Lecture 3: Concurrency: Processes, Threads, and Address Spaces

3.0 Main point:
What are processes? How are they related to threads and address spaces?

3.1 Concurrency

3.1.1 Definitions:

*Uniprogramming:* one process at a time (e.g. MS/DOS, Macintosh)

Easier for operating system builder: get rid of problem of concurrency by defining it away. For personal computers, idea was: one user does only one thing at a time. Harder for user: can’t work while waiting for printer.

*Multiprogramming:* more than one process at a time (UNIX, OS/2, Windows NT). Note: This is often called multitasking, but multitasking sometimes has other meanings – see below – so not used in this course.

3.1.2 The basic problem of concurrency:
- Hardware: single CPU, I/O interrupts.
- API: users think they have machine to themselves.

OS has to coordinate all the activity on a machine: multiple users, I/O interrupts, etc.

How can it keep all these things straight?

3.2 Processes

The notion of a “process” is a central concept for Operating Systems.

**Process:** Operating system abstraction to represent what is needed to run a single program (this is the traditional UNIX definition)

Formally, a process is a sequential stream of execution in its own address space.

3.2.1 Two parts to a (traditional Unix) process:

1. **Sequential program execution:** the code in the process is executed as a single, sequential stream of execution (no concurrency inside a process). This is known as a thread of control.

2. **State Information:** everything specific to a particular execution of a program: 
   *Encapsulates protection:* address space
   - CPU registers
   - Main memory (contents of address space)
   - I/O state (in UNIX this is represented by file descriptors)
3.2.2 Process =? Program

A program is, for example, a set of C statements or commands (vi, ls)

```c
main()
{
...
}
A()
{
...
}
```

PROGRAM

```c
main()
{
...
}
A()
{
...
}
```

PROCESS

1. More to a process than just a program:
   - Program is just part of process state.
   - I run emacs on lecture.txt, you run emacs on homework.java – same program, different processes.

2. Less to a process than a program:
   - A program can invoke more than one process to get the job done
   - cc starts up cpp, cc1, cc2, as, ld (each are programs themselves)

3.3 Multiple Threads of Control

The traditional notion of a Process can be extended to allow for additional concurrency:

Thread: a sequential execution stream within a process (concurrency)
(Sometimes called: a "lightweight" process). Provides the illusion that each activity (or thread) is running on its own CPU, entirely sequentially.

Address space: all the state needed to run a program (literally, all the addresses that can be touched by the program). Provides the illusion that a program is running on its own machine (protection).

3.3.1 Why separate the concept of a thread from that of a process?

1. Discuss the “thread” part of a process (concurrency), separately from the “address space” part of a process (protection).

2. Many situations where you want multiple threads per address space.
   Question: Why would you want this?

Multithreading: a single program made up of a number of different concurrent activities (sometimes called multitasking, as in Ada, just to be confusing!)

3.3.2 Examples of multithreaded programs

1. Embedded systems: elevators, planes, medical systems, wristwatches, etc. Single program, concurrent operations.

2. Most modern OS kernels: internally concurrent because have to deal with concurrent requests by multiple users. But no protection needed within kernel.

3. Database Server: provides access to shared data by potentially many concurrent users. Also has background utility processing that must get done.
4. Network servers: user applications that get multiple requests concurrently off the network. Again, single program, multiple concurrent operations (examples: file servers, Web server, and airline reservation systems)

5. Parallel programming: split program into multiple threads to make it run faster. This is called multiprocessing.

Multiprogramming = multiple jobs or processes
Multiprocessing = multiple CPUs

Some multiprocessors are in fact uniprogrammed – multiple threads in one address space, but only run one program at a time.

### 3.3.3 Thread State

What state does a thread have?

Some state *shared by all threads* in a process/address space:
- Contents of memory (global variables, heap)
- I/O state (file system)

Some state “private” to each thread – each thread has its own copy
- CPU registers (including, program counter)
- Execution stack – what is this?

**Execution stack**: where parameters, temporary variables, and return PC are kept, while called procedures are executing (for example, where are A’s variables kept, while B, C are executing?)

```c
A(int tmp) {
    if (tmp < 2)
        B();
    printf(tmp);
}
B() {
    C();
}
C() {
    A(2);
}
A(1);
```

---

### 3.4 Classification

Real operating systems have either
- One or many address spaces
- One or many threads per address space

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of address spaces:</th>
<th>one</th>
<th>many</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of threads per address space:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>MS/DOS, Macintosh</td>
<td>traditional UNIX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many</td>
<td>embedded systems, JavaOS, Pilot (PC)</td>
<td>Mach, OS/2 Windows 95, Windows NT, Solaris, Linux, HP-UX, ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples:
1. MS/DOS – one thread, one address space
2. Traditional UNIX – one thread per address space, many address spaces
3. Mach, Microsoft NT, new UNIX (Linux, Solaris, HPUX) – many threads per address space, many address spaces
4. Embedded systems (Geoworks, VxWorks, JavaOS, etc.). Also, Pilot (the operating system on the first personal computer ever built) – many threads, one address space (idea was: no need for protection if single user)

3.5 Summary

Processes have two parts: threads and address spaces.

Book talks about processes: when this concerns concurrency, really talking about thread portion of a process; when this concerns protection, really talking about address space portion of a process.