Everything You Wanted To Know About Storage: Part Teal—The Buffering Pod

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Today’s Agenda

- Queuing
- Buffering
- Caching
- Flow Control
QUEUING
Definitions - Queue Depth

**IO Operation (aka “IOP”)**

Storage operation issued by a host (initiator) to a storage device/system (target)

*Example: Host issues a READ Operation of 100 blocks from a storage device*

**IO Queue**

A queue which holds one or more outstanding **IO Operations**

**IO Queue Depth**

Maximum number of outstanding **IO Operations** that the **IO Queue** can hold
Example: IO Queue with a IO Queue Depth of three
Larger Queue Depth allows IO Operations to be serviced in parallel or batched resulting in higher total IOPS and bandwidth.

Example Results:
@Queue Depth =1;
IOPS are 10K (1/100usec)

@Queue Depth =3;
IOPS are 25K (3/120usec)
Host systems typically have multiple Autonomous Processes simultaneously issuing IO Operations (Application Queue Depth)

Host O/S storage stacks have internal queues to accommodate oversubscribed Storage Device IO Queues (O/S Stack Queue Depth)

Queue Depth must be looked at End to End; App->O/S->Storage Device->Media
IO Queue Depth Considerations (Multiple IO Queues)

- Modern Storage Devices use a multi IO queue model for efficiency, typically one IO Queue per host CPU
- Effective Storage Device IO Queue Depth equals:
  # of IO Queues * individual IOQ Depth
Memory buffers (termed Transfer Buffers) are used to exchange IO Operation data between the Host System and Storage Device.

Transfer buffer resources are committed until the IO Operation completes.

- Resources may be large; example 64K IO requires 64K of memory.

\[
\text{IO Queue Memory} = \text{IO Queue Depth} \times \text{size of (IOP Descriptor + Transfer Buffer)}
\]
CACHE

@RogovMark
Dell EMC
Cache in the US
Definition

Cache (aka Cache Memory)
/ˈkaSH/

- An auxiliary memory from which high-speed retrieval is possible
Buffer
Use once and throw it away + allows blocks re-arranging
Cache

Cache implies multiple use of blocks
Reads with Cache

Read Hit: First reason for Caches to exist
Reads with Cache

Read Miss
Writes with Cache

Write-through: Write data to Cache and Disk, then confirm completion
Writes with Cache

Write-around: Bypass cache
Writes with Cache

Write-back: Write data to Cache and confirm completion; write to disk later
Performance in a File Oriented World

Listing the contents of a directory

Files In Directory

Seconds to Complete

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Listing the contents of a directory

“Uncached ‘ls’” had a USB unmount just prior to the ‘ls’ command execution

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Answer To Ken’s Interview Question
FLOW CONTROL

Rob Davis
Mellanox
Flow control is a mechanism for temporarily stopping the transmission of data on computer network to avoid buffer overflows.
What is Flow Control?

No Flow Control

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What is Flow Control?

No Flow Control

Flow Control
Buffers are Everywhere

All computer networking devices have some buffers to facilitate speed matching.
Buffers are Everywhere

But these buffers seem to never be big enough.
Buffers are Everywhere

This can lead to a Buffer Overflow resulting in Data Packet Drops forcing error recovery delays.
Buffer Overflows are Bad…
Buffer Overflows happen when more data is coming into a networking device then is going out.
IEEE 802.3x standard defines a flow control mechanism for Ethernet called the pause frame.
Flow Control Prevents Overflows

When the data in a buffer gets to a certain level the pause frame is sent causing the upstream device to stop sending data for a specified amount of time.
With credit based flow control the sending device knows how much buffer space the receiving device has eliminating buffer overflows.
Explicit Congestion Notification (ECN) slows down a explicit device’s data rate that is believed to be overflowing another devices buffer.
The data rate of the device slowed down then increases in increments over time based on preset parameters.

RFC 3168 - Explicit Congestion Notification (ECN)
Priority Flow Control
Priority Flow Control
Priority Flow Control (PFC) is similar to 802.3x Pause, except eight priority levels are added. When the data in any of the eight buffers gets to a certain level a pause is sent causing the upstream device to stop sending data only for that priority level for a specified amount of time.
Overall Summary

- Queues Line Up Work Processes or Requests
- Buffers absorb traffic bursts and smooth out data flow
- Caches store data closer to the user to accelerate access
- Flow Control Modules the Rate of Data or Requests to prevent buffer overflow
Other Storage Terms Got Your Pride?
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