



# PostgreSQL – memory management internals

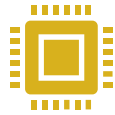


Krishnakumar “KK” Ravi

# About me



**EM for PG OSS contributors/committers team.**



**Started with porting Linux to new ;- ) MIPS, SH4 boards and device drivers !!**



**~22 years industry experience**

Naturesoft (Embedded)  
HP (HPC, Parallel filesystems)  
Storsimple (Hybrid cloud storage)  
Microsoft (Storsimple, Kubernetes, Flex PG service, OSS PG)

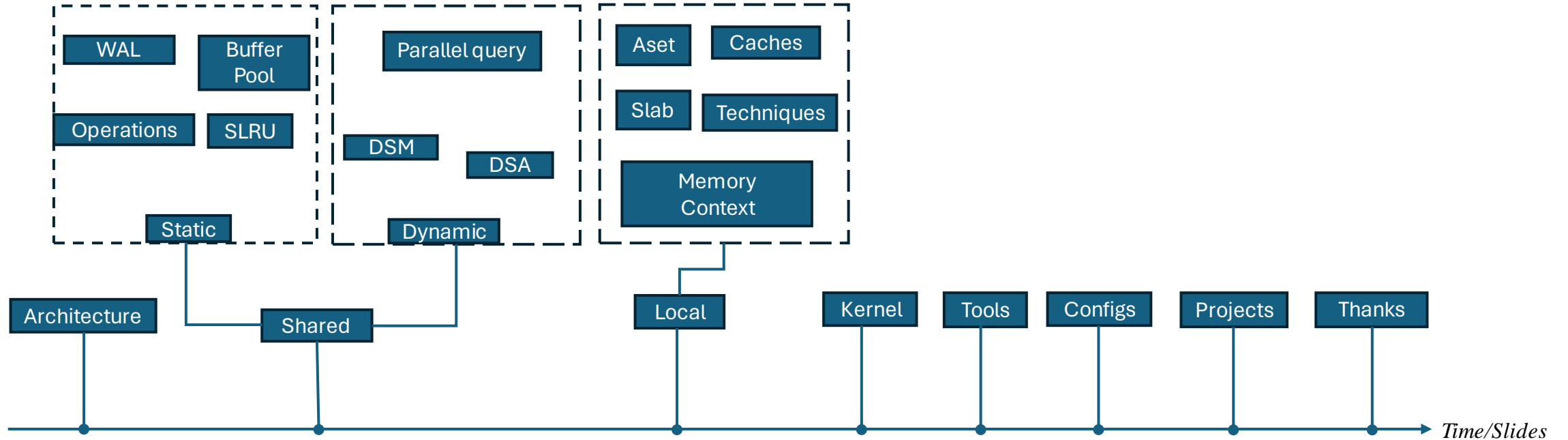


**One of the most exciting part of my day – interacting with top PostgreSQL folks.**

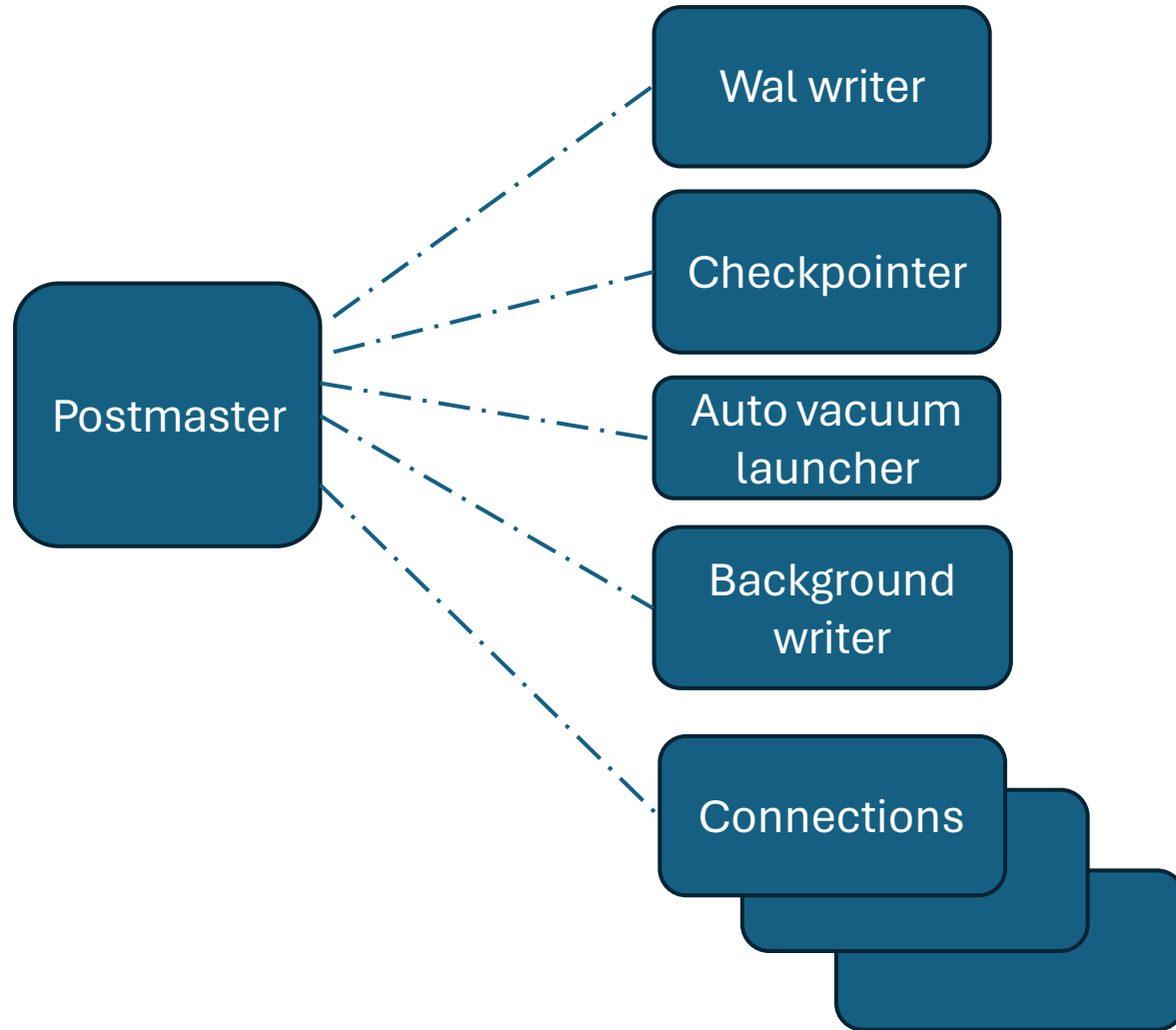


**Have come to share the lessons learned on PostgreSQL memory management.**

# What will we discuss?



# Process based architecture



Currently, POSTGRES runs as one process for each active user. This was done as an expedient to get a system operational as quickly as possible. We plan on converting POSTGRES to use lightweight processes available in the operating systems we are using

- *"The implementation of POSTGRES". M. Stonebraker, L. A. Rowe, and M. Hirohama. Transactions on Knowledge and Data Engineering 2(1). IEEE. March 1990.*

# Memory types

- Shared
- Local
- Kernel

# Shared memory

- Static
- Dynamic

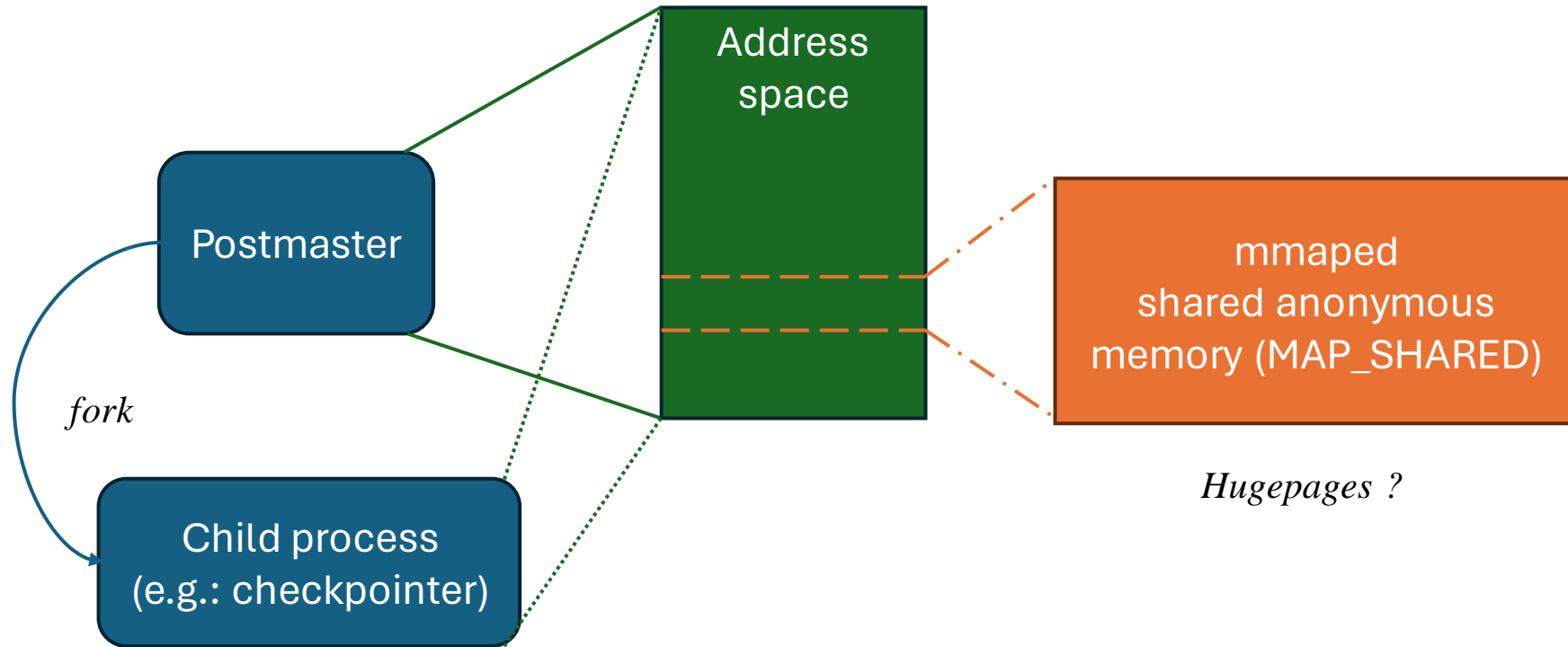
```
00005583f3038000 856K r---- /home/kk-dev/projects/pg/install-pg/bin/postgres
00005583f310e000 6180K r-x-- /home/kk-dev/projects/pg/install-pg/bin/postgres
00005583f3717000 2816K r---- /home/kk-dev/projects/pg/install-pg/bin/postgres
00005583f39d8000 140K r---- /home/kk-dev/projects/pg/install-pg/bin/postgres
00005583f39fb000 100K rw--- /home/kk-dev/projects/pg/install-pg/bin/postgres
00005583f459c000 924K r---- [ anon ]
00007f8779512000 28K rw-s- /dev/shm/PostgreSQL.1502130758
00007f8779519000 146336K rw-s- /dev/zero (deleted)
00007f8782458000 28K r--s- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/gconv/gconv-modules.cache
00007f878245f000 20K rw--- [ anon ]
00007f8782464000 160K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6
00007f878248c000 1620K r-x-- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6
00007f8782621000 352K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6
00007f8782679000 4K ----- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6
00007f878267a000 16K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6
00007f878267e000 8K rw--- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6
00007f8782680000 52K rw--- [ anon ]
00007f878268d000 8K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libz.so.1.2.11
00007f878268f000 68K r-x-- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libz.so.1.2.11
00007f87826a0000 24K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libz.so.1.2.11
00007f87826a6000 4K ----- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libz.so.1.2.11
00007f87826a7000 4K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libz.so.1.2.11
00007f87826a8000 4K rw--- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libz.so.1.2.11
00007f87826a9000 712K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libcrypto.so.3
00007f878275b000 2424K r-x-- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libcrypto.so.3
00007f87829b9000 840K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libcrypto.so.3
00007f8782a8b000 364K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libcrypto.so.3
00007f8782ae6000 12K rw--- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libcrypto.so.3
00007f8782ae9000 12K rw--- [ anon ]
00007f8782aec000 120K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libssl.so.3
00007f8782b0a000 364K r-x-- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libssl.so.3
00007f8782b65000 116K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libssl.so.3
00007f8782b82000 40K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libssl.so.3
00007f8782b8c000 16K rw--- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libssl.so.3
00007f8782b90000 56K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libm.so.6
00007f8782b9e000 496K r-x-- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libm.so.6
00007f8782c1a000 364K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libm.so.6
00007f8782c75000 4K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libm.so.6
00007f8782c76000 4K rw--- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libm.so.6
00007f8782c78000 4K rw-s- [ shmid=0x0 ]
00007f8782c79000 4K r---- /usr/lib/locale/C.utf8/LC_TIME
00007f8782c7a000 4K r---- /usr/lib/locale/C.utf8/LC_NUMERIC
00007f8782c7b000 4K r---- /usr/lib/locale/C.utf8/LC_MONETARY
00007f8782c7c000 4K r---- /usr/lib/locale/C.utf8/LC_MESSAGES/SYS_LC_MESSAGES
00007f8782c7d000 8K rw--- [ anon ]
00007f8782c7f000 8K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2
00007f8782c81000 168K r-x-- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2
00007f8782cab000 44K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2
00007f8782cb6000 4K r---- /usr/lib/locale/C.utf8/LC_COLLATE
00007f8782cb7000 8K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2
00007f8782cb9000 8K rw--- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2
00007ffe0ec66000 136K rw--- [ stack ]
00007ffe0ed2e000 16K r---- [ anon ]
00007ffe0ed32000 8K r-x-- [ anon ]
```

# Static memory

- Create
- Locking
- Examples:
  - Buffer pool
  - SLRU
  - WAL buffer

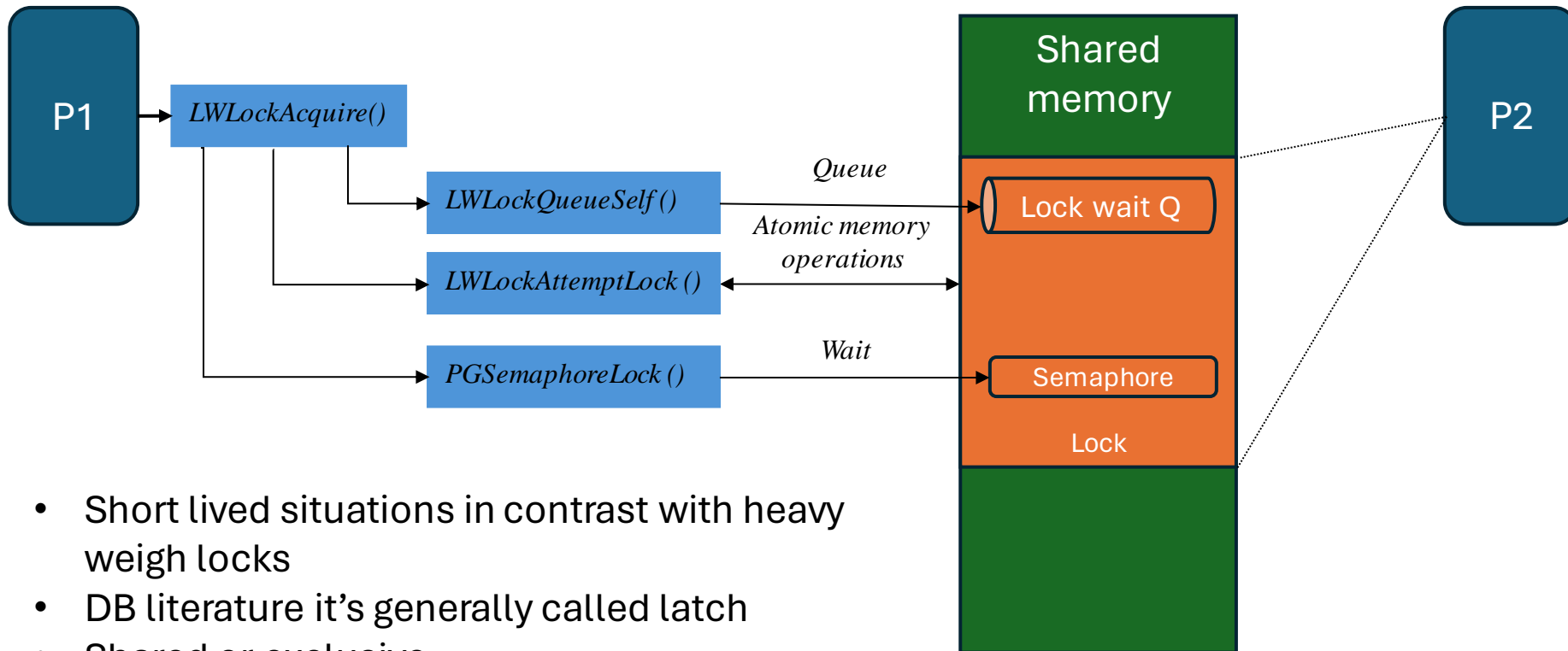
# Creation

- SysV memory
- Mmap



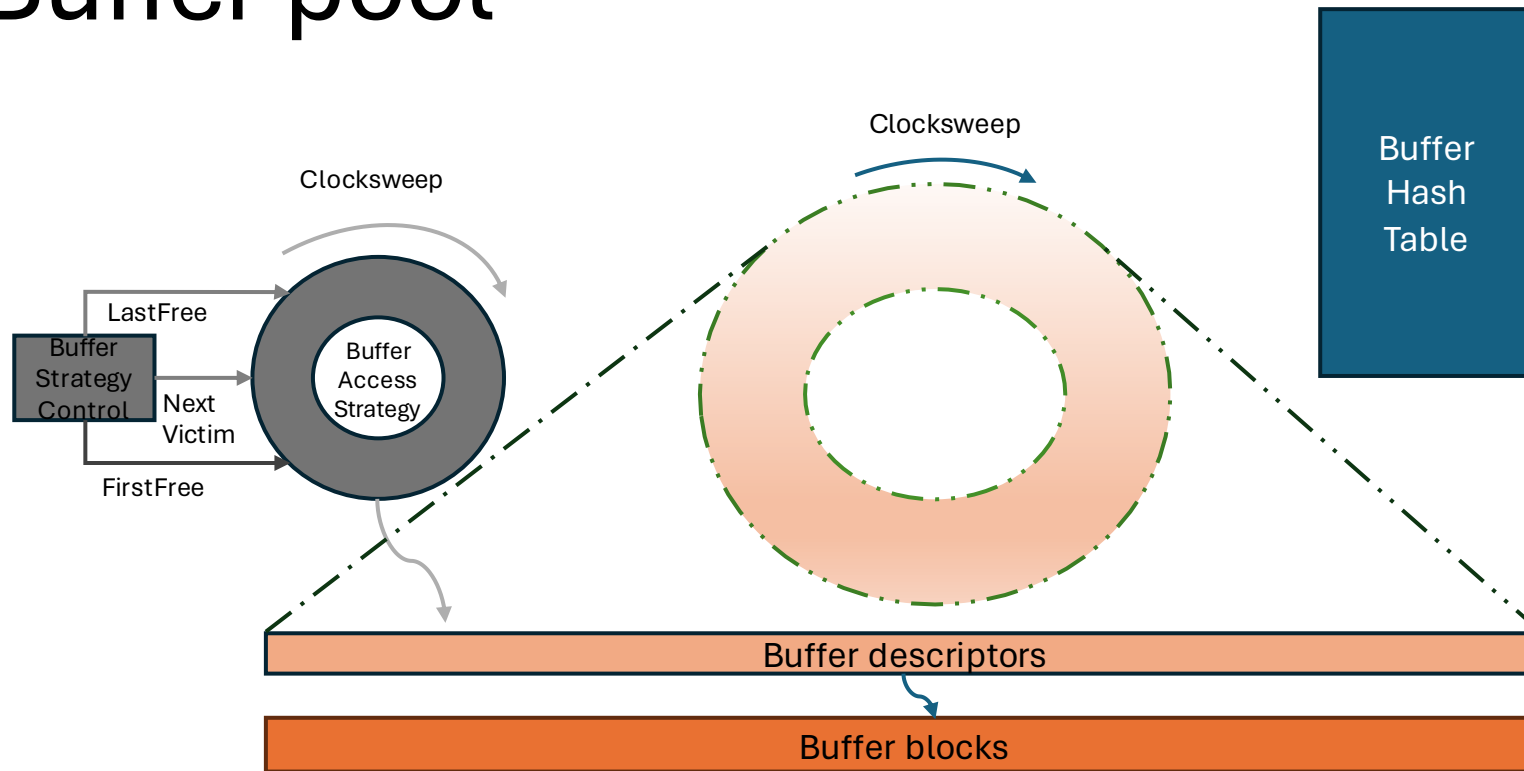


# Lightweight Locking – slow path



- Short lived situations in contrast with heavy weigh locks
- DB literature it's generally called latch
- Shared or exclusive
- No deadlock detection
- In future could be built on top of futex ?

# Buffer pool



Most frequently & recently  
BufferAccessStrategy useful for Scan resistance

- Sequential
- Vacuum

CLOCK algorithm 1960s Multics?  
Future? CAR built-in scan resistance

ReadBufferExtended  
Usage count goes up to 5

# Bufferpool contents

```
postgres=# select * from pg_buffercache where relfilenode = 24698;
```

bufferid	relfilenode	reltablespace	reldatabase	relforknumber	relblocknumber	isdirty	usagecount	pinning_backends
1	24698	1663	5	0	108492	t	5	0
3	24698	1663	5	0	108493	t	5	0
4	24698	1663	5	0	108494	t	5	0
5	24698	1663	5	0	108495	t	5	0
6	24698	1663	5	0	108496	t	5	0
7	24698	1663	5	0	108497	t	5	0
9	24698	1663	5	0	108498	t	5	0
10	24698	1663	5	0	108499	t	5	0
11	24698	1663	5	0	108500	t	5	0
12	24698	1663	5	0	108501	t	5	0
13	24698	1663	5	0	108502	t	5	0
15	24698	1663	5	0	108503	t	5	0
16	24698	1663	5	0	108504	t	5	0
17	24698	1663	5	0	108505	t	5	0
18	24698	1663	5	0	108506	t	5	0
19	24698	1663	5	0	108507	t	5	0
21	24698	1663	5	0	108508	t	5	0
22	24698	1663	5	0	108509	t	5	0
23	24698	1663	5	0	108510	t	5	0

# Other shared memory

- WAL buffer
- SLRU

```
postgres=# select name from pg_stat_slru;
          name
-----
commit_timestamp
multixact_member
multixact_offset
notify
serializable
subtransaction
transaction
other
(8 rows)
```

# DSM – Dynamic shared memory

```
postgres=# set debug_parallel_query = on; $strace -f -p $CONNECTED_PID 2>&1 | egrep "mmap|munmap|shm_open|shm"
SET
postgres=# select 2024;
?column?
-----
      2024
(1 row)

postgres=# select 2024;
?column?
-----
      2024
(1 row)

postgres=#
```

```
openat(AT_FDCWD, "/dev/shm/PostgreSQL.3184094726", O_RDWR|O_CREAT|O_EXCL|O_NOFOLLOW|O_CLOEXEC, 0600) = 7
mmap(NULL, 94784, PROT_READ|PROT_WRITE, MAP_SHARED, 7, 0) = 0x7f5caf47d000
munmap(0x7f5caf47d000, 94784) = 0
unlink("/dev/shm/PostgreSQL.3184094726") = 0
[]
```

# DSA – Dynamic shared memory areas

- Memory allocator built on top of DSM
- Primarily started for parallel hash join.

# Process local memory

- Interface - MemoryContext
- MemoryContext{Alloc, Realloc, Reset, Delete}
- Implementations
  - Allocation Set - standard
  - Slab (large equally sized objects) – logical replication
- CurrentMemoryContext always point to current

# Hierarchy and error handling

- Hierarchical context
  - Top Memory Context
  - Cache Memory context
- Parent and Child free interlinked
- Exception
  - Set jump
  - Memory freed on error
- Child parent
  - Set as parent after allocations

context_name	level
TopMemoryContext	1
CacheMemoryContext	2
ErrorContext	2
GUCMemoryContext	2
LOCALLOCK hash	2
MdSmgr	2
MessageContext	2
Operator class cache	2
Operator lookup cache	2
PgStat Pending	2
PgStat Shared Ref	2
PgStat Shared Ref Hash	2
Portal hash	2
PrivateRefCount	2
Record information cache	2
Relcache by OID	2
RowDescriptionContext	2
Timezones	2
TopPortalContext	2
TopTransactionContext	2
TransactionAbortContext	2
Type information cache	2
WAL record construction	2
search_path processing cache	2
smgr relation table	2
GUC hash table	3
PortalContext	3
index info	3
relation rules	3
ExecutorState	4
ExprContext	5
Table function arguments	5
TupleSort main	5
printtup	5
TupleSort sort	6
Caller tuples	7

# Kernel memory consumption

- Typical process consumption – page table, stack etc.
- Double buffering in page cache

```
postgres=# SELECT pg_total_relation_size('my_large_table');
pg_total_relation_size
-----
1074864128
(1 row)

postgres=# select pg_filenode_relation(0, 24698);
pg_filenode_relation
-----
my_large_table
(1 row)

postgres=# select pg_filenode_relation(0, 24705);
pg_filenode_relation
-----
my_large_table_pkey
(1 row)
```

```
● $fincore -b 24705 24698
RES  PAGES  SIZE FILE
183296000 44750 183296000 24705
891289600 217600 891289600 24698
○ $
```



# Configuration

- shared\_buffers
- work\_mem
  - Executor nodes of the query
  - Parallel workers
  - User sessions
  - Partitions
- huge\_pages – on, off, try
- Overcommit settings
  - `sysctl -w vm.overcommit_memory=2`

# Related views

- pg\_shmem\_allocations
- pg\_backend\_memory\_contexts

```
postgres=# select * from pg_shmem_allocations;
```

name	off	size	allocated_size
Buffer Descriptors	5730944	1048576	1048576
Backend SSL Status Buffer	146802560	41472	41472
Async Queue Control	147476864	3952	3968
Wal Sender Ctl	147470080	1144	1152
AutoVacuum Data	147461248	5328	5376
commit_timestamp	4793472	267424	267520
multixact_member	5462400	267424	267520
multixact_offset	5328640	133760	133760
subtransaction	5061120	267424	267520
notify	147480832	133760	133760
Shared Memory Stats	147614592	279992	280064
serializable	146176896	267424	267520
PROCLock hash	143215104	2896	2944
FinishedSerializableTransactions	146176768	16	128
XLOG Ctl	54912	4208192	4208256
Shared MultiXact State	5729920	1024	1024
Proc Header	146444544	136	256
Archiver Data	147473664	8	128
XLOG Recovery Ctl	4263680	104	128
Backend Client Host Name Buffer	146663296	8192	8192
ReplicationSlot Ctl	147466624	2720	2816
KnownAssignedXids	146560128	31720	31744
Prepared Transaction Table	146844032	16	128
BTree Vacuum State	147474560	1476	1536
Checkpoint BufferIds	141263488	327680	327680
Wal Receiver Ctl	147471232	2264	2304
PREDICATELOCKTARGET hash	143914496	2896	2944
Backend Status Array	146599808	55296	55296
KnownAssignedXidsValid	146591872	7930	7936
Slot Sync Data	147474432	24	128
WaitEventExtensionCounterData	147894656	8	128
DSM Registry Data	54656	16	128
WaitEventExtension hash by name	147901184	2896	2944
Shared Buffer Lookup Table	141591168	2896	2944
CommitTs shared	5060992	32	128
Backend Application Name Buffer	146655104	8192	8192
ProcSignal	146925440	11272	11392
Logical Replication Launcher Data	147473792	528	640
Buffer Blocks	6779520	134221824	134221824
Buffer IO Condition Variables	141001344	262144	262144
Proc Array	146559488	524	640
PMSignalState	146924416	1016	1024
PREDICATELOCK hash	144359808	2896	2944
PredXactList	145620224	88	128
Fast Path Strong Relation Lock Data	143910272	4100	4224
Wal Summarizer Ctl	147473536	48	128
transaction	4263808	529568	529664
RWConflictPool	145883776	24	128
WaitEventExtension hash by id	147894784	2896	2944
TransamVariables	54784	72	128
XLogPrefetchStats	4263552	72	128
Buffer Strategy Status	142519808	28	128
SerialControlData	146444416	12	128
shmInvalBuffer	146856192	68128	68224
Sync Scan Locations List	147476096	656	768

```
postgres=# select * from pg_backend_memory_contexts limit 20;
```

name	ident	parent	level	total_bytes	total_nblocks	free_bytes	free_chunks	used_bytes
TopMemoryContext			0	97696	5	14352	12	83344
TopTransactionContext		TopMemoryContext	1	8192	1	7760	0	432
Btree proof lookup cache		TopMemoryContext	1	8192	1	576	0	7616
TableSpace cache		TopMemoryContext	1	8192	1	2112	0	6080
Type information cache		TopMemoryContext	1	24384	2	2640	0	21744
Operator lookup cache		TopMemoryContext	1	24576	2	10776	3	13800
Record information cache		TopMemoryContext	1	8192	1	1600	0	6592
RowDescriptionContext		TopMemoryContext	1	8192	1	6912	0	1280
MessageContext		TopMemoryContext	1	65536	4	32720	2	32816
search_path processing cache		TopMemoryContext	1	8192	1	5616	8	2576
Operator class cache		TopMemoryContext	1	8192	1	576	0	7616
PgStat Shared Ref Hash		TopMemoryContext	1	7232	2	704	0	6528
PgStat Shared Ref		TopMemoryContext	1	8192	4	4072	2	4120
PgStat Pending		TopMemoryContext	1	16384	5	15984	48	400
smgr relation table		TopMemoryContext	1	32768	3	16848	8	15920
TransactionAbortContext		TopMemoryContext	1	32768	1	32528	0	240
Portal hash		TopMemoryContext	1	8192	1	576	0	7616
TopPortalContext		TopMemoryContext	1	8192	1	7680	0	512
PortalContext	<unnamed>	TopPortalContext	2	1024	1	592	0	432
ExecutorState		PortalContext	3	49216	4	13424	1	35792

(20 rows)

# Extensions & Tools

- pg\_buffercache
- pg\_prewarm
- pmap (Linux)

```
00005583f3a14000 220K rw--- [ anon ]
00005583f459c000 924K rw--- [ anon ]
00005583f4683000 1392K rw--- [ anon ]
00007f877932f000 776K rw--- [ anon ]
00007f87793f1000 1024K rw-s- /dev/shm/PostgreSQL.4106567874
00007f87794f1000 132K rw--- [ anon ]
00007f8779512000 28K rw-s- /dev/shm/PostgreSQL.1502130758
00007f8779519000 146336K rw-s- /dev/zero (deleted)
00007f8782401000 348K r---- /usr/lib/locale/C.utf8/LC_CTYPE
00007f8782458000 28K r--s- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/gconv/gconv-modules.cache
00007f878245f000 20K rw--- [ anon ]
00007f8782464000 160K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6
00007f878248c000 1620K r-x-- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6
00007f8782621000 352K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6
00007f8782679000 4K ----- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6
00007f878267a000 16K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6
00007f878267e000 8K rw--- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6
00007f8782680000 52K rw--- [ anon ]
00007f878268d000 8K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libz.so.1.2.11
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00007f87826a0000 24K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libz.so.1.2.11
00007f87826a6000 4K ----- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libz.so.1.2.11
00007f87826a7000 4K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libz.so.1.2.11
00007f87826a8000 4K rw--- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libz.so.1.2.11
00007f87826a9000 712K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libcrypto.so.3
00007f878275b000 2424K r-x-- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libcrypto.so.3
00007f87829b9000 840K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libcrypto.so.3
00007f8782a8b000 364K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libcrypto.so.3
00007f8782ae6000 12K rw--- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libcrypto.so.3
00007f8782ae9000 12K rw--- [ anon ]
00007f8782aec000 120K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libssl.so.3
00007f8782b0a000 364K r-x-- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libssl.so.3
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00007f8782b82000 40K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libssl.so.3
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00007f8782b9e000 496K r-x-- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libm.so.6
00007f8782c1a000 364K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libm.so.6
00007f8782c75000 4K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libm.so.6
00007f8782c76000 4K rw--- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libm.so.6
00007f8782c78000 4K rw-s- [ shmid=0x0 ]
00007f8782c79000 4K r---- /usr/lib/locale/C.utf8/LC_TIME
00007f8782c7a000 4K r---- /usr/lib/locale/C.utf8/LC_NUMERIC
00007f8782c7b000 4K r---- /usr/lib/locale/C.utf8/LC_MONETARY
00007f8782c7c000 4K r---- /usr/lib/locale/C.utf8/LC_MESSAGES/SYS_LC_MESSAGES
00007f8782c7d000 8K rw--- [ anon ]
00007f8782c7f000 8K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2
00007f8782c81000 168K r-x-- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2
00007f8782cab000 44K r---- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2
00007f8782cb6000 4K r---- /usr/lib/locale/C.utf8/LC_COLLATE
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00007f8782cb9000 8K rw--- /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2
00007ffe0ec66000 136K rw--- [ stack ]
00007ffe0ed2e000 16K r---- [ anon ]
00007ffe0ed32000 8K r-x-- [ anon ]
```

# Projects

## Ideas/unmerged

- Invalidate buffer cache – patch is out
- Memory shrink/expand – serverless, overbooking (anyone ? 😊)
- Memory accounting & limiting
- Merge SLRUs into buffer pool
- RelCache cleanups.
- Improve allocation speeds
- New buffer pool replacement algorithm.

# Acknowledgements

- Microsoft Contributors/Committer team.
- Specially thanks - Thomas, David, Andres & Teresa.