Cache Memories

Introduction to Computer Systems
14th Lecture, Nov. 4, 2015.

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Today

- **Cache memory organization and operation**
- **Performance impact of caches**
  - The memory mountain
  - Rearranging loops to improve spatial locality
  - Using blocking to improve temporal locality

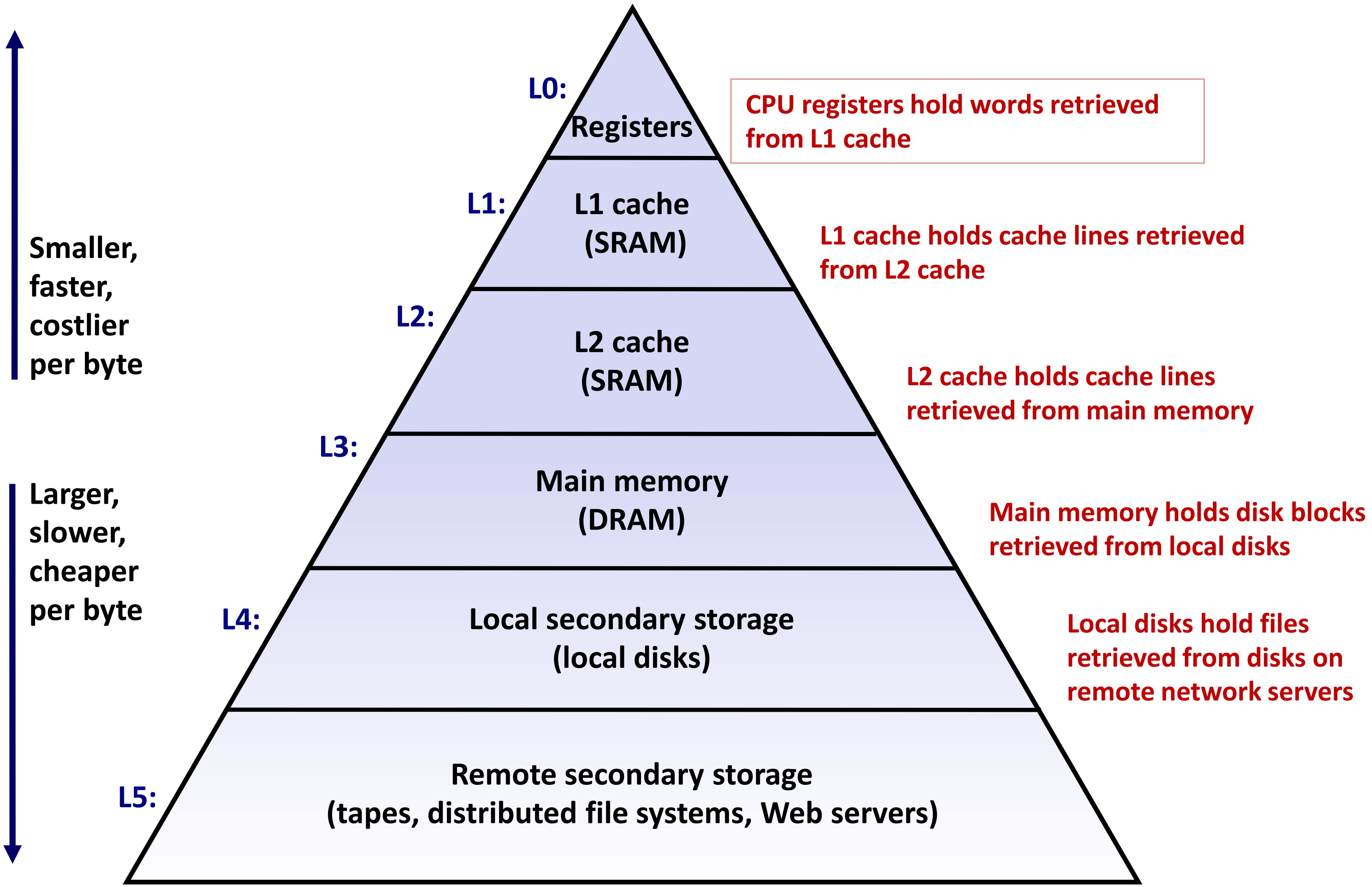
Memory Hierarchies

- **Some fundamental and enduring properties of hardware and software:**
  - Fast storage technologies cost more per byte, have less capacity, and require more power (heat!).
  - The gap between CPU and main memory speed is widening.
  - Well-written programs tend to exhibit good locality.

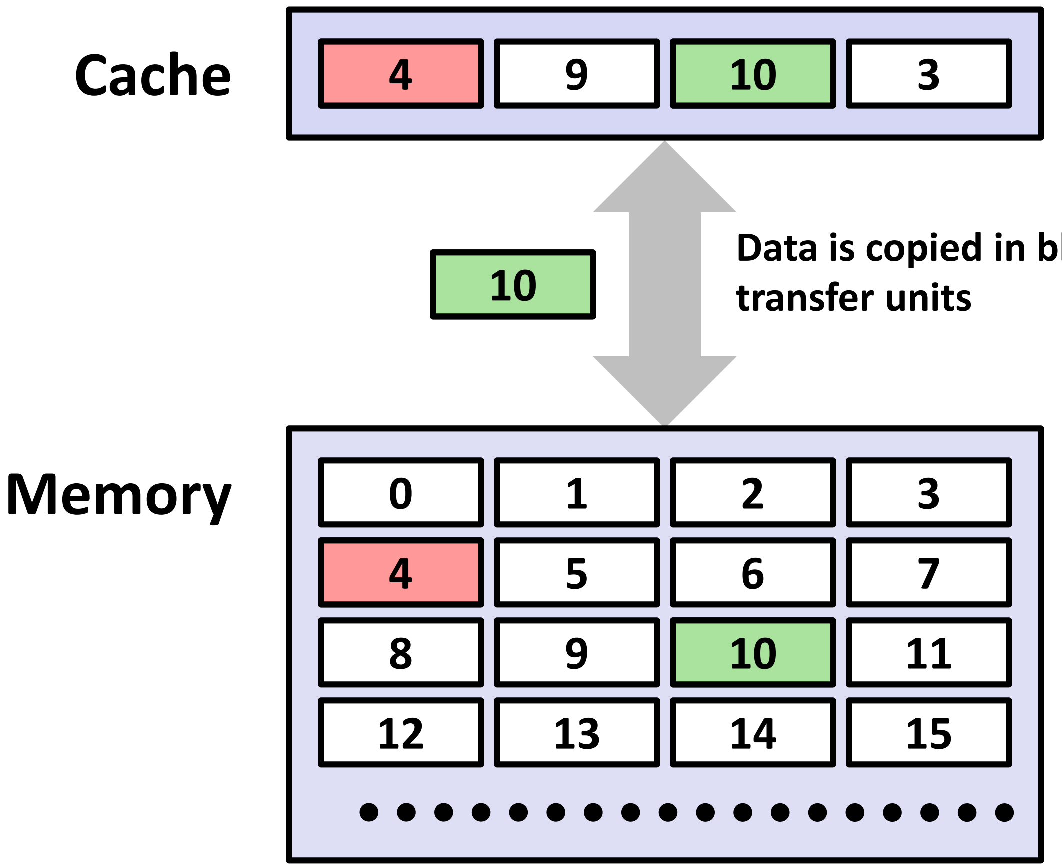
- **These fundamental properties complement each other beautifully.**

- **They suggest an approach for organizing memory and storage systems known as a memory hierarchy.**

An Example Memory Hierarchy



General Cache Concept



Smaller, faster, more expensive memory caches a subset of the blocks

Data is copied in block-sized transfer units

Larger, slower, cheaper memory viewed as partitioned into “blocks”

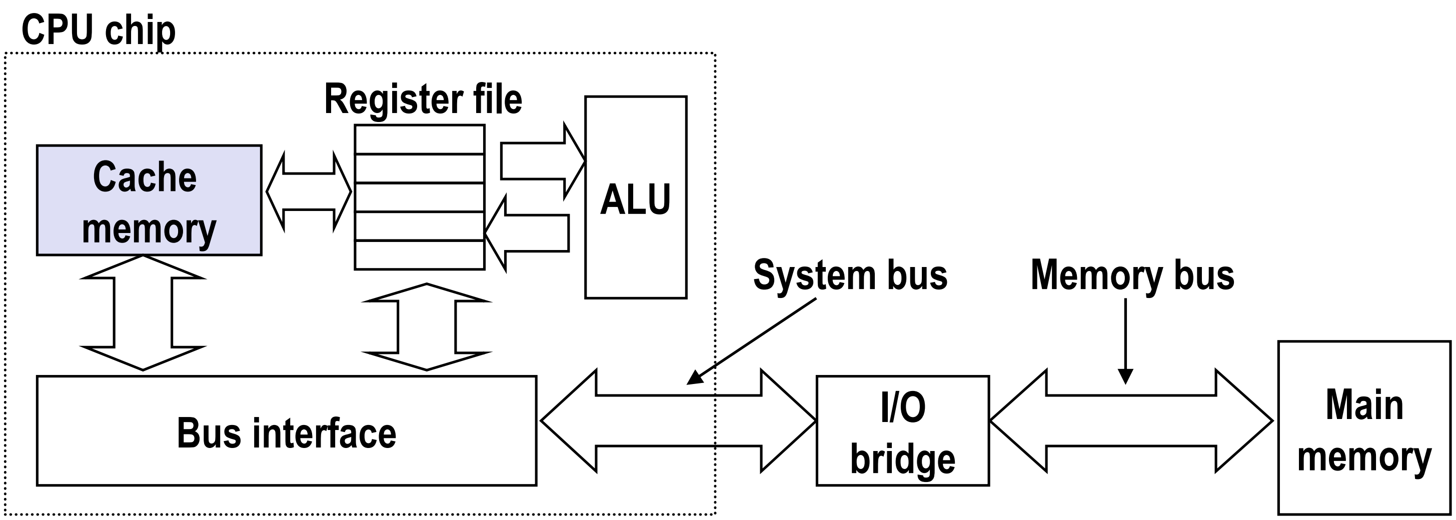
Many types of caches

- **Examples**
  - Hardware: L1, L2, L3 cache memories, TLBs, …
  - Software: Virtual memory, FS buffers, Web browser caches, …

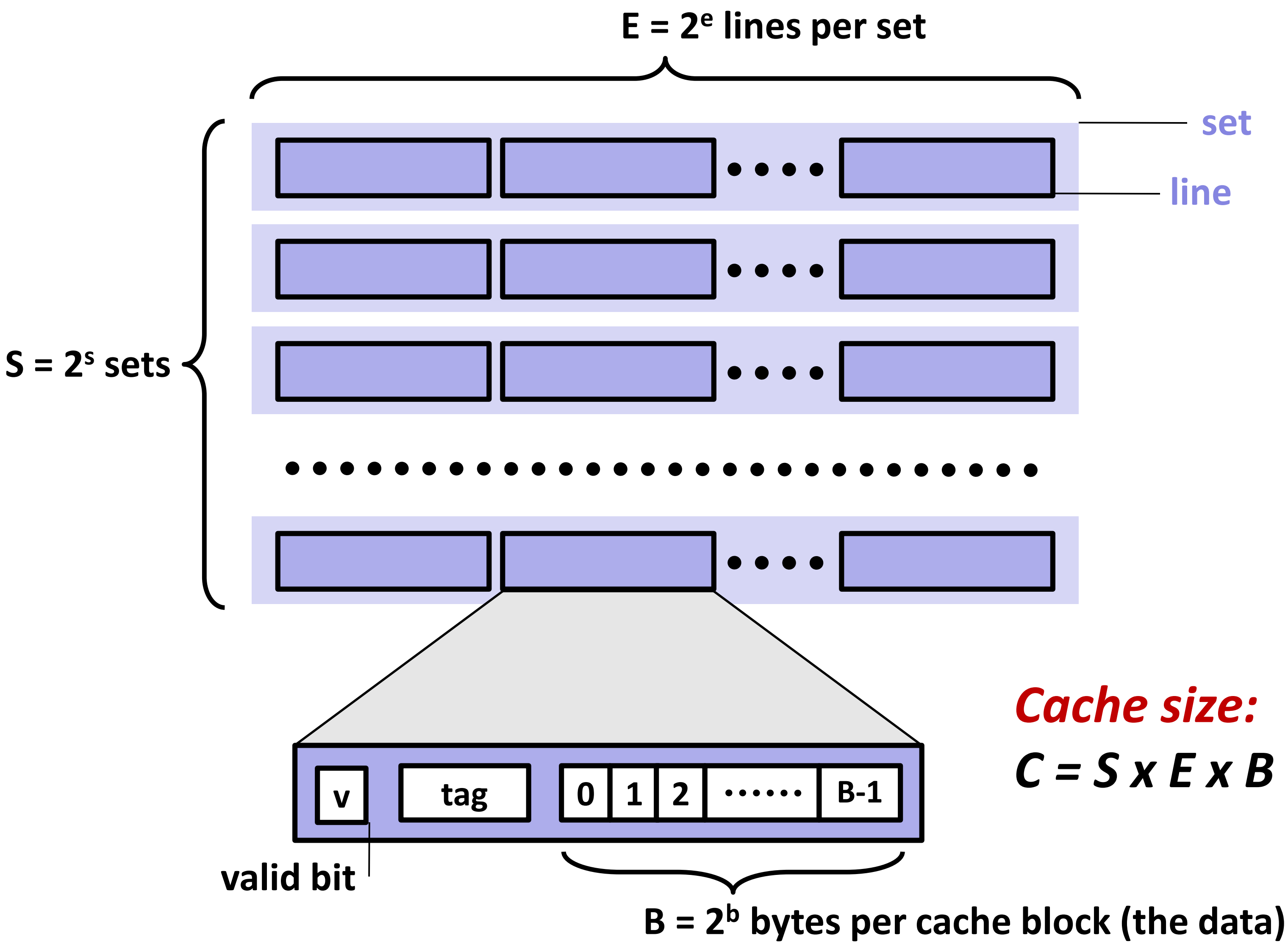
- **Hardware cache memories**
  - Significant impact on program performance
  - Topic of today’s lecture

Cache Memories

- Cache memories are small, fast SRAM-based memories managed automatically in hardware
  - Hold frequently accessed blocks of main memory
- CPU looks first for data in cache, then in main memory
- Typical system structure:



General Cache Organization (S, E, B)

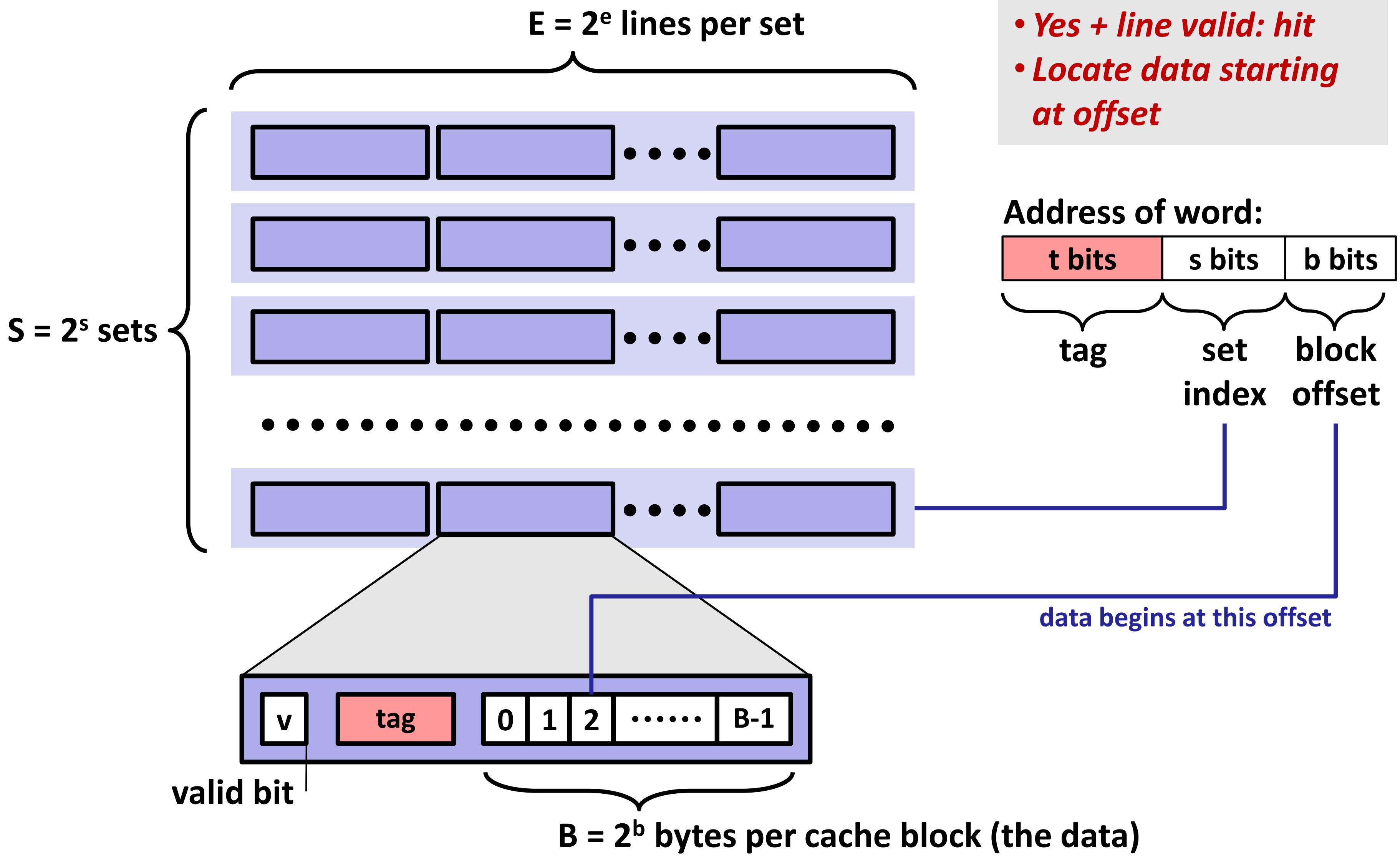


Cache size:

C = S x E x B data bytes

Cache Read

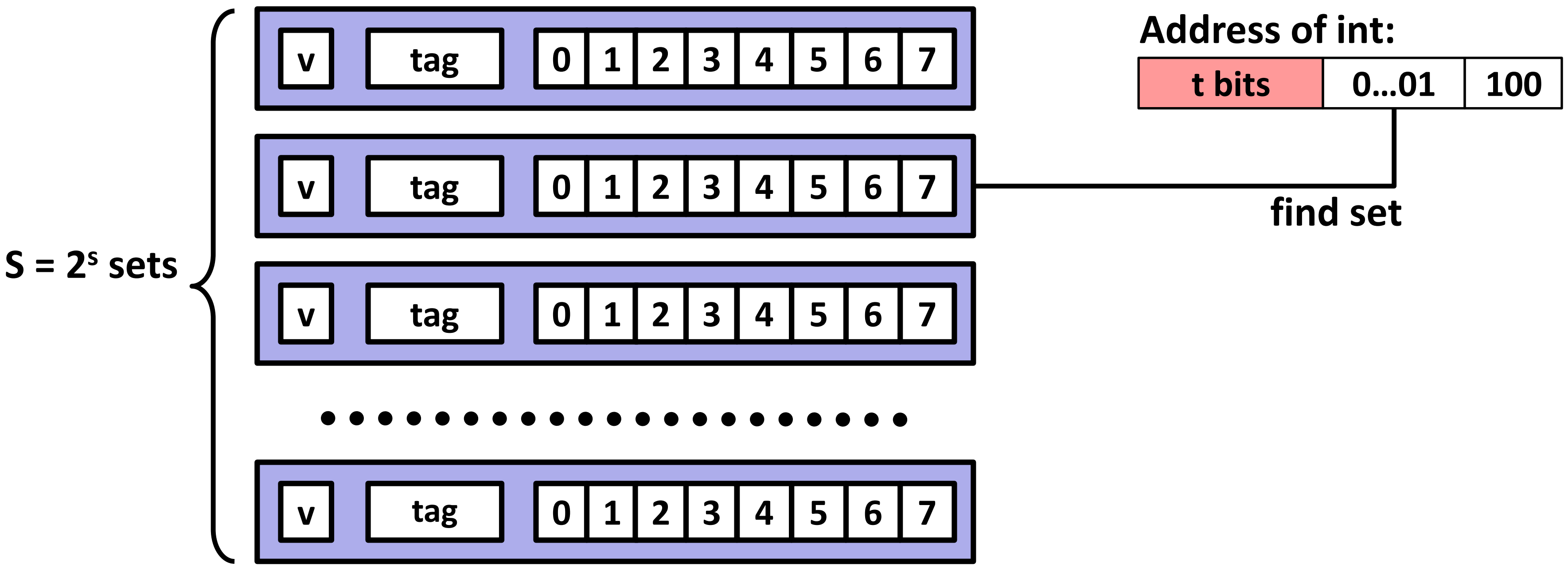
- *Locate set*
- *Check if any line in set has matching tag*
- *Yes + line valid: hit*
- *Locate data starting at offset*



Example: Direct Mapped Cache (E = 1)

Direct mapped: One line per set

Assume: cache block size 8 bytes



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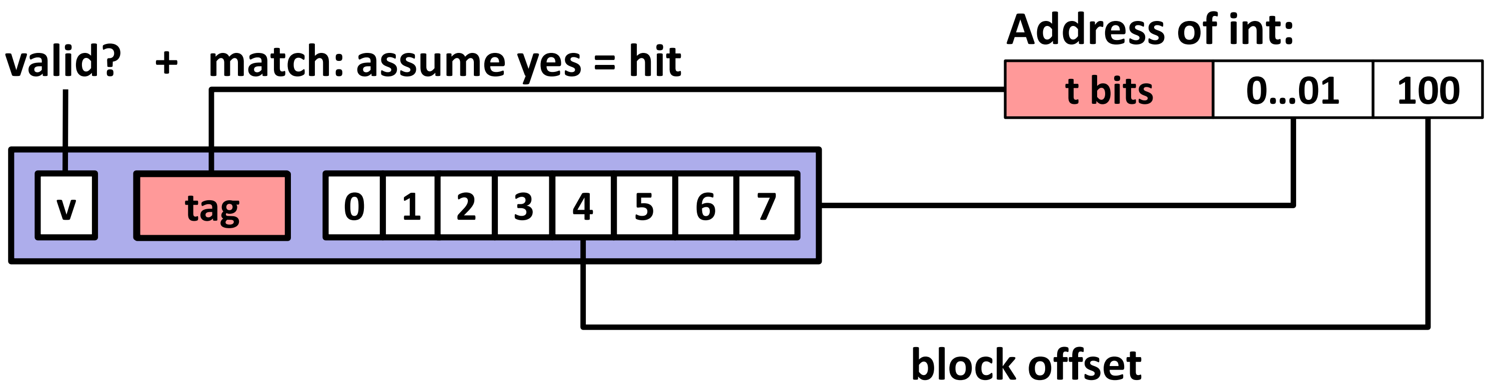

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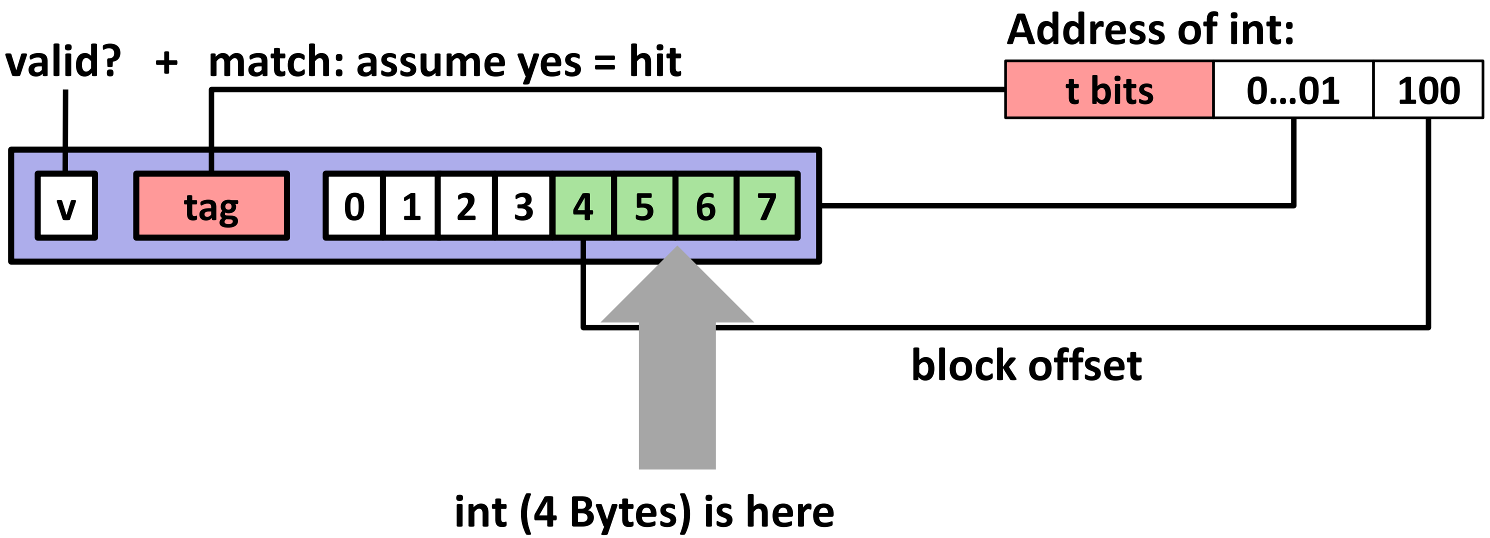


If tag doesn't match: old line is evicted and replaced

Direct-Mapped Cache Simulation

t=1	s=2	b=1
x	xx	x

M=16 bytes (4-bit addresses), B=2 bytes/block,
S=4 sets, E=1 Blocks/set

Address trace (reads, one byte per read):

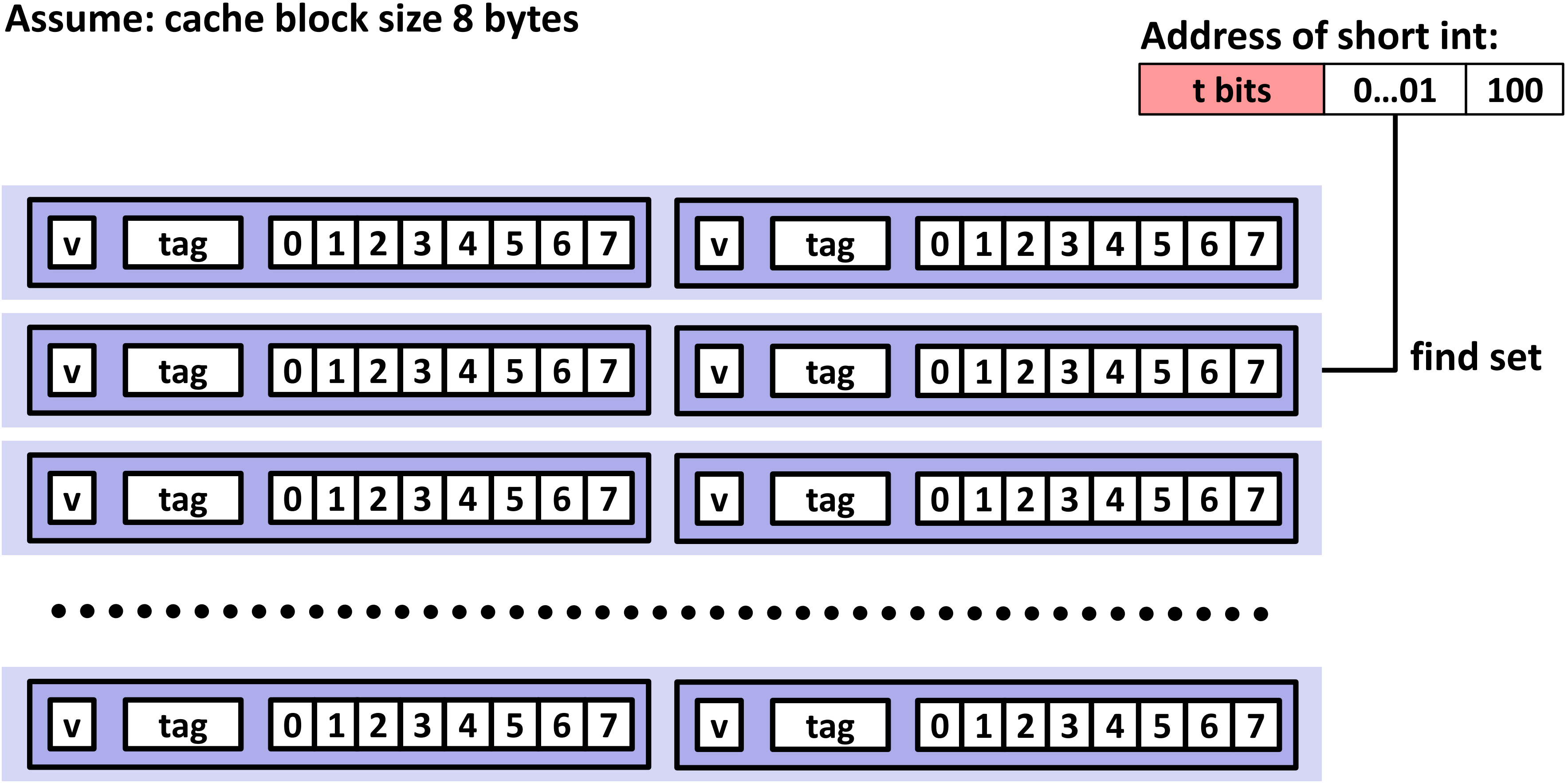
0	**$[0000_2]$,**	miss
1	**$[0001_2]$,**	hit
7	**$[0111_2]$,**	miss
8	**$[1000_2]$,**	miss
0	**$[0000_2]$**	miss

	v	Tag	Block
Set 0	1	0	M[0-1]
Set 1			
Set 2			
Set 3	1	0	M[6-7]

E-way Set Associative Cache (Here: E = 2)

E = 2: Two lines per set

Assume: cache block size 8 bytes



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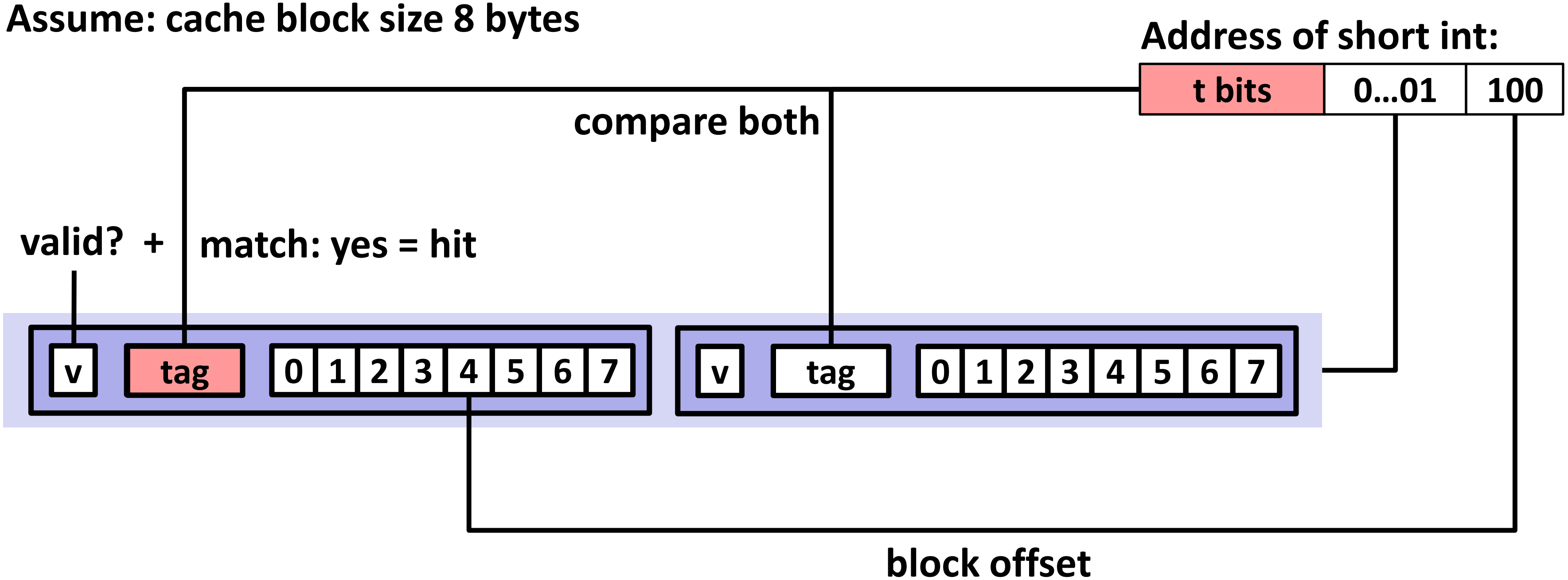

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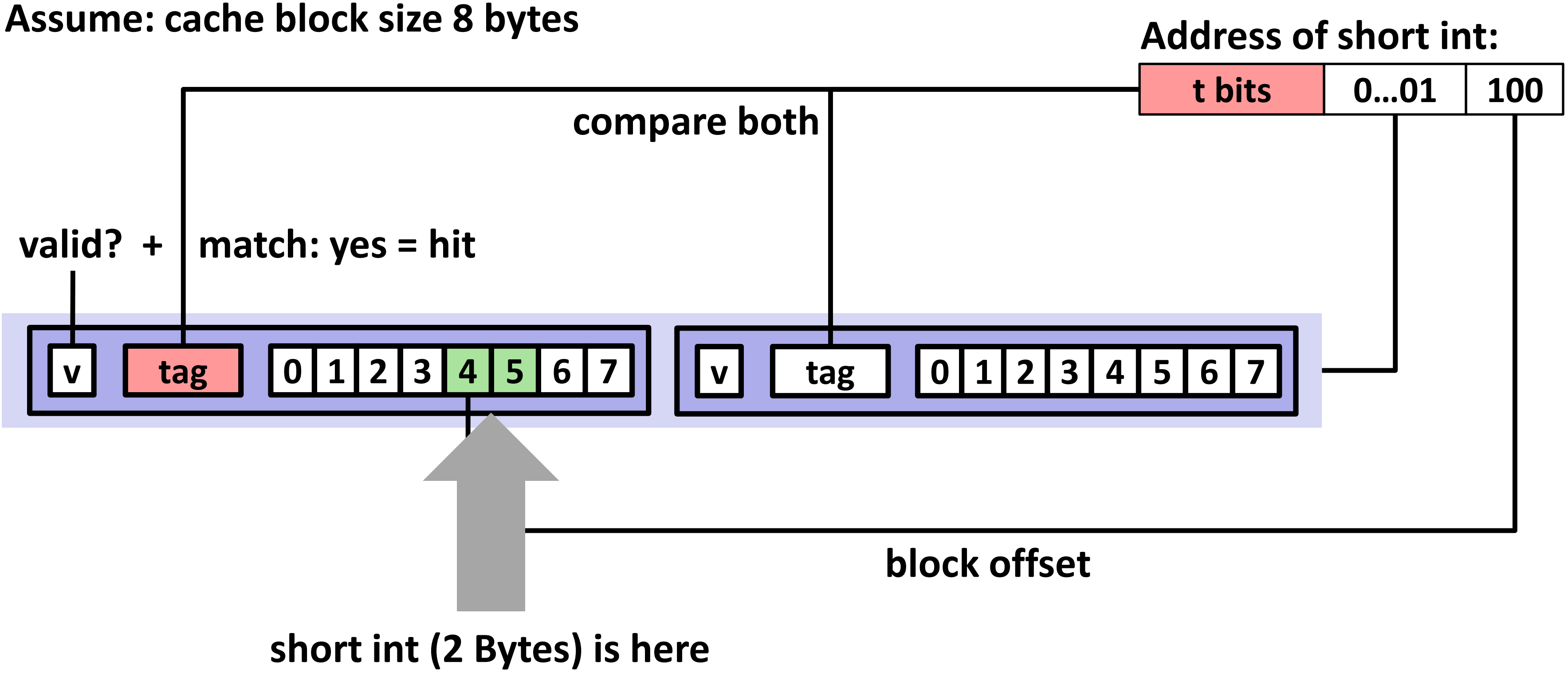


No match:

- One line in set is selected for eviction and replacement
- Replacement policies: random, least recently used (LRU), …

2-Way Set Associative Cache Simulation

t=2	s=1	b=1
xx	x	x

M=16 byte addresses, B=2 bytes/block,
S=2 sets, E=2 blocks/set

Address trace (reads, one byte per read):

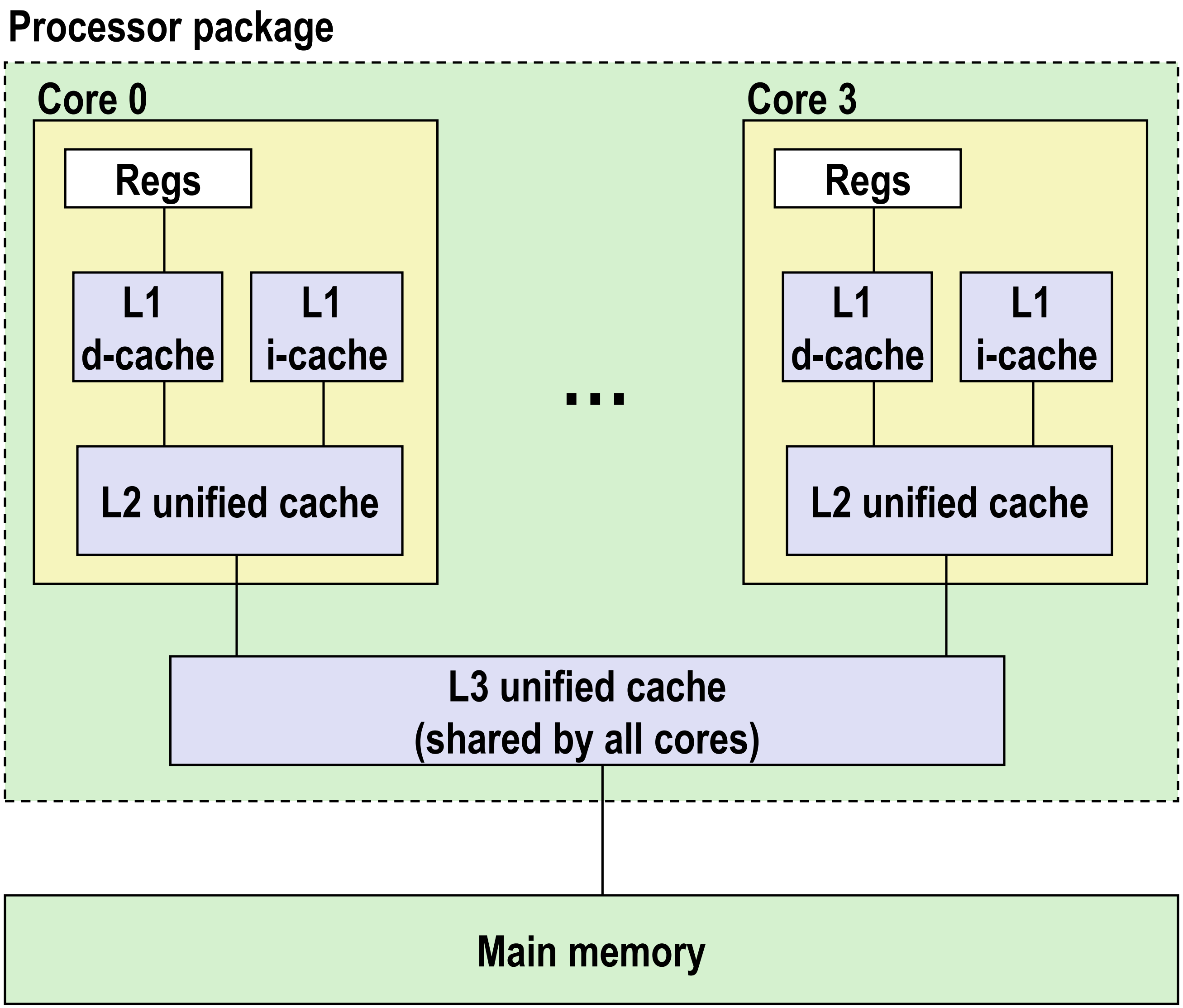
0	**$[00\underline{0}0_2]$,**	miss
1	**$[00\underline{0}1_2]$,**	hit
7	**$[01\underline{1}1_2]$,**	miss
8	**$[10\underline{0}0_2]$,**	miss
0	**$[00\underline{0}0_2]$**	hit

	v	**Tag**	**Block**
Set 0	1	00	M[0-1]
	1	10	M[8-9]
Set 1	1	01	M[6-7]
	0		

What about writes?

- **Multiple copies of data exist:**
  - L1, L2, L3, Main Memory, Disk
- **What to do on a write-hit?**
  - Write-through (write immediately to memory)
  - Write-back (defer write to memory until replacement of line)
    - Need a dirty bit (line different from memory or not)
- **What to do on a write-miss?**
  - Write-allocate (load into cache, update line in cache)
    - Good if more writes to the location follow
  - No-write-allocate (writes straight to memory, does not load into cache)
- **Typical**
  - Write-through + No-write-allocate
  - **Write-back + Write-allocate**

Intel Core i7 Cache Hierarchy



L1 i-cache and d-cache:
32 KB, 8-way,
Access: 4 cycles

L2 unified cache:
256 KB, 8-way,
Access: 11 cycles

L3 unified cache:
8 MB, 16-way,
Access: 30-40 cycles

Block size: 64 bytes for all caches.

Cache Performance Metrics

- **Miss Rate**
  - Fraction of memory references not found in cache (misses / accesses) = 1 – hit rate
  - Typical numbers (in percentages):
    - 3-10% for L1
    - can be quite small (e.g., < 1%) for L2, depending on size, etc.
- **Hit Time**
  - Time to deliver a line in the cache to the processor
    - includes time to determine whether the line is in the cache
  - Typical numbers:
    - 1-2 clock cycle for L1
    - 5-20 clock cycles for L2
- **Miss Penalty**
  - Additional time required because of a miss
    - typically 50-200 cycles for main memory (Trend: increasing!)

Lets think about those numbers

- **Huge difference between a hit and a miss**
  - Could be 100x, if just L1 and main memory

- **Would you believe 99% hits is twice as good as 97%?**
  - Consider:
    cache hit time of 1 cycle
    miss penalty of 100 cycles
  - Average access time:
    97% hits: 1 cycle + 0.03 * 100 cycles = **4 cycles**
    99% hits: 1 cycle + 0.01 * 100 cycles = **2 cycles**

- **This is why "miss rate" is used instead of "hit rate"**

Writing Cache Friendly Code

- **Make the common case go fast**
  - Focus on the inner loops of the core functions

- **Minimize the misses in the inner loops**
  - Repeated references to variables are good (temporal locality)
  - Stride-1 reference patterns are good (spatial locality)

Key idea: Our qualitative notion of locality is quantified through our understanding of cache memories

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  - Rearranging loops to improve spatial locality
  - Using blocking to improve temporal locality

The Memory Mountain

- **Read throughput (read bandwidth)**
  - Number of bytes read from memory per second (MB/s)

- **Memory mountain: Measured read throughput as a function of spatial and temporal locality.**
  - Compact way to characterize memory system performance.

Memory Mountain Test Function

```
/* The test function */
void test(int elems, int stride) {
    int i, result = 0;
    volatile int sink;

    for (i = 0; i < elems; i += stride)
        result += data[i];
    sink = result; /* So compiler doesn't optimize away the loop */
}

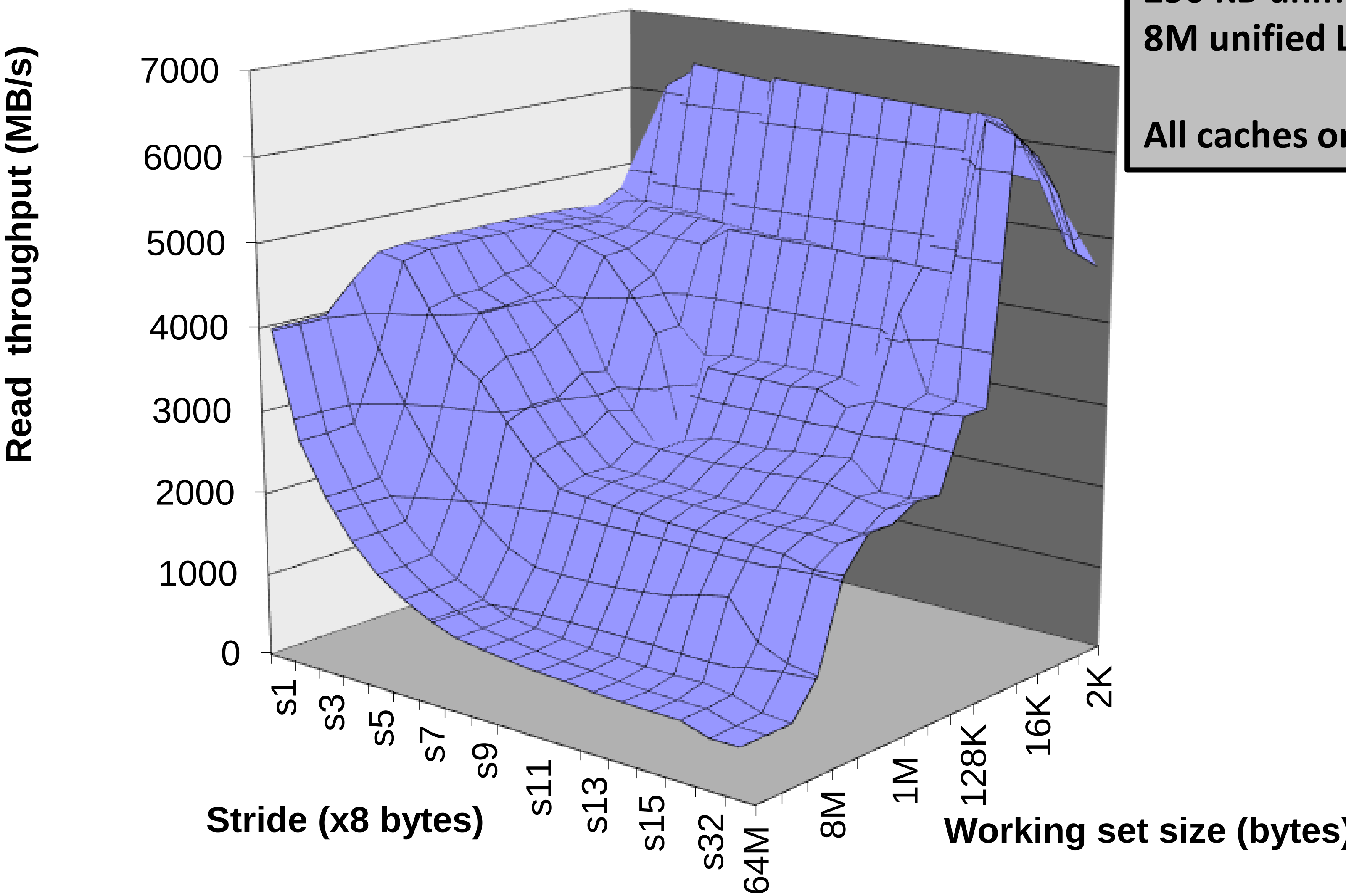
/* Run test(elems, stride) and return read throughput (MB/s) */
double run(int size, int stride, double Mhz)
{
    double cycles;
    int elems = size / sizeof(int);

    test(elems, stride);                       /* warm up the cache */
    cycles = fcyc2(test, elems, stride, 0);   /* call test(elems,stride) */
    return (size / stride) / (cycles / Mhz); /* convert cycles to MB/s */
}
```

The Memory Mountain

Intel Core i7
32 KB L1 i-cache
32 KB L1 d-cache
256 KB unified L2 cache
8M unified L3 cache

All caches on-chip



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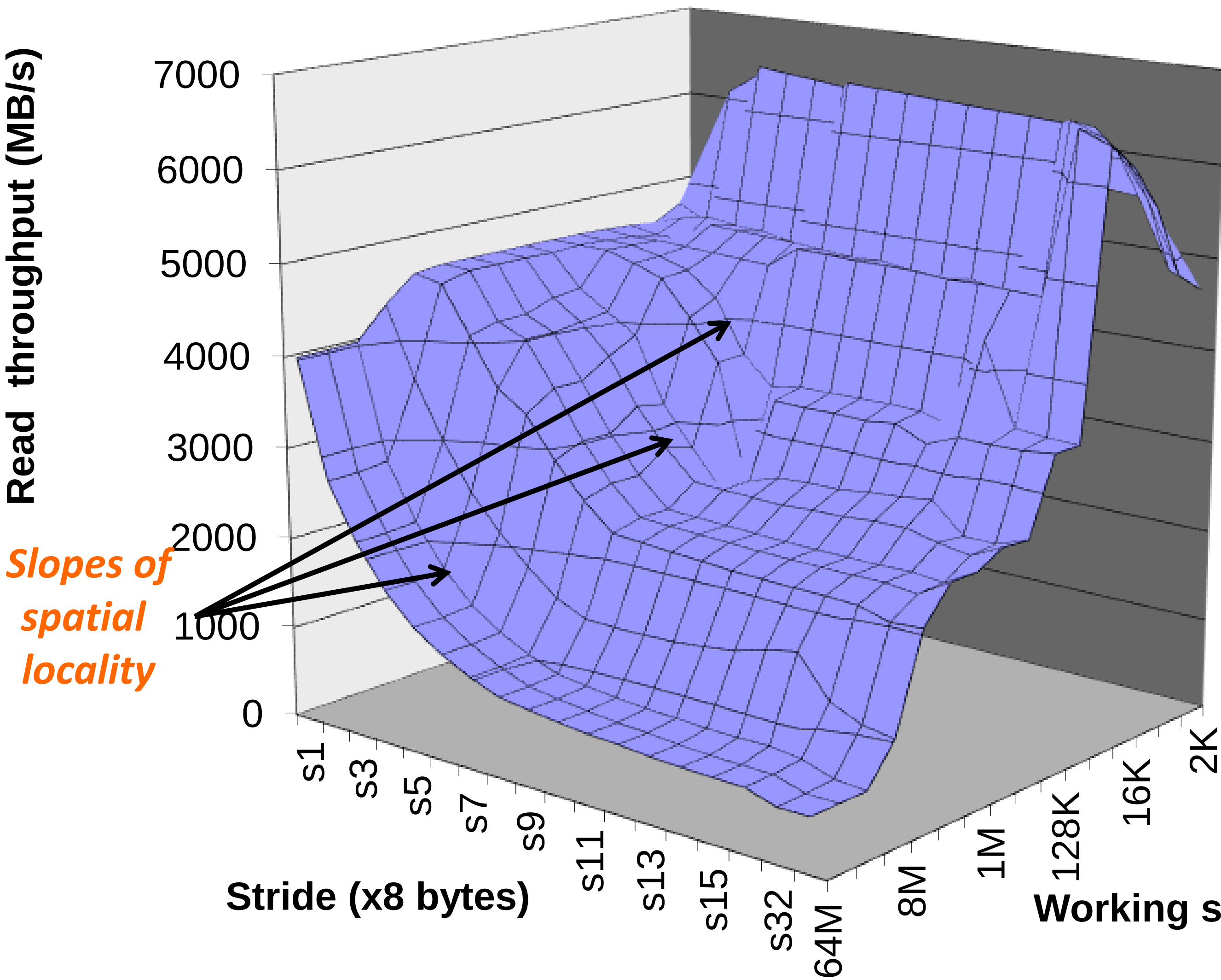

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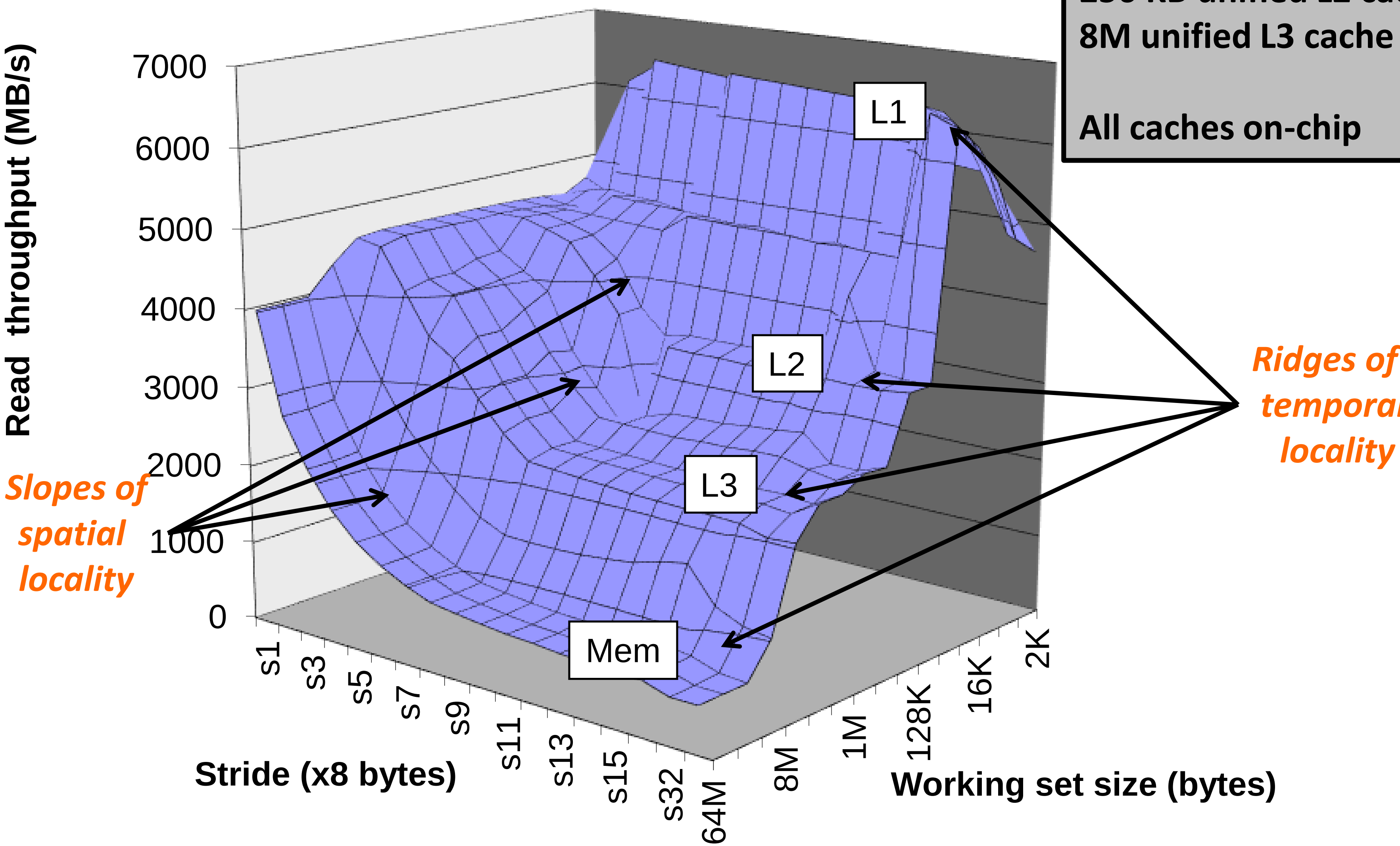

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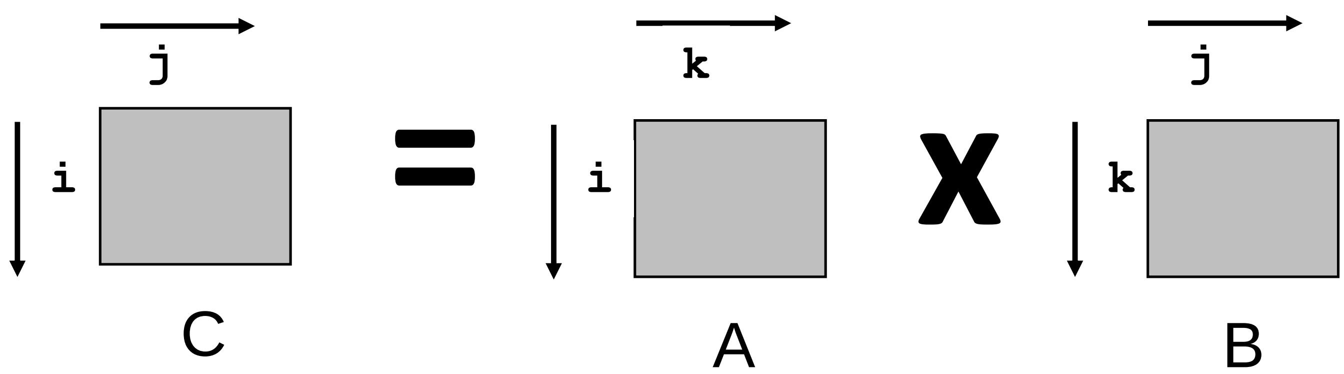
Miss Rate Analysis for Matrix Multiply

- **Assume:**
  - Line size = 32B (big enough for four 64-bit words)
  - Matrix dimension (N) is very large
    - Approximate 1/N as 0.0
  - Cache is not even big enough to hold multiple rows
- **Analysis Method:**
  - Look at access pattern of inner loop



Matrix Multiplication Example

- **Description:**
  - Multiply N x N matrices
  - $O(N^3)$ total operations
  - N reads per source element
  - N values summed per destination
    - but may be able to hold in register

Variable sum held in register

```
/* ijk */
for (i=0; i<n; i++)  {
  for (j=0; j<n; j++) {
    sum = 0.0;
    for (k=0; k<n; k++)
      sum += a[i][k] * b[k][j];
    c[i][j] = sum;
  }
}
```

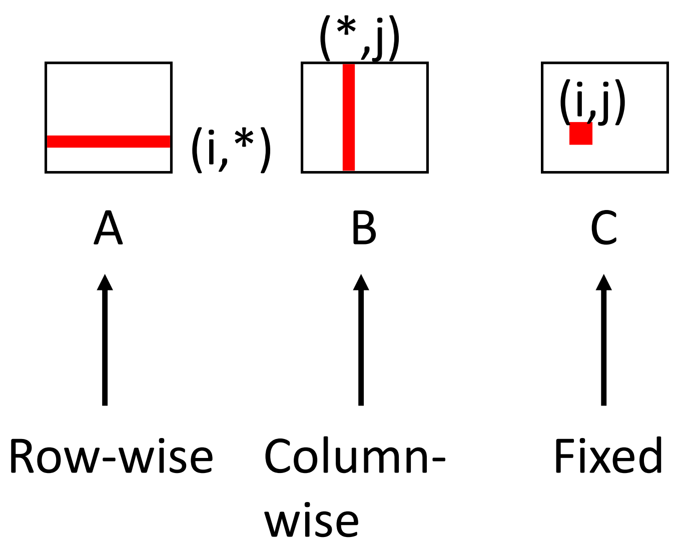
Layout of C Arrays in Memory (review)

- **C arrays allocated in row-major order**
  - each row in contiguous memory locations
- **Stepping through columns in one row:**
  - ```
    for (i = 0; i < N; i++)
      sum += a[0][i];
    ```
  - accesses successive elements
  - if block size (B) > 8 bytes, exploit spatial locality
    - miss rate = 8 bytes / B
- **Stepping through rows in one column:**
  - ```
    for (i = 0; i < n; i++)
      sum += a[i][0];
    ```
  - accesses distant elements
  - no spatial locality!
    - miss rate = 1 (i.e. 100%)

Matrix Multiplication (ijk)

```
/* ijk */
for (i=0; i<n; i++)  {
  for (j=0; j<n; j++) {
    sum = 0.0;
    for (k=0; k<n; k++)
      sum += a[i][k] * b[k][j];
    c[i][j] = sum;
  }
}
```

Inner loop:



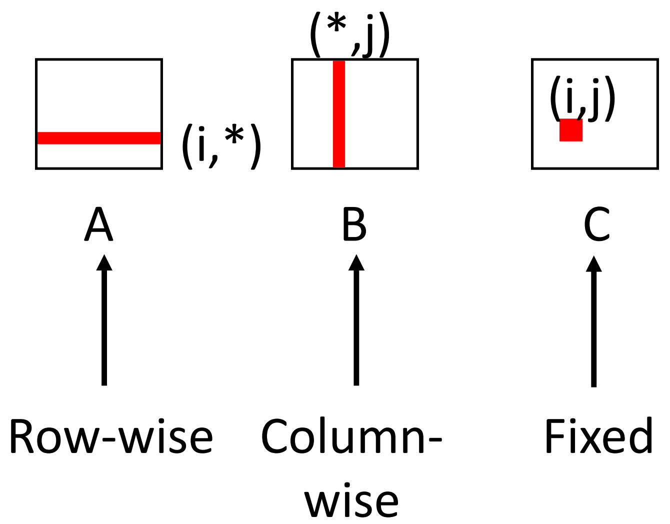
Misses per inner loop iteration:

A	B	C
0.25	1.0	0.0

Matrix Multiplication (jik)

```
/* jik */
for (j=0; j<n; j++) {
  for (i=0; i<n; i++) {
    sum = 0.0;
    for (k=0; k<n; k++)
      sum += a[i][k] * b[k][j];
    c[i][j] = sum
  }
}
```

Inner loop:



Misses per inner loop iteration:

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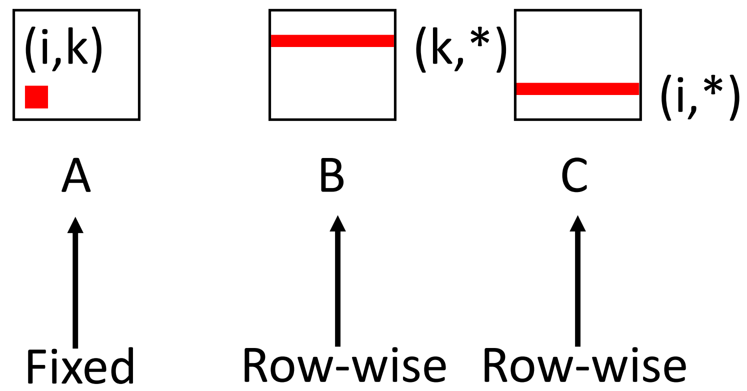
0.25	1.0	0.0

Matrix Multiplication (kij)

```
/* kij */
for (k=0; k<n; k++) {
  for (i=0; i<n; i++) {
    r = a[i][k];
    for (j=0; j<n; j++)
      c[i][j] += r * b[k][j];
  }
}
```

Inner loop:



Misses per inner loop iteration:

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0.0	0.25	0.25

Matrix Multiplication (ikj)

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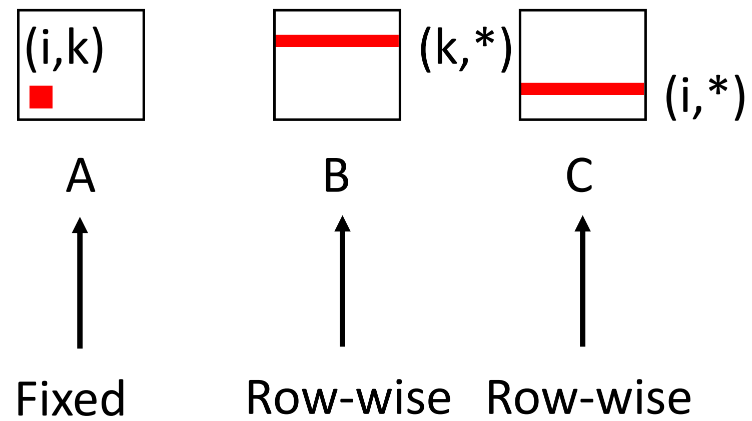
/* ikj */
for (i=0; i<n; i++) {
  for (k=0; k<n; k++) {
    r = a[i][k];
    for (j=0; j<n; j++)
      c[i][j] += r * b[k][j];
  }
}
```

Inner loop:



Misses per inner loop iteration:

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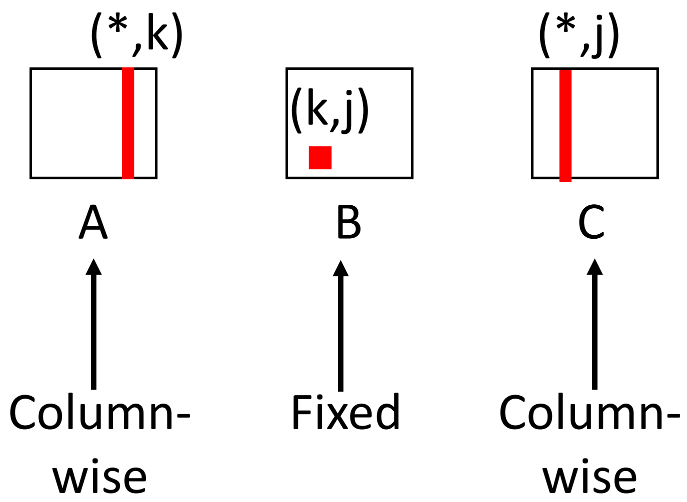
0.0	0.25	0.25

Matrix Multiplication (jki)

```
/* jki */
for (j=0; j<n; j++) {
  for (k=0; k<n; k++) {
    r = b[k][j];
    for (i=0; i<n; i++)
      c[i][j] += a[i][k] * r;
  }
}
```

Inner loop:



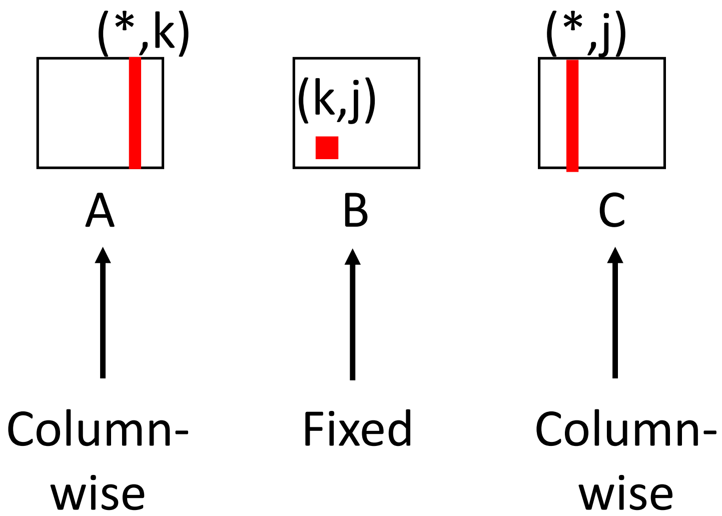
Misses per inner loop iteration:

A	B	C
1.0	0.0	1.0

Matrix Multiplication (kji)

```
/* kji */
for (k=0; k<n; k++) {
  for (j=0; j<n; j++) {
    r = b[k][j];
    for (i=0; i<n; i++)
      c[i][j] += a[i][k] * r;
  }
}
```

Inner loop:



Misses per inner loop iteration:

A	B	C
1.0	0.0	1.0

Summary of Matrix Multiplication

```
for (i=0; i<n; i++) {
  for (j=0; j<n; j++) {
   sum = 0.0;
   for (k=0; k<n; k++)
     sum += a[i][k] * b[k][j];
   c[i][j] = sum;
 }
}
```

ijk (& jik):
- 2 loads, 0 stores
- misses/iter = **1.25**

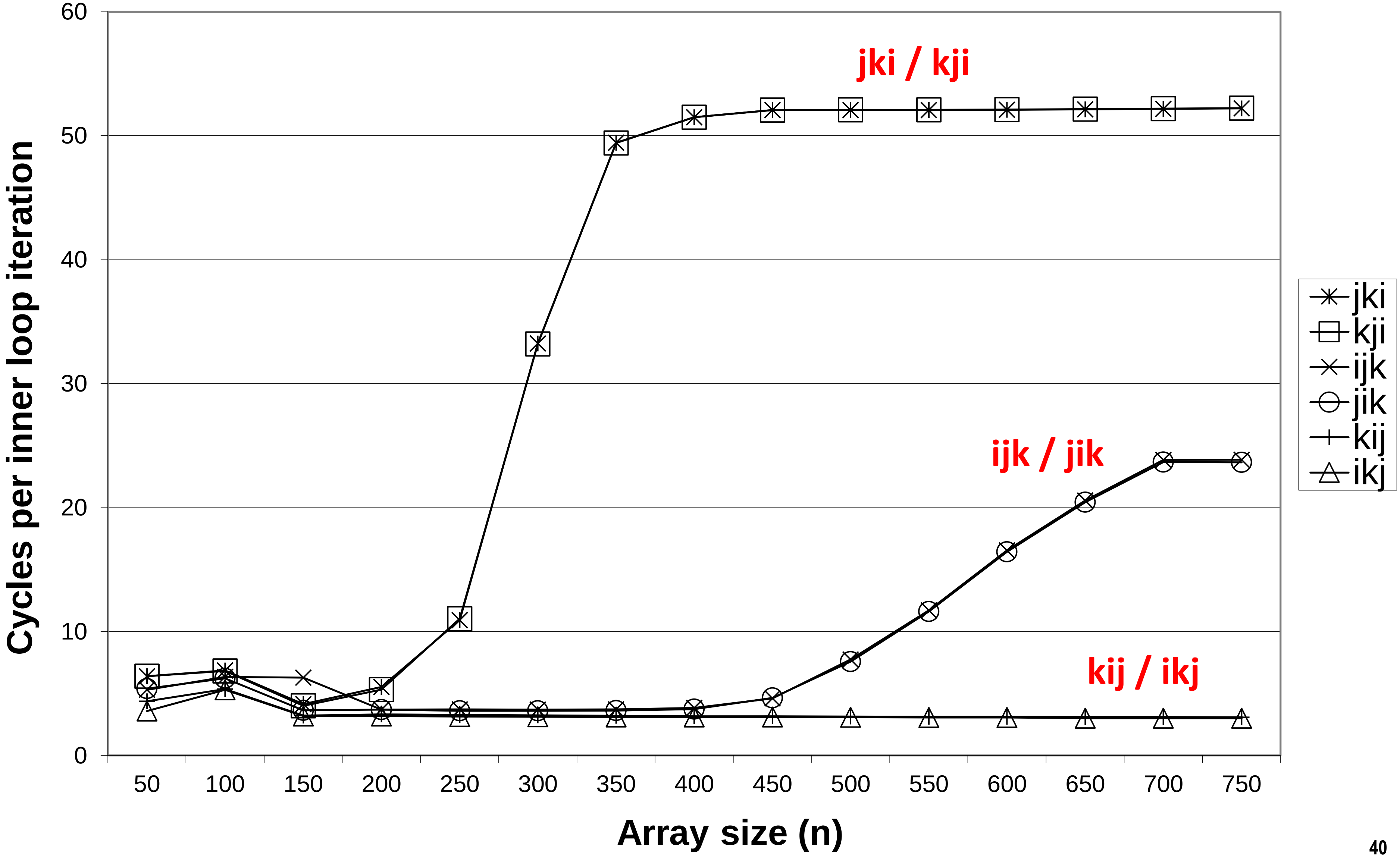
```
for (k=0; k<n; k++) {
 for (i=0; i<n; i++) {
  r = a[i][k];
  for (j=0; j<n; j++)
   c[i][j] += r * b[k][j];
 }
}
```

kij (& ikj):
- 2 loads, 1 store
- misses/iter = **0.5**

```
for (j=0; j<n; j++) {
 for (k=0; k<n; k++) {
   r = b[k][j];
   for (i=0; i<n; i++)
    c[i][j] += a[i][k] * r;
 }
}
```

jki (& kji):
- 2 loads, 1 store
- misses/iter = **2.0**

Core i7 Matrix Multiply Performance



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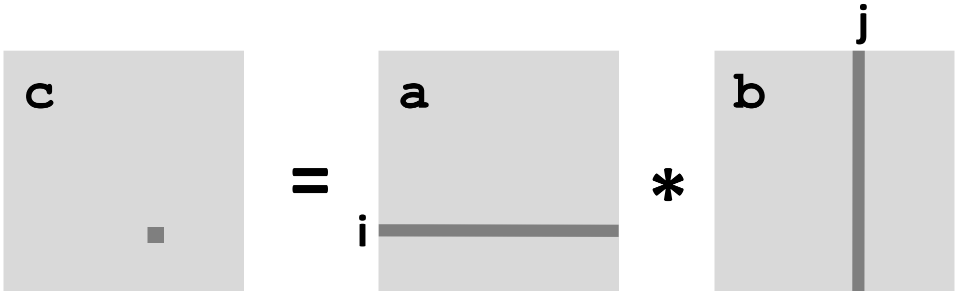
Example: Matrix Multiplication

```
c = (double *) calloc(sizeof(double), n*n);

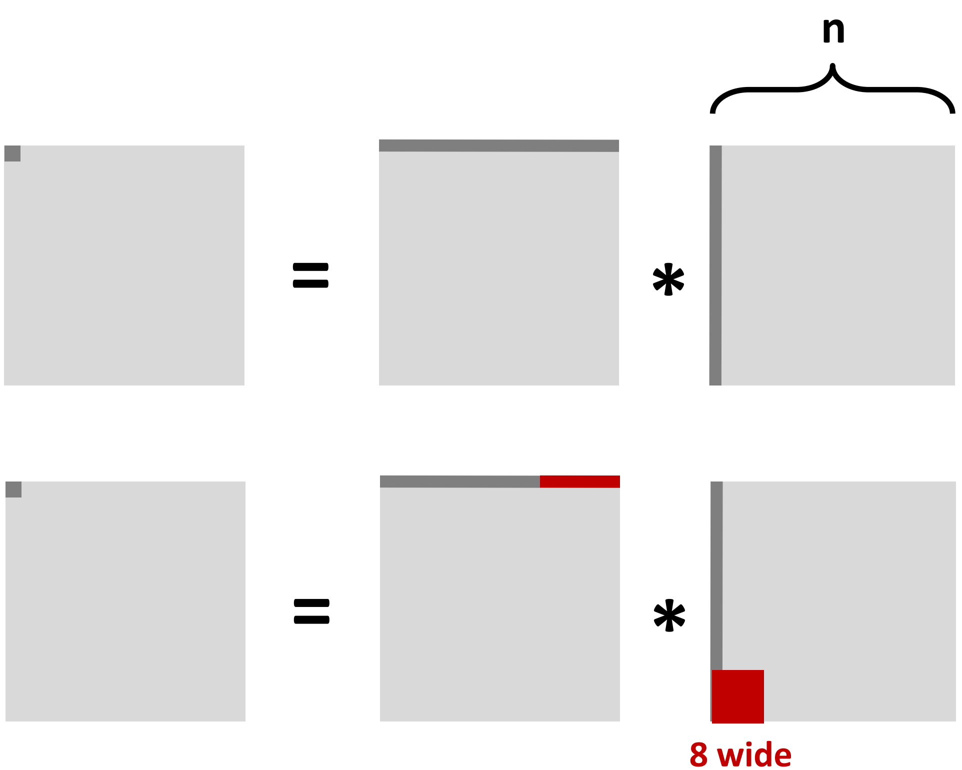
/* Multiply n x n matrices a and b  */
void mmm(double *a, double *b, double *c, int n) {
    int i, j, k;
    for (i = 0; i < n; i++)
        for (j = 0; j < n; j++)
            for (k = 0; k < n; k++)
                c[i*n+j] += a[i*n + k]*b[k*n + j];
}
```



Cache Miss Analysis

- **Assume:**
  - Matrix elements are doubles
  - Cache block = 8 doubles
  - Cache size C << n (much smaller than n)

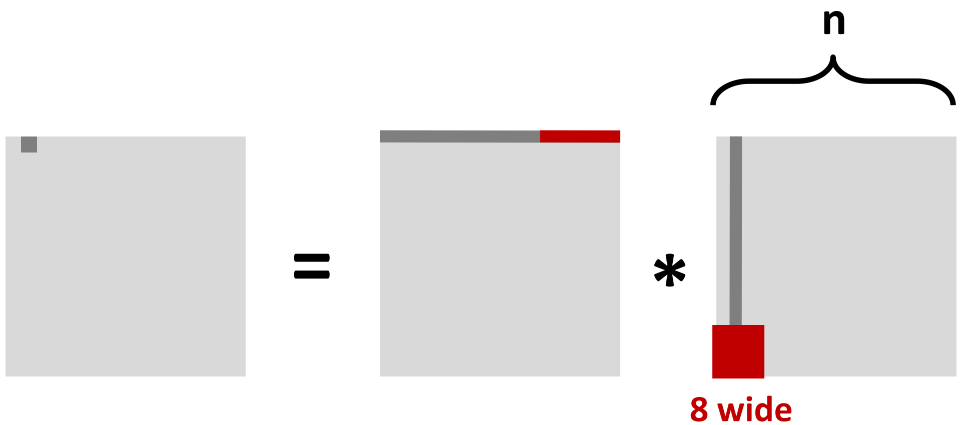
- **First iteration:**
  - n/8 + n = 9n/8 misses
  - Afterwards in cache: (schematic)



Cache Miss Analysis

- **Assume:**
  - Matrix elements are doubles
  - Cache block = 8 doubles
  - Cache size C << n (much smaller than n)

- **Second iteration:**
  - Again:
    n/8 + n = 9n/8 misses

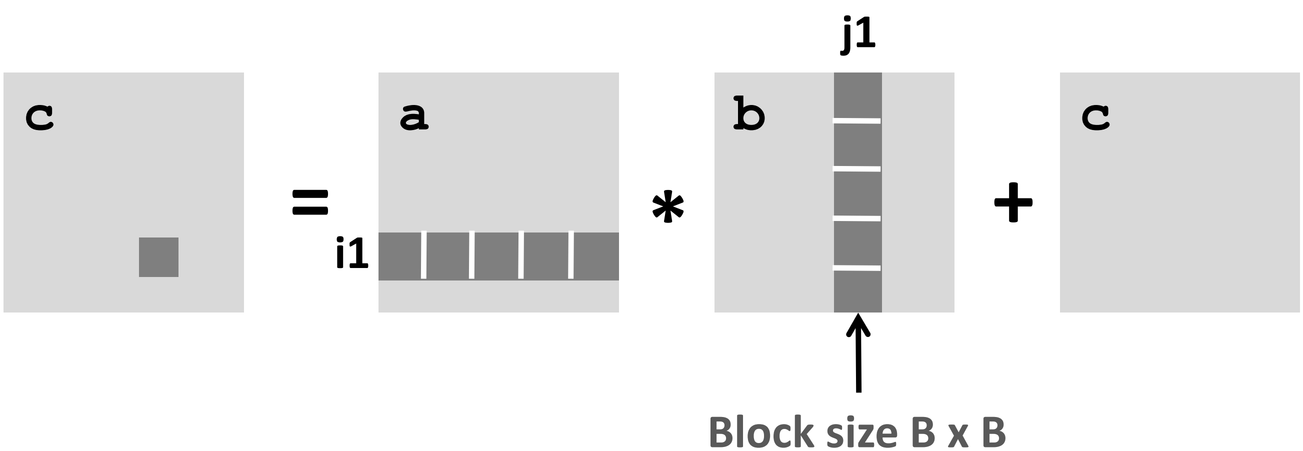


- **Total misses:**
  - $9n/8 * n^2 = (9/8) * n^3$

Blocked Matrix Multiplication

```
c = (double *) calloc(sizeof(double), n*n);

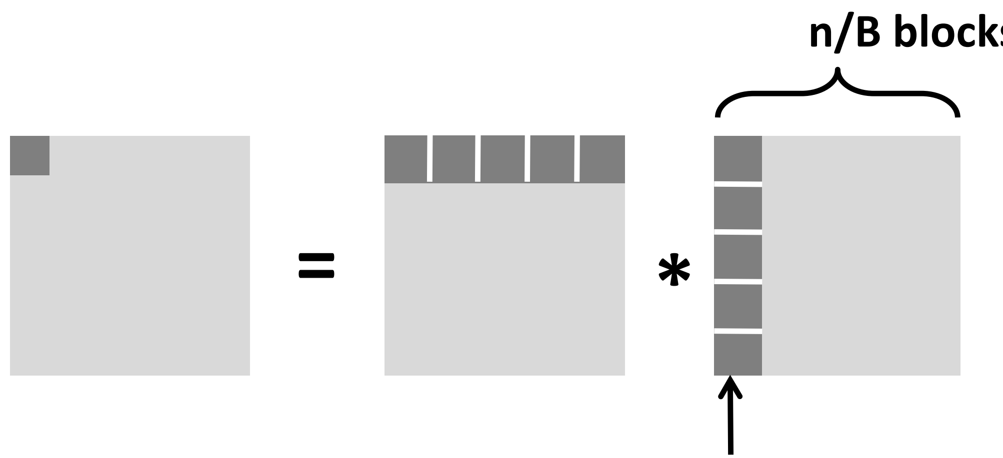
/* Multiply n x n matrices a and b  */
void mmm(double *a, double *b, double *c, int n) {
    int i, j, k;
    for (i = 0; i < n; i+=B)
        for (j = 0; j < n; j+=B)
            for (k = 0; k < n; k+=B)
                /* B x B mini matrix multiplications */
                for (i1 = i; i1 < i+B; i++)
                    for (j1 = j; j1 < j+B; j++)
                        for (k1 = k; k1 < k+B; k++)
                            c[i1*n+j1] += a[i1*n + k1]*b[k1*n + j1];
}
```



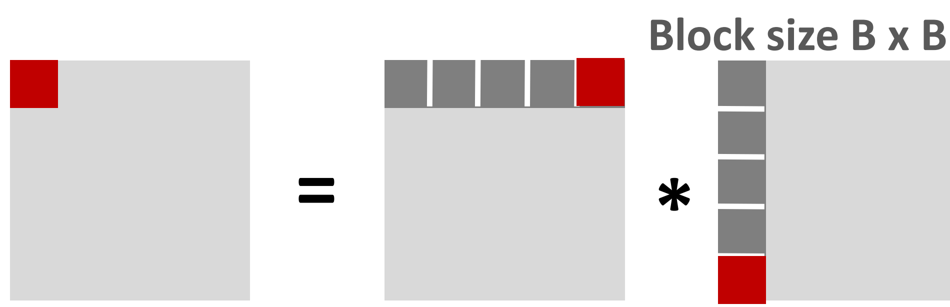
Cache Miss Analysis

- **Assume:**
  - Cache block = 8 doubles
  - Cache size C << n (much smaller than n)
  - Three blocks ■ fit into cache: $3B^2 < C$

- **First (block) iteration:**
  - $B^2/8$ misses for each block
  - $2n/B * B^2/8 = nB/4$ (omitting matrix c)

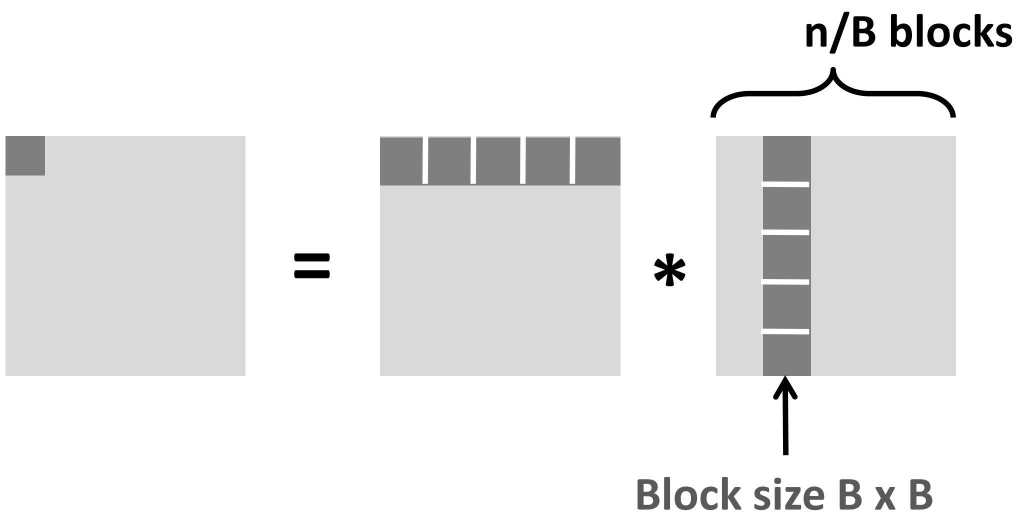


  - Afterwards in cache (schematic)



Cache Miss Analysis

- **Assume:**
  - Cache block = 8 doubles
  - Cache size C << n (much smaller than n)
  - Three blocks ■ fit into cache: $3B^2 < C$
- **Second (block) iteration:**
  - Same as first iteration
  - $2n/B * B^2/8 = nB/4$



- **Total misses:**
  - $nB/4 * (n/B)^2 = n^3/(4B)$

Blocking Summary

- **No blocking: (9/8) * n^3**
- **Blocking: 1/(4B) * n^3**

- **Suggest largest possible block size B, but limit $3B^2 < C$!**

- **Reason for dramatic difference:**
  - Matrix multiplication has inherent temporal locality:
    - Input data: $3n^2$, computation $2n^3$
    - Every array elements used O(n) times!
  - But program has to be written properly

Cache Summary

- Cache memories can have significant performance impact
- You can write your programs to exploit this!