CMSC 430
Introduction to Compilers
Spring 2016

Code Generation
Introduction

- Code generation is the process of moving from “highest level” IR down to machine code
  - Usually takes place after data flow analysis

- Three major components
  - Instruction selection — Map IR into assembly code
  - Instruction scheduling — Reorder operations
    - Hide latencies in pipelined machines, ensure code obeys processor constraints
    - Modern processors do a lot of this already, and they have better information than the compiler...
  - Register allocation — Go from unbounded to finite reg set
    - Implies not all variables can always be in registers

- These problems are tightly coupled
  - But typically done separately in compilers
Code quality

• Compilers need to produce good “quality” code
  ▪ This used to mean: code should match what an expert assembly programmer would write
  ▪ With modern languages it’s much more unclear, but it mostly comes down to **performance**
    - back-end needs to know ins and outs of target machine code
      - What kind of code can the machine run efficiently?
      - When does the machine need extra help from the compiler?
      - Rise of bytecode: fulfills a long-standing idea of splitting front- and back-end of compiler up, and reusing them in many combinations
    - code generation cannot always be optimal
      - Benchmarking (e.g., SPEC) plays big role in code generator design
      - Compiler vendors play lots of games to do well on benchmarks
    - Rule of thumb: expose as much information as possible
Example: boolean operators

- How should these be represented?
  - Depends on the target machine and how they are used

- Example 1: If-then-else, x86, gcc

```c
if (x < y)
    a = b + c;
else
    a = d + e;
```

```assembly
cmp rx, ry       // result in EFLAGS
jge l1
add ra, rb, rc
jmp l2
l1: add ra, rd, re
l2: nop
```
Boolean operators (cont’d)

• Example 2: Standalone, x86, gcc

```c
a = (x < y);
```

```c
cmp rx, ry        // result in EFLAGS
setl %al          // 16-bit instruction
andb $1, %al      // only low bit set
movzbl %al, %eax  // extend to 32-bits
```
Boolean operations (cont’d)

• Example 3: If-then-else, Lua bytecode

```lua
local a, b, c, d, e, x, y;
if (x < y) then
    a = b + c;
else
    a = d + e;
end
```

```asm
lt 0, R5, R6 // skip next instr if R5 < R6 true
jmp l1       // pc += 2
add R0, R1, R2
jmp l2       // pc += 1
l1: add R0, R3, R4
l2: return
```
Boolean operations (cont’d)

• Example 4: Stand-alone, Lua

```
local a, x, y;
a = (x < y)
```

```
l1: loadbool R0, 0, l2 // R0 <- 0, fall through to l2
l2: return
```

```
lt 1, R1, R2 // skip next instr if R1 < R2 true
jmp l1 // pc += 1
loadbool R0, 0, l2 // R0 <- 0, jump to l2
```

Example: case statements

• Consider compiling a case/switch statement with n guards
  ▪ How expensive is it to decide which arm applies?

• Option 1: Cascaded if-then-else
  ▪ O(n) — linear in the number of cases, and actual cost depends on where matching arm occurs

• Option 2: Binary search
  ▪ O(log n) — but needs guards that are totally ordered

• Option 3: Jump table
  ▪ O(1) — but best when guards are dense (e.g., ints 0..10)

• No amount of “optimization” will covert one of these forms into another
Instruction selection

• Arithmetic exprs, global vars, if-then-else
  ▪ See codegen*.ml files on web site
Instruction selection — loops

while \((b)\) do \(s\);  
do \(s\) while \((b)\);  
for \((init; b; post)\) \(s\);
Multi-dimensional arrays

• Conceptually

• Row-major order (most languages)

• Column-major order (Fortran)

• Indirection vectors (Java)
Computing an array address

- **a[i]**
  - **a + i * sizeof(*a)**
    - Here `a` is the base address of the array, and assume array 0-based

- **a[i][j]**
  - **Row-major order**
    - **a + i * sizeof(*a) + j * sizeof(**a)**
    - Here `sizeof(*a)` is the size of a row or column, as appropriate
    - Much more arithmetic needed if array not 0-based
  - **Column-major order**
    - **a + j * sizeof(*a) + i * sizeof(**a)**
  - **Indirection vectors**
    - *(a + i * sizeof(pointer)) + j * sizeof(**a)*
Functions

• (Aka procedure, subroutine, routine, method, ...)
• Fundamental abstraction of computing
  ▪ Reusable grouping of code
  ▪ Usually also introduces a lexical scope/name space

• Calling conventions to interact with system, libraries, or separately compiled code
  ▪ In these cases, don’t have access to other code at compile time
    - Must have standard for passing parameters, return values, invariants maintained across function call, etc
  ▪ Don’t necessarily need to obey these “within” the language
    - But deviating from them reduces utility of system tools
Terminology

• Run time vs. compile time
  - The code that implements the calling convention is executed at \textit{run time}
  - The code is generated at \textit{compile time}

• Caller vs. callee
  - Caller — that function that made the call
  - Callee — the function that was called
(Algol, C) function call concerns

- Function invoked at call site
  - Control returns to call site when function returns
  - \( \Rightarrow \) need to save and restore a “return address”

- Function calls may be recursive
  - \( \Rightarrow \) need a stack of return addresses

- Need storage for parameters and local variables
- Must preserve caller’s state
  - \( \Rightarrow \) stack needs space for these

- Stack consists of activation records
  - We’ll see what these look like and how they are set up next
Activation Record Basics

One AR for each invocation of a procedure
Procedure Linkages

Standard procedure linkage

- **procedure p**
  - **prolog**
  - **pre-call**
  - **post-return**
  - **epilog**

- **procedure q**
  - **prolog**
  - **epilog**

Procedure has
- standard **prolog**
- standard **epilog**

Each call involves a
- **pre-call** sequence
- **post-return** sequence

These are completely predictable from the call site
⇒ depend on the number & type of the actual parameters
Pre-call sequence

• Sets up callee’s basic AR
• Helps preserve its own environment

• The Details
  - Allocate space for the callee’s AR
    - except space for local variables
  - Evaluates each parameter & stores value or address
  - Saves return address, caller’s ARP into callee’s AR
  - Save any caller-save registers
    - Save into space in caller’s AR
  - Jump to address of callee’s prolog code
Post-return sequence

• Finish restoring caller’s environment
• Place any value back where it belongs

• The Details
  ▪ Copy return value from callee’s AR, if necessary
  ▪ Free the callee’s AR
  ▪ Restore any caller-save registers
  ▪ Copy back call-by-value/result parameters
  ▪ Continue execution after the call
Prolog code

• Finish setting up callee’s environment
• Preserve parts of caller’s environment that will be disturbed

• The Details
  ■ Preserve any callee-save registers
  ■ Allocate space for local data
    - Easiest scenario is to extend the AR
  ■ Handle any local variable initializations
Epilog code

- Wind up the business of the callee
- Start restoring the caller’s environment

The Details
- Store return value?
  - Some implementations do this on the return statement
  - Others have return assign it & epilog store it into caller’s AR
  - Still others (x86) store it in a register
- Restore callee-save registers
- Free space for local data, if necessary
- Load return address from AR
- Restore caller’s ARP
- Jump to the return address
Concrete example: x86

- The CPU has a fixed number of registers
  - Think of these as memory that’s really fast to access
  - For a 32-bit machine, each can hold a 32-bit word

- Important x86 registers
  - eax  generic register for computing values
  - esp  pointer to the top of the stack
  - ebp  pointer to start of current stack frame
  - eip  the program counter (points to next instruction in text segment to execute)
x86 activation record

- The stack just after f transfers control to g

Based on Fig 6-1 in Intel ia-32 manual
x86 calling convention

• To call a function
  ▪ Push parameters for function onto stack
  ▪ Invoke CALL instruction to
    - Push current value of eip onto stack
      - i.e., save the program counter
      - Start executing code for called function
  ▪ Callee pushes ebp onto stack to save it

• When a function returns
  ▪ Put return value in eax
  ▪ Invoke RET instruction to load return address into eip
    - i.e., start executing code where we left off at call
Example

int f(int a, int b) {
    return a + b;
}

int main(void) {
    int x;
    x = f(3, 4);
}

gcc -m32 -S a.c
Example

```c
int f(int a, int b) {
    return a + b;
}

int main(void) {
    int x;
    x = f(3, 4);
}
```

gcc -m32 -S a.c
Example

```c
int f(int a, int b) {
    return a + b;
}

int main(void) {
    int x;
    x = f(3, 4);
}
```

gcc -m32 -S -O3 a.c
Lots more details

- There’s a whole lot more to say about calling functions
  - Local variables are allocated on stack by the callee as needed
    - This is usually the first thing a called function does, by incrementing esp
  - Saving registers
    - If the callee is going to use eax itself, you’d better save it to the stack before you call
  - Passing parameters in registers
    - More efficient than pushing/popping from the stack
    - Can be done if caller and callee cooperate
    - (But watch out for extern functions that could be called from anywhere)
  - Etc...
Even more details

• Different languages/OS’s can have different conventions
  - And conventions have changed over time

• System call interface is different application-level interface
  - Need to switch into kernel mode in some way
  - Details depend on OS
  - Typically, syscalls wrapped by standard library
    - E.g., calling open() in C calls into libc, which does some high-level stuff and then does a syscall
    - Syscall code often implemented as inline assembly
Higher-order languages

• If a called function can outlive its caller, need to keep activation record on the heap
  - \texttt{fun x -> (fun y -> x + y)}
  - I.e., we need \textit{closures} for these

• These get allocated basically like we saw in 330
  - Try to avoid allocating these if curried functions called with all arguments at once
Memory layout

- Code, static, and global data have known size
  - Can refer to entities by predetermined offsets
    - (Note: ASLR used to prevent attackers from guessing these)
  - Heap and stack both grow and shrink over time
    - Better utilization if stack and heap grow toward each other (Knuth)

- Note this is a virtual address space
The really big picture

Compiler’s view

OS’s view

Hardware’s view

virtual address spaces

Physical address space
The really small picture

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Page_table
Linking

• Many languages support *separate compilation*
  - Individual modules or components are compiled by themselves, without needing to recompile the modules or components they depend on
  - Can dramatically reduce time to recompile program when program is changed

• *Linking* combines components together
  - In C and OCaml, linking is an explicit phase
  - In Java, linking is implicit as dependencies are loaded by the JVM

• Linkers often support *shared libraries*
  - Shared lib code appears only once on disk for all apps
  - Shared lib can be updated, apps automatically see new version
    - → linking against shared lib only checks existence (and maybe type) of symbol
  - Shard lib code must be *position independent*
Linking example

Makefile
all: main.o lib.o
    gcc main.o lib.o -o prog

lib.o: lib.c
    gcc -c lib.c

main.o: main.c
    gcc -c main.c

main.c
extern int print_s(const char *);
int main() {
    print_s("Hello, world!");
}

lib.c
#include <stdio.h>
void print_s(const char *s) {
    printf("%s", s);
}
gcc compilation process

Loading

- OS needs to know many things about a program
  - Where is the program code
  - Where are values for the data segment
  - How should the program be started
  - What shared libs does the program refer to

- Thus, compilers must create an executable that is in a standard format
  - E.g., ELF on Linux, PE32+ on Windows, Mach-O on OS X

- Details of all these can be found on the web, in man pages, and in developer documentation
ELF

**elf.c**

```c
int x = 1010101;
char *s = "Hello, world!\n";

int main() {
    int x=1;
    return x;
}
```

gcc -o elf.c

objdump -D elf.o
Stack SMASHING!

- **Buffer overflow**

```
*str  ret  exec("/bin/sh")
```

- **strcpy()** - what if bounds aren’t checked?

- **Return to libc**

```
*str  ret  fake_ret  "/bin/sh"
```

- `system()`
Stack SMASHING! (defences)

- Canary values
  - inject random values in between stack frames
  - check those values during function call

- Address Space Layout Randomisation
  - randomise the layout of key data areas (heap, stack, libraries)

```c
int main () {
    register int *ebp asm("ebp");
    printf("%p\n", ebp);
}
```

```
$: ./randomlayout
0x7fff67835036
$: ./randomlayout
0x7fff663e5036
```
Compiling objects and classes

• Object = record with data (fields) and code (meths)
  ▪ In a classless OO language, in general case need to treat each object separately

• Class = set of objects with same meths
  ▪ ⇒ All insts of a class can share memory used for meth code
  ▪ (But, each inst has its own fields)

• Virtual method table (vtable) contains pointers to methods of class
  ▪ Object record points to vtable, and then vtable used to resolve dynamic dispatch
Example

```c
class A { int f; void m1(void) { ... } }
```
```
a1 = A.new();
a2 = A.new();
```

- The vtable includes the class type (for run-time type tests) and a function pointer for each method
  - At `x.m1()`, call `(x->vtable[0])(())`
  - (Note we know the offset of m1 from the type of x)
Single Inheritance

class A { int f; void m1(void) { ... } }
class B extends A { int g; void m2(void) { ... } }
a = A.new();
b = B.new();

- Ensure superclass layouts are *prefixes* of subclass layouts
  - At \texttt{x.m1()}, still call \texttt{(x->vtable[0])()}
  - At \texttt{x.m2()}, call \texttt{(x->vtable[1])()}

```cpp
class A { int f; void m1(void) { ... } }
class B extends A { int g; void m2(void) { ... } }
a = A.new();
b = B.new();
```
Multiple inheritance

class A { int f; void m1(void) { ... } }
class B extends A { int g; void m2(void) { ... } }
class C extends A { int h; void m3(void) { ... } }
class D extends B { int i; void m1(void) { ... } }
class E extends C, D { int j; void m4(void) { ... } }

• (Notice that D overrides method m1)
• Much more complicated!
  ▪ Separate compilation, so don’t know full inheritance hierarchy
  ▪ Must support both up- and downcasts
  ▪ Want method lookup to be efficient
• Solutions? Several—see web for details!