

Distributed Systems and Security: An Introduction

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UCL Computer Science



CS GZ03 / M030
1st October 2012

Today's Lecture

- Administrivia
- Overview of Distributed Systems
 - What are they?
 - Why build them?
 - Why are they hard to build well?
- Operating Systems Background
- Questionnaire

Course Staff and Office Hours

- Instructor:
 - Brad Karp, MPEB 7.20, Mon 4 – 5 PM, ext. 30406
- Teaching Assistant:
 - Petr Marchenko, MPEB 7th floor lab,
hours TBA, ext. 30400
- Office hours begin next week
- Time reserved for answering your questions
- Outside office hours, email to schedule appointment

Meeting Times and Locations

- Mondays 11 AM – 1 PM,
24 Gordon Square, Room 105
- Wednesdays 9 AM – 11 AM,
MPEB, Room 1.20
- Lecture will run 90 minutes
- Sometimes lecture will be followed by a 30-minute discussion of an additional topic (e.g., Q&A on a coursework)
- No lecture 8th, 10th, 29th, 31st October; 3rd, 5th December (rescheduled to Fridays)
- Reading week: 5th – 9th November,
no lecture!

Class Communication

- Class web page
 - <http://www.cs.ucl.ac.uk/staff/B.Karp/gz03/f2012/>
 - Detailed calendar, coursework, class policies, announcements/corrections
 - **Your responsibility: check page daily!**
- M030/GZ03 Piazza Page
 - <https://piazza.com/class#fall2012/computersciencem030gz03/home>
 - Important announcements from class staff (also forwarded to you by email)
 - Postings from course staff and students
 - **Subscribe using enrollment key**
 - You **must** subscribe (class policy)
 - **Your responsibility: check email daily!**

Using Piazza

- Please post questions on class material on Piazza, rather than emailing course staff
- Whole class benefits from seeing your question and its answer
- Students are encouraged to **answer one another's questions!**
- When discussing something private (e.g., your marks, or details of your specific solution to a coursework), mark your post as **private**, so only course staff see it!

Readings, Lectures, and Lecture Notes

- Readings must be read before lecture; lectures **assume you have done so**
- Lecture notes will be posted to the class web site just after lecture
- Class calendar shows all reading assignments day by day...

Readings

- No textbook
- Classic and recent research papers on real, built distributed and secure systems
- Available on class web page; [print these yourselves](#)
- All readings examinable
- Research papers are dense and complex; they are often challenging
 - Be prepared to read and re-read the papers
 - Come to lecture with questions, and/or use office hours

Grading

- Final grade components:
 - One programming coursework: 15%
 - One problem set coursework: 15%
 - Final exam: 70%

Late Work Policy

- N.B. that **M030/GZ03 policy differs from that for other CS classes!**
- For every day late or fraction thereof, **including weekend days**, 10% of marks deducted
- Each student receives budget of **3 late days** for entire term
 - Each late day “cancels” one day of lateness
 - Goal: give you flexibility, e.g., in case you can’t find a bug, or encounter unexpected other snag
 - You declare how many late days to use when turning in a coursework late; **cannot declare or change later!**
 - Must use whole late days—cannot use fractional ones!

Late Days (cont'd)

- If submission more than 2 days late after taking late days into account, zero marks
- Programming courseworks turned in online; may be submitted 24/7
- Problem set courseworks turned in on paper in lecture; can be submitted **M – F only**
 - Weekend days after deadline **still count as elapsed days**

Late Days (cont'd)

- If submission more than 2 days late after taking late days into account, zero marks

Late days give you flexibility.

No other extensions given on coursework, unless for unforeseeable, severely extenuating circumstances!

paper in lecture; can be submitted **M – F**
only

- Weekend days after deadline **still count as elapsed days**

Academic Honesty

- All courseworks must be completed individually
- May discuss understanding of problem statement, general sketch of approach
- May not discuss details of solution
- May not show your solution to others (this year or in future years)
- May not look at others' solutions (this year or from past years)

Academic Honesty (cont'd)

- We use code comparison software
 - Compares parse trees; immune to obfuscation
 - Produces color-coded all-student-pairs code comparisons
- Don't copy code—you **will** be caught!
- Penalty for copying: automatic zero marks, referral for disciplinary action by UCL (usually leads to exclusion from all exams at UCL)

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What Is a Distributed System?

- Multiple computers (“machines,” “hosts,” “boxes,” &c.)
 - Each with CPU, memory, disk, network interface
 - Interconnected by LAN or WAN (*e.g.*, Internet)
- Application runs across this dispersed collection of networked hardware
- But user sees single, unified system

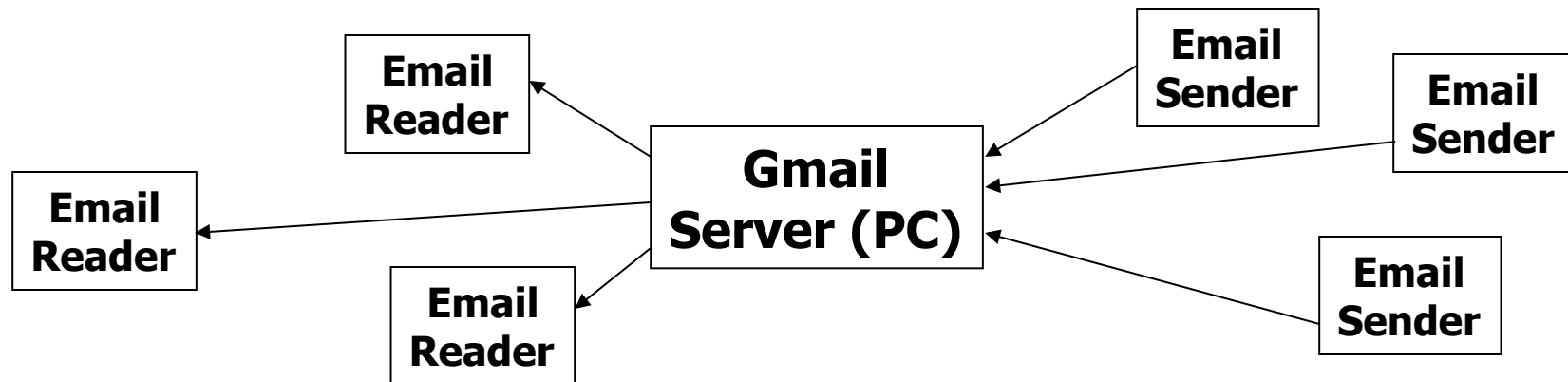
What Is a Distributed System? (Alternate Take)

“A distributed system is a system in which I can't do my work because some computer that I've never even heard of has failed.”

– Leslie Lamport, Microsoft Research (ex DEC)

Start Simple: Centralized System

- Suppose you run Gmail
- Workload:
 - Inbound email arrives; store on disk
 - Users retrieve, delete their email
- You run Gmail on one server with disk

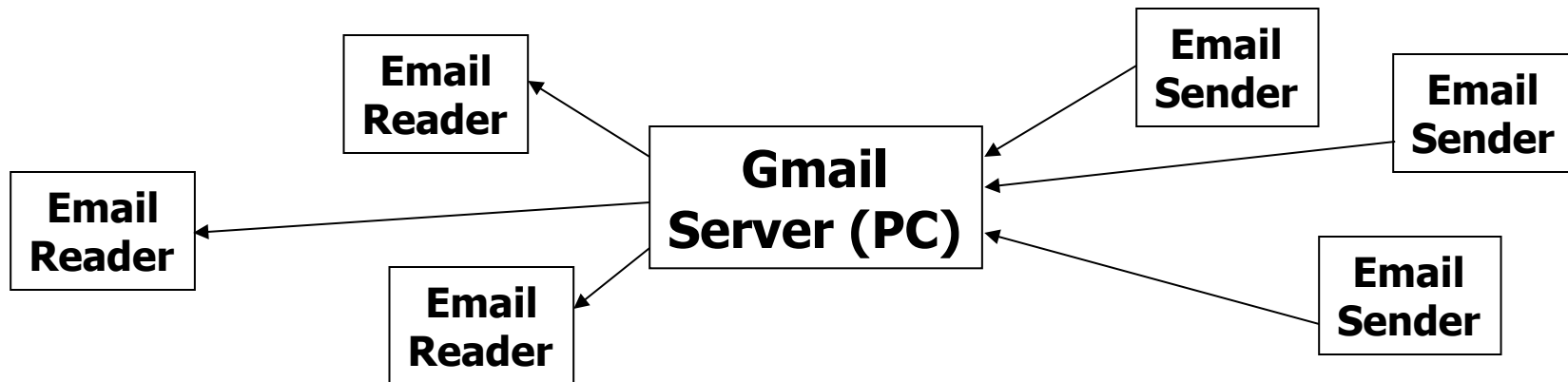


Start Simple: Centralized System

- Suppose you run Gmail
- Workload:

What are shortcomings of this design?

- You run Gmail on one server with disk



Why Distribute? For Availability

- Suppose Gmail server goes down, or network between client and it goes down
- No incoming mail delivered, no users can read their inboxes
- Fix: **replicate** the data on several servers
 - Increased chance some server will be reachable
 - Consistency? One server down when delete message, then comes back up; message returns in inbox
 - Latency? Replicas should be far apart, so they fail independently
 - Partition resilience? *e.g.*, airline seat database splits, one seat remains, bought twice, once in each half!

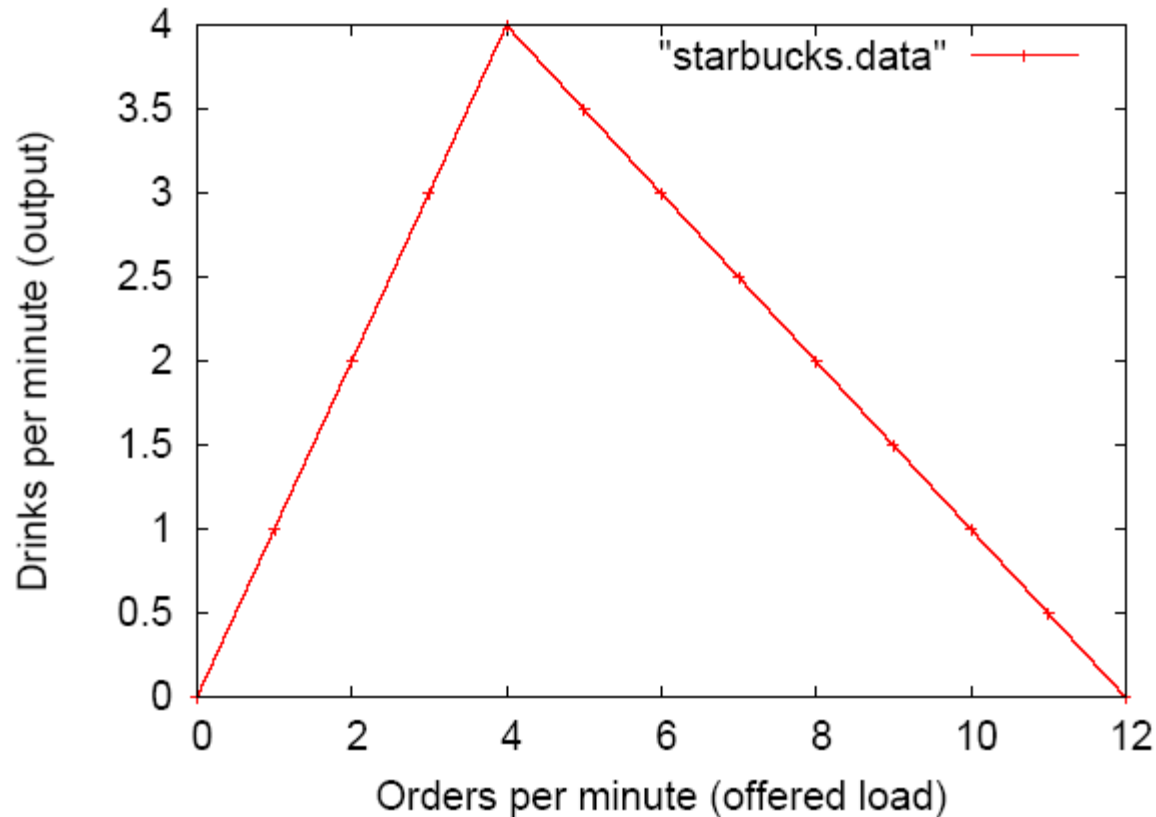
Why Distribute? For Scalable Capacity

- What if Gmail a huge success?
- Workload exceeds capacity of one server
- Fix: spread users across several servers
 - Best case: linear scaling—if U users per box, N boxes support NU users
 - Bottlenecks? If each user's inbox on one server, how to route inbound mail to right server?
 - Scaling? How close to linear?
 - Load balance? Some users get more mail than others!

Performance Can Be Subtle

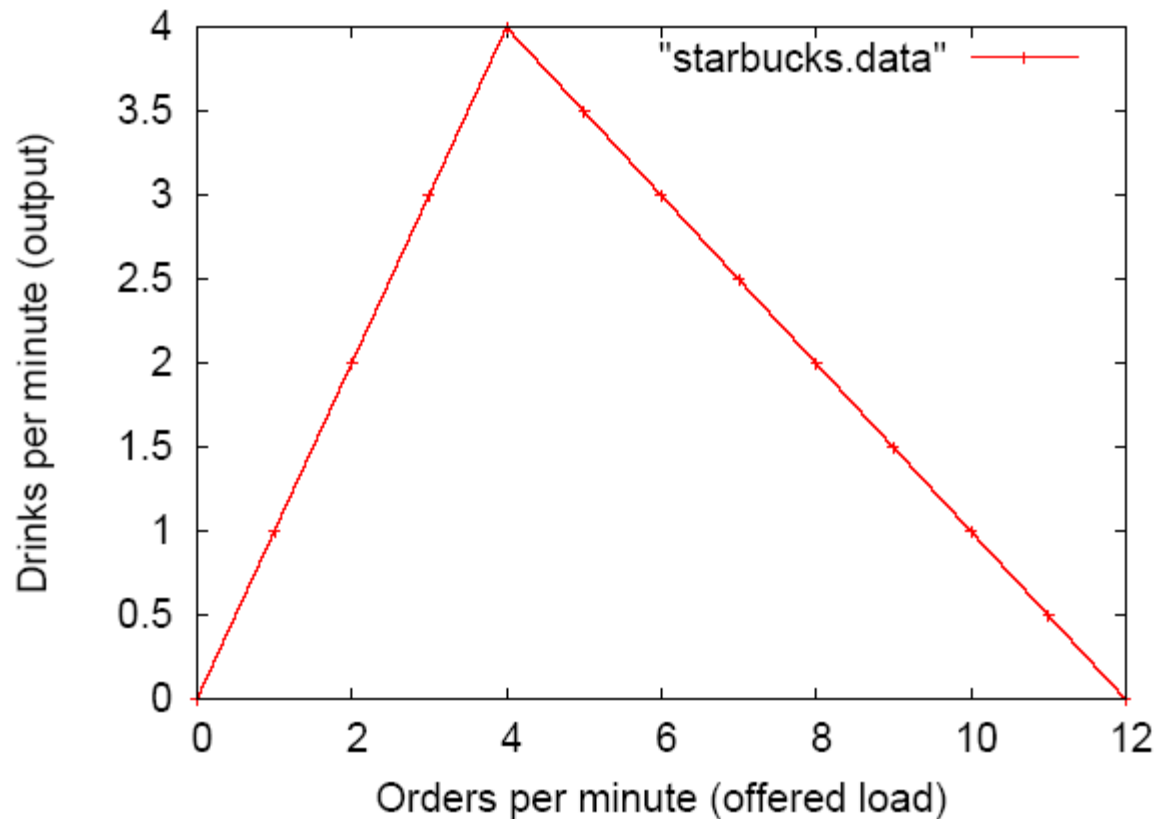
- Goal: predictable performance under high load
- 2 employees run a Starbucks
 - Employee 1: takes orders from customers, calls them out to Employee 2
 - Employee 2:
 - writes down drink orders (5 seconds per order)
 - makes drinks (10 seconds per order)
- What is throughput under increasing load?

Starbucks Throughput



- Peak system performance: 4 drinks / min
- What happens when load > 4 orders / min?
- What happens to efficiency as load increases?

Starbucks Throughput



What would preferable curve be?
What design achieves that goal?

Why Are Distributed Systems Hard to Design?

- Failure: of hosts, of network
 - Remember Lamport's lament
- Heterogeneity
 - Hosts may have different data representations
- Need consistency (many specific definitions)
 - Users expect familiar "centralized" behavior
- Need concurrency for performance
 - Avoid waiting synchronously, leaving resources idle
 - Overlap requests concurrently whenever possible

Security

- Before Internet:
 - Encryption and authentication using cryptography
 - Between parties known to each other (e.g., diplomatic wire)
- Today:
 - Entire Internet of potential attackers
 - Legitimate correspondents often have no prior relationship
 - Online shopping: how do you know you gave credit card number to amazon.com? How does amazon.com know you are authorized credit card user?
 - Software download: backdoor in your new browser?
 - Software vulnerabilities: remote infection by worms!
 - Crypto not enough alone to solve these problems!