Nginx Performance Evaluation

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Detailed information in every step:

1. Purpose

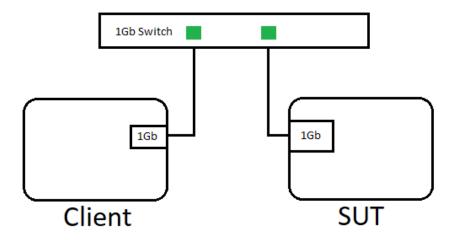
This is a performance test on latest version of plain nginx, find bottleneck, and solve it.

A simple approach is to saturate a single core in my SUT workstation, because my 1Gb NIC can only generate very limited workload

But it will show you how to easily scale-up if you have 10Gb NIC + 10-core CPU, or more easily scale-out if you have 10x servers with single 10Gb NIC + 10-core CPU.

And the CPU saturation will help you to see the bottleneck directly, not just guessing, or trying randomly.

2. Environment



SUT Hardware:

NIC: Intel Corporation Ethernet Connection (7) I219-LM (No RSS)

CPU: Intel(R) Xeon(R) E-2186G CPU @ 3.80GHz (HT=off)

Memory: 32GB x2 (2666MHz)

Software:

OS: Red Hat Enterprise Linux Server release 7.5 (Maipo)

Kernel: 3.10.0-862.11.6.el7.x86_64 (with Meldown & Spectre patches)

nginx-1.15.5 + zlib-1.2.11 + pcre-8.42 + jemalloc-5.1.0

3. Setup

Download the latest version of Nginx from http://nginx.org/download/nginx-1.15.5.tar.gz Compilation requires zlib-1.2.11 + pcre-8.42 (jemalloc-5.1.0)

4. Environment Check

NIC bandwidth:

```
[root@dr1~]# iperf3 -c www.example.com &
[ID] Interval Transfer Bandwidth Retr Cwnd
[4] 0.00-1.00 sec 114 MBytes 958 Mbits/sec 0 543 Kbytes looks good
```

Stop SUT Services:

systemctl stop ***, after doing this step, we can check system remaining services: [root@st50 www]# systemctl -a | grep running

session-113.scope loaded active running Session 113 of user root session-2.scope loaded active running Session 2 of user root auditd.service loaded active running Security Auditing Service dbus.service loaded active running D-Bus System Message Bus

getty@tty1.service loaded active running Getty on tty1
polkit.service loaded active running Authorization Manager
sshd.service loaded active running OpenSSH server daemon

dbus.socket loaded active running D-Bus System Message Bus Socket

Enable Client irgbalance service:

[root@dr1 www]# systemctl start irqbalance

5. Compile Nginx

[root@st50 nginx-1.15.5]# ./configure --prefix=/home/www/nginx0 --with-pcre=/home/www/pcre-8.42 --with-zlib=/home/www/zlib-1.2.11 --with-debug

6. Tuning system

check irq#

[root@st50 www]# cat /proc/interrupts | grep eno1

123: 27700 1 0 2 0 0 0 0 6 0 0 IR-

PCI-MSI-edge eno1

bind irq to single logical core #2:

echo 4 > /proc/irq/123/smp_affinity

slightly enlarge the ring cache:

ethtool -G eno1 rx 8192

reduce softirg a little:

ethtool -C eno1 adaptive-tx off adaptive-rx off rx-usecs 400 # rx-frames 15 # in microseconds or packets

Disable THP:

echo madvise > /sys/kernel/mm/transparent_hugepage/enabled echo madvise > /sys/kernel/mm/transparent_hugepage/defrag add following 2 lines into /etc/security/limits.conf

Change kernel parameters listed below:

fs.file-max=500000 #open files

kernel.sysrg = 0 #sysrg keys disabled

kernel.core_uses_pid = 1 #coredump kernel.msgmnb = 65536 #max bytes kernel.msgmax = 65536 #max length

kernel.shmmax = 68719476736 #single share memory segment max size

kernel.shmall = 4294967296 #pages
net.core.wmem_default = 8388608 #tx window
net.core.rmem_default = 8388608 #rx window
net.core.wmem_max = 16777216 #tx window
net.core.rmem_max = 16777216 #rx window
net.core.netdev_max_backlog = 40960 #rx queue len
net.core.somaxconn = 40960 #connection

#net.core.default_qdisc=fq #google congestion control #net.ipv4.tcp_congestion_control=bbr #google congestion control

net.ipv4.ip forward = 0 #disable ip forward

net.ipv4.conf.default.rp_filter = 1 #reverse path filter, same port io

net.ipv4.tcp_syncookies = 1 #avoid syn flood net.ipv4.tcp_max_tw_buckets = 6000 #TIME_WAIT #

net.ipv4.tcp_sack = 1 #selective acknowledge

net.ipv4.tcp_window_scaling = 1 #64k window

^{*} hard nofile 655350

^{*} soft nofile 655350

```
#rx window: min/def/max
net.ipv4.tcp rmem = 4096
                             87380 4194304
net.ipv4.tcp_wmem = 4096
                             16384 4194304
                                                    #tx window: min/def/max
net.ipv4.tcp mem = 94500000 915000000 927000000 #sys tcp mem
net.ipv4.tcp max orphans = 3276800
                                              #sockets
net.ipv4.tcp_max_syn_backlog = 40960
                                              #syn queue
net.ipv4.tcp timestamps = 0
                                             #better than resend
net.ipv4.tcp synack retries = 1
                                             #hand shake#
net.ipv4.tcp_syn_retries = 1
net.ipv4.tcp tw recycle = 1
net.ipv4.tcp_tw_reuse = 1
                                            # TIME-WAIT sockets reuse
net.ipv4.tcp_fin_timeout = 1
                                             #close timeout
                                            #default 2h
net.ipv4.tcp keepalive time = 30
net.ipv4.tcp_slow_start_after_idle=0
net.ipv4.ip_local_port_range = 1024 65000
vm.zone reclaim mode=0
                                             #alloc remote page when used up local
kernel.kptr_restrict=0
                                             #perf
Change nginx.conf:
user www;
worker processes 10;
#worker_cpu_affinity 00000000100 00000000100;
error log /dev/null;
events {
use epoll;
worker connections 4096;
}
http {
  include
            mime.types;
  default_type application/octet-stream;
  #open file cache
                       max=10 inactive=5m;
  #open_file_cache_valid 2m;
  #open file cache min uses 1;
  #access log logs/access.log main;
  access_log off;
  server_names_hash_bucket_size 128;
  client header buffer size 2k;
  large_client_header_buffers 4 4k;
  client max body size 8m;
  sendfile
                                    #skip user space
             on;
                                    #merge bundle
  tcp_nopush on;
                                    #disable nagle
  tcp_nodelay on;
  keepalive_timeout 60;
```

```
gzip on;
  #gzip_static on;
  gzip_proxied expired no-cache no-store private auth;
  gzip_min_length 1k;
  gzip_buffers 16 8k;
  gzip_http_version 1.1;
  gzip_comp_level 4;
               text/plain application/x-javascript text/css application/xml image/svg+xml;
  gzip_types
  gzip_vary on;
  server {
    listen
             80;
    server_name www.example.com;
    #access log off;
    location / {
      root html;
      index index.html index.htm;
    }
    error_page 500 502 503 504 /50x.html;
    location = /50x.html {
      root html;
    }
 }
7. Run test
start nginx on the core #2:
numactl -C 2 --localalloc nginx/sbin/nginx
Validate logo.svg
wget http://www.example.com/logo.svg
run ab test:
ab -n 800000 -c 100 http://www.example.com/logo.svg
This is ApacheBench, Version 2.3 <$Revision: 1430300 $>
Copyright 1996 Adam Twiss, Zeus Technology Ltd, http://www.zeustech.net/
Licensed to The Apache Software Foundation, http://www.apache.org/
Benchmarking www.example.com (be patient)
Completed 80000 requests
Completed 160000 requests
Completed 240000 requests
Completed 320000 requests
Completed 400000 requests
```

Completed 480000 requests Completed 560000 requests Completed 640000 requests Completed 720000 requests Completed 800000 requests Finished 800000 requests

Server Software: nginx/1.15.5

Server Hostname: www.example.com

Server Port: 80

Document Path: /logo.svg
Document Length: 2649 bytes

Concurrency Level: 100

Time taken for tests: 23.820 seconds

Complete requests: 800000

Failed requests: 0 Write errors: 0

Total transferred: 2328000000 bytes HTML transferred: 2119200000 bytes

Requests per second: 33585.56 [#/sec] (mean)

Time per request: 2.977 [ms] (mean)

Time per request: 0.030 [ms] (mean, across all concurrent requests)

Transfer rate: 95443.35 [Kbytes/sec] received

Connection Times (ms)

min mean[+/-sd] median max

Connect: 0 1 0.3 1 6
Processing: 0 2 0.5 2 22
Waiting: 0 2 0.5 1 22
Total: 1 3 0.7 3 25

Percentage of the requests served within a certain time (ms)

50% 3 3 66% 75% 3 80% 3 90% 4 95% 4 98% 5 5 99%

100% 25 (longest request)

8. Monitor

Network: sar -n DEV 2 4 CPU: mpstat -P ALL 2 4

Memory: numactl -H

Cache/TLB: perf stat --cpu=2 -dd

Syscall utility:

perf probe 'tcp_recvmsg'

perf probe -x /lib64/libc.so.6 malloc

perf record -e probe:tcp_recvmsg -e probe_libc:malloc -a

Hotspot capture: perf record; perf top; perf stat Memory access utility: perf mem -D record

9. Analyze

CPU usage: (from mpstat)

 Average:
 CPU
 %usr
 %nice
 %sys %iowait
 %irq
 %soft
 %steal
 %guest
 %gnice
 %idle

 Average:
 2
 24.28
 0.00
 45.06
 0.00
 0.00
 30.66
 0.00
 0.00
 0.00

Network usage: (from sar -n DEV)

02:51:19 PM IFACE rxpck/s txpck/s rxkB/s txkB/s rxcmp/s txcmp/s rxmcst/s %ifutil 02:55:25 PM eth0 188525.00 196267.50 15738.66 106685.75 0.00 0.00 2.00 **87.40**

Syscall usage in 8 seconds: (from perf record -e probe_libc:malloc -e probe:tcp_recvmsg)

1,027,994 probe_libc:malloc 256,699 probe:tcp_recvmsg

TLB usage: (from perf stat -dd)

6,543,139,385 dTLB-loads # 817.829 M/sec (71.49%) 6,057,670 dTLB-load-misses # 0.09% of all dTLB cache hits (57.20%)

Memory usage: (from numactl -H)

node 0 size: 65371 MB node 0 free: 63229 MB

Memory access samples in 8 seconds: (perf mem -D record)

total: 134024 samples

36K cpu/mem-loads,ldlat=30/P

97K cpu/mem-stores/P

the bottleneck is memory allocator (can be misleading on RHEL 7.5 with kernel 3.10)

Move to SLES-15 with new kernel 4.12, lots of perf improvements

perf record -a -g --all-kernel (all net relative) perf record -a -g --all-user (yeah)

```
Samples: 29K of event 'cycles:ppp', Event count (approx.): 4339942980
 Children
                Self Command Shared Object
                                                    Symbol 
                               [unknown]
                                                    [.] 00000000000000000
               0.00% nginx
  - 0
       4.56% 0x1
       3.41% _int_malloc
             _int_free
        1.95%
        1.18% 0
       1.00% ngx_http_header_filter
       0.85% ngx_http_headers_filter
     + 0.75% 0x1e2e650
       0.53% syscall_return_via_sysret
               0.00%
                     nginx
                                                        0x08478b48f58948fb
                                [unknown]
                      nginx
                                                        0x0000000000000001
               0.00%
                                [unknown]
nginx
                                                        ngx_vslprintf
    4.63%
                      nginx
0x0000000001e3f878
               0.00%
nginx
                                [unknown]
                                                        0x000000000000000000000
               0.00%
                                [unknown]
                      nginx
                               1ibc-2.26.so
                                                        _int_malloc
                      nginx
```

And I got malloc usage data for this scenario:

```
st250:/home/www # perf record -e probe_libc:malloc -e probe:tcp_recvmsg -aR -g --
output=/tmp/perf-probes.data -- sleep 8
st250:/home/www # perf script -i /tmp/perf-probes.data 2>/dev/null | grep malloc | awk
'{a[$1]++;}END{for (i in a)print i, a[i];}' | sort -rnk2 > libc.malloc.sys
st250:/home/www # cat libc.malloc.sys
nginx 998487
sleep 832
systemd 345
dbus-daemon 300
systemd-journal 254
sadc 212
systemd-logind 182
sshd 171
mpstat 62
sar 50
perf 2
```

10. Introduce jemalloc

```
Compile jemalloc:
```

[root@www jemalloc-5.1.0]# ./autogen.sh

[root@www jemalloc-5.1.0]# make & make install

Compile nginx with jemalloc:

[root@st50 nginx-1.15.5]# ./configure --prefix=/home/www/nginx0 --with-pcre=/home/www/pcre-8.42 --with-zlib=/home/www/zlib-1.2.11 --with-debug --with-ld-opt="-ljemalloc"

Restart Nginx:

export LD_LIBRARY_PATH=\$LD_LIBRARY_PATH:/usr/local/lib

numactl -C 2 --localalloc nginx/sbin/nginx

#keep all other settings same

11. Redo ab test

[root@dr1 www]# ab -n 800000 -c 300 http://www.example.com/logo.svg This is ApacheBench, Version 2.3 <\$Revision: 1430300 \$> Copyright 1996 Adam Twiss, Zeus Technology Ltd, http://www.zeustech.net/ Licensed to The Apache Software Foundation, http://www.apache.org/

Benchmarking www.example.com (be patient)

Completed 80000 requests

Completed 160000 requests

Completed 240000 requests

Completed 320000 requests

Completed 400000 requests

Completed 480000 requests

Completed 560000 requests

Completed 640000 requests

Completed 720000 requests

Completed 800000 requests

Finished 800000 requests

Server Software: nginx/1.15.5

Server Hostname: www.example.com

Server Port: 80

Document Path: /logo.svg
Document Length: 2649 bytes

Concurrency Level: 300

Time taken for tests: 22.148 seconds

Complete requests: 800000

Failed requests: 0 Write errors: 0

Total transferred: 2328000000 bytes HTML transferred: 2119200000 bytes

Requests per second: 36120.88 [#/sec] (mean)

Time per request: 8.305 [ms] (mean)

Time per request: 0.028 [ms] (mean, across all concurrent requests)

Transfer rate: 102648.20 [Kbytes/sec] received

Connection Times (ms)

min mean[+/-sd] median max

Connect: 0 4 24.6 3 1007

Processing: 1 4 6.0 4 225 Waiting: 0 4 5.6 4 209 Total: 1 8 25.3 7 1015

Percentage of the requests served within a certain time (ms)

50% 7

66% 8

75% 8

80% 8

90% 8

95% 9

98% 11

99% 12

100% 1015 (longest request)

12. Analyze for jemalloc

CPU usage: (from mpstat)

Average: CPU %usr %nice %sys %iowait %irq %soft %steal %guest %gnice %idle

Average: 2 19.54 0.00 35.12 0.00 0.00 32.18 0.00 0.00 0.00 13.15

Network usage: (from sar -n DEV)

02:51:19 PM IFACE rxpck/s txpck/s rxkB/s txkB/s rxcmp/s txcmp/s rxmcst/s %ifutil 02:51:21 PM eth0 211446.00 222039.50 17673.09 120630.16 0.00 0.00 0.00 98.82

Syscall usage in 8 seconds: (from perf record -e probe:tcp_recvmsg -e probe_libc:malloc)

840 probe_libc:malloc 289,287 probe:tcp_recvmsg

TLB usage: (from perf record)

6,861,897,872 dTLB-loads # 857.666 M/sec (76.95%) 18,741,425 dTLB-load-misses # 0.27% of all dTLB cache hits (61.60%)

Memory usage: (from numactl -H)

node 0 size: 65371 MB node 0 free: 63200 MB

Memory access samples in 8 seconds: (perf mem -D record)

total: 113608 samples

30K cpu/mem-loads,ldlat=30/P

82K cpu/mem-stores/P

And malloc usage data now:

st250:/home/www # perf record -e probe_libc:malloc -e probe:tcp_recvmsg -aR -g -- output=/tmp/perf-probes.data -- sleep 8

st250:/home/www # perf script -i /tmp/perf-probes.data 2>/dev/null | grep malloc | awk '{a[\$1]++;}END{for (i in a)print i, a[i];}' | sort -rnk2 > libc.malloc.sys.jemalloc st250:/home/www # cat libc.malloc.sys.jemalloc

nginx 6883 systemd 901 dbus-daemon 635 systemd-journal 462 sleep 416 systemd-logind 208 sshd 165 perf 2

perf top shows NO memory allocator any more ~~ (actually CPU is not bottleneck)

```
6.29% nginx [kernel.vmlinux] [k] system_call
5.05% nginx [kernel.vmlinux] [k] sysret_check
1.14% swapper [kernel.vmlinux] [k] memcpy
1.14% nginx [kernel.vmlinux] [k] raw_spin_lock
1.02% nginx [e1000e] [k] e1000_xmit_frame
0.97% nginx libc-2.17.so [.] __memcpy_ssse3_back
```

13. Conclusion

Memory allocation latency is critical to nginx, glibc malloc is blamed for years, and TCmalloc and jemalloc is developed to resolve this performance issue.

As a simple comparison before and after introducing jemalloc,

```
RPS is increased from 33585.56 to 36087.54 (+8%)
CPU %idle is increased from 0% to 13.15% (13%) while workload is +8% (total jemalloc > 20%)
CPU %sys is reduced from 45.50% to 35.12% (-10%) while workload is +8% heavier
Network util: increased from 87.40% to 98.82% (+11%) Saturated
TLB-loads is increased from 819.362 to 857.666 M/sec (+5%) while workload is +8% heavier
Syscall probe_libc:malloc is reduced from 926,719 to 840 (99%?) ..... Deviation ?
Syscall tcp_recvmsg increased from 231K to 289K, (+25%), why >8%? Deviation ?
99% latency has been reduced from 12ms to 12ms (0%) while workload is +8% heavier
```

14. Future works

This is a very simple test to resolve malloc performance bottleneck by introducing jemalloc It demonstrates the iteration of simplifying the problem, finding performance bottleneck, fixing problem, and verifying it. And then continue this iteration into a higher performance state.

Will do more research on DPDK user-space TCP stack, because the later profile shows that bottleneck is in tcp stack of Linux kernel. I know it could be something complicated, but it's worthy to try, there is no free lunch.

15. DPDK

Finally got a chance to have a look at DPDK on my server.

I chose the F-Stack implementation: https://github.com/f-stack/f-stack

The first glance of the readiness state is 99% CPU on my cores, it surprised me a bit. A minute later, I realize that it is in User Space Mode: means it should be a busy loop, and then I was released.

And the profile looks like this:

```
nginx
                                            [.] main_loop
                nginx
45.33% main loop
                        [unknown]
                                            [.] 00000000000000000
         0.00% nginx
  1.40% 0x14174a0
  0.70% 0x7ffff6d4c400
  0.50%
         memset sse2 unaligned erms
                nginx
                                            [.] ixgbe_recv_pkts_vec
                        nginx
1.80% ixgbe_recv_pkts_vec
         0.00% nginx
                         [unknown]
                                            [.] 0x00000000000000001
                nginx
                         libcrypto.so.1.1.1
                                               0x00007ffff6921643
         0.00%
                nginx
                                               tcp_usr_send
                        nginx
         0.00%
               nginx
                         [unknown]
```

It looks like not saturated, but my driver side still using interrupt, and usage of CPU0 is 100%, I need to start multiple ab processes, let's say 10, and we can add the throughput altogether.

And I got this:

```
libcrypto.so.1.1.1
nginx
                        tcp_output
nginx
                        ff_dpdk_if_send
nginx
                        tcp_do_segment
                        ixgbe_xmit_pkts
nginx
libc-2.28.so
                           memmove_avx_unaligned_erms
libc-2.28.so
                         int_free
nginx
                         ip_output
nginx
                        in_pcblookup_hash_locked.isra.1
                        ngx_http_parse_header_line
libcrypto.so.1.1.1
                        EVP_EncryptUpdate
libc-2.28.so
                        malloc
                        ngx_sprintf_num
nginx
                        tcp_input
```

The total throughput is 91,595. Then I tried more ab, 20, 30, the throughput stays at 91k. I know the throughput of nginx server on a single logical core has reached it ceiling.

I then increase the server logical cores to 2, the throughput goes up to 183,180, well the scaling is not bad, and most importantly: there is nearly no sys & irq:

```
0.00
                                             0.00
                                                     0.00
                                                                       0.00
                                                                                0.00
98.42
         0.00
                                    0.33
                                                     6.00
                                                                       0.00
                                                                               0.00
                                                     0.00
                                                              0.00
                                                                       0.00
         0.00
                                             1.08
                           0.00
                                    0.00
                                                                              98.92
          0.00
```

The %usr shown here is very noticeable, since there is a idle_sleep(ms) in "while (1)" of main_loop function

If set idle_sleep=0, the \$usr will be constantly equal to 97-99, and set idle_sleep=1 \$usr will cost about 3% when idle, but the throughput will decrease from 183,180 -> 181,563 (-1%), I will keep this anyway, since it will show me the real workload.

Enabling jemalloc increased RPS from 181,563 to 184,589 (+1.7%)

```
nginx
                            tcp_output
                            tcp_do_segment
ff_dpdk_if_send
in_pcblookup_hash_locked.isra.1
nginx
nginx
nginx
                            ixgbe_xmit_pkts
nainx
libc-2.28.so
                             memset avx2 erms
                            rn_match
nginx
nginx
                            ip_output
libjemalloc.so.2
                            free
libc-2.28.so
                              _memmove_avx_unaligned_erms
libcrypto.so.1.1.1
                            EVP_EncryptUpdate
nginx
                            ngx_sprintf_num
nginx
                            ngx_http_parse_header_line
nginx
                            tcp_input
nginx
                            ngx_http_log_escape.part.0
libcrypto.so.1.1.1
                           OPENSSL_cleanse
                            uma_zalloc_arg
nginx
nginx
libcrypto.so.1.1.1
                            main_loop
                            0x0000000000008564c
                           callout_reset_tick_on
ngx_pcalloc
nginx
nginx
                            __memset_sse2_unaligned_erms
ff_veth_input.isra.3
libc-2.28.so
nginx
nginx
                            ngx_hash_find
                            ip_input
nginx
nginx
                            ngx_http_process_request_headers
                           EVP_CipherInit_ex
EVP_CIPHER_CTX_reset
libcrypto.so.1.1.1
libcrypto.so.1.1.1
nginx
                           ngx_http_header_filter
```

Then, I turn on gzip in nginx.conf, even though the transfer rate reduced from 13 to 3 (MB/s). it is not surprising, small packets didn't bring any performance benefit, since the network bandwidth is not current bottleneck.

When I extend to 4 lcore, each CPU avg usage is only about 40%, I checked the hugepages were used up.

echo 2048 > /sys/devices/system/node/node0/hugepages/hugepages-2048kB/nr_hugepages

Doubling large page memory will give the CPU usage up to 80%, continue to add

echo 40960 > /sys/devices/system/node/node0/hugepages/hugepages-2048kB/nr_hugepages

Let's add to 40960, which I assume it may support about 40 lcores, and add ab clients to 40.

And now, with 4 lcores, RPS goes up to 368,615, scaling factor = 2, not bad

Meanwhile the in/out %ifutil is about 15%

Average:	IFACE	rxpck/s	txpck/s	rxkB/s	txkB/s	rxcmp/s	txcmp/s	rxmcst/s	%ifutil
Average:	enp0s20u1u5	1.06	1.06	0.08	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Average:	eno2	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Average:	ens1f1	0.06 1	812744.69	0.02	150540.41	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.33
Average:	eno3	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Average:	eno4	70.19	62.94	7.15	9.95	0.00	0.00	4.19	0.01
Average:	eno1	5.62	0.00	1.61	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.31	0.00
Average:	ens1f0 1	806853.75	8.75	192683.14	0.05	0.00	0.00	8.88	15.78

Noticeably, if I enabled the Hyper Threading in ab side, the latency on the extra lcores is much higher than the prores only: 99% latency increases from 8ms to 200ms,

I feel super tired today, will try more lcores & other options later