Discussion 08

Pipelining, Hazards

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Announcements 📣

Agenda

- Pipelining
- Hazards

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Pipelining

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Pipelining Basics

- Maximizes efficiency by using components of the datapath that are “sleeping” during each phase of processing
- `n`-stage pipeline means n instructions operate at the same time
- Maximizes throughput
  - Latency: how long it takes to finish 1 instruction
  - Throughput: number of operations finished per unit time
- Standard RISC-V 5 stage pipeline
  - `IF`, `ID`, `EX`, `MEM`, `WB`

How does this affect timing?

	Single cycle	**`n` stage pipeline**
Clock Cycle	Clock period of entire datapath	max(clock period of any stage)
Latency	Clock cycle	Clock cycle * `n`
Throughput (instruction / cycle)	1	1

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Hazards

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Hazard Basics

- All hazards are caused by some kind of dependency
- Prevent future instructions from executing correctly or starting properly
- Types of hazards
  - Structural hazards
  - Data hazards
  - Control hazards
- Most common solution: stalls / NOP (bubble)

Structural Hazards

- The same piece of hardware is used by multiple stages
- Common situation:
  - Memory array (IF, Mem)
  - RegFile (ID, WB)
  - Hardware solution
    - Have the stages use separate components (IMEM + DMEM)
    - Adding multiple ports to RegFile to allow specialized access
    - Double pumping: 2 operations in the same cycle (e.g. write on rising edge and read on falling edge)
- Software solution
  - Stalling / NOP

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Data Hazards

- Register value needs to be used before it’s updated
- Common situation:
  - Register is computed in EX or MEM stage after it needs to be read
- Solution
  - Stalling / NOP
  - Forwarding

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Control Hazards

- Caused by jumps / branches: we don’t know which instruction to execute until EX stage
- Example

```
beq x0 a0 exit
addi a0 x0 1                                # do we execute this line?
…
exit:
```

- Solution
  - Stalling / NOP
  - Branch prediction: guess whether a branch is “likely-taken” or “likely-not-taken” and flush half-executed instructions in pipeline if branch is not taken
    Don’t worry too much about it

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Thank you!

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