

# The Guide to ChronOS

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February 17, 2024

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction to ChronOS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Lab 0 - Introduction to Rust Programming language</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1	Objectives . . . . .	4
2.2	Install Rust . . . . .	4
2.2.1	Integrated Development Environment . . . . .	5
2.3	Hello World . . . . .	5
2.4	Variables . . . . .	6
2.5	Attributes . . . . .	7
2.6	Unsafe Rust . . . . .	7
2.6.1	External Code . . . . .	7
2.7	Module . . . . .	7
2.8	Structs . . . . .	7
2.9	Impl . . . . .	8
2.10	Function . . . . .	8
2.11	Match . . . . .	8
2.12	Trait . . . . .	9
2.13	Self-study materials . . . . .	9
<b>3</b>	<b>Lab 1 - Getting started</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1	Expected Outcome . . . . .	10
3.2	Preparation . . . . .	10
3.3	Task 1 - Standalone Rust Binary . . . . .	11
3.3.1	Introduction . . . . .	11
3.3.2	Implementation . . . . .	13
3.3.3	Output . . . . .	15
3.4	Task 2 - Build Minimal Kernel . . . . .	16
3.4.1	Introduction . . . . .	16
3.4.2	Implementation . . . . .	16
3.4.3	Output . . . . .	18
3.5	Task 3 - Show something! . . . . .	19
3.5.1	Introduction . . . . .	19
3.5.2	Implementation . . . . .	19
3.5.3	Output . . . . .	21

<b>4</b>	<b>Lab 2 - VGA output</b>	<b>22</b>
4.1	Expected Outcome . . . . .	22
4.2	Task 1 - Print text at a specified position using ASCII encoding . . . . .	22
4.2.1	Introduction . . . . .	22
4.2.2	Implementation . . . . .	22
4.2.3	Output . . . . .	25
4.3	Task 2 - Write byte . . . . .	25
4.3.1	Introduction . . . . .	25
4.3.2	Implementation . . . . .	26
4.3.3	Output . . . . .	30
4.4	Task 3 - Enable write! and writeln! . . . . .	31
4.4.1	Introduction . . . . .	31
4.4.2	Implementation . . . . .	31
4.4.3	Output . . . . .	34
4.5	Task 4 - Writer in vga.rs . . . . .	35
4.5.1	Introduction . . . . .	35
4.5.2	Implementation . . . . .	35
4.5.3	Output . . . . .	38
<b>5</b>	<b>Lab 3 - Paging</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Utility - Test tool</b>	<b>40</b>
6.1	Lab 2 . . . . .	40
<b>7</b>	<b>Extra knowledge</b>	<b>41</b>
7.1	What did bootimage tool do? . . . . .	41
7.2	VGA text buffer . . . . .	41
7.3	Big endian and little endian . . . . .	41

# Chapter 1

## Introduction to ChronOS

All code available at GitHub [https://github.com/acyanbird/chronos\\_labs/](https://github.com/acyanbird/chronos_labs/)  
Please see different branch for each stage.

Writing a lab assignment to create an operating system using Rust as the programming language:

**Lab Assignment:** Building an Operating System with Rust

**Objective:** In this lab, you will learn to create a simple operating system using the Rust programming language. Operating systems are complex pieces of software that manage hardware resources and provide services to other software applications. This lab will introduce you to the basics of operating system development, focusing on the foundational components.

## Chapter 2

# Lab 0 - Introduction to Rust Programming language

### 2.1 Objectives

Since this project uses Rust as the programming language, and there are no specific university courses for it, this lab will introduce you to some fundamental syntax to help you get started. You don't need to read through this Lab completely right now. Throughout the subsequent implementation of the operating system, if you encounter new Rust content, we will reference you back to the relevant sections of Lab 0. Combining examples will help you better understand their application.

### 2.2 Install Rust

Rustup is used to install and managed Rust. You can check if your machine is already install Rust by typing `rustc --version` in your console.

If not, for installation on Unix-like machine (e.g. MacOS, Linux) input this in terminal

```
1 curl --proto '=https' --tlsv1.2 -sSf https://sh.rustup.rs | sh
```

For windows users install

```
1 https://static.rust-lang.org/rustup/dist/i686-pc-windows-gnu/  
2 rustup-init.exe
```

### 2.2.1 Integrated Development Environment

I highly recommend using an IDE for development. Currently, there are not many IDEs that support Rust. Here, I recommend Visual Studio Code + rust-analyzer extension or RustRover.

## 2.3 Hello World

We will use cargo to create the basic framework for the project. Cargo is Rust's build system and package manager and it should be installed by rustup. You could check it by

```
1 cargo --version
```

Create project by

```
1 cargo new hello
2 cd hello
```

It will also generate an empty git repository for version control, and a cargo.toml that provide project basic information and dependency. We could ignore it right now. The file structure is like:

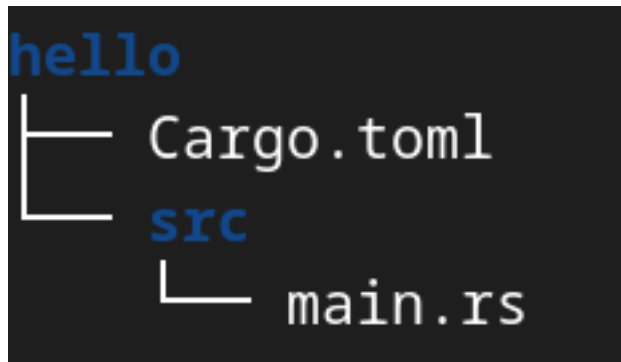


Figure 2.1: project structure

**Cargo.toml:** This is the configuration file for your Rust project. It contains metadata about the project, such as its name, version, dependencies, and other settings.

**src/directory:** This directory is where you put your source code files. It contains your project's main code. You will often have one or more Rust source files (.rs) in this directory.

## CHAPTER 2. LAB 0 - INTRODUCTION TO RUST PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE6

main.rs: This is the primary entry point for your Rust application. It typically contains the main function, which is the starting point of your program.

The main.rs created by cargo is a simple program that would print Hello, world! It is similar to C. To run project use **cargo run** command in terminal.

```
1 fn main() {  
2     println!("Hello, world!");  
3 }
```

## 2.4 Variables

### Variables:

- Variables in Rust are declared using the let keyword.
- By default, variables in Rust are immutable, which means their values cannot be changed once assigned. To make a variable mutable, you use the mut keyword.
- You can reassign values to mutable variables, but their types must remain the same.

```
1 // Declare an immutable integer variable  
2 let x = 10;  
3 // Declare a mutable integer variable  
4 let mut y = 20;  
5 // Reassign a value to the mutable variable  
6 y = 30;
```

### Constants:

- Constants in Rust are declared using the const keyword.
- Constants must have an explicitly defined type and must have a fixed, compile-time determined value.
- Conventionally, constants are named using all uppercase letters and underscores to separate words.

```
1 // Declare an integer constant  
2 const MAX_VALUE: i32 = 100;  
3 // Declare a string constant  
4 const GREETING: &str = "Hello, Rust!";
```

## 2.5 Attributes

Attributes in Rust are metadata applied to modules, crates, functions, structs, or other items. They can instruct the compiler to perform specific tasks or apply certain properties to the item they annotate. Attributes can be divided into two main categories: Inner Attributes and Outer Attributes.

- Outer Attributes (`#[outer_attribute]`): Applied to the item that follows them. They are used to set attributes or give instructions related to the item directly below them.
- Inner Attributes (`#![inner_attribute]`): Applied to the item they are contained within. They are often found at the beginning of source files or modules to configure or set options for the scope they reside in.

## 2.6 Unsafe Rust

### Tell the compiler I know what I'm doing!

The `unsafe` keyword allows you to bypass the language's usual safety checks and guarantees. It's used when you need to perform operations that the Rust compiler can't prove to be safe at compile-time, such as accessing raw pointers, dereferencing them, or making changes to mutable static variables. It's a way to tell the Rust compiler that you, the programmer, will ensure the safety of the code within the `unsafe` block.

### 2.6.1 External Code

## 2.7 Module

See more on <https://doc.rust-lang.org/rust-by-example/mod.html>

## 2.8 Structs

A struct, short for structure, is a custom data type that lets you package together related data under a single name. We use it to making code more organized, readable, and maintainable. It's similar to structs in C. In our case

```

1 struct VGChar {
2     ascii: u8,
3     color: u8,
4 }
```

`VGChar` is a struct with 2 fields, `ascii` and `color` both with data type `u8`. We can create instance by



```

1 let character = VGChar {
2     ascii: b'A', // ASCII code for 'A'
3     color: 0x04; // black background, red foreground
4 };

```

Using `character.ascii` and `character.color` access the `ascii` and `color` fields of the character instance, respectively. You can use these to read (and, if mutable, modify) the data stored in an instance of a struct.

## 2.9 Impl

### TODO

It is a keyword used to implement functionality for a particular type, such as a struct or enum. It allows you to define methods, associated functions, and trait implementations for the specified type. The `impl` keyword can be used indefinitely, but typically, organizing related functionality into one or a few `impl` blocks is a clearer and more maintainable practice.

## 2.10 Function

## 2.11 Match

It allows you to compare a value against a series of patterns and execute code based on which pattern matches. It's similar to a `switch` statement in other languages but more powerful. For our example:

```

1 match byte {
2     // if not acceptable ASCII, print a space with error color
3     0x20..=0x7e | b'\n' => self.write_byte(byte, COLOR),
4     _ => self.write_byte(b' ', ERROR_COLOR),
5 }

```

- `0x20..=0x7e | b'\n'`: This is a pattern that matches any byte within the range 0x20 to 0x7e or the newline character `b'\n'`. If the byte matches this pattern, `self.write_byte(byte, COLOR)` is executed.
- `_`: This is the wildcard pattern that matches any value that hasn't been matched by the previous patterns. Then `self.write_byte(b' ', ERROR_COLOR)` is executed, printing a space with error color.

## 2.12 Trait

In Rust, a trait defines a set of methods that types can implement. It allows for defining shared behavior across different types.

## 2.13 Self-study materials

However, to master this language, you'll need to continue learning as you go. Here are some recommended books and platforms for learning Rust:

- Official Rust Website: The official Rust website provides comprehensive documentation, tutorials, and resources for learning Rust.
- The Rust Programming Language: Affectionately nicknamed “the book,” The Rust Programming Language will give you an overview of the language from first principles[6]
- Rust by Example: Rust by Example (RBE) is a collection of runnable examples that illustrate various Rust concepts and standard libraries.[3] If you prefer learning a new language by reading example code, then this book might be more suitable for you.
- A half-hour to learn Rust: Providing lots of Rust snippets. It has brief explanation of each code snippet, suitable for quick browsing.
- rustlings: This project contains small exercises to get you used to reading and writing Rust code.[4]

## Chapter 3

# Lab 1 - Getting started

This lab is running and tested on Linux (Debian) only for now.

### 3.1 Expected Outcome

In this lab, we'll create a Rust program entirely from scratch, free from any reliance on a host operating system. Our goal is to develop a minimal 64-bit kernel that can display text using VGA through QEMU. Below is the expected output.

### 3.2 Preparation

- QEMU

To run the experiment's output, we need to use QEMU. Here, we won't list the installation steps for QEMU on various operating systems. Please visit the official website at <https://www.qemu.org/download/> to download the appropriate installer and follow the on-screen instructions for installation.

- Nightly Rust

If you are not install Rust already, please follow instructions here [2.2](#)

Rust offers various versions, but for operating system development, we require certain experimental features not available in the stable version. Thus, we can't use the stable version. To install Nightly Rust, simply enter the following command in your terminal.

```
1 rustup update nightly
```

- bootimage

This tool assists us in generating files for the virtual machine (QEMU). To install it, use the following command in your terminal using Cargo.

```
1 cargo install bootimage
```

- llvm-tools-preview

The llvm-tools-preview is a dependency for the bootimage tool. You can install it using command

```
1 rustup component add llvm-tools-preview
```

## 3.3 Task 1 - Standalone Rust Binary

### 3.3.1 Introduction

When we create a Rust program, similar to Lab 0, it usually relies on an existing operating system. Rust comes with a standard library that depends on the features of that operating system.

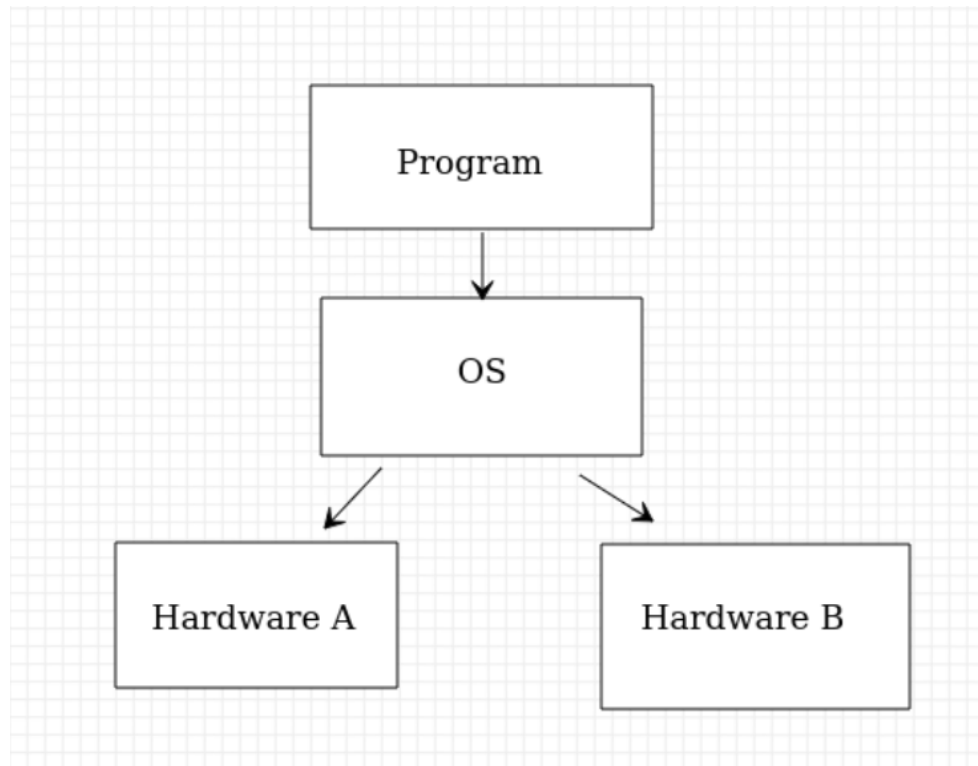


Figure 3.1: Common Rust Program

But since our goal is to build an operating system from the ground up, we can't rely on the existing one. So, we disable the standard library using `no_std`, and this lets us work directly with hardware.

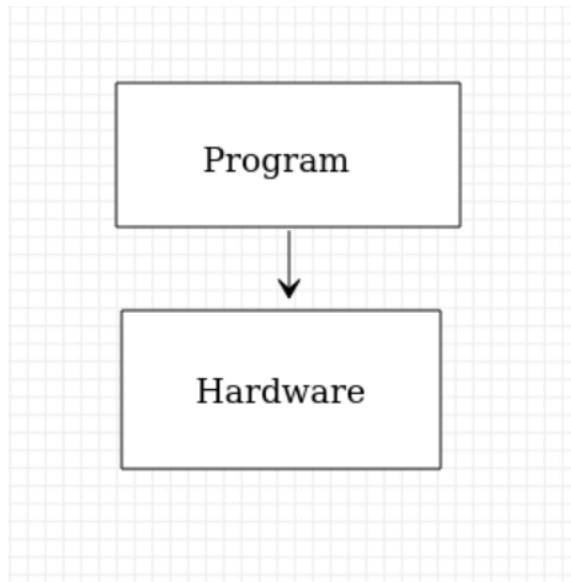


Figure 3.2: Standalone Rust

See branch lab-1-1 for the code.

### 3.3.2 Implementation

#### Step 1: Setup a New Rust Project

Open a terminal and create a new Rust project by running

```
1 cargo new chronos_lab --bin --edition 2018
```

This creates a new binary project named `chronos_lab`. You could use your own name. Change into the project directory with

```
1 cd <your project name>
```

#### Step 2: Editing Cargo.toml

Open the `Cargo.toml` file in your project's root directory.

In the initial `Cargo.toml` file, the `[package]` section includes predefined name, version, and edition information. You can now leave them unchanged.

Add configurations for development and release profiles to change the panic strategy to abort, which disables stack unwinding during a panic. Add these lines at the end of the `Cargo.toml` file:

```
1 [profile.dev]
2 panic = "abort" # Configures the compiler to abort the program
on panic during development builds.
```

```

3 [profile.release]
4 panic = "abort" # Configures the compiler to abort the program
  on panic during release builds.

```

Here is the detail explanation of this part:

- `[profile.dev]` and `[profile.release]`: These sections allow you to specify settings for development (cargo build) and release (cargo build --release) profiles, respectively.
- `panic = "abort"`: By default, Rust tries to recover from errors (panics) by unwinding the program's stack, which can't be done without additional support. In this case, we want the program to just stop immediately when an error happens. Setting `panic = "abort"` makes the program do that.

### Step 3: Writing the Freestanding Rust Code

Open the `src/main.rs` file. Replace its contents with the following code:

```

1 #![no_std] // disable the Rust standard library
2 #![no_main] // disable all Rust-level entry points
3
4 #[no_mangle] // don't mangle the name of this function
5 pub extern "C" fn _start() {
6     loop {}
7 }
8
9 #[panic_handler] // this function is called on panic
10 fn panic(_info: &core::panic::PanicInfo) -> ! {
11     // the `!` type means "this function never returns"
12     // place holder for now, we'll write this function later
13     loop {}
14 }

```

Here is the detail explanation of this part:

- `#![no_std]`: This attribute disables the standard library. It is used for low-level programming, where direct control over the system is required.
- `#![no_main]`: Rust programs typically start execution from the main function. This attribute disables it, which is necessary for creating a freestanding binary.
- `#[no_mangle]`: This attribute prevents Rust from changing the name of the `_start` function, ensuring the linker can find it.
- `pub extern "C" fn _start() -> !`: Defines the entry point for our program. The function will use the C ABI for compatibility with C code 2.6.1. The `!` return type indicates that this function will never return.

- `#[panic_handler]`: Specifies the function to call when a panic occurs. Panics can occur for various reasons, such as out-of-bounds array access.

For more information see 2.5

### Step 5: Building the Project

By default, the linker includes the C runtime, which can lead to errors. To avoid this problem, we have two options. One way is to pass different parameters based on the operating system we're using. However, a more direct approach is to specify that we're compiling for an embedded system. This way, the linker won't attempt to link the C runtime environment, ensuring a successful build without linker errors.

First add the target architecture. Open your terminal run the command

```
1 rustup target add thumbv6m-none-eabi
```

This command uses `rustup`, the Rust toolchain installer, to add support for compiling Rust code for the `thumbv6m-none-eabi` target, which is a common architecture for ARM Cortex-M microcontrollers. You can also choose alternative targets as long as the underlying environment doesn't include an operating system.

Execute

```
1 cargo build --target=thumbv6m-none-eabi
```

to compile your project for the `thumbv6m-none-eabi` target. This tells Cargo, Rust's package manager and build system, to compile the project for the specified architecture rather than the default target platform that is your host machine.

### 3.3.3 Output

At this point, the program won't produce any output. If all the steps proceed smoothly, it should compile successfully without reporting any errors. For example:

```
1 cargo build --target=thumbv6m-none-eabi
2   Compiling chronos_labs v0.1.0
  (/home/lucia/2023cse/project/chronos_labs)
3   Finished dev [unoptimized + debuginfo] target(s) in 0.04s
```



## 3.4 Task 2 - Build Minimal Kernel

### 3.4.1 Introduction

We'll use Rust to create a small 64-bit kernel for the x86 architecture base on program we made for previous task. We will use the bootloader tool to create a bootable disk image, allowing us to launch it using QEMU.

See branch lab-1-2 for the code.

### 3.4.2 Implementation

#### Step 1: Create a custom target specification file

In the previous task, we referenced an embedded environment as our compilation target. However, to build our custom operating system, we need to write a custom target specification file. Create a `chronos_labs.json` file in the root directory, although you can choose any name for this file. Create this file:

```
1 touch chronos_labs.json
```

Here is the content of the file:

```
1 {
2   "llvm-target": "x86_64-unknown-none",
3   "data-layout": "e-m:e-i64:64-f80:128-n8:16:32:64-S128",
4   "arch": "x86_64",
5   "target-endian": "little",
6   "target-pointer-width": "64",
7   "target-c-int-width": "32",
8   "os": "none",
9   "executables": true,
10  "linker-flavor": "ld.lld",
11  "linker": "rust-lld",
12  "panic-strategy": "abort",
13  "disable-redzone": true,
14  "features": "-mmx,-sse,+soft-float"
15 }
```

You don't necessarily need to understand what each fields represents, but here are a few of the parameters that are more unique compared to other operating systems and might be worth understanding:

- `"llvm-target": "x86_64-unknown-none"`: Specifies the target architecture for the compiler. Here, it's for 64-bit x86 architecture without a specific vendor or operating system.
- `"arch": "x86_64"`: The architecture of the target system, indicating a 64-bit processor.

- "linker-flavor": "ld.lld" and "linker": "rust-ld": Specify which linker to use, here it's cross-platform LLD linker included with Rust.
- "panic-strategy": "abort": Determines how to handle panic situations. "abort" means the program will immediately stop, without trying to unwind the stack.
- "disable-redzone": true: Disables the red zone, or sometimes it could lead to stack corruption.
- "features": "-mmx,-sse,+soft-float": Specifies CPU features to enable or disable. Here, MMX and SSE are disabled, while software-based floating-point calculations are enabled. Disable of mmx and sse features means we disable the Single Instruction Multiple Data (SIMD) instructions because it will cause interruption too frequently. And enable soft-float that simulates all floating-point operations using software functions that rely on regular integers will solve the error by disable SIMD.

### Step 2: Create .cargo/config.toml

In your project's root directory, create a folder named .cargo

```
1 mkdir .cargo
```

Inside the .cargo folder, create a file named config.toml

```
1 cd .cargo && touch config.toml
```

Open config.toml and paste the following contents:

```
1 [unstable]
2 build-std = ["core", "compiler_builtins"]
3 build-std-features = ["compiler-builtins-mem"]
4
5 [build]
6 target = "chronos_labs.json"    #replace with your file name
```

Here are explanations for each line:

#### [unstable]

build-std = ["core", "compiler\_builtins"]: Tells Cargo to compile essential Rust libraries core and compiler\_builtins from scratch

build-std-features = ["compiler-builtins-mem"]: Activates memory functions in compiler\_builtins

#### [build]

target = "chronos\_labs.json": Points to a custom target file to specify how to compile for a particular setup.

### Step 3: Use bootimage

Add bootimage to dependency, open Cargo.toml and add under [dependencies]

```
1 [dependencies]
2 bootloader = "0.9.23"
```

Also add these in .cargo/config.toml

```
1 [target.'cfg(target_os = "none")']
2 runner = "bootimage runner"
```

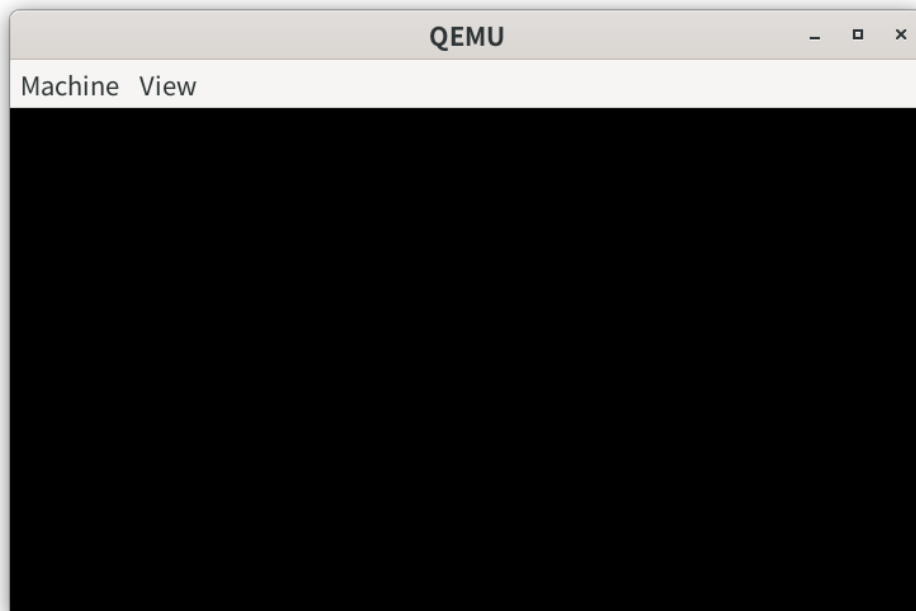
[target.'cfg(target\_os = "none")'] include "chronos\_labs.json" file, and runner key defines command gets executed bootimage runner after the project has been successfully compiled.

Now we can use cargo run to execute this project. The cargo run command is a convenient tool used in Rust projects to compile and run the application code in one step.

If you interested in what did bootimage tool do, see 7.1

### 3.4.3 Output

The output should be a blank QEMU window:



## 3.5 Task 3 - Show something!

### 3.5.1 Introduction

We use VGA text buffer to make output for this operating system. It is because it's simple and straightforward to write to. VGA text mode provides a direct way to display text on the screen by writing characters and their attributes (like color) to a specific area of memory. More information about it 7.2

In the Windows operating system, encountering an error often results in the appearance of a blue screen. Therefore, we will also attempt to display a blue screen in our system.

### 3.5.2 Implementation

Open `src/main.rs`

#### Step 1: Define Constants

Add these constant

```
1 const BUFFER_HEIGHT: usize = 25;  
2 const BUFFER_WIDTH: usize = 80;  
3 const BACKGROUND_COLOR: u16 = 0x1000; // blue background, black  
  foreground
```

- `const BUFFER_HEIGHT: usize = 25;` Defines a constant named `BUFFER_HEIGHT` with a type of `usize` (an unsigned size type, which means it's a number that can't be negative and its size varies based on the computer architecture). The value 25 represents the number of text lines that the VGA text buffer can display at one time.
- `const BUFFER_WIDTH: usize = 80;` Similar to the first line, this defines a constant named `BUFFER_WIDTH`, also of type `usize`. The value 80 represents the number of characters that can fit on a single line of the VGA text buffer.
- `const BACKGROUND_COLOR: u16 = 0x1000;` This line defines a constant named `BACKGROUND_COLOR` with a type of `u16` (a 16-bit unsigned integer). The value 0x1000 is a hexadecimal number that specifies the color attributes for the text and background. It will be 000100000000 in binary. Recover from 7.2, we know that it sets the background color to blue and the foreground (text) color to black.

See more about variables in Rust on 2.4

#### Step 2: Initializes Buffer

Add this line inside `_start()`

```
1 let vga_buffer = unsafe {  
  core::slice::from_raw_parts_mut(0xb8000 as *mut u16, 2000) };
```

- `unsafe { ... }`: In Rust, unsafe blocks are used for performing unsafe operations, such as direct hardware access or low-level memory operations. Here, the unsafe block is used for operations related to hardware interaction.
  - `core::slice::from_raw_parts_mut(0xb8000 as *mut u16, 2000)`: This is a function call that creates a mutable slice
- `0xb8000 as *mut u16`: This is a memory address conversion, casting the hexadecimal address `0xb8000` as a mutable pointer to a `u16` type. `0xb8000` is starting address of VGA buffer, and each element is a 16-bit character/color combination.
- `2000`: This is the length of the slice, indicating that the slice contains 2000 `u16` elements. That's the size of VGA buffer by  $80 \times 25 = 2000$

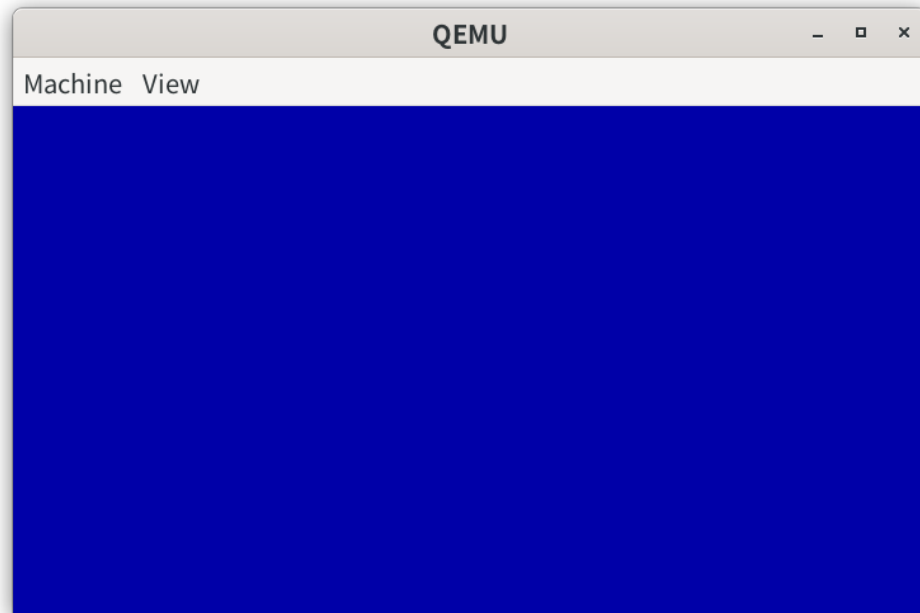
### Step 3: Assign values

Add a for loop below

```
1 for i in 0..(BUFFER_HEIGHT * BUFFER_WIDTH) {  
2     vga_buffer[i] = BACKGROUND_COLOR;  
3 }
```

Sets each element of the `vga_buffer` array to `BACKGROUND_COLOR`. In this case, leave character section empty.

### 3.5.3 Output



You may try to display other color than blue by yourself? You could find the color code from [https://wiki.osdev.org/Printing\\_To\\_Screen](https://wiki.osdev.org/Printing_To_Screen)

## Chapter 4

# Lab 2 - VGA output

### 4.1 Expected Outcome

In this lab, we'll implement support of safety output string, number and support Rust's formatting macros instead of write on buffer directly. In this process, we will use traits to implement more functionality with less, cleaner, and more concise code. We will establish an interface that ensures safety and simplicity by isolating all unsafe operations within a dedicated module.

### 4.2 Task 1 - Print text at a specified position using ASCII encoding

#### 4.2.1 Introduction

At the end of lab 1, we traversed the entire VGA buffer to output a blue screen. Now we will continue to use slices to output specific text at specified positions.

#### 4.2.2 Implementation

##### Step 1: Modify the BACKGROUND\_COLOR constant

In the previous implementation, we used the u16 data type for assignment because we didn't need to output specific characters. However, this time we will only define the color part. If you forget how to define it, you can refer to the [documentation.7.2](#)

Change constant name into COLOR

```
1 const COLOR: u8 = 0x04; // black background, red foreground
```

You could change into different value to represent different color as you wish!

##### Step 2: Modify vga\_buffer

We change pointer datatype from u16 to u8 because we want to assign character and color separately. Length change to 4000 so the end of buffer remain unchanged.

```
1 let vga_buffer = unsafe {
  core::slice::from_raw_parts_mut(0xb8000 as *mut u8, 4000) };
```

### Step 3: Print character

Delete the for loop under buffer definition and change into

```
1 vga_buffer[0] = b'H';
2 vga_buffer[1] = COLOR;
3 vga_buffer[2] = b'e';
4 vga_buffer[3] = COLOR;
5 vga_buffer[4] = b'l';
6 vga_buffer[5] = COLOR;
7 vga_buffer[6] = b'l';
8 vga_buffer[7] = COLOR;
9 vga_buffer[8] = b'o';
10 vga_buffer[9] = COLOR;
```

- b'H': It represents a byte literal(a single byte of data). In this case, corresponds to the ASCII encoding of the uppercase letter 'H'.
- COLOR: Color part of the character, represent red foreground and black background.

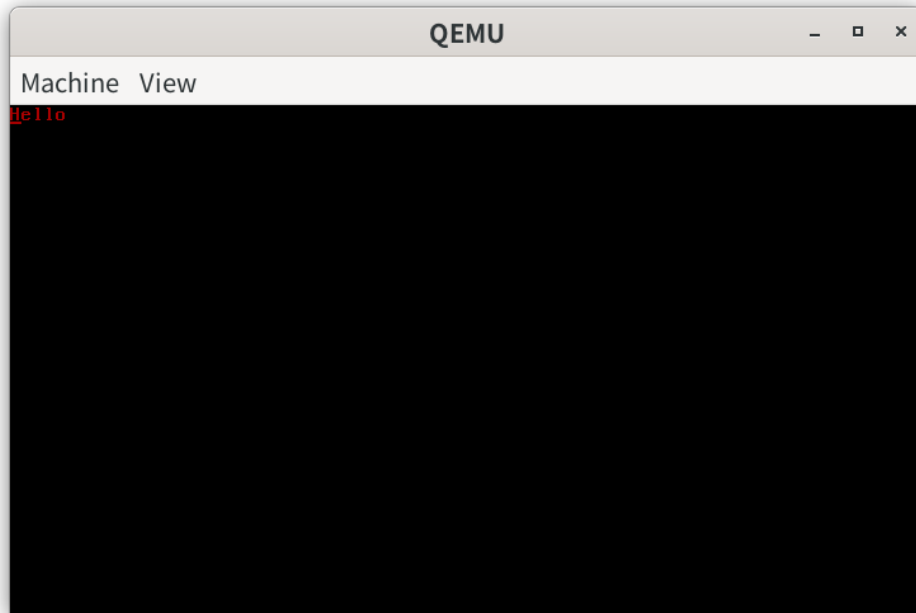
Remember to keep

```
1 loop {}
```

Don't delete it!

You would see the output like this if everything going well



**Step 4: Print somewhere else**

Remember that

```
1 const BUFFER_HEIGHT: usize = 25;  
2 const BUFFER_WIDTH:  usize = 80;
```

You can print words at the new line

```
1 // write "World" at the next line  
2 vga_buffer[160] = b'W';  
3 vga_buffer[161] = COLOR;  
4 vga_buffer[162] = b'o';  
5 vga_buffer[163] = COLOR;  
6 vga_buffer[164] = b'r';  
7 vga_buffer[165] = COLOR;  
8 vga_buffer[166] = b'l';  
9 vga_buffer[167] = COLOR;  
10 vga_buffer[168] = b'd';  
11 vga_buffer[169] = COLOR;
```

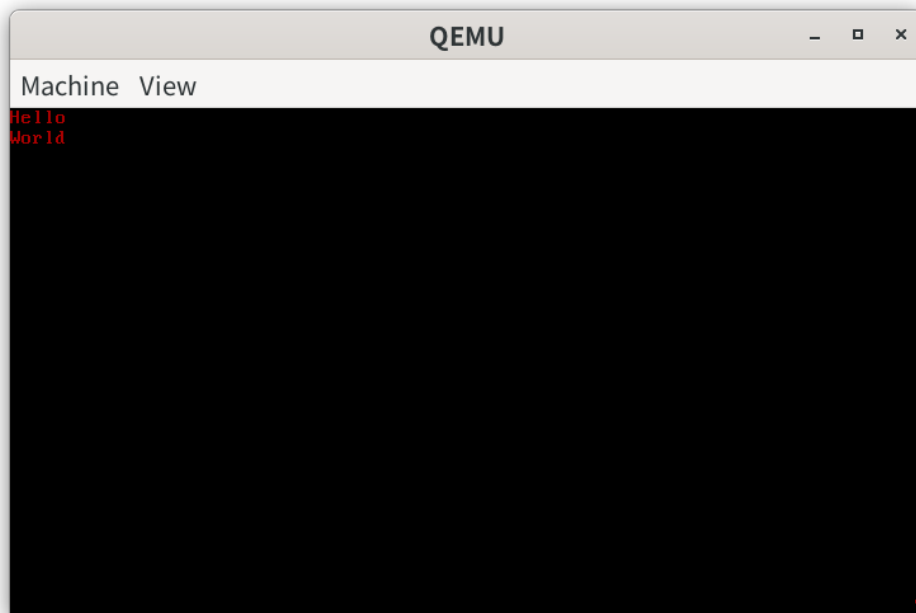
Or at the end

```
1 // End
2 vga_buffer[3998] = b'!';
3 vga_buffer[3999] = COLOR;
```

Now you can visually see the correspondence between memory addresses and screen positions.

### 4.2.3 Output

The code may look cumbersome, but it's okay because it's just to demonstrate the correspondence between the VGA buffer and the screen. We'll implement the `print!` and `println!` functions in a more elegant way.



## 4.3 Task 2 - Write byte

### 4.3.1 Introduction

In this task, we will create a `vga.rs` file to handle VGA output specifically, aiming to improve code readability. At the same time, we'll use a more elegant approach to output single characters, recognize newline characters, and handle situations where characters exceed the screen.

### 4.3.2 Implementation

#### Step 1: Create src/vga.rs file

Create a vga.rs file in the src folder, and copy the necessary declarations. We will import this file as module to main. More about module?2.7

```
1 const BUFFER_HEIGHT: usize = 25;
2 const BUFFER_WIDTH:  usize = 80;
3 const COLOR: u8 = 0x04; // black background, red foreground
```

#### Step 2: Create a new struct represent single VGA character

We create VGACChar that contain both ASCII and color. And in Rust, the ordering of fields in default structs is not defined, so we use the repr(C) attribute to ensure that the struct's fields are laid out in memory exactly in order.

```
1 #[repr(C)]
2 #[derive(Clone, Copy)]
3 struct VGACChar {
4     ascii: u8,
5     color: u8,
6 }
```

More about struct see 2.8

It also relate to the big endian and little endian that define in specification file 7.3

- #[derive(Clone, Copy)]: Generates code to implement the Clone and Copy for that type, needed by volatile.

#### Step 3: Struct for buffer

We use the volatile library, which helps us prevent Rust's compiler from optimizing out our write operations to the buffer.

Add support in Cargo.toml

```
1 [dependencies]
2 bootloader = "0.9.23"
3 volatile = "0.2.6"
```

Add these lines under VGACChar

```
1 #[repr(transparent)]
2 struct Buffer {
3     chars: [[Volatile<VGACChar>; BUFFER_WIDTH]; BUFFER_HEIGHT],
4     // 2D array
5 }
```

We use a 2D array to represent rows and columns.

- `#[repr(transparent)]`: Buffer has the same memory layout as its inner 2D array of `Volatile<VGACChar>` elements

#### Step 4: Implement Writer

```
1 pub struct Writer {
2     column_position: usize,
3     row_position: usize,
4     buffer: &'static mut Buffer,
5 }
```

For line buffer: `&'static mut Buffer`

It is a field named `buffer`, is a mutable reference to a `Buffer` instance.

- `&` denotes a reference
- `'static` is a lifetime specifier. When used in a context like this, it indicates that the reference can live for the entire duration of the program.
- `mut` means it allows modification of the `Buffer` instance it refers to

We use `writer` to implement output function. The first character will appear in the top-left corner. When a row is filled or a newline character is entered, input will move to the next row. If the entire screen is filled, all input will shift up one row, clearing the initial first row of input. To achieve this, we need to keep track of the current input position, namely the row and column numbers.

This is the `write_byte` function that can output single character

```
1 impl Writer {
2     pub fn write_byte(&mut self, byte: u8, color: u8) {
3         match byte {
4             b'\n' => self.new_line(),
5             byte => {
6                 if self.column_position >= BUFFER_WIDTH {
7                     self.new_line();
8                 }
9
10                let row = self.row_position;
11                let col = self.column_position;
12
13                self.buffer.chars[row][col].write(VGACChar {
14                    ascii: byte,
15                    color,
16                });
17                self.column_position += 1;
18            }
19        }
20    }
21 }
```

```

18     }
19   }
20 }
21 }

```

You can find more information about ‘impl’ [here](#).2.9

In the next step, we will implement the `new_line` function.

We use the `write` method from the `volatile` library to write code at the corresponding position (therefore `Buffer` is with the `mut` parameter). The `color` is then a shorthand for `color: color`, which can be omitted when the variable name matches the field name.

After written into each character, we plus the `column_position`.

#### Step 5: `new_line()` function

```

1  impl Writer {
2      pub fn new_line(&mut self) {
3          if self.row_position < BUFFER_HEIGHT - 1 {
4              self.column_position = 0;
5              self.row_position += 1; // change to new line
6          } else { // if the row is full, scroll up
7              for row in 1..BUFFER_HEIGHT {
8                  for col in 0..BUFFER_WIDTH {
9                      let character =
10                         self.buffer.chars[row][col].read();
11                         self.buffer.chars[row -
12                         1][col].write(character);
13                     }
14                 }
15                 self.clear_row(BUFFER_HEIGHT - 1);
16                 self.column_position = 0;
17             }
18         }
19
20         fn clear_row(&mut self, row: usize) { // new function to
21             clear a row
22             for col in 0..BUFFER_WIDTH {
23                 self.buffer.chars[row][col].write(VGACChar {
24                     ascii: b' ',
25                     color: COLOR,
26                 });
27             }
28         }
29     }
30 }

```

A new `impl` blocks is used to keep clearer and more maintainable codes, you

can merge these two functions into previous block if you wish.

The `new_line` function is used to move the next character to the start of the next line. If the character is already on the last line of the screen, it scrolls the screen up by one line by reading and write each character one line above. And clearing the last line by writing space to each character. The `clear_row` function is private function meaning it can only be accessed within its own module.

### Testing

Here is 2 testing function. Write in `src/vga.rs`

```

1 pub fn test_print() {
2     let mut writer = Writer {
3         column_position: 0,
4         row_position: 0,
5         buffer: unsafe { &mut *(0xb8000 as *mut Buffer) },
6     };
7
8     writer.write_byte(b'H', COLOR);
9     writer.write_byte(b'\n', COLOR);
10    writer.write_byte(b'e', COLOR);
11 }
12
13 pub fn test_rolldown() {
14     let mut writer = Writer {
15         column_position: 0,
16         row_position: 0,
17         buffer: unsafe { &mut *(0xb8000 as *mut Buffer) },
18     };
19
20     for i in 1..= 25 {
21         let line: u8 = i + b'O';
22         writer.write_byte(line, COLOR);
23         writer.write_byte(b'\n', COLOR);
24     }
25 }
```

We creates an instance of the `Writer` struct, and test the basic function. To use these, goto `main.rs`

```

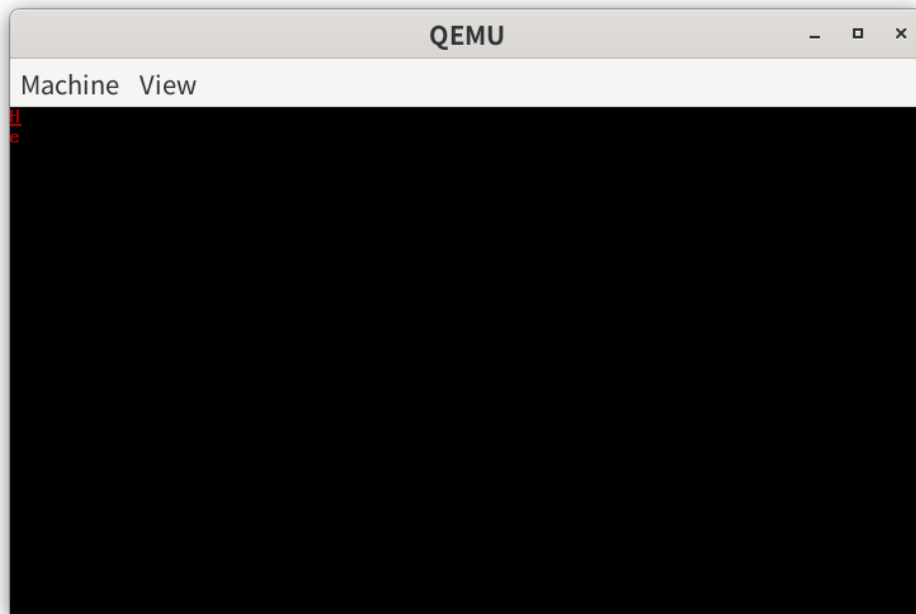
1 mod vga;    // import the `vga` module
2
3 #[no_mangle] // don't mangle the name of this function
4 pub extern "C" fn _start() {
5     // vga::test_print();
6     vga::test_rolldown();
7 }
```

```
7     loop {}  
8 }
```

### 4.3.3 Output

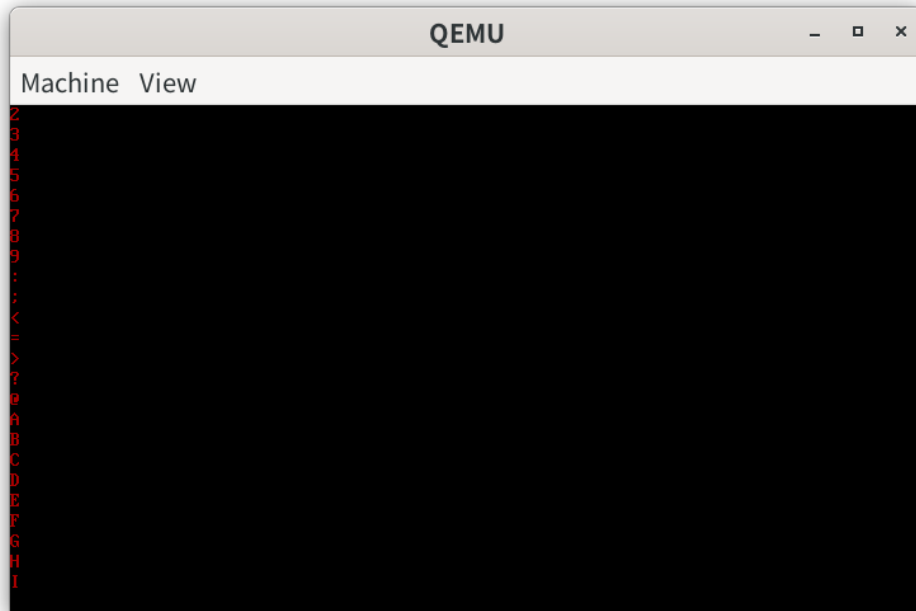
We have 2 test functions, rember to run them one by one!

For the `vga::test_print()`; we have



This indicates that both the input bytes and the newline character functionality are working correctly.

And for `vga::test_rolldown()`; we have



The result is normal because we sequentially output the subsequent content of the ASCII table. We can see that the '1' that should have been outputted in the first row disappears and is replaced by '2'. This indicates that the functionality of shifting the other content upwards when the row limit is exceeded is working correctly.

## 4.4 Task 3 - Enable write! and writeln!

### 4.4.1 Introduction

In this section, we will extend the `write_byte` function to `write_string`, using it to output strings. Furthermore, we will leverage Rust's trait functionality to accomplish formatted output.

### 4.4.2 Implementation

#### Step 1: `write_string` function

```

1  impl Writer {
2      pub fn write_string(&mut self, s: &str) {
3          for byte in s.bytes() {
4              match byte {
5                  // if not acceptable ASCII, print a space with
                     error color

```



```

6         0x20..=0x7e | b'\n' => self.write_byte(byte,
          COLOR),
7         _ => self.write_byte(b' ', ERROR_COLOR),
8     }
9 }
10 }
11 }

```

There's a loop that iterates over each byte in the string `s`. For each byte it calls `write_byte` to write the byte to VGA buffer after validation. That is because not all UTF-8 encodings are supported by VGA; it only supports ASCII and the encodings defined in Code page 437[5]. Therefore, if a character (such as a Chinese character) cannot be displayed, we will output a blue block as a substitute. You can also choose your own error output.

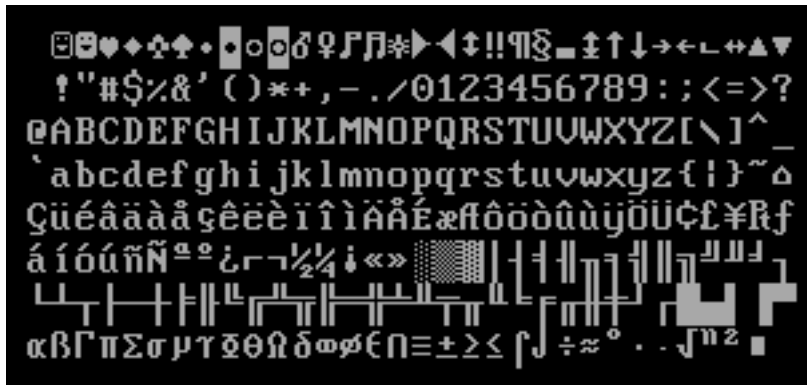


Figure 4.1: Code page 437

You can learn more about match here<sup>2.11</sup>

### Step 2: Implement trait

Trait has many use cases, but we won't delve into all of them now. According to the documentation[6], after implementing `fn write_str(&mut self, s: &str) -> Result`, the trait can provide us with various functionalities like formatting output.

We just need to substitute the previously implemented `write_string` function, ensuring that the name `write_str` remains unchanged.

```

1  impl core::fmt::Write for Writer {
2      fn write_str(&mut self, s: &str) -> core::fmt::Result {
3          self.write_string(s);
4          Ok(())
5      }

```

```
6 }
```

- `core::fmt::Result`: It is an enum with two value, `Ok` and `Err` represents the result of a formatting operation.
- `Ok()`: It means that the operation was successful, but there is no specific value to return, so it returns the unit value `()`.

### Step 3: Public Buffer and writer

Because we need to define `Writer` in `main.rs`, we have to make `Buffer` and `Writer` visible. This is a somewhat unsafe operation, but for now, let's proceed with this to complete the testing.

```
1  #[repr(transparent)]
2  pub struct Buffer {
3      chars: [[Volatile<VGACHar>; BUFFER_WIDTH]; BUFFER_HEIGHT],
4      // 2D array
5  }
6
7  pub struct Writer {
8      pub column_position: usize,
9      pub row_position:   usize,
10     pub buffer: &'static mut Buffer,
11 }
```

- `pub`: It allows the item to be visible and it can be accessed and used outside of its module.

### Step 4: Create `lib.rs`

Using `lib.rs` to import all modules is standard practice within Rust community. We organizing all module imports in one place for clarity and consistency in the project structure.

```
1  #![no_std]
2  pub mod vga;
```

#### Test

In main file, using

```
1  use chronos_labs::vga::Writer;
2  use chronos_labs::vga::Buffer;
```

Instead of

```
1 mod vga;
```

To directly access to these two structure. Remember replace the `chronos_labs` if you using other name.

```
#[no_mangle]    // don't mangle the name of this function
pub extern "C" fn _start() {
    let mut writer = Writer {
        column_position: 0,
        row_position: 0,
        buffer: unsafe { &mut *(0xb8000 as *mut Buffer) },
    };

    let num : i32 = 1;

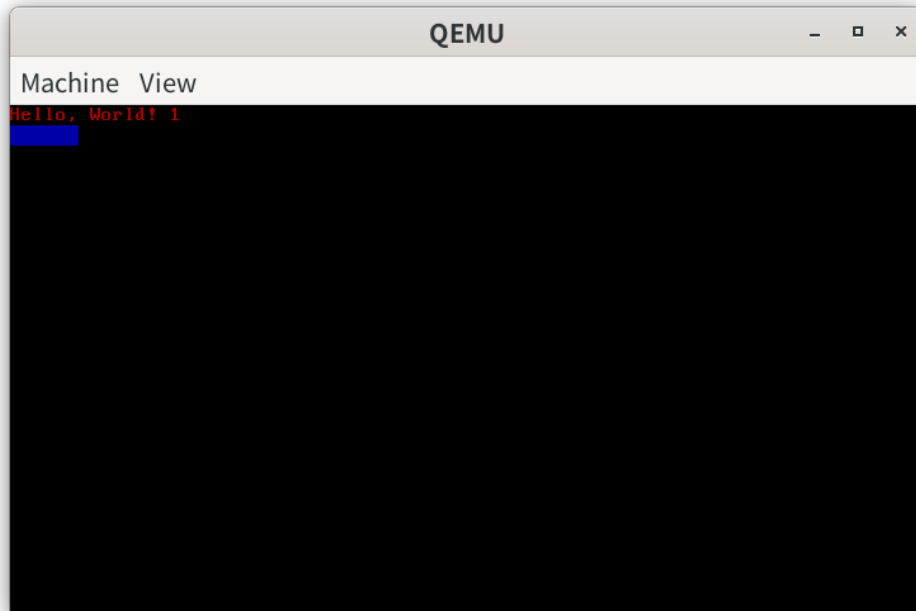
    use core::fmt::Write;
    writeln!(writer, "Hello, World! {}", num).unwrap();
    write!(writer, "汉字").unwrap();

    loop {}
}
```

- `unwrap()`: This is used to simplify code when handling `Result` types. We could use this because we are confident that the result will always be `Ok()`.

### 4.4.3 Output

We can see the format is working so we could insert variable into string. Each chinese character using 3 bytes, so 6 blue boxes is printed in total.



## 4.5 Task 4 - Writer in vga.rs

### 4.5.1 Introduction

We can directly create a Writer instance inside the vga module and access it by use. By instantiating Writer within vga instead of `_start()`, this encapsulation ensures cleaner and safer code. It also facilitates future calls to the Writer.

### 4.5.2 Implementation

#### Step 1: Add dependency

```
1 [dependencies]
2 ...
3 spin = "0.5.2"
4 lazy_static = { version = "1.0", features = ["spin_no_std"] }
```

- `lazy_static`: This crate in Rust provides a convenient way to define lazily initialized static variables. In our case is a writer instance that would be available throughout the entire program execution.
- `spin`: Add support of a mutex lock.

**Step 2: Initialize static WRITER**

Add these below struct writer

```

1 lazy_static!{
2     pub static ref WRITER: Mutex<Writer> = Mutex::new(Writer {
3         column_position: 0,
4         row_position: 0,
5         buffer: unsafe { &mut *(0xb8000 as *mut Buffer) },
6     });
7 }

```

- `Mutex<Writer>`: It represents a mutex lock where the data type protected inside the lock is `Writer`.

Why we are using mutex lock? Because we want to make `WRITER` changable during program (write into buffer). So we only allow one process modify the writer at each time.

**Step 3: Change visibility**

```

1 #[repr(transparent)]
2 struct Buffer {
3     chars: [[Volatile<VGACChar>; BUFFER_WIDTH]; BUFFER_HEIGHT],
4     // 2D array
5 }
6
7 pub struct Writer {
8     column_position: usize,
9     row_position: usize,
10    buffer: &'static mut Buffer,
11 }

```

We don't need to define the `Buffer`, `row_position`, `column_position`, and other fields in `main`, so they can be made private again.

**Step 4: Change lib.rs**

```

1 #![no_std]
2 mod vga;
3 pub use vga::WRITER;

```

We export `WRITER` only.

**Step 5: Clear screen**

Add a function `clear screen` to reset the output window

```

1 impl Writer {
2     pub fn clear_screen(&mut self) {
3         for row in 0..BUFFER_HEIGHT {
4             self.clear_row(row);
5         }
6         self.column_position = 0;
7         self.row_position = 0;
8     }
9 }

```

For now, you can call function by using

```

1 WRITER.lock().clear_screen();

```

### Test

In main.rs

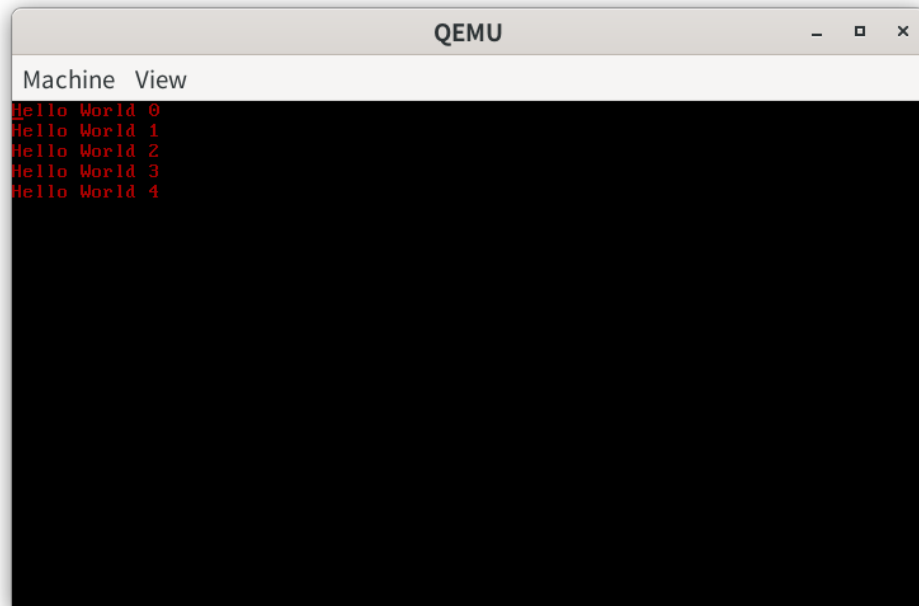
```

1 ...
2 use chronos_labs::WRITER;
3 use core::fmt::Write;
4
5 #[no_mangle] // don't mangle the name of this function
6 pub extern "C" fn _start() {
7     for i in 0..5 {
8         writeln!(WRITER.lock(), "Hello World {}", i).unwrap();
9     }
10
11     // WRITER.lock().clear_screen(); // uncomment this line to
12     clear the screen
13
14     loop {}
15 }
16 ...

```

Imports the WRITER static variable from the vga module and import core::fmt::Write to use writeln!

### 4.5.3 Output



## Chapter 5

### Lab 3 - Paging



## Chapter 6

# Utility - Test tool

Before using it, remember to comment

```
1  #[profile.dev]  
2  #panic = "abort"
```

### 6.1 Lab 2

The test is available at branch test-lab2

If you want to add them to your code add this function to vga.rs. And copy and paste tests folder.

```
1  impl Writer {  
2      pub fn get_ascii(&mut self, row: usize, col: usize) -> u8 {  
3          self.buffer.chars[row][col].read().ascii  
4      }  
5  }
```

Using command

```
1  cargo test --test lab2
```

# Chapter 7

## Extra knowledge

### 7.1 What did bootimage tool do?

### 7.2 VGA text buffer

The VGA (Video Graphics Array) text buffer is a specific area of memory used to display text on the screen in a text-mode environment. It is located at the memory address 0xB8000. It extends to 0xB8FA0, covering a space that allows for 25 lines of 80 characters each, making up the standard 80x25 text mode.

Each character in the VGA text buffer is represented by two bytes:

The first byte represents the ASCII code of the character, determining which character to display. The second byte defines the color of the character, with the lower 4 bits specifying the foreground color and the upper 4 bits the background color.

Attribute								Character							
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Blink <sup>[n. 1]</sup>		Background color			Foreground color <sup>[n. 2][n. 3]</sup>			Code point							

[3]

### 7.3 Big endian and little endian

Big endian and little endian are two ways of ordering bytes in multi-byte data types. The difference lies in the order in which the bytes are stored in memory, we are using little endian according to the target specification file. In a little endian system, the least significant byte (LSB) is stored at the lowest memory

address. Conversely, in a big endian system, it's the opposite. Here is the example

We have structure VGACChar

```
1 struct VGACChar {  
2     ascii: u8,  
3     color: u8,  
4 }
```

If you create a VGACChar with an ascii of 0x41 ('A') and a color of 0x04, it would be stored in memory as 41 04 in a little endian system. This is because `ascii_character` is the first field in the struct, so it gets the lower memory address.

# Bibliography

- [1] VGA text mode (2024) Wikipedia. Available at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/VGA\\_text\\_mode](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/VGA_text_mode) (Accessed: 29 January 2024).
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- [4] Rustlings (2015) rustlings. Available at: <https://rustlings.cool/> (Accessed: 13 February 2024).
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