

Lecture 15:

# **Heterogeneous Parallelism, Hardware Specialization, DSLs**

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**Parallel Computing  
Stanford CS149, Fall 2021**

# Review: Transactional Memory

- **Atomic construct: declaration that atomic behavior must be preserved by the system**
  - Motivating idea: increase simplicity of synchronization without (significantly) sacrificing performance
- **Transactional memory implementation**
  - Many variants have been proposed: SW, HW, SW+HW
  - Implementations differ in:
    - Data versioning policy (eager vs. lazy)
    - Conflict detection policy (pessimistic vs. optimistic)
    - Detection granularity (object, word, cache line)
- **Software TM systems (STM)**
  - Compiler adds code for versioning & conflict detection
    - Note: STM barrier = instrumentation code (e.g. StmRead, StmWrite)
  - Basic data-structures
    - Transactional descriptor per thread (status, rd/wr set, ...)
    - Transactional record per data (locked/version)
- **Hardware Transactional Memory (HTM)**
  - Versioned data is kept in caches
  - Conflict detection mechanisms augment coherence protocol

# HTM Example: Transactional Coherence and Consistency

- Use TM as the coherence mechanism → all transactions all the time
- Successful transaction commits update memory and all caches in the system

P1	P2	P3
Begin T1	Begin T2	Begin T4
Read A	Read A	Read E
Write A, 1	Write E, 3	Write B, 6
Write C, 2	Commit T2	Write C, 7
Read D	Begin T3	Read F
Commit T1	Write C, 4	Commit T4
	Read A	
	Write E, 5	
	Commit T3	

- Assumptions
  - One “commit” per execution step across all processors
  - When one transaction causes another transaction to abort and re-execute, assume that the transaction “commit” of one transaction can overlap with the “begin” of the re-executing transaction
  - Minimize the number of execution steps

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Action	Read set	Write set	Action	Read set	Write set	Action	Read set	Write set
<b>B T1</b>			<b>B T2</b>			<b>B T4</b>		
<b>R A</b>	<b>A:0</b>		<b>R A</b>	<b>A:0</b>		<b>R E</b>	<b>E:0</b>	
<b>W A, 1</b>	<b>A:0</b>	<b>A:1</b>	<b>W E</b>	<b>A:0</b>	<b>E:3</b>	<b>W B, 6</b>	<b>E:0</b>	<b>B:6</b>
<b>W C, 2</b>	<b>A:0</b>	<b>A:1,C:2</b>	<b>C T2</b>	<b>A:0</b>	<b>E:3</b>	<b>B T4</b>		
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**I want to begin this lecture by reminding you...**

**In assignment 1 we observed that a well-optimized parallel implementation of a compute-bound application is about 40 times faster on my quad-core laptop than the output of single-threaded C code compiled with gcc -O3.**

**(In other words, a lot of software makes inefficient use of modern CPUs.)**

**Today we're going to talk about how inefficient the CPU in that laptop is, even if you are using it as efficiently as possible.**

# Heterogeneous processing

**Observation: most “real world” applications have complex workload characteristics**

**They have components that can be widely parallelized.**

**They have components that are amenable to wide SIMD execution.**

**They have components with predictable data access**

**And components that are difficult to parallelize.**

**And components that are not.  
(divergent control flow)**

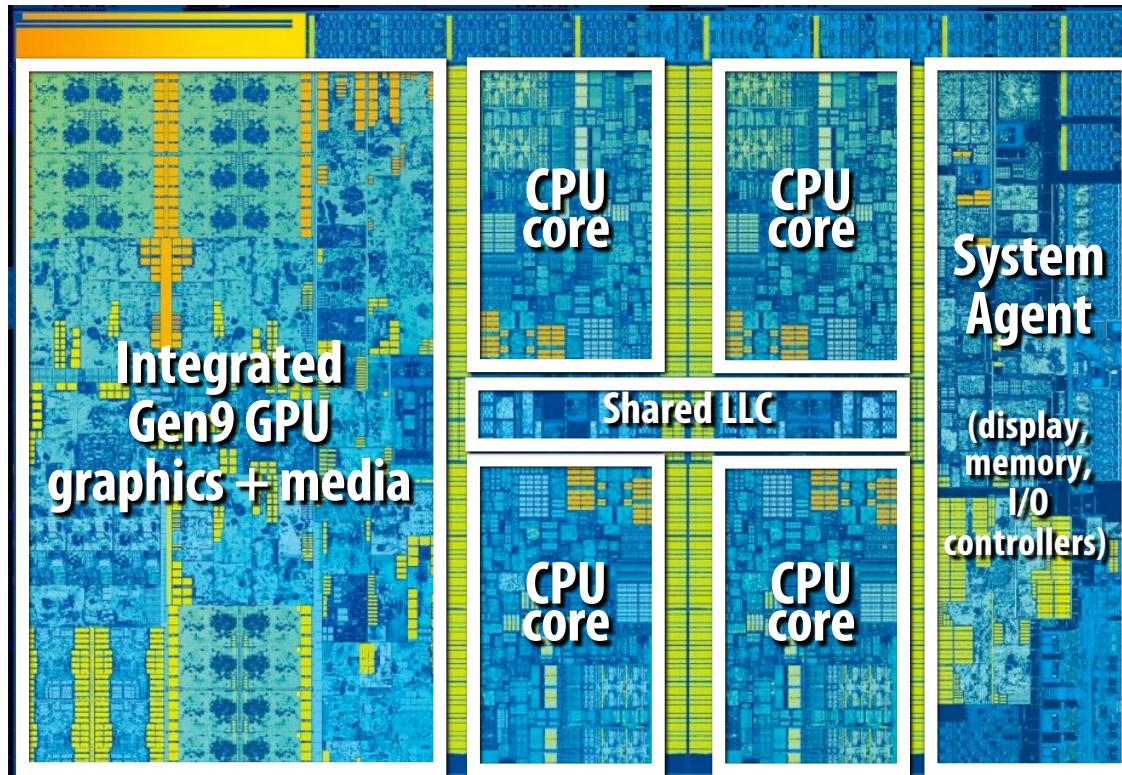
**And components with unpredictable access, but those accesses might cache well.**

**Idea: the most efficient processor is a heterogeneous mixture of resources (“use the most efficient tool for the job”)**

# **Examples of heterogeneity**

# Example: Intel "Skylake" (2015)

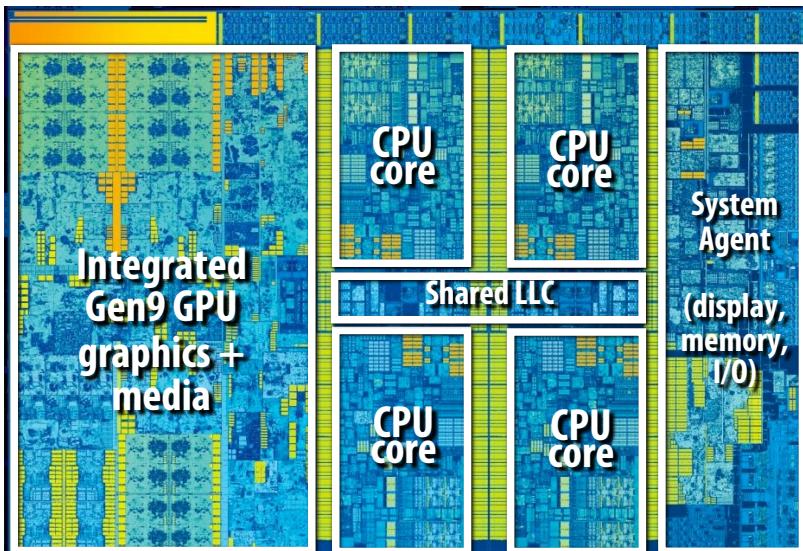
(6th Generation Core i7 architecture)



4 CPU cores + graphics cores + media accelerators

# Example: Intel "Skylake" (2015)

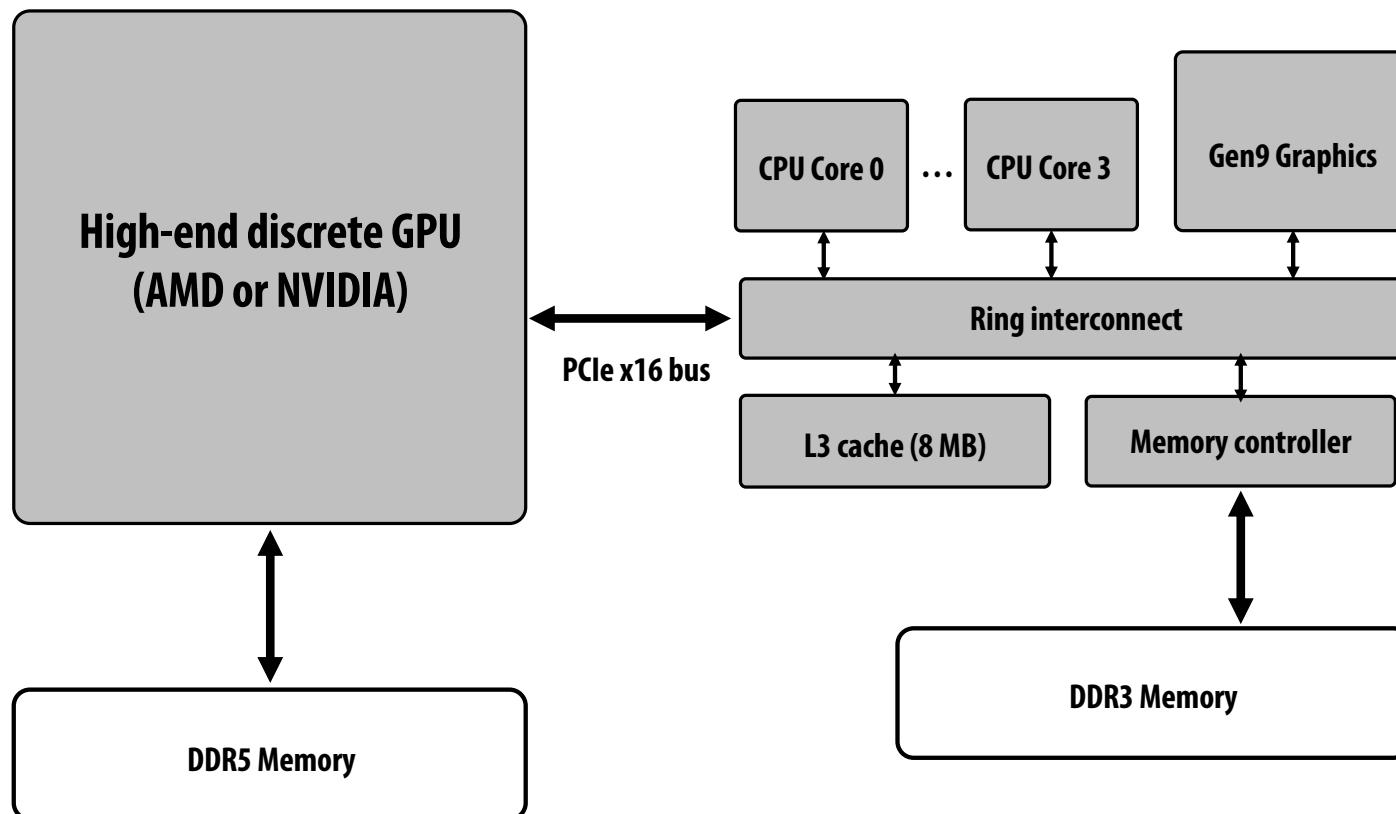
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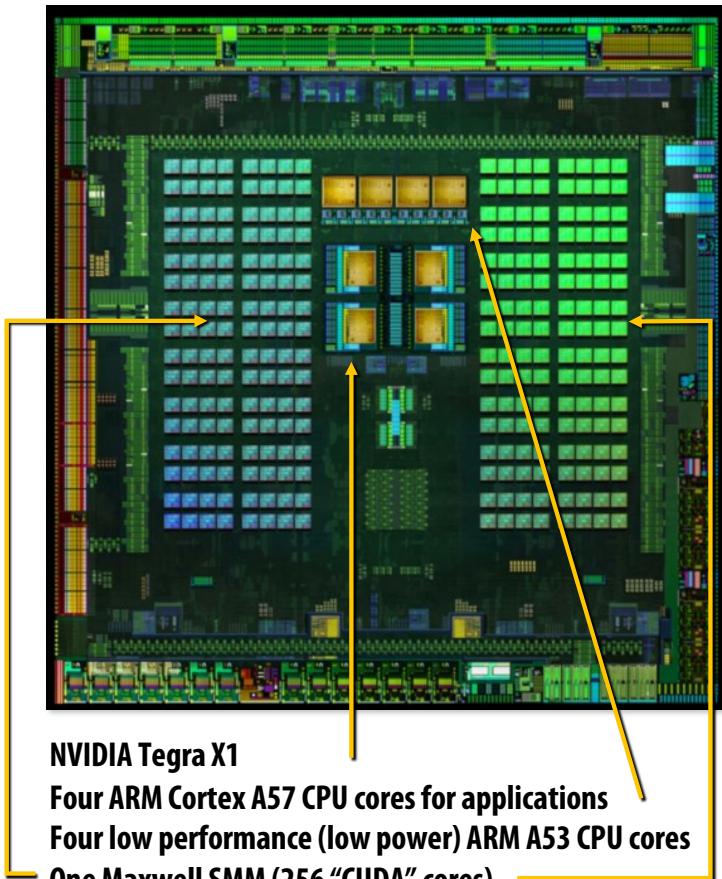
- CPU cores and graphics cores share same memory system
- Also share LLC (L3 cache)
  - Enables, low-latency, high-bandwidth communication between CPU and integrated GPU
- Graphics cores are cache coherent with CPU cores

# More heterogeneity: add discrete GPU

Keep discrete (power hungry) GPU unless needed for graphics-intensive applications  
Use integrated, low power graphics for basic graphics/window manager/UI



# Mobile heterogeneous processors



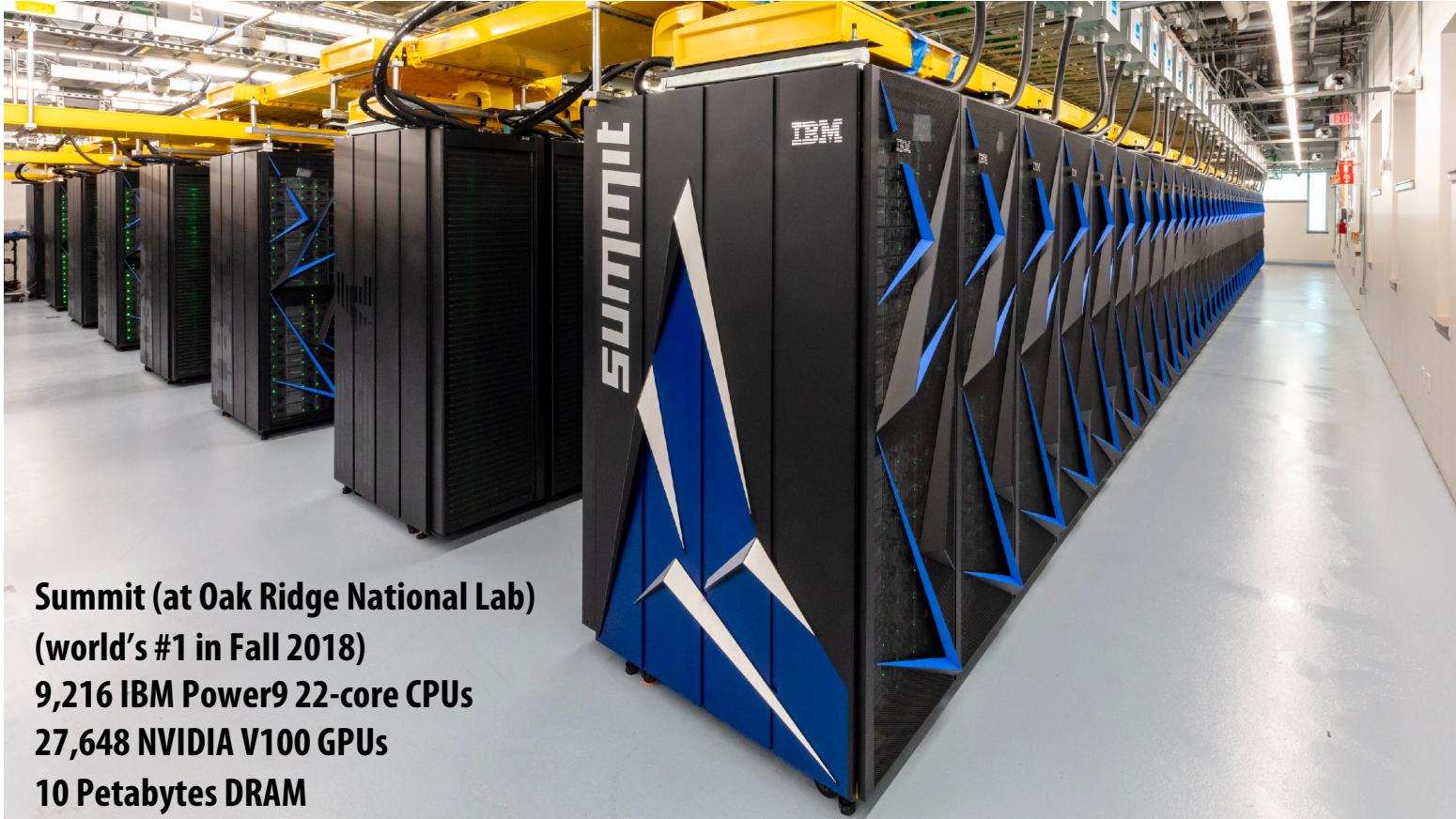
A11 image credit: TechInsights Inc.'

\* Disclaimer: estimates by TechInsights, not an official Apple reference.



**Apple A11 Bionic \***  
Two “high performance” 64 bit ARM CPU cores  
Four “low performance” ARM CPU cores  
Three “core” Apple-designed GPU  
Image processor  
Neural Engine for DNN acceleration  
Motion processor

# GPU-accelerated supercomputing



# **Energy-constrained computing**

# Performance and Power

$$Power = \frac{Ops}{second} \times \frac{Joules}{Op}$$

**FIXED**



Specialization (fixed function)  $\Rightarrow$  better energy efficiency

What is the magnitude  
of improvement from  
specialization?

**Pursuing highly efficient processing...  
(specializing hardware beyond just parallel CPUs and GPUs)**

# Efficiency benefits of compute specialization

- Rules of thumb: compared to high-quality C code on CPU...
- Throughput-maximized processor architectures: e.g., GPU cores
  - Approximately 10x improvement in perf / watt
  - Assuming code maps well to wide data-parallel execution and is compute bound
- Fixed-function ASIC (“application-specific integrated circuit”)
  - Can approach 100-1000x or greater improvement in perf/watt
  - Assuming code is compute bound and is not floating-point math

# **Why is a “general-purpose processor” so inefficient?**

**Wait... this entire class we've been talking about making efficient use out of multi-core CPUs and GPUs... and now you're telling me these platforms are “inefficient”?**

# Consider the complexity of executing an instruction on a modern processor...

**Read instruction** ————— Address translation, communicate with icache, access icache, etc.

**Decode instruction** ————— Translate op to uops, access uop cache, etc.

**Check for dependencies/pipeline hazards**

**Identify available execution resource**

**Use decoded operands to control register file SRAM (retrieve data)**

**Move data from register file to selected execution resource**

**Perform arithmetic operation**

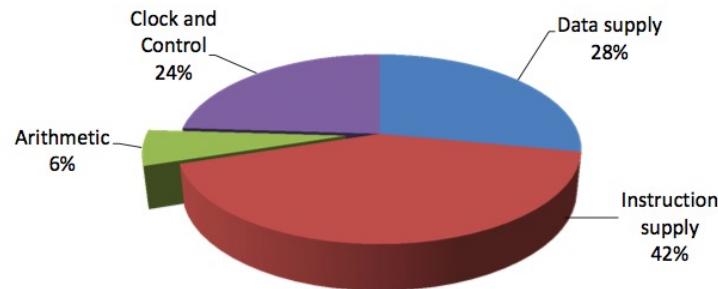
**Move data from execution resource to register file**

**Use decoded operands to control write to register file SRAM**

**Review question:**

How does SIMD execution reduce overhead of certain types of computations?

What properties must these computations have?

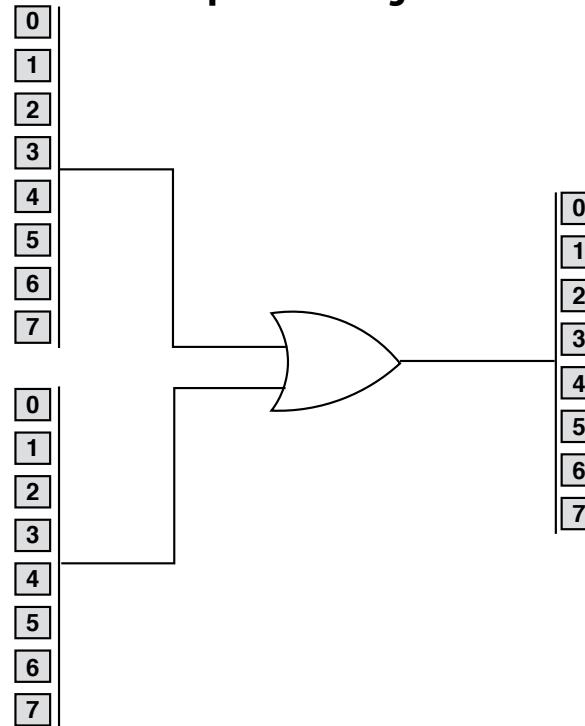


*Efficient Embedded Computing [Dally et al. 08]*

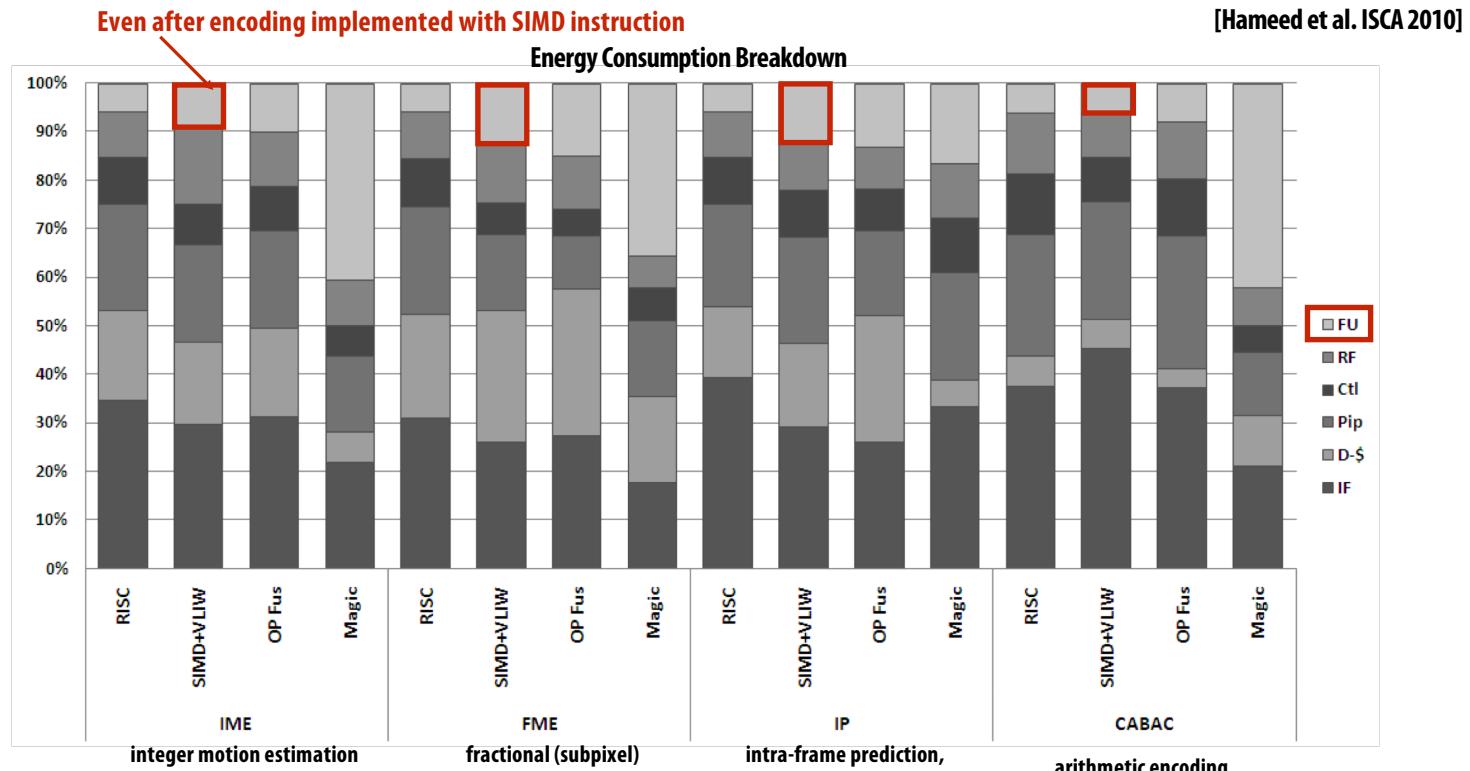
[Figure credit Eric Chung]

# Contrast that complexity to the circuit required to actually perform the operation

Example: 8-bit logical OR



# H.264 video encoding: fraction of energy consumed by functional units is small (even when using SIMD)



FU = functional units

RF = register fetch

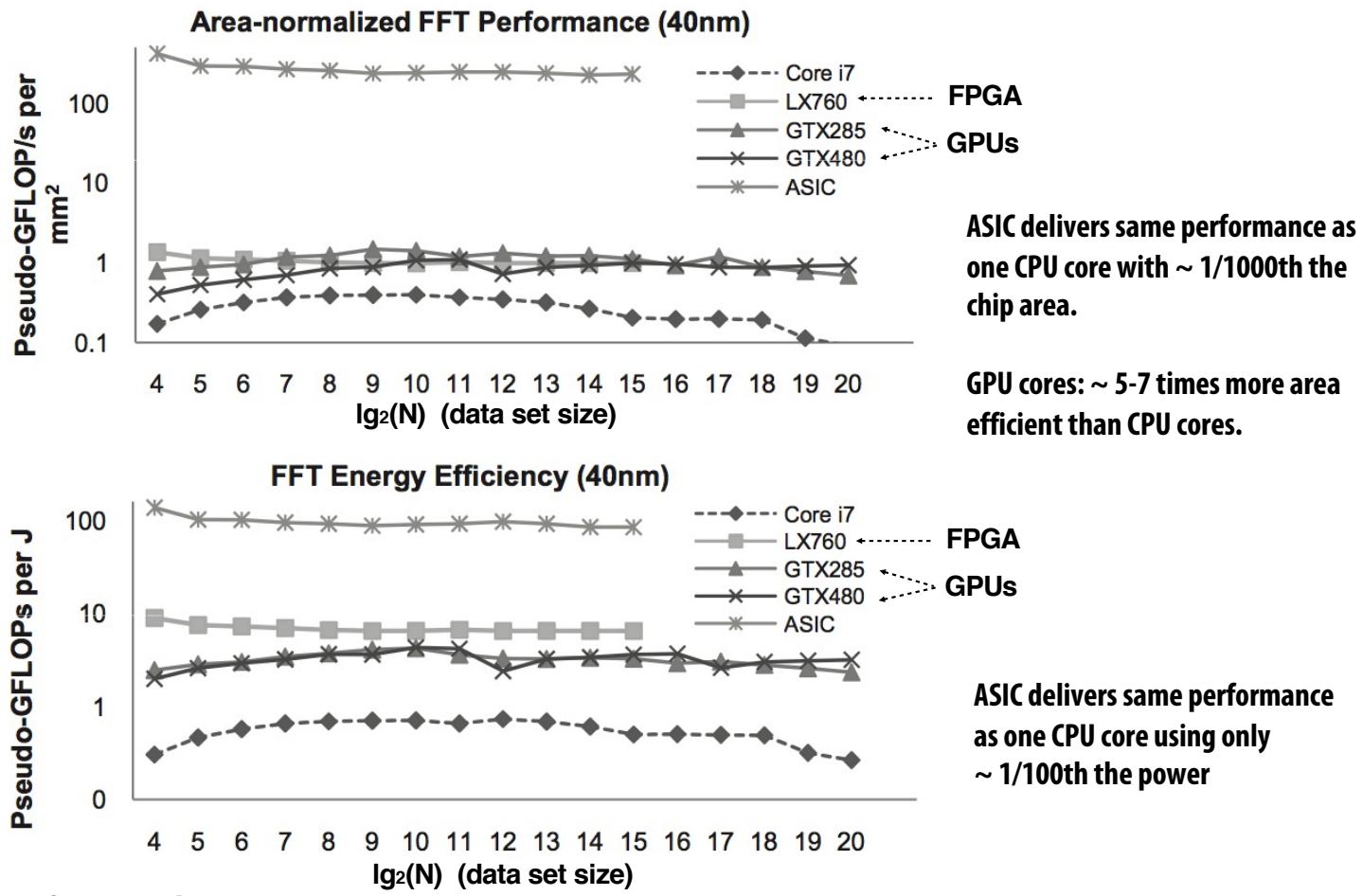
Ctrl = misc pipeline control

Pip = pipeline registers (interstage)

D-\$ = data cache

IF = instruction fetch + instruction cache

# Fast Fourier transform (FFT): throughput and energy benefits of specialization

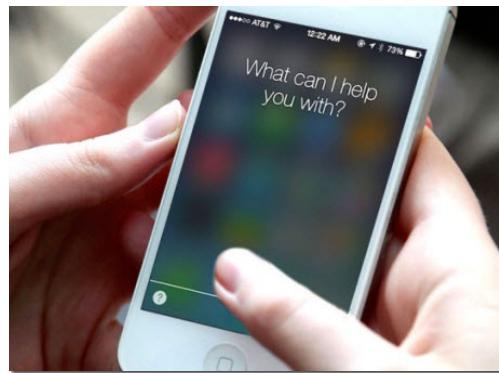


[Chung et al. MICRO 2010]

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# Mobile: benefits of increasing efficiency

- Run faster for a fixed period of time
  - Run at higher clock, use more cores (reduce latency of critical task)
  - Do more at once
  
- Run at a fixed level of performance for longer
  - e.g., video playback, health apps
  - Achieve “always-on” functionality that was previously impossible



**iPhone:**  
Siri activated by button press or holding phone up to ear

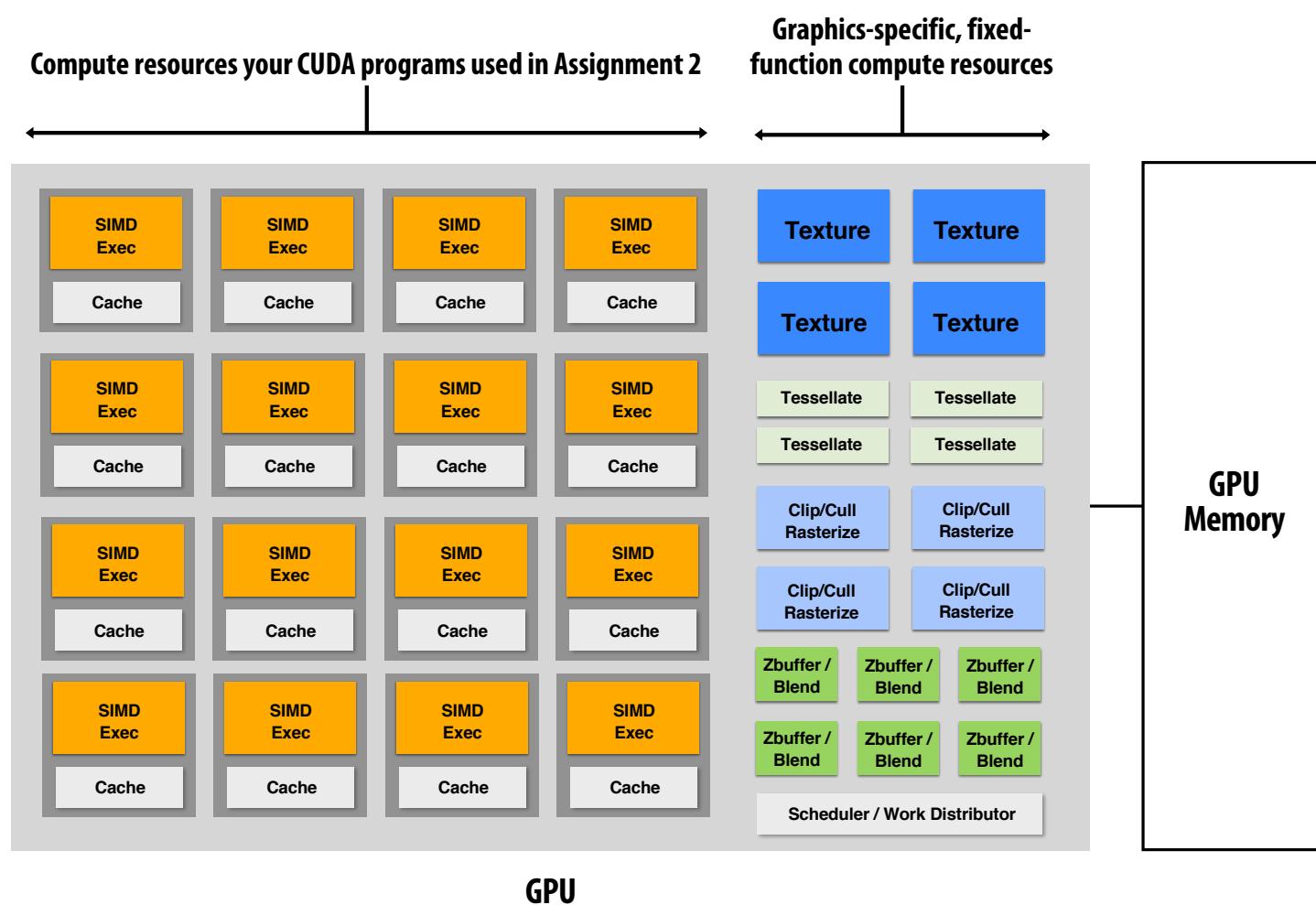


**Amazon Echo / Google Home**  
**Always listening**



**Google Glass: ~40 min recording per charge  
(nowhere near “always on”)**

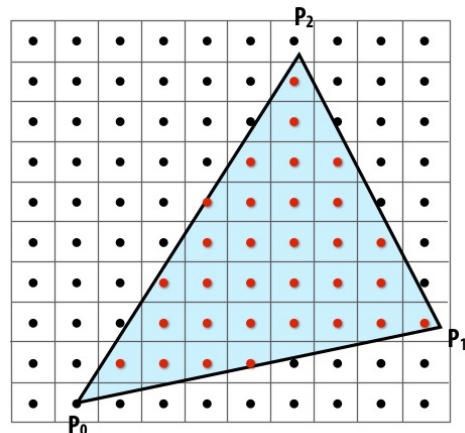
# GPU's are themselves heterogeneous multi-core processors



# Example graphics tasks performed in fixed-function HW

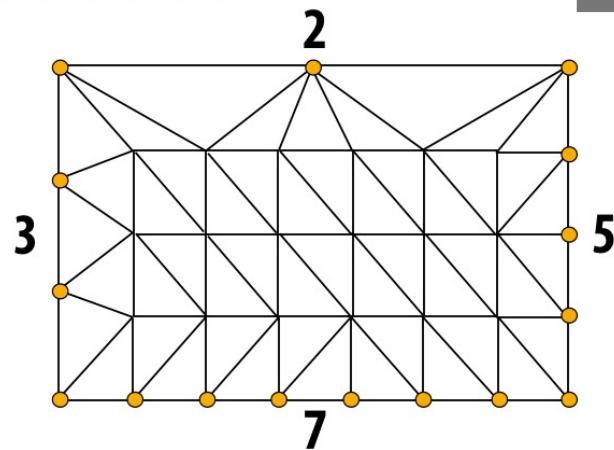
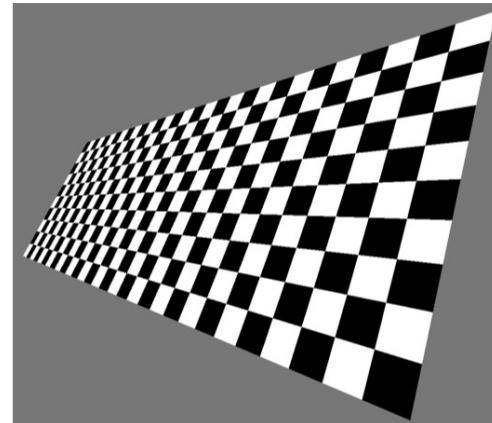
Rasterization:

Determining what pixels a triangle overlaps



Texture mapping:

Warping/filtering images to apply detail to surfaces



Geometric tessellation:  
computing fine-scale geometry  
from coarse geometry

# Digital signal processors (DSPs)

Programmable processors, but simpler instruction stream control paths

Complex instructions (e.g., SIMD/VLIW): perform many operations per instruction (amortize cost of control)

## Example: Qualcomm Hexagon DSP

Used for modem, audio, and (increasingly) image processing on Qualcomm Snapdragon SoC processors

VLIW: "very-long instruction word"

Single instruction specifies multiple different operations to do at once (contrast to SIMD)

Below: innermost loop of FFT

Hexagon DSP performs 29 "RISC" ops per cycle

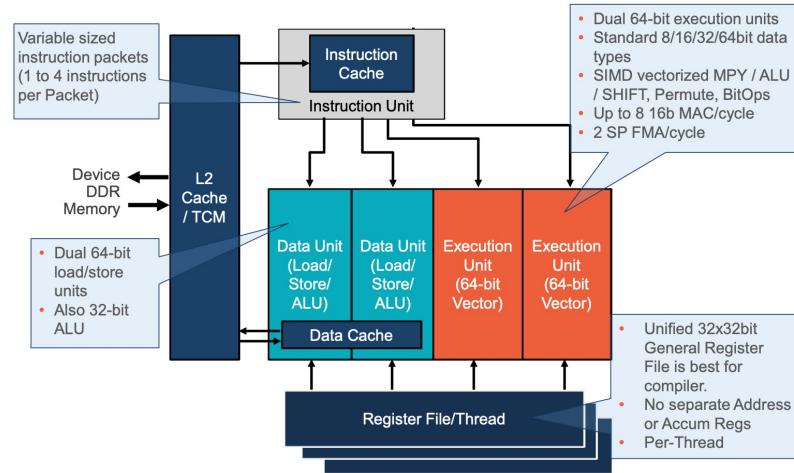
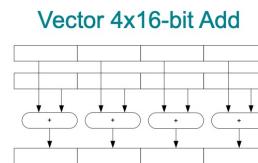
64-bit Load and

64-bit Store with  
post-update  
addressing

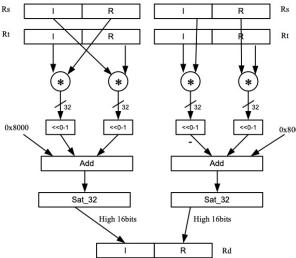
```
{ R17:16 = MEMD(R0++M1)
  MEMD(R6++M1) = R25:24
  R20 = CMPY(R20, R8):<<1:rnd:sat
  R11:10 = VADDH(R11:10, R13:12)
}:endloop0
```

Zero-overhead loops

- Dec count
- Compare
- Jump top



Complex multiply with  
round and saturation



Hexagon DSP is in  
Google Pixel phone



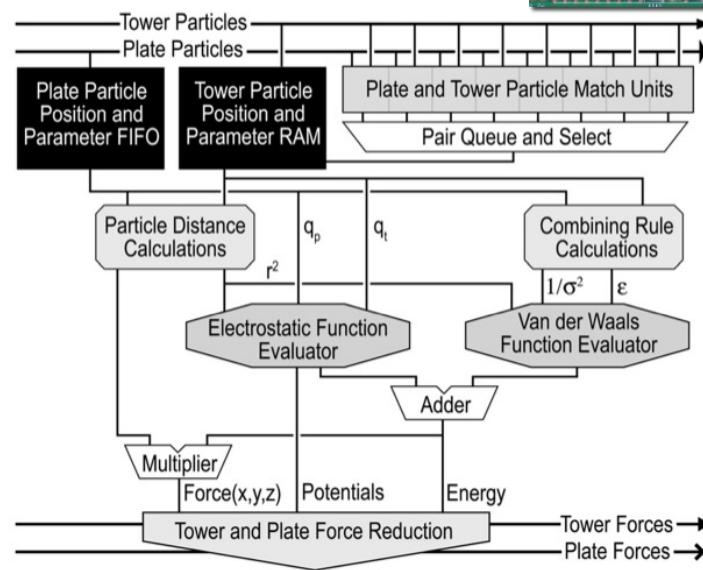
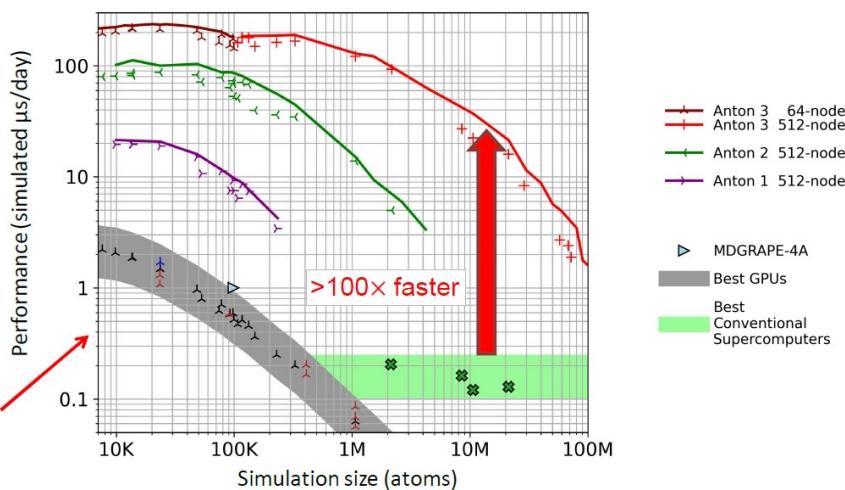
# Anton supercomputer for molecular dynamics

[Developed by DE Shaw Research]



- Simulates time evolution of proteins
- ASIC for computing particle-particle interactions (512 of them in machine)
- Throughput-oriented subsystem for efficient fast-fourier transforms
- Custom, low-latency communication

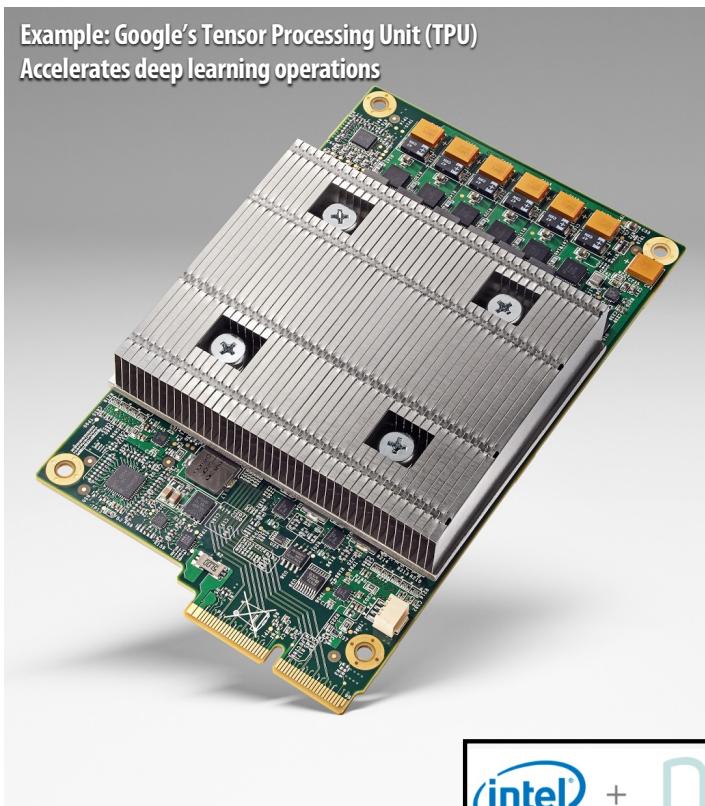
network designed for communication patterns  
of N-body simulations



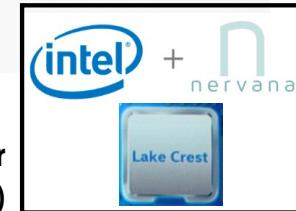
# Specialized processors for evaluating deep networks

Countless recent papers at top computer architecture research conferences on the topic of ASICs or accelerators for deep learning or evaluating deep networks...

- [Cambricon: an instruction set architecture for neural networks](#), Liu et al. ISCA 2016
- [EIE: Efficient Inference Engine on Compressed Deep Neural Network](#), Han et al. ISCA 2016
- [Cnvlutin: Ineffectual-Neuron-Free Deep Neural Network Computing](#), Albericio et al. ISCA 2016
- [Minerva: Enabling Low-Power, Highly-Accurate Deep Neural Network Accelerators](#), Reagen et al. ISCA 2016
- [vDNN: Virtualized Deep Neural Networks for Scalable, Memory-Efficient Neural Network Design](#), Rhu et al. MICRO 2016
- [Fused-Layer CNN Architectures](#), Alwani et al. MICRO 2016
- [Eyeriss: A Spatial Architecture for Energy-Efficient Dataflow for Convolutional Neural Network](#), Chen et al. ISCA 2016
- [PRIME: A Novel Processing-in-memory Architecture for Neural Network Computation in ReRAM-based Main Memory](#), Chi et al. ISCA 2016
- [DNNWEAVER: From High-Level Deep Network Models to FPGA Acceleration](#), Sharma et al. MICRO 2016



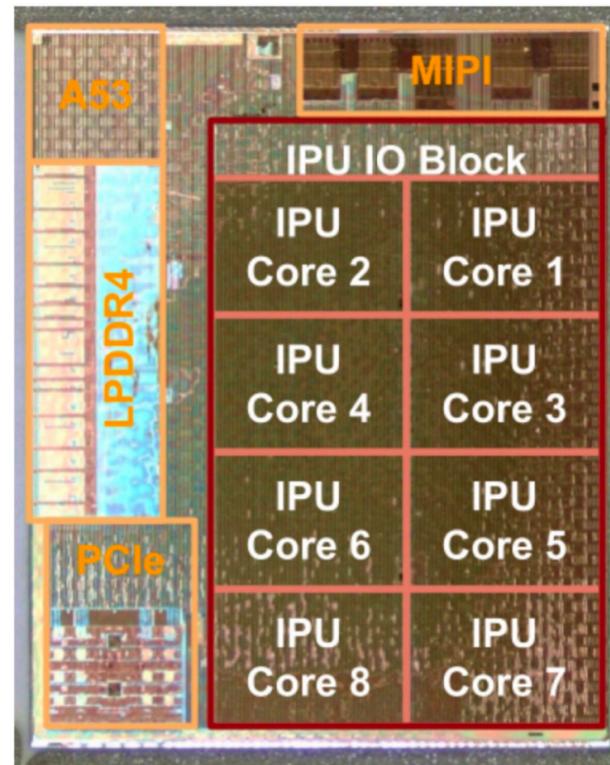
Intel Lake Crest ML accelerator  
(formerly Nervana)



# Example: Google's Pixel Visual Core

Programmable “image processing unit” (IPU)

- Each core = 16x16 grid of 16 bit multiply-add ALUs
- ~10-20x more efficient than GPU at image processing tasks  
(Google's claims at HotChips '18)

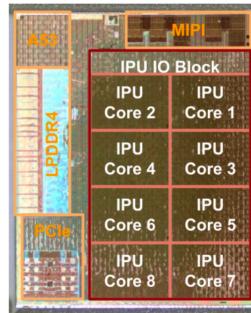


# Let's crack open a modern smartphone

Google Pixel 2 Phone:

Qualcomm Snapdragon 835 SoC + Google Visual Pixel Core

**Visual Pixel Core**  
Programmable image  
processor and DNN accelerator



**"Hexagon"**  
**Programmable DSP**  
data-parallel multi-media  
processing

**Image Signal Processor**  
ASIC for processing camera  
sensor pixels



**Multi-core GPU**  
(3D graphics,  
OpenCL data-parallel compute)

**Video encode/decode ASIC**

**Display engine**  
(compresses pixels for  
transfer to high-res screen)

**Multi-core ARM CPU**  
4 "big cores" + 4 "little cores"

# FPGAs (Field Programmable Gate Arrays)

- Middle ground between an ASIC and a processor
- FPGA chip provides array of logic blocks, connected by interconnect
- Programmer-defined logic implemented directly by FPGA

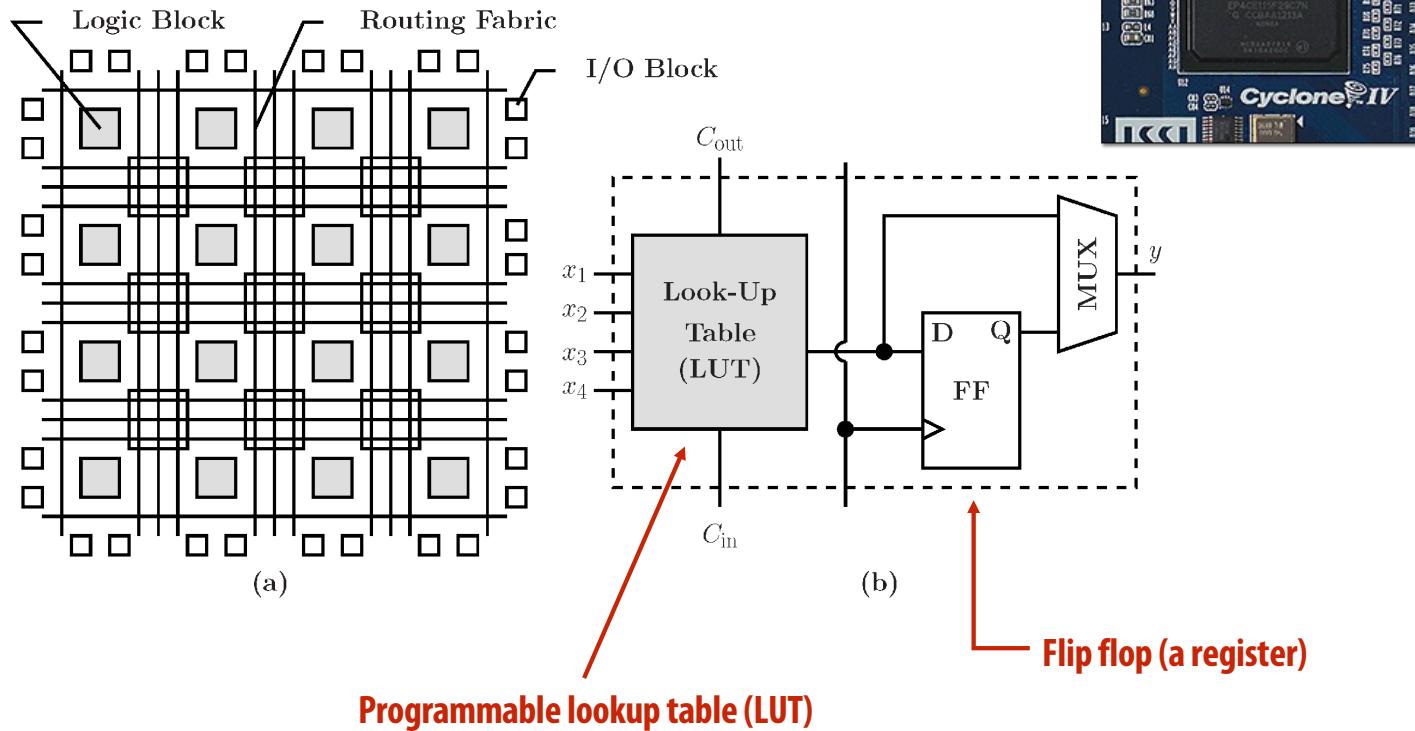
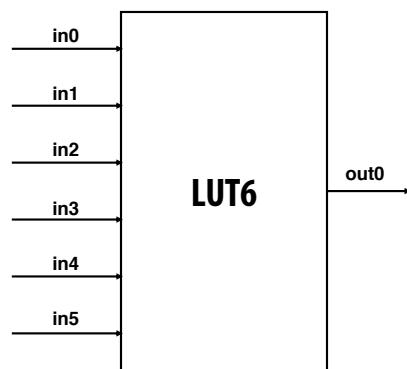


Image credit: Bai et al. 2014

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# Specifying combinatorial logic as a LUT

- Example: 6-input, 1 output LUT in Xilinx Virtex-7 FPGAs
  - Think of a LUT6 as a 64 element table



Example: 6-input AND	In	Out
	0	0
	1	0
	2	0
	3	0
	:	:
	63	1

40-input AND constructed by chaining outputs of eight LUT6's (delay = 3)

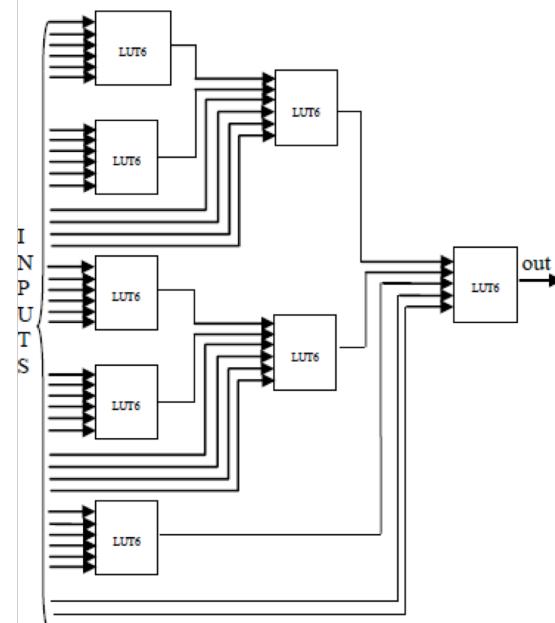
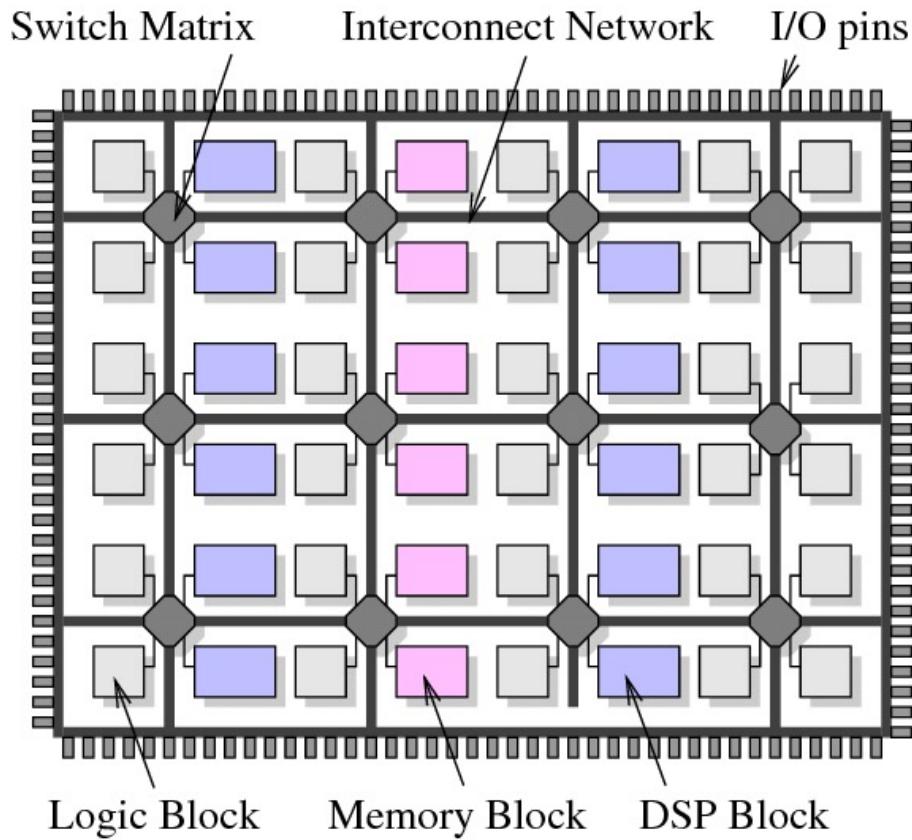


Image credit: [Zia 2013]

# Modern FPGAs



- **A lot of area devoted to hard gates**
  - **Memory blocks (SRAM)**
  - **DSP blocks (multiplier)**

# Project Catapult

[Putnam et al. ISCA 2014]

- Microsoft Research investigation of use of FPGAs to accelerate datacenter workloads
- Demonstrated offload of part of Bing search's document ranking logic

FPGA board

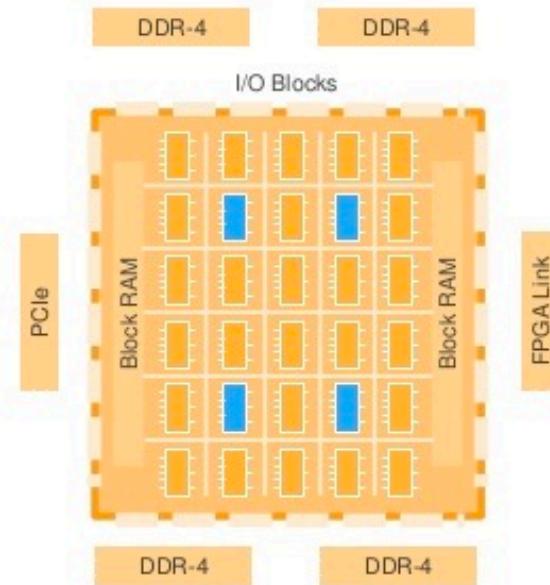


1U server (Dual socket CPU + FPGA connected via PCIe bus)

# Amazon F1

- FPGA's are now available on Amazon cloud services

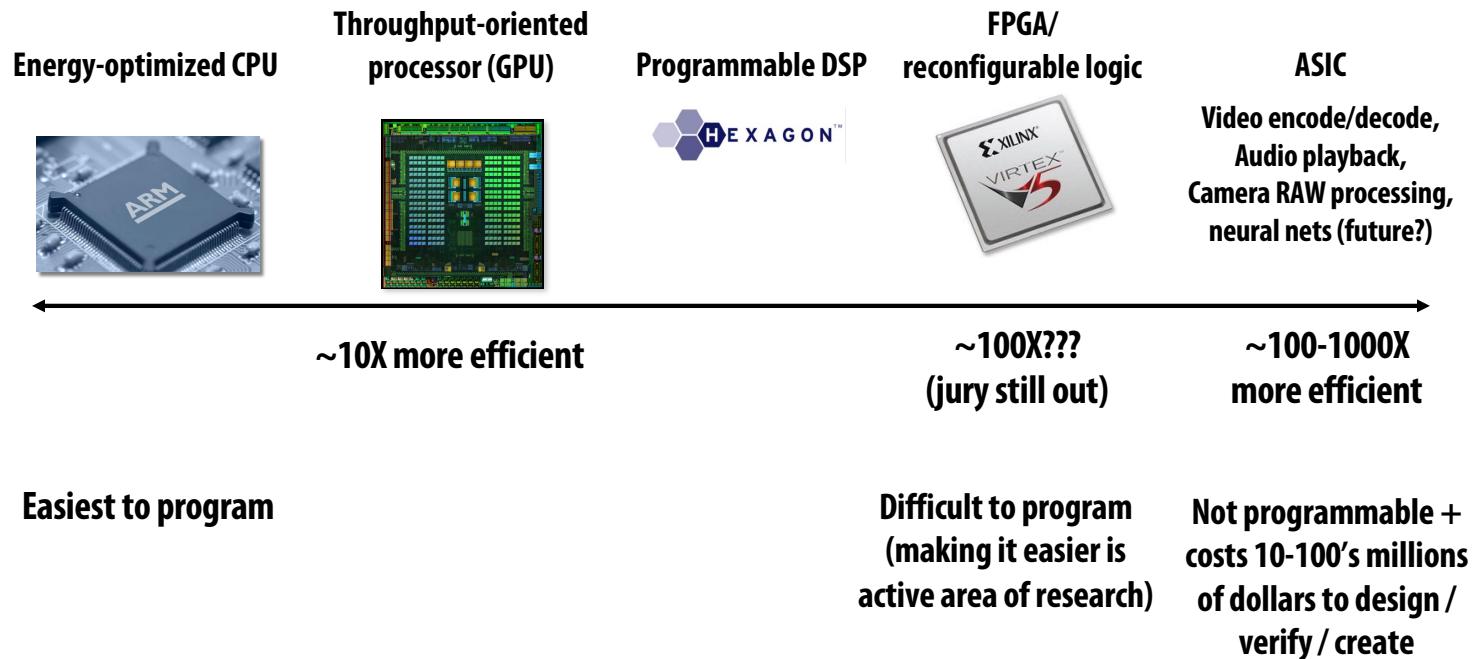
## What's Inside the F1 FPGA?



- **System Logic Block:**  
Each FPGA in F1 provides over 2M of these logic blocks
- **DSP (Math) Block:**  
Each FPGA in F1 has more than 5000 of these blocks
- **I/O Blocks:**  
Used to communicate externally, for example to DDR-4, PCIe, or ring
- **Block RAM:**  
Each FPGA in F1 has over 60Mb of internal Block RAM, and over 230Mb of embedded UltraRAM



# Summary: choosing the right tool for the job



# **Challenges of heterogeneous designs:**

**(it's not easy to realize the potential of  
specialized, heterogeneous processing)**

# Challenges of heterogeneity

- **Heterogeneous system: preferred processor for each task**
- **Challenge to software developer: how to map application onto a heterogeneous collection of resources?**
  - Challenge: “Pick the right tool for the job”: design algorithms that decompose into components that each map well to different processing components of the machine
  - The scheduling problem is more complex on a heterogeneous system
- **Challenge for hardware designer: what is the right mixture of resources?**
  - Too few throughput oriented resources (lower peak throughput for parallel workloads)
  - Too few sequential processing resources (limited by sequential part of workload)
  - How much chip area should be dedicated to a specific function, like video?

**Reducing energy consumption idea 1:  
use specialized processing**  
(use the right processor for the job)

**Reducing energy consumption idea 2:  
move less data**

# Data movement has high energy cost

- Rule of thumb in mobile system design: always seek to reduce amount of data transferred from memory
  - Earlier in class we discussed minimizing communication to reduce stalls (poor performance). Now, we wish to reduce communication to reduce energy consumption
- “Ballpark” numbers [[Sources: Bill Dally \(NVIDIA\), Tom Olson \(ARM\)](#)]
  - Integer op: ~ 1 pJ \*
  - Floating point op: ~20 pJ \*
  - Reading 64 bits from small local SRAM (1mm away on chip): ~ 26 pJ
  - Reading 64 bits from low power mobile DRAM (LPDDR): ~1200 pJ
- Implications
  - Reading 10 GB/sec from memory: ~1.6 watts
  - Entire power budget for mobile GPU: ~1 watt (remember phone is also running CPU, display, radios, etc.)
  - iPhone 6 battery: ~7 watt-hours (note: my Macbook Pro laptop: 99 watt-hour battery)
  - Exploiting locality matters!!!

Suggests that recomputing values, rather than storing and reloading them, is a better answer when optimizing code for energy efficiency!

\* Cost to just perform the logical operation, not counting overhead of instruction decode, load data from registers, etc.

# Three trends in energy-optimized computing

## ■ Compute less!

- Computing costs energy: parallel algorithms that do more work than sequential counterparts may not be desirable even if they run faster

## ■ Specialize compute units:

- Heterogeneous processors: CPU-like cores + throughput-optimized cores (GPU-like cores)
- Fixed-function units: audio processing, “movement sensor processing” video decode/encode, image processing/computer vision?
- Specialized instructions: expanding set of AVX vector instructions, new instructions for accelerating AES encryption (AES-NI)
- Programmable soft logic: FPGAs

## ■ Reduce bandwidth requirements

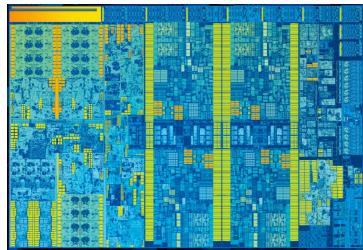
- Exploit locality (restructure algorithms to reuse on-chip data as much as possible)
- Aggressive use of compression: perform extra computation to compress application data before transferring to memory (likely to see fixed-function HW to reduce overhead of general data compression/decompression)

# **Summary: heterogeneous processing for efficiency**

- **Heterogeneous parallel processing: use a mixture of computing resources that fit mixture of needs of target applications**
  - Latency-optimized sequential cores, throughput-optimized parallel cores, domain-specialized fixed-function processors
  - Examples exist throughout modern computing: mobile processors, servers, supercomputers
- **Traditional rule of thumb in “good system design” is to design simple, general-purpose components**
  - This is not the case in emerging systems (optimized for perf/watt)
  - Today: want collection of components that meet perf requirement AND minimize energy use
- **Challenge of using these resources effectively is pushed up to the programmer**
  - Current CS research challenge: how to write efficient, portable programs for emerging heterogeneous architectures?

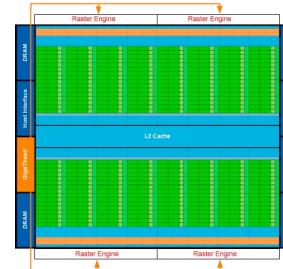
# Heterogeneous Parallel Programming Today

Pthreads  
OpenMP  
IPSC



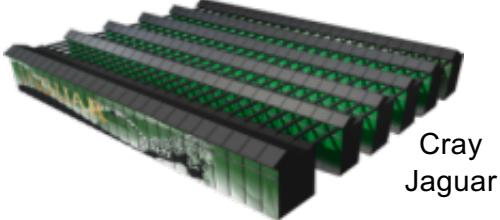
Intel  
Skylake

CUDA  
OpenCL



Nvidia  
Fermi

MPI  
PGAS  
Spark



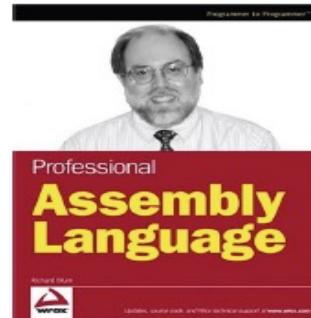
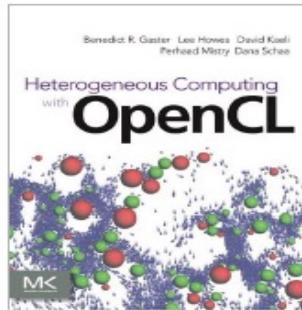
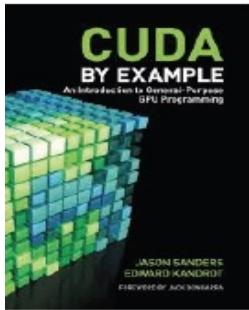
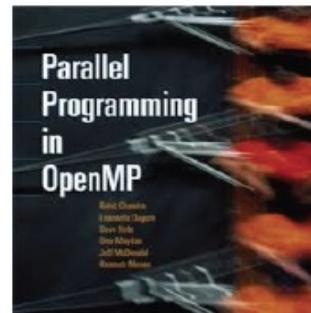
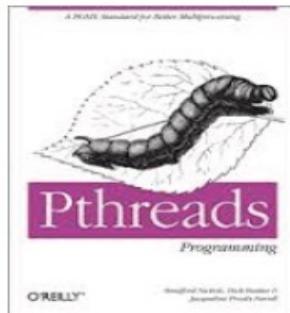
Cray  
Jaguar

Verilog  
VHDL



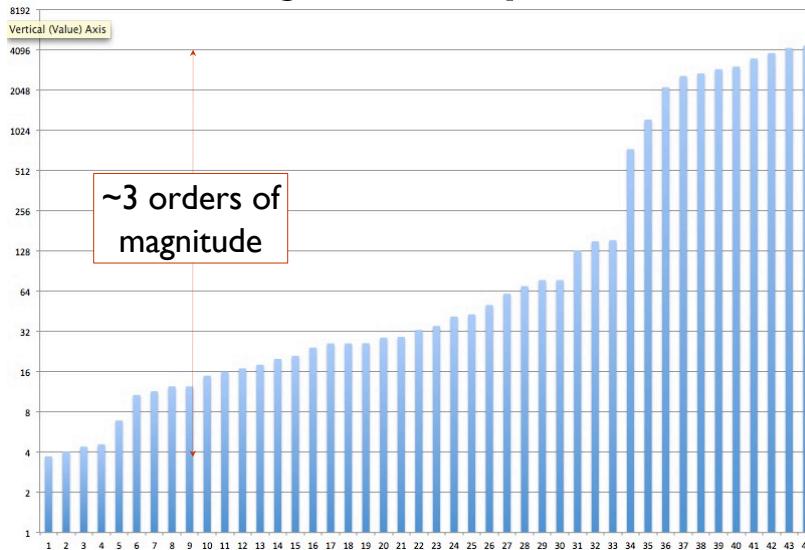
Altera  
FPGA

# EXPERT PROGRAMMERS ⇒ LOW PRODUCTIVITY



# Expert Programming is Difficult

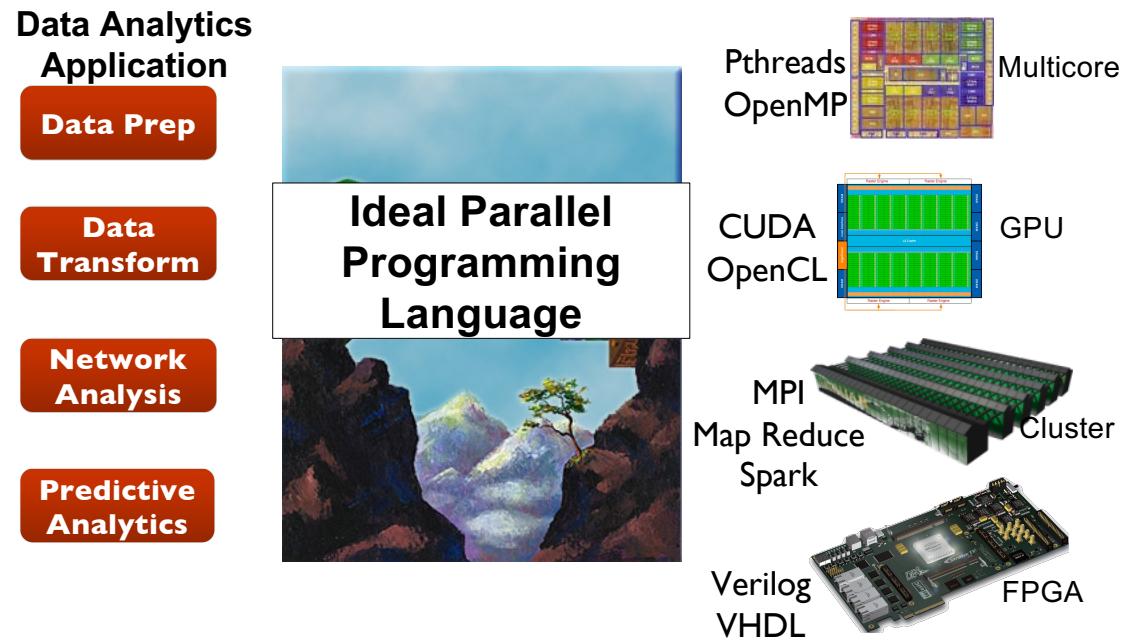
Image Filter in OpenMP



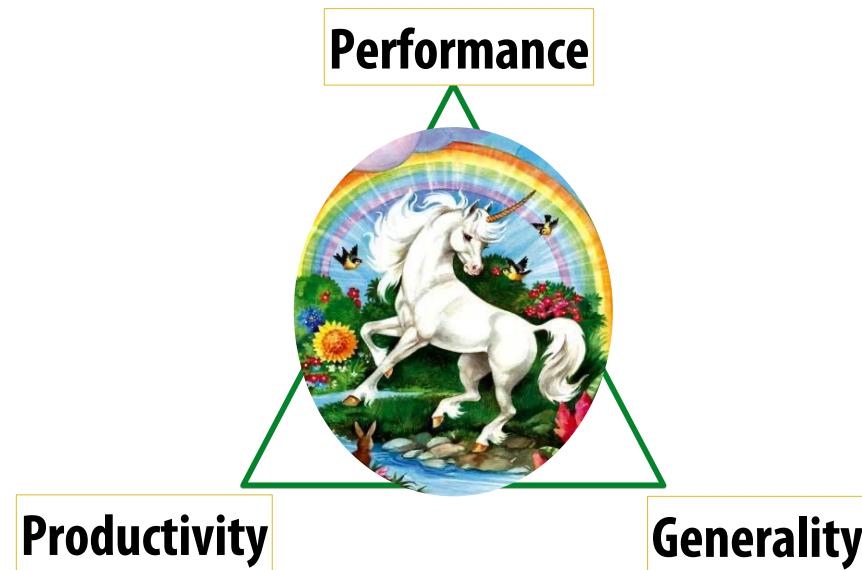
## Optimizations:

- Precomputing twiddle
- Not computing what not part of the filter
- Transposing the matrix
- Using SSE

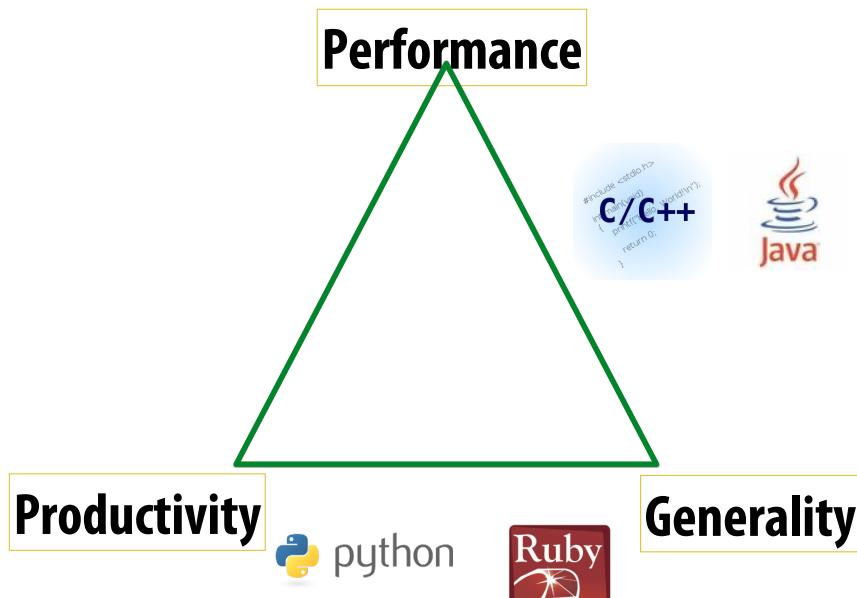
# Big-Data Analytics Programming Challenge



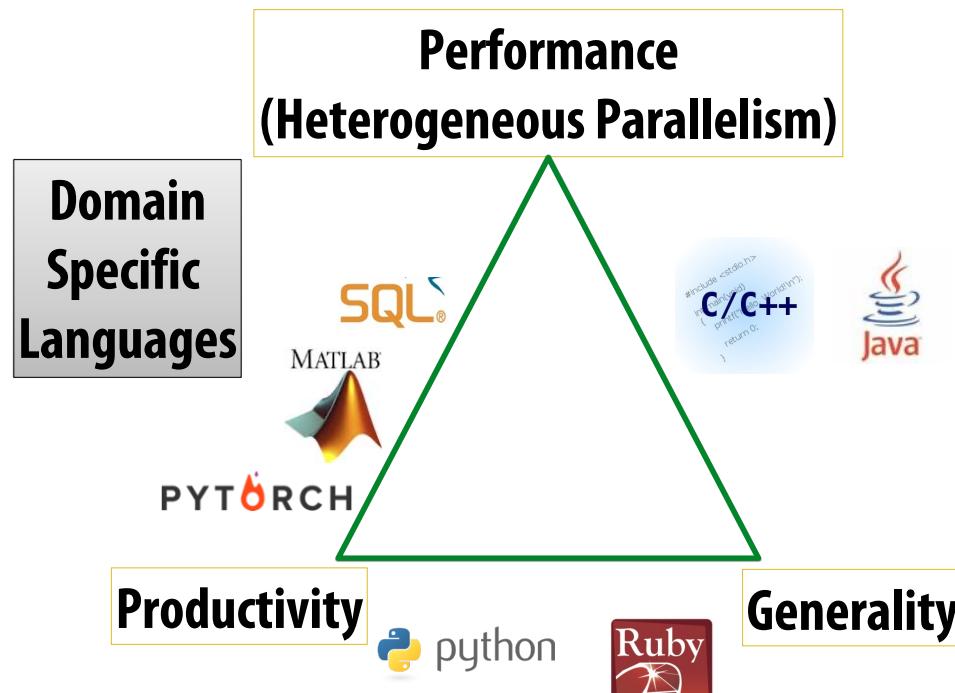
# The Ideal Parallel Programming Language



# Successful Languages (not exhaustive ;-))



# Way Forward ⇒ Domain Specific Languages



# **DSL Hypothesis**

**It is possible to write one program  
and  
run it efficiently on heterogeneous  
parallel systems**

# Domain Specific Languages

- Domain Specific Languages (DSLs)
  - Programming language with restricted expressiveness for a particular domain
  - High-level, usually declarative, and deterministic



T<sub>E</sub>X

# Domain-specific programming systems

- Main idea: raise level of abstraction for expressing programs
  - Goal: write one program, and run it efficiently on different machines
- Introduce high-level programming primitives specific to an application domain
  - Productive: intuitive to use, portable across machines, primitives correspond to behaviors frequently used to solve problems in targeted domain
  - Performant: system uses domain knowledge to provide efficient, optimized implementation(s)
    - Given a machine: system knows what algorithms to use, parallelization strategies to employ for this domain
    - Optimization goes beyond efficient mapping of software to hardware! The hardware platform itself can be optimized to the abstractions as well
- Cost: loss of generality/completeness

# Building DSLs

- External DSL
  - An external DSL is implemented as a standalone language
    - Matlab, SQL
    - + Flexible syntax and semantics, simplicity
    - – YAPL, interpretations slow, no tool chain (IDE, debugger, prof, ...)
- Embedded (Internal) DSL
  - An internal DSL is embedded within another language. Ideally, the host language has features that make it easy to build DSLs
  - OptiML(Scala), Halide(C++), PyTorch(Python), TensorFlow(Python)
  - +Familiar syntax, access to general purpose features, tool chain
  - –verbose syntax, hard to limit features, hard to debug DSLs, slow interpreters

# Delite: A Framework for High Performance DSLs

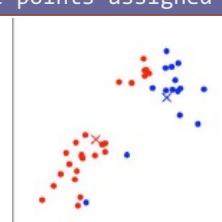
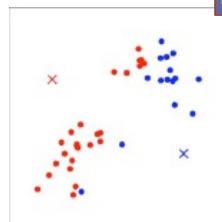
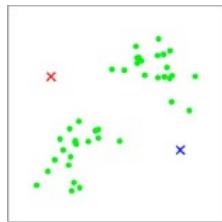
- **Overall Approach: Generative Programming for “Abstraction without regret”**
  - **Embed compilers in Scala libraries:** Scala does syntax and type checking
  - **Use metaprogramming with LMS (type-directed staging) to build an intermediate representation (IR) of the user program**
  - **Optimize IR and map to multiple targets**
- **Goal: Make embedded DSL compilers easier to develop than stand alone DSLs**
  - **As easy as developing a library**

# OptiML: Overview

- Provides a familiar (MATLAB-like) language and API for writing ML applications
  - Ex. `val c = a * b` (`a, b` are `Matrix[Double]`)
- Implicitly parallel data structures
  - Base types
    - `Vector[T], Matrix[T], Graph[V,E], Stream[T]`
  - Subtypes
    - `TrainingSet, IndexVector, Image, ...`
- Implicitly parallel control structures
  - `sum{...}, (0::end){...}, gradient { ... }, untilconverged { ... }`
  - Allow anonymous functions with restricted semantics to be passed as arguments of the control structures

# K-means Clustering in OptiML

```
untilconverged(kMeans, tol){kMeans =>
    val clusters = samples.groupRowsBy { sample =>
        kMeans.mapRows(mean => dist(sample, mean)).minIndex
    }
    val newKmeans = clusters.map(e => e.sum / e.length)
    newKmeans
}
```



assign each sample to the closest mean

calculate distances to current means

move each cluster centroid to the mean of the points assigned to it

- No explicit map-reduce, no key-value pairs
- No distributed data structures (e.g. RDDs)
- No annotations for hardware design
- Efficient multicore and GPU execution
- Efficient cluster implementation
- Efficient FPGA hardware

# Importance of DSLs is Growing

- **Linear Algebra**
  - **Matlab**
- **Data processing**
  - **SQL**
- **Machine Learning**
  - **PyTorch**
  - **TensorFlow**
- **Image processing**
  - **Halide**
- **Key question**
  - **How to design and implement high-performance DSLs that support heterogeneous computing**

# **A DSL example:**

## **Halide: a domain-specific language for image processing**

**Jonathan Ragan-Kelley, Andrew Adams et al.**  
**[SIGGRAPH 2012, PLDI 13]**