

Computer Engineering

What is Computer Engineering?

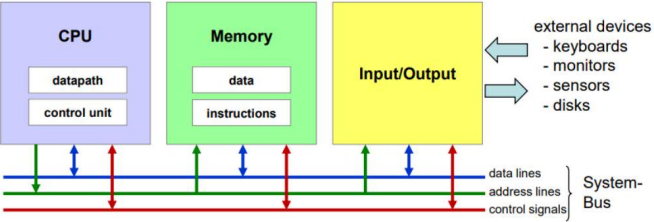
Computer Engineering is where microelectronics and software meet. It involves:

- Architecture and organization of computer systems
- Combines hardware and software to implement a computer
- Applications in embedded systems, information technology, and technical/scientific tools

Basic Hardware Components

A computer system consists of four fundamental components:

- **CPU (Central Processing Unit):** Processes instructions and data
- **Memory:** Stores instructions and data
- **Input/Output:** Interface to external devices
- **System Bus:** Electrical connection between components



CPU Components

The CPU contains several key components:

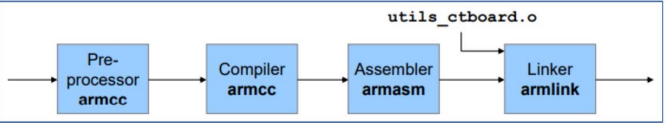
- **Core Registers:** Fast but limited storage inside CPU
- **ALU (Arithmetic Logic Unit):** Performs arithmetic and logic operations
- **Control Unit:** Reads and executes instructions
- **Bus Interface:** Connects CPU to system bus

Memory Types

- **Main Memory (Arbeitsspeicher):**
 - Connected through System-Bus
 - Access to individual bytes
 - Volatile: SRAM, DRAM
 - Non-volatile: ROM, Flash
- **Secondary Storage:**
 - Connected through I/O
 - Access to blocks of data
 - Non-volatile
 - Examples: HDD, SSD, CD, DVD

Program Translation Process

Translation from source code to executable involves four steps:



1. **Preprocessor:**
 - Text processing
 - Includes header files
 - Expands macros
 - Output: Modified source program
2. **Compiler:**
 - Translates C to assembly
 - CPU-specific code generation
 - Output: Assembly program
3. **Assembler:**
 - Converts assembly to machine code
 - Creates relocatable object file
 - Output: Binary object file
4. **Linker:**
 - Merges object files
 - Resolves dependencies
 - Creates executable program
 - Output: Executable file

Program Compilation Process

To compile and link a program:

1. Create source files (.c) and header files (.h)
2. Run preprocessor to expand includes and macros
3. Compile source files to object files
4. Link object files and libraries
5. Test executable

Simple Program Translation - From Source to Executable

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #define MAX 100
3
4 int main(void) {
5     printf("Max is %d\n", MAX);
6     return 0;
7 }
```

Translation steps:

1. Preprocessor expands include and replaces MAX with 100
2. Compiler converts to assembly language
3. Assembler creates object file
4. Linker combines with C library to create executable

Cortex-M Architecture

Core Architecture Overview

The ARM Cortex-M is a 32-bit processor architecture designed for embedded systems:

- Load/store architecture
- 32-bit data path
- Thumb instruction set
- Hardware multiply and optional divide

Core Registers

The Cortex-M has 16 core registers, each 32-bit wide:

- **R0-R7:** Low registers - general purpose
- **R8-R12:** High registers - general purpose
- **R13 (SP):** Stack Pointer - temporary storage
- **R14 (LR):** Link Register - return address from procedures
- **R15 (PC):** Program Counter - address of next instruction

ALU and Flags

The Arithmetic Logic Unit (ALU) is 32-bit wide and supports:

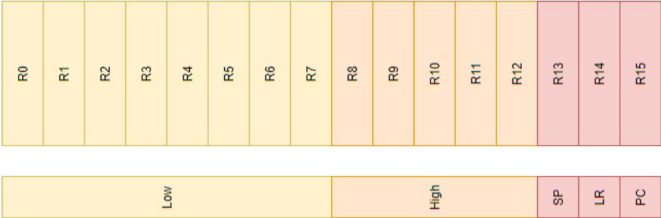
- Arithmetic operations (add, subtract, multiply)
- Logic operations (AND, OR, XOR)
- Compare operations
- Shift and rotate operations

The Application Program Status Register (APSR) contains flags:

- **N:** Negative result
- **Z:** Zero result
- **C:** Carry from operation
- **V:** Overflow occurred

Instruction Set

The Cortex-M uses 16-bit Thumb instructions:



Main instruction types:

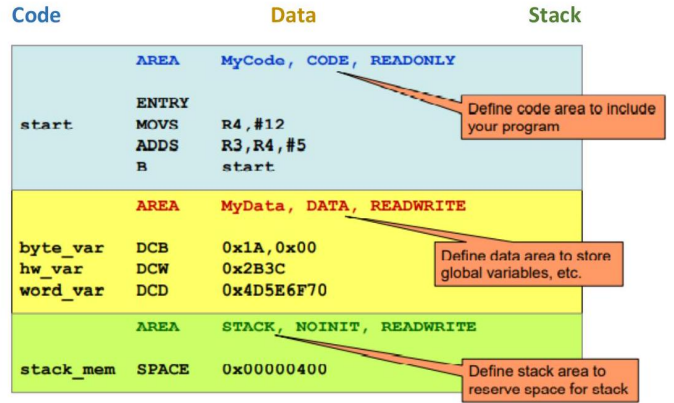
- **Data Transfer:** Move, Load, Store operations
- **Data Processing:** Arithmetic, logical, shift operations
- **Control Flow:** Branch and function calls

Basic Assembly Program Structure Example of a simple assembly program:

	Label	Instr.	Operands	Comments
1				
2	demoprg	MOVS	R0, #0xA5	; copy 0xA5 into R0
3		MOVS	R1, #0x11	; copy 0x11 into R1
4		ADDS	R0, R0, R1	; add R0 and R1, store in R0

Assembly Program Sections

Program memory is organized in sections:



- Directives for initialized data:
- **DCB:** Define Constant Byte (8-bit)
 - **DCW:** Define Constant Half-Word (16-bit)
 - **DCD:** Define Constant Word (32-bit)
- Directive for uninitialized data:
- **SPACE:** Reserve specified number of bytes

Data Definition Memory layout for different data types:

1	var1	DCB	0x1A	;single byte
2	var2	DCB	0x2B,0x3C,0x4D,0x5E	;byte array
3	var3	DCW	0x6F70,0x8192	;half-words
4	var4	DCD	0xA3B4C5D6	;word
5	data	SPACE	100	;reserve 100 bytes

Creating Assembly Programs

- Steps to create an assembly program:
1. Define program sections (CODE, DATA)
 2. Declare any external symbols (IMPORT/EXPORT)
 3. Define initialized data using DCx directives
 4. Reserve uninitialized data using SPACE
 5. Write program code using proper instruction syntax
 6. End program with END directive

Data Transfer

Data Transfer Overview

- ARM Cortex-M uses a load/store architecture:
- Memory can only be accessed through load and store instructions
 - All other operations work on registers
 - Various addressing modes for flexible memory access

Load Instructions

Main load instructions for moving data into registers:

- **MOVS** (Move and Set flags):
 - Register to Register: `MOVS R1, R2`
 - 8-bit immediate: `MOVS R1, #0x1C`
 - Constant: `MOVS R1, #MyConst`
- **LDR** (Load Register):
 - 32-bit literal: `LDR R1, #0xA1B2C3D4`
 - PC-relative: `LDR R1, [PC, #12]`
 - Pseudo instruction: `LDR R1, =MyConst`
 - Register indirect: `LDR R1, [R2]`
- **LDRB** (Load Register Byte):
 - Loads 8-bit value
 - Bits 31 to 8 are set to zero
- **LDRH** (Load Register Half-word):
 - Loads 16-bit value
 - Bits 31 to 16 are set to zero

Store Instructions

Instructions for storing data from registers to memory:

- **STR** (Store Register):
 - Basic store: `STR R1, [R2]`
 - With offset: `STR R1, [R2, #0x04]`
- **STRB** (Store Register Byte):
 - Stores lowest 8 bits of register
- **STRH** (Store Register Half-word):
 - Stores lowest 16 bits of register

Memory Access Example

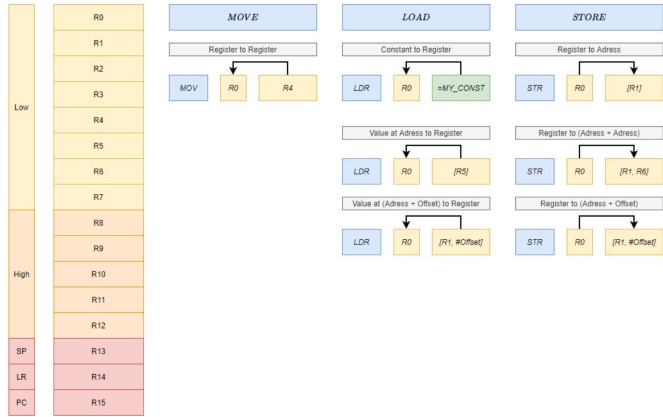
Loading and storing array elements:

		AREA	my_data, DATA, READWRITE	
00000000	11223344	my_array	DCD	0x11223344
00000004	55667788		DCD	0x55667788
00000008	99AABBC		DCD	0x99AABBC

		AREA	myCode, CODE, READONLY	
		. . .		
		; load base and offset registers		
0000007C	4906	LDR	R1,=my_array	; load address of array
0000007E	4B07	LDR	R3,=0x08	
		; indirect addressing		
00000080	680C	LDR	R4,[R1]	; base R1
00000082	684D	LDR	R5,[R1,#0x04]	; base R1, immediate offset
00000084	58CE	LDR	R6,[R1,R3]	; base R1, offset R3

Memory Layout Example

Memory layout for array elements and instructions:



- Size considerations:
- Array elements: 3 * 4 Bytes
 - Instructions: 5 * 2 Bytes
 - Literals (0x08): 1 * 4 Bytes

Memory Access Patterns

Steps for accessing memory:

1. Determine required data size (byte, half-word, word)
2. Choose appropriate load/store instruction
3. Calculate correct memory address
4. Consider alignment requirements
5. Load/store data using proper addressing mode

Basic Data Transfer Operations Common data transfer operations:

1	;Load operations		
2	MOVS	R1, #42	;Load immediate value
3	MOVS	R2, R1	;Copy register
4	LDR	R3, =0x1234	;Load 32-bit constant
5	LDR	R4, [R3]	;Load from memory
6	LDRB	R5, [R3, #1]	;Load byte with offset
7			
8	;Store operations		
9	STR	R1, [R2]	;Store word
10	STRB	R1, [R2, #4]	;Store byte with offset
11	STRH	R1, [R2, R3]	;Store half-word with register offset

Arithmetic Operations

Arithmetic Operations

- Flags (APSR = N, Z, C, V)
- Instructions ending with with «S» allow flag modification
- ADDS
 - SUBS
 - MOVS
 - LSLS

Flag	Meaning	Action	Operands
Negative	MSB =1	N = 1	signed
Zero	Result = 0	Z = 1	signed, unsigned
Carry	Carry	C = 1	unsigned
Overflow	Overflow	V = 1	signed

Overview

- ADD / ADDS
- ADCS Addition with Carry
- ADR Address to Register
- SUB / SUBS
- SBBS
- RSBS
- MULS

Subtraction

Subtraction with carry (borrow)

Reverse Subtract (negative)

Multiplication

$A + B$

$A + B + c$

$PC + A$

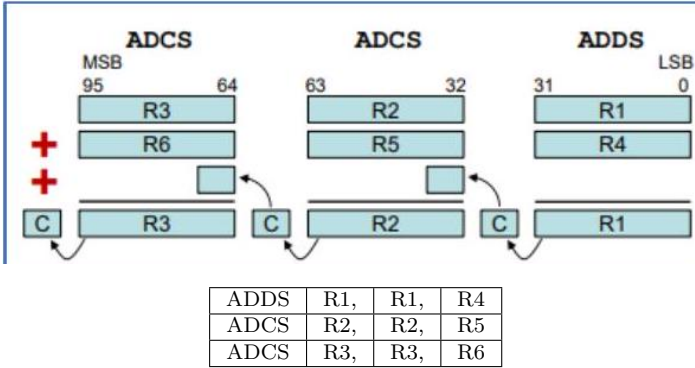
$A - B$

$A - B - !c$

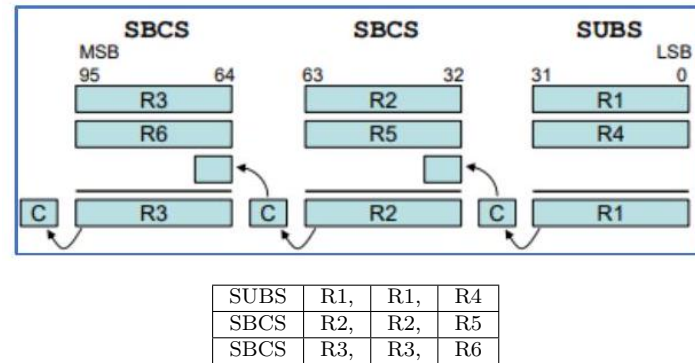
$-1 \cdot A$

$A \cdot B$

Multi-Word Addition with ADCS



Multi-Word Subtraction with SBBS



Negative Number

- 2' Complement $A = !A + 1$

Carry and Overflow

unsigned

- Addition $\rightarrow C = 1 \rightarrow$ carry result too large for available bits

- Subtraction $\rightarrow C = 0 \rightarrow$ borrow result less than zero \rightarrow no negative numbers signed
- Addition \rightarrow potential overflow in case of operands with equal signs
- Subtraction \rightarrow potential overflow in case of operands with opposite signs

Addition and Subtraction

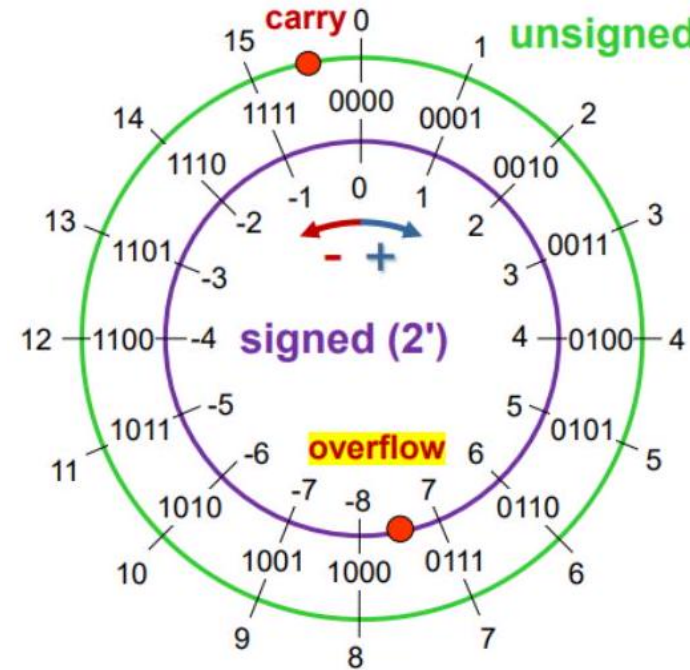
- Addition $C = 1 \rightarrow$ Carry

1	1	0	1	13d
0	1	1	1	7d
1	1	1	1	
1				
1	0	1	0	0

- Subtraction $C = 0 \rightarrow$ Borrow sign
 $6d - 14d = 0110b - 1110b = 0110b + 0010b$

0	1	1	0	6d
0	0	1	0	2d = TC(14d)

0100



Logic, Shift and Rotate Instructions

Logical Instructions

The following instruction only affect N and Z flags

- ANDS
- BICS
- EORS
- MVNS Bitwise NOT
- ORRS

Bitwise OR

Rdn # Rm

Rdn & Rm

Rdn & ! Rm $a \& \sim b$

Rdn \$ Rm $a \wedge b$

Rm a

a | b

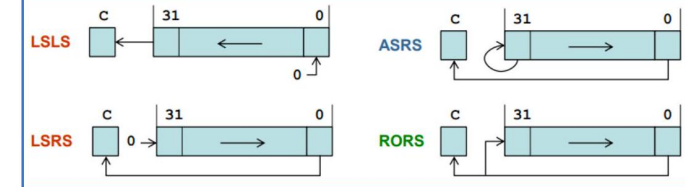
Shift Instructions

- LSLS Logical Shift Left $2^n \cdot Rn \ 0 \rightarrow LSB$

- LSRS Logical Shift Right $2^{-n} \cdot Rn \ 0 \rightarrow MSB$

- ASRS Arithmetic Shift Right $R^{-n} \pm \pm MSB \rightarrow MSB$

- RORS Rotate Right $LSB \rightarrow MSB$



Sign-Extension

Add additional bits

- Unsigned zero extension fill left bits with zero
- Signed sign extension copy sign bit to the left

Unsigned $\rightarrow \sim$ Zero Extension			
1011 \rightarrow	00001011	0011 \rightarrow	00000011
Signed \rightarrow Sign Extension			
1011 \rightarrow	11111011	0011 \rightarrow	00000011

Truncation

Cast cuts out the left most digits

- Signed possible change of sign
- Unsigned results in module operation

Integer ranges based on word sizes

8-bit	hex 0 x 00	unsigned	signed	16-bit	hex 0x0000	unsigned
	0x75	127	127		0x7FFF	F 32'767
	0x80	128	-128		0x8000	032' 768

	0xFF	255	-1		0xFFFF	F 65'535
32-bit	hex	unsigned		signed		
	0x0000 0000	0		0		
	0x7FFF'FFFF	2'147'483'647		2'147'483'647		...
						2'147'483'
	0x8000'0000	2'147'483'648 -		-2'147'483'		
	0xFFFF'FFFF	4'294'967'295		-		...
						-1

00000000	B083	SUB	SP,SP,#12
00000002 9200	STR	R2,[SP]	
00000004	9301	STR	R3,[SP,#4]
000000069602	STR	R6,[SP,#8]	

POP {R2,R3,R6}

00000008 9A00	LDR	R2,[SP]
0000000A 9B01	LDR	R3,[SP,#4]
0000000C 9B02	LDR	R6,[SP,#8]
0000000E B003	ADD	SP,SP,#12

Parameter Passing

Where

- Register
- Global variables
- Stack
- Caller: PUSH parameter on stack
- Callee: Access parameter through LDR

Reentrancy

- Recursive Function Calls
- Registers and global variables are overwritten
- Requires an own set of data for each call
- Solution:
- ARM Procedure Call Standard

Passing through global variables

- Shared variables in data area
- Overhead to access variable
- Error prone, unmaintainable
- By reference
- Allows passing of larger structures

ARM Procedure call Standard

Parameters

- Caller copies arguments From R0 to R3
- Caller copies additional parameters to stack

Returning fundamental data types

- Smaller than word
- Word
- Double word
- 128-Bit

zero or sign extend to word return in R0 return in R0 / R1 return in R0 - R3

Returning composite data types

- Up to 4 bytes return in R0
- Larger than 4 bytes stored in data area

Register / "pass by value"

AREA exData,DATA,...

...

AREA exCode,CODE,...

...

MOVS R1,#0x03

BL double

MOVS ...,R0

...

double

LSLS R0,R1,#1

BX LR

caller

callee
function
double

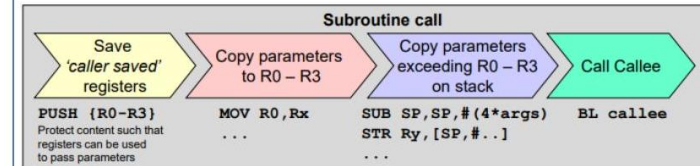
Register Usage

Register	Synonym	Role
r0	a1	Argument / result / scratch register
r1	a2	Argument / result / scratch register
r2	a3	Argument / scratch register 3
r3	a4	Argument / scratch register 4
r4	v1	Variable register 1
r5	v2	Variable register 2
r6	v3	Variable register 3
r7	v4	Variable register 4
r8	v5	Variable register 5
r9	v6	Variable register 6
r10	v7	Variable register 7
r11	v8	Variable register 8
r12	IP	Intra-Procedure-call scratch register
r13	SP	
r14	LR	

Register contents might be modified
might be modified
Callee must preserve contents of these registers (Callee saved)

Subroutine Call – Caller Side

Pattern as used by the compiler. Manually written assembly code may be slightly different.



On return from subroutine

Modular Coding and Linking

Modular Coding / Linking

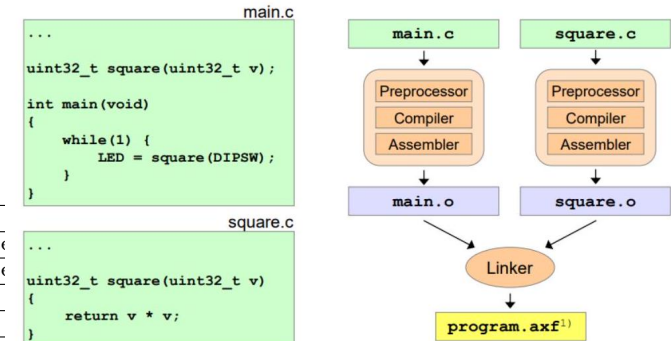
From source code to executable program

Compile / assemble each module

- Results in an object file for each module

Link all object files

- Results in one executable file



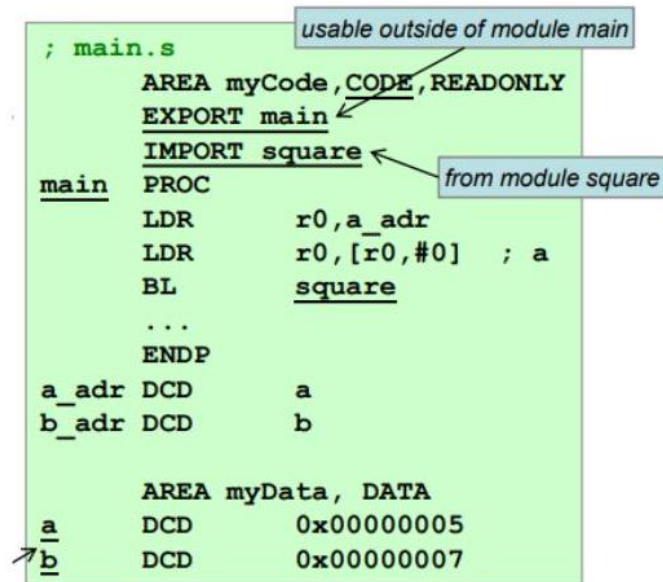
Managing complexity by modular programming

Topic	Benefits
Enable working in teams	Multiple development repository
Useful partitioning and structuring of the programs	Eases reusing code
Individual verification of each module	Benefits all users
Providing libraries of types and functions	For reuse instead of reinventing the wheel
Mixing of modules that are programmed in various languages	E.g. mix C and assembly
Only compile the changed modules	Speeds up compilation

ARM assembly IMPORT and EXPORT keywords

Linkage control

- EXPORT for use by other module
- IMPORT from another module for use in this module Internal symbols
- Neither IMPORT nor EXPORT



Linker Input - Object files

Code section Code and constant data of the module, base at address 0×0

Data section All global variables of the module, based at address 0×0

Symbol table All symbols with their attributes like global/local, reference

Relocation table

- Which bytes of the data and code section need to be adjusted (and how) after merging the sections in the linking process

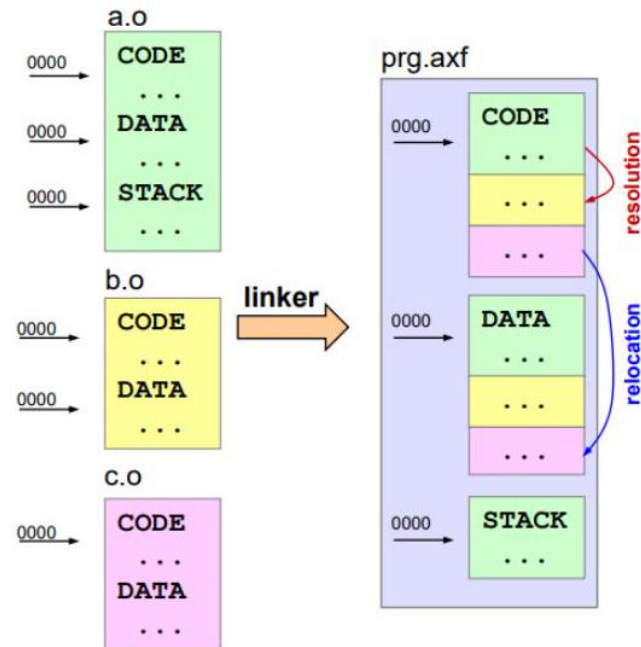
ARM tool chain uses ELF for object files

Linker tasks

- Merge object file code sections
- Merge object file data sections
- Symbol resolution
- Address relocation

Linker Output

- AXF = ARM eXecutable File



PRIMASK

- Single bit controlling all maskable interrupts

- Disable	set PRIMASK clear PRIMASK	Assembly
- Enable		CPSID ¹⁾ CPSIE ¹⁾

On reset PRIMASK = 0 → enabled

Storing the context

Interrupt event can take place at any time

- E.g. between TST and BEQ instructions
- ISR call requires automatic save off registers and caller saved registers

ISR call

- Stores xPSR, PC, LR, R12, R0-R3 on Stack
- Stores EXC_RETURN to LR

ISR Return

- Use BX LR or POP {..., PC}
- Loading EXC_Return into PC
- Restores R0-R3, R12, LR, PC and xPSR from Stack

Polling

Periodic query of status information

- Reading of status registers in loop
- Synchronous with main program
- Advantages
- Simple straightforward
- Implicit synchronisation
- Deterministic

Exceptional Control Flow

Interrupt sources

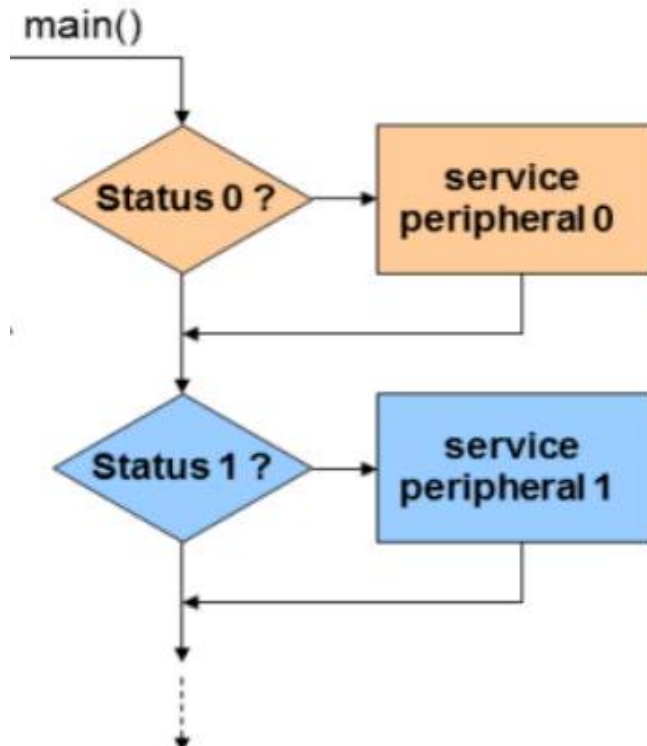
- Peripherals signal to CPU that an event needs immediate attention
- Can alternatively be generated by software request
- Asynchronous to instruction execution

System exceptions

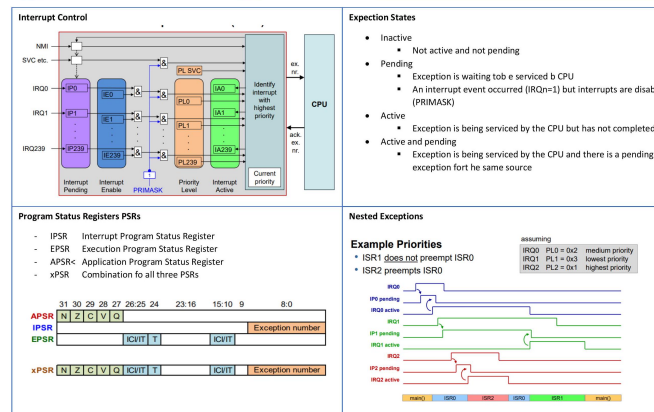
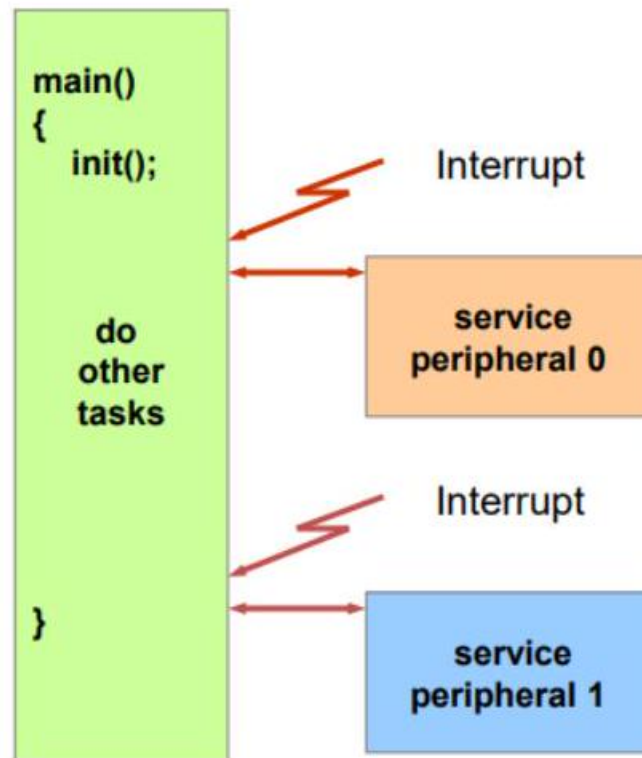
- Reset
- NMI
- Faults
- System Level Calls

Restart of processor

Non-maskable Interrupt (cannot be ignored) Undefined instructions OS calls - Instructions SVC and PendSV



- No additional interrupt logic required
- Disadvantages
- Busy wait -> wastes CPU time
- Reduced throughput
- Long reaction time
- No synchronization
- Difficult debugging

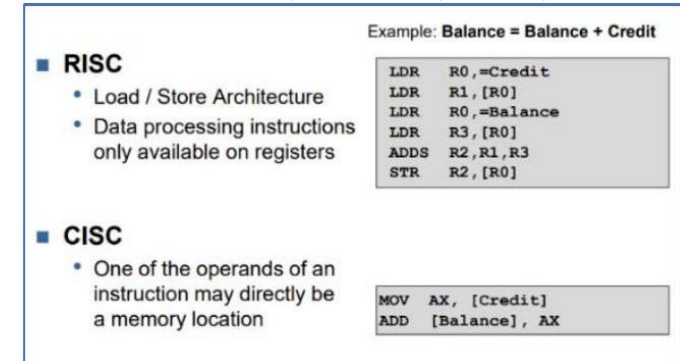


Increasing System Performance

Speed vs Low Power Aspects of Optimization	
Optimizing for	Drawbacks on
Higher speed	Power, cost, chip area
Lower cost	Speed, reliability
Zero power consumption	Speed, cost
Super reliable	Chip area, cost, speed
Temperature range	Power, cost lifetime

RISC = Reduced Instruction Set Computer

- Few instructions, unique instruction format
- Fast decoding, simple addressing
- Less hardware -> allows higher clock rates
- More chip space for registers (up to 256!)
- Load-store architecture reduces memory access, CPU works at full-speed on registers
- Higher clock frequencies
- Easy and shorter pipelines (instruction size / duration)



CISC = Complex Instruction Set Computer

- More complex and more instructions
- Less program memory needed with complex instructions
- Short programs may work faster with less memory accesses

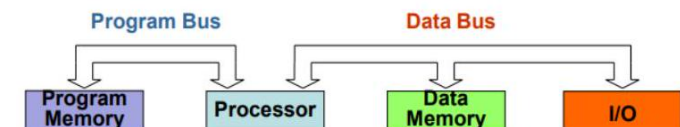
Von Neuman Architecture

- Same memory holds program and data
- Single bus system between CPU and memory system bus

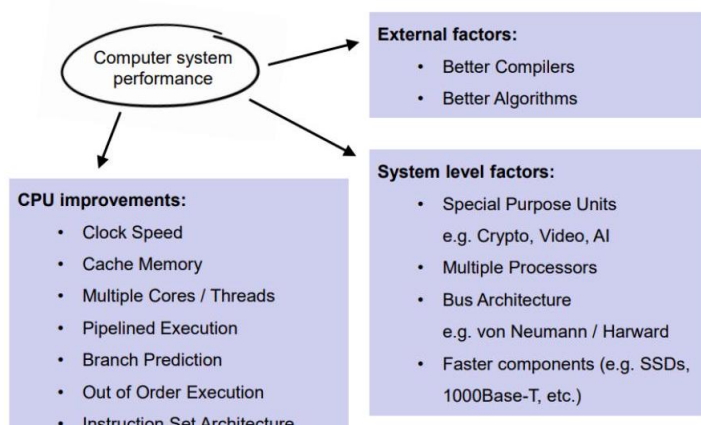


Harvard Architecture

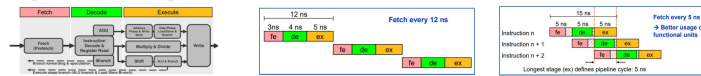
- «Mark I» at Harvard University
- Separate memories for program and data
- Two sets of addresses/data buses between CPU and memory



How to Increase System Speed?

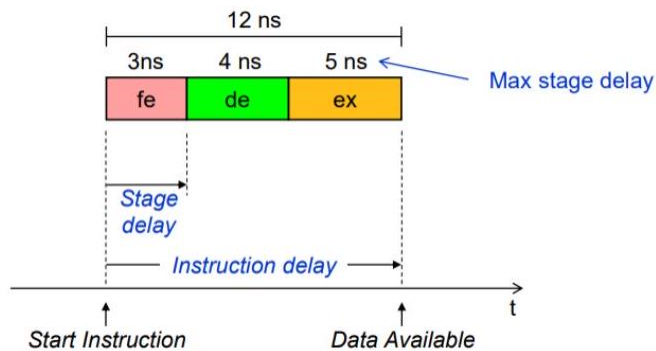


Fetching the next instruction, while the current one decodes
Sequential vs. Pipelined



Timings and definitions (Example)

- Fe: fetch Read instructions 3 ns
- De: decode Decode instruction, read register or memory 4 ns
- Ex: execute Execute instruction, write back result 5 ns



Advantages of pipelining

- All stages are set to the same execution time
- Massive performance gain
- Simpler hardware at each stage allows for a higher clock rate

Disadvantages

- A blocking stage blocks while pipeline
- Multiple stages may need to have access to the memory at the same time

Instructions per second

Without pipelining

$$\frac{\text{Instructions}}{\text{second}} = \frac{1}{\text{Instruction delay}}$$

With pipelining

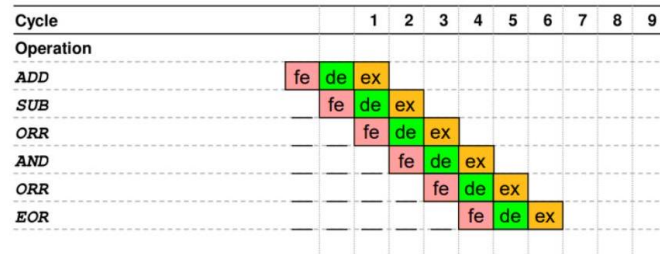
- Pipeline needs to be filled first

- After filling, instructions are executed after every stage

$$\frac{\text{Instructions}}{\text{second}} = \frac{1}{\text{Max stage delay}}$$

Optimal pipelining

- All operations here are on registers
- In this example it takes 6 clock cycles to execute 6 instructions
- Clock cycles per instruction (CPI) = 1

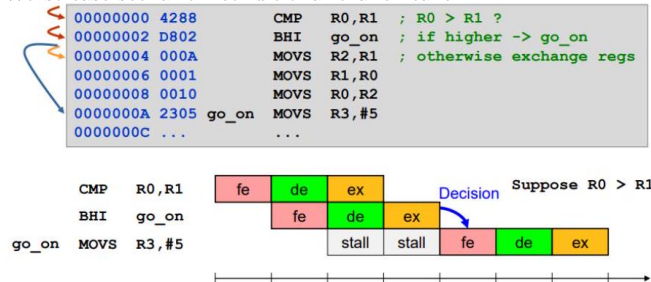


Special situation: LDR

- In this example it takes 7 clock cycles to execute 6 instructions
- Read cycle must complete on the bus before LDR instruction can complete
- Next 2 instructions must wait one pipeline cycle (S = stall)
- Clock cycles per Instruction (CPI) = 1.2

Control Hazards

- Branch / jump decisions occur in stage 3 (ex)
- Worst case scenario - conditional branch taken:



Reduce control hazards

- Loop fusion reduces control hazards

Ideas to further improve pipelining

- Branch prediction
- Store last decisions made for each conditional branch
- -> probability is high that the same decision is taken again
- Instruction prefetch
- Fetch several instructions in advance
- -> better use of system bus
- -> possibility of «Out of Order Execution»
- Out of Order Execution
- If one instruction stalls, it might be possible to already execute the next instruction

Limits of optimization

- Complex optimizations -> severe security problems

- Instructions executed, that would throw access violations under «In Order» circumstances.
- «Meltdown» and «Spectre» attacks: allow a process to access the data of another process

Parallel Computing

- Streaming / Vector processing One instruction processes multiple data items simultaneously
- Multithreading Multiple programs/threads share a single CPU
- Multicore Processors One processor contains multiple CPU cores
- Multiprocessor Systems A computer system contains multiple processors

