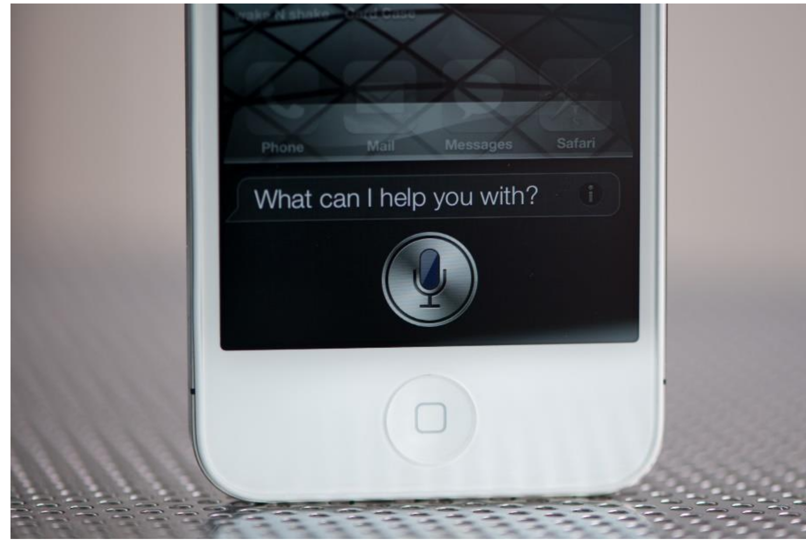
Lecture 1: Introduction

- Today's topics:
  - Why computer organization is important
  - Logistics
  - Modern trends

Why Computer Organization



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Why Computer Organization

- Embarrassing if you are a BS in CS/CE and can't make sense of the following terms: DRAM, pipelining, cache hierarchies, I/O, virtual memory, …

- Embarrassing if you are a BS in CS/CE and can't decide which processor to buy: 3 GHz P4 or 2.5 GHz Athlon (helps us reason about performance/power), …

- Obvious first step for chip designers, compiler/OS writers

- Will knowledge of the hardware help you write better programs?

Must a Programmer Care About Hardware?

- Must know how to reason about program performance and energy

- Memory management: if we understand how/where data is placed, we can help ensure that relevant data is nearby

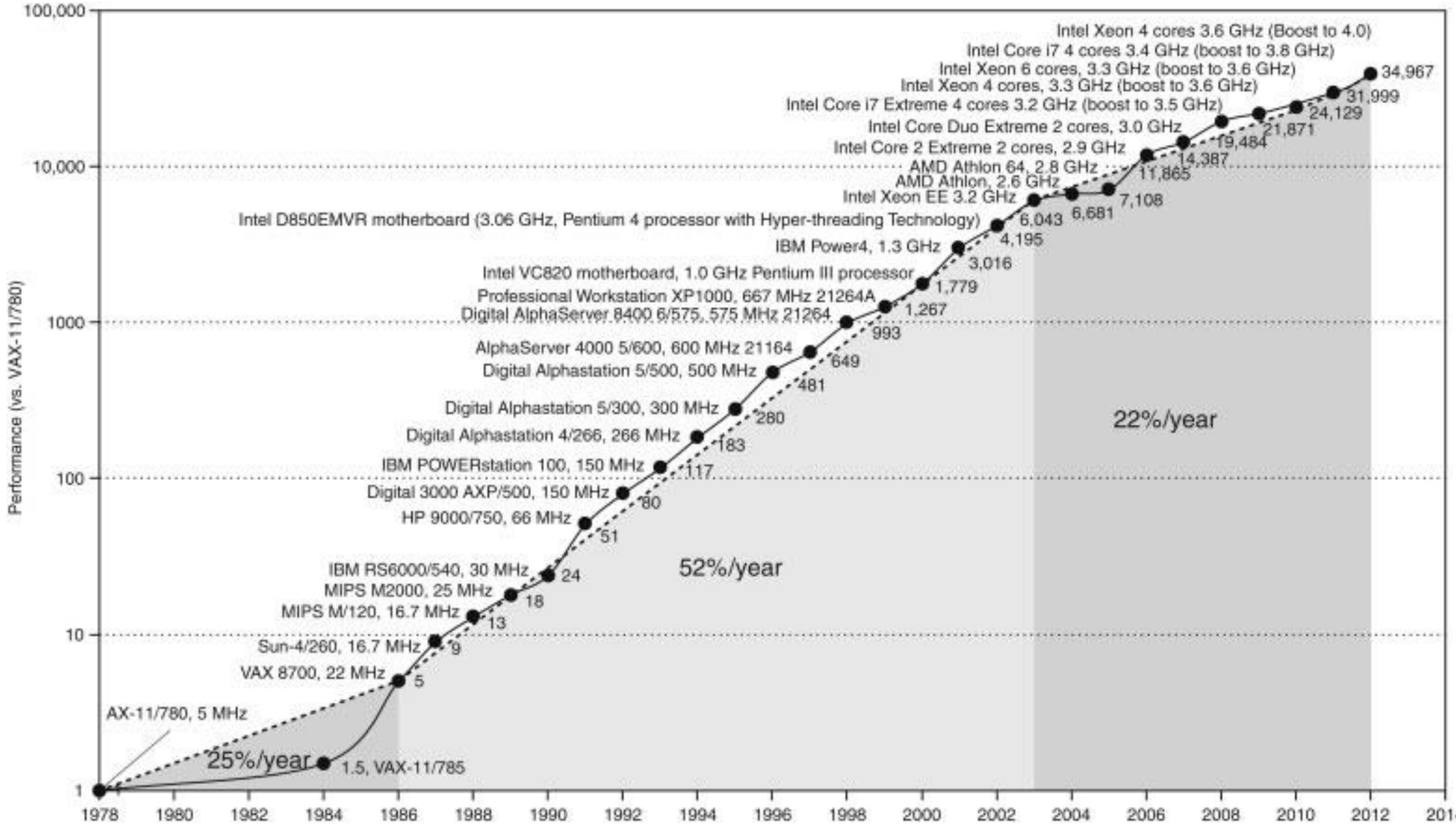
- Thread management: if we understand how threads interact, we can write smarter multi-threaded programs

→ Why do we care about multi-threaded programs?

Key Topics

- Moore's Law, power wall
- Use of abstractions
- Assembly language
- Computer arithmetic
- Pipelining
- Using predictions
- Memory hierarchies
- Reliability

Microprocessor Performance



Source: H&P Textbook

50% improvement every year!!

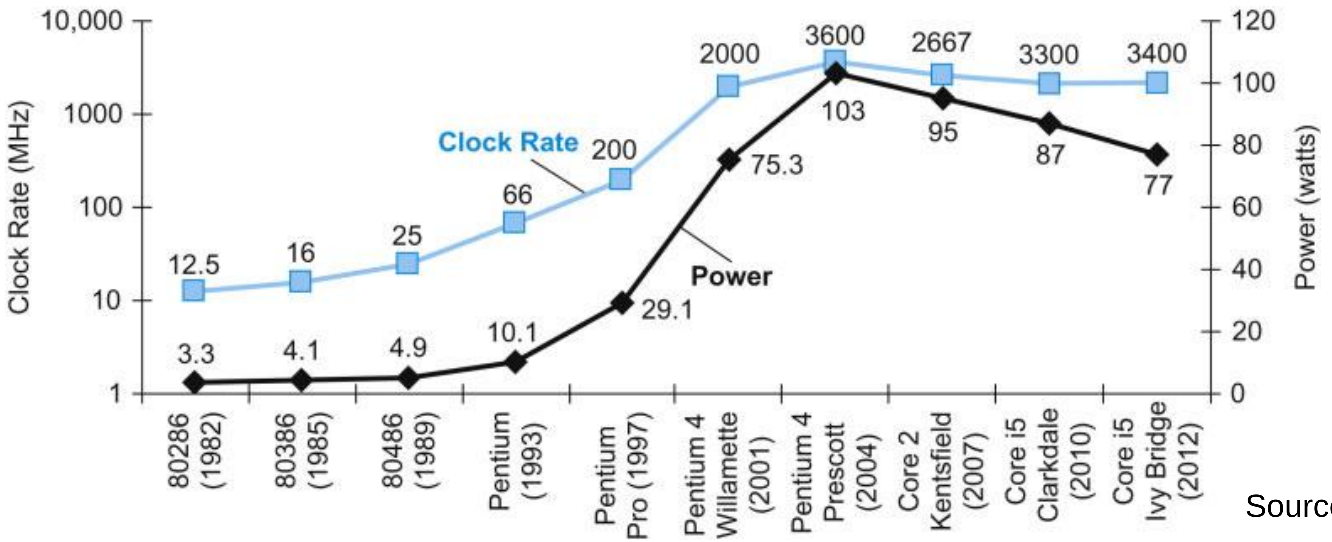
What contributes to this improvement?

Power Consumption Trends

- **Dyn power α activity x capacitance x voltage^2 x frequency**

- Voltage and frequency are somewhat constant now, while capacitance per transistor is decreasing and number of transistors (activity) is increasing

- <u>Leakage (Static) power α Leakage Current x voltage</u>
- Note the Leakage Current is proportional to the size of HW.



Source: H&P Textbook

Important Trends

- Running out of ideas to improve single thread performance
- Power wall makes it harder to add complex features
- Power wall makes it harder to increase frequency (WHY?)

Important Trends

- Historical contributions to performance:
  1. Better processes (faster devices) ~20%
  2. Better circuits/pipelines ~15%
  3. Better organization/architecture ~15%

In the future, bullet-2 will help little and bullet-1 will eventually disappear!

	Pentium	P-Pro	P-II	P-III	P-4	Itanium	Montecito
Year	1993	95	97	99	2000	2002	2005
Transistors	3.1M	5.5M	7.5M	9.5M	42M	300M	1720M
Clock Speed	60M	200M	300M	500M	1500M	800M	1800M

Moore's Law in action

At this point, adding transistors to a core yields little benefit

What Does This Mean to a Programmer?

- Today, one can expect only a 20% annual improvement; the improvement is even lower if the program is not multi-threaded
    - A program needs many threads
    - The threads need efficient synchronization and communication
    - Data placement in the memory hierarchy is important
    - Accelerators should be used when possible

Challenges for Hardware Designers

- Find efficient ways to
  - boost single-thread performance
  - improve data sharing
  - boost programmer productivity
  - manage the memory system
  - build accelerators for important kernels
  - reduce system energy per instruction

The HW/SW Interface

Application software

Systems software
(OS, compiler)

Hardware

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

Compiler

```
lw    $15, 0($2)
add   $16, $15, $14
add   $17, $15, $13
lw    $18, 0($12)
lw    $19, 0($17)
add   $20, $18, $19
sw    $20, 0($16)
```

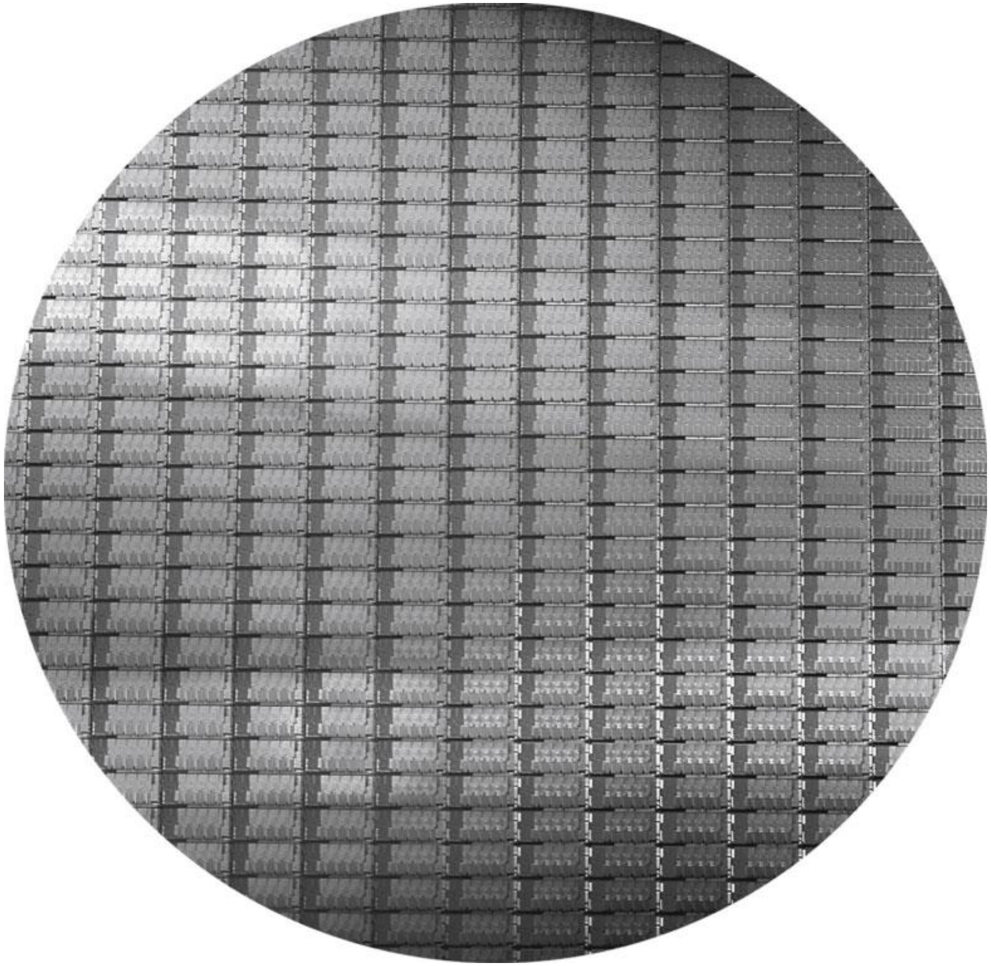
Assembler

000000101100000
110100000100010
…

Computer Components

- Input/output devices
- Secondary storage: non-volatile, slower, cheaper
- Primary storage: volatile, faster, costlier
- CPU/processor (datapath and control)

Wafers and Dies



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Manufacturing Process

- Silicon wafers undergo many processing steps so that different parts of the wafer behave as insulators, conductors, and transistors (switches)

- Multiple metal layers on the silicon enable connections between transistors

- The wafer is chopped into many dies – the size of the die determines yield and cost

Processor Technology Trends

- Shrinking of transistor sizes: 250nm (1997) → 130nm (2002) → 70nm (2008) → 35nm (2014)
- Transistor density increases by 35% per year and die size increases by 10-20% per year… functionality improvements!
- Transistor speed improves linearly with size (complex equation involving voltages, resistances, capacitances)
- Wire delays do not scale down at the same rate as transistor delays (WHY?)

Memory and I/O Technology Trends

- DRAM density increases by 40-60% per year, latency has reduced by 33% in 10 years (the memory wall!), bandwidth improves twice as fast as latency decreases

- Disk density improves by 100% every year, latency improvement similar to DRAM

- Networks: primary focus on bandwidth; 10Mb → 100Mb in 10 years; 100Mb → 1Gb in 5 years