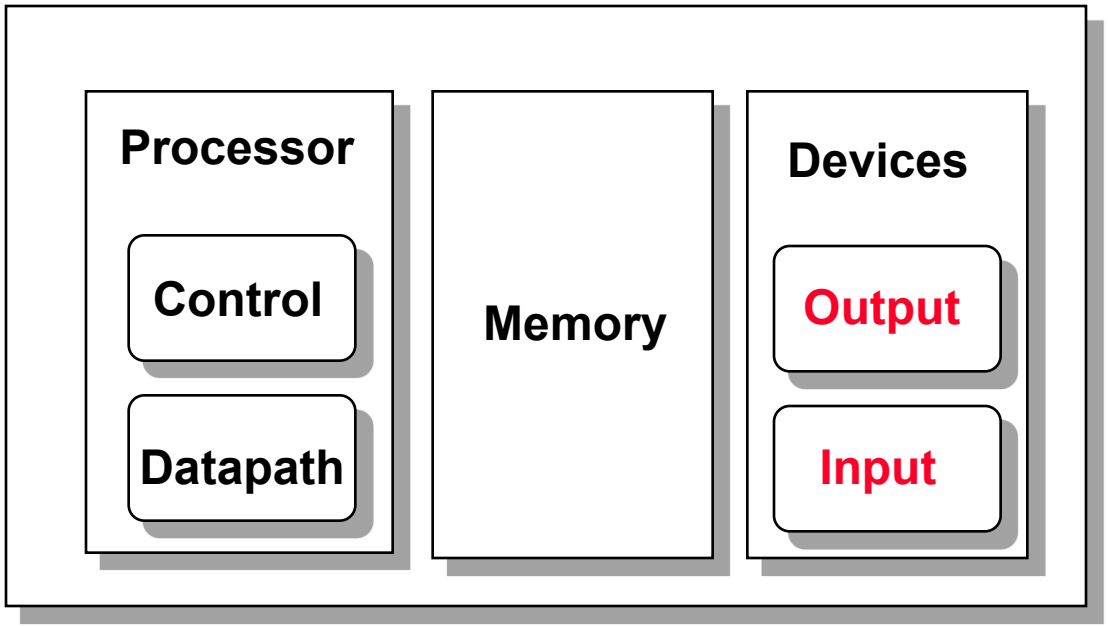
# I/O Systems

[Adapted from Mary Jane Irwin for
*Computer Organization and Design*,
Patterson & Hennessy, © 2005, UCB]

# Review: Major Components of a Computer

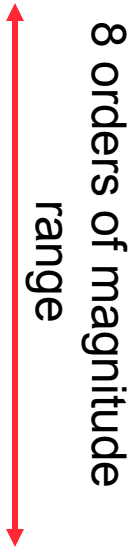



- Important metrics for an I/O system
  - Performance
  - Expandability
  - Dependability
  - Cost, size, weight

# Input and Output Devices

- I/O devices are incredibly diverse with respect to
  - Behavior – input, output or storage
  - Partner – human or machine
  - Data rate – the peak rate at which data can be transferred between the I/O device and the main memory or processor

| Device | Behavior | Partner | Data rate (Mb/s) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Keyboard | input | human | 0.0001 |
| Mouse | input | human | 0.0038 |
| Laser printer | output | human | 3.2000 |
| Graphics display | output | human | 800.0000-8000.0000 |
| Network/LAN | input or output | machine | 100.0000-1000.0000 |
| Magnetic disk | storage | machine | 240.0000-2560.0000 |



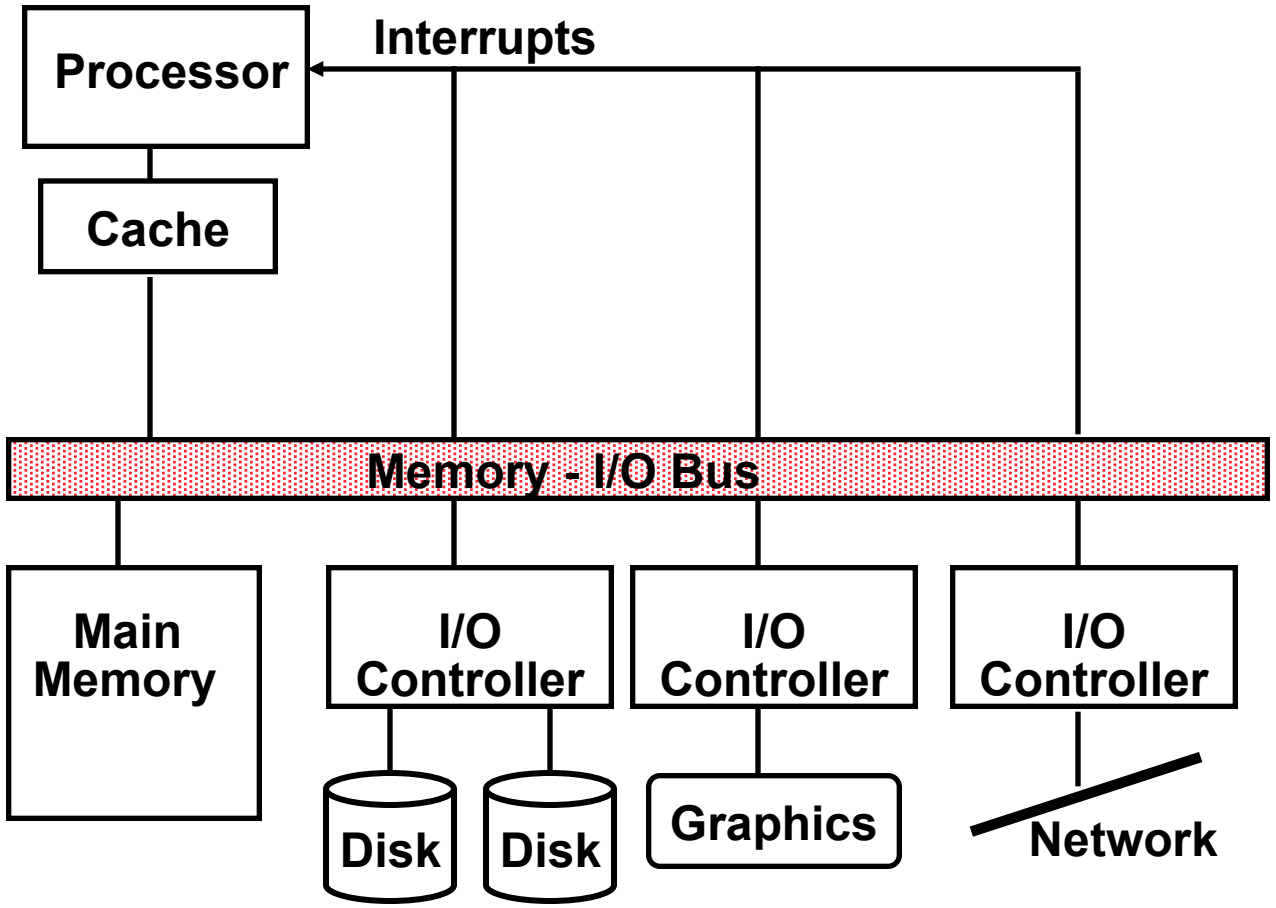
# I/O Performance Measures

- I/O bandwidth (throughput) – amount of information that can be input (output) and communicated across an interconnect (e.g., a bus) to the processor/memory (I/O device) per unit time
  1. How much data can we move through the system in a certain time?
  2. How many I/O operations can we do per unit time?

- I/O response time (latency) – the total elapsed time to accomplish an input or output operation
  - An especially important performance metric in real-time systems

- Many applications require both high throughput and short response times

# A Typical I/O System



# I/O System Performance

- Designing an I/O system to meet a set of bandwidth and/or latency constraints means

1. Finding the weakest link in the I/O system – the component that constrains the design
   - The processor and memory system ?
   - The underlying interconnection (e.g., bus) ?
   - The I/O controllers ?
   - The I/O devices themselves ?
2. (Re)configuring the weakest link to meet the bandwidth and/or latency requirements
3. Determining requirements for the rest of the components and (re)configuring them to support this latency and/or bandwidth

# I/O System Performance Example

- A disk workload consisting of 64KB reads and writes where the user program executes 200,000 instructions per disk I/O operation and
  - a processor that sustains 3 billion instr/s and averages 100,000 OS instructions to handle a disk I/O operation

The maximum disk I/O rate (# I/O's/s) of the processor is

$$\frac{\text{Instr execution rate}}{\text{Instr per I/O}} = \frac{3 \times 10^9}{(200 + 100) \times 10^3} = 10{,}000 \text{ I/O's/s}$$

  - a memory-I/O bus that sustains a transfer rate of 1000 MB/s

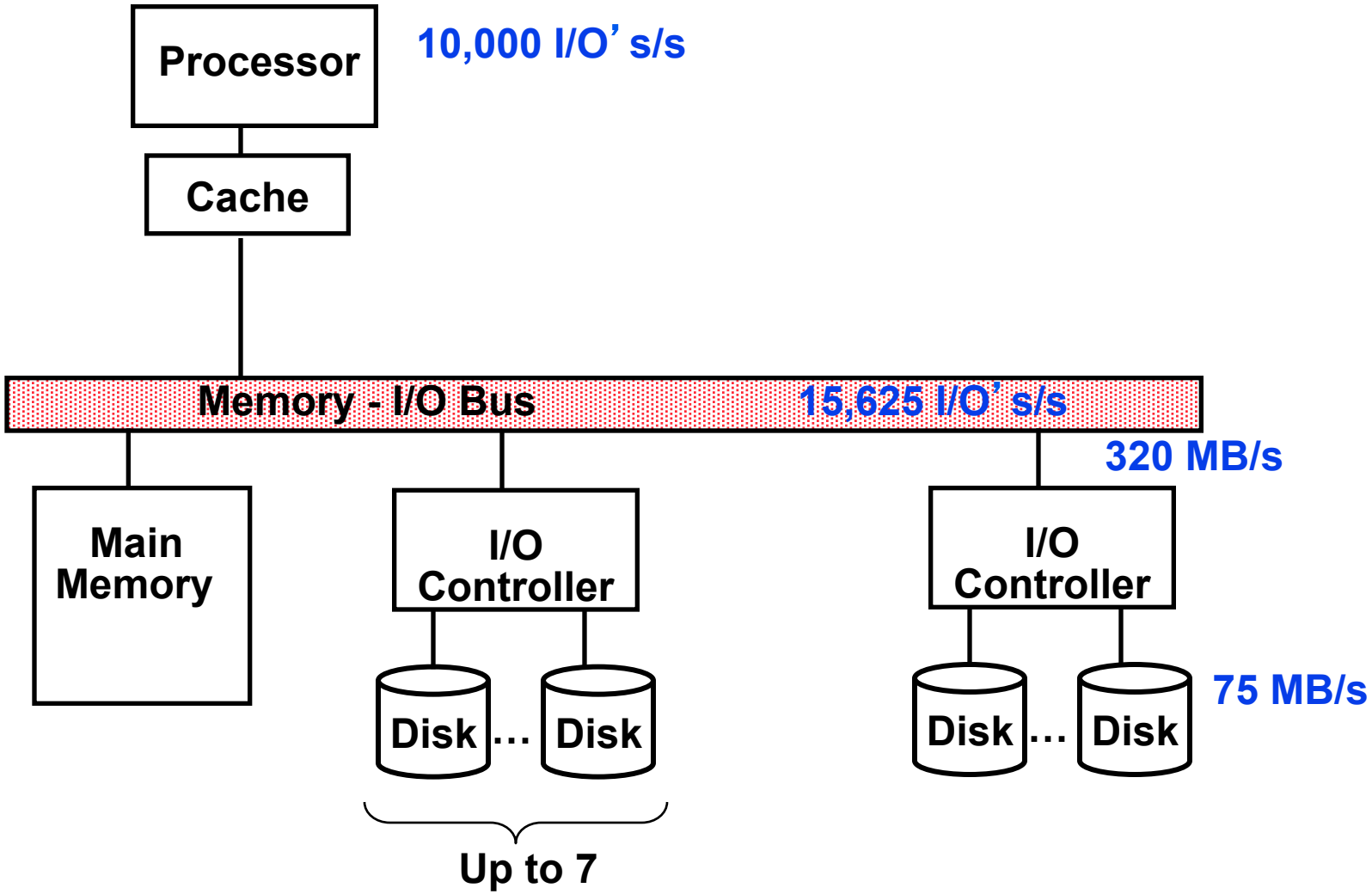
Each disk I/O reads/writes 64 KB so the maximum I/O rate of the bus is

$$\frac{\text{Bus bandwidth}}{\text{Bytes per I/O}} = \frac{1000 \times 10^6}{64 \times 10^3} = 15{,}625 \text{ I/O's/s}$$

  - SCSI disk I/O controllers with a DMA transfer rate of 320 MB/s that can accommodate up to 7 disks per controller
  - disk drives with a read/write bandwidth of 75 MB/s and an average seek plus rotational latency of 6 ms

what is the maximum sustainable I/O rate and what is the number of disks and SCSI controllers required to achieve that rate?

# Disk I/O System Example



# I/O System Performance Example, Con't

So the processor is the bottleneck, not the bus

- disk drives with a read/write bandwidth of 75 MB/s and an average seek plus rotational latency of 6 ms

Disk I/O read/write time = seek + rotational time + transfer time =
6ms + 64KB/(75MB/s) = 6.9ms

Thus each disk can complete 1000ms/6.9ms or 146 I/O's per second. To saturate the processor requires 10,000 I/O's per second or
10,000/146 = 69 disks

To calculate the number of SCSI disk controllers, we need to know the average transfer rate per disk to ensure we can put the maximum of 7 disks per SCSI controller and that a disk controller won't saturate the memory-I/O bus during a DMA transfer

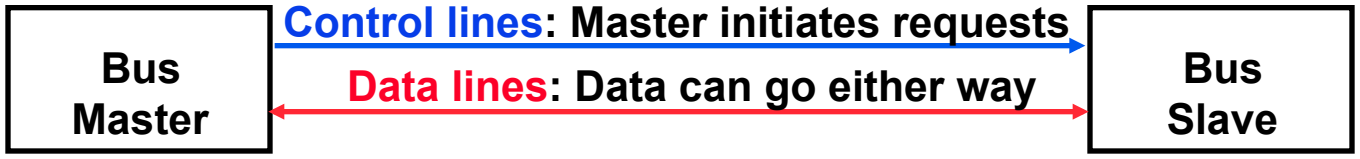
Disk transfer rate = (transfer size)/(transfer time) = 64KB/6.9ms = 9.56 MB/s

Thus 7 disks won't saturate either the SCSI controller (with a maximum transfer rate of 320 MB/s) or the memory-I/O bus (1000 MB/s). This means we will need 69/7 or 10 SCSI controllers.

# I/O System Interconnect Issues

- A bus is a shared communication link (a single set of wires used to connect multiple subsystems) that needs to support a range of devices with widely varying latencies and data transfer rates
  - Advantages
    - Versatile – new devices can be added easily and can be moved between computer systems that use the same bus standard
    - Low cost – a single set of wires is shared in multiple ways
  - Disadvantages
    - Creates a communication bottleneck – bus bandwidth limits the maximum I/O throughput
- The maximum bus speed is largely limited by
  - The length of the bus
  - The number of devices on the bus

# Bus Characteristics




- Control lines
  - Signal requests and acknowledgments
  - Indicate what type of information is on the data lines
- Data lines
  - Data, addresses, and complex commands
- Bus transaction consists of
  - Master issuing the command (and address) – request
  - Slave receiving (or sending) the data – action
  - Defined by what the transaction does to memory
    - Input – inputs data from the I/O device to the memory
    - Output – outputs data from the memory to the I/O device

# Types of Buses

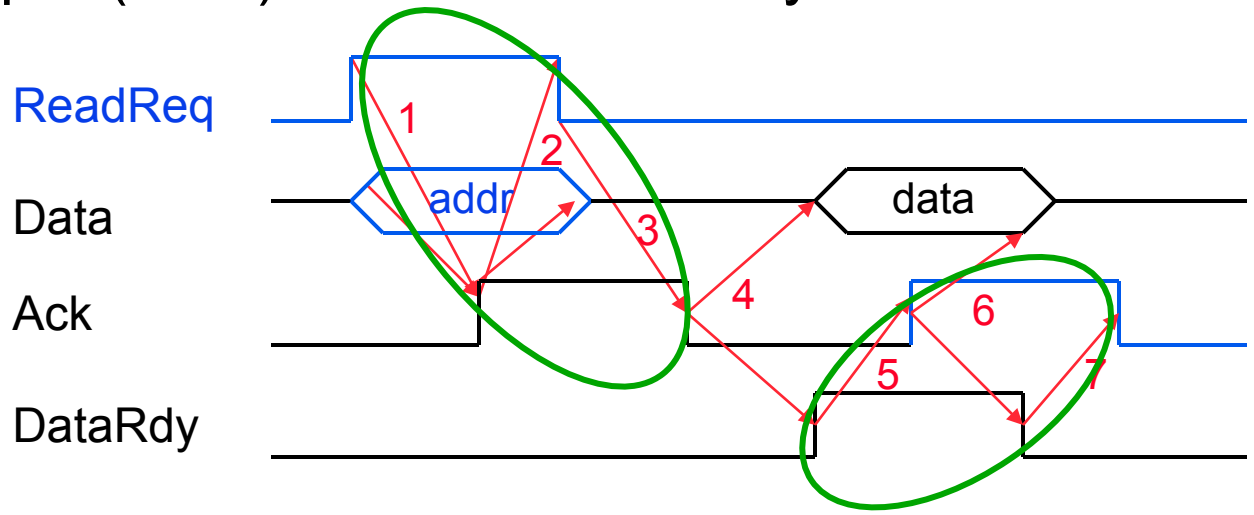
- Processor-memory bus (proprietary)
  - Short and high speed
  - Matched to the memory system to maximize the memory-processor bandwidth
  - Optimized for cache block transfers
- I/O bus (industry standard, e.g., SCSI, USB, Firewire)
  - Usually is lengthy and slower
  - Needs to accommodate a wide range of I/O devices
  - Connects to the processor-memory bus or backplane bus
- Backplane bus (industry standard, e.g., ATA, PCIexpress)
  - The backplane is an interconnection structure within the chassis
  - Used as an intermediary bus connecting I/O busses to the processor-memory bus

# Synchronous and Asynchronous Buses

- Synchronous bus (e.g., processor-memory buses)
  - Includes a clock in the control lines and has a fixed protocol for communication that is relative to the clock
  - Advantage: involves very little logic and can run very fast
  - Disadvantages:
    - Every device communicating on the bus must use same clock rate
    - To avoid clock skew, they cannot be long if they are fast
- Asynchronous bus (e.g., I/O buses)
  - It is not clocked, so requires a handshaking protocol and additional control lines (ReadReq, Ack, DataRdy)
  - Advantages:
    - Can accommodate a wide range of devices and device speeds
    - Can be lengthened without worrying about clock skew or synchronization problems
  - Disadvantage: slow(er)

# Asynchronous Bus Handshaking Protocol

- Output (read) data from memory to an I/O device



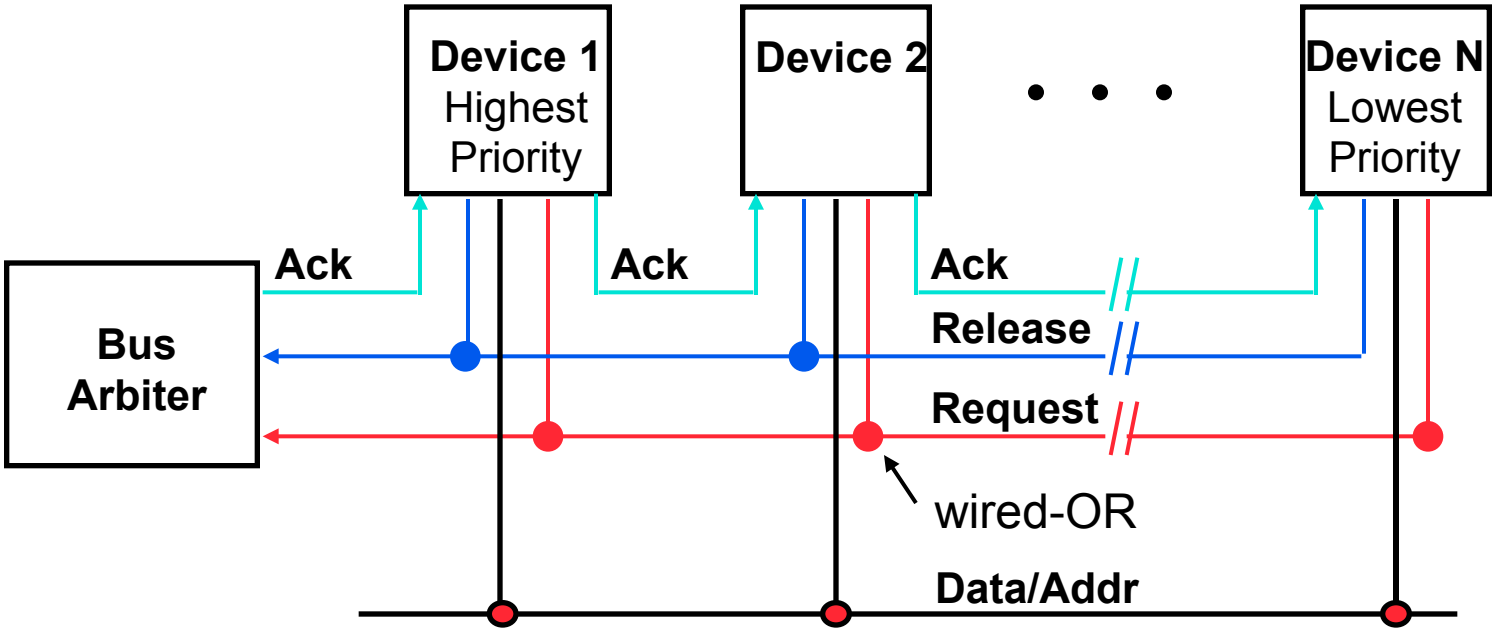

I/O device signals a request by raising ReadReq and putting the addr on the data lines

1. Memory sees ReadReq, reads addr from data lines, and raises Ack
2. I/O device sees Ack and releases the ReadReq and data lines
3. Memory sees ReadReq go low and drops Ack
4. When memory has data ready, it places it on data lines and raises DataRdy
5. I/O device sees DataRdy, reads the data from data lines, and raises Ack
6. Memory sees Ack, releases the data lines, and drops DataRdy
7. I/O device sees DataRdy go low and drops Ack

# The Need for Bus Arbitration

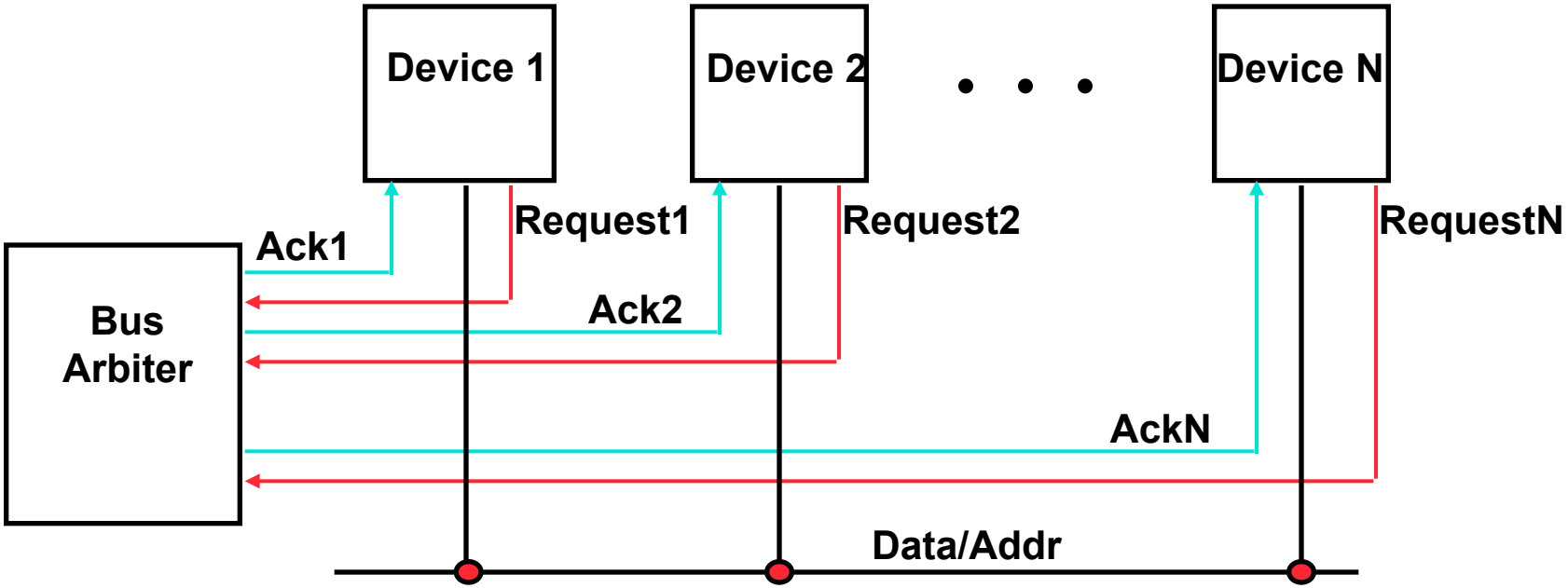
- Multiple devices may need to use the bus at the same time so must have a way to arbitrate multiple requests
- Bus arbitration schemes usually try to balance:
  - Bus priority – the highest priority device should be serviced first
  - Fairness – even the lowest priority device should never be completely locked out from the bus
- Bus arbitration schemes can be divided into four classes
  - Daisy chain arbitration – see next slide
  - Centralized, parallel arbitration – see next-next slide
  - Distributed arbitration by self-selection – each device wanting the bus places a code indicating its identity on the bus
  - Distributed arbitration by collision detection – device uses the bus when its not busy and if a collision happens (because some other device also decides to use the bus) then the device tries again later (Ethernet)

# Daisy Chain Bus Arbitration




- Advantage: simple
- Disadvantages:
  - Cannot assure fairness – a low-priority device may be locked out indefinitely
  - Slower – the daisy chain grant signal limits the bus speed

# Centralized Parallel Arbitration



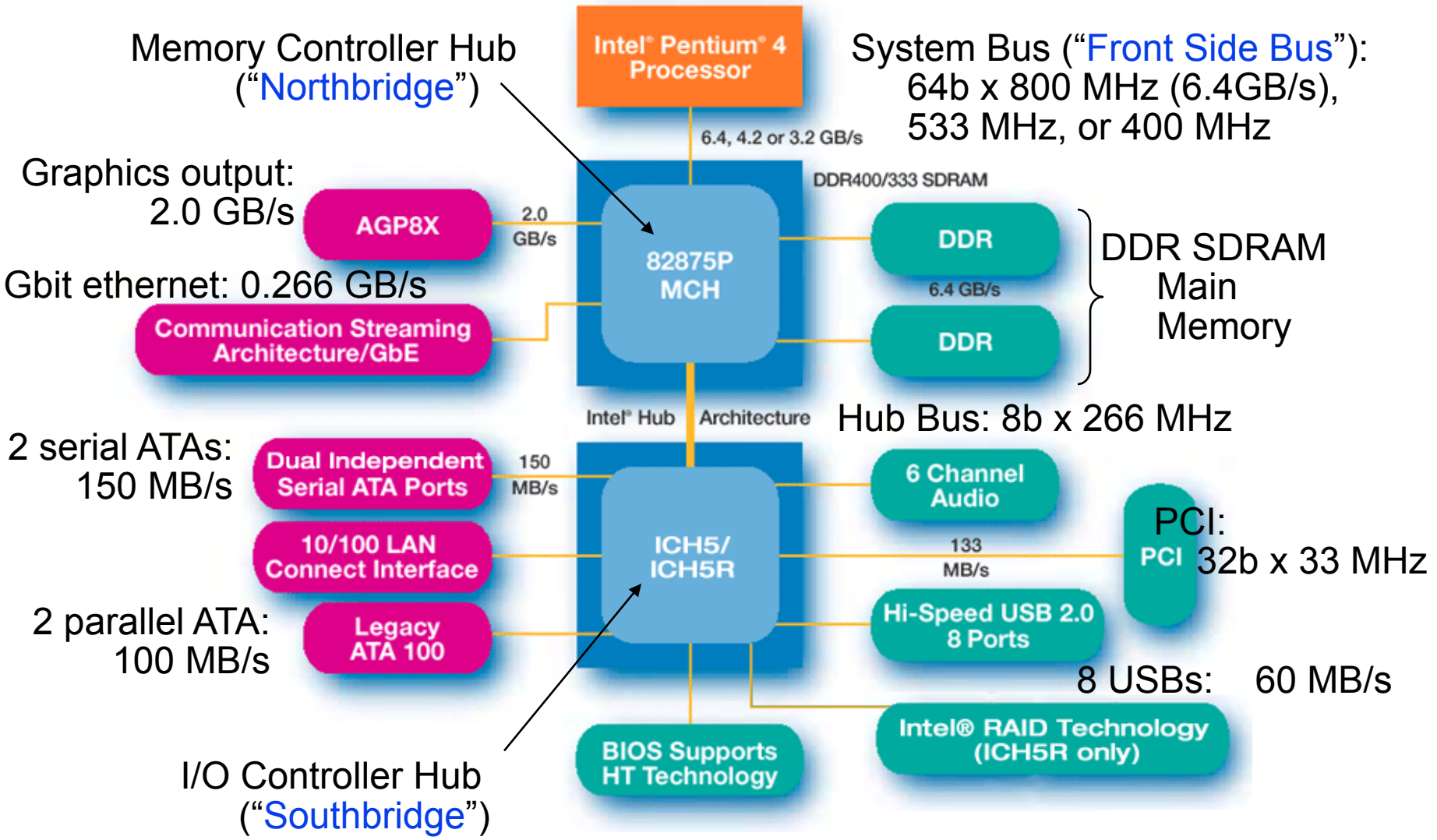

- Advantages: flexible, can assure fairness
- Disadvantages: more complicated arbiter hardware
- Used in essentially all processor-memory buses and in high-speed I/O buses

# Bus Bandwidth Determinates

- The bandwidth of a bus is determined by
  - Whether its is synchronous or asynchronous and the timing characteristics of the protocol used
  - The data bus width
  - Whether the bus supports block transfers or only word at a time transfers

| | Firewire | USB 2.0 |
|---|---|---|
| Type | I/O | I/O |
| Data lines | 4 | 2 |
| Clocking | Asynchronous | Synchronous |
| Max # devices | 63 | 127 |
| Max length | 4.5 meters | 5 meters |
| Peak bandwidth | 50 MB/s (400 Mbps)<br>100 MB/s (800 Mbps) | 0.2 MB/s (low)<br>1.5 MB/s (full)<br>60 MB/s (high) |

# Example: The Pentium 4's Buses



# Buses in Transition

- Companies are transitioning from synchronous, parallel, *wide* buses to asynchronous *narrow* buses
  - Reflection on wires and clock skew makes it difficult to use 16 to 64 parallel wires running at a high clock rate (e.g., ~400 MHz) so companies are transitioning to buses with a few one-way wires running at a very high "clock" rate (~2 GHz)

| | PCI | PCIexpress | ATA | Serial ATA |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total # wires | 120 | 36 | 80 | 7 |
| # data wires | 32 – 64 (2-way) | 2 x 4 (1-way) | 16 (2-way) | 2 x 2 (1-way) |
| Clock (MHz) | 33 – 133 | 635 | 50 | 150 |
| Peak BW (MB/s) | 128 – 1064 | 300 | 100 | 375 (3 Gbps) |

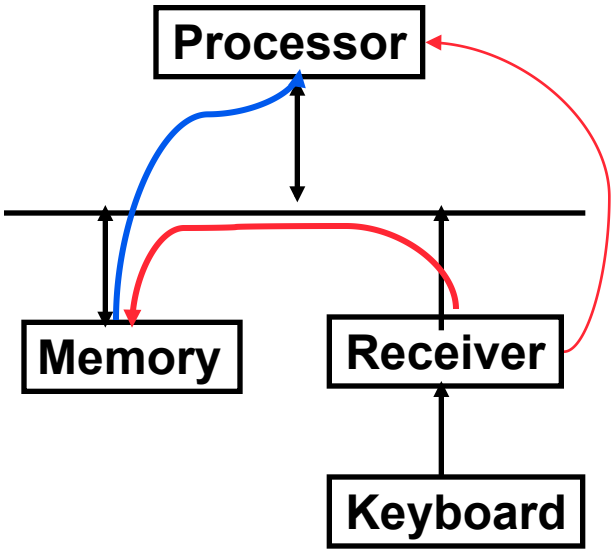
# ATA Cable Sizes

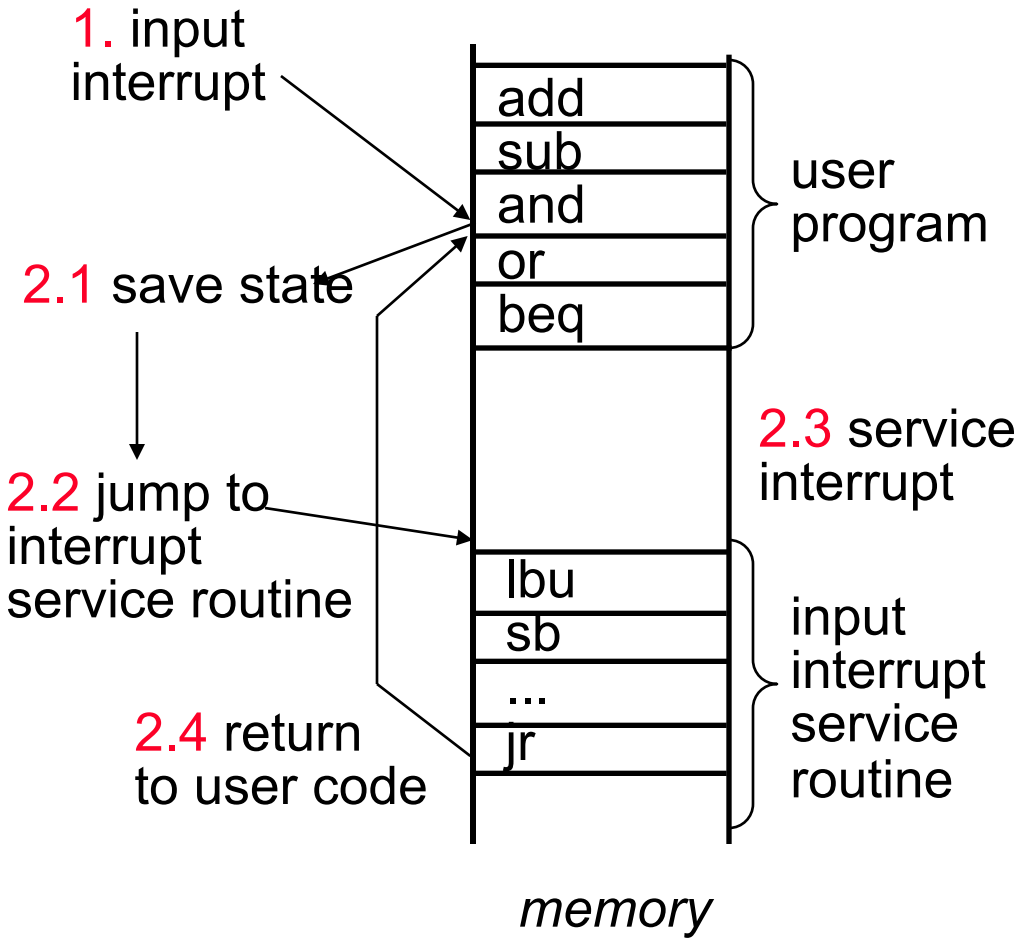
- Serial ATA cables (red) are much thinner than parallel ATA cables (green)

# Communication of I/O Devices and Processor

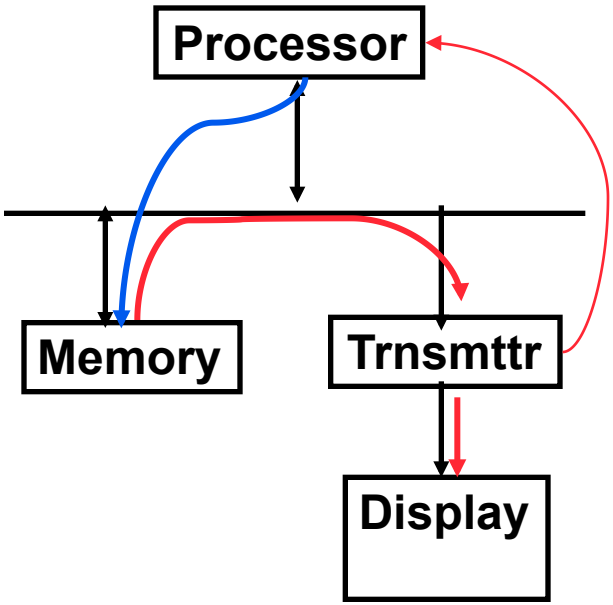
- How the processor directs the I/O devices
  - Special I/O instructions
    - Must specify both the device and the command
  - Memory-mapped I/O
    - Portions of the high-order memory address space are assigned to each I/O device
    - Read and writes to those memory addresses are interpreted as commands to the I/O devices
    - Load/stores to the I/O address space can only be done by the OS
- How the I/O device communicates with the processor
  - Polling – the processor periodically checks the status of an I/O device to determine its need for service
    - Processor is totally in control – but does all the work
    - Can waste a lot of processor time due to speed differences
  - Interrupt-driven I/O – the I/O device issues an interrupts to the processor to indicate that it needs attention

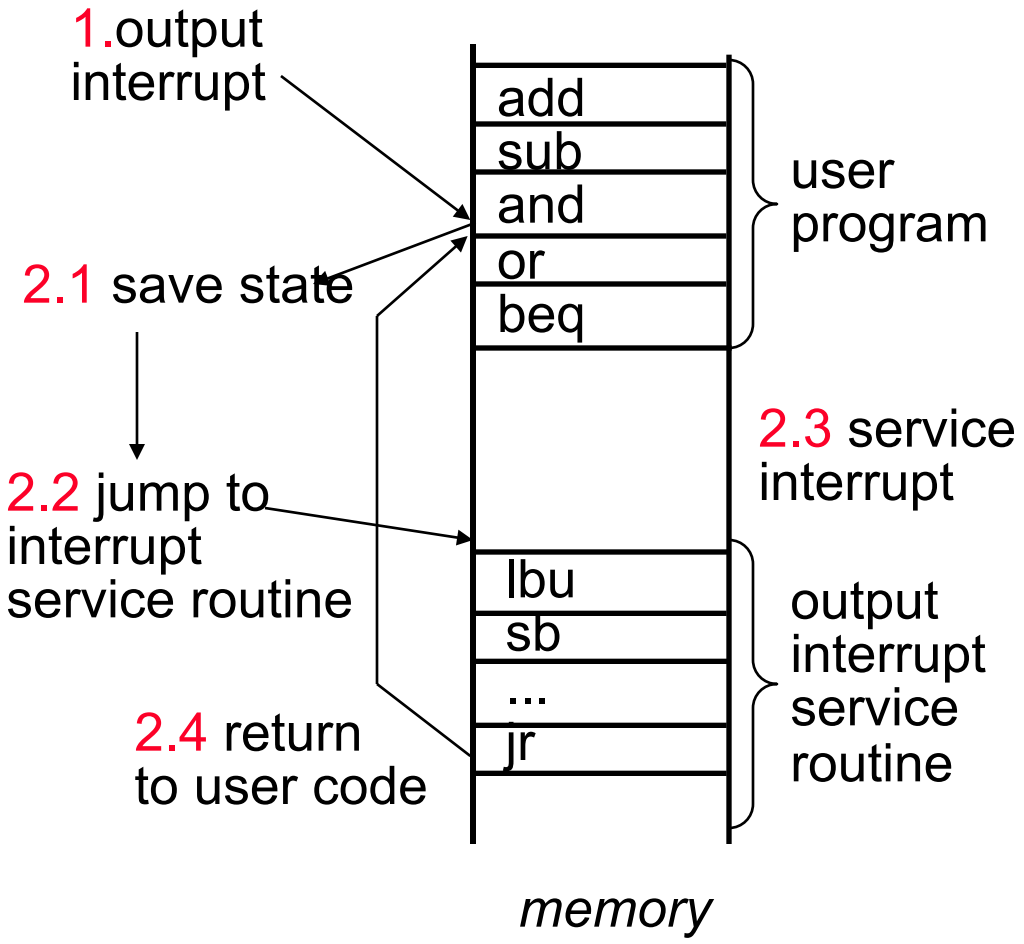
# Interrupt-Driven Input



# Interrupt-Driven Output



# Interrupt-Driven I/O

- An I/O interrupt is asynchronous wrt instruction execution
  - Is not associated with any instruction so doesn't prevent any instruction from completing
    - You can pick your own convenient point to handle the interrupt
- With I/O interrupts
  - Need a way to identify the device generating the interrupt
  - Can have different urgencies (so may need to be prioritized)
- Advantages of using interrupts
  - Relieves the processor from having to continuously poll for an I/O event; user program progress is only suspended during the actual transfer of I/O data to/from user memory space
- Disadvantage – special hardware is needed to
  - Cause an interrupt (I/O device) and detect an interrupt and save the necessary information to resume normal processing after servicing the interrupt (processor)

# Direct Memory Access (DMA)

- For high-bandwidth devices (like disks) interrupt-driven I/O would consume a *lot* of processor cycles
- DMA – the I/O controller has the ability to transfer data directly to/from the memory without involving the processor
  1. The processor initiates the DMA transfer by supplying the I/O device address, the operation to be performed, the memory address destination/source, the number of bytes to transfer
  2. The I/O DMA controller manages the entire transfer (possibly thousand of bytes in length), arbitrating for the bus
  3. When the DMA transfer is complete, the I/O controller interrupts the processor to let it know that the transfer is complete
- There may be multiple DMA devices in one system
  - Processor and I/O controllers contend for bus cycles and for memory

# The DMA Stale Data Problem

- In systems with caches, there can be two copies of a data item, one in the cache and one in the main memory
  - For a DMA read (from disk to memory) – the processor will be using stale data if that location is also in the cache
  - For a DMA write (from memory to disk) and a write-back cache – the I/O device will receive stale data if the data is in the cache and has not yet been written back to the memory
- The coherency problem is solved by
  1. Routing all I/O activity through the cache – expensive and a large negative performance impact
  2. Having the OS selectively invalidate the cache for an I/O read or force write-backs for an I/O write (flushing)
  3. Providing hardware to selectively invalidate or flush the cache – need a hardware snooper

# I/O and the Operating System

- The operating system acts as the interface between the I/O hardware and the program requesting I/O
  - To protect the shared I/O resources, the user program is not allowed to communicate directly with the I/O device

- Thus OS must be able to give commands to I/O devices, handle interrupts generated by I/O devices, provide equitable access to the shared I/O resources, and schedule I/O requests to enhance system throughput
  - I/O interrupts result in a transfer of processor control to the supervisor (OS) process