

# CS420: Operating Systems

## Threads

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# Threads

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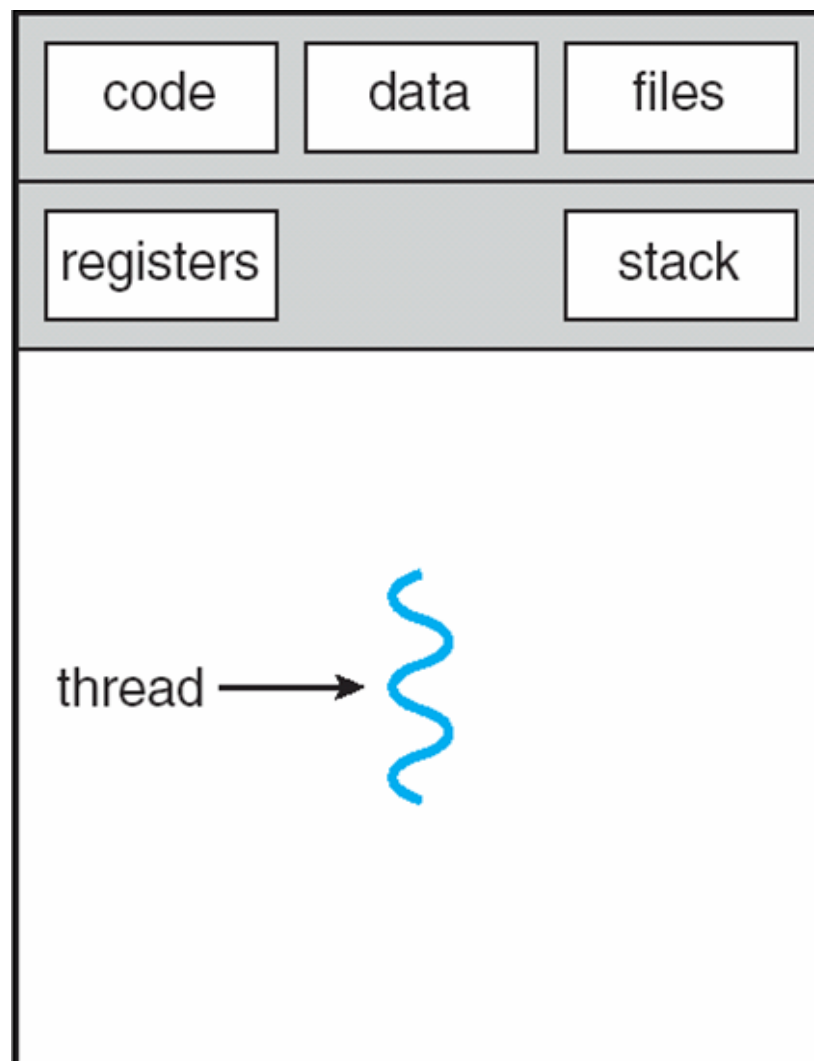
- **A thread is a basic unit of processing**
  - Has the following components:
    - Thread ID
    - Program counter
    - Register set
    - Stack
  - Shares some resources with other threads in same process
    - Code section
    - Data section
    - OS Resources (e.g. open files, signals)
- **Scheduled by the operating system**

# Threads

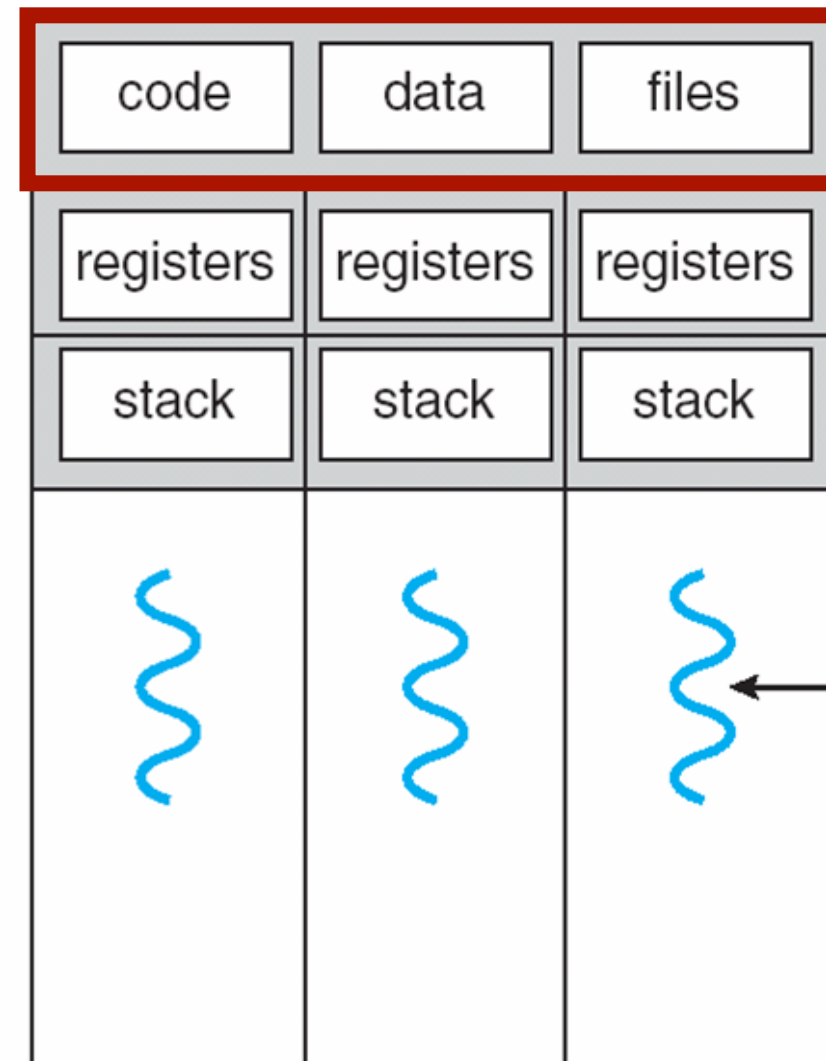
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- **A heavyweight process is a process that has a single thread of control**
  - Can only perform a single task at a time
- **A multi-threaded process is a process that has multiple threads of control**
  - Can perform more than one task at a time
    - Render images
    - Fetch data
    - Update display
    - Check spelling

# Single and Multithreaded Processes



single-threaded process



**Shared**

multithreaded process

# Thread vs Process

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- **Processes -**

- Independent units of execution
- Each contains its own state information
- Each contains its own address space
- Interact with each other through various IPC mechanisms

- **Threads (within the same process) -**

- Share the same state
- Share the same memory space
- Share the same variables
- Can communicate directly through shared variables
- Share signal handling

# Benefits of Multithreaded Programming

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- **Responsiveness**

- Interactive applications are more responsive when multithreaded (e.g. a thread for the GUI, another for socket, a third for rendering, etc.)

- **Resource Sharing**

- Unlike processes, threads share memory and resources

- **Economy**

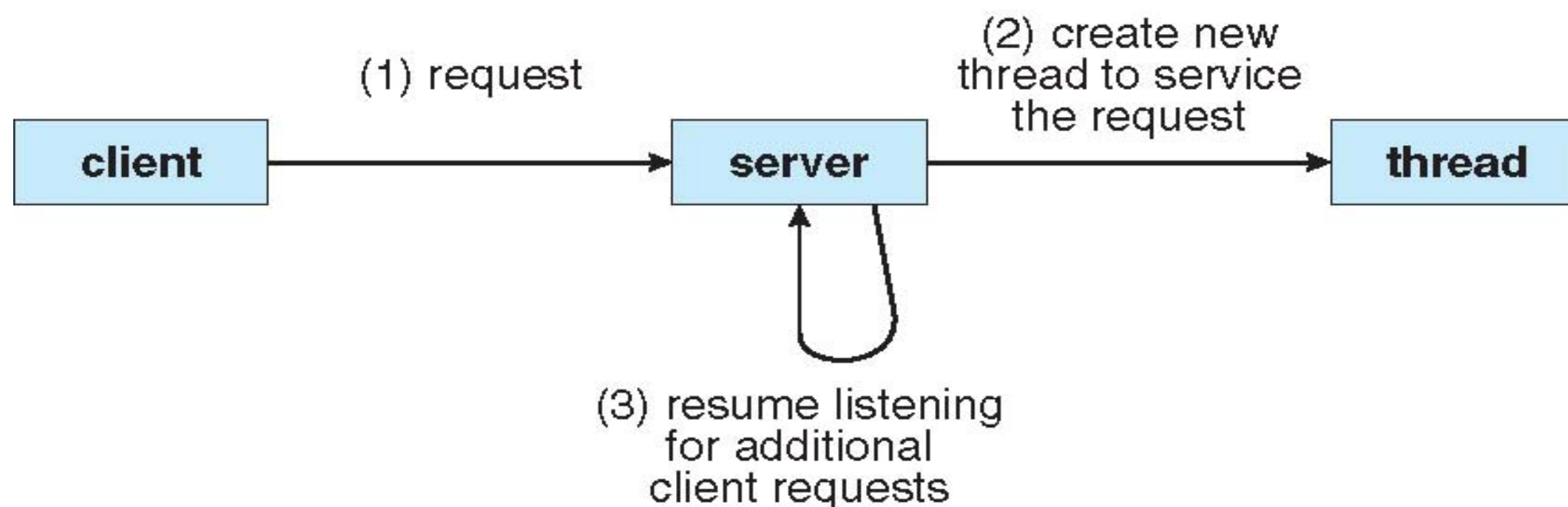
- Since threads share resources, creating threads and switching between them is more efficient than processes

- **Scalability**

- Multithreading allows for increased parallelism on multicore systems as each thread can run on a different CPU core

# Multithreaded Server Architecture

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# Multicore Programming

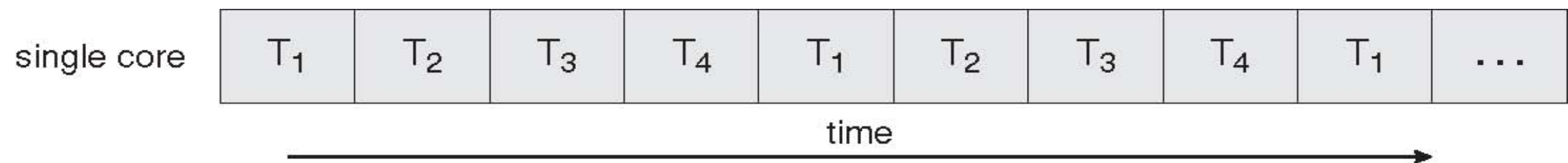
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- **The performance of a process can be increased by properly threading the process to take advantage of modern multicore CPUs**
- **Multicore systems have challenges not faced in a single-core/single-threaded environment**
  - **Dividing activities** - How can an application be divided into separate, concurrent tasks?
  - **Balance** - How can those tasks be divided in such a way that each does an equal amount of work?
  - **Data splitting** - Can the data for those task be divided for processing on separate CPU cores?
  - **Data dependency** - Are there data dependencies between different task?
  - **Testing and debugging** - What is the best way to debug a multithreaded program with many different execution paths?



# Concurrent Execution on a Single-core System

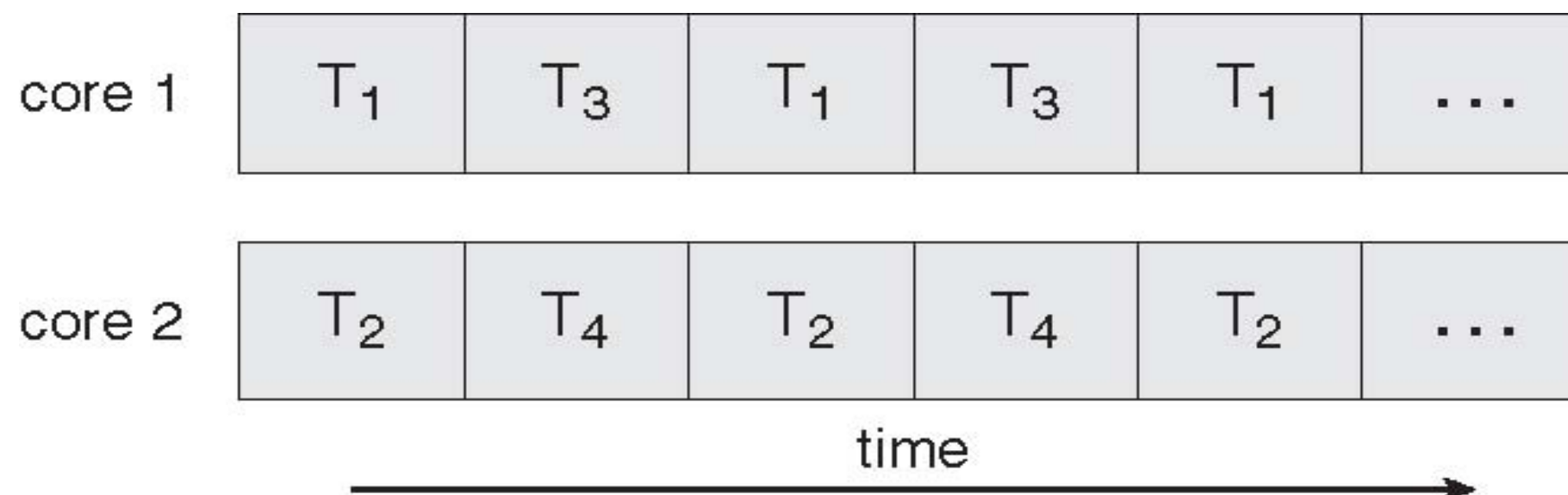
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- Only a single thread can execute at a time
- Threads are interleaved so each gets time on the processor

# Parallel Execution on a Multicore System

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- With multiple cores, threads can be divided over the cores and run in parallel
- May still interleave threads if not enough cores are available for all of the threads

# Thread Support

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- **Threads may be supported at different levels of the OS**
  - **User threads**
    - Supported above the kernel
    - Managed without kernel support
    - Main user thread libraries currently in use  
POSIX PThreads / Java threads
  - **Kernel threads**
    - Supported by the kernel/operating system
    - Managed by the kernel/operating system
    - Most modern operating systems support kernel threads  
(e.g. Windows XP/2000, Solaris, Linux, Tru64 UNIX, Mac OS X)

# Multithreading Models

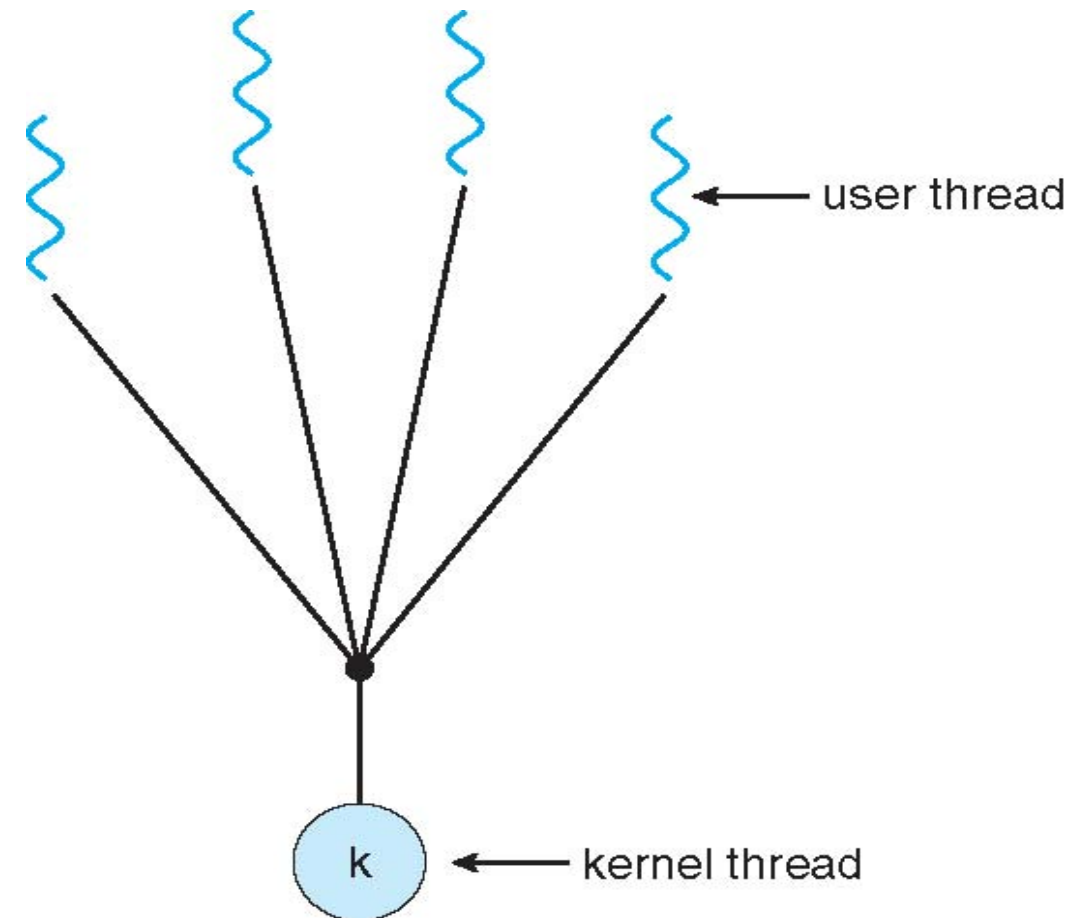
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- **There must be a relationship between user level threads and kernel threads**
- **Different models of threading exist to define this relationship**
  - Many-to-One
  - One-to-One
  - Many-to-Many

# Many-to-One

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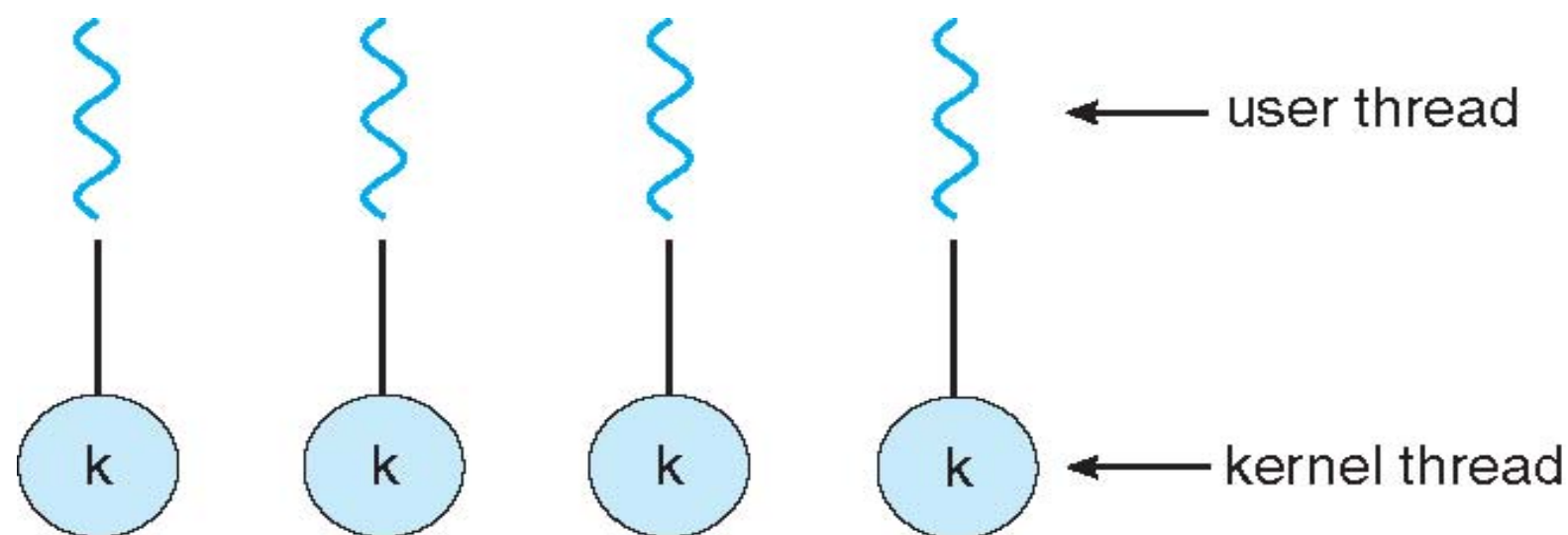
- **Many user-level threads mapped to single kernel thread**
  - Examples: Solaris Green Threads, GNU Portable Threads
  - Not many systems use this model
- **Thread management is done in user space**
- **Entire process will block if any single thread blocks (no other threads will run)**
- **Unable to run multiple threads in parallel on a multiprocessor system**



# One-to-One

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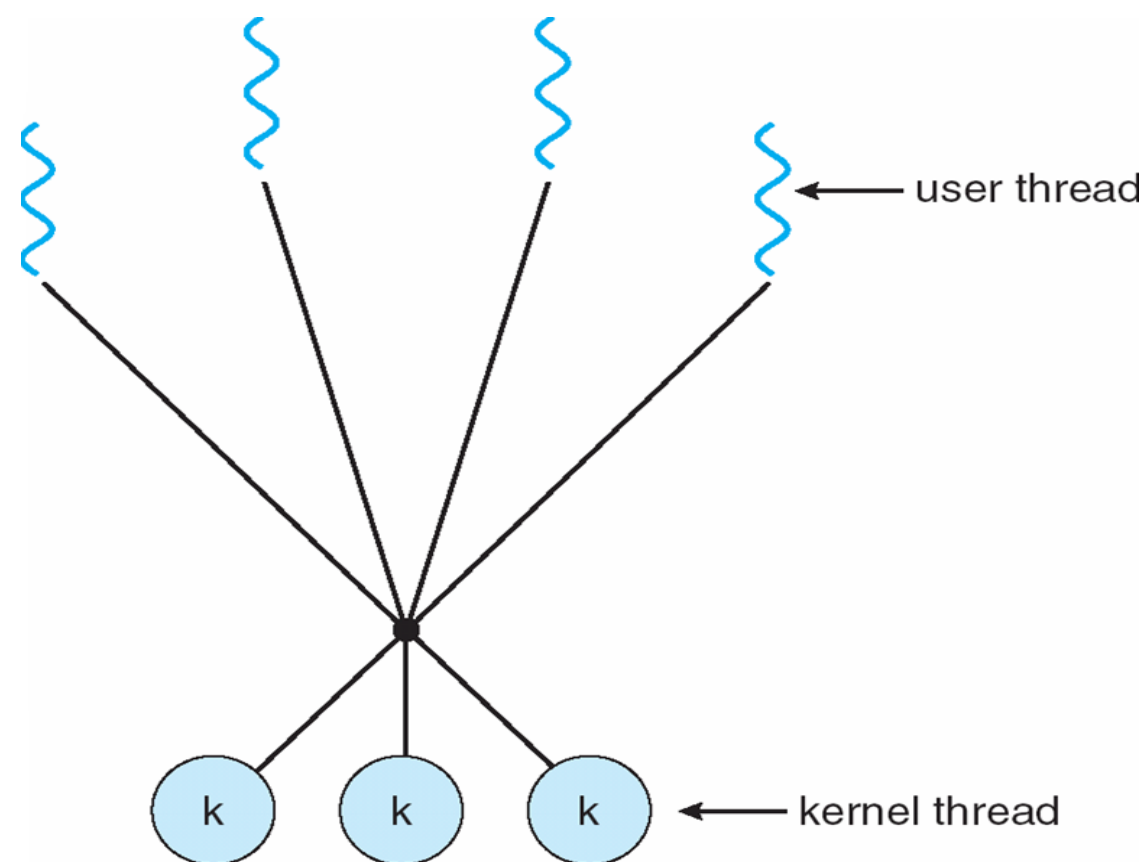
- **Each user-level thread maps to kernel thread**
  - Examples: Windows NT/XP/2000, Linux, Solaris 9 and later
- **Allows more concurrency**
  - A thread can run when another thread has made a blocking system call
  - Multiple threads can run in parallel on multiprocessor systems
- **Downside, for each thread created, a corresponding kernel thread must also be created**



# Many-to-Many Model

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- **Allows many user level threads to be mapped to many kernel threads**
  - Avoids blocking of threads when a single thread makes a blocking system call
- **Allows the operating system to create a sufficient number of kernel threads**
- **Reduces the overhead associated with too many kernel threads as was present in the one-to-one model**

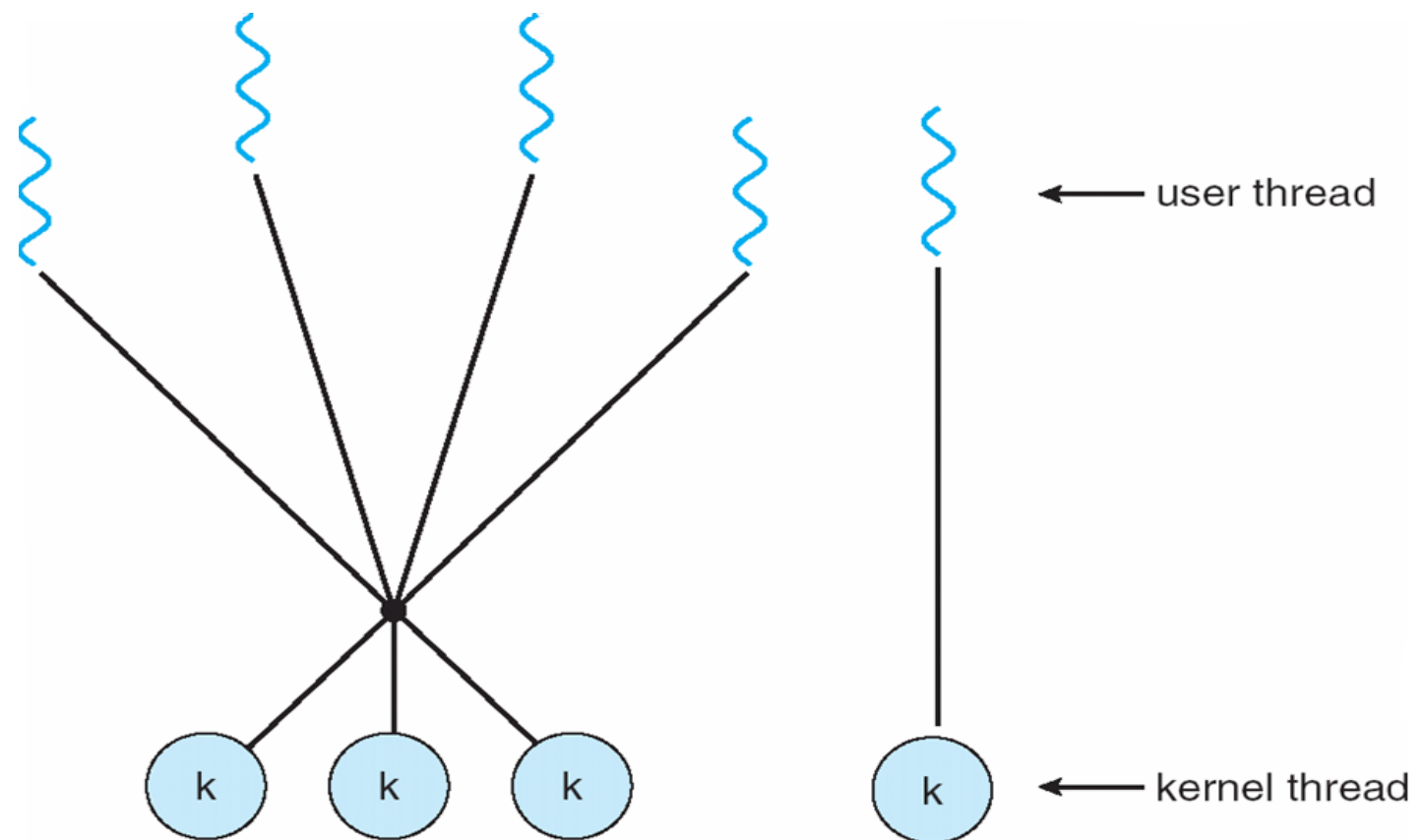


# Two-level Model

- **Similar to the Many-to-Many model except that it allows a user thread to be bound to a specific kernel thread**

- **Examples include**

- IRIX
- HP-UX
- Tru64 UNIX
- Solaris 8 and earlier





# Thread Libraries

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- **A 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
- **Three main thread libraries currently in use**
  - (1) POSIX PThreads - user-level or kernel-level threads for POSIX-compliant systems
  - (2) Win32 threads - kernel-level threads for Windows systems
  - (3) Java threads

# POSIX Pthreads

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- **May be provided either as user-level or kernel-level**
- **A POSIX standard (IEEE 1003.1c) API for thread creation and synchronization**
- **API specifies behavior of the thread library, implementation is up to development of the library**
- **Common in UNIX operating systems (Solaris, Linux, Mac OS X)**

# Java Threads

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- **Java threads are managed by the JVM**
- **Typically implemented using the threads model provided by underlying OS**
- **Java threads may be created in two different ways:**
  - Extending the Thread class
  - Implementing the Runnable interface

# Pthreads Example

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

int sum; /* this data is shared by the thread(s) */
void *runner(void *param); /* threads call this function */

int main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    pthread_t tid; /* the thread identifier */
    pthread_attr_t attr; /* set of thread attributes */

    if (argc != 2) {
        fprintf(stderr, "usage: a.out <integer value>\n");
        return -1;
    }
    if (atoi(argv[1]) < 0) {
        fprintf(stderr, "%d must be >= 0\n", atoi(argv[1]));
        return -1;
    }
}
```

## Pthreads Example (Cont.)

---

```
    /* get the default attributes */
    pthread_attr_init(&attr);
    /* create the thread */
    pthread_create(&tid,&attr,runner,argv[1]);
    /* wait for the thread to exit */
    pthread_join(tid,NULL);

    printf("sum = %d\n",sum);
}

/* The thread will begin control in this function */
void *runner(void *param)
{
    int i, upper = atoi(param);
    sum = 0;

    for (i = 1; i <= upper; i++)
        sum += i;

    pthread_exit(0);
}
```

# Pthreads Code for Joining 10 Threads

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```
#define NUM_THREADS 10

/* an array of threads to be joined upon */
pthread_t workers[NUM_THREADS];

for (int i = 0; i < NUM_THREADS; i++)
    pthread_join(workers[i], NULL);
```

# Win32 API Multithreaded C Program

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```
#include <windows.h>
#include <stdio.h>
DWORD Sum; /* data is shared by the thread(s) */

/* the thread runs in this separate function */
DWORD WINAPI Summation(LPVOID Param)
{
    DWORD Upper = *(DWORD*)Param;
    for (DWORD i = 0; i <= Upper; i++)
        Sum += i;
    return 0;
}

int main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    DWORD ThreadId;
    HANDLE ThreadHandle;
    int Param;

    if (argc != 2) {
        fprintf(stderr, "An integer parameter is required\n");
        return -1;
    }
    Param = atoi(argv[1]);
    if (Param < 0) {
        fprintf(stderr, "An integer >= 0 is required\n");
        return -1;
    }
}
```

## Win32 API Multithreaded C Program (Cont.)

---

```
/* create the thread */
ThreadHandle = CreateThread(
    NULL, /* default security attributes */
    0, /* default stack size */
    Summation, /* thread function */
    &Param, /* parameter to thread function */
    0, /* default creation flags */
    &ThreadId); /* returns the thread identifier */

if (ThreadHandle != NULL) {
    /* now wait for the thread to finish */
    WaitForSingleObject(ThreadHandle, INFINITE);

    /* close the thread handle */
    CloseHandle(ThreadHandle);

    printf("sum = %d\n", Sum);
}
}
```



# Java Multithreaded Program

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```
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>"); }
}
```

# Implicit Threading

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- **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**

# Implicit Threading with OpenMP

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```
#include <omp.h>
#include <stdio.h>

int main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    /* standard sequential code here */

    /* the next bit is automatically parallelized */
    #pragma omp parallel
    {
        printf("I am a parallel region.");
    }

    #pragma omp parallel for
    for (int i = 0; i < 1000; i++) {
        c[i] = a[i] + b[i];
    }

    /* more standard sequential code can go here */

    return 0;
}
```