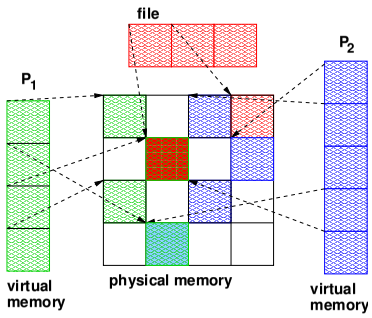
## Single-Address-Space Operating Systems

- New paradigm for OS design
- Enabled by 64-bit hardware
- Motivation: use H/W features to:
  - ➜ improve overall performance,
  - ➜ simplify applications.



## Address Spaces

Traditional OS use a separate address space for each process.






## Multiple address spaces:

- Each address space has own virtual→physical mapping.
- Advantages:
  - ➜ Maximises available address space
  - ➜ Isolates processes (provide protection)
- Drawbacks:
  - ➜ Meaning of virtual address depends on process context
  - ➜ Isolation inhibits sharing



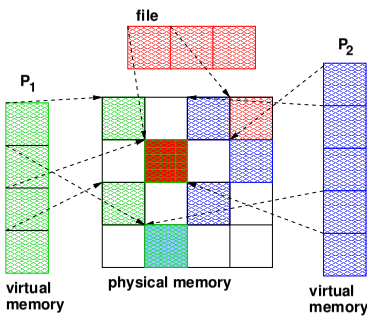
## How do processes share data?

- Via files:
  - ➜ One process writes data to a file, another reads file
  - ➜ Similarly pipes, sockets, ...
- Via message passing (IPC):
  - ➜ One process sends message, another receives
- Via shared memory:
  - ➜ both establish shared memory arena (`mmap()`)
  - ➜ shared buffers are mapped to the same physical memory locations
  - ➜ both can access the same data directly

All require OS intervention.

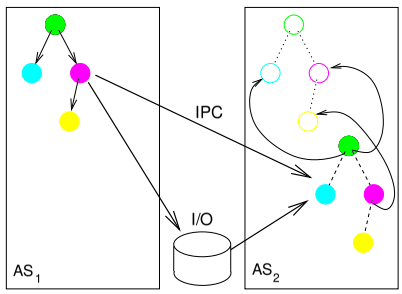


## Sharing between address spaces






## Problems with sharing: Pointers!

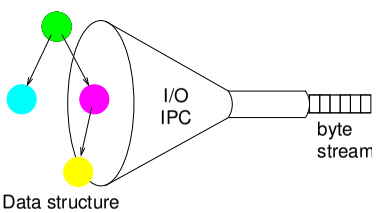



- ➜ pointers are bound to an address space
- ➜ they are meaningless outside



## Sharing across address spaces

... requires copying and conversions




- ➜ implies loss of typing
- ➜ increases code complexity (order of 30% of app code!)
- ➜ increases run-time overhead



## Other problems with address spaces

| memory data: | file data: |
|---|---|
| `item_t a, *x;` | `item_t a;`<br>`int x;`<br>`FILE *f;` |
| `...`<br>`a = *x;` | `...`<br>`f = fopen("f","r");`<br>`fseek (f, x, SEEK_SET);`<br>`fread (*a, sizeof(item_t), 1, f);` |
| address is `*x` | address is `("f",*x)` |

Inconsistent naming of persistent and volatile data

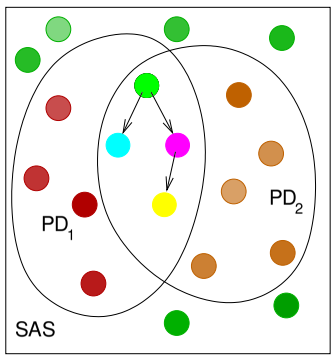
## WHY DO WE HAVE PROBLEMS WITH SHARING?

- The problems are with pointers
  - ➜ pointer problems result from per-address-space mappings
  - ➜ result from the desire to maximise the available address space
  - ➜ results from limitations on address bits
- But we have 64-bit architectures now!
- Why not abolish private mappings????
  - ➜ all address spaces are merged into one
  - ➜ each process has same virtual→physical mapping
  - ➜ all memory objects (text, data, stack, libraries) are allocated at unique addresses
  - ➜ $2^{64}$ is big enough to include "files" as memory objects

⇒ *single-address-space system*



## Single-Address-Space Operating Systems



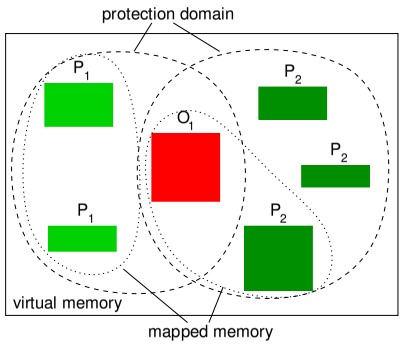



## SASOS CHARACTERISTICS:

- Unique addresses for all data items
  - ➜ threads always agree about the address of data
- Sharing by reference
  - – simply pass pointer
- no marshalling or conversion of data formats required
  - ➜ on-disk format same as in-memory format



## Protection in a SASOS






## PROTECTION:

- Everything is *visible*
- *Protection domain* defines what is *accessible*
- Access requires mapping virtual to physical addresses
- Mapping established by system

⇒ System controls access by establishing *partial view* of the single address space

- Can implement usual protection models (ACLs, capabilities)



## Single Address Space Advantages

### APPLICATION VIEW

- Simple naming mechanism – 64 bit address – supported by "conventional" hardware.
- User data structures can contain embedded references to other data.
- Eliminates excessive copying of data and software pointer translation.



## SASOS ADVANTAGES: SYSTEM VIEW

- Simplifies data migration
- Simplifies process migration
- Orthogonality of translation and protection
- No need for file system — all disk I/O is paging
- RAM is cache for VM — unified buffer & disk cache management
- Easy to implement zero-copy operations
- In-place execution — no need for position-independent code

⇒ Simplified system implementation and increased performance



## SASOS ADVANTAGES: HARDWARE VIEW

- Virtual caches are no problem
  virtual address maps uniquely to physical address
- hardware separating translation from protection could increase performance due to increased TLB coverage
  (e.g. IA-64 *protection keys*)

## Single-Address-Space Operating Systems

**IBM SYSTEM/38** [Ber80] and successor **AS/400** [Sol96] (1978)

- high-level object-oriented architecture built on single-level store
- geared towards data-intensive commercial applications
- protection based on tagged capabilities

**Drawbacks:**
- totally different environment
- requires hardware support
- performance...



**ANGEL** [MSS+93] (City University, London, 1992–5)

- runs on standard hardware
- microkernel architecture with lightweight RPC
- protection server for flexible protection model

**Drawbacks:**
- prototype is 32-bit only
- performance?



**OPAL** [CLFL94] (U of Washington, 1992–4)

- runs on standard hardware
- protection domains as 1st class objects
- password capabilities
- implemented on top of Mach

**Drawbacks:**
- applications must handle capabilities (e.g. on RPC)
- no fast rights amplification
- performance!



**SOMBRERO** [SMF96] (Arizona State U, 1994–now)

- designed (not implemented) special protection hardware
- simulated on Alpha
- established some software engineering advantages of SASOS



**MUNGI** [HEV+98] (UNSW, 1994–now)

- "pure" SASOS (no message-passing IPC)
- standard 64-bit hardware
- discretionary and mandatory access control
- user-level device drivers and system extensions
- POSIX emulation
- fastest SASOS to date



## SASOS Issues

- Protection model
- POSIX compatibility
- Resource Management
- Linking
- Persistence
- System extensibility
- Performance

Discussed in context of Mungi



## Mungi Security

**TWO BASIC KINDS OF MECHANISMS:**

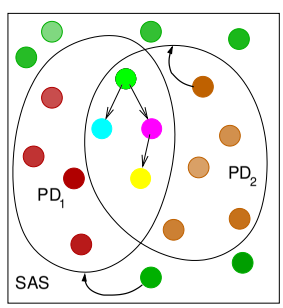
- Discretionary access control
  - ➜ *user-oriented* mechanism
  - ➜ users determine which of their data should be accessible to others
  - ➜ essential for *privacy*
  - ➜ two basic models: *access control lists* and *capabilities*
- Mandatory access control
  - ➜ *system-oriented* mechanism
  - ➜ system-wide *security policy* limits data flow
  - ➜ essential for use of *untrusted extensions*
  - ➜ range of models: Denning, Bell-LaPadula, Chinese Wall, role-based....

Mungi has both



## Discretionary Access Control in Mungi

- Threads execute inside a *protection domain* (PD)
- A protection domain is defined as a set of *capabilities*
- Capabilities and protection domains are user-level objects
- Thread may or may not have control over its PD
  - ➜ supports user-controlled confinement

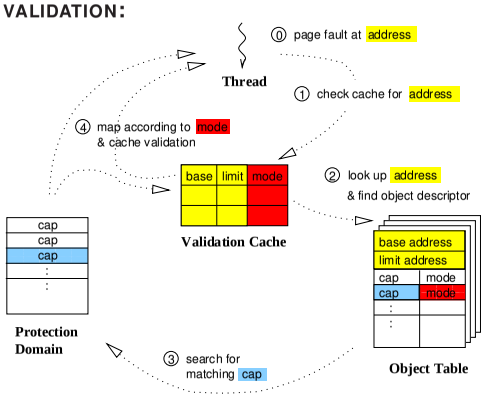


## MAIN MUNGI ABSTRACTIONS:

- Unit of protection is the *memory object*
  - ➜ contiguous page range
  - ➜ associated with a set of *password capabilities*
- Unit of execution is the *thread*
  - ➜ kernel-scheduled
  - ➜ execute in an *active protection domain* (APD)
  - ➜ associated with a (user-level) *TCB object* (UTCB)
  - ➜ thread control is via access to UTCB
- An APD consists of (caps for) an array of *Clists*
  - ➜ A Clist is an object consisting of an array of caps
  - ➜ APD itself is in kernel space
- Caps confer sets of rights, combination of:
  - ➜ `read`, `write`, `execute`, `delete`, `enquire`, `PDX`



## ACCESS VALIDATION:




**Note:** All capability presentation is *implicit*



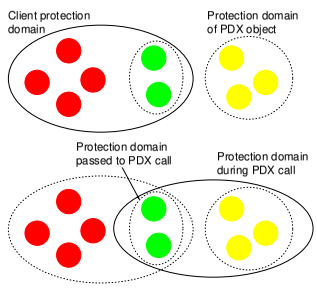
## THREADS AND PROTECTION DOMAINS

- A thread can be started in an existing APD or a new one
- New APD is instantiated from a template
  - ➜ called the *protection domain object* (PDO)
  - ➜ system-defined structure
  - ➜ consists of an array of *clist* capabilities,
  - ➜ access restricted to trusted management code
  - ➜ PDO creation requires special privileges
- Thread can also change APD temporarily
  - ➜ called *protection-domain extension*, PDX
  - ➜ requires PDX cap
  - ➜ serves as protected-procedure call mechanism



## Protected Procedure Calls

- Object can have (PDX) type:
  - ➜ has *PDX capabilities*,
  - ➜ registered set of *entry points*,
  - ➜ an associated *PDX clist*.
- Owner's APD changes *for the duration of the call*
- Allows secure invocation of an object in a PD different from caller's
- *Discretionary* access control validates entry points and invocation right



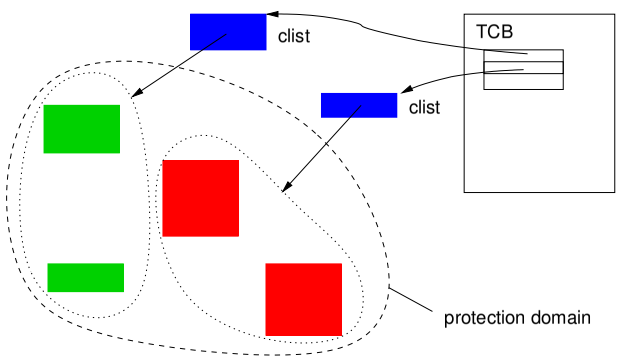



## Protection Domain Manipulation:

- All capability presentation is *implicit* (via clists).
- A thread can manipulate its protection domain:
  - ➜ by modifying its clists,
  - ➜ **provided that the APD contains the clists**.
- A thread can be set up so that it's APD:
  - – does not contain the clists defining it,
  - – does not contain write access to any "public" objects.
- Such a thread is *confined*.



## Discretionary Confinement in Mungi






## Mandatory Access Control in Mungi

- Using *domain and type enforcement* (DTE) model [EH01a]:
  - – Each object has a *type* label
  - – Each APD has a *domain* label
  - – Each thread has:
    - ➜ a type label (because it's an object)
    - ➜ a domain label (because it belongs to an APD)
  - – a PDX object has:
    - ➜ a type label (because it's an object)
    - ➜ a domain label (because it has an associated PD)
- System-wide security policy is a relation on types and domains

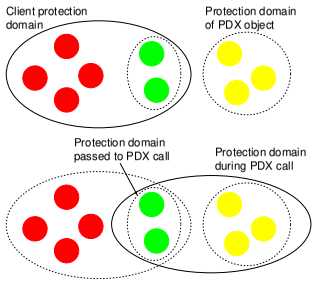


## MANDATORY ACCESS CONTROL OPERATION

- MAC policy relation is represented in (user-level) *policy object*
- Kernel consults on each access validation:
  - – Object access: domain has access to type
  - – APD creation / PDX call:
    - ➜ thread has access to invoked object
    - ➜ caller APD has right to transfer to target APD
- Policy object consists of a number of (mostly simple) validation functions
  - ➜ invoked via PDX ⇒ also subject to MAC!
  - ➜ MAC validations are cached in separate validation cache

## PDX AGAIN...

- ➜ *discretionary* access control validates entry points and invocation right
- ➜ *mandatory* access control validates right to use target PD
- ➜ *discretionary* and *mandatory* access control validate data access




- Can use this as the basis for secure system extensions!
  - ➜ Component model based on PDX for extending system



## OS Extensibility

- Linux loadable kernel modules:
  - ➜ Run as part of the kernel ⇒ no protection.
  - ➜ Unsuitable for OS extension/customisation by users.
- User-level servers (Mach, Windows-NT):
  - ➜ based on message-based communication with servers,
  - ➜ performance problems ⇒ migrate extensions into kernel.
  - ➜ newer systems try to do better (e.g. SawMill)



## EXISTING APPROACHES TO OS EXTENSIBILITY (CONT'D)

- Safe kernel extensions by *trusted code* (e.g. SPIN [BSP+95]):
  - ➜ extensions must be programmed in *type-safe* language (Modula-3),
  - ➜ restrictive programming model,
  - ➜ large trusted computing base,
  - ➜ unconvincing performance.
- Safety by *sandboxing* kernel extensions (e.g. Vino [SESS96]):
  - ➜ poor performance.



## WHAT'S WRONG?

- Kernel extensions create huge *security problems*.
  - ➜ Kernel code is inherently unrestricted.
  - ➜ Imposition of restrictions results in *cost* and *complexity*.
- User-level extensions can be secure but:
  - ➜ have potential *performance problems*, and
  - ➜ need to be supported by an appropriate *framework*.



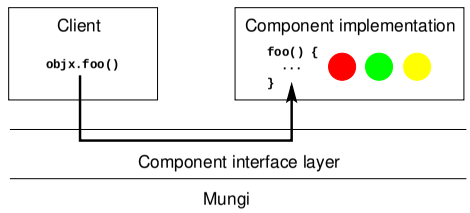
## WHAT'S NEEDED?

User-level extensibility can be made to work if [EH01b]:

- Performance can be ensured.
  - ➜ Requires fast inter-process communication.
  - ➜ Has been demonstrated (L4, Pebble, Mungi).
- Security can be guaranteed.
  - ➜ Extensions operate within "normal" OS protection system.
  - ➜ Will work if OS protection is *strong and flexible* enough.
- A framework for extensions is provided which supports:
  - ➜ transparent invocation of extended services,
  - ➜ low overhead extension and customisation of extensions,
  - ➜ software technology to minimise complexity.



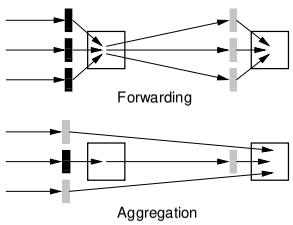
## Mungi Component Model




- ➜ Component implementation is in different PD from caller
  - ➜ Can use for invoking protected subsystems
- ➜ PDX is used for invocation
- ➜ Component data is created *inside* the component PD
- ➜ Client and component are mutually protected
- ➜ Mandatory security policy limits data propagation
- ➜ Single address space ⇒ *no need to marshal arguments!*



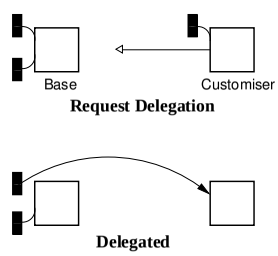
## EXTENDING EXTENSIONS




- ➜ Components export *interfaces*.
- ➜ Component instances can invoke interfaces of other instances (and thus extend them): *forwarding*.
- ➜ *Aggregation* allows direct invocation of extended interface.



## CUSTOMISATION




- ➜ *Delegation* is a dynamic form of aggregation that allows an invocation of a base component to be transparently handled by another component.
- ➜ Avoids the semantic nightmares of *virtual inheritance*.

## OVERHEAD OF MANDATORY ACCESS CONTROL

| Benchmark | no MAC ms | with MAC ms | O/H % |
|---|---|---|---|
| OO1 | 187.8 | 187.8 | 0.0 |
| Jigsaw$_{56\times56}$ | 374 | 375 | 0.3 |
| Andrew | 672 | 674 | 0.3 |



## EXTENSION SYSTEM PERFORMANCE: MICROBENCHMARKS

Broken PostScript Picture — sorry



## EXTENSION SYSTEM PERFORMANCE: MACROBENCHMARKS

| Environment | Time |
|---|---|
| Linux (RAM disk) | 283 ms |
| Mungi (statically linked) | 146 ms |
| Mungi (extension) | 247 ms |



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