

Embedded System Design and Modeling

VIII. Description, Communication

Description

Software Architecture

- ▶ FSM and Simulink models in general need to be working in a larger system
- ▶ For example, inputs and outputs must match the rest of the system, some functions must be called from various places, etc.
- ▶ This is achieved via Software Architecture

- ▶ AUTOSAR = a standard for automotive software architecture, which aims to describe all the aspects of software architecture of a vehicle
- ▶ In particular, it provides a way to describe:
 - ▶ different software components (e.g. pieces of software implementing various functionalities)
 - ▶ the communication between them
 - ▶ the scheduling of the tasks
 - ▶ and more ...

AUTOSAR

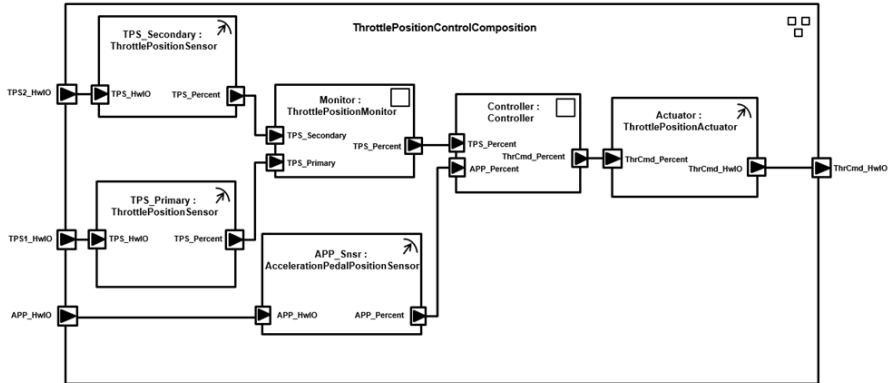


Figure 1: Different software components working together ¹

¹image from Matlab documentation

AUTOSAR Software Components

- ▶ **Software Component (SwC)** = a piece of software that implements a certain functionality
- ▶ AUTOSAR provides a way to describe software components, such that they can be integrated in a larger system
- ▶ The most important elements of an Application SwC:
 - ▶ **Ports** = interfaces to the outside world
 - ▶ input / output ports (variables with specified data types)
 - ▶ client / server ports (function calls which one component provides, and some other component may call)
 - ▶ **Runnables** = functions that can be called by the system
 - ▶ **Periodic runnables**: called periodically by the system, e.g. every 10ms. This is where FSM's are typically implemented.
 - ▶ **Server runnables**: called by other components via client/server ports
 - ▶ each runnable has access to some of the ports of the SwC
 - ▶ runnables can have various parameters (e.g. periodicity, priority)
 - ▶ Many other elements: Interrunnable variables, data types, etc.

AUTOSAR Application Software Components

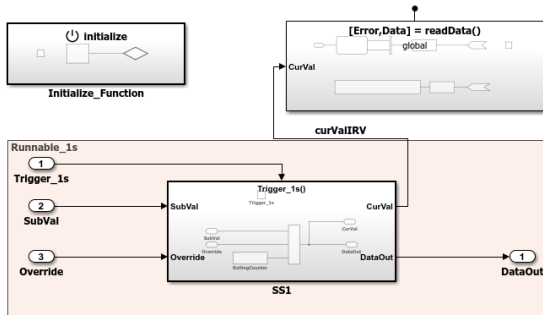


Figure 2: Software Component implemented in Matlab ²

- ▶ In this sample component we have:
 - ▶ three runnables (one for initialization, one server, one periodic)
 - ▶ input and output ports
 - ▶ one client/server port
 - ▶ one InterRunnable Variable (IRV)

²image from Matlab documentation

AUTOSAR Application Software Components

- ▶ The SwC description is typically created via architecture tools, and is saved in a specific XML file (extension *.arxml)
- ▶ These files can then be imported into AUTOSAR-compliant tools (e.g. Simulink) in which the developer can implement the functionality
- ▶ The tool makes sure that the implementation matches the description (e.g. input and output have the correct names and types etc.)
- ▶ Matlab/Simulink/Stateflow have support for AUTOSAR, can import and export the SwC descriptions, the SwC can be implemented fully in Simulink/Stateflow, and then the C code can be generated from the models

Models of communication

Models of communications

- ▶ Consider multiple models working in parallel composition
 - ▶ i.e. multiple models, processes, threads etc
- ▶ How do they communicate?
- ▶ Typical scenarios:
 - ▶ two models (FSM's) on the same machine, executed on same CPU thread
 - ▶ two models on the same machine, executed on parallel threads/CPU's (parallelization)
 - ▶ two models on different machines
- ▶ It is a general topic in multi-threaded programming (working with threads, processes etc)

Models of Communications

Approaches

- ▶ Two tasks (runnables, functions, processes, components etc.) need to communicate data between them
- ▶ Two communication paradigms:
 - ▶ Communicate via shared memory / variables
 - ▶ both processes read/write some variable **directly**
 - ▶ one process writes it, the other process reads it
 - ▶ Communicate via message passing
 - ▶ blocking (synchronous)
 - ▶ non-blocking (asynchronous)
- ▶ Let's assume the tasks are running in a multi-threaded environment

Shared memory

- ▶ **Shared** variables = variables which can be written / read by both tasks
- ▶ One task writes the variable, the other reads it, communication is done
- ▶ Potential problems in a multi-threaded environment:
 - ▶ What if both models try to access (read or write) the variable **at the same time**?
 - ▶ What if a thread is interrupted right in the middle of a read/write operation?
- ▶ Solution: access to shared variable must be via **atomic operations** or guarded with a **mutex**

Shared memory

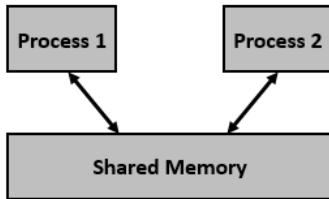


Figure 3: Shared Memory illustrated

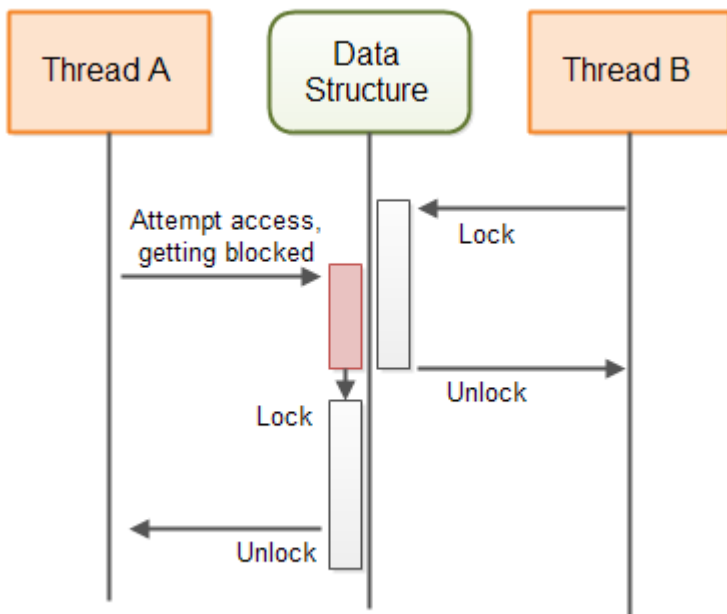
Shared memory

- ▶ **Atomic** operation = an operation that is indivisible (once it starts, it can't be interrupted until it ends)
 - ▶ it is either fully done, or not done at all
- ▶ Typical atomic operations:
 - ▶ setting / getting a value for a built in datatype like `int`, `bool`, e.g.
 - ▶ `a = 5;`
 - ▶ `is_Enabled = False;`
- ▶ Non-atomic operations: everything else
 - ▶ calling a function
 - ▶ e.g. inserting/removing an element in a vector
 - ▶ setting multiple variables (can be interrupted inbetween)
 - ▶ ...

Mutex (lock)

- ▶ **Mutex** (or **lock**) = a mechanism for ensuring only one process accesses a given resource (e.g. variable) at one time
 - ▶ A process first **acquires** the mutex, and only afterwards accesses the variable
 - ▶ While the mutex is acquired, no other process can access it.
 - ▶ The first process **releases** the mutex when it's done with the variable
 - ▶ Another process then automatically acquires the mutex and access the variable, etc
- ▶ A process **blocks** when tries to acquire a lock which is held by another one
 - ▶ **blocks** = goes to sleep until the lock is released by the current holder
- ▶ The part of code code between acquiring and releasing the mutex is known as a **critical section**
- ▶ Mutexes are provided by the operating system, and are used in code via library functions provided by the OS

Mutex (lock)



Mutex (lock) in Python

```
lock = threading.Lock()
def thread_function_1():

    # Acquire lock
    with lock:
        print("Thread 1 acquired lock. Writing...")
        write_shared_memory()

    # Lock is released
    # In Python this happens automatically
    # when exiting the `with` context manager
```

Mutex (lock) in Python

```
def thread_function_2():  
  
    # Acquire lock  
    with lock:  
        print("Thread 2 acquired lock. Reading...")  
        read_shared_memory()  
  
    # Lock is released  
    # In Python this happens automatically  
    # when exiting the `with` context manager
```

Mutex (lock) in C

```
#include <pthread.h>
```

```
pthread_mutex_t mutex;
```

```
void do_work_with_mutex()
```

```
{
```

```
    // Acquire the mutex
```

```
    pthread_mutex_lock(&mutex);
```

```
    // Do some work here that requires the mutex
```

```
    // Release the mutex
```

```
    pthread_mutex_unlock(&mutex);
```

```
}
```

Shared memory

Other considerations for shared memory communication:

- ▶ There can be multiple writers, multiple readers of the shared data, each one writing/reading at different times
- ▶ There is no acknowledgment/response that the data has been read. It is up to the designer to ensure that everything works correctly.
- ▶ In AUTOSAR, this communication pattern is typically achieved with Sender-Receiver ports

Other shared resources:

- ▶ Memory is not the only resource which needs a synchronized access
- ▶ Mutexes can be used for controlled access to any other resource:
 - ▶ memory
 - ▶ peripherals
 - ▶ files
 - ▶ ...

Message passing

Second approach: Communication via Message Passing

- ▶ Communication is achieved explicitly via **messages**, which are sent and received through some sort of channel
- ▶ The channel can be some sort of storage (e.g. a queue, a list, a buffer etc.) which ensures that the data is not lost
- ▶ Two variants:
 - ▶ blocking (synchronous)
 - ▶ non-blocking (asynchronous)

Message Passing in Java

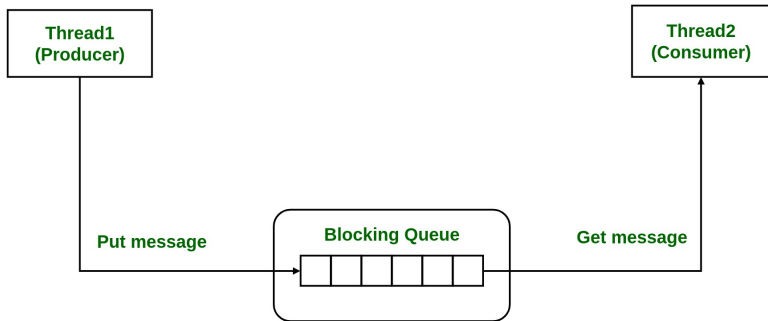


Figure 5: Message Passing illustrated

Message passing: blocking

Message passing: **blocking (synchronous)**

- ▶ When the sender sends, it **waits** for the receiver to acknowledge that it has received the data
- ▶ If the receiver is first to read, it **waits** for the data to be available
- ▶ Basically, the earlier one waits for the other one.
- ▶ Works like a courier

Message passing: non-blocking

Message passing: **non-blocking (asynchronous)**

- ▶ When the sender sends, the data is **stored** somewhere, and the sender goes on
- ▶ When the receiver reads, it **collects** (if available) the data and goes on
- ▶ Neither process waits
- ▶ Works like the post office

Message passing

Comparing blocking vs non-blocking:

- ▶ Storage:
 - ▶ Non-blocking communication needs a storage mechanism (FIFO, LIFO, Queue, list etc.)
 - ▶ This storage space may overflow \Rightarrow need to have safety mechanisms in place to avoid **buffer overflow**
 - ▶ Blocking communication does not need any special storage space (FIFO, LIFO, Queue, list etc.)
- ▶ Delays:
 - ▶ Non-blocking communication doesn't delay the sender nor the receiver
 - ▶ Blocking communication delays one of the processes until the other one is ready
- ▶ Examples:...

Message passing example - Python

```
import multiprocessing as mp
```

```
# Define a function that will run in a separate process
```

```
def worker(conn):
```

```
    while True:
```

```
        # Receive a message from the main process
```

```
        message = conn.recv()
```

```
        # Check if the message is the sentinel value, which indicates
```

```
        # that the main process has closed the connection and we
```

```
        # exit the loop
```

```
        if message == mp.sentinel:
```

```
            break
```

```
        # Print the received message
```

```
        print('Received message:', message)
```

Message passing example - Python

Create a pipe for communication with the worker process

```
parent_conn, child_conn = mp.Pipe()
```

Start the worker process

```
p = mp.Process(target=worker, args=(child_conn,))
```

```
p.start()
```

Send some messages to the worker process

```
parent_conn.send('hello')
```

```
parent_conn.send('world')
```

Close the connection to signal that we're done sending messages

```
parent_conn.send(mp.sentinel)
```

Wait for the worker process to finish

```
p.join()
```