File Systems in Operating System

A file is a collection of related information that is recorded on secondary storage. Or file is a collection of logically related entities. From user's perspective a file is the smallest allotment of logical secondary storage.

A file is a collection of correlated information which is recorded on secondary or non-volatile storage like magnetic disks, optical disks, and tapes. It is a method of data collection that is used as a medium for giving input and receiving output from that program.

In general, a file is a sequence of bits, bytes, or records whose meaning is defined by the file creator and user. Every File has a logical location where they are located for storage and retrieval.

ATTRIBUTES	TYPES	OPERATIONS
Name	Doc	Create
Type	Exe	Open
Size	Jpg	Read
Creation Data	Xis	Write
Author	C	Append
Last Modified	Java	Truncate
protection	class	Delete
		Close

FILE TYPE	USUAL	FUNCTION

	EXTENSION	
Executable	exe, com, bin	Read to run machine language program
Object	obj, o	Compiled, machine language not linked
Source Code	C, java, pas, asm, a	Source code in various languages
Batch	bat, sh	Commands to the command interpreter
Text	txt, doc	Textual data, documents
Word Processor	wp, tex, rrf, doc	Various word processor formats
Archive	arc, zip, tar	Related files grouped into one compressed file
Multimedia	mpeg, mov, rm	For containing audio/video information

Objective of File management System

- It provides I/O support for a variety of storage device types.
- Minimizes the chances of lost or destroyed data
- Helps OS to standardized I/O interface routines for user processes.

- It provides I/O support for multiple users in a multiuser systems environment.

Properties of a File System

Here, are important properties of a file system:

- Files are stored on disk or other storage and do not disappear when a user logs off.
- Files have names and are associated with access permission that permits controlled sharing.
- Files could be arranged or more complex structures to reflect the relationship between them.

File structure

A File Structure needs to be predefined format in such a way that an operating system understands . It has an exclusively defined structure, which is based on its type.

Three types of files structure in OS:

- A text file: It is a series of characters that is organized in lines.
- An object file: It is a series of bytes that is organized into blocks.
- A source file: It is a series of functions and processes.

File Attributes

A file has a name and data. Moreover, it also stores meta information like file creation date and time, current size, last modified date, etc. All this information is called the attributes of a file system.

Here, are some important File attributes used in OS:

- **Name:** It is the only information stored in a human-readable form.
- **Identifier**: Every file is identified by a unique tag number within a file system known as an identifier.
- **Location:** Points to file location on device.
- **Type:** This attribute is required for systems that support various types of files.
- **Size**. Attribute used to display the current file size.
- **Protection**. This attribute assigns and controls the access rights of reading, writing, and executing the file.

- **Time, date and security:** It is used for protection, security, and also used for monitoring

File Type

It refers to the ability of the operating system to differentiate various types of files like text files, binary, and source files. However, Operating systems like MS_DOS and UNIX has the following type of files:

Character Special File

It is a hardware file that reads or writes data character by character, like mouse, printer, and more.

Ordinary files

- These types of files stores user information.
- It may be text, executable programs, and databases.
- It allows the user to perform operations like add, delete, and modify.

Directory Files

- Directory contains files and other related information about those files. Its basically a folder to hold and organize multiple files.

Special Files

- These files are also called device files. It represents physical devices like printers, disks, networks, flash drive, etc.

Functions of File

- Create file, find space on disk, and make an entry in the directory.
- Write to file, requires positioning within the file
- Read from file involves positioning within the file
- Delete directory entry, regain disk space.
- Reposition: move read/write position.

Commonly used terms in File systems

Field:

This element stores a single value, which can be static or variable length.

DATABASE:

Collection of related data is called a database. Relationships among elements of data are explicit.

FILES:

Files is the collection of similar record which is treated as a single entity.

RECORD:

A Record type is a complex data type that allows the programmer to create a new data type with the desired column structure. Its groups one or more columns to form a new data type. These columns will have their own names and data type.

File Access Methods

File access is a process that determines the way that files are accessed and read into memory. Generally, a single access method is always supported by operating systems. Though there are some operating system which also supports multiple access methods.

Three file access methods are:

- Sequential access
- Direct random access
- Index sequential access

Sequential Access

In this type of file access method, records are accessed in a certain pre-defined sequence. In the sequential access method, information stored in the file is also processed one by one. Most compilers access files using this access method.

Random Access

The random access method is also called direct random access. This method allow accessing the record directly. Each record has its own address on which can be directly accessed for reading and writing.

Index Sequential Access

This type of accessing method is based on simple sequential access. In this access method, an index is built for every file, with a direct pointer to different

memory blocks. In this method, the Index is searched sequentially, and its pointer can access the file directly. Multiple levels of indexing can be used to offer greater efficiency in access. It also reduces the time needed to access a single record.

FILE DIRECTORIES:

Collection of files is a file directory. The directory contains information about the files, including attributes, location and ownership. Much of this information, especially that is concerned with storage, is managed by the operating system. The directory is itself a file, accessible by various file management routines.

Information contained in a device directory are:

- Name
- Type
- Address
- Current length
- Maximum length
- Date last accessed
- Date last updated
- Owner id
- Protection information

Operation performed on directory are:

- Search for a file
- Create a file
- Delete a file
- List a directory
- Rename a file
- Traverse the file system

Advantages of maintaining directories are:

- **Efficiency:** A file can be located more quickly.
- **Naming:** It becomes convenient for users as two users can have same name for different files or may have different name for same file.
- **Grouping:** Logical grouping of files can be done by properties e.g. all java programs, all games etc.

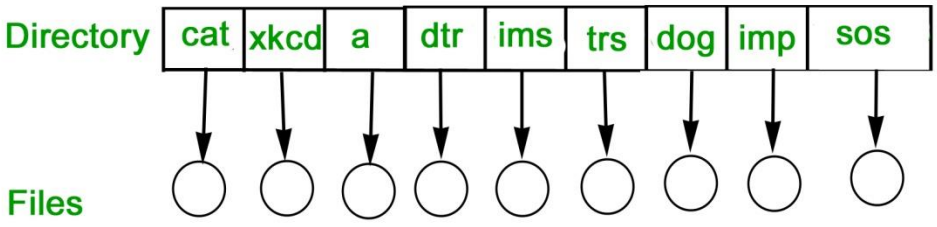
Types of Directory structures

SINGLE-LEVEL DIRECTORY

In this a single directory is maintained for all the users.

Problem in using this type of directory is:

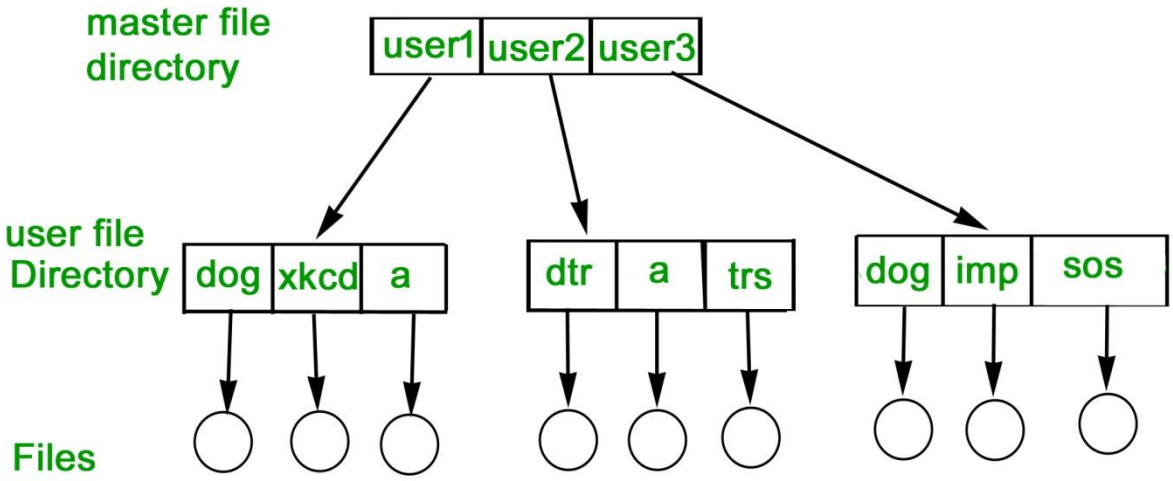
- **Naming problem:** Users cannot have same name for two files.
- **Grouping problem:** Users cannot group files according to their need.



TWO-LEVEL DIRECTORY

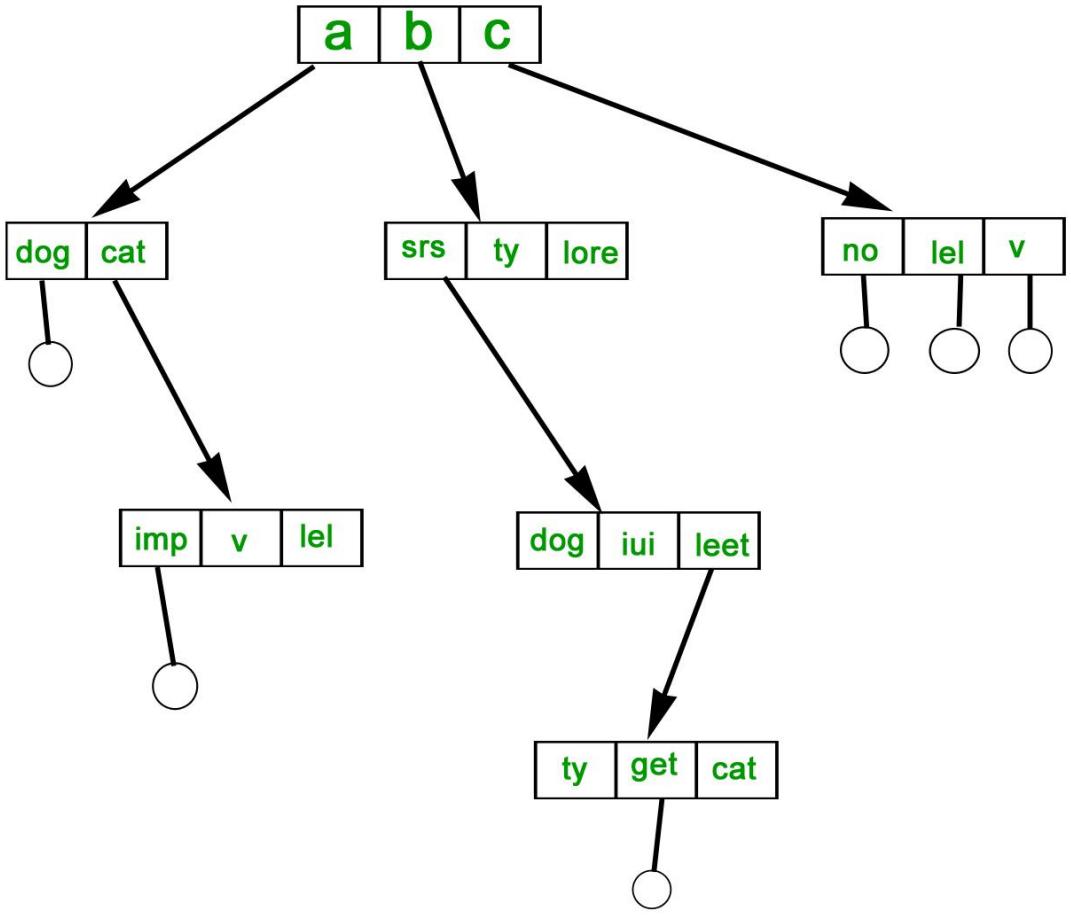
In this separate directories for each user is maintained.

- Path name:Due to two levels there is a path name for every file to locate that file.
- Now,we can have same file name for different user.
- Searching is efficient in this method.



TREE-STRUCTURED DIRECTORY :

Directory is maintained in the form of a tree. Searching is efficient and also there is grouping capability. We have absolute or relative path name for a file.

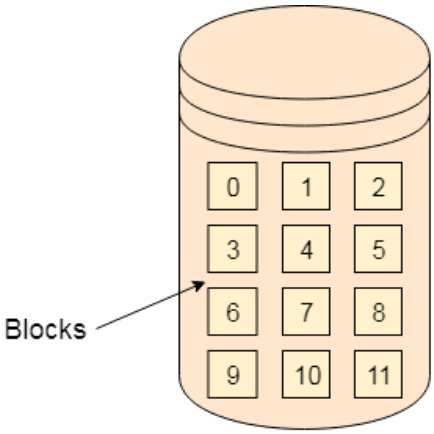


FILE ALLOCATION METHODS

1.Contiguous Allocation

If the blocks are allocated to the file in such a way that all the logical blocks of the file get the contiguous physical block in the hard disk then such allocation scheme is known as contiguous allocation.

In the image shown below, there are three files in the directory. The starting block and the length of each file are mentioned in the table. We can check in the table that the contiguous blocks are assigned to each file as per its need.



File Name	Start	Length	Allocated Blocks
abc.text	0	3	0,1,2
video.mp4	4	2	4,5
jtp.docx	9	3	9,10,11

Directory

Contiguous Allocation

Advantages

1. It is simple to implement.
2. We will get Excellent read performance.
3. Supports Random Access into files.

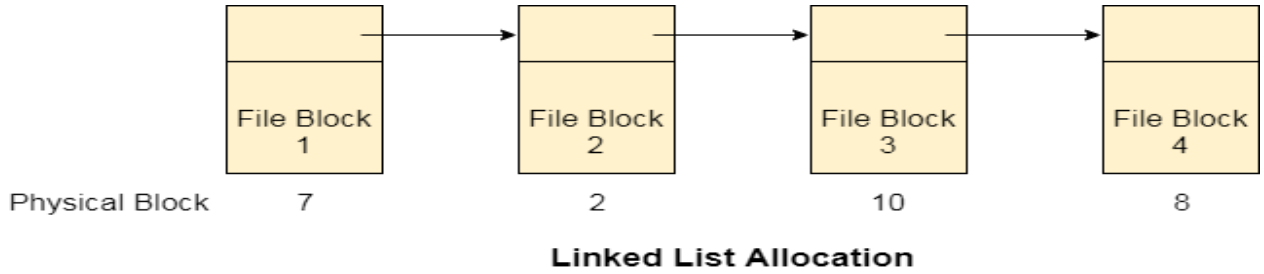
Disadvantages

1. The disk will become fragmented.
2. It may be difficult to have a file grow.

2.Linked List (Linked)Allocation

Linked List allocation solves all problems of contiguous allocation. In linked list allocation, each file is considered as the linked list of disk blocks. However, the disks blocks allocated to a particular file need not to be contiguous on the

disk. Each disk block allocated to a file contains a pointer which points to the next disk block allocated to the same file.



Linked List Allocation

Advantages

1. There is no external fragmentation with linked allocation.
2. Any free block can be utilized in order to satisfy the file block requests.
3. File can continue to grow as long as the free blocks are available.
4. Directory entry will only contain the starting block address.

Disadvantages

1. Random Access is not provided.
2. Pointers require some space in the disk blocks.
3. Any of the pointers in the linked list must not be broken otherwise the file will get corrupted.
4. Need to traverse each block.

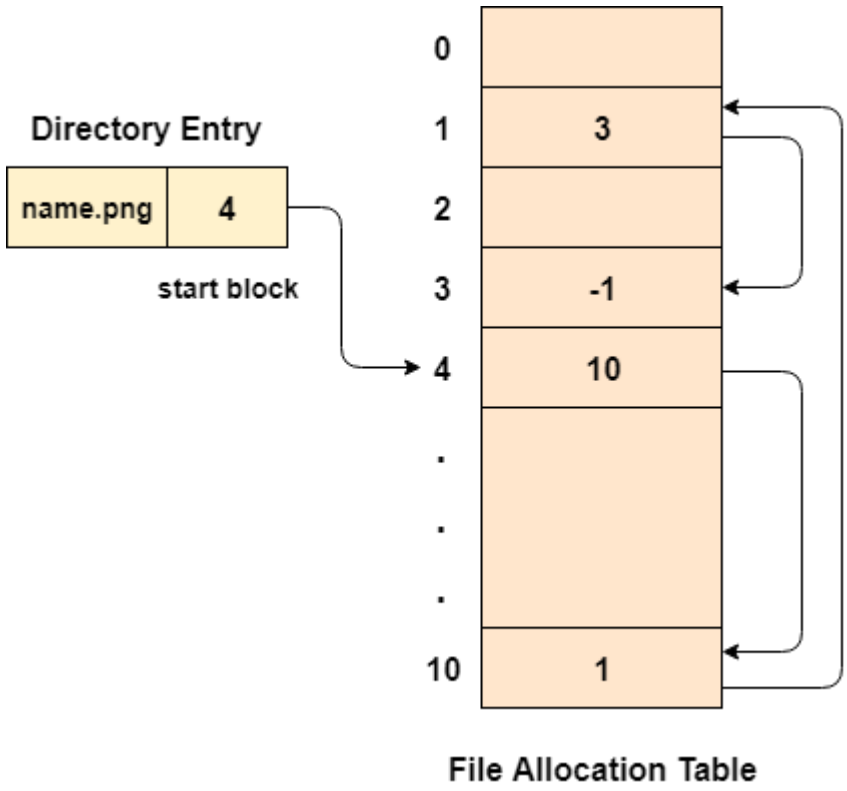
3.**File Allocation Table**

The main disadvantage of linked list allocation is that the Random access to a particular block is not provided. In order to access a block, we need to access all its previous blocks.

File Allocation Table overcomes this drawback of linked list allocation. In this scheme, a file allocation table is maintained, which gathers all the disk block links. The table has one entry for each disk block and is indexed by block number.

File allocation table needs to be cached in order to reduce the number of head seeks. Now the head doesn't need to traverse all the disk blocks in order to access one successive block.

It simply accesses the file allocation table, read the desired block entry from there and access that block. This is the way by which the random access is accomplished by using FAT. It is used by MS-DOS and pre-NT Windows versions.



Advantages

1. Uses the whole disk block for data.
2. A bad disk block doesn't cause all successive blocks lost.
3. Random access is provided although its not too fast.
4. Only FAT needs to be traversed in each file operation.

Disadvantages

1. Each Disk block needs a FAT entry.
2. FAT size may be very big depending upon the number of FAT entries.
3. Number of FAT entries can be reduced by increasing the block size but it will also increase Internal Fragmentation.

4.**Indexed Allocation**

Limitation of FAT

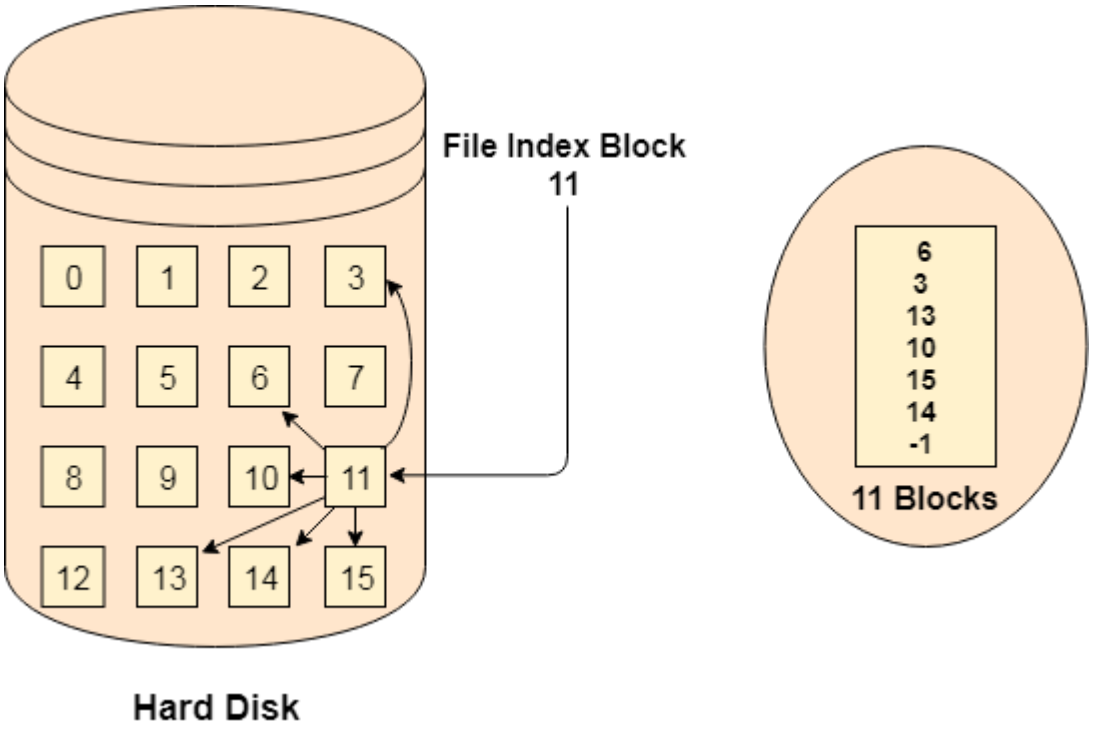
Limitation in the existing technology causes the evolution of a new technology. Till now, we have seen various allocation methods; each of them was carrying several advantages and disadvantages.

File allocation table tries to solve as many problems as possible but leads to a drawback. The more the number of blocks, the more will be the size of FAT.

Therefore, we need to allocate more space to a file allocation table. Since, file allocation table needs to be cached therefore it is impossible to have as many space in cache. Here we need a new technology which can solve such problems.

Indexed Allocation Scheme

Instead of maintaining a file allocation table of all the disk pointers, Indexed allocation scheme stores all the disk pointers in one of the blocks called as indexed block. Indexed block doesn't hold the file data, but it holds the pointers to all the disk blocks allocated to that particular file. Directory entry will only contain the index block address.



Advantages

1. Supports direct access
2. A bad data block causes the lost of only that block.

Disadvantages

1. A bad index block could cause the lost of entire file.
2. Size of a file depends upon the number of pointers, a index block can hold.
3. Having an index block for a small file is totally wastage.
4. More pointer overhead

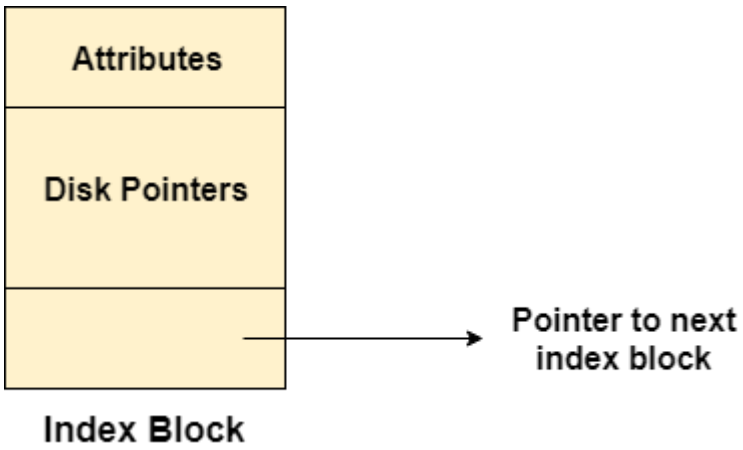
5.**Linked Index Allocation**

Single level linked Index Allocation

In index allocation, the file size depends on the size of a disk block. To allow large files, we have to link several index blocks together. In linked index allocation,

- Small header giving the name of the file
- Set of the first 100 block addresses
- Pointer to another index block

For the larger files, the last entry of the index block is a pointer which points to another index block. This is also called as linked schema.



Advantage: It removes file size limitations

Disadvantage: Random Access becomes a bit harder

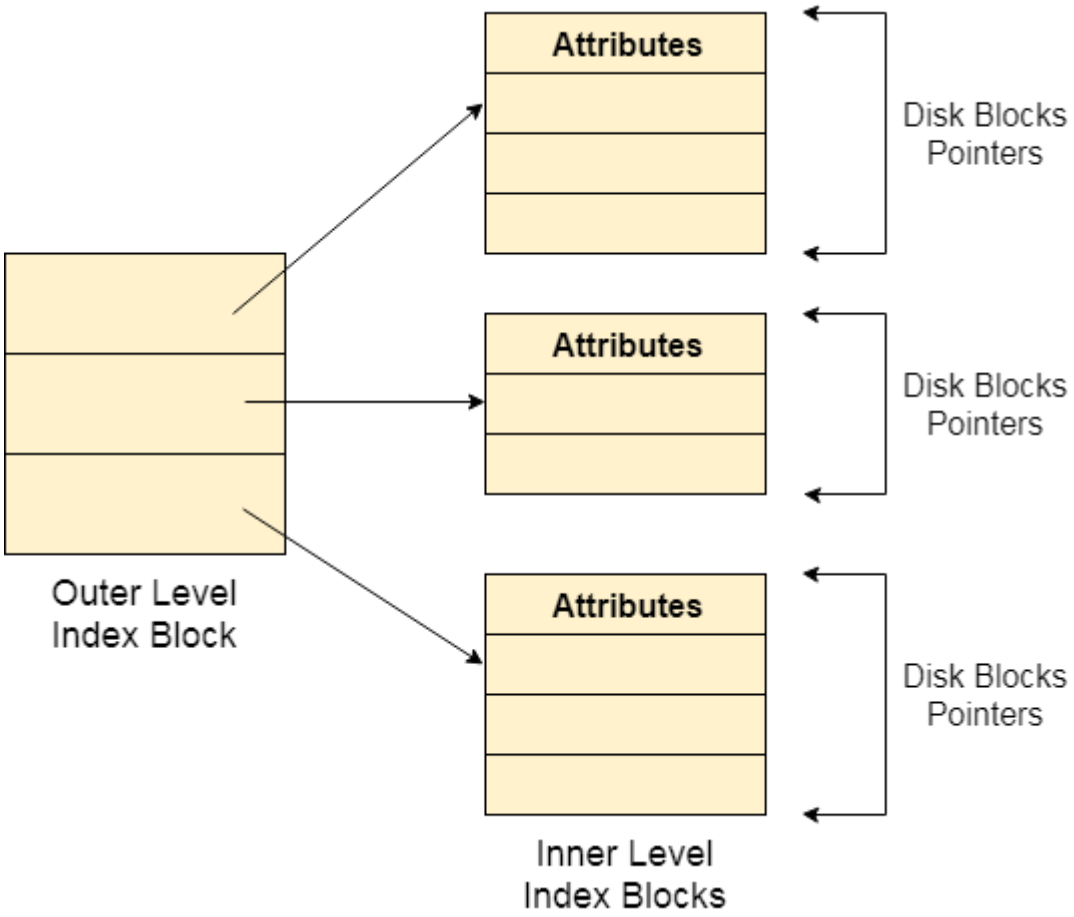
Multilevel Index Allocation

In Multilevel index allocation, we have various levels of indices. There are outer level index blocks which contain the pointers to the inner level index blocks and the inner level index blocks contain the pointers to the file data.

- The outer level index is used to find the inner level index.
- The inner level index is used to find the desired data block.

Advantage: Random Access becomes better and efficient.

Disadvantage: Access time for a file will be higher.



Protection and Security Methods

The different methods that may provide protect and security for different computer systems are −

Authentication

This deals with identifying each user in the system and making sure they are who they claim to be. The operating system makes sure that all the users are authenticated before they access the system. The different ways to make sure that the users are authentic are:

- **Username/ Password**

  Each user has a distinct username and password combination and they need to enter it correctly before they can access the system.

- **User Key/ User Card**

  The users need to punch a card into the card slot or use they individual key on a keypad to access the system.

- **User Attribute Identification**

  Different user attribute identifications that can be used are fingerprint, eye retina etc. These are unique for each user and are compared with the existing samples in the database. The user can only access the system if there is a match.

One Time Password

These passwords provide a lot of security for authentication purposes. A one time password can be generated exclusively for a login every time a user wants to enter the system. It cannot be used more than once. The various ways a one time password can be implemented are −

- **Random Numbers**

  The system can ask for numbers that correspond to alphabets that are pre arranged. This combination can be changed each time a login is required.

- **Secret Key**

  A hardware device can create a secret key related to the user id for login. This key can change each time.

Note : for case study on UNIX file Management and security refer my handwritten notes