Part III
Synchronization
Message Passing

The most important property of a program is whether it accomplishes the intention of its user.

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Message Passing: 1/3

- When processes/threads are interested with one another, two fundamental requirements must be met: synchronization and communication.
- **Synchronization** enforces mutual exclusion.
- **Communication** allows information to be passed to other processes/threads.
- Message passing, a form of communication, can be implemented in shared-memory and distributed environment.
Message Passing: 2/3

- Mutex locks, semaphores and monitors are **shared-memory** synchronization mechanisms.
- This means all processes and threads use a piece of shared memory to store and manage mutex locks, semaphores and monitors.
- In a distributed environment, processes and threads run on different computers without a global shared-memory.
- In this case, message passing becomes useful.
Communication links can be established between threads/processes. There are three important issues:

1. **Naming**: How to refer to each other?
2. **Synchronization**: Shall we wait when participating a message activity?
3. **Buffering**: Can messages wait in a communication link?
Naming: Direct Addressing

Symmetric Scheme: 1/3

- Direct Addressing: Each process that wants to communicate must explicitly name the other party:
  - Send(receiver, message);
  - Receive(sender, message);

- With this scheme:
  - Exactly one link exists between each pair of communicating processes.
  - These links may be established for processes that need to communicate before they run.
**Naming: Direct Addressing**

**Asymmetric Scheme: 2/3**

- In this scheme, we have
  - `Send(receiver, message);`
  - `Receive(id, message);`

- The `Receive()` primitive receives the ID of the sender. Thus, in this scheme, a receiver can receive messages from any process.
Naming: Direct Addressing

Disadvantages: 3/3

- There are disadvantages in the symmetric and asymmetric schemes:
  - Changing the name/ID of a process may require examining all other process definitions.
  - Processes must know the IDs of the other parties to start a communication.
Naming: Indirect Addressing

Mailbox: 1|4

- With indirect addressing, messages are sent to and received from *mailboxes*.
- Each mailbox has a unique ID.
- The primitives are
  - \texttt{Send(mailbox-name, message)};
  - \texttt{Receive(mailbox-name,message)};
Naming: Indirect Addressing

Communication Links: 2/4

- There is a link between two processes only if they share a mailbox.
- A link may be shared by multiple processes.
- Multiple links may exist between each pair of processes, and each link corresponds to a mailbox.
- By decoupling the sender and receiver, indirect addressing provides a greater flexibility in the use of messages.
Naming: Indirect Addressing

Communication Links: 3|4

-one-to-one

-many-to-one
  mailbox → port

-one-to-many

-many-to-many
Naming: Indirect Addressing

Communication Links: 4|4

- What if there is only one message in a mailbox and several processes execute `Receive()`? It depends on the following:
  - If there is only one link between at most two processes, this situation will not happen.
  - Allow at most one process to receive at a time.
  - Allow the system to select an arbitrary order.
Synchronization

- The sender and/or receiver may be blocked:
  - **Blocking Send**: the sender blocks until its message is received
  - **Nonblocking Send**: the sender sends and resumes its execution immediately
  - **Blocking Receive**: the receiver blocks until a message is available
  - **Nonblocking Receive**: the receive receives a message or a null.

- When both send and receive are blocking, we have a **rendezvous** between the sender and receiver.
Synchronous vs. Asynchronous

- **Blocking** and **non-blocking** are known as synchronous and asynchronous.
  - If the sender and receiver must synchronize their activities, use synchronous communication.
  - Because of the **uncertainty in the order of events**, asynchronous communication is more difficult to program.
  - On the other hand, asynchronous algorithms are **general** and **portable**, because they are guaranteed to run correctly on networks with arbitrary timing behavior.
Capacity

- The **capacity** of a link is its **buffer** size:
  - **Zero Capacity**: Since no message can be waiting in the link, it is **synchronous**. Sender blocks.
  - **Unbounded Capacity**: Messages can wait in the link. Sender never blocks and the link is **asynchronous**. **The order of messages being received does not have to be FIFO**.
  - **Bounded Capacity**: Buffered Message Passing. Sender blocks if the buffer is full, and the link is **asynchronous**. Isn’t it a bounded buffer if the order is FIFO?
Message Passing in Unix

- Unix systems provide at least two message passing mechanisms: **pipes** and **message queues**.
- A pipe is a generalization of the pipe in $A \mid B$.
- Function `pipe(int pfd[2])` creates a communication link and returns two file descriptors. Writing to `pfd[1]` puts data in the pipe; reading from `pfd[0]` gets the data out. Data items in a pipe are FIFO just like $A \mid B$.
- Message queues are mailboxes. Use `msgget()` to obtain a message queue, and use ` msgsnd()` and `msgrcv()` to send and receive messages.
Message Passing with \textit{ThreadMentor}
Channels

- A **channel** is a *bi-directional* communication link between two specific threads.
- A channel can be *synchronous* or *asynchronous*.
- Channels use user-defined thread IDs for identification purpose. A use-defined thread ID is a unique non-negative integer selected by the user.
- The user-defined thread ID must be set in the thread constructor:
  
  ```
  UserDefinedThreadID = 10;
  ```
Declaring a Channel

- Two classes `SynOneToOneChannel` (blocking send and receive) and `AsynOneToOneChannel` (non-blocking send and receive) are available:

  ```
  SynOneToOneChannel X("chan-2-3", 15, 3);
  AsynOneToOneChannel Y("chan-4-5", 15, 3);
  ```

  Channels X and Y are built between threads 15 and 3.
Use methods `Send()` and `Receive()` to send and receive a message to and from a channel:

- `X.Send(*pointer-to-message,size);`
- `Y.Receive(*pointer-to-message,size);`

Send an `int` message to channel `X`:

```c
AsynOneToOneChannel X;
int Msg;
X.Send(&Msg, sizeof(int));
```
Sending and Receiving: 2/2

- Receive a message of four doubles from channel Y:
  
  ```
  AsynOneToOneChannel Y;
  double Msg[4];
  Y.Receive(Msg, 4*sizeof(double));
  ```

- Send a message of `struct Data` to channel Z:
  
  ```
  struct Data {
    double x; int y; char z[100];
  }
  
  Msg;
  SynOneToOneChannel Z;
  Z.Send(&Msg, sizeof(Data));
  ```
Linear Array Sorting: 1/9

- Each thread has an input channel from its predecessor and an output channel to its successor.
- The first time a thread receives a positive integer, it is memorized as $N$.
- For a subsequent received positive integer $X$:
  - If $X < N$, this thread sends $N$ to its successor and memorizes $X$ as $N$.
  - Otherwise, $X$ is sent to its successor.
  - If there is no successor, this thread creates a thread, builds a channel to it, and sends the number.
Linear Array Sorting: 2/9

a master thread keeps sending numbers to the leading thread

sort positive integers with \(-1\) as end-of-data
What type of channels (i.e., sync or async) should be used?
const int NOT_DEFINED = -2;
const int END_OF_DATA = -1; // end of input flag
class SortThread : public Thread
{
    public:
        SortThread(int index, int threadID);
        ~SortThread(); // destructor
        SynOneToOneChannel *channel;
    private:
        void ThreadFunc();
        int Index;    // index of the sort thread
        int Number;   // number memorized
        SortThread *neighbor; // next sort thread
};
class MasterThread : public Thread
{
    public: MasterThread(int threadID);
    private: void ThreadFunc();
};
can an async. channel be used here?

SortThread::SortThread(int index, int threadID)
{
    Index = index;
    UserDefinedThreadID = threadID;
    neighbor = NULL; // initially no neighbor
    Number = NOT_DEFINED; // no memorized number
    ChannelName = … // give this channel a name
    channel = new SynOneToOneChannel(ChannelName,
        threadID-1, threadID);
}

destructor and destructor

SortThread::~SortThread() // this is a destructor
{ delete channel; }

a sync channel between them
void SortThread::ThreadFunc()
{
    Thread::ThreadFunc();
    int number, tmpNum;
    Thread_t self = GetID();
    while(true) {
        channel->Receive(&number, sizeof(int)); // receive a number
        if (number == END_OF_DATA) break;
        if (Number == NOT_DEFINED) Number = number; // first number. Memorize it
        else { // other numbers
            if (number >= Number) tmpNum = number; // larger than mine
            else { tmpNum = Number; // no. save mine in temporarily
                Number = number; // but, also memorize it
            }
            if (neighbor == NULL) { // no neighbor? create one
                neighbor = new SortThread(Index+1,UserDefinedThreadID+1);
                neighbor->Begin(); // run it!
            }
            neighbor->channel->Send(&tmpNum,sizeof(int)); // send number
        }
    } // end of data reached. see next slide
}
void SortThread::ThreadFunc()
{
    while (true) {
        // other stuffs on the previous slide
        // end of data received
    }
    if (neighbor != NULL) { // if I am not the last one
        // I should pass the EOD
        neighbor->channel->Send(&number, sizeof(int));
        neighbor->Join(); // wait for neighbor to complete
    }
    Exit();
}

MasterThread::MasterThread(int threadID)
{
    UserDefinedThreadID = threadID;
    ThreadName = ...; // a thread name
}

void MasterThread::ThreadFunc()
{
    Thread::ThreadFunc();
    int input;
    do {
        cin >> input; // read an integer or END_OF_DATA
        if (input == END_OF_DATA)
            break;
        else
            firstSortThread->channel->Send(&input, sizeof(int));
    } while (input != END_OF_DATA);
    firstSortThread->channel->Send(&input, sizeof(int));
    Exit();
}
SortThread *firstSortThread; // first sorting thread

void main(void)
{
    MasterThread *masterThread;
    firstSortThread = new SortThread(1,2);
    firstSortThread->Begin();
    masterThread = new MasterThread(1);
    masterThread->Begin();
    masterThread->Join();
    firstSortThread->Join();
    Exit();
}

main program
The End