THREADS

MICHAEL ROITZSCH
- **kernel:**
  - provides system foundation
  - usually runs in privileged CPU mode

- **microkernel:**
  - kernel provides mechanisms, no policies
  - most functionality implemented in user mode, unless dictated otherwise by
    - security
    - performance
- provides an exclusive instance of a full system platform
- may be a synthetic platform (bytecode)
- full software implementations
- hardware-assisted implementations in the kernel (hypervisor)
- see virtualization lecture on Dec 19th
- inter-process communication
- between threads
- two-way agreement, synchronous
- memory mapping with flexpages
- see communication lecture last week
- (virtual) address space
- unit of memory management
- provides spatial isolation
- common memory content can be shared
  - shared libraries
  - kernel
- see memory lecture in two weeks
Kernel Address Space

User Address Space
ALTERNATIVES

- Monolith
- Exokernel
- Microkernel
- Software Isolation

- user
- shared system
- privileged

more code
THREADS
- abstraction of code execution
- unit of scheduling
- provides temporal isolation
- typically requires a stack
- thread state:
  - instruction pointer
  - stack pointer
  - CPU registers, flags
- storage for function-local data
  - local variables
  - return address
- one stack frame per function
- grows and shrinks dynamically
- grows from high to low addresses
maps user-level threads to kernel-level threads
- often a 1:1 mapping
- threads can be implemented in userland
assigns threads to hardware
- one kernel-level thread per logical CPU
with hyper-threading and multicore, we have more than one hardware thread
- thread can enter kernel:
  - voluntarily
  - system call
  - forced
  - interrupt
  - exception
**KERNEL ENTRY**

- IP and SP point into kernel
- user CPU state stored in TCB
  - old IP and SP
  - registers
  - flags
  - FPU state
  - MMX, SSE, AVX
- thread control block
- kernel object, one per thread
- stores thread’s userland state while it is not running
- untrusted parts can be stored in user space
  - separation into KTCB (kernel TCB) and UTCB (user TCB)
  - UTCB also holds system call parameters
once the kernel has provided its services, it returns back to userland

by restoring the saved user IP and SP

the same thread or a different thread

the old thread may be blocking now

waiting for some resource

returning to a different thread might involve switching address spaces
SCHEDULING
- scheduling describes the decision, which thread to run on a CPU at a given time
- When do we schedule?
  - current thread blocks or yields
  - time quantum expired
- How do we schedule?
  - RR, FIFO, RMS, EDF
  - based on thread priorities
scheduling decisions are policies
should not be in a microkernel
L4 used to have facilities to implement scheduling in user land
- each thread has an associated preempter
- kernel sends an IPC when thread blocks
- preempter tells kernel where to switch to
no efficient implementation yet
scheduling is the only in-kernel policy in L4
- scheduling in L4 is based on thread priorities
- time-slice-based round robin within the same priority level
- kernel manages priority and timeslice as part of the thread state
- see scheduling lecture on Nov 14th
- thread 1 is a high priority driver thread, waiting for an interrupt (blocking)
- thread 2 and 3 are ready with equal priority
- 1 hardware thread
- kernel fills time slices of threads 2 and 3
- scheduler selects 2 to run
- device interrupt arrives
- thread 2 is forced into the kernel, where it unblocks thread 1 and fills its time slice
- switch to thread 1 preempts thread 2
- thread 1 blocks again (interrupt handled, waiting for next)
- thread 2 has time left
- thread 2’s time slice has expired
- timer interrupt forces thread 2 into kernel
- scheduler selects the next thread on the same priority level (round robin)
it’s really only one hardware thread being multiplexed
SYNCHRONIZATION
synchronization used for
- mutual exclusion
- producer-consumer-scenarios

traditional approaches that do not work
- spinning, busy waiting
- disabling interrupts
- for concurrent access to data structures
- use atomic operations to protect manipulations
- only suited for simple critical sections
Thread 1 in critical section
Thread 2 in critical section
serializer and atomic operations can be combined to a nice counting semaphore

semaphore

- shared counter for correctness
- wait queue for fairness
- down (P) and up (V) operation
- semaphore available iff counter > 0
- counter increments and decrements using atomic operations
- when necessary, call semaphore thread to block/unblock and enqueue/dequeue
- cross-task semaphores, when counter is in shared memory
- IPC only in the contention case
  - good for mutual exclusion when contention is rare
  - for producer-consumer-scenarios, contention is the common case
- solution for small critical sections in scheduling lecture
NOVA
NOVA is a research microhypervisor developed by Udo Steinberg

explore technologies for a small and robust platform that hosts:

- legacy operating systems
- native NOVA applications
- designed for virtualization and manycore
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Process-Style</strong></th>
<th><strong>Interrupt-Style</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>one kernel stack per thread</td>
<td>one kernel stack per CPU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>context switch: switch to kernel stack of target thread</td>
<td>context switch: save kernel state of current thread, discard stack, restore state of target thread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>target thread resumes at last context switch point</td>
<td>target thread resumes with empty kernel stack in continuation function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kernel state retained on stack at switch time</td>
<td>kernel state must be explicitly serialized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can switch anytime</td>
<td>lower thread overhead</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fiasco, Linux**  
**NOVA, (xnu)**
- repeated basic microkernel concepts
  - paradigm, resource abstractions
- closer look on threads
  - TCB, kernel entry
- scheduling
  - time slices, priorities, preemption
- synchronization
  - atomic ops, serializer thread, semaphore
- next up: memory