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# ***Using MPI***

*Portable Parallel Programming  
with the Message-Passing Interface  
third edition*

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*William Gropp*

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*Ewing Lusk*

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*Anthony Skjellum*

## Using MPI

**Scientific and Engineering Computation**

William Gropp and Ewing Lusk, editors; Janusz Kowalik, founding editor

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# **Using MPI**

Portable Parallel Programming with the  
Message-Passing Interface

Third Edition

William Gropp  
Ewing Lusk  
Anthony Skjellum

The MIT Press  
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To Patty, Brigid, and Jennifer

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## **Series Foreword**

The Scientific and Engineering Series from MIT Press presents accessible accounts of computing research areas normally presented in research papers and specialized conferences. Elements of modern computing that have appeared thus far in the series include parallelism, language design and implementation, system software, and numerical libraries. The scope of the series continues to expand with the spread of ideas from computing into new aspects of science.

This book in the series is the first of two books describing how to use the Message-Passing Interface (MPI), a communication library for both parallel computers and workstation networks. MPI has been developed as a standard for message passing and related operations. Its adoption by both users and implementors is providing the parallel programming community with the portability and features needed to develop application programs and parallel libraries that tap the power of today's (and tomorrow's) high-performance computers.

William Gropp and Ewing Lusk, Editors

## Preface to the Third Edition

In the fifteen years since the second edition of *Using MPI* was published, in 1999, high-performance computing (HPC) has undergone many changes. Some aspects of HPC have been disruptive and revolutionary; but others, no less significant, have been gradual and evolutionary. This edition of *Using MPI* updates the second edition to bring our presentation of the Message-Passing Interface (MPI) standard into line with these changes.

The most dramatic change has been in parallel computing hardware. The speed (cycle rate) of individual processing units has leveled off because of power and heat-dissipation constraints, causing parallelism to become mainstream and, for HPC, putting increased pressure on the *scale* of parallelism. Computer vendors have responded. The preface to the second edition refers to “the very largest computers in the world, with thousands of processors.” Today, applications run on computers with *millions* of processors. The processors referred to at that time have also undergone substantial change. Multiple processors sharing memory, multicore processors, with multiple hardware threads per core, perhaps with attached graphical processing units (GPUs), are now common in HPC machines and indeed in all computers.

In the programming languages area, change has been less dramatic. HPC applications still rely on Fortran, C, and C++ for the compute-intensive parts of their algorithms (except for GPUs), although these standard languages have themselves evolved. C now means C11, and (for our purposes here) Fortran means Fortran 2008. OpenMP has emerged as the most widely used approach in computational science to the shared-memory programming appropriate for multiprocessor nodes and multicore processors. GPU programming can be said to be where message passing was in the early 1990s, with competing application programming interfaces (APIs) and a search for a standard that will provide portability among competing hardware devices without sacrificing performance.

Applications have changed even less, although the increased scale of the largest machines has stimulated the search for more scalable algorithms and the use of libraries that provide new levels of scalability. Adoption of radically new programming models and languages has been conservative: most large applications are written in Fortran, C, or C++, with parallelism provided by MPI (or libraries written on top of it), OpenMP, and (increasingly) vendor-specific GPU-executed subsections. Reliance on MPI has remained central to application development and/or execution.

MPI itself has changed in some ways but not others. Basic functions have not changed: the first example code from the first edition of this book is still valid. The

basic point-to-point and collective communication functions are unaltered. The largest changes to the MPI standard are those made by the MPI-3 Forum. After a “rest period” of some fifteen years, the MPI Forum reconstituted itself in 2008, with both veteran and new members, to bring the MPI standard up to date with respect to the new developments in hardware capabilities, core language evolution, the needs of applications, and the experience gained over the years by computer vendors, MPI implementors, and users. The changes included substantial additions to the API, especially in the area of remote memory operations, but also removal or replacement of some functions and a few changes that affect even simple programs. The most substantive changes are described in a companion volume to this one, *Using Advanced MPI*, but all the changes by the MPI-3 Forum that affect the material described here are incorporated in this volume.

## About the Third Edition

This third edition of *Using MPI* contains many updates to the second edition.

- All example code has been brought up to date with respect to modern C and Fortran.
- MPI-3 changes that are relevant to our discussions and examples are fully reflected in both the example code and the text. All deprecated functions have been removed, and where new, better ways of doing things have been made available, they are used.
- The C++ bindings, which were removed in MPI-3, have vanished, leaving only a brief discussion of how to use MPI in C++ programs.
- Applications have been updated or replaced with those more typical of current practice.
- The references have been updated to reflect the substantial attention MPI has received in academic and other literature.

Our order of presentation again is guided by the level of complexity in the algorithms we study. This tutorial approach differs substantially from that given in more formal presentations of the MPI standard such as [112]. The overall structure of this edition is little changed from that of the previous edition; however, each individual chapter does include substantial updates. Among other changes, the applications sections, which have been contributed by active computational scientists

using MPI, have as their primary audience those who are interested in how MPI has been used in a specific scientific domain. These sections may easily be skipped by the general reader. We include them to demonstrate that MPI has been used in quite advanced application programs.

We begin in Chapter 1 with a brief overview of the current situation in parallel computing environments, the message-passing model, and the process that produced MPI. This chapter has been updated to describe in more detail the changes in HPC environments that have occurred since the previous edition, as discussed briefly above. We have also updated the account of MPI Forum activities to describe the recent work of the MP-3 Forum.

Chapter 2 introduces the basic concepts that arise from the message-passing model itself and how MPI augments these basic concepts to create a full-featured, high-performance-capable interface. Parts of this chapter have been completely rewritten.

In Chapter 3 we set the pattern for the remaining chapters. We present several examples and the small number of MPI functions that are required to express them. We describe how to execute the examples using one widely used MPI implementation and how to investigate the performance of these programs using a graphical performance-analysis tool. The previous edition's application in this chapter has been moved to the libraries chapter, written using only the MPI functions introduced in this chapter, together with a new library described there.

Chapter 4 rounds out the basic features of MPI by focusing on a particular application prototypical of a large family: solution of the Poisson problem. We introduce MPI's facilities for application-oriented process structures called virtual topologies. Using performance analysis tools, we illustrate how to improve performance using slightly more advanced MPI message-passing functions. The discussion of non-blocking operations here has been expanded. We conclude with a discussion of a production code currently being used to investigate a number of problems in fluid mechanics.

Some of the more advanced features for message passing provided by MPI are covered in Chapter 5. We use the N-body problem as a setting for much of the discussion. We complete our discussion of derived datatypes with a focus on features that have been added in MPI-3. Our application is a cosmology simulation that uses advanced approaches to N-body problems.

We believe that the majority of programmers of parallel computers will, in the long run, access parallelism through libraries. Indeed, enabling the construction of robust libraries is one of the primary motives behind the MPI effort, and perhaps its single most distinguishing feature when compared with other parallel program-

ming environments. In Chapter 6 we address this issue with a series of examples. We introduce a new library (the Asynchronous Dynamic Load Balancing (ADLB) library) and describe its use in simplifying a nuclear structure application while increasing its scalability.

MPI contains a variety of advanced features that will only have been touched on or presented in their simplest form at this point in the book. These features include elaborate collective data-distribution and data-collection schemes, error handling, and facilities for implementing client-server applications. In Chapter 7 we fill out the description of these features using further examples taken from applications. Our application in this chapter is a sophisticated hybrid calculation for nuclear theory.

In Chapter 8 we discuss what one finds “under the hood” in implementations of MPI. Understanding the choices available to MPI implementors can provide insight into the behavior of MPI programs in various computing environments. Changes in communication hardware and ubiquity of multithreading motivate updates to the previous edition’s treatment.

Chapter 9 presents a comparison of MPI with sockets, a standard interface for sending messages between processes on different machines for both Unix and Microsoft systems. Examining the similarities and differences helps one understand the assumptions that MPI makes about underlying system services.

Chapter 10 contains a brief summary of the material in the companion volume to this book, which includes topics from both MPI-2 and MPI-3. We conclude with a few thoughts on the future of MPI.

We include a glossary of terms used in this book. The appendices include material that would have been out of place in the main text. Appendix A describes the MPE library that we use in several of our examples and gives its Fortran and C bindings. Appendix B provides pointers to supplementary material for this book, including complete source code for the examples, and related MPI materials that are available on the net. Appendix C discusses some issues of C and Fortran that are relevant to MPI and may be unfamiliar to some readers. It has been updated to reflect new developments in Fortran and particular issues related to MPI-3.

## Acknowledgments for the Third Edition

We gratefully acknowledge the careful and thoughtful work of our copy editor, Gail Pieper. We are also grateful to those who contributed application examples: Steve Pieper, James Vary and Pieter Maris, Salman Habib and Hal Finkel, and Paul Fischer.

## Preface to the Second Edition

When *Using MPI* was first published in 1994, the future of MPI was unknown. The MPI Forum had just concluded its work on the Standard, and it was not yet clear whether vendors would provide optimized implementations or whether users would select MPI for writing new parallel programs or would port existing codes to MPI.

Now the suspense is over. MPI is available everywhere and widely used, in environments ranging from small workstation networks to the very largest computers in the world, with thousands of processors. Every parallel computer vendor offers an MPI implementation, and multiple implementations are freely available as well, running on a wide variety of architectures. Applications large and small have been ported to MPI or written as MPI programs from the beginning, and MPI is taught in parallel programming courses worldwide.

In 1995, the MPI Forum began meeting again. It revised in a compatible way and significantly extended the MPI specification, releasing version 1.2 (covering the topics included in the original, 1.0 specification) and version 2.0 (covering entirely new topics) in the summer of 1997. In this book, we update the original *Using MPI* to reflect these later decisions of the MPI Forum. Roughly speaking, this book covers the use of MPI 1.2, while *Using MPI 2* (published by MIT Press as a companion volume to this book) covers extensions in MPI 2.0. New topics in MPI-2 include parallel I/O, one-sided operations, and dynamic process management. However, many topics relevant to the original MPI functions were modified as well, and these are discussed here. Thus this book can be viewed as the up-to-date version of the topics covered in the original edition.

### About the Second Edition

This second edition of *Using MPI: Portable Programming with the Message-Passing Interface* contains many changes from and additions to the first edition.

- We have added many new examples and have added additional explanations to the examples from the first edition.
- A section on common errors and misunderstandings has been added to several chapters.
- We have added new material on the performance impact of choices among alternative MPI usages.

- A chapter on implementation issues has been added to increase understanding of how and why various MPI implementations may differ, particularly with regard to performance.
- Since “Fortran” now means Fortran 90 (or Fortran 95 [17]), all Fortran examples have been updated to Fortran 90 syntax. We do, however, explain the small modifications necessary to run the examples in Fortran 77.
- We have added the new functions from the MPI 1.2 specification, and also those from MPI 2.0 whose exposition seems to belong with functions from MPI 1.2.
- We describe new tools in the MPE toolkit, reflecting their evolution since the publication of the first edition.
- The chapter on converting to MPI from earlier message-passing systems has been greatly revised, now that many of those systems have been completely supplanted by MPI. We include a comparison of MPI syntax and semantics with PVM, since conversion of programs from PVM to MPI is still going on. We also compare MPI with the use of Unix sockets.
- Some functions in MPI 1.0 are now deprecated, since better definitions have now been made. These are identified and their replacements described.
- Errors, particularly those in the example programs, have been corrected.

[To preclude possible confusion on the part of the reader, the outline of the second edition that occurred here has been omitted.]

### Acknowledgments for the Second Edition

We thank Peter Lyster of NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center for sharing his marked-up copy of the first edition of *Using MPI* with us. We thank Puri Bangalore, Nicholas Carriero, Robert van de Geijn, Peter Junglas, David Levine, Bryan Putnam, Bill Saphir, David J. Schneider, Barry Smith, and Stacey Smith for sending in errata for the first edition (and anyone that we’ve forgotten), and Anand Pillai for correcting some of the examples in Chapter 6. The reviewers of the prospectus for this book offered many helpful suggestions for topics. We thank Gail Pieper for her careful and knowledgeable editing.

## Preface to the First Edition

### About This Book

During 1993, a broadly based group of parallel computer vendors, software writers, and application scientists collaborated on the development of a standard portable message-passing library definition called MPI, for Message-Passing Interface. MPI is a specification for a library of routines to be called from C and Fortran programs. As of mid-1994, a number of implementations are in progress, and applications are already being ported.

*Using MPI: Portable Parallel Programming with the Message-Passing Interface* is designed to accelerate the development of parallel application programs and libraries by demonstrating how to use the new standard. It fills the gap among introductory texts on parallel computing, advanced texts on parallel algorithms for scientific computing, and user manuals of various parallel programming languages and systems. Each topic begins with simple examples and concludes with real applications running on today's most powerful parallel computers. We use both Fortran (Fortran 77) and C. We discuss timing and performance evaluation from the outset, using a library of useful tools developed specifically for this presentation. Thus this book is not only a tutorial on the use of MPI as a language for expressing parallel algorithms, but also a handbook for those seeking to understand and improve the performance of large-scale applications and libraries.

Without a standard such as MPI, getting specific about parallel programming has necessarily limited one's audience to users of some specific system that might not be available or appropriate for other users' computing environments. MPI provides the portability necessary for a concrete discussion of parallel programming to have wide applicability. At the same time, MPI is a powerful and complete specification, and using this power means that the expression of many parallel algorithms can now be done more easily and more naturally than ever before, without giving up efficiency.

Of course, parallel programming takes place in an environment that extends beyond MPI. We therefore introduce here a small suite of tools that computational scientists will find useful in measuring, understanding, and improving the performance of their parallel programs. These tools include timing routines, a library to produce an event log for post-mortem program visualization, and a simple real-time graphics library for run-time visualization. Also included are a number of utilities that enhance the usefulness of the MPI routines themselves. We call the union of these libraries MPE, for MultiProcessing Environment. All the example programs

and tools are freely available, as is a model portable implementation of MPI itself developed by researchers at Argonne National Laboratory and Mississippi State University [59].

Our order of presentation is guided by the level of complexity in the parallel algorithms we study; thus it differs substantially from the order in more formal presentations of the standard.

[To preclude possible confusion on the part of the reader, the outline of the first edition that occurred here has been omitted.]

In addition to the normal subject index, there is an index for the definitions and usage examples for the MPI functions used in this book. A glossary of terms used in this book may be found before the appendices.

We try to be impartial in the use of Fortran and C for the book's examples; many examples are given in each language. The MPI standard has tried to keep the syntax of its calls similar in Fortran and C; for the most part they differ only in case (all capitals in Fortran, although most compilers will accept all lower case as well, while in C only the "MPI" and the next letter are capitalized), and in the handling of the return code (the last argument in Fortran and the returned value in C). When we need to refer to an MPI function name without specifying whether it is Fortran or C, we will use the C version, just because it is a little easier to read in running text.

This book is not a reference manual, in which MPI routines would be grouped according to functionality and completely defined. Instead we present MPI routines informally, in the context of example programs. Precise definitions are given in [93]. Nonetheless, to increase the usefulness of this book to someone working with MPI, we have provided for each MPI routine that we discuss a reminder of its calling sequence, in both Fortran and C. These listings can be found set off in boxes scattered throughout the book, located near the introduction of the routines they contain. In the boxes for C, we use ANSI C style declarations. Arguments that can be of several types (typically message buffers) are typed as `void*`. In the Fortran boxes the types of such arguments are marked as being of type `<type>`. This means that one of the appropriate Fortran data types should be used. To find the "binding box" for a given MPI routine, one should use the appropriate bold-face reference in the Function Index (**f90** for Fortran, **C** for C).

## Acknowledgments

Our primary acknowledgment is to the Message Passing Interface Forum (MPIF), whose members devoted their best efforts over the course of a year and a half to

producing MPI itself. The appearance of such a standard has enabled us to collect and coherently express our thoughts on how the process of developing application programs and libraries for parallel computing environments might be carried out. The aim of our book is to show how this process can now be undertaken with more ease, understanding, and probability of success than has been possible before the appearance of MPI.

The MPIF is producing both a final statement of the standard itself and an annotated reference manual to flesh out the standard with the discussion necessary for understanding the full flexibility and power of MPI. At the risk of duplicating acknowledgments to be found in those volumes, we thank here the following MPIF participants, with whom we collaborated on the MPI project. Special effort was exerted by those who served in various positions of responsibility: Lyndon Clarke, James Cownie, Jack Dongarra, Al Geist, Rolf Hempel, Steven Huss-Lederman, Bob Knighten, Richard Littlefield, Steve Otto, Mark Sears, Marc Snir, and David Walker. Other participants included Ed Anderson, Joe Baron, Eric Barszcz, Scott Berryman, Rob Bjornson, Anne Elster, Jim Feeney, Vince Fernando, Sam Fineberg, Jon Flower, Daniel Frye, Ian Glendinning, Adam Greenberg, Robert Harrison, Leslie Hart, Tom Haupt, Don Heller, Tom Henderson, Alex Ho, C.T. Howard Ho, John Kapenga, Bob Leary, Arthur Maccabe, Peter Madams, Alan Mainwaring, Oliver McBryan, Phil McKinley, Charles Mosher, Dan Nessett, Peter Pacheco, Howard Palmer, Paul Pierce, Sanjay Ranka, Peter Rigsbee, Arch Robison, Erich Schikuta, Ambuj Singh, Alan Sussman, Robert Tomlinson, Robert G. Voigt, Dennis Weeks, Stephen Wheat, and Steven Zenith.

While everyone listed here made positive contributions, and many made major contributions, MPI would be far less important if it had not had the benefit of the particular energy and articulate intelligence of James Cownie of Meiko, Paul Pierce of Intel, and Marc Snir of IBM.

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*The MPI Language Specification* is copyrighted by the University of Tennessee and will appear as a special issue of *International Journal of Supercomputer Applications*, published by MIT Press. Both organizations have dedicated the language definition to the public domain.

We also thank Nathan Doss of Mississippi State University and Hubertus Franke of the IBM Corporation, who participated in the early implementation project that has allowed us to run all of the examples in this book. We thank Ed Karrels, a student visitor at Argonne, who did most of the work on the MPE library and the profiling interface examples. He was also completely responsible for the new version of the upshot program for examining logfiles.

We thank James Cownie of Meiko and Brian Grant of the University of Washington for reading the manuscript and making many clarifying suggestions. Gail Pieper vastly improved the prose. We also thank those who have allowed us to use their research projects as examples: Robert Harrison, Dave Levine, and Steven Pieper.

Finally we thank several Mississippi State University graduate students whose joint research with us (and each other) have contributed to several large-scale examples in the book. The members of the *Parallel Scientific Computing* class in the Department of Computer Science at MSU, spring 1994, helped debug and improve the model implementation and provided several projects included as examples in this book. We specifically thank Purushotham V. Bangalore, Ramesh Pankajakshan, Kishore Viswanathan, and John E. West for the examples (from the class and research) that they have provided for us to use in the text.

## Using MPI

# 1 Background

In this chapter we survey the setting in which the MPI standard has evolved, from the current situation in parallel computing and the status of the message-passing model for parallel computation to the actual process by which MPI was developed.

## 1.1 Why Parallel Computing?

Fast computers have stimulated the rapid growth of a new way of doing science. The two broad classical branches of theoretical science and experimental science have been joined by *computational* science. Computational scientists simulate on supercomputers phenomena too complex to be reliably predicted by theory and too dangerous or expensive to be reproduced in the laboratory. Successes in computational science have caused demand for supercomputing resources to rise sharply over the past twenty years.

During this time parallel computers have evolved from experimental contraptions in laboratories to become the everyday tools of computational scientists who need the ultimate in computer resources in order to solve their problems.

Several factors have stimulated this evolution. It is not only that the speed of light and the effectiveness of heat dissipation impose physical limits on the speed of a single computer. (To pull a bigger wagon, it is easier to add more oxen than to grow a gigantic ox.) It is also that the cost of advanced single-processor computers increases more rapidly than their power. (Large oxen are expensive.) And price/performance ratios become really favorable if the required computational resources can be found instead of purchased. This factor caused many sites to exploit existing workstation networks, originally purchased to do modest computational chores, as SCANs (SuperComputers At Night) by utilizing the workstation network as a parallel computer. And as personal computer (PC) performance increased and prices fell steeply, both for the PCs themselves and the network hardware necessary to connect them, dedicated clusters of PC workstations provided significant computing power on a budget. The largest of these clusters, assembled out of commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) parts, competed with offerings from traditional supercomputer vendors. One particular flavor of this approach, involving open source system software and dedicated networks, acquired the name “Beowulf” [113]. Further, the growth in performance and capacity of wide-area networks (WANs) has made it possible to write applications that span the globe. Many researchers are exploring the concept of a “grid” [50] of computational resources and connections that is in some ways analogous to the electric power grid.

Thus, considerations of both peak performance and price/performance are pushing large-scale computing in the direction of parallelism. So why hasn't parallel computing taken over? Why isn't every program a parallel one?

## 1.2 Obstacles to Progress

Barriers to the widespread use of parallelism are in all three of the usual large subdivisions of computing: hardware, algorithms, and software.

In the hardware arena, we are still trying to build intercommunication networks (often called switches) that keep up with speeds of advanced single processors. Although not needed for every application (many successful parallel programs use Ethernet for their communication environment and some even use electronic mail), in general, faster computers require faster switches to enable most applications to take advantage of them. Over the past ten years much progress has been made in this area, and today's parallel supercomputers have a better balance between computation and communication than ever before.

Algorithmic research has contributed as much to the speed of modern parallel programs as has hardware engineering research. Parallelism in algorithms can be thought of as arising in three ways: from the physics (independence of physical processes), from the mathematics (independence of sets of mathematical operations), and from the programmer's imagination (independence of computational tasks). A bottleneck occurs, however, when these various forms of parallelism in algorithms must be *expressed* in a real program to be run on a real parallel computer. At this point, the problem becomes one of software.

The biggest obstacle to the spread of parallel computing and its benefits in economy and power is inadequate software. The author of a parallel algorithm for an important computational science problem may find the current software environment obstructing rather than smoothing the path to use of the very capable, cost-effective hardware available.

Part of the obstruction consists of what is not there. Compilers that automatically parallelize sequential algorithms remain limited in their applicability. Although much research has been done and parallelizing compilers work well on some programs, the best performance is still obtained when the programmer supplies the parallel algorithm. If parallelism cannot be provided automatically by compilers, what about libraries? Here some progress has occurred, but the barriers to writing libraries that work in multiple environments have been great. The requirements of libraries and how these requirements are addressed by MPI are the subject matter of Chapter 6.

Other parts of the obstruction consist of what *is* there. The ideal mechanism for communicating a parallel algorithm to a parallel computer should be expressive, efficient, and portable. Before MPI, various mechanisms all represented compromises among these three goals. Some vendor-specific libraries were efficient but not portable, and in most cases minimal with regard to expressiveness. High-level languages emphasize portability over efficiency. And programmers are never satisfied with the expressivity of their programming language. (Turing completeness is necessary, but not sufficient.)

MPI is a compromise too, of course, but its design has been guided by a vivid awareness of these goals in the context of the next generation of parallel systems. It is portable. It is designed to impose no semantic restrictions on efficiency; that is, nothing in the design (as opposed to a particular implementation) forces a loss of efficiency. Moreover, the deep involvement of vendors in MPI's definition has ensured that vendor-supplied MPI implementations can be efficient. As for expressivity, MPI is designed to be a convenient, complete definition of the message-passing model, the justification for which we discuss in the next section.

### 1.3 Why Message Passing?

To put our discussion of message passing in perspective, we briefly review informally the principal parallel computational models. We focus then on the advantages of the message-passing model.

#### 1.3.1 Parallel Computational Models

A *computational model* is a conceptual view of the types of operations available to a program. It does not include the specific syntax of a particular programming language or library, and it is (almost) independent of the underlying hardware that supports it. That is, any of the models we discuss can be implemented on any modern parallel computer, given a little help from the operating system. The effectiveness of such an implementation, however, depends on the gap between the model and the machine.

Parallel computational models form a complicated structure. They can be differentiated along multiple axes: whether memory is physically shared or distributed, how much communication is in hardware or software, exactly what the unit of execution is, and so forth. The picture is made confusing by the fact that software can provide an implementation of any computational model on any hardware. This section is thus not a taxonomy; rather, we wish to define our terms in order to

delimit clearly our discussion of the message-passing model, which is the focus of MPI.

**Data parallelism.** Although parallelism occurs in many places and at many levels in a modern computer, one of the first places it was made available to the programmer was in vector processors. Indeed, the vector machine began the current age of supercomputing. The vector machine’s notion of operating on an array of similar data items in parallel during a single operation was extended to include the operation of whole programs on collections of data structures, as in SIMD (single-instruction, multiple-data) machines such as the ICL DAP and the Thinking Machines CM-2. The parallelism need not necessarily proceed instruction by instruction in lock step for it to be classified as data parallel. Data parallelism is now more a programming style than a computer architecture, and the CM-2 is extinct.

At whatever level, the model remains the same: the parallelism comes entirely from the data and the program itself looks much like a sequential program. The partitioning of data that underlies this model may be done by a compiler. High Performance Fortran (HPF) [79] defined extensions to Fortran that allowed the programmer to specify a partitioning and that the compiler would translate into code, including any communication between processes. While HPF is rarely used anymore, some of these ideas have been incorporated into languages such as Chapel or X10.

Compiler directives such as those defined by OpenMP [97] allow the programmer a way to provide hints to the compiler on where to find data parallelism in sequentially coded loops.

Data parallelism has made a dramatic comeback in the form of graphical processing units, or GPUs. Originally developed as attached processors to support video games, they are now being incorporated into general-purpose computers as well.

**Shared memory.** Parallelism that is not determined implicitly by data independence but is explicitly specified by the programmer is *control* parallelism. One simple model of control parallelism is the shared-memory model, in which each processor has access to all of a single, shared address space at the usual level of load and store operations. A schematic diagram of this arrangement is shown in Figure 1.1. Access to locations manipulated by multiple processes is coordinated by some form of locking, although high-level languages may hide the explicit use of locks. Early examples of this model were the Denelcor HEP and Alliant family of shared-memory multiprocessors, as well as Sequent and Encore machines. The Cray

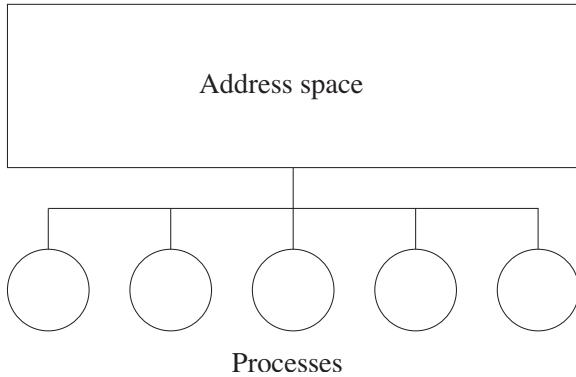


Figure 1.1: The shared-memory model

parallel vector machines, as well as the SGI Power Challenge series, were also of this same model. Now there are many small-scale shared-memory machines, often called “symmetric multiprocessors” (SMPs). Over the years, “small” has evolved from two or four (now common on laptops) to as many as sixty-four processors sharing one memory system.

Making “true” shared-memory machines with more than a few tens of processors is difficult (and expensive). To achieve the shared-memory model with large numbers of processors, one must allow some memory references to take longer than others. The most common shared-memory systems today are single-chip multicore processors or nodes consisting of a few multicore processors. Such nodes can be assembled into very large distributed-memory machines. A variation on the shared-memory model occurs when processes have a local memory (accessible by only one process) and also share a portion of memory (accessible by some or all of the other processes). The Linda programming model [37] is of this type.

**Message passing.** The message-passing model posits a set of processes that have only local memory but are able to communicate with other processes by sending and receiving messages. It is a defining feature of the message-passing model that data transfer from the local memory of one process to the local memory of another requires operations to be performed by both processes. Since MPI is a specific realization of the message-passing model, we discuss message passing in detail below.

In Figure 1.2 we don’t show a specific communication network because it is not part of the computational *model*. The IBM Blue Gene/P had a three-dimensional mesh, and the BG/Q has a five-dimensional mesh (although the fifth dimension

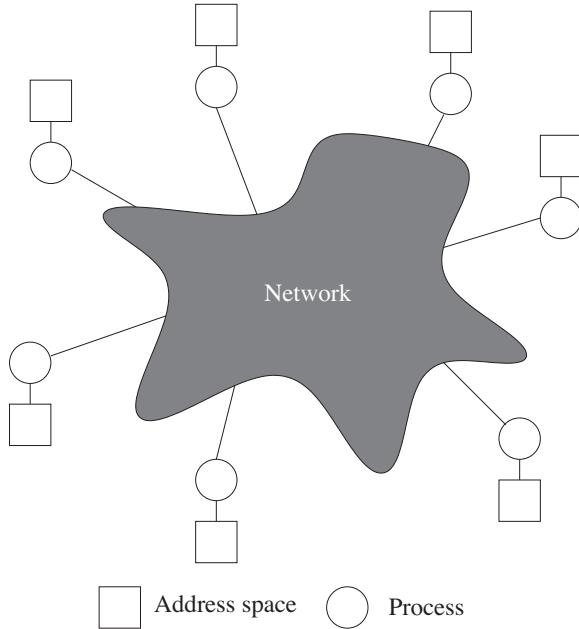


Figure 1.2: The message-passing model

is small). Many clusters use multilevel switched networks, and supercomputers such as the IBM PERCS and Cray Cascade also use high-radix (many connections) switches. Now message-passing models (represented by MPI) are implemented on a wide variety of hardware architectures.

**Remote memory operations.** Halfway between the shared-memory model, where processes access memory without knowing whether they are triggering remote communication at the hardware level, and the message-passing model, where both the local and remote processes must participate, is the remote memory operation model. This model was typified by *put* and *get* operations on such machines as the Cray T3E. Now multiple vendors support such operations, at least at a low level (not visible to the programmer and not in any portable way). In this case one process can access the memory of another without that other's participation, but it does so explicitly, not the same way it accesses its local memory. A related type of operation is the “active message” [120], which causes execution of a (typically short) subroutine in the address space of the other process. Active messages are

often used to facilitate *remote memory copying*, which can be thought of as part of the active-message model. Such remote memory copy operations are exactly the “one-sided” sends and receives unavailable in the classic message-passing model. The first commercial machine to popularize this model was the TMC CM-5, which used active messages both directly and as an implementation layer for the TMC message-passing library.

MPI-style remote memory operations were introduced in the MPI-2 Standard and further developed in the MPI-3 standard, described in *Using Advanced MPI* [55]. Hardware support for one-sided operations, even on “commodity” networks, is now standard. In addition to proprietary interfaces such as IBM’s LAPI [107], there are industry standards such as InfiniBand [6], which have the potential to bring good support for remote memory access operations even to inexpensive parallel computers.

**Threads.** Early forms of the shared-memory model provided processes with separate address spaces, which could obtain shared memory through explicit memory operations, such as special forms of the C `malloc` operation. The more common version of the shared-memory model now specifies that all memory be shared. This allows the model to be applied to multithreaded systems, in which a single process (address space) has associated with it several program counters and execution stacks. Since the model allows fast switching from one thread to another and requires no explicit memory operations, it can be used portably in Fortran programs. The difficulty imposed by the thread model is that any “state” of the program defined by the value of program variables is shared by all threads simultaneously, although in most thread systems it is possible to allocate thread-local memory. One widely used thread model is specified by the POSIX Standard [76]. A higher-level approach to programming with threads is also offered by OpenMP [97, 38].

**Hybrid models.** Combinations of the above models are also possible, in which some clusters of processes share memory with one another but communicate with other clusters via message passing (Figure 1.3), or in which single processes may be multithreaded (separate threads share memory) yet not share memory with one another. In any case, attached GPUs may contribute vector-style parallelism as well.

All of the world’s largest parallel machines provide a combined (or hybrid) model at the hardware level, even though they are currently being programmed largely with MPI. MPI implementations can take advantage of such hybrid hardware by

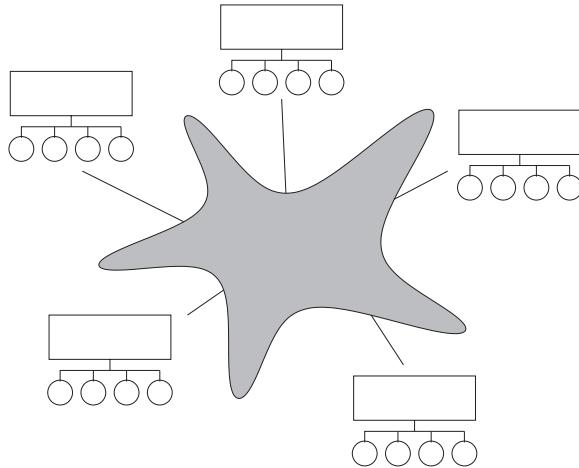


Figure 1.3: The hybrid model

utilizing the shared memory to accelerate message-passing operations between processes that share memory.

These combined models lead to software complexity, in which a shared-memory approach (like OpenMP) is combined with a message-passing approach (like MPI), along with code to manage an attached GPU (like CUDA). A significant number of applications have been ported to (or originally written for) such complex execution environments, but at a considerable cost in programming complexity and (in some cases) loss of portability.

The description of parallel computing models we have given here has focused on what they look like to the programmer. The underlying hardware for supporting these and future models continues to evolve. Among these directions is support for multithreading at the hardware level. One approach has been to add support for large numbers of threads per processor core; this approach helps hide the relatively high latency of memory access. The YarcData Urika [16] is the most recent version of this approach; previous systems include the Tera MTA and the Denelcor HEP. Another approach, now used on most commodity processors, is *simultaneous multithreading* (sometimes called *hyperthreading*), where several hardware threads share the same resources in a compute core. Simultaneous multithreading is usually transparent to the programmer.

### 1.3.2 Advantages of the Message-Passing Model

In this book we focus on the message-passing model of parallel computation, and in particular the MPI instantiation of that model. While we do not claim that the message-passing model is uniformly superior to the other models, we can say here why it has become widely used and why we can expect it to be around for a long time.

**Universality.** The message-passing model fits well on separate processors connected by a (fast or slow) communication network. Thus, it matches the highest level of the hardware of most of today's parallel supercomputers, as well as workstation networks and dedicated PC clusters. Where the machine supplies extra hardware to support a shared-memory model, the message-passing model can take advantage of this hardware to speed data transfer. Use of a GPU can be orthogonal to the use of MPI.

**Expressivity.** Message passing has been found to be a useful and complete model in which to express parallel algorithms. It provides the control missing from the data-parallel and compiler-based models in dealing with data locality. Some find its anthropomorphic flavor useful in formulating a parallel algorithm. It is well suited to adaptive, self-scheduling algorithms and to programs that can be made tolerant of the imbalance in process speeds found on shared networks.

**Ease of debugging.** Debugging of parallel programs remains a challenging research area. While debuggers for parallel programs are perhaps easier to write for the shared-memory model, it is arguable that the debugging process itself is easier in the message-passing paradigm. The reason is that one of the most common causes of error is unexpected overwriting of memory. The message-passing model, by controlling memory references more explicitly than any of the other models (only one process at a time has direct access to any memory location except during a well-defined, short time period), makes it easier to locate erroneous memory reads and writes. Some parallel debuggers even can display message queues, which are normally invisible to the programmer.

**Performance.** The most compelling reason that message passing will remain a permanent part of the parallel computing environment is performance. As modern CPUs have become faster, management of their caches and the memory hierarchy in general has become the key to getting the most out of these machines. Message

passing provides a way for the programmer to explicitly associate specific data with processes and thus allow the compiler and cache-management hardware to function fully. Indeed, one advantage distributed-memory computers have over even the largest single-processor machines is that they typically provide more memory and more cache. Memory-bound applications can exhibit superlinear speedups when ported to such machines. And even on shared-memory computers, use of the message-passing model can improve performance by providing more programmer control of data locality in the memory hierarchy.

This analysis explains why message passing has emerged as one of the more widely used paradigms for expressing parallel algorithms. Although it has shortcomings, message passing remains closer than any other paradigm to being a standard approach for the implementation of parallel applications.

#### 1.4 Evolution of Message-Passing Systems

Message passing has only recently, however, become a standard for *portability*, in both syntax and semantics. Before MPI, there were many competing variations on the message-passing theme, and programs could only be ported from one system to another with difficulty. Several factors contributed to the situation.

Vendors of parallel computing systems, while embracing standard sequential languages, offered different, proprietary message-passing libraries. There were two (good) reasons for this situation:

- No standard emerged, and—until MPI—no coherent effort was made to create one. This situation reflected the fact that parallel computing is a new science, and experimentation has been needed to identify the most useful concepts.
- Without a standard, vendors quite rightly treated the excellence of their proprietary libraries as a competitive advantage and focused on making their advantages unique (thus nonportable).

To deal with the portability problem, the research community contributed a number of libraries to the collection of alternatives. The better known of these are PICL [52], PVM [27] , PARMACS [29], p4 [31, 35, 36], Chameleon [67], Zip-code [111], and TCGMSG [68]; these libraries were publicly available but none of them are still widely used, having been supplanted by MPI. Many other experimental systems, of varying degrees of portability, have been developed at universities. In addition, commercial portable message-passing libraries were developed, such as Express [39], with considerable added functionality. These portability libraries,

from the user's point of view, also competed with one another, and some users were driven to then write their own metaportable libraries to hide the differences among them. Unfortunately, the more portable the code thus produced, the less functionality in the libraries the code could exploit, because it must be a least common denominator of the underlying systems. Thus, to achieve portable syntax, one must restrict oneself to deficient semantics, and many of the performance advantages of the nonportable systems are lost.

Sockets, both the Berkeley (Unix) variety and Winsock (Microsoft) variety, also offer a portable message-passing interface, although with minimal functionality. We analyze the difference between the socket interface and the MPI interface in Chapter 9.

## 1.5 The MPI Forum

The plethora of solutions being offered to the user by both commercial software makers and researchers eager to give away their advanced ideas for free necessitated unwelcome choices for the user among portability, performance, and features.

The user community, which definitely includes the software suppliers themselves, determined to address this problem. In April 1992, the Center for Research in Parallel Computation sponsored a one-day workshop on Standards for Message Passing in a Distributed-Memory Environment [121]. The result of that workshop, which featured presentations of many systems, was a realization both that a great diversity of good ideas existed among message-passing systems and that people were eager to cooperate on the definition of a standard.

At the Supercomputing '92 conference in November, a committee was formed to define a message-passing standard. At the time of creation, few knew what the outcome might look like, but the effort was begun with the following goals:

- to define a portable standard for message passing, which would not be an official, ANSI-like standard but would attract both implementors and users;
- to operate in a completely open way, allowing anyone to join the discussions, either by attending meetings in person or by monitoring e-mail discussions; and
- to be finished in one year.

The MPI effort was a lively one, as a result of the tensions among these three goals. The MPI Forum decided to follow the format used by the High Performance

Fortran Forum, which had been well received by its community. (It even decided to meet in the same hotel in Dallas.)

The MPI standardization effort has been successful in attracting a wide class of vendors and users because the MPI Forum itself was so broadly based. At the original (MPI-1) forum, the parallel computer vendors were represented by Convex, Cray, IBM, Intel, Meiko, nCUBE, NEC, and Thinking Machines. Members of the groups associated with the portable software libraries were also present: PVM, p4, Zipcode, Chameleon, PARMACS, TCGMSG, and Express were all represented. Moreover, a number of parallel application specialists were on hand. In addition to meetings every six weeks for more than a year, there were continuous discussions via electronic mail, in which many persons from the worldwide parallel computing community participated. Equally important, an early commitment to producing a model implementation [65] helped demonstrate that an implementation of MPI was feasible.

The first version of the MPI standard [93] was completed in May 1994. During the 1993–1995 meetings of the MPI Forum, several issues were postponed in order to reach early agreement on a core of message-passing functionality. The forum reconvened during 1995–1997 to extend MPI to include remote memory operations, parallel I/O, dynamic process management, and a number of features designed to increase the convenience and robustness of MPI. Although some of the results of this effort are described in this book, most of them are covered formally in [56] and described in a more tutorial approach in [60]. We refer to this as MPI-2.

The MPI-2 version remained the definition of MPI for nearly fifteen years. Then, in response to developments in hardware and software and the needs of applications, a third instantiation of the forum was constituted, again consisting of vendors, computer scientists, and computational scientists (the application developers). During 2008–2009, the forum updated the MPI-2 functions to reflect recent developments, culminating in the release of MPI-2.2 in September 2009. The forum continued to meet, substantially extending MPI with new operations, releasing the MPI-3 standard in September of 2012. Since then, the forum has continued to meet to further enhance MPI, for example, considering how MPI should behave in an environment where hardware is somewhat unreliable.

This book primarily covers the functionality introduced in MPI-1, revised and updated to reflect the (few) changes that the MPI-2 and MPI-3 forums introduced into this functionality. It is a companion to the standard itself, showing how MPI is *used* and how its features are exploited in a wide range of situations. The more substantive *additions* to the MPI-1 standard are covered in the standard itself, of course, and in *Using Advanced MPI* [55].

# 2 Introduction to MPI

In this chapter we introduce the basic concepts of MPI, showing how they arise naturally out of the message-passing model.

## 2.1 Goal

The primary goal of the MPI specification is to demonstrate that users need not compromise among efficiency, portability, and functionality. Specifically, users can write portable programs that still take advantage of the specialized hardware and software offered by individual vendors. At the same time, advanced features, such as application-oriented process structures and dynamically managed process groups with an extensive set of collective operations, can be expected in every MPI implementation and can be used in every parallel application program where they might be useful. One of the most critical families of users is the parallel library writers, for whom efficient, portable, and highly functional code is extremely important. MPI is the first specification that allows these users to write truly portable libraries. The goal of MPI is ambitious; but because the collective effort of collaborative design and competitive implementation has been successful, it has removed the need for an alternative to MPI as a means of specifying message-passing algorithms to be executed on any computer platform that implements the message-passing model.

This tripartite goal—portability, efficiency, functionality—has forced many of the design decisions that make up the MPI specification. We describe in the following sections just how these decisions have affected both the fundamental *send* and *receive* operations of the message-passing model and the set of advanced message-passing operations included in MPI.

## 2.2 What Is MPI?

MPI is not a revolutionary new way of programming parallel computers. Rather, it is an attempt to collect the best features of many message-passing systems that have been developed over the years, improve them where appropriate, and standardize them. Hence, we begin by summarizing the fundamentals of MPI.

- MPI is a library, not a language. It specifies the names, calling sequences, and results of subroutines to be called from Fortran programs and the functions to be called from C programs. The programs that users write in Fortran and C are compiled with ordinary compilers and linked with the MPI library.

- MPI is a specification, not a particular implementation. As of this writing, all parallel computer vendors offer an MPI implementation for their machines and free, publicly available implementations can be downloaded over the Internet. A correct MPI program should be able to run on all MPI implementations without change.
- MPI addresses the message-passing model. Although it is far more than a minimal system, its features do not extend beyond the fundamental computational model described in Chapter 1. A computation remains a collection of *processes* communicating with *messages*. Functions defined in MPI-2 and MPI-3 extend the basic message-passing model considerably, but still focus on the movement of data among separate address spaces.

The structure of MPI makes it straightforward to port existing codes and to write new ones without learning a new set of fundamental concepts. Nevertheless, the attempts to remove the shortcomings of prior systems have made even the basic operations a little different. We explain these differences in the next section.

### 2.3 Basic MPI Concepts

Perhaps the best way to introduce the basic concepts in MPI is first to derive a minimal message-passing interface from the message-passing model itself and then to describe how MPI extends such a minimal interface to make it more useful to application programmers and library writers.

In the message-passing model of parallel computation, the processes executing in parallel have separate address spaces. Communication occurs when a portion of one process's address space is copied into another process's address space. This operation is cooperative and occurs only when the first process executes a *send* operation and the second process executes a *receive* operation. What are the minimal arguments for the send and receive functions?

For the sender, the obvious arguments that must be specified are the data to be communicated and the destination process to which the data is to be sent. The minimal way to describe data is to specify a starting address and a length (in bytes). Any sort of data item might be used to identify the destination; typically it has been an integer.

On the receiver's side, the minimum arguments are the address and length of an area in local memory where the received variable is to be placed, together with a variable to be filled in with the identity of the sender, so that the receiving process can know which process sent it the message.

Although an implementation of this minimum interface might be adequate for some applications, more features usually are needed. One key notion is that of *matching*: a process must be able to control which messages it receives, by screening them by means of another integer, called the *type* or *tag* of the message. Since we are soon going to use “type” for something else altogether, we will use the word “tag” for this argument to be used for matching. A message-passing system is expected to supply queuing capabilities so that a receive operation specifying a tag will complete successfully only when a message sent with a matching tag arrives. This consideration adds the tag as an argument for both sender and receiver. It is also convenient if the source can be specified on a receive operation as an additional screening parameter.

Moreover, it is useful for the receive to specify a maximum message size (for messages with a given tag) but allow for shorter messages to arrive. In this case the actual length of the message received needs to be returned in some way.

Now our minimal message interface has become

---

```
send(address, length, destination, tag)
```

---

and

---

```
receive(address, length, source, tag, actlen)
```

---

where the `source` and `tag` in the `receive` can be either input arguments used to screen messages or special values used as “wild cards” to indicate that messages will be matched from any source or with any tag, in which case they could be filled in with the actual tag and destination of the message received. The argument `actlen` is the length of the message received. Typically it is considered an error if a matching message is received that is too long, but not if it is too short.

Many systems with variations on this type of interface were in use when the MPI effort began. Several of them were mentioned in the preceding chapter. Such message-passing systems proved extremely useful, but they imposed restrictions considered undesirable by a large user community. The MPI Forum sought to lift these restrictions by providing more flexible versions of each of these parameters, while retaining the familiar underlying meanings of the basic `send` and `receive` operations. Let us examine these parameters one by one, in each case discussing first the original restrictions and then the MPI version.

**Describing message buffers.** The `(address, length)` specification of the message to be sent was a good match for early hardware but is not really adequate for two different reasons:

- Often, the message to be sent is *not contiguous*. In the simplest case, it may be a row of a matrix that is stored columnwise. More generally, it may consist of an irregularly dispersed collection of structures of different sizes. In the past, programmers (or libraries) have had to provide code to pack this data into contiguous buffers before sending it and to unpack it at the receiving end. However, as communications processors began to appear that could deal directly with strided or even more generally distributed data, it became more critical for performance that the packing be done “on the fly” by the communication processor in order to avoid the extra data movement. This cannot be done unless the data is described in its original (distributed) form to the communication library.
- The information *content* of a message (its integer values, floating-point values, etc.) is really independent of how these values are represented in a particular computer as strings of bits. If we describe our messages at a higher level, then it will be possible to send messages between machines that represent such values in different ways, such as with different byte orderings or different floating-point number representations. This will also allow the use of MPI communication between computation-specialized machines and visualization-specialized machines, for example, or among workstations of different types on a network. The communication library can do the necessary conversion *if* it is told precisely what is being transmitted.

The MPI solution, for both of these problems, is to specify messages at a higher level and in a more flexible way than (address, length) in order to reflect the fact that a message contains much more structure than just a string of bits. Instead, an MPI message buffer is defined by a triple (address, count, datatype), describing count occurrences of the data type datatype starting at address. The power of this mechanism comes from the flexibility in the values of datatype.

To begin with, datatype can take on the values of elementary data types in the host language. Thus (A, 300, MPI\_REAL) describes a vector A of 300 real numbers in Fortran, regardless of the length or format of a floating-point number. An MPI implementation for heterogeneous networks guarantees that the same 300 reals will be received, even if the receiving machine has a very different floating-point format.

The full power of data types, however, comes from the fact that users can construct their own data types using MPI routines and that these data types can describe noncontiguous data. Details of how to construct these “derived” data types are given in Chapter 5.

**Separating families of messages.** Nearly all message-passing systems have provided a *tag* argument for the *send* and *receive* operations. This argument allows the programmer to deal with the arrival of messages in an orderly way, even if the arrival of messages is not in the order anticipated. The message-passing system queues messages that arrive “of the wrong tag” until the program(mer) is ready for them. Usually a facility exists for specifying wild-card tags that match any tag.

This mechanism has proven necessary but insufficient, because the arbitrariness of the tag choices means that the entire program must use tags in a predefined, coherent way. Particular difficulties arise in the case of libraries, written far from the application programmer in time and space, whose messages must not be accidentally received by the application program.

MPI’s solution is to extend the notion of tag with a new concept: the *context*. Contexts are allocated at run time by the system in response to user (and library) requests and are used for matching messages. They differ from tags in that they are allocated by the system instead of the user and no wild-card matching is permitted.

The usual notion of message tag, with wild-card matching, is retained in MPI.

**Naming processes.** Processes belong to *groups*. If a group contains  $n$  processes, then its processes are identified within the group by *ranks*, which are integers from 0 to  $n - 1$ . All processes in an MPI implementation belong to an initial group. Within this group, processes are numbered similarly to the way in which they are numbered in many previous message-passing systems, from 0 up to 1 less than the total number of processes.

**Communicators.** The notions of context and group are combined in a single object called a *communicator*, which becomes an argument to most point-to-point and collective operations. Thus the destination or source specified in a send or receive operation always refers to the rank of the process in the group identified with the given communicator.

That is, in MPI the basic (blocking) *send* operation has become

---

`MPI_Send(address, count, datatype, destination, tag, comm)`

---

where

- (*address*, *count*, *datatype*) describes *count* occurrences of items of the form *datatype* starting at *address*,
- *destination* is the rank of the destination in the group associated with the communicator *comm*,

- tag is an integer used for message matching, and
- comm identifies a group of processes and a communication context.

The *receive* has become

---

**MPI\_Recv**(address, maxcount, datatype, source, tag, comm, status)

---

Here, the arguments are as follows:

- (address, maxcount, datatype) describe the receive buffer as they do in the case of MPI\_Send. It is allowable for less than maxcount occurrences of datatype to be received. The arguments tag and comm are as in MPI\_Send, with the addition that a wildcard, matching any tag, is allowed.
- source is the rank of the source of the message in the group associated with the communicator comm, or a wildcard matching any source,
- status holds information about the actual message size, source, and tag, useful when wild cards have been used.

The source, tag, and count of the message actually received can be retrieved from status.

Several early message-passing systems returned the “status” parameters by separate calls that implicitly referenced the most recent message received. MPI’s method is one aspect of its effort to be reliable in the situation where multiple threads are receiving messages on behalf of a process.

## 2.4 Other Interesting Features of MPI

Our focus so far has been on the basic *send* and *receive* operations, since one may well regard as the most fundamental new feature in MPI the small but important way in which each of the arguments of the “traditional” send/receive was modified from the minimal message-passing interface we described at the beginning of this section. Nevertheless, MPI is a large specification and offers many other advanced features, including the following:

**Collective communications.** A proven concept from early message-passing libraries is the notion of *collective operation*, performed by all the processes in a computation. Collective operations are of two kinds:

- *Data movement* operations are used to rearrange data among the processes. The simplest of these is a broadcast, but many elaborate scattering and gathering operations can be defined (and are supported in MPI).
- *Collective computation* operations (minimum, maximum, sum, logical OR, etc., as well as user-defined operations).

In both cases, a message-passing library can take advantage of its knowledge of the structure of the machine in order to optimize and increase the parallelism in these operations.

MPI has an extremely flexible mechanism for describing data movement routines. These are particularly powerful when used in conjunction with the derived datatypes.

MPI also has a large set of collective computation operations and a mechanism by which users can provide their own. In addition, MPI provides operations for creating and managing groups in a scalable way. Such groups can be used to control the scope of collective operations.

**Virtual topologies.** One can conceptualize processes in an application-oriented topology, for convenience in programming. Both general graphs and grids of processes are supported in MPI. Topologies provide a high-level method for managing process groups without dealing with them directly. Since topologies are a standard part of MPI, we do not treat them as an exotic, advanced feature. We use them early in the book (Chapter 4) and freely from then on.

**Debugging and profiling.** Rather than specifying any particular interface, MPI requires the availability of “hooks” that allow users to intercept MPI calls and thus define their own debugging and profiling mechanisms. In Chapter 7 we give an example of how to write such hooks for analyzing program behavior.

**Communication modes.** MPI has both the blocking send and receive operations described above and nonblocking versions whose completion can be tested for and waited for explicitly. It is possible to test and wait on multiple operations simultaneously. MPI also has multiple communication *modes*. The *standard* mode corresponds to current common practice in message-passing systems. The *synchronous* mode requires sends to block until the corresponding receive has occurred (as opposed to the standard mode blocking send, which blocks only until the buffer can be reused). The *ready* mode (for sends) is a way for the programmer to notify

the system that the receive has been posted, so that the underlying system can use a faster protocol if it is available. The *buffered* mode provides user-controllable buffering for send operations.

**Support for libraries.** The structuring of all communication through communicators provides to library writers for the first time the capabilities they need to write parallel libraries that are completely independent of user code and inter-operable with other libraries. Libraries can maintain arbitrary data, called *attributes*, associated with the communicators they allocate, and can specify their own error handlers. The tools for creating MPI parallel libraries that take advantage of these features are described in Chapters 6 and 7.

**Support for heterogeneous networks.** MPI programs can run on networks of machines that have different lengths and formats for various fundamental datatypes, since each communication operation specifies a (possibly very simple) structure and all the component datatypes, so that the implementation always has enough information to do data format conversions if they are necessary. MPI does not specify how these conversions are done, however, thus allowing a variety of optimizations. We discuss heterogeneity specifically in Chapter 7.

**Processes and processors.** The MPI standard talks about *processes*. A process is a software concept that represents an address space and one or more threads (each thread has a separate program counter and call stack). In contrast, a *processor* is a piece of hardware containing a central processing unit capable of executing a program. Some MPI implementations will limit an MPI program to one MPI process per processor; others will allow multiple MPI processes on each processor.

An MPI process is usually the same as a process in the operating system, but that isn't required by the MPI standard. See [41, 78] for examples of one Unix process containing multiple MPI processes.

## 2.5 Is MPI Large or Small?

Perhaps the most fundamental decision for the MPI Forum was whether MPI would be “small and exclusive,” incorporating the minimal *intersection* of existing libraries, or “large and inclusive,” incorporating the *union* of the functionality of existing systems.

In the end, although some ideas were left out, an attempt was made to include a relatively large number of features that had proven useful in various libraries and

<code>MPI_Init</code>	Initialize MPI
<code>MPI_Comm_size</code>	Find out how many processes there are
<code>MPI_Comm_rank</code>	Find out which process I am
<code>MPI_Send</code>	Send a message
<code>MPI_Recv</code>	Receive a message
<code>MPI_Finalize</code>	Terminate MPI

Table 2.1: The six-function version of MPI

applications. At the same time the number of *ideas* in MPI is small; the number of functions in MPI comes from combining a small set of orthogonal concepts.

To demonstrate just how little one needs to learn to write MPI programs, we present here a list of the indispensable functions, the ones that the programmer really cannot do without. There are six. With only these functions a vast number of useful and efficient programs can be written. The other functions add flexibility (datatypes), robustness (nonblocking send/receive), efficiency (“ready” mode), modularity (groups, communicators), or convenience (collective operations, topologies). Nonetheless, one can forego all of these concepts and use only the six routines from MPI shown in Table 2.1 to write complete message-passing programs.

The designers of MPI attempted to make the features of MPI consistent and orthogonal. Hence users can incrementally add sets of functions to their repertoire as needed, without learning everything at once. For example, for collective communication, one can accomplish a lot with just `MPI_Bcast` and `MPI_Reduce`, as we show in Chapter 3. The next addition to one’s repertoire is likely to be the non-blocking operations, which we discuss in Chapter 4, followed by derived datatypes, introduced in Chapter 4 and explored in more depth in Chapter 5. The unfolding of topics in this book will be driven by examples that motivate the introduction of MPI routines a little at a time.

## 2.6 Decisions Left to the Implementor

The MPI standard does not specify *every* aspect of a parallel program. Some aspects of parallel programming that are left to the specific implementation are as follows:

- Process startup is left to the implementation. This strategy allows considerable flexibility in how an MPI program is executed, at some cost in portability of the parallel programming environment.

- Although MPI specifies a number of error codes, the implementation is allowed to return a richer set of error codes than is specified in the standard.
- The amount of system buffering provided for messages is implementation dependent, although users can exert some control if they choose. In Chapter 4 we describe what we mean by buffering and techniques for dealing with the buffering problem . Chapter 8 contains a look at buffering issues from the implementor's point of view.
- Further issues, including some impacting performance, that come up when one looks more deeply into implementation issues are covered in Chapter 8.

The implementation used in preparing examples for this book is MPICH [59], a freely available, portable implementation of MPI. Instructions for obtaining MPICH and the source code for the examples used here are given in Appendix B.

# 3 Using MPI in Simple Programs

In this chapter we introduce the most basic MPI calls and use them to write some simple parallel programs. Simplicity of a parallel algorithm does not limit its usefulness, however: even a small number of basic routines are enough to implement a major application. We also demonstrate in this chapter a few of the tools that we use throughout this book to study the behavior of parallel programs.

## 3.1 A First MPI Program

For our first parallel program, we choose a “perfect” parallel program: it can be expressed with a minimum of communication, load balancing is automatic, and we can verify the answer. Specifically, we compute the value of  $\pi$  by numerical integration. Since

$$\int_0^1 \frac{1}{1+x^2} dx = \arctan(x)|_0^1 = \arctan(1) - \arctan(0) = \arctan(1) = \frac{\pi}{4},$$

we will integrate the function  $f(x) = 4/(1+x^2)$ . To do this integration numerically, we divide the interval from 0 to 1 into some number  $n$  of subintervals and add up the areas of the rectangles as shown in Figure 3.1 for  $n = 5$ . Larger values of the parameter  $n$  will give us more accurate approximations of  $\pi$ . This is not, in fact, a very good way to compute  $\pi$ , but it makes a good example.

To see the relationship between  $n$  and the error in the approximation, we write an interactive program in which the user supplies  $n$  and the program first computes an approximation (the parallel part of the program) and then compares it with a known, highly accurate approximation to  $\pi$ .

The parallel part of the algorithm occurs as each process computes and adds up the areas for a different subset of the rectangles. At the end of the computation, all of the local sums are combined into a global sum representing the value of  $\pi$ . Communication requirements are consequently simple. One of the processes (we’ll call it the manager) is responsible for communication with the user. It obtains a value for  $n$  from the user and broadcasts it to all of the other processes. Each process is able to compute which rectangles it is responsible for from  $n$ , the total number of processes, and its own rank. After reporting a value for  $\pi$  and the error in the approximation, the manager asks the user for a new value for  $n$ .

The complete program is shown in Figure 3.2. In most of this book we will show only the “interesting” parts of programs and refer the reader to other sources for the complete, runnable version of the code. For our first few programs, however,

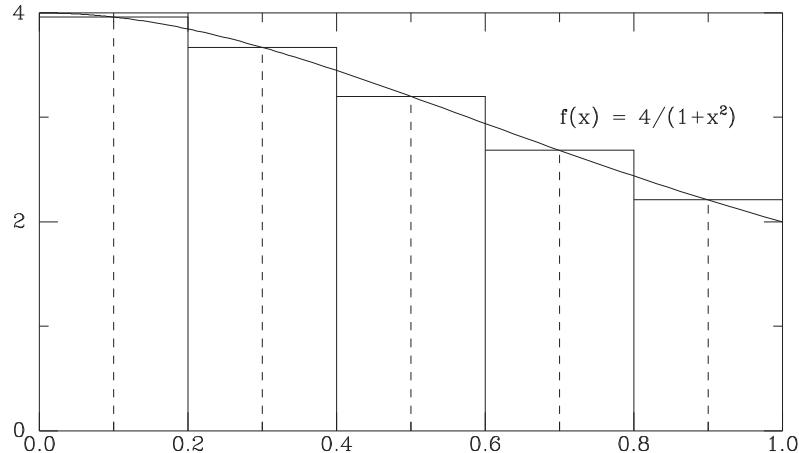


Figure 3.1: Integrating to find the value of  $\pi$

we include the entire code and describe it more or less line by line. In the directory of programs that accompanies this book, the `pi` program is available as ‘`simplempi/pi.f`’. See Appendix B for details of how to obtain this code, other examples, and an implementation of MPI.

Our program starts like any other, with the `program main` statement. Fortran programs may use either `include "mpif.h"` or the `mpi` module. MPI-3 implementations should also provide an `mpi_f08` module; this module provides a newer interface for Fortran but requires different declarations for MPI objects. See *Using Advanced MPI* [55] for details. The include file or module is necessary in every MPI Fortran program and subprogram to define various constants and variables. In this book, all of the examples use the `mpi` module because it provides valuable checking for correct argument types and counts. However, if your MPI implementation does not provide an `mpi` module, you can use the `mpif.h` include file.

After a few lines of variable definitions, we get to three lines that will probably be found near the beginning of every Fortran MPI program:

---

```
call MPI_INIT(ierr)
call MPI_COMM_RANK(MPI_COMM_WORLD, myid, ierr)
call MPI_COMM_SIZE(MPI_COMM_WORLD, numprocs, ierr)
```

---

---

```

program main
use mpi
double precision PI25DT
parameter (PI25DT = 3.141592653589793238462643d0)
double precision mypi, pi, h, sum, x, f, a
integer n, myid, numprocs, i, ierr
!                                         function to integrate
f(a) = 4.d0 / (1.d0 + a*a)

call MPI_INIT(ierr)
call MPI_COMM_RANK(MPI_COMM_WORLD, myid, ierr)
call MPI_COMM_SIZE(MPI_COMM_WORLD, numprocs, ierr)

do
  if (myid .eq. 0) then
    print *, 'Enter the number of intervals: (0 quits)'
    read(*,*) n
  endif
!
!                                         broadcast n
  call MPI_BCAST(n, 1, MPI_INTEGER, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
!
  if (n .le. 0) exit
!
!                                         calculate the interval size
  h = 1.0d0/n
  sum = 0.0d0
  do i = myid+1, n, numprocs
    x = h * (db1e(i) - 0.5d0)
    sum = sum + f(x)
  enddo
  mypi = h * sum
!
!                                         collect all the partial sums
  call MPI_REDUCE(mypi, pi, 1, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                  MPI_SUM, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
!
!                                         node 0 prints the answer.
  if (myid .eq. 0) then
    print *, 'pi is ', pi, ' Error is', abs(pi - PI25DT)
  endif
enddo
call MPI_FINALIZE(ierr)
end

```

---

Figure 3.2: Fortran program (fpi) for calculating  $\pi$

The call to `MPI_INIT` is required in every MPI program and must be the first MPI call.<sup>1</sup> It establishes the MPI “environment.” Only one invocation of `MPI_INIT` can occur in each program execution. Its only argument is an error code. Every Fortran MPI subroutine returns an error code in its last argument, which is either `MPI_SUCCESS` or an implementation-defined error code. In this example (and in many of our examples) we will be sloppy and not test the return codes from our MPI routines, assuming that they will always be `MPI_SUCCESS`. This approach will improve readability of the code at the expense of possible debugging time. We will discuss later (in Section 7.7) how to check, handle, and report errors.

As described in Chapter 2, all MPI communication is associated with a *communicator* that describes the communication context and an associated group of processes. In this program we will be using only the default communicator, predefined and named `MPI_COMM_WORLD`, which defines one context and the set of all processes. `MPI_COMM_WORLD` is one of the items defined in the `mpi` module and in ‘`mpif.h`’.

The call `MPI_COMM_SIZE` returns (in `numprocs`) the number of processes that the user has started for this program. Precisely how the user caused these processes to be started depends on the implementation, but any program can find out the number with this call. The value `numprocs` is actually the size of the group of processes associated with the default communicator `MPI_COMM_WORLD`. We think of the processes in any group as being numbered with consecutive integers beginning with 0, called *ranks*. By calling `MPI_COMM_RANK`, each process finds out its rank in the group associated with a communicator. Thus, although each process in this program will get the same number in `numprocs`, each will have a different number for `myid`.

Next, the manager process (which can identify itself by using `myid`) gets a value for `n`, the number of rectangles, from the user. The line

---

```
call MPI_BCAST(n, 1, MPI_INTEGER, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
```

---

sends the value of `n` to all other processes. Note that *all* processes call `MPI_BCAST`, both the process sending the data (with rank zero) and all of the other processes in `MPI_COMM_WORLD`.<sup>2</sup> The call to `MPI_BCAST` results in every process (in the

<sup>1</sup>There are a few exceptions, including the `MPI_Initialized` routine, which a library can call to determine whether `MPI_Init` has been called. See Section 7.8.2.

<sup>2</sup>In some message-passing systems, messages sent with a broadcast can be received with a receive, just like a message sent with a send. In MPI, communication involving more than two processes is *collective*, and all participating processes call the same routine. `MPI_BCAST` is an example of a collective communication routine.

group associated with the communicator given in the fifth argument) ending up with a copy of  $n$ . The data to be communicated is described by the address ( $n$ ), the datatype (`MPI_INTEGER`), and the number of items (1). The process with the original copy is specified by the fourth argument (0 in this case, the manager process, which just reads it from the user). (MPI assigns a type to every data item. MPI datatypes are described in full in Section 5.1.)

Thus, after the call to `MPI_BCAST`, all processes have  $n$  and their own identifiers, which is enough information for each one to compute its contribution, `mypi`. Each process computes the area of every `numprocs`'th rectangle, starting with `myid+1`. Next, all of the values of `mypi` held by the individual processes need to be added up. MPI provides a rich set of such operations, using the `MPI_REDUCE` routine, with an argument specifying which arithmetic or logical operation is being requested. In our case the call is

---

```
call MPI_REDUCE(mypi, pi, 1, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, MPI_SUM, 0, &
               MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
```

---

The first two arguments identify the source and result addresses, respectively. The data being collected consists of 1 (third argument) item of type `MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION` (fourth argument). The operation is addition (`MPI_SUM`, the next argument), and the result of the operation is to be placed in `pi` on the process with rank 0 (fifth argument). The last two arguments are the communicator and error return code, as usual. The first two arguments of `MPI_REDUCE` must not overlap (i.e., must be different variables or sections of an array). A full list of such operations is presented in Section 7.2.2, where user-defined operations are also discussed.

All processes then return to the top of the loop (the manager prints the answer first). The `MPI_BCAST` causes all the processes except the manager to wait for the next value of  $n$ .

When the user types a zero in response to the request for a number of rectangles, the loop terminates and all processes execute

---

```
call MPI_FINALIZE(ierr)
```

---

This call must be made by every process in an MPI computation; it terminates the MPI “environment.” With few exceptions, no MPI calls may be made by a process after its call to `MPI_FINALIZE`. In particular, `MPI_INIT` cannot be called again.

The Fortran bindings for the MPI routines used in this section are summarized in Table 3.1. In the tables of Fortran bindings, the expression `<type>` stands for any Fortran datatype, such as `INTEGER` or `DOUBLE PRECISION`.

---

<b>MPI_INIT</b> (ierror)
integer ierror
<b>MPI_COMM_SIZE</b> (comm, size, ierror)
integer comm, size, ierror
<b>MPI_COMM_RANK</b> (comm, rank, ierror)
integer comm, rank, ierror
<b>MPI_BCAST</b> (buffer, count, datatype, root, comm, ierror)
<type> buffer(*)
integer count, datatype, root, comm, ierror
<b>MPI_REDUCE</b> (sendbuf, recvbuf, count, datatype, op, root, comm, ierror)
<type> sendbuf(*), recvbuf(*)
integer count, datatype, op, root, comm, ierror
<b>MPI_FINALIZE</b> (ierror)
integer ierror

---

Table 3.1: Fortran bindings for routines used in the fpi program

### 3.2 Running Your First MPI Program

The way in which MPI programs are “launched” on a particular machine or network is not itself part of the MPI standard. Therefore it may vary from one machine to another. Several existing MPI implementations have used a syntax like

---

```
mpirun -np 4 fpi
```

---

The MPI Forum settled on a standard that recommended, but did not require, the syntax

---

```
mpiexec -n 4 fpi
```

---

instead. See *Using Advanced MPI* [55] for a complete discussion of the options for `mpiexec`.

Some MPI implementations may require different commands to start MPI programs; often `man mpi` will give tell you how to run programs. The MPI standard strongly encourages implementors to provide an `mpiexec` command that provides a uniform interface to starting MPI programs.

---

```
int MPI_Init(int *argc, char ***argv)
int MPI_Comm_size(MPI_Comm comm, int *size)
int MPI_Comm_rank(MPI_Comm comm, int *rank)
int MPI_Bcast(void *buf, int count, MPI_Datatype datatype, int root,
              MPI_Comm comm)
int MPI_Reduce(const void *sendbuf, void *recvbuf, int count,
               MPI_Datatype datatype, MPI_Op op, int root, MPI_Comm comm)
int MPI_Finalize()
```

---

Table 3.2: C bindings for routines used in the pi program

### 3.3 A First MPI Program in C

In this section we repeat the program for computing the value of  $\pi$ , but this time in C rather than Fortran. In general, every effort was made in MPI to keep the Fortran and C bindings similar. The primary difference is that error codes are returned as the value of C functions instead of in a separate argument. In addition, the arguments to most functions are more strongly typed than they are in Fortran (with the `mpi` module), having specific C types such as `MPI_Comm` and `MPI_Datatype` where Fortran has integers (the `mpi_f08` Fortran module provides similarly strong typing). The included file is, of course, different: instead of the `mpi` module, we `#include` the file ‘`mpi.h`’. Moreover, the arguments to `MPI_Init` are different, so that a C program can take advantage of command-line arguments. An MPI implementation is expected to remove from the `argv` array any command-line arguments that should be processed by the implementation before returning control to the user program and to decrement `argc` accordingly. Note that the arguments to `MPI_Init` in C are the *addresses* of the usual main arguments `argc` and `argv`. One is allowed to pass `NULL` for both of these addresses.

The program is shown in Figure 3.3, and definitions of the C versions of the MPI routines used in this program are given in Table 3.2.

### 3.4 Using MPI from Other Languages

The current MPI standard (version 3.0 at the time of this writing) defines language bindings for Fortran and C. At one point explicit C++ bindings were defined as

---

```

#include "mpi.h"
#include <math.h>
int main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    int n, myid, numprocs, i;
    double PI25DT = 3.141592653589793238462643;
    double mypi, pi, h, sum, x;
    MPI_Init(&argc,&argv);
    MPI_Comm_size(MPI_COMM_WORLD, &numprocs);
    MPI_Comm_rank(MPI_COMM_WORLD, &myid);
    while (1) {
        if (myid == 0) {
            printf("Enter the number of intervals: (0 quits) ");
            scanf("%d",&n);
        }
        MPI_Bcast(&n, 1, MPI_INT, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD);
        if (n == 0)
            break;
        else {
            h = 1.0 / (double) n;
            sum = 0.0;
            for (i = myid + 1; i <= n; i += numprocs) {
                x = h * ((double)i - 0.5);
                sum += (4.0 / (1.0 + x*x));
            }
            mypi = h * sum;
            MPI_Reduce(&mypi, &pi, 1, MPI_DOUBLE, MPI_SUM, 0,
                         MPI_COMM_WORLD);
            if (myid == 0)
                printf("pi is approximately %.16f, Error is %.16f\n",
                       pi, fabs(pi - PI25DT));
        }
    }
    MPI_Finalize();
    return 0;
}

```

---

Figure 3.3: C program for calculating  $\pi$

well (see the second edition of this book); but they did not prove useful in the long run and so have been removed from the standard. C++ users should be able to freely use the C bindings by including into their program the file ‘`mpi.h`’, which defines them. Individual computer scientists have produced bindings for other languages, although they are not officially blessed by the MPI Forum and may not be complete. A web search will turn up at least experimental bindings for languages such as Python, Ruby, Java, Julia, and D.

### 3.5 Timing MPI Programs

Sequential algorithms are tested for correctness by seeing whether they give the right answer. For parallel programs, the right answer is not enough: one wishes to decrease the execution time. Therefore, measuring speed of execution is part of testing the program to see whether it performs as intended.

Many operating systems and libraries provide timing mechanisms, but so far all of those that both are portable and provide access to high resolution clocks are cumbersome to use. Therefore MPI provides a simple routine that can be used to time programs or sections of programs.

`MPI_Wtime()` returns a double-precision floating-point number that is the time in seconds since some arbitrary point of time in the past. The point is guaranteed not to change during the lifetime of a process. Thus, a time interval can be measured by calling this routine at the beginning and end of a program segment and subtracting the values returned. Making this a floating-point value allows the use of high-resolution timers if they are supported by the underlying hardware, although no particular resolution is specified. MPI provides a function to find out what the resolution is. This function, called `MPI_Wtick`, has no arguments. It returns a floating-point number that is the time in seconds between successive ticks of the clock. The bindings are shown in Tables 3.3 and 3.4. The values returned by `MPI_Wtime` are not synchronized with other processes. That is, you cannot compare a value from `MPI_Wtime` from process 8 with a value from process 2. Only the difference in values of `MPI_Wtime`, taken on the same process, has any meaning.<sup>3</sup>

Suppose we wished to measure the *speedup* obtained by our program for computing  $\pi$ . Since this program is written as an interactive program, we wish to time only the section that does internal communications and computation. We don’t

---

<sup>3</sup>If in fact the values of `MPI_Wtime` are synchronized among the processes, the MPI implementation sets an *attribute* to indicate this. This will be discussed in Section 7.8.

---

double precision **MPI\_WTIME()**

---

double precision **MPI\_WTICK()**

---

Table 3.3: Fortran binding for MPI timing routines

---

double **MPI\_Wtime()**

---

double **MPI\_Wtick()**

---

Table 3.4: C binding for MPI timing routines

want to include time spent waiting for user input. Figure 3.4 shows how the central part of our  $\pi$  program is modified to provide timings. Then, by running it with varying numbers of processes, we can measure speedup. Speedup for  $p$  processors is normally defined as

$$\frac{\text{time for 1 process}}{\text{time for } p \text{ processes}}$$

Thus, a nearly perfect speedup would be a phrase like “speedup of 97.8 with 100 processors.” Note that for this program, because of the small amount of computational work done, speedups greater than one are unlikely; we’ll discuss this in more detail in Section 4.6.

### 3.6 A Self-Scheduling Example: Matrix-Vector Multiplication

So far, we have been able to write a “message-passing” program without explicitly sending and receiving messages. The next example will illustrate such explicit point-to-point communication and, at the same time, illustrate one of the most common of parallel algorithm prototypes: the *self-scheduling*, or *manager-worker*, algorithm. We will demonstrate the self-scheduling prototype first in the context of matrix-vector multiplication, for simplicity, but the same abstract algorithm has been used in many other contexts.

This example was chosen not because it illustrates the best way to parallelize this particular numerical computation (it doesn’t) but because it illustrates the basic MPI *send* and *receive* operations in the context of a fundamental type of parallel algorithm, applicable in many situations.

The idea is that one process, which we call the manager process, is responsible for coordinating the work of the others. This mechanism is particularly appropriate when the other processes (the *worker* processes) do not have to communicate with

---

```

double precision starttime, endtime
...
do
!     ... read n on process zero
        starttime = MPI_WTIME()
!
        broadcast n
        call MPI_BCAST(n, 1, MPI_INTEGER, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
!
        check for quit signal
        if ( n .le. 0 ) exit
!
        calculate the interval size
        h   = 1.0d0/n
        sum = 0.0d0
        do i = myid+1, n, numprocs
            x   = h * (dble(i) - 0.5d0)
            sum = sum + f(x)
        enddo
        mypi = h * sum
!
        collect all the partial sums
        call MPI_REDUCE(mypi, pi, 1, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                    MPI_SUM, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
!
        node 0 prints the answer.
        endtime = MPI_WTIME()
        if (myid .eq. 0) then
            print *, 'pi is ', pi, 'Error is ', abs(pi - PI25DT)
            print *, 'time is ', endtime-starttime, ' seconds'
        endif
    enddo

```

---

Figure 3.4: Timing the program for calculating  $\pi$ 

one another and when the amount of work that each worker must perform is difficult to predict. In the case of matrix-vector multiplication, the first criterion holds but not the second. We can, of course, take the view that we might be computing on a network of workstations with varying loads and so, even if equal amounts of work were assigned, the time it takes for each worker to complete its task might vary widely. In any event, the point of this example is the use of the MPI *send* and *receive* routines to express the manager-worker parallel algorithm, rather than the matrix-vector multiplication itself.

In our example of multiplying a matrix by a vector, a unit of work to be given out will consist of the dot product of one row of the matrix **A** with the (column) vector **b**. The manager begins by broadcasting **b** to each worker. It then sends

one row of the matrix **A** to each worker. At this point the manager begins a loop, terminated when it has received all of the entries in the product. The body of the loop consists of receiving one entry in the product vector from whichever worker sends one, then sending the next task to that worker. In other words, completion of one task by a worker is considered to be a request for the next task. Once all tasks have been handed out, termination messages are sent instead.

Each worker, after receiving the broadcast value of **b**, also enters a loop, terminated by the receipt of the termination message from the manager. The body of the loop consists of receiving a row of **A**, forming the dot product with **b**, and sending the answer back to the manager.

Although the manager and workers execute distinct algorithms, and in some environments they can be compiled into separate executable files, the more portable and convenient alternative is to combine them into a single program, with a test near the beginning to separate the manager code from the worker code.

We present the code here in three chunks: the code executed by all processes, the code executed only by the manager, and the code executed only by the workers. The code that is executed by all processes is shown in Figure 3.5. It does not contain any MPI calls that we have not already seen.

Now we fill in the sections carried out by the manager and workers. The way in which the manager obtains the matrix **A** and the vector **b** is irrelevant, so we don't show their initialization here. We have arbitrarily made **A** of size  $100 \times 100$ , just to be specific. The code for the manager is shown in Figure 3.6 on page 37. The new MPI call is the *send* operation, which the manager uses to send a row of **A** to a worker. In this first version we pack the data into a contiguous buffer before sending it. (In Section 5.2, we will show how MPI can do this for us.) Then the message is sent to process *i* with

---

```
tag = i
dest = i
call MPI_SEND(buffer, cols, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, dest, &
            tag, MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
```

---

The first three arguments, *buffer*, *cols*, and *MPI\_DOUBLE\_PRECISION*, describe the message in the usual MPI way: address, count, and datatype. The next argument, *i*, is the destination, an integer specifying the rank of the destination process in the group associated with the communicator given by the argument *MPI\_COMM\_WORLD*. Next comes an integer message type, or *tag*, in MPI terminology. We use the tag in this case to send a little extra information along with the row, namely, the row number. The worker will send this number back with the

---

```
program main
use mpi
integer MAX_ROWS, MAX_COLS, rows, cols
parameter (MAX_ROWS = 1000, MAX_COLS = 1000)
double precision a(MAX_ROWS,MAX_COLS), b(MAX_COLS)
double precision c(MAX_ROWS), buffer(MAX_COLS), ans

integer myid, manager, numprocs, ierr, status(MPI_STATUS_SIZE)
integer i, j, numsent, sender
integer anstype, row

call MPI_INIT(ierr)
call MPI_COMM_RANK(MPI_COMM_WORLD, myid, ierr)
call MPI_COMM_SIZE(MPI_COMM_WORLD, numprocs, ierr)
manager = 0
rows   = 100
cols   = 100

if (myid .eq. manager) then
!     manager initializes and then dispatches
    ...
else
!     workers receive b, then compute dot products until they
!     receive a done message
    ...
endif

call MPI_FINALIZE(ierr)
end
```

---

Figure 3.5: Fortran program for matrix-vector multiplication: common part

dot product it computes, so the manager will know where to store the answer in the vector **c**. Of course, we are assuming that there are enough tag values to keep track of the rows of **A**. MPI guarantees that at least the values from 0 to 32767 are valid, which will suffice for small tests of this program. (More tag values might be available; see Section 7.8 for how to find out. We reserve tag value 0 for the termination message. Then a communicator is specified (in this case the “default” communicator `MPI_COMM_WORLD`, whose group includes all processes), and a place (`ierr`) in which to return an error code. (We will consider error codes in more detail in Section 7.7.)

The responses from the workers are received by the line

---

```
call MPI_RECV(ans, 1, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, MPI_ANY_SOURCE, &
           MPI_ANY_TAG, MPI_COMM_WORLD, status, ierr)
```

---

This is a *blocking* receive; that is, control is not returned to the user program until the message has been received. The first three arguments specify a place to put the message. Here it is a single double-precision number, the dot product of one row of **A** with **b**. The manager process can also specify that it wishes to wait for a message from a specific process. Here it does not wish to be so selective, so it uses the predefined value `MPI_ANY_SOURCE` to indicate that it will accept messages from any process associated with the `MPI_COMM_WORLD` communicator. The use of `MPI_ANY_TAG` indicates that any row is acceptable.

The argument `status` is an output argument that provides information about the message that is received (including the source, tag, and length). In Fortran, it is an array of integers of size `MPI_STATUS_SIZE`. It is declared in the user’s program. Here we have called it `status`. The entry `status(MPI_SOURCE)` is filled in with the rank of the process that sent the message. It is important here because we will send the next unit of work (the next row) to that worker. We also need to know the value of `status(MPI_TAG)` in order to know where to store the answer in the vector **c**. In C, `status` is a structure of type `MPI_Status`; the element `status.MPI_SOURCE` is the source, and the element `status.MPI_TAG` is the tag value. In C programs, the `status` is usually passed by reference (that is, `&status`). In Fortran and C, other entries in `status` are used to determine the number of items that were actually received with the routine `MPI_Get_count`, which we will discuss in Section 7.1.3.

After all rows have been sent, the manager sends a message with tag zero to the workers to tell them they are finished. The content of this message is irrelevant; all the information is carried by the tag. In fact, since the content of the message is irrelevant, we send a message of zero length by setting the count field to zero.

---

```

! manager initializes and then dispatches
! initialize a and b (arbitrary)
do j = 1,cols
  b(j) = 1
  do i = 1,rows
    a(i,j) = i
  enddo
enddo
numsent = 0
! send b to each worker process
call MPI_BCAST(b, cols, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, manager, &
               MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
! send a row to each worker process; tag with row number
do i = 1,min(numprocs-1,rows)
  do j = 1,cols
    buffer(j) = a(i,j)
  enddo
  call MPI_SEND(buffer, cols, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, i, &
                i, MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
  numsent = numsent+1
enddo
do i = 1,rows
  call MPI_RECV(ans, 1, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                MPI_ANY_SOURCE, MPI_ANY_TAG, &
                MPI_COMM_WORLD, status, ierr)
  sender = status(MPI_SOURCE)
  anstype = status(MPI_TAG)           ! row is tag value
  c(anstype) = ans
  if (numsent .lt. rows) then        ! send another row
    do j = 1,cols
      buffer(j) = a(numsent+1,j)
    enddo
    call MPI_SEND(buffer, cols, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                  sender, numsent+1, MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
    numsent = numsent+1
  else      ! Tell sender that there is no more work
    call MPI_SEND(MPI_BOTTOM, 0, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                  sender, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
  endif
enddo

```

---

Figure 3.6: Fortran program for matrix-vector multiplication: manager part

---

```

!      workers receive b, then compute dot products until
!      done message received
call MPI_BCAST(b, cols, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, manager, &
               MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
if (myid .le. rows) then
  ! skip if more processes than work
  do
    call MPI_RECV(buffer, cols, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                  manager, MPI_ANY_TAG, MPI_COMM_WORLD, &
                  status, ierr)
    if (status(MPI_TAG) .eq. 0) exit
    row = status(MPI_TAG)
    ans = 0.0
    do i = 1,cols
      ans = ans+buffer(i)*b(i)
    enddo
    call MPI_SEND(ans, 1, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, manager, &
                  row, MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
  enddo
endif

```

---

Figure 3.7: Fortran program for matrix-vector multiplication: worker part

The worker code is given in Figure 3.7. It is a simple loop in which a message is received from the manager and then is acted upon. Whether the message is a row to work on or a termination message is determined by its tag, which is available in `status(MPI_TAG)`.

If the message is a row (the tag is nonzero), then the dot product with **b** is computed and sent back to the manager, and the worker waits for another task with `MPI_RECV`. Otherwise the worker branches to the `MPI_FINALIZE` in the code shared by manager and worker.

The new routines used in this example are the basic *send* and *receive* routines. Their Fortran and C bindings are given in Tables 3.5 and 3.6, respectively.

Now that we have discussed `MPI_Send` and `MPI_Recv`, we have covered all of the six functions listed in Chapter 2 as the minimal subset of MPI.

### 3.7 Studying Parallel Performance

In this section we study the behavior of parallel programs in more depth than just by timing them as we did in Section 3.5. We will begin with a simple example

---

**MPI\_SEND**(buf, count, datatype, dest, tag, comm, ierror)  
     <type> buf(\*)  
     integer count, datatype, dest, tag, comm, ierror

**MPI\_RECV**(buf, count, datatype, source, tag, comm, status, ierror)  
     <type> buf(\*)  
     integer count, datatype, source, tag, comm,  
         status(MPI\_STATUS\_SIZE), ierror

---

Table 3.5: Fortran bindings for send and receive routines

---

int **MPI\_Send**(const void \*buf, int count, MPI\_Datatype datatype, int dest, int tag,  
                   MPI\_Comm comm)

int **MPI\_Recv**(void \*buf, int count, MPI\_Datatype datatype, int source, int tag,  
                   MPI\_Comm comm, MPI\_Status \*status)

---

Table 3.6: C bindings for send and receive routines

of *scalability analysis*, applied to matrix-vector and matrix-matrix multiplication. This is an interesting and deep topic in its own right (see, for example, [49] or [80]). We can convey the flavor of an analysis by looking at the program we have just written. We will then switch from an analytical approach to an experimental one and show how to instrument a program so that it produces a log that we can study with graphical tools.

### 3.7.1 Elementary Scalability Calculations

Scalability analysis is the estimation of the computation and communication requirements of a particular problem and the mathematical study of how these requirements change as the problem size and/or the number of processes changes. As an elementary example, let us look at the matrix-vector multiplication algorithm that we have just presented. The amount of computation is easy to estimate. Let us suppose, for simplicity, that the matrix **A** is square, of size  $n \times n$ . Then for each element of the product **c** of **A** and **b**, we have to perform  $n$  multiplications and  $n - 1$  additions. There are  $n$  elements of **c**, so the total number of floating-point operations is

$$n \times (n + (n - 1)) = 2n^2 - n.$$

For simplicity, we assume that additions and multiplications take the same amount of time, which we call  $T_{calc}$ . We assume further that the total computation time is dominated by the floating-point operations. Thus our rough estimate for computation time is  $(2n^2 - n) \times T_{calc}$ .

Now let us estimate the communication costs. Let us not count the cost of sending **b** to each worker process, assuming that it arrived there some other way (perhaps it is computed there). Then the number of floating-point numbers that have to be communicated is  $n$  (to send a row of **A**),  $+ 1$  (to send the answer back) for each element of **c**, for a grand total of

$$n \times (n + 1) = n^2 + n.$$

If we assume that the time it takes to communicate a floating-point number is  $T_{comm}$ , the total communication time is roughly  $(n^2 + n) \times T_{comm}$ .

Therefore the ratio of communication to computation is

$$\left( \frac{n^2 + n}{2n^2 - n} \right) \times \left( \frac{T_{comm}}{T_{calc}} \right).$$

Since the cost of a single floating-point operation is usually much less than the cost of communicating one floating-point number, we hope to make this ratio as small as possible. Often by making a problem larger, one can reduce to insignificance the communication overhead. Here the bad news is that it doesn't happen in this case. The ratio  $T_{comm}/T_{calc}$  is roughly independent of  $n$ . (For the purposes of this analysis, we will ignore the effects of message sizes on communication costs; more detail is presented in Section 4.6.) As  $n$  gets larger, the ratio  $\frac{n^2+n}{2n^2-n}$  just gets closer to  $\frac{1}{2}$ . This means that communications overhead will always be a problem in this simplistic algorithm for matrix-vector multiply. (In Chapter 4, we will discuss the effect of message size on the communication cost.)

Better news is provided by a similar analysis of matrix-*matrix* multiplication. We can easily modify our matrix-vector algorithm to multiply two matrices instead. The vector **b** becomes a matrix **B**, we still distribute a copy of **B** to all the worker processes, and we collect back a whole row of the product matrix **C** from each process. The worker code is shown in Figure 3.8, and the manager code is modified accordingly. (We save listing of the whole program until later, when we show the instrumented version.)

Now let us do the scalability analysis for this (still not so very good) algorithm for matrix multiplication. For simplicity, let us again suppose that **A** is square and that **B** is square as well. Then the number of operations for each element of **C** is

---

```

! workers receive B, then compute rows of C until done message
do i = 1,bcols
  call MPI_BCAST(b(1,i), brows, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                 manager, MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
enddo
do
  call MPI_RECV(buffer, acols, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, manager, &
                MPI_ANY_TAG, MPI_COMM_WORLD, status, ierr)
  if (status(MPI_TAG) .eq. 0) exit
  row = status(MPI_TAG)
  do i = 1,bcols
    ans(i) = 0.0
    do j = 1,acols
      ans(i) = ans(i) + buffer(j)*b(j,i)
    enddo
  enddo
  call MPI_SEND(ans, bcols, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, manager, &
                row, MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
enddo

```

---

Figure 3.8: Matrix-matrix multiplication: worker part

(as before)  $n$  multiplications and  $n - 1$  adds, but now there are  $n^2$  elements of **C** to be computed, as opposed to  $n$ . Therefore, the number of floating-point operations is

$$n^2 \times (2n - 1) = 2n^3 - n^2.$$

The number of floating-point numbers communicated for each row is  $n$  (to send the row of **A**, plus  $n$  to send the row of **C** back), and there are  $n$  rows, so

$$n \times 2n$$

is the answer. Now the ratio of communication to computation is

$$\left( \frac{2n^2}{2n^3 - n^2} \right) \times \left( \frac{T_{comm}}{T_{calc}} \right),$$

which approaches  $1/n$  as  $n$  becomes large. Therefore for this problem we should expect communication overhead to play a smaller role than in large problems.

### 3.7.2 Gathering Data on Program Execution

Timing results provide some insight into the performance of our program, and our programs so far have not been difficult to understand. But suppose that we need

to see in detail just what the sequence of events was, just what amounts of time were spent on each phase of the computation, and just how long each individual communication operation took. The easiest way to understand this data at a glance would be through a graphical tool of some kind.

Several projects have been developed to create files of events with associated time stamps and then examine them in postmortem fashion by interpreting them graphically on a workstation. Such files are called *logfiles*.

In this book we will use some simple tools for creating logfiles and viewing them. We treat the library for creation of logfiles as separate from the message-passing library. Viewing the logfile is independent of its creation, and multiple tools can be used. The tools we describe in this chapter are the ones we used to prepare the illustrative screenshots shown here. They are part of the MPE (MultiProcessing Environment) described more fully in Appendix A. Since MPE was initially developed, other tools, similar in intent, have been developed and made widely available. See, for example, [10, 99, 108]. Although these systems have different interfaces and capabilities, they are used in similar ways, so our discussion of MPE remains a useful guide to using them for performance analysis.

In the next few sections we describe routines in the MPE library for explicit logging of programmer-chosen events under program control, and we use the matrix-matrix multiplication program as an example. These routines will be used in Chapter 7 to build a completely automatic logging mechanism based on the standard MPI profiling interface.

The logfile viewing program we demonstrate here is called upshot; it is a simple graphical display of parallel time lines and state durations, based on an earlier program of the same name [70]. Further description of upshot is given in Appendix A.<sup>4</sup> Upshot itself has evolved into a newer graphical display system, written in Java in Chicago during the era of Michael Jordan and therefore called Jumpshot [129]. The logging systems cited above all use a form of it for displaying logfiles.

### 3.7.3 Instrumenting a Parallel Program with MPE Logging

Although there are advantages to having logfile creation and logfile examination be parts of a single integrated system, we separate them so that they can undergo separate development. We present in this section the MPE library for logfile cre-

---

<sup>4</sup>The strange name “upshot” arose historically. Once there was a program called “gist” that was written at BBN for the Butterfly software environment. It inspired a program written at Argonne, and the thesaurus suggested “upshot” as related to “gist.”

ation. It is designed to coexist with any MPI implementation. It is also used in the automatic instrumentation techniques for MPI programs discussed in Chapter 7. Reference bindings for MPE are given in Appendix A. Here we describe the routines needed to instrument a program with explicit, programmer-controlled events. In Chapter 7 we show how automatic logging can be done, with a decrease in programmer involvement but a corresponding decrease in flexibility.

Generally speaking, we need to call the `MPE_Log_event` routine only when we wish to record a log. The time-stamp and process identifier are collected automatically; the user specifies an event type and optionally can also supply one integer data item and one (short) character string. In addition, each process must call `MPE_Init_log` to prepare for logging and `MPE_Finish_log` to merge the files being stored locally at each process into a single logfile, which is written out. `MPE_Stop_log` can be used to suspend logging, although the timer continues to run. `MPE_Start_log` causes logging to resume.

### 3.7.4 Events and States

The programmer chooses whatever non-negative integers are desired for event types; the system attaches no particular meaning to event types. Events are considered to have no duration. For measuring the duration of program states, pairs of events are specified as the beginnings and endings of *states*. A state is defined by the `MPE_Describe_state` routine, which specifies the starting and ending event types. For the benefit of a logfile display program, whatever it might be, `MPE_Describe_state` also adds a state name and a color (and a bitmap pattern for use by monochrome displays) for the state. The corresponding `MPE_Describe_event` provides an event description for an event type. Note that this differs from the approach taken in [125], for example, where every “event” has duration. We treat events as atomic, and we define states, whether long or short, in terms of events.

### 3.7.5 Instrumenting the Matrix-Matrix Multiply Program

Now let us instrument the matrix-matrix multiply program using these routines. The first decision to make is which events to log. In this example it is easier first to decide on the states to be visualized and then to provide starting and ending events for each state. We could get a reasonably complete picture of the matrix-matrix multiply by measuring in the manager program

- broadcast of **B**,

- sending each row of **A**, and
- receiving each row of **C**

and in the worker program

- receipt of **B** (by broadcast),
- receipt of each row of **A**,
- computation of the row of **C**, and
- sending each row of **C** back to the manager.

The overall framework of the instrumented version of our matrix-matrix multiplication program is shown in Figure 3.9. This is much the same as Figure 3.5, except for some changes to the program variables to reflect the fact that this is matrix-matrix instead of matrix-vector multiplication. The logging setup section just before the main `if` that separates manager and worker does the `MPE_INIT_LOG` and then defines four states, for broadcasting, computing, sending and receiving. For example, the line

---

```
ierror = MPE_DESCRIBE_STATE(1, 2, "Bcast", "red:vlines3")
```

---

defines the “Bcast” state as the time between events of type 1 and events of type 2. We will use those event types to bracket the `MPI_BCAST` call in the program. The name of the state will be used in the logfile display program (whatever it may be) to label data associated with this state. The last argument is a hint to the display program about how we wish this state displayed. Here we are requesting “red” on a color display and the bitmap pattern “vlines3” on a black-and-white display. The black-and-white (bitmap) versions are the ones used in this book. Calling the `MPE_DESCRIBE_STATE` routine just inserts a record into the logfile that the display program can use if it wishes.

At the end of the computation, the call to `MPE_FINISH_LOG` gathers the log buffers from all the processes and merges them based on the time-stamps. Process zero writes the logfile to the file named as the argument of `MPE_FINISH_LOG`.

Code specific to the manager process is shown in Figure 3.10. We have just inserted calls to `MPE_LOG_EVENT` before and after each of the sections of code that we wish to be represented as a state, using the event types that we chose above. In addition, we have in some cases added data in the integer data field (the loop index in this case).

---

```

!  matmat.f - matrix - matrix multiply,
!  simple self-schedulling version
program main
use mpi
integer MAX_AROWS, MAX_ACOLS, MAX_BCOLS
parameter (MAX_AROWS = 20, MAX_ACOLS = 1000, MAX_BCOLS = 20)
double precision a(MAX_AROWS,MAX_ACOLS), b(MAX_ACOLS,MAX_BCOLS)
double precision c(MAX_AROWS,MAX_BCOLS)
double precision buffer(MAX_ACOLS), ans(MAX_BCOLS)
double precision starttime, stoptime
integer myid, master, numprocs, ierr, status(MPI_STATUS_SIZE)
integer i, j, numsent, sender
integer anstype, row, arows, acols, brows, bcols, crows, ccols
call MPI_INIT(ierr)
call MPI_COMM_RANK(MPI_COMM_WORLD, myid, ierr)
call MPI_COMM_SIZE(MPI_COMM_WORLD, numprocs, ierr)
arows = 10
acols = 20
brows = 20
bcols = 10
crows = arows
ccols = bcols
master = 0
ierr = MPE_INIT_LOG()
if (myid .eq. 0) then
  ierr = MPE_DESCRIBE_STATE(1, 2, "Bcast", "red:vlines3")
  ierr = MPE_DESCRIBE_STATE(3, 4, "Compute", "blue:gray3")
  ierr = MPE_DESCRIBE_STATE(5, 6, "Send", "green:light_gray")
  ierr = MPE_DESCRIBE_STATE(7, 8, "Recv", "yellow:gray")
endif
if (myid .eq. 0) then
!   master initializes and then dispatches ...
else
!   slaves receive b, then compute rows of c ...
endif
ierr = MPE_FINISH_LOG("pmatmat.log")
call MPI_FINALIZE(ierr)
end

```

---

Figure 3.9: Matrix-matrix multiplication with logging: common part

---

```

!      master initializes and then dispatches
!      .... initialization of a and b, broadcast of b
!      numsent = 0
!      send a row of a to each other process; tag with row number
!      For simplicity, assume arows .ge. numprocs - 1
      do i = 1,numprocs-1
        do j = 1,acols
          buffer(j) = a(i,j)
        enddo
        ierr = MPE_LOG_EVENT(5, i, "send")
        call MPI_SEND(buffer, acols, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, i, &
                      i, MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
        ierr = MPE_LOG_EVENT(6, i, "sent")
        numsent = numsent+1
      enddo
      do i = 1,crows
        ierr = MPE_LOG_EVENT(7, i, "recv")
        call MPI_RECV(ans, ccols, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                      MPI_ANY_SOURCE, MPI_ANY_TAG, &
                      MPI_COMM_WORLD, status, ierr)
        sender = status(MPI_SOURCE)
        anstype = status(MPI_TAG)
        ierr = MPE_LOG_EVENT(8, anstype, "recvd")
        do j = 1,ccols
          c(anstype,j) = ans(j)
        enddo
        if (numsent .lt. arows) then
          do j = 1,acols
            buffer(j) = a(numsent+1,j)
          enddo
          ierr = MPE_LOG_EVENT(5, i, "send")
          call MPI_SEND(buffer, acols, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                        sender, numsent+1, MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
          ierr = MPE_LOG_EVENT(6, i, "sent")
          numsent = numsent+1
        else
          ierr = MPE_LOG_EVENT(5, 0, "send")
          call MPI_SEND(1.0, 1, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, sender, &
                        0, MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
          ierr = MPE_LOG_EVENT(6, 0, "sent")
        endif
      enddo

```

---

Figure 3.10: Matrix-matrix multiplication with logging: manager part

---

```

!      slaves receive b, then compute rows of c until done message
ierr = MPE_LOG_EVENT(1, 0, "bstart")
do i = 1,bcols
  call MPI_BCAST(b(1,i), brows, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                 master, MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
enddo
ierr = MPE_LOG_EVENT(2, 0, "bend")
ierr = MPE_LOG_EVENT(7, i, "recv")
do
  call MPI_RECV(buffer, acols, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, master, &
                MPI_ANY_TAG, MPI_COMM_WORLD, status, ierr)
  if (status(MPI_TAG) .eq. 0) exit
  row = status(MPI_TAG)
  ierr = MPE_LOG_EVENT(8, row, "recv")
  ierr = MPE_LOG_EVENT(3, row, "compute")
  do i = 1,bcols
    ans(i) = 0.0
    do j = 1,acols
      ans(i) = ans(i) + buffer(j)*b(j,i)
    enddo
  enddo
  ierr = MPE_LOG_EVENT(4, row, "computed")
  ierr = MPE_LOG_EVENT(5, row, "send")
  call MPI_SEND(ans, bcols, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, master, &
                row, MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
  ierr = MPE_LOG_EVENT(6, row, "sent")
enddo

```

---

Figure 3.11: Matrix-matrix multiplication: worker part

We log in the “receive” event the loop index we have reached, and in the “received” event the number of the row that was received. We have not really used the character data field here, since we have not varied it according to the individual event being logged; here it is merely echoing the event type.

Code specific to the worker process is shown in Figure 3.11. Again, the placement of calls to MPE\_LOG\_EVENT is routine.

### 3.7.6 Notes on Implementation of Logging

For accuracy, logging of an event should be a low-overhead operation. MPE\_Log—event stores a small amount of information in memory, which is quite fast. During

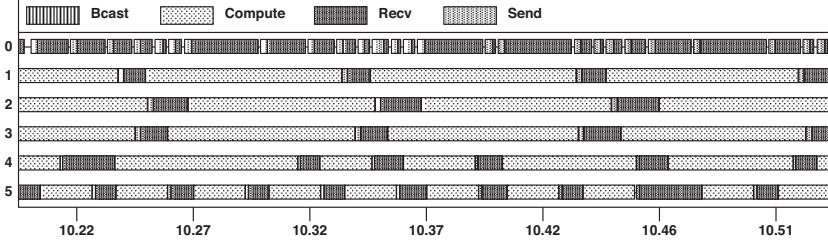


Figure 3.12: Upshot output

`MPE_Finish_log`, these buffers are merged in parallel, and the final buffer, sorted by time-stamp, is written out by process 0.

One subtle aspect of collecting logs with time-stamps is the necessity of relying on local clocks. On some parallel computers there are synchronized clocks, but on others the clocks are only approximately synchronized. On workstation networks, the situation is much worse, and clocks even drift with respect to each other as well.

To compensate for this situation, the time-stamps are postprocessed with respect to synchronizations at `MPE_Init_log` and `MPE_Finish_log`. Postprocessing, which includes aligning and stretching the time axes of each process so that the `MPE_Init_log` and `MPE_Finish_log` take place at the same time, is done as part of `MPE_Finish_log`. MPI itself is used to combine the logs, and the combining process is done in parallel, with the logfile itself written out by the process with rank 0 in `MPI_COMM_WORLD`.

### 3.7.7 Graphical Display of Logfiles

After an MPI program instrumented with the MPE logging routines has completed, the directory where it executed contains a file of events sorted by time, with time adjusted to correct for offset and drift. We can write many programs to extract useful data from this file. One that we describe here and use from time to time in the rest of this book is the graphical display program upshot. A sample of upshot output is shown in Figure 3.12, which displays a portion of the logfile collected while running the matrix-matrix multiplication program on six Suns on an Ethernet. One can tell which one was the Sparc-10; the others were Sparc-2's.

Upshot displays parallel time lines, with states indicated by colored bars on color displays and patterns of dots or lines on monochrome displays (like the page of this

book). Time-stamp values, adjusted to start at 0, are shown along the bottom of the frame. A particular view is shown in Figure 3.12.

Of course, the information in logfiles can be displayed in simple summary form as well, without graphics. The logfile is easy to parse with other tools as well. For example, we can add up the time intervals recorded for each state, getting something like the following.

```
State:    Time:  
Bcast     0.146799  
Compute   0.044800  
Send      0.030711  
Recv      0.098852  
-----  
Total:    0.321162
```

Such summary information is a crude form of profiling; it tells us where the program is spending its time. Note that since the events and states may be described by the programmer and are not tied to the message-passing library, the MPE library can be useful in studying aspects of an algorithm that have nothing to do with interprocess communication.

### 3.8 Using Communicators

Up to this point, all our examples have used `MPI_COMM_WORLD` as an argument to nearly every MPI call. What is it for, if it is always the same? In this section we describe *communicators*, which are perhaps the most pervasive and distinguishing feature of the MPI library specification. While a more comprehensive discussion of the purpose and use of communicators occurs in Chapter 6, we give here an extremely simple example that illustrates some of the MPI functions dealing with groups and communicators.

The example will illustrate the Monte Carlo method of integration. We will use it to find (again) the value of  $\pi$ . This will not be a particularly good way to find the value of  $\pi$ , but it will provide us with a simple example. To make it more interesting, we will introduce here some of the MPE real-time graphics operations, so that we can watch our program in action.

In Figure 3.13, if the radius of the circle is 1, then the area is  $\pi$  and the area of the square around it is 4. Therefore the ratio  $r$  of the area of the circle to that of the square is  $\pi/4$ . We will compute the ratio  $r$  by generating random points  $(x, y)$  in the square and counting how many of them turn out to be in the circle (by

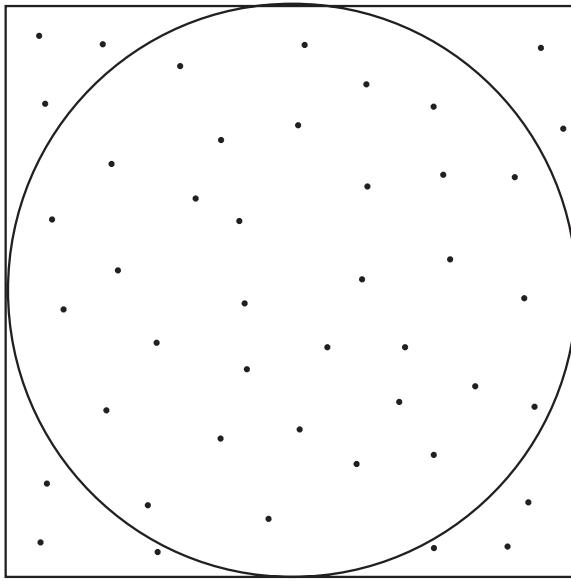


Figure 3.13: Monte Carlo computation of  $\pi$

determining for each one whether  $x^2 + y^2 < 1$ ). Then  $\pi = 4r$ . The testing of these points is highly parallelizable.

The issue of parallel random number generators is too deep for us here (see, for example, [104, 21, 32] for discussions of the topic). To avoid the issue, we will use only one random number generator and devote a separate process to it. This process will generate the random numbers and will hand them out to the other processes for evaluation and display. Since the other processes will need to perform collective operations that do not involve this random number “server,” we need to define a communicator whose group (see Chapter 2 for a brief discussion of groups) does not include it. The program itself is shown in Figures 3.14 through 3.17. This example is in C and has two purposes: to illustrate the use of a nondefault communicator, and to demonstrate the use of the MPE graphics library. We delay discussion of the graphics routines until the next section. The code that illustrates communicator manipulation is as follows:

---

```

MPI_Comm world, workers;
MPI_Group world_group, worker_group;
int ranks[1];

```

---

```

MPI_Init(&argc,&argv);
world = MPI_COMM_WORLD;
MPI_Comm_size(world, &numprocs);
MPI_Comm_rank(world, &myid);
server = numprocs-1; /* last process is server */

MPI_Comm_group(world, &world_group);
ranks[0] = server;
MPI_Group_excl(world_group, 1, ranks, &worker_group);
MPI_Comm_create(world, worker_group, &workers);
MPI_Group_free(&worker_group);
MPI_Group_free(&world_group);

```

---

The new feature here is that we have *two* communicators, `world` and `workers`. The communicator `workers` will contain all the processes except the random number server. This code illustrates how to build a communicator that has all the processes except the server process in it. To do this, we deal explicitly with the *group* of processes associated with the default communicator `MPI_COMM_WORLD`. Let us go through this code line by line.

Two communicators, `world` and `workers`, are declared, along with two groups of processes, `world_group` and `worker_group`. In C, an MPI group is described by a `MPI_Group` type. After the required call to `MPI_Init`, we assign `MPI_COMM_WORLD` to `world`. We find out how many processes there are with the call to `MPI_Comm_size`, and we assign to `server` the rank of the last process in the original group. The next few lines of code build the communicator that has as its group all of the processes except the random number server. First we extract from the `MPI_COMM_WORLD` communicator its group, which contains all processes. This is done with a call to `MPI_Comm_Group`. It returns in `world_group` the group of all processes. Next we build a new group. Groups can be manipulated in many ways (see Chapter 7), but here the simplest approach is to use `MPI_Group_excl`, which takes a given group and forms a new group by excluding certain of the original group's members. The members to be excluded are specified with an array of ranks; here we exclude a single process. Then the call to `MPI_Group_excl` returns in `worker_group` the new group, containing all the processes except the random number server. We create the new communicator from `MPI_COMM_WORLD` by calling `MPI_Comm_create` with the old communicator and the new group, getting back the new communicator in `workers`. This is the communicator we will use for collective operations that do not involve the random number server. At the end of the program, we release this communicator with a call to `MPI_Comm_`

---

```
/* compute pi using Monte Carlo method */
#include <math.h>
#include "mpi.h"
#include "mpe.h"
#define CHUNKSIZE      1000
/* message tags */
#define REQUEST    1
#define REPLY      2
int main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    int iter;
    int in, out, i, iters, max, ix, iy, ranks[1], done, temp;
    double x, y, Pi, error, epsilon;
    int numprocs, myid, server, totalin, totalout, workerid;
    int rands[CHUNKSIZE], request;
    MPI_Comm world, workers;
    MPI_Group world_group, worker_group;
    MPI_Status status;

    MPI_Init(&argc, &argv);
    world = MPI_COMM_WORLD;
    MPI_Comm_size(world, &numprocs);
    MPI_Comm_rank(world, &myid);
    server = numprocs-1;           /* last proc is server */
    if (myid == 0)
        sscanf( argv[1], "%lf", &epsilon );
    MPI_Bcast(&epsilon, 1, MPI_DOUBLE, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD);
    MPI_Comm_group(world, &world_group);
    ranks[0] = server;
    MPI_Group_excl(world_group, 1, ranks, &worker_group);
    MPI_Comm_create(world, worker_group, &workers);
    MPI_Group_free(&worker_group);
}
```

---

Figure 3.14: Monte Carlo computation of  $\pi$ : beginning

---

```

if (myid == server) {           /* I am the rand server */
    do {
        MPI_Recv(&request, 1, MPI_INT, MPI_ANY_SOURCE, REQUEST,
                     world, &status);
        if (request) {
            for (i = 0; i < CHUNKSIZE; ) {
                rands[i] = random();
                if (rands[i] <= INT_MAX) i++;
            }
            MPI_Send(rands, CHUNKSIZE, MPI_INT,
                        status.MPI_SOURCE, REPLY, world);
        }
    }
    while(request > 0);
}

```

---

Figure 3.15: Monte Carlo computation of  $\pi$ : server

free. Finally, since we needed only the group `worker_group` in order to create the `workers` communicator, we may now release it by calling `MPI_Group_free`.

The code that “tidies up” by freeing the group and communicator that we created during the run merits further discussion, because it illustrates an important point: communicators contain internal references to groups. When we extract the group explicitly, by a call to `MPI_Comm_group`, we create another *reference* to the group. Later on, when we call `MPI_Group_free` with this reference, we are freeing the reference, which becomes invalid, but we are not destroying the group itself, since there is another reference inside the communicator. For this reason, we may actually call

---

```
MPI_Group_free(&worker_group);
```

---

and

---

```
MPI_Comm_free(&workers);
```

---

in either order; the group does not cease to exist until both references to the group have been freed. As an aid to safe programming, MPI sets the arguments to a free call to a special null object; this makes it easier to detect the inadvertent use of an (now) invalid object. These null objects have names (so that one can test for them); they are `MPI_GROUP_NULL` and `MPI_COMM_NULL`. Others will be introduced as they are needed.

---

```

else {                                     /* I am a worker process */
    request = 1;
    done = in = out = 0;
    max = INT_MAX;             /* max int, for normalization */
    MPI_Send(&request, 1, MPI_INT, server, REQUEST, world);
    MPI_Comm_rank(workers, &workerid);
    iter = 0;
    while (!done) {
        iter++;
        request = 1;
        MPI_Recv(rands, CHUNKSIZE, MPI_INT, server, REPLY,
                    world, MPI_STATUS_IGNORE);
        for (i=0; i<CHUNKSIZE; ) {
            x = (((double) rands[i++])/max) * 2 - 1;
            y = (((double) rands[i++])/max) * 2 - 1;
            if (x*x + y*y < 1.0)
                in++;
            else
                out++;
        }
        MPI_Allreduce(&in, &totalin, 1, MPI_INT, MPI_SUM,
                        workers);
        MPI_Allreduce(&out, &totalout, 1, MPI_INT, MPI_SUM,
                        workers);
        Pi = (4.0*totalin)/(totalin + totalout);
        error = fabs( Pi-3.141592653589793238462643);
        done = (error < epsilon || (totalin+totalout) > 1000000);
        request = (done) ? 0 : 1;
        if (myid == 0) {
            printf( "\rpi = %23.20f", Pi );
            MPI_Send(&request, 1, MPI_INT, server, REQUEST,
                        world);
        }
        else {
            if (request)
                MPI_Send(&request, 1, MPI_INT, server, REQUEST,
                            world);
        }
    MPI_Comm_free(&workers);
}
}

```

---

Figure 3.16: Monte Carlo computation of  $\pi$ : workers

---

```

if (myid == server) {           /* I am the rand server */
    ...
} else {                      /* I am a worker process */
    ...
}
if (myid == 0) {
    printf( "\npoints: %d\nin: %d, out: %d, <ret> to exit\n",
            totalin+totalout, totalin, totalout );
    getchar();
}
MPI_Finalize();
}

```

---

Figure 3.17: Monte Carlo computation of  $\pi$ : ending

The code in Figure 3.16 also introduces a new feature. We've talked about `MPI_Recv` and the `status` parameter; for Fortran programs, this is an output parameter of type `integer status(MPI_STATUS_SIZE)`. But what if you don't want any of the information that the `status` parameter provides? In that case, in either C or Fortran, you can pass the special value `MPI_STATUS_IGNORE`. This does just what it says—ignore the `status` parameter.

The other new MPI library call introduced in this example is `MPI_Allreduce`. This differs from the `MPI_Reduce` that we have seen before in that the result of the reduction operation is available in all processes, not just in the one specified as root. Depending on implementation, `MPI_Allreduce` may be more efficient than the equivalent `MPI_Reduce` followed by an `MPI_Bcast`. Here we use it to test whether it is time to stop. We have provided an error value on the command line, and each process compares the current value of  $\pi$  with the precalculated value we have put into the program.

The specific bindings for the functions used in the Monte Carlo example are shown in Tables 3.7 and 3.8.

### 3.9 Another Way of Forming New Communicators

The preceding example was useful in introducing the notions of MPI groups and communicators. However, there is a slightly easier way of creating new communicators containing a subset of the processes in an existing communicator.

---

```

int MPI_Allreduce(const void *sendbuf, void *recvbuf, int count,
                  MPI_Datatype datatype, MPI_Op op, MPI_Comm comm)

int MPI_Comm_group(MPI_Comm comm, MPI_Group *group)

int MPI_Group_excl(MPI_Group group, int n, const int ranks[],
                   MPI_Group *newgroup)

int MPI_Group_free(MPI_Group *group)

int MPI_Comm_create(MPI_Comm comm, MPI_Group group,
                    MPI_Comm *newcomm)

int MPI_Comm_free(MPI_Comm *comm)

```

---

Table 3.7: C bindings for new routines needed by Monte Carlo example

---

<b>MPI_ALLREDUCE</b> (sendbuf, recvbuf, count, datatype, op, comm, ierror)
<type> sendbuf(*), recvbuf(*)
integer count, datatype, op, comm, ierror
<b>MPI_COMM_GROUP</b> (comm, group, ierror)
integer comm, group, ierror
<b>MPI_GROUP_EXCL</b> (group, n, ranks, newgroup, ierror)
integer group, n, ranks(*), newgroup, ierror
<b>MPI_GROUP_FREE</b> (group, ierror)
integer group, ierror
<b>MPI_COMM_CREATE</b> (comm, group, newcomm, ierror)
integer comm, group, newcomm, ierror
<b>MPI_COMM_FREE</b> (comm, ierror)
integer comm, ierror

---

Table 3.8: Fortran bindings for new routines needed by Monte Carlo example

---

```
int MPI_Comm_split(MPI_Comm oldcomm, int color, int key,
                   MPI_Comm *newcomm)
```

---

Table 3.9: C binding for splitting communicators

---

```
MPI_COMM_SPLIT(oldcomm, color, key, newcomm, ierror)
               integer oldcomm, color, key, newcomm, ierror
```

---

Table 3.10: Fortran binding for splitting communicators

`MPI_Comm_split` is a collective operation taking as input a communicator and two integers, called the `color` and the `key`, returning a new communicator. All the processes that pass in the same value of `color` will be placed in the same communicator, and that communicator will be the one returned to them. The bindings for `MPI_Comm_split` is shown in Table 3.9 and 3.10.

The `key` argument is used to assign ranks to the processes in the new communicator. If all processes passing the same value of `color` also pass the same value of `key`, then they are given ranks in the new communicator that are in the same order as their ranks in the old communicator. If they pass in different values for `key`, then these values are used to determine their order in the new communicator.

Note that `MPI_Comm_split` creates several new communicators (one for each `color` value) but that each process is given access only to one of the new communicators, the one whose group the process belongs to.

The alternative way of creating new communicators out of `MPI_COMM_WORLD` simplifies our program substantially. Instead of manipulating the groups of the communicators directly, we create the communicator for the workers by having all of them pass to `MPI_Comm_split` the same `color` value, but one that is different from that passed in by the server. All the code involving group extraction and the call to `MPI_Comm_create` is replaced by

---

```
color = (myid == server);
MPI_Comm_split(world, color, 0, &workers);
```

---

### 3.10 A Handy Graphics Library for Parallel Programs

A second reason for including this Monte Carlo example is that it allows us to introduce in its simplest possible form the MPE graphics library. In many programs, parallel or not, it would be convenient to provide some simple graphics output.

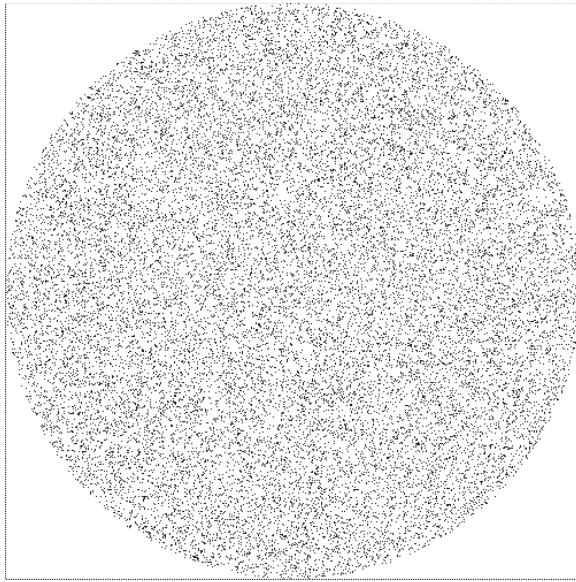


Figure 3.18: Monte Carlo computation of  $\pi$ : output

The X Window System (X11) provides this capability, but it has a steep learning curve. We decided that in order to better represent some of the computations in the examples in this book, it would be useful to add to the model implementation a simple graphics interface. One unusual aspect of this library is that it allows shared access by parallel processes to a single display. This functionality can be implemented in several ways. One way is to use the X11 windowing system, which implements it directly. Another mechanism would be to have all process communicate (using MPI and a separate communicator) with a single process that draws on the display. The great feature of libraries is that the application need not know how they are implemented but only the application programmer interface (API) to the library.

We can animate the Monte Carlo program with only four calls: to initialize shared access to a shared display, to free it, to draw points, and to update the display with the points that have been drawn. All processes declare

---

```
MPE_Graph graph;
```

---

which defines a “handle” to a graphics object that will be manipulated by the MPE graphics routines. The type `MPE_Graph` is defined in the file ‘`mpe.h`’, which must

be included. At the beginning of the program, all processes might do

---

```
MPE_Open_graphics(&graph, MPI_COMM_WORLD, (char *)0, -1, -1,
                  WINDOW_SIZE, WINDOW_SIZE, MPE_GRAPH_INDEPENDENT);
```

---

which initializes this handle. The arguments in this case specify that the communicator MPI\_COMM\_WORLD will be used for communication for this graphics object, that the default display from the user's environment should be used as the X display ((char \*) 0 as third argument instead of a display name), and that the user will be asked to place the window that is created. One could specify a location (x,y) by using non-negative integers instead of (-1, -1). The rest of the arguments specify that the window will be square with side WINDOW\_SIZE and that graphics operations will not be collective. For details, see Appendix A.

At the end of the program, each process does

---

```
MPE_Close_graphics(&graph);
```

---

to terminate access to the display. The only drawing command in this program is used to draw single points on the display. We will draw the points that lie within the circle of radius 1. Therefore, as more points are generated, we expect to see a rounder and rounder circle emerge. We can see this happening in Figure 3.18. The subroutine call

---

```
MPE_Draw_point(graph,
                (int)(WINDOW_SIZE/2 + x*WINDOW_SIZE/2),
                (int)(WINDOW_SIZE/2 - y*WINDOW_SIZE/2),
                MPE_BLACK);
```

---

draws a point at the two coordinates given by its second and third arguments, in the color given by its last argument (of type MPE\_Color). The line

---

```
MPE_Update(graph);
```

---

causes all of the drawing actions that may have been buffered up to this point to be flushed to the display. We can cut down on traffic to the X server by calling this only after a large number of calls to MPE\_Draw\_point. In our program (not shown in this book) MPE\_Update is called after each process has finished with one batch of points.

### 3.11 Common Errors and Misunderstandings

Experience with helping people learn MPI has helped us identify a set of mistakes that users often make. In this section we call your attention to some of them in the hope that we can help you avoid them right from the beginning.

**Forgetting `ierr` in Fortran.** Perhaps the most common error made in MPI programs written in Fortran is to forget the last argument, where the error code is returned. Some Fortran compilers will catch this at compile time, but others will not, leading to hard-to-find errors.

**Misdeclaring `status` in Fortran.** When an `MPI_Recv` returns, certain information has been stored in the `status` argument. `Status` is an *array* of integers (of size `MPI_STATUS_SIZE`), *not* a single integer. Many compilers will not complain about this, but running the program will definitely lead to an unexpected memory overwrite and mysterious behavior.

**Misdeclaring string variables in Fortran.** In Fortran, strings are not the same as arrays of characters. Although this is not really an MPI issue, MPI does use string variables, and so this error sometimes happens when someone uses MPI for the first time. A ten-character string `a` in Fortran should be declared as something like

---

```
character*10 a
```

---

and definitely *not*

---

```
character a(10)
```

---

The latter is an array of characters, not a single character string variable.

**Expecting `argc` and `argv` to be passed to all processes.** The arguments to `MPI_Init` in C are `&argc` and `&argv`. This feature *allows* the MPI implementation to fill these in on all processes, but the MPI standard does not *require* it. Some implementations propagate `argc` and `argv` to all processes; some don't. The same is true for the environment (variables whose values are accessible by `getenv`); some implementations may start all processes with the environment in existence when `mpirun` or `mpiexec` is run, but others may not. A portable program will not rely on this feature. Remember that MPI does not assume it is running under Unix, and some MPI implementations run on Windows or in specialized (e.g., real-time)

environments. MPI-3 provides a way to access some of this information with a predefined `MPI_Info` object, `MPI_INFO_ENV`. `MPI_Info` is described in *Using Advanced MPI* [55].

**Doing things before `MPI_Init` or after `MPI_Finalize`.** The MPI standard says little about the situation before `MPI_Init` or after `MPI_Finalize`, not even how many processes are running. Doing anything whatsoever in your program during either of these periods may yield unexpected and implementation-dependent results. For example, `argc` and `argv` may not make any sense until after `MPI_Init` has processed them, and so an MPI application should not access them until then. One exception is the behavior after `MPI_Finalize` returns. The MPI standard guarantees that at least the process with rank zero in `MPI_COMM_WORLD` will continue executing after `MPI_Finalize` returns. This permits an application to perform any non-MPI cleanup and, in a POSIX environment, provide an exit code for the program. If you use this feature, make sure to test that the process is the one with rank zero in `MPI_COMM_WORLD`—after `MPI_Finalize`, it's possible that all MPI processes are still running.

**Matching `MPI_Bcast` with `MPI_Recv`.** It is easy to think that `MPI_Bcast` is a “multiple send” operation, and that the recipients of the broadcast message should receive it with `MPI_Recv`. On the contrary, `MPI_Bcast` is a collective operation that must be called on all processes in the group of the specified communicator. It functions as a multisend on the specified root process and as a receive on the others. The reason is that it allows for optimal performance. An `MPI_Recv` does not have to check whether the message it has just received is part of a broadcast and hence may have to be forwarded to other processes.

**Assuming your MPI implementation is thread-safe.** We discussed multithreading in Chapter 1. MPI was designed so that it could be implemented in a thread-safe manner (multiple threads could call MPI routines at the same time) but the standard does not require it of implementations. If you use multithreading in your program (or even if your compiler generates multithreaded code for you) and your MPI implementation is not thread-safe, you may get unpredictable results. See *Using Advanced MPI* [55] for a discussion of the MPI-2 features that make MPI’s interaction with threads more explicit.

### 3.12 Summary of a Simple Subset of MPI

In this chapter we have introduced basic MPI routines through simple example programs. In particular, we have defined the six functions that make up the minimal MPI subset that we discussed in Chapter 2. We have added to those the two most common collective operations and the basic timing routine, and we have shown how to work with groups and communicators. We have also introduced a few useful tools: MPE logging, MPE graphics, and upshot, as representative of a class of widely available performance analysis tools. We will continue to use these tools as we look at more example programs in the chapters to come. Additionally, we have summarized a few of the common problems that MPI beginners sometimes make.

In some ways we have already provided enough of the MPI library to write serious applications. In other ways we have barely scratched the surface. MPI offers much more, as we will see in the upcoming chapters.

The following section is the first of our “Application” sections. These appear at the end of several chapters. You might want to skip these if you are reading the book sequentially, since in many cases they require considerable study and knowledge of the particular field in order to understand fully. We include them to demonstrate the range and complexity of scientific applications that have been enabled by MPI.

### 3.13 Application: Computational Fluid Dynamics

The following application illustrates the usefulness of user-defined virtual topologies and collective communication over these virtual topologies, all within a computational fluid dynamics code. It illustrates the use of operations on communicators to define topologies not provided directly by MPI. The use of MPI topology definition routines will be explained in the next chapter. The computation of flow regimes over complex configurations involves the numerical solution of a system of coupled nonlinear partial differential equations known as the Navier-Stokes equations. Researchers in the CFD lab at the Mississippi State University NSF Engineering Research Center for Computational Field Simulation have developed an implicit, finite-volume code (known as UNCLE) for solving the unsteady three-dimensional incompressible Euler and Navier-Stokes equations using an artificial compressibility approach [117, 116, 123]. The flow solver can be used in a variety of applications ranging from maneuvering underwater vehicles to centrifugal compressors.

This code uses dynamic multiblock grids with relative motion in order to account for complex moving geometries. Key elements of the solution method include high-resolution, flux-based, upwind finite-volume approximations in time-varying trans-

formed coordinates and a multiple-pass solution algorithm based on discretized Newton relaxation [123]. The equations in the fully coupled unsteady form are solved by using third-order spatial differencing for both steady and unsteady flows and second-order time differencing for unsteady flows. Relaxation at each time step is carried out by using a simple symmetric Gauss-Seidel sweeps. Turbulent flows are simulated by using the Baldwin-Lomax turbulence model.

Large memory requirements and large run times severely restrict the size and complexity of the problems that can be handled using the sequential version of the code. Therefore, the need was identified for a scalable portable parallel version that could take advantage of existing and emerging parallel platforms. The message-passing interface required for the parallel implementation had to support collective operations within user-defined groups as well as provide safe communication contexts for overlapping sets of collective operations (we will see an example of overlapping communicators later in this section).

### 3.13.1 Parallel Formulation

The parallel formulation employs spatial decomposition of the overall grid into subblocks that are assigned to separate processes [100]. To exploit coarse-grained parallelism and message passing, the implicit subiteration algorithm was modified at block interfaces to provide a block-decoupled algorithm. This decoupled algorithm utilizes Gauss-Seidel relaxation sweeps within each process but is effectively explicit at block boundaries, allowing parallel solution for all blocks. The solution at points shared by neighboring processes is updated between each subiteration by means of a message exchange.

The implementation of the Baldwin-Lomax turbulence model [25] introduces additional complexity into the parallel implementation of the flow code. This mainly affects the set-up phase of the solution process. The model requires the normal derivative of the tangential velocity at all impermeable surfaces in order to calculate the turbulent viscosity. This derivative is calculated in any block that includes an impermeable surface. The values of the derivatives then are propagated along the blocks that lie on any of the computational domain axes that begin with or terminate in an impermeable boundary. The blocks that satisfy the above condition are grouped together to share the derivative information. The turbulence model further requires the calculation of the maxima and minima of quantities that are distributed among the blocks of the above group.

The time-dependent equations in Cartesian coordinates are transformed into general curvilinear coordinates while introducing the artificial compressibility terms

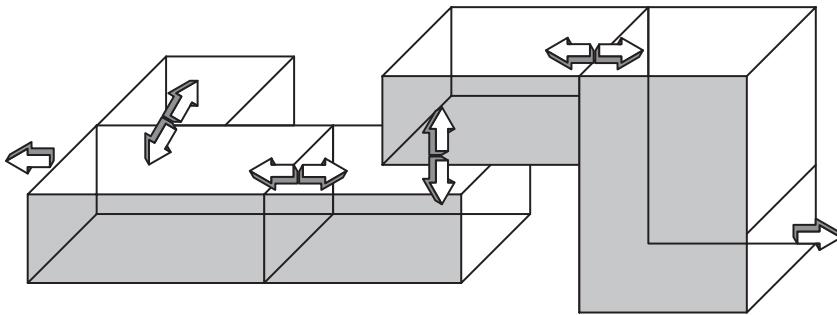


Figure 3.19: Multiblock grid of physical domain for CFD problem

into the equations. The coordinate transformation essentially maps the arbitrary shape of the region of interest to a computational domain that is a rectangular parallelepiped. The solution procedure consists of two different phases. The first involves setting up a linear system using appropriate flux formulation and linearization techniques. The second phase is the solution of the linear system. The size of the system is equal to four times the number of grid points in the domain and could be of order  $10^4$ – $10^6$  unknowns for realistic problems. However, the coefficient matrix of the linear system is extremely sparse and is generally solved by using iterative methods. From the parallel processing point of view, the set-up phase is easily parallelizable, having local data dependencies and being confined to at most 13-point stencils for three-dimensional problems.

Mapping of the physical domain into a single rectangular parallelepiped is often not possible for complex geometries. This problem is resolved by resorting to what are known as multiblock grids, where the physical domain is partitioned appropriately before being mapped into a number of rectangular three-dimensional domains that share common faces. This is shown in Figure 3.19. The linear system in each block is solved by using symmetric Gauss-Seidel iterations with boundary information being exchanged at the end of each forward and backward iteration [116].

Key areas of the parallel implementation include (a) initialization of the flow field, (b) duplication of stored data for points near block interfaces, (c) exchange of data during subiterations, for points having duplicated storage, and (d) treatment

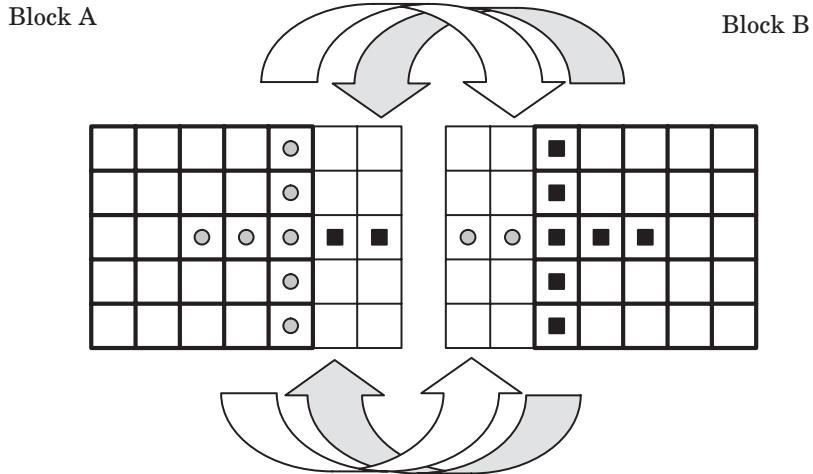


Figure 3.20: Information interchange between grid blocks in CFD application

of line searches along coordinates emanating from solid boundaries, which arise from the particular algebraic turbulence model used. These issues are discussed below.

### 3.13.2 Parallel Implementation

In the parallel implementation of this code [100], the domain is partitioned into a number of nearly equally sized subdomains, each of which is assigned to a different process. The local data dependencies at the boundary of each block are taken into account by a two-cell-deep layer of buffer cells whose values are updated from the appropriate block, as shown in Figure 3.20.

These values are used for setting up and solving the linear system. Each node independently performs Gauss-Seidel iterations and exchanges information through point-to-point messages. Thus each block goes through the sequence of operations shown in Figure 3.21.

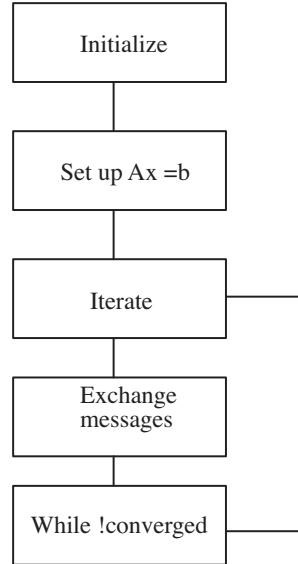


Figure 3.21: Simple flowchart of algorithm for CFD application

The data duplication and updating at the block boundaries are implemented using the MPI\_Sendrecv routine. Since this is a locally blocking routine, tight synchronization is achieved among the blocks. A message is exchanged after each forward and backward sweep of the symmetric Gauss-Seidel iteration, as shown in Figure 3.22.

The connectivity of the processes gives rise to a Cartesian virtual topology having empty nodes in it. Each process is tagged by using an ordered triplet  $P, Q, R$  that represents its coordinate on the virtual Cartesian grid. These coordinates are then used to define communicators for processes that are oriented along any of the three axes of the grid. This technique involves repeated use of the MPI\_COMM\_SPLIT, by using the values of the coordinate triplet at the color value. For example, in creating the communicator in the second coordinate, we could use

---

```
call MPI_COMM_SPLIT(MPI_COMM_WORLD, p+r*p_max, q, &
q_comm, ierror)
```

---

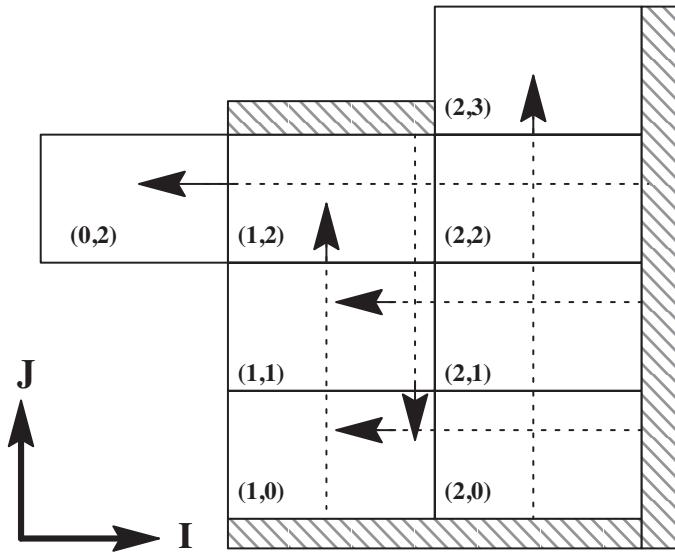


Figure 3.22: Communication pattern for CFD application with turbulence model

The communicators that are defined in this way form the basis for all the collective operations needed for implementing the turbulence model.

The details of the parallel turbulence model implementation are shown in Figure 3.22. The blocks with the shaded borders have impermeable boundaries and therefore calculate the velocity derivatives. The values of the derivative are then broadcast to the blocks through which the arrows pass. This is done using the `MPI_BCAST` routine within an appropriately defined communicator. Thus each arrow represents a separate process group and its associated communicator. A global `MPI_ALLREDUCE` operation using the local minimum and maximum leaves the global minimum and maximum with each process that participates. The pattern here shows overlapping communicators, as promised above. For each process, there are two communicators: one for the row that the process is in and one for the column. The code for the broadcasts in this step looks very roughly like

---

```
call MPI_BCAST(deriv, count, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, row_root, &
               row_comm, ierror)
call MPI_BCAST(deriv, count, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, col_root, &
               col_comm, ierror)
```

---

This application illustrates how MPI can simplify the coding of a complex application. The key simplifications that result come from the use of virtual topologies and collective communication with the virtual topologies. Although the researchers chose to use their own virtual topologies in this case, the availability of communicators and the ease of building subset communicators with MPI\_COMM\_SPLIT made programming easy. This application would be extremely difficult on a system that was strictly a point-to-point message-passing interface without contexts of message passing.

# 4 Intermediate MPI

In the preceding chapter we considered a number of straightforward parallel algorithms. We wrote parallel programs for these algorithms using straightforward MPI subroutine calls, and we verified with timing and program visualization tools that our programs behaved as we expected.

In this chapter we introduce several important issues that require more subtlety in our analysis and more precision in our tools. The mathematical problem we address here (the Poisson problem) is only a little more complicated than the problems of the preceding chapter, but the parallel algorithm, particularly the communication pattern, admits more options.

We introduce several new MPI routines. For example, since our mathematical problem takes place on a finite-difference computational grid, we introduce the MPI notion of *virtual topology*, which makes the allocation of processes to particular parts of a grid convenient to manage. We also describe many of the variations on the basic *send* and *receive* operations supported by MPI; indeed, the communication patterns needed here by our parallel algorithm motivated some of the more esoteric MPI features.

Our first goal in this chapter is thus to show how MPI enables efficient programs to be written concisely. A secondary goal is to explain some of the issues that arise in analyzing communication patterns in grid-based problems.

We approach both of these goals by examining a number of programs for the 2-D and 3-D Poisson problem, a model partial differential equation. Because Fortran provides a much more convenient syntax for manipulating multidimensional arrays than does C, the bulk of the examples in this chapter are written in Fortran.

We also use the Poisson problem as a means to introduce the different mechanisms by which an MPI program can send data from one process to another, particularly with respect to both how data is buffered in the message passing system and how nonblocking communications can be used. By examining the different approaches in the context of a single application, we clarify the distinctions between these approaches. We begin by presenting the mathematical problem and an approach to solving it computationally. Then we describe MPI's virtual topology feature, which allows us to manage a grid of processes. As we progress, we introduce several new MPI functions while considering various ways of organizing the communications. To help in understanding the reasons for the different implementation choices, we also make another brief foray into scalability analysis.

This chapter may also be viewed as a discussion of the sparse matrix-vector product, because that is really the fundamental operation at work in these algorithms. While we will not discuss it in this book, the message-passing operations

discussed in this chapter are the same as are used in implementing a parallel sparse matrix-vector product. The Jacobi method was chosen for its simplicity in the computational part of the program, allowing us to present a complete application.

## 4.1 The Poisson Problem

The Poisson problem is a simple partial differential equation (PDE) that is at the core of many applications. More elaborate problems and algorithms often have the same communication structure that we will use here to solve this problem. Thus, by studying how MPI can be used here, we are providing fundamentals on how communication patterns appear in more complex PDE problems. At the same time, we can demonstrate a wide variety of message-passing techniques and how MPI may be used to express them.

We emphasize that while the Poisson problem is a useful example for describing the features of MPI that can be used in solving partial differential equations and other problems that involve decomposition across many processes, the numerical techniques in this section are not the last word in solving PDEs and give poor performance relative to more recent and sophisticated methods. For information on more sophisticated, freely available parallel solvers for PDEs that use MPI, see [24]. For more details about the mathematical terminology used in this chapter, consult [81], among other sources.

The Poisson problem is expressed by the following equations:

$$\nabla^2 u = f(x, y) \text{ in the interior} \quad (4.1)$$

$$u(x, y) = g(x, y) \text{ on the boundary} \quad (4.2)$$

To simplify the discussion, we use the unit square as the domain.

To find an approximate solution to this problem, we define a square *mesh* (also called a *grid*) consisting of the points  $(x_i, y_j)$ , given by

$$\begin{aligned} x_i &= \frac{i}{n+1}, i = 0, \dots, n+1, \\ y_j &= \frac{j}{n+1}, j = 0, \dots, n+1, \end{aligned}$$

where there are  $n + 2$  points along each edge of the mesh (see Figure 4.1). We will find an approximation to  $u(x, y)$  only at the points  $(x_i, y_j)$ . We use the shorthand  $u_{i,j}$  to refer to the approximation to  $u$  at  $(x_i, y_j)$ . The value  $1/(n + 1)$  is used

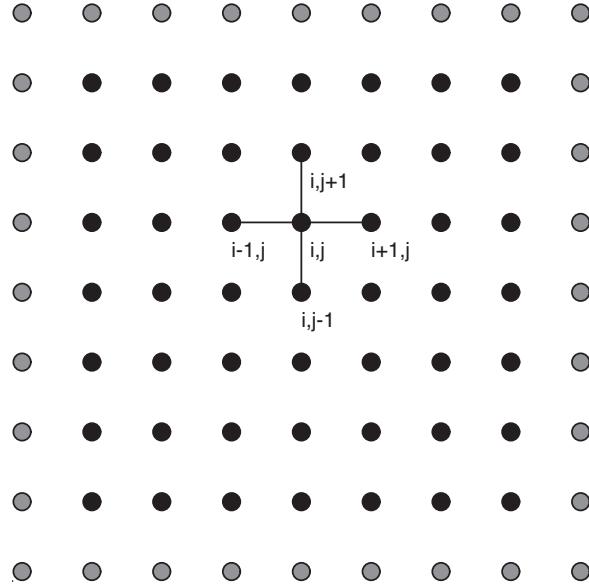


Figure 4.1: Five-point stencil approximation for 2-D Poisson problem, with  $n = 7$ . The boundaries of the domain are shown in gray.

frequently; we will denote it by  $h$  (following common practice). We can approximate (4.1) at each of these points with the formula [81]

$$\frac{u_{i-1,j} + u_{i,j+1} + u_{i,j-1} + u_{i+1,j} - 4u_{i,j}}{h^2} = f_{i,j}. \quad (4.3)$$

We wish to solve (4.3) for  $u_{i,j}$  everywhere on the mesh. Since the formula involves  $u$  at five points, we must find some way to solve for  $u$  everywhere. One approach is to rewrite (4.3) as

$$u_{i,j} = \frac{1}{4} (u_{i-1,j} + u_{i,j+1} + u_{i,j-1} + u_{i+1,j} - h^2 f_{i,j}),$$

iterate by choosing values for all mesh points  $u_{i,j}$ , and then replace them by using<sup>1</sup>

$$u_{i,j}^{k+1} = \frac{1}{4} (u_{i-1,j}^k + u_{i,j+1}^k + u_{i,j-1}^k + u_{i+1,j}^k - h^2 f_{i,j}).$$

---

<sup>1</sup>The ways in which arrays and matrices correspond to one another and are laid out in memory by Fortran and C compilers are often a source of confusion. We discuss this topic in excruciating detail in Appendix C.

---

```

integer i, j, n
double precision u(0:n+1,0:n+1), unew(0:n+1,0:n+1)
do j=1, n
    do i=1, n
        unew(i,j) = &
            0.25*(u(i-1,j)+u(i,j+1)+u(i,j-1)+u(i+1,j)) - &
            h * h * f(i,j))
    enddo
enddo

```

---

Figure 4.2: Jacobi iteration

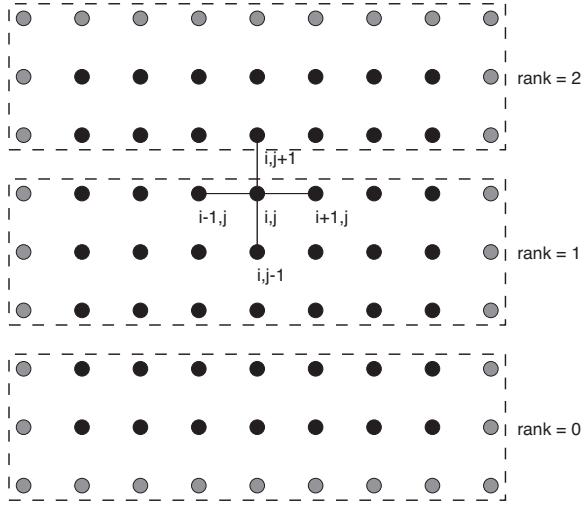


Figure 4.3: 1-D decomposition of the domain

This process, known as *Jacobi iteration*, is repeated until the solution is reached. Fortran code for this is shown in Figure 4.2.

To parallelize this algorithm, we need to parallelize the loops in the code. To do so, we must distribute the data, in this case the arrays *u*, *unew*, and *f*, across the processes. Several approaches are possible.

One of the simplest decompositions is shown in Figure 4.3. In this decomposition, the physical domain is sliced into slabs, with the computations on each slab being handled by a different process.

---

```

integer i, j, n
double precision u(0:n+1,s:e), unew(0:n+1,s:e)
do j=s, e
    do i=1, n
        unew(i,j) = &
            0.25*(u(i-1,j)+u(i,j+1)+u(i,j-1)+u(i+1,j)) - &
            h * h * f(i,j))
    enddo
enddo

```

---

Figure 4.4: Jacobi iteration for a slice of the domain

This decomposition is easily described in Fortran. On each process, the arrays are dimensioned as

---

```
double precision u(0:n+1,s:e)
```

---

where  $s:e$  indicates the values of  $j$  that this process is responsible for. This way of declaring  $u$  changes the code for the algorithm to that shown in Figure 4.4. Unfortunately, a problem arises. The loop will require elements such as  $u(i,s-1)$ , that is, data from a different process. The rest of this chapter will discuss how to identify which process the data is from and how to get that data.

But first, let us fix our routine. Since the data is needed, we must expand our arrays to hold the data. In this case, a dimension of

---

```
double precision u(0:n+1,s-1:e+1)
```

---

is sufficient (see Figure 4.5). The elements of the array that are used to hold data from other processes are called *ghost points*. In Section 4.3 we will show how to get the data for these ghost points.

## 4.2 Topologies

Our next task is deciding how to assign processes to each part of the decomposed domain. An extensive literature on this subject (e.g., [53, 64, 92, 119, 128, 69, 74, 75]) exists. Handling this assignment of processes to regions is one of the services that MPI provides to the programmer, exactly because the best (or even a good) choice of decomposition depends on the details of the underlying hardware.

The description of how the processes in a parallel computer are connected to one another is often called the *topology* of the computer (or more precisely, of the

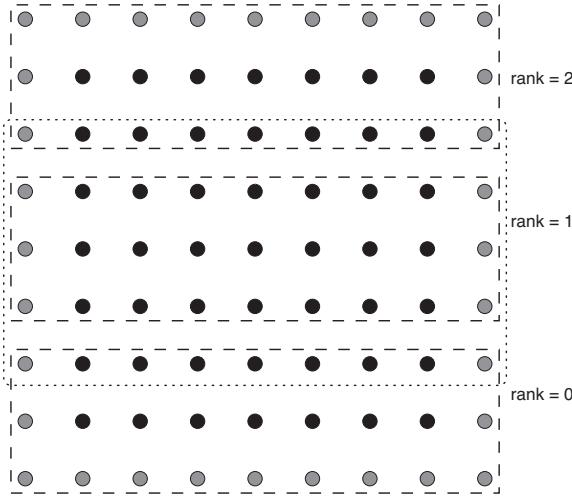


Figure 4.5: The computational domain, with ghost points, for one of the processes

interconnection network). In most parallel programs, each process communicates with only a few other processes; the pattern of communication is called an *application topology* or *virtual topology*. The relationships between the topology of the parallel computer’s hardware and the application can be made in many ways; some are better than others.

For example, simply assigning processes in increasing rank from the bottom may seem to be the best approach. On some parallel computers, however, this ordering can lead to performance degradation (see [71, 77] for more details). It is hard for anyone but the vendor to know the best way for application topologies to be fitted onto the physical topology of the parallel machine. MPI allows the vendor to help optimize this aspect of the program through implementation of the MPI topology functions.

The topology functions are sometimes treated as an “exotic” feature of MPI, but we introduce them here, early in the book, because they make many types of MPI programs easier to write.

MPI allows the user to define a particular application, or virtual, topology. An important virtual topology is the *Cartesian* topology. This is simply a decomposition in the natural coordinate (e.g.,  $x$ ,  $y$ ) directions. A two-dimensional Cartesian decomposition is shown in Figure 4.6. Each element of the decomposition (rectangles in the figure) is labeled by a coordinate tuple indicating the position of

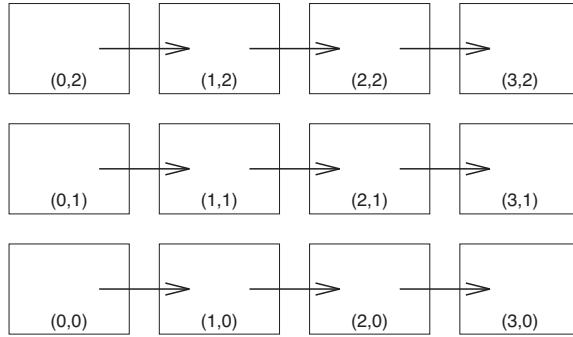


Figure 4.6: A two-dimensional Cartesian decomposition of a domain, also showing a shift by one in the first dimension. Tuples give the coordinates as would be returned by `MPI_Get_coords`.

the element in each of the coordinate directions. For example, the second process from the left and the third from the bottom is labeled  $(1, 2)$ . (The indices start from zero, following the practice of C, rather than starting at one, which may be more natural for Fortran users.) MPI provides a collection of routines for defining, examining, and manipulating Cartesian topologies.

The routine `MPI_Cart_create` creates a Cartesian decomposition of the processes, with the number of dimensions given by the `ndim` argument. The user can specify the number of processes in any direction by giving a positive value to the corresponding element of `dims`. For example, to form the decomposition shown in Figure 4.6, one can use the following code:

---

```

integer dims(2)
logical isperiodic(2), reorder

dims(1)      = 4
dims(2)      = 3
isperiodic(1) = .false.
isperiodic(2) = .false.
reorder      = .true.
ndim         = 2
call MPI_CART_CREATE(MPI_COMM_WORLD, ndim, dims, isperiodic, &
                     reorder, comm2d, ierr)

```

---

This creates a new communicator in the sixth argument from the communicator in the first argument. The new communicator has the Cartesian topology defined by the second through fifth arguments. The `isperiodic` argument indicates whether

the processes at the “ends” are connected (for example, is the right neighbor of the process at the right end the *leftmost* process in that row?). This is useful for “periodic” domains. For example, in simulating the weather on the Earth within the temperate latitudes using a three-dimensional grid with the dimensions referring to east-west, north-south, and up-down, the first of these is periodic and the other two are not.

Note that we have not specified which process is assigned to each of the elements of the decomposition. By setting the argument `reorder` to `.true.`, we have allowed MPI to find a good way to assign the process to the elements of the decomposition.

In one dimension, we can simply use the rank in the new communicator, plus or minus one, to find our neighbors (and not use `MPI_Cart_create`). Even here, this may not be the best choice, because neighbors defined in this way may not be neighbors in the actual hardware. In more than one dimension, however, it is more difficult to determine the neighboring processes. The `reorder` argument, when true, lets MPI know that it may reorder the processes for better performance.

Fortunately, MPI provides a simple way to find the neighbors of a Cartesian mesh. The most direct way is to use the routine `MPI_Cart_get`. This routine returns values of the `dims` and `isperiodic` argument used in `MPI_Cart_create` as well as an array `coords` that contains the Cartesian coordinates of the calling process. For example, the code

---

```
call MPI_CART_GET(comm2d, 2, dims, isperiodic, coords, ierr)
print *, '(', coords(1), ',', coords(2), ')'
```

---

will print the coordinates of the calling process in the communicator `comm2d`. Another way is to use `MPI_Cart_coords`; this routine, given a rank in a communicator, returns the coordinates of the process with that rank. For example, to get the coordinates of the calling process, one can use

---

```
call MPI_COMM_RANK(comm2d, myrank, ierr)
call MPI_CART_COORDS(comm2d, myrank, 2, coords, ierr)
```

---

However, another way exists that is more closely related to what we are trying to accomplish. Each process needs to send and receive data from its neighbors. In the 1-D decomposition, these are the neighbors above and below. There are many ways to do this transfer, but a simple one is illustrated in Figure 4.7. This represents a copy of the top row from one process to the bottom ghost-point row of the process above it, followed by a copy of the bottom row to the top ghost-point row of the process below. If we look at the first of these operations, we see that each process

---

<b>MPI_CART_CREATE</b> (commold, ndims, dims, isperiodic, reorder, newcomm, ierror)
integer commold, ndims, dims(*), newcomm, ierror
logical isperiodic(*),reorder
<b>MPI_CART_SHIFT</b> (comm, direction, shift, src, dest, ierror )
integer comm, direction, shift, src, dest, ierror
<b>MPI_CART_GET</b> (comm, maxdims, dims, isperiodic, coords, ierror)
integer comm, maxdims, dims(*), coords(*), ierror
logical isperiodic(*)
<b>MPI_CART_COORDS</b> (comm, rank, maxdims, coords, ierror)
integer comm, rank, maxdims, coords(*), ierror

---

Table 4.1: Fortran bindings for topology routines

is both sending and receiving data. In fact, one way to look at this is that data is being shifted up from one process to another. This is a common operation, and MPI provides the routine `MPI_Cart_shift` that may be used to find the neighbors.

Figure 4.6 shows a (nonperiodic) shift by one in the first dimension in a two-dimensional Cartesian grid. `MPI_Cart_shift` may be used to find the destination and source of a shift for each process. For example, the process at Cartesian coordinates (1,1) has destination at (2,1) and source at (0,1). This gives the neighbors to the left (the rank of the process at coordinates (0,1)) and to the right (the rank of the process at coordinates (2,1)).

What happens for a right shift at the right edge? For example, what is the right neighbor of (3,0) in Figure 4.6? If the grid were periodic, the right neighbor would be (0,0). In our application, however, the grid is not periodic, and thus there is no neighbor. This is indicated by the value `MPI_PROC_NULL`. This value is a valid source for all the MPI receive routines and a valid destination for all the MPI send routines. The behavior of an `MPI_Send` or `MPI_Recv` with `MPI_PROC_NULL` as a source or destination is identical to code of the following form:

---

```

if (source .ne. MPI_PROC_NULL) then
    call MPI_SEND(..., source, ...)
endif

```

---

We will exploit `MPI_PROC_NULL` when we write the code to move data between the processes.

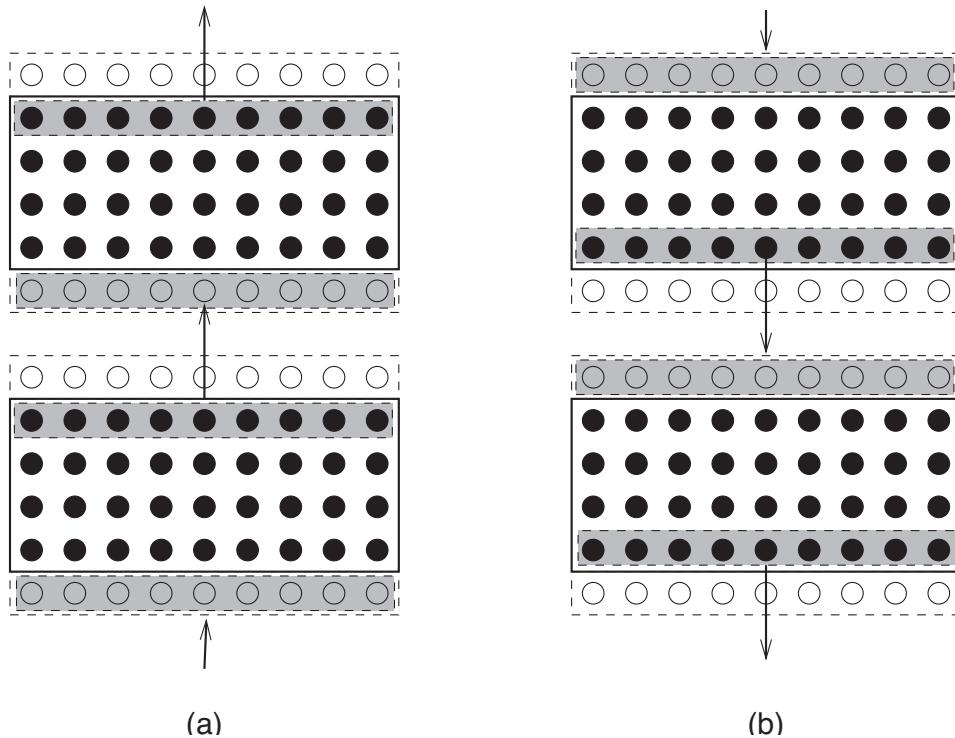


Figure 4.7: Two-step process to transfer data. Ghost point areas are shown in dashed boxes; data to be moved is shaded. The mesh points are shown as block circles; the ghost points in the mesh are shown as unfilled circles.

```
int MPI_Cart_create(MPI_Comm comm_old, int ndims, const int dims[],  
                   const int isperiodic[], int reorder, MPI_Comm *new_comm)  
  
int MPI_Cart_shift(MPI_Comm comm, int direction, int displ, int *src, int *dest)  
  
int MPI_Cart_get(MPI_Comm comm, int maxdims, int dims[], int isperiodic[],  
                 int coords[])  
  
int MPI_Cart_coords(MPI_Comm comm, int rank, int maxdims, int coords[])
```

Table 4.2: C bindings for topology routines

---

```

MPI_SENDRECV(sendbuf, sendcount, sendtype, dest, sendtag, recvbuf, recvcount,
    recvtype, source, recvtag, comm, status, ierror)
    <type> sendbuf(*), recvbuf(*)
    integer sendcount, sendtype, dest, sendtag, recvcount, recvtype,
        source, recvtag, comm, status(MPI_STATUS_SIZE), ierror

MPI_ISEND(buf, count, datatype, dest, tag, comm, request, ierror)
    <type> buf(*)
    integer count, datatype, dest, tag, comm, request, ierror

MPI_IRecv(buf, count, datatype, source, tag, comm, request, ierror)
    <type> buf(*)
    integer count, datatype, source, tag, comm, request, ierror

MPI_WAIT(request, status, ierror)
    integer request, status(MPI_STATUS_SIZE), ierror

MPI_TEST(request, flag, status, ierror)
    logical flag
    integer request, status(MPI_STATUS_SIZE), ierror

MPI_WAITALL(count, array_of_requests, array_of_statuses, ierror)
    integer count, array_of_requests(*),
        array_of_statuses(MPI_STATUS_SIZE,*), ierror

MPI_WAITANY(count, array_of_requests, index, status, ierror)
    integer count, array_of_requests(*), index,
        status(MPI_STATUS_SIZE), ierror

```

---

Table 4.3: Fortran bindings for various data exchange routines

The last routine that we need in defining the decomposition helps us determine the array limits (`s` and `e` in the sample code), given the Cartesian coordinate of the process and the size of the array (`n` in our sample). Because it is a common need, we have provided `MPE_Decompld`. To determine the values of `s` and `e`, we use

---

```
call MPE_DECOMP1D(n, nprocs, myrank, s, e)
```

---

where `nprocs` is the number of processes in the Cartesian coordinate, `myrank` is the Cartesian coordinate of the calling process, and `n` is the size of the array (assumed to run from 1 to `n`). `MPE_Decompld` computes values for `s` and `e`. If `n`

---

```

int MPI_Sendrecv(const void *sendbuf, int sendcount, MPI_Datatype sendtype,
                 int dest, int sendtag, void *recvbuf, int recvcount,
                 MPI_Datatype recvtype, int source, MPI_Datatype recvtag,
                 MPI_Comm comm, MPI_Status *status)

int MPI_Isend(const void* buf, int count, MPI_Datatype datatype, int dest, int tag,
              MPI_Comm comm, MPI_Request *request)

int MPI_Irecv(void* buf, int count, MPI_Datatype datatype, int source, int tag,
              MPI_Comm comm, MPI_Request *request)

int MPI_Wait(MPI_Request *request, MPI_Status *status)

int MPI_Test(MPI_Request *request, int *flag, MPI_Status *status)

int MPI_Waitall(int count, MPI_Request array_of_requests[],
                MPI_Status array_of_statuses[])

int MPI_Waitany(int count, MPI_Request array_of_requests[], int *index,
                MPI_Status *status)

```

---

Table 4.4: C bindings for various data exchange routines

is evenly divisible by nprocs, this routine isn't really needed; in that case we can use

---

```

s = 1 + myrank * (n / nprocs)
e = s + (n / nprocs) - 1

```

---

In the case where nprocs does not evenly divide n, the most obvious choice is

---

```

s = 1 + myrank * floor(n / nprocs)
if (myrank .eq. nprocs - 1) then
    e = n
else
    e = s + floor (n / nprocs) - 1
endif

```

---

where `floor(x)` returns the largest integer value that is no greater than x. The special case for the last process is needed to ensure that all points between 1 and n are assigned to some process. However, this simple formula does not provide an even decomposition of points among the processes. To see why, consider using these formulas with size=64 and n=127. Every process gets  $\text{floor}(n/\text{size}) = 1$  elements

except for the last, which gets  $e - s + 1 = n - 63 * \text{floor}(n/\text{size}) = 64$  elements. `MPE_Decompld` in this case gives processes 0 through 62 two elements and gives the last process a single element. By using `MPE_Decompld`, we are ensured that if `nprocs` does not evenly divide `n`, we will still get correct decomposition of the data, with good load balancing.

Now that we know how the data is decomposed among the processes and how the processes are ranked in the decomposition, we can write the routine to get the data that we need. For each process, we must get the ghost-point data for the `s-1` row from the process below and the data for the `e+1` row from the process above. Many methods exist to do even this simple operation, and we will investigate several of them through the course of this chapter.

### 4.3 A Code for the Poisson Problem

In this section we will assemble the pieces of the code that we have defined, as well as the first version of the MPI routines needed to exchange the ghost points between the processes.

The only piece of this code that we have not yet described is the routine to exchange data between the processes. The rest of this chapter will be concerned with different ways to perform this communication operation, and it will pay particular attention to some subtle issues that are often ignored in discussions of message passing. With the warning that we are about to embark on a long journey, we start with perhaps the simplest approach, shown in Figure 4.8.

In this routine, each process sends data to the process on top and then receives data from the process below it. The order is then reversed, and data is sent to the process below and received from the process above. We will see below that, while this strategy is simple, it is not necessarily the best way to implement the exchange of ghost points.

We now have all of the pieces needed to put together our first version of the Poisson solver program. This program uses `MPI_Cart_create` to create the decomposition of processes and the routine `MPE_Decompld` to determine the decomposition of the arrays. The routine `onedinit` simply initializes the elements of the arrays `a`, `b`, and `f`. The solution is computed alternately in the array `a` and then `b`; this is why there are two calls to `exchng1` and `sweep1d` in the loop. The iteration is terminated when the difference between two successive approximations to the solution is less than  $1 \times 10^{-5}$ . The difference between the local parts of `a` and `b` is computed with the routine `diff`; the routine `MPI_Allreduce` is used to ensure that all processes compute the same value for the difference in all of the

---

```

subroutine exchng1(a, nx, s, e, commld, nbrbottom, nbrtop)
use mpi
integer nx, s, e, commld, nbrbottom, nbrtop
double precision a(0:nx+1,s-1:e+1)
integer ierr
!
call MPI_SEND(a(1,e), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                nbrtop, 0, commld, ierr)
call MPI_RECV(a(1,s-1), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                nbrbottom, 0, commld, MPI_STATUS_IGNORE, ierr)
call MPI_SEND(a(1,s), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                nbrbottom, 1, commld, ierr)
call MPI_RECV(a(1,e+1), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                nbrtop, 1, commld, MPI_STATUS_IGNORE, ierr)
return
end

```

---

Figure 4.8: Code to exchange data for ghost points using blocking sends and receives

elements. The program prints both the progress of the iterations and the final iteration count. A do-loop with a maximum iteration count ensures that the program terminates even if the iteration is not converging. The computational part of the program is shown in Figure 4.9.

Let’s run this program, using the MPI profiling interface and the graphical tools in order to understand the behavior. Using the “automatic” profiling method described in Chapter 7, we use the MPE profiling files ‘mpe\_proff.o’ and ‘mpe\_prof.o’ to generate a logfile of the communication. The ‘Makefile’ in the file ‘intermediate’ contains a target for ‘oned’; this is the first version of our Poisson solver. To run it, we give the command

---

```
mpiexec -n 8 ./oned
```

---

Using the MPE logging tools described in Section 3.7.3, we can get a graphical display of the communication. One output from upshot is shown in Figure 4.10. Note that the communication is entirely sequential! What went wrong?

Although this is a frequently used communication pattern, it is not a safe one, particularly for large values of  $nx$  (long messages). The reason is that the amount of parallelism depends in a subtle way on the amount of buffering provided by the message passing system, which is not explicitly specified by MPI and may be difficult to determine. Let us suppose that we run this on a system with a small

---

```

! Get a new communicator for a decomposition of the domain
! and my position in it
call MPI_CART_CREATE(MPI_COMM_WORLD, 1, numprocs, .false., &
     .true., commld, ierr)
call MPI_COMM_RANK(commld, myid, ierr)
call MPI_CART_SHIFT(commld, 0, 1, nbrbottom, nbrtop, ierr)
! Compute the actual decomposition
call MPE_DECOMP1D(ny, numprocs, myid, s, e)
! Initialize the right-hand-side (f) and the initial solution
! guess (a)
call ONEDINIT(a, b, f, nx, s, e)
!
! Actually do the computation. Note the use of a collective
! operation to check for convergence, and a do-loop to bound the
! number of iterations.
!
do it=1, maxit
    !           get ghost points
    call EXCHNG1(a, nx, s, e, commld, nbrbottom, nbrtop)
    !           perform one Jacobi "sweep"
    call SWEEP1D(a, f, nx, s, e, b)
    !           repeat to get a solution back into array a
    call EXCHNG1(b, nx, s, e, commld, nbrbottom, nbrtop)
    call SWEEP1D(b, f, nx, s, e, a)
    !           check for convergence
    diffw = DIFF(a, b, nx, s, e)
    call MPI_ALLREDUCE(diffw, diffnorm, 1, &
        MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
        MPI_SUM, commld, ierr)
    if (diffnorm .lt. 1.0e-5) exit
    if (myid .eq. 0) print *, 2*it, ' Difference is ', diffnorm
enddo
    if (myid .eq. 0 .and. it .gt. maxit) then
        print *, 'Failed to converge'
    endif
    if (myid .eq. 0) then
        print *, 'Converged after ', 2*it, ' Iterations'
    endif

```

---

Figure 4.9: Implementation of the Jacobi iteration

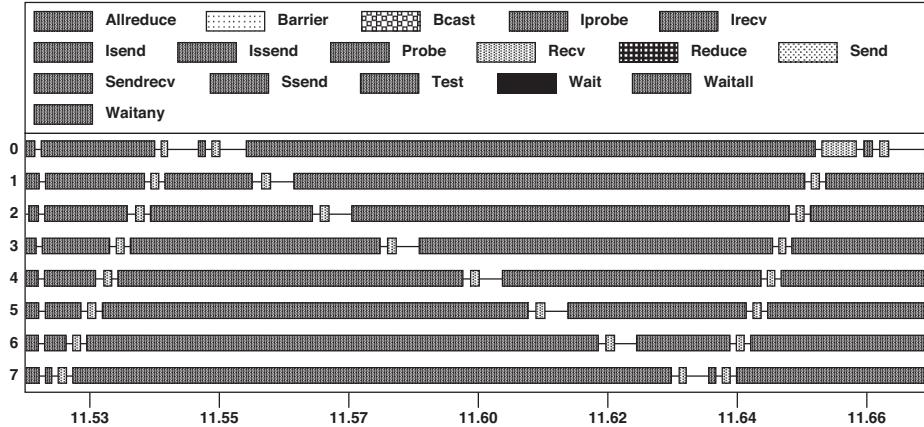


Figure 4.10: Communication in a single iteration for send followed by receive

amount of system buffer space or with a large message size. Then we will get the behavior displayed in Figure 4.10.

Looking at the upshot output gives us a clue to what has happened. The sends do not complete until the matching receives take place on the destination process. Since one process (the “top” process) does not send to anyone in the first step, it can receive from the process below it, thus allowing that process to receive from below it, and so forth. This produces a staircase pattern of sends and receives. We illustrate this in Figure 4.11.

Before we go any farther, we need to understand in more detail what happens when we ask MPI to send a message.

Consider the following code:

---

```

if (rank .eq. 0) then
    call MPI_Send(sbuffer, ..., 1, ...)
else
    call MPI_Recv(rbuffer, ..., 0, ...)
endif

```

---

What happens on the process with rank zero?

The easy answer is that the message in `sbuffer` is sent to process one. But what if process one is not ready to receive it? Perhaps process one is still computing a previous result. What can process zero do? Three possibilities exist: process zero can stop and wait until process one is ready to receive the message, it can copy

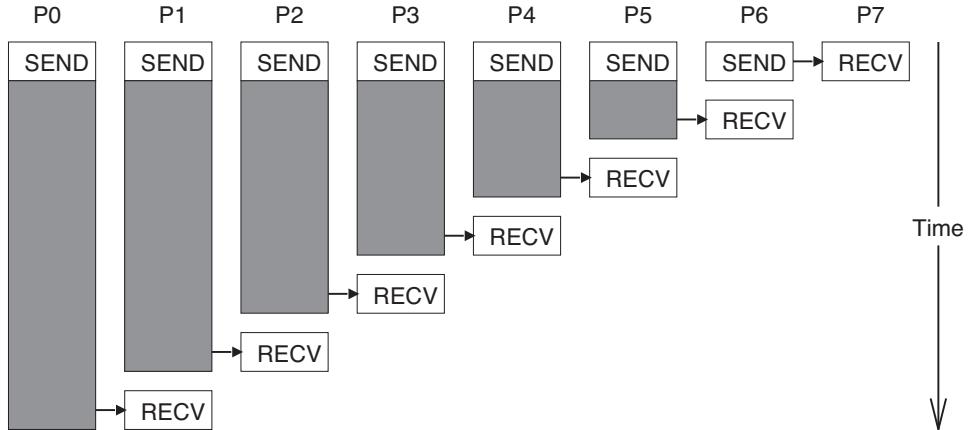


Figure 4.11: Sequentialization caused by sends blocking until the matching receive is posted. The shaded area indicates the time a process is idle, waiting for the send to be allowed to transfer data to the neighboring process.

the message out of `sbuffer` into some internal buffer (which may be located on process zero, process one, or somewhere else) and return from the `MPI_Send` call, or it can fail.

Good arguments exist for the first two possibilities. The argument for the second case is the easiest: as long as space is available to hold a copy of the message, the message-passing system should provide this service to the programmer rather than forcing the process to stop dead in its tracks until the matching receive is called.

The argument for the first case is, in part, a rebuttal to this. What if there isn't enough space available? We don't want the computation to fail just because the matching receive has not yet been made; perhaps `MPI_Recv` is about to be called. Since we cannot guarantee that enough space will be available to store a copy of an arbitrary message, why not simply say that we will never copy the message into internal storage?

The MPI Forum had long and impassioned discussions about these choices; in the end, both interpretations were allowed. That is, an MPI implementation is permitted to copy the message to be sent into internal storage in order to permit the `MPI_Send` to return, but it is not required to do so. If the MPI implementation does copy the send buffer into internal storage, we say that it *buffers* the data. Different buffering strategies provide differing levels of convenience and performance. However, it is incorrect for an MPI program to require buffering in `MPI_Send`.

The third case is also interesting because it allows for certain performance improvements. The use of this kind of send operation is described in Section 7.1.5.

For large applications that are already using a large amount of memory, even requiring the message-passing system to use all “available” memory may not provide enough memory to make this code work. For example, consider a value of  $nx$  in the above example that represents more memory space than is free on the process. There is no place to store this message on the sending process; and, until the receiver begins the matching receive, there is no place to store the message on the receiving process. For large applications that are already using large amounts of memory, the value of  $nx$  that triggers this situation may be quite small. Once the receive is issued, however, we know that there is enough space to receive, since the receiver supplies the buffer in the call to the receive.

The performance problem shown here is even more dangerous. As we saw, the code runs (it does not deadlock) but it does not execute in parallel.

All of these issues suggest that programmers should be aware of the pitfalls in assuming that the system will provide adequate buffering. In the next few sections, we will describe ways in which the MPI programmer can ensure that the correct parallel execution of a program does not depend on the amount of buffering, if any, provided by the message-passing system.

**Ordered send and receive.** One of the easiest ways to correct for a dependence on buffering is to order the sends and receives so that they are paired. That is, the sends and receives are ordered so that if one process is sending to another, the destination will do a receive that matches that send before doing a send of its own. The code for this approach is shown in Figure 4.12. In this code, the even processes (in Cartesian coordinates) send first, and the odd processes receive first.

Figure 4.13 shows the communication pattern in a single iteration of the Jacobi code when using this approach.

**Combined send and receive.** Pairing the sends and receives is effective but can be difficult to implement when the arrangement of processes is complex (for example, with an irregular grid). An alternative is to use the MPI routine `MPI_Sendrecv`. This routine allows you to send and receive data without worrying about deadlock from a lack of buffering. Each process then sends to the process below it and receives from the process above it. The code fragment for this sequence of operations is shown in Figure 4.14. Note that we can use `MPI_STATUS_IGNORE` in `MPI_Sendrecv` as well as in `MPI_Recv`. In fact, `MPI_STATUS_IGNORE` may be used anywhere that MPI uses a single status as an output parameter.

---

```
subroutine exchng1(a, nx, s, e, commld, nbrbottom, nbrtop)
use mpi
integer nx, s, e, commld, nbrbottom, nbrtop
double precision a(0:nx+1,s-1:e+1)
integer rank, coord, ierr
!
call MPI_COMM_RANK(commld, rank, ierr)
call MPI_CART_COORDS(commld, rank, 1, coord, ierr)
if (mod(coord, 2) .eq. 0) then
    call MPI_SEND(a(1,e), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                  nbrtop, 0, commld, ierr)
    call MPI_RECV(a(1,s-1), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                  nbrbottom, 0, commld, MPI_STATUS_IGNORE, ierr)
    call MPI_SEND(a(1,s), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                  nbrbottom, 1, commld, ierr)
    call MPI_RECV(a(1,e+1), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                  nbrtop, 1, commld, MPI_STATUS_IGNORE, ierr)
else
    call MPI_RECV(a(1,s-1), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                  nbrbottom, 0, commld, MPI_STATUS_IGNORE, ierr)
    call MPI_SEND(a(1,e), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                  nbrtop, 0, commld, ierr)
    call MPI_RECV(a(1,e+1), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                  nbrtop, 1, commld, MPI_STATUS_IGNORE, ierr)
    call MPI_SEND(a(1,s), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                  nbrbottom, 1, commld, ierr)
endif
return
end
```

---

Figure 4.12: Exchange routine with paired sends and receives

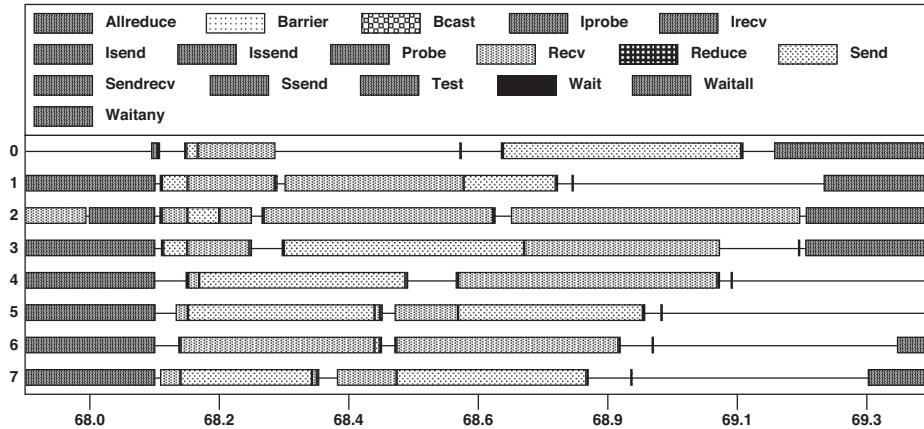


Figure 4.13: Communication in a single iteration with paired sends and receives

---

```

subroutine exchng1(a, nx, s, e, commld, nbrbottom, nbrtop)
use mpi
integer nx, s, e, commld, nbrbottom, nbrtop
double precision a(0:nx+1,s-1:e+1)
integer ierr
!
call MPI_SENDRECV(
    a(1,e), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, nbrtop, 0, &
    a(1,s-1), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, nbrbottom, 0, &
    commld, MPI_STATUS_IGNORE, ierr)
call MPI_SENDRECV(
    a(1,s), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, nbrbottom, 1, &
    a(1,e+1), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, nbrtop, 1, &
    commld, MPI_STATUS_IGNORE, ierr)
return
end

```

---

Figure 4.14: Exchange routine with send-receive

---

<b>MPI_BSEND</b> (buf, count, datatype, dest, tag, comm, ierror)
<type> buf(*)
integer count, datatype, dest, tag, comm, ierror
<b>MPI_BUFFER_ATTACH</b> (buffer, size, ierror)
<type> buffer(*)
integer size, ierror
<b>MPI_BUFFER_DETACH</b> (buffer, size, ierror)
<type> buffer(*)
integer size, ierror

---

Table 4.5: Fortran bindings for buffer operations

---

int <b>MPI_Bsend</b> (const void* buf, int count, MPI_Datatype datatype, int dest, int tag, MPI_Comm comm)
int <b>MPI_Buffer_attach</b> (void* buffer, int size)
int <b>MPI_Buffer_detach</b> (void* buffer, int* size)

---

Table 4.6: C bindings for buffering routines. Note that even though the buffer argument in **MPI\_Buffer\_detach** is typed as `void *`, it is really a pointer to a pointer and is typed as `void *` to simplify its use.

**Buffered sends.** Instead of requiring the programmer to determine a safe ordering of the send and receive operations, MPI allows the programmer to provide a buffer into which data can be placed until it is delivered (or at least left the buffer). The change to the exchange routine is simple; one just replaces the `MPI_Send` calls with `MPI_Bsend`. The resulting routine is shown in Figure 4.15.

In addition to the change to the exchange routine, MPI requires that the programmer provide the storage into which the message may be placed with the routine `MPI_Buffer_attach`. This buffer should be large enough to hold all of the messages that must be sent before the matching receives are called. In our case, we need a buffer of  $2 \times nx$  double precision values. We can provide this with code like the following:

---

```

subroutine exchng1(a, nx, s, e, commld, nbrbottom, nbrtop)
use mpi
integer nx, s, e, commld, nbrbottom, nbrtop
double precision a(0:nx+1,s-1:e+1)
integer ierr

call MPI_BSEND(a(1,e), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, nbrtop, &
    0, commld, ierr)
call MPI_RECV(a(1,s-1), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, nbrbottom, &
    0, commld, MPI_STATUS_IGNORE, ierr)
call MPI_BSEND(a(1,s), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, nbrbottom, &
    1, commld, ierr)
call MPI_RECV(a(1,e+1), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, nbrtop, &
    1, commld, MPI_STATUS_IGNORE, ierr)
return
end

```

---

Figure 4.15: Exchange routine with buffered sends

---

```

double precision buffer(2*MAXNX+2*MPI_BSEND_OVERHEAD)
...
call MPI_SIZEOF(buffer(1), dsize, ierr)
call MPI_BUFFER_ATTACH(buffer, &
    2*MAXNX*dsize+2*MPI_BSEND_OVERHEAD*dsize, ierr)

```

---

The `dsize` here is the number of bytes in a double-precision value; while typically eight, the use of `MPI_SIZEOF` in Fortran or `sizeof` in C ensures the correct value is always used.

Note that extra space is allocated in the buffer. For each message that is sent with `MPI_Bsend`, an extra amount of space, of `MPI_BSEND_OVERHEAD` bytes, must be allocated. An MPI implementation uses this within the `MPI_Bsend` routine to manage the buffer space and the communication (e.g., it may allocate an `MPI_Request` within the buffer area). The code here actually allocates eight times as much space for this overhead than is needed; the intent is to simplify the declaration, which would otherwise have to be something like

---

```

double precision &
    buffer(2*MAXNX+2*( (MPI_BSEND_OVERHEAD+dsize-1)/dsize))

```

---

Once a program no longer needs to use a buffer (or wishes to reclaim it for other use), the routine `MPI_Buffer_detach` should be called. The bindings for these

routines are shown in Tables 4.5 and 4.6. (The reason for the buffer and size arguments in MPI\_Buffer\_detach is that C programmers can use these to find out the location and size of an existing buffer in order to free it.) We emphasize that buffering may incur a performance penalty (extra effort copying data to and from the buffer) and may expose the program to failure if the amount of needed buffering is not calculated correctly.

One final caution when using MPI\_Bsend is needed. One might think that a loop like the following could be used to send 100 bytes at each iteration of the loop:

---

```

size = 100 + MPI_BSEND_OVERHEAD
call MPI_BUFFER_ATTACH(buf, size, ierr)
do i=1, n
    call MPI_BSEND(sbuf, 100, MPI_BYTE, 0, dest, &
                    MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
    < ... other work>
enddo
call MPI_BUFFER_DETACH(buf, size, ierr)

```

---

The problem with this code is the message sent in the  $i^{th}$  step of the loop may not have been delivered when the next call to MPI\_Bsend occurs in the  $i + 1$ st step. To use MPI\_Bsend correctly in this case, either the buffer given specified with MPI\_Buffer\_attach must be large enough to hold *all* of the data sent (in this case,  $n * (100 + \text{MPI_BSEND_OVERHEAD})$ ), or the buffer attach and detach must be moved inside of the loop (at the cost of extra overhead).

An alternative to using the buffered send involves using communications operations that do not block but permit the program to continue to execute instead of waiting for communications to complete. This approach also allows the program to compute while waiting for the communications to complete. However, the ability to overlap computation with communication is only one reason to consider the non-blocking operations in MPI; the ability to prevent one communication operation from preventing others from finishing is just as important.

#### 4.4 Using Nonblocking Communications

On most parallel computers, moving data from one process to another takes more time than moving or manipulating data within a single process. For example, on one modern parallel computer, each processor core can compute over 10 billion floating-point results per second but can only move roughly two hundred million

words per second between processes.<sup>2</sup> To keep a program from being slowed (also described as “starved for data”), many parallel computers allow users to start sending (and receiving) several messages and to proceed with other operations. Programmers who have used “asynchronous I/O” will recognize this approach as a way of compensating for the relatively slow speed of access to external information (disks in the case of I/O, another process in the case of message passing). MPI supports this approach by providing *nonblocking* sends and receives.

Nonblocking routines also solve the problem of buffering, by providing a way to defer completion of communication until the user, through an MPI receive operation, provides a place for a message to be received into. Many MPI concepts have this property of solving two or more problems.

The routine `MPI_Isend` begins the nonblocking send operation. The arguments are the same as for `MPI_Send` with the addition of a *handle* as the next to last argument (the last argument in C). The two routines also behave similarly except that, for `MPI_Isend`, the buffer containing the message to be sent must not be modified until the message has been delivered (more precisely, until the operation is complete, as indicated by one of the `MPI_Wait` or `MPI_Test` routines). In C, the type of this handle is `MPI_Request`. In the new Fortran 2008 binding, which we discuss in *Using Advanced MPI* [55], the type is similar to C: `Type(MPI__Request)`. Because the Fortran 2008 types are similar to C, we won’t mention them in the rest of the discussions; see Chapter 11 of *Using Advanced MPI* [55] or the MPI-3 standard [94] for more information.

The *handle* argument is used to determine whether an operation has completed. The easiest way to test is with `MPI_Test`:

---

```
call MPI_ISEND(buffer, count, datatype, dest, tag, &
           comm, request, ierr)
< do other work >
flag = .false.
do while (.not. flag)
    call MPI_TEST(request, flag, status, ierr)
enddo
```

---

Often, one wishes to wait until the send completes. Rather than writing the loop in the previous example, one can use `MPI_Wait` instead:

---

```
call MPI_WAIT(request, status, ierr)
```

---

<sup>2</sup>This apparent mismatch of capabilities reflects underlying engineering and physical realities and is a major reason that the message-passing approach, which keeps the programmer reminded of the cost of accessing remote data, has been a successful way to program parallel computers.

Once a nonblocking operation is complete (e.g., `MPI_Wait` returns or `MPI_Test` returns with `flag = .true.`), the request is set to `MPI_REQUEST_NULL`.

The routine `MPI_Irecv` begins the nonblocking receive operation. It has one additional argument, the handle, just as `MPI_Isend` does. It also has one *less* argument: the status argument, which is used to return information on the completed receive, is deleted from the argument list. Just as for `MPI_Isend`, `MPI_Test` may be used to test for the completion of a receive started with `MPI_Irecv`, and `MPI_Wait` may be used to wait for the completion of such a receive. The status arguments of these two routines return the information on the completed receive in the same form as `MPI_Recv` does for a blocking receive.

In many cases, one wishes to test or wait for many nonblocking operations. Although one can simply loop through the operations, this approach is inefficient, since this forces the user's program to be constantly executing rather than waiting (possibly without consuming CPU time) for the "next" message. MPI provides a way to wait for all or any of a collection of nonblocking operations (with `MPI_Waitall` and `MPI_Waitany`) and to test all or any of a collection of nonblocking operations (with `MPI_Testall` and `MPI_Testany`). For example, to start two nonblocking receives and then wait on them, one can use

---

```
call MPI_IRecv(..., requests(1), ierr)
call MPI_IRecv(..., requests(2), ierr)
...
call MPI_WAITALL(2, requests, status, ierr)
```

---

Here, `status` must be an array of two `MPI_Status` objects; it can be declared with

---

```
integer status(MPI_STATUS_SIZE, 2)
```

---

Alternatively, if the values in the `statuses` array are not required, one can use the value `MPI_STATUSES_IGNORE` instead for the `statuses` output parameters. This special value may be used anywhere an array of statuses is an output parameter.

With these routines, we can rewrite the exchange routine `exchng1` using non-blocking operations, as shown in Figure 4.16. This approach allows for both sends and receives to take place at the same time. In principle, this approach can be almost twice as fast as the version in Figure 4.12, though not all systems support this (don't forget that MPI was designed to support current and future message-passing systems). In the next section, we try them out and see what happens.

---

```

subroutine exchng1(a, nx, s, e, commld, nbrbottom, nbrtop)
use mpi
integer nx, s, e, commld, nbrbottom, nbrtop
double precision a(0:nx+1,s-1:e+1)
integer ierr, req(4)
!
call MPI_IRecv(&
    a(1,s-1), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, nbrbottom, 0, &
    commld, req(1), ierr)
call MPI_IRecv(&
    a(1,e+1), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, nbrtop, 1, &
    commld, req(2), ierr)
call MPI_Isend(&
    a(1,e), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, nbrtop, 0, &
    commld, req(3), ierr)
call MPI_Isend(&
    a(1,s), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, nbrbottom, 1, &
    commld, req(4), ierr)
!
call MPI_Waitall(4, req, MPI_STATUSES_IGNORE, ierr)
return
end

```

---

Figure 4.16: Row-exchange routine using nonblocking operations

Note that in order to overlap communication and computation, we must make further changes to our program. In particular, we need to change the sweep program to allow us to do some of the work while we wait for data to arrive. We will come back to nonblocking operations in Section 4.9, where we discuss overlapping communication with computation.

## 4.5 Synchronous Sends and “Safe” Programs

What can we do to ensure that a program does not depend on buffering? In general, this is equivalent to the Turing halting-problem and is hence unanswerable, but in many special cases it is possible to show that if the program runs successfully with no buffering, it will run with any amount of buffering. MPI provides a way to send a message so that the send does not return until the destination begins to receive the message (in addition, just like `MPI_Send`, it doesn’t return until the send buffer is available for reuse by the programmer). The routine is `MPI_Ssend`.

P	Blocking Send	Ordered Send	Sendrecv	Buffered Bsend	Nonblock Isend
1	1.120	1.127	1.122	1.119	1.115
2	0.551	0.552	0.559	0.551	0.552
4	0.307	0.307	0.304	0.307	0.308
8	0.133	0.128	0.127	0.133	0.126
16	0.065	0.049	0.047	0.066	0.050
32	0.078	0.036	0.028	0.078	0.028
64	0.127	0.021	0.019	0.126	0.019

Table 4.7: Timings for variants of the 1-D decomposition of the Poisson problem

The arguments to this send are identical to those for `MPI_Send`. Note that an MPI operation can implement `MPI_Send` with `MPI_Ssend`; thus, for maximum portability, one should ensure that any use of `MPI_Send` can be replaced with `MPI_Ssend`. Programs that do not require buffering (or, with `MPI_Bsend`, only the amount of buffering made available) for their correct operation are sometimes called *safe*.

## 4.6 More on Scalability

Because we have encapsulated the routines to exchange data between the processes, it is a simple matter to link the program with different methods and to compare them. Table 4.7 shows the results for one particular parallel computer and MPI implementation.

Before going on, we note that each iteration of the loop calls `MPI_Allreduce`. This routine can take a significant amount of time; on networks of workstations, it can take many milliseconds. In many applications, the effective cost of `MPI_Allreduce` is reduced by taking a number of iterations without computing the difference between successive iterates; this approach works because the Jacobi method converges very slowly.

A quick examination of Table 4.7 reveals a number of interesting features. First, with the exception of the blocking and buffered sends, the performance of the other methods is roughly the same. The blocking sends case shows the lack of parallelism in the communication; with 32 processes, the computation actually takes longer than with 16 processes.

To understand the performance of these methods, we perform a simple scalability analysis similar to the one in Chapter 3. We will need a slightly more sophisticated

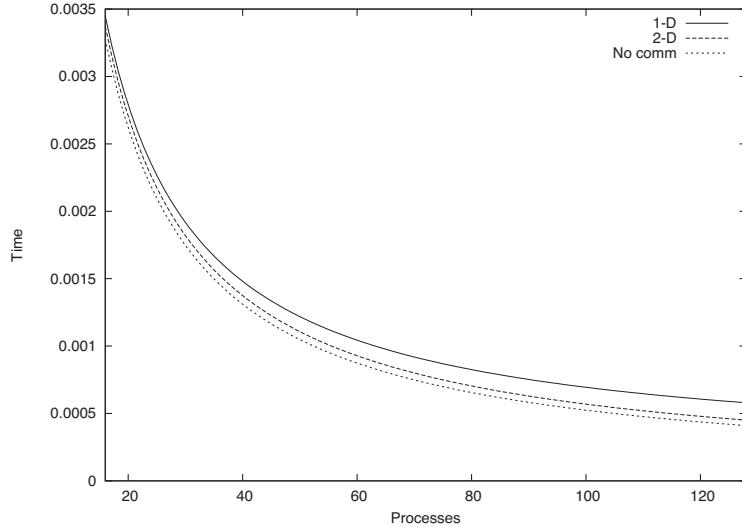


Figure 4.17: Predicted time for a 1-D (solid) and 2-D (dashed) decomposition of the 2-D Poisson problem. The cost assuming no communication is also shown (dotted).

model of communication cost here. There, we used  $T_{comm}$  as the time to send a word. We will replace  $T_{comm}$  with  $s + rn$  as the time to send  $n$  bytes; for  $n$  large, we have  $T_{comm} \approx r * n$ . The term  $s$  is the latency or startup time; it can be thought of as the time to send a message containing no data beyond the message tag and source. The term  $r$  is the inverse rate; it is the time to send a single byte and is given by one over the bandwidth. For example, if the bandwidth of a connection is 1 GB/sec,  $r = 1/(1\text{GB/sec}) = 10^{-9}$  sec/byte. Using this formula, we can easily see that the `exchng1d` routine in Figure 4.12 takes roughly  $2(s + rn)$  time, where  $n = 8nx$  (assuming 8-byte double-precision data).

In a two-dimensional decomposition, let there be  $p_x$  processes in the  $x$  direction and  $p_y$  processes in the  $y$  direction, with each process having the same number of mesh points. Then, with the exception of the processes on any edge of the domain, the amount of communication  $T_c$  is

$$T_c = 2 \left( s + r \frac{n}{p_x} \right) + 2 \left( s + r \frac{n}{p_y} \right).$$

If  $p_x = p_y = \sqrt{p}$ , this takes a particularly simple form:

$$T_c = 4 \left( s + r \frac{n}{\sqrt{p}} \right).$$

Figure 4.17 shows the expected performance for both 1-D and 2-D decompositions of the domain, based on these estimates. The

The situation is even more extreme in 3-D, as shown in Figure 4.18. Care must be exercised here because our analysis is good in the 3-D case only for  $p \geq 27$ : the reason is that for  $p < 27$  no process has neighbors on all six sides, since the 3-D decomposition creates smaller cubes in the domain.

Another way to look at the performance of a program is to compute the *speedup* and *parallel efficiency*. The speedup is defined as

$$\text{speedup} = \frac{\text{Time with no parallelism}}{\text{Time with parallelism}},$$

and the parallel efficiency is defined is speedup/ $p$ . For example, for the 1-D decomposition, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \text{speedup} &= \frac{fn^2}{\frac{fn^2}{p} + 2(s + rn)} \\ \text{efficiency} &= \frac{fn^2}{p \left( \frac{fn^2}{p} + 2(s + rn) \right)} \\ &= \frac{fn^2}{fn^2 + 2(s + rn)p} \\ &= \frac{1}{1 + \frac{2(s+rn)p}{fn^2}}. \end{aligned}$$

Here,  $f$  is the cost of the floating-point computation at each mesh point, and  $r$  is the cost to communicate each word. We can see that the efficiency is always less than one. It improves as  $n$  increases and decreases as  $p$  increases. A similar analysis can be carried out with a 2-D decomposition, which reveals the benefits of this more complex decomposition for large numbers of processes. This is illustrated in Figure 4.19, which shows plots of the parallel efficiencies for a range of both process count  $p$  and mesh size  $n$  for the 1-D and 2-D decompositions. Note that the 1-D decomposition has low efficiencies for large numbers of processes, while the 2-D decomposition has reasonable efficiencies for 10,000 processes on suitable large meshes.

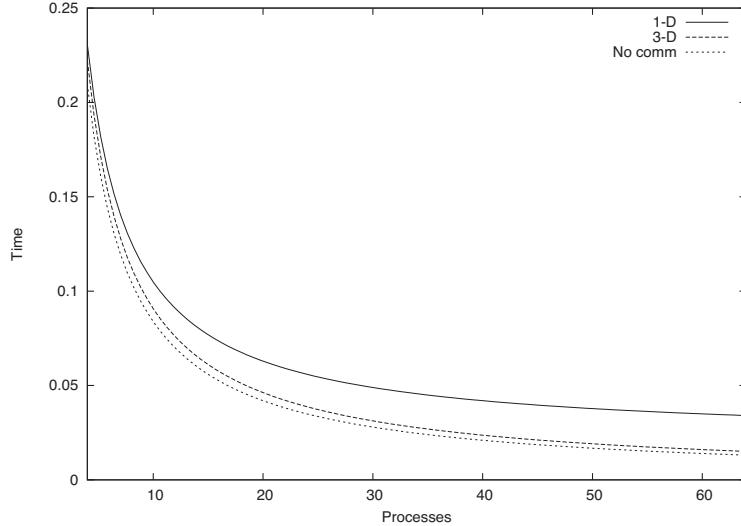


Figure 4.18: Predicted time for a 1-D (dashed) and 3-D (solid) decomposition of the 3-D Poisson problem. The dotted line shows the time assuming no communication.

One must also be careful in considering speedup and efficiency. In the end, total time to solution is what matters, and some algorithms have high parallel efficiency but are inefficient in terms of total time for solution. In fact, the Jacobi algorithm that we are considering here has that property. By using a good decomposition, each iteration of Jacobi can be made efficient. Yet the convergence rate of Jacobi is low, leading to a very long time required for solution. Speedup and efficiency can provide insight but must be used with caution.

More details on analyzing the communication in parallel codes for PDEs are given in [62, 63]; an example of using these techniques to analyze a large application can be found in [49]. See also [124, 18, 108, 95].

#### 4.7 Jacobi with a 2-D Decomposition

Figures 4.17 and 4.18 and this scalability analysis suggest that we need to rewrite our program to use these higher-dimensional decompositions. Fortunately, MPI makes this task relatively easy. We will show how a few modifications to the program in Figure 4.9 change it from a one-dimensional to two-dimensional decomposition.

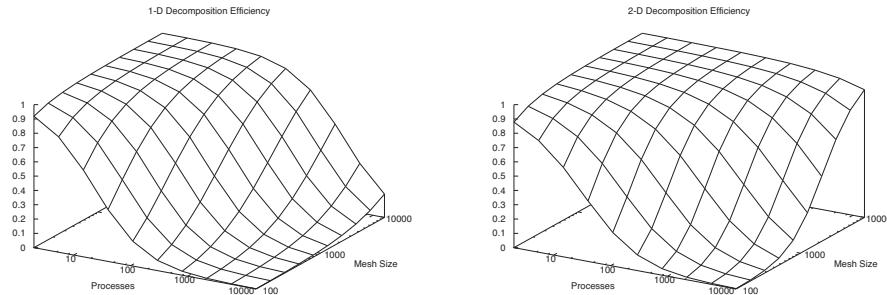


Figure 4.19: Efficiencies for the 1-D and 2-D decompositions for a range of process counts and mesh sizes

First, we let MPI compute the decomposition of the domain for us with `MPI_Cart_create`:

---

```
isperiodic(1) = .false.
isperiodic(2) = .false.
reorder      = .true.
call MPI_CART_CREATE(MPI_COMM_WORLD, 2, dims, isperiodic, &
                     reorder, comm2d, ierr)
```

---

Compare this with the 1-D code in Section 4.2.

Next, we get left and right neighbors as well as the top and bottom neighbors:

---

```
call MPI_CART_SHIFT(comm2d, 0, 1, nbrleft, nbrright, ierr)
call MPI_CART_SHIFT(comm2d, 1, 1, nbrbottom, nbrtop, ierr)
```

---

We change the body of the sweep routine to

---

```
integer i, j, n
double precision u(sx-1:ex+1,sy-1:ey+1), &
                unew(sx-1:ex+1,sy-1:ey+1)
do j=sy, ey
  do i=sx, ex
    unew(i,j) = &
      0.25*(u(i-1,j)+u(i,j+1)+u(i,j-1)+u(i+1,j)) - &
      h * h * f(i,j))
  enddo
enddo
```

---

The last routine that we need to change is the data exchange routine (`exchng1d` in the 1-D examples). This is a little more difficult because, while the data sent to the top and bottom processes is stored contiguously in memory, the data sent to the left and right processes is not.

## 4.8 An MPI Derived Datatype

One of MPI's novel features is its use of a datatype associated with every message. Specifying the length of a message as a given count of occurrences of a given datatype is more portable than using length in bytes, since lengths of given types may vary from one machine to another. It also allows MPI to provide translations between machine formats.

So far all of our messages have consisted of contiguous areas in memory, so the basic datatypes such as `MPI_INTEGER` and `MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION`, accompanied by a count, have been sufficient to describe our messages. In this section we introduce MPI's *derived datatypes*, which allow us to specify *noncontiguous* areas in memory, such as a row of an array stored columnwise (or, in our case, a column of an array stored rowwise).

This is a common situation, and MPI provides a mechanism for describing this kind of data layout. We begin by defining a new datatype that describes a group of elements that are separated by a constant amount in memory (a constant *stride*). We do this with the `MPI_Type_vector`:

---

```
call MPI_TYPE_VECTOR(ey - sy + 1, 1, ex - sx + 3, &
                     MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, stridetype, ierr)
call MPI_TYPE_COMMIT(stridetype, ierr)
```

---

The arguments to `MPI_Type_vector` describe a *block*, which consists of a number of (contiguous) copies of the input datatype given by the fourth argument. The first argument is the number of blocks; the second is the number of elements of the old datatype in each block (this is often one). The third argument is the *stride*; this is the distance in terms of the extent of the input datatype between successive elements. The old datatype is the fourth argument. The fifth argument is the created derived datatype. In this example, there is one double-precision item per block; the double-precision values are  $ex + 1 - (sx - 1) + 1 = ex - sx + 3$  apart, and there are  $ey - sy + 1$  of them (because we don't communicate the ghost points at either end). Figure 4.20 illustrates an MPI vector datatype.

Note that after the new datatype is created with the `MPI_Type_vector` command, we *commit* it to the system with `MPI_Type_commit`. This routine takes

29	30	31	32	33	34	35
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

```
MPI_Type_Vector(5, 1, 7, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, newtype,
                 ierr)
```

Figure 4.20: A strided data item (shaded) and its MPI definition. Numbers indicate consecutive memory locations.

the newly constructed datatype and gives the system the opportunity to perform any performance optimizations that it may wish. All user-constructed data types must be committed before they can be used.

With this new datatype definition, the MPI code for sending a row differs from the code for sending a column only in the datatype argument. The final version of exchng2d is shown in Figure 4.21.

When a datatype is no longer needed, it should be freed with `MPI_Type_free`. The datatype variable (the first argument) is set to `MPI_TYPE_NULL` by `MPI_Type_free`. Bindings for these routines are shown in Tables 4.8 and 4.9.

An alternative definition of the strided type, described in Section 5.4, allows the programmer to send any number of elements with the same datatype.

## 4.9 Overlapping Communication and Computation

Because moving data from one process to another can be time-consuming, it is often advantageous to arrange the program so that some work can be done while the messages are “in transit.” So far, we have used nonblocking operations to avoid deadlock in the communications. Here we describe some of the details in arranging a program so that computation and communication can take place simultaneously.

---

```

subroutine exchng2(a, sx, ex, sy, ey, &
                     comm2d, stridetype, &
                     nbrleft, nbrright, nbrtop, nbrbottom )
use mpi
integer sx, ex, sy, ey, stridetype
double precision a(sx-1:ex+1, sy-1:ey+1)
integer nbrleft, nbrright, nbrtop, nbrbottom, comm2d
integer ierr, nx
!
nx = ex - sx + 1
! These are just like the 1-d versions, except for less data
call MPI_SENDRECV(a(sx,ey), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                     nbrtop, 0, &
                     a(sx,sy-1), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                     nbrbottom, 0, comm2d, MPI_STATUS_IGNORE, ierr)
call MPI_SENDRECV(a(sx,sy), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                     nbrbottom, 1, &
                     a(sx,ey+1), nx, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                     nbrtop, 1, comm2d, MPI_STATUS_IGNORE, ierr)
!
! This uses the vector datatype stridetype
call MPI_SENDRECV(a(ex,sy), 1, stridetype, nbrright, 0, &
                     a(sx-1,sy), 1, stridetype, nbrleft, 0, &
                     comm2d, MPI_STATUS_IGNORE, ierr)
call MPI_SENDRECV(a(sx,sy), 1, stridetype, nbrleft, 1,&
                     a(ex+1,sy), 1, stridetype, nbrright, 1,&
                     comm2d, MPI_STATUS_IGNORE, ierr)
return
end

```

---

Figure 4.21: Two-dimensional exchange with sendrecv

---

<b>MPI_TYPE_VECTOR</b> (count, blocklength, stride, oldtype, newtype, ierror)
<b>integer</b> count, blocklength, stride, oldtype, newtype, ierror
<b>MPI_TYPE_COMMIT</b> (datatype, ierror)
<b>integer</b> datatype, ierror
<b>MPI_TYPE_FREE</b> (datatype, ierror)
<b>integer</b> datatype, ierror

---

Table 4.8: Fortran bindings for elementary MPI datatype routines

---

```

int MPI_Type_vector(int count, int blocklength, int stride, MPI_Datatype oldtype,
                    MPI_Datatype *newtype)

int MPI_Type_commit(MPI_Datatype *datatype)

int MPI_Type_free(MPI_Datatype *datatype)

```

---

Table 4.9: C bindings for MPI elementary datatype routines

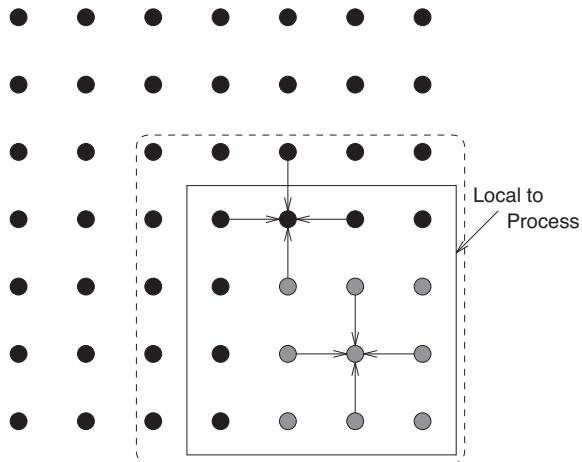


Figure 4.22: The shaded points show those mesh points whose computation does not depend on any data from other processes. The local domain is given by the solid outline; the domain with ghost points is given by the dashed box.

In the Jacobi method, the values of  $u_{\text{new}}$  at points of the mesh that are interior to the domain on each process may be computed without needing any data from any other process; this is shown in Figure 4.22.

We can arrange our computational task as follows: (1) indicate where to receive data from other processes, (2) begin sending data to the other processes, (3) compute with the local data, and (4) receive data from the other processes and finish computing with it. Separating the code into these four steps does increase the amount of code, but all of it is easily derived from our existing code. For example, Step 3 is given by the code in Figure 4.23.

All that we have done here is to select the part of the domain that is one away from the edges of the local domain, ensuring that all of the data is available.

---

```

integer i, j, n
double precision u(sx-1:ex+1,sy-1:ey+1), &
    unew(sx-1:ex+1,sy-1:ey+1)
do j=sy+1, ey-1
    do i=sx+1, ex-1
        unew(i,j) = &
            0.25*(u(i-1,j)+u(i,j+1)+u(i,j-1)+u(i+1,j)) - &
            h * h * f(i,j))
    enddo
enddo

```

---

Figure 4.23: Code to compute a Jacobi iteration with only local data

The communication routines change in similar ways; in addition, the calls are split into two sections of code, separated by the main computational section. The first part begins both the nonblocking sends and nonblocking receives:

---

```

call MPI_IRECV(..., requests(1), ierr)
...
call MPI_ISEND(..., requests(5), ierr)

```

---

These are followed by

---

```

do k=1,8
    call MPI_WAITANY(8, requests, idx, status, ierr)
    ! Use tag to determine which edge
    select case (status(MPI_TAG))
        case(1)
            do j=sy,ey
                unew(si,j) = ...
            enddo
        case(2)
            do j=sy,ey
                unew(ei,j) = ...
            enddo
        case(3)
            do i=sx,ex
                unew(i,ej) = ...
            enddo
        case(100)
            do i=sx,ex
                unew(i,sj) = ...
            enddo

```

---

---

```
    end select
enddo
```

---

Here, `requests(1)` through `requests(4)` are receive handles; `requests(5)` through `requests(8)` are send handles.

## 4.10 More on Timing Programs

Our simple code can also be used to solve time-dependent PDEs. Many discretizations for time-dependent PDEs require only the data that our Jacobi iteration needs. The only difference is that the sweep routines change and there is no longer any need for `MPI_Allreduce` to check for convergence. However, this does raise an issue when timing this program: how do we know that every process is finished when we call `MPI_Wtime`? We can use the MPI routine `MPI_Barrier` to ensure that every process has completed the computation. A barrier is a special collective operation that does not let the calling process continue until all processes in the communicator have called `MPI_Barrier`.

---

```
call MPI_Barrier(MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
t1 = MPI_Wtime()
<do work>
call MPI_Barrier(MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
total_time = MPI_Wtime() - t1
```

---

The barriers ensure that all processes have reached the same point in the code and are ready to proceed. Many of the collective operations (e.g., `MPI_Allreduce`) have the same property; that is, no process can exit the operation until all processes have entered. Note that this is not true for operations like `MPI_Reduce`, where only the root process must wait for all other processes to enter the `MPI_Reduce` call. The bindings for `MPI_Barrier` are shown in Tables 4.10 and 4.11.

This simple timing code is in fact often too simple. A number of factors can cause this code to produce misleading results. One well-known problem is that of cache: if the data needed for the work step will fit into cache, the first time this data is accessed, the time will often be dominated not by the work itself but by the time to load the data into cache. A less well-known but related problem is the demand-loading of code: in many systems, the machine instructions are not loaded from disk into memory until they are first referenced. Because this requires accessing a disk (or at least a remote file server), this can take a significant amount of time. Thus, it is better to use a loop such as the following:

---

**MPI\_BARRIER(comm, ierr)**  
integer comm, ierr

---

Table 4.10: Fortran bindings for barrier routine

---

int **MPI\_Barrier**(MPI\_Comm comm)

---

Table 4.11: C binding for barrier routine

---

```
do i=1,2
  call MPI_BARRIER(MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
  t1 = MPI_Wtime()
  <do work>
  call MPI_BARRIER(MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
  total_time = MPI_Wtime() - t1
enddo
```

---

This simple code runs the test twice, discarding the result from the first test. More sophisticated testing methods are discussed in [66]. The chapter on measuring performance in [24] also contains valuable suggestions for accurately timing tests. Note that this code is only approximate. There is no guarantee that all processes will exit the MPI\_BARRIER at even approximately the same time. The MPI\_BARRIER guarantees only that no process exits before all have entered. If you really need a way to have all processes synchronized in time, a method is described in [126] that was used for benchmarking collective communications in MPI.

## 4.11 Three Dimensions

So far, we have restricted ourselves to the 2-D problem. Now, we want to introduce the 3-D case and also show the problem in a C implementation. Even a relatively small 3-D problem having 100 grid points on a side involves  $10^6$  grid points; it is common to encounter two or three orders of magnitude more grid points than this in 3-D simulations. These problems are consequently ideal candidates for parallel computing. The flexibility of MPI makes generalizing our previous 2-D problem solutions to 3-D straightforward.

One complication in developing a 3-D code is the decomposition of the domain among the processes. As we would expect from the scalability analysis in this chapter, we should use a 3-D virtual topology. MPI provides the routine MPI\_

---

**MPI\_DIMS\_CREATE(nnodes, ndims, dims, ierr)**  
 integer nnodes, ndims, dims(\*), ierr

---

Table 4.12: Fortran binding for MPI\_DIMS\_CREATE

---

int **MPI\_Dims\_create(int nnodes, int ndims, int dims[])**

---

Table 4.13: C binding for MPI\_DIMS\_CREATE

Dims\_create to aid in generating a Cartesian virtual topology with any number of dimensions. This routine takes as input the total number of processes and the number of dimensions, and it returns an array containing the Cartesian dimensions. These values may be used as the dims argument to MPI\_Cart\_create. The bindings are shown in Tables 4.12 and 4.13.

## 4.12 Common Errors and Misunderstandings

As in the preceding chapter, we list a few common pitfalls associated with the concepts presented in this one.

**Not making programs safe.** In Section 4.5 we identified the concept of “safe” programs; those that would still work if all blocking sends were replaced by synchronous sends. A program of the following form is inherently *unsafe*:

Process 0	Process 1
MPI_Send to process 1	MPI_Send to process 0
MPI_Recv from process 1	MPI_Recv from process 0

It is certain to fail for some value of the length of the message, since there will not be enough system buffering for both messages to be copied out of the send buffers before being copied into the receive buffers. Many implementations have generous buffering, which can lull the programmer into a false sense of security. As messages get bigger, eventually the buffer limit will be reached and the program will fail. When exchanging messages between processes, it is better to write a safe program using one of the techniques described in this chapter.

- Interleave sends and receives so that one process is sending while the other is receiving.
- Use MPI\_Sendrecv.

- Allocate one's own buffers with `MPI_Buffer_attach`.
- Use the nonblocking operations `MPI_Isend` and `MPI_Irecv`.

The most common and general approach is the last one.

**Counting on the overlapping of communication and computation.** The nonblocking operations are more important for allowing safe programs than for improving performance by overlapping communication and computation. Although we described in Section 4.9 how to structure our program to allow for such overlapping, many implementations cannot overlap without extra hardware in the form of a communication coprocessor. Use of the nonblocking operations *allows* an implementation to obtain extra performance by simultaneously communicating and computing, but it is not *required* to; and whether such overlapping is possible may depend on the hardware environment. If switching to nonblocking operations doesn't improve performance, it may not be your fault.

### 4.13 Application: Nek5000/NekCEM

Nek5000/NekCEM are scalable open-source codes for computational fluid dynamics (Nek5000) and computational electromagnetics (NekCEM) used in a variety of applications including vascular flow, heat transfer, combustion, ocean modeling, fundamentals of turbulence, astrophysics, accelerator physics, and nanophotonics. The codes are based on spectral element methods (SEM) coupled with high-order timestepping to solve the governing initial-/boundary-value problems in two or three space dimensions and time. Nek5000 solves the incompressible Navier-Stokes equations (or a low-Mach variant) and NekCEM solves the time-dependent Maxwell's equations. The principal design goal for Nek5000/NekCEM is to reduce the number of gridpoints through the use of high-order methods while maintaining a cost-per-gridpoint comparable to low-order methods. Because of its minimal numerical dispersion, the benefits of the SEM are manifest for problems where long time-integration is required, which is often the case in high-performance computing applications that are striving to capture significant scale interactions spanning several decades.

In the SEM, the computational domain is represented as the union of  $E$  nonoverlapping elements, where the elements are typically curvilinear hexahedra (bricks). Within each element, the solution and data are represented as  $N$ th-order tensor-product polynomials.

The SEM has much in common with the finite element method (FEM) save that, through its restricted attention to tensor-product bases, its implementation is tailored to high performance for much higher order than feasible with the classical FEM. Polynomial orders of  $N=7$  to 20 are quite common, yielding 500–8000 points per element. A central idea in the SEM is never to form local elemental matrices, which would in general have  $(N + 1)^6$  nonzeros per element, but to instead use preconditioned iterative solvers that require only the action of operators applied to functions.

In addition to the fine-grained parallelism intrinsic to the matrix-matrix based operator evaluation, the SEM has a natural concurrency that can be realized by distributing element groups across MPI ranks. Because of the  $C^0$  continuity, the number of surface basis functions that span adjacent elements is minimal and equal to the number of surface nodes. The associated stencil is deep—fully comprising  $N$  values in each direction—but requires only one value (each way) to be communicated per surface point, per exchange. In Nek5000/NekCEM domain decomposition is realized through recursive spectral bisection coupled with partition clean-up heuristics to ensure connected subdomains [102]. As noted below, recursive bisection is a central component of one of the two solution strategies used to solve the coarse-grid problem that arises in the pressure Poisson problem at each timestep.

Temporal discretization for the Navier-Stokes equations is based on third-order operator splitting involving an explicit advection step, implicit diffusion, and a pressure projection step [87]. The pressure solve captures all of the parallel complexity in Nek5000 save I/O. Because of its long-range interaction, the pressure solve is the most compute and communication intensive substep. It relies on three principal communication kernels: vector reductions, nearest-neighbor exchanges, and a generalized all-to-all. In addition to these kernels, the coarse-grid solve associated with the multi-level preconditioner is intrinsically communication intensive and thus dictates much of the data-layout and development strategy in Nek5000. Although it is built on the other kernels, the coarse-grid solve is technically a communication step in its own right and we include a discussion of it here. Each of the kernels is called in an exchange-agnostic format that hides details of the communication interface and that permits changing the communication mechanism without altering the base code (or compiling without MPI altogether).

The major use for vector reductions in Nek5000 is for iterative solvers (e.g., conjugate gradients or GMRES), where the inner products allow one to compute the projection (best approximation) in the associated Krylov subspaces. Projection-based methods yield dramatic reductions in iteration count and are thus an essential component of efficient iterative solvers. With hardware support for `MPI_All_`

reduce, the overhead constitutes only one or two percent of the run-time when strong scaling to a million ranks.

A central component of Nek5000’s parallel implementation is the stand-alone gather-scatter library, which effects the data exchanges between elements that enforce continuity of the solution and test spaces. The communication, which consists of addition and redistribution of shared interface values, is effected through Nek5000’s gather-scatter library, `gs()`.

From the preceding discussion, it is clear that if adjacent elements are on different processes, then communication is required to update the residual. Technically, this amounts to identifying the nearest-neighbor connections and setting up messages to transfer the data. In the `gs()` library, this process is streamlined through a simple user interface. For the `gs()` call, MPI rank  $p$  simply provides a pointer to the vector that holds the intermediate residuals, along with a pre-assigned `gs` handle: `ierr=gs(handle,u)`. The input vector is assumed to be contiguously packed. Typically, `gs()` will effect the exchange by marching through the input vector, skipping over singletons that have no shared values, condensing any shared values within a given rank, and then packing values shared between ranks into outbound buffers destined for neighboring processes. Nonblocking MPI\_Irecv is used to post the result buffers and the outbound buffers are sent to each of the target MPI ranks. When the data is received the results are summed and control is returned to the calling routine. In addition to summation of reals, `gs()` supports other commutative/associative operators including product, min, and max, on a variety of argument types (such as `int`, `int*8`, and `real*8`), and on  $m$ -tuples that can be passed in list or in interleaved form. The support for  $m$ -tuples cuts internode latency by a factor of  $m$  and is used extensively in NekCEM, where there are  $m = 6$  values associated with the unknown **E**- and **H**-fields in Maxwell’s equations.

Graph connectivity for `gs()` is established through the simple call

```
handle=gs_setup(global_pointer,nL),
```

where `global_pointer` is a list of  $n_L$  8-byte integers that is, in effect, the set of global pointers from  $\underline{u}_L$  to  $\underline{u}$ . Any repeated entry in `global_pointer` implies a shared connection between two or more corresponding entries in  $\underline{u}_L$  (i.e., the “ $u$ ” that is passed into `gs()`). Known singletons, such as nodes that are interior to the elements, can be indicated by setting `global_pointer` to 0, implying that these nodes are to be skipped in both the setup and execute phases. To find repeated indices on separate processes, `gs_setup()` invokes the following communication exchange. On each rank  $p$ , for  $i = 1, \dots, n_L$ , set

$p_{\text{target}} = \text{mod}(\text{global\_pointer}(i), P)$  and then swap pointers to target processes in  $\log_2 P$  data exchanges using the crystal router described below. Once on the target process, the pointers are sorted to identify matched pairs. The originating process rank and local position  $(p, i)$  are carried throughout the exchange-sort process so that when the data is returned to  $p$  via a second crystal-router call, each entry  $i$  has a list of shared addresses  $(p', i')$ . With this list established, the connectivity graph is defined and `global_pointer` is discarded. We remark that, because of the distributed memory model, `global_pointer` is the *only* `int*8` array required in Nek5000/NekCEM as it is the only one that indexes in excess of two billion entries.

The crystal router, `cr()`, is a scalable all-to-all or all-to-many exchange algorithm that guarantees termination in at most  $1 + \log_2 P$  messages [51]. It is a central part of the Nek5000/NekCEM communication library because it allows one to easily avoid  $O(P)$  communication costs that would be devastating for  $P \gg 10^3$ . A simple `cr()` exchange is illustrated in Figure 4.24, in which each process has a set of data values with subscript  $q'$  indicating the target process. The values are sorted by target, which is the first step prior to each send/receive. On the first exchange, any MPI process with rank  $p < P/2$  sends to its partner  $q = p + P/2$  all data targeted for  $q' \geq P/2$ . Processes  $q$  reciprocate such that, after the first exchange, the problem is reduced to a pair of independent complete exchanges that can be solved by recurring on the preceding sort/exchange step. The process terminates in  $\log_2 P$  exchanges (or  $1 + \log_2 P$ , if  $P$  is not a power of 2) and sends messages of size  $\approx m/2$  for an input vector length  $m$ , assuming a reasonable balance in target process distributions. At each stage, there are  $P$  messages sent across the network ( $P/2$  in each direction) and, for large  $m$ , `cr()` will potentially saturate the bisection bandwidth of the network such that the communication complexity is greater than  $O(\log P)$ . For the latency-dominated small- $m$  scenario, however, the  $\log_2 P$  bound makes `cr()` a highly scalable generalized complete exchange.

Nek5000/NekCEM supports two flavors of `cr()`, a dynamic one, in which a list with the target processes is supplied along with the data to be exchanged, and a static one, in which the list is supplied in a preprocessing step and the overall data path is premapped so that data is moved without pointers. The static version also supports condensation on the fly, so that if two values are to be summed at the target they will be summed at the first process where they coincide. This latter variant is useful in cases where the number of process connections in the `gs()` is  $C \gg \log_2 P$ . Instead of invoking  $C$  pairwise exchanges with  $C$ -fold latency, one can implement a `cr()`-based variant of `gs()` to guarantee a  $\log_2 P$  latency penalty, plus an increase in bandwidth demands. For each new graph, `gs_setup()`

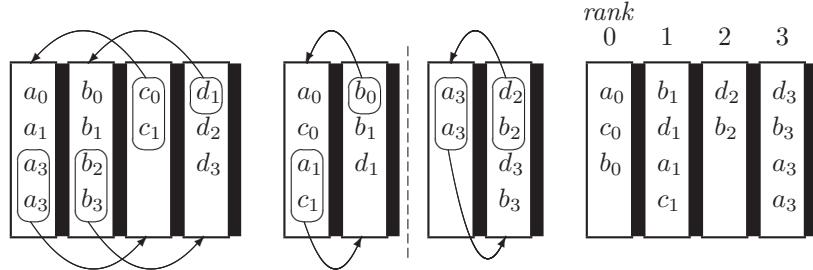


Figure 4.24: Illustration of crystal router for  $P=4$ : (left) exchange for  $P$  ranks; (center) two exchanges for  $P/2$  ranks; (right) final data arrangement, distributed by subscript.

runs trials of pairwise-, `cr()`-, and `all_reduce`-based `gs()` implementations and selects the fastest before returning the handle. The timings are reported, but the `gs()` interface is independent of the underlying exchange mechanism.

As mentioned above, the pressure solve is the most compute-intensive substep in the Navier-Stokes time advancement. Depending on the details of the discretization, the pressure solve is manifest as some type of Poisson problem, which is effectively treated by GMRES with multilevel Schwarz preconditioning [47, 84]. At the finest level, the error is reduced using Schwarz-based smoothers that use the `cr()` to effect data transfer between regions of overlap. The residual is then restricted to a coarser mesh of order  $N' = 3$ , followed by a second round of smoothing. Finally, the residual is restricted to piecewise trilinear bases,  $N'' = 1$ , and this coarse system,  $A_0 p_0 = g_0$ , is either solved directly or smoothed using algebraic multigrid.

For  $P > 10^4$ , algebraic multigrid (AMG) has an advantage as a coarse-grid solver because it avoids the  $O(P^{2/3})$  local complexities. The AMG solver in Nek5000 is based on the optimized independent-quality metrics for coarsening, interpolation, and smoothing, described in [85]. At each level, we perform three sweeps of Chebyshev-accelerated diagonal smoothing and then coarsen the residual to roughly half the number of degrees of freedom. For  $n_0 = 10^6$ , one can anticipate 10 to 20 levels in the multigrid scheme, each requiring restriction, smoothing, and coarse-to-fine interpolation. The operations at each level are implemented in parallel using distributed matrix-vector products that employ the `gs()` library, with a different handle in each case. At the lowest levels there will only be a few active processes but the stencils are potentially long, with several hundred nonzeros per row because of the fill generated by the interpolation operators and in these cases `gs_setup()` often selects `cr()` or `all_reduce` over the pairwise exchange strategy.

# 5 Fun with Datatypes

This chapter discusses some of the more advanced features from the MPI standard that have not arisen in the discussion so far, particularly in the area of MPI datatypes. The chapter also provides a more complete discussion of some features already introduced briefly. We use the opportunity to introduce several interesting example programs.

## 5.1 MPI Datatypes

One of MPI's unusual features is the introduction of a datatype argument for all messages sent and received. In the early chapters of this book, we relied primarily on elementary datatypes that correspond to the base datatypes in the host programming language—integers, floating-point numbers, and so forth, and arrays of these. In this section we discuss the complete set of datatypes and take the opportunity to describe the full power of MPI's derived datatype features.

### 5.1.1 Basic Datatypes and Concepts

MPI provides a rich set of predefined datatypes. These include all of the basic datatypes in C (Table 5.1) and Fortran (Table 5.2). Included in both lists are two datatypes specific to MPI: `MPI_BYTE` and `MPI_PACKED`. `MPI_BYTE` refers to a *byte* that is defined as eight binary digits. Many C and Fortran programmers may wonder why this is needed when they have `MPI_CHAR` and `MPI_CHARACTER`, respectively. There are two reasons. First, while many implementations represent `char` and `character` as bytes, this representation is not required. A version of C for Japanese could choose 16-bit chars, for example. The second reason is that in a heterogeneous environment, machines may have different character sets. For example, a system that uses ASCII uses different bits to represent the character A than does a system that uses EBCDIC. `MPI_PACKED` is described in Section 5.2.3.

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 do not include the MPI datatypes that correspond to language datatypes that are not part of the language standard but are common extensions. Vendor-specific implementations of Fortran, in particular, often have additional datatypes. In Fortran 77, for example, the most common was `DOUBLE COMPLEX`, the double precision counterpart to `COMPLEX`, which is not, in fact, part of Fortran 77. The MPI standard could hardly mandate datatypes not part of the language standards, and so such datatypes are not a *required* part of an MPI implementation. However, many Fortran implementations do support `DOUBLE COMPLEX`, along with types such as `REAL*8` (8-byte reals) and `INTEGER*2` (2-byte integers).

MPI Datatype	C Datatype
MPI_CHAR	signed char
MPI_FLOAT	float
MPI_DOUBLE	double
MPI_LONG_DOUBLE	long double
MPI_WCHAR	wchar_t
MPI_SHORT	short
MPI_INT	int
MPI_LONG	long
MPI_LONG_LONG_INT	long long
MPI_SIGNED_CHAR	signed char
MPI_UNSIGNED_CHAR	unsigned char
MPI_UNSIGNED_SHORT	unsigned short
MPI_UNSIGNED	unsigned int
MPI_UNSIGNED_LONG	unsigned long
MPI_UNSIGNED_LONG_LONG	unsigned long long
MPI_C_COMPLEX	float _Complex
MPI_C_DOUBLE_COMPLEX	double _Complex
MPI_C_LONG_DOUBLE_COMPLEX	long double _Complex
MPI_PACKED	
MPI_BYTE	

Table 5.1: The major basic (predefined) MPI datatypes for C

MPI defines the corresponding datatypes MPI\_DOUBLE\_COMPLEX, MPI\_REAL8, and MPI\_INTEGER2 (among others) as *optional* datatypes—an MPI implementation does not need to define them, but it should use these names if it does.

As we have already seen in Section 4.8, it is often useful to define additional datatypes. MPI provides for arbitrary datatypes; the rest of this section concerns how MPI describes a general datatype.

In MPI, a datatype is an object consisting of a sequence of the basic datatypes (Tables 5.1 and 5.2) and displacements, in bytes, of each of these datatypes. These displacements are taken to be relative to the buffer that the datatype is describing (see Section 3.6). We will represent a datatype as a sequence of pairs of basic types and displacements as shown in (5.1); MPI calls this sequence the *typemap*.

$$\text{Typemap} = \{(type_0, disp_0), \dots, (type_{n-1}, disp_{n-1})\} \quad (5.1)$$

For example, the type MPI\_INT can be represented as the typemap `(int, 0)`.

MPI Datatype	Fortran Datatype
MPI_BYTE	
MPI_CHARACTER	CHARACTER
MPI_COMPLEX	COMPLEX
MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION	DOUBLE PRECISION
MPI_INTEGER	INTEGER
MPI_LOGICAL	LOGICAL
MPI_PACKED	
MPI_REAL	REAL

Table 5.2: Basic (predefined) MPI datatypes for Fortran

The *type signature* of a datatype is just a list of the basic datatypes in a datatype:

$$\text{Type signature} = \{type_0, \dots, type_{n-1}\}$$

The type signature controls how data items are interpreted when data is sent or received. In other words, it tells MPI how to interpret the bits in a data buffer. The displacements tell MPI where to find the bits (when sending) or where to put them (when receiving).

To illustrate how MPI assembles user-defined datatypes, we need to introduce a few terms. Let an MPI datatype have typemap given by (5.1). We define the following:

$$lb(\text{Typemap}) = \min_j(disp_j) \quad (5.2)$$

$$ub(\text{Typemap}) = \max_j(disp_j + \text{sizeof}(type_j)) + pad \quad (5.3)$$

$$\text{extent}(\text{Typemap}) = ub(\text{Typemap}) - lb(\text{Typemap}) \quad (5.4)$$

Here, *lb* is the *lower bound* of the displacements of the components of the datatype and can be considered the location of the first byte described by the datatype; *ub* is the *upper bound* of the datatype and can be considered the location of the last byte described by the datatype. The *extent* is the difference between these two, possibly increased to meet an alignment requirement. The *sizeof* operator in (5.3) is the size of the *basic* datatype in bytes.

To discuss the role of the “pad,” we first need to discuss data *alignment*. Both C and Fortran require that the basic datatypes be properly aligned, that is, that the locations of, for example, an integer or a double-precision value occur only where allowed. Each implementation of these languages defines what is allowed

(with some restrictions, of course). One of the most common requirements made by an implementation of these languages is that the address of an item in bytes be a multiple of the length of that item in bytes. For example, if an `int` takes four bytes, then the address of an `int` must be evenly divisible by four. This requirement is reflected in the definition of the extent of an MPI datatype. Consider the typemap

$$\{(int, 0), (char, 4)\} \quad (5.5)$$

on a computer that requires that `int`'s be aligned on 4-byte boundaries. This typemap has  $lb = \min(0, 4) = 0$  and  $ub = \max(0 + 4, 4 + 1) = 5$ . But the next `int` can only be placed with displacement eight from the `int` in the typemap. This makes the extent of this typemap *on the computer we are discussing* eight.

To find the extent of a datatype, MPI provides the routine `MPI_Type_get_extent`. The first argument is the MPI datatype; the lower bound is returned in the second argument and the extent is returned in the third argument. In C, the type of the second and third argument is `MPI_Aint`; this is an integer type that can hold an arbitrary address. The corresponding type in Fortran is `INTEGER (KIND=MPI_ADDRESS_KIND)`. The extents of the basic datatypes (those in Tables 5.1 and 5.2) are the same as the number of bytes in them.

The size of a datatype is the number of bytes that the data takes up. This is given by `MPI_Type_size`; the first argument is the datatype, and the size is returned in the second argument. The difference between the extent and size of a datatype is illustrated by the typemap in (5.5): the size is five bytes, but the extent (on a computer that requires `int`s be aligned on four-byte boundaries) is eight bytes. Bindings for the datatype routines described here are given in Tables 5.3 and 5.4.

While an `int` was large enough to hold the size of an MPI datatype when MPI was defined, many systems now have more than 2 gigabytes of memory, which is the greatest number of bytes that can be described by a signed 32-bit integer. Since many systems today use what is sometimes called the “LP64” model, where `long` and pointers (e.g., `void *`) are 64-bit and `int` are 32-bits, the output value from `MPI_Type_size` may not fit in an `int` or Fortran `INTEGER`. MPI-3 has added special routines for the rare cases where an MPI datatype is too large for an `int`; these are discussed in *Using Advanced MPI* [55], Chapter 8.

### 5.1.2 Derived Datatypes

The typemap is a completely general way of describing an arbitrary datatype. However, it may not be convenient, particularly if the resulting typemap contains

---

```
int MPI_Type_contiguous(int count, MPI_Datatype oldtype,
                       MPI_Datatype *newtype)

int MPI_Type_get_extent(MPI_Datatype datatype, MPI_Aint *lb, MPI_Aint *extent)

int MPI_Type_size(MPI_Datatype datatype, int *size)
```

---

Table 5.3: C bindings for MPI datatype routines

---

<b>MPI_TYPE_CONTIGUOUS</b> (count, oldtype, newtype, ierror)
integer count, oldtype, newtype, ierror
<b>MPI_TYPE_GET_EXTENT</b> (datatype, lb, extent, ierror)
integer datatype, ierror
integer (kind=MPI_ADDRESS_KIND) lb, extent
<b>MPI_TYPE_SIZE</b> (datatype, size, ierror)
integer datatype, size, ierror

---

Table 5.4: Fortran bindings for MPI datatype routines

large numbers of entries. MPI provides a number of ways to create datatypes without explicitly constructing the typemap.

**Contiguous:** This is the simplest constructor. It produces a new datatype by making `count` copies of an existing one, with the displacements incremented by the extent of the `oldtype`.

**Vector:** This is a slight generalization of the contiguous type that allows for regular gaps in the displacements. Elements are separated by multiples of the extent of the input datatype. See Section 4.8.

**Hvector:** This is like vector, but elements are separated by a specified number of bytes.

**Indexed:** In this datatype, an array of displacements of the input datatype is provided; the displacements are measured in terms of the extent of the input datatype. See Section 5.2.3.

**Hindexed:** This is like indexed, but the displacements are measured in bytes. See Section 5.2.4.

**Struct:** This provides a fully general description. In fact, if the input arguments consist of the basic MPI datatypes, the input is just the typemap. See Section 5.3.

We will describe the MPI functions that create these datatypes as we encounter them. We will discuss the contiguous type here, because that datatype explains how the count argument in MPI routines applies to these derived datatypes.

The routine `MPI_Type_contiguous` produces a new datatype by making count copies of an existing one, with the displacements incremented by the extent of the oldtype. For example, if the original datatype (`oldtype`) has typemap

$$\{(int, 0), (double, 8)\},$$

then

---

```
MPI_Type_contiguous(2, oldtype, &newtype);
```

---

produces a datatype `newtype` with typemap

$$\{(int, 0), (double, 8), (int, 16), (double, 24)\}.$$

When a count argument is used in an MPI operation, it is the same as if a contiguous type of that size had been constructed. That is,

---

```
MPI_Send(buffer, count, datatype, dest, tag, comm);
```

---

is exactly the same as

---

```
MPI_Type_contiguous(count, datatype, &newtype);
MPI_Type_commit(&newtype);
MPI_Send(buffer, 1, newtype, dest, tag, comm);
MPI_Type_free(&newtype);
```

---

### 5.1.3 Understanding Extents

The extent of a datatype is probably the most misunderstood concept in MPI. The extent of a datatype is used by MPI communication routines to indicate where to find the “next” data item to send or put the “next” item received. For example

---

```
char *buffer;
MPI_Send(buffer, n, datatype, ...);
```

---

sends the same data (but in a single message, rather than n messages) as

---

```

char *buffer;
MPI_Type_get_extent(datatype, &lb, &extent);
for (i=0; i<n; i++) {
    MPI_Send(buffer + (i * extent), 1, datatype, ...);
}

```

---

To simplify this example, we have declared `buffer` as type `char` and assumed that `sizeof(char)` is one byte.

We can see from this that the extent of a datatype is *not* its size; it is closest to being the *stride* of a datatype: the distance (in bytes) to skip (stride) from the start of one instance of the datatype to the start of another instance of a datatype. We will come back to this topic in Section 5.4, where we will see how to use the extent to send data separated by regular gaps.

## 5.2 The N-Body Problem

Many simulations involve computing the interaction of a large number of particles or objects. If the force between the particles is completely described by adding the forces between all pairs of particles and if the force between each pair acts along the line between them, this is called an N-body central force problem (often just an N-body problem). Such a problem is a good choice for parallelization because it can be described with  $N$  items (the particles) but requires  $\mathcal{O}(N^2)$  computation (all the pairs of particles). Thus, we can expect good speedups for large problems because the communication between processes will be small relative to the computation.<sup>1</sup>

In this section, we will use the N-body problem to describe a number of MPI features, including new collective operations, persistent communication requests, and new derived datatypes.

In implementing an N-body code, we need first to decide how the particles are distributed among the processes. One simple way is to divide the particles evenly among the processes. For example, if there are 1000 particles and 10 processes, we put the first 100 particles on process 0, the second 100 particles on process 1, and so forth. To compute the forces on the particles, each process must access all the particles on the other processes. (An important optimization involves exploiting the fact that the forces are equal and opposite; this can reduce the computation by a factor of 2. For simplicity, we do not make use of this property.)

---

<sup>1</sup>As we'll note in Section 5.2.3, despite this obvious calculation of the work involved, some algorithms can approximate the solution to high accuracy with fewer computations.

To begin, we define a particle datatype. Let us assume that a particle is defined by the structure

---

```
typedef struct {
    double x, y, z;
    double mass;
} Particle;
```

---

and that the particles are stored in an array:

---

```
Particle particles[MAX_PARTICLES];
```

---

To send this data, we could just send four doubles for each particle, but it makes more sense in MPI to create a datatype for a particle consisting of four doubles:

---

```
MPI_Type_contiguous(4, MPI_DOUBLE, &particletype);
MPI_Type_commit(&particletype);
```

---

We should use `MPI_Type_indexed` or more generally `MPI_Type_create_struct` to build this structure, but `MPI_Type_contiguous` will work on almost any system for this particular case. We will cover the use of `MPI_Type_create_struct` in Section 5.3.

### 5.2.1 Gather

The simplest approach is for all processes to exchange all the particles and then compute with them. In this approach, all processes will have copies of all of the particles, computing only the forces on the particles held locally.<sup>2</sup> For example, each process could do

---

```
Particle *(particleloc[]);

...
MPI_Comm_size(MPI_COMM_WORLD, &size);
for (i=0; i<size; i++)
    MPI_Send(particles, count, particletype, i, 0,
               MPI_COMM_WORLD);
for (i=0; i<size; i++) {
    MPI_Recv(particleloc[i], MAX_PARTICLES, particletype, i, 0,
               MPI_COMM_WORLD, &status);
    /* Use status to determine how many particles were sent */
    MPI_Get_count(&status, particletype, &mycount);
}
```

---

<sup>2</sup>This approach is suitable only for relatively small number of particles; it may be used if the forces are particularly complicated or if long spans of time need to be computed.

(For reasons that will soon be clear, we have deliberately left out the sends and receives from a process to itself in this code.) This code has many problems: it does not scale (it takes time proportional to the number of processes), it may deadlock (because the code requires that MPI\_Send provide buffering), and it needs the locations particleloc[i] computed before the code can be used. We could use the techniques in Chapter 4 to get around the deadlock (buffering) problem, but the other problems require more care. Fortunately, MPI provides routines to handle this common case. We will show how the routines MPI\_Allgather and MPI\_Allgatherv can be used to provide efficient ways to communicate data between processes.

First, let us handle the problem of determining how many particles each process has. Let each process have count contain the number of particles that it holds. We wish to fill an array counts such that counts[i] contains the number of particles on the  $i^{th}$  process. One way to do this is to gather all the data to a single process and then use MPI\_Bcast to send the data to all the processes. The routine that accomplishes this is MPI\_Gather.

---

```
int count, counts[];
...
root = 0;
MPI_Gather(&count, 1, MPI_INT, counts, 1, MPI_INT, root,
              MPI_COMM_WORLD);
MPI_Comm_size(MPI_COMM_WORLD, &size);
MPI_Bcast(counts, size, MPI_INT, root, MPI_COMM_WORLD);
```

---

The gather operation takes the data being sent by the  $i^{th}$  process and places it in the  $i^{th}$  location in the receive buffer on the root process. Only the process designated as the root receives the data.

Tables 5.5 and 5.6 show the bindings for the gather operations. The first three arguments describe the data to be sent; the fourth through sixth arguments describe the data to be received. For MPI\_Gather, the seventh argument indicates which process will receive the data. MPI\_Gather requires that all processes, including the root, send the same amount of data and that the type signature of the sendtype match that of the recvtype. The value of recvcount is the number of data items sent by any *one* process; usually, sendtype = recvtype and sendcount = recvcount. Once all the data has been gathered to a single process, the data can be distributed to all processes with the broadcast routine MPI\_Bcast. Note also that the recvbuf is longer than the sendbuf except for the trivial case where the sendcount is zero.

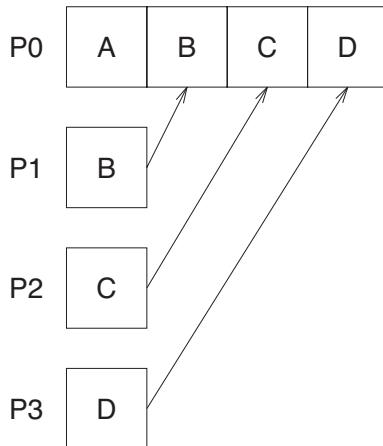


Figure 5.1: Data motion for a gather operation with p0 as root

Just as with MPI\_Reduce and MPI\_Allreduce, it can be more convenient and efficient to combine the gather and broadcast operations into a single operation. MPI\_Allgather does this; the code for collecting the counts onto all processes is shown here:

---

```
int counts[MAX_PROCESSES];
MPI_Allgather(&count, 1, MPI_INT, counts, 1, MPI_INT,
              MPI_COMM_WORLD);
```

---

Note that the recvcount argument is a scalar; it indicates the number of items received from *each* process, not the sum of the number of items received from all processes.

If all processes had the same number of particles, then we could use MPI\_Allgather to get the particles:

---

```
MPI_Allgather(myparticles, count, particletype,
              allparticles, count, particletype, MPI_COMM_WORLD);
```

---

In most cases, however, each process will have different numbers of particles. In this case, we can use a variant of MPI\_Allgather that permits differing sizes of data to be sent from each process. The routine MPI\_Allgatherv takes the lengths of each item to be received and the displacement relative to the receive buffer (in units of the extent of the receive datatype) where the item will be stored. That is, on the  $i^{th}$  process, recvcount[i] items are received into the receive buffer starting

---

```

int MPI_Gather(const void *sendbuf, int sendcount, MPI_Datatype sendtype,
                 void *recvbuf, int recvcount, MPI_Datatype recvtype, int root,
                 MPI_Comm comm)

int MPI_Allgather(const void *sendbuf, int sendcount, MPI_Datatype sendtype,
                    void *recvbuf, int recvcount, MPI_Datatype recvtype,
                    MPI_Comm comm)

int MPI_Allgatherv(const void *sendbuf, int sendcount, MPI_Datatype sendtype,
                     void *recvbuf, const int *recvcounts, const int *displs,
                     MPI_Datatype recvtype, MPI_Comm comm)

```

---

Table 5.5: C bindings for N-body code

---

<b>MPI_GATHER</b> (sendbuf, sendcount, sendtype, recvbuf, recvcount, recvtype, root, comm, ierror)
<type> sendbuf(*), recvbuf(*)
integer sendcount, sendtype, recvcount, recvtype, root, comm, ierror
<b>MPI_ALLGATHER</b> (sendbuf, sendcount, sendtype, recvbuf, recvcount, recvtype, comm, ierror)
<type> sendbuf(*), recvbuf(*)
integer sendcount, sendtype, recvcount, recvtype, comm, ierror
<b>MPI_ALLGATHERV</b> (sendbuf, sendcount, sendtype, recvbuf, recvcounts, rdispls, recvtype, comm, ierror)
<type> sendbuf(*), recvbuf(*)
integer sendcount, sendtype, recvcounts(*), displs(*), recvtype, comm, ierror

---

Table 5.6: Fortran bindings for N-body code

at location `recvbuf + displs[i]` (the value of `displs[i]` is relative to the datatype of the receive buffer). In our case, we wish to receive the particles into a single array `allparticles`. The displacement for the  $i^{th}$  process is simply the sum of counts for processes 0 through  $i - 1$ . The code to gather all of the particles is

---

```
displacements[0] = 0;
for (i=1; i<size; i++)
    displacements[i] = counts[i-1] + displacements[i-1];
MPI_Allgatherv(myparticles, count, partictype,
                  allparticles, counts, displacements, partictype,
                  MPI_COMM_WORLD);
```

---

In case you are wondering what `MPI_Gather` and `MPI_Allgather` have separate datatype arguments for the send and receive buffers, the reason is that MPI requires only that the type signatures match. For example, by using a different MPI datatype for the send and receive types, the data can be transposed “on the fly”. To do this, the send type could specify a row of a matrix (stored in column-major, with `n` columns, and created with `MPI_Type_vector`) with a `sendcount` of 1 and the receive type could specify contiguous doubles with a receive count of `n` and receive type of `MPI_DOUBLE`.

### 5.2.2 Nonblocking Pipeline

In this section we present another approach to the communications in the N-body problem. When using `MPI_Allgatherv`, the computation and communication phases are distinct and nonoverlapping. A different approach is to use nonblocking communications, overlapping the communication with the computation. There are a number of ways to do this. One of the simplest is to create a *pipeline* where each process receives some data from the left and sends data to the right. While the data is arriving, computations on data previously received are carried out. This approach is shown below:

---

```
while (not done) {
    MPI_Irecv(buf1, ..., source=left, ..., &handles[0]);
    MPI_Isend(buf2, ..., dest=right, ..., &handles[1]);
    <compute with buf2>
    MPI_Waitall(2, handles, statuses);
    <swap buf1 and buf2>
}
```

---

If enough data is being sent and the MPI implementation and computer hardware can effectively overlap computation and communication, this approach can be faster than using `MPI_Allgatherv`.

In many simulations, thousands to millions of these steps may be taken. As written above, each step requires the creation of a send and a receive request, with the same parameters being used in each cycle. In this situation, it is possible for a sophisticated MPI implementation to take advantage of the fact that the same operation is being performed many times. To express this, MPI provides routines to create “persistent” send and receive objects that can be used to perform the same operation multiple times. The form of the create call is very similar to a nonblocking send and receive; the only difference is that no communication takes place. Just as for the nonblocking operations `MPI_Isend` and `MPI_Irecv`, these routines return an `MPI_Request`. In order to begin communication with the request, the routine `MPI_Start` must first be called with the request. In order to complete the communication, one of the wait routines, such as `MPI_Wait`, must be called. Once a wait has succeeded with the request, `MPI_Start` may be called again. Multiple persistent communications may be initiated with `MPI_Startall`.

The code

---

```
MPI_Irecv(..., &request);
```

---

is equivalent to

---

```
MPI_Recv_init(..., &request);
MPI_Start(&request);
```

---

An `MPI_Wait` on an `MPI_Irecv` request is equivalent to

---

```
MPI_Wait(&request, &status);
MPI_Request_free(&request);
```

---

In the N-body problem, the code is complicated by the fact that, if all processes do not have the same number of particles, then there must be a different `MPI_Request` created for each number of particles (or, for simplicity, for each process). The code is shown in Figure 5.2.<sup>3</sup>

Note that we call the communication routines only `size-1` times; we do not need to send the particles back to their original processes. A complete N-body code using this approach is available in ‘`advmsg/nbodypipe.c`’. Bindings for the MPI routines used here are shown in Tables 5.7 and 5.8.

---

<sup>3</sup>For Fortran programmers, the C expression `a % b` is roughly equivalent to the Fortran expression `mod(a,b)`.

---

```

int MPI_Send_init(const void* buf, int count, MPI_Datatype datatype, int dest,
                  int tag, MPI_Comm comm, MPI_Request *request)

int MPI_Recv_init(void* buf, int count, MPI_Datatype datatype, int source, int tag,
                  MPI_Comm comm, MPI_Request *request)

int MPI_Start(MPI_Request *request)

int MPI_Startall(int count, MPI_Request array_of_requests[])

int MPI_Request_free(MPI_Request *request)

```

---

Table 5.7: C bindings for nonblocking pipeline

---

<b>MPI_SEND_INIT</b> (buf, count, datatype, dest, tag, comm, request, ierror)
<type> buf(*)
integer request, count, datatype, dest, tag, comm, request, ierror
<b>MPI_RECV_INIT</b> (buf, count, datatype, source, tag, comm, request, ierror)
<type> buf(*)
integer count, datatype, source, tag, comm, request, ierror
<b>MPI_START</b> (request, ierror)
integer request, ierror
<b>MPI_STARTALL</b> (count, array_of_requests, ierror)
integer count, array_of_requests(*), ierror
<b>MPI_REQUEST_FREE</b> (request, ierror)
integer request, ierror

---

Table 5.8: Fortran bindings for nonblocking pipeline

---

```

/* Setup */
for (i=0; i<size-1; i++) {
    MPI_Send_init(sendbuf, counts[(rank+i)%size],
                    particletype, right, i, MPI_COMM_WORLD,
                    &request[2*i]);
    MPI_Recv_init(recvbuf, counts[(rank+i-1+size)%size],
                    particletype, left, i, MPI_COMM_WORLD,
                    &request[2*i+1]);
}
/* run pipeline */
while (!done) {
    <copy local particles into sendbuf>
    for (i=0; i<size; i++) {
        MPI_Status statuses[2];
        if (i != size-1)
            MPI_Startall(2, &request[2*i]);
        <compute using sendbuf>
        if (i != size-1)
            MPI_Waitall(2, &request[2*i], statuses);
        <copy recvbuf into sendbuf>
    }
    <compute new particle positions>
}
/* Free requests */
for (i=0; i<2*(size-1); i++) {
    MPI_Request_free(&request[i]);
}

```

---

Figure 5.2: Nonblocking pipeline implemented with MPI persistent communication objects

### 5.2.3 Moving Particles between Processes

In many N-body problems, the force between the particles falls off rapidly with distance. At great enough distance, the influence of an individual particle becomes negligible. A number of algorithms have been devised to take advantage of this fact. They can reduce the order of the computation from  $\mathcal{O}(N^2)$  to  $\mathcal{O}(N \log N)$  [22, 26, 73] or even to  $\mathcal{O}(N)$  [54]. All of these algorithms organize the particles into groups based on their location. For example, the domain may be divided into cells, and the cells assigned to processes as shown in Figure 5.3. One important step in the implementation of these algorithms is that of transferring particles from one

P12	P13	P14	P15
P8	P9	P10	P11
P4	P5	P6	P7
P0	P1	P2	P3

Figure 5.3: Sample of a decomposition of a domain into cells. The cells are labeled with process numbers and the dots are particles that belong to that process.

---

```

int MPI_Type_create_indexed_block(int count, int blocklength,
                                  const int array_of_displacements[], MPI_Datatype oldtype,
                                  MPI_Datatype *newtype)

int MPI_Get_count(const MPI_Status *status, MPI_Datatype datatype, int *count)

int MPI_Probe(int source, int tag, MPI_Comm comm, MPI_Status *status)

```

---

Table 5.9: C bindings used in moving particles

process to another as they move. We will discuss several ways in which this can be accomplished in MPI.

If all of the particles are stored together in a single array, such as `Particles myparticles[]`, then the particles that need to be given to another process can be described by their indices into this array. MPI provides a way to describe the data to be moved directly in terms of these indices with `MPI_Type_create_indexed_block`. The input to this routine is the number of elements as the first argument, the number of elements to move for each index (this is often one, as in this case) as the second argument, the array of index values as the third argument, and the type of the data to move as the fourth argument. The fifth argument is the new data type. Figure 5.4 shows how this routine can be used, and Figure 5.5 illustrates the relationship of the index values to the data that is to be moved. Note that this will work even if no particles leave the cell (`n_to_move=0`).

---

```

MPI_TYPE_CREATE_INDEXED_BLOCK(count, blocklength,
    array_of_displacements, oldtype, newtype, ierror)
    integer count, blocklength, array_of_displacement(*), oldtype,
        newtype, ierror

MPI_GET_COUNT(status, datatype, count, ierror)
    integer status(*), datatype, count, ierror

MPI_PROBE(source, tag, comm, status, ierror)
    integer source, tag, comm, status(MPI_STATUS_SIZE), ierror

```

---

Table 5.10: Fortran bindings used in moving particles

---

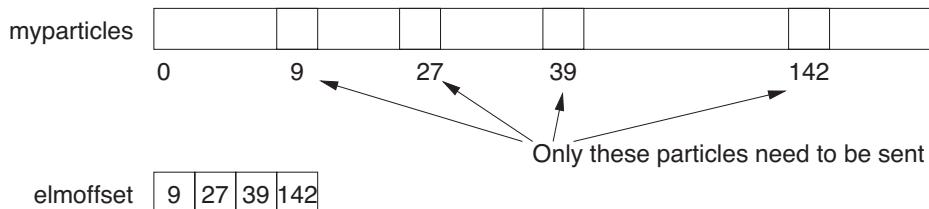
```

n_to_move = 0;
for (i=0; i<count; i++) {
    if (...particle exited cell...) {
        elmoffset[n_to_move] = i;
        n_to_move++;
    }
}
MPI_Type_create_indexed_block(n_to_move, 1, elmoffset,
    particletype, &sendtype);
MPI_Type_commit(&sendtype);
MPI_Send(myparticles, 1, sendtype, dest, tag, comm);
MPI_Type_free(&sendtype);

```

---

Figure 5.4: Sketch of code to move particles from one process to another

Figure 5.5: Illustration of the `array_of_displacements` argument in Figure 5.4

To receive, we can use

---

```
MPI_Recv(newparticles, MAX_PARTICLES, particletype,
           source, tag, comm, &status);
MPI_Get_count(&status, particletype, &number);
```

---

where `number` is the number of particles received. Here we use the routine `MPI__Get_count` to determine how many particles were delivered. `MPI_Get_count` uses the information in the `status` returned from an MPI receive, probe, wait, or test together with a datatype (in the second argument) to determine what the output value is relative to. Note that the MPI datatype used in `MPI_Get_count` must be the same as the MPI datatype used in the MPI call that produced the `status` value; in this case, since `MPI_Recv` specified `particletype`, we must give `particletype` to `MPI_Get_count`. Bindings for these routines are given in Tables 5.9 and 5.10.

This approach requires us to preallocate enough space to receive any number of particles. This is not always possible. What we need is some way to find out about a message before we receive it. The routine `MPI_Probe` allows us to do this. `MPI_Probe` takes a source, tag, and communicator and returns an `MPI_Status`. In this `MPI_Status`, just as if the message had been received, are the message tag, source, and, using `MPI_Get_count`, length of the message. If the `MPI_Probe` is followed by a `MPI_Recv` using the same source, tag, and communicator, the `MPI_Recv` will receive the message that `MPI_Probe` told us about. Thus, we can use `MPI_Get_count` along with `MPI_Probe` to determine the amount of space that we need before we use `MPI_Recv` to receive the message. Since `MPI_Probe` and `MPI_Iprobe` return a status even when the message has not been received yet, they may be used to find out how large a pending message is and then allocate a buffer for it. This is one of the main situations where `MPI_Probe` is needed; `MPI_Irecv` will not do, because it requires preallocating the buffer into which the message is to be received. The code for this is

---

```
MPI_Probe(source, tag, comm, &status);
MPI_Get_count(&status, particletype, &number);
MPI_Type_get_extent(particletype, &lb, &extent);
newparticles = (Particle *)malloc(number * extent);
MPI_Recv(newparticles, number, particletype,
           source, tag, comm, &status);
```

---

**A note on thread safety.** This code shows one of the few places where the MPI design itself has a thread safety problem. Many MPI programs are run in an

Thread 1	Thread 2
<code>MPI_Probe(s, t, comm, &amp;st1)</code>	<code>MPI_Probe(s, t, comm, &amp;st2)</code>
<code>MPI_Get_count(&amp;st1, d, &amp;n1)</code>	<code>MPI_Get_count(&amp;st2, d, &amp;n2)</code>
<code>MPI_Recv(a, n1, d, s, t, comm, &amp;st)</code>	<code>MPI_Recv(b, n2, d, s, t, comm, &amp;st)</code>

Figure 5.6: Two threads in the same MPI process receiving in the same communicator

Case	Thread 1		Thread 2	
	Probe	Recv	Probe	Recv
1	1	1	10	10
2	1	10	1	1
3	1	1	1	10
4	10	10	1	1

Figure 5.7: Possible results for the code in Figure 5.6 showing the lengths of the message returned by the `MPI_Probe` and the `MPI_Recv` steps

environment where there is one thread per process or where only one thread makes MPI calls, and in those situations, there is no problem with the above code.

If several threads are executing MPI calls, however, this code may not work. Consider the situation shown in Figure 5.6.

In this example, the two threads are trying to receive a message from the process at rank  $s$  in communicator  $comm$  with datatype  $d$ . Let us further assume that the process at rank  $s$  has sent two messages, one of length 1 and one of length 10. The possible outcomes are shown in Figure 5.7.

Only cases one and four give what the programmer intended. In the other two cases, the `MPI_Probe` and the `MPI_Recv` calls see separate messages. To understand why, consider how case two might happen.

Figure 5.8 shows one possible execution sequence. Both threads call `MPI_Probe` before either call `MPI_Recv`; thus, both threads find out about the first message sent from the process at rank  $s$ , which has size one. Next, the second thread receives this message with `MPI_Recv`. Then, the first thread attempts to receive a message with a count of  $n1 = 1$ . Unfortunately, since the first message has already been received, the first thread sees the second message, the one with length 10. This will generate an error of class `MPI_ERR_TRUNCATE`.

Several ways exist for avoiding this problem. The classic approach in multi-

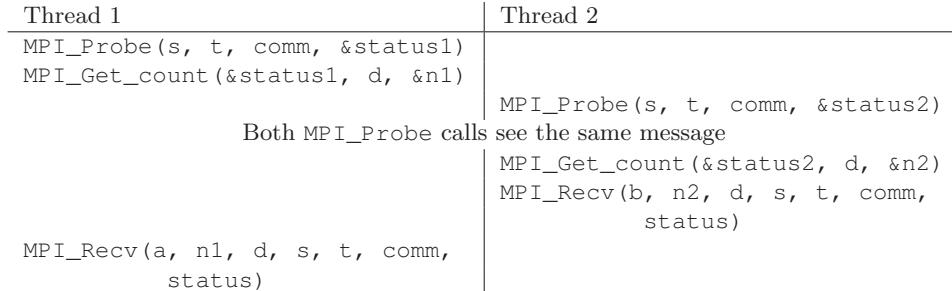


Figure 5.8: Possible execution sequence for the two threads in Figure 5.6

threaded programming is to use some mutual exclusion mechanism, such as locks, around the `MPI_Probe` to `MPI_Recv` to prevent any other thread from interfering. MPI offers another approach: since communication on different communicators is independent, as long as no communicator is used by more than one thread, no mutual exclusions are required. MPI-3 introduced a way to solve this with a new MPI object, the `MPI_Message` and routines to probe and receive using this new object. This is discussed, along with other thread safety issues, in *Using Advanced MPI* [55].

Note that we have sent data, using a derived datatype, that was not stored contiguously in memory and received it into contiguous locations in memory. MPI requires only that the type signatures match, that is, the basic kinds of the data (e.g., integers match integers, reals match reals).

#### 5.2.4 Sending Dynamically Allocated Data

In some implementations of N-body algorithms, the particles may be stored in dynamically allocated storage. In this case, there is no single buffer that we can use for the displacements to be relative to, as required by `MPI_Type_create_indexed_block` (and the more general `MPI_Type_indexed`, which allows a different number of elements to be sent at each index). We can use instead a special location, `MPI_BOTTOM`, and the absolute addresses (as given by `MPI_Get_address`) of the items. Since we will be computing the displacements as addresses in bytes rather than as indexes into an array, we use `MPI_Type_create_hindexed_block` (or the more general `MPI_Type_create_hindexed`). These routines are identical to `MPI_Type_create_indexed_block` and `MPI_Type_indexed`, respectively, except that the third argument is measured in bytes rather

---

```

MPI_Aint elmoffset[MAX_PARTICLES];
n_to_move = 0;
while (particle) {
    if (particle exited cell) {
        MPI_Get_address(particle, &elmoffset[n_to_move]);
        n_to_move++;
        <make sure to unlink particle and de-allocate>
    }
    else {
        particle = particle->next;
    }
}
MPI_Type_create_hindexed_block(n_to_move, 1, elmoffset,
                                particletype, &particlemsg);
MPI_Type_commit(&particlemsg);
MPI_Send(MPI_BOTTOM, 1, particlemsg, dest, tag, comm);
MPI_Type_free(&particlemsg);

```

---

Figure 5.9: Sketch of code to move dynamically allocated particles to other processes

than in elements. For example, if the particles are stored in a linked list whose elements are dynamically created, we can use the code in Figure 5.9.

The routine `MPI_Get_address` takes an item as the first argument and returns its address, with type (in C) of `MPI_Aint` as the second argument. Fortran programmers will appreciate this function, but C programmers may be a bit puzzled by its use, particularly in a C program. The reason is that in many C implementations, the value of a pointer (as an integer) is implemented as the address in memory of the item pointed at. This is not required in C, however, and on many important machines (for example, supercomputers with word, not byte, addressability and practically every personal computer on the planet in the 1990s) pointers were *not* addresses. While at this writing the use of an address as the pointer is nearly universal, the growth in the use of accelerators, such as GPGPUs with their own memory space, has led some researchers to consider exploiting this feature of C and once again using part of the pointer to describe different kinds of address spaces. Using `MPI_Get_address` in C programs helps maintain portability. Bindings for these routines are shown in Tables 5.11 and 5.12.

---

```
int MPI_Get_address(const void* location, MPI_Aint *address)
int MPI_Type_create_hindexed_block(int count, int blocklength,
                                   const MPI_Aint array_of_displacements[], MPI_Datatype oldtype,
                                   MPI_Datatype *newtype)
```

---

Table 5.11: C bindings for sending dynamically allocated data

---

<b>MPI_GET_ADDRESS</b> (location, address, ierror)
<type> location
integer (KIND=MPI_ADDRESS_KIND) address
integer ierror
<b>MPI_TYPE_CREATE_HINDEXED_BLOCK</b> (count, blocklength,
array_of_displacements, oldtype, newtype, ierror)
integer (KIND=MPI_ADDRESS_KIND) array_of_displacement(*)
integer count, blocklength, oldtype, newtype, ierror

---

Table 5.12: Fortran bindings for sending dynamically allocated data

### 5.2.5 User-Controlled Data Packing

In some cases, it is easier to assemble a contiguous buffer to be sent rather than to create a special datatype. MPI provides routines to pack and unpack data consisting of any MPI datatype into and out of a user-provided buffer. The routine `MPI_Pack` allows the programmer to incrementally add data to a user-provided buffer. Data that has been packed may be sent and received with the datatype `MPI_PACKED`. The input to `MPI_Pack` is the data to pack, the number and datatype of the items, output buffer and the size of the output buffer in bytes, the current position, and the communicator. The position is also an output argument; it is one of the few arguments in MPI that is both input and output. The position value must be set to zero before the first call to `MPI_Pack` each time a buffer is to be filled up with data. `MPI_Pack` uses position to keep track of where in the output buffer it is. The value of position must be used as the count argument when sending a buffer that has been filled with `MPI_Pack`. The exact meaning of position is implementation dependent; for example, it need not be the number of bytes packed.

One question that must be answered is, How big a buffer do I need to hold the data? The routine `MPI_Pack_size` answers this question. This routine takes the number of elements, the MPI datatype of those elements, and the communicator in

---

```

Particle particles[MAX_PARTICLES];

position = 0;
particle = &particles[0];
MPI_Pack_size(MAX_SEND, partictype, comm, &bufsize);
buffer = malloc((unsigned)bufsize);
while (particle) {
    if (particle exited cell) {
        MPI_Pack(particle, 1, partictype, buffer, bufsize,
                    &position, comm);
        <make sure to unlink particle and de-allocate>
    }
    else {
        particle = particle->next;
    }
}
MPI_Send(buffer, position, MPI_PACKED, dest, tag, comm);

```

---

Figure 5.10: Sketch of code to pack particles into an output buffer

which they will be communicated and returns the maximum number of bytes that will be required by `MPI_Pack` to hold the data.

The communicator is a required argument because in a heterogeneous environment, that is, in an MPI program where `MPI_COMM_WORLD` contains processors with different data representations, the choice of representation for data to be sent in a communicator may depend on which processes are in a communicator. For example, consider the case where `MPI_COMM_WORLD` contains 64 processors of identical type and 1 processor that provides fast visualization but uses a different data representation. The program uses `MPI_Comm_split` to create a compute and a graphics communicator; the compute communicator contains the 64 identical processors. For the compute communicator, `MPI_Pack` can choose the native data representation for higher performance and efficiency. For `MPI_COMM_WORLD`, `MPI_Pack` may choose a different format.

A version of the code in Section 5.2.4 that uses `MPI_Pack` is shown in Figure 5.10. Receiving the particles is managed with `MPI_Unpack`, as shown in Figure 5.11. Note the use of `MPI_Get_count` to get the length of the packed buffer and the test of `position < length` to determine when all of the particles have been unpacked. Bindings for these routines are given in Tables 5.13 and 5.14.

One can also receive a message assembled with `MPI_Pack` and sent with data-

---

```

MPI_Recv(buffer, maxcount, MPI_PACKED,
           source, tag, comm, &status);
MPI_Get_count(&status, MPI_PACKED, &length);
position = 0;
while (position < length) {
    MPI_Unpack(buffer, length, &position, &newparticle,
                  1, particletype, comm);
    <add new particle to the list of particles>
}

```

---

Figure 5.11: Sketch of code to unpack particles from a buffer

---

```

int MPI_Pack(const void* inbuf, int incount, MPI_Datatype datatype, void *outbuf,
               int outsize, int *position, MPI_Comm comm)

int MPI_Unpack(const void* inbuf, int insize, int *position, void *outbuf,
                 int outcount, MPI_Datatype datatype, MPI_Comm comm)

int MPI_Pack_size(int incount, MPI_Datatype datatype, MPI_Comm comm, int *size)

```

---

Table 5.13: C bindings for buffer pack and unpack

type **MPI\_PACKED** with the appropriate datatype. In this case, we could use the **particletype** datatype:

---

```

MPI_Recv(buffer, maxparticle, particletype,
           source, tag, comm, &status);
MPI_Get_count(&status, particletype, &newparticles);

```

---

Multiple buffers can be maintained, of course. For example, in traversing the data, we would probably keep data for each neighboring process in a separate buffer, each with a separate position variable.

### 5.3 Visualizing the Mandelbrot Set

No book on parallel programming would be complete without an example of Mandelbrot computation. In this section we use it to illustrate the use of MPI's derived datatypes along with the MPE real-time graphics library. See Section 3.10. For our example we use one of the many optimizations at the algorithm level that are

---

<b>MPI_PACK</b> (inbuf, incount, datatype, outbuf, outcount, position, comm, ierror)
<type> inbuf(*), outbuf(*)
integer incount, datatype, outcount, position, comm, ierror
<b>MPI_UNPACK</b> (inbuf, insize, position, outbuf, outcount, datatype, comm, ierror)
<type> inbuf(*), outbuf(*)
integer insize, position, outcount, datatype, comm, ierror
<b>MPI_PACK_SIZE</b> (incount, datatype, comm, size, ierror)
integer incount, datatype, comm, size, ierror

---

Table 5.14: Fortran bindings for buffer pack and unpack

possible for programs, parallel or not, that compute graphical representations of the Mandelbrot set.

The Mandelbrot set is a popular exercise for parallel computation because it is so obviously a parallel application, it introduces a load-balancing problem, and the results are fascinating to look at. To be at least a little original, we do it here with a slightly nonstandard algorithm. We would like to think we invented this trick, but we are not certain. Surely others have had the same idea.

Let  $z$  be a complex variable. That is, we think of  $z$  as a point  $(x, y)$  in the plane, with multiplication on points of the plane given by

$$(x_1, y_1) \cdot (x_2, y_2) = (x_1 x_2 - y_1 y_2, x_1 y_2 + x_2 y_1).$$

The *Mandelbrot set*  $\mathcal{M}$  is defined in the following way. Given a complex number  $c$ , consider the function  $f_c(z) = z^2 + c$ . Then we can compute a series of points in the complex plane:  $z_0 = 0$ ,  $z_1 = f_c(0)$ ,  $z_2 = f_c(z_1) = f_c^2(0)$ , and so on. Either this series remains bounded, in which case  $c$  is in  $\mathcal{M}$ , or it gets farther and farther away from 0, in which case it is not. It can be proven that once a point in this sequence gets farther than a distance of 2 from the origin, the series becomes unbounded.

A “picture” of the Mandelbrot set can be made by plotting the points on the screen. Each pixel in the display corresponds to a point  $c$  in the complex plane and can be tested for membership in  $\mathcal{M}$  by applying the function  $f_c$  repeatedly to 0. Either  $|f_c^n(0)| > 2$  for some  $n$ , or some preset number of iterations has been reached, in which case we give up and declare that the point  $c$  is in  $\mathcal{M}$  and color it, say, black. Details of the very complex boundary of  $\mathcal{M}$  can be seen by “magnification,” assigning the full area of the display to a small section of the complex plane. For more on the Mandelbrot set and related topics, see [88] or [101].

The region near the boundary of  $\mathcal{M}$  is interesting. Striking representations of this area can be made by assigning a color to the pixel representing point  $c$  according to the first value  $n$  for which  $|f_c^n(0)| > 2$ . As we explore the edge of  $\mathcal{M}$  at greater and greater magnifications, we have a sense of exploring a huge universe of great variety. After a few random magnifications, we are likely to be looking at a part of the plane that no one has ever looked at before.

The calculation of each pixel's color value can be made independently of every other pixel's, so the program to compute such pictures is straightforwardly parallelizable, just by dividing up the screen into areas, one for each process. Unfortunately, this naive "prescheduled" approach works badly because of load imbalances. Some points escape the circle of radius 2 after only a few iterations, others take longer, and of course the points in  $\mathcal{M}$  itself take the maximum number of iterations before we give up on them. As we magnify, we need more iterations to bring out detail, so some pixels may take thousands of times more iterations than others before we can assign them a color.

The most natural way to overcome this load-balancing problem is with self-scheduling. We divide up the screen into some moderately large number of squares and devote one process (the manager) to sending them to the other processes (the workers) for computation. Just as in the matrix-vector multiplication program in Chapter 3, completion of a task is a request for another assignment. Some tasks will take much longer than others (particularly the areas that are mostly black), but unless we have very bad luck, we will be able to keep all processes busy all the time.

We have included a parallel Mandelbrot program among the examples available with this book. It is too long to present here, but it has three interesting aspects that we will expand on below. Specifically, it illustrates

- the use of derived datatypes in MPI for sending scattered structures,
- an interesting technique for accelerating the computation, and
- a few more functions from the MPE graphics library.

During the initialization phase of the computation, the manager process broadcasts a highly miscellaneous collection of data to the workers. We can think of it as a C structure, although not all the data is stored as a single C structure. We could broadcast each of these parameters separately, which would be wasteful of messages (and would be expensive, because of the often high startup cost of sending a message), or we could rearrange them into arrays of ints, arrays of doubles,

---

```
MPI_TYPE_CREATE_HVECTOR(count, blocklength, stride, oldtype, newtype,
    ierror)
    integer (kind=MPI_ADDRESS_KIND) stride
    integer count, blocklength, oldtype, newtype, ierror

MPI_TYPE_CREATE_STRUCT(count, array_of_blocklengths,
    array_of_displacements, array_of_types, newtype, ierror)
    integer (kind=MPI_ADDRESS_KIND) array_of_displacements(*)
    integer count, array_of_blocklengths(*), array_of_types(*), newtype,
    ierror
```

---

Table 5.15: Fortran bindings for MPI datatype routines

---

```
int MPI_Type_create_hvector(int count, int blocklength, MPI_Aint stride,
    MPI_Datatype oldtype, MPI_Datatype *newtype)

int MPI_Type_create_struct(int count, const int array_of_blocklengths[],
    const MPI_Aint array_of_displacements[],
    const MPI_Datatype array_of_types[], MPI_Datatype *newtype)
```

---

Table 5.16: C bindings for MPI datatype routines

and so forth. The “MPI way” is to create a datatype that represents this structure and send it all at once.

The algorithm we use is illustrated in Figures 5.12, 5.13, and 5.14. The example code implements a method for accelerating the computation. The trick is based on the fact that except at the very lowest magnification, if the border of any square is made up of pixels all of which have the same color, then all the pixels in the interior of the square must have that color too. This can speed things up a great deal, especially for large areas of  $\mathcal{M}$  itself. In order to dynamically adapt the sizes of the squares, we do the following.

The queue of tasks to be done is managed by the manager and consists of squares whose colors are to be computed. Initially just one task is in the queue, the entire region selected for display. Given a square, we begin computing the colors of the pixels on its boundary. If we get all the way around the boundary without changing colors, then we color in the interior with the same color. If we come to a new color while computing the boundary, then we subdivide the square into four subsquares and send them back to the manager as new tasks, while we carry on with the boundary. We carefully keep the squares nested tightly so that we never compute

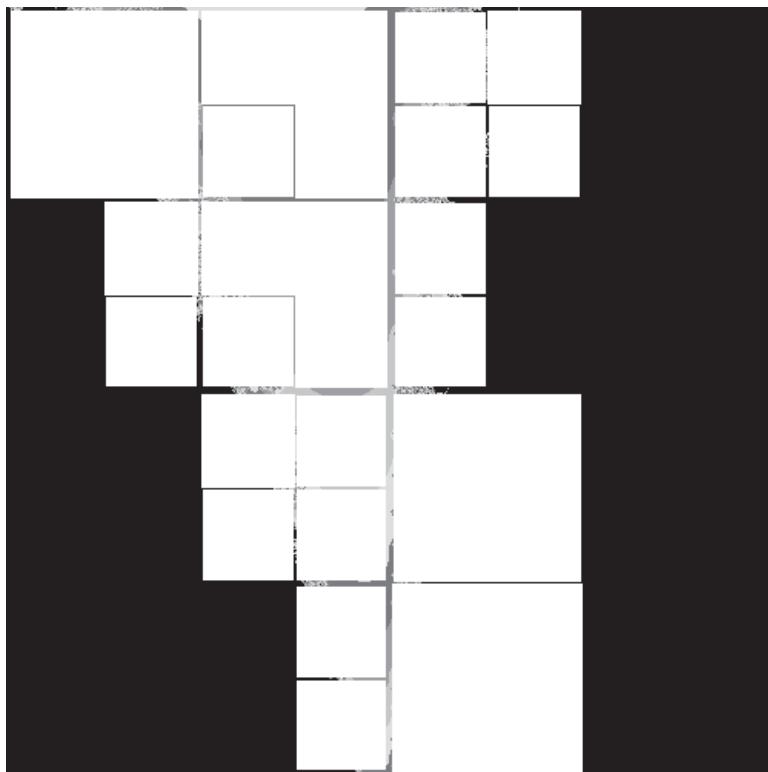


Figure 5.12: Box algorithm for Mandelbrot, starting

the color of any pixel more than once. There is a cutoff for subdivision so that when the squares get small enough, they are not subdivided further.

As the program runs, we watch the picture develop by using the MPE graphics library to see whether the program is proceeding as we expect. In addition to drawing individual points as we did in Chapter 3, we draw line segments as we are computing the boundaries of squares. Even when the boundary is not all of the same color, there are stretches of boundary that are, and they are displayed with

---

```
MPE_Draw_line(handle, x1, y1, x2, y2, color);
```

---

where `handle` is a pointer to an `MPE_Graph` structure initialized with `MPE_Open_graphics`; `x1, y1` and `x2, y2` are the endpoints of the line; and `color` is a color of type `MPE_Color`.



Figure 5.13: Box algorithm for Mandelbrot, a little later

When we “win” and get to fill in a whole square, then we use

---

```
MPE_Fill_rectangle(handle, x, y, w, h, color);
```

---

where  $x, y$  is the position of the upper left corner of the rectangle, and  $w$  and  $h$  are the width and height of the rectangle, respectively, in pixels. When we draw only one point at a time, we use

---

```
MPE_Draw_point(handle, x, y, color);
```

---

where  $x$  and  $y$  are the coordinates of the point, in pixels.

Even these separate calls are “batched” in that we only call `MPE_Update` at the end of a task (an entire boundary, an entire square of the same color, or a small square of different colors). Figure 5.14 shows the completed picture.

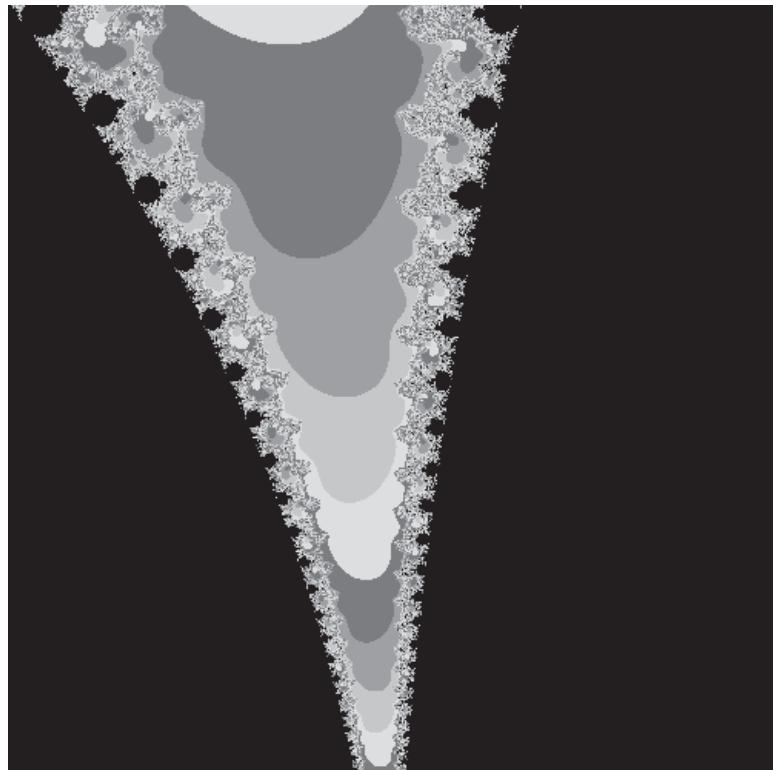


Figure 5.14: Mandelbrot, complete

We take this opportunity to introduce the most general of the MPI derived data-types, which may be used for sending C structures or parts of them. The Mandelbrot program data structures contain a C structure that holds command line arguments, which specify a large number of options for the program. It is convenient to keep them in a structure so that they can easily be passed to various subroutines. MPI does not specify that all processes have access to the command line arguments through `MPI_Init`, so we broadcast them, assuming that at least the process with rank 0 in `MPI_COMM_WORLD` does get them when the program is started. After storing them in its copy of this structure, it broadcasts the structure to the other processes. The structure itself looks like the following:

---

```
struct {
    char      display[50];    /* Name of display */
```

---

```

int      maxiter;          /* max # of iterations */
double   xmin, ymin;       /* lower left corner of rectangle */
double   xmax, ymax;       /* upper right corner */
int      width;           /* of display in pixels */
int      height;          /* of display in pixels */
} cmdline;

```

---

We would like to broadcast this structure with a single MPI\_Bcast, taking advantage of MPI's facilities for dealing with alignment, mixed types, and heterogeneous communication. We show here two ways to do so.

`MPI_Type_create_struct` is very general. It allows us to describe with a single datatype a collection of data items of various elementary and derived types. It considers the data to be composed of a set of “blocks” of data, each of which has a count and datatype associated with it and a location given as a displacement. The code to set up to broadcast the above structure would look like the following:

---

```

/* set up 4 blocks */
int      blockcounts[4] = {50,1,4,2};
MPI_Datatype types[4];
MPI_Aint    displs[4];
MPI_Datatype cmdtype;

/* initialize types and displs with addresses of items */
MPI_Get_address(&cmdline.display, &displs[0]);
MPI_Get_address(&cmdline.maxiter, &displs[1]);
MPI_Get_address(&cmdline.xmin, &displs[2]);
MPI_Get_address(&cmdline.width, &displs[3]);
types[0] = MPI_CHAR;
types[1] = MPI_INT;
types[2] = MPI_DOUBLE;
types[3] = MPI_INT;

```

---

The `blockcounts` array indicates how many elements there are for each corresponding type. In our example, we have `char display[50]`, so the value of `blockcounts[0]` is 50. `blockcounts[1]` is one, matching the single `int` that is the next element (`maxiter`) in the structure. Following `maxiter`, there are four `double` values, starting with `xmin`, so `blockcounts[2]` is 4. There are also two `int` values, so `blockcounts[3]` is 2.

Now we are ready to do the broadcast. First we adjust the displacement array so that the displacements are offsets from the beginning of the structure; that is, we make them relative to the beginning of the structure.

---

```
for (i = 3; i >= 0; i--)
    displs[i] -= displs[0];
```

---

Then we build the new type

---

```
MPI_Type_create_struct(4, blockcounts, displs, types, &cmdtype);
MPI_Type_commit(&cmdtype);
```

---

and broadcast it from process zero to all others:

---

```
MPI_Bcast(&cmdline, 1, cmdtype, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD);
```

---

There is an alternative to the way the displacements are presented. The displacements need not be relative to the beginning of a particular structure; they can be “absolute” addresses as well. In this case, we treat them as relative to the starting address in memory, given by MPI\_BOTTOM. Using this technique, we can omit the loop that adjusts the displacements, leaving them as originally given by calls to MPI\_Get\_address, and change the MPI\_Bcast to

---

```
MPI_Bcast(MPI_BOTTOM, 1, cmdtype, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD);
```

---

### 5.3.1 Sending Arrays of Structures

When sending more than one struct, for example, when the count argument is greater than one, we may need an additional step when creating the datatype. Consider the datatype

---

```
struct {
    int a;
    char b;
} my_struct, struct_array[10];
```

---

Given this structure, you might use the MPI code given in Figure 5.15 to create a datatype for it.

The code in this figure *might* work. To understand the problem, consider Figure 5.16. This figure shows one possible layout for the array struct\_array in memory. As you can see, the end of the last element in struct\_array[i] does not immediately precede the beginning of the first element in struct\_array[i+1].

Now, the MPI library may not know how the compiler has chosen to lay out structures in memory; some compilers have options by which one can choose among several different options (such as natural alignment, packed, packed on two-byte

---

```

int blockcounts[2] = {1,1};
MPI_Datatype types[2];
MPI_Aint displs[2];
MPI_Datatype structtype;

/* initialize types and displs with addresses of items */
MPI_Get_address(&my_struct.a, &displs[0]);
MPI_Get_address(&my_struct.b, &displs[1]);
types[0] = MPI_INT;
types[1] = MPI_CHAR;
/* Make displs relative */
displs[1] -= displs[0];
displs[0] = 0;
MPI_Type_create_struct(2, blockcounts, displs, types,
                           &structtype);
MPI_Type_commit(&structtype);

```

---

Figure 5.15: Code to construct a datatype for a structure. See also Section 5.5.

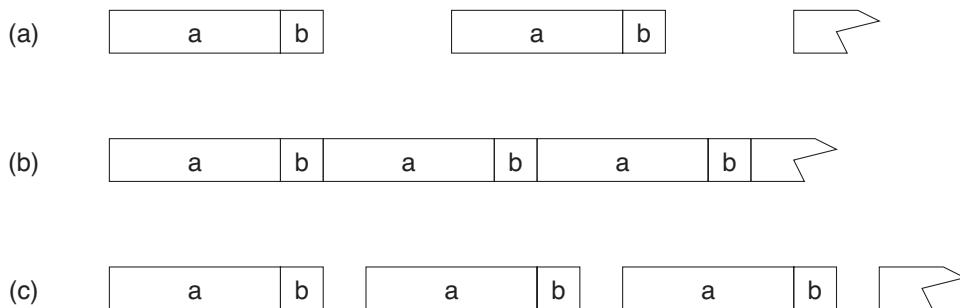


Figure 5.16: Three possible layouts of structure `struct_array` in memory: natural (a), packed (b), and packed on two-byte boundaries (c)

---

```

MPI_Aint      displs;
MPI_Datatype rowtype;

displs = number_in_column * sizeof(double);
MPI_Type_create_resized(MPI_DOUBLE, (MPI_Aint)0, displs,
                         &rowtype);
MPI_Type_commit(&rowtype);

```

---

Figure 5.17: Code to construct a general strided vector

boundaries, etc.). Three possible alignments are shown in Figure 5.16. Thus, the MPI library may have to choose where the “natural” end of the structure is. The code that we used relies on MPI choosing correctly. For robust and portable code, one doesn’t wish to rely on guessing correctly. How can we ensure that `structtype` is correct? We will see how to do this in Section 5.5, but first we will look at another related case where gaps exist between the elements in a datatype.

## 5.4 Gaps in Datatypes

In Section 4.8 we introduced the `MPI_Type_vector` routine and used it to create a datatype for prespecified number of elements. What can you do if you want to specify a variable number of elements?

We obviously wish to use the count argument of the send and receive routines, and so we need to describe a datatype that consists of the element followed by a “skip” to the next data element. We can accomplish this by using `MPI_Type_create_resized` to create a new datatype that includes this skip. What this routine really does is create a new datatype from an existing one, but with a new lower bound and extent (and hence a new upper bound). By placing the upper bound at a displacement that is the number of bytes between successive elements, we can skip over those bytes when using this datatype.

Figure 5.17 shows the code to create an MPI datatype for a double-precision array with `number_in_column` elements (assuming Fortran storage order for matrices).

This provides a good place to get a better understanding of the meaning of extent and MPI contiguous datatypes. Consider this attempt to define a datatype to access the rows of a matrix stored columnwise:

---

```

MPI_Type_vector(1, 1, number_in_column, MPI_DOUBLE, &rowtype2);
MPI_Type_commit(&rowtype2);

```

---

---

```
int MPI_Type_create_resized(MPI_Datatype oldtype, MPI_Aint lb, MPI_Aint extent,
                           MPI_Datatype *newtype)

int MPI_Type_get_true_extent(MPI_Datatype datatype, MPI_Aint *true_lb,
                            MPI_Aint *true_extent)
```

---

Table 5.17: C bindings for datatype extent functions

---

<b>MPI_TYPE_CREATE_RESIZED</b> (oldtype, lb, extent, newtype, ierror)
integer oldtype, newtype, ierror
integer(kind=MPI_ADDRESS_KIND) lb, extent

<b>MPI_TYPE_GET_TRUE_EXTENT</b> (datatype, true_lb, true_extent, ierror)
integer datatype, ierror
integer(kind=MPI_ADDRESS_KIND) true_lb, true_extent

---

Table 5.18: Fortran bindings for datatype extent functions

The intent is to use the count argument in a send in order to send the desired number of elements, just as with the datatype `rowtype` constructed above. However, the extent of `rowtype2` is the distance from the first to the last byte in the datatype; and since `rowtype2` contains only a single `double`, the extent is just the size of a `double`. Thus, a send or a receive using datatype `rowtype2` will use consecutive `doubles`, not `doubles` separated by `number_in_column` `doubles`.

Similarly, it is sometimes necessary to discover the true extent of a datatype, that is, the lower and upper bounds (or minimum and maximum displacements) used by a datatype. The routine `MPI_Type_get_true_extent` returns the lower bound and the extent of a datatype, ignoring any changes to the upper and lower bound made with `MPI_Type_create_resized`. Note that this value can be different from the value that `MPI_Type_size` returns: `MPI_Type_size` returns the number of bytes needed to represent the data values in the datatype *ignoring* the displacements; `MPI_Type_get_true_extent` effectively returns the number of bytes needed to hold a datatype including any gaps between data values caused by the displacements. For example, the vector type created with

---

```
call MPI_TYPE_VECTOR(10, 1, 20, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                     vectype, ierr)
```

---

---

```

int blockcounts[2] = {1,1};
MPI_Datatype types[2];
MPI_Aint displs[2], s_lb, s_extent;
MPI_Datatype structtype;

/* initialize types and displs with addresses of items */
MPI_Get_address(&struct_array[0].a, &displs[0]);
MPI_Get_address(&struct_array[0].b, &displs[1]);
types[0] = MPI_INT;
types[1] = MPI_CHAR;
/* Make displs relative */
displs[1] -= displs[0];
displs[0] = 0;
MPI_Type_create_struct(2, blockcounts, displs, types,
                           &structtype);
/* Check that the datatype has the correct extent */
MPI_Type_get_extent(structtype, &s_lb, &s_extent);
if (s_extent != sizeof(struct_array[0])) {
    MPI_Datatype sold = structtype;
    MPI_Type_create_resized(sold, 0, sizeof(my_struct),
                             &structtype);
    MPI_Type_free(&sold);
}
MPI_Type_commit(&structtype);

```

---

Figure 5.18: Code to construct a datatype for a structure that does not rely on MPI using the same rule for structure padding as the C compiler

containing ten double precision values separated by a stride of 20 has a size (from `MPI_Type_size`) of 80 bytes (assuming 8 byte DOUBLE PRECISION) and a true extent of 1440 ( $= (10 - 1) \times 20 \times 8 + 8$ ) bytes.

## 5.5 More on Datatypes for Structures

Now that we have seen how to specify a gap at the end of a datatype, we can see how to make the create a datatype for the `structtype` example in Figure 5.15. We do this in two steps. First, create an MPI datatype that describes the elements of the structure. Second, resize that type to have the correct extent if necessary; that is, if the extent of MPI datatype created with `MPI_Type_create_struct` is not the same as the `sizeof` the type in C. This is shown in Figure 5.18.

The MPI standard requires that MPI deliver exactly the data that is specified by a datatype. In other words, for structures that contain gaps or padding, MPI must not remove the “gaps.” Hence, the MPI implementation needs to carefully skip over padding in a structure. The padding is of no importance to the application, but skipping over it might impose a significant performance penalty. The performance of an application that sends structures can be improved in two ways. The first and best is to rearrange the layout of the structure to eliminate any gaps. Often, this can be done by ordering the items in the structure so that the largest datatypes come first, followed by the next longest, and so on. For example, rearranging this structure

---

```
struct {
    int a;
    double b;
    int c;
} struct_a;
```

---

to

---

```
struct {
    double b;
    int a;
    int c;
} struct_a;
```

---

will often yield a structure without gaps. To eliminate any padding at the end of the structure (see Section 5.3.1), adding a dummy declaration of a data item of the necessary size is a common approach.

A second approach is to forsake portability to heterogeneous systems of computers for performance by avoiding the use of `MPI_Type_create_struct` altogether, and instead send data of type `MPI_BYTE`, using the C `sizeof` operator to determine the size of the structure (again assuming that a `char` is one byte). While our preference is to write programs that are as portable as possible, using `MPI_BYTE` can be a reasonable choice when performance is an issue. Note that using `MPI_BYTE` does not offer a performance advantage over the predefined MPI datatypes such as `MPI_INT` or `MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION`.

## 5.6 Deprecated and Removed Functions

Experience with MPI led to increased understanding of application needs and eventually an understanding of better ways to do things than the ways specified in the

Deprecated MPI-1	MPI-2 and MPI-3 Replacement
MPI_ERRHANDLER_CREATE	MPI_COMM_CREATE_ERRHANDLER
MPI_ERRHANDLER_GET	MPI_COMM_GET_ERRHANDLER
MPI_ERRHANDLER_SET	MPI_COMM_SET_ERRHANDLER
MPI_Handler_function	MPI_Comm_errhandler_fn
MPI_KEYVAL_CREATE	MPI_COMM_CREATE_KEYVAL
MPI_KEYVAL_FREE	MPI_COMM_FREE_KEYVAL
MPI_DUP_FN	MPI_COMM_DUP_FN
MPI_NULL_COPY_FN	MPI_COMM_NULL_COPY_FN
MPI_NULL_DELETE_FN	MPI_COMM_NULL_DELETE_FN
MPI_Copy_function	MPI_Comm_copy_attr_function
COPY_FUNCTION	COMM_COPY_ATTR_FN
MPI_Delete_function	MPI_Comm_delete_attr_function
DELETE_FUNCTION	COMM_DELETE_ATTR_FN
MPI_ATTR_DELETE	MPI_COMM_DELETE_ATTR
MPI_ATTR_GET	MPI_COMM_GET_ATTR
MPI_ATTR_PUT	MPI_COMM_SET_ATTR

Table 5.19: Deprecated functions, constants, and typedefs

original (MPI-1) specification. At the same time, neither the MPI-2 Forum nor the MPI-3 Forum wanted to change the standard in such a way that existing MPI programs would suddenly lose their portability. Therefore the forum decided that certain functions would be “deprecated.” This means that these functions are still part of the MPI standard and implementations are required to support them, but that applications are encouraged to eventually abandon them in favor of new ways of accomplishing the same things. However, a deprecated routine may be removed from MPI. Table 5.19 lists the functions that were deprecated in MPI-1, MPI-2, or MPI-3. The MPI-3 forum did decide to remove a handful of routines that had been deprecated by MPI-2. These have straightforward replacements and are listed in Table 5.20.

## 5.7 Common Errors and Misunderstandings

This chapter has introduced at least a couple of topics that can be occasions for misunderstanding.

Removed MPI-1	MPI-2 Replacement
MPI_ADDRESS	MPI_GET_ADDRESS
MPI_TYPE_HINDEXED	MPI_TYPE_CREATE_HINDEXED
MPI_TYPE_HVECTOR	MPI_TYPE_CREATE_HVECTOR
MPI_TYPE_STRUCT	MPI_TYPE_CREATE_STRUCT
MPI_TYPE_EXTENT	MPI_TYPE_GET_EXTENT
MPI_TYPE_UB	MPI_TYPE_GET_EXTENT
MPI_TYPE_LB	MPI_TYPE_GET_EXTENT
MPI_LB	MPI_TYPE_CREATE_RESIZED
MPI_UB	MPI_TYPE_CREATE_RESIZED
MPI_COMBINER_HINDEXED_INTEGER	none
MPI_COMBINER_HVECTOR_INTEGER	none
MPI_COMBINER_STRUCT_INTEGER	none
MPI_Handler_function	MPI_Comm_errhandler_function

Table 5.20: Removed functions and constants

**Confusing the specification of MPI datatypes with their implementation.** MPI’s datatypes *allow* optimized performance by telling the implementation exactly what the data layout is for a send or receive operation. With hardware support, using MPI datatypes can unleash extra performance. Even without hardware support, implementation of datatypes can be either sophisticated and fast or straightforward and slow. A poor implementation of datatypes can cause the user to prefer to create contiguous buffers and copy noncontiguous data into them “by hand.” See [61] and [105] for work on benchmarking datatype implementations, and [103, 118, 127, 106] for research into improvements in datatype implementation techniques. An example of how the use of MPI datatypes improved performance can be found in [23]. Still, much room remains for improvement in how MPI vendors implement datatypes, and we expect these improvements to eventually show up as research on MPI implementations gradually permeates the entire MPI implementation community. Meanwhile, though it may be faster right now on some MPI implementations to pack buffers yourself, don’t give up on MPI datatypes too soon!

**Confusing extent and size.** The size of a datatype is the number of bytes of data that it describes. The true extent is the distance from the first to the last byte described by the datatype. The extent is the stride between successive instances of the datatype. For most of the predefined types, these three are the same (the

predefined datatypes for the MPI\_MAXLOC and MPI\_MINLOC operators may be exceptions, depending on the underlying compiler and hardware). But for many user-constructed datatypes, the size and extent will be different. See the end of Section 5.1 for more details.

## 5.8 Application: Cosmological Large-Scale Structure Formation

Our application for this chapter is a more sophisticated approach to the N-body problem that we introduced here.

The early history of the universe was characterized by a hot phase, after which the continuing expansion of the universe led to a cooling of its constituents. The matter component—mostly dark matter—began to collapse under its own mutual gravitational attraction. Various statistical properties of the structure that results from this collapse are functions of statistical properties of the initial matter configuration, and these in turn are functions of some aspects of fundamental physics—the true target of investigation. Moreover, these same statistical properties can be measured in our real universe by using surveys conducted with large telescopes. Because gravitational collapse is a highly nonlinear process, the relationship between these statistical properties of the initial conditions and those at later times can be determined only by numerical simulation. Hence, numerical simulation results are necessary in order to derive constraints on fundamental physics from the statistics derived from observational data.

Inside the simulation, the universe’s matter is represented by using a collection of homogeneous particles interacting via the force of gravity. Cosmologists often use the astronomical unit of “parsec” (abbreviated pc) to measure distances; 1 pc is approximately 3.26 light years. In order to match the volume of large-scale surveys, the simulation must be a few gigaparsecs on each side. And in order to gather measurements from the simulation with sufficiently low statistical uncertainty, each particle can be only about  $10^8$  solar masses. Thus, modern simulations will require trillions of particles. Using the direct  $O(N^2)$  algorithm to compute the gravitational force of every particle on every other would be hopeless on any computer, but more efficient algorithms exist. HACC, a simulation developed at Los Alamos and Argonne National Laboratories, can conduct simulations of such astronomical size by decomposing this interparticle force calculation into several different pieces.

On the largest scales, the interparticle force is computed by depositing each particle’s mass on a large, distributed grid and then using a method that takes advantage of the fast Fourier transform (FFT) in order to compute the force in  $O(M \log M)$  time.  $M$  is the number of grid cells, and generally  $M$  is chosen equal

to (or more than) the total number of particles. Unfortunately, the resulting force computation is accurate only to the size of the grid; and because the particles cluster together, having only grid-scale force resolution is insufficient to accurately predict the particle motions. In order to gain finer force resolution, an additional force solver is used for the small-scale residual force. The best mechanism to use to construct such a high-resolution solver depends on the computer architecture. For systems with GPU accelerators, the direct  $N^2$  residual is computed. For CPU-based systems, the force is further approximated by using a multipole-like method built on top of a k-dimensional treelike data structure. This data structure recursively sorts the particles based on their spatial coordinates and then approximates the force on each particle from groups of relatively distant particles. In order to keep this high-resolution piece of the calculation local to each MPI rank, each rank maintains a large ghost region of particles from neighboring ranks.

HACC exhibits two kinds of interrank communication: all-to-all communication for the FFT and neighbor-to-neighbor when exchanging ghost zones of grid force and particles. Both these communication phases can be accomplished efficiently, even on the largest modern supercomputers (see Figure 5.19). The result is that HACC can perform the needed trillion-particle simulations necessary to advance cosmology in conjunction with modern observational advances.

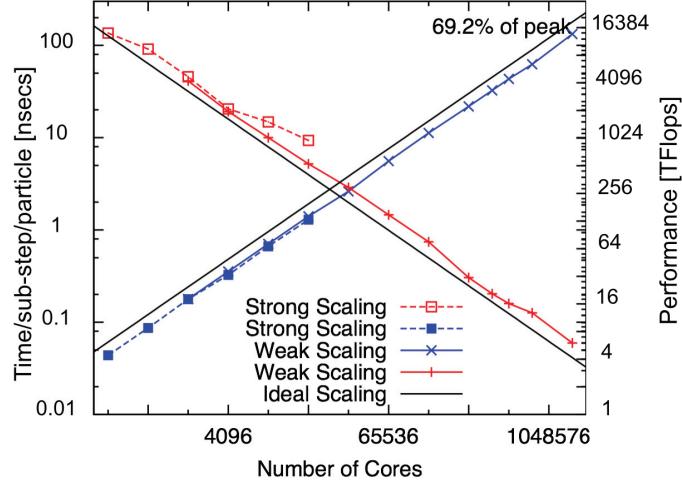


Figure 5.19: Weak and strong scaling for HACC on the IBM BG/Q—time per substep per particle and overall performance as a function of the number of cores. Weak scaling is the key metric for large-scale cosmological N-body codes. This data demonstrates perfect scaling to 1,572,864 cores (equal to the number of MPI ranks) and 6.3M-way concurrency. The largest run was a 3.6 trillion particle benchmark, which, at 13.94 Petaflops sustained, reached 69.2% of the theoretical peak performance of the machine.

# 6 Parallel Libraries

One of the primary motivations for MPI was to enable the development of parallel libraries. Libraries have been critical to the development of a software base for sequential computers. Lack of modularity in the first generation of message-passing systems hampered the comparable development of reliable parallel libraries, libraries that can be written independently of one another and of user code and still cooperate with one another in a single application.

We begin this chapter with a discussion of some of the issues that are raised by parallel libraries. We describe some of the shortcomings of early message-passing systems when they are considered from the viewpoint of the library writer, and we point out features of the MPI definition that were introduced to overcome these shortcomings. We then give an example of a simple library; it contains only two functions but illustrates a number of MPI's features that support libraries. We devote a section to the interplay between linear algebra and partial differential equations as an example of an area where parallel libraries are likely to be heavily used. We briefly describe some aspects of the use of MPI in the solution of a dense system of linear equations. We conclude the chapter with a discussion of general strategies for building parallel libraries.

## 6.1 Motivation

In this section we outline the motivation for libraries and describe the special design features of MPI that help in building parallel libraries.

### 6.1.1 The Need for Parallel Libraries

Software libraries offer several advantages:

- They ensure consistency in program correctness.
- They help guarantee a high-quality implementation.
- They hide distracting details and complexities associated with state-of-the-art implementations.
- They minimize repetitive effort or haphazard results.

Even in sequential libraries, library writers incorporate numerous heuristics and domain-specific “tricks.” With the addition of parallelism based on message passing, the “detail work” of typical numerical methods grows significantly, strongly

motivating the development of parallel libraries that encapsulate and hide this complexity from the user. MPI is the underlying system library that will help make scientific as well as application-oriented parallel libraries both reliable and commonplace.

### 6.1.2 Common Deficiencies of Early Message-Passing Systems

In the *sequential* Fortran and C environments, one can easily create libraries, because the stack-oriented procedural programming model has well-defined conditions about reasonable vs. erroneous programs. In the *distributed-memory, message-passing environment*, however, libraries are difficult to write with either vendor-supplied software or portability systems. The problem is one of modularity: a library needs a communication space isolated from the user's communication space precisely because it is a library. Its communication patterns are designed independently of the user code it is to be linked to.

The most obvious problem is that of having a message sent by the library accidentally received by user code, or vice versa. One might argue that tags could be used effectively to designate restrictions on message delivery. Such tags prove insufficient, however, for several reasons. First, more than one library (or invocation of the same library) could use the same tags. Second, wildcard receipt-selectivity on tags (e.g., `MPI_ANY_TAG`) destroys any promise of real protection that tags could otherwise afford. For this reason parallel libraries are often written in a style that strictly alternates execution of user code and library code, with care taken that no messages be in transit when control is passed from user to library and back (this state is often called *quiescence*). This type of design, inherited from the sequential case, introduces synchronization barriers that inhibit performance, and still leaves other problems unsolved.

This problem can be illustrated with a simple example. Let's assume that the program calls two routines, `SendRight` and `SendEnd`. These two routines are shown in Figure 6.1. Two possible execution sequences for these routines are shown in Figure 6.2. In part (b) of this figure, the messages are received by the wrong routine because the message from routine `SendEnd` on process zero arrives at process two before the message from `SendRight` on process one arrives at process two. This example depends on using `MPI_ANY_SOURCE` in both of the routines. While in this case the routines could be written to provide an explicit source instead, in other cases (particularly manager/worker examples), `MPI_ANY_SOURCE` cannot be avoided.

---

```

void SendRight(int *buf, int rank, int size)
{
    MPI_Status status;
    if (rank + 1 < size)
        MPI_Send(buf, 1, MPI_INT, rank+1, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD);
    if (rank > 0)
        MPI_Recv(buf, 1, MPI_INT, MPI_ANY_SOURCE, 0,
                    MPI_COMM_WORLD, &status);
}
void SendEnd(int *buf, int rank, int size)
{
    MPI_Status status;
    if (rank == 0)
        MPI_Send(buf, 1, MPI_INT, size-1, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD);
    if (rank == size - 1)
        MPI_Recv(buf, 1, MPI_INT, MPI_ANY_SOURCE, 0,
                    MPI_COMM_WORLD, &status);
}

```

---

Figure 6.1: The two routines whose possible message patterns are shown in Figure 6.2

You might think that it is possible to fix this problem by never using `MPI_ANY_SOURCE`. The code in Figure 6.3 can have two different execution sequences, as shown in Figure 6.4. This example uses neither `MPI_ANY_SOURCE` nor `MPI_ANY_TAG`, but the messages are still delivered to the wrong places.

Both examples indicate the worst kind of error: a program that runs but with wrong data. Similar examples can be shown where a program halts because a message was received by the wrong process.

Note that in this code, the routines of the first library are called on both sides of the routine in the second library. If both libraries use the same communicator, there is *nothing* that the second library can do to guarantee that it doesn't intercept the message sent in `StartSend`.

MPI communicators solve the problems illustrated in Figures 6.1 and 6.3 by providing distinct communication contexts; if the different routines (e.g., `SendRight` and `SendEnd` in Figure 6.1) use separate communicators, MPI guarantees that messages will be received by the intended routine.

Communicators also provide an elegant way to express other abstractions related to groups of processes. Incorporated into MPI are various kinds of abstractions: process groups describe participants in collective operations and rank-naming in

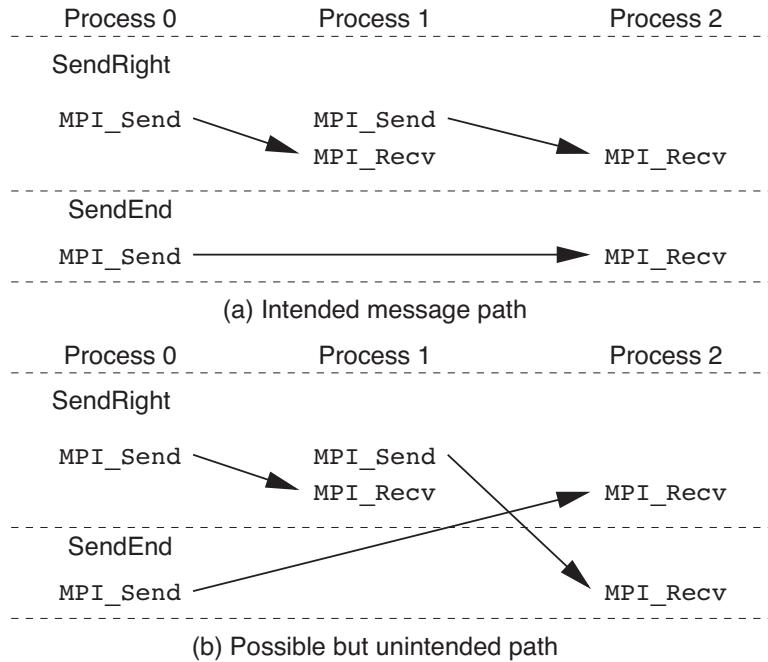


Figure 6.2: Possible message-matching patterns for the code in Figure 6.1

point-to-point communication, contexts separate unrelated message traffic, topologies let users describe process relationships as they prefer, and communicators encapsulate all this information in a useful object that also abstracts all these details for the typical user.

### 6.1.3 Review of MPI Features That Support Libraries

The requirements for effective libraries can be summarized as follows:

- A safe communication space guarantees that a library can send and receive point-to-point messages without interference from other point-to-point messages generated in the system.
- Collective operations take a process group (from a communicator) as the set of participants; processes that do not participate continue unimpeded.

---

```

/* Code for library 1: Nonblocking send from 0 to 1 */
void StartSend(int *buf, int rank, int size, MPI_Request *req)
{
    if (rank == 0)
        MPI_Isend(buf, 1, MPI_INT, 1, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD, req);
}

void EndSend(int *buf, int rank, MPI_Request *req)
{
    if (rank == 0)
        MPI_Wait(req, MPI_STATUS_IGNORE);
    else if (rank == 1)
        MPI_Recv(buf, 1, MPI_INT, 0, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD,
                  MPI_STATUS_IGNORE);
}

/* Code for library 2: send from 0 to 1 */
void DoSomething(int *buf, int rank, int size)
{
    if (rank == 0)
        MPI_Send(buf, 1, MPI_INT, 1, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD);
    else if (rank == 1)
        MPI_Recv(buf, 1, MPI_INT, 0, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD,
                  MPI_STATUS_IGNORE);
}

```

---

Figure 6.3: Code whose message pattern is shown in Figure 6.4

- Abstract names for processes are based on virtual topologies, or at least rank-in-group names, thereby avoiding hardware dependencies, and ideally making application code more intuitive.

MPI offers several features that implement these important requirements:

- **Process groups** define a rank-naming for processes in point-to-point communication relative to the group. In addition, these groups define the scope of collective operations. (Note that the internal representations of process names are not revealed at the application level; that would spoil portability.) This scope makes it possible to make strong statements about the noninterference of sequential collective operations in the same communication context.

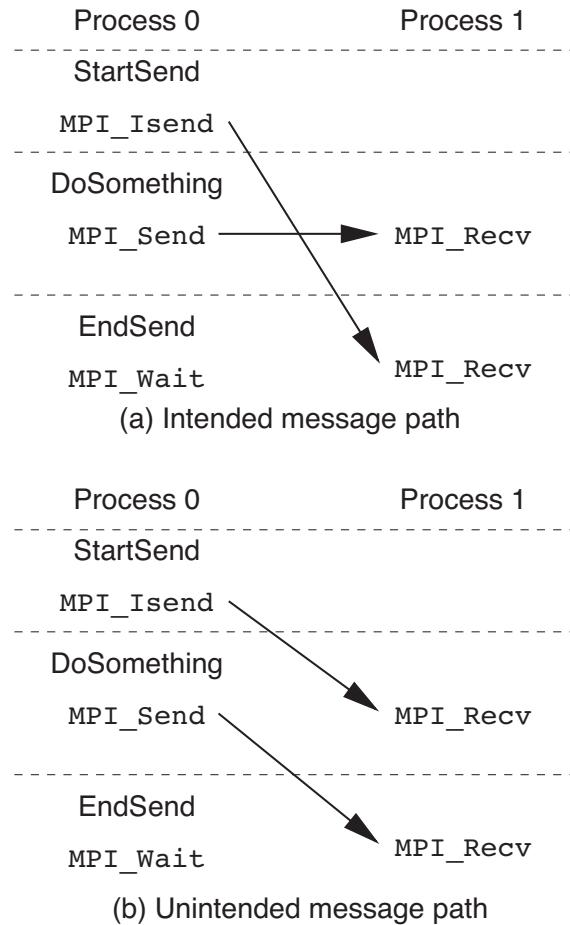


Figure 6.4: Possible message-matching patterns for the code in Figure 6.3

- **Contexts** provide the ability to have separate safe “universes” (called contexts) of message passing in MPI. A context is conceptually implemented by a secondary or “hyper” tag that differentiates messages from one another. Unlike user-manipulated tags, these contexts provide totally separate communication space, each with a full complement of user-managed tags. Contexts are allocated by the system for safety; if users were to define contexts, two libraries might inadvertently define the same one. Users do not work directly with contexts; rather, they work with process groups and communicators.
- **Communicators** encapsulate contexts, groups, and virtual topologies in an object that provides the appropriate scope for all communication operations in MPI. Communicators bind process groups and context information together to form a safe communication space within the group. The communicator also provides an object that can be used to maintain local (to the communicator) copies of data that the library needs to keep from one invocation to another. The MPI term for this is “attribute caching.”

The use of separate communication contexts by distinct libraries (or distinct library invocations) insulates communication internal to the library execution from external communication (group safety). This approach allows one to invoke the library even if communications are pending. Moreover, it avoids the need to synchronize each entry into and exit from library code. Most such synchronizations are unnecessary, reduce performance, and can be avoided because of the context model.

## 6.2 A First MPI Library

In this section we describe a simple two-function library. It provides a feature not included in MPI: a way to execute a block of code sequentially, one process at a time. This can be useful when generating output to a file or to standard output, for example. Use of this library is illustrated with the following example:

---

```
seqBegin(MPI_COMM_WORLD);
printf("My rank is %d\n", wrank);
fflush(stdout);
seqEnd(MPI_COMM_WORLD);
```

---

Note the use of `fflush`—without this, the C library implementation of `printf` may buffer the output and not send it to standard output until more output text has been accumulated. We also note that whether this data appears on standard

output in the order expected also depends on the MPI environment. Most MPI environments will ensure that data sent from a process to `stdout` or `stderr` will appear in a timely (e.g., almost immediate) way, but this is not required by the standard.

We first sketch the algorithm that is used by `seqBegin` and `seqEnd`. Perhaps the easiest way to ensure that only one process at a time runs a block of code is to use something like the following:

---

```

MPI_Comm_size(MPI_COMM_WORLD, &wszie);
MPI_Comm_rank(MPI_COMM_WORLD, &wrank);
for (i=0; i<wszie; i++) {
    MPI_Barrier(MPI_COMM_WORLD);
    if (i == wrank) {
        ... code to execute on one process at a time
    }
}

```

---

However, this code calls `MPI_Barrier` as many times as there are processes. With a large number of processes, this can add up to a significant amount of time, since most implementations of `MPI_Barrier` take  $\log p$  time when there are  $p$  processes (`wszie` in the code above).

In addition, this code requires three private variables: the index variable `i`, the number of processes `wszie`, and the rank of the calling process, `wrank` (`w` here is for “world”, as in `MPI_COMM_WORLD`).

A clearer and more efficient approach is to encapsulate this functionality into two routines, as shown above, and to use a *token* to indicate which process can execute the block of code at any time. We start with the token at the process with rank zero; when that process enters `seqEnd`, it sends the token to the process with rank one, who is waiting to receive it. When that process enters `seqEnd`, it sends the token to the process with rank two, and so on, until the last process in the communicator receives the token. In other words, the communication proceeds around the processes, arranged in a ring, and the token is virtual—there is no specific data or object that is sent. Rather, a process has the token if it has received a message from the previous process (or it is the initial process, the one with rank zero), and it has not yet sent a message to the next process.

This immediately raises a question: How can we do this communication safely? The algorithm described has a form similar to the first example on the need for communication contexts (Figure 6.1). To ensure that there is no interference with messages from other parts of the program, we will need to have a separate communicator.

---

```
/* Sequential execution code */
#include "mpi.h"
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>

typedef struct {
    MPI_Comm lcomm;
    int      prevRank, nextRank;
} seqInfo;

static int seqKeyval = MPI_KEYVAL_INVALID;
```

---

Figure 6.5: The header file for seqBegin and seqEnd

We will take the following approach. For each input communicator (the MPI\_Comm argument to seqBegin), we will create a new, private communicator with MPI\_Comm\_dup. We will also precompute the rank of the process from which we receive the token and the rank of the process to which we will send the token. So that we don't do this every time seqBegin is called on the same communicator, we'll save this information. The C structure that holds this information is shown in Figure 6.5 as seqInfo. But where can we save this value so that, when seqBegin is called with a communicator, we can find the appropriate private communicator and communication ranks? We could keep a table of correspondences between communicators that we have seen before and the private seqInfos that we have created. But it would be better if we could somehow attach the seqInfo value to the input communicator. Fortunately, MPI allows us to do just this. The MPI term for this is *caching of attributes*, and it is typically used to keep a pointer to a data structure used by the library to maintain information between calls. In Fortran, it is an integer. Attributes are identified by *key values*, which are system allocated so that multiple libraries can attach attributes to the same communicator without knowledge of one another.

In this case the cached information includes a communicator to be used for seqBegin's internal communication and the ranks of the previous and next processes in the communication ring. The seqInfo structure is shown in Figure 6.5.

The complete sequential execution library is shown in Figures 6.6 and 6.7. It demonstrates how to use communicators and caching. The way that attributes are attached to communicators allows for their selective propagation when the call MPI\_Comm\_dup is used, as we define further in this example. The already-discussed

call `MPI_Comm_create` never copies attributes to the newly created communicator. The sequential execution library requires the use of caching to store persistent information and it requires the use of a cached communicator to protect the user from communication actions of the library. The code for `seqBegin` is shown in Figure 6.6 and 6.7.

What's going on in this library? First, `seqBegin` checks to see whether it has ever been called before by this process, by seeing whether it has a valid value for the global integer `seqKeyval`. If not, `seqBegin` has to get an attribute *key value*, so that it can cache its information on this and all future communicators that may call `seqBegin` in this process; it does so with `MPI_Comm_create_keyval`. Otherwise, `seqBegin` is already the key value for use by this library.

Next, the code checks to see whether an `seqBegin` has ever been called on the current communicator, by looking up the attribute for the key value `seqKeyval`. If not, the system handle associated with this key value is created and attached to the communicator. The most notable call here is `MPI_Comm_dup`<sup>1</sup> communicator, but with new contexts of communication. Any “other” attributes cached by the system will be selectively copied, according to the attribute-copying set up by the user when those attributes were attached. (See Table 6.1 for the bindings for attribute copying and deletion functions.) The next task for `seqBegin` is to determine all the specific data that needs to go in the user handle for this particular call, so that the work of transmitting data can begin and so that the user can also legally call `seqEnd`.

Processes that call this library are in one of three states: executing the sequential block of code, waiting to receive the token, or waiting to complete the final `MPI_BARRIER`, which is necessary to ensure that successive uses of the library on the same communicator maintain the guaranteed ordering of execution of the code between the `seqBegin` and `seqEnd` calls.

In `seqBegin`, after the information saved in the attribute is accessed, every process performs an `MPI_Recv` from rank `prevRank`. For the process with rank zero in the communicator, the value of this is `MPI_PROC_NULL`; and the `MPI_Recv` call completes immediately, allowing the routine to finish and return to the user's code, which thus begins the execution of the code that the user wants executed sequentially. The other processes wait.

---

<sup>1</sup>In MPI-3, there was a subtle change to communicators that makes it a better practice use a routine new in MPI-3 for duplicating communicators. This routine is `MPI_Comm_dup_with_info`, which makes a complete duplicate of the input communicator but without copying any “info” values from the parent communicator. See *Using Advanced MPI* [55] for a more comprehensive discussion.

---

```
int MPI_Comm_dup(MPI_Comm comm, MPI_Comm *newcomm)

int MPI_Comm_create_keyval(MPI_Copy_function *copy_fn,
                           MPI_Delete_function *delete_fn, int *keyval, void* extra_state)

int MPI_Comm_set_attr(MPI_Comm comm, int keyval, void* attribute_val)

int MPI_Comm_get_attr(MPI_Comm comm, int keyval, void* attribute_val, int *flag)

int MPI_Comm_free_keyval(int *keyval)

int MPI_Comm_delete_attr(MPI_Comm comm, int keyval)

typedef int MPI_Comm_copy_attr_function(MPI_Comm oldcomm, int *keyval,
                                         void *extra_state, void *attribute_value_in, void *attribute_value_out,
                                         int *flag)

typedef int MPI_Comm_delete_attr_function(MPI_Comm comm, int *keyval,
                                         void *attribute_value, void *extra_state)
```

---

Table 6.1: C bindings for new MPI calls needed by seqBegin, seqEnd, and related calls. The attribute\_value in MPI\_Comm\_get\_attr is cast as a void \* to simplify casts; the actual argument must be a pointer to a pointer of the correct type. The same applies to attribute\_value\_out in MPI\_Comm\_copy\_attr\_function.

Once a process completes the sequential block of code and enters seqEnd, it again finds the attribute, extracts the information about the private communicator and the rank of the next process, and sends the token to that process. If the process is the last in the ring, the value of nextRank is MPI\_PROC\_NULL, and this send returns immediately. All processes then enter MPI\_Barrier, which ensures that no sequential section can start until all processes are complete with the current one.

Communicators are frequently created by copying existing communicators (with MPI\_Comm\_dup) and are eventually freed, at which point one might wish to clean up storage associated with an attribute. In order to handle attached attributes during these operations, MPI specifies that when a key value is created, the user may supply functions to copy and delete the attribute value when the communicator is copied or freed. In our example, we have specified the delete function; this is the seqDelFn argument to MPI\_Comm\_create\_keyval, and the implementation of the delete function is shown in Figure 6.8.

---

**MPI\_COMM\_DUP**(comm, newcomm, ierror)  
     integer comm, newcomm, ierror

**MPI\_COMM\_CREATE\_KEYVAL**(comm\_copy\_attr\_fn, comm\_delete\_attr\_fn,  
     comm\_keyval, extra\_state, ierror)  
     external comm\_copy\_attr\_fn, comm\_delete\_attr\_fn  
     integer comm\_keyval, ierror  
     integer(kind=MPI\_ADDRESS\_KIND) extra\_state

**MPI\_COMM\_FREE\_KEYVAL**(comm\_keyval, ierror)  
     integer comm\_keyval, ierror

**MPI\_COMM\_SET\_ATTR**(comm, comm\_keyval, attribute\_val, ierror)  
     integer comm, comm\_keyval, ierror  
     integer(kind=MPI\_ADDRESS\_KIND) attribute\_val

**MPI\_COMM\_GET\_ATTR**(comm, comm\_keyval, attribute\_val, flag, ierror)  
     integer comm, comm\_keyval, ierror  
     integer(kind=MPI\_ADDRESS\_KIND) attribute\_val  
     logical flag

**MPI\_COMM\_DELETE\_ATTR**(comm, comm\_keyval, ierror)  
     integer comm, comm\_keyval, ierror

**integer function COPY\_FN**(oldcomm, keyval, extra\_state, attribute\_value\_in,  
     attribute\_value\_out, flag)  
     integer oldcomm, keyval, extra\_state, attribute\_value\_in,  
     attribute\_value\_out, flag

**integer function DELETE\_FN**(comm, keyval, attribute\_value, extra\_state)  
     integer comm, keyval, attribute\_value, extra\_state  
     logical flag

---

Table 6.2: Fortran bindings for new MPI calls needed by seqBegin, seqEnd, and related calls. COPY\_FN and DELETE\_FN are not MPI functions; instead, these show the calling sequences for the arguments with the same name to MPI\_COMM\_CREATE\_KEYVAL.

---

```
int seqDelFn(MPI_Comm comm, int keyval, void *attr, void *estate);

void seqBegin(MPI_Comm comm)
{
    MPI_Comm lcomm;
    int flag, mysize, myrank;
    seqInfo *info;
    if (seqKeyval == MPI_KEYVAL_INVALID) {
        MPI_Comm_create_keyval(MPI_NULL_COPY_FN, seqDelFn,
                              &seqKeyval, NULL);
    }
    MPI_Comm_get_attr(comm, seqKeyval, &info, &flag);
    if (!flag) {
        info = (seqInfo *)malloc(sizeof(seqInfo));
        MPI_Comm_dup(comm, &info->lcomm);
        MPI_Comm_rank(info->lcomm, &myrank);
        MPI_Comm_size(info->lcomm, &mysize);
        info->prevRank = myrank - 1;
        if (info->prevRank < 0) info->prevRank = MPI_PROC_NULL;
        info->nextRank = myrank + 1;
        if (info->nextRank >= mysize) info->nextRank = MPI_PROC_NULL;
        MPI_Comm_set_attr(comm, seqKeyval, info);
    }
    MPI_Recv(NULL, 0, MPI_INT, info->prevRank, 0, info->lcomm,
            MPI_STATUS_IGNORE);
}
```

---

Figure 6.6: Implementation of seqBegin

In some cases, a library may want to ensure that the cached attribute information is propagated to new communicators created with `MPI_Comm_dup`. The version of `seqBegin` in Figure 6.6 does not do this, but a simple change is all that is required to add this feature. By changing one line of `seqBegin`, we can add the copy callbacks:

---

```

void seqEnd(MPI_Comm comm)
{
    seqInfo *info;
    int      flag;

    /* Sanity check */
    if (seqKeyval == MPI_KEYVAL_INVALID)
        MPI_Abort(MPI_COMM_WORLD, 1);
    MPI_Comm_get_attr(comm, seqKeyval, &info, &flag);
    if (!info || !flag)
        MPI_Abort(MPI_COMM_WORLD, 1);

    MPI_Send(NULL, 0, MPI_INT, info->nextRank, 0, info->lcomm);

    /* Make everyone wait until all have completed their send */
    MPI_Barrier(info->lcomm);
}

```

---

Figure 6.7: Implementation of seqEnd

---

```

static int seqDelFn(MPI_Comm comm, int keyval, void *attr,
                     void *estate)
{
    seqInfo *myinfo = (seqInfo *)attr;
    MPI_Comm_free(&myinfo->lcomm);
    free(myinfo);
    return 0;
}

```

---

Figure 6.8: Implementation of seqDelFn, the attribute delete function

---

```

/* first see if this library has ever been called. */
if (seqKeyval == MPI_KEYVAL_INVALID) {
    /* our first mission is to create the process-local keyval
       for this library, while specifying callbacks */
    MPI_Comm_create_keyval(seqCopyFn, seqDelFn,
                           &seqKeyval, NULL);
    ...
}

```

---

The implementation of the copy function is shown in Figure 6.9. This function creates a new communicator with **MPI\_Comm\_dup** and uses the same ranks of

---

```
static int seqCopyFn(MPI_Comm comm, int keyval, void *attr,
                     void *estate)
{
    seqInfo *myinfo, *oldinfo = (seqInfo *)attr;
    myinfo = (seqInfo *)malloc(sizeof(seqInfo));
    MPI_Comm_dup(oldinfo->lcomm, &myinfo->lcomm);
    myinfo->prevRank = oldinfo->prevRank;
    myinfo->nextRank = oldinfo->nextRank;
    return 0;
}
```

---

Figure 6.9: Implementation of an attribute copy function for seqBegin

previous and next process as the parent communicator.

The attribute copy and delete functions should return the value zero unless some error has occurred. If they return a nonzero value, then the MPI routine that caused them to be called will also indicate an error. Note that the error value returned by the MPI routine (if the MPI error handler has been set to return a value on errors) may *not* be the nonzero value returned by the copy or delete function.

A more sophisticated version of this library could use an internal pool of message tags. In that case, dup'ing a communicator that had been used for seqBegin and seqEnd would not require an additional MPI\_Comm\_dup call in the attribute copy routine; instead, a new tag value would be selected for communication, and that tag value would be used in the MPI\_Send and MPI\_Recv calls in the seqBegin and seqEnd routines.

Although it is rarely necessary, keyvals can be freed by calling MPI\_Comm\_free\_keyval. Attributes associated with a keyval can be deleted with MPI\_Comm\_delete\_attr; this will invoke the attribute delete function, if one was specified when the keyval was created (the default delete function performs no operations and simply returns success).

Note that as of MPI-3, MPI\_Comm\_dup duplicates any MPI\_Info hints that have been associated with the communicator. In some cases, this may cause problems, so careful library writers should look at the routine MPI\_Comm\_dup\_with\_info.

## 6.3 Linear Algebra on Grids

Many applications can be written in terms of the standard vector operations performed on a grid or mesh. One such example is the Poisson problem presented in Chapter 4. As we saw in that chapter, a major issue is the choice of data decomposition, that is, how the elements of the vectors are distributed across the processes. This section describes the design and implementation of MPI libraries that address some of the issues in providing efficient and flexible routines for vector operations on grids that will operate correctly with many different distributions of the elements. These libraries are initially “object based” and alternatively “object oriented.” The object-based libraries use C data structures and therefore provide abstractions like vectors and data distributions. The object-oriented libraries go one step further by exploiting inheritance and are consequently better able to optimize their run-time performance by making a number of decisions outside of inner loops. Typically, they do this with persistent objects that describe the details of a desired parallel computation. The hierarchy of objects is shown in Figure 6.12. We will discuss the objects in this figure, starting at the bottom.

### 6.3.1 Mappings and Logical Grids

Two basic abstractions help with data mapping. The first is a logical grid topology, which describes the names of processes and their relationships. This data structure is helpful for describing communication structures and data layout. Data layout itself is described by mapping functions, which describe transformations of indices of the data onto the logical grid topologies in each dimension. In this section we will restrict our attention to two-dimensional logical grid topologies.

**Logical 2-D grid topologies.** As we saw in Chapter 4, MPI provides a set of routines that can be used to create virtual topologies. The routines provided by MPI for creating Cartesian virtual topologies are not always applicable, however. In some cases, it may be necessary to decompose or split a communicator into parts based on a more general criterion. MPI provides the function `MPI_Comm_split` for this purpose (see Section 3.9). Recall that this function takes as input a communicator, a color, and a key. All processes with the same color are placed into the same new communicator, which is returned in the fourth argument. The processes are ranked in the new communicator in the order given by key; if two processes have the same key value, they retain the same relative ordering as in the old communicator.

---

```
typedef struct
{
    int P, Q; /* global shape of grid */
    int p, q; /* local position on grid */

    MPI_Comm grid_comm; /* parent communicator */
    MPI_Comm row_comm; /* row communicator */
    MPI_Comm col_comm; /* column communicator */
} LA_Grid_2d;
```

---

Figure 6.10: The 2-D logical grid structure

---

```
int MPI_Cart_sub(MPI_Comm oldcomm, const int remain_dims[],
                  MPI_Comm *newcomm)
```

---

Table 6.3: C binding for MPI topology routine used in la\_grid\_2d\_new\_II

As an example of the use of `MPI_Comm_split`, in Figure 6.11 we show an alternative way to generate a 2-D Cartesian topology. The data structure for the logical grid that this routine creates is shown in Figure 6.10.

Multiple calls to `MPI_Comm_split` can be used to generate overlapping subgroup communicators, as we have done to get row communicators and column communicators in Figure 6.11, where the topology constructor is presented.

**Revisiting grids using MPI topology functions.** An alternative to `MPI_Comm_split` when using a Cartesian topology (created, for example, with `MPI_Cart_create`) is to use `MPI_Cart_sub`. This takes a communicator that has a Cartesian topology and returns a new communicator consisting of those processes that are in a hyperplane of the Cartesian topology of the input communicator. This hyperplane is described by the second argument; for each dimension in the original Cartesian topology, a true value indicates that that dimension remains in the Cartesian topology associated with the output communicator. One way to understand this is to think of a 2-D Cartesian topology, with rows numbered as the first dimension and columns the second. Then if `remain_dim = { 1, 0 }`, the output communicator represents the row containing the process; if `remain_dim = { 0, 1 }`, the output communicator represents the column containing the process. The use of `MPI_Cart_sub` to construct the row and column communicators for the virtual topology hierarchy is shown in Figure 6.13.

---

```

LA_Grid_2d *la_grid_2d_new(MPI_Comm comm, int P, int Q)
{
    LA_Grid_2d *grid;
    MPI_Comm row, col;
    int my_rank, p, q;

    /* Determine row and column position */
    MPI_Comm_rank(comm, &my_rank);
    p = my_rank / Q;
    q = my_rank % Q; /* pick a row-major mapping */

    /* Split comm into row and col comms */
    MPI_Comm_split(comm, p, q, &row); /* color by row,
                                         rank by column */
    MPI_Comm_split(comm, q, p, &col); /* color by column,
                                         rank by row */

    /* Make new grid */
    grid = (LA_Grid_2d *)malloc(sizeof(LA_Grid_2d));
    /* Fill in new grid structure */
    grid->grid_comm = comm;
    grid->row_comm = row;
    grid->col_comm = col;
    grid->P = P;
    grid->Q = Q;
    grid->p = p;
    grid->q = q;
    /* Return the newly built grid */
    return (grid);
}

```

---

Figure 6.11: The 2-D logical grid structure constructor

Note that the MPI Cartesian topology functions will map the processes to the Cartesian topology in a particular way: specifically, the ranks of the processes in the communicator created by `MPI_Cart_create` follow a row-major ordering; that is, if each process in a 3-D Cartesian topology has Cartesian coordinates  $(i, j, k)$ , the next process in rank in the Cartesian communicator has Cartesian coordinates  $(i, j, k + 1)$ , unless  $k$  is already at the maximum value (number of processes in that dimension), in which case  $j$  (or  $i$  if  $j$  is at the maximum value) is incremented by one. If another decomposition is preferred, for example, a column major (i.e., the

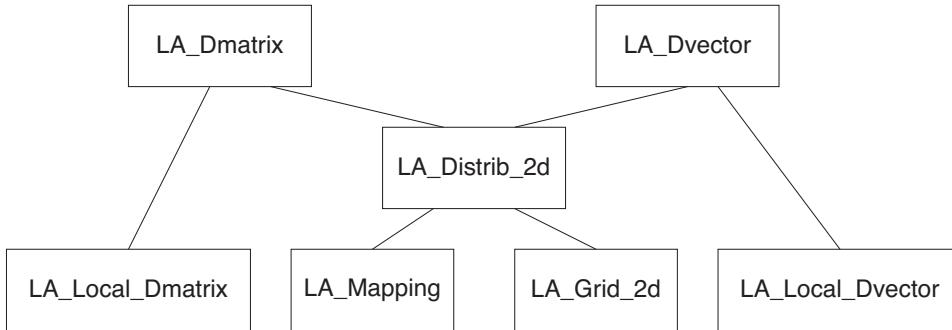


Figure 6.12: Hierarchy of data structures in the linear algebra examples

---

**MPI\_CART\_SUB**(oldcomm, remain\_dims, newcomm, ierror)  
 integer oldcomm, newcomm, ierror  
 logical remain\_dims(\*)

---

Table 6.4: Fortran binding for MPI topology routine used in `la_grid_2d_new` (revisited)

first value in the coordinate tuple  $(i, j, k)$  changes first), then `MPI_Comm_split` can be used instead.

**Mapping functions and distributions.** Because we wish to provide flexible library routines, we let the user specify how data is laid out in the system. Specifically, we provide data mapping functions, particularly for common layouts (linear load balanced, scattered, and so on). Following the rules for these mappings, users can potentially add different mapping strategies for coefficients, but distributions we illustrate here will cover a lot of ground and will illustrate our design goal of “data distribution independence.”

Single mappings aren’t enough because they describe one-dimensional conversions between a global index space and local process naming for coefficients; they indicate which globally numbered coefficient goes where in a set of processes. For two-dimensional data structures (such as matrices), we need two such mappings to describe how information maps onto a process topology. To meet this need, we devise a data structure, called a distribution, that we make particular to two dimensions but that could generalize for higher-dimensional grids, too.

```
#define N_DIMS 2
#define FALSE 0
#define TRUE 1
LA_Grid_2d *la_grid_2d_new_II(MPI_Comm comm, int P, int Q)
{
    LA_Grid_2d *grid;
    MPI_Comm comm_2d, row, col;
    int my_rank, p, q;
    int dims[N_DIMS], /* hold dimensions */
        local[N_DIMS], /* local position */
        period[N_DIMS], /* aperiodic flags */
        remain_dims[N_DIMS]; /* flags for sub-dimension
                               computations */

    /* Generate a new communicator with virtual topology added */
    dims[0] = P; period[0] = FALSE;
    dims[1] = Q; period[1] = FALSE;
    MPI_Cart_create(comm, N_DIMS, dims, period, TRUE, &comm_2d);
    /* map back to topology coordinates: */
    MPI_Comm_rank(comm, &my_rank);
    MPI_Cart_coords(comm_2d, my_rank, N_DIMS, local);
    p = local[0]; q = local[1]; /* this is "my" grid location */
    /* Use cartesian sub-topology mechanism to get row/col comms */
    remain_dims[0] = FALSE; remain_dims[1] = TRUE;
    MPI_Cart_sub(comm_2d, remain_dims, &row);
    remain_dims[0] = TRUE; remain_dims[1] = FALSE;
    MPI_Cart_sub(comm_2d, remain_dims, &col);
    grid = (LA_Grid_2d *)malloc(sizeof(LA_Grid_2d)); /* new grid */

    /* rest of the code is the same as before */
}
```

---

Figure 6.13: 2-D topology hierarchy with Cartesian topology functions

---

```

#define LA_MAPPING_BLINEAR 1
#define LA_MAPPING_BSCATTER 2

typedef struct
{
    int map_type; /* Used for quick comparison of mappings */

    void (*mu)(int I, int P, int N, void *extra, int *p, int *i);
        /* Mapping of I->(p,i) */
    void (*mu_inv)(int p, int i, int P, int N, void *extra, int *I);
        /* Inverse (p,i)->I: */
    void (*local_len)(int p, int P, int N, void *extra, int *n);
        /* # of coefficients mapped to each process: */
    void *extra; /* for mapping-specific parameters */
} LA_Mapping;

/* some pre-defined mappings ... */
extern LA_Mapping *LA_Mapping_Blk_Linear, *LA_Mapping_Blk_Scatter,
    *LA_Mapping_Linear, *LA_Mapping_Scatter;

```

---

Figure 6.14: Definition of mapping function data structure

---

```

typedef struct
{
    LA_Grid_2d *grid; /* grid on which the distribution is based */
    LA_Mapping *row; /* row mapping */
    LA_Mapping *col; /* col mapping */
} LA_Distrib_2d;

```

---

Figure 6.15: Definition of distribution data structure

Figure 6.15 illustrates the data structure that encompasses both the logical grid information and a pair of mappings, which proves sufficient to describe basic linear algebra.

### 6.3.2 Vectors and Matrices

Given the logical grids, mappings, and the two-dimension distributions based on them, we can now turn to distributed data structures for linear algebra.

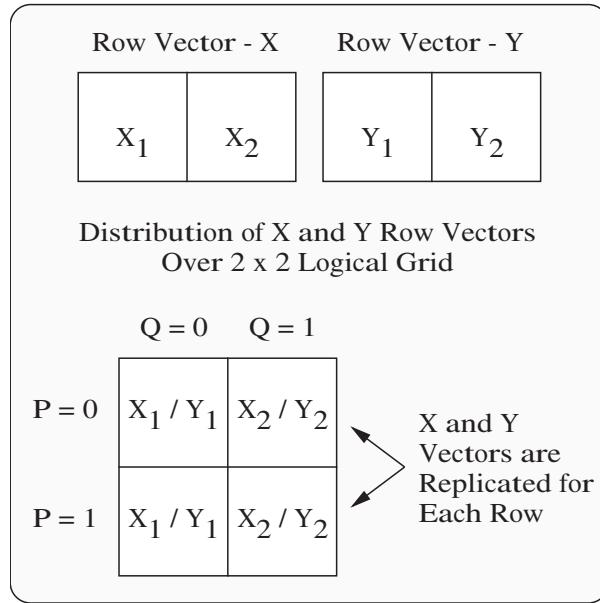


Figure 6.16: Layout of two row vectors over a  $2 \times 2$  logical process grid. Column vectors are laid out in an analogous fashion, orthogonal to the row vectors.

**Vectors.** In a 2-D logical grid topology, vectors may be either row- or column-oriented vectors. We assume that each row (respectively, column) vector is replicated over each row (respectively, column) of a logical grid. Figure 6.16 shows schematically how two row vectors might be distributed in a grid. In this example, each vector is broken into two subvectors and is distributed along the columns of the grid. Through replication, each process row has a complete copy of both vectors; see also [51, 109].

**Vector structure and construction.** Distributed vectors are defined by the data structure illustrated in Figure 6.17. As an instance of a distributed object, a vector contains information including both its global and its local length, a pointer to local real data storage, and a type field that indicates the choice of row or column distribution. In addition, the vector data structure references an underlying logical grid topology data structure and a data distribution. This latter information completes the specification of how vector coefficients are mapped and replicated over the topology.

---

```

typedef struct la_local_dvector
{
    int m;                      /* local vector length */
    double *data;                /* vector data */
} LA_Local_Dvector;

typedef struct la_dvector
{
    LA_Local_Dvector v;        /* Local vector */
    int M;                     /* full length of vector */
    int type;                  /* row or column type */
    LA_Distrib_2d *dis;        /* how to map data on grid */
} LA_Dvector;

```

---

Figure 6.17: Definition of the distributed vector on the logical grid

**Matrices.** Matrices on two-dimensional process grids are defined analogously to vectors, as depicted in Figure 6.18. A matrix is divided into submatrices, each with a local shape given by  $m \times n$ . The values of  $m$  and  $n$  generally differ in each process, just as the lengths of subvectors differ, in general, in each process. A matrix has a storage strategy, depending on whether it is row or column major. (The default constructor we use will make column-major local matrices; this detail remains an issue for fine optimizations of local memory access.) As with vectors, distributed matrices refer to an underlying logical process grid and distribution, through which they acquire the detailed information on topology shape and coefficient mapping.

### 6.3.3 Components of a Parallel Library

High-quality libraries must provide more than one version of a function that can perform efficiently over different conditions (we call such a set of methods a *poly-algorithm*). For example, we provide multiple versions of the vector sum and inner-product functions, both with the same sequential complexity. The “strided” version of these functions has a reduced computational load at the expense of more communication. Conversely, the “nonstrided” version is computationally more intensive but requires fewer messages because the algorithm exploits data redundancy; in the case of the vector sum (with compatibly stored data), no messages are needed at all. The most efficient function is determined by comparing issues such as message latency, bandwidth, and floating-point performance, all with reference to the size of the vector and the logical grid dimensions  $P, Q$ . The performance analysis tools we

---

```

typedef struct la_local_dmatrix
{
    int      storage_type; /* Storage strategy (row/column-major) */
    int      m, n;        /* Local dimensions */
    double **data;       /* The local matrix, as set of pointers */
} LA_Local_Dmatrix;

typedef struct la_dmatrix
{
    LA_Local_Dmatrix a;   /* Local matrix */
    int      M, N;        /* Global dimensions of LA_Dmatrix. */
    LA_Distrib_2d *dis;   /* how to map data onto grid */
} LA_Dmatrix;

```

---

Figure 6.18: The distributed matrix structure

have described earlier, along with some empirical modeling, can help decide which function is best for a given case on a real system.

**Vector sum.** The vector sum is typically a noncommunicating operation provided the vectors being summed are stored compatibly, that is, corresponding coefficients appear in the same processes at aligned offsets. This is the simplest of the parallel vector operations possible on the distributed vectors. The operation to be performed is  $\mathbf{z} = \alpha\mathbf{x} + \beta\mathbf{y}$ , where  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are real scalar constants. Good implementations handle special cases like  $\alpha = 0$  and  $\beta = 1.0$  for better performance. Even better implementations use sequential BLAS (for Basic Linear Algebra Subprograms [43, 42, 82]) when local vectors are long enough to make the cost of a subroutine call less important than the performance gain of an often-optimized sequential kernel.

Thus, a number of different versions of the vector sum must be available and must be selected appropriately for different situations. This is where the object-oriented and object-based approaches to the library design differ. For the object-oriented case, the user is forced to “commit” to certain operations in order to pre-evaluate all the data transformations, choices about use of BLAS, and so on. This approach makes these relatively expensive choices a one-time operation, and may even encourage further one-time overheads for better performance. The object-based versions, which are object extensions to the familiar BLAS, have to test for errors, data layout, and so on each time, making the overhead of general data layouts

somewhat higher than the object-oriented versions. These concepts are illustrated in detail with the code and related documentation described in (Appendix B).

**Inner product.** The inner product offers a similar set of challenges to those presented by vector sum; in addition to offering the choices of replicated and non-replicated work versions, the use or nonuse of underlying BLAS remains. Here, we illustrate a version of the code that utilizes the object-oriented approach. For this approach, a “dot product” object is created once, describing the dot-product relationship between two vectors. Whenever a dot product is needed,  $(\star xy \rightarrow op)()$  is performed. The absence of arguments here appears to be a deficiency but is actually a sign that we have tightly optimized our code! We show the version that employs sequential BLAS, to remind the reader that we can access efficient local operations (in the limit of large enough data). See Figures 6.19 and 6.20.

**Skew inner product.** The skew inner product combines the idea of vector redistribution and dot product into a single calculation, when the vectors are not distributed compatibly at the beginning of the operation. Specifically, it handles the case where one vector is a “row” vector, in any layout, and the other vector is a “column” vector. Until now, we have been assuming that the vectors are collinear (either row or column) and of the same distribution.

Both object-based and object-oriented versions of this call appear in the software distribution. The nice feature of this routine is that the object-oriented version is needed to achieve the right computational complexity, because it is essential to organize the operations in each process once and for all.

**Matrix-vector product.** To illustrate the use of the vectors together with dense matrices, we have also included the equivalent object-based and object-oriented libraries for the dense matrix-vector product. Here the number of choices for data optimization grows; hence, if the vectors and matrices are distributed incompatibly, a large number of `if` statements have to be handled. For the object-oriented strategy, this is done once and for all. For the object-based approach, lots of conditional branching gets done with each call.

## 6.4 The LINPACK Benchmark in MPI

The LINPACK benchmark [5] is a well-known numerical code that is often used to benchmark computers for floating-point performance. LINPACK itself is an example of a successful numerical library, and we briefly discuss some aspects of a

---

```

double ddot_stride(LA_Dvector *x, LA_Dvector *y, int *error)
{
    int      i, start, stride, m;
    double local_sum = 0.0, sum, *x_data, *y_data;

    if (x->type != y->type) { /* Check for compatible types */
        *error = LA_TYPE_ERROR; /* FAILURE */
        return(0.0);
    }

    /* Determine the stride based on type */
    if (x->type == LA_GRID_ROW) {
        start = x->dis->grid->p; stride = x->dis->grid->P;
    }
    else {
        start = x->dis->grid->q; stride = x->dis->grid->Q;
    }

    /* Sum up my part (non-optimized) */
    m      = x->v.m;
    x_data = &(x->v.data[0]); y_data = &(y->v.data[0]);
    for (i = start; i < m; i += stride)
        local_sum += x_data[i] * y_data[i];

    /* Get the sum of all parts */
    MPI_Allreduce(&local_sum, &sum, 1, MPI_DOUBLE, MPI_SUM,
                  x->dis->grid->grid_comm);

    /* Return result */
    *error = MPI_SUCCESS;
    return(sum);
}

```

---

Figure 6.19: Object-based, strided inner (dot) product on distributed vectors, without BLAS

---

```

void LAX_ddot_strided blas(LA_Dvector_ddot_stride_binop *xy,
                           double *result)
{
    int      start, stride;
    double local_sum = 0.0;
    LA_Dvector *x, *y;

    /* Dereference the binary vector operands: */
    x = xy -> binop.x;  y = xy -> binop.y;

    /* Determine the stride based on type */
    start = xy -> local_start;
    stride = xy -> local_stride;

    /* Sum up my part */
    blas_ddot(&(x->v.m), &(x->v.data[start]), &stride,
              &(y->v.data[start]), &stride);

    /* Get the sum of all parts */
    MPI_Allreduce(&local_sum, result, 1, MPI_DOUBLE, MPI_SUM,
                  xy->binop.comm);
    /* Return result */
    xy -> binop.error = 0;
}

```

---

Figure 6.20: Object-oriented, strided inner (dot) product on distributed vectors, with BLAS

parallel version of this program. A parallel version of LINPACK’s successor, LAPACK [7], has been developed. This package is known as ScaLAPACK (for Scalable LAPACK) [28]. We will discuss only a few of the issues involved in developing this code.

The benchmark program solves the linear system  $Ax = b$  for  $x$ , given a matrix  $A$  and right-hand-side vector  $b$ . The matrix  $A$  is *dense* (i.e, all of its elements are nonzero). The code solves this problem by computing a factorization of  $A$  into  $PLU$ ; here,  $L$  is a lower-triangular matrix,  $U$  is an upper triangular matrix, and  $P$  is a permutation matrix. The permutation matrix represents the exchange of rows used in the *partial pivoting* algorithm that this code uses to improve numerical stability. In order to determine the permutation, as each row of the matrix is used to generate the factorization, the row of the matrix that contains the largest element is needed. We assume that the rows (and columns) of the matrix may

---

```

double precision dtemp(2)

dtemp(1) = dabs(work(j, j))
dtemp(2) = myrow

call MPI_ALLREDUCE(MPI_IN_PLACE, dtemp, 1, &
                 MPI_2DOUBLE_PRECISION, MPI_MAXLOC, &
                 colcomm, ierr)

ipivnode = dtemp(2)
if (dtemp(1) .eq. 0.0d00) ipivnode = icurrow

```

---

Figure 6.21: Code fragment for finding a pivot row

be distributed across the processes. To find this element, we can use the code in Figure 6.21. This makes use of the predefined reduction operation `MPI_MAXLOC` as the `MPI_Op` argument to `MPI_ALLREDUCE`; this routine returns just what we need (the maximum in the first element and the location of the maximum in the second element).

Note that this example used `MPI_IN_PLACE` as the `sendbuf` argument. This tells MPI to take the input from the `recvbuf` (second) argument, and to replace that value with the result. Why is `MPI_IN_PLACE` required? In Fortran, using the same variable for two or more parameters is invalid—Fortran requires that the parameters all describe different storage locations. This permits the Fortran compiler to optimize access to variables, particularly arrays, and can result in code that executes much faster than code that must assume that parameter may point to overlapping storage. In C, the `restrict` qualifier can be used to accomplish a similar effect, though C compilers are typically less aggressive in taking advantage of this than are Fortran compilers. Using `MPI_IN_PLACE` allows the same rules to be used for both the C and Fortran bindings and permits the implementation to easily determine when the operation should be performed in place. We say a little more about this in Appendix C.2.

An interesting feature about this library is that once code is developed using a general communicator (instead of hard-wiring in `MPI_COMM_WORLD`), it immediately becomes useful on any subset of processes. Thus, if a parallel application is using task parallelism (dividing a job into tasks that may interact) and each of these tasks is itself parallel, then a parallel linear system solver library written in MPI can be used by any or all of the tasks. Without communicators (more precisely,

the group component of the communicator), the library could not be used in this case.

## 6.5 Strategies for Library Building

The rest of this chapter concentrates on *loosely synchronous* parallel libraries. By loosely synchronous libraries we mean libraries that are essentially single program, multiple data. They compute on analogous parts of a dataset, however complex or irregular, and occasionally communicate. Perhaps this communication is collective; perhaps it is just selective point-to-point transfers. In any event, the number of messages produced and consumed is well characterized in advance for such libraries; and most often, both the size and sources for all messages are anticipated at the time the program is written. That processes may “get ahead” of other processes between synchronizing communications is the reason for the term loosely synchronous [51]. Also included in this model is the idea that certain processes may send messages and continue even though their counterpart has failed to complete a receive; for this purpose, we use MPI send routines that are nonblocking.

Particular strategies are now available to the library writer because of features in MPI:

- Duplicate communicators for safe communication space when entering calls to parallel libraries (`MPI_Comm_dup`, `MPI_Comm_create`).
- Define distributed structures based on communicators.
- Use MPI-defined virtual topology information to make algorithms easier to understand (e.g., `MPI_Cart_create`).
- Augment virtual topology technology as needed (e.g., topology hierarchies, as in Section 6.3.1).
- Use attributes on communicators (called attribute caching) when adding additional collective operations to a communicator (Section 6.2).
- If the library should handle any errors reported by an MPI routine (for example, to provide a more application-specific error message), attach a different error handler to the library’s private communicator (see Section 7.7).

A number of mechanisms used in libraries before MPI to achieve correctness are no longer necessary and can be safely discarded:

- It is no longer necessary to publish tag usage by the library to avoid tag conflicts with user code. If the library uses its own communicator, both it and the user have access to a full range of tags.
- It is no longer necessary to make a parallel library mimic the behavior of a sequential library by synchronizing at the entry and exit of each parallel call in order to achieve quiescence. Communicators local to the library ensure that no library message will be intercepted by user code or vice versa.
- There is no need to restrict the library programming model to nonoverlapping process group assumptions, since communicators with overlapping groups pose no particular problem for MPI libraries.
- Many existing libraries work only over “all” processors (processes) of a user’s allocation. With MPI it is easy to write a library so that it can use whatever group of processes is specified when it is called.

## 6.6 Examples of Libraries

One of the hopes of the MPI Forum was that the features in MPI intended for writing libraries would, in fact, enable the creation of portable libraries, allowing parallel programmers to use ever more powerful constructs in building their programs.

This hope has indeed been realized, and many large applications make use of MPI primarily or even entirely through widely used libraries such as FFTW [46], PETSc [24], ScaLAPACK [28], Trilinos [12], SPRNG [9], and ParMETIS [8]. This is a very abbreviated list.

In some cases, you may find libraries that are simple ports of libraries written for previous message-passing systems. These can be useful but, for the reasons given at the beginning of this chapter, may require care in their use. The most common limitation is for a library to use `MPI_COMM_WORLD` for all communication. A library that uses MPI to properly avoid the possible interference of messages in the library with ones outside the library will use either `MPI_Comm_dup` or one of the other communicator construction routines (such as `MPI_Cart_create`), an explicit communicator argument, or `MPI_Barrier` to separate library messages from nonlibrary messages. You can often use the Unix command `nm` to discover what routines are used in a library. For example, for a static library,

```
nm /usr/local/lib/libpetsc.a | grep 'U _MPI_'
```

lists all of the MPI routines used in the library `libpetsc.a`. In many cases, a similar command will work with shared libraries, though you need to make sure you apply the command to the library, not to a link that points at the library. Depending on the exact format of the output of the `nm` command, the command

```
nm /usr/local/lib/libpetsc.a | grep -i MPI_ | \
    awk '{print $8}' | sort | uniq
```

will print a sorted list containing the MPI routines in use (along with other symbols containing `MPI_`). If this list contains only a subset of the MPI point-to-point functions (e.g., `MPI_Send` and `MPI_Recv`), along with the communicator information functions `MPI_Comm_size` and `MPI_Comm_rank`, then you know that the library does not use the MPI features for providing communication safety and hence must be used with care.

## 6.7 Application: Nuclear Green’s Function Monte Carlo

Our application in this chapter illustrates the use of an MPI-based parallel library to hide some of the complexity of MPI programming by providing a higher-level programming model. Sophisticated use of MPI inside the library provides scalability to the application.

A major goal in nuclear physics is to understand how nuclear binding, stability, and structure arise from the underlying interactions between individual nucleons. In the past decade considerable progress has been made in the development of approaches to the nuclear many-body problem for light nuclei. Physicists from Los Alamos and Argonne National Laboratories developed the nuclear Green’s Function Monte Carlo (GFMC) method years ago but recently needed to scale it for execution on more processors than before, in order to enable nuclear theory computations for carbon-12, carbon’s most important isotope.

In GFMC calculations the nuclear quantum-mechanical wave function is expressed as a vector of components describing the state of each nucleon. All the components are functions of the positions of all of the nucleons. The total numbers of components in the vectors are 16, 160, 1,792, 21,504, and 267,168 for helium-4, lithium-6, beryllium-8, boron-10, and carbon-12, respectively. This exponential growth in components constrains the GFMC method to light nuclei; carbon-12 is the current limit.

GFMC starts with an approximate wave function and systematically improves it by damping out “contaminants.” During this process, the nuclear binding energy computed with the wave function decreases until the remaining contamination is

smaller than the Monte Carlo statistical errors, and the calculation is then stopped. The improvement (propagation) is done in a series of small steps. Each step requires a new  $3A$ -dimensional integral ( $A$  is the number of nucleons). Thus the whole GFMC calculation is a huge integral, typically of more than 10,000 dimensions, which is done by a Monte Carlo method. Various tests indicate that the GFMC calculations of binding energies have errors of only 1–2%. As Monte Carlo samples are propagated, they can wander into regions of low importance and be discarded. Or they can find areas of large importance and will then be multiplied. Hence, the number of computed samples fluctuates during the calculation.

The problem’s large size demands the use of the largest available computers. The GFMC program was written in the mid-1990s using MPI, and until 2008 its parallel structure was largely unchanged. Because of the fluctuating number of samples, the method depended on the complete evaluation of several (preferably more than 10) Monte Carlo samples on each MPI rank. These fluctuations also required the work to be periodically redistributed over the ranks. For carbon-12, only about 15,000 samples are needed, so using the many 10,000s of nodes on forefront computers such as Argonne’s IBM Blue Gene/P and Blue Gene/Q requires a finer-grained parallelization in which one sample is computed on many ranks. The ADLB library was developed to expedite this approach.

The ADLB (Asynchronous Dynamic Load Balancing) library [86] was initially motivated by the needs of GFMC, but is more general-purpose in its functionality and has been used in a number of other applications as well. (ADLB can be obtained from [11].) Its basic idea is to create an environment for expressing parallel algorithms in a manager-worker framework like that in our early example in Section 3.6, but utilizing an abstraction that allows a more scalable implementation. The plan is to replace the explicit manager process by an abstract pool of work units, which may be implemented in a variety of ways. Instead of *sending* “ready” messages and results to the manager and *receiving* work units to work on from it, the worker processes *put* requests and results into the work pool and *get* work units from it. PI communication takes place behind the scenes. In one implementation of ADLB, a (potentially large) number of intercommunicating “ADLB server” processes manage the work pool. Work unit types and priorities allow one to construct sophisticated algorithms within this simple application programming interface. This is done in GFMC.

As the project started, GFMC was running with good efficiency on up to 2,048 MPI ranks. MPI calls were used between the manager rank and worker ranks to coordinate the workers, direct them to periodically exchange work to maintain load balancing, and collect and average the Monte Carlo samples. This general structure

has been retained when using ADLB, but in addition ADLB calls were inserted to parcel work (that had all been done on one worker) to multiple workers and then collect the results. This was typically achieved by replacing a loop that computed multiple results with two loops: the first loop quickly uses ADLB's *put* to deposit work packages in the pool, and the second gathers the results with ADLB's *get*. To avoid deadlocks, The second loop also accepts work packages of the same type, so at least one worker will always be available for processing of packages. In this way, work that was done on only one MPI rank can now be spread across up to 72 ranks for the case of carbon-12.

A further problem for carbon-12 calculations on the Blue Gene computers is that there is not enough memory to use each core of a node as a separate MPI rank. The solution was to adopt a hybrid programming model in which only a few (perhaps just one) multithreaded ADLB/MPI processes are run on each node of the machine, making available up to all of each node's memory. This was accomplished by using the Fortran version of OpenMP for shared-memory parallelism within a single address space, which needed to be done only in the computationally intensive subroutines of the GFMC program. In some cases, however, this approach could not be used because different iterations of the DO loop accumulate into the same array element. In such cases an extra dimension was added to the result array so that each thread can accumulate into its own copy of the array. At the end of the loop, these copies are added together. OpenMP on the Blue Gene computers proved to be very efficient; we typically get 90% efficiency. These changes were independent of using ADLB: even in a pure MPI implementation they would have been necessary. See 7.5 for a discussion of how to use MPI and OpenMP together.

Calculations of carbon-12 on BG/Q show excellent scaling with increasing number of nodes. For example, using 8 ranks per node with 6 threads each gives scaling efficiencies of 85% and 79% for 131,072 and 262,144 ranks, respectively.

Prior to this work, a few calculations of the carbon-12 ground state had been made with the old GFMC program and merely hundreds of processors. These were necessarily simplified calculations with significant approximations that produced questionable results. The combination of BG/P (and now BG/Q) and the ADLB version of the program has completely changed this situation. We first made one very large calculation of the carbon-12 ground state using our best interaction model and none of the previously necessary approximations. This calculation was made with an extra large number of Monte Carlo samples to allow various tests of convergence of several aspects of the GFMC method. These tests showed that our standard GFMC calculation parameters for lighter nuclei were also good for carbon-12.

The results of the calculation were also encouraging. The computed binding energy of carbon-12 is 93.2 MeV, with a Monte Carlo statistical error of 0.6 MeV. Based on the convergence tests and our experience with GFMC, we estimate the systematic errors at approximately 1 MeV. Thus, this result is in excellent agreement with the experimental binding energy of 92.16 MeV.

# 7

## Other Features of MPI

This chapter describes the more advanced routines from the MPI standard that have not arisen in the discussion so far. We use the opportunity to introduce several interesting example programs.

### 7.1 Working with Global Data

Throughout this book we have been concentrating on the message-passing computational model. Some applications are more naturally written for a global memory model in which all of the parallel machine's memory is directly available to each process. In this section we discuss what is necessary in order to provide the basic functionality of the global-memory model in a distributed-memory environment, and what MPI routines might be used in doing so. The example provided here is just one way in which this may be accomplished in MPI; others include one-sided memory access, described in *Using Advanced MPI* [55], and the use of threads as message agents. We call this global data rather than shared memory because we will still require the use of MPI routine calls to access and update the global data, unlike shared memory models where simple reference and assignment are used to access and update values. What's important here is the *style* of access—in the cases we'll describe, there is data in which all processes are interested, unlike most of our previous examples where just a few processes exchanged any particular piece of information. MPI also provides a different programming model, the one-sided communication, that is well-suited to these sorts of programs. The one-sided model is covered in *Using Advanced MPI*.

#### 7.1.1 Shared Memory, Global Data, and Distributed Memory

The essential feature of the message-passing model is that at least two processes are involved in every communication; send and receive operations must be paired. The essential feature of a shared-memory model is that any process can access all the memory in the machine. On a distributed-memory architecture, where each memory address is local to a specific processor, this means that each process must be able to access the local memory of other processes, without any particular action on the part of the process whose local memory is being read or written to.

In a sense, then, every processor (CPU plus memory) must be host to two different functions: a compute process that does the main work, and a data server process that provides the other processes in the computation access to that processor's memory (see Figure 7.1). These two processes need not be separate MPI processes.

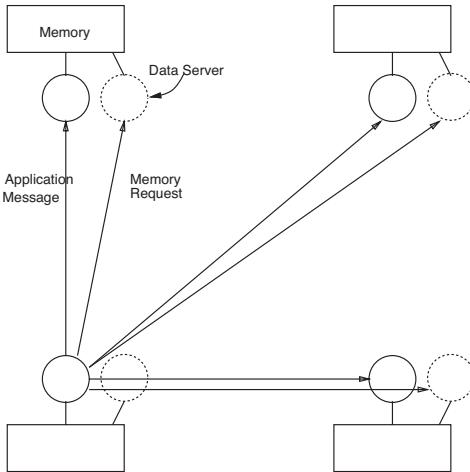


Figure 7.1: Sharing distributed memory

In many cases the machine’s operating system or message-passing software will not permit it, and in other cases the overhead of switching between the two processes is prohibitive.

Several approaches exist, depending on what level of extension to the message-passing model is offered by the underlying system. One approach is to use a separate thread to handle the data management requests. A more direct approach, called one-sided or remote memory access, is available in MPI and is discussed in *Using Advanced MPI* [55]. We use this example to illustrate the use of two-sided message passing to provide a data service—in this case, a simple counter. The same ideas can be used to provide more complex services, including ones that require more complex computation than a simple increment.

### 7.1.2 A Counter Example

We begin with the simplest possible case: simulating a single shared-memory location. Having a single “shared” variable that can be updated atomically by any process is surprisingly useful. In a true shared-memory environment, the counter is read and updated by normal memory operations, but the updating must be protected by a lock of some kind. In the message-passing environment, no lock is needed because only one process is actually updating the memory location. Hence, one easy way to implement the shared counter with MPI is to give one MPI pro-

cess the job of holding the counter and servicing requests to retrieve and update its value. To make things particularly straightforward, let us suppose we wish to implement a function `NXTVAL` that returns the value of a built-in counter that is initialized to 0 at startup. Each retrieval of its value increments the value by one. With many processes calling `NXTVAL`, it is guaranteed that no two will ever retrieve the same value and that all values of the counter will handed out consecutively, with no value being skipped.

We dedicate one process<sup>1</sup> to being the “server” for this variable. It can be set up much the same way in which we established the server for random numbers in Chapter 3. Let us encapsulate the counter by defining of set of three routines to manage it for the MPE library: `MPE_Counter_create`, `MPE_Counter_free`, and `MPE_Counter_nxtval`. `MPE_Counter_create` will be a collective operation (must be called by all processes in a given communicator); it will split off one process of the communicator’s group to hold the counter and return two new communicators. One communicator, `counter_comm`, will be used in calls to `MPE_Counter_nxtval`; the other, `smaller_comm`, will be used by the remaining processes for the main computation. `MPE_Counter_free` cleans up these communicators and ends the server process function, terminating its original call to `MPI_Counter_create`. This strategy relies on the fact that MPI, unlike many other systems, supports collective and point-to-point operations on communicators based on arbitrary subgroups of processes. Thus, the communicator `smaller_comm` is just as capable as the communicator passed to `MPI_Counter_create`, except that it has one less process available.

This client-server computation is easy enough that we can include all the necessary code here. `MPE_Counter_create` is shown in Figure 7.2, including the handling of an unexpected tag (signifying an error in our program) that uses `MPI_Abort` to cause the program to exit (see Section 7.7.4). `MPE_Counter_nxtval` is shown in Figure 7.3. `MPE_Counter_free` is shown in Figure 7.4; it is also a collective operation. The process with rank zero in the counter’s communicator sends a message to the counter process to make it call `MPE_Counter_free` as well.

We use `MPI_Comm_split` to create the smaller communicator `smaller_comm`. We do this by using the special value `MPI_UNDEFINED` as the value of `color` for the process that is the counter process and is not in the `smaller_comm` communicator. For this process, `MPI_Comm_split` returns a value of `MPI_COMM_NULL`.

---

<sup>1</sup>In some MPI implementations, multiple MPI processes per processor are allowed. The MPI standard neither requires nor prohibits it. This example makes the most sense in such an environment; otherwise, one processor is idle most of the time waiting for counter requests.

---

```

void MPE_Counter_create(MPI_Comm old_comm, MPI_Comm *smaller_comm,
                        MPI_Comm *counter_comm)
{
    int counter = 0;
    int message, done = 0, myid, numprocs, server, color;
    MPI_Status status;

    MPI_Comm_size(old_comm, &numprocs);
    MPI_Comm_rank(old_comm, &myid);
    server = numprocs-1; /* last proc is server */
    MPI_Comm_dup(old_comm, counter_comm); /* make one new comm */
    if (myid == server) color = MPI_UNDEFINED;
    else color = 0;
    MPI_Comm_split(old_comm, color, myid, smaller_comm);

    if (myid == server) { /* I am the server */
        while (!done) {
            MPI_Recv(&message, 1, MPI_INT, MPI_ANY_SOURCE,
                        MPI_ANY_TAG, *counter_comm, &status);
            if (status.MPI_TAG == REQUEST) {
                MPI_Send(&counter, 1, MPI_INT, status.MPI_SOURCE,
                           VALUE, *counter_comm);
                counter++;
            }
            else if (status.MPI_TAG == GOAWAY) {
                done = 1;
            }
            else {
                fprintf(stderr, "bad tag %d sent to MPE counter\n",
                         status.MPI_TAG);
                MPI_Abort(*counter_comm, 1);
            }
        }
        MPE_Counter_free(smaller_comm, counter_comm);
    }
}

```

---

Figure 7.2: MPE\_Counter\_create

---

```

int MPE_Counter_nxtval(MPI_Comm counter_comm, int *value)
{
    int server, numprocs;
    MPI_Comm_size(counter_comm, &numprocs);
    server = numprocs-1;
    MPI_Send(NULL, 0, MPI_INT, server, REQUEST, counter_comm);
    MPI_Recv(value, 1, MPI_INT, server, VALUE, counter_comm,
               MPI_STATUS_IGNORE);
    return 0;
}

```

---

Figure 7.3: MPE\_Counter\_nxtval

---

```

int MPE_Counter_free(MPI_Comm *smaller_comm,
                      MPI_Comm *counter_comm)
{
    int myid, numprocs;
    MPI_Comm_rank(*counter_comm, &myid);
    MPI_Comm_size(*counter_comm, &numprocs);
    /* Make sure that all requests have been serviced */
    if (myid == 0)
        MPI_Send(NULL, 0, MPI_INT, numprocs-1, GOAWAY,
                   *counter_comm);
    MPI_Comm_free(counter_comm);
    if (*smaller_comm != MPI_COMM_NULL) {
        MPI_Comm_free(smaller_comm);
    }
    return 0;
}

```

---

Figure 7.4: Code for MPE\_Counter\_free

All other processes are placed in the new communicator; because we used `myid` as the `key` argument, they are ordered in `smaller_comm` the same as in `old_comm`.

### 7.1.3 The Shared Counter Using Polling Instead of an Extra Process

The disadvantage of the implementation we have just described is, of course, that one process is “wasted” minding the counter when it could perhaps be used in computation. To get around this disadvantage, this process must do useful work and manage the counter simultaneously. One way to do so within the restrictions

---

```
int MPI_Rsend(const void* buf, int count, MPI_Datatype datatype, int dest, int tag,
              MPI_Comm comm)

int MPI_Iprobe(int source, int tag, MPI_Comm comm, int *flag, MPI_Status *status)
```

---

Table 7.1: C bindings for MPI routines in counter example

---

<b>MPI_RSEND</b> (buf, count, datatype, dest, tag, comm, ierror)
<type> buf(*)
integer count, datatype, dest, tag, comm, ierror
<b>MPI_IPROBE</b> (source, tag, comm, flag, status, ierror)
logical flag
integer source, tag, comm, status(MPI_STATUS_SIZE), ierror

---

Table 7.2: Fortran bindings for MPI routines in counter example

of the message-passing model, where all communication requires explicit receives, is to periodically probe the system to see whether a request for “counter service” has arrived. This is called *polling*. If a message *has* arrived, the message is received and responded to; otherwise the computation is resumed. The check can be carried out with a call to `MPI_Iprobe`, which determines whether messages have arrived that match a source, tag, and communicator given as arguments. The difference between using `MPI_Test` and using `MPI_Iprobe` is that `MPI_Test` is associated with a specific nonblocking send or receive operation that created a request. In particular, in the case of the receive, this means that the buffer has already been supplied by the user program. `MPI_Iprobe` (and its blocking version, `MPI_Probe`), on the other hand, are not associated with a particular request. Rather, they check for receipt of messages arriving with certain characteristics. To periodically check for counter requests and service them, then, the application program periodically calls

---

```
MPE_Counter_service(comm)
```

---

where `comm` is the communicator built for use by the counter. Let us suppose that this time we let process 0 be responsible for the counter and define `COUNTER` as the tag to be used in counter-related communication. The code for `MPE_Counter_service` is shown in Figure 7.5. Assorted generalizations are of course possible (multiple counters, separate communicators), but we show here just the simplest case.

---

```

void MPE_Counter_service(MPI_Comm comm)
{
    static int counter = 0;
    int requester, flag;
    MPI_Status status;
    /* Process all pending messages */
    do {
        MPI_Iprobe(MPI_ANY_SOURCE, COUNTER, comm, &flag, &status);
        if (flag) {
            requester = status.MPI_SOURCE;
            MPI_Recv(MPI_BOTTOM, 0, MPI_INT, requester, COUNTER,
                      comm, MPI_STATUS_IGNORE);
            counter++;
            MPI_Send(&counter, 1, MPI_INT, requester,
                       COUNTER, comm);
        }
    } while (flag);
}

```

---

Figure 7.5: MPE\_Counter\_service

The programmer is responsible for seeing that this routine gets called often enough by the server process to service requests. One way to do this might be to use the profiling interface described in Section 7.6 to intercept MPI calls and probe for messages. Another way is to create a separate thread that does nothing but call MPE\_Counter\_service. Ensuring that the communication system responds to requests is a deep subject, often discussed under the general name of *ensuring progress* or just *progress*. The MPI library itself must decide how to respond to incoming data, and the specific choice made by the implementors is unlikely to be optimal for all applications. Thus, you may see applications calling **MPI\_Iprobe** or **MPI\_Test** “to ensure progress”. In this case, they are doing for the MPI implementation what calling MPE\_Counter\_service does for the nxtval service.

The requests for the counter service themselves are made with

---

```

MPI_Send(NULL, 0, MPI_INT, 0, COUNTER, comm);
MPI_Recv(&val, 1, MPI_INT, 0, COUNTER, comm, MPI_STATUS_IGNORE);

```

---

Note the explicit known server and tag. The count field in the send is 0 because no data is associated with the request; the tag is enough. Note that we also could have used **MPI\_Sendrecv** here.

### 7.1.4 Fairness in Message Passing

In the preceding example, one process that makes a large number of requests very quickly can prevent other processes from receiving counter values. For example, consider what happens in Figure 7.5 if `MPI_Iprobe` always returns the process with the lowest rank in the communicator that matches the source, tag, and communicator values. If the process with rank zero, for example, makes many requests for the counter in a short period of time, the code in Figure 7.5 will give preference to that process over other processes with larger rank. MPI does not guarantee that `MPI_Recv` or `MPI_Iprobe` will be *fair* in selecting a message when a wildcard such as `MPI_ANY_SOURCE` or `MPI_ANY_TAG` is used.

What behavior would we like in this case? Basically, we don't want any one process to monopolize the counter; we want `MPE_Counter_service` to respond to all processes that are requesting a value once before responding to a process that "has come back for seconds." To do this, we need to eliminate the use of `MPI_ANY_SOURCE`. But if we do this, we must turn the call to `MPI_Iprobe` into

---

```
for (rank=0; rank<size; rank++) {
    MPI_Iprobe(rank, COUNTER, comm, &flag, &status);
    if (flag) { ... }
}
```

---

This will work, but there is a better way in MPI. Instead of using `MPI_Iprobe` followed by `MPI_Recv`, we can use `MPI_Irecv`, followed by `MPI_Test`. Since every receive in MPI must have a specified source (or `MPI_PROC_NULL`), we need one `MPI_Irecv` for each process in the communicator. Then we want `MPE_Counter_service` to test each of these receive requests and determine which are ready; those processes are sent the updated counter value.

We could use code similar to the loop with `MPI_Iprobe`, but MPI provides a single function that does just what we want: `MPI_Testsome`. This routine tests each of the requests and indicates which of them have completed. It returns the number of completed requests in `outcount`, the indices of the completed requests in `array_of_indices`, and the corresponding status values in the first `outcount` elements of `array_of_statuses`. This "fair" version of `MPE_Counter_service` is shown in Figure 7.6.

Because this example uses `MPI_Irecv`, the array of requests being tested by `MPE_Counter_service` must be created first. The routine `MPE_Counter_service_setup` is used for that purpose.

The approach arguably has some awkward pieces. The global variable `reqs` is one. As a result of using this global variable, this version of `MPE_Counter_`

---

```

/* We will see later how to remove the global variable reqs */
static MPI_Request *reqs;
void MPE_Counter_service(MPI_Comm comm)
{
    static int counter = 0;
    int requester, outcount, size, i;
    MPI_Status *statuses;
    int *indices;

    MPI_Comm_size(comm, &size);
    /* Allocate space for arrays */
    statuses = (MPI_Status *)malloc(size * sizeof(MPI_Status));
    indices = (int *)malloc(size * sizeof(int));
    /* Process all pending messages FAIRLY */
    do {
        MPI_Testsome(size, reqs, &outcount, indices, statuses);
        if (outcount) {
            for (i=0; i<outcount; i++) {
                requester = statuses[i].MPI_SOURCE;
                counter++;
                MPI_Send(&counter, 1, MPI_INT, requester,
                           COUNTER, comm);
                /* Repost the nonblocking receive */
                MPI_Irecv(MPI_BOTTOM, 0, MPI_INT, requester,
                            COUNTER, comm, &reqs[indices[i]]);
            }
        }
    } while (outcount);
    free(statuses); free(indices);
}

void MPE_Counter_service_setup(MPI_Comm comm)
{
    int i, size;
    MPI_Comm_size(comm, &size);
    for (i=0; i<size; i++) {
        MPI_Irecv(MPI_BOTTOM, 0, MPI_INT, i, COUNTER, comm,
                    &reqs[i]);
    }
}

```

---

Figure 7.6: A fair version of MPE\_Counter\_service

service can be used with only one communicator at a time. In addition, the MPE\_Counter\_service routine must use `malloc` and `free` to provide temporary arrays for `MPI_Testsome`. This is a place where attributes attached to the communicator, using the approach from Section 6.2, are a natural and powerful way to improve the usability of a library routine.

Another awkward issue is all of the MPI requests created by the call to `MPI_Irecv`. In this code, a receive is always preposted so that it is ready for an incoming messages. But what happens when we're done with the counter? Each process will be one request for every process in the communicator. What we need is a way to tell MPI to discard these receive requests. MPI provides `MPI_Cancel` for just this purpose. For a receive request, cancellation checks to see if the receive request has been satisfied. If not, then the request is removed from the queue of posted receives<sup>2</sup>; thus, once a receive request is canceled, it cannot be matched by a subsequent send. In this case, the cancel succeeds. However, it is possible that the request has already been matched by a send. In that case, the cancel attempt will fail. In both cases, it is necessary to complete the request with any of the request completion routines. To determine if the cancellation was successful, the routine `MPI_Test_cancelled` should be called. A typical use of `MPI_Cancel` is

---

```

...
MPI_Cancel(&req);
MPI_Wait(&req, &status);
MPI_Test_cancelled(&status, &flag);
if (flag) {
    ... message was successfully canceled
}
```

---

Note that the `MPI_Wait` call is guaranteed to complete—either the message was successfully canceled, or the message has been matched, and the message will be delivered. The bindings for these routines are shown in Tables 7.3 and 7.4.

The approach used by MPI to provide fairness in message passing is very similar to the approach used in Unix to provide fairness in handling read and write operations with file descriptors. See Chapter 9 for details.

### 7.1.5 Exploiting Request-Response Message Patterns

In the preceding two sections, “shared memory” has consisted of a single value held by a single process. At this point, however, it is not difficult to see how to generalize

---

<sup>2</sup>This is a conceptual queue—different MPI implementations make use different strategies, but they will all act *as if* there is a queue of posted receives.

---

```
int MPI_Testsome(int incount, MPI_Request array_of_requests[], int *outcount,
                  int array_of_indices[], MPI_Status array_of_statuses[])
int MPI_Cancel(MPI_Request *request)
int MPI_Test_cancelled(const MPI_Status *status, int *flag)
```

---

Table 7.3: C bindings for testing and cancelling requests

---

<b>MPI_TESTSOME</b> (incount, array_of_requests, outcount, array_of_indices, array_of_statuses, ierror)
integer incount, array_of_requests(*), outcount, array_of_indices(*), array_of_statuses(MPI_STATUS_SIZE,*), ierror
<b>MPI_CANCEL</b> (request, ierror)
integer request, ierror
<b>MPI_TEST_CANCELLED</b> (status, flag, ierror)
integer status(MPI_STATUS_SIZE), ierror
logical flag

---

Table 7.4: Fortran bindings for testing and cancelling requests

the concept to treat all, or nearly all, the machine’s memory as shared. If multiple processes per processor are allowed, then we can use the approach of Section 7.1.2, where the memory of each node is managed by a separate process. If they are not, or we cannot tolerate the overhead of constantly switching processes on a single processor, then we can use the approach of Section 7.1.3, at the expense of having to call the service routine often enough to provide timely service to requests. It is precisely the desire to avoid both of these drawbacks (multiple processes per node or frequent calls to a “polling” routine) that has motivated the approaches that go beyond the message-passing model. We touch on these in Chapter 10.

There is one way in which we might be able to improve the performance of the mechanism we have used here. We note that whenever a process requests data from another one, it knows that the request will be answered. Similarly, the “server” process knows that every request is expecting a reply. This means that the request for data, which earlier had the form

---

<b>MPI_Send</b>
<b>MPI_Recv</b>

---

can be recoded as

---

```
MPI_Irecv
MPI_Send
MPI_Wait
```

---

On some architectures, particularly more loosely coupled systems that use networks to communicate data between processes, the protocol that takes place between sending and receiving processes can be greatly simplified if the sending process can assume that the matching receive has already been posted. The reason the protocol can be simpler is that if the sending side knows that a buffer has been supplied (this is the main function of `MPI_Irecv`), any negotiations between the processes over buffer space can be bypassed. In fact, some network approaches, such as remote direct memory access (RDMA) that are supported by networks such as InfiniBand, require that receive buffers exist, and require additional coding and message traffic to ensure that these buffers are available. MPI provides a special form of the send for this situation. If the sender is assured that the receive has already been posted, then it may use `MPI_Rsend`. (The “R” is for “receiver ready;”; the MPI standard calls this kind of send a “ready send”.) The MPI implementation may treat this as a normal send (the semantics are the same as those of `MPI_Send`) but is allowed to optimize the protocol if it can. If the corresponding receive is *not* posted, then this is treated as a programmer error, and MPI’s behavior is undefined in this case. Because it is important when using `MPI_Rsend` to consider both the sending and receiving side, we show a sketch of the code for the two processes below.

Requester	Server
<code>MPI_Irecv</code>	
<code>MPI_Send</code>	<code>MPI_Recv</code>
<code>MPI_Wait</code>	<code>MPI_Rsend</code>

A further refinement is to use `MPI_Rsend` in both the requester and the server.

Note that `MPI_Rsend` should be used only when it is known that the receive is already issued. For the most part, message-passing programming purposely allows few opportunities for writing code whose correct execution depends on the exact timing and order of events, but `MPI_Rsend` makes it possible to write code that is formally incorrect (because the program does not guarantee that `MPI_Rsend` is never called unless the matching `MPI_Recv` has already been issued) but that runs correctly most of the time. This means that `MPI_Rsend` should be used only when it can be shown to improve performance, and only with great care. In addition, few implementations currently exploit the opportunities offered to an MPI

implementation, though at least one does, and performance tests have shown some benefits to using it on that implementation of MPI.

## 7.2 Advanced Collective Operations

In the book so far, we have introduced new collective operations of MPI as a consequence of trying to create a parallel algorithm, code, or library. At this stage, a few routines remain that we haven't needed in our palette of examples. Since these routines are important, and may be just what is needed to get the job done, we present them here all at once. In this book, we restrict ourselves to the collective routines defined in MPI-1 and MPI-2. MPI-3 added two more categories of collectives: nonblocking and neighborhood collectives. These are described in the companion volume, *Using Advanced MPI* [55].

### 7.2.1 Data Movement

MPI provides many operations for collective data movement. We have already seen `MPI_Bcast` and the gather routines. In addition to these, MPI provides the opposite of gather, called scatter (`MPI_Scatter` and `MPI_Scatterv`), and a kind of “all scatter” called `alltoall` (`MPI_Alltoall` and `MPI_Alltoallv`). MPI-2 introduced an additional variation of `MPI_Alltoallv` called `MPI_Alltoallw`. These are illustrated in Figure 7.7.

### 7.2.2 Collective Computation

We have already seen several collective computation routines; `MPI_Reduce` performs a reduction of data from each process onto the specified root process. We have seen the use of `MPI_SUM` as the operation given to `MPI_Reduce` to sum up entries from all of the processes in a communicator. MPI provides a number of additional operations, shown in Table 7.5, that can be used with any of the collective computation routines. Most of these are self-explanatory. The last two, `MPI_MAXLOC` and `MPI_MINLOC`, are similar to `MPI_MAX` and `MPI_MIN` except that they also return the rank of the process where the maximum or minimum was found (if several processes have the maximum or minimum, the rank of the first one is returned). The datatype that is used for `MPI_MAXLOC` and `MPI_MINLOC` contains both the value and the rank; see the MPI standard or the implementation's man pages on `MPI_MAXLOC` and `MPI_MINLOC` for more details.

Several additional predefined operations were introduced in MPI-2 that are intended for use with the one-sided communication functions. These include `MPI_`

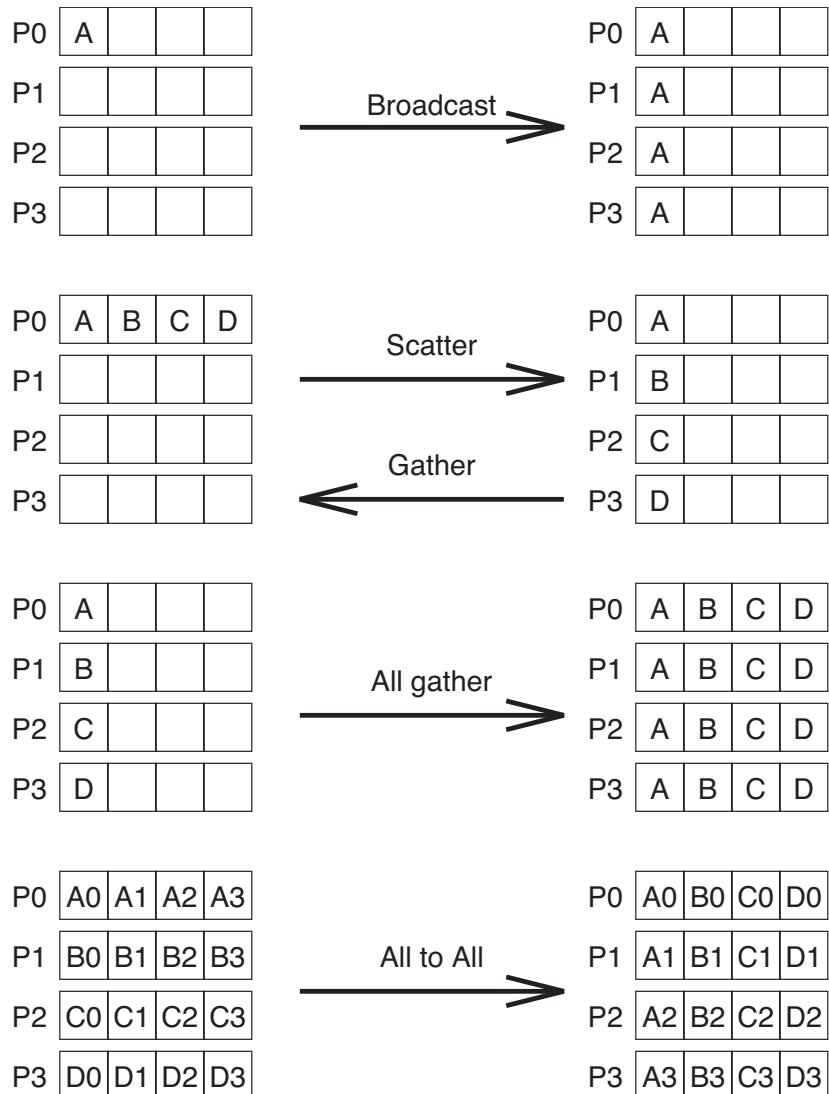


Figure 7.7: Schematic representation of collective data movement in MPI

MPI Name	Operation
MPI_MAX	Maximum
MPI_MIN	Minimum
MPI_PROD	Product
MPI_SUM	Sum
MPI_LAND	Logical and
MPI_LOR	Logical or
MPI_LXOR	Logical exclusive or (xor)
MPI_BAND	Bitwise and
MPI_BOR	Bitwise or
MPI_BXOR	Bitwise xor
MPI_MAXLOC	Maximum value and location
MPI_MINLOC	Minimum value and location

Table 7.5: Predefined operations for MPI collective computation

---

```
int MPI_Op_create(MPI_User_function *function, int commute, MPI_Op *op)
int MPI_Op_free(MPI_Op *op)
typedef int MPI_User_function(void *invec, void *inoutvec, int *len,
                           MPI_Datatype *datatype)
```

---

Table 7.6: C bindings for defining collective computation

REPLACE and MPI\_NO\_OP. The use of these is described in *Using Advanced MPI* [55].

**User-defined operations.** MPI also allows you to define your own operations that can be passed to the collective computation routines. For example, you may want to perform a more complex arithmetic operation (e.g., arguments are matrices to be multiplied together). A new operation is defined by using the routine MPI\_Op\_create; the output (third argument) of this routine is a new operation (in C, of type MPI\_Op) that can be passed to routines such as MPI\_Allreduce. There are two input values; the first is a function, and the second indicates whether the operation is commutative. The form of the function is the same for C and Fortran; the bindings are shown in Tables 7.6 and 7.7. A user-defined operation is deleted by calling MPI\_Op\_free.

---

<b>MPI_OP_CREATE</b> (function, commute, op, ierror)
external function
logical commute
integer op, ierror
<b>MPI_OP_FREE</b> (op, ierror)
integer op, ierror
<b>User_function</b> (invec, inoutvec, len, datatype)
<type> invec(*),inoutvec(*)
integer len, datatype

---

Table 7.7: Fortran bindings for defining collective computation. The `User_function` is not part of MPI; rather, it shows the calling sequence for the `function` argument to `MPI_OP_CREATE`.

The second argument to `MPI_Op_create` allows you to indicate that the operation is not commutative; that is,  $a \text{ op } b$  does not give the same results as  $b \text{ op } a$ . Matrix multiplication is a well-known example of a noncommutative operation. The presence of the commutative flag allows an MPI implementation more freedom in determining the order in which it computes the result.

**Other collective computation operations.** MPI provides several other collective computation operations that users may find valuable. One is `MPI_Scan`. This is much like an `MPI_Allreduce` in that the values are formed by combining values contributed by each process and that each process receives a result. The difference is that the result returned by the process with rank  $r$  is the result of operating on the input elements on processes with rank  $0, 1, \dots, r$ . If the operation is `MPI_SUM`, `MPI_Scan` computes all of the partial sums. There is also a variation of `MPI_Scan` called `MPI_Exscan`. This is an exclusive scan: whereas in `MPI_Scan` the value returned on each process includes the contribution from that process, in `MPI_Exscan` the value of the calling process is not included in the result returned on that process. That is, the result of `MPI_Exscan` on the process with rank  $r$  is the result of applying the specified operation on the values contributed by processes  $0, 1, \dots, r - 1$ .

As an example of where `MPI_Scan` and `MPI_Exscan` can be used, consider the problem of balancing the work (computational effort) across processors. For example, in the one-dimensional decomposition that we used in Chapter 4, we can order all processes by rank and consider the work “to the left” relative to the total

work. That is, if the work is evenly distributed, each process will find that the sum of work to the left, not counting the current process, will be `rank * total_work / nprocs`. The following code provides a simple sketch:

---

```
t1 = MPI_Wtime();
... work ...
my_time = MPI_Wtime() - t1;
MPI_Scan(&my_time, &time_to_me, 1, MPI_DOUBLE,
          MPI_SUM, MPI_COMM_WORLD);
total_work = time_to_me; // Only for the last process
MPI_Bcast(&total_work, 1, MPI_DOUBLE, nprocs-1, MPI_COMM_WORLD);
fair_share = (rank + 1) * total_work / nprocs;
if (fair_share > time_to_me + EPS) {
    ... shift work to rank-1
}
else if (fair_share < time_to_me - EPS) {
    ... shift work to rank+1
}
```

---

With `MPI_Exscan`, the `fair_share` term would use `rank` instead of `rank + 1`.

The other collective computation routine is `MPI_Reduce_scatter`. The effect of this routine is to combine an `MPI_Reduce` and a `MPI_Scatterv`. This routine can be used to perform multiple `MPI_Reduce` operations concurrently and, in a sophisticated MPI implementation, can run faster than using `MPI_Reduce` and `MPI_Scatterv`. To see how this can be used, consider the problem of forming a matrix-vector product where the matrix and the vector are distributed across the processes. The vectors are distributed as follows: each process has some contiguous section of the vector, and these sections are in rank order. That is, process zero has the first chunk of values, process one the next chunk, and so on. More precisely, if the full vector is of size  $n$  and there are  $nprocs$  processes, then process zero has elements (starting from 1)  $1:n/nprocs$ , the second has elements  $n/nprocs+1:2n/nprocs$ , and so on (we are assuming that  $nprocs$  divides  $n$  here for simplicity).

The matrix is distributed across the processes by *columns*: the process with rank zero has columns  $1:n/nprocs$  and all of the rows, process one has columns  $n/nprocs+1:2n/nprocs$ , and so on. The distribution of the matrix and the vectors across the processes is shown in Figure 7.8.

We want to form the matrix-vector product  $y = Ax$ . Let  $A_i$  denote the part of the matrix  $A$  that is on process  $i$ , and let  $x_i$  denote the part of the vector  $x$  that is on process  $i$ . Because we have distributed  $A$  across the processes by column, we

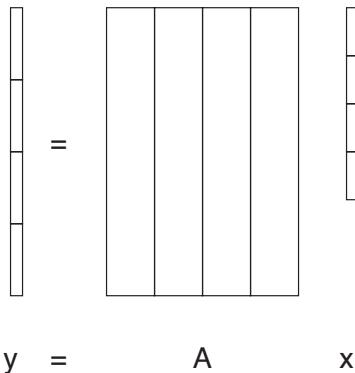


Figure 7.8: Distribution of a matrix and vector across a communicator

can form the product  $w^i = A_i x_i$  on each process independently, that is, without any communication with any other process. The result vector  $w^i$  is a vector of size  $n$ , not  $n/nprocs$ ; we use a superscript  $i$  to remind us that  $w^i$  is *not* the part of  $w$  on the  $i^{th}$  process but is instead the result from the local matrix-vector product on the  $i^{th}$  process. To get the result  $y$ , we must combine all of the contributions  $w^i$ . Specifically, on process zero we must sum up the first  $n/nprocs$  elements from all of the  $w^i$ 's, on the second process, we must sum up the second  $n/nprocs$  elements of the  $w^i$ 's, and so forth. This is what `MPI_Reduce_scatter` does. It takes a `sendbuf` and an array of counts `recvcounts` and forms a result in `recvbuf` by combining the first `recvcounts(1)` (in Fortran notation) elements from `sendbuf` on all processes to the `recvbuf` on process zero; on process one, the `recvcounts(2)` elements in `sendbuf`, starting at the `recvcounts(1)+1^{th}` element are combined from all processes, and so on. This is just what we need to form  $y_i$  from the corresponding parts of the  $w^k$ 's. The code for the matrix-vector product is shown in Figure 7.9. Bindings for `MPI_Reduce_scatter` are shown in Tables 7.8 and 7.9. For the case where every element of the `recvcounts` array has the same value, there is a variant of `MPI_Reduce_scatter` that takes a single scale parameter rather than an array for the counts; this routine is `MPI_Reduce_scatter_block`.

### 7.2.3 Common Errors and Misunderstandings

Four errors are more common than others in using the collective routines. The first two apply to all collective routines. MPI requires that collective routines on the

---

```

subroutine matvec(n, m, lmatrix, lx, ly, counts, comm)
use mpi
integer n, m, comm, counts(*)
real lmatrix(n,m), lx(m), ly(m)
integer i, j
real sum
real, allocatable :: tmp(:)

allocate (tmp(n))

! Perform the local matrix-vector multiply
! Should use the level-2 BLAS routine SGEMV
do i=1,n
    sum = 0
    do j=1,m
        sum = sum + lmatrix(i,j)*lx(j)
    enddo
    tmp(i) = sum
enddo

! Perform the local matrix-vector product
call MPI_REDUCE_SCATTER(tmp, ly, counts, &
                         MPI_REAL, MPI_SUM, comm, ierr)
deallocate (tmp)

! We're done!
end

```

---

Figure 7.9: Dense matrix-vector multiplication using MPI\_Reduce\_scatter

---

```
int MPI_Reduce_scatter(const void *sendbuf, void *recvbuf, const int recvcounts[],
                      MPI_Datatype datatype, MPI_Op op, MPI_Comm comm)
```

---

Table 7.8: C binding for MPI\_Reduce\_scatter

---

```
MPI_REDUCE_SCATTER(sendbuf, recvbuf, recvcounts,datatype, op, comm, ierror)
<type> sendbuf(*), recvbuf(*)
integer recvcounts(*), datatype, op, comm, ierror
```

---

Table 7.9: Fortran binding for MPI\_Reduce\_scatter

same communicator be called by all processes in that communicator, in the same order. The most common error that violates this rule is using a collective operation within one branch of an if-test on rank and either forgetting or misordering the collective routine in the other branch of the if.

The second common error is to assume that because a routine is collective, all processes making a collective call will complete that call at (roughly) the same time. Even MPI\_Barrier guarantees only that no process will exit the barrier before all have entered; MPI says nothing about how far apart in time different processes may be when they exit the barrier. In collective routines such as MPI\_Bcast, the root process may exit the call, having performed its task, before some or any of the other processes enter the collective routine. In the MPI standard, the collective routines are allowed to be synchronizing, but, with the exception of MPI\_Barrier, are not required to be synchronizing. Of course some routines, such as MPI\_Allreduce, because of their very definition, cannot complete on any process until all processes have contributed their data.

The third common error applies to all the routines where it might make sense to use the input buffer as the output buffer. A good example is MPI\_Allreduce, where code like the following is often desired:

---

```
call MPI_ALLREDUCE(a, a, 1, MPI_REAL, MPI_SUM, comm, ierror)
```

---

Unfortunately, this violates the Fortran standard, and hence MPI cannot allow it. For consistency, MPI also prohibits this in C code. It is possible to use a special symbol, MPI\_IN\_PLACE, for the send (source) buffer, as described in Section 6.4. See Appendix C for more details.

The last common error is specific to MPI\_Bcast. All processes, both the root (sender) and the other processes (those receiving the data), must call MPI\_Bcast. Some message-passing systems had a “multicast” or “multisend” routine that sent messages to many processes; these processes used a regular receive call to receive the message. The MPI Forum considered such a “multisend” but felt that it would interfere with the performance of regular receives (that would now need to check for broadcasts) and the scalability of the broadcast itself.

### 7.3 Intercommunicators

Despite the convenience of communicators discussed thus far, a more general form of communicators, specifically targeted for group-to-group communication, proves a useful addition to MPI. Such “extended communicators” are called *intercommunicators* in the standard, and the regular communicators discussed thus far are more

formally called *intracomunicators*. MPI defines a minimal number of operations for these intercommunicators; these operations are, however, a powerful starting point for group-to-group communication.

Figure 7.10 illustrates the relationship of processes and groups in an intercommunicator. Each intercommunicator contains two groups. A process that is a member of an intercommunicator is, by definition, in one of these two groups. We call the group that the process is in the *local group*; the other group is called *remote group*. Accessor functions (mainly used by libraries built on top of MPI) permit queries about whether a communicator is an intercommunicator, via `MPI_Comm_test_inter`, and access to information about the remote group, via `MPI_Comm_remote_size` and `MPI_Comm_remote_group`. The local group, of which the owner of the intercommunicator is always a member, is accessible with the usual commands `MPI_Comm_size` and `MPI_Comm_group`, as before.

The remote group is the destination of messages sent with `MPI_Send` and its relatives. When sending a message, one names processes in the remote group by rank in the remote group. Messages are received with `MPI_Recv` and its relatives. The value of the `source` in the arguments to the receive call and in the `MPI_SOURCE` field of `MPI_Status` refers to a rank in the sending group (and hence remote group to the receiving process). This is illustrated in Figure 7.10.

The two groups in an intercommunicator do not overlap; that is, no process in the remote group may also be part of the local group. In MPI-1, only point-to-point communication is defined on intercommunicators, in addition to special operations used to construct and destroy them. These operations are summarized for C in Table 7.10 and for Fortran in Table 7.11. The most commonly used function is `MPI_Intercomm_create`; regular `MPI_Send` and `MPI_Recv` calls are valid with an intercommunicator as their argument, as well as the usual intracommunicator already introduced.

MPI-1 did not define general collective operations for intercommunicators. However, it is possible to turn an intercommunicator into an intracommunicator, with `MPI_Intercomm_merge`. This command provides a means to get an intracommunicator suitable for use with collective operations (as well as point-to-point operations). The operation is also summarized in the two tables just mentioned. MPI-2 did define general collective operations for intercommunicators. These exploit the two-group nature of intercommunicators, and are different from the MPI-1 intracommunicator collective operations. For example, `MPI_Bcast` on an intercommunicator sends data from one process in one group to *all* processes in the other group.

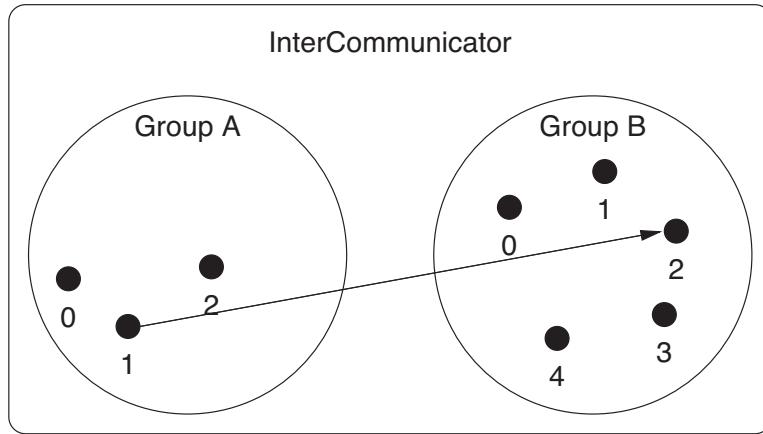


Figure 7.10: Schematic of an MPI intercommunicator. A send from process 1 of one group to process 2 of the other group is shown. From the point of view of the sending process in group A, the local group is group A and the remote group is group B. From the point of view of the receiving process (process 2 in group B), the local group is group B and the remote group is group A. All point-to-point communication in an intercommunicator takes place between the two groups that make up the intercommunicator.

---

```

int MPI_Comm_test_inter(MPI_Comm comm, int *flag)
int MPI_Comm_remote_size(MPI_Comm comm, int *size)
int MPI_Comm_remote_group(MPI_Comm comm, MPI_Group *group)
int MPI_Intercomm_create(MPI_Comm local_comm, int local_leader,
                        MPI_Comm peer_comm, int remote_leader, int tag,
                        MPI_Comm *newintercomm)
int MPI_Intercomm_merge(MPI_Comm intercomm, int high,
                      MPI_Comm *newintroncomm)

```

---

Table 7.10: C bindings for intercommunicator routines

---

```

#define ICTAG 0
int MPE_Counter_create_ic(MPI_Comm oldcomm,
                           MPI_Comm *smaller_comm,
                           MPI_Comm *counter_comm)
{
    int counter = 0, message, done = 0, myid, numprocs, server;
    int color, remote_leader_rank;
    MPI_Status status;
    MPI_Comm oldcommdup, splitcomm;

    MPI_Comm_dup(oldcomm, &oldcommdup);
    MPI_Comm_size(oldcommdup, &numprocs);
    MPI_Comm_rank(oldcommdup, &myid);
    server = numprocs-1;           /* last proc is server */

    color = (myid == server);     /* split into server and rest */
    MPI_Comm_split(oldcomm, color, myid, &splitcomm);

    /* build intercommunicator using bridge w/ oldcommdup */
    if(!color) { /* I am not the server */
        /* 1) the non-server leader process is chosen to have rank
           "0" in the peer comm. oldcommdup != rank of server
           guaranteed that this leader "0" has rank "0" in both
           oldcommdup and in this splitcomm too, by virtue of
           MPI_Comm_split
        2) server has rank "server" in oldcommdup */

        remote_leader_rank = server; /* server rank, oldcommdup */
        *smaller_comm = splitcomm; /* return new, smaller world */
    }
    else
        remote_leader_rank = 0; /* non-server leader, oldcommdup */

    MPI_Intercomm_create(splitcomm, 0, oldcommdup,
                        remote_leader_rank, ICTAG, counter_comm);
    MPI_Comm_free(&oldcommdup); /* not needed after
                                Intercomm_create */

    /* rest of code unchanged from before... */
}

```

---

Figure 7.11: MPE\_Counter\_create using intercommunicators

---

**MPI\_COMM\_TEST\_INTER**(comm, flag, ierror)  
     integer comm, ierror  
     logical flag

**MPI\_COMM\_REMOTE\_SIZE**(comm, size, ierror)  
     integer comm, size, ierror

**MPI\_COMM\_REMOTE\_GROUP**(comm, group, ierror)  
     integer comm, group, ierror

**MPI\_INTERCOMM\_CREATE**(local\_comm, local\_leader, peer\_comm, remote\_leader,  
     tag, newintercomm, ierror)  
     integer local\_comm, local\_leader, peer\_comm, remote\_leader, tag,  
     newintercomm, ierror

**MPI\_INTERCOMM\_MERGE**(intercomm, high, intracomm, ierror)  
     integer intercomm, intracomm, ierror  
     logical high

---

Table 7.11: Fortran bindings for intercommunicator routines

---

```
#define SERVER_RANK 0
int MPE_Counter_nxtval_ic(MPI_Comm counter_comm, int *value)
{
    /* always request/receive services from
       intercomm (remote) rank=0 */
    MPI_Send(NULL, 0, MPI_INT, SERVER_RANK, REQUEST, counter_comm);
    MPI_Recv(value, 1, MPI_INT, SERVER_RANK, VALUE, counter_comm,
             MPI_STATUS_IGNORE);
    return 0;
}
```

---

Figure 7.12: MPE\_Counter\_nxtval using intercommunicators

---

```

#define SERVER_RANK 0
int MPE_Counter_free_ic(MPI_Comm *smaller_comm,
                         MPI_Comm *counter_comm)
{
    int myid;
    MPI_Comm_rank(*smaller_comm, &myid);
    MPI_Barrier(*smaller_comm);
    if (myid == 0)
        MPI_Send(NULL, 0, MPI_INT, SERVER_RANK, GOAWAY,
                 *counter_comm);

    MPI_Comm_free(counter_comm);
    MPI_Comm_free(smaller_comm);

    return(0);
}

```

---

Figure 7.13: MPE\_Counter\_free using intercommunicators

**NXTVAL revisited.** Earlier in this chapter, we defined a client-server computation to provide the NXTVAL counter service. It turns out that using intercommunicators is another way to implement this service and actually simplifies the coding of some features. Therefore, we’ve reimplemented the earlier service, as displayed in Figures 7.11, 7.12, and 7.13. While the service provided is equivalent, the book-keeping of an intercommunicator is simpler, because the remote group of the clients is a server, at known rank 0. As before, the clients get their own “smaller\_comm” in which to work; unlike the earlier examples, counter\_comm is an intercommunicator. The only interaction that makes sense is for the server to communicate with the clients (and the clients with the server) when referring to counter\_comm. This provides a nice separation from any communication that might have been intended in old\_comm (which might have well been MPI\_COMM\_WORLD).

This simple example, while introducing the use of intercommunicators, does not demonstrate the convenience that they bring when both groups have, in general, more than one process. In that case, intercommunicators provide a clean way to implement “parallel-client, parallel-server” computations [110].

To give more of a flavor for intercommunicators, we outline two interesting services that could be supported by them: first, peer-oriented intercommunicators to allow separately devised “modules” to be interfaced at a higher level (an abstraction of an atmospheric/ocean model communication); second, a bulletin-board system

analogous to the Linda tuple space [37].

**Atmospheric and ocean intercommunication.** A Grand Challenge application that is often discussed is modeling the ocean and atmosphere in a single, comprehensive code. Several groups are developing such codes, or evolving them from their sequential counterparts—often the atmospheric and oceanic codes are developed separately, with the intent to couple them at a higher level later on and to transfer boundary information at the ocean-atmosphere boundary via messages.

Intercommunicators are natural for this situation. The separate codes can both work with intracomunicators, allowing them to be developed and tested separately. The intercommunicator for the ocean will have as its local group the ocean’s processes, just as they appear in the intracomunicator used for ocean-only messages. Similarly, the intercommunicator for the atmosphere will have as its local group the atmosphere’s processes. The remote group for the ocean will be the atmospheric processes that interface on the ocean, and vice versa. Other strategies are possible too, depending on the details of the communication across the boundary.

For example, assume that the two parts of the application have been written to use a specified communicator `comm` instead of `MPI_COMM_WORLD`. We’ll name the two parts `do_ocean(comm)` and `do_atmos(comm)`. There is also a routine, `ocean_and_atmos(intercomm)`, that communicates data between the ocean and atmosphere models. The main program that sets these up is shown in Figure 7.14.

Note that the result of `MPI_Comm_split` is a communicator that is either for the ocean routine (if `color = OCEAN`) or for the atmosphere routine (if `color = ATMOS`). `MPI_Comm_split` always returns either a single new communicator (if `color` is non-negative) or `MPI_COMM_NULL`.

In *Using Advanced MPI* [55], we will see how to use the MPI dynamic process features to bring together two separate MPI programs, rather than using this approach of splitting `MPI_COMM_WORLD`.

**Building a bulletin board (or Linda tuple space).** A group of parallel data servers is another possibility with intercommunicators. The Linda tuple space model provides a bulletin board of data that can be accessed by name, in the style of a virtual shared memory. In order to get reasonable scalability with this strategy, multiple processes must be involved in the process of serving these requests. Obvious operations are to place a named object into the space, to retrieve its value, or to retrieve its value and remove it. A process that is a client of the bulletin board service would have as its local group itself, or itself and others who

---

```
program main
use mpi
integer ocean_or_atmos_comm, intercomm, ocean_comm, atmos_comm
integer nprocs, rank, ierr, color, remote_leader
integer OCEAN, ATMOS
parameter (OCEAN=0,ATMOS=1)

call MPI_INIT(ierr)
call MPI_COMM_SIZE(MPI_COMM_WORLD, nprocs, ierr)
call MPI_COMM_RANK(MPI_COMM_WORLD, rank, ierr)
if (rank .lt. size/2) then
    color = OCEAN
    remote_leader = size/2
else
    color = ATMOS
    remote_leader = 0
endif
call MPI_COMM_SPLIT(MPI_COMM_WORLD, color, rank, &
    ocean_or_atmos_comm, ierr)
call MPI_INTERCOMM_CREATE(ocean_or_atmos_comm, 0, &
    MPI_COMM_WORLD, remote_leader, &
    0, intercomm, ierr)
if (color .eq. OCEAN) then
    ocean_comm = ocean_or_atmos_comm
    call do_ocean(ocean_comm)
else
    atmos_comm = ocean_or_atmos_comm
    call do_atmos(atmos_comm)
endif
call ocean_and_atmos(intercomm)
...
call MPI_FINALIZE(ierr)
end
```

---

Figure 7.14: Program to combine two applications using separate communicators

are receiving the same class, or priority of service. The remote group for such clients is the set of servers (or subset of servers) that is allowed to post and retrieve information.

A key facet of these requests is that the clients need not know *where* the data is and need not specify where it should be stored. Rather, a request will be made, possibly to a master server, which will then scatter the request. One of the servers will provide the service. The communication isolation of an intercommunicator helps with the possibility that the client receive a response from any of the servers, not just the server that took the client's original request.

## 7.4 Heterogeneous Computing

Heterogeneous computing refers to using a collection of computers of different types as a parallel computer. In many settings, a powerful parallel computer can be constructed by connecting workstations together. If workstations from several vendors are combined, however, the workstations may not share a common format for data. For example, the order of bytes within an integer may differ. Systems may even use different numbers of bytes to represent integers and floating-point values.

MPI has been designed to operate correctly in this environment. MPI ensures that if data is sent and received with MPI datatypes with the same type signature, then the correct data will be received (if the data is representable on both the sender and the receiver). No special steps need be taken to port an MPI program to a heterogeneous parallel computer. Note also that this flexibility can be provided by an MPI implementation at no cost on a homogeneous system; this helps encourage the creation of programs that are truly portable between dedicated MPPs and workstation clusters.

From the beginning, certain implementations of MPI supported heterogeneous computing, including MPICH [59] and LAM [34]. Versions were also developed that included support for more advanced security, resource, and scheduling issues; see [50] for some of the issues and [48] for a description of one such implementation.

However, few current MPI implementations support systems that do not have a common data format—the cost of creating, testing, and maintaining such an implementation has been judged too high for the small demand for this feature. This is a reflection of the convergence of the industry on a few standard formats and the fact that most users of MPI have systems that are homogeneous in data representation.

## 7.5 Hybrid Programming with MPI and OpenMP

As we mentioned in Section 1.3.1, OpenMP is a compiler-based system for shared-memory parallel programming with threads. As such it can be a convenient approach for exploiting the shared memory and multiple processing cores on the individual nodes of a machine whose overall memory is distributed among such nodes. In this case, MPI is used for the inter-node parallelism. The MPI and OpenMP implementations must cooperate with one another in order to make this work, however. A full discussion of issues related to hybrid programming is given in Chapter 6 of *Using Advanced MPI* [55]. Here we present an abbreviated form of that material. We will assume for the purposes of this section that you are at least modestly familiar with OpenMP.

The MPI standard defines four levels of thread safety, any one of which permits an MPI implementation to be compliant with the standard. Although the standard definitions are independent of any particular thread model, they have a straightforward interpretation for OpenMP. The four levels of thread safety are as follows.

**MPI\_THREAD\_SINGLE** means that the MPI implementation expects only one user thread to be present. This precludes the use of OpenMP.

**MPI\_THREAD\_FUNNELED** means that only the main OpenMP thread (called the “master” in OpenMP) can make MPI calls. A thread can determine whether it is the main thread or not by calling `MPI_Is_thread_main`. Most, if not all, MPI implementations support this level of thread safety. That is, all MPI calls are

- outside OpenMP parallel regions,
- inside OpenMP master regions, or
- guarded by a call to `MPI_Is_thread_main`. From MPI’s point of view, the “main” thread is the one that called `MPI_Init_thread` (see below).

**MPI\_THREAD\_SERIALIZED** means that only one thread may make MPI calls at a time. For example,

---

```
int MPI_Init_thread(int *argc, char ***argv, int required, int *provided)
int MPI_Query_thread(int *provided)
int MPI_Is_thread_main(int *flag)
```

---

Table 7.12: C routines for working with threads

---

```
#pragma omp parallel
{
...
(no MPI calls here)

...
#pragma omp single
{
...
(MPI calls allowed here)
...
}
...
}
```

---

**MPI\_THREAD\_MULTIPLE** means that MPI calls are allowed at any time by any thread.

An OpenMP application specifies which level of thread safety it is written for by calling `MPI_Init_thread` instead of `MPI_Init`. It passes in the required level and the MPI library returns the level that it supports. It can also query the level provided by the MPI implementation by calling `MPI_Query_thread`. Bindings for the relevant routines are shown in Tables 7.12 and 7.13.

## 7.6 The MPI Profiling Interface

The MPI Forum recognized that profiling and other forms of performance measurement were vital to the success of MPI. At the same time, it seemed far too early to standardize on any particular performance measurement approach. Common to all approaches, however, is the requirement that something particular happens at the time of every MPI call, for example, to take a time measurement, or write a log record, or perform some more elaborate action.

---

<b>MPI_INIT_THREAD</b> (required, provided, ierror)
integer required, provided, ierror
<b>MPI_QUERY_THREAD</b> (provided, ierror)
integer provided, ierror
<b>MPI_IS_THREAD_MAIN</b> (flag, ierror)
logical flag
integer ierror

---

Table 7.13: Fortran routines for working with threads

---

```

int MPI_Bcast(void *buf, int count, MPI_Datatype datatype,
              int root, MPI_Comm comm)
{
    int result;

    MPE_Log_event(S_BCAST_EVENT, Bcast_ncalls, (char *)0);
    result = PMPPI_Bcast(buf, count, datatype, root, comm);
    MPE_Log_event(E_BCAST_EVENT, Bcast_ncalls, (char *)0);
    return result;
}

```

---

Figure 7.15: Profiling version of MPI\_Bcast

The MPI Forum decided, therefore, to include in MPI a specification for allowing anyone, even without the source code for the MPI implementation, to intercept calls to the MPI library and perform *arbitrary* actions.

The trick is to perform this interception of calls at link time rather than compile time. The MPI specification requires that every MPI routine be callable by an alternative name. In particular, every routine of the form `MPI_xxx` must also be callable by the name `PMPI_xxx`. Moreover, users must be able to provide their own versions of `MPI_xxx`.

This scheme allows users to write a limited number of “wrappers” for the MPI routines and perform whatever actions they wish in the wrappers. To call the “real” MPI routine, they address it with its `PMPI_` prefix. For example, suppose that we wished to create logfiles automatically instead of explicitly as we did in Chapter 3. Then we might write our own version of, say, `MPI_Bcast`, as shown in Figure 7.15.

We then need only ensure that our version of `MPI_Bcast` is the one used by the linker to resolve references to it from the application code. Our routine calls

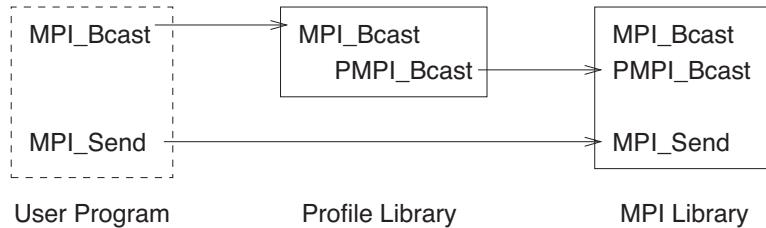


Figure 7.16: Resolution of routines when using profiling library

---

```

int MPI_Init(int *argc, char ***argv)
{
    int procid, returnVal;
    returnVal = PMPI_Init(argc, argv);
    MPE_Initlog();
    PMPI_Comm_rank(MPI_COMM_WORLD, &procid);
    if (procid == 0) {
        MPE_Describe_state(S_SEND_EVENT, E_SEND_EVENT,
                            "Send", "blue:gray3");
        MPE_Describe_state(S_RECV_EVENT, E_RECV_EVENT,
                            "Recv", "green:light_gray");
        ...
    }
    return returnVal;
}
  
```

---

Figure 7.17: Profiling version of MPI\_Init

**PMPI\_Bcast** to do the normal work. The sequence of libraries presented to the linker is as shown in Figure 7.16.

Similarly, a profiling version of **MPI\_Finalize** can be used to do any termination processing, such as writing out log files or printing statistics accumulated during the individual calls to profiled versions of the MPI routines.

Various profiling libraries are likely to want to enable user control of some of their functions at run time. The problem for the profiling interface is that the types of control are likely to vary widely from one profiling library to another. The solution is to define a single MPI profiling control routine, **MPI\_Pcontrol**, with a variable length argument list. The first argument is assumed to be a level number, used to control the amount or type of profiling that is to occur. The amusing feature about this routine is that it is not defined to do anything. But a profiling library

---

```
int MPI_Pcontrol(const int level, ...)
```

---

Table 7.14: C binding for MPI profiling control

---

<b>MPI_PCONTROL</b> (level)
integer level

---

Table 7.15: Fortran binding for MPI profiling control. Note that this is one of the few MPI routines whose Fortran binding does *not* include an error return code.

writer can redefine it, just as he redefines other MPI routines. The bindings for `MPI_Pcontrol` are shown in Tables 7.14 and 7.15.

The beauty of this arrangement is that the supplier of the profiling library need not provide profiling versions of any routines other than those in which he is interested.

Once the style of profiling has been chosen, of course, most of what goes into the profiled version of each routine is the same. It is not difficult to develop a metaprofiling mechanism that automates the wrapping of all, or a specific subset, of the MPI routines at once, provided that the action taken for each routine is the same.

The profiling interface can also be used to answer questions about an application without changing the source code of the application. We will illustrate this with two examples.

### 7.6.1 Finding Buffering Problems

The routine `MPI_Send` is often implemented with some internal buffering, allowing some programs that are formally unsafe (because they depend on buffering) to run in practice. Depending on such buffering is poor practice, however. Is there any easy way to check to see whether a program depends on buffering in `MPI_Send`?

This is a hard problem to answer in general, but the following approaches will often reveal codes that depend on buffering. Our first solution is very simple. We will write our own version of `MPI_Send` that provides no buffering:

---

```
subroutine MPI_SEND(buf, count, datatype, dest, &
                    tag, comm, ierr)
use mpi, only : PMPI_SSEND
integer buf(*), count, datatype, dest, tag, comm, ierr
call PMPI_SSEND(buf, count, datatype, dest, tag, comm, ierr)
end
```

---

---

```
int MPI_Issend(const void* buf, int count, MPI_Datatype datatype, int dest, int tag,
               MPI_Comm comm, MPI_Request *request)
```

---

Table 7.16: C binding for the nonblocking synchronous send

With this version of `MPI_Send`, many programs that depend on `MPI_Send` providing buffering will deadlock; specifically, the program will enter this routine but never complete because the matching receive, required to start before `MPI_Ssend` and `PMPI_Ssend` can complete, is never started. If a parallel debugger is available, it can be used to find out where the program has stopped.

We've shown the use of the `mpi` module assuming that the module fully implements the Fortran MPI bindings as described in the standard. Unfortunately, it is difficult to implement the `mpi` module using standard Fortran. As a result, many MPI implementations implement as much of the `mpi` module as possible, often leaving out the interface definitions for routines that have "choice" parameters—such as communication buffers that can be of any type. In that case, the examples here may fail to compile, because the routine definition is not in the module. You then have several options. One is to fall back on the `mpif.h` include file. The other is to adapt your code to extract only the values, not the routine definitions from the `mpi` module. For example, in Figure 7.18, the `use` statement could be

---

```
use mpi, only: MPI_STATUS_SIZE, PMPI_WTIME
```

---

The value `MPI_STATUS_SIZE` is needed for the status declaration, and `PMPI_WTIME` is needed to declare this routine as a function that returns a double precision value.

The approach of using `MPI_Ssend` is a little awkward because it depends on having the program deadlock and then using a parallel debugger. Can we write a version of `MPI_Send` that will detect that a problem exists? We can, if we require that any `MPI_Send` complete within a specific length of time. For example, in many scientific applications, no send operation should take more than a few seconds. Let us assume that any `MPI_Ssend` that takes more than ten seconds indicates a problem. Hence, what we need is a send operation that is nonblocking (so that we can start it and then time how long it takes, waiting no more than ten seconds) and that cannot complete until the matching receive begins. In other words, we want to use the nonblocking synchronous send `MPI_Issend`. The bindings for this routine are the same as for the other nonblocking sends, as shown in Tables 7.16 and 7.17.

---

<b>MPI_ISSEND</b> (buf, count, datatype, dest, tag, comm, request, ierror)
<type> buf(*)
integer count, datatype, dest, tag, comm, request, ierror

---

Table 7.17: Fortran binding for the nonblocking synchronous send

The code is shown in Figure 7.18. This code busy-waits for the `PMPI_Issend` to complete by calling `PMPI_Test` repeatedly. More refined versions might poll `PMPI_Test` for a short period of time, then sleep (using the Unix `sleep` call) for a second or two, then test again, and so on, until ten seconds elapse. Another version could use `MPI_Pcontrol` to allow the user to control the length of time delay rather than fixing the time limit at ten seconds.

### 7.6.2 Finding Load Imbalances

Consider an application that uses `MPI_Allreduce` and where profiling results, using, for example, the MPE profiling library, indicate that `MPI_Allreduce` is very slow, hurting parallel performance. In many cases, the problem is not in the implementation of `MPI_Allreduce`; rather, the problem is in a load imbalance in the application. Because `MPI_Allreduce` is synchronizing (since no process can complete this operation before all processes have contributed their values), any load imbalance shows up in the execution time of `MPI_Allreduce`. We can estimate the size of the load imbalance by measuring the time that an `MPI_Barrier` takes right before the `MPI_Allreduce`. Figure 7.19 shows one simple implementation; it also shows how to use `MPI_Finalize` to report final statistics.

### 7.6.3 Mechanics of Using the Profiling Interface

The MPI standard does not specify how to compile or link programs with MPI (other than specifying that the header files `mpi.h` and `mpif.h` and the Fortran modules `mpi` and `mpi_f08` must exist, if the MPI implementation supports those levels of Fortran). Similarly, the names of the MPI library and the name of any separate library containing the profiling versions of the MPI routines are not specified.

Some implementations provide *compiler wrappers* that ensure that all of the libraries and any other options are properly applied. For example, to compile a C program in file `myprog.c`, you might use

---

```
mpicc -o myprog myprog.c
```

---

---

```

subroutine MPI_SEND(buf, count, datatype, dest, &
    tag, comm, ierr)
use mpi, only: MPI_STATUS_SIZE, PMPI_ISSEND, PMPI_TEST, &
    PMPI_ABORT, PMPI_WTIME
integer buf(*), count, datatype, dest, tag, comm, ierr
integer request, status(MPI_STATUS_SIZE)
logical flag
double precision tstart

tstart = PMPI_WTIME()
call PMPI_ISSEND(buf, count, datatype, dest, tag, comm, &
    request, ierr)
! wait until either ten seconds have passed or
! the issend completes.
do
    call PMPI_TEST(request, flag, status, ierr)
    if (.not. flag .and. PMPI_WTIME() - tstart .lt. 10.0) exit
enddo
! Signal error if we timed out.
if (.not. flag) then
    print *, "MPI_SEND call has hung!"
    call PMPI_ABORT(comm, ierr)
endif
end

```

---

Figure 7.18: Version of MPI\_Send that uses MPI\_Issend to detect unsafe programs

In other systems, particularly supercomputers where the expectation is that almost all programs will be MPI programs, the system C and Fortran compilers will automatically add the appropriate header search paths and libraries. For those systems, simply using

---

```
cc -o myprog myprog.c
```

---

may work. In both of these cases, you can simply add your profiling library to the command line, for example:

---

```
mpicc -o myprog myprog.c -lprof
```

---

If you need to write the compile and link commands yourself, consult the documentation of the MPI implementation. Many of the compilation scripts have an option such as `-link-info` that will output the link command that would be

---

```

static double t_barrier = 0, t_allreduce = 0;
int MPI_Allreduce(const void* sendbuf, void* recvbuf, int count,
                  MPI_Datatype datatype, MPI_Op op, MPI_Comm comm)
{
    double t1, t2, t3;
    t1 = PMPI_Wtime();
    PMPI_Barrier(comm);
    t2 = PMPI_Wtime();
    PMPI_Allreduce(sendbuf, recvbuf, count, datatype, op, comm);
    t3 = PMPI_Wtime();
    t_barrier += (t2 - t1);
    t_allreduce += (t3 - t2);
    if (t3 - t2 < t2 - t1) {
        int myrank;
        PMPI_Comm_rank(comm, &myrank);
        printf("Barrier slower than Allreduce on %d\n", myrank);
    }
    return MPI_SUCCESS;
}
int MPI_Finalize()
{
    int rank;
    PMPI_Comm_rank(MPI_COMM_WORLD, &rank);
    printf("[%d]: Allreduce barrier time %f; Allreduce time %f\n",
           rank, t_barrier, t_allreduce);
    return PMPI_Finalize();
}

```

---

Figure 7.19: C version of MPI\_Allreduce that uses PMPI\_Barrier to estimate the amount of load imbalance

used to link an MPI program. When examining the link command, note that there are no standards for the library names or order (one implementation, MPICH, has created an optional standard for all implementations that use MPICH as the basis for their implementation). In some systems, both the MPI and PMPI routines will be in a single library. This is the simplest case. In other cases, the PMPI routines will be in a separate library. For example, let us assume that the MPI routines are in `libmpi` and the PMPI versions are in `libpmpi`. Then a link line for a program in `myprog.o` with a profiling library `libprof` might look like

---

```
cc -o myprog myprog.o -lprof -lmpi -lpmpi
```

---

Note that the profiling library `-lpmpm` follows the regular (`-lmpi`) library. In some cases, it may be necessary to repeat the library names. Using Fortran may also require special libraries. You should check the documentation for your MPI implementation; do not assume that `cc ... -lmpi -lpmpm` is all that you need to do.

## 7.7 Error Handling

Error handling and error recovery are important and difficult issues. Errors can be the result of user mistakes (e.g., invalid arguments), hardware errors (e.g., power supply failure), resource exhaustion (e.g., no more memory), or bugs in the base software. MPI provides some facilities for handling error reporting, particularly by libraries.

### 7.7.1 Error Handlers

MPI associates an error handler with each communicator. When an error is detected, MPI calls the error handler associated with the communicator being used; if there is no communicator, `MPI_COMM_WORLD` is used. When `MPI_Init` is called, the initial (default) error handler is one that causes the program to abort (i.e., all processes exit). Most MPI implementations will print an error message as well.

Instead of aborting on an error, MPI can return an error code. In Fortran, this is the `ierror` argument in most of the MPI routines. In C, this is the return value of the MPI function. The only exceptions are `MPI_Wtime`, `MPI_Wtick`, and the handle transfer routines (these are routines used to convert MPI handles, such as an `MPI_Request`, between Fortran and C). MPI provides two predefined error handlers: `MPI_ERRORS_ARE_FATAL` (the default) and `MPI_ERRORS_RETURN`. `MPI_ERRORS_RETURN` causes the MPI routines to return an error value instead of aborting. The routine `MPI_Comm_set_errhandler` is used to change the error handler.

The error codes returned, with the exception of `MPI_SUCCESS`, are defined by each MPI implementation. This approach allows an MPI implementation to encode additional data into the error code. MPI also specifies a small set of error *classes*: integers that divide the errors codes into a small number of categories. For example, for an error class such as `MPI_ERR_TAG`, the error code could encode information on what was wrong with the tag value (e.g., too big? too small?) and the MPI routine that detected the error. The error classes used by the routines in this book

MPI_SUCCESS	No error
MPI_ERR_BUFFER	Invalid buffer pointer
MPI_ERR_COUNT	Invalid count argument
MPI_ERR_TYPE	Invalid datatype argument
MPI_ERR_TAG	Invalid tag argument
MPI_ERR_COMM	Invalid communicator
MPI_ERR_RANK	Invalid rank
MPI_ERR_REQUEST	Invalid request (handle)
MPI_ERR_ROOT	Invalid root
MPI_ERR_GROUP	Invalid group
MPI_ERR_OP	Invalid operation
MPI_ERR_TOPOLOGY	Invalid topology
MPI_ERR_DIMS	Invalid dimension argument
MPI_ERR_ARG	Invalid argument of some other kind
MPI_ERR_UNKNOWN	Unknown error
MPI_ERR_TRUNCATE	Message truncated on receive
MPI_ERR_OTHER	Known error not in this list
MPI_ERR_INTERN	Internal MPI error
MPI_ERR_IN_STATUS	Look in the status array for the error
MPI_ERR_PENDING	Operation not complete (see text)
MPI_ERR_KEYVAL	Invalid keyval used
MPI_ERR_LASTCODE	Last standard error code (not class)

Table 7.18: Error classes for the routines in this book

are shown in Table 7.18. MPI-2 and MPI-3 added additional error classes; these are covered in *Using Advanced MPI* [55].

The difference between the classes MPI\_ERR\_UNKNOWN and MPI\_ERR\_OTHER is that MPI\_Error\_string can return useful information about MPI\_ERR\_OTHER. The error class MPI\_ERR\_UNKNOWN can be used by an MPI implementation for unexpected situations, such as an error return from code that the MPI implementation itself uses.

The two error classes MPI\_ERR\_IN\_STATUS and MPI\_ERR\_PENDING are special cases. MPI has four routines that complete multiple requests and return an array of statuses; these are MPI\_Waitsome, MPI\_Waitall, MPI\_Testsome, and MPI\_Testall. For these four functions, errors could occur for any subset of the requests. In this case, there is no single error code to return from the routine. In this case, the error value returned is MPI\_ERR\_IN\_STATUS. This indicates that the actual error codes are in the array of statuses, in the MPI\_ERROR element

---

```

/* Install a new error handler */
MPI_Comm_set_errhandler(MPI_COMM_WORLD, MPI_ERRORS_RETURN);
/* Send a message to an invalid destination */
dest = -1;
errcode = MPI_Send(..., dest, ...);
if (errcode != MPI_SUCCESS) {
    MPI_Error_class(errcode, &errclass);
    if (errclass == MPI_ERR_RANK) {
        printf("Invalid rank (%d) in call to MPI_Send", dest);
    }
}

```

---

Figure 7.20: Code to check the error class of an error code returned by an MPI routine. Note that the MPI standard does not specify which error class a particular error returns; other possibilities for this error include **MPI\_ERR\_ARG**.

(`status.MPI_ERROR` in C; `status(MPI_ERROR)` in Fortran). To understand **MPI\_ERR\_PENDING**, consider the case of **MPI\_Waitall**. For each request that was passed to **MPI\_Waitall**, three possibilities exist. First, the request completed successfully. In this case, the **MPI\_ERROR** field of the corresponding status element is set to **MPI\_SUCCESS**. Second, the request failed because of an error; in this case, the **MPI\_ERROR** field of the corresponding status element is set to the MPI error code that indicates the reason the request failed. Third, the request has neither completed nor failed; in this case, the **MPI\_ERROR** field is set to **MPI\_ERR\_PENDING** to indicate that the request is still pending without error.

To convert an error code into an error class, use **MPI\_Error\_class**. As an example, consider the code in Figure 7.20.

All MPI implementations provide a way to translate an MPI error code or class into a string. The routine **MPI\_Error\_string** takes an error code or class and a user-provided string buffer and returns a description of the error in the string, along with the length of the text in the string. The string buffer must be **MPI\_MAX\_ERROR\_STRING** in size.

For example, instead of using **MPI\_Error\_class** in the example above, we could use

---

```

...
if (errcode != MPI_SUCCESS) {
    MPI_Error_class(errcode, &errclass);
    if (errclass == MPI_ERR_RANK) {
        char buffer[MPI_MAX_ERROR_STRING];

```

---

```

    int resultlen;
    MPI_Error_string(errcode, buffer, &resultlen);
    puts(buffer);
}
}

```

---

The value of MPI\_MAX\_ERROR\_STRING in C is one greater than the value of MPI\_MAX\_ERROR\_STRING in Fortran to allow for the string terminator in C. That is, the same maximum number of characters are allowed in both C and Fortran; however, C requires a declaration of `char buf[11]` to hold ten characters while Fortran requires `character*10 buf`. Fortran users should also note that `character*10 buf` and `character buf(10)` are very different declarations. Error strings in Fortran must be declared as

---

```
character*(MPI_MAX_ERROR_STRING) buf
```

---

### 7.7.2 Example of Error Handling

Figure 7.21 shows code that reports on any errors that occur during the execution of one of the four MPI routines that can complete multiple requests. This code assumes that the error handler has been set to be MPI\_ERRORS\_RETURN.

### 7.7.3 User-Defined Error Handlers

MPI also allows the user to define additional error handlers.

A user-defined error handler for communicators has the form

---

```
void user_function(MPI_Comm *comm, int *error_code, ...)
```

---

The first argument is the communicator of the operation; the second is the error code. Pointers are used so that Fortran programmers may write MPI error handlers without resorting to C. Additional arguments are available to C programmers through a “stdargs” interface; their meaning is defined by each MPI implementation.

Often, it is desirable to temporarily replace one error handler with another one. For example, in Fortran we can use

---

```

integer old_handler, new_handler
call MPI_Comm_get_errhandler(comm, old_handler, ierr)
call MPI_Comm_set_errhandler(comm, new_handler, ierr)
<.... code .... >
call MPI_Comm_set_errhandler(comm, old_handler, ierr)

```

---

---

```

MPI_Request    req_array[100];
MPI_Status      status_array[100];
char            msg[MPI_MAX_ERROR_STRING];
...
err = MPI_Waitall(n, req_array, status_array);
if (err == MPI_ERR_IN_STATUS) {
    for (i=0; i<n; i++) {
        switch (status_array[i].MPI_ERROR) {
            case MPI_SUCCESS:           /* request has completed */
            break;
            case MPI_ERR_PENDING:     /* request hasn't completed */
            break;
            default:                 /* error on this request */
            MPI_Error_string(status_array[i].MPI_ERROR, msg,
                             &msglen);
            printf("Error in request %d: %s\n", i, msg);
        }
    }
}

```

---

Figure 7.21: Handling error returns from MPI\_Waitany

---

```
call MPI_Errhandler_free(old_handler, ierr)
```

---

An MPI error handler is an opaque object that is created and freed much like an MPI\_Request. The routine MPI\_Comm\_create\_errhandler creates an MPI error handler that Fortran and C users can assign to a variable.

Once an error handler is created, it can be attached to a communicator with MPI\_Comm\_set\_errhandler. This is done so that a library that uses its own communicator can have its own error handler. The error handler for a communicator can be retrieved with MPI\_Comm\_get\_errhandler and freed with MPI\_Errhandler\_free.

The last line of this example calls MPI\_Errhandler\_free to free the error handler returned by MPI\_Comm\_set\_errhandler. In general, most MPI routines that return an MPI object, such as the group associated with a communicator (MPI\_Comm\_group and MPI\_Comm\_remote\_group), return (semantically<sup>3</sup>) a *copy* of the object; this copy must be freed by the user when it is no longer

---

<sup>3</sup>By this we mean that the object behaves as if it is a copy. An implementation can implement this operation in many ways; many implementations use a reference count mechanism to avoid making an actual copy.

needed. The MPI-3 standard clarified the previous versions of the standard to say that an error handler returned by `MPI_Comm_get_errhandler` should be freed with `MPI_Errhandler_free` when it is no longer needed.

Error handlers are inherited from the parent communicator. That is, when a new communicator is created with a function such as `MPI_Comm_dup`, the error handler in the new communicator is set to be the same one as the input communicator. Thus, to change the “global” error handler, one might change the error handler associated with `MPI_COMM_WORLD` before any other communicators are created (for example, right after the `MPI_Init` call). Error handlers may also be defined for two other classes of routines in MPI; see *Using Advanced MPI* [55] for details.

Users should be careful with error handlers. The MPI standard does not require that a program that encounters an error be continuable; that is, once an error has occurred, it may not be possible for the program to continue to use MPI. This is a common position for standards: a standard does not specify the behavior of erroneous programs.

In the most general case, where nothing is known about the ability of the MPI implementation to continue from errors, the user should terminate the program (see the next section). User-defined error handlers can be used to ensure that program termination proceeds in an orderly way and that important information is preserved. For example, a user-defined error handler might flush all file output buffers and write out some information on the cause of the error.

However, most MPI implementations will allow a program to continue and operate correctly after an error is encountered. In fact, many of the error classes represent cases where error recovery is particularly easy. These classes include all of the “invalid xxx” errors: `MPI_ERR_BUFFER`, `MPI_ERR_COUNT`, `MPI_ERR_TYPE`, . . . , `MPI_ERR_ARG`. Most MPI implementations will also continue after `MPI_ERR_TRUNCATE`, which is usually generated when the specified buffer size in a receive operation is too small to hold the message received (the usual behavior is to discard either the entire message or the part that does not fit in the buffer). The error classes `MPI_ERR_UNKNOWN` and `MPI_ERR_INTERN` are usually *not* continuable since they indicate a problem within the MPI implementation itself. The other error class, `MPI_ERR_OTHER`, may or may not be continuable, depending on the particular MPI implementation. The behavior of MPI in the presence of faults is discussed in Section 9.2.

---

```

int MPI_Abort(MPI_Comm comm, int errorcode)

int MPI_Comm_create_errhandler(MPI_Comm_errhandler_function *function,
                               MPI_Errhandler *errhandler)

int MPI_Comm_set_errhandler(MPI_Comm comm, MPI_Errhandler errhandler)

int MPI_Comm_get_errhandler(MPI_Comm comm, MPI_Errhandler *errhandler)

int MPI_Errhandler_free(MPI_Errhandler *errhandler)

int MPI_Error_string(int errorcode, char *string, int *resultlen)

int MPI_Error_class(int errorcode, int *errorclass)

typedef void MPI_Comm_errhandler_function(MPI_Comm *, int *, ...)
```

---

Table 7.19: C bindings for error handling and the `typedef` for the user-provided error handling function

#### 7.7.4 Terminating MPI Programs

To force an MPI program to exit, MPI provides the function `MPI_Abort`. This function has two arguments: the communicator of tasks to abort and the error code that should, where possible, be returned to the calling environment (for example, by `exit(code)` or `stop code`). This function should be used only for unusual termination, for example, in the case of an error.

An implementation is always free to abort all processes; that is, it can act as if the communicator argument was `MPI_COMM_WORLD`. The presence of the communicator argument is intended for compatibility with future extensions of MPI that may include dynamic process management.

#### 7.7.5 Common Errors and Misunderstandings

The MPI standard states that MPI errors classes are valid error codes. Some users misinterpret this to mean that MPI error classes and codes are interchangeable. This can lead to incorrect code such as

---

```

err = MPI_Send( ... );
if (err == MPI_ERR_RANK) {
    printf("Rank given to MPI_Send was invalid\n");
    ...
}
```

---

---

<b>MPI_ABORT</b> (comm, errorcode, ierror)
integer comm, errorcode, ierror
<b>MPI_COMM_CREATE_ERRHANDLER</b> (function, handler, ierror)
external function
integer errhandler, ierror
<b>MPI_COMM_SET_ERRHANDLER</b> (comm, errhandler, ierror)
integer comm, errhandler, ierror
<b>MPI_COMM_GET_ERRHANDLER</b> (comm, errhandler, ierror)
integer comm, errhandler, ierror
<b>MPI_ERRHANDLER_FREE</b> (errhandler, ierror)
integer errhandler, ierror
<b>MPI_ERROR_STRING</b> (errorcode, string, resultlen, ierror)
integer errorcode, resultlen, ierror
character(*) string
<b>MPI_ERROR_CLASS</b> (errorcode, errorclass, ierror)
integer errorcode, errorclass, ierror

---

Table 7.20: Fortran bindings for error handling

The problem with this is that the MPI implementation may have encoded additional information about the error (such as the exact value of the incorrect rank in this case); indeed, one widely used MPI implementation, MPICH, does exactly that. A correct version is shown below:

---

```

err = MPI_Send( ... );
if (err != MPI_SUCCESS) {
    int errclass;
    MPI_Error_class(err, &errclass);
    if (errclass == MPI_ERR_RANK) {
        char errstring[MPI_MAX_ERROR_STRING];
        int len;
        MPI_Error_string(err, errstring, &len);
        puts(errstring);
        // Now decide how to continue the application,
        // or call MPI_Abort
        ...
    }
}

```

---

This version also makes use of `MPI_Error_string` to print a more detailed error message in the event that the MPI implementation provides it. The only error classes that may be compared to the error codes output by an MPI routine are `MPI_SUCCESS` and `MPI_ERR_IN_STATUS`.

## 7.8 The MPI Environment

In writing portable programs, one often needs to determine some implementation limits. For example, even a sequential program may need to know how many open files it can have. In many cases, this information is available only from the documentation of the system; and this documentation may be incorrect or out of date. MPI provides access to some of the implementation limits through predefined attribute keys defined for the communicator `MPI_COMM_WORLD` (see Section 6.2 for information about attribute keys).

Currently, MPI has only six predefined attribute keys:

**`MPI_TAG_UB`** Largest message tag value (smallest is zero).

**`MPI_HOST`** Rank in `MPI_COMM_WORLD` of host process, if any.

**`MPI_IO`** Which process can do I/O (see below).

**`MPI_WTIME_IS_GLOBAL`** If true, the values returned by `MPI_Wtime` are synchronized across all processes in `MPI_COMM_WORLD` (that is, `MPI_Wtime` returns the value of a global clock).

**`MPI_APPNUM`** If the MPI job contains multiple executables, this gives the index, starting from zero, of the executable being run by this process. MPI programs can be started with multiple executables either with `mpiexec` or with `MPI_Comm_spawn_multiple`, described in *Using Advanced MPI* [55]. For most applications in this book, the value of this attribute will either be zero or the attribute will not be set.

**`MPI_UNIVERSE_SIZE`** Used to indicated how many processes might be created with MPI's dynamic process routines. See *Using Advanced MPI* [55] for more details.

Some parallel processing systems have a distinguished process called the *host*. The value of `MPI_HOST` is the rank of this process in `MPI_COMM_WORLD`. If there is no host process, the value `MPI_PROC_NULL` is used.

MPI makes some requirements for how system operations are provided *if* they are provided. For example, any system operation, whether it be (in C) a `malloc` or a `printf` or (in Fortran) an `open` or `write`, must operate independently of other processes. This means that all I/O is independent *if it can be performed at all*. To determine whether I/O is available, one uses the attribute key `MPI_IO`. The value associated with this key can be `MPI_ANY_SOURCE`, indicating that any and all processes can perform I/O; `MPI_PROC_NULL`, indicating that no process can perform I/O; or a rank of a process that can perform I/O.

The definition of “perform I/O” is that any of the language-specified I/O operations are allowed. For example, for C users, this means that `printf` and `scanf` are supported. For Fortran, this means that `read` (including `read *, ...`) and `print` are supported. If a system cannot provide the full functionality of the language-specified I/O, it is required to return `MPI_PROC_NULL` as the value of the key `MPI_IO`. (This does not mean that the system cannot provide any I/O, just that it must return `MPI_PROC_NULL` if it cannot provide all of the language-specified I/O. On some systems, providing access to standard input is not possible; these systems must return `MPI_PROC_NULL`.)

When MPI was first specified, some parallel computers did not have good facilities for providing I/O to all MPI processes or could provide only a subset of the language-specified I/O. Some MPI implementations also chose not to provide I/O from every process. While in some cases I/O is still not available from each process, these are now much less common. Many MPI applications assume that I/O is available from every process and operate on a wide variety of platforms.

Note that because the key values are defined by MPI, future versions of MPI can define additional key values. In fact, `MPI_WTIME_IS_GLOBAL` is an example; this key value was added in MPI 1.1. In addition, each MPI implementation may define key values that refer to a particular implementation. As a hypothetical example, an implementation might provide `MPIV_REQUESTS` (`MPIV` for MPI vendor) that would give the number of `MPI_Request`s that can be active at any time. To date, few such vendor-specific key values have been implemented, although some research projects did investigate the use of key values to provide run-time control of parameters within a particular MPI implementation to an application. Instead, a different mechanism, `MPI_Info`, which was added in MPI-2 and expanded in MPI-3, is used for some cases; and MPI-3 added a very general mechanism, called the MPIT or “tools interface,” which provides direct ways to query and set parameters that control the execution of the MPI implementation. These approaches are described in *Using Advanced MPI* [55].

---

```
int MPI_Get_processor_name(char *name, int *resultlen)
int MPI_Initialized(int *flag)
int MPI_Finalized(int *flag)
```

---

Table 7.21: C bindings for inquiry functions

### 7.8.1 Processor Name

It is often helpful to be able to identify the processor on which a process is running. Having the program provide the names of the processors on which the program has run is much more reliable than having the user remember to do so. In MPI, the routine `MPI_Get_processor_name` performs this task. It also returns the length of the string. The buffer provided to this routine should be at least `MPI_MAX_PROCESSOR_NAME` characters long. Note that some systems, such as symmetric multiprocessors (SMPs), may migrate a process from one processor to another during the course of a run. On these systems, an MPI implementation may choose to indicate the processor that was running the process at the time of the call. Other implementations may simply return the name of the multiprocessor without indicating which processor within the SMP running the process at the time of the call.<sup>4</sup>

### 7.8.2 Is MPI Initialized?

We pointed out in Chapter 3 that `MPI_Init` had to be called before any other MPI routine and that it could be called at most once by each process. These requirements can cause problems for modules that wish to use MPI and are prepared to call `MPI_Init` if necessary. To solve this problem, MPI provides the routine `MPI_Initialized` that can always be called, even if `MPI_Init` has not been called. The routine, `MPI_Initialized`, returns a flag whose value is true if `MPI_Init` has been called and false otherwise. The value is true even if `MPI_Finalize` has been called. Similarly, the routine `MPI_Finalized` may be used to discover whether `MPI_Finalize` has been called.

---

<sup>4</sup>This interpretation of the standard meets the letter but not the spirit of the Standard, which was intended to allow users to gather enough information about the execution environment to reproduce a computational experiment. On SMPs that are not perfectly symmetrical in hardware (for example, have non-uniform memory access (NUMA)), returning the name of the SMP without indicating the specific processor or chip used is not sufficient.

---

<b>MPI_GET_PROCESSOR_NAME</b> (name, resultlen, ierror)
character*(MPI_MAX_PROCESSOR_NAME) name
integer resultlen, ierror
<b>MPI_INITIALIZED</b> (flag, ierror)
logical flag
integer ierror
<b>MPI_FINALIZED</b> (flag, ierror)
logical flag
integer ierror

---

Table 7.22: Fortran bindings for inquiry functions

## 7.9 Determining the Version of MPI

MPI is a standard, which means that it is documented and usually changes very slowly. It has changed, however. There are four versions of MPI-1: MPI-1.0, MPI-1.1, MPI-1.2, and MPI-1.3. MPI-1.0 was the original version of MPI. MPI-1.1 was primarily a “bug fix” version, fixing obvious errors in the document. It also removed the function `MPI_Type_count`, because the standard was vague about its meaning and implementations had chosen different interpretations (and no applications were using it). MPI-1.1 also introduced the `MPI_ERR_IN_STATUS` and `MPI_ERR_PENDING` error classes for multiple completions. MPI-1.2 contained a few additional clarifications and one new function: `MPI_Get_version`. This function returns the version of MPI as two integers: the version and the subversion. The bindings of this function are shown in Tables 7.23 and 7.24. In addition to this new function, constants are also defined containing the version and subversion numbers.

For MPI-3.0, these are

---

```
#define MPI_VERSION      3
#define MPI_SUBVERSION   0
```

---

in C and

---

```
integer MPI_VERSION, MPI_SUBVERSION
parameter (MPI_VERSION      = 3)
parameter (MPI_SUBVERSION   = 0)
```

---

in Fortran.

---

```
int MPI_Get_version(int *version, int *subversion)
int MPI_Get_library_version(char *version, int *resultlen)
```

---

Table 7.23: C routines to return version information

---

<b>MPI_GET_VERSION</b> (version, subversion, ierror)
integer version, subversion, ierror
<b>MPI_GET_LIBRARY_VERSION</b> (version, resultlen, ierror)
character*(MPI_MAX_LIBRARY_VERSION_STRING) version
integer resultlen, ierror

---

Table 7.24: Fortran routines to return version information

Why are there both constants and functions? In creating an MPI application, a programmer needs both compile-time information, provided by the ‘mpi.h’ and ‘mpif.h’ files or the mpi or mpi\_f08 module (in Fortran), and link-time information, provided by the library containing the MPI implementation. In a perfect world, these would always be consistent. By providing both constants and a function, careful programmers can test that the version of MPI that they compiled for (and included header files for) matches the one that they linked with.

C users can also use the constant forms, because they are preprocessor constants, to arrange for conditional compilation. For example, the code

---

```
#if MPI_VERSION < 3
    /* Use old graph topology routines */
    ...
#else
    /* Use MPI-3 scalable graph topology routines */
    ...
#endif
```

---

allows an application to select more powerful and efficient MPI-3 features when MPI-3 is available and to function using previous versions of MPI when MPI-3 isn’t available.

Note that MPI version 2.0 was primarily a set of entirely new functions, but it also impacted MPI-1 programs, because MPI 2.0 deprecated certain MPI-1 functions and encouraged new functions in their place, which would not be available in an implementation with version 1.x. Version 2.0 of MPI also introduced such variations on the MPI-1 functions as the use of NULL for the arguments to MPI\_Init.

To round out the description of the MPI standards, MPI-1.3 incorporated accumulated errata and was approved in 2008. It marked the end of the MPI-1 series of standards. The MPI-2 standard has three versions: MPI-2.0, released in 1998; MPI-2.1, released in 2008; and MPI-2.2, released in 2009. MPI-3.0 was released in 2012, with MPI-3.1 expected in late 2014 or 2015. All MPI standards are available at the MPI Forum web site, [www.mpi-forum.org](http://www.mpi-forum.org).

Relevant to this particular section, MPI-3 introduced an additional function for determining exactly what version of the MPI library your program is linked with. `MPI_Get_library_version` is designed to report whatever information the specific MPI implementation you are using wishes to, such as the internal library name and version, compilers used to build it and options used at compile time. You pass it a buffer of length `MPI_MAX_LIBRARY_VERSION_STRING` and it returns the information string and the actual length of the string returned. For example, beginning your application with code like the following might help you figure out mysterious behavior resulting from linking with the wrong MPI library.

---

```
int main(int argc, char* argv) {
    int versionlen;
    char lib_version[MPI_MAX_LIBRARY_VERSION_STRING];

    MPI_Init(NULL, NULL);
    MPI_Get_library_version(lib_version, &versionlen);
    printf("MPI library version: %s\n", lib_version);
```

---

`MPI_Get_library_version` is allowed to be called before `MPI_Init`.

## 7.10 Other Functions in MPI

We have tried to introduce as many of the MPI functions as possible by having them appear in examples. This means that some MPI functions have not appeared at all. The routines that we have not discussed fall into these categories:

- Routines to create new groups from an existing group or groups:

`MPI_Group_incl`, `MPI_Group_range_incl`,  
`MPI_Group_range_excl`, `MPI_Group_union`,  
`MPI_Group_intersection`, and `MPI_Group_difference`. These  
are rarely needed; normally, `MPI_Comm_split` should be used to create  
new communicators. Groups are used in scalable remote memory  
synchronization in MPI.

- Routines to get information about a group: `MPI_Group_compare`, `MPI_Group_size`, `MPI_Group_rank`, and `MPI_Group_translate_ranks`. The one routine here that sees some use is `MPI_Group_translate_ranks`. This can be used to determine the rank in `MPI_COMM_WORLD` that corresponds to a particular rank in another communicator.
- Routine to determine the type of virtual topology: `MPI_Topo_test`.
- Routines to manipulate Cartesian virtual topologies: `MPI_Cartdim_get`, `MPI_Cart_rank`, and `MPI_Cart_map`.
- Routines to manipulate graph virtual topologies: `MPI_Graph_create`, `MPI_Graphdims_get`, `MPI_Graph_neighbors_count`, `MPI_Graph_neighbors`, and `MPI_Graph_map`, and routines to manipulate graph virtual topologies using a more scalable description: `MPI_Dist_graph_create_adjacent`, `MPI_Dist_graph_create`, `MPI_Dist_graph_neighbors_count`, and `MPI_Dist_graph_neighbors`
- Miscellaneous point-to-point routines: `MPI_Bsend_init`, `MPI_Ibsend`, `MPI_Rsend_init`, `MPI_Irsend`, `MPI_Ssend_init`, `MPI_Sendrecv_replace`, `MPI_Get_elements`, and `MPI_Waitsome`.
- Support for mixed language, that is, C and Fortran, programming, including routines to convert handles from Fortran to their C representation and back.
- Additional routines to create communicators
- MPI-2 and MPI-3 operations, in the areas of I/O, dynamic process management, and remote memory access operations.

Although these routines did not find a natural place in our book, they may be just what you need. For example, the routines for manipulating virtual topologies may provide exactly the operations needed for a PDE application on a complicated mesh. We encourage you to consider these routines when developing an application.

## 7.11 Application: No-Core Configuration Interaction Calculations in Nuclear Physics

A microscopic theory for the structure and reactions of light nuclei poses formidable challenges for high-performance computing. A nucleus with  $Z$  protons and  $N$  neu-

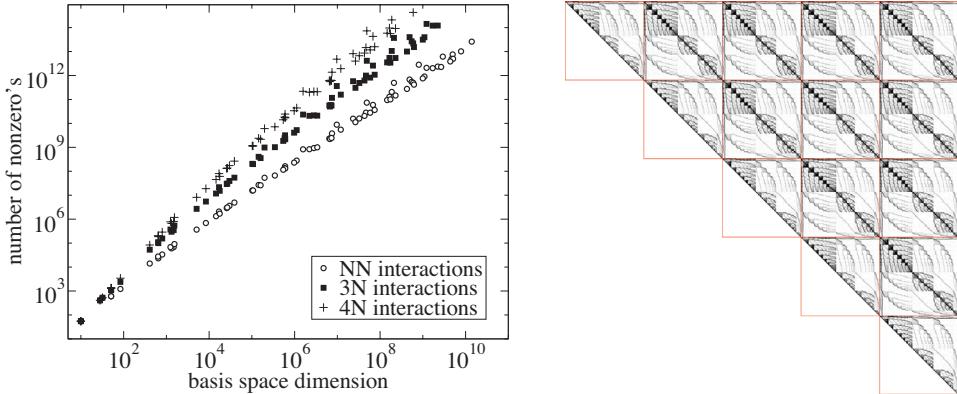


Figure 7.22: Dimensions and number of nonzero matrix elements for NCCI calculations of light nuclei (left) and typical sparsity structure of the sparse matrix problems—in this case with a dimension of 143,792 and with 402,513,272 nonzero matrix elements in the upper triangle, evenly distributed over 15 MPI ranks (right) (adapted from Ref. [89])

trons is a self-bound quantum many-body system with  $A = N + Z$  strongly interacting nucleons. The interactions are strong (otherwise nuclei would not be bound) and feature both attractive and repulsive contributions along with significant spin and angular momentum dependence. Furthermore the interaction includes both short-range and long-range terms; and in addition to two-body (NN) interactions, one needs suitable three-nucleon (3N) interactions (and possibly higher many-body interactions).

In the ab initio no-core configuration interaction (NCCI) approach, the nuclear wavefunction for  $A$  nucleons is expanded in Slater determinants of single-nucleon wavefunctions (configurations), and the  $A$ -body Schrödinger equation becomes a large sparse matrix problem. The eigenvalues of this matrix are the binding energies, and the corresponding eigenvectors are the nuclear wavefunctions. Although the wavefunctions themselves are not physically observable, they can be used to evaluate observables, which can then be compared with experimental data. In order to reach numerical convergence for fundamental problems of interest, the dimension of the matrix is in the billions, and the number of nonzero matrix elements may saturate available storage on present-day leadership computing facilities (see the left panel of Figure 7.22).

The code MFDn is a hybrid MPI/OpenMP parallel Fortran 90 code for NCCI nuclear structure calculations [114, 91, 19, 20]. In MFDn the many-body matrix is constructed and the lowest eigenstates are calculated by using an iterative Lanczos algorithm. Each Lanczos iteration consists of a sparse matrix-vector multiplication (SpMV) followed by orthonormalization; typically several hundred iterations are needed to converge eight to ten eigenvectors. The converged eigenvectors are written to file, and select physical observables are calculated for comparison with experimental data. By far the most compute-intensive parts of the calculation are the construction of the large sparse matrix and the iterative Lanczos algorithm.

We use a two-dimensional distribution of the symmetric matrix over the MPI ranks. To save memory, we store only half the matrix in core using compressed sparse row format, and we use the same data structure for both an SpMV and a transpose SpMV. That is, we distribute the half the matrix over  $n(n + 1)/2$  MPI ranks (see the right panel of Fig. 7.22). The local memory use by each MPI rank is proportional to the local number of nonzero matrix elements; the local workload to construct the sparse matrix is roughly proportional to the local number of nonzero matrix elements; and the local workload of the SpMV is also proportional to the local number of nonzero matrix elements. Thus we aim to distribute the matrix so that each MPI rank has approximately the same number of nonzero matrix elements. This objective is achieved by a round-robin distribution of (groups of) basis states over the MPI ranks.

After the initial setup phase—input and distribution of parameters and interaction data, as well as the distribution of (groups of) basis states—each MPI rank constructs the nonzero matrix elements it needs to store in core. No communication occurs during this phase of the code, which typically takes between 10% and 50% of the total runtime, depending on the number of requested eigenvalues (i.e., the number of required Lanczos iterations). Next we perform the Lanczos iterations, which take between 20% and 80% of the total runtime. Each iteration consists basically of an SpMV and transpose SpMV, followed by orthonormalization. Because of the two-dimensional distribution of half of the symmetric matrix, a significant amount of MPI collective communication occurs over disjoint communicator groups spanning all MPI ranks necessary for each SpMV and transpose SpMV, involving large arrays of real numbers. Schematically, we can express this as follows:

---

```

do while (not converged)
  call MPI_AllGatherV           ! collect next local input vector
  call SpMV
  call MPI_Reduce             ! reduction of results local SpMV

```

---

```

call MPI_Bcast           ! local input vector for transpose SpMV
call SpMV_Transpose
call MPI_Reduce_scatter ! output vector scattered
                        ! over all MPI ranks
call Orthonormalize     ! contains additional calls
                        ! to MPI_AllReduce
call CheckConvergence
end do

```

---

Furthermore, the vectors are stored distributed over all  $n(n+1)/2$  MPI ranks, so we have additional calls to MPI\_AllReduce on MPI\_COMM\_WORLD in the orthonormalization subroutine. This subroutine also calculates the  $\alpha_i$  and  $\beta_i$  of tridiagonal Lanczos matrix and prepares the next input vector distributed over all MPI ranks.

The mapping of the matrix blocks onto the hardware has a significant influence on the communication time[19, 20]. With an initial naive distribution of the matrix blocks onto the MPI ranks scaling broke down for large-scale runs using thousands of MPI ranks, despite the fact that the local workload was distributed evenly among all MPI ranks. This situation was caused by a combination of load imbalance in the communication volume over the different MPI communicators and an inefficient mapping of the MPI ranks onto the physical cores. By reorganizing the computational tasks we removed the load imbalance in the communication volume, thus improving the scalability. A further improvement was achieved by a careful analysis of the communication patterns and a subsequent rearrangement of the mapping of the matrix blocks onto physical processing units in a way that exploits the network topology. The communication overhead was reduced by a factor of 5 for a typical run on 18,336 MPI ranks.

On platforms with multicore nodes, we can further improve the performance and scalability by using MPI communication between nodes, and OpenMP within a node[91]. Both during the construction of the matrix and in the SpMV we use dynamic OpenMP scheduling to ensure load balancing within a node. In addition, for each Lanczos iteration we can overlap the MPI\_Bcast with the local SpMV, and the MPI\_Reduce with the local SpMV\_Transpose, and thus ‘hide’ a significant amount of the MPI communication during the Lanczos iterations[19, 20].

In the left panel of Figure 7.23 we show a combination of strong and weak scaling data of MFDn on Edison at the National Energy Research Scientific Computing Center (NERSC) for the two most time-consuming phases. Edison is a Cray XC30 at NERSC consisting of 5,576 nodes with two 12-core Intel “Ivy Bridge” processors per node and 64 GB memory per node. For large production runs with MFDn we typically use four MPI ranks per node, with six OpenMP threads per MPI rank,

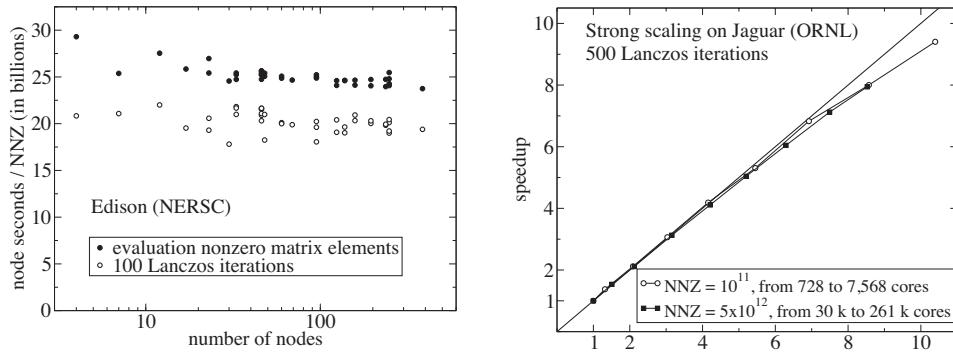


Figure 7.23: Strong and weak scaling on Edison at NERSC (left) and strong scaling for two different problem sizes on Jaguar at ORNL (right, adapted from Ref. [90]) using the hybrid MPI/OpenMP implementation

although for relatively small runs (less than a few thousand cores) our MPI-only implementation performs better. Since the workload is largely proportional to the number of nonzero matrix elements, we show the CPU time divided by the number of nonzero matrix elements. Perfect scaling corresponds to a straight horizontal line. We also achieve good scaling on the leadership computing facilities at Argonne National Laboratory and at Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL): on Jaguar (Cray XK6) at ORNL we have demonstrated 90% efficiency in strong scaling from 30,624 cores to 261,120 cores (see the right panel of Figure 7.23) using two MPI ranks per node, with eight OpenMP threads per MPI rank.

# 8

## Understanding How MPI Implementations Work

Understanding how MPI may be implemented can provide greater insight into the particular design choices made by the MPI Forum. Looking at the implementation reveals the motivation for some of the MPI design decisions. This motivation might be missed if one considered the library design only from the viewpoint of programmer convenience and failed to take into account the interface between the MPI library and the underlying message-passing hardware. In this chapter, we will briefly discuss one possible implementation approach for an MPI implementation that sends messages between computers connected by a network.

The approach taken for the implementation here separates the complicated part of an MPI implementation (managing communicators, derived datatypes, topologies, etc.) from the part that makes contact with the communication device. The upper layers can remain open and independent of a particular communication device, while the communication part can be optimized for a particular device and environment.

A more detailed and specific description of the design of several MPI implementations can be found in the literature. The MPICH implementation is described in more detail in [57, 59]. Several projects have developed variations on the MPICH implementation [96, 30], and many vendors, including Microsoft, Intel, IBM, and Cray, have based their own implementations on MPICH.

We emphasize that it is impossible to say “how MPI is implemented.” It is possible only to discuss how a particular implementation of MPI works.

### 8.1 Introduction

To show how an MPI implementation might work, we will start by considering how an `MPI_Send` might be implemented and follow the message to the matching `MPI_Recv`. Along the way, we will discover that we will need to add features to our design.

#### 8.1.1 Sending Data

When MPI sends data, it must include with the buffer that the user is sending information on the message tag, communicator, length, and source and destination of the message. We will call this additional information the *envelope*. Sending a message consists of sending the envelope, followed by the data. This method of sending the data immediately is called an *eager* protocol.

### 8.1.2 Receiving Data

When a message arrives, there are two possible cases. Either a matching receive (e.g., MPI\_Recv, MPI\_Irecv, MPI\_Sendrecv) has already been made or it hasn't. Where a matching receive already exists, the receive provides a location for the data that is arriving behind the envelope. To keep track of what receives are available (particularly for the nonblocking varieties), the MPI implementation can maintain a queue<sup>1</sup> of receives that have been posted. We can think of this as a queue of messages that are expected, and we call it the expected queue. When an incoming message matches a receive in this queue, the receive is marked as completed and is removed from the queue.

Where no matching receive exists, the situation is more complicated. The receiving process must remember that a message has arrived, and it must store the data somewhere. Let us look at these two requirements. The first requirement, to remember that a message has arrived but has not matched a receive, is relatively easy to handle. We keep a queue (in the same sense as the expected messages are in a queue) of messages that were unexpected. When a program tries to receive a message with MPI\_Recv, it first checks this unexpected queue to see whether the message has already arrived. If it has, the receive can remove the message and data from that queue and complete. What about the data? The receiving process must store the data somewhere. Here we have a problem. What if the message is too big to fit in the available memory space? This situation can happen, for example, if in a manager-worker algorithm such as the one described in Section 3.6, many workers send large messages (say, 100 MB each) to the manager at nearly the same time. The MPI standard requires the implementation to handle this case and not to fail. This is the reason that we discussed buffering in Chapter 4; no matter how much memory space is provided for unexpected messages, at some point the receiver can run out.

### 8.1.3 Rendezvous Protocol

To solve the problem of delivering too much data to the destination, we need to control how much data arrives at the destination and when that data is delivered. One simple solution is to send only the envelope to the destination process. When the receiver wants the data (and has a place to put the data), it sends back to the sender a message that says, in effect, “send the data for this message now.” The

---

<sup>1</sup>Strictly speaking, it isn't exactly a queue, since we don't always take the top element off of it. But it is ordered in the sense that if two messages have the same source, communicator, and message tag, the first to arrive is the first to be removed from the queue.

MPI Call	Message Size	Protocol
<code>MPI_Ssend</code>	any	Rendezvous always
<code>MPI_Rsend</code>	any	Eager always
<code>MPI_Send</code>	$\leq 16\text{KB}$	Eager
<code>MPI_Send</code>	$> 16\text{KB}$	Rendezvous

Table 8.1: One possible mapping of MPI send modes onto the eager and rendezvous protocols. Other mappings are possible.

sender can then send the data, knowing that the receiver has a place to put the data. This approach is called a *rendezvous* protocol, because the sender and the receiver must meet and agree when to send the data.

A careful reader will note that the rendezvous approach addresses the issue of the space taken up by the data but not the space needed by the receiving process to store the envelopes. Any MPI implementation is limited to the number of unmatched (unexpected) messages that can be handled. This number is usually reasonably large (e.g., thousands), but can sometimes be exceeded by applications that send large numbers of messages to other processes without receiving any messages.

#### 8.1.4 Matching Protocols to MPI’s Send Modes

The reason for the various MPI send modes now becomes clear. Each represents a different style of communication, and each can be implemented naturally by using a combination of the eager and rendezvous protocols. One possible mapping of MPI send modes onto the protocols is shown in Table 8.1.

We note that MPI does not specify a particular implementation approach. For example, an MPI implementation could choose to implement `MPI_Send`, `MPI_Rsend`, and `MPI_Ssend` with the rendezvous protocol and never use the eager protocol. It could also choose to implement `MPI_Ssend` with a modified eager protocol, where the message is sent eagerly but the `MPI_Ssend` does not complete until the sending process receives an acknowledgment from the receiving process, thus enforcing the requirement that `MPI_Ssend` not complete until the matching receive has started (this would make `MPI_Ssend` slightly faster than an implementation that used only the rendezvous protocol, and was in fact used by early versions of MPICH).

Protocol	Time
Eager (expected)	$s + r(n + e)$
Eager (unexpected)	$s + r(n + e) + cn$
Rendezvous	$3s + r(n + 3e)$

Table 8.2: Comparison of the costs of eager and rendezvous protocols

### 8.1.5 Performance Implications

The major advantage of the rendezvous protocol is that it can handle arbitrarily large messages in any number. Why not use this method for all messages? The reason is that the eager method can be faster, particularly for short messages. To understand this, we can go back to the time complexity analysis in Chapter 4, but now apply the terms to the messages that the MPI implementation itself sends. Let the cost of sending a message of  $n$  bytes be  $s + rn$ . Let the envelope be  $e$  bytes in size. Also, since in the eager case we may need to copy the message from a temporary buffer to the buffer provided by the receive, let the cost of this copy be  $c$  seconds/byte. The relative costs of the eager and rendezvous protocols are shown in Table 8.2.

If messages are expected, eager is always faster than rendezvous. Even for unexpected messages, eager is faster for messages smaller than  $2(s + re)/c$  bytes. For small messages, the cost of sending the message is dominated by the latency term  $s$ ; in this limit, the rendezvous method is three times slower than the eager method. Hence implementations often have a mix of methods. Typically,  $s/c$  is  $10^3$  to  $10^4$ , so for many applications that send relatively short messages (of around a thousand elements or less), the eager protocol is always faster.

Given this analysis, we might choose to always use the fastest method (under the assumption that either all or some fraction of the eager messages will be unexpected). If we do so, however, we must provide roughly  $2s/c$  space for each message that we might eagerly receive. If we simply consider receiving one message from every other process (say we have  $p$  processes), and one in every communicator ( $u$  for unique communication spaces), we need  $2spu/c$  bytes for each process (or  $2sp^2u/c$  over all). On a system with many processes this is a significant amount of space. Many implementations currently address this situation by limiting the amount of space available, giving each possible source process the same amount of space for eagerly delivered messages. Other approaches are possible; for example, the space for eager messages could be dynamically assigned as needed.

### 8.1.6 Alternative MPI Implementation Strategies

Here we have briefly sketched one implementation approach. There are others. For example, it is possible for a receive to send a message to the source of the message (when `MPI_ANY_SOURCE` is not used) indicating that a message is expected [98]. This can reduce the latency introduced by the rendezvous protocol by eliminating one message exchange. Other approaches can be used when the hardware supports remote memory access or some form of shared memory. For example, most MPI implementations support networks with hardware support for remote memory operations and make use of shared memory for communication within a node.

### 8.1.7 Tuning MPI Implementations

Most MPI implementations provides some parameters to allow MPI users to tune the performance for their applications. From the preceding discussion, we know that both the amount of space available for eager delivery of messages and the message size at which an `MPI_Send` or `MPI_Isend` switches from eager to rendezvous protocol are natural parameters, and many MPI implementations allow the user some control over these. For example, the MPICH implementation has an environment variable `MPICH_CVAR_EAGER_LIMIT` that sets the message size above which the rendezvous protocol is used. Note, however, that you can't just set this to 4000000000; there is usually a range of valid values.

These parameters are implementation-dependent and can change with time. Each vendor's documentation for MPI should be checked to see what environment variables are available.

In some cases, there are options that you may want to use during program development. For example, some implementations, including MPICH, allow the user to control the level of error checking and reporting. Once a program has been thoroughly debugged, turning off these checks can save time, particularly in latency-sensitive parts of the application. MPI-3 added a standard way to discover and modify these values, which are called *control variables*. These are discussed in *Using Advanced MPI* [55], Chapter 9.

## 8.2 How Difficult Is MPI to Implement?

MPI has many functions. How difficult is it to implement all of these functions? How difficult is it to develop a high-performance MPI implementation? MPI was carefully designed so that the features of MPI are orthogonal, allowing an implementation both to build a full MPI implementation on top of a smaller number

of routines and to incrementally improve the implementation by replacing parts of the MPI implementation with more sophisticated techniques as the implementation matures.

This is a common approach. For example, in graphics and printing, most graphical displays provide for drawing a single pixel at an arbitrary location. Any other graphical function can be built by using this single, elegant primitive. However, high-performance graphical displays offer a wide variety of additional functions, ranging from block copy and line drawing to 3-D surface shading. MPI implementations tend to follow this same approach: at the very bottom of the MPI implementation are routines to communicate data between processes. An MPI implementation, early in its life, may implement all of MPI in terms of these operations. As time goes on, it can add more advanced features. For example, special routines to provide faster collective operations might exploit special features of the parallel computer’s hardware. The topology routines (i.e., `MPI_Cart_create` and `MPI_Graph_create`) can become aware of the parallel computer’s interconnect topology.

One example of a feature in MPI that implementations are improving incrementally is the handling of MPI’s derived datatypes. Early implementations of MPI often did the equivalent of using `MPI_Pack` followed by a send of contiguous data. As implementations have matured, they have addressed the issue of providing better performance on MPI derived datatypes; see [61], for example.

### 8.3 Device Capabilities and the MPI Library Definition

Earlier we commented that considering the device interface illuminates some of the design decisions in MPI. Any message-passing library imposes a certain view of the characteristics of the devices it is intended for. MPI was carefully designed to impose as few restrictions as possible, thus allowing implementations that take full advantage of modern, powerful communications hardware.

For a simple example, consider the case of `MPI_Probe`, the blocking “probe” function. Recall that MPI also has a nonblocking version, `MPI_Iprobe`. Not all message-passing libraries support probe at all, and those that do tend to supply only the nonblocking version, since the blocking one can be implemented at the user level by calling the nonblocking one in a loop. However, this “busy waiting” is not really acceptable in a multithreaded or even multiprogramming environment. If the library supplies the blocking probe as well, then the implementation can use whatever resources it may have, such as an intelligent communication controller, to free the CPU while waiting for a message.

Similarly, from the programmer's point of view there is no *need* for the (blocking) function `MPI_Recv`, since its functionality can be obtained with `MPI_Irecv` followed by `MPI_Wait`. On the other hand, the library can make more efficient use of the device if it does not have to return to the user halfway through the operation. Another case in point is the use of a datatype parameter on all MPI communication calls, rather than using `MPI_Pack` and `MPI_Unpack` together with sending untyped data. Explicit packing and unpacking, while sometimes necessary, forces a memory copy operation that usually is not.

Other parts of the MPI library, such as `MPI_Waitany`, clearly could be implemented at the user level and thus are not necessary in order for the programmer to implement an algorithm. Eliminating them would make MPI a smaller and simpler library. On the other hand, it would also eliminate opportunities for optimization by the communications layer. One reason that MPI is a relatively large library is that the MPI Forum deliberately sacrificed the notion of a “minimalist” library in favor of enabling high performance.

## 8.4 Reliability of Data Transfer

The MPI standard specifies that the message-passing operations are *reliable*. This means that the application programmer who uses a correct implementation of MPI need not worry about whether the data sent has been delivered correctly. However, it does mean that the MPI implementation must take steps to ensure that messages are delivered reliably.

No mechanism for delivering data is 100% reliable. Even direct, memory-to-memory interconnects have a small probability of failure. This is what parity and ECC (error correcting code) memories and data paths are for. Parity allows errors to be detected, ECC allows some (usually single-bit) errors to be corrected and others (usually double-bit) detected. In the case of more loosely connected systems, the probability of an uncorrectable failure is higher.

For example, take the commonly used network protocol TCP. This protocol provides *reliable* data connections between two points. But what does “reliable” mean in this context? It turns out that since 100% reliability is impossible, any TCP implementation must be prepared to decide that a connection has failed. At that point, TCP terminates the connection and reliably notifies the users of the connection that the connection has been closed. This is the meaning of “reliable” in TCP: data is delivered, or it is possible to discover that something went wrong.

This level of reliability is adequate in some circumstances but not in others. Many of the MPI Forum participants intended for MPI to provide what is often called

“guaranteed delivery”: MPI is expected to ensure that the message is delivered, correcting for any errors that may occur in the lower-level data-movement layers. In the TCP case, this might mean keeping track of how much data has been successfully delivered and, if a connection fails, having MPI automatically re-establish the connection and continue sending the data. However, being able to ensure that data has been delivered adds extra overhead and can reduce the performance of MPI (or any other message-passing or data-delivery system).

# 9 Comparing MPI with Sockets

In this chapter, we will discuss just one other system for interprocess communication in detail. This system is *sockets*, which is a common, low-level mechanism for communicating between different computers. Sockets is widely available; modern scripting languages such as Python make it easy to program with sockets.

The socket application programmer interface (API) is the basic programming interface for using TCP (among other methods) to send data between processes that are connected by many networks, including the Internet. The details of this interface are not covered here; see, for example, [115] for detailed coverage of the use of sockets. In this discussion we focus on using TCP with sockets. We will cover only a subset of the socket interface that illuminates the differences from MPI and similarities with it.

Sockets are used primarily to establish a point-to-point communication path between two processes. Once a connection is established between two processes (using `socket`, `bind`, `listen`, `accept`, and `connect`), the two processes have file descriptors (fds) with which they can read from and write to the socket. At the simplest level, a `read` on a socket is similar to an `MPI_Recv`, and a `write` on a socket is similar to an `MPI_Send`. However, the differences between MPI and sockets are interesting.

Let us look first at how data can be sent with sockets. In the case of sockets, a `write` call can return with a positive value, indicating that that number of bytes were written, or a negative value, indicating a problem (and no bytes written). The behavior of `read` is similar: the returned value indicates the number of bytes read, with an negative value indicating a problem (and no bytes read).

For sockets, as for MPI, the handling of message buffers is key to understanding what happens. The first part to note is that an attempt to write `count` bytes to the socket may be only partially successful. What happens depends on whether the socket has been set to be nonblocking (with the flag `O_NONBLOCK` or `O_NDELAY` set using the `fcntl` call on the sockets file descriptor). If the socket has *not* been set as nonblocking, then the `write` will succeed; that is, it will return with value `count` as long as `count` is no larger than the size of the socket buffer (this also assumes that the socket buffer is empty, for example, when no data has yet been sent on the socket). If `count` is greater than the socket size, then the `write` call will block until enough data has been read from the other end of the socket. In this mode, a `write` is like an `MPI_Send`: small enough data buffers are sent even if no receive is waiting for them, while sending (writing) larger data buffers can block the process, waiting for a receive to occur at the other end of the communication. For the same reasons that we discussed in Chapter 4, it can be difficult in some

---

```

void Sender(int fd, char *buf, int count)
{
    int n;
    while (count > 0) {
        n = write(fd, buf, count);
        if (n < 0) { ... special handling ... }
        count -= n;
        buf += n;
    }
}

void Receiver(int fd, char *buf, int count)
{
    int n;
    while (count > 0) {
        n = read(fd, buf, count);
        if (n < 0) { ... special handling ... }
        count -= n;
        buf += n;
    }
}

```

---

Figure 9.1: Partial code to send data between two processes

cases to guarantee that a program using `write` and `read` won't deadlock because two processes are both trying to write data to a socket that is already full of data.

To avoid this problem, a socket can be marked as nonblocking. In this case, the behavior of `read` and `write` are different from the blocking case. For `write`, if there is no room for the data, the `write` call returns the value `-1` and sets `errno` to `EAGAIN`.<sup>1</sup> This keeps the process from blocking but requires the programmer to take other steps to deliver the data. For example, when a `write` fails, the programmer might try to `read` from the socket, in the event that the socket is being written to from both ends (the “unsafe” case of each process executing a `write` to the other, intending to follow that with a `read`). In this mode, `write` and `read` are somewhat like `MPI_Isend` and `MPI_Irecv`, but with a different way of handling `MPI_Wait`. Note that this nonblocking mode for sockets is provided to allow applications to function correctly in the presence of limited buffering, just as for the MPI nonblocking modes.

---

<sup>1</sup>In a multithreaded environment, you must access the per-thread value of `errno`.

Some operating systems provide asynchronous read and write operations, called `aio_read` and `aio_write`, respectively. These are an alternative interface for nonblocking read and write operations and are closer to the MPI nonblocking operations in spirit. Note, however, that there is no requirement in MPI (or in the definitions of `aio_read` or `aio_write` for that matter) that these operations take place concurrently with computation.

Continuing the analogy with the MPI nonblocking operations, the socket API provides its own counterpart to `MPI_Waitsome` and `MPI_Testsome`. These are the `select` and `poll` calls, whose arguments are file descriptor masks. `Select` and `poll` can return immediately, in analogy with `MPI_Testsome` (when called with a timeout value of zero), or block until at least one of the fds is ready to be read from or written to. The difference is that `select` and `poll` only indicate that a file descriptor may be used; in MPI, a successful test or wait completes the related communication. A sketch of what an implementation of `MPI_Testsome` might look like in an implementation that communicates over sockets is shown in Figure 9.2.

## 9.1 Process Startup and Shutdown

When describing a message-passing library or application, most of the time is spent discussing the mechanisms for sending data between processes. This overlooks the difficulty in simply getting the processes started, particularly in a scalable way. To illustrate the issues, we will briefly describe some of the possibilities.

Starting a parallel job consists of two steps: starting the processes and putting those processes in contact with one another. Different approaches may be taken for each of these steps.

One of the simplest approaches is for the first process, for example, the single process that is started by `mpieexec`, to start all the other processes by using a remote shell program such as `rsh` or `ssh`. This initial process is called the *manager* process. In this approach, a command-line argument can be used to give the new processes the port number of a socket on the first process that can be connected to in order to get information on all of the processes in the MPI job.

This approach has the advantage of making use of existing facilities for starting processes and for routing standard in, out, and error. The disadvantages are many. For example, it is not scalable (all processes are connected to the manager process) and it relies on remote shell (considered a security risk) or a secure variant. In environments where a process manager is used for load balancing, this approach cannot be used because only the process manager is allowed to start tasks.

---

```

int Testsome(int *flag)
{
    fd_set readmask, writemask;
    int nfds;
    struct timeval timeout;

    ...setup read and write masks
    ...set timeout to zero (don't block)
    timeout.tv_sec = 0;
    timeout.tv_usec = 0;
    nfds = select(maxfd+1, &readmask, &writemask,
                  (fd_set*)0, &timeout);
    if (nfds == 0) { *flag = 0; return 0; }
    if (nfds < 0) { return nfds; } /* Error! */
    for (fds to read on) {
        if (FD_ISSET(fd, &readmask)) {
            Receive(fd, ...);
        }
    }
    for (fds to write on) {
        if (FD_ISSET(fd, &writemask)) {
            Sender(fd, ...);
        }
    }
    return 0;
}

```

---

Figure 9.2: A sketch of a `Testsome` implementation using `select` with sockets

Another approach is to run daemons on the processors that will allow processes to be started for MPI jobs. An MPI job is started by contacting one or more of these demons and requesting that the MPI process be started. This can be organized in a scalable way but adds the extra burden of providing reliable, fault tolerant, and secure process management services to the MPI implementor. In addition, some mechanism must be provided to allow the MPI processes to discover each other, such as a separate data server.

If starting processes seems hard, ensuring that processes are all stopped under all conditions is even harder. Consider the case where one MPI process in an MPI job is killed, either by a signal (such as `SIGINT` or `SIGFPE`) or by `MPI_Abort`. When this happens, all processes in the MPI job should exit. Making this happen can be difficult. For example, it would be incorrect to rely on catching a signal,

since some Unix signals are uncatchable (e.g., SIGKILL and SIGSTOP). Similarly, relying on a “watchdog” process is also unreliable, since the watchdog itself may fail or be killed (for example, some operating systems will kill processes when the OS starts to run short of critical resources like swap space; this might happen as a result of a runaway parallel program, thus causing the OS to kill the one process, the watchdog, that could save the day).

## 9.2 Handling Faults

The MPI standard says little about what happens when something goes wrong. The reason is largely that standards rarely specify the behavior of erroneous programs or the consequences of events beyond the standard (such as a power failure). This is a good match to highly scalable systems where communication between processes is guaranteed by the underlying operating environment and where scalable and high-performance implementation of the MPI collective routines is important. However, in a more loosely coupled network environment, such as a collection of workstations, there is much greater likelihood that contact with another process will be lost, and applications written using sockets often include code to handle this event.

One reason that this is easier to handle in the socket case than it is in the MPI case is that there are only two parties to the socket: if one fails, then it is reasonably clear what needs to be done. In the case of MPI, the failure of one process among a thousand during an MPI collective operation such as an MPI\_Allreduce makes it difficult to recover (one can ensure that the MPI\_Allreduce operation succeeds for all members of the communicator before allowing the MPI program to continue, but only at a significant performance cost).

An MPI implementation could provide the same level of support for communication failures in the case of communicators of size two; this is a “quality of implementation” issue. That is, there is no reason why an MPI implementation cannot provide the same level of support for failures in communication as sockets as long as only two-party communicators are used. A generalization of this, to intercommunicators where the two “parties” are the groups of processes, can also be made [58].

The MPI Forum has been discussing for several years extensions of MPI to provide greater support for fault tolerance. While the general idea seems simple, the details are surprisingly difficult. One difficult constraint is that many users of MPI depend on MPI providing the highest possible performance; these users are often unwilling to sacrifice any performance for fault tolerance. Proving that a feature will not

impact the performance of any current or future MPI implementation is nearly impossible.

Perhaps more important, the nature of the faults that MPI is expected to survive has a major impact on the fault tolerance features that are needed. Most of the work to date on MPI fault tolerance has focused on surviving the failure of a process. However, the failure of a process almost always results in data being lost by the computation, making it impossible to continue without additional steps being taken by the application to recover that data. For extreme-scale systems, a more common fault may be a transient memory error—one that causes incorrect data to be stored but does not cause the process to fail. More work is needed before a useful and effective fault-tolerant extension to MPI can be defined. This is an active area of research, with many projects and results. For more information, see, for example, [58, 44, 45, 40, 72, 122, 83, 33, 30].

# 10 Wait! There's More!

MPI is a standard library (and notation) specification for supporting the message-passing model of parallel computation. The MPI Forum interpreted its mission broadly (not without considerable discussion), and “message passing” in MPI includes not only many varieties of point-to-point communication but also contexts, groups, collective operations, process topologies, and profiling and environmental inquiry functions. Making MPI a large specification widened the scope of its applicability.

## 10.1 Beyond MPI-1

As soon as the MPI-1 standard was released, however, it was seen that the ideas behind MPI could be applied more widely, to the benefit of applications. Work on extending MPI took on three overall directions:

- **Generalizing the fixed nature of `MPI_COMM_WORLD`.** The MPI (-1) process model described in this book assumes that the number of processes participating in the parallel computation is fixed before the program begins. A more dynamic approach is to allow a computation to create new processes during the run or to establish MPI communication with processes already running in a separate `MPI_COMM_WORLD`.
- **Generalizing the notion of message passing.** The idea here is to explore ways that a process can cause events to occur on another process or processor without sending a message that the other process must explicitly receive, such as a remote signal or remote memory copy.
- **Generalizing the notion of computation.** As parallel machines have become larger, many applications based on scalable algorithms for their core computations have seen their bottlenecks shift from computation and inter-process communication to input and output of data. New parallel computers have parallel hardware in the file system, but what a “parallel file” *means* or what parallel I/O should be in general is still an open research question.

These and other topics were taken up by the MPI-2 and MPI-3 Forums and from the subject matter of the companion volume to this one, *Using Advanced MPI* [55].

## 10.2 Using Advanced MPI

In the present volume, you have been introduced to the basic concepts of MPI and seen how to apply them in a diverse set of concrete programming situations. The subset of the MPI standard presented here is sufficient for implementing quite large and sophisticated application programs, as demonstrated by the application examples appearing in several chapters.

The companion volume, *Using Advanced MPI* [55], continues the tutorial approach we have used so far into the parts of the current MPI standard that embody the extensions to basic MPI that we enumerated in the previous section. In particular, *Using Advanced MPI* covers the following topics.

**Large scale systems.** When MPI was first defined, an MPI program with 100 ranks was a highly parallel program. Now, applications with *millions* of ranks are running on the world's largest machines. The MPI-3 Forum in particular has introduced features into the standard that address the issues of scalability that arise both in the interface itself and its implementation. Particular enhancements include nonblocking and neighborhood collective operations.

**Remote memory access.** Introduced in MPI-2, remote memory access (or one-sided operations) were substantially extended and refined by the MPI-3 Forum.

**Using shared memory.** Nearly all today's machines have the capability of having multiple processes (with separate MPI ranks) share memory on a node of the machine. MPI-3 introduced functionality to allow programming this configuration with MPI.

**Hybrid programming.** Although we did touch on hybrid programming with OpenMP and MPI in this book, *Using Advanced MPI* contains a much deeper discussion of the issues surrounding multithreaded programming with MPI and new MPI-3 functionality in support of it.

**Parallel I/O.** The MPI-2 Forum introduced the MPI approach to parallel I/O, in which the analogy of sending/receiving messages to writing/reading files is exploited through the use of non-blocking and collective operations, together with the use of MPI datatypes to describe noncontiguous, typed data, both in memory and in files.

**Coping with large data.** Current data sizes dwarf those envisioned at the time of MPI-1 and MPI-2. Strategies for dealing with this issue are discussed.

**Performance and correctness debugging.** MPI-3 introduced a new tools interface that has the potential to provide substantially more capability than the profiling interface presented in this book. Other debugging approaches are also described.

**Dynamic process management.** MPI-2 introduced the notion that a set of MPI processes could create a new set of MPI processes. This functionality is only starting to be used by applications.

**Working with modern Fortran.** In this book, our appendix has described some issues presented by the Fortran interface. These issues are explored more deeply in *Using Advanced MPI*, particularly the use of the `mpi_f08` module.

**Features for libraries.** MPI-2 and MPI-3 introduced a number of features to further support the development of MPI-based libraries. These are described in *Using Advanced MPI*.

### 10.3 Will There Be an MPI-4?

MPI-2 introduced a lot of new, sophisticated technology into MPI, and it took a surprising amount of time before high-performance implementations were available. MPI-3 introduced fewer new features into MPI, but some, such as the reworked one-sided communication interface, are likely to take time to implement well. Experience will need to be gained with applications and with mature implementations of MPI-3 in order to fully understand where MPI needs to be extended. Topics under discussion include fault tolerance, extensions to two-sided message passing, and a tighter integration with thread-based programming models.

### 10.4 Beyond Message Passing Altogether

Message passing is not the only approach to parallel computing, and other approaches have been suggested. The first is called PGAS (for Partitioned Global Address Space) languages. The idea of these languages is to enable programming with essentially a shared-memory model (load/store) but with an awareness of the performance implications of local vs. remote access. These are compiler-based, rather than library-based, approaches. The C version of this approach is UPC [14] and the Fortran version is Co-Array Fortran (CAF) [2, 3], and is part of the Fortran 2008 standard. There is also a Java version called Titanium [13]. UPC and CAF are installed on a number of today's largest machines.

The PGAS languages retain the MPI feature that the programmer is directing the behavior of a specific number of processes. In what we might call the HPCS languages (since they were developed as part of DARPA’s High-Productivity Computing Systems project) this restriction is relaxed. Only the parallelism itself is specified; how it is executed is left to the implementation. The HPCS languages are Chapel [1], X10 [15], and Fortress [4].

## 10.5 Final Words

When we wrote the first edition of this book, we never thought that we would be doing a third edition some twenty years later. Yet the MPI Forum focus, constant over the years, on functionality, portability, and performance, leaving “user convenience” to library writers, has proved to be a robust framework indicating that MPI will be an essential component of large, small, current, and future systems. We hope that this introduction to MPI will provide you with the understanding you will need as parallel computing confronts the future.

## Glossary of Selected Terms

The following is a glossary of the most commonly used terms in this book. While it is far from complete, it does provide a number of useful definitions in one place.

**Active Messages** An active message is normally a short message that causes remote execution on the receiving process of a specified section of code while delivering to that code the active-message “payload.” Analogous to remote procedure calls used in most Unix/Linux/POSIX systems, the active-message paradigm is a means both for implementing higher-level protocols like MPI and for direct programming in certain situations. Active messages are an extension to the message-passing model of MPI.

**Application Programmer Interface (API)** An application programmer interface (API) is the set of callable functions (or methods used with objects, or both), and rules and guidelines for how one software library (or component) will work with or contract with another. A library (or component) is often said to *publish* its API. In practical terms, an API provides a set of capabilities and rules that, when used correctly, provide services and operations to an application programmer. Operating systems publish APIs of system calls (POSIX is one such example, Win32 another). MPI has a standardized API (the main topic of this book), which consists of its function calls, parameters, arguments, and rules for accomplishing group-oriented message passing. APIs can have versions, a good example of which is that MPI started from MPI-1, which has been updated over the past twenty years to MPI-2 and MPI-3; now MPI-4 is being developed.

**Application Topology** Application topologies are the natural process interconnection implied by the algorithm, in parallel. MPI supports the mapping of application topologies onto virtual topologies, and virtual topologies onto physical hardware topologies.

**Attributes** Attributes in MPI are integers (in Fortran) or pointers (in C) that can be attached, by key value, to a communicator.

**Asynchronous Communication** Asynchronous communication is often used interchangeably with nonblocking communication. This is generally communication in which the sender and receiver place no constraints on each other in terms of completion and which may also overlap as much as possible with computation. The term asynchronous communication is not used in MPI.

**Bandwidth** The bandwidth of a message transmission is its transfer rate. Bandwidth is the reciprocal of the time needed to transfer a byte (the incremental per-byte cost).

**Blocking Communication** Blocking communication refers to communication in which the call does not complete (or return control to the calling program) until the buffer is available for reuse (in the case of the send) or use (in the case of a receive). See *Blocking Send* and *Blocking Receive*.

**Blocking Receive** A blocking receive is a receive that blocks until the data buffer contains the selected message. See *Nonblocking Receive*.

**Blocking Send** A blocking send is a send that blocks until the data buffer is available for reuse. This may or may not require recipient to begin the process of receiving the message. The details of the blocking depend on the implementation and the amount of buffering that the system may choose to do or be able to do.

**Buffered Communication** Communication in which the send operation (which may be blocking or nonblocking) may make use of a user-provided buffer, in order to ensure that the send does not block (and possibly deadlock) while waiting for space to store the user's message. This is primarily of use with blocking sends, where this mode removes the possibility that the matching receive may need to start before the blocking, buffered send call can return. Buffering may involve additional copying of data and can impact performance.

**Buffering** Buffering refers to the amount or act of copying (or the amount of memory) that the system uses as part of its transmission protocols. Generally, buffering helps avoid *deadlocks*, making programming easier for specific cases but less portable and predictable.

**Caching of Attributes** Caching is the process of attaching attributes in MPI to a communicator. See *Attributes*.

**Cartesian Topology** Cartesian topology is the type of virtual topology that supports regular mapping of processes into an N-dimensional name space. Examples include two- and three-dimensional logical process topologies used for linear algebra and PDE computations.

**Collective Communication** Collective communication involves operations such as “broadcast” (`MPI_Bcast`) and “all reduce” (`MPI_Allreduce`) that in-

volve the entire group of a communicator, rather than just two members, as in point-to-point communication.

**Communication Modes** MPI provides buffered, ready, standard, and synchronous communication modes for point-to-point communication.

**Communication Processor** A communication processor is generally the hardware component that provides the local access of a processor to the parallel computer network. Such processors are also called “router chips” and “mesh-routing chips” or MRCs on some systems. As time passes, the communication processor and its “glue chips” are becoming capable of more than simple transfers to and from CPUs, and may be capable of “gather/scatter”-type operations and other high-speed memory accesses without direct CPU intervention.

**Communicator** A communicator is a group of processes plus the notion of safe communication *context*. MPI has two types of communicators: intracomunicators (the default), and intercommunicators (these involve two disjoint groups of processes). Communicators guarantee that communication is isolated from other communication in the system and also that collective communication is isolated from point-to-point communication. Some people think of communicators as “virtual fabrics” of communication.

**Context** In MPI, the context is not a user-visible quantity per se but is the internal mechanism by which a communicator endows a group with safe communication space, separating such communication from all others in the system and separating point-to-point and collective communication of a communicator’s group.

**Contiguous Data** The simplest message buffers consist of data that is not dispersed in memory but, rather, is contiguous. MPI deals with this case, and with more general noncontiguous data, through datatypes. An example of contiguous data would be ten double precision numbers starting at a base address, and stored consecutively in memory.

**Datatypes** The MPI objects that support general gather and scatter of complex data specifications are called datatypes. The simple ones are built in, and user-defined data types are called derived datatypes.

**Deadlock** The state of execution where the computation cannot proceed because an impasse is reached where two or more processes depend directly or indirectly on each other for a result before continuing. A good example is two processes trying to receive from each other, then send to each other, in a blocking communication mode.

**Deprecated Function** A deprecated function or feature of MPI is one that has been replaced by a better way of performing the same operation in a later version of the standard. Switching to using the “new way” is recommended. Deprecated functions will eventually be removed from future versions of the standard.

**Erroneous Program** An erroneous program in MPI standard terminology is one that uses MPI in a way that is invalid according to the standard. Such programs have undetermined behavior. In some cases, erroneous programs actually run. Compare with *Unsafe Programs*, which is another category of MPI program.

**Event** An event is the unit of logging for program instrumentation. Events are considered to have no duration.

**Fault Tolerance** Fault tolerance is a feature of a program or library such as MPI that allows it to detect, mitigate, isolate, and potentially recover from a misbehavior (a fault, leading in turn to a failure) of hardware and/or software. MPI’s standardized model has assumed reliable underlying hardware and lower-level software up to now, but a number of “fault tolerant MPIs” have been proposed and prototyped over the past 15 years.

**GPGPU** General-purpose computing on graphical processing units (GPGPUs), which are typically combined with a conventional processor and programmed with a special purpose language such as CUDA, OpenACC, or OpenCL.

**Graph Topology** Graph topology is the type of virtual topology that allows general relationships between processes, where processes are represented by nodes of a graph.

**Group** A group (or process group) is an ordered collection of processes. Each process has a rank in the group. The rank runs from zero to one less than the number of processes.

**Group Safety** Group safety is the type of insulation from message passing provided by contexts of communication in MPI. Each communicator has a group, and that group communicates in a specific context, independent of all other communication for that group (with different communicators) and all other groups.

**Heterogeneous Computing** A heterogeneous environment has distinct data formats and/or distinct computational capabilities.

**Intercommunicator** Intercommunicators support both a “local” and “remote” group view of the world and can be used in client-server-oriented point-to-point computation. They are often just called communicators.

**Interconnection Network** An interconnection network comprises the hardware that connects processors to form a parallel computer.

**Intracomunicator** Intracomunicators are less general than intercommunicators, in that they have only a “local” view of processes but support both point-to-point and collective communication. In this book, when we refer to a communicator, we are referring to an intracomunicator.

**Key Value** The MPI-defined integer that is used to name a particular attribute to be cached is called the key value. The names are process local, so that all communicators on a process can easily share similar attributes.

**Latency** Latency in the sense of a message-passing system refers to the cost to set up a message transmission. It is the “startup cost” (or fixed cost) before any bytes of data can be sent. High latency means that messages are costly up front and may be cheap in the limit of large messages only if the per-byte rate is small (that is, *bandwidth* is high).

**Message Passing Interface Forum (MPIF)** The MPI Forum convened to create a de facto standard for message passing, independent of standards bodies. The group consisted of representatives from vendors, universities, and national laboratories. Researchers from around the world are participating.

**MPE** MPE is the multiprocessing environment add-on software provided with this book to enhance message-passing programming with MPI, including graphics and profiling capabilities.

**Multicore Architecture** A multicore architecture is one in which several processors share a socket or die and thereby offer fine-grained concurrency. Most

processors produced today (even for laptops and embedded devices) offer multiple cores. A multicore architecture is a kind of *multiprocessor*.

**Multiprocessor** A multiprocessor refers to a single computer with multiple processors sharing memory and other resources. Originally implemented with multiple processors and a shared-memory network, or on a single computer with a shared bus, multiprocessors now include the nearly ubiquitous *multicore* architecture.

**Node** Node is used in two senses in this book. In one sense, it is synonymous with processor; in the other, it refers to the nodes of a graph, which is a standard computer science data structure.

**Nonblocking Communication** In a nonblocking communication, the call does not wait for the communication to be completed. See *NonBlocking Receive* and *NonBlocking Send*.

**Nonblocking Receive** A non-blocking receive is a receive operation that may return before the data buffer contains an incoming message. This is often used to provide the location and layout of the data buffer to the lower-level message passing hardware in order to provide better performance.

**Nonblocking Send** The send may return before the data buffer is available for reuse. The intent is that the send returns almost immediately. A nonblocking send must not require a matching receive to start before returning.

**Overlapping of Communication, Computation, I/O** In some systems, asynchronous communication, computation, and input-output can be overlapped in time, so that the total time is shorter than if each of these operations was done sequentially. MPI supports the potential for overlapping of communication and computation with its nonblocking operations, although implementations and underlying hardware vary in their ability to support this kind of concurrency. When it works on a system, overlapping can hide some of the cost of message passing.

**Pairwise Ordering** The pairwise ordering property of message-passing systems is essential to the message-passing programming paradigm of MPI and its ancestor systems. This property guarantees that two messages sent between a pair of processes arrives in the order they were sent. With the introduction of “contexts,” this requirement is weakened to require that two messages sent between a pair of processes using the same communicator arrive in the same

order they were sent. MPI does weaken this further by changing the order of messages of different tags between the same processor pair.

**Parallel Library** A library is an “encapsulation” of an algorithm in a way that is meant to be convenient for multiple uses in a single application and/or reuse in multiple applications. Library writers for parallel computers can build robust libraries because MPI specifically provides features to help libraries to isolate their communication from that of users and other libraries.

**Persistent Requests** Persistent requests are used when multiple communications are to be started, tested, or completed, in order to reduce costs and provide the user with access to higher performance.

**Physical Topology** Physical topology is the topology of the parallel computer interconnection network, such as a mesh or hypercube.

**Point-to-Point Communication** Point-to-point communication is between two members of a communicator; (generically, a send-receive type call).

**Portability** Portability is the concept of moving a program from one environment to another. The degree of portability indicates the amount of work needed to get the program to run again. High-quality portability (also called performance portability, or transportability) implies that reasonable performance is retained as a product of that porting process. MPI is designed to help ensure that high performance is possible across a number of different parallel platforms.

**Process** A process is the smallest addressable unit of computation in the MPI model. A process resides on a processor (or node). MPI does not discuss how processes are born, die, or are otherwise managed.

**Processor** A processor is (loosely) the CPU, memory, and I/O capabilities of a subset of a parallel machine (or a workstation in a workstation cluster). A processor supports the execution of one or more processes in the MPI model, but MPI makes only limited connection between processes and processors in environmental inquiry routines and in two topology-related mapping routines.

**Quiescence** The quiescence property requires that programmers guarantee that no outside communication will impinge on a group of processes during a specific period of execution, in order for a given operation to execute correctly. Quiescence demands that no pending point-to-point communication is in place

and that no other processes will send any messages between two points of synchronization for a group of processes. This strategy is not required for most of MPI; the notable exception is during the creation of intercommunicators, where a quiescence guarantee is required of two “leader” processes in the “peer communicator.”

**Race Condition** A race condition is the situation in which two or more processes or threads strive for a resource and obtain it in an unpredictable fashion. Race conditions often mean that a program sometimes works and sometimes breaks.

**Ready Communication Mode** In ready communication mode, also known as *ready send*, the system is allowed to assume that the receiver has already posted the receive prior to the sender posting the send. If the receive has not been issued when the send occurs, the send is erroneous, and the behavior is undefined (error detection is encouraged but not required by MPI). The ready send may also be either blocking or nonblocking, as defined above.

**Reduce** An operation that reduces many data items by combining them together to form a result.

**Request Object** A request object is returned by MPI in response to an operation that will have a subsequent “wait” before it is completed. A good example is `MPI_Irecv`. The request object is used with `MPI_Wait` and similar calls to find out whether the original operation is complete.

**Safe Programs** In this book, and in the MPI standard, reference is made to “safe” and “unsafe” programs, independent of the concept of thread safety. A safe program is a program that does not rely on any buffering for its correct execution.

**Standard Mode** The standard communication mode of MPI corresponds most closely to current common practice.

**Status Object** The status object is the MPI means for returning information about an operation, notably a receive. For thread safety, this object is returned at the time the receive completes; for efficiency, the format of the receive object is an array for Fortran and a structure for C.

**Subgroup** MPI works on communicators that have groups. Other communicators based on subgroups of the “world group” are also possible. Subgroups are

just as flexible as groups from which they are defined, and no distinction is necessary, except that it is convenient to call certain groups “subgroups” and certain communicators “subcommunicators” when describing algorithms.

**Synchronization** Synchronization is an operation that forces a group of processes all to pass through a critical section of code before any can continue. Many MPI collective operations are potentially synchronizations, but not all are required to be implemented with this property (except `MPI_Barrier`, which is specifically designed to be a synchronization). See also *Synchronous Communication Mode*.

**Synchronous Communication Mode** The sender in the synchronous communication mode may not return until the matching receive has been issued on the destination process. Synchronous sends may be either blocking or nonblocking, depending on whether the data buffer provided to the send is available for reuse when the send call returns.

**Thread** A thread is the atomic notion of execution within an MPI process. Each MPI process has a main thread and may have additional threads, provided a thread-safe programming environment and threads package are both available. The MPI interface is thread safe but does not tie MPI specifically to any thread paradigm or standard. Implementations of MPI may or may not be thread safe. The precise level of thread safety offered in an MPI implementation can be found in an MPI program with functions introduced in MPI-2.

**Thread Safety** Thread safety is the quality of software semantics that guarantees that independently executing threads will not interfere with each other by accessing data intended for a different thread. Implementing thread safety requires eliminating most global state and explicitly managing use of any global state that cannot be eliminated. MPI is designed to be a thread-safe specification. Implementations may or may not achieve thread safety internally.

**Topology** See *Virtual Topology*.

**Type Map** A type map is the sequence of pairs of basic MPI datatypes and displacements that make up, in part, a derived datatype.

**Type Signature** The type signature is the MPI concept that extracts just the sequence of datatypes from a type map.

**Unsafe Program** In MPI, a program is called unsafe if it depends on resources or an implementation to work in a particular way that is not mandated, such as that there be internal buffering of a certain size. Unsafe programs can work correctly on some systems, and fail on others, or even change characteristics for different length messages or for different versions on an MPI implementation. An example is two MPI ranks both sending each other a blocking message, which can result in *deadlock*; however, the program might run OK on a specific MPI implementation that buffers data internally. Such a program is said to be *unsafe* but not *erroneous*.

**User-Defined Topology** If MPI's virtual topologies are insufficient, then users can easily build their own topologies. Such topologies are often application-oriented.

**Virtual Topology** Virtual topologies are a naming of processes in a communicator other than the rank naming. Graphs, Cartesian grids, and user-defined arrangements are all possible. Virtual topologies link applications more closely to communicators because the names of processes reflect the communication pattern needed for it. See also *Application Topology*.

# A The MPE Multiprocessing Environment

Here we describe the MPE library that has been used in the examples throughout this book. It consists of functions that are

- consistent in style with MPI,
- not in MPI,
- freely available, and
- will work with any MPI implementation.

These tools are rudimentary and lack many desirable features. Nonetheless, we have found them useful in the preparation of this book.

The files ‘`mpe.h`’ and ‘`mpef.h`’ should be included for C and Fortran programs, respectively.

## A.1 MPE Logging

The C bindings for the logging routines are given in Table A.1 and the Fortran bindings in Table A.2.

These routines allow the user to log events that are meaningful for specific applications, rather than relying on automatic logging of MPI library calls. The basic routines are `MPE_Init_log`, `MPE_Log_event`, and `MPE_Finish_log`. `MPE_Init_log` must be called (by all processes) to initialize MPE logging data structures. `MPE_Finish_log` collects the log data from all the processes, merges it, and aligns the timestamps with respect to the times at which `MPE_Init_log` and `MPE_Finish_log` were called. Then, the process with rank 0 in `MPI_COMM_WORLD` writes the log into the file whose name is given as an argument. A single event is logged with the `MPE_Log_event` routine, which specifies an event type (completely up to the user), and one integer and one character string for user data. In order to place in the logfile data that might be useful for a logfile analysis or visualization program (like `jumpshot`), the routines `MPE_Describe_event` and `MPE_Describe_state` allow one to add event and state descriptions and to define states by specifying a starting and ending event for each state. One can also suggest a state color to be used by the logfile visualizations program. In the case of `jumpshot`, the color can be of the form “`red:vlines`” in order to specify simultaneously a color for a color display and a bitmap for black-and-white displays (such as books).

---

```

int MPE_Init_log(void)
int MPE_Start_log(void)
int MPE_Stop_log(void)
int MPE_Finish_log(char *filename)
int MPE_Describe_state(int start, int end, char *name, char *color)
int MPE_Describe_event(int event, char *name)
int MPE_Log_event(int event, int intdata, char *chardata)

```

---

Table A.1: C bindings for MPE logging routines

---

<b>MPE_INIT_LOG()</b>	
<b>MPE_FINISH_LOG(logfilename)</b>	character*(*) logfilename
<b>MPE_START_LOG()</b>	
<b>MPE_STOP_LOG()</b>	
<b>MPE_DESCRIBE_STATE(start, end, name, color)</b>	
	integer start, end
	character*(*) name, color
<b>MPE_DESCRIBE_EVENT(event, name)</b>	
	integer event
	character*(*) name
<b>MPE_LOG_EVENT(event, intdata, chardata)</b>	
	integer event, intdata
	character*(*) chardata

---

Table A.2: Fortran bindings for MPE logging

---

```
int MPE_Open_graphics(MPE_Graph *handle, MPI_Comm comm, char *display,
                      int x, int y, int is_collective)

int MPE_Draw_point(MPE_Graph handle, int x, int y, MPE_Color color)

int MPE_Draw_line(MPE_Graph handle, int x1, int y1, int x2, int y2, MPE_Color color)

int MPE_Draw_circle(MPE_Graph handle, int centerx, int centery, int radius,
                     MPE_Color color)

int MPE_Fill_rectangle(MPE_Graph handle, int x, int y, int w, int h, MPE_Color color)

int MPE_Update(MPE_Graph handle)

int MPE_Num_colors(MPE_Graph handle, int *nc)

int MPE_Make_color_array(MPE_Graph handle, int ncolors, MPE_Color array[])

int MPE_Close_graphics(MPE_Graph *handle)
```

---

Table A.3: C bindings for MPE graphics routines

Finally, `MPE_Stop_log` and `MPE_Start_log` can be used to dynamically turn logging off and on, respectively. By default, it is on after `MPE_Init_log` is called.

These routines are used in one of the profiling libraries supplied with the distribution for automatic event logging for MPI library calls.

## A.2 MPE Graphics

Many application programmers would like to enhance the output of their programs with some simple graphics but find learning the X11 programming model too much of a burden. To make it easier, we have defined a small set of simple graphics primitives that can be used in MPI programs. An introduction to this library is given in Chapter 3, Section 3.8. The C bindings for these routines are given in Table A.3.

Our implementation assumes that the underlying graphics routines can be called directly from programs that are also using MPI. We use X11 to provide this functionality, but other implementations may be possible.

---

**MPE\_OPEN\_GRAPHICS**(handle, comm, display, x, y, is\_collective, ierror)  
 integer handle, comm, x, y, ierror  
 character(\*) display  
 logical is\_collective

**MPE\_DRAW\_POINT**(handle, x, y, color, ierror)  
 integer handle, x, y, color, ierror

**MPE\_DRAW\_LINE**(handle, x1, y1, x2, y2, color, ierror)  
 integer handle, x1, y1, x2, y2, color, ierror

**MPE\_DRAW\_CIRCLE**(handle, centerx, centery, radius, color, ierror)  
 integer handle, centerx, centery, radius, color, ierror

**MPE\_FILL\_RECTANGLE**(handle, x, y, w, h, color, ierror)  
 integer handle, x, y, w, h, color, ierror

**MPE\_UPDATE**(handle, ierror)  
 integer handle, ierror

**MPE\_NUM\_COLORS**(handle, nc, ierror)  
 integer handle, nc, ierror

**MPE\_MAKE\_COLOR\_ARRAY**(handle, ncolors, array, ierror)  
 integer handle, ncolors, array(\*), ierror

**MPE\_CLOSE\_GRAPHICS**(handle, ierror)  
 integer handle, ierror

---

Table A.4: Fortran bindings for MPE graphics routines

### A.3 MPE Helpers

In addition to the logging and graphics code, the MPE library contains a number of routines to aid programmers in producing parallel applications. The routine `MPE_Decompile` was used in Chapter 4 to compute decompositions of an array. The routines `MPE_Counter_create`, `MPE_Counter_free`, `MPE_Counter_nxtval`, and `MPE_Counter_service` were defined in Chapter 7 to implement a remote counter. Bindings for these routines are shown in Tables A.5 and A.6.

---

```

int MPE_Decomp1d(int n, int size, int rank, int *s, int *e)
int MPE_Counter_create(MPI_Comm old_comm, MPI_Comm
                         *smaller_com, MPI_Comm *counter_comm)

int MPE_Counter_free(MPI_Comm *smaller_comm, MPI_Comm *counter_comm)

int MPE_Counter_nxtval(MPI_Comm counter_comm, int *value)

int MPE_Counter_service(MPI_Comm comm)

int MPE_Counter_service_setup(MPI_Comm comm)

```

---

Table A.5: C bindings for Miscellaneous MPE routines

---

<b>MPE_DECOMP1D</b> (n, size, rank, s, e)
integer n, size, rank, s, e
<b>MPE_COUNTER_CREATE</b> (old_comm, smaller_comm, counter_comm)
integer old_comm, smaller_comm, counter_comm
<b>MPE_COUNTER_FREE</b> (smaller_comm, counter_comm)
integer smaller_comm, counter_comm
<b>MPE_COUNTER_NXTVAL</b> (counter_comm, value)
integer counter_comm, value
<b>MPE_COUNTER_SERVICE</b> (comm)
integer comm
<b>MPE_COUNTER_SERVICE_SETUP</b> (comm)
integer comm

---

Table A.6: Fortran bindings for Miscellaneous MPE routines

# B MPI Resources Online

Here we describe how to get access to MPI-related material on the Internet.

**Examples of MPI programs.** All the examples used in this book are available on the web at <http://www.mcs.anl.gov/mpi/usingmpi>. The file ‘README’ lists the files by chapter. A Unix ‘tar’ file (compressed) containing all of the examples is available in ‘examples.tar.gz’. Instructions for unpacking this file are in the ‘README’ file. In addition, any errata items for this book will be made available at that web site.

**MPI implementations.** The MPICH implementation, written by the authors of this book and others, is freely available and may be downloaded at <http://www.mpich.org>. The MPICH implementation includes examples and test programs. Most of the test programs may be used with any MPI implementation.

**The MPI standard.** The MPI standard is available in PDF at <http://www mpi-forum.org>. Errata for MPI-1, MPI-2, and MPI-3 are also available there.

A great deal of information on parallel programming projects and tools is available on the net. We encourage you to investigate other sites for other resources on MPI and parallel computing.

# C Language Details

In this appendix we briefly discuss some details of C and Fortran that interact with MPI.

## C.1 Arrays in C and Fortran

This section discusses the layout of C and Fortran arrays in memory and talks briefly about how implicit “reshapes” of arrays are handled in Fortran. All arrays are stored in memory according to some rule, defined by the language, that says how to map the indices of an array reference such as  $a(i, j, k, l)$  into a computer’s memory. Understanding and exploiting this rule are important in creating efficient representations of data.

### C.1.1 Column and Row Major Ordering

Many discussions of the differences between Fortran and C arrays refer to “column” and “row” major ordering. These terms come from looking at a two-dimensional array as representing a matrix. To understand this, consider the  $m \times n$  matrix

$$\begin{pmatrix} a_{11} & a_{12} & a_{13} & \cdots & a_{1n} \\ a_{21} & a_{22} & a_{23} & \cdots & a_{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ a_{m1} & a_{m2} & a_{m3} & \cdots & a_{mn} \end{pmatrix}$$

If we use the Fortran declaration

---

```
real a(m,n)
```

---

and represent the matrix element  $a_{ij}$  with  $a(i, j)$ , then *column major ordering*, used in the Fortran language, means that the elements are stored by columns; that is, they are stored in the order  $a(1, 1), a(2, 1), \dots, a(m, 1), a(1, 2), \dots, a(m, n)$ . *Row major ordering*, used in the C language, means that the elements are stored by rows; that is,  $a[0][0], a[0][1], \dots, a[0][n-1], a[1][0], \dots, a[m-1][n-1]$ . We have used Fortran and C array notation here to emphasize how each is stored in memory.

### C.1.2 Meshes vs. Matrices

While a matrix-based view of arrays is common and often helpful, a different view of arrays is more natural for many applications, for instance, the 2-D Poisson example in Chapter 4. The solution to the problem had a natural representation as a function

$u(x, y)$ . We solved this problem on a discrete mesh of points  $(x_i, y_j)$  and used the Fortran element  $u(i, j)$  to represent  $u(x_i, y_j)$ . While this approach seems entirely natural, consider how this appears:

$$\begin{array}{cccc} u(1,m) & u(2,m) & \cdots & u(n,m) \\ u(1,m-1) & u(2,m-1) & \cdots & u(n,m-1) \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ u(1,1) & u(2,1) & \cdots & u(n,1) \end{array}$$

Viewed this way, the *rows* are stored together! What is going on?

The real story is that Fortran arrays are (always) stored so that, when we look at how the elements are placed in memory, we see that the first index varies most rapidly. In fact, the rule for mapping a Fortran array into memory is simple: If the array is declared as  $A(N1, N2, \dots)$ , then  $A(I1, I2, \dots)$  is the  $(I1-1) + N1 * ((I2-1) + N2 * (\dots))$ th element (starting from zero).

The rule for C is the opposite; the *last* index varies most rapidly. When considering the special case of two dimensions and looking at the arrays as representing matrices, we see how these lead to the row- and column-major interpretations.

### C.1.3 Higher Dimensional Arrays

Once we know how arrays are laid out in the computer's memory, we can use that information to design ways to access sections of multidimensional arrays, planes with one coordinate constant, for example. If we wish to send a plane of data out of a 3-D array, we can form three different datatypes, one for each coordinate direction.

For concreteness, consider a Fortran array dimensioned as

---

**double precision a(nx, ny, nz)**

---

We will consider two different situations. In the first, we wish to send an entire face of this 3-D rectangular array. In the second, we wish to send only a rectangular part of the face. We will see that exploiting the knowledge of how data is laid out in memory will allow us to use a single MPI\_Type\_vector call for the first situation, while in the second situation (involving a part of a face) we will need to build a derived type from another derived type.

This is a good place to mention that most MPI implementations do not understand Fortran array sections. That is, you should not pass a part of an array using, for example,  $a(3:10, 19:27, 4)$ . Instead, you should pass the first element

that you wish to send; for example,  $a(3, 19, 4)$ . The only exception is if `MPI_SUBARRAYS_SUPPORTED`, which is provided by the `mpif.h` file and the `mpi` and `mpi_f08` modules, has the value `.TRUE.`. This is unlikely to be the case unless you are using the `mpi_f08` module with Fortran.

**Sending an Entire Face.** To send the elements  $a(1:nx, 1:ny, k)$  for some value of  $k$ , we do not need a datatype, since this selects  $nx \times ny$  contiguous memory locations, starting at  $a(1, 1, k)$ . Having a datatype for each face can be convenient, however. We can construct the datatype for this face with

---

```
call MPI_TYPE_CONTIGUOUS(nx * ny, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                         newz, ierror)
```

---

The next face to send is  $a(1:nx, j, 1:nz)$ . This is a vector: there are  $nx$  elements in each block, there are  $nz$  blocks, and the blocks are separated by a stride of  $nx \times ny$ . The datatype representing full faces in the  $x - z$  plane is

---

```
call MPI_TYPE_VECTOR(nz, nx, nx * ny, MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, &
                      newy, ierror)
```

---

Now consider the  $y - z$  face  $a(i, 1:ny, 1:nz)$ . There are  $ny \times nz$  elements, each of size 1, separated by  $nx$ . To see this, remember that the formula for the locations of the elements of  $a(i, j, k)$  is  $\text{offset} + (i-1) + nx * ((j-1) + ny * (k-1))$ . The value of  $j$  runs from 1 to  $ny$ , and  $k$  runs from 1 to  $nz$ . Thus the elements are

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{offset} + (i-1) + 0 \\ &\text{offset} + (i-1) + nx \\ &\quad \dots \\ &\text{offset} + (i-1) + nx * (ny-1) \\ &\text{offset} + (i-1) + nx * (0 + ny * 1) \\ &\quad \dots \\ &\text{offset} + (i-1) + nx * ((ny-1) + ny * (nz-1)) \end{aligned}$$

Note that the element at  $a(i, ny, k)$  is  $nx$  elements from the element at  $a(i, 1, k+1)$ , as of course all the elements  $a(i, j, k)$  are  $nx$  elements from  $a(i, j+1, k)$ . Thus, we can use the vector type

---

```
call MPI_TYPE_VECTOR(ny * nz, 1, nx, &
                      MPI_DOUBLE_PRECISION, newx, ierror)
```

---



---

```
call MPI_TYPE_COMMIT(newx, ierror)
```

---

An approach similar to that in Section 5.4 can be used to generate more general datatypes.

## C.2 Aliasing

MPI routines such as MPI\_Allreduce have both input and output buffers. It might seem natural to use code like this:

---

```
sum = ...
call MPI_ALLREDUCE(sum, sum, 1, MPI_INTEGER, MPI_SUM, &
                   MPI_COMM_WORLD, ierr)
```

---

This code is incorrect; we mentioned in Section 3.1 that the input and output buffers had to be distinct (nonoverlapping). This is a requirement of Fortran of which some programmers are not aware. The Fortran standard states that if an actual argument is repeated, then the routine may not assign a value to it. Repeating an argument is called *aliasing*. This prohibits the form of use of the MPI\_Allreduce call given above, because the second use of the repeated argument sum has a value assigned to it by the routine. For consistency, the C versions of the MPI routines share this restriction (even though the C language does not prohibit aliasing).

In MPI-2, this restriction was eased somewhat. Many of the collective routines allow the use of the value MPI\_IN\_PLACE as the value of the sendbuf or recvbuf. For example, MPI\_Allreduce allows MPI\_IN\_PLACE as the sendbuf argument. In that case, the input data is taken from recvbuf. MPI\_IN\_PLACE is discussed in Section 5.2.1 in the MPI-3 standard [94].

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