CMSC 216
Introduction to Computer Systems
Lecture 1
Introduction

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Administrivia

- Course home page is at http://www.cs.umd.edu/class/fall2010/cmsc216
- If you don't already have a GLUE account, request one at http://www.oit.umd.edu/new/
- Bring your laptop to discussion section on the next two Wednesdays and - after that – Every Monday!
- Read Chapter 1 of Bryant and O'Hallaron, and Chapter 1 of Reek

Introduction to Computer Systems

- Course objectives
- Expectations
- Course policies
- Discussion sections
- Course projects
- Submit server
- Grades server

Chapter 1, Bryant and O'Hallaron

A Tour of Computer Systems

Storage of Information

- Computers store all data as binary digits, or bits; groups of 8 bits are often called bytes
- How these bits are treated depends on their context
  - the same sequence of bits can be used to represent a character, or an integer, or a floating-point number, or an instruction, or...
  - it's all a matter of interpretation

Instruction-based execution

- Each program on a computer is a sequence of instructions written in machine language
- Processor executes one instruction at a time in a program, then executes the next one in turn
- To study code in this form, it's helpful to use assembly language rather than machine language code

Example assembly program

```
main: mov   #0,sum          ; set sum to 0
      mov   #1,num          ; set num to 1
loop: add   num,sum         ; add num to sum
      add   #1,num          ; add 1 to num
      ble   num,#1000,loop  ; if num <= 1000, go back to 'loop'
      halt                  ; end of program. stop running
```

This is a slightly modified version of the example in Wikipedia's Computer article

- What does this program do?
- Sequence of operations doesn't always go to the next instruction in memory

Computer layout

- Lots of places to store information:
  - CPU registers
  - CPU caches
  - Main memory
  - Hard drives
  - Remote storage
- The farther away from the CPU you go, the longer it takes to access data
- Typical programs have to access data stored on a hard drive, which is quite slow compared to other storage mediums

Caching is important

- Executing a program can mean reading instructions from disk into memory, then moving around data from memory to registers or memory to disk
- Because some devices are much slower (maybe because they're bigger), we can utilize caches to speed up execution time by accessing copies of data
- This can be a major performance gain - properly utilizing caches can increase performance by orders of magnitude

The role of the operating system

- Protect the computer from misuse
- Provide an abstraction for using the hardware so that programs can be written for a variety of different hardware
- Manage the resources to allow for reasonable use by all users and programs on a computer

The UNIX Operating System

- Developed in 1970s at Bell Labs
- Kernel written in C, also developed at the same time
  - C was developed for the purpose of writing UNIX and systems programming
- We will use a variant of UNIX named Linux
  - Do not try working in a Windows environment just because you're more comfortable with it!
  - Other UNIX variants exist, such as Solaris, and the various BSDs (OpenBSD, NetBSD, FreeBSD, OSX)

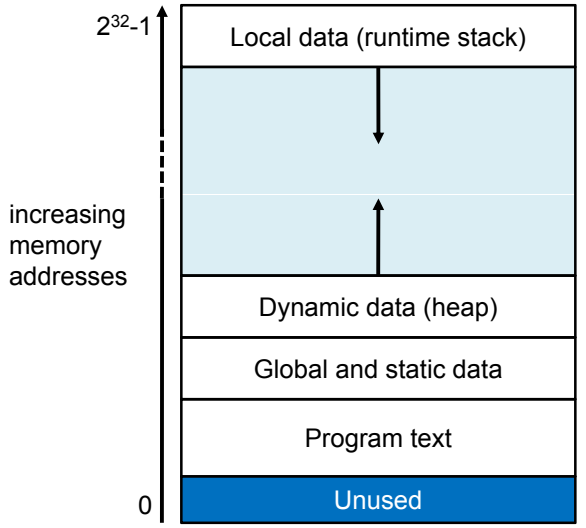
Processes

- Programs are often written as if they are the only things running on a system
- The OS allows them to work this way by providing an abstraction known as a process
- Process is a running program (one or more threads of control), along with all the data associated with it (an **address space**)
- OS uses context switching to give the appearance of multiple processes executing at once on a single processor

Virtual memory

- Each process is presented with the appearance of having 4 GB of available memory (on a 32-bit system) - this is virtual memory
- Physical memory ≠ virtual memory
  - Computer may not even have 4 GB of memory!
- Memory is organized in a particular manner; from bottom to top (in terms of addresses):
  - program code and data
  - heap
  - stack

Virtual address space (simplified)



Files in UNIX

- A file is a sequence of bytes - not a magical container holding the bytes, but the bytes themselves
- In UNIX, all I/O devices are modeled as a file
  - input from keyboard
  - output to screen
  - input/output from/to disk
  - input/output from/to network port
- Specific details of file organization can vary from OS to OS, and even filesystem to filesystem

Why learn about computer systems?

- Getting your programs to work correctly requires an understanding of how the computer does its work
- Making the computer do what you want can require in-depth knowledge of the OS
- For example, this Java method runs incredibly slowly, and it's entirely the programmer's fault:

```
public static int sumByColumns(int[][] array) {
  int sum = 0;
  for (int j = 0; j < COLS; j++)
    for (int i = 0; i < ROWS; i++)
      sum += array[i][j];
  return sum;
}
```