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SEM (EE-310) notes

NDS

Processor

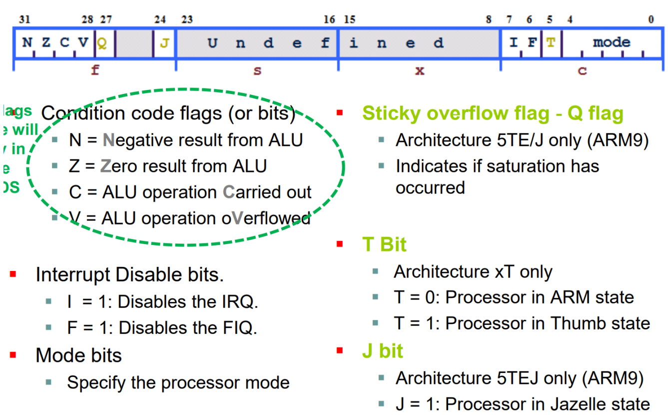
Two advanced RISC processors:

- ARM9 (66 MHz) - ARM 946E-S
  - Keys: A, B, L, R, arrows, select, start
  - LCD TFT
  - GBA Flash
  - BIOS in ROM: `0xffff0000` to `0xffff7fff` (32KB)
  - Harvard
- ARM7 (33 MHz) - ARM 7TDMI-S
  - Keys: X, Y
  - Touchscreen
  - WiFi
  - Audio
  - Screen open-close
  - BIOS in ROM: `0x00000000` to `0x00003fff` (16KB)
  - Von Neuman
- Communicate via WRAM

ARM processor:

- 32-bit RISC processor (32-bit instruction = word size)
- 37 registers of 32-bits (16 available)
- ALU, multiplier, caches
- Litte endian (by default)
- Up-to 4 function parameters (registers `r0-r3`), rest through stack
- Return value in `r0`
- Interupts (`intr0` less priority < `intr1` more priority)

Program status register `cpsr`:



Memory

Main RAM:

- From `0x02000000` to `0x023fffff` (4MB)

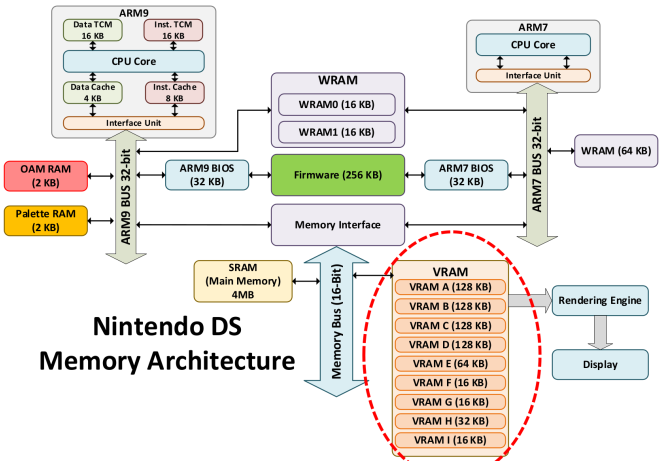
VRAM:

- From `0x06000000` to `0x068A0000` (656KB)

Cartige ROM:

- From `0x08000000` to `0x09ffffff` (32MB)

NDS memory architecture:



Utilities

Find macro value: `grep -rn "REG_DISPCNT" /opt/devkitpro/libnds/include/nds`

Peripherals

Interrupts sources:

- Graphic (x2)
- Timer (x4)
- DMA (x4)
- Keypad
- GBA Flashcard
- FIFO
- GFX FIFO
- DS Card
- ...

Interrupts:

- `IRQ_VBLANK`: Vertical blank
- `IRQ_HBLANK`: Horizontal blank
- `IRQ_TIMER0`: Timer 0
- `IRQ_KEYS`: Keypad
- `IRQ_WIFI`: WiFi
- `IRQ_DMA0`: DMA 0

Interrupts handler:

- Initialize interrupts subsystem: `irqInit()`
- Specify handler for interrupt: `irqSet(IRQ_MASK irq, VoidFunctionPointer handler)`
- Remove handler for interrupt: `irqClear(IRQ_MASK irq)` (before disable)
- Allow/Enable given interrupt: `irqEnable(uint32 irq)`
- Prevent/Disable interrupt: `irqDisable(uint32 irq)`

Timer

Information and formulas:

- Clock is `33.514` MHz

- 4 hardware timers, 16 bits counter
- Maximum measured ticks: `2^16 - 1` ticks
- Maximum measured time: `M = (2^16 - 1) * VALUE / 33514000` seconds
- Find start timer value or frequency for `x` seconds:
  - Frequency: `f = 33514000 / VALUE` Hz
  - Time of a cycle: `t = 1 / f` seconds
  - Maximum time: `M = (2^16 - 1) * t` seconds
  - Number of ticks: `n = x * f` ticks
  - Start timer value: `s = (2^16 - 1) - n`, equivalent to using macro with `freq = 1 / x` Hz

Macros:

- `TIMER_DATA(n)`: de-referenced pointer to data register `n`
- `TIMER_CR(n)`: de-referenced pointer to control register `n`, same as `TIMERn_CR`
- `TIMER_ENABLE`: enable timer
- `TIMER_DIV_VALUE`: timer counts at `(33.514 / VALUE)` MHz (`VALUE`: 1, 64, 256, 1024)
- `TIMER_FREQ_VALUE(freq)`: register value to start counting from so that it overflows each `1/freq` second (user `TIMER_FREQ` for `VALUE` 1)
- `TIMER_IRQ_REQ`: request interrupt on overflow

Examples:

- `TIMER_DATA(0) = TIMER_FREQ_64(125)`
- `TIMER_CR(0) = TIMER_ENABLE | TIMER_DIV_64 | TIMER_IRQ_REQ`
- `irqSet(IRQ_TIMER(0), &ISR_TIMER0)`: set the interrupt handler to the function `ISR_TIMER0` (don't forget to `irqInit()` before), (`IRQ_TIMER(n)` equivalent to `IRQ_TIMERn`)
- `irqEnable(IRQ_TIMER(0))`: enable interrupt

Pre-computed divider boundaries:

Divider	F_{CYCLE}=(33.514/DIV)MHz	$T_{CYCLE}=1/F_{CICLE}$	$F_{MIN}=F_{CYCLE}/2^{16}$	$T_{MAX}=2^{16}\ T_{CYCLE}$
TIMER_DIV_1	33.514 MHz	29.838 ns	511.383 Hz	1.955 ms
TIMER_DIV_64	523.656 kHz	1.910 us	7.990 Hz	125.151 ms
TIMER_DIV_256	130.914 kHz	7.639 us	1.998 Hz	500.603 ms
TIMER_DIV_1024	32.729 kHz	30.554 us	0.499 Hz	2.002 s

Graphics

Information:

- Each pixel is 16 bits RGB
  - 1 bit for transparency: 0 transparent, 1 opaque
  - 5 bits intensity for each color: 0 minimum, 31 maximum
- Macros `ARGB16(...)` and `RGB15(...)`
- Resolution of screen
  - 192 rows (`SCREEN_HEIGHT`)
  - 256 columns (`SCREEN_WIDTH`)
  - 49152 pixels
  - Drawn from left to right and top to bottom
- Interrupts when drawing
  - `IRQ_VBLANK`: vertical blank, once per screen refresh
  - `IRQ_HBLANK`: horizontal blank, once per line refresh
- Bitmaps in VRAM used with ARM9 from `0x06000000` to `0x068A0000` (656KB)
  - `A` to `D`: 128 KiB
  - `E`: 64 KiB
  - `H`: 32 KiB
  - `F`, `G`, `I`: 16 KiB

Configuration sequence:

- Power Manager configuration: `REG_POWERCNT`

  - POWER_LCD: LCD screen
  - POWER_2D_A: Main 2D core
  - POWER_MATRIX: 3D Matrix
  - POWER_3D_CORE: Main 3D core
  - POWER_2D_B: Sub-display 2D core
  - POWER_SWAP_LCDS: Screen used by the main core
- Graphical engines configuration: REG_DISPCNT (mode)
  - MODE_a_2D where a in 0..=6
  - ENABLE_3D
  - DISPLAY_b_ACTIVE where b in {BG0,BG1,BG2,BG3,SPR}
  - DISPLAY_c_ON where c in {WIN0,WIN1,SPR_WIN}
  - 2D mode
  - MODE_FBd where d in 0..=4
- VRAM configuration: VRAM_x_CR (activate and configure banks)
  - Mode
  - Shifting
  - VRAM_ENABLE

Examples:

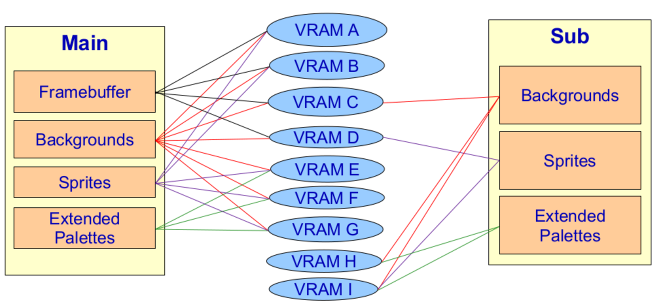
- REG_POWERCNT = POWER_LCD | POWER_2D_A
- REG_DISPCNT = MODE_0_2D | DISPLAY_BG1_ACTIVE: activate mode 0 and background 1
- VRAM_A_CR = VRAM_ENABLE | VRAM_A_LCD: activate bank A, map it to 2D background representation
- REG_DISPCNT = MODE_FB0 and VRAM_A_CR = VRAM_ENABLE | VRAM_A_LCD: to use FB0
- ARGB16(1, 31, 0, 0), RGB15(31, 0, 0)
- Pointer to buffer: u16 * buff = (u16 *) VRAM_A (pixel is 16 bits, read VRAM pixel by pixel)

Screen modes:

Mode	BG0	BG1	BG2	BG3
0	Tiled/3D	Tiled	Tiled	Tiled
1	Tiled/3D	Tiled	Tiled	Rotoscale
2	Tiled/3D	Tiled	Rotoscale	Rotoscale
3	Tiled/3D	Tiled	Tiled	Ext. Rotoscale
4	Tiled/3D	Tiled	Rotoscale	Ext. Rotoscale
5	Tiled/3D	Tiled	Ext. Rotoscale	Ext. Rotoscale
6	3D	N/A	Large Bitmap	N/A
FrameBuf.	Direct VRAM display as a bitmap			

Mode	BG0	BG1	BG2	BG3
0	Tiled	Tiled	Tiled	Tiled
1	Tiled	Tiled	Tiled	Rotoscale
2	Tiled	Tiled	Rotoscale	Rotoscale
3	Tiled	Tiled	Tiled	Ext. Rotoscale
4	Tiled	Tiled	Rotoscale	Ext. Rotoscale
5	Tiled	Tiled	Ext. Rotoscale	Ext. Rotoscale

VRAMs banks for types of data:



Framebuffer Mode

- Drawing map of pixels directly
- Four framebuffers associated with their 128 KiB VRAM bank (FB0 with VRAM_A, FB3 with VRAM_D)
- Full screen takes 192*256*16/1024/8 = 96 KiB
- Support for double buffering
  - One buffer is read to be written on the screen
  - The other buffer used to change/write the next image to draw
  - Swap/Exchange during VBLANK interrupt

- Enable framebuffer mode for sub display by swap screens: toggle bit 15 `REG_POWERCNT ^= BIT(15)`

Example:

- Fill canvas with white color: `memset(VRAM_A, 0xFF, 256*192*2)`

Rotoscale Mode

Additional configuration:

- Configure each active background `BGCTRL[n]` (pixel configuration 8/16 bits), background memory organized in data blocks
  - Set bitmap base address, indicate slot to use in dedicated background memory `BG_BMP_BASE(x)` (increase of 16 KB)
  - Indicate background size and format `BgSize_m_yxz`, `m` is `B8` or `B16` (bitmap pixel size), `yxz` is background size (e.g.: `256x256`)
- Initialize pallets when using 8 bits mode `BG_PALETTE[0..=255]`
- Can only use 256 colors type of palette with rotoscale
- Optional: adjust affine transformation matrix (for each background)

Palettes:

- Collection of 256 colors (in ARGB16), 512 B
- 8 bits per pixel (index in palette)
- Dedicated Palette RAM (2 KiB), faster and consumes less power
- Palette pointer: `uint_16 * myPalette = BG_PALETTE`
- Write to palette: `BG_PALETTE[1] = BLUE`, use `BG_PALETTE_SUB` for sub display
- Two possibilities for palettes
  - 1 palette of 256 colors: 8 bits per pixel (64 B tile size), colors from `0x00` to `0xFF`
  - 16 palettes of 16 colors: 4 bits per pixel (32 B tile size), palette from `0x0` to `0xF`, color from `0x0` to `0xF`
  - Index 0 in palette is used for transparency (displays when no opaque background pixel behind)
- Use `BgSize_B16_256x256` to configure background for emulating framebuffer mode

Software Interrupt mode (SWI):

- Copy data from one point to another
- `void swiCopy (const void *source, void *dest, int flags)`, uses 2 bytes `u16`
- `source`: origin memory address
- `dest`: destination memory address
- `flags`: data size/length (in 2-byte words) to copy

Affine transformation matrix:

- Rotoscale: rotation and scaling
- Structure `bg_transform` (`xdx/hdx`, `ydx/vdx`, . . . , `dx`, `dy`), fixed-point numbers (8 bits decimal part `Q1.8`, e.g.: `1.00000000 := 256 = 1 << 8`)
- One matrix per background: `bgTransform[background_nb]`
- Must define the transformation matrix (required for Ext. Rotoscale mode)

GRIT:

- Convert images to Assembly code (in data segment of program)
- Declaration of paletes, maps, graphic data
- Also generates header file to link between C and Assembly
- From terminal `grit myImage.png -g -gB16` > `myImage.h`, `myImage.s`
- Put output files in the `data` project folder
- Get bitmap and pallette (8 bits): `grit bottom.png -gb -gB8 -pu8`

Examples:

- Activation: `REG_POWERCNT = POWER_LCD | POWER_2D_A`
- Deactivation: `REG_POWERCNT &= ~(POWER_LCD) & ~(POWER_2D_A)`
- Activate mode 4 and background 2: `REG_DISPCNT = MODE_5_2D | DISPLAY_BG2_ACTIVE`

- Activate mode and background for SUB display: `REG_DISPCNT_SUB = MODE_5_2D | DISPLAY_BG2_ACTIVE`
- Store image of 256x256 pixels with palette (64 KiB), activate VRAM: `VRAM_A_CR = VRAM_ENABLE | VRAM_A_MAIN_BG`
- Main 2D engine, background 2, base address 0, 256x256 image size, one palette format (B8): `BGCTRL[2] = BG_BMP_BASE(0) | BgSize_B8_256x256` (or `BGCTRL_SUB[x]`)
- Write color: `BG_BMP_RAM(0)[row * SCREEN_WIDTH + col] = color` (`BG_BMP_RAM(0) === BG_GFX`)
- Transfer image (to base address 0): `swiCopy(imgBitmap, BG_BMP_RAM(0), imgBitmapLen/2)`
- Transfer palette: `swiCopy(imgPal, BG_PALETTE, imgPalLen/2)`

Tiled mode

- Useful for repeated pieces of graphics
- Tile size is 8x8 pixels (64 pixels), screen width 32 tiles, screen height 24 tiles, total of 32x24=768 tiles on screen (can have more out of screen, scrolling effect)
  - Tiles map possibilities: 32x32, 32x64, 64x32, 64x64
- Maximum of 1024 tiles (as index map is 10 bits)
- Can be used for background (configure `BGCTRL[x]`)
- Tiles transformations like rotoscale
- Tile is matrix of color indexes in palette
- Tiles stored from base address `BG_TILE_RAM(x)`, `BG_TILE_RAM_SUB(x)`
  - Tile base address must be multiple of 16 KB (0x4000)
  - Maximum size is 256 KB
- Configure background control register: `BG_TILE_BASE(x)` (16 values of base address, `x` in `0..=15`, 4 bits for `TILE_BASE` in `REG_BGnCNT`)
- Screen size is 256 pixels (32 tiles) by 192 pixels (24 tiles)

Tile referencing (map format):

- Each tile is referenced with 16 bits
  - Tile number: 10 bits
  - Horizontal/Vertical mirror: 2 bits
    * Horizontal flip: `tile | BIT(10)`
    * Vertical flip: `tile | BIT(11)`
  - Palette used (if 16-color palette): 4 bits (16 possible palettes), bits 15-12 specify palette number
- Map can start (map base) in address multiple of 2 KB (0x800)
  - Most used BG: 32x32 tiles (2 B per tile), total of 2 KB
  - Config BG register controller: `BG_MAP_BASE(x)` (increase of 2KB for tile mode, 16 KB for rotoscale), `BG_TILE_BASE(x)` (increase of 16KB)
  - Write the tile definition: `BG_TILE_RAM(x)`, `BG_TILE_RAM_SUB(x)`
  - Access tile to set/modify: write layout with tiles `BG_MAP_RAM(x)[row*32 + col]`, `BG_MAP_RAM_SUB(x)` (or tile number with flip bits)

Configuration `BGCTRL[n]` / `BGCTRL_SUB[n]` (same as `REG_BGnCNT`):

- Number of tiles in tiles map
- Number of colors in palette
- Memory positions for map and for tiles (base address)

Direct Memory Address:

- Faster for large amount of memory (larger than a tile)
- Perform data transfers without CPU intervention (DMA controller)
- CPU configures DMA controller to make data transfer between peripherals
  - Base address, Destination address, Data size
- DMA controller performs I/O operation autonomously when bus available
- `void dmaCopy(const void * source, void * dest, uint32 size)`, uses 1 byte `u8`
- Always cast `dest`: `(u8*)`
- Used to copy the tiles to e.g. for second tile: `&BG_TILE_RAM(0)[32]` (size 64)

GRIT:

- Option to generate tiles `-gt`
- Option to generate palette `-p`
- Image to transform should have size multiple of 8
- Map can be generated if full image is going to be displayed (tiled mode): option `-m`

Examples:

- Configure engine: `REG_DISPCNT = MODE_0_2D | DISPLAY_BG0_ACTIVE`
- Configure VRAM bank: `VRAM_A_CR = VRAM_ENABLE | VRAM_A_MAIN_BG`, use `VRAM_x_SUB_BG` for sub (look which VRAM available in picture)
- Background 0 in SUB display, 32x32 tiles, use 1 palette (256 colors), in `MAP_BASE0`, tiles at 2 KB from `TILE_BASE`: `BGCTRL_SUB[0] = BG_32x32 | BG_COLOR_256 | BG_MAP_BASE(0) | BG_TILE_BASE(1)` (be careful for overlap between `MAP_BASE` and `TILE_BASE`)
- Used tiled mode and ext. rotoscale in one: `REG_DISPCNT = MODE_5_2D | DISPLAY_BG1_ACTIVE | DISPLAY_BG3_ACTIVE`
- Copy two custom tiles (`u8 tile[64] = ...`): `swiCopy(tile1, BG_TILE_RAM_SUB(x), 32); swiCopy(tile2, &BG_TILE_RAM_SUB(x)[32], 32);`

Keys & Touchscreen

Information:

- Events detected in 16 bits register `REG_KEYCNT`
- Pressed keys in `REG_KEYINPUT` (zero bit means key pressed)
- No buffering
- 60 points read/sec with `swiForVBlank()` (interpolate for lines)
- Two arm processors
  - ARM 946E-S: `KEY_A`, `KEY_B`, `KEY_SELECT`, `KEY_START`, `KEY_RIGHT`, `KEY_LEFT`, `KEY_UP`, `KEY_DOWN`, `KEY_R`, `KEY_L`
  - ARM 7TDMI-S: `KEY_X`, `KEY_Y`, `KEY_TOUCH` (for touchscreen), `KEY_LID`
  - Can check bits against macro: e.g. `uint32 keys = keysDown()`, `keys == KEY_x` (strictly only one key), `keys & KEY_x != 0` (maybe multiple keys)
  - Bit 14/15 used to configure interrupts
- Polling (active waiting using infinite loop) in libnds
  - Polling is slower and consumes more power than interrupts
  - Call `swiWaitForVBlank()` inside of polling loop
  - Scans and stores pressed keys and touchscreen: `void scanKeys()`
  - Returns keys pressed/held: `uint32 keysHeld()`
  - Returns only keys pressed: `uint32 keysDown()`
  - Returns only keys released: `uint32 keysUp()`
  - Position where touchscreen pressed: `void touchRead(touchPosition * pos)` (output argument)
    - Check if touchscreen was touched: `keys & KEY_TOUCH`
    - Use API with struct return: `touchPosition pos; touchRead(&pos);`
    - Fields `px` and `py`, touched pixel coordinates
    - `(0, 0)` when screen is not touched, detect touch using `touch.px || touch.py`
    - Position in memory for pixel is `VRAM_x[touch.py * 256 + touch.px]`

Interrupts:

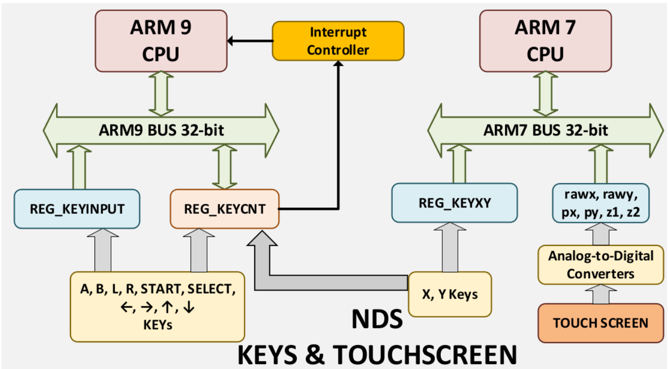
- Set `REG_KEYCNT` to trigger interrupts
- One key triggers an interrupt: set bit 14 (enable interrupts)
- A combination of keys pressed together trigers an interrupt: set bit 15 and 14 + all the keys to trigger interrupt
- Cannot use libnds API in the ISR: use the `REG_KEYINPUT` to identify pressed key with inverse logic `~REG_KEYINPUT & KEY_x != 0`

Examples:

- Key A, Left or Start trigger an interrupt when any is pressed: `REG_KEYCNT = BIT(14) | KEY_A | KEY_LEFT | KEY_START`

- Key A and B trigger an interrupt only when both pressed together: `REG_KEYCNT = BIT(14) | BIT(15) | KEY_A | KEY_B`

Two processors manage keys and touchscreen together:



Sound

Registers:

- Power up sound I/O subsystem: `powerON(POWER_SOUND)`
- Global configuration register `SOUND_CR`
  - Enable and set volume: `SOUND_CR = SOUND_ENABLE | SOUND_VOL(0x7F)`
  - 127 possible volumes from silent `0x00` to full `0x7f`
- Each channel configured independently (16 channels audio)
  - Channel activation: `SCHANNEL_CR(index)`
  - Configuring channel 0: `SCHANNEL_CR(0) = SCHANNEL_ENABLE | SOUND_ONE_SHOT | SOUND_8BIT`
  - Must configure (at least) three properties with `SCHANNEL_property(index)`
    - Playback frequency `SCHANNEL_TIMER(0) = SOUND_FREQ(11127)`
    - Pointer to sound to play `SCHANNEL_SOURCE(0) = (uint32) sound1`
    - Duration (32 bits): `SCHANNEL_LENGTH(0) = ((int) sound1_end - (int) sound) >> 2`

MaxMod:

- Module files: background music (`.mod`, `.s3m`, `.it`, `.xm`)
- Sound effects: play on demand (`.wav` + module formats witohut looping)
- Initialize library pointers to sounds + internal buffers
  - `void mmInitDefaultMem(mm_addr soundbank)`
  - `soundbank` parameter is name of sound-bank binary (default `soundbank_bin`)
  - Not too big (below 2 MB)
- Load music modules
  - `void mmLoad(mm_word module_ID)`
  - `module_ID` parameter is 32 bits index with module identifier
  - All identifiers defined in `soundbank.h`
- Load sound effect
  - `void mmLoadEffect( mm_word sample_ID )`
  - `sample_ID` parameter is 32 bit sample index with effect identifier
- Play music
  - `void mmStart(mm_word module_ID, mm_pmode mode)`
  - `mode` parameter specifies loop or not `MM_PLAY_LOOP` or `MM_PLAY_ONCE`
- Control music using active module identifier
  - `void mmPause()`
  - `void mmResume()`
  - `void mmStop()`
- Play sound effect
  - `mm_sfxhand mmEffect(mm_word sample_ID)`
  - Effect will play without modifying the sound configuration
- Play sound effect with specific sound configuration

  - `mm_sfxhand mmEffectEx(mm_sound_effect* sound)`
  - `sound` parameter is struct with `volume`, `panning`, `rate` (frequency)

Transformation utility:

- Start with raw audio data (uncompressed binary files)
- Use the MaxMod `mmutil` toolchain
- Use `-d` parameter for NDS
- Generates the `soundbank.bin` and header file `soundbank.h`
- Place the audio file sin folder `audio` inside C project

Automatic transformation:

- Place audio files in folder `audio` inside C project
- When building the project files will be generated in the `build` folder (`.bin`, `.h`)
- Use sounds in C project with MaxMod API: include library and soundbank headers

Examples:

- Transform `s1.wav` and `s2.mod`: `mmutil s1.wav s2.mod -d -osoundbank.bin -hsoundbank.h`

Acronyms

- NDS: Nintendo DS
- GBA: Game Boy Advance
- LCD: Liquid Crystal Display
- TFT: Thin-Film Transistor
- ARM: Advanced RISC Machine
- RISC: Reduced Instruction Set Computer
- CISC: Complex Instruction Set Computer
- CPU: Central Processing Unit
- ALU: Arithmetic Logic Unit
- CU: Control Unit
- PC: Program Counter
- CR: Control Register
- SR: State Register
- IR: Instruction Register
- MAR: Memory Address Register
- MDR: Memory Data Register
- I/O: Input/Output
- MM: Main Memory
- CM: Cache Memory
- SPM: Scratch-Pad Memory
- RAM: Random Access Memory
- VRAM: Video Random Access Memory
- WRAM: Window Random Access Memory
- REQ: REQuest
- FIQ: Fast Interrupt Request
- IRQ: Interrupt ReQuest
- FREQ: FREQuency
- SVC: SuperVisor Call
- INTR: INTeRrupt
- DMA: Direct Memory Access
- SPI: Serial Peripheral Interface
- ASCII: American Standard Code for Information Interchange
- GFX: Graphics
- FIFO: First-In, First-Out
- API: Application Programming Interface
- RGB: Red Green Blue
- ARGB: Alpha Red Green Blue

- BG: BackGround
- FB: FrameBuffer
- BMP: BitMap Pointer
- SWI: SoftWare Interrupt
- GRIT: GBA Raster Image Transmogrifier
- CNT/CTRL: CoNTRoLler
- A2D: Analog TO Digital
- ISR: Interrupt Service Routine
- IPC: Inter-Processor Communication