

GFS: The Google File System

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Motivating Application: Google

- Crawl the whole web
- Store it all on “one big disk”
- Process users’ searches on “one big CPU”
- More storage, CPU required than one PC can offer
- Custom parallel supercomputer: expensive (so much so, not really available today)

Cluster of PCs as Supercomputer

- Lots of cheap PCs, each with disk and CPU
 - High aggregate storage capacity
 - Spread search processing across many CPUs
- How to share data among PCs?
- Ivy: shared virtual memory
 - Fine-grained, relatively strong consistency at load/store level
 - Fault tolerance?
- NFS: share fs from one server, many clients
 - Goal: mimic original UNIX local fs semantics
 - Compromise: close-to-open consistency (performance)
 - Fault tolerance?

Cluster of PCs as Supercomputer

GFS: File system for sharing data on clusters, designed with Google's application workload specifically in mind

- Ivy: shared virtual memory
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 - Fault tolerance?
- NFS: share fs from one server, many clients
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 - Fault tolerance?

Google Platform Characteristics

- 100s to 1000s of PCs in cluster
- Cheap, commodity parts in PCs
- Many modes of failure for each PC:
 - App bugs, OS bugs
 - Human error
 - Disk failure, memory failure, net failure, power supply failure
 - Connector failure
- Monitoring, fault tolerance, auto-recovery essential

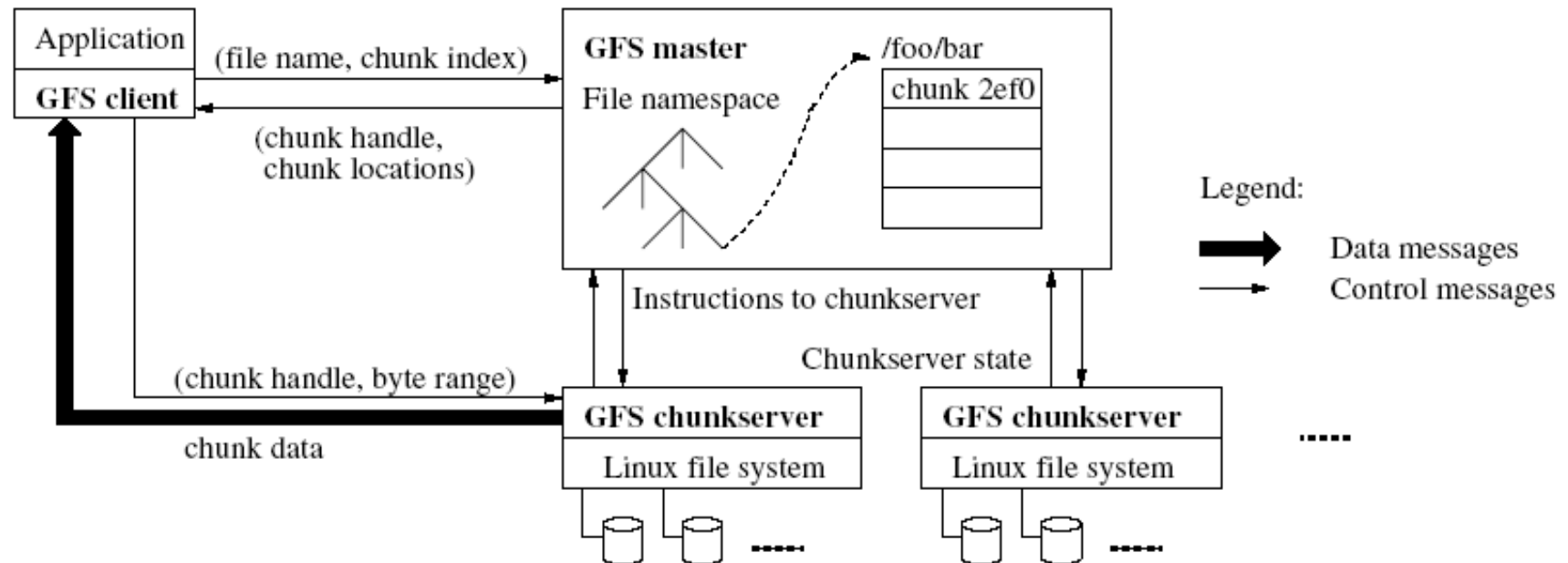
Google File System: Design Criteria

- Detect, tolerate, recover from failures **automatically**
- Large files, ≥ 100 MB in size
- Large, streaming reads (≥ 1 MB in size)
 - Read once
- Large, sequential writes that **append**
 - Write once
- Concurrent appends by multiple clients (e.g., producer-consumer queues)
 - **Want atomicity for appends without synchronization overhead among clients**

GFS: Architecture

- One **master server** (state replicated on backups)
- Many **chunk servers** (100s – 1000s)
 - Spread across racks; **intra-rack b/w greater than inter-rack**
 - **Chunk**: 64 MB portion of file, identified by 64-bit, globally unique ID
- Many clients accessing same and different files stored on same cluster

GFS: Architecture (2)



Master Server

- Holds all metadata:
 - Namespace (directory hierarchy)
 - Access control information (per-file)
 - Mapping from files to chunks
 - Current locations of chunks (chunkservers)
- Manages chunk **leases** to chunkservers
- **Garbage collects** orphaned chunks
- **Migrates chunks** between chunkservers

Master Server

- Holds all metadata:
 - Namespace (directory hierarchy)

Holds all metadata in RAM; very fast operations on file system metadata

- Current locations of chunks (chunkservers)
- Manages chunk leases to chunkservers
- Garbage collects orphaned chunks
- Migrates chunks between chunkservers

Chunkserver

- Stores 64 MB file chunks on local disk using standard Linux filesystem, each with version number and checksum
- Read/write requests specify chunk handle and byte range
- Chunks replicated on configurable number of chunkservers (default: 3)
- No caching of file data (beyond standard Linux buffer cache)

Client

- Issues control (metadata) requests to master server
- Issues data requests directly to chunkservers
- Caches metadata
- Does no caching of data
 - No consistency difficulties among clients
 - Streaming reads (read once) and append writes (write once) don't benefit much from caching at client

Client API

- Is GFS a filesystem in traditional sense?
 - Implemented in kernel, under vnode layer?
 - Mimics UNIX semantics?
- No; a library apps can link in for storage access
- API:
 - open, delete, read, write (as expected)
 - snapshot: quickly create copy of file
 - append: **at least once, possibly with gaps and/or inconsistencies among clients**

Client Read

- Client sends master:
 - read(file name, chunk index)
- Master's reply:
 - chunk ID, chunk version number, locations of replicas
- Client sends "closest" chunkserver w/replica:
 - read(chunk ID, byte range)
 - "Closest" determined by IP address on simple rack-based network topology
- Chunkserver replies with data

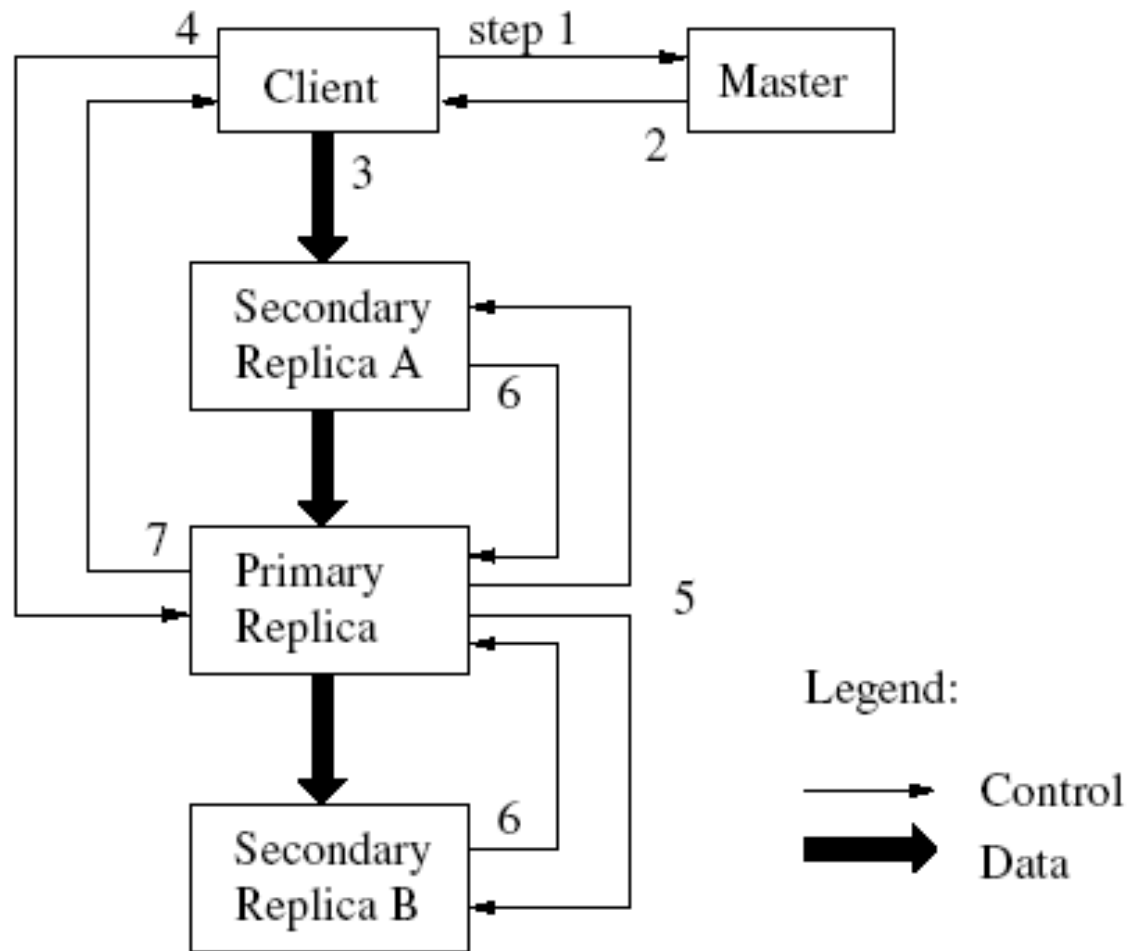
Client Write

- Some chunkserver is **primary** for each chunk
 - Master grants **lease** to primary (typically for 60 sec.)
 - Leases renewed using periodic **heartbeat messages** between master and chunkservers
- Client asks master for primary and secondary replicas for each chunk
- Client sends data to replicas in **daisy chain**
 - **Pipelined: each replica forwards as it receives**
 - **Takes advantage of full-duplex Ethernet links**

Client Write (2)

- All replicas **acknowledge data write to client**
- Client sends **write request to primary**
- Primary assigns **serial number to write request, providing ordering**
- Primary **forwards write request with same serial number to secondaries**
- Secondaries **all reply to primary** after completing write
- Primary **replies to client**

Client Write (3)



Client Record Append

- Google uses large files as **queues between multiple producers and consumers**
- Same control flow as for writes, except...
- Client pushes data to **replicas of last chunk of file**
- Client sends request to primary
- Common case: request **fits in current last chunk:**
 - Primary **appends data to own replica**
 - Primary tells secondaries to do same at **same byte offset** in theirs
 - Primary replies with success to client

Client Record Append (2)

- When data **won't fit in last chunk:**
 - Primary fills current chunk with padding
 - Primary instructs other replicas to do same
 - Primary replies to client, “retry on next chunk”
- If record append fails at any replica, client **retries operation**
 - So replicas of same chunk may contain **different data**—even duplicates of all or part of record data
- **What guarantee does GFS provide on success?**
 - Data written **at least once in atomic unit**

GFS: Consistency Model

- Changes to namespace (i.e., metadata) are atomic
 - Done by single master server!
 - Master uses log to define global total order of namespace-changing operations
- Data changes more complicated
- Consistent: file region all clients see as same, regardless of replicas they read from
- Defined: after data mutation, file region that is consistent, and all clients see that entire mutation

GFS: Data Mutation Consistency

	Write	Record Append
serial success	defined	defined interspersed with inconsistent
concurrent successes	consistent but undefined	
failure	inconsistent	

- Record append **completes at least once, at offset of GFS' choosing**
- **Apps must cope with Record Append semantics**

Applications and Record Append Semantics

- Applications should include **checksums** in records they write using Record Append
 - Reader can identify padding / record fragments using checksums
- If application cannot tolerate duplicated records, should include **unique ID** in record
 - Reader can use unique IDs to filter duplicates

Logging at Master

- Master has all metadata information
 - Lose it, and you've lost the filesystem!
- Master logs all client requests that modify metadata to disk sequentially
- Replicates log entries to remote backup servers
- Only replies to client after log entries safe on disk on self and backups!

Chunk Leases and Version Numbers

- If no outstanding lease when client requests write, master grants new one
- Chunks have version numbers
 - Stored on disk at master and chunkservers
 - Each time master grants new lease, increments version, informs all replicas
- Master can **revoke leases**
 - e.g., when client requests rename or snapshot of file

What If the Master Reboots?

- **Replays log from disk**
 - Recovers namespace (directory) information
 - Recovers file-to-chunk-ID mapping
- **Asks chunkservers which chunks they hold**
 - Recovers chunk-ID-to-chunkserver mapping
- **If chunk server has older chunk, it's stale**
 - Chunk server down at lease renewal
- **If chunk server has newer chunk, adopt its version number**
 - Master may have failed while granting lease

What if Chunkserver Fails?

- Master notices **missing heartbeats**
- Master decrements count of replicas for all chunks on dead chunkserver
- Master **re-replicates** chunks missing replicas in background
 - Highest priority for chunks missing greatest number of replicas

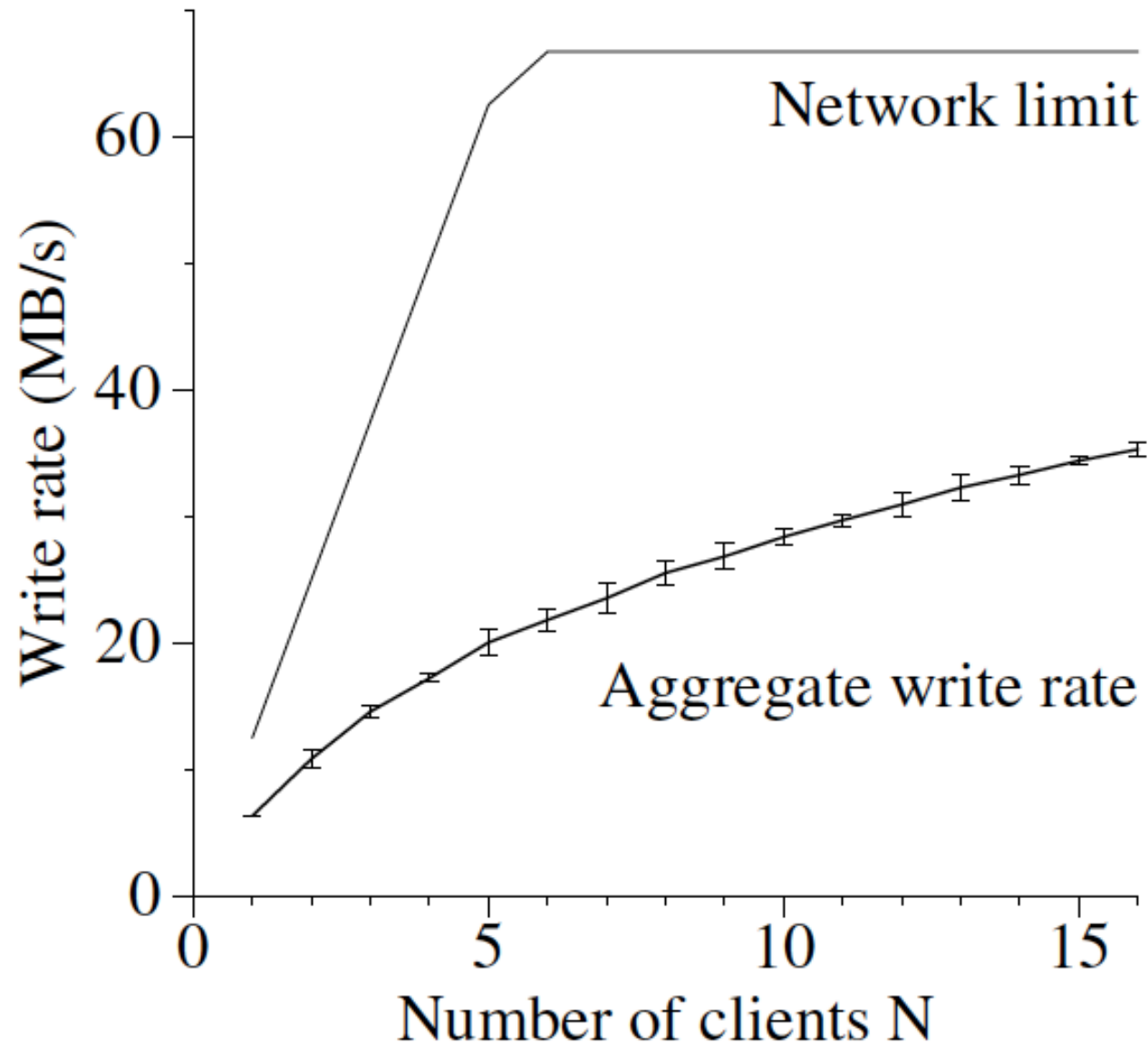
File Deletion

- When client deletes file:
 - Master records deletion in its log
 - File renamed to hidden name including deletion timestamp
- Master scans file namespace in background:
 - Removes files with such names if deleted for longer than 3 days (configurable)
 - In-memory metadata erased
- Master scans chunk namespace in background:
 - Removes unreferenced chunks from chunkservers

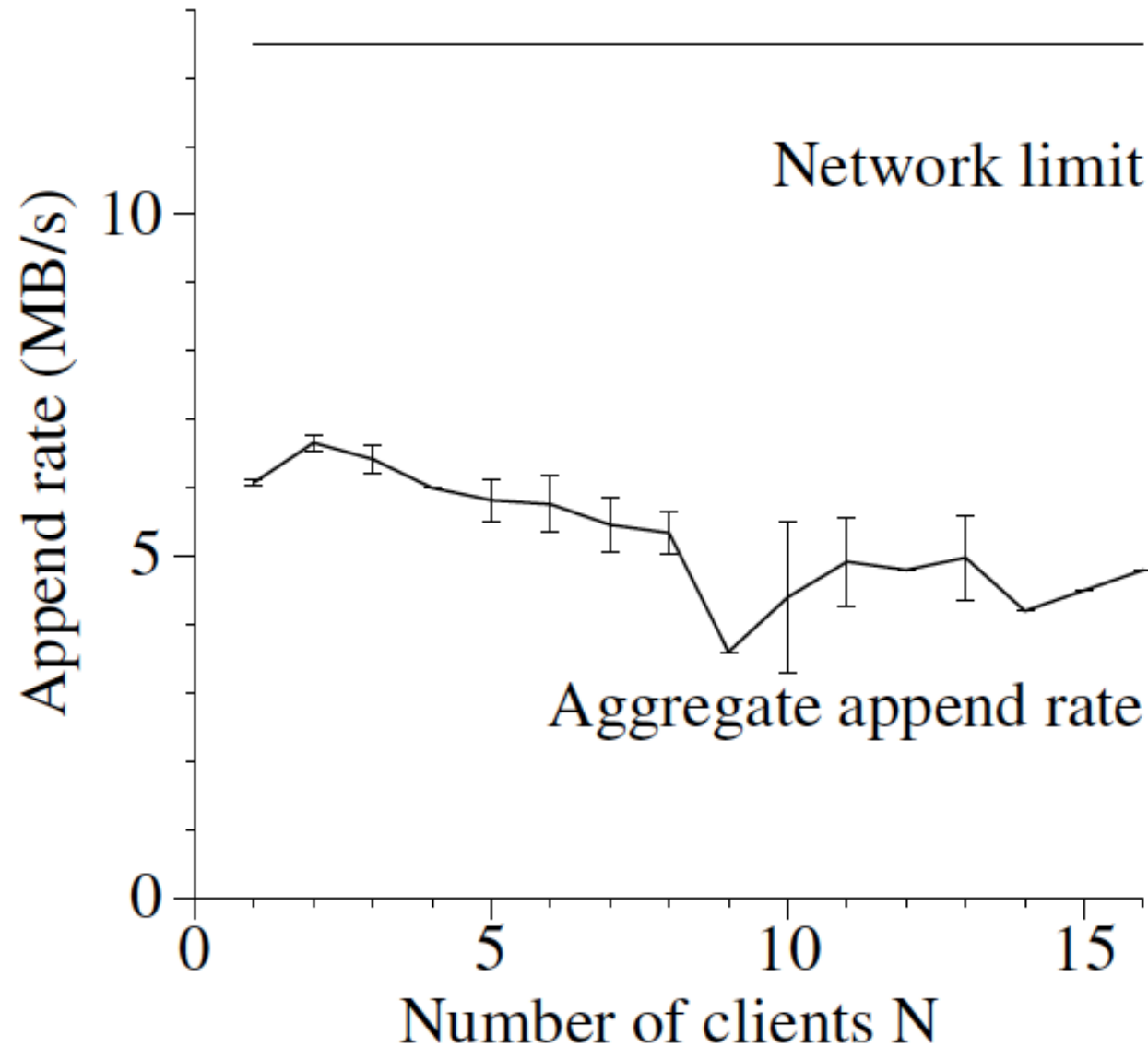
What About Small Files?

- Most files stored in GFS are multi-GB; **a few are shorter**
- Instructive case: **storing a short executable in GFS, executing on many clients simultaneously**
 - 3 chunkservers storing executable **overwhelmed by many clients' concurrent requests**
 - App-specific fix: **replicate such files on more chunkservers; stagger app start times**

Write Performance (Distinct Files)



Record Append Performance (Same File)



GFS: Summary

- Success: used actively by Google to support search service and other applications
 - Availability and recoverability on cheap hardware
 - High throughput by decoupling control and data
 - Supports massive data sets and concurrent appends
- Semantics not transparent to apps
 - Must verify file contents to avoid inconsistent regions, repeated appends (at-least-once semantics)
- Performance not good for all apps
 - Assumes read-once, write-once workload (no client caching!)