Message Passing Interface (MPI) Programming

MPI (Message Passing Interface) is a standard message passing system that enables us to write and run applications on parallel computers. In 1992, MPI Forum was formed to develop a portable message passing system. The MPI standard was completed in 1994.¹ Now many vendors are supporting the standard, and there are several public domain implementations of the MPI. An example is the MPICH implementation from Argonne National Laboratory.²

USEFUL URL

• Argonne National Laboratory
  http://www.mcs.anl.gov/mpi

Message Passing Programming

• Distributed memory processes have access only to local data.
• The sender process issues a send call, and the receiver process issues a matching receive call.

POINT-TO-POINT MESSAGE PASSING

• Program mpi_simple.c

```c
#include "mpi.h"
#include <stdio.h>
main(int argc, char *argv[]) {
  MPI_Status status;
  int myid;
  int n;
  MPI_Init(&argc, &argv);
  MPI_Comm_rank(MPI_COMM_WORLD, &myid);
  if (myid == 0) {
    n = 777;
    MPI_Send(&n, 1, MPI_INT, 1, 10, MPI_COMM_WORLD);
  } else {
    MPI_Recv(&n, 1, MPI_INT, 0, 10, MPI_COMM_WORLD, &status);
    printf("n = %d\n", n);
  }
  MPI_Finalize();
}
```

• Single Program Multiple Data (SPMD) Model: Identical copies of a program running in parallel. Each of processes begins execution at the same point in a common code image. The processes may each follow distinct flow of control. Processes are distinguished by their process ID’s which are used for flow control and communication.

¹ Subsequently MPI1.2 and MPI2 standards were defined, see http://www.mcs.anl.gov/mpi.
Process 0
if (myid == 0) {
    n = 777;
    MPI_Send(&n,...);
} else {
    MPI_Recv(&n,...);
    printf(...);
}

Process 1
if (myid == 0) {
    n = 777;
    MPI_Send(&n,...);
} else {
    MPI_Recv(&n,...);
    printf(...);
}

MPI LIBRARY CALLS

• All C programs which call MPI library calls must include mpi.h.

int MPI_Init(int *pargc, char ***pargv)
Establishes the MPI environment. The call to MPI_Init() is required in every MPI program and
must be the first MPI call. The arguments MPI_Init() are the addresses of the usual main() arguments
argc and argv. The MPI system removes from the argv array any command-line arguments that should
be processed by the MPI system before returning to the user program and to decrement argc accordingly. (pargv is a pointer to char *argv[]).

For example, executing myprogram as
> mpirun -np 4 myprogram -mpiversion x y z
the -np 4 option is interpreted by the mpirun program. The -mpiversion x y z arguments are then
passed to myprogram. The MPI_Init() call strips the -mpiversion argument so that after the call to
MPI_Init() in the user program, the user program sees command arguments as if it has been called as
myprogram x y z
MPI_Init() returns the error condition. It returns MPI_SUCCESS (defined in mpi.h) if successful. Error
codes are MPI_ERR_xxx where xxx = TYPE (for invalid data type argument), etc.

• Dynamic process group: If we start an MPI application as mpirun -np 4 myprogram, it will
create 4 processes. MPI allows us to define a subset of these processes in run time using MPI library
calls. Suppose a group consists of n processes. Processes in the group are numbered sequentially
from 0 to n-1. This process ID in a group is called rank. Dynamic groups are useful, for example,
when we want to broadcast a message only to a subset of the total processes.

• Context: In one application, we can create multiple groups with overlapping processes. Messages in
different groups are never mixed. They are given by the MPI system unique IDs called context.

• Communicator: When creating a new group, a user associates it with a communicator variable in
order to refer to the group later. A communicator is of type MPI_Comm (defined in mpi.h).
MPI_COMM_WORLD is a predefined communicator referring to the entire processes.

int MPI_Comm_rank(MPI_Comm comm, int *rank)
Obtain the node ID rank of the calling process in the range between 0 and n-1 where n is the total
number of processes in the group referred to by communicator comm.

int MPI_Finalize()
This call must be made by every process in an MPI computation. It terminates the MPI
environment; no MPI calls may be made by a process after its call to MPI_Finalize(). It returns the
error condition.
int MPI_Send(void *buffer, int count, MPI_Datatype datatype, 
    int destination, int tag, MPI_Comm communicator)

Synchronous, (blocking) send of a message. It is safe to reuse the buffer when MPI_Send() returns (synchronous) (see p. 6). It may block until the message is received by the destination. The MPI standard leaves the decision to each implementation. However, correct programs are such that work even if MPI_Send() always blocks. It returns the error condition, MPI_SUCCESS if successful.

- **buffer**: refers to the buffer that contains the message to be sent. The buffer may be any legal type.
- **count**: a positive integer that specifies the number of elements to be sent.
- **datatype**: standard datatypes are MPI_INT, MPI_FLOAT, MPI_DOUBLE, MPI_CHAR, etc. User defined datatype is also supported.
- **destination**: a process ID (rank) where the message is to be sent.
- **tag**: an integer given by a user that identifies the label of the message.
- **communicator**: communicator to specify the group and context where the message is to be sent.

int MPI_Recv(void *buffer, int count, MPI_Datatype datatype, int source, 
    int tag, MPI_Comm communicator, MPI_Status *status)

Synchronous, blocking receive of a message. Receive a message and wait for the receive operation to complete before proceeding. When the message is received, it is stored in buffer and the calling process resumes execution.

- **buffer**: refers to the buffer where the message is to be stored. The buffer may be any legal type.
- **count**: a positive integer that specifies the number of elements to be received.
- **datatype**: standard datatypes are MPI_INT, MPI_FLOAT, MPI_DOUBLE, MPI_CHAR, etc. User defined datatype is also supported.
- **source**: a process ID (rank) where the message is to be received from. MPI_ANY_SOURCE is a wildcard to accept a message from any source.
- **tag**: an integer given by a user that identifies the label of the message. MPI_ANY_TAG is a wildcard to accept a message with any tag.
- **communicator**: communicator to specify the group and context where the message is to be received from.
- **status**: the status is filled in with information about the received message. For example, status.MPI_SOURCE is the source process rank status.MPI_TAG is the tag of the received message.

- **Datatype Constructors**: Define a user-defined datatype. Examples are,

  - `int MPI_Type_contiguous(int count, MPI_Datatype oldtype, 
    MPI_Datatype *newtype)`

    Defines a new datatype that occupies contiguous memory cells consisting of count data elements of oldtype.

  - `int MPI_Type_struct(int count, int *array_of_blocklengths, int 
    *array_of_displacements, MPI_Datatype *array_of_types, MPI_Datatype *newtype)`

    Defines a new datatype that consists of blocks of memory cells occupied by different datatypes. The offset of each block is specified in bytes and stored in array_of_displacements[].

**COMMUNICATOR**

**PROCESS GROUP**

Sometimes we want to perform global operations in a selected subset of all the processes.
In MPI, user programs can define new process groups at run time. In each group, member processes are sequentially numbered by rank from 0 to n−1 where n is the number of processes in the group.

**CONTEXT**

Sometimes we do not want to mix two kinds of messages even in the same process group. This is true especially when we develop a library function. Messages sent in a library function must not be received outside that function.

```c
main() {
  ...
  library_function();
  ...
  crecv(10,...);
  ...
}
library_function() {
  ...
  csend(10,...);
  ...
}
```

In MPI, context is implemented as a message ID allocated by the system. Context is a kind of message tag allocated by the system at run time in response to a user request. Message exchange occurs only when both user-defined tags as well as system-defined contexts match.

**COMMUNICATOR**

The notions of group and context are combined in a single object called a communicator. Most communications are specified in terms of rank of the process in the group identified with the given communicator.

**Example:** mpi_comm.c

```c
#include "mpi.h"
#include <stdio.h>
#define N 64
main(int argc, char *argv[]) { 
  MPI_Comm world, workers;
  MPI_Group world_group, worker_group;
  int myid, nprocs;
  int server, n = -1, ranks[1];
  MPI_Init(&argc, &argv);
  world = MPI_COMM_WORLD;
  MPI_Comm_rank(world, &myid);
  MPI_Comm_size(world, &nprocs);
  server = nprocs-1;
  MPI_Comm_group(world, &world_group);
  ranks[0] = server;
  MPI_Group_excl(world_group, 1, ranks, &worker_group);
  MPI_Comm_create(world, worker_group, &workers);
  
```
MPI_Group_free(&worker_group);
if (myid != server) {
    MPI_Allreduce(&myid, &n, 1, MPI_INT, MPI_SUM, workers);
    MPI_Comm_free(&workers);
}
printf("process %2d: n = %6d\n", myid, n);
MPI_Finalize();

(For MPI_Allreduce(), see p. 9.)

> mpirun -np 4 mpi_comm
process 0: n =  3
process 1: n =  3
process 2: n =  3
process 3: n = -1

### MPI Library Calls for Managing Communicators

**MPI_Comm** is a data type to specify communicators.

**MPI_Group** is a data type to specify groups.

**MPI_Comm_size**(MPI_Comm communicator, int *nprocs)
Returns the number of processes nprocs in the group identified with communicator.

**MPI_Comm_group**(MPI_Comm communicator, MPI_Group *group)
Extracts the group information for the given communicator. The return value is the handle to the group of the communicator.

**MPI_Group_excl**(MPI_Group old_group, int n_excl, int *ranks, MPI_Group *sub_group)
Excludes n_excl members specified by ranks stored in ranks[] array from the group old_group, and then create sub_group with the smaller number of member processes. Excluded are a set of ranks, {ranks[0], ..., ranks[n_excl-1]}. This is one of the group constructors.

**MPI_Comm_create**(MPI_Comm old_comm, MPI_Group sub_group, MPI_Comm *new_comm)
Creates a new communicator new_comm consisting of sub_group of the parent communicator old_comm. This is a communicator constructor.

**MPI_Group_free**(MPI_Group *group)
Group destructor for deallocation; frees MPI system resources for group.

**MPI_Comm_free**(MPI_Comm *communicator)
Communicator destructor; frees MPI system resources associated with communicator.

### Group Constructors

**int MPI_Group_incl**(MPI_Group old_group, int n, int *ranks, MPI_Group *sub_group)
Includes n members specified by ranks stored in ranks[] array from the group old_group, and then create sub_group with the smaller number of member processes.

**int MPI_Group_union**(MPI_Group group1, MPI_Group group2, MPI_Group *new_group)
**int MPI_Group_intersection**(MPI_Group group1, MPI_Group group2, MPI_Group *new_group)
**int MPI_Group_difference**(MPI_Group group1, MPI_Group group2, MPI_Group *new_group)

These functions apply set operations (union, intersection, and difference) to group1 and group2 to create a new_group. For example difference consists of all elements in group1 not in group2.
Message Passing Modes

(Example)

\[
\text{group1} = \{a, b, c, d\}, \ \text{group2} = \{d, a, e\} \\
\text{group1} \cup \text{group2} = \{a, b, c, d, e\} \quad \text{(union)} \\
\text{group1} \cap \text{group2} = \{a, d\} \quad \text{(intersection)} \\
\text{group1} \setminus \text{group2} = \{b, c\} \quad \text{(difference)}
\]

(BY DR. WILLIAM SAPHIR OF NASA AMES RESEARCH CENTER)

- **Non-blocking**: A routine is non-blocking if it is guaranteed to complete regardless of external events (e.g., the other processors).
  
  Example: A send is non-blocking if it is guaranteed to return whether or not there is a matching receive.

- **Blocking**: A routine is blocking if its completion (return of control to the calling routine) may depend on an external event (an event that is outside the control of the routine itself).
  
  Example: A send is blocking if it does not return until there is a matching receive.

- **Asynchronous**: A routine is asynchronous if it initiates an operation that happens logically outside the flow of control of the calling process. The important practical distinction is whether the program may be required to check for completion of the operation before proceeding.
  
  Example: \text{pvm\_send()} in PVM and \text{csend()} in NX have almost exactly the same semantics but the documentation says differently.

  - \text{pvm\_send()}
    
    “The pvm\_send routine is asynchronous. Computation on the sending processor resumes as soon as the message is safely on its way to the receiving processor. This is in contrast to synchronous communication, during which computation on the sending processor halts until the matching receive is executed by the receiving processor.”

  - \text{csend()}
    
    “This is a synchronous system call. The calling process waits (blocks) until the send completes. Completion of the send does not mean that the message was received, only that the message was sent and that the send buffer can be reused.”

  We will call both calls nonblocking, synchronous.

  **Why Use Asynchronous Message Passing?**

  Answer: To overlap communication with computation.

SYNCHRONOUS MESSAGE PASSING

\text{MPI\_Send()}

**Semantics**: (blocking), synchronous

- Safe to modify original data immediately after the \text{MPI\_Send()} call.
- Depending on implementation, it may return whether or not a matching receive has been posted, or it may block (especially if no buffer space available). Programmer should assume that it is blocking.
Implementation

- May or may not buffer messages at source and/or destination. (cf. The following is the Intel NX implementation to demonstrate the concept of buffering.)
- If a receive has been posted, it delivers the message directly to the user buffer.
- If not, it buffers the message in system space on destination node.
- Does not return until message has been transferred out of the sending user buffer.

MPI_Recv()

Semantics: blocking, synchronous

- Blocks for message to arrive.
- Safe to use data on return.

Implementation

- If a matching message has been buffered, copies messages into user space and returns.
- Posts receive for data.
- Waits for data to arrive.
- Does not return until message has been transferred into the receiving user buffer.

ASYNCHRONOUS MESSAGE PASSING

MPI_Isend()

Semantics: non-blocking, asynchronous

- Returns whether or not a matching receive has been posted.
- Not safe to modify original data immediately (use MPI_Wait() system call).

Implementation

- May or may not buffer. (cf. The following is the Intel NX implementation to demonstrate the concept of buffering.)
- If a receive has been posted, it delivers the message directly to the user buffer.
- If not, it buffers the message in system space on destination node.
- Returns “immediately” before message has been transferred out of the sending user buffer.

MPI_Irecv()

Semantics: non-blocking, asynchronous

- Does not block for message to arrive.
- Cannot use data before checking for completion with MPI_Wait().

Implementation (Intel NX)

- If a matching message has arrived (and is buffered), copies messages into user space and returns.
- Posts receive and returns.
Asynchronous communication enables the overlap of computation & communication. (cf. An alternative approach is multi-threading integrated with the communication subsystem.)

```
int MPI_Irecv(void *buffer, int count, MPI_Datatype datatype,
               int source, int tag, MPI_Comm comm, MPI_Request *request)
```

Posts an asynchronous receive that initiates a receipt of a message. It immediately returns a handle (an ID given by the system) which will be used by MPI_Wait().

- buffer: refers to the buffer where the received message will be stored.
- count: the number of elements in the message buffer.
- datatype: datatype of each receive buffer entry.
- source: rank of source.
- tag: an integer given by a user that identifies the label of the message.
- comm: communicator.
- request: request handle.

```
int MPI_Wait(MPI_Request *request, MPI_Status *status)
```

Waits for completion of an asynchronous send or receive operation. When the message is complete, it returns and the associated message buffer is available for reuse, in the case of a send operation, or the buffer contains valid data, in the case of receive.

- request: request handle.
- status: received message status object.

- Program irecv_mpi.c

```c
#include "mpi.h"
#include <stdio.h>
#define N 1000
main(int argc, char *argv[]) {
    MPI_Status status;
    MPI_Request request;
    int send_buf[N], recv_buf[N];
    int send_sum = 0, recv_sum = 0;
    long myid, left, Nnode, msg_id, i;
    MPI_Init(&argc, &argv);
    MPI_Comm_rank(MPI_COMM_WORLD, &myid);
    MPI_Comm_size(MPI_COMM_WORLD, &Nnode);
    left  = (myid + Nnode - 1) % Nnode;
    for (i=0; i<N; i++) send_buf[i] = myid*N+i;
    /* Post a receive */
    MPI_Irecv(recv_buf, N, MPI_INT, MPI_ANY_SOURCE, 777, MPI_COMM_WORLD,
             &request);
    /* Perform tasks that don't use recv_buf */
    MPI_Send(send_buf, N, MPI_INT, left, 777, MPI_COMM_WORLD);
    for (i=0; i<N; i++) send_sum += send_buf[i];
    /* Complete the receive */
    MPI_Wait(&request, &status);
    /* Now it's safe to use recv_buf */
    for (i=0; i<N; i++) recv_sum += recv_buf[i];
    printf("Node %d: Send %d Recv %d\n", myid, send_sum, recv_sum);
    MPI_Finalize();
}
```

```bash
> mpirun -np 3 irecv_mpi
Node 0: Send  499500 Recv 1499500
Node 1: Send 1499500 Recv 2499500
Node 2: Send 2499500 Recv  499500
```

Note that 0+1+...+999 = (0+999)\times1000/2 = 499500; 1000+1001+...1999 = (1000+1999)\times1000/2 = 1499500; 2000+2001+...2999 = (2000+2999)\times1000/2 = 2499500.
Global Operations

BARRIER SYNCHRONIZATION

- **Barrier**: A point in the program where parallel processes wait for each other. After all the processes have reached the barrier statement, they are all released to continue execution.

  ```c
  <A>;
  barrier();
  <B>;
  ```

**MPI_Barrier(MPI_Comm communicator)**

Waits until all other nodes in the group have called `MPI_Barrier()` before continuing to execute the next line.

**ALL-TO-ALL REDUCTION**

- **All-to-all reduction**: Each process contributes a partial value to obtain the global summation. In the end, all the processes will receive the calculated summation. It is also called **multiple aggregation**.

- **Hypercube algorithm**: Communication requirements of a reduction operation can be structured as a series of pairwise exchanges, one with each neighbor in a hypercube (butterfly) structure. This structure allows a computation requiring all-to-all communication among \( p \) processes to be performed in \( \log_2 p \) steps.

```plaintext
a_000 + a_001 + a_010 + a_011 + a_100 + a_101 + a_110 + a_111
= ((a_000 + a_001) + (a_010 + a_011))
  + ((a_100 + a_101) + (a_110 + a_111))
```

At each level \( l \), a process exchanges messages with a partner whose node ID differs only at the \( l \)-th bit position.

**MPI_Allreduce(void *sendbuf, void *recvbuf, int count, MPI_Datatype datatype, MPI_Op op, MPI_Comm communicator)**

All-to-all reduction operation applied to data pointed to by `sendbuf`. The result is returned to the address `recvbuf` in all the processes in the group specified by the `communicator`. Valid operations for `op` are: `MPI_SUM`, `MPI_MIN`, `MPI_MAX`, etc.
Other MPI Library Calls

double MPI_Wtime()

Returns the elapsed wall-clock time in seconds since some time in the past. The “time in the past” is guaranteed not to change during the lifetime of the process.

How to Run an MPI Application on the HPC Linux Cluster at USC

(This part of the lecture is machine specific and may be supplemented by an appropriate documentation on the computer to be used.)

HPC is a distributed memory system. The master nodes, hpc-login1, hpc-login2, and hpc-login3, are available for user logins in order to edit, compile and submit batch jobs to the compute nodes. The hpc-login1 (now obsolete) is for 32bit i686 codes and hpc-login2 and hpc-login3 are for 64bit x86_64 codes. Each compute node has up to 24 cores, and is connected by high-performance low-latency Infiniband and Myrinet networks. Please use the latest master node, hpc-login3.usc.edu, for this course.

URL

- USC High Performance Computing and Communications (HPCC) Linux Computing Resource
  https://hpcc.usc.edu/support/infrastructure/hpcc-computing-resource-overview

Compilation

1. Log in to hpc-login3.usc.edu using the secure shell (in the following, we use 64-bit codes).
   ```bash
   > ssh -l <login_id> hpc-login3.usc.edu
   ```
2. To use the MPI library for message passing, append the following lines in the .cshrc file in your home directory (if you are using the C shell interface).
   ```bash
   source /usr/usc/openmpi/default/setup.csh
   ```
3. Put your MPI source code, e.g., mpi_simple.c, in your directory.
4. Create a file named makefile, the content of which is the following, to compile mpi_simple.c:
   ```bash
   mpi_simple: mpi_simple.c
   [TAB]mpicc -O -o mpi_simple mpi_simple.c
   ```
5. Compile the application program: The following will create an executable, mpi_simple.
   ```bash
   hpc-login3: make mpi_simple
   ```

Execution

1. Create a script file (named, e.g., mpi_simple.pbs) to submit an MPI job using the PBS, the content of which is (as a specific example, the user’s home directory is /home/rcf-proj/an2/anakano and the executable, mpi_simple, is placed in directory, hpc/cs596, under the home directory):
   ```bash
   #!/bin/bash
   #PBS -l nodes=1:ppn=2
   #PBS -l walltime=00:00:59
   #PBS -o mpi_simple.out
   #PBS -j oe
   #PBS -N mpi_simple
   WORK_HOME=/home/rcf-proj/an2/anakano/hpc/cs596
   cd $WORK_HOME
   np=$(cat $PBS_NODEFILE | wc -l)
   mpirun -np $np -machinefile $PBS_NODEFILE ./mpi_simple
   ```
2. Submit a PBS job:
   ```bash
   hpc-login3: qsub mpi_simple.pbs
   PBS has given the job ID 24076615
   ```
You can check the status of your PBS job using the `qstat` command.

```
hpc-login3: qstat -u <login_id>
```

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job ID</th>
<th>Username</th>
<th>Queue</th>
<th>Jobname</th>
<th>SessID</th>
<th>NDS</th>
<th>TSK</th>
<th>Memory</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>S Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24076615.hpc-pbs.usc anakano quick mpi_simple</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>00:00:59</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the job is completed, you can see the result (standard output and error if any) in the file, `mpi_simple.out`, in the working directory specified in your script file.

```
hpc-login3: more mpi_simple.out
```

```
Begin PBS Prologue Thu Aug 24 09:28:24 PDT 2017
Job ID: 24076615.hpc-pbs1.hpcc.usc.edu
Username: anakano
Group: m-csci
Project: lc_an2
Name: mpi_simple
Queue: quick
Shared Access: no
All Cores: no
Has MIC: no
Is hada: false
Nodes: hpc2499
TMPDIR: /tmp/24076615.hpc-pbs1.hpcc.usc.edu
End PBS Prologue Thu Aug 24 09:28:26 PDT 2017
```

```
n = 777
```

```
Begin PBS Epilogue Thu Aug 24 09:28:27 PDT 2017
Job ID: 24076615.hpc-pbs1.hpcc.usc.edu
Username: anakano
Accountname: lc_an2
Group: m-csci
Job Name: mpi_simple
Session: 30528
Limits: neednodes=1:ppn=2, nodes=1:ppn=2, walltime=00:00:59
Resources: cput=00:00:01, energy_used=0, mem=18296kb, vmem=0kb, walltime=00:00:00:02
Queue: quick
Shared Access: no
Has MIC: no
Is hada: false
Account: lc_an2
removed '/scratch'
End PBS Epilogue Thu Aug 24 09:28:27 PDT 2017
```

You can kill a PBS job using the `qdel` command, specifying its PBS job ID.

```
hpc-login3: qdel 24076615
```