CPU connected directly to memory
How long to run this code?

• Characteristics
  • CPU Instructions & Register accesses: 0.5 ns (2 GHz)
  • Memory accesses: 50 ns

```c
int arr[1000];
for (i = 0; i < arr.len(); i++) { ++arr[i]; }
```

```assembly
    mov r3, #1000
    loop: ldr r1, [r0]
        subs r3, r3, #1
        add r1, r1, #1
        str r1, [r0], #4
        bne <loop>
```

1. 2.5 microseconds (2,505 ns)
2. 250 microseconds (250,000 ns)
3. 101 microseconds (101,000.5 ns)
How long to run this code?

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  - Memory accesses: 50 ns

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for (i = 0; i < arr.len(); i++) { ++arr[i]; }
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        bne <loop>
```

1. 2.5 microseconds (2,505 ns)
2. 250 microseconds (250,000 ns)
3. 101 microseconds (101,000.5 ns)

\[1 \times 0.5 + 1000 \times (2 \times 50 + 2 \times 0.5) = 101,000.5 \text{ ns}\]
Why not just make everything fast?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Access Time</th>
<th>Typical Size</th>
<th>$/MB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registers</td>
<td>&lt; 0.5ns</td>
<td>~256 bytes</td>
<td>$1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRAM/&quot;Cache&quot;</td>
<td>5ns</td>
<td>1-4MB</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRAM/&quot;Memory&quot;</td>
<td>50ns</td>
<td>GBs</td>
<td>$0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid state</td>
<td>20μS</td>
<td>TBs</td>
<td>$0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnetic Disk</td>
<td>5ms</td>
<td>10-100s TB</td>
<td>$0.000001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High cost for fast storage (inverse relationship between cost and performance)!
A Solution: Caching

- Keep *all* data in bigger, cheaper, slower storage
- Keep *copies* of active data in smaller, more expensive, faster storage
What do we cache?

• Data stored verbatim in slower storage
• Previous computations – recomputations are a kind of `slow storage’
• Examples
  • CPU memory hierarchy
  • File system page buffer
  • Domain Name System (DNS)
  • Content Distribution Networks (CDN)
  • Web browser caches
  • Database caches
How long to run this code?

• Characteristics
  • CPU Instructions & Register accesses: 0.5 ns (2 GHz)
  • CPU cache accesses: 5 ns
  • Memory accesses: 50 ns

```
  mov     r3, #1000

loop: ldr r1, [r0]
  subs    r3, r3, #1
  add     r1, r1, #1
  str     r1, [r0], #4
  bne     <loop>
```

It’s complicated -- not enough info to answer this yet!
Evaluating cache effectiveness

- **Hit**: when a requested item was in the cache
- **Miss**: when a requested item was *not* in the cache
- **Hit ratio** and **Miss ratio**: proportion of hits and misses, respectively
- **Hit time** and **Miss time**: time to access item in the cache and not in the cache, respectively
When is caching effective?

- Which of these workloads could we cache effectively?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repeated Access</th>
<th>Random Access</th>
<th>Sequential access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A few popular items</td>
<td>No pattern to accesses</td>
<td>Access items in order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.g. most social media</td>
<td>E.g. large hash tables</td>
<td>E.g. streaming a video</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What influences cache effectiveness?

• **Temporal locality**: nearness in time
  • Data accessed now was probably accessed recently
  • Useful data tends to continue to be useful

• **Spatial locality**: nearness in name
  • Data accessed now is “near” previously accessed data
  • Memory addresses, files in the same directory, frames in a video, etc.
Effective access time

• Effective access time is a function of:
  • Hit and Miss ratio
  • Hit and Miss times

• $t_{\text{effective}} = (\text{hit\_ratio}) \times t_{\text{hit}} + (1 - \text{hit\_ratio}) \times t_{\text{miss}}$
  • Also referred to as AMAT (Average Memory Access Time)
Characterizing a caching system

• Properties that affect what cache is suitable for *and* how to effectively use a cache
  • Effective access time
  • Look-aside vs. Look-through
  • Write-through vs. Write-back
  • Write-allocation
  • Eviction policy
Who handles misses?

- What happens when a requested item is not in the cache?
Look-aside

- Advantages: easy to implement, flexible
- Disadvantages: application handles consistency, can be slower on misses
Look-through

- Advantages: helps maintain consistency, simple to program against
- Disadvantages: harder to implement, less flexible

Figure 5: Look-through Cache
Handling Writes

• Caching creates a replica/copy of the data

• When you write, the data needs to be synchronized at some point
  • But when?
Write-through

• Write to backing store on every update

• Advantages
  • Cache and memory are always consistent
  • Eviction is cheap
  • Easy to implement

• Disadvantages
  • Writes are at least as slow as writes to the backing store
Write-back

• Update only in the cache; write to backing store only when evicting item from cache

• Advantages
  • Writes always at cache speed
  • Multiple writes to same item combined
  • Batch writes of related items

• Disadvantages
  • More complex to maintain consistency
  • Eviction is more expensive
Write-allocate vs. Write-no-allocate

• When writing to items not currently in the cache, do we bring them into the cache?

• Yes == Write-allocate
  • Advantage: exploits temporal locality since written data is likely to be accessed again soon

• No == Write-no-allocate
  • Advantage: avoids spurious evictions if data is not accessed soon
Eviction policies

• Which items to evict from cache when we run out of space?

• Many algorithms!
  • Least Recently Used (LRU), Most Recently Used (MRU)
  • Least Frequently Used (LFU)
  • First-in-First-Out (FIFO), Last-In-First-Out (LIFO)
  • ...

• Deciding factors: workload and performance requirements
Challenges in Caching

• Speed: making the cache itself fast

• Cache Coherence: dealing with out-of-sync caches

• Performance: maximizing hit ratio

• Security: avoiding information leakage through the cache
Characterizing a Caching System

• Effective access time

• Look-aside vs. Look-through

• Write-through vs. Write-back

• Write-allocate vs. Write-no-allocate

• Eviction policy

Useful for designers of caches and application developers (using caches)!
Remainder of this section

• Caching in the CPU memory hierarchy

• CDN (Web) Caching

• Research: cache optimizations in mobile apps (compute and network)

• Next assignment: in-memory web application cache