CUDA Memory Model

Or how "our strength grows out of our weakness"

by Georgy Evtushenko **y**@g_evtushenko on January 5, 2021

» Motivation

Performance A significant slowdown is caused by excess memory ordering

Correctness One source of non-deterministic concurrency bugs is a
misunderstanding of the architecture's shared memory consistency
model i.e. what values can be read from shared memory when issued
concurrently with other reads and writes.¹

¹Daniel J. Sorin, Mark D. Hill, and David A. Wood. *A Primer on Memory Consistency and Cache Coherence*. 1st. 2011. ISBN: 1608455645.

» Definitions

Read operation All variants of Id instruction and atom instruction.

Write operation All variants of st instruction and atom instruction.

Memory operation A read or write operation.

Memory model Set of rules defining how memory operations on shared memory from multiple threads are processed. Tradeoff between ease of programmability and efficiency.

Memory order Total order of memory operations.

» Sequential consistency

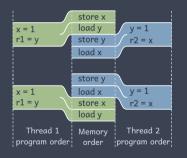
"... the result of any execution is the same as if the operations of all the processors were executed in some sequential order, and the operations of each individual processor appear in this sequence in the order specified by its program."²

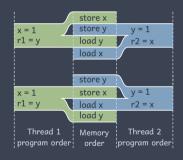
Thread 1	Thread 2
1 x = 1	1 y = 1
2 r1 = v	2 r2 = x

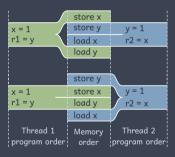
²L. Lamport. "How to Make a Multiprocessor Computer That Correctly Executes Multiprocess Programs". In: *IEEE Transactions on Computers* C-28 (1979), pp. 690–691.

» Sequential consistency

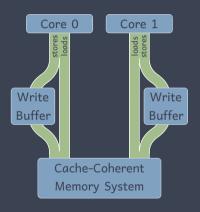








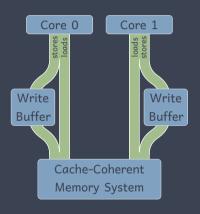
» Total Store Order TSO



TSO/x86 memory model allows some non-SC executions by holding stores in write buffers:

- * A store enters the write buffer immediately
- A store exits the write buffer when cache in a read-write coherence state

» Total Store Order TSO

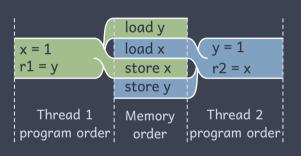


TSO/x86 memory model allows some non-SC executions by holding stores in write buffers:

- * A store enters the write buffer immediately
- A store exits the write buffer when cache in a read-write coherence state

Thread 1	Thread 2
x = 1;	1 y = 1;
r1 = y;	2 r2 = x;

» Total Store Order TSO



*
$$L(a)$$

*
$$L(a)$$

$$* S(a)$$

*
$$S(a)$$

st Therefore it's possible to have both $r_1=0$ and $r_2=0$

ASM

1 mov eax, DWORD PTR Y[rip]
2 mov DWORD PTR Y[rip], 0
3 add eax, 1
4 mov DWORD PTR X[rip], eax

» Program order

Compiler barrier

```
1  x = y + 1;
2  asm volatile ("" ::: "memory");
3  y = 0;
1  g++ -03 -S -masm=intel ctmo.cpp
```

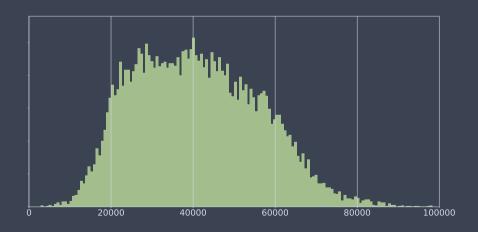
ASM

```
1 mov eax, DWORD PTR Y[rip]
2 add eax, 1
3 mov DWORD PTR X[rip], eax
4 mov DWORD PTR Y[rip], 0
```

Compiler barrier

» Program order

```
1 void thread_2_body ()
2 {
3    y = 1;
4    asm volatile (
5    "" ::: "memory");
6    r2 = x;
7 }
```



Compiler barrier

» Program order

```
1  void thread_1_body ()
2  {
3     x = 1;
4     asm volatile (
5     "mfence" ::: "memory");
6     r1 = y;
7  }
```

```
Thread 2

1 void thread_2_body ()

2 {

3     y = 1;

4     asm volatile (
        "mfence" ::: "memory");

6     r2 = x;

7 }
```

» Weak models definitions

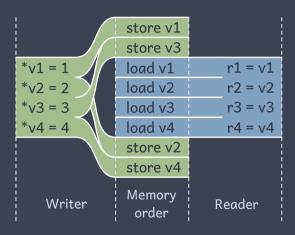
Weak memory models preserves only the orders that programmers require.

memory operations can be reordered unless there is a fence between them.

- * L(a)
- * S(a)
- * FENCE $\langle p L(a) \Rightarrow \text{FENCE} \langle m L(a) \rangle$
- * FENCE $\langle p S(a) \Rightarrow \text{FENCE} \langle m S(a) \rangle$

» Operations interleaving

```
device void writer (
                           1 device void reader (
  volatile int * v1,
                                 volatile int * v1,
  volatile int * v2,
                           3 volatile int * v2,
 volatile int * v3,
                           _{4} volatile int * v3,
 volatile int * v4)
                           5 volatile int * v4,
                           6 int *result)
*v1 = 1:
*v2 = 2:
                                int r1 = *v1; int r2 = *v2;
*v3 = 3:
                                int r3 = *v3; int r4 = *v4:
*v4 = 4:
                                if (r1 == 1 \& r3 == 3)
                                \&\& r2 == 0 \&\& r4 == 0)
                          13 	 *result = 0:
```



» Operations interleaving

Was interleaved up to 671 times out of 1000 runs on RTX 3090.

```
cudaMemset (x, 0, 4 * sizeof (int));
cudaMemset (y, 0, 2 * sizeof (int));

if (single_segment)
   kernel<<<1024, 32>>> (x + 0, x + 1, x + 2, x + 3, r);
else
   kernel<<<1024, 32>>> (x + 0, y + 0, x + 1, y + 1, r);
```

```
host void writer (
   volatile int * v1,
volatile int * v2,
volatile int * v3,
volatile int * \overline{v4})
 *v1 = 1;
*v2 = 2:
*v3 = 3:
*v4 = 4:
```

addr	value

```
host void writer (
     volatile int * v1,
  volatile int * v2,
  volatile int * v3,
   volatile int * v4)
    *v1 = 1; // <=
  *v2 = 2;
9 *v3 = 3;
10 *v4 = 4:
```

addr	value
200	1

```
host void writer (
    volatile int * v1,
3 volatile int * v2,
4 volatile int * v3,
  volatile int * v4)
   *v1 = 1;
v^2 = 2; v^2 = 2
9 *v3 = 3:
10 *v4 = 4;
```

addr	value
200	1
400	2

```
host void writer (
     volatile int * v1,
volatile int * v2,
4 volatile int * v3,
   volatile int * v4)
    *v1 = 1;
*v2 = 2;
9 *v3 = 3; // <=
10 \times v4 = 4;
```

addr	value
200	1
400	2
204	3

```
host void writer (
     volatile int * v1,
volatile int * v2,
4 volatile int * v3,
  volatile int * v4)
   *v1 = 1;
*v2 = 2;
9 *v3 = 3:
10 *v4 = 4: // <=
```

addr	value
200	1
400	2
204	3
404	4

```
device void writer (
    volatile int * v1.
10 * v4 = 4:
```

addr	value	value	value	value

```
1 device void writer (
               volatile int * v1.
volatile int * v1,
volatile int * v2,
volatile int * v3,
volatile int * v4)

{
    *v1 = 1; // <=
    *v2 = 2;
    *v3 = 3;</pre>
10 *v4 = 4;
```

addr	value	value	value	value
200	1			

```
1 device void writer (
       volatile int * v1.
volatile int * v1,
volatile int * v2,
volatile int * v3,
volatile int * v4)

{
    *v1 = 1;
    *v2 = 2; // <=
    *v3 = 3;</pre>
10 * v4 = 4:
```

addr	value	value	value	value
200	1			
400	2			

```
1 device void writer (
              volatile int * v1.
volatile int * v1,
volatile int * v2,
volatile int * v3,
volatile int * v4)

{
    *v1 = 1;
    *v2 = 2;
    *v3 = 3; // <=</pre>
10 * v4 = 4:
```

addr	value	value	value	value
200	1	3		
400	2			

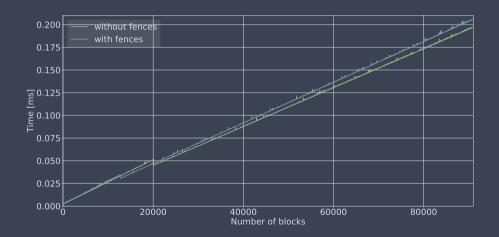
```
1 device void writer (
             volatile int * v1.
volatile int * V1,
volatile int * v2,
volatile int * v3,
volatile int * v4)
{
    *v1 = 1;
    *v2 = 2;
    *v3 = 3;
}
10 *v4 = 4: // <=
```

addr	value	value	value	value
200	1	3		
400	2	4		

» Operations interleaving

```
device void writer (
    volatile int * v1,
    volatile int * v2,
    volatile int * v3,
   volatile int * v4)
  *v1 = 1:
  *v2 = 2:
  threadfence ();
*v3 = 3:
  *v4 = 4:
```

```
l device void reader (
    volatile int * v1,
3 volatile int * v2,
4 volatile int * v3,
5 volatile int * v4,
6 int *result)
     int r1 = *v1; int r2 = *v2;
    threadfence ();
    int r3 = v3: int r4 = v4:
     if ( r1 == 1 && r3 == 3
     \&\& r2 == 0 \&\& r4 == 0)
14 *result = 0:
```

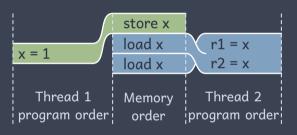


coRR

» Read-Read Coherence

```
global void coherence of read read (/*...*/) {
     shared int cache[BLOCK SIZE];
     /* .. Initialize shared memory .. */
     syncthreads ();
     if (tid == wthread) {
     cache[tid] = 1;
     else {
       const int r1 = cache[reordering 1[tid]];
       const int r2 = cache[reordering 2[tid]];
   if (r1 == 1 \&\& r2 == 0)
if (tid == rthread)
  *violated = 1;
```

» Read-Read Coherence coRR



» Read-Read Coherence

coRR

Violated 157 times out of 100'000 runs on GTX 560 (Fermi). Fixed in Maxwell.

» Message Passing

» Message Passing

```
global void kernel (
    int n, int * flag, int * data, int *result) {
 for (int i = 0; i < n; i++)
                                    IADD R3, R0, 0x1;
  data[i] = i + 1;
                                    IADD R4, R0, 0x2;
                                    STG.E [R1], R3
 *flaq = 1;
                                    IADD R3, R0, 0x3;
                                    STG.E [R2], R4;
                                    MOV32I R5, 0x1;
                                    STG.E [flag], R5;
```

» Message Passing

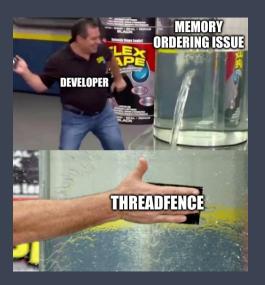
```
global void ke<u>rnel (</u>
      int n, int * flag, int * data, int *result) {
  while (*flag == 0);
                                      LDG.E R1, [R0];
                                      ISETP.NE.AND PO. PT. R2. RZ. PT:
  for (int i = 0; i < n; i++)
                                      @!P0 BRA .L1:
  if (data[i] == 0)
                                      LDG.E R3, [R2];
5 *result = 0:
                                      LDG.E R4, [R2+0×4];
                                      LDG.E R5. [R2+0x81:
                                      LDG.E R6, [R2+0xc];
                                      EXIT:
                                      .L1:
                                      BRA .L1:
```

```
global void kernel (
    int n, volatile int * flag, int * data, int *result) {
while (*flag == 0);
                                    .L1:
                                    LDG.E.STRONG.SYS R1, [R0];
 for (int i = 0; i < n; i++)
                                    ISETP.NE.AND PO. PT. R2. RZ. PT:
  if (data[i] == 0)
                                    @!P0 BRA .L1;
*result = 0:
                                    LDG.E R3, [R2];
                                    LDG.E R4, [R2+0x4];
                                    LDG.E R5, [R2+0x8];
                                    LDG.E R6, [R2+0xc];
                                    EXIT:
```

» Stale data found RTX 2080

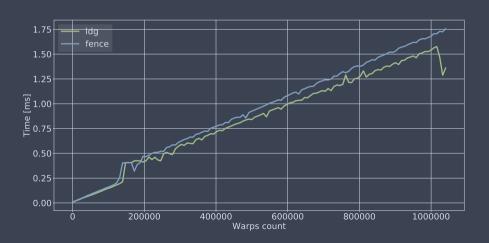


```
global void kernel (
    int n, volatile int * flag, int * data, int *result) {
for (int i = 0; i < n; i++)
                                   while (*flag == 0);
  data[i] = i + 1:
                                   threadfence ();
threadfence ();
                                    for (int i = 0; i < n; i++)
*flag = 1;
                                     if (data[i] == 0)
                                       *result = 0:
```



```
device int ldg (const int * p)
 int out;
 asm volatile("ld.global.cg.s32 %0, [%1];" : "=r"(out) : "l"(p));
 return out;
for (int i = 0; i < n; i++)
                                   while (*flag == 0);
 data[i] = i + 1;
                                   // threadfence ();
threadfence ();
                                   for (int i = 0; i < n; i++)
*flag = 1;
                                     if (ldg (data + i) == 0)
                                       *result = 0:
```

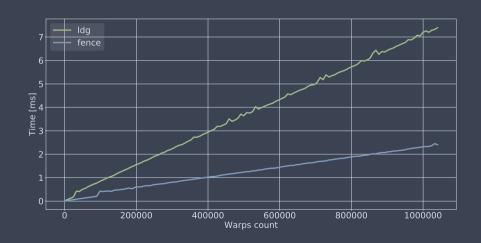
Average speedup is about 8.4%.



"It's possible to break the dependency order between the flag load and the later, dependent ld.cg load, that makes your test pass. Because it's possible to write a program that breaks this order, it's not possible for us to write a memory model that says the order is enforced."

³Olivier Giroux. personal communication.

Average slowdown is about 208.3%.



The fence can be eliminated if the status flag and the corresponding value being updated can be combined into a single architectural word.⁴

⁴M. Garland D. Merrill. "Single-pass Parallel Prefix Scan with Decoupled Look-back". In: *NVIDIA Technical Report NVR-2016-002* (2016).

```
union data_flag

{
    struct { int32_t data; int32_t flag; } fields;
    int64_t vec;
};
```

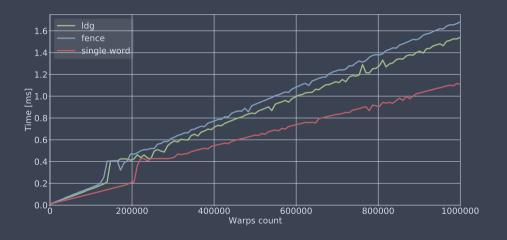
Writer

```
data_flag tmp;
tmp.fields.data = 1;
tmp.fields.flag = 1;
df->vec = tmp.vec;
```

Reader

```
while (!tmp.fields.flag)
tmp.vec = df->vec;

if (tmp.fields.data == 0)
*result = 0;
```



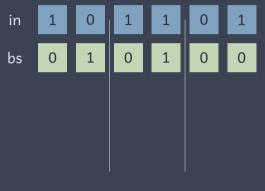
» Exclusive scan sequential version

Scan produces an output sequence where each element is computed to be the reduction of the elements occurring earlier in the input sequence.

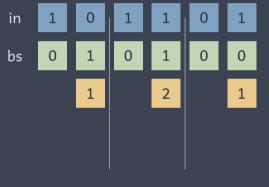
```
int sum = 0;
for (int i = 0; i < n; i++)
{
    out[i] = sum;
    sum += in[i];
}</pre>
in 1 0 1 1 0 1

out 0 1 1 2 3 3
```

» Exclusive scan inner scan

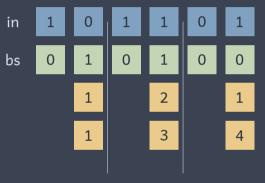


» Exclusive scan blocks' results

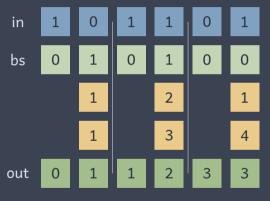


» Exclusive scan

inclusive scan of blocks' results

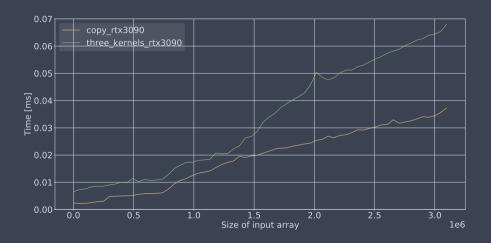


» Exclusive scan final result



» Exclusive scan three-kernels version

```
hierarchical_partial_scan<<<blooks, hierarchical_block_size>>> (
   in, out, helper_buffer);
hierarchical_blocks_results_scan<<<1, 1024>>> (
   blocks, helper_buffer, helper_buffer);
hierarchical_final_adjust<<<blooks, hierarchical_block_size>>> (
   out, helper_buffer);
```



» Exclusive scan sequential version

```
// Load
data type thread data[thread data size];
BlockLoad (temp storage).Load (in + block offset, thread data);
syncthreads ();
// This thread block aggregate
data type block reduce =
  BlockReduce (temp storage).Sum (thread data);
```

sequential version

```
if (threadIdx.x == 0) {
 if (blockIdx.x == 0) {
    commit (block statuses + blockIdx.x, block reduce);
 else {
   do {
      prev block status = load (block statuses + blockIdx.x - 1);
   } while (prev block status.flag == 0);
    thread data[0] += prev block status.data;
    commit (
      block statuses + blockIdx.x,
      prev block status.data + block reduce);
  syncthreads ():
```

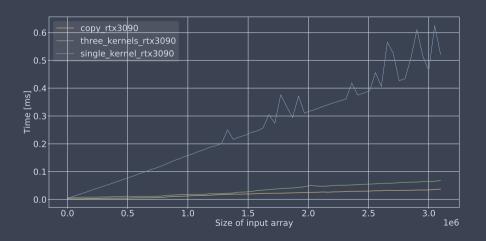
» Exclusive scan sequential version

```
BlockScan (temp_storage).ExclusiveSum (thread_data, thread_data);

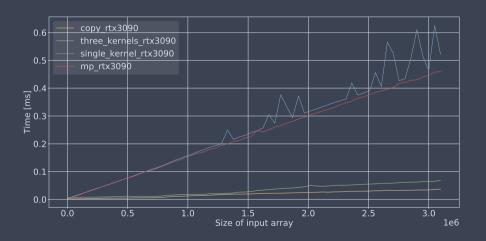
syncthreads ();

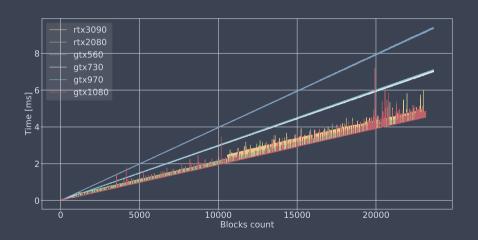
// Store final result
BlockStore (temp storage).Store (out + block offset, thread data);
```

» Exclusive scan single scan performance



» Exclusive scan single scan performance





» Exclusive scan decoupled look-back

```
1 if (blockIdx.x == 0)
2 if (threadIdx.x == 0)
3 store (block_statuses + blockIdx.x, 2, block_aggregate);
```

```
if (blockIdx.x != 0)
{
  if (threadIdx.x == 0)
    store (block_statuses + blockIdx.x, 1, block_aggregate);
  if (threadIdx.x / WARP_SIZE == 0)
  {
    //
```

```
int predecessor_idx = blockIdx.x - WARP_SIZE + threadIdx.x;
data_type thread_sum = data_type ();

while (true)
{
   prev_block_status = load (block_statuses + predecessor_idx);

while (prev_block_status.flag == 0)
   prev_block_status = load (block_statuses + predecessor_idx);
```

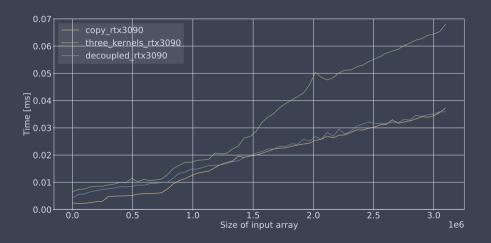
```
if ( all sync (WARP MASK, prev block status.flag < 2)) {</pre>
  thread sum += prev block status.data;
  predecessor idx -= WARP SIZE;
  continue:
else {
  const int final mask =
   ballot sync (WARP MASK, prev block status.flag > 1);
  const int rightmost thread = WARP SIZE - 1 - clz (final mask);
  thread sum += threadIdx.x % WARP SIZE < rightmost thread
              ? 0
              : prev block status.data;
  break:
```

» Exclusive scan decoupled look-back

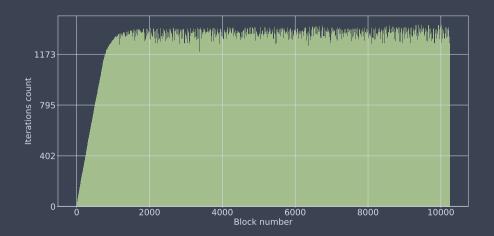
```
data_type aggregate =
   WarpReduce (temp_storage.warp_reduce).Sum (thread_sum);

if (threadIdx.x == 0) {
   store (block_statuses + blockIdx.x, 2, aggregate + block_aggregate);
   prev_aggregate = aggregate;
}
```

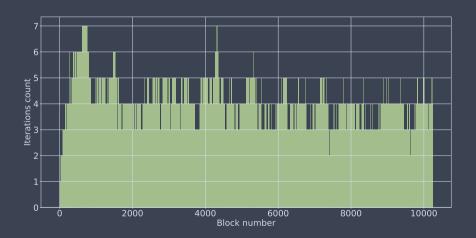
» Exclusive scan decoupled look-back



» Exclusive scan single-kernel

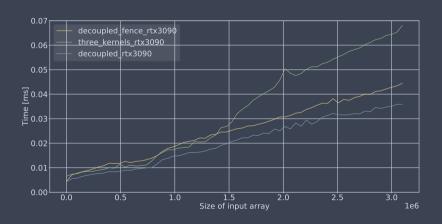


» Exclusive scan decoupled look-back



» Exclusive scan

Fence version: 23% performance degradation



Release pattern on a location M consists of fence followed by a strong write on M in program order.

```
1 __threadfence ();
2 *flag = 1; // volatile int *flag
```

Acquire pattern on a location M consists of strong read on M followed by a fence in program order.

```
1 int reg = *flag; // volatile int *flag
2 __threadfence ();
```

» Definitions

Read operation All variants of ld instruction and atom instruction.

Write operation All variants of st instruction and atom instruction.

Memory operation A read or write operation.

» Definitions

Read operation All variants of Id instruction and atom instruction.

Write operation All variants of st instruction and atom instruction.

Memory operation A read or write operation.

Strong operation A fence operation, or a memory operation with a .relaxed, .acquire, .release, .acq_rel or .volatile qualifier.

» Release and Acquire Patterns

Release pattern on a location M consists of a release operation on M.

```
device void store release (int * flag, int val)
           asm volatile (
              "st.release.gpu.b32 [%0], %1;"
       5 :: "l"(flag),"r"(val) : "memory");
Acquire pattern on a location M consists of an acquire operation on M.
           device int load acquire (int * flag)
            int req;
            asm volatile (
              "ld.acquire.gpu.b32 %0, [%1];"
            : "=r"(reg) : "l"(flag) : "memory");
            return reg;
```

acquire/release operations

st.release.gpu

- 1 MEMBAR.ALL.GPU
- 2 ST.E.STRONG.GPU [UR4], R0

ld.acquire.gpu

- LD.E.STRONG.GPU R0, [UR4]
- 2 CCTL.IVALL

» Release and Acquire Patterns

```
device void old writer (
   int n, volatile int * flag, int * data, int *result) {
  for (int i = 0: i < n: i++)
   data[i] = i + 1:
   threadfence ();
 *flag = 1:
 device void new writer (
   int n, atomic<int> &flag, int * data, int *result) {
  for (int i = 0: i < n: i++)
   data[i] = i + 1;
  flag.store (1, memory order release);
```

» Reduce sequential version

Reduce produces a single aggregate from a list of input elements.

» Device reduction

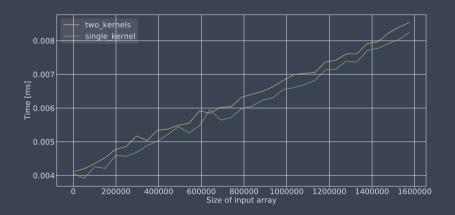
```
reduce<<<bloom>
locks, block_size>>> (in, block_results);
reduce_block_results<<<1, block_size>>> (
    blocks, block_results, block_results);
```

» Device reduction

```
// .. block-wide reduce ..
if (threadIdx.x == 0)
    block results[blockIdx.x] = block result;
    threadfence ();
    const int prev count = atomicAdd (count, 1);
    temp storage.need to perform final reduce
      = prev count == gridDim.x - 1;
```

» Device reduction performance

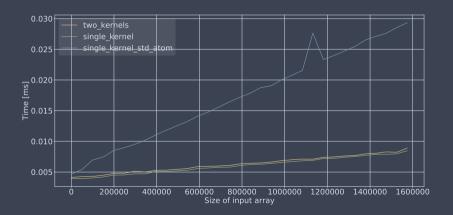
Single-kernel version: \approx 4% performance improvement



» Device reduction

```
// .. block-wide reduce ..
if (threadIdx.x == 0)
    block results[blockIdx.x] = block result;
    const int prev count =
      count->fetch add (1, cuda::std::memory order release);
    temp storage.need to perform final reduce
      = prev count == gridDim.x - 1;
```

» Device reduction performance

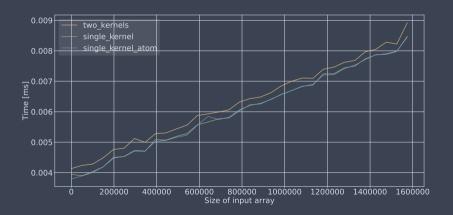


» Device reduction

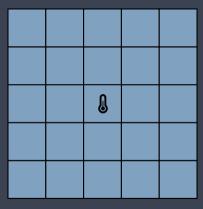
```
// CUDA C++, __host__ __device__.
// Strictly conforming to the C++ Standard.
#include <cuda/std/atomic>
cuda::std::atomic<int> x;

// CUDA C++, __host__ __device__.
// Conforming extensions to the C++ Standard.
#include <cuda/atomic>
cuda::atomic<int, cuda::thread_scope_block> x;
```

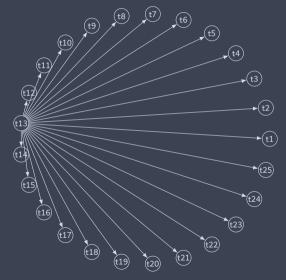
» Device reduction performance



» Broadcast illustration



» Broadcast illustration



basic version

```
» Broadcast
```

```
unsigned int special value = (unsigned int) -1;
unsigned int last it = special value;
int stride = blockDim.x * gridDim.x;
for (unsigned it = 0; it < last it; it++) {</pre>
  int i = threadIdx.x + blockIdx.x * blockDim.x;
  for (: i < n: i += stride) {
    data[i] += value;
   if (data[i] > threshold)
      stop = true;
  if (stop)
  last it = it:
```

» Broadcast volatile global

```
sensor owner

if (data[i] > threshold)

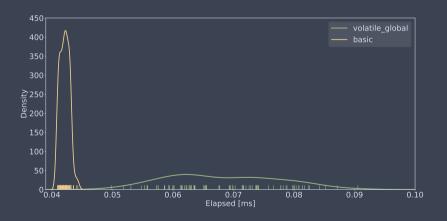
stop = true;

store (flag, stop, it + 1);
```

ther threads

» Broadcast

volatile global performance

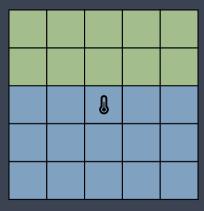


volatile global block

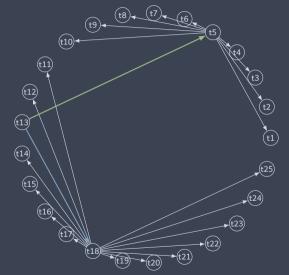
```
if (last it == special value) {
 if (threadIdx.x == 0) {
    status word it state = load (flag);
    while (it state.data <= it)</pre>
      it state = load (flag);
    if (it state.flag)
      block last it = it state.data;
    syncthreads ();
  last it = block last it;
```

» Broadcast

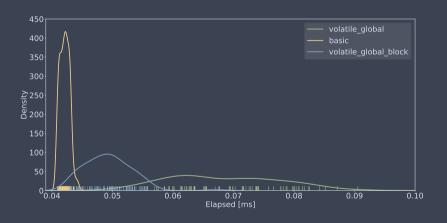
» Broadcast illustration



» Broadcast illustration



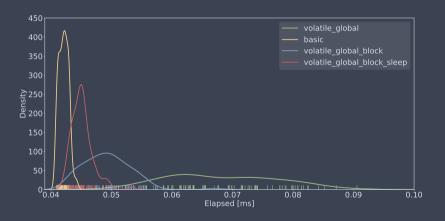
volatile global block performance



» Broadcast

```
if (last it == special value) {
  if (threadIdx.x == 0) {
    status word it state = load (flag);
    while (it state.data <= it) {</pre>
        nanosleep (250); //< new line
      \overline{it} state = load (flag):
    if (it state.flag)
      block last it = it state.data;
    syncthreads ();
  last it = block last it;
```

volatile global block sleep performance



atomic (sensor owner)

```
» Broadcast
```

```
if (data[i] > threshold)
stop = true;

flag->store (
status_word {stop, it + 1},
cuda::memory_order_relaxed);

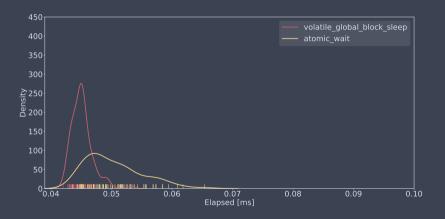
flag->notify_all ();
```

» Broadcast atomic

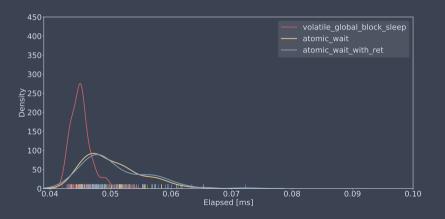
other threads

```
if (threadIdx.x == 0) {
  status word it state
    = flag->load (cuda::memory order relaxed);
  if (it state.data <= it) {</pre>
    flag->wait (it state, cuda::memory order relaxed);
    it state = flag->load (cuda::memory order relaxed);
  if (it state.flag)
    block last it = it state.data;
syncthreads ();
last it = block last it;
```

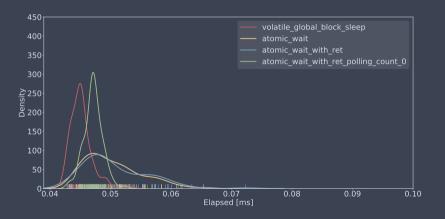
» Broadcast atomic performance



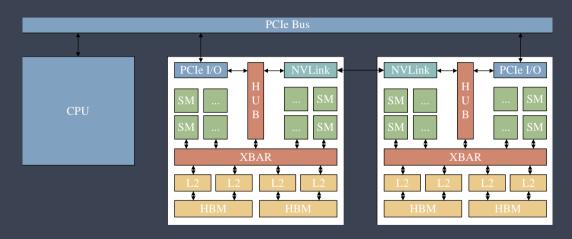
» Broadcast atomic performance

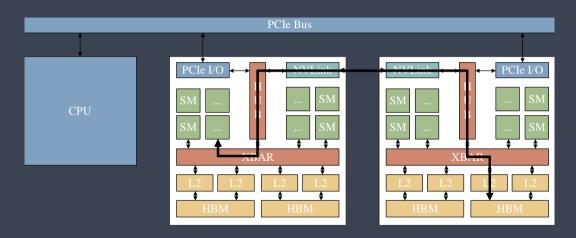


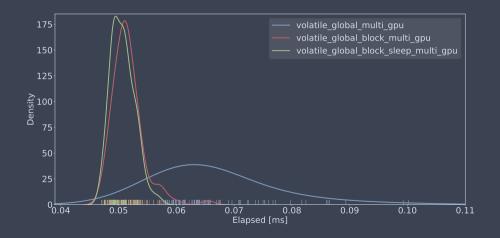
» Broadcast atomic performance











Recommended materials

- * CppCon 2018: Olivier Giroux "High-Radix Concurrent C++."
- * CppCon 2019: Olivier Giroux "The One-Decade Task: Putting std::atomic in CUDA."
- * Cpp Toronto 2020: Bryce Adelstein Lelbach "The CUDA C++ Standard Library by."
- * Sorin, Daniel J. and Hill, Mark D. and Wood, David A. "A Primer on Memory Consistency and Cache Coherence"

Source codes and presentation will be published soon, check **y**@g_evtushenko