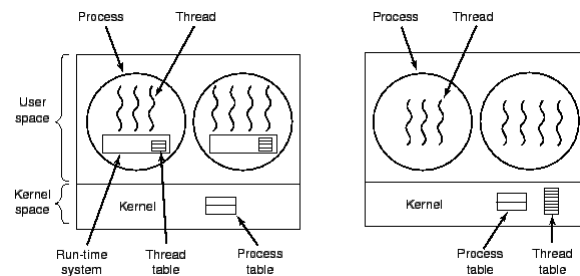


Graduate Operating Systems

Spring 2022

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User Threads vs. Kernel Threads



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User Threads vs. Kernel Threads

- “Lightweight” vs. “heavyweight”
- Concurrency vs. parallelism
- Control (or lack thereof)
- (Portability)

- **Scheduler activations:** combine benefits of kernel-level threads and user-level threads

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Kernel/User Level Integration

- “Virtual processors” allocated by kernel
- ULTS controls which threads to run
- Kernel **notifies** ULTS when changes are made (number of processors) or blocking occurs
- ULTS **notifies** kernel when more/fewer processors are needed

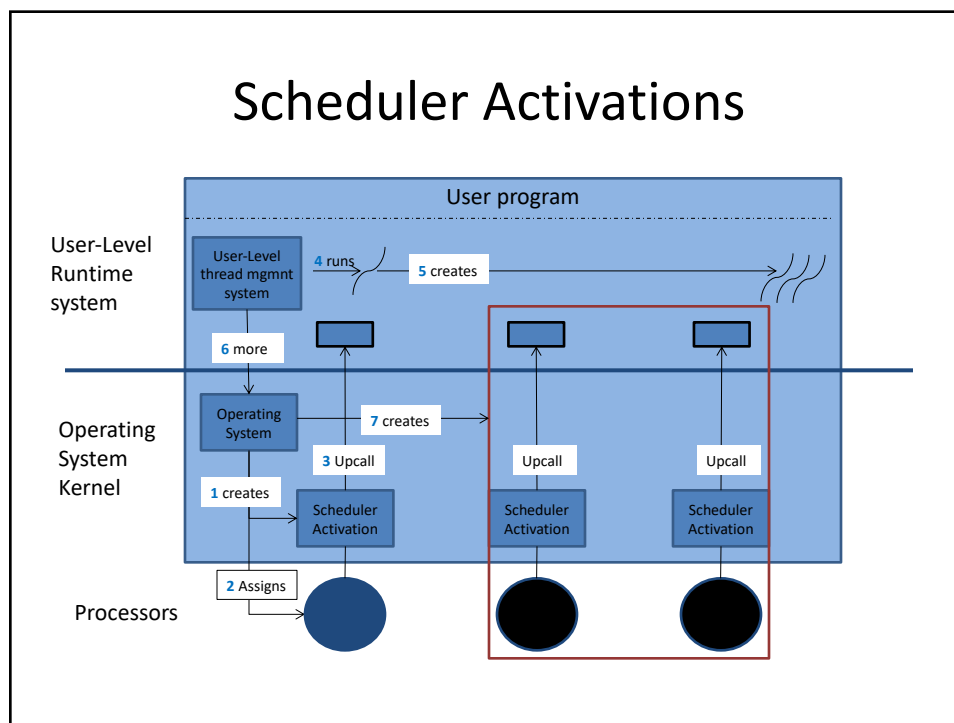
4

Scheduler Activations

- Tool for KL & UL communication
 - Kernel: “notify UL of events that impact user-level scheduling”
 - UL: “notify KL of events that can affect processor allocation”
- System calls vs. upcalls
- Scheduler activation: “execution context for an event vectored from the kernel to an address space”

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Scheduler Activations



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Scheduler Activations (Upcalls)

- Add this processor** (processor #)
Execute a runnable user-level thread.
- Processor has been preempted** (preempted activation # and its machine state)
Return to the ready list the user-level thread that was executing in the context of the preempted scheduler activation.
- Scheduler activation has blocked** (blocked activation #)
The blocked scheduler activation is no longer using its processor.
- Scheduler activation has unblocked** (unblocked activation # and its machine state)
Return to the ready list the user-level thread that was executing in the context of the blocked scheduler activation.

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Example: Blocking

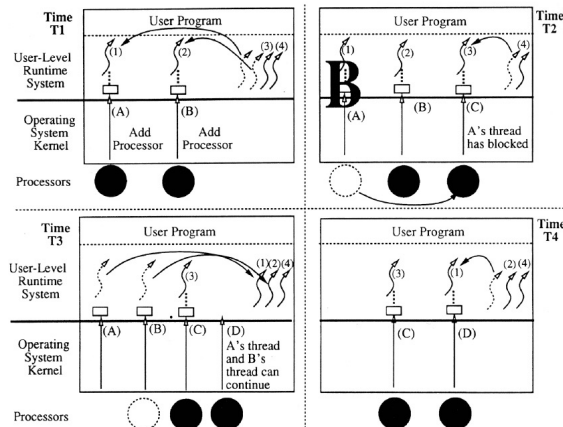


Fig. 1. Example: I/O request/completion.

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Scheduler Activations (System Calls)

Add more processors (additional # of processors needed)

Allocate more processors to this address space and start them running scheduler activations.

This processor is idle ()

Preempt this processor if another address space needs it.

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Scheduler Activations

- What if user-level thread is in critical section when it is blocked or preempted?
- Prevention & recovery

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Paper “DThreads”

- Multithreaded programming hard
- Enforce deterministic execution (but be efficient)
- Heisenbugs
- **Same program + same inputs = always same outputs**
- Goals of Dthreads: deterministic execution, easy to deploy, robust to changes in input/architectures/code, eliminates cache-line *false sharing*, efficient.
- How: turn multithreaded apps into multiple processes with private *copy-on-write* mappings to shared memory

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Paper “DThreads”

- Pthread: race conditions (Figure 1)
- DThreads: deterministic output (Figure 2)
- Synchronization points
- Last-writer wins protocol
- Deterministic thread index
- Memory mapped files
- Global token (serialization, locks, condition variables, barriers)

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