



# Parallel Computing with Modern C++



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Parallelism is everywhere

- Servers
- Computers
- Smartphones



# **Why Parallel Computing?**

High performance (e.g., low execution time, high throughput, low latency)

Scalability

Quality of services

Reduce the energy consumption?

- Less cost
- More sustainable

But how is it possible?



# **Why Parallel Computing?**

Power consumption reduction obtained with parallel execution compared to the sequential ones (Source [3])

	Pbzip2	Lane detection	Person recognition
Power consumption reduction (%)	- 9.43%	- 10.37%	- 7.39%

How is it possible?



# **Why Parallel Computing?**

Power consumption reduction obtained with parallel execution compared to the sequential ones





#### **Concurrent vs. Parallel**

Tasks (A) and (B) are only concurrent. The others are concurrent and parallel





Task Parallelism





Source [1]

Data parallelism



Source [1]



How do we achieve parallelism in computing applications?

We (still) need to model and program our applications to execute in parallel (in the vast majority of cases).

Software must be designed to run in parallel: "The free lunch is over." [Ref 5]

Different ways were already presented in this course.

Today we will see how to parallel computing works in modern C++ using the standard C++ threads

Requirements: Familiarity with modern C++ features and access to C++17 compiler

Why C++?



#### Why C++?

A great starting point to parallel computing



#### Why C++?

It is efficient!



Read more on Zeuch et al. Analyzing Efficient Stream Processing on Modern Hardware



# **Parallel Computing - Concurrency in C++**

C++11 standard provided support for concurrency through multithreading (Standard C++ Thread Library)

Improved support with C++17 and C++20

No major updates seen (until now) in C++23



What are threads?

- Hardware threads
- Software threads
- std::threads



What are threads?

- Hardware threads
- Software threads
- std::threads



Source: https://techlarry.github.io/OS/



What if there are created more threads than software threads or hardware threads?



#### **Standard C++ threads**

Code examples with C++ thread class Implemented with RAII

```
#include <iostream> // std::cout
                         // std::thread
#include <thread>
void foo()
 // do stuff...
void bar(int x)
 // do stuff...
int main()
 std::thread first (foo); // spawn new thread that calls foo()
  std::thread second (bar,0); // spawn new thread that calls bar(0)
  std::cout << "main, foo and bar now execute concurrently...\n";
 // synchronize threads:
  first.join();
                             // pauses until first finishes
                             // pauses until second finishes
  second.join();
  std::cout << "foo and bar completed.\n";</pre>
 return 0;
```



#### **Standard C++ threads**

Many other features <<u>https://cplusplus.com/reference/thread/thread/</u>>

- arguments
- change of ownership
- running in background
- identifying threads
- System thread interface
  - Pause threads (this\_thread::sleep\_for(time))
  - Threads priority
  - Threads affinity "pinning"



#### **Data shared between threads**

There's no problem if all shared data is read-only. But, this is not true in many cases. Modifying the shared data can cause problems.

Be careful when sharing data: problematic race conditions (the threads execution order affects the correctness) data races occur when the threads access the same memory location and one updates it. We need to serialize to guarantee consistency and defined behavior.



#### **Data shared between threads**

Protecting shared data

- Critical sections
- Mutex
- Locks
- Deadlock



#### **Data shared between threads**

Protecting shared data

- Critical sections
- Mutex
- Locks
- Deadlock

Why this topic so relevant?



### **Parallelism challenges**

Thinking in parallel Locks and mutexes

Shared mutable state

```
timed_mutex the_mutex;
void task1() {
    cout << "Task1 trying to get lock" << endl;
    the_mutex.lock();
    cout << "Task1 has lock" << endl;
    this_thread::sleep_for(500ms);
    cout << "Task1 releasing lock" << endl;
    the_mutex.unlock();
}
```



### **Parallelism challenges**

Locks and mutexes

"Locks, can't live with them, can't live without them." [Ref 1]

Why locks are so problematic?



#### **Condition variables**

From CPP reference: "A condition variable is a synchronization primitive that allows multiple threads to communicate with each other. It allows some number of threads to wait (possibly with a timeout) for notification from another thread that they may proceed. A condition variable is always associated with a mutex."



#### Condition variable example from cplusplus.com

```
#include <iostream>
#include <string>
#include <thread>
#include <mutex>
#include <condition variable>
std::mutex m;
std::condition variable cv;
std::string data;
bool ready = false;
bool processed = false;
void worker thread()
    std::unique lock lk(m);
    cv.wait(lk, []{return ready;}); // Wait until main() sends data, then we
own the lock.
    std::cout << "Worker thread is processing data\n";</pre>
    data += " after processing";
    processed = true; // Send data back to main()
    std::cout << "Worker thread signals data processing completed\n";</pre>
    lk.unlock(); //Manual unlocking is done before notifying
    cv.notify one();
```

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```
int main()
    std::thread worker(worker thread);
    data = "Example data";
        std::lock guard lk(m);
        ready = true;
        std::cout << "main() signals data ready\n";</pre>
    cv.notify one();
        std::unique lock lk(m);
        cv.wait(lk, []{return processed;});// wait for the
worker
    std::cout << "Back in main(), data = " << data << '\n';</pre>
    worker.join();
```

#### Condition variable example from cplusplus.com

```
#include <iostream>
#include <string>
#include <thread>
#include <mutex>
#include <condition variable>
std::mutex m;
std::condition variable cv;
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    cv.wait(lk, []{return ready;}); // Wait until main() sends data, then we
own the lock.
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    data += " after processing";
    processed = true; // Send data back to main()
    std::cout << "Worker thread signals data processing completed\n";</pre>
    lk.unlock(); //Manual unlocking is done before notifying
    cv.notify one();
```

OF TECHNOLOGY

```
int main()
    std::thread worker(worker thread);
   data = "Example data";
        std::lock guard lk(m);
        ready = true;
        std::cout << "main() signals data ready\n";</pre>
    cv.notify one();
        std::unique lock lk(m);
        cv.wait(lk, []{return processed;});// wait for the
worker
    std::cout << "Back in main(), data = " << data << '\n';</pre>
    worker.join();
```

main() signals data ready Worker thread is processing data Worker thread signals data processing completed Back in main(), data = Example data after processing

#### **Futures**

Facility to obtain values that are returned and to catch exceptions that are thrown by asynchronous tasks

```
#include <iostream>
#include <future>
int task() {
    std::cout << "Task started" << std::endl;</pre>
    std::cout << "Task completed" << std::endl;</pre>
    return 1;
int main() {
    //future that launches a task
    std::future<int> fut1 = std::async(std::launch::async, task);
    // Wait for the result of task
    int result = fut1.get();
    std::cout << "The result is : " << result << std::endl;</pre>
    return 0;
```



#### Futures

```
#include <iostream>
#include <future>
int task() {
    std::cout << "Task started" << std::endl;</pre>
    std::cout << "Task completed" << std::endl;</pre>
    return 1;
int main() {
    //future that launches a task
    std::future<int> fut1 = std::async(std::launch::async, task);
    // Wait for the result of task
    int result = fut1.get();
    std::cout << "The result is : " << result << std::endl;</pre>
    return 0;
```

Task 1 started Task 1 completed The result is : 1



Did you notice? What is it?

```
#include <iostream>
#include <future>
int task() {
    std::cout << "Task started" << std::endl;</pre>
    std::cout << "Task completed" << std::endl;</pre>
    return 1;
int main() {
    //future that launches a task
    std::future<int> fut1 = std::async(std::launch::async, task);
    // Wait for the result of task
    int result = fut1.get();
    std::cout << "The result is : " << result << std::endl;</pre>
    return 0;
```

Task 1 started Task 1 completed The result is : 1



#### **Standard C++ Tasks**

AKA Asynchronous programming

Contrary of blocking and waiting, tasks can run in background

Threads vs. tasks



#### **Promises**

std::promise provides means to set a value that can later be read with a std::future object: the waiting thread could block on the future, while the thread providing the data could use the promise to set the associated value and make the future ready [6].

promise: producer/writer.

future: consumer/reader



```
// promise example from <https://cplusplus.com/reference/future/promise/>
#include <iostream>
                    // std::cout
#include <functional> // std::ref
#include <thread> // std::thread
#include <future> // std::promise, std::future
void print int (std::future<int>& fut) {
 int x = fut.get();
 std::cout << "value: " << x << '\n';</pre>
int main ()
 std::promise<int> prom;
                                             // create promise
 std::future<int> fut = prom.get future();
                                             // engagement with future
 std::thread th1 (print int, std::ref(fut));
                                             // send future to new thread
 prom.set value (10);
                                             // fulfill promise
                                             // (synchronizes with getting the future)
 th1.join();
 return 0;
```



```
// promise example from <https://cplusplus.com/reference/future/promise/>
#include <iostream>
                      // std::cout
#include <functional> // std::ref
#include <thread> // std::thread
#include <future> // std::promise, std::future
void print int (std::future<int>& fut) {
  int x = fut.get();
  std::cout << "value: " << x << '\n';</pre>
int main ()
  std::promise<int> prom;
                                   // create promise
  std::future<int> fut = prom.get future(); // engagement with future
  std::thread th1 (print_int, std::ref(fut)); // send future to new thread
                                             // fulfill promise
  prom.set value (10);
                                                                                            value: 10
                                             // (synchronizes with getting the future)
  th1.join();
```

return 0;



A problem with futures:

Data race and undefined behavior when accessing a std::future object from multiple threads (without additional synchronization)



Solution: shared\_future

Single producer multiple consumers





### **Communication between threads**

Thread safe concurrent data structures, such as:

- Stacks
- Queues
- Lists

(Potentially) Safe and (potentially) efficient threads communication



#### **Communication between threads**

Queue: represented as a single-linked list [6]



Source [6]


Thread safe queues

std::queue FIFO:

- New data is pushed to end and the oldest data is popped at the "beginning"
- front() return a reference to the value at the "beginning"
- pop() no return, removes the element at the "beginning" (C++ constraint for exception safety)

std::queue is not suitable to be used as a concurrent queue:

- race conditions in concurrent function call
- undefined behaviours



# **C++ concurrent data structures**

Needed to share data and synchronize messages

A queue between producers and consumer threads

But, C++ does not provide a standard concurrent queue (why?)



Thread safe concurrent queues

Simplest solution: Use a wrapper class that protects shared data with member instances:

- std::queue
- std::mutex



Thread safe concurrent queues

Simplest solution: Use a wrapper class that protects shared data with member instances:

- std::queue
- std::mutex

Locking a mutex before calling a std::queue member function, then unlocks.

Only one thread per time can access a given queue member function.



### Thread safe concurrent queues

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```
template <class T>
class threadSafeQueue {
   std::mutex m;
   std::queue<T> q;
   std::condition variable cv;
public:
   threadSafeQueue() = default;
   void push(T value) {
       std::lock guard<std::mutex> lg(m);
       q.push(value);
       cv.notify one();
   void pop(T& value) {
       std::unique lock<std::mutex> lg(m);
       cv.wait(lg, [this] {return !q.empty();});
       value = q.front();
       q.pop();
```



Code example from [7] Representation from [8]

Using the thread safe concurrent queues. What is the output? Is it safe?

```
threadSafeQueue<int> myQueue;
void consumer() {
   int data;
   std::cout << "The consumer is running" << std::endl;</pre>
  myQueue.pop(data);
                                                               // Get a value from the queue
   std::cout << "Consumer received: " << data << std::endl;</pre>
void producer() {
   std::cout << "The producer is running..." << std::endl;</pre>
                                                      // Push the data into the queue
  myQueue.push(10);
   std::cout << "The producer has pushed some data" << std::endl;</pre>
int main() {
   auto cons = async(std::launch::async, consumer); //starting consumer
   auto prod = async(std::launch::async, producer); //starting producer
   cons.wait();
   prod.wait();
```



Using the thread safe concurrent queues. What is the output? Is it safe?

```
threadSafeQueue<int> myQueue;
void consumer() {
   int data;
   std::cout << "The consumer is running" << std::endl;</pre>
                                                               // Get a value from the queue
   myQueue.pop(data);
   std::cout << "Consumer received: " << data << std::endl;</pre>
void producer() {
   std::cout << "The producer is running..." << std::endl;</pre>
   myQueue.push(10);
                                                      // Push the data into the queue
   std::cout << "The producer has pushed some data" << std::endl;</pre>
int main() {
   auto cons = async(std::launch::async, consumer); //starting consumer
   auto prod = async(std::launch::async, producer); //starting producer
   cons.wait();
   prod.wait();
```

The consumer is running The producer is running... The producer has pushed some data Consumer received: 10 The producer is running... The consumer is runningThe producer has pushed some data

Consumer received: 10



# **Standard C++ Parallelism**

Is it enough to achieve scalability?

Not for the majority of use-cases!

Why?



# **C++ Thread pools**

Scalability

Use properly the CPU resources

Manage the overhead of threads creation



# **C++ Thread pools**

```
#include <iostream>
#include <chrono>
#include <functional>
#include "concurrentQueue.h"
using namespace std;
// Example of a computation
void processTask(int taskId) {
  cout << "Processing task " << taskId << " in thread " << this thread::get id() << endl;</pre>
  this thread::sleep for (chrono::seconds(1)); // task processing
int main() {
  const int numTasks = 10;
  const int numThreads = 3 ;//std::thread::hardware concurrency();
  cout << "Executing " << numTasks << " tasks in a thread pool of: " << numThreads << " threads" << endl;
  ThreadPool threadPool (numThreads) ;
  for (int i = 0; i < numTasks; ++i) {</pre>
     threadPool.enqueue(processTask, i);
  return 0;
```



# **Concurrent queue: concurrentQueue.h**

```
class ThreadPool {
  public:
       ThreadPool(size t num threads) {
           for (size t i = 0; i < num threads; ++i) {</pre>
               threads .emplace back([this] {
                   while (true) {
                       std::function<void()> task;
                           std::unique lock<std::mutex> lock(mutex );
                           condition .wait(lock, [this] {
                                return stop || !tasks .empty();
                           if (stop && tasks .empty()) {
                                return;
                           task = std::move(tasks .front());
                           tasks .pop();
                       task();
               });
```

```
~ThreadPool() {
```

```
std::unique lock<std::mutex> lock(mutex );
               stop = true;
           condition .notify all();
           for (std::thread& thread : threads ) {
               thread.join();
       template<typename F, typename... Args>
       auto enqueue (F&& f, Args&&... args) -> std::future<typename
std::result of<F(Args...)>::type> {
           using return type = typename std::result of <F(Args...)>::type;
           auto task = std::make shared<std::packaged task<return type()>>(
                   std::bind(std::forward<F>(f), std::forward<Arqs>(arqs)...)
           );
           std::future<return type> result = task->get future();
               std::unique lock<std::mutex> lock(mutex );
               tasks .emplace([task]() {
                   (*task)();
           condition .notify one();
           return result;
```

```
private:
```

```
std::vector<std::thread> threads_;
std::queue<std::function<void()>> tasks_;
std::mutex mutex_;
std::condition_variable condition_;
bool stop = false;
```

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## **C++ Thread pools**

```
#include <iostream>
#include <chrono>
#include <functional>
#include "concurrentQueue.h"
using namespace std;
// Example of a computation
void processTask(int taskId) {
  cout << "Processing task " << taskId << " in thread " << this thread::get id() << endl;</pre>
  this thread::sleep for (chrono::seconds(1)); // task processing
int main() {
  const int numTasks = 10:
  const int numThreads = 3 ;//std::thread::hardware concurrency();
  cout << "Executing " << numTasks << " tasks in a thread pool of: " << numThreads << " threads" << endl;
  ThreadPool threadPool (numThreads) ;
  for (int i = 0; i < numTasks; ++i) {</pre>
     threadPool.enqueue(processTask, i);
  return 0;
```

Executing 10 tasks in a thread pool of: 3 threads Processing task 0 in thread 140446390413056 Processing task 1 in thread 140446373627648 Processing task 2 in thread 140446382020352 Processing task 3 in thread 140446373627648 Processing task 4 in thread 140446390413056 Processing task 5 in thread 140446382020352 Processing task 6 in thread 140446373627648 Processing task 7 in thread 140446373627648 Processing task 7 in thread 140446373627648 Processing task 7 in thread 140446373627648 Processing task 9 in thread 140446373627648



### **Practical example**

#### Parallelize the prime number calculation with C++ threads

```
// Function that checks if a number is prime
bool isPrime(int num) {
    if (num <= 1)
        return false;
    for (int i = 2; i < num; ++i) {
        if (num % i == 0)
            return false;
    }
    return true;
}</pre>
```



# **Practical example**

### Naive thread pool with fixed chunks (AKA static assignment)

Very low runtime overhead

Works very well when the workload is fairly divided between the worker threads (balanced workload)



Source [6]



### **Practical example**

```
int main(int argc, char *argv[]){
                                       int interval=0, threadPoolSize=0;
                                       /* interval and threadPoolSize are argos code here and removed for visual clarity */
                                       const int rangeStart = 1;
                                       const int rangeEnd = interval;
                                       std::vector<std::thread> threads;
                                       std::vector<int> threadResults(threadPoolSize, 0);
                                       int chunkSize = (rangeEnd - rangeStart + 1) / threadPoolSize;
                                       int remaining = (rangeEnd - rangeStart + 1) % threadPoolSize;
                                       int start = rangeStart;
                                       for (int i = 0; i < threadPoolSize; ++i) {</pre>
                                           int end = start + chunkSize - 1;
                                           if (i < remaining)</pre>
                                               ++end;
                                           threads.emplace back([start, end, i, &threadResults]() {
                                               threadResults[i] = countPrimesInRange(start, end);
                                           start = end + 1;
                                       for (auto& thread : threads) {
                                           thread.join();
                                       int totalPrimes = 0;
                                       for (int result : threadResults) {
                                           totalPrimes += result;
                                       /* Here we calculate the exec time */
                                       return 0;
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```



How can the performance be further improved?



What about using a concurrent queue?





## Parallel prime numbers with a concurrent queue

```
#include <iostream>
#include <vector>
#include <chrono>
#include "concurrentQueue.h"
int main(int argc, char *argv[])
-{
   /* interval and threadPoolSize are argos code here and removed for visual clarity */
   ThreadPool pool(threadPoolSize);
   std::vector<std::future<bool>> results;
   for (int i = 0; i < interval; ++i) {
       results.emplace back(pool.enqueue([](int value) {
           if (value <= 1)</pre>
           return false;
           // Check from 2 to n-1
           for (int i = 2; i < value; i++) {</pre>
           if (value % i == 0)
               return false;
           return true;
       }, i));
   int primerCount = 0;
   for (auto& result : results) {
       bool isPrime = result.get();
       if (isPrime)
          primerCount++;
   /* Here we calculate the exec time */
   return 0:
```

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# Parallel prime numbers with a concurrent queue

What performance can we expect?



### Evaluation in a machine with 6 cores and 12 Hyperthreads

Why this performance?



What if we run in a more powerful machine?



### **Evaluation in a machine with 8 cores and 16 Hyperthreads**

Why this performance?

Execution Time of a milion prime numbers calculation





What if we increase the workload?



### **Evaluation in a machine with 8 cores and 16 Hyperthreads**

Why this performance?

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Execution Time of two million prime numbers calculation

Adriano Vogel and Alois Zoitl. Parallel Computing with Modern C++

# **C++ concurrent data structures**

Lock-free concurrent data structures?

#### A data structure where more than one thread can access the data structure concurrently

"a lock-free queue might allow one thread to push and one to pop but break if two threads try to push new items at the same time"

"A wait-free data structure is a lock-free data structure with the additional property that every thread accessing the data structure can complete its operation within a bounded number of steps, regardless of the behavior of other threads"

"Writing wait-free data structures correctly is extremely hard"

memory ordering constraints, atomic operations, making changes visible to other threads in a exact order.

Quotes from Williams [6]



### Lock-Free single producer single consumer (SPSC) Queues



Read more about FastFlow in: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-32820-6\_65



### Lock-Free single producer single consumer (SPSC) Queues





Adriano Vogel and Alois Zoitl. Parallel Computing with Modern C++

TBB-Latency ----FastFlow-Latency ----

TBB-Throughput FastFlow-Throughput

### Lock-Free single producer single consumer (SPSC) Queues





# Lock-free concurrent data structures

Very strong reasons are needed to write one. The benefits have to outweighs the costs:

#### - Advantages

Every thread can progress no matter the status of others;

Robustness: if a thread fails only its data is lost

#### - Challenges

"Although it can increase the potential for concurrency of operations on a data structure and reduce the time an individual thread spends waiting, **it may well decrease overall performance**" [6]

The needed atomic operations can be much slower than the non-atomic ones



# **C++ concurrent data structures**

Work-stealing?

"work stealing is a rare event" [6]

- Work-stealing with intel Threading Building Blocks (One API) [1]



# **C++ concurrent data structures**

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Work-stealing with intel Threading Building Blocks (One API) [1]

C++17 added parallel algorithms to the standard library, with only a new first parameter for the execution policy. Example [6]:

std::vector<int> my\_data; std::sort(std::execution::par,my\_data.begin(),my\_data.end());

Parallel algorithms require at least C++17 and Itbb (install libtbb-dev)



#### Parallel For

```
#pragma omp parallel for
for(unsigned i=0;i<v.size();++i){
    do_stuff(v[i]);</pre>
```

std::for\_each(std::execution::par,v.begin(),v.end(),do\_stuff);



#### std::accumulate (from left successively applying the operator)

std::vector<int> v{1, 2, 3, 4};

std::accumulate(v.begin(), v.end(), 1, [](int a, int b){ return a \* b; });



### std::reduce (applying the operator in a non-deterministic way)

std::vector<int> v{1, 2, 3, 4};

 $\texttt{std}::\texttt{reduce(std}:\texttt{execution}::\texttt{par}, \texttt{v}.\texttt{begin()}, \texttt{v}.\texttt{end()}, \texttt{1}, \texttt{[](int a, int b){ return a * b; });}$ 



From www.modernescpp.com


#### std::transform\_reduce

- first, the range of elements to apply the algorithm to
  last
  - init the initial value of the generalized sum
- reduce binary FunctionObject that will be applied in unspecified order to the results of transform, the results of other reduce and init.
- **transform** unary or binary *FunctionObject* that will be applied to each element of the input range(s). The return type must be acceptable as input to reduce.



#### std::transform\_reduce

// Example modified from https://dev.to/sandordargo/the-big-stl-algorithms-tutorial-reduce-operations-3flm
#include <iostream>
#include <numeric>
#include <vector>
int main() {
 std::vector v {1, 2, 3, 4, 5};
 int calc = std::transform\_reduce(v.begin(), v.end(), 0,
 [](int 1, int r) {return l+r;},
 [](int i) {return i\*i;});
 std::cout << "The calculated result is: " << calc << std::endl;</pre>



```
#include <iostream>
#include <numeric>
#include <vector>
int main() {
    using namespace std;
    std::vector v {1, 2, 3, 4, 5};
    int calc = std::transform reduce(
        v.begin(),
                                                                                                             Transform - i: 2 local: (2*2): 4
        v.end(),
                                                                                                              Transform - i: 1 local: (1*1): 1
        0, //beginning of the vector
                                                                                                              Reduce - L: 1 & R: 4 local: 5
        [](int 1, int r) {
                                                                                                              Transform - i: 4 local: (4*4): 16
            cout << "Reduce - L: " << l << " & R: " << r << " local: " << l+r << endl;
                                                                                                              Transform - i: 3 local: (3*3): 9
                                                                                                              Reduce - L: 9 & R: 16 local: 25
             return 1+r;
                                                                                                              Reduce - L: 5 & R: 25 local: 30
             }, //reduce (sum transformed values)
                                                                                                             Reduce - L: 0 & R: 30 local: 30
        [](int i) {
                                                                                                              Transform - i: 5 local: (5*5): 25
             cout << "Transform - i: " << i << " local: (" << i << "*" << i << "): " << i*i << endl;
                                                                                                              Reduce - L: 30 & R: 25 local: 55
            return i*i;
                                                                                                              The calculated result is: 55
        } //transform: multiplies the values
```

std::cout << "The calculated result is: " << calc << std::endl;</pre>



);

}

See the list of parallelized algorithms: <u>https://en.cppreference.com/w/cpp/algorithm</u>



#### Is C++ STL scalable enough for all use cases?

Probably not for all. That is why it can be extended to run in accelerators (e.g., GPGPUs, FPGAs) or multiple machines (distributed computing).

Other programming languages have a better support for distributed computing than C++



# **Advanced Parallel Computing**

- Lock-free with the FastFlow and Boost library

- Work-stealing with intel threading building block (One API)



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## **Further resources**

#### Some great books





# **Assignment: standard C++ Parallel Computing**

See the assignment document



### References

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# Thank you!

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