Shells and Signals

Shell logic

```plaintext
while (true) {
    // Print command prompt.
    Read command line from user.
    Parse command line.
    If command is built-in, do it.
    Else fork process to execute command.
        in child:
            Exec requested command (never returns)
        in parent:
            Wait for child to complete.
    }
```

program that runs other programs on behalf of the user

- **sh**: Original Unix shell (Stephen Bourne, AT&T Bell Labs, 1977)
- **bash**: “Bourne-Again” Shell, widely used
default on most Unix/Linux/Mac OS X systems

many others...
**Terminal ≠ shell**

User interface to shell and other programs.
Graphical (GUI) vs. command-line (CLI)

Command-line terminal (emulator):
Input (keyboard)
Output (screen, sound)

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**To wait or not?**

A *foreground* job is a process for which the shell waits.*

```
$ emacs fizz.txt  # shell waits until emacs exits.
```

A *background* job is a process for which the shell does not wait*... yet.

```
$ emacs boom.txt &  # emacs runs in background.
[1] 9073  # shell saves background job and is...  
$ gdb ./umbrella  # immediately ready for next command.
```

*Also: foreground jobs get input from (and "own") the terminal. Background jobs do not.

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**Signals**

*Signal:* small message notifying a process of event in system
like exceptions and interrupts
sent by kernel, sometimes at request of another process
ID is entire message

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Corresponding Event</th>
<th>Default Action</th>
<th>Can Override?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SIGINT</td>
<td>Interrupt (Ctrl-C)</td>
<td>Terminate</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>SIGKILL</td>
<td>Kill process (immediately)</td>
<td>Terminate</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>SIGSEGV</td>
<td>Segmentation violation</td>
<td>Terminate &amp; Dump</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>SIGALRM</td>
<td>Timer signal</td>
<td>Terminate</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>SIGTERM</td>
<td>Kill process (politely)</td>
<td>Terminate</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>SIGCHLD</td>
<td>Child stopped or terminated</td>
<td>Ignore</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>SIGCONT</td>
<td>Continue stopped process</td>
<td>Continue (Resume)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>SIGSTOP</td>
<td>Stop process (immediately)</td>
<td>Stop (Suspend)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>SIGTSTP</td>
<td>Stop process (politely)</td>
<td>Stop (Suspend)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Sending/receiving a signal**

Kernel *sends* (delivers) a signal to a *destination process* by updating state in the context of the destination process.

Reasons:

- **System event**, e.g. segmentation fault (SIGSEGV)
- **Another process used kill system call:** explicitly request the kernel send a signal to the destination process

Destination process *receives* signal when kernel forces it to react.

Reactions:

- **Ignore** the signal (do nothing)
- **Terminate** the process (with optional core dump)
- **Catch** the signal by executing a user-level function called *signal handler*
  
  Like an impoverished Java exception handler
Signals handlers as concurrent flows

Signal handlers run concurrently with main program (in same process).

Pending and blocked signals

A signal is **pending** if sent but not yet received

<= 1 pending signal per type per process

No Queue! Just a bit per signal type.

Signals of type S discarded while process has S signal pending.

A process can **block** the receipt of certain signals

Receipt delayed until the signal is unblocked

A pending signal is received at most once

Process Groups

Every process belongs to exactly one process group (default: parent’s group)

Let's draw a picture...
Sending signals from the keyboard

Shell: Ctrl-C sends SIGINT (Ctrl-Z sends SIGTSTP) to every job in the foreground process group.
SIGINT – default action is to terminate each process
SIGTSTP – default action is to stop (suspend) each process

```
Shell

pid=10
pgid=10

Foreground job

pid=20
pgid=20

Child

pid=21
pgid=20

Background job #1

pid=32
pgid=32

Background process group 32

Background job #2

pid=40
pgid=40

Background process group 40

Child

pid=22
pgid=20

Foreground process group 20
```

Signal demos

Ctrl-C

Ctrl-Z

```
kill

kill(pid, SIGINT);
```

A program that reacts to externally generated events (Ctrl-c)

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

void handler(int sig) {
    safe_printf("You think hitting ctrl-c will stop me?\n\n");
    sleep(2);
    safe_printf("Well...\n");
    printf("OK\n");
    exit(0);
}

main() {
    signal(SIGINT, handler);
    /* installs ctrl-c handler */
    while(1) {
        safe_printf("You think hitting ctrl-c will stop me?\n        Well...OK\n        ");
    }
}
```

A program that reacts to internally generated events

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

int beeps = 0;

void handler(int sig) {
    safe_printf("BEEP\n");
    if (++beeps < 5)
        alarm(1);
    else {
        safe_printf("DING DING!\n");
        exit(0);
    }
}

main() {
    signal(SIGALRM, handler);
    alarm(1); /* send SIGALRM in 1 second */
    while (1) {
        safe_printf("You think hitting ctrl-c will stop me?\n        Well...OK\n        ");
    }
}
```

```
> ./external

You think hitting ctrl-c will stop me?
Well...OK
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
DING DING!
```

```
> ./internal

BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
DING DING!
```
Signal summary

Signals provide process-level exception handling
  Can generate from user programs
  Can define effect by declaring signal handler

Some caveats
  Very high overhead
    >10,000 clock cycles
    Only use for exceptional conditions
  Not queued
    Just one bit for each pending signal type

Many more complicated details we have not discussed.
  Book goes into too much gory detail.