



Consortium des Équipements  
de Calcul Intensif  
en Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles

# Introduction to Parallel Computing

damien.francois@uclouvain.be  
November 2025



# Agenda

1. General concepts, definitions, challenges
2. Hardware for parallel computing
3. Programming models
4. User tools

1.

## General concepts

# Why parallel? (simplified)

Speed up – Solve a problem faster  
→ more processing power  
(a.k.a. strong scaling)

Scale up – Solve a larger problem  
→ more memory and network capacity  
(a.k.a. weak scaling)

Scale out – Solve many problems  
→ more storage capacity

Also: energy consumption is a cubic function of clock frequency so using 2 compute units is 8 times cheaper than using one unit with double the frequency

# Parallelization involves:

- *decomposition* of the work
  - **distributing instructions** to processors
  - **distributing data** to memories
- *collaboration* of the workers
  - **synchronization** of the distributed work
  - **communication** of data

Parallelization involves:

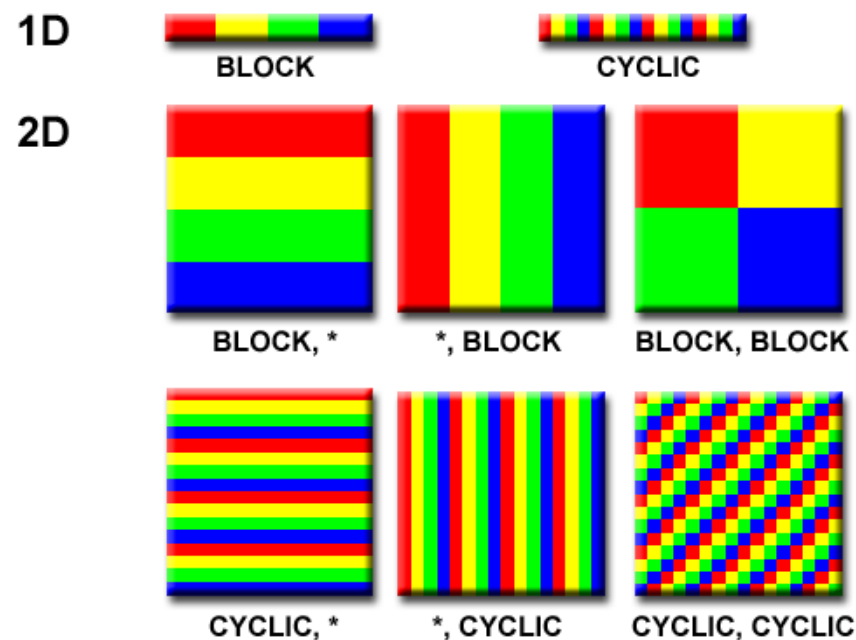
# Decomposition of the work

- **Operation decomposition** : task-level parallelism
  - Multiple programs (functional decomposition)
  - Multiple instances of the same program (SPMD)
- **Data decomposition** : data-level parallelism

Parallelization involves:

# Decomposition of the work

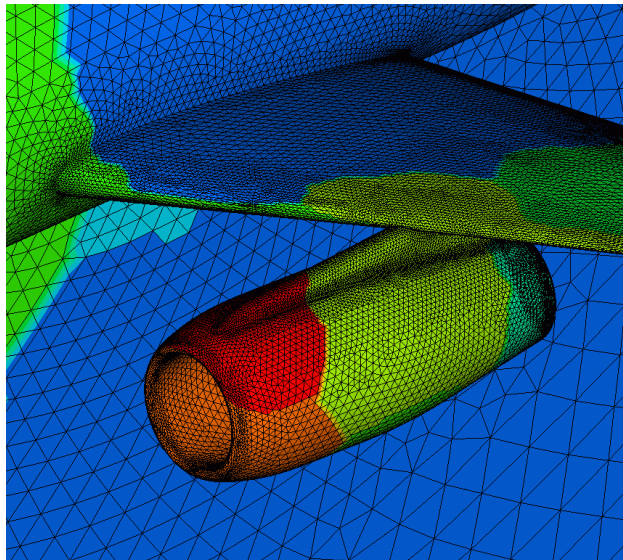
- **Operation decomposition** : task-level parallelism
- **Data decomposition** : data-level parallelism
  - **Block, cyclic**



Parallelization involves:

# Decomposition of the work

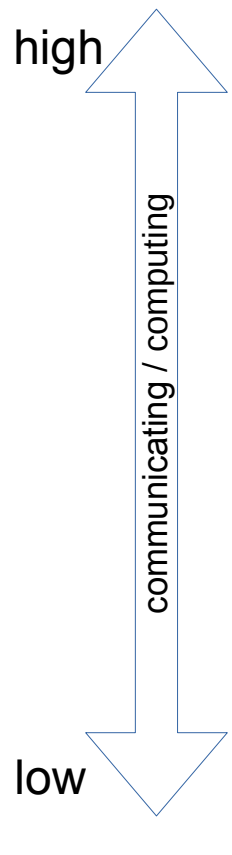
- **Operation decomposition** : task-level parallelism
- **Data decomposition** : data-level parallelism
  - **Domain decomposition** : decomposition of work and data is done in a higher model, e.g. in the reality





# Collaboration of the workers

- **Synchronization of the workers**

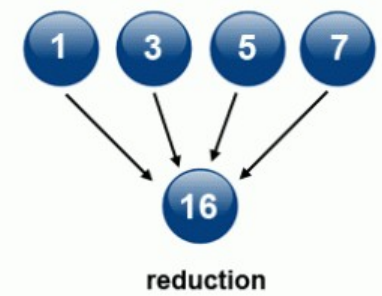
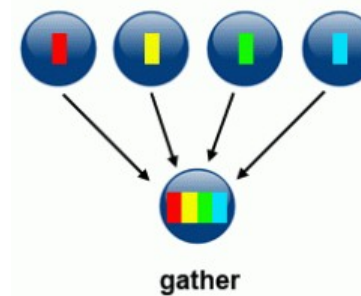
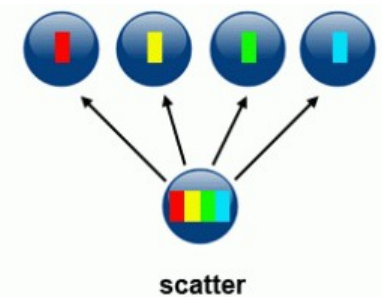
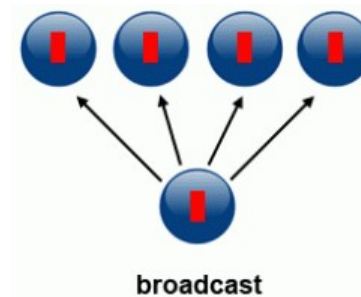
- 
- **Synchronous** (SIMD) at the processor level ; the same processor instruction for each worker at any time ; (instruction level)
  - **Fine-grained** parallelism : subtasks communicate many times per second (typically at the loop level)
  - **Coarse-grained** parallelism : they do not communicate many times per second (typically function-call level)
  - **Embarrassingly parallel** : they rarely or never have to communicate (asynchronous)

Parallelization involves:

# Collaboration of the workers

- **Communication between workers**

- Point to point
- Broadcast
- Scatter
- Gather
- Reduction



# Does it work?

## Speedup, Efficiency, Scalability

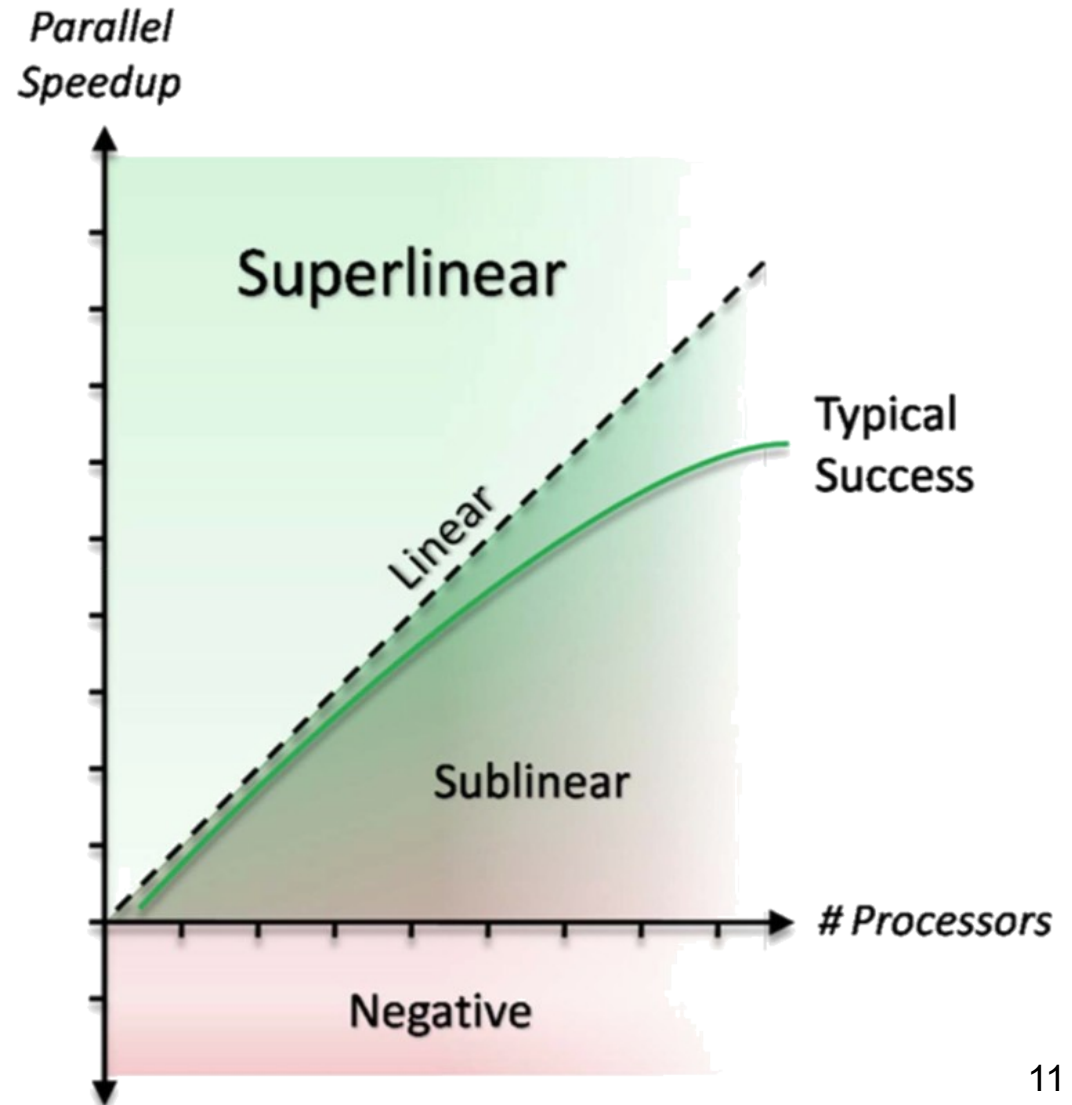
Time for serial operations

Speedup  $S = \frac{T_S}{T_P}$

Time for parallel operations

Efficiency  $E = \frac{S}{p} = \frac{T_S}{pT_p}$

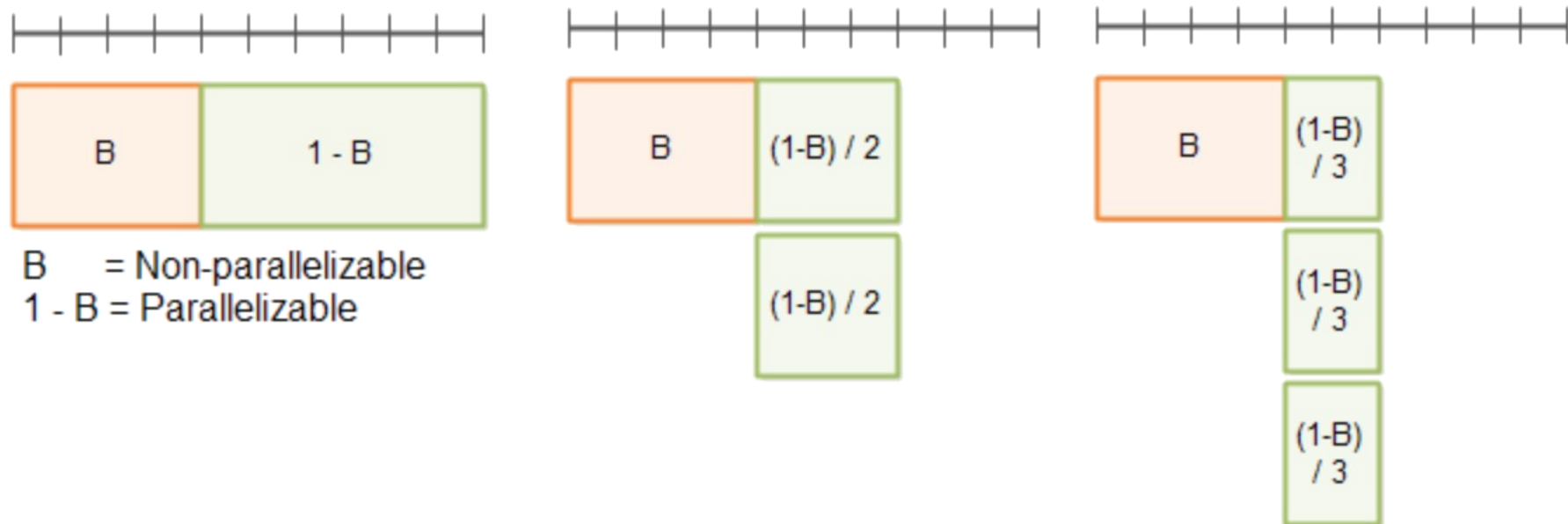
Number of processors



Why wouldn't it work?

# Challenge 1: Amdahl's Law

Not all the work can be decomposed



In parallel computing, Amdahl's law is mainly used to predict the theoretical maximum speedup for programs using multiple processors.

Why wouldn't it work?

# Challenge 2: Parallel overhead

Collaboration means communication and extra work

```
void main (int argc, char *argv[])  
{  
  
    printf("Processor %d of %d: Hello World!\n",  
    }  
}
```



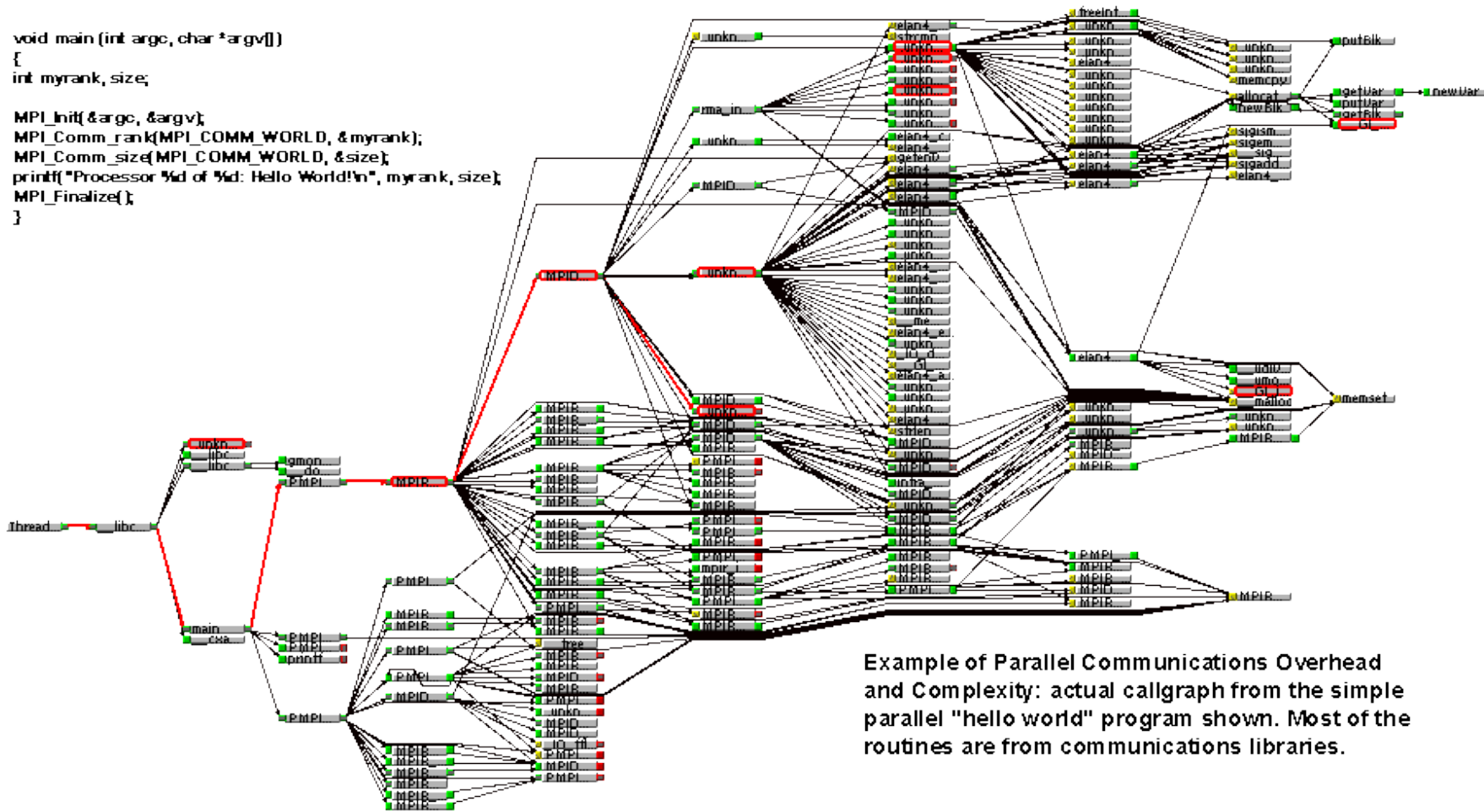
Why wouldn't it work?

# Challenge 2: Parallel overhead

Collaboration means communication and extra work

```
void main (int argc, char *argv[])
{
  int myrank, size;

  MPI_Init(&argc, &argv);
  MPI_Comm_rank(MPI_COMM_WORLD, &myrank);
  MPI_Comm_size(MPI_COMM_WORLD, &size);
  printf("Processor %d of %d: Hello World!\n", myrank, size);
  MPI_Finalize();
}
```



Example of Parallel Communications Overhead and Complexity: actual callgraph from the simple parallel "hello world" program shown. Most of the routines are from communications libraries.

Why wouldn't it work?

# Challenge 3: Load imbalance

Parallelization is efficient only if every worker roughly has the same amount of work



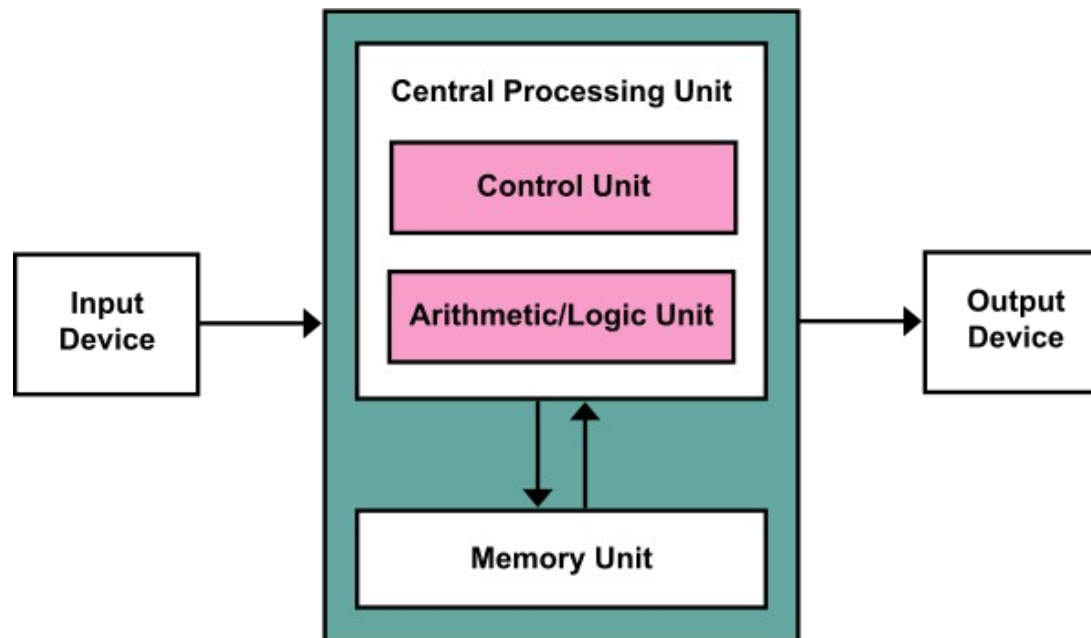
# 2.

## Hardware for parallel computing



# Von Neumann (serial) architecture

An abstract view of early computers



# Parallelism at the CPU (core) level

# An abstract view of modern CPUs

- Instruction-level parallelism (**ILP**)
  - Instruction pipelining
  - Out-of-order execution
  - Speculative execution
  - ...
- Single Instruction Multiple Data (**SIMD**)
- Simultaneous multithreading (**SMT**)

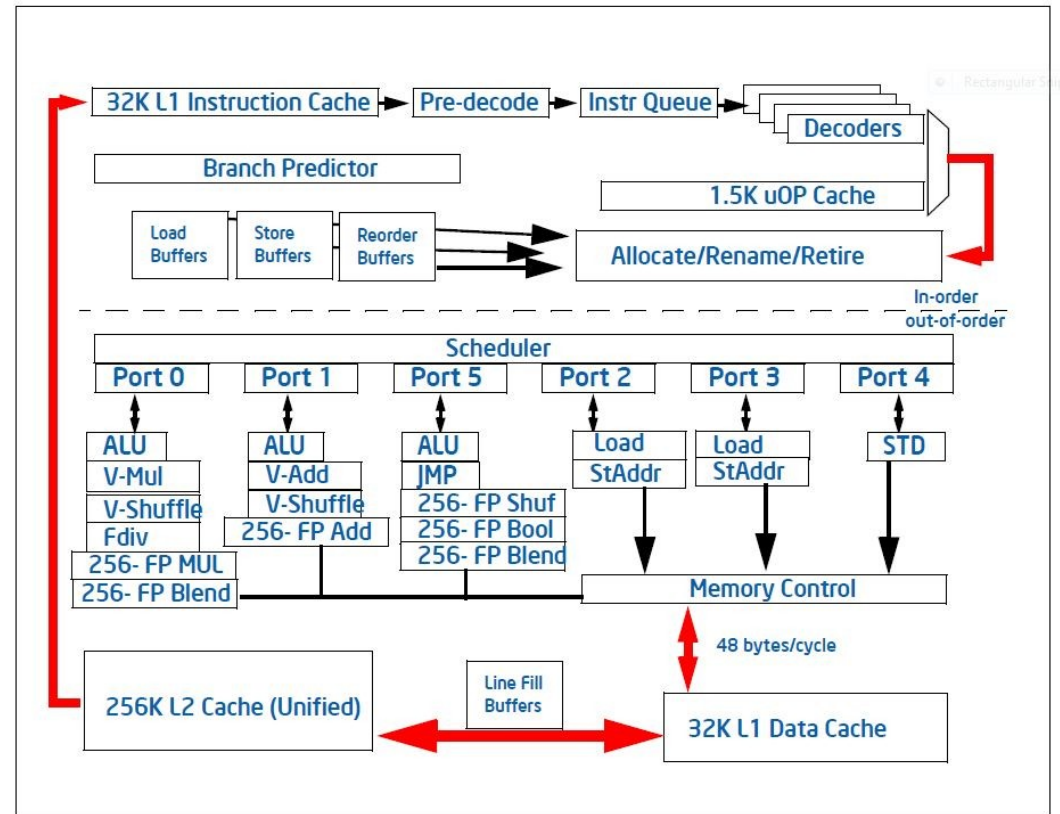
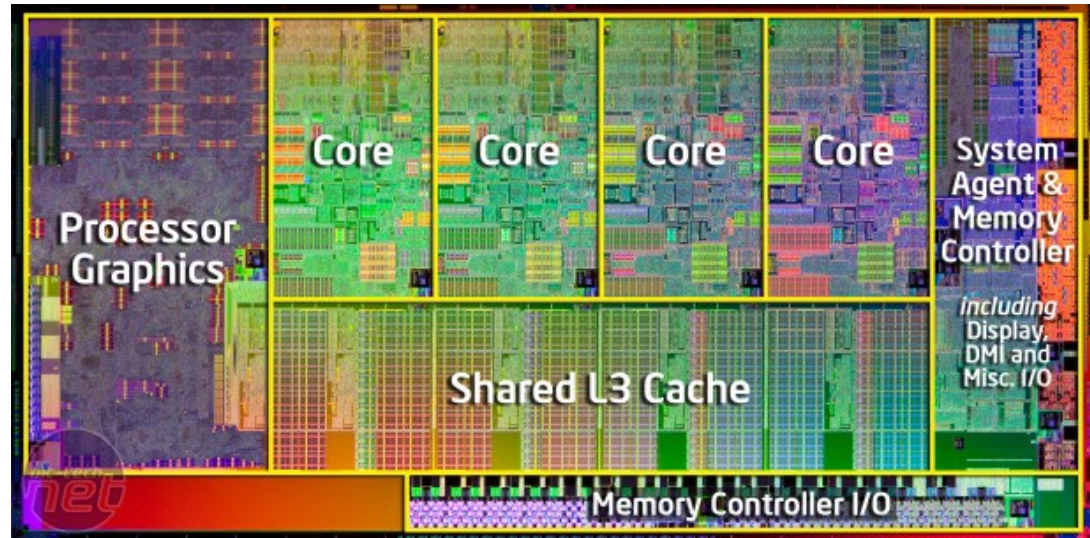


Figure 2-1. Intel microarchitecture code name Sandy Bridge Pipeline Functionality

# Parallelism at the chip (socket) level



- **Multicore** parallelism

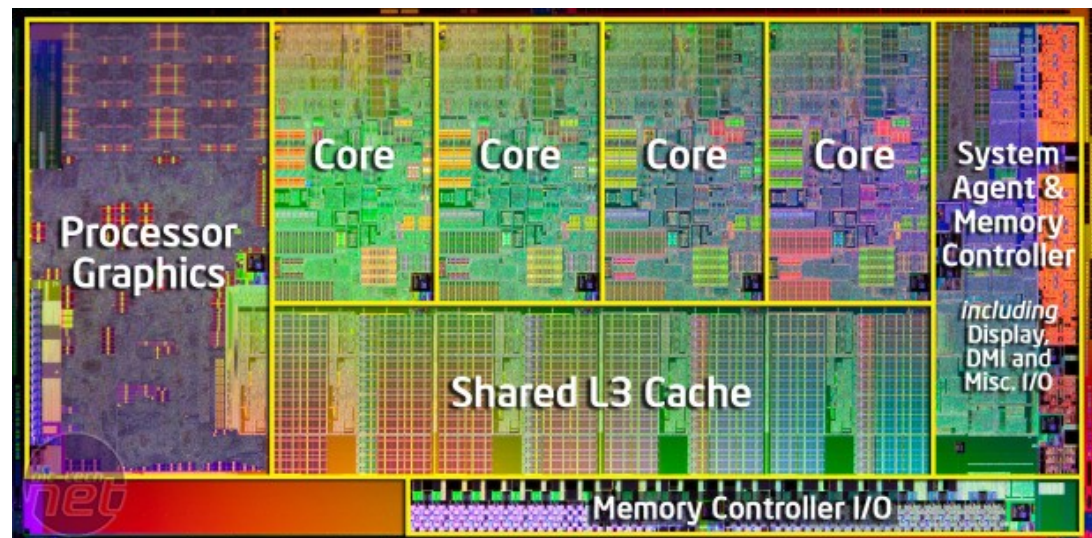
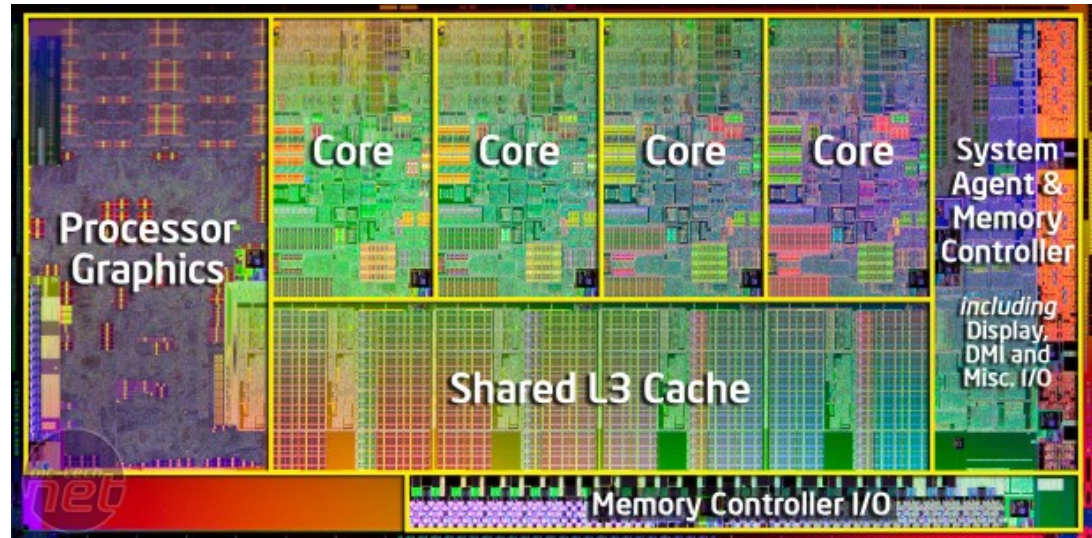




# Parallelism at the computer level



- Multi-socket parallelism
  - SMP
  - NUMA
- Accelerators



# Parallelism at the data center level



**Multi-node parallelism**





# Parallelism at the data center level

## Cluster computing

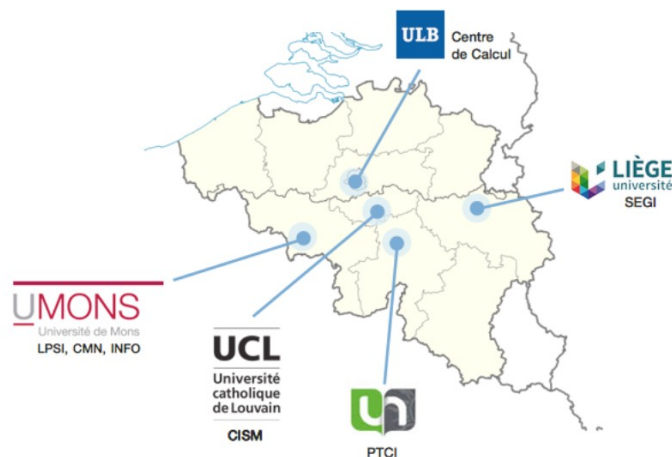


### Consortium des Équipements de Calcul Intensif

6 clusters, 10k cores, 1 login, 1 home directory

## About

CÉCI is the 'Consortium des Équipements de Calcul Intensif'; a consortium of high-performance computing centers of [UCL](#), [ULB](#), [ULg](#), [UMons](#), and [UNamur](#). [Read more.](#)



## The common storage is functional!

Have you tried it yet? [More info...](#)

## Latest News

SATURDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2017

### A CÉCI user pictured in the ULiège news!

The ULiège website [published a story](#) (in French) about the work of Denis Baurain and his collaborators on the Tier-1 cluster Zenobe that lead to a publication in [Nature Ecology & Evolution](#).

TUESDAY, 01 AUGUST 2017

### Ariel Lozano is the new CÉCI logisticien

We are happy to announce the hire of a new CÉCI logisticien: Ariel Lozano. Welcome Ariel!

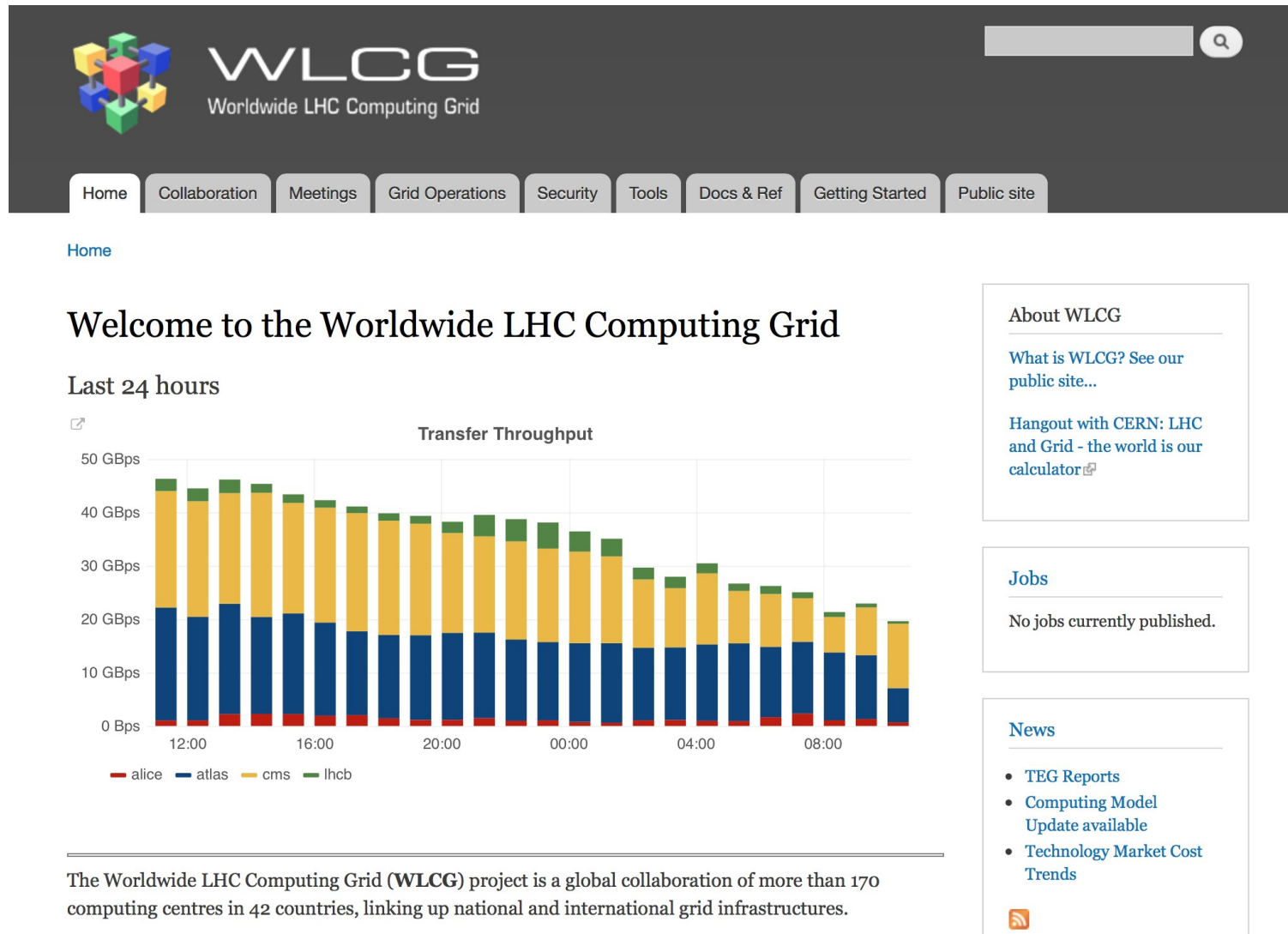
# Parallelism at the data center level

Cloud computing “someone else’s cluster”



# Parallelism at the world level

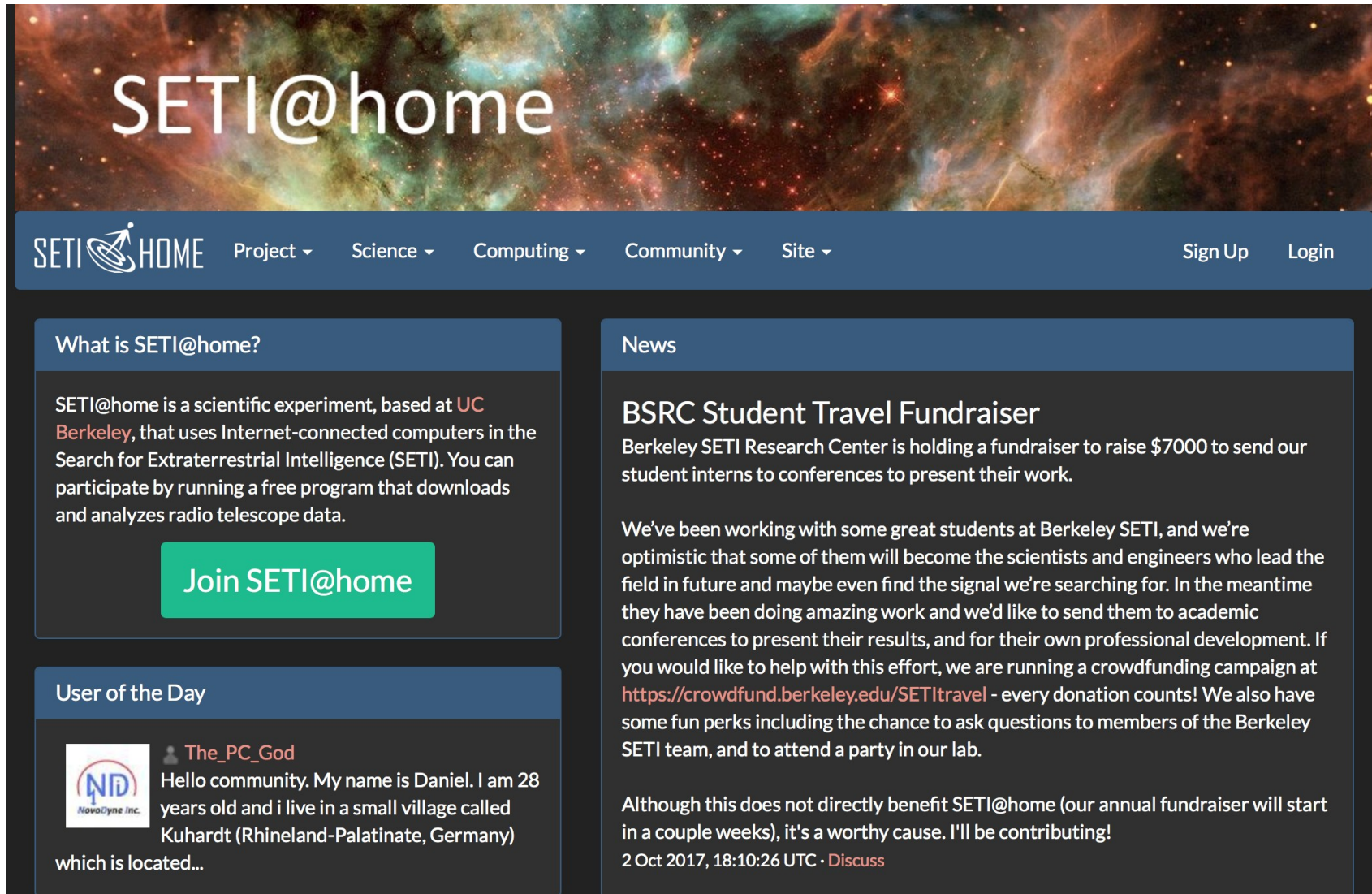
## Grid computing – “cluster of clusters”





# Parallelism at the world level

Distributed computing – “no unused cycle”



The screenshot shows the SETI@home website with a cosmic background. The header features the SETI@home logo and a navigation menu with links for Project, Science, Computing, Community, and Site. There are also links for Sign Up and Login. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column has a section titled 'What is SETI@home?' which describes the project as a scientific experiment based at UC Berkeley, using Internet-connected computers to search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI). It includes a green button labeled 'Join SETI@home'. Below this is a 'User of the Day' section featuring a profile for 'The\_PC\_God', a member of NovoDyne Inc., who is 28 years old and lives in a small village called Kuhardt in Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany. The right column has a 'News' section with a headline 'BSRC Student Travel Fundraiser'. The text describes a fundraiser by the Berkeley SETI Research Center to raise \$7000 for student interns. It mentions a crowdfunding campaign at <https://crowdfund.berkeley.edu/SETItravel> and lists some perks like asking questions to the Berkeley SETI team and attending a party. The news item is dated 2 Oct 2017, 18:10:26 UTC and includes a 'Discuss' link.

SETI@home


SETI@HOME Project Science Computing Community Site Sign Up Login

### What is SETI@home?

SETI@home is a scientific experiment, based at **UC Berkeley**, that uses Internet-connected computers in the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI). You can participate by running a free program that downloads and analyzes radio telescope data.

**Join SETI@home**

### User of the Day

 **The\_PC\_God**  
Hello community. My name is Daniel. I am 28 years old and i live in a small village called Kuhardt (Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany) which is located...

### News

#### BSRC Student Travel Fundraiser

Berkeley SETI Research Center is holding a fundraiser to raise \$7000 to send our student interns to conferences to present their work.

We've been working with some great students at Berkeley SETI, and we're optimistic that some of them will become the scientists and engineers who lead the field in future and maybe even find the signal we're searching for. In the meantime they have been doing amazing work and we'd like to send them to academic conferences to present their results, and for their own professional development. If you would like to help with this effort, we are running a crowdfunding campaign at <https://crowdfund.berkeley.edu/SETItravel> - every donation counts! We also have some fun perks including the chance to ask questions to members of the Berkeley SETI team, and to attend a party in our lab.

Although this does not directly benefit SETI@home (our annual fundraiser will start in a couple weeks), it's a worthy cause. I'll be contributing!

2 Oct 2017, 18:10:26 UTC • [Discuss](#)

# 3.

**Programming paradigms**

(logic of work sharing and organizing)

**Programming models**

(software libraries and APIs)

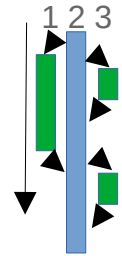
# Is parallization automagic?

- **ILP**: yes, by the CPU and/or the compiler
- **SIMD**: mostly, by the compiler
- **Intra-node**: can be if the library/software you use is designed for it
- **GPUs**: can be if the library/software you use is designed for it
- **Inter-node**: never automagic.

# Main parallel programming paradigms

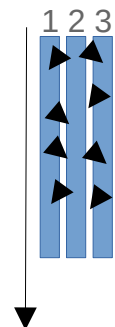
- **Task-farming:**

- Master program distributes work to worker programs (*leader/follower*); or
- Worker programs pick up tasks from pool (*work stealing*).



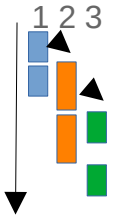
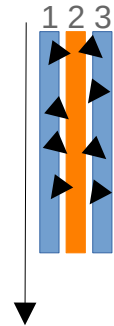
- **SPMD** (Single program multiple data)

- A single program that contains both the logic for distributing work and computing
- Multiple instances are started and “linked” together
- Instances are identified with a distinct index

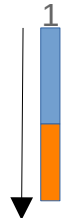


# Other parallel programming paradigms

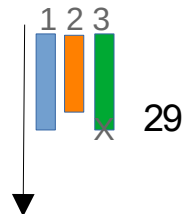
- **MPMD (Multiple program multiple data)**
- **Pipelining** : workers take care of a subtask in the processing chain and pass the intermediate result to the next worker
- **Divide and Conquer** :
  - workers are spawned at need and report their result to the parent
  - Speculative parallelism : workers are spawned and result possibly discarded



CPU1: If (`very_long_computation()`)  
 CPU1: then  
 CPU1:   do A  
 CPU1: else  
 CPU1:   do B



CPU1: `res=very_long_computation()`  
 CPU2: do A  
 CPU3: do B  
 CPU1: if (`res`) discard B else discard A



# Main programming models

- Single computer:
  - **CPUs:** PThreads, *OpenMP*, TBB, OpenCL
  - **Accelerators:** *CUDA*, OpenCL, *OpenAcc/OpenMP*, SYCL, Hipp, ROCm
- Multi-computer:
  - **Clusters:**
    - Message passing: *MPI*, PVM
    - PGAS: CoArray Fortran, UPC, Global Arrays
  - **Clouds:** MapReduce, Spark RDD
  - **Distributed computing:** BOINC

Linux program starting process

## Code (program.c)

## Text file

# Compiler

# Binary (program.exe)

# Executable file

# Loader

# Process (PID 1235)

## Running instance

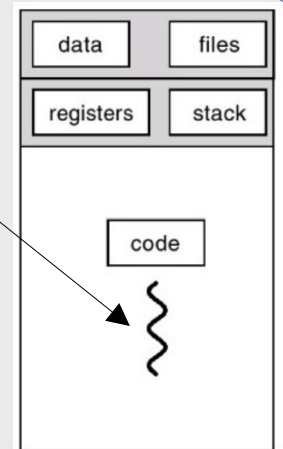
```
#include <stdio.h>
```

```
int main(void)
{
    printf("Hello, World!\n");
}
```

[illegible]

Computer

## One execution thread





# Code (program.c)

Text file

## Compiler

# Binary (program.exe)

Executable file

## Loader

# Process (PID 1235)

Running instance

```
#include <stdio.h>
```

```
int main(void)
```

```
{
```

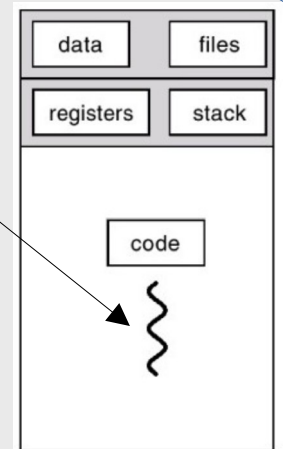
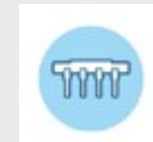
```
    printf("Hello, World!\n");
```

```
}
```



Computer

One execution thread  
is assigned by the OS  
one CPU core



# Code (program.c)

Text file

## Compiler

# Binary (program.exe)

Executable file

## Loader, called multiple times

# Multiple independent processes

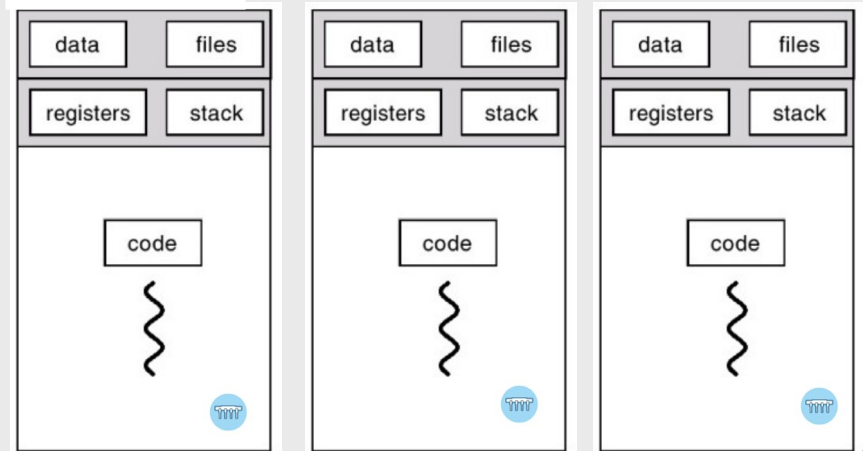
Running instances

```
#include <stdio.h>

int main(void)
{
    printf("Hello, World!\n");
}
```



### Computer



# Code (program.c)

Text file

## Compiler

# Binary (program.exe)

Executable file

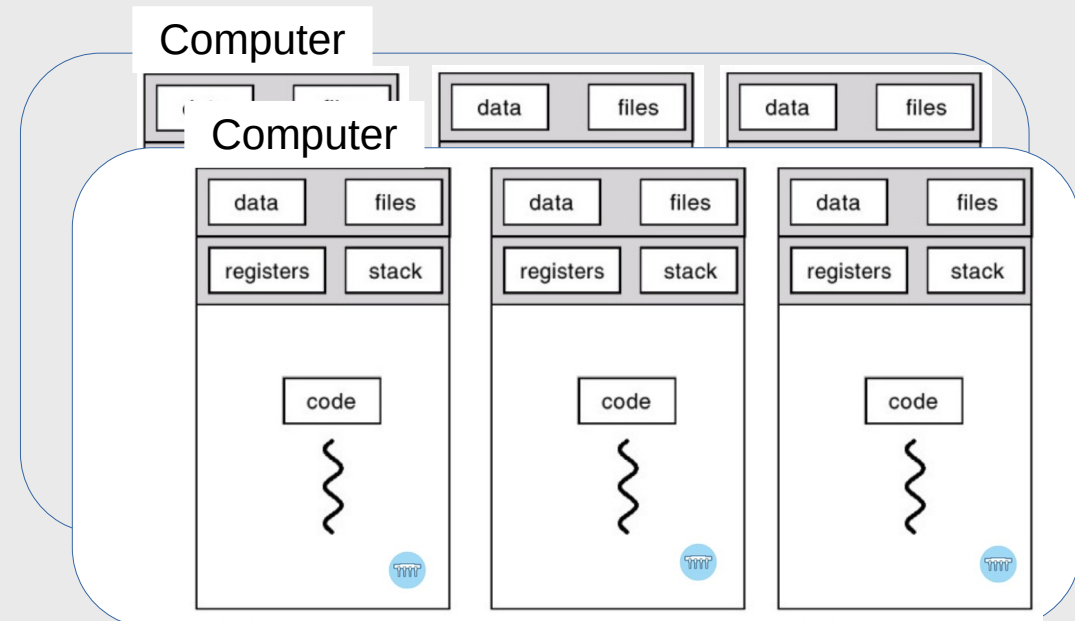
Loader,  
called multiple times  
with SSH on multiple  
servers

# Multiple independent processes on multiple servers

Running instances

```
#include <stdio.h>

int main(void)
{
    printf("Hello, World!\n");
}
```



Code (program.c)

Text file

Compiler

Binary (program.exe)

Executable file

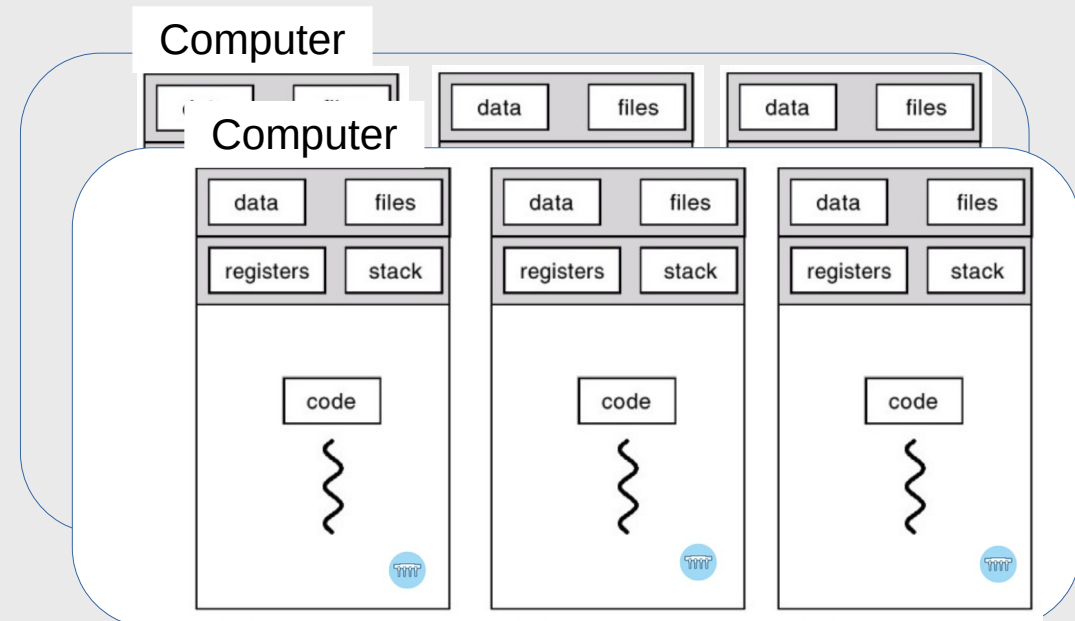
Loader,  
called multiple times  
with SSH on multiple  
servers

Multiple **independent**  
processes on multiple  
servers

Running instances

```
#include <stdio.h>
int main(void)
{
    printf("Hello, World!\n");
}
```

srun  
xargs, split, GNU parallel  
make this easier



# Forking Code

Text file

Compiler

# Single binary

Executable file

Loader, called once

# Multiple Processes with parent/child relationship

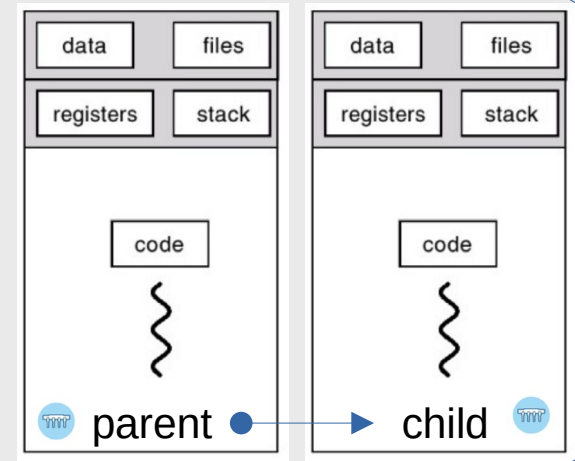
Running instances

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <sys/types.h>;
#include <unistd.h>;
int main()
{
    // make two process which run same
    // program after this instruction
    fork();

    printf("Hello world!\n");
    return 0;
}
```



Computer



IPC – Inter-process communication

# Multithreaded Code

Text file

Compiler

## Single binary

Executable file

Loader, called once

Single process with  
multiple threads  
(multithreaded – shared memory)

Running instance

```
void print_message_function( void *ptr );

main()
{
    pthread_t thread1, thread2;
    char *message1 = "Hello";
    char *message2 = "World";

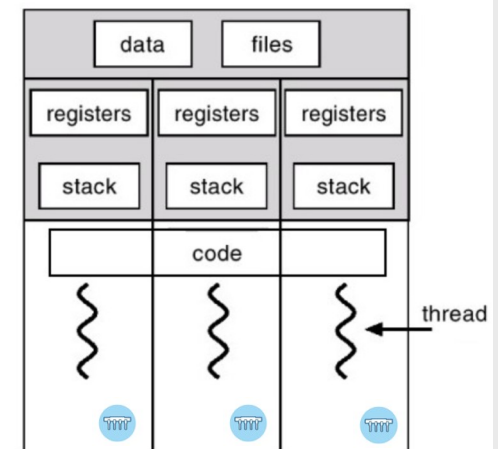
    pthread_create( &thread1, pthread_attr_default,
                   (void*)&print_message_function, (void*) message1);
    pthread_create( &thread2, pthread_attr_default,
                   (void*)&print_message_function, (void*) message2);

    exit(0);
}

void print_message_function( void *ptr )
{
    char *message;
    message = (char *) ptr;
    printf("%s ", message);
}
```



Computer



# Multithreaded Code

Text file

Compiler

# Single binary

Executable file

Loader, called once

# Single process with multiple threads (multithreaded – shared memory)

Running instance

```
void print_message_function( void *ptr );
```

```
main()
```

```
{
```

```
pthread_t thread1, thread2;
```

```
char *message1 = "Hello";
```

```
char *message2 = "World";
```

```
pthread_create( &thread1, pthread_attr_default,
```

```
(void*)print_message_function, (void*) message1);
```

```
pthread_create( &thread2, pthread_attr_default,
```

```
(void*)print_message_function, (void*) message2);
```

```
exit(0);
```

```
}
```

```
void print_message_function( void *ptr )
```

```
{
```

```
char *message;
```

```
message = (char *) ptr;
```

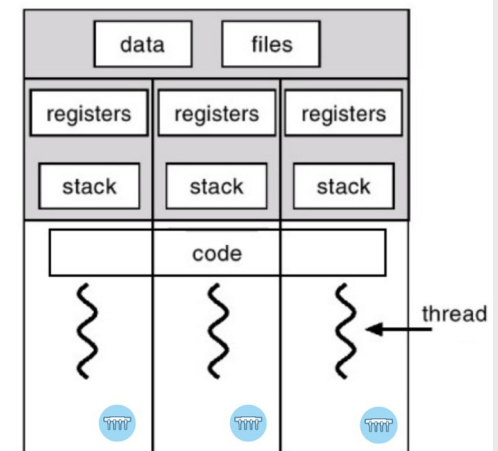
```
printf("%s ", message);
```

```
}
```

OpenMP makes this easier



Computer





# Code (program.c)

## Text file

# Compiler

# Binary (program.exe)

## Executable file

# Loader,

called multiple times  
with SSH on multiple  
servers

# Multiple **connected** processes on multiple servers

# Running instances

```
int main() {
    struct sockaddr_in server;
    int lfd, n, confd;
    char r_buff[100] = "", s_buff[100] = "";

    lfd = socket(AF_INET, SOCK_STREAM, 0);
    server.sin_family = AF_INET;
    server.sin_port = 2000;
    server.sin_addr.s_addr = inet_addr("127.0.0.1");

    bind(lfd, (struct sockaddr *)&server, sizeof server);
    listen(lfd, 1);

    n = sizeof client;
    confd = accept(lfd, (struct sockaddr *)&client, &n);

    while (1) {
        recv(confd, r_buff, sizeof r_buff, 0);
        printf("\n[client] %s", r_buff);
        if (strcmp(r_buff, "exit") == 0)
            break;

        printf("\nserver: ");
        gets(s_buff);
        send(confd, s_buff, sizeof s_buff, 0);
        if (strcmp(s_buff, "exit") == 0)
            break;
        printf("\n");
    }
}

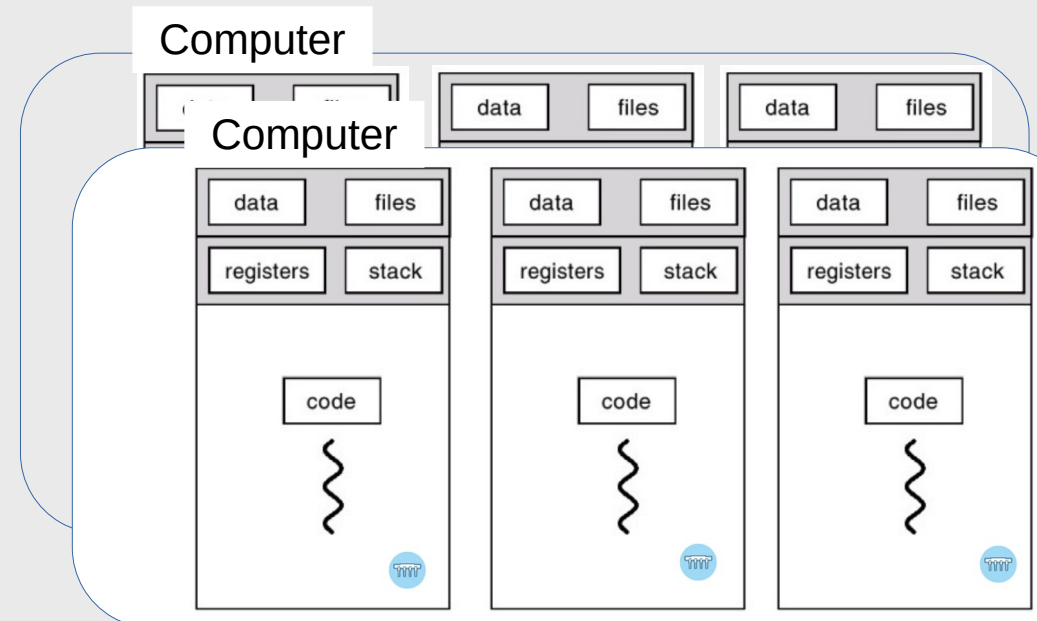
int main() {
    struct sockaddr_in server;
    int lfd;
    char r_buff[100] = "", s_buff[100] = "";

    lfd = socket(AF_INET, SOCK_STREAM, 0);
    server.sin_family = AF_INET;
    server.sin_port = 2000;
    server.sin_addr.s_addr = inet_addr("127.0.0.1");

    connect(lfd, (struct sockaddr *)&server, sizeof server);

    while (1) {
        printf("\nclient: ");
        gets(s_buff);
        send(lfd, s_buff, sizeof s_buff, 0);
        if (strcmp(s_buff, "end") == 0)
            break;

        recv(lfd, r_buff, sizeof r_buff, 0);
        printf("[server] %s", r_buff);
        if (strcmp(r_buff, "end") == 0)
            break;
        printf("\n");
    }
}
```

[illegible]



Code (program.c)

Text file

Compiler

Binary (program.exe)

Executable file

Loader,  
called multiple times  
with SSH on multiple  
servers

Multiple **connected**  
processes on multiple  
servers

Running instances

```
int main() {
    struct sockaddr_in client, server;
    int lfd, n, confd;
    char r_buff[100] = "", s_buff[100] = "";

    lfd = socket(AF_INET, SOCK_STREAM, 0);
    server.sin_family = AF_INET;
    server.sin_port = 2000;
    server.sin_addr.s_addr = htonl(INADDR_ANY);
    bind(lfd, (struct sockaddr *)&server, sizeof(server));
    listen(lfd, 1);

    n = sizeof(client);
    confd = accept(lfd, (struct sockaddr *)&client, &n);

    while (1) {
        recv(confd, r_buff, sizeof(r_buff), 0);
        printf("\n[client] %s", r_buff);
        if (strcmp(r_buff, "exit") == 0)
            break;

        printf("\nserver: ");
        gets(s_buff);
        send(confd, s_buff, sizeof(s_buff), 0);
        if (strcmp(s_buff, "exit") == 0)
            break;
        printf("\n");
    }
}
```

```
int main() {
    struct sockaddr_in server;
    int lfd;
    char r_buff[100] = "", s_buff[100] = "";

    lfd = socket(AF_INET, SOCK_STREAM, 0);
    server.sin_family = AF_INET;
    server.sin_port = 2000;
    server.sin_addr.s_addr = htonl(INADDR_ANY);
    bind(lfd, (struct sockaddr *)&server, sizeof(server));
    listen(lfd, 1);

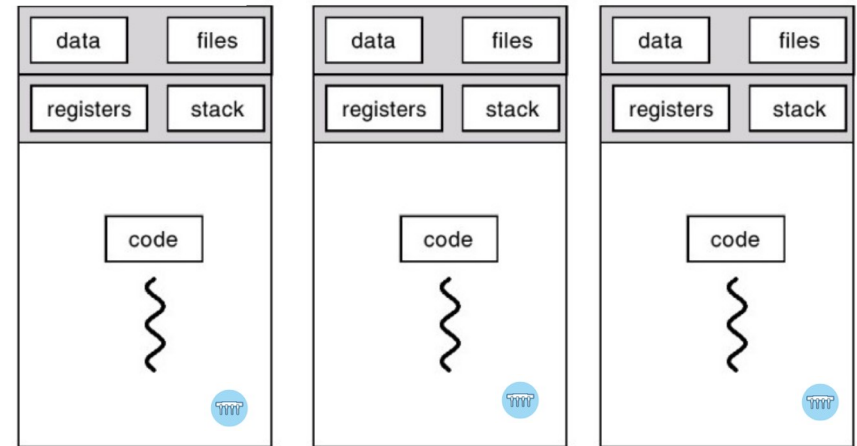
    while (1) {
        n = sizeof(client);
        confd = accept(lfd, (struct sockaddr *)&client, &n);

        while (1) {
            recv(confd, r_buff, sizeof(r_buff), 0);
            printf("[server] %s", r_buff);
            if (strcmp(r_buff, "end") == 0)
                break;

            printf("\n");
        }
    }
}
```

Computer

Computer



xargs, split, GNU parallel → start multiple independent processes

OpenMP → write multithreaded programs

MPI → write multiprocess connected programs

# 4.

## User tools that GNU/Linux offers

- 4.1 Parallelized tools
- 4.2 Job control and parallel processes
- 4.3 Basic tools
- 4.4 GNU Parallel

## 4.1. Parallelized utilities

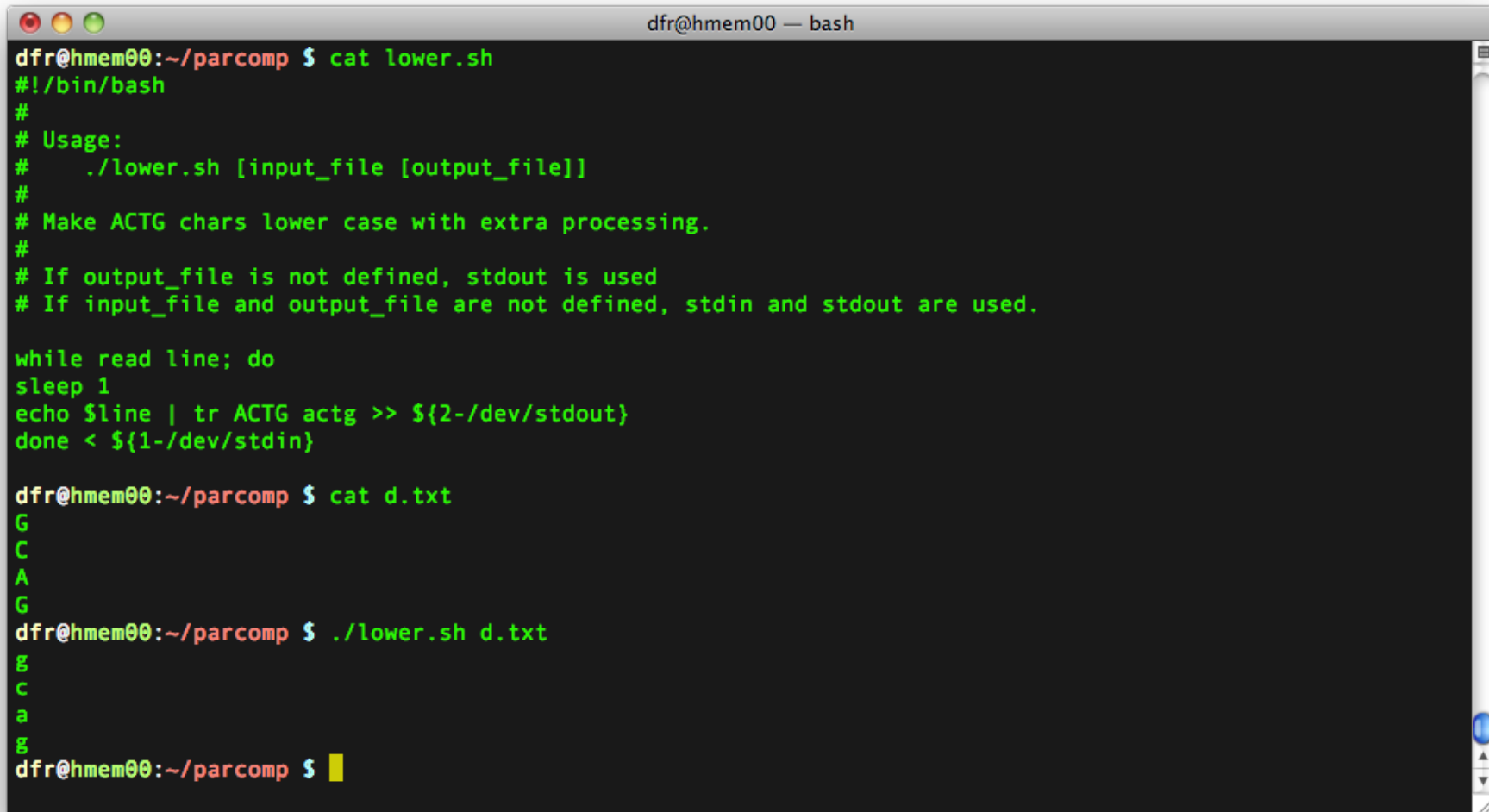
Some tools have a parallelized counterpart, or parallel options. Examples:

serial		parallel
gzip	↔	pigz
grep	↔	ripgrep, singrep
ssh	↔	clustershell
sort	↔	sort --parallel
scp	↔	bbcp
bc	↔	bcx
...		...

You might have to install them by yourself if they are not present on the clusters

## 4.2. Job control & Parallel processes in Bash

Consider the following example program



```
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ cat lower.sh
#!/bin/bash
#
# Usage:
#   ./lower.sh [input_file [output_file]]
#
# Make ACTG chars lower case with extra processing.
#
# If output_file is not defined, stdout is used
# If input_file and output_file are not defined, stdin and stdout are used.

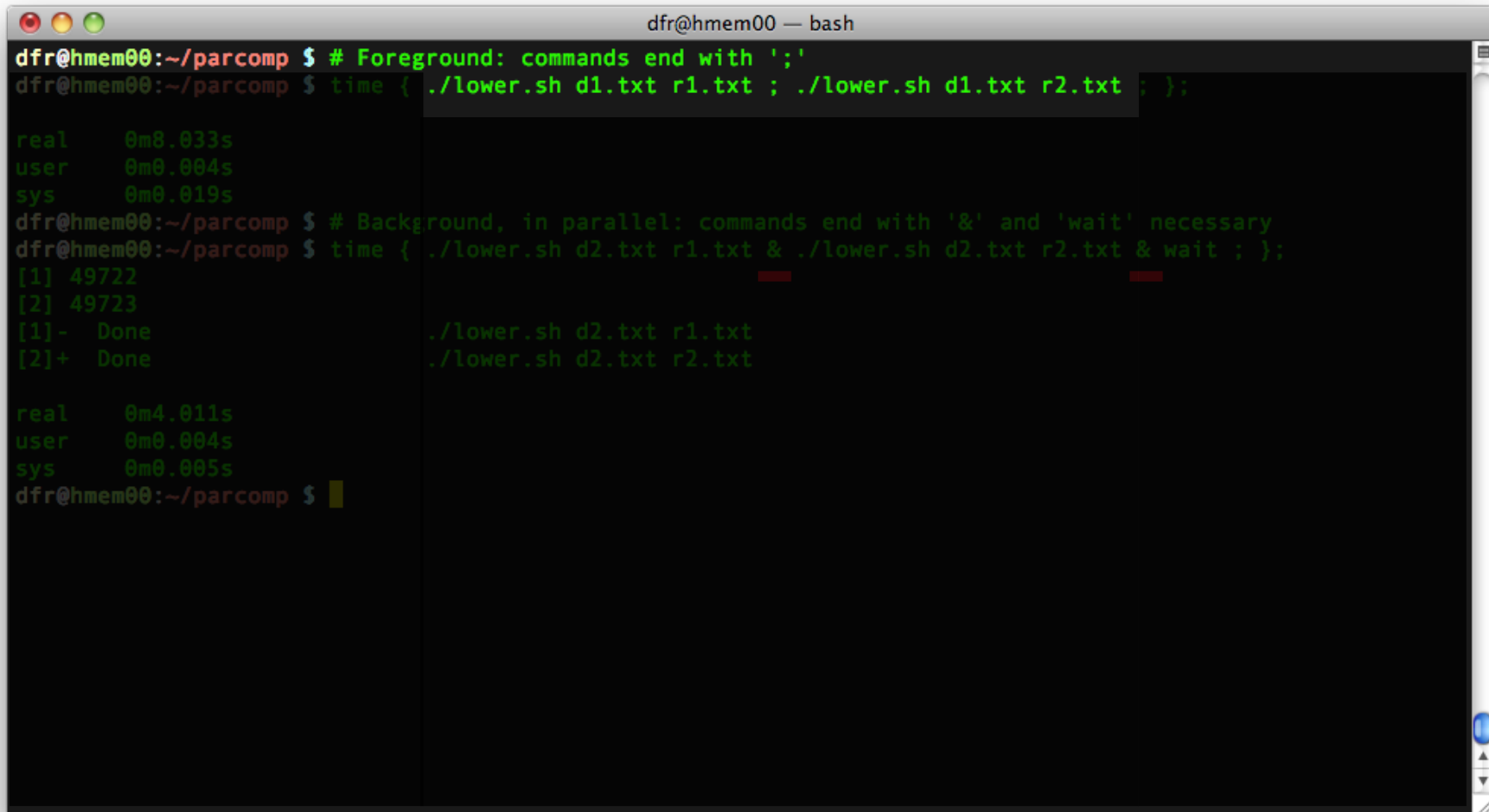
while read line; do
sleep 1
echo $line | tr ACTG actg >> ${2-/dev/stdout}
done < ${1-/dev/stdin}

dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ cat d.txt
G
C
A
G
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ ./lower.sh d.txt
g
c
a
g
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $
```

It is written in Bash and just transforms some upper case letters to lower case

## 4.2. Job control & Parallel processes in Bash

Run the program twice

A terminal window titled 'dfr@hmem00 — bash' showing a sequence of commands and their outputs. The first command is a foreground execution of two './lower.sh' scripts, which takes 8.033 seconds. The second command is a background execution of the same two scripts using '&' and 'wait', which takes 4.011 seconds. The terminal shows the process IDs (49722 and 49723) and the completion status of each job. The window has a standard macOS-style title bar with red, yellow, and green buttons, and a scrollbar on the right side.

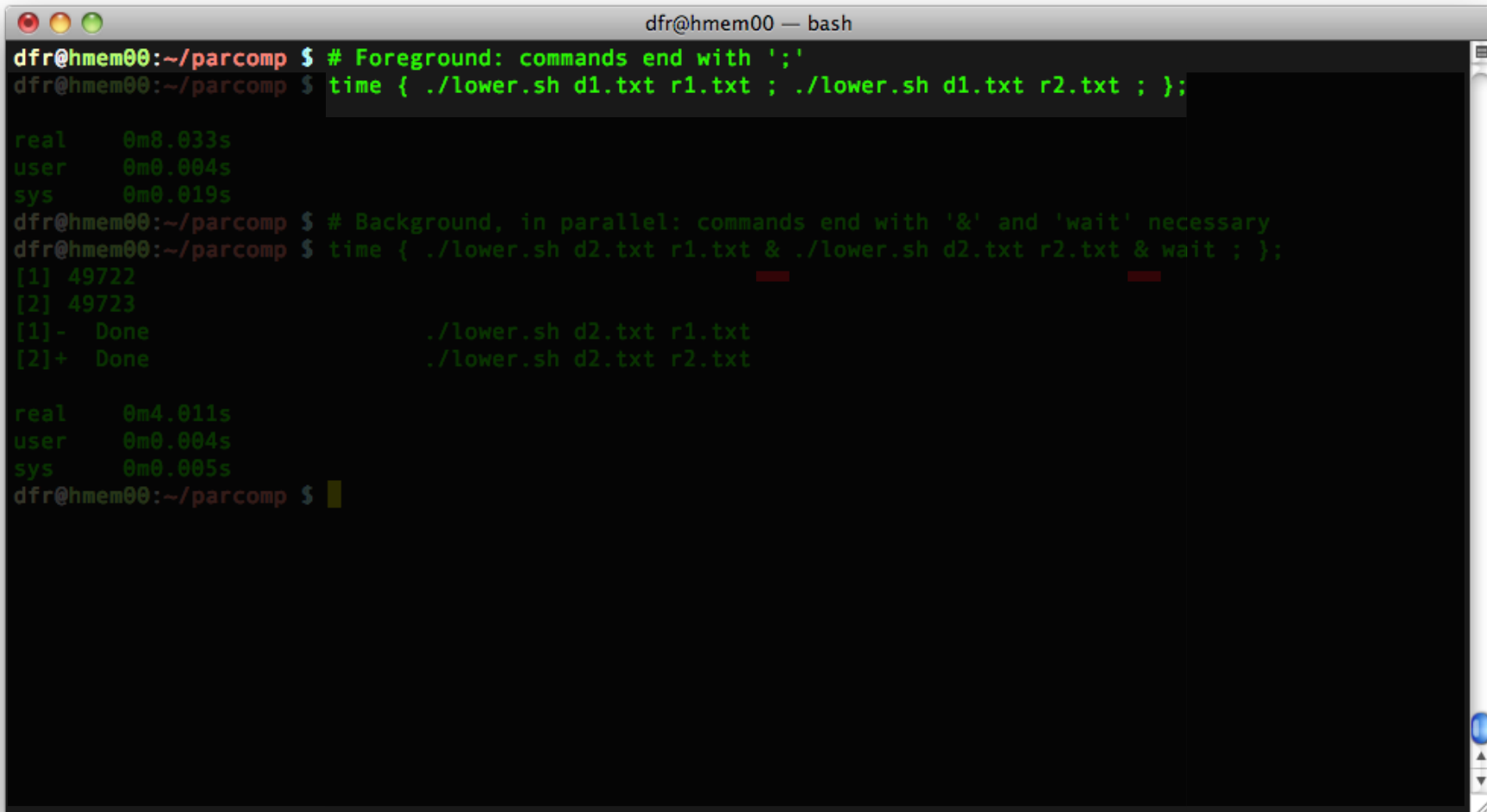
```
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ # Foreground: commands end with ';'
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { ./lower.sh d1.txt r1.txt ; ./lower.sh d1.txt r2.txt ; };

real    0m8.033s
user    0m0.004s
sys     0m0.019s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ # Background, in parallel: commands end with '&' and 'wait' necessary
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { ./lower.sh d2.txt r1.txt & ./lower.sh d2.txt r2.txt & wait ; };
[1] 49722
[2] 49723
[1]-  Done                  ./lower.sh d2.txt r1.txt
[2]+  Done                  ./lower.sh d2.txt r2.txt

real    0m4.011s
user    0m0.004s
sys     0m0.005s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $
```

## 4.2. Job control & Parallel processes in Bash

Run the program twice and measure the time it takes



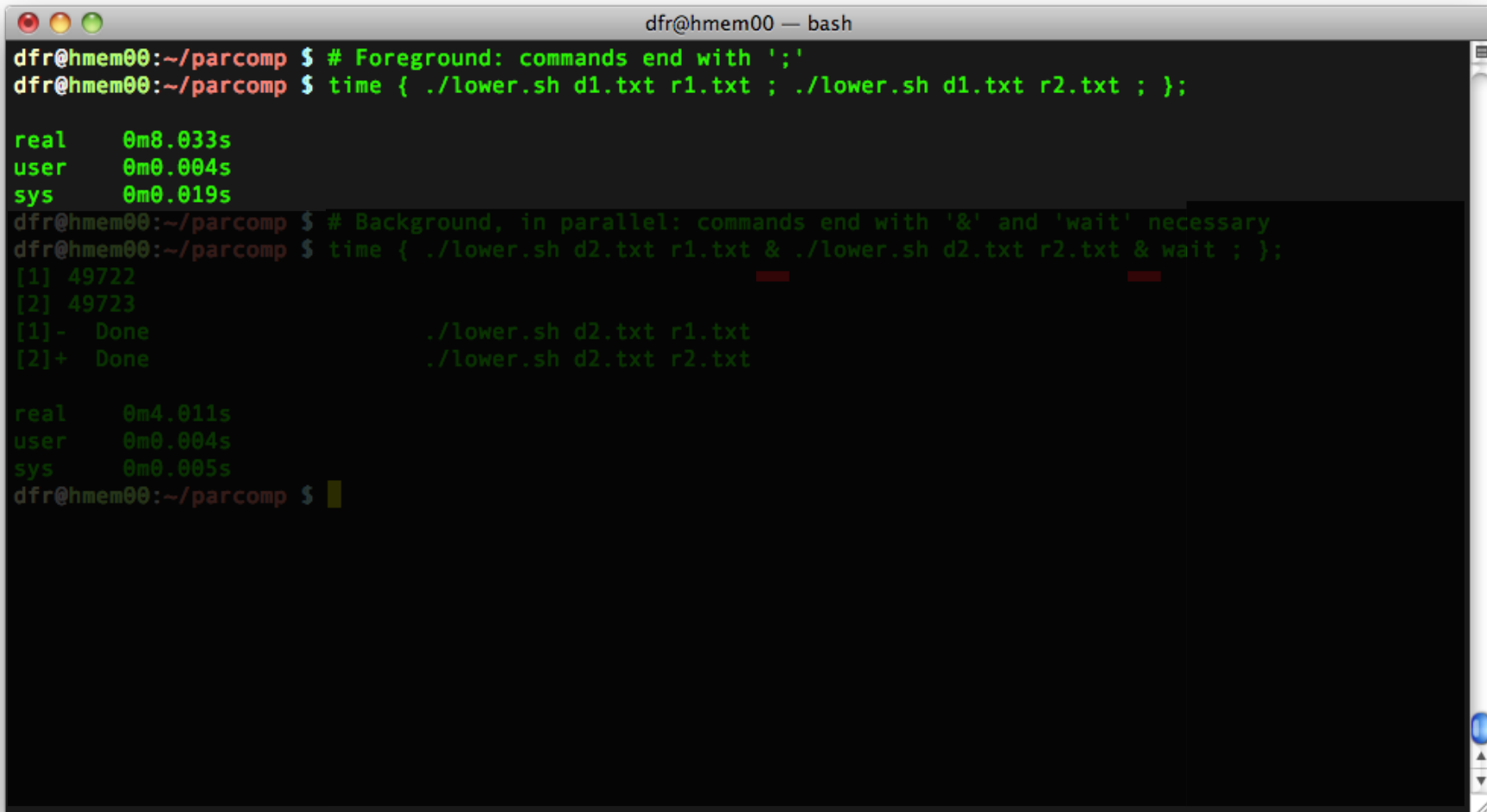
```
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ # Foreground: commands end with ';'
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { ./lower.sh d1.txt r1.txt ; ./lower.sh d1.txt r2.txt ; };

real    0m8.033s
user    0m0.004s
sys     0m0.019s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ # Background, in parallel: commands end with '&' and 'wait' necessary
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { ./lower.sh d2.txt r1.txt & ./lower.sh d2.txt r2.txt & wait ; };
[1] 49722
[2] 49723
[1]-  Done                  ./lower.sh d2.txt r1.txt
[2]+  Done                  ./lower.sh d2.txt r2.txt

real    0m4.011s
user    0m0.004s
sys     0m0.005s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $
```

## 4.2. Job control & Parallel processes in Bash

Run the program twice and measure the time it takes



```
dfr@hmem00 — bash
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ # Foreground: commands end with ';'
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { ./lower.sh d1.txt r1.txt ; ./lower.sh d1.txt r2.txt ; };

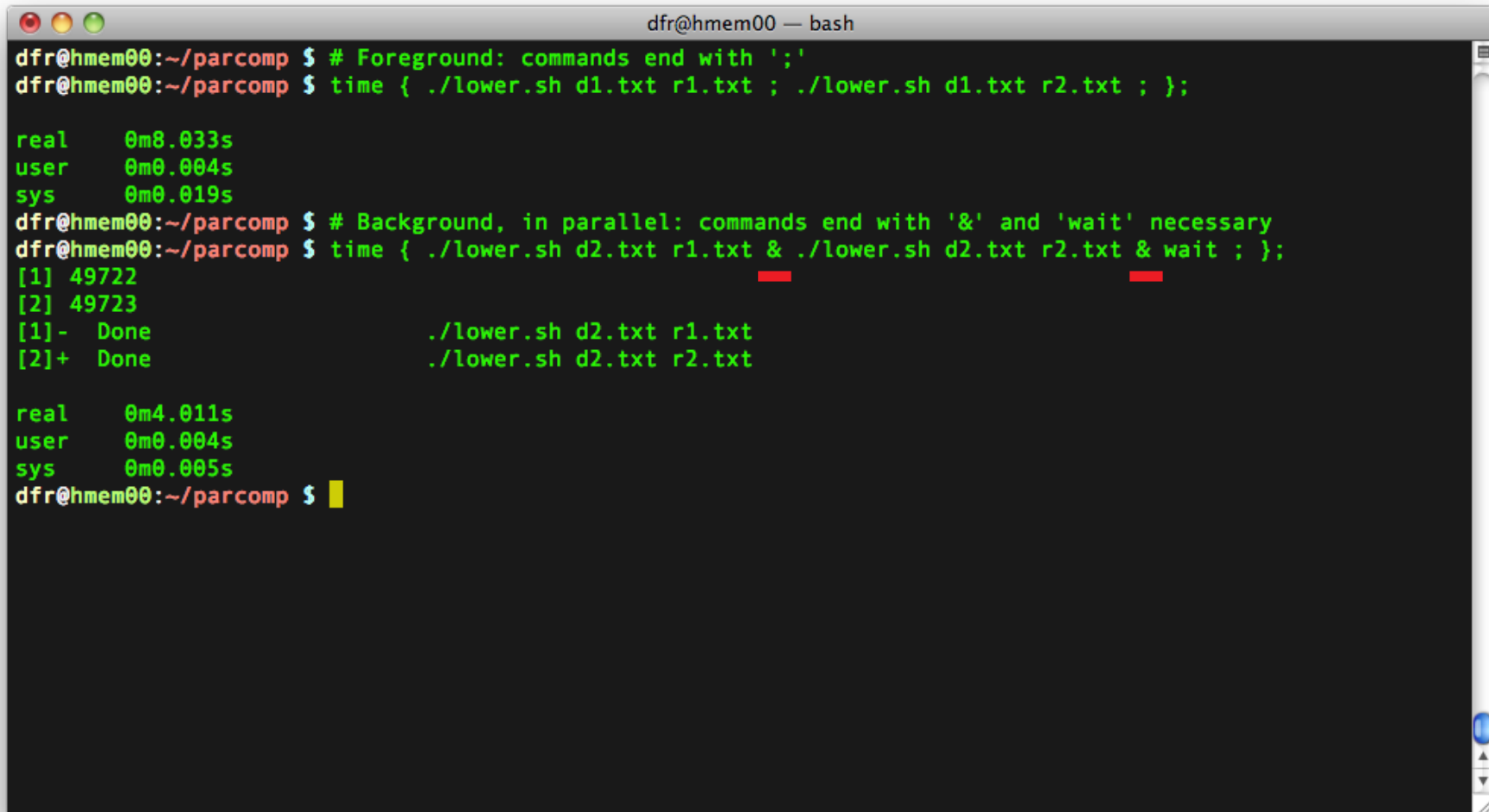
real    0m8.033s
user    0m0.004s
sys     0m0.019s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ # Background, in parallel: commands end with '&' and 'wait' necessary
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { ./lower.sh d2.txt r1.txt & ./lower.sh d2.txt r2.txt & wait ; };
[1] 49722
[2] 49723
[1]-  Done                  ./lower.sh d2.txt r1.txt
[2]+  Done                  ./lower.sh d2.txt r2.txt

real    0m4.011s
user    0m0.004s
sys     0m0.005s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $
```



## 4.2. Job control & Parallel processes in Bash

Run the program twice “in the background” and measure the time



```
dfr@hmem00 — bash
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ # Foreground: commands end with ';'
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { ./lower.sh d1.txt r1.txt ; ./lower.sh d1.txt r2.txt ; };

real    0m8.033s
user    0m0.004s
sys     0m0.019s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ # Background, in parallel: commands end with '&' and 'wait' necessary
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { ./lower.sh d2.txt r1.txt & ./lower.sh d2.txt r2.txt & wait ; };
[1] 49722
[2] 49723
[1]-  Done                  ./lower.sh d2.txt r1.txt
[2]+  Done                  ./lower.sh d2.txt r2.txt

real    0m4.011s
user    0m0.004s
sys     0m0.005s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $
```

## 4.2. Job control & Parallel processes in Bash

Parallel for loop in Bash:

```
for i in {1..10}; do  
    command1  
    command2  
done
```

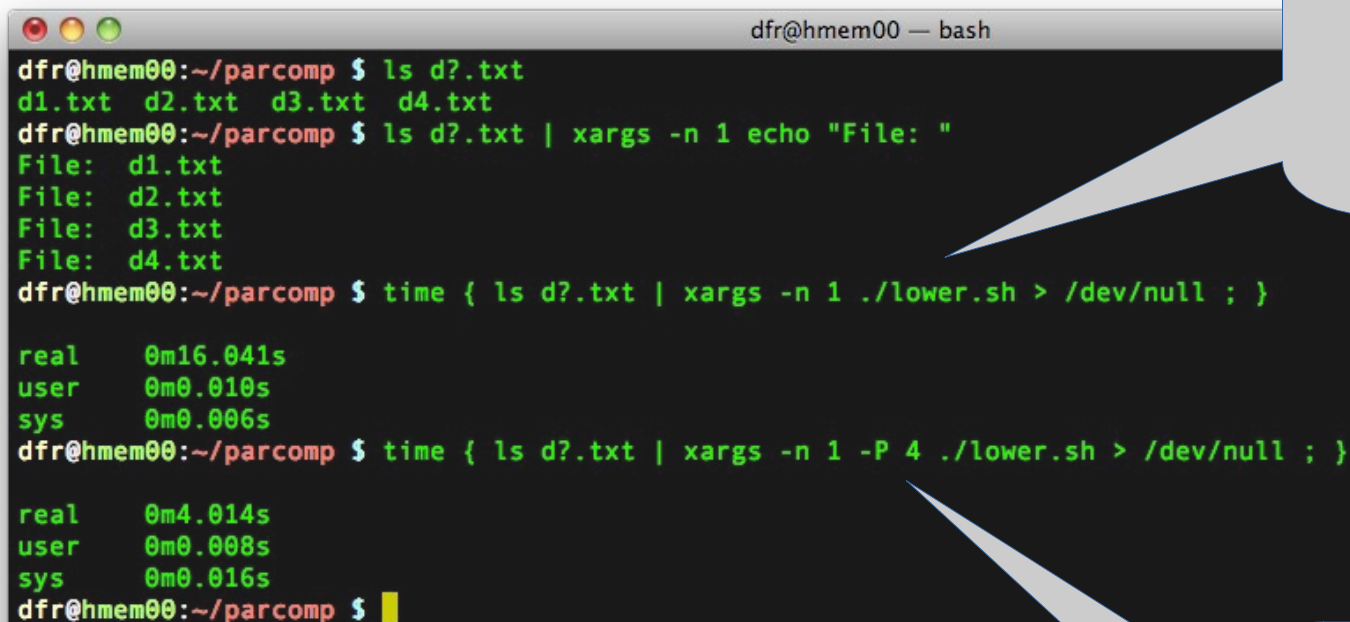
```
for i in {1..10}; do  
    (  
        command1  
        command2  
    ) &  
done; wait
```

(...) & : creates a sub-shell with all commands in the bloc and start it in the background  
wait : *barrier* to synchronize all sub-shells

## 4.3. Basic tools

### 4.3.1. One program and many files

The xargs command distributes data from stdin to program

A terminal window titled 'dfr@hmem00 — bash' showing a series of commands and their outputs. The commands use 'ls' to list files and 'xargs' to execute a program on each file. The first 'xargs' command uses 'echo' to show the files being processed. The second 'xargs' command uses './lower.sh' and is timed. The third 'xargs' command uses './lower.sh' with the '-P 4' option for parallelism and is also timed. The terminal output shows the files being processed and the execution time for each command.

```
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ ls d?.txt
d1.txt d2.txt d3.txt d4.txt
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ ls d?.txt | xargs -n 1 echo "File: "
File: d1.txt
File: d2.txt
File: d3.txt
File: d4.txt
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { ls d?.txt | xargs -n 1 ./lower.sh > /dev/null ; }

real    0m16.041s
user    0m0.010s
sys     0m0.006s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { ls d?.txt | xargs -n 1 -P 4 ./lower.sh > /dev/null ; }

real    0m4.014s
user    0m0.008s
sys     0m0.016s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $
```

Equivalent to  
./lower.sh d1.txt ;  
./lower.sh d2.txt ;  
./lower.sh d3.txt ;  
./lower.sh d3.txt ;

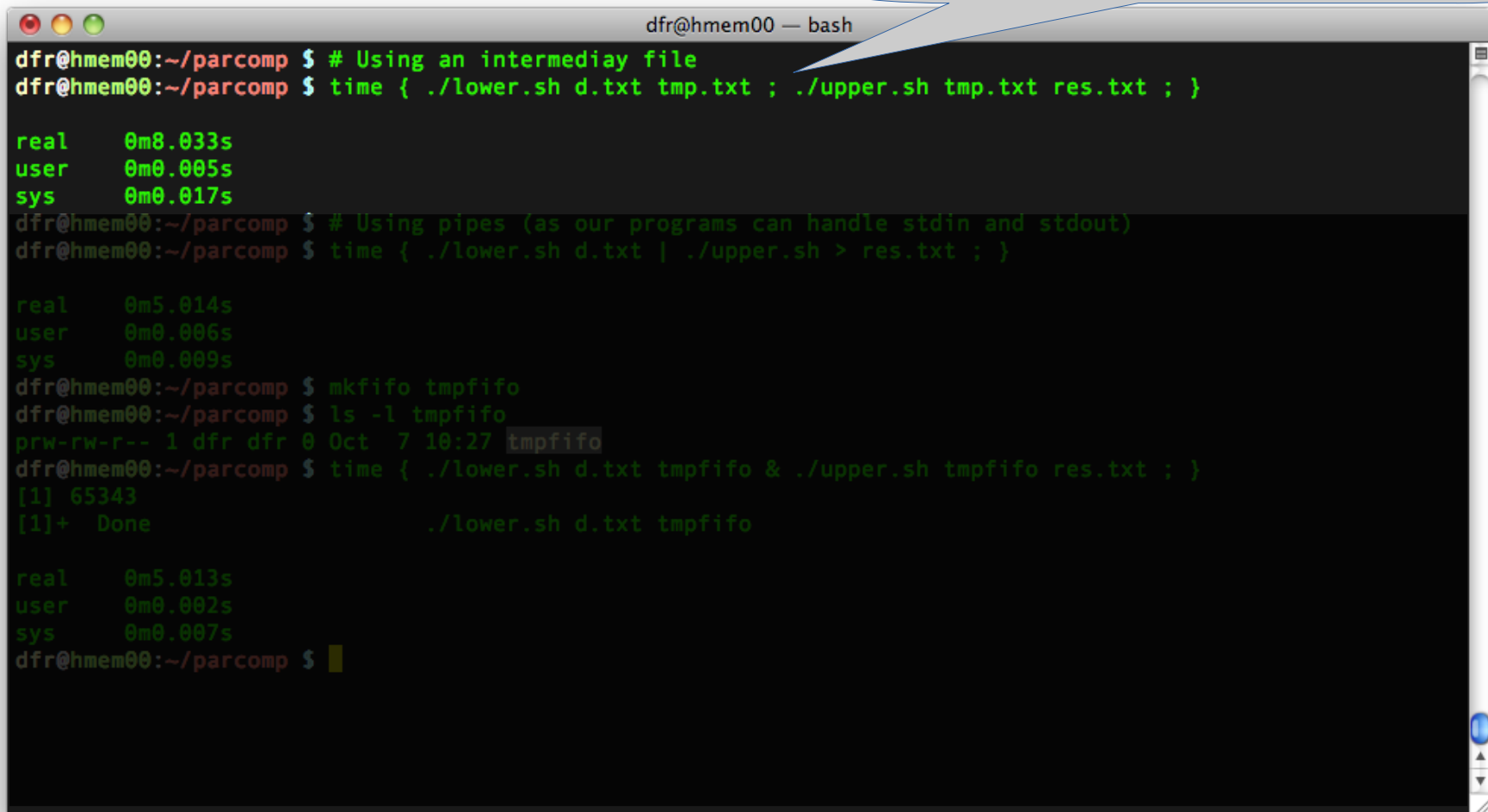
Equivalent to  
./lower.sh d1.txt &  
./lower.sh d2.txt &  
./lower.sh d3.txt &  
./lower.sh d3.txt &  
wait

## 4.3. Basic tools

### 4.3.2. Several programs and one file

Using UNIX pipes for pipelining operations

./upper.sh waits for ./lower.sh to finish  
Note the intermediate file



```
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ # Using an intermediary file
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { ./lower.sh d.txt tmp.txt ; ./upper.sh tmp.txt res.txt ; }

real    0m8.033s
user    0m0.005s
sys     0m0.017s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ # Using pipes (as our programs can handle stdin and stdout)
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { ./lower.sh d.txt | ./upper.sh > res.txt ; }

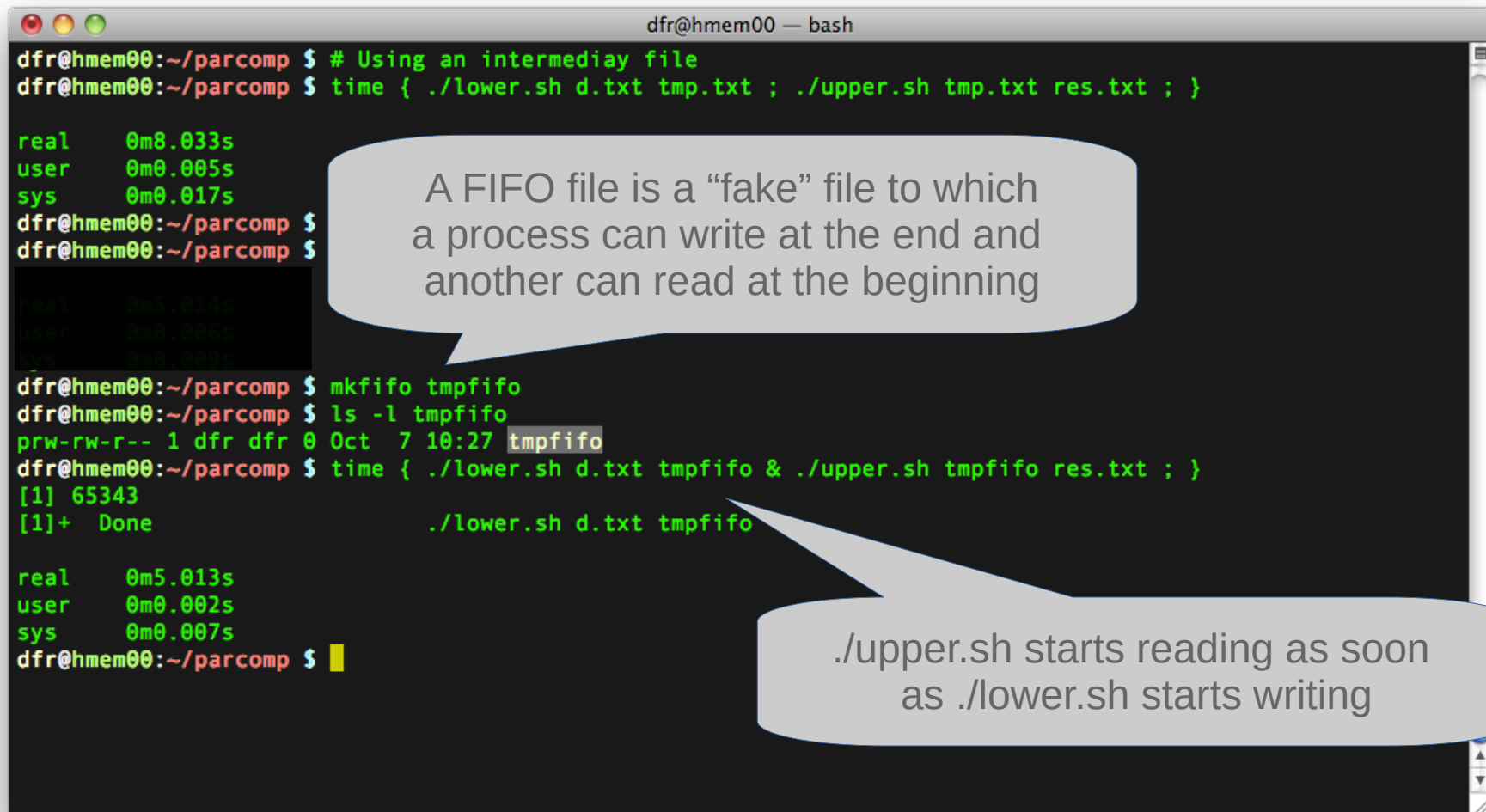
real    0m5.014s
user    0m0.006s
sys     0m0.009s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ mkfifo tmpfifo
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ ls -l tmpfifo
prw-rw-r-- 1 dfr dfr 0 Oct  7 10:27 tmpfifo
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { ./lower.sh d.txt tmpfifo & ./upper.sh tmpfifo res.txt ; }
[1] 65343
[1]+  Done                  ./lower.sh d.txt tmpfifo

real    0m5.013s
user    0m0.002s
sys     0m0.007s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $
```

## 4.3. Basic tools

### 4.3.2. Several programs and one file

Using UNIX fifos for pipelining operations



A terminal window titled "dfr@hmem00 — bash" showing a sequence of commands and their outputs. The commands demonstrate the use of UNIX fifos for pipelining operations. The first part shows a command being timed, followed by a breakdown of real, user, and system time. The second part shows the creation of a fifo file named "tmpfifo", its permissions, and the execution of two shell scripts in parallel, connected by the fifo. The third part shows the timing of the parallel execution. Two callout boxes provide additional context: one explains that a FIFO file is a "fake" file for inter-process communication, and the other notes that the upper script starts reading as soon as the lower script starts writing.

```
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ # Using an intermediary file
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { ./lower.sh d.txt tmp.txt ; ./upper.sh tmp.txt res.txt ; }

real    0m8.033s
user    0m0.005s
sys     0m0.017s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $

real    0m5.014s
user    0m0.006s
sys     0m0.009s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ mkfifo tmpfifo
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ ls -l tmpfifo
prw-rw-r-- 1 dfr dfr 0 Oct  7 10:27 tmpfifo
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { ./lower.sh d.txt tmpfifo & ./upper.sh tmpfifo res.txt ; }
[1] 65343
[1]+  Done                  ./lower.sh d.txt tmpfifo

real    0m5.013s
user    0m0.002s
sys     0m0.007s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $
```

A FIFO file is a “fake” file to which a process can write at the end and another can read at the beginning

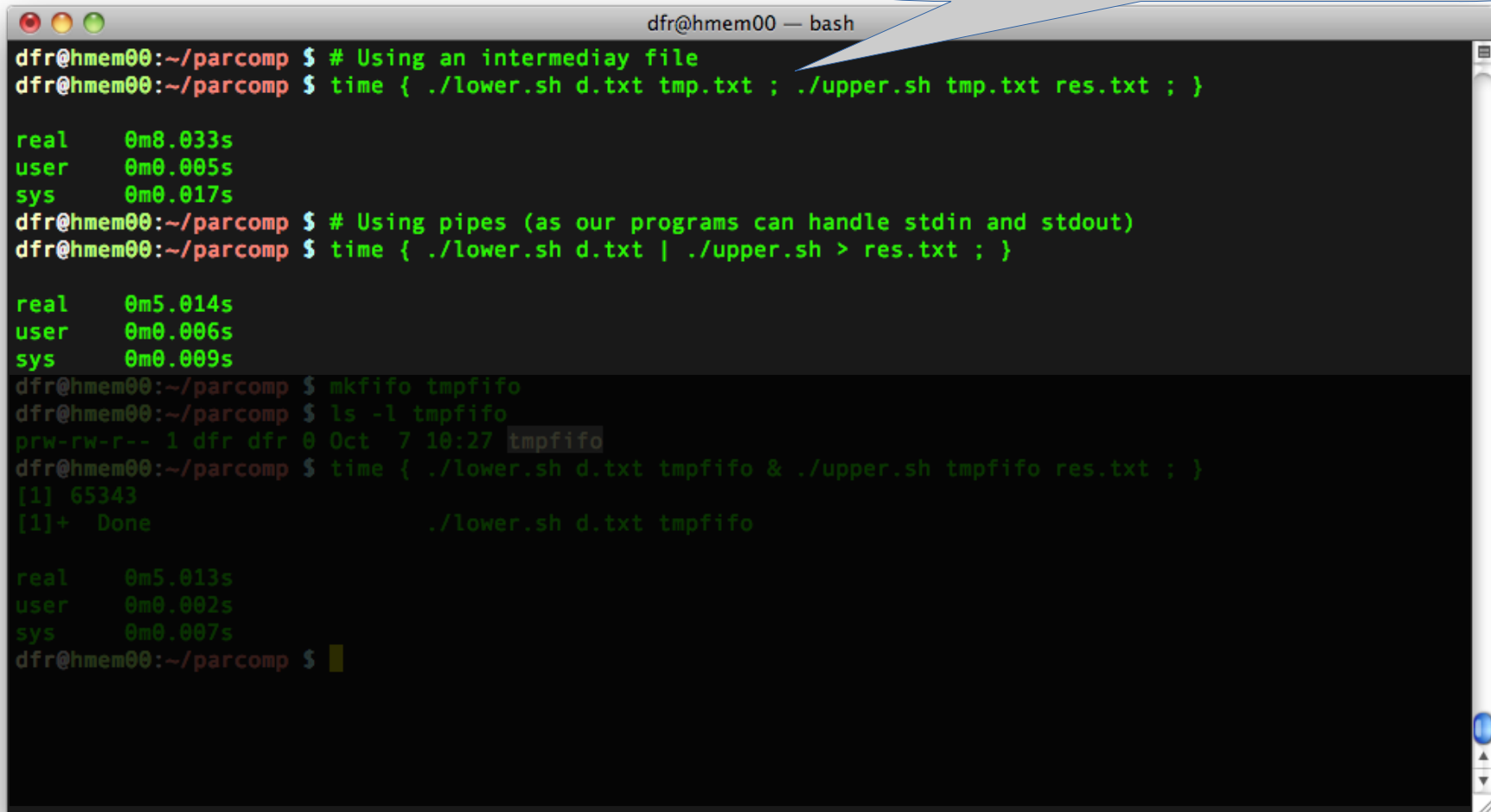
./upper.sh starts reading as soon as ./lower.sh starts writing

## 4.3. Basic tools

### 4.3.2. Several programs and one file

Using UNIX pipes for pipelining operations

./upper.sh waits for ./lower.sh to finish  
Note the intermediate file



```
dfr@hmem00 — bash
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ # Using an intermediary file
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { ./lower.sh d.txt tmp.txt ; ./upper.sh tmp.txt res.txt ; }

real    0m8.033s
user    0m0.005s
sys     0m0.017s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ # Using pipes (as our programs can handle stdin and stdout)
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { ./lower.sh d.txt | ./upper.sh > res.txt ; }

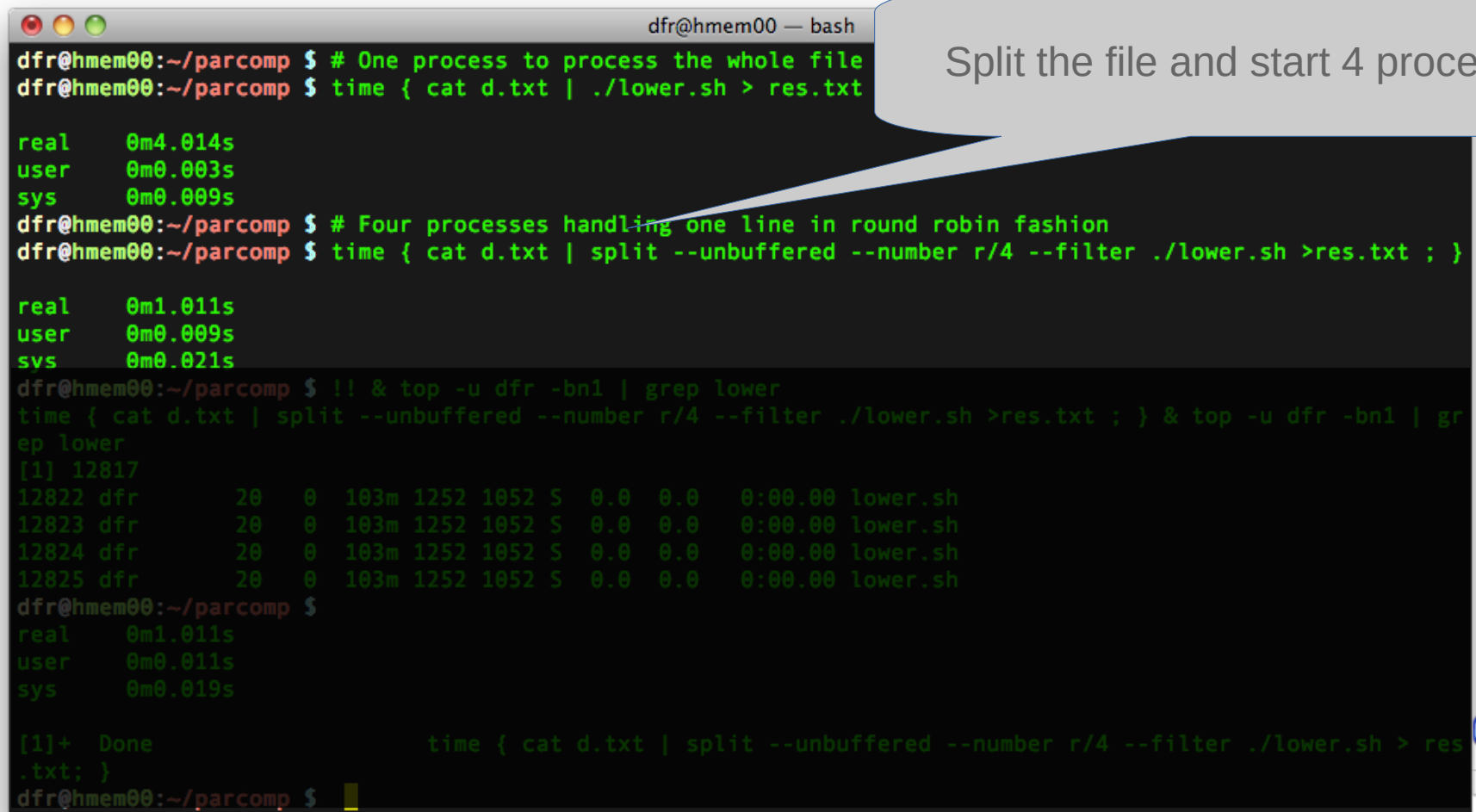
real    0m5.014s
user    0m0.006s
sys     0m0.009s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ mkfifo tmpfifo
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ ls -l tmpfifo
prw-rw-r-- 1 dfr dfr 0 Oct  7 10:27 tmpfifo
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { ./lower.sh d.txt tmpfifo & ./upper.sh tmpfifo res.txt ; }
[1] 65343
[1]+  Done                  ./lower.sh d.txt tmpfifo

real    0m5.013s
user    0m0.002s
sys     0m0.007s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $
```

## 4.3. Basic tools

### 4.3.3. One program and one large file

The split command distributes data from stdin to program



A terminal window titled 'dfr@hmem00 — bash' showing the execution of a program on a large file. The user first runs a single process to process the whole file, then runs four processes handling one line in round robin fashion. The terminal output shows the execution time for both cases, with the parallel execution being significantly faster. A speech bubble points to the 'split' command in the second command.

```
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ # One process to process the whole file
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { cat d.txt | ./lower.sh > res.txt

real    0m4.014s
user    0m0.003s
sys     0m0.009s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ # Four processes handling one line in round robin fashion
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time { cat d.txt | split --unbuffered --number r/4 --filter ./lower.sh >res.txt ; }

real    0m1.011s
user    0m0.009s
sys     0m0.021s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ !! & top -u dfr -bn1 | grep lower
time { cat d.txt | split --unbuffered --number r/4 --filter ./lower.sh >res.txt ; } & top -u dfr -bn1 | gr
ep lower
[1] 12817
12822 dfr      20   0  103m 1252 1052 S   0.0  0.0   0:00.00 lower.sh
12823 dfr      20   0  103m 1252 1052 S   0.0  0.0   0:00.00 lower.sh
12824 dfr      20   0  103m 1252 1052 S   0.0  0.0   0:00.00 lower.sh
12825 dfr      20   0  103m 1252 1052 S   0.0  0.0   0:00.00 lower.sh
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $
real    0m1.011s
user    0m0.011s
sys     0m0.019s

[1]+  Done                  time { cat d.txt | split --unbuffered --number r/4 --filter ./lower.sh > res
.txt; }
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $
```

Split the file and start 4 processes

Need recent version of Coreutils/8.22-goolf-1.4.10

### 4.3. Basic tools

#### 4.3.4. Several programs and many files

A Makefile describes dependencies and is executed with 'make'

The screenshot shows a terminal window with a dark background. At the top, the title bar reads "dfr@hmem00 — bash". The terminal content is a Makefile:

```
# Sample Makefile to process each file with
# lower.sh then upper.sh
#
all: d1.res d2.res d3.res d4.res

# Build intermediary files
%.tmp: %.txt
    ./lower.sh $< $@

# Build final result
%.res: %.tmp
    ./upper.sh $< $@
```

Below the Makefile, there are two callout boxes with arrows pointing to specific rules:

- The first callout box points to the rule `%.tmp: %.txt` and contains the text: "This means: build a .tmp file from a similarly-named .txt file using the ./lower program".
- The second callout box points to the rule `%.res: %.tmp` and contains the text: "This means: build a .res file from a similarly-named .tmp file using the ./upper.sh program".

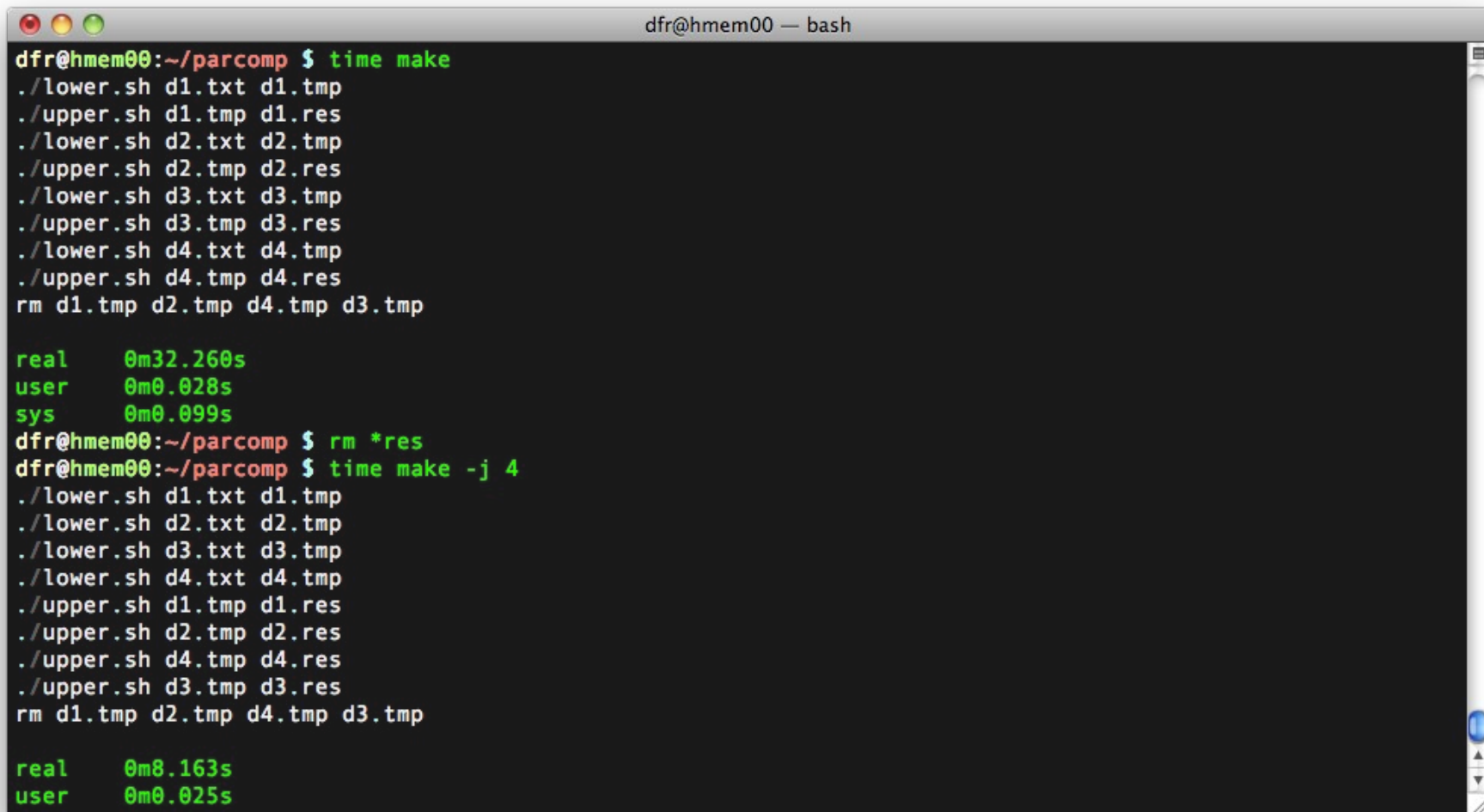
At the bottom of the terminal window, the status bar shows: "Makefile" 14L, 219C written. On the right side, there are two green status indicators: "14,0-1" and "All".



## 4.3. Basic tools

### 4.3.4. Several programs and many files

The 'make' command can operate in parallel



```
dfr@hmem00 — bash
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time make
./lower.sh d1.txt d1.tmp
./upper.sh d1.tmp d1.res
./lower.sh d2.txt d2.tmp
./upper.sh d2.tmp d2.res
./lower.sh d3.txt d3.tmp
./upper.sh d3.tmp d3.res
./lower.sh d4.txt d4.tmp
./upper.sh d4.tmp d4.res
rm d1.tmp d2.tmp d4.tmp d3.tmp

real    0m32.260s
user    0m0.028s
sys     0m0.099s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ rm *res
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time make -j 4
./lower.sh d1.txt d1.tmp
./lower.sh d2.txt d2.tmp
./lower.sh d3.txt d3.tmp
./lower.sh d4.txt d4.tmp
./upper.sh d1.tmp d1.res
./upper.sh d2.tmp d2.res
./upper.sh d4.tmp d4.res
./upper.sh d3.tmp d3.res
rm d1.tmp d2.tmp d4.tmp d3.tmp

real    0m8.163s
user    0m0.025s
```

# Summary

- You have either
  - one very large file to process
    - with one program: `split`
    - with several programs: `fifo` (or `pipes`)
  - many files to process
    - with one program `xargs`
    - with many programs `make`

## 4.4. GNU Parallel

### GNU Parallel

GNU **parallel** is a shell tool for executing jobs in parallel using one or more computers. A job can be a single command or a small script that has to be run for each of the lines in the input. The typical input is a list of files, a list of hosts, a list of users, a list of URLs, or a list of tables. A job can also be a command that reads from a pipe. GNU **parallel** can then split the input and pipe it into commands in parallel.

If you use `xargs` and `tee` today you will find GNU **parallel** very easy to use as GNU **parallel** is written to have the same options as `xargs`. If you write loops in shell, you will find GNU **parallel** may be able to replace most of the loops and make them run faster by running several jobs in parallel.

GNU **parallel** makes sure output from the commands is the same output as you would get had you run the commands sequentially. This makes it possible to use output from GNU **parallel** as input for other programs.

For each line of input GNU **parallel** will execute *command* with the line as arguments. If no *command* is given, the line of input is executed. Several lines will be run in parallel. GNU **parallel** can often be used as a substitute for `xargs` or `cat | bash`.

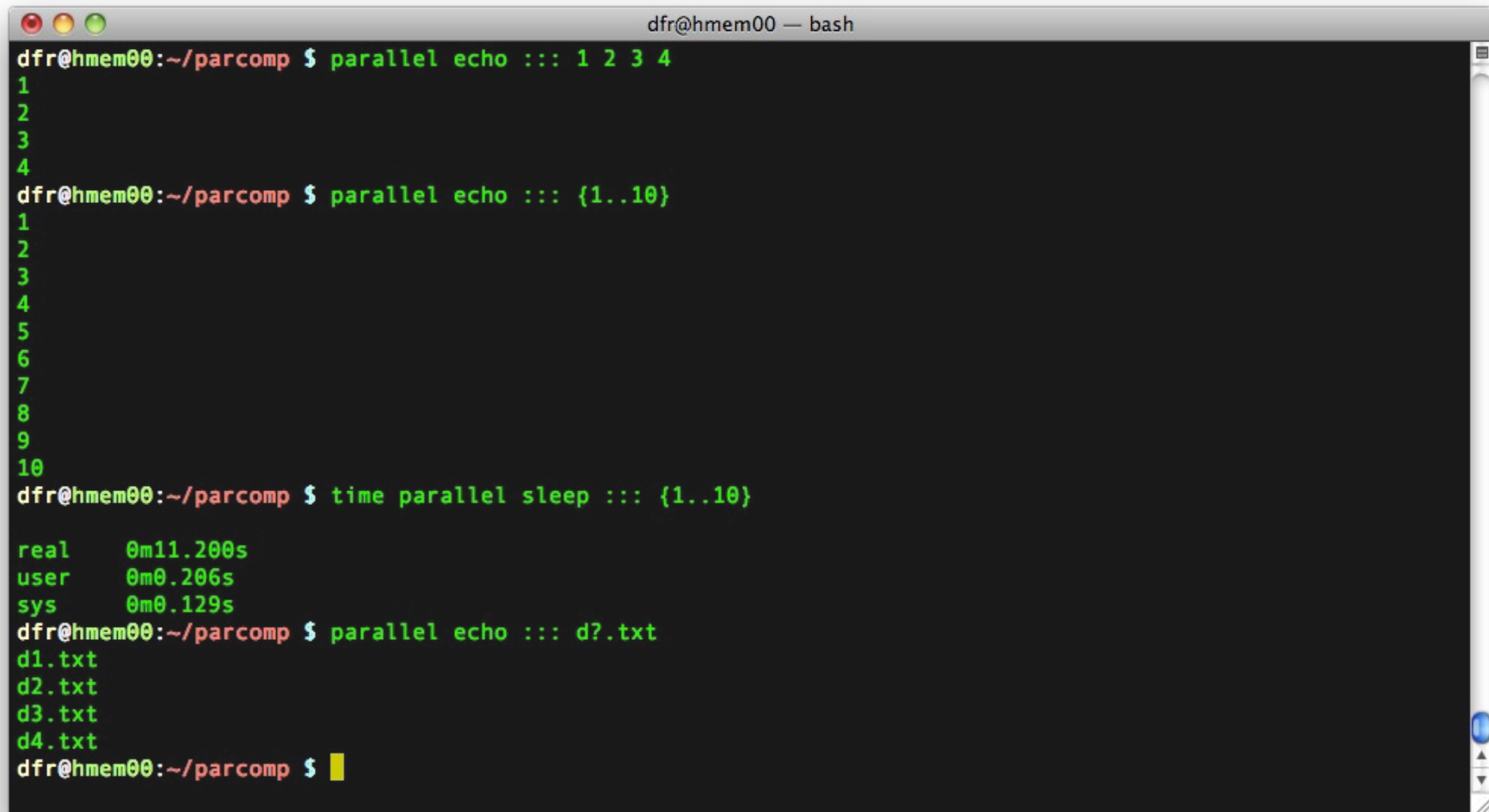


For people who live life in the parallel lane.

More complicated to use but very powerful  
Might not be available everywhere but you can install it

## 4.4. GNU Parallel

- Syntax: `parallel command ::: argument list`



```
dfr@hmem00 — bash
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ parallel echo ::: 1 2 3 4
1
2
3
4
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ parallel echo ::: {1..10}
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ time parallel sleep ::: {1..10}

real    0m11.200s
user    0m0.206s
sys     0m0.129s
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ parallel echo ::: d?.txt
d1.txt
d2.txt
d3.txt
d4.txt
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $
```

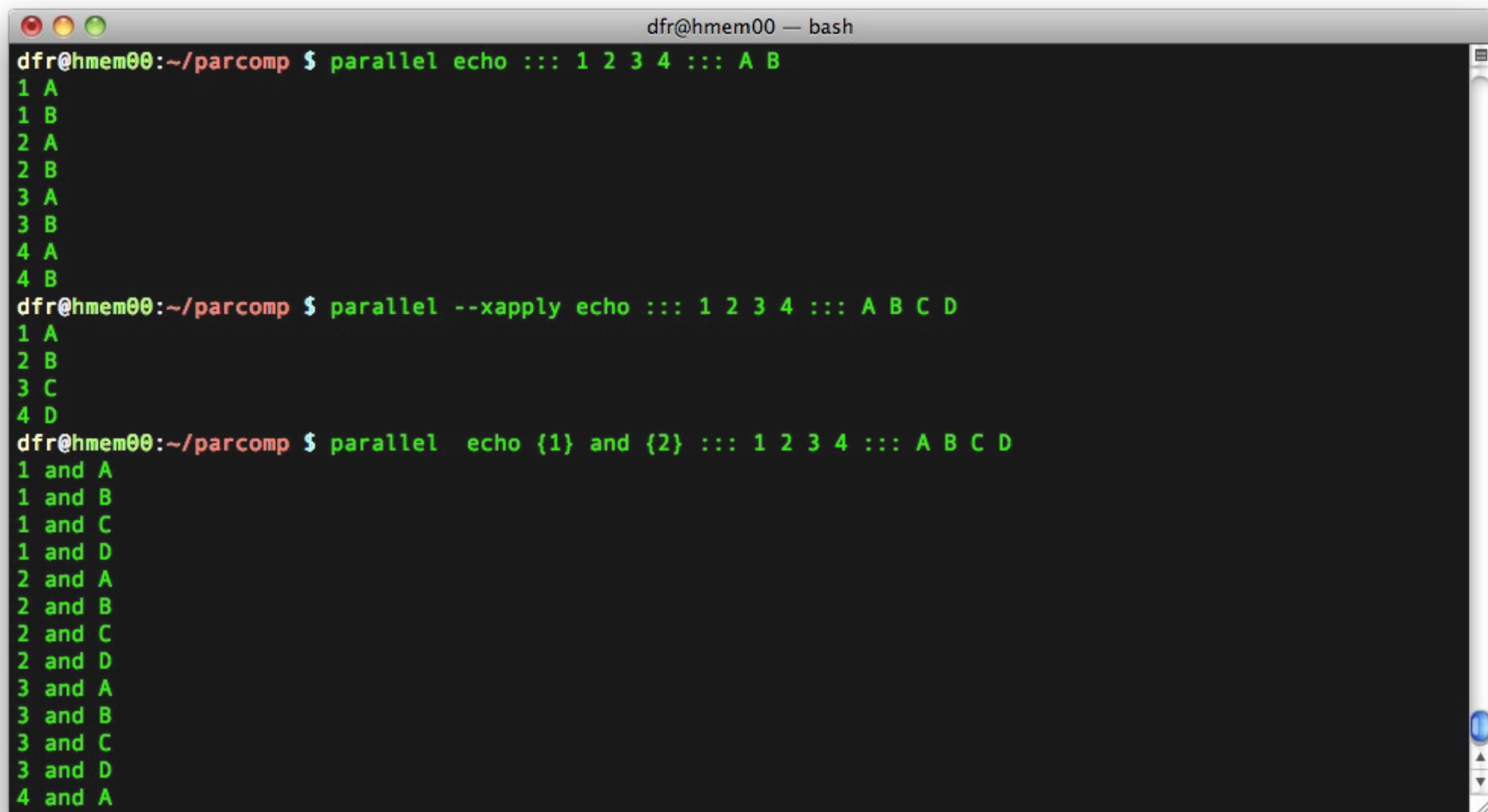
## 4.4. GNU Parallel

- Syntax: {} as argument placeholder.

```
d1.txt
d2.txt
d3.txt
d4.txt
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ parallel echo {} {}.res ::: d?.txt
d1.txt d1.res
d2.txt d2.res
d3.txt d3.res
d4.txt d4.res
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ parallel echo {} ::: ../parcomp/d?.txt
../parcomp/d1.txt
../parcomp/d2.txt
../parcomp/d3.txt
../parcomp/d4.txt
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ parallel echo {/} ::: ../parcomp/d?.txt
d1.txt
d2.txt
d3.txt
d4.txt
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $
```

## 4.4. GNU Parallel

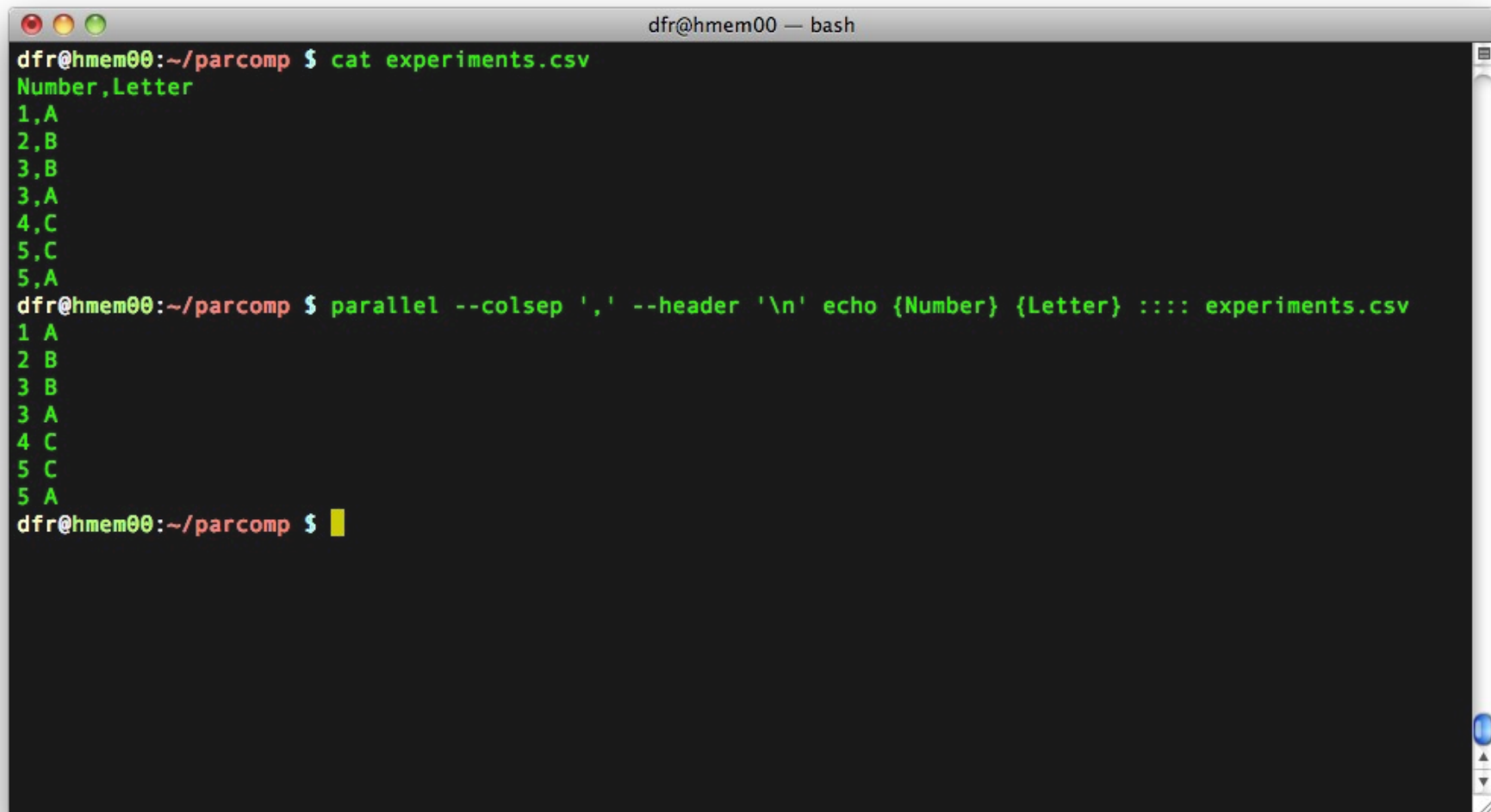
- Multiple parameters and --xapply



```
dfr@hmem00 — bash
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ parallel echo ::: 1 2 3 4 ::: A B
1 A
1 B
2 A
2 B
3 A
3 B
4 A
4 B
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ parallel --xapply echo ::: 1 2 3 4 ::: A B C D
1 A
2 B
3 C
4 D
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ parallel echo {1} and {2} ::: 1 2 3 4 ::: A B C D
1 and A
1 and B
1 and C
1 and D
2 and A
2 and B
2 and C
2 and D
3 and A
3 and B
3 and C
3 and D
4 and A
```

## 4.4. GNU Parallel

- When arguments are in a file : use ::: (4x ':')

A terminal window titled 'dfr@hmem00 — bash' showing a sequence of commands and their outputs. The first command is 'cat experiments.csv', which outputs a CSV file with 6 rows: a header 'Number,Letter' and five data rows: '1,A', '2,B', '3,B', '3,A', and '4,C'. The second command is 'parallel --colsep ',' --header '\n' echo {Number} {Letter} ::: experiments.csv', which outputs the same data as the CSV file, but with each row on a new line and the columns separated by a comma. The prompt 'dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp \$' is shown at the end of the terminal line.

```
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ cat experiments.csv
Number,Letter
1,A
2,B
3,B
3,A
4,C
5,C
5,A
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ parallel --colsep ',' --header '\n' echo {Number} {Letter} ::: experiments.csv
1 A
2 B
3 B
3 A
4 C
5 C
5 A
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $
```

## 4.4. GNU Parallel

### Interactivity

GNU **parallel** can ask the user if a command should be run using **--interactive**:

```
parallel --interactive echo ::: 1 2 3
```

Output:

```
echo 1 ?...y
echo 2 ?...n
1
echo 3 ?...y
3
```



## 4.4. GNU Parallel

### Timing

Some jobs do heavy I/O when they start. To avoid a thundering herd GNU **parallel** can delay starting new jobs. **--delay X** will make sure there is at least X seconds between each start:

```
parallel --delay 2.5 echo Starting {} \; date ::: 1 2 3
```

Output:

```
Starting 1
Thu Aug 15 16:24:33 CEST 2013
Starting 2
Thu Aug 15 16:24:35 CEST 2013
Starting 3
Thu Aug 15 16:24:38 CEST 2013
```

## 4.4. GNU Parallel

### Progress information

Based on the runtime of completed jobs GNU **parallel** can estimate the total runtime:

```
parallel --eta sleep ::: 1 3 2 2 1 3 3 2 1
```

Output:

```
Computers / CPU cores / Max jobs to run
1:local / 2 / 2

Computer:jobs running/jobs completed/%of started jobs/
Average seconds to complete
ETA: 2s 0left 1.11avg local:0/9/100%/1.1s
```

## 4.4. GNU Parallel

With a joblog GNU **parallel** can be stopped and later pickup where it left off. It is important that the input of the completed jobs is unchanged.

```
parallel --joblog /tmp/log exit ::: 1 2 3 0
cat /tmp/log
parallel --resume --joblog /tmp/log exit ::: 1 2 3 0 0 0
cat /tmp/log
```

Output:

Seq	Host	Starttime	Runtime	Send	Receive	Exitval	Signal	Command
1	:	1376580069.544	0.008	0	0	1	0	exit 1
2	:	1376580069.552	0.009	0	0	2	0	exit 2
3	:	1376580069.560	0.012	0	0	3	0	exit 3
4	:	1376580069.571	0.005	0	0	0	0	exit 0

Seq	Host	Starttime	Runtime	Send	Receive	Exitval	Signal	Command
1	:	1376580069.544	0.008	0	0	1	0	exit 1
2	:	1376580069.552	0.009	0	0	2	0	exit 2
3	:	1376580069.560	0.012	0	0	3	0	exit 3
4	:	1376580069.571	0.005	0	0	0	0	exit 0
5	:	1376580070.028	0.009	0	0	0	0	exit 0
6	:	1376580070.038	0.007	0	0	0	0	exit 0

## 4.4. GNU Parallel

- Split a file with `--pipe`

A terminal window titled 'dfr@hmem00 — bash' showing a sequence of commands and their outputs. The first command is 'cat \*.csv', which outputs a list of pairs (Number, Letter). The second command is 'tail -n +2 \*.csv | parallel -kN1 --recend '\n' --pipe echo -n "JOB{#} : ;cat;"', which outputs the same list of pairs, each preceded by a job number (JOB1 through JOB7).

```
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ cat *.csv
Number,Letter
1,A
2,B
3,B
3,A
4,C
5,C
5,A
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $ tail -n +2 *.csv | parallel -kN1 --recend '\n' --pipe echo -n "JOB{#} : ;cat;"
JOB1 :1,A
JOB2 :2,B
JOB3 :3,B
JOB4 :3,A
JOB5 :4,C
JOB6 :5,C
JOB7 :5,A
dfr@hmem00:~/parcomp $
```

# Summary

1. General concepts, definitions, challenges
2. Hardware for parallel computing
3. Programming models
4. User tools