Run-time Environments

Lecture 11

Status

- We have covered the front-end phases
  - Lexical analysis
  - Parsing
  - Semantic analysis
- Next are the back-end phases
  - Optimization
  - Code generation
- We'll do code generation first . . .

Run-time environments

- Before discussing code generation, we need to understand what we are trying to generate
- There are a number of standard techniques for structuring executable code that are widely used

Outline

- Management of run-time resources
- Correspondence between
  - static (compile-time) and
  - dynamic (run-time) structures
- Storage organization

Run-time Resources

- Execution of a program is initially under the control of the operating system
- When a program is invoked:
  - The OS allocates space for the program
  - The code is loaded into part of the space
  - The OS jumps to the entry point (i.e., “main”)

Memory Layout

- Low Address
- Code
- Other Space
- High Address
Notes

• By tradition, pictures of machine organization have:
  - Low address at the top
  - High address at the bottom
  - Lines delimiting areas for different kinds of data

• These pictures are simplifications
  - E.g., not all memory need be contiguous

What is Other Space?

• Holds all data for the program
• Other Space = Data Space

• Compiler is responsible for:
  - Generating code
  - Orchestrating use of the data area

Code Generation Goals

• Two goals:
  - Correctness
  - Speed

• Most complications in code generation come from trying to be fast as well as correct

Assumptions about Execution

1. Execution is sequential; control moves from one point in a program to another in a well-defined order
2. When a procedure is called, control eventually returns to the point immediately after the call

Do these assumptions always hold?

Activations

• An invocation of procedure P is an activation of P

• The lifetime of an activation of P is
  - All the steps to execute P
  - Including all the steps in procedures P calls

Lifetimes of Variables

• The lifetime of a variable x is the portion of execution in which x is defined

• Note that
  - Lifetime is a dynamic (run-time) concept
  - Scope is a static concept
Activation Trees

- Assumption (2) requires that when $P$ calls $Q$, then $Q$ returns before $P$ does
- Lifetimes of procedure activations are properly nested
- Activation lifetimes can be depicted as a tree

Example

```java
Class Main {
    g() : Int { 1 }
    f():  Int { g() }
    main(): Int {{ g(); f(); }}
}
```

What is the activation tree for this example?

Example

```java
Class Main {
    g() : Int { 1 }
    f():  Int { g() }
    main(): Int {{ g(); f(); }}
}
```

Example

```java
Class Main {
    g() : Int { 1 }
    f():  Int { g() }
    main(): Int {{ g(); f(); }}
}
```

Notes

- The activation tree depends on run-time behavior
- The activation tree may be different for every program input
- Since activations are properly nested, a stack can track currently active procedures
Example

Class Main {
    g() : Int { 1; }
    f() : Int { g(); }
    main() : Int { g(); f(); };
}

Main Stack
  g
  f

Example

Class Main {
    g() : Int { 1; }
    f() : Int { g(); }
    main() : Int { g(); f(); };
}

Main Stack
  g
  f
  g

Revised Memory Layout

Low Address

Code

Memory

Stack

High Address

Activation Records

• The information needed to manage one procedure activation is called an activation record (AR) or frame

• If procedure F calls G, then G’s activation record contains a mix of info about F and G.

What is in G’s AR when F calls G?

• F is “suspended” until G completes, at which point F resumes. G’s AR contains information needed to resume execution of F.

• G’s AR may also contain:
  - G’s return value (needed by F)
  - Actual parameters to G (supplied by F)
  - Space for G’s local variables

The Contents of a Typical AR for G

• Space for G’s return value
• Actual parameters
• Pointer to the previous activation record
  - The control link points to AR of caller of G
• Machine status prior to calling G
  - Contents of registers & program counter
  - Local variables
• Other temporary values
Example 2, Revisited

```java
Class Main {
    g() : Int { 1 };
    f(x:Int):Int { if x=0 then g() else f(x - 1) (** ) fi};
    main(): Int {{f(3); (*)}};
}
```

AR for f:
- result
- argument
- control link
- return address

Stack After Two Calls to f

Notes
- Main has no argument or local variables and its result is never used; its AR is uninteresting
- (*) and (**) are return addresses of the invocations of f
  - The return address is where execution resumes after a procedure call finishes
- This is only one of many possible AR designs
  - Would also work for C, Pascal, FORTRAN, etc.

The Main Point

The compiler must determine, at compile-time, the layout of activation records and generate code that correctly accesses locations in the activation record

Thus, the AR layout and the code generator must be designed together!

Discussion
- The advantage of placing the return value 1st in a frame is that the caller can find it at a fixed offset from its own frame
- There is nothing magic about this organization
  - Can rearrange order of frame elements
  - Can divide caller/callee responsibilities differently
  - An organization is better if it improves execution speed or simplifies code generation
Discussion (Cont.)

• Real compilers hold as much of the frame as possible in registers
  - Especially the method result and arguments

Globals

• All references to a global variable point to the same object
  - Can’t store a global in an activation record

• Globals are assigned a fixed address once
  - Variables with fixed address are “statically allocated”
  - Depending on the language, there may be other statically allocated values

Memory Layout with Static Data

Memory

Low Address

Stack

Static Data

Code

High Address

Heap Storage

• A value that outlives the procedure that creates it cannot be kept in the AR
  
  method foo() { new Bar }

  The Bar value must survive deallocation of foo’s AR

• Languages with dynamically allocated data use a heap to store dynamic data

Notes

• The code area contains object code
  - For most languages, fixed size and read only

• The static area contains data (not code) with fixed addresses (e.g., global data)
  - Fixed size, maybe readable or writable

• The stack contains an AR for each currently active procedure
  - Each AR usually fixed size, contains locals

• Heap contains all other data
  - In C, heap is managed by malloc and free

Notes (Cont.)

• Both the heap and the stack grow

• Must take care that they don’t grow into each other

• Solution: start heap and stack at opposite ends of memory and let them grow towards each other
Memory Layout with Heap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Address</th>
<th>High Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Static Data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stack</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Layout

- Low-level details of machine architecture are important in laying out data for correct code and maximum performance
- Chief among these concerns is **alignment**

Alignment

- Most modern machines are (still) 32 bit
  - 8 bits in a byte
  - 4 bytes in a word
  - Machines are either byte or word addressable
- Data is **word aligned** if it begins at a word boundary
- Most machines have some alignment restrictions
  - Or performance penalties for poor alignment

Alignment (Cont.)

- Example: A string
  - "Hello"
  - Takes 5 characters (without a terminating \0)
  - To word align next datum, add 3 "padding" characters to the string
  - The padding is not part of the string, it's just unused memory

Next Topic: Stack Machines

- A simple evaluation model
- No variables or registers
- A stack of values for intermediate results
- Each instruction:
  - Takes its operands from the top of the stack
  - Removes those operands from the stack
  - Computes the required operation on them
  - Pushes the result on the stack

Example of Stack Machine Operation

- The addition operation on a stack machine

```
    5
   /|
  7 +
  /|
 9 →
```

```
Example of a Stack Machine Program

- Consider two instructions
  - push i - place the integer i on top of the stack
  - add - pop two elements, add them and put the result back on the stack
- A program to compute 7 + 5:
  
  push 7  
  push 5  
  add

Why Use a Stack Machine?

- Each operation takes operands from the same place and puts results in the same place
- This means a uniform compilation scheme
- And therefore a simpler compiler

Optimizing the Stack Machine

- The add instruction does 3 memory operations
  - Two reads and one write to the stack
  - The top of the stack is frequently accessed
- Idea: keep the top of the stack in a register (called accumulator)
  - Register accesses are faster
  - The “add” instruction is now acc ← acc + top_of_stack
  - Only one memory operation!

Stack Machine with Accumulator

Invariants
- The result of an expression is in the accumulator
- For op(e₁,…,eₙ) push the accumulator on the stack after computing e₁,…,eₙ₋₁
  - After the operation pops n-1 values
- Expression evaluation preserves the stack

Stack Machine with Accumulator. Example

Compute 7 + 5 using an accumulator

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>acc</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stack</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

acc ← 7
push acc
acc ← 5
acc ← acc + top_of_stack
pop
### A Bigger Example: $3 + (7 + 5)$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Stack</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>acc ← 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>&lt;init&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>push acc</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3, &lt;init&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acc ← 7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3, &lt;init&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>push acc</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7, 3, &lt;init&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acc ← 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7, 3, &lt;init&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acc ← acc + top_of_stack</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7, 3, &lt;init&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pop</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3, &lt;init&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acc ← acc + top_of_stack</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3, &lt;init&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pop</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>&lt;init&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes

- It is very important evaluation of a subexpression preserves the stack
  - Stack before the evaluation of $7 + 5$ is $3, <init>$
  - Stack after the evaluation of $7 + 5$ is $3, <init>$
  - The first operand is on top of the stack