Simple Optimal Wait-free Multireader Registers

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Abstract

Multireader shared registers are basic objects used as communication medium in asynchronous concurrent computation. We propose a surprisingly simple and natural scheme to obtain several wait-free constructions of bounded 1-writer multireader registers from atomic 1-writer 1-reader registers, that is easier to prove correct than any previous construction. Our main construction is the first symmetric pure timestamp one that is optimal with respect to the worst-case local use of control bits; the other one is optimal with respect to global use of control bits; both are optimal in time.

1 Introduction

Interprocess communication in distributed systems happens by either message-passing or shared variables (also known as shared registers). Lamport [20] argues that every message-passing system must hide an underlying shared variable. This makes the latter an indispensable ingredient. The multireader wait-free shared variable is (even more so than the multiwriter construction) the building block of virtually all bounded wait-free shared-variable concurrent object constructions, for example, [29, 15, 5, 3, 6, 13, 2, 16, 25]. Hence, understanding, simplicity, and optimality of bounded wait-free atomic multireader constructions is a basic concern. Our constructions are really simple and structured extensions of the basic unbounded timestamp algorithm in [29], based on a natural recycling scheme of obsolete timestamps.

Asynchronous communication: Consider a system of asynchronous processes that communicate among themselves by executing read and write operations on a set of shared variables only. The system has no global clock or other synchronization primitives. Every shared variable is associated with a process (called owner) which writes it and the other processes may read it. An execution of a write (read) operation on a shared variable will be referred to as a Write (Read) on that variable. A Write on a shared variable puts a value from a predetermined finite domain into the variable, and a Read reports a value from the domain. A process that writes (reads) a variable is called a writer (reader) of the variable.

Wait-free shared variable: We want to construct shared variables in which the following two properties hold. (1) Operation executions are not necessarily atomic, that is, they are not indivisible, and (2) every operation finishes its execution within a bounded number of its own steps, irrespective of the presence of other operation executions and their relative speeds. That is, operation executions are wait-free. These two properties give rise to a classification of shared variables: (i) A safe variable is one in which a Read not overlapping any Write returns the most recently written value. A Read that overlaps a Write may return any value from the domain of the variable; (ii) A regular variable is a safe variable in which a Read not overlapping any Write returns the most recently written value. A Read that overlaps a Write may return any value from the domain of the variable; and (iii) An atomic variable is

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a regular variable in which the Reads and Writes behave as if they occur in some total order which is an extension of the precedence relation.

**Multireader shared variable:** A multireader shared variable is one that can be written by one process and read (concurrently) by many processes. Lamport [20] constructed an atomic wait-free shared variable that could be written by one process and read by one other process, but he did not consider constructions of wait-free shared variables with more than one writer or reader.

**Previous Work:** In 1987 there appeared at least five purported solutions for the wait-free implementation of 1-writer \( n \)-reader atomic shared variable from atomic 1-writer 1-reader shared variables: [19, 28, 4, 27] and the conference version of [15], of which [4] was shown to be incorrect in [9] and only [27] appeared in journal version. The only other 1-writer \( n \)-reader atomic shared variable constructions appearing in journal version are [10] and the “projection” of the main construction in [22]. A selection of related work is [20, 22, 5, 10, 11, 12, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28]. A brief history of atomic wait-free shared variable constructions and timestamp systems is given in [13].

Israeli and Li [15] introduced and analyzed the notion of timestamp system as an abstraction of a higher typed communication medium than shared variables. (Other constructions are [5, 10, 8, 6, 7, 13].) As an example of its application, [15] presented a non-optimal multireader construction, partially based on [20], using order \( n^2 \) control bits overall, and order \( n \) control bits locally for each of \( O(n^2) \) shared 1-reader 1-writer variables. Our constructions below are inspired by this timestamp method and exploit the limited nature of the multireader problem to obtain both simplification and optimality.

**This work:** We give a surprisingly simple and elegant wait-free construction of an atomic multi-reader shared variable from atomic 1-reader 1-writer shared variables. Other constructions (and our second construction) don’t use pure timestamps [15] but divide the timestamp information between the writer’s control bits and the reader’s control bits. Those algorithms have an asymmetric burden on the writer-owned subvariables. Our construction shows that using pure timestamps we can balance the size of the subvariables evenly among all owners, obtaining a symmetric construction. The intuition behind our approach is given in Section 2. Technically:

(i) Our construction is a bounded version of the unbounded construction in [24] restricted to the multireader case (but different from the “projection” of the bounded version in [22]), and its correctness proof follows simply and directly from the correctness of the unbounded version and a proof of proper recycling of obsolete timestamps.

(ii) The main version of our construction is the first construction that uses a sublinear number of control bits, \( O(\log n) \), locally for everyone of the \( n^2 \) constituent 1-reader 1-writer subvariables. It is easy to see that this is optimal locally, leading to a slightly non-optimal global number of control bits of order \( n^2 \log n \). Implementations of wait-free shared variables assume atomic shared (control) subvariables. Technically it may be much simpler to manufacture in hardware—or implement in software—small \( \Theta(\log n) \)-bit atomic subvariables that are robust and reliable, than the exponentially larger \( \Theta(n) \)-bit atomic subvariables required in all previous constructions. A wait-free implementation of a shared variable is fault-tolerant against crash failures of the subvariables, but not against more malicious, say Byzantine, errors. Slight suboptimality is a small price to pay for ultimate reliability.

(iii) Another version of our construction uses \( n \) 1-writer 1-reader variables of \( n \) control bits and \( n^2 \) 1-writer 1-reader variables of 2 control bits each, yielding a global \( O(n^2) \) number of control bits. There need to be \( n^2 \) 1-writer 1-reader subvariables for pairwise communication, each of them using some control bits. Hence the global number of control bits in any construction is \( \Omega(n^2) \). We also reduce the number of copies of the value written to \( O(n) \) rather than \( O(n^2) \). All these variations of our construction use the minimum number \( O(n) \) of accesses to the shared 1-reader 1-writer subvariables, per Read and Write operation.

Our construction corrects [30] by merging pairs \( R_{i,n}, R_{i,n+1} \) of shared variables in that paper into a single shared variable \( R_{i,n} \) here \( 0 < i < n \). We give an informal argument why the construction works correctly; the formal argument is deferred to a later treatment in I/O automata assertional framework surveyed in [18].
Table 1: Comparison of Results.

| Construction | Global control bits | Max local control bits |
|--------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 19           | $\Theta(n^3)$       | $\Theta(n)$            |
| 28           | $\Theta(n^2)$       | $\Theta(n)$            |
| 42-incorrect: 9 | $\Theta(n^2)$       | $\Theta(n)$            |
| 27           | $\Theta(n^3)$       | $\Theta(n)$            |
| 15           | $\Theta(n^2)$       | $\Theta(n)$            |
| 22           | $\Theta(n^2)$       | $\Theta(n)$            |
| 10           | $\Theta(n^2)$       | $\Theta(n)$            |
| This paper (ii) | $\Theta(n^2 \log n)$ | $\Theta(\log n)$       |
| This paper (iii) | $\Theta(n^2)$       | $\Theta(n)$            |

1.1 Model, Problem Definition, and some Notations

Throughout the paper, there are $n$ readers indexed $0, 1, \ldots, n - 1$ and a single writer indexed $n$. The multireader variable constructed will be called ABS (for abstract).

A construction consists of a collection of atomic 1-reader 1-writer shared variables $R_{i,j}$, $i, j \in \{0, 1, \ldots, n\}$, written by process $i$ and read by process $j$, thus providing a communication path from user $i$ to user $j$. We say that the writer, process $i$, owns the shared variable $R_{i,j}$. Strictly speaking, the “diagonal” shared variables $R_{i,i}$ ($0 \leq i \leq n$) are superfluous since process $i$ can remember in a local variable what it wrote last to a shared variable it owns. We keep the diagonal shared variables nonetheless, since doing so allows us to simplify the protocols. There are two global procedures, Read and Write, to execute a read operation or write operation on ABS, respectively. Each of these have an input parameter $i$, which is the index of the executing user, and in addition, Write takes a value to be written to ABS as input. A return statement must end both procedures, in the case of Read having an argument which is taken to be the value read from ABS.

A procedure contains a declaration of local variables and a body. A local variable appearing in can be declared static, which means it retains its value between procedure invocations. The body is a program fragment comprised of atomic statements. Access to shared variables is naturally restricted to assignments from $R_{j,i}$ to local variables and assignments from local variables to $R_{i,j}$, for any $j$ (recall that $i$ is the index of the executing user). No other means of inter-process communication is allowed. In particular, no synchronization primitives can be used. Assignments to and from shared variables are called writes and reads respectively, always in lower case. The space complexity of a construction is the maximum size, in bits, of a shared variable. The time complexity of the Read or Write procedure is the maximum number of shared variable accesses in a single execution.

1.2 Correctness

A wait-free construction must satisfy the following constraint: **Wait-Freedom**: Each procedure must be free from unbounded loops. Given a construction, we are interested in properties of its executions, which the following notions help formulate. A state is a configuration of the construction, comprising values of all shared and local variables, as well as program counters. In between invocations of the Read and Write procedure, a user is said to be idle, and its program counter has the value ‘idle’. One state is designated as initial state. All users must be idle in this state.

A state $t$ is an immediate successor of a state $s$ if $t$ can be reached from $s$ through the execution of a procedure statement by some user in accordance with its program counter. Recall that $n$ denotes the number of readers of the constructed variable ABS. A state has precisely $n + 1$ immediate successors: there is at precisely one atomic statement per process to be executed next (each process is deterministic).

A history of the construction is a finite or infinite sequence of states $t_0, t_1, \ldots$ such that $t_0$ is the
initial state and \( t_{i+1} \) is an immediate successor of \( t_i \). Transitions between successive states are called the *events* of a history. With each event is associated the index of the executing user, the relevant procedure statement, and the values manipulated by the execution of the statement. Each particular access to a shared variable is an event, and all such events are totally ordered.

The *(sequential) time complexity* of the Read or Write procedure is the maximum number of shared variable accesses in some such operation in some history.

An event \( a \) precedes an event \( b \) in history \( h \), \( a \prec_h b \), if \( a \) occurs before \( b \) in \( h \). Call a finite set of events of a history an event-set. Then we similarly say that an event-set \( A \) precedes an event-set \( B \) in a history, \( A \prec_h B \), when each event in \( A \) precedes all those in \( B \). We use \( a \preceq_h b \) to denote that either \( a =_h b \) or \( a \prec_h b \). The relation \( \prec_h \) on event-sets constitutes what is known as an interval order. That is, a partial order \( \prec \) satisfying the interval axiom
\[
\forall a, b, c, d : (a \prec b \land c \prec d \land c \neq b \Rightarrow a \prec d).
\]
This implication can be seen to hold by considering the last event of \( c \) and the earliest event of \( b \). See [20] for an extensive discussion on models of time.

Of particular interest are the sets consisting of all events of a single procedure invocation, which we call an operation. An operation is either a Read operation or a Write operation. It is complete if it includes the execution of the final return statement of the procedure. Otherwise it is said to be pending. A history is complete if all its operations are complete. Note that in the final state of a complete finite history, all users are idle. The value of an operation is the value written to \( abs \) in the case of a Write, or the value read from \( abs \) in the case of a Read.

The following crucial definition expresses the idea that the operations in a history appear to take place instantaneously somewhere during their execution interval. A more general version of this is presented and motivated in [14]. To avoid special cases, we introduce the notion of a proper history as one that starts with an initializing Write operation that precedes all other operations. Linearizability: A complete proper history \( h \) is linearizable if the partial order \( \prec_h \) on the set of operations can be extended to a total order which obeys the semantics of a variable. That is, each Read operation returns the value written by that Write operation which last precedes it in the total order. We use the following definition and lemma from [22]:

**Definition 1** A construction is correct if it satisfies Wait-Freedom and all its complete proper histories are linearizable.

**Lemma 1** A complete proper history \( h \) is linearizable if there exists a function mapping each operation in \( h \) to a rational number, called its timestamp, such that the following 3 conditions are satisfied:

- **Uniqueness:** different Write operations have different timestamps.
- **Integrity:** for each Read operation there exists a Write operation with the same timestamp and value, that it doesn’t precede.
- **Precedence:** if one operation precedes another, then the timestamp of the latter is at least that of the former.

### 2 Intuition

We use the following intuition based on timestamp systems: The concurrent reading and writing of the shared variable by one writer and \( n \) readers (collectively, the players) is viewed as a pebble game on a finite directed graph. The nodes of the graph can be viewed as the timestamps used by the system, and a pebble on a node as a subvariable containing this timestamp. If the graph contains an arc pointing from node \( a \) to node \( b \) then \( a \) is dominated by \( b \) (\( a < b \)). The graph has no cycles of length 1 or 2. First, suppose that every player has a single pebble which initially is placed at a distinguished node that is dominated by all other nodes. A Read or Write by a player consists in observing where the pebbles of the other players are, and determining a node to move its own pebble to. In a Write, the writer puts its pebble on a node that satisfies all of the following: (i) it dominates the previous position; (ii) it is not occupied by a pebble of a reader; and (iii) it is not dominated
by a node occupied by a pebble of a reader. In a Read, the reader concerned puts its pebble at a node containing the writer’s pebble. In the pebble game a player can only observe the pebble positions of the other players in sequence, one at a time. By the time the observation sequence is finished, pebbles observed in the beginning may have moved again. Thus, in an observation sequence by a reader, a node can contain another reader’s pebble that dominates the node containing the writer’s pebble. Then, the second reader has already observed the node pebbled by a later Write of the writer and moved its pebble there. In the unbounded timestamp solution below, where the timestamps are simply the nonnegative integers and a higher integer dominates a lower integer, this presents no problem: a reader simply moves its pebble to the observed pebbled node corresponding to the greatest timestamp. But in the bounded timestamp solution we must distinguish obsolete timestamps from active recycled timestamps. Clearly, the above scenario cannot happen if in a Read we observe the position of the writer’s pebble last in the observation sequence. Then, the linearization of the complete proper history of the system consists of ordering every Read after the Write it joined its pebble with. This is the basic idea. But there is a complication that makes life less easy.

In the implementation of the 1-writer n-reader variable in 1-writer 1-reader subvariables, every subvariable is a one-way communication medium between two processes. Since two-way communication between every pair of processes is required, there are at least $(n + 1)n$ such subvariables: Every process owns at least $n$ subvariables it can write, each of which is read by one of the other $n$ processes. Thus, a pebble move of a player actually consists in moving (at least) $n$ pebble copies, in sequence one at a time—a move of a pebble consists in atomically writing a subvariable. Every pebble copy can only be observed by a single fixed other player—the reader of that 1-writer 1-reader subvariable. This way player 0 may move the pebble copy associated with player 1 to another node (being observed by player 1 at time $t_1$) while the pebble copy associated with player 2 is still at the originating node (being observed later by player 2 at time $t_2 > t_1$). This once more opens the possibility that a reader sees a writer’s pebble at a node pebbled by a Write, while another reader earlier on sees a writer’s pebble at a node pebbled by a later Write. The following argument shows that this ‘later Write’ must be in fact the ‘next Write’: A reader always joins its pebble to a node that is already pebbled, and only the writer can move its pebbles to an unoccupied node. Therefore, the fact that a reader observes the writer’s pebble last guarantees that no reader, of which the pebble was observed before, can have observed a Write’s pebble position later than the next Write. Namely, at the time the writer’s pebble was observed by the former reader at the node pebbled by Write, the next Write wasn’t finished, but the latter reader has already observed the writer’s pebble. This fact is important in the bounded timestamp solution we present below, since it allows us to use a very small timestamp graph that contains cycles of length just 3: $G = (V, E)$ with $V = \{⊥, 1, \ldots, 4n+3\}^2$ and $(v_1, v_2) \in E (v_1 < v_2)$ iff either $v_1 = (i, j), v_2 = (k, h)$ and $j = k$ and $i \neq h \neq ⊥$, or $(i, j) = (⊥, ⊥)$ and $h \neq ⊥$.

This approach suffices to linearize the complete proper history of the system if we can prevent a Write to pebble the same node as a Read in the process of chasing an older obsolete Write. This we accomplish by a Read by player $i$ announcing its intended destination node several times to the writer, with an auxiliary pebble for the purpose (special auxiliary subvariable) intended for this purpose, and in between checking whether the writer has moved to the same node. In this process either the Read discovers a Write that is intermediate between two Writes it observed, and hence covered by the Read, in which case it can safely report that Write and choose the bottom timestamp $(⊥, ⊥)$. Alternatively, the Read ascertains that future Writes know about the timestamp it intends to use and those Writes will avoid that timestamp.

3 Unbounded

Figure 11 shows Construction 0, which is a restriction to the multireader case of the unbounded solution multiwriter construction of [29]. Line 2 of the Write procedure has the same effect as “$\text{free} := \text{free} + 1$” with $\text{free}$ initialized at 0 (because the writer always writes $\text{free}$ to $R_{n,n,\text{tag}}$ in line 4). The processes indexed $0, \ldots, n-1$ are the readers and the process indexed $n$ is the writer. We present it here as
an aid in understanding Construction 1. Detailed proofs of correctness (of the unrestricted version, where not just process \( n \) can Write, but every process can do so) are given in [29] and essentially simple proofs in [22] and the textbook [23].

```plaintext
type I = 0..n
   shared : record
      value : ABtype
      tag : integer
   end

procedure Write(n, v)
   var j : I
      free : integer
      from : array[0..n] of shared
   begin
      1 for j := 0..n do from[j] := R_j,n
      2 free := max_{j \in I} from[j].tag + 1
      3 from[n] := (v, free)
      4 for j := 0..n do R_{n,j} := from[n]
   end

procedure Read(i)
   var j, max : I
      from : array[0..n] of shared
   begin
      1 for j := 0..n do from[j] := R_{j,i}
      2 select max such that \( \forall j : \text{from}[max].\text{tag} \geq \text{from}[j].\text{tag} \)
      3 from[i] := from[max]
      4 for j := 0..n do R_{i,j} := from[i]
      5 return from[i].value
   end
```

Figure 1: Construction 0

The timestamp function called for in lemma 1 is built right into this construction. Each operation starts by collecting value-timestamp pairs from all users. In line 3 of either procedure, the operation picks a value and timestamp for itself. It finishes after distributing this pair to all users. It is not hard to see that the three conditions of lemma 1 are satisfied for each complete proper history. Integrity and Precedence are straightforward to check. Uniqueness follows since timestamps of Write operations of the single writer strictly increase (based on the observation that each \( R_{i,i}.\text{tag} \) is nondecreasing).

Restricting our unbounded timestamp multiwriter algorithm of [29], in the version of [22], to the single writer case enabled us to tweak it to have a new very useful property that is unique to the multireader case: The greatest timestamp scanned by a reader is either the writer’s timestamp \( \text{from}[n].\text{tag} \) or another reader’s timestamp that is at most 1 larger. The tweaking consists in the fact that there is a definite order in the scanning of the shared variables in line 2 of the Read procedure: the writer’s shared variable is scanned last (compare Section 2).

**Lemma 2** The max selected in line 2 of the Read procedure satisfies \( \text{from}[n].\text{tag} \leq \text{from}[max].\text{tag} \leq \text{from}[n].\text{tag} + 1 \).

**Proof.** At the time the writer’s shared variable \( R_{n,i} \) is scanned last in line 2 of the Read\((i)\) procedure, yielding \( \text{from}[n].\text{tag} \), the writer can have started its next write, the \((\text{from}[n].\text{tag} + 1)\)th Write, but no write after that—otherwise the \( \text{from}[n].\text{tag} \) would already have been overwritten in
A bounded timestamp is a pair \((t, h)\) where \(t\) is the value of the tail field and \(h\) is the value of the head field. Every field can contain a value \(v\) with \(0 \leq t < 4n + 2\) or \(t\) is the distinguished initial, or bottom, value \(\perp\). (\(\perp\) is not a number and is lower than any number.) We define the domination relation “\(<\)” on the bounded timestamps as follows: \((t_1, h_1) < (t_0, h_0)\) if either \(h_1 = t_0\) and \(t_1 \neq h_0 \neq \perp\), or \(t_1, h_1 = \perp\) and \(h_0 \neq \perp\).

The matrix of shared variables stays the same, but now every \(R_{i,j}\) \((0 \leq i, j \leq n)\) contains a record consisting of a value field, and a bounded timestamp consisting of a tail field and a head field. The purpose is that process \(j\) can see (read) whether process \(i\) has executed a Read \((0 \leq i < n)\) or Write \((i = n)\) with what timestamp. The readers use this information to select an appropriate “latest” Write value to return in their Read. The shared variables \(R_{i,n}\) for communication between readers \(i\) \((0 \leq i \leq n - 1)\) and the writer \(n\) contains in addition a second such record. This second record is used by the readers to inform the writer of timestamps that are not obsolete, in the sense that they still exist in the local variables of the reader even though they may have already disappeared from every shared variable in the system. These timestamps may possibly be written to a shared variable owned by the reader involved, and hence cannot be recycled yet. The scan executed in line 1 of the Write protocol gathers all timestamps written in both records of the \(R_{i,n}\)’s \((0 \leq i \leq n)\). These constitute all the timestamps that are not obsolete, and hence the process can determine the \(\leq 4n + 2\) values occurring in the fields (two per timestamp, one timestamp per record, for \(2n + 1\) records), and select a value that doesn’t occur (there are \(4n + 3\) values available exclusive of the bottom value \(\perp\)). The initial state of the construction has all records in the \(R_{i,j}\)’s set to \((0, \perp, \perp)\).

The lines of Construction-1 are numbered maintaining—or subnumbering— the corresponding line numbers of Construction-0. The only real difference in the Write protocols is line 2 (select new timestamp). In the Read protocols the differences are lines 2.x (determine latest—or appropriate—timestamp) and lines 3.x (assign selected timestamp to local variable \(from[i]\)), and lines 0.x (start Read by reading writer’s timestamp and writing it back to writer). According to this scheme we obtain the out-of-order line-sequence 2.4, 3.1, 2.5, 3.2 because the instructions in lines 2 and 3 of Construction-0 are split and interleaved in Construction-1.

**Lemma 3** Line 2 of a Write always selects a free integer \(h_1\) such that the timestamp \((t_1, h_1)\) with new head \(h_1\) and new tail \(t_1\) (head of the timestamp of the directly preceding Write), assigned in line 3 and written in line 4 of that Write, satisfies \((t_1, h_1) \not< (t_0, h_0)\) and \((t_1, h_1) \not= (t_0, h_0)\) for every timestamp \((t_0, h_0)\) either scanned in line 1 of the Write, or presently occurring in a local variable of a concurrent Read that will eventually be written to a shared variable in line 4 of that Read.

**Proof.** Intuition: In line 1 of a Write the shared variables with each reader, and a redundant shared variable with itself, are scanned in turn. In assigning a value to free in line 2 the writer avoids all values that occur in the head and tail fields of the shared variables. All local variables of a reader are re-assigned from shared variables in executing the Read procedure, before they are written to shared variables. So the only problem can be that free occurs in a local variable of a concurrently active Read that has not yet written it to a variable shared with the writer at the time that variable was scanned by the Write. If free exists in a local variable temp this doesn’t matter.
shared : record
  value : Abstype
  tail : ⊥, 0..4n + 2
  head : ⊥, 0..4n + 2
end

procedure Write(n, v)
var j : 0..n
  free : 0..4n + 2
  temp : shared
  used : array[0..1, 0..n] of shared
begin
1 for j := 0..n − 1 do used[0..1, j] := R_{j,n}; temp := R_{n,n}
2 free := least positive integer not in tail or head fields of used or temp records
3 temp := (v, used[0,n].head, free)
4 for j := 0..n do R_{n,j} := temp
end

procedure Read(i)
var j, max
  temp : shared
  from : array[0..n] of shared
begin
0.1 from[i] := R_{i,i}; temp := R_{n,i}
0.2 R_{i,n} := (from[i], temp)
1 for j = 0..n do from[j] := R_{j,i}
2.1 if from[n] ≠ temp then
2.2 temp := from[n] ; R_{i,n} := (from[i], temp)
2.3 for j = 0..n do from[j] := R_{j,i}
2.4 if from[n] ≠ temp then
3.1 from[i] := (temp.value, ⊥, ⊥); goto 4
2.5 if ∃max : from[max] . (tail, head) > from[n] . (tail, head) then
3.2 from[i] := from[max]
3.3 else from[i] := from[n]
4.1 for j := 0..n − 1 do R_{i,j} := from[i]; R_{i,n} := (from[i] · temp)
5 return from[i].value
end

Figure 2: Construction 1
since the timestamp concerned will not be used as a Read timestamp. Hence, the only way in which free can be assigned a value that concurrently exists in a local variable of a Read which already has been used or eventually can be used in selection line 2.5 of a Read, and hence eventually can be part of an offending timestamp written to a shared variable, is according to the following scenario: A Read(i), say R, is active at the time a Write, say W₁, reads either one of their shared variables. This R will select or has already selected the offending timestamp \((t₀, h₀)\), originally written by a Write \(W₀\) preceding \(W₁\), but \(R\) has not yet written it to \(R_{t,n+1}\) or \(R_{t,n}\) by the times \(W₁\) scans those variables. Moreover, \(W₁\) will in fact select a timestamp \((t₁, h₁)\) with either \((t₁, h₁) < (t₀, h₀)\) or \((t₁, h₁) = (t₀, h₀)\). This can only happen if free in line 2 is \(t₀\), or \(h₀\) and the \(t₀ = head\) of the timestamp of the Write immediately preceding \(W₁\), respectively. Then, a later Read \(R₀\) using its line 2.5 the \((t₁, h₁)\) timestamp written by \(W₁\) and the \((t₀, h₀)\) timestamp written by \(R\) concludes falsely that \(W₁\) precedes \(W₀\) or \(W₁ = W₀\). For this to happen, \(R\) has to write \((t₀, h₀)\) in line 4, and has to assign it previously in one of lines 3.1, 3.2, or 3.3. In line 3.1 the timestamp assigned is the bottom timestamp \((⊥, ⊥)\) which by definition cannot dominate or equal a timestamp assigned by the writer. This leaves assignement of the offending timestamp \((t₀, h₀)\) in line 3.2 or line 3.3. This also leads to a contradiction of which the proof is deferred to a future paper using the I/O automata formalism.

The crucial feature that makes the bounded algorithm work is the equivalent of lemma 2

Lemma 4 The timestamp selected in lines 2.x and written in line 4 of a Read(i) is one of the following:

(i) The timestamp \((⊥, ⊥)\) for a Write that is completely overlapped by the Read concerned;
(ii) Another reader’s timestamp scanned in line 1 (respectively, line 2.3) that is written by the next Write after the Write that wrote the timestamp from \([n],(tail, head)\) scanned in line 1.
(iii) Otherwise, the writer’s timestamp from \([n],(tail, head)\) scanned in line 1.

Proof. Intuition: Only assignments in lines 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 can result in a write in line 4.

(i) If line 3.1 is executed in a Read, then previously we scanned the writer’s timestamp in lines 0.1, 1, 2.3, and obtained three successive timestamps without two successive ones being the same. Hence the Write corresponding to the middle scan, of line 1, is overlapped completely by the Read, and the Read can be ordered directly after this Write, and this has no consequences for the remaining ordering. This is reflected by using the timestamp \((⊥, ⊥)\) to be written by such a Read in line 4.

(ii) If line 3.2 is executed in a Read then the timestamp assigned is a reader’s timestamp scanned in line 1 or line 2.3. The writer’s timestamp used in the comparison line 2.5 is, say, \((t, h)\). According to the semantics of the “<” sign in definition 2 only a reader’s timestamp of the form \((h, free)\) satisfies the condition in line 2.5. The only timestamps in the system are created by the writer. By Lemma 3 existence of the \((h, free)\) timestamp somewhere in the system at the time of writing the current instance of timestamp \((t, h)\) would have prevented the writer from writing \((t, h)\). Thus the writer must have written the \((h, free)\) timestamp after it wrote \((t, h)\). Using Lemma 3 a second time, the writer can write a timestamp with \(h\) in the tail field only at the very next Write after the Write that wrote a timestamp with \(h\) in the head field, since the \((t, h)\) timestamp is still somewhere in a shared variable or to be written to a shared variable.

(iii) If line 3.3 is executed in a Read, then items (i) and (ii) were not applicable and the timestamp assigned is the writer’s timestamp scanned in line 1.

Theorem 1 Construction-1 is a wait-free implementation of an atomic 1-writer n-reader register. It uses \((n+1)(n+2)−1\) atomic 1-writer 1-reader 2\log(4n+4) bits control shared variables. The Write scans \(2n+1\) of these variables and writes \(n+1\) of them; the Read scans \(\leq 2n+3\) of these variables and writes \(\leq n+3\) of them.

Proof. Complexity: Since the program of Construction-1 contains no loops, it is straightforward to verify that every Read and Write executes the number of accesses to shared variables, and the size of the shared variables, as in the statement of the theorem.
**Wait-Freedom:** This follows directly from the upper bounds on the complexity (scans and writes) of the shared variables in the construction, and the fact that the program of Construction-1 is loop-free.

**Linearizability:** Consider a complete proper history (as defined before) $h$ of all Writes and only those Read’s that don’t write the bottom timestamp $(\bot, \bot)$ in line 4. Let $\prec_h$ be the partial order induced by the timing of the Reads and Writes of $h$. Lemma 4 items (ii) and (iii), asserts that on this history $h$, Construction-0 and Construction-1 behave identically in that the same Read reports the values of the same Write in both constructions. Therefore, with respect to $h$, linearizability of Construction-1 follows from the linearizability of Construction-0. Let $\prec'_h$ be the linear order thus resulting from $\prec_h$. The remaining Read’s, those that write the bottom timestamp $(\bot, \bot)$ in line 4, completely overlap a Write, lemma 4 item (i), and report the value of that overlapped Write. Hence they can, without violating linearizability, be inserted in the $\prec'_h$-order directly following the Write concerned. This shows that Construction-1 is linearizable.

**Minimum Number of Global Control Bits:** The same algorithm with only $O(n^2)$ control bits overall can be constructed as follows. Each register owned by the writer contains $2n$ control bits, and each register owned by a reader contains only 2 control bits. The control bits are used to determine the domination relation between readers and the writer. The Protocol stays the same, only the decisions in the protocol are made according to different format data. Since the decisions are isomorphic with that of Protocol 1, the correctness of the new Protocol follows by induction on the total atomic order of the operation executions in each run by the correctness of Construction-1.

**Minimum Number of Replicas of Stored Values:** In the algorithm, each subregister ostensibly contains a copy of the value to be written. This sums up to $O(n^2 \log V)$ bits, for the value ranging from 1 to $V$. With the following scheme only the registers owned by the writer contain the values. Each register owned by the writer can contain two values. The two fields concerned are used alternatingly. The writer starts its $t$th write with an extra write (line 0) to all registers it owns, writing the new value in field $t \pmod{2}$. In line 4 it writes to field $t \pmod{2}$ (it marks this field as the last one written), and finishes by setting $t := (t + 1) \pmod{2}$. The readers, on the other hand, now write no values, only the timestamps. If the reader chooses the writer, it takes the value from the marked field; if it chooses a reader, it takes the value from the unmarked field. Since no observed reader can be more than one write ahead of the actually observed write, this is feasible while maintaining correctness. This results in $O(n)$ replications of the value written resulting in a total of $O(n \log V)$ value bits. This is clearly the optimal order since the writer needs to communicate the value to everyone of the readers through a separate subregister. (Consider a schedule where every reader but one has fallen asleep indefinitely. Wait-freeness requires that the writer writes the value to a subregister being read by the active reader.)

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