HW/SW approaches for RISC-V code size reduction

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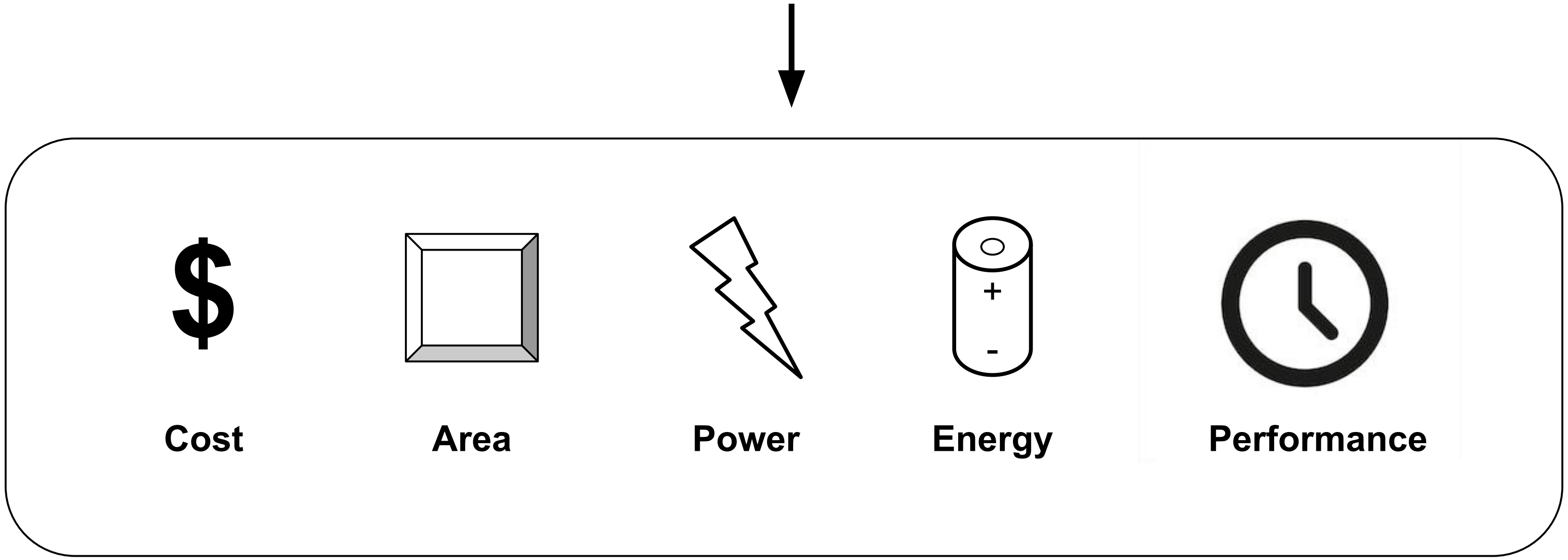
Code size in embedded systems

Code Size impacts



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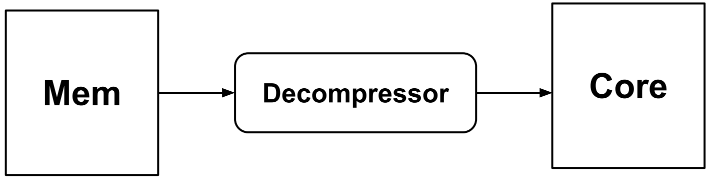
How to reduce the code size?

Compaction techniques



Compression techniques

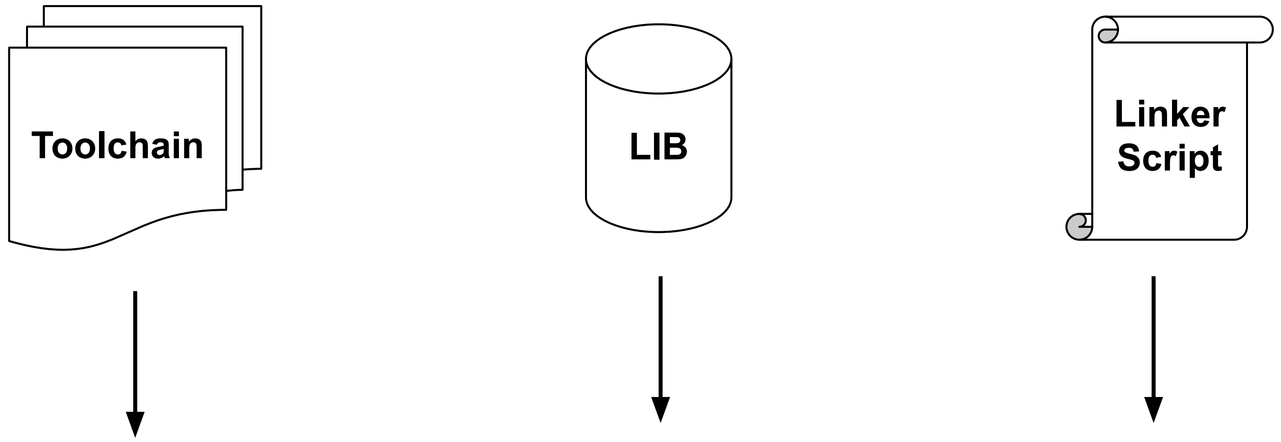
ARM Thumb2
RISC-V RVC

Modify/Extend the **ISA**

Contributions of this work

- **Evaluate** RISC-V **RVC** code size on Benchmarks
- **Effect** of **Xpulp extension** on code size
- **HCC**: **new** RISC-V **extension** for **code size** reduction
- **Implement** 16-bit ***push***/***pop***/***popret*** on the open RISC-V core **CV32E40P**
  - **CV32E40P implements RV32IM[F]CXpulp**
- **Area** and **performance costs** estimation

Tuning the toolchain environment



- **Updated toolchains** can produce smaller code
- **Generic** and **ISA-specific options** for code size

- Compiled with the **same ISA** used for the code
- **Optimized** for size (Newlib-nano, picolibc,...)

- **Collect** all the **frequently accessed** data **sections** (sbss, sdata) **near** the **Global Pointer**

Experimental setup: compilers

ISA:
ARM Thumb

Compiler:
arm-none-eabi-gcc (7.2)

Compiler flags:
- -march=armv7-m
- -mcpu=cortex-m3
- -mthumb
- -Os
- -ffunction-sections
- -fdata-sections
- -gc-section

ISA:
RISC-V RVC

Compiler:
riscv32-unknown-elf-gcc (7.X)

Compiler flags:
- -march=rv32imc
- -Os
- -msave-restore
- -ffunction-sections
- -fdata-sections
- -gc-section

Experimental setup: programs

Program:
IoT

ARM size:
~200 KiB

Note:

- Industry program

Benchmark suite:
Embench 0.5

ARM size:
from ~200 to ~1500 B

Note:

- Set of 19 programs
- Dummy libraries
- Geometric mean

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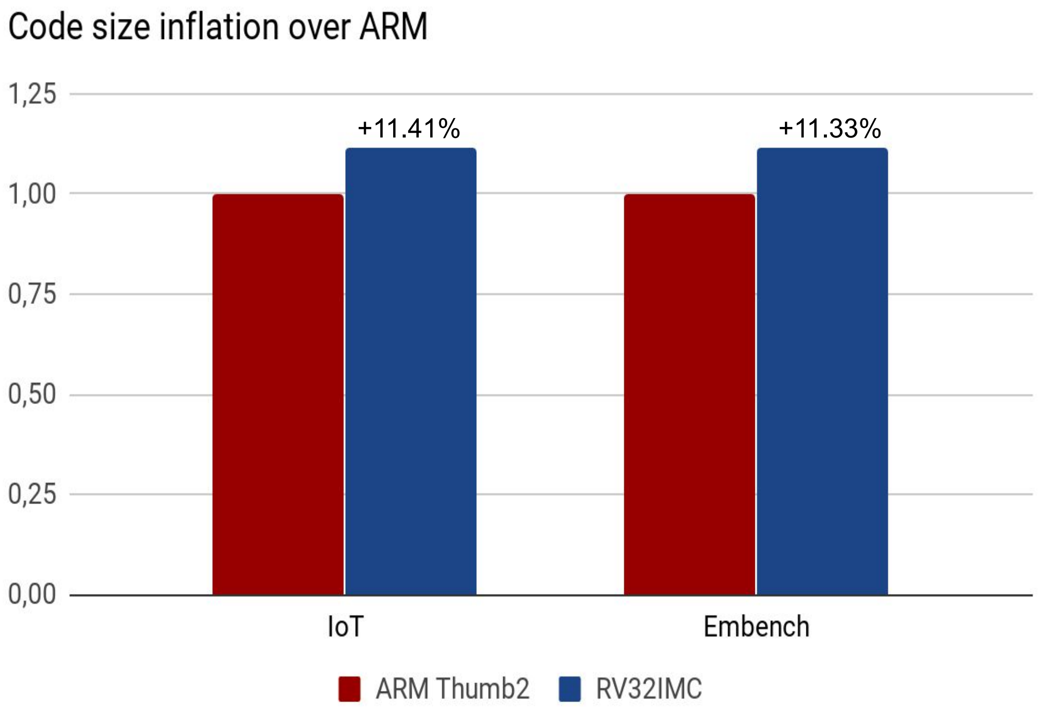
RISC-V RVC comparison with ARM Thumb-2



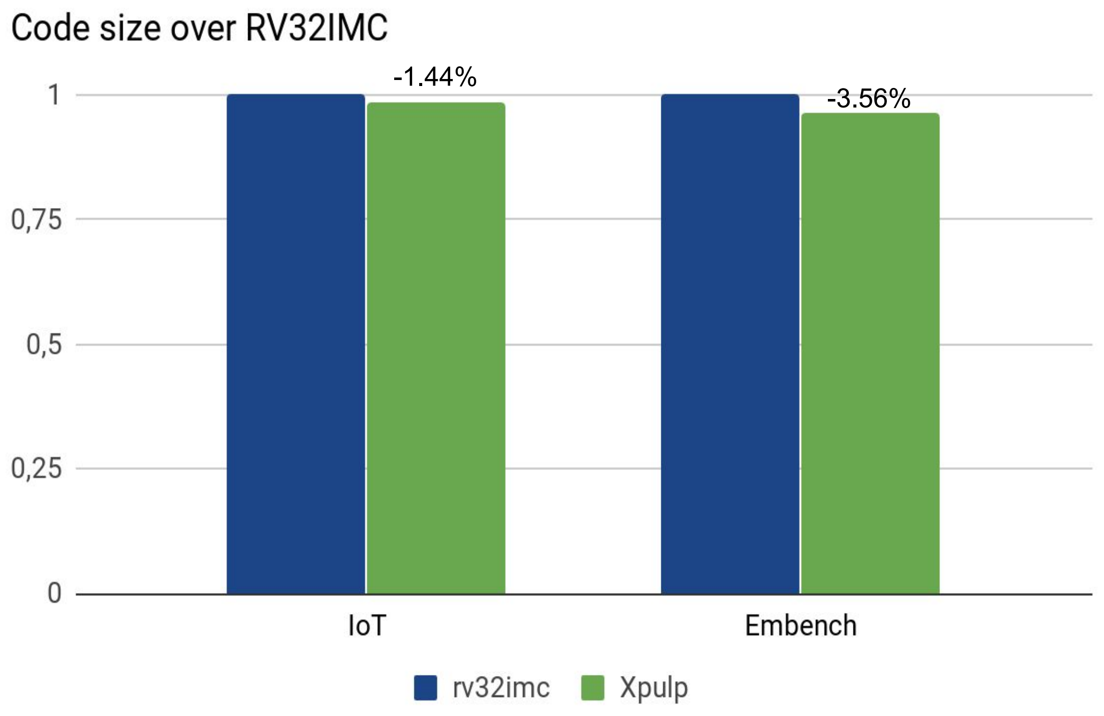
RISC-V code >11% than ARM!

Xpulp extension - Designed for performance

Xpulp new instructions:

- Branch immediate
- MAC
- Additional ALU operations
- Bit manipulation
- SIMD operations
- HW loops
- Post increment mem ops
- Immediate offset mem ops

Performance, efficiency boost
+
lower code size!



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Xpulp - Originally designed for performance

Xpulp RISC-V extension can:

- **boost** DSP applications **performance** up to **10x**
- **increase** their **efficiency**
- **improve** the **code size**

Xpulp + RVC coexistence can be even improved!

$\downarrow$

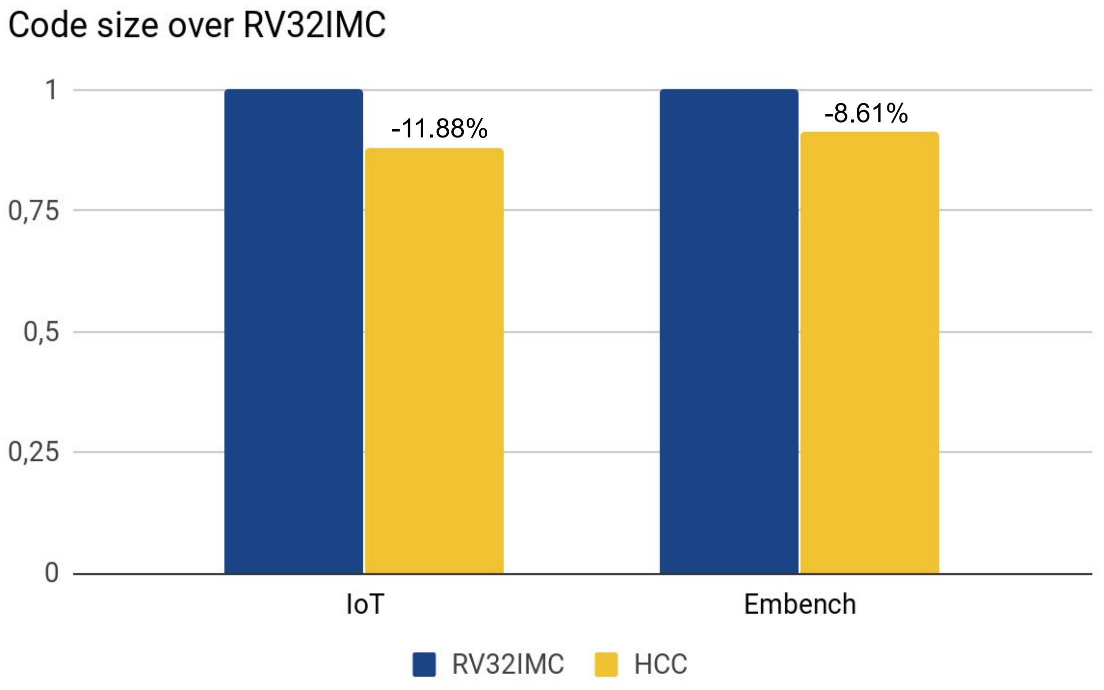
PULP toolchain sub-optimal behaviour:

- Xpulp instructions steal RVC registers to the surrounding other instructions
- 32-bit Xpulp instructions replace equivalent 16-bit RVC instructions

HCC extension - Designed for low Code Size

HCC new instructions:

- 16-bit **push/pop/popret**
- 16-bit **lbu/sb/lhu/sh**
- **48-bit load-immediate**
- **Branch** against **immediate**
- **Muliadd** (32-bit)
- En**jal16** (32-bit)
- **Immediate shift**
- Unsigned **extend byte/halfword**
- **Load/store multiple**



HCC - Single instructions

- **HCC reference** size
  - **IoT**: 233804 B
  - **Embench**: 1975 B
- Used **either *save*/*restore*** routines **or push/pop/popret**
- **48-bit load-immediate** increases the code size due to **compiler issues**
- **JAL16 not used** here. Useful with scattered code or large programs

Code size reduction	**IoT**	**Embench**
HCC reference	0%	0%
push/pop/popret	-5.11%	-3.70%
lbu/sb	-1.49%	-0.76%
lhu/sh	-0.74%	-0.20%
48-bit load-Immediate	-0.53%	0.66%
Branch Immediate	-1.35%	-0.41%
JAL16	0.00%	0.00%
MuliAdd	-0.17%	0.00%
Imm. Shift	-0.35%	-3.04%
uxtb/uxth	-0.40%	-0.25%
ldm/stm	0.00%	-0.56%
HCC extension	-11.88%	-8.61%

HCC - Single instructions

- **Some instructions** are highly **code dependant** (lbu/sb/lhu/sh, immshf, brimm)
- It's **common** for functions to **manipulate** the **stack**. 16-bit **push/pop/popret easily** return important **size reductions**
- They lead also to **performance improvements** (less jumps, improved locality)

Code size reduction	**IoT**	**Embench**
HCC reference	0%	0%
push/pop/popret	-5.11%	-3.70%
lbu/sb	-1.49%	-0.76%
lhu/sh	-0.74%	-0.20%
48-bit load-Immediate	-0.53%	0.66%
Branch Immediate	-1.35%	-0.41%
JAL16	0.00%	0.00%
MuliAdd	-0.17%	0.00%
Imm. Shift	-0.35%	-3.04%
uxtb/uxth	-0.40%	-0.25%
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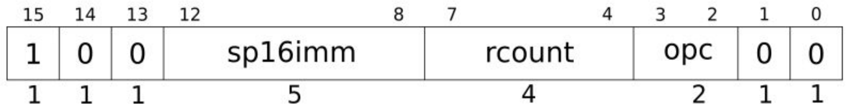
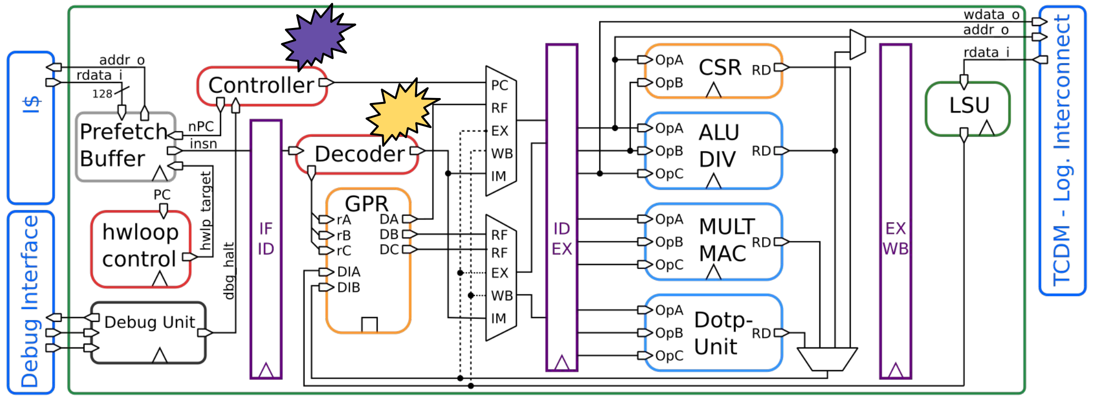
16-bit push/pop/popret



- **Opcode**: Reserved but **free** space in **RVC**
- **opc**: **type** of **operation** among ***push***, ***pop***, ***popret***
- **rcount**: **register sequence** to push/pop
- **sp16imm**: **additional stack space** for automatic variables

16-bit push/pop/popret: implementation on CV32E40P



Added **FSM** to the controller to inject **memory operations,** an **addition** and possibly a **jump**

Modified decoder to recognize push/pop/popret

Costs:

- Area: +2.5%
- Frequency: not modified

Benefit on rv32imc:

- Code size: from -3.7% to -5%

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Code size inflation over ARM

Code size inflation over ARM	**IoT**	**Embench**
ARM Thumb2	0%	0%
RV32IMC	11.41%	11.33%
RV32IMC Xpulp	9.81%	7.36%
RV32IMC HCC	-1.75%	2.21%
RV32IMC push/pop/popret	5.80%	7.70%

Conclusion

Code size inflation over ARM	**IoT**	**Embench**
ARM Thumb2	0%	0%
RV32IMC	11.41%	11.33%
RV32IMC Xpulp push/pop/popret	5.37%	5.32%

PULP
+
16-bit push/pop/popret

→

- **Code size <5.4%**
- Same operating frequency
- Benefits of Xpulp (up to 10x performance)

- Area >2.5%

The End

Thanks for the attention!

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