

**Full system  
simulation in  
gem5**



# What we will cover

- What is full system simulation?
- Basics of booting up a real system in gem5
- Creating disk images using packer and qemu
- Extending/modifying a gem5 disk image
- m5term to interact with a running system



# What is Full System Simulation?

Full system simulation (FSS) is a type of simulation that emulates a complete computer system, including the CPU, memory, I/O devices, and system software like operating systems.

It allows for detailed analysis and debugging of hardware and software interactions.

## Components Simulated:

- CPUs (multiple types and configurations)
- Memory hierarchy (caches, main memory)
- I/O devices (disk, network interfaces)
- Entire software stack (OS, drivers, applications)

# Basics of Booting Up a Real System in gem5

**Overview:** gem5 can simulate the process of booting up a real system, providing insights into the behavior of the hardware and software during startup.

## Steps Involved

### 1. Setting Up the Simulation Environment:

- Choose the ISA (e.g., x86, ARM).
- Configure the system components (CPU, memory, caches).

### 2. Getting the correct resources such as kernel, bootloader, diskimages, etc.

### 3. Configuring the Boot Parameters:

- Set kernel command line parameters, if necessary.

### 4. Running the Simulation:

- Start the simulation and monitor the boot process.



# Lets run a full system simulation in gem5

The incomplete code already has a board built.

Lets run a full-system workload in gem5.

This workload is an Ubuntu 24.04 boot, it will throw three m5 exits at:

- Kernel Booted
- when `after_boot.sh` is run
- After run script is run

# Obtain the workload and set exit event

To set the workload we do the following;

```
workload = obtain_resource("x86-ubuntu-24.04-boot-with-systemd", resource_version="1.0.0")  
board.set_workload(workload)
```

## Obtain the workload and set exit event (conti.)

Lets make the exit event handler and set it in our simulator's object

```
def exit_event_handler():  
    print("first exit event: Kernel booted")  
    yield False  
    print("second exit event: In after boot")  
    yield False  
    print("third exit event: After run script")  
    yield False  
    yield True
```

```
simulator = Simulator(  
    board=board,  
    on_exit_event={  
        ExitEvent.EXIT: exit_event_handler(),  
    },  
)
```

# Creating disk images using packer and qemu

To create a generic ubuntu diskimage that we can use in gem5, we will use

- packer: This will automate the diskimage creation process.
- qemu: We will use qemu plugin in packer to actually create the diskimage.
- ubuntu autoinstall: We will use autoinstall to automate the ubuntu install process.

gem5 resources already have code that can create the a generic ubuntu image using the above mentioned method.

- Path on codespaces: `/workspaces/2024/gem5-resources/src/x86-ubuntu`

Lets go through the important parts of the creation process.





# Getting the iso and the user-data file

As we are using ubuntu autoinstall, we need a live server install iso

- This can be found online from the ubuntu website: [iso](#) (switch link to 24.04)

We also need the user-data file that will tell ubuntu autoinstall how to install ubuntu

- The user-data file on gem5-resources specifies all default options with a minimal server installation.

# How to get our own user-data file

To get user-data file from scratch, you need to install ubuntu on a machine.

- Post-installation, we can retrieve the `autoinstall-user-data` from `/var/log/installer/autoinstall-user-data` after the system's first reboot.

You can install ubuntu on your own vm and get the user-data file

# Using qemu to get the user-data file

We can also use qemu to install ubuntu and then get the above mentioned file.

- First, we need to create an empty diskimage in qemu with the command: `qemu-img create -f raw ubuntu-22.04.2.raw 5G`
- Then we use qemu to boot the diskimage:

```
qemu-system-x86_64 -m 2G \  
    -cdrom ubuntu-22.04.2-live-server-amd64.iso \  
    -boot d -drive file=ubuntu-22.04.2.raw,format=raw \  
    -enable-kvm -cpu host -smp 2 -net nic \  
    -net user,hostfwd=tcp::2222-:22
```

After installing ubuntu, we can use ssh to get the user-data file

# Important parts of the packer script

Lets go over the packer file

- **bootcommand:**

```
"e<wait>",  
"<down><down><down>",  
"<end><bs><bs><bs><bs><wait>",  
"autoinstall ds=nocloud-net\\;s=http://{{ .HTTPIP }}:{{ .HTTPPort }}/ ---<wait>",  
"<f10><wait>"
```

This boot command opens the GRUB menu to edit the boot command, then removes the --- and adds autoinstall command.

- **http\_directory:** This directory points to directory that has the user-data file and an empty file named meta-data. These files are used to install ubuntu



## Important parts of the packer script (Conti.)

- **qemu\_args:** We need to provide packer with the qemu arguments we will be used to boot the image.
  - For example, the qemu command that the packer script will use will be:

```
qemu-system-x86_64 -vnc 127.0.0.1:32 -m 8192M \  
-device virtio-net,netdev=user.0 -cpu host \  
-display none -boot c -smp 4 \  
-drive file=<Path/to/image>,cache=writeback,discard=ignore,format=raw \  
-machine type=pc,accel=kvm -netdev user,id=user.0,hostfwd=tcp::3873-:22
```

- **File provisioners:** These commands allow us to move files from host machine to the qemu image
- **Shell provisioner:** This allows us to run bash scripts that can run the post installation commands.

# Lets use the base ubuntu image to create a diskimage with the gapbs benchmark

Update the [x86-ubuntu.pkr.hcl](#) file

The general structure of the packer file would be the same but with a few key changes:

- We will now add an argument in source "qemu" "initialize" block
  - `diskimage = true` : This will let packer know that we are using a base diskimage and not an iso from which we will install ubuntu.
- remove the `http_directory = "http"` directory as we no longer need to use autoinstall.
- Change the `iso_checksum` and `iso_urls` to that of our base image.
- Update the file and shell provisioners: We dont need to transfer the files again as our base image already has them
- Boot command: As we are not installing ubuntu. We can write the commands to login and any other commands we need like setting up network or ssh

# Changes to the postinstallation script

For this post installation script we need to get the dependencies and build the gapbs benchmarks.

Add this to the [post-installation.sh](#) script

```
git clone https://github.com/sbeamer/gapbs
cd gapbs
make
```

Lets run the packer script and use this diskimage in gem5!

```
./build.sh
```

# Lets use our built diskimage in gem5

Lets add the md5sum and the path to our [local JSON](#)

Lets run the [gem5 gapbs config](#)

This script should run the bfs benchmark.

```
GEM5_RESOURCE_JSON_APPEND=../../materials/02-Using-gem5/07-full-system/completed/local-gapbs-resource.json gem5 x86-fs-gapbs-kvm-run.py
```





# Lets see how we can access the terminal using m5term

- We are going to run the same [gem5 gapbs config](#) but with a small change.

Lets change the last `yield True` to `yield False` so that the simulation doesnt exit and we can access the simulation

```
def exit_event_handler():  
    print("first exit event: Kernel booted")  
    yield False  
    print("second exit event: In after boot")  
    yield False  
    print("third exit event: After run script")  
    yield False  
    yield False
```

# Using m5term

First lets make the m5term binary.

In [gem5/util/term](#), run

```
make
```

Now we have the m5term binary.

Now lets connect to our simulation by using the m5term binary

```
m5term 3456
```