Course Overview

Computer Systems
1st Lecture, Sep. 3, 2018

Lecture:

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Based on slides by:

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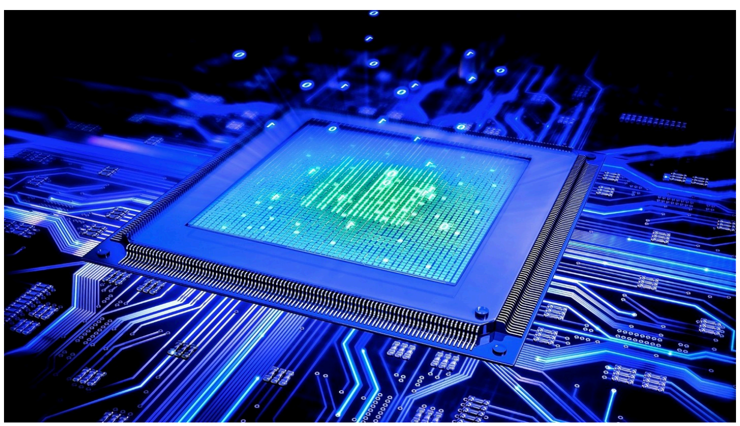
Overview

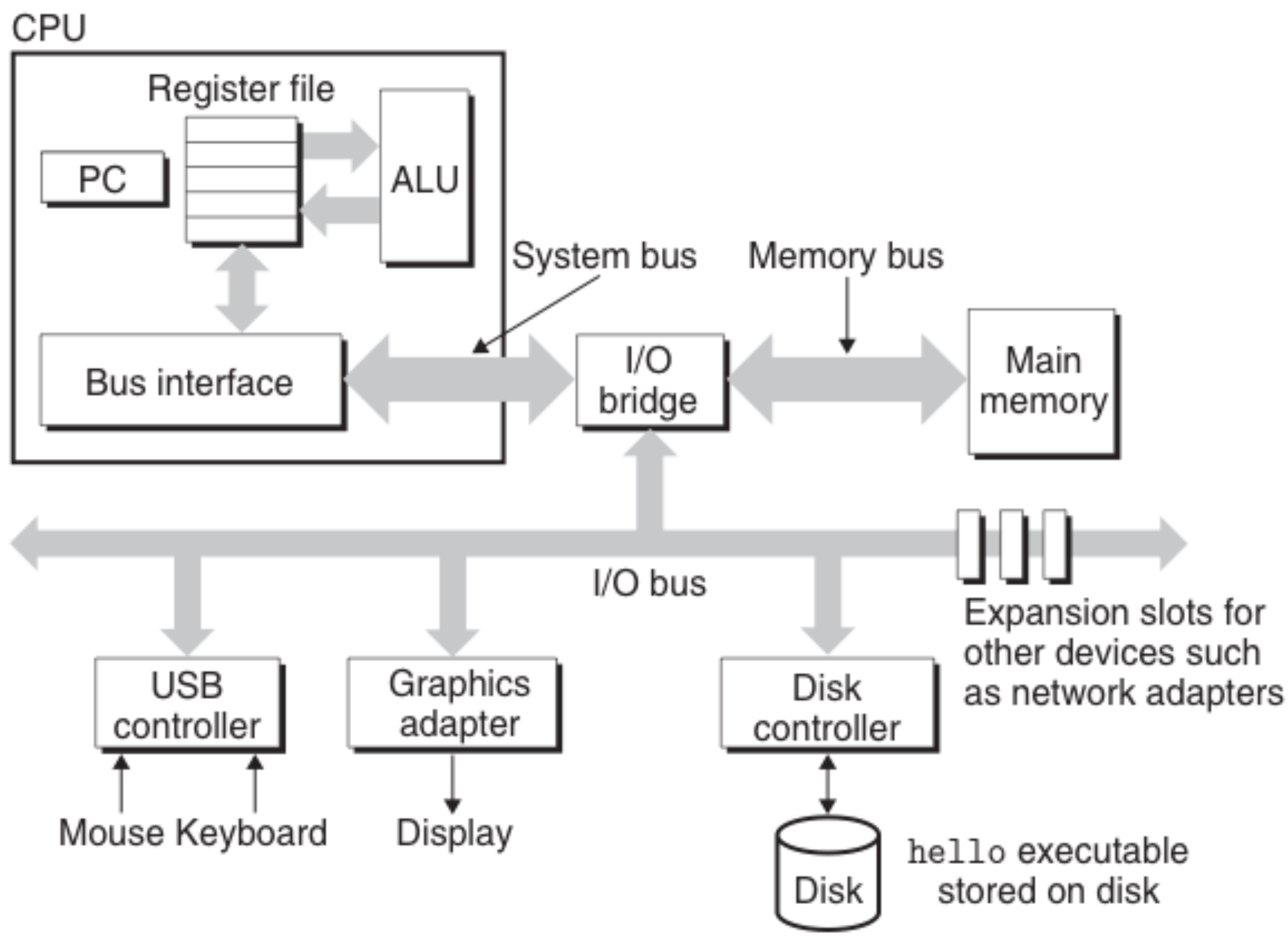
- Course introduction
- Overall theme
- What is part of the course

What is a computer system for you?

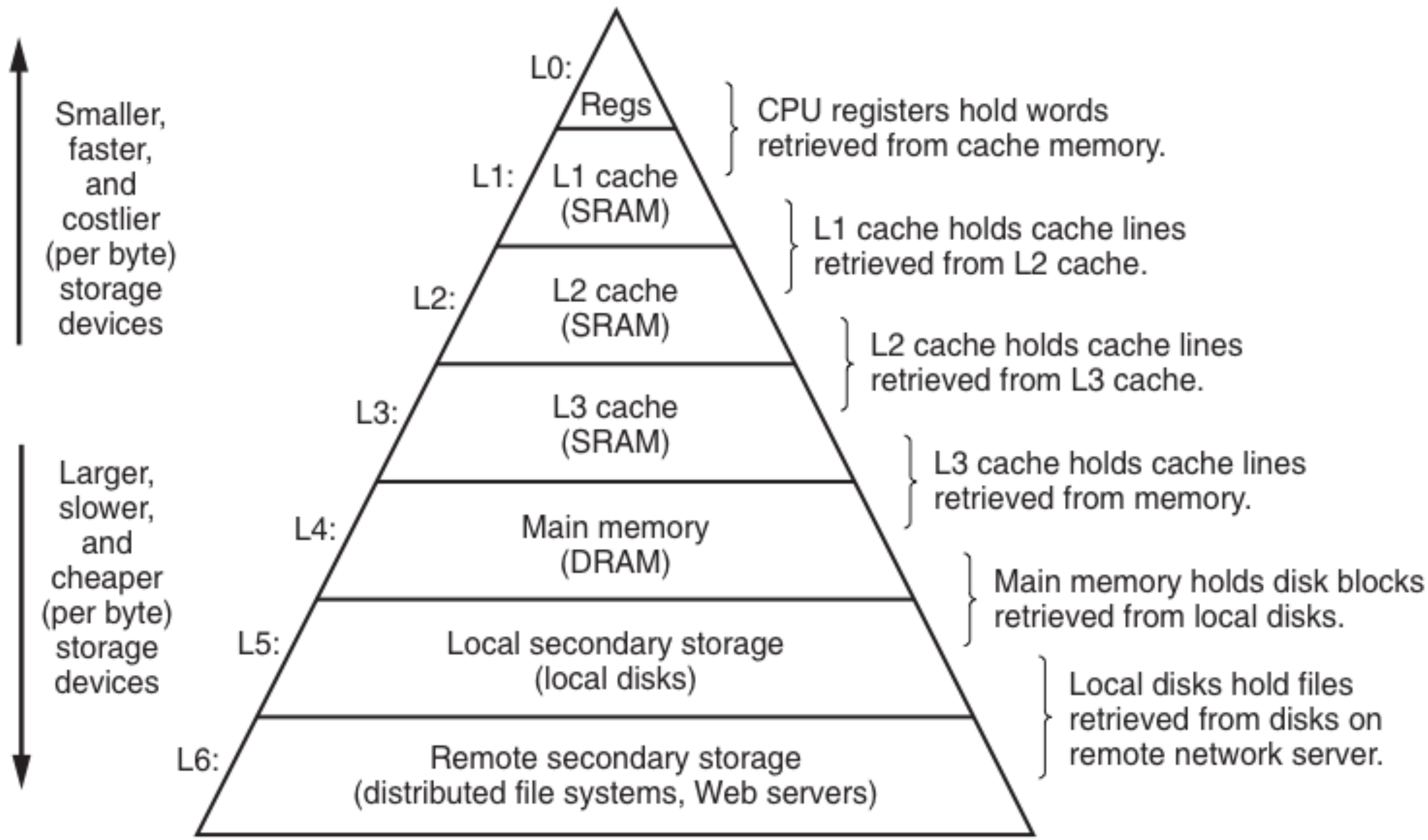
- **5 minutes! What to you is a computer system?**
  - **For inspiration (and more):**
  - CPU, logic gate, transistor, RAM, memory hierarchy, virtual memory, process, thread, network, disk, I/O, http, TCP/IP, RSA, bus, cache, WiFi, switch, internet, synchronization, pipeline,..



Simple Computer System (hardware)

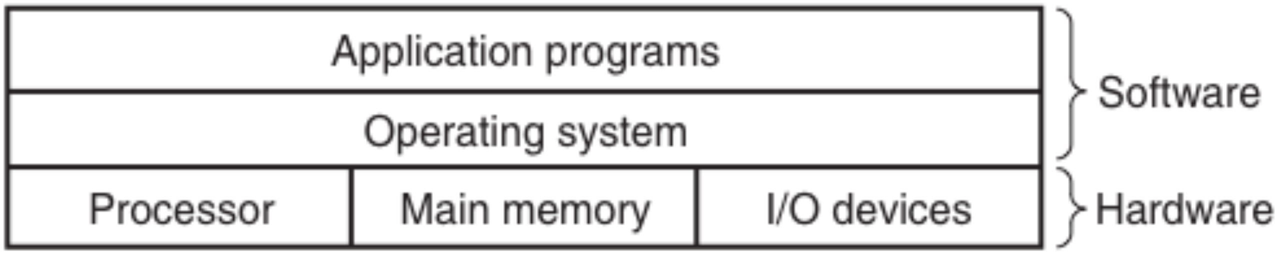


The Memory Hierarchy

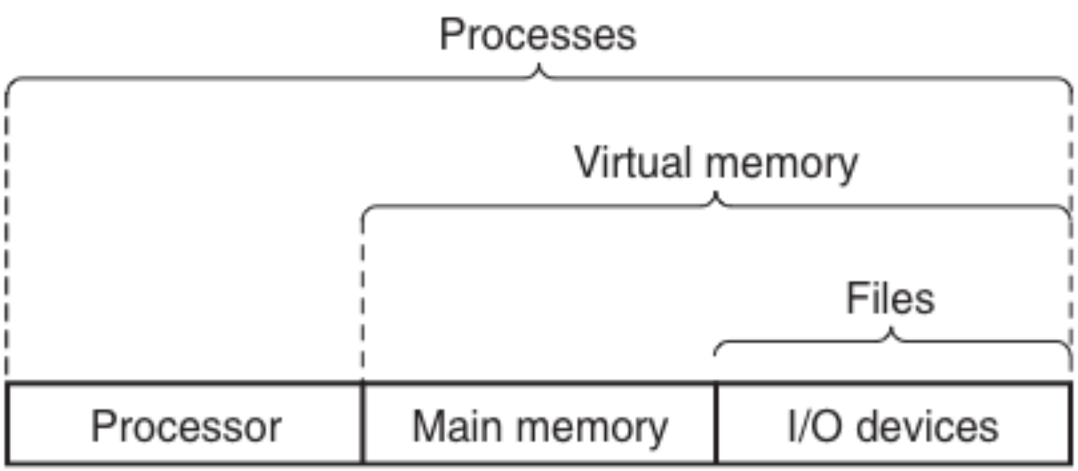


The Memory Hierarchy

- Layered view of computer system

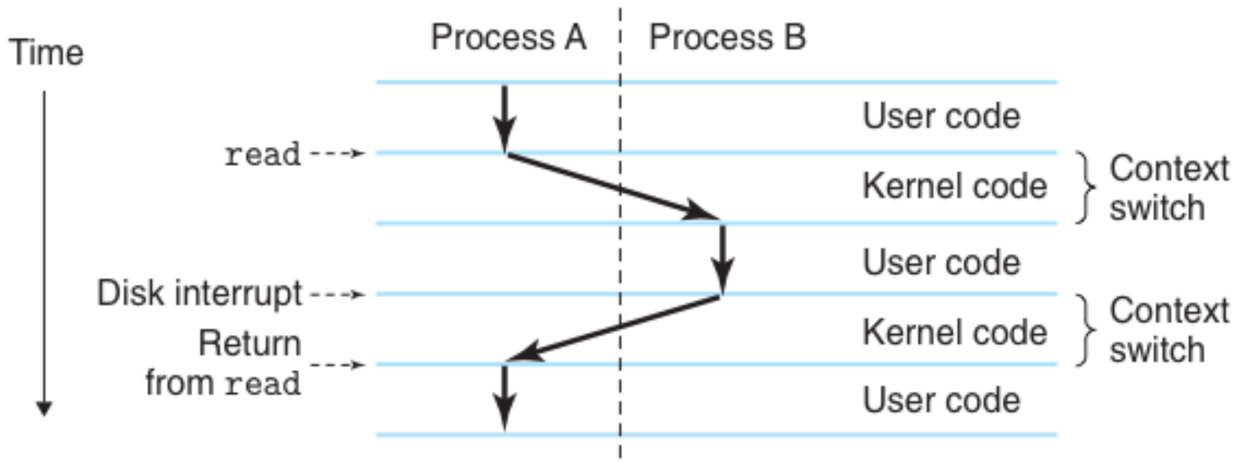


- Abstractions provided by OS



The Processes

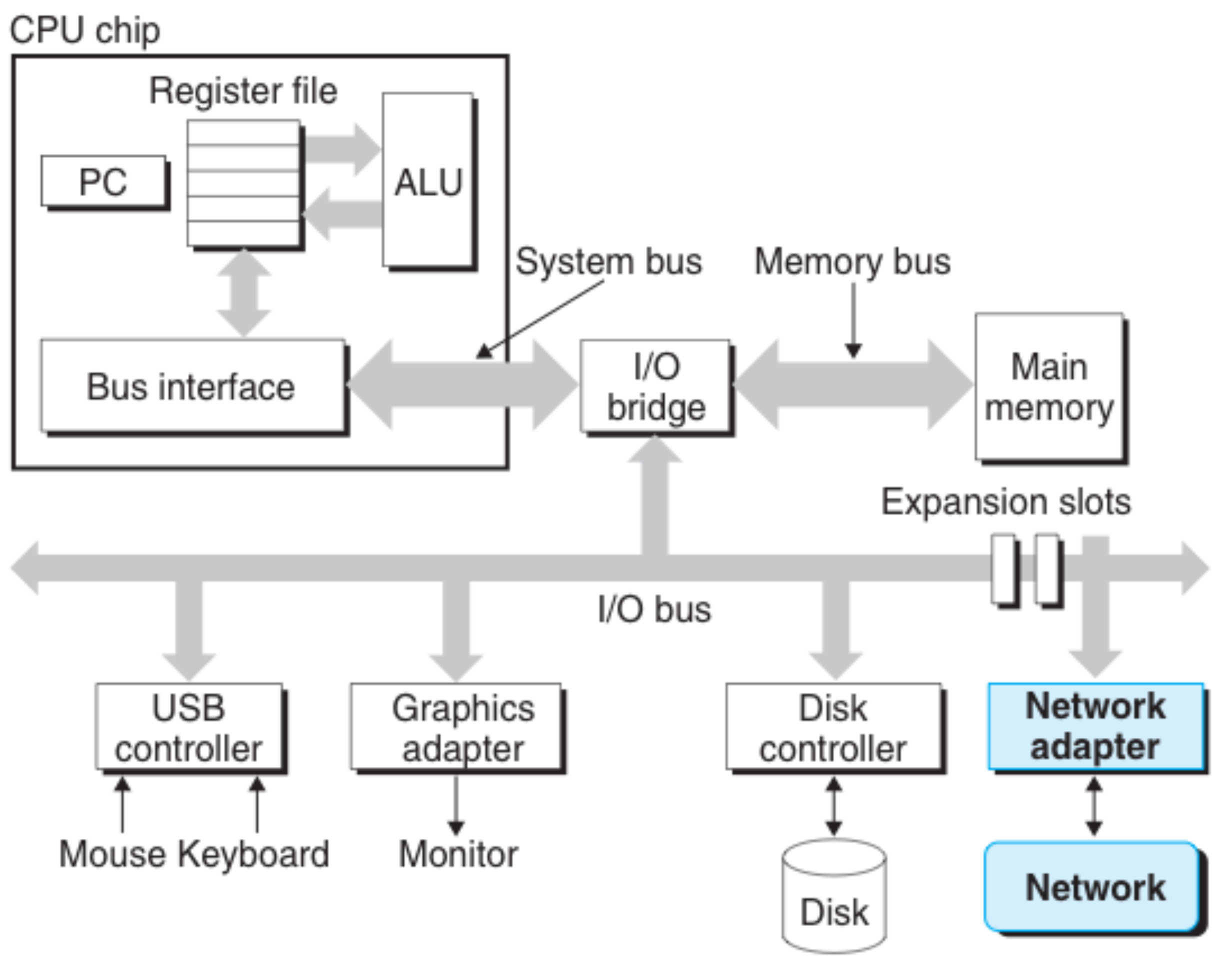
- Multi-process system



- Multi-process on sequential processor
- Multi-process on multi-core processor

The Network – system side

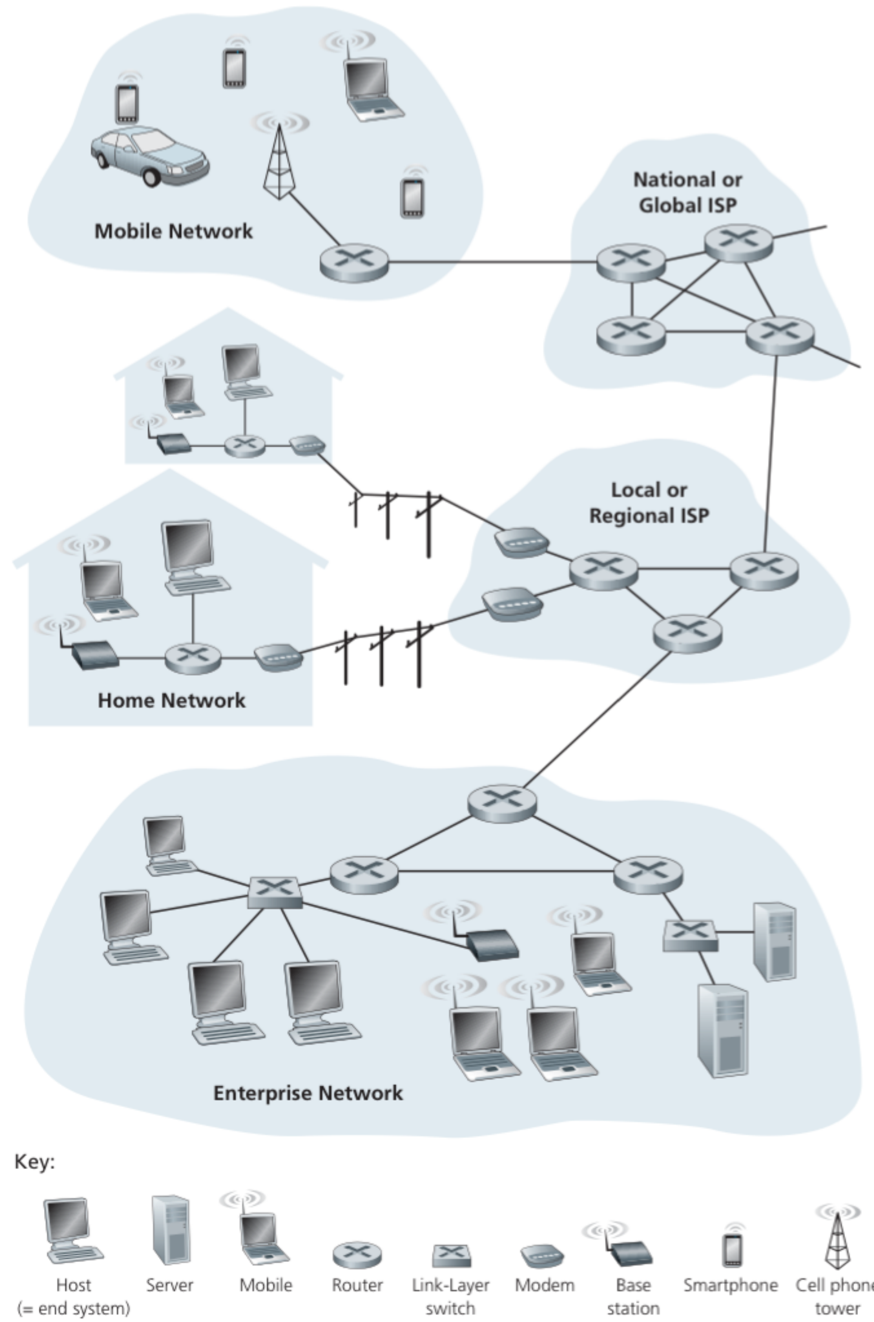
- How to interface with computer system
- Learn the differen abstractions and how they are implemented
- Understand how security can be improved



The Network – network side

-

a. Five-layer Internet protocol stack

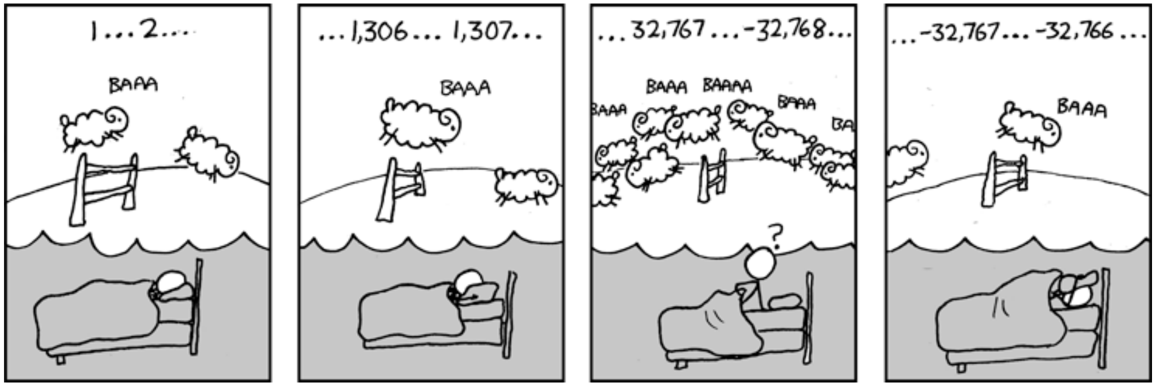


Course Theme:
Abstraction Is Good But Don't Forget Reality

- **Most CS courses emphasize abstraction**
  - Abstract data types
  - Asymptotic analysis
- **These abstractions have limits**
  - Especially in the presence of bugs
  - Need to understand details of underlying implementations
- **Useful outcomes from taking CompSys**
  - Knowledge about concepts of (low-level abstractions)
    - Machine Architecture, Memory hierarchy, Operating Systems, Computer Networks, and Encryption.
  - Become more effective programmers
    - Able to find and eliminate bugs efficiently
    - Able to understand and tune for program performance

Great Reality #1: Ints are not Integers, Floats are not Reals

- **Example 1: Is $x^2 \geq 0$?**
  - Float's: Yes!



  - Int's:
    - 40000 * 40000 ➙ 1600000000
    - 50000 * 50000 ➙ ??
- **Example 2: Is (x + y) + z = x + (y + z)?**
  - Unsigned & Signed Int's: Yes!
  - Float's:
    - (1e20 + -1e20) + 3.14 --> 3.14
    - 1e20 + (-1e20 + 3.14) --> ??

Source: xkcd.com/571

Computer Arithmetic

- **Does not generate random values**
  - Arithmetic operations have important mathematical properties
- **Cannot assume all “usual” mathematical properties**
  - Due to finiteness of representations
  - Integer operations satisfy “ring” properties
    - Commutativity, associativity, distributivity
  - Floating point operations satisfy “ordering” properties
    - Monotonicity, values of signs
- **Observation**
  - Need to understand which abstractions apply in which contexts
  - Important issues for compiler writers and serious application programmers

Great Reality #2: You've Got to Know Assembly

- **Chances are, you'll never write programs in assembly**
  - Compilers are much better & more patient than you are
- **But: Understanding assembly is key to machine-level execution model**
  - Behavior of programs in presence of bugs
    - High-level language models break down
  - Tuning program performance
    - Understand optimizations done / not done by the compiler
    - Understanding sources of program inefficiency
  - Implementing system software
    - Compiler has machine code as target
    - Operating systems must manage process state
  - Creating / fighting malware
    - x86 assembly is the language of choice!

Great Reality #3: Memory Matters
Random Access Memory Is an Unphysical Abstraction

- **Memory is not unbounded**
  - It must be allocated and managed
  - Many applications are memory dominated
- **Memory referencing bugs especially pernicious**
  - Effects are distant in both time and space
- **Memory performance is not uniform**
  - Cache and virtual memory effects can greatly affect program performance
  - Adapting program to characteristics of memory system can lead to major speed improvements

Memory Referencing Bug Example

```
typedef struct {
  int a[2];
  double d;
} struct_t;

double fun(int i) {
  volatile struct_t s;
  s.d = 3.14;
  s.a[i] = 1073741824; /* Possibly out of bounds */
  return s.d;
}
```

```
fun(0)  →    3.14
fun(1)  →    3.14
fun(2)  →    3.1399998664856
fun(3)  →    2.00000061035156
fun(4)  →    3.14
fun(6)  →    Segmentation fault
```

- Result is system specific

Memory Referencing Bug Example

```
typedef struct {
  int a[2];
  double d;
} struct_t;
```

```
fun(0)  ➙   3.14
fun(1)  ➙   3.14
fun(2)  ➙   3.1399998664856
fun(3)  ➙   2.00000061035156
fun(4)  ➙   3.14
fun(6)  ➙   Segmentation fault
```

Explanation:

	Critical State	6
	?	5
	?	4
struct_t	d7 ... d4	3
struct_t	d3 ... d0	2
struct_t	a[1]	1
struct_t	a[0]	0

Location accessed by `fun(i)`

Memory Referencing Errors

- **C and C++ do not provide any memory protection**
  - Out of bounds array references
  - Invalid pointer values
  - Abuses of malloc/free
- **Can lead to nasty bugs**
  - Whether or not bug has any effect depends on system and compiler
  - Action at a distance
    - Corrupted object logically unrelated to one being accessed
    - Effect of bug may be first observed long after it is generated
- **How can I deal with this?**
  - Program in Java, Ruby, Python, F#, …
  - Understand what possible interactions may occur
  - Use or develop tools to detect referencing errors (e.g. Valgrind)

Great Reality #4: There's more to performance than asymptotic complexity

- **Constant factors matter too!**
- **And even exact op count does not predict performance**
  - Easily see 10:1 performance range depending on how code written
  - Must optimize at multiple levels: algorithm, data representations, procedures, and loops
- **Must understand system to optimize performance**
  - How programs compiled and executed
  - How to measure program performance and identify bottlenecks
  - How to improve performance without destroying code modularity and generality

Memory System Performance Example

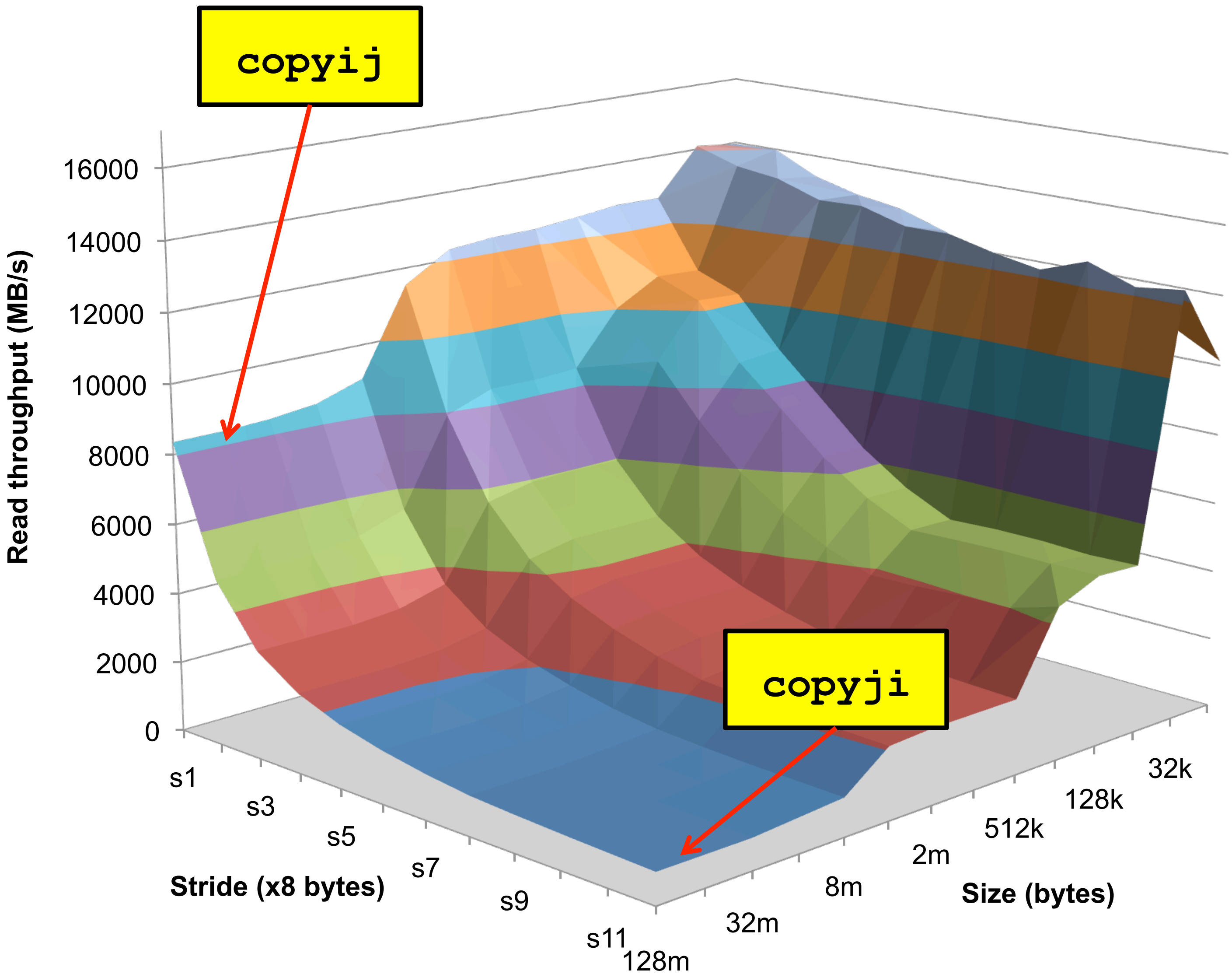
```
void copyij(int src[2048][2048],
            int dst[2048][2048])
{
  int i,j;
  for (i = 0; i < 2048; i++)
    for (j = 0; j < 2048; j++)
      dst[i][j] = src[i][j];
}
```

```
void copyji(int src[2048][2048],
            int dst[2048][2048])
{
  int i,j;
  for (j = 0; j < 2048; j++)
    for (i = 0; i < 2048; i++)
      dst[i][j] = src[i][j];
}
```

4.3ms 2.0 GHz Intel Core i7 Haswell 81.8ms

- Hierarchical memory organization
- Performance depends on access patterns
  - Including how step through multi-dimensional array

Why The Performance Differs



Great Reality #5: Computers do more than execute programs

- **They need to get data in and out**
  - I/O system critical to program reliability and performance

- **They communicate with each other over networks**
  - Many system-level issues arise in presence of network
    - Concurrent operations by autonomous processes
    - Coping with unreliable media
    - Cross platform compatibility
    - Complex performance issues

Course Perspective

- Most Systems Courses are Builder-Centric
  - Computer Architecture
    - Design pipelined processor in LogiSim
  - Operating Systems
    - Implement sample portions of operating system in KUDOS
  - Networking
    - Implement and simulate network protocols
  - Encryption
    - Understand and use encryption to improve security

Course Perspective

- Course is Programmer-Centric
  - Purpose is to show that by knowing more about the underlying system, one can be more effective as a programmer
  - Enable you to
    - Write programs that are more reliable and efficient
    - Incorporate features that require hooks into OS
      - E.g., concurrency, signal handlers
  - Cover material in this course that you won't see elsewhere
  - Not just a course for dedicated hackers
    - **We bring out the hidden hacker in everyone!**

Welcome and Enjoy!