Thread-Level Parallelism

15-213 / 18-213: Introduction to Computer Systems
26th Lecture, Nov 26, 2012

Instructors:
Randy Bryant, Dave O’Hallaron, and Greg Kesden
Today

- **Parallel Computing Hardware**
  - Multicore
    - Multiple separate processors on single chip
    - How they maintain consistent view of memory
  - Hyperthreading
    - Efficient execution of multiple threads on single core

- **Thread-Level Parallelism**
  - Splitting program into independent tasks
    - Example: Parallel summation
    - Some performance artifacts
  - Divide-and conquer parallelism
    - Example: Parallel quicksort
Exploiting parallel execution

- So far, we’ve used threads to deal with I/O delays
  - e.g., one thread per client to prevent one from delaying another

- Multi-core CPUs offer another opportunity
  - Spread work over threads executing in parallel on N cores
  - Happens automatically, if many independent tasks
    - e.g., running many applications or serving many clients
  - Can also write code to make one big task go faster
    - by organizing it as multiple parallel sub-tasks

- Shark machines can execute 16 threads at once
  - 8 cores, each with 2-way hyperthreading
  - Theoretical speedup of 16X
    - never achieved in our benchmarks
Multicore Processor

- **Intel Nehalem Processor**
  - E.g., Shark machines (8 cores / machine)
  - Multiple processors operating with coherent view of memory
Memory Consistency

What are the possible values printed?
- Depends on memory consistency model
- Abstract model of how hardware handles concurrent accesses

Sequential consistency
- Overall effect consistent with each individual thread
- Otherwise, arbitrary interleaving

```
int a = 1;
int b = 100;

Thread1:
Wa:  a = 2;
Rb:  print(b);

Thread2:
Wb:  b = 200;
Ra:  print(a);
```
### Sequential Consistency Example

```plaintext
int a = 1;
int b = 100;

Thread1:
Wa: a = 2;
Rb: print(b);

Thread2:
Wb: b = 200;
Ra: print(a);
```

**Thread consistency constraints**
- `Wa` -> `Rb`
- `Wb` -> `Ra`

**Impossible outputs**
- `100, 1` and `1, 100`
- Would require reaching both `Ra` and `Rb` before `Wa` and `Wb`
Non-Coherent Cache Scenario

- Write-back caches, without coordination between them

```cpp
int a = 1;
int b = 100;

Thread1:
Wa: a = 2;
Rb: print(b);

Thread2:
Wb: b = 200;
Ra: print(a);
```

print 1

print 100
Snoopy Caches

- Tag each cache block with state
  - Invalid: Cannot use value
  - Shared: Readable copy
  - Exclusive: Writeable copy

```java
int a = 1;
int b = 100;

Thread1:
Wa: a = 2;
Rb: print(b);

Thread2:
Wb: b = 200;
Ra: print(a);
```
Snoopy Caches

- Tag each cache block with state
  - Invalid: Cannot use value
  - Shared: Readable copy
  - Exclusive: Writeable copy

```
int a = 1;
int b = 100;
```

Thread1:
Wa: a = 2;
Rb: print(b);

Thread2:
Wb: b = 200;
Ra: print(a);

```
print 2
print 200
```

- When cache sees request for one of its E-tagged blocks
  - Supply value from cache
  - Set tag to S
Hyperthreading: Out-of-Order Processor Structure

- Instruction control dynamically converts program into stream of operations
- Operations mapped onto functional units to execute in parallel
Hyperthreading Implementation

- Replicate enough instruction control to process K instruction streams
- K copies of all registers
- Share functional units
Some Machines

- **Shark Machines**
  - Intel Nehalem processors
  - 8 cores, each with 2-way hyperthreading
  - 2.2 GHz clock rate

- **GHC Cluster Machines**
  - Intel Westmere processors
  - 6 cores, each with 2-way hyperthreading
  - 3.2 GHz clock rate
Summation Example

- **Sum numbers 0, ..., N-1**
  - Should add up to \((N-1) \times N/2\)

- **Partition into K ranges**
  - \([N/K]\) values each
  - Accumulate leftover values serially

- **Method #1: All threads update single global variable**
  - 1A: No synchronization
  - 1B: Synchronize with pthread semaphore
  - 1C: Synchronize with pthread mutex
    - “Binary” semaphore. Only values 0 & 1
Accumulating in Single Global Variable: Declarations

typedef unsigned long data_t;
/* Single accumulator */
volatile data_t global_sum;

/* Mutex & semaphore for global sum */
sem_t semaphore;
pthread_mutex_t mutex;

/* Number of elements summed by each thread */
size_t nelems_per_thread;

/* Keep track of thread IDs */
pthread_t tid[MAXTHREADS];

/* Identify each thread */
int myid[MAXTHREADS];
Accumulating in Single Global Variable: Operation

```c
nelems_per_thread = nelems / nthreads;
/* Set global value */
global_sum = 0;

/* Create threads and wait for them to finish */
for (i = 0; i < nthreads; i++) {
    myid[i] = i;
    Pthread_create(&tid[i], NULL, thread_fun, &myid[i]);
}
for (i = 0; i < nthreads; i++)
    Pthread_join(tid[i], NULL);

result = global_sum;

/* Add leftover elements */
for (e = nthreads * nelems_per_thread; e < nelems; e++)
    result += e;
```
Thread Function: No Synchronization

```c
void *sum_race(void *vargp)
{
    int myid = *((int *)vargp);
    size_t start = myid * nelems_per_thread;
    size_t end = start + nelems_per_thread;
    size_t i;

    for (i = start; i < end; i++) {
        global_sum += i;
    }
    return NULL;
}
```
Unsynchronized Performance

- $N = 2^{30}$
- Best speedup = 2.86X
- Gets wrong answer when > 1 thread!
Thread Function: Semaphore / Mutex

Semaphore

```c
void *sum_sem(void *vargp)
{
    int myid = *((int *)vargp);
    size_t start = myid * nelems_per_thread;
    size_t end = start + nelems_per_thread;
    size_t i;

    for (i = start; i < end; i++) {
        sem_wait(&semaphore);
        global_sum += i;
        sem_post(&semaphore);
    }
    return NULL;
}
```

Mutex

```c
pthread_mutex_lock(&mutex);
global_sum += i;
pthread_mutex_unlock(&mutex);
```
Semaphore / Mutex Performance

- Terrible Performance
  - 2.5 seconds $\rightarrow$ ~10 minutes
- Mutex 3X faster than semaphore
- Clearly, neither is successful
Separate Accumulation

- **Method #2: Each thread accumulates into separate variable**
  - 2A: Accumulate in contiguous array elements
  - 2B: Accumulate in spaced-apart array elements
  - 2C: Accumulate in registers

```c
/* Partial sum computed by each thread */
data_t psum[MAXTHREADS*MAXSPACING];

/* Spacing between accumulators */
size_t spacing = 1;
```
Separate Accumulation: Operation

```
nelems_per_thread = nelems / nthreads;

;/* Create threads and wait for them to finish */
for (i = 0; i < nthreads; i++) {
    myid[i] = i;
    psum[i*spacing] = 0;
    Pthread_create(&tid[i], NULL, thread_fun, &myid[i]);
}
for (i = 0; i < nthreads; i++)
    Pthread_join(tid[i], NULL);

result = 0;

;/* Add up the partial sums computed by each thread */
for (i = 0; i < nthreads; i++)
    result += psum[i*spacing];

;/* Add leftover elements */
for (e = nthreads * nelems_per_thread; e < nelems; e++)
    result += e;
```
Thread Function: Memory Accumulation

```c
void *sum_global(void *vargp)
{
    int myid = *((int *)vargp);
    size_t start = myid * nelems_per_thread;
    size_t end = start + nelems_per_thread;
    size_t i;

    size_t index = myid*spacing;
    psum[index] = 0;
    for (i = start; i < end; i++) {
        psum[index] += i;
    }
    return NULL;
}
```
Memory Accumulation Performance

- **Clear threading advantage**
  - Adjacent speedup: 5 X
  - Spaced-apart speedup: 13.3 X (Only observed speedup > 8)

- **Why does spacing the accumulators apart matter?**
False Sharing

- Coherency maintained on cache blocks
- To update psum[i], thread i must have exclusive access
  - Threads sharing common cache block will keep fighting each other for access to block
False Sharing Performance

- Best spaced-apart performance 2.8 X better than best adjacent
- **Demonstrates cache block size = 64**
  - 8-byte values
  - No benefit increasing spacing beyond 8
Thread Function: Register Accumulation

```c
void *sum_local(void *vargp)
{
    int myid = *((int *)vargp);
    size_t start = myid * nelems_per_thread;
    size_t end = start + nelems_per_thread;
    size_t i;
    size_t index = myid*spacing;
    data_t sum = 0;
    for (i = start; i < end; i++) {
        sum += i;
    }
    psum[index] = sum;
    return NULL;
}
```
Register Accumulation Performance

- Clear threading advantage
  - Speedup = 7.5 X
- 2X better than fastest memory accumulation
A More Substantial Example: Sort

- Sort set of N random numbers
- Multiple possible algorithms
  - Use parallel version of quicksort
- Sequential quicksort of set of values X
  - Choose “pivot” p from X
  - Rearrange X into
    - L: Values ≤ p
    - R: Values ≥ p
  - Recursively sort L to get L’
  - Recursively sort R to get R’
  - Return L’ : p : R’
Sequential Quicksort Visualized

X

p

L p R

p2

L2 p2 R2

.

.

L'
Sequential Quicksort Visualized

X

L'

p

L3

p3

R3

R'

L'

p

R'
Sequential Quicksort Code

```c
void qsort_serial(data_t *base, size_t nele) {
    if (nele <= 1)
        return;
    if (nele == 2) {
        if (base[0] > base[1])
            swap(base, base+1);
        return;
    }

    /* Partition returns index of pivot */
    size_t m = partition(base, nele);
    if (m > 1)
        qsort_serial(base, m);
    if (nele-1 > m+1)
        qsort_serial(base+m+1, nele-m-1);
}
```

- **Sort nele elements starting at base**
  - Recursively sort L or R if has more than one element
Parallel Quicksort

- Parallel quicksort of set of values X
  - If $N \leq N\text{thresh}$, do sequential quicksort
  - Else
    - Choose “pivot” $p$ from $X$
    - Rearrange $X$ into
      - L: Values $\leq p$
      - R: Values $\geq p$
    - Recursively spawn separate threads
      - Sort L to get $L'$
      - Sort R to get $R'$
    - Return $L' : p : R'$
Parallel Quicksort Visualized

```
X
```

```
\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{p} \\
\text{L} & \text{p} & \text{R} \\
\text{p2} & \text{p3} \\
\text{L2} & \text{R2} & \text{p} & \text{L3} & \text{p3} & \text{R3} \\
\vdots & \vdots \\
\text{L'} & \text{p} & \text{R'}
\end{array}
\]
Thread Structure: Sorting Tasks

- **Task:** Sort subrange of data
  - Specify as:
    - **base:** Starting address
    - **nele:** Number of elements in subrange
- **Run as separate thread**
Small Sort Task Operation

Sort subrange using serial quicksort
Large Sort Task Operation

Partition Subrange

Spawn 2 tasks
Top-Level Function (Simplified)

```c
void tqsort(data_t *base, size_t nele) {
    init_task(nele);
    global_base = base;
    global_end = global_base + nele - 1;
    task_queue_ptr tq = new_task_queue();
    tqsort_helper(base, nele, tq);
    join_tasks(tq);
    free_task_queue(tq);
}
```

- Sets up data structures
- Calls recursive sort routine
- Keeps joining threads until none left
- Frees data structures
Recursive sort routine (Simplified)

```c
/* Multi-threaded quicksort */
static void tqsort_helper(data_t *base, size_t nele, 
    task_queue_ptr tq) {
    if (nele <= nele_max_sort_serial) {
        /* Use sequential sort */
        qsort_serial(base, nele);
    }
    sort_task_t *t = new_task(base, nele, tq);
    spawn_task(tq, sort_thread, (void *) t);
}
```

- Small partition: Sort serially
- Large partition: Spawn new sort task
Sort task thread (Simplified)

/* Thread routine for many-threaded quicksort */
static void *sort_thread(void *vargp) {
  sort_task_t *t = (sort_task_t *) vargp;
  data_t *base = t->base;
  size_t nele = t->nele;
  task_queue_ptr tq = t->tq;
  free(vargp);
  size_t m = partition(base, nele);
  if (m > 1)
    tqsort_helper(base, m, tq);
  if (nele-1 > m+1)
    tqsort_helper(base+m+1, nele-m-1, tq);
  return NULL;
}

- Get task parameters
- Perform partitioning step
- Call recursive sort routine on each partition
- Serial fraction: Fraction of input at which do serial sort
- Sort $2^{37}$ (134,217,728) random values
- Best speedup = 6.84X
Parallel Quicksort Performance

- Good performance over wide range of fraction values
  - F too small: Not enough parallelism
  - F too large: Thread overhead + run out of thread memory
Amdahl’s Law

**Overall problem**
- $T$  Total sequential time required
- $p$  Fraction of total that can be sped up ($0 \leq p \leq 1$)
- $k$  Speedup factor

**Resulting Performance**
- $T_k = pT/k + (1-p)T$
  - Portion which can be sped up runs $k$ times faster
  - Portion which cannot be sped up stays the same
- Maximum possible speedup
  - $k = \infty$
  - $T_\infty = (1-p)T$
Amdahl’s Law Example

- **Overall problem**
  
  - $T = 10$  Total time required
  
  - $p = 0.9$  Fraction of total which can be sped up
  
  - $k = 9$  Speedup factor

- **Resulting Performance**
  
  - $T_9 = 0.9 \times 10/9 + 0.1 \times 10 = 1.0 + 1.0 = 2.0$
  
  - Maximum possible speedup
    
    - $T_\infty = 0.1 \times 10.0 = 1.0$
Amdahl’s Law & Parallel Quicksort

- **Sequential bottleneck**
  - Top-level partition: No speedup
  - Second level: $\leq 2X$ speedup
  - $k^{th}$ level: $\leq 2^{k-1}X$ speedup

- **Implications**
  - Good performance for small-scale parallelism
  - Would need to parallelize partitioning step to get large-scale parallelism
    - Parallel Sorting by Regular Sampling
      - H. Shi & J. Schaeffer, J. Parallel & Distributed Computing, 1992
Parallelizing Partitioning Step

Parallel partitioning based on global $p$

Reassemble into partitions
Experience with Parallel Partitioning

- Could not obtain speedup
- Speculate: Too much data copying
  - Could not do everything within source array
  - Set up temporary space for reassembling partition
Lessons Learned

- **Must have parallelization strategy**
  - Partition into K independent parts
  - Divide-and-conquer

- **Inner loops must be synchronization free**
  - Synchronization operations very expensive

- **Watch out for hardware artifacts**
  - Need to understand processor & memory structure
  - Sharing and false sharing of global data

- **Beware of Amdahl’s Law**
  - Serial code can become bottleneck

- **You can do it!**
  - Achieving modest levels of parallelism is not difficult
  - Set up experimental framework and test multiple strategies