Operating Systems: Processes and Threads

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Tiina Niklander

Process model
A process is an activity that has a program, input, output, and a state.

Some terms:

- **Text/code** = executable instructions
- **Data** = variables
- **Stack** = workarea
  - Parameter passing to subroutines/system calls
- **Process Control Block**, PCB entry in Process Table = management information
Process model

- One physical program counter switches between processes
- Conceptual model of 4 independent, sequential processes
- Only one program active at any instant on one CPU
  pseudoparallelism

Process Creation

Principal events that cause process creation
1. System initialization
2. Execution of a process creation system
3. User request to create a new process
4. Initiation of a batch job
Process Creation

Operating system does
- Create PCB
  - OS ‘generates’ a unique ID
- Allocate memory for the process
- Initiate PCB
- Link PCB to other structures
  - Place to Ready-queue, link to parent process, etc

Process Termination

Conditions which terminate processes
1. Normal exit (voluntary)
2. Error exit (voluntary)
3. Fatal error (involuntary)
4. Killed by another process (involuntary)
**Process Hierarchies**

- Parent creates a child process, child processes can create its own process
- Forms a hierarchy
  - UNIX calls this a "process group"
- Windows has no concept of process hierarchy
  - all processes are created equal

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**Process States (1)**

- Possible process states
  - running
  - blocked
  - ready
- Transitions between states shown

1. Process blocks for input
2. Scheduler picks another process
3. Scheduler picks this process
4. Input becomes available
Process states

Figure 3.7 Process States for Trace of Figure 3.4

Process states

Sta Fig 3.8
Process Control Block

Fields of a process table entry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process management</th>
<th>Memory management</th>
<th>File management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registers</td>
<td>Pointer to text segment</td>
<td>Root directory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program counter</td>
<td>Pointer to data segment</td>
<td>Working directory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program status word</td>
<td>Pointer to stack segment</td>
<td>File descriptors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stack pointer</td>
<td></td>
<td>User ID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process state</td>
<td></td>
<td>Group ID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling parameters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process ID</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time when process started</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPU time used</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's CPU time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time of next alarm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tasks on interrupt

1. Hardware stacks program counter, etc.
2. Hardware loads new program counter from interrupt vector.
3. Assembly language procedure saves registers.
4. Assembly language procedure sets up new stack.
5. C interrupt service runs (typically reads and buffers input).
6. Scheduler decides which process is to run next.
7. C procedure returns to the assembly code.
8. Assembly language procedure starts up new current process.

The process is not always changed in step 6, if running process can continue. Process can be changed only at step 6.
Threads

Word processor with three threads

- One thread interacts with user
- One thread handles reformatting in background
- One thread handles disk backups in background
Multithreaded web server using dispatcher

- Dispatcher receives requests
- Handles to an idle worker thread for processing
- Suitable model for such: finite-state machine

```
while (TRUE) {
    get_next_request(&buf);
    handoff_work(&buf);
}
```

```
while (TRUE) {
    wait_for_work(&buf);
    look_for_page_in_cache(&buf, &page);
    if (page_not_in_cache(&page))
        read_page_from_disk(&buf, &page);
    return_page(&page);
}
```

Thread model

(a) Three processes each with one thread
(b) One process with three threads
Thread Model: Process vs thread

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per process items</th>
<th>Per thread items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address space</td>
<td>Program counter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global variables</td>
<td>Registers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open files</td>
<td>Stack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child processes</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pending alarms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signals and signal handlers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Items shared by all threads in a process
- Items private to each thread in thread
- Each thread has its own stack!

Why threads?

- Multiple parallel activities. Thread provide easier programming models
- Faster to create and destroy one thread than a whole process
- When one thread waits, another might be able to execute
- Shared data area of threads in one process. Efficient resource sharing and easy communication.

BUT
- Mutual exclusion and synchronization are fully programmer's responsibility (no support from OS or anything else)
POSIX threads (pthreads)

IEEE standard for threads for portable thread programs
- `pthread_create()`
  - Create a new thread
- `pthread_exit()`
  - Terminate the calling thread
- `pthread_join()`
  - Wait for a specific thread to exit
- `pthread_yield()`
  - Release the CPU to let another thread run
- Functions for synchronization and mutual exclusion
- And more than 50 other functions

User-level vs kernel-level threads

(a) A user-level threads package.
- Kernel (or OS) is not aware of threads, schedules processes
- User process must dispatch threads itself

(b) A threads package managed by the kernel.
- All thread control and dispatching done by the kernel
- No control on the user level
User-level threads

Advantages
- Fast dispatching
  - No mode switch
  - No interrupt
  - No process switch!
- Programmer can freely choose the scheduling mechanism

Disadvantages
- When one thread is blocked on system call, it blocks the whole process (and all other threads)
- Threads of one process cannot be executed on several processors concurrently
  - Remember: kernel dispatches only processes!

Kernel-level threads

Advantages
- Threads of one process can be executed simultaneously on multiple processors
- If one thread is blocked, the other threads of this process may still continue
- Often also the kernel implementation is multithreaded

Disadvantages
- Dispatching a thread has two phases:
  - Interrupt +, interrupt handling and mode switch
  - Dispatcher (and return to user mode)
- Slower than in user-level threads
Hybrid Implementations

**Multiplexing** user-level threads onto kernel-level threads

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**Solaris**

![Solaris Multithreaded Architecture Example](image)

*Figure 4.15 Solaris Multithreaded Architecture Example*
Making single-threaded code multithreaded

- Global variables
  - Threads may not be aware of others using the same variable
  - See next slide for solutions
- Library procedures
  - May not be reentrant (second call to procedure before the first one is finished)
  - Solution: rewrite the library or use an excluding jacket
- Signals
  - No simple solutions - difficult already in single thread
- Stack management
  - How to increase a thread’s stack in case of stack overflow

Threads and global variables

Conflicts between threads over the use of a global variable

One solution:
- Prohibit global variables

Alternative:
- Private global variables
- Accessing these is tricky, language may not support
- New library procedures
Interprocess Communication

Race Conditions

Two processes want to access shared memory at the same time

Critical Regions (1)

Four conditions to provide mutual exclusion

1. No two processes simultaneously in critical region
2. No assumptions made about speeds or numbers of CPUs
3. No process running outside its critical region may block another process
4. No process must wait forever to enter its critical region
Critical Regions (2)

Mutual exclusion using critical regions

Mutual Exclusion

- Busy Waiting - occupy the CPU while waiting
- Sleep and Wakeup
  - Semaphores
  - Mutexes
  - Monitors
  - Message Passing
  - Barriers
**Scheduling**

**Introduction to Scheduling (1)**

- Bursts of CPU usage alternate with periods of I/O wait
  - a CPU-bound process
  - an I/O bound process

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**Introduction to Scheduling (2)**

**All systems**
- Fairness - giving each process a fair share of the CPU
- Policy enforcement - seeing that stated policy is carried out
- Balance - keeping all parts of the system busy

**Batch systems**
- Throughput - maximize jobs per hour
- Turnaround time - minimize time between submission and termination
- CPU utilization - keep the CPU busy all the time

**Interactive systems**
- Response time - respond to requests quickly
- Proportionality - meet users' expectations

**Real-time systems**
- Meeting deadlines - avoid losing data
- Predictability - avoid quality degradation in multimedia systems

*Scheduling Algorithm Goals*
Scheduling in Batch Systems (1)

An example of shortest job first scheduling

Scheduling in Batch Systems (2)

Three level scheduling
Scheduling in Interactive Systems (1)

- Round Robin Scheduling
  - list of runnable processes
  - list of runnable processes after B uses up its quantum

Scheduling in Interactive Systems (2)

A scheduling algorithm with four priority classes

(Highest priority)

(Lowest priority)
Scheduling in Real-Time Systems

Schedulable real-time system

- Given
  - m periodic events
  - event i occurs within period $P_i$ and requires $C_i$ seconds
- Then the load can only be handled if

$$\sum_{i=1}^{m} \frac{C_i}{P_i} \leq 1$$

Policy versus Mechanism

- Separate what is allowed to be done with how it is done
  - a process knows which of its children threads are important and need priority

- Scheduling algorithm parameterized
  - mechanism in the kernel

- Parameters filled in by user processes
  - policy set by user process
Thread Scheduling (1)

Possible scheduling of threads
- 50-msec process quantum
- threads run 5 msec/ CPU burst