CSE P 501 – Compilers

Register Allocation

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Agenda

- Register allocation constraints
- Local methods
  - Faster compile, slower code, but good enough for lots of things (JITs, …)
- Global allocation – register coloring

k

- Intermediate code typically assumes infinite number of registers
- Real machine has k registers available
- Goals
  - Produce correct code that uses k or fewer registers
  - Minimize added loads and stores
  - Minimize space needed for spilled values
  - Do this efficiently – $O(n)$, $O(n \log n)$, maybe $O(n^2)$

Register Allocation

- Task
  - At each point in the code, pick the values to keep in registers
  - Insert code to move values between registers and memory
    - No additional transformations – scheduling should have done its job
      - But we will usually rerun scheduling after this
  - Minimize inserted code, both dynamically and statically

Allocation vs Assignment

- Allocation: deciding which values to keep in registers
- Assignment: choosing specific registers for values
- Compiler must do both

Local Register Allocation

- Apply to basic blocks
- Produces decent register usage inside a block
  - But can have inefficiencies at boundaries between blocks
- Two variations: top-down, bottom-up

Top-down Local Allocation

- Principle: keep most heavily used values in registers
  - Priority = # of times register referenced in block
- If more virtual registers than physical,
  - Reserve some registers for values allocated to memory
    - Need enough to address and load two operands and store result
  - Other registers dedicated to “hot” values
    - (But are tied up for entire block with particular value, even if only needed for part of the block)

Bottom-up Local Allocation (1)

- Keep a list of available registers (initially all registers at beginning of block)
- Scan the code
- Allocate a register when one is needed
- Free register as soon as possible
  - In x:=y op z, free y and z if they are no longer needed before allocating x

Bottom-up Local Allocation (2)

- If no registers are free when one is needed for allocation:
  - Look at values assigned to registers – find the one not needed for longest forward stretch in the code
  - Insert code to spill the value to memory and insert code to reload it when needed later

Bottom-Up Allocator

- Invented about once per decade
  - Sheldon Best, 1955, for Fortran I
  - Laslo Belady, 1965, for analyzing paging algorithms
  - William Harrison, 1975, ECS compiler work
  - Chris Fraser, 1989, LCC compiler
  - Vincenzo Liberatore, 1997, Rutgers
- Will be reinvented again, no doubt
- Many arguments for optimality of this

Global Register Allocation

- A standard technique is graph coloring
- Use control and dataflow graphs to derive interference graph
  - Nodes are live ranges (not registers!)
  - Edge between (t1,t2) when t1 and t2 cannot be assigned to the same register
    - Most commonly, t1 and t2 are both live at the same time
    - Can also use to express constraints about registers, etc.
- Then color the nodes in the graph
  - Two nodes connected by an edge may not have same color (i.e., be allocated to same register)
  - If more than k colors are needed, insert spill code

Live Ranges (1)

- A live range is the set of definitions and uses that are related because they flow together
  - Every definition can reach every use
  - Every use that a definition can reach is in the same live range

Live Ranges (2)

- The idea relies on the notion of *liveness*, but not the same as either the set of variables or set of values
  - Every value is part of some live range, even anonymous temporaries
  - Same name may be part of several different live ranges

Live Ranges: Example

1. loadi … → rfp
2. loadai rfp, 0 → rw
3. loadi 2 → r2
4. loadai rfp,xoffset → rx
5. loadai rfp,yoffset → ry
6. loadai rfp,zoffset → rz
7. mult rw, r2 → rw
8. mult rw, rx → rw
9. mult rw, ry → rw
10. mult rw, rz → rw
11. storeai rw → rfp, 0

Register	Interval
rfp	[1,11]
rw	[2,7]
rw	[7,8]
rw	[8,9]
rw	[9,10]
rw	[10,11]
r2	[3,7]
rx	[4,8]
ry	[5,9]
rz	[6,10]

Coloring by Simplification

- Linear-time approximation that generally gives good results
  1. Build: Construct the interference graph
  2. Simplify: Color the graph by repeatedly simplification
  3. Spill: If simplify cannot reduce the graph completely, mark some node for spilling
  4. Select: Assign colors to nodes in the graph

1. Build

- Construct the interference graph
- Find live ranges – SSA!
  - Build SSA form of IR
  - Each SSA name is initially a singleton set
  - A Φ-function means form the union of the sets that includes those names (union-find algo.)
  - Resulting sets represent live ranges
  - Either rewrite code to use live range names or keep a mapping between SSA names and live-range names

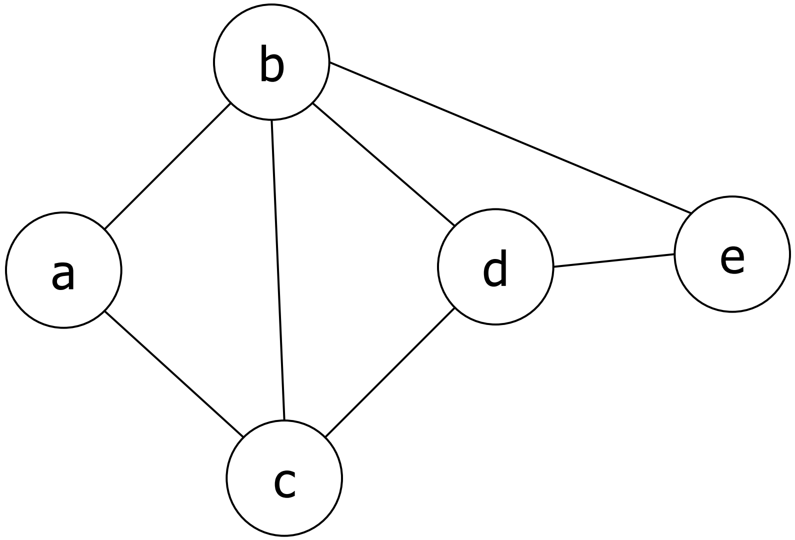
1. Build

- Use dataflow information to build interference graph
  - Nodes = live ranges
  - Add an edge in the graph for each pair of live ranges that overlap
    - But watch copy operations. MOV ri $\rightarrow$ rj does not create interference between ri, rj since they can be the same register if the ranges do not otherwise interfere

2. Simplify

- Heuristic: Assume we have K registers
- Find a node *m* with fewer than K neighbors
- Remove *m* from the graph. If the resulting graph can be colored, then so can the original graph (the neighbors of *m* have at most K-1 colors among them)
- Repeat by removing and pushing on a stack all nodes with degree less than K
  - Each simplification decreases other node degrees – may make more simplifications possible

Example with k = 3



3. Spill

- If simplify stops because all nodes have degree ≥ k, mark some node for spilling
  - This node is in memory during execution
  - ∴ Spilled node no longer interferes with remaining nodes, reducing their degree.
  - Continue by removing spilled node and push on the stack (optimistic – hope that spilled node does not interfere with remaining nodes – Briggs allocator)

3. Spill

- Spill decisions should be based on costs of spilling different values
- Issues
  - Address computation needed for spill
  - Cost of memory operation
  - Estimated execution frequency
    - (e.g., inner loops first)

4. Select

- Assign nodes to colors in the graph:
  - Start with empty graph
  - Rebuild original graph by repeatedly adding node from top of the stack
    - (When we do this, there must be a color for it if it didn't represent a potential spill – pick a different color from any adjacent node)
  - When a potential spill node is popped it may not be colorable (neighbors may have k colors already). This is an actual spill.

Example with k = 3

Stack

a
c
b
d
e

5. Start Over

- If Select phase cannot color some node (must be a potential spill node), add load instructions before each use and stores after each definition
  - Creates new temporaries with tiny live ranges
- Repeat from beginning
  - Iterate until Simplify succeeds
  - In practice a couple of iterations are enough

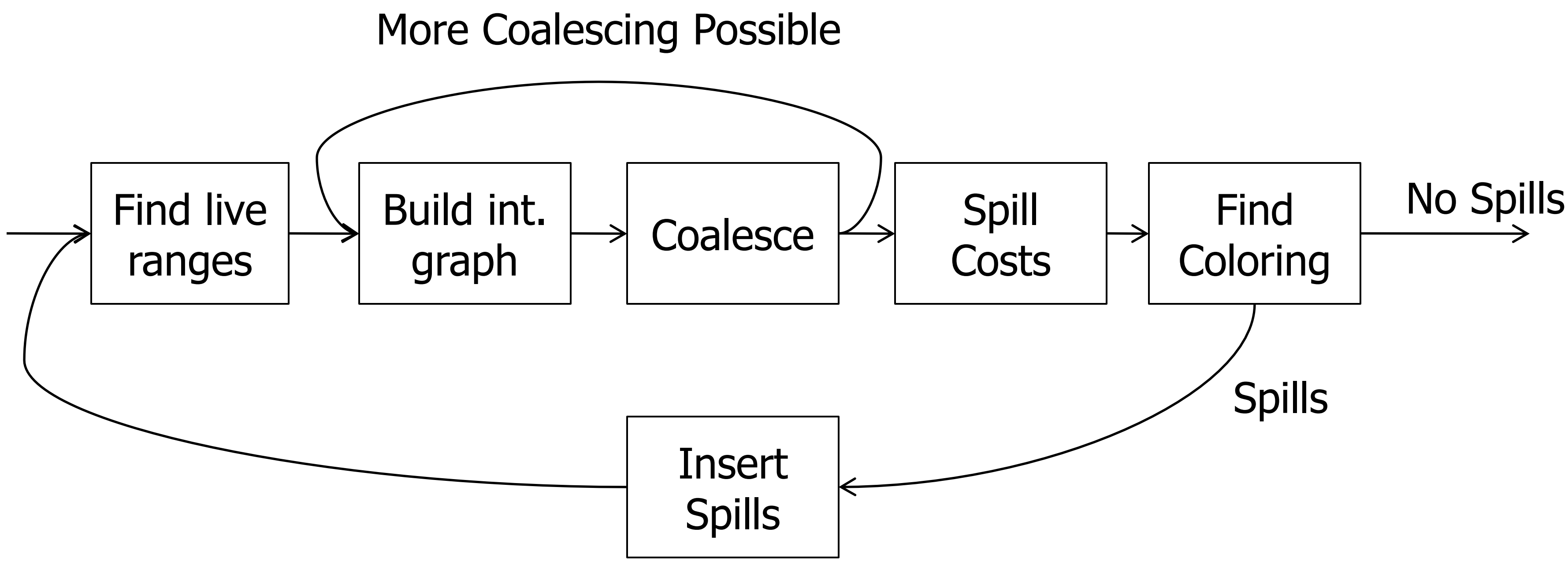
Coalescing Live Ranges

- Idea: if two live ranges are connected by a copy operation (MOV ri $\rightarrow$ rj) do not otherwise interfere, then the live ranges can be coalesced (combined)
  - Rewrite all references to rj to use ri
  - Remove the copy instruction
- Then need to fix up interference graph

Advantages?

- Makes the code smaller, faster (no copy operation)
- Shrinks set of live ranges
- Reduces the degree of any live range that interfered with both live ranges ri, rj
- But: coalescing two live ranges can prevent coalescing of others, so ordering matters
  - Best: Coalesce most frequently executed ranges first (e.g., inner loops)
- Can have a substantial payoff – do it!

Overall Structure



Complications

- Need to deal with irregularities in the register set
  - Some operations require dedicated registers (idiv in x86, split address/data registers in M68k and othres)
  - Register conventions like function results, use of registers across calls, etc.
- Model by precoloring nodes, adding constraints in the graph, etc.

Graph Representation

- The interference graph representation drives the time and space requirements for the allocator (& maybe the compiler)
- Not unknown to have O(5K) nodes and O(1M) edges
- Dual representation works best
  - Triangular bit matrix for efficient access to interference information
  - Vector of adjacency vectors for efficient access to node neighbors

And That’s It

- Modulo all the picky details, that is…