Bare-Metal Multicore Performance in a General-Purpose Operating System

(Now With Added Energy Efficiency!)
Group Effort: Acknowledgments

- Josh Triplett: First prototype (LPC 2009)
- Frederic Weisbecker: Core kernel work and x86 port
- Steven Rostedt: Lots of code review and comments, tracing upgrades
- Christoph Lameter: Early adopter feedback, work on vmstat kthread
- Li Zhong: Power port
- Geoff Levand, Kevin Hilman: ARM port, with Kevin continuing on with residual-tick-elimination work
- Peter Zijlstra: Scheduler-related review, comments, and work
- Paul E. McKenney: Read-copy update (RCU) work, full-system idle
- Thomas Gleixner, Paul E. McKenney: “Godfathers”
- Ingo Molnar: Maintainer
- Other contributors:
  - Avi Kivity, Chris Metcalf, Gilad Ben Yossef, Hakan Akkan, Lai Jiangshan, Max Krasnyansky, Namhyung Kim, Paul Gortmaker, Paul Mackerras, Zen Lin, Jason Furmanek, Paul Clarke, Mala Anand, Mike Galbraith, Oleg Nesterov, Viresh Kumar, and probably many others
There Used To Be Things You Could Count On...
There Used To Be Things You Could Count On...

Like a scheduling-clock interrupt every jiffy on every CPU.
There Used To Be Things You Could Count On...

Hey!

Yes?

Is there something else for you to do?

There is!

Guess I should get to it. Thanks!
There Used To Be Things You Could Count On...

Like a scheduling-clock interrupt every jiffy on every CPU. Whether you needed it or not.
There Used To Be Things You Could Count On...

Hey!

Is there something else for you to do?

Wha?

No!!!

Oh.

Never mind. Bye, then!

#$@#!
There Used To Be Things You Could Count On...

Like a scheduling-clock interrupt every jiffy on every CPU.
  Whether you needed it or not.
And especially, whether your battery needed it or not.
There Used To Be Things You Could Count On...
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Like a scheduling-clock interrupt every jiffy on every CPU. Whether you needed it or not. And especially, whether your battery needed it or not. Of course, back then you needed a somewhat larger battery...
There Used To Be Things You Could Count On...

Like a scheduling-clock interrupt every jiffy on every CPU. Whether you needed it or not. And especially, whether your battery needed it or not. Of course, back then you needed a somewhat larger battery... And, if your system was portable, a forklift.
What We Need Instead...
Before Linux's dyntick-idle System

CPU 0

Scheduling-Clock Interrupts

Busy Period Ends

But CPU Remains in High-Power State

CPU 1
Before Linux's dyntick-idle System

1. Wake up!
2. Is there something for you to do?
3. Uh... No?
4. Oh. Go back to sleep, then!
5. #$@#!
Linux's dyntick-idle System

- Dyntick-Idle Mode Enables CPU Deep-Sleep States
- Enter Dyntick-Idle Mode At End Of Busy Period
- Very Good For Energy Efficiency!!!

Scheduling-Clock Interrupts
Also: Avoid Unnecessary Usermode Interrupts

- HPC and real-time applications can increase performance if unnecessary scheduling-clock interrupts are omitted
- And if there is only one runnable task on a given CPU, why interrupt it?
- If another task shows up, *then* we can interrupt the CPU
- Until then, interrupting it only slows it down
Also: Avoid Unnecessary Usermode Interrupts
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- Josh Triplett prototyped CONFIG_NO_HZ_FULL 2009.
Benchmark Results Before (Anton Blanchard)
Benchmark Results After (Anton Blanchard)

Well worth going after...
But There Were A Few Small Drawbacks...

- User applications can monopolize CPU
  - But if there is only one runnable task, so what???
  - If new task awakens, interrupt the CPU, restart scheduling-clock interrupts
  - In the meantime, we have an “adaptive ticks usermode” CPU

- No process accounting
  - Use delta-based accounting, based on when process started running
  - One CPU retains scheduling-clock interrupts for timekeeping purposes

- RCU grace periods go forever, running system out of memory
  - Inform RCU of adaptive-ticks usermode execution so that it ignores adaptive-ticks user-mode CPUs, similar to its handling of dyntick-ticks CPUs

- Frederic Weisbecker took on the task of fixing this (for x86-64)
  - Geoff Levand and Kevin Hilman: Port to ARM
  - Li Zhong: Port to PowerPC
  - I was able to provide a bit of help with RCU
How Does It Work?

Scheduling
clock
interrupts

One task per CPU

Second task awakens

Adaptive
Ticks
Other Than Energy Efficiency, Looks Great!!!

- But what is the problem with energy efficiency?
Energy Efficiency and Timekeeping

- Hardware oscillators drift
- Requires periodic recalculation of time conversion parameters, e.g., via NTP
  - Otherwise user applications get bad time data
- One special case
Energy Efficiency and Timekeeping

- Hardware oscillators drift
- Requires periodic recalculation of time conversion parameters, e.g., via NTP
  - Otherwise user applications get bad time data
- One special case:
  - If all CPUs are idle, none of them care about accurate timekeeping
  - Just need to recalculate time-conversion parameters when the first CPU goes non-idle
Energy Efficiency, Timekeeping, and Idle

No need for time parameter recalculation
But If Running Userspace, Need Recalculation
Energy Efficiency, Timekeeping, and Userspace

Need time parameter recalculation!!!
Shut Down *Almost All* Scheduling-Clock Interrupts

- If all CPUs are idle, we can shut down all CPUs' scheduling-clock interrupts
- If any CPU is non-idle, we need at least one CPU running the scheduling-clock interrupt
- Initial approach: Require that CPU 0 always run the scheduling-clock interrupt
Shut Down *Almost* All Scheduling-Clock Interrupts

Keep scheduling-clock Interrupt on at least on CPU 0
The Battery-Powered Embedded Folks Not Happy...
The Battery-Powered Embedded Folks Not Happy...
We Must Shut Down All Scheduling-Clock Interrupts
We Must Shut Down *All* Scheduling-Clock Interrupts: Two Simple (But Broken) Approaches

- **Just count non-idle CPUs!!!**
  - Maintain an atomic counter
  - When a CPU goes idle, atomically increment the counter
  - When a CPU goes non-idle atomically decrement the counter
    - This is a *really bad* idea on a system with lots of CPUs
    - Memory contention will degrade scalability and performance – and in extreme cases, hangs the system

- **Just scan CPUs looking for non-idle ones!!!**
  - Have the timekeeping kthread periodically scan CPUs: If all are idle, turn off the scheduling-clock tick
    - Vulnerable to race conditions, see next slide
Scanning For Full-System Idle is Broken!

- Scanning is subject to race conditions!
- Example race scenario on a four-CPU system:
  - CPU 0 goes idle (3 CPUs non-idle)
  - Timekeeping kthread checks CPU 0, sees it idle
  - CPU 1 goes idle (2 CPUs non-idle)
  - CPU 0 goes non-idle (3 CPUs non-idle)
  - Timekeeping kthread checks CPU 1, sees it idle
  - CPU 2 goes idle (2 CPUs non-idle)
  - CPU 1 goes non-idle (3 CPUs non-idle)
  - Timekeeping kthread checks CPU 2, sees it idle
  - CPU 3 goes idle (2 CPUs non-idle)
  - CPU 2 goes non-idle (3 CPUs non-idle)
  - Timekeeping kthread checks CPU 3, sees it idle
  - **Timekeeping kthread wrongly concludes that the entire system is idle!!!**
How To Efficiently Detect Full-System Idle?

- We have to give up something:
  - Energy efficiency
  - Scalability
  - Determinism
  - Full-system idle detection latency
  - Sanity
Opportunistic Idle on Large Systems?

![Graph showing the relationship between percent of time in full-system idle and number of CPUs. The graph illustrates how the percent of time decreases as the number of CPUs increases, with labels indicating 90%, 33%, 10%, and 1% at specific points.]
Opportunistic Idle on Large Systems?

Not so much!!!
How To Efficiently Detect Full-System Idle?

- We have to give up something:
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How To Efficiently Detect Full-System Idle?

- We have to give up something:
  - Energy efficiency
  - Scalability
  - Determinism
  - Full-system idle detection latency
  - Sanity: You cannot give up something that you do not have!!!
How To Efficiently Detect Full-System Idle?

- We have to give up something:
  - Full-system idle detection latency

- Use a state machine

- Enter full-system-idle state more slowly on larger systems
  - Forces more time between atomic updates of global state variable on large systems, maintaining a constant level of memory contention

- Leverage RCU's pre-existing scan of idle CPUs
  - If a CPU is idle, it does not respond to RCU grace periods
  - RCU therefore scans CPUs, report quiescent states on their behalf
  - Also track last time each CPU went idle
Full-System-Idle State Machine

- **Added twist:** A timekeeping CPU being non-idle must not prevent the system from entering full-system-idle state!

- **States:**
  - `RCU_SYSIDLE_NOT`: Some CPU is not idle.
    - Return to this state any time a non-timekeeping CPU goes non-idle from `RCU_SYSIDLE_LONG` or later state.
  - `RCU_SYSIDLE_SHORT`: All CPUs idle for brief period.
    - Advance here if scan finds all non-timekeeping CPUs idle.
  - `RCU_SYSIDLE_LONG`: All CPUs idle for “long enough”.
    - Advance here if in `RCU_SYSIDLE_SHORT` state long enough, and if all CPUs remained idle throughout that time.
  - `RCU_SYSIDLE_FULL`: All CPUs idle, ready for sysidle.
    - Advance here from `RCU_SYSIDLE_LONG` if still idle on next scan.
  - `RCU_SYSIDLE_FULL_NOTED`: Scheduling-clock tick disabled globally.
    - Advance here when timekeeping kthreads sees `RCU_SYSIDLE_FULL` state.
Full-System-Idle State Machine Schematic

Protect against memory contention

Non-timekeeping CPU goes non-idle

RCU_SYSIDLE_NOT
Idle scan
RCU_SYSIDLE_SHORT
Idle for sufficient time
RCU_SYSIDLE_LONG
Idle scan
RCU_SYSIDLE_FULL
Tick turned off
RCU_SYSIDLE_FULL_NOTED
Wake timekeeping CPU
How Long Idle in RCU_SYSIDLE_SHORT State?

- CPU going idle records the time
- RCU remembers most recent idle time when scanning CPUs
- Advance to RCU_SYSIDLE_LONG only if it has been sufficiently long since the last CPU went idle
  - Increases linearly with increasing numbers of CPUs
  - Adjusted by HZ and number of CPUs per rcu_node structure
How Long Is “Sufficiently Long”, Anyway?

![Graph showing the relationship between the number of CPUs and the required idle time to enter full-system idle. The graph is a straight line indicating a direct proportionality.]
Avoiding Non-Idle Races

- Bad scenario: Timekeeping CPU turns off all scheduling-clock interrupts, then does not notice a CPU going non-idle

- Avoid this as follows:
  - CPU going non-idle in the RCU_SYSIDLE_FULL_NOTED state will force scheduling-clock interrupts back on.
  - CPU going non-idle will force the state to RCU_SYSIDLE_NOT unless the current state is RCU_SYSIDLE_SHORT
  - This means that there is at least one remaining scan (from RCU_SYSIDLE_LONG to RCU_SYSIDLE_FULL): During this scan, the CPU will be detected as non-idle, forcing state back to RCU_SYSIDLE_NOT
  - This requires careful use of atomic operations and memory barriers

- Be careful, getting this right is harder than it looks!
Avoiding Non-Idle Races

- Any CPU can drive state back down to RCU_SYSIDLE_NOT
  - It does so when it goes non-idle, but only if state has advanced to RCU_SYSIDLE_LONG or further
  - Uses atomic xchg() operation to update state: If returns RCU_SYSIDLE_FULL_NOTED, wakes up timekeeping CPU

- Only one task advances the state
  - After each scan finds all CPUs idle, with optional time constraint
  - Uses cmpxchg(), upon failure assumes CPU went non-idle

- If CPU going non-idle sees RCU_SYSIDLE_SHORT, state might advance to RCU_SYSIDLE_LONG
  - But memory barriers guarantee that next scan sees the non-idle CPU

- Diagrams on next three slides...
Handling Non-Idle Races: Scenario 1

- **Timekeeping CPU**
  - cmpxchg to RCU_SYSIDLE_LONG
- **CPU going non-idle**
  - Does nothing!
- **Next scan sees non-idle CPU**
  - RCU_SYSIDLE_NOT
  - State machine starts over
- **CPU goes idle before next scan**
  - RCU_SYSIDLE_LONG
  - Possible Universe 0
  - Possible Universe 1
Handling Non-Idle Races: Scenario 2

- **Timekeeping CPU**
  - cmpxchg to RCU_SYSIDLE_FULL
  - CPU going non-idle: xchg
  - State machine starts over

- **RCU_SYSIDLE_LONG**
  - Race!!!

- **CPU going non-idle**
  - xchg to RCU_SYSIDLE_NOT

Possible Universe 0
- RCU_SYSIDLE_FULL
- CPU going non-idle: xchg

Possible Universe 1
- RCU_SYSIDLE_NOT
- Timekeeping CPU's cmpxchg fails, timekeeping CPU aware of non-idle CPU

State machine starts over
Handling Non-Idle Races: Scenario 3

Timekeeping CPU

RCU_SYSIDLE_FULL

CPU going non-idle

cmpxchg to
RCU_SYSIDLE_FULL_NOTED

Race!!!

xchg to
RCU_SYSIDLE_NOT

RCU_SYSIDLE_FULL_NOTED

Timekeeping CPU sleeps

CPU going non-idle wakes
timekeeping CPU and
state machine starts over

RCU_SYSIDLE_NOT

Possible Universe 0

Possible Universe 1

Timekeeping CPU's cmpxchg
fails, timekeeping CPU stays
awake

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Sounds Complex! Did You Mechanically Verify This?
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- Well, I tried via goto-cc/goto-instrument/satabs:

Performing pointer analysis for concurrency-aware abstraction
satabs: value_set.cpp:1183: void value_sett::assign(const exprt&, const exprt&, const namespacet&, bool): Assertion `base_type_eq(rhs.type(), type, ns)' failed. 
Aborted (core dumped)

Bug report to the authors (who have been responsive)
- Array allocation problem, fix is still on the way...
- Used several other tools, all of which failed in interesting ways

- So I fell back on Promela/spin
  - 135 lines of Promela says it works!!! (Safety, not yet forward progress)
Sounds Complex! Did You Mechanically Verify This?

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- So I fell back on Promela/spin
  - 135 lines of Promela says it works!!! (Safety, not yet forward progress)
  - Should I believe it? ;-)
Other Issues

- **1Hz residual tick:**
  - Just in case something we haven't found yet needs interrupts...
  - Kevin Hilman has a patch series that turns this off: Use at your own risk!

- **Timer wheel:**
  - Suppose that the application occasionally enters the kernel
  - Current timer-wheel code will proceed jiffy-by-jiffy to catch up
    - Resulting in extreme latency blows
  - “Bandaid” patches available: single-timer and no-timer cases
  - Thomas Gleixner working on more general solution

- **vmstat kthread**
  - Christoph Lameter has a prototype patch

- **RCU_SOFTIRQ**
  - Patches to avoid needlessly invoking this softirq handler

- “Whack-a-mole” with other problems, e.g., unbound workqueues
To Probe More Deeply Into Adaptive Ticks

- Documentation/timers/NO_HZ.txt
- Is the whole system idle?  
  - http://lwn.net/Articles/558284/
- (Nearly) full tickless operation in 3.10  
  - http://lwn.net/Articles/549580/
- “The 2012 realtime minisummit” (LWN, CPU isolation discussion)  
  - http://lwn.net/Articles/520704/
- “Interruption timer périodique” (Kernel Recipes, in French)  
  - https://kernel-recipes.org/?page_id=410
- “What Is New In RCU for Real Time” (RTLWS 2012)  
    - Slides 31-32
- “TODO”  
  - https://github.com/fweisbec/linux-dynticks/wiki/TODO
- “NoHZ tasks” (LWN)  
  - http://lwn.net/Articles/420544/
Configuration Cheat Sheet (Subject to Change!)

- **CONFIG_NO_HZ_FULL=y** Kconfig: enable adaptive ticks
  - Implies dyntick-idle mode (specify separately via **CONFIG_NO_HZ_IDLE=y**)
  - Specify which CPUs at compile time: **CONFIG_NO_HZ_FULL_ALL=y**
    - But boot CPU is excluded, used as timekeeping CPU
  - “full_nohz=” boot parameter: Specify adaptive-tick CPUs, overriding build-time Kconfig
    - “full_nohz=1,3-7” says CPUs 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 are adaptive-tick
    - Omitting “full_nohz=”: No CPUs are adaptive-tick unless **CONFIG_NO_HZ_FULL_ALL=y**
    - Boot CPU cannot be adaptive-ticks, it will be used as timekeeping CPU regardless
  - PMQOS to reduce idle-to-nonidle latency
    - X86 can also use “idle=mwait” and “idle=poll” boot parameters, but note that these can cause thermal problems and degrade energy efficiency, especially “idle=poll”

- **CONFIG_RCU_NOCB_CPU=y** Kconfig: enable RCU offload
  - Specify which CPUs to offload at build time:
    - **RCU_NOCB_CPU_NONE=y** Kconfig: No offloaded CPUs (specify at boot time)
    - **RCU_NOCB_CPU_ZERO=y** Kconfig: Offload CPU 0 (intended for randconfig testing)
    - **RCU_NOCB_CPU_ALL=y** Kconfig: Offload all CPUs
  - “rcu_nocbs=” boot parameter: Specify additional offloaded CPUs

- **CONFIG_NO_HZ_FULL_SYSIDLE=y**: enable system-wide idle detection
  - Still needs more plumbing from Frederic, work in progress

Also: **CONFIG_HIGH_RES_TIMERS=y**, **CONFIG_DEBUG_PREEMPT=n**, **CONFIG_TRACING=n**, **CONFIG_DEBUG_LIST=n**, ...
Patch Cheat Sheet 1/2 (Subject to Change!)

- Get the vmstat per-CPU kthreads out of the way:
  - http://lwn.net/Articles/569669/

- Turn off the residual 1Hz tick:
  - http://www.spinics.net/lists/arm-kernel/msg273778.html

- Remove residual RCU_SOFTIRQ jitter:

- Timer latency bandaids (to be obsoleted by rewrite):
Patch Cheat Sheet 2/2 (Subject to Change!)

- **Workqueues:**

- **Dedicated timekeeper IPI:**

- **Cleanups and fixes:**
  - [https://lkml.org/lkml/2014/2/14/234](https://lkml.org/lkml/2014/2/14/234)
Boot/Doc Cheat Sheet *(Subject to Change!)*

**Boot:**
- `nosoftlockup`: Decrease soft-lockup checking overhead, and also remove the corresponding diagnostics. *(Decisions, decisions!)*
- `isolcpus=n-m`: Tell the Linux kernel to isolate the specified CPUs. *(Some consider this to be obsolete, others swear by it.)*
- `elevator=noop`: Disable complex block I/O schedulers. *(Some prefer compiling with `CONFIG_IOSCHED_NOOP=n`, `CONFIG_IOSCHED_DEADLINE=n`, and `CONFIG_IOSCHED_CFQ=n`.)*

**Documentation:**
- How-to info for kthreads: `Documentation/kernel-per-CPU-kthreads.txt`
- Available in 3.10, see `Documentation/timers/NO_HZ.txt` for more info
Summary

- General-purpose OS or bare-metal performance?
  - Why not both?
  - Work in progress gets us very close for CPU-bound workloads:
    - Adaptive ticks userspace execution (early version in mainline)
    - RCU callback offloading (version two in mainline)
    - Interrupt, process, daemon, and kthread affinity
    - Timer offloading
  - Some restrictions:
    - Need to reserve CPU(s) for housekeeping; 1-Hz residual tick
    - Adaptive-ticks and RCU-callback-offloaded CPUs specified at boot time
    - One task per CPU for adaptive-ticks usermode execution
    - Global TLB-flush IPIs, cache misses, and TLB misses are still with us
    - Whack-a-mole with various other issues, patches in flight
  - And can maintain energy efficiency as well!
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- Extending Linux's reach further into extreme computing!!!
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