

ENCE360 Assignment 2022

Introduction

This assignment comes with a single program, `serial.c`, that completes a menial task - numerical integration. As is, the program prompts the user for a number range, a number of slices, and the index of the function it should integrate over this range.

We will modify this file in two main ways:

- After reading the user's prompts, the calculation will be handled by a child process. The parent process will take user requests, and spawn a child process to handle the task. This is similar to how an operating system's terminal works.
- We will multithread the integration. This will simply make it run faster.

We will then combine these two modifications together.

Notes:

- All programs will need to be compiled with the `-lm` flag on the end. Anything involving threads will additionally need the `-lpthread` flag.
- All programs should compile with `-Wall -Werror`, so fix those warnings!

1. Spawning Task Processes

Your first task is to make a modified version of the supplied program Copy `serial.c` and name the copy `process.c`. This program will run the function `integrateTrap()` inside a child process. The parent process should then re-prompt for input. This means you'll be able to have several queries running at once. Your code should have a maximum number of worker processes - if the number of children is already at this maximum, it should not prompt for input until one of the children finishes. Signals will be needed to get this to work.

As a starting point, I suggest you `#define` a `MAX_CHILDREN` macro, and declare a `static` global variable `numChildren`.

2. Multithreaded Execution

Make another copy of the original `serial.c`, this time named `thread.c`. No processes or `fork()`ing this time, just threading.

Your program should contain a `#define` for the number of threads to split the work between. Split the work of the integration equally between a fixed number of threads by splitting up the range. For example, the prompt `-1 1 16 1` run with 4 worker threads should split the 16 slices evenly, 4 slices per thread.

You *must* declare a variable within `main()` that each thread writes to when completed, the access to which is controlled with a mutex. While this is not strictly necessary for a simple integration, it is for the general case where the threads take different times to execute.

I suggest you define a `struct` containing the arguments we want each thread to have access to, and make an array of these within your `main()` function. The `integrateTrap()` function will need to be modified to take a pointer to this `struct` as its argument, as a `void*`.

Be sure to check your implementation for correctness. On a modern (last 5 years) computer, should notice a significant speedup roughly proportional to the number of threads used - ie, using 4 threads, the program should run 4 times faster than `serial.c`.

3. Multithreaded Worker Processes

The final step is to combine these two modifications into a third new file, `processThread.c`. This should allow multiple jobs to be run at once, *and* be faster than `process.c`, especially when handling one task at a time.

This one should only require a few modifications given the code you've already written. Again, make sure you check for correctness by comparing it to the supplied code's answers.

4. Report

Once you've written these three programs, also write a short, 2-3 page report describing and explaining the performance differences you see between them. In order to test this, you'll want to remove the delay caused by a human typing in the tasks. You can do this by feeding an input file in as follows:

```
./a.out < testCases.txt
```

You should test with more than just the sample `testCases.txt` provided. Your report should contain at least one graph showing how the program performances compare.

Depending on the computer you're running your tests on, varying both the number of threads and the maximum number of child processes may produce very different results, which could be good to talk about.

Avoid testing your code on a virtual machine (for example, though WSL on Windows) - running the program natively (for example, on the Linux lab machines) will give you much more to discuss in your report.

You will submit both this report and your source files. Make sure your code is laid out sensibly and is easy to follow.

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