

Computer Architecture

IN BA3 - Paolo IENNE

Notes by Ali EL AZDI

September 11, 2024

Introduction

This document is designed to offer a LaTeX-styled overview of the Computer Architecture course, emphasizing brevity and clarity. Should there be any inaccuracies or areas for improvement, please reach out at ali.elazdi@epfl.ch for corrections. For the latest version, check my GitHub repository.
<https://github.com/elazdi-al/comparch/blob/main/main.pdf>

Contents

Contents	3
1 Part I(a) - ISA Reminder, Assembly Language, Compiler - W 1.1	4
1.1 From High Level Languages to Assembly Language	4
1.1.1 High Level Languages	4
1.1.2 Assembly Language	4
1.2 Processors	5
1.3 Joint or Disjoint Program and Data Memories	6
1.4 The Encoding problem	7
1.4.1 The Stupid Solution	7
1.4.2 RISC-V Encoding (The Solution)	7
1.4.3 Automating this process	8
1.5 ISA (Instruction Set Architecture)	9

Chapter 1

Part I(a) - ISA Reminder, Assembly Language, Compiler - W 1.1

hum...welcome back

In the first part of the course, professor introduced (for motivational purposes) how computer architecture, specifically processors, have become essential to our lives, and how the field is growing exponentially. (didn't think it was essential to mention here...)

1.1 From High Level Languages to Assembly Language

1.1.1 High Level Languages

When talking about programming we usually think of programs that look like this...

```
1  int data = 0x00123456;
2  int result = 0;
3  int mask = 1;
4  int count = 0;
5  int temp = 0;
6  int limit = 32;
7  do {
8      temp = data & mask;
9      result = result + temp;
10     data = data >> 1;
11     count = count + 1;
12 } while (count != limit);
```

name	value
data	0x00123456
result	0
mask	1
count	...
temp	
limit	
...	
my_float	3.141529
a_string	Hello world!

1.1.2 Assembly Language

We use this code because it enables us to build a *Finite State Machine*, which isn't feasible with C code. This language provides a more rigid format with a sequence of numbered instructions, an *opcode*, predefined variable names, and the ability to **jump between lines**.

```

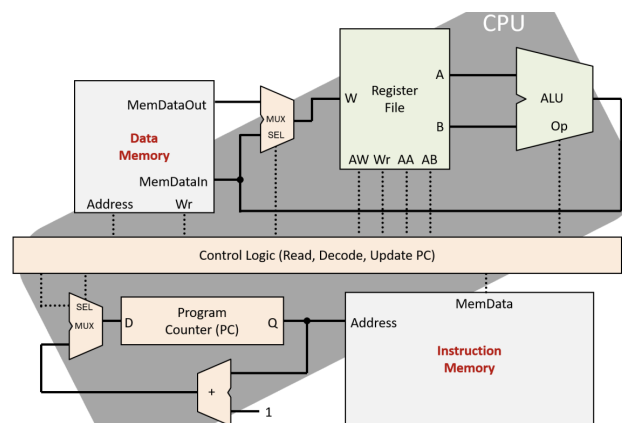
1      li x1, 0x00123456
2      li x2, 0
3      li x3, 1
4      li x4, 0
5      li x5, 0
6      li x6, 32
7  loop: and x5, x1, x3
8      add x2, x2, x5
9      srl x1, x1, 1
10     addi x4, x4, 1
11     bne x4, x6, loop

```

1.2 Processors

Remember, a processor can be decomposed into five components:


- **ALU (Arithmetic and Logic Unit):** Performs arithmetic and logical operations.
- **Register File:** Stores data temporarily for quick access during processing.
- **Memory:** Holds data and instructions needed by the processor.
- **Control Logic:** Directs the operation of the processor by coordinating the other components.
- **PC (Program Counter):** Keeps track of the address of the next instruction to be executed.
- **Instruction Memory:** Stores the program instructions that the processor will execute.



We may distinguish three types of general operations made by the processor:

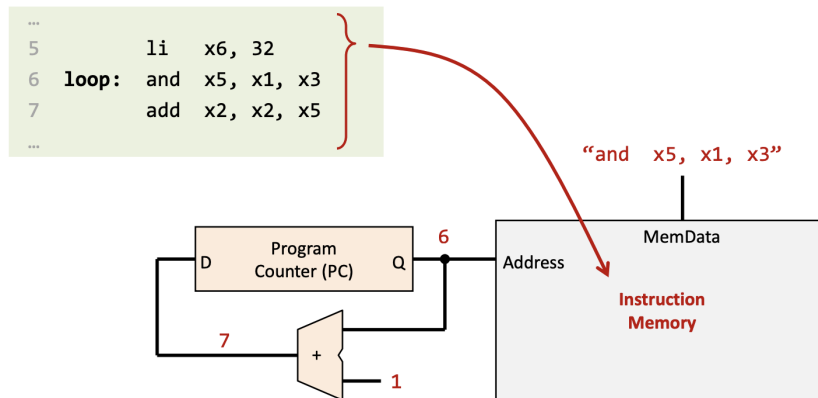
Encoding

add x1, x1, x1	0 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000
add x1, x1, x2	1 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0001
add x1, x1, x3	2 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0010
add x1, x1, x4	3 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0011
add x1, x1, x5	4 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0100
...	...
and x1, x1, x1	32768 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 1000 0000 0000 0000
and x1, x1, x2	32769 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 1000 0000 0000 0001
and x1, x1, x3	32770 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 1000 0000 0000 0010
and x1, x1, x4	32771 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 1000 0000 0000 0011
and x1, x1, x5	32772 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 1000 0000 0000 0100
...	...

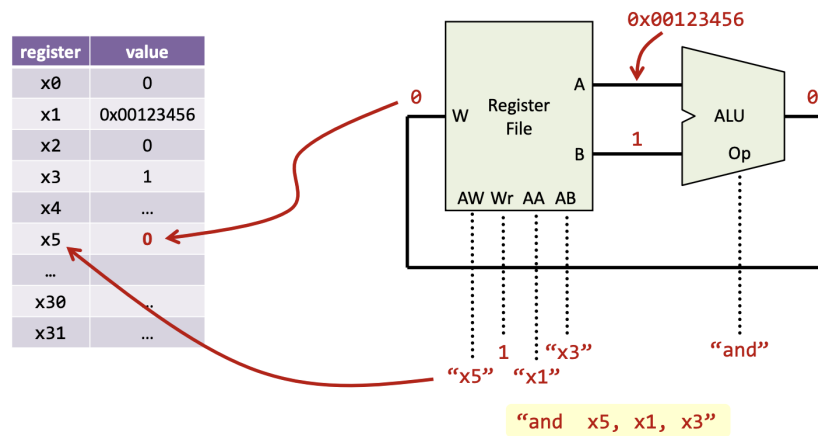


 ... } # of opcodes × # destinations × # source 1 × # source 1 ≤ 2³² combinations

Fetching



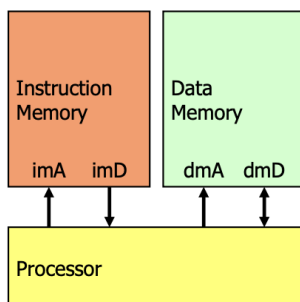
Executing



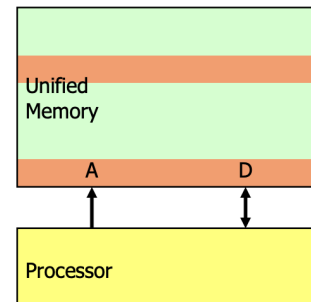
1.3 Joint or Disjoint Program and Data Memories

There are two main types of architectures one called the Harvard Architecture (Where the data and the memory are separate) and one called Unified Architecture (where data is shared with the program memory)

Harvard Architecture



Unified Architecture





1.4 The Encoding problem

We may ask ourselves how we encode assembly written instructions into actual 0s and 1s.

1.4.1 The Stupid Solution

Now, the professor throws out the "stupid idea" (his words) of just counting all possible instructions, assigning a number to each one, and writing the numbers in binary. The problem with such a method is that the number of instructions could grow exponentially, requiring an unmanageable number of bits to represent each one, leading to inefficiency.

add x1, x1, x1	0 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000
add x1, x1, x2	1 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0001
add x1, x1, x3	2 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0010
add x1, x1, x4	3 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0011
add x1, x1, x5	4 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0100
...	...
and x1, x1, x1	32768 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 1000 0000 0000 0000
and x1, x1, x2	32769 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 1000 0000 0000 0001
and x1, x1, x3	32770 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 1000 0000 0000 0010
and x1, x1, x4	32771 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 1000 0000 0000 0011
and x1, x1, x5	32772 = 0000 0000 0000 0000 1000 0000 0000 0100
...	...

of opcodes × # destinations × # source 1 × # source 1 ≤ 2³² combinations

"stupid solution"

1.4.2 RISC-V Encoding (The Solution)

Instead, the chosen solution is to use an instruction set encoding where instructions are grouped into classes, each with a fixed format. This approach optimizes both memory usage and processing speed by limiting the number of bits required to represent instructions, while still allowing for a large variety of operations.

Instruction	Pseudocode	Type	funct7	funct3	opcode
Shift					
sll rd,rs1,rs2	rd ← rs1 << rs2	R	0x00	0x1	0x33
slli rd,rs1,imm	rd ← rs1 << imm	I	0x00	0x1	0x13
srl rd,rs1,rs2	rd ← rs1 >> _u rs2	R	0x00	0x5	0x33
srlui rd,rs1,imm	rd ← rs1 >> _u imm	I	0x00	0x5	0x13
sra rd,rs1,rs2	rd ← rs1 >> _s rs2	R	0x20	0x5	0x33
sraui rd,rs1,imm	rd ← rs1 >> _s imm	I	0x20	0x5	0x13

Arithmetic					
add rd,rs1,rs2	rd ← rs1 + rs2	R	0x00	0x0	0x33
addi rd,rs1,imm	rd ← rs1 + sext(imm)	I		0x0	0x13
sub rd,rs1,rs2	rd ← rs1 − rs2	R	0x20	0x0	0x33
lui rd,imm	rd ← imm				
auipc rd,imm	rd ← pc + imm				

Logical					
xor rd,rs1,rs2	rd ← rs1	R	funct7	rs2	rs1
xori rd,rs1,imm	rd ← rs1	I	imm[11:0]	rs1	funct3
or rd,rs1,rs2	rd ← rs1	I	funct7	imm[4:0]	rs1
ori rd,rs1,imm	rd ← rs1	S	imm[11:5]	rs2	rs1
and rd,rs1,rs2	rd ← rs1	B	imm[12−10:5]	rs2	rs1
andi rd,rs1,imm	rd ← rs1	U	imm[31:12]		rd
		J	imm[20−10:1−11−19:12]		rd

Instruction types

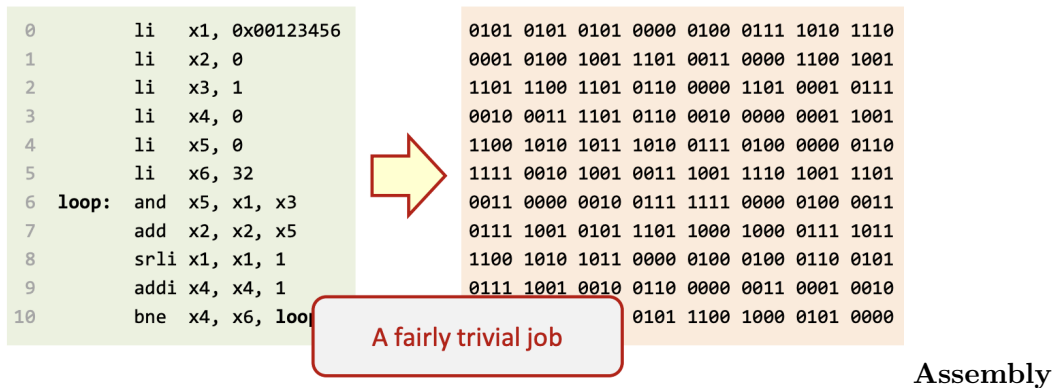
RISC-V encoding

1.4.3 Automating this process

Now to automate the processes of decoding assembler code into machine code we use an **Assembler**, and to automate the process of decoding a higher level language to assembler we use a **Compiler**.

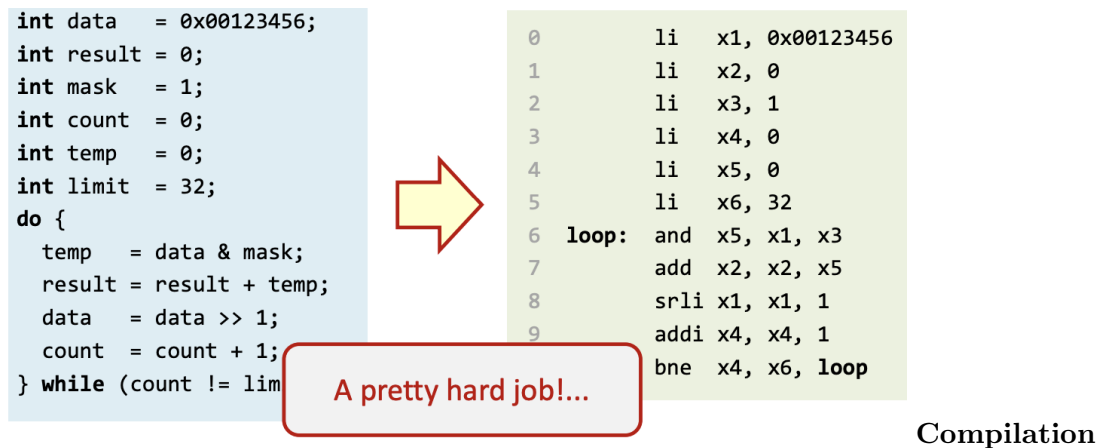
Assembler

The program that does this is called an assembler. It takes the assembly code and converts it into machine code.



Compiler

A compiler is a program that translates high-level source code written in languages like C or Java into machine code or an intermediate representation. This machine code can then be executed by the processor. The compiler performs various stages, such as lexical analysis, parsing, optimization, and code generation, ensuring that the program runs efficiently on the target hardware.



1.5 ISA (Instruction Set Architecture)

The ISA is the interface between the hardware and the software. It defines the instructions that a processor can execute, as well as the format of those instructions.

