Parallel Systems

Conclusions
Goal of course Part I

- Learn the basic techniques
  - Of the 2 basic paradigms: MP & MT
  - Plus one recent hit: GPU computing

- All are quite low-level
  - Higher-level techniques rely on them
  - Can be learned easily when understanding the lower level
  - E.g. OpenMP for multithreading

- Understand specific parallel issues
  - Indeterminism
  - Race conditions
  - Synchronization
  - deadlocks
Parallel Systems

Distributed memory

- Message-passing MPI
  - coarse-grain parallelism

Shared memory

- coarse-grain parallelism
  - Explicit multi-threading
  - OpenMP
  - OpenCL/CUDA
    - SIMT
  - Vector instructions
    - SIMD

fine-grain parallelism

Parallel Systems: Conclusions
Jan Lemeire
Course Overview

Parallel paradigms

**Multi-threaded**
- architectures: PRAM & cache coherence
- synchronization:
  - critical sections
  - conditional wait
  - composite constructs

**Message-passing**
- architectures:
  - communication networks
- communication: MPI
- specific functions for specific structures!

**GPU programming**
- clear strategy:
  - transparent, powerful, dedicated hardware
  - write efficient programs taking structure into account

Parallel algorithms

**Matrix Algorithms**
- structured mathematical operations:
  - optimize for memory
  - structured communication and computation

**Tree Search**
- advanced techniques:
  - dynamic load balancing
  - termination detection

**Sort Algorithms**
- specific solutions are necessary
- inherent parallelism in sequential algorithm is not enough
The Current Big Question

Will Parallel Computing become widely used?
Parallelism

In the need of processing power?

Combine resources!

Cumbersome!!

Parallelism is not for free...

*No compiler that transform a sequential algorithm into high-performant parallel code*
Some comment on blogs

“A Programmer had a problem. He thought, 'I know, I'll use threads'. Now the programmer has two problems.”

“Using multiple threads adds a whole new layer of complexity to your code.”

“I don't think any extension to C or C++ will suddenly make all the multithreading headache goes away.”

“I suspect GPUs will suffer from the same problem facing today's multicore: too difficult to program, and too few programmers.”
Parallelism is not for free

Sequential world
- Separation hardware – program (3GL)
  With one abstract model for architecture: Von Neumann
- Java: platform-independence
- .net: language-independence

Parallel world
- Ultimate goal: match hardware – program
- *No universal abstract model for parallel architectures!*
  No common HW model can be used, since parallel programming has to break abstractions (for performance) by preventing us from hiding low level details (PPP 70)
- Trade-off performance – genericity
  Performance is program and hardware dependent, and their match
  Efficient programs should be developed specifically ...
  Less impact in the sequential case (overhead of OOP or java is small)
Goal of course Part II

- Understand limitations of current technology so that better solution can be build tomorrow
- Provide answers to the following, deeper questions:
  - How make parallelism successful?
  - Which strategies to follow?
  - What does prevent us for exploiting resources in parallel successfully?
  - What should a software developer know?
  - How can we offer parallel processing power to the non-expert user?
Strategy

Ask yourself:

- Is it worth it?
- Is it possible?
- Is it easy?

Effort ~ Benefit

Our strategy for making parallelism used

- Use commodity hardware
- Use standard approaches which are close to the sequential world: MPI & Multi-threading
- Develop solutions that are as generic as possible
- Put them in domain-specific libraries

For specific, critical solutions, however, parallel technology is mature.
Sequential program is always (!?) more efficient, simpler and less error-prone
- What about maintenance of parallel programs? Like keeping documentation up-to-date...

What do we learn from the GPU case...
- Economical aspects guide technology
- NVIDIA’s approach: Transparency, good documentation, easy installation, automatic GPU detection an compilation
- Already widely used for specific algorithms

Will it remain and become a standard??
Feedback is welcome

Feedback on course content & organization?

Fill in the online course evaluation!