

# Using the Global Arrays Toolkit to Reimplement NumPy for Distributed Computation

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**Abstract**—Global Arrays (GA) is a software system from Pacific Northwest National Laboratory that enables an efficient, portable, and parallel shared-memory programming interface to manipulate distributed dense arrays. Using a combination of GA and *NumPy*, we have reimplemented *NumPy* as a distributed drop-in replacement called Global Arrays in NumPy (*GAiN*). Scalability studies will be presented showing the utility of developing serial *NumPy* codes which can later run on more capable clusters or supercomputers.

**Index Terms**—Global Arrays, Python, NumPy, MPI

## Introduction

Scientific computing with Python typically involves using the *NumPy* package. *NumPy* provides an efficient multidimensional array and array processing routines. Unfortunately, like many Python programs, *NumPy* is serial in nature. This limits both the size of the arrays as well as the speed with which the arrays can be processed to the available resources on a single compute node.

For the most part, *NumPy* programs are written, debugged, and run in singly-threaded environments. This may be sufficient for certain problem domains. However, *NumPy* may also be used to develop prototype software. Such software is usually ported to a different, compiled language and/or explicitly parallelized to take advantage of additional hardware.

Global Arrays in NumPy (*GAiN*) is an extension to Python that provides parallel, distributed processing of arrays. It implements a subset of the *NumPy* API so that for some programs, by simply importing *GAiN* in place of *NumPy* they may be able to take advantage of parallel processing transparently. Other programs may require slight modification. This allows those programs to take advantage of the additional cores available on single compute nodes and to increase problem sizes by distributing across clustered environments.

## Background

Like any complex piece of software, *GAiN* builds on many other foundational ideas and implementations. This background is not intended to be a complete reference, rather only what is necessary to understand the design and implementation of *GAiN*. Further details may be found by examining the references or as otherwise noted.

## NumPy

*NumPy* [Oli06] is a Python extension module which adds a powerful multidimensional array class `ndarray` to the Python language. *NumPy* also provides scientific computing capabilities such as basic linear algebra and Fourier transform support. *NumPy* is the de facto standard for scientific computing in Python and the successor of the other numerical Python packages `Numarray` [Dub96] and `numeric` [Asc99].

The primary class defined by *NumPy* is `ndarray`. The `ndarray` is implemented as a contiguous memory segment. Internally, all `ndarray` instances have a pointer to the location of the first element as well as the attributes `shape`, `ndim`, and `strides`. `ndim` describes the number of dimensions in the array, `shape` describes the number of elements in each dimension, and `strides` describes the number of bytes between consecutive elements per dimension. The `ndarray` can be either FORTRAN- or C-ordered. Recall that in FORTRAN, the first dimension has a stride of one while it is the opposite (last) dimension in C. `shape` can be modified while `ndim` and `strides` are read-only and used internally, although their exposure to the programmer may help in developing certain algorithms.

The creation of `ndarray` instances is complicated by the various ways in which it can be done such as explicit constructor calls, view casting, or creating new instances from template instances (e.g. slicing). To this end, the `ndarray` does not implement Python's `__init__()` object constructor. Instead, `ndarrays` use the `__new__()` classmethod. Recall that `__new__()` is Python's hook for subclassing its built-in objects. If `__new__()` returns an instance of the class on which it is defined, then the class's `__init__()` method is also called. Otherwise, the `__init__()` method is not called. Given the various ways that `ndarray` instances can be created, the `__new__()` classmethod might not always get called to properly initialize the instance. `__array_finalize__()` is called instead of `__init__()` for `ndarray` subclasses to avoid this limitation.

The element-wise operators in *NumPy* are known as *Universal Functions*, or *ufuncs*. Many of the methods of `ndarray` simply invoke the corresponding *ufunc*. For example, the operator `+` calls `ndarray.__add__()` which invokes the *ufunc* `add`. *Ufuncs* are either unary or binary, taking either one or two arrays as input, respectively. *Ufuncs* always return the

result of the operation as an `ndarray` or `ndarray` subclass. Optionally, an additional output parameter may be specified to receive the results of the operation. Specifying this output parameter to the ufunc avoids the sometimes unnecessary creation of a new `ndarray`.

Ufuncs can operate on `ndarray` subclasses or array-like objects. In order for subclasses of the `ndarray` or array-like objects to utilize the ufuncs, they may define three methods or one attribute which are `__array_prepare__()`, `__array_wrap__()`, `__array__()`, and `__array_priority__`, respectively. The `__array_prepare__()` and `__array_wrap__()` methods will be called on either the output, if specified, or the input with the highest `__array_priority__`. `__array_prepare__()` is called on the way into the ufunc after the output array is created but before any computation has been performed and `__array_wrap__()` is called on the way out of the ufunc. Those two functions exist so that `ndarray` subclasses can properly modify any attributes or properties specific to their subclass. Lastly, if an output is specified which defines an `__array__()` method, results will be written to the object returned by calling `__array__()`.

#### Single Program, Multiple Data

Parallel applications can be classified into a few well defined programming paradigms. Each paradigm is a class of algorithms that have the same control structure. The literature differs in how these paradigms are classified and the boundaries between paradigms can sometimes be fuzzy or intentionally blended into hybrid models [Buy99]. The Single Program Multiple Data (SPMD) paradigm is one example. With SPMD, each process executes essentially the same code but on a different part of the data. The communication pattern is highly structured and predictable. Occasionally, a global synchronization may be needed. The efficiency of these types of programs depends on the decomposition of the data and the degree to which the data is independent of its neighbors. These programs are also highly susceptible to process failure. If any single process fails, generally it causes deadlock since global synchronizations thereafter would fail.

#### Message Passing Interface (MPI)

Message passing libraries allow efficient parallel programs to be written for distributed memory systems. MPI [Gro99a], also known as MPI-1, is a library specification for message-passing that was standardized in May 1994 by the MPI Forum. It is designed for high performance on both massively parallel machines and on workstation clusters. An optimized MPI implementation exists on nearly all modern parallel systems and there are a number of freely available, portable implementations for all other systems [Buy99]. As such, MPI is the de facto standard for writing massively parallel application codes in either FORTRAN, C, or C++.

The MPI-2 standard [Gro99b] was first completed in 1997 and added a number of important additions to MPI including, but not limited to, one-sided communication and the C++ language binding. Before MPI-2, all communication

required explicit handshaking between the sender and receiver via `MPI_Send()` and `MPI_Recv()` in addition to non-blocking variants. MPI-2's one-sided communication model allows reads, writes, and accumulates of remote memory without the explicit cooperation of the process owning the memory. If synchronization is required at a later time, it can be requested via `MPI_Barrier()`. Otherwise, there is no strict guarantee that a one-sided operation will complete before the data segment it accessed is used by another process.

#### mpi4py

`mpi4py` is a Python wrapper around MPI. It is written to mimic the C++ language bindings. It supports point-to-point communication, one-sided communication, as well as the collective communication models. Typical communication of arbitrary objects in the FORTRAN or C bindings of MPI require the programmer to define new MPI datatypes. These datatypes describe the number and order of the bytes to be communicated. On the other hand, strings could be sent without defining a new datatype so long as the length of the string was understood by the recipient. `mpi4py` is able to communicate any serializable Python object since serialized objects are just byte streams. `mpi4py` also has special enhancements to efficiently communicate any object implementing Python's buffer protocol, such as `NumPy` arrays. It also supports dynamic process management and parallel I/O [Dal05], [Dal08].

#### Global Arrays and Aggregate Remote Memory Copy Interface

The GA toolkit [Nie06], [Nie10], [Pn11] is a software system from Pacific Northwest National Laboratory that enables an efficient, portable, and parallel shared-memory programming interface to manipulate physically distributed dense multidimensional arrays, without the need for explicit cooperation by other processes. GA compliments the message-passing programming model and is compatible with MPI so that the programmer can use both in the same program. GA has supported Python bindings since version 5.0. Arrays are created by calling one of the creation routines such as `ga.create()`, returning an integer handle which is passed to subsequent operations. The GA library handles the distribution of arrays across processes and recognizes that accessing local memory is faster than accessing remote memory. However, the library allows access mechanisms for any part of the entire distributed array regardless of where its data is located. Local memory is acquired via `ga.access()` returning a pointer to the data on the local process, while remote memory is retrieved via `ga.get()` filling an already allocated array buffer. Individual discontinuous sets of array elements can be updated or retrieved using `ga.scatter()` or `ga.gather()`, respectively. GA has been leveraged in several large computational chemistry codes and has been shown to scale well [Apr09].

The Aggregate Remote Memory Copy Interface (ARMCI) provides general-purpose, efficient, and widely portable remote memory access (RMA) operations (one-sided communication). ARMCI operations are optimized for contiguous and non-contiguous (strided, scatter/gather, I/O vector) data transfers. It also exploits native network communication interfaces and system resources such as shared memory [Nie00]. ARMCI

provides simpler progress rules and a less synchronous model of RMA than MPI-2. ARMCi has been used to implement the Global Arrays library, GPShMEM - a portable version of Cray SHMEM library, and the portable Co-Array FORTRAN compiler from Rice University [Dot04].

### Cython

Cython [Beh11] is both a language which closely resembles Python as well as a compiler which generates C code based on Python's C API. The Cython language additionally supports calling C functions as well as static typing. This makes writing C extensions or wrapping external C libraries for the Python language as easy as Python itself.

### Previous Work

*GaiN* is similar in many ways to other parallel computation software packages. It attempts to leverage the best ideas for transparent, parallel processing found in current systems. The following packages provided insight into how *GaiN* was to be developed.

MITMatlab [Hus98], which was later rebranded as Star-P [Ede07], provides a client-server model for interactive, large-scale scientific computation. It provides a transparently parallel front end through the popular MATLAB [Pal07] numerical package and sends the parallel computations to its Parallel Problem Server. Star-P briefly had a Python interface. Separating the interactive, serial nature of MATLAB from the parallel computation server allows the user to leverage both of their strengths. This also allows much larger arrays to be operated over than is allowed by a single compute node.

Global Arrays Meets MATLAB (GAMMA) [Pan06] provides a MATLAB binding to the GA toolkit, thus allowing for larger problem sizes and parallel computation. GAMMA can be viewed as a GA implementation of MITMatlab and was shown to scale well even within an interpreted environment like MATLAB.

IPython [Per07] provides an enhanced interactive Python shell as well as an architecture for interactive parallel computing. IPython supports practically all models of parallelism but, more importantly, in an interactive way. For instance, a single interactive Python shell could be controlling a parallel program running on a supercomputer. This is done by having a Python engine running on a remote machine which is able to receive Python commands.

distarray [Gra09] is an experimental package for the IPython project. distarray uses IPython's architecture as well as MPI extensively in order to look and feel like *NumPy* `ndarray` instances. Only the SPMD model of parallel computation is supported, unlike other parallel models supported directly by IPython. Further, the status of distarray is that of a proof of concept and not production ready.

A Graphics Processing Unit (GPU) is a powerful parallel processor that is capable of more floating point calculations per second than a traditional CPU. However, GPUs are more difficult to program and require other special considerations such as copying data from main memory to the GPU's on-board memory in order for it to be processed, then copying

the results back. The GpuPy [Eit07] Python extension package was developed to lessen these burdens by providing a *NumPy*-like interface for the GPU. Preliminary results demonstrate considerable speedups for certain single-precision floating point operations.

A subset of the Global Arrays toolkit was wrapped in Python for the 3.x series of GA by Robert Harrison [Har99]. It illustrated some important concepts such as the benefits of integration with *NumPy* -- the local or remote portions of the global arrays were retrieved as *NumPy* arrays at which point they could be used as inputs to *NumPy* functions like the `ufuncs`.

Co-Array Python [Ras04] is modeled after the Co-Array FORTRAN extensions to FORTRAN 95. It allows the programmer to access data elements on non-local processors via an extra array dimension, called the co-dimension. The `CoArray` module provided a local data structure existing on all processors executing in a SPMD fashion. The `CoArray` was designed as an extension to Numeric Python [Asc99].

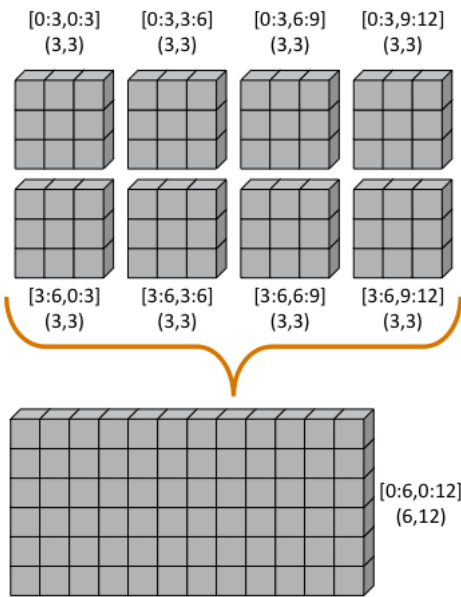
### Design

The need for parallel programming and running these programs on parallel architectures is obvious, however, efficiently programming for a parallel environment can be a daunting task. One area of research is to automatically parallelize otherwise serial programs and to do so with the least amount of user intervention [Buy99]. *GaiN* attempts to do this for certain Python programs utilizing the *NumPy* module. It will be shown that some *NumPy* programs can be parallelized in a nearly transparent way with *GaiN*.

There are a few assumptions which govern the design of *GaiN*. First, all documented *GaiN* functions are collective. Since Python and *NumPy* were designed to run serially on workstations, it naturally follows that *GaiN*, running in an SPMD fashion, will execute every documented function collectively. Second, only certain arrays should be distributed. In general, it is inefficient to distribute arrays which are relatively small and/or easy to compute. It follows, then, that *GaiN* operations should allow mixed inputs of both distributed and local array-like objects. Further, *NumPy* represents an extensive, useful, and hardened API. Every effort to reuse *NumPy* should be made. Lastly, GA has its own strengths to offer such as processor groups and custom data distributions. In order to maximize scalability of this implementation, we should enable the use of processor groups [Nie05].

A distributed array representation must acknowledge the duality of a global array and the physically distributed memory of the array. Array attributes such as `shape` should return the global, coalesced representation of the array which hides the fact the array is distributed. But when operations such as `add()` are requested, the corresponding pieces of the input arrays must be operated over. Figure 1 will help illustrate. Each local piece of the array has its own shape (in parenthesis) and knows its portion of the distribution (in square brackets). Each local piece also knows the global shape.

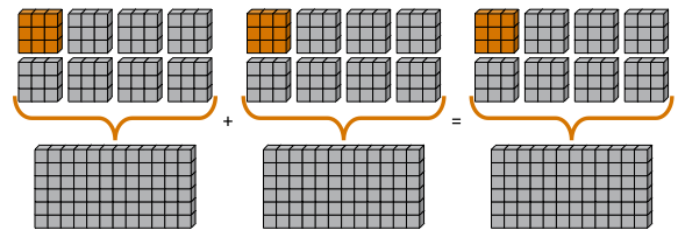
A fundamental design decision was whether to subclass `ndarray` or to provide a work-alike replacement for the



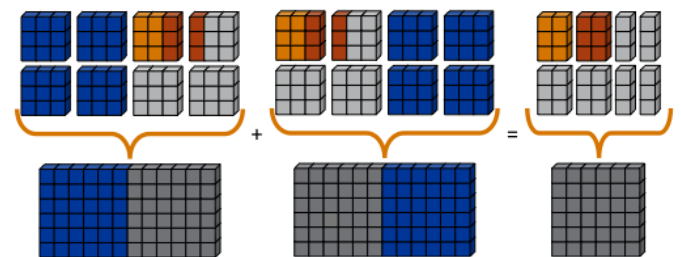
**Figure 1:** Each local piece of the `gain.ndarray` has its own shape (in parenthesis) and knows its portion of the distribution (in square brackets). Each local piece also knows the global shape.

entire `numpy` module. The `NumPy` documentation states that `ndarray` implements `__new__()` in order to control array creation via constructor calls, view casting, and slicing. Subclasses implement `__new__()` for when the constructor is called directly, and `__array_finalize__()` in order to set additional attributes or further modify the object from which a view has been taken. One can imagine an `ndarray` subclass called `gainarray` circumventing the usual `ndarray` base class memory allocation and instead allocating a smaller `ndarray` per process while retaining the global shape. One problem occurs with view casting -- with this approach the other `ndarray` subclasses know nothing of the distributed nature of the memory within the `gainarray`. `NumPy` itself is not designed to handle distributed arrays. By design, ufuncs create an output array when one is not specified. The first hook which `NumPy` provides is `__array_prepare__()` which is called *after the output array has been created*. This means any ufunc operation on one or more `gainarray` instances without a specified output would automatically allocate the entire output on each process. For this reason alone, we opted to reimplement the entire `numpy` module, controlling all aspects of array creation and manipulation to take into account distributed arrays.

We present a new Python module, `gain`, developed as part of the main Global Arrays software distribution. The release of GA v5.0 contained Python bindings based on the complete GA C API, available in the extension module `ga`. The GA bindings as well as the `gain` module were developed using Cython. With the upcoming release of GA v5.1, the module `ga.gain` is available as a drop-in replacement for `NumPy`. The goal of the implementation is to allow users to write `import ga.gain as numpy` and then to execute their code using the MPI process manager `mpixec -np 4 python script.py`. In order to succeed as a drop-in replacement, all attributes,



**Figure 2:** Add two arrays with the same data distribution. There are eight processors for this computation. Following the owner-computes rule, each process owning a piece of the output array (far right) retrieves the corresponding pieces from the sliced input arrays (left and middle). For example, the corresponding gold elements will be computed locally on the owning process. Note that for this computation, the data distribution is the same for both input arrays as well as the output array such that communication can be avoided by using local data access.



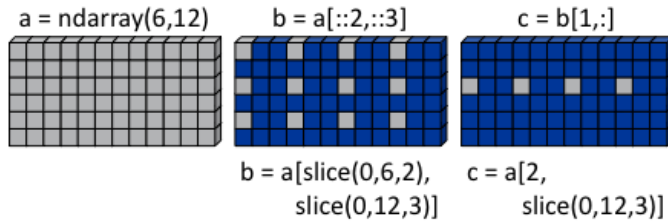
**Figure 3:** Add two sliced arrays. There are eight processors for this computation. The elements in blue were removed by a slice operation. Following the owner-computes rule, each process owning a piece of the output array (far right) retrieves the corresponding pieces from the sliced input arrays (left and middle). For example, the corresponding gold elements will be computed locally on the owning process. Similarly for the copper elements. Note that for this computation, the data for each array is not equivalently distributed which will result in communication.

functions, modules, and classes which exist in `numpy` must also exist within `gain`. Efforts were made to reuse as much of `numpy` as possible, such as its type system. As of GA v5.1, arrays of arbitrary fixed-size element types and sizes can be created and individual fields of C struct data types accessed directly. `GAIv` is able to use the `numpy` types when creating the GA instances which back the `gain.ndarray` instances.

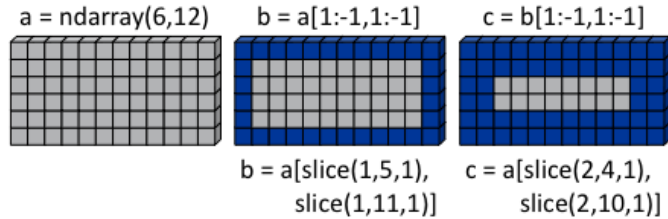
`GAIv` follows the owner-computes rule [Zim88]. The rule assigns each computation to the processor that owns the data being computed. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the concept. For any array computation, `GAIv` bases the computation on the output array. The processes owning portions of the output array will acquire the corresponding pieces of the input array(s) and then perform the computation locally, *calling the original NumPy routine* on the corresponding array portions. In some cases, for example if the output array is a view created by a slicing operation, certain processors will have no computation to perform.

The `GAIv` implementation of the `ndarray` implements a few important concepts including the dual nature of a global array and its individual distributed pieces, slice arithmetic, and separating collective operations from one-sided operations. When a `gain.ndarray` is created, it creates a Global Array





**Figure 4:** Slice arithmetic example 1. Array  $b$  could be created either using the standard notation (top middle) or using the canonicalized form (bottom middle). Array  $c$  could be created by applying the standard notation (top right) or by applying the equivalent canonical form (bottom right) to the original array  $a$ .



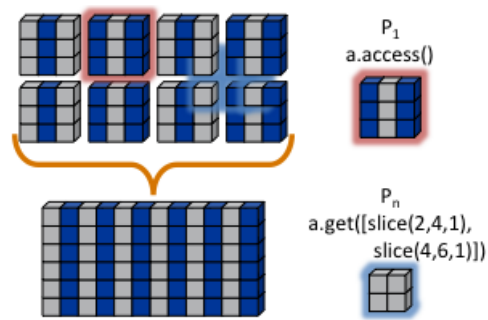
**Figure 5:** Slice arithmetic example 2. See the caption of Figure 4 for details.

of the same shape and type and stores the GA integer handle. The distribution on a given process can be queried using `ga.distribution()`. The other important attribute of the `gain.ndarray` is the `global_slice`. The `global_slice` begins as a list of `slice` objects based on the original shape of the array.

```
self.global_slice = [slice(0,x,1) for x in shape]
```

Slicing a `gain.ndarray` must return a view just like slicing a `numpy.ndarray` returns a view. The approach taken is to apply the key of the `__getitem__(key)` request to the `global_slice` and store the new `global_slice` on the newly created view. We call this type of operation *slice arithmetic*. First, the key is *canonicalized* meaning Ellipsis are replaced with `slice(0, dim_max, 1)` for each dimension represented by the Ellipsis, all `slice` instances are replaced with the results of calling `slice.indices()`, and all negative index values are replaced with their positive equivalents. This step ensures that the length of the key is compatible with and based on the current shape of the array. This enables consistent slice arithmetic on the canonicalized keys. Slice arithmetic effectively produces a new key which, when applied to the same original array, produces the same results had the same sequence of keys been applied in order. Figures 4 and 5 illustrate this concept.

When performing calculations on a `gain.ndarray`, the current `global_slice` is queried when accessing the local data or fetching remote data such that an appropriate `ndarray` data block is returned. Accessing local data and fetching remote data is performed by the `gain.ndarray.access()` and `gain.ndarray.get()` methods, respectively. Figure 6 illustrates how `access()` and `get()` are used. The `ga.access()` function on which `gain.ndarray.access()` is based will always return the



**Figure 6:** `access()` and `get()` examples. The current `global_slice`, indicated by blue array elements, is respected in either case. A process can access its local data block for a given array (red highlight). Note that `access()` returns the entire block, including the sliced elements. Any process can fetch any other processes' data using `get()` with respect to the current shape of the array (blue highlight). Note that the fetched block will not contain the sliced elements, reducing the amount of data communicated.

entire block owned by the calling process. The returned piece must be further sliced to appropriately match the current `global_slice`. The `ga.strided_get()` function on which `gain.ndarray.get()` method is based will fetch data from other processes without the remote processes' cooperation i.e. using one-sided communication. The calling process specifies the region to fetch based on the current view's shape of the array. The `global_slice` is adjusted to match the requested region using slice arithmetic and then transformed into a `ga.strided_get()` request based on the global, original shape of the array.

Recall that GA allows the contiguous, process-local data to be accessed using `ga.access()` which returns a C-contiguous `ndarray`. However, if the `gain.ndarray` is a view created by a slice, the data which is accessed will be contiguous while the view is not. Based on the distribution of the process-local data, a new slice object is created from the `global_slice` and applied to the accessed `ndarray`, effectively having applied first the `global_slice` on the global representation of the distributed array followed by a slice representing the process-local portion.

After process-local data has been accessed and sliced as needed, it must then fetch the remote data. This is again done using `ga.get()` or `ga.strided_get()` as above. Recall that one-sided communication, as opposed to two-sided communication, does not require the cooperation of the remote process(es). The local process simply fetches the corresponding array section by performing a similar transformation to the target array's `global_slice` as was done to access the local data, and then translates the modified `global_slice` into the proper arguments for `ga.get()` if the `global_slice` does not contain any step values greater than one, or `ga.strided_get()` if the `global_slice` contained step values greater than one.

One limitation of using GA is that GA does not allow negative stride values corresponding to the negative step values allowed for Python sequences and `NumPy` arrays. Supporting negative step values for `GAI/N` required special care -- when a negative step is encountered during a slice



**Figure 7:** Flattening a 2D distributed array. The block owned by a process becomes discontinuous when representing the 2D array in 1 dimension.

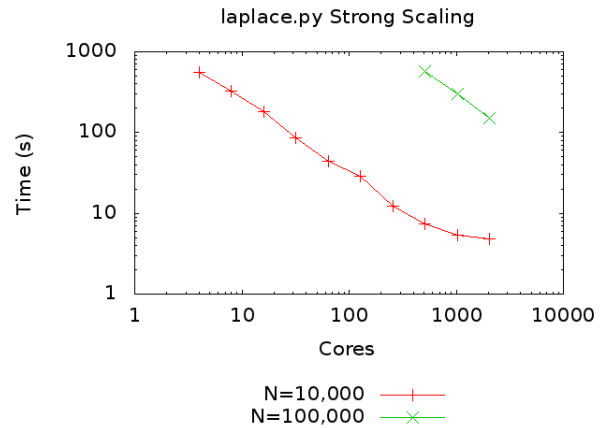
operation, the slice is applied as usual. However, prior to accessing or fetching data, the slice is inverted from a negative step to a positive step and the start and stop values are updated appropriately. The `ndarray` which results from accessing or fetching is then re-inverted, creating the correct view of the new data.

Another limitation of using GA is that the data distribution cannot be changed once an array is created. This complicates such useful functionality as `numpy.reshape()`. Currently, *GAI*<sub>N</sub> must make a copy of the array instead of a view when altering the shape of an array.

Translating the `numpy.flatiter` class, which assumes a single address space while translating an N-dimensional array into a 1D array, into a distributed form was made simpler by the use of `ga.gather()` and `ga.scatter()`. These two routines allow individual data elements within a GA to be fetched or updated. Flattening a distributed N-dimensional array which had been distributed in blocked fashion will cause the blocks to become discontinuous. Figure 7 shows how a  $6 \times 6$  array might be distributed and flattened. The `ga.get()` operation assumes the requested patch has the same number of dimensions as the array from which the patch is requested. Reshaping, in general, is made difficult by GA and its lack of a redistribute capability. However, in this case, we can use `ga.gather()` and `ga.scatter()` to fetch and update, respectively, any array elements in any order. `ga.gather()` takes a 1D array-like of indices to fetch and returns a 1D `ndarray` of values. Similarly, `ga.scatter()` takes a 1D array-like of indices to update and a 1D array-like buffer containing the values to use for the update. If a `gain.flatiter` is used as the output of an operation, following the owner-computes rule is difficult. Instead, pseudo-owners are assigned to contiguous slices of the 1D view. These pseudo-owners gather their own elements as well as the corresponding elements of the other inputs, compute the result, and scatter the result back to their own elements. This results in additional communication which is otherwise avoided by true adherence to the owner-computes rule. To avoid this inefficiency, there are some cases where operating over `gain.flatiter` instances can be optimized, for example with `gain.dot()` if the same `flatiter` is passed as both inputs, the base of the `flatiter` is instead multiplied together element-wise and then the `gain.sum()` is taken of the resulting array.

## Evaluation

The success of *GAI*<sub>N</sub> hinges on its ability to enable distributed array processing in *NumPy*, to transparently enable this processing, and most importantly to efficiently accomplish those



**Figure 8:** *laplace.py* for  $N=10,000$  and  $N=100,000$ . For  $N=10,000$ , one matrix of double-precision numbers is approximately 0.75GB. For this problem, *GAI*<sub>N</sub> scales up to 2K cores. For  $N=100,000$ , one matrix of double-precision numbers is approximately 75GB. In addition to handling this large-scale problem, *GAI*<sub>N</sub> continues to scale up to 2K cores.

goals. Performance Python [Ram08] “perfpv” was conceived to demonstrate the ways Python can be used for high performance computing. It evaluates *NumPy* and the relative performance of various Python extensions to *NumPy*. It represents an important benchmark by which any additional high performance numerical Python module should be measured. The original program *laplace.py* was modified by importing `ga.gain` in place of `numpy` and then stripping the additional test codes so that only the `gain(numpy)` test remained. The latter modification makes no impact on the timing results since all tests are run independently but was necessary because `gain` is run on multiple processes while the original test suite is serial. The program was run on the chinook supercomputer at the Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory, part of Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. Chinook consists of 2310 HP DL185 nodes with dual socket, 64-bit, Quad-core AMD 2.2 GHz Opteron processors. Each node has 32 Gbytes of memory for 4 Gbytes per core. Fast communication between the nodes is obtained using a single rail Infiniband interconnect from Voltaire (switches) and Mellanox (NICs). The system runs a version of Linux based on Red Hat Linux Advanced Server. *GAI*<sub>N</sub> utilized up to 512 nodes of the cluster, using 4 cores per node.

In Figure 8, *GAI*<sub>N</sub> is shown to scale up to 2K cores on a modest problem size. *GAI*<sub>N</sub> is also able to run on problems which are not feasible on workstations. For example, to store one 100,000x100,000 matrix of double-precision numbers requires approximately 75GB.

During the evaluation, it was noted that a lot of time was spent within global synchronization calls e.g. `ga.sync()`. The source of the calls was traced to, among other places, the vast number of temporary arrays getting created. Using GA statistics reporting, the original *laplace.py* code created 912 arrays and destroyed 910. Given this staggering figure, an array cache was created. The cache is based on a Python `dict` using the shape and type of the arrays as the keys and stores

No Cache	Depth-1 Cache	Depth-2 Cache	Depth-3 Cache
912/910	311/306	110/102	11/1

**Table 1:** How array caching affects GA array creation/destruction counts when running `laplace.py` for 100 iterations. The smaller numbers indicate better reuse of GA memory and avoidance of global synchronization calls, at the expense of using additional memory.

discarded GA instances represented by the GA integer handle. The number of GA handles stored per shape and type is referred to as the cache depth. The `gain.ndarray` instances are discarded as usual. Utilizing the cache keeps the GA memory from many allocations and deallocations but primarily avoids many synchronization calls. Three cache depths were tested, as shown in Table 1. The trade-off of using this cache is that if the arrays used by an application vary wildly in size or type, this cache will consume too much memory. Other heuristics could be developed to keep the cache from using too much memory e.g. a maximum size of the cache, remove the least used arrays, remove the least recently used. Based on the success of the GA cache, it is currently used by *GAiN*.

## Conclusion

*GAiN* succeeds in its ability to grow problem sizes beyond a single compute node. The performance of the `perfp.py` code and the ability to drop-in *GAiN* without modification of the core implementation demonstrates its utility. As described previously, *GAiN* allows certain classes of existing *NumPy* programs to run using *GAiN* with sometimes as little effort as changing the import statement, immediately taking advantage of the ability to run in a cluster environment. Once a smaller-sized program has been developed and tested on a desktop computer, it can then be run on a cluster with very little effort. *GAiN* provides the groundwork for large distributed multidimensional arrays within *NumPy*.

## Future Work

*GAiN* is not a complete implementation of the *NumPy* API nor does it represent the only way in which distributed arrays can be achieved for *NumPy*. Alternative parallelization strategies besides the owner-computes rule should be explored. GA allows for the get-compute-put model of computation where ownership of data is largely ignored, but data movement costs are increased. Task parallelism could also be explored if load balancing becomes an issue. The GA cache should be exposed as a tunable parameter. Alternative temporary array creation strategies could be developed such as lazy evaluation.

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