TCSS 422: OPERATING SYSTEMS

Three Easy Pieces:
Ch. 28 - Locks

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OBJECTIVES

- Locks – Ch. 28

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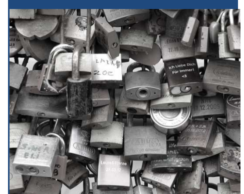
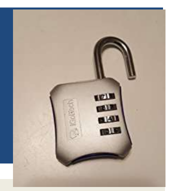
CHAPTER 28 – LOCKS



LOCKS



- Ensure critical section(s) are executed atomically-*as a unit*
  - Only one thread is allowed to execute a critical section at any given time
  - Ensures the code snippets are "mutually exclusive"
- Protect a global counter:

```
balance = balance + 1;
```

- A "critical section":

```
lock_t mutex; // some globally-allocated lock 'mutex'
…
lock(&mutex);
balance = balance + 1;
unlock(&mutex);
```

LOCKS - 2

- Lock variables are called "MUTEX"
  - Short for mutual exclusion (that's what they guarantee)
- Lock variables store the state of the lock
- States
  - **Locked** (acquired or held)
  - **Unlocked** (available or free)
- Only 1 thread can hold a lock

LOCKS - 3

- `pthread_mutex_lock(&lock)`
  - Try to acquire lock
  - If lock is free, calling thread will acquire the lock
  - Thread with lock enters critical section
    - Thread "owns" the lock
- No other thread can acquire the lock before the owner releases it.

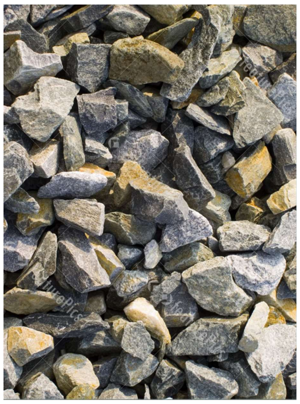
LOCKS - 4

- Program can have many mutex (lock) variables to "serialize" many critical sections
- Locks are also used to protect data structures
  - Prevent multiple threads from changing the same data simultaneously
  - Programmer can make sections of code "granular"
    - Fine grained – means just one grain of sand at a time through an hour glass
  - Similar to relational database transactions
    - DB transactions prevent multiple users from modifying a table, row, field

FINE GRAINED?

- Is this code a good example of "*fine grained parallelism*"?

```
pthread_mutex_lock(&lock);
a = b++;
b = a * c;
*d = a + b +c;
FILE * fp = fopen ("file.txt", "r");
fscanf(fp, "%s %s %s %d", str1, str2, str3, &e);
ListNode *node = mylist->head;
Int i=0
while (node) {
  node->title = str1;
  node->subheading = str2;
  node->desc = str3;
  node->end = *e;
  node = node->next;
  i++
}
e = e - i;
pthread_mutex_unlock(&lock);
```



FINE GRAINED PARALLELISM

```
pthread_mutex_lock(&lock_a);
pthread_mutex_lock(&lock_b);
a = b++;
pthread_mutex_unlock(&lock_b);
pthread_mutex_unlock(&lock_a);

pthread_mutex_lock(&lock_b);
b = a * c;
pthread_mutex_unlock(&lock_b);

pthread_mutex_lock(&lock_d);
*d = a + b +c;
pthread_mutex_unlock(&lock_d);

FILE * fp = fopen ("file.txt", “r");
pthread_mutex_lock(&lock_e);
fscanf(fp, "%s %s %s %d", str1, str2, str3, &e);
pthread_mutex_unlock(&lock_e);

ListNode *node = mylist->head;
int i=0 . . .
```

EVALUATING LOCK IMPLEMENTATIONS

- Correctness
  - Does the lock work?
  - Are critical sections mutually exclusive? (atomic-*as a unit*?)

- Fairness
  - Do threads competing for a lock have a fair chance of acquiring it?
- Overhead

BUILDING LOCKS

- Locks require hardware support
  - To minimize overhead, ensure fairness and correctness
  - Special "atomic-*as a unit*" instructions to support lock implementation
  - Atomic-*as a unit* exchange instruction
    - XCHG
  - Compare and exchange instruction
    - CMPXCHG
    - CMPXCHG8B
    - CMPXCHG16B

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HISTORICAL IMPLEMENTATION

- To implement mutual exclusion
  - Disable interrupts upon entering critical sections

```
void lock() {
    DisableInterrupts();
}
void unlock() {
    EnableInterrupts();
}
```

- Any thread could disable system-wide interrupt
  - What if lock is never released?
- On a multiprocessor processor each CPU has its own interrupts
  - Do we disable interrupts for all cores simultaneously?
- While interrupts are disabled, they could be lost
  - If not queued…

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SPIN LOCK IMPLEMENTATION

- Operate without atomic-*as a unit* assembly instructions
- "Do-it-yourself" Locks
- Is this lock implementation: Correct? Fair? Performant?

```
typedef struct __lock_t { int flag; } lock_t;

void init(lock_t *mutex) {
    // 0 → lock is available, 1 → held
    mutex->flag = 0;
}

void lock(lock_t *mutex) {
    while (mutex->flag == 1)  // TEST the flag
            ;  // spin-wait (do nothing)
    mutex->flag = 1;  // now SET it !
}

void unlock(lock_t *mutex) {
    mutex->flag = 0;
}
```


DIY: CORRECT?

- Correctness requires luck… (e.g. *DIY lock is incorrect*)

Thread1	Thread2
call `lock()`	
`while (flag == 1)`	
interrupt: switch to Thread 2	
	call `lock()`
	`while (flag == 1)`
	`flag = 1;`
	interrupt: switch to Thread 1
`flag = 1;` // set flag to 1 (too!)	

- Here both threads have "acquired" the lock simultaneously

DIY: PERFORMANT?

```
void lock(lock_t *mutex)
{
  while (mutex->flag == 1);    // while lock is unavailable, wait…
  mutex->flag = 1;
}
```

- What is wrong with while(<cond>); ?

- Spin-waiting wastes time actively waiting for another thread
- while (1); will "peg" a CPU core at 100%
  - Continuously loops, and evaluates mutex->flag value…
  - Generates heat…

TEST-AND-SET INSTRUCTION

- C implementation: not atomic
  - Adds a simple check to basic spin lock
  - One a single core CPU system with preemptive scheduler:
  - Try this…

```
int TestAndSet(int *ptr, int new) {
    int old = *ptr;    // fetch old value at ptr
    *ptr = new;        // store 'new' into ptr
    return old;        // return the old value
}
```

- lock() method checks that TestAndSet doesn't return 1
- Comparison is in the caller
- Single core systems are becoming scarce
- Try on a one-core VM

DIY: TEST-AND-SET - 2

- Requires a preemptive scheduler on single CPU core system
- Lock is never released without a context switch
- 1-core VM: occasionally will deadlock, doesn't miscount

```
typedef struct __lock_t {
    int flag;
} lock_t;

void init(lock_t *lock) {
    // 0 indicates that lock is available,
    // 1 that it is held
    lock->flag = 0;
}

void lock(lock_t *lock) {
    while (TestAndSet(&lock->flag, 1) == 1)
        ;       // spin-wait
}

void unlock(lock_t *lock) {
    lock->flag = 0;
}
```

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SPIN LOCK EVALUATION

- **Correctness:**
  - Spin locks guarantee: critical sections won't be executed simultaneously by (2) threads
- **Fairness:**
  - No fairness guarantee. Once a thread has a lock, nothing forces it to relinquish it…
- **Performance:**
  - Spin locks perform "busy waiting"
  - Spin locks are best for short periods of waiting
  - Performance is slow when multiple threads share a CPU
    - Especially for long periods

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COMPARE AND SWAP

- Checks that the lock variable has the expected value FIRST, before changing its value
  - If so, make assignment
  - Return value at location
- Adds a comparison to TestAndSet
- Useful for wait-free synchronization
  - Supports implementation of shared data structures which can be updated atomically (*as a unit*) using the HW support CompareAndSwap instruction
  - Shared data structure updates become "wait-free"
  - Upcoming in Chapter 32

COMPARE AND SWAP

- Compare and Swap

```
int CompareAndSwap(int *ptr, int expected, int new) {
    int actual = *ptr;
    if (actual == expected)
        *ptr = new;
    return actual;
```

- Spin loc

1-core VM:
Count is correct, no deadlock

```
        ; // spin
}
```

- X86 provides "`cmpxchgl`" compare-and-exchange instruction
  - `cmpxchg8b`
  - `cmpxchg16b`

TWO MORE "LOCK BUILDING" CPU INSTRUCTIONS

- Cooperative instructions used together to support synchronization on RISC systems
- No support on x86 processors
  - Supported by RISC: Alpha, PowerPC, ARM
- Load-linked (LL)
  - Loads value into register
  - Same as typical load
  - Used as a mechanism to track competition
- Store-conditional (SC)
  - Performs "mutually exclusive" store
  - Allows only one thread to store value

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LL/SC LOCK

```
int LoadLinked(int *ptr) {
    return *ptr;
}

int StoreConditional(int *ptr, int value) {
    if (no one has updated *ptr since the LoadLinked to this address) {
            *ptr = value;
            return 1; // success!
    } else {
            return 0; // failed to update
    }
}
```

- LL instruction loads pointer value (ptr)
- SC only stores if the load link pointer has not changed
- Requires HW support
  - C code is psuedo code

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LL/SC LOCK - 2

```
void lock(lock_t *lock) {
    while (1) {
            while (LoadLinked(&lock->flag) == 1)
                    ; // spin until it's zero
            if (StoreConditional(&lock->flag, 1) == 1)
                    return; // if set-it-to-1 was a success: all done
                            otherwise: try it all over again
    }
}

void unlock(lock_t *lock) {
    lock->flag = 0;
}
```

- Two instruction lock

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QUESTIONS