Exceptions and Processes

Much of the material for this lecture is drawn from Computer Systems: A Programmer’s Perspective (Bryant & O’Hallaron) Chapter 8
Goals of this Lecture

Help you learn about:

• Exceptions
• The process concept
• … and thereby…
• How operating systems work
• How application programs interact with operating systems and hardware

The process concept is one of the most important concepts in system programming
Context of this Lecture

Second half of the course

Previously

- C Language
- Assembly Language
- Machine Language

language levels tour

Starting Now

- Application Program
- Operating System
- Hardware

service levels tour

Application programs, OS, and hardware interact via exceptions
Motivation

Question:
- Executing program thinks it has exclusive use of all of memory
- But multiple executing programs must share one memory
- How is that illusion implemented?

Question:
- Executing program thinks it has exclusive control of the CPU
- But multiple executing programs must share one CPU (or a few CPUs)
- How is that illusion implemented?

Answers: Exceptions…
Agenda

Exceptions

Processes

Illusion: Private address space

Illusion: Private control flow
Exceptions

Exception

• An abrupt change in control flow in response to a change in processor state
Some exceptions are **synchronous**

- Occur as result of actions of executing program
- Examples: Synchronous exception occurs when:
  - Application pgm requests I/O
  - Application pgm requests more heap memory
  - Application pgm attempts integer division by 0
  - Application pgm attempts to access privileged memory
  - Application pgm accesses variable that is not in physical memory
  - See later in this lecture
  - See upcoming *Virtual Memory* lecture
Asynchronous Exceptions

Some exceptions are **asynchronous**

- Do not occur (directly) as result of actions of executing program
- Examples: Asynchronous exception occurs when:
  - User presses key on keyboard
  - Disk controller finishes reading data
  - Hardware timer expires
Exceptions Note

Note:

Exceptions in OS ≠ exceptions in Java

Implemented using try/catch and throw statements
Exceptional Control Flow

Application program

Exception handler in operating system

exception

exception return (sometimes)

exception handler
Exceptions vs. Function Calls

Handling an exception is similar to calling a function
- CPU pushes arguments onto stack
- Control transfers from original code to other code
- Other code executes
- Control returns to some instruction in original code

Handling an exception is different from calling a function
- CPU pushes additional data onto stack
  - E.g. values of all registers
- CPU pushes data onto OS’s stack, not application pgm’s stack
- Handler runs in kernel/privileged mode, not in user mode
  - Handler can execute all instructions and access all memory
- Control might return to some instruction in original code
  - Sometimes control returns to next instruction
  - Sometimes control returns to current instruction
  - Sometimes control does not return at all!
Classes of Exceptions

There are 4 classes of exceptions…
(1) Interrupts

**Occurs when:** External (off-CPU) device requests attention
**Examples:**
- User presses key
- Disk controller finishes reading/writing data
- Hardware timer expires

**Diagram:**

1. CPU interrupt pin goes high
2. After current instr finishes, control passes to exception handler
3. Exception handler runs
4. Exception handler returns control to next instr
(2) Traps

**Occurs when:** Application pgm requests OS service

**Examples:**
- Application pgm requests I/O
- Application pgm requests more heap memory
- Traps provide a function-call-like interface between application pgm and OS
(3) Faults

**Occurs when:** Application pgm causes a (possibly recoverable) error

**Examples:**
- Application pgm divides by 0
- Application pgm accesses privileged memory (seg fault)
- Application pgm accesses data that is not in physical memory (page fault)
(4) Aborts

**Occurs when:** HW detects a non-recoverable error

**Example:** Parity check indicates corruption of memory bit (overheating, cosmic ray!, etc.)
## Summary of Exception Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Occurs when</th>
<th>Asynch/Synch</th>
<th>Return Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interrupt</strong></td>
<td>External device requests attention</td>
<td>Asynch</td>
<td>Return to next instr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trap</strong></td>
<td>Application pgm requests OS service</td>
<td>Sync</td>
<td>Return to next instr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fault</strong></td>
<td>Application pgm causes (maybe recoverable) error</td>
<td>Sync</td>
<td>Return to current instr (maybe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abort</strong></td>
<td>HW detects non-recoverable error</td>
<td>Sync</td>
<td>Do not return</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aside: Exceptions in IA-32 Processors

Each exception has a number
Some exceptions in IA-32 processors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exception #</th>
<th>Exception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Fault: Divide error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Fault: Segmentation fault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Fault: Page fault (see Virtual Memory lecture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Abort: Machine check</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32-127</td>
<td>Interrupt or trap (OS-defined)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>Trap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129-255</td>
<td>Interrupt or trap (OS-defined)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aside: Traps in IA-32 Processors

To execute a trap, application program should:
- Place number in EAX register indicating desired OS service
- Place arguments in EBX, ECX, EDX, ESI, EDI, EBP registers
- Execute assembly language instruction `int $128`

Example: To request change in size of heap section of memory (see Dynamic Memory Management lecture)...

```
movl $45, %eax
movl $newAddr, %ebx
int $128
```

Place 45 (change size of heap section) in EAX
Place new address of end of heap in EBX
Execute trap
Aside: System-Level Functions

Traps are wrapped in **system-level functions**

Example: To change size of heap section of memory…

```c
/* unistd.h */
int brk(void *addr);
...

/* unistd.s */
Defines brk() in assembly lang
Executes int instruction
...

/* client.c */
...
brk(newAddr);
...
```

**brk()** is a system-level function

A call of a system-level function, that is, a **system call**

See Appendix for some Linux system-level functions
Agenda

Exceptions

Processes

Illusion: Private address space

Illusion: Private control flow
Processes

Program

• Executable code
• A static entity

Process

• An instance of a program in execution
• A dynamic entity: has a time dimension
• Each process runs one program
  • E.g. process 12345 might be running emacs
• One program can run in multiple processes
  • E.g. Process 12345 might be running emacs, and process 54321 might also be running emacs – for the same user or for different users
Process abstraction provides application pgms with two key illusions:

- Private address space
- Private control flow

Process is a profound abstraction in computer science
Agenda

Exceptions

Processes

Illusion: Private address space

Illusion: Private control flow
Hardware and OS give each application process the illusion that it is the only process using memory.
Private Address Space: Reality

All processes use the same physical memory
Hardware and OS provide application pgms with a virtual view of memory, i.e. virtual memory (VM)

Memory is divided into pages

Process X VM

Physical Memory

Process Y VM

Disk
Question:
- How do the CPU and OS implement the illusion of private address space?
- That is, how do the CPU and OS implement virtual memory?

Answer:
- Exceptions!
- Specifically, page faults
- Overview now, details next lecture…
Private Address Space Example 1

- Process executes instruction that references virtual memory
- CPU determines virtual page
- CPU checks if required virtual page is in physical memory: yes
- CPU does load/store from/to physical memory
Private Address Space Example 2

- Process executes instruction that references virtual memory
- CPU determines virtual page
- CPU checks if required virtual page is in physical memory: no!
  - CPU generates page fault
  - OS gains control of CPU
  - OS evicts some page from physical memory to disk, loads required page from disk to physical memory
  - OS returns control of CPU to process – to same instruction
- Process executes instruction that references virtual memory
- CPU checks if required virtual page is in physical memory: yes
- CPU does load/store from/to physical memory

Exceptions (specifically, page faults) enable the illusion of private address spaces
Agenda

Exceptions
Processes

Illusion: Private address space

Illusion: Private control flow
Private Control Flow: Illusion

Simplifying assumption: only one CPU

Hardware and OS give each application process the illusion that it is the only process running on the CPU
Private Control Flow: Reality

Multiple processes share the CPU
Multiple processes run **concurrently**
OS occasionally **preempts** running process
Process Status

More specifically…

At any time a process has **status**:  
- **Running**: CPU is executing process’s instructions  
- **Ready**: Process is ready for OS to assign it to the CPU  
- **Blocked**: Process is waiting for some requested service (typically I/O) to finish
Process Status Transitions

**Service requested**: OS moves running process to blocked set because it requested a (time consuming) system service (often I/O)

**Service finished**: OS moves blocked process to ready set because the requested service finished

**Time slice expired**: OS moves running process to ready set because process consumed its fair share of CPU time

**Scheduled for execution**: OS selects some process from ready set and assigns CPU to it

* Preempting transition
Throughout its lifetime a process’s status switches between running, ready, and blocked.
Question:
  • How do CPU and OS implement the illusion of private control flow?
  • That is, how to CPU and OS implement process status transitions?

Answer (Part 1):
  • Contexts and context switches…
Process Contexts

Each process has a context

• The process’s state, that is…
• Register contents
  • EIP, EFLAGS, EAX, EBX, etc. registers
• Memory contents
  • TEXT, RODATA, DATA, BSS, HEAP, and STACK
Context Switch

Context switch:
- OS saves context of running process
- OS loads context of some ready process
- OS passes control to newly restored process
Aside: Process Control Blocks

Question:
• Where does OS save a process’ s context?

Answer:
• In its process control block (PCB)

Process control block (PCB)
• A data structure
• Contains all data that OS needs to manage the process
Aside: Process Control Block Details

Process control block (PCB):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Unique integer assigned by OS when process is created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Running, ready, or waiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy</td>
<td>ID of parent process ID of child processes (if any)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(See <em>Process Management</em> Lecture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>High, medium, low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time consumed</td>
<td>Time consumed within current time slice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Context     | When process is not running...  
|             | Contents of all registers (In principle) contents of all of memory            |
| Etc.        |                                                                             |
Context Switch Efficiency

Observation:
- During context switch, OS must:
  - Save context (register and memory contents) of running process to its PCB
  - Restore context (register and memory contents) of some ready process from its PCB

Question:
- Isn’t that very expensive (in terms of time and space)?
Context Switch Efficiency

Answer:

- Not really!
- During context switch, OS does save/load register contents
  - But there are few registers
- During context switch, OS does not save/load memory contents
  - Each process has a page table that maps virtual memory pages to physical memory pages
  - During context switch, need only deactivate process X page table and activate process Y page table
- See Virtual Memory lecture
Question:
• How do CPU and OS implement the illusion of private control flow?
• That is, how do CPU and OS implement process status transitions?
• That is, how do CPU and OS implement context switches?

Answer (Part 2):
• Exceptions!
• Context switches occur while the OS handles exceptions…
Exceptions and Context Switches

Context switches occur while OS is handling exceptions
Exceptions and Context Switches

Exceptions occur frequently
- Process explicitly requests OS service (trap)
- Service request fulfilled (interrupt)
- Process accesses VM page that is not in physical memory (fault)
- Etc.
- ... And if none of them occur for a while ...
- Expiration of hardware timer (interrupt)

Whenever OS gains control of CPU via exception...

It has the option of performing context switch
## Private Control Flow Example 1

- Process X is running
- Hardware clock generates **interrupt**
- OS gains control of CPU
- OS examines “time consumed” field of process X’s PCB
- OS decides to do context switch
  - OS saves process X’s context in its PCB
  - OS sets “status” field in process X’s PCB to **ready**
  - OS adds process X’s PCB to the ready set
  - OS removes process Y’s PCB from the ready set
  - OS sets “status” field in process Y’s PCB to **running**
  - OS loads process Y’s context from its PCB
- Process Y is running
• Process Y is running
• Process Y executes `trap` to request read from disk
• OS gains control of CPU
• OS decides to do context switch
  • OS saves process Y’s context in its PCB
  • OS sets “status” field in process Y’s PCB to blocked
  • OS adds process Y’s PCB to the blocked set
  • OS removes process X’s PCB from the ready set
  • OS sets “status” field in process X’s PCB to running
• OS loads process X’s context from its PCB
• Process X is running
Private Control Flow Example 3

- Process X is running
- Read operation requested by process Y completes => disk controller generates interrupt
- OS gains control of CPU
- OS sets “status” field in process Y’s PCB to ready
- OS moves process Y’s PCB from the blocked list to the ready list
- OS examines “time consumed within slice” field of process X’s PCB
- OS decides not to do context switch
- Process X is running
Process X is running
Process X accesses memory, generates page fault
OS gains control of CPU
OS evicts page from memory to disk, loads referenced page from disk to memory
OS examines “time consumed” field of process X’s PCB
OS decides not to do context switch
Process X is running

Exceptions enable the illusion of private control flow
Summary

Exception: an abrupt change in control flow
- **Interrupt**: asynchronous; e.g. I/O completion, hardware timer
- **Trap**: synchronous; e.g. app pgm requests more heap memory, I/O
- **Fault**: synchronous; e.g. seg fault, page fault
- **Abort**: synchronous; e.g. failed parity check

Process: An instance of a program in execution
- CPU and OS give each process the illusion of:
  - Private address space
  - Reality: **virtual memory**
  - Private control flow
  - Reality: **Concurrency, preemption, and context switches**
- Both illusions are implemented using exceptions
## Appendix: System-Level Functions

### Linux system-level functions for **I/O management**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>read()</td>
<td>Read data from file descriptor; called by getchar(), scanf(), etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>write()</td>
<td>Write data to file descriptor; called by putchar(), printf(), etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>open()</td>
<td>Open file or device; called by fopen()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>close()</td>
<td>Close file descriptor; called by fclose()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>creat()</td>
<td>Open file or device for writing; called by fopen(…, &quot;w&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>lseek()</td>
<td>Position file offset; called by fseek()</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Described in *I/O Management* lecture
## Appendix: System-Level Functions

Linux system-level functions for **process management**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>exit()</td>
<td>Terminate the current process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>fork()</td>
<td>Create a child process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>wait()</td>
<td>Wait for child process termination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>execvp()</td>
<td>Execute a program in the current process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>getpid()</td>
<td>Return the process id of the current process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Described in *Process Management* lecture
Linux system-level functions for I/O redirection and inter-process communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>dup()</td>
<td>Duplicate an open file descriptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>pipe()</td>
<td>Create a channel of communication between processes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Described in *Process Management* lecture
### Appendix: System-Level Functions

Linux system-level functions for **dynamic memory management**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>brk()</td>
<td>Move the program break, thus changing the amount of memory allocated to the HEAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>sbrk()</td>
<td>(Variant of previous)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>mmap()</td>
<td>Map a virtual memory page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>munmap()</td>
<td>Unmap a virtual memory page</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Described in *Dynamic Memory Management* lecture
## Appendix: System-Level Functions

### Linux system-level functions for signal handling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>alarm()</td>
<td>Deliver a signal to a process after a specified amount of wall-clock time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>kill()</td>
<td>Send signal to a process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>sigaction()</td>
<td>Install a signal handler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>setitimer()</td>
<td>Deliver a signal to a process after a specified amount of CPU time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>sigprocmask()</td>
<td>Block/unblock signals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Described in *Signals* lecture