National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University
Computer Architecture & System Lab

Locking

IOC5226 Operating System Capstone

Tsung Tai Yeh
Department of Computer Science
National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University

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  - MIT 6.828 Operating system engineering class, 2018
  - MIT 6.004 Operating system, 2018
  - Remzi H. Arpaci-Dusseau etl. , Operating systems: Three easy pieces. WISC

Outline

- Locks
- Hardware synchronization operators
  - test-and-set
  - compare-and-swap
  - fetch-and-add
  - Load-linked / stored-conditional
- Reducing spin-locking overhead
  - yield ()
  - Futex in Linux

Locks and unlocks

- **Lock: synchronization mechanism that enforces atomicity**
- lock(L) : acquire lock L exclusively
  - Only the process with L can access the critical section
- Unlock(L): release exclusive access to lock L
  - Permitting other processes to access the critical section

Program 0

```
{
    lock(L)
    counter ++
    unlock(L)
}
```

Shared variable

```
int counter=5
lock_t L
```

Program 1

```
{
    lock(L)
    counter --
    unlock(L)
}
```

Software locking -- Interrupt

- In a single-processor system
- **How does it work ?**
  - **Lock** -- turning off interrupts before entering a critical section
  - Ensure the code inside the critical section won't be interrupted -> execute as if it were atomic
- **Requires privileges**
  - User processes generally cannot disable interrupts (how to trust every requests ?)
- Not suited for multicore systems
  - Threads can run on different processors and enter the critical section

Process 1

Lock → disable interrupts()

unlock → enable interrupts()

```
while(1){
    disable interrupts()
    critical section
    enable interrupts()
}
```

Process 2

```
while(1){
    disable interrupts()
    critical section
    enable interrupts()
}
```

Problems with disabling interrupts

- Disabling interrupts for long is always bad
  - Can result in **lost interrupts** and **dropped data**
- But what about multiprocessors ?
  - Disabling interrupts on just the local processor is not very helpful
  - Unless all processes are running on the local processor
  - Disabling interrupts on **all** processors is **expensive**

Hardware synchronization Operators

- **test-and-set (loc, t)**
  - Atomically read original value and replace it with “t”
- **compare-and-swap (loc, a, b)**
  - Atomically: if (loc == a) {loc = b;}
- **fetch-and-add (loc, n)**
  - Atomically read the value at loc and replace it with its value incremented by n
- **Load-linked / stored-conditional**
  - Load-linked: loads values from specified address
  - Store-conditional: if no other thread has touched value -> store, else return error

How about hardware locking ?

- Does this scheme provide mutual exclusion ?

Process 1

```
while(1){
   while(lock != 0);
   lock = 1; // lock
   critical section
   lock = 0; //unlock
}
```

Process 2

```
while(1){
   while(lock != 0);
   lock = 1; // lock
   critical section
   lock = 0; //unlock
}
```

lock = 0

Context switch

```
lock = 0
P1: while (lock != 0);
-------------------------
P2: while (lock != 0);
P2: lock = 1;
-------------------------
P1: lock = 1;
```

… Both processes in critical section

How to make mutual execution ?

- Make the following operations be atomic

Process 1

```
while(1){
    while(lock != 0);
    lock = 1; // lock
    critical section
    lock = 0; //unlock
}
```

Make atomic, how?

Test & Set instruction

- Test & set instruction
  - Return the old value pointed to by the old_ptr
  - ‘test’ the old value
  - ‘setting’ the memory location to a new value

```
int test_and_set (int *old_ptr, int new)
{
    int old = *old_ptr; // fetch old value at old_ptr
    *old_ptr = new;     // store ‘new’ into old_ptr
    return old;         // return the old value
}
```

How to use test_and_set ?

```
int TestAndSet(int *old_ptr, int new)
{
    int old = *old_ptr;
    *old_ptr = new;
    return prev;
}
```

- The first invocation of test_and_set will read a 0 and set lock to 1 then return
- The second test_and_set invocation will see lock as 1, and loop continuously until lock becomes 0

```
typedef struct __lock_t {
    int flag;
};
void init (lock_t *lock) {
    // 0: lock is available, 1: lock is held
    lock->flag = 0;
}
void lock (lock_t *lock) {
    while (TestAndSet (&lock->flag, 1) == 1);
}
void unlock (lock_t *lock) {
        lock->flag = 0;
}
```

Intel hardware atomic exchange (xchg)

- Why does xchg work ?
  - If two CPUs execute xchg at the same time
  - The hardware ensures that one xchg completes then the second xchg starts

```
int xchg (int *L)
{
    int prev = *L;
    *L = 1;
    return prev;
}
```

Typical usage
xchg reg, mem

```
int xchg (addr, value) {
    %eax = value
    xchg %eax, (addr)
}
void acquire (int *locked) {
    while (1) {
        if(xchg (locked, 1) == 0)
            break;
    }
}
void release (int *locked) {
    locked = 0;
}
```

Compare-And-Swap

```
int CompareAndSwap(int *old_ptr, int
expected, int new)
{
    int original = *ptr;
    if (original == expected)
            *ptr = new;
    return original;
}
```

- **Compare-And-Swap**
  - Test whether the value at the address specified by ‘ptr’ is equal to ‘expected’
  - If so, update the memory location pointed to by ptr with the new value
  - If not, do nothing
  - Return the original value at that memory location

Compare-And-Swap

- Compare-And-Swap with lock
  - Check if the flag is 0
  - If so, atomically swaps in a 1 thus acquiring the lock
  - Spinning while the lock is held

```
int lock (lock_t *lock)
{
    while (CompareAndSwap (&lock->flag, 0, 1) == 1);
    // spin
}
```

Load-linked and store-conditional (llsc)

- **The load-linked**
  - Fetches a value from memory and places it in a register
- **The store-conditional**
  - Only succeeds if no intervening store to the address has taken place
  - If success, return 1 and update the value at ptr to value
  - If fail, 0 is returned

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

Lock implementation with llsc

- **lock ()**
  - A thread spins waiting for the flag to be set to 0
  - The thread tries to acquire the lock via the store-conditional
  - If succeeds, the thread has atomically changed the flag’s value to 1

```
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;
}
```

llsc Case study

The key feature of llsc instruction is only one of these threads will succeed in updating the flag 1 and acquire the lock

1. The first thread calls lock() and executes ll, return 0 as the lock is not held
2. The first thread is interrupted and another thread enters the lock code
3. The second thread get a 0 in ll
4. Both of them attempt the ss
5. The second thread that attempt ss will fail (why ?)

```
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;
}
```

Fetch-and-add

- **Fetch-and-add**
  - Atomically increments a value while returning the old value at a particular address
- **Ticket lock**
  - A thread first does an atomic fetch-and-add on the ticket value (myturn as turn value)
  - Globally shared lock->turn is used to decide which thread's turn it is
  - Enter the critical section when (myturn == turn)

```
int FetchAndAdd (int *ptr) {
    int old = *ptr;
    *ptr = old + 1;
    return old;
}
type_def struct __lock_t {
    int ticket;
    int turn;
} lock_t;
void lock_init (lock_t *lock) {
    lock->ticket = 0;
    lock-> turn = 0;
}
void lock (lock_t *lock) {
    int myturn  = FetchAndFetch (&lock->ticket)
    while (lock-> turn != myturn);
}
void unlock (lock_t *lock) {lock->turn ++;}
```

Evaluating spin locks

- **Correctness**
  - Does it provide mutual exclusion ?
  - Yes, spin lock only allows a single thread to enter the critical section at a time
- **Fairness**
  - Does it guarantee a waiting thread will enter the critical section ?
  - No, spin locks don’t provide any fairness guarantees
  - A thread spinning may spin forever under contention
- **Performance**
  - The performance overhead is high in the single CPU
  - On multiple CPUs, spin locks work reasonably well (why ?)

Case study: yield ()

- What to do ?
  - When a context switch occurs in a critical section
  - Will threads need to spin endlessly and wait for the interrupted (lock-holding) thread to be run again ?
- **yield ()** system call
  - Moves the caller from running state to the ready state
  - Promote another thread to running
  - The yielding thread essentially **deschedules** itself
  - A thread can call when it wants to give up the CPU and let another thread run

yield ()

- Two threads on one CPU
  - A thread happens to call lock() and find a lock held
  - It will simply yield the CPU without spinning
  - The other thread will run and finish its critical section
  - Thus, yield () relieves the spinning lock problem

```
void init () {
    flag = 0;
}
void lock () {
    while (TestAndSet (&flag, 1) == 1)
            yield (); // give up the CPU
}
void unlock () {
    flag = 0;
}
```

The yield () problem

- There are many threads contending for a lock repeatedly
  - **One thread acquires the lock** and is preempted before releasing it
  - The **other 99 threads will each call lock (),** then find lock held
  - Finally, yield the CPU
  - **Each of the 99 thread will execute the run-and-yield pattern** before the thread holding the lock gets to run again
    → **plenty of waste**
  - **The starvation problem**
    - A thread may get caught in an endless yield loop while other threads repeatedly enter and exit the critical section

Using queues: Sleeping instead of spinning

int lock (lock_t *m) {
// acquire guard lock by spinning
while (TestAndSet (&m->guard, 1) == 1);
if (m->flag == 0) {
m->flag = 1; // lock is acquired
m->guard = 0;
} else {
queue_add(m->q, gettid());
m->guard = 0;
park ();
} }
	int unlock(lock_t *m) {
	// acquire guard lock by spinning
	while (TestAndSet (&m->guard, 1) == 1);
	if (queue_empty (m->q)) {
	m->flag = 0;
	} else {
	// hold lock for next thread !
	unpark (queue_remove (m->q));
	}
	m->guard = 0;
	}

park (): put a calling thread to sleep. **unpark(tid):** wake a particular thread

Wakeup / waiting race

- **Where is the race condition ?**
  - A thread will be about to park (it should sleep until the lock is no longer held.)
  - A switch at that time to another thread holding the lock and the lock is released
  - The subsequent park by the first thread would then sleep forever
  - **Wakup / waiting race:**
    - The thread that unpark doesn’t know threads are going to park
    - Threads that park don’t know the thread is going to unpark

```
int lock (lock_t *m) {
    // acquire guard lock by spinning
    while (TestAndSet (&m->guard, 1) == 1)
    if (m->flag == 0) {
            m->flag = 1; // lock is acquired
            m->guard = 0;
    } else {
            queue_add(m->q, gettid());
            m->guard = 0;
            park ();
    }
}
```

setpark()

- **Adding setpark()**
  - If another thread calls unpark before park is actually called
  - **The subsequent park returns immediately instead of sleeping**

```
int lock (lock_t *m) {
    // acquire guard lock by spinning
    while (TestAndSet (&m->guard, 1)
== 1);
    if (m->flag == 0) {
            m->flag = 1; // lock is acquired
            m->guard = 0;
    } else {
            queue_add(m->q, gettid());
            setpark();
            m->guard = 0;
            park ();
    }
}
```

futex in Linux

- Callers can use **futex** calls to sleep and wake as need be
  - Each futex has associated with it a specific physical memory location
  - **futex_wait (address, expected)**
    - Puts the calling thread to sleep
  - **futex_wake (address)**
    - Wakes one thread that is waiting on the queue

Locks by using futex

- **Lock using futex**
  - A single integer to track
    - Whether the lock is held or not (The high bit of the integer)
    - The number of waiters on the lock (all the other bits)
  - If the lock is negative, it is held
    - Because the high bit is set and the bit determines the sign of the integer

```
int mutex_lock (int *mutex) {
    int v;
    /*Bit 31 was clear, we got the mutex*/
    if (atomic_bit_test_set (mutex, 31) == 0)
            return;
    atomic_increment (mutex);
    while (1) {
      if (atomic_bit_test_set (mutex, 31) == 0)
{
            atomic_decrement (mutex);
            return;
      }
 // we are monitoring it truly negative (locked)
      v = *mutex;
      if (v >= 0)
            continue;
      futex_wait (mutex, v);
    } }
```

Conclusion

- **Lock**
  - Enforce atomicity through the synchronization
- **Interrupt-based lock**
  - Expensive on multiprocessor
- **Hardware synchronization operators**
  - test-and-set …
- **Spin lock is expensive and error-prone**
  - yield ()