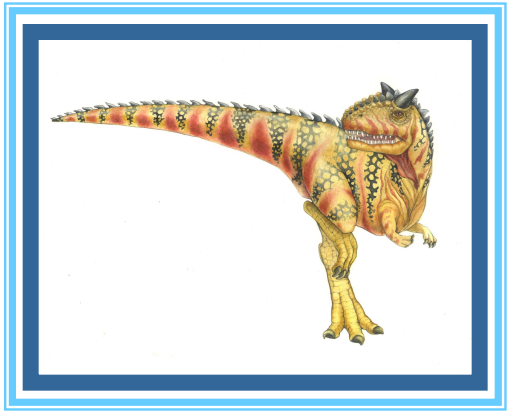
Chapter 13: I/O Systems



Chapter 13: I/O Systems

- Overview
- I/O Hardware
- Application I/O Interface
- Kernel I/O Subsystem
- Transforming I/O Requests to Hardware Operations
- STREAMS
- Performance

Objectives

- Explore the structure of an operating system's I/O subsystem
- Discuss the principles of I/O hardware and its complexity
- Provide details of the performance aspects of I/O hardware and software

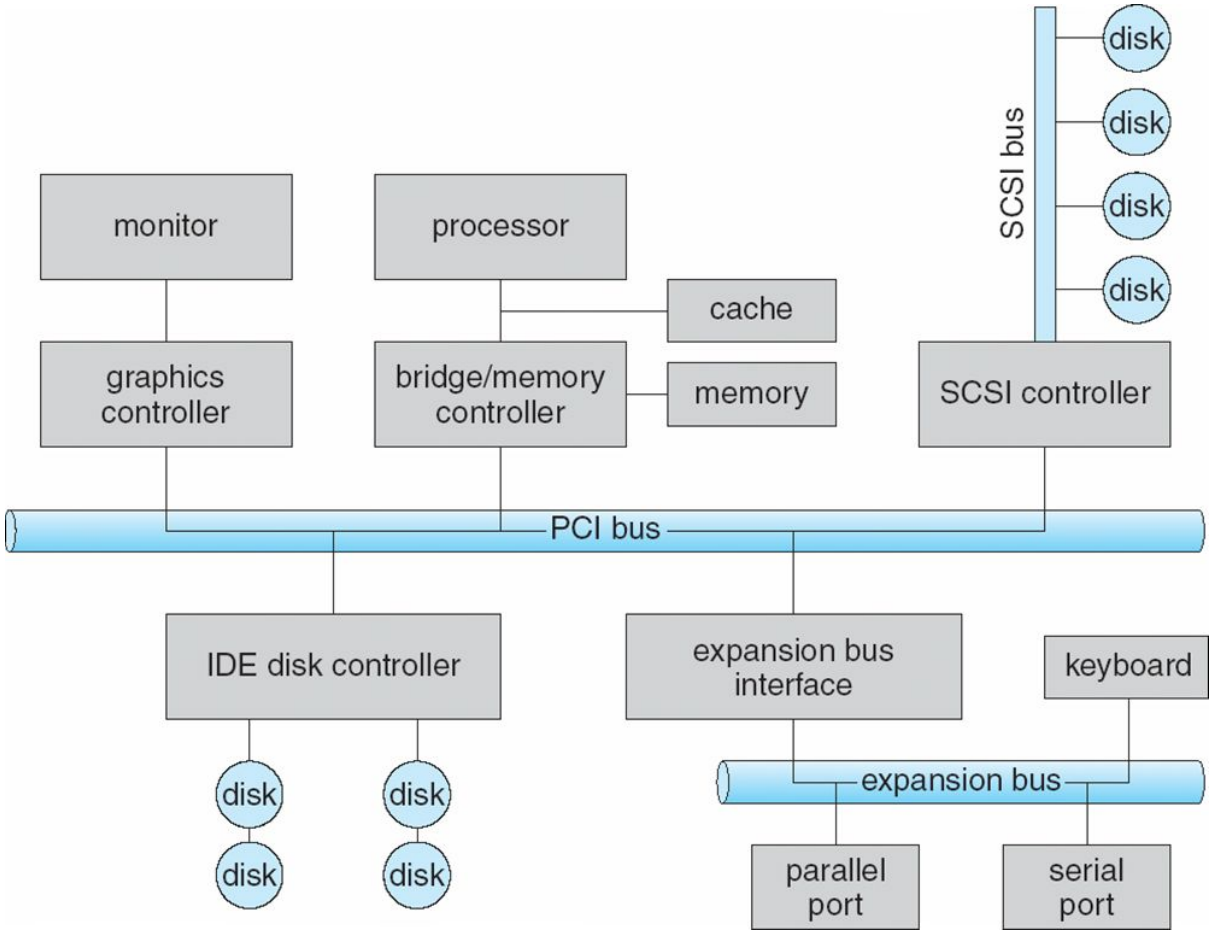
Overview

- I/O management is a major component of operating system design and operation
  - Important aspect of computer operation
  - I/O devices vary greatly
  - Various methods to control them
  - Performance management
  - New types of devices frequent
- Ports, busses, device controllers connect to various devices
- **Device drivers** encapsulate device details
  - Present uniform device-access interface to I/O subsystem

I/O Hardware

- Incredible variety of I/O devices
  - Storage
  - Transmission
  - Human-interface
- Common concepts – signals from I/O devices interface with computer
  - **Port** – connection point for device
  - **Bus** - **daisy chain** or shared direct access
    - **PCI** bus common in PCs and servers, PCI Express (**PCIe**)
    - **expansion bus** connects relatively slow devices
  - **Controller** (**host adapter**) – electronics that operate port, bus, device
    - Sometimes integrated
    - Sometimes separate circuit board (host adapter)
    - Contains processor, microcode, private memory, bus controller, etc
      - Some talk to per-device controller with bus controller, microcode, memory, etc

A Typical PC Bus Structure



I/O Hardware (Cont.)

- I/O instructions control devices
- Devices usually have registers where device driver places commands, addresses, and data to write, or read data from registers after command execution
  - Data-in register, data-out register, status register, control register
  - Typically 1-4 bytes, or FIFO buffer
- Devices have addresses, used by
  - Direct I/O instructions
  - **Memory-mapped I/O**
    - Device data and command registers mapped to processor address space
    - Especially for large address spaces (graphics)

Device I/O Port Locations on PCs (partial)

I/O address range (hexadecimal)	device
000–00F	DMA controller
020–021	interrupt controller
040–043	timer
200–20F	game controller
2F8–2FF	serial port (secondary)
320–32F	hard-disk controller
378–37F	parallel port
3D0–3DF	graphics controller
3F0–3F7	diskette-drive controller
3F8–3FF	serial port (primary)

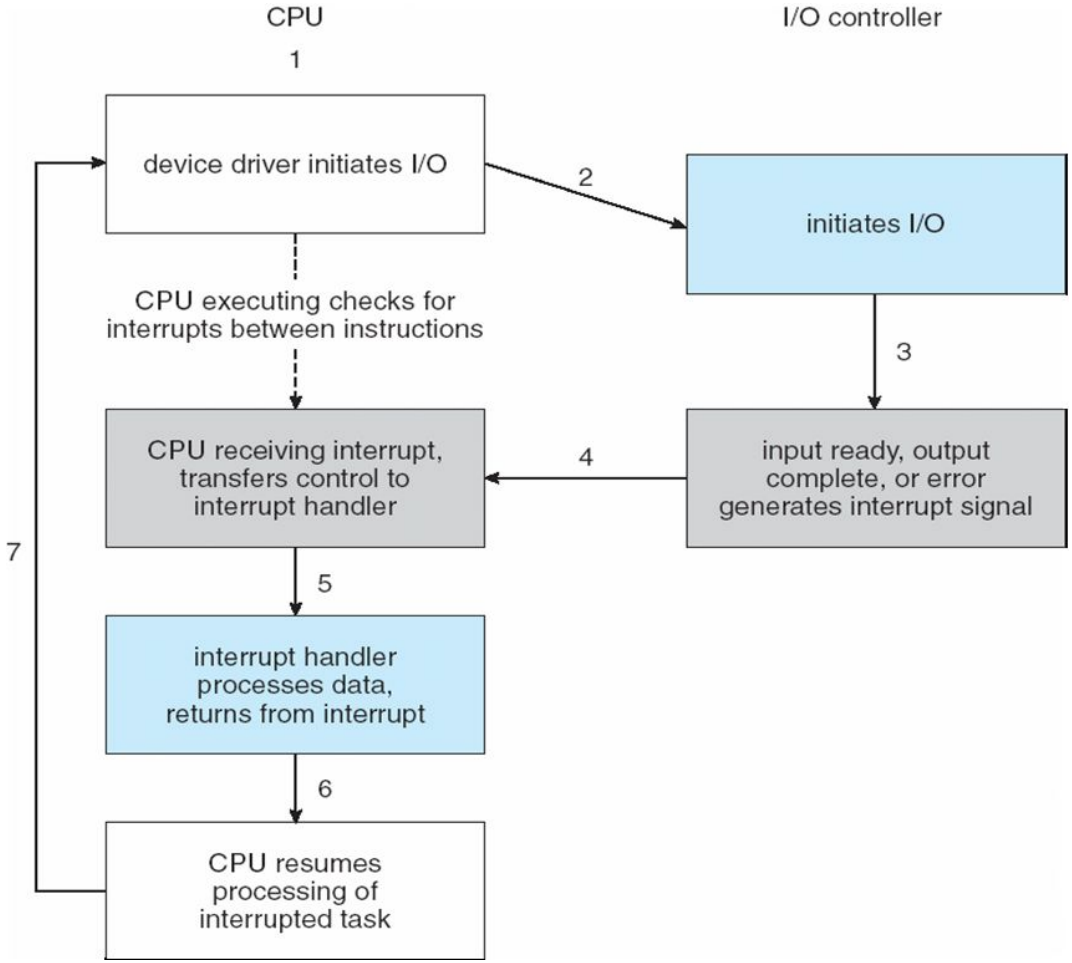
Polling

- For each byte of I/O
  1. Read busy bit from status register until 0
  2. Host sets read or write bit and if write copies data into data-out register
  3. Host sets command-ready bit
  4. Controller sets busy bit, executes transfer
  5. Controller clears busy bit, error bit, command-ready bit when transfer done
- Step 1 is **busy-wait** cycle to wait for I/O from device
  - Reasonable if device is fast
  - But inefficient if device slow
  - CPU switches to other tasks?
    - But if miss a cycle data overwritten / lost

Interrupts

- Polling can happen in 3 instruction cycles
  - Read status, logical-and to extract status bit, branch if not zero
  - How to be more efficient if non-zero infrequently?
- CPU **Interrupt-request line** triggered by I/O device
  - Checked by processor after each instruction
- **Interrupt handler** receives interrupts
  - **Maskable** to ignore or delay some interrupts
- **Interrupt vector** to dispatch interrupt to correct handler
  - Context switch at start and end
  - Based on priority
  - Some **nonmaskable**
  - Interrupt chaining if more than one device at same interrupt number

Interrupt-Driven I/O Cycle



Intel Pentium Processor Event-Vector Table

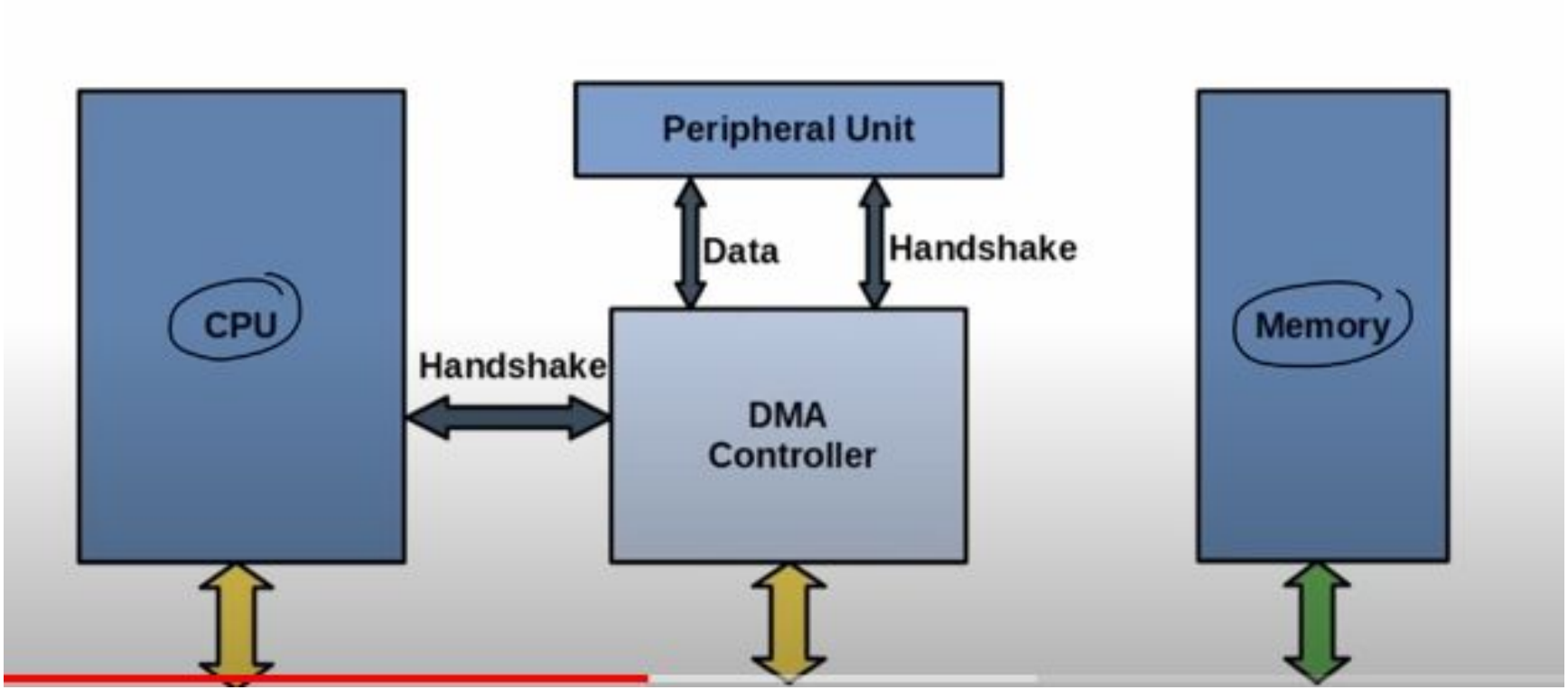
vector number	description
0	divide error
1	debug exception
2	null interrupt
3	breakpoint
4	INTO-detected overflow
5	bound range exception
6	invalid opcode
7	device not available
8	double fault
9	coprocessor segment overrun (reserved)
10	invalid task state segment
11	segment not present
12	stack fault
13	general protection
14	page fault
15	(Intel reserved, do not use)
16	floating-point error
17	alignment check
18	machine check
19–31	(Intel reserved, do not use)
32–255	maskable interrupts

Interrupts (Cont.)

- Interrupt mechanism also used for **exceptions**
  - Terminate process, crash system due to hardware error
- Page fault executes when memory access error
- System call executes via **trap** to trigger kernel to execute request
- Multi-CPU systems can process interrupts concurrently
  - If operating system designed to handle it
- Used for time-sensitive processing, frequent, must be fast

Direct Memory Access

- Used to avoid **programmed I/O** (one byte at a time) for large data movement
- Requires **DMA** controller
- Bypasses CPU to transfer data directly between I/O device and memory
- OS writes DMA command block into memory
  - Source and destination addresses
  - Read or write mode
  - Count of bytes
  - Writes location of command block to DMA controller
  - Bus mastering of DMA controller – grabs bus from CPU
    - **Cycle stealing** from CPU but still much more efficient
  - When done, interrupts to signal completion
- Version that is aware of virtual addresses can be even more efficient - **DVMA**


Peripheral Unit
Data
Handshake
CPU
Handshake
DMA
Controller
Memory

Working Steps

1. If the DMA controller is free, it requests the control of bus from the processor by raising the bus request signal.
2. Processor grants the bus to the controller by raising the bus grant signal, now DMA controller is the bus master.
3. The processor initiates the DMA controller by sending the memory addresses, number of blocks of data to be transferred and direction of data transfer.
4. After assigning the data transfer task to the DMA controller, instead of waiting ideally till completion of data transfer, the processor resumes the execution of the program after retrieving instructions from the stack.
5. It makes the data transfer according to the control instructions received by the processor.
6. After completion of data transfer, it disables the bus request signal and CPU disables the bus grant signal thereby moving control of buses to the CPU.

Types of Data transfer

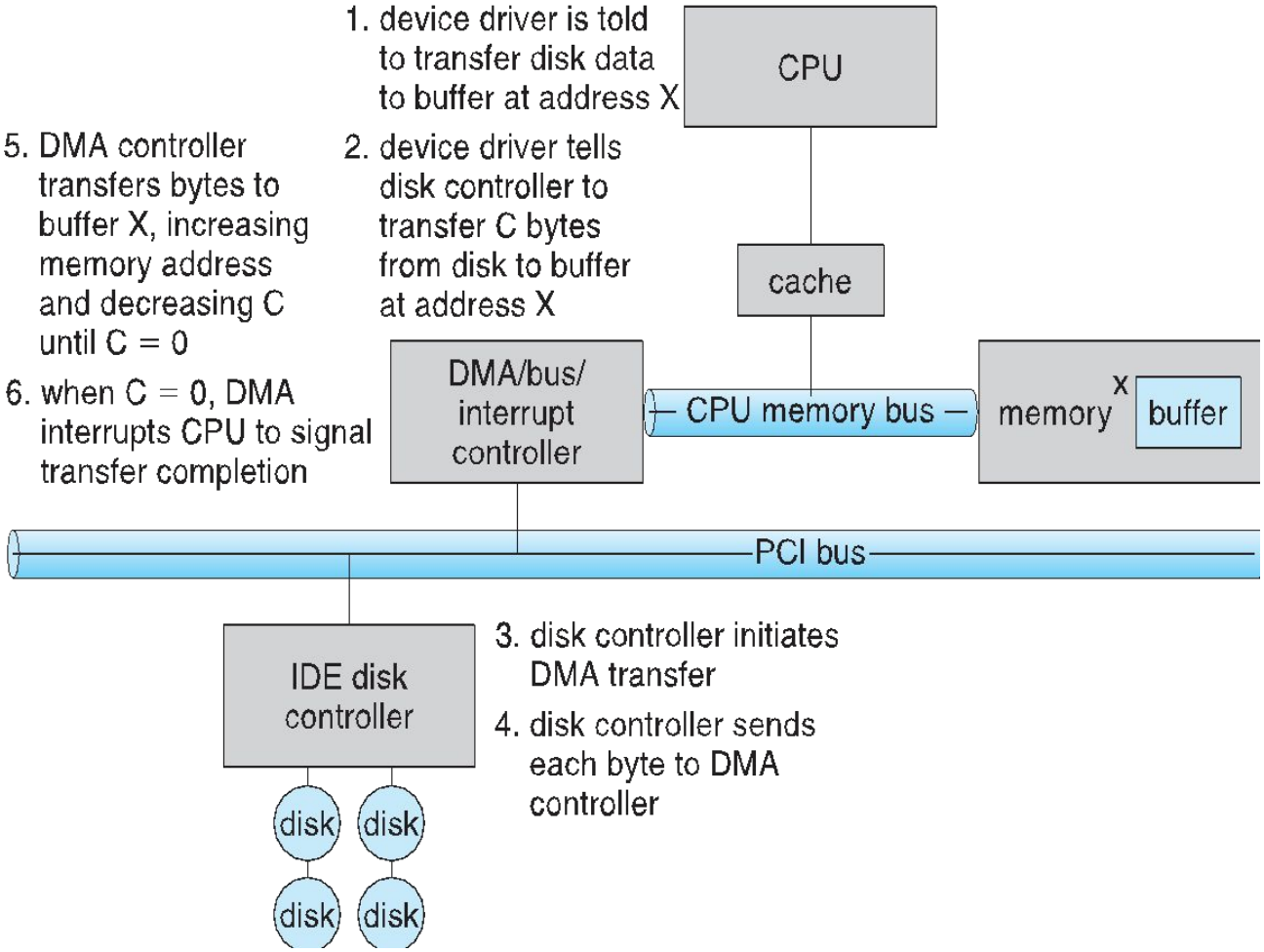
a) **Burst Mode**: In this mode DMA handover the buses to CPU only after completion of whole data transfer. Meanwhile, if the CPU requires the bus it has to stay ideal and wait for data transfer.

b) **Cycle Stealing Mode**: In this mode, DMA gives control of buses to CPU after transfer of every byte. It continuously issues a request for bus control, makes the transfer of one byte and returns the bus. By this CPU doesn't have to wait for a long time if it needs a bus for higher priority task.

c) **Transparent Mode:** Here, DMA transfers data only when CPU is executing the instruction which does not require the use of buses.

- To speed up the transfer of data between I/O devices and memory; DMA controller acts as station master.
- DMA **controller is a control unit**, part of I/O device's **interface circuit**, which can transfer blocks of data between I/O devices and main memory with minimal intervention from the processor.
- It is controlled by the processor. The processor initiates the DMA controller by sending the starting address, Number of words in the data block and direction of transfer of data .i.e. from I/O devices to the memory or from main memory to I/O devices.
- More than one external device can be connected to the DMA controller.
- DMA controller contains an address unit, for generating addresses and selecting I/O device for transfer.
- It also contains the control unit and data count for keeping counts of the number of blocks transferred and indicating the direction of transfer of data.
- When the transfer is completed, DMA informs the processor by raising an interrupt.

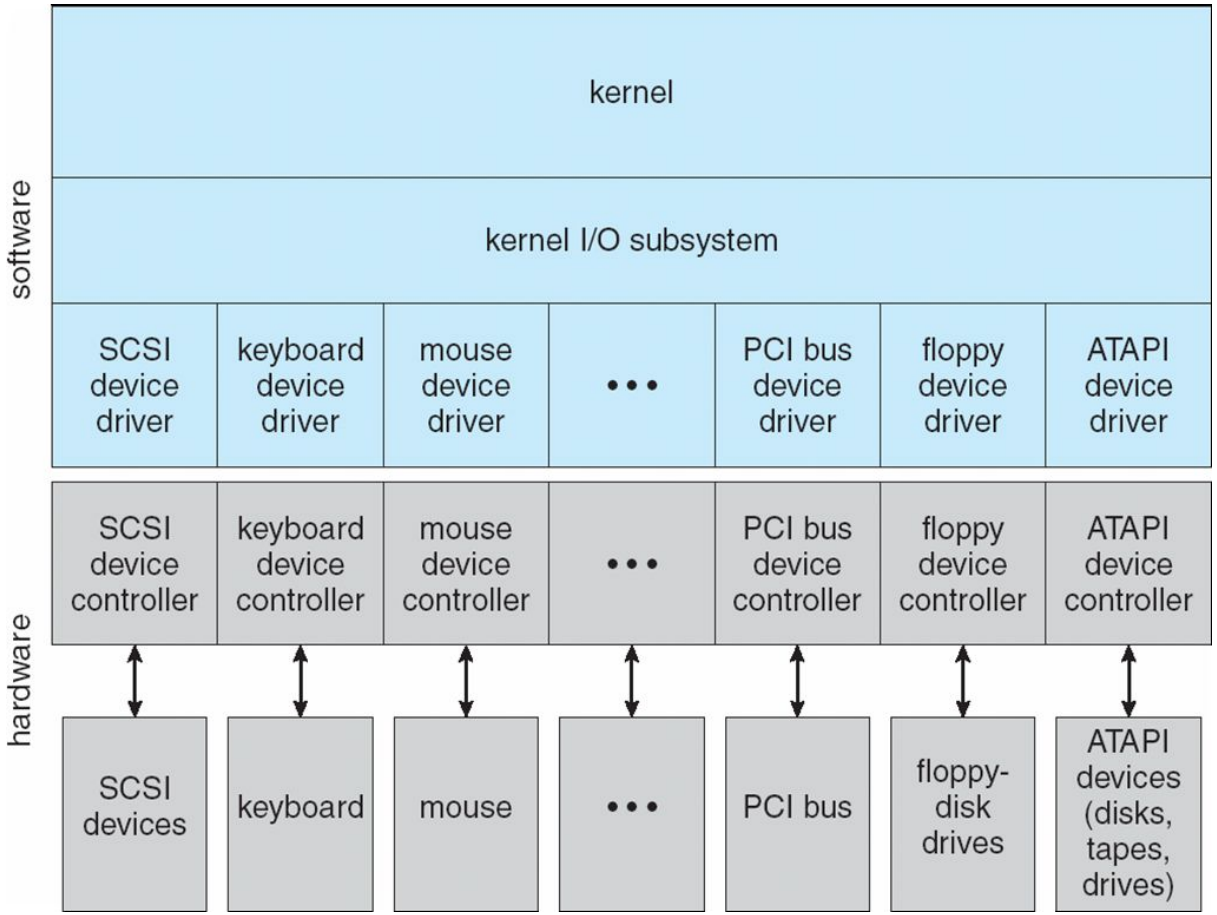
Six Step Process to Perform DMA Transfer



Application I/O Interface

- I/O system calls encapsulate device behaviors in generic classes
- Device-driver layer hides differences among I/O controllers from kernel
- New devices talking already-implemented protocols need no extra work
- Each OS has its own I/O subsystem structures and device driver frameworks
- Devices vary in many dimensions
  - **Character-stream** or **block**
  - **Sequential** or **random-access**
  - **Synchronous** or **asynchronous** (or both)
  - **Sharable** or **dedicated**
  - **Speed of operation**
  - **read-write**, **read only**, or **write only**

A Kernel I/O Structure



Characteristics of I/O Devices

aspect	variation	example
data-transfer mode	character block	terminal disk
access method	sequential random	modem CD-ROM
transfer schedule	synchronous asynchronous	tape keyboard
sharing	dedicated sharable	tape keyboard
device speed	latency seek time transfer rate delay between operations	
I/O direction	read only write only read–write	CD-ROM graphics controller disk

Characteristics of I/O Devices (Cont.)

- Subtleties of devices handled by device drivers
- Broadly I/O devices can be grouped by the OS into
  - Block I/O
  - Character I/O (Stream)
  - Memory-mapped file access
  - Network sockets
- For direct manipulation of I/O device specific characteristics, usually an escape / back door
  - Unix `ioctl()` call to send arbitrary bits to a device control register and data to device data register

Block and Character Devices

- Block devices include disk drives
  - Commands include read, write, seek
  - **Raw I/O**, **direct I/O**, or file-system access
  - Memory-mapped file access possible
    - File mapped to virtual memory and clusters brought via demand paging
  - DMA
- Character devices include keyboards, mice, serial ports
  - Commands include **`get(), put()`**
  - Libraries layered on top allow line editing

Network Devices

- Varying enough from block and character to have own interface
- Linux, Unix, Windows and many others include **socket** interface
  - Separates network protocol from network operation
  - Includes `select()` functionality
- Approaches vary widely (pipes, FIFOs, streams, queues, mailboxes)

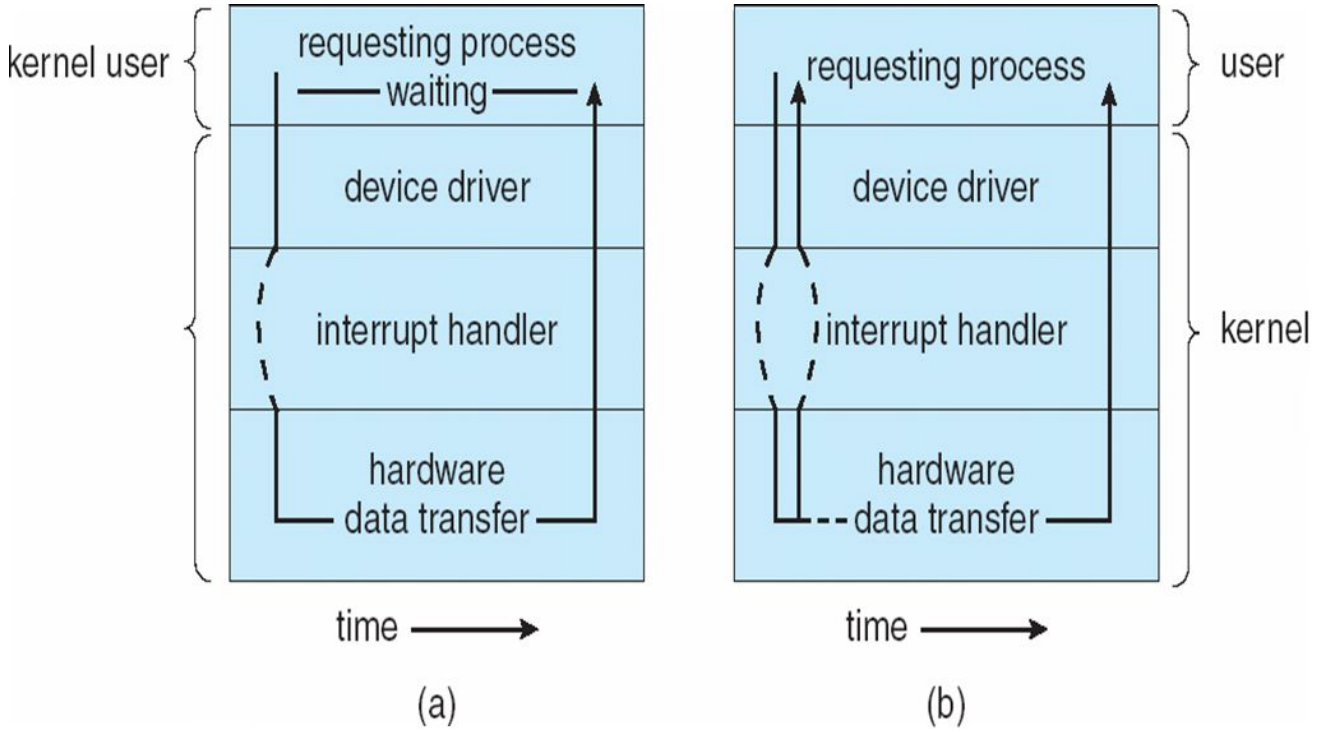
Clocks and Timers

- Provide current time, elapsed time, timer
- Normal resolution about 1/60 second
- Some systems provide higher-resolution timers
- **Programmable interval timer** used for timings, periodic interrupts
- `ioctl()` (on UNIX) covers odd aspects of I/O such as clocks and timers

Nonblocking and Asynchronous I/O

- **Blocking** - process suspended until I/O completed
  - Easy to use and understand
  - Insufficient for some needs
- **Nonblocking** - I/O call returns as much as available
  - User interface, data copy (buffered I/O)
  - Implemented via multi-threading
  - Returns quickly with count of bytes read or written
  - **`select()`** to find if data ready then **`read()`** or **`write()`** to transfer
- **Asynchronous** - process runs while I/O executes
  - Difficult to use
  - I/O subsystem signals process when I/O completed

Two I/O Methods



Synchronous

Asynchronous

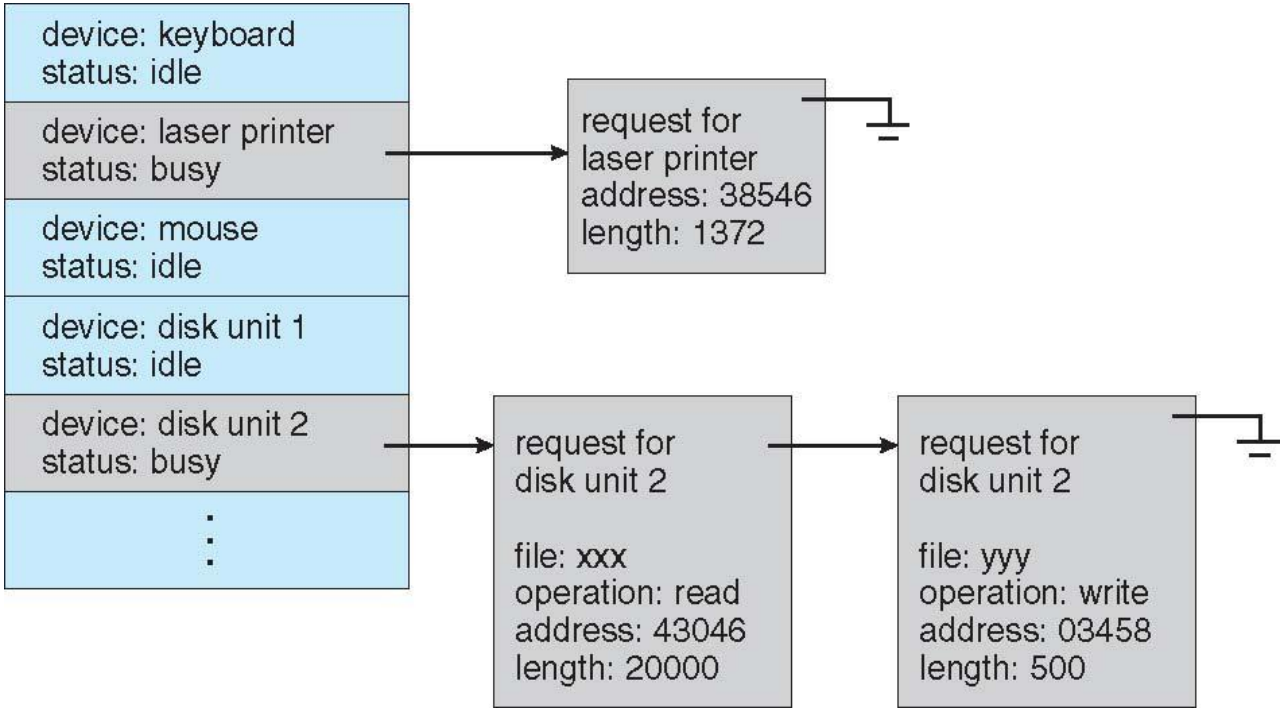
Vectored I/O

- **Vectored I/O** allows one system call to perform multiple I/O operations
- For example, Unix **`readve()`** accepts a vector of multiple buffers to read into or write from
- This scatter-gather method better than multiple individual I/O calls
  - Decreases context switching and system call overhead
  - Some versions provide atomicity
    - Avoid for example worry about multiple threads changing data as reads / writes occurring

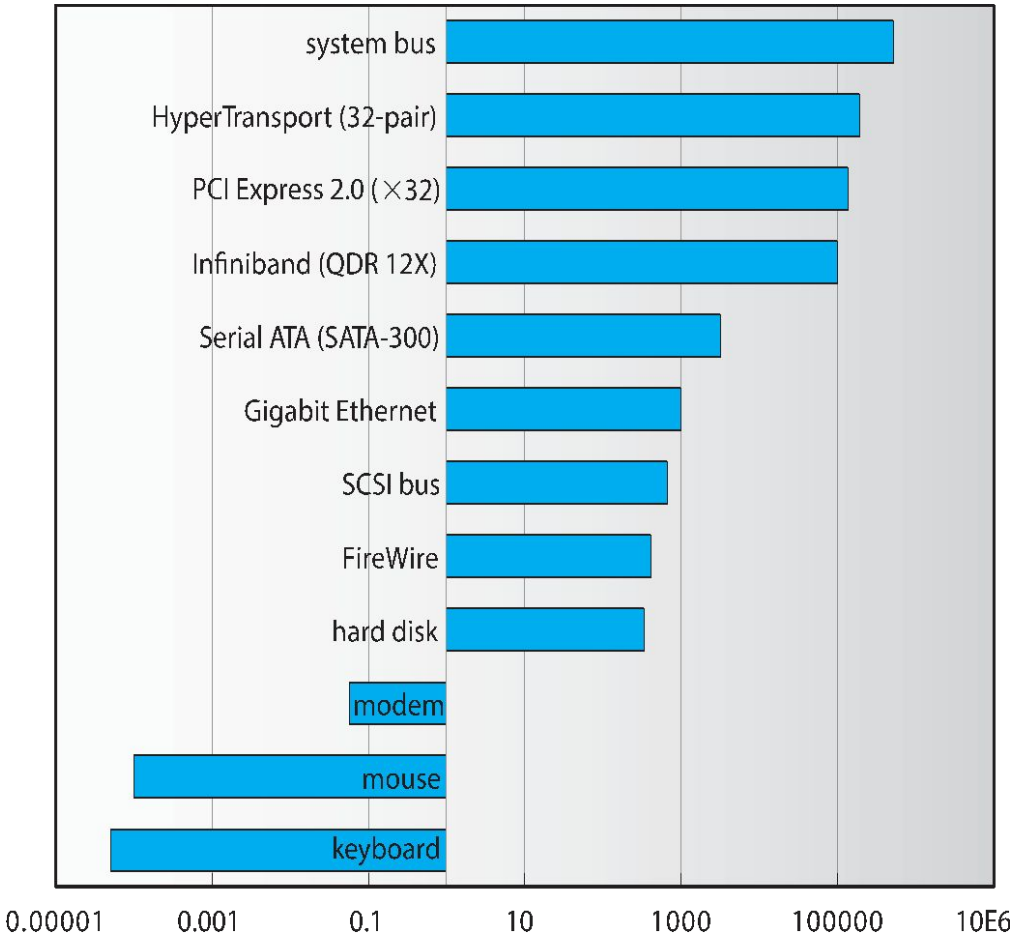
Kernel I/O Subsystem

- Scheduling
  - Some I/O request ordering via per-device queue
  - Some OSs try fairness
  - Some implement Quality Of Service (i.e. IPQOS)
- **Buffering** - store data in memory while transferring between devices
  - To cope with device speed mismatch
  - To cope with device transfer size mismatch
  - To maintain "copy semantics"
  - **Double buffering** – two copies of the data
    - Kernel and user
    - Varying sizes
    - Full / being processed and not-full / being used
    - Copy-on-write can be used for efficiency in some cases

Device-status Table



Sun Enterprise 6000 Device-Transfer Rates



Kernel I/O Subsystem

- **Caching** - faster device holding copy of data
  - Always just a copy
  - Key to performance
  - Sometimes combined with buffering
- **Spooling** - hold output for a device
  - If device can serve only one request at a time
  - i.e., Printing
- **Device reservation** - provides exclusive access to a device
  - System calls for allocation and de-allocation
  - Watch out for deadlock

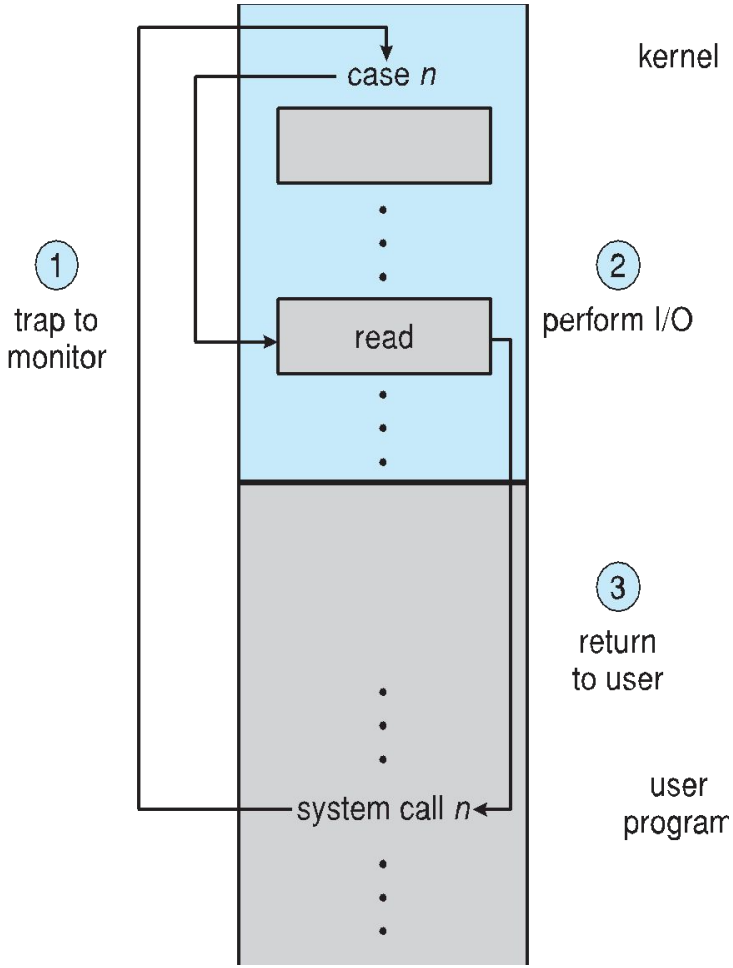
Error Handling

- OS can recover from disk read, device unavailable, transient write failures
  - Retry a read or write, for example
  - Some systems more advanced – Solaris FMA, AIX
    4. Track error frequencies, stop using device with increasing frequency of retry-able errors
- Most return an error number or code when I/O request fails
- System error logs hold problem reports

I/O Protection

- User process may accidentally or purposefully attempt to disrupt normal operation via illegal I/O instructions
  - All I/O instructions defined to be privileged
  - I/O must be performed via system calls
    - Memory-mapped and I/O port memory locations must be protected too

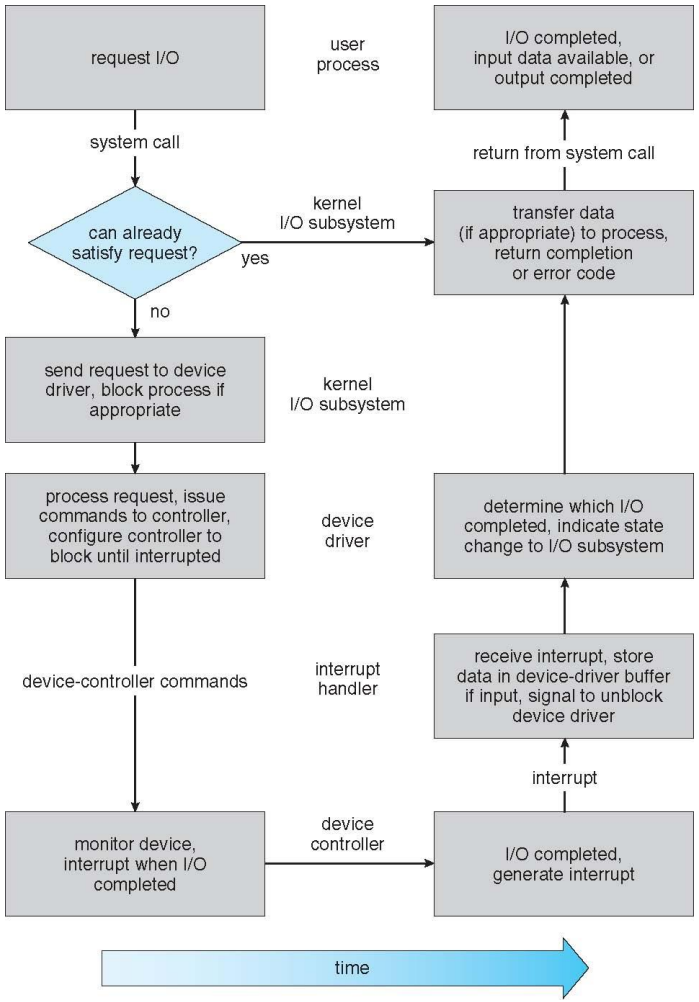
Use of a System Call to Perform I/O



I/O Requests to Hardware Operations

- Consider reading a file from disk for a process:
  - Determine device holding file
  - Translate name to device representation
  - Physically read data from disk into buffer
  - Make data available to requesting process
  - Return control to process

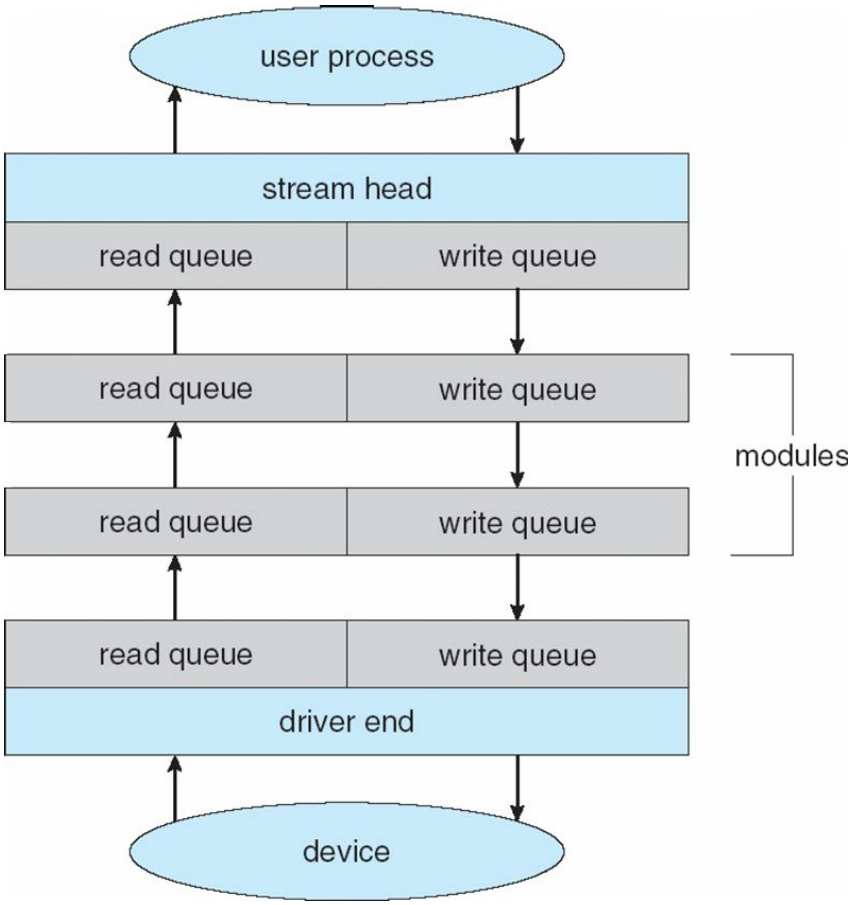
Life Cycle of An I/O Request



STREAMS

- **STREAM** – a full-duplex communication channel between a user-level process and a device in Unix System V and beyond
- A STREAM consists of:
  - STREAM head interfaces with the user process
  - driver end interfaces with the device
  - zero or more STREAM modules between them
- Each module contains a **read queue** and a **write queue**
- Message passing is used to communicate between queues
  - **Flow control** option to indicate available or busy
- Asynchronous internally, synchronous where user process communicates with stream head

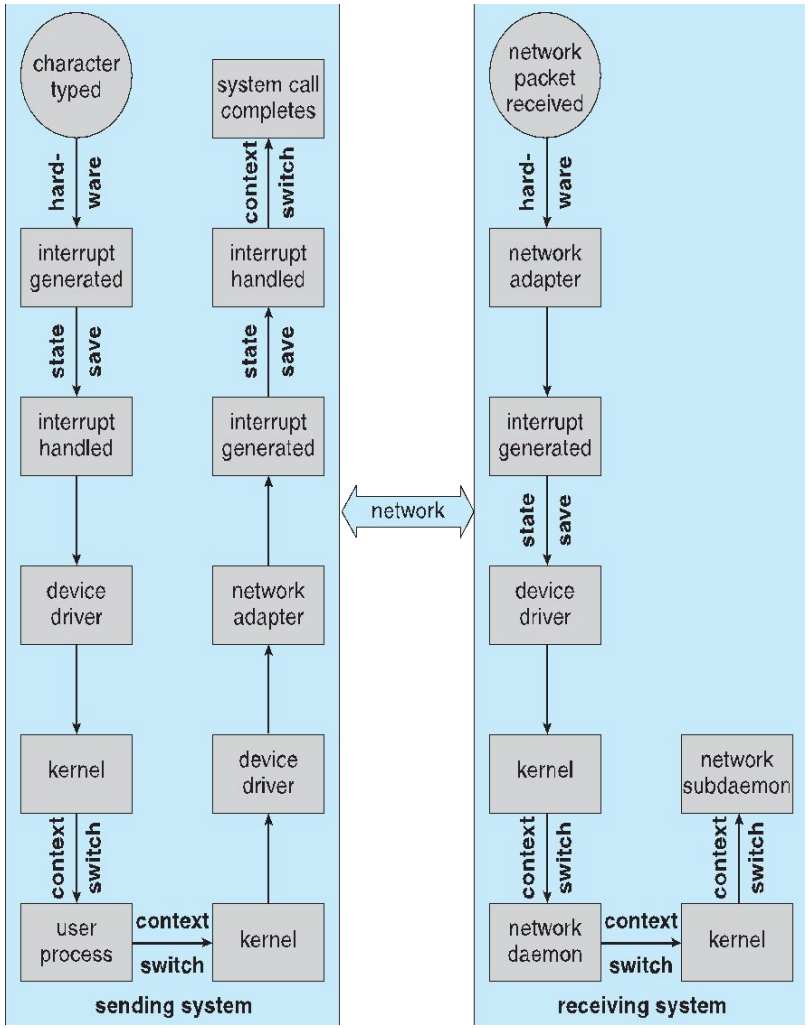
The STREAMS Structure



Performance

- I/O a major factor in system performance:
  - Demands CPU to execute device driver, kernel I/O code
  - Context switches due to interrupts
  - Data copying
  - Network traffic especially stressful

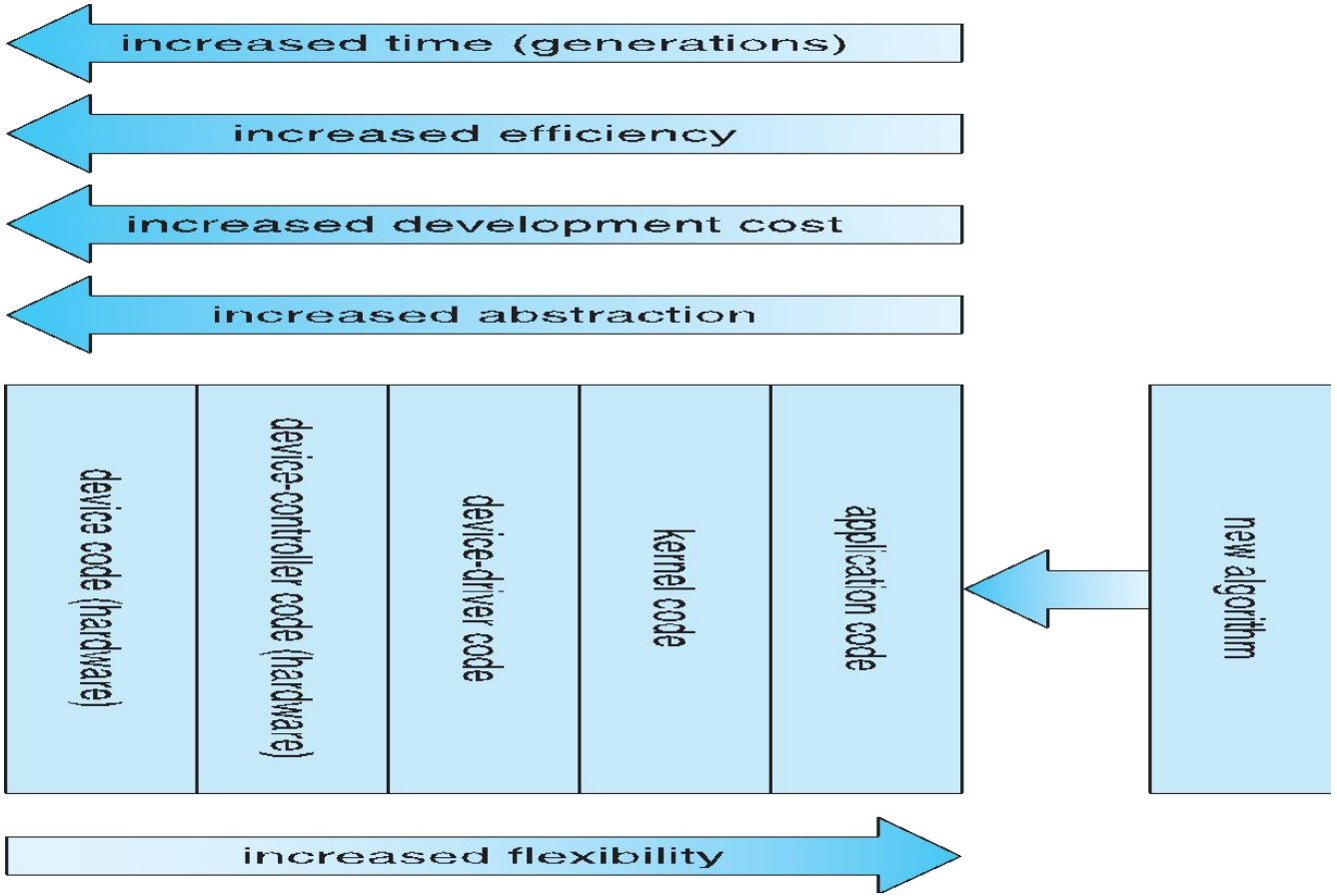
Intercomputer Communications



Improving Performance

- Reduce number of context switches
- Reduce data copying
- Reduce interrupts by using large transfers, smart controllers, polling
- Use DMA
- Use smarter hardware devices
- Balance CPU, memory, bus, and I/O performance for highest throughput
- Move user-mode processes / daemons to kernel threads

Device-Functionality Progression



End of Chapter 13