

COMP15111 Notes

Chris Williamson

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1 Lecture 1:Introduction

1.1 A Computational Model

The simplest, earliest, commonest, most important model is the **Von-Neumann Imperative Procedural Computer Model**

A computer can:

1. Store information
2. Manipulate the stored information
3. Make decisions depending on the stored information

1.2 Simple View Of A Computer

$$Memory \Leftrightarrow Bus \Leftrightarrow Processor$$

1.2.1 Memory

- A set of locations which can hold information, such as numbers(or programs)

Each memory location has a unique (numerical) address

Typically thousands of millions of different locations

There are various ways of depicting memory; a common one is a 'hex dump':

Each item has a unique address.

1.2.2 Bus

- Bidirectional communication path

Transmits addresses and numbers

1.2.3 Processor

- Obeys a sequence of instructions = program (code)

Historically the processor was often referred to as a CPU

Nowadays this is inappropriate - typically several processing 'cores'

1.3 Three-address instructions

Every kind of processor has a different set of instructions, real world examples include: pentium, ARM....and others

We will start with something simple

Each 3-address instruction:

1. Copies the values from any two memory locations and sends them to the processor (source operands)
2. Copies some operation e.g. adds the copied numbers together

3. Copies the result back from the processor into a third memory location (destination operand)

e.g. sum of two values 'a' and 'b'
 a holds 2, b holds 3 "source operands"
 2+ 3 is 5 "operation"
 Sum becomes 5 "destination operand"

1.4 Registers

Reduce accesses to main memory by using registers:

1. Very small, very fast memory within the processor
2. Each register can hold a single value

Processors contain up to a few dozen registers e.g. ARM: 16 registers - R0 to R15

1.5 Instruction Styles

Make instructions as simple as possible while allowing for the best use of registers
 One-address style (e.g. Intel Pentium):

1. Only use (at most) 1 memory location in each instruction
2. Use registers for the other operands

$$register \leftarrow register + memorylocation$$

Load-store style (e.g. ARM): Use registers for all three operands

$$register \leftarrow register + register$$

So we need extra instructions to get at memory locations:

1. **Load** (from memory): $register \leftarrow memory\ location$
2. **Store** (to memory): $memory\ location \rightarrow register$

Sum = a + b + c;

Becomes:

Register1 \leftarrow a (i.e. load from a)

Register2 \leftarrow b (i.e. load from b)

Register3 \leftarrow register 1 + register2 (i.e. a+b)

Register4 \leftarrow c (i.e. load from c)

Register5 \leftarrow register3 + register4 (i.e. (a+b)+c)

sum \rightarrow register5 (i.e. store to sum)

One load or store instruction per variable (a, b, c, sum)

One arithmetic instruction per operation (+, +)

Lots of very simple, very fast instructions

2 Lecture 2

Computers obey program which are sequences of instructions

Instructions are coded as values in memory

The sequences are held in memory adjacent memory locations

Values in memory can be interpreted as:

1. Numbers (in several different ways)
2. Instructions
3. Text
4. Colours
5. Music
6. Anything you want

Values are often represented as numbers for convenience.

2.1 Assembly Language

Assembly language is a means of representing machine instructions in a human readable form.

Each type of processor has its own assembly language but they typically have a lot in common:

1. A mnemonic specifies the type of operation
2. A destination a register on this case
3. And one or more sources also registers
4. Possibly with a comment too

2.2 ARM instructions

ARM has many instructions but we only need three categories:

1. Memory operations
2. Processing operations
3. Control flow

Memory operation move data between the memory and the registers

Processing operations perform calculations using value already in registers

Control flow instructions are used to make decisions, repeat operations etc.

2.3 ARM memory instructions

Memory operations load a register from the memory or store a register value to the memory

e.g. LDR R1, a means: $R1 \leftarrow a$

e.g. STR R5, sum means: $R5 \rightarrow \text{sum}$ (i.e. $\text{sum} \leftarrow R5$)

a and sum are aliases for the addresses of memory locations

2.4 ARM processing instructions

Processing operations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication.

e.g. ADD R3, R1, R2 means: $R3 \leftarrow R1 + R2$

2.5 ARM control instructions

Fundamentally, these are branches to other code sequences.

Often, branches are made conditional to allow decisions to be made.

e.g. B somewhere means: branch to somewhere

e.g. BEQ elsewhere means: branch to elsewhere IF previous result was equals

e.g. BNE wherever means: branch to wherever IF previous result was not equal

2.6 Stored programs and the Program Counter

A computer can make decisions, and choose which instructions to obey next depending upon the results of those decisions.

How? First we need to see how the sequence of instructions is controlled.

Von-Neumann Model: memory holds both instructions and numbers - **stored program**

Program Counter (PC) register: holds the address of the memory location containing the next instruction to be obeyed (executed).

ARM uses register 15 as its PC

2.7 Fetch-Execute Cycle

Start with PC containing the address of (the memory location holding) the first instruction of a program

Repeatedly:

1. **Fetch**: copy the instruction, pointed to by the PC, from memory and set PC to point to the next instruction
2. **Execute**: obey the instruction (exactly as before)

ARM:

1. 'Resets' to (starts at) address 00000000
2. Instructions each occupy 4 memory locations, so PC increases by 4 in each fetch

2.8 Decision Making

Linear sequences of instructions are limiting.

To make a decision, the computer must change (or not) to a different sequence of instructions

e.g. a 1 pound discount on items worth 20 pounds or more.

Decision: compare the total and 20 pounds to see if it is larger, then depending on result, either perform action or not.

Action: subtract 1 pound from the total.

Computers have no intelligence, so spell out details **Formalise:** if total \geq 20 pounds then subtract 1 pound from total

Rewrite: if total $<$ 20 pounds then dont

subtract 1 pound from total

Encode: as ARM instructions

2.9 Compare And Branch