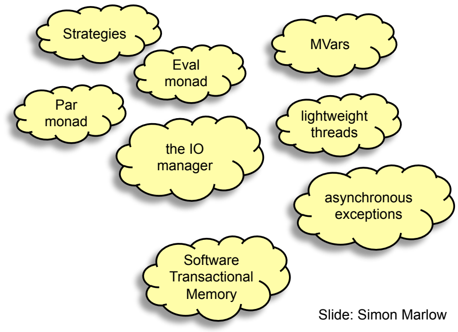
Parallel Programming

David Sands

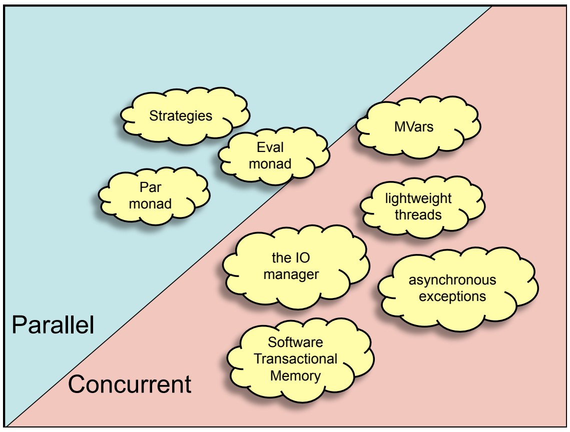
Slides borrowed and adapted from Simon Marlow's page

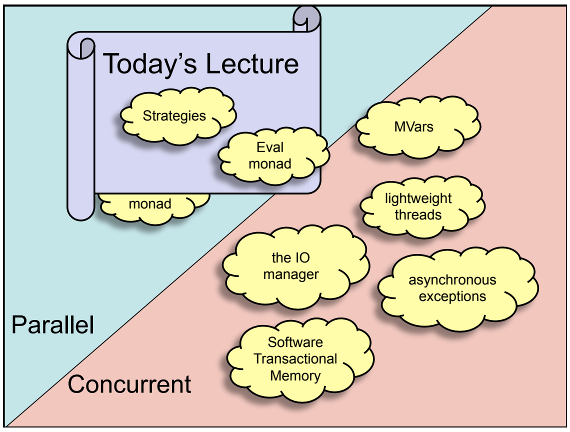
http://community.haskell.org/~simonmar/CEFP1.pdf

Parallel and Concurrent Haskell ecosystem

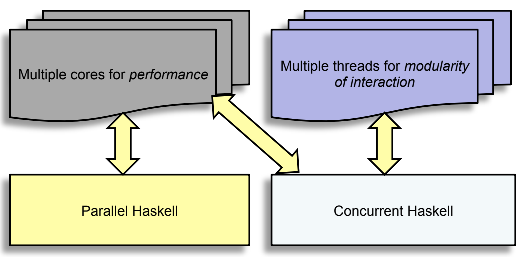


Slide: Simon Marlow





Parallelism vs. Concurrency



Slide: S. Marlow

Parallelism vs. Concurrency

- Primary distinguishing feature of Parallel Haskell: determinism
  - The program does "the same thing" regardless of how many cores are used to run it.
  - No race conditions or deadlocks
  - add parallelism without sacrificing correctness
  - Parallelism is used to speed up pure (non-IO monad) Haskell code

Slide: S. Marlow

Parallelism vs. Concurrency

- Primary distinguishing feature of Concurrent Haskell: threads of control
  - Concurrent programming is done in the IO monad
    - because threads have *effects*
    - effects from multiple threads are interleaved nondeterministically at runtime.
  - Concurrent programming allows programs that interact with multiple external agents to be *modular*
    - the interaction with each agent is programmed separately
    - Allows programs to be structured *as* a collection of interacting agents (actors)

Slide: S. Marlow

Parallel Haskell

- Basic primitives: par and pseq
- parallelise use of Sudoku solver
- use ThreadScope to profile parallel execution

- do dynamic rather than static partitioning
- measure parallel speedup
  - use Amdahl's law to calculate possible speedup
- Evaluation Strategies
  - build simple Strategies

Running example: solving Sudoku

- code from the Haskell wiki (brute force search with some intelligent pruning)
- can solve all 49,000 problems in 2 mins
- input: a line of text representing a problem

```
.......2143.......6........2.15..........637...........68...4.....23........7....
.......241..8.............3...4..5..7.....1......3.......51.6....2....5..3...7...
.......24....1...........8.3.7...1..1..8..5.....2......2.4...6.5...7.3...........
```

```
import Sudoku

solve :: String -> Maybe Grid
```

Slide: S. Marlow

Solving Sudoku problems

- Sequentially:
  - divide the file into lines
  - call the solver for each line

```
import Sudoku

f = "sudoku17.1000.txt"

main :: IO ()
main = do
    grids <- fmap lines $ readFile f
    let solutions = map solve grids
    print $ all isJust solutions
```

Compile

- Optimisation –O2
- Runtime options

```
$ ghc -O2 sudoku1.hs -rtsopts
[1 of 2] Compiling Sudoku           ( Sudoku.hs, Sudoku.o )
[2 of 2] Compiling Main             ( sudoku1.hs, sudoku1.o )
Linking sudoku1 ...
$
```

Controlling Evaluation for Parallelism

- *In theory* a compiler should be able to automatically compile pure functional programs to use multiple cores
  - purity ⇒ computations can be freely reordered without changing the result
- *In practice* this is hard. We need to give hints as to which strategy to use
  - but no synchronisation/deadlock issues need to be considered!

Run the program...

```
$ ./sudoku1 +RTS -s
   2,392,127,440 bytes allocated in the heap
      36,829,592 bytes copied during GC
         191,168 bytes maximum residency (11 sample(s))
          82,256 bytes maximum slop
               2 MB total memory in use (0 MB lost due to fragmentation)

  Generation 0:  4570 collections,     0 parallel,  0.14s,  0.13s elapsed
  Generation 1:    11 collections,     0 parallel,  0.00s,  0.00s elapsed

...

  INIT  time    0.00s  (  0.00s elapsed)
  MUT   time    2.92s  (  2.92s elapsed)
  GC    time    0.14s  (  0.14s elapsed)
  EXIT  time    0.00s  (  0.00s elapsed)
  Total time    3.06s  (  3.06s elapsed)

...
```

par and pseq

`ghc -threaded` uses a threaded runtime system. To make use of it we need to add some parallelism hints to the code

`Control.Parallel` provides

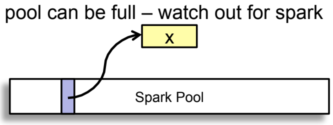
`pseq , par :: a -> b -> b`

- `pseq` – seq but with a *guarantee* of left-to-right evaluation order
- `par` – maybe evaluate left argument (to whnf) possibly in parallel with its right arg.

What does par *actually do?*

`x `par` y`

- par creates a *spark* by writing an entry in the *spark pool*
  – par is very cheap! (not a thread)
- the spark pool is a circular buffer
- when a processor has nothing to do, it tries to remove an entry from its own spark pool, or steal an entry from another spark pool (*work stealing)*
- when a spark is found, it is evaluated
- The spark pool can be full – watch out for spark overflow!



Parallelising Sudoku

- Let's divide the work in two, so we can solve each half in parallel:

```
let (as,bs) = splitAt (length grids `div` 2) grids
    as' = map solve as
    bs' = map solve bs
```

- Now we need something like

```
let solutions = as' `par` bs' `pseq` as' ++ bs'
print $ all isJust solutions
```

But this won't work...

- Like seq, par evaluates its argument to Weak Head Normal Form (WHNF)
  – evaluates as far as the *first constructor*
  – e.g. for a list, we get either [] or (x:xs)
  – e.g. WHNF of `map solve (a:as)` would be `solve a : map solve as`
- But we want to evaluate the whole list, and the elements

We need 'deepseq'

```
import Control.DeepSeq(deepseq)
-- deepseq :: NFData a => a -> b -> b
```

- deepseq fully evaluates a nested data structure (its first arg) and returns it's second
  – e.g. `a `deepseq` b`
  `a` is fully evaluated, including the elements
- uses overloading: the argument must be an instance of NFData
  – instances for most common types are provided by the library

deep

- We need to use deepseq inside a par
  `(as `deepseq` as) `par` …`

```
deep a = a `deepseq` a
```

- But things in a par should be variables, and should be used later (otherwise the spark might get discarded!). Thus:

```
let as’ = deep as in
    as’ `par` …
```

Using deep

```
main = do
    grids <- fmap lines $ readFile f
    let (as,bs) = splitAt (length grids `div` 2) grids
        as' = deep $ map solve as
        bs' = deep $ map solve bs
        result = all isJust (as' ++ bs')
    bs' `par` as' `pseq` print result
```

- Why bs’ before as’?
  - worked out a little better
  - need performance measurement…

Let’s try it...

- Compile sudoku2
  - (add -threaded -rtsopts)
  - run with `sudoku17.1000.txt +RTS -N2`
- Take note of the Elapsed Time

Runtime results...

```
$ ./sudoku1 +RTS -s -N2
True
   2,400,106,440 bytes allocated in the heap
      48,996,296 bytes copied during GC
       2,615,040 bytes maximum residency (7 sample(s))
         326,584 bytes maximum slop
               9 MB total memory in use (0 MB lost due to fragmentation)

  Generation 0:  2984 collections,  2983 parallel,  0.65s,  0.12s elapsed
  Generation 1:     7 collections,     7 parallel,  0.02s,  0.02s elapsed

  Parallel GC work balance: 1.49 (6106266 / 4103299, ideal 2)

SPARKS: 1 (1 converted, 0 pruned)

  INIT  time    0.01s  (  0.01s elapsed)
  MUT   time    2.25s  (  1.70s elapsed)
  GC    time    0.68s  (  0.14s elapsed)
  EXIT  time    0.00s  (  0.00s elapsed)
  Total time    2.93s  (  1.85s elapsed)
```

One spark was created and one was run by a processor

speedup ~1.5 over the sequential version

Why not 2?

- two reasons for lack of parallel speedup:
  - less than 100% utilisation (some processors idle for part of the time)
  - extra overhead in the parallel version
- Each of these has many possible causes...

A menu of ways to screw up

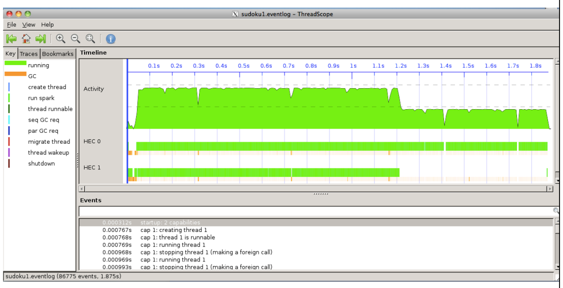
- less than 100% utilisation
  - parallelism was not created, or was discarded
  - algorithm not fully parallelised – residual sequential computation
  - uneven work loads
  - poor scheduling
  - communication latency
- extra overhead in the parallel version
  - overheads from rpar, work-stealing, deep, ...
  - lack of locality, cache effects...
  - larger memory requirements leads to GC overhead
  - GC synchronisation
  - duplicating work

So we need *tools*

- to tell us why the program isn't performing as well as it could be
- For Parallel Haskell we have ThreadScope

```
$ ghc -O2 sudoku2.hs -threaded -rtsopts -eventlog
$ ./sudoku2 +RTS -N2 -ls
$ threadscope sudoku2.eventlog
```

- -eventlog has very little effect on runtime
  - important for profiling parallelism



Uneven workloads...

- So one of the tasks took longer than the other, leading to less than 100% utilisation

```
let (as,bs) = splitAt (length grids `div` 2) grids
```

- One of these lists contains more work than the other, even though they have the same length
  - sudoku solving is not a constant-time task: it is a searching problem, so depends on how quickly the search finds the solution

Partitioning

```
let (as,bs) = splitAt (length grids `div` 2) grids
```

- Dividing up the work along fixed pre-defined boundaries, as we did here, is called *static partitioning*
  - static partitioning is simple, but can lead to under-utilisation if the tasks can vary in size
  - static partitioning does not adapt to varying availability of processors – our solution here can use only 2 processors

Dynamic Partitioning

- GHC's runtime system provides spark pools to track dynamic work units, and a work-stealing scheduler to assign them to processors
- So all we need to do is use smaller tasks and more pars, and we get dynamic partitioning

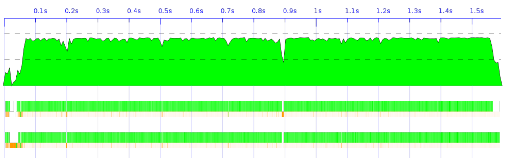
Simple idea: parallel map

```
paraMap:: (a -> b) -> [a] -> [b]
paraMap f [] = []
paraMap f (x:xs) = let y  = deep $ f x
                       ys = paraMap f xs
                   in y `par` ys `pseq` y : ys
```

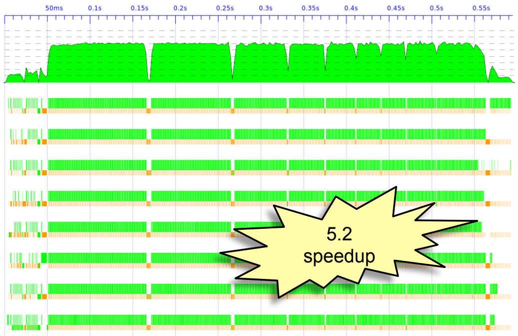
places each call to f in a new spark – to be evaluated deeply!

```
main = do
    grids <- fmap lines $ readFile f
    let solutions = paraMap solve grids
    print $ all isJust solutions
```

Result (2 cores)



Same code on an 8-core box



Evaluation Strategies

par and pseq are low level

- All about sequencing computation and creation of sparks
  - monads are good for sequencing…
- Algorithm + Strategy = Parallel program
  - *strategies* as re-usable components that can be composed together
  - Clean separation of algorithm from strategy

The Eval monad

```
import Control.Parallel.Strategies

data Eval a
instance Monad Eval

runEval :: Eval a -> a

rpar :: a -> Eval a
rseq :: a -> Eval a
```

- Eval is pure
- Just for expressing sequencing between rpar/rseq – nothing more
- Compositional – larger Eval sequences can be built by composing smaller ones using monad combinators
- Internal workings of Eval are very simple (see Haskell Symposium 2010 paper)

Example: A parallel map

```
rParaMap :: (a -> b) -> [a] -> Eval [b]
rParaMap f [] = return []
rParaMap f (a:as) = do
   b <- rpar $ deep (f a)
   bs <- rParaMap f as
   return (b:bs)
```

Create a spark to evaluate (f a) for each element a

Return the new list

The Strategy type

```
type Strategy a = a -> Eval a
```

- A Strategy is...
  - A function that,
  - when applied to a value 'a',
  - evaluates 'a' to some degree
  - (possibly sparking evaluation of sub-components of 'a' in parallel),
  - and returns an equivalent 'a' in the Eval monad
- NB. the return value should be equivalent to the original

Some Basic Strategies

- r0 — no evaluation
- rpar — create a parallel spark
- rdeepseq — deep evaluation

evalList

- parMap has the sparking behaviour built-in, start with a basic traversal in the Eval monad:

```
evalList (a -> Eval a) -> [a] -> Eval [a]
evalList f []     = return []
evalList f (x:xs) = do
  x'  <- f x
  xs' <- evalList f xs
  return (x':xs')
```

evalList

```
-- Earlier example could be defined as
rParaMap f =
  parList (rpar `dot` rdeepseq) . map f

parList f = evalList (rpar `dot` f)
  where s1 `dot` s2 = s1 . runEval . s2
```

How do we *use* a Strategy?

```
type Strategy a = a -> Eval a
```

- We could just use runEval
- But this is better:

```
x `using` s = runEval (s x)
```

- e.g.

```
myList `using` parList rdeepseq
```

- Idea: \`using\` strategies should always be a performance annotation.
  - need to check that x \`using\` s == x

Using Strategies

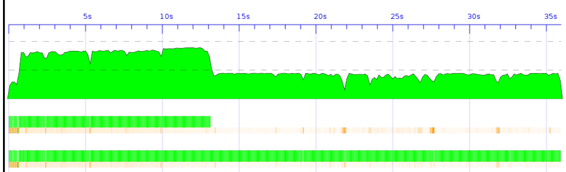
```
main = do
    grids <- fmap lines $ readFile f
    let solutions = map solve grids `using` strat
    print $ all isJust solutions
```

```
strat = evalList (rpar `dot` rdeepseq)
```

- Note: this modularity depends crucially on lazy evaluation – otherwise strat would be too late to have any control (the term would already be evaluated!)

What if the file is BIG

- 1000 -> 16000 sudokus
- Spark pool buffer exceeded – lost sparks –



chunkList Strategy

- Strategy idea – spark chunks of n elements (fewer sparks)

```
strat = chunkList 100 (rpar `dot` rdeepseq)

chunkList n strat =
   fmap concat . evalList strat . chunks
     where chunks = takeWhile (not.null)
                  . map (take n)
                  . iterate (drop n)

prop_chunkList k xs = k > 0 ==>
     xs == xs `using` chunkList k rdeepseq
```

chunkList is parListChunk

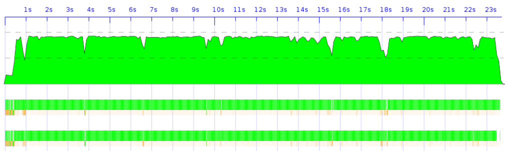
- This function already exists in the strategies library (I missed it first time!)

```
parListChunk :: Int -> Strategy a -> Strategy [a]
```

Source

Divides a list into chunks, and applies the strategy `evalList strat` to each chunk in parallel.

16000 in <24s



Summary

- Strategies, in theory:
  - *Algorithm + Strategy = Parallelism*
- Strategies, in practice (sometimes):
  - *Algorithm + Strategy = No Parallelism*
- laziness is the magic ingredient that bestows modularity, but laziness can be tricky to deal with.

Where to look next

- Other alternatives are emerging, see e.g.
  - The Par monad: abandon modularity via laziness for more explicit concurrency
  - Data-parallel Haskell – operations on bulk data (think GPU's – thousands of cores)

Further Reading

- Many slides here adapted from Simon Marlow's CEFP summer school slides
- http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/people/simonmar
  - /par-tutorial.pdf
  - /papers/strategies.pdf
- haskell.org/haskellwiki/ThreadScope