Alexandria University
Faculty of Engineering
Computer and Systems Engineering Dept.
3rd year

Subject: Operating Systems
Assignment 1
Assigned: Monday, 8th October, 2012
Due: Tuesday, 23th October, 2012

Simple Shell

Objectives:

1. Familiarity with system calls in Unix environment.
2. Introducing processes and their nesting.

Problem Statement:

It is required to implement a Unix shell program. A shell is simply a program that conveniently allows you to run other programs. Read up on your favorite shell to see what it does.

Your shell must support the following:

1. **The internal shell command "exit" which terminates the shell**
   - **Concepts:** shell commands, exiting the shell.
   - **System calls:** exit()
2. **A command with no arguments**
   - **Example:** ls, cp, rm …etc
   - **Details:** Your shell must block until the command completes and, if the return code is abnormal, print out a message to that effect.
   - **Concepts:** Forking a child process, waiting for it to complete and synchronous execution.
   - **System calls:** fork(), execvp(), exit(), wait()
3. **A command with arguments**
   - **Example:** ls –l
   - **Details:** Argument 0 is the name of the command.
   - **Concepts:** Command-line parameters.
4. **A command, with or without arguments, executed in the background using &.**
   - **Example:** firefox &
   - **Details:** In this case, your shell must execute the command and return immediately, not blocking until the command finishes.
   - **Concepts:** Background execution, signals, signal handlers, processes and asynchronous execution.
   - **Requirements:** You have to show that the opened process will be nested as a child process to the shell program via opening the task manager found in the operating system like in figure 1. Additionally you have to write in a log file when a child process is terminated (main application will be interrupted by a SIGCHLD signal). So you have to

implement an interrupt handler to handle this interrupt and do the corresponding action to it.

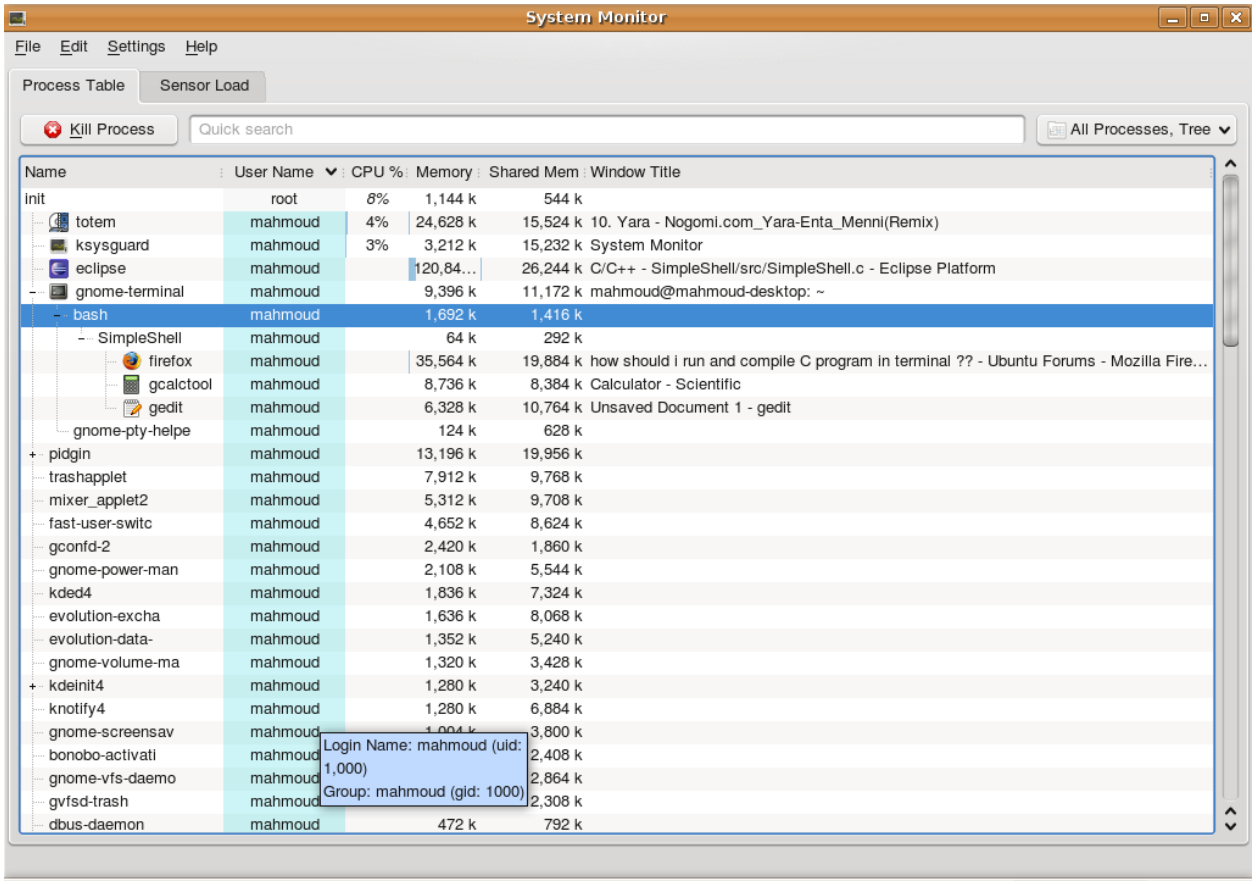

Figure 1 Firefox, Calculator and Gedit are child processes to the SimpleShell process

Description:

To process the user command, do the following:

Step 1: Your command shell should take the user command and its parameter(s), i.e., "ls" and "–l" in this example, and convert them into C strings. (Recall that a C string terminates with a null string, i.e., \0.)

Step 2: The command shell should create a child process via fork ().

Step 3: The child process passes the C strings—the command and parameter(s)—to execvp ().

Step 4: The parent process, i.e., the command shell, should wait, via wait (), for the child process to finish.

Step 5: The command shell gets the next command and repeats the above steps. The command shell terminates itself when the user types exit.

In case a user wants to execute the command in background (i.e. as a background process), he/she writes & at the end of the command. For example, a user command can be:

Shell > firefox &

In this case, your command shell should not wait for the child by skipping the Step 4.

You should keep a log file for your shell program such that whenever a child process terminates, the shell program appends the line "Child process was terminated" to the log file. To do this, you have to write a signal handler that appends the line to the log file when the SIGCHLD signal is received.

Hint:

- When a child dies, the parent process receives SIGCHLD (or SIGCLD) signal.
- To see the set of all signals supported on your system, type, kill –l
- Use a process monitor package to monitor your processes. Provide a screenshot for your shell parent process and some child processes spawned as background processes.
- **Suggested packages:** KSysguard or Gnome-System-Monitor.

Deliverables:

- Complete source code, commented thoroughly and clearly.
- Object Code.
- A report that includes:
    - A description of the overall organization of your code and the major functions.
    - Sample runs.
    - Screenshots for the processes hierarchy in KSysguard (or any similar package) during the execution of your shell program.

Notes:

- Languages used: C/C++.
- Students will work individually.
- No cheating. It will be hardly penalized for both parties.