I/O

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How does a processor interact with its environment?

Computer System =
Memory + Datapath + Control + Input + Output
Putting it all together

I/O connected with I/O Controllers

high-performance interconnect: processor, memory, display
lower-performance interconnect: disk, keyboard, network
Bus Types

Processor – Memory ("Front Side Bus")

- Short, fast, & wide
- Mostly fixed topology, designed as a "chipset"
  - CPU + Caches + Interconnect + Memory Controller

I/O and Peripheral busses (PCI, SCSI, …)

- Longer, slower, & narrower
- Flexible topology, multiple/varied connections
- Interoperability standards for devices
- Connect to processor-memory bus through a bridge
I/O Device API

Typical I/O Device API

• a set of read-only or read/write registers

Command registers

• writing causes device to do something

Status registers

• reading indicates what device is doing, error codes, ...

Data registers

• Write: transfer data to a device
• Read: transfer data from a device

Every device uses this API
How to talk to a device?

1. Programmed I/O:
   special instructions talk over special busses
   Specify: device, data, direction
   • inb $a, 0x64 (keyboard status register)
   • outb $a, 0x60 (keyboard data register)
   • Protection: only allowed in kernel mode (expensive)

2. Memory-Mapped I/O:
   map registers into virtual address space
   • Accesses to certain addresses redirected to I/O devices
   • Data goes over the memory bus (faster!)
   • Protection: via bits in pagetable entries
   • OS+MMU+devices configure mappings
Memory-Mapped I/O

Virtual Address Space

Physical Address Space

agreed-upon locations for communication

vs. less-favored alternative = Programmed I/O:
- Syscall instructions that communicate with I/O
- Communicate via special device registers
Device Drivers

Programmed I/O

char read_kbd()
{
    do {
        sleep();
        status = inb(0x64);
    } while(!(status & 1));

    return inb(0x60);
}

Clicker Question: Which is better?
(A) Programmed I/O
(B) Memory Mapped I/O
(C) Both have syscalls, both are bad

Memory Mapped I/O

struct kbd {
    char status, pad[3];
    char data, pad[3];
};

kbd *k = mmap(...);

char read_kbd()
{
    do {
        sleep();
        status = k->status;
    } while(!(status & 1));

    return k->data;
}

syscalls
I/O Data Transfer

How to talk to device?
  • Programmed I/O or Memory-Mapped I/O

How to get events?
  • Polling or Interrupts

How to transfer lots of data?
  disk->cmd = READ_4K_SECTOR;
  disk->data = 12;
  while (!(disk->status & 1)) {
    for (i = 0..4k)
      buf[i] = disk->data;
  }
Data Transfer

1. Programmed: Device $\leftrightarrow$ CPU $\leftrightarrow$ RAM Transfer
   for $(i = 1 \ldots n)$
   - CPU issues read request
   - Device puts data on bus & CPU reads into registers
   - CPU writes data to memory

2. Direct Memory Access (DMA): Device $\leftrightarrow$ RAM
   - CPU sets up DMA request
   - for $(i = 1 \ldots n)$
     Device puts data on bus & RAM accepts it
   - Device interrupts CPU after done
Programmed I/O vs Memory Mapped I/O

Programmed I/O
- Requires special instructions
- Can require dedicated hardware interface to devices
- Protection enforced via kernel mode access to instructions
- Virtualization can be difficult

Memory-Mapped I/O
- Re-uses standard load/store instructions
- Re-uses standard memory hardware interface
- Protection enforced with normal memory protection scheme
- Virtualization enabled with normal memory virtualization scheme
Polling vs. Interrupts

How does program learn device is ready/done?

1. Polling: Periodically check I/O status register
   - Common in small, cheap, or real-time embedded systems
     + Predictable timing, inexpensive
     - Wastes CPU cycles

2. Interrupts: Device sends interrupt to CPU
   - Cause register identifies the interrupting device
   - Interrupt handler examines device, decides what to do
     + Only interrupt when device ready/done
     - Forced to save CPU context (PC, SP, registers, etc.)
     - Unpredictable, event arrival depends on other devices’ activity

Clicker Question: Which is better?
(A) Polling    (B) Interrupts  (C) Both equally good/bad