Linux-rt: Turning a General Purpose OS into a Real-Time OS

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What is Linux

- An open source Unix-like Kernel
- Started by Linus Torvalds in 1991
- MINIX
- GNU – RMS - 1983
Linux

- SMP (1-4096 CPUs)
- Preemptive
- 24 Major Architectures
- Countless Boards/Systems
- 1000's of drivers
- 1000000's LOC
- 1000's contributors
- 1 community
Turn Linux, a GPOS into a RTOS

Because:

- People are adding GPOS features to RTOS'
- Gives the programmer a single framework
- It's fun
To Preempt or not to Preempt?

- !Preempt
  - Analyze all sections
  - Legacy code
  - Too much

- Preempt
  - Replace non-preemptible constructs with preemptible ones
  - Solve priority inversion
Preempt_RT

- IRQs
- Spinlocks
- RCU
- Per CPU data
- RW locks

- Threaded IRQs
- Mutexes
- Preemptible RCU (*)
- +Locks/Atomic
- Mutexes (*)
Threaded IRQs

- Kernel thread per ISR
- Generic hard-IRQ handler
  - Disables IRQ line
  - Wakes thread
- No generic code in IRQ context
- Memory allocators can be preemptible
Spinlocks/Mutexes

- raw_spinlock_t
  - For the few real sites
- spinlock -> mutex
  - spin_lock_irq*() doesn't alter IRQ state
- Implicit preempt-disable dependencies
Preemptible RCU

- Fun subject to talk about with Paul McKenney
- Implicit dependencies on preempt_disable
  - Lockdep annotation (?)
Per CPU data

- Add a lock
- Migration
- Atomics
- Trades performance for preemptibility
RW locks

- Non-deterministic
  - Waiting for unbounded # of readers
- Complex boost chain
- Map to mutex (*)
  - Sacrifice performance in favour of determinism
Priority Inversion

- Priority Inheritance
  - Needs simplification (?)
- RCU Boost (*)
- Work Queues (deferred work)
Semaphores vs. PI

- No resource owner
  - Convert to Mutex
  - Convert to Completions

- Eradicate semaphores (?)
Trouble

• More preemption
  – Bigger race windows
  – More likely to hit deadlock
Lockdep

- Runtime lock dependencies
- Lock classes
  - Lock initialization site
  - Requires annotations
- Validate DAG
  - Generates warnings before locking up
Lockdep

• Annotating classes
  – I-nodes
    • Class per filesystem
  – Recursion
    • mutex_lock_nested()
  – Trees
    • Balanced trees
      – Limited depth
      – Class for each level
    • Unbalanced
      – (?)
  – RCU (?)
Tracing

- Quickly find problems
  - IRQ-off latency
  - Preempt-off latency
  - OOPS-history
- Uses compiler prologue hooks (mcount)
- Records call trace history
- Catches races with predicates
Lockstat

- Lock usage statistics
  - contentions/acquisitions
  - wait-/hold-time
  - bounces
  - contention points
- Shows bottlenecks
  - files_lock
Really cool stuff

- Lockless (read-side) pagecache
  - RCU
- Concurrent (write-side) pagecache
  - Optimistic locking/RCU
  - Lock-coupling
Current developments

- Hot topics:
  - RT balancer
  - RCU Boost
  - Adaptive spin
  - RW locks
  - Group scheduling (bandwidth limiting)
  - Lockless get_user_pages()}
RT balancer

- FIFO/RR
- SMP real-time invariant
- CPUSSET root domain aware
- How to handle affinity (?)
RCU boost

- Prio boost all read-side sections on sync_rcu()
- Force grace period using krcupreemptd
Adaptive Spin

- Avoid context switch overhead
- Spin while owner is running
RW-locks

- Multi reader support
  - Reader limit
- Full PI
  - Boosts all the readers
  - Prio-fair
- Horribly complex code (?)
RT group scheduling

• cgrouops
  – Task groups
  – Hierarchical

• FIFO/RR

• Bandwidth limits
  – Safe for !root users

• PI issues (?)
Lockless get_user_pages()

- Locklessly walk the page tables
- Avoids mmap_sem (rwlock)
- Improvements for:
  - DIO
  - futexes
Future Developments

• Things we hope will happen:
  – Partitioned EDF scheduler (?)
    • Deadline inheritance (?)
  – Soft-RT scheduler class (?)
  – RT network extensions (?)
  – ...

EDF

- Partitioned EDF scheduler
- Needs to extend the already complex PI framework
  - Deadline inheritance
Soft-RT

- Integrated or its own class?
RT network extensions

• RX memory reserves
  – Overlaps with swap over network effort
• Protocols (RTP?)
We hope people will contribute their ideas
And code
Join the Linux(-rt) community
Help obsolete the -rt patches
Academics vs Linux

- 'Cultural' differences
- Academic credit for work on Linux (?)
- Educate the kernel people
  - Various backgrounds
    - Physics, Math, HW Eng., MD
  - Mental context switches
  - Can't remember yesterday
How to do a kernel project

• Involve from the start
• Release early, release often
• Feedback on LKML
  – Act on it
  – Convince the other he's wrong
• Don't give up!
In theory, there is no difference between theory and practice. But, in practice, there is.