CP — Concurrent Programming
1. Introduction

Prof. O. Nierstrasz
Spring Semester 2009
### Concurrent Programming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Prof. Oscar Nierstrasz</th>
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<tr>
<td>Assistants</td>
<td>Fabrizio Perin, Jorge Ressia, Jacek Jonczy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>Wednesday @ 10h15-12h00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercises</td>
<td>Wednesday @ 12h00-13h00</td>
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<td>Labs</td>
<td>ExWi Pool (selected dates …)</td>
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<td>WWW</td>
<td><a href="http://scg.unibe.ch/Teaching/CP/">http://scg.unibe.ch/Teaching/CP/</a></td>
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Roadmap

- Course Overview
- Concurrency and Parallelism
- Difficulties: Safety and Liveness
- Expressing Concurrency: Process Creation
- Expressing Concurrency: Communication and Synchronization
Roadmap

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Goals of this course

> Introduce *basic concepts of concurrency*
  — safety, liveness, fairness

> Present tools for *reasoning* about concurrency
  — LTS, Petri nets

> Learn the *best practice* programming techniques
  — idioms and patterns

> Get *experience* with the techniques
  — lab sessions
Schedule

1. Introduction
2. Java and Concurrency
3. Safety and Synchronization
4. Safety Patterns
5. Liveness and Guarded Methods
6. Lab session
7. Liveness and Asynchrony
8. Condition Objects
9. Fairness and Optimism
10. Petri Nets
11. Lab session
12. Architectural Styles for Concurrency
13. Final exam
Texts

Doug Lea, *Concurrent Programming in Java: Design Principles and Patterns*, Addison-Wesley, 1996

Further reading

Roadmap

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> Expressing Concurrency: Communication and Synchronization
Concurrency

> A sequential program has a *single thread of control*.  
  — Its execution is called a *process*.

> A concurrent program has *multiple threads of control*.  
  — These may be executed as *parallel processes*.
Parallelism

A concurrent program can be executed by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiprogramming:</th>
<th>processes <em>share one or more processors</em></th>
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<tr>
<td>Multiprocessing:</td>
<td>each process runs on its own processor but with <em>shared memory</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Distributed processing:</td>
<td>each process runs on <em>its own processor</em> connected by a network to others</td>
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*Assume only that all processes make positive finite progress.*
Why do we need concurrent programs?

- **Reactive programming**
  - minimize response delay; maximize throughput
- **Real-time programming**
  - process control applications
- **Simulation**
  - modelling real-world concurrency
- **Parallelism**
  - speed up execution by using multiple CPUs
- **Distribution**
  - coordinate distributed services
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Difficulties

But concurrent applications introduce complexity:

**Safety**
> concurrent processes may *corrupt shared data*

**Liveness**
> processes may “*starve*” if not properly coordinated

**Non-determinism**
> the same program run twice may give *different results*

**Run-time overhead**
> thread construction, context switching and synchronization *take time*
Concurrency and atomicity

Programs P1 and P2 execute concurrently:

\[
\begin{align*}
\{ & \ x = 0 \ \} \\
P1: & \ x := x + 1 \\
P2: & \ x := x + 2 \\
\{ & \ x = ? \ \}
\end{align*}
\]

What are possible values of \( x \) after P1 and P2 complete?

What is the intended final value of \( x \)?
Safety

Safety = ensuring consistency

A safety property says “nothing bad happens”

— **Mutual exclusion**: shared resources must be *updated atomically*

— **Condition synchronization**: operations may be *delayed* if shared resources are in the wrong state
  - *(e.g., read from empty buffer)*
Liveness

Liveness = ensuring progress

A liveness property says “something good happens”

— No Deadlock: some process can always access a shared resource
— No Starvation: all processes can eventually access shared resources
Course Overview
Concurrency and Parallelism
Difficulties: Safety and Liveness
Expressing Concurrency: Process Creation
Expressing Concurrency: Communication and Synchronization
Expressing Concurrency

A programming language must provide mechanisms for:

**Process creation**
>
how do you specify **concurrent processes**?

**Communication**
>
how do processes **exchange information**?

**Synchronization**
>
how do processes **maintain consistency**?
Most concurrent languages offer some variant of the following:

- Co-routines
- Fork and Join
- Cobegin/coend
Co-routines are only *pseudo-concurrent* and require explicit transfers of control.

Co-routines can be used to implement most higher-level concurrent mechanisms.
Fork can be used to create any number of processes: Join waits for another process to terminate.

Fork and join are unstructured, so require care and discipline!
Cobegin/coend blocks are better structured:

```
cobegin S1 || S2 || ... || Sn coend
```

but they can only create a *fixed number of processes*. The caller continues when all of the coblocks have terminated.
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> Expressing Concurrency: Process Creation
> **Expressing Concurrency: Communication and Synchronization**
Communication and Synchronization

In approaches based on shared variables, processes communicate indirectly. Explicit synchronization mechanisms are needed.

In message passing approaches, communication and synchronization are combined. Communication may be either synchronous or asynchronous.
Synchronization Techniques

Different approaches are roughly equivalent in expressive power and can be used to implement each other.

Each approach emphasizes a different style of programming.
Busy-Waiting

Busy-waiting is primitive but effective
Processes atomically set and test shared variables.

Condition synchronization is easy to implement:
— to signal a condition, a process sets a shared variable
— to wait for a condition, a process repeatedly tests the variable

Mutual exclusion is more difficult to realize correctly and efficiently

...
Semaphores were introduced by Dijkstra (1968) as a higher-level primitive for process synchronization.

A semaphore is a non-negative, integer-valued variable $s$ with two operations:

> **P(s):**
  - delays until $s > 0$
  - then, atomically executes $s := s - 1$

> **V(s)**
  - atomically executes $s := s + 1$
Programming with semaphores

Many problems can be solved using *binary semaphores*, which take on values 0 or 1.

```
process P1
  loop
    P (mutex) {  wants to enter  }
    Critical Section
    V (mutex) {  exits   }
    Non-critical Section
  end
end

process P2
  loop
    P (mutex)
    Critical Section
    V (mutex)
    Non-critical Section
  end
end
```

*Semaphores can be implemented using busy-waiting, but usually implemented in O/S kernel.*
Monitors

A monitor encapsulates resources and operations that manipulate them:

> operations are invoked like ordinary procedure calls
  — invocations are guaranteed to be mutually exclusive
  — condition synchronization is realized using wait and signal primitives
  — there exist many variations of wait and signal ...
type buffer(T) = monitor
  var
  slots : array [0..N-1] of T;
  head, tail : 0..N-1;
  size : 0..N;
  notfull, notempty:condition;

procedure deposit(p : T);
  begin
    if size = N then
      notfull.wait
    slots[tail] := p;
    size := size + 1;
    tail := (tail+1) mod N;
    notempty.signal
  end

procedure fetch(var it : T);
  begin
    if size = 0 then
      notempty.wait
    it := slots[head];
    size := size - 1;
    head := (head+1) mod N;
    notfull.signal
  end

begin
  size := 0;
  head := 0;
  tail := 0;
end
Problems with monitors

Monitors are more structured than semaphores, but they are still tricky to program:

— Conditions must be manually checked
— Simultaneous signal and return is not supported

A signalling process is temporarily suspended to allow waiting processes to enter!

— Monitor state may change between signal and resumption of signaller
— Unlike with semaphores, multiple signals are not saved
— Nested monitor calls must be specially handled to prevent deadlock
Path Expressions

Path expressions express the *allowable sequence of operations* as a kind of regular expression:

```
buffer : (put; get)*
```

Although they elegantly express solutions to many problems, path expressions are too limited for general concurrent programming.
Message Passing

Message passing combines communication and synchronization:

> The sender specifies the message and a destination — a process, a port, a set of processes, ...

> The receiver specifies message variables and a source — source may or may not be explicitly identified

> Message transfer may be:
  — asynchronous: send operations never block
  — buffered: sender may block if the buffer is full
  — synchronous: sender and receiver must both be ready
Send and Receive

In CSP and Occam, source and destination are explicitly named:

PROC buffer(CHAN OF INT give, take, signal)
...
SEQ
numitems := 0 ...
WHILE TRUE
ALT
numitems ≤ size & give?thebuffer[inindex]
SEQ
numitems := numitems + 1
inindex := (inindex + 1) REM size
numitems > 0 & signal?any
SEQ
take!thebuffer[outindex]
numitems := numitems - 1
outindex := (outindex + 1) REM size

NB: The consumer must signal!any to inform the buffer that it wishes to take?avalue
Remote Procedure Calls and Rendezvous

In Ada, the caller identity need not be known in advance:

```ada
task body buffer is ...
begin loop
  select
    when no_of_items < size =>
      accept give(x : in item) do
        the_buffer(in_index) := x;
      end give;
      no_of_items := no_of_items + 1; ...
    or
    when no_of_items > 0 =>
      accept take(x : out item) do
        x := the_buffer(out_index);
      end take;
      no_of_items := no_of_items - 1; ...
  end select;
end loop; ...
```
What you should know!

> Why do we need concurrent programs?
> What problems do concurrent programs introduce?
> What are safety and liveness?
> What is the difference between deadlock and starvation?
> How are concurrent processes created?
> How do processes communicate?
> Why do we need synchronization mechanisms?
> How do monitors differ from semaphores?
> In what way are monitors equivalent to message-passing?
Can you answer these questions?

- What is the difference between concurrency and parallelism?
- When does it make sense to use busy-waiting?
- Are binary semaphores as good as counting semaphores?
- How could you implement a semaphore using monitors?
- How would you implement monitors using semaphores?
- What problems could nested monitors cause?
- Is it better when message passing is synchronous or asynchronous?
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