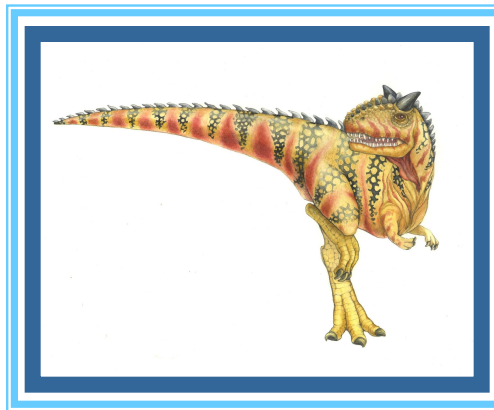


# Chapter 4: Threads & Concurrency

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# Outline

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- Overview
- Multicore Programming
- Multithreading Models
- Thread Libraries
- Implicit Threading
- Threading Issues
- Operating System Examples





# Objectives

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- Identify the basic components of a thread, and contrast threads and processes
- Describe the benefits and challenges of designing multithreaded applications
- Illustrate different approaches to implicit threading including thread pools, fork-join, and Grand Central Dispatch
- Describe how the Windows and Linux operating systems represent threads
- Design multithreaded applications using the Pthreads, Java, and Windows threading APIs





# Motivation

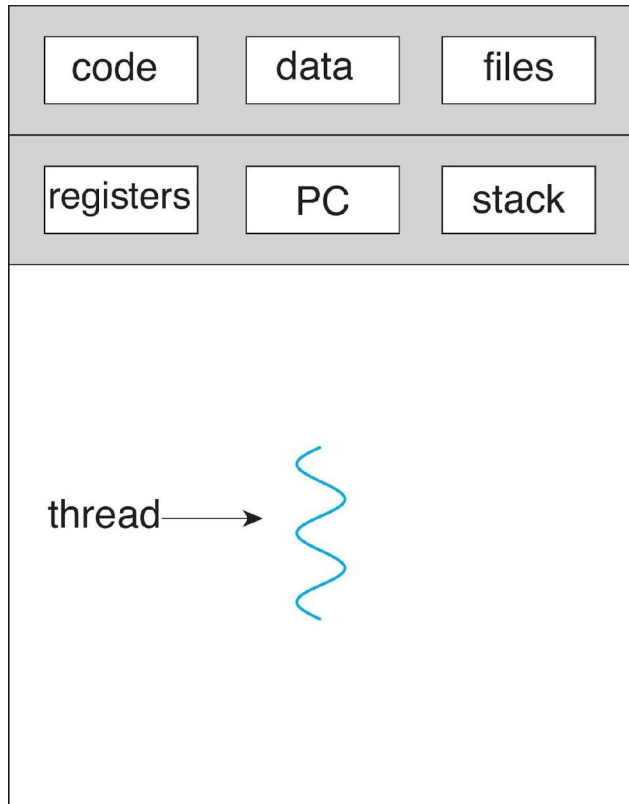
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- Most modern applications are multithreaded
- Threads run within application
- Multiple tasks with the application can be implemented by separate threads
  - Update display
  - Fetch data
  - Spell checking
  - Answer a network request
- Process creation is heavy-weight while thread creation is light-weight
- Can simplify code, increase efficiency
- Kernels are generally multithreaded

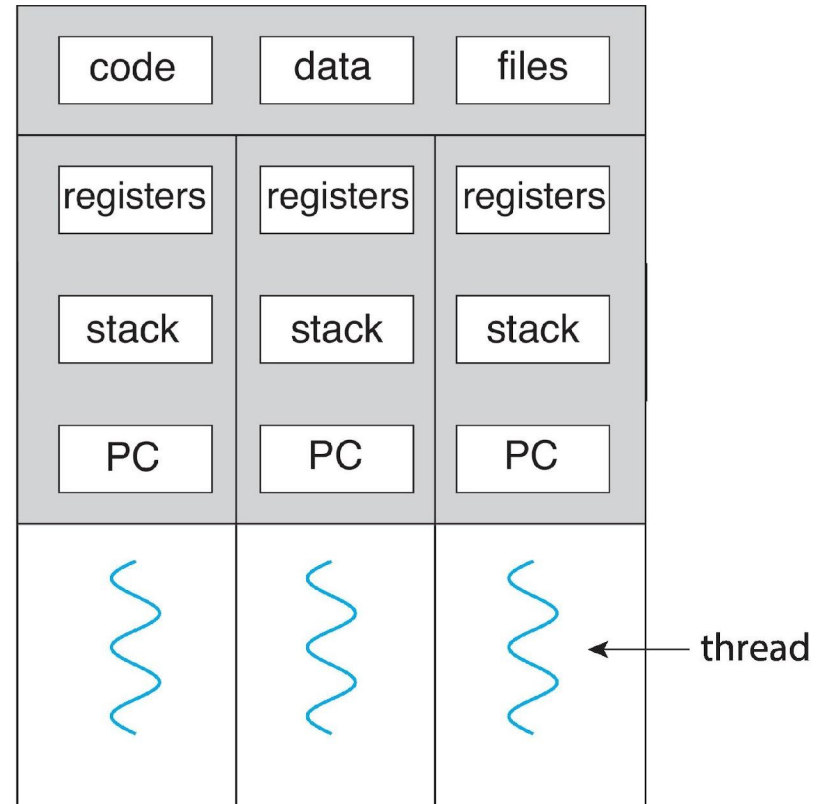




# Single and Multithreaded Processes



single-threaded process

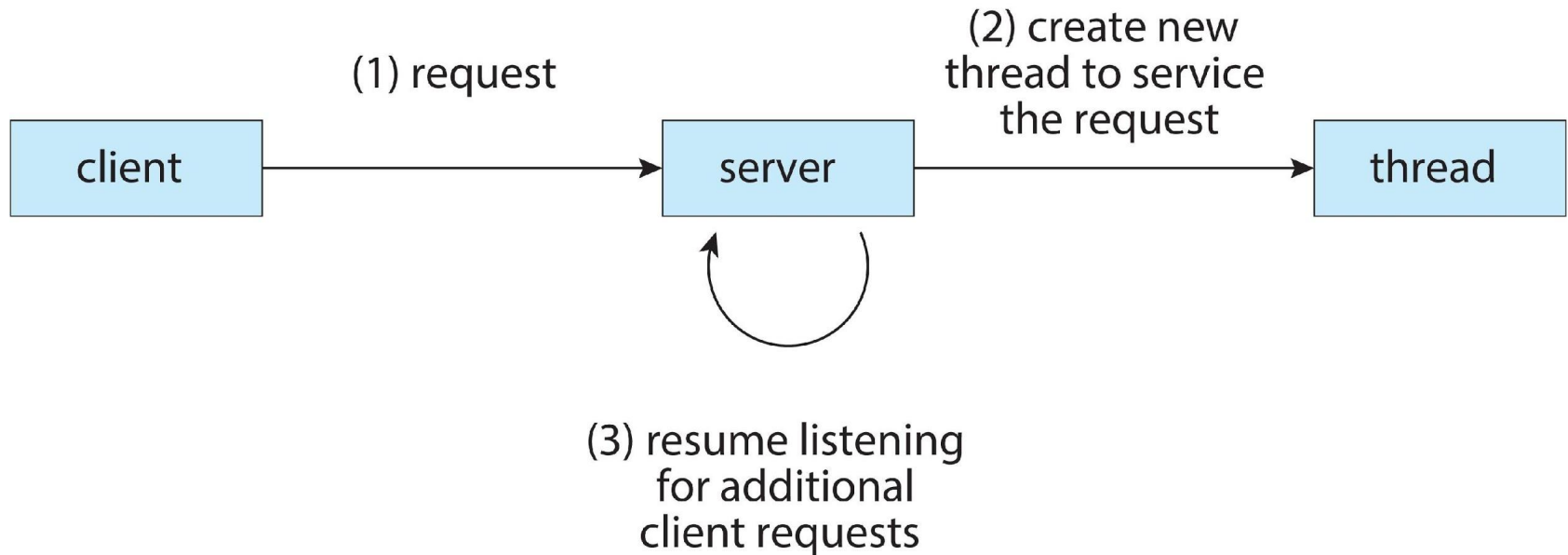


multithreaded process





# Multithreaded Server Architecture





# Benefits

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- **Responsiveness** – may allow continued execution if part of process is blocked, especially important for user interfaces
- **Resource Sharing** – threads share resources of process, easier than shared memory or message passing
- **Economy** – cheaper than process creation, thread switching lower overhead than context switching
- **Scalability** – process can take advantage of multicore architectures





# Multicore Programming

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- **Multicore** or **multiprocessor** systems putting pressure on programmers, challenges include:
  - **Dividing activities**
  - **Balance**
  - **Data splitting**
  - **Data dependency**
  - **Testing and debugging**
- **Parallelism** implies a system can perform more than one task simultaneously
- **Concurrency** supports more than one task making progress
  - Single processor / core, scheduler providing concurrency

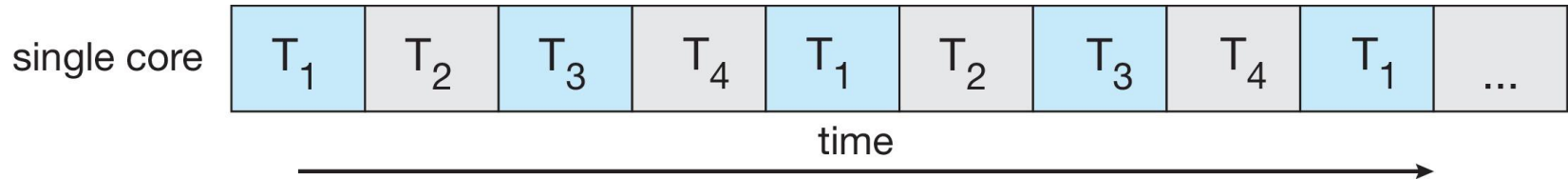




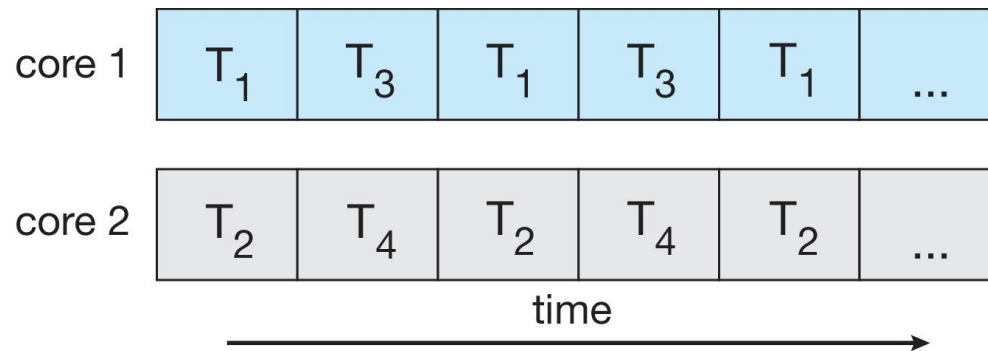


# Concurrency vs. Parallelism

- **Concurrent execution on single-core system:**



- **Parallelism on a multi-core system:**





# Multicore Programming

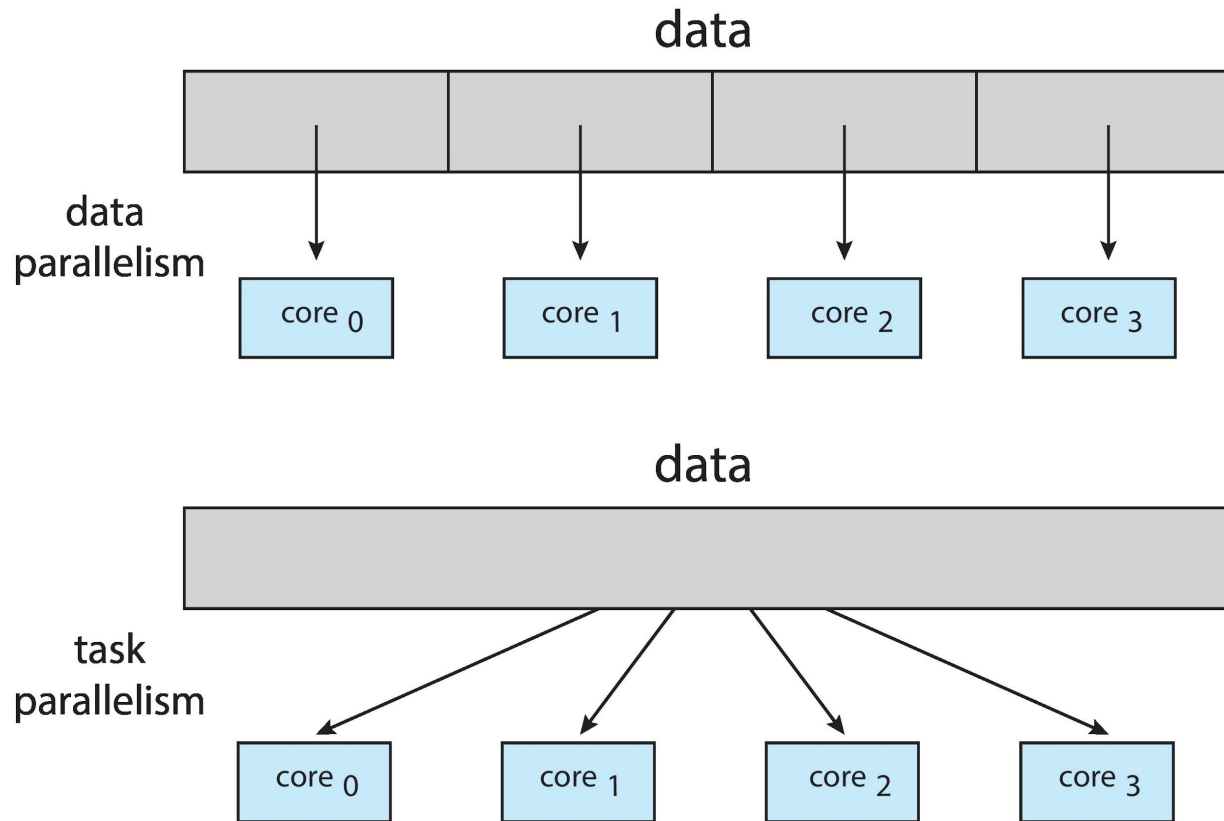
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- Types of parallelism
  - **Data parallelism** – distributes subsets of the same data across multiple cores, same operation on each
  - **Task parallelism** – distributing threads across cores, each thread performing unique operation





# Data and Task Parallelism





# User Threads and Kernel Threads

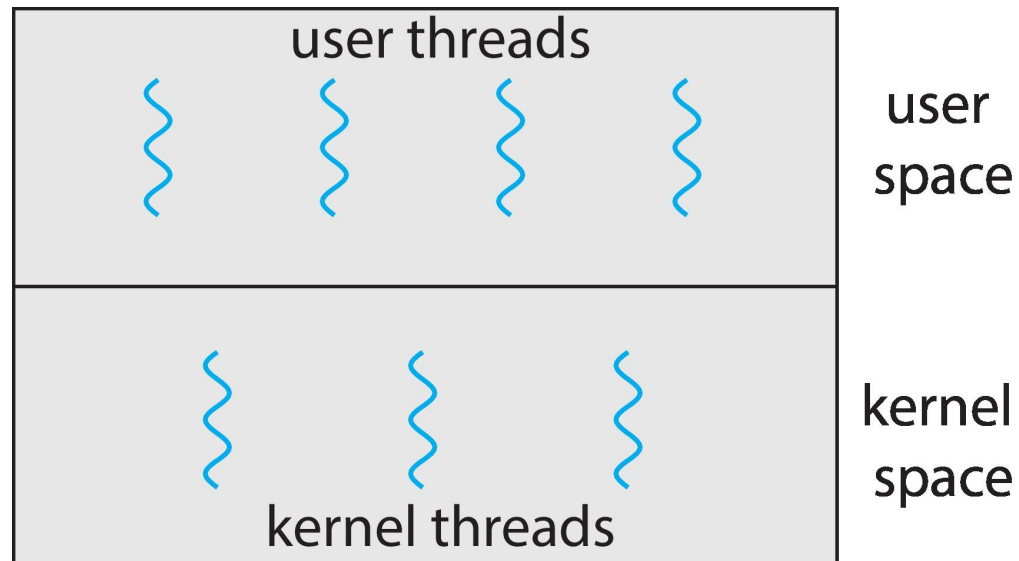
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- **User threads** - management done by user-level threads library
- Three primary thread libraries:
  - POSIX **Pthreads**
  - Windows threads
  - Java threads
- **Kernel threads** - Supported by the Kernel
- Examples – virtually all general -purpose operating systems, including:
  - Windows
  - Linux
  - Mac OS X
  - iOS
  - Android





# User and Kernel Threads





# Multithreading Models

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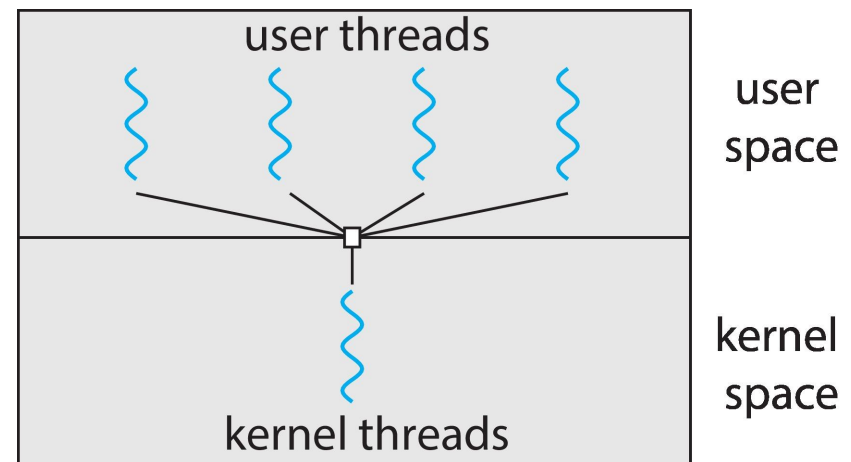
- Many-to-One
- One-to-One
- Many-to-Many





# Many-to-One

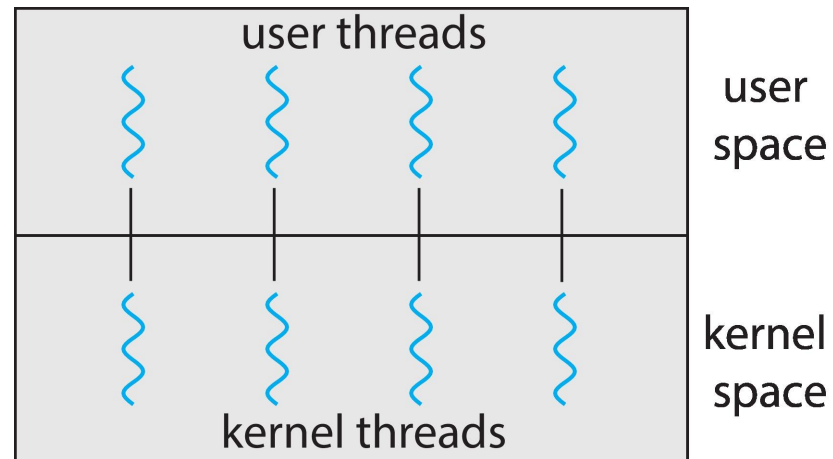
- Many user-level threads mapped to single kernel thread
- One thread blocking causes all to block
- Multiple threads may not run in parallel on muticore system because only one may be in kernel at a time
- Few systems currently use this model
- Examples:
  - **Solaris Green Threads**
  - **GNU Portable Threads**





# One-to-One

- Each user-level thread maps to kernel thread
- Creating a user-level thread creates a kernel thread
- More concurrency than many-to-one
- Number of threads per process sometimes restricted due to overhead
- Examples
  - Windows
  - Linux

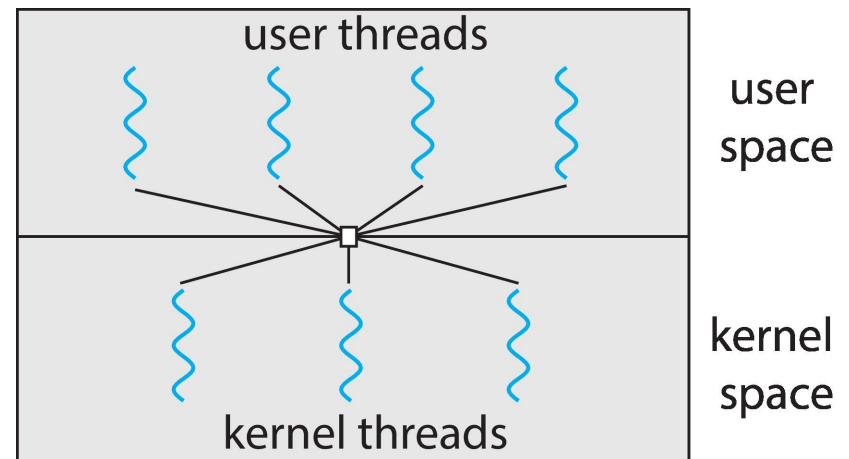






# Many-to-Many Model

- Allows many user level threads to be mapped to many kernel threads
- Allows the operating system to create a sufficient number of kernel threads
- Windows with the *ThreadFiber* package
- Otherwise not very common





# Thread Libraries

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- **Thread library** provides programmer with API for creating and managing threads
- Two primary ways of implementing
  - Library entirely in user space
  - Kernel-level library supported by the OS





# Pthreads

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- May be provided either as user-level or kernel-level
- A POSIX standard (IEEE 1003.1c) API for thread creation and synchronization
- ***Specification***, not ***implementation***
- API specifies behavior of the thread library, implementation is up to development of the library
- Common in UNIX operating systems (Linux & Mac OS X)





# Pthreads Example

---

```
#include <pthread.h>
#include <stdio.h>

#include <stdlib.h>

int sum; /* this data is shared by the thread(s) */
void *runner(void *param); /* threads call this function */

int main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    pthread_t tid; /* the thread identifier */
    pthread_attr_t attr; /* set of thread attributes */

    /* set the default attributes of the thread */
    pthread_attr_init(&attr);
    /* create the thread */
    pthread_create(&tid, &attr, runner, argv[1]);
    /* wait for the thread to exit */
    pthread_join(tid, NULL);

    printf("sum = %d\n", sum);
}
```





# Pthreads Example (Cont.)

---

```
/* The thread will execute in this function */  
void *runner(void *param)  
{  
    int i, upper = atoi(param);  
    sum = 0;  
  
    for (i = 1; i <= upper; i++)  
        sum += i;  
  
    pthread_exit(0);  
}
```





# Threading Issues

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- Semantics of **fork()** and **exec()** system calls
- Signal handling
  - Synchronous and asynchronous
- Thread cancellation of target thread
  - Asynchronous or deferred
- Thread-local storage
- Scheduler Activations





# Semantics of `fork()` and `exec()`

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- Does `fork()` duplicate only the calling thread or all threads?
  - Some UNIXes have two versions of `fork`
- `exec()` usually works as normal – replace the running process including all threads





# Signal Handling

- **Signals** are used in UNIX systems to notify a process that a particular event has occurred.
- A **signal handler** is used to process signals
  1. Signal is generated by particular event
  2. Signal is delivered to a process
  3. Signal is handled by one of two signal handlers:
    1. default
    2. user-defined
- Every signal has **default handler** that kernel runs when handling signal
  - **User-defined signal handler** can override default
  - For single-threaded, signal delivered to process







# Signal Handling (Cont.)

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- Where should a signal be delivered for multi-threaded?
  - Deliver the signal to the thread to which the signal applies
  - Deliver the signal to every thread in the process
  - Deliver the signal to certain threads in the process
  - Assign a specific thread to receive all signals for the process





# Thread Cancellation

- Terminating a thread before it has finished
- Thread to be canceled is **target thread**
- Two general approaches:
  - **Asynchronous cancellation** terminates the target thread immediately
  - **Deferred cancellation** allows the target thread to periodically check if it should be cancelled
- Pthread code to create and cancel a thread:

```
pthread_t tid;  
  
/* create the thread */  
pthread_create(&tid, 0, worker, NULL);  
  
. . .  
  
/* cancel the thread */  
pthread_cancel(tid);  
  
/* wait for the thread to terminate */  
pthread_join(tid, NULL);
```





# Thread Cancellation (Cont.)

- Invoking thread cancellation requests cancellation, but actual cancellation depends on thread state

Mode	State	Type
Off	Disabled	–
Deferred	Enabled	Deferred
Asynchronous	Enabled	Asynchronous

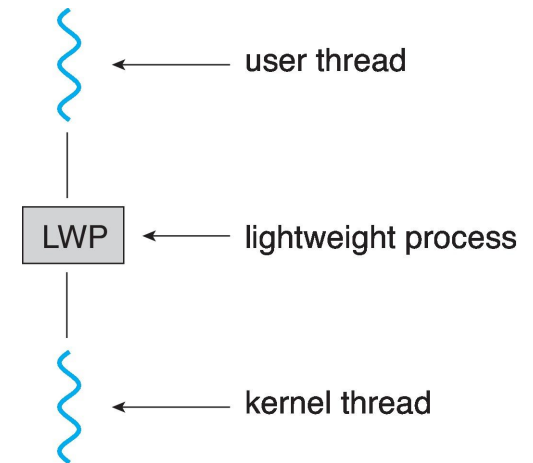
- If thread has cancellation disabled, cancellation remains pending until thread enables it
- Default type is deferred
  - Cancellation only occurs when thread reaches **cancellation point**
    - 4 i.e., `pthread_testcancel()`
    - 4 Then **cleanup handler** is invoked
- On Linux systems, thread cancellation is handled through signals





# Scheduler Activations

- Both M:M and Two-level models require communication to maintain the appropriate number of kernel threads allocated to the application
- Typically use an intermediate data structure between user and kernel threads – **lightweight process (LWP)**
  - Appears to be a virtual processor on which process can schedule user thread to run
  - Each LWP attached to kernel thread
  - How many LWPs to create?
- Scheduler activations provide **upcalls** - a communication mechanism from the kernel to the **upcall handler** in the thread library
- This communication allows an application to maintain the correct number kernel threads



# End of Chapter 4

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