

An Optimizing Compiler for Low-Level Floating Point Operations

by

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Submitted to the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Engineering

at the

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

June 1990

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Abstract

The recent increase of power of computation combined to the decrease of power consumption of devices led to an explosion of smart devices for all the possible purposes, and it's called the *Internet of Things*.

The IoT includes all devices that has an interface to the real world and are connected to the internet, such as: *Smart Fridges, Smart TVs, Thermostats, Alarms, Cameras and etc.* These devices were born to simplify normal's people life, let's take the smart fridge as example: it will alert you when the food you have in the fridge is going to expire, the thermostat will try to save money applying smart strategies for heat consumption. One of the most important application of IoT to people's life is *House Security*: exploiting the IoT concept to improve the house security with smart sensors like cameras, leap motion sensors and microphones. House Security has to be of concern, because house invasion is an always trending crime. However these systems are not always perfect and the most common problem are false positives, for the which there is an active branch of research focused on. The raise of devices connected introduced another problem: heterogeneity between IoT devices. As the popularity of smart devices increased more and more companies started producing their own different ecosystems. Communication between different ecosystems is another research topic which will analyzed in this document.

Thesis Supervisor: William J. Dally
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Acknowledgments

This is the acknowledgements section. You should replace this with your own acknowledgements.

Contents

1	Introduction	13
1.1	Motivations for micro-optimization	13
1.2	Description of micro-optimization	14
1.2.1	Post Multiply Normalization	15
1.2.2	Block Exponent	15
1.3	Integer optimizations	16
1.3.1	Conversion to fixed point	16
1.3.2	Small Constant Multiplications	16
1.4	Other optimizations	17
1.4.1	Low-level parallelism	17
1.4.2	Pipeline optimizations	18
A	Tables	19
B	Figures	21

List of Figures

B-1	Armadillo slaying lawyer.	21
B-2	Armadillo eradicating national debt.	22

List of Tables

A.1	Armadillos	19
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Chapter 1

Introduction

IoT surveillance systems has been proved to be effective during the time, catching the burglar committing the crime and helping the authorities to catch him[1]. Nonetheless these systems are not yet perfect, and during this paper we will investigate on some optimizations with respect to the *integration* with other ecosystems and the *reduction* of false positives. Here follows the main structure of the document:

Chapter two introduces the technologies used in our scenario, with a brief introduction on the techniques adopted to face the various problems.

Chapter three illustrates the main architecture of the optimizations proposed during the document and the motivation behind them.

Chapter four shows the implementation of our use case with the optimizations we have described formerly.

Chapter five is an extensive analysis of the results obtained during the whole analysis of the scenario.

1.1 Motivations for micro-optimization

The idea of micro-optimization is motivated by the recent trends in computer architecture towards low-level parallelism and small, pipelineable instruction sets [?, ?]. By getting rid of more complex instructions and concentrating on optimizing frequently used instructions, substantial increases in performance were realized.

Another important motivation was the trend towards placing more of the burden of

performance on the compiler. Many of the new architectures depend on an intelligent, optimizing compiler in order to realize anywhere near their peak performance [?, ?, ?]. In these cases, the compiler not only is responsible for faithfully generating native code to match the source language, but also must be aware of instruction latencies, delayed branches, pipeline stages, and a multitude of other factors in order to generate fast code [?].

Taking these ideas one step further, it seems that the floating point operations that are normally single, large instructions can be further broken down into smaller, simpler, faster instructions, with more control in the compiler and less in the hardware. This is the idea behind a micro-optimizing FPU; break the floating point instructions down into their basic components and use a small, fast implementation, with a large part of the burden of hardware allocation and optimization shifted towards compile-time.

Along with the hardware speedups possible by using a μ FPU, there are also optimizations that the compiler can perform on the code that is generated. In a normal sequence of floating point operations, there are many hidden redundancies that can be eliminated by allowing the compiler to control the floating point operations down to their lowest level. These optimizations are described in detail in section 1.2.

1.2 Description of micro-optimization

In order to perform a sequence of floating point operations, a normal FPU performs many redundant internal shifts and normalizations in the process of performing a sequence of operations. However, if a compiler can decompose the floating point operations it needs down to the lowest level, it then can optimize away many of these redundant operations.

If there is some additional hardware support specifically for micro-optimization, there are additional optimizations that can be performed. This hardware support entails extra “guard bits” on the standard floating point formats, to allow several unnormalized operations to be performed in a row without the loss information¹. A discussion of the mathematics behind unnormalized arithmetic is in appendix ??.

The optimizations that the compiler can perform fall into several categories:

¹A description of the floating point format used is shown in figures ?? and ??.

1.2.1 Post Multiply Normalization

When more than two multiplications are performed in a row, the intermediate normalization of the results between multiplications can be eliminated. This is because with each multiplication, the mantissa can become denormalized by at most one bit. If there are guard bits on the mantissas to prevent bits from “falling off” the end during multiplications, the normalization can be postponed until after a sequence of several multiplies².

As you can see, the intermediate results can be multiplied together, with no need for intermediate normalizations due to the guard bit. It is only at the end of the operation that the normalization must be performed, in order to get it into a format suitable for storing in memory³.

1.2.2 Block Exponent

In a unoptimized sequence of additions, the sequence of operations is as follows for each pair of numbers (m_1, e_1) and (m_2, e_2) .

1. Compare e_1 and e_2 .
2. Shift the mantissa associated with the smaller exponent $|e_1 - e_2|$ places to the right.
3. Add m_1 and m_2 .
4. Find the first one in the resulting mantissa.
5. Shift the resulting mantissa so that normalized
6. Adjust the exponent accordingly.

Out of 6 steps, only one is the actual addition, and the rest are involved in aligning the mantissas prior to the add, and then normalizing the result afterward. In the block exponent optimization, the largest mantissa is found to start with, and all the mantissa's shifted before any additions take place. Once the mantissas have been shifted, the additions

²Using unnormalized numbers for math is not a new idea; a good example of it is the Control Data CDC 6600, designed by Seymour Cray. [?] The CDC 6600 had all of its instructions performing unnormalized arithmetic, with a separate `NORMALIZE` instruction.

³Note that for purposed of clarity, the pipeline delays were considered to be 0, and the branches were not delayed.

can take place one after another⁴. An example of the Block Exponent optimization on the expression $X = A + B + C$ is given in figure ??.

1.3 Integer optimizations

As well as the floating point optimizations described above, there are also integer optimizations that can be used in the μ FPU. In concert with the floating point optimizations, these can provide a significant speedup.

1.3.1 Conversion to fixed point

Integer operations are much faster than floating point operations; if it is possible to replace floating point operations with fixed point operations, this would provide a significant increase in speed.

This conversion can either take place automatically or based on a specific request from the programmer. To do this automatically, the compiler must either be very smart, or play fast and loose with the accuracy and precision of the programmer's variables. To be "smart", the computer must track the ranges of all the floating point variables through the program, and then see if there are any potential candidates for conversion to floating point. This technique is discussed further in section ??, where it was implemented.

The other way to do this is to rely on specific hints from the programmer that a certain value will only assume a specific range, and that only a specific precision is desired. This is somewhat more taxing on the programmer, in that he has to know the ranges that his values will take at declaration time (something normally abstracted away), but it does provide the opportunity for fine-tuning already working code.

Potential applications of this would be simulation programs, where the variable represents some physical quantity; the constraints of the physical system may provide bounds on the range the variable can take.

1.3.2 Small Constant Multiplications

One other class of optimizations that can be done is to replace multiplications by small integer constants into some combination of additions and shifts. Addition and shifting can

⁴This requires that for n consecutive additions, there are $\log_2 n$ high guard bits to prevent overflow. In the μ FPU, there are 3 guard bits, making up to 8 consecutive additions possible.

be significantly faster than multiplication. This is done by using some combination of

$$\begin{aligned}a_i &= a_j + a_k \\a_i &= 2a_j + a_k \\a_i &= 4a_j + a_k \\a_i &= 8a_j + a_k \\a_i &= a_j - a_k \\a_i &= a_j \ll mshift\end{aligned}$$

instead of the multiplication. For example, to multiply s by 10 and store the result in r , you could use:

$$\begin{aligned}r &= 4s + s \\r &= r + r\end{aligned}$$

Or by 59:

$$\begin{aligned}t &= 2s + s \\r &= 2t + s \\r &= 8r + t\end{aligned}$$

Similar combinations can be found for almost all of the smaller integers⁵. [?]

1.4 Other optimizations

1.4.1 Low-level parallelism

The current trend is towards duplicating hardware at the lowest level to provide parallelism⁶

Conceptually, it is easy to take advantage to low-level parallelism in the instruction

⁵This optimization is only an “optimization”, of course, when the amount of time spent on the shifts and adds is less than the time that would be spent doing the multiplication. Since the time costs of these operations are known to the compiler in order for it to do scheduling, it is easy for the compiler to determine when this optimization is worth using.

⁶This can be seen in the i860; floating point additions and multiplications can proceed at the same time, and the RISC core be moving data in and out of the floating point registers and providing flow control at the same time the floating point units are active. [?]

stream by simply adding more functional units to the μ FPU, widening the instruction word to control them, and then scheduling as many operations to take place at one time as possible.

However, simply adding more functional units can only be done so many times; there is only a limited amount of parallelism directly available in the instruction stream, and without it, much of the extra resources will go to waste. One process used to make more instructions potentially schedulable at any given time is “trace scheduling”. This technique originated in the Bulldog compiler for the original VLIW machine, the ELI-512. [?, ?] In trace scheduling, code can be scheduled through many basic blocks at one time, following a single potential “trace” of program execution. In this way, instructions that *might* be executed depending on a conditional branch further down in the instruction stream are scheduled, allowing an increase in the potential parallelism. To account for the cases where the expected branch wasn’t taken, correction code is inserted after the branches to undo the effects of any prematurely executed instructions.

1.4.2 Pipeline optimizations

In addition to having operations going on in parallel across functional units, it is also typical to have several operations in various stages of completion in each unit. This pipelining allows the throughput of the functional units to be increased, with no increase in latency.

There are several ways pipelined operations can be optimized. On the hardware side, support can be added to allow data to be recirculated back into the beginning of the pipeline from the end, saving a trip through the registers. On the software side, the compiler can utilize several tricks to try to fill up as many of the pipeline delay slots as possible, as described by Gibbons. [?]

Appendix A

Tables

Table A.1: Armadillos

Armadillos	are
our	friends

Appendix B

Figures

Figure B-1: Armadillo slaying lawyer.

Figure B-2: Armadillo eradicating national debt.