Observation and Control for Debugging Distributed Computations

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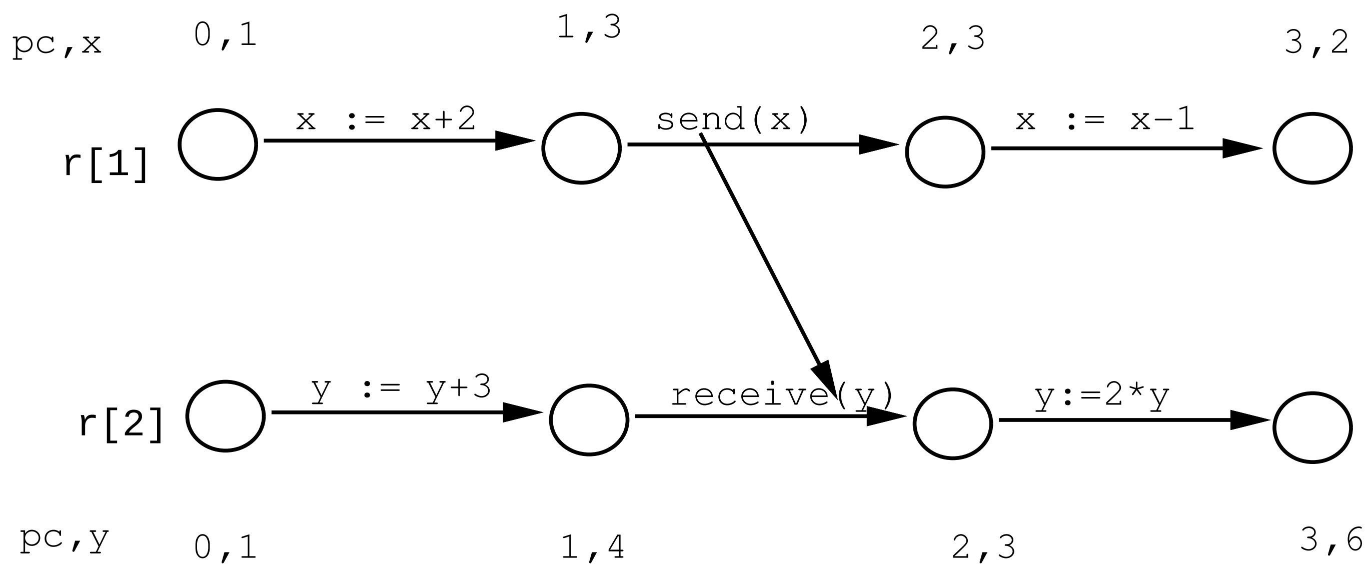
Outline of the talk

- Introduction: our model
- Observation: Main ideas
  - Lack of shared clock
  - Lack of shared memory
  - Combinatorial Explosion
- Observation: Algorithms
  - WCP algorithm, Channel predicates
  - Detecting regular expressions
- Control
  - Delaying events: offline
  - Delaying events: online
  - Controlling order: offline
  - Controlling order: online

Characteristics of Distributed Systems

- Lack of shared clock
  - order of events partial
- Lack of shared memory
  - meaning of global state
  - need messages for observing "global state"
- Multiple processes
  - Combinatorial explosion
  - non-determinism

Model of a Distributed Program



- messages: asynchronous, reliable, no FIFO assumption
- no shared clock or memory
- local states
- Lamport's causally precede relation, concurrency relation

Motivation for Observation

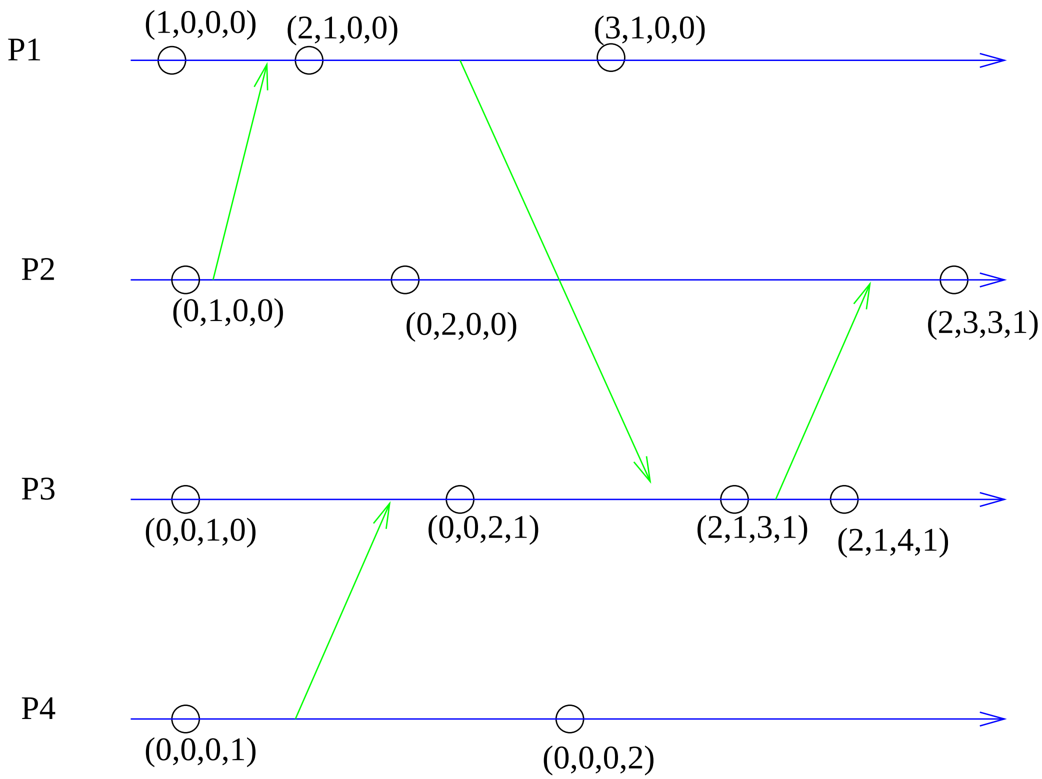
Dear Watson, you see but you do not observe...

- Distributed Debugging, Testing
  - stop when the predicate q is true
    - predicate q = (P1 is in critical section) and (P2 is in critical section).
  - Detect if the program violates any invariant
- Fault-tolerance
  - Monitoring while the program is operational
- Distributed Active Rules
  - On global condition p, trigger rule a
- General paradigm for observing Distributed Algorithms
  - Termination detection, deadlock detection, loss of token

Lack of shared clock

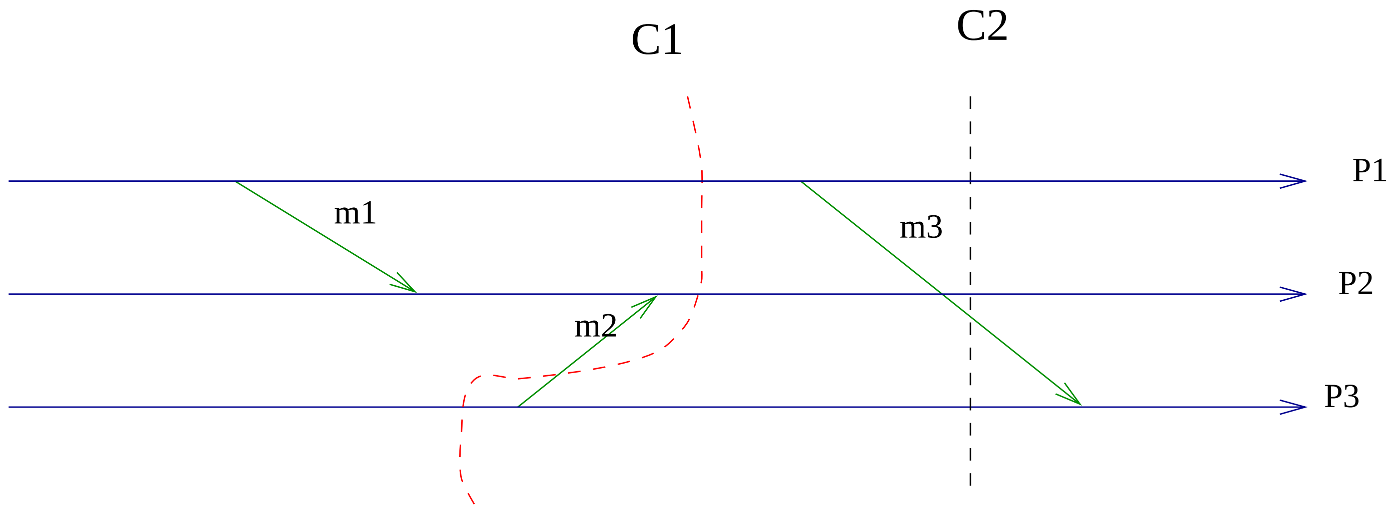
- Problem: define truthness of the predicate $CS_1 \wedge CS_2$
  - based on real time
  - based on causality
- Real-time considered harmful in distributed system.
  - My clock synchronization algorithm achieves 10 ms
  - programs should work independent of processor speeds
- Reject linear time, accept vector time
  - Lamport 78, Fidge 89, Mattern 89
  - Simultaneity vs Concurrency

Clock in a Distributed System



- Property: $s \to t$ iff $s.v < t.v$.

Lack of shared state

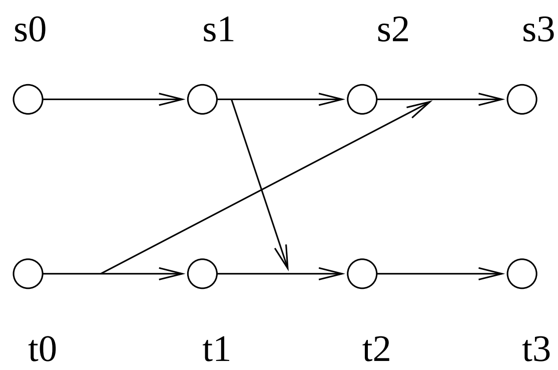


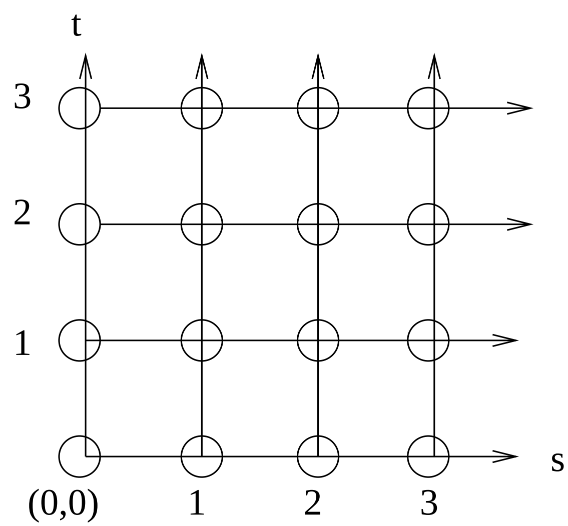
- consistent global state
  - if the receive of an event is recorded, then send must be recorded

Camera: Chandy and Lamport's Algorithm

- Algorithm to compute a snapshot of a computation: S_*
  - S_* is a possible global state in the computation
- Stable predicate: once true stays true
  - e.g. termination detection, deadlock detection
- To monitor stable predicates: repeatedly take the snapshots
- Disadvantages of CL Algorithm for predicate detection
  - Not useful for unstable predicates
  - Does not return the first cut
  - How often should the snapshot be taken ?
  - Assumes FIFO

Unstable Predicates





- Multiple timed executions consistent with one run

Two interpretations of predicates

- Two modalities: [Cooper and Marzullo 91], [Garg and Waldecker 91]
  - Possibly:q (also called weak predicates)
    - exists a path from the initial state to the final state along which q is true on some state
  - Definitely:q (also called strong predicates)
    - for all paths from the initial state to the final state q is true on some state

Communication Complexity

- Consider evaluation of the predicate $q(x_1, x_2)$
  - only P_1 knows all the values taken by x_1
  - only P_2 knows values taken by x_2
  - Is $q(x_1, x_2)$ true for some value of x_1 and x_2
- Key question: number of values that need to be communicated
  - one value per internal event, or
  - one value per external event

Monotonicity

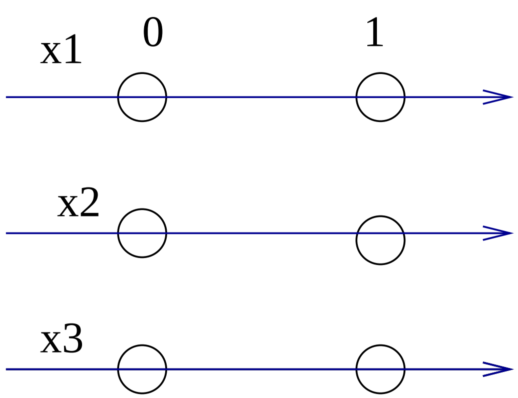
- Definition
  - Assume x_1 takes values from a totally ordered set
  - q is monotone w.r.t. first argument if

$$\forall a, b, x_2 : (a < b) \Rightarrow (q(a, x_2) \Rightarrow q(b, x_2))$$

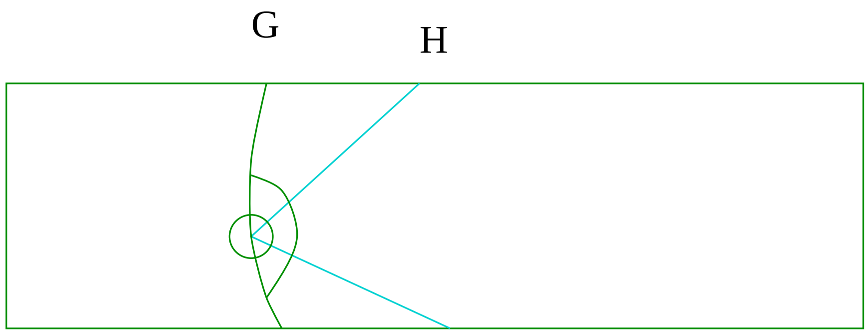
- Examples
  - $q = (x_1 > x_2)$: monotonic w.r.t x_1 and x_2
  - $q = l_1 \wedge l_2$: monotonic
  - $q = (x_1 = x_2)$: not monotonic.

Multiple Processes

- Intractability of the Global Predicate Detection Problem
  - **Given**: an execution S of N processes, N variables $x_1, \ldots, x_N$, and a predicate q defined on x.
  - Is there a consistent cut $G \in S$ such that $q(G)$ is true.
- Theorem [Chase and Garg 95]: The predicate detection problem is NP-Complete.
  - Proof: By reduction from SAT $((x_1 \vee \bar{x_2} \vee x_3) \wedge (\bar{x_1} \vee x_2) \wedge \ldots)$



Linearity



- Forbidden predicate: forbidden(G,i) iff
  - $\forall H : G \leq H : (G[i] = H[i]) \Rightarrow \neg q(H)$
- Predicate q is linear w.r.t. a computation S if
  - $\forall G : \neg q(G) \Rightarrow \exists i : \text{forbidden}(G, i)$
- Examples
  - $l_1 \wedge l_2 \wedge \ldots \wedge l_n$
  - $x + y \geq k$, x is non-increasing
  - channel is empty

Summary of Observation: Problems and Solutions

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Characteristic	Problem	Idea	Bonus
No shared clock	ordering events	causality	avoid race errors
No shared memory	message/state change	monotonicity	extremal functior
multiple processes	combinatorial explosion	linearity	first cut

Cooper and Marzullo's Algorithm

- Possibly:p
  - construct the lattice of global states, check each global state for truthness of p
- Definitely:p
  - for all paths from the initial state to the final state p is true on some state
  - construct the lattice of global states
  - remove states satisfying p
  - Is last state reachable from the initial state
- Complexity: $O(k^n)$ where
  - k: Number of local states per process
  - n: Number of processes

Weak Conjunctive Predicates

- WCP $\equiv$ Possibly:$l_1 \wedge l_2 \wedge \ldots \wedge l_n$
- useful for bad or undesirable predicates
  - Example: the classical mutual exclusion problem.
  - Example: (John is sleeping) and (Mary is sleeping) and (Robert is sleeping)
- detect errors that may be hidden in some run due to race conditions.

Importance of Weak Conjunctive Predicates

- Sufficient for detection of any boolean expression
  - which can be expressed as a disjunction of a small number of conjunctions.
  - Example x, y and z are in three different processes. Then,

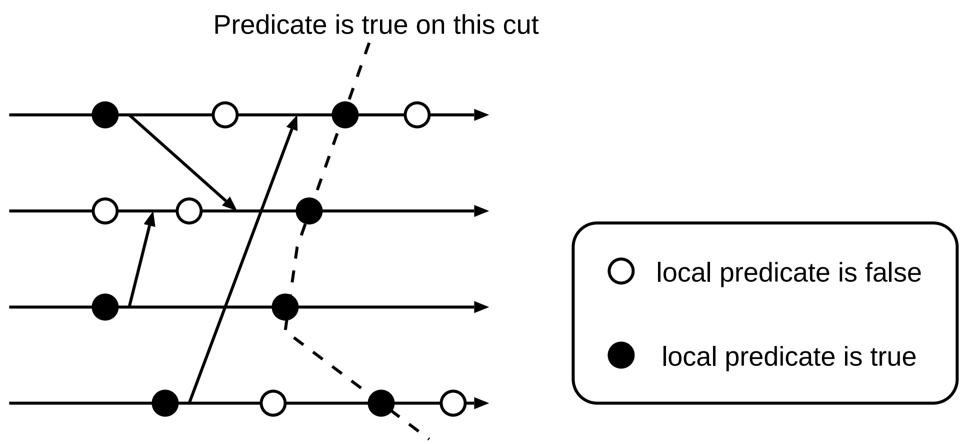
$$even(x) \wedge ((y < 0) \vee (z > 6))$$

$$\equiv$$

$$(even(x) \wedge (y < 0)) \vee (even(x) \wedge (z > 6))$$

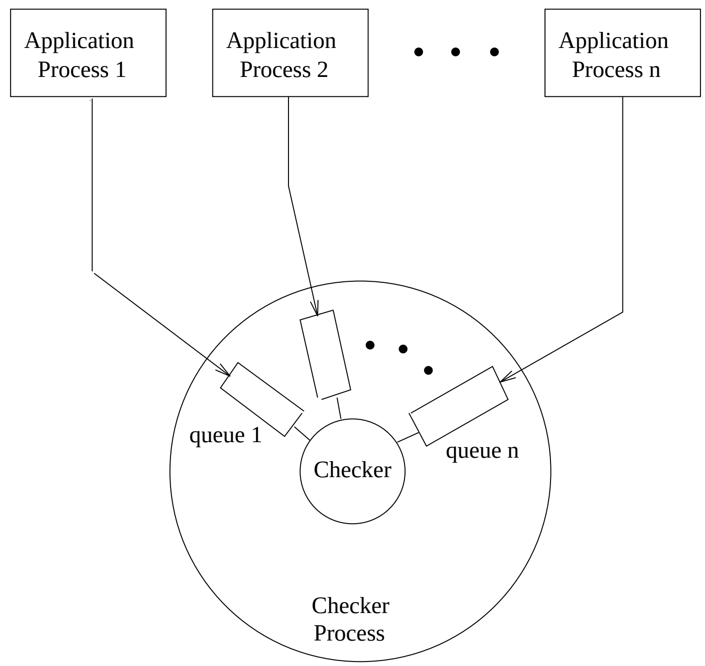
- the global predicate is satisfied by only a finite number of possible global states.
  - Example, x and y are in different processes.
    - $(x = y)$ is not a *local* predicate

Conditions for Weak Conjunctive Predicates



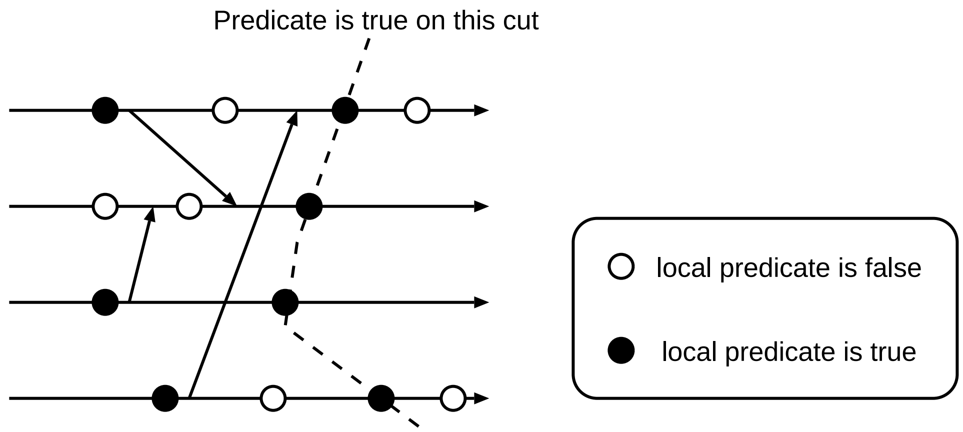
- Possibly $(l_1 \wedge l_2 \wedge \ldots l_n)$ is true **iff** there exist s_i in P_i such that l_i is true in state s_i, and s_i and s_j are incomparable for distinct i, j.
- Key problems and solutions
  - number of states satisfying local predicates may be large: Use monotonicity (at most one state per message)
  - combinatorial explosion when combining them together: Use Linearity

Weak Conjunctive Predicates: Centralized Algorithm



- Each non-checker process maintains its local *vector*
  - send to the checker process the vector clock whenever
    - local predicate is true
    - at most once in each message interval.
  - Optimization: Sufficient to send the vector once after each message is sent

Checker Process



- Steps
  - Begin with the initial global state
  - Eliminate any state that happened before any other state along the current cut.
- Predicate true for the first time
  - if no states can be eliminated.
- Predicate false
  - if we eliminate the final state from any process

Overhead: Non-checker processes

- Space complexity
  - the array $vector$: $O(n)$.
- message complexity
  - $O(m_s)$ where m_s is the number of program messages sent.
  - In addition, program messages have to include time vectors.
- Time complexity
  - detection of local predicates
  - maintain vector clock $(O(n)$/message).

Overhead: Checker processes

- Space complexity
  - n queues, each containing at most m vectors
- Time complexity
  - The algorithm for checker requires at most $O(n^2m)$ comparisons.
  - Any algorithm which determines whether there exists a set of incomparable vectors of size n in n chains of size at most m, makes at least $mn(n-1)/2$ comparisons.

[Garg and Waldecker 94]

Disadvantages of above algorithm

- Centralized
  - Checker process may become a bottleneck
- Space requirements
  - Queues at the checker process may grow large
- Message complexity
  - may result in too many additional messages

Other WCP algorithms

- token based algorithm [Garg and Chase 95]
  - eliminate centralized checker process
- Completely distributed algorithm [Garg and Chase 95]
  - Uses Scholten and Dijkstra's termination detection
- Distributed Offline-algorithm [Venkatesan and Dathan 92]
  - assume FIFO and off-line
- Keeping queues shorter [Chiou and Korfhage 95]
  - eliminate vectors that are useless
- Avoiding control messages[Hurfin, Mizuno et al 96]
  - piggyback info/token with application messages

Channel Predicates: Observing hallways

- Many properties require channels
  - termination detection: all processes are idle and all channels are empty

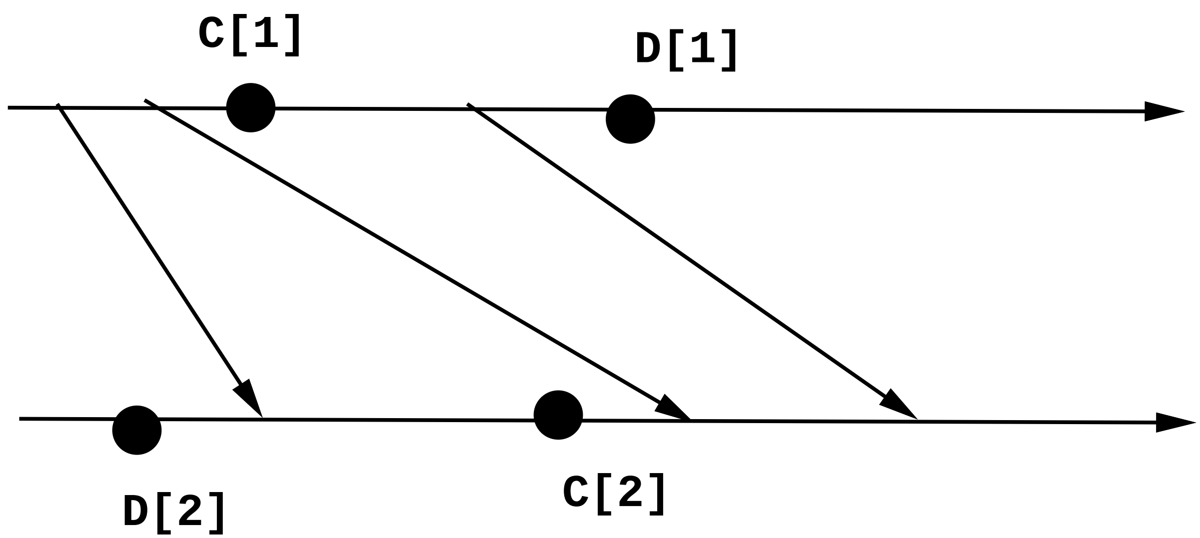
- A channel predicate: a boolean function on the state of the channel
  - uni-directional
  - memoryless. i.e. channel state = sequence of messages sent - set of messages received
  - Linearity: Given any channel state in which the predicate is false, then
    - cannot be made true by sending more messages without receiving any messages, or
    - cannot be made true by receiving more messages without sending any messages.

Linear Channel Predicates

- Empty channels
  - If false, then it cannot be made true by sending more messages,
- Channel has exactly three red messages
  - If less than three, then it cannot be made true by receiving more messages,
  - If more than three, then it cannot be made true by sending more messages,

Non-linear Channel Predicates

- Channel has an odd number of messages



- Key result: linearity = first cut is well defined.

Relational Predicates

- k tokens corresponding to k resources in the system
  - x_i: number of token at P_i
  - $\Sigma x_i < k$: loss of tokens
  - $\Sigma x_i > k$: License violation problem
- Predicate, global function
  - $\exists G$: consistent(G) : $\Sigma_{s_i \in G} s_i.x_i < K$
  - $\min G$: consistent(G) : $\Sigma_{s_i \in G} s_i.x_i$
  - Ideas:
    - max-flow technique: [Chase and Garg 95]
    - Matrix clocks: detect predicate of the form $x_1 + x_2 < k$ [Tomlinson and Garg 93]
    - Use Dilworth's theorem: [Tomlinson and Garg 96]

Other Algorithms

- Conjunction of global predicates
  - Example: $(x_1 = x_2) \wedge (x_3 > x_4)$

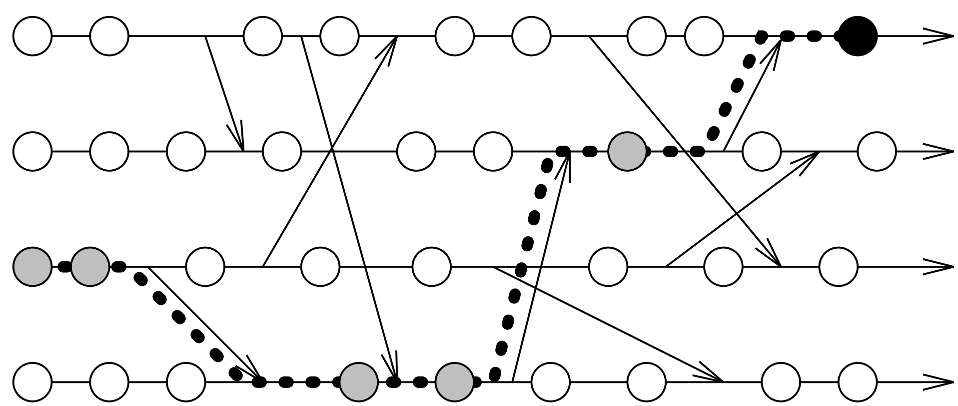
  Stoller and Scneider 95, Garg and Mitchell 96
- Notion of fixed set [Stoller and Scneider 95]
  - set of variables such that on fixing them we get a WCP
  - fix $x_1 = 4$ and $x_4 = 6$, we get $(4 = x_2) \wedge (x_3 > 6)$
  - evaluate all WCP obtained by using all values of fixed-set.
- Definitely True predicates
  - strong conjunctive predicates [Garg and Waldecker 93]

Causal Predicates

- Predicate based on control flow
  - useful for expressing and observing the flow of information.
- Early work
  - sequence of local predicates [Miller and Choi 88]
    - $l_1 \rightarrow l_2 \rightarrow \ldots l_m$.
- regular expression of local predicates [Fromentin, Raynal, Garg, Tomlinson 94]

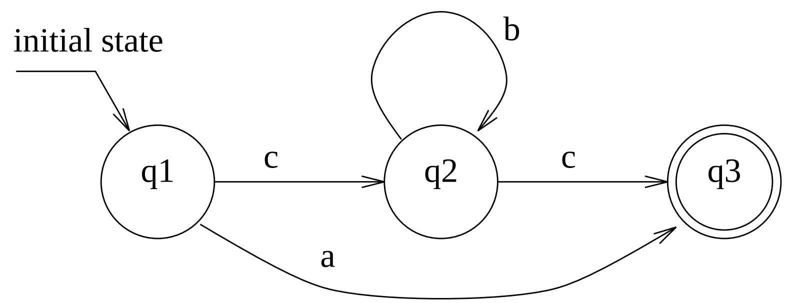
Detection of Regular Expression

- Example of a regular expression ?
  - $a + cb^*c$
- a regular expression is true in a run iff there exists a path in the run (poset) which matches the expression
- Complexity of problem
  - Many states
  - Many paths per state
  - Many strings per path



Algorithm

- Regular expression: $a + cb^*c$
- convert it to *non-deterministic* finite state machine (fsm)
- simulate it during the execution (piggybacking state of the fsm)
  - keep z[1..m] with each process
  - z[i] $=$ 1 iff there exists a causal path that takes the fsm to state i.



- Define one bit for each state

$$
\begin{aligned}
z_1 &:= init \\
z_2 &:= (c \wedge \diamond z_1) \vee (b \wedge \diamond z_2) \\
z_3 &:= (a \wedge \diamond z_1) \vee (c \wedge \diamond z_2)
\end{aligned}
$$

Other Approaches

- DAG patterns of local predicates [Garg, Tomlinson, Fromentin, Raynal 95]
- Atomic Sequences [Hurfin, Plouzeau, Raynal 93]
  - $l_i[r_i]l_{i+1}$
  - r_i does not occur between l_i and l_{i+1}
- Dynamic Properties [Babaoglu and Raynal 95]
  - Generalization of atomic sequences
- Event Normal Form [Chiou and Korfhage 94]
  - sequences of conjunctive predicates
- Recursive Poset Logic [Tomlinson and Garg 95]
  - Recursive combination of sequencing, conjunction, and linear predicates

Motivation for Control

Who controls the past controls the future, who controls the present controls the past...

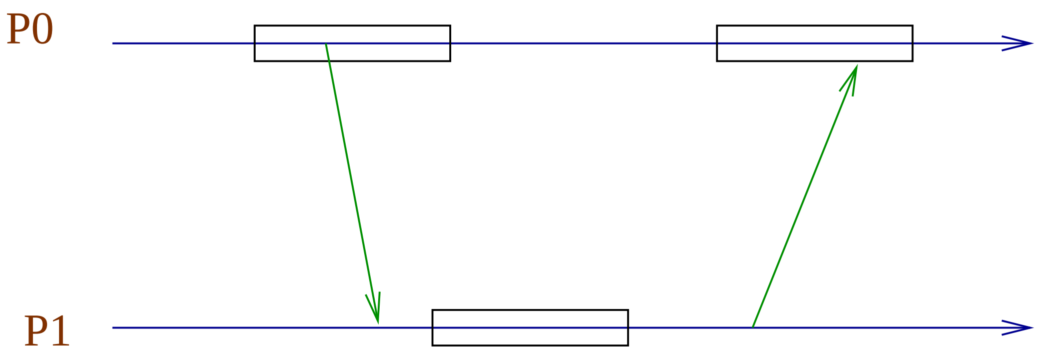
George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four.

- maintain global invariants or proper order of events
- Examples: Distributed Debugging
  - ensure that $busy_1 \vee busy_2$ is always true
  - ensure that m_1 is delivered before m_2
- Resource Allocation
  - maintain $\neg CS_1 \vee \neg CS_2$
- Fault tolerance
  - On fault, rollback and execute under control
- Adaptive policies
  - procedure A (B) better under light (heavy) load

Models for Control

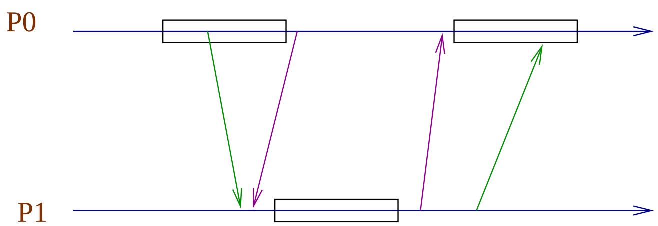
- Is the future known ?
  - Yes: offline control
    - applications in distributed debugging, recovery, fault tolerance..
  - No: online control
    - applications: global synchronization, resource allocation
- Delaying events vs Changing order of events
  - supervisor simply adds delay between events
  - supervisor changes order of events

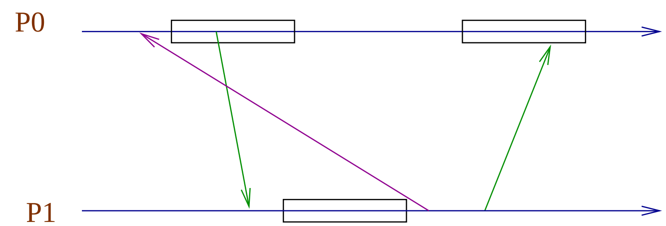
Delaying events: Offline control



- Maintain at least one of the process is not red
- Can add additional arrows in the diagram
- the control relation should not interfere with existing causality relation
  - otherwise, the system deadlocks

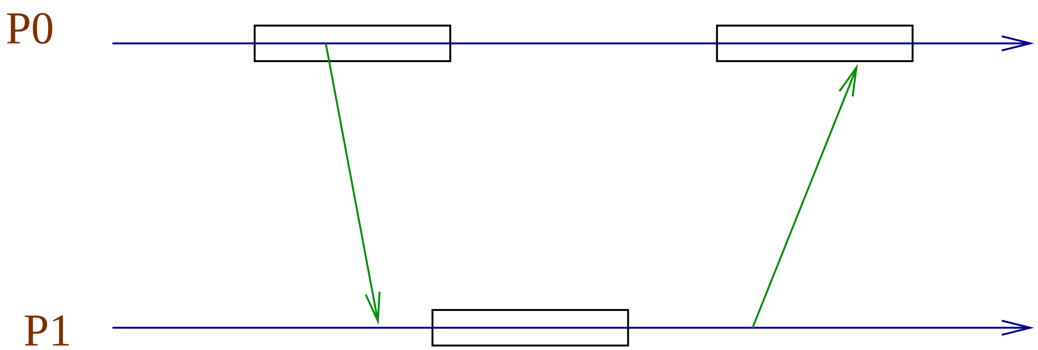
Delaying events: Offline control





- Problem:
  - Instance: Given a computation and a boolean expression q of local predicates
  - Question: Is there a non-interfering control relation that maintains q
- This problem is NP-complete [Tarafdar and Garg 97]

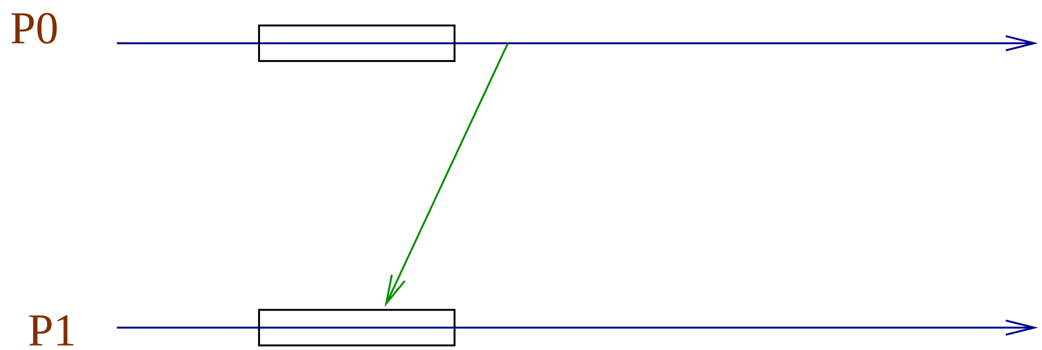
Delaying events: disjunctive predicates



- Efficient algorithm for disjunctive predicates
  - Example: at least one of the philosopher does not have a fork
  - Result: a control strategy exists iff there is no set of overlapping false intervals
    - $overlap(I_1, I_2) = (I_1.lo \rightarrow I_2.hi) \wedge (I_2.lo \rightarrow I_1.hi)$
  - Result: There exists an $O(n^2 m)$ algorithm to determine the strategy
    - n = number of processes
    - m = number of states per process

Delaying events: Online control

- Only the past is known
  - deadlock is impossible to avoid



- Assume: a process cannot block when its local predicate is false
  - maintaining $l_1 \vee l_2 \vee ... \vee l_n$ is equivalent to $n-1$ mutual exclusion problem
    - in CS = local predicate false
  - i.e., all n processes cannot be in the CS
  - can be solved using token which is a liability rather than privilege

Controlling order: Offline control

- Problem: Given a computation enforce an order of messages in a repeated run
  - Same order
    - Replay of distributed execution (distributed debugging)
    - need to store messages or message order
  - Different order
    - Testing of a distributed program [Kilgore, Chase 97]
    - Recovery of a distributed program
    - can change the order of two independent messages
    - the computation may change after first reorder

Controlling order: Online control

- Simple example: FIFO ordering of messages
- External events:
  - invocation of a message
  - send of a message
  - receive of a message
  - delivery of a message
- constraints on supervisor
  - invocation and receive events are uncontrollable
  - liveness requirement
    - if only events possible are send and delivery then at least one must be enabled.

Limitations of Online Supervision

- Specification: set of computation possible with a fixed set of messages
  - Question: Is there a control strategy to meet the specification ?
- Assumption: Supervisor can send control messages and tag user messages
  - Control possible iff specs include all synchronously order computations [Murty and Garg 97]
- Assumption: Supervisor can only tag user messages
  - control possible iff specs include all causally ordered computations [Murty and Garg 97]

Online supervision: Algorithms

- Forbidden predicate [Murty and Garg 97]
  - sub-structure that is not allowed in the computation
  - Example 1: Causal ordering
    - $\exists x, y : (x.s \rightarrow y.s) \wedge (y.r \rightarrow x.r)$
  - Example 2: Local forward flush channels
    - $(process(x.s) = process(y.s)) \wedge (process(x.r) = process(y.r) \wedge (color(x) = red) \wedge (x.s \rightarrow y.s) \wedge (y.r \rightarrow x.r)$
- There exists an algorithm with
  - input: a forbidden predicate
  - output: either "not possible", or a protocol to meet specs

Applications to Distributed Debugging

- Additional command
  - do *action* when *condition*
  - Also assume *run* and *rerun*
- Conditions
  - boolean predicate on the global state
    - requirement of (semi)-linearity
  - regular expression
- Actions
  - stop pids
  - print expressions
  - maintain boolean predicate
  - maintain order-expression

Summary

- Observation
  - Use causality instead of time to define "and"
  - Use monotonicity to reduce communication complexity
  - Global observation is quite efficient for many practical cases
    - linearity for boolean predicates
    - regular expressions of local predicates
- Control
  - desirable for many applications
  - offline vs online has implications on limitations
  - delay vs change of order model

Future Work

- Predicate detection under faulty environment
  - processes, channels or messages may fail
  - messages from different incarnations
- More complex model of control
  - plant variables vs control variables
  - unobservable events, uncontrollable events