

Concurrent Programming

Exercise Booklet 8: Message Passing

Solutions to selected exercises (\diamond) are provided at the end of this document. Important: You should first try solving them before looking at the solutions. You will otherwise learn **nothing**.

Exercise 1. Implement the turnstile example given at the beginning of the course. You should have a counter process and two turnstile processes. The turnstile thread should send a `{bump}` message to the counter thread so that the counter can increment its local counter. The counter should also support a `{read,From}` that sends back the value of the counter to the process with pid `From`.

```

1 start(N) -> %% Spawns a counter and N turnstile clients
2   C = spawn(?MODULE, counter_server, [0]),
3   [ spawn(?MODULE, turnstile, [C, 50]) || _ <- lists:seq(1, N) ],
4   C.
5
6 counter_server(State) -> %% State is the current value of the counter
7   complete.
8
9 turnstile(C, N) -> %% C is the PID of the counter, and N the number of
10  complete.      %% times the turnstile turns

```

Exercise 2. Implement a server that concatenates strings. It should follow the protocol given by the following atoms (which are sent to the server):

- `{start}`: client wishes to send a number of strings to be concatenated;
- `{add, S}`: concatenate string `S` to the current result;
- `{done, From}`: done sending strings, send back result to `From`.

```

1 start() ->
2   S = spawn(?MODULE, server, []),
3   [ spawn(?MODULE, client, [S]) || _ <- lists:seq(1, 100000) ].
4
5 client(S) -> %%
6   S!{start, self()},
7   S!{add, "h", self()},
8   S!{add, "e", self()},
9   S!{add, "l", self()},
10  S!{add, "l", self()},
11  S!{add, "o", self()},
12  S!{done, self()},
13  receive
14  {S, Str} ->
15    io:format("Done: ~p~s~n", [self(), Str])
16  end.
17
18 server() ->
19  complete.

```

Discuss

- What happens if multiple clients want to use the service?
- Modify your solution so that the server spawns “servlets” that help out individual clients.

Exercise 3. We wish to define a server that receives two types of messages from a client: “continue” and “counter”.

1. Each time the server receives the message “counter” it should display on the screen the number of times that it received the “continue” message since the last time it received the “counter” message.
2. Modify your solution so that the server, instead of printing the number on the screen, sends it back to the client which then prints the number of the screen himself.

Exercise 4. (\diamond) We wish to model a *Timer* that, when spawned, receives the frequency with which it should generate *ticks* and the set of pids which should receive ticks (a message represented as the atom *tick*). For example, `spawn(timer,timer,[100, [pid1,pid2,pid3,pid4]])` will initiate the *timer* process that will send a tick message every 100 milliseconds to pids *pid1*, *pid2*, *pid3* and *pid4*.

Exercise 5. Modify your solution so that the *Timer* is initially created with an empty list of pids and that clients have to register in order to receive ticks. For that they need to communicate with the *Timer* sending it a `register` message.

Exercise 6. Write a server that receives a number *n* and sends back a boolean indicating whether it is prime or not. Provide two solutions, one where you define an ad-hoc client and server and another using the generic server seen in class.

Exercise 7. (\diamond) Implement the bar exercise (Exercise 1) from EB5. On Fridays the bar is usually full of men, therefore the owners would like to implement an access control mechanism in which one man can enter for every two women.

1. Complete the template below:

```

1  -module(bar).
2  -compile(export_all).
3
4  start(W,M) ->
5      S=spawn(?MODULE,server,[0,0]),
6      [spawn(?MODULE,woman,[S]) || _ <- lists:seq(1,W)],
7      [spawn(?MODULE,man,[S]) || _ <- lists:seq(1,M)].
8
9  woman(S) -> % Reference to PID of server
10     error(not_implemented).
11
12  man(S) -> % Reference to PID of server
13     error(not_implemented).
14
15  server(Women,Men) -> % Counters for Women and Men
16     error(not_implemented).
```

2. Consider how to address that extension where it can get late (see details in EB5). Complete the template below:

```

1  -module(bar2).
2  -compile(export_all).
3
4  start(W,M) ->
5      S=spawn(?MODULE,server,[0,0,false]),
6      [spawn(?MODULE,woman,[S]) || _ <- lists:seq(1,W)],
7      [spawn(?MODULE,man,[S]) || _ <- lists:seq(1,M)],
8      spawn(?MODULE,itGotLate,[3000,S]).
9
10  itGotLate(Time,S) ->
11      timer:sleep(Time),
12      R=make_ref(),
13      S!{self(),R,itGotLate},
14      receive
15      {S,R,ok} ->
```

```

16         done
17         end.
18
19 woman(S) -> % Reference to PID of server
20         error(not_implemented).
21
22 man(S) -> % Reference to PID of server
23         error(not_implemented).
24
25 server(Women,Men,false) -> % Counters for Women and Men, false=it
26                             % did not get late yet
27         error(not_implemented);
28
29 server(Women,Men,true) -> % Counters for Women and Men, true= it got late
30         error(not_implemented);

```

Exercise 8. You are asked to implement a guessing game. A server receives requests to play the game from clients. These requests are of the form `{From,Ref,start}`, where `From` is the Pid of the client, `Ref` is a reference number and `start` is an atom. The server should then:

1. spawn a “servlet” process that plays the game with the client; and
2. then receive new client requests.

Note that by spawning a servlet the server is always responsive to new game requests. The servlet should behave as follows:

- generate a pseudorandom number in the range `[0,10]`;
- wait for guesses from the client of the form `{Pid,Ref,Number}`, where `Pid` is its Pid, `Ref` is a reference number and `Number` is the number the client is guessing.
- answer each message, indicating whether the client has guessed (`gotIt`) or not (`tryAgain`).

The client should keep guessing random numbers. Once it has guessed correctly, both client and servlet simply ends their execution.

You can use the function `rand:uniform(N)` for generating random numbers between 1 and N. Also, you may include helper functions.

```

1 -module(gg).
2 -compile(export_all).
3
4 start() ->
5         spawn(fun server/0).
6
7 server() ->
8         exit(incomplete).
9
10 client(S) ->
11         exit(incomplete).

```

Exercise 9. We wish to model a network of processes, called *nodes*, each of which holds some number of *tokens*. Each node has a list of the pids of its neighboring nodes. A timer process sends a tick to all nodes in the system. Upon receiving this tick, each node passes on a copy of all its tokens to all its neighbors.

1 Solutions to Selected Exercises

Answer to exercise 4

```

1  -module(tick).
2  -compile(export_all).
3
4
5  start(T) ->
6      L = [spawn(?MODULE,client,[]) || _ <- lists:seq(1,10)],
7          spawn(?MODULE,timer,[T,L]).
8
9  timer(Frequency,L) ->
10     timer:sleep(Frequency),
11     [Pid!{tick} || Pid <- L],
12     timer(Frequency,L).
13
14  client() ->
15     receive
16     {tick} ->
17         client()
18     end.

```

Answer to exercise 7

```

1  -module(b).
2  -compile(export_all).
3
4  start(W,M) ->
5      S=spawn(?MODULE ,server ,[0]),
6      [spawn(?MODULE,woman,[S]) || _ <- lists:seq(1,W)],
7      [spawn(?MODULE,man,[S]) || _ <- lists:seq(1,M)].
8
9  woman(S) -> % Reference to PID of server
10     S!{self(),woman}.
11
12  man(S) -> % Reference to PID of server
13     Ref = make_ref(),
14     S!{self(),Ref,man},
15     receive
16     {S,Ref,ok} ->
17         ok
18     end.
19
20  server(Women) ->
21     receive
22     {_From,woman} ->
23         server(Women+1);
24     {From, Ref, man} when Women>1 ->
25         From!{self(),Ref,ok},
26         server(Women-2)
27     end.

```