Engineering and Technology Journal e-ISSN: 2456-3358

Volume 11 Issue 06 June-2026, Page No.- 10651- 10657

DOI: 10.47191/etj/v11i06.41, I.F. – 8.595

A Formal C-Based Simulation Framework for Comparative Analysis of Paging and Segmentation Memory Management: Mathematical Modelling, Algorithmic Evaluation, and Fragmentation Quantification

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ABSTRACT: Memory management constitutes one of the most consequential responsibilities of a modern operating system kernel. Among the classical memory management paradigms, paging and segmentation represent two fundamentally distinct strategies for mapping logical address spaces onto physical memory. Paging partitions memory into fixed-size units called frames and pages, achieving immunity from external fragmentation at the cost of internal fragmentation. Segmentation, conversely, imposes variable-size logical units aligned with program structure, facilitating natural sharing and protection, yet inherently generating external fragmentation over time. Despite their conceptual simplicity, an empirically grounded, quantitative comparison of these two schemes under a unified, configurable simulation environment remains an underserved contribution in the operating systems literature.

This paper presents a formally designed, byte-level C simulation framework that independently models paging and segmentation within a shared configurable memory space. The simulator implements four canonical placement strategies for segmentation (First-Fit, Best-Fit, Next-Fit, and Worst-Fit), an optional swap-space extension for paging, and a memory compaction operator for segmentation. We derive closed-form mathematical models for internal and external fragmentation, validate them against simulator output, and conduct five controlled experiments: (i) page-size sensitivity analysis, (ii) placement-strategy comparison for segmentation, (iii) workload-scalability analysis, (iv) compaction effectiveness evaluation, and (v) address-translation correctness verification. Simulation results demonstrate that internal fragmentation in paging is bounded by $O(n \times P)$ where n is the number of processes and P is the page size, whereas external fragmentation in segmentation grows monotonically with allocation-deallocation cycles regardless of placement strategy, and is reduced to zero by compaction at a cost of $O(M)$ data movement where M is the total memory size. The framework is publicly reproducible and serves dual purposes as a research instrument and a pedagogical tool.

KEYWORDS: Memory Management; Paging; Segmentation; Internal Fragmentation; External Fragmentation; Memory Compaction; Fit Strategies; Address Translation; Operating Systems Simulation; C Programming.

1. INTRODUCTION

The management of physical memory in a multiprogramming environment demands that the operating system simultaneously satisfy competing goals: maximizing memory utilization, minimizing allocation latency, enforcing memory protection boundaries between processes, and supporting efficient address translation. Two of the most extensively studied memory management architectures are paging and segmentation, both of which have been foundational to processor design and operating system development for several decades [1, 2].

Paging is characterized by the partitioning of both logical and physical address spaces into equal-size units, denoted pages and frames respectively. A hardware-assisted page table maps logical page numbers to physical frame numbers, thereby permitting non-contiguous allocation of process memory and eliminating external fragmentation entirely. The principal liability of paging is internal fragmentation: the final page allocated to a process is rarely fully utilized, resulting in wasted space within that frame. The magnitude of this waste is bounded above by $P - 1$ bytes per process, where P is the page size [1].

Segmentation organizes a process's logical address space into variable-length segments that correspond semantically to program units: code segment, data segment, heap, and stack. Each segment is represented in a segment table by a (base, limit) pair. While segmentation supports fine-grained sharing, protection, and logical program organization, it introduces external fragmentation as segments of different sizes are allocated and deallocated over time, leaving unusable gaps in the free memory region [2, 3].

Although these two paradigms are thoroughly covered in textbooks [1, 2, 3], rigorous empirical comparisons under controlled, reproducible simulation conditions remain relatively sparse. Existing educational simulators typically lack quantifiable fragmentation metrics, do not expose all four canonical placement strategies simultaneously, and seldom model compaction or swap-space extensions. Furthermore, many tools do not provide a byte-level memory ownership map that allows precise, cycle-accurate measurement of fragmentation.

This work addresses these gaps by presenting a formally structured, configurable C simulation framework with the following primary contributions:

- A byte-level physical memory model shared by paging and segmentation modules, enabling directly comparable fragmentation measurements.
- Closed-form mathematical models for internal fragmentation (paging) and external fragmentation

(segmentation), validated against empirical simulator output.

- Four segmentation placement strategies (First-Fit, Best-Fit, Next-Fit, Worst-Fit) implemented and benchmarked under identical workloads.
- An in-place memory compaction operator whose cost is formally characterized.
- An optional swap-space extension for paging with capacity constraints.
- Five reproducible controlled experiments producing quantitative performance data.
- A set of patent claims describing the novel aspects of the simulation architecture.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Silberschatz, Galvin, and Gagne [1] provide the canonical treatment of paging and segmentation in modern operating systems curricula. They describe paging as an effective solution to external fragmentation while acknowledging the unavoidable internal fragmentation inherent to fixed-size allocation. Tanenbaum and Bos [2] argue that segmentation constitutes the more natural model for program structure, offering fine-grained sharing and protection at the cost of external fragmentation susceptibility. Stallings [3] offers a complementary perspective emphasizing system internals and performance design.

In the domain of educational simulation, several tools have been proposed. Madnick and Donovan [4] introduced early formalisms for virtual memory simulation. Liu and Layland [5] contributed analytical models for scheduling and resource allocation that have been extended to memory management contexts. More recently, web-based simulators such as those accompanying Silberschatz's textbook provide visual page-table walkthroughs but lack quantitative fragmentation output, configurable fit strategies, and compaction modeling.

Research into placement algorithms for dynamic memory allocation has been extensive. Knuth [6] provides the classical analysis demonstrating that First-Fit and Best-Fit exhibit similar long-run external fragmentation characteristics, while Worst-Fit tends to produce larger but more uniformly distributed holes. Wilson et al. [7] extended this analysis to modern heap allocators, showing that fragmentation behavior is highly workload-dependent. Our simulation corroborates these findings in an operating-system segmentation context.

Memory compaction has been studied theoretically by Randell [8] and in practice by garbage-collected runtime systems. The cost of compaction is widely understood to be linear in the amount of live data, consistent with our formal characterization in Section 4. To our knowledge, no prior work presents a unified, byte-level C simulation that simultaneously benchmarks all four fit strategies, models compaction, incorporates swap-space, and derives formal fragmentation bounds, which constitutes the primary novelty of the present contribution.

3. MATHEMATICAL MODELS AND DEFINITIONS

3.1 System Notation

Let M denote total physical memory size in bytes, P denote the fixed page size in bytes, and $F = \lfloor M/P \rfloor$ denote the total number of physical frames. For a system with n concurrently allocated processes, let s_i denote the logical size in bytes of process i ($1 \le i \le n$).

3.2 Paging: Address Translation Model

In the paging model, a logical address λ is decomposed into a page number p and an intra-page offset d:

$$\mathbf{p = \lfloor \lambda / P \rfloor, d = \lambda \bmod P}$$

Given a page table PT_i for process i, the physical frame $f = PT_i[p]$ is obtained via direct table lookup. The corresponding physical address φ is computed as:

$$\mathbf{\varphi = f \times P + d, \text{ where } 0 \le d < P \text{ and } f \in \{0, 1, ..., F-1\}}$$

The translation is valid if and only if $p < PT_i$.length and $PT_i[p] \neq \perp$ (i.e., the page is resident in physical memory rather than swapped to secondary storage).

3.3 Paging: Internal Fragmentation Model

For process i with logical size s_i, the number of pages required is:

$$\mathbf{k_i = \lceil s_i / P \rceil = \lfloor (s_i + P - 1) / P \rfloor}$$

The internal fragmentation incurred by process i is the unused space in its last allocated page:

$$\mathbf{IF_i = k_i \times P - s_i}$$

Note that $0 \le IF_i \le P - 1$ for any s_i. The total system-wide internal fragmentation across n allocated processes is:

$$\mathbf{IF\_total = \Sigma(i=1 \text{ to } n)\ IF_i = \Sigma(i=1 \text{ to } n)\ (\lceil s_i/P \rceil \times P - s_i)}$$

The expected internal fragmentation per process, assuming s_i is uniformly distributed over [1, P], is:

$$\mathbf{E[IF_i] = (P - 1) / 2}$$

This result establishes that larger page sizes yield proportionally greater expected internal fragmentation per process, creating a fundamental design tradeoff between translation efficiency (fewer page table entries with larger pages) and memory utilization (less internal waste with smaller pages).

3.4 Segmentation: Address Translation Model

In the segmentation model, each segment j is described by a ($base_j$, $limit_j$) pair stored in the segment table. A logical address λ consists of a segment selector s and a byte offset d. The physical address is:

$$\mathbf{\varphi = base\_s + d, \text{ valid iff } 0 \le d < limit\_s}$$

Any access with $d \ge limit_s$ triggers a segmentation fault (protection violation), enforcing logical isolation between segments.

3.5 Segmentation: External Fragmentation Model

Let $F^d = \{b_1, b_2, ..., b\_r\}$ denote the set of r disjoint free blocks of sizes $b_1 \ge b_2 \ge ... \ge b\_r$ (sorted descending). The total free memory is:

$$\mathbf{T\_free = \Sigma(j=1 \text{ to } r)\ b\_j}$$

External fragmentation EF is defined as the total free memory that cannot be used because no single contiguous block is large enough to satisfy an incoming allocation request of size s_req:

$$\mathbf{EF = T\_free - max(b_1, b_2, ..., b\_r) = T\_free - b_1}$$

This definition formalizes the intuition that external fragmentation measures the "wasted" free memory: memory that is free in aggregate but unusable due to discontinuity. Note that EF = 0 if and only if all free memory is contiguous (i.e., r = 1 or all allocated segments are contiguous).

3.6 Compaction Cost Model

Compaction resolves external fragmentation by relocating all allocated segments toward the low end of the address space. Let the set of currently allocated segments be {S_1, S_2, ..., S_m} with bases $\beta_1 \le \beta_2 \le ... \le \beta\_m$ and sizes $\sigma_1, \sigma_2, ..., \sigma\_m$. After compaction, segment S_i is relocated to new base β_j':

$$\mathbf{\beta_j' = \Sigma(j=1 \text{ to } i-1)\ \sigma\_j,\ \beta_1' = 0}$$

The total number of bytes moved during compaction is:

$$\mathbf{C\_bytes = \Sigma(i=1 \text{ to } m)\ |\beta_i - \beta_i'|}$$

In the worst case (all segments displaced maximally), C_bytes = O(M) where M is total memory size. After compaction, EF = 0 by construction, since all free memory coalesces into a single contiguous block at the high end of the address space.

3.7 Swap-Space Extension

When swap is enabled and the number of free frames f_free is insufficient to accommodate k pages of a new process (k > f_free), the deficit is resolved by placing (k − f_free) pages into the swap area of capacity C_swap pages. The allocation succeeds if and only if:

Algorithm 1. Paging allocation with optional swap-space support.

Algorithm 1: PAGING-ALLOCATE (s_req, P, FrameTable, PageTable, SwapEnabled)

Input: s_req (bytes), page size P, free frame table, swap capacity C_swap

Output: Process ID pid on success; -1 on failure

1. k ← ⌈s_req / P⌉ // pages required
2. f_free ← |{f ∈ FrameTable : f.free = true}| // count free frames
3. if f_free < k then
4. if NOT SwapEnabled then return -1 // fail: no swap
5. if swap_used + (k - f_free) > C_swap then return -1 //swap full
6. pid ← next available process slot
7. assigned ← 0; swapped ← 0
8. for each frame f in FrameTable while assigned < k:
9. if f.free then
10. PageTable[pid][assigned] ← f.id
11. MemoryMap[f.id*P .. f.id*P+P-1] ← pid
12. f.free ← false; assigned ← assigned + 1
13. for i ← assigned to k-1:
14. PageTable[pid][i] ← ⊥ (swapped); swapped ← swapped + 1
15. swap_used ← swap_used + swapped
16. IF_pid ← k*P - s_req // internal fragmentation
17. return pid

Complexity: O(F) time, O(k) space for page table

Algorithm 2: Segmentation Allocation (Best-Fit)

The Best-Fit strategy scans all free blocks and selects the smallest block that is no smaller than the requested size, minimizing residual hole size.

Algorithm 2: SEG-ALLOCATE-BEST-FIT(pid, s_req, MemoryMap)

Input: pid, segment size s_req, byte-level MemoryMap[0..M-1]

Output: seg_id on success; -1 on failure

1. best_start ← -1; best_len ← ∞
2. run_start ← -1; run_len ← 0
3. for i ← 0 to M-1:
4. if MemoryMap[i] = FREE then
5. if run_start = -1 then run_start ← i
6. run_len ← run_len + 1
7. else:
8. if run_len ≥ s_req AND run_len < best_len then
9. best_start ← run_start; best_len ← run_len
10. run_start ← -1; run_len ← 0
11. // handle tail run
12. if run_len ≥ s_req AND run_len < best_len then best_start ←run_start
13. if best_start = -1 then return -1 // allocation failure
14. seg_id ← next_seg_id++; SegTable[seg_id] ← (pid, best_start, s_req)
15. MemoryMap[best_start .. best_start+s_req-1] ← seg_id
16. EF ← T_free - max_free_block // update fragmentation metric
17. return seg_id

Complexity: O(M) time, O(1) additional space

Algorithm 2. Segmentation allocation using Best-Fit placement.

Algorithm 3: Memory Compaction

Compaction relocates all live segments to the low end of the address space, eliminating all holes and thereby zeroing external fragmentation.

Algorithm 3: COMPACT (SegTable, MemoryMap, M)

Input: SegTable (allocated segments), MemoryMap[0..M-1]

Output: Updated SegTable and MemoryMap; total bytes moved

1. L ← sort(SegTable.allocated, key=base) // stable sort by base address
2. NewMap[0..M-1] ← FREE
3. write_ptr ← 0; bytes_moved ← 0
4. for each segment S in L:
5. bytes_moved ← bytes_moved + |S.base - write_ptr|
6. NewMap[write_ptr .. write_ptr+S.limit-1] ← S.seg_id
7. S.base ← write_ptr // update segment table
8. write_ptr ← write_ptr + S.limit
9. MemoryMap ← NewMap
10. EF ← 0 // guaranteed post-compaction
11. return bytes_moved

Complexity: O(m log m + M) time, O(M) space for NewMap

Algorithm 3. Memory compaction with O(M) byte movement cost.

5. SIMULATION ARCHITECTURE AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 Physical Memory Model

The simulator represents physical memory as a byte-level integer array MemoryMap[0..M−1] where each element encodes the owner of that byte: zero denotes free, a positive integer in the range [1, MAX_SEGMENTS) denotes ownership by segment seg_id, and values ≥ 10^6 encode paging frame ownership by process identifier. This unified representation allows both paging and segmentation to operate within the same physical address space model,

swap_used + (k - f_free) ≤ C_swap

Pages residing in swap are marked in the page table with a sentinel value (⊥), and swap_used is incremented accordingly. Upon process deallocation, swap pages are reclaimed symmetrically.

4. ALGORITHMIC DESIGN AND PSEUDOCODE

Algorithm 1: Paging Allocation

The paging allocation procedure maps a logical process of size s_req bytes onto available physical frames, optionally spilling excess pages into swap storage.

enabling directly comparable utilization and fragmentation measurements.

The memory size M and page size P are configurable at runtime without requiring recompilation. A reinitialisation routine clears all data structures - the frame table, segment table, page tables, and MemoryMap - to a known-clean state, ensuring that batch experiments are independent of one another.

5.2 Paging Module

The paging module maintains a frame table FrameTable[0..F−1] where each entry is a binary in-use flag. For each allocated process, a per-process page table records the frame index assigned to each logical page. Frame allocation is performed by a sequential scan of the frame table, assigning the next available free frame to each logical page in order. This corresponds to a First-Fit policy at the frame granularity, which is standard in operating system practice. Internal fragmentation is computed after each allocation as $k \times P - s\_req$, where $k = \lceil s\_req/P \rceil$.

5.3 Segmentation Module

The segmentation module supports four placement strategies, selectable at runtime:

- First-Fit: scans MemoryMap from address 0 and returns the first contiguous free run of length ≥ s_req. Complexity: O(M).
- Best-Fit: scans the entire MemoryMap and selects the smallest qualifying free run. Complexity: O(M).
- Next-Fit: maintains a persistent pointer that advances from the last allocation point, scanning circularly. Complexity: O(M) worst case, O(1) amortized for sequential allocations.
- Worst-Fit: selects the largest qualifying free run, intending to leave the largest possible residual hole. Complexity: O(M).

External fragmentation is computed after each allocation or deallocation as T_free − max_free_block, as formalized in Section 3.5.

5.4 Experimental Configuration

All experiments use a deterministic pseudo-random seed (seed = 42 or 99 as specified) to ensure full reproducibility. Process sizes are drawn from a uniform distribution over [s_min, s_max]. The memory size is fixed at M = 65,536 bytes (64 KB) unless otherwise noted. Five controlled experiments are conducted: (E1) page-size sensitivity, (E2) placement-strategy comparison, (E3) workload-scalability analysis, (E4) compaction effectiveness, and (E5) address-translation validation.

6. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Experiment 1: Page-Size Sensitivity Analysis

Table 1 reports the effect of varying page size on internal fragmentation, memory utilization, and allocation success rate for 30 processes with sizes uniformly distributed over [512, 8192] bytes in a 64 KB memory.

Table 1. Paging experiment: effect of page size on internal fragmentation and memory utilization (M = 64 KB, n = 30 processes, s ~ U [512, 8192] bytes, seed = 42).

Page Size (bytes)	Processes	Internal Frag. (bytes)	Utilization (%)	Alloc. Success (%)
256	30	215	98.0	53.3
512	30	116	100.0	50.0
1024	30	471	100.0	50.0
2048	30	1023	100.0	43.3
4096	30	1049	100.0	33.3

These results confirm the mathematical model of Section 3.3: internal fragmentation increases monotonically with page size. For P = 256 bytes, IF_total = 215 bytes (≈1% of allocated memory). For P = 4096 bytes, IF_total = 1049 bytes (≈4%). Simultaneously, allocation success rate declines with larger page sizes because each process consumes more frames (rounding up), exhausting the frame pool sooner. The 512-byte page size achieves the optimal fragmentation-utilization tradeoff in this workload, yielding IF_total = 116 bytes with 100% utilization.

Experiment 2: Placement Strategy Comparison

Table 2 compares the four placement strategies for segmentation under identical workloads (40 processes, sizes in [512, 4096] bytes, M = 64 KB). After all allocations, alternating segments (even-indexed) are deallocated to induce external fragmentation.

Table 2. Segmentation experiment: placement strategy comparison (M = 64 KB, n = 40, s ~ U[512, 4096] bytes, seed = 42; alternating deallocation applied).

Strategy	Processes	External Frag. (bytes)	Util. (%)	Success(%)
First-Fit	40	25,606	55.5	72.5
Best-Fit	40	25,606	55.5	72.5
Next-Fit	40	25,606	55.5	72.5
Worst-Fit	40	25,606	55.5	72.5

Under this workload, all four strategies produce identical external fragmentation (25,606 bytes) and utilization (55.5%). This finding aligns with the theoretical analysis of Knuth [6] and Wilson et al. [7]: placement strategy primarily influences the spatial distribution of holes rather than their total volume, when the workload is fixed. The total external fragmentation is determined primarily by the allocation-deallocation pattern rather than the placement policy. This result has practical implications: for long-running systems with mixed allocation patterns, compaction (Algorithm 3) is a more reliable remedy than strategy selection.

Experiment 3: Workload Scalability Analysis

Table 3 presents internal fragmentation (paging, P = 1024 bytes) and external fragmentation (segmentation, First-Fit) as a function of the number of concurrently allocated processes.

Table 3. Workload scalability: paging internal fragmentation vs. segmentation external fragmentation (M = 64 KB, P = 1024 bytes, s ~ U[512, 4096] bytes, seed = 99; alternating deallocation for segmentation).

No. of Processes	Paging: Internal Frag. (bytes)	Segmentation: External Frag. (bytes)
5	927	5,795

10	502	13,477
20	41	23,357
30	341	31,959
40	341	34,694
50	341	34,694

Paging internal fragmentation is non-monotonic and bounded, stabilizing at 341 bytes once the frame pool is exhausted and subsequent requests are rejected. This is consistent with the O(n × P) bound: as the system approaches full allocation, no new processes are admitted, so fragmentation ceases to accumulate. Segmentation external fragmentation grows monotonically from 5,795 bytes at 5 processes to 34,694 bytes at 50 processes, demonstrating the fundamental accumulation problem of variable-size allocation. At 40 and 50 processes the fragmentation saturates because memory is nearly full and further deallocations do not create new holes.

Experiment 4: Compaction Effectiveness

Table 4 quantifies the effect of Algorithm 3 (Compaction) on external fragmentation in a 64 KB memory with 20 segments allocated and every third segment deallocated.

Table 4. Compaction experiment: before and after state (M = 64 KB, 20 segments, every third deallocated; bytes moved = 96,632).

State	Free Bytes	Largest Block (bytes)	External Frag. (bytes)
Before Compaction	33,926	18,410	15,516
After Compaction	33,926	33,926	0

Compaction reduces external fragmentation from 15,516 bytes to exactly zero, confirming the formal guarantee of Algorithm 3 (EF = 0 post-compaction). The largest free block increases from 18,410 bytes (54.3% of total free) to 33,926 bytes (100% of total free), restoring full contiguity. The cost is 96,632 bytes moved, which at M = 64 KB represents a data-movement factor of approximately 1.47× the total memory size, consistent with the O(M) complexity characterization. This experiment demonstrates that compaction is an effective but expensive remedy for external fragmentation, motivating its selective deployment in practice.

Experiment 5: Address Translation Correctness

Table 5 validates the address translation formulas of Sections 3.2 and 3.4 against simulator output for a paging process of 3,500 bytes (P = 1024 bytes, yielding k = 4 pages and IF = 596 bytes).

Table 5. Paging address translation validation (s_req = 3,500 bytes, P = 1,024 bytes, k = 4 pages, IF = 596 bytes). Physical address = Frame × P + Offset.

Logical Addr. (hex)	Page No.	Offset (dec)	Frame No.	Physical Addr. (hex)	Translation Valid
0x0000	0	0	0	0x0000	YES
0x03E8	0	1,000	0	0x03E8	YES
0x07D0	1	976	1	0x07D0	YES
0x0BB8	2	952	2	0x0BB8	YES

All four translations produce correct physical addresses consistent with the formula $\varphi = f \times P + d$. The internal fragmentation of 596 bytes is verified: $4 \times 1024 - 3500 = 596$, confirming the model. For segmentation (base = 0, limit = 2000), offsets 0, 500, 1000, and 1500 all translated correctly with the formula $\varphi = \text{base} + d = d$, and all validated as within-limit ($d < 2000$).

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 Comparative Analysis Summary

Table 6 summarizes the qualitative and quantitative tradeoffs between paging and segmentation as revealed by the simulation experiments.

Table 6. Comparative summary of paging and segmentation across key dimensions.

Dimension	Paging	Segmentation
Allocation unit	Fixed (P bytes)	Variable (s_req bytes)
Internal fragmentation	Present: $0 \le IF_i \le P-1$	Absent (exact fit)
External fragmentation	Absent (frames noncontig.)	Present: grows with cycles
Address translation	PT lookup: O(1) with TLB	Segment table: O(1)
Logical organisation	Weak (page boundaries arbitrary)	Strong (semantic units)
Sharing/protection	Page-granular	Segment-granular (finer)
Compaction needed?	No	Yes (after cycling)
Failure mode	Frame exhaustion	Fragmented free space
Remedy	Swap or page replacement	Compaction (O(M) cost)

7.2 Implications for System Design

The simulation results collectively support several practical design insights. First, the choice of page size is a critical tuning parameter: smaller pages reduce internal fragmentation and improve utilization but increase page table size and TLB pressure. Larger pages improve TLB hit rates and reduce table overhead but waste memory. Modern operating systems such as Linux support huge pages (2 MB, 1 GB) precisely to manage this tradeoff for large-memory workloads.

Second, placement strategy has minimal impact on long-term external fragmentation when the workload is adversarial (alternating allocation-deallocation). This finding suggests that compaction budget, rather than strategy selection, should be the primary design lever for segmentation systems. In garbage-collected runtimes, this manifests as generational collectors that compact the young generation frequently, preventing fragmentation accumulation.

Third, the O(M) compaction cost establishes a clear performance penalty that must be amortized across the fragmentation reduction benefit. In systems where process relocation is expensive (e.g., requires updating all pointer-

containing registers), compaction may be prohibitive except during idle periods, motivating hybrid schemes such as paged segmentation.

7.3 Pedagogical Value

The simulator has been designed as a teaching instrument as well as a research tool. The interactive command-line interface allows students to observe fragmentation effects in real time, experiment with fit strategies, trigger compaction, and observe address translation step by step. The byte-level memory snapshot ('.' = free, '#' = occupied) provides an intuitive visual representation of memory state that complements the quantitative metrics. The deterministic batch experiment mode (Algorithm 4, not detailed here for brevity) supports controlled comparative studies, making the framework suitable for laboratory assignments in operating systems courses.

9. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This paper has presented a formally grounded, byte-level C simulation framework for the comparative analysis of paging and segmentation memory management strategies. The framework contributes closed-form mathematical models for internal and external fragmentation, formally characterized algorithms for paging allocation, segmentation placement, and memory compaction, and five controlled experiments that validate theoretical predictions against empirical simulator output.

Key findings are as follows. Internal fragmentation in paging is bounded by O(n×P) and depends sensitively on the choice of page size: a 16-fold increase in page size (256 to 4096 bytes) produces a 4.9-fold increase in total internal fragmentation while reducing allocation success rates. External fragmentation in segmentation accumulates monotonically with allocation-deallocation cycles and is independent of the choice of placement strategy under the workloads tested, confirming Knuth's classical result. Compaction eliminates external fragmentation entirely at an O(M) data-movement cost, reducing EF from 15,516 bytes to zero in the representative experiment while moving 96,632 bytes. Address translation formulas are validated to be bit-exact for all tested logical addresses.

Future work will extend the simulator in the following directions:

- Page replacement algorithms (LRU, FIFO, Optimal, Clock) to model eviction policies under memory pressure.
- Paged segmentation and inverted page tables to represent hybrid architectures used in x86-64 processors.
- Translation Lookaside Buffer (TLB) simulation with configurable associativity and replacement policy, enabling address-translation latency modeling.
- Memory compaction cost modeling with explicit I/O bandwidth constraints, enabling realistic overhead estimation.
- Multi-level page tables to support larger logical address spaces with sparse allocation patterns.
- Integration with a process scheduling simulator to study the interaction between CPU scheduling and memory allocation decisions.

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APPENDIX: SELECTED SOURCE CODE

A.1 External Fragmentation Measurement

The following C function computes external fragmentation in O(M) time using a single linear scan of the byte-level memory map:

```
int find_largest_free_block()
{
   int max_block = 0, cur = 0;
   for (int i = 0; i < MEMORY_SIZE; ++i)
   {

      if (memory_map[i] == OWNER_FREE)
      {

         cur++;

         if (cur > max_block)
            max_block = cur;
      }
      else
      {
         cur = 0;
      }
   }

   return max_block;
}

/* External fragmentation = total_free - largest_free_block */

int external_frag = total_free_bytes() - find_largest_free_block();
```

Code Listing 1. External fragmentation computation (O(M) single-pass scan).

A.2 Internal Fragmentation Computation

```
long paging_internal_fragmentation_total()
{

   long tot = 0;

   for (int i = 0; i < MAX_PROCS; ++i)
   {

      if (paging_processes[i].pid != -1 &&

         paging_processes[i].page_to_frame != NULL)
      {

         int pages = paging_processes[i].num_pages;

         int req = paging_processes[i].size_bytes;

         /*                              IF_i = ceil(s_i/P)*P - s_i */

         tot += (long)pages * PAGE_SIZE - req;
      }
   }

   return tot;
}
```

Code Listing 2. Aggregate internal fragmentation computation across all allocated processes.