Understanding the Pros & Cons of Synchrony

Douglas C. Schmidt
d.schmidt@vanderbilt.edu
www.dre.vanderbilt.edu/~schmidt

Professor of Computer Science
Institute for Software Integrated Systems
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, Tennessee, USA
Learning Objectives in this Part of the Lesson

- Motivate the need for Java Future & CompletableFuture mechanisms by understanding the pros & cons of synchrony
Overview of Synchrony & Synchronous Operations
Method calls in typical Java programs are largely *synchronous*.

E.g., calls on Java collections & behaviors in Java stream aggregate operations.
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- i.e., a callee borrows the thread of its caller until its computation(s) finish
Method calls in typical Java programs are largely *synchronous*.

- i.e., a callee borrows the thread of its caller until its computation(s) finish & a result is returned.

*Note "request/response" nature of these calls*
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  - “Intuitive” to program & debug, e.g.
  - Maps onto common two-way method patterns

See www.iro.umontreal.ca/~keller/Layla/remote.pdf
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  - “Intuitive” to program & debug, e.g.
  - Maps onto common two-way method patterns
  - Local caller state retained when callee returns

See wiki.c2.com/?ActivationRecord
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```java
byte[] downloadContent(URL url) {
    byte[] buf = new byte[BUFSIZ];
    ByteArrayOutputStream os =
        new ByteArrayOutputStream();
    InputStream is = url.openStream();
    for (int bytes;
         (bytes = is.read(buf)) > 0;)
        os.write(buf, 0, bytes); ...
```

See [wiki.c2.com/?ActivationRecord](http://wiki.c2.com/?ActivationRecord)
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- May not leverage all parallelism available in multi-core systems

See www.ibm.com/developerworks/library/j-jvmc3
The Cons of Synchrony

- Cons of synchronous calls
- May not leverage all parallelism available in multi-core systems
- Blocking threads incur overhead
  - e.g., synchronization, context switching, data movement, & memory management costs

See www.ibm.com/developerworks/library/j-jvmc3
The Cons of Synchrony

- Cons of synchronous calls
- May not leverage all parallelism available in multi-core systems
  - Blocking threads incur overhead
- Selecting right # of threads is hard

```java
List<Image> filteredImages = urls
    .parallelStream()
    .filter(not(this::urlCached))
    .map(this::downloadImage)
    .map(this::applyFilters)
    .reduce(Stream::concat)
    .orElse(Stream.empty())
    .collect(toList());

Image downloadImage(URL url){
    return new Image(url, downloadContent(url));
}
```

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List<Image> filteredImages = urls.parallelStream().filter(not(this::urlCached)).map(this::downloadImage).map(this::applyFilters).reduce(Stream::concat).orElse(Stream.empty()).collect(toList());

A large # of threads may help to improve performance, but can also waste resources
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Particularly tricky for I/O-bound programs that need more threads to run efficiently
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- Cons of synchronous calls
  - May not leverage all parallelism available in multi-core systems
  - May need to change the size of the common fork-join pool

See lesson on “The Java Fork-Join Pool: Maximizing Core Utilization w/the Common Fork-Join Pool”
The Cons of Synchrony

- Cons of synchronous calls
- May not leverage all parallelism available in multi-core systems
- May need to change the size of the common fork-join pool, e.g.
- Set a system property

```java
String desiredThreads = "10";
System.setProperty("java.util.concurrent.ForkJoinPool.common.parallelism", desiredThreads);
```

It’s hard to estimate the total # of threads to set in the common fork-join pool
The Cons of Synchrony

- Cons of synchronous calls
  - May not leverage all parallelism available in multi-core systems
  - May need to change the size of the common fork-join pool, e.g.
    - Set a system property
    - Or use the ManagedBlocker to increase common pool size automatically/temporarily

ManageBlockers can only be used with the common fork-join pool..

See docs.oracle.com/javase/8/docs/api/java/util/concurrent/ForkJoinPool.ManagedBlocker.html
End of Understanding the Pros & Cons of Synchrony