Intermediate Code & Local Optimizations
Lecture Outline

• Intermediate code

• Local optimizations
Code Generation Summary

• We have so far discussed
  - Runtime organization
  - Simple stack machine code generation
  - Improvements to stack machine code generation

• Our compiler goes directly from the abstract syntax tree (AST) to assembly language
  - And does not perform optimizations
  - (optimization is the last compiler phase, which is by far the largest and most complex these days)

• Most real compilers use intermediate languages
Why Intermediate Languages?

**ISSUE:** When to perform optimizations

- On abstract syntax trees
  - **Pro:** Machine independent
  - **Con:** Too high level

- On assembly language
  - **Pro:** Exposes most optimization opportunities
  - **Con:** Machine dependent
  - **Con:** Must re-implement optimizations when re-targeting

- On an intermediate language
  - **Pro:** Exposes optimization opportunities
  - **Pro:** Machine independent
Why Intermediate Languages?

• Have many front-ends into a single back-end
  - gcc can handle C, C++, Java, Fortran, Ada, ...
  - each front-end translates source to the same generic language (called GENERIC)

• Have many back-ends from a single front-end
  - Do most optimization on intermediate representation before emitting code targeted at a single machine
Kinds of Intermediate Languages

High-level intermediate representations:
- closer to the source language; e.g., syntax trees
- easy to generate from the input program
- code optimizations may not be straightforward

Low-level intermediate representations:
- closer to target machine; e.g., P-Code, U-Code (used in PA-RISC and MIPS), GCC’s RTL, 3-address code
- easy to generate code from
- generation from input program may require effort

“Mid”-level intermediate representations:
- Java bytecode, Microsoft CIL, LLVM IR, ...
Intermediate Code Languages: Design Issues

- Designing a good ICode language is not trivial.
- The set of operators in ICode must be rich enough to allow the implementation of source language operations.
- ICode operations that are closely tied to a particular machine or architecture, make retargeting harder.
- A small set of operations
  - may lead to long instruction sequences for some source language constructs,
  - but on the other hand makes retargeting easier.
Intermediate Languages

• Each compiler uses its own intermediate language
  - IL design is still an active area of research
• Nowadays, usually an intermediate language is a high-level assembly language
  - Uses register names, but has an unlimited number
  - Uses control structures like assembly language
  - Uses opcodes but some are higher level
    • E.g., push translates to several assembly instructions
    • Most opcodes correspond directly to assembly opcodes
Architecture of gcc
Three-Address Intermediate Code

• Each instruction is of the form
  \[ x := y \text{ op } z \]
  - \( y \) and \( z \) can be only registers or constants
  - Just like assembly

• Common form of intermediate code

• The expression \( x + y \times z \) is translated as
  \[ \mathbf{t}_1 := y \times z \]
  \[ \mathbf{t}_2 := x + \mathbf{t}_1 \]
  - temporary names are made up for internal nodes
  - each sub-expression has a “home”
Generating Intermediate Code

- Similar to assembly code generation

- Major difference
  - Use any number of IL registers to hold intermediate results

Example: if \((x + 2 > 3 \times (y - 1) + 42)\) then \(z := 0\);

\[
\begin{align*}
  t_1 &:= x + 2 \\
  t_2 &:= y - 1 \\
  t_3 &:= 3 \times t_2 \\
  t_4 &:= t_3 + 42 \\
  \text{if } t_1 &\leq t_4 \text{ goto L} \\
  z &:= 0 \\
L: &
\end{align*}
\]
Generating Intermediate Code (Cont.)

• **igen(e, t)** function generates code to compute the value of \( e \) in register \( t \)

• Example:

\[
\text{igen}(e_1 + e_2, t) = \\
\text{igen}(e_1, t_1) \quad (t_1 \text{ is a fresh register}) \\
\text{igen}(e_2, t_2) \quad (t_2 \text{ is a fresh register}) \\
t := t_1 + t_2
\]

• Unlimited number of registers

\[\Rightarrow \text{simple code generation}\]
An Intermediate Language

\[
P \rightarrow S P | \varepsilon
\]

\[
S \rightarrow id := id \text{ op } id
| id := op id
| id := id
| push id
| id := pop
| if id relop id goto L
| L:
| goto L
\]

- id’s are register names
- Constants can replace id’s
- Typical operators: +, -, *
**From 3-address code to machine code**

This is almost a macro expansion process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3-address code</th>
<th>MIPS assembly code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| \( x := A[i] \)  | load i into \( r1 \)
|                  | `la r2, A`                              |
|                  | `add r2, r2, r1`                        |
|                  | `lw r2, (r2)`                           |
|                  | `sw r2, x`                              |
| \( x := y + z \) | load y into \( r1 \)
|                  | load z into \( r2 \)
|                  | `add r3, r1, r2`                        |
|                  | `sw r3, x`                              |
| if \( x \geq y \) goto \( L \) | load x into \( r1 \)
|                  | load y into \( r2 \)
|                  | `bge r1, r2, L`                         |
Basic Blocks

• A *basic block* is a maximal sequence of instructions with:
  - no labels (except at the first instruction), and
  - no jumps (except in the last instruction)

• Idea:
  - Cannot jump into a basic block (except at beginning)
  - Cannot jump out of a basic block (except at end)
  - Each instruction in a basic block is executed after all the preceding instructions have been executed
Basic Block Example

Consider the basic block

\[ L: \]
\[ t := 2 \times x \] \hspace{1cm} (1) \\
\[ w := t + x \] \hspace{1cm} (2) \\
\[ \text{if } w > 0 \text{ goto } L' \] \hspace{1cm} (4)

\[ w := t + x \] \hspace{1cm} (3)

- No way for (3) to be executed without (2) having been executed right before
  - We can change (3) to \( w := 3 \times x \)
  - Can we eliminate (2) as well?
Identifying Basic Blocks

• Determine the set of leaders, i.e., the first instruction of each basic block:
  - The first instruction of a function is a leader
  - Any instruction that is a target of a branch is a leader
  - Any instruction immediately following a (conditional or unconditional) branch is a leader

• For each leader, its basic block consists of itself and all instructions up to, but not including, the next leader (or end of function)
Control-Flow Graphs

A *control-flow graph* is a directed graph with
- Basic blocks as nodes
- An edge from block A to block B if the execution can flow from the last instruction in A to the first instruction in B
  - E.g., the last instruction in A is `goto L_B`
  - E.g., the execution can fall-through from block A to block B

Frequently abbreviated as *CFGs*
Control-Flow Graphs: Example

- The body of a function (or procedure) can be represented as a control-flow graph
- There is one initial node
- All “return” nodes are terminal
Constructing the Control Flow Graph

- Identify the basic blocks of the function
- There is a directed edge between block $B_1$ to block $B_2$ if
  - there is a (conditional or unconditional) jump from the last instruction of $B_1$ to the first instruction of $B_2$ or
  - $B_2$ immediately follows $B_1$ in the textual order of the program, and $B_1$ does not end in an unconditional jump.
Optimization Overview

- Optimization seeks to improve a program’s utilization of some resource
  - Execution time (most often)
  - Code size
  - Network messages sent
  - (Battery) power used, etc.

- Optimization should not alter what the program computes
  - The answer must still be the same
  - Observable behavior must be the same
    - this typically also includes termination behavior
A Classification of Optimizations

For languages like C there are three granularities of optimizations

(1) **Local optimizations**
- Apply to a basic block in isolation

(2) **Global optimizations**
- Apply to a control-flow graph (function body) in isolation

(3) **Inter-procedural optimizations**
- Apply across method boundaries

Most compilers do (1), many do (2) and very few do (3)
Cost of Optimizations

• In practice, a conscious decision is made not to implement the fanciest optimization known

• Why?
  - Some optimizations are hard to implement
  - Some optimizations are costly in terms of compilation time
  - Some optimizations have low benefit
  - Many fancy optimizations are all three!

• Goal: maximum benefit for minimum cost
Local Optimizations

- The simplest form of optimizations
- No need to analyze the whole procedure body
  - Just the basic block in question

- Example: algebraic simplification
Algebraic Simplification

• Some statements can be deleted
  \[ x := x + 0 \]
  \[ x := x \times 1 \]

• Some statements can be simplified
  \[ x := x \times 0 \quad \Rightarrow \quad x := 0 \]
  \[ y := y \times\times 2 \quad \Rightarrow \quad y := y \times y \]
  \[ x := x \times 8 \quad \Rightarrow \quad x := x \ll 3 \]
  \[ x := x \times 15 \quad \Rightarrow \quad \dagger := x \ll 4; \ x := \dagger - x \]
  (on some machines \(\ll\) is faster than \(*\); but not on all!)
Constant Folding

• Operations on constants can be computed at compile time
• In general, if there is a statement
  \[ x := y \text{ op } z \]
  - And \( y \) and \( z \) are constants
  - Then \( y \text{ op } z \) can be computed at compile time

• Example: \( x := 2 + 2 \Rightarrow x := 4 \)
• Example: \( \text{if } 2 < 0 \text{ goto L } \) can be deleted
• When might constant folding be dangerous?
Flow of Control Optimizations

• Eliminating unreachable code:
  - Code that is unreachable in the control-flow graph
  - Basic blocks that are not the target of any jump or “fall through” from a conditional
  - Such basic blocks can be eliminated

• Why would such basic blocks occur?

• Removing unreachable code makes the program smaller
  - And sometimes also faster
    • Due to memory cache effects (increased spatial locality)
Single Assignment Form

- Some optimizations are simplified if each register occurs only once on the left-hand side of an assignment.
- Intermediate code can be rewritten to be in single assignment form.

\[
\begin{align*}
  x &:= z + y & b &:= z + y \\
  a &:= x & \Rightarrow & a &:= b \\
  x &:= 2 * x & x &:= 2 * b \\
\end{align*}
\]

(b is a fresh temporary)

- More complicated in general, due to control flow (e.g. loops).
Common Subexpression Elimination

• Assume
  – A basic block is in single assignment form
  – A definition $x :=$ is the first use of $x$ in a block

• All assignments with same RHS compute the same value

• Example:

  $x := y + z$  \hspace{2cm}  $x := y + z$

  $\quad \Rightarrow \quad \Rightarrow$

  $w := y + z$  \hspace{2cm}  $w := x$

  (the values of $x$, $y$, and $z$ do not change in the ... code)
Copy Propagation

• If \( w := x \) appears in a block, all subsequent uses of \( w \) can be replaced with uses of \( x \)

• Example:

\[
\begin{align*}
  & b := z + y \\
  & a := b \\
  & x := 2 * a
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
  & b := z + y \\
  & a := b \\
  & x := 2 * b
\end{align*}
\]

• This does not make the program smaller or faster but might enable other optimizations
  - Constant folding
  - Dead code elimination
Copy Propagation and Constant Folding

• Example:

\[
\begin{align*}
  a & := 5 & a & := 5 \\
  x & := 2 \times a & \Rightarrow & x & := 10 \\
  y & := x + 6 & & y & := 16 \\
  \top & := x \times y & & \top & := x \ll 4
\end{align*}
\]
Copy Propagation and Dead Code Elimination

If

\[ w := \text{RHS} \text{ appears in a basic block} \]
\[ w \text{ does not appear anywhere else in the program} \]

Then

the statement \( w := \text{RHS} \) is dead and can be eliminated

- \text{Dead} = \text{does not contribute to the program's result}

Example: \( (a \text{ is not used anywhere else}) \)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{x} & := \text{z + y} & \text{b} & := \text{z + y} & \text{b} & := \text{z + y} \\
\text{a} & := \text{x} & \Rightarrow & \text{a} & := \text{b} & \Rightarrow & \text{x} & := 2 * \text{b} \\
\text{x} & := 2 * \text{x} & \text{x} & := 2 * \text{b}
\end{align*}
\]
Applying Local Optimizations

• Each local optimization does very little by itself

• Typically optimizations interact
  - Performing one optimization enables other opt.

• Optimizing compilers repeatedly perform optimizations until no improvement is possible
  - The optimizer can also be stopped at any time to limit the compilation time
An Example

Initial code:

```plaintext
a := x ** 2
b := 3
c := x
d := c * c
e := b * 2
f := a + d
g := e * f
```

assume that only \( f \) and \( g \) are used in the rest of program
An Example

Algebraic simplification:

\[
\begin{align*}
  a & := x ** 2 \\
  b & := 3 \\
  c & := x \\
  d & := c * c \\
  e & := b * 2 \\
  f & := a + d \\
  g & := e * f
\end{align*}
\]
An Example

Algebraic simplification:

\[
\begin{align*}
  a & := x \times x \\
  b & := 3 \\
  c & := x \\
  d & := c \times c \\
  e & := b \ll 1 \\
  f & := a + d \\
  g & := e \times f
\end{align*}
\]
An Example

Copy and constant propagation:

\[
\begin{align*}
    a & := x \times x \\
    b & := 3 \\
    c & := x \\
    d & := c \times c \\
    e & := b \ll 1 \\
    f & := a + d \\
    g & := e \times f
\end{align*}
\]
An Example

Copy and constant propagation:

\[
\begin{align*}
a & := x \times x \\
b & := 3 \\
c & := x \\
d & := x \times x \\
e & := 3 \ll 1 \\
f & := a + d \\
g & := e \times f
\end{align*}
\]
An Example

Constant folding:

\[
\begin{align*}
  a &:= x \times x \\
  b &:= 3 \\
  c &:= x \\
  d &:= x \times x \\
  e &:= 3 \ll 1 \\
  f &:= a + d \\
  g &:= e \times f
\end{align*}
\]
An Example

**Constant folding:**

\[
\begin{align*}
a & := x \times x \\
b & := 3 \\
c & := x \\
d & := x \times x \\
e & := 6 \\
f & := a + d \\
g & := e \times f
\end{align*}
\]
An Example

Common subexpression elimination:

\[
\begin{align*}
a &:= x \times x \\
b &:= 3 \\
c &:= x \\
d &:= x \times x \\
e &:= 6 \\
f &:= a + d \\
g &:= e \times f
\end{align*}
\]
An Example

Common subexpression elimination:

\[
\begin{align*}
a &:= x \times x \\
b &:= 3 \\
c &:= x \\
d &:= a \\
e &:= 6 \\
f &:= a + d \\
g &:= e \times f
\end{align*}
\]
An Example

Copy and constant propagation:

\[
\begin{align*}
    a & := x \times x \\
    b & := 3 \\
    c & := x \\
    d & := a \\
    e & := 6 \\
    f & := a + d \\
    g & := e \times f
\end{align*}
\]
An Example

Copy and constant propagation:

\[
\begin{align*}
a & := x \times x \\
b & := 3 \\
c & := x \\
d & := a \\
e & := 6 \\
f & := a + a \\
g & := 6 \times f
\end{align*}
\]
An Example

Dead code elimination:

\[
\begin{align*}
a & := x \times x \\
b & := 3 \\
c & := x \\
d & := a \\
e & := 6 \\
f & := a + a \\
g & := 6 \times f
\end{align*}
\]
An Example

Dead code elimination:

\[ a := x \times x \]

\[ f := a + a \]
\[ g := 6 \times f \]

This is the final form
Peephole Optimizations on Assembly Code

- The optimizations presented before work on intermediate code
  - They are target independent
  - But they can be applied on assembly language also

**Peephole optimization** is an effective technique for improving assembly code
- The “peephole” is a short sequence of (usually contiguous) instructions
- The optimizer replaces the sequence with another equivalent one (but faster)
Implementing Peephole Optimizations

• Write peephole optimizations as replacement rules

\[ i_1, \ldots, i_n \rightarrow j_1, \ldots, j_m \]
where the RHS is the improved version of the LHS

• Example:

move $a \ $b, move $b \ $a \rightarrow move \ $a \ $b

- Works if move $b \ $a is not the target of a jump

• Another example:

addiu $a \ $a \ i, addiu $a \ $a \ j \rightarrow addiu \ $a \ $a \ i+j
Peephole Optimizations

- Redundant instruction elimination, e.g.:

  \[
  \ldots \quad \text{goto } L \\
  L: \quad \ldots \\
  \Rightarrow \\
  \ldots \\
  \]

- Flow of control optimizations, e.g.:

  \[
  \ldots \quad \text{goto } L1 \\
  \ldots \\
  L1: \text{goto } L2 \\
  \ldots \\
  \Rightarrow \\
  \ldots \quad \text{goto } L2 \\
  \ldots \\
  L1: \text{goto } L2 \\
  \ldots \\
  \]
Peephole Optimizations (Cont.)

- Many (but not all) of the basic block optimizations can be cast as peephole optimizations
  - Example: `addiu $a $b 0 \rightarrow move $a $b`
  - Example: `move $a $a \rightarrow`
  - These two together eliminate `addiu $a $a 0`

- Just like for local optimizations, peephole optimizations need to be applied repeatedly to get maximum effect
Local Optimizations: Concluding Remarks

• Intermediate code is helpful for many optimizations

• Many simple optimizations can still be applied on assembly language

• “Program optimization” is grossly misnamed
  - Code produced by “optimizers” is not optimal in any reasonable sense
  - “Program improvement” is a more appropriate term

• Next time: global optimizations