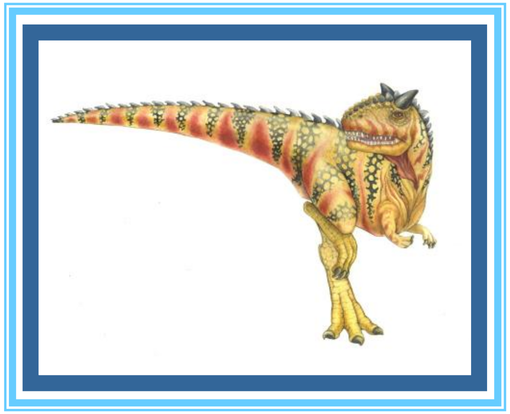
Chapter 4: Threads



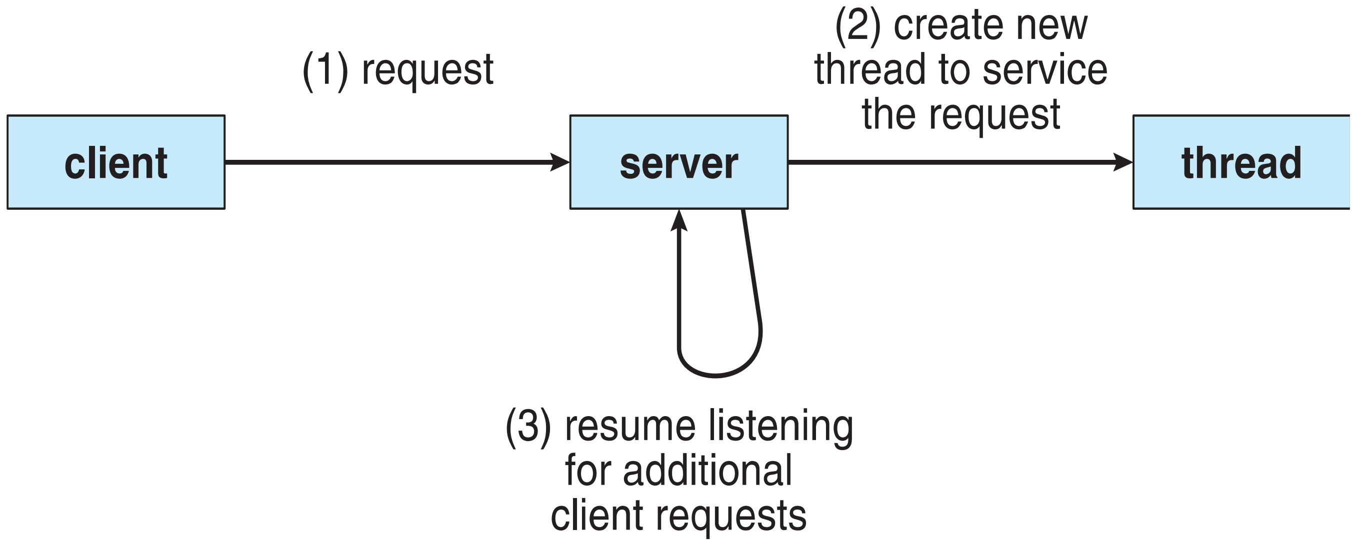
Objectives

- To introduce the notion of a thread—a fundamental unit of CPU utilization that forms the basis of multithreaded computer systems
- To discuss the APIs for the Pthreads, Windows, and Java thread libraries
- To explore several strategies that provide implicit threading
- To examine issues related to multithreaded programming
- To cover operating system support for threads in Windows and Linux

Motivation

- Most modern applications are multithreaded
- Threads run within application
- Multiple tasks with the application can be implemented by separate threads
  - Update display
  - Fetch data
  - Spell checking
  - Answer a network request
- Process creation is heavy-weight while thread creation is light-weight
- Can simplify code, increase efficiency
- Kernels are generally multithreaded

Multithreaded Server Architecture



Benefits

- **Responsiveness –** may allow continued execution if part of process is blocked, especially important for user interfaces
- **Resource Sharing –** threads share resources of process, easier than shared memory or message passing
- **Economy –** cheaper than process creation, thread switching lower overhead than context switching
- **Scalability –** process can take advantage of multiprocessor architectures-each thread run parallel on diff processor

Multicore Programming

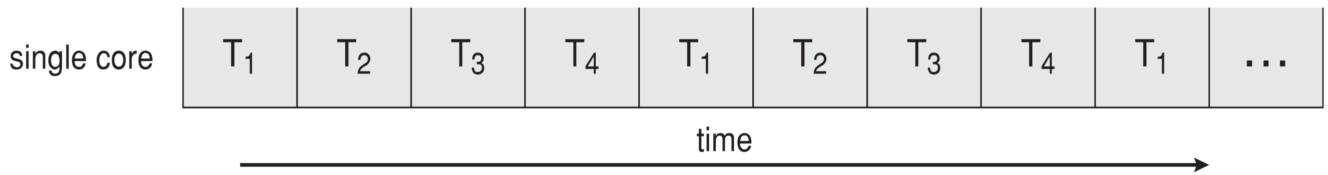
- **Multicore** or **multiprocessor** systems putting pressure on programmers, challenges include:
  - **Dividing activities**
  - **Balance**
  - **Data splitting**
  - **Data dependency**
  - **Testing and debugging**
- ***Parallelism*** implies a system can perform more than one task simultaneously
- ***Concurrency*** supports more than one task making progress
  - Single processor / core, scheduler providing concurrency

Multicore Programming (Cont.)

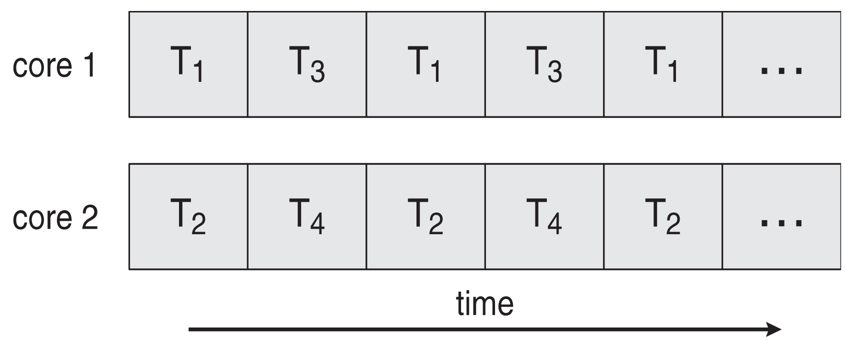
- Types of parallelism
  - **Data parallelism** – distributes subsets of the same data across multiple cores, same operation on each
  - **Task parallelism** – distributing threads across cores, each thread performing unique operation
- As # of threads grows, so does architectural support for threading
  - CPUs have cores as well as ***hardware threads***
  - Consider Oracle SPARC T4 with 8 cores, and 8 hardware threads per core

Concurrency vs. Parallelism

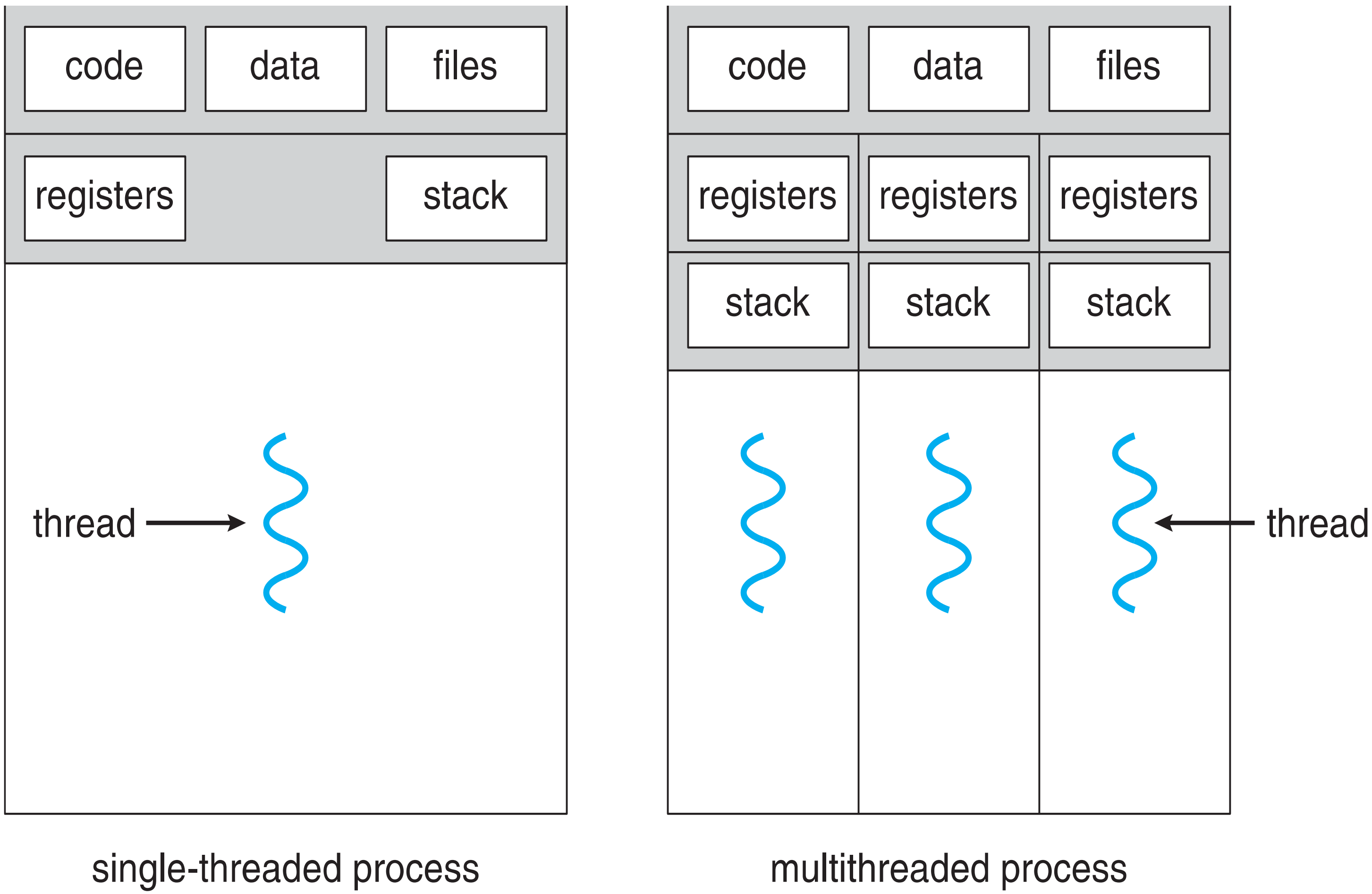
- **Concurrent execution on single-core system:**



- **Parallelism on a multi-core system:**



Single and Multithreaded Processes



User Threads and Kernel Threads

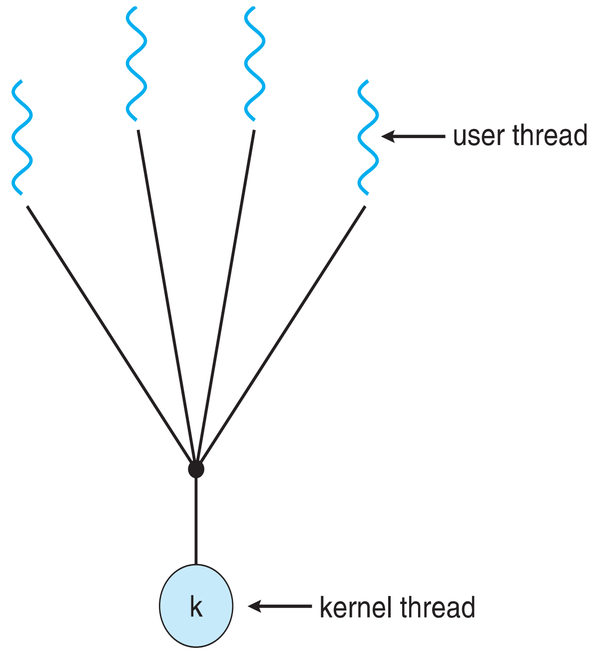
- **User threads** - management done by user-level threads library
- Three primary thread libraries:
  - POSIX **Pthreads**
  - Windows threads
  - Java threads
- **Kernel threads** - Supported by the Kernel
- Examples – virtually all general purpose operating systems, including:
  - Windows
  - Solaris
  - Linux
  - Tru64 UNIX
  - Mac OS X

Multithreading Models

- Many-to-One
- One-to-One
- Many-to-Many

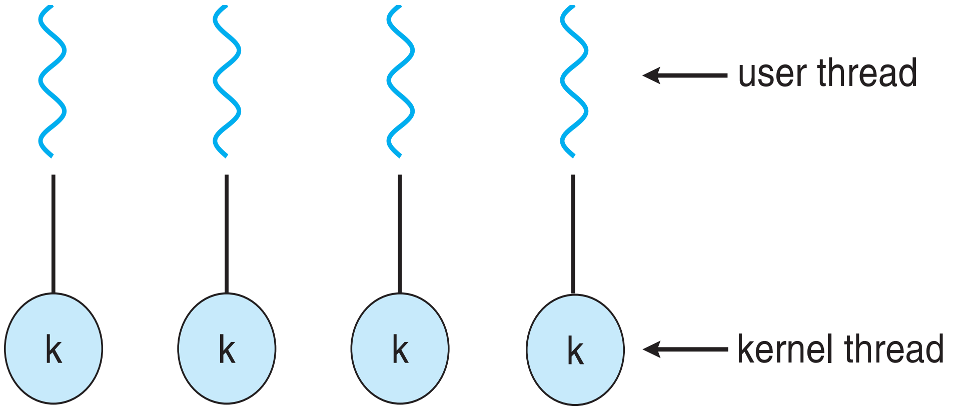
Many-to-One

- Many user-level threads mapped to single kernel thread
- One thread blocking causes all to block
- Multiple threads may not run in parallel on muticore system because only one may be in kernel at a time
- Few systems currently use this model
- Examples:
  - **Solaris Green Threads**
  - **GNU Portable Threads**



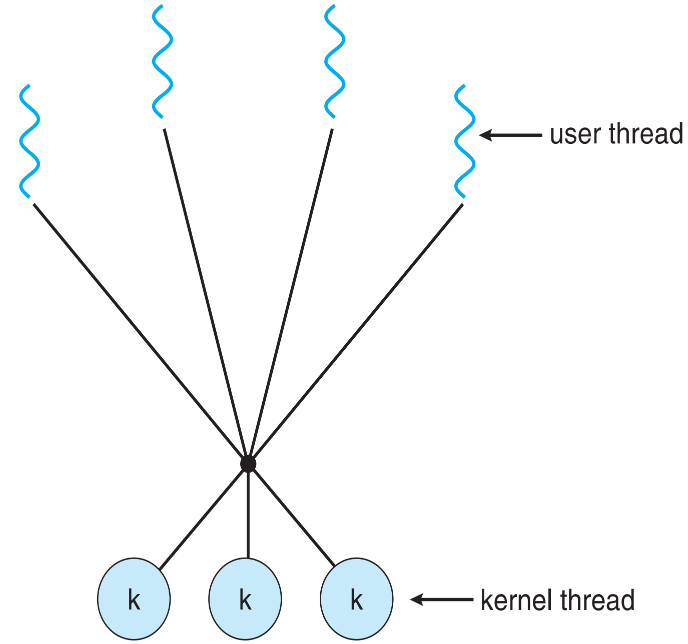
One-to-One

- Each user-level thread maps to kernel thread
- Creating a user-level thread creates a kernel thread
- More concurrency than many-to-one
- Number of threads per process sometimes restricted due to overhead
- Examples
  - Windows
  - Linux
  - Solaris 9 and later



Many-to-Many Model

- Allows many user level threads to be mapped to many kernel threads
- Allows the operating system to create a sufficient number of kernel threads
- Solaris prior to version 9
- Windows with the *ThreadFiber* package



Thread Libraries

- **Thread library** provides programmer with API for creating and managing threads
- Two primary ways of implementing
  - Library entirely in user space
  - Kernel-level library supported by the OS

Java Threads

- Java threads are managed by the JVM
- Typically implemented using the threads model provided by underlying OS
- Java threads may be created by:

```
public interface Runnable
{
    public abstract void run();
}
```

  - Extending Thread class
  - Implementing the Runnable interface

Java Multithreaded Program

```
class Sum
{
  private int sum;

  public int getSum() {
   return sum;
  }

  public void setSum(int sum) {
   this.sum = sum;
  }
}

class Summation implements Runnable
{
  private int upper;
  private Sum sumValue;

  public Summation(int upper, Sum sumValue) {
   this.upper = upper;
   this.sumValue = sumValue;
  }

  public void run() {
   int sum = 0;
   for (int i = 0; i <= upper; i++)
      sum += i;
   sumValue.setSum(sum);
  }
}
```

Java Multithreaded Program (Cont.)

```
public class Driver
{
   public static void main(String[] args) {
     if (args.length > 0) {
      if (Integer.parseInt(args[0]) < 0)
       System.err.println(args[0] + " must be >= 0.");
      else {
       Sum sumObject = new Sum();
       int upper = Integer.parseInt(args[0]);
       Thread thrd = new Thread(new Summation(upper, sumObject));
       thrd.start();
       try {
          thrd.join();
          System.out.println
                   ("The sum of "+upper+" is "+sumObject.getSum());
      } catch (InterruptedException ie) { }
      }
     }
     else
      System.err.println("Usage: Summation <integer value>"); }
}
```

Example -2

```
class ThreadA extends Thread{
    public void run( ) {
      for(int i = 1; i <= 5; i++) {
        System.out.println("From Thread A with i = "+ -1*i);
      }
      System.out.println("Exiting from Thread A ...");
    }
}
class ThreadB extends Thread {
   public void run( ) {
     for(int j = 1; j <= 5; j++) {
       System.out.println("From Thread B with j= "+2* j);
     }
     System.out.println("Exiting from Thread B ...");
       }
}
class ThreadC extends Thread{
    public void run( ) {
       for(int k = 1; k <= 5; k++) {
          System.out.println("From Thread C with k = "+ (2*k-1));
       }
       System.out.println("Exiting from Thread C ...");
    }
}
```

Example -2 (cont..)

```
public class Main {
    public static void main(String args[]) {
        ThreadA a = new ThreadA();
        ThreadB b = new ThreadB();
        ThreadC c = new ThreadC();
        a.start();
        b.start();
        c.start();
        System.out.println("... Multithreading is over ");
    }
}
```

From Thread A with i = -1
From Thread A with i = -2
From Thread A with i = -3
From Thread B with j= 2
From Thread A with i = -4
From Thread A with i = -5
Exiting from Thread A ...
... Multithreading is over
From Thread C with k = 1
From Thread B with j= 4
From Thread B with j= 6
From Thread B with j= 8
From Thread B with j= 10

Implicit Threading

- Growing in popularity as numbers of threads increase, program correctness more difficult with explicit threads
- Creation and management of threads done by compilers and run-time libraries rather than programmers
- Three methods explored
  - Thread Pools
  - OpenMP
  - Grand Central Dispatch
- Other methods include Microsoft Threading Building Blocks (TBB), **`java.util.concurrent`** package

Operating System Examples

- Windows Threads
- Linux Threads

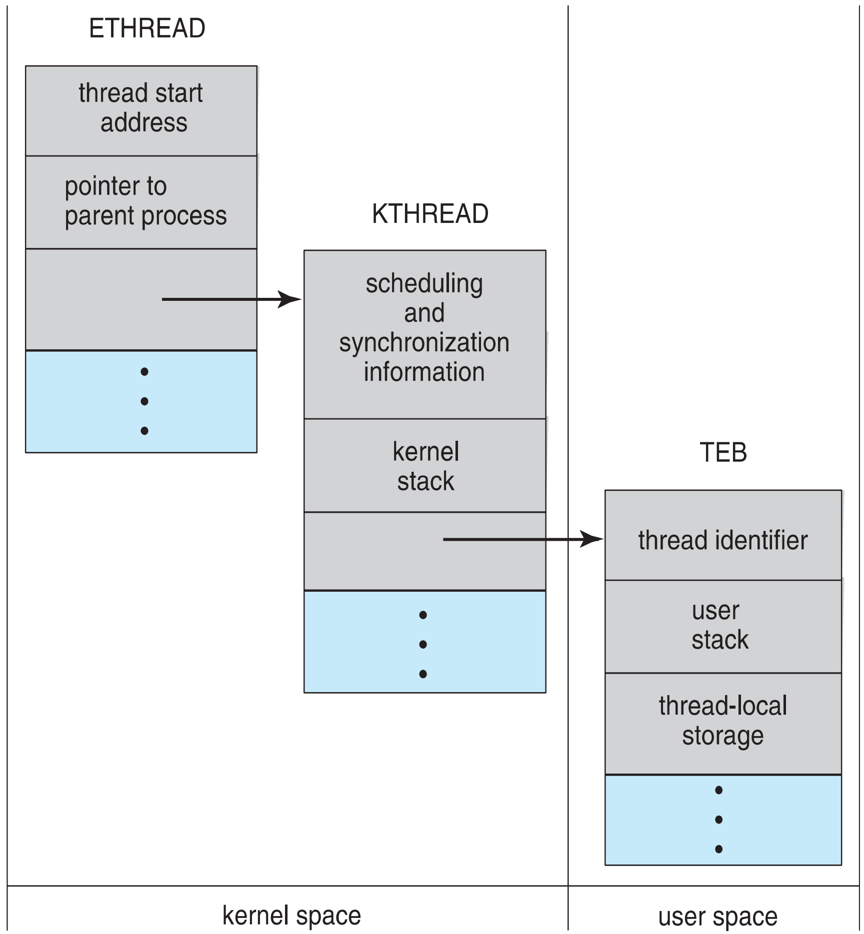
Windows Threads

- Windows implements the Windows API – primary API for Win 98, Win NT, Win 2000, Win XP, and Win 7
- Implements the one-to-one mapping, kernel-level
- Each thread contains
  - A thread id
  - Register set representing state of processor
  - Separate user and kernel stacks for when thread runs in user mode or kernel mode
  - Private data storage area used by run-time libraries and dynamic link libraries (DLLs)
- The register set, stacks, and private storage area are known as the **context** of the thread

Windows Threads (Cont.)

- The primary data structures of a thread include:
  - ETHREAD (executive thread block) – includes pointer to process to which thread belongs and to KTHREAD, in kernel space
  - KTHREAD (kernel thread block) – scheduling and synchronization info, kernel-mode stack, pointer to TEB, in kernel space
  - TEB (thread environment block) – thread id, user-mode stack, thread-local storage, in user space

Windows Threads Data Structures



Linux Threads

- Linux refers to them as ***tasks*** rather than ***threads***
- Thread creation is done through **`clone()`** system call
- **`clone()`** allows a child task to share the address space of the parent task (process)
  - Flags control behavior

flag	meaning
`CLONE_FS`	File-system information is shared.
`CLONE_VM`	The same memory space is shared.
`CLONE_SIGHAND`	Signal handlers are shared.
`CLONE_FILES`	The set of open files is shared.

- **`struct task_struct`** points to process data structures (shared or unique)