The Memory Hierarchy

- Topics
  - Storage technologies and trends
  - Locality of reference
  - Caching in the memory hierarchy

Random-Access Memory (RAM)

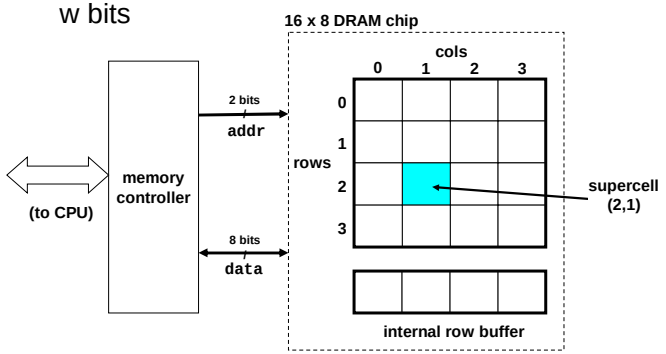
- Key features
  - RAM is packaged as a chip.
  - Basic storage unit is a cell (one bit per cell).
  - Multiple RAM chips form a memory.
- Static RAM (SRAM)
  - Each cell stores bit with a six-transistor circuit.
  - Retains value indefinitely, as long as it is kept powered.
  - Relatively insensitive to disturbances such as electrical noise.
  - Faster and more expensive than DRAM.
- Dynamic RAM (DRAM)
  - Each cell stores bit with a capacitor and transistor.
  - Value must be refreshed every 10-100 ms.
  - Sensitive to disturbances.
  - Slower and cheaper than SRAM.

SRAM vs DRAM Summary

	Tran. per bit	Access time	Persist?	Sensitive?	Cost	Applications
SRAM	6	1X	Yes	No	100x	cache memories
DRAM	1	10X	No	Yes	1X	Main memories, frame buffers

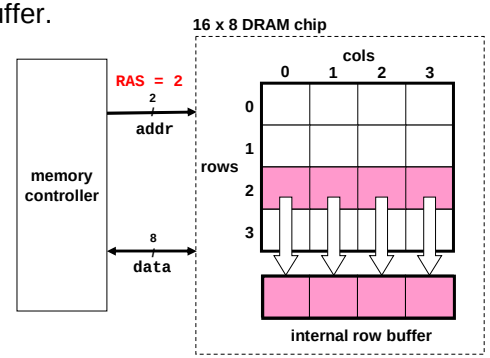
Conventional DRAM Organization

- d x w DRAM:
  - dw total bits organized as d supercells of size w bits



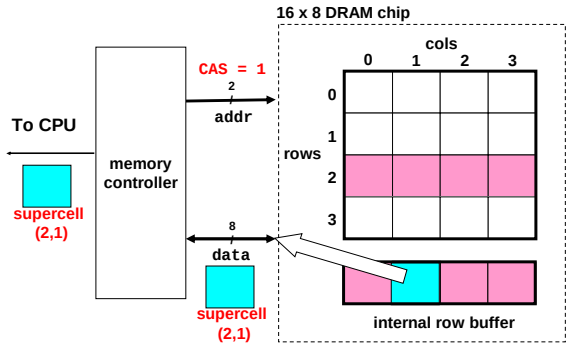
Reading DRAM Supercell (2,1)

- Step 1(a): Row access strobe (RAS) selects row 2.
- Step 1(b): Row 2 copied from DRAM array to row buffer.

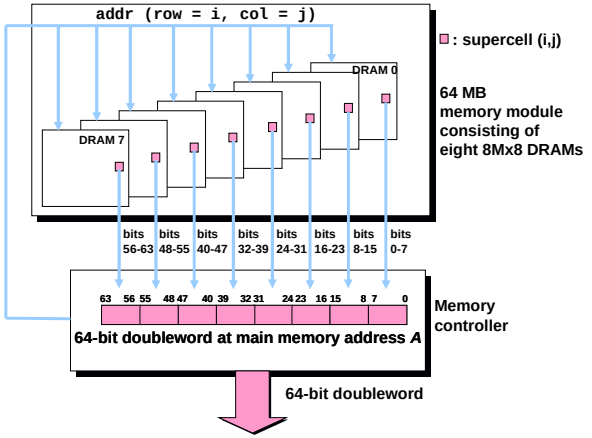


Reading DRAM Supercell (2,1)

- Step 2(a): Column access strobe (CAS) selects column 1.
- Step 2(b): Supercell (2,1) copied from buffer to data lines, and eventually back to the CPU.



Memory Modules



Enhanced DRAMs

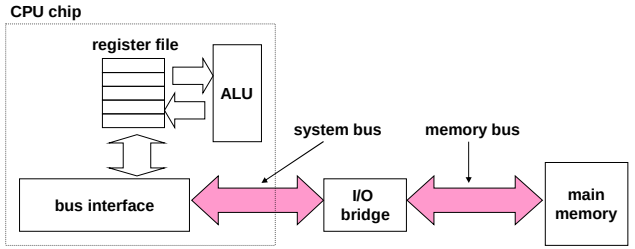
- All enhanced DRAMs are built around the conventional DRAM core.
  - Fast page mode DRAM (FPM DRAM)
    - Access contents of row with [RAS, CAS, CAS, CAS, CAS] instead of [(RAS,CAS), (RAS,CAS), (RAS,CAS), (RAS,CAS)].
  - Extended data out DRAM (EDO DRAM)
    - Enhanced FPM DRAM with more closely spaced CAS signals.
  - Synchronous DRAM (SDRAM)
    - Driven with rising clock edge instead of asynchronous control signals.
  - Double data-rate synchronous DRAM (DDR SDRAM)
    - Enhancement of SDRAM that uses both clock edges as control signals.
  - Video RAM (VRAM)
    - Like FPM DRAM, but output is produced by shifting row buffer
    - Dual ported (allows concurrent reads and writes)

Nonvolatile Memories

- DRAM and SRAM are volatile memories
  - Lose information if powered off.
- Nonvolatile memories retain value even if powered off.
  - Generic name is read-only memory (ROM).
  - Misleading because some ROMs can be read and modified.
- Types of ROMs
  - Programmable ROM (PROM)
  - Eraseable programmable ROM (EPROM)
  - Electrically eraseable PROM (EEPROM)
  - Flash memory
- Firmware
  - Program stored in a ROM
    - Boot time code, BIOS (basic input/ouput system)
    - graphics cards, disk controllers.

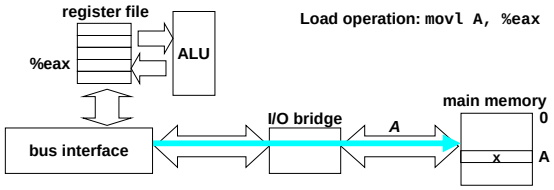
Typical Bus Structure Connecting CPU and Memory

- A bus is a collection of parallel wires that carry address, data, and control signals.
- Buses are typically shared by multiple devices.



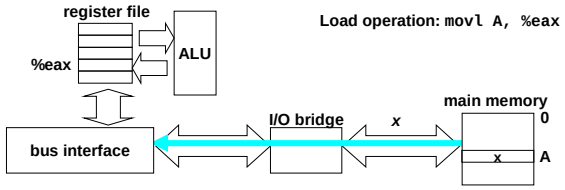
Memory Read Transaction (1)

- CPU places address A on the memory bus.



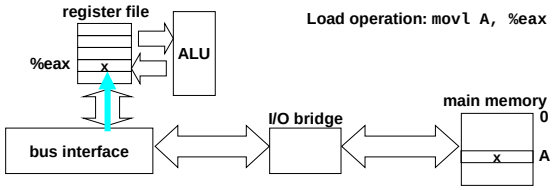
Memory Read Transaction (2)

- Main memory reads A from the memory bus, retrieves word x, and places it on the bus.



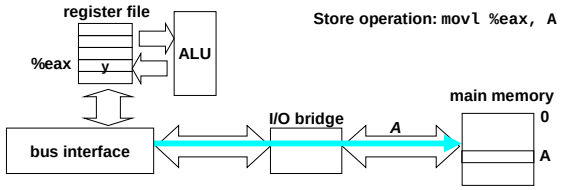
Memory Read Transaction (3)

- CPU reads word x from the bus and copies it into register %eax.



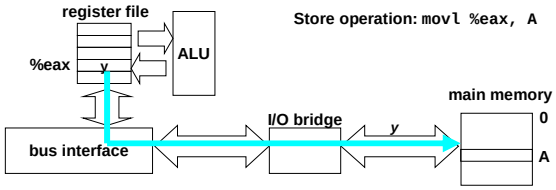
Memory Write Transaction (1)

- CPU places address A on bus. Main memory reads it and waits for the corresponding data word to arrive.



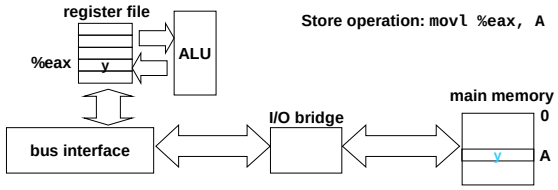
Memory Write Transaction (2)

- CPU places data word y on the bus.



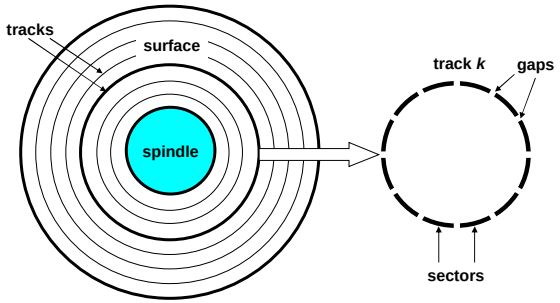
Memory Write Transaction (3)

- Main memory reads data word y from the bus and stores it at address A.



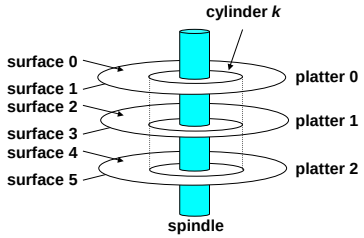
Disk Geometry

- Disks consist of platters, each with two surfaces.
- Each surface consists of concentric rings called tracks.
- Each track consists of sectors separated by gaps.



Disk Geometry (Muliple-Platter View)

- Aligned tracks form a cylinder.



Disk Capacity

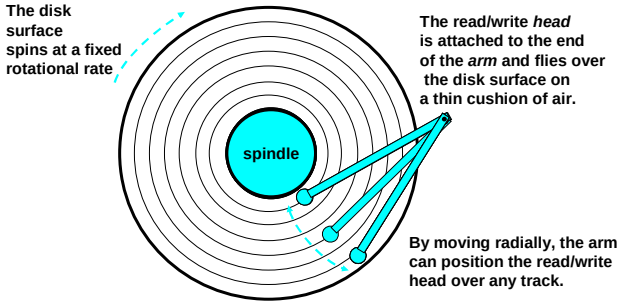
- Capacity: maximum number of bits that can be stored.
  - Vendors express capacity in units of gigabytes (GB), where 1 GB = 10^9.
- Capacity is determined by these technology factors:
  - Recording density (bits/in): number of bits that can be squeezed into a 1 inch segment of a track.
  - Track density (tracks/in): number of tracks that can be squeezed into a 1 inch radial segment.
  - Areal density (bits/in2): product of recording and track density.

Computing Disk Capacity

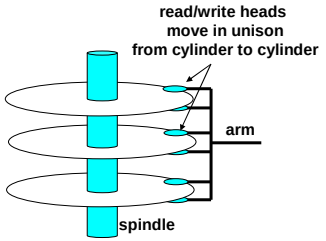
- Capacity = (# bytes/sector) x (avg. # sectors/track) x
- (# tracks/surface) x (# surfaces/platter) x
- (# platters/disk)
- Example:
  - 512 bytes/sector
  - 300 sectors/track (on average)
  - 20,000 tracks/surface
  - 2 surfaces/platter
  - 5 platters/disk

- Capacity = 512 x 300 x 20000 x 2 x 5
- = 30,720,000,000
- = 30.72 GB

Disk Operation (Single-Platter View)



Disk Operation (Multi-Platter View)



Disk Access Time

- Average time to access some target sector approximated by :
  - Taccess = Tavg seek + Tavg rotation + Tavg transfer
- Seek time (Tavg seek)
  - Time to position heads over cylinder containing target sector.
  - Typical Tavg seek = 9 ms
- Rotational latency (Tavg rotation)
  - Time waiting for first bit of target sector to pass under r/w head.
  - Tavg rotation = 1/2 x 1/RPMs x 60 sec/1 min
- Transfer time (Tavg transfer)
  - Time to read the bits in the target sector.
  - Tavg transfer = 1/RPM x 1/(avg # sectors/track) x 60 secs/1 min.

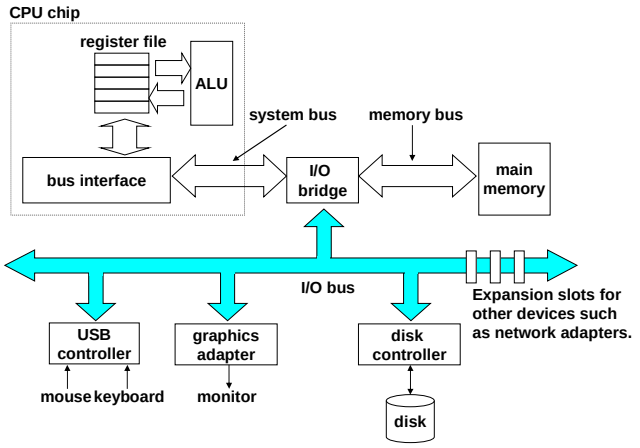
Disk Access Time Example

- Given:
  - Rotational rate = 7,200 RPM
  - Average seek time = 9 ms.
  - Avg # sectors/track = 400.
- Derived:
  - Tavg rotation = 1/2 x (60 secs/7200 RPM) x 1000 ms/sec = 4 ms.
  - Tavg transfer = 60/7200 RPM x 1/400 secs/track x 1000 ms/sec = 0.02 ms
  - Taccess = 9 ms + 4 ms + 0.02 ms
- Important points:
  - Access time dominated by seek time and rotational latency.
  - First bit in a sector is the most expensive, the rest are free.
  - SRAM access time is about 4 ns/doubleword, DRAM about 60 ns
    - Disk is about 40,000 times slower than SRAM,
    - 2,500 times slower then DRAM.

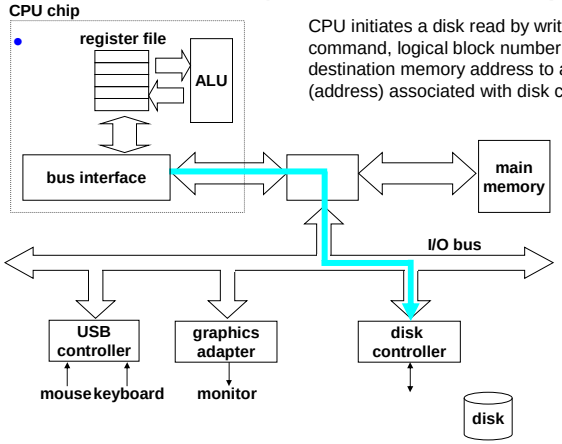
Logical Disk Blocks

- Modern disks present a simpler abstract view of the complex sector geometry:
  - The set of available sectors is modeled as a sequence of b-sized logical blocks (0, 1, 2, ...)
- Mapping between logical blocks and actual (physical) sectors
  - Maintained by hardware/firmware device called disk controller.
  - Converts requests for logical blocks into (surface,track,sector) triples.
- Allows controller to set aside spare cylinders for each zone.
  - Accounts for the difference in "formatted capacity" and "maximum capacity".

I/O Bus

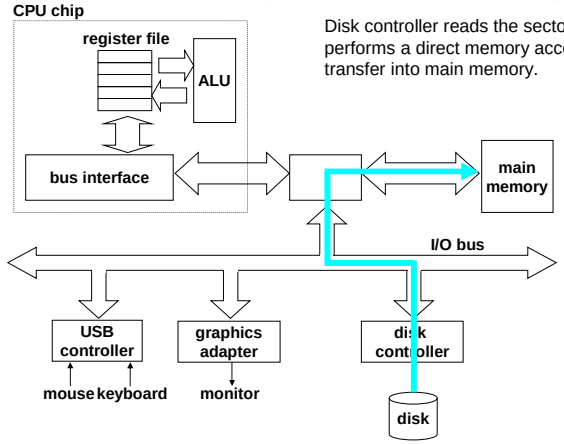


Reading a Disk Sector (1)



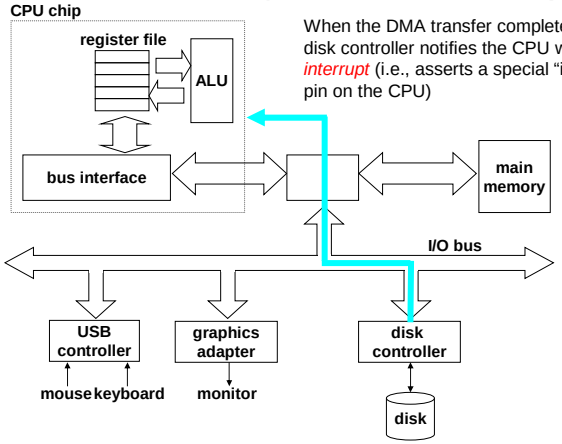
CPU initiates a disk read by writing a command, logical block number, and destination memory address to a port (address) associated with disk controller.

Reading a Disk Sector (2)



Disk controller reads the sector and performs a direct memory access (DMA) transfer into main memory.

Reading a Disk Sector (3)



When the DMA transfer completes, the disk controller notifies the CPU with an *interrupt* (i.e., asserts a special "interrupt" pin on the CPU)

The CPU-Memory Gap

- The increasing gap between DRAM, disk, and CPU speeds.