15-410

"...Arguably less wrong..."

Synchronization #3
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Synchronization

Project 2 out today

- Writeup this afternoon
  - A fair amount of reading
- Tarball afternoon/evening

Computer Club “demo night” Thursday

- Scaife 125, 19:00
  - Computer Club introduction/overview
  - History of PC graphics
  - Demos –menagerie of hardware, software (old games)

Outline

Synch 1

- Two building blocks
- Three requirements for mutual exclusion
- Algorithms people *don't* use for mutual exclusion

Synch 2

- How mutual exclusion is really implemented

Synch 3

- Condition variables
  - Under the hood
  - The atomic-sleep problem
- Semaphores, monitors –overview

Road Map

Two Fundamental operations

- ✔ Atomic instruction sequence
- ➪ Voluntary de-scheduling

Voluntary de-scheduling

The Situation

- You hold lock on shared resource
- But it's not in “the right mode”

Action sequence

- Unlock shared resource
- Write down “wake me up when...”
- Go to sleep until resource changes state

What *not* to do

```
while (!reckoning) {
  mutex_lock(&scenario_lk);
  if ((date >= 1906-04-18) &&
   (hour >= 5))
    reckoning = true;
  else
    mutex_unlock(&scenario_lk);
}
wreak_general_havoc();
mutex_unlock(&scenario_lk);
```

What *Not* To Do

Why is this wrong?

- Make sure you understand!
- See previous two lectures
- Do *not* do this in P2 or P3
  - Not even if it is *really tempting* in P3

Arguably Less Wrong

```
While (!reckoning) {
  mutex_lock(&scenario_lk);
  if ((date >= 1906-04-18) &&
    (hour >= 5))
    reckoning = true;
  else {
    mutex_unlock(&scenario_lk);
    sleep(1);
  }
}
wreak_general_havoc();
mutex_unlock(&scenario_lk);
```

Arguably Less Wrong

Don't do this either

- How wrong is “a while”?
  - N-1 times it's much too short
  - Nth time it's much too long

Arguably Less Wrong

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- How wrong is “a while”?
  - N-1 times it's much too short
  - Nth time it's much too long
  - It's wrong *every time*
- What's the problem?

Arguably Less Wrong

Don't do this either

- How wrong is “a while”?
  - N-1 times it's much too short
  - Nth time it's much too long
  - It's wrong *every time*
- What's the problem?
  - We don't really want a duration!
  - We want to wait for a *condition*

Something Is Missing

Mutex protects shared state

- Also encapsulates “interfering code sequence” as object
- Good

How can we sleep for the *right* duration?

- Get an expert to tell us!
- Encapsulate “the right duration”
  - ...into a *condition variable* object

Once More, With Feeling!

```
mutex_lock(&scenario_lk);
while (cvarp = wait_on()) {
  cond_wait(&scenario_lk, cvarp);
}
wreak_general_havoc(); /* locked! */
mutex_unlock(&scenario_lk);
```

wait_on()?

```
if (y < 1906)
  return (&new_year);
else if (m < 4)
  return (&new_month);
else if (d < 18)
  return (&new_day);
else if (h < 5)
  return (&new_hour);
else
  return (0);
```

What Wakes Us Up?

```
for (y = 1900; y < 2000; y++)
  for (m = 1; m <= 12; m++)
    for (d = 1; d <= days(m); d++)
      for (h = 0; h < 24; h++)
        ...
          cond_broadcast(&new_hour);
        cond_broadcast(&new_day);
      cond_broadcast(&new_month);
    cond_broadcast(&new_year);
```

Condition Variable Requirements

Keep track of threads asleep “for a while”

Allow notifier thread to wake sleeping thread(s)

Must be thread-safe

- **Many threads may call condition_wait() at same time**
- **Many threads may call condition_signal() at same time**
- **Say, those look like “interfering sequences”...**

Why *Two* Parameters?

```
condition_wait(&mutex, &cvar);
```

Mutex required to access/modify the "world" state

Whoever awakens you will need to hold that mutex

- **So you'd better give it up.**

When you wake up, you will need to hold it again

- **"Convenient" for condition_wait() to un-lock/re-lock**

But there's something more subtle

Inside a Condition Variable

cvar->queue

- of sleeping processes
- FIFO or more exotic

cvar->mutex

- Protects queue against interfering wait()/signal() calls
- This isn't the caller's mutex (locking caller's world state)
- This is our secret invisible mutex

Inside a Condition Variable

```
cond_wait(mutex, cvar)
{
  lock(cvar->mutex);
  enq(cvar->queue, my_thread_id());
  unlock(mutex);
  ATOMICALLY {
    unlock(cvar->mutex);
    kernel_please_pause_this_thread();
  }
  lock(mutex);
}
```

What is this "ATOMICALLY" stuff?

What We Hope For

cond_wait(m, c);	*cond_signal(c);*
`enq(c->que, me);`	
`unlock(m);`	
`unlock(c->m);`	
`kern_thr_pause();`	
	`lock(c->m);`
	`id = deq(c->que);`
	`thr_wake(id);`
	`unlock(c->m);`

Pathological Execution Sequence

cond_wait(m, c);	*cond_signal(c);*
`enq(c->que, me);`	
`unlock(m);`	
`unlock(c->m);`	
	`lock(c->m);`
	`id = deq(c->que);`
	`thr_wake(id);`
	`unlock(c->m);`
`kern_thr_pause();`	

`thr_wake(id)` ⇒ `ERR_NOT_ASLEEP`

Achieving wait() Atomicity

Disable interrupts (if you are a kernel)

Rely on OS to implement condition variables

- **(Why is this not the best idea?)**

Have a better kernel thread-sleep interface

Hmmm....

Achieving wait() Atomicity

P2 challenges

- Understand the issues!
  - mutex, cvar
- Understand the host kernel we give you
- Put the parts together
  - Don't use “wrong” or “arguably less wrong” approaches!
  - Seek solid, clear solutions
    - There's more than one way to do it
    - Make sure to pick a correct way...
    - Try to pick a *good* way.

Outline

Last time

- How mutual exclusion is really implemented

Condition variables

- Under the hood
- The atomic-sleep problem

⇒ Semaphores

Monitors

Semaphore Concept

Semaphore is a different encapsulation object

- Can produce mutual exclusion
- Can produce sleep-until-it's-time

Intuition: counted resource

- Integer represents “number available”
  - Semaphore object initialized to a particular count
- Thread blocks until it is allocated an instance

Semaphore Concept

wait(), aka P(), aka proberen ("wait")

- wait until value > 0
- decrement value ("taking" one instance)

signal(), aka V(), aka verhogen ("increment")

- increment value ("releasing" one instance)

Just one small issue...

- wait() and signal() *must be atomic*

“Mutex-style” Semaphore

```
semaphore m = 1;

do {
  wait(m); /* mutex_lock() */
  ..critical section...
  signal(m); /* mutex_unlock() */

  ...remainder section...
} while (1);
```

“Condition-style” Semaphore

Thread 0	*Thread 1*
	`wait(c);`
`result = 42;`	
`signal(c);`	
	`use(result);`

“Condition with Memory”

Semaphores ***retain memory*** of signal() events

“full/empty bit” - *unlike* condition variables

Thread 0	*Thread 1*
`result = 42;`	
`signal(c);`	
	`wait(c);`
	`use(result);`

Semaphore vs. Mutex/Condition

Good news

- Semaphore is a higher-level construct
- Integrates mutual exclusion, waiting
- Avoids mistakes common in mutex/condition API
  - signal() too early is “lost”
  - ...

Semaphore vs. Mutex/Condition

Bad news

- Semaphore is a higher-level construct
- Integrates mutual exclusion, waiting
  - Some semaphores are “mutex-like”
  - Some semaphores are “condition-like”
  - How's a poor library to know?
    - Spin-wait or not???

Semaphores - 31 Flavors

Binary semaphore

- It counts, but only from 0 to 1!
  - "Available" / "Not available"
- Consider this a hint to the implementor...
  - "Think mutex!"

Non-blocking semaphore

- wait(semaphore, timeout);

Deadlock-avoidance semaphore

- #include <deadlock.lecture>

My Personal Opinion

One *"simple, intuitive"* synchronization object

- **In 31 performance-enhancing flavors!!!**

"The nice thing about standards is that you have so many to choose from."

- **Andrew S. Tanenbaum**

Conceptually simpler to have two objects

- **One for mutual exclusion**
- **One for waiting**
- **...after you've understood what's actually happening**

Semaphore Wait: Inside Story

```
wait(semaphore s)
  ACQUIRE EXCLUSIVE ACCESS
  --s->count;
  if (s->count < 0)
    enqueue(s->queue, my_id());
    ATOMICALLY
      RELEASE EXCLUSIVE ACCESS
      thread_pause()
  else
      RELEASE EXCLUSIVE ACCESS
```

Semaphore Signal: Inside Story

```
signal(semaphore s)
  ACQUIRE EXCLUSIVE ACCESS
  ++s->count;
  if (s->count <= 0) {
    tid = dequeue(s->queue);
    thread_wakeup(tid);
  RELEASE EXCLUSIVE ACCESS
```

What's all the shouting?

- An exclusion algoritm much like a mutex, or
- OS-assisted atomic de-scheduling

Monitor

Basic concept

- Semaphores eliminate some mutex/condition mistakes
- Still some common errors
  - Swapping “signal()” & “wait()”
  - Accidentally omitting one

Monitor: higher-level abstraction

- Module of high-level language procedures
  - All access some shared state
- *Compiler* adds synchronization code
  - Thread running in any procedure blocks *all* thread entries

Monitor “commerce”

```
int cash_in_till[N_STORES] = { 0 };
int wallet[N_CUSTOMERS] = { 0 } ;

boolean buy(int cust, store, price) {
  if (wallet[cust] >= price) {
    cash_in_till[store] += price;
    wallet[cust] -= price;
    return (true);
  } else
    return (false);
}
```

Monitors –What about waiting?

Automatic mutal exclusion is nice...

- **...but it is too strong**

Sometimes one thread needs to wait for another

- **Automatic mutual exclusion forbids this**
- **Must leave monitor, re-enter - *when?***

Have we heard this “when” question before?

Monitor Waiting –The Problem

```
void
stubbornly_cash_check(acct a, check c)
{
  while (account[a].bal < check.val) {
    ...Sigh, must wait for a while...
    ...What goes here?  I forget...
  }
  account[a].bal -= check.val;
}
```

Monitor Waiting –Wrong Solution

```
boolean
try_cash_check(acct a, check c)
{
  if (account[a].bal < check.val)
    return (false); /* pass the buck */
  account[a].bal -= check.val;
  return (true);
}
```

Monitor condition variables

Similar to condition variables we've seen

condition_wait(cvar)

- **Only one parameter**
- **Mutex-to-drop is implicit**
  - **(the “monitor mutex”)**
- **Operation**
  - **“Temporarily exit monitor” -- drop the mutex**
  - **Wait until signalled**
  - **“Re-enter monitor” - re-acquire the mutex**

Monitor Waiting

```
void
stubbornly_cash_check(acct a, check c)
{
  while (account[a].bal < check.val) {
    cond_wait(account[a].activity);
  }
  account[a].bal -= check.val;
}
```

Q: Who would signal() this cvar?

Monitor condition variables

signal() policy question - which thread to run?

- Signalling thread? Signalled thread?
  - Can argue either way
- Or: signal() *exits monitor* as side effect!
- Different signal() policies mean different monitor flavors

Summary

Two fundamental operations

- Mutual exclusion for must-be-atomic sequences
- Atomic de-scheduling (and then wakeup)

Mutex/condition-variable ("pthreads") style

- Two objects for two core operations

Semaphores, Monitors

- Semaphore: one object
- Monitor: invisible compiler-generated object
- *Same core ideas inside*

Summary

What you should know

- Issues/goals
- Underlying techniques
- How environment/application design matters

All done with synchronization?

- Only one minor issue left
  - Deadlock