Parallel MATLAB at VT

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AOE: Department of Aerospace and Ocean Engineering
ARC: Advanced Research Computing
ICAM: Interdisciplinary Center for Applied Mathematics
- Introduction
- Programming Models
- Execution
- Example: Quadrature
- Conclusion
Parallel MATLAB is an extension of MATLAB that takes advantage of multicore desktop machines and clusters.

The *Parallel Computing Toolbox* or **PCT** runs on a desktop, and can take advantage of cores (R2014a has no limit, R2013b limit is 12, ...). Parallel programs can be run interactively or in batch.

The **MATLAB Distributed Computing Server** (**MDCS**) controls parallel execution of MATLAB on a cluster with tens or hundreds of cores.

Virginia Tech’s Ithaca cluster provides **MDCS** services through a **MATLAB** queue that runs on 28 nodes. Each node has two, quad-core CPUs for a total 224 cores (a license limit). Currently, the **MATLAB_Q** limits each job to 96 cores.
1 Your machine should have multiple processors or cores:
   - On a PC: Start :: Settings :: Control Panel :: System
   - On a Mac: Apple Menu :: About this Mac :: More Info...

2 Your MATLAB must be version 2012a or later:
   - Go to the HELP menu, and choose About Matlab.

3 You must have the Parallel Computing Toolbox:
   - At VT, the concurrent (& student) license includes the PCT.
   - The standalone license does not include the PCT.
   - To list all your toolboxes, type the MATLAB command `ver`.
   - When using an MDCS (server) be sure to use the same version of MATLAB on your client machine.
   - Ithaca’s MDCS supports R2012a, R2012b, R2013a, and R2013b (R2014a soon ?).
MATLAB Parallel Computing

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Three ways to write a parallel MATLAB program:

- suitable for loops can be made into \texttt{parfor} loops;
- the \texttt{spmd} statement can define cooperating synchronized processing;
- the \texttt{task} feature creates multiple independent programs.

The \texttt{parfor} approach is a limited but simple way to get started. \texttt{spmd} is powerful, but may require rethinking the program/data. The \texttt{task} approach is simple, but suitable only for computations that need almost no communication.
Lecture #2: PARFOR

The simplest path to parallelism is the `parfor` statement, which indicates that a given `for` loop can be executed in parallel.

When the “client” MATLAB reaches such a loop, the iterations of the loop are automatically divided up among the workers, and the results gathered back onto the client.

Using `parfor` requires that the iterations are completely independent; there are also some restrictions on array-data access.

OpenMP implements a directive for ’parallel for loops’
Lecture #3: SPMD

MATLAB can also work in a simplified kind of MPI model.

There is always a special “client” process.

Each worker process has its own memory and separate ID.

There is a single program, but it is divided into client and worker sections; the latter marked by special `spmd/end` statements.

Workers can “see” the client’s data; the client can access and change worker data.

The workers can also send messages to other workers.

OpenMP includes constructs similar to `spmd`. 
SPMD programming includes distributed arrays.

A distributed array is logically one array, and a large set of MATLAB commands can treat it that way (e.g. ‘backslash’).

However, portions of the array are scattered across multiple processors. This means such an array can be really large.

The local part of a distributed array can be operated on by that processor very quickly.

A distributed array can be operated on by explicit commands to the SPMD workers that “own” pieces of the array, or implicitly by commands at the global or client level.
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There are several ways to execute a parallel MATLAB program:

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Parallel MATLAB jobs can be run directly, that is, interactively.

The `matlabpool` command is used to reserve a given number of workers on the local (or perhaps remote) machine.

`matlabpool` was replaced by `parpool` in R2013b, and in R2014a issues a warning.

Once these workers are available, the user can type commands, run scripts, or evaluate functions, which contain `parfor` statements. The workers will cooperate in producing results.

Interactive parallel execution is great for desktop debugging of short jobs.

**Note:** Starting in R2013b, if you try to execute a parallel program and a pool of workers is not already open, MATLAB will open it for you. The pool of workers will then remain open for a time that can be specified under Parallel → Parallel Preferences (default = 30 minutes).
Parallel MATLAB jobs can be run indirectly.

The **batch** command is used to specify a MATLAB code to be executed, to indicate any files that will be needed, and how many workers are requested.

The **batch** command starts the computation in the background. The user can work on other things, and collect the results when the job is completed.

The **batch** command works on the desktop, and can be set up to access the Ithaca cluster.
EXECUTION: Local and Remote MATLAB Workers

Desktop System

- Parallel Computing Toolbox
  - Local Workers
    - Simulink, Blocksets, and Other Toolboxes
    - MATLAB

Computer Cluster

- MATLAB Distributed Computing Server
  - Workers
    - Scheduler
MATLAB uses Cluster Profiles (previously called “configurations”) to set the location of a job. ‘local’ is the default. Others can be added to send jobs to other clusters (e.g. Ithaca).
Interactively, we call `parpool` (or `matlabpool`) and then our function:

```matlab
mypool = parpool ( 'local', 4 )
(or)
matlabpool ( 'open', 'local', 4 )
q = quad_fun ( n, a, b );
delete('mypool')  or matlabpool('close')
```

'local' is a default Cluster Profile defined as part of the PCT. The `batch` command runs a script, with a `matlabpool` argument:

```matlab
job = batch ( 'quad_script', 'matlabpool', 4 )
(or)
job = batch ( 'Profile','local', 'quad_script', ...  'matlabpool'  4 )
```
Virginia Tech has installed the Ithaca cluster of 84 nodes. Each node has 2 quadcore processors and (at least) 24 GB of memory.

This means each node can run 8 MATLAB processes.

28 nodes with 8 cores are dedicated to the Parallel MATLAB cluster, so Ithaca can accommodate a combination of jobs with a total of 224 workers.

At this time the queueing software imposes a limit of 96 workers per job.
If you want to work with parallel MATLAB on Ithaca, you must first get an account. Go to
http://www.arc.vt.edu/forms/account_request.php
Log in (PID and password), select Ithaca in the System section and MATLAB in the Software section, and submit.

Remote submission steps include:

1. Download and add some files to your MATLAB directory
2. Run a script to create a new profile on your desktop.

An Ithaca cluster profile (e.g. ithaca_R2013b) will be created that can be used in batch().
These steps are described in detail here:
http://www.arc.vt.edu/resources/software/matlab/remotesub.php
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QUAD: Estimating an Integral

Approximating an integral

![Graph showing an integral approximation]
function q = quad_fun(n, a, b)

q = 0.0;
w = (b - a) / n;
for i = 1:n
    x = (((n - i) * a + (i - 1) * b) / (n - 1));
    fx = 4. / (1 + x.^2);
    q = q + w * fx;
end

return
end
The function **quad_fun** estimates the integral of a particular function over the interval \([a, b]\).

It does this by evaluating the function at \(n\) evenly spaced points, multiplying each value by the weight \((b - a)/n\).

These quantities can be regarded as the areas of little rectangles that lie under the curve, and their sum is an estimate for the total area under the curve from \(a\) to \(b\).

We could compute these subareas **in any order we want**.

We could even compute the subareas **at the same time**, assuming there is some method to save the partial results and add them together in an organized way.
function q = quad_fun(n, a, b)

q = 0.0;
w = (b - a) / n;
parfor i = 1:n
    x = ((n - i) * a + (i - 1) * b) / (n - 1);
    fx = 4. / (1 + x.^2);
    q = q + w * fx;
end

return
end
The parallel version of `quad_fun` does the same calculations.

The `parfor` statement changes **how** this program does the calculations. It asserts that all the iterations of the loop are independent, and can be done in any order, or in parallel.

Execution begins with a single processor, the client. When a `parfor` loop is encountered, the client is helped by a “pool” of workers.

Each worker is assigned some iterations of the loop. Once the loop is completed, the client resumes control of the execution.

MATLAB ensures that the results are the same (with exceptions) whether the program is executed sequentially, or with the help of workers.

The user can wait until execution time to specify how many workers are actually available.
To run *quad_fun.m* in parallel on your desktop, type:

```matlab
n = 10000; a = 0.5; b = 1;
matlabpool open local 4
q = quad_fun(n, a, b);
matlabpool close
```

The word **local** is choosing the local profile, that is, the cores assigned to be workers will be on the local machine.

The value ”4” is the number of workers you are asking for. It can be up to 12 on a local machine. It does not have to match the number of cores you have.
The batch command, for indirect execution, accepts scripts (and since R2010b functions). We can make a suitable script called `quad_script.m`:

```matlab
n = 10000; a = 0.5; b = 1;
q = quad_fun ( n, a, b )
```

Now we assemble the *job* information needed to run the script and submit the job:

```matlab
job = batch ( 'quad_script', 'matlabpool', 4, ...
    'Profile', 'local', ...
    'AttachedFiles', { 'quad_fun' } )
```
After issuing `batch()`, the following commands wait for the job to finish, gather the results, and clear out the job information:

- `wait ( job ); % no prompt until the job is finished`
- `load ( job ); % load data from the job’s Workspace`
- `delete ( job ); % clean up (destroy prior to R2012a)`
The batch command can send your job *anywhere*, and get the results back, as long as you have set up an account on the remote machine, and you have defined a **Cluster Profile** on your desktop that tells it how to access the remote machine.

At Virginia Tech, if your Ithaca account has been set up properly, your desktop can send a batch job there as easily as running locally:

```matlab
job = batch ( 'quad_script', 'matlabpool', 4, ...
  'Profile', 'ithaca_R2013a, ...
  'AttachedFiles', { 'quad_fun' } )
```

The job is submitted. You may wait for it, load it and destroy/delete it, all in the same way as for a local batch job.
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CONCLUSION: Summary

- Introduction:Parallel Computing Toolbox
- Models of parallelism: parfor, spmd, distributed
- Models of execution: Interactive vs. Indirect, Local vs. Remote
  - Ithaca cluster
- Quadrature example: Parallelizing and Running
Virginia Tech has a limited number of concurrent MATLAB licenses, and including the Parallel Computing Toolbox.

Since Fall 2011, the PCT is included with the student license.

Run `ver` in the Matlab Command Window to see what licenses you have available.

If you don’t have a multicore machine, you won’t see any speedup, but you may still be able to run some ‘parallel’ programs.
There is a local LISTSERV for people interested in MATLAB on the Virginia Tech campus. We try **not** to post messages here unless we really consider them of importance!

Important messages include information about workshops, special MATLAB events, and other issues affecting MATLAB users.

To subscribe to the mathworks listserver, send email to:

```
listserv@listserv.vt.edu.
```

The body of the message should simply be:

```
subscribe mathworks  firstname lastname
```
CONCLUSION: Where is it?

- **Matlab** Parallel Computing Toolbox Product Documentation
  http://www.mathworks.com/help/toolbox/distcomp/


- An **Adobe** PDF with these notes, along with a zipped-folder containing the **Matlab** codes can be downloaded from the ARC website at
  www.arc.vt.edu/userinfo/training/nli_2014b_VT.pdf
CONCLUSION: Upcoming Classes

1. Parallel Matlab II: Parfor
   (Wednesday, 22 October 2014, 2-2:50pm, Torgersen 1100)

2. Parallel Matlab III: Single Program Multiple Data (SPMD)
   (Wednesday, 29 October 2014, 11-11:50pm, Torgersen 1100)
Please complete the evaluation form

Thanks