



Scheduling in Kernel 2.6

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Agenda

- * Scheduling
 - o Process Scheduling
 - O(1) scheduler – design, performance
 - Pre-emption
 - o I/O Scheduling
 - Dealine I/O scheduler
 - Anticipatory I/O scheduler
 - Comparison



Considerations in Scheduler design

- * Fairness
 - o Prevent starvation of tasks
- * Scheduling latency
 - o Reduction in delay between a task waking up and actually running
 - o Time taken for the scheduler decisions
- * Interrupt latency
 - o Delay in processing h/w interrupts
- * Scheduler decisions



Process Scheduler

* Goals

- o Good interactive performance during high load
- o Fairness
- o Priorities
- o SMP efficiency
- o SMP affinity
 - Issues of random bouncing taken care
 - No more 'timeslice squeeze'
- o RT Scheduling

(From /usr/src/linux-2.6.x/Documentation/sched-design.txt)



Goals (contd)

- * Full $O(1)$ scheduling
 - o Great shift away from $O(n)$ scheduler
- * Perfect SMP scalability
 - o Per CPU runqueues and locks
 - o No global lock/runqueue
 - o All operations like wakeup, schedule, context-switch etc. are in parallel
- * Batch scheduling (bigger timeslices, RR)
- * No scheduling storms
- * $O(1)$ RT scheduling



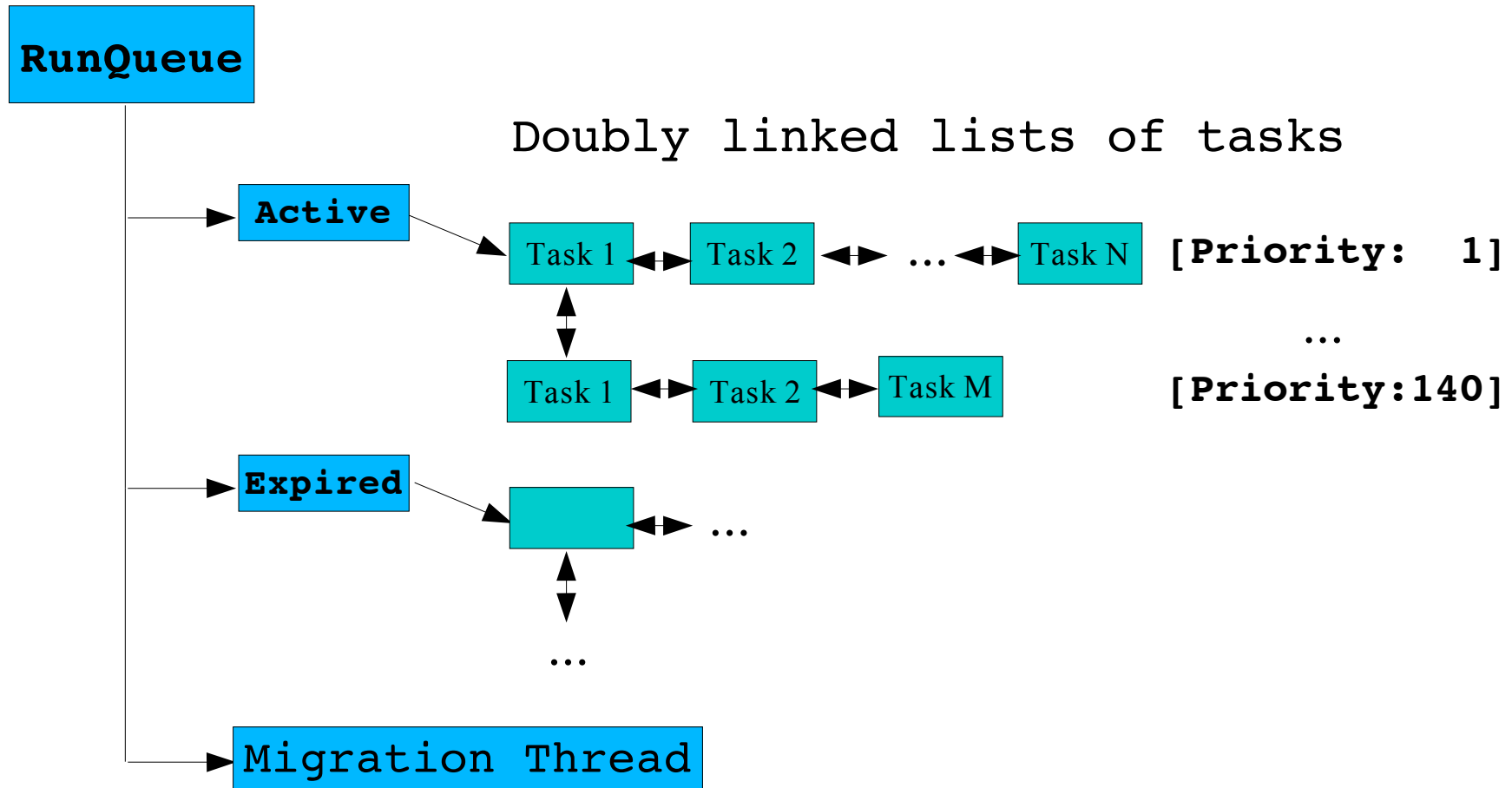
Design

- * 140 priority levels
 - o The lower the value, higher is the priority
 - o Eg : Priority level 110 will have a higher priority than 130.
- * Two priority-ordered 'priority-arrays' per CPU
 - o 'Active' array : tasks which have timeslices left
 - o 'Expired' Array : tasks which have run
 - o Both accessed through pointers from per-CPU runqueue
- * They are switched via a simple pointer swap



Per-CPU runqueue

Each CPU on the system has it's own RunQueue





O(1) Algorithm (Constant time algorithm)

- * The highest priority level, with at-least ONE task in it, is selected
 - o This takes a fixed time (say $t1$)
- * The first task (head of the doubly-linked list) in this priority level is allowed to run
 - o This takes a fixed time (say $t2$)
- * Total time taken for selecting a new process is
 - o $t = t1 + t2$ (Fixed)
- * The time taken for selecting a new process will be fixed (constant time irrespective of number of tasks)
- * Deterministic algorithm !!



2.6 v/s 2.4

Kernel 2.4 had

- * A Global runqueue.
 - o All CPUs had to wait for other CPUs to finish execution.
- * An $O(n)$ scheduler.
 - o In 2.4, the scheduler used to go through the entire “global runqueue” to determine the next task to be run.
 - o This was an $O(n)$ algorithm where 'n' is the number of processes. The time taken was proportional to the number of active processes in the system.
- * This lead to large performance hits during heavy workloads.



Scheduling policies in 2.6

- * 140 Priority levels
 - o 1-100 : RT prio ($MAX_RT_PRIO = 100$)
 - o 101-140 : User task Prio ($MAX_PRIO = 140$)
- * Three different scheduling policies
 - o One for normal tasks
 - o Two for Real time tasks
- * Normal tasks
 - o Each task assigned a “Nice” value
 - o $PRIO = MAX_RT_PRIO + NICE + 20$
 - o Assigned a time slice
 - o Tasks at the same prio are round-robined.
 - Ensures Priority + Fairness



Policies (contd ...)

- * RT tasks (Static priority)
 - o FIFO RT tasks
 - Run until they relinquish the CPU voluntarily
 - Priority levels maintained
 - Not pre-empted !!
 - o RR RT tasks
 - Assigned a timeslice and run till the timeslice is exhausted.
 - Once all RR tasks of a given prio level exhaust their timeslices, their timeslices are refilled and they continue running.
 - Prio levels are maintained
- * The above can be unfair !! - Sane design expected !!



Interactivity estimator

- * Dynamically scales a tasks priority based on it's interactivity
- * Interactive tasks receive a prio bonus [-5]
 - o Hence a larger timeslice
- * CPU bound tasks receive a prio penalty [+5]
- * Interactivity estimated using a running sleep average.
 - o Interactive tasks are I/O bound. They wait for events to occur.
 - o Sleeping tasks are I/O bound or interactive !!
 - o Actual bonus/penalty is determined by comparing the sleep average against a constant maximum sleep average.
- * Does not apply to RT tasks



Recalculation of priorities

When a task finishes it's timeslice :

- * It's interactivity is estimated
- * Interactive tasks can be inserted into the 'Active' array again.
- * Else, priority is recalculated
- * Inserted into the NEW priority level in the 'Expired' array.



Re-inserting interactive tasks

- * To avoid delays, interactive tasks may be re-inserted into the 'active' array after their timeslice has expired.
- * Done only if tasks in the 'expired' array have run recently.
 - o Done to prevent starvation of tasks
- * Decision to re-insert depends on the task's priority level.



Finegrained timeslice distribution

- * Priority is recalculated only after expiring a timeslice.
- * Interactive tasks may become non-interactive during their LARGE timeslices, thus starving other processes.
- * To prevent this, time-slices are divided into chunks of 20ms.
- * A task of equal priority may preempt the running task every 20ms.
- * The preempted task is requeued and is round-robin in its priority level.
- * Also, priority recalculation happens every 20ms.



For programmers

From `/usr/src/linux-2.6.x/kernel/sched.c`

* `void schedule()`

- o The main scheduling function.
- o Upon return, the highest priority process will be active

* Data

o `struct runqueue()`

- The main per-CPU runqueue data structure

o `struct task_struct()`

- The main per-process data structure



For programmers (contd....)

Process Control methods

- * `void set_user_nice (...)`
 - o Sets the nice value of task p to given value
- * `int setscheduler(...)`
 - o Sets the scheduling policy and parameters for a given pid
- * `rt_task(pid)`
 - o Returns true if pid is real-time, false if not.
- * `yield()`
 - o Place the current process at the end of the runqueue and call `schedule()`.



Handling SMP (multiple CPUs)

- * A run-queue per CPU
 - o Each CPU handles it's own processes and do not have to wait till other CPU tasks finish their timeslices.
- * A 'migration' thread runs for every CPU.
- * `void load_balance()`
 - o This function call attempts to pull tasks from one CPU to another to balance CPU usage if needed.
 - o Called
 - Explicitly if runqueues are inbalanced
 - Periodically by the timer tick
- * Processes can be made affine to a particular CPU.



I/O Schedulers



I/O Scheduler

- * Kernel 2.4 I/O scheduler
 - o One request queue, which is sorted seek-wise.
 - o Reduces seek-time for the disk head.
 - o This type of sorting can lead to starvation of requests far away from the current seek position.
 - o Write – starving – reads.
 - Write requests are asynchronous and non-blocking
 - Most apps are not bothered about write commits
 - Read requests are blocking, as apps need the data to continue (synchronous)
 - Read requests have to be prioritised over write requests to improve responsiveness.



Deadline I/O scheduler

- * Assigns tasks an expiration time
- * Alongwith a queue sorted seek-wise, two additional queues are implemented.
 - o FIFO read queue with a deadline of 500ms
 - o FIFO write queue with a deadline of 5 seconds.
- * A request is submitted to the sorted queue and the appropriate deadline queue (at the tail of the queue)
- * Requests are scheduled from the sorted queue.
- * If a request in the FIFO queue expires then the scheduler begins dispatching from FIFO queues.



Deadline I/O scheduler (contd...)

- * Ensures that seeks are minimised
- * At the same time, makes sure that requests are not starved.
- * Read requests are given a better deadline than write requests (10 times)
 - o Interactivity is improved.
 - o Applications are not blocked by read requests.
 - o Improved performance in case of dependent read requests.
 - Eg : `$ cat *`
- * Can result in a seek-storm, because the sorted queue can get neglected !!



Anticipatory I/O scheduler

- * Same algorithm, but anticipates future read requests in case of dependent read requests.
- * After a read-request is completed
 - o Doesn't proceed to the next request
 - o Waits for a few milliseconds (6ms) to see if the application submits another read request.
 - Eg : an app reading an Image file in 1024byte buffers.
 - o If a new read request happens then the scheduler process this request.
- * This small wait prevents a lot of seek operations.
 - o If the app doesn't issue any read request the waiting period is wasted !!



Performance Comparison

- * Read operations
 - o Deadline I/O
 - Comparable during streaming writes.
 - Performs 10 times better during streaming reads.
 - o Anticipatory I/O (w.r.t 2.4)
 - 10 times better during streaming writes
 - 100 times better during streaming reads.
- * Write operations
 - o Perform almost same as 2.4 (2.4 may be better)
 - o Deadline I/O scheduler performs slightly better than Anticipatory I/O scheduler.



Resources

- * Kernel documentation
 - o /usr/src/linux-2.6.x/Documentation/
 - sched-design.txt, sched-coding.txt
 - preempt-locking.txt
 - as-iosched.txt
- * Scheduler
 - <http://kerneltrap.org/node/view/464>
 - <http://kerneltrap.org/node/view/657>
 - <http://www.arstechnica.com/etc/linux/index.html>
- * <http://kerneltrap.org>
- * The Linux Mailing List Archives



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