Lecture 11
Code Optimization I:
Machine Independent Optimizations

Topics

- Machine-Independent Optimizations
  - Code motion
  - Reduction in strength
  - Common subexpression sharing
- Tuning
  - Identifying performance bottlenecks

There's more to performance than asymptotic complexity

Constant factors matter too!

- Easily see 10:1 performance range depending on how code written
- Must optimize at multiple levels: algorithm, data representations, procedures, and loops

Must understand system to optimize performance

- How programs compiled and executed
- How to measure program performance and identify bottlenecks
- How to improve performance without destroying code modularity and generality

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Optimizing Compilers

Provide efficient mapping of program to machine

- register allocation
- code selection and ordering
- eliminating minor inefficiencies

Don't (usually) improve asymptotic efficiency

- up to programmer to select best overall algorithm
- big-O savings are (often) more important than constant factors
  - but constant factors also matter

Have difficulty overcoming "optimization blockers"

- potential memory aliasing
- potential procedure side-effects

Limitations of Optimizing Compilers

Operate Under Fundamental Constraint

- Must not cause any change in program behavior under any possible condition
- Often prevents it from making optimizations that would only affect behavior under pathological conditions.

Behavior that may be obvious to the programmer can be obfuscated by languages and coding styles

- e.g., data ranges may be more limited than variable types suggest

Most analysis is performed only within procedures

- whole-program analysis is too expensive in most cases

Most analysis is based only on *static* information

- compiler has difficulty anticipating run-time inputs

When in doubt, the compiler must be conservative

Machine-Independent Optimizations

- Optimizations you should do regardless of processor / compiler

Code Motion

- Reduce frequency with which computation performed
  - If it will always produce same result
  - Especially moving code out of loop

```
for (i = 0; i < n; i++)
  for (j = 0; j < n; j++)
    a[n*i + j] = b[j];
```

```
for (i = 0; i < n; i++) {
  int ni = n*i;
  for (j = 0; j < n; j++)
    a[ni + j] = b[j];
}
```

Compiler-Generated Code Motion

- Most compilers do a good job with array code + simple loop structures

Original Code

```
for (i = 0; i < n; i++)
  for (j = 0; j < n; j++)
    a[n*i + j] = b[j];
```

Code Generated by GCC

```
for (i = 0; i < n; i++) {
  int ni = n*i;
  int *p = a+ni;
  for (j = 0; j < n; j++)
    *p++ = b[j];
}
```

```
  imull %ebx,%eax          # i*n
  movl 8(%ebp),%edi        # a
  leal (%edi,%eax,4),%edx  # p = a+i*n (scaled by 4)
# Inner Loop
.L40:
  movl 12(%ebp),%edi       # b
  movl (%edi,%ecx,4),%eax  # b+j  (scaled by 4)
  movl %eax,(%edx)         # *p = b[j]
  addl $4,%edx             # p++  (scaled by 4)
  incl %ecx                # j++
  jl .L40                  # loop if j<n
```

Reduction in Strength

- Replace costly operation with simpler one
- Shift, add instead of multiply or divide

  `16*x   -->   x << 4`
  - Utility machine dependent
  - Depends on cost of multiply or divide instruction
  - On Pentium II or III, integer multiply only requires 4 CPU cycles
- Recognize sequence of products

```
for (i = 0; i < n; i++)
  for (j = 0; j < n; j++)
    a[n*i + j] = b[j];
```

```
int ni = 0;
for (i = 0; i < n; i++) {
  for (j = 0; j < n; j++)
    a[ni + j] = b[j];
  ni += n;
}
```

Make Use of Registers

- Reading and writing registers much faster than reading/writing memory

Limitation

- Compiler not always able to determine whether variable can be held in register
- Possibility of *Aliasing*
- See example later

Machine-Independent Opts. (Cont.)

Share Common Subexpressions

- Reuse portions of expressions
- Compilers often not very sophisticated in exploiting arithmetic properties

```
/* Sum neighbors of i,j */
up =    val[(i-1)*n + j];
down =  val[(i+1)*n + j];
left =  val[i*n   + j-1];
right = val[i*n   + j+1];
sum = up + down + left + right;
```

3 multiplications: i*n, (i–1)*n, (i+1)*n

```
int inj = i*n + j;
up =    val[inj - n];
down =  val[inj + n];
left =  val[inj - 1];
right = val[inj + 1];
sum = up + down + left + right;
```

1 multiplication: i*n

Time Scales

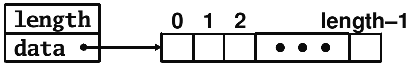
Absolute Time

- Typically use nanoseconds
  - 10^{-9} seconds
- Time scale of computer instructions

Clock Cycles

- Most computers controlled by high frequency clock signal
- Typical Range
  - 100 MHz
    - » 10^8 cycles per second
    - » Clock period = 10ns
  - 2 GHz
    - » 2 X 10^9 cycles per second
    - » Clock period = 0.5ns

Vector ADT



Procedures

`vec_ptr new_vec(int len)`

- Create vector of specified length

`int get_vec_element(vec_ptr v, int index, int *dest)`

- Retrieve vector element, store at *dest
- Return 0 if out of bounds, 1 if successful

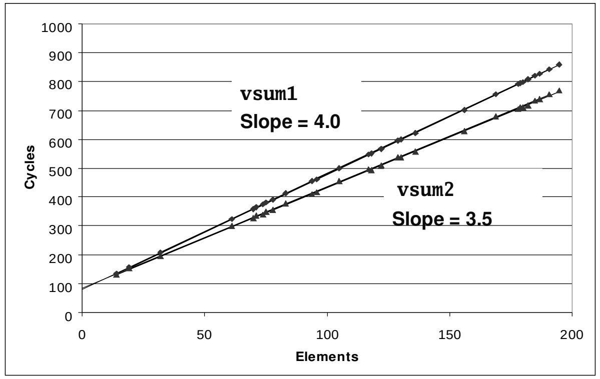
`int *get_vec_start(vec_ptr v)`

- Return pointer to start of vector data

- Similar to array implementations in Pascal, ML, Java, Python
  - E.g., always do bounds checking

Cycles Per Element

- Convenient way to express performance of program that operates on vectors or lists
- Length = n
- T = CPE*n + Overhead



Optimization Example

```
void combine1(vec_ptr v, int *dest)
{
  int i;
  *dest = 0;
  for (i = 0; i < vec_length(v); i++) {
    int val;
    get_vec_element(v, i, &val);
    *dest += val;
  }
}
```

Procedure

- Compute sum of all elements of integer vector
- Store result at destination location
- Vector data structure and operations defined via abstract data type

Pentium II/III Performance: Clock Cycles / Element

- 42.06 (Compiled -g) 31.25 (Compiled -O2)

Understanding Loop

```
void combine1-goto(vec_ptr v, int *dest)
{
    int i = 0;
    int val;
    *dest = 0;
    goto entry;
  loop:
    get_vec_element(v, i, &val);
    *dest += val;
    i++;
  entry:
    if (i < vec_length(v))
      goto loop
  done:
}
```

1 iteration

Inefficiency

- Procedure vec_length called every iteration
- Even though result always the same

Move `vec_length` Call Out of Loop

```
void combine2(vec_ptr v, int *dest)
{
  int i;
  int length = vec_length(v);
  *dest = 0;
  for (i = 0; i < length; i++) {
    int val;
    get_vec_element(v, i, &val);
    *dest += val;
  }
}
```

Optimization

- Move call to `vec_length` out of inner loop
  - Value does not change from one iteration to next
  - Code motion
- CPE: 20.66 (Compiled -O2)
  - `vec_length` requires only constant time, but significant overhead

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Code Motion Example #2

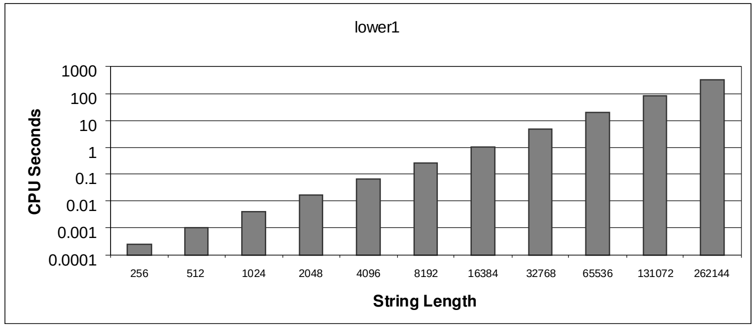
Procedure to Convert String to Lower Case

```
void lower(char *s)
{
  int i;
  for (i = 0; i < strlen(s); i++)
    if (s[i] >= 'A' && s[i] <= 'Z')
      s[i] -= ('A' - 'a');
}
```

- Extracted from 213 lab submissions, Fall, 1998

Lower Case Conversion Performance

- Time quadruples when double string length
- Quadratic performance



Convert Loop To Goto Form

```
void lower(char *s)
{
   int i = 0;
   goto entry;
 loop:
   if (s[i] >= 'A' && s[i] <= 'Z')
       s[i] -= ('A' - 'a');
   i++;
 entry:
   if (i < strlen(s))
     goto loop;
 done:
}
```

- `strlen` executed every iteration
- `strlen` linear in length of string
  - Must scan string until finds `'\0'`
- Overall performance is quadratic

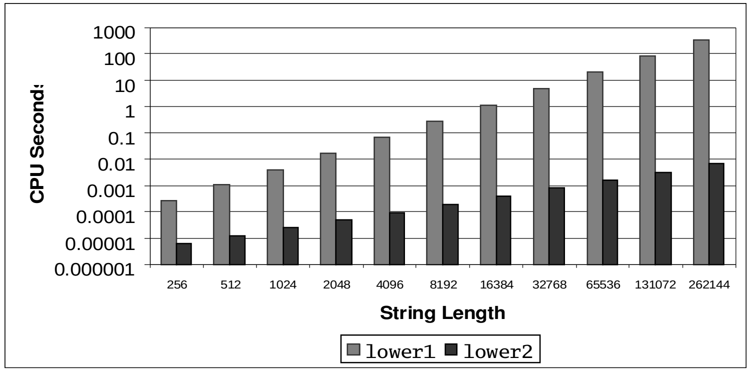
Improving Performance

```
void lower(char *s)
{
  int i;
  int len = strlen(s);
  for (i = 0; i < len; i++)
    if (s[i] >= 'A' && s[i] <= 'Z')
      s[i] -= ('A' - 'a');
}
```

- Move call to `strlen` outside of loop
- Since result does not change from one iteration to another
- Form of code motion

Lower Case Conversion Performance

- Time doubles when double string length
- Linear performance



Optimization Blocker: Procedure Calls

Why couldn't the compiler move `vec_len` or `strlen` out of the inner loop?

- Procedure may have side effects
  - Alters global state each time called
- Function may not return same value for given arguments
  - Depends on other parts of global state
  - Procedure `lower` could interact with `strlen`

Why doesn't compiler look at code for `vec_len` or `strlen`?

- Linker may overload with different version
  - Unless declared static
- Interprocedural optimization is not used extensively due to cost

Warning:

- Compiler treats procedure call as a black box
- Weak optimizations in and around them

Reduction in Strength

```
void combine3(vec_ptr v, int *dest)
{
  int i;
  int length = vec_length(v);
  int *data = get_vec_start(v);
  *dest = 0;
  for (i = 0; i < length; i++) {
    *dest += data[i];
}
```

Optimization

- Avoid procedure call to retrieve each vector element
  - Get pointer to start of array before loop
  - Within loop just do pointer reference
  - Not as clean in terms of data abstraction
- CPE: 6.00 (Compiled -O2)
  - Procedure calls are expensive!
  - Bounds checking is expensive

Eliminate Unneeded Memory Refs

```
void combine4(vec_ptr v, int *dest)
{
  int i;
  int length = vec_length(v);
  int *data = get_vec_start(v);
  int sum = 0;
  for (i = 0; i < length; i++)
    sum += data[i];
  *dest = sum;
}
```

Optimization

- Don't need to store in destination until end
- Local variable `sum` held in register
- Avoids 1 memory read, 1 memory write per cycle
- CPE: 2.00 (Compiled -O2)
  - Memory references are expensive!

Detecting Unneeded Memory Refs.

Combine3

```
.L18:
      movl (%ecx,%edx,4),%eax
      addl %eax,(%edi)
      incl %edx
      cmpl %esi,%edx
      jl .L18
```

Combine4

```
.L24:
      addl (%eax,%edx,4),%ecx

      incl %edx
      cmpl %esi,%edx
      jl .L24
```

Performance

- Combine3
  - 5 instructions in 6 clock cycles
  - `addl` must read and write memory
- Combine4
  - 4 instructions in 4 clock cycles

Optimization Blocker: Memory Aliasing

Aliasing

- Two different memory references specify single location

Example

- `v: [3, 2, 17]`
- `combine3(v, get_vec_start(v)+2)   --> ?`
- `combine4(v, get_vec_start(v)+2)   --> ?`

Observations

- Easy to have happen in C
  - Since allowed to do address arithmetic
  - Direct access to storage structures
- Get in habit of introducing local variables
  - Accumulating within loops
  - Your way of telling compiler not to check for aliasing

Machine-Independent Opt. Summary

Code Motion

- *Compilers are good at this for simple loop/array structures*
- *Don't do well in presence of procedure calls and memory aliasing*

Reduction in Strength

- Shift, add instead of multiply or divide
  - ***compilers are (generally) good at this***
  - ***Exact trade-offs machine-dependent***
- Keep data in registers rather than memory
  - ***compilers are not good at this, since concerned with aliasing***

Share Common Subexpressions

- *compilers have limited algebraic reasoning capabilities*

Important Tools

Measurement

- Accurately compute time taken by code
  - Most modern machines have built in cycle counters
  - Using them to get reliable measurements is tricky
- Profile procedure calling frequencies
  - Unix tool gprof

Observation

- Generating assembly code
  - Lets you see what optimizations compiler can make
  - Understand capabilities/limitations of particular compiler

Code Profiling Example

Task

- Count word frequencies in text document
- Produce sorted list of words from most frequent to least

Steps

- Convert strings to lowercase
- Apply hash function
- Read words and insert into hash table
  - Mostly list operations
  - Maintain counter for each unique word
- Sort results

Data Set

- Collected works of Shakespeare
- 946,596 total words, 26,596 unique
- Initial implementation: 9.2 seconds

Shakespeare's
most frequent words

29,801	the
27,529	and
21,029	I
20,957	to
18,514	of
15,370	a
14010	you
12,936	my
11,722	in
11,519	that

Code Profiling

Augment Executable Program with Timing Functions

- Computes (approximate) amount of time spent in each function
- Time computation method
  - Periodically (~ every 10ms) interrupt program
  - Determine what function is currently executing
  - Increment its timer by interval (e.g., 10ms)
- Also maintains counter for each function indicating number of times called

Using

```
gcc -O2 -pg -o prog prog.c
./prog
```

- Executes in normal fashion, but also generates file `gmon.out`

```
gprof prog
```

- Generates profile information based on `gmon.out`

Profiling Results

```
%   cumulative   self              self     total
time   seconds   seconds    calls  ms/call  ms/call  name
86.60      8.21      8.21        1  8210.00  8210.00  sort_words
 5.80      8.76      0.55   946596     0.00     0.00  lower1
 4.75      9.21      0.45   946596     0.00     0.00  find_ele_rec
 1.27      9.33      0.12   946596     0.00     0.00  h_add
```

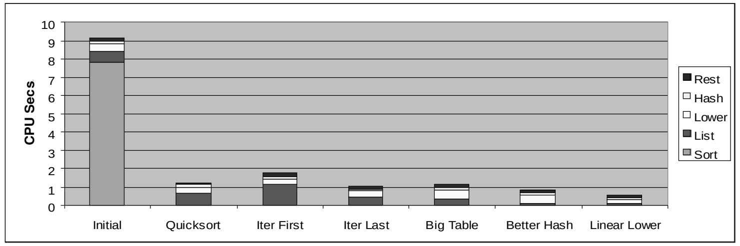
Call Statistics

- Number of calls and cumulative time for each function

Performance Limiter

- Using inefficient sorting algorithm
- Single call uses 87% of CPU time

Code Optimizations



- First step: Use more efficient sorting function
- Library function `qsort`
- Iter first: Use iterative function to insert elements into linked list
  - » Causes code to slow down
- Iter last: Iterative function, places new entry at end of list
  - » Tend to place most common words at front of list
- Big table: Increase number of hash buckets
- Better hash: Use more sophisticated hash function
- Linear lower: Move `strlen` out of loop

Profiling Observations

Benefits

- Helps identify performance bottlenecks
- Especially useful when have complex system with many components

Limitations

- Only shows performance for data tested
- E.g., linear lower did not show big gain, since words are short
  - Quadratic inefficiency could remain lurking in code
- Timing mechanism fairly crude
  - Only works for programs that run for > 3 seconds