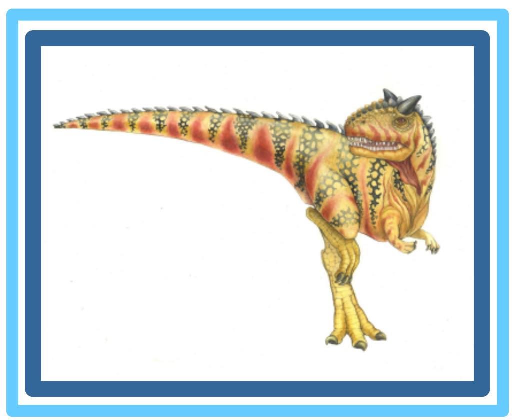
Chapter 6: Synchronization Tools



Chapter 6: Synchronization Tools

- Background
- The Critical-Section Problem
- Peterson’s Solution
- Synchronization Hardware
- Mutex Locks
- Semaphores

Objectives

- To present the concept of process synchronization.
- To introduce the critical-section problem, whose solutions can be used to ensure the consistency of shared data
- To present both software and hardware solutions of the critical-section problem
- To examine several classical process-synchronization problems
- To explore several tools that are used to solve process synchronization problems

Critical Section Problem

- Consider system of ***n*** processes $\{p_0, p_1, \ldots p_{n-1}\}$
- Each process has **critical section** segment of code
  - Process may be changing common variables, updating table, writing file, etc
  - When one process in critical section, no other may be in its critical section
- ***Critical section problem*** is to design protocol to solve this
- Each process must ask permission to enter critical section in **entry section**, may follow critical section with **exit section**, then **remainder section**

Critical Section

General structure of process P_i

```
do {
    entry section
        critical section
    exit section
        remainder section
} while (true);
```

Solution to Critical-Section Problem

1. **Mutual Exclusion** - If process P_i is executing in its critical section, then no other processes can be executing in their critical sections
2. **Progress** - If no process is executing in its critical section and there exist some processes that wish to enter their critical section, then the selection of the processes that will enter the critical section next cannot be postponed indefinitely
3. **Bounded Waiting** - A bound must exist on the number of times that other processes are allowed to enter their critical sections after a process has made a request to enter its critical section and before that request is granted

Peterson's Solution

Good algorithmic description of solving the problem

Two process solution — Peterson's solution is restricted to two processes that alternate the execution between the critical section and remainder section.

The two processes share two variables:

```
int turn;
Boolean flag[2]
```

The variable **`turn`** indicates whose turn it is to enter the critical section

The **`flag`** array is used to indicate if a process is ready to enter the critical section. **`flag[i] = `*`true`*** implies that process P_i is ready!

Algorithm for Process P_i

```
do {
    flag[i] = true;
    turn = j;
    while (flag[j] && turn = = j);
            critical section
    flag[i] = false;
            remainder section
 } while (true);
```

Peterson's Solution (Cont.)

Provable that the three CS requirement are met:

1. Mutual exclusion is preserved

   `Pi` enters CS only if:

   either **`flag[j] = false`** or **`turn = i`**

2. Progress requirement is satisfied
3. Bounded-waiting requirement is met

Synchronization Hardware

- Many systems provide hardware support for implementing the critical section code.
- All solutions below based on idea of **locking**
  - Protecting critical regions via locks
- Uniprocessors – could disable interrupts
  - Currently running code would execute without preemption

Solution to Critical-section Problem Using Locks

```
do {
    acquire lock
            critical section
    release lock
            remainder section
} while (TRUE);
```

test_and_set Instruction

Definition:

```
boolean test_and_set (boolean *target)
  {
       boolean rv = *target;
       *target = TRUE;
       return rv:
  }
```

1. Executed atomically
2. Returns the original value of passed parameter
3. Set the new value of passed parameter to "TRUE".

Take place as an Atomic operation

Solution using test_and_set()

Shared Boolean variable lock, initialized to FALSE

Solution:

```
do {
        while (test_and_set(&lock))
         ; /* do nothing */
                /* critical section */
     lock = false;
                /* remainder section */
 } while (true);
```

Semaphore

- Synchronization tool that provides more sophisticated ways (than Mutex locks) for process to synchronize their activities.
- Semaphore ***S*** – integer variable
- Can only be accessed via two indivisible (atomic) operations
  - **`wait()`** and **`signal()`**
    - Originally called **`P()`** and **`V()`**— **From Dutch words Proberen and Verhogen – meaning "to test", "to increment" respectively**
- Definition of the **`wait()` operation**

```
wait(S) {
    while (S <= 0)
       ; // busy wait
    S--;
}
```

- Definition of the **`signal()` operation**

```
signal(S) {
    S++;
}
```

Semaphore Usage

Counting semaphore – integer value can range over an unrestricted domain

Binary semaphore – integer value can range only between 0 and 1

Also called as **mutex lock**

Can solve various synchronization problems

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End of Chapter 6