CMSC 433 – Programming Language Technologies and Paradigms

Task Execution
Task

- Multithreaded programs often organized as tasks
  - i.e., abstract, discrete units of work
- Ideally, each task is independent
- Running program organizes & executes these tasks
public class SingleThreadWebServer {
    public static void main(String[] args) throws IOException {
        ServerSocket socket = new ServerSocket(80);
        while (true) {
            Socket connection = socket.accept();
            // executes in this Thread
            handleRequest(connection);
        }
    }
    ...
}
• Doesn’t exploit concurrency
• Handles requests one at a time
  – Current request blocks all others
public class ThreadPerTaskWebServer {
    public static void main(String[] args) throws IOException {
        ServerSocket socket = new ServerSocket(80);
        while (true) {
            final Socket connection = socket.accept();
            Runnable task = new Runnable() {
                public void run() {
                    handleRequest(connection);
                }
            };
            new Thread(task).start();
        }
    }
}
Thread Per Connection

• Handles requests concurrently
  – Requests don’t block each other
  – Exploits concurrency

• Risks
  – handleRequest() must be thread-safe
  – Can create an unbounded number of threads
Too Many Threads

• Thread management incurs costs
  – Time
  – Resource consumption

• Beyond a certain point, additional threads can be detrimental
  – Limit the number of threads created
The Executor Framework

- Tasks are logical units of work
- Threads allow tasks to run asynchronously
- But we sometimes need to manage how and when threads are created
- The Executor Framework serves this purpose
public interface Executor {
    void execute(Runnable command);
}

• Follows Producer/Consumer pattern
  – Producer submits a Runnable
  – A thread in a thread pool (consumer) executes the Runnable
• Decouples task submission from task execution
• Executor implementation can create different execution policies
  – How many tasks can execute concurrently?
  – In what order will they run?
  – Can tasks be queued if they can’t run immediately?
  – What happens when executor capacity is exceeded?
• Two code styles supported
  – Actions: Runnables
  – Functions: Callables
  – Also has lifecycle mgmt: e.g., cancellation, shutdown
• ExecutorService adds lifecycle mgmt to Executor

public interface ExecutorService extends Executor {
    void shutdown();
    List<Runnable> shutdownNow();
    boolean isShutDown();
    boolean isTerminated();
    boolean awaitTermination( long timeout, TimeUnit unit);
    // other convenience methods for submitting tasks
}
Creating Executors

- Usually created via `Executors` factory class
  - Configures a `ThreadPoolExecutor`
  - Customizes shutdown methods, before/after hooks, saturation policies, queuing
Creating Executors

- Executors methods

```java
public class Executors {
    static ExecutorService newSingleThreadedExecutor();
    static ExecutorService newFixedThreadPool(int n);
    static ExecutorService newCachedThreadPool(int n);
    static ScheduledExecutorService newScheduledThreadPool(int n);
    // additional versions & utility methods
    ...
}
```
class WebServer {
    ExecutorService pool = Executors.newFixedThreadPool(7);
    public static void main(String[] args) {
        ServerSocket socket = new ServerSocket(80);
        while (true) {
            final Socket connection = socket.accept();
            Runnable r = new Runnable() {
                public void run() {
                   handleRequest(connection);
                }
            };
            pool.execute(r);
        }
    }
}
public class LifecycleWebServer {
    private final ExecutorService exec = Executors.newCachedThreadPool();
    public void start() throws IOException {
        ServerSocket socket = new ServerSocket(80);
        while (!exec.isShutdown()) {
            try {
                final Socket conn = socket.accept();
                exec.execute(new Runnable() {
                    public void run() {
                        handleReq(conn);
                    }
                });
            } catch (RejectedExecutionException e) { }
        }
    }
    ...
}
... public void stop() { exec.shutdown(); } void handleReq(Socket connection) {
    Request req = readRequest(connection);
    if (isShutdownRequest(req))
        stop();
    else
        dispatchRequest(req);
}...}
ScheduledExecutorService

• For deferred and recurring tasks, can schedule
  – Callable or Runnable to run once with a fixed delay after submission
  – Schedule a Runnable to run periodically at a fixed rate
  – Schedule a Runnable to run periodically with a fixed delay between executions

• Submission returns a ScheduledFutureTask handle which can be used to cancel the task

• Like Timer, but supports pooling and is more robust
import static java.util.concurrent.TimeUnit.*;

class BeeperControl {
    private final ScheduledExecutorService scheduler =
        executors.newScheduledThreadPool(1);

    public void beepForAMinute() {
        final Runnable beeper = new Runnable() {
            public void run() {
                System.out.println("beep");
            }
        };
        final ScheduledFuture<?> beeperHandle =
            scheduler.scheduleAtFixedRate(beeper, 0, 1, SECONDS);

        scheduler.schedule(new Runnable() {
            public void run() {
                beeperHandle.cancel(true);
            }
        }, 60, SECONDS);
    }
}
public class SingleThreadRenderer {
    void renderPage(CharSequence source) {
        renderText(source);
        List<ImageData> imageData = new ArrayList<ImageData>();
        for (ImageInfo imageInfo : scanForImageInfo(source))
            imageData.add(imageInfo.downloadImage());
        for (ImageData data : imageData)
            renderImage(data);
    }
}

Exploiting Parallelism
public abstract class FutureRenderer {
    private final ExecutorService executor = Executors.newCachedThreadPool();
    void renderPage(CharSequence source) {
        final List<ImageInfo> imageInfo = scanForImageInfo(source);
        Callable<List<ImageData>> task =
            new Callable<List<ImageData>>() {
                public List<ImageData> call() {
                    List<ImageData> result = new ArrayList<ImageData>();
                    for (ImageInfo imageInfo : imageInfos)
                        result.add(imageInfo.downloadImage());
                    return result;
                }
            };
Future<List<ImageData>> future = executor.submit(task);
renderText(source);
try {
    List<ImageData> imageData = future.get();
    for (ImageData data : imageData)
        renderImage(data);
} catch (InterruptedException e) {
    // cleanup here
}
...

Performance

• Performed two tasks concurrently
  – (1) Rendering text & (2) downloading images
• Speedup regulated by workload
  – If downloading 10x longer than rendering, max speedup is only 9%
  – Downloading takes same time, max speedup is only 2
• Best improvements when there are lots of independent, homogeneous tasks to be done
Kinds of Parallelism

• Data parallelism
  – The same task run on different data in parallel
• Task parallelism
  – Different tasks running on the same data
• Pipeline parallelism
  – A parallel pipeline of tasks, each of which might be data parallel
• Unstructured
  – Ad hoc combination of threads with no obvious top-level structure
Data parallelism

• Example: convert all characters in an array to upper-case
  – Divide data between different tasks & perform the tasks in parallel
  – Key: no dependencies between the tasks that cause their results to be ordered
Task Parallelism

• Example
  – Several functions on the same data: average, minimum, binary or, geometric mean
  – No dependencies between the tasks, so all tasks can run in parallel
Pipeline Parallelism

- Output of one task is the input to the next
  - Each task can run in parallel
  - Throughput impacted by the longest-latency element in the pipeline
Pipeline Load Balancing

• Assign more than one computational process to each task
  – Combines data- and pipeline- parallelism
Design Recipe

- Here are some rules of thumb to follow when designing a concurrent system
Concurrency Strategy

• How to break down the entire task into smaller units of work?
  – e.g., Data parallel, Task parallel, Pipeline

• Will need to anticipate some of the coding you'll do next
Implement Code Units

• Write down the parameters of that work
  – What varies for the chunk done by thread 1 vs. thread 2 vs. thread 3 etc.
• Write down functions that do the work, given the parameters
• Test those functions in a single-threaded scenario
  – e.g., make a loop that calls your functions N times to compute the total result.
Identify Concurrency Hazards

- Look for concurrent accesses to shared data structures
- Decide how to handle these accesses
  - e.g., use synchronization, make copies, use thread confinement, etc.
Choose Task Execution Policy

• Choose how you will execute your tasks
  – E.g., thread pool
• Choose the number of threads
  – May need several queues and executors if there are dependencies between the tasks.