Virtual memory - Swapping

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Virtual memory

- **1:** Allowing two or more processes to use main memory, given them an illusion of private memory.
- **2:** Provide the illusion of a much larger address space than provided by the main memory.

*Pages can be temporarily stored in secondary memory i.e. on disk.*
Processes

Processes in virtual space

Small physical memory

Large secondary storage
Large virtual memory

Virtual memory

- Page in memory
- Page on disk
- Not allocated
The problem of Swapping

- Memory management must detect that a page is currently not in memory.
- If it is not in memory, how do we find it?
- If the memory is full, which page do we throw out?
- When we throw out a page, do we have to copy it to disk?
- Who should do all this, hardware or operating system?
The page table entry (PTE)

- 31: 20-bit frame number
- 12: Present
- 6 / 31: User/Supervisor
- R/W: R/W
The page table entry (PTE)

- **Present**: 0
- **Page slot index**: 31
- **Area number**: 8
Page faults

Page present (in memory)
  yes
  no

Allowed access
  yes
  no

Translate address

Seg. fault

Page allocated (on disk)
  yes
  no

Swap in page

Allowed segment
  yes
  no

Allocate page

Seg. fault
Remember the TLB

- TLB hit
  - yes
  - no
    - retrieve PTE

- page present (in memory)
  - yes
  - no
    - page allocated (on disk)
      - yes
      - no
        - swap in page
          - yes
          - no
            - allowed segment
              - yes
              - no
                - allocate page
                  - yes
                  - no
                    - seg. fault
                      - seg. fault
                      - seg. fault

- allowed access
  - yes
  - no
    - translate address
      - yes
      - no
        - seg. fault
          - seg. fault
          - seg. fault
The operating system keeps track of all processes and maintains:

**a memory structure**
- Which segments are allowed.
- Read/write access.
- User/Supervisor mode.
- Copy on write.

**a page table**
- Which pages are allocated?
- Physical frames of pages or location on secondary storage.
- Access rights.
- Modified, accessed, cacheable...
The cost of page faults

The cost of memory access:

- TLB hit, address found in cache: $\sim 1\text{ ns}$
- TLB hit, address in memory: $\sim 10\text{ ns}$
- TLB miss, PTE in memory: up to $100\text{ ns}$
- TLB miss, page on disk: up to $10\text{ ms}$

Retrieving from disk is a factor 100,000 times more expensive than finding things in memory.

*What can we do while we're waiting?*
Replacement policy

The problem with caching - which item do we throw out when the cache is filled?

Why try to be smart - pick a page by random.

Are pages referenced randomly?
Locality of references

Memory references are not random in space nor time.

- **Temporal locality**: an address that has been referenced is likely to be referenced soon again.
- **Spatial locality**: an address that is close to something that has been referenced is likely to be referenced.

*In these benchmarks we have simulated spatial locality by assuming that 20% of the pages are accessed 80% of the time.*
The random policy

When the memory is full select a frame by random and move it to disk.
We can do better!

When you need to throw out a page, select the one that will be used \textit{the furthest in the future}.

- page references: 
  0,1,2,3,0,2,3,1,2,0,3,0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>access</th>
<th>hit/miss</th>
<th>evict</th>
<th>memory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>miss</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
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<td>hit</td>
<td></td>
<td>0,1,2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Optimal replacement policy

Case closed .... ehhh?
Optimal replacement policy

Important to know the best possible solution (even if it’s not obtainable).

We might not have access to the future - but the past might give us a good approximation.
Least Recently Used (LRU)

A page that has not been referenced for long is not likely to be referenced in the near future.

page references:
0,1,2,3,0,2,3,1,2,0,3,0

<table>
<thead>
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<td>miss</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>hit</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,0,3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Result: two more misses compared to the optimal.
Least Recently Used

The image shows a graph plotting the hit ratio against the number of frames in memory. The graph compares different memory management strategies:

- **Random**
- **Optimal**
- **LRU**

The LRU strategy shows the highest hit ratio, indicating more efficient memory management compared to random and optimal strategies.
Implement Least Recently Used

Keep track of a queue of pages (as many as we have frames).

In each page reference, move page to the end of the list.

When evicting a page, select the first page in the list.

Is this expensive?
The Atlas Computer / Atlas Supervisor

- Manchester University, 1962
- 48-bit word, 16 K word memory, 96 K word “drum”
- 24-bit address space
- paged virtual memory
- 512 word pages
- approximated Least Recently Used replacement policy
The problem with LRU is that we need to update the lists in each page reference.

It is much cheaper if we only update the list when we have a page fault.

Idée: It’s better to keep a page that was recently brought in compared to one that has been around for a while.
FIFO - first-in, first-out

- Keep allocated pages in a queue - add in one end, reclaim in the other.
- page references: 0,1,2,3,0,2,3,1,2,0,3,0

<table>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>miss</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,3,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Result: only 3 hits -("
Let’s try with more pages 0-4
page references:
0,1,2,3,0,1,4,0,1,2,3,4

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<td>hit</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,2,3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 hits out of 12 page references - hmmm
Belady’s anomaly

Let’s try with more frames, four instead of three!

- page references:
  0,1,2,3,0,1,4,0,1,2,3,4

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<tr>
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<td>miss</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,2,3,4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WTF!
Approximating LRU

Assume a *reference bit* in the page table entry, initially set to zero.

When the page is referenced, the bit is set to one - *by the hardware*.

When selecting a page for eviction - select a page with the reference bit set to zero.

A page with a reference bit set to one - *is given a second chance*.

When should a reference bit be cleared?
the clock algorithm

15:1 → 13:0

access page 7
access page 15
access page 18
access page 8
access page 2
access page 45
move forward, reset reference bit
remove page
allocate new page
move forward

15:1

8:1
the clock algorithm

![Graph showing hit ratio vs frames in memory for different algorithms: random, optimal, LRU, and clock. The graph illustrates the performance comparison of these algorithms as more frames are added to memory.]
You have two frames to choose from, holding:

- a page that has been recently used but not modified and,
- a page that has not been used for a long time but has been modified.

Which one should we reclaim if we need a free frame?
The page table entry (PTE)
Implementation of Page Frame Reclaiming Algorithm in Linux:

- Global i.e. all processes share all frames.
- Two sets: the *active list* and the *inactive list*.
- Each set implements an approximation of LRU similar to the clock algorithm.
- Inactive pages are moved from the active to the inactive set and vice versa.
- A kernel thread tries to maintain a set of free frames i.e. moving pages from the inactive set to disk before it is needed.
- Operations are batched to improve disk locality and reduce locking.
The problem of Swapping

- Memory management must detect that a page is currently not in memory.
- If it is not in memory, how do we find it?
- If the memory is full, which page to we throw out?
- When we throw out a page, do we have to copy it to disk?
- Who should do all this, hardware or operating system?