

# SPINning Parallel Systems Software\*

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**Abstract.** We describe our experiences in using SPIN to verify parts of the Multi Purpose Daemon (MPD) parallel process management system. MPD is a distributed collection of processes connected by Unix network sockets. MPD is dynamic: processes and connections among them are created and destroyed as MPD is initialized, runs user processes, recovers from faults, and terminates. This dynamic nature is easily expressible in the SPIN/PROMELA framework but poses performance and scalability challenges. We present here the results of expressing some of the parallel algorithms of MPD and executing both simulation and verification runs with SPIN.

## 1 Introduction

Reasoning about parallel programs is surprisingly difficult. Even small parallel programs are difficult to write correctly, and an incorrect parallel program is equally difficult to debug. In our experience writing the Multi Purpose Daemon (MPD), a parallel system program described below, this characterization has been borne out: despite MPD's small size and apparent simplicity, errors have impeded progress toward code in which we have complete confidence. (Of course, another possible explanation is that as parallel programmers we are inept; we reject this hypothesis because it is impossible to verify rigorously.)

Such a situation motivates us to explore program verification techniques. Since our programs are small and our algorithms simple (when viewed from the perspective of a single process), we hope that program verification software will be able to handle our problem; since the difficulty of reasoning about parallelism has shown us that we really do need help with this problem, investing in verification is worth the effort.

MPD [1,2] is a process manager for parallel programs and is itself a parallel program. Its function is to start the processes of a parallel job in a scalable way, manage input and output, deal with faults, and cause jobs to terminate cleanly. While the job is running, it may need to provide services to the application, such as implementing a barrier or assisting an application process in setting

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up communication with another process in the job. MPD is the sort of process manager needed to run applications that use the standard MPI [11, 12] library for parallelism, although it is not MPI-specific. MPD is distributed as part of the portable and publicly available MPICH [4, 5] implementation of MPI.

Our first attempt [10] to use formal verification techniques to ensure correctness of MPD algorithms was based on the ACL2 [8, 9] theorem prover. While ACL2 provided a useful simulation environment, formulating desired properties of and reasoning about models of MPD algorithms proved difficult. Our second approach, described here, employs the model checker SPIN [6, 7]. Our particular application is unusual in that the number of entities and the topology of the communication network can change over time. We also need to model a larger number of entities than many SPIN applications do. In Section 4 we discuss the challenges that these properties provide to the SPIN system.

In Section 2 we describe MPD in more detail and outline our method for modeling a distributed, dynamic set of Unix processes in PROMELA. In Section 3 we describe our experiences with this approach, which we believe shows potential benefits for the further development of MPD. In Section 4 we present the concrete results of specific verification experiments, and we conclude in Section 5 with a summary of the current project status and our future plans.

## 2 Approach

To present what we want to verify and how we have gone about it, we describe here a few salient features of the MPD system. More details can be found in [1] and [2].

The MPD system consists of several types of processes. The *daemons* are persistent (may run for weeks or months at a time, starting many jobs), and there typically exists one daemon instance per host in a TCP-connected network. *Manager* processes are started by the daemons to control the application processes (*clients*) of a single parallel job and provide most of the MPD features. The daemons are connected in a ring. A *console* process is started by a user or another process to connect to the daemon ring and give it a command, such as `mpirun` to start a user parallel job. Separate managers for each user process, started by the daemons, support individual process environments for the user processes. The managers also connect themselves into a ring.

Exactly how the daemons are started or connected is not important, since the system provides a number of choices, and the process need not be particularly fast. A console command is started by the user, either interactively or under the control of a batch scheduler. The daemons spawn the managers, which use information given them by the daemons to connect themselves into a ring, then spawn the clients. The startup messages traverse the ring quickly, so most invocation of new processes and connecting takes place in parallel, leading to fast startup even for jobs involving hundreds of processes. The situation is as shown in Figure 1, where the clients may be application MPI processes. The vertical solid lines represent connections based on pipes; the remaining solid lines all

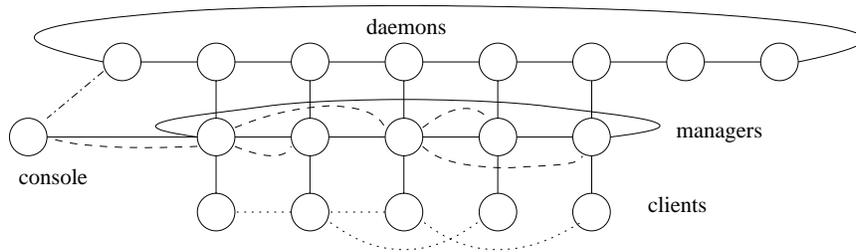


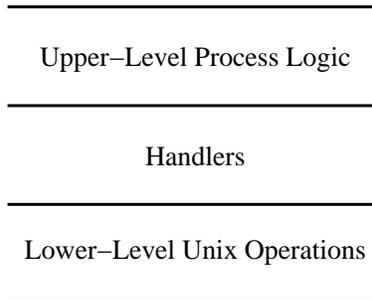
Fig. 1. Daemons with console process, managers, and clients

represent connections based on Unix sockets. The dashed lines represent the trees of connections for forwarding input and output, and the dotted lines represent *potential* connections among the client processes. The dot-dashed line is the original connection from console to local daemon on a Unix socket, which is replaced during startup by the network connection to the first manager.

An important feature of MPD for our purpose here is that the structure of the code for each of the three process types (daemon, manager, console) is essentially the same: after initialization, the process enters an essentially infinite loop, implemented by a Unix socket function `select`, which indicates which sockets have messages available. That is, most of the time, the process is idle. When a message arrives on one of its sockets from one of the processes it is connected to, it wakes up, parses the message, calls the appropriate handler routine to process the message, and re-enters the idle state by calling `select` again. The handler routine itself does a small amount of processing, typically resulting in the creation of new sockets or in the sending of messages on existing sockets. The logic of the distributed algorithms executed by the system as a whole, therefore, is contained primarily in the handlers. No individual message, received by one process, results in much activity. The individual handlers are typically implemented in a few lines, or at most a few tens of lines, of C code.

This structure allows us to treat the system as comprising three layers (see Figure 2). The top tier corresponds to the upper-level logic of the process (initialization, `select` loop, parsing and dispatching of incoming messages to handlers). This is sequential logic that we have confidence in; hence, although we must model this part of each process in some way in PROMELA, the PROMELA model does not have to be faithful to the algorithms in this layer. The bottom layer corresponds to well-understood Unix operations on sockets. Again the code is sequential and not of particular interest. It is in the middle layer (the handlers) that the interesting parallel algorithms are expressed and the bugs appear.

Verification of the algorithms executed by different components of the MPD system is not the only goal of the project. Equally important and desirable is the ability to translate, possibly automatically, a verified PROMELA model to executable C code while preserving the verified properties of the model. Only the middle layer of the model has to be translated. Thus, in our PROMELA model of each type of process, we take considerable liberties with the top and bottom



**Fig. 2.** Layers of code in MPD

layers, but we wish the Promela code for the middle layer (the handlers) to be directly translatable into C or the scripting language Python. Our current implementation of MPD is in C.

## 2.1 Modeling Components of the MPD System

Components of the MPD system map naturally to PROMELA entities: a **proctype** is defined for each different MPD process type; individual daemon, manager, console, and client processes correspond to active instances of the corresponding **proctypes**; sockets map to channels; and messages that are read and written over the sockets correspond to messages traveling on the channels. Our models of individual process types preserve the three-layer structure (Figure 2) of executable MPD code for clarity, readability, and modularity and also to facilitate the translation of verified handler algorithms to executable code.

The top tier of the model typically contains the start-up logic of a particular MPD algorithm followed by a mechanism for sampling and processing the attached channels. The middle tier corresponds to a collection of handlers that define the set of message types permitted for each type of communication link as well as the behavior of the process in response to each message type. The lowest tier consists of a PROMELA-based implementation of the Unix socket primitives. Note that an MPD programmer relies on the predefined functionality of the socket processing functions but does not implement the primitives. Creating a PROMELA library of Unix socket primitives allows us to (1) hide the details of the socket model from both the verification and translation to the executable code, (2) interchange, if need be, different models of sockets without changing the remainder of the model, and (3) reuse the socket model in verification of independent MPD algorithms.

## 2.2 Modeling Unix Sockets

A Unix socket is an endpoint of a bidirectional communication path between two processes. In MPD, sockets are manipulated when a connection between two

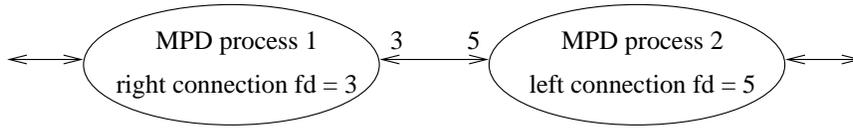


Fig. 3. Connected MPD processes

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
other_fd		0		5		3		
owner_pid		0		1		2		
use_flag		FREE		RHS		LHS		

Fig. 4. Example state of the socket array

processes is established or destroyed. Correct operation of some MPD algorithms depends on correct allocation and manipulation of sockets, while other MPD algorithms assume a static system of processes and communication links between them. Our objective is to model sockets efficiently to support verification of both types of MPD algorithms.

An MPD process runs on top of an operating system, which provides (among other services) the implementation of sockets and their handling. We must model the sockets, but we do so without creating a model of the operating system. In fact in our model, the operating systems of the hosts on which MPD processes execute are combined into a single implicit global operating system. The only explicit manifestation of the operating system is the socket descriptor structure described below. In the model, the functionality of the operating system is hidden inside the socket library, and its tasks are handled directly by the MPD processes.

A Unix socket is referenced by a file descriptor (fd) and represents a buffer for reading and writing messages. Our PROMELA model of a socket consists of a channel and a three-part record that describes how the particular socket should be used. A model of an MPD algorithm contains an array of channels and an array of socket descriptor structures. The first field of the socket descriptor structure references the fd at the other endpoint of the connection. The second field identifies a process that has an exclusive privilege to read from, write to, and deallocate the socket. The third field is a flag that indicates whether the socket has been allocated to a particular process and, if so, how it can be used. Outside the context of MPD, the usage flag need indicate only whether the socket is free or allocated. However, since the model is created specifically for use with MPD, the flag field of the socket descriptor structure is also used to denote how the socket is used by an MPD process. For example, when a ring of MPD processes is established, sockets corresponding to the right-hand side of the connection are processed differently from the sockets on the left. Figure 3 shows two connected MPD processes. Figure 4 shows the corresponding state of an array of socket descriptors as well as one unallocated socket.

The following Unix socket primitives have been modeled in accordance with their defined functionality[14]: `connect`, `accept`, `close`, `read`, and `write`. Other socket primitives, such as `socket`, `bind`, and `listen`, are not explicitly modeled but are implied in the model. `Select` is used only in the top tier of the MPD process. We include a model of `select` in the socket library, but its implementation is greatly influenced by the specific way in which the function is used by MPD algorithms. The modeled socket functions, defined as `inline PROMELA` functions of the same name, serve as an interface between the bottom and middle tiers of the model. Below is an excerpt of the socket library together with the definitions of the channels and socket descriptor structure. Definitions of self-explanatory functions and macros are omitted.

```
chan connection[CONN_MAX] = [QSZ] of {msg_type};

typedef conn_info_type {
    unsigned other_fd : FD_BITS;
    unsigned owner_pid : PROC_BITS;
    unsigned use_flag : FLAG_BITS;
};

conn_info_type conn_info[CONN_MAX];

inline read(file_desc, message)
{
    connection[file_desc]?message;
}

inline write(file_desc, message)
{
    connection[conn_info[file_desc].other_fd]!message;
    fd_select_check(conn_info[file_desc].other_fd)
}

inline close(file_desc)
{
    IF /* other side has not been closed yet */
    :: (conn_info[file_desc].other_fd != INVALID_FD) ->
        set_other_side(conn_info[file_desc].other_fd, INVALID_FD);
        fd_select_check(conn_info[file_desc].other_fd)
    FI;
    deallocate_connection(file_desc)
}

inline connect(file_desc, lp)
{
    allocate_connection(j);          /* server's connection */
}
```

```

    set_owner(j, lp);
    set_handler(j, AWAIT_ACCEPT);
    allocate_connection(file_desc); /* client's connection */
    set_owner(file_desc, _pid);
    set_other_side(j, file_desc); /* relate connections */
    set_other_side(file_desc, j); /* to each other */
    lp_select_check(lp)
}

inline accept(file_desc)
{
    file_desc = 0;
    do
        :: (file_desc >= CONN_MAX) ->
            assert(0) /* block if no connect was made */
        :: (readable_lp(file_desc, _pid)) ->
            set_handler(file_desc, NEW);
            break
        :: else ->
            file_desc = file_desc + 1
    od
}

```

Notice that `read(fd)` and `write(fd)` operate on different sockets. The reading operation amounts to receiving a message from the `connection[fd]` channel, while the writing operation places the message on the other buffer of the connection, which is pointed to by the `other_fd` field of `conn_info[fd]`. This approach ensures that the connection is truly bidirectional and that the two processes at the endpoints of the connection can read and write independently. `Connect` and `accept` are companion operations. To establish a connection, a client process connects to a listening port on the server process. To complete the connection, the server must accept the connection request from the client. In the model, the client allocates both sockets of the connection and sets the `use_flag` of the server's socket to `AWAIT_ACCEPT`. The `accept` operation then locates the socket with the set flag. In Unix, an `accept` will block if executed before a `connect` is issued. The PROMELA model also implements this behavior. Finally, the `close` operation deallocates the socket. When a `close` is issued in Unix, the process on the other side of the connection essentially sees an `EOF` on the corresponding socket. To simulate the behavior in PROMELA, the model of the `close` operation sets the `other_fd` of the remaining part of the connection to an invalid value. `Write`, `connect`, and `close` operations contain references to `{fd,lp}_select_check` functions, which are helper functions to the `select` operation. They set a bit for the owner process of the connection, indicating that the process can leave the idle state and do some processing in response to received messages or other set flags. The `select` function blocks until the bit is set.

### 2.3 The Road Not Taken

One may model the MPD system in many ways. We are fully prepared for the possibility that as this project progresses and we model other kinds of MPD algorithms, our model will change. The three-layered approach allows us to make dramatic changes in different levels of the model without affecting the remainder of the model. We experimented with several different models of the MPD system and came to the following conclusions.

While it is tempting to model the operating system explicitly and to hide the manipulation of the sockets inside such a model, doing so goes against the methodology of SPIN/PROMELA model construction. An explicit model of the operating system produces a process that simply forwards messages between daemons, managers, clients, and consoles, resulting in a rapid explosion of the state space.

One can model the socket operations by sending explicit messages. For example, a `connect` can result in a message that is consumed by the corresponding `accept`. A `close` operation can send a special `eof` message on the other end of the connection, if it is still open. The `select` operation may be viewed as a message whose parameters include references to sockets, which should be sampled for messages. The `select` would return when a response message is received. The parameters of the response message could contain the references to the sockets that in fact have messages that are ready for consumption. After experimenting with such an approach, we decided that the model should contain only those messages that represent explicit communication between MPD processes, while communication that occurs between the host operating systems should be represented by other means, such as setting and resetting of flags.

## 3 Early Experiences with Modeling and Verification

This is our first SPIN project. Initial efforts concentrated on investigating applicability of the SPIN-based approach to our problem. We experimented by constructing different models of Unix sockets and different models of MPD algorithms and attempting verification of these models. These efforts resulted in an early success in demonstrating that a proposed MPD algorithm was incorrect.<sup>1</sup>

### 3.1 A Buggy Algorithm for Creating a Daemon Ring

Establishment of a ring of daemons, the first step of the MPD system, and maintenance of the ring are central to the operation of MPD. Informally, daemon ring creation proceeds as follows. The initial daemon establishes a listening port

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<sup>1</sup> Admittedly, our focus at the time was on learning SPIN and PROMELA and not on development of MPD algorithms. Had we been concentrating on the latter topic, the rather obvious error we discovered with SPIN's aid probably would have been found during early stages of design. Nonetheless, we view the experience as evidence of the usefulness of the SPIN-based approach to verification of MPD algorithms.

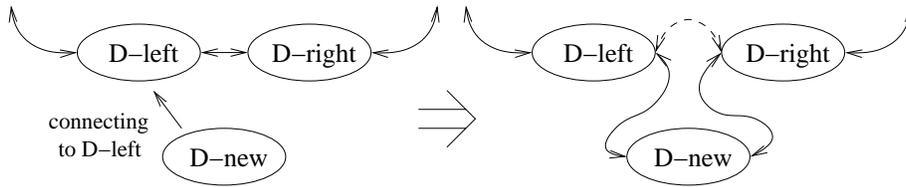


Fig. 5. Ring insertion

to which subsequent connections are made. The daemon connects to its own listening port, creating a ring of one daemon. The listening port of the first daemon and the name of the host processor are queried from the console. The desired number of daemons is then initiated and directed to enter the ring by connecting to the first daemon. Figure 5 shows the result of inserting a new daemon into an existing ring. Upon completion of the insertion the old connection between daemons on the right and left of the new daemon is disconnected (shown in the figure by the dashed line). Note that in the special case of insertion into a ring of one daemon, the daemon plays both the left and the right roles.

Initially we modeled an algorithm that allowed new daemons to enter the ring sequentially. Figure 6 presents the algorithm as a message sequence chart. The new daemon is supplied with the information it needs to initiate a connection to the daemon *D-left*, so identified because it will end up as the left-hand side neighbor of the new daemon. The connection is accepted by *D-left*. The new daemon then queries the *D-left* daemon about the coordinates of its right-hand side neighbor. As no information about the state of the ring is kept by the daemons in this algorithm, *D-left* queries *D-right* for its listening port number and the name of the host. *D-right* returns the requested information, which is then forwarded to the new daemon. The new daemon declares itself the new right-hand side neighbor of *D-left*, which replaces its existing right-hand side connection with the connection to *D-new*. The old connection is closed. The new daemon continues to enter the ring by connecting to *D-right* using the coordinates it received in the `rhs_info_return` message from *D-left*. The connection is accepted, and the new daemon declares itself the new left-hand side of *D-right*, which closes the remaining endpoint of the old connection.

MPD design requirements, however, mandate that several ring insertion commands can be issued simultaneously. Moreover, an MPD process can be blocked only by a select. (The second requirement is fulfilled if there are no blocking read statements within the body of any handler.) Our sequential algorithm exhibits neither of the mandated properties. The algorithm assumes that the sequence of messages `rhs_info_request`, ..., `new_rhs` is not interrupted, that is, *D-new* sends an `rhs_info_request` message and blocks until it receives the `rhs_info_return` message. *D-left* is similarly blocked upon sending the `rhs_info_return` message until the receipt of the `new_rhs` message. If the algorithm is changed so that daemons are blocked only by a select and several new daemons simultaneously enter the ring, an erroneous execution scenario is possi-

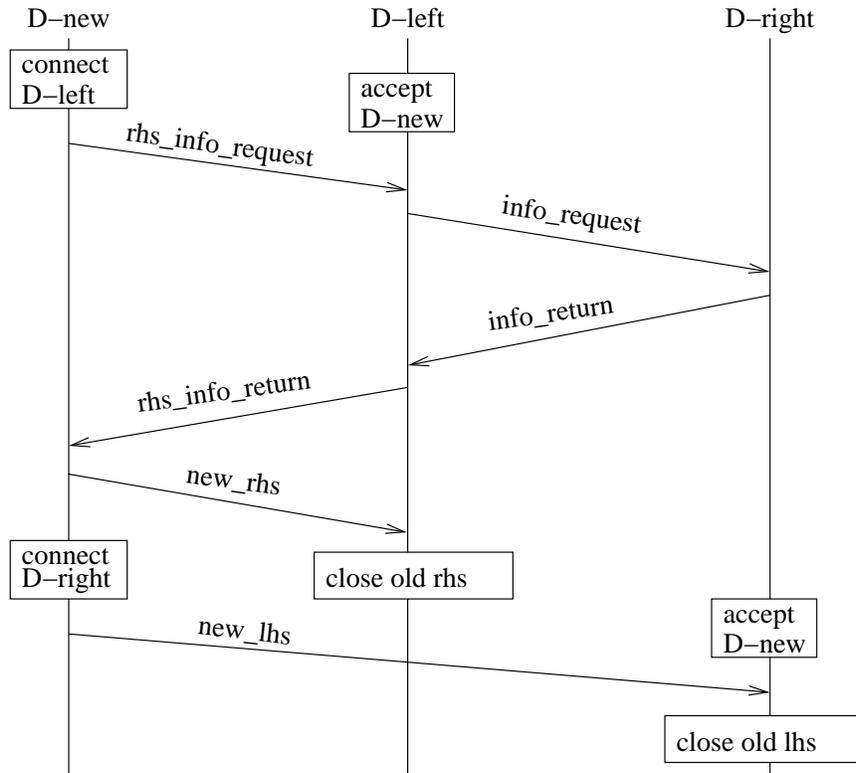


Fig. 6. Sequential ring insertion algorithm

ble. The error occurs when two daemons attempt to simultaneously enter a ring of more than one daemon. The initial connection is made by both new daemons to the same daemon in the ring. Then both daemons issue an `rhs_info_request`. If the processing of the resulting messages is interleaved, both new processes are told to connect their right-hand side to the same daemon. A ring will not be established in this case. In the correct algorithm, one of the new processes should connect its right-hand side to the other new daemon, which should connect its right-hand side to the existing daemon. The algorithm is fixed by storing on each daemon the coordinates of its right-hand side neighbor. Doing so makes unnecessary the series of messages to request and return this information to the new daemon.

This error was discovered during simulations of the PROMELA model within SPIN. The experience was important not only because SPIN helped us find an error but also because SPIN helped us to do so very quickly. This experience leads us to believe that the tool will become invaluable in future development efforts both for verification and for rapid prototyping and testing of new algorithms.

### 3.2 Early Problems with Modeling and Verification

Our early models were naive because of our inexperience and our attempts to match the model too closely to C code. Including an explicit model of the operating system for socket handling led to extreme state space explosion while requiring a long state vector size. After examining the literature on pragmatic use of SPIN [3, 13], we developed much leaner models. In optimizing our original explicit models we tried to find a level of abstraction that preserved the correlation of the PROMELA model to the eventual C code while keeping verification feasible.

## 4 Verification of MPD Algorithms

An MPD daemon ring is a dynamic structure: new processes may enter the ring at any time, and existing processes or their host processors may crash or may shut down in an orderly fashion. We modeled and verified algorithms for ring creation and ring recovery after a single process/processor crash. The majority of MPD algorithms reside in the managers. We modeled and verified a barrier algorithm, an example of a manager-level functionality, which ensures that all clients reach a certain point in the execution of a parallel job before any client is allowed to proceed further.

All verification runs were conducted on a 933 MHz Pentium III processor with 970 MB of usable RAM. We used default XSPIN settings for all verification attempts, except when we increased the memory limit to allow the search to complete. In cases where verification did not complete with default parameters within physical memory limits, verification with compression (`-DCOLLAPSE` compile-time directive) was performed. Such experiments are identified by an asterisk.

### 4.1 Ring Establishment Algorithm

Figure 7 shows a message-sequence chart representation of an algorithm that allows parallel insertion of daemons into the ring. A minor difference between this algorithm and the ring establishment algorithm described in Section 3 (Figure 6) is that the `new_rhs` message is sent before the coordinates of *D-right* are supplied to `D-new` via the message `reconnect_rhs`. The major difference is that in this algorithm each daemon records and maintains the identities (listening port number and the host name) of the two daemons located to its right. Strictly speaking, only the identity of the immediate right-hand side neighbor is needed to establish the ring. To recover from an unexpected crash of a daemon, however, the identity of the second right-hand side neighbor (`rhs2`) must be known as well. The algorithm involves sending a message of type `rhs2info`, to communicate this information to the appropriate daemon. This operation is not shown in the figure. In a small ring (fewer than three daemons) or when a ring is being created, special case logic ensures that appropriate information is forwarded to

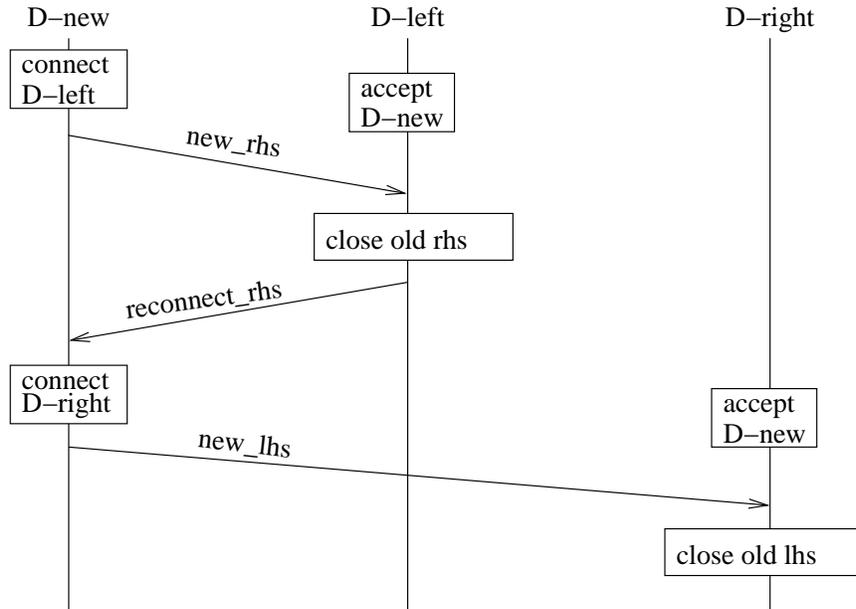


Fig. 7. Parallel ring insertion algorithm

the correct daemon. In the general case, upon receipt of the `new_rhs` message *D-left* sends the `rhs2info` message, in a counterclockwise direction along the ring, to its left-hand side neighbor, indicating that it has a new rhs2, namely, *D-new*. In addition, upon receipt of the `new_lhs` message, *D-right* sends the `rhs2info` message along the ring, also in a counterclockwise direction, to *D-new*. The rhs2 neighbor of *D-new* is the right-hand side neighbor of *D-right*.

The algorithm was modeled by using the three-tiered approach described above. To check whether the algorithm is correct, we verify that the resulting system topology, which is implicit in the socket descriptor structures array, is in fact a ring of the correct size. In addition, we check that the state information (identities of the two neighbors to the right) agrees with the information in the socket descriptor structures array. These two checks are performed when the ring establishment algorithm is completed, which in reality corresponds to all daemons entering an idle state. In the PROMELA model this corresponds to a timeout. A properly connected ring manifests itself in successfully supporting operation of daemon-level algorithms. In fact, MPD designers and users test whether the ring was established successfully by executing one of such algorithms and examining its results. The algorithm, invoked by `mpitrace`, reports the identities of all daemons and their position in the ring. To convince our “customers” (i.e., MPD designers) that the PROMELA model of the ring establishment algorithm is correct, we also verify that upon its completion, the trace algorithm terminates after having visited every daemon in the ring. The trace algorithm is

Correctness Property	Model Size	Time (s)	Memory (MB)	Vector Size (byte)	States Stored/Matched	Search Depth
State	1	0.00	2.5	40	10/0	9
	2	0.00	2.5	92	44/23	21
	3	0.05	3.0	136	4304/5278	44
	4	105.35	768	224	3.83e+06/7.97e+06	115
Trace	1	0.00	2.5	40	14/0	13
	2	0.00	2.5	92	56/27	29
	3	0.80	3.3	136	5743/6718	58
	4*	159.33	173	224	4.57e+06/9.28e+06	115

**Table 1.** Verification statistics for the ring establishment algorithm

implemented both in MPD and in our model by sending two kinds of messages along the ring, which leads to an increase in the number of states that have to be examined during a verification attempt. For this reason, on a model of a given size, verification of the successful trace completion is more expensive, in terms of time and memory, than verification of ring topology and state information.

Statistics for the verification of the ring algorithm are presented in Table 1. The first portion of the table reports on the verification of state of the ring properties, that is, the information in the socket description structures array and the recorded identities of the two right-hand side neighbor of each daemon. The second portion of the table presents statistics on verification of a successful trace after ring establishment. The algorithm was verified for models comprising up to four daemons, as indicated in the second column of the table.

We were unable to exhaustively verify the algorithm on models with five or more daemons. Because of dramatic state space explosion and large state vectors, verification attempts for these models ran out of 970 MB of memory, and using the compression and graph encoding techniques (`-DCOLLAPSE` and `-DMA=n` compile-time directives) still did not enable the search to complete. When we applied predicate abstraction techniques to model the ring establishment algorithm, verification succeeded for models with only up to eight daemons. However, the desired correlation of the PROMELA model to the C/Python code was lost, as was the ability to perform meaningful simulations. As shown below in verification statistics of other MPD algorithms that we have modeled and verified, the rapid increase in the number of states for relatively small models occurs only for the ring establishment algorithm and is due in large part to its properties.

Since the daemons enter the ring in parallel, there are many possible interleavings of their execution leading to many possible ring configurations. In general, given  $n$  daemons, there are  $n!$  resulting ring configurations. Moreover, a daemon enters the ring in two steps: first it connects its left-hand side, then its right-hand side, which in turn increases the number of possible interleavings. An increase in model size also leads to an increase in the number of sockets/fds that are manipulated. Since every connection consists of two sockets, there is a

minimum of  $2n$  sockets in a ring of  $n$  daemons. However, as the ring is being created, additional sockets are required because there are execution sequences in which allocation of a new socket occurs *before* deallocation of a socket belonging to a connection whose other end has been closed. Finally, an increase in model size leads to an increase of the buffer size of the communication channels. Recall that when a new daemon enters the ring, a `rhs2info` message is sent along the ring in a counterclockwise direction to a daemon located two positions to the left of the new daemon. Therefore, in a general case, for  $n$  new daemons inserted into the ring,  $n$  `rhs2info` messages are sent. Some execution sequences result in all  $n$  messages accumulating on a single communication channels. Therefore, the buffer size is equal to the number of daemons.

The fact that verification succeeds only on small models needs to be put in perspective. On one hand, a running MPD typically consists of several tens or hundred of processes. Therefore, given the current technology, we cannot completely verify MPD algorithms for every possible system size and topology. On the other hand, prior experience with debugging of the MPD code suggests that even the most difficult errors manifest themselves in systems of just a few (four to ten) processes. Therefore, the models of MPD algorithms as the current level of abstraction allow us to perform verification of some algorithms on models of satisfactory size. For other algorithms, such as the ring establishment algorithm, a slightly more abstract model or a more efficient socket library will enable verification to complete on models of sufficient size.

## 4.2 Recovery from a Single Nondeterministic Failure

The ring recovery algorithm works as follows. When a daemon in a properly established ring fails, the operating system on its host processor will close all sockets that belonged to it, so the neighbors of the failed daemon will see that the sockets on their opposite end of their connection to the daemon were closed. Of course, sockets may be closed for legitimate reasons as well, but the suite of MPD algorithms is designed in such a way that a closed socket on the right-hand side connection in the ring, without any advance notification that a controlled shutdown or disconnection will take place, signifies an unintended failure and places the burden of recovery on the remaining members of the ring. In the algorithm, the left-hand side neighbor reinstates the ring by establishing a connection to the right-hand side neighbor of the failed daemon. The identities of the two right-hand side neighbors must be updated for all affected daemons.

In our model of the algorithm the initial ring is hard-coded. One daemon is directed to fail, although we do not specify which one should do so. The recovery procedure is then initiated. The model algorithm was verified against the three correctness properties of a properly established ring, as discussed above. Table 2 shows statistics of the verification attempts.

Correctness Property	Model Size	Time (s)	Memory (MB)	Vector Size (byte)	States Stored/Matched	Search Depth
State	2	0.00	2.5	96	52/2	34
	3	0.00	2.5	116	266/141	56
	4	0.01	2.6	180	1073/1288	73
	5	0.10	3.4	216	4276/7985	90
	6	0.60	7.0	304	16323/41086	107
	7	2.97	23.1	352	59822/189011	124
	8	15.79	91.9	464	212205/806732	141
	9	69.70	376.0	520	734040/3.26e+06	158
	10*	243.08	71.8	656	2.49e+06/1.27e+07	175
	11*	1054.09	235.9	720	8.32e+06/4.78e+07	192
	12*	5340.19	772.6	876	2.75e+07/1.76e+08	209
	Trace	2	0.00	2.5	96	64/2
3		0.01	2.5	116	326/161	64
4		0.02	2.7	176	1433/1648	87
5		0.17	4.0	216	6992/12801	112
6		1.46	13.1	304	38755/98302	139
7		13.74	89.7	352	253322/832511	168
8		163.39	814.1	464	1.93e+06/7.83e+06	199
9*		1919.94	502.5	520	1.62e+07/7.85e+07	232

Table 2. Verification statistics for the ring recovery algorithm

### 4.3 Manager-Level Barrier Algorithm

Parallel programs frequently rely on a *barrier* mechanism to ensure that all processes of the job reach a certain point (complete initialization, for example) before any are allowed to proceed further. Parallel jobs, that is, programs running on the clients, rely on the manager processes to implement the barrier service. The algorithm proceeds as follows. A manager process is designated as the leader of the algorithm and is given a rank of 0. When the leader reads a request from its client to provide the barrier service, it sends a message `barrier_in` to its right-hand side neighbor in the ring. When a non-leader manager receives the `barrier_in` message, its behavior is determined by whether its client has already requested the barrier service. If the client has done so, the manager forwards the message to the right-hand side manager. Otherwise, it holds the `barrier_in` message until the request from the client arrives. While the `barrier_in` message is held, a bit variable `holding_barrier_in` is set. Once the `barrier_in` message traverses the entire manager ring and arrives back in the leader, meaning that each client has reached the barrier and notified its manager, the leader sends a `barrier_out` message around the ring. When a manager receives the `barrier_out` message, it notifies its client to proceed past the barrier. The leader can be either the first or the last manager to allow its client to proceed.

We modeled the algorithm on top of the socket library. A ring of managers is hard-coded in the beginning, and a manager with `_pid` of 0 is designated as the leader. There is no need to model the clients explicitly; thus the communication

Model Size	Time (s)	Memory (MB)	Vector Size (byte)	States Stored/Matched	Search Depth
1	0.00	2.5	40	20/4	14
2	0.00	2.5	60	47/24	21
3	0.00	2.5	84	118/118	29
4	0.00	2.5	108	321/506	37
5	0.01	2.6	128	920/1992	45
6	0.04	2.8	152	2707/7420	53
7	0.18	3.8	172	8058/26618	61
8	0.73	7.2	196	24101/92958	69
9	2.42	18.1	220	72220/318220	77
10	9.73	54.6	244	216567/1.07e+06	85
11	35.03	168.8	264	649598/3.57e+06	93
12	127.97	549.2	288	1.95e+06/1.18e+07	101
13*	759.23	192.9	308	5.85e+06/3.85e+07	109
14*	3050.96	571.3	332	1.75e+07/1.25e+08	117

**Table 3.** Verification statistics for the barrier algorithm

with them is represented by two bits per manager. One bit designates that a request for a barrier service has been received by the manager. The other bit, `client_barrier_out`, designates that the manager notified the client to proceed past the barrier. Global arrays of bits were defined, using the bit-array implementation by Ruys [13], to store these values. A constant `ALL_BITS` corresponds to a value of the bit array where an element was set for every manager in the ring.

We verified two correctness conditions about the algorithm. First, at the end of the algorithm, all clients must have been told to proceed past the barrier:

```
timeout -> assert(client_barrier_out == ALL_BITS)
```

The second condition is an invariant: no client is allowed to proceed until all clients have reached the barrier and all managers have released the `barrier_in` message:

```
assert((client_barrier_out == 0) ||
       ((client_barrier_in == ALL_BITS)
        && (holding_barrier_in == 0)))
```

Table 3 shows statistics for verification of the barrier algorithm. We were able to exhaustively verify models with up to fourteen managers.

## 5 Summary and Future Plans

We described here our first experiences in applying the SPIN-based approach to verification of a parallel process management system called MPD. We settled on

a three-tier architecture for the models in order to maintain the correlation to the eventual code of the MPD system and to enforce modularity of the model. The bottom layer of the architecture consists of a PROMELA model of operations on Unix sockets. We encountered some early difficulties in the verification attempts. Specifically, for the ring establishment algorithm, exhaustive verification can be completed only on models with up to four daemons. However, we were able to exhaustively verify larger models of other algorithms.

Based on our experiences, we believe that design and development of algorithms for MPD and similar systems can benefit greatly from application of the SPIN-based software verification methods. SPIN's simulation capability allows for rapid prototyping of new algorithms. Since even the most difficult errors can be discovered on models comprising only a few processes, the verification engine of SPIN enables us to verify the algorithms on models that are sufficiently large for our purposes.

A long-term goal of this project is to model and verify MPD algorithms and then translate them into C or another programming language, while preserving the verified properties. Ideally, translation should be automated. To allow this to happen, the PROMELA model must not be overly abstract. Figure 8 shows a PROMELA model and a C implementation of a portion of the barrier algorithm, in which a `barrier_in` message is received and processed by a manager. Automated translation certainly appears feasible for this level of abstraction of the PROMELA model. Notice the one-to-one correspondence between the control structures of the two segments. There is further correspondence between PROMELA and C for checking and setting of boolean variables (lines `p.3,c.2` and `p.15,c.13`). The code for message assembly (lines `p.6,c.4` and `p.10,c.12`) matches as follows. A PROMELA macro `make_barrier_out_msg` corresponds in C to writing a string, containing a `barrier_out` command, to a buffer. In the PROMELA model, before a message can be written to a buffer, the corresponding fd must be found using functions `find_right` or `find_left`. In the C code, the buffer is written to a file descriptor correspondingly referenced by `rhs_idx` or `lhs_idx`. Therefore, the two PROMELA lines `p.6-7` match a single C line `c.5`.

Of course, not all models will lend themselves well to verification at this level of abstraction, as verification of the ring establishment algorithm demonstrated. But, models of the MPD algorithms should fall into just a few different classes with respect to the level of abstraction, and a separate mapping can be defined for each such level to enable the PROMELA-to-C translation.

We will continue to model and verify individual MPD algorithms. They include the daemon-level functionality for controlled shutdown of a portion of the ring and subsequent ring reestablishment, as well as various manager-level algorithms, such as the handling of the parallel input and output to the console. Correct interaction of these algorithms is also very important. Many things take place in parallel in a running MPD system. Daemons enter and leave the ring, as do managers, different client processes request different services from the managers, and several instances of the same algorithm may be executing

```

p.1  :: (msg.cmd == barrier_in) ->
p.2  if
p.3  :: (IS_1(client_barrier_in,_pid)) ->
p.4  if
p.5  :: (_pid == 0) ->
p.6  make_barrier_out_msg;
p.7  find_right(fd,_pid);
p.8  write(fd,msg)
p.9  :: else ->
p.10 make_barrier_in_msg;
p.11 find_right(fd,_pid);
p.12 write(fd,msg)
p.13 fi
p.14 :: else ->
p.15 SET_1(holding_barrier_in,_pid)
p.16 fi

c.1  if ( strcmp( cmdval, "barrier_in" ) == 0 ) {
c.2  if ( client_barrier_in ) {
c.3  if ( rank == 0 ) {
c.4  sprintf( buf,
           "cmd=barrier_out dest=anyone src=%s\n",
           myid );
c.5  write_line( buf, rhs_idx );
c.6  }
c.7  else {
c.8  sprintf( buf,
           "cmd=barrier_in dest=anyone src=%s\n",
           origin );
c.9  write_line( buf, rhs_idx );
c.10 }
c.11 }
c.12 else {
c.13 holding_barrier_in = 1;
c.14 }
c.15 }

```

**Fig. 8.** Portion of the PROMELA model and C implementation of the barrier algorithm

simultaneously. We hope to be able to reason formally about MPD models that consist of several related and interdependent algorithms.

The PROMELA implementation of the the Unix socket library as well as models of the MPD algorithms described in this paper are available at <http://www.mcs.anl.gov/~matlin/spin-mpd>.

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