GPU Programming

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Overview

- Motivation and need for CUDA

- Introduction to CUDA

    – CUDA kernels, decompositions

    – CUDA memory management

    – C and Fortran

- OpenCL

NVIDIA CUDA

- Traditional languages alone are not sufficient for programming GPUs

- CUDA allows NVIDIA GPUs to be programmed in C/C++ or Fortran

  – defines language extensions for defining *kernels*

  – kernels execute in multiple threads concurrently on the GPU

 – provides API functions for e.g. device memory management

CPU ⟷ Bus ⟷ GPU

Main program code

Key kernel code
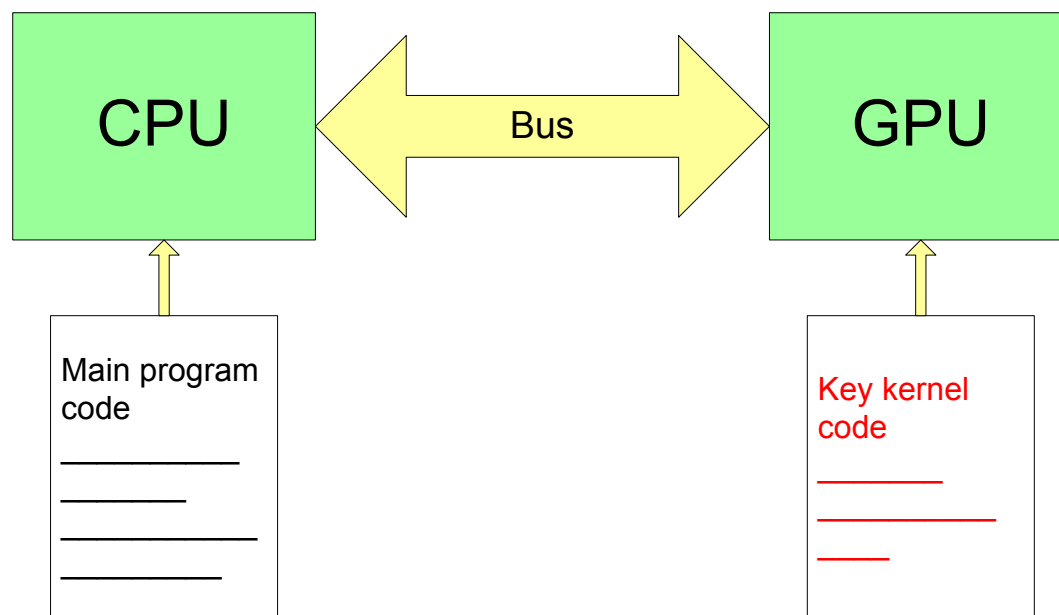
GPGPU: Stream Computing
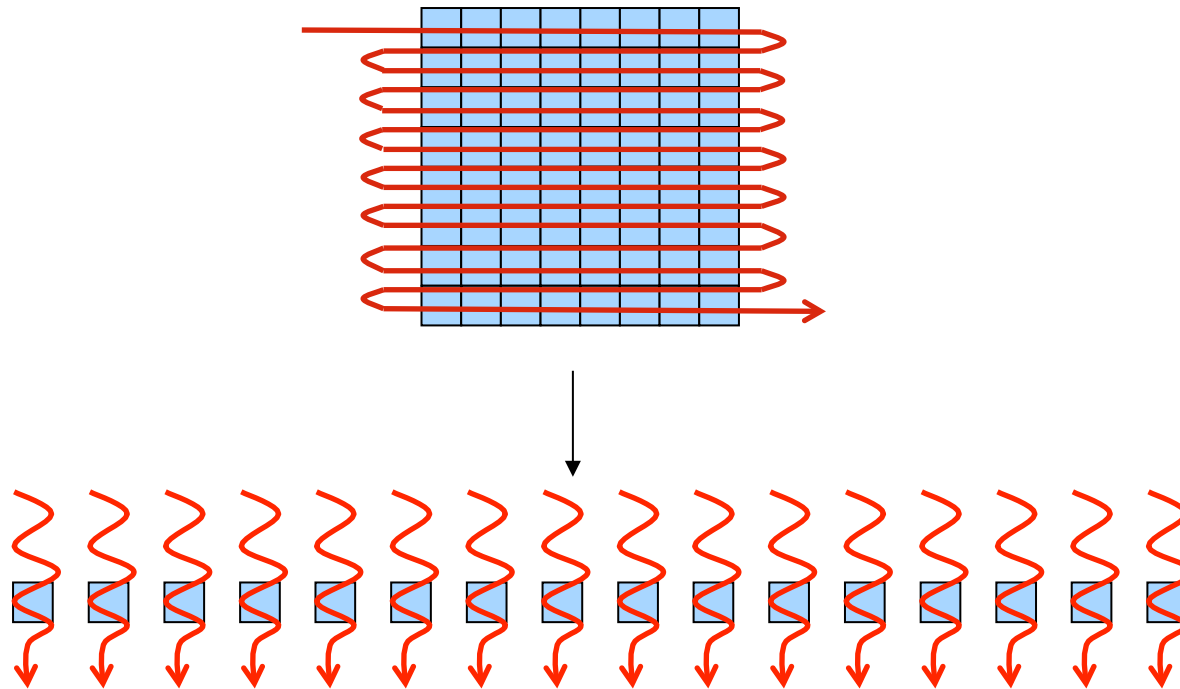
- Data set decomposed into a *stream* of elements

- A single computational function (*kernel*) operates on each element
  - "thread" defined as execution of kernel on one data element

- Multiple cores can process multiple elements in parallel
  - i.e. many threads running in parallel

- Suitable for data-parallel problems
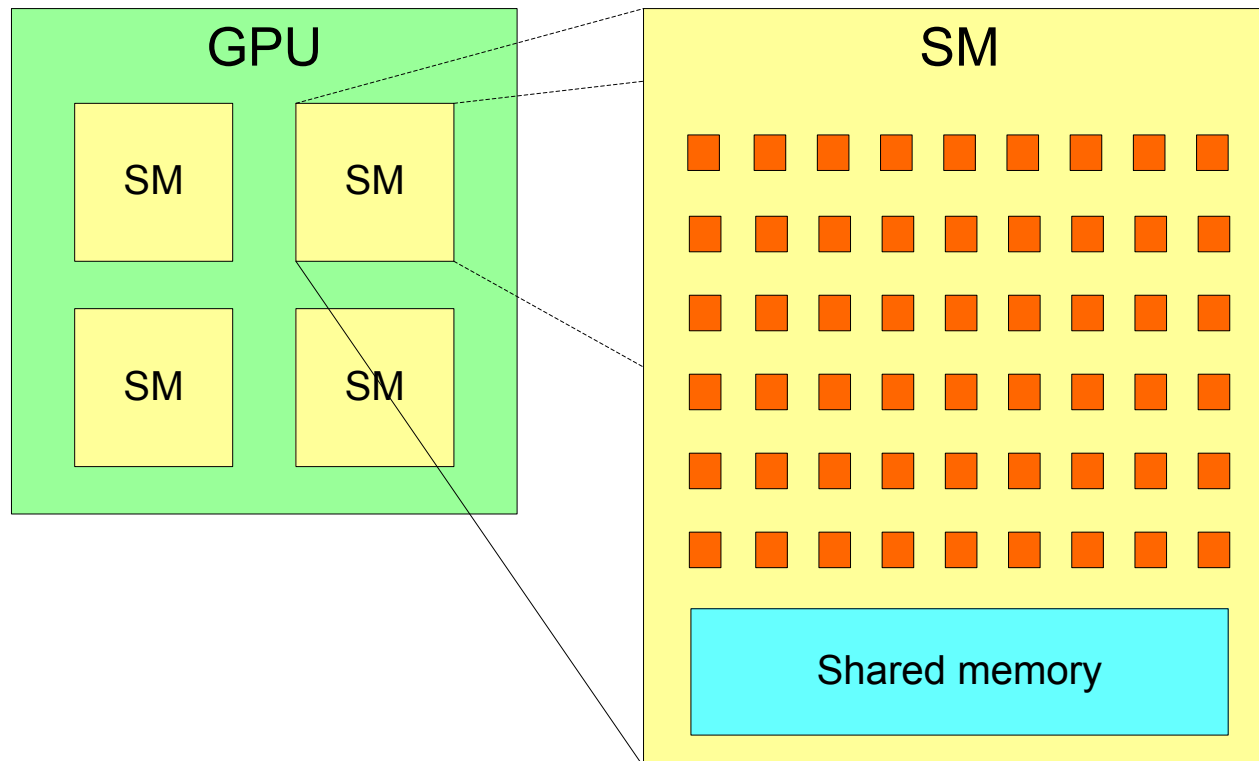
- NVIDIA GPUs have a 2-level hierarchy:
  - Multiple *Streaming Multiprocessors (*SMs), each with multiple *cores*
- The number of SMs, and cores per SM, varies across generations

- In CUDA, this is abstracted as *Grid* of *Thread Blocks*
  - The multiple **blocks** in a grid map onto the multiple **SMs**
    - Each block in a grid contains multiple **threads**, mapping onto the **cores** in an SM

- We don't need to know the exact details of the hardware (number of SMs, cores per SM).
  - Instead, *oversubscribe*, and system will perform scheduling automatically
    - Use more blocks than SMs, and more threads than cores
  - Same code will be portable and efficient across different GPU versions.

CUDA dim3 type

- CUDA introduces a new `dim3` type
  - Simply contains a collection of 3 integers, corresponding to each of X,Y and Z directions.

  C:

  ```
  dim3 my_xyz_values(xvalue,yvalue,zvalue);
  ```

  Fortran:

  ```
  type(dim3) :: my_xyz_values
  my_xyz_values = dim3(xvalue,yvalue,zvalue)
  ```

- X component can be accessed as follows:

C: `my_xyz_values.x`

Fortran: `my_xyz_values%x`

And similar for Y and Z

- E.g. for

`my_xyz_values = dim3(6,4,12)`

then `my_xyz_values%z` has value 12

Analogy

- You check in to the hotel, as do your classmates

  – Rooms allocated in order

- Receptionist realises hotel is less than half full

  – Decides you should all move from your room number i to room number $2i$

  – so that no-one has a neighbour to disturb them

- Serial Solution:
  - Receptionist works out each new number in turn

- **Parallel Solution:**

"Everybody: check your room number. Multiply it by 2, and move to that room."

- **Serial solution:**

```
for (i=0;i<N;i++){
  result[i] = 2*i;
}
```

- We can parallelise by assigning each iteration to a separate CUDA thread.

CUDA C Example

```
__global__ void myKernel(int *result)
{
    int i = threadIdx.x;
    result[i] = 2*i;
}
```

- Replace loop with function

- Add __global__ specifier

  - To specify this function is to form a GPU kernel

- Use internal CUDA variables to specify array indices

  - threadidx.x is an internal variable unique to each thread in a block.

    - X component of dim3 type. Since our problem is 1D, we are not using the Y or Z components (more later)

CUDA C Example

- And launch this kernel by calling the function

  - *on multiple CUDA threads using $<<<...>>>$ syntax*

```
dim3 blocksPerGrid(1,1,1); //use only one block
dim3 threadsPerBlock(N,1,1); //use N threads in the block

myKernel<<<blocksPerGrid, threadsPerBlock>>>(result);
```

CUDA FORTRAN Equivalent

Kernel:

```fortran
attributes(global) subroutine myKernel(result)
    integer, dimension(*) :: result
    integer :: i
    i = threadidx%x
    result(i) = 2*i
end subroutine
```

Launched as follows:

```fortran
blocksPerGrid = dim3(1, 1, 1)
threadsPerBlock = dim3(N, 1, 1)
call myKernel <<<blocksPerGrid, threadsPerBlock>>> (result)
```

CUDA C Example

- The previous example only uses 1 block, i.e. only 1 SM on the GPU, so performance will be very poor. In practice, we need to use multiple blocks to utilise all SMs, e.g.:

```
__global__ void myKernel(int *result)
{
  int i = blockIdx.x * blockDim.x + threadIdx.x;
  result[i] = 2*i;
}


...
dim3 blocksPerGrid(N/256,1,1); //assuming 256 divides N exactly
dim3 threadsPerBlock(256,1,1);

myKernel<<<blocksPerGrid, threadsPerBlock>>>(result);
...
```

FORTRAN

```fortran
attributes(global) subroutine myKernel(result)
    integer, dimension(*) :: result
    integer :: i
    i = (blockidx%x-1)*blockdim%x + threadidx%x
    result(i) = 2*i
end subroutine
...
blocksPerGrid = dim3(N/256, 1, 1) !assuming 256 divides N exactly
threadsPerBlock = dim3(256, 1, 1)
call myKernel <<<blocksPerGrid, threadsPerBlock>>> (result)
...
```

- We have chosen to use 256 threads per block, which is typically a good number (see practical).

CUDA C Example

- More realistic 1D example: vector addition

```
__global__ void vectorAdd(float *a, float *b, float *c)
{
  int i = blockIdx.x * blockDim.x + threadIdx.x;
  c[i] = a[i] + b[i];
}


...
dim3 blocksPerGrid(N/256,1,1); //assuming 256 divides N exactly
dim3 threadsPerBlock(256,1,1);

vectorAdd<<<blocksPerGrid, threadsPerBlock>>>(a, b, c);
...
```

CUDA FORTRAN Equivalent

```fortran
attributes(global) subroutine vectorAdd(a, b, c)

    real, dimension(*) :: a, b, c

    integer :: i

    i = (blockidx%x-1)*blockdim%x + threadidx%x

    c(i) = a(i) + b(i)

end subroutine

...

blocksPerGrid = dim3(N/256, 1, 1)

threadsPerBlock = dim3(256, 1, 1)

call vectorAdd <<<blocksPerGrid, threadsPerBlock>>> (a, b, c)

...
```

CUDA C Internal Variables

For a 1D decomposition (e.g. the previous examples)

- `blockDim.x`: Number of threads per block
  - Takes value 256 in previous example

- `threadIdx.x:` unique to each thread in a block
  - Ranges from 0 to 255 in previous example

- `blockIdx.x`: Unique to every block in the grid
  - Ranges from 0 to (N/256 - 1) in previous example

CUDA Fortran Internal Variables

For a 1D decomposition (e.g. the previous example)

- `blockDim%x`: Number of threads per block
  - Takes value 256 in previous example

- `threadIdx%x`: unique to each thread in a block
  - Ranges from 1 to 256 in previous example

- `blockIdx%x`: Unique to every block in the grid
  - Ranges from 1 to (N/256) in previous example

2D Example

- 2D or 3D CUDA decompositions also possible, e.g. for matrix addition (2D):

```
__global__ void matrixAdd(float a[N][N], float b[N][N], float c[N][N])
{
  int j = blockIdx.x * blockDim.x + threadIdx.x;
  int i = blockIdx.y * blockDim.y + threadIdx.y;

  c[i][j] = a[i][j] + b[i][j];
}

int main()
{
  dim3 blocksPerGrid(N/16,N/16,1); // (N/16)x(N/16) blocks/grid (2D)
  dim3 threadsPerBlock(16,16,1); // 16x16=256 threads/block (2D)
  matrixAdd<<<blocksPerGrid, threadsPerBlock>>>(a, b, c);
}
```

CUDA Fortran Equivalent

```fortran
! Kernel declaration

attributes(global) subroutine matrixAdd(N, a, b, c)

    integer, value :: N

    real, dimension(N,N) :: a, b, c

    integer :: i, j

    i = (blockidx%x-1)*blockdim%x + threadidx%x

    j = (blockidx%y-1)*blockdim%y + threadidx%y

    c(i,j) = a(i,j) + b(i,j)

end subroutine


! Kernel invocation

blocksPerGrid = dim3(N/16, N/16, 1) ! (N/16)x(N/16) blocks/grid (2D)

threadsPerBlock = dim3(16, 16, 1) ! 16x16=256 threads/block (2D)

call matrixAdd <<<blocksPerGrid, threadsPerBlock>>> (N, a, b, c)
```

Memory Management - allocation

- The GPU has a separate memory space from the host CPU

- Data accessed in kernels must be on GPU memory

- Need to manage GPU memory and copy data to and from it explicitly

- cudaMalloc is used to allocate GPU memory

- cudaFree releases it again

```
float *a;

cudaMalloc(&a, N*sizeof(float));

…

cudaFree(a);
```

Memory Management - cudaMemcpy

- Once we've allocated GPU memory, we need to be able to copy data to and from it

- cudaMemcpy does this:

```
cudaMemcpy(array_device, array_host, N*sizeof(float),
      cudaMemcpyHostToDevice);
cudaMemcpy(array_host, array_device, N*sizeof(float),
                cudaMemcpyDeviceToHost);
```

- The first argument always corresponds to the *destination* of the transfer.

- Transfers between host and device memory are relatively slow and can become a bottleneck, so should be minimised when possible

CUDA FORTRAN – Data management

- Data management is more intuitive than CUDA C

  - Because Fortran has array syntax, and also compiler knows if a pointer is meant for CPU or GPU memory

- Can use allocate() and deallocate() as for host memory

```
real, device, allocatable, dimension(:) :: d_a
allocate( d_a(N) )
…
deallocate ( d_a )
```

- Can copy data between host and device using assignment

```
d_a = a(1:N)
```

- Or can instead use CUDA API (similar to C), e.g.

```
istat = cudaMemcpy(d_a, a, N)
```

Synchronisation between host and device

- Kernel calls are *non-blocking.* This means that the host program continues immediately after it calls the kernel
  - Allows overlap of computation on CPU and GPU

- Use `cudaThreadSynchronize()` to wait for kernel to finish

```
vectorAdd<<<blocksPerGrid, threadsPerBlock>>>(a, b, c);
//do work on host (that doesn't depend on c)
cudaThreadSynchronise(); //wait for kernel to finish
```

- Standard `cudaMemcpy` calls are blocking
  - Non-blocking variants exist

Synchronisation between CUDA threads

- Within a kernel, to syncronise between threads in the same block use the `syncthreads()` call

- Therefore, threads in the same block can communicate through memory spaces that they share, e.g. assuming `x` local to each thread and `array` in a shared memory space

```
if (threadIdx.x == 0) array[0]=x;
syncthreads();
if (threadIdx.x == 1) x=array[0];
```

- It is *not possible* to communicate between different blocks in a kernel: must instead exit kernel and start a new one

Compiling CUDA Code

- CUDA C code is compiled using `nvcc`:

  ```
  nvcc -o example example.cu
  ```

- CUDA Fortran is compiled using PGI compiler
  - either use `.cuf` filename extension for CUDA files
  - and/or pass `-Mcuda` to the compiler command line

  ```
  pgf90 -Mcuda -o example example.cuf
  ```

OpenCL

- Open Compute Language (OpenCL): "The Open Standard for Heterogeneous Parallel Programming"
  - Open cross-platform framework for programming modern multicore and heterogeneous systems

- Supports wide range of applications and architectures, including GPUs
  - Supported on NVIDIA Tesla + AMD FireStream

- See http://www.khronos.org/opencl/

OpenCL vs CUDA on NVIDIA

- NVIDIA support both CUDA and OpenCL as APIs to the hardware.
    - But put much more effort into CUDA
    - CUDA more mature, well documented and performs better

- OpenCL and C for CUDA conceptually very similar
    - Very similar abstractions, basic functionality etc
    - Different names e.g. "Thread" CUDA -> "Work Item" (OpenCL)
    - Porting between the two should in principle be straightforward

- OpenCL is a lower level API than C for CUDA
    - More work for programmer

- OpenCL obviously portable to other systems
    - But in reality work will still need to be done for efficiency on different architecture

- OpenCL may well catch up with CUDA given time

Summary

- Traditional languages alone are not sufficient for programming GPUs

- CUDA allows NVIDIA GPUs to be programmed using C/C++ or Fortran
  - defines language extensions and APIs to enable this

- We introduced the key CUDA concepts and gave examples

- OpenCL provides another means of programming GPUs in C
  - conceptually similar to CUDA, but less mature and lower-level
  - supports other hardware as well as NVIDIA GPUs