Lab2: GCD Algorithm

# 1. Objective

Write assembly programs to implement the GCD algorithm.

# 2. Background

Read the article below that discusses the Euclidean algorithm and Binary GCD (Stein’s algorithm).

Euclidean algorithm for computing the greatest common divisor:

<https://cp-algorithms.com/algebra/Euclidean-algorithm.html>

Video tutorials:

Recursive Euclidean: GCD - Euclidean Algorithm (Method 2): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svBx8u5bMEg>

Non-recursive Euclidean GCD - Euclidean Algorithm (Method 1): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHwneN6zJmU>

We use a pair of data and for illustration. All three variants compute , but Euclidean (recursive or non-recursive) uses division/modulo each step, while binary GCD uses only shifts, subtraction, and comparisons, which can be faster on hardware where division is expensive.

**Recursive Euclidean**

**// Recursive GCD**

int gcd (int a, int b) {

if (b == 0)

return a;

else

return gcd (b, a % b);

}

* Start with . Since , recurse to .
* Next .
* Next .
* Base case returns , so .

**Iterative (non-recursive) Euclidean**

**// Iterative GCD**

int gcd (int a, int b) {

while (b) {

a %= b;

swap(a, b);

}

return a;

}

* Start with a=48, b=18. Replace (a, b) with (b, a mod b) until b=0.
* 48 mod 18 = 12 ⇒ (a, b) = (18, 12).
* 18 mod 12 = 6 ⇒ (a, b) = (12, 6).
* 12 mod 6 = 0 ⇒ (a, b) = (6, 0).
* Stop; gcd = 6.

**Binary GCD (Stein’s algorithm)**

**// Binary GCD (Stein's algorithm)**

// Computes gcd(a, b) using only shifts, subtraction, and comparisons.

int gcd(int a, int b) {

// If either is zero, GCD is the bitwise OR (the other operand).

// This works because if a==0, a|b == b; if b==0, a|b == a.

if (!a || !b)

return a | b; // handles (0, x) and (x, 0) in O(1)

// shift = number of common powers of two dividing both a and b.

// ctz(x) = count trailing zeros in binary; ctz(a|b) gives min(ctz(a), ctz(b)).

unsigned shift = \_\_builtin\_ctz(a | b); // factor 2^shift out and restore at the end

// Make a odd by removing all factors of two.

a >>= \_\_builtin\_ctz(a); // divide a by 2^ctz(a)

// Main loop: maintain a odd; reduce b until it becomes zero.

do {

// Remove all factors of two from b to make it odd as well.

b >>= \_\_builtin\_ctz(b); // divide b by 2^ctz(b)

// Ensure a <= b to keep subtraction non-negative.

if (a > b)

swap(a, b); // now a <= b

// Replace (a, b) with (a, b - a); gcd is invariant under subtracting equals for odd a, b.

b -= a; // b becomes even (difference of two odds), next iteration will strip the 2s

} while (b); // stop when b hits 0; then a holds gcd without the common 2^shift factor

// Restore the common power-of-two factor that was factored out initially.

return a << shift; // multiply gcd by 2^shift to get final result

}

* Start . If either is zero, return the other; not the case. Compute common power-of-two factor: has , so extract one factor of 2 at the end; set shift . (48 in binary is 110000, and 18 is 010010; bitwise OR gives 110010, which is decimal 50 with one trailing zero.)
* Remove factors of two individually: has → ; has → .
* Now both odd. Repeat:
  + Ensure ; currently . Set , which is even.
  + Normalize by removing factors of two: → .
  + Now . Since , set .
* Loop ends at . Result before restoring powers of two is . Restore the common factor: return , hence .

## How to implement ctz()

ctz() stands for “count trailing zeros”. It returns the number of consecutive 0-bits at the least-significant end of an integer’s binary representation. For example, ctz(48) = 4 because 48 = 0b0011 0000 ends with four zeros, and ctz(18) = 1 because 18 = 0b10010 ends with one zero. In the binary GCD (Stein’s) algorithm, ctz(x) gives the largest power of 2 dividing x, so dividing by 2^ctz(x) quickly removes all factors of two.)

ARMv7 does not have a native CTZ instruction, but you can implement it with bit-reverse + CLZ “count leading zeros.”.

ctz(x) = clz(rbit(x)) (handle the case of x=0 separately.)

For nonzero x, ctz(x) = clz(rbit(x)) because reversing the bits turns trailing zeros into leading zeros. Using x = 0b0010 1100 (44), rbit over 8 bits yields 0b0011 0100, which has 2 leading zeros, so ctz(x) = 2.

This trick only works for non-zero input x, since many implementations of ctz/clz consider input x = 0 as undefined behavior for performance reasons. So please define ctz(0)=32 explicitly before calling ctz(x) for x!=0.

# 3. Lab Steps

Start with the Assembly program below that implements the Recursive Euclidean algorithm.

Computing the Euclidean Algorithm in raw ARM Assembly

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=665rzOSSxWA>

<https://github.com/LaurieWired/Assembly-Algorithms/tree/main/GCD>

Modify it to implement (1) the Iterative (non-recursive) Euclidean algorithm; (2) the Binary GCD algorithm.

# 5. Report

Use the project report template and submit the report in PDF format. Submit two separate source files for parts (1) and (2), with the input pair (48, 18).