CIS 452

Lab 6 Report

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The Shared Memory Problem

## Question One

**What exactly does Sample Program 1 intend to do (i.e. who is responsible for what operations)?**

After the shared memory is created and attached, the program assigns 0 and 1 to shmptr[0] and shmPtr[1], respectively. After this initial setup, the program forks and within the child’s code it loops however many times that were passed in by the command line argument, each iteration swapping the values of shmPtr[0] and shmPtr[1]. After the child is done looping, it calls shmdt() to detach itself from the shared memory, then exits. Meanwhile, the parent’s code it is also performing this same loop and operation, swapping shmPtr[1] and shmPtr[0] “loop” number of times. Afterwards, the parent calls wait() until the child has finished. Once wait returns with the child program’s exit status, the parent prints out the final values of shmPtr[0] and shmPtr[1] before also detaching from the shared memory and destroying it. Finally, the parent program exits.

## Question Two

**What is the program's expected output?**

The expected output is that the values of shmPtr[0] and shmPtr[1] will print out in the parent’s code at the end with the same values they were initially assigned to (before any of the looping happened), since both the child and parent are looping the same number of times, but reverse-swapping the other program’s swap (child is swapping 0 -> 1, while at the same time the parent is swapping 1 -> 0, so the one swap is reverted by the other swap).

Coincidentally, when we ran the program many times with a low value for “loop,” that is exactly what happened. The values of shmPtr[0] and shmPtr[1] kept printing out at the end as 0 and 1, which were the same values that were initially assigned to them.

## Question Three

**Describe the output of the Sample Program as the loop values increase.**

As the loop value increases, the values of shmPtr[0] and shmPtr[1] begin to print out at the end with values different from the ones they were initially assigned - some runs they both printed at the end with a value of 0, sometimes they both printed with a value of 1, and sometimes the values were swapped from their initial values.

## Question Four

**Describe *precisely* what is happening to produce the observed interesting output.  Your answer should tie in to the concepts discussed in Chapter 5 of your textbook -- Process Synchronization.**

Even though both the parent and child processes seem to be looping and swapping values at the same time, that is not necessarily true. Because this program does not try to synchronize the two processes in any way, it is possible that during any given time the processes fall out of synch - with one performing more than one swap in a row before the other process gets a chance to execute its swapping logic, which would throw off the swap->and->then->reverse->swap system that was intended. This could occur in either the parent or child process, but becomes much more likely the more iterations we do, which is why this lack of synchronization becomes apparent with the use of very high loop values.

Shared Memory Synchronization

## Question Five

**Name and describe in your own words the use of the three fields of the sembuf structure.**

The sembuf structure contains the following three fields:

1. unsigned short sem\_num - the semaphore number
2. short sem\_op - operation to be performed on the semaphore
3. short sem\_flg - operation flags (either IPC\_NOWAIT or SEM\_UNDO)

## Question Six

**What is the purpose of the SEM\_UNDO flag (i.e. why would you use it)?**

**Note: make sure you truly understand what this flag does.**

Sem\_UNDO flag control makes semop(2) allocate an undo structure for each semaphore operation, which contains the operation that returns the semaphore to this previous state. If the process dies, the system applies the operation in the undo structures

You would want to use it to prevent a process with exclusive use of a semaphore terminating abnormally, and failing to undo the operation freeing the semaphore. This would cause the semaphore to stay locked in memory in the state the process left it in.

# Programming Assignment (Controlled Process Synchronization)

## Source Code

## Sample Output