Lecture 17
Parallelizing Algorithms
Recall

• Concurrency: multiple flows of control
• Parallelism: simultaneous flows of control

• Reasons for concurrency
  – Improvements in throughput, responsiveness
  – Natural fit to application domain

• Reasons for parallelism
  – Performance improvements
Parallelizing Algorithms

• One important topic in parallelism: making existing sequential algorithms run in parallel
  – Existing algorithms often perform common, important tasks (e.g. sorting, searching, depth-first search)
  – Making them more efficient improves application / system performance

• **Tasks** offer a framework for studying parallelization
  – Idea: identify computations within algorithms that can be thought of as tasks (i.e. can be performed independently)
  – Execute these tasks concurrently, BUT ...
  – ... Tune concurrent execution to make best use of computational resources
Loop Parallelization

- Many sequential algorithms are *iterative* (i.e. use loops)
- Loop parallelization: perform (groups of) iterations in parallel
  - Sequential
    for (Element e : collection)
    process(e);
  - Parallel
    for (Element e : collection)
    exec.execute (new Runnable() {
      public void() run {
        process(e);
      }
    });

- When does this work?
  - Iterations must be independent (i.e. result of one iteration does not depend on the other)
  - Example: adding 1 to each element in an array
    - The result of processing each element is independent of the others
    - They can be made into tasks!
Loop Parallelization (2)

• Variation: grouping several iterations together into tasks
  – Consider summing elements in an array
    
    ```java
    sum = 0;
    for (int i=0; i < a.length; i++)
        sum += a[i];
    ```
  – Iterations are not independent and cannot be made into tasks “as is”
  – However, several tasks can be created!
    
    ```java
    int sum[] = new int[NUMTASKS]; // Ensure initialization to 0
    for (int i=0; i < NUMTASKS; i++) {
        exec.execute (new Runnable() {
            public void run () {
                for (j = i*NUMTASKS; j < (i+1)*NUMTASKS; j++)
                    sum[i] += a[j];
            }
        });
    }
    ```

    // After termination, sum up sum[i] values

• In this case, independent tasks created
  – However, final result depends on collecting results of tasks
  – This requires determining when tasks have terminated!
  – Common approach
    • Create executor for each call to sum
    • Feed tasks to executor in course of computing sum
    • When no more tasks are needed, shut down executor and await its termination

• You still have to worry about thread-safety, visibility!!
Parallelizing Recursion

- Sometimes algorithms are recursive
  
  **Example: depth-first search of a tree**
  - Process node
  - Search each subtree
  - If there are no subtrees, return

- Similar ideas to loop parallelization can be used
  - Generate tasks from recursive calls!
  - Execute tasks concurrently
  - Considerations
    - Tasks should be independent
    - Works best if algorithms are **tail-recursive**: recursive calls issued at end
Example (JCIP pp. 182): Depth-First Search

- **Tree**: object in `List<Node<T>>`
  - List has only one node (the root)
  - Node methods
    - `getChildren()`: return list of subtrees (list of nodes)
    - `compute()`: perform computation on node

- **Sequential tail-recursive version**

  ```java
  public<T> void sequentialRecursive(List<Node<T>> nodes, Collection<T> results) {
      for (Node<T> n : nodes) {
          results.add(n.compute());
          sequentialRecursive(n.getChildren(), results);
      }
  }
  ```

  - Final operation of any call to `sequentialRecursive()` is the recursive call
  - This operation is therefore tail-recursive
Parallelizing Depth-First Search

• Task launching

```java
public <T> void parallelRecursive(final Executor exec,
        List<Node<T>> nodes,
        final Collection<T> results) {
    for (final Node<T> n : nodes) {
        exec.execute(new Runnable() {
            public void run() { results.add(n.compute()); }
        });
        parallelRecursive(exec, n.getChildren(), results);
    }
}
```

• Result collection

```java
public <T> Collection<T> getParallelResults(List<Node<T>> nodes)
    throws InterruptedException {
    ExecutorService exec = Executors.newCachedThreadPool();
    Queue<T> resultQueue = new ConcurrentLinkedQueue<T>();
    parallelRecursive(exec, nodes, resultQueue);
    exec.shutdown();
    exec.awaitTermination();
    return resultQueue;
}
```
Performance Tuning

• The previous examples showed how task boundaries can be defined for parallelization

• However: there are other considerations.
  – There is overhead in task launching
    • Insertion into work queue
    • Retrieval from work queue by worker thread
  – There is only run-time benefit if the final run-time decreases!

• We will study this issue in the context of parallel sorting
Recall Quicksort

- A fast sequential sorting algorithm invented by Tony Hoare (Turing Award winner) based on
  - Partitioning
  - Recursion
- quickSortSegment (elts, i, j) sorts elements in segment of array elts starting at i and extending j elements to the right
  - First, partition segment into two subsegments: those less than elts[i] and those greater than elts[i]
    - elt[i] is called the pivot
    - Partitioning involves scanning through segment and potentially swapping pivot with other elements
  - Then, recursively sort each of the subsegments
public static void quickSortSegment (int[] elts, int first, int size) {
    if (size == 2) {
        if (elts[first] > elts[first+1])
            swap (elts, first, first+1);
    }
    else if (size > 2) {
        int pivotPosition = partitionSegment(elts, first, size);
        quickSortSegment (elts, first, pivotPosition-first);
        quickSortSegment (elts, pivotPosition+1, first+size-1-pivotPosition);
    }
}

• (Almost) tail-recursive!
• Since recursive calls work on disjoint parts of the array, these can be made parallel
• Idea for parallelizing: turn each “recursive call” into a task
Parallelism and Termination

• When parallelizing a sequential application, need mechanism for determining when parallel code has finished
  – In sequential setting, can wait for method termination
  – Determining when all tasks have terminated in parallel setting is less easy

• Different approaches possible
  – Use completion service (works if you know what all the tasks are)
  – Shutdown executor (works if executor used only for this application and you know when no more tasks will be submitted)
  – Maintain count of number of unfinished tasks (need counting mechanism)

• For Quicksort, we will use last option
  – We will implement a class of latches
  – Latch will be used to maintain count of unfinished tasks
  – When count is 0, sorting is done
BasicCountingLatch.java

• Implements basic `CountDownLatch` methods
  – `countDown()`
  – `await()`

• New features
  – `countDown(delta)`
    Reduces count by delta, provided count ≥ delta
  – `countUp()`
    Increments count, provided count > 0
ParallelQuickSortTaskCount.java

• Code for parallel Quicksort

• Key method:

```java
public void sort(int[] elts) {
    int NUMTHREADS = ...;
    exec = Executors.newFixedThreadPool(NUMTHREADS);
    tasks = new BasicCountingLatch(1);
    exec.execute (new PQSTask (elts,0,elts.length));
    tasks.await(); // Wait for tasks to finish.
    exec.shutdown();
}
```

• Note use of `tasks`
  – `BasicCountingLatch` object, initialized to 1
  – `sort()` uses `tasks.await()` to determine when sorting is finished
PQSTask Class

- Class of sorting tasks
- A task sorts $\text{elts}[\text{first .. first+size-1}]$
- When task finishes, $\text{tasks}$ decremented

```java
private class PQSTask implements Runnable {
    private int elts[];
    private int first;
    private int size;

    public PQSTask (…) { … }

    public void run () {
        parallelQuickSortSegment (elts, first, size);
        tasks.countDown();
    }
}
```
parallelQuickSortSegment()

- Segment-sorting routine
- Note that creation of two new tasks requires incrementing tasks by 2

```java
class ParallelQuickSortSegment {
    public void parallelQuickSortSegment (int[] elts, int first, int size) {
        if (size == 2) {
            if (elts[first] > elts[first+1])
                IntArraySortUtils.swap (elts, first, first+1);
        }
        else if (size > 2) {
            int pivotPosition = IntArraySortUtils.partitionSegment(elts, first, size);

            // Create new sorting tasks and increment task count
            PQSTask task1 = new PQSTask(elts, first, pivotPosition-first);
            PQSTask task2 = new PQSTask(elts, pivotPosition+1, ...);
            tasks.countUp(2);

            // Execute tasks
            exec.execute(task1);
            task2.run(); // Run second task in existing worker thread
        }
    }
}
```
Performance

- Parallelized Quicksort is slower (on my four-core machine) than sequential Quicksort!
  - When sorting $k$ elements, on average $k/2$ tasks will be created
    - $k = 10$: 5 tasks
    - $k = 1,000,000$: 500,000 tasks!
  - The overhead of task management overwhelms the gains from parallelism
- Can solve this by coarsening task boundaries (fewer, bigger tasks)
Tuning Parallel Quicksort

• Want to limit number of tasks based on number of CPUs
• One idea:
  – Determine number of threads to be used
  – Determine size of sorting problem that should be handled sequentially
  – Only create new tasks when the sorting problem is larger than this limit
• How to determine number of threads?
  – Recall formula: \( N_{\text{threads}} = N_{\text{CPU}} \times U_{\text{CPU}} \times (1 + W/C) \)
  – For sorting, \( W/C \) is (very) low, so \( N_{\text{threads}} = N_{\text{CPU}} + 1 \) (or 2) is a good idea
  – To compute \( N_{\text{CPU}} \) in Java, use \( \text{Runtime.getRuntime().availableProcessors()} \)
• How to determine sequential task limit?
  – If sorting \( k \) elements, set size limit to \( k / N_{\text{threads}} \)
  – E.g.: if \( k \) is 1,000, \( N_{\text{threads}} = 3 \), then sequential task limit is 333
    • If sorting \( \leq 333 \) elements, do so sequentially
    • Otherwise, use parallelism
ParallelQuickSortTaskCountTunable.java

• Introduce \texttt{THRESHOLD} field to determine when to “go sequential”
• Task definition is the same
  ```java
  private class PQSTask implements Runnable { ... }
  ```
• Segment sorting routine changes to use \texttt{THRESHOLD}
  ```java
  public void parallelQuickSortSegment(...) {
    if (size <= THRESHOLD) {
      IntArraySortUtils.quickSortSegment(elts, first, size);
    }
    else {
      ....
    }
  }
  ```
• Result: much better performance!
Other Parallel Quicksort Implementations

• ParallelQuickSortEltCount.java
  Uses count of elements not yet in sorted position for termination

• ParallelQuickSortShutdown.java
  Uses shutdown of executor to determine termination