

How to Use this Template

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Submission Instructions

1. After you’ve completed all the sections, download this document as a PDF [File → Download as PDF]
2. Create a new GitHub repo for the capstone. Name it “**Capstone Project**”
3. Add this document to your repo. Make sure it’s named “**Capstone_Stage1.pdf**”

[Description](#)

[Intended User](#)

[Features](#)

[User Interface Mocks](#)

[Screen 1](#)

[Screen 2](#)

[Key Considerations](#)

[How will your app handle data persistence?](#)

[Describe any corner cases in the UX.](#)

[Describe any libraries you’ll be using and share your reasoning for including them.](#)

[Next Steps: Required Tasks](#)

[Task 1: Project Setup](#)

[Task 2: Implement UI for Each Activity and Fragment](#)

[Task 3: Your Next Task](#)

[Task 4: Your Next Task](#)

[Task 5: Your Next Task](#)

GitHub Username: Izodine

iAssembly

Description

iAssembly (or iASM for short) is an x86 assembly simulator designed to teach the basics of 32-bit Assembly. It uses NASM (Netwide Assembler) as a basis. One of the main points of the app is to show that while assembly looks very intimidating, it is not that difficult to learn the basics of how it works. It is also designed to demonstrate how low level computer functions work

to aid in designing better software. It contains a tutorial section that outlines various assembly and low level concepts. It provides exercises and allows you to “link” the code editor to it. It’ll provide the instructions for the exercise as well as a button to check if the user was correct.

Intended User

The intended user would be anyone learning or wanting to learn how to program. It can even be useful for users who are experienced in programming but unaware of how low level operations work.

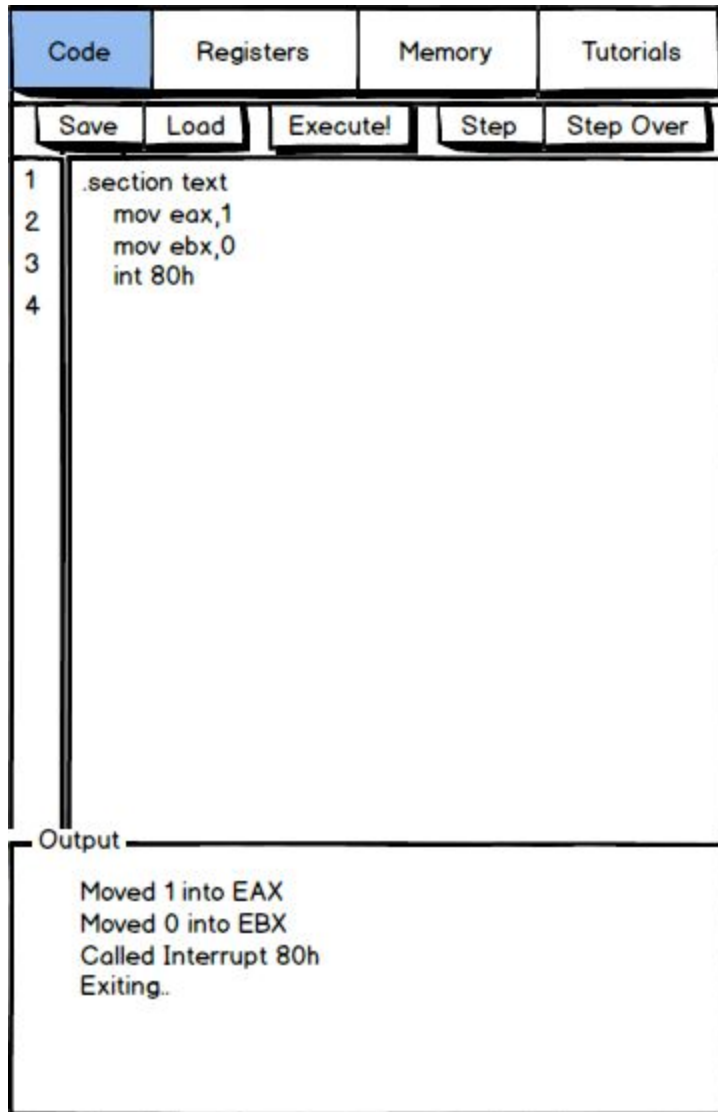
Features

- A simulated environment for basic x86 Assembly using Netwide Assembler as a basis for syntax.
- Basic Syntax Highlighting
- Ability to save and load programs.
- Detailed explanations and tutorials that link to the code editor.
- Ability to see what values are in each register.
- Ability to observe the stack and heap.

User Interface Mocks

These can be created by hand (take a photo of your drawings and insert them in this flow), or using a program like Photoshop or Balsamiq.

Code Editor



The app is separated into a couple different screens using tabs. This is the code editor. It allows the user to save/load programs, as well as execute, step, and step over. There will be basic syntax highlighting as well as line numbers. At the bottom there is an output window that displays the result of each line.

Register Screen

Code		Registers		Memory		Tutorials	
General Purpose Registers							
EAX		EBX		ECX		EDX	
AX		BX		CX		DX	
AH	AL	BH	BL	CH	CL	DH	DL
ESI		EDI		ESP		EBP	

This screen shows what is currently in each register. It also breaks down the extended standard registers into their 16 bit sub parts.

Code	Registers	Memory	Tutorials
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[illegible]

Tablet

Registers		Memory	Tutorials						
<div> <div>Save</div> <div>Load</div> <div>Execute!</div> <div>Step</div> <div>Step Over</div> </div>		General Purpose Registers							
1	<pre> .section text mov eax,1 mov ebx,0 int 80h </pre>	EAX	EBX	ECX	EDX				
2									
3									
4									
		AX	BX	CX	DX				
		AH	AL	BH	BL	CH	CL	DH	DL
Output		ESI	EDI	ESP	EBP	EIP			

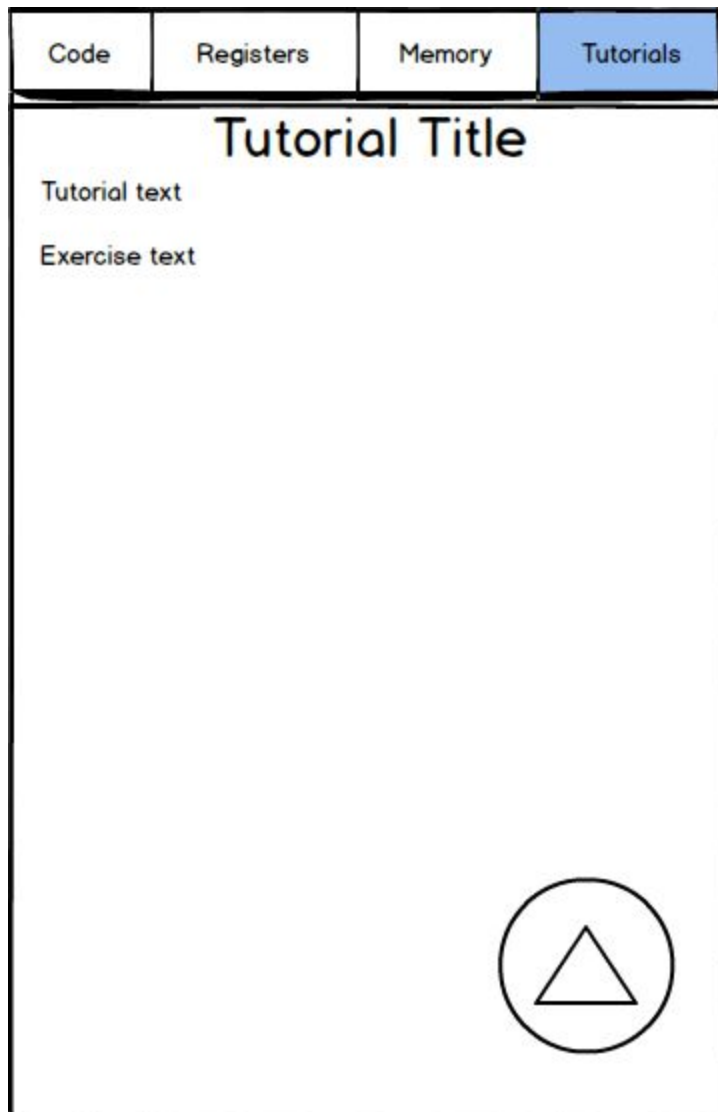
The tablet UI will always have the code editor on the left, and using the right side of the screen for the other sections of the app as shown above.

Tutorial Screen

Code	Registers	Memory	Tutorials
Tutorials			
Tutorial Title			
Tutorial Title			
Tutorial Title			
Tutorial Title			
Tutorial Title			
Tutorial Title			
Tutorial Title			
Tutorial Title			
.....			

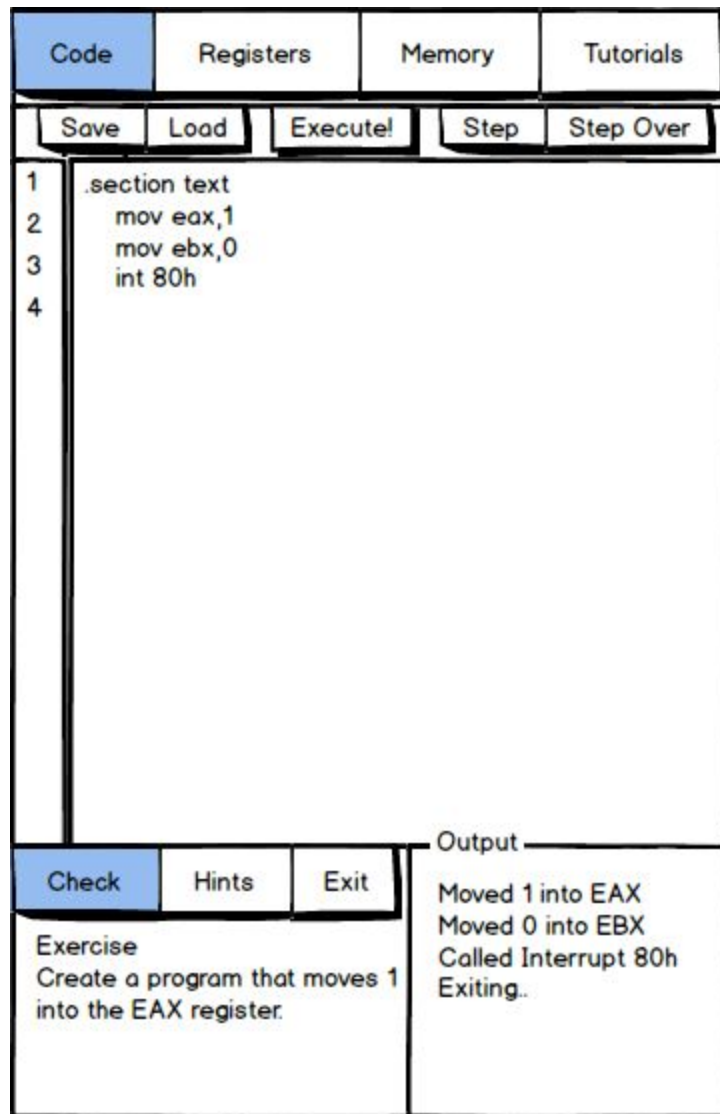
This screen is the listing for tutorials. Upon clicking on an entry it will flip to a detail fragment for that specific tutorial.

Tutorial Detail Screen



This screen shows the details of the tutorial/explanation. The FAB will start the alternate code editor that has the tutorial linked into it. The triangle is supposed to be a play button (I couldn't figure out how to rotate the thing).

Code Editor (Tutorial Integrated Version)



This is the alternate code editor view when the user wants to do an exercise defined in a tutorial.

Key Considerations

How will your app handle data persistence?

Most of the data will be user preferences. So this particular app will mostly be using SharedPreferences. For saving/loading programs, it will be using a basic file explorer and use an output stream to move the contents of the program into a file.

Describe any corner cases in the UX.

If the user wants to leave the alternate code editor linked to the corresponding tutorial, there is a clearly marked button for it.

Describe any libraries you'll be using and share your reasoning for including them.

This particular app doesn't need any libraries apart from the standard Material Design/Android libraries. Nothing crazy is being used here apart from my own Java code.

Next Steps: Required Tasks

This is the section where you can take the main features of your app (declared above) and decompose them into tangible technical tasks that you can complete incrementally until you have a finished app.

Task 1: Project Setup

- Configure libraries (Material design)
- Determine what the most suitable minSDK should be to target the most users but allow for gorgeous UI.
- Import pre-written Java code to form the base functionality of the app.

Task 2: Implement UI for Each Activity and Fragment

- Build UI for MainActivity
- Add fragments, tabs, and toolbar buttons to MainActivity.
- Add basic syntax highlighting to the code textview.
- The fragments mentioned above are the CodeFragment, and OutputFragment.
- Design alternate OutputFragment layout in accordance to design mock for tutorial integration. These will change via a Fragment transaction to make the "tutorial linked" code editor.
- Build UI for RegisterFragment, MemoryFragment, and its corresponding fragments.
- Build UI for TutorialFragment, and the TutorialDetailFragment. This will replace TutorialFragment in a Fragment transaction.

Task 3: Link Pre-Completed Simulation Code to Android

- Some of the code has already been finished, as it's been worked in outside of Android Studio in Eclipse to get essential functions working more easily. It was easier to do it this way in the context of this project.
- At this point in integration, the basic Bss/Data segments are functional.
- Link Bss/Data segments to the MemoryFragment. Use readBss() and readData() from the Memory class to achieve this. They both return a Map object, where the key is the address, and the value is the value sitting at that address.
- The text parser is almost complete, but it can't be linked yet due to...

Task 4: ..The Simulation Thread..*dun dun duuuun*

- This is a doozy. Because the ability of stepping through/over the code is an essential part of visualizing x86, this needs to be put in a separate thread. Gasp!
- In order to run the App and the Interpreter parallel to each other, the code has to be executed by the interpreter in a separate thread, and must be able to be controlled. By control, I mean it has to wait/continue on fixed intervals and on logical conditions. The thread is *not* stopped in a random fashion. I will be using wait() and notify() to achieve this.
- There is only one additional thread needed to make this all work, and will be done in accordance to the following resources:
<http://developer.android.com/training/multiple-threads/define-runnable.html>
<http://developer.android.com/guide/components/processes-and-threads.html>
<http://developer.android.com/training/multiple-threads/communicate-ui.html>
<http://stackoverflow.com/questions/1036754/difference-between-wait-and-sleep>
http://www.javamex.com/tutorials/wait_notify_how_to.shtml

Task 5: Finish Building the Simulation Code

- Add an implementation of a basic EFLAGS register.
- Finish the Bss segment.
- Finish the Data segment.
- Implement simulated method/procedure calls.
- Add some system interrupts to the Instruction set.
- Add a decent selection of Instructions. Mov is already implemented. Add ADD, SUB, MUL, DIV, CALL, and some of the variations of the JMP instruction.

- Add the thread specific code to allow the interpreter to “step” through and “step over” the code.

Task 6: Link the CodeFragment UI to the Simulation code

- Link the step button to the newly formed step code in the Interpreter.
- Link the “step through” button to the newly formed code in the Interpreter.
- Link the Execute button to the Interpreter’s “load” method. The load method takes in an array list of strings, each string corresponding to a line. So, this will have to take the code in the text area and convert it to an array list. After this, invoke interpret() to actually begin executing the code.
- Add the functionality to the tutorial panel buttons to exit tutorial mode, give a hint, and check the code to see if it yields the right result.

Task 7: Implement Tutorials

- Write a method to modify OutputFragment to integrate the tutorial panel, and another method to switch it back. It needs to be able to transform into the tutorial integrated editor as defined in the above mock.
- Create an adapter and fill it with a new layout that corresponds to the correct tutorial.
- The FAB in the TutorialDetailFragment has to be able to 1) Switch the tab to the code editor, and 2) Execute the method defined in the first point to flip around the UI to the Tutorial integrated UI.
- Add the functionality to the tutorial panel buttons to exit tutorial mode, give a hint, and check the code to see if it yields the right result.

Task 8: Implement Saving and Loading programs

- Write a utility method to save and load files in accordance to the following resource: <http://developer.android.com/training/basics/data-storage/files.html>
- Link the save and load logic to the save/load buttons in CodeFragment.

Task 9: Error cases

- Now that everything is linked up and ready to go. Test away! Make sure text entered by the user can’t break the parser or the interpreter.
- Test edge cases. Since this is a closely coupled x86 simulator, it also simulates each segment. Make sure that overflowing the stack doesn’t break anything, and vice versa with the heap.
- Test any other cases that have been thought of during development.
- The simulation has been coded to take error cases into consideration, but this is why every case should be tested to make sure it handles it gracefully. This is supposed to be a teaching/learning tool, not a headache and confusion inducing tool.

Task 10: Polish

- Make sure all the UI gracefully meets all Material Design guidelines.
- Make the app feel alive. Add animations where they may look nice and convey what the user is supposed to do/can do.

Add as many tasks as you need to complete your app.

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