Distributed Programming

• low level: sending data among distributed computations
  • network is visible (to the programmer)
  • programmer must deal with many details

• higher level: supporting invocations among distributed computations
  • network is invisible (to the programmer)
  • programmer focuses on application
Remote Procedure Call

Calling Procedure \(\rightarrow\) Called Procedure

args \(\rightarrow\) results

Calling Procedure \(\leftarrow\) Client Stub

args \(\rightarrow\) results

request \(\rightarrow\) reply

Client Stub \(\leftarrow\) RPC Transport

RPC Transport \(\rightarrow\) Called Procedure

args \(\rightarrow\) results

Server Stub \(\leftarrow\) RPC Transport

RPC Transport \(\rightarrow\) Called Procedure

args \(\rightarrow\) results

request \(\rightarrow\) reply

Server Stub \(\leftarrow\) Called Procedure
Remote Invocation Issues

• generating stubs/proxies
• serialization of arguments and return values
• heterogeneity of data representations
• locating servers in a distributed environment (*)
• authentication of called and calling procedures (*)
• semantics of invocation

(*) addressed in other sections of the course
Interface Definition Language

Language binding: how IDL is translated to a given programming language.
module modulename {
    exception exceptionName { [type pname]* };
    typedef type newtype;

    interface newInterface {
        oneway type fname(in type pname1);
        attribute newtype;
    };

    interface newInterface2 : newInterface {
        type fname2 (out newInterface pname3) raises exceptionName;
    };
};

From: Ole Arthur Bernsen
IDL Example

typedef unsigned long AccountNumber;
typedef unsigned long PersonalIdentificationNumber;

exception NoSuchAccount {}; exception InvalidPin{}; exception InsufficientFunds {};

interface Account {
   struct AccountRecord {
      string owner;
      float balance;
      string lastaccess;
   }
   void Credit (in float Amount);
   void Debit(in float Amount) raises (InsufficientFunds);
   void List (out AccountRecord List_R1);
}

interface Sbank {
   Account Access (in AccountNumber acct, in PersonalIdentificationNumber pin)
      raises (NoSuchAccount, InvalidPin);
}

From: Nigel Edwards
Serialization

Issues:
- how to represent base types (i.e. int)
- how to represent structured types (arrays)
- how to deal with references (pointers)
- how to treat duplicated objects

transforming a typed, highly structured object into a stream of bytes.

Transfer syntax: the description of the encoded data stream.
Invocation Semantics - Blocking

(a) Synchronous
- Client: Call remote procedure
- Server: Call local procedure and return results
- Request
- Reply
- Wait for result

(b) Asynchronous (one-way)
- Client: Call remote procedure
- Server: Call local procedure
- Request
- Accept request
- Return from call
- Wait for acceptance

synchronous
asynchronous (one-way)
Invocation Semantics - Blocking

asynchronous (with returned result)
Invocation Semantics – Modes

• **At-most once**: it is guaranteed that the invocation will not occur or will occur exactly once.

• **At-least-once**: it is guaranteed that the invocation will occur though perhaps multiple times

• **Best-effort**: no guarantee
Corba

Goal: interoperability among application components
• written in different programming languages
• executing on heterogeneous architectures
• communicating over different networks.

Corba: Common Object Request Broker Architecture
ORB: Object Request Broker

From: Object Management Group
Role of the Object Request Broker

- **Application interfaces**: interfaces for a specific application
- **Domain interfaces**: interfaces shared across applications in a given application domain (publishing)
- **Common Facilities**: generic services that might be needed in several domains (document structure)
- **Object Services**: commonly needed across all applications (e.g., lifetime, naming, trading)

From: Doug Schmidt
Elements of Corba

From: Kate Keahey
Elements of Corba

From: Doug Schmidt
Corba Process Structure
Corba Services

• Naming - bind of names to objects (*)
• Events - asynchronous notification (*)
• Lifecycle - object management
• Relationship - maintaining relationships among objects
• Transaction - structured, reliable, database operations (*)

(*) - see more about later in the course
Corba and Java

Corba is still needed to fill in the gaps between Java and system developed in other languages.