



The Secrets of Concurrency

Dr Heinz M. Kabutz

heinz@javaspecialists.eu



Javaspecialists.eu
java training

Background

● Heinz Kabutz

- The Java Specialists' Newsletter
 - 50 000 readers in 121 countries
 - <http://www.javaspecialists.eu>
- Java Champion
- Actively code Java
- Live on Island of Crete
- Teach Java to companies:
 - Java Concurrency Course
 - Java Specialist Master Course
 - Java Design Patterns Course
 - <http://www.javaspecialists.eu/courses>



Why Crete?

- **Infrastructure good enough**
 - Airport 10 minutes
 - Leased E1 line to my house
- **Closer to customers than Cape Town**
- **Great lifestyle, good food, clean air, friendly people**
- **Wife and children are Greek citizens**
- **And now for the *real reason* ...**





2.2: The Secrets of Concurrency

- **Writing correct concurrent code can be a real challenge; only *perfect* is good enough**
- **You need to synchronize in the precisely correct places**
 - Too much synchronization and you risk deadlock and contention
 - Too little synchronization and you risk seeing early writes, corrupt data, race conditions and stale local copies of fields
- **In this section, we will look at ten laws that will make it easier for you to write correct thread-safe code.**

2.2: The Secrets of Concurrency

- **The ten laws that will help you write thread-safe code**
 - **Law 1: The Law of the Sabotaged Doorbell**
 - **Law 2: The Law of the Xerox Copier**
 - **Law 3: The Law of the Overstocked Haberdashery**
 - **Law 4: The Law of the Blind Spot**
 - **Law 5: The Law of the Leaked Memo**
 - **Law 6: The Law of the Corrupt Politician**
 - **Law 7: The Law of the Micromanager**
 - **Law 8: The Law of Cretan Driving**
 - **Law 9: The Law of Sudden Riches**
 - **Law 10: The Law of the Uneaten Lutefisk**

1. The Law of the Sabotaged Doorbell

Instead of arbitrarily suppressing interruptions, manage them better.

- * Removing the batteries from your doorbell to avoid hawkers also shuts out people that you want to have as visitors**

Law 1: The Law of the Sabotaged Doorbell

- Have you ever seen code like this?

```
try {  
    Thread.sleep(1000);  
} catch (InterruptedException ex) {  
    // this won't happen here  
}
```

- We will answer the following questions:
 - What does InterruptedException mean?
 - How should we handle it?

Shutting Down Threads

- **Shutdown threads when they are inactive**
 - In **WAITING** or **TIMED_WAITING** states:
 - `Thread.sleep()`
 - `BlockingQueue.get()`
 - `Semaphore.acquire()`
 - `wait()`
 - `join()`

Law 1: The Law of the Sabotaged Doorbell

Thread “interrupted” Status

- **You can interrupt a thread with:**

- `someThread.interrupt();`
- **Sets the “interrupted” status to true**
- **What else?**
 - If thread is in state **WAITING** or **TIMED_WAITING**, the thread immediately returns by throwing **InterruptedException** and sets “interrupted” status back to false
 - **Else, the thread does nothing else. In this case, `someThread.isInterrupted()` will return true**

Law 1: The Law of the Sabotaged Doorbell

How to Handle InterruptedException?

- **Option 1: Simply re-throw InterruptedException**
 - Approach used by `java.util.concurrent`
 - Not always possible if we are overriding a method
- **Option 2: Catch it and return**
 - Our current “interrupted” state should be set to true
 - Add a boolean volatile “running” field as backup mechanism

```
while (running) {  
    // do something  
    try {  
        TimeUnit.SECONDS.sleep(1);  
    } catch (InterruptedException e) {  
        Thread.currentThread().interrupt();  
        break;  
    }  
}
```

Law 1: The Law of the Sabotaged Doorbell

2. The Law of the Xerox Copier

Protect yourself by making copies of objects

*** Never give your originals to anyone, even a bank!**

"Safe as a Bank"

- Our home loan application was lying on the desk the day this bank was trashed by rioters
- *Fortunately, we had only given them copies of our important documents!*



© Greg Manset

Law 2: The Law of the Xerox Copier

- **Immutable objects are always thread safe**
 - No stale values, race conditions or early writes
- **For concurrency, *immutable* means [Goetz'06]**
 - State cannot be modified after construction
 - All the fields are final
 - 'this' reference does not escape during construction

How do we use an Immutable Object?

- **Whenever we want to change it, make a copy**
 - e.g. String '+' operator produces a new String
- **Additional GC expense, but concurrency is easier**

Basic Thread-Safe ArrayList

```
public class ImmutableList<E> implements Iterable<E> {  
    private final Object[] elements;  
  
    public ImmutableList() {  
        this.elements = new Object[0];  
    }  
  
    private ImmutableList(Object[] elements) {  
        this.elements = elements;  
    }  
  
    public int size() { return elements.length; }  
  
    public ImmutableList<E> add(E o) {  
        Object[] new_elements = new Object[elements.length + 1];  
        System.arraycopy(elements, 0,  
                           new_elements, 0, elements.length);  
        new_elements[new_elements.length - 1] = o;  
        return new ImmutableList<E>(new_elements);  
    }  
}
```

Law 2: The Law of the Xerox Copier

Thread-Safe Iterator

```
public Iterator<E> iterator() {  
    return new Iterator<E>() {  
        int pos = 0;  
  
        public boolean hasNext() {  
            return pos < elements.length;  
        }  
  
        public E next() {  
            return (E) elements[pos++];  
        }  
  
        public void remove() {  
            throw new UnsupportedOperationException();  
        }  
    };  
}
```


Using ImmutableList

- **We use this in a more functional approach:**

```
ImmutableArrayList<String> ial =  
    new ImmutableList<String>();  
ial = ial.add("Heinz").add("Max").add("Kabutz");  
for (Object o : ial) {  
    System.out.println("o = " + o);  
}
```

3. The Law of the Overstocked Haberdashery

Having too many threads is bad for your application. Performance will degrade and debugging will become difficult.

*** Haberdashery: A shop selling sewing wares, e.g. threads and needles.**

Law 3: The Law of the Overstocked Haberdashery

- **Story: Client-side library running on server**
- **We will answer the following questions:**
 - How many threads can you create?
 - What is the limiting factor?
 - How can we create more threads?

Quick Demo

How many *inactive* threads can we create, before the JVM crashes?



Some JVMs Core Dump

Exception in thread "main" java.lang.OutOfMemoryError: unable to create new native thread
at java.lang.Thread.start0(Native Method)
at java.lang.Thread.start(Thread.java:597)
at ThreadCreationTest\$1.<init>(ThreadCreationTest:8)
at ThreadCreationTest.main(ThreadCreationTest.java:7)

An unexpected error has been detected by Java Runtime Environment:

Internal Error (455843455054494F4E530E4350500134) #
Java VM: Java HotSpot(TM) Client VM (1.6.0_01-b06)
An error report file with more information is saved as
hs_err_pid22142.log

Aborted (core dumped)

Law 3: The Law of the Overstocked Haberdashery

How to Create More Threads?

- **We created about 2500 threads on Mac OS X**
 - Had to kill with -9
- **Stack size can cause OutOfMemoryError if too large**

Causing Thread Dumps

- **The jstack tool dumps threads of process**
 - Similar to CTRL+Break (Windows) or CTRL+\ (Unix)
- **For thread dump JSP page**
 - <http://javaspecialists.eu/archive/Issue132.html>
 - Sorted threads allow you to diff between calls

How Many Threads is Healthy?

- **Additional threads should improve performance**
- **Not too many active threads**
 - ± 4 active per core
- **Inactive threads**
 - Number is architecture specific
 - Consume memory
 - Can cause sudden death of the JVM
 - What if a few thousand threads suddenly become active?

Law 3: The Law of the Overstocked Haberdashery

Traffic Calming

- **Thread pooling good way to control number**
- **Use new `ExecutorService`**
 - Fixed Thread Pool
- **For small tasks, thread pools can be faster**
 - Not main consideration
- **See <http://www.javaspecialists.eu/archive/Issue149.html>**

4. The Law of the Blind Spot

It is not always possible to see what other threads (cars) are doing with shared data (road)

Law 4: The Law of the Blind Spot

- **Java Memory Model allows thread to keep local copy of fields**
- **Your thread might not see another thread's changes**
- **Usually happens when you try to avoid synchronization**

Calling shutdown() might have no effect

```
public class Runner {  
    private boolean running = true;  
    public void doJob() {  
        while(running) {  
            // do something  
        }  
    }  
    public void shutdown() {  
        running = false;  
    }  
}
```

Why?

- **Thread1 calls doJob() and makes a local copy of running**
- **Thread2 calls shutdown() and modifies the value of field running**
- **Thread1 does not see the changed value of running and continues reading the local stale value**

Law 4: The Law of the Blind Spot

Making Field Changes Visible

- **Three ways of preventing this**
 - **Make field volatile**
 - **Make field final puts a “freeze” on value**
 - **Make read and writes to field synchronized**
 - **Also includes new locks**

Better MyThread

```
public class Runner {  
    private volatile boolean running = true;  
    public void doJob() {  
        while(running) {  
            // do something  
        }  
    }  
    public void shutdown() {  
        running = false;  
    }  
}
```


5. The Law of the Leaked Memo

The JVM is allowed to reorder your statements resulting in seemingly impossible states (seen from the outside)

*** Memo about hostile takeover bid left lying in photocopy machine**

Law 5: The Law of the Leaked Memo

- If two threads call `f()` and `g()`, what are the possible values of `a` and `b` ?

```
public class EarlyWrites {  
    private int x;  
    private int y;  
    public void f() {  
        int a = x;  
        y = 3;  
    }  
    public void g() {  
        int b = y;  
        x = 4;  
    }  
}
```

Early writes can result in:
`a=4, b=3`

The order of Things

- **Java Memory Model allows reordering of statements**
- **Includes writing of fields**
- **To the writing thread, statements appear in order**

How to Prevent This?

- **JVM is not allowed to move writes out of synchronized block**
 - Allowed to move statements into a synchronized block
- **Keyword volatile prevents early writes**
 - From the Java Memory Model:
 - There is a happens-before edge from a write to a volatile variable *v* to all subsequent reads of *v* by any thread (where subsequent is defined according to the synchronization order)

How to Cause This Error (Victor Grazi)

- **Actually this is very easy to produce. Here are the steps:**
 - Write some production code that depends on correct ordering
 - Test it thoroughly
 - (Don't worry all tests will pass)
 - Release to production
 - Wait for the next corporate change freeze
 - Check your inbox - you will have 500 emails from irate users who were bitten by the bug

6. The Law of the Corrupt Politician

In the absence of proper controls, corruption is unavoidable.

*** Lord Acton: *Power tends to corrupt. Absolute power corrupts absolutely.***

Law 6: The Law of the Corrupt Politician

- Without controls, the best code can go bad

```
public class BankAccount {  
    private int balance;  
    public BankAccount(int balance) {  
        this.balance = balance;  
    }  
    public void deposit(int amount) {  
        balance += amount;  
    }  
    public void withdraw(int amount) {  
        deposit(-amount);  
    }  
    public int getBalance() { return balance; }  
}
```

What happens?

- The += operation is not atomic
- Thread 1
 - Reads balance = 1000
 - Locally adds 100 = 1100
 - Before the balance written, Thread 1 is swapped out
- Thread 2
 - Reads balance=1000
 - Locally subtracts 100 = 900
 - Writes 900 to the balance field
- Thread 1
 - Writes 1100 to the balance field

Law 6: The Law of the Corrupt Politician

Solutions

- **Pre Java 5**

- synchronized
 - But avoid using “this” as a monitor
 - Rather use a private final object field as a lock

- **Java 5 and 6**

- Lock, ReadWriteLock
- AtomicInteger – dealt with in The Law of the Micromanager

Pre-Java 5

```
public class BankAccount {  
    private int balance;  
    private final Object lock = new Object();  
  
    public BankAccount(int balance) {  
        this.balance = balance;  
    }  
  
    public void deposit(int amount) {  
        synchronized(lock) { balance += amount; }  
    }  
  
    public void withdraw(int amount) {  
        deposit(-amount);  
    }  
  
    public int getBalance() {  
        synchronized(lock) { return balance; }  
    }  
}
```

Law 6: The Law of the Corrupt Politician

ReentrantLocks

- **Basic monitors cannot be interrupted and will never give up trying to get locked**
 - The Law of the Uneaten Lutefisk
- **Java 5 Locks can be interrupted or time out after some time**
- **Remember to unlock in a finally block**

```
private final Lock lock =  
    new ReentrantLock();  
  
public void deposit(int amount) {  
    lock.lock();  
    try {  
        balance += amount;  
    } finally {  
        lock.unlock();  
    }  
}  
  
public int getBalance() {  
    lock.lock();  
    try {  
        return balance;  
    } finally {  
        lock.unlock();  
    }  
}
```

Law 6: The Law of the Corrupt Politician

ReadWriteLocks

- Can distinguish read and write locks
- Use `ReentrantReadWriteLock`
- Then lock either the write or the read action
 - `lock.writeLock().lock();`
 - `lock.writeLock().unlock();`
- Careful: Starvation can happen!

```
private final ReadWriteLock lock =  
    new ReentrantReadWriteLock();
```

```
public void deposit(int amount) {  
    lock.writeLock().lock();  
    try {  
        balance += amount;  
    } finally {  
        lock.writeLock().unlock();  
    }  
}
```

```
public int getBalance() {  
    lock.readLock().lock();  
    try {  
        return balance;  
    } finally {  
        lock.readLock().unlock();  
    }  
}
```

Law 6: The Law of the Corrupt Politician

7. The Law of the Micromanager

Even in life, it wastes effort and frustrates the other *threads*.

* *mi·cro·man·age*: to manage or control with excessive attention to minor details.

Law 7: The Law of the Micromanager

- **Thread contention is difficult to spot**
- **Performance does not scale**
- **None of the usual suspects**
 - CPU
 - Disk
 - Network
 - Garbage collection
- **Points to thread contention**

Real Example – *Don't Do This!*

- **“How to add contention 101”**
 - `String WRITE_LOCK_OBJECT = "WRITE_LOCK_OBJECT";`
- **Later on in the class**
 - `synchronized(WRITE_LOCK_OBJECT) { ... }`
- **Constant Strings are flyweights!**
 - Multiple parts of code locking on one object
 - Can also cause deadlocks and livelocks

AtomicInteger

- Thread safe without explicit locking
- Tries to update the value repeatedly until success
 - `AtomicInteger.equals()` is not overridden

```
public final int addAndGet(int delta) {  
    for (;;) {  
        int current = get();  
        int next = current + delta;  
        if (compareAndSet(current, next))  
            return next;  
    }  
}
```

```
import java.util.concurrent.atomic.AtomicInteger;

public class BankAccount {
    private final AtomicInteger balance =
        new AtomicInteger();

    public BankAccount(int balance) {
        this.balance.set(balance);
    }
    public void deposit(int amount) {
        balance.addAndGet(amount);
    }
    public void withdraw(int amount) {
        deposit(-amount);
    }
    public int getBalance() {
        return balance.intValue();
    }
}
```

Law 7: The Law of the Micromanager

8. The Law of Cretan Driving

The JVM does not enforce all the rules.
Your code is probably wrong, even if it works.

*** Don't *stop* at a stop sign if
you treasure your car!**







Law 8: The Law of Cretan Driving

- **Learn the JVM Rules !**
- **Example from JSR 133 – Java Memory Model**
 - **VM implementers are encouraged to avoid splitting their 64-bit values where possible. Programmers are encouraged to declare shared 64-bit values as volatile or synchronize their programs correctly to avoid this.**

JSR 133 allows this – NOT a Bug

- Method `set()` called by two threads with
 - `0x12345678ABCD0000L`
 - `0x1111111111111111L`

```
public class LongFields {  
    private long value;  
    public void set(long v) { value = v; }  
    public long get()      { return value; }  
}
```

- Besides obvious answers, “value” could now also be
 - `0x11111111ABCD0000L` or `0x1234567811111111L`

Java Virtual Machine Specification

- **Gives great freedom to JVM writers**
- **Makes it difficult to write 100% correct Java**
 - It might work on all JVMs to date, but that does not mean it is correct!
- **Theory vs Practice clash**

Synchronize at the Right Places

- **Too much synchronization causes contention**
 - As you increase CPUs, performance does not improve
 - The Law of the Micromanager
- **Lack of synchronization leads to corrupt data**
 - The Law of the Corrupt Politician
- **Fields might be written early**
 - The Law of the Leaked Memo
- **Changes to shared fields might not be visible**
 - The Law of the Blind Spot

Law 8: The Law of Cretan Driving

9. The Law of Sudden Riches

Additional resources (faster CPU, disk or network, more memory) for seemingly stable system can make it unstable.

*** Sudden inheritance or lottery win ...**

Law 9: The Law of Sudden Riches

- **Better hardware can break system**
 - Old system: Dual processor
 - New system: Dual core, dual processor

Faster Hardware

- **Latent defects show up more quickly**
 - Instead of once a year, now once a week
- **Faster hardware often coincides with higher utilization by customers**
 - More contention
- **E.g. DOM tree becomes corrupted**
 - Detected problem by synchronizing all subsystem access
 - Fixed by copying the nodes whenever they were read

10. The Law of the Uneaten Lutefisk

A deadlock in Java can only be resolved by restarting the Java Virtual Machine.

- * Imagine a Viking father insisting that his stubborn child eat its lutefisk before going to bed

Law 10: The Law of the Uneaten Lutefisk

- **Part of program stops responding**
- **GUI does not repaint**
 - Under Swing
- **Users cannot log in anymore**
 - Could also be The Law of the Corrupt Politician
- **Two threads want what the other has**
 - And are not willing to part with what they already have

Using Multiple Locks

```
public class HappyLocker {  
    private final Object lock = new Object();  
    public synchronized void f() {  
        synchronized(lock) {  
            // do something ...  
        }  
    }  
    public void g() {  
        synchronized(lock) {  
            f();  
        }  
    }  
}
```

Finding the Deadlock

- **Pressing CTRL+Break or CTRL+\ or use jstack**

Full thread dump:

Found one Java-level deadlock:

=====

"g()":

waiting to lock monitor 0x0023e274 (object 0x22ac5808, a
HappyLocker),
which is held by "f()"

"f()":

waiting to lock monitor 0x0023e294 (object 0x22ac5818, a
java.lang.Object),
which is held by "g()"

Law 10: The Law of the Uneaten Lutefisk

Deadlock Means You Are Dead ! ! !

- **Deadlock can be found with jconsole**
- **However, there is no way to resolve it**
- **Better to automatically raise critical error**
 - **Newsletter 130 – Deadlock Detection with new Lock**
 - **<http://www.javaspecialists.eu/archive/Issue130.html>**

Conclusion

- **Threading is a lot easier when you know the rules**
- **Tons of free articles on JavaSpecialists.EU**
 - <http://www.javaspecialists.eu/archive>
- **Advanced Java Courses available**
 - <http://www.javaspecialists.eu/courses>



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