A Message Passing Standard for MPP and Workstations

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Message Passing Interface (MPI)

Message passing library

Can be added to sequential languages (C, Fortran)

Designed by consortium from industry, academics, government

Goal is a message passing standard
MPI Programming Model

Multiple Program Multiple Data (MPMD)
  Processors may execute different programs
    (unlike SPMD)
  Number of processes is fixed (one per processor)
  No support for multi-threading

Point-to-point and collective communication
MPI Basics

MPI_INIT
initialize MPI

MPI_FINALIZE
terminate computation

MPI_COMM SIZE
number of processes

MPI_COMM RANK
my process identifier

MPI_SEND
send a message

MPI_RECV
receive a message
Language Bindings

Describes for a given base language
  concrete syntax
  error-handling conventions
  parameter modes

Popular base languages:
  C
  Fortran
Point-to-point message passing

Messages sent from one processor to another are FIFO ordered.
Messages sent by different processors arrive non-deterministically.

Receiver may specify source:
- source = sender's identity => symmetric naming
- source = MPI_ANY_SOURCE => asymmetric naming
  example: specify sender of next pivot row in ASP

Receiver may also specify tag:
- Distinguishes different kinds of messages
- Similar to operation name in SR
Examples (1/2)

```c
int x, status;
float buf[10];

MPI_SEND (buf, 10, MPI_FLOAT, 3, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD);
    /* send 10 floats to process 3; MPI_COMM_WORLD = all processes */

MPI_RECV (&x, 1, MPI_INT, 15, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD, &status);
    /* receive 1 integer from process 15 */

MPI_RECV (&x, 1, MPI_INT, MPI_ANY_SOURCE, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD, &status);
    /* receive 1 integer from any process */
```
Examples (2/2)

```c
int x, status;
#define NEW_MINIMUM 1

MPI_SEND (&x, 1, MPI_INT, 3, NEW_MINIMUM, MPI_COMM_WORLD);
    /* send message with tag NEW_MINIMUM */.

MPI_RECV (&x, 1, MPI_INT, 15, NEW_MINIMUM, MPI_COMM_WORLD, &status);
    /* receive 1 integer with tag NEW_MINIMUM */

MPI_RECV (&x, 1, MPI_INT, MPI_ANY_SOURCE, NEW_MINIMUM, MPI_COMM_WORLD, &status);
    /* receive tagged message from any source */
```
Forms of message passing

MPI has a very wide and complex variety of primitives

Programmer can decide whether to:
- minimize copying overhead
  -> synchronous and ready-mode sends
- minimize idle time, overlap communication & computation
  -> buffered sends and nonblocking sends

Communication modes control the buffering

(Non)blocking determines when sends complete
Communication modes

• **Standard:**
  – Programmer cannot make any assumptions whether the message is buffered, this is up to the system

• **Buffered:**
  – Programmer provides (bounded) buffer space
  – SEND completes when message is copied into buffer (local)
  – Erroneous if buffer space is insufficient

• **Synchronous:**
  – Send waits for matching receive
  – No buffering -> easy to get deadlocks

• **Ready:**
  – Programmer asserts that receive has already been posted
  – Erroneous if there is no matching receive yet
Unsafe programs

- MPI does not guarantee any system buffering
- Programs that assume it are unsafe and may deadlock

Example of such a deadlock:

Machine 0:
MPI_SEND (&x1, 10, MPI_INT, 1, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD);
MPI_RECV (&x2, 10, MPI_INT, 1, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD, &status);

Machine 1:
MPI_SEND (&y1, 10, MPI_INT, 0, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD);
MPI_RECV (&y2, 10, MPI_INT, 0, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD, &status);
(Non)blocking sends

A blocking send returns when it’s safe to modify its arguments
A non-blocking ISEND returns immediately (dangerous)

```c
int buf[10];
request = MPI_ISEND (buf, 10, MPI_FLOAT, 3, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD);
compute(); /* these computations can be overlapped with the transmission */
buf[2]++; /* dangerous: may or may not affect the transmitted buf */
MPI_WAIT(&request, & status); /* waits until the ISEND completes */
```

Don’t confuse this with synchronous vs asynchronous!
synchronous = wait for (remote) receiver
blocking = wait till arguments have been saved (locally)
Non-blocking receive

- **MPI_IPROBE** check for pending message
- **MPI_PROBE** wait for pending message
- **MPI_GET_COUNT** number of data elements in message

**MPI_PROBE** (source, tag, comm, &status) => status
**MPI_GET_COUNT** (status, datatype, &count) => message size
status.MPI_SOURCE => identity of sender
status.MPI_TAG => tag of message
Example: Check for Pending Messages

int buf[1], flag, source, minimum;
while ( ...) {
    MPI_IPROBE(MPI_ANY_SOURCE, NEW_MINIMUM, comm, &flag, &status);
    while (flag) {
        /* handle new minimum */
        source = status.MPI_SOURCE;
        MPI_RECV (buf, 1, MPI_INT, source, NEW_MINIMUM, comm, &status);
        minimum = buf[0];
        /* check for another update */
        MPI_IPROBE(MPI_ANY_SOURCE, NEW_MINIMUM, comm, &flag, &status);
    }
    ... /* compute */
}
Example: Receiving Message with Unknown Size

```c
int count, *buf, source;
MPI_PROBE(MPI_ANY_SOURCE, 0, comm, &status);
source = status.MPI_SOURCE;
MPI_GET_COUNT (status, MPI_INT, &count);
buf = malloc (count * sizeof (int));
MPI_RECV (buf, count, MPI_INT, source, 0, comm, &status);
```
Global Operations - Collective Communication

Coordinated communication involving all processes

Functions:

- **MPI_BARRIER**
  synchronize all processes
- **MPI_BCAST**
  send data to all processes
- **MPI_GATHER**
  gather data from all processes
- **MPI_SCATTER**
  scatter data to all processes
- **MPI_REDUCE**
  reduction operation
- **MPI_REDUCE ALL**
  reduction, all processes get result
Barrier

MPI_BARRIER (comm)

Synchronizes group of processes

All processes block until all have reached the barrier

Often invoked at end of loop in iterative algorithms
Figure 8.3 from Foster's book

Processes:

- **Data**: A0
- A1
- A2
- A3

**One-to-all broadcast**:

- MPI_BCAST
- A0
- A0
- A0
- A0

**One-to-all gather**:

- MPI_GATHER
- A0 A1 A2 A3

**One-to-all scatter**:

- MPI_SCATTER
- A0
- A1
- A2
- A3
Reduction

Combine values provided by different processes

Result sent to one processor (MPI REDUCE) or all processors (MPI REDUCE ALL)

Used with commutative and associative operators:

MAX, MIN, +, x , AND, OR
Example 1

Global minimum operation

```c
MPI_REDUCE (inbuf, outbuf, 2, MPI_INT, MPI_MIN, 0, MPI_COMM_WORLD)
```

outbuf[0] = minimum over inbuf[0]'s

outbuf[1] = minimum over inbuf[1]'s
Figure 8.4 from Foster's book

Initial Data:

 Processes . . . 

0  

2 4

1  

5 7

2  

0 3

3  

6 2

MPI_REDUCE with MPI_MIN, root = 0:

0 2

- -

- -

- -

MPI_ALLREDUCE with MPI_MIN:

0 2

0 2

0 2

0 2

MPI_REDUCE with MPI_SUM, root = 1:

- -

13 16

- -

- -
Example 2: SOR in MPI
SOR communication scheme

Each CPU communicates with left & right neighbor (if existing)
Also need to determine convergence criteria
Expressing SOR in MPI

Use a ring topology

Each processor exchanges rows with left/right neighbor

Use REDUCE_ALL to determine if grid has changed less than epsilon during last iteration
Figure 8.5 from Foster's book

(1) **MPI_BCAST**

(2) **MPI_SCATTER**

(3) **MPI_SEND/RECV**

(4) **MPI_REDUCEALL**

(5) **MPI_GATHER**
Semantics of collective operations

• Blocking operations:
  – It’s safe to reuse buffers after they return

• Standard mode only:
  – Completion of a call does not guarantee that other processes have completed the operation

• A collective operation may or may not have the effect of synchronizing all processes
Modularity

MPI programs use libraries

Library routines may send messages

These messages should not interfere with application messages

Tags do not solve this problem
Communicators

Communicator denotes group of processes (context)

MPI_SEND and MPI_RECV specify a communicator

MPI_RECV can only receive messages sent to same communicator

Library routines should use separate communicators, passed as parameter
Discussion

Library-based:
   No language modifications
   No compiler
Syntax is awkward
Message receipt based on identity of sender and operation tag, but not on contents of message
Needs separate mechanism for organizing name space
No type checking of messages
Syntax

SR:
   call slave.coordinates(2.4, 5.67);
   in coordinates (x, y);

MPI:
   #define COORDINATES_TAG 1
   #define SLAVE_ID 15
   float buf[2];
   buf[0] = 2.4; buf[1] = 5.67;
   MPI_SEND (buf, 2, MPI_FLOAT, SLAVE_ID, COORDINATES_TAG,
            MPI_COMM_WORLD);
   MPI_RECV (buf, 2, MPI_FLOAT, MPI_ANY_SOURCE, COORDINATES_TAG,
             MPI_COMM_WORLD, &status);