

9: Compilers and interpreters

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Learning outcomes

- Explain the difference between interpretation, just-in-time compilation and ahead-of-time compilation
- Distinguish the basic parts of a compilation pipeline and recall how they operate
- Describe how common high-level code structures translate to machine code

Worksheet E

- Compilers and machine code
- Due in class on Monday 21st November (next week)

Final worksheet submission

- Soon!!! (see MyFalmouth)
- Should be easy: "Download Zip" from GitHub, rename, upload to LearningSpace
- If any of your work is **not** on GitHub (e.g. images on imgur), be sure to **add it to the zip!**
 - Exception: SpaceChem videos can stay as YouTube links
- Even if you have submitted everything on time via GitHub, late submission to LearningSpace will have the standard penalty for late submission (40% cap)!





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 - A just-in-time (JIT) compiler is halfway between the two — it compiles the program on-the-fly at runtime

Interpreted:

- ► Python
- ▶ Lua
- JavaScript (in old web browsers)
- Bespoke scripting languages

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NB: technically any language could appear in any column here, but this is where they typically are

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 - ► The compiler translates the program **in advance**, on the developer's machine
 - The interpreter translates the program at runtime, on the user's machine — this takes extra time

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 - An interpreted program can run on any machine, as long as a suitable interpreter is available

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 - Writing an AOT or JIT compiler (especially a good one) is hard, and required in-depth knowledge of the target machine
 - Writing an interpreter is easy in comparison



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 - ► The interpreter is already on the end user's machine, so programs can use it e.g. to dynamically generate and execute new code
 - The AOT compiler is not generally on the end user's machine, so this is more difficult



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Virtual machines

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- Bytecode is essentially machine code for a virtual machine (VM)
- Translation from source code to bytecode can be done ahead of time
- At runtime, translate the bytecode (by interpretation or JIT compilation) into machine code for the physical machine
- E.g. a Java JAR file, a .NET executable, a Python .pyc or .pyo file all contain bytecode for their respective VMs



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- Generally much simpler than an AOT compiler for a higher-level language

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 Handles header inclusion, macro expansion and conditional compilation

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Linker

Preprocessor

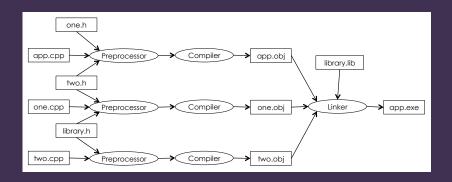
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Compiler

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Linker

 Combines the object files together with any external libraries to produce an executable (on Windows, a .exe file)







The MIPS architecture

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- ► MIPS was popular in 1980s 2000s
 - ► Embedded systems
 - Consoles (Nintendo 64, PlayStation 1 and 2)
- Easier to understand than most CPU instruction sets in common use today

Online MIPS simulator

http://rivoire.cs.sonoma.edu/cs351/wemips/

Memory locations inside the CPU

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- Memory locations inside the CPU
- Faster to access than main memory
- Registers in MIPS architecture include:
 - \$zero: constant 0
 - ▶ \$t0-\$t9: temporary storage
 - \$s0-\$s7: saved temporary storage
- Each register holds a single 32-bit value

```
add $d, $s, $t
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▶ \$d, \$s and \$t are register names

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- This adds the value of \$s to the value of \$t, and stores the result in \$d

Adding register values

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```
sub $d, $s, $t
```

 Subtracts the value of \$t from the value of \$s, and stores the result in \$a

```
addi $d, $s, C
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- This adds the value of \$s to c, and stores the result in
 \$d
- addi = "add immediate" as in c is specified immediately in the code, not looked up from a register
- ► There is no subi instruction to subtract c, add -c

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- ► What does this code do?

```
addi $s0, $s1, 0
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▶ What does this code do?

```
addi $s0, $zero, 12
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▶ What does this code do?

```
addi $s0, $zero, 12
```

 MIPS does not have dedicated instructions for setting a register value to a constant or to the value of another register — it has to be done with addi





Control flow in MIPS

▶ In assembly code, can set a **label** on any line:

```
MyLabel: add $s0, $s1, 1
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```
MyLabel: add $s0, $s1, 1
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- Some instructions use labels to refer to a location in the code
- E.g. the j instruction simply jumps (backwards or forwards) to the specified line:

```
j MyLabel
```

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► This jumps to Label if and only if the value of \$s equals the value of \$t

```
bne $s, $t, Label
```

► This jumps to Label if and only if the value of \$s does not equal the value of \$t

► Branching allows us to implement if statements

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```
if s0 != 0:
    s1 += 1
else:
    s2 += 1
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```
if s0 != 0:
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```
beq $s0, $zero, Else
addi $s1, $s1, 1
j End
Else: addi $s2, $s2, 1
End:
```

► Branching allows us to implement while loops

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```
i = 0
total = 0
limit = 10

while i != limit:
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    i += 1
# end while
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```
addi $s0, $zero, 0
addi $s1, $zero, 0
addi $s2, $zero, 10

Loop: beq $s0, $s2, LoopEnd
add $s1, $s1, $s0
addi $s0, $s0, 1
j Loop
LoopEnd:
```

Exercise

Write a piece of Python code equivalent to the following:

```
addi $s0, $zero, 10
addi $s1, $zero, 0

Loop: beq $s0, $zero, LoopEnd
add $s1, $s1, $s0
addi $s0, $s0, -1
j Loop
LoopEnd:
```

Not quite a while loop

- ► Socrative FALCOMPED
- ▶ What is the difference between these two programs?
- (NB: assume \$s $0 \ge 0$)

```
addi $s1, $zero, 0

Loop: add $s1, $s1, $s0

addi $s0, $s0, -1

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addi $s1, $zero, 0

Loop: add $s1, $s1, $s0
addi $s0, $s0, -1
bne $s0, $zero, Loop
```

The code on the right implements a **do-while** loop (which Python doesn't have, but other languages do)

Function calls

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- Socrative FALCOMPED: why save the return address? Why not just hard-code it into the program?
- Nested function calls require a stack of return addresses







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- ▶ 1 line of assembly = 1 instruction
- ► Each instruction is a 32 bit value
- First 6 bits specify the opcode; how the remaining 26 bits are interpreted depends on which opcode it is

opcode	\$s	\$t	\$d	shift	function
6 bits	5 bits	5 bits	5 bits	5 bits	6 bits

R-type instruction:

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 - ▶ E.g. \$zero \rightarrow 00000, \$s0 \rightarrow 01000, \$s1 \rightarrow 01001

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 - ► There are 32 registers

Example

```
add $s0, $s0, $s1
```



opcode s t d shift function 000000 01000 01001 01001 00000 100000

opcode	\$s	\$t	С
6 bits	5 bits	5 bits	16 bits

I-type instruction:

opcode	\$s	\$t	С
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opcode specifies the operation to execute

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- opcode specifies the operation to execute
 - ► E.g. addi has opcode 001000
- ▶ c is specified as a 16-bit number

Example

```
addi $s0, $s1, 123
```

 \downarrow

```
opcode s t C 001000 01001 01000 000000001111011
```

opcode	address
6 bits	26 bits

J-type instruction:

opcode	address
6 bits	26 bits

▶ opcode specifies the operation to execute

opcode	address
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- opcode specifies the operation to execute
 - ► E.g. J has opcode 000010

opcode	address
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 - ► E.g. J has opcode 000010
- address is specified as a 26-bit number