MPIT: A New Interface for Performance Tools in MPI 3
(A Proposal from the MPI-3 Tools WG)

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Tool Interfaces in MPI

- Standardized interfaces for tools are essential
  - Otherwise: hard to create portable tools
  - Many ad-hoc solutions

- Positive example: PMPI
  - Standardized interposition mechanism for MPI
  - Required by the standard / Available everywhere
  - Used by a large number of tools

- BUT: PMPI only covers part of what tools need
  - Only intended as a first party interface
  - Application level abstraction
  - No insight into the MPI library

- Chance to change this in MPI-3
Charter of the Tools Working Group

- Define interfaces for development tools
  - Performance analysis, debuggers, correctness tools
  - Insight into MPI library
  - Understand interactions between MPI and application
  - Determine application execution environment

- Motivation:
  - Provide the basis for reliable and portable tools
  - Provide new functionality not covered by PMPI

- All efforts are intended as an extension to PMPI

https://svn.mpi-forum.org/trac/mpi-forum-web/wiki/MPI3Tools
Current Activities

- MPI Performance Information Interface (MPIT)
- Documentation of the current MPIR interface
  - Automatic Process Acquisition Interface
- Additional 3rd party interfaces
  - New, scalable version of an APAI for MPI-2/3
  - Debugger DLL naming
  - Handle query interfaces
- Potential future items
  - Extensions of the MPI_Pcontrol mechanism
  - Piggybacking (together with the FT WG)
  - Low level tracing option in MPIT
MPIT: A Performance Information Interface for MPI

- Enable tools access to internal MPI information
  - Information about MPI configuration
  - Internal performance information
    - Queue management
    - Memory consumption

- Usage models
  - Portable configuration tools
  - PMPI tools with access to internal data
  - Self monitoring applications & Autotuning
  - Portable communication tool <-> application
  - PAPI-C component
Central Concepts

- An MPI implementation decides what to expose
  - No restrictions on the implementation
  - Flexibility to expose implementation specific details
  - Option to provide production and debug versions
  - Requirement: API to provide additional information in a portable way to convey some semantics

- Variables
  - Data is conveyed through a set of variables
  - Configuration and performance variables
  - Separate type system to avoid initialization problems

- C bindings only / No Fortran bindings
Three + One Sections

1. Configuration variables
   • Settings for runtime behavior (typical: env. vars.)
   • Options to read / to set?

2. Performance variables
   • Internal performance information of the MPI library
   • Virtualized start/stop counters

3. Initialization, finalization, and type system
   • Separate MPIT from MPI
   • Separate sessions for performance variables

Initially planned, but put aside: low-level tracing interface
   • Log internal events to ring buffer
Configuration Variables

- User controlled configuration mechanisms
  - Often in the form of environment variables
  - Tailor behavior to a machine or algorithm
  - Typically barely documented, hard to understand

- First section of MPIT allows access to those variables
  - Query all existing variables
  - Query default and current settings
  - Ideally: application specific control

- Sample use cases
  - Tool to list all configuration options
  - Document execution parameters
  - Configuration and optimization all the way to autotuning
Detecting Configuration Variables

- Two step process
  - Find all available variables
  - Query detailed information about a variable

- Step 1: Iterator approach to discover all variables
  - Initialize iterator with a constant
  - Pass the same iterator to repeating calls until done
  - Each invocation returns one variable name
  - Gather or search for variable names

- Step 2: Query additional information
  - Detailed description
  - Type and size information
API Calls for Variable Detection

- **MPIT_CONFIG_FIND**
  - **IN/OUT**: iterator
  - **OUT**: name/namelen (string)
  - **IN**: maxverbosity

- **MPIT_CONFIG_QUERY**
  - **IN**: name
  - **OUT**: datatype/count
  - **OUT**: description/length (string)
  - **OUT**: default value
  - **OUT**: verbosity

- **MPIT_CONFIG_VARS_CHANGED**
  - **OUT**: flag
Verbosity Levels

- MPIs could return large number of variables
  - Restrict the number of returned variables
  - Categorize all variables based on use case

- Verbosity levels in increasing order
  - MPIT_VERBOSITY_USER_BASIC
  - MPIT_VERBOSITY_USER_DETAILED
  - MPIT_VERBOSITY_TUNER_BASIC
  - MPIT_VERBOSITY_TUNER_DETAILED
  - MPIT_VERBOSITY_MPI_DEVELOPER

- Query call only return variables that at the requested verbosity level or lower
String Interface

- Many MPIT calls rely on return strings
  - Widely different lengths (name vs. descriptions)

- Currently not handled well in MPI
  - Predefined maximal length for a string as a constant
  - MPI returns actual length copied into buffer
  - Not efficient for widely varying string sizes
  - Danger of buffer overflows

- Proposal to use a different approach
  - IN/OUT parameter for length to indicate size of buffer
  - If zero is passed in, MPI returns actual size of string
  - Automatic truncation if buffer is too small
Once configuration variables are identified
- Ability to query configuration settings
- Document default/current settings
- Adjust configuration
- Opportunity for auto tuning

**MPIT_CONFIG_GET**
- **IN**: name (string)
- **OUT**: buf (with type/size as provided by query call)

**MPIT_CONFIG_SET**
- **IN**: name (string)
- **OUT**: buf (with type/size as provided by query call)
Issues with Writing Configuration Variables

- Writing configuration variables has complications
  - Access from multiple tools
  - Changes may require global synchronization
  - WG currently favors avoiding writes
  - Strong concrete use cases?

- Options to avoid racing updates
  - Request exclusive write access during `MPIT_INIT`
  - Locking mechanisms

- Options to deal with globally synchronizing changes
  - Make `MPIT_CONFIG_SET` a collective call
  - Batching updates before applying them
**Configuration Variables API Overview**

- **MPIT_CONFIG_FIND**(iter,name,maxverbose)**:**
  Iterator to find all configuration variables

- **MPIT_CONFIG_QUERY**(name,desc,type/size,default,verbose)**:**
  Query description and type of a variable

- **MPIT_CONFIG_VARS_CHANGED**(flag)**:**
  Notification that the list has changed

- **MPIT_CONFIG_GET**(name,buffer)**:**
  Read the value of a configuration variable

- **MPIT_CONFIG_SET**(name,buffer)**:**
  Write a value to a configuration variable
Performance Variables

- Access to MPI internal performance information
  - Queue length, memory footprint, matching time, …
  - MPI defines a set of variables that are available and updated by the MPI library at runtime
  - MPIT can query (and control) these variables

- Sample use cases:
  - Performance studies (find bottlenecks inside of MPI)
  - Scalability studies (e.g., wrt. Memory)

- Same query process as with configuration variables
  - Step 1: Iterator-based detection of available data
  - Step 2: Ability to query information for each variable
API for Variable Detection

- **MPIT_PERFORMANCE_FIND**
  - **IN/OUT**: iterator
  - **OUT**: name/namelen (string)
  - **IN**: maxverbosity

- **MPIT_PERFORMANCE_QUERY**
  - **IN**: name
  - **OUT**: class of the performance variable / type of information
  - **OUT**: datatype/count
  - **OUT**: description/length (string)
  - **OUT**: readonly (can not be reset)
  - **OUT**: continuous (can not be started/stopped)
  - **OUT**: verbosity

- **MPIT_PERFORMANCE_VARS_CHANGED**
  - **OUT**: flag
Classes of Performance Variables

- **MPIT_VARCLASS_STATE**
  - Snapshot of a discrete state (e.g., work/message/wait)

- **MPIT_VARCLASS_UTILIZATION**
  - Utilization of a finite resource (e.g., buffer) (range 0.0-1.0)

- **MPIT_VARCLASS_RESOURCE**

- **MPIT_VARCLASS_HIGHWATERMARK**
  - Absolute utilization of a resource in MPI (current/high/low)

- **MPIT_VARCLASS_LOWWATERMARK**

- **MPIT_VARCLASS_COUNTER**
  - Monotonically increasing counter of a specific set of events (+1)

- **MPIT_VARCLASS_AGGREGATE**
  - Aggregate value over time of a specific event parameter (+N)

- **MPIT_VARCLASS_TIMER**
  - Aggregated time of a set of events
Handle API for Performance Variables

- Performance variables require active handles
  - Allocation and deallocation routines
  - Easier for optimizations
  - Access routines require handles

- `MPIT_PERFORMANCE_HANDLE_GET`
  - **IN**: name (string)
  - **OUT**: handle

- `MPIT_PERFORMANCE_HANDLE_FREE`
  - **IN**: handle
Counter API

- All counter access require a valid handle to the counter

- Start/Stop API
  - `MPIT_PERFORMANCE_START`
  - `MPIT_PERFORMANCE_STOP`
  - `IN`: handle (`MPIT_ALL_COUNTERS` would also be OK)

- Read/Write/Reset API
  - `MPIT_PERFORMANCE_READ`
  - `MPIT_PERFORMANCE_RESET`
  - `MPIT_PERFORMANCE_READRESET`
  - `MPIT_PERFORMANCE_WRITE`
  - `IN`: handle of counter
  - `IN`: application buffer of correct type (for read & readreset)
### Performance Variables API Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><code>MPIT_PERFORMANCE_FIND (iter,name,maxverbose)</code></td>
<td>Iterator to find all performance variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>MPIT_PERFORMANCE_QUERY (name,…)</code></td>
<td>Query description and type of a variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>MPIT_PERFORMANCE_VARS_CHANGED (flag)</code></td>
<td>Notification that the list has changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>MPIT_PERFORMANCE_HANDLE_GET(name,handle)</code></td>
<td>Request a handle for a variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>MPIT_PERFORMANCE_HANDLE_FREE (handle)</code></td>
<td>Release a handle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPIT_PERFORMANCE_START(handle)</td>
<td>Start recording data of one/all variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPIT_PERFORMANCE_STOP(handle)</td>
<td>Stop recording data of one/all variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPIT_PERFORMANCE_READ(handle,buffer)</td>
<td>Read and/or reset the value of a variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPIT_PERFORMANCE_READRESET(handle,buffer)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPIT_PERFORMANCE_RESET(handle)</td>
<td>Set the value of a performance variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPIT_PERFORMANCE_WRITE(handle,buffer)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hierarchy and Group Information

- Variables should be structured
  - Semantic information describing variables
  - Grouping and hierarchical relationships
  - Needs to be provided by the MPI library
- Structured as hierarchical sets
  - Variables are grouped in sets
  - Sets are grouped in sets
- Routines to query set structure
  - Iterator based
  - Top-down and bottom-up options
  - Additional textual descriptions
Variable Taxonomy API

MPIT_TAXON_QUERY_SET_VARIABLES (iter,var,set,type)
Iterator to find all sets containing a variable

MPIT_TAXON_QUERY_VARIABLE_SETS (iter,var,set,type)
Iterator to find all variables contained in a set

MPIT_TAXON_QUERY_SET_SETS (iter,set,set)
Iterator to find all sets contained in a set

MPIT_TAXON_CHANGED (flag)
Taxonomy information has changed

MPIT_TAXON_DESCRIBE_SET (iset,desc)
Get additional information for a particular set
Initialization of MPIT

- Initialization separate from MPI itself
  - Not bound to MPI_Init / MPI_Finalize
  - New calls: `MPIT_Init/MPIT_Finalize` (similar semantics)
  - Can be run before Init and after Finalize

- Multiple, nested initialization
  - Allow multiple tools to gather MPIT data
  - Each usage requires separate Init/Finalize pair
  - Usage counter

- Open questions:
  - Is this sufficient for a clean co-existence of tools?
  - Is it necessary to have access to argv/argc?
Session Management

- How to enable multiple tools to gather performance data?
  - Identify which tool requested which counters
  - Provide consistent counter data

- Explicit sessions for performance counters

  **MPIT_PERFORMANCE_SESSION_CREATE**
  - **OUT**: session handle
  - Create session and return session specific handle

  **MPIT_PERFORMANCE_SESSION_DESTROY**
  - **IN**: session handle
  - End session and delete all handles

- Session argument for every **MPIT_PERFORMANCE** call
MPIT Type System

- Type system separated from MPI
  - Not guaranteed to be initialized before MPI_Init
  - Complex datatypes unnecessary

- MPIT offers a set of basic types
  - `MPIT_BYTE, MPIT_SHORT, MPIT_LONG, MPIT_INT, MPIT_LONG_LONG, MPIT_CHAR, MPIT_FLOAT, MPIT_DOUBLE`
  - Each type has an equivalent MPI base type

- Enumeration types
  - Fixed number of values (similar to enum)
  - `MPIT_TYPECLASS_GET`
    - Returns whether a type is an enumeration type or not
MPIT Enumeration Types

- Each element of an enumeration carries semantics
  - MPI would benefit from being able to get such semantics
  - Query interface for descriptions of each element

**MPIT_ENUMTYPE_QUERY**
- **IN**: type (must be an enumeration type)
- **OUT**: number (number of elements in the set)
- **OUT**: name of the enumeration type

**MPIT_ENUMITEM_QUERY**
- **IN**: type (must be an enumeration type)
- **IN**: number (item number to query)
- **OUT**: description string
**Init/Finalize/Types API Overview**

**MPIT_INIT (instance)**  
Initialize the interface for use

**MPIT_FINALIZE (instance)**  
Finish using this instance of MPIT

**MPIT_PERFORMANCE_SESSION_CREATE (session)**  
Create a new session for performance variables

**MPIT_PERFORMANCE_SESSION_DESTROY (session)**  
Delete a new session for performance variables

**MPIT_TYPECLASS_GET (type, class)**  
Determine whether a type is an enumeration type

**MPIT_ENUMTYPE (type, number, name)**  
**MPIT_ENUMITEM (type, itemno, desc)**  
Query information about an enumeration type
MPIT Status

- API has been presented to MPI forum before
  - January meeting
  - Feedback is being integrated

- Draft currently being reworked
  - Multiple initialization/finalizations
  - Adding session management
  - Group and hierarchy information

- Timeline
  - Final discussions in the next weeks
  - Presentation to the MPI Forum at October Meeting
  - First reading + votes after that
Conclusions

- With MPI-3 we have the chance to get more tools interfaces
  - Going beyond the successful PMPI interface
  - For debugging, performance analysis, correctness tools

- MPIT: a new way of getting performance data from MPI
  - Portable access to performance and configuration data
  - Based on a query interface (MPI library independent)
  - Support for interface virtualization

- Feedback on MPIT needed now
  - Extensions discussions in the WG
  - Presentation and buy in from MPI forum
  - Need more feedback from the tools community!