

*Operating  
Systems:  
Internals  
and Design  
Principles*

# Chapter 4 Threads

Eighth Edition  
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# Processes and Threads

## Resource Ownership

Process includes a virtual address space to hold the process image

- the OS performs a protection function to prevent unwanted interference between processes with respect to resources

## Scheduling/Execution

Follows an execution path that may be interleaved with other processes

- a process has an execution state (Running, Ready, etc.) and a dispatching priority and is scheduled and dispatched by the OS



# Processes and Threads

- The unit of dispatching is referred to as a *thread* or *lightweight process*
- The unit of resource ownership is referred to as a *process* or *task*
- **Multithreading** - The ability of an OS to support multiple, concurrent paths of execution within a single process



# Single Threaded Approaches

- A single thread of execution per process, in which the concept of a thread is not recognized, is referred to as a single-threaded approach
- MS-DOS is an example

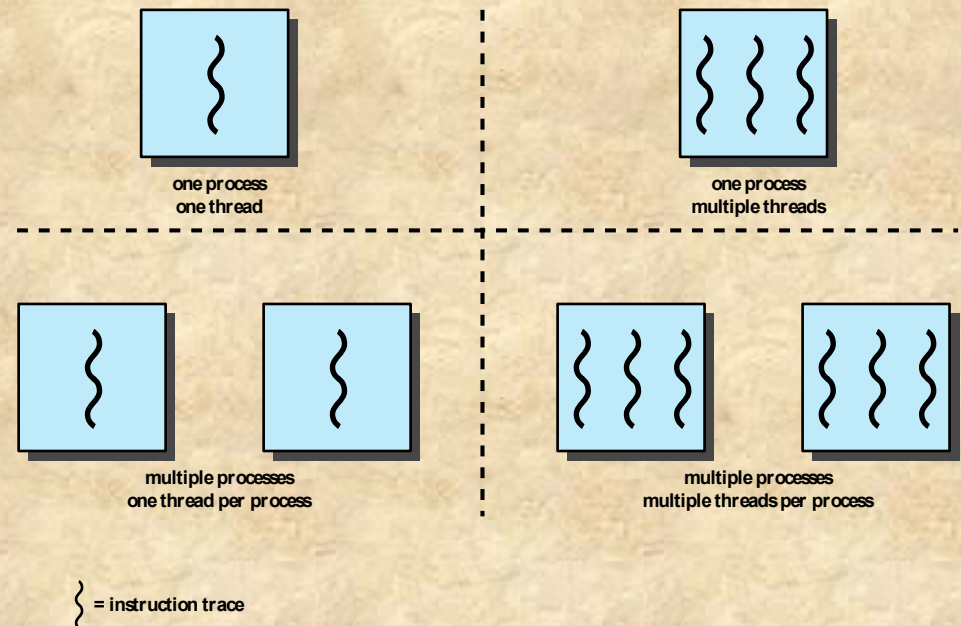


Figure 4.1 Threads and Processes

# Multithreaded Approaches

- The right half of Figure 4.1 depicts multithreaded approaches
- A Java run-time environment is an example of a system of one process with multiple threads

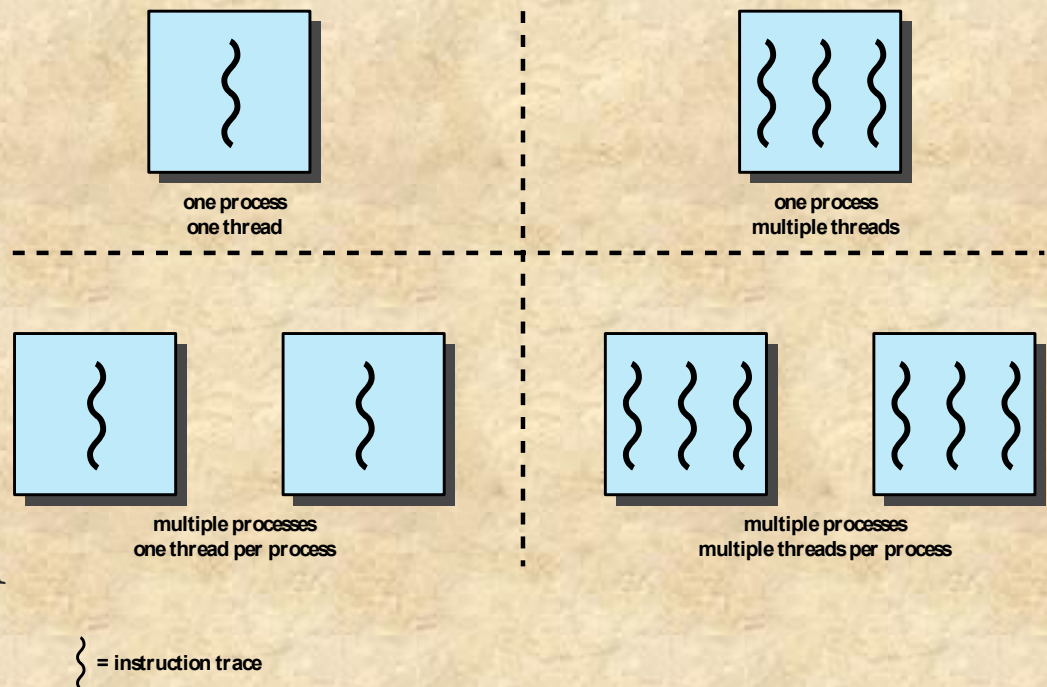


Figure 4.1 Threads and Processes

# Processes

- The unit of resource allocation and a unit of protection
- A virtual address space that holds the process image
- Protected access to:
  - processors
  - other processes
  - files
  - I/O resources

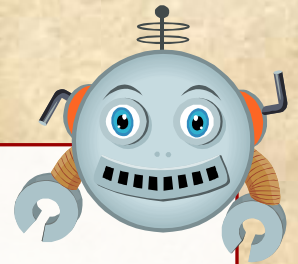


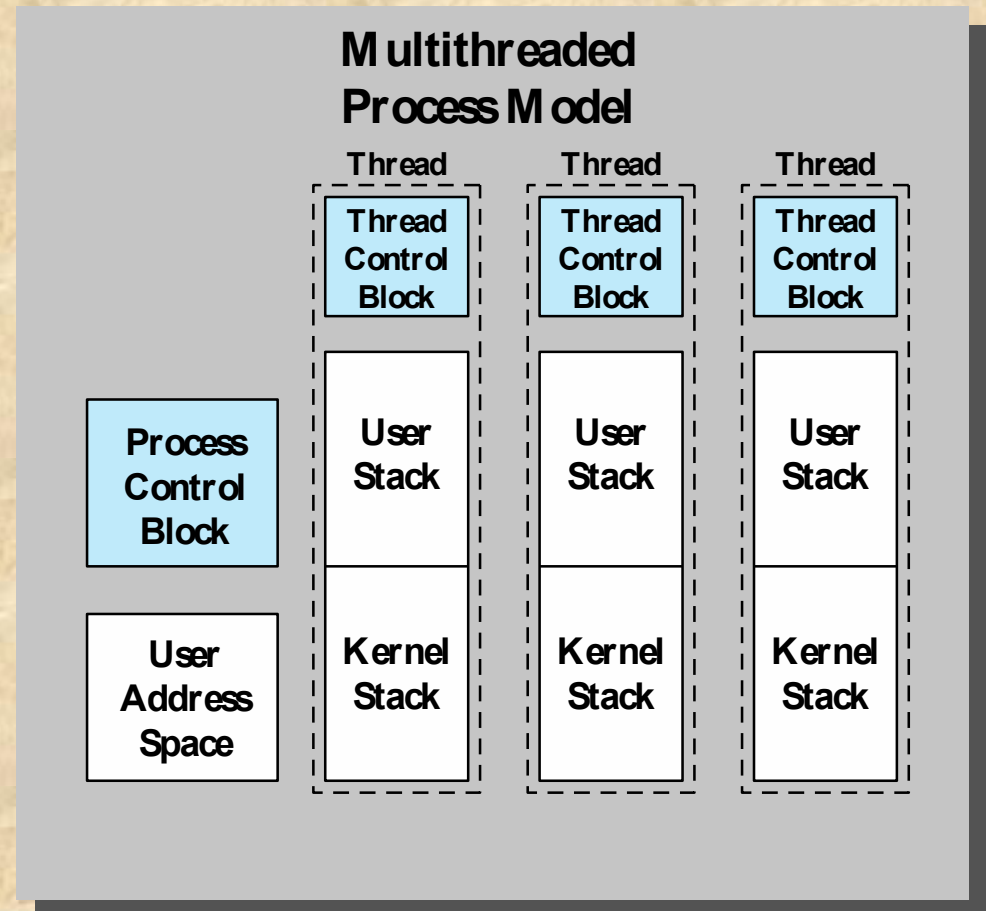
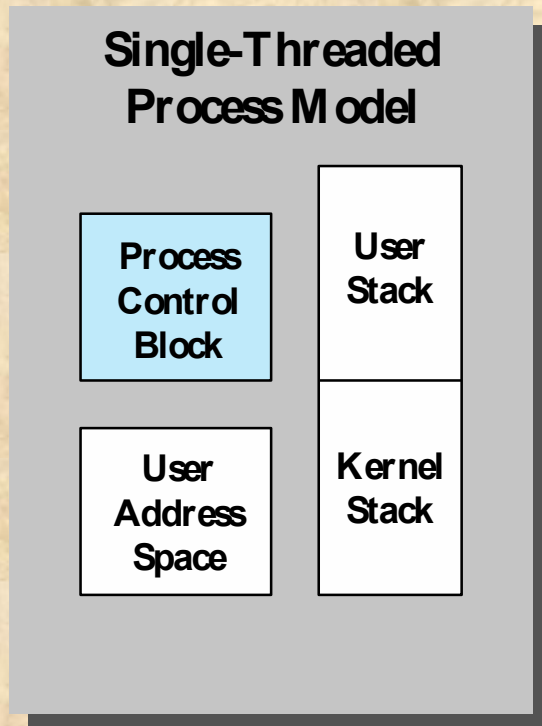


# One or More Threads in a Process

Each thread has:

- an execution state (Running, Ready, etc.)
- saved thread context when not running
- an execution stack
- some per-thread static storage for local variables
- access to the memory and resources of its process (all threads of a process share this)

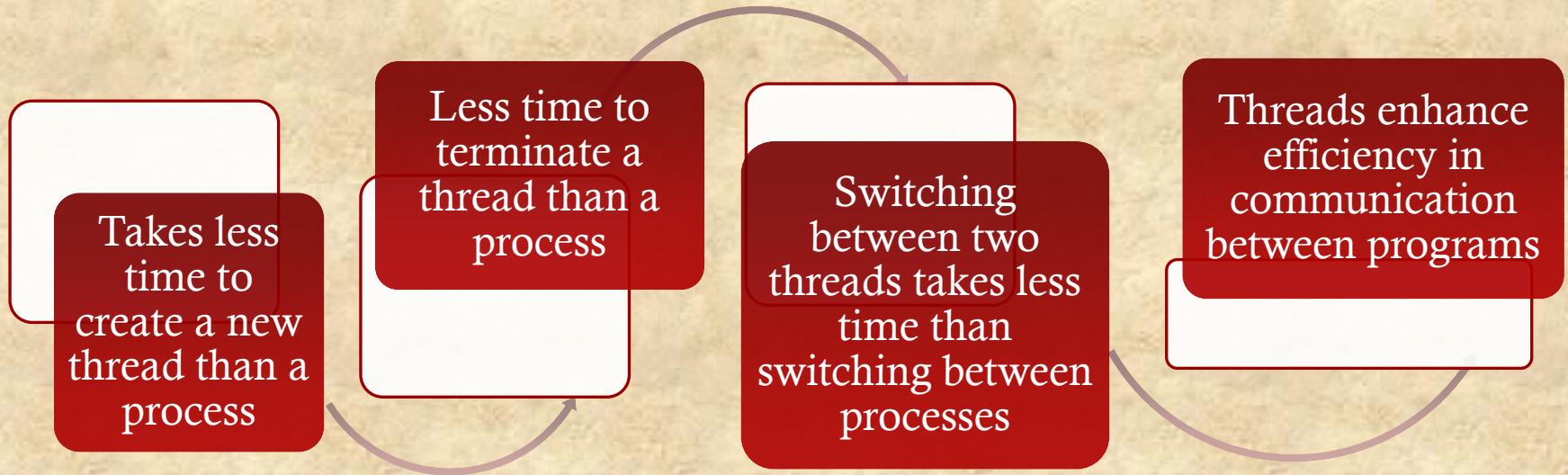




**Figure 4.2 Single Threaded and M ultithreaded Process M odels**



# Benefits of Threads



# Thread Use in a Single-User System

- Foreground and background work
- Asynchronous processing
- Speed of execution
- Modular program structure



# Threads

- In an OS that supports threads, scheduling and dispatching is done on a thread basis
- Most of the state information dealing with execution is maintained in thread-level data structures
  - suspending a process involves suspending all threads of the process
  - termination of a process terminates all threads within the process





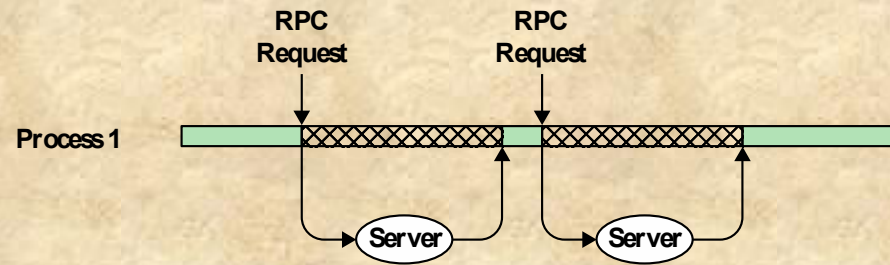
# Thread Execution States

The key states for a thread are:

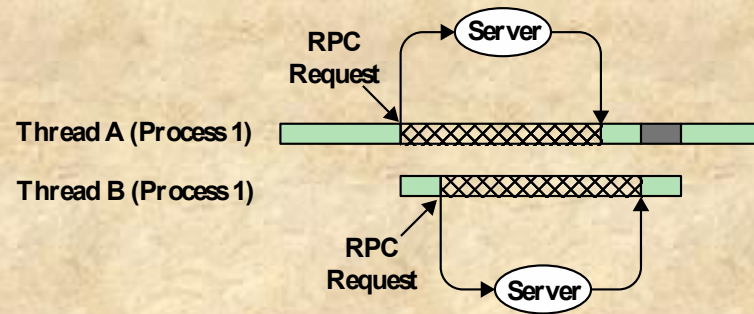
- Running
- Ready
- Blocked

Thread operations associated with a change in thread state are:

- Spawn
- Block
- Unblock
- Finish



(a) RPC Using Single Thread



(b) RPC Using One Thread per Server (on a uniprocessor)




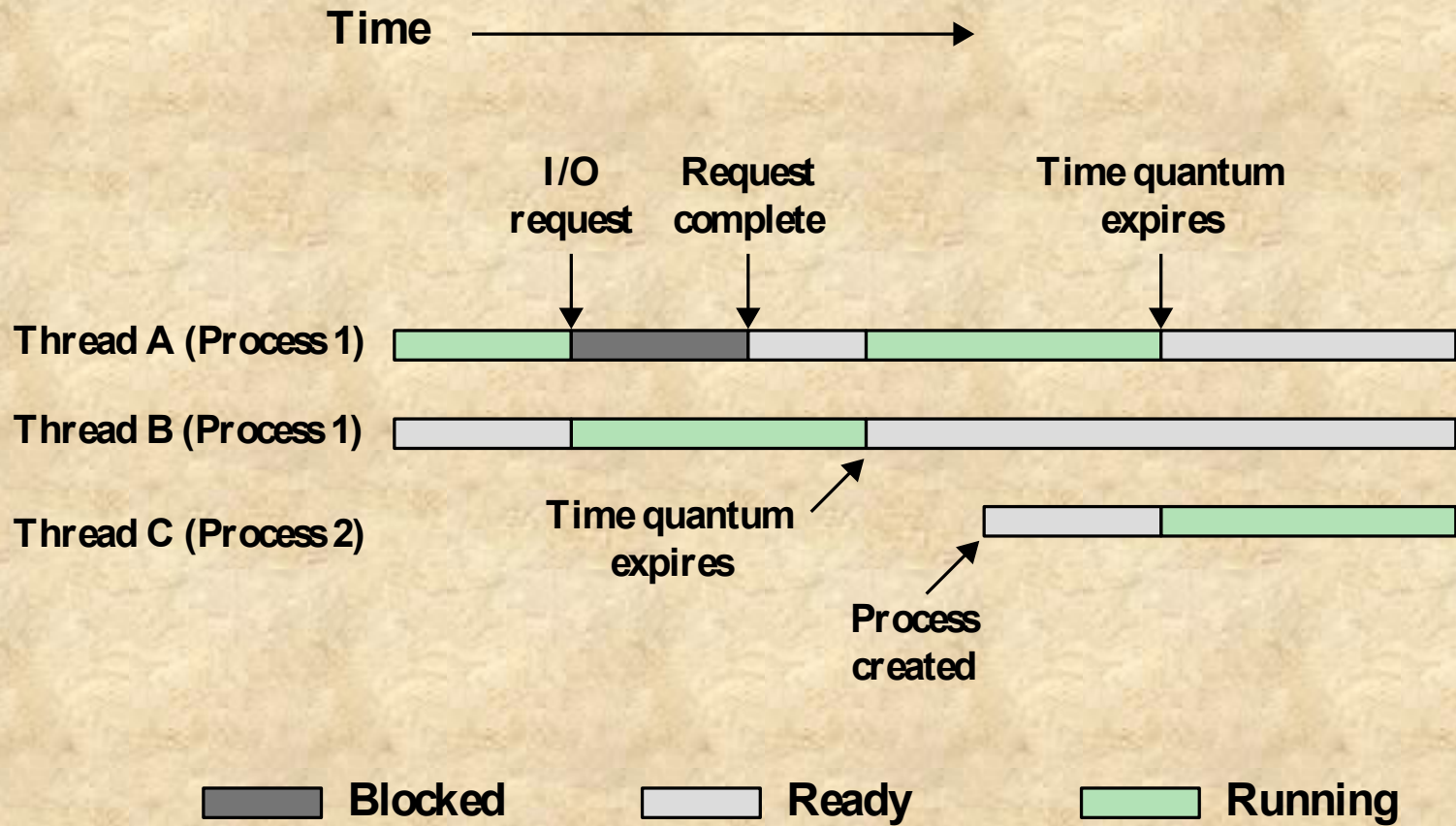
-  Blocked, waiting for response to RPC
-  Blocked, waiting for processor, which is in use by Thread B
-  Running

Figure 4.3 Remote Procedure Call (RPC) Using Threads



**Figure 4.4 Multithreading Example on a Uniprocessor**



# Thread Synchronization

- It is necessary to synchronize the activities of the various threads
  - all threads of a process share the same address space and other resources
  - any alteration of a resource by one thread affects the other threads in the same process

# Types of Threads

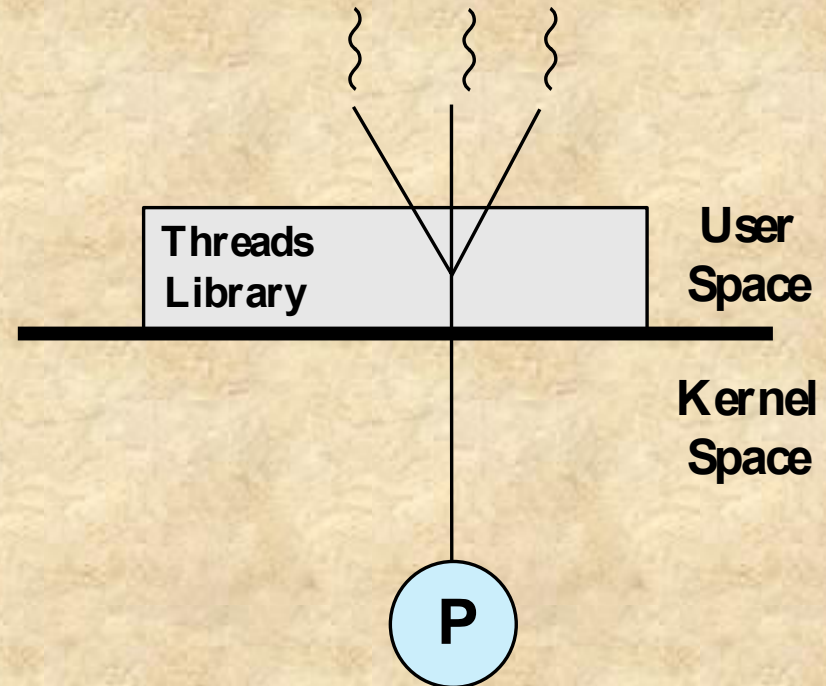


User Level  
Thread (ULT)

Kernel level  
Thread (KLT)

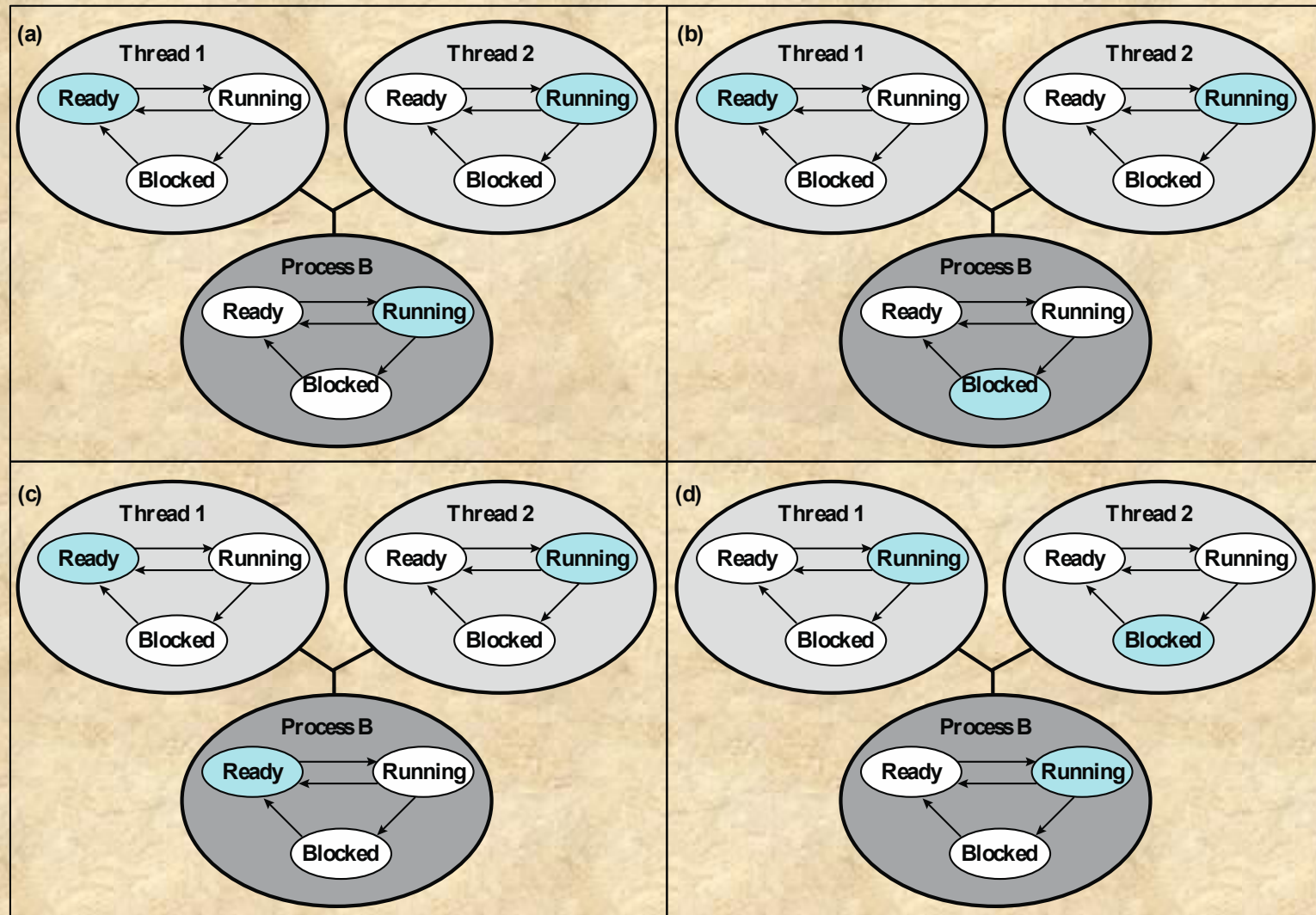
# User-Level Threads (ULTs)

- All thread management is done by the application
- The kernel is not aware of the existence of threads



(a) Pure user-level





Colored state  
is current state

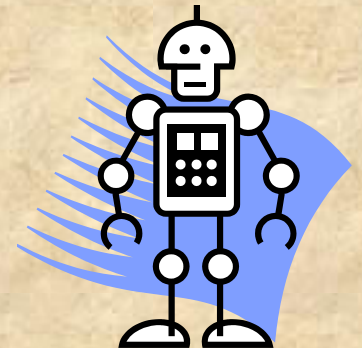
Figure 4.6 Examples of the Relationships Between User -Level Thread States and Process States

# Advantages of ULTs

Thread switching does not  
require kernel mode  
privileges

Scheduling can be  
application specific

ULTs  
can run  
on any  
OS



# Disadvantages of ULTs

- In a typical OS many system calls are blocking
  - as a result, when a ULT executes a system call, not only is that thread blocked, but all of the threads within the process are blocked
- In a pure ULT strategy, a multithreaded application cannot take advantage of multiprocessing





# Overcoming ULT Disadvantages

## Jacketing

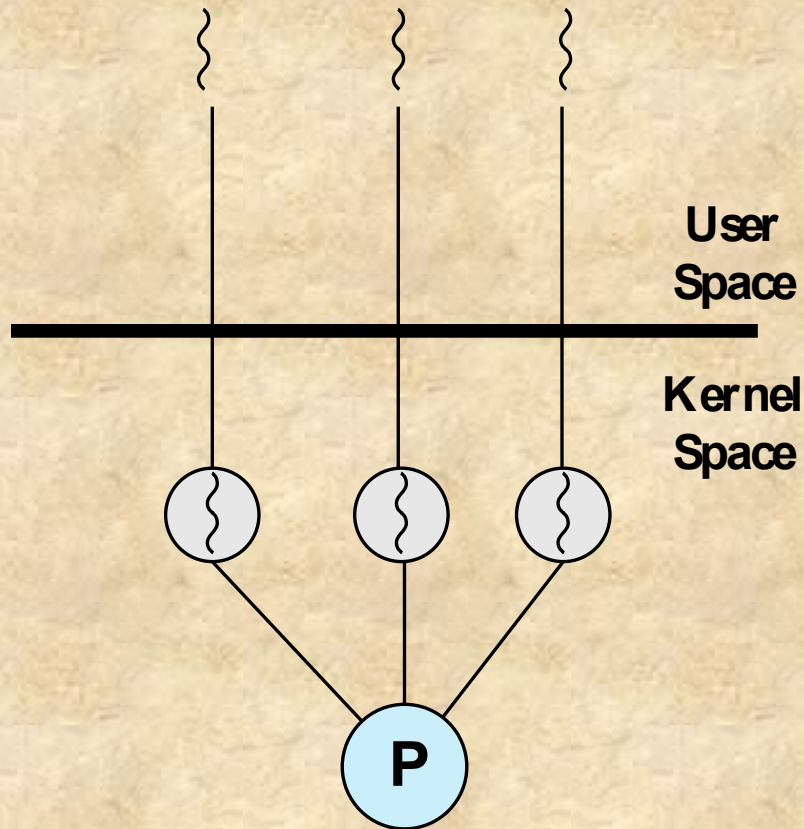
- converts a blocking system call into a non-blocking system call



Writing an application  
as multiple processes  
rather than multiple  
threads



# Kernel-Level Threads (KLTs)

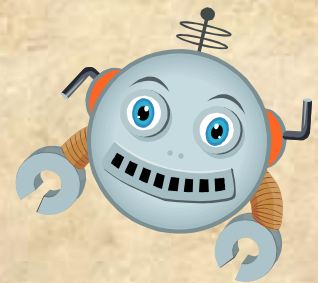


(b) Pure kernel-level

- Thread management is done by the kernel
  - no thread management is done by the application
- Windows is an example of this approach

# Advantages of KLTs

- The kernel can simultaneously schedule multiple threads from the same process on multiple processors
- If one thread in a process is blocked, the kernel can schedule another thread of the same process
- Kernel routines can be multithreaded





# Disadvantage of KLTs

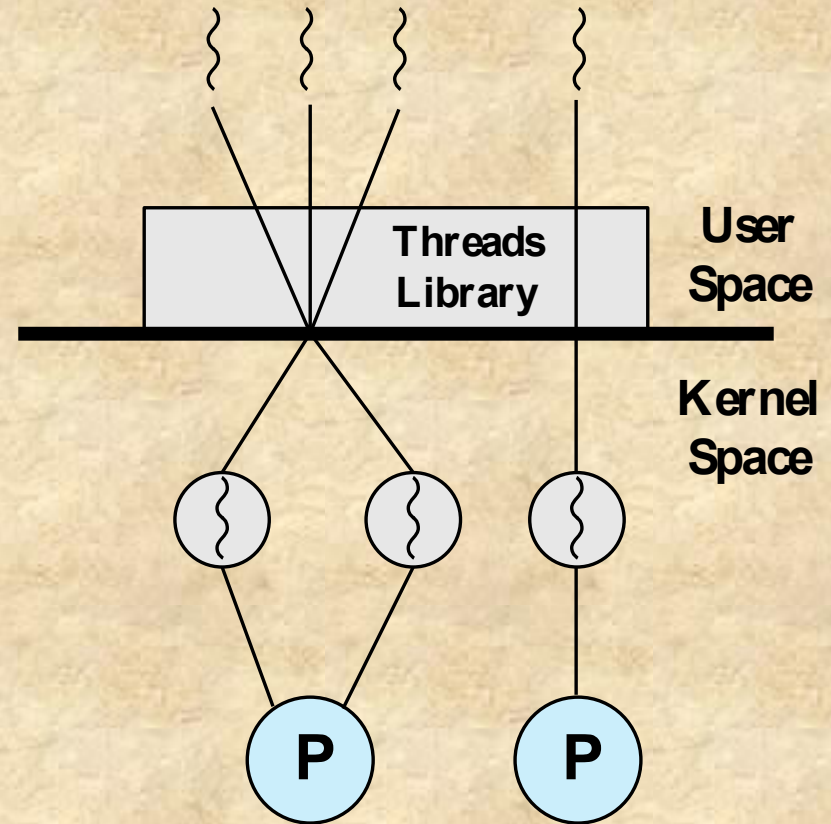
- ❏ The transfer of control from one thread to another within the same process requires a mode switch to the kernel

Operation	User-Level Threads	Kernel-Level Threads	Processes
Null Fork	34	948	11,300
Signal Wait	37	441	1,840

Table 4.1  
Thread and Process Operation Latencies ( $\mu$ s)

# Combined Approaches

- Thread creation is done in the user space
- Bulk of scheduling and synchronization of threads is by the application
- Solaris is an example

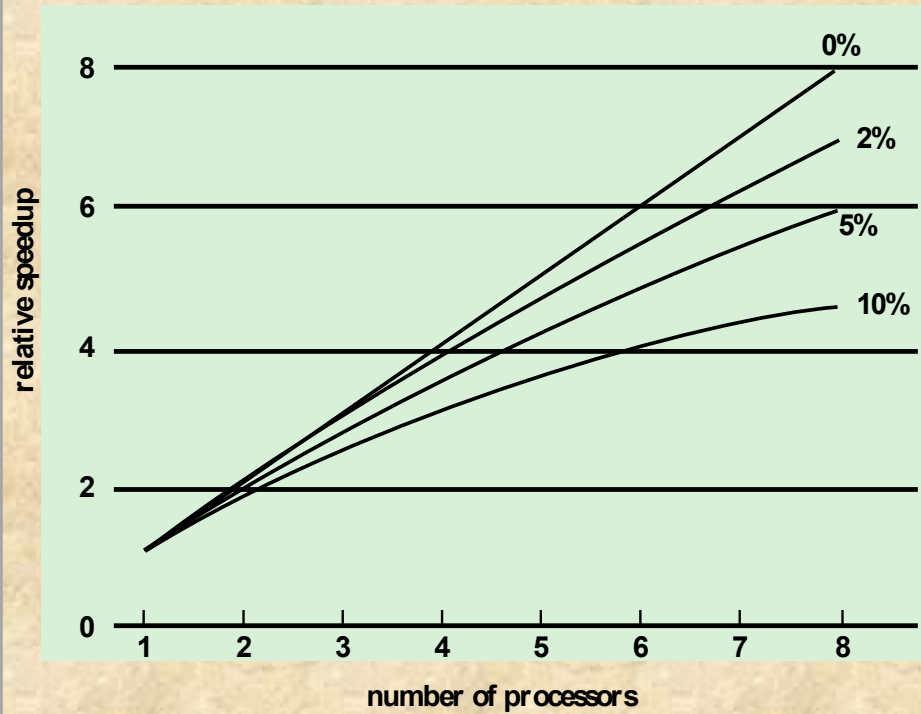


(c) Combined

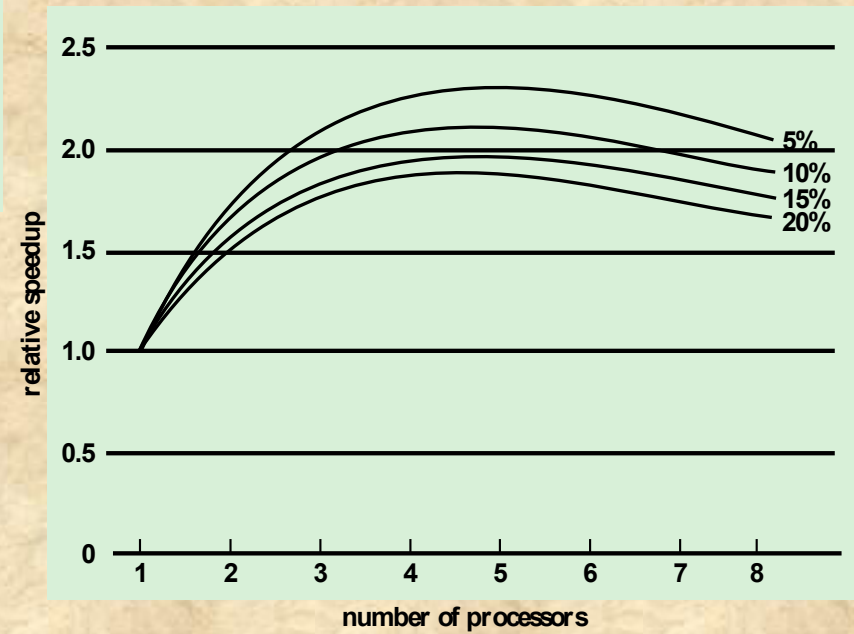
Threads:Processes	Description	Example Systems
<b>1:1</b>	Each thread of execution is a unique process with its own address space and resources.	Traditional UNIX implementations
<b>M:1</b>	A process defines an address space and dynamic resource ownership. Multiple threads may be created and executed within that process.	Windows NT, Solaris, Linux, OS/2, OS/390, MACH
<b>1:M</b>	A thread may migrate from one process environment to another. This allows a thread to be easily moved among distinct systems.	Ra (Clouds), Emerald
<b>M:N</b>	Combines attributes of M:1 and 1:M cases.	TRIX

**Table 4.2**  
**Relationship between Threads and Processes**



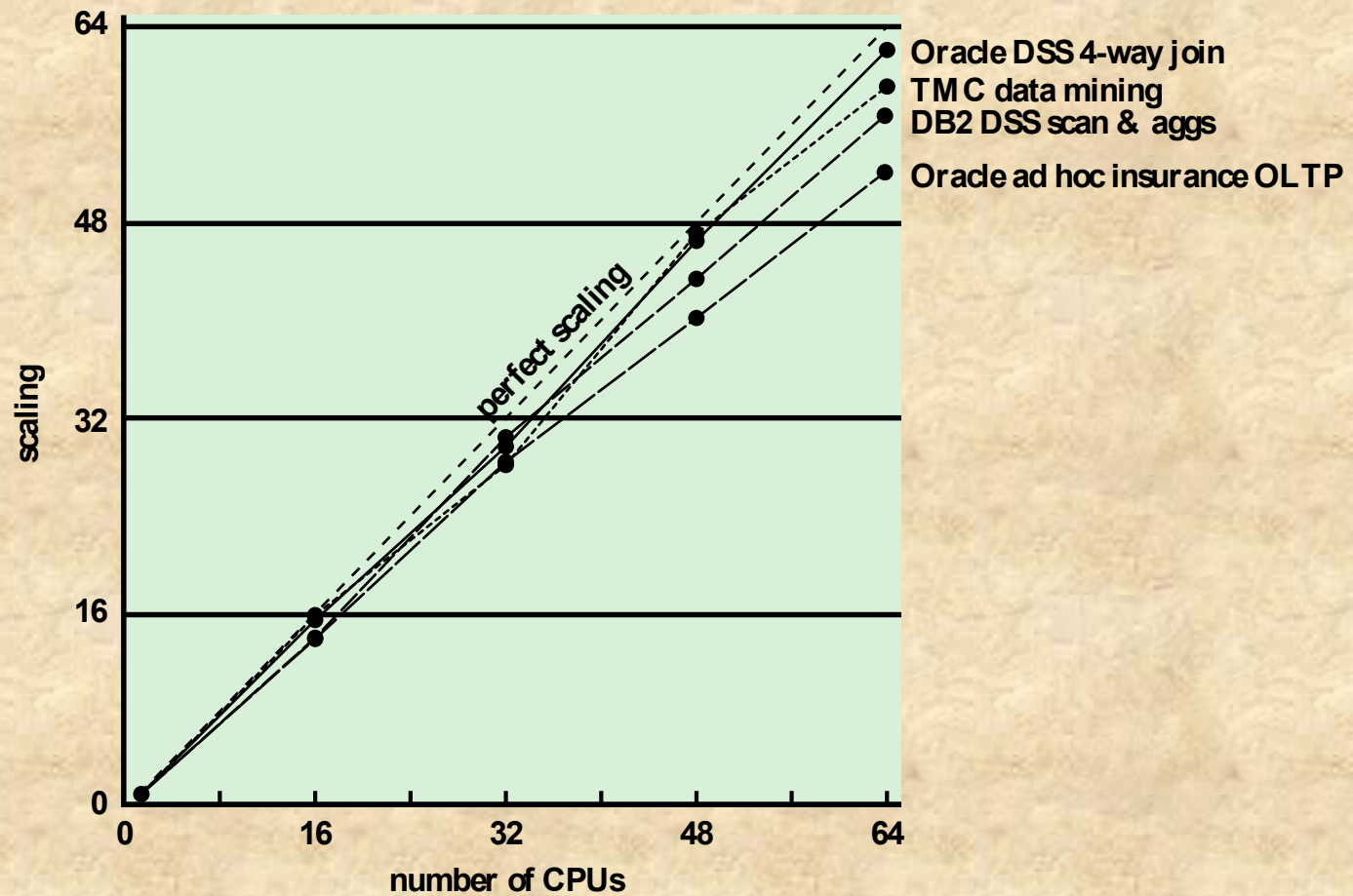


(a) Speedup with 0%, 2%, 5%, and 10% sequential portions



(b) Speedup with overheads

Figure 4.7 Performance Effect of Multiple Cores



**Figure 4.8 Scaling of Database Workloads on Multiple-Processor Hardware**

# Applications That Benefit

- Multithreaded native applications
  - characterized by having a small number of highly threaded processes
- Multiprocess applications
  - characterized by the presence of many single-threaded processes
- Java applications
- Multiinstance applications
  - multiple instances of the application in parallel



# Valve Game Software

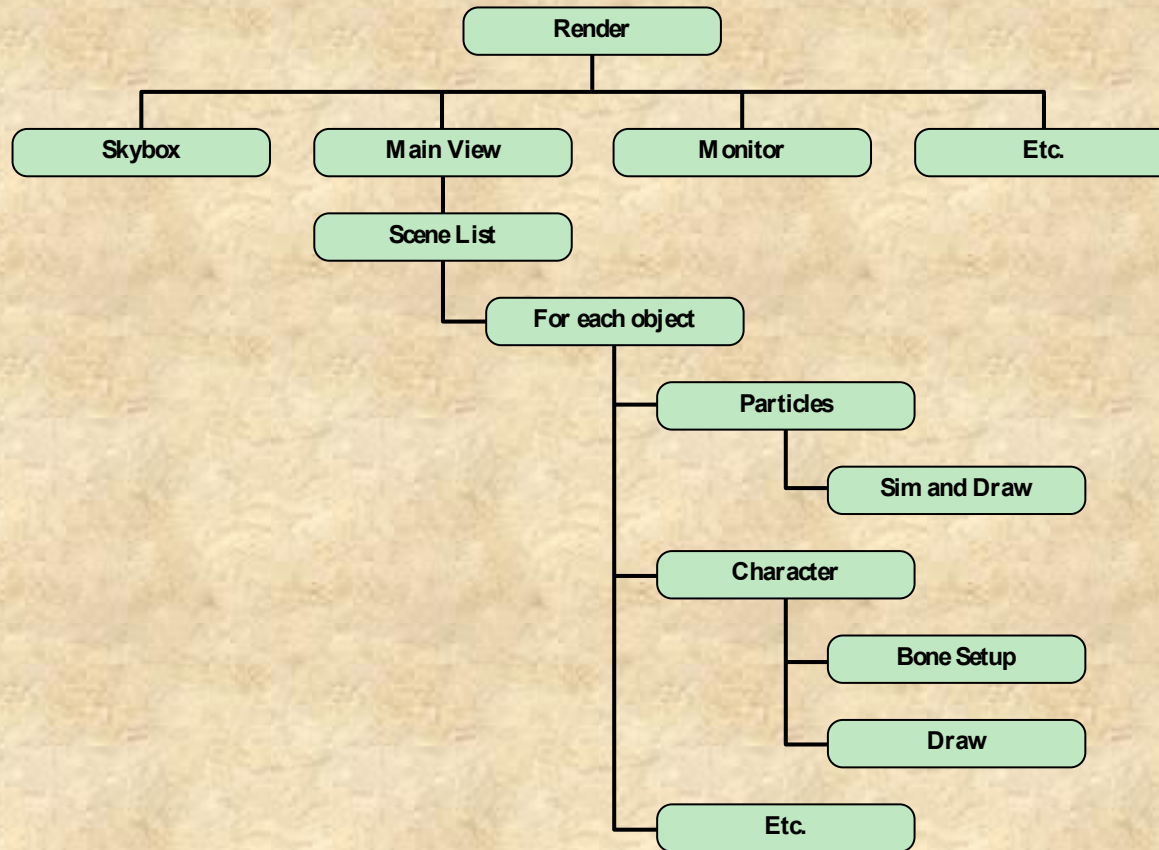


Figure 4.9 Hybrid Threading for Rendering Module

# Windows 8 Process and Thread Management

- An **application** consists of one or more processes
- Each **process** provides the resources needed to execute a program
- A **thread** is the entity within a process that can be scheduled for execution
- A **job object** allows groups of process to be managed as a unit
- A **thread pool** is a collection of worker threads that efficiently execute asynchronous callbacks on behalf of the application
- A **fiber** is a unit of execution that must be manually scheduled by the application
- **User-mode scheduling (UMS)** is a lightweight mechanism that applications can use to schedule their own threads

# Changes in Windows 8

- Changes the traditional Windows approach to managing background tasks and application lifecycles
- Developers are now responsible for managing the state of their individual applications
- In the new Metro interface Windows 8 takes over the process lifecycle of an application
  - a limited number of applications can run alongside the main app in the Metro UI using the SnapView functionality
  - only one Store application can run at one time
- Live Tiles give the appearance of applications constantly running on the system
  - in reality they receive push notifications and do not use system resources to display the dynamic content offered



# Metro Interface

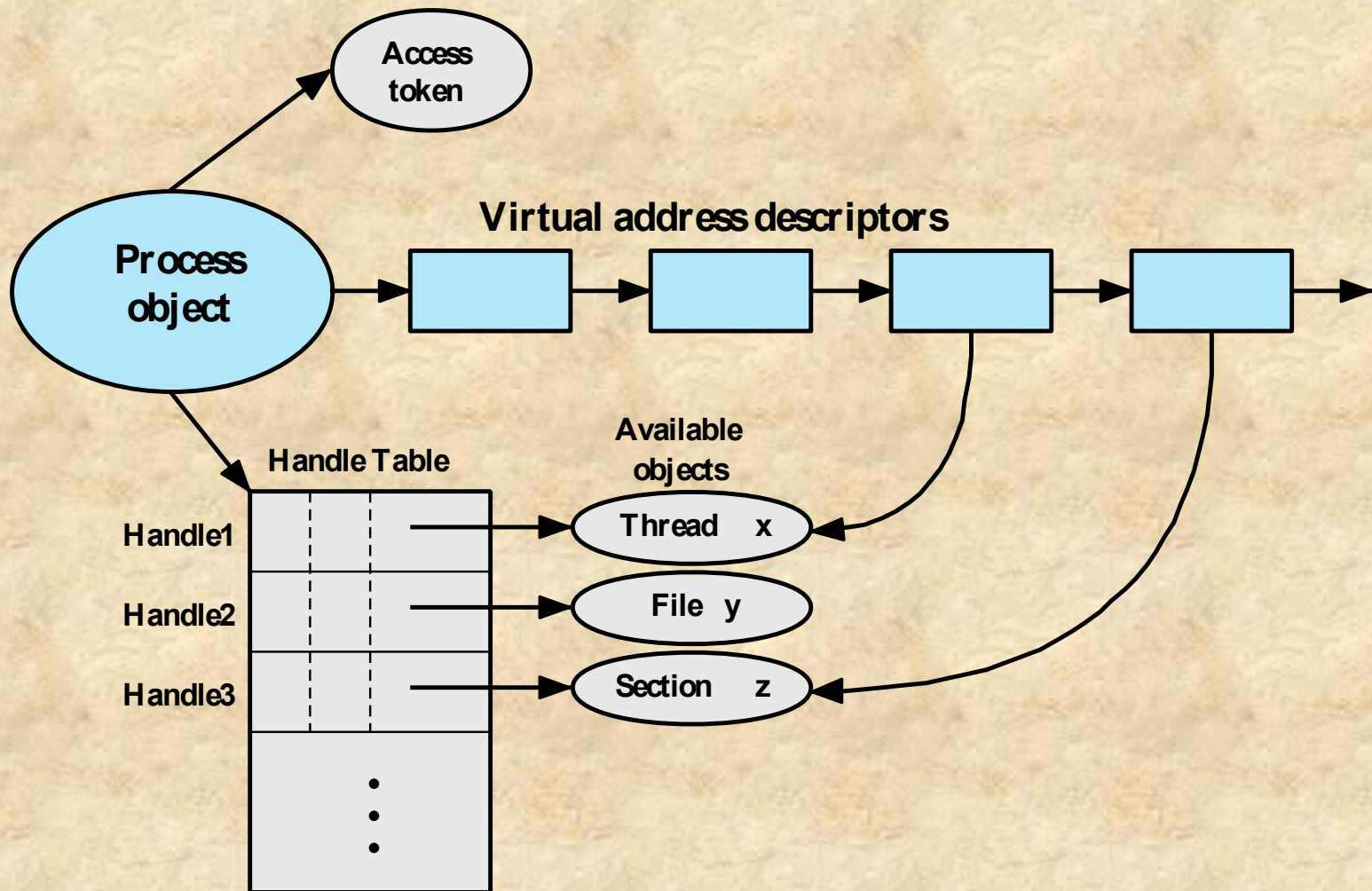
- Foreground application in the Metro interface has access to all of the processor, network, and disk resources available to the user
  - all other apps are suspended and have no access to these resources
- When an app enters a suspended mode, an event should be triggered to store the state of the user's information
  - this is the responsibility of the application developer
- Windows 8 may terminate a background app
  - you need to save your app's state when it's suspended, in case Windows terminates it so that you can restore its state later
  - when the app returns to the foreground another event is triggered to obtain the user state from memory

# Windows Processes

Processes and services provided by the Windows Kernel are relatively simple and general purpose

- implemented as objects
- created as new process or a copy of an existing
- an executable process may contain one or more threads
- both processes and thread objects have built-in synchronization capabilities





**Figure 4.10 A Windows Process and Its Resources**



# Process and Thread Objects

Windows makes use of two types of process-related objects:

## Processes

- an entity corresponding to a user job or application that owns resources

## Threads

- a dispatchable unit of work that executes sequentially and is interruptible



<b>Process ID</b>	A unique value that identifies the process to the operating system.
<b>Security descriptor</b>	Describes who created an object, who can gain access to or use the object, and who is denied access to the object.
<b>Base priority</b>	A baseline execution priority for the process's threads.
<b>Default processor affinity</b>	The default set of processors on which the process's threads can run.
<b>Quota limits</b>	The maximum amount of paged and nonpaged system memory, paging file space, and processor time a user's processes can use.
<b>Execution time</b>	The total amount of time all threads in the process have executed.
<b>I/O counters</b>	Variables that record the number and type of I/O operations that the process's threads have performed.
<b>VM operation counters</b>	Variables that record the number and types of virtual memory operations that the process's threads have performed.
<b>Exception/debugging ports</b>	Interprocess communication channels to which the process manager sends a message when one of the process's threads causes an exception. Normally, these are connected to environment subsystem and debugger processes, respectively.
<b>Exit status</b>	The reason for a process's termination.

**Table 4.3**

**Windows**

**Process**

**Object**

**Attributes**

(Table is on page 175 in textbook)

<b>Thread ID</b>	A unique value that identifies a thread when it calls a server.
<b>Thread context</b>	The set of register values and other volatile data that defines the execution state of a thread.
<b>Dynamic priority</b>	The thread's execution priority at any given moment.
<b>Base priority</b>	The lower limit of the thread's dynamic priority.
<b>Thread processor affinity</b>	The set of processors on which the thread can run, which is a subset or all of the processor affinity of the thread's process.
<b>Thread execution time</b>	The cumulative amount of time a thread has executed in user mode and in kernel mode.
<b>Alert status</b>	A flag that indicates whether a waiting thread may execute an asynchronous procedure call.
<b>Suspension count</b>	The number of times the thread's execution has been suspended without being resumed.
<b>Impersonation token</b>	A temporary access token allowing a thread to perform operations on behalf of another process (used by subsystems).
<b>Termination port</b>	An interprocess communication channel to which the process manager sends a message when the thread terminates (used by subsystems).
<b>Thread exit status</b>	The reason for a thread's termination.

## Table 4.4

## Windows

## Thread

## Object

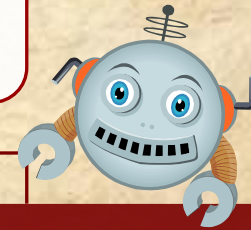
## Attributes

(Table is on page 175 in textbook)

# Multithreaded Process



Achieves concurrency  
without the overhead of  
using multiple processes



Threads within the same  
process can exchange  
information through their  
common address space and  
have access to the shared  
resources of the process

Threads in different  
processes can exchange  
information through shared  
memory that has been set  
up between the two  
processes

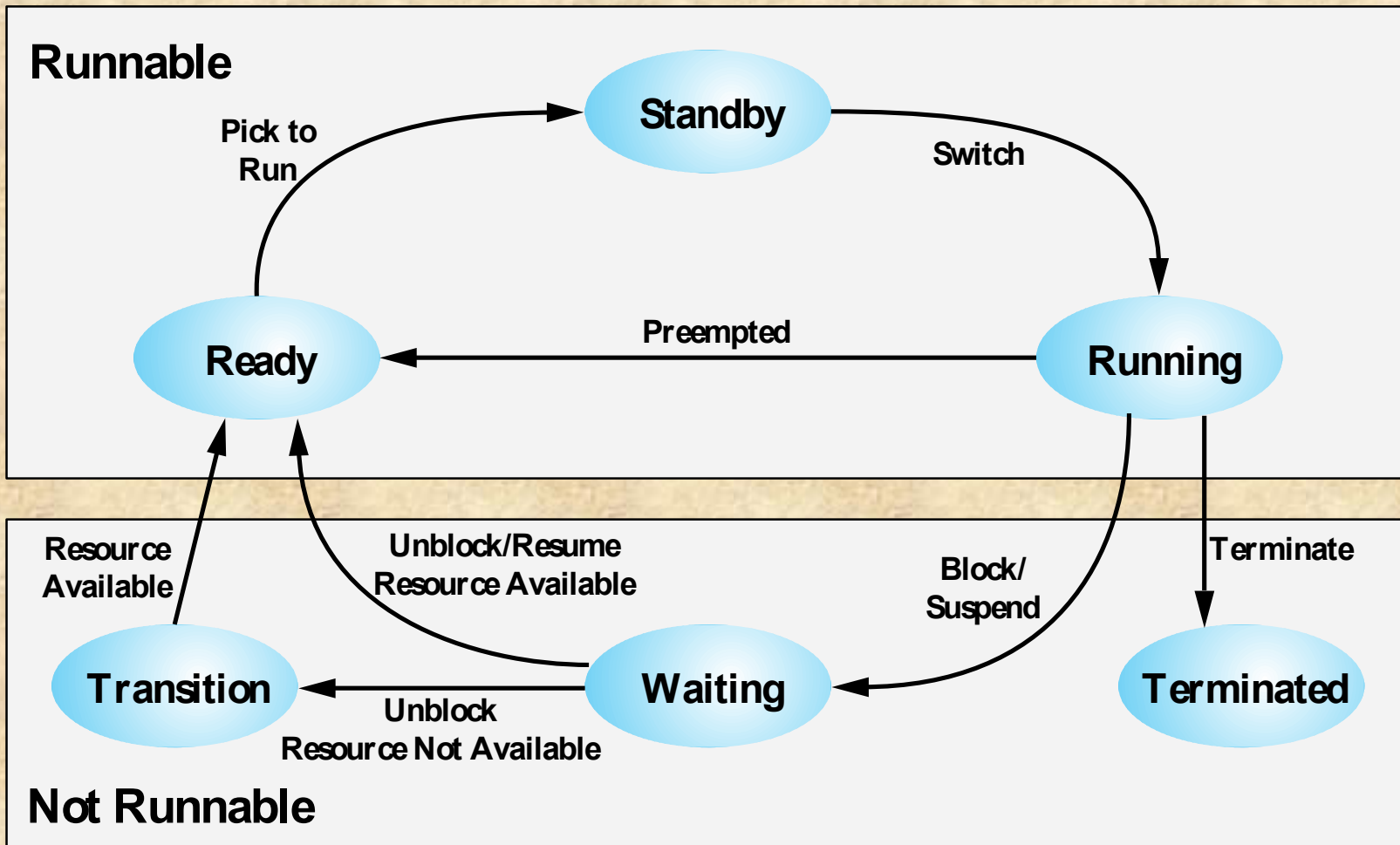



Figure 4.11 Windows Thread States



# Solaris Process

 makes use of four thread-related concepts:

## Process

- includes the user's address space, stack, and process control block

## User-level Threads

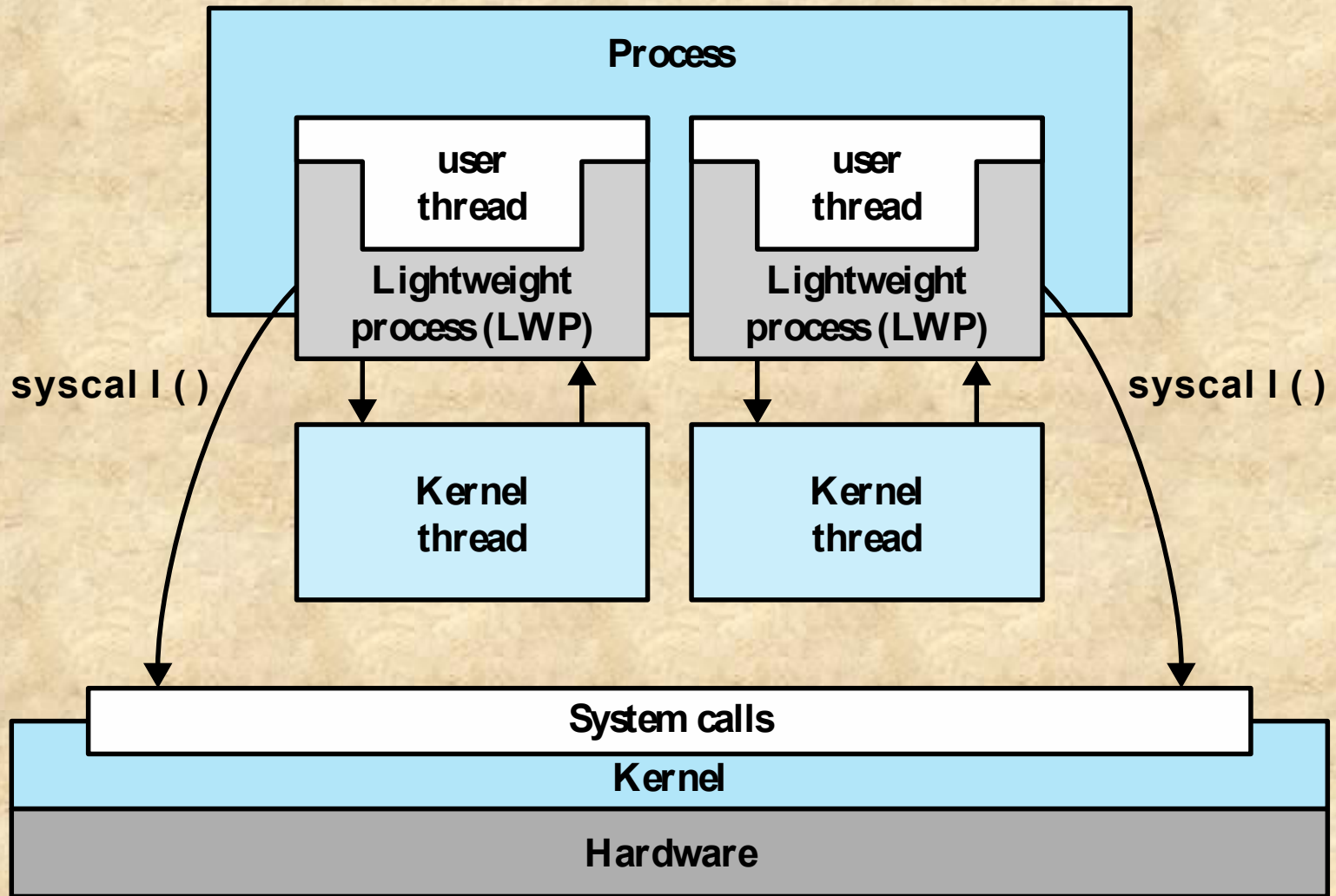
- a user-created unit of execution within a process

## Lightweight Processes (LWP)

- a mapping between ULTs and kernel threads

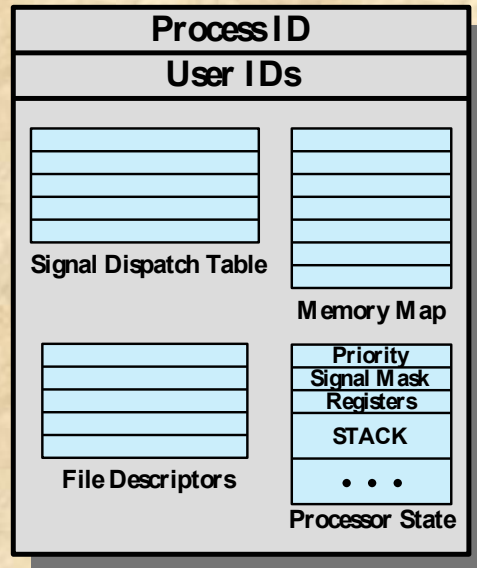
## Kernel Threads

- fundamental entities that can be scheduled and dispatched to run on one of the system processors



**Figure 4.12 Processes and Threads in Solaris**

## UNIX Process Structure



## Solaris Process Structure

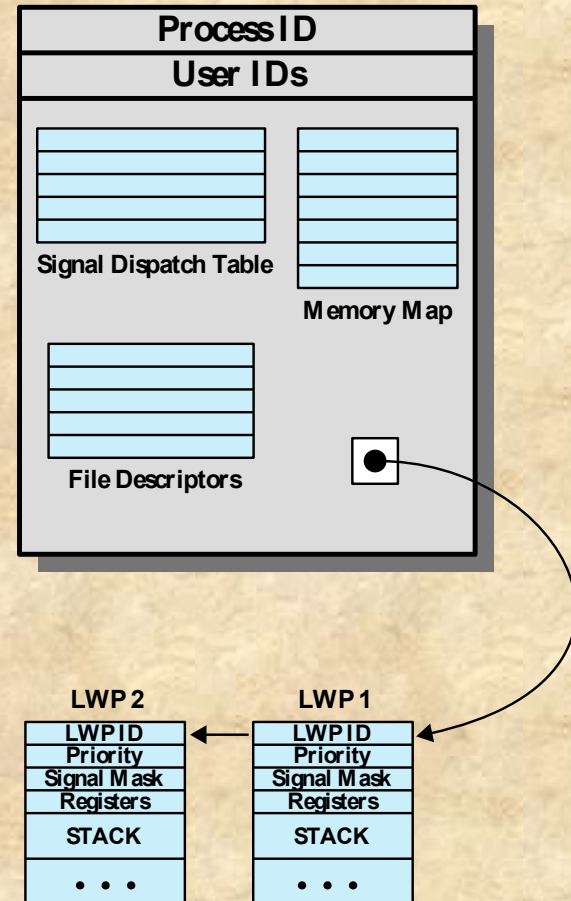


Figure 4.13 Process Structure in Traditional UNIX and Solaris [LEWI96]

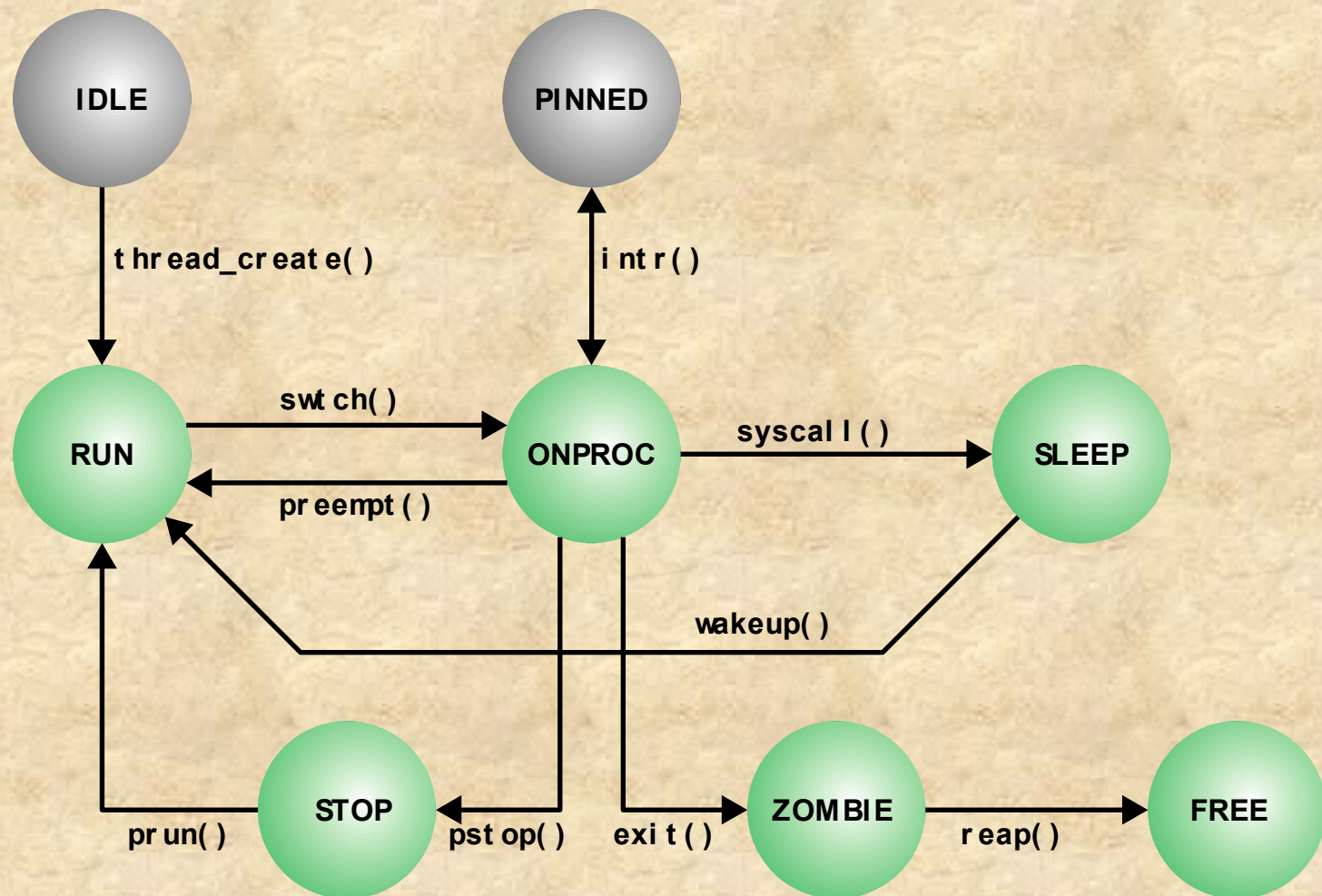
# A Lightweight Process (LWP)

## Data Structure Includes:

- An LWP identifier
- The priority of this LWP
- A signal mask
- Saved values of user-level registers
- The kernel stack for this LWP
- Resource usage and profiling data
- Pointer to the corresponding kernel thread
- Pointer to the process structure







**Figure 4.14 Solaris Thread States**

# Interrupts as Threads

- Most operating systems contain two fundamental forms of concurrent activity:

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Processes (threads)	cooperate with each other and manage the use of shared data structures by primitives that enforce mutual exclusion and synchronize their execution
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Interrupts	synchronized by preventing their handling for a period of time
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# Solaris Solution

- Solaris employs a set of kernel threads to handle interrupts
  - an interrupt thread has its own identifier, priority, context, and stack
  - the kernel controls access to data structures and synchronizes among interrupt threads using mutual exclusion primitives
  - interrupt threads are assigned higher priorities than all other types of kernel threads



# Linux Tasks

A process, or task, in Linux is represented by a `task_struct` data structure



This structure contains information in a number of categories



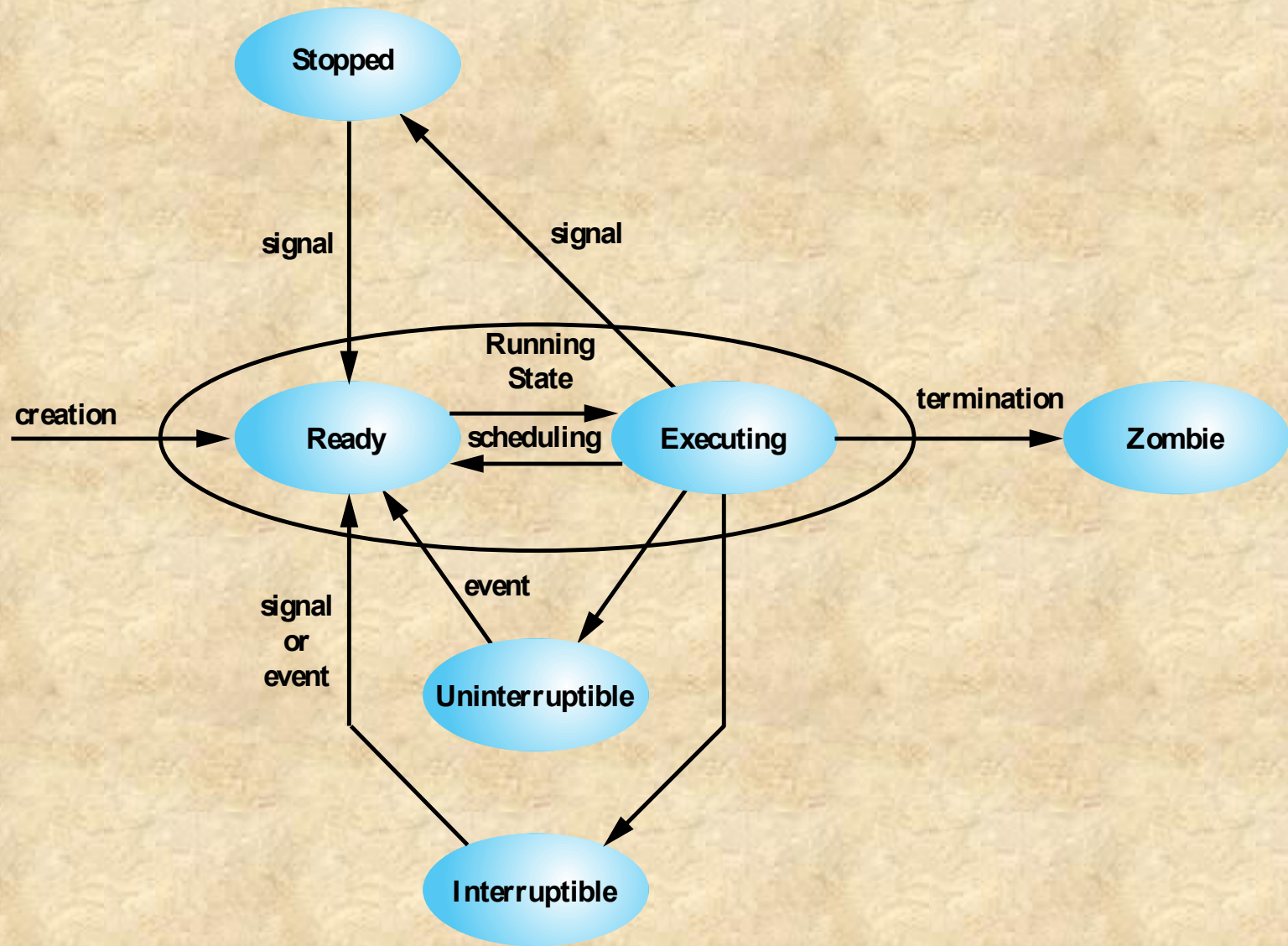


Figure 4.15 Linux Process/Thread Model

# Linux Threads

Linux does not recognize a distinction between threads and processes

A new process is created by copying the attributes of the current process

The clone() call creates separate stack spaces for each process

User-level threads are mapped into kernel-level processes

The new process can be *cloned* so that it shares resources

# Linux Namespaces

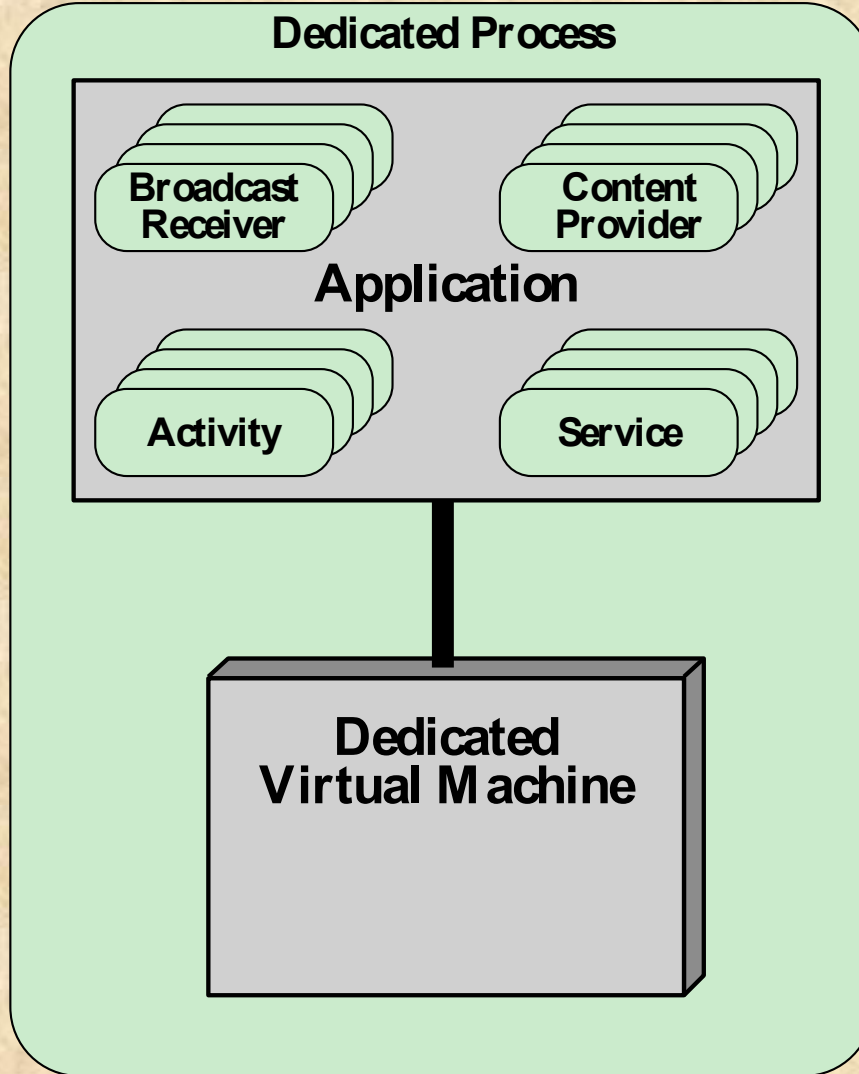
- A namespace enables a process to have a different view of the system than other processes that have other associated namespaces
- One of the overall goals is to support the implementation of control groups, cgroups), a tool for lightweight virtualization that provides a process or group of processes with the illusion that they are the only processes on the system
- There are currently six namespaces in Linux
  - mnt
  - pid
  - net
  - ipc
  - uts
  - user



# Android Process and Thread Management

- An Android application is the software that implements an app
- Each Android application consists of one or more instance of one or more of four types of application components
- Each component performs a distinct role in the overall application and even by other applications
- Four types of components:
  - Activities
  - Services
  - Content providers
  - Broadcast receivers





**Figure 4.16 Android Application**

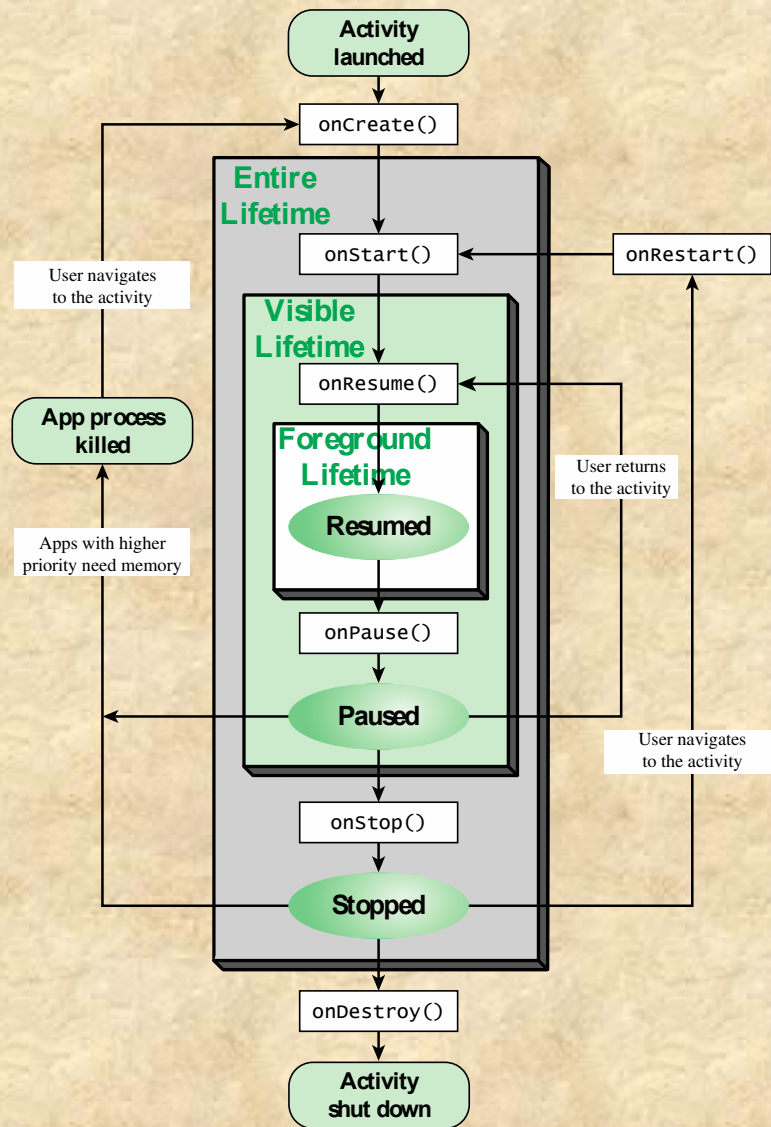
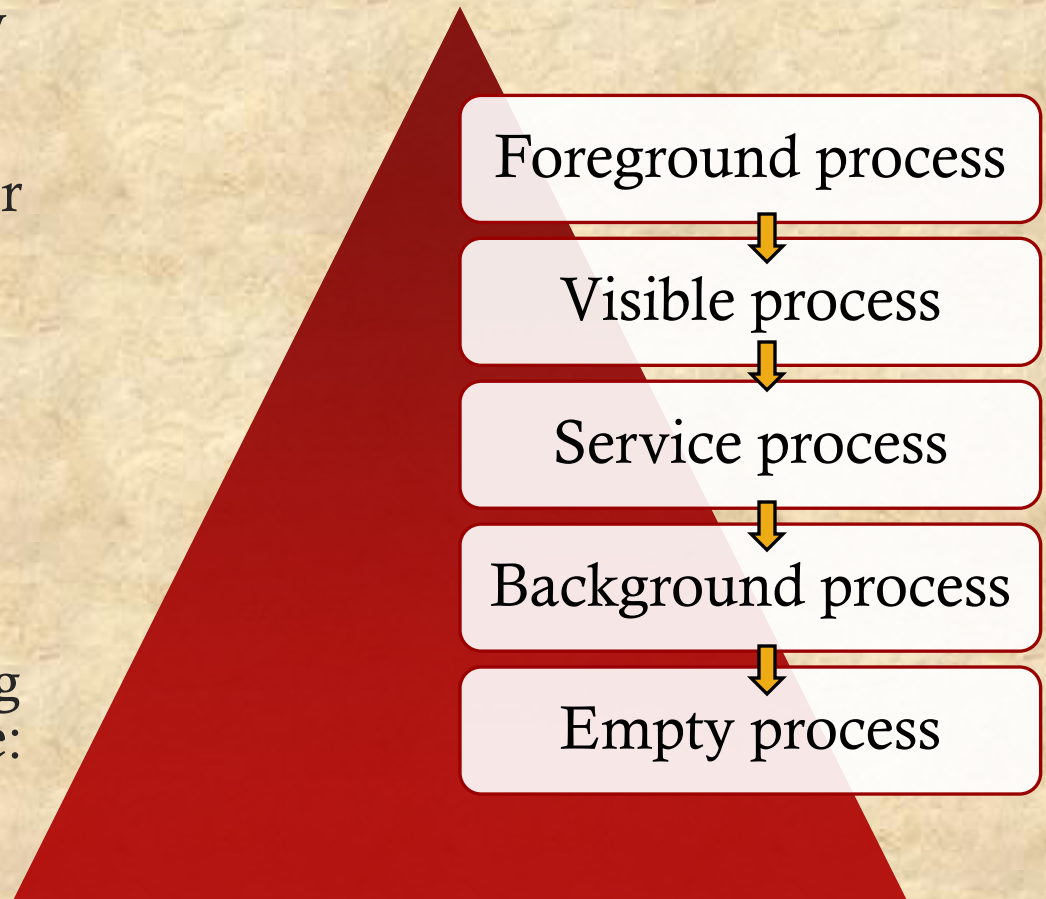


Figure 4.17 Activity State Transition Diagram

# Processes and Threads

- A precedence hierarchy is used to determine which process or processes to kill in order to reclaim needed resources
- Processes are killed beginning with the lowest precedence first
- The levels of the hierarchy, in descending order of precedence are:



# Mac OS X Grand Central Dispatch (GCD)



- Provides a pool of available threads
- Designers can designate portions of applications, called *blocks*, that can be dispatched independently and run concurrently
- Concurrency is based on the number of cores available and the thread capacity of the system





# Block

- A simple extension to a language
- A block defines a self-contained unit of work
- Enables the programmer to encapsulate complex functions
- Scheduled and dispatched by queues
- Dispatched on a first-in-first-out basis
- Can be associated with an event source, such as a timer, network socket, or file descriptor



# Summary

- Processes and threads
  - Multithreading
  - Thread functionality
- Types of threads
  - User level and kernel level threads
- Multicore and multithreading
- Windows 8 process and thread management
  - Changes in Windows 8
  - Windows process
  - Process and thread objects
  - Multithreading
  - Thread states
  - Support for OS subsystems
- Solaris thread and SMP management
  - Multithreaded architecture
  - Motivation
  - Process structure
  - Thread execution
  - Interrupts as threads
- Linux process and thread management
  - Tasks/threads/namespaces
- Android process and thread management
  - Android applications
  - Activities
  - Processes and threads
- Mac OS X grand central dispatch