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Steps Towards a Gaming-Optimized Scheduler

The CPU scheduler plays a decisive role in the Linux gaming experience. By controlling which task runs first, for how long, and on which CPU, the scheduler directly impacts stutter, latency, energy efficiency, and overall performance.

This talk asks whether a gaming-optimized scheduler is feasible, and if so, what fundamental properties it should preserve. We will outline potential optimization areas specific to gaming workloads, highlight trade-offs against general-purpose scheduling goals, and explore how the scheduler might balance throughput with responsiveness under highly interactive and latency-sensitive conditions.

As a case study, we will share insights from developing LAVD, a sched_ext-based scheduler designed for gaming workloads in mind. The session aims to spark discussion on what an optimized scheduler for gaming could look like, how it might integrate with the broader Linux gaming stack, and what steps could bring us closer to that goal.

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