

Virtual Memory (VM*)

Overview and motivation

- *Fair warning*: it's pretty complex, but crucial for understanding how processes work and for debugging performance.
- VM as tool for caching
- Address translation
- VM as tool for memory management
- VM as tool for memory protection

*Not to be confused with "Virtual Machine" which is a whole other thing.

Again: Processes

Definition: A process is an instance of a running program

- One of the most important ideas in computer science
- Not the same as "program" or "processor"
- Necessary for allowing programs to be developed independently of each other (another form of encapsulation)

Process provides each program with two key abstractions:

- Logical control flow
 - Each process seems to have exclusive use of the CPU
- Private virtual address space
 - Each process seems to have exclusive use of memory (all 2⁶⁴ bytes of it!)

How are these <u>illusion</u>s maintained?

- Process executions interleaved (multi-tasking) done...
- Address spaces managed by virtual memory system now!

Memory as we know it so far... is virtual!

Programs refer to virtual memory addresses

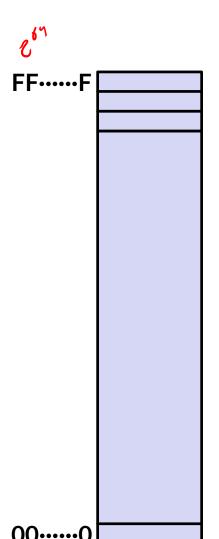
- movq (%rdi),%rax
- Conceptually memory is just a very large array of bytes
- Each byte has its own address
- System provides private address space to each process

Allocation: Compiler and run-time system

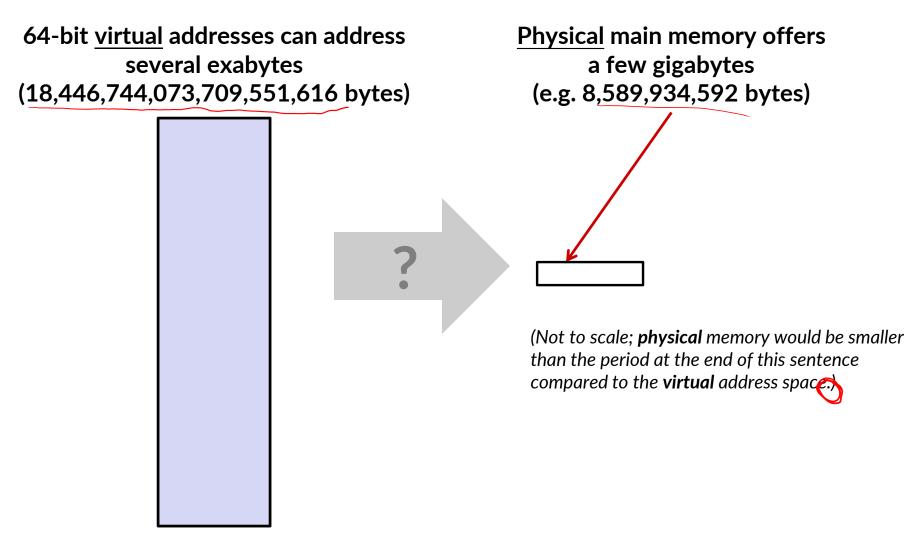
- Where different program objects should be stored
- All allocation within single virtual address space

But...

- We probably don't have 2w bytes of physical memory (definitely not if w = 64!)
- We certainly don't have 2w bytes of physical memory for every process.
 - Processes should not interfere with one another
 - Except in certain cases where they want to share code or data

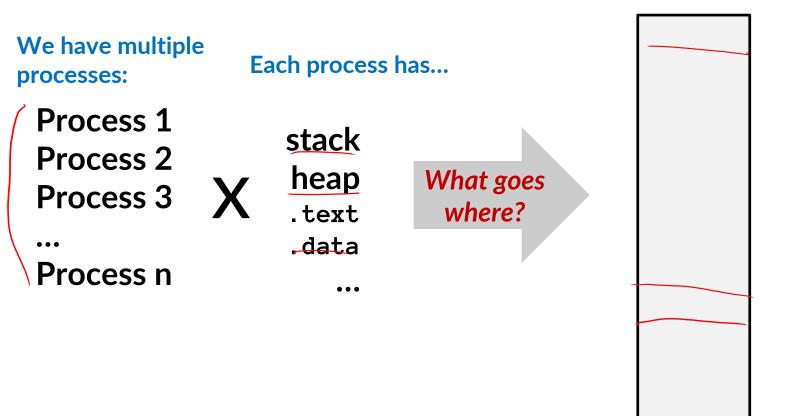


Problem 1: How Does Everything Fit?



1 virtual address space per process, with many processes...

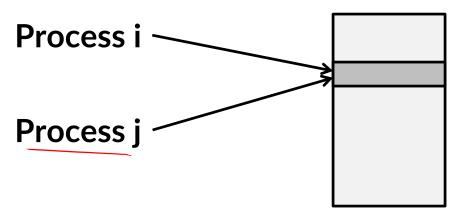
Problem 2: Memory Management



Physical main memory

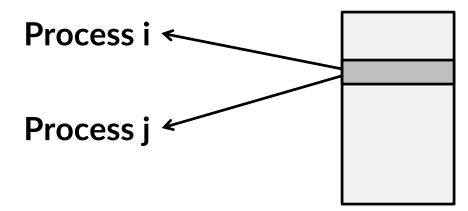
Problem 3: How To Protect

Physical main memory



Problem 4: How To Share?

Physical main memory

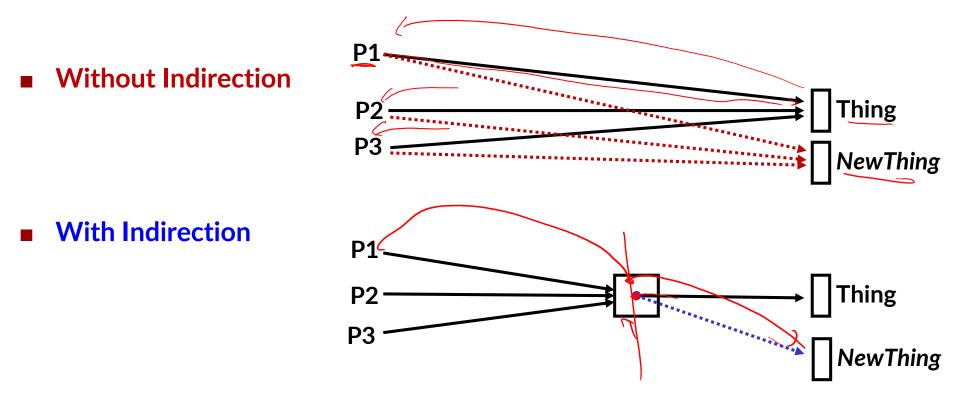


How can we solve these problems?

- Fitting a huge address space into a tiny physical memory
 - Managing the address spaces of multiple processes
- Protecting processes from stepping on each other's memory
- Allowing processes to share common parts of memory

Indirection

 "Any problem in computer science can be solved by adding another level of indirection." - David Wheeler, inventor of the subroutine (a.k.a. procedure)



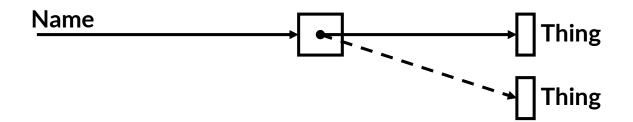
What if I want to move Thing?

Indirection

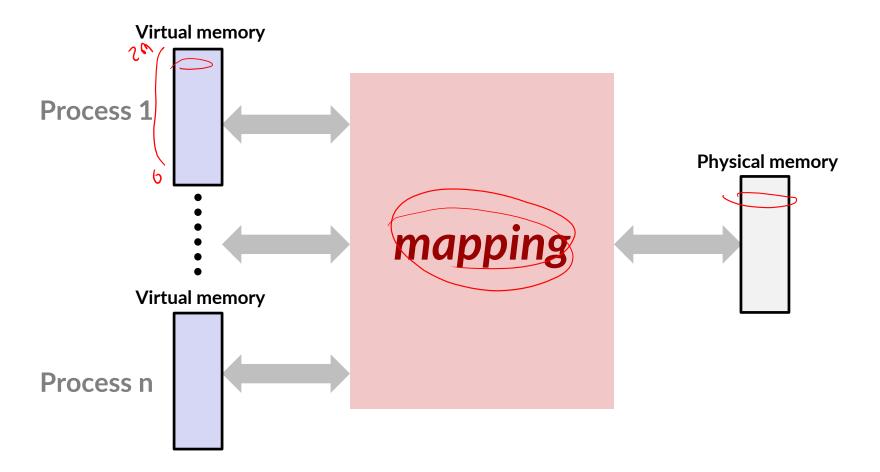
- Indirection: the ability to reference something using a name, reference, or container instead the value itself. A flexible mapping between a name and a thing allows changing the thing without notifying holders of the name.
 - Adds some work ("overhead"; now have to look up 2 things instead of 1)
 - But don't have to track everyone that uses the name/address

Examples of indirection:

- <u>911</u>: routed to local office
- **Call centers:** route calls to available operators, etc.
- Phone system: cell phone number portability
- Snail mail: mail forwarding
- **Domain Name Service (DNS):** translation from name to IP address
- **Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP):** local network address assignment



Indirection in Virtual Memory



- Each process gets its own private virtual address space
- Solves the previous problems

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Address Spaces

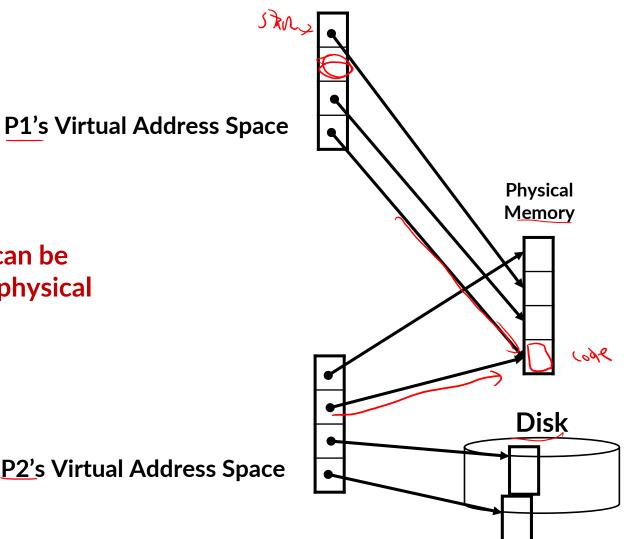
Virtual address space: Set of N = 2ⁿ virtual addresses {0, 1, 2, 3, ..., N-1}

Physical address space: Set of M = 2^m physical addresses (n >= m) {0, 1, 2, 3, ..., M-1} 160 2 256

Every byte in main memory has:

- one physical address
- zero, one, or more virtual addresses

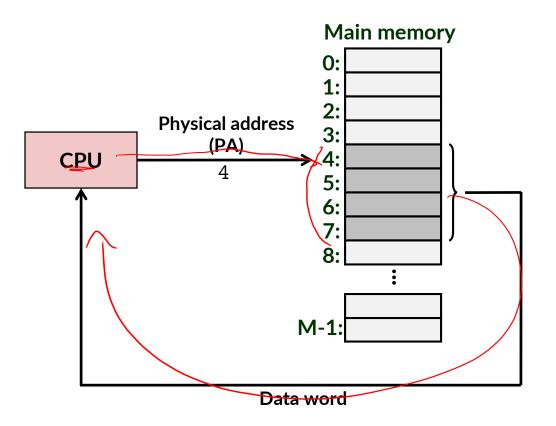
Mapping



A virtual address can be mapped to either physical memory or disk

P2's Virtual Address Space

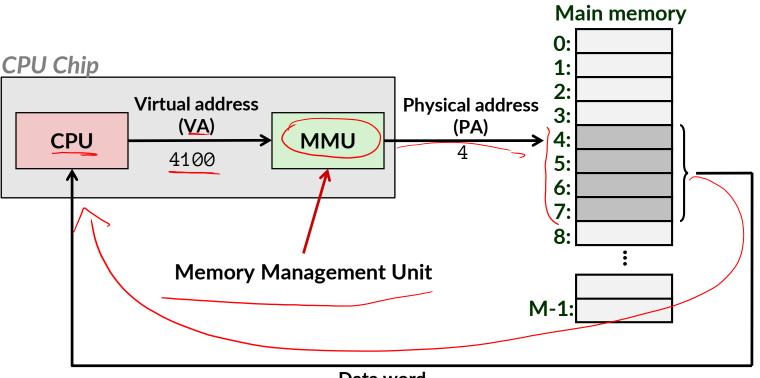
A System Using Physical Addressing



Used in "simple" systems with (usually) just one process:

 embedded microcontrollers in devices like cars, elevators, and digital picture frames

A System Using Virtual Addressing



Data word

Physical addresses are completely invisible to programs

- Used in all modern desktops, laptops, servers, smartphones...
- One of the great ideas in computer science

Why Virtual Memory (VM)?

Efficient use of limited main memory (RAM)

- Use RAM as a cache for the parts of a virtual address space
 - some non-cached parts stored on disk
 - some (unallocated) non-cached parts stored nowhere
- Keep only active areas of virtual address space in memory
 - transfer data back and forth as needed

Simplifies memory management for programmers

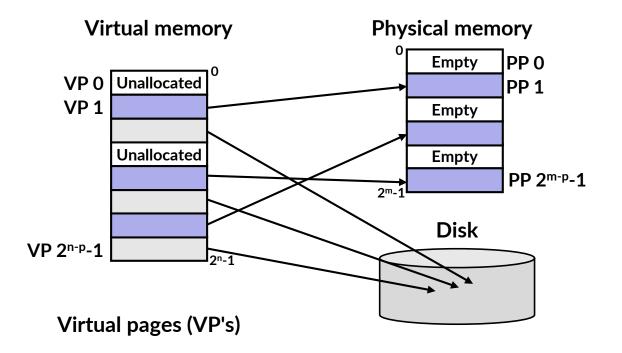
Each process gets the same full, private linear address space

Isolates address spaces

- One process can't interfere with another's memory
 - because they operate in different address spaces
- User process cannot access privileged information
 - different sections of address spaces have different permissions

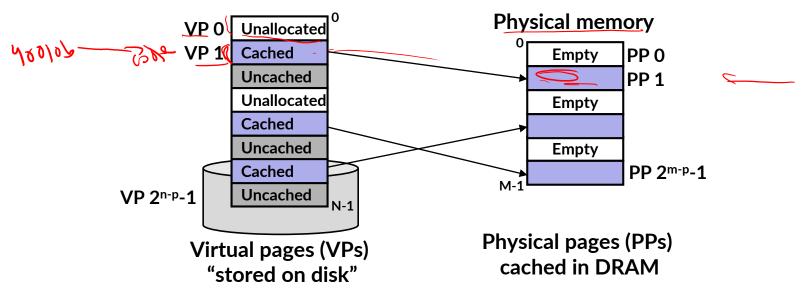
VM and the Memory Hierarchy

- Think of virtual memory as array of N = 2ⁿ contiguous bytes.
- Pages of virtual memory are usually stored in physical memory, but sometimes spill to disk.
 - Pages are another unit of aligned memory (size is P = 2^e bytes)
 - Each virtual page can be stored in any physical page



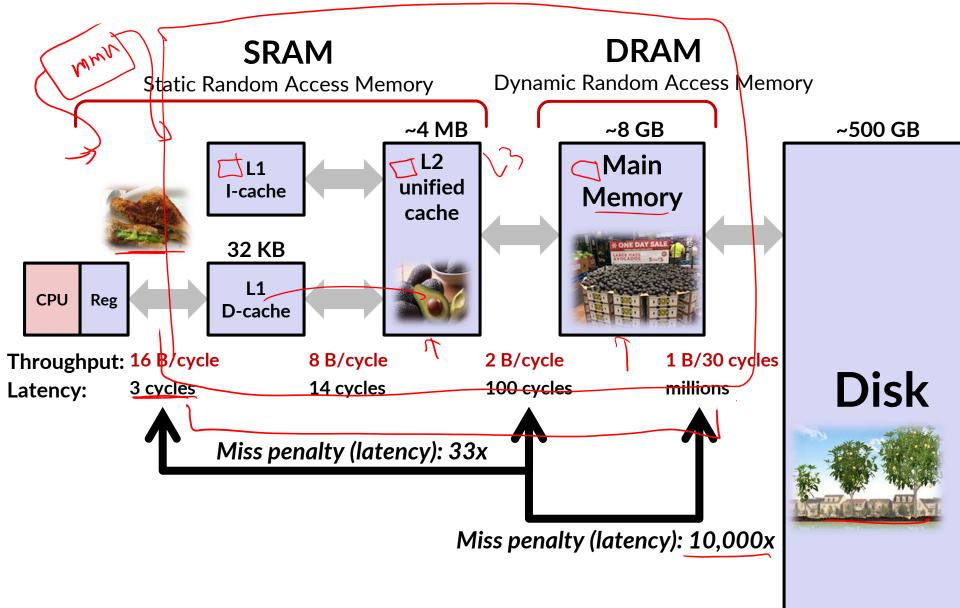
or: Virtual Memory as DRAM Cache for Disk

- Think of virtual memory as an array of N = 2ⁿ contiguous bytes stored on a disk.
- Then physical main memory is used as a cache for the virtual memory array
 - These "cache blocks" are called pages (size is P = 2^p bytes)



Virtual memory

Memory Hierarchy: Core 2 Duo



Virtual Memory Design Consequences

- Large page size: typically <u>4-8 KB</u> or 2-4 MB
 - Can be up to 1 GB (for "Big Data" apps on big computers)
 - Compared with 64-byte cache blocks

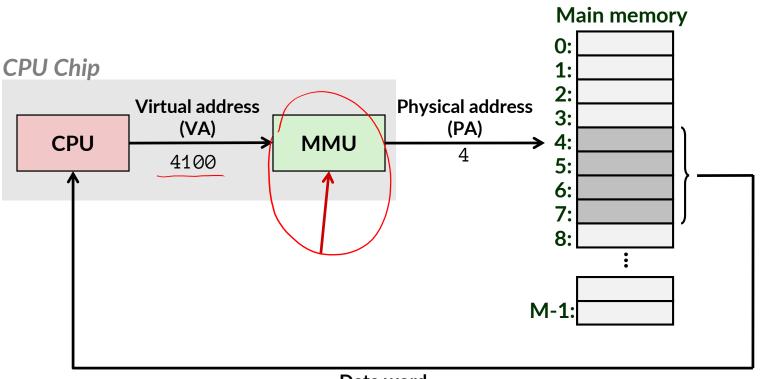
Fully associative

- Any virtual page can be placed in any physical page
- Requires a "large" mapping function different from CPU caches

Highly sophisticated, expensive replacement algorithms in OS

- Too complicated and open-ended to be implemented in hardware
- Write-back rather than write-through
 - *Really* don't want to write to disk every time we modify something in memory
 - Some things may never end up on disk (e.g. stack for short-lived process)

Address Translation

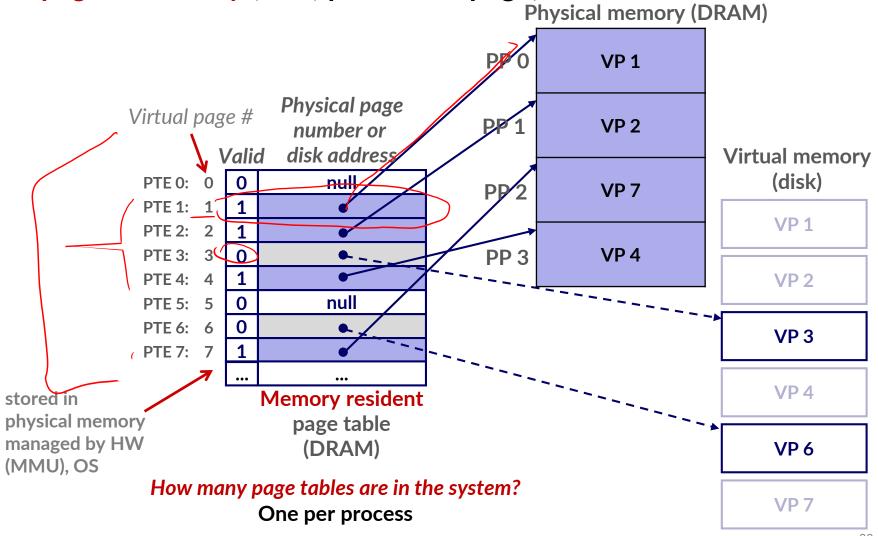


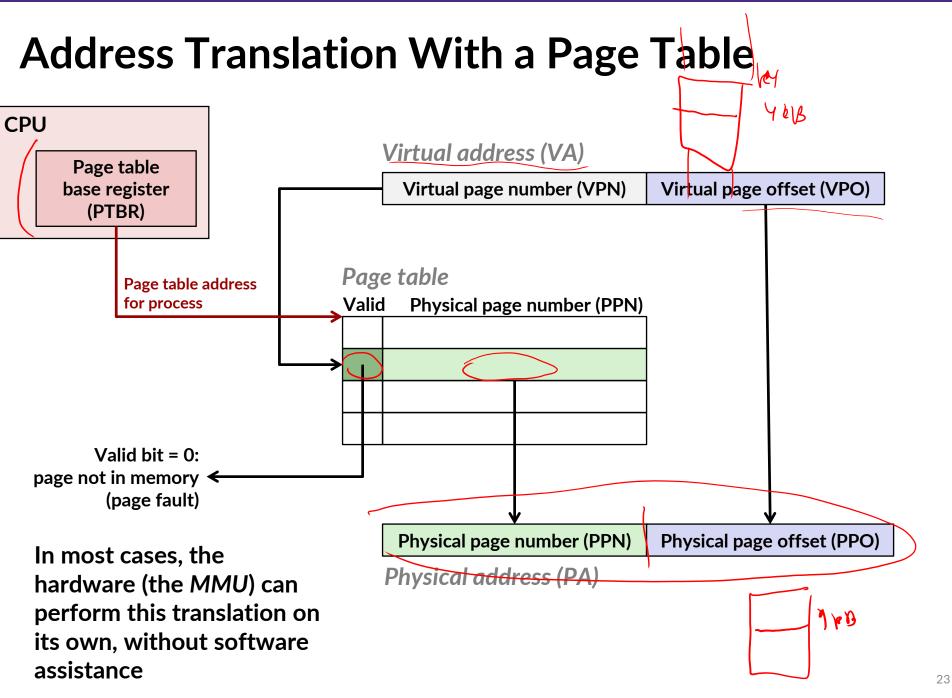
Data word

How do we perform the virtual \rightarrow physical address translation?

Address Translation: Page Tables

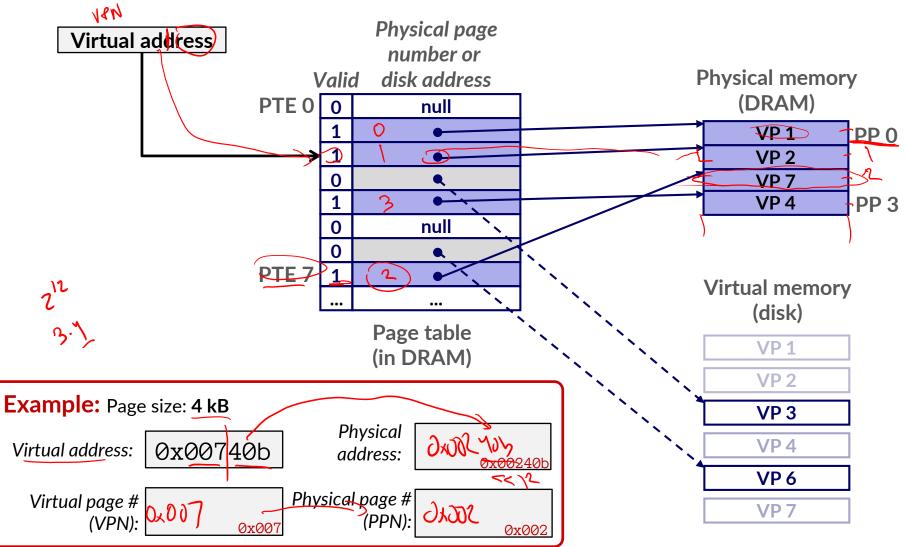
 A page table is an array that maps virtual pages to physical pages (one page table entry (PTE) per virtual page)





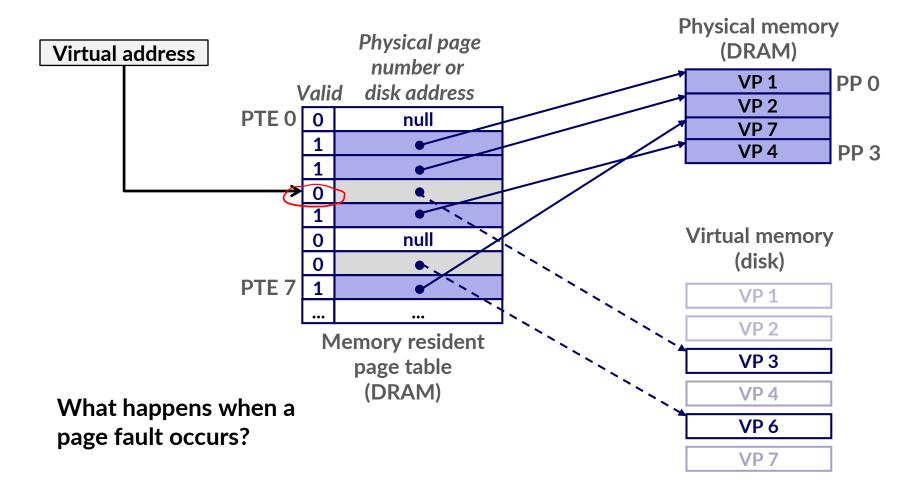
Page Hit

Page hit: reference to VM byte that is in physical memory



Page Fault

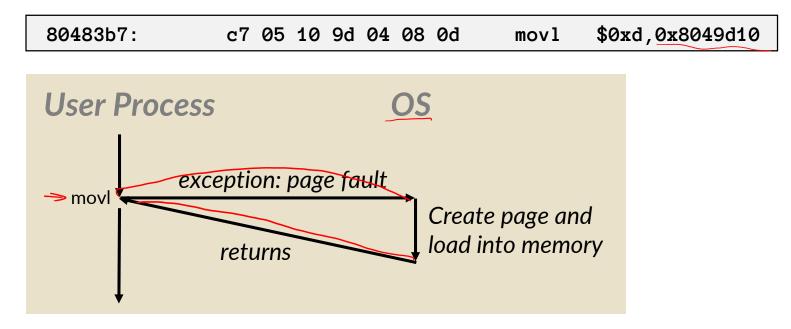
Page fault: reference to VM byte that is NOT in physical memory



Fault Example: Page Fault

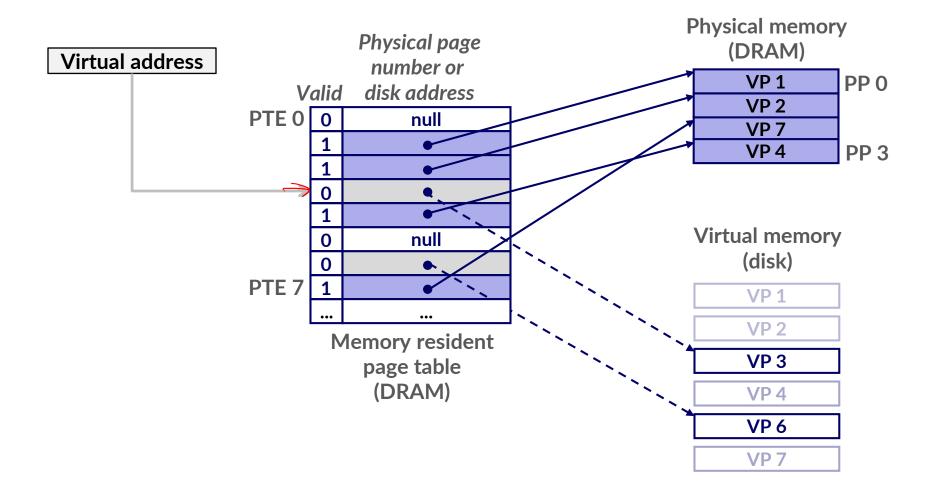
- User writes to memory location
- That portion (page) of user's memory is currently on disk

int a[1000];
int main()
{
 a[500] = 13;
}

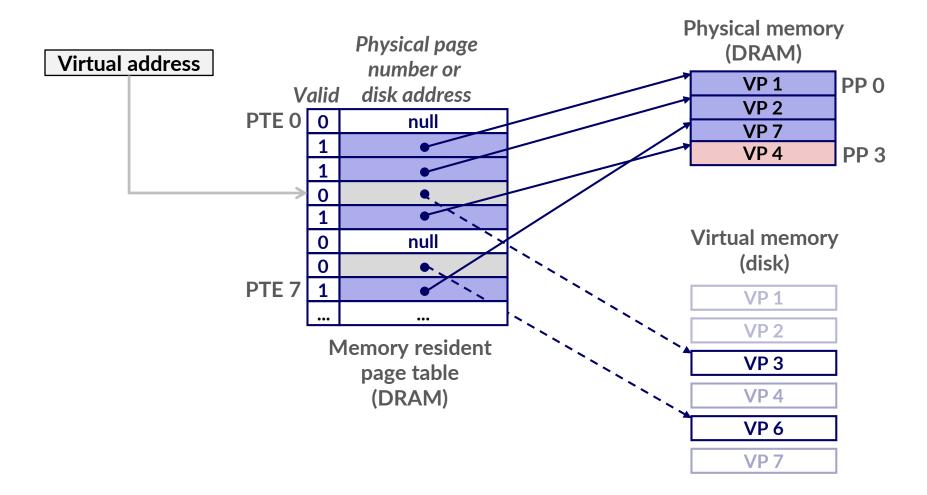


- Page fault handler must load page into physical memory
- Returns to faulting instruction: **mov** is executed *again*!
- Successful on second try

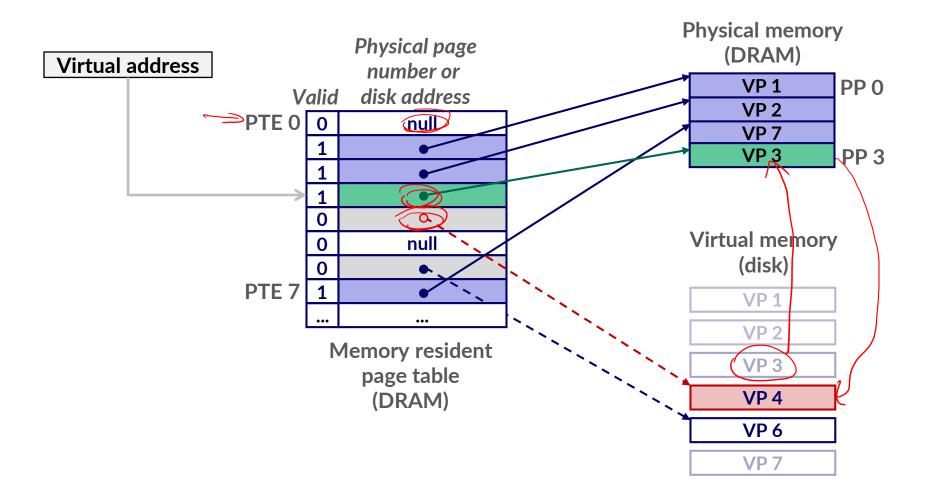
Page miss causes page fault (an exception)



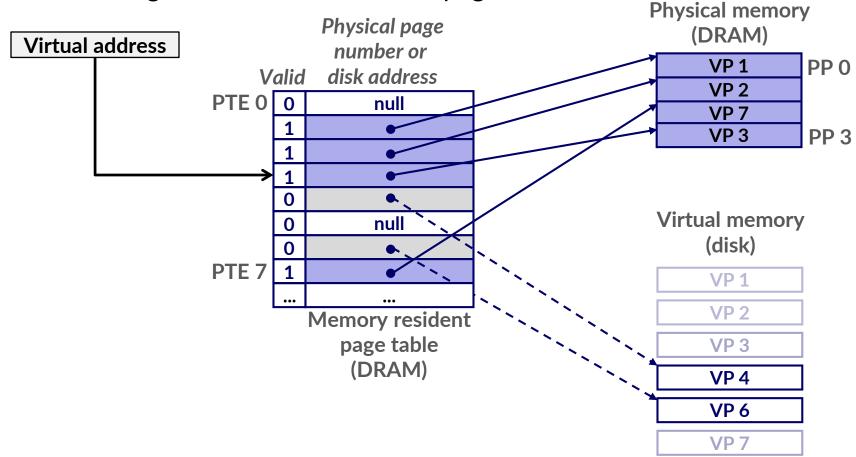
- Page miss causes page fault (an exception)
- Page fault handler selects a victim to be evicted (here VP 4)



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- Page miss causes page fault (an exception)
- Page fault handler selects a victim to be evicted (here VP 4)
- Offending instruction is restarted: page hit!



Why does it work?

Why does Virtual Memory work on RAM/disk?

- Works well for avoiding disk accesses because of *locality*.
 - Same reason that L1 / L2 / L3 caches work
- The set of virtual pages that a program is "actively" accessing at any point in time is called its working set
- if (working set size of one process < main memory size):</p>
 - Good performance for one process (after compulsory misses)

But...

if sum(working set sizes of all processes) > main memory size:

- Thrashing: Performance meltdown where pages are swapped (copied) between memory and disk continuously. CPU always waiting or paging.
- This is why your computer can feel faster when you add RAM.

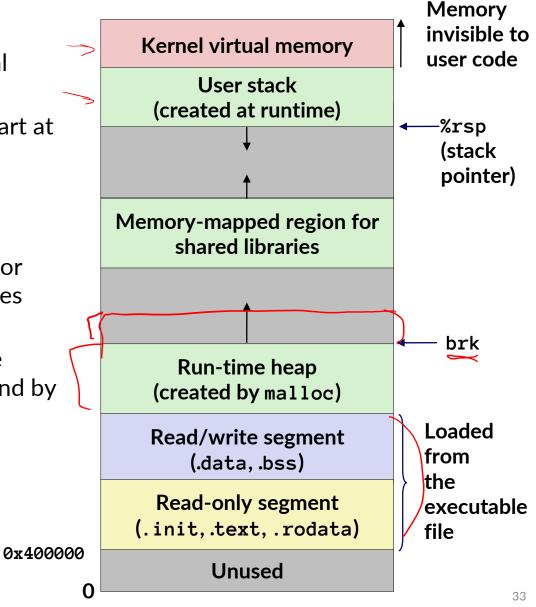
Simplifying Linking and Loading

Linking

- Each program has similar virtual address space
- Code, data, and heap always start at the same addresses.

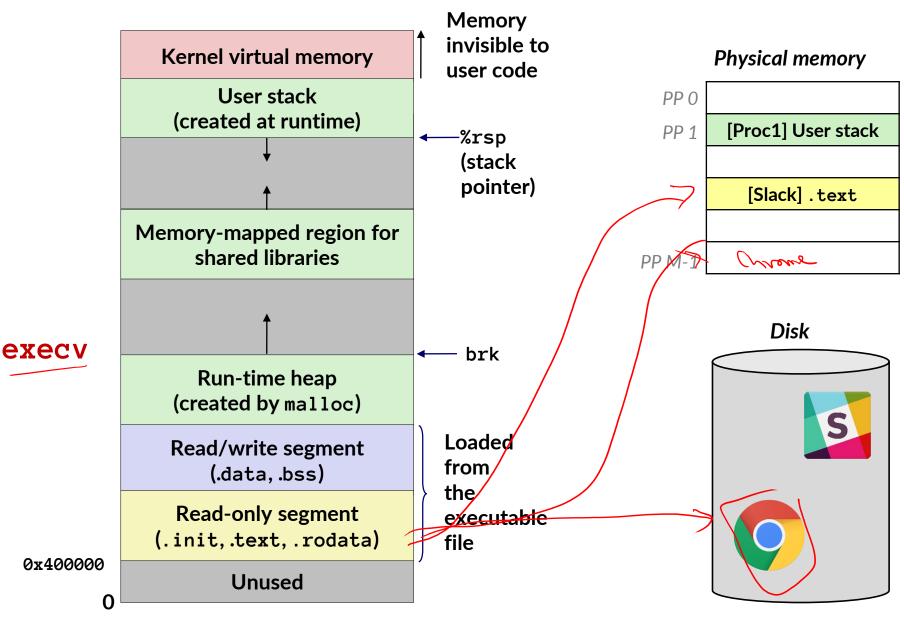
Loading

- execve allocates virtual pages for —.text and .data sections & creates PTEs marked as invalid
- The .text and .data sections are copied, page by page, on demand by the virtual memory system



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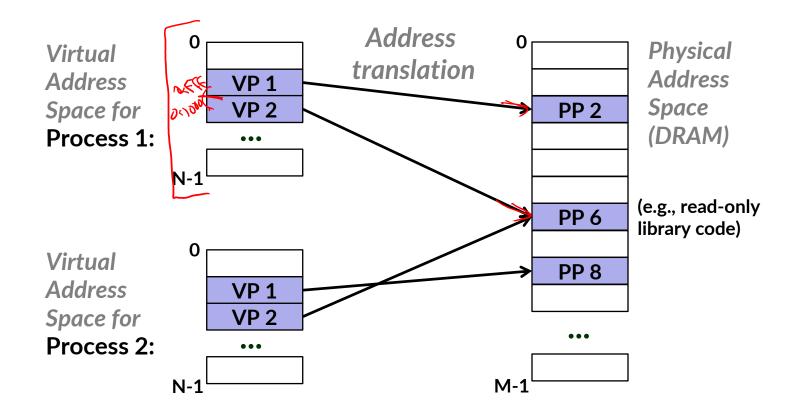
Simplifying Linking and Loading



VM for Managing Multiple Processes

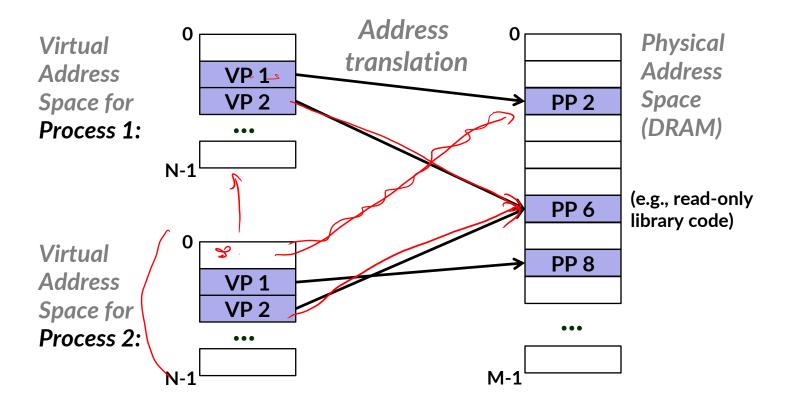
Key abstraction: each process has its own virtual address space

- It can view memory as a simple linear array
- With virtual memory, this simple linear virtual address space need not be contiguous in physical memory
 - Process needs to store data in another VP? Just map it to any PP!



VM for Protection and Sharing

- The mapping of VPs to PPs provides a simple mechanism to protect memory and to share memory between processes
 - Sharing: just map virtual pages in separate address spaces to the same physical page (here: PP 6)
 - Protection: process simply can't access physical pages to which none of its virtual pages are mapped (here: Process 2 can't access PP 2)

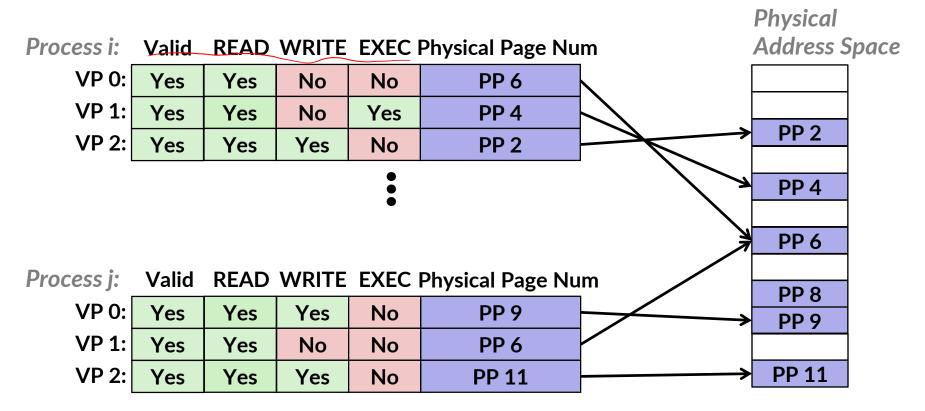


Memory Protection Within a Single Process

Can we use virtual memory to control read/write/execute permissions? How?

Memory Protection Within a Single Process

- Extend page table entries with permission bits
- MMU checks these permission bits on every memory access
 - If violated, raises exception and OS sends SIGSEGV signal to process (segmentation fault)



Terminology

context switch

Switch between processes on the same CPU

page in

Move pages of virtual memory from disk to physical memory

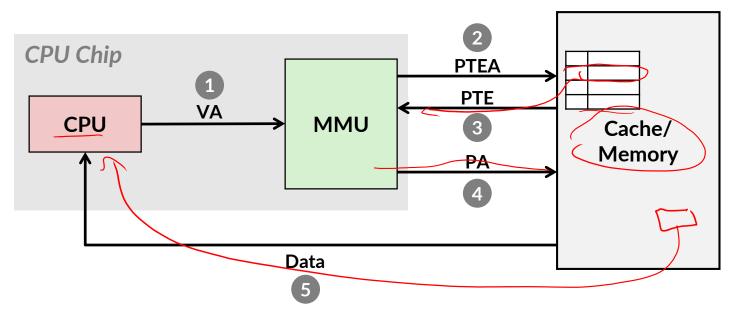
page out

Move pages of virtual memory from physical memory to disk

thrash

- Total working set size of processes is larger than physical memory
- Most time is spent paging in and out instead of doing useful computation

Address Translation: Page Hit

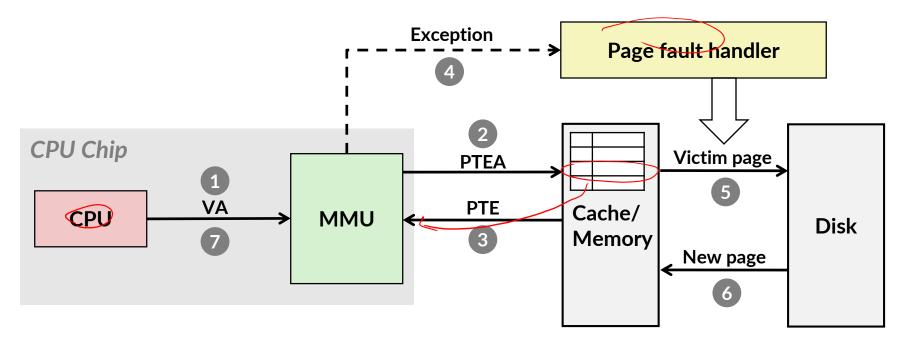


1) Processor sends virtual address to MMU (memory management unit)

- 2-3) MMU fetches PTE from page table in cache/memory (Uses PTBR to find beginning of page table for current process)
- 4) MMU sends *physical* address to cache/memory requesting data
- 5) Cache/memory sends data (~1 word) to processor

VA = Virtual AddressPTEA = Page Table Entry AddressPTE= Page Table EntryPA = Physical AddressData = Contents of memory stored at VA originally requested by CPU

Address Translation: Page Fault



1) Processor sends virtual address to MMU

2-3) MMU fetches PTE from page table in cache/memory

- 4) Valid bit is zero, so MMU triggers page fault exception
- 5) Handler identifies victim (and, if dirty, pages it out to disk)
- 6) Handler pages in new page and updates PTE in memory
- 7) Handler returns to original process, restarting faulting instruction

Hmm... Translation Sounds Slow!

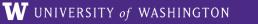
- The MMU accesses memory twice: once to get the PTE for translation, and then again for the actual memory request
 - The PTEs may be cached in L1 like any other memory word
 - But they may be evicted by other data references
 - And a hit in the L1 cache still requires 1-3 cycles

What can we do to make this faster?

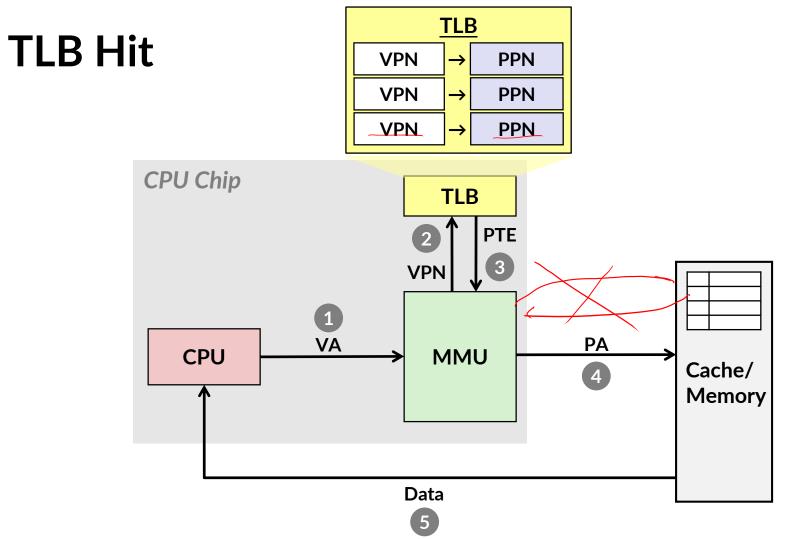
Speeding up Translation with a TLB

- Solution: add another cache! 💐 <
- Translation Lookaside Buffer (TLB):
 - Small hardware cache in MMU
 - Maps virtual page numbers to physical page numbers
 - Contains complete *page table entries* for small number of pages
 - Modern Intel processors: 128 or <u>256</u> entries in TLB
 - Much faster than a page table lookup in cache/memory

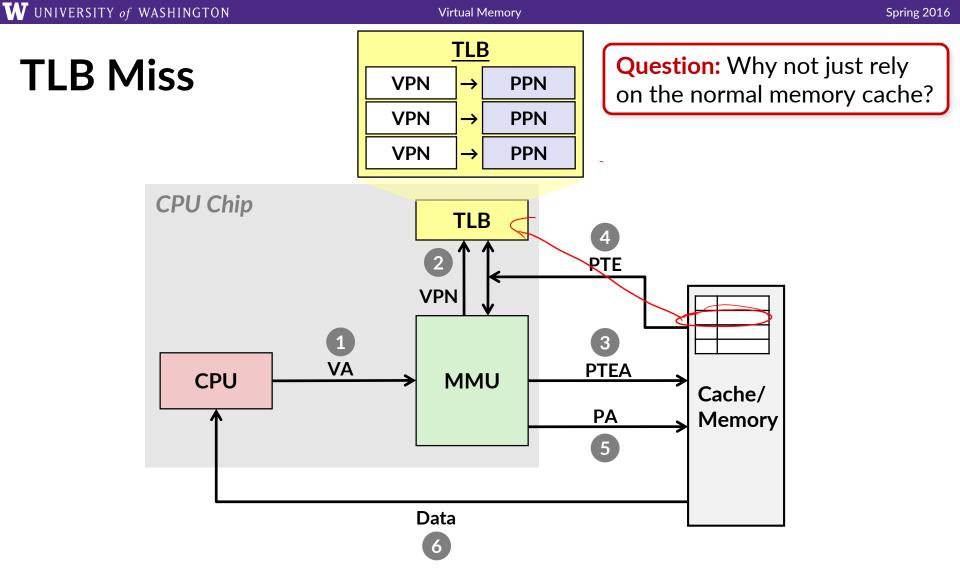
<u>TLB</u>								
VPN → PPN								
VPN] → [PPN						
VPN] → [PPN						



Virtual Memory



A TLB hit eliminates a memory access



A TLB miss incurs an additional memory access (the PTE) Fortunately, TLB misses are rare.

Summary of Address Translation Symbols

Basic Parameters

- N = 2ⁿ: Number of addresses in virtual address space
- M = 2^m: Number of addresses in physical address space
- P = 2^p : Page size (bytes)

Components of the virtual address (VA)

- VPO: Virtual page offset
- VPN: Virtual page number
- TLBI: TLB index
- TLBT: TLB tag

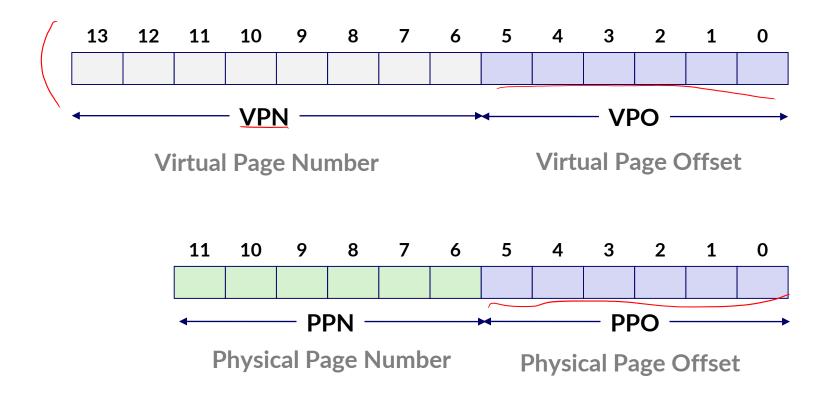
Components of the physical address (PA)

- PPO: Physical page offset (same as VPO)
- PPN: Physical page number

Simple Memory System Example (small)

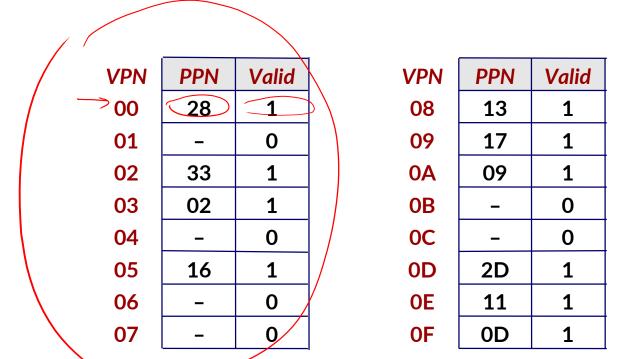
Addressing

- 14-bit virtual addresses
- 12-bit physical address
- Page size = 64 bytes



Simple Memory System Page Table

Only showing first 16 entries (out of 256 = 2⁸)



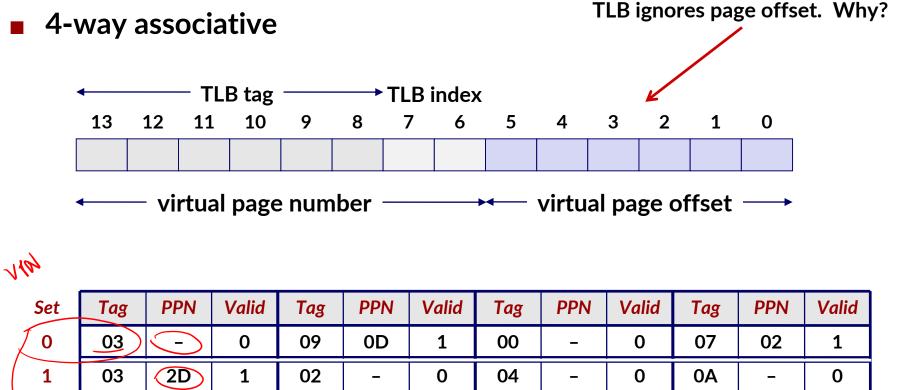
What about a real address space? Read more in the book...

Simple Memory System TLB

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- 16 entries total
- 4 sets



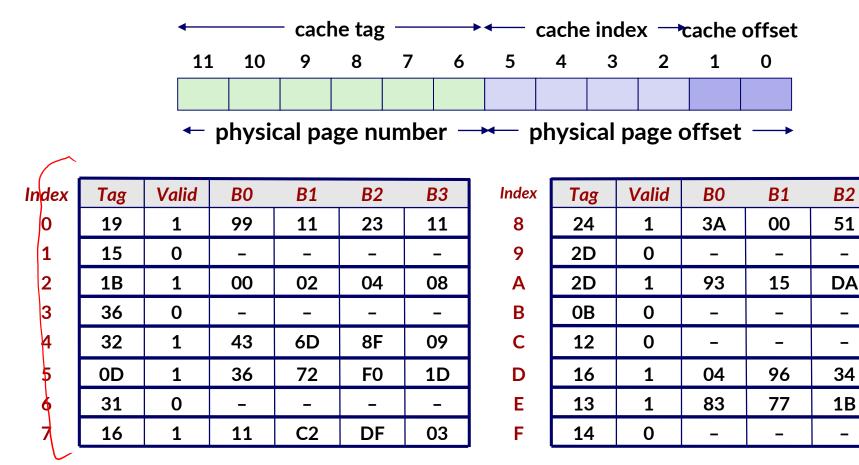
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Simple Memory System Cache

- 16 lines, 4-byte block size
- Physically addressed
- Direct mapped

Note: It is a coincidence that the physical page number is the same bits as the cache tag



B3

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3B

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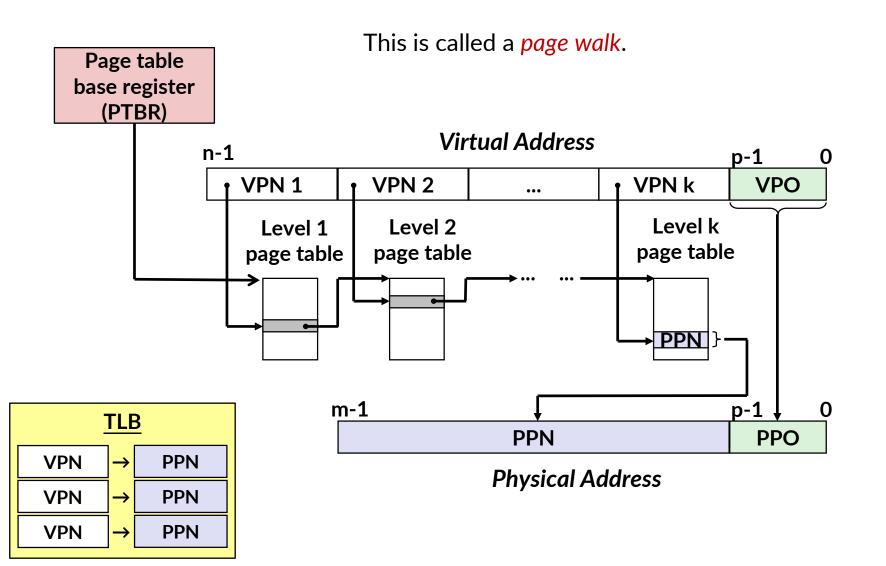
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So...

- This seems complicated, but also elegant and effective
 - Level of indirection to provide isolated memory, caching, etc.
 - TLB as a cache-of-a-page-table to avoid "two trips to memory for one load"
- Just one issue... Numbers don't work out for the story so far!
- The problem is the page-table itself for each process...
 - Suppose 64-bit addresses and 8KB pages
 - How many page-table-entries is that? (Also: Each PTE is > 1byte)
 - Moral: Cannot use this naïve implementation of the virtual→physical-page mapping: It's way too big.

A solution: Multi-level page tables



This works!

- Just a tree of depth k (e.g., 4) where each node at depth i has up to 2^k children if part i of the VPN has k bits
- Hardware for multi-level page tables inherently more complicated
 - But it's a necessary complexity: 1-level does not fit
- Why it works: Most subtrees are not used at all, so they are never created and definitely aren't in physical memory
 - Even parts created can be evicted from cache/memory when not being used
 - Each node can have a size of ~1-100KB
- But now for a k-level page table, a TLB miss requires k+1 cache/memory accesses
 - Fine so long as TLB misses are rare: motivates larger TLBs

Summary

Programmer's view of virtual memory

- Each process has its own private linear address space
- Cannot be corrupted by other processes

System view of virtual memory

- Uses memory efficiently by caching virtual memory pages
 - Efficient only because of locality
- Simplifies memory management and sharing
- Simplifies protection by providing a convenient interpositioning point to check permissions

Memory System Summary

L1/L2 Memory Cache

- Purely a speed-up technique
- Behavior invisible to application programmer and (mostly) OS
- Implemented totally in hardware

Virtual Memory

- Supports many OS-related functions
 - Process creation, task switching, protection
- Operating System (software)
 - Allocates/shares physical memory among processes
 - Maintains high-level tables tracking memory type, source, sharing
 - Handles exceptions, fills in hardware-defined mapping tables
- Hardware
 - Translates virtual addresses via mapping tables, enforcing permissions
 - Accelerates mapping via translation cache (TLB)

Memory System – Who controls what?

L1/L2 Memory Cache

- Controlled by hardware
- Programmer cannot control it
- Programmer *can* write code in a way that takes advantage of it

Virtual Memory

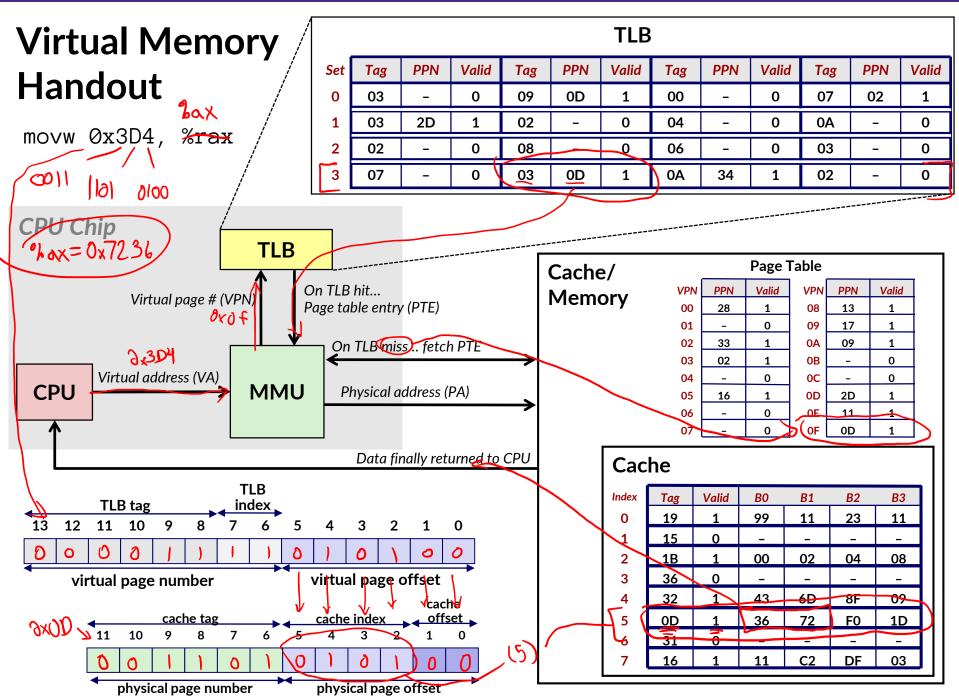
- Controlled by OS and hardware
- Programmer cannot control mapping to physical memory
- Programmer can control sharing and some protection
 - via OS functions (not in CSE 351)

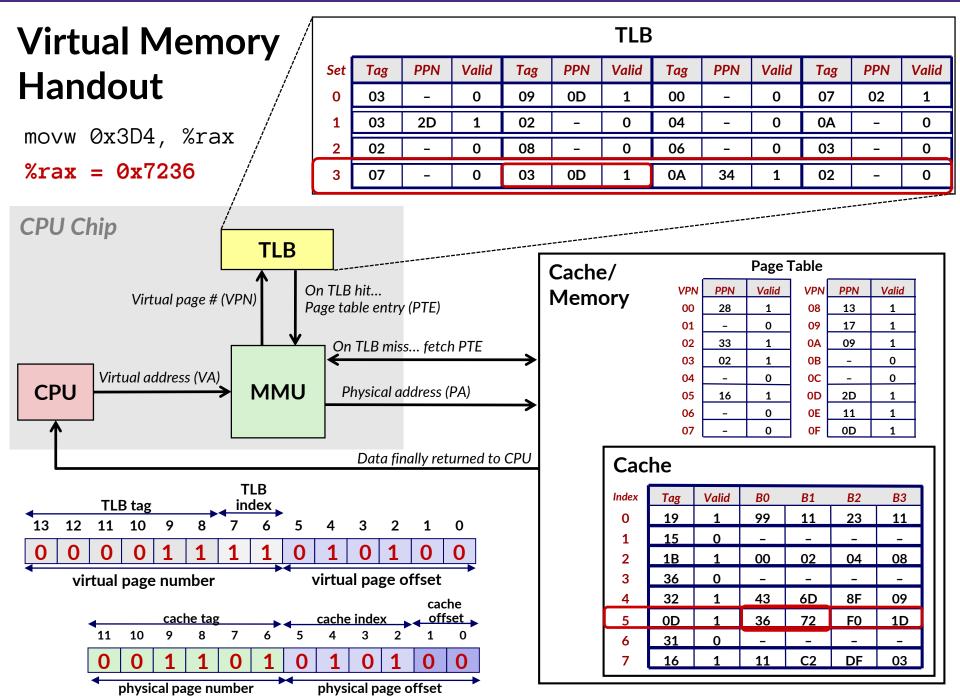
Quick Review

- What do Page Tables map?
- Where are Page Tables?
- How many Page Tables are there?
- Can your program tell if a page fault has occurred?
- What is thrashing?
- T/F: Virtual Addresses that are contiguous will always be contiguous in physical memory.
 - TLB stands for ______ and stores ______

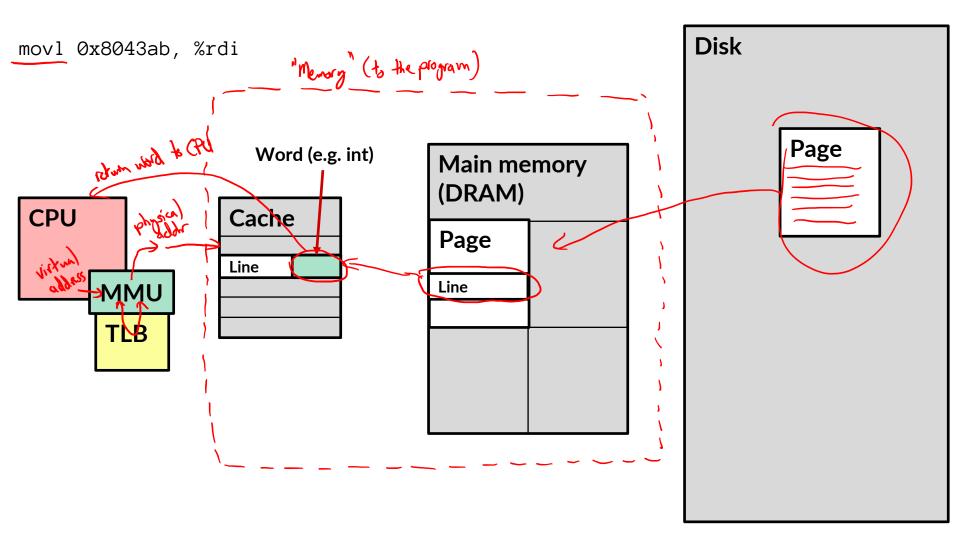
Quick Review Answers

- What do Page Tables map?
 - Virtual pages to physical pages or location on disk
- Where are Page Tables?
 - In physical memory
- How many Page Tables are there?
 - One per process
- Can your program tell if a page fault has occurred?
 - Nope. But it has to wait a long time.
- What is thrashing?
 - Constantly paging out and paging in. The working set of all applications you are trying to run is bigger than physical memory.
- T/F: Virtual Addresses that are contiguous will always be contiguous in physical memory. (could be on different physical pages)
 - False; *pages* can be mapped anywhere (within a page they are contiguous)
- TLB stands for <u>Translation Lookaside Buffer</u>, and stores <u>page table entries</u>.





Memory Overview



Detailed Examples...

Current state of caches/tables

Page table (partial)

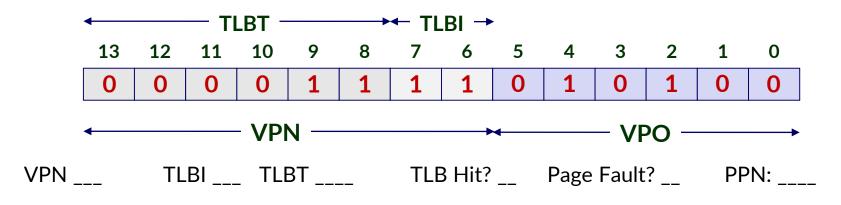
TLB												
Set	Tag	PPN	Valid	Tag	PPN	Valid	Tag	PPN	Valid	Tag	PPN	Valid
0	03	-	0	09	0D	1	00	-	0	07	02	1
1	03	2D	1	02	-	0	04	-	0	0A	-	0
2	02	Ι	0	08	Ι	0	06	-	0	03	-	0
3	07	-	0	03	0D	1	0A	34	1	02	-	0

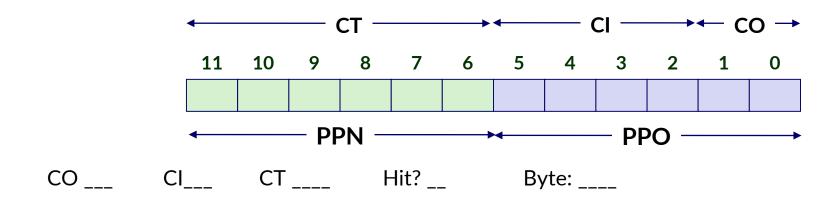
VPN	PPN	Valid	VPN	PPN	Valid
00	28	1	08	13	1
01	-	0	09	17	1
02	33	1	0 A	09	1
03	02	1	OB	-	0
04	-	0	0C	_	0
05	16	1	0D	2D	1
06	_	0	OE	11	1
07	-	0	OF	0D	1

Cache

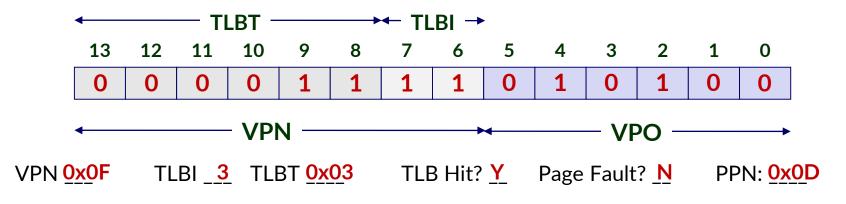
Index	Tag	Valid	B0	B1	B2	B 3	Index	Tag	Valid	B0	B1	B2	B 3
0	19	1	99	11	23	11	8	24	1	3A	00	51	89
1	15	0	_	_	_	-	9	2D	0	_	-	-	-
2	1B	1	00	02	04	08	Α	2D	1	93	15	DA	3B
3	36	0	_	-	-	-	В	0B	0	-	-	_	-
4	32	1	43	6D	8F	09	С	12	0	_	-	-	-
5	0D	1	36	72	FO	1D	D	16	1	04	96	34	15
6	31	0	-	_	-	-	Е	13	1	83	77	1B	D3
7	16	1	11	C2	DF	03	F	14	0	_	_	_	_

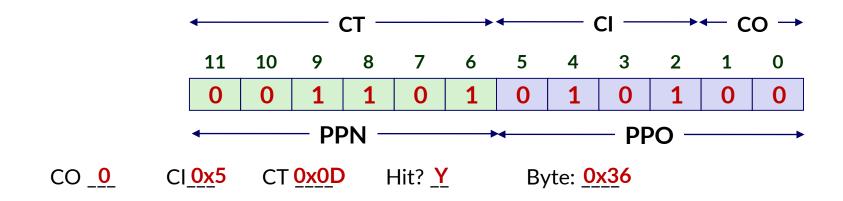
Virtual Address: 0x03D4



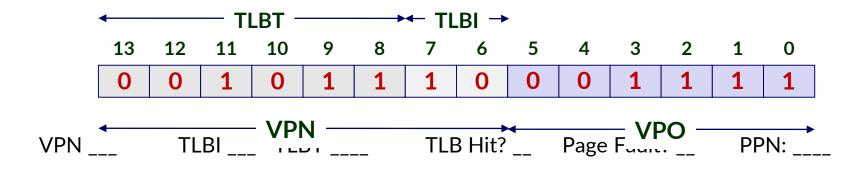


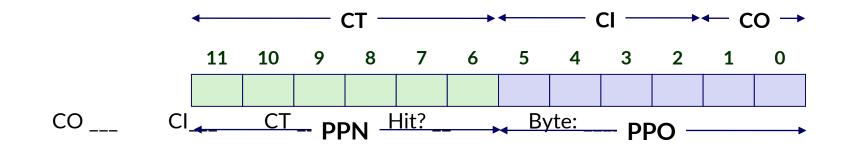
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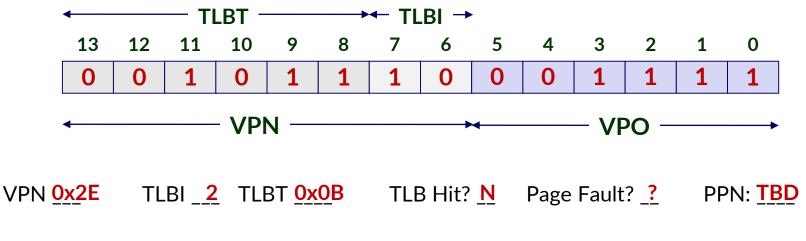


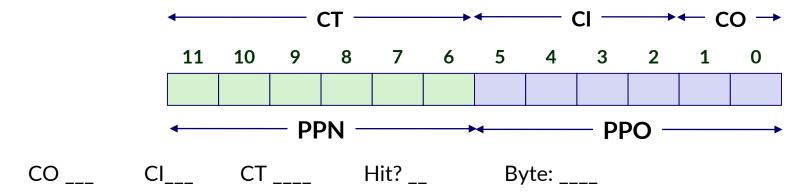
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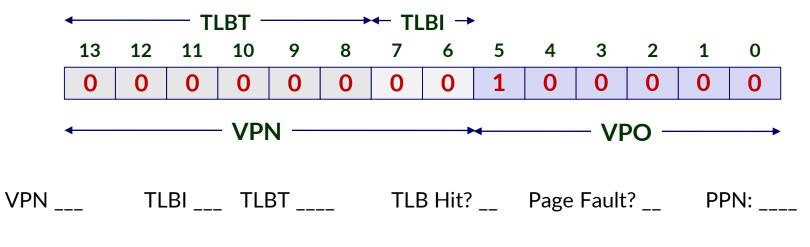


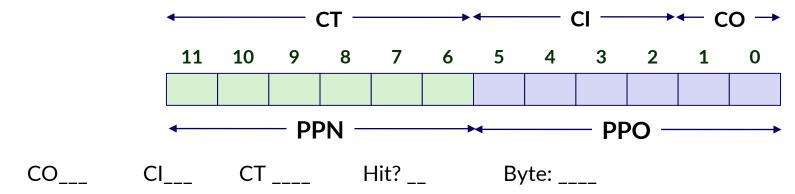
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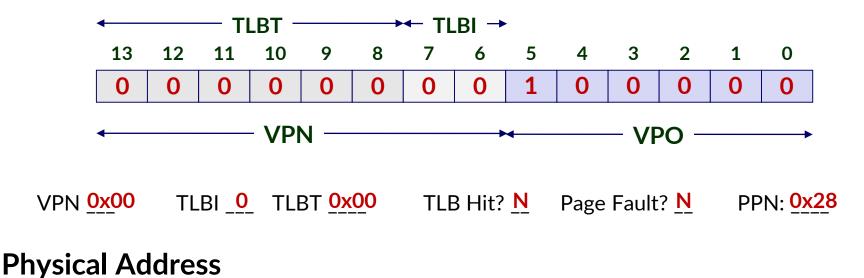


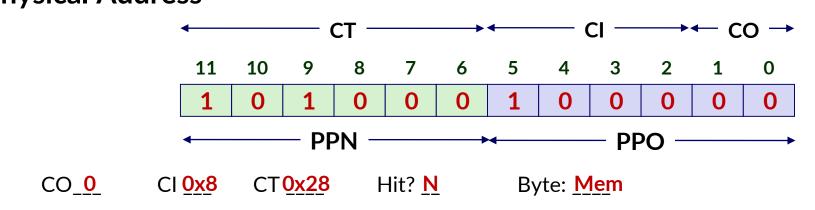
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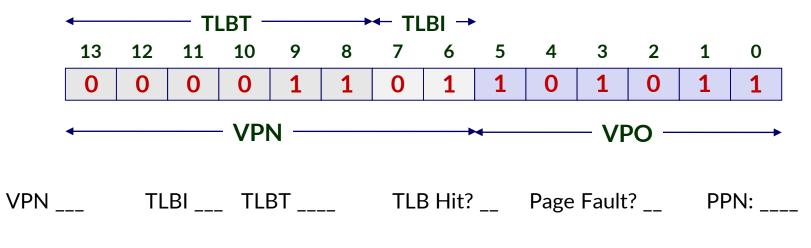


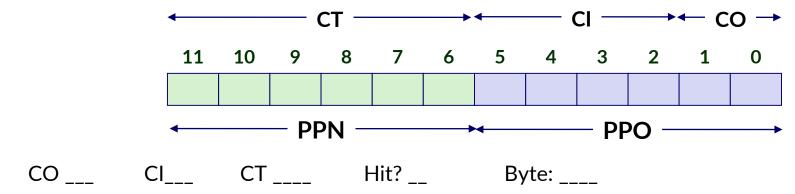
Virtual Address: 0x0020





Virtual Address: 0x036B





Virtual Address: 0x036B

