I/O Systems

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Today’s Topics

- **Device characteristics**
  - Block device vs. Character device
  - Direct I/O vs. Memory-mapped I/O
  - Polling vs. Interrupts
  - Programmed I/O vs. DMA
  - Blocking vs. Non-blocking I/O

- **I/O software layers**
I/O Devices (1)

- **Block device**
  - Stores information in fixed-size blocks, each one with its own address.
  - 512B – 32KB per block
  - It is possible to read or write each block independently of all the other ones.
  - Disks, tapes, etc.

- **Character device**
  - Delivers or accepts a stream of characters.
  - Not addressable and no seek operation.
  - Printers, networks, mice, keyboards, etc.
## I/O Devices (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Device</th>
<th>Data rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keyboard</td>
<td>10 bytes/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouse</td>
<td>100 bytes/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56K modem</td>
<td>7 KB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone channel</td>
<td>8 KB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual ISDN linoc</td>
<td>16 KB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laser printer</td>
<td>100 KB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scanner</td>
<td>400 KB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classic Ethernet</td>
<td>1.25 MB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USB 2.0 (Universal Serial Bus)</td>
<td>1.5 MR/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital camcorder</td>
<td>4 MB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDE disk</td>
<td>5 MB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40x CD-ROM</td>
<td>6 MB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast Ethernet</td>
<td>12.5 MB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISA bus</td>
<td>16.7 MB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIDE (ATA-2) disk</td>
<td>16.7 MB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FireWire (IEEE 1394)</td>
<td>50 MB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XGA Monitor</td>
<td>60 MB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SONET OC-12 network</td>
<td>78 MB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCSI Ultra 2 disk</td>
<td>80 MB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gigabit Ethernet</td>
<td>125 MB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultrium tape</td>
<td>320 MB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCI bus</td>
<td>528 MB/sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun Gigaplane XB backplane</td>
<td>20 GB/sec</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

USB 2.0: 60 MB/s
I/O Devices (3)

- **Device controller (or host adapter)**
  - I/O devices have components:
    - Mechanical component
    - Electronic component
  - The electronic component is the device controller.
    - May be able to handle multiple devices.
  - Controller’s tasks
    - Convert serial bit stream to block of bytes.
    - Perform error correction as necessary.
    - Make available to main memory.
Accessing I/O Devices (1)

- **Direct I/O**
  - Use special I/O instructions to an I/O port address.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I/O address range (hexadecimal)</th>
<th>device</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>000–00F</td>
<td>DMA controller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>020–021</td>
<td>interrupt controller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>040–043</td>
<td>timer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200–20F</td>
<td>game controller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2F8–2FF</td>
<td>serial port (secondary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>320–32F</td>
<td>hard-disk controller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>378–37F</td>
<td>parallel port</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3D0–3DF</td>
<td>graphics controller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3F0–3F7</td>
<td>diskette-drive controller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3F8–3FF</td>
<td>serial port (primary)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Memory-mapped I/O

- The device control registers are mapped into the address space of the processor.
  - The CPU executes I/O requests using the standard data transfer instructions.
- I/O device drivers can be written entirely in C.
- No special protection mechanism is needed to keep user processes from performing I/O
  - Can give a user control over specific devices but not others by simply including the desired pages in its page table.
- Reading a device register and testing its value is done with a single instruction.
Polling vs. Interrupts (1)

- **Polled I/O**
  - CPU asks ("polls") devices if need attention.
    - ready to receive a command
    - command status, etc.
  - **Advantages**
    - Simple
    - Software is in control.
    - Efficient if CPU finds a device to be ready soon.
  - **Disadvantages**
    - Inefficient in non-trivial system (high CPU utilization).
    - Low priority devices may never be serviced.
Polling vs. Interrupts (2)

- **Interrupt-driven I/O**
  - I/O devices request interrupt when need attention.
  - Interrupt service routines specific to each device are invoked.
  - Interrupts can be shared between multiple devices.
  - **Advantages**
    - CPU only attends to device when necessary.
    - More efficient than polling in general.
  - **Disadvantages**
    - Excess interrupts slow (or prevent) program execution.
    - Overheads (may need 1 interrupt per byte transferred)
Polling vs. Interrupts (3)

1. CPU
   - device driver initiates I/O
   - CPU executing checks for interrupts between instructions
   - CPU receiving interrupt, transfers control to interrupt handler
   - interrupt handler processes data, returns from interrupt
   - CPU resumes processing of interrupted task

2. I/O controller
   - initiates I/O
   - input ready, output complete, or error generates interrupt signal

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Polling vs. Interrupts (4)

- Polling
- Interrupts

[Diagram of device manager window showing various devices and controllers]
Programmed I/O vs. DMA

- **DMA (Direct Memory Access)**
  - Bypasses CPU to transfer data directly between I/O device and memory.
  - Used to avoid programmed I/O for large data movement.
Blocking vs. Non-Blocking I/O

- **Blocking I/O**
  - Process is suspended until I/O completed.
  - Easy to use and understand.

- **Nonblocking I/O**
  - I/O call returns quickly, with a return value that indicates how many bytes were transferred.
  - A nonblocking `read()` returns immediately with whatever data available – the full number of bytes requested, fewer, or none at all.
Goals of I/O Software

- **Goals**
  - **Device independence**
    - Programs can access any I/O device without specifying device in advance.
  - **Uniform naming**
    - Name of a file or device should simply be a string or an integer.
  - **Error handling**
    - Handle as close to the hardware as possible.
  - **Synchronous vs. asynchronous**
    - blocked transfers vs. interrupt-driven
  - **Buffering**
    - Data coming off a device cannot be stored in final destination.
  - **Sharable vs. dedicated devices**
    - Disks vs. tape drives
    - Unsharable devices introduce problems such as deadlocks.
I/O Software Layers

- User-level I/O Software
- Device-independent I/O Software
- Device Drivers
- Interrupt Handlers

Hardware

Network
Interrupt Handlers

- Handling interrupts
  - Critical actions
    : Acknowledge an interrupt to the PIC.
    : Reprogram the PIC or the device controller.
    : Update data structures accessed by both the device and the processor.
  - Noncritical actions
    : Update data structures that are accessed only by the processor.
    (e.g., reading the scan code from the keyboard)
  - Reenable interrupts
  - Return from interrupts
    : Actions may be delayed.
    : Copy buffer contents into the address space of some process (e.g., sending the keyboard line buffer to the terminal handler process).
    : Bottom half (Linux)
Device Drivers (1)

- **Device drivers**
  - Device-specific code to control each I/O device interacting with device-independent I/O software and interrupt handlers.
  - Requires to define a well-defined model and a standard interface of how they interact with the rest of the OS.
  - Implementing device drivers:
    - Statically linked with the kernel.
    - Selectively loaded into the system during boot time.
    - Dynamically loaded into the system during execution. (especially for hot pluggable devices.)
Device Drivers (2)
The problem

- Reliability remains a crucial, but unresolved problem
  - 5% of Windows systems crash every day
  - Huge cost of failures: stock exchange, e-commerce, ...
  - Growing “unmanaged systems”: digital appliances, consumer electronics devices

- OS extensions are increasingly prevalent
  - 70% of Linux kernel code
  - Over 35,000 drivers with over 120,000 versions on Windows XP
  - Written by less experienced programmer

- Extensions are a leading cause of OS failure
  - Drivers cause 85% of Windows XP crashes
  - Drivers are 7 times buggier than the kernel in Linux
Device-Independent I/O SW (1)

- **Uniform interfacing for device drivers**
  - In Unix, devices are modeled as special files.
    - They are accessed through the use of system calls such as open(), read(), write(), close(), ioctl(), etc.
    - A file name is associated with each device.
  - Major device number locates the appropriate driver.
    - Minor device number (stored in i-node) is passed as a parameter to the driver in order to specify the unit to be read or written.
  - The usual protection rules for files also apply to I/O devices.
Device-Independent I/O SW (2)

- **Buffering**
  - (a) Unbuffered
  - (b) Buffered in user space
  - (c) Buffered in the kernel space
  - (d) Double buffering in the kernel

![Buffering Diagram]

User process

- User space
- Kernel space

(a) Unbuffered
(b) Buffered in user space
(c) Buffered in the kernel space
(d) Double buffering in the kernel space
Error reporting

- Many errors are device-specific and must be handled by the appropriate driver, but the framework for error handling is device independent.
- Programming errors vs. actual I/O errors
- Handling errors
  - Returning the system call with an error code.
  - Retrying a certain number of times.
  - Ignoring the error.
  - Killing the calling process.
  - Terminating the system.
Allocating and releasing dedicated devices

- Some devices cannot be shared.
  1. Require processes to perform open()’s on the special files for devices directly.
     - The process retries if open() fails.
  2. Have special mechanisms for requesting and releasing dedicated devices.
     - An attempt to acquire a device that is not available blocks the caller.

Device-independent block size

- Treat several sectors as a single logical block.
- The higher layers only deal with abstract devices that all use the same block size.
User-Space I/O Software

- **Provided as a library**
  - Standard I/O library in C
    - `fopen()` vs. `open()`?
    - Buffering for `fgetc()`?

- **Spooling**
  - A way of dealing with dedicated I/O devices in a multiprogramming system.
  - Implemented by a daemon and a spooling directory.
  - Printers, network file transfers, USENET news, mails, etc.
I/O Systems Layers

- **Layer**
  - User processes
  - Device-independent software
  - Device drivers
  - Interrupt handlers
  - Hardware

**I/O reply**
- Make I/O call; format I/O; spooling
- Naming, protection, blocking, buffering, allocation
- Set up device registers; check status
- Wake up driver when I/O completed
- Perform I/O operation