Parallel Computing

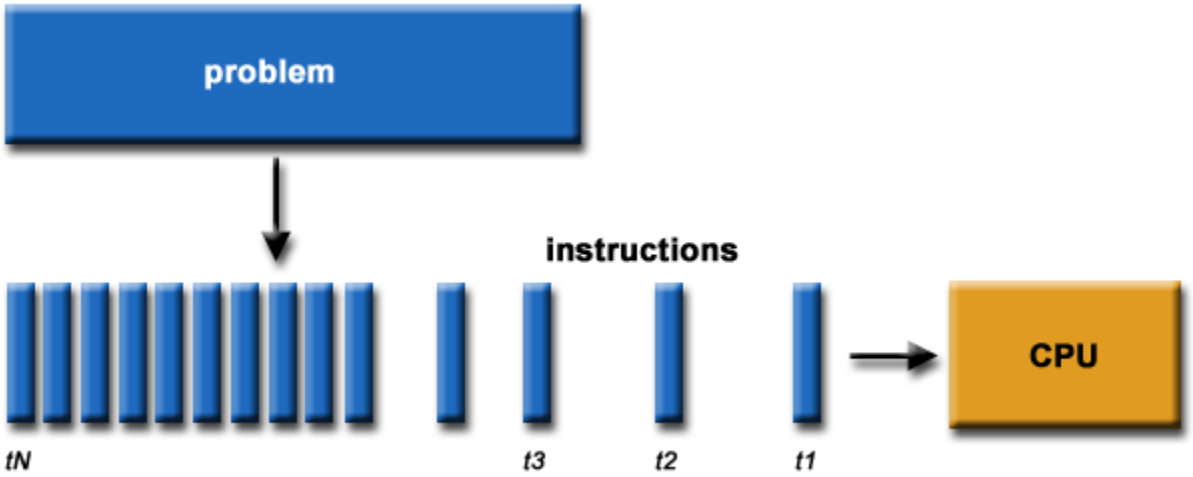
Chris 2008/03/14

Outlines

- Overview
  - What Is Parallel Computing?
  - Why Use Parallel Computing?
- Concepts and terminology
  - SISD, SIMD, MISD, MIMD
  - Amdahl's Law and Gustafson's Law
- Parallel Computer Memory Architecture
  - Shared Memory
  - Distributed Memory
  - Hybrid Distributed-Shared Memory

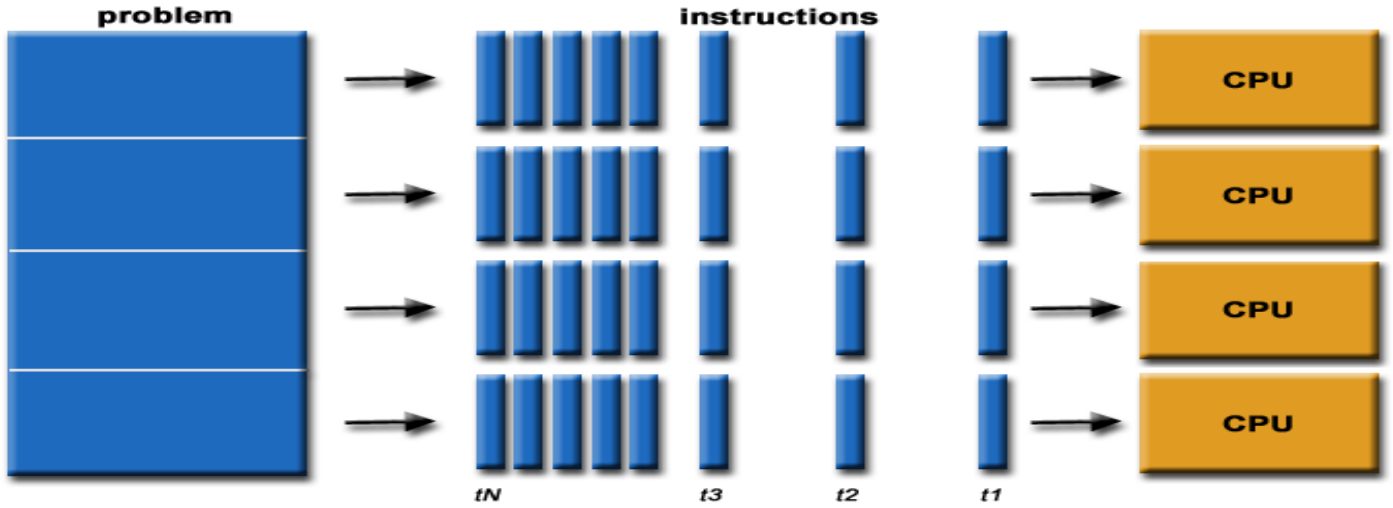
What is parallel computing ?

- Traditionally, software has been written for ***serial*** computation:
  - To be run on a single computer having a single Central Processing Unit (CPU);
  - A problem is broken into a discrete series of instructions.
  - Instructions are executed one after another.
  - Only one instruction may execute at any moment in time



What is parallel computing (cont.)?

- In the simplest sense, ***parallel computing*** is the simultaneous use of multiple compute resources to solve a computational problem.
  - To be run using multiple CPUs
  - A problem is broken into discrete parts that can be solved concurrently
  - Each part is further broken down to a series of instructions
  - Instructions from each part execute simultaneously on different CPUs



Why use parallel computing ?

- The primary reasons for using parallel computing:
  - Save time - wall clock time
  - Solve larger problems
  - Provide concurrency (do multiple things at the same time)
- Other reasons might include:
  - Taking advantage of non-local resources - using available compute resources on a wide area network, or even the Internet when local compute resources are scarce.
  - Cost savings - using multiple "cheap" computing resources instead of paying for time on a supercomputer.
  - Overcoming memory constraints - single computers have very finite memory resources. For large problems, using the memories of multiple computers may overcome this obstacle.

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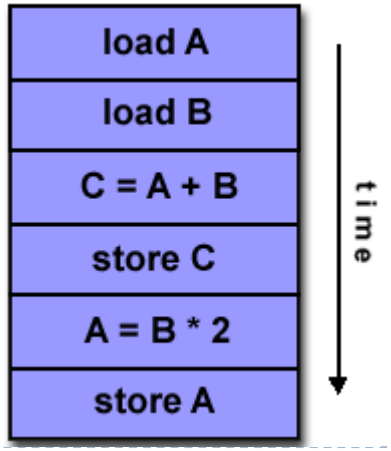
Concepts and terminology

- There are different ways to classify parallel computers. One of the more widely used classifications, in use since 1966, is called Flynn's Taxonomy.
- Flynn's taxonomy distinguishes multi-processor computer architectures according to how they can be classified along the two independent dimensions of ***Instruction*** and ***Data***. Each of these dimensions can have only one of two possible states: ***Single*** or ***Multiple***.

Flynn's taxonomy		
	Single Instruction	**Multiple Instruction**
Single Data	SISD	MISD
Multiple Data	SIMD	MIMD

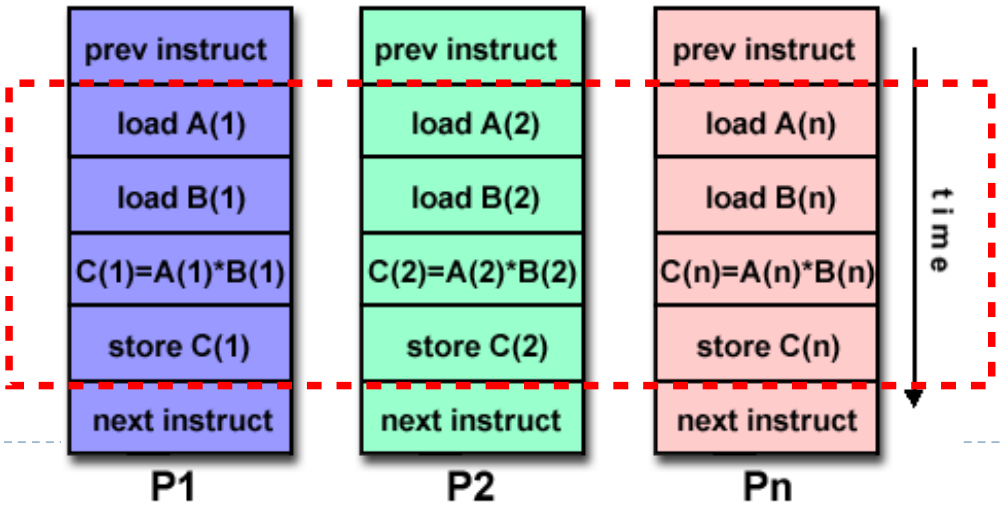
Single Instruction, Single Data (SISD)

- A serial (non-parallel) computer
- Single instruction: only one instruction stream is being acted on by the CPU during any one clock cycle
- Single data: only one data stream is being used as input during any one clock cycle
- Deterministic execution
- This is the oldest and until recently, the most prevalent form of computer
- Examples: most PCs, single CPU workstations and mainframes



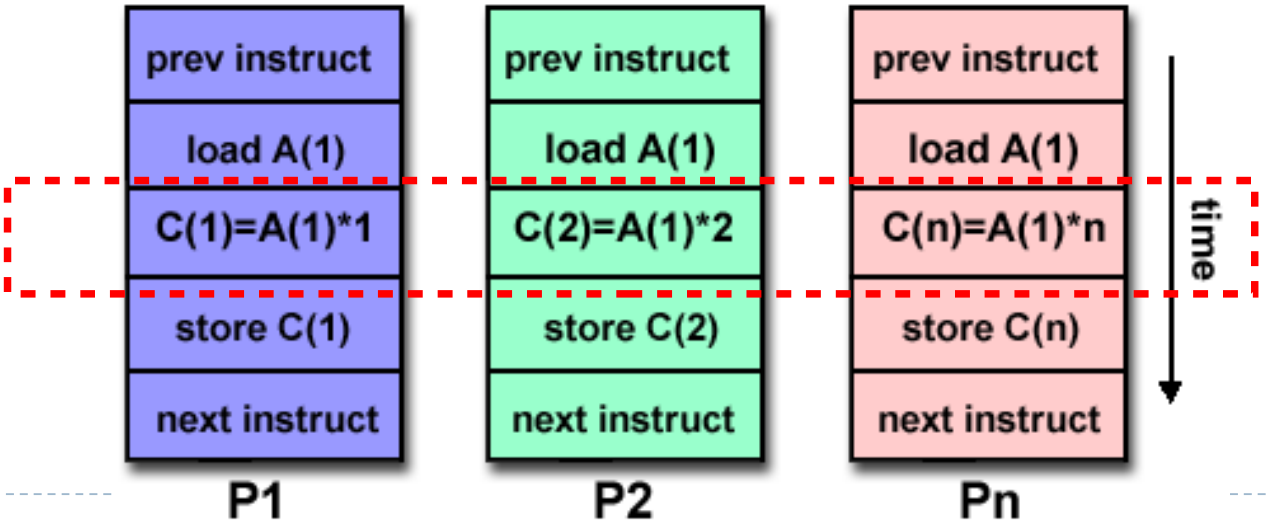
Single Instruction, Multiple Data (SIMD)

- A type of parallel computer
- Single instruction: All processing units execute the same instruction at any given clock cycle
- Multiple data: Each processing unit can operate on a different data element
- This type of machine typically has an instruction dispatcher, a very high-bandwidth internal network, and a very large array of very small-capacity instruction units.
- Best suited for specialized problems characterized by a high degree of regularity, such as image processing.
- Synchronous (lockstep) and deterministic execution
- Two varieties: Processor Arrays and Vector Pipelines



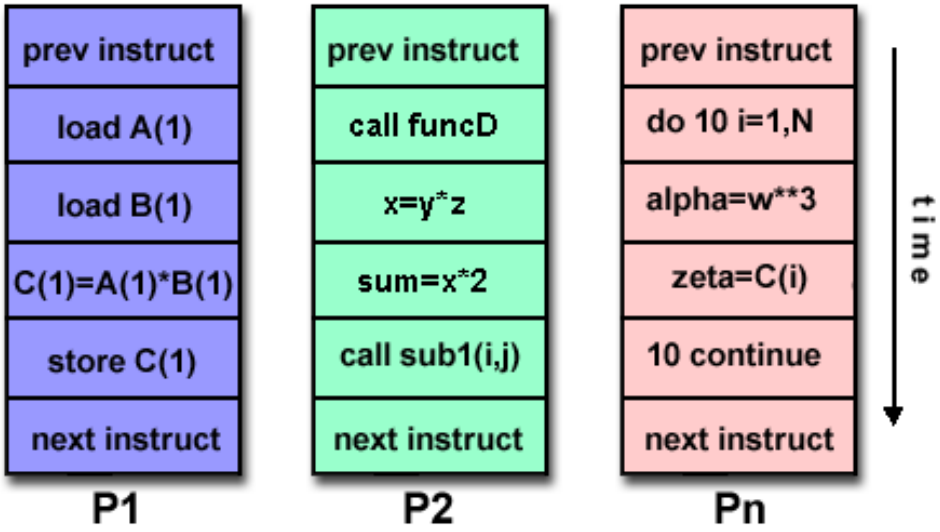
Multiple Instruction, Single Data (MISD)

- A single data stream is fed into multiple processing units.
- Each processing unit operates on the data independently via independent instruction streams.
- Few actual examples of this class of parallel computer have ever existed. One is the experimental Carnegie-Mellon C.mmp computer (1971).
- Some conceivable uses might be:
  - multiple frequency filters operating on a single signal stream
  - multiple cryptography algorithms attempting to crack a single coded message



Multiple Instruction, Multiple Data (MIMD)

- Currently, the most common type of parallel computer. Most modern computers fall into this category.
- Multiple Instruction: every processor may be executing a different instruction stream
- Multiple Data: every processor may be working with a different data stream
- Execution can be synchronous or asynchronous, deterministic or non-deterministic
- Examples: most current supercomputers, networked parallel computer "grids" and multi-processor SMP computers - including some types of PCs.



Amdahl's Law and Gustafson's Law

- http://www.zdnet.com.tw/white_board/intel/video-2.htm
- Sun Ni's Law

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Parallel Computer Memory Architectures

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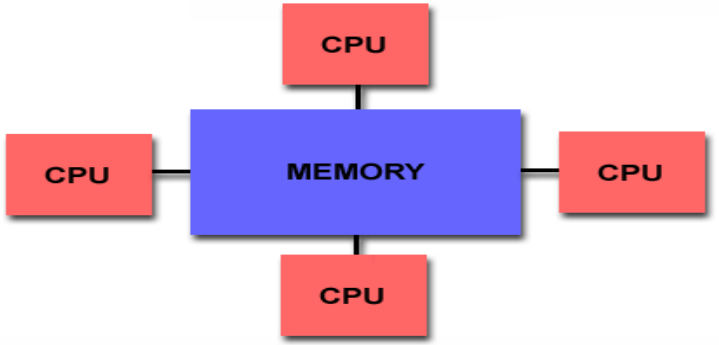
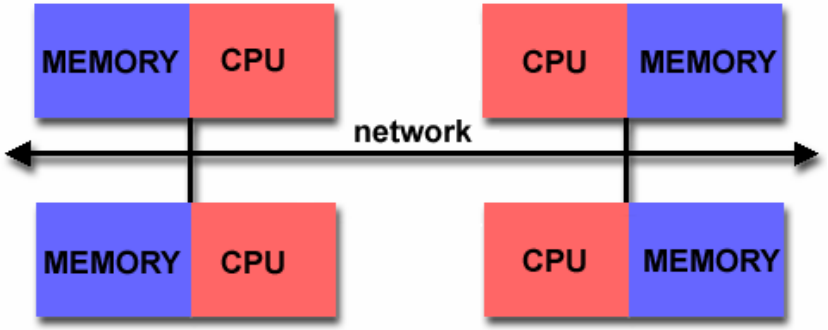
Shared Memory



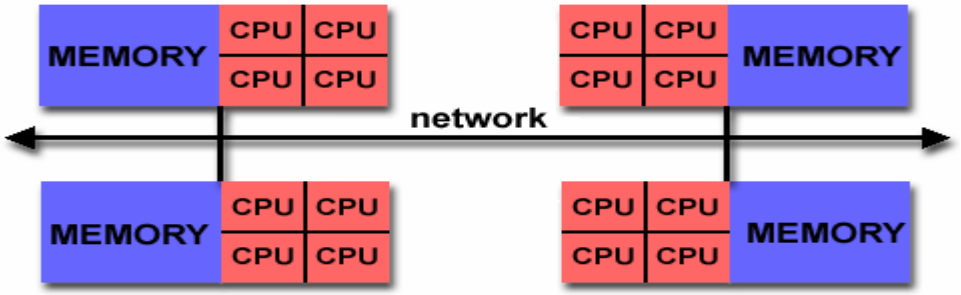
- Advantages:
  - Global address space provides a user-friendly programming perspective to memory
  - Data sharing between tasks is both fast and uniform due to the proximity of memory to CPUs
- Disadvantages:
  - Primary disadvantage is the lack of scalability between memory and CPUs. Adding more CPUs can geometrically increases traffic on the shared memory-CPU path, and for cache coherent systems, geometrically increase traffic associated with cache/memory management.
  - Programmer responsibility for synchronization constructs that insure "correct" access of global memory.
  - Expense: it becomes increasingly difficult and expensive to design and produce shared memory machines with ever increasing numbers of processors.

Distributed Memory



- Advantages:
  - Memory is scalable with number of processors. Increase the number of processors and the size of memory increases proportionately.
  - Each processor can rapidly access its own memory without interference and without the overhead incurred with trying to maintain cache coherency.
  - Cost effectiveness: can use commodity, off-the-shelf processors and networking.
- Disadvantages:
  - The programmer is responsible for many of the details associated with data communication between processors.
  - It may be difficult to map existing data structures, based on global memory, to this memory organization.
  - Non-uniform memory access (NUMA) times

Hybrid Distributed-Shared Memory



- The shared memory component is usually a cache coherent SMP machine. Processors on a given SMP can address that machine's memory as global.
- The distributed memory component is the networking of multiple SMPs. SMPs know only about their own memory - not the memory on another SMP. Therefore, network communications are required to move data from one SMP to another.
- Current trends seem to indicate that this type of memory architecture will continue to prevail and increase at the high end of computing for the foreseeable future.
- Advantages and Disadvantages: whatever is common to both shared and distributed memory architectures.