

15-410

“...Arguably less wrong...”

Synchronization #3
Sep. 19, 2007

Dave Eckhardt

Roger Dannenberg

Synchronization

Project 2 out today

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

Computer Club “demo night” next Wednesday

- Wean 7500, 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 “sleep(1)”?

Arguably Less Wrong

Don't do this either

- How wrong is “sleep(1)”?
 - N-1 times it's much too short
 - Nth time it's much too long

Arguably Less Wrong

Don't do this either

- How wrong is “sleep(1)”?
 - N-1 times it's much too short
 - Nth time it's much too long
 - It's wrong *every time*

Arguably Less Wrong

Don't do this either

- How wrong is “sleep(1)”?
 - 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 “sleep(1)”?
 - 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...

“Protect shared state” is solved

- We use a “mutex object”
- Also encapsulates “Which code interferes with this?”
- Good

How to solve “sleep for the right duration”?

Something Is Missing

“Protect shared state” is solved

- We use a “mutex object”
- Also encapsulates “Which code interferes with this”
- Good

How to solve “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(cvarp, &scenario_lk);  
}  
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(&cvar, &mutex);
```

Mutex required to examine/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(cvar, world_mutex)
{
    lock(cvar->mutex);
    enq(cvar->queue, my_thread_id());
    unlock(world_mutex);
    ATOMICALLY {
        unlock(cvar->mutex);
        kernel_please_pause_this_thread();
    }
    lock(world_mutex);
}
```

What is this “ATOMICALLY” stuff?

What We Hope For

<i>cond_wait(m, c);</i>	<i>cond_signal(c);</i>
enq(c->que, me);	
unlock(m);	
unlock(c->m);	
kern_thr_pause();	
	lock(c->m);
	id = deq(c->que);
	kern_thr_wake(id);
	unlock(c->m);

Pathological Execution Sequence

<i>cond_wait(m, c);</i>	<i>cond_signal(c);</i>
enq(c->que, me);	
unlock(m);	
unlock(c->m);	
	lock(c->m);
	id = deq(c->que);
	kern_thr_wake(id);
	unlock(c->m);
kern_thr_pause();	

kern_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

<i>Thread 0</i>	<i>Thread 1</i>
	wait(c);
result = 42;	
signal(c);	
	use(result);

“Condition with Memory”

Semaphores *retain memory* of signal() events
“full/empty bit” - *unlike* condition variables

<i>Thread 0</i>	<i>Thread 1</i>
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 algorithm 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 mutual 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