Administrivia

- Course home page is at http://www.cs.umd.edu/class/fall2009/cmsc313
- If you don’t already have a GLUE account, request one at http://www.oit.umd.edu/new/
- You have to be registered for one of the 213 sections
- Bring your laptop to discussion section on Wed.
- Read Chapter 1 of Bryant and O’Hallaron, and Chapter 1 of Reek

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Introduction to Computer Systems

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

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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...
  – 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

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
  - output 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:
  ```java
  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;
  }
  ```
Comparison between C and Java

- C is procedural, not object-oriented
- C is fully compiled (to machine code), not to bytecode
- C allows direct manipulation of memory via pointers
- C does not have garbage collection
- Many of the basic language constructs in C act in similar ways to the way they work in Java
- C has many important, yet subtle, details