

Lecture 1 - 4th Sept 2024

Instruction Set Architecture: how hardware executes software

• What is a computer?

↳ just a machine that does whatever the software tells it to do.

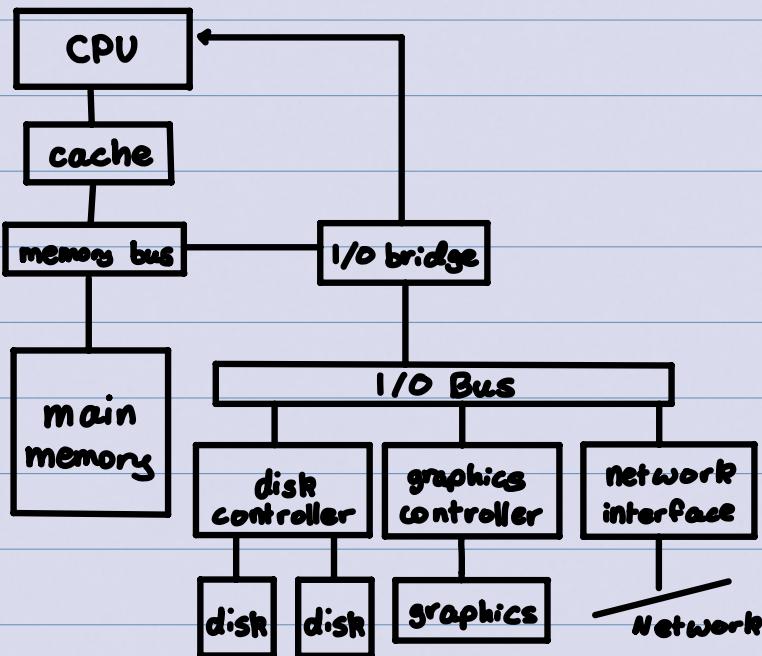
↳ computer > digital circuits > logic gates > transistors

↳ Software is just a series of instructions.

↳ The five classic components of a computer:

- CPU: Central Arithmetic (ALU) and Central Control
- Memory System
- Input and Output

↳ But, here's a more realistic view:



Architecture vs Microarchitecture

↳ Processor architecture:

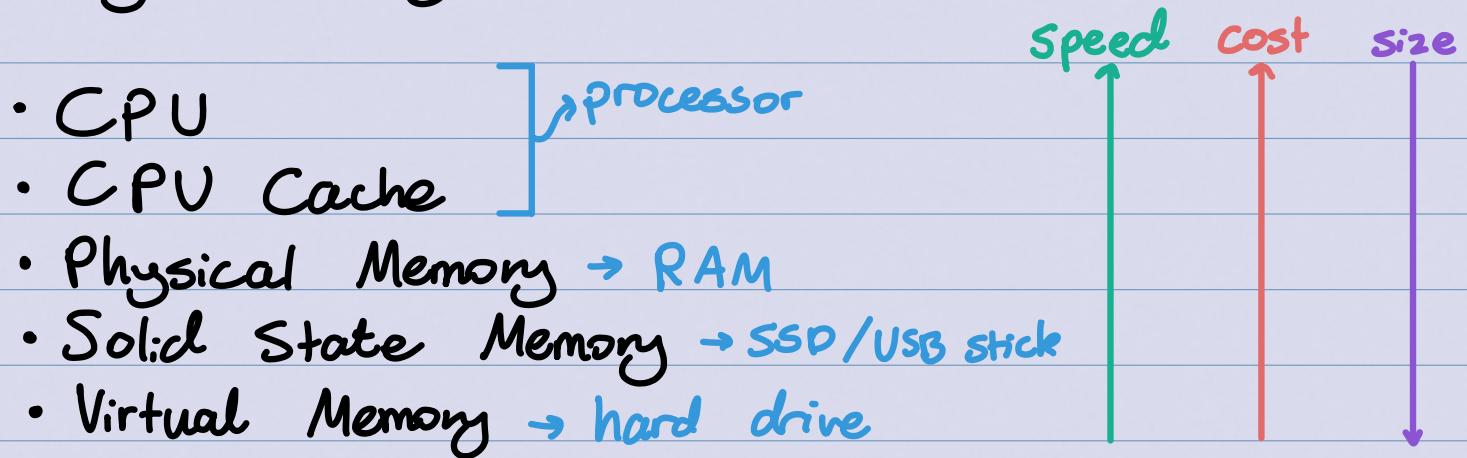
- Functional appearance to software (ISA)
 - Exactly what instructions does it have?
 - Number of memory/storage locations it has
 - Interface!

in this case, compilers!

↳ Processor microarchitecture:

- Logical Structure that implements the architecture
 - Number of functional units, interconnection, control
 - Size of the caches
 - Not visible to the software
 - Implementation!

Memory Hierarchy:



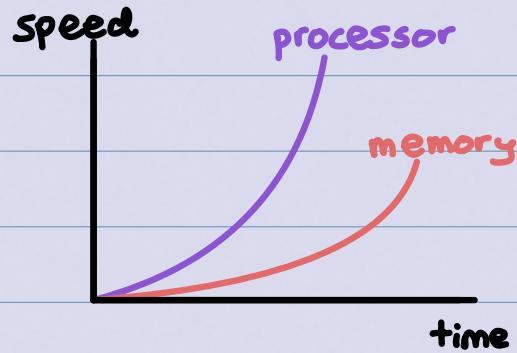
- Moore's Law: every 18-24 months,

- 2x transistors on same chip area
- 2x processor speed
- 2x memory capacity
- ½ energy/power consumption.

↳ technically not a law, but it's a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Memory Wall: every 2 years,

- 2x Instructions / second
- 2x memory capacity
- 1.1x memory latency



↳ growing disparity between processor and memory performance!
 ∵ significant effort in reducing / hiding memory latency.

Latency: time from start to finish (aka response time).

Throughput: number of tasks completed per time unit
 (aka bandwidth)

↳ throughput can exploit parallelism, but latency cannot!

• Improving the latency of a component always improves the overall system throughput.

$$\text{Speedup} = \frac{\text{Performance } (\alpha)}{\text{Performance } (y)} \quad \text{→ "}\alpha\text{ is "speedup" times faster than } y\text{"}$$

↳ can be broken down into $\frac{\text{throughput } (\alpha)}{\text{throughput } (y)}$ or
 $\frac{\text{latency } (y)}{\text{latency } (\alpha)}$.
 don't forget - latency will likely be < 1 , so need to invert fraction!

Iron Law of Performance:

$$\text{CPU Time: } \frac{\text{instructions}}{\text{program}} \cdot \frac{\text{cycles}}{\text{instruction}} \cdot \frac{\text{Seconds}}{\text{cycle}}$$

aka CPI

IPC is inverse - instructions per cycle

Amdahl's Law : Speedup = $\frac{1}{(1 - \text{Frac}_{\text{EHN}}) + \frac{\text{Frac}_{\text{EHN}}}{\text{Speedup}_{\text{EHN}}}}$

Example :

- Enhancement 1: speedup of 20 on 10% of time

$$\hookrightarrow \frac{1}{(1 - 0.1) + \frac{0.1}{20}} = \frac{1}{0.9 + 0.005} = 1.105.$$

- Enhancement 2: speedup of 1.6 on 80% of time.

$$\hookrightarrow \frac{1}{(1 - 0.8) + \frac{0.8}{1.6}} = \frac{1}{0.2 + 0.5} = \frac{1}{0.7} = 1.43.$$

\therefore , the second enhancement is better \rightarrow even though the first enhancement has a speedup of 20, it's only helpful 10% of the time.

\hookrightarrow "make the common case fast" !!

Power Consumption : transistors consume / dissipate power in two ways:

- Dynamic Power : Consumed by activities in a circuit (switching transistors)

$$\hookrightarrow P = \frac{1}{2} C \cdot V^2 \cdot f \cdot a$$

where: C = capacitance (\sim chip area)

V = power supply voltage

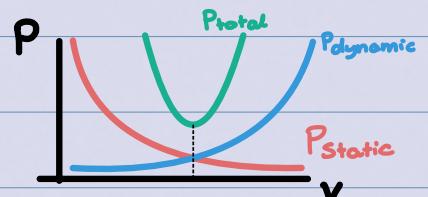
f = clock frequency

a = activity factor

- Static Power : consumed when powered on but idle (leaking current)

↳ as voltage decreases, leakage increases.

- we strive for the "sweet spot" between static and dynamic power:



- Power Wall: supply voltage (generally) decreasing over time.

↳ emphasis on power starting ~2000.

- Since ~2000, we've "hit a wall" and aren't making as much progress.

- What is an ISA?

↳ Functional and precise specification of a computer.

- An ISA is a "contract" between the software and the hardware.
 - Specifies what hardware promises to do when it sees certain instructions, but not how it does it.

CISC vs RISC :

- Early trend was to add more and more instructions to new CPUs to do elaborate operations

↳ CISC (Complex Instruction Set Computing)

- Now, we keep the instruction set small and simple and let the software do the complicated operations by composing simpler ones.
 - This makes it easier to build fast hardware.
- ↳ RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computing)

Instruction Set:

- Arithmetic and logic: add, subtract, multiply, divide, AND, OR, XOR, ...
- Data movement: move, load, store
- Control flow: branch and jump
- System (privileged): used to manage processor state, handle exceptions, etc.
- Each instruction has a specific format and encoding

Registers

- General-Purpose Registers: can be used for various purposes as determined by the programmer or compiler.
- Special-Purpose Registers: have specific roles such as:
 - ↳ Program Counter (PC): holds the address of the next instruction to be executed.
 - ↳ Stack Pointer (SP): points to the top of the stack in memory
 - ↳ Status Register: holds flags that indicate the results of operations (e.g., zero flag).

Memory Model:

- this is virtual memory,
not physical!
- **Address Space**: defines the range of memory locations that can be addressed
 - ↳ Eg: a 32-bit address space can address $2^{32} = 4\text{ GB}$.
 - **Byte Ordering**: specifies whether multi-byte values are stored with the most significant byte first (big-endian) or last (little-endian)
 - **Alignment Requirements**: some ISAs require data to be aligned in memory in specific ways.
 - ↳ Eg: 32-bit values may need to be stored at addresses that are multiples of four.

Addressing Modes:

- **Immediate**: the operand is included directly in the instruction itself.
 - ↳ often used for small constants and quick arithmetic operations.
- **Register**: the operand is stored in a CPU register
 - ↳ often used for frequently-accessed variables and intermediate results.
- **Direct**: the instruction contains the memory address where the operand is located.
 - ↳ often used for accessing static variables or fixed memory locations.
- **Indirect**: the instruction specifies a register that contains the memory address of the operand
 - ↳ often used for accessing pointer-based structures.

RISC-V

- New open-source and license-free ISA spec.
 - Appropriate for all levels of computing system, from microcontrollers to supercomputers.
 - Simple and elegant!
 - Designed with modularity and extensibility in mind
 - Many optional extensions targeting different use cases:
 - M: integer multiplication and division
 - A: atomic instructions
 - F: single-precision floating point
 - D: double-precision floating point
 - C: compressed instructions
 - V: vector operations
- ↳ Eg: "RV64MC" would be a RISC V 64-bit implementation with the extensions M and C.

- There are 32 registers in RISC-V, numbered from 0 to 31: $x_0 - x_{31}$
 - ↳ x_0 is special, it always holds the value zero.
- Each register is 32-bits wide → note, 32 bits is called a "word"
- Some registers have conventional uses:
 - ↳ x_1 : return address (ra)
 - x_2 : stack pointer (sp)
 - $x_{10} - x_{17}$: function arguments/return values ($a_0 - a_7$)
- Since registers are close to the processor, they're very fast (faster than 0.25 ns)!

RISC-V arithmetic instruction syntax:

opname, rd, rs1, rs2

opname: operation, by name

rd: "destination", operand getting result

rs1: "source 1", 1st operand for operation

rs2: "source 2", 2nd operand for operation

Eg: add, x1, x2, x3

↳ $a = b + c$, where a is stored at register 1, b in register 2, and c in register 3.

Example: how would we implement the following

Statement: $a = b + c + d - e$? a is $x10$, b is $x1$, c is $x2$, d is $x3$, and e is $x4$.

↳
add x10, x1, x2 # $a = b + c$
add x10, x10, x3 # $a = a + d$
sub x10, x10, x4 # $a = a - e$

Example: $f = (g + h) - (i + j)$; , where f is $x19$,

g is $x20$, h is $x21$, i is $x22$, and j is $x23$.

↳ we'll have to use intermediate temporary registers!

↳
add x5, x20, x21 # temp1 = g + h
add x6, x22, x23 # temp2 = i + j

sub x19, x5, x6

f = temp1 - temp2

Immediates : numerical constants

↳ add immediate instruction: similar to add instruction, but the last operand must be a number, not a register:

addi rd, rs1, number

↳ Eg: add 6 to the value in register x3.

↳ addi x3, x3, 6 # $x_3 = x_3 + 6$.

→ RISC philosophy is to reduce the operations to an absolute minimum!

• There is no subtract immediate instruction in RISC-V → just pass a negative number!

• Register zero (x_0): RISC-V hardwires the register 0 (x_0) to value 0.

↳ Eg: add x3, x4, x0 : f = g

Eg: addi x3, x0, 0x ff : f = 0x ff

∴, the instruction add x0, x1, x2 won't do anything!

Also, x0 is useful for clearing a register or negating a number.