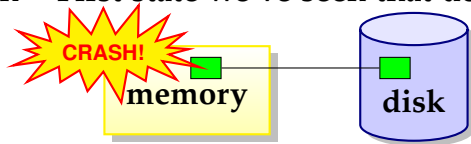


# File system fun

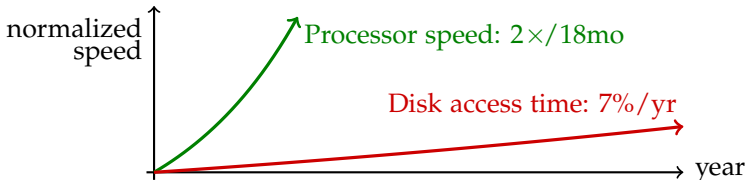
- **File systems: traditionally hardest part of OS**
  - More papers on FSES than any other single topic
- **Main tasks of file system:**
  - Don't go away (ever)
  - Associate bytes with name (files)
  - Associate names with each other (directories)
  - Can implement file systems on disk, over network, in memory, in non-volatile ram (NVRAM), on tape, w/ paper.
  - We'll focus on disk and generalize later
- **Today: files, directories, and a bit of performance**

# Why disks are different

- Disk = First state we've seen that doesn't go away



- So: Where all important state ultimately resides
- **Slow (milliseconds access vs. nanoseconds for memory)**



- **Huge (100–1,000x bigger than memory)**
  - How to organize large collection of ad hoc information?
  - Taxonomies! (Basically FS = general way to make these)

# Disk vs. Memory

	Disk	MLC NAND Flash	DRAM
Smallest write	sector	sector	byte
Atomic write	sector	sector	byte/word
Random read	8 ms	75 $\mu$ s	50 ns
Random write	8 ms	300 $\mu$ s*	50 ns
Sequential read	100 MB/s	250 MB/s	> 1 GB/s
Sequential write	100 MB/s	170 MB/s*	> 1 GB/s
Cost	\$0.04/GB	\$0.65/GB	\$10/GiB
Persistence	Non-volatile	Non-volatile	Volatile

\*Flash write performance degrades over time

# Disk review

- **Disk reads/writes in terms of sectors, not bytes**

- Read/write single sector or adjacent groups



- **How to write a single byte? “Read-modify-write”**

- Read in sector containing the byte



- Modify that byte

- Write entire sector back to disk



- Key: if cached, don't need to read in

- **Sector = unit of atomicity.**



- Sector write done completely, even if crash in middle  
(disk saves up enough momentum to complete)

- **Larger atomic units have to be synthesized by OS**

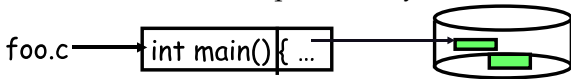
## Some useful trends

- **Disk bandwidth and cost/bit improving exponentially**
  - Similar to CPU speed, memory size, etc.
- **Seek time and rotational delay improving *very* slowly**
  - Why? require moving physical object (disk arm)
- **Disk accesses a huge system bottleneck & getting worse**
  - Bandwidth increase lets system (pre-)fetch large chunks for about the same cost as small chunk.
  - Trade bandwidth for latency if you can get lots of related stuff.
  - How to get related stuff? Cluster together on disk
- **Desktop memory size increasing faster than typical workloads**
  - More and more of workload fits in file cache
  - Disk traffic changes: mostly writes and new data
  - Doesn't necessarily apply to big server-side jobs

# Files: named bytes on disk

- **File abstraction:**

- User's view: named sequence of bytes



- FS's view: collection of disk blocks
- File system's job: translate name & offset to disk blocks:



- **File operations:**

- Create a file, delete a file
- Read from file, write to file

- **Want: operations to have as few disk accesses as possible & have minimal space overhead (group related things)**

# What's hard about grouping blocks?

- Like page tables, file system metadata are simply data structures used to construct mappings

- Page table: map virtual page # to physical page #



- File metadata: map byte offset to disk block address



- Directory: map name to disk address or file #



# FS vs. VM

- **In both settings, want location transparency**
- **In some ways, FS has easier job than than VM:**
  - CPU time to do FS mappings not a big deal (= no TLB)
  - Page tables deal with sparse address spaces and random access, files often denser ( $0 \dots \text{filesize} - 1$ ),  $\sim$ sequentially accessed
- **In some ways FS's problem is harder:**
  - Each layer of translation = potential disk access
  - Space a huge premium! (But disk is huge?!?) Reason?  
Cache space never enough; amount of data you can get in one fetch never enough
  - Range very extreme: Many files  $< 10$  KB, some files many GB

# Some working intuitions

- **FS performance dominated by # of disk accesses**
  - Say each access costs  $\sim 10$  milliseconds
  - Touch the disk 100 extra times = 1 *second*
  - Can do a *billion* ALU ops in same time!
- **Access cost dominated by movement, not transfer:**

**seek time + rotational delay + # bytes/disk-bw**

- 1 sector:  $5\text{ms} + 4\text{ms} + 5\mu\text{s}$  ( $\approx 512 \text{ B} / (100 \text{ MB/s})$ )  $\approx 9\text{ms}$
  - 50 sectors:  $5\text{ms} + 4\text{ms} + .25\text{ms} = 9.25\text{ms}$
  - Can get **50x the data for only  $\sim 3\%$  more overhead!**
- **Observations that might be helpful:**
  - All blocks in file tend to be used together, sequentially
  - All files in a directory tend to be used together
  - All names in a directory tend to be used together

# Common addressing patterns

- **Sequential:**

- File data processed in sequential order
- By far the most common mode
- Example: editor writes out new file, compiler reads in file, etc

- **Random access:**

- Address any block in file directly without passing through predecessors
- Examples: data set for demand paging, databases

- **Keyed access**

- Search for block with particular values
- Examples: associative data base, index
- Usually not provided by OS

# Problem: how to track file's data

- **Disk management:**

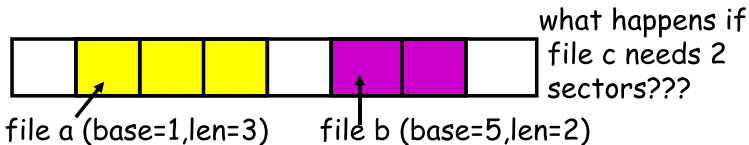
- Need to keep track of where file contents are on disk
- Must be able to use this to map byte offset to disk block
- Structure tracking a file's sectors is called an index node or *inode*
- Inodes must be stored on disk, too

- **Things to keep in mind while designing file structure:**

- Most files are small
- Much of the disk is allocated to large files
- Many of the I/O operations are made to large files
- Want good sequential and good random access  
(what do these require?)

# Straw man: contiguous allocation

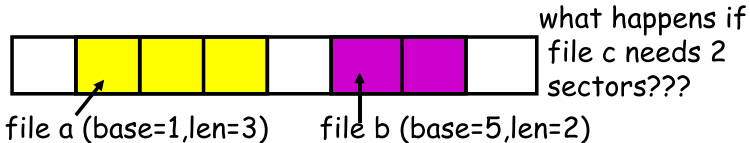
- “Extent-based”: allocate files like segmented memory
  - When creating a file, make the user pre-specify its length and allocate all space at once
  - Inode contents: location and size



- Example: IBM OS/360
- Pros?
- Cons? (Think of corresponding VM scheme)

# Straw man: contiguous allocation

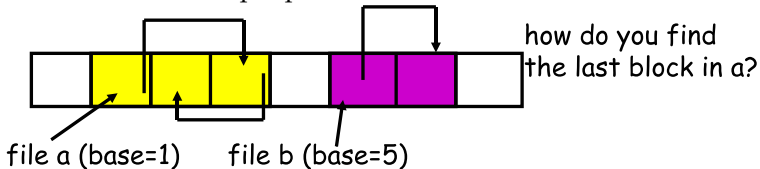
- **“Extent-based”**: allocate files like segmented memory
  - When creating a file, make the user pre-specify its length and allocate all space at once
  - Inode contents: location and size



- **Example: IBM OS/360**
- **Pros?**
  - Simple, fast access, both sequential and random
- **Cons? (Think of corresponding VM scheme)**
  - External fragmentation

# Linked files

- **Basically a linked list on disk.**
  - Keep a linked list of all free blocks
  - Inode contents: a pointer to file's first block
  - In each block, keep a pointer to the next one

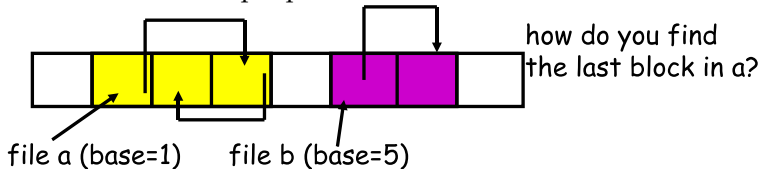


- **Examples (sort-of): Alto, TOPS-10, DOS FAT**
- **Pros?**
- **Cons?**

# Linked files

- **Basically a linked list on disk.**

- Keep a linked list of all free blocks
- Inode contents: a pointer to file's first block
- In each block, keep a pointer to the next one



- **Examples (sort-of): Alto, TOPS-10, DOS FAT**

- **Pros?**

- Easy dynamic growth & sequential access, no fragmentation

- **Cons?**

- Linked lists on disk a bad idea because of access times
- Pointers take up room in block, skewing alignment

## Example: DOS FS (simplified)

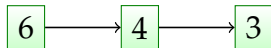
- Uses linked files. Cute: links reside in fixed-sized “file allocation table” (FAT) rather than in the blocks.

Directory (5)      FAT (16-bit entries)

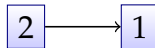
a: 6
b: 2

0	free
1	eof
2	1
3	eof
4	3
5	eof
6	4
	...

file a



file b



- Still do pointer chasing, but can cache entire FAT so can be cheap compared to disk access

# FAT discussion

- **Entry size = 16 bits**

- What's the maximum size of the FAT?
- Given a 512 byte block, what's the maximum size of FS?
- One solution: go to bigger blocks. Pros? Cons?

- **Space overhead of FAT is trivial:**

- 2 bytes / 512 byte block =  $\sim 0.4\%$  (Compare to Unix)

- **Reliability: how to protect against errors?**

- Create duplicate copies of FAT on disk
- State duplication a very common theme in reliability

- **Bootstrapping: where is root directory?**

- Fixed location on disk:

FAT	(opt) FAT	root dir	...
-----	-----------	----------	-----

# FAT discussion

- **Entry size = 16 bits**

- What's the maximum size of the FAT? 65,536 entries
- Given a 512 byte block, what's the maximum size of FS? 32 MiB
- One solution: go to bigger blocks. Pros? Cons?

- **Space overhead of FAT is trivial:**

- 2 bytes / 512 byte block =  $\sim 0.4\%$  (Compare to Unix)

- **Reliability: how to protect against errors?**

- Create duplicate copies of FAT on disk
- State duplication a very common theme in reliability

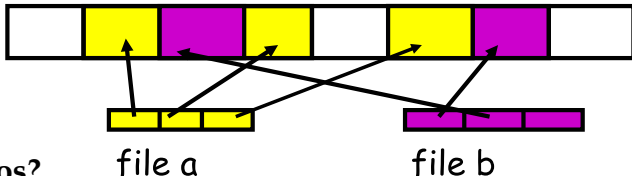
- **Bootstrapping: where is root directory?**

- Fixed location on disk:

FAT	(opt) FAT	root dir	...
-----	-----------	----------	-----

# Indexed files

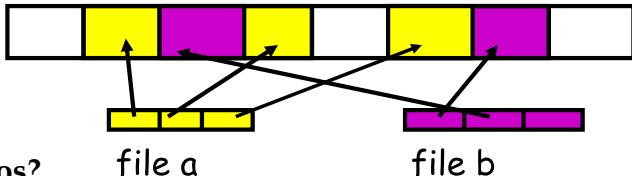
- Each file has an array holding all of its block pointers
  - Just like a page table, so will have similar issues
  - Max file size fixed by array's size (static or dynamic?)
  - Allocate array to hold file's block pointers on file creation
  - Allocate actual blocks on demand using free list



- Pros?
- Cons?

# Indexed files

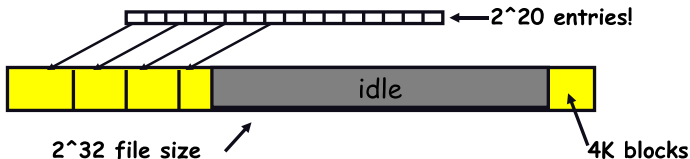
- Each file has an array holding all of its block pointers
  - Just like a page table, so will have similar issues
  - Max file size fixed by array's size (static or dynamic?)
  - Allocate array to hold file's block pointers on file creation
  - Allocate actual blocks on demand using free list



- Pros?
  - Both sequential and random access easy
- Cons?
  - Mapping table requires large chunk of contiguous space  
... Same problem we were trying to solve initially

# Indexed files

- Issues same as in page tables

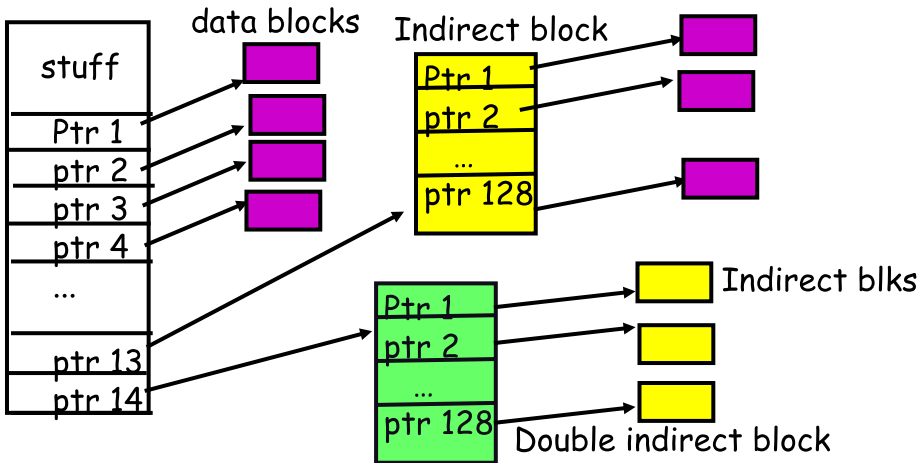


- Large possible file size = lots of unused entries
- Large actual size? table needs large contiguous disk chunk
- Solve identically: small regions with index array, this array with another array, ... Downside?



# Multi-level indexed files (old BSD FS)

- Solve problem of first block access slow
- inode = 14 block pointers + “stuff”



# Old BSD FS discussion

- **Pros:**

- Simple, easy to build, fast access to small files
- Maximum file length fixed, but large.

- **Cons:**

- What is the worst case # of accesses?
- What is the worst-case space overhead? (e.g., 13 block file)

- **An empirical problem:**

- Because you allocate blocks by taking them off unordered freelist, metadata and data get strewn across disk

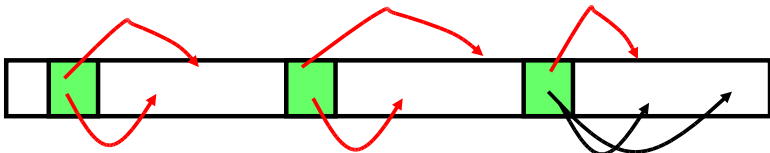
# More about inodes

- **Inodes are stored in a fixed-size array**

- Size of array fixed when disk is initialized; can't be changed
- Lives in known location, originally at one side of disk:



- Now is smeared across it (why?)



- The index of an inode in the inode array called an i-number
- Internally, the OS refers to files by inumber
- When file is opened, inode brought in memory
- Written back when modified and file closed or time elapses

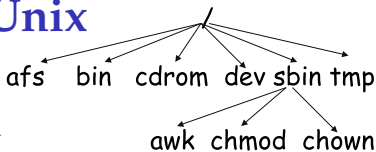
# Directories

- **Problem:**
  - “Spend all day generating data, come back the next morning, want to use it.” – F. Corbato, on why files/dirs invented
- **Approach 0: Have users remember where on disk their files are**
  - (E.g., like remembering your social security or bank account #)
- **Yuck. People want human digestible names**
  - We use directories to map names to file blocks
- **Next: What is in a directory and why?**

# A short history of directories

- **Approach 1: Single directory for entire system**
  - Put directory at known location on disk
  - Directory contains  $\langle \text{name}, \text{inumber} \rangle$  pairs
  - If one user uses a name, no one else can
  - Many ancient personal computers work this way
- **Approach 2: Single directory for each user**
  - Still clumsy, and 1s on 10,000 files is a real pain
- **Approach 3: Hierarchical name spaces**
  - Allow directory to map names to files *or other dirs*
  - File system forms a tree (or graph, if links allowed)
  - Large name spaces tend to be hierarchical (ip addresses, domain names, scoping in programming languages, etc.)

# Hierarchical Unix



- **Used since CTSS (1960s)**

- Unix picked up and used really nicely

- **Directories stored on disk just like regular files**

- Special inode type byte set to directory
- User's can read just like any other file
- Only special syscalls can write (why?)
- Inodes at fixed disk location
- File pointed to by the index may be another directory
- Makes FS into hierarchical tree (what needed to make a DAG?)

```
<name,inode#>
<afs,1021>
<tmp,1020>
<bin,1022>
<cdrom,4123>
<dev,1001>
<sbin,1011>
⋮
```

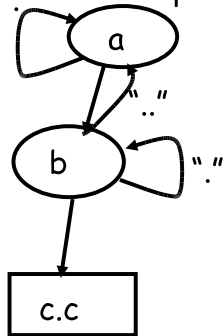
- **Simple, plus speeding up file ops speeds up dir ops!**

# Naming magic

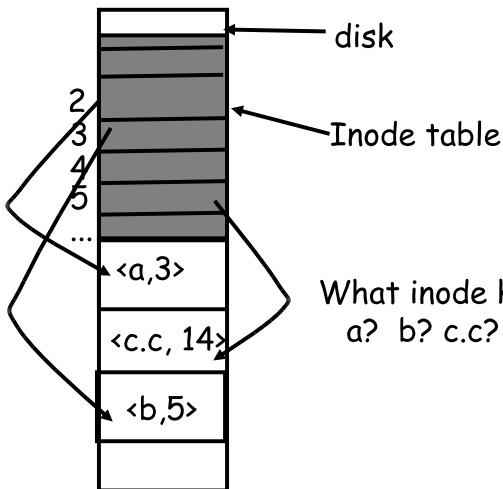
- **Bootstrapping: Where do you start looking?**
  - Root directory always inode #2 (0 and 1 historically reserved)
- **Special names:**
  - Root directory: `"/"`
  - Current directory: `."`
  - Parent directory: `.."`
- **Special names not implemented in FS:**
  - User's home directory: `"~"`
  - Globbing: `"foo.*"` expands to all files starting `"foo."`
- **Using the given names, only need two operations to navigate the entire name space:**
  - `cd name`: move into (change context to) directory *name*
  - `ls`: enumerate all names in current directory (context)

# Unix example: /a/b/c.c

"." Name space



Physical organization



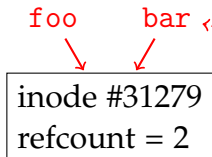
# Default context: working directory

- **Cumbersome to constantly specify full path names**
  - In Unix, each process associated with a “current working directory” (cwd)
  - File names not beginning with “/” are assumed to be relative to cwd; otherwise translation happens as before
  - Editorial: root, cwd should be regular fds (like stdin, stdout, ...) with *openat* syscall instead of *open*
- **Shells track a default list of active contexts**
  - A “search path” for programs you run
  - Given a search path  $A : B : C$ , a shell will check in A, then check in B, then check in C
  - Can escape using explicit paths: “./foo”
- **Example of locality**

# Hard and soft links (synonyms)

- **More than one dir entry can refer to a given file**

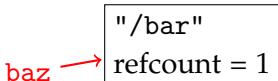
- Unix stores count of pointers (“hard links”) to inode
- To make: “ln foo bar” creates a synonym (bar) for *file* foo



- **Soft/symbolic links = synonyms for *names***

- Point to a file (or dir) *name*, but object can be deleted from underneath it (or never even exist).
- Unix implements like directories: inode has special “symlink” bit set and contains name of link target

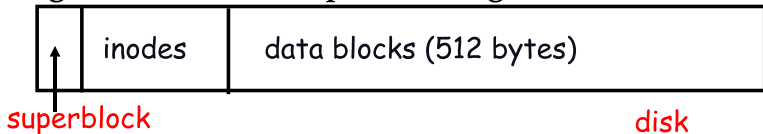
ln -s /bar baz



- When the file system encounters a symbolic link it automatically translates it (if possible).

# Case study: speeding up FS

- **Original Unix FS: Simple and elegant:**



- **Components:**

- Data blocks
- Inodes (directories represented as files)
- Hard links
- Superblock. (specifies number of blks in FS, counts of max # of files, pointer to head of free list)

- **Problem: slow**

- Only gets 20Kb/sec (2% of disk maximum) even for sequential disk transfers!

# A plethora of performance costs

- **Blocks too small (512 bytes)**
  - File index too large
  - Too many layers of mapping indirection
  - Transfer rate low (get one block at time)
- **Poor clustering of related objects:**
  - Consecutive file blocks not close together
  - Inodes far from data blocks
  - Inodes for directory not close together
  - Poor enumeration performance: e.g., "ls", "grep foo \*.c"
- **Usability problems**
  - 14-character file names a pain
  - Can't atomically update file in crash-proof way
- **Next: how FFS fixes these (to a degree) [McKusic]**

# Problem: Internal fragmentation

- Block size was too small in Unix FS
- Why not just make block size bigger?

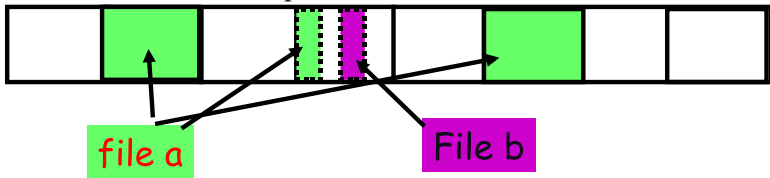
Block size	space wasted	file bandwidth
512	6.9%	2.6%
1024	11.8%	3.3%
2048	22.4%	6.4%
4096	45.6%	12.0%
1MB	99.0%	97.2%

- Bigger block increases bandwidth, but how to deal with wastage (“internal fragmentation”)?
  - Use idea from malloc: split unused portion.

# Solution: fragments

- **BSD FFS:**

- Has large block size (4096 or 8192)
- Allow large blocks to be chopped into small ones (“fragments”)
- Used for little files and pieces at the ends of files

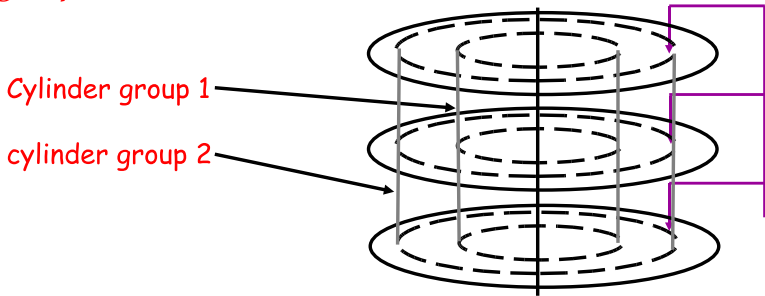


- **Best way to eliminate internal fragmentation?**

- Variable sized splits of course
- Why does FFS use fixed-sized fragments (1024, 2048)?

# Clustering related objects in FFS

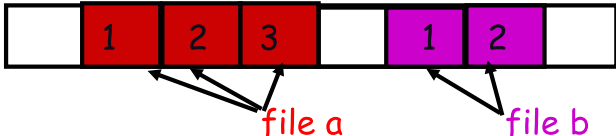
- Group 1 or more consecutive cylinders into a “*cylinder group*”



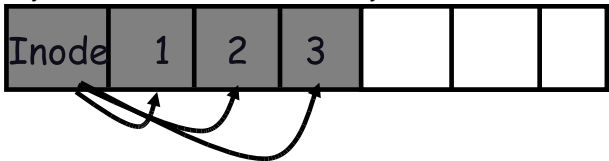
- Key: can access any block in a cylinder without performing a seek. Next fastest place is adjacent cylinder.
- Tries to put everything related in same cylinder group
- Tries to put everything not related in different group (?!)

# Clustering in FFS

- Tries to put sequential blocks in adjacent sectors
  - (Access one block, probably access next)



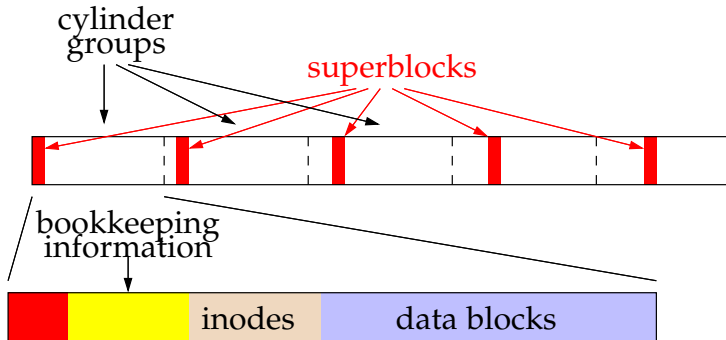
- Tries to keep inode in same cylinder as file data:
  - (If you look at inode, most likely will look at data too)



- Tries to keep all inodes in a dir in same cylinder group
  - Access one name, frequently access many, e.g., "ls -l"

# What does disk layout look like?

- Each cylinder group basically a mini-Unix file system:

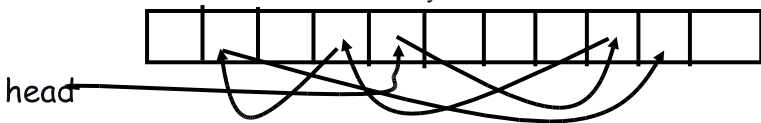


- **How to ensure there's space for related stuff?**
  - Place different directories in different cylinder groups
  - Keep a "free space reserve" so can allocate near existing things
  - When file grows too big (1MB) send its remainder to different cylinder group.

# Finding space for related objs

- **Old Unix (& DOS): Linked list of free blocks**

- Just take a block off of the head. Easy.



- Bad: free list gets jumbled over time. Finding adjacent blocks hard and slow

- **FFS: switch to bit-map of free blocks**

- 1010101111111000001111111000101100
- Easier to find contiguous blocks.
- Small, so usually keep entire thing in memory
- Time to find free block increases if fewer free blocks

# Using a bitmap

- **Usually keep entire bitmap in memory:**
  - 4G disk / 4K byte blocks. How big is map?
- **Allocate block close to block  $x$ ?**
  - Check for blocks near `bmap[x/32]`
  - If disk almost empty, will likely find one near
  - As disk becomes full, search becomes more expensive and less effective
- **Trade space for time (search time, file access time)**
- **Keep a reserve (e.g, 10%) of disk always free, ideally scattered across disk**
  - Don't tell users (`df` can get to 110% full)
  - Only root can allocate blocks once FS 100% full
  - With 10% free, can almost always find one of them free

# So what did we gain?

- **Performance improvements:**
  - Able to get 20-40% of disk bandwidth for large files
  - 10-20x original Unix file system!
  - Better small file performance (why?)
- **Is this the best we can do? No.**
- **Block based rather than extent based**
  - Could have named contiguous blocks with single pointer and length (Linux ext2fs, XFS)
- **Writes of metadata done synchronously**
  - Really hurts small file performance
  - Make asynchronous with write-ordering (“soft updates”) or logging/journaling... more next lecture
  - Play with semantics (/tmp file systems)

# Other hacks

- **Obvious:**
  - Big file cache
- **Fact: no rotation delay if get whole track.**
  - How to use?
- **Fact: transfer cost negligible.**
  - Recall: Can get 50x the data for only  $\sim 3\%$  more overhead
  - 1 sector:  $5\text{ms} + 4\text{ms} + 5\mu\text{s}$  ( $\approx 512\text{ B} / (100\text{ MB/s})$ )  $\approx 9\text{ms}$
  - 50 sectors:  $5\text{ms} + 4\text{ms} + .25\text{ms} = 9.25\text{ms}$
  - How to use?
- **Fact: if transfer huge, seek + rotation negligible**
  - **LFS**: Hoard data, write out MB at a time
- **Next lecture:**
  - FFS in more detail
  - More advanced, modern file systems