Thread basics

Threads and processes

- Every program you run starts a process
 - A process is the entity associated with a running program that owns the resources of the running program and that is scheduled and managed by the operating system.
 - A process has its own address space, open files, is allocated physical memory, etc.
- Every process has at least one thread
 - A thread has its own program counter and registers
 - System resources used by the thread are owned by the process
 - In particular, all threads associated with a process share the same address space.

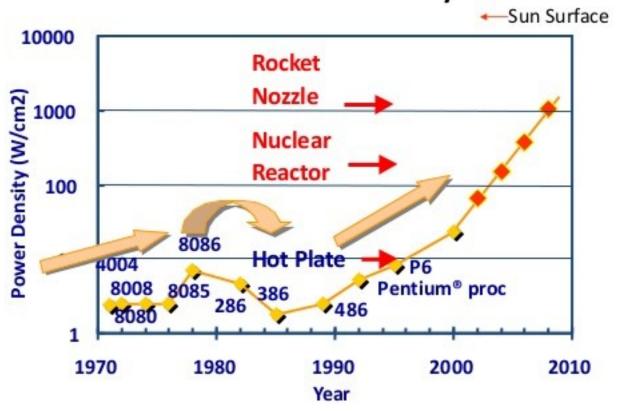
Why use threads?

- Easier programming
 - Many tasks whose execution needs to appear to be interleaved/happening at the same time
 - Some tasks can run forever (e.g., watch for mouse input)
 - Having a loop iterate over them and making sure each tasks gets its share of the processor can lead to complex programs
- Better performance
 - To use all of the cores in a multicore processor we need at least one thread for each core

Why multicores

- Life was simpler when processor clock rates doubled every couple of years or so
- Processors got faster, enabling more complicated software, when motivated faster processors (and buying a new machine) which motivated even more complicated software...
- If something cannot go on forever, it will stop. -- Stein's Law, first pronounced in the 1980s by Herbert Stein
 - Always true of exponentials
 - E = 1/2*C*V², where E is energy, C is capacitance and V is voltage.
 - Higher frequencies require higher voltages
 - More cores increase C, which increases energy linearly

Power density

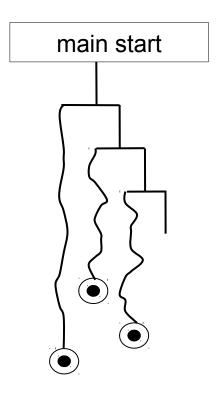


Power density too high to keep junctions at low temp

Java offers good support for multithreading

Java Thread

```
class YourClass extends Thread {
   public void run () {
       // code for the thread, i.e. what it does
public static void main(String [] args) {
   YourClass t1 = new YourClass("...");
   t1.start();
```



Thread Execution Time

One core or processor

t1			t1			t1		
	t2				t2		t2	
		t3		t3				t3

>= 2 cores or processors

t1	t1		t1	t1		t1	t1	
t2		t2		t2	t2		t2	t2
	t3	t3	t3		t3	t3		t3

time

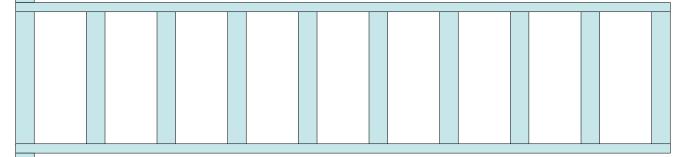
Many Threads, Few Processors

- advantages of many threads, even on single processor
 - impression of continuous progress in all threads
 - improve utilization of different components
 - handle user inputs more quickly
- disadvantage of many threads
 - add slight work to program structure
 - adds scheduling overhead
 - incur overhead in thread creation
 - cause complex interleaving the execution and possibly wrong results (if you do not think "in parallel")

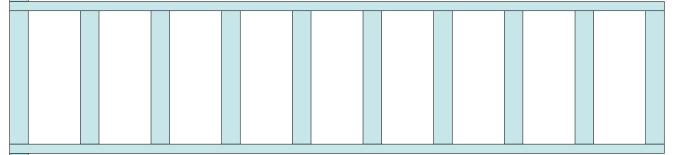
A typical *numerical* program has sequential periods of execution followed by parallel periods followed by sequential periods followed by parallel

periods

As programmers, we can spawn new threads at the start of a parallel phase, and kill them at the end of the phase



Or we can start the threads once, and at the end of a parallel period put them into a pool to be reused at the next parallel period



Or have them suspend to begin working again

A Second Reason for Threads

- Let say you have a game that is handling multiple players and characters
- The game also needs to monitor keyboard input, mouse clicks, etc.
- There are several ways to code this
 - One big loop that goes over everything
 - A thread that monitors input and an action loop
 - A thread for input and each character

One big loop

```
while (true) {
 check if new input, if so, put on the input queue // what if
   // we need to pause to check what is coming next to
   // complete a command to put on the input queue?
  update char1 action
  update char2 action
 update charn action
```

Using two threads (changed)

```
Thread 0:
    Check for input, clean it up, put on an input queue

Thread 1:
while (true) {
    update char1 action
    update char2 action
```

update charn action

Using many threads (changed)

```
Thread 0:
    Check for input, clean it up, put on an input queue
Thread 1:
  char<sub>1</sub> actions
Thread n:
  update charn action
```

Two ways to spawn threads in Java First Way

```
public class myThread extends Thread {
  public void run( ) {
   // thread actions here
myThread\ t1 = new\ Mythread(...);
t1.start(); // indirectly invokes t1.run()
```

- Inherit from the Thread class
- Invoke the run method on the object via the start method call
- We don't have to write start -- it comes for free (inherited from Thread)
- The run method can be viewed as the "main" method of the thread

Two ways to spawn threads in Java Second Way

```
public class myRunnable
  extends C implements runnable {
  public myRunnable() {
    // constructor stuff
  public void run() {
    // thread actions here
  }
  ....
}
```

- Implement Runnable interface
- Invoke the start method on the Thread object
- The start method calls the run method after some underlying system actions.

Thread t1 = new Thread(new MyRunnable()).start();

From a discussion on StackOverflow

http://stackoverflow.com/questions/541487/implements-runnable-vs-extends-thread

Moral of the story:

Inherit only if you want to override some behavior.

Or rather it should be read as:

Inherit less, interface more.

Or, in other words, implementing *Runnable* is preferable to *extends Thread*

Calling run directly does not start a new thread

The difference between run and start

Sai Hegde at http://www.coderanch.com/t/234040/threads/java/Difference-between-run-start-method

```
1.Thread t1 = new Thread();
2.Thread t2 = new Thread();
3.t1.run();
4.t2.run();
```

t1.run() is guaranteed to completely execute before t2.run, i.e. it does not execute the two run calls asynchronously with the calling code. The run method is executed with the same thread that calls t1.run() and t1.run().

Often not useful.

Calling run does not start a new Thread

```
1.Thread t1 = new Thread();
2.Thread t2 = new Thread();
3.t1.run();
4.t2.run();
```

t1.run and t2.run will execute one after the other like any other method call

Calling start does start a new Thread

```
1.Thread t1 = new Thread();
2.Thread t2 = new Thread();
3.t1.start();
4.t2.start();
```

t1.start and t2.start can, and usually will, execute asynchronously with respect to one another *and* the calling thread.

An attempt at a humorous example of this

```
private class LawnMower extends Thread {
  public void run() {
    cutTheGrass();
public void doChoresFirstThenReadComics() {
  new LawnMower.run();
  readComics();
public void readComicsWhileSomeoneElseDoesChores() {
  new LawnMower.start();
  readComics();
```

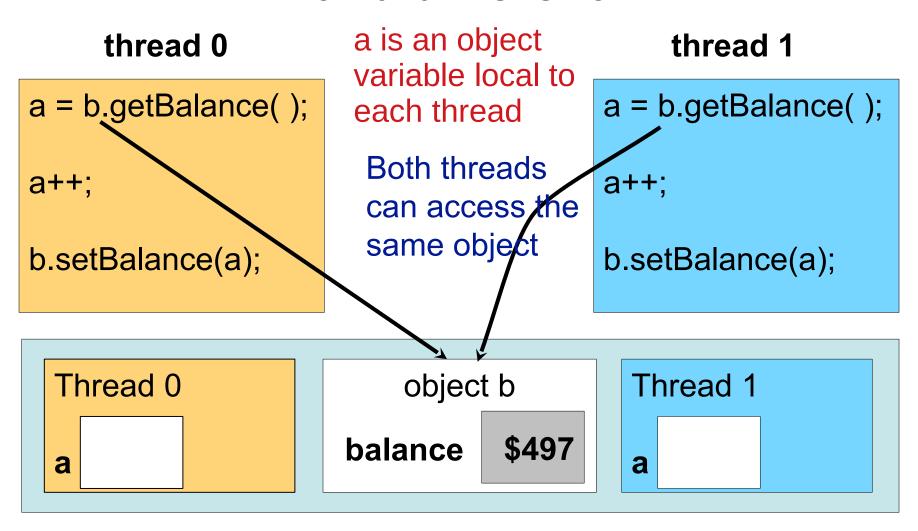
What happens with start?

- Thread t1 = new Thread() creates a new Java Thread object.
- *t1.run()* invokes the run method on that object
- To get asynchronous execution, a new thread, i.e., a new locus of control, needs to be created.
- This is what start does.
 - When start is executed, it creates a new system thread (generally an OS thread on most implementations)
 - it executes the run method in that new thread.
 - This is what lets the actions performed by the run method execute asynchronously with other code.

All threads for a given process share memory

- If thread T0 writes a value to X, and thread T1 reads X, the value of X will (eventually) change
- The major challenge of writing correct multi-threaded programs is managing accesses to variable shared across different threads

ordering and atomicity are important and different



Program Memory

```
a = b.getBalance();
a++;
b.setBalance(a);
```

thread 1

```
a = b.getBalance();
a++;
b.setBalance(a);
```

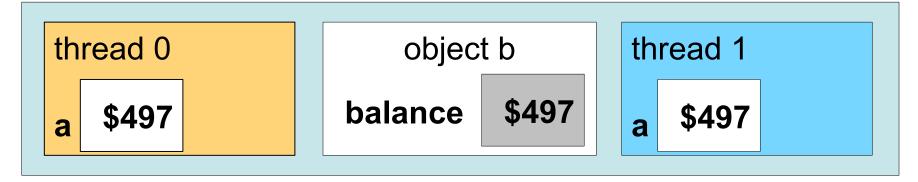


Program Memory

```
a = b.getBalance();
a++;
b.setBalance(a);
```

thread 1

```
a = b.getBalance();
a++;
b.setBalance(a);
```



Program Memory

```
a = b.getBalance();
a++;
b.setBalance(a);
```

thread 1

```
a = b.getBalance();
a++;
b.setBalance(a);
```



Program Memory

a = b.getBalance();a++;b.setBalance(a);

The end result probably should have been \$499.
One update is lost.

thread 1

```
a = b.getBalance();
a++;
b.setBalance(a);
```



Program Memory

synchronization enforces atomicity

thread 0

synchronized(b) { a = b.getBalance(); a++; b.setBalance(a); }

Make them atomic using synchronized

thread 1

```
synchronized(b) {
  a = b.getBalance();
  a++;
  b.setBalance(a);
}
```

```
thread 0

balance $497

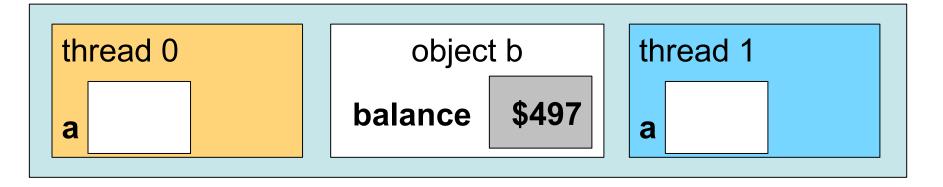
thread 1

a
```

Program Memory

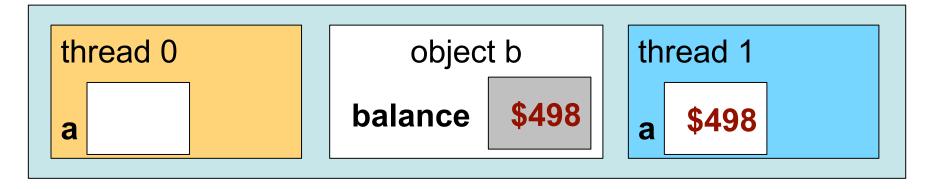
```
synchronized(b) {
  a = b.getBalance();
  a++;
  b.setBalance(a);
}
```

```
synchronized(b) {
  a = b.getBalance();
  a++;
  b.setBalance(a);
}
```



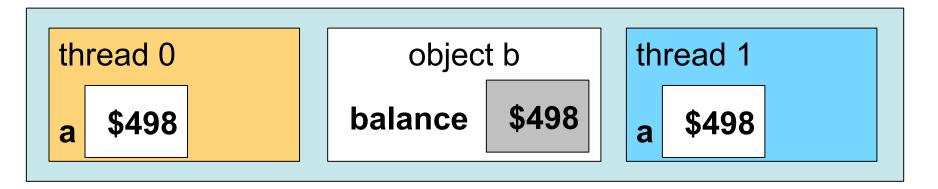
```
synchronized(b) {
  a = b.getBalance();
  a++;
  b.setBalance(a);
}
```

```
synchronized(b) {
  a = b.getBalance();
  a++;
  b.setBalance(a);
}
```



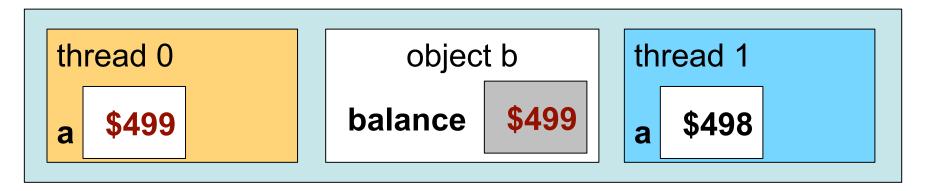
```
synchronized(b) {
  a = b.getBalance();
  a++;
  b.setBalance(a);
}
```

```
synchronized(b) {
  a = b.getBalance();
  a++;
  b.setBalance(a);
}
```



```
synchronized(b) {
  a = b.getBalance();
  a++;
  b.setBalance(a);
}
```

```
synchronized(b) {
  a = b.getBalance();
  a++;
  b.setBalance(a);
}
```



Locks typically do not enforce ordering

```
synchronized(b) {
  a = b.getBalance();
  a++;
  b.setBalance(a);
}
```

Either order is possible

```
For many (but not all) programs, either order is correct
```

```
synchronized(b) {
  a = b.getBalance();
  a++;
  b.setBalance(a);
}
```

```
synchronized(b) {
  a = b.getBalance();
  a++;
  b.setBalance(a);
}
```

```
synchronized(b) {
  a = b.getBalance();
  a++;
  b.setBalance(a);
}
```

Java Locks

- Every object can be locked
- the code synchronized(b) {stmt_list} says that no other code synchronized on the object referenced by b can execute at the same time as stmt_list in the thread holding the lock.
- By locking on objects accessed in a block of code, the operations can be made atomic. Assume the code accesses objects o1 and o2:
 - Any other code accessing o1 and o2 has to synchronize on at least one lock that is the same
 - Simply getting a lock does not make the code atomic:
 it is necessary for other code to cooperate and try and get at least one lock that is the same
 - This violates encapsulation, but life is tough

```
synchronized (o2 Wrong - no
synchronized(o1) {
                         o1.foo();
   o1.foo();
                                       synchronizati
   o2.bar();
                         o2.bar();
                                       on assuming
                                       o1, o2
                                       different
                      synchronized(o1) objects
synchronized(o1) {
   o1.foo();
                         o1.foo();
                                       Works –
                         o2.bar();
   o2.bar();
                                       synchronized
                                       assuming o1
                                       is same in
                                       both calls
                      synchronized(o2) {
synchronized(o2) {
                                        Works -
                         o1.foo();
   o1.foo();
                                        synchronized
   o2.bar();
                         o2.bar();
                                        assuming o1
                                        is same in
                                        both calls
```

```
synchronized(o3) { synchronized(o3)
   o1.foo();
                        o1.foo();
                                        Works
   o2.bar();
                        o2.bar();
synchronized(o1) {
                       synchronized(o1) {
   synchronized (o2)
                          synchronized (o2)
   o1.foo();
                                            Works
                          o1.foo();
   o2.bar();
                          o2.bar();
synchronized(o2) {
                      synchronized(o2) {
   synchronized (o1)
                         synchronized (o1)
                                            Works
  o1.foo();
                         o1.foo();
                         o2.bar();
  o2.bar();
```

Acquiring multiple locks can lead to deadlock

When doing multithreaded programming, assume that anything bad that can happen will happen if it is not prevented from happening by locks or other mechanisms.

Bugs involving races, deadlock, etc. are incredibly hard to find because the program behavior is non-deterministic.

Can lead to deadlock

```
synchronized(o1) {
    synchronized(o2)
    o1.foo();
    o2.bar();
}
```

```
synchronized(o2) {
    synchronized(o1)
    o1.foo(); very
    o2.bar(); dangerous
}
```



Can lead to deadlock

o1 lock

The left thread cannot get o2's lock, the right thread cannot get o1's lock, so neither thread can finish and release their locks -- deadlock!

o2 lock

Can lead to deadlock

o1 lock

There is always an ordering cycle in programs that can deadlock.

o2 lock

Synchronized methods

```
Class B {
   synchronized void foo(T o1) {
      o1.foo();
      o2.bar();
B b = new B();
b.foo(ox);
```

When foo is invoked, a lock is acquired on object ref'd by b, not ox

Synchronized methods - how this works

```
Class B {
   synchronized void foo(T o1, B this) {
      o1.foo();
      o2.bar();
B b = new B();
b.foo(ox, b);
```

When foo is invoked, a lock is acquired on object ref'd by b, not ox

Synchronized method semantics

```
Class B {
   synchronized void foo(T o1) {
      o1.foo();
      o2.bar();
                    As if a lock is acquired on the
                    this, i.e. synchronized(this) within
Class B {
                    the method.
   void foo(T o1) {
      synchronized(this) {
          o1.foo();
          o2.bar();
```

Synchronized methods

```
There will
Class B {
                                         be a race on
 static T obj = null;
                                         the access to
 B(T t) \{obj = t;\}
                                         B.obj.f (i.e.
 synchronized void foo(Object o1) {
                                         oX.f) in the
   B.obj.f = \dots
                                         calls to
                                         bl.foo and
                                         b2.foo.
             Thread 0
                                       Thread 1
B b1 = new B(oX);
                                B b2 = new B(oX);
b1.foo();
                                 b2.foo();
```

Synchronized methods

```
Class B {
                                       object
 static T obj = null;
                           lock on b1
                                      foo() {
                           object
                                       B.obj.f
 B(T t) \{obj = t;\}
                                                   object
 synchronized void foo(Object o1) {
                                                  10X
   B.obj.f = \dots
                                      b1
                                                  float f
                                      object
                                      foo() {
                   lock on b2 object
                                      B.obj.f
                                         Thread
             Thread 0
B b1 = new B(oX);
                                 B b2 = new B(oX);
b1.foo();
                                 b2.foo();
```

In this case synchronize on B.obj

```
Class B {
                                      Both threads
 T obj = null;
                                      now
 B(T t) \{obj = t;\}
                                      synchronize
 synchronized void foo(Object o1) {
                                      on the field
   synchronize(obj) {
                                      being
     obj.f = \dots
                                      accessed
            Thread 0
                                   Thread 1
                            B b2 = new B(oX);
B b1 = new B(oX);
 b1.foo();
                             b2.foo();
```

Synchronized methods

```
Class B {
                                       b1
                        lock on b1
                                       object
 T obj = null;
                        obj object
                                       foo() {
 B(T t) \{obj = t;\}
                                       B.obj.f
 synchronized void foo(Object o1) {
                                                   object
   synchronize(obj) {
                                                  10X
                                       b1
     obj.f = \dots
                                                   float f
                                       object
                                      foo() {
                   lock on obj object
                                       B.obj.f
                                         Thread
             Thread 0
 B b1 = new B(oX);
                                  B b2 = new B(oX);
 b1.foo();
                                  b2.foo();
```

A general rule

- To avoid races do one of the following
 - Always synchronize on the shared object
 - Always synchronize on another object that is used everywhere in the program to synchronize the shared object(s) -- requires communication among the developers of the other parts of the program.

A general rule - first case

- To avoid races do one of the following
 - Always synchronize on the shared object(s)
 - Always synchronize on another object that is used everywhere in the program to synchronize the shared object

See the class B example three slides back

Be careful about deadlock!

A general rule - second case

- To avoid races do one of the following
 - Always synchronize on the shared object
 - Always synchronize on another object that is used everywhere in the program to synchronize the shared object

We will consider the code below

An example of the second case

```
synchronized(o1) {
                         synchronized(o2) {
     synchronized(o2)
                            synchronized(o1)
     o1.foo();
                            o1.foo();
     o2.bar();
                            o2.bar();
         class Lock {
          static I1 = new Object();
synchronized(Lock.l1) { synchronized(Lock.l1) {
   o1.foo();
                            o1.foo();
   o2.bar();
                            o2.bar();
```

Question: Why not always use a single lock to synchronize everything?

Weird things happen without proper synchronization

```
What is the purpose of this code? What value(s) can be printed for v1? Does the while loop end?
```

```
Executes before threads are spawned newVal = 0;
```

flag = 0

Thread 1

Thread 0

Weird things happen without proper synchronization

Executes before threads are spawned

```
newVal = 0; flag = 0
```

The bold line orders (and the dotted transitive order) are *NOT* guaranteed by Java and most languages. E.g., this would be an is an undefined C++ program.

Thread 1

Thread 0

```
while (C.flag == 0);
C.newVal = 52;
v1 = C.newVal;
C.flag = 1;
System.out.println(v1);
```

Weird things happen without proper synchronization

Executes before threads are spawned

```
newVal = 0; flag = 0
```

No guarantee the **while** will ever end No guarantee v1 will get the value assigned in Thread 0.

Thread 0

C.newVal =
$$52$$
;

$$C.flag = 1;$$

Thread 1

```
while (C.flag = 0);
```

System.out.println(v1);

What causes the problem?

Executes before threads are spawned

$$newVal = 0;$$
 flag = 0

Compiler, processor or memory subsystem may reorder instructions. Register allocation may keep value of *flag* in the *while* loop in a register.

Thread 1

Thread 0

System.out.println(v1);

Executes before threads are spawned

```
newVal = 0;
flag = 0
```

obj must be a reference to the same object in all threads

Thread 1

Thread 0

```
synchronized(obj) {
   C.newVal = 52;
   C.flag = 1;
}
```

```
synchronize(obj) {f = C.flag;}
while (f == 0) {
   synchronize(obj) {f = C.flag;}
}
```

v1 = C.newVal;

System.out.println(v1);

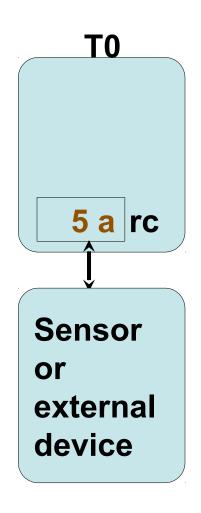
Synchronized also makes sure values are updated

- Compilers attempt to store values in registers
- Even if the cache entry for a variable is invalidated, the old or stale value may remain in a register
- When encountering a synchronized block in thread T, Java makes sure that
 - Values in registers accessed by T's code are refreshed (reload the registers from memory/cache)
 - Reads and Writes to memory initiated by thread T prior to the synchronized block are finished
- Before leaving a synchronized block Java makes sure that
 - all reads and writes have finished, i.e., the value are in memory.

Thus, synchronization does three things

- It enforces atomicity by letting the programmer only allow one thread at a time to access storage locations inside of synchronized code
- It forces the compiler to get fresh values for variables stored in registers
- It forces the compiler to write updated values to global memory

Volatile variables



- In embedded devices and controllers it is common to have a sensor/external device automatically update registers on the processors
- Program variables that contain values from this register should be updated every time they are read
- Volatile variables in Java can also be used to force threads to update values and write values within a synchronized block
- Use of volatile can decrease performance

Even long data types require attention

Not all primitive stores are atomic

```
public class C {
    static long li
= 0;
}
```

```
Thread 0 Thread 1 ... C.li = Long.MAX VALUE(); C.li = 0;
```

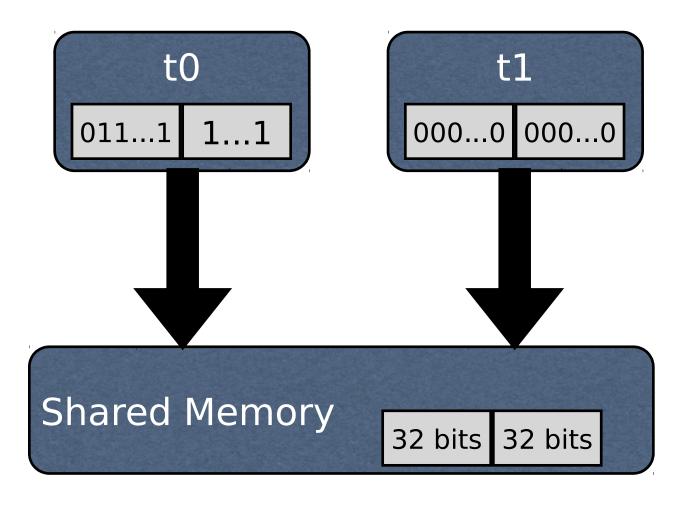
What are the allowed values for *C.li* after both stores (assuming they are unsynchronize)?

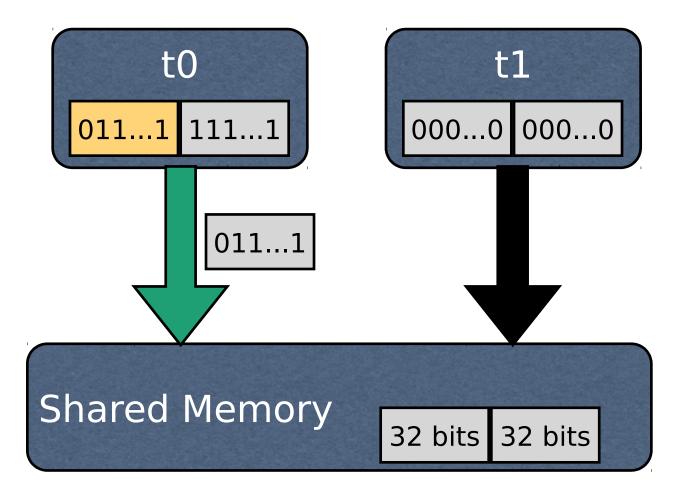
Not all primitive stores are atomic

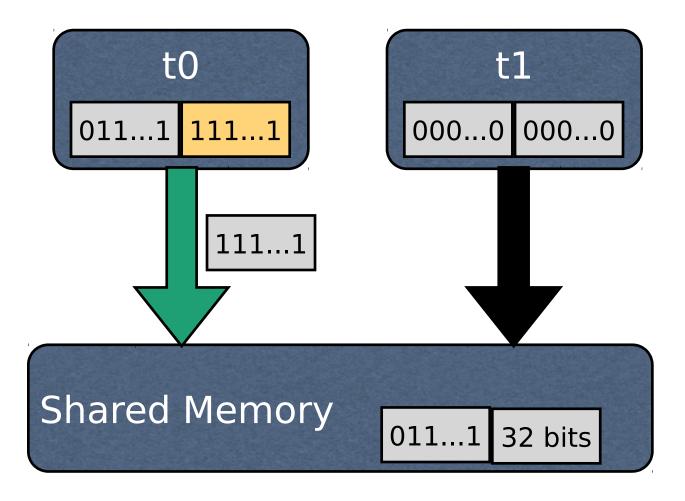
four values possible:

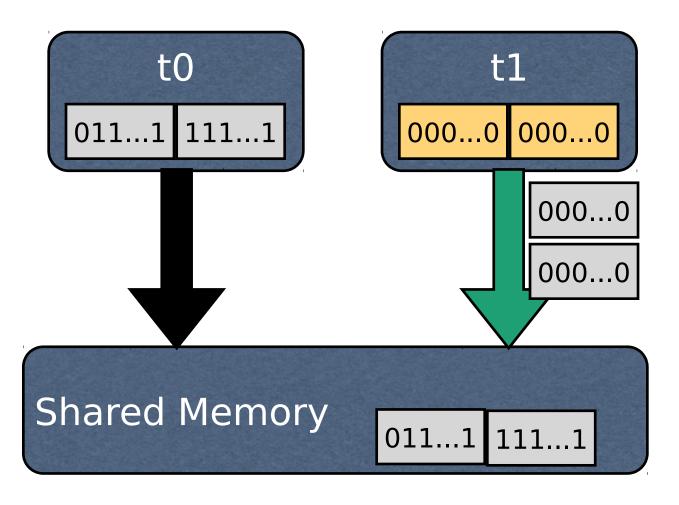
```
MAX_VALUE, 0,
MAX_VALUE & 32(1).32(0) (32 1 bits followed by 32 0 bits)
MAX_VALUE & 32(0).32(1) (32 0 bits followed by 32 1 bits)
```

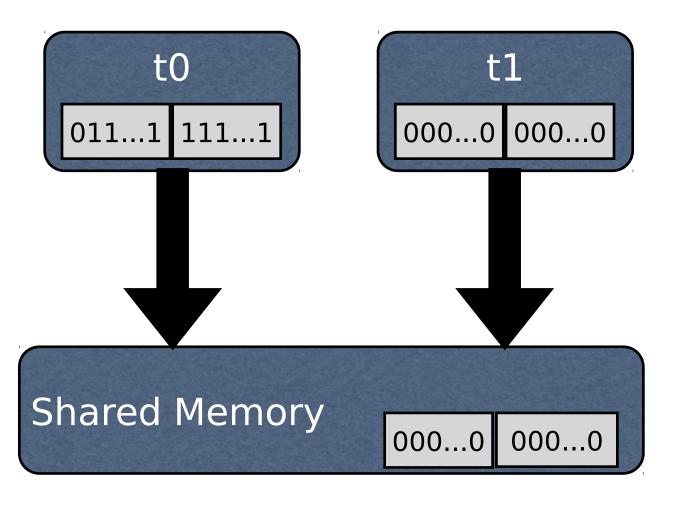
Why have such an abomination?



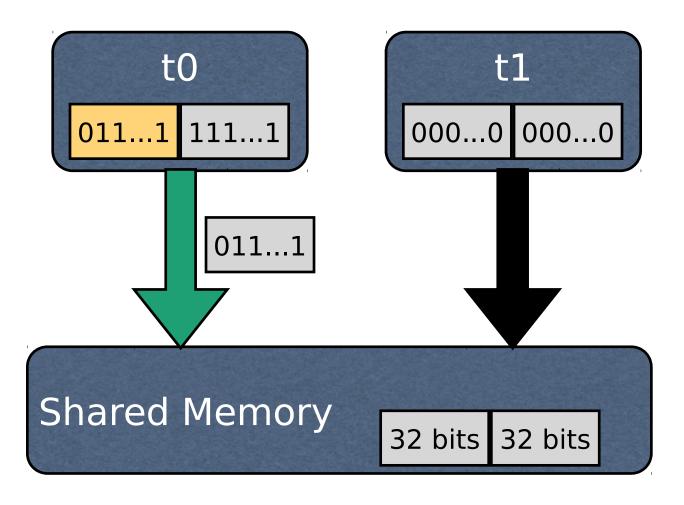


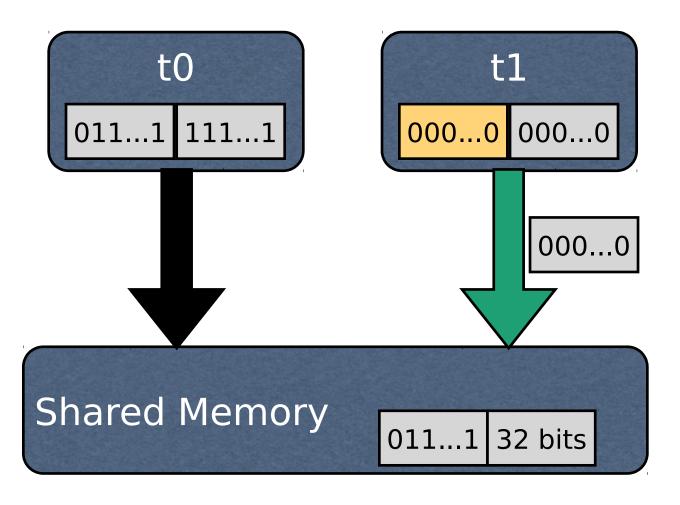


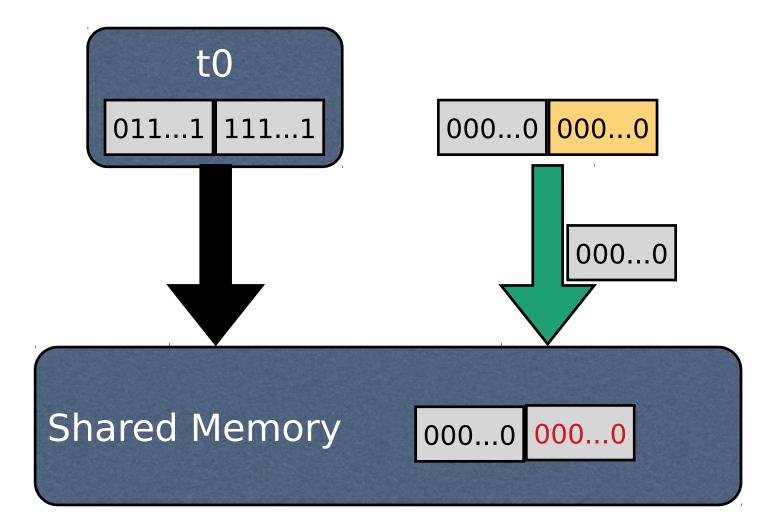


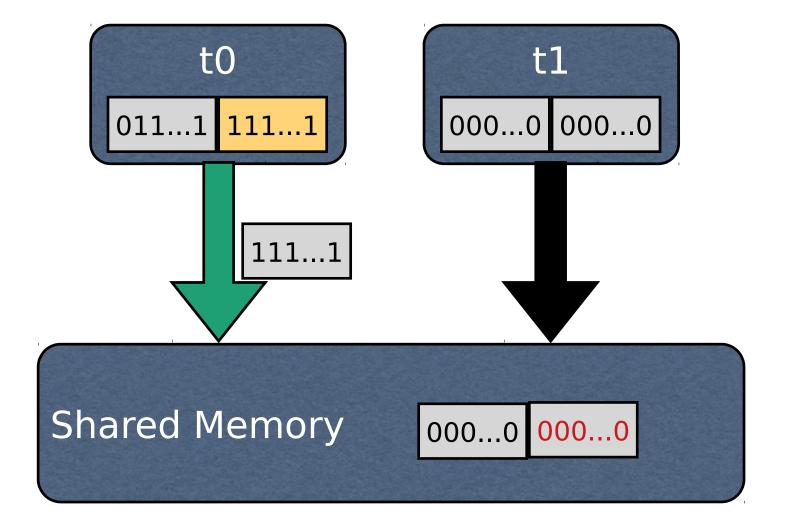


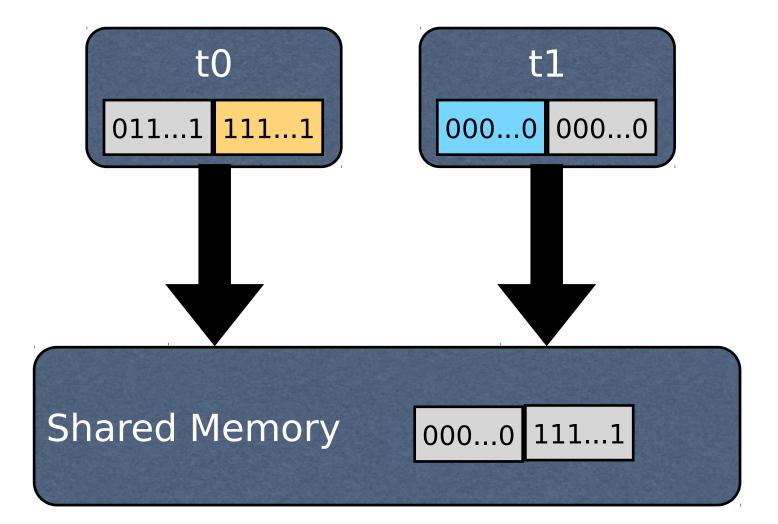
The wrong thing happens



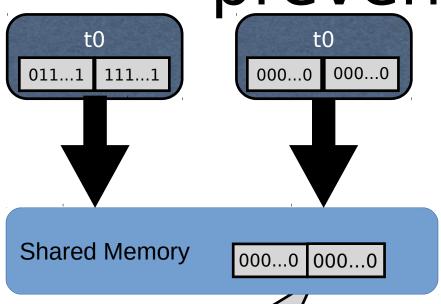








Orders not prevented can happen - so prevent them



Synchronization forces one or the other write to finish before the other begins

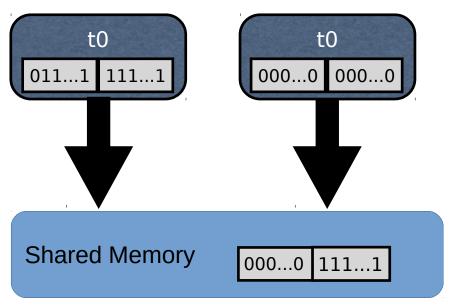
Thread 0

```
...
synchronized(C) {
    C.li = Long.MAX_VALUE();
}
```

Thread 1

```
...
synchronized(C) {
    C.li = 0;
}
```

Not just a Java problem



This problem will occur with any language unless

- 1. the language spec/compiler enforce the atomicity of the writes
- 2. the hardware enforces atomicity of multi-word writes (and program will not be portable)

Why don't all language specs prevent this?

- The problem has three sources:
 - 1. The program has a race
 - 2. Synchronization is not free
 - 3. Writing specs that cover what a racy program means is hard, as in really, really hard
- Programmers should not write racy programs unless they really, really, REALLY know what they are doing -- and even then they probably don't (search for double-lock idiom)
- If atomicity for atomics is provided by default, all stores of multi-word primitives will be slower to help poorly written programs

From the Java Language Specification, 2nd edition, Chapter 17

In the absence of explicit synchronization, an implementation is free to update the main memory in an order that may be surprising. *Therefore the programmer who prefers to avoid surprises should use explicit synchronization.*

Join/Wait/Notify/NotifyAll

 These are all Java provided methods to allow you to control the execution order of threads.

```
Thread t1 = new Thread(. . .);
...
t1.join()
```

- This code blocks until t1 completes. join is inherited from a thread class
- join (long millis) waits milliseconds for the thread to die
- join (long millis, int nanos) waits millis
 milliseconds and nanos nanoseconds for the thread to die

Wait()

- A method in Object
- Puts the thread that executes the wait method in the wait queue associated with the object's monitor (lock) where it stays until another thread executes a notify (and it is chosen) or notifyAll or it is interrupted
 - the thread wanting to wait must own the monitor
 - threads own monitors
 - By executing a synchronized instance method of that object.
 - By executing the body of a synchronized statement that synchronizes on the object.
 - For objects of type Class, by executing a synchronized static method of that class.

Notify

- A method in Object
- notify wake up a single thread waiting on the executing object's monitor. You don't get to pick the thread. The woken up thread acquires the monitor.
 - the notifying thread must own the monitor
 - the notified thread competes with other threads to acquire the monitor as soon as the notifying thread relinquishes it
- notifyAll wakes up all such threads and puts them all into the locks blocked queue. Only one notified thread will acquire the lock and continue on. The others will wait in the blocked queue for the lock to be released and then acquire it, one-by-one.
- Use notify when all threads accessing the resource are the same. Use notifyAll otherwise. As a general rule, if no specific reason to use notify, use notifyAll.

Stop

stop()

Deprecated. This method is inherently unsafe. Stopping a thread with Thread.stop causes it to unlock all of the monitors that it has locked (as a natural consequence of the unchecked ThreadDeath exception propagating up the stack). If any of the objects previously protected by these monitors were in an inconsistent state, the damaged objects become visible to other threads, potentially resulting in arbitrary behavior. Many uses of stop should be replaced by code that simply modifies some variable to indicate that the target thread should stop running. The target thread should check this variable regularly, and return from its run method in an orderly fashion if the variable indicates that it is to stop running. If the target thread waits for long periods (on a condition variable, for example), the interrupt method should be used to interrupt the wait.

Notify/Wait example

```
public class BlockingQueue<T> {
  private Queue<T> queue = new LinkedList<T>();
  private int capacity;
  public BlockingQueue(int capacity) {
    this.capacity = capacity;
  // code to add and remove elements to/from the queue
```

Notify/Wait example continued

```
public synchronized void put(T element) throws
   InterruptedException {
   while(queue.size() == capacity) {
      wait();
                                       item 0
   queue.add(element);
   notifyAll();
                                       item 1
                                       item 2
           wait queue
                                       item n
               T0
```

Notify/Wait example continued

```
public synchronized void put(T element) throws
   InterruptedException {
   while(queue.size() == capacity) {
      wait();
                                         item 0
   queue.add(element);
   notifyAll();
                                         item 1
                         blocked queue
                                         item 2
          wait queue
              T0
                                         item n
```

Notify/Wait example continued

```
public synchronized T take() throws
   InterruptedException {
   while(queue.isEmpty()) {
      wait();
                                             item 0
   T item = queue.remove();
                                             item 1
   notifyAll();
   return item;
                                             item 2
                             blocked queue
              wait queue
                                  T0
                                             item n-1
```