

Aims:

- *Resource Sharing*: costly resources (high-quality printers and expensive programs) can be shared
- *Computation Speedup*: Algorithms can run concurrently
- *Reliability*: Failure of one site does not imply failure of the whole system
Redundancy prerequisite

Especially last point difficult to fulfill

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Several Levels of Distribution possible
listed from tightly coupled to loosely coupled

- Shared memory
- Shared file system
- Bus Systems
- Switching Systems

Key Problem Areas:

- Transparency: pretend to be one computer
- Reliability: want availability, fault tolerance
- Performance
- Scalability: avoid centralised tables and algorithms

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Communication

Simplest way of communication:
Client/Server Model

Idea: group of processes (servers) used by clients

Advantage: Simple communication

Simple enough to study several problems

First problem: Addressing! Possible Solutions:

- Hardware address into client code: inflexible
- Broadcasting: works only on local networks
- Name Servers: Ask special host
Example: Domain Name Service, DNS

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Second Problem:

Blocking (synchronous) vs. non-blocking primitives

Conceptual ease vs. performance

Third Problem:

Reliable vs. unreliable primitives

Where does the error correction go?

Kernel (once for all) vs. application (possibly more efficient)

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Very simple idea: execute procedure on different host

Goal: total transparency

Basic Schema:

- Client sends arguments to server
- Server executes call
- Server sends results back

Difference to local call hidden in kernel routines

Details complicated:

- Have to transfer parameters
- deal with failures

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Problems with parameter passing

- Different representation on different machines: either common format (inefficient), or store format in message
- What to do with call-by-reference parameters? Can copy arrays, but not arbitrary data structures

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Failure problems more complicated
Have several cases

- Client cannot locate server: Generate exception
⇒ transparency lost
- Lost Request Messages: use timer
- Lost Reply Messages: client timer insufficient:
could execute operation more than once
Solution: use sequence numbers
- Server Crashes: Sequence numbers not enough: When did crash occur?
Can guarantee *at least once*, at *most once* semantics, but not *exactly once* semantics ⇒ have to have call-specific remedies
- Client Crash: leaves orphans (unwanted computations)
No general way of getting rid of them

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Generating Timestamps

Unique timestamps needed for co-ordination
No problem in monoprocessor system: use system clock

Not possible in distributed systems

One way out:

- Each host maintains logical clock which is advanced with each event
- All message from host contain logical clock
- When message with greater logical clock is received, increase own logical clock to this value
- with two identical timestamps, let host number decide

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A Distributed Version (Ricart and Agrawala)
Assume reliable messages, unique timestamps
Following steps:

- Process trying to enter critical section:
sends to all other processes name of section and unique timestamp
- Process receiving such a message:
 - Sends back OK if not interested in critical section
 - Queues message if already in critical section
- Receiver wants to enter critical section
⇒ enters critical section if its request has lower timestamp and queues message, otherwise sends OK

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Grants mutual exclusion without deadlock or starvation

Problems:

- Requires that everyone knows about all other hosts
- Algorithm fails if one host fails
⇒ Reconstruction of network necessary in this case

Suitable for networks where configuration is stable

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A Token Ring Algorithm

Assumption: Network organised on a (physical or logical) ring, i.e.,
each node has unique successor in line
Simple algorithm:

- At initialisation, generate token
- Pass token around continuously
- Process wanting to enter a critical region waits for token
- After leaving critical section, process passes token to next neighbour

Properties:

- Detecting lost tokens difficult: Time spent in critical region unbound
- Detecting dead processes easy if sent token is acknowledged

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Election Algorithms

Problem: Select new co-ordinator
Assumption:
Know id of every host on the network
First example: Bully algorithm

- P sends message to all hosts with higher number
- No response ⇒ P wins and is co-ordinator
- Answer received ⇒ host with higher number has taken over

Second Example: Ring Algorithm

- any host may send *Election* message
- passed around the net, which each host id added
- If original host gets message, determines co-ordinator and sends new message around
- After it has gone round, host removes it

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