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Distributed Computing and Systems

Project Concept

Introduction

Topic: 13 write – update. Implement distributed memory with read and write access, using write-update protocol.

We present a concept design for the above distributed system which reflects our current vision of implementation. The aim of the project is educational.

Assumptions

This distributed system will be a developer/programmer tool. Offering an interface to use distributed memory. It uses the main memory of its nodes and doesn’t utilize their filesystems for saving data (data is not persistent).

Use Cases

* Start up: An operation that starts the system up, so it is operational.
* Exit: An operation that shuts the system down.
* Memory allocation: An operation that, when called, allocates memory from the distributed system to the process calling it.
* Free memory: An operation that, when called, frees memory that was allocated to the process calling it.
* Read: Given a (virtual) memory address in the distributed memory, read from it.
* Write: Write to a (virtual) memory address in the distributed memory.
* Health – check: An operation that allows the user to check the status of the system/nodes.

The system will have one user type that will be able to perform all operations on it. The above use cases will be provided either as CLI commands or as a library package to some programming language. This will be decided further down the development cycle.

Component Design

1. User Interface: A process that lets the user interact with the distributed system. As mentioned earlier it will be either a CLI or a program library that allows the user to do all necessary operations on the system.
2. Node:
   1. Storage Engine: each node maintains a local storage system for its segment of the distributed system’s memory.
   2. Communication Manager: handles networking communications for read, write, update requests.
   3. Synchronisation Manager: this component will work with the ‘Communication Manager’ and utilize some kind of locking system to ensure data consistency. The nature of this component will be explored further during development of the software.
   4. Fault Manager: Answers to health – check requests for a specific node and, also, sends heartbeats to the ‘System Monitor’ to confirm that the node is operational. Further functionality might be included later during development.
3. Mapping Manager: provides each ‘Node’ with some segment of the DS’s memory to be managed by the ‘Storage Engine’ of that ‘Node’.
4. System Monitor: a component that answers to the user’s health – check requests and collects the node heartbeats to manage the systems health. Requests to start and stop the system go through this component.
5. Network:
   1. Communication: A protocol for message passing and data sharing between ‘Nodes’/’Mapping Managers’ must be used. It will be TCP (or UDP depending on implementation). Message types are ‘READ\_REQUEST’, ‘WRITE\_REQUEST’, ‘UPDATE\_NOTIFICATION’, ‘SYSTEM\_HEALTHCHECK’ and ‘HEARTBEAT’ and they include necessary metadata for the system to be operational.
   2. Topology: Most probably a mesh topology to allow for easy communication between ‘Nodes’ and other Components.

Further details of the System Architecture

1. Migration Algorithm: The algorithm for sharing non-local blocks. A very simple algorithm that simply sends the requested block over the ‘Network’ to the ‘Node’ that requested it.
2. Write – Update Protocol: This protocol is used by the component in ‘Nodes’ that handles write requests. When a write occurs to some memory address, the update is registered in the ‘Node’ where the address is local to and propagated to all other ‘Nodes’ that share this memory address.

As per the assignments request, this system should be developed to work on at least two different machines.

Some of the Components described above might be joined together to make the development easier, but it is too early to decide upon that yet.

Architecture