Assembly Language for x86 Processors

7th Edition

Kip Irvine

Chapter 1: Basic Concepts

Slides prepared by the author

Revision date: 1/15/2014

Welcome to Assembly Language

- Some Good Questions to Ask
- Assembly Language Applications

Questions to Ask

- Why am I learning Assembly Language?
- What background should I have?
- What is an assembler?
- What hardware/software do I need?
- What types of programs will I create?
- What do I get with this book?
- What will I learn?

Welcome to Assembly Language *(cont)*

- How does assembly language (AL) relate to machine language?
- How do C++ and Java relate to AL?
- Is AL portable?
- Why learn AL?

Assembly Language Applications

- Some representative types of applications:
  - Business application for single platform
  - Hardware device driver
  - Business application for multiple platforms
  - Embedded systems & computer games

(see next panel)

Comparing ASM to High-Level Languages

Type of Application	High-Level Languages	Assembly Language
Business application software, written for single platform, medium to large size.	Formal structures make it easy to organize and maintain large sections of code.	Minimal formal structure, so one must be imposed by programmers who have varying levels of experience. This leads to difficulties maintaining existing code.
Hardware device driver.	Language may not provide for direct hardware access. Even if it does, awkward coding techniques must often be used, resulting in maintenance difficulties.	Hardware access is straightforward and simple. Easy to maintain when programs are short and well documented.
Business application written for multiple platforms (different operating systems).	Usually very portable. The source code can be recompiled on each target operating system with minimal changes.	Must be recoded separately for each platform, often using an assembler with a different syntax. Difficult to maintain.
Embedded systems and computer games requiring direct hardware access.	Produces too much executable code, and may not run efficiently.	Ideal, because the executable code is small and runs quickly.

What's Next

- Welcome to Assembly Language
- **Virtual Machine Concept**
- Data Representation
- Boolean Operations

Virtual Machine Concept

- Virtual Machines
- Specific Machine Levels

Virtual Machines

- Tanenbaum: Virtual machine concept
- Programming Language analogy:
  - Each computer has a native machine language (language L0) that runs directly on its hardware
  - A more human-friendly language is usually constructed above machine language, called Language L1
- Programs written in L1 can run two different ways:
  - Interpretation – L0 program interprets and executes L1 instructions one by one
  - Translation – L1 program is completely translated into an L0 program, which then runs on the computer hardware

Translating Languages

English: Display the sum of A times B plus C.

C++: cout << (A * B + C);

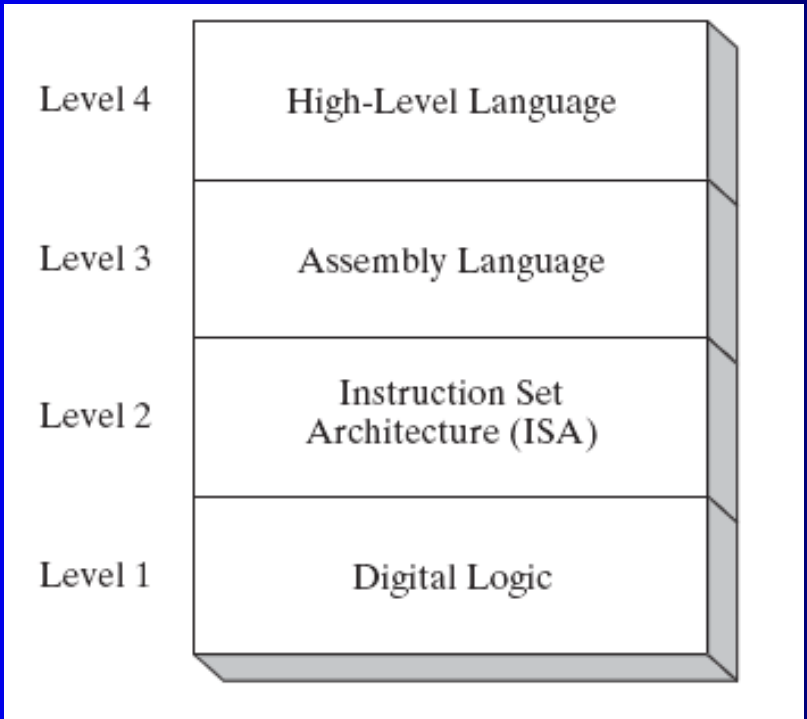
Assembly Language:

```
mov eax,A
mul B
add eax,C
call WriteInt
```


Intel Machine Language:

```
A1 00000000
F7 25 00000004
03 05 00000008
E8 00500000
```

Specific Machine Levels



(descriptions of individual levels follow . . .)

High-Level Language

- Level 4
- Application-oriented languages
  - C++, Java, Pascal, Visual Basic . . .
- Programs compile into assembly language (Level 4)

Assembly Language

- Level 3
- Instruction mnemonics that have a one-to-one correspondence to machine language
- Programs are translated into Instruction Set Architecture Level - machine language (Level 2)

Instruction Set Architecture (ISA)

- Level 2
- Also known as conventional machine language
- Executed by Level 1 (Digital Logic)

Digital Logic

- Level 1
- CPU, constructed from digital logic gates
- System bus
- Memory
- Implemented using bipolar transistors

next: Data Representation

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Chapter 2: x86 Processor Architecture

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Chapter Overview

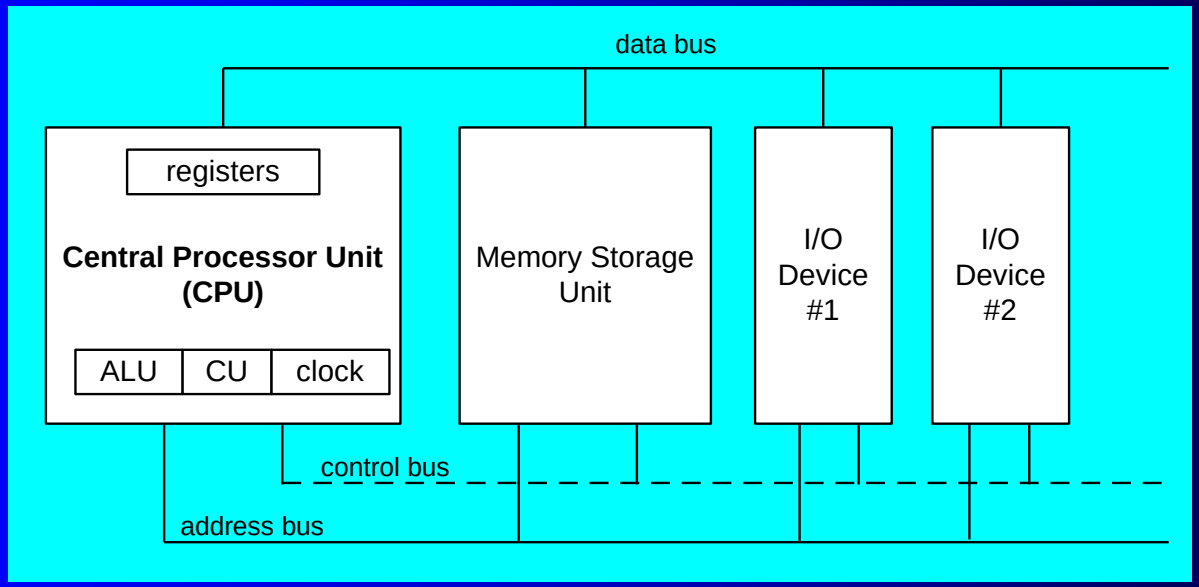
- General Concepts
- IA-32 Processor Architecture
- IA-32 Memory Management
- 64-bit Processors
- Components of an IA-32 Microcomputer
- Input-Output System

General Concepts

- Basic microcomputer design
- Instruction execution cycle
- Reading from memory
- How programs run

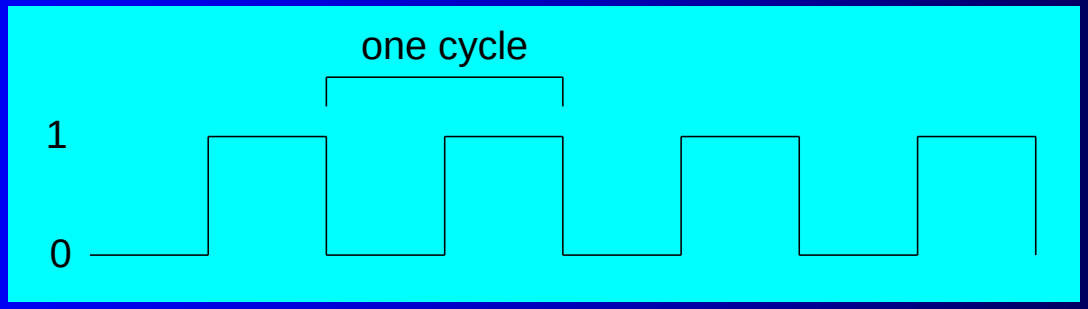
Basic Microcomputer Design

- clock synchronizes CPU operations
- control unit (CU) coordinates sequence of execution steps
- ALU performs arithmetic and bitwise processing



Clock

- synchronizes all CPU and BUS operations
- machine (clock) cycle measures time of a single operation
- clock is used to trigger events



What's Next

- General Concepts
- **IA-32 Processor Architecture**
- IA-32 Memory Management
- 64-Bit Processors
- Components of an IA-32 Microcomputer
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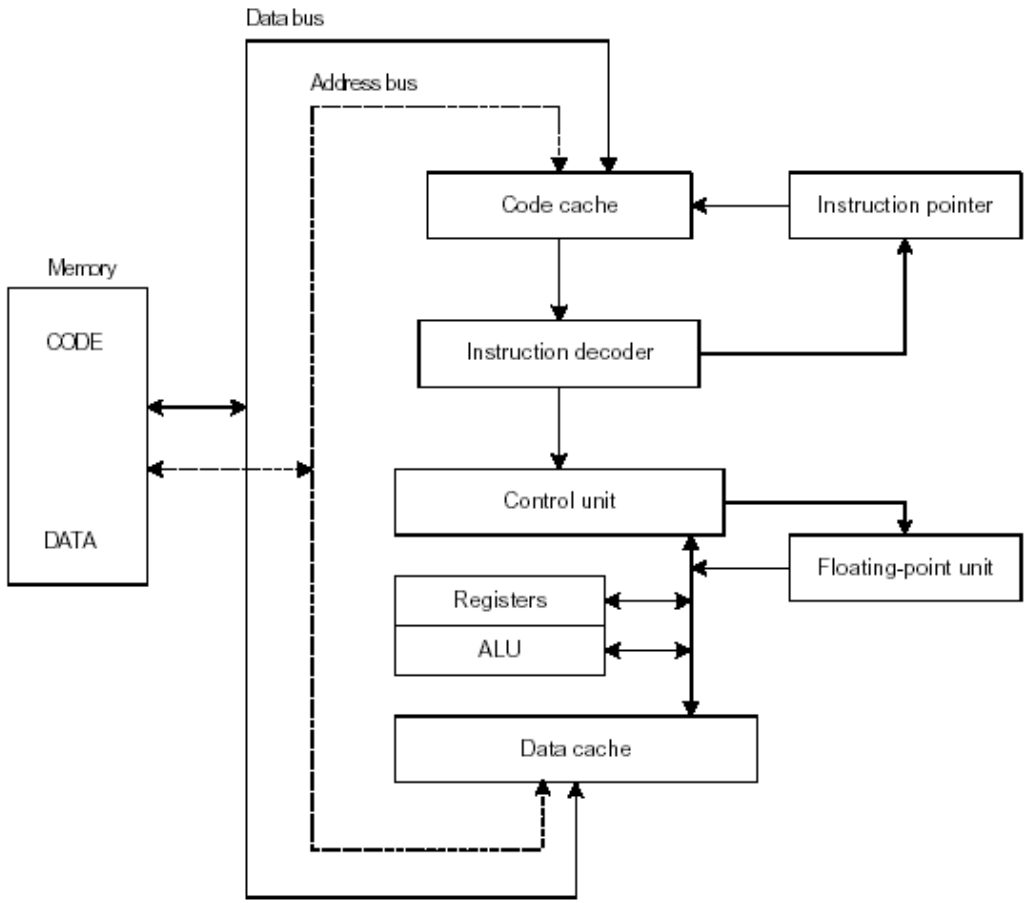
Instruction Execution Cycle

- Fetch
- Decode
- Fetch operands
- Execute
- Store output

Figure 2–2 Simplified Pentium CPU Block Diagram.



Reading from Memory

Multiple machine cycles are required when reading from memory, because it responds much more slowly than the CPU. The steps are:

1. Place the address of the value you want to read on the address bus.
2. Assert (changing the value of) the processor's RD (read) pin.
3. Wait one clock cycle for the memory chips to respond.
4. Copy the data from the data bus into the destination operand

Cache Memory

- High-speed expensive static RAM both inside and outside the CPU.
  - Level-1 cache: inside the CPU
  - Level-2 cache: outside the CPU
- Cache hit: when data to be read is already in cache memory
- Cache miss: when data to be read is not in cache memory.

IA-32 Processor Architecture

- Modes of operation
- Basic execution environment
- Floating-point unit
- Intel Microprocessor history

Modes of Operation

- Protected mode
  - native mode (Windows, Linux)
- Real-address mode
  - native MS-DOS
- System management mode
  - power management, system security, diagnostics

- Virtual-8086 mode
  - hybrid of Protected
  - each program has its own 8086 computer
- Not available in 64 bit Windows 7

Basic Execution Environment

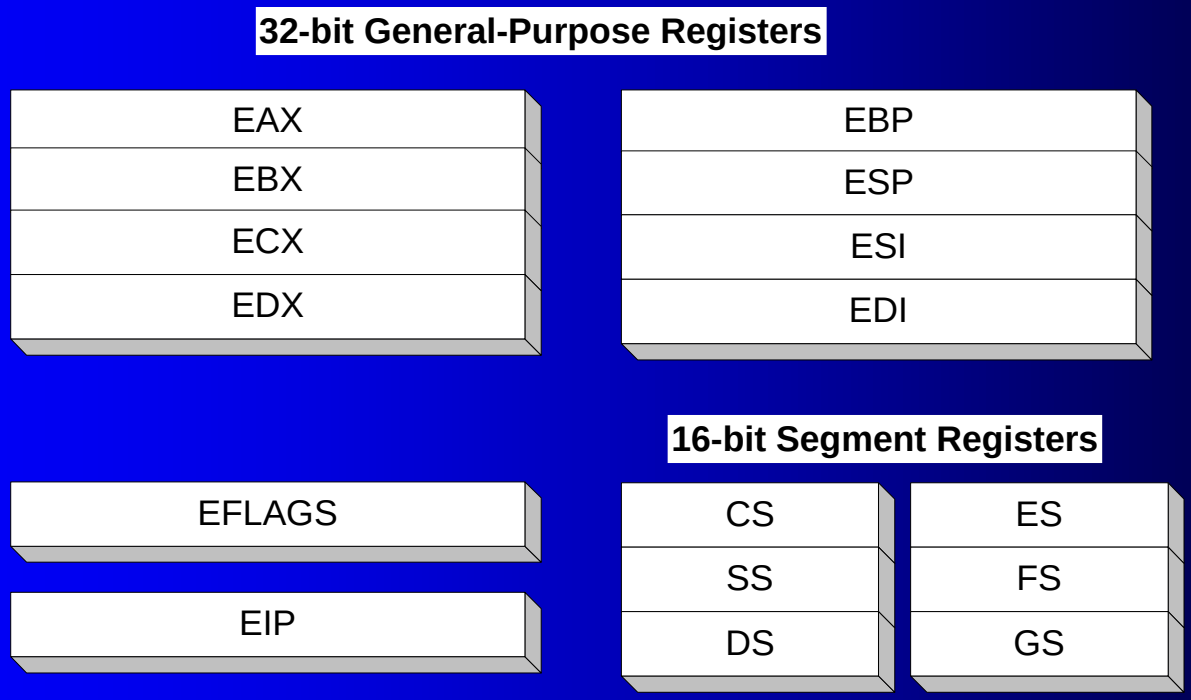
- Addressable memory
- General-purpose registers
- Index and base registers
- Specialized register uses
- Status flags
- Floating-point, MMX, XMM registers

Addressable Memory

- Protected mode
  - 4 GB
  - 32-bit address
- Real-address and Virtual-8086 modes
  - 1 MB space
  - 20-bit address
  - (not available in 64 bit Windows 7)

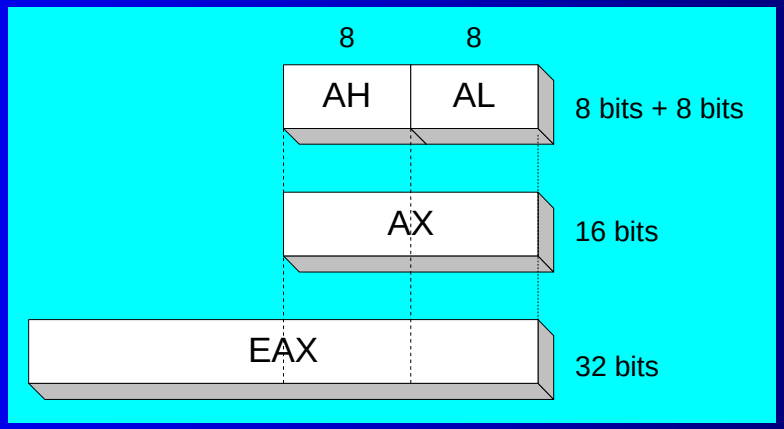
General-Purpose Registers

Named storage locations inside the CPU, optimized for speed.



Accessing Parts of Registers

- Use 8-bit name, 16-bit name, or 32-bit name
- Applies to EAX, EBX, ECX, and EDX



32-bit	16-bit	8-bit (high)	8-bit (low)
EAX	AX	AH	AL
EBX	BX	BH	BL
ECX	CX	CH	CL
EDX	DX	DH	DL

Index and Base Registers

- Some registers have only a 16-bit name for their lower half:

32-bit	16-bit
ESI	SI
EDI	DI
EBP	BP
ESP	SP

Some Specialized Register Uses (1 of 2)

- General-Purpose
  - EAX – accumulator
  - ECX – loop counter
  - ESP – stack pointer
  - ESI, EDI – index registers
  - EBP – extended frame pointer (stack)
- Segment
  - CS – code segment
  - DS – data segment
  - SS – stack segment
  - ES, FS, GS - additional segments

Some Specialized Register Uses (2 of 2)

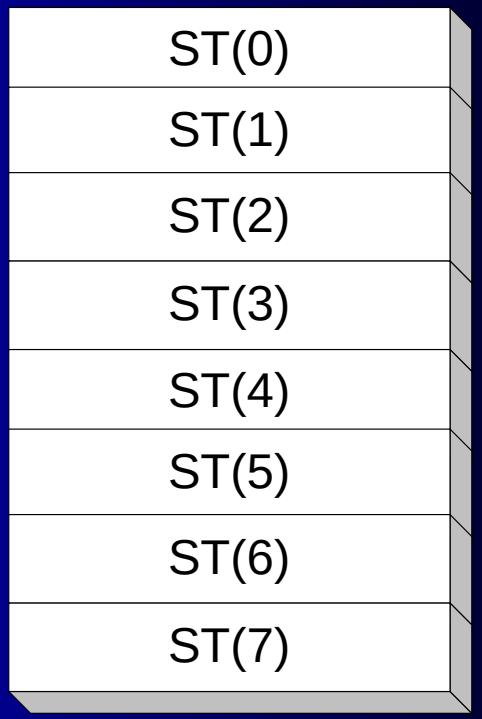
- EIP – instruction pointer
- EFLAGS
  - status and control flags
  - each flag is a single binary bit

Status Flags

- Carry
  - unsigned arithmetic out of range
- Overflow
  - signed arithmetic out of range
- Sign
  - result is negative
- Zero
  - result is zero
- Auxiliary Carry
  - carry from bit 3 to bit 4
- Parity
  - sum of 1 bits is an even number

Floating-Point, MMX, XMM Registers

- Eight 80-bit floating-point data registers
  - ST(0), ST(1), . . . , ST(7)
  - arranged in a stack
  - used for all floating-point arithmetic
- Eight 64-bit MMX registers
- Eight 128-bit XMM registers for single-instruction multiple-data (SIMD) operations



What's Next

- General Concepts
- IA-32 Processor Architecture
- **IA-32 Memory Management**
- 64-Bit Processors
- Components of an IA-32 Microcomputer
- Input-Output System

IA-32 Memory Management

- Real-address mode
- Calculating linear addresses
- Protected mode
- Multi-segment model
- Paging

Protected Mode (1 of 2)

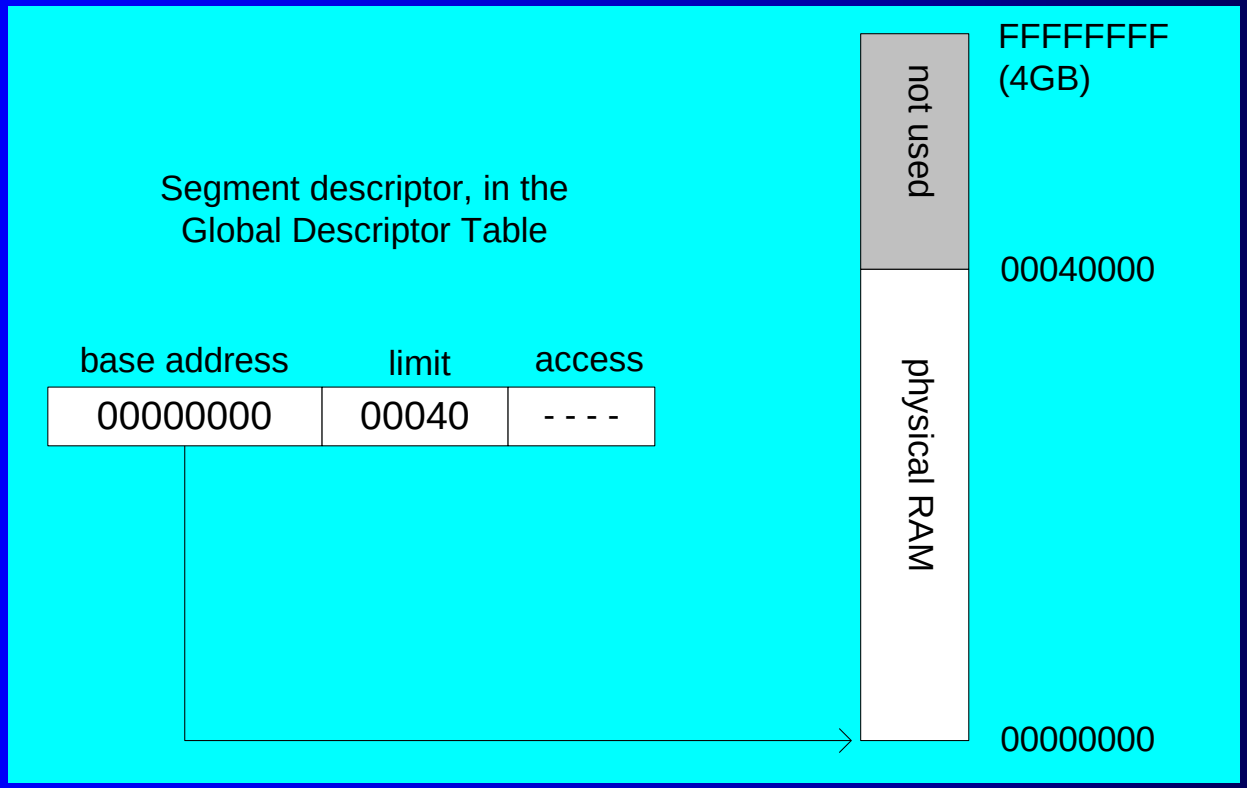
- 4 GB addressable RAM
  - (00000000 to FFFFFFFFh)
- Each program assigned a memory partition which is protected from other programs
- Designed for multitasking
- Supported by Linux & MS-Windows

Protected Mode (2 of 2)

- Segment descriptor tables
- Program structure
  - code, data, and stack areas
  - CS, DS, SS segment descriptors
  - global descriptor table (GDT)
- MASM Programs use the Microsoft flat memory model

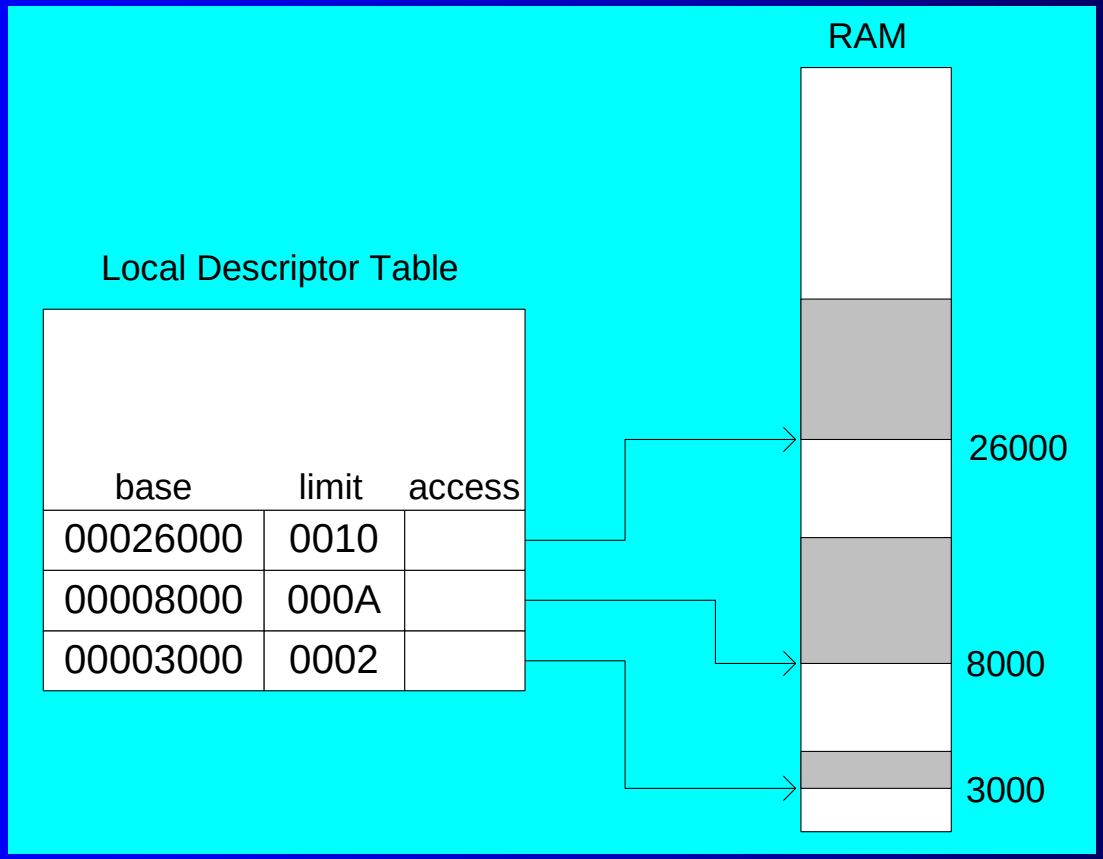
Flat Segment Model

- Single global descriptor table (GDT).
- All segments mapped to entire 32-bit address space



Multi-Segment Model

- Each program has a local descriptor table (LDT)
  - holds descriptor for each segment used by the program



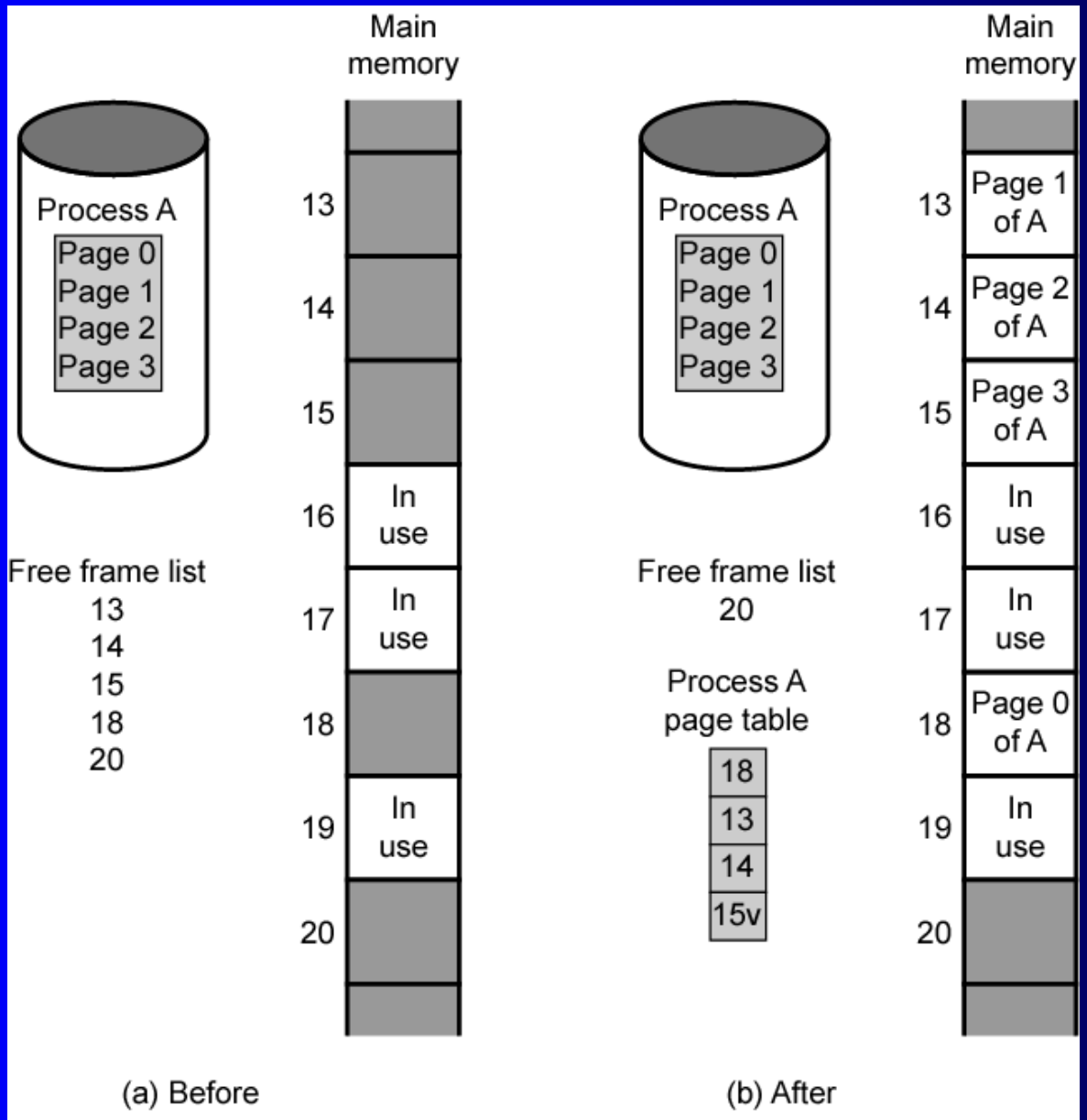
Paging

- Supported directly by the CPU
- Divides each segment into 4096-byte blocks called pages
- Sum of all programs can be larger than physical memory
- Part of running program is in memory, part is on disk
- Virtual memory manager (VMM) – OS utility that manages the loading and unloading of pages
- Page fault – issued by CPU when a page must be loaded from disk

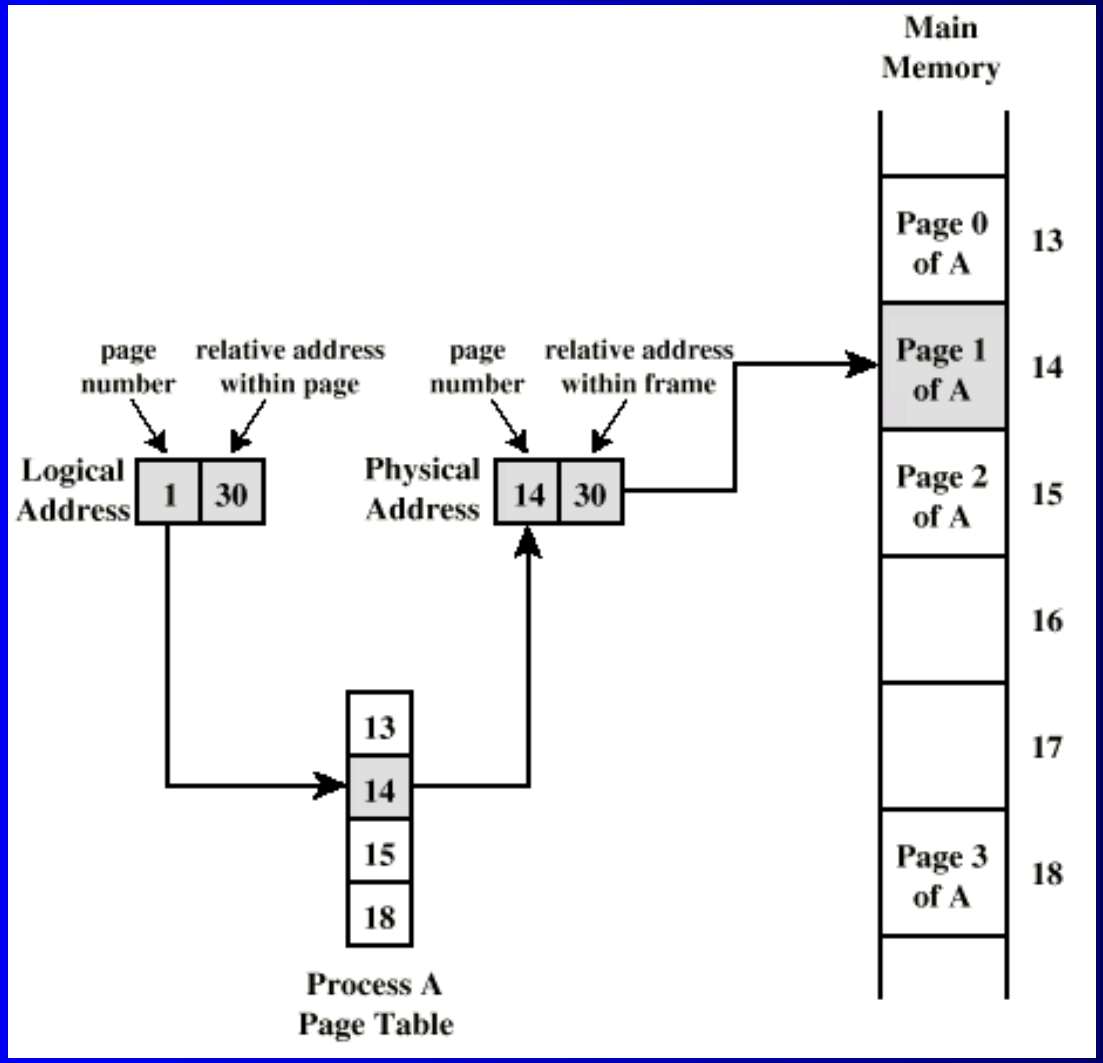
Paging (from Stallings)

- Split memory into equal sized, small chunks -page frames
- Split programs (processes) into equal sized small chunks - pages
- Allocate the required number page frames to a process
- Operating System maintains list of free frames
- A process does not require contiguous page frames
- Use page table to keep track

Allocation of Free Frames



Logical and Physical Addresses - Paging



Virtual Memory

- Demand paging
  - Do not require all pages of a process in memory
  - Bring in pages as required
- Page fault
  - Required page is not in memory
  - Operating System must swap in required page
  - May need to swap out a page to make space
  - Select page to throw out based on recent history

Thrashing

- Too many processes in too little memory
- Operating System spends all its time swapping
- Little or no real work is done
- Disk light is on all the time

- Solutions
  - Good page replacement algorithms
  - Reduce number of processes running
  - Fit more memory

Bonus

- We do not need all of a process in memory for it to run
- We can swap in pages as required
- So - we can now run processes that are bigger than total memory available!

- Main memory is called real memory
- User/programmer sees much bigger memory - virtual memory

What's Next

- General Concepts
- IA-32 Processor Architecture
- IA-32 Memory Management
- **64-Bit Processors**
- Components of an IA-32 Microcomputer
- Input-Output System

64-Bit Processors

- 64-Bit Operation Modes
  - Compatibility mode – can run existing 16-bit and 32-bit applications (Windows supports only 32-bit apps in this mode)
  - 64-bit mode – Windows 64 uses this
- Basic Execution Environment
  - addresses can be 64 bits (48 bits, in practice)
  - 16 64-bit general purpose registers
  - 64-bit instruction pointer named RIP

64-Bit General Purpose Registers

- 32-bit general purpose registers:
  - EAX, EBX, ECX, EDX, EDI, ESI, EBP, ESP, R8D, R9D, R10D, R11D, R12D, R13D, R14D, R15D
- 64-bit general purpose registers:
  - RAX, RBX, RCX, RDX, RDI, RSI, RBP, RSP, R8, R9, R10, R11, R12, R13, R14, R15

Max memory in 64 bit Systems

- Max RAM limits for different editions of Windows 7:
  - Starter: 8GB
  - Home Basic: 8GB
  - Home Premium: 16GB
  - Professional: 192GB
  - Enterprise: 192GB
  - Ultimate: 192GB
- Linux can support 64 TB (128 TB virtual address space)
- Depends on system board manufacturer also

What's Next

- General Concepts
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- **Components of an IA-32 Microcomputer**
- Input-Output System

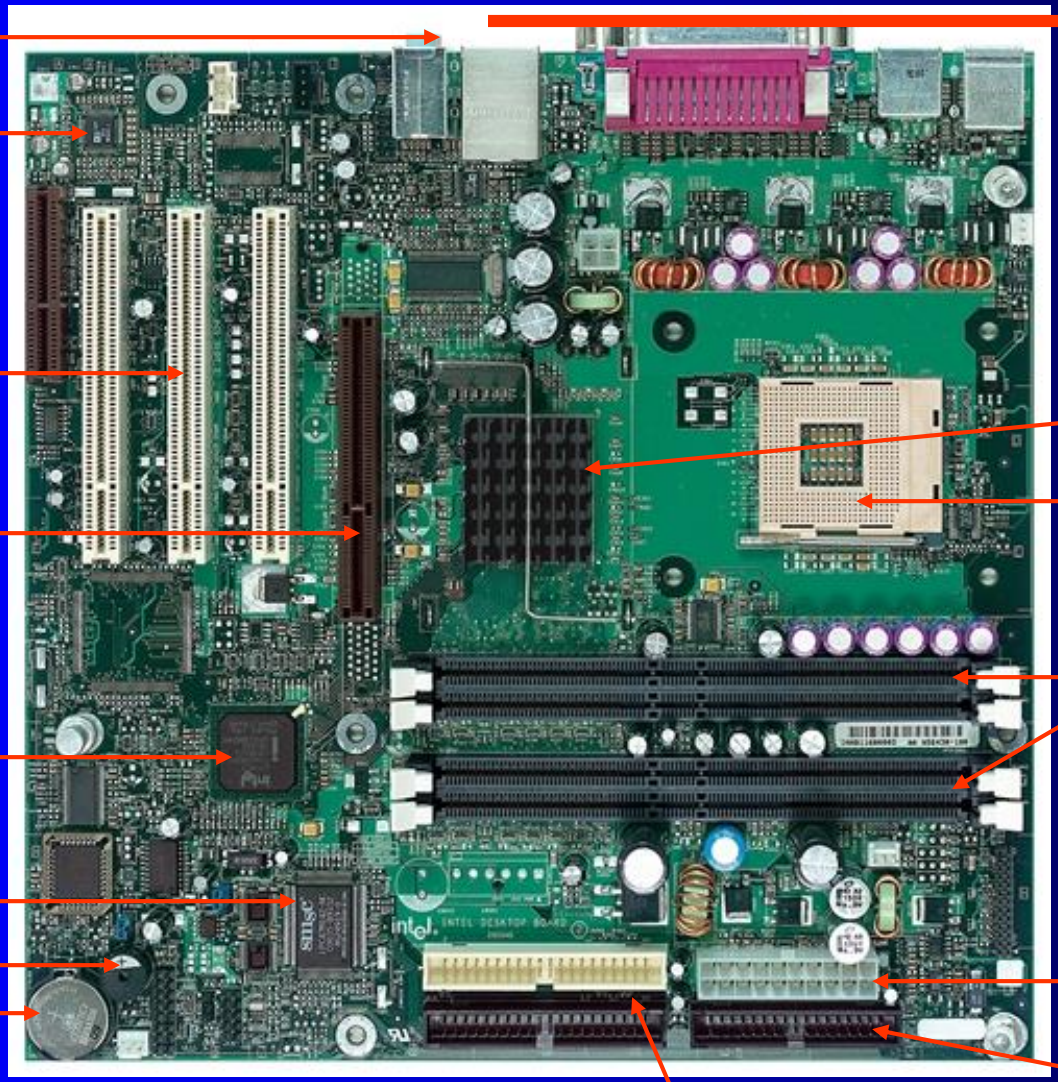
Components of an IA-32 Microcomputer

- Motherboard
- Video output
- Memory
- Input-output ports

Motherboard

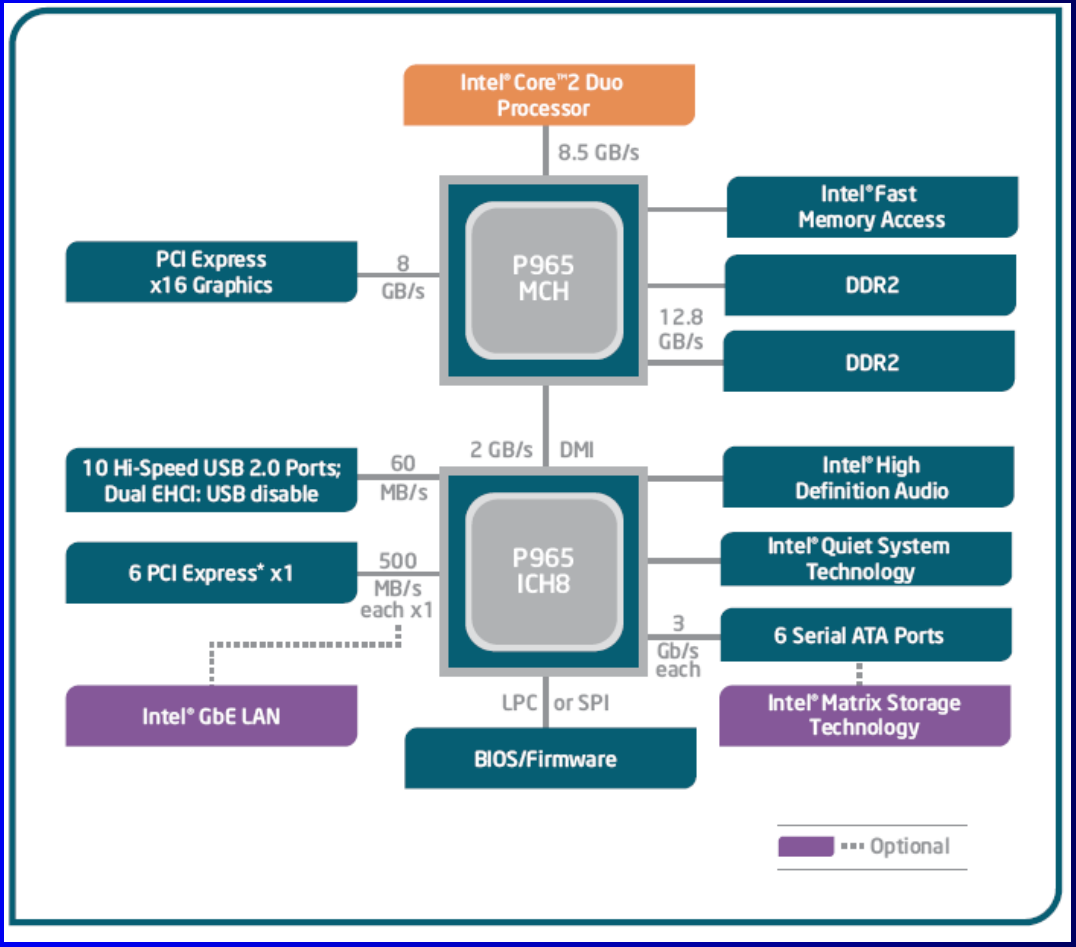
- CPU socket
- External cache memory slots
- Main memory slots
- BIOS chips
- Sound synthesizer chip (optional)
- Video controller chip (optional)
- IDE, parallel, serial, USB, video, keyboard, joystick, network, and mouse connectors
- PCI bus connectors (expansion cards)

Intel D850MD Motherboard



Source: Intel® Desktop Board D850MD/D850MV Technical Product Specification

Intel 965 Express Chipset



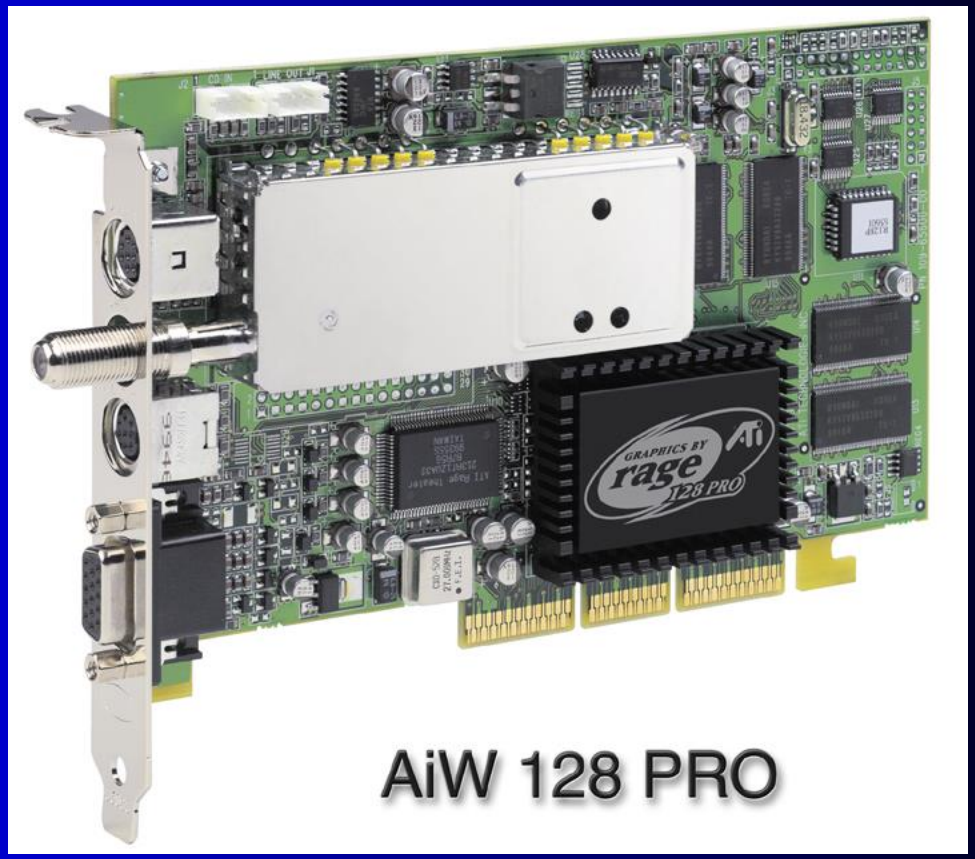
Video Output

- Video controller
  - on motherboard, or on expansion card
  - AGP (accelerated graphics port technology)*
- Video memory (VRAM)
- Video CRT Display
  - uses raster scanning
  - horizontal retrace
  - vertical retrace
- Direct digital LCD monitors
  - no raster scanning required

* This link may change over time.

Sample Video Controller (ATI Corp.)

- 128-bit 3D graphics performance powered by RAGE™ 128 PRO
- 3D graphics performance
- Intelligent TV-Tuner with Digital VCR
- TV-ON-DEMAND™
- Interactive Program Guide
- Still image and MPEG-2 motion video capture
- Video editing
- Hardware DVD video playback
- Video output to TV or VCR



Memory

- ROM
  - read-only memory
- EPROM
  - erasable programmable read-only memory
- Dynamic RAM (DRAM)
  - inexpensive; must be refreshed constantly
- Static RAM (SRAM)
  - expensive; used for cache memory; no refresh required
- Video RAM (VRAM)
  - dual ported; optimized for constant video refresh
- CMOS RAM
  - complimentary metal-oxide semiconductor
  - system setup information
- See: Intel platform memory (Intel technology brief: link address may change)

Input-Output Ports

- USB (universal serial bus)
  - intelligent high-speed connection to devices
  - up to 12 megabits/second
  - USB hub connects multiple devices
  - *enumeration*: computer queries devices
  - supports *hot* connections
- Parallel
  - short cable, high speed
  - common for printers
  - bidirectional, parallel data transfer
  - Intel 8255 controller chip

Input-Output Ports (cont)

- Serial
  - RS-232 serial port
  - one bit at a time
  - uses long cables and modems
  - 16550 UART (universal asynchronous receiver transmitter)
  - programmable in assembly language

Device Interfaces

- ATA host adapters
  - intelligent drive electronics (hard drive, CDROM)
- SATA (Serial ATA)
  - inexpensive, fast, bidirectional
- FireWire
  - high speed (800 MB/sec), many devices at once
- Bluetooth
  - small amounts of data, short distances, low power usage
- Wi-Fi (wireless Ethernet)
  - IEEE 802.11 standard, faster than Bluetooth

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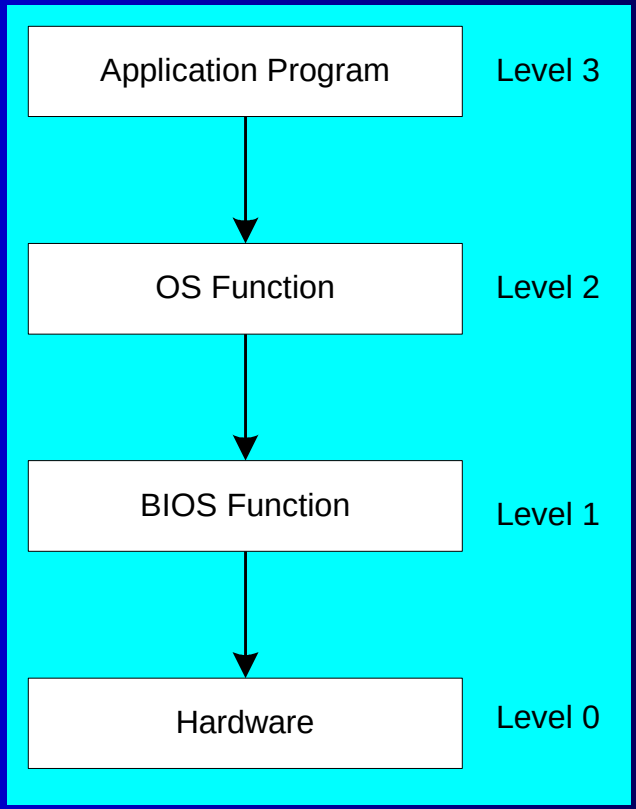
- **Input-Output System**

Levels of Input-Output

- Level 3: High-level language function
  - examples: C++, Java
  - portable, convenient, not always the fastest
- Level 2: Operating system
  - Application Programming Interface (API)
  - extended capabilities, lots of details to master
- Level 1: BIOS
  - drivers that communicate directly with devices
  - OS security may prevent application-level code from working at this level

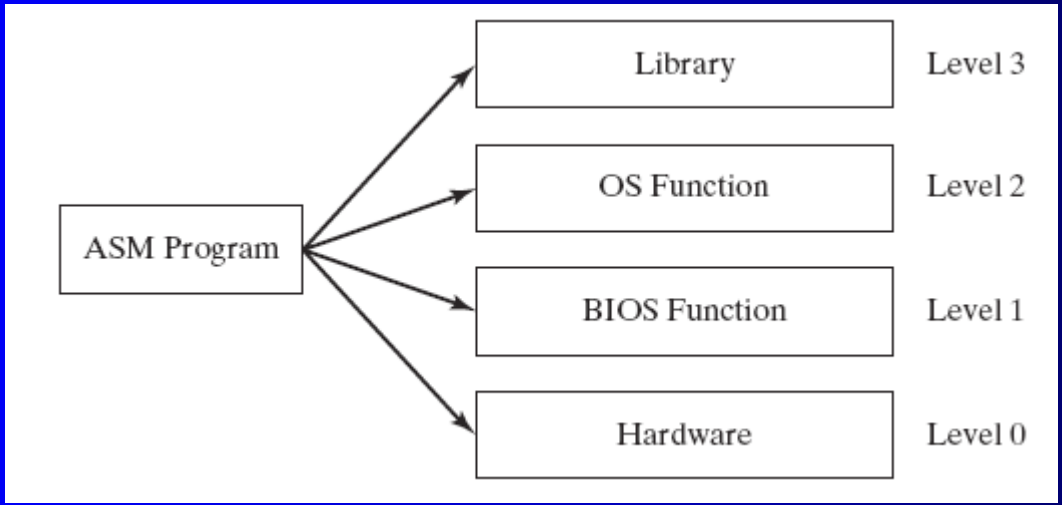
Displaying a String of Characters

When a HLL program displays a string of characters, the following steps take place:



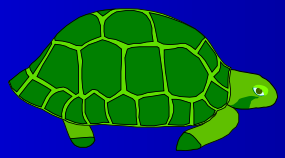
Programming levels

Assembly language programs can perform input-output at each of the following levels:



Summary

- Central Processing Unit (CPU)
- Arithmetic Logic Unit (ALU)
- Instruction execution cycle
- Multitasking
- Floating Point Unit (FPU)
- Complex Instruction Set
- Real mode and Protected mode
- Motherboard components
- Memory types
- Input/Output and access levels



42 69 6E 61 72 79

What does this say?