Paper Revision Plan

We include every word of the reviews here. We first address comments that give suggestions and then include all other comments at the end for completeness.

Area chair comments

- “Most notably, reviewers pointed out some improvements in the way experiments are conducted and some needed clarification regarding the decision of making individual components in Mason highly available through (double) replication.”
    - We add the throughput-latency plots that produced the plots in our Evaluation and clarify decisions made related to design. More specific changes we made to address these are below under the specific comments from the reviewers.

Clarifications

Reviewers gave suggestions for additional clarification/details:

- Reviewer 7d29: “My understanding is that the proxy module needs a way to implement a state machine replication to tolerate failures. At the same time, Proxies are part of the protocol to implement state-machine replication. There is a circular dependency here that the authors should clarify.”
    - We clarify the relationship to and assumptions from state-machine replication under the “Proxies” paragraph in Section 3, “Mason Overview”.
- Reviewer 7d29: “Similar to the previous point, the sequencer uses primary backup for availability but the fault tolerance guarantees are less strong than state-machine replication using consensus. It's like authors implement consensus but some of the internal parts have weaker failure models. The authors should clarify this aspect.”
    - We clarify that we do not replicate the sequencer. We believe the confusion may have been caused by the name “backup sequencer” and rename it to “standby sequencer” and describe it as “cold” in an attempt to clarify this. The “cold” standby sequencer does nothing other than wait for a recovery message from a proxy after the proxy detects failure, then execute the recovery protocol, and take over as the sequencer. We note that this does not change our failure model or guarantees: processes may fail according to the crash failure model, where processes stop executing requests, and the failure is undetectable to other processes. The cold standby sequencer is only needed for liveness: the recovery protocol relies entirely on state replicated at the proxies, not on any state at the failed or standby sequencer.
- Reviewer pVUr: “The paper is very well written, with detailed walk through of the system protocols in section 3 and 4. While I am able to follow the arguments without any issue, I do wish some of the sub-section has a diagram that shows an example of how the failure leads to potential holes in multi-sequence space.”
    - We add a diagram (Fig. 2, Section 4) to show how failures can lead to potential holes.

- Reviewer JUGB: “As a side note, if we use Mason on top of replicated services, why not push it down to the service itself? I know it defeats the purpose of having it as a separate tool to create scalable distributed services, but if the monetary and resource cost of this tool is too high, it also defeats that purpose.”
    - We believe that this is an interesting avenue of future work; because Scalog is related to this idea we elaborate on its discussion in the Related Work.
- Reviewer JUGB: “2. Recovery. I also suggest improving the recovery discussion. It was not entirely clear to me how the system recovers from the simultaneous sequencer and proxy leader failures. In particular, it seems that the sequencer recovery process needs all proxies to participate, which can be a problem if a proxy leader fails and needs a sequencer to recover. The appendix touches on this issue briefly, but I think it needs some prime real estate in the body of the paper.”
    - We add a paragraph under subsection 4.3 “Recovering to Prevent Holes from Sequence Failure” titled “Concurrent Proxy Leader Failure” to explicitly discuss concurrent sequencer and proxy leader failure and how the current design handles this case.
- Reviewer JUGB: “It may also be a good idea to include a brief discussion on the benefits of multi-sequence numbers compared to mono-sequences.”
    - We make the differences between a single sequence space and multi-sequence spaces more clear by adding to the Introduction how the multi-sequence abstraction extends the sequence abstraction and text to subsection 2.1 “Building Services with Multi-Sequences”.
- Reviewer JUGB: “5. Reconfigurations. A minor point here, as far as paper goes. For a system like this to be usable, it needs to dynamically scale up and down in the number of proxies. This should be simple if not for the sequence GC protocol that requires all proxies to participate. I wonder whether the authors can include a few sentences about doing such reconfigurations.”
    - We add a discussion about how reconfiguration could be accomplished in section 5, “Supporting Scalable Throughput”. We also clarify in the Evaluation that we do not implement reconfiguration.

Evaluation Suggestions

- Reviewer 7d29: “I really appreciate the goal of making systems that need Sequencers easier to develop, debug, and maintain. However, it should be stated that, internally, the addition to the proxy adds a possible bottleneck that can make the performance less predictable.”
    - We acknowledge and discuss this in a new paragraph “Performance predictability” under a new “Limitations” section 8.
- Reviewer 7d29: “It would have been nice to measure the performance of the systems under actual failure.”
    - Due to time and prioritizing other portions of the revision we do not evaluate throughput and latency during failure.
- Reviewer pVUr: “Section 5 gives an insightful discussion about MASON service and section 6 and 7 give two types of system modification with performance evaluations.

When present the results, instead of a bar graph for throughput and table with few rows for latency, plotting the throughput v.s. latency in the same graph would be a much better choice."

    - To the Evaluation we added all throughput-latency plots that produced the bar plots to show performance as load changes for each setup. We also remove the bar graphs as they became redundant with the throughput-latency plots.
- Reviewer JUGB: "1. The big one. The biggest concern I have with this work is the double replication of all client requests. First, each request replicates in a proxy before going to the actual service, which is likely to replicate the operation again. Both tested systems, Corfu and ZooKeeper, do that. This potentially makes the cost of hiding the holes to avoid complicated recoveries too much to bear. The proposed solution essentially puts (an extra) Paxos/Raft in the path of every request. The paper briefly mentions that in the Corfu evaluation, Mason used 6 proxies for each Corfu shard. 6 Raft-replicated proxies require at least 18 nodes to support one Corfu shard. Extrapolating from these numbers, to get the 2x throughout improvement in 4-shard Corfu, Mason needed 24 proxies, which is 72 additional nodes, not counting the sequencer machine. This seems like a lot of extra hardware for a 2x speedup. The numbers seem to be a bit better for ZooKeeper." and "I recommend the authors extend the evaluation to include some cost or efficiency metric while comparing systems with and without Mason."
    - We make the resource cost of Mason explicit by adding a "Resource Cost" Paragraph in a new "Limitations" section, 7.
- Reviewer JUGB: "3. Evaluation suggestions. It may be interesting to compare sequencer batching with a no-batching setup to see if/how the latency is impacted."
    - We omit this comparison for time and to prioritize other portions of the revision.
- Reviewer JUGB: "Speaking of latency, I also suggest the authors to better explain low latency in their experiments, especially ZooKeeper ones. ZooKeeper latency experiments do not correlate with assumptions made earlier in the paper: "MASON's tradeoff for a stronger abstraction and scalable ordering throughput is higher latency relative to monolithic-sequencer designs, since the proxies and a single round of replication are on the path for each request."" and "Another suggestion is to report latency-throughput curves to let readers see how latency changes as throughput increases."
    - We add the throughput-latency plots we used to generate the bar plots. We also address this peculiarity explicitly in the fourth paragraph in the subsection "Making Zookeeper Scalable".
- Reviewer JUGB: "And finally, ideally, it would be nice to have a performance comparison with other sequencing approaches."
    - We omit evaluating implementations of other sequencing approaches for time and to prioritize other portions of the revision. We note that previous approaches either do not scale, discussed in the Introduction, subsection 6.2, and Related Work, or do not provide contiguous multi-sequencing, discussed in Related Work.
- We have additionally rerun the ZK-Mason getData experiments to fill out the throughput-latency plot. The latency chart has changed as a result; the performance numbers did not significantly change.

Related Work

Several reviewers suggested additional related work to cite or compare to:

- Reviewer 7d29: “Granola (ATC12) implements distributed transactions using stateful information embedded into proxy modules. To me, the approach seems similar and may be worth adding a citation.”
    - We address Granola in the Distributed databases paragraph of Related Work. The client proxies in Granola are similar to our service stubs in that they exist on the client (proxies) and execute Granola (service) code.
- Reviewer 7d29: “The paper does not discuss multi-leader approaches. I understand they might be seen as distantly related work but in terms of performance, they might provide insights in addition to the baseline that has been evaluated.”
    - We discuss multi-leader approaches in the second paragraph of the paragraph “Distributed databases” in the Related Work.
- Reviewer JUGB: “The idea of separating the component roles (sequencer, client proxies that batch request, service partitions, etc.) and throwing more hardware at the problem vaguely reminds me of Compartmentalization (see "Scaling Replicated State Machines with Compartmentalization").”
    - Thank you for the pointer, we agree and add a discussion of Compartmentalization to the Related Work.
- Reviewer JUGB: “4. Related works. Several other works, including the cited ones, propose various distributed scalable sequencing schemes. I think the related works section needs to expand a bit to compare and contrast with existing approaches better. For example, Calvin uses distributed and batched sequencers that sit in front of the clients and also replicate ordered operations: "Calvin divides time into 10-millisecond epochs during which every machine’s sequencer component collects transaction requests from clients. At the end of each epoch, all requests that have arrived at a sequencer node are compiled into a batch. This is the point at which replication of transactional inputs (discussed below) occurs." Another approach to scaling sequencers was shown in Scalog paper (also cited), and this approach avoids double-replication of Mason, so a more in-depth comparison would have been nice.”
    - We expand the Related Work section to provide more discussion of Calvin and Scalog.

Additional Comments

Reviewer 7d29:

“This is a very well-written, easy-to-understand, and impactful paper. It describes how to implement a sequencer in systems relying on consensus to define deterministic state machines. The presented solution is named Mason, which basically consists of a highly available proxy module that is placed between clients and the server backend. The proxy module is stateful, and this assumption is leveraged to avoid holes in the sequencer's ordering deliveries.

I support acceptance of this paper but I would still point out some areas of improvement:”

- We address each point above.

Area Chair AHw8:

"Dear Authors, thank you for submitting to JSys. After reading the reviews, we recommend a REVISE decision. We believe the concerns of reviewers can be addressed in the next three months (potentially sooner, but we wanted to give you enough time to handle the comments). After the submission of your revised version, reviewers will evaluate your modifications and a final decision will be made.

All three reviewers appreciate the contributions and are mostly happy with the submission. In general, all reviewers are optimistic about the acceptance of the paper; however, all suggest clarifications/improvements that authors should carefully consider during the revision time.

Most notably, reviewers pointed out some improvements in the way experiments are conducted and some needed clarification regarding the decision of making individual components in Mason highly available through (double) replication.

We look forward to receiving your revised version. Thank you one more time for submitting, Lewis Tseng and Roberto Palmieri - Area chairs of JSys."

- We address "Most notably, reviewers pointed out some improvements in the way experiments are conducted and some needed clarification regarding the decision of making individual components in Mason highly available through (double) replication." above.

Reviewer pVUr:

"This paper introduced MASON, a consensus-based replicated proxy service that coordinates between clients, sharding datastore and sequencer. The proxy (or proxies) as a replicated state machine which tolerates up to f failures, provided the guarantee of any sequence number assigned to an operation will not be lost, even if sequencer and client can crash at any time. In fact, the system depends on several protocols to achieve the goal. Proxy execution protocol describes the main process. Proxy leader failover protocol ensures a new leader can identify any temporary holes and recover previous sequence or get new numbers. Sequencer recovery protocol make sure that all proxies local view of the sequence space are collected and holes filled with no-ops. Finally, a garbage collection protocol among all proxy leaders helps to reduce the cost of previous recovery protocols."
...
"Overall, this paper is a good example of how consensus-based system can be used in a large scale service. Not only does it provide safety guarantees but also improves throughputs. This work would be a good contribution to the community."

Program Chairs

"Hello authors,

Thank you for submitting your work to JSys. The reviewers are deliberating on your work, and a decision will be out soon. Apologies for the delay.

Thanks,

JSys Editors-in-chiefs”

Reviewer JUGB:

“Summary
This paper discusses a solution to a transaction or operation sequencing problem in strongly consistent distributed systems with a partitioned state. Many partitioned systems will replicate the data or operation in an order prescribed by the partition owner or leader. In transactional cases, an operation may touch data in multiple partitions, each operating in its independent sequencing space. As a result, such multi-partition operations need to order with respect to all partitions they touch. One approach for ordering such transactions is deterministic database systems, which establish a sequence of all operations ahead of commitment and execution. This preordering requires the sequencing information to be attached to each operation or transaction before it starts to replicate/execute in its partitions.

Such transaction preordering has two limitations. Firstly, if a sequence number is issued for an operation that fails before reaching its partitions, these partitions will get stuck due to a sequencing hole from the ordered but lost operation. A complicated recovery process must either recover the operation from other partitions or replace the missing operation with a no-op in all partitions. The second limitation is the scalability of the sequencer -- the sequencing job is inherently sequential, with a single machine typically responsible for doing all the work. As such, the sequencer can be only as fast as a single machine.

The proposed system, Mason, is a sequencer for multi-sequence partitioned systems, where each partition has its own sequencing space. The sequencer sits between clients issuing the requests/operations and the partitioned distributed service and is responsible for maintaining all the sequencing spaces for all service partitions. Mason assigns each operation a multi-sequence number that orders that operation across all relevant partitions (i.e., the partitions/shards the operation touch). Each sequence number in Mason can be viewed as a version vector across all sequencing spaces relevant to the operation. As such, the vector does not include partitions the operation does not touch, allowing the independent operations to proceed concurrently and unaware of each other.

Mason addresses the two sequencer limitations. At the high level, Mason consists of a set of replicated client proxies and a single sequencer machine. Each client proxy receives an operation from the client, contacts the sequencer to assign a sequence number to the operation, durably replicates the ordered operations, and then passes it off to the distributed service.

The ordered operation replication solves the sequencing hole problem. Each proxy uses Raft to replicate the operations after sequencing and before passing these ordered operations to the

distributed service. By durably preserving ordered client operations, Mason ensures that client failures cannot create sequencing holes. However, it is still possible for "Mason-local" sequencing holes to emerge when the proxy leader fails after asking the sequencer for the sequence number but before replicating the ordered client's request. Mason has a mechanism to recover these local holes by making the sequencer remember sequence numbers given to each proxy, allowing the new proxy leader to fill no-ops for these sequences.

Solving scalability issues in Mason is a two-pronged approach. First, the proxy clients can be scaled up as needed by sharding client requests to different proxies. The real scalability bottleneck remains with the single-machine sequencer. However, the sequencer uses batching to order multiple user requests in one shot. Batching works by allocating a sequence range in each sequence space used by operations in the batch, allowing the proxy to assign final sequences to each command from the allocated sequence ranges. Batching allows Mason to trade some latency with increased sequencer throughput.

The paper evaluates Mason in two reference implementations and shows significant throughput improvements in both.

Strength

1. With the popularity of deterministic databases, fast and reliable sequencers are an important problem to solve. The idea of having a reliable sequencer that can be used as a service without worrying about sequence holes and recovery is interesting.
2. The paper shows the existence of more complicated failure scenarios and possible sources of bottlenecks due to the increased number of components and addresses most of them.
3. The evaluation shows remarkable throughput improvements in tested systems.
4. Mason seems easy enough to use, allowing building scalable multi-shard services with relatively little overhead.
5. The paper is well written. It is easy to read and follow. Overall, I was very engaged reading it.
6. Good to have proofs of provided guarantees.

Areas for Improvement.”

- “Areas for Improvement” are addressed individually above.

Artifact Revision Plan

Thank you for the feedback and suggestions! We include all reviews and discussion and respond inline.

JSYS 2022 Oct Artifacts Program Chairs

Decision: Revise
Comment: Please revise your artifact, taking the reviewers' feedback into account, and then submit the improved artifact for reevaluation. Please see the JSys Call for Papers for details. https://www.jsys.org/cfp/

We will try our best to assign the same reviewers for the revised artifact (though this is not guaranteed), so that the review can be done efficiently. Since the reviewers could already reproduce the main results, the main focus will be on packaging and whether reviewers can reproduce the results without author guidance.

You can submit at our next deadline in Mar 2023. Thank you for participating in artifact evaluation, and we hope this strengthened your artifact!

JSYS 2022 Oct Artifacts Paper2 Area Chair eS4H

Metareview:
The Artifact Evaluation Board (AEB) has completed its review of the artifact that accompanies your submitted paper.

In the AEB's judgment, the submitted artifact meets the standard set by JSys for utility in reproducing the main results presented in your paper. It does not, however, meet the standard set by JSys for usability by a third party. For this reason, the overall decision for the artifact is "revise."

We encourage you to revise your artifact, taking the reviewers' feedback into account, and then submit the improved artifact for reevaluation. Please see the JSys Call for Papers for details. https://www.jsys.org/cfp/

All of the reviewers reported that they struggled to utilize the artifact, to varying degrees. One wrote: "It was difficult to setup the experiment environment correctly. [Undocumented] assumptions and lack of documentation/tooling were a problem: [...] While none of these issues has bearing on whether MASON actually works or not, it did mean that much of my review was spent debugging instead of replicating results. These issues would be easy to fix for those with deep knowledge of the project. Navigating these issues as a newcomer to the project was challenging."

- **Author Response:** We followed below suggestions to improve the READMEs and included more tooling/scripts to make it easier to build and run with the correct parameters.

That reviewer exchanged messages with the authors during the evaluation period—thank you, authors, for providing timely and substantial feedback! As a result of the online conversation, the reviewer was able to put the artifact through its paces. This is a positive outcome! Still, the reviews are consistent in citing their need for the authors' guidance in order to get to that point. One reviewer wrote that "[the] author's responses to the reviewers' questions were also essential in achieving a correct configuration," and another reported that they "[needed] to check other reviewer's conversion to know how to setup the environment."

Based on the reviewers' experience, it seems likely to the AEC that the artifact's current instructions, packaging, and/or automation would be challenging for many third parties to navigate successfully, without similar and substantial guidance from the authors. The reviewers offer several suggestions for making the artifact easier to navigate, install, configure, and execute, so that future users of the artifact would in general need little or no communication with the authors in order to exercise the artifact.

The reviewers reported that once they understood how to utilize the artifact, they were able to reproduce some of the main results presented in your paper. One concluded that they reproduced "most" of the main results, while two concluded that they reproduced "a few." The most successful reviewer wrote: "My overall impression regarding [reproducibility] is that I have no reason to suspect the software does not work as advertised in the paper (and some reason to believe it does), but I was unable to [reproduce] what are arguably the most important results (Fig 3 and Fig 4)." The apparent difficulties were explainable for reasons of scale (Figure 3), configuration error (Figure 4), or expected variation (Figure 5). Another reviewer felt that their efforts were generally successful, and problems were due to logistical issues: "I was able to successfully reproduce the patterns in both Figure 2 and Figure 5. The experiments of Figures 3 and 4 were not reproducible, partly due to my fault.... I couldn't get hold of the reservation for the number of nodes required again, so couldn't rerun the experiments. Going through the code base, I believe that the results should have been reproducible."

Overall, the reviewers reported that they were able to reproduce a substantial fraction of the results presented in your paper. While at least two reviewers were unable to fully reproduce the results behind Figures 3 and 4, it seems that the results that were obtained were generally "on track." This is a very good outcome!

The reviews and the discussion comments provide substantial feedback that can be used to improve the usability of your artifact, and perhaps to improve the reproducibility of results as well (e.g., to fix apparent "configuration" errors). After the issues identified by the reviewers have been addressed, please submit a revised version of this artifact for evaluation.

Confidence: 5: The area chair is absolutely certain
Recommendation: Revise

JSYS 2022 Oct Artifacts Paper2 Reviewer WvWk

Review:

The paper presents MASON, a scalable and contiguous multi-sequence abstraction that can be used as a generic building block in a distributed system to achieve total oder. The authors present two experiments to showcase the MASON's claims:

1. Throughput vs number of proxies and sequence spaces showcasing scalability
2. Contiguous multi-sequence numbers showcasing correctness

They also provide two experiments comparing the existing solutions with their solution, replicating the functionality with MASON as the building block:

1. Scalability of Corfu-MASON
    - This provides a comparison between Corfu-MASON, which uses MASON as Corfu's sequence generator, and CORFU', which is the author's implementation of Corfu in a similar environment as Corfu-MASON.
2. Scalability of ZK-MASON
    - This gives a comparison between ZK-MASON, a Zookeeper like coordination service, and RSMKeeper, a prototype of ZooKeeper over Raft.

The artifact is a git repository with different branches for MASON, Corfu-MASON, CORFU', ZK-MASON and RSMKeeper. In addition to the main system of each branch, the repository contains modules for a client, proxy, sequencer and eRPC along with the scripts for setting up and running the experiments.

The authors have provided a Readme that explains what needs to be done to reproduce the experiment. I would like to point out to the authors that some edits of the Readme were lost while switching between different branches. Two "lost" examples:

- The user should create an Emulab account and join the project "Mason".
- Note that clients must have `--client_concurrency <= kSessionCredits` otherwise proxies may deadlock waiting for client requests to ensure client-determined order. Once all these edits are combined, the Readme was ok to run the experiments.

- **Author Response:** We put these back into the README and added instructions to swap in an experiment (from a comment below). We modified the build script, *ltomake*, so that the user no longer has to manually edit *eRPC/sm_types.h* to set kSessionCredits.

My suggestions to the authors are:

1. Combine all changes to the Readme from different branches without loosing any information.
2. Include a Readme for each component with a short description of the module and the list of flags that can be be used to configure them.
3. Include all the responses to the reviewers' questions in the artifact.
4. If the project profile in Emulab/Cloudlab is not durable (I am not aware if the platform stores the profiles for an indefinite amount of time), please provide detailed instructions on setting up the profile using the genilib script.

- **Author Response:** We combined all changes to the README; each branch should now contain the same, updated, README. We added a README for each component that describes the component's flags. These flags can be changed through usage of the *run_experiment.py* script. We included instructions to prevent users' problems in the README and additionally included details of fixes for problems that some reviewers experienced. We believe our Mason/mason profile in Emulab is durable.

Reproducibility:

I was able to successfully reproduce the patterns in both Figure 2 and Figure 5. The experiments of Figures 3 and 4 were not reproducible, partly due to my fault. During my cluster reservation, I ran the experiments with the help of the git commit history(specifically, the Readme) and code reading/debugging. I finally made it work, but before generating the figures, by mistake released the machines. I couldn't get hold of the reservation for the number of nodes required again, so couldn't rerun the experiments. Going through the code base, I believe that the results should have been reproducible.

Summary: The paper presents MASON, a scalable and contiguous multi-sequence abstraction that can be used as a generic building block in a distributed system to achieve total oder. The authors present two experiments to showcase the MASON's claims: 1. Throughput vs number of proxies and sequence spaces showcasing scalability 2. Contiguous multi-sequence numbers showcasing correctness They also provide two experiments comparing the existing solutions with their solution, replicating the functionality with MASON as the building block: 1. Scalability of Corfu-MASON * This provides a comparison between Corfu-MASON, which uses MASON as Corfu's sequence generator, and CORFU', which is the author's implementation of Corfu in a similar environment as Corfu-MASON. 2. Scalability of ZK-MASON * This gives a comparison between ZK-MASON, a Zookeeper like coordination service, and RSMKeeper, a prototype of ZooKeeper over Raft.
Artifact: The artifact is a git repository with different branches for MASON, Corfu-MASON, CORFU', ZK-MASON and RSMKeeper. In addition to the main system of each branch, the repository contains modules for a client, proxy, sequencer and eRPC along with the scripts for setting up and running the experiments.
Explanation: I used the author provided project profile on Emulab to setup the experiments. The configuration and running of the experiments was done with the help of the Readme file, but combining the different commits from the different branches of the repository. The author's responses to the reviewers' questions were also essential in achieving a correct configuration.
How Usable Is The Artifact?: I was able to use this artifact, but it required little communication with authors
How Reproducible Are The Results?: I was able to reproduce a few of the main results

- **Author Response:** We included more scripts and improved existing setup scripts that should make running all experiments easier. We also fixed the README so that it is up-to-date and consistent across branches.

JSYS 2022 Oct Artifacts Paper2 Reviewer d8bF

Review:
This paper proposes MASON, which is the first system to expose contiguous multi-sequence abstraction. In the artifact, authors release the code and also the CloudLab profiles for ease of reproducing it.

But the testing part still takes time and efforts. It would be great if authors can make it more "automatic". Also, I need to check other reviewer's conversion to know how to setup the environment.

- **Author Response:** We improved setup documentation. We improved *ltomake*, the main compiling script, to automatically configure a parameter that caused confusion during artifact evaluation. We also included a *run_suite.sh* script that makes it easier to run a full suite of experiments. For most experiments, using the script is sufficient to run the suite; we note in the README where this is not the case (one experiment has hardcoded parameters that are difficult to automate because they are compile-time parameters that depend on the configuration).

Summary: Figure 2: MASON ordering throughput with increasing proxy count. Figure 3: CORFU' and Corfu-MASON throughput comparison. Figure 4. RSMKeeper and ZK-MASON comparsion. Figure 5. recovery part.
Artifact: Authors provide github repo and also profiles for the CloudLab. For each figure, authors provide instruction to generate corresponding figure.
Explanation: Reuse the CloudLab profile provided by the author and follow the instructions provided by authors. Also, I learn a lot from the conversations between authors and other reviewers.
How Usable Is The Artifact?: I was able to use this artifact, but it required little communication with authors
How Reproducible Are The Results?: I was able to reproduce most of the main results

JSYS 2022 Oct Artifacts Paper2 Reviewer 1JoQ

Review:
This section is not applicable for artifact review.

Summary: This paper presents MASON, a system that provides a contiguous sequence abstraction and can be used as a building block to help scale services that require a sequencer. To show the benefits of MASON, the authors present a microbenchmarks illustrating that increasing proxies increases throughput (Fig. 2), create and compare Corfu' and Corfu-MASON (Fig. 3), and create and compare RSMKeeper and ZK-Mason (used to show that MASON can allow ZooKeeper to scale) (Fig. 4). Figures 3-4 show the results that using MASON allows both services to scale beyond what is possible without MASON. Figure 5 shows MASON's ability to recover from two types of failures.
Artifact: The MASON artifect is a GitHub repo, where different branches contain different implementations used in evaluation (master, corfu, corfumason, rmskeeper, zk-mason). In each branch, there is a file that contains the source for each project (e.g., client, proxy, sequencer, etc). Documentation is found in a README.md. There exist some helper scripts in the setup

directory. The recovery folder includes scripts to generate a Figure 5-like graph; plot_datfiles.sh is a script used to create a graph as in Figure 2.
Explanation: #### Usability It was difficult to setup the experiment environment correctly. Undocumentated assumptions and lack of documentation/tooling were a problem: the repo must be cloned in a shared location within an experiment, the MASON image needs to be used (the creation of which is not documented), SSH keys must be set up for ssh-ing between CloudLab nodes, a results directory must be created in the repo before running the experiment script, the run experiment script will attempt to run components that are not used, there's no easy way to configure the kSessionKey for compilation of each component for each experimental build, some of the directions regarding kSessionKey are not necessarily true at all scales, etc. While none of these issues has bearing on whether MASON actually works or not, it did mean that much of my review was spent debugging instead of replicating results. These issues would be easy to fix for those with deep knowledge of the project. Navigating these issues as a newcomer to the project was challenging. Some of the scripting in the setup folder was sophisticated, helpful, and reflected some significant effort of the authors to automate setup and graph generation (as in Figure 2 and Figure 5). My rating of "I was able to use this artifact, but it required lot of communication with the authors" reflects the time commitment it took to get this artifact working and to setup/teardown each experiment. #### Reproducibility Figure 2: I was able to replicate portions of Figure 2 without difficulties, and my results were comparable to those presented in the paper. Figure 3: I ran some basic tests with CORFU' and corfu-mason, but did not attempt to exactly reproduce results (due to high number of servers required to run these tests beyond a single shard). Figure 4: I attempted to replicate results for 1 and 2 shards for zk-mason. 1 shard completed correctly; two shards did not complete due to some proxy errors in the logs. I suspect it is a configuration error, although I followed the instructions in the README. Results for 1 shard showed comparable throughput to the result in the paper. Figure 5: I was initially not able to run the test successfully; on correspondence, there was a configuration value that needed to be set to a different value than described in the README. After setting that value, I was able to run the experiment successfully. My results are not a perfect mirror for Fig. 5 in the paper. The proxy recovery interval, in the paper, appears to be take approx. 3-4 seconds; my proxy recovery interval is about 6 seconds. I am guessing most of the difference is due to the random failture detection time set by Raft; thus, I believe my results are likely a successful reproduction of those presented in the paper. A suggestion for improvement would be to be more clear about the experimental topology/configuration used for each stage of each experiment run (e.g., # of machines in each category, actual kSessionValues used, and actual run_experiment.py comman used). There was also no instruction for separating out or specifying the types of operations, as is done in the paper. My overall impression regarding reproducability is that I have no reason to suspect the software does not work as advertised in the paper (and some reason to believe it does), but I was unable to repoduce what are arguably the most important results (Fig 3 and Fig 4).

- **Author Response:** We made it explicit where the user can clone the repository and how to swap in using the “mason” image on Emulab. We were unable to recreate problems with ssh keys; we included in the README the instructions (below) from an evaluator on how to solve the problem if it occurs. We added an empty results directory to each branch so it does not need to be created. We removed components from branches that

don't use them. The *run_experiment.py* script no longer tries to run them; components that are used no longer try to connect to unused components. kSessionCredits is now configured automatically with the *ltomake* build script. The script uses the largest kSessionCredits small enough to allow all of the necessary connections for each branch. This needs to be changed for the recovery experiment; we state in the README and in the *ltomake* script what it should be set to in order to run that specific experiment. Furthermore, the *run_suite.sh* script clarifies which *run_experiment.py* parameters should be used, and it runs a full suite of experiments for each figure. The exception is the ZK-Mason getData experiments; the README documents what must be done for that experiment, with a warning to make sure it is correct in *run_suite.sh*. *run_suite.sh* can be run with --appends or --reads for Corfu/Corfu-Mason and --setDatas or --getDatas for RSMKeeper and ZK-Mason.

How Usable Is The Artifact?: I was able to use this artifact, but it required a lot of communication with authors

How Reproducible Are The Results?: I was able to reproduce a few of the main results

JSYS 2022 Oct Artifacts Paper2 Reviewer 1JoQ

Comment:

Hello authors,

I would appreciate your guidance regarding the following questions.

Figure 3 (corfu/corfumason)

How are we supposed to run experiments from the corfu branch? I note that the proxy does not build in that branch (which makes sense, as proxies are not needed for CORFU'). However run_experiment.py assumes there are proxies (and by default will issue commands to proxies) so although I get results, I am not confident I am running the experiment correctly.

I also don't see the mechanism that controls the number of shards (I only see the mechanism for number of replicas). How is this value set, for both corfu and corfumason?

Finally, I see where the paper states the proxy/client ratio for zk-mason but I do not see that information for corfumason. What is the ratio of proxies to clients for corfumason?

- **Author Response:** We removed components that were unused in a branch. We added how to configure the number of shards/proxies to the README. We include a *run_suite.sh* script which has the correct component ratios.

Figure 4 (zookeeper)

What is the best way to run an experiment in the rmskeeper branch since some components are not relevant? How do we configure the number of shards for both rmskeeper and zk-mason?

- **Author Response:** Similar to the corfu branch we removed unused components. We added *run_suite.sh* which now contains the correct configuration. Experiments for RSMKeeper and setData experiments for ZK-Mason can be run with "bash run_suite.sh [--setDatas/--getDatas]". Some configuration is required for --getDatas for ZK-Mason and we note in the README what needs to be done.

Figure 5 (recovery)

I am unable to successfully run the command from the README. The test hangs after the sequencer is killed, and does not complete. In the output, I see that the proxies appear to be aborted:

```
bash: line 1:  3168 Aborted                 sudo -E env LD_LIBRARY_PATH=$LD_LIBRARY_PATH
numactl --cpunodebind=0 --membind=0 ./proxy --my_ip 155.98.36.39 --seq_ip 155.98.36.24
--nthreads 8 --batch_to 20 --replica_1_ip 155.98.36.131 --replica_2_ip 155.98.36.121
--my_raft_id 0 --replica_1_raft_id 1 --replica_2_raft_id 2 --proxy_id_start 0 --client_ip
155.98.36.31 --max_log_size 500000 --nsequence_spaces 4 --backupseq_ip 155.98.36.105
--nextproxy0_ip 155.98.36.124 --nextproxy1_ip 155.98.36.119 --nextproxy2_ip 155.98.36.116
--am_gc_leader &> /proj/myproject/mason/results/results-1667011362/proxy-0.log
```

When I check the corresponding proxy log, I see:

```
66:528786 WARNG: Rpc 2: Received connect response from [H: 155.98.36.31:31850, R: 0, S:
XX] for session 4. Issue: Error [Ring buffers exhausted].
66:528797 CATS_ERROR: [2] In sm_handler
terminate called after throwing an instance of 'std::runtime_error'
  what():  Got a SM error: [Ring buffers exhausted]
```

I am not sure if this is a genuine error or if I am configuring the experiment wrong.

- **Author Response:** We added to the README the configuration for this experiment. One line will need to be commented out in *ltomake* which will build the clients with the correct kSessionCredits so that enough connections can be made.

JSYS 2022 Oct Artifacts Paper2 Authors

Comment:
Hello,

Thanks for trying to run our system again! I'm sorry for these issues.

Figure 3:

Yes, I think you are running the experiments correctly. When we branched we left the proxies in whatever state they were in. run_experiment.py will start the proxies, but clients don't send any requests to them. In send_request() line 200 of client.cc clients send a request to the sequencer and when they receive a response in seq_num_cont_func() line 174 of client.cc they begin writing to the CORFU' servers. I'm sorry for the confusion this caused.

To set the number of shards you can use --ncorfu_servers and --corfu_replication_factor. The number of shards is --ncorfu_servers/--corfu_replication_factor. We used 2 for the replication factor for all of the experiments.

In the experiments for corfumason we used 1 client machine with 16 threads each for every proxy (3 proxy servers) and 6 proxies (18 proxy servers) for every corfu shard (2 corfu servers).

Figure 4:

The best way to run rsmkeeper is to instantiate a mason experiment with the default values, and run with the default values in the run_experiment.py script. The script will start the sequencer but nothing will interact with it. (You can check the output of the sequencer after running an experiment to verify this.) The actual rsmkeeper shard is on the proxy, not the service server, so the service servers and sequencers should not interact with anything.

The defaults in the rsmkeeper branch should be set correctly, there should be 1 proxy (3 proxy servers) with 1 thread each and 1 client with 8 threads.

For zk-mason, there should be 1 client machine with 16 threads per proxy (3 proxy servers) and 2 proxies (6 proxy servers) per zk-mason shard (3 zk-mason "service" servers).

Figure 5:

This is likely because kSessionCredits in eRPC/src/sm_types.h is too high. kSessionCredits is a parameter that eRPC uses for the number of outstanding messages a connection can have and to limit the number of connections an endpoint can have. For recovery experiments, because there are now proxy->client connections (for proxies to send noops to clients) in addition to client->proxy connections, kSessionCredits needs to be reduced to allow more connections on the clients. I believe building all components with kSessionCredits = 64 should work for the recovery experiment. But it's important --client_concurrency < kSessionCredits. And when building all components #define PLOT_RECOVERY 1 in common.h.

Thank you!

JSYS 2022 Oct Artifacts Paper2 Reviewer WvWk

Comment:

Dear authors,

I was trying to see if I could run the experiment. I am running into a problem during experimental setup using the scripts. I created an experiment in Emulab with the script from the repository, copied the list of machines into the indicated file. Then I tried to setup the experiment, from one of the reserved machines, by running python3 parse_machine_list.py [my Emulab username]. But the script exited with status 1. Below are the logs I got while running the script (it repeats for each machine).

```
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
 Setting up hugepages...
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Removing currently reserved hugepages
Unmounting /mnt/huge and removing directory
Reserving hugepages
Creating /mnt/huge and mounting as hugetlbfs
net.ipv4.conf.default.rp_filter = 0
net.ipv4.conf.all.rp_filter = 0
kernel.shmmax = 9223372036854775807
kernel.shmall = 1152921504606846720
```

modprobe: FATAL: Module igb-uio not found in directory /lib/modules/4.15.0-169-generic
Binding interface enp6s0f1 to DPDK
sudo: dpdk-devbind: command not found
Binding interface enp6s0f0 to DPDK
sudo: dpdk-devbind: command not found

Setting up DPDK on all machines...
dpdk_apt_setup.sh: line 17: /usr/share/dpdk/dpdk-sdk-env.sh: No such file or directory

When I ran the script for the second time, I get the following per machine:

Couldn't get iface and/or mac--will pause before setting up DPDK so you can input them manually

Can you please let me know how to proceed?

Thanks.

- **Author Response:** We added the Emulab profile to use and copied an evaluator's response below into the README that describes how to swap in an Emulab profile.

JSYS 2022 Oct Artifacts Paper2 Authors

Comment:
Dear WvWk,

Thanks for trying to run our system! I'm sorry you got an error.

I'm guessing that because it can't find commands/modules that you will need to use the Emulab disk image at urn:publicid:IDN+emulab.net+image+Mason//ubuntu-go1.18.5 which you can specify on line 37 of the genilib script "emulab_genilib".

You can also use the experiment profile "mason" under project "Mason", which should work.

If this is not the problem or you run into further problems, please let us know.

Thank you!

JSYS 2022 Oct Artifacts Paper2 Reviewer 1JoQ

Comment:
Hello authors & reviewers,

I was able to setup the CloudLab experiment with the following steps:

1. Create a CloudLab user
2. Add an extra ssh key to cloud lab (this is because the easiest way to setup ssh between cloud lab nodes in an experiment is to copy a private key onto one of the nodes); I created an additional/extra key so I can delete this key after the artifact evaluation for privacy/safety

3. Use the author's Mason cloud lab profile to create an experiment with default options (instructions for this given below by Area Chair eS4H)
4. Log into one of the nodes (I used sequencer-0)
5. Upload your private ssh key onto the node and run the following commands: chmod 600 /your/priv/key eval "$(ssh-agent -s)" ssh-add /your/priv/key
6. Clone the mason GitHub repo: git clone https://github.com/masonj2022/mason mason-init Note: don't clone into ~/mason, as the scripts will do that later and it is best to avoid conflicts
7. cd mason-init/setup
8. Now make some edits/fixes to parse_machine_list.py: a. The first edit is to fix an indexing error. On line 102, change the 6 to a 7 (https://github.com/masonj2022/mason/blob/24da3117d02270adbbd329873fb4514f605304fe/setup/parse_machine_list.py#L102) It is possible this is not an error all reviewers will encounter; I believe it is related to how tabs/spaces are copied between my browser & terminal. To check to see if you need to do this, review the output of parse_machine_list.py. This is only necessary if the SSH command is incorrect. b. This script assumes that the GitHub repo is cloned at the same location on each nodes. I don't want to log into each node, so instead modify the script to clone the repo on each of the other nodes. Replace line 188 and 189 (https://github.com/masonj2022/mason/blob/24da3117d02270adbbd329873fb4514f605304fe/setup/parse_machine_list.py#L188) with setup_cmd = ("cd ~; git clone https://github.com/masonj2022/mason; cd mason/setup; sudo bash dpdk_apt_setup.sh %s %s" % (machines[machine]['iface1'], machines[machine]['iface2'])) Alternatively, you can ssh into each machine and manually clone the repo before running the setup script.
9. Follow direction as originally indicated to copy/paste the machine list from cloudlab, and then run parse_machine_list.py as indicated. The script should report an exit status of 0 for all hosts.

I hope this is helpful to the other reviewers. I have not yet attempted to run experiments, so I am only assuming that each node is correctly configured at this point.

- **Author Response:** We were unable to reproduce ssh key problems and the whitespace/indexing problem; we noted in the README that some users ran into these problems and pasted your solution into the README. Thank you for going through the effort to solve these problems and give other evaluators a potential solution. Hopefully, this will help other users if they run into these problems. We also included an explicit location to which the user should clone: "/proj/your-project/". This should be over Emulab's NFS and thus should only need to be cloned once regardless of the number of nodes in the experiment. We also improved the setup scripts to include "ssh ... -o StrictHostKeyChecking=no" so that the setup scripts don't prompt the user for every new ssh connection.

JSYS 2022 Oct Artifacts Paper2 Reviewer d8bF

Comment:

Hi author, I am still facing similar errors when using Mason profile. Could you elaborate more on that?

- **Author Response:** We hope to have addressed this by including Area Chair eS4H's instructions below in the README.

JSYS 2022 Oct Artifacts Paper2 Area Chair eS4H

Comment:
FWIW, I used the authors' CloudLab profile (Mason/mason) today to instantiate an experiment on CloudLab.

The experiment instantiated successfully, meaning that CloudLab set up the machines and network. I did not actually try running any activities on the allocated resources. But by instantiating an experiment, I was able to verify that the authors' profile at least "basically works."

You can find this profile on CloudLab as follows.

- From the menu, choose "Experiments -> Start Experiment".
- In the resulting screen, click "Change Profile".
- In the dialog, go to the search box (upper left) and enter "mason".
- Scroll down in the list if necessary, and choose the "Mason" profile.

Then click the "Select Profile" button and proceed with the usual experiment-instantiation process.

- **Author Response:** Thank you for making this more clear and explicit! We have included this in the README.

Revision: Solution: Scalable, Contiguous Sequencing for Building Consistent Services

Abstract

Some recent services use a sequencer to simplify ordering operations on sharded data. The sequencer assigns each operation a multi-sequence number which explicitly orders the operation on each shard it accesses. Existing sequencers have two shortcomings. First, failures can result in some multi-sequence numbers never being assigned, exposing a non-contiguous multi-sequence, which requires complex scaffolding to handle. Second, existing implementations use single-machine sequencers, limiting service throughput to the ordering throughput of one machine.

We make two contributions. First, we posit that sequencers should expose our new contiguous multi-sequence abstraction. Contiguity guarantees every sequence number is assigned an operation, simplifying the abstraction. Second, we design and implement MASON, the first system to expose the contiguous multi-sequence abstraction and the first to provide a scalable multi-sequence. MASON is thus an ideal building block for consistent, scalable services. Our evaluation shows MASON unlocks scalable throughput for two strongly-consistent services built on it.

1 Introduction

Designers of large-scale distributed services grapple with the tradeoff between strong consistency and high performance. A strongly-consistent distributed service is a useful building block because applications can reason about its behavior as if it were running on a single machine. However, strong consistency requires coordination among a service's servers, adding overhead.

Some recent services achieve consistency using a *sequencer* to explicitly order data accesses a priori, removing the need to coordinate concurrent accesses [37, 56]. This enables sequencer-based designs to achieve strong consistency with higher throughput than other approaches.

~~An existing abstraction enabled by sequencers is~~ Early work using sequencers used a *sequence* abstraction that globally orders all operations [3, 49]. More recent work, and this work, target the *multi-sequence* abstraction ~~. This~~ that only explicitly orders operations that execute on the same subset of data [37, 56]. This allows operations spanning multiple subsets of data to only be ordered with respect to other operations on intersecting subsets, reducing contention compared to ordering all operations globally, and improving throughput and latency.

The multi-sequence abstraction uses a collection of *sequence spaces*, i.e., logically independent sequences of strictly increasing integers, to provide a strictly serializable ordering of accesses to different subsets (*shards*) of the service's data. An operation that needs cross-shard ordering gets an atomically assigned *multi-sequence number* containing a sequence number from the sequence space of each shard the operation accesses. An *execution protocol*, designed by the service developer, defines the sequence spaces involved in an operation and how shards use multi-sequence numbers to execute operations. Driven by the execution protocol, the service's servers use the sequence numbers to order operations on the shard(s) they manage, with the multi-sequence numbers atomically ordering operations relative to other operations to provide strong consistency. Operations ordered by multi-sequence numbers can be executed without coordination across servers, enabling strongly consistent, scalable, and efficient services.

However, the abstraction used by recent services is a *non-contiguous multi-sequence*: failures can cause *holes* in the sequence space, i.e., sequence numbers that are never used. To preserve consistency, a service must identify and reason about all holes. Identifying holes requires service-wide coordination between the service's servers to reach consensus on whether a sequence number has an associated operation that can be recovered. If not, then it is a hole, and the servers must coordinate to avoid using any sequence numbers that are part of the same multi-sequence number as the hole. Implementing consensus and service-wide coordination to handle holes significantly complicates execution protocol design (§2.2).

This paper introduces the *contiguous multi-sequence* abstraction for building consistent, scalable services. The contiguous multi-sequence abstraction assigns exactly one operation to every integer in each sequence space such that no sequence space has a hole. Contiguity strengthens the multi-sequence abstraction over its existing noncontiguous counterpart by hiding consensus and service-wide coordination, simplifying the development of services. Some existing services use the noncontiguous multi-sequence abstraction internally to expose higher-level abstractions like distributed databases [37, 56]. Compared to higher-level abstractions, the contiguous multi-sequence supports developing more diverse functionality, e.g., ephemeral objects (§6).

In addition to being noncontiguous, existing implementations of the multi-sequence abstraction [37, 56] suffer from a second limitation: they have an ordering throughput ceiling that limits the throughput of any services built on top of them. These implementations use a *monolithic sequencer*, a single machine whose only task is to hand out multi-sequence numbers, enabling low-latency ordering that is easy to reason about. A monolithic sequencer can order operations with higher throughput than coordination-based mechanisms, but

this design can *only achieve ordering throughput up to the throughput limit of a single machine.* Thus, a service built on a monolithic sequencer cannot scale.

Our system, MASON, addresses the ordering throughput limitation. MASON is a building block for distributed services that provides the contiguous multi-sequence abstraction with no ceiling on ordering throughput, unlocking scalability for services that were previously unscalable. MASON's contiguous multi-sequence implementation enables services to (1) use simple execution protocols that need not incorporate consensus or service-wide coordination and (2) scale to achieve service throughput far higher than what is possible with monolithic sequencers.

Our key insight is that MASON can enable simple execution protocols and scalability via a layer of replicated proxies between clients and a monolithic sequencer. To overcome the failure modes that expose holes, the proxy layer provides fault tolerance for clients and the sequencer, guaranteeing the contiguous multi-sequence abstraction. To overcome the monolithic sequencer's ceiling on ordering throughput, proxies batch requests for multi-sequence numbers. This batching is perfect, in that the sequencer does no more work to allocate one million contiguous numbers than it does to allocate a single number. Each replicated proxy operates essentially independently, allowing the proxy layer to scale out; adding more proxies increases ordering throughput. These techniques enable MASON to scale: if the sequencer is the bottleneck, proxies increase batch size; if the proxy layer is the bottleneck, more proxies are added.

Our evaluation shows MASON provides scalable ordering throughput: with one sequence space, MASON achieves ~16.7 Mops/sec with 24 proxy machines, scaling to ~31.5 Mops/sec with 48 proxy machines. MASON's tradeoff for a stronger abstraction and scalable ordering throughput is higher latency relative to monolithic-sequencer designs, since the proxies and a single round of replication are on path for each request. MASON's latency is still low, however, with a median latency of ~243 μs at the reported throughputs.

We demonstrate MASON's value as a building block by using it to implement Corfu-MASON, a distributed shared log modeled after CORFU [3]; and ZK-MASON, a distributed prototype of the coordination service ZooKeeper [22]. With MASON's strong abstraction, it was easy to build these services that consistently execute cross-shard operations (§6). MASON also unlocked scalability for them in contrast to their fundamentally unscalable original designs. Specifically, our implementation of CORFU's original design is limited to ~14.1 Mops/s (nearly line rate for a sequencer with a 10G NIC, ~14.5 Mops/s). Building it on MASON lets it scale from ~7.3 Mops/s (one server) to ~29.1 Mops/s (four servers). Our implementation of ZooKeeper's original design is limited to ~150 Kops/s; its MASON-based implementation scales from ~1.3 Mops/s (one server) to ~7 Mops/s (eight servers).

This paper makes two major contributions. The first is the contiguous multi-sequence abstraction, which simplifies building correct services compared to the previous noncontiguous multi-sequence abstraction. While the noncontiguous multi-sequence abstraction demands significant distributed systems expertise to use correctly, our abstraction shields service developers from the complexity of reasoning about holes (§2). By handling this complexity internally, the contiguous multi-sequence abstraction enables faster development of new services, promotes designs with fewer bugs, and enables developers without distributed systems expertise to develop scalable distributed services. The second major contribution is the design of MASON, which notably is the first multi-sequence design that is scalable. MASON's inherent scalability is the foundation for removing the throughout ceiling from existing and future services built on a multi-sequence abstraction (§5). Together, these contributions make it easy to build consistent services with a newfound ability to scale service throughput (§6).

2 The Contiguous Multi-Sequence

This section is an orientation to the multi-sequence abstraction. Section 2.1 explains how to build strongly-consistent services with the generic multi-sequence abstraction. Section 2.2 describes why building services with the existing *noncontiguous* multi-sequence abstraction is challenging. Our *contiguous* multi-sequence abstraction instead makes it easy to use multi-sequences to build scalable, consistent services.

2.1 Building Services with Multi-Sequences

The sequence abstraction globally orders operations in a single sequence space. The multi-sequence abstraction extends the sequence abstraction to multiple sequence spaces to enable the service to order operations only when they execute on the same subset of data. This enables services to execute operations in order with less coordination: servers managing a subset of data only need local ordering information, reducing contention compared to ordering all operations globally, improving throughput and latency. Services built on the generic multi-sequence abstraction typically include clients, a sequencing component, and servers, each holding one or more shards. Typically, each shard stores a subset of the service's data and is replicated for fault tolerance. Each shard has its own sequence space, a sequence of strictly increasing integers that order operations on the shard's data. To execute an operation, a client identifies the shards involved in the operation, gets a multi-sequence number from the sequencing component with one number from each relevant shard's sequence space, and sends the operation to the shards' servers with the multi-sequence number. Each server locally uses the multi-sequence number to order this operation's data accesses relative to other operations' accesses. In contrast, with a single, global sequence space, each shard would need to know the next operation to execute across all

shards instead of only the next operation concerning its own data.

We next define multi-sequence numbers, explain how they are assigned to operations consistently, and describe how execution protocols use them to scale execution.

Multi-sequence numbers. A *multi-sequence number*, n, is a set of $\langle ssid, sn \rangle$ tuples where *ssid* is a unique number identifying the sequence space, and *sn* is a sequence number in that space. The sequence number in space s in multi-sequence number n is denoted n_s. For a set of sequence spaces requested by a client, the sequencing component returns a multi-sequence number consisting of the next sequence number n_s in each relevant space s.

Strictly serializable multi-sequence number assignment. From clients' perspectives, strictly serializable services process operations one at a time in an order that a single machine could have received them [48]. Concretely, *strict serializability* requires that there exists a legal total order of operations consistent with the partial ordering of "real-time" precedence, i.e., if a completes before b begins, then a must be ordered before b [21, 48].

Multi-sequence numbers enable strongly consistent distributed services when assigned to operations in a strictly serializable order. To simplify discussion, we define a default, Δ, where $n_s = \Delta$ for all n_s not mapped to a specific sequence number (i.e., all s not in this multi-sequence number). For the set of all sequence spaces S, we define a partial ordering over all multi-sequence numbers where $a < b \iff \forall s \in S, a_s \neq \Delta \wedge b_s \neq \Delta \implies a_s < b_s$. The multi-sequence abstraction guarantees that two multi-sequence numbers either share no common sequence spaces or are strictly ordered (i.e., if $a_s < b_s$ for one common space s, then $a_{s'} < b_{s'}$ for all common spaces s', implying $a < b$). The partial ordering of the multi-sequence numbers defines the ordering of operations. If strict serializability imposes an ordering between two operations, then multi-sequence numbers assigned on path with their execution capture that ordering.

Execution protocols. To use the multi-sequence abstraction, a service developer implements an *execution protocol* that executes operations in order of their multi-sequence numbers, yielding a strictly serializable service. The execution protocol runs on clients (typically encapsulated in a client library) and on the service's servers. For clients, the execution protocol defines how operations are mapped to the service's shards and which sequence spaces are involved in a given operation. For servers, it determines when shards can safely execute operations, based on the operations' multi-sequence numbers.

Scalable execution. Multi-sequence numbers enable services to scale throughput up to the rate the sequencer can assign sequence numbers. Execution scales through parallelism: when some shards are executing an operation, other shards can execute a different operation. The sequence spaces in multi-sequence numbers determine which operations can execute in parallel, as operations with disjoint multi-sequence numbers access different shards. As long as multi-sequence number assignment keeps up, the service can increase its throughput by adding more machines and creating more shards. However, existing multi-sequenced services use *monolithic* (single-machine) sequencers, which can never assign sequence numbers to operations at a higher rate than a single machine can support and hence limit the service's scalability.

2.2 From Noncontiguous to Contiguous

The generic multi-sequence abstraction is realized as a *noncontiguous* abstraction in existing services, which use it to expose higher-level abstractions [37, 56]. As we explain next, noncontiguity complicates service development. In contrast, the *contiguous* multi-sequence abstraction simplifies developing services with multi-sequences by encapsulating that complexity within the abstraction.

Holes in a noncontiguous sequence complicate the abstraction. *Holes* occur when a sequence number is not used for an operation. For example, a hole occurs if a client fails after receiving a sequence number but before using it. A shard may see, e.g., sequence numbers 1–3 and then receive an operation with sequence number 5, indicating a potential hole at 4. To preserve strict serializability, the shard may only execute operation 5 after 4 is used, since 4 could belong to any operation. To make progress in the absence of an operation, the service must decide that the entire multi-sequence number is a hole and enforce that it is not used on any shard, typically by assigning a *no-op* to each of its sequence numbers.

Handling holes complicates service design. The service must have a mechanism to identify sequence numbers that are potential holes. Existing designs use timeouts [3, 56] or infer holes from out-of-order operation arrival [37, 56]. More challenging is that the service's servers must reach service-wide consensus on whether a sequence number is a hole, then coordinate to ensure that the other numbers in the hole's multi-sequence number are treated as holes to avoid partially executing a cross-shard operation. Existing services achieve this with a global shared log [56] or a failure coordinator [37]. Requiring consensus in the execution protocol makes a service developer's task significantly more difficult. Consensus is hard to implement and incorporate [7, 47], and requires developers to understand the nuances of the sequencing component and consensus implementation in depth.

Although existing services feature workable solutions for handling holes, requiring services to select and properly incorporate a solution does not reflect operational best practices. Much of the purpose of providing infrastructure building blocks (such as an implementation of the multi-sequence abstraction) is to enable services to use them without needing to understand their complexities, via clean abstractions that mask the subtleties of their internal operation and failure modes. Pushing the complexity of handling holes to services increases the chances of one doing so incorrectly, similar to

how pushing memory management to individual programmers increases the chances of memory leaks.

Our contiguous multi-sequence avoids holes and hides consensus. Our abstraction assigns exactly one operation to each sequence number in each sequence space. Service developers can focus on designing execution protocols that achieve their services' goals, a much simpler task when freed from reasoning about holes or implementing consensus. Eris [37] and vCorfu [56], the two existing designs built on the noncontiguous multi-sequence abstraction, were developed by distributed systems experts. With the contiguous multi-sequence abstraction, we aim to empower developers without such expertise to use multi-sequences to build scalable, consistent services, and make it easier and faster for experts.

3 MASON Overview

The central contributions of MASON are to shield services from the complexity of dealing with holes by providing the contiguous multi-sequence, and to provide the benefits of the multi-sequence abstraction while allowing ordering throughput to scale beyond what a monolithic sequencer can provide. Section 4 describes how the components work together to guarantee a contiguous multi-sequence. Section 5 describes how MASON enables scalability with two mechanisms that relieve all throughput bottlenecks.

3.1 Model and Assumptions

We assume a set of processes that communicate via point-to-point communication over an asynchronous network, where messages can be arbitrarily delayed and reordered. We assume a crash failure model, where processes execute according to their specification until they cease sending messages and the failure is undetectable to other processes. MASON is safe under these assumptions. We assume service shards implement at-most-once semantics to handle retransmissions.

3.2 MASON Components

Figure 1 shows how MASON is used in a service. It also shows MASON's two types of internal components: a *sequencer* and replicated *proxies*. The core of MASON's design is a monolithic sequencer that provides high-throughput operation ordering, surrounded by a replicated proxy layer that handles the failure modes and bottlenecks impeding existing sequencers.

The sequencer allocates increasing multi-sequence numbers. It is implemented by a single machine, and only one sequencer is active at a time. MASON ~~keeps a backup sequencer on standby~~ maintains a cold *standby sequencer* for failure recovery.The standby sequencer does not participate in normal case operation and is only required for liveness. The monolithic sequencer at MASON's core provides the benefits of existing sequencers: contention-free, high-throughput ordering of operations in a distributed system. In our system, MASON itself is the distributed system, leveraging the sequencer's

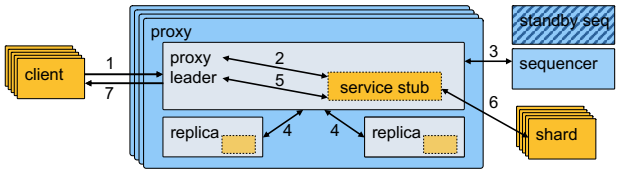


Figure 1: The components of a service built with MASON and an operation's flow through the service. Blue components are part of MASON; yellow components are supplied by the service. Numbers correspond to steps in §3.3.

benefits while managing its drawbacks to provide a simpler, scalable building block to the service.

Proxies are replicated state machines (~~our~~ RSMs). We treat the RSM protocol as a black box, but for liveness require that it is leader-based and that the protocol informs a replica when it gains and loses leadership; these two properties enable a leader takeover protocol that allows MASON to only replicate once, discussed below (§4.1). Both requirements could be eschewed at the cost of normal-case latency by replicating state both before making a request to the sequencer and after. However, because leader-based protocols are common in practice, we choose the lower latency design. Our implementation uses Raft [46]~~, though any RSM would work)~~. A proxy is thus logically a single entity implemented by a leader process and multiple follower processes on separate machines. The leader accepts operations from clients and executes them via the *service stub* using multi-sequence numbers. The rest of this paper refers to a proxy replica group simply as a *proxy*. A MASON deployment may have one or more proxies, depending on system load.

Identical to many other RSM-based systems, we assume at most f of $2f+1$ proxy replicas fail [30, 36, 41, 46]. A MASON deployment must be configured so that f is sufficiently large. In the rare event that more than f machines fail, manual intervention by an operator is necessary to restore availability.

Service stubs are implemented by the service built on MASON and drive the execution protocol on the proxies. Service developers interact with MASON on the proxies through service stubs which execute within the proxy's process. When a proxy receives an operation from a service's client, it passes the operation to the stub. The stub either requests that MASON order the operation, or executes the operation immediately if it need not be ordered, e.g., an inconsistent read. After ordering and replicating the operation, the proxy returns it back to the stub which begins the execution protocol. Stubs are analogous to client libraries in existing multi-sequenced services. Section 6 shows how stubs are used to develop services.

The proxy may *batch* requests for multi-sequence numbers for scalability, i.e., request multi-sequence numbers for multiple client operations in one sequencer request (§5). The sequencer *allocates* a multi-sequence number for each operation in the batch. An allocated multi-sequence number is one given to a proxy that the sequencer promises not to allocate

again. Proxies are responsible for *assigning* multi-sequence numbers to client operations. Assignment uses replication to permanently associate a multi-sequence number with an operation and guarantee it will never be assigned to another operation. Once the proxy has replicated the assignment of a multi-sequence number to an operation, it returns the operation and multi-sequence number to the service stub for execution.

3.3 Normal-Case Operation of MASON

The normal case operation of MASON, shown in Figure 1, includes the following steps:

1. A client sends an operation to a proxy.
2. The proxy passes the operation to the service stub which determines the relevant sequence spaces.
3. The proxy asks the sequencer to allocate a multi-sequence number covering the relevant sequence spaces.
4. The proxy replicates the allocated number and operation, assigning the number to the operation.
5. The proxy returns the operation and multi-sequence number to the service stub.
6. The service stub and shards run the execution protocol.
7. The proxy sends the response from the stub to the client.

4 Ensuring a Contiguous Multi-Sequence

MASON provides a contiguous multi-sequence by handling all potential sources of holes: client failures (Figure 2a), network drops (Figure 2b), sequencer failures (Figure 2c), and combinations thereof. This section covers how MASON handles each of these failure scenarios and then sketches a proof of strict serializability.

4.1 Proxies Prevent Holes from Client Failure

In a multi-sequenced service, client failure can cause holes when the client obtains a sequence number and fails before using it in the service. For instance, Figure 2a illustrates Client A failing before using sequence number 3 from sequence space *i*, resulting in a hole at 3. MASON prevents such holes with proxies that manage multi-sequence numbers on clients' behalf. Proxies are replicated for fault tolerance, eliminating this source of holes. A proxy will always return an operation that was assigned a multi-sequence number to the service stub even if the client fails and even if a minority of proxy replicas fails.

A byproduct of replication is that proxies maintain a record of every assigned sequence number, which is used in sequencer recovery (§4.3). By masking client failure and maintaining state needed for sequencer recovery, proxy replication is a key mechanism for avoiding holes in MASON.

The proxy replication strategy is driven by correctness and performance. Proxies must replicate enough information to preserve contiguity and strict serializability. Replicating every input to the proxy leader would be correct, but this would add unacceptable latency to client requests and burden proxies with excessive communication overhead. Fortunately, MASON can skip replication for all but one step in operation processing, because the other steps can be safely retried, including after client, sequencer, and/or proxy replica failure.

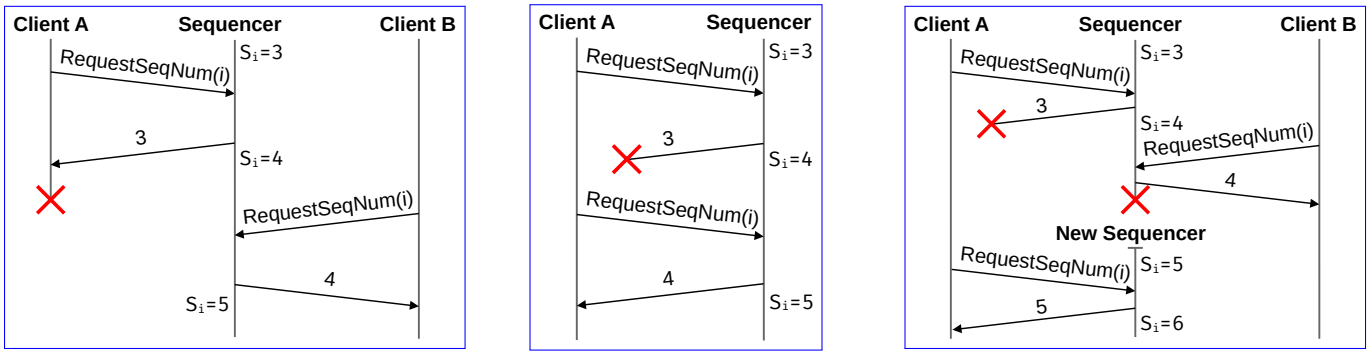
The exception is step 5 (Fig. 1), returning a multi-sequenced client operation to the service stub. Replicating the mapping of each client operation to a multi-sequence number before this step is critical for correctness in MASON. Suppose the mapping is not replicated. The sequencer and proxy leader could fail concurrently after the leader returns a multi-sequenced client operation to its service stub, but before the stub sends its operation to every relevant shard. The shards that received the operation may execute it, but the operation will not be completed after recovery because the mapping of multi-sequence number to operation was lost. Exposing the partial execution violates strict serializability. Therefore, before returning an operation to the service stub, the proxy must permanently associate the operation with a multi-sequence number through replication. Once replication succeeds, the sequence number is *assigned* to the operation.

We next describe how the proxy processes operations, in order to explain why all other steps are safe to retry. We discuss one operation and a single sequence space for ease of explanation; the reasoning can be easily extended to batches of operations and multiple sequence spaces.

Receiving a client operation. Clients can send an operation to any proxy. When a proxy leader receives an operation from a client, it passes the operation to the service stub. If the stub requests that the operation be ordered, the leader allocates a *sequencer request ID* for that operation (step 3 in Figure 1). Sequencer request IDs are allocated only by the leader, so they are trivially contiguous and strictly increasing. Sequencer request IDs are used during proxy failover to recover sequence numbers that were allocated but not yet assigned to any operation, i.e., potential holes.

Requesting a sequence number. The leader then requests a sequence number from the sequencer, with the sequencer request ID (step 3). If the sequencer has not seen this sequencer request ID from this proxy, the sequencer updates its state in two relevant ways: it allocates a sequence number for this request by incrementing the sequence counter in the requested sequence space, and maps the sequencer request ID to the allocated number. If the sequencer has seen the sequencer request ID before, it responds with the previously allocated sequence number and marks it as a retransmit.

Proxy leader failure. When a proxy leader fails, the new leader must recover the sequence numbers that were allocated but not yet assigned. The state needed to correctly match allocated but unassigned sequence numbers to operations was lost with the failed leader, so these are temporary holes. We now explain how we use sequencer request IDs to recover such holes. This is the key mechanism for ensuring correctness



(a) Hole caused by client failure. **(b)** Hole caused by network drop. **(c)** Hole caused by sequencer failure.

Figure 2: Potential sources of holes. S_i is the next sequence number in sequence space i.

when proxies execute only one round of replication.

The new leader collaborates with the sequencer to identify these temporary holes as follows:

1. The new leader saw a contiguous set of sequencer request IDs until some ID x, after which it saw noncontiguous IDs until y. The range from x to y is noncontiguous because the leader replicates sequence number-operation pairs as they arrive from the sequencer, which may be out of order.
2. The new leader requests sequence numbers for all IDs from $x+1$ until $y-1$ that were not replicated. The sequencer will either return already-allocated sequence numbers, or will allocate new numbers for the IDs.
3. The new leader replicates and assigns all returned sequence numbers to no-ops and returns them to the service stub.
4. The new leader then resumes normal operation, allocating sequencer request IDs from $y+1$.

There may be allocated but unassigned sequence numbers with sequence request IDs greater than y. In such cases, the sequencer will mark the returned sequence numbers as retransmits. The leader replicates and assigns them to no-ops and retries the request with a new sequencer request ID. If the sequencer fails concurrently with leader failure, the sequencer recovery protocol recovers and assigns no-ops to any allocated but unassigned sequence numbers (§4.3).

Returning the operation and sequence number to the service stub (step 5). Strict serializability dictates that the service's execution protocol cannot use one sequence number for multiple operations, and different sequence numbers cannot be used for one operation. MASON must therefore guarantee the sequence number associated with an operation never changes once the service is made aware of it. MASON thus replicates the sequence number-to-operation assignment (step 4) before passing the operation to the service stub.

The proxy leader's other steps in handling a client operation—passing the operation to the service stub and forwarding the service's response to the client (step 7)—can be safely left unreplicated. Retrying these steps is safe. The service stub, shards, and clients already provide at-most-once semantics to handle retransmission due to network drops, so they will be able to handle retransmission from the proxies.

4.2 Reliable Transport Prevents Holes from Packet Loss

Holes can occur after network drops (as illustrated in Figure 2b). MASON handles network drops with a reliable transport layer. Since the state needed to reliably transport multi-sequence numbers is lost on sequencer failure, MASON uses a recovery protocol to correctly fill holes with no-ops in case of simultaneous packet loss and sequencer failure (§4.3). Reliable transport and the sequencer recovery protocol ensure that every allocated multi-sequence number arrives at a proxy.

4.3 Recovering to Prevent Holes from Sequencer Failure

~~In , sequencer~~ Sequencer failure can cause ~~temporary~~ holes if failure occurs before the reliable transport protocol can retransmit a dropped response. ~~Suppose~~ For instance, suppose the sequencer allocates and sends ~~multi-sequence numbers a and b, where $a < b$, for~~ the sequence number 3 for sequence space i and later 4 for the same sequence space i for two client operations, as illustrated in Figure 2c. If the message containing ~~a~~ 3 is dropped and the sequencer fails before retransmission, but a ~~proxy receives b, then a~~ client receives 4, then 3 is a temporary hole. One solution replicates the sequencer to permanently associate client requests and multi-sequence numbers. However, replication compromises the main benefit of a sequencer: simplified ordering ~~,~~ so the sequencer can devote all its resources to allocating numbers.

MASON instead runs one active sequencer, backed by an idle ~~backup~~ standby sequencer and sequencer recovery protocol. If the active sequencer fails, the ~~backup~~ standby sequencer takes over and executes the recovery protocol to correctly fill any temporary holes caused by the failure, ensuring a contiguous multi-sequence when the ~~backup~~ standby resumes normal operation.

MASON's sequencer recovery protocol is based on two observations. First, the proxies' collective state includes which sequence numbers have been assigned, so they collectively know where potential holes in each sequence space are. MASON assigns these sequence numbers to no-ops. Second, all outstanding operations are concurrent. An outstanding operation is one that a proxy received (step 1 in Fig. 1), but has not yet assigned a sequence number (step 4), and thus is not ordered. When the ~~backup~~ standby sequencer resumes normal operation, it can allocate new multi-sequence numbers for outstanding operations in any relative order, as long as they are ordered after the highest previously-assigned sequence number in each sequence space, which the proxies collectively know.

The steps in MASON's sequencer recovery protocol are:

a) Detect sequencer failure and activate a ~~backup~~ standby sequencer.
b) Identify potential holes in each sequence space.
c) Replicate the assignment of no-ops to holes.
d) Resume normal operation with new sequence numbers.

Failure detection and ~~backup~~ standby sequencer activation. Proxies unreliably detect sequencer failure with timeouts and pings. If a proxy does not hear from the sequencer after a timeout (.5 s in our implementation), it pings the sequencer. After another timeout, the proxy declares the sequencer failed and initiates recovery by activating the ~~backup~~ standby sequencer. The ~~backup~~ standby sequencer informs the other proxies that recovery has begun. All proxies then replicate a special recovery operation and seal their sequence spaces, rejecting any packets from the previous sequencer. The new sequencer waits for all proxies to complete the sealing process before resuming recovery. Replicating the recovery operation on all proxies before allowing the ~~backup~~ standby sequencer to resume recovery ensures proxies reject all packets from the previous sequencer. This in turn, ensures there is only one active sequencer at a time even when proxy leaders fail, sequencer-failure detection is incorrect, or messages from the previous sequencer were delayed or reordered in the network.

Identifying potential holes. During normal operation, proxies track their *local views* of each sequence space. A proxy's local view is the subsequence of numbers in each sequence space that the proxy has assigned to operations. After sealing, proxies send their local views to the ~~backup~~ standby sequencer. The ~~backup~~ standby sequencer reconstructs each sequence space, exposing any temporary holes. Garbage collection of proxies' local views is described at the end of this section.

Assigning temporary holes to no-ops. The ~~backup~~ standby sequencer notifies proxies of any temporary holes in each sequence space. Proxies assign these sequence numbers to no-ops, replicate the assignment, and pass them to the service stubs, as they would with client-issued operations.

Resuming normal operation. The ~~backup~~ standby sequencer identifies the start of each sequence space based on the highest number in each sequence space compiled from the proxies. It then notifies proxies to resume normal operation and allocates new sequence numbers from that point. Proxies must re-request sequence numbers for all outstanding operations.

Concurrent proxy leader failure. If a proxy leader fails during sequencer recovery, the new leader will have enough state to correctly participate in recovery. In particular, if the leader fails before replicating the recovery operation, the sequencer will not have started recovery, and all holes normally recovered as part of leader recovery will be found when the sequencer is rebuilding the sequence. If the leader fails after replicating the recovery operation, the new leader will have the same state as the previous leader when the previous leader began sequencer recovery.

Garbage-collecting sequence number tracking state. Proxies run a lightweight garbage collection protocol to discard tracked sequence numbers that are no longer needed for sequencer recovery. Each sequence space is partitioned into intervals of size N. When all N sequence numbers in an interval have been assigned to operations, it is safe to discard the state associated with those sequence numbers. To determine when all N numbers have been assigned, the proxies form a communication ring and periodically send an accumulating count of the sequence numbers assigned in each sequence space's latest interval. At the end of a round, if any sequence space's count is N, the interval is completely assigned; all state associated with that interval is discarded.

4.4 Proof Sketch of Strict Serializability

This subsection sketches a proof of the strict serializability of the assignment of multi-sequence numbers to operations. We include the formal proof in the appendix (§A). We make the assumptions stated in §3.1. Our proof reasons about pairs of operations, showing they are either *strictly concurrent*, where they do not share sequence spaces, or *strictly ordered*, where if $a_n < b_n$ for some overlapping sequence space n, then $a_{n'} < b_{n'}$ for all overlapping sequence spaces n' , where a_n denotes the sequence number in sequence space n assigned to operation a.

To show that there exists a total order over all completed operations consistent with the partial ordering of real-time precedence, we exhaustively analyzed all cases of failure scenarios from no failures to concurrent failure of proxy leaders, proxy followers, and sequencer. In all cases an operation is assigned at most one multi-sequence number which occurs if/when replication to a majority of replicas in a proxy succeeds. The assigned multi-sequence numbers for all operations that access overlapping sequence spaces are then strictly ordered by either the same sequencer, or by an initial sequencer and a ~~backup~~ standby sequencer that recovers all previous assignments before allocating any new multi-sequence numbers.

Thus, the partial order of assigned multi-sequence numbers strictly orders all conflicting operations. Further, this partial order is consistent with real-time precedence either trivially when two operations are ordered by the same sequencer or because a ~~backup~~ standby sequencer only allocates numbers larger than the maximum previously assigned in each sequence space. Only strictly concurrent (i.e., no overlapping sequence spaces) operations are unordered by that partial order, and any ordering of them results in a valid total order. Extending the partial order to a total order consistent with real-time precedence is thus trivial: unordered operations are first ordered by the partial order of real-time precedence and then remaining unordered operations are arbitrarily ordered.

5 Supporting Scalable Throughput

A service's achievable throughput (*service throughput*) is capped by the minimum of the rate at which it can execute requests (*execution throughput*) and the rate at which it can order requests (*ordering throughput*). Execution throughput scales when more service shards are added if and only if the service implements a scalable execution protocol. Ordering throughput scales only if the ordering component scales. Previous multi-sequence abstraction designs do not scale.

MASON supports scalable service throughput by removing the bottlenecks that limit monolithic-sequencer designs and achieving scalable ordering. This section describes two complementary mechanisms that alleviate all ordering throughput bottlenecks: horizontally scaling out the proxy layer, and batching requests to the sequencer.

Potential ordering throughput bottlenecks. MASON has two components, so there are two potential bottlenecks on computation: the proxy layer and the sequencer. Each component sends and receives network traffic, so there are four potential bottlenecks on network bandwidth. Our two scaling mechanisms address all six bottlenecks: scaling out the proxy layer relieves all bottlenecks at the proxy layer, and batching relieves all bottlenecks at the sequencer.

The proxy layer scales out. When MASON is bottlenecked by a proxy layer resource, the proxy layer can scale out. Each proxy operates essentially independently, so holding all else constant, doubling the number of proxies doubles the amount of computation and bandwidth available at the proxies for processing client operations, doubling the proxy layer's achievable throughput.

In truth, proxies are not completely independent; there is overhead to garbage collect multi-sequence number tracking state (§4.3). However, the overhead is constant for each proxy with respect to the number of proxies due to the ring communication pattern; thus, it does not affect the proxy layer's scalability.

In §3–4 we have assumed a static configuration where the numbers of proxies and shards do not change. MASON components can be reconfigured as follows. To add a new proxy, the new proxy first creates a connection to the sequencer and then joins the garbage collection ring using standard techniques, e.g., those used in distributed hash tables [52]. Removing proxies is more difficult to do safely. For example, if a proxy is removed and the sequencer fails, the recovery protocol may not be able to reconstruct a complete view of the used sequence numbers (i.e., it will be missing those numbers used by the removed proxy but which were not yet garbage-collected). It may attempt to assign those used sequence numbers to no-ops, which is not safe. Thus, to remove a proxy, the proxy stops processing client requests, but continues to take part in garbage collection until all sequence numbers the proxy received are garbage collected. At this point the proxy can remove itself from the ring and disconnect from the sequencer. Waiting until all of its numbers are garbage collected ensures any used multi-sequence number will not be assigned a no-op. Alternatively, the proxy could transfer all of its sequence numbers to a different proxy, e.g., the next proxy in the garbage collection ring, and then leave the ring. Reconfiguring the service's shards can be achieved through operations internal to the service and via the service stubs.

Batches are as efficient as single requests. When MASON is bottlenecked by the sequencer proxies can increase throughput by batching multi-sequence number requests. This batching is perfect, holding all else constant, in that a request for one client operation uses the same resources as a request for multiple operations.

To request multi-sequence numbers for a batch of client requests, the proxy constructs a sequencer request which indicates the relevant sequence spaces and how many numbers are required from each sequence space to order the operations in the batch and sends a single sequencer request for the batch. The sequencer allocates the requested count of sequence numbers in each sequence space and replies with the lowest allocated number in each sequence space. Finally, the proxy iterates through client operations in the order they were received and gives each operation the next lowest sequence number in each of its sequence spaces.

MASON alleviates all bottlenecks on the sequencer by increasing the batch size. MASON's batching is timeout-driven: all client requests that arrive at a proxy within the timeout are batched together. By doubling the timeout (hence batch size) at a given client load, proxies can halve the rate at which they issue sequencer requests. The sequencer, in turn, would need half the resources to handle the same client load. The sequencer can thus handle twice the ordering throughput before hitting the same bottleneck. Timeout-driven batching is naturally dynamic: higher client load results in larger batches.

Why not batch at clients? A strawman design for increasing ordering throughput is to batch requests at clients, which has two limitations. First, the maximum throughput is limited by the number of parallel requests a client will individually make. Second, batching at clients requires waiting until the client

has issued those requests, which can substantially increase latency. In contrast, MASON's proxies can batch across any number of clients, achieving the large batches that allow it to scale. In general, naïvely adding only a batching layer to prior designs does not work, as it introduces new failure modes (e.g., batching machine failure) that require a comprehensive service redesign such as that of MASON.

6 Services

This section explains how services can easily use MASON and its contiguous multi-sequence abstraction to scale service throughput. We describe two services we implemented over MASON: a distributed shared log based on CORFU [3] and a distributed prototype of the coordination service ZooKeeper [22].

6.1 Interaction with MASON

A service's execution protocol consists of (at least) two components: *shards* and *service stubs*. Shards are implemented entirely by the service and interact with service stubs and other service-implemented components. Service stubs are the mechanism by which services interact with proxies. They determine an operation's relevant sequence spaces and request ordering via MASON if necessary, drive the execution protocol interacting with other service components, and have control of the operation until informing MASON that the operation is complete. This is sufficient for the services we implement here; more complex services may need multi-round sequencing for some operations, e.g., where the write set depends on the read set. In that case, MASON could be augmented so that the stub could request another round of ordering and include metadata, which MASON replicates and the service can use to resume execution if the current proxy leader fails.

6.2 Making CORFU Scalable: Corfu-MASON

CORFU is a shared log supporting append and read operations that consistently execute across shards [3]. Appends write a value to the current tail of the log. Reads return the value written to a specified log position. Many applications can be implemented with shared logs, e.g., producer-consumer queues and logging [24, 51].

We use MASON to implement Corfu-MASON, a service based on CORFU. CORFU's original implementation does not scale; although CORFU has a scalable execution protocol, the implementation is limited by the ordering throughput of its monolithic sequencer [3, 56]. By replacing the sequencer with MASON, MASON's scalable ordering combines with the scalable execution protocol to enable the whole service to scale.

Corfu-MASON uses CORFU's scalable execution protocol. The shared log is represented by a single sequence space. Appends acquire a sequence number that directly determines which log position to write. A round-robin mapping of log position-to-shard ensures append load is uniform on shards, enabling appends to execute in parallel [3].

Corfu-MASON implements two of CORFU's three operations, `append(b)` and `read(l)`. `append(b)` appends the entry b to the log and returns the log position l to which it was written. `read(l)` returns the entry at log position l, or an error code if the entry does not exist. CORFU implements a third operation, `fill(l)`, to fill holes in the sequence (and the log) caused by failed clients. CORFU clients detect holes in the log with a timeout and execute `fill(l)` to fill the lth position with junk. The timeout-and-`fill(l)` procedure is unnecessary in Corfu-MASON because of MASON's contiguous sequence.

Corfu-MASON's execution protocol uses sequence numbers for `appends` to determine which log positions to write, which in turn map to specific shards. In addition to eliminating the need for `fill` operations, MASON's contiguous sequence simplifies `reads`. If a client attempts to read a log position that has not been written yet, it can simply keep checking that log position. The contiguous sequence guarantees that the entry will eventually be written. `reads` need not be ordered and hence are not ordered or replicated by MASON; the service stub executes reads immediately. CORFU tolerates shard failure using client-driven chain replication [55], and so Corfu-MASON uses service stub-driven chain replication.

Corfu-MASON was implemented in a single day thanks to both the simplicity of CORFU and the strong abstraction of a contiguous sequence provided by MASON.

6.3 Making ZooKeeper Scalable: ZK-MASON

ZK-MASON is a ZooKeeper-like coordination service built on MASON. ZooKeeper [22] is a widely-used coordination service implemented on ZooKeeper Atomic Broadcast (ZAB) [25], a version of state machine replication (SMR). ZAB, like other SMR protocols, cannot scale: it is fundamentally limited by the rate a single machine can execute requests. Furthermore, ZooKeeper uses a single replicated state machine to ensure consistency, so an instance cannot be sharded. We designed ZK-MASON to be scalable, using the cross-shard consistency and scalable ordering provided by MASON.

ZK-MASON operations. Similar to ZooKeeper, ZK-MASON maintains a set of *znodes*. Each znode has a pathname beginning with "/" (similar to a filesystem) and data associated with it. We implemented seven operations in ZK-MASON:

- `create(`*path*`,`*data*`,`*flags*`)`: creates a znode with pathname *path* and data *data*. *flags* allows the client to specify a persistent or ephemeral znode.
- `setData(`*path*`,`*data*`,`*version*`)`: sets the data at *path* if *version* matches the current version, or if *version* is -1.
- `getData(`*path*`,`*watch*`)`: gets the data at *path*.
- `exists(`*path*`,`*watch*`)`: checks if the znode exists.
- `delete(`*path*`,`*version*`)`: deletes znode specified by *path* if *version* matches the current version, or if *version* is -1.

- `getChildren`(*path*, *watch*) : returns the children of *path*

The read operations `getData`, `exists`, and `getChildren` return the znode's current version. Read operations have a *watch* flag, which sets a *watch* on the znode if the flag is set. ZK-MASON watches have the same semantics as ZooKeeper watches. Watches are triggered by updates depending on the type of read operation and the type of update operation. For example, a watch set by `getChildren` is triggered after a `create` or `delete` of a child, but not by any `setData` on its children, as that does not change the result of `getChildren`. ZK-MASON notifies the client when its *watch* is triggered.

ZK-MASON execution protocol. ZK-MASON's execution protocol is based on Eris's execution protocol [37]. ZK-MASON assigns znodes to shards based on a hash of the full pathname. Shards consist of $2f+1$ servers; each shard tolerates f failures. Each server executes incoming operations in order of the shard's sequence space. When a proxy receives a client operation, the service stub determines which shards are involved in the operation and requests a multi-sequence number for the relevant sequence spaces. For example, to execute a `create`, the service stub hashes the *path* and the parent pathname to get the sequence spaces for those two shards. MASON acquires and replicates a multi-sequence number with the two sequence spaces. The service stub sends a `create` operation to each server in *path*'s shard and an `addChild` operation to each server in *path*'s parent's shard in parallel. When the stub receives a quorum of $f+1$ responses from each shard, the operation is complete; the stub informs MASON of completion, and MASON returns to the client. Read operations, for example, `getData`, only need to receive one response from the shard before returning to the client because they are sequenced and do not change state.

Ephemeral znodes. *Ephemeral znodes* are transient znodes that exist only during an active client connection. They are created by a client and deleted by the service when the client disconnects, either explicitly or due to failure. Ephemeral znodes can be used to add to a distributed queue: if the creating client fails, the object is removed. They can also help manage locks: if a client acquires a lock and fails, the lock is released when the ephemeral object disappears [53]. Implementing ephemeral znodes in ZK-MASON is straightforward. Shards keep a timer that is reset with client heartbeats. After timing out, the shard sends a `delete` to a proxy to delete the node. The `delete` is ordered to prevent divergent shards.

The contiguous multi-sequence abstraction simplifies ZK-MASON. Implementing this service over a noncontiguous multi-sequence would require consensus to deal with holes. Because a missing sequence number could belong to a multi-shard operation, e.g., `create`, the hole-filling consensus would need to be service-wide to avoid partially executing the operation on some shards but not others. To handle cases where aborting a partially-executed operation is impossible, each full operation would need to be persisted by the service so it could be recovered by shards that never received it (e.g., the full operation could be sent to every relevant shard).

In ZK-MASON, if a shard encounters a gap in its sequence space, it can wait for the missing operation and each shard only needs to receive the parts of the operation that will execute on that shard. The contiguous multi-sequence guarantees that the operation will be executed.

7 Evaluation

MASON provides two main innovations for building services. First, it is a general, reusable building block that offers the contiguous multi-sequence abstraction. This makes it easy to build efficient implementations of complex services (§6). But, as with any such abstraction, we expect overheads compared to specialized implementations. Second, MASON provides a scalable multi-sequence allowing previously unscalable services to now scale. This section quantifies the overhead of MASON's general abstraction for two services (§7.2 and §7.3), shows MASON provides scalable ordering (§7.1), that its scalable ordering does indeed enable services to scale (§7.2 and §7.3), and that MASON does provide a contiguous multi-sequence despite failures (§7.4).

Implementation. MASON is written in C++. All components, including clients, service shards, and MASON components, communicate with eRPC, a reliable RPC framework [27]. eRPC uses unreliable datagrams in Intel DPDK (v. 17.11.5) as its transport layer [14]. We replicate proxies with Raft [46], and periodically durably snapshot their state for Raft log compaction. We do not implement reconfiguration. MASON will be open-sourced by publication time.

Evaluation setup. We evaluate MASON on the Emulab testbed [57] with Dell R430 (d430) machines [11]. We run Ubuntu 18.04.11 with Linux kernel version 4.15.0. The machines have two hyperthreaded 8-core CPUs (Intel E5-2630 "Haswell", 2.4 GHz) with 20 MB L3 cache, 64 GB RAM, and one dual-port 10 GbE PCI-Express NIC (Intel X710).

We load MASON with clients running on separate machines of the same type. Unless otherwise specified, each client machine runs 16 threads, each implementing several logical closed-loop clients that generate new operations as previous operations complete. We control load by varying the number of client machines and the number of logical closed-loop clients per thread. Latency is measured at clients for each operation. We report the median over five trials of the median latency over all clients in a trial. We present latency as *median/99th percentile*. Throughput is also measured at each client and aggregated over all clients in a trial. For all scalability experiments we derive the throughput by increasing load (i.e., the number of logical clients). We report the highest throughput before latency spikes from overload. We show the median throughput over five trials. Trials are 68 seconds each; the first and last 4 seconds of measurements are discarded.

Each proxy is replicated on 3 machines. Experiments in

Sections 7.1 and 7.4 use a stub service with one operation: clients indicate relevant sequence spaces and the service returns the assigned multi-sequence number to the client.

7.1 MASON Scales Ordering Throughput

MASON uses two mechanisms to scale ordering throughput: adding more proxies and increasing batching to the sequencer. The first mechanism, adding more proxies, is evaluated in Figure 3. Ordering throughput is the number of client operations per second that receive a multi-sequence number and return to clients. To stress ordering throughput, the proxies do not execute operations on behalf of clients in this experiment. We present latency as *median/99th percentile*.

Figure 3 shows that, as the number of proxies doubles, the ordering throughput also roughly doubles for each sequence space count. As the number of sequence spaces in the system increases, the per-proxy machine throughput decreases, so overall ordering throughput with the same number of proxies is lower. Latency at these throughputs ranges from ~243 (median)/~380 μs (99th percentile) for a single sequence space to ~358/~693 μs for 8 sequence spaces. This experiment demonstrates that adding more proxies enables MASON to scale ordering throughput.

We are unable to test our second mechanism, increasing batching to the sequencer, because we cannot saturate the sequencer with the machines available on Emulab. With 48 proxy machines, the sequencer processes ~3.2 Mops/s, which is far from the ~14.5 Mops/s possible at line rate. As MASON scales linearly with increasing proxies, we expect to be able to achieve over 142 Mops/s before the sequencer becomes the bottleneck. At that point, we expect to be able to continue doubling the ordering throughput of MASON by doubling the number of proxies and doubling the batch sizes. Average batch size for 48 proxies with one sequence space is ~8 operations.

7.2 Making CORFU Scalable

MASON provides scalable ordering that, when coupled with a scalable execution protocol, enables services to scale. Corfu-MASON replaces CORFU's monolithic sequencer with MASON, yielding a scalable distributed shared log (§6.2).

We compare Corfu-MASON with CORFU′, our implementation of CORFU in the same environment as Corfu-MASON, using C++ and eRPC over DPDK. CORFU′'s sequencer processes requests at ~14.2 Mops/s, nearly line-rate for our message size (~14.5 Mops/s). This is a fairer baseline than using CORFU's improved sequencer, whose maximum ordering throughput is ~570 Kops/s [3, 4].

Figure 4a evaluates Corfu-MASON's scalability. We run a workload consisting entirely of 64 B appends and increase the number of Corfu shards. We use 6 (replicated) proxies for every Corfu shard, keeping the ratio of proxies to Corfu shards constant. CORFU′ roughly doubles throughput from one to two Corfu shards before the sequencer saturates and latency increases; the maximum observed throughput of CORFU′ is ~14.1 Mops/s with latency of ~70 (median)/~90 μs (99th percentile). MASON allows ordering in Corfu-MASON to scale, enabling service throughput to increase linearly: Corfu-MASON scales from ~7.3 Mops/s with one Corfu shard to ~29.1 Mops/s with four Corfu shards, an increase of ~3.98x. Append latency at four Corfu shards is ~200/297 μs. The increase in latency is from extra round trips (clients sending requests to proxy leaders, which leaders replicate) and proxies waiting for 20 μs to batch requests.

Figure 4b shows the scalability of reads. Clients execute reads on random log positions in CORFU′ by reading a shard's tail replica. Reads in Corfu-MASON are executed by proxy leaders, which read the tail replica. Reads are not sequenced in either service, so reads scale the same in both services. Latency for Corfu-MASON is ~97/~147 μs, ~65 μs higher than CORFU′'s ~32/~62 μs, from the extra round trip through the proxy leader.

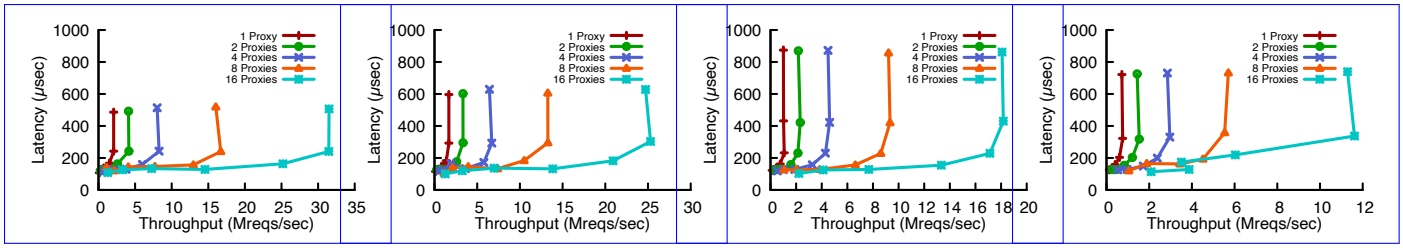
7.3 Making ZooKeeper Scalable

ZK-MASON is a ZooKeeper-like coordination service [22] (see Sec. 6.3). ZK-MASON uses a scalable execution protocol with MASON's scalable ordering to scale the entire service.

To compare ZK-MASON and ZooKeeper we implemented RSMKeeper, a prototype of ZooKeeper over Raft [46]. RSMKeeper has the same operations as ZK-MASON. Both are implemented in C++ with eRPC over DPDK [14, 27]; RSMKeeper uses a single thread. We note that RSMKeeper has much higher throughput than the original ZooKeeper implementation, providing a fairer baseline.

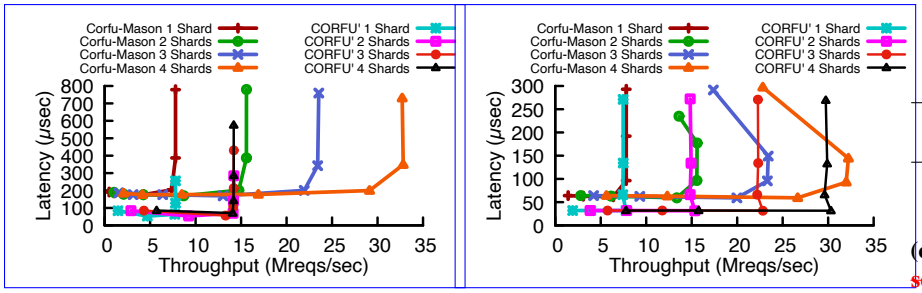
We configured RSMKeeper and ZK-MASON to maximize service throughput while keeping latency low. RSMKeeper is loaded by one client machine running 8 threads. ZK-MASON clients use 16 threads. ZK-MASON uses 2 proxies per shard and 1 client machine per proxy. Each proxy uses 8 threads and each ZK-MASON shard uses 1 thread. This is the minimal setup for a single shard that stresses the shard's throughput. We add more ZK-MASON shards, keeping the ratio of clients and proxies to shards constant. Our ZK-MASON experiments show the scalability of the contiguous multi-sequence abstraction when scaling out the number of shards.

Figure 5a shows the ~~throughput~~ throughput-latency of `setData` operations. RSMKeeper's (and ZooKeeper's) design uses a single replicated state machine to ensure consistency and thus cannot run with more than one shard; its maximum throughput is ~150 Kops/s. With one shard, ZK-MASON has 8.6× the service throughput of RSMKeeper, at ~1.29 Mops/s while providing latency in a similar range as shown in Figure 5c. ZK-MASON has lower latency than RSMKeeper in Figure 5c, ~192 μs vs ~211 μs, because of where we determined overload to be for RSMKeeper; we chose a point in the throughput-latency curve that increased throughput at the cost of some latency. At lower load and lower throughput settings, RSMKeeper has lower latency than ZK-MASON. For example, RSMKeeper has



(a) 1 Sequence Space (b) 2 Sequence Spaces (c) 4 Sequence Spaces (d) 8 Sequence Spaces

Figure 3: MASON ordering throughput-latency; each point represents a given load, doubling the client load from the previous point. MASON scales linearly with the number of proxies: as the number of proxies doubles, the ordering throughput also roughly doubles for each sequence space count.

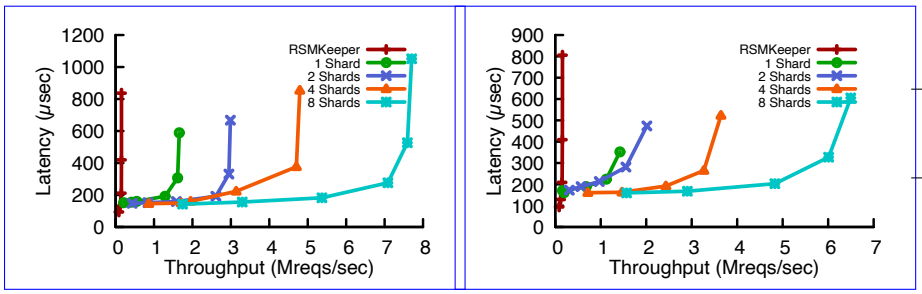


Operation	Med.	99%
CORFU′ `append`	70	90
Corfu-MASON `append`	200	297
CORFU′ `read`	32	62
Corfu-MASON `read`	97	147

(c) Latency (μs).~~`append` latency is for service at peak throughput.~~

(a) `append` ~~throughput~~throughput-latency (b) `read` ~~throughput~~throughput-latency

Figure 4: CORFU′ and Corfu-MASON comparison; each point represents a given load, doubling the client load from the previous point. Corfu-MASON `append` throughput scales linearly with more shards while CORFU′ saturates at 2 shards. Corfu-MASON has higher latency in exchange for contiguity and linear scalability.



Operation (shards)	Med.	99%
RSMKeeper `set`. (1)	211	355
ZK-MASON `set`. (1)	192	268
ZK-MASON `set`. (8)	276	518
RSMKeeper `get`. (1)	209	352
ZK-MASON `get`. (1)	224	~~306~~ 304
ZK-MASON `get`. (8)	327	~~667~~ 699

(c) Latency (μs).

(a) `setData` ~~throughput.~~throughput-latency (b) `getData` ~~throughput.~~throughput-latency

Figure 5: RSMKeeper and ZK-MASON comparison; each point represents a given load, doubling the client load from the previous point. ZK-MASON achieves higher throughput than RSMKeeper with a single shard at comparable latency. ZK-MASON throughput scales linearly at the cost of a modest increase in latency.

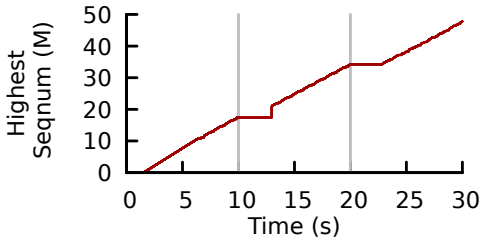


Figure 6: Highest contiguous multi-sequence number received across all clients at time *t*. We induce proxy leader failure at 10 s and sequencer failure at 20 s.

~94 μs median latency at ~85 Kops/s and ZK-MASON has ~152 μs at ~212 Kops/s. ZK-MASON's higher single-shard throughput comes from the proxy layer scaling with two (replicated) proxies handling client requests for one ZK-MASON shard. Furthermore, ZK-MASON shards do less work per `setData` operation than RSMKeeper. For each operation, RSMKeeper handles operation execution, one round of client-to-leader communication, two rounds of leader-to-follower communication, and snapshotting Raft state and log compaction to disk. On the other hand, MASON frees the ZK-MASON shard from handling tasks related to ordering and consensus. The shard only handles execution and one round of proxy-to-shard communication. With more resources devoted to execution, one ZK-MASON shard has a higher maximum throughput than RSMKeeper. More importantly, ZK-MASON is able to scale throughput by increasing the number of shards and proxies: with eight shards its throughput scales to ~7.1 Mops/s.

Figure 5b shows the ~~throughput~~ throughput-latency of `getData` operations. We configured RSMKeeper to replicate `getData` operations to provide the same consistency as ZooKeeper's `sync`-`getData` construction and ZK-MASON's `getData` operation. RSMKeeper's maximum throughput is ~150 Kops/s with latency ~209 (median)/~352 μs (99th percentile). ZK-MASON's `getData` throughput scales from ~1.1 Mops/s with one shard to ~6 Mops/s with eight shards. Latencies in those runs range from ~224/~304 μs (one shard) to ~327/~699 μs (eight shards). `getData` operations have slightly higher latency than `setData` operations because proxies need to wait for a response from a ZK-MASON ~~quorum before~~ replica which must execute all operations ordered before the `getData` before returning to the client, while `setData` can be executed on ZK-MASON shards asynchronously.

7.4 MASON Provides a Contiguous Sequence

This experiment validates that MASON provides a contiguous sequence despite component failures. We run MASON with 16 proxies. Each proxy machine hosts either 8 leaders or 8 followers in 8 different proxies for a total of 6 proxy machines (2 leader machines and 4 follower machines). Load is generated by 4 client machines. Clients request one sequence number from each of 4 sequence spaces. We inject proxy and sequencer failure; network drops occur naturally.

Figure 6 shows the highest contiguous sequence number successfully received by a client over time for each of 4 sequence spaces. That is, if Figure 6 indicates that at time x the highest contiguous sequence number from a sequence space is y, then each sequence number up to and including y in that space was received by some client. We ran the experiment with 4 sequence spaces and plotted the highest contiguous sequence number for each sequence space. Since clients request one number from every sequence space, they advance at the same rate and thus all four lines overlap.

We first kill a proxy machine hosting 8 proxy leaders 10 s into the experiment. The 8 recovering proxies stop processing client operations and may have uncompleted operations. The flat region in the plot indicates where the sequence increase is blocked by uncompleted operations. Once failover is complete, the new leaders respond to pending client operations. The plot spikes as gaps in the sequence are filled in and operations serviced by the two non-failing proxies are accounted for. Proxy failure detection and failover take 3.06 s, including 1 s-2 s for the failure detection timeout, set randomly by Raft.

We kill the sequencer 20 s into the experiment. A proxy times out 1 s later and begins the recovery protocol. Failure detection and recovery take 2.38 s—the plot's 2nd flat region—and then the contiguous multi-sequence continues to grow.

8 Limitations

Resource Cost. MASON provides a contiguous, scalable multi-sequence using replicated proxies. This ability to scale adds overhead compared to non-scalable designs in operational settings that do not demand more throughput than the latter can support. For instance, when CORFU′ saturates its sequencer at 2 Corfu shards, Corfu-MASON uses 36 proxy machines (12 proxy groups). Proxies process more RPCs than Corfu shards, so Corfu-MASON needs more proxies than shards to saturate the shards. The resource overhead (number of machines) is thus 600% to saturate two Corfu shards with Corfu-MASON (42 total machines including a standby for Corfu-MASON and 6 including a standby for CORFU). As another example, the overhead for the single-shard setup for ZK-MASON is 266% (8 total machines including a standby for ZK-MASON and 3 total machines for RSMKeeper).

However, MASON's ability to scale means it can be used to provide throughput that cannot be achieved with non-scalable designs: we evaluated up to a 206% throughput increase for Corfu-MASON over CORFU′'s *maximum* throughput and expect throughput to continue scaling, and we evaluated up to a 4733% throughput increase for ZK-MASON over RSMKeeper's *maximum* throughput and expect throughput to continue scaling.

Thus, a practical deployment strategy could be to initially deploy the service in a small one proxy setup and to

colocate the service's processes on the machines used for the proxy. As throughput demands increase, the service could then add more proxy groups and eventually split proxies and the service's processes into different machines to scale them independently. This strategy may add some operational overhead from changing configurations but would enable a service to pay a lower cost for an initial setup.

Performance predictability. The intermediate components between clients and the service can make the performance of the system as a whole less predictable because tail latencies at each hop can accumulate. Furthermore, MASON's additional components may complicate performance debugging since more components will need to be inspected.

9 Related Work

This section explains MASON's relationship to the five categories of related work it builds upon. At a high level, the primary distinction of MASON is that it provides strict serializability, unlike atomic multicast; it is scalable, unlike state machine replication and fast ordering systems; it provides multiple sequence spaces, unlike shared logs; and its abstraction enables more efficient, specialized service implementations than distributed databases.

Atomic multicast. Atomic multicast guarantees messages are delivered reliably and satisfying a total order to one or more groups of processes [8, 17, 18, 20]. Unlike the order given by a contiguous multi-sequence, the total order given by atomic multicast is not strictly serializable. Atomic multicast is thus used directly in systems to provide weaker consistency guarantees [39], or augmented to provide stronger consistency [6, 34].

State machine replication. There is a large body of work on state machine replication (SMR) implemented with consensus ~~[1, 12, 15, 19, 23, 25, 28, 30–33, 40, 41, 44–46, 50]~~ [1, 12, 15, 19, 23, 25, 28, 30–33, 40, 41, 44–46, 50, 58], which provides two properties MASON aims for: a contiguous sequence via SMR's log and fault tolerance via consensus. These protocols have a fundamental throughput ceiling, the rate a single machine can execute commands in order.

Compartmentalization is a technique to scale state machine replication [58]. Compartmentalization "involves decoupling individual bottlenecks into distinct components and scaling these components independently". How MASON scales ordering can be viewed as compartmentalization: ordering, handing out multi-sequence numbers, is explicitly separated from execution, and scaled via the proxy layer and batching.

In the compartmentalized version of Multi-Paxos, a batching layer batches client requests before sending them to the leader which orders batches in the log [58]. This technique scales ordering, but is still limited to the rate a single machine can execute commands in order, and does not easily extend to the contiguous multi-sequencing abstraction.

Distributed shared logs. CORFU uses a monolithic sequencer to find the tail of a distributed shared log [3]. It cannot scale beyond the throughput of the sequencer. MASON can provide a contiguous sequence to a CORFU service while scaling beyond the throughput of a monolithic sequencer, but MASON requires more resources and has higher latency.

Delos [5] unifies separate shared log or storage instances into a single virtualized shared log. It inherits the scalability limitations of its underlying systems. Scalog [13] is a distributed shared log that uses a replicated ordering mechanism to reliably totally order records in a log. Scalog increases the write throughput ceiling compared to CORFU by two orders of magnitude. It increases ordering throughput using a similar technique as MASON~~: each storage server periodically orders multiple records at once . Scalog, unlike CORFU but like~~ 's proxies which batch requests across clients: storage servers collect and periodically order multiple operations at once using tiered aggregators "that relay ordering information" from the layer below it up to a replicated sequencer. Scalog and MASON ~~, guarantees~~ both guarantee that services always see a contiguous sequence of operations~~.~~ , unlike CORFU. Scalog's mechanism for guaranteeing contiguity is similar to MASON's, i.e., both replicate client operations before executing them. Scalog also replicates its sequencer. However, Scalog cannot be easily extended to multi-sequencing: Scalog orders operations using a summary of operations that arrive at individual shards. Scalog's resource overhead is lower than MASON for services where replicating an operation is the same as executing the operation (e.g., a shared log). In such services, Scalog replicates the operation on servers for contiguity, which serves to execute the operation as well. The same service over MASON must replicate the operation twice, as separate steps on distinct components: the proxy layer replicates the operation for contiguity, and execution is carried out by storing the operation on service servers. For other services where executing the operation is more than just storing its input, for example in ZK-MASON, Scalog's technique of replicating for contiguity would need to be accompanied by a separate step of executing the operation. MASON's and Scalog's overheads are thus similar for such services.

ChronoLog [29] uses physical time to order records by accounting for skew among distributed components. It reports an order of magnitude higher throughput than CORFU. ~~Delos, Scalog,~~ Like Scalog, Delos and ChronoLog cannot be easily extended to multi-sequencing: ~~Scalog orders operations using a summary of operations that arrived at individual shards;~~ ChronoLog and Delos lack mechanisms to atomically append to multiple logs. Thus, they cannot easily be modified to support strictly serializable cross-shard operations.

Chariots [43] scales by delegating the ordering of disjoint ranges of a shared log to independent servers, providing only causal consistency [38]. FuzzyLog partially orders records in exchange for better performance [39]. MASON provides the stronger guarantee of strict serializability.

Fast ordering systems. State-of-the-art networks or network appliances can support high-throughput, low-latency sequencing [26, 36, 37]. Unlike MASON, these sequencers cannot scale, do not provide a contiguous sequence, and are not fault-tolerant. However, such sequencers can provide sequencing with much lower latency than MASON.

Kronos provides high-throughput happens-before ordering; services totally order operations [16]. Mostly-ordered multicast uses datacenter network properties to provide consistent multicasting except during network failures or packet loss [50]. Reliable 1Pipe, 1Pipe's strongest abstraction, provides ordered communication to receiver groups where messages eventually arrive absent failures and partitions [35]. Services detect and handle lost messages with consensus, much like services using noncontiguous multi-sequences. In contrast to these systems, MASON provides the stronger abstraction of a strictly serializable, contiguous sequence.

Distributed databases. FoundationDB uses a single sequence space with batching to scalably implement commit timestamps [60], but does not provide contiguity or multi-sequencing. Granola uses clock-based timestamps on clients (through "client proxies" which are similar to our service stubs in that they exist on the clients (proxies) to execute Granola (service) code) and servers and coordination among shards to determine a global transaction order [10]; the clock-based timestamps do not provide contiguity or multi-sequencing. Calvin uses a sequencing layer distributed across all servers in the system [54]. The sequencing layer synchronously batches operations, exchanges them among replicas, then exchanges them among all servers in its copy of the database. Distributing the sequencer across servers and using large synchronous batches enables the sequencer to be more scalable than a single machine sequencer. However, as more shards are added, the all-to-all communication within a copy of the database will become a bottleneck, halting scalability. Eris [37], Calvin [54], vCorfu [56], Tango [4], and other distributed databases [2, 42, 49, 51, 59, 60] provide a higher-level abstraction than MASON. It is harder for services to build efficient, specialized implementations over the distributed database abstraction compared to the multi-sequence abstraction. For instance, ephemeral znodes (§6.3) do not fit the traditional distributed database model; a service developer would implement a new replicated component to manage client connections and explicitly delete the znode at connection termination. In contrast, implementing ephemeral znodes in ZK-MASON was straightforward.

The multi-leader approach to system design, as used in, for example, Spanner [9], uses a replica designated as the leader for each shard. A shard leader coordinates with replicas in its own shard and with leaders in other shards for operations that span multiple shards. For example, the service must implement consensus to order operations within a shard, perhaps via state-machine replication, and concurrency control, like optimistic concurrency control or two-phase locking with two-phase commit, to order operations across shards. Thus, multi-leader services are more difficult to implement than services using the multi-sequence abstraction, which orders operations within a shard by assigning a sequence space to a shard and across shards by atomically allocating a multi-sequence number. Therefore, services built on the multi-sequence abstraction do not need to implement coordination across shards for ordering; they only need to implement the service semantics.

MASON's contiguous multi-sequence abstraction is an excellent candidate for implementing distributed databases. Its contiguity would eliminate significant complexity in ported implementations of Eris and vCorfu. Similarly, its contiguity would greatly simplify developing new multi-sequence-based distributed databases. Its scalable multi-sequence would enable Eris, vCorfu, and future databases to scale far higher than the throughput ceiling of monolithic sequencers. This is an important avenue for future work.

10 Conclusion

The multi-sequence abstraction extends the sequence abstraction to enable consistent ordering across shards with only local ordering information. This paper proposed the contiguous multi-sequence abstraction for building consistent services. It is a stronger abstraction than the noncontiguous multi-sequence abstraction in use today, making it easier to build services with multi-sequences. We also presented MASON, the first system to expose the contiguous multi-sequence abstraction and the first to provide a scalable multi-sequence. We demonstrated MASON's usefulness as a building block for scalable, consistent services by using it to enable scalability in two services that were previously fundamentally unscalable.

References

[1] R. C. Aksoy and M. Kapritsos. Aegean: replication beyond the client-server model. In *Proceedings of the 27th ACM Symposium on Operating Systems Principles (SOSP'19)*, Huntsville, ON, Canada, 2019. ACM. URL https://doi.org/10.1145/3341301.3359663.

[2] P. Antonopoulos, A. Budovski, C. Diaconu, A. Hernandez Saenz, J. Hu, H. Kodavalla, D. Kossmann, S. Lingam, U. F. Minhas, N. Prakash, V. Purohit, H. Qu, C. Sreenivas Ravella, K. Reisteter, S. Shrotri, D. Tang, and V. Wakade. Socrates: the new SQL server in the cloud. In *Proceedings of the 2019 International Conference on Management of Data (SIGMOD'19)*, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2019. Association for Com-

puting Machinery (ACM). URL https://doi.org/10.1145/3299869.3314047.

[3] M. Balakrishnan, D. Malkhi, V. Prabhakaran, T. Wobber, M. Wei, and J. D. Davis. Corfu: A shared log design for flash clusters. In *Proceedings of the 9th USENIX Symposium on Networked Systems Design and Implementation (NSDI'12)*, San Jose, CA, USA, 2012. USENIX Association.

[4] M. Balakrishnan, D. Malkhi, T. Wobber, M. Wu, V. Prabhakaran, M. Wei, J. D. Davis, S. Rao, T. Zou, and A. Zuck. Tango: Distributed data structures over a shared log. In *Proceedings of the 24th ACM Symposium on Operating Systems Principles (SOSP'13)*, Farmington, PA, USA, 2013. Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). URL https://doi.org/10.1145/2517349.2522732.

[5] M. Balakrishnan, J. Flinn, C. Shen, M. Dharamshi, A. Jafri, X. Shi, S. Ghosh, H. Hassan, A. Sagar, R. Shi, et al. Virtual Consensus in Delos. In *14th USENIX Symposium on Operating Systems Design and Implementation (OSDI'20)*, Online, 2020. USENIX Association.

[6] C. E. Bezerra, F. Pedone, and R. Van Renesse. Scalable State-Machine Replication. In *Proceedings of the 9th European Conference on Computer Systems (EuroSys'14)*, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2014. Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). URL https://doi.org/10.1109/DSN.2014.41.

[7] T. D. Chandra, R. Griesemer, and J. Redstone. Paxos made live: an engineering perspective. In *Proceedings of the 26th ACM SIGACT-SIGOPS Symposium on Principles of Distributed Computing (PODC'07)*, Portland, OR, USA, 2007. Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). URL https://doi.org/10.1145/1281100.1281103.

[8] P. R. Coelho, N. Schiper, and F. Pedone. Fast atomic multicast. In *Proceedings of the 2017 47th Annual IEEE/IFIP International Conference on Dependable Systems and Networks (DSN'17)*, Denver, CO, USA, 2017. IEEE. URL https://doi.org/10.1109/DSN.2017.15.

[9] J. C. Corbett, J. Dean, M. Epstein, A. Fikes, C. Frost, J. Furman, S. Ghemawat, A. Gubarev, C. Heiser, P. Hochschild, W. Hsieh, S. Kanthak, E. Kogan, H. Li, A. Lloyd, S. Melnik, D. Mwaura, D. Nagle, S. Quinlan, R. Rao, L. Rolig, Y. Saito, M. Szymaniak, C. Taylor, R. Wang, and D. Woodford. Spanner: Google's Globally-Distributed database. In *10th USENIX Symposium on Operating Systems Design and Implementation (OSDI 12)*, pages 261–264, Hollywood, CA, Oct. 2012. USENIX Association. ISBN 978-1-931971-96-6. URL https://www.usenix.org/conference/osdi12/technical-sessions/presentation/corbett.

[10] J. A. Cowling and B. Liskov. Granola: Low-overhead distributed transaction coordination. In *USENIX Annual Technical Conference*, volume 12, 2012. URL https://doi.org/10.5555/2342821.2342842.

[11] D430. D430. https://wiki.emulab.net/wiki/d430, 2021. Accessed: 12-10-2021.

[12] H. T. Dang, D. Sciascia, M. Canini, F. Pedone, and R. Soulé. Netpaxos: Consensus at network speed. In *Proceedings of the 1st ACM SIGCOMM Symposium on Software Defined Networking Research (SOSR'15)*, Santa Clara, CA, USA, 2015. Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). URL https://doi.org/10.1145/2774993.2774999.

[13] C. Ding, D. Chu, E. Zhao, X. Li, L. Alvisi, and R. van Renesse. Scalog: Seamless Reconfiguration and Total Order in a Scalable Shared Log. In *Proceedings of the 17th USENIX Conference on Networked Systems Design and Implementation (NSDI'20)*, Santa Clara, CA, USA, 2020. USENIX Association.

[14] DPDK Project. DPDK. https://dpdk.org, 2021. Accessed: 12-10-2021.

[15] V. Enes, C. Baquero, T. F. Rezende, A. Gotsman, M. Perrin, and P. Sutra. State-machine replication for planet-scale systems. In *Proceedings of the 15th European Conference on Computer Systems (EuroSys'20)*, Heraklion, Greece, 2020. Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). URL https://doi.org/10.1145/3342195.3387543.

[16] R. Escriva, A. Dubey, B. Wong, and E. G. Sirer. Kronos: The design and implementation of an event ordering service. In *Proceedings of the 9th European Conference on Computer Systems (EuroSys'14)*, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2014. Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). URL https://doi.org/10.1145/2592798.2592822.

[17] A. Gotsman, A. Lefort, and G. Chockler. White-box atomic multicast. In *Proceedings of the 2019 49th Annual IEEE/IFIP International Conference on Dependable Systems and Networks (DSN'19)*, Portland, OR, USA, 2019. IEEE. URL https://doi.org/10.1109/dsn.2019.00030.

[18] R. Guerraoui and A. Schiper. Genuine atomic multicast in asynchronous distributed systems. *Theoretical Computer Science*, 254(1-2):297–316, 2001. URL https://doi.org/10.1016/S0304-3975(99)00161-9.

[19] Z. Guo, C. Hong, M. Yang, D. Zhou, L. Zhou, and L. Zhuang. Rex: Replication at the speed of multicore. In *Proceedings of the 9th European Conference on Computer Systems (EuroSys'14)*, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2014. Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). URL https://doi.org/10.1145/2592798.2592800.

[20] V. Hadzilacos and S. Toueg. A modular approach to fault-tolerant broadcasts and related problems. Technical report, Cornell University, 1994.

[21] M. P. Herlihy and J. M. Wing. Linearizability: A correctness condition for concurrent objects. *ACM Transactions on Programming Languages and Systems (TOPLAS)*, 12(3), 1990. URL https://doi.org/10.1145/78969.78972.

[22] P. Hunt, M. Konar, F. P. Junqueira, and B. Reed. ZooKeeper: Wait-free Coordination for Internet-scale Systems. In *Proceedings of the 2010 USENIX Annual Technical Conference (USENIX ATC'10)*, Boston, MA, USA, 2010. USENIX Association.

[23] Z. István, D. Sidler, G. Alonso, and M. Vukolic. Consensus in a Box: Inexpensive Coordination in Hardware. In *Proceedings of the 13th USENIX Conference on Networked Systems Design and Implementation (NSDI'16)*, Santa Clara, CA, USA, 2016. USENIX Association.

[24] Z. Jia and E. Witchel. Boki: Stateful Serverless Computing with Shared Logs. In *Proceedings of the 28th ACM Symposium on Operating Systems Principles (SOSP'21)*, Online, 2021. Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). URL https://doi.org/10.1145/3477132.3483541.

[25] F. P. Junqueira, B. C. Reed, and M. Serafini. Zab: High-performance broadcast for primary-backup systems. In *Proceedings of the 2011 41st Annual IEEE/IFIP International Conference on Dependable Systems and Networks (DSN'11)*, Hong Kong, China, 2011. IEEE. URL https://doi.org/10.1109/DSN.2011.5958223.

[26] A. Kalia, M. Kaminsky, and D. G. Andersen. Design guidelines for high performance RDMA systems. In *Proceedings of the 2016 USENIX Annual Technical Conference (USENIX ATC'16)*, Denver, CO, USA, 2016. USENIX Association. URL https://doi.org/10.5555/3026959.3027000.

[27] A. Kalia, M. Kaminsky, and D. G. Andersen. Datacenter RPCs can be general and fast. In *Proceedings of the 16th USENIX Conference on Networked Systems Design and Implementation (NSDI'19)*, Boston, MA, USA, 2019. USENIX Association.

[28] M. Kapritsos, Y. Wang, V. Quema, A. Clement, L. Alvisi, and M. Dahlin. All about Eve: Execute-Verify Replication for Multi-Core Servers. In *Proceedings of the 10th USENIX Symposium on Operating Systems Design and Implementation (OSDI'12)*, Hollywood, CA, USA, 2012. USENIX Association.

[29] A. Kougkas, H. Devarajan, K. Bateman, J. Cernuda, N. Rajesh, and X.-H. Sun. ChronoLog: A Distributed Shared Tiered Log Store with Time-based Data Ordering. In *Proceedings of the 36th International Conference on Massive Storage Systems and Technology (MSST'20)*, Santa Clara, CA, USA, 2020. IEEE.

[30] L. Lamport. The part-time parliament. *ACM Transactions on Computer Systems (TOCS)*, 16(2), 1998.

[31] L. Lamport. Generalized consensus and Paxos. *Technical Report MSR-TR-2005-33*, 2005.

[32] L. Lamport. Fast Paxos. *Distributed Computing*, 19(2), 2006. URL https://doi.org/10.1007/s00446-006-0005-x.

[33] L. Lamport, D. Malkhi, and L. Zhou. Vertical Paxos and Primary-Backup Replication. In *Proceedings of the 28th ACM SIGACT-SIGOPS Symposium on Principles of Distributed Computing (PODC'09)*, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, 2009. Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). URL https://doi.org/10.1145/1582716.1582783.

[34] L. H. Le, E. Fynn, M. Eslahi-Kelorazi, R. Soulé, and F. Pedone. Dynastar: Optimized dynamic partitioning for scalable state machine replication. In *2019 IEEE 39th International Conference on Distributed Computing Systems (ICDCS'19)*, Dallas, TX, USA, 2019. IEEE.

[35] B. Li, G. Zuo, W. Bai, and L. Zhang. 1Pipe: Scalable Total Order Communication In Data Center Networks. In *Proceedings of the 2021 ACM SIGCOMM 2021 Conference (SIGCOMM'21)*, Online, 2021. Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). URL https://doi.org/10.1145/3452296.3472909.

[36] J. Li, E. Michael, N. K. Sharma, A. Szekeres, and D. R. Ports. Just Say NO to Paxos Overhead: Replacing Consensus with Network Ordering. In *Proceedings of the 12th USENIX Symposium on Operating Systems Design and Implementation (OSDI'16)*, Savannah, GA, USA, 2016. USENIX Association.

[37] J. Li, E. Michael, and D. R. Ports. Eris: Coordination-Free Consistent Transactions Using In-Network Concurrency Control. In *Proceedings of the 26th ACM Symposium on Operating Systems Principles (SOSP'17)*, Shanghai, China, 2017. Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). URL https://doi.org/10.1145/3132747.3132751.

[38] W. Lloyd, M. J. Freedman, M. Kaminsky, and D. G. Andersen. Don't settle for eventual: Scalable causal consistency for wide-area storage with COPS. In *Proceedings of the 23rd ACM Symposium on Operating Systems Principles (SOSP'11)*, Cascais, Portugal, 2011. Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). URL https://doi.org/10.1145/2043556.2043593.

[39] J. Lockerman, J. M. Faleiro, J. Kim, S. Sankaran, D. J. Abadi, J. Aspnes, S. Sen, and M. Balakrishnan. The FuzzyLog: a partially ordered shared log. In *Proceedings of the 13th USENIX Symposium on Operating Systems Design and Implementation (OSDI'18)*, Carlsbad, CA, USA, 2018. USENIX Association.

[40] Y. Mao, F. P. Junqueira, and K. Marzullo. Mencius: building efficient replicated state machines for WANs. In *Proceedings of the 8th USENIX Symposium on Operating Systems Design and Implementation (OSDI'08)*, San Diego, CA, USA, 2008. USENIX Association.

[41] I. Moraru, D. G. Andersen, and M. Kaminsky. There Is More Consensus in Egalitarian Parliaments. In *Proceedings of the 24th ACM Symposium on Operating Systems Principles (SOSP'13)*, Farmington, PA, USA, 2013. Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). URL https://doi.org/10.1145/2517349.2517350.

[42] S. Mu, L. Nelson, W. Lloyd, and J. Li. Consolidating Concurrency Control and Consensus for Commits under Conflicts. In *Proceedings of the 12th USENIX Symposium on Operating Systems Design and Implementation (OSDI'16)*, Savannah, GA, USA, 2016. USENIX Association.

[43] F. Nawab, V. Arora, D. Agrawal, and A. El Abbadi. Chariots: A scalable shared log for data management in multi-datacenter cloud environments. In *Proceedings of the 18th International Conference on Extending Database Technology (EDBT'15)*, Brussels, Belgium, 2015. OpenProceedings.org.

[44] K. Ngo, S. Sen, and W. Lloyd. Tolerating slowdowns in replicated state machines using copilots. In *14th USENIX Symposium on Operating Systems Design and Implementation (OSDI'20)*, Online, 2020. USENIX Association.

[45] B. M. Oki and B. H. Liskov. Viewstamped Replication: A New Primary Copy Method to Support Highly-Available Distributed Systems. In *Proceedings of the Seventh Annual ACM Symposium on Principles of Distributed Computing (PODC'88)*, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 1988. Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). URL https://doi.org/10.1145/62546.62549.

[46] D. Ongaro and J. K. Ousterhout. In search of an understandable consensus algorithm. In *Proceedings of the 2014 USENIX Annual Technical Conference (USENIX ATC'14)*, Philadelphia, PA, USA, 2014. USENIX Association.

[47] H. Pan, J. Tuglu, N. Zhou, T. Wang, Y. Shen, X. Zheng, J. Tassarotti, L. Tseng, and R. Palmieri. Rabia: Simplifying State-Machine Replication Through Randomization. In *Proceedings of the 28th ACM Symposium on Operating Systems Principles (SOSP'21)*, Online, 2021. Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). URL https://doi.org/10.1145/3477132.3483582.

[48] C. H. Papadimitriou. The serializability of concurrent database updates. *Journal of the ACM (JACM)*, 26 (4), 1979. URL https://doi.org/10.1145/322154.322158.

[49] D. Peng and F. Dabek. Large-scale Incremental Processing Using Distributed Transactions and Notifications. In *Proceedings of the 9th USENIX Symposium on Operating Systems Design and Implementation (OSDI'10)*, Vancouver, BC, Canada, 2010. USENIX Association.

[50] D. R. Ports, J. Li, V. Liu, N. K. Sharma, and A. Krishnamurthy. Designing Distributed Systems Using Approximate Synchrony in Data Center Networks. In *Proceedings of the 12th USENIX Symposium on Networked Systems Design and Implementation (NSDI'15)*, Oakland, CA, USA, 2015. USENIX Association.

[51] K. Ren, D. Li, and D. J. Abadi. SLOG: serializable, low-latency, geo-replicated transactions. *Proceedings of the VLDB Endowment*, 12(11), 2019. URL https://doi.org/10.14778/3342263.3342647.

[52] I. Stoica, R. Morris, D. Karger, M. F. Kaashoek, and H. Balakrishnan. Chord: A Scalable Peer-to-Peer Lookup Service for Internet Applications. In *Proceedings of the 2001 Conference on Applications, Technologies, Architectures, and Protocols for Computer Communications (SIGCOMM'01)*, San Diego, CA, USA, 2001. Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). URL https://doi.org/10.1145/383059.383071.

[53] The Apache Software Foundation. ZooKeeper Recipes and Solutions. https://zookeeper.apache.org/doc/current/recipes.html, 2021. Accessed: 12-10-2021.

[54] A. Thomson, T. Diamond, S.-C. Weng, K. Ren, P. Shao, and D. J. Abadi. Calvin: Fast Distributed Transactions for Partitioned Database Systems. In *Proceedings of the 2012 ACM SIGMOD International Conference on Management of Data (SIGMOD'12)*, Scottsdale, AZ, USA, 2012. Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). URL https://doi.org/10.1145/2213836.2213838.

[55] R. Van Renesse and F. B. Schneider. Chain Replication for Supporting High Throughput and Availability. In *Proceedings of the 6th USENIX Symposium on Operating Systems Design and Implementation (OSDI'04)*, San Francisco, CA, USA, 2004. USENIX Association.

[56] M. Wei, A. Tai, C. J. Rossbach, I. Abraham, M. Munshed, M. Dhawan, J. Stabile, U. Wieder, S. Fritchie, S. Swanson, et al. vCorfu: A Cloud-Scale Object Store on a Shared Log. In *Proceedings of the 14th USENIX Symposium on Networked Systems Design and Implementation (NSDI'17)*, Boston, MA, USA, 2017. USENIX Association.

[57] B. White, J. Lepreau, L. Stoller, R. Ricci, S. Guruprasad, M. Newbold, M. Hibler, C. Barb, and A. Joglekar. An Integrated Experimental Environment for Distributed Systems and Networks. In *Proceedings of the 5th USENIX Symposium on Operating Systems Design and*

Implementation (OSDI'02), Barcelona, Catalonia-Spain, 2002. USENIX Association. URL https://doi.org/10.1145/1060289.1060313.

[58] M. Whittaker, A. Ailijiang, A. Charapko, M. Demirbas, N. Giridharan, J. M. Hellerstein, H. Howard, I. Stoica, and A. Szekeres. Scaling replicated state machines with compartmentalization. *Proceedings of the VLDB Endowment*, 14(11):2203–2215, 2021. URL https://doi.org/10.14778/3476249.3476273.

[59] I. Zhang, N. K. Sharma, A. Szekeres, A. Krishnamurthy, and D. R. Ports. Building Consistent Transactions with Inconsistent Replication. *ACM Transactions on Computer Systems (TOCS)*, 35(4), 2018. URL https://doi.org/10.1145/2815400.2815404.

[60] J. Zhou, M. Xu, A. Shraer, B. Namasivayam, A. Miller, E. Tschannen, S. Atherton, A. J. Beamon, R. Sears, J. Leach, et al. Foundationdb: A distributed unbundled transactional key value store. In *Proceedings of the 2021 International Conference on Management of Data*, pages 2653–2666, 2021. URL https://doi.org/10.1145/3448016.3457559.

A Proof of Strict Serializability

This presents a proof of the strict serializability of assignment of multi-sequence numbers to operations.

A.1 Definitions

Strict serializability requires that there exists a legal total order of operations and that the total order reflects the real-time ordering constraints. Formally: *A complete history h satisfies* linearizability *if there exists a legal total order τ of $ops(h)$ such that $\forall op_1, op_2 \in ops(h). op_1 <_h op_2 \Rightarrow op_1 <_\tau op_2$.*

That is, if an operation x ends before an operation y begins then x must appear before y in the total order.

Let $\mathcal{S} = \{\mathcal{S}_0, \mathcal{S}_1, ...\}$ be the set of all sequence spaces. We say that two multi-sequence numbers a and b *conflict* if $\exists n \in S$ such that $a_n \neq \Delta \wedge b_n \neq \Delta$. Multi-sequence numbers are ordered by the partial ordering τ over all multi-sequence numbers where $a < b \iff \forall n \in S, a_n \neq \Delta \wedge b_n \neq \Delta \implies a_n < b_n$.

Note that this partial ordering includes the possibility of conflicting multi-sequence numbers not being ordered: i.e. where $a_i < b_i \wedge b_j < a_j$ for some $i, j \in S \implies a \| b$.

The goal of MASON is to provide an ordering for a service built on MASON. Thus, we prove that the partial ordering τ produced by MASON is a legal total order satisfying linearizability. It is then up to the service to apply the operations in the order determined by τ.

An operation is *assigned* a multi-sequence number when the Raft entry containing the operation and multi-sequence number pair is committed. Multi-sequence numbers are *allocated* by the sequencer to a request from the proxy; this does not guarantee the operation for which the proxy requested a multi-sequence number will be assigned the allocated multi-sequence number.

Algorithm 1: Sequencer Protocol

```
1  S;                          // Set of sequence spaces
2  atMostOnce[];  // Map of (proxy, seqReqId) to
     the response
3  activeSequencer ← False;
4  when the sequencer receives a message m, from proxy
     p do
5      case
         m = RequestSeqNum(seqReqId, {count_i}_{i=0}^{|S|}) do
6          if ¬activeSequencer then
7              return null;
8          if (p, seqReqId) ∈ atMostOnce then
9              return atMostOnce[(p, seqReqId)], True;
10         resp ← {∅}_{i=0}^{|S|};
11         for i ∈ {0, ..., |S|} do
12             if count_i ≠ 0 then
13                 resp_i ← S_i;
14                 S_i ← S_i + count_i;
15         atMostOnce[(proxyId, seqReqId)] ← resp;
16         return resp, False;
17     case m = Recover do
18         for each proxy do
19             send GetMaxAndSeal to each proxy
20         wait for all proxies to reply
           // Portion of recovery for
              contiguity is omitted.
21         for i ∈ {0, ..., |S|} do
22             S_i ← max_{response∈responses} S_i in response + 1;
23         activeSequence ← True;
```

We allow operations to be assigned a range of sequence numbers in each sequence space. We will share notation for operations and sequence numbers where for an operation x, x_n denotes the maximum sequence number assigned to operation x in sequence space n. The comparison $x_n < y_n$, and $x_n \leq y_n$ compares the highest assigned sequence number for operation x in sequence space n and the lowest assigned sequence number for operation y in sequence space n That is, $x_n < y_n \iff \max_{i \in x_n} i < \min_{i \in y_n} i$ and $x_n \leq y_n \iff \max_{i \in x_n} i \leq \min_{i \in y_n} i$.

The term *proxy* indicates a replicated state machine that executes the MASON protocol detailed in Alg 2 and Alg 3. *Sequencer* denotes a machine executing the protocol detailed in Alg 1. A ~~backup~~ standby sequencer may begin executing the sequencer protocol from line 17 of Alg 1 when notified by any proxy.

Algorithm 2: Proxy State and Request Protocol

```
curSeqReqId ← 0;
maxCmtdSeqReqId ← −1;          // updated in ApplyLog locally
cmtdSeqReqIds[];               // holds all committed SeqReqIds
maxRecvdSeqNum[];              // max received sequence number for each sequence space
sequencers[];                  // array of sequencers
activeIndex ← 0;               // index of the active sequencer
when proxy p receives a message m do
    case m = ClientRequest(op) do
        retx ← True;
        seqReqId ← curSeqReqId;
        curSeqReqId ← curSeqReqId + 1;
        activeSequencer ← sequencers[activeIndex];
        nextSequencer ← sequencers[activeIndex + 1];
        while retx do
            send (resp, retx) ← seqnumReq(myProxyId, seqReqId, op.seqReq) to activeSequencer;
            wait for response or suspect activeSequencer has failed;
            if suspect activeSequencer has failed then
                send Recover to nextSequencer
            wait for response from activeSequencer;
            if sequencers[activeIndex] ≠ activeSequencer then
                return
            if retx then
                executeNoop(resp);
                seqReqId ← curSeqReqId;
                curSeqReqId ← curSeqReqId + 1;
        replicate(seqReqId, resp);
        wait for commit;
        updateMaxRecvdSeqNum(resp);
        execute(op); // Determined by service.
        return to op.client;
    case m = GetMaxAndSeal do
        activeIndex ← activeIndex + 1;
        replicate(seal); // contains activeIndex
        wait for commit;
        return maxRecvdSeqNum;
```

A.2 Assumptions

The model consists of a set of processes, $\mathcal{P}$, which contains clients, proxy replicas, and sequencers. Processes may fail according to the crash failure model, where processes stop executing requests, and the failure is undetectable to other processes.

We assume an asynchronous network model where messages can be arbitrarily delayed and reordered.

We develop MASON's proxies with Raft and assume the following as guarantees from Raft [46], the guarantee A.1 being explicitly stated in the paper.

Guarantee A.1 *"If a log entry is committed in a given term, then that entry will be present in the logs of the leaders for all higher-numbered terms."*

Guarantee A.2 *Raft is available as long as a majority of replicas have not failed.*

Algorithm 3: Proxy Leader Failover Recovery Protocol

```
when proxy replica gains Raft leadership do
    UncmtdSeqReqIds ← {i.i ∈ ℤ ∧ i ≤ maxCmtdSeqReqId};
    UncmtdSeqReqIds ← UncmtdSeqReqIds \ cmtdSeqReqIds;
    for seqReqId ∈ UncmtdSeqReqIds do
        send (resp, retx) ← seqnumReq(myProxyId, seqReqId, 0);
        wait for response;
        if retx then
            executeNoop(resp);
    curSeqReqId ← maxCmtdSeqReqId + 1;
```

A.3 Proof of total order

To prove that MASON provides a linearizable ordering we first show that its ordering is a total order and then prove that the total order respects the real-time order.

To provide a total order MASON needs to ensure for any two operations x and y one of $x < y$, $y < x$, or $\forall n \in S, x_n = \Delta \vee y_n = \Delta$. The latter case describes when the two operations share no sequence spaces, which we will call *strictly concurrent* and denote $x \|_s y$; in this case x and y are trivially ordered in either order. When any of these relations are true we will say operations x and y are *strictly ordered*. More specifically for any two operations x and y, x and y are strictly ordered if and only if $(x_n < y_n \forall n \in S.(x_n \neq \Delta \wedge y_n \neq \Delta)) \vee (y_n < x_n \forall n \in S.(x_n \neq \Delta \wedge y_n \neq \Delta))$.

We prove that MASON provides a total order, that is, where all operations are strictly ordered as described above.

Lemma A.1 *The assigned multi-sequence numbers for any replicated and committed operation do not change.*

Proof: Directly implied by SMR Guarantee A.1; any elected leader will have the operation and multi-sequence number pairing in its log. □

The goal then is to prove that any two *assigned* operations are totally ordered, that is we need to show that $\forall x, y, (x < y) \vee (y < x) \vee x \|_s y$. We first prove a total order for conflicting operations.

Lemma A.2 *Any two conflicting operations x, y are strictly ordered.*

Proof: We prove by case analysis on all possible combinations of failures of MASON components.

Case 0: No failures. The sequencer trivially guarantees the existence of a total order in normal operation. Consider any two conflicting operations $x, y \in ops(h)$ and any two sequence spaces on which x and y conflict, n, m, such that $x_n \neq \Delta \wedge y_n \neq \Delta \wedge x_m \neq \Delta \wedge y_m \neq \Delta$. Without loss of generality let x arrive at the sequencer before y. Let $\mathcal{S}_n = i, \mathcal{S}_m = j$ when x arrives. Lines 11 – 14 of Alg 1 increment $\mathcal{S}_n$ and $\mathcal{S}_m$ by the respective counts before responding. Once the proxy replicates the assigned multi-sequence numbers for x the assignment does not change by Lemma A.1. Then, y, arriving later, must receive $\mathcal{S}_n \geq i + x_n.count, \mathcal{S}_m \geq i + x_m.count$ where $x_n.count$ is the number of sequence numbers requested for $\mathcal{S}_n$ by operation x (line 14 of Alg 1). Thus, $x_n < y_n \wedge x_m < y_m$; that is, they are strictly ordered.

Case 1: Proxy follower failure. This case is equivalent to Case 0 by SMR guarantee A.2: proxies execute as normal with a majority of non-failing machines in the proxy.

Case 2: Proxy leader failure. Consider two conflicting operations x, y, and any two sequence spaces on which x and y conflict n, m. Upon proxy leader failure there are four cases.

Case 2a: x and y are assigned (committed) before failure. This case is equivalent to Case 0 by Lemma A.1.

Case 2b: Neither x nor y are assigned before failure. When x and y are retransmitted by their clients (not shown) they will be allocated *seqReqIds* greater than *maxCmtdSeqReqId*, by line 9 of Alg 3 and 10 of Alg 2. Without loss of generality consider x and its *seqReqId*, $x.seqReqId$. If the sequencer has already allocated a multi-sequence number for $x.seqReqId$ the sequencer responds with $retx == True$ and the new leader will allocate a new *seqReqId*, by lines 8 – 9 of Alg 1 and lines 14 – 25 of Alg 2. The $x.seqReqId$ is then incremented and the request to the sequencer is resent lines 14 – 25 of Alg 2. This is repeated, line 14 of Alg 2, until the sequencer has not allocated a multi-sequence number for $x.seqReqId$, indicated by returning $retx == False$, line 16 of Alg 1 and line 14 of Alg 2. x is then allocated a new multi-sequence number. Thus, x and y eventually receive new sequence numbers and this case is equivalent to Case 0.

Case 2c: Either x or y is assigned before failure, and the other is not. Without loss of generality assume x is assigned a multi-sequence number and y is not. The logic is similar to Case 2b. When y is retransmitted by its client (not shown) it will be allocated a *seqReqId* greater than *maxCmtdSeqReqId*, by line 9 of Alg 3 and 10 of Alg 2. Consider y's *seqReqId*, $y.seqReqId$. If the sequencer has already allocated a multi-sequence number for $y.seqReqId$ the sequencer responds with $retx == True$ and the new leader will allocate a new *seqReqId*, by lines 8 – 9 of Alg 1 and lines 14 – 25 of Alg 2. The $y.seqReqId$ is then incremented and the request to the sequencer is resent lines 14 – 25 of Alg 2. This is repeated, line 14 of Alg 2, until the sequencer has not allocated a multi-sequence number for $y.seqReqId$, indicated by returning $retx == False$, line 16 of Alg 1 and line 14 of Alg 2. y is then allocated a new multi-sequence number. Thus, y eventually receives a new sequence number and this case is equivalent to y arriving to the sequencer later as in Case 0. These subcases exhaust all 4 combinations of the state of processing of x and y.

Case 3: Sequencer failure. All multi-sequence numbers replicated (and assigned) before sequencer failure are totally ordered by Case 0 and Lemma A.1. What remains to show is that all multi-sequencers assigned after failure are totally ordered. No multi-sequence number allocated by the previous sequencer will be assigned after line 34 of Alg 2 because of lines 32 and 20 – 21 of Alg 2. Proxies trivially ensure $maxRecvdSeqNum \geq$ all assigned multi-sequence numbers at commit time, line 28 of Alg 2. Thus, for any assigned multi-sequence number x at the time of seal commit: $x_i \leq \mathcal{S}_i.i \in \mathcal{S}$, by lines 21 – 22 of Alg 1. For any multi-sequence number, y, assigned after recovery, $\mathcal{S}_i < y_i.i \in \mathcal{S}$, line 14 of Alg 1. So, $x < y$ for any pair (x, y) where x is assigned before recovery seal and y is assigned after recovery seal. $\forall j, k \in ops(h).j, k$ assigned after recovery, j and k are strictly ordered or strictly concurrent by Case 0.

Case 4: Concurrent proxy leader and proxy follower failure. This case is equivalent to Case 2 by the guarantee of availability when fewer than a majority of machines failed A.2.

Case 5: Concurrent proxy follower failure and sequencer failure. As a guarantee of SMR, proxies continue to operate as normal with a majority of non-failing machines (A.2). Thus, this case is equivalent to Case 3.

Case 6: Concurrent proxy leader and sequencer failure.

Case 6a: The sealing operation on the proxy was not replicated. The new sequencer cannot execute the recovery process until it receives confirmation from every proxy that they were sealed, line 20 of Alg 1. Sealed confirmations are not sent until the seal is replicated. Thus, the new leader will eventually hear, via retransmits, from the new sequencer, and begin replicating the seal, line 33 of Alg 2. Thus, this case is equivalent to Case 3.

Case 6b: The sealing operation on the proxy was replicated. SMR guarantees that only a replica with all committed operations can become the new leader, guarantee A.1. Thus,

the new leader has the seal operation, and begins to execute recovery. Thus, this case becomes equivalent to Case 3. These two cases are exhaustive as the proxy either committed the seal command or did not at any point in time.

Case 7: Concurrent proxy leader, proxy follower, and sequencer failure. This case is equivalent to Case 6 by the guarantees of SMR when f or fewer replicas fail.

These cases are exhaustive because they are all combinations of possible failures of components in MASON.□

Lemma A.3 MASON*'s ordering is a total order, that is,* $\forall$ *assigned operations* $x, y, (x < y) \vee (y < x) \vee x \|_s y$.

Proof: Either x and y conflict or they do not. If x and y conflict, then they are totally ordered by Lemma A.2. If they are non-conflicting, then they are strictly concurrent and can be ordered by τ in any order. □

A.4 Proof of real-time order

We need to show for any operation x returned to a client, any operation y invoked after x returned is ordered after x in the total order. We denote the event of the response to a client as $resp(op)$ and the invocation event $inv(op)$.

Lemma A.4 *If an operation, x, is assigned a multi-sequence number, n, then a sequencer allocated n for x.*

Proof: Lines 9 – 26 of Alg 2 imply that the proxy only replicates, assigns, an operation if *retx* is False (line 14). This implies the returned n was allocated for x, lines 8 – 16 of Alg 1. □

Lemma A.5 *For any two operations x and y,* $resp(x)$ *precedes* $inv(y)$ *in real-time implies* $x < y$.

Proof: Given any two operations x and y and, without loss of generality, assume $resp(x)$ precedes $inv(y)$ in real-time, there are two cases x and y conflict or they do not.

Case 0: x and y do not conflict. In this case x and y are strictly concurrent and can be assigned in either order. We order y after x in the total order.

Case 1: x and y conflict. Given Lemma A.4, it is sufficient to show that for any y invoked after $resp(x)$, y is *allocated* a higher multi-sequence number than x, such that $x < y$. There are thus two cases: the sequencer that allocated the assigned multi-sequence number for x allocates the assigned multi-sequence number for y or it does not.

Case 1a: The sequencer that allocated the assigned multi-sequence number for x allocates the assigned multi-sequence number for y. In this case $x < y$ by the normal case ordering. Specifically $resp(x) < inv(y)$ implies that x, being already assigned, arrives to the sequencer before y. Line 11 – 14 of Alg 1 increases all sequence spaces for which x requested a sequence number. Thus, the conflicting sequence spaces are increased. The sequence spaces on any sequencer do not decrease, thus, y is allocated a higher multi-sequence number. So, $\forall n \in \mathcal{S}.x_n \neq \Delta \wedge y_n \neq \Delta, x_n < y_n$, thus $x < y$.

Case 1b: The sequencer that allocated the assigned multi-sequence number for x does not allocate the assigned multi-sequence number for y. Without loss of generality let the sequencer that allocates the multi-sequence number eventually assigned to x be S_x and the sequencer that allocates the multi-sequence number eventually assigned to y be S_y. Because y is assigned a multi-sequence number allocated by S_y and x is assigned a multi-sequence number allocated by S_x and $resp(x) < inv(y)$, S_y must have become the active sequencer after *x.seqnum* was allocated. To become the active sequencer S_y must have received a *Recover* message from a proxy and executed recovery, receiving the *maxRecvdSeqNum* from every proxy (lines 3, 17, 18 – 20, and 23 of Alg 1 and 31 – 35 of Alg 2). As S_x allocated the sequence number eventually assigned to x, *x.seqnum* must be *assigned* (replicated) before the proxy receives *GetMaxAndSeal* and replicates the *seal*; otherwise, the proxy would have incremented *activeIndex* and began to ignore messages from S_x, lines 20 – 21 and 30 – 31 of Alg 2. Thus, *x.seqnum* is replicated before *seal* and the proxy replies with a multi-sequence number, *max* such that $\forall n.x_n \neq \Delta, x_n \leq max_n$. Thus, S_y will have $x_i \leq max_i < \mathcal{S}_i \forall i.x_i \neq \Delta$, line 19 of Alg 1 and line 35 of Alg 2. The sequence spaces on any sequencer do not decrease and so $\forall n.x_n \neq \Delta \wedge y_n \neq \Delta, x_n \leq max_n < y_n$. Thus, $x < y$. □

Theorem A.1 MASON *provides a strictly serializable total ordering.*

Proof: MASON provides a total order, by A.3, that respects real-time ordering, by A.5. □