The horrors of parallel programming

Max Neunhöffer



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HPCGAP offers: regions, read-only objects, private data, the atomic statement and atomic objects.

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HPCGAP offers:

regions, shared objects, locking, thread local variables

Max Neunhöffer (University of St Andrews)

In a parallel program, the behaviour can depend on some more or less random order, in which some events occur.
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gap> while true do a := 1; a := 2 ; od;
!sh
--- Switching to thread 5
[5] gap> Collected(List([1..1000],i->a));
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HPCGAP offers: semaphores, channels, synchronisation variables

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gap> a := ShareSpecialObj([1,2,3]);;
gap> b := ShareSpecialObj([1,2,3]);;
gap> c := CreateSemaphore(0);
<semaphore 0xb557060: count = 0>
gap> while true do atomic a do atomic b do
> a[1] := b[1]; od; od;
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When the second loop is started, everything will deadlock.

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- **Do not use** ShareSpecialObj!

HPCGAP offers: deadlock protection, region precedence

Communication

Basic problem: Data is in one place but is needed in another.

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HPCGAP offers: shared memory model, fast object serialisation, access to fast networking using MPI and ZeroMQ

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This is called the **memory wall**.

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HPCGAP offers: thread local allocation, parallel garbage collection, MPI and ZeroMQ for explicit communication.

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HPCGAP offers: nice UI and break loops for individual threads.