xv6: Adding a system call

# Background

## RISC-V CPU modes

### User mode

* Least privilege
* User processes run in this mode
* Uses paging with pagetable corresponding to running user process

### Supervisor mode (or Kernel mode)

* Medium privilege
* Kernel (including kernel modules and device drivers), hypervisor run in this mode
* Uses paging with page table reserved for kernel

### Machine mode

* Highest privilege
* Bootloader, firmware run in this mode
* Does not use paging

## 

## Life cycle of a system call: **sleep**

Suppose the following code is executed by a user program test\_sleep.c:

#include "kernel/types.h"

#include "kernel/stat.h"

#include "user/user.h"

int main()

{

int status = sleep(100);

if (status == -1)

printf("Error\n");

else

printf("Ok\n");

return 0;

}

**sleep** is a system call. It will cause the following steps.

1. User function calls sleep(100)
   * It means sleep for 100 timer interrupts. Timer interrupts have an interval of 0.1 second (interval is defined in kernel/start.c/timerinit). So, this sleep takes about 10 seconds.
   * **sleep** system call takes an int as argument and returns an int, which is found from its declaration in user/user.h, int sleep(int)
2. The system call number of sleep is loaded into the register **a7** and a trap is generated.
   * The definition of the function int sleep(int) is provided in user/usys.S
   * **sleep** system call has system call number 13, which is defined as SYS\_sleep in kernel/syscall.h
3. The trap generated in step 2, puts the processor into supervisor mode and calls the function kernel/trampoline.S/uservec. This function does some state management (saving state of registers and swapping pagetable) and finally jumps to kernel/trap.c/usertrap.
   * This function does not *call* usertrap. So, we will never get back to this function again while handling our sleep(100).
4. The function kernel/trap.c/usertrap handles the trap based on its cause. As, **sleep** is a system call, it calls kernel/syscall.c/syscall.
   * The cause of a trap is given by r\_scause() (supervisor trap cause). If it is 8, then the cause is system call. We will see other values in later assignments.
5. The function kernel/syscall.c/syscall is the single point of contact for handling system calls. It retrieves the system call number (13 in this case) from the saved (in step 3) value of register **a7**. Then it calls the handler function corresponding to the system call number. All system call handlers are saved in an array of function pointers, kernel/syscall.c/syscalls. In this array, the system call handler for **sleep** is sys\_sleep.
6. The function sys\_sleep is defined in kernel/sysproc.c. In this function, first the argument to **sleep** system call is retrieved. Then it does some work that actually makes the calling process sleep for the given amount of time. It returns -1, if there is any error, otherwise it returns 0.
7. Now, we are again in the kernel/syscall.c/syscall. The returned value of the system call handler (in this case, sys\_sleep) is saved in the register **a0**.
8. Then it returns to kernel/trap.c/usertrap and calls kernel/trap.c/usertrapret.
9. In kernel/trap.c/usertrapret, it does some state management and calls kernel/trampoline.S/userret.
10. kernel/trampoline.S/userret does some state management (restoring state of registers and swapping pagetable) and returns to user mode.

## System call related codes explanation:

user/user.h

* Contains declaration of system call related functions

kernel/syscall.h

* Contains definition of system call number for each system call

user/usys.S

* Generated by user/usys.pl
* Contains the definition of system call related functions
* Generates a trap with corresponding system call number that puts the CPU into supervisor mode

kernel/trampoline.S

kernel/trampoline.S/uservec

* Saves the state of the registers
* Switches the pagetable of the user process with the pagetable for kernel
* Calls kernel/trap.c/usertrap

kernel/trampoline.S/userret

* Restores the state of the registers
* Switches the pagetable for kernel with the pagetable of the user process
* Switches mode from supervisor to user

kernel/trap.c

kernel/trap.c/usertrap

* Handles an interrupt, exception, or system call from user space
* Calls kernel/syscall.c/syscall if the trap is generated by system call (supervisor trap cause = 8)
* Calls kernel/trap.c/usertrapret after the trap is handled

kernel/trap.c/usertrapret

* Returns to user space
* Calls kernel/trampoline.S/uservec

kernel/syscall.c

* Contains declarations of the system call handlers

kernel/syscall.c/syscalls

* An array of function pointers that points to the actual code for handling each system call
* All the system call handlers must have the same type. For xv6, the type is uint64(void). So, if a system call has arguments, it retrieves them from saved registers using kernel/syscall.c/argraw. The returned value must be a uint64, which means a system call can either return an integer or a pointer.

kernel/syscall.c/syscall

* The main point of contact for handling system calls
* Calls the corresponding handler for the system call that generated the trap. The system call that generated the trap is found in the system call number which was provided in user/usys.S.
* Stores the returned value from the system call handler

kernel/syscall.c/argraw

* Retrieves the arguments to the system call as uint64
* Can retrieve at most 6 arguments, i.e., xv6 can only handle system call with at most 6 arguments

kernel/syscall.c/argint

* Retrieves the arguments to the system call and saves it at another variable of int type.

kernel/syscall.c/argaddr

* Retrieves the arguments to the system call and saves it at another variable which will be treated as an address.

kernel/sysproc.c

* Contains definition of the system call handlers related to process management

kernel/sysfile.c

* Contains definition of the system call handlers related to file management

# 

# Add a new system call

We will add a new system call to get an integer user id. We will call this system call **getuid**.

1. First we need to declare its signature in user/user.h.

// system calls

int fork(void);

...

int uptime(void);

int getuid(void); // add this line

1. Then we need to define the system call number for **getuid** in kernel/syscall.h.

// System call numbers

#define SYS\_fork 1

...

#define SYS\_close 21

#define SYS\_getuid 22 // add this line

1. We need to have the definition of int getuid(void) in user/usys.S. This code is auto generated by user/usys.pl. So, we add an entry for **getuid** in user/usys.pl.

#!/usr/bin/perl -w

...

entry("uptime");

entry("getuid"); # add this line

1. We need to add a system call handler for **getuid**. For that we will add a function named sys\_getuid. We need to add a record in the array kernel/syscall.c/syscalls. So, we make the following changes in kernel/syscall.c.

// Prototypes for the functions that handle system calls.

extern uint64 sys\_fork(void);

...

extern uint64 sys\_close(void);

extern uint64 sys\_getuid(void); // add this line

// An array mapping syscall numbers from syscall.h

// to the function that handles the system call.

static uint64 (\*syscalls[])(void) = {

[SYS\_fork] sys\_fork,

...

[SYS\_close] sys\_close,

[SYS\_getuid] sys\_getuid, // add this line

};

1. We need to add the definition of the function sys\_getuid. We can define it in both kernel/sysproc.c and kernel/sysfile.c. We will arbitrarily select kernel/sysproc.c this time. Add the following codes at the end of kernel/sysproc.c.

// return user id

uint64

sys\_getuid(void)

{

return getuid();

}

1. The function sys\_getuid calls another function getuid that will be defined in kernel/proc.c (please note that this getuid function is different from that declared in user/user.h). Add the following codes at the end of kernel/proc.c. *[This step would not be required if* sys\_getuid *did not call a newly defined function.]*

// define a global variable for user id

int uid = 123;

// getter for user id

int

getuid(void)

{

return uid;

}

1. Now, to make getuid accessible from kernel/sysproc.c, add a line in kernel/defs.h. *[This step would not be required if* sys\_getuid *did not call a newly defined function.]*

// proc.c

int cpuid(void);

...

void procdump(void);

int getuid(); // add this line

1. Now, create the following user program printuid.c following the instructions in [xv6: Adding a user program](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rkjfVXLO8ssAwPMnv0W7tv1Z2SH_xmuMlu_o4pB_sWw/edit#heading=h.yks8ddnfxcpl) and run.

#include "kernel/types.h"

#include "kernel/stat.h"

#include "user/user.h"

int main()

{

int uid = getuid();

printf("%d\n", uid);

return 0;

}

1. The output should look like this:

$ printuid

123

$

# Practice

Add a system call to set the user id. Also, create a user program to test it.