CS 31: Intro to Systems ISAs and Assembly

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Reading Quiz

Overview

- How to directly interact with hardware
- Instruction set architecture (ISA)
 - Interface between programmer and CPU
 - Established instruction format (assembly lang)
- Assembly programming (ARM64)

Abstraction





Compilation Steps (.c to a.out)



Compilation Steps (.c to a.out)



You can see the results of intermediate compilation steps using different gcc flags

executable binary

Executable code (a.out)

Assembly Code

Human-readable form of CPU instructions

- Almost a 1-to-1 mapping to Machine Code
- Hides some details:
 - Registers have names rather than numbers
 - Instructions have names rather than codes

We're going to use ARM64 assembly

- CS lab machines are x86 (x86-64)
- We have a small cluster of ARM64 machines for CS 31
 - On that cluster, can compile C to ARM64 assembly: gcc -S code.c # open code.s in editor to view

Compilation Steps (.c to a.out)



Object / Executable / Machine Code

Assembly			Machine Co			
sub	sp, sp, #0x10	d1	00	43	ff	
mov	w0, #0xa	52	80	01	40	
str	w0, [sp, #12]	b9	00	0f	e0	
mov	w0, #0x14	52	80	02	80	
str	w0, [sp, #8]	b9	00	0b	e0	
ldr	w1, [sp, #12]	b9	40	0f	e1	
ldr	w0, [sp, #8]	b9	40	0b	e0	
add	W0, W1, W0	0b	00	00	20	
str	w0, [sp, #12]	b9	00	0f	e0	
ldr	w0, [sp, #12]	b9	40	0f	e0	
add	sp, sp, #0x10	91	00	43	ff	
ret		d6	5f	03	c0	

Machine Code (Hexadecimal for readability)

Object / Executable / Machine Code

Assembly

sub	sp,	sp, #0x10
mov	w0,	#0xa
str	w0,	[sp, #12]
mov	w0,	#0x14
str	w0,	[sp, #8]
ldr	w1,	[sp, #12]
ldr	w0,	[sp, #8]
add	w0,	w1, w0
str	w0,	[sp, #12]
ldr	w0,	[sp, #12]
add	sp,	sp, #0x10
ret		

int main(void) { int a = 10;int b = 20;a = a + b;return a; }

Compilation Steps (.c to a.out)



Instruction Set Architecture (ISA)

- ISA (or simply architecture): Interface between lowest software level and the hardware.
- Defines specification of the language for controlling CPU state:
 - Provides a set of instructions
 - Makes CPU registers available
 - Allows access to main memory
 - Exports control flow (change what executes next)

Instruction Set Architecture (ISA)

• The agreed-upon interface between all software that runs on the machine and the hardware that executes it.



ISA Examples

- Intel IA-32 (80x86)
- ARM
- MIPS
- PowerPC
- IBM Cell
- Motorola 68k

- Intel IA-64 (Itanium)
- VAX
- SPARC
- Alpha
- IBM 360

How many of these ISAs have you used? (Don't worry if you're not sure. Try to guess based on the types of CPUs/devices you interact with.)

- Intel IA-32 (80x86)
- ARM
- MIPS
- PowerPC
- IBM Cell
- Motorola 68k
 - A. 0
 B. 1-2
 C. 3-4

- Intel IA-64 (Itanium)
- VAX
- SPARC
- Alpha

D. 5-6

E. 7+

• IBM 360

ISA Characteristics

High-level language ISA Hardware Implementation

- Above ISA: High-level language (C, Python, ...)
 - Hides ISA from users
 - Allows a program to run on any machine (after translation by human and/or compiler)
- Below ISA: Hardware implementing ISA can change (faster, smaller, ...)
 - ISA is like a CPU "family"

ISA Characteristics

High-level language ISA Hardware Implementation

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 ISA is like a CPU "family"

Instruction Translation

```
sum.c (High-level C)
int sum(int x, int y) {
    int res;
    res = x+y;
    return res;
}
```

```
sum.s from sum.c:
    gcc -S sum.c
```

sum.s (Assembly)

sum	:		
	sub	sp,	sp, #0x20
	str	w0,	[sp, #12]
	str	w1,	[sp, #8]
	ldr	w1,	[sp, #12]
	ldr	w0,	[sp, #8]
	add	w0,	w1, w0
	str	w0,	[sp, #28]
	ldr	w0,	[sp, #28]
	add	sp,	sp, #0x20
	ret		

Instructions to set up the stack frame and get argument values

An add instruction to compute sum

Instructions to return from function

ISA Design Questions

```
sum.c (High-level C)
int sum(int x, int y) {
    int res;
    res = x+y;
    return res;
}
```

```
sum.s from sum.c:
   gcc -S sum.c
```

sum.s (Assembly)

sum:				
S	sub	sp,	sp, #	0x20
S	str	w0,	[sp,	#12]
S	str	w1,	[sp,	#8]
1	dr	w1,	[sp,	#12]
1	dr	w0,	[sp,	#8]
a	add	w0,	w1, w	r 0
S	str	w0,	[sp,	#28]
1	dr	w0,	[sp,	#28]
a	add	sp,	sp, #	0x20
r	ret			

What should these instructions do?

What is/isn't allowed by hardware?

How complex should they be?

Example: supporting multiplication.

C statement: $A = A^*B$

Simple instructions:

Powerful instructions:

LOAD REG1, A MULT A, B

PROD REG1, REG2

STORE A, REG1

LOAD REG2, B

Translation: Load the values 'A' and 'B' from memory into registers, compute the product, store the result in memory where 'A' was. Which would you use if you were designing an ISA for your CPU? (Why?) Simple instructions: Powerful instructions:

> LOAD REG1, A LOAD REG2, B PROD REG1, REG2 STORE A, REG1

MULT A, B

- A. Simple
- B. Powerful
- C. Something else

RISC versus CISC (Historically)

- Complex Instruction Set Computing (CISC)
 - Large, rich instruction set
 - More complicated instructions built into hardware
 - Multiple clock cycles per instruction
 - Easier for humans to reason about
- Reduced Instruction Set Computing (RISC)
 - Small, highly optimized set of instructions
 - Memory accesses are specific instructions
 - One instruction per clock cycle
 - Compiler: more work, more potential optimization

So . . . Which System "Won"?

- Most ISAs (after mid/late 1980's) are RISC
- The ubiquitous Intel x86 is CISC
 - Tablets and smartphones (ARM) taking over?
- x86 breaks down CISC assembly into multiple, RISC-like, machine language instructions
- Distinction between RISC and CISC is less clear
 - Some RISC instruction sets have more instructions than some CISC sets

ISA Examples

- Intel IA-32 (CISC)
- ARM (RISC)
- MIPS (RISC)
- PowerPC (RISC)
- IBM Cell (RISC)
- Motorola 68k (CISC)

- Intel IA-64 (Neither)
- VAX (CISC)
- SPARC (RISC)
- Alpha (RISC)
- IBM 360 (CISC)

ISA Characteristics

High-level language ISA Hardware Implementation

- Above ISA: High-level language (C, Python, ...)
 - Hides ISA from users
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- Below ISA: Hardware implementing ISA can change (faster, smaller, ...)
 - ISA is like a CPU "family"

Intel x86 Family (IA-32)

Intel i386 (1985)

- 12 MHz 40 MHz
- ~300,000 transistors
- Component size: 1.5 μ m



Intel Core i9 12900k (late 2021)

- ~4,000 MHz 5,000 MHz
- ~3,000,000,000 transistors
- Component size: ~7 nm



Everything in this family uses the same ISA (Same instructions)!

This semester... ARM!

- ARM is less complex than x86
- ARM is everywhere (e.g., smart phones)
- Specifically, we'll be using AArch64 (64-bit ARM, ARM64)

Processor State in Registers (ARM64)

- Working memory for currently executing program
- Address of next instruction to execute (PC)
- Status of recent ALU tests:
 - N: result is negative
 - Z: result is zero
 - C (carry): unsigned overflow
 - V: signed overflow



ARM64 Register Conventions

- Even though x0 x31 are generalpurpose, some are unofficially reserved for specific purposes...
- x29 x31 used to keep track of function / stack information (more on this later)



Component registers



Assembly Programmer's View of State



Memory:

- Byte addressable array
- Program code and data
- Execution stack

Types of ARM64 Instructions

- Data movement (move values between registers or memory)
 - Move (mov): move data from one register to another
 - Load (ldr): move data from memory to register
 - Store (str): move data from register to memory

Data Movement

Move values between memory and registers or between two registers.



Types of ARM64 Instructions

- Data movement (move values between registers or memory)
- Arithmetic (use ALU to compute a value)
 - addition (add)
 - subtract (sub)
 - Many more...

Arithmetic

Use ALU to compute a value, store result in a register.


Types of ARM64 Instructions

- Data movement (move values between registers or memory)
- Arithmetic (use ALU to compute a value)
- Control (change PC based on ALU condition code state)
 - branch (b): change PC to value
 - branch if equal (b.eq): change PC if condition codes indicate equality
 - branch if less than or equal (b.le): same as above, but for less than or equal

Control

Change PC based on ALU condition code state.



Types of ARM64 Instructions

- Data movement (move values between registers or memory)
- Arithmetic (use ALU to compute a value)
- Control (change PC based on ALU condition code state)
- Stack / Function call (We'll cover these in detail later)
 - Shortcut instructions for common operations

Addressing Modes

- Instructions need to be told where to get operands or store results
- Variety of options for how to *address* those locations

Addressing Mode: Register

- Instructions can refer to the name of a register
- Example:
 - mov x4, x15 (Copy the contents of x15 into x4 -- overwrites x4, no change to x15)

Addressing Mode: Immediate

- Also known as "Literal" or "Constant" mode
- Allows programmer to hard-code a number
- Can be either decimal (# prefix) or hexadecimal (#0x prefix)
- Examples:
 - mov x0, #42 (Move the decimal constant 42 into register x0)
 - add x1, x3, #0x10 (Add hex 0x10 to contents of x3, store result in x1)

- Access the contents of memory by using a memory address contained in a register.
- Can only be used for the load and store family of instructions
 - load: data moves from memory into register (load from memory)
 - store: data moves from register into memory (store to memory)
 - other instructions cannot access memory directly (e.g, add)

- Access the contents of memory by using a memory address contained in a register.
- Several different forms for accessing memory
- 1. access address in register: [register]

Accessing memory requires brackets []. The brackets are a giveaway that we're treating the number in the register as a memory address.

• Examples:

- ldr x1, [x7] (Access memory at the address stored in register x7, load data there into x1)
- str x20, [x2] (Store the contents of register x20 at the memory address stored in x2)

• ldr x1, [x7] (Access memory at the address stored in register x7, load data there into x1)

CPU Registers

name	value
xl	0
x7	0x1A68



• ldr x1, [x7] (Access memory at the address stored in register x7, load data there into x1)



• ldr x1, [x7] (Access memory at the address stored in register x7, load data there into x1)



- 2. access address in register + immediate: [register, #constant]
- 3. access address in register + register: [register, register]
- Examples:
 - ldr x3, [sp, #8] (Take the value in sp (x31), add 8 to it, and treat the sum as a memory address. Load the data found at that memory address into register x3.)
 - str x2, [x1, x7] (Take the value in x1, add the value stored in x7 to it, and treat the sum as a memory address. Load the data found at that memory address into register x2.)









Other ways of accessing memory

- Other memory forms, see table at bottom of book section 9.1.
- Other instructions that load / store two registers at once, see table 2 in book section 9.2.
- In general, I'll expect you to be able to read / understand those instructions with the help of the cheat sheet. You don't need to generate them on your own though. They often help with compiler optimizations.

Let's try a few examples...

(Bonus: write an equivalent one-line expression in C code)

ldr x0, [sp, #8] ldr x1, [sp, #16] lsl x1, x1, #3 mul x1, x0, x1 ldr x0, [sp] add x1, x0, x1 str x1, [sp, #16]



(Bonus: write an equivalent one-line expression in C code)

ldr	x0,	[sp, #8]
ldr	x1,	[sp, #16]
lsl	x1,	x1, #3
mul	x1,	x0, x1
ldr	x0,	[sp]
add	x1,	x0, x1
str	x1,	[sp, #16]

	Regis	sters			Memory	
	Name	Value		Address	Value	C variable
	x0	2		0x1260	2	х
Α.	x1	50		0x1268	3	У
				0x1270	50	Z
	x31 (sp)	0x1260				
	Regis	sters			Memory	
	Name	Value		Address	Value	C variable
	x0	50		0x1260	50	х
В.	x1	2		0x1268	3	У
				0x1270	2	Z
	x31 (sp)	0x1260		•••		
	Regis	sters	-		Memory	
	Name	Value		Address	Value	C variable
	x0	3		0x1260	2	х
C.	x1	48		0x1268	3	У
				0x1270	48	Z
	x31 (sp)	0x1260				

(Bonus: write an equivalent one-line expression in C code)

ldr x0, [sp, #8] ldr x1, [sp, #16] lsl x1, x1, #3 mul x1, x0, x1 ldr x0, [sp] add x1, x0, x1 str x1, [sp, #16]

internory				
Address	Value	C variable		
0x1260	2	х		
0x1268	3	У		
0x1270	2	Z		

Memory

Registers

Name	Value
x0	
x1	
x31 (sp)	0x1260

(Bonus: write an equivalent one-line expression in C code)

ldr x0, [sp, #8] $x0 \leftarrow y$ ldr x1, [sp, #16] x1 $\leftarrow z$ lsl x1, x1, #3 x1 \leftarrow x1 << 3mul x1, x0, x1 $x1 \leftarrow x0 * x1$ $1dr x0, [sp] x0 \leftarrow x$ add x1, x0, x1 $x1 \leftarrow x0 + x1$ str x1, [sp, #16] $z \leftarrow x1$ C Expression:

MemoryAddressValueC variable0x12602x0x12683y0x127050z.........

Registers

Name	Value
x0	2
x1	50
x31 (sp)	0x1260

(Bonus: write an equivalent one-line expression in C code)

ldr x0, [sp, #8] $x0 \leftarrow y$ ldr x1, [sp, #16] x1 $\leftarrow z$

 x1, x1, #3 $x1 \leftarrow x1 << 3$

 mul x1, x0, x1 $x1 \leftarrow x0 * x1$
 $1dr x0, [sp] x0 \leftarrow x$ add x1, x0, x1 $x1 \leftarrow x0 + x1$ str x1, [sp, #16] $z \leftarrow x1$ C Expression: z = z * 8 * y + x

ινιειτιοι γ				
Address	Value	C variable		
0x1260	2	х		
0x1268	3	У		
0x1270	50	Z		

Momory

Registers

Name	Value
x0	2
x1	50
x31 (sp)	0x1260

```
ldr x0, [sp]
ldr x1, [sp, #-16]
orr x0, x0, #15
neg x1, x0
stp x0, x1, [sp, #8]
```

Re	_	0xFF(
Name	Value		OxFF
x0			0xFF:
x1			OxFF :
•••			0xFF2
x31 (sp)	0xFF10	Y	

Memory

	Address	Value
	0xFF00	5
	0xFF08	11
-	OxFF10	7
	OxFF18	9
	0xFF20	13
	•••	•••

How might you execute this C statement in ARM64 assembly?



How might you execute this C statement in ARM64 assembly?

z = x ^ y



A: ldr x0, [sp, #8]
A: ldr x1, [sp]
eor x0, x0, x1
str x0, [sp, #-8]

ldr x0, [sp, #-8]
B: ldr x1, [sp]
eor x0, x0, x1
str x0, [sp, #8]

I came up with some C: other way.

How might you execute this C statement in ARM64 assembly?

$$z = (z - 5) \& \sim y$$





(1) $z = x^{y}$

ldr x0,	[sp, #-8]	x0 ← x
ldr x1,	[sp]	x1 ← y
eor x0,	x0, x1	x0 ← x0 ^ x1
str x0,	[sp, #8]	z ← x0

2)	z = (z - 5) & ~y	
	ldr x0, [sp]	x0 ← y
	mvn x0, x0	x0 ← ~x0
	ldr x1, [sp, #8]	x1 ← z
	sub x1, x1, #5	x1 ← x1 - 5
	and x1, x0, x1	x1 ← x0 & x1
	str x1, [sp, #8]	z 🗲 x1

These are each just one example of *many* ways to execute these C statements in ARM64 assembly!

Control Flow

- Previous examples focused on:
 - data movement (mov, ldr, str)
 - arithmetic(add, sub, orr, neg, lsl, etc.)
- Up next: branching (aka jumping)!

(Changing which instruction we execute next.)



Relevant XKCD





<u>xkcd #292</u>

Unconditional branching / goto

A label is a place you <u>might</u> jump to.

Labels ignored except for goto/branches.

(Skipped over if encountered)

```
a = a + b;
label1:
  return a;
}
```

int func(void) {

int a = 10;

int b = 20;

goto label1;

int x = 20; Label1: int y = x + 30; Label2: printf("%d, %d\n", x, y);

ARM64 Labels

- Label represents a place to which you might branch
 - The assembler determines the address of the label
 - The address will often be displayed as an offset from the start of a function
- For "local" labels (the kind you'll be *writing* for if/else and loops):
 - Convention says to prefix them with a . character
 - e.g., .L1:

Unconditional	branching / goto
<pre>int func(void) { int a = 10; int b = 20;</pre>	mov w0, #1 mov w1, #2
goto label1; a = a + b;	b .L1 add w0, w0
label1: return a; }	.L1: ret

- mov w0, #10 mov w1, #20
- b .L1 add w0, w0, w1

Note, we declared 'int' variables (32-bit), so we use the w register prefix!

Unconditional branching / goto

- Uses for unconditional branching:
 - (intentional) infinite loop
 - break
 - continue
 - function calls (handled differently than just b instruction)
- Often, we only want to branch when *something* is true / false.
- Need a way to compare values, branch based on comparison results.

Condition Codes (or "Flags")

• Set in two ways:

- 1. In response to explicit comparison instructions
- 2. As "side effects" produced by ALU with instructions suffixed by **s**
 - e.g., adds subs
- ARM64, condition codes tell you:
 - N: the result of the ALU operation is negative (high-order bit is 1)
 - Z: the result of the ALU operation is zero
 - C (carry): the result, if interpreted as unsigned, has overflowed
 - V: the result, if interpreted as signed, has overflowed

Instructions that set condition codes

- 1. Arithmetic/logic side effects (adds, subs, ands, etc.)
- 2. CMP and TEST:
 - **cmp a**, **b** like computing **a**-**b** without storing result
 - Sets V if overflow, Sets C if carry-out, Sets Z if result is zero, Sets N if result is negative
 - tst a, b like computing a&b without storing result
 - Sets Z if result is zero, sets N if result is negative V and C flags are zero (there is no overflow with &)
Which flags would this **subs** set?

• Suppose x0 holds 5, x1 holds 7

subs x0, x0, #5

A. Z
B. N
C. C and Z
D. C and N
E. C, N, and V

If the result is zero (Z) If the result's first bit is set (negative if signed) (N) If the result overflowed (assuming unsigned) (C) If the result overflowed (assuming signed) (V)

Which flags would this **cmp** set?

• Suppose x0 holds 5, x1 holds 7

cmp x0, x1

A. Z
B. N
C. C and Z
D. C and N
E. C, N, and V

If the result is zero (Z) If the result's first bit is set (negative if signed) (N) If the result overflowed (assuming unsigned) (C) If the result overflowed (assuming signed) (V)

Conditional Branching

• b.SUFFIX: branch based on which condition codes are set

See book section 9.4.1

You do not need to memorize these!

Instruction	Condition	Description
b	1	Unconditional
b.eq	Z	Equal / Zero
b.ne	~Z	Not Equal / Not Zero
b.mi	N	Negative
b.Pl	~N	Nonnegative
b.gt	~(N^V) & ~Z	Greater (Signed)
b.ge	~ (N^V)	Greater or Equal (Signed)
b.lt	(N^V) ~Z	Less (Signed)
b.le	(N^V)	Less or Equal (Signed)

Example Scenario

```
long userval;
scanf("%ld", &userval);
```

```
if (userval == 42) {
    userval += 5;
```

```
} else {
```

}

...

```
userval -= 10;
```

- Suppose user gives us a value via scanf
- We want to check to see if it equals 42
 - If so, add 5
 - If not, subtract 10

How might we use branches/CCs for this?

Assume userval is stored in register x0 at this point.

```
long userval;
scanf("%ld", &userval);
```

```
if (userval == 42) {
    userval += 5;
} else {
    userval -= 10;
```

```
}
```

...

How would we use jumps/CCs for this?

...

Assume userval is stored in register x0 at this point.

```
long userval;
scanf("%ld", &userval);
```

```
if (userval == 42) {
    userval += 5;
} else {
    userval -= 10;
}    (A) cmp x0, #42
    b.eq .L2
    .L1:
```

```
b.eq .L2
.L1:
   sub x0, x0, #10
   b .DONE
.L2:
   add x0, x0, #5
.DONE:
```

...

```
(B) cmp x0, #42
                        (C) cmp x0, #42
   b.ne .L2
                            b.ne .L2
  .L1:
                           .L1:
  sub x0, x0, #10
                            add x0, x0, #5
   b .DONE
                             b .DONE
  .L2:
                           .L2:
   add x0, x0, #5
                             sub x0, x0, #10
  .DONE:
                           .DONE:
```

...

Loops

• We'll look at these in the lab!

Summary

- ISA defines what programmer can do on hardware
 - Which instructions are available
 - How to access state (registers, memory, etc.)
 - This is the architecture's *assembly language*
- In this course, we'll be using ARM64 (AArch64)
 - Instructions for:
 - moving data (mov, ldr, str)
 - arithmetic (add, sub, mul, orr, lsl, etc.)
 - control (b, b.eq, b.ne, etc.)
 - Condition codes for making control decisions
 - If the result is zero (Z)
 - If the result's first bit is set (negative if signed) (N)
 - If the result overflowed (assuming unsigned) (C)
 - If the result overflowed (assuming signed) (V)