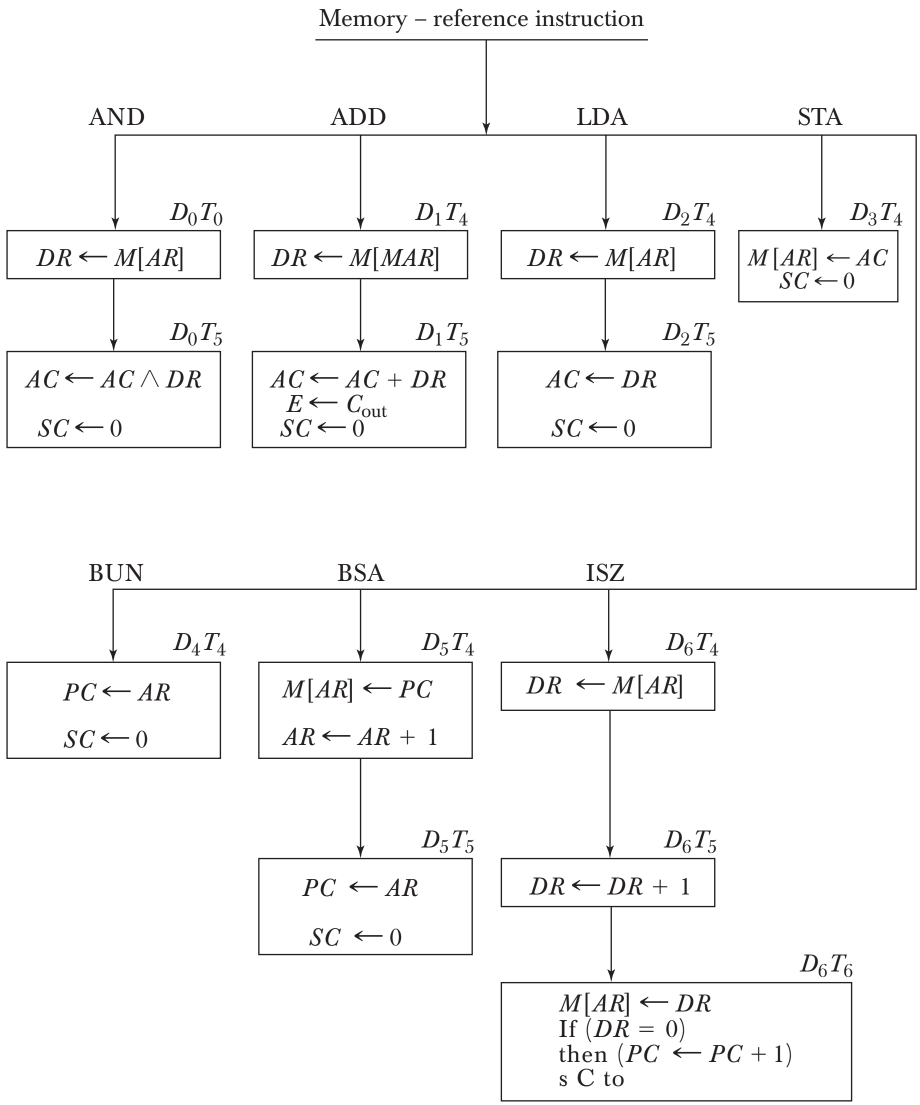


Figure 5-11 Flowchart for memory-reference instructions.

5-7 Input–Output and Interrupt

A computer can serve no useful purpose unless it communicates with the external environment. Instructions and data stored in memory must come from some input device. Computational results must be transmitted to the user through some output device. Commercial computers include many types of input and output devices. To demonstrate the most basic requirements for input and output communication, we will use as an illustration a terminal unit with a keyboard and printer. Input–output organization is discussed further in Chap. 11.

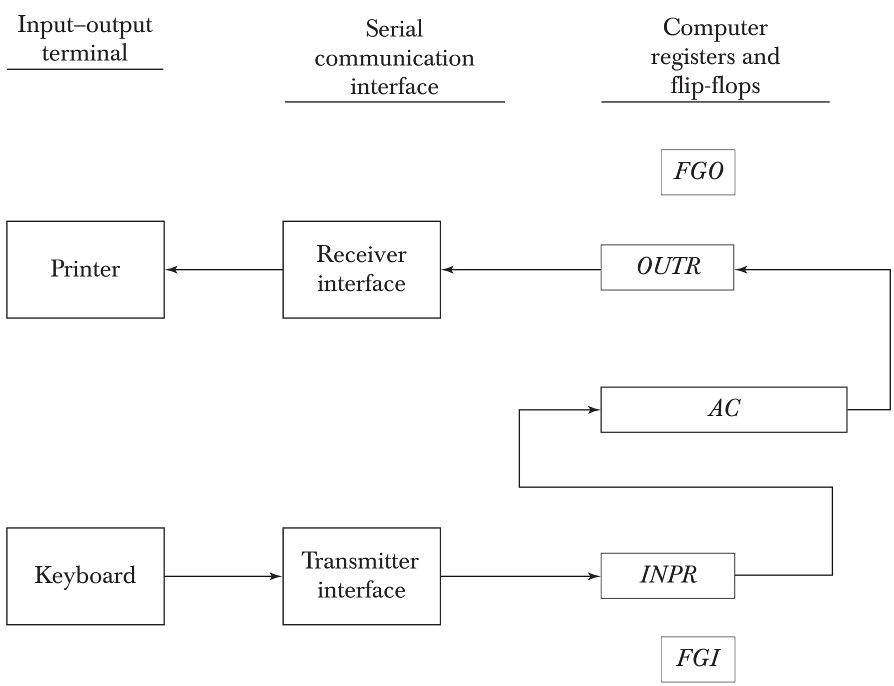
Input–Output Configuration

The terminal sends and receives serial information. Each quantity of information has eight bits of an alphanumeric code. The serial information from the keyboard is shifted into the input register *INPR*. The serial information for the printer is stored in the output register *OUTR*. These two registers communicate with a communication interface serially and with the *AC* in parallel. The input–output configuration is shown in Fig. 5-12. The transmitter interface receives serial information from the keyboard and transmits it to *INPR*. The receiver interface receives information from *OUTR* and sends it to the printer serially. The operation of the serial communication interface is explained in Sec. 11-3.

input register

The input register *INPR* consists of eight bits and holds an alphanumeric input information. The 1-bit input flag *FGI* is a control flip-flop. The flag bit is

Figure 5-12 Input–output configuration.



set to 1 when new information is available in the input device and is cleared to 0 when the information is accepted by the computer. The flag is needed to synchronize the timing rate difference between the input device and the computer. The process of information transfer is as follows. Initially, the input flag *FGI* is cleared to 0. When a key is struck in the keyboard, an 8-bit alphanumeric code is shifted into *INPR* and the input flag *FGI* is set to 1. As long as the flag is set, the information in *INPR* cannot be changed by striking another key. The computer checks the flag bit; if it is 1, the information from *INPR* is transferred in parallel into *AC* and *FGI* is cleared to 0. Once the flag is cleared, new information can be shifted into *INPR* by striking another key.

output register

The output register *OUTR* works similarly but the direction of information flow is reversed. Initially, the output flag *FGO* is set to 1. The computer checks the flag bit; if it is 1, the information from *AC* is transferred in parallel to *OUTR* and *FGO* is cleared to 0. The output device accepts the coded information, prints the corresponding character, and when the operation is completed, it sets *FGO* to 1. The computer does not load a new character into *OUTR* when *FGO* is 0 because this condition indicates that the output device is in the process of printing the character.

Input–Output Instructions

Input and output instructions are needed for transferring information to and from *AC* register, for checking the flag bits, and for controlling the interrupt facility. Input–output instructions have an operation code 1111 and are recognized by the control when $D_7 = 1$ and $I = 1$. The remaining bits of the instruction specify the particular operation. The control functions and microoperations for the input–output instructions are listed in Table 5-5. These instructions are executed with the clock transition associated with timing signal T_3. Each control function needs a Boolean relation D_7IT_3, which we designate for convenience by the symbol p. The control function is distinguished by one of the bits in $IR(6–11)$. By assigning the symbol B_i to bit i of IR, all control functions can

TABLE 5-5 Input–Output Instructions

$D_7IT_3 = p$ (common to all input–output instructions)
$IR(i) = B_i$ [bit in $IR(6–11)$ that specifies the instruction]

	p:	$SC \leftarrow 0$	Clear *SC*
INP	pB_{11}:	$AC(0–7) \leftarrow INPR, \quad FGI \leftarrow 0$	Input character
OUT	pB_{10}:	$OUTR \leftarrow AC(0–7), \quad FGO \leftarrow 0$	Output character
SKI	pB_9:	If $(FGI = 1)$ then $(PC \leftarrow PC + 1)$	Skip on input flag
SKO	pB_8:	If $(FGO = 1)$ then $(PC \leftarrow PC + 1)$	Skip on output flag
ION	pB_7:	$IEN \leftarrow 1$	Interrupt enable on
IOF	pB_6:	$IEN \leftarrow 0$	Interrupt enable off

be denoted by pB_i for $i = 6$ though 11. The sequence counter SC is cleared to 0 when $p = D_7IT_3 = 1$.

The INP instruction transfers the input information from $INPR$ into the eight low-order bits of AC and also clears the input flag to 0. The OUT instruction transfers the eight least significant bits of AC into the output register $OUTR$ and clears the output flag to 0. The next two instructions in Table 5-5 check the status of the flags and cause a skip of the next instruction if the flag is 1. The instruction that is skipped will normally be a branch instruction to return and check the flag again. The branch instruction is not skipped if the flag is 0. If the flag is 1, the branch instruction is skipped and an input or output instruction is executed. (Examples of input and output programs are given in Sec. 6-8.) The last two instructions set and clear an interrupt enable flip-flop IEN. The purpose of IEN is explained in conjunction with the interrupt operation.

Program Interrupt

The process of communication just described is referred to as programmed control transfer. The computer keeps checking the flag bit, and when it finds it set, it initiates an information transfer. The difference of information flow rate between the computer and that of the input–output device makes this type of transfer inefficient. To see why this is inefficient, consider a computer that can go through an instruction cycle in 1 μs. Assume that the input–output device can transfer information at a maximum rate of 10 characters per second. This is equivalent to one character every 100,000 μs. Two instructions are executed when the computer checks the flag bit and decides not to transfer the information. This means that at the maximum rate, the computer will check the flag 50,000 times between each transfer. The computer is wasting time while checking the flag instead of doing some other useful processing task.

An alternative to the programmed controlled procedure is to let the external device inform the computer when it is ready for the transfer. In the meantime the computer can be busy with other tasks. This type of transfer uses the interrupt facility. While the computer is running a program, it does not check the flags. However, when a flag is set, the computer is momentarily interrupted from proceeding with the current program and is informed of the fact that a flag has been set. The computer deviates momentarily from what it is doing to take eare of the input or output transfer. It then returns to the current program to continue what it was doing before the interrupt.

The interrupt enable flip-flop IEN can be set and cleared with two instructions. When IEN is cleared to 0 (with the IOF instruction), the flags cannot interrupt the computer. When IEN is set to 1 (with the ION instruction), the computer can be interrupted. These two instructions provide the programmer with the capability of making a decision as to whether or not to use the interrupt facility.

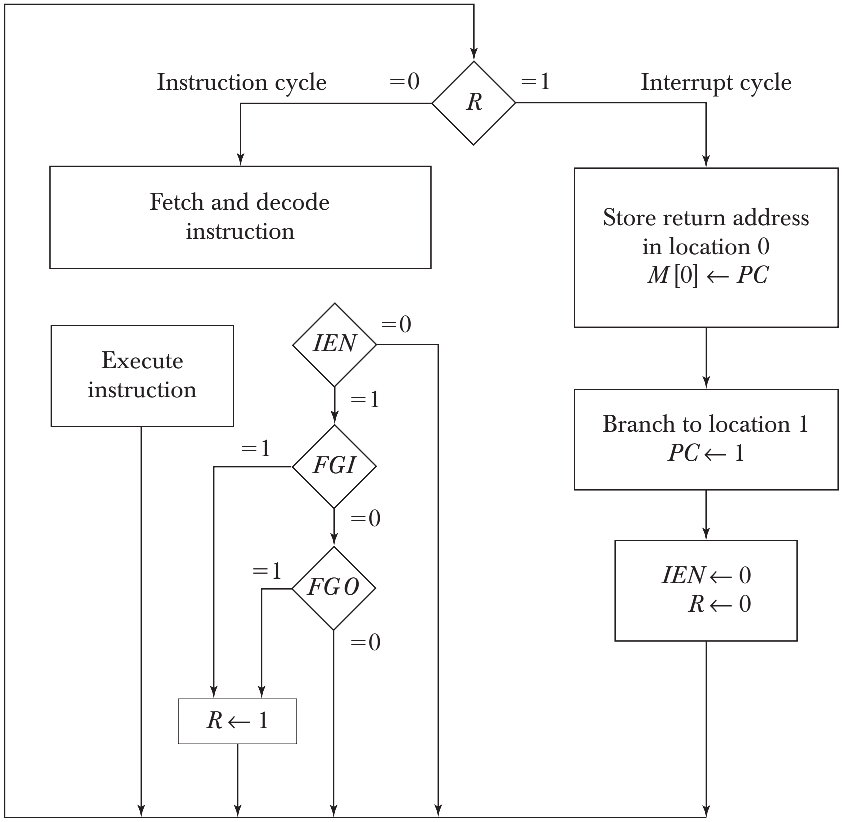


Figure 5-13 Flowchart for interrupt cycle.

The way that the interrupt is handled by the computer can be explained by means of the flowchart of Fig. 5-13. An interrupt flip-flop R is included in the computer. When $R = 0$, the computer goes through an instruction cycle. During the execute phase of the instruction cycle IEN is checked by the control. If it is 0, it indicates that the programmer does not want to use the interrupt, so control continues with the next instruction cycle. If IEN is 1, control checks the flag bits. If both flags are 0, it indicates that neither the input nor the output registers are ready for transfer of information. In this case, control continues with the next instruction cycle. If either flag is set to 1 while $IEN = 1$, flip-flop R is set to 1. At the end of the execute phase, control checks the value of R, and if it is equal to 1, it goes to an interrupt cycle instead of an instruction cycle.

interrupt cycle

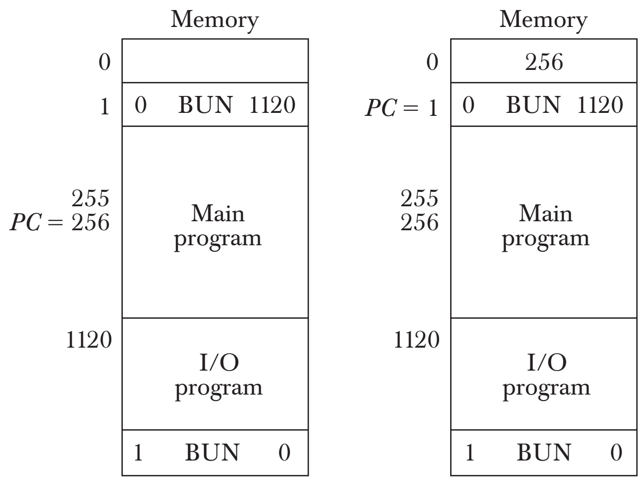
The interrupt cycle is a hardware implementation of a branch and save return address operation. The return address available in PC is stored in a specific location where it can be found later when the program returns to the instruction at which it was interrupted. This location may be a processor register, a memory stack, or a specific memory location. Here we choose the memory location at address 0 as the place for storing the return address. Control then inserts address 1 into *PC* and clears *IEN* and *R* so that no more interruptions can occur until the interrupt request from the flag has been serviced.

An example that shows what happens during the interrupt cycle is shown in Fig. 5-14. Suppose that an interrupt occurs and *R* is set to 1 while the control is executing the instruction at address 255. At this time, the return address 256 is in *PC*. The programmer has previously placed an input–output service program in memory starting from address 1120 and a BUN 1120 instruction at address 1. This is shown in Fig. 5-14(a).

When control reaches timing signal T_0 and finds that $R = 1$, it proceeds with the interrupt cycle. The content of *PC* (256) is stored in memory location 0, *PC* is set to 1, and *R* is cleared to 0. At the beginning of the next instruction cycle, the instruction that is read from memory is in address 1 since this is the content of *PC*. The branch instruction at address 1 causes the program to transfer to the input–output service program at address 1120. This program checks the flags, determines which flag is set, and then transfers the required input or output information. Once this is done, the instruction ION is executed to set *IEN* to 1 (to enable further interrupts), and the program returns to the location where it was interrupted. This is shown in Fig. 5-14(b).

The instruction that returns the computer to the original place in the main program is a branch indirect instruction with an address part of 0. This instruction is placed at the end of the I/O service program. After this instruction

Figure 5-14 Demonstration of the interrupt cycle.



(a) Before interrupt (b) After interrupt cycle