CSE 451: Operating Systems
Spring 2006

Module 9
Scheduling

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Scheduling

- In discussing processes and threads, we talked about context switching
  - an interrupt occurs (device completion, timer interrupt)
  - a thread causes an exception (a *trap* or a *fault*)
- We glossed over the choice of which process or thread is chosen to be run next
  - "some thread from the ready queue"
- This decision is called scheduling
  - scheduling is policy
  - context switching is mechanism

Classes of Schedulers

- Batch
  - Throughput / utilization oriented
  - Example: audit inter-bank funds transfers each night
- Interactive
  - Response time oriented
  - Example: `attu`
- Real time
  - Deadline driven
  - Example: embedded systems (cars, airplanes, etc.)
- Parallel
  - Speedup driven
  - Example: "space-shared" use of a 1000-processor machine for large simulations
- Others…

We'll be talking primarily about interactive scheduers (as does the text).

Multiple levels of scheduling decisions

- Long term
  - Should a new "job" be "initiated," or should it be held?
  - typical of batch systems
  - what might cause you to make a "hold" decision?
- Medium term
  - Should a running program be temporarily marked as non-runnable (e.g., swapped out)?
- Short term
  - Which thread should be given the CPU next? For how long?
  - Which I/O operation should be sent to the disk next?
  - On a multiprocessor:
    - should we attempt to coordinate the running of threads from the same address space in some way?
    - should we worry about cache state (processor affinity)?

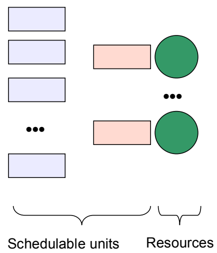
Scheduling Goals I: Performance

- Many possible metrics / performance goals (which sometimes conflict)
  - maximize CPU utilization
  - maximize throughput (`requests completed / s`)
  - minimize average response time (`average time from submission of request to completion of response`)
  - minimize average waiting time (`average time from submission of request to start of execution`)
  - minimize energy (`joules per instruction`) subject to some constraint (`e.g., frames/second`)

Scheduling Goals II: Fairness

- No single, compelling definition of "fair"
  - How to measure fairness?
    - Equal CPU consumption? (over what time scale?)
  - Fair per-user? per-process? per-thread?
  - What if one process is CPU bound and one is IO bound?
- Sometimes the goal is to be unfair:
  - Explicitly favor some particular class of requests (`priority system`), but…
  - avoid starvation (`be sure everyone gets at least some service`)

The basic situation



Scheduling:
- Who to assign each resource to
- When to re-evaluate your decisions

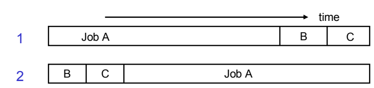
When to assign?

- Pre-emptive vs. non-preemptive schedulers
  – Non-preemptive
    - once you give somebody the green light, they've got it until they relinquish it
      – an I/O operation
      – allocation of memory in a system without swapping
  – Preemptive
    - you can re-visit a decision
      – setting the timer allows you to preempt the CPU from a thread even if it doesn't relinquish it voluntarily
      – in any modern system, if you mark a program as non-runnable, its memory resources will eventually be re-allocated to others
    - Re-assignment always involves some overhead
      – Overhead doesn't contribute to the goal of any scheduler
- We'll assume "work conserving" policies
  – Never leave a resource idle when someone wants it
    - Why even mention this? When might it be useful to do something else?

Algorithm #1: FCFS/FIFO

- First-come first-served / First-in first-out (FCFS/FIFO)
  – schedule in the order that they arrive
  – "real-world" scheduling of people in (single) lines
    - supermarkets, bank tellers, McD's, Starbucks …
  – typically non-preemptive
    - no context switching at supermarket!
  – jobs treated equally, no starvation
    - In what sense is this "fair"?
- Sounds perfect!
  – in the real world, when does FCFS/FIFO work well?
    - even then, what's it's limitation?
  – and when does it work badly?

FCFS/FIFO example



- Suppose the duration of A is 5, and the durations of B and C are each 1
  – average response time for schedule 1 (assuming A, B, and C all arrive at about time 0) is (5+6+7)/3 = 18/3 = 6
  – average response time for schedule 2 is (1+2+7)/3 = 10/3 = 3.3
  – consider also "elongation factor" – a "perceptual" measure:
    - Schedule 1: A is 5/5, B is 6/1, C is 7/1 (worst is 7, ave is 4.7)
    - Schedule 2: A is 7/5, B is 1/1, C is 2/1 (worst is 2, ave is 1.5)

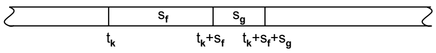
FCFS/FIFO drawbacks

- Average response time can be lousy
  – small requests wait behind big ones
- May lead to poor utilization of other resources
  – if you send me on my way, I can go keep another resource busy
  – FCFS may result in poor overlap of CPU and I/O activity

Algorithm #2: SPT/SJF

- Shortest processing time first / Shortest job first (SPT/SJF)
  – choose the request with the smallest service requirement
- *Provably optimal* with respect to average response time

SPT/SJF optimality



- In any schedule that is not SPT/SJF, there is some adjacent pair of requests f and g where the service time (duration) of f, s_f, exceeds that of g, s_g
- The total contribution to average response time of f and g is $2t_k+2s_f+s_g$
- If you interchange f and g, their total contribution will be $2t_k+2s_g+s_f$, which is smaller because $s_g < s_f$
- If the variability among request durations is zero, how does FCFS compare to SPT for average response time?

SPT/SJF drawbacks

- It's non-preemptive
  – So?
- … but there's a preemptive version – SRPT (Shortest Remaining Processing Time first) – that accommodates arrivals (rather than assuming all requests are initially available)
- Sounds perfect!
  – what about starvation?
  – can you know the processing time of a request?
  – can you guess/approximate? How?

Algorithm #3: RR

- Round Robin scheduling (RR)
  – ready queue is treated as a circular FIFO queue
  – each request is given a time slice, called a quantum
    • request executes for duration of quantum, or until it blocks
      – what signifies the end of a quantum?
    • time-division multiplexing (time-slicing)
  – great for timesharing
    • no starvation
- Sounds perfect!
  – how is RR an improvement over FCFS?
  – how is RR an improvement over SPT?
  – how is RR an approximation to SPT?
  – what are the warts?

RR drawbacks

- What if all jobs are exactly the same length?
  – What would the pessimal schedule be?
- What do you set the quantum to be?
  – no value is "correct"
    • if small, then context switch often, incurring high overhead
    • if large, then response time degrades
  – treats all jobs equally
    • if I run 100 copies of SETI@home, it degrades your service
    • how might I fix this?

Algorithm #4: Priority

- Assign priorities to requests
  – choose request with highest priority to run next
    • if tie, use another scheduling algorithm to break (e.g., RR)
  – to implement SJF, priority = expected length of CPU burst
- Abstractly modeled (and usually implemented) as multiple "priority queues"
  – put a ready request on the queue associated with its priority
- Sounds perfect!

Priority drawbacks

- How are you going to assign priorities?
- Starvation
  – if there is an endless supply of high priority jobs, no low-priority job will ever run
- Solution: "age" threads over time
  – increase priority as a function of accumulated wait time
  – decrease priority as a function of accumulated processing time
  – many ugly heuristics have been explored in this space

Combining algorithms

- In practice, any real system uses some sort of hybrid approach, with elements of FCFS, SPT, RR, and Priority
- Example: multi-level feedback queues (MLFQ)
  - there is a hierarchy of queues
  - there is a priority ordering among the queues
  - new requests enter the highest priority queue
  - each queue is scheduled RR
  - queues have different quanta
  - requests move between queues based on execution history
  - In what situations might this approximate SJF?

UNIX scheduling

- Canonical scheduler is pretty much MLFQ
  - 3-4 classes spanning ~170 priority levels
    - timesharing: lowest 60 priorities
    - system: middle 40 priorities
    - real-time: highest 60 priorities
  - priority scheduling across queues, RR within
    - process with highest priority always run first
    - processes with same priority scheduled RR
  - processes dynamically change priority
    - increases over time if process blocks before end of quantum
    - decreases if process uses entire quantum
- Goals:
  - reward interactive behavior over CPU hogs
    - interactive jobs typically have short bursts of CPU

Scheduling the Apache web server SRPT

- What does a web request consist of? (What's it trying to get done?)
- How are incoming web requests scheduled, in practice?
- How might you estimate the service time of an incoming request?
- Starvation under SRPT is a problem in theory – is it a problem in practice?
  - "Kleinrock's conservation law"

(Recent work by Bianca Schroeder and Mor Harchol-Balter at CMU)

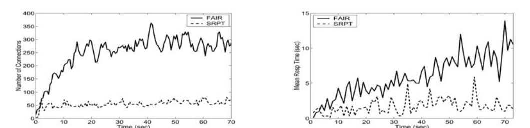


Figure 5: *Results for a persistent overload of 1.2. (Left) Buildup in connections at the server. (Right) response times.*

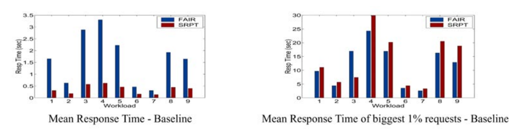


Figure 13: *Comparison of FAIR and SRPT in the baseline case for the workloads in Table 1, under the NASA trace log. The mean response times over all requests are shown left, and the mean response times of only the biggest 1% of all requests are shown right.*

Summary

- Scheduling takes place at many levels
- It can make a huge difference in performance
  - this difference increases with the variability in service requirements
- Multiple goals, sometimes conflicting
- There are many "pure" algorithms, most with some drawbacks in practice – FCFS, SPT, RR, Priority
- Real systems use hybrids
- Recent work has shown that SPT/SRPT – always known to be beneficial in principle – may be more practical in some settings than long thought