The Deadlock Lecture
Reminder from last time

• **Multi-Reader Single-Writer (MRSW) locks**
• Alternatives to semaphores/locks:
  – Conditional critical regions (CCRs)
  – Monitors
  – Condition variables
  – Signal-and-wait vs. signal-and-and-continue semantics
• Concurrency primitives in practice
• Concurrency primitives wrap-up
From last time: primitives summary

- Concurrent systems require means to ensure:
  - Safety (mutual exclusion in critical sections), and
  - Progress (condition synchronization)
- Spinlocks (busy wait); semaphores; CCRs and monitors
  - Hardware primitives for synchronisation
  - Signal-and-Wait vs. Signal-and-Continue
- Many of these are still used in practice
  - Subtle minor differences can be dangerous
  - Require care to avoid bugs – e.g., “lost wakeups”
- More detail on implementation in our case study

Progress is particularly difficult, in large part because of primitives themselves, which is the topic of this lecture
This time

- Liveness properties
- Deadlock
  - Requirements
  - Resource allocation graphs and detection
  - Prevention – the *Dining Philosophers Problem* – and recovery
- Thread priority and the scheduling problem
- Priority inversion
- Priority inheritance
Liveness properties

- From a theoretical viewpoint must ensure that we eventually make progress, i.e. want to avoid
  - Deadlock (threads sleep waiting for one another), and
  - Livelock (threads execute but make no progress)

- Practically speaking, also want good performance
  - No starvation (single thread must make progress)
  - (more generally may aim for fairness)
  - Minimality (no unnecessary waiting or signaling)

- The properties are often at odds with safety :-(

5
Deadlock

- Set of $k$ threads go asleep and cannot wake up
  - each can only be woken by another who’s asleep!
- Real-life example (Kansas, 1920s):
  “When two trains approach each other at a crossing, both shall come to a full stop and neither shall start up again until the other has gone.”
- In concurrent programs, tends to involve the taking of mutual exclusion locks, e.g.:

```c
// thread 1
lock(X);
...
lock(Y);
// critical section
unlock(Y);
```

```c
// thread 2
lock(Y);
...
if(<cond>) {
  lock(X);
  ...
}
```

Risk of deadlock if both threads get here simultaneously.
Requirements for deadlock

- Like all concurrency bugs, deadlock may be rare (e.g. imagine `<cond>` is mostly false)
- In practice there are four necessary conditions
  1. **Mutual Exclusion**: resources have bounded #owners
  2. **Hold-and-Wait**: can acquire Rx and wait for Ry
  3. **No Preemption**: keep Rx until you release it
  4. **Circular Wait**: cyclic dependency
- Require all four to be true to get deadlock
  - But most modern systems always satisfy 1, 2, 3
- Tempting to think that his applies only to locks ...
  - But it also can occur for many other resource classes whose allocation meets conditions: memory, CPU time, ...
Resource allocation graphs

- Graphical way of thinking about deadlock
  - Circles are threads (or processes)
  - Boxes are single-owner resources (e.g. mutexes)
  - Edges show lock hold and wait conditions
  - A cycle means we (will) have deadlock

Thick line R->T means T holds resource R
Dashed line T->R T wants resource R

Deadlock!
Resource allocation graphs

- Can generalize to resources which can have K distinct users (c/f semaphores)
- Absence of a cycle means no deadlock...
  - but presence only means may have deadlock, e.g.

No deadlock: If T1 releases Rb, then T3’s acquire of Rb can be satisfied
Dealing with deadlock

1. Ensure it never happens
   – Deadlock prevention
   – Deadlock avoidance (Banker’s Algorithm)

2. Let it happen, but recover
   – Deadlock detection & recovery

3. Ignore it!
   – The so-called “Ostrich Algorithm” ;-)
   – “Have you tried turning it off and back on again?”
   – Very widely used in practice!
Deadlock prevention

1. **Mutual Exclusion**: resources have bounded #owners
   - Could always allow access... but probably unsafe ;-((
   - However can help e.g. by using MRSW locks

2. **Hold-and-Wait**: can get Rx and wait for Ry
   - Require that we request all resources simultaneously; deny the request if any resource is not available now
   - But must know maximal resource set in advance = hard?

3. **No Preemption**: keep Rx until you release it
   - Stealing a resource generally unsafe (but see later)

4. **Circular Wait**: cyclic dependency
   - Impose a partial order on resource acquisition
   - Can work: but requires programmer discipline
   - Lock order enforcement rules used in many systems e.g., FreeBSD WITNESS – static and dynamic orders checked
Example: Dining Philosophers

- 5 philosophers, 5 forks, round table...

```java
Semaphore forks[] = new Semaphore[5];

while(true) {  // philosopher i
    think();
    wait(fork[i]);
    wait(fork[(i+1) % 5];
    eat();
    signal(fork[i]);
    signal(fork[(i+1) % 5];
}
```

- Possible for everyone to acquire ‘left’ fork
  - Q: what happens if we swap order of signal()s?
Example: Dining Philosophers

- (one) Solution: always take lower fork first

```java
Semaphore forks[] = new Semaphore[5];

while(true) {  // philosopher i
    think();
    first = MIN(i, (i+1) % 5);
    second = MAX(i, (i+1) % 5);
    wait(fork[first]);
    wait(fork[second]);
    eat();
    signal(fork[second]);
    signal(fork[first]);
}
```

- Now even if 0, 1, 2, 3 are held, 4 will not acquire final fork
Deadlock avoidance

• Prevention aims for deadlock-free “by design”

• **Deadlock avoidance** is a dynamic scheme:
  – Assumption: We know maximum possible resource allocation for every process / thread
  – Assumption: A process granted all desired resources will complete, terminate, and free its resources
  – Track actual allocations in real-time
  – When a request is made, only grant if guaranteed no deadlock even if all others take max resources

• E.g. **Banker’s Algorithm** – see textbooks
  – Not really useful in general as need a priori knowledge of #processes/threads, and their max resource needs
Deadlock detection

• **Deadlock detection** is a dynamic scheme that determines if deadlock exists
  – Principle: At a some moment in execution, examine resource allocations and graph
  – Determine if there is at least one plausible sequence of events in which all threads could make progress
  – I.e., check that we are not in an unsafe state in which no further sequences can complete without deadlock

• When only a single instance of each resource, can explicitly check for a cycle:
  – Keep track which object each thread is waiting for
  – From time to time, iterate over all threads and build the resource allocation graph
  – Run a cycle detection algorithm on graph O(n^2)

• More difficult if have multi-instance resources
Deadlock detection

- Have m distinct resources and n threads
- $V[0:m-1]$, vector of currently available resources
- $A$, the $m \times n$ resource allocation matrix, and $R$, the $m \times n$ (outstanding) request matrix
  - $A_{i,j}$ is the number of objects of type j owned by i
  - $R_{i,j}$ is the number of objects of type j needed by i
- Proceed by successively marking rows in A for threads that are not part of a deadlocked set
  - If we cannot mark all rows of A we have deadlock

Optimistic assumption: if we can fulfill thread i’s request $R_i$, then it will run to completion and release held resources for other threads to allocate.
Deadlock detection algorithm

- Mark all zero rows of A (since a thread holding zero resources can’t be part of deadlock set)
- Initialize a working vector W[0:m-1] to V
  - W[] describes any free resources at start, plus any resources released by a hypothesized sequence of satisfied threads freeing and terminating
- Select an unmarked row i of A s.t. R[i] <= W
  - (i.e. find a thread who’s request can be satisfied)
  - Set W = W + A[i]; mark row i, and repeat
- Terminate when no such row can be found
  - Unmarked rows (if any) are in the deadlock set
Deadlock detection example 1

- Five threads and three resources (none free)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Find an unmarked row, mark it, and update W
  - T0, T2, T3, T4, T1

At the end of the algorithm, all rows are marked: the deadlock set is empty.
Deadlock detection example 2

- Five threads and three resources (none free)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T0</td>
<td>0 1 0</td>
<td>0 0 0</td>
<td>0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>2 0 0</td>
<td>2 0 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>3 0 3</td>
<td>0 0 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>2 1 1</td>
<td>1 0 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>0 0 1</td>
<td>0 0 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Threads T1, T2, T3 & T4 in deadlock set

One minor tweak to T2’s request vector...

Cannot find a row in R <= W!!

Now wants one unit of resource Z
Deadlock recovery

- What can we do when we detect deadlock?
- Simplest solution: kill something!
  - Ideally someone in the deadlock set ;-)  
- Brutal, and not guaranteed to work
  - But sometimes the best (only) we can do
  - E.g. Linux OOM killer (better than system reboot?)
  - ... Or not – often kills the X server!
- Could also resume from checkpoint
  - Assuming we have one
- In practice computer systems seldom detect or recover from deadlock: rely on programmer

Note: “kill someone” breaks the no preemption precondition for deadlock.
Livelock

- Deadlock is at least ‘easy’ to detect by humans
  - System basically blocks & stops making any progress
- Livelock is less easy to detect as threads continue to run... but do nothing useful
- Often occurs from trying to be clever, e.g.:

```c
// thread 1
lock(X);
...
while (!trylock(Y)) {
    unlock(X);
    yield();
    lock(X);
}
...
```

```c
// thread 2
lock(Y);
...
while (!trylock(X)) {
    unlock(Y);
    yield();
    lock(Y);
}
...
```

Livelock if both threads get here simultaneously
Scheduling and thread priorities

- Which thread should run when >1 runnable? E.g., if:
  - A thread releases a contended lock and continues to run
  - CV broadcast wakes up several waiting threads
- Many possible scheduling policies; e.g.,
  - Round robin – rotate between threads to ensure progress
  - Fixed priorities – assign priorities to threads, schedule highest—e.g., real-time > interactive > bulk > idle-time
  - Dynamic priorities – adjust priorities to balance goals—e.g., boost priority after I/O to improve interactivity
  - Gang scheduling – schedule for patterns such as P-C
  - Affinity – schedule for efficient resource use (e.g., caches)
- Goals: latency vs. throughput, energy, “fairness”, ...
  - NB: These competing goals cannot generally all be satisfied
Priority inversion

• Another liveness problem...
  – Due to interaction between locking and scheduler
• Consider three threads: T1, T2, T3
  – T1 is high priority, T2 medium priority, T3 is low
  – T3 gets lucky and acquires lock L...
  – ... T1 preempts T3 and sleeps waiting for L...
  – ... then T2 runs, preventing T3 from releasing L!
  – Priority inversion: despite having higher priority and no shared lock, T1 waits for lower priority thread T2
• This is not deadlock or livelock
  – But not desirable (particularly in real-time systems)!
  – Disabled Mars Pathfinder robot for several months
Priority inheritance

- Typical solution is **priority inheritance**:
  - Temporarily boost priority of lock holder to that of the highest waiting thread
  - T3 would have run with T1’s priority while holding a lock T1 was waiting for – preventing T2 from preempting T3
  - Concrete benefits to system interactivity
  - (some RT systems (like VxWorks) allow you specify on a per-mutex basis [to Rover’s detriment ;-])

- Windows “solution”
  - Check if any ready thread hasn’t run for 300 ticks
  - If so, double its quantum and boost its priority to 15
  - 😊
Problems with priority inheritance

- Hard to reason about resulting behaviour: heuristic
- Works for locks
  - More complex than it appears: propagation might need to be propagated across chains containing multiple locks
  - How might we handle reader-writer locks?
- How about condition synchronisation, res. allocation?
  - With locks, we know what thread holds the lock
  - Semaphores do not record which thread might issue a signal or release an allocated resource
  - Must compose across multiple waiting types: e.g., “waiting for a signal while holding a lock”
- Where possible, avoid the need for priority inheritance
  - Avoid sharing between threads of differing priorities
Summary + next time

- **Liveness** properties
- **Deadlock**
  - Requirements
  - Resource allocation graphs and detection
  - Prevention – the *Dining Philosophers Problem* – and recovery
- **Thread priority** and the **scheduling problem**
- **Priority inversion**
- **Priority inheritance**

- **Next time:**
  - Concurrency without shared data
  - Active objects; message passing
  - Composite operations; transactions
  - ACID properties; isolation; serialisability