Modern Virtual Memory Systems

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Every instruction and data access needs address translation and protection checks.

A good VM design needs to be fast (~ one cycle) and space-efficient.
Address translation is very expensive!  
In a two-level page table, each reference becomes several memory accesses

**Solution:** *Cache translations in TLB*

- **TLB hit**  \(\Rightarrow\) *Single-cycle Translation*
- **TLB miss**  \(\Rightarrow\) *Page Table Walk to refill*

**Diagram:**

- **Virtual address**
- **VPN**
- **offset**
- **VPN = virtual page number**
- **PPN = physical page number**
- **hit?**
- **physical address**
- **PPN**
- **offset**
TLB Designs

- Typically 32-128 entries, usually fully associative
  - Each entry maps a large page, hence less spatial locality across pages → more likely that two entries conflict
  - Sometimes larger TLBs (256-512 entries) are 4-8 way set-associative
- Random or FIFO replacement policy
- No process information in TLB?

TLB Reach: Size of largest virtual address space that can be simultaneously mapped by TLB

Example: 64 TLB entries, 4KB pages, one page per entry

TLB Reach = _________________________________?
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\[
\text{TLB Reach} = \text{64 entries} \times 4 \text{ KB} = 256 \text{ KB (if contiguous)}
\]
Variable-Sized Page Support

Virtual Address

31  22  21  12  11  0
  p1  p2  offset

10-bit 10-bit
L1 index L2 index

Root of the Current Page Table

(Processor Register)

Level 1 Page Table

p1

Level 2 Page Tables

offset

Data Pages

page in primary memory
large page in primary memory
page in secondary memory
PTE of a nonexistent page
Variable-Size Page TLB

Some systems support multiple page sizes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

hit?

virtual address

physical address

VPN offset

VPN offset

Tag

PPN

L

PPN offset
Handling a TLB Miss

Software (MIPS, Alpha)
TLB miss causes an exception and the operating system walks the page tables and reloads TLB. A privileged “untranslated” addressing mode used for walk

Hardware (SPARC v8, x86, PowerPC)
A memory management unit (MMU) walks the page tables and reloads the TLB

If a missing (data or PT) page is encountered during the TLB reloading, MMU gives up and signals a Page-Fault exception for the original instruction
Hierarchical Page Table Walk: SPARC v8

Virtual Address

Context Table Register

Context Table

root ptr

Context Register

L1 Table

PTP

L2 Table

PTP

L3 Table

PTP

PTE

Physical Address

MMU does this table walk in hardware on a TLB miss
Address Translation: putting it all together

Virtual Address

TLB Lookup

Page Table Walk

Protection Check

Page Fault

Update TLB

Protection Fault

Physical Address (to cache)

Where?

Page Fault (OS loads page)

 SEGFAULT

The page is

≠ memory

∈ memory

denied

permitted

hardware

hardware or software

software
Topics

• Interrupts

• Speeding up the common case:
  – TLB & Cache organization

• Speeding up page table walks

• Modern Usage
Interrupts: altering the normal flow of control

An external or internal event that needs to be processed by another (system) program. The event is usually unexpected or rare from program’s point of view.
Causes of Interrupts

Interrupt: an *event* that requests the attention of the processor

- **Asynchronous: an *external event***
  - input/output device service-request
  - timer expiration
  - power disruptions, hardware failure
- **Synchronous: an *internal event (a.k.a exception)***
  - undefined opcode, privileged instruction
  - arithmetic overflow, FPU exception
  - misaligned memory access
  - *virtual memory exceptions*: page faults, TLB misses, protection violations
  - *traps*: system calls, e.g., jumps into kernel
Asynchronous Interrupts: invoking the interrupt handler

• An I/O device requests attention by asserting one of the *prioritized interrupt request lines*

• When the processor decides to process the interrupt
  – It stops the current program at instruction $I_i$, completing all the instructions up to $I_{i-1}$ (*precise interrupt*)
  – It saves the PC of instruction $I_i$ in a special register (EPC)
  – It disables interrupts and transfers control to a designated interrupt handler running in the kernel mode
Interrupt Handler

• Saves EPC before enabling interrupts to allow nested interrupts ⇒
  – need an instruction to move EPC into GPRs
  – need a way to mask further interrupts at least until EPC can be saved

• Needs to read a *status register* that indicates the cause of the interrupt

• Uses a special indirect jump instruction RFE (*return-from-exception*) that
  – enables interrupts
  – restores the processor to the user mode
  – restores hardware status and control state
Synchronous Interrupts

• A synchronous interrupt (exception) is caused by a particular instruction

• In general, the instruction cannot be completed and needs to be restarted after the exception has been handled
  – With pipelining, requires undoing the effect of one or more partially executed instructions

• In case of a trap (system call), the instruction is considered to have been completed
  – A special jump instruction involving a change to privileged kernel mode
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- Speeding up page table walks

- Modern Usage
Address Translation in CPU

PC → Inst TLB → Inst. Cache → RegFile + → Data TLB → Data Cache
Address Translation in CPU

TLB miss? Page Fault? Protection violation?
Address Translation in CPU

- PC
- Inst TLB
- Inst. Cache
- RegFile
- Data TLB
- Data Cache

TLB miss? Page Fault? Protection violation?

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Address Translation in CPU

- Software handlers need a \textit{restartable} exception on page fault or protection violation.
Address Translation in CPU

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- Handling a TLB miss needs a hardware or software mechanism to refill TLB
Address Translation in CPU

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  - virtual-address caches
  - parallel TLB/cache access
Virtual-Address Caches

CPU \rightarrow \text{TLB} \rightarrow \text{Physical Cache} \rightarrow \text{Primary Memory}
Virtual-Address Caches

Alternative: place the cache before the TLB
Virtual-Address Caches

Alternative: place the cache before the TLB
Virtual-Address Caches

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- one-step process in case of a hit (+)
Virtual-Address Caches

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Virtual-Address Caches

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- one-step process in case of a hit (+)
- cache needs to be flushed on a context switch unless address space identifiers (ASIDs) included in tags (-)
- aliasing problems due to the sharing of pages (-)
Aliasing in Virtual-Address Caches

Two virtual pages share one physical page

Virtual cache can have two copies of same physical data. Writes to one copy not visible to reads of other!
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General Solution: *Disallow aliases to coexist in cache*

Software (i.e., OS) solution for direct-mapped cache

VAs of shared pages must agree in cache index bits; this ensures all VAs accessing same PA will conflict in direct-mapped cache (early SPARCs)
Concurrent Access to TLB & Cache

Index L is available without consulting the TLB
⇒ cache and TLB accesses can begin simultaneously
Tag comparison is made after both accesses are completed
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*When does this work?* $L + b < k$ __  $L + b = k$ __  $L + b > k$ __
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Concurrent Access to TLB & Large L1

The problem with L1 > Page size

Can VA₁ and VA₂ both map to PA?
Concurrent Access to TLB & Large L1
The problem with L1 > Page size

Can VA₁ and VA₂ both map to PA?  Yes
After the PPN is known, $2^a$ physical tags are compared.

Is this scheme realistic?
A solution via **Second-Level Cache**

Usually a common L2 cache backs up both Instruction and Data L1 caches

L2 is “inclusive” of both Instruction and Data caches
Anti-Aliasing Using L2: *MIPS R10000*

- Suppose VA1 and VA2 both map to PA and VA1 is already in L1, L2 (VA1 ≠ VA2)
- After VA2 is resolved to PA, collision is detected in L2. Collision → **Field a is different.**
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```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VA</th>
<th>VPN</th>
<th>Page Offset</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>PPN</td>
<td>Page Offset</td>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tag</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

Virtual Index into L2 tag

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VA1</th>
<th>PPN_a</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VA2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PA</th>
<th>a_1</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
```

L1 PA cache

L2 cache
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• After VA2 is resolved to PA, collision is detected in L2. Collision → **Field a is different.**
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Virtually Addressed L1: Anti-Aliasing using L2

Physically addressed L2 can also be used to avoid aliases in virtually addressed L1.
Topics

• Interrupts

• Speeding up the common case:
  – TLB & Cache organization

• Speeding up page table walks

• Modern Usage
Page Fault Handler

- When the referenced page is not in DRAM:
  - The missing page is located (or created)
  - It is brought in from disk, and page table is updated
    Another job may be run on the CPU while the first job waits for the requested page to be read from disk
  - If no free pages are left, a page is swapped out
    Pseudo-LRU replacement policy

- Since it takes a long time to transfer a page (msecs), page faults are handled completely in software by the OS
  - Untranslated addressing mode is essential to allow kernel to access page tables
Translation for Page Tables

- Can references to page tables cause TLB misses?
- Can this go on forever?
Translation for Page Tables

- Can references to page tables cause TLB misses?
- Can this go on forever?

A program that traverses the page table needs a “no translation” addressing mode.
A PTE in primary memory contains primary or secondary memory addresses.

A PTE in secondary memory contains *only* secondary memory addresses.

⇒ a page of a PT can be swapped out only if none of its PTE’s point to pages in the primary memory.

*Why?*
A PTE in primary memory contains primary or secondary memory addresses

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Why?

Pointed-to pages become inaccessible (page fault due to swapped-out PT page)
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Why? 

*Pointed-to pages become inaccessible (page fault due to swapped-out PT page)*

May cause deadlock!
Atlas Revisited

• One PAR for each physical page

• PAR’s contain the VPN’s of the pages *resident in primary memory*

• *Advantage:* The size is proportional to the size of the primary memory

• *What is the disadvantage?*
Atlas Revisited

- One PAR for each physical page

- PAR’s contain the VPN’s of the pages \textit{resident in primary memory}

- \textit{Advantage}: The size is proportional to the size of the primary memory

- \textit{What is the disadvantage?}  
  \textit{Must check all PARs!}
Hashed Page Table: Approximating Associative Addressing

- Hashed Page Table is typically 2 to 3 times larger than the number of PPNs to reduce collision probability.
- It can also contain DPNs for some non-resident pages (*not common*).
- If a translation cannot be resolved in this table then the *software* consults a data structure that has an entry for every existing page.
Virtual Memory Use Today - 1

- Desktop/server/cellphone processors have full demand-paged virtual memory
  - Portability between machines with different memory sizes
  - Protection between multiple users or multiple tasks
  - Share small physical memory among active tasks
  - Simplifies implementation of some OS features

- Vector supercomputers and GPUs have translation and protection but not demand paging
  (Older Crays: base&bound, Japanese & Cray X1: pages)
  - Don’t waste expensive processor time thrashing to disk (make jobs fit in memory)
  - Mostly run in batch mode (run set of jobs that fits in memory)
  - Difficult to implement restartable vector instructions
Virtual Memory Use Today - 2

• Most embedded processors and DSPs provide physical addressing only
  – Can’t afford area/speed/power budget for virtual memory support
  – Often there is no secondary storage to swap to!
  – Programs custom-written for particular memory configuration in product
  – Difficult to implement restartable instructions for exposed architectures
Next lecture: Pipelining!
Global System Address Space

- Level A maps users’ address spaces into the global space providing privacy, protection, sharing etc.
- Level B provides demand paging for the large global system address space
- Level A and Level B translations may be kept in separate TLB’s
Hashed Page Table Walk:
PowerPC Two-level, Segmented Addressing

![Diagram of hashed page table walk]

- **64-bit user VA**
  - Seg ID
  - Page
  - Offset

- **Hashed Segment Table**
  - Hashed Segment Table

- **80-bit System VA**
  - Global Seg ID
  - Page
  - Offset

- **Hashed Page Table**
  - Hashed Page Table

- **PA of Seg Table** per process
  - PA of Seg Table

- **PA of Page Table** system-wide
  - PA of Page Table

- **40-bit PA**
  - PPN
  - Offset

- **40-bit PA**
  - IBM numbers bits with MSB=0
Power PC: Hashed Page Table

- Each hash table slot has 8 PTEs \(<VPN,PPN>\) that are searched sequentially.
- If the first hash slot fails, an alternate hash function is used to look in another slot.

*All these steps are done in hardware!*

- Hashed Table is typically 2 to 3 times larger than the number of physical pages.
- The full backup Page Table is a software data structure.