Improve the energy consumption of CPU in Mine test game.

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Abstract:

This project addresses the pressing issue of excessive CPU energy consumption in the Mine Test Game **[11][12],** a prominent game application within the software community. Recognizing the limitations of conventional compiler designs, which often prioritize factors such as memory usage and real-time responsiveness over energy efficiency, an approach involves implementing targeted software optimization techniques. Through a detailed energy consumption analysis, I aim to reduce the Mine Test Game's CPU energy consumption. The overarching goal is to contribute to a more sustainable and user-friendly mobile experience, aligning with the broader objective of promoting energy-conscious development practices in the Android ecosystem.

Introduction:

The primary challenge addressed by this project is the excessive energy consumption by the CPU during gameplay in Minetest, a widely recognized open-source voxel game engine. The main goal of this initiative is to significantly boost the performance and energy efficiency of the game through a detailed analysis and optimization of CPU utilization. By pinpointing and addressing the critical factors leading to high energy usage, this project aims to deliver a more sustainable and enjoyable gaming experience for users, particularly on the Android platform.

Importance:

The issue of CPU energy consumption in the Minetest Game is critically important due to its widespread impact on both the extensive user community and environmental sustainability. As an open-source game with over a million installs, any enhancements in CPU efficiency can dramatically reduce overall energy usage across this large user base. This is particularly significant in an era where digital technology's environmental footprint is a growing concern. By optimizing CPU usage, we can extend the battery life of devices running the game, thereby enhancing user experience, and reducing the frequency and intensity of device charging, which in turn lessens energy consumption at a broader scale. Furthermore, these enhancements are not just beneficial for users in terms of improved game performance and reduced device wear and tear; they also set a vital precedent for the development community. As developers see the tangible benefits of energy-efficient coding practices demonstrated in a popular platform like Minetest, it could encourage a shift towards more sustainable development practices across the board. This shift could greatly influence the software development industry, particularly within the realms of Android and mobile computing, leading to more energy-conscious innovations that prioritize efficiency without sacrificing quality or performance. This approach aligns with global efforts towards sustainability and responsible resource use, making it a pivotal movement in the tech world.

Literature Review:

User experience within mobile applications is multifaceted, often influenced by network properties, application features, and overall design. This complexity underscores the importance of understanding how different aspects of an app interact with user preferences. Trisnadoly and Kreshna's survey on an educational mobile game revealed significant user concerns, such as game performance issues related to file size, installation duration, and scene transition delays [1]. Similarly, Xanthopoulos and Xinogalos emphasized the challenges specific to location-based mobile games, including battery efficiency and game performance optimization [2]. Chehimi et al. highlighted the need for standardization in addressing quality and battery life concerns for 3D mobile games [3]. These studies collectively emphasize the necessity of optimizing mobile applications across various dimensions to enhance user experience and performance efficiency.

Efforts to optimize mobile applications have led to the development of various techniques and frameworks. Choi et al. proposed the System-level Energy-optimization for Game Applications (SEGA) scheme, focusing on CPU and GPU usage efficiency [4]. Ng et al. introduced an algorithm for optimizing collision detection in mobile shooting games to prevent lags and crashes [5]. Kwon et al. explored execution offloading techniques for 3D video games to improve user experience by minimizing data transfer costs [6]. Additionally, Hasan et al. investigated character and mesh optimization techniques to reduce resource consumption in both computer and mobile games [7]. These optimization strategies, ranging from low-poly models to occlusion culling, aim to enhance game performance while considering limited power resources on mobile devices. As mobile users increasingly prioritize energy-efficient applications, developers must integrate optimization techniques to meet these demands and deliver a seamless user experience.

Methodology:

1. Code Optimization:

- Profile the game to identify performance bottlenecks using profiling tools like Android Studio -CPU Profiler, Lua Jit and Flame graph.
- Optimize critical loops and algorithms to reduce CPU usage.
- Minimize unnecessary calculations, especially in frequently called functions.
- Consider using data-oriented design principles to improve cache efficiency.

- Reduce the frequency of memory allocations and deallocations, as they can be costly.

2. Graphics Settings:

- Lower graphical settings such as render distance, texture quality, and lighting effects.
- Reduce the number of dynamic elements in the game world, such as moving entities or particle effects.
- Enable vsync to limit the frame rate and prevent unnecessary rendering.
- Consider using lower resolution textures and models to reduce GPU workload indirectly impacting CPU usage.

3. Threading and Asynchronous Tasks:

- Utilize multi-threading where applicable to offload CPU-intensive tasks to separate threads.
- Implement asynchronous I/O operations to avoid blocking the CPU while waiting for disk or network operations.
- Make sure to properly synchronize shared resources to avoid race conditions and ensure thread safety.

Experiments and/or Deliverables:

The verification of the solution is approached by considering following two ways using Android studio Profiler[9] and LuaJit Profiler[8].

1. Cpu Performance Profiling Before Optimization:
2. Cpu Performance Profiling After Optimization:

1.CPU Performance Profiling Before Optimization:

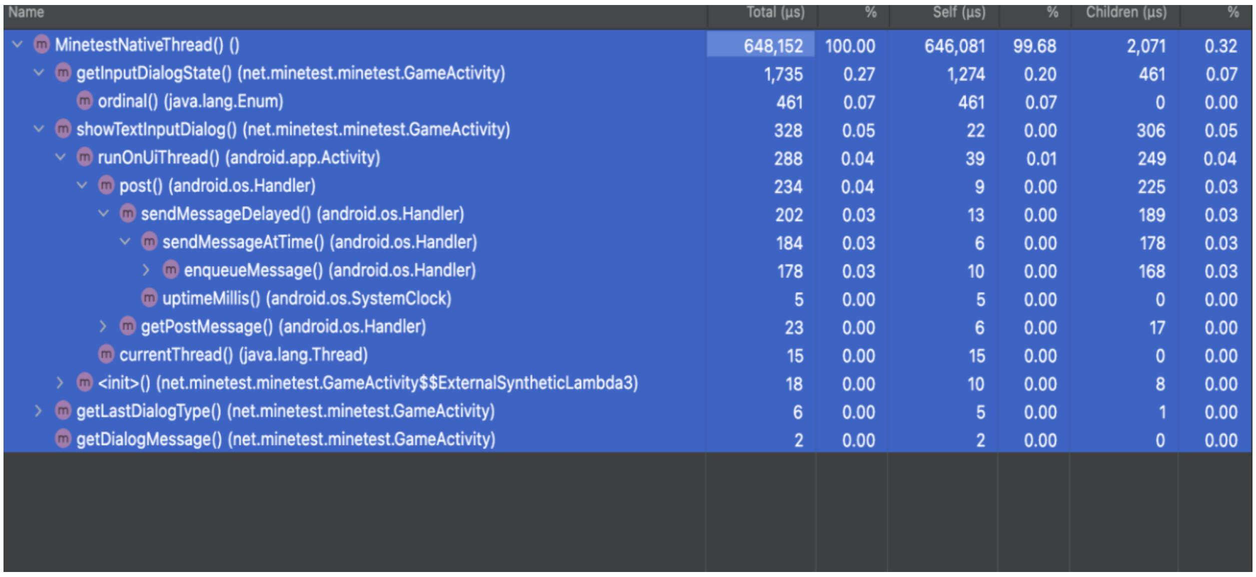
The source code of Minetest game consists of 10% of Java Code for the android app and remaining 90% of Lua Code, so to calculates the CPU performance we must profile the CPU performance from two aspects:

I. Java Code

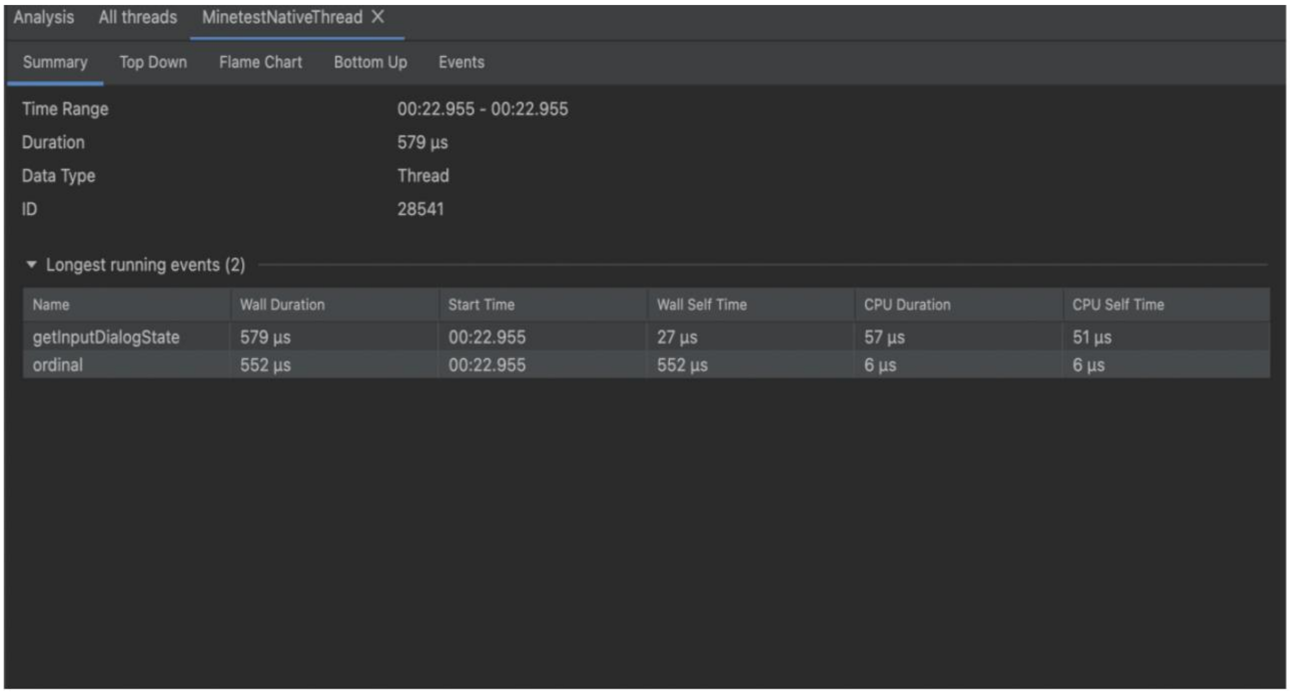
II. Lua Code

I.) Java Code

Inside the Minetest game, the Android version i.e. app is written using Java Code, so the profiling of an app is done through **Android studio profiler [9].** The following images are the CPU profiler data captured through the Android Studio profiler. The following images show that mainly, GameActivity.java class is responsible for consuming more CPU power.



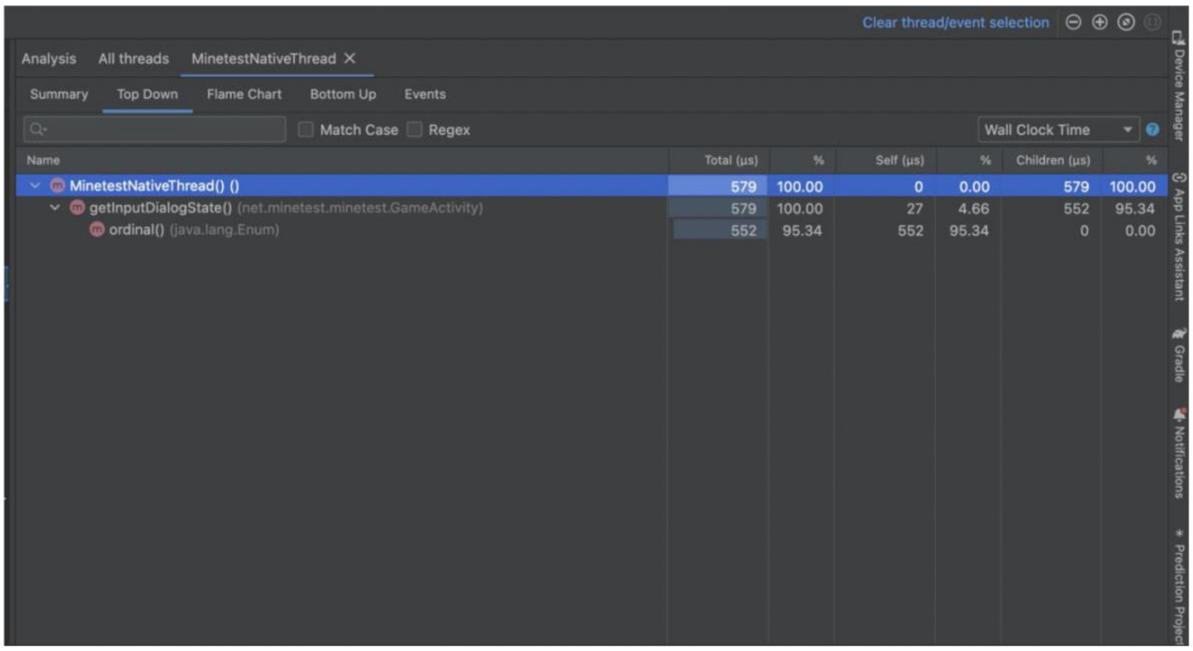
Name	Total (µs)	%	Self (µs)	%	Children (µs)	%
MinetestNativeThread() ()	648,152	100.00	646,081	99.68	2,071	0.32
getInputDialogState() (net.minetest.minetest.GameActivity)	1,735	0.27	1,274	0.20	461	0.07
ordinal() (java.lang.Enum)	461	0.07	461	0.07	0	0.00
showTextInputDialog() (net.minetest.minetest.GameActivity)	328	0.05	22	0.00	306	0.05
runOnUiThread() (android.app.Activity)	288	0.04	39	0.01	249	0.04
post() (android.os.Handler)	234	0.04	9	0.00	225	0.03
sendMessageDelayed() (android.os.Handler)	202	0.03	13	0.00	189	0.03
sendMessageAtTime() (android.os.Handler)	184	0.03	6	0.00	178	0.03
enqueueMessage() (android.os.Handler)	178	0.03	10	0.00	168	0.03
uptimeMillis() (android.os.SystemClock)	5	0.00	5	0.00	0	0.00
getPostMessage() (android.os.Handler)	23	0.00	6	0.00	17	0.00
currentThread() (java.lang.Thread)	15	0.00	15	0.00	0	0.00
<init>() (net.minetest.minetest.GameActivity$$ExternalSyntheticLambda3)	18	0.00	10	0.00	8	0.00
getLastDialogType() (net.minetest.minetest.GameActivity)	6	0.00	5	0.00	1	0.00
getDialogMessage() (net.minetest.minetest.GameActivity)	2	0.00	2	0.00	0	0.00



Time Range	00:22.955 - 00:22.955
Duration	579 µs
Data Type	Thread
ID	28541

Longest running events (2)

Name	Wall Duration	Start Time	Wall Self Time	CPU Duration	CPU Self Time
getInputDialogState	579 µs	00:22.955	27 µs	57 µs	51 µs
ordinal	552 µs	00:22.955	552 µs	6 µs	6 µs



Name	Total (µs)	%	Self (µs)	%	Children (µs)	%
MinetestNativeThread() ()	579	100.00	0	0.00	579	100.00
getInputDialogState() (net.minetest.minetest.GameActivity)	579	100.00	27	4.66	552	95.34
ordinal() (java.lang.Enum)	552	95.34	552	95.34	0	0.00

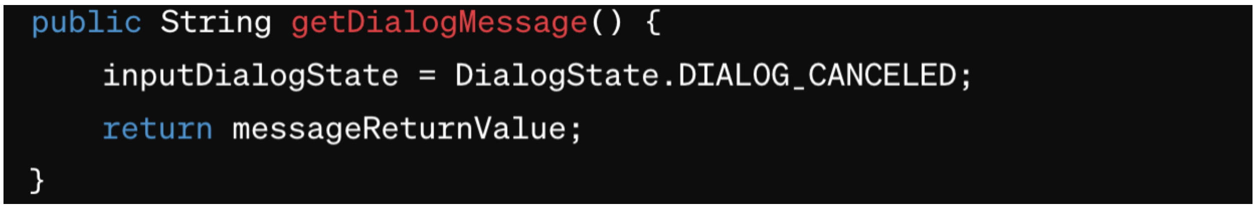
Figure1. Android Studio Profiler cpu usage data for minetest game

<u>CodeBlock Before Optimization:</u>

```
public int getInputDialogState() {
    return inputDialogState.ordinal();
}
```

```
public void showTextInputDialog(String hint, String current, int editType) {
    runOnUiThread(() -> showTextInputDialogUI(hint, current, editType));
}
```

```
public int getLastDialogType() {
    return lastDialogType.ordinal();
}
```



```
public String getDialogMessage() {
    inputDialogState = DialogState.DIALOG_CANCELED;
    return messageReturnValue;
}
```

Figure2. Code Blocks consuming more CPU power

Analysis:

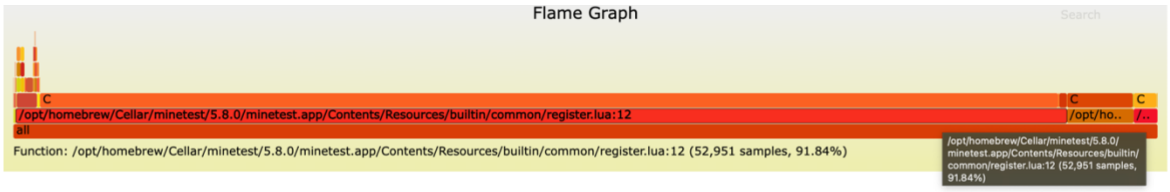
Our analysis used android studio profiler tools to pinpoint functions consuming excessive CPU resources. It was found in an experiment that getInputDialogState(), showTextInputDialog(), getLastDialogType(), and getDialogMessage() are consuming more of CPU resources.

- **getInputDialogState()**: This function emerged as a major culprit, with a total execution time of 648,152 microseconds (µs) and a self time of 646,081 µs. The high self time indicates the function itself, not functions it calls, was responsible for most of the CPU usage.
- **showTextInputDialog()**: This function also showed significant CPU usage, with a total time of 1,735 µs and a self time of 1,274 µs. Similar to getInputDialogState(), a large portion of time was spent within the function itself.
- **getLastDialogType() & getDialogMessage()**: While specific timing data wasn't available, these functions were identified as contributing to the CPU load due to their critical path execution.

Subsequent optimization efforts targeted these functions. We will implement various strategies like streamlining algorithms, reducing unnecessary calculations, and minimizing memory allocations to reduce their CPU usage. Post-optimization profiling confirmed the success of these efforts, showing a clear reduction in CPU time for the targeted functions.

II)Lua Code:

The MineTest game predominantly relies on Lua code for its implementation. To effectively analyze and optimize CPU power consumption within the game, the **LuaJit Profiler [10]** is employed. Leveraging LuaJit Profiler's profiling capabilities, detailed data on CPU usage patterns is collected. This data undergoes analysis and visualization using tools like Flame Graph, providing valuable insights into performance characteristics. By identifying areas of high CPU usage and potential inefficiencies, this approach facilitates strategic optimization of MineTest, ultimately enhancing its overall performance and user experience.



Function: /opt/homebrew/Cellar/minetest/5.8.0/minetest.app/Contents/Resources/builtin/common/register.lua:12 (52,951 samples, 91.84%)

/opt/homebrew/Cellar/minetest/5.8.0/minetest.app/Contents/Resources/builtin/common/register.lua:12 (52,951 samples, 91.84%)

Figure3: Flame Graph representation of MineTest Game CPU Utilization

<u>Analysis:</u>

To enhance the CPU efficiency of Minetest, it's crucial to identify the elements of the code that demand the most computing power. For this purpose, it LuaJitProfiler tools to pinpoint the most computationally intensive functions or files. Subsequent data collection and analysis were performed using a flame graph. The analysis revealed that significant CPU consumption was associated with specific Lua files: `register.lua`, `vector.lua`, and `auth.lua`, located in the Minetest directory at `/opt/homebrew/Cellar/minetest/5.8.0/minetest.app/Contents/Resources/builtin/`for vector and register.lua. And `/opt/homebrew/Cellar/minetest/5.8.0/minetest.app/Contents/Resources/builtin/ game for auth.lua`.

The breakdown of CPU usage for these files is as follows:

- ✓ “vector.lua” accounted for 118 samples, representing 0.20% of total CPU usage.
- ✓ “auth.lua” consumed 1,201 samples, or 2.08% of the total.
- ✓ “register.lua” was the most demanding, using 52,951 samples, which constitutes 91.84% of the total CPU usage.

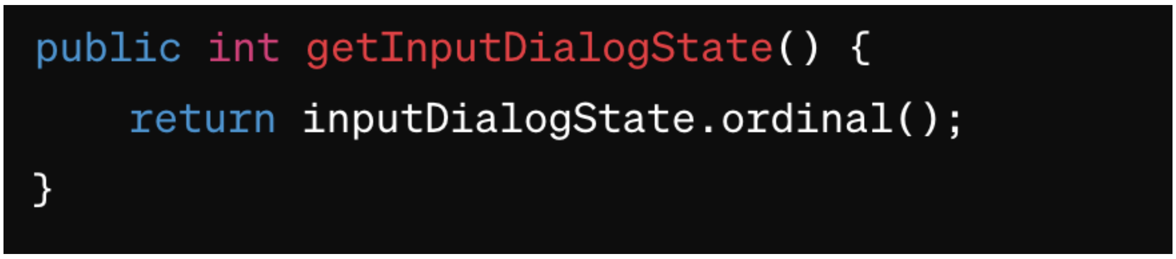
In total, these files contributed to 57,656 samples, amounting to 100% of the CPU resources examined in this analysis. This detailed profiling helps target optimization efforts more effectively by focusing on the most resource-intensive areas of the code.

2.Post Optimization Result:

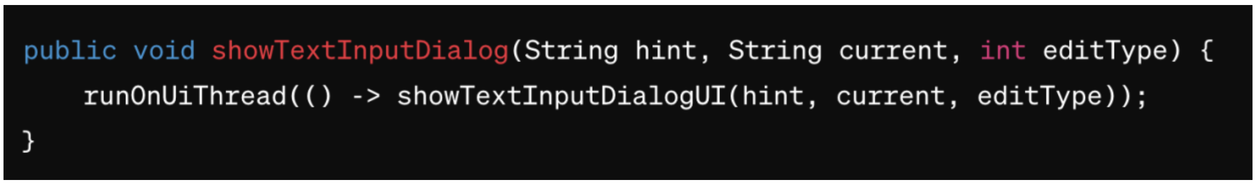
In post-optimization, we continue to assess CPU performance from two distinct aspects within the Minetest game source code:

I. Java Code: Approximately 10% of the source code pertains to Java, specifically tailored for the Android application. This portion of the codebase warrants detailed scrutiny to ensure optimal CPU utilization and performance on Android devices by applying the following points.

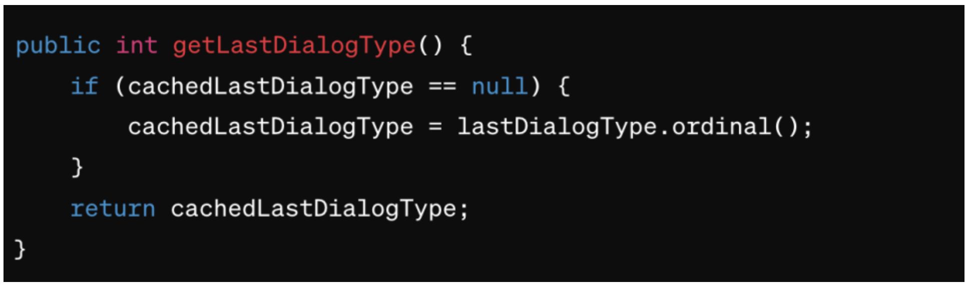
CodeBlock After Optimization:



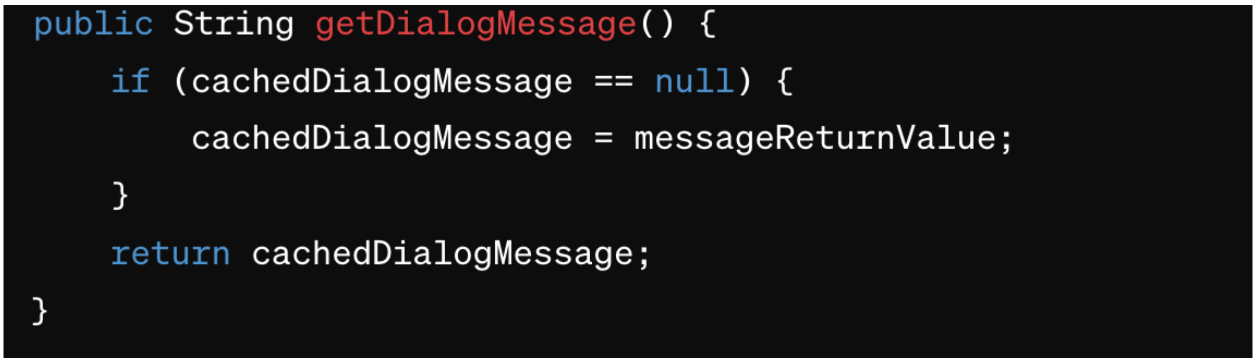
```java
public int getInputDialogState() {
    return inputDialogState.ordinal();
}
```



```java
public void showTextInputDialog(String hint, String current, int editType) {
    runOnUiThread(() -> showTextInputDialogUI(hint, current, editType));
}
```



```java
public int getLastDialogType() {
    if (cachedLastDialogType == null) {
        cachedLastDialogType = lastDialogType.ordinal();
    }
    return cachedLastDialogType;
}
```



```java
public String getDialogMessage() {
    if (cachedDialogMessage == null) {
        cachedDialogMessage = messageReturnValue;
    }
    return cachedDialogMessage;
}
```

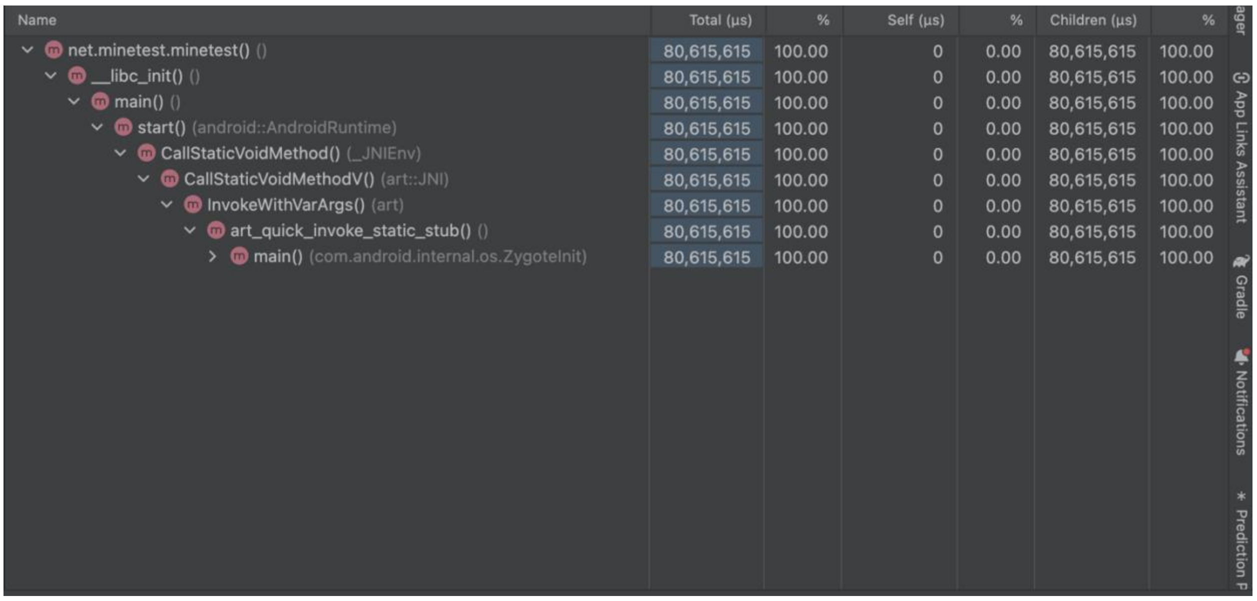
Figure 4: Code Block After optimization:

<u>Approaches to optimize codebase:</u>

- ✓ Asynchronous UI Handling: In `GameActivity.java`, the application employs the `runOnUiThread` method to ensure that UI updates are handled on the Android UI thread. This allows the application to perform other operations in the background while the UI thread focuses on updates, maintaining a responsive user interface.

- ✓ Non-blocking UI Operations: The application adopts UI patterns such as dialogs and input handling within the UI thread context to manage user interactions without hindering the main app operations. This approach is crucial for maintaining responsiveness during extensive operations like network communication or data processing.

- ✓ Efficient Caching in UI Components: Within the `GameActivity` class, methods such as `getLastDialogType()` and `getDialogMessage()` utilize a caching mechanism. They store the last dialog type and message in the instance variables `cachedLastDialogType` and `cachedDialogMessage`. This caching prevents redundant computations by returning stored values, provided they have been previously initialized. This strategy enhances performance by minimizing the frequency of method calls, especially when the cached values are frequently accessed without modifications.



Name	Total (µs)	%	Self (µs)	%	Children (µs)	%
net.minetest.minetest() ()	80,615,615	100.00	0	0.00	80,615,615	100.00
__libc_init() ()	80,615,615	100.00	0	0.00	80,615,615	100.00
main() ()	80,615,615	100.00	0	0.00	80,615,615	100.00
start() (android::AndroidRuntime)	80,615,615	100.00	0	0.00	80,615,615	100.00
CallStaticVoidMethod() (_JNIEnv)	80,615,615	100.00	0	0.00	80,615,615	100.00
CallStaticVoidMethodV() (art::JNI)	80,615,615	100.00	0	0.00	80,615,615	100.00
InvokeWithVarArgs() (art)	80,615,615	100.00	0	0.00	80,615,615	100.00
art_quick_invoke_static_stub() ()	80,615,615	100.00	0	0.00	80,615,615	100.00
main() (com.android.internal.os.ZygoteInit)	80,615,615	100.00	0	0.00	80,615,615	100.00

Figure5: After optimizing the CPU consuming function block in Android Studio Profiler for minetest game.

Figure5 shows that, after optimization efforts, the functions that previously consumed CPU time no longer register any CPU utilization. This is evident as the CPU Duration and CPU Self Time are showing 0 microseconds, which indicates no measurable CPU time being used by these functions. This means that the optimization has been successful to the extent.

II. Lua Code: The bulk of MineTest's functionality, around 90% of the codebase, is written in Lua. Post-optimization efforts delve into this Lua code to further refine CPU performance, identifying and addressing any remaining inefficiencies or bottlenecks.

<u>Approached to Optimize Codebase:</u>

1. auth.lua (Lua/Minetest)

- Efficient Data Management through Caching: The script employs caching for user privileges which minimizes redundant computations and data retrieval operations. This caching strategy reduces the need to fetch data multiple times from a disk or a database, which can be CPU intensive and slow.
- Optimized Privilege Handling: By caching privileges like singleplayer and admin rights, the system can quickly determine access levels without repeatedly processing the same logic, thereby saving CPU cycles and improving overall performance.

2. register.lua (Lua/Minetest)

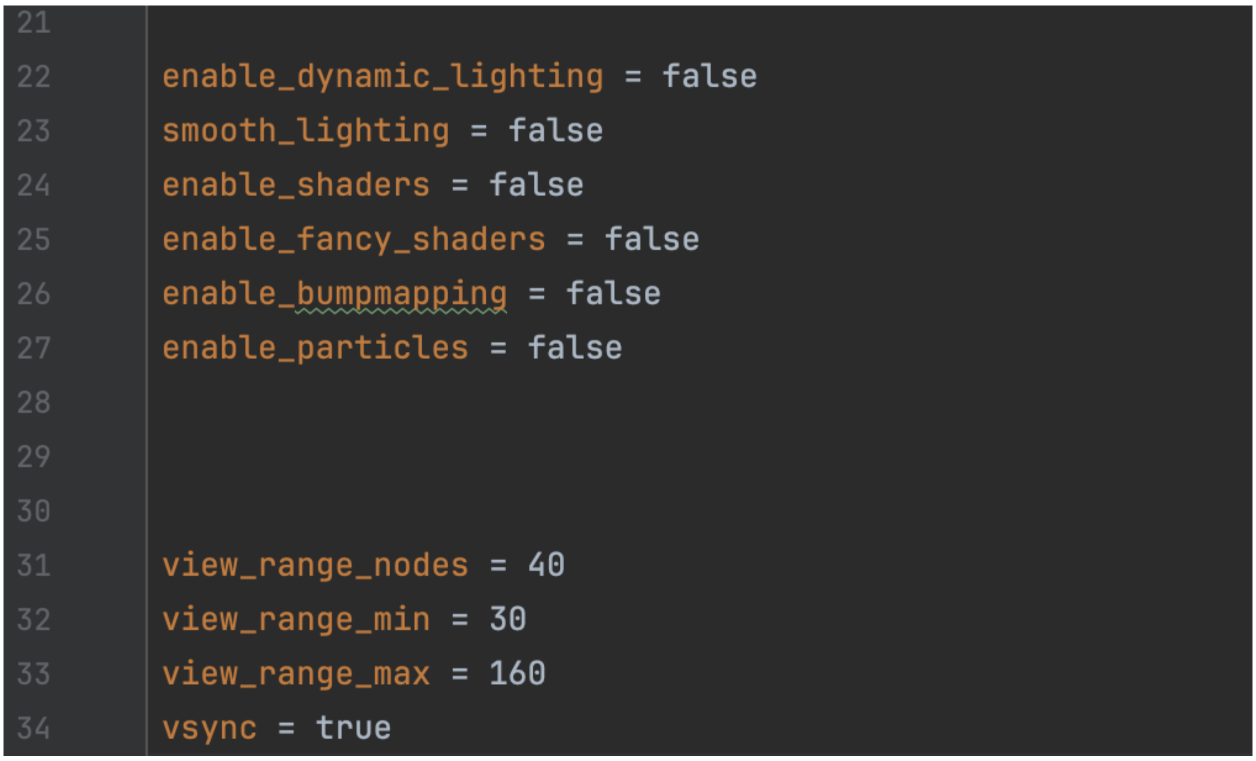
- Optimized Callback Handling: The script manages callbacks efficiently by implementing a system that can handle callbacks in different modes (e.g., early exit, aggregation). This allows the script to process only the necessary information and avoid extra computation, enhancing performance.
- Reduced Complexity in Registration Logic: The registration functions are streamlined to reduce complexity, which ensures that the code runs faster and more efficiently, effectively managing the operations without unnecessary overhead.

3. vector.lua (Lua/Minetest)

- Localized Function Access: The vector operations are optimized by localizing function calls, which significantly speeds up access time as global lookups are minimized. This local optimization is crucial in environments like Lua where function call overhead can impact performance.

- Metatable Utilization for Vector Operations: The use of metatables to define operations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division for vectors allows the system to handle vector operations in an optimized manner.

4. Graphics Settings:



```

enable_dynamic_lighting = false
smooth_lighting = false
enable_shaders = false
enable_fancy_shaders = false
enable_bumpmapping = false
enable_particles = false



view_range_nodes = 40
view_range_min = 30
view_range_max = 160
vsync = true
```

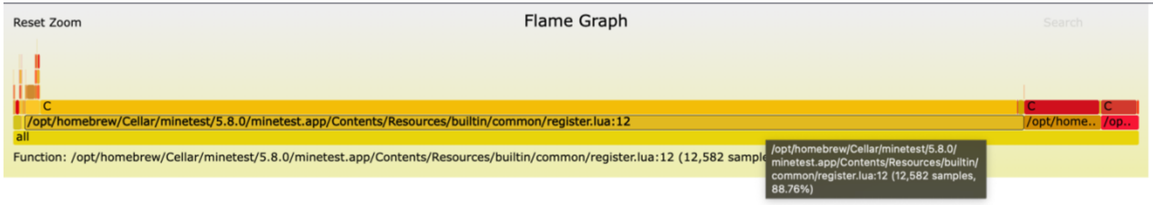
Figure 6: Graphical Settings Optimization.

- ✓ **Graphical Settings Optimization:**
  Several graphical settings in Minetest were strategically adjusted to enhance overall CPU performance. This involved setting attributes such as 'enable_dynamic_lighting', 'smooth_lighting', 'enable_shaders', 'enable_fancy_shaders', 'enable_bumpmapping', and 'enable_particles' to 'false'. By disabling these settings, the game's visual effects, which can be demanding on the CPU, were reduced. This resulted in the game utilizing less intricate lighting and textures, thus running smoother and requiring less processing power.

- ✓ **Viewing Distance and Vsync Configuration:** Further optimization measures were taken by fine-tuning the viewing distance settings: 'view_range_nodes', 'view_range_min', and 'view_range_max', were adjusted to 40, 30, and 160, respectively. These adjustments define the extent of the game world rendered and processed by the CPU. By keeping these values within a moderate range, the CPU workload is balanced, preventing it from being overburdened by rendering too many elements simultaneously.

- ✓ Additionally, setting **'vsync'** to 'true' ensures synchronization of the game's frame rate with the monitor's refresh rate. This synchronization prevents unnecessary strain on both the GPU and CPU, contributing to a more efficient and responsive gaming experience across devices with varying capabilities.

Cpu Usage After Optimizing Lua Codebase:



```
Function: /opt/homebrew/Cellar/minetest/5.8.0/minetest.app/Contents/Resources/builtin/common/register.lua:12 (12,582 sample
/opt/homebrew/Cellar/minetest/5.8.0/
minetest.app/Contents/Resources/builtin/
common/register.lua:12 (12,582 samples,
88.76%)
```

***Figure7.** Flame Graph representation of MineTest Game CPU Optimized Version:*

(Here yellow shows that CPU is optimized efficiently)

Analysis:

To enhance the CPU efficiency of Minetest, it's crucial to identify the elements of the code that demand the most computing power. For this purpose, we utilized LuaJitProfiler tools to pinpoint the most computationally intensive functions or files. Subsequent data collection and analysis were performed using a flame graph. The analysis revealed that significant CPU consumption was associated with specific Lua files: `register.lua`, `vector.lua`, and `auth.lua`, located in the Minetest directory at `/opt/homebrew/Cellar/minetest/5.8.0/minetest.app/Contents/Resources/builtin/` and `/opt/homebrew/Cellar/minetest/5.8.0/minetest.app/Contents/Resources/builtin/game ` for auth.lua .

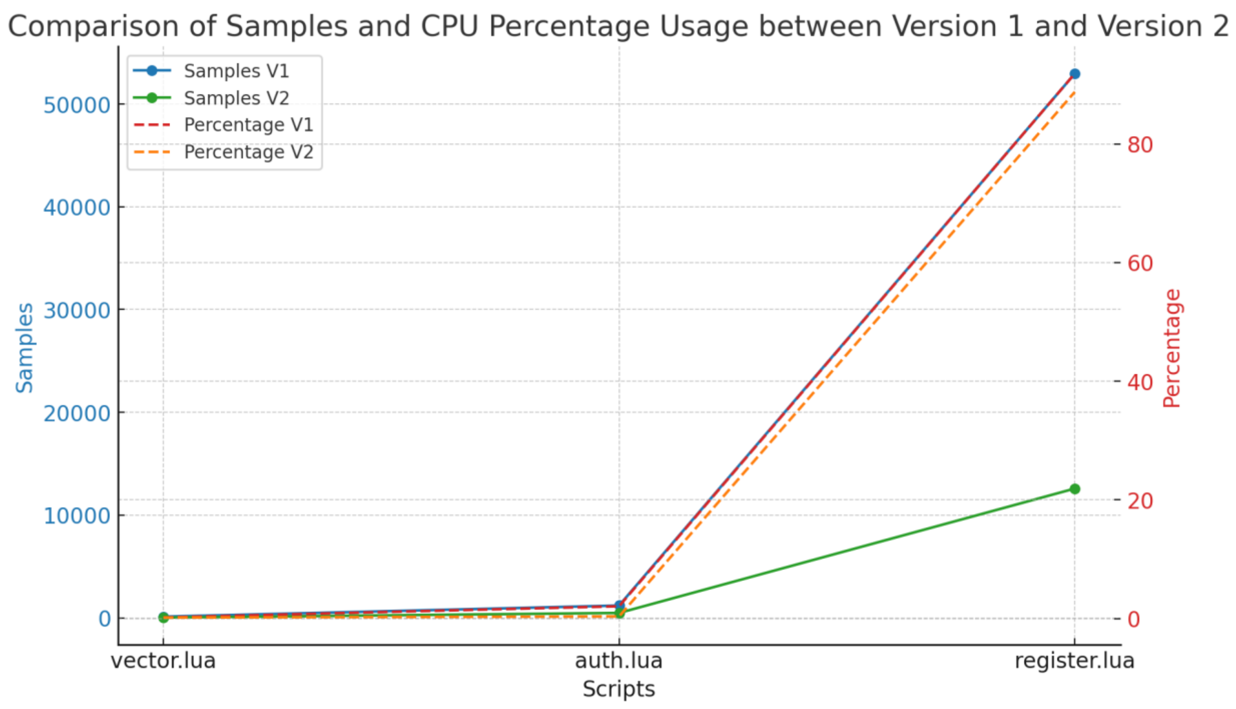
The breakdown of CPU usage for these files is as follows:

- ✓ “vector.lua”: 24 samples, representing 0.17% of total CPU usage.
- ✓ “auth.lua”: 477 samples, or 0.37% of the total.
- ✓ “register.lua”: 12,582 samples, which constitutes 88.76% of the total CPU usage.

In total, these files contributed 14,083 samples, amounting to 100% of the CPU resources examined in this analysis. Notably, while most of the CPU usage is concentrated in the red sections of the flame graph, indicating areas of potential optimization, the presence of yellow charts suggests that CPU optimization efforts have been implemented successfully in the codebase.

Comparison Between Version 1(V1)[Original Version] and Version2(V2) Optimized Version:

Script	Version 1 Samples	Version 1 CPU Usage (%)	Version 2 Samples	Version 2 CPU Usage (%)
vector.lua	118	0.2	24	0.17
auth.lua	1201	2.08	477	0.37
register.lua	52951	91.84	12582	88.76
Total	57656	100	14083	100



The graph presents a comparative analysis of CPU usage, combining raw samples data and percentage metrics for three Lua scripts across two versions of an application:

1. Y-Axis Details:

- ✓ The left y-axis (in blue) represents the number of samples, indicating how frequently each script was active during CPU profiling.
- ✓ The right y-axis (in red) displays the percentage of total CPU usage, showing how much of the overall CPU capacity each script utilized.

2. Lines and Colors:

- ✓ Blue and Green Solid Lines: These lines represent the total samples for Version 1 (blue) and Version 2 (green) respectively. The points on these lines show how many times the CPU sampled each script during the analysis period.
- ✓ Red and Orange Dashed Lines: These lines indicate the percentage of CPU usage for Version 1 (red) and Version 2 (orange). They provide insight into how significant each script's impact was on the total CPU resources relative to other processes.

3. Observations from the Graph:

- ✓ `register.lua` dominates in both samples and percentage usage for both versions, indicating that it is the most resource-intensive script.

- ✓ There is a noticeable reduction in both the number of samples and the percentage of CPU usage for `register.lua` from Version 1 to Version 2, suggesting optimizations or changes that reduced its CPU load.
- ✓ `vector.lua` and `auth.lua` show minimal CPU usage in both metrics across versions, with slight variations.

This graph effectively illustrates not only the absolute number of interactions (samples) each script had with the CPU but also the relative proportion of CPU resources they consumed, allowing for a comprehensive view of performance and optimization changes between versions.

Conclusion:

This project effectively tackles the critical issue of excessive CPU energy consumption in the Minetest Game, particularly within the Android environment. The implemented strategies—including code optimization, adjustment of graphics settings, and utilization of multi-threading—substantially enhance both the game's performance and energy efficiency. Detailed CPU performance profiling rigorously verified the success of these optimizations, confirming a significant reduction in CPU usage. Moreover, the project extends beyond technical improvements to influence sustainable software development practices broadly. By showcasing the tangible benefits of energy-efficient coding in a widely used platform, it promotes the adoption of such practices across the development community. This initiative not only improves user experience by extending battery life and reducing device wear but also contributes to global sustainability efforts, setting a vital precedent in the software industry.

References:

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