

Message-Passing Programming with MPI

Message-Passing Concepts



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Overview

- This lecture will cover
 - message passing model
 - SPMD
 - communication modes
 - collective communications

Programming Models

Serial Programming

Concepts

Arrays Subroutines
Control flow Variables
Human-readable OO

Languages

Python C/C++
Java Fortran
struct if/then/else

Implementations

gcc -O3 pgcc -fast
icc
crayftn javac
craycc

Message-Passing Parallel Programming

Concepts

Processes Send/Receive
SPMD Collectives
Groups

Libraries

MPI
MPI_Init()

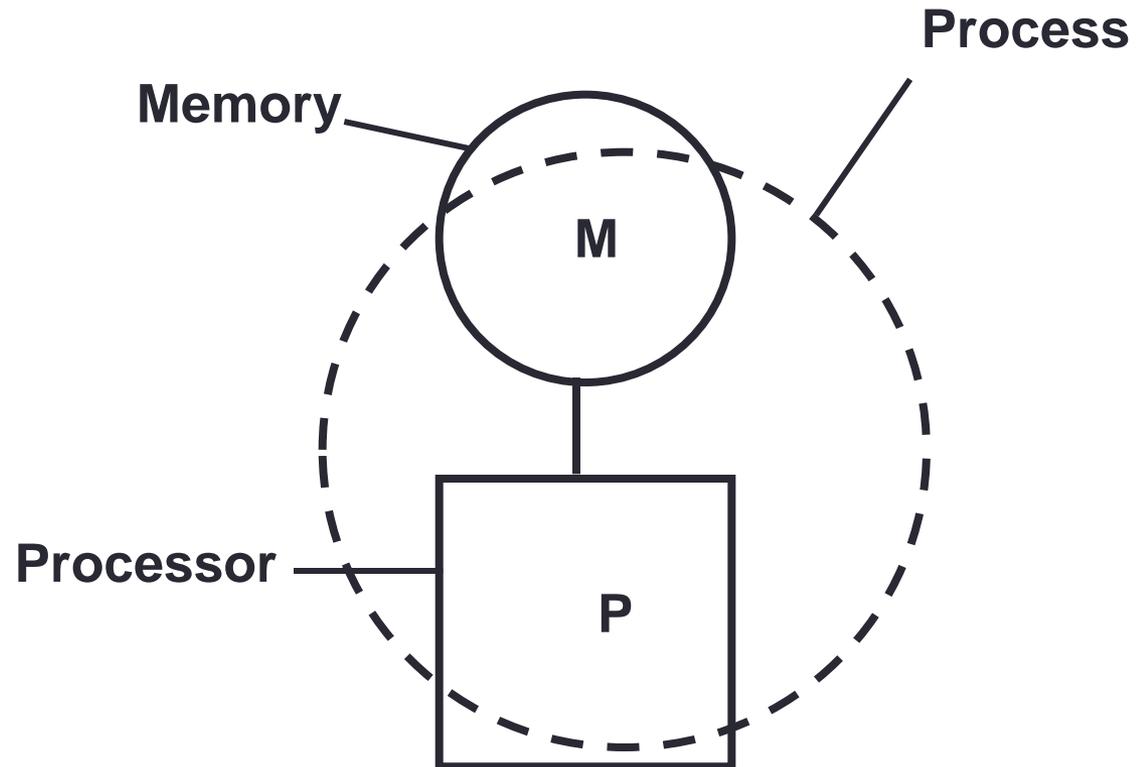
Implementations

Intel MPI MPICH2
OpenMPI Cray MPI
IBM MPI

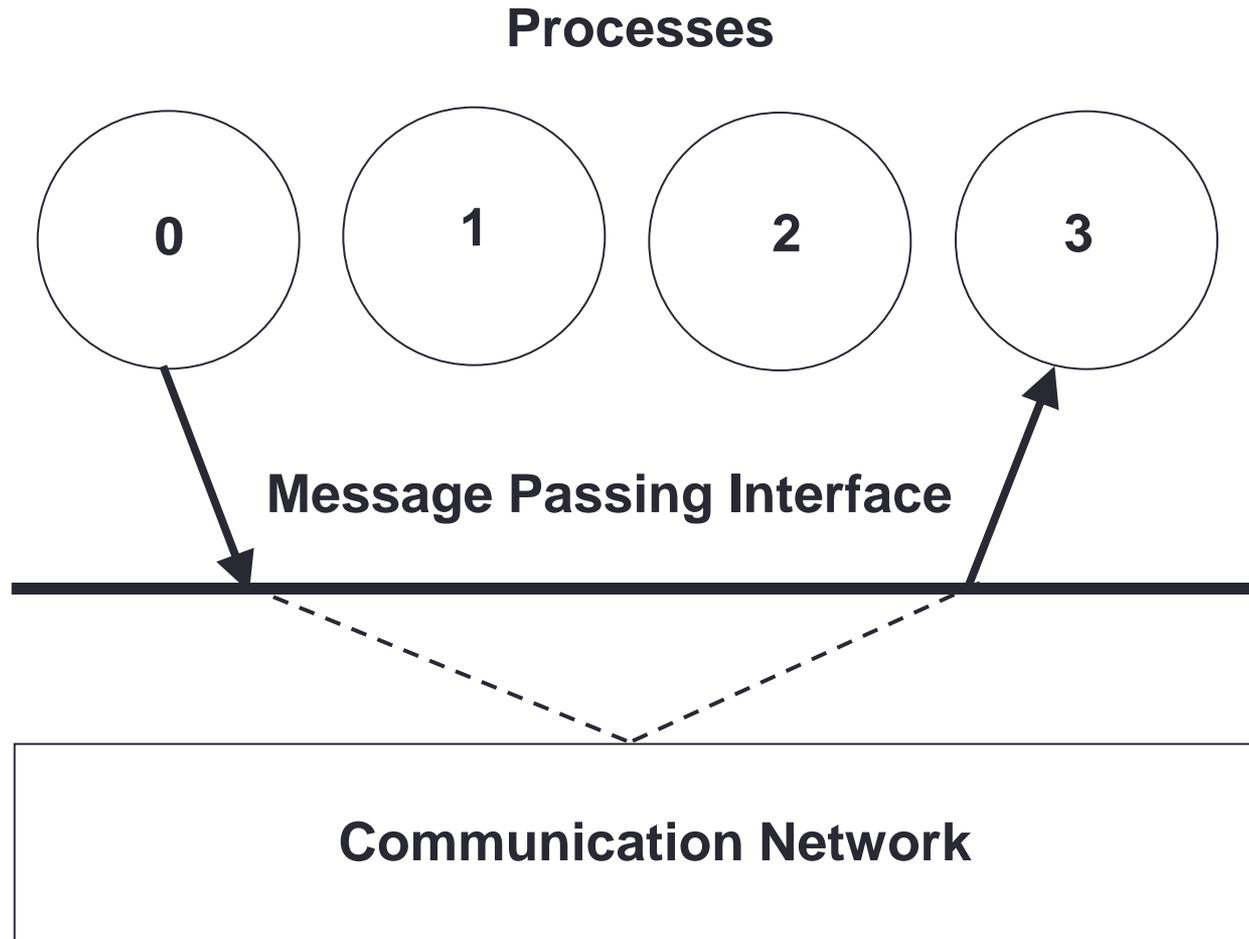
Message Passing Model

- The message passing model is based on the notion of processes
 - can think of a process as an instance of a running program, together with the program's data
- In the message passing model, parallelism is achieved by having many processes co-operate on the same task
- Each process has access only to its own data
 - ie all variables are private
- Processes communicate with each other by sending and receiving messages
 - typically library calls from a conventional sequential language

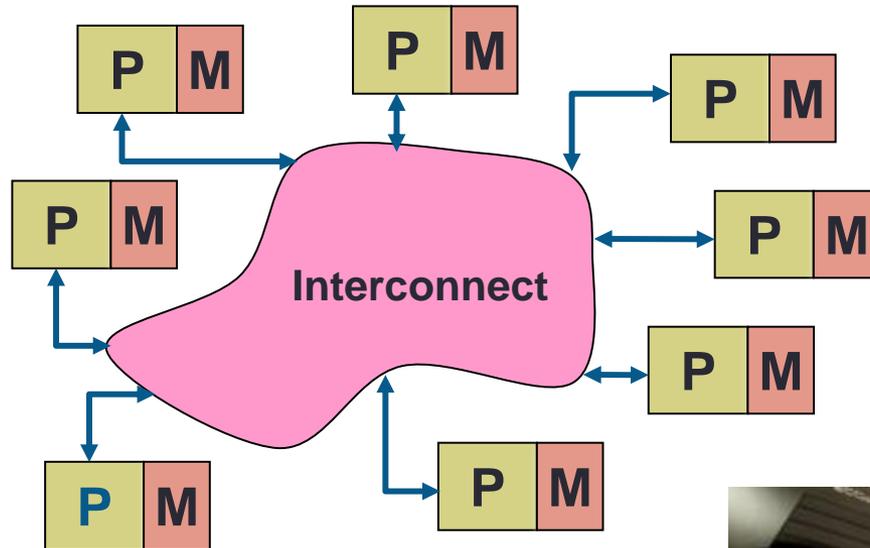
Sequential Paradigm



Parallel Paradigm

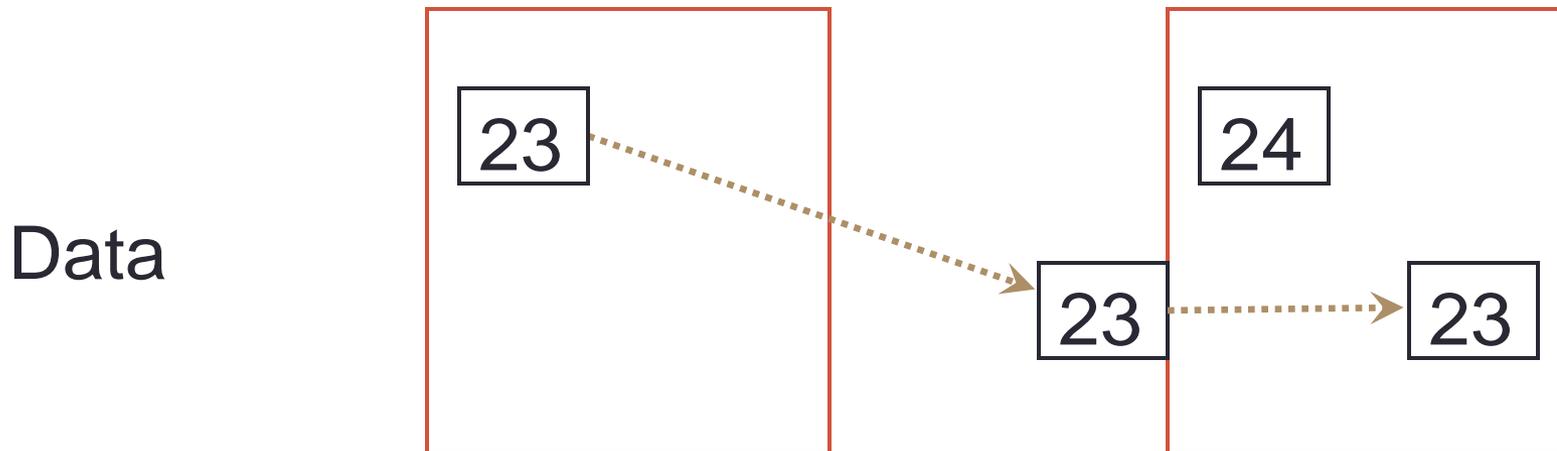


Distributed-Memory Architectures



Process Communication

	Process 1	Process 2
Program	<code>a=23</code> <code>Send (2, a)</code>	<code>Recv (1, b)</code> <code>a=b+1</code>



SPMD

- Most message passing programs use the Single-Program-Multiple-Data (SPMD) model
- All processes run (their own copy of) the same program
- Each process has a separate copy of the data
- To make this useful, each process has a unique identifier
- Processes can follow different control paths through the program, depending on their process ID
- Usually run one process per processor / core

Emulating General Message Passing (C)

```
main (int argc, char **argv)
{
    if (controller_process)
    {
        Controller( /* Arguments */ );
    }
    else
    {
        Worker      ( /* Arguments */ );
    }
}
```

Emulating General Message Passing (F)

```
PROGRAM SPMD
  IF (controller_process) THEN
    CALL CONTROLLER ( ! Arguments ! )
  ELSE
    CALL WORKER      ( ! Arguments ! )
  ENDIF
END PROGRAM SPMD
```

Messages

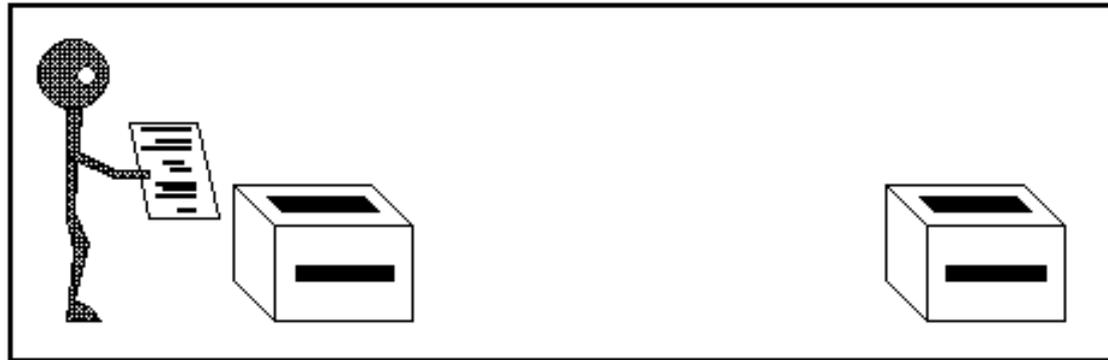
- A message transfers a number of data items of a certain type from the memory of one process to the memory of another process
- A message typically contains
 - the ID of the sending processor
 - the ID of the receiving processor
 - the type of the data items
 - the number of data items
 - the data itself
 - a message type identifier

Communication modes

- Sending a message can either be synchronous or asynchronous
- A synchronous send is not completed until the message has started to be received
- An asynchronous send completes as soon as the message has gone
- Receives are usually synchronous - the receiving process must wait until the message arrives

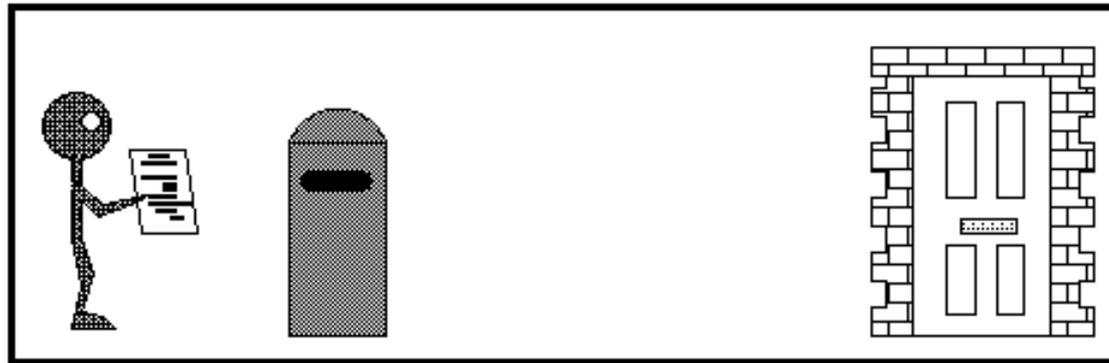
Synchronous send

- Analogy with faxing a letter.
- Know when letter has started to be received.



Asynchronous send

- Analogy with posting a letter.
- Only know when letter has been posted, not when it has been received.



Point-to-Point Communications

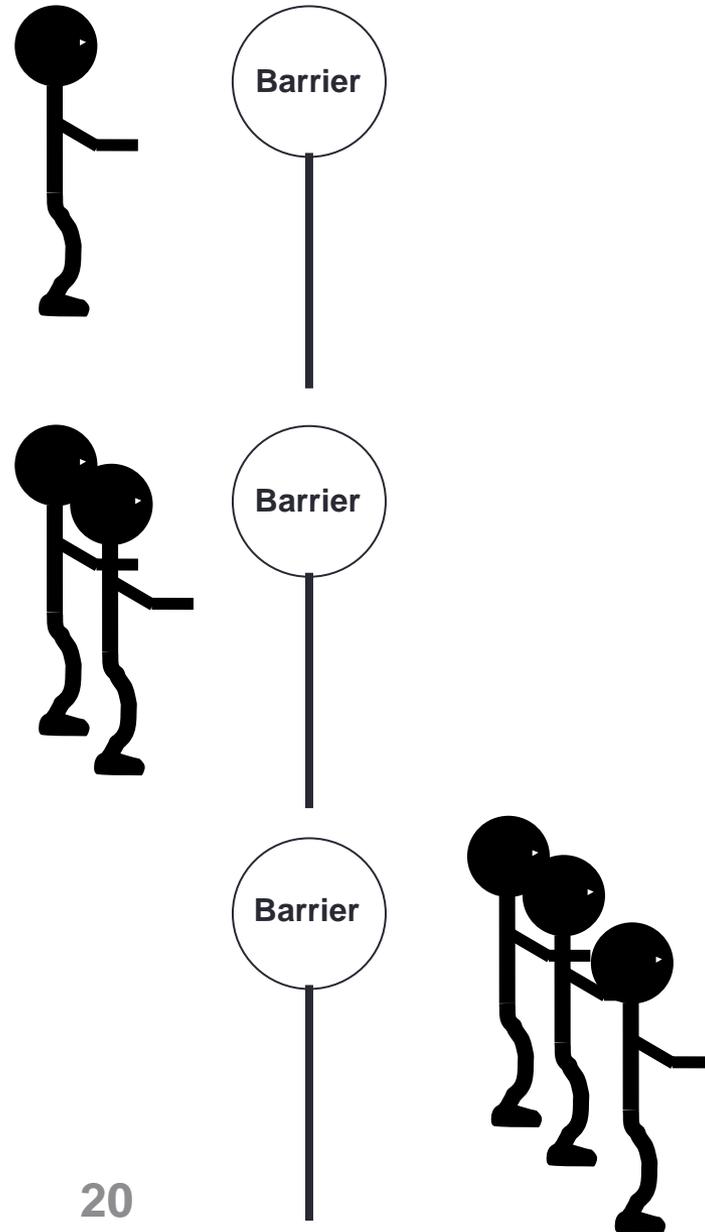
- We have considered two processes
 - one sender
 - one receiver
- This is called point-to-point communication
 - simplest form of message passing
 - relies on matching send and receive
- Close analogy to sending personal emails

Collective Communications

- A simple message communicates between two processes
- There are many instances where communication between groups of processes is required
- Can be built from simple messages, but often implemented separately, for efficiency

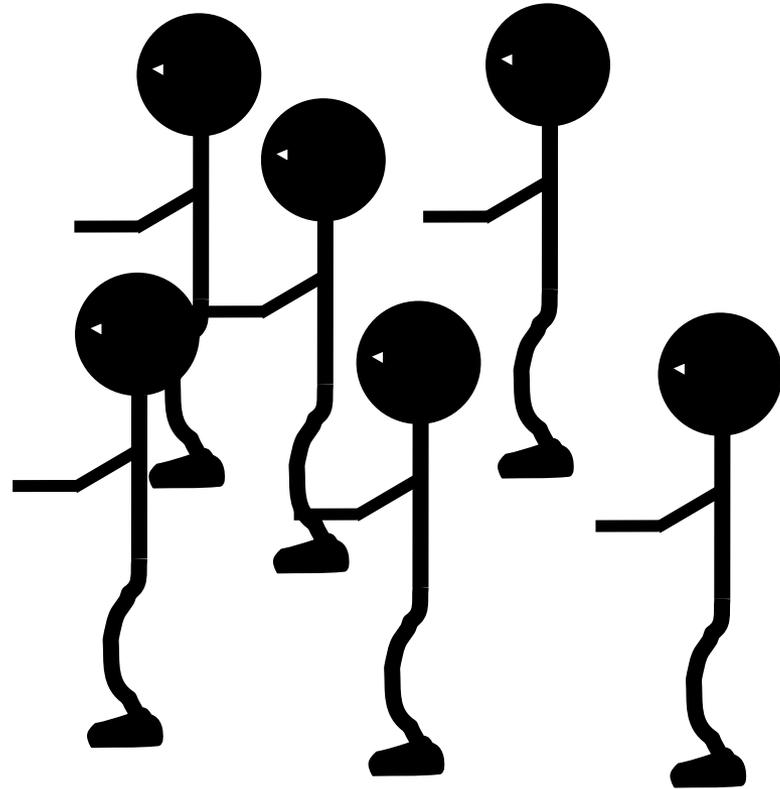
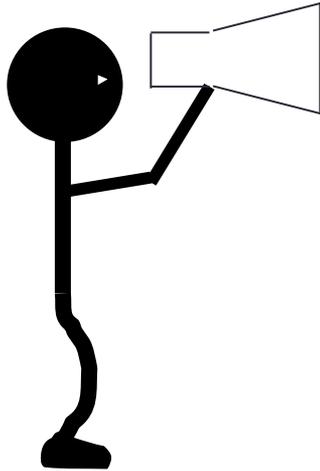
Barrier

- Global synchronisation



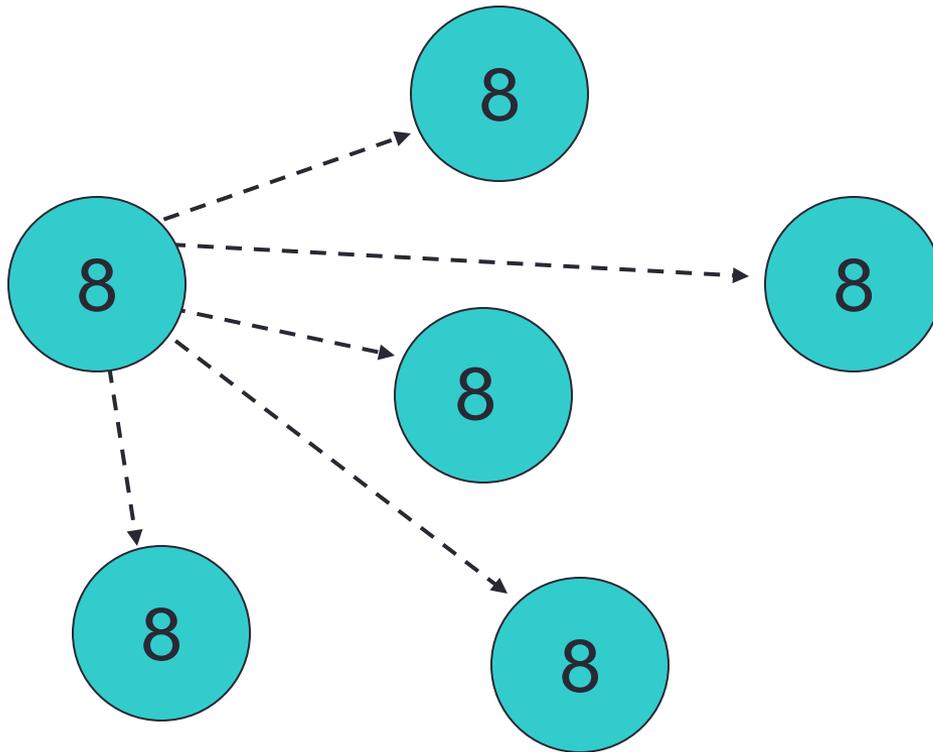
Broadcast

- One to all communication



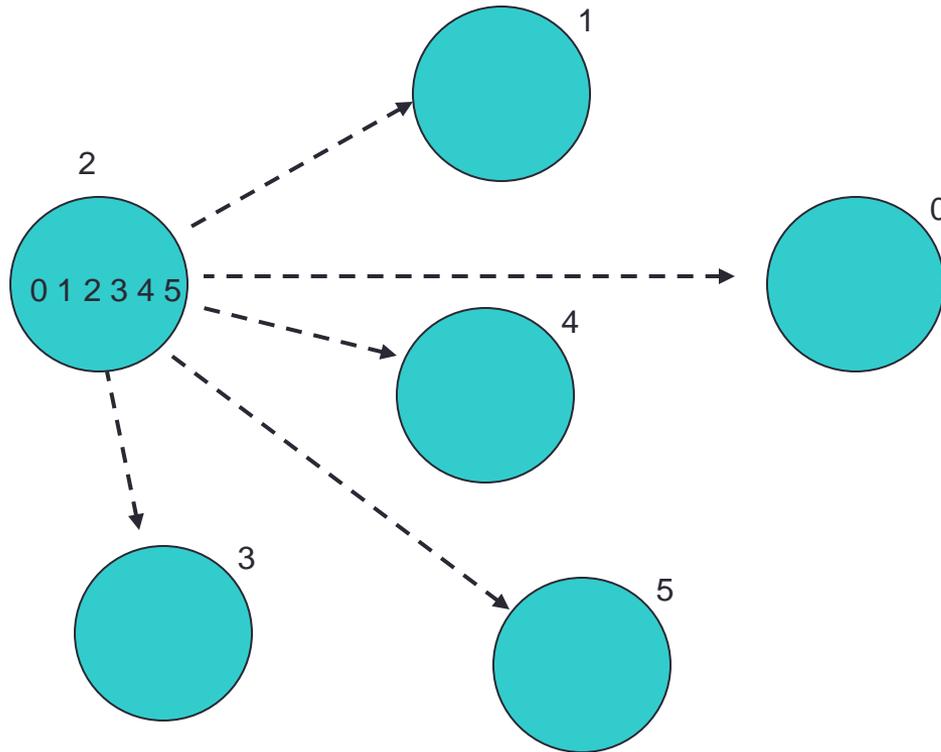
Broadcast

- From one process to all others



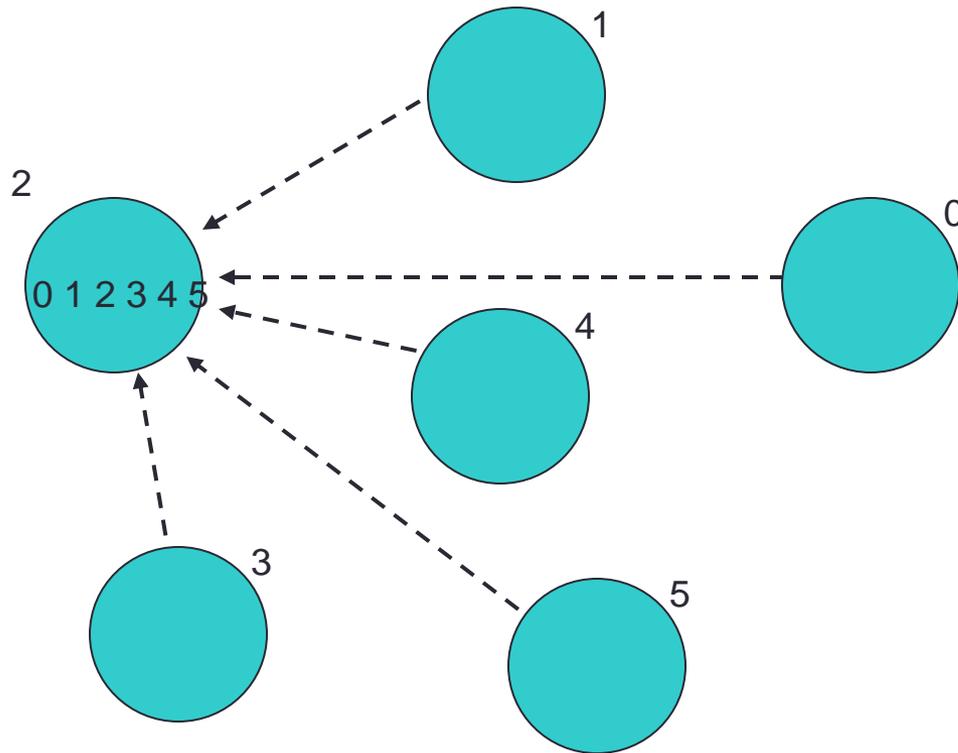
Scatter

- Information scattered to many processes



Gather

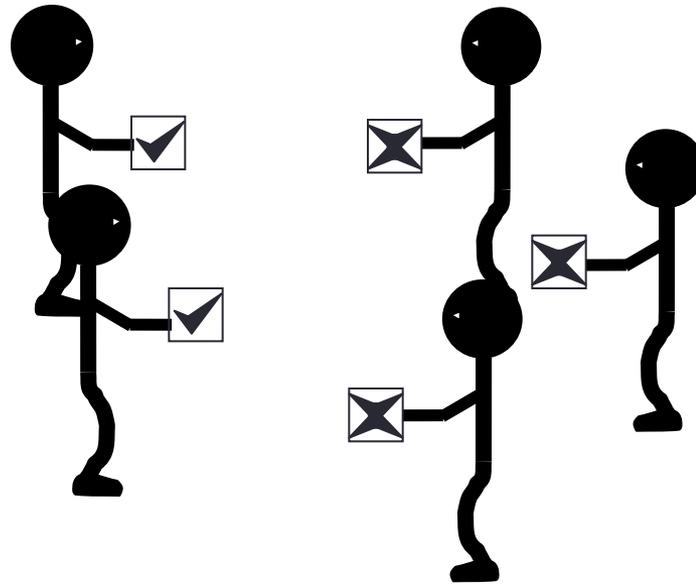
- Information gathered onto one process



Reduction Operations

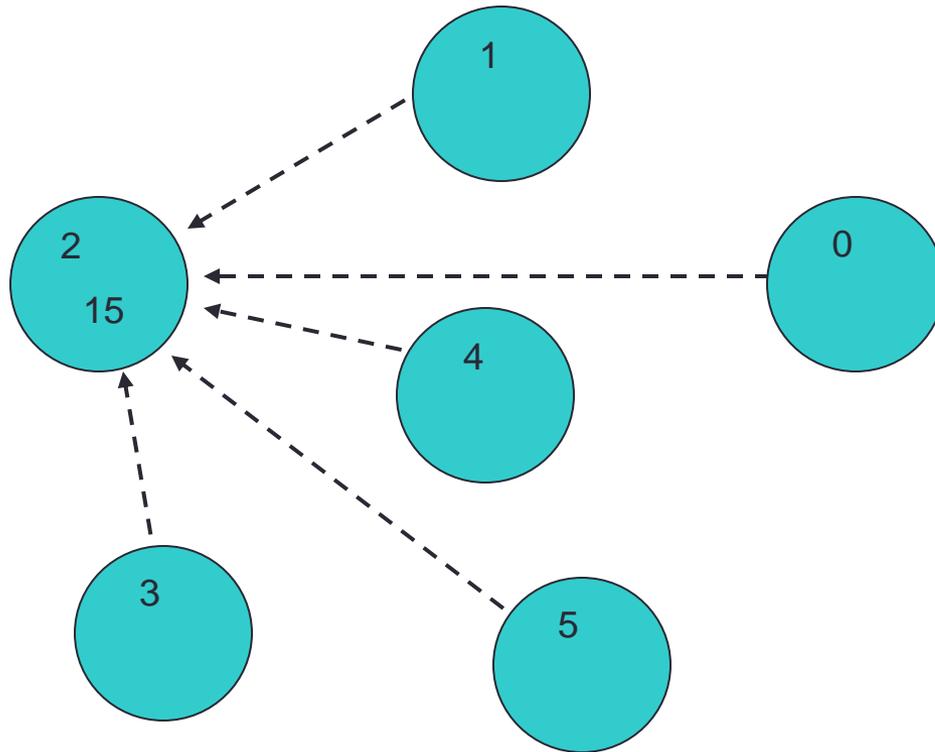
- Combine data from several processes to form a single result

Strike?



Reduction

- Form a global sum, product, max, min, etc.



Launching a Message-Passing Program

- Write a *single piece* of source code
 - with calls to message-passing functions such as send / receive
- Compile with a *standard compiler* and link to a *message-passing library* provided for you
 - both open-source and vendor-supplied libraries exist
- Run *multiple copies* of *same executable* on parallel machine
 - each copy is a separate *process*
 - each has its own private data completely distinct from others
 - each copy can be at a completely different line in the program
- Running is usually done via a launcher program
 - “please run N copies of my executable called *program.exe*”

Issues

- Sends and receives must match
 - danger of deadlock
 - program will stall (forever!)
- Possible to write very complicated programs, but ...
 - most scientific codes have a simple structure
 - often results in simple communications patterns
- Use collective communications where possible
 - may be implemented in efficient ways

Summary (i)

- Messages are the *only* form of communication
 - all communication is therefore explicit
- Most systems use the SPMD model
 - all processes run exactly the same code
 - each has a unique ID
 - processes can take different branches in the same codes
- Basic communications form is point-to-point
 - collective communications implement more complicated patterns that often occur in many codes

Summary (ii)

- Message-Passing is a programming model
 - that is implemented by MPI
 - the Message-Passing Interface is a library of function/subroutine calls
- Essential to understand the basic concepts
 - private variables
 - explicit communications
 - SPMD
- Major difficulty is understanding the Message-Passing model
 - a very different model to sequential programming

```
if (x < 0)
    print("Error");
exit;
```