Open-Channel SSDs

**Definition:** A class of Solid State Drives that expose (some of) their geometry to the host and allow it to control (part of) its internals through a richer R/W/E interface.

- The design space is very large, from pure physical access to restricted access rules.

**Objective:** Move storage closer to the application – host data placement & scheduling

- Reduce Write Amplification Factor (WAF) and Space Amplification Factor (SAF)
- Make media parallelism available to the host – device provides isolation across parallel units

Term introduced at *Baidu paper* [1] to optimize their KV-store by accessing physical media.

Different types of OCSSDs implemented in the industry: Fusion I/O, Violin Memory and others.

Several specifications available:

- Open-Channel SSD 1.2 and 2.0 [2] (Support in Linux Kernel through LightNVM since 4.4 and 4.17)
- Several CSP specific Open-Channel Specifications

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[1] An efficient design and implementation of LSM-tree based key-value store on open-channel SSD (Eurosys’14), Peng Wang, Guangyu Sun, Song Jiang, Jian Ouyang, Shiding Lin, Chen Zhang, and Jason Cong
[2] lightnvm.io
Denali Open-Channel SSDs

- Industry standard for a specific point in the Open-Channel SSD design space
  - **Goal:** Minimize host & device changes across NAND generations to speed up new media adoption
  - Device manages the physical media: retention, ECC, access policies, program patterns, etc.
  - Host controls data placement and I/O scheduling
  - Media access is abstracted through access rules – align with zoned devices
  - Feedback loop for device -> host communication

- Several companies involved in the Joint Development Forum (JDF). Representation from:
  - NAND, controller and SSD vendors
  - Cloud Service Providers (CSPs)
  - Enterprise storage

- Start point at Open-Channel 2.0 specification
  - Continue work done from 1.2 to 2.0
  - Address issues / limitations in 2.0
  - Incorporate feedback from the JDF for industry-wide standard
  - Pave the way for incorporating in NVMe standard
Design Space

- Mimic HDDs and maintain block abstraction for adoption
- HDDs already moving towards zone-based block devices (SMR)

SSD Design Space (increasing host responsibilities)

- Simplify device by removing mapping layer – maintain media
- Remove block abstraction to enable host place and schedule
- Host rules similar to zone-devices

- Very simple device
- Ideal for fast prototyping
- Productize single NAND / vendor SSD
Nomenclature

- **Geometry:**
  - *Logical Block:* Minimum addressable unit for reads.
  - *Chunk:* Collection of logical blocks. Minimum addressable unit for resets (erases)
  - *Parallel Unit (PU):* Collection of Chunks that must be accessed serialized. Typically, a device counts on tens / hundreds of these parallel units
  - *Group:* Collection of PUs that share the same transfer bus on the device.

- **Tenant:** Logical construction to represent a collection of chunks that are used by the host for a given purpose. This abstraction allows to manage WAF, SAF, isolation and parallelism
  - A device can be partitioned into several workload-optimized tenants.
  - When a tenant is composed by a whole PU, the tenant is guaranteed I/O isolation – aggregated bandwidth does not have an impact on per-tenant latencies.
  - When none of the tenants share chunks, very little WAF is generated - applications good at managing sequential writes and hot / cold data separation.
  - Per-tenant over-provision allows to minimize SAF – better $$ per TB.
Key Challenges*

* The Denali spec. is not finalized
Device Warranty

- Without any form of protection, the host can create hot spots and wear them out very quickly.

- Current warranty metrics do not apply since the host manages data placement:
  - DWPD and TBW are device-wide.
  - Devices are optimized for a given workload – different over-provision, DWPD, etc.
  - Current reliability / endurance standards are device wide (e.g., JEDEC).

- **Path**: Host is king, but it must behave!
  - Reuse today’s warranty concepts, but at a lower granularity (chunk).
  - Maintain a dedicated log for warranty purposes. Vendor ground truth.
  - Incorporate Denali to current reliability / endurance standards.
  - Add protection mechanisms for misbehaved hosts (e.g., prevent double erases*).
  - Report wear unevenness (over given threshold) to the host through feedback loop*.
  - Create tools to verify host’s and device’s behavior.

* Present in Open-Channel 2.0
Reservations

- The host can organize parallel units (PUs) into different tenants to provide I/O isolation
- Tenants are not visible to the device
  - Feedback loop can only report wear unevenness at a chunk granularity
  - Uneven wear across tenants is expected
  - Device-side per-tenant manipulation is not possible (e.g., RAID)

Path: Incorporate reservations at the device level
- Allow host to create / delete tenants that are visible to the device
  - Host is aware of media boundaries: Group, PU and chunk
- Enable per-tenant feedback notifications
  - Different urgency and scope
- Narrow down device responsibilities for different types of tenants
- Support for vertical, horizontal and hybrid configurations: manage isolation vs. capacity
- NVMe alignment: Endurance groups & NVM Sets
Device side RAID

- RAID is strongly recommended for some NAND by the vendors, independently of used ECC
  - Prevent *infant block death*
  - Reach acceptable PE Cycle count

- RAID has purposely being left out of available specifications due to complexity

- Different needs
  - CSPs deals with single device errors at higher level: erasure coding, software RAID, etc.
  - Enterprise require per device guarantees: RAID within drives and across drives

- **Path:** Support RAID as part of reservation interface
  - Denali should address cloud and enterprise; leaving RAID undefined (i.e., VU) will create fragmentation
  - RAID schemes should be reported by the device – flexibility and controlled complexity
  - Enabled in Denali as part of the reservations
    - *create_tenant* takes PUs and raid scheme as parameters
  - User-specific parity schemes can be accelerated other places (in a few slides)
NVMe Alignment

- The ultimate purpose is to standardize the core ideas of Denali OC in NVMe
  - It is necessary for wide industry adoption
  - Helps reducing fragmentation
  - Makes further integration in the storage stack easier
  - Changes are expected
Architecture
Host manages storage entirely
- Use of CPU and memory
- Need for dedicated drivers *

Devices expose Denali interface

Need for Denali-OF for disaggregation

* Support in Linux through LightNVM subsystem (from kernel 4.4)
Adoption Challenges & Insights

- Service providers are not willing to dedicate extra host resources for managing storage
  - Resources are *billable* to the application
  - FTLs are expensive in terms of both CPU and memory
    - Denali must enable both (i) lightweight host and (ii) FTL offload
- Most applications can excel with simpler abstractions than *raw* media access
  - Error path is the critical path – raw media does fail
    - Denali already abstracts media. More complex constructions can be built on top
- Considerable gains by moving computation and transfers closer to the data while maintaining a simple interface at the host (i.e., computational storage)
  - RAID, erasure coding, deduplication, compression, etc.
  - Analytics, calculations, DB operations, etc.
  - Peer-to-peer PCIe, RDMA
    - Denali is a flexible storage offload for different classes of applications
- Disaggregation must be simple
  - Management + transparent I/O path
    - Denali can build on top of work done on NVMeOF
Host uses a lightweight API
- Traditional block devices
- Key-Value stores
- Dedicated APIs, e.g., append-only streams (AOs)

Aggregator manages storage
- *Billable* CPU and memory not shared with the application
- No need for Denali OC support in host’s OS
- Allows to offload computation closer to the data on parts owned by the service provider
- Vendor Unique commands allow to use NVMe

PCle attached allows fast adoption for dedicated storage APIs on local storage

Fabrics attached enables typical NVMeOF disaggregation (next slide)
Back to Software APIs

- Storage protocols increase in complexity by adding vendor-, user-dedicated extensions
  - Solve a problem under a set of assumptions
  - Require dedicated support from SSD vendors
  - Once standardized, need to carry it forever
  - Once deployed, it cannot be *easily* modified

- Denali OC allows for these extensions to become APIs
  - Easy to prototype, test, deploy and modify
  - Much shorter deployment time (years to weeks)
  - Still allow for multiple sources
  - NVMe can be used as protocol through VU commands (which remain between host and accelerator)
  - Storage accelerators simplify this further by encapsulating Denali OC-specific management, leaving host untouched
    - Offloads, HW accelerations, user-specific secret sauce, etc.

- Denali *is not* the *ultimate* spec. of specs., but it can help to reduce workload-specific extensions in NVMe
Case Study: Append-Only Streams (Demo)

- **Append-Only Streams**
  - Spec. developed by Microsoft to (i) minimize WAF, (ii) reduce device DRAM and (iii) speed up denser NAND adoption.
  - Extend the concept of directives (i.e., *I/O streams*)
    - Write sequential following rules, read random
    - Minimize data movement during GC
    - Management interface: per-stream properties (e.g., isolation)

- **libaos**
  - Built entirely on top of *liblightnvm* (< 1500 LOC)
  - Run transparently on OCSSD 1.2, 2.0 and Denali

- **Accelerator**
  - Hides *libaos* implementation details
  - Does not require SSDs to support AOs natively
  - AOs spec. can change and *libaos* can be improved through software update
    - No need to replace any piece of HW
    - Avoid new SKUs and drive re-qualification
Conclusions

- Different types of Open-Channel SSDs are gaining significant traction
  - Increasing demand both by CSPs and enterprise
  - Different flavors available
  - Different vendors with SDKs and prototypes
  - Denali JDF is a step towards reducing fragmentation – NVMe is the goal

- Accelerator platforms for storage offload are a good fit for Denali OC adoption
  - Do not spend host resources managing storage
  - Facilitate offloads and provide them with a richer storage interface
  - Leverage existing ecosystem
  - Help to keep a lightweight NVMe protocol – promote the use of software APIs

- Growing ecosystem with more companies contributing
  - CNEX Labs, Western Digital, Intel, Red Hat and others
  - lightnvm.io: documentation, research articles, github repositories and examples
Visit us at the CNEX Labs room. Request demo: info@cnexlabs.com

Denali:
- Denali-OF Tenant Isolation with Broadcom’s Stingray
- Denali-OF Tenant Isolation with Mellanox’s Bluefield
- Append-Only streams library (libaos) on Denali using liblightnvm