Scheduling

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CSE 306
Last time

- We went through the high-level theory of scheduling algorithms
- Today: View into how Linux makes its scheduling decisions
Lecture goals

- Understand low-level building blocks of a scheduler
- Understand competing policy goals
- Understand the O(1) scheduler
  - CFS next lecture
- Familiarity with standard Unix scheduling APIs
mm_struct – represents an address space in kernel

A task points to 0 or 1 mm_structs

Kernel threads just “borrow” previous task’s mm, as they only execute in kernel address space

Many tasks can point to the same mm_struct

Multi-threading

Quantum – CPU timeslice
Outline

✧ Policy goals (review)
✧ O(1) Scheduler
✧ Scheduling interfaces
Policy goals

- Fairness – everything gets a fair share of the CPU
- Real-time deadlines
  - CPU time before a deadline more valuable than time after
- Latency vs. Throughput: Timeslice length matters!
  - GUI programs should feel responsive
  - CPU-bound jobs want long timeslices, better throughput
- User priorities
  - Virus scanning is nice, but I don’t want it slowing things down
No perfect solution

- Optimizing multiple variables
- Like memory allocation, this is best-effort
  - Some workloads prefer some scheduling strategies
- Nonetheless, some solutions are generally better than others
Outline

- Policy goals
- O(1) Scheduler
- Scheduling interfaces
O(1) scheduler

- Goal: decide who to run next, independent of number of processes in system
  - Still maintain ability to prioritize tasks, handle partially unused quanta, etc
O(1) Bookkeeping

- runqueue: a list of runnable processes
  - Blocked processes are not on any runqueue
  - A runqueue belongs to a specific CPU
  - Each task is on exactly one runqueue
    - Task only scheduled on runqueue’s CPU unless migrated
- $2 \times 40 \times \#\text{CPUs}$ runqueues
  - 40 dynamic priority levels (more later)
  - 2 sets of runqueues – one active and one expired
O(1) Data Structures

Active

139
138
137
•
•
101
100

Expired

139
138
137
•
•
101
100
O(1) Intuition

- Take the first task off the lowest-numbered runqueue on active set
  - Confusingly: a lower priority value means higher priority
- When done, put it on appropriate runqueue on expired set
- Once active is completely empty, swap which set of runqueues is active and expired
- Constant time, since fixed number of queues to check; only take first item from non-empty queue
O(1) Example

Active

139
138
137
•
•
•
101
100

Expired

139
138
137
•
•
•
101
100

Pick first, highest priority task to run

Move to expired queue when quantum expires
### What now?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Expired</th>
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Blocked Tasks

- What if a program blocks on I/O, say for the disk?
  - It still has part of its quantum left
  - Not runnable, so don’t waste time putting it on the active or expired runqueues
- We need a “wait queue” associated with each blockable event
  - Disk, lock, pipe, network socket, etc.
Blocking Example

Active

139
138
137
.
.
.
101
100

Expired

139
138
137
.
.
.
101
100

Disk

Block on disk!

Process goes on disk wait queue
Blocked Tasks, cont.

- A blocked task is moved to a wait queue until the expected event happens
  - No longer on any active or expired queue!
- Disk example:
  - After I/O completes, interrupt handler moves task back to active runqueue
If a process blocks and then becomes runnable, how do we know how much time it had left?

Each task tracks ticks left in ‘time_slice’ field

- On each clock tick: `current->time_slice--`
- If time slice goes to zero, move to expired queue
  - Refill time slice
  - Schedule someone else
- An unblocked task can use balance of time slice
- Forking halves time slice with child
More on priorities

- 100 = highest priority
- 139 = lowest priority
- 120 = base priority
- “nice” value: user-specified adjustment to base priority
  - Selfish (not nice) = -20 (I want to go first)
  - Really nice = +19 (I will go last)
Base time slice

\[
time = \begin{cases} 
(140 - \text{prio}) \times 20\text{ms} & \text{prio < 120} \\
(140 - \text{prio}) \times 5\text{ms} & \text{prio \geq 120}
\end{cases}
\]

✦ “Higher” priority tasks get longer time slices
✦ And run first
Goal: Responsive UIs

- Most GUI programs are I/O bound on the user
  - Unlikely to use entire time slice
  - Users get annoyed when they type a key and it takes a long time to appear
- Idea: give UI programs a priority boost
  - Go to front of line, run briefly, block on I/O again
- Which ones are the UI programs?
Idea: Infer from sleep time

- By definition, I/O bound applications spend most of their time waiting on I/O.
- We can monitor I/O wait time and infer which programs are GUI (and disk intensive).
- Give these applications a priority boost.
- Note that this behavior can be dynamic:
  - Ex: GUI configures DVD ripping, then it is CPU-bound.
  - Scheduling should match program phases.
Dynamic priority

\[ dynamic \ priority = \max \left( 100, \ \min \left( static \ priority - \ bonus + 5, \ 139 \right) \right) \]

- Bonus is calculated based on sleep time
- Dynamic priority determines a tasks’ runqueue
- This is a heuristic to balance competing goals of CPU throughput and latency in dealing with infrequent I/O
- May not be optimal
Dynamic Priority in O(1) Scheduler

- Important: The runqueue a process goes in is determined by the **dynamic** priority, not the static priority

- Dynamic priority is mostly determined by time spent waiting, to boost UI responsiveness

- Nice values influence **static** priority

- No matter how “nice” you are (or aren’t), you can’t boost your dynamic priority without blocking on a wait queue!
Rebalancing tasks

- As described, once a task ends up in one CPU’s runqueue, it stays on that CPU forever
Rebalancing

CPU 0

CPU 1

CPU 1 Needs More Work!
Rebalancing tasks

- As described, once a task ends up in one CPU’s runqueue, it stays on that CPU forever.
- What if all the processes on CPU 0 exit, and all of the processes on CPU 1 fork more children?
- We need to periodically rebalance.
- Balance overheads against benefits.
  - Figuring out where to move tasks isn’t free.
Idea: Idle CPUs rebalance

- If a CPU is out of runnable tasks, it should take load from busy CPUs
  - Busy CPUs shouldn’t lose time finding idle CPUs to take their work if possible
- There may not be any idle CPUs
  - Overhead to figure out whether other idle CPUs exist
  - Just have busy CPUs rebalance much less frequently
Average load

- How do we measure how busy a CPU is?
- Average number of runnable tasks over time
- Available in /proc/loadavg
Rebalancing strategy

- Read the loadavg of each CPU
- Find the one with the highest loadavg
- (Hand waving) Figure out how many tasks we could take
  - If worth it, lock the CPU’s runqueues and take them
  - If not, try again later
Outline

- Policy goals
- O(1) Scheduler
- Scheduling interfaces
Setting priorities

- setpriority(which, who, niceval) and getpriority()
  - Which: process, process group, or user id
    - PID, PGID, or UID
  - Niceval: -20 to +19 (recall earlier)
- nice(niceval)
  - Historical interface (backwards compatible)
  - Equivalent to:
    - setpriority(PRIO_PROCESS, getpid(), niceval)
Scheduler Affinity

- sched_setaffinity and sched_getaffinity
- Can specify a bitmap of CPUs on which this can be scheduled
  - Better not be 0!
- Useful for benchmarking: ensure each thread on a dedicated CPU
yield

- Moves a runnable task to the expired runqueue
  - Unless real-time (more later), then just move to the end of the active runqueue
- Several other real-time related APIs
Summary

✦ Understand competing scheduling goals
✦ Understand O(1) scheduler + rebalancing
✦ Scheduling system calls