Code Generation

The Main Idea of Today's Lecture

We can emit stack-machine-style code for expressions via recursion

(We will use MIPS assembly as our target language)

Lecture Outline

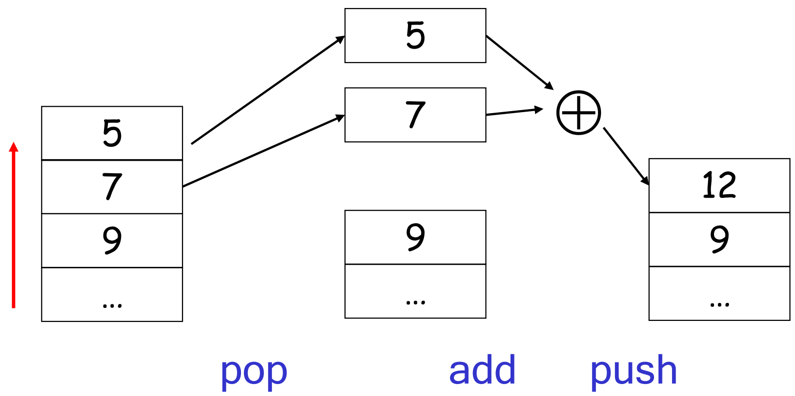
- What are stack machines?
- The MIPS assembly language
- A simple source language (**"Mini Bar"**)
- A stack machine implementation of the simple language

Stack Machines

- A simple evaluation model
- No variables or registers
- A stack of values for intermediate results
- Each instruction:
  - Takes its operands from the top of the stack
  - Removes those operands from the stack
  - Computes the required operation on them
  - Pushes the result onto the stack

Example of Stack Machine Operation

The addition operation on a stack machine



Example of a Stack Machine Program

- Consider two instructions
  - push i - place the integer i on top of the stack
  - add - pop topmost two elements, add them and put the result back onto the stack

- A program to compute 7 + 5:

```
push 7
push 5
add
```


Why Use a Stack Machine?

- Each operation takes operands from the same place and puts results in the same place

- This means a uniform compilation scheme

- And therefore a simpler compiler

Why Use a Stack Machine?

- Location of the operands is implicit
  - Always on the top of the stack
- No need to specify operands explicitly
- No need to specify the location of the result
- Instruction is "add" as opposed to "add r_1, r_2" (or "add r_d r_{i1} r_{i2}")
  - ⇒ Smaller encoding of instructions
  - ⇒ More compact programs
- This is one of the reasons why Java Bytecode uses a stack evaluation model

Optimizing the Stack Machine

- The add instruction does 3 memory operations
  - Two reads and one write to the stack
  - The top of the stack is frequently accessed
- Idea: keep the top of the stack in a dedicated register (called the "accumulator")
  - Register accesses are faster (why?)
- The "add" instruction is now

  acc ← acc + top_of_stack

  - Only one memory operation!

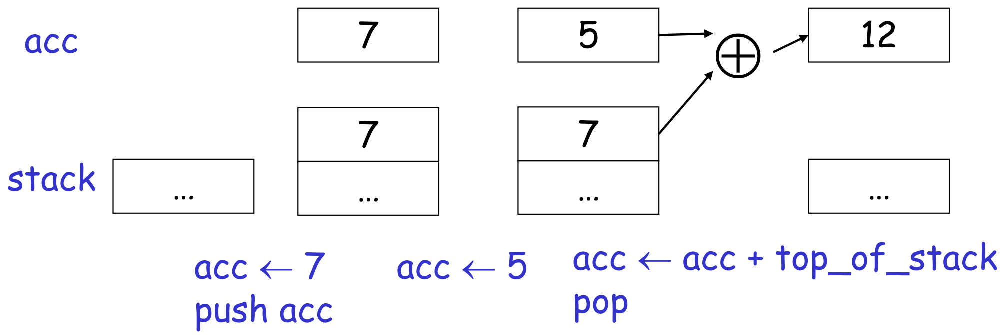
Stack Machine with Accumulator

Invariants

- The result of computing an expression is always placed in the accumulator
- For an operation $op(e_1,\ldots,e_n)$ compute each e_i and then push the accumulator (= the result of evaluating e_i) onto the stack
- After the operation pop n-1 values
- After computing an expression the stack is as before

Stack Machine with Accumulator: Example

Compute 7 + 5 using an accumulator



A Bigger Example: 3 + (7 + 5)

Code	Acc	Stack
acc ← 3	3	<init>
push acc	3	3, <init>
acc ← 7	7	3, <init>
push acc	7	7, 3, <init>
acc ← 5	5	7, 3, <init>
acc ← acc + top_of_stack	12	7, 3, <init>
pop	12	3, <init>
acc ← acc + top_of_stack	15	3, <init>
pop	15	<init>

Notes

- It is very important that the stack is preserved across the evaluation of a subexpression
  - Stack before the evaluation of 7 + 5 is 3, <init>
  - Stack after the evaluation of 7 + 5 is 3, <init>
  - The first operand is on top of the stack

From Stack Machines to MIPS

- The compiler generates code for a stack machine with accumulator
- We want to run the resulting code on the MIPS processor (or simulator)
- We simulate the stack machine instructions using MIPS instructions and registers

Simulating a Stack Machine on the MIPS…

- The accumulator is kept in MIPS register $a0
- The stack is kept in memory
- The stack grows towards lower addresses
  - Standard convention on the MIPS architecture
- The address of the next location on the stack is kept in MIPS register $sp
  - Guess: what does "sp" stand for?
  - The top of the stack is at address $sp + 4

MIPS Assembly

MIPS architecture

- Prototypical Reduced Instruction Set Computer (RISC) architecture
- Arithmetic operations use registers for operands and results
- Must use load and store instructions to use operands and store results in memory
- 32 general purpose registers (32 bits each)
  - We will use $sp, $a0 and $t1 (a temporary register)

Read the SPIM documentation for more details

A Sample of MIPS Instructions

- lw reg_1 offset(reg_2) "load word"
  - Load 32-bit word from address reg_2 + offset into reg_1
- add reg_1 reg_2 reg_3
  - $reg_1 \leftarrow reg_2 + reg_3$
- sw reg_1 offset(reg_2) "store word"
  - Store 32-bit word in reg_1 at address reg_2 + offset
- addiu reg_1 reg_2 imm "add immediate"
  - $reg_1 \leftarrow reg_2 + imm$
  - "u" means overflow is not checked
- li reg imm "load immediate"
  - reg ← imm

MIPS Assembly: Example

- The stack-machine code for 7 + 5 in MIPS:

acc ← 7	li $a0 7
push acc	sw $a0 0($sp)
	addiu $sp $sp -4
acc ← 5	li $a0 5
acc ← acc + top_of_stack	lw $t1 4($sp)
	add $a0 $a0 $t1
pop	addiu $sp $sp 4

- We now generalize this to a simple language…

A Small Language

- A language with only integers and integer operations ("**Mini Bar**")

$$P \rightarrow F\ P \mid F$$
$$F \rightarrow id(ARGS)\ begin\ E\ end$$
$$ARGS \rightarrow id,\ ARGS \mid id$$
$$E \rightarrow int \mid id \mid if\ E_1 = E_2\ then\ E_3\ else\ E_4$$
$$\mid E_1 + E_2 \mid E_1 - E_2 \mid id(E_1,\ldots,E_n)$$

A Small Language (Cont.)

- The first function definition f is the "main" routine
- Running the program on input i means computing f(i)
- Program for computing the Fibonacci numbers:

```
fib(x)
begin
    if x = 1 then 0 else
    if x = 2 then 1 else fib(x - 1) + fib(x – 2)
end
```

Code Generation Strategy

- For each expression e we generate MIPS code that:
  - Computes the value of e in \$a0
  - Preserves \$sp and the contents of the stack
- We define a code generation function cgen(e) whose result is the code generated for e
  - cgen(e) will be recursive

Code Generation for Constants

- The code to evaluate an integer constant simply copies it into the accumulator:

cgen(int) = li \$a0 int

- Note that this also preserves the stack, as required

Code Generation for Addition

```
cgen(e1 + e2) =
        cgen(e1)              ; $a0 ← value of e1
        sw $a0 0($sp)         ; push that value
        addiu $sp $sp -4      ; onto the stack
        cgen(e2)              ; $a0 ← value of e2
        lw $t1 4($sp)         ; grab value of e1
        add $a0 $t1 $a0       ; do the addition
        addiu $sp $sp 4       ; pop the stack
```

Possible optimization:

Put the result of e_1 directly in register \$t1?

Code Generation for Addition: Wrong Attempt!

Optimization: Put the result of e_1 directly in \$t1?

```
cgen(e1 + e2) =
        cgen(e1)              ; $a0 ← value of e1
        move $t1 $a0          ; save that value in $t1
        cgen(e2)              ; $a0 ← value of e2
                              ; may clobber $t1
        add $a0 $t1 $a0       ; perform the addition
```

Try to generate code for : 3 + (7 + 5)

Code Generation Notes

- The code for $e_1 + e_2$ is a template with "holes" for code for evaluating e_1 and e_2
- Stack machine code generation is recursive
- Code for $e_1 + e_2$ consists of code for e_1 and e_2 glued together
- Code generation can be written as a recursive-descent of the AST
  - At least for (arithmetic) expressions

Code Generation for Subtraction and Constants

New instruction: sub reg_1 reg_2 reg_3

Implements $reg_1 \leftarrow reg_2 - reg_3$

cgen($e_1 - e_2$) =

cgen(e_1)	; $a0 ← value of e_1
sw $a0 0($sp)	; push that value
addiu $sp $sp -4	; onto the stack
cgen(e_2)	; $a0 ← value of e_2
lw $t1 4($sp)	; grab value of e_1
sub $a0 $t1 $a0	; do the subtraction
addiu $sp $sp 4	; pop the stack

Code Generation for Conditional

- We need flow control instructions
- New MIPS instruction: beq reg_1 reg_2 label
  - Branch to label if $reg_1 = reg_2$
- New MIPS instruction: j label
  - Unconditional jump to label

Code Generation for If (Cont.)

cgen(if $e_1 = e_2$ then e_3 else e_4) =

cgen(e_1)
sw $a0 0($sp)
addiu $sp $sp -4
cgen(e_2)
lw $t1 4($sp)
addiu $sp $sp 4
beq $a0 $t1 true_branch

false_branch:
cgen(e_4)
j end_if
true_branch:
cgen(e_3)
end_if:

Meet The Activation Record

- Code for function calls and function definitions depends on the layout of the activation record (or "AR")
- A very simple AR suffices for this language:
  - The result is always in the accumulator
    - No need to store the result in the AR
  - The activation record holds actual parameters
    - For $f(x_1,\ldots,x_n)$ push the arguments $x_n,\ldots,x_1$ onto the stack
    - These are the only variables in this language

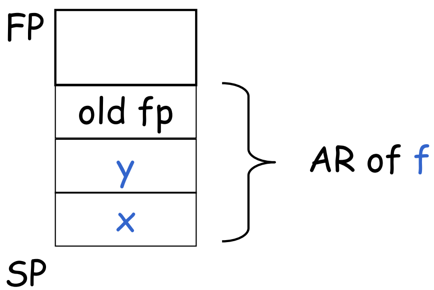
Meet The Activation Record (Cont.)

- The stack discipline guarantees that on function exit, $sp is the same as it was before the args got pushed (i.e., before function call)
- We need the return address
- It's also handy to have a pointer to the current activation
  - This pointer lives in register $fp (frame pointer)
  - Reason for frame pointer will be clear shortly (at least I hope!)

Layout of the Activation Record

Summary: For this language, an AR with the caller's frame pointer, the actual parameters, and the return address suffices

Picture: Consider a call to f(x,y), the AR will be:



Code Generation for Function Call

- The calling sequence is the instructions (of both *caller* and *callee*) to set up a function invocation
- New instruction: jal label
  - Jump to label, save address of next instruction in special register $ra
  - On other architectures the return address is stored on the stack by the "call" instruction

Code Generation for Function Call (Cont.)

```
cgen(f(e1,…,en)) =
   sw $fp 0($sp)
   addiu $sp $sp -4
   cgen(en)
   sw $a0 0($sp)
   addiu $sp $sp -4
   …
   cgen(e1)
   sw $a0 0($sp)
   addiu $sp $sp -4
   jal f_entry
```

- The caller saves the value of the frame pointer
- Then it pushes the actual parameters in reverse order
- The caller's jal puts the return address in register $ra
- The AR so far is 4*n+4 bytes long

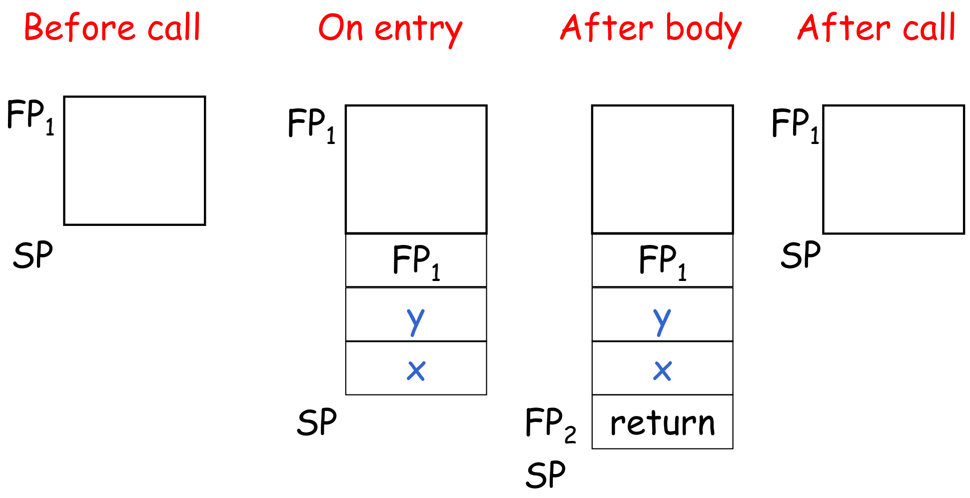
Code Generation for Function Definition

- New MIPS instruction: jr reg
  - Jump to address in register reg

```
cgen(f(x1,…,xn) begin e end) =
 f_entry:
   move $fp $sp
   sw $ra 0($sp)
   addiu $sp $sp -4
   cgen(e)
   lw $ra 4($sp)
   addiu $sp $sp frame_size
   lw $fp 0($sp)
   jr $ra
```

- Note: The frame pointer points to the top, not bottom of the frame
- Callee saves old return addr, evaluates its body, pops the return addr, pops the args, and then restores $fp
- frame_size = 4*n + 8

Calling Sequence: Example for f(x,y)



Code Generation for Variables/Parameters

- Variable references are the last construct
- The "variables" of a function are just its parameters
  - They are all in the AR
  - Pushed by the caller
- Problem: Because the stack grows when intermediate results are saved, the variables are not at a fixed offset from $sp

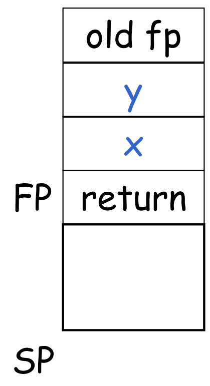
Code Generation for Variables/Parameters

- Solution: use the frame pointer
  - Always points to the return address on the stack
  - Since it does not move, it can be used to find the variables
- Let x_i be the i^{th} ($i = 1,\ldots,n$) formal parameter of the function for which code is being generated

cgen(x_i) = lw $a0 offset($fp)   (offset = 4*i)

Code Generation for Variables/Parameters

- Example: For a function f(x,y) begin e end the activation and frame pointer are set up as follows (when evaluating e):



- x is at fp + 4
- y is at fp + 8

Activation Record & Code Generation Summary

- The activation record must be designed together with the code generator
- Code generation can be done by recursive traversal of the AST

Discussion

- Production compilers do different things
  - Emphasis is on keeping values (esp. current stack frame) in registers
  - Intermediate results are laid out in the AR, not pushed and popped from the stack
  - As a result, code generation is often performed in synergy with register allocation
- Next time: code generation for temporaries and a deeper look into parameter passing mechanisms