Last Class: RPCs

• RPCs make distributed computations look like local computations

• Issues:
  – Parameter passing
  – Binding
  – Failure handling

Today:

• Case Study: Sun RPC

• Lightweight RPCs

• Remote Method Invocation (RMI)
  – Design issues
Case Study: SUNRPC

- One of the most widely used RPC systems
- Developed for use with NFS
- Built on top of UDP or TCP
  - TCP: stream is divided into records
  - UDP: max packet size < 8912 bytes
  - UDP: timeout plus limited number of retransmissions
  - TCP: return error if connection is terminated by server
- Multiple arguments marshaled into a single structure
- At-least-once semantics if reply received, at-least-zero semantics if no reply. With UDP tries at-most-once
- Use SUN’s eXternal Data Representation (XDR)
  - Big endian order for 32 bit integers, handle arbitrarily large data structures

Binder: Port Mapper

- Server start-up: create port
- Server stub calls svc_register to register prog. #, version # with local port mapper
- Port mapper stores prog #, version #, and port
- Client start-up: call clnt_create to locate server port
- Upon return, client can call procedures at the server
**Rpcgen: generating stubs**

- Q_xdr.c: do XDR conversion
- Detailed example: later in this course

---

**Lightweight RPCs**

- Many RPCs occur between client and server on same machine
  - Need to optimize RPCs for this special case => use a lightweight RPC mechanism (LRPC)
- Server $S$ exports interface to remote procedures
- Client $C$ on same machine imports interface
- OS kernel creates data structures including an argument stack shared between $S$ and $C$
Lightweight RPCs

- RPC execution
  - Push arguments onto stack
  - Trap to kernel
  - Kernel changes mem map of client to server address space
  - Client thread executes procedure (OS upcall)
  - Thread traps to kernel upon completion
  - Kernel changes the address space back and returns control to client
- Called “doors” in Solaris

Doors

- Which RPC to use? - run-time bit allows stub to choose between LRPC and RPC
Other RPC Models

• Asynchronous RPC
  – Request-reply behavior often not needed
  – Server can reply as soon as request is received and execute procedure later

• Deferred-synchronous RPC
  – Use two asynchronous RPCs
  – Client needs a reply but can’t wait for it; server sends reply via another asynchronous RPC

• One-way RPC
  – Client does not even wait for an ACK from the server
  – Limitation: reliability not guaranteed (Client does not know if procedure was executed by the server).

Asynchronous RPC

a) The interconnection between client and server in a traditional RPC
b) The interaction using asynchronous RPC
Deferred Synchronous RPC

- A client and server interacting through two asynchronous RPCs

Remote Method Invocation (RMI)

- RPCs applied to objects, i.e., instances of a class
  - Class: object-oriented abstraction; module with data and operations
  - Separation between interface and implementation
    - Interface resides on one machine, implementation on another
- RMIs support system-wide object references
  - Parameters can be object references
Distributed Objects

- When a client binds to a distributed object, load the interface ("proxy") into client address space
  - Proxy analogous to stubs
- Server stub is referred to as a skeleton

Proxies and Skeletons

- Proxy: client stub
  - Maintains server ID, endpoint, object ID
  - Sets up and tears down connection with the server
  - [Java:] does serialization of local object parameters
  - In practice, can be downloaded/constructed on the fly (why can’t this be done for RPCs in general?)
- Skeleton: server stub
  - Does deserialization and passes parameters to server and sends result to proxy
**Binding a Client to an Object**

(a) Example with implicit binding using only global references

Distr_object* obj_ref;
obj_ref = ...;
obj_ref-> do_something();

(b) Example with explicit binding using global and local references

Distr_object objPref;
Local_object* obj_ptr;
obj_ref = ...;
obj_ptr = bind(obj_ref);
obj_ptr -> do_something();

---

**Parameter Passing**

- Less restrictive than RPCs.
  - Supports system-wide object references
  - [Java] pass local objects by value, pass remote objects by reference
**DCE Distributed-Object Model**

(a) Distributed dynamic objects in DCE.

(b) Distributed named objects

---

**Java RMI**

- **Server**
  - Defines interface and implements interface methods
  - Server program
    - Creates server object and registers object with “remote object” registry

- **Client**
  - Looks up server in remote object registry
  - Uses normal method call syntax for remote method

- **Java tools**
  - Rmiregistry: server-side name server
  - Rmic: uses server interface to create client and server stubs
Java RMI and Synchronization

- Java supports Monitors: synchronized objects
  - Serializes accesses to objects
  - How does this work for remote objects?
- Options: block at the client or the server
- Block at server
  - Can synchronize across multiple proxies
  - Problem: what if the client crashes while blocked?
- Block at proxy
  - Need to synchronize clients at different machines
  - Explicit distributed locking necessary
- Java uses proxies for blocking
  - No protection for simultaneous access from different clients
  - Applications need to implement distributed locking