

EE 445L - Lab 2: Performance Debugging

Joshua Bryant
jmb6357

James Morris
jsm3288

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1 Objective

The five main objectives for this lab are: (1) developing software debugging techniques (2) passing data using a FIFO queue (3) learning how to use the oscilloscope and logic analyzer (4) observing critical sections, and (5) getting an early start on Lab 3 by writing a line drawing function. The specific software debugging techniques used for this lab include performance debugging in real time and profiling program activity.

2 Measurement Data

3 Analysis and Discussion

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2. If you expected the execution speed to vary a lot, you should use the data dump technique. This technique is less intrusive than printing data to a screen and the amount of time needed to dump data each execution cycle should remain almost constant. This technique also allows for storing a large number of data entries for review later to allow averaging over hundreds of samples for average execution time as well as finding the most likely minimum and maximum execution times.
3. If the expected execution speed is very large, using printf output is appropriate provided small strings were used for output. Although printf can be very intrusive in faster programs, the long execution period means that outputting a few characters won't significantly slow down the program, as discussed in class.
4. Minimally intrusive debugging techniques are defined to have a negligible effect on the system being debugged.
5. The two necessary components collected during a "profile" are the timing characteristics and the execution patterns of a program.
6. The critical sections in the bad FIFO were at the increment and decrement since they happen after the value being changed is called from memory but before it is being stored. The way to fix this problem on ARM would be to include the post-increment and post-decrement inside the functions using these values as parameters. This is clear after viewing both the standard FIFO and bad FIFO code side by side.