

NAME

sthread_t – Shore Thread Abstract Base Class

SYNOPSIS

```
#include <sthread.h>

/* See sthread.h - too long to include here */
```

DESCRIPTION

The thread mechanism allows several threads of control to share the same address space. Each thread is represented by an instance of class **sthread_t**. Once created, a thread is an independent entity with its own stack. A thread's execution begins with its **run** method and ends when **run** returns. A thread can also be made to end early by calling **end**, which forces a longjmp out of the **run** method.

A thread is created by allocating it from the heap with a call to **new** and it is started by calling its method **fork**. One can await a thread's completion by calling its method **wait**. The following code is an example from the Tcl-based storage manager test shell,

```
/*
 * ssh_smthread_t is derived from smthread_t, which is
 * derived from sthread_t.
 */
smthread_t *doit = new ssh_smthread_t(f_arg);
if (!doit) {
    /* error - out of memory */
}

w_rc_t rc = doit->fork();
if(rc) {
    /* fatal error */
}

w_rc_t rc = doit->wait();
if(rc) {
    /* fatal error */
}

delete doit;
```

In a C++ program, the sthread initialization code is built into the library such that it will execute before the **main** function. The initialization code is responsible for spawning a **main_thread**, such that, when the initialization function returns, it returns in the context of the **main_thread**. This ensures that the program executes in a threaded environment from the very beginning.

Class **sthread_base_t** is the base class for all sthread classes. It defines constants and enums used throughout the thread package.

Class **sthread_named_base_t** inherits from **sthread_base_t** and adds a name string to the class. Its only purpose is to ease debugging by providing a name to sthread classes.

Class **sthread_t** is an abstract base class that represents a thread of execution; it must be derived in order to be used, hence the protected constructor.

Enumerations

enum status_t

A thread can be in one of the following states at any one time:

t_defunct	is dead
t_ready	is in the ready queue waiting to run
t_running	is running
t_blocked	is not ready to run

enum priority_t

These are the thread priority levels in decreasing order:

t_time_critical	has highest priority
t_regular	has regular priority
t_fixed_low	has lower than regular priority
t_idle_time	only runs when system is idle

Methods

sthread_t(priority, block_immediate, auto_delete, name)

The constructor creates a *priority* level thread. If *block_immediate* is true, the thread will automatically be run sometime soon. Otherwise, the thread is blocked awaiting an explicit **unblock** call. If *auto_delete* is true, the thread automatically deallocates (destroys) itself when it ends. Otherwise, the caller must deallocate the thread with **delete**. The *name* parameter is used for debugging purposes only.

The constructor is protected because **sthread_t** is an abstract base class. Users should derive from **sthread_t** the virtual **run** method.

~sthread_t()

The destructor deallocates the stack and other resources used by the thread.

run()

Method **run** is automatically started (by the thread switching code) when a thread begins execution. It is a pure virtual function that must be implemented in a derived class. The thread ends when

static end()

The **end** method ends the execution of the current thread by forcing a longjmp out of the **run** method.

static block(timeout, list, caller)

The **block** method makes the current thread dormant for at least *timeout* milliseconds. The thread can be awakened explicitly by an **unblock** call. The calling thread's tcb is inserted into { list }, and

the *caller* string is saved for debugging purposes. Note that **block** only returns when the thread is unblocked (by another thread). Ordinarily, programs do not call **block** or **unblock**, since they are the basis for more powerful synchronization mechanisms: mutexes and condition variables.

unblock(rc)

The **unblock** method unblocks the thread with an the error *rc* and marks it as ready to continue running. The value of *rc* will be returned from the **block** method.

static me()

The **me** method returns a pointer to the current (running) thread.

wait(timeout)

The **wait** method waits for the thread to terminate. The method returns without error when the thread terminates within *timeout* milliseconds. Otherwise, a timeout error is returned.

sleep(timeout)

The **sleep** method causes the thread to halt execution for *timeout* milliseconds. Other threads continue running.

yield()

The **yield** method gives up the CPU so other threads can run. The current thread remains active and will be run again soon.

I/O Operations

The thread package provides asynchronous I/O operations. Threads performing these operations will block, but the server process will not. The implementation was developed for operating systems that do not provide threads or asynchronous I/O. For each open file a process, **diskrw**, is started. When a thread needs I/O on a file, the sthread library blocks the thread, forwards its request to **diskrw** and switches to another ready thread. When the I/O request is complemented, the **diskrw** process informs the sthread library, which in turn unblocks the original thread that requested the I/O.

Sthread_t provides methods similar to Unix in handling file I/O. However, the file descriptors used by these methods are not interchangeable with that of Unix, i.e., the *fd* returned by **sthread_t::open** can only be used with other methods in **sthread_t** such as **sthread_t::read**.

These I/O operations are closely integrated with buffer pool management. The storage manager buffer pool is located in memory shared with the **diskrw** processes. I/O requests must refer to locations in this shared memory.

Now that most popular operating systems provide threads and asynchronous I/O, the **sthread_t** I/O operations should be re-implemented or even eliminated.

ERRORS

See **errors(sthread)**

EXAMPLES**VERSION**

This manual page applies to Version 2.0 of the Shore Storage Manager.

SPONSORSHIP

The Shore project is sponsored by the Advanced Research Project Agency, ARPA order number 018 (formerly 8230), monitored by the U.S. Army Research Laboratory under contract DAAB07-91-C-Q518. Further funding for this work was provided by DARPA through Rome Research Laboratory Contract No. F30602-97-2-0247.

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SEE ALSO

smthread_t(ssm), smutex_t(sthread), scond_t(sthread), sevsem_t(sthread), file_handlers(sthread), intro(sthread).