# Distributed Computing III

Murphy was an optimist

*CSSE6400* 

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May 8, 2023

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#### Answer

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- Timeout

What to do if fault is detected?

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- Retry
- Restart

### Definition 1. Idempotency

Repeating an operation does not change receiver's

state.

#### Byzantine Generals Problem



- $\bullet$  n generals need to agree on plan
- Can only communicate via messenger
- Messenger may be delayed or lost
- Some generals are traitors
  - Send dishonest messages
  - Pretend to have not received message

#### Definition 2. Byzantine Faults

Nodes in a distributed system may 'lie' – send faulty

or corrupted messages or responses.

Can we design a system to be Byzantine fault tolerant?

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Answer

Yes, but, it is *challenging*.

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- Santise inputs
  - Assume any input from external sources may be malicious
- Retrieve data from multiple sources
  - If possible
  - e.g. Multiple NTP servers

#### Assumption

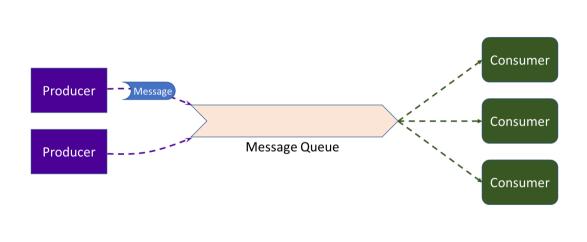
If all nodes are part of our system, we may assume there are no Byzantine faults.

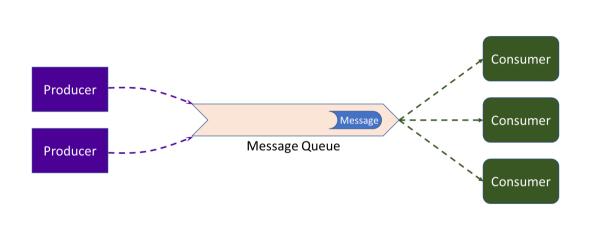
- Santise user input
- Byzantine faults may still arise
  - Logic defects
    - Same code is usually deployed to all replicated nodes, defeating easy fault tolerance solutions

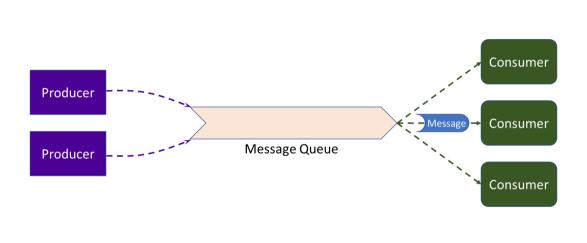
## Definition 3. Poison Message

A message that causes the receiver to fail.

# Normal Message Flow

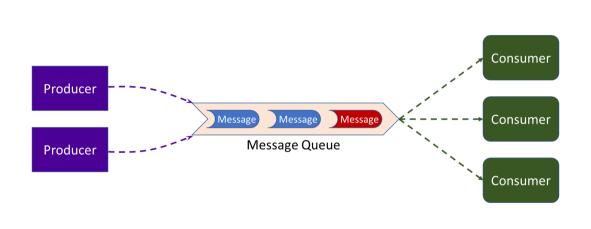


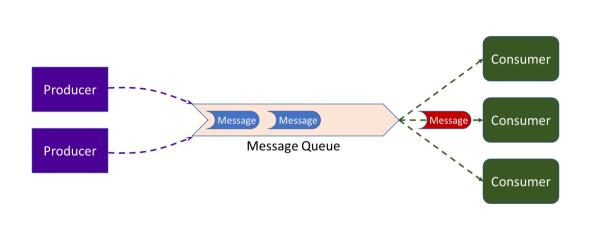


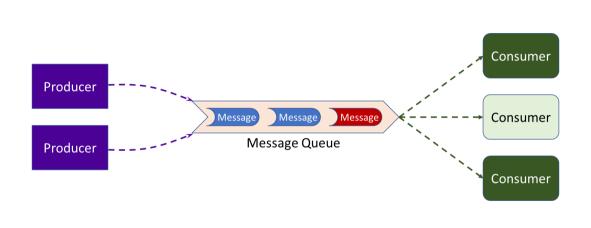


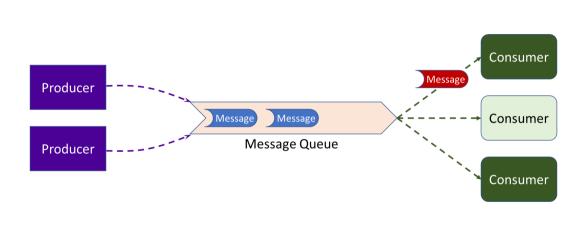
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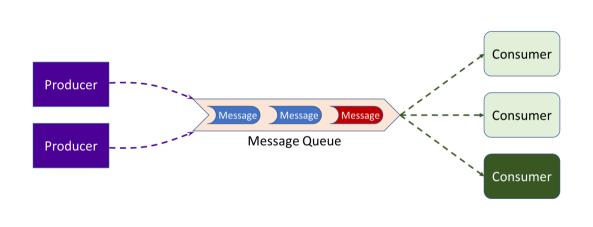












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#### Answer

- Content is invalid
  - e.g. Invalid product id sent to purchasing service
  - Error handling doesn't cater for error case
- System state is invalid
  - e.g. Add item to shopping cart that has been deleted
  - Logic doesn't handle out of order messages
    - Insidious asynchronous faults

## Detecting Poison Messages

## Retry counter – with limit

- Where is counter stored?
  - Memory What if server restarts?
  - DB Slow
  - Must ensure counter is reset, regardless of how message is handled
    - e.g. Message is manually deleted

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## Message service may have a timeout property

- Message removed from queue
  - Pending messages get older while waiting for poison message
  - Transient network faults may exceed timeout

## Detecting Poison Messages

## Monitoring service

- Trigger action if message stays at top of queue for too long
- Can check for queue errors
  - No messages are being processed
  - Restart message service

## Discard message

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## Always retry

- Requires mechanism to fix message
  - Often requires manual intervention
- Suitable when message delivery is most important
- Very long delays in processing

## Dead-letter queue

- Long transient failures result in adding many messages
  - e.g. Network failure
- Requires manual monitoring and intervention
- System must not require strict ordering of messages
- Suitable when message processing speed is important

## Retry queue

- Transient failures also added
- Use a previous strategy to deal with poison messages
- System must not require strict ordering of messages
- Suitable when message processing speed is very important
  - Main queue is never blocked
  - Receivers need to process from two message queues

## Definition 4. Poison Pill Message

Special message used to notify receiver it should no longer wait for messages.

Why use a poison pill message?

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Answer

Graceful shutdown of system.

How to order asynchronous messages?

How to order asynchronous messages?

#### Answer

- Timestamps?
  - Can't keep clocks in sync
  - Limited clock precision

# Data Issues

## Consistency

Eventual Consistency weak guarantee Linearisability strong guarantee Causal Ordering strong guarantee

#### Eventual Consistency

- Allows stale reads
- May be appropriate for some systems
  - e.g. Social media updates<sup>1</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See Distributed II slides 40 - 44.

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- Leaderless replication
  - Lock value on quorum before writing

#### Causal Order

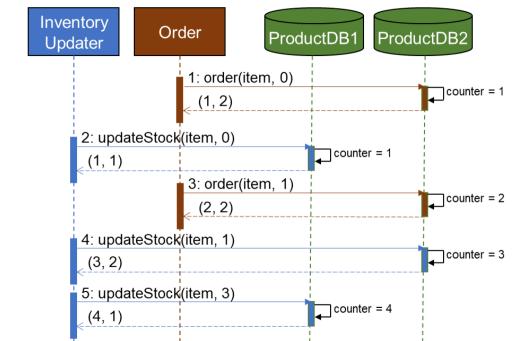
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- Single-leader replication
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  - Followers read log to execute writes
- Lamport timestamps



## Definition 5. Consensus

A set of nodes in the system agree on some aspect of the system's state.

#### Consensus Properties

Uniform Agreement All nodes must agree on the decision

Integrity Nodes can only vote once

Validity Result must have been proposed by a node

Termination Every node that doesn't crash must decide

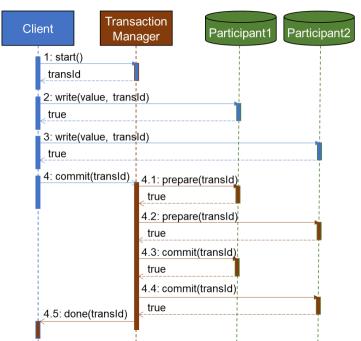
## Definition 6. Atomic Commit

All nodes participating in a distributed transaction need to form consensus to complete the transaction.

#### Two-Phase Commit

Prepare Confirm nodes can commit transaction Commit Finalise commit once consensus is reached

• Abort if consensus can't be reached



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  - Error handling to catch faults

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- Partially Synchonous System
  - Assumes important message order is preserved
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  - Error handling to catch faults
- Asynchonous System
  - No timing assumptions
  - Important message order managed by application
  - Difficult & limited design

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- Crash Stop
  - Node fails and never restarts
- Crash Recovery
  - Node fails and restarts
    - Requires persistent memory to recover to close to prior state
- Arbitrary Failure
  - Nodes may perform spurious or malicious actions
    - Byzantine faults

- Distributed systems are hard to build
- Large systems have to be distributed
- Monoliths can't scale to millions of users

• Use environments, tools & libraries

• Leaverage others' experience