Anatomy of a disk

- **Stack of magnetic platters**
  - Rotate together on a central spindle @3,600-15,000 RPM
  - Drives speed drifts slowly over time
  - Can’t predict rotational position after 100-200 revolutions

- **Disk arm assembly**
  - Arms rotate around pivot, all move together
  - Pivot offers some resistance to linear shocks
  - Arms contain disk heads—one for each recording surface
  - Heads read and write data to platters
Storage on a magnetic platter

- Platters divided into concentric tracks
- A stack of tracks of fixed radius is a cylinder
- Heads record and sense data along cylinders
  - Significant fractions of encoded stream for error correction
- Generally only one head active at a time
  - Disks usually have one set of read-write circuitry
  - Must worry about cross-talk between channels
  - Hard to keep multiple heads exactly aligned
Disk positioning system

- Move head to specific track and keep it there
  - Resist physical socks, imperfect tracks, etc.

- A seek consists of up to four phases:
  - speedup—accelerate arm to max speed or half way point
  - coast—at max speed (for long seeks)
  - slowdown—stops arm near destination
  - settle—adjusts head to actual desired track

- Very short seeks dominated by settle time (~1 ms)

- Short (200-400 cyl.) seeks dominated by speedup
  - Accelerations of 40g
Seek details

• Head switches comparable to short seeks
  - May also require head adjustment
  - Settles take longer for writes than reads

• Disk keeps table of pivot motor power
  - Maps seek distance to power and time
  - Disk interpolates over entries in table
  - Table set by periodic “thermal recalibration”
  - 500 ms recalibration every 25 min, bad for AV

• “Average seek time” quoted can be many things
  - Time to seek 1/3 disk, 1/3 time to seek whole disk,
Sectors

- Disk interface presents linear array of *sectors*
  - Generally 512 bytes, written atomically

- Disk maps logical sector #s to physical sectors
  - *Zoning*—puts more sectors on longer tracks
  - *Track skewing*—sector 0 pos. varies for sequential I/O
  - *Sparing*—flawed sectors remapped elsewhere

- OS doesn’t know logical to physical sector mapping
  - Larger logical sector # difference means larger seek
  - Highly non-linear relationship (*and* depends on zone)
  - OS has no info on rotational positions
  - Can empirically build table to estimate times
Disk interface

- Controls hardware, mediates access
- Computer, disk often connected by bus (e.g., SCSI)
  - Multiple devices may contentd for bus
  - SCSI devices can disconnect during requests (+200 µs)
- Command queuing: Give disk multiple requests
  - Disk can schedule them using rotational information
- Disk cache used for read-ahead
  - Otherwise, sequential reads would incur whole revolution
  - Cross track boundaries? Can’t stop a head-switch
- Some disks support write caching
  - But data not stable—not suitable for all requests
Scheduling: First come first served (FCFS)

- Process disk requests in the order they are received
- Advantages
  - Easy to implement
  - Good fairness
- Disadvantages
  - Cannot exploit request locality
  - Increases average latency, decreasing throughput
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Shortest positioning time first (SPTF)

• Always pick request with shortest seek time

• Advantages
  - 
  - 

• Disadvantages
  - 
  - 

• Improvement
  - 
  -
Shortest positioning time first (SPTF)

- Always pick request with shortest seek time

- Advantages
  - Exploits locality of disk requests
  - Higher throughput

- Disadvantages
  - Starvation
  - Don’t always know what request will be fastest

- Improvement: Aged SPTF
  - Give older requests higher priority
  - Adjust “effective” seek time with weighting factor:
    \[ T_{\text{eff}} = T_{\text{pos}} - W \cdot T_{\text{wait}} \]
“Elevator” scheduling (SCAN)

- Sweep across disk, servicing all requests passed
  - Like SPTF, but next seek must be in same direction
  - Switch directions only if no further requests

- Advantages

- Disadvantages

- Variant
“Elevator” scheduling (SCAN)

- Sweep across disk, servicing all requests passed
  - Like SPTF, but next seek must be in same direction
  - Switch directions only if no further requests

- Advantages
  - Takes advantage of locality
  - Bounded waiting

- Disadvantages
  - Cylinders in the middle get better service
  - Might miss locality SPTF could exploit

- CSCAN: Only sweep in one direction
  - Very commonly used algorithm in Unix
VSCAN(r)

• Continuum between SPTF and SCAN
  - Like SPTF, but slightly uses “effective” positioning time
    If request in same direction as previous seek: \( T_{eff} = T_{pos} \)
    Otherwise: \( T_{eff} = T_{pos} + r \cdot T_{max} \)
  - when \( r = 0 \), get SPTF, when \( r = 1 \), get SCAN
  - E.g., \( r = 0.2 \) works well

• Advantages and disadvantages
  - Those of SPTF and SCAN, depending on how \( r \) is set