the program while external interrupts are asynchronous. If the program is rerun, the internal interrupts will occur in the same place each time. External interrupts depend on external conditions that are independent of the program being executed at the time.

software interrupt

External and internal interrupts are initiated from signals that occur in the hardware of the CPU. A software interrupt is initiated by executing an instruction. Software interrupt is a special call instruction that behaves like an interrupt rather than a subroutine call. It can be used by the programmer to initiate an interrupt procedure at any desired point in the program. The most common use of software interrupt is associated with a supervisor call instruction. This instruction provides means for switching from a CPU user mode to the supervisor mode. Certain operations in the computer may be assigned to the supervisor mode only, as for example, a complex input or output transfer procedure. A program written by a user must run in the user mode. When an input or output transfer is required, the supervisor mode is requested by means of a supervisor call instruction. This instruction causes a software interrupt that stores the old CPU state and brings in a new PSW that belongs to the supervisor mode. The calling program must pass information to the operating system in order to specify the particular task requested.

8-8 Reduced Instruction Set Computer (RISC)

An important aspect of computer architecture is the design of the instruction set for the processor. The instruction set chosen for a particular computer determines the way that machine language programs are constructed. Early computers had small and simple instruction sets, forced mainly by the need to minimize the hardware used to implement them. As digital hardware became cheaper with the advent of integrated circuits, computer instructions tended to increase both in number and complexity. Many computers have instruction sets that include more than 100 and sometimes even more than 200 instructions. These computers also employ a variety of data types and a large number of addressing modes. The trend into computer hardware complexity was influenced by various factors, such as upgrading existing models to provide more customer applications, adding instructions that facilitate the translation from high-level language into machine language programs, and striving to develop machines that move functions from software implementation into hardware implementation. A computer with a large number of instructions is classified as a *complex instruction set computer,* abbreviated CISC.

CISC

In the early 1980s, a number of computer designers recommended that computers use fewer instructions with simple constructs so they can be executed much faster within the CPU without having to use memory as often. This type of computer is classified as a *reduced instruction set computer* or RISC.

RISC

In this section we introduce the major characteristics of CISC and RISC architectures and then present the instruction set and instruction format of a RISC processor.

CISC Characteristics

The design of an instruction set for a computer must take into consideration not only machine language constructs, but also the requirements imposed on the use of high-level programming languages. The translation from high-level to machine language programs is done by means of a compiler program. One reason for the trend to provide a complex instruction set is the desire to simplify the compilation and improve the overall computer performance. The task of a compiler is to generate a sequence of machine instructions for each high-level language statement. The task is simplified if there are machine instructions that implement the statements directly. The essential goal of a CISC architecture is to attempt to provide a single machine instruction for each statement that is written in a high-level language. Examples of CISC architectures are the Digital Equipment Corporation VAX computer and the IBM 370 computer.

Another characteristic of CISC architecture is the incorporation of variable-length instruction formats. Instructions that require register operands may be only two bytes in length, but instructions that need two memory addresses may need five bytes to include the entire instruction code. If the computer has 32-bit words (four bytes), the first instruction occupies half a word, while the second instruction needs one word in addition to one byte in the next word. Packing variable instruction formats in a fixed-length memory word requires special decoding circuits that count bytes within words and frame the instructions according to their byte length.

The instructions in a typical CISC processor provide direct manipulation of operands residing in memory. For example, an ADD instruction may specify one operand in memory through index addressing and a second operand in memory through a direct addressing. Another memory location may be included in the instruction to store the sum. This requires three memory references during execution of the instruction. Although CISC processors have instructions that use only processor registers, the availability of other modes of operations tend to simplify high-level language compilation. However, as more instructions and addressing modes are incorporated into a computer, the more hardware logic is needed to implement and support them, and this may cause the computations to slow down. In summary, the major characteristics of CISC architecture are:

1. A large number of instructions–typically from 100 to 250 instructions
2. Some instructions that perform specialized tasks and are used infrequently

3. A large variety of addressing modes–typically from 5 to 20 different modes
4. Variable-length instruction formats
5. Instructions that manipulate operands in memory

RISC Characteristics

The concept of RISC architecture involves an attempt to reduce execution time by simplifying the instruction set of the computer. The major characteristics of a RISC processor are:

1. Relatively few instructions
2. Relatively few addressing modes
3. Memory access limited to load and store instructions
4. All operations done within the registers of the CPU
5. Fixed-length, easily decoded instruction format
6. Single-cycle instruction execution
7. Hardwired rather than microprogrammed control

The small set of instructions of a typical RISC processor consists mostly of register-to-register operations, with only simple load and store operations for memory access. Thus each operand is brought into a processor register with a load instruction. All computations are done among the data stored in processor registers. Results are transferred to memory by means of store instructions. This architectural feature simplifies the instruction set and encourages the optimization of register manipulation. The use of only a few addressing modes results from the fact that almost all instructions have simple register addressing. Other addressing modes may be included, such as immediate operands and relative mode.

By using a relatively simple instruction format, the instruction length can be fixed and aligned on word boundaries. An important aspect of RISC instruction format is that it is easy to decode. Thus the operation code and register fields of the instruction code can be accessed simultaneously by the control. By simplifying the instructions and their format, it is possible to simplify the control logic. For faster operations, a hardwired control is preferable over a microprogrammed control. An example of hardwired control is presented in Chap. 5 in conjunction with the control unit of the basic computer. Examples of microprogrammed control are presented in Chap. 7.

A characteristic of RISC processors is their ability to execute one instruction per clock cycle. This is done by overlapping the fetch, decode, and execute phases of two or three instructions by using a procedure referred to as pipelining. A load or store instruction may require two clock cycles because access to

memory takes more time than register operations. Efficient pipelining, as well as a few other characteristics, are sometimes attributed to RISC, although they may exist in non-RISC architectures as well. Other characteristics attributed to RISC architecture are:

1. A relatively large number of registers in the processor unit
2. Use of overlapped register windows to speed-up procedure call and return
3. Efficient instruction pipeline
4. Compiler support for efficient translation of high-level language programs into machine language programs

A large number of registers is useful for storing intermediate results and for optimizing operand references. The advantage of register storage as opposed to memory storage is that registers can transfer information to other registers much faster than the transfer of information to and from memory. Thus register-to-memory operations can be minimized by keeping the most frequent accessed operands in registers. Studies that show improved performance for RISC architecture do not differentiate between the effects of the reduced instruction set and the effects of a large register file. For this reason a large number of registers in the processing unit are sometimes associated with RISC processors. The use of overlapped register windows when transferring program control after a procedure call is explained below. Instruction pipeline in RISC is presented in Sec. 9-5 after we explain the concept of pipelining.

pipelining

Overlapped Register Windows

Procedure call and return occurs quite often in high-level programming languages. When translated into machine language, a procedure call produces a sequence of instructions that save register values, pass parameters needed for the procedure, and then calls a subroutine to execute the body of the procedure. After a procedure return, the program restores the old register values, passes results to the calling program, and returns from the subroutine. Saving and restoring registers and passing of parameters and results involve time-consuming operations. Some computers provide multiple-register banks, and each procedure is allocated its own bank of registers. This eliminates the need for saving and restoring register values. Some computers use the memory stack to store the parameters that are needed by the procedure, but this requires a memory access every time the stack is accessed.

A characteristic of some RISC processors is their use of *overlapped register windows* to provide the passing of parameters and avoid the need for saving and restoring register values. Each procedure call results in the allocation of a

new window consisting of a set of registers from the register file for use by the new procedure. Each procedure call activates a new register window by incrementing a pointer, while the return statement decrements the pointer and causes the activation of the previous window. Windows for adjacent procedures have overlapping registers that are shared to provide the passing of parameters and results.

The concept of overlapped register windows is illustrated in Fig. 8-9. The system has a total of 74 registers. Registers $R0$ through $R9$ are global registers that hold parameters shared by all procedures. The other 64 registers are divided into four windows to accommodate procedures *A*, *B*, *C*, and *D*. Each register window consists of 10 local registers and two sets of six registers common to adjacent windows. Local registers are used for local variables. Common registers are used for exchange of parameters and results between adjacent procedures. The common overlapped registers permit parameters to be passed without the actual movement of data. Only one register window is activated at any given time with a pointer indicating the active window. Each procedure call activates a new register window by incrementing the pointer. The high registers of the calling procedure overlap the low registers of the called procedure, and therefore the parameters automatically transfer from calling to called procedure.

As an example, suppose that procedure *A* calls procedure *B*. Registers $R26$ through $R31$ are common to both procedures, and therefore procedure *A* stores the parameters for procedure *B* in these registers. Procedure *B* uses local registers $R32$ through $R41$ for local variable storage. If procedure *B* calls procedure *C*, it will pass the parameters through registers $R42$ through $R47$. When procedure *B* is ready to return at the end of its computation, the program stores results of the computation in registers $R26$ through $R31$ and transfers back to the register window of procedure *A*. Note that registers $R10$ through $R15$ are common to procedures *A* and *D* because the four windows have a circular organization with *A* being adjacent to *D*.

As mentioned previously, the 10 global registers $R0$ through $R9$ are available to all procedures. Each procedure in Fig. 8-9 has available a total of 32 registers while it is active. This includes 10 global registers, 10 local registers, six low overlapping registers, and six high overlapping registers. Other fixed-size register window schemes are possible, and each may differ in the size of the register window and the size of the total register file. In general, the organization of register windows will have the following relationships:

number of global registers = G

number of local registers in each window = L

number of registers common to two windows = C

number of windows = W

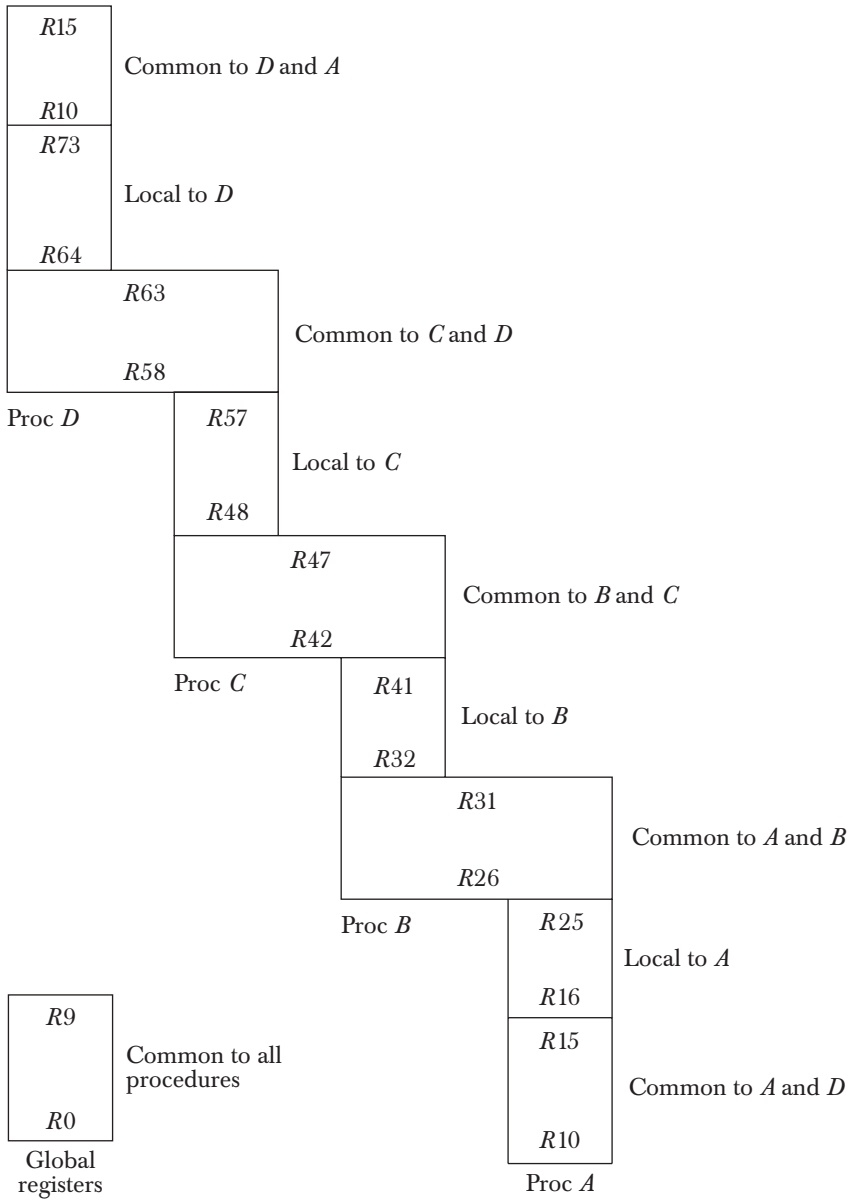

Figure 8-9 Overlapped register windows.