Memory Management

To do ...

- Basic memory management
- Swapping
- Kernel memory allocation
- Next Time: Virtual memory
Memory management

- Ideal memory for a programmer – large, fast, non-volatile and cheap – not an option

- Best alternative → memory hierarchy
  - Small amount of fast, expensive memory – cache
  - Some medium-speed, medium price main memory
  - Gigabytes of slow, cheap and non-volatile disk storage

- To handle the memory hierarchy – memory manager
  - Allocates scarce resource among competing requests to maximize (memory) utilization and system throughput
  - Offers a convenient abstraction for programming
  - Provides isolation between processes
Basic memory management

- Simplest memory abstraction – no abstraction at all
  - Early mainframes (before ‘60), minicomputers (before ‘70) and PCs (before ‘80)
  - MOV REG1, 1000 #REG1 (physical memory 1000)
  - Logically, only one program running at a time Why?
  - Still here, some alternatives for organizing memory

![Diagram showing memory organization for mainframes, minicomputers, and PCs]
Multiprogramming and swapping

- Even with no memory abstraction, you can run multiple programs concurrently
- Switching processes with swapping – Corbató’s CTSS
  - Simple
  - Bring each process entirely
  - Move another one to disk
  - Process swapped back in restarts from where it was

- Clearly, moving the whole thing is not too good for performance
Multiprogramming with fixed partitions

- With some additional hardware, avoid swapping
- IBM OS/360
  - Split memory in $n$ parts (possible $\neq$ sizes)
  - Single or separate input queues for each partition
  - ~MFT: Multiprogramming with Fixed number of Tasks

**Protection?**

**Relocation?**
Size of the allocation unit

- Important design issue
- A pervasive problem – fragmentation
  - Internal fragmentation – the available portion is larger than what was requested
  - External fragmentation – two small partitions left, but one big partition needed!
A new abstraction – Address space

- Address space – all the memory a process can reference
  
  ```
  MOV REG1, ???
  ```

- What does it include
  - Code – static, so it won’t change while the program runs
  - Stack – to keep track of where it is in the function call chain
  - Heap – for dynamically allocated memory
  - We placed them opposite so they can both grow (but this is just a convention)
Multiprogramming – Relocation

- With absolute physical memory – the program must always run in the exact same location
  - What a little JMP X can do!

- IBM 360 stop-gap solution – Change it at loading time
  - Static relocation
  - If a program was reloaded starting at 131,072, the constant 131,072 was added to every address at load time
  - Not particularly fast!
Multiprogramming – Protection

- What stops a process from writing outside its allocated memory?
- IBM 360 – Check it for each reference
  - Split memory into 2KB blocks
  - Each block was assigned a 4b protection key kept in CPU
  - The PSW (program status word) also kept a 4b key
  - OS trapped any process trying to access memory with protection key != the PSW key
Virtual addresses

- Memory is easier to manage if processes use virtual addresses
  - ... independent of location in physical mem where the data is
  - ... translated by HW into physical addresses (with OS help)
- Every address you have ever seen is virtual

```c
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
int main (int argc, char *argv[]) {
    printf("Loc. of code: %p\n", (void *) main);
    printf("Loc. of heap: %p\n", (void *) malloc(1));
    int x = 1;
    printf("Loc. of stack: %p\n", (void *) &x);
    return x;
}
```

*R. And A. Arpaci-Dusseau, Three Easy Pieces, v0.6*
Virtual memory system – Goals

- **Transparency**
  - Programs should not know that memory is virtualized; the OS +HW multiplex memory among processes behind the scenes
  - … (there’s more to transparency, next lecture!) …

- **Efficiency**
  - Both in time and space; not making them too slow and efficiently using physical memory

- **Protection**
  - Isolating the address spaces of processes from each other; i.e., a process should not be able to access or affect the memory of any other process or the OS itself
Multiprogramming with variable partitions

- A simple solution – partition physical memory into dynamically allocated blocks
  - CDC 6600 and Intel 8088
- Base and limit values
  - Address locations + base value → physical address
  - Ideally, base and limit registers can only be modified by OS
  - A disadvantage – Comparisons can be done fast but additions can be expensive

- Transparency
- Protection
- Efficiency
And now a short break ...
Memory management

- With dynamically allocated memory
  - OS must keep track of allocated/free memory
  - In general terms, two approaches - bit maps and linked lists

- Bit maps
  - Divide memory into allocation units (size?), track usage with a bitmap

- Linked list of allocated or free spaces
  - List ordered by address
Picking a place – different algorithms

- Assume a chunk of memory, maintained somehow
  - A free list perhaps
    - Head \(\rightarrow\) (Address: 0, Len: 256) \(\rightarrow\) (Address: 512, Len: 512) \(\rightarrow\) NULL

- A request for 10B: `malloc(10)`
- Head \(\rightarrow\) (Address: 0, Len: 256) \(\rightarrow\) (Address: 522, Len: 502) \(\rightarrow\) NULL

- Free 266: `free(266)`
- Head \(\rightarrow\) (Address: 256, Len: 266) \(\rightarrow\) (Address: 0, Len: 256) \(\rightarrow\) (Address: 522, Len: 502) \(\rightarrow\) NULL ?!?!
Tracking the size of allocated units

- Not that free does not take size
  - Keep extra info in a header block
    - Size (this for sure)
    - Additional pointers for faster de-allocation
    - Magic number for additional integrity checks

```c
typedef struct _header_t {  
    int size;
    int magic;
} header_t;

void free(void *ptr) {  
    header_t *hptr = (void *) ptr - sizeof(header_t);
    ...
    assert(header_t->magic == MAGICN);
    ...
}
```
Picking a place – basic algorithms

- If list of processes & holes is ordered by addresses …
  - First fit – simple and fast
  - Next fit - ~ First fit, starting where it left off
    - Slightly worst performance than First fit
  - Best fit – try to waste the least, but many tiny holes and a whole list search
  - Worst fit – try to “waste” the most (making it easier to reuse)
    - Not too good either

- Speeding things up
  - Two lists (free and allocated) – slows down de-allocation
  - Order the hole list – first fit ~ best fit
  - Use the same holes to keep the list
Kernel memory allocation

- Most OS manage memory as a set of fixed-size pages
- Kernel maintains a list of free pages
- Page-level allocator has
  - Two main routines: e.g. `get_page()` & `freepage()` in SVR4
  - Two main clients: Paging system & KMA

```
Kernel memory allocator

Page-level allocator

Paging system

Network Buffers
Proc structures
inodes, file descriptors
User processes
Block buffer cache
```

Provides odd-size buffers to various kernel subsystems

Physical memory
Kernel memory allocation

- KMA’s common users
  - The pathname translation routine
  - Proc structures, vnodes, file descriptor blocks, …

- Since requests << page → page-level allocator is inappropriate

- KMA & the page-level allocator (three models)
  - Pre-allocates part of memory for the KMA
  - Allow KMA to request memory
  - Allow two-way exchange with the paging system
Memory utilization
- Physical memory is limited after all
- Major cause of wasted memory – fragmentation

Speed
- It is used by various kernel subsystems (e.g. interrupt handler)
- Better be fast – both in avg and worst case

Simple API
- A simple free & malloc is nice but you can’t release partial memory with too simple of a malloc

Allow a two-way exchange with page-level allocator
KMA – Resource map allocator

- Resource map – a set of <base, size> pairs
- Initially the pool is described by a single pair
- ... after a few exchanges ... a list of entries per contiguous free regions
- Allocate requests based on
  - First fit, Best fit, Worst fit
- A simple interface
  ```c
  offset_t rmalloc(size);
  void rmfree(base, size);
  ```

```
rmalloc(256)  rmalloc(320)
```

```
rmalloc(256)  rmalloc(320)
```

```
256,128
576,448
```

```
rmfree(256,128)
```
Resource map allocator

- **Pros**
  - Easy to implement
  - Not restricted to memory allocation
  - It avoid waste
  - Client can release any part of the region
  - Allocator coalesces adjacent free regions

- **Cons**
  - After a while maps ended up fragmented – low utilization
  - Higher fragmentation, longer map
  - Map may need an allocator for its own entries
  - To coalesce regions, keep map sorted – expensive
  - Linear search to find a free region large enough
KMA – Simple power-of-two free list

- A set of free lists
- Each list keeps free buffers of a particular size \((2^x)\)
- Each buffer has one word header
  - Pointer to next free buffer, if free or to
  - Pointer to free list (or size), if allocated
KMA – Simple power-of-two free list

- Allocating(size)
  - allocating (size + header) rounded up to next power of two
  - Return pointer to first byte after header

- Freeing doesn’t require size as argument
  - Move pointer back header-size to access header
  - Put buffer in list

- Initialize allocator by pre-allocating buffers or get pages on demand; if it needs a buffer from an empty list …
  - Block request until a buffer is released
  - Satisfy request with a bigger buffer if available
  - Get a new page from page allocator
Power-of-two free lists

• **Pros**
  – Simple and pretty fast (avoids linear search)
  – Familiar programming interface (malloc, free)
  – Free does not require size; easier to program with

• **Cons**
  – Rounding means internal fragmentation
  – As many requests are power of two and we loose header; a lot of waste
  – No way to coalesce free buffers to get a bigger one
  – Rounding up may be a costly operation
Other algorithms – Buddy

- Coalescing is critical; buddy allocator
- Free memory is a $2^N$ size block
  - When requesting a block, split in half until is big enough
  - When block is freed, check if buddy is free & coalesce
    - Finding a buddy – address of each buddy pair differs only by a single bit!
  - Repeat
Coming up …

- Virtual memory in all its beauty