

# 15-410

*“...Mooooo!...”*

IPC & RPC  
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# Synchronization

## Project 3 tactical considerations

- Getting the shell running is important
  - We won't build a hand-load kernel for each test!
  - Test harness will rely on shell to launch programs
- Getting a body of code solid is important
  - Better for `exec ( )` to work 1000 times than `thr_fork` once
- Run tests as soon as you can
- Carefully consider the P3extra overtime
  - In general, getting a really solid kernel is the best thing
    - » For your grade
    - » For your education!

# Synchronization

## Project 3 *calendrical* considerations

- Some member of the course staff can't count so well...
- P3 is due Monday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, not Friday, April 8<sup>th</sup>.

# Outline

**IPC – InterProcess Communication**

**RPC – Remote Procedure Call**

**Textbook**

- **Sections 4.5, 4.6**

# Scope of “IPC”

**Communicating processes on one machine**

**Multiple machines?**

- **Virtualize single-machine IPC**
- **Switch to a “network” model**
  - **Failures happen**
  - **Administrative domain switch**
  - **...**
  - **(RPC)**

# IPC parts

**Naming**

**Synchronization/buffering**

**Message body issues**

- Copy vs. reference
- Size

# Naming

**Message sent to *process* or to *mailbox*?**

## **Process model**

- `send(P, msg)`
- `receive(Q, &msg)` or `receive(&id, &msg)`

**No need to set up “communication link”**

- But you need to know process id's
- You get only one “link” per process pair

# Naming

## Mailbox model

- `send(box1, msg)`
- `receive(box1, &msg)` or `receive(&box, &msg)`

## Where do mailbox id's come from?

- “name server” approach

```
box = createmailbox();  
register(box1, "Terry's process");  
boxT = lookup("Terry's process");
```

## File system approach – *great* (if you have one)



# Multiple Senders

## Problem

- Receiver needs to know who sent request

## First-cut solution

- Sender includes identifier in message body
- Problem?

## Typical solution

- “Message” not just a byte array
- OS imposes structure
  - sender id (maybe process id and mailbox id)
  - maybe: type, priority, ...

# Multiple Receivers

## Problem

- Service may be “multi-threaded”
- Multiple receivers waiting for one mailbox

## Typical solution

- OS “arbitrarily” chooses receiver per message
  - (Can you guess how?)

# Synchronization

## Issue

- Does communication imply synchronization?

## Blocking send()?

- Ok for request/response pattern
- Provides assurance of message delivery
- *Bad* for producer/consumer pattern

## Non-blocking send()?

- Raises buffering issue (below)

# Synchronization

## Blocking receive()?

- Ok/good for “server thread”
  - Remember, de-scheduling is a kernel *service*
- Ok/good for request/response pattern
- Awkward for some servers
  - Abort connection when client is “too idle”

## Pure-non-blocking receive?

- Ok for polling
- Polling is costly

# Synchronization

## Receive-with-timeout

- Wait for message
- Abort if timeout expires
- Can be good for real-time systems
- What timeout value is appropriate?

# Synchronization

## Meta-receive

- Specify a group of mailboxes
- Wake up on first message

## Receive-scan

- Specify list of mailboxes, timeout
- OS indicates which mailbox(es) are “ready” for what
- Unix: `select()`, `poll()`

# Buffering

## Issue

- How much space does OS provide “for free”?
- “Kernel memory” limited!

## Options

- No buffering
  - implies blocking send
- Fixed size, undefined size
  - Send blocks *unpredictably*

# A Buffering Problem

## P1

```
send(P2, p1-my-status)
receive(P2, &p1-peer-status)
```

## P2

```
send(P1, p2-my-status)
receive(P1, &p2-peer-status)
```

## What's the problem?

- Can you draw a picture of it?



# Message Size Issue

Ok to copy *small* messages sender  $\Rightarrow$  receiver

Bad to copy *1-megabyte* messages

- (Why?)

Bad suggestion: “Chop up large messages”

- Evades the issue

# “Out-of-line” Data

## Message can *refer to* memory regions

- (page-aligned, multiple-page)
- Either “copy” or *transfer ownership* to receiver
- Can share the physical memory
  - Mooooo!

# “Rendezvous”

## Concept

- Blocking send
- Blocking receive

## Great for OS

- No buffering required!

## Theoretically interesting

## Popular in a variety of languages

- (most of them called “Ada”)

# Example: Mach IPC

## Why study Mach?

- “Pure” “clean” capability/message-passing system
- Low abstraction count
- This *is* CMU...

## Why not?

- Failed to reach market
- Performance problems with multi-server approach?

**Verdict: hmm... (GNU Hurd? Godot??)**

# Mach IPC – ports

## Port: Mach “mailbox” object

- One receiver
  - (one “backup” receiver)
- Potentially many senders

## Ports identify system objects

- Each task identified/controlled by a port
- Each *thread* identified/controlled by a port
- Kernel exceptions delivered to “exception port”
  - “External Pager Interface” - page faults in user space!

# Mach IPC – Port Rights

## Receive rights

- “Receive end” of a port
- Held by one task
- Capability typically unpublished
  - receive rights imply ownership

## Send rights

- “Send end” - ability to transmit message to mailbox
- Frequently published via “name server” task
- Confer no rights (beyond “denial of service”)

# Mach IPC – Message

## Memory region

- In-line for “small” messages (copied)
- Out-of-line for “large” messages
  - Sender may de-allocate on send
  - Otherwise, copy-on-write

## “Port rights”

- Sender specifies task-local port #
- OS translates to internal port-id while queued
- Receiver observes task-local port #

# Mach IPC – Operations

## send

- block, block(n milliseconds), don't-block
- “send just one”
  - when destination full, queue 1 message in *sender thread*
  - sender notified when transfer completes

## receive

- receive from port
- receive from *port set*
- block, block(n milliseconds), don't-block



# Mach IPC – “RPC”

## Common pattern: “Remote” Procedure Call

### Client synchronization/message flow

- Blocking send, blocking receive

### Client must allow server to respond

- Transfer “send rights” in message
  - “Send-once rights” speed hack

### Server message flow (N threads)

- Blocking receive, non-blocking send

# Mach IPC – Naming

## Port send rights are OS-managed capabilities

- unguessable, unforgeable

## How to contact a server?

- Ask the name server task
  - *Trusted* – source of all capabilities

## How to contact the name server?

- Task creator specifies name server for new task
  - Can create custom environment for task tree
    - » By convention, send rights to name server are located at a particular client port number (like stdin/stdout/stderr)
- System boot task launches nameserver, gives out rights

# IPC Summary

## Naming

- Name server?
- File system?

## Queueing/blocking

## Copy/share/transfer

## A Unix surprise

- `sendmsg()/recvmsg()` pass file descriptors!

# RPC Overview

**RPC = Remote *Procedure Call***

**Concept: extend IPC across machines**

- Maybe across “administrative domains”

**Marshalling**

**Server location**

**Call semantics**

**Request flow**

# RPC Model

## Approach

```
d = computeNthDigit(CONST_PI, 3000);
```

- Abstract away from “who computes it”
- Should “work the same” when remote Cray does the job

## Issues

- Must specify server *somehow*
- What “digit value” is “server down”?
  - Exceptions useful in “modern” languages

# Marshalling

## Values must cross the network

### *Machine formats differ*

- Integer byte order
  - [www.scieng.com/ByteOrder.PDF](http://www.scieng.com/ByteOrder.PDF)
- Floating point format
  - IEEE 754 or not
- Memory packing/alignment issues

# Marshalling

## Define a “network format”

- ASN.1 - “self-describing” via in-line tags
- XDR – not

## “Serialize” language-level object to byte stream

- Rules typically recursive
  - Serialize a struct by serializing its fields in order
- Implementation probably should *not* be recursive
  - (Why not?)

# Marshalling

## Issues

- **Some types don't translate well**
  - Ada has ranged integers, e.g., 44..59
  - Not everybody really likes 64-bit ints
  - Floating point formats are religious issues
- **Performance!**
  - Memory speed  $\cong$  network speed
- The dreaded “pointer problem”



# Marshalling

```
struct node {  
    int value;  
    struct node *neighbors[4];  
} nodes[1024];
```

```
nnodes = sizeof(nodes)/sizeof(nodes[0]);
```

```
n = occupancy(nodes, nnodes);
```

```
bn = best_neighbor(node);
```

```
i = value(node);
```

## Implications?

# Marshalling

```
n = occupancy(nodes, nnodes);
```

- **Marshall array – ok**

```
bn = best_neighbor(node);
```

- **Marshall graph structure – not so ok**

```
i = value(node);
```

- **Avoiding** marshalling graph – not obvious
  - “Node fault”??

# Server Location

## Which machine?

- Multiple AFS cells on the planet
- Each has multiple file servers

## Approaches

- Special hostnames: [www.cmu.edu](http://www.cmu.edu)
- Machine lists
  - AFS CellSrvDB /usr/vice/etc/CellServDB
- DNS SRV records (RFC 2782)

# Server Location

## Which port?

- **Must distinguish services on one machine**
  - Single machine can be AFS volume, vldb, pt server
- **Fixed port assignment**
  - AFS: fileserver UDP 7000, volume location 7003
  - /etc/services or [www.iana.org/assignments/port-numbers](http://www.iana.org/assignments/port-numbers)
  - RFC 2468 [www.rfc-editor.org/rfc/rfc2468.txt](http://www.rfc-editor.org/rfc/rfc2468.txt)
- **Dynamic port assignment**
  - Contact “courier” / “matchmaker” service via RPC
  - ...on a fixed port assignment!

# Call Semantics

## Typically, caller blocks

- Matches procedure call semantics

## Blocking can be expensive

- By a factor of *a million(!!)* over real procedure call

## “Asynchronous RPC”

- Transmit request, do other work, check for reply
- Not really “PC” any more
- More like programming language “futures”

# Fun Call Semantics

## Batch RPC

- Send *list* of procedure calls
- Later calls can use results of earlier calls

## Issues

- Abort batch if one call fails?
  - Yet another programming language?
- Typically wrecks “procedure call” abstraction
  - Your code must make N calls before 1<sup>st</sup> answer

# Fun Call Semantics

## Batch RPC Examples

- NFS v4 (eventually), RFC 3010
- Bloch, A Practical Approach to Replication of Abstract Data Objects

# Sad Call semantics

## Network failure

- Retransmit request
  - How long?

## Server reboot

- Does client deal with RPC session restart?
- Did the call “happen” or not?
  - Retransmitting “remove foo.c” all day long may not be safe!



# Client Flow

## Client code calls *stub* routine

- “Regular code” which encapsulates the magic

## Stub routine

- Locates communication channel
  - If not established: costly location/set-up/authentication
- Marshals information
  - Procedure #, parameters
- Sends message, awaits reply
- Unmarshals reply, returns to user code

# Server Flow

Thread pool runs *skeleton* code

## Skeleton code

- Waits for request from a client
- Locates client state
  - Authentication/encryption context
- Unmarshals parameters
- Calls “real code”
- Marshals reply
- Sends reply

# RPC Deployment

## Define interface

- Get it right, you'll live with it for a while!
- AFS & NFS RPC layers ~15 years old

## “Stub generator”

- Special-purpose compiler
- Turns “interface spec” into stubs & skeleton

## Link stub code with client & server

## Run a server!

# Java RMI

## Remote Method Invocation

### Serialization: programmer/language cooperation

- *Dangerously* subtle!
  - Bloch, [Effective Java](#)

### RMI > RPC

- Remote methods  $\cong$  remote procedures
- *Parameters* can be (differently) remote
  - Client on A can call method of class implemented on B passing object located on C
    - » (slowly)

# RPC Summary

**RPC is lots of fun**

**So much fun that lots of things don't do it**

- SMTP
- HTTP

**RPC = IPC**

- + server location, marshalling, network failure, delays
- - special copy tricks, speed

**Remote Objects? Effective Java, Bitter Java**