

Administrivia

- Reminder: Homework 3 due today.
- Guest speaker in Parallel Programming Friday at 11:30am — Trinity alum Dr. Scott Schaefer (now on faculty at TAMU). Talk will mostly be about graphics, with a little about parallelism.

Slide 1

I/O Subsystem, Continued

- Goal of this part of the o/s is like for other parts — manage physical resources on behalf of (all) user programs, and provide a nicer “virtual machine”.
- Hardware is diverse and complicated, so in discussing it we try to find basic principles, talk about what’s available to o/s-level programmer.

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Goals of I/O Software

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- Device independence — application programs shouldn't need to know what kind of device.
- Uniform naming — conventions that apply to all devices (e.g., Unix path names, Windows drive letter and path name).
- Error handling — handle errors at as low a level as possible, retry/correct if possible.
- "Synchronous interface to asynchronous operations."
- Buffering.
- Device sharing / dedication.

Layers of I/O Software

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- Typically organize I/O-related parts of operating system in terms of layers — more modular.
- Usual scheme involves four layers (see figure on p. 288):
 - User-space software — provide library functions for application programs to use, perform spooling.
 - Device-independent software — manage dedicated devices, do buffering, etc.
 - Device drivers — issue requests to device (or controller), queue requests, etc.
 - Interrupt handlers — process interrupt generated by device (or controller).

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User-Space Software

- Library procedures:
 - Simple wrappers — e.g., `write` just sets up parameters and makes system call.
 - Formatting, e.g., `printf`.
- Spooling:
 - Actual I/O to device (e.g., printer) handled by background process.
 - User programs put requests in special directory.
 - Examples — printing, network requests.

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Device-Independent Software

- Uniform interface to device drivers — naming conventions, protection (who can access what), etc.
- Buffering — simpler interface for user programs, applies to both input and output.
- Error reporting — actual I/O errors, and also impossible requests from programs.
- Allocating and releasing dedicated devices.
- Providing device-independent block size — more uniform interface.

Device Drivers

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- Idea is to have something that mediates between device controller and o/s — so, need one of these for every combination of o/s and device. Often written by device manufacturer.
- Called by other parts of o/s, we hope according to one of a small number of standard interfaces — e.g., “block device” interface, or “character device” interface. Communicates with device controller in its language (so to speak).
- Normally run in kernel mode. Formerly often compiled into kernel, now usually loaded dynamically (details vary).

Device Drivers, Continued

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- When called, must:
 - Check that parameters are okay (return if not).
 - Check that device is not in use (queue request if it is).
 - Talk to device — may involve many commands, may require waiting (block if so).
 - Check for errors, return info to caller. If there are queued requests, continue with next one.

Interrupt Handlers

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- Background: Something at one of the higher levels has initiated an I/O operation and blocked itself (e.g., using a semaphore). When operation completes, interrupt handler is run.
- Interrupt handler must:
 - Save state of current process so it can be restarted.
 - Deal with interrupt — acknowledge it (to interrupt controller), run interrupt service procedure to get info from device controller's registers/buffers.
 - Unblock requesting process.
 - Choose next process to run — maybe process that requested I/O, maybe interrupted process, maybe another — and do context switch.

I/O Software Layers — Example

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- As an example, sketch simplified version of what happens when an application program calls C-library function `read`. (`man 2 read` for its parameters.)

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User-Space Software Layer — C-Library `read` function

- Library function called from application program, so executes in “user space”.
- Sets up parameters — “file descriptor” constructed by previous `open` (more about files in next chapter), buffer, count — and issues `read` system call.
System call generates interrupt (trap), transferring control to system `read` function.
Eventually, control returns here, after other layers have done their work.
- Returns to caller.

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Device-Independent Software Layer — System `read` Function

- Invoked by interrupt handler for system calls, so executes in kernel mode.
- Checks parameters — is the file descriptor okay (not null, open for reading, etc.)? Returns error code if necessary.
- If buffering, checks to see whether request can be obtained from buffer. If so, copies data and returns.
- If no buffering, or not enough data in buffer, calls appropriate device driver (file descriptor indicates which one to call, other parameters such as block number) to fill buffer, then copies data and returns.

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Device-Driver Layer — Read Disk Block

- Contains code to be called by device-independent layer and also code to be called by interrupt handler.
- Maintains list of read/write requests for disk (specifying block to read and buffer).
- When called by device-independent layer, either adds request to its queue or issues appropriate commands to controller, then blocks requesting process (application program).
(This is where things become asynchronous.)
- When called by interrupt handler, transfers data to memory (unless done by DMA), unblocks requesting process, and if other requests are queued up, processes next one.

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Interrupt-Handler Layer — Read Disk Block

- Gets control when requested disk operation finishes and generates interrupt.
- Gets status and data from disk controller, unblocks waiting user process.
At this point, "call stack" (for user process) contains C library function, system `read` function, and a device-driver function. We return to the device-driver function and then unwind the stack.

Minute Essay

- What did you find most/least interesting/difficult about Homework 3?

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