Lecture 05 Intro to x86-64 Assembly

CS213 – Intro to Computer Systems Branden Ghena – Winter 2024

Slides adapted from: St-Amour, Hardavellas, Bustamente (Northwestern), Bryant, O'Hallaron (CMU), Garcia, Weaver (UC Berkeley)

Northwestern

Administrivia

- Pack Lab
 - Due in one week from today (Thursday, January 25)
 - If you haven't yet, **get started right away**!
 - Lots of conceptually difficult parts to understand
 - Lots of C code to write, which you may have forgotten
 - Especially, make sure you don't have issues logging into Moore
 - Takes ~24 hours to fix and we won't be giving extensions for it
 - This assignment is 12.5% of your overall course grade, and takes at least that much effort
 - Not an "easier first assignment"

Administrivia

- Homework 2
 - Releases later today
 - Ready to be worked on (except the last question for Thursday's lecture)
 - Due in 1.5 weeks (Tuesday, January 30th)

- Midterm exam
 - Exactly two weeks from today (February 1st)
 - Taken here in the classroom
 - Details next week

Today's Goals

- Introduce assembly and the x86-64 Instruction Set Architecture
 - Discuss background of the factors that affected its evolution
- Understand registers: the analogy to variables in assembly
- Explore our first assembly instruction: **mov**

Outline

Assembly Languages

• Registers

- x86-64 Assembly
 - Introduction
 - Move Instruction
 - Memory Addressing Modes

Assembly (Also known as: Assembly Language, ASM)

• Purpose of a CPU: execute instructions

• High-level programs (like in C) are split into many small instructions

- Assembly is a low-level programming language where the program instructions match a particular architecture's operations
 - Assembly is a human-readable text representation of machine code
 - Each assembly instruction is one machine instruction (usually)

Programs can be written in assembly or machine instructions

C Program (source code)

a = (b+c) - (d+e);

Assembly Programaddq %rdi, %rsiaddq %rdx, %rcxsubq %rcx, %rsimovq %rsi, %rax

Machine Instructions

0x4889D3 0x488903 0x53 0x5B

There are many assembly languages

- Instruction Set Architecture: All programmer-visible components of a processor needed to write software for it
 - Operations the processor can execute
 - The system's state (registers, memory, program counter)
 - The effect operations have on system state
- Each assembly language has instructions that match a particular processor's Instruction Set Architecture (ISA)
- Assembly is not portable to other architectures (like C is)

Which instructions should an assembly include?

Each assembly language has its own operations

There are some obviously useful instructions:

- Add, subtract, and bit shift
- Read and write memory

But what about:

- Only run the next instruction if these two values are equal
- Perform four pairwise multiplications simultaneously
- Add two ascii numbers together (2' + 3' = 5)

Instruction Set Philosophies

Early trend: add more instructions to do elaborate operations **Complex Instruction Set Computing** (CISC)

- Handle many different types of operations
- More options for the compiler
- Complicated hardware runs more slowly



Opposite philosophy later began to dominate: **Reduced Instruction Set Computing** (RISC)

- Simpler (and smaller) instruction set makes it easier to build fast hardware
- Let software do the complicated operations by composing simpler ones

Modern reality is somewhere between these two

Mainstream Instruction Set Architectures



x86

Designer	Intel, AMD
Bits	16-bit, 32-bit and 64-bit
Introduced	1978 (16-bit), 1985 (32-bit), 2003 (64-bit)
Design	CISC
Туре	Register-memory
Encoding	Variable (1 to 15 bytes)
Endianness	Little

Macbooks & PCs (Core i3, i5, i7, M) x86 Instruction Set



ARM architectures

Designer	ARM Holdings
Bits	32-bit, 64-bit
Introduced	1985; 31 years ago
Design	RISC
Туре	Register-Register
Encoding	AArch64/A64 and AArch32/A32 use 32-bit instructions, T32 (Thumb-2) uses mixed 16- and 32-bit instructions. ARMv7 user- space compatibility ^[1]
Endianness	Bi (little as default)

Smartphones (iPhone, Android), M1 Macbooks, Raspberry Pi, Embedded systems <u>ARM Instruction Set</u>



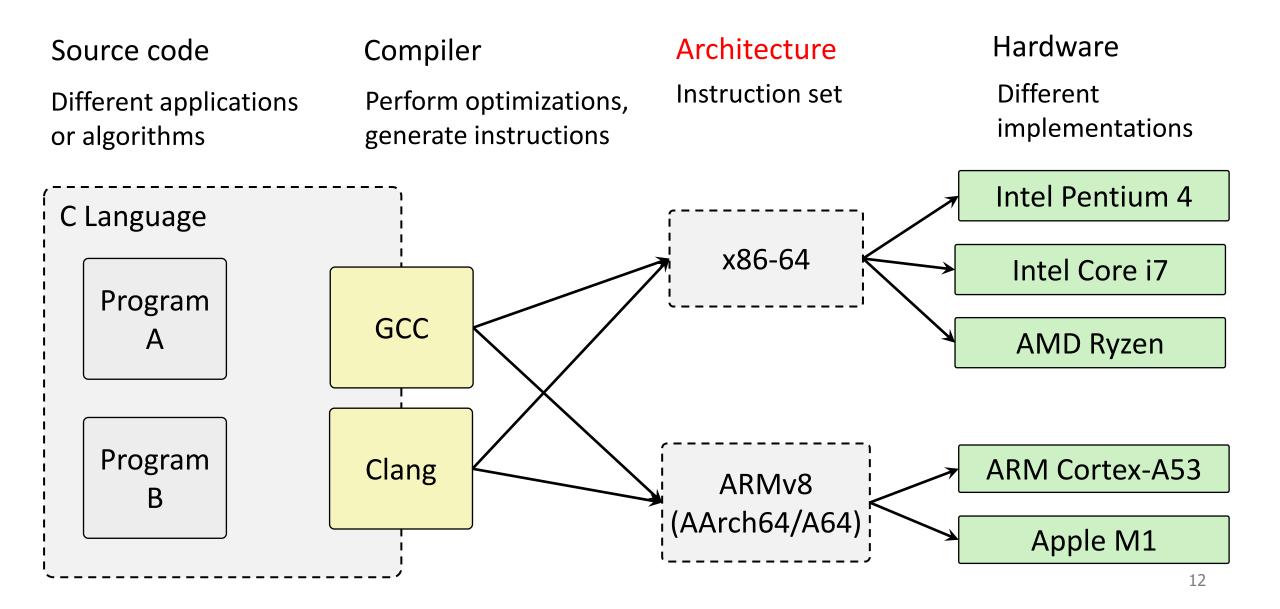
RISC-V

Designer	University of California, Berkeley
Bits	32, 64, 128
Introduced	2010
Version	2.2
Design	RISC
Туре	Load-store
Encoding	Variable
Branching	Compare-and-branch
Endianness	Little

Open-source

Relatively new, designed for cloud computing, embedded systems, academic use RISCV Instruction Set

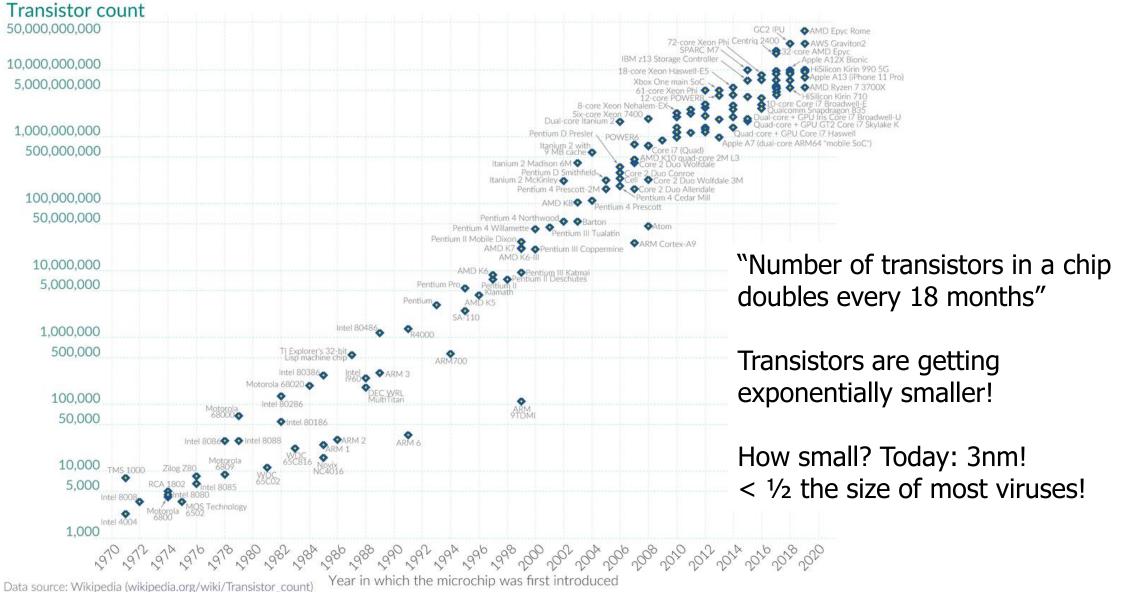
Instruction Set Architecture sits at software/hardware interface



Intel x86 Processors

- Dominate laptop/desktop/server market
 - No longer completely dominant in laptops though
- Complex instruction set computer (CISC)
 - Many different instructions with many different formats
 - But, only small subset encountered by normal programs
- Design evolved over time
 - Backwards compatible up until 8086, introduced in 1978
 - Added more features as time goes on
 - Historical legacy has large impact on architecture

Moore's Law – CPU transistors counts



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Evolution of x86 ISA

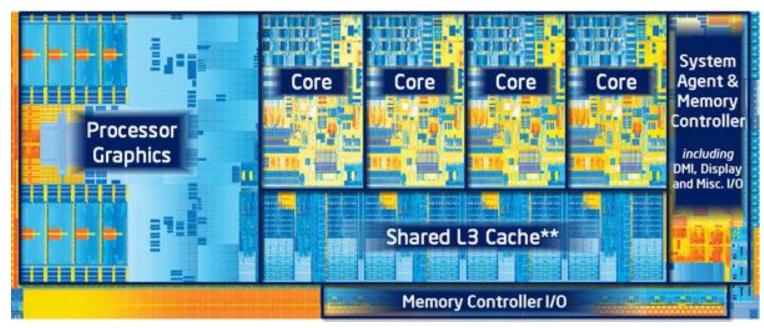
Name	Date	Transistors	Comments
8086	1978	29k	16b processor, basis for IBM PC & DOS; 1MB address space
80286	1982	134K	Elaborate (!useful) addressing; basis for IBM PC and Windows
386	1985	275K	Extended to 32b , added "flat addressing" that Linux/gcc uses
486	1989	1.9M	Improved performance; integrated FP unit into chip
Pentium	1993	3.1M	Improved performance
PentiumPro	1995	6.5M	Conditional move instructions; big change in microarch. (P6)
Pentium II	1997	7M	Merged Pentium/MMZ + PentiumPro, MMX instructions within P6
Pentium III	1999	8.2M	Integer and floating point vector instructions (SSE); Level2 cache
Pentium 4	2001	42M	8B ints and floating point formats to vector instructions
Pentium 4E	2004	125M	Hyperthreading (able to run 2 programs simultaneously), 64b
Core 2	2006	291M	P6-like, multicore, no hyperthreading
Core i7 (Nehalem)	2008	781M	Hyperthreading + multicore, TurboBoost (run fewer cores faster)
Core i3 (Nehalem)	2010	383M+177M	GPU on second silicon die within package (at 2010 version)
Core i3, i5, i7	2011	997M	Cores and GPU within the same processor die
(Sandy Bridge)		(i7 – 4 cores)	
Core i3, i5, i7 (Ivy Bridge)	2012	1400M (i7 – 4 cores)	Tri-gate transistors, much lower power consumption
Xeon E7 8800 V4 (Broadwell-EX)	2016	>5690M (22 cores)	14nm technology

Backwards Compatibility The cause of, and solution to, all of life's problems.

- Programs that worked on one x86 processor should keep working on the next one
 - Old programs work on new processors, which makes upgrading possible
 - Even today's x86-64 processors boot thinking they are 8086s!
- Adding powerful new features while keeping backwards compatibility is a careful balancing act
 - Backwards compatibility introduces a lot of constraints
 - May rule out "cleaner" designs that would break existing programs
 - The cause of some "surprising" aspects of the design of x86-64
 - "The x86 really isn't all that complex—it just doesn't make a lot of sense." — Mike Johnson (AMD's x86 architect), 1994
- Not just a hardware thing!

In this class

- x86-64/EMT64: the current standard
 - Some asides on IA32: The traditional x86
- Presentation
 - Book covers x86-64; web aside on IA32
 - Labs will be based on x86-64



Outline

Assembly Languages

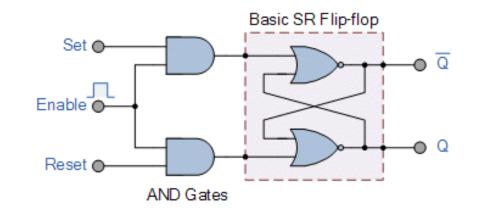
Registers

• x86-64 Assembly

- Introduction
- Move Instruction
- Memory Addressing Modes

Hardware uses registers for variables

- Unlike C, assembly doesn't have variables as you know them
- Instead, assembly uses *registers* to store values
- Registers are:
 - Small memory chunks of a fixed size
 - Can be read or written
 - Limited in number
 - Very fast and low power to access
 - Don't have types (just bits)
 - The operation performed determines how contents are treated



How many registers?

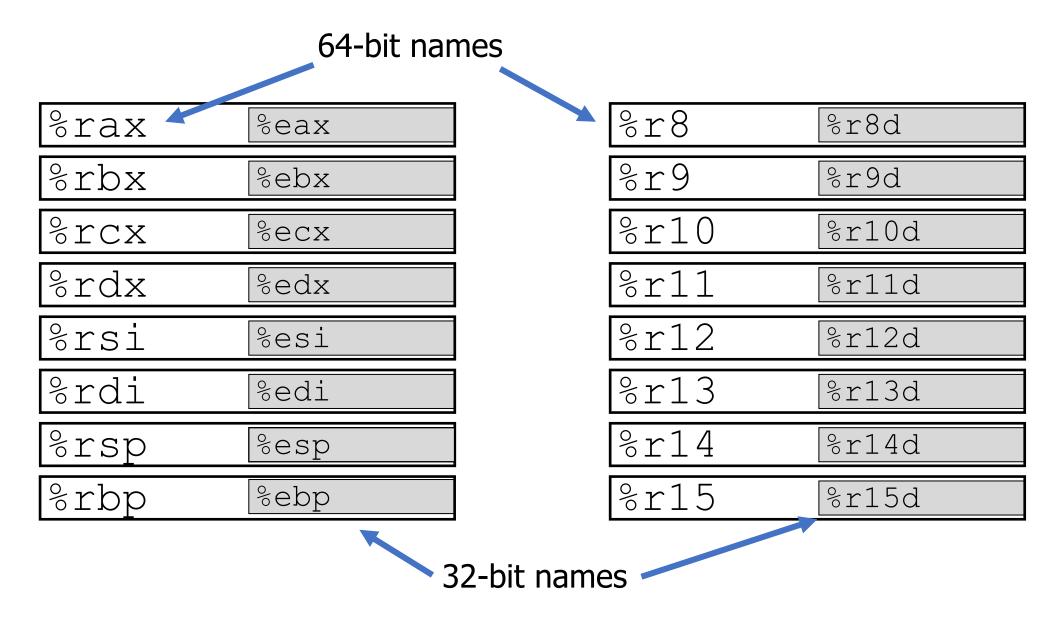
- Tradeoff between speed and availability
 - More registers can hold more variables
 - Simultaneously; all registers are slower
 - Also registers take physical space within the chip
- x86-64 has 16 registers (for integer operations)
 - Historically only 8 registers
 - Added 8 more with 64-bit extensions

How big should each register be?

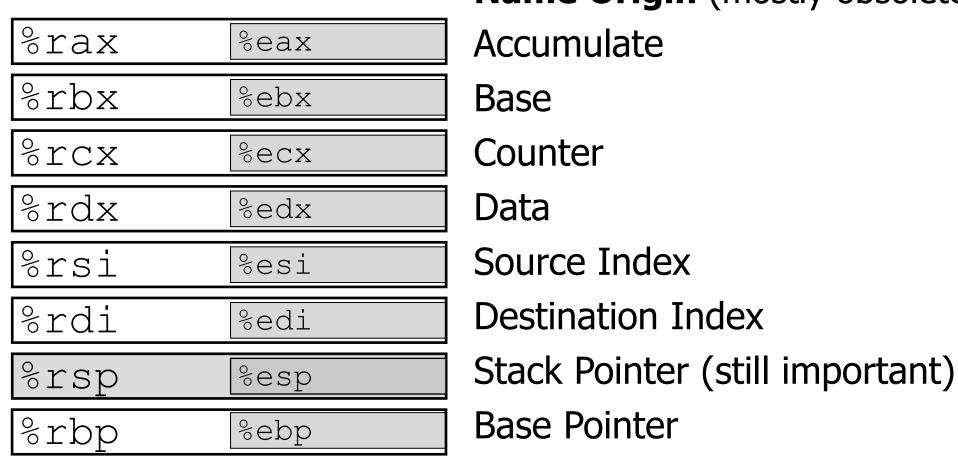
- Registers are usually the size of a *word*
 - The natural unit of data for a processor
 - Width of the data type that a CPU can process in one instruction
 - Likely the size of its registers
 - Imprecise term that will inevitably slip into explanations

- x86 processors started with 16-bit words
- IA32 upgraded to 32-bit "double word" registers
- x86-64 upgraded again 64-bit "quad word" registers

x86-64 Integer Registers



Historical Register Purposes



Name Origin (mostly obsolete)

x86-64 Register Access Options

63	31	15	7	0
%rax	%eax	%ax	%al	
%rbx	%ebx	%bx	%bl	
%rcx	%ecx	%cx	%cl	
%rdx	%edx	%dx	%dl	

Registers can be accessed by any of these names to work with 8-byte, 4-byte, 2-byte, or 1-byte data

x86-64 Register Access Options

63	31	15	7	0
%rax	%eax	%ax	%a	1

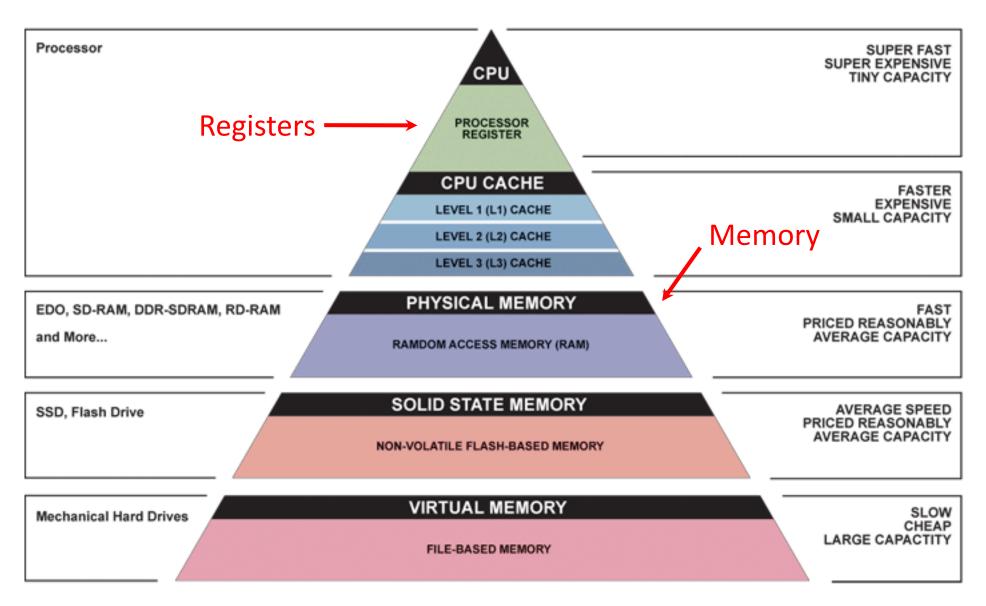
- The same data can be accessed under different names and widths
- Example: store 64-bit value 0x00000000000010A0B in %rax
 - %rax: 0x0000000000010A0B (64-bit)
 - %eax: 0x00010A0B (32-bit)
 - %ax: 0x0A0B (16-bit)
 - %al: 0x0B (8-bit)

		16-bit registers		
x86-64 full register naming			8-bit	8-bit
%rax	%eax	%ax [%ah	%al
%rbx	%ebx	%bx [%bh	%bl
%rcx	%ecx	°CX [%ch	%cl
%rdx	%edx	%dx [%dh	۶dl
%rsi	%esi	%si [%sil
%rdi	%edi	%di [%dil
%rbp	%ebp	%bp [%bpl
%rsp	%esp	%sp		%spl
%r8	%r8d	%r8w		%r8b
• • •	•			• • •
%r15	%r15d	%r15w		%r15b
	32-bit registers			
64-bit registers				

Registers versus Memory

- What if more variables than registers?
 - Keep most frequently used in registers and move the rest to memory (called *spilling* to memory)
- Why not all variables in memory?
 - Smaller is faster: registers 100-500 times faster
 - Memory Hierarchy
 - Registers: 16 registers * 64 bits = 128 Bytes
 - RAM: 4-32 GB
 - SSD: 100-1000 GB

Memory Hierarchy



Special-purpose register: Instruction Pointer

- Instruction Pointer: %rip
 - Contains the address of the currently executing instruction
 - Actually special-purpose, only used for this one thing
- Processor hardware uses <code>%rip</code> when loading instructions
 - Load instruction from memory pointed to by <code>%rip</code>
 - Advance <code>%rip</code> to the next instruction
 - Repeat
 - Note: hardware does this automatically, you don't (usually) interact with this at all

Break + Question

Which of these is FALSE?

- [A] Registers are faster to access than memory
- [B] Registers do not have a type
- [C] Registers can have special purposes
- [D] Registers are dynamically created as needed

Break + Question

D

Which of these is FALSE?

- [A] Registers are faster to access than memory
- [B] Registers do not have a type
- [C] Registers can have special purposes

Registers are dynamically created as needed

There are a fixed number of registers for a given architecture

Outline

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x86-64 Assembly

- Introduction
- Move Instruction
- Memory Addressing Modes

Writing Assembly Code? In 2024???

- Chances are, you'll never write a program in assembly, but understanding assembly is the key to the machine-level execution model:
 - Behavior of programs in the presence of bugs
 - When high-level language model breaks down
 - Tuning program performance
 - Understanding compiler optimizations and sources of program inefficiency
 - Implementing systems software
 - What are the "states" of processes that the OS must manage
 - Using special units (timers, I/O co-processors, etc.) inside processor!
 - Fighting malicious software
 - Distributed software is in binary form

Example x86-64 Assembly

.text

.globl multstore

.type multstore, @function

ret

Example x86-64 Assembly

```
.text
```

```
.globl multstore
```

.type multstore, @function

```
# multiply and store to memory
multstore:
```

```
pushq %rbx # save to stack
movq %rdx, %rbx
call mult2
```

movq %rax, (%rbx)

```
popq # restore from stack
```

ret

Various assembly instructions

Example x86-64 Assembly

.text

.globl multstore

.type multstore, @function

```
# multiply and store to memory
multstore:
    pushq %rbx # save to stack
    movq %rdx, %rbx
    call mult2
    movq %rax, (%rbx)
    popq # restore from stack
    ret
```

Example x86-64 Assembly

```
.text
```

.globl multstore

.type multstore, @function

multiply and store to memory
multstore:
 pushq %rbx # save to stack
 movq %rdx, %rbx
 call mult2
 movq %rax, (%rbx)
 popq # restore from stack
 ret
Labels are arbitrary
names that mark a
section of code
We'll get back to these
later

Example x86-64 Assembly

.text

.globl multstore .type multstore, @function

multiply and store to memory
multstore:

pushq %rbx # save to stack
movq %rdx, %rbx
call mult2
movq %rax, (%rbx)
popq # restore from stack
ret

 Assembler directives (mostly ignore these)

> Can be used to specify data versus code regions, make functions linkable with other code, and many other tasks.

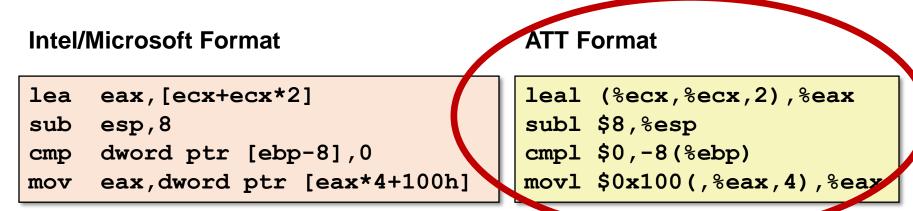
x86-64 Instructions

• General Instruction Syntax:

op src, dst

- 1 operator, 2 operands
 - op = operation name ("operator")
 - src1 = source location ("source")
 - dst = destination location ("destination")
- Keep hardware simple via regularity

Careful! Two Syntaxes for Assembly



- Intel/Microsoft mnemonics vs. ATT
 - Operands listed in opposite order: mov Dest, Src VS. movl Src, Dest
 - Constants not preceded by `\$', Denote hex with `h' at end: 100h vs. <u>\$0x100</u>
 - Operand size indicated by operands rather than operator suffix: sub vs. subq
 - Addressing format shows effective address computation: [eax*4+100h] vs. \$0x100(, %rax, 4)
- gcc (gas), gdb, objdump work on the ATT format
 - We will **always** use the ATT format as well

Short Break + Example x86-64 Assembly

```
.text
.globl multstore
.type multstore, @function
# multiply and store to memory
multstore:
   pushq %rbx # save to stack
   movq %rdx, %rbx
                                      What might this instruction do?
   call mult2
   movq %rax, (%rbx)
                                      (op src, dst)
   popq # restore from stack
   ret
```

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- Introduction
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Three Basic Kinds of Instructions

- 1. Transfer data between memory and register
 - *Load* data from memory into register
 - %reg = Mem[address]
 - Store register data into memory
 - Mem[address] = %reg

Remember: Memory is indexed just like an array of bytes!

- 2. Perform arithmetic operation on register or memory data
 - c = a + b; z = x << y; i = h & g;
- 3. Control flow: what instruction to execute next
 - Unconditional jumps to/from procedures
 - Conditional branches

Moving Data

- General form: mov_ source, destination
 - Missing letter _ specifies size of operands
 - Reminder: backwards compatibility means "word" = 16 bits
 - Lots of these in typical code
- mov**b** src, dst
 - Move 1-byte "byte"
- movw src, dst
 - Move 2-byte "word"

- movl src, dst
 - Move 4-byte "long word"
- mov**q** src, dst
 - Move 8-byte "quad word"
 - Native size for x86-64

Note: Instructions *must* be used with properly-sized register names

Operand Types (src and dst)

- *Immediate:* Constant integer data
 - Examples: \$0x400, \$-533
 - Like C literal, but prefixed with `\$'
 - Encoded with 1, 2, 4, or 8 bytes *depending on the instruction*
- Register: 1 of 16 integer registers
 - Examples: %rax, %r13
 - But %rsp reserved for special use
 - Others have special uses for particular instructions
- *Memory:* Consecutive bytes of memory at a computed address
 - Simplest example: (rax) treats value of %rax as an address \rightarrow access memory
 - Various other "address modes" we'll talk about later

Γ	%rax
	%rcx
	^g rdx
	%rbx
Ţ	%rsi
	%rdi
	%rsp
	%rbp
	%rN (r8-r15)

MOV Operand Combinations



Cannot do memory-memory transfer with a single instruction

• How would you do it?

MOV Operand Combinations



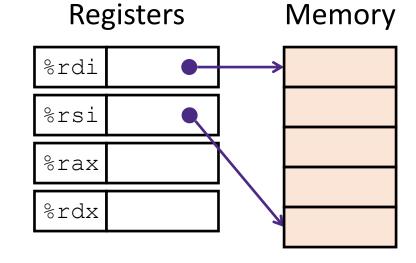
Cannot do memory-memory transfer with a single instruction

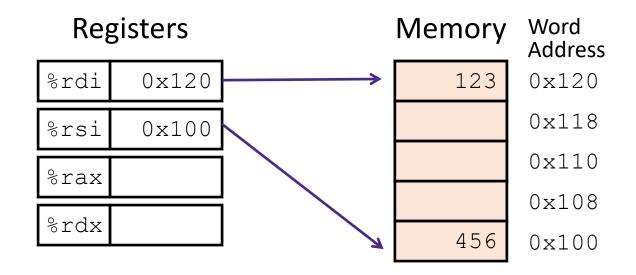
• How would you do it? 1) Mem->Reg, 2) Reg->Mem

```
void swap(long* xp, long* yp)
{
    long t0 = *xp;
    long t1 = *yp;
    *xp = t1;
    *yp = t0;
}
```

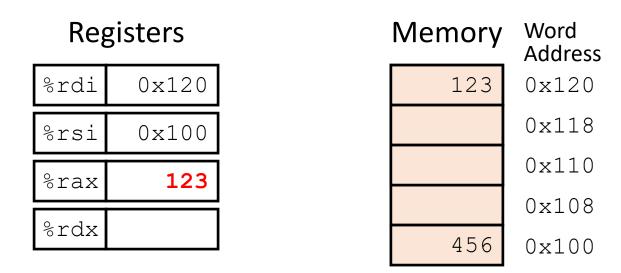
Register	7	/ariable
%rdi	\Leftrightarrow	xp
%rsi	\Leftrightarrow	ур
%rax	\Leftrightarrow	t0
%rdx	\Leftrightarrow	t1

swap:	
movq	(%rdi), %rax
movq	(%rsi), %rdx
movq	<pre>%rdx, (%rdi)</pre>
movq	<pre>%rax, (%rsi)</pre>
ret	





swap:					
movq	(%rdi), %rax	#	t0	=	*xp
movq	(%rsi), %rdx	#	t1	=	*yp
movq	%rdx, (%rdi)	#	*xp	=	t1
movq	%rax, (%rsi)	#	*yp	=	t0
ret					



swap:					
movq	(%rdi), %rax	#	t0	=	*xp
movq	(%rsi), %rdx	#	t1	=	*yp
movq	%rdx, (%rdi)	#	*xp	=	t1
movq	%rax, (%rsi)	#	*yp	=	t0
ret					

Re	gisters	 Memory	Word Address
%rdi	0x120	123	0x120
%rsi	0x100		0x118
%rax	123		0x110
	45.0		0x108
%rdx	456	456	0x100

swap:						
movq	(%rdi),	%rax	#	t0	=	*xp
movq	(% rs i),	%rdx	#	t1	=	*yp
movq	%rdx, (l%rdi)	#	*xp	=	t1
movq	%rax, (%rsi)	#	*yp	=	t0
ret						

Re	gisters	Memory	Word Address
%rdi	0x120	456	0x120
%rsi	0x100		0x118
%rax	123		0x110
%rdx	456		0x108
5LUX	400	456	0x100

swap:							
movq	(%rdi)	,	%rax	#	t0	=	*xp
movq	(%rsi)	,	%rdx	#	t1	=	*yp
movq	%rdx,	(9	rdi)	#	*xp	=	t1
movq	%rax,	(9	grsi)	#	*yp	=	t0
ret							



swap:						
movq	(%rdi)	, %rax	#	t0	=	*xp
movq	(%rsi)	, %rdx	#	t1	=	*yp
movq	%rdx,	(%rdi)	#	*xp	=	t1
movq	%rax,	(%rsi)	#	*yp	=	t0
ret						

Break + Open Question

- How does the number of available registers affect a system?
 - What if x86-64 only had two registers?

• What if x86-64 instead had 512 registers?

Break + Open Question

- How does the number of available registers affect a system?
 - What if x86-64 only had two registers?
 - "Register Pressure" becomes a problem
 - Accessing 3+ things at once requires memory
 - Way more memory reads/writes
 - What if x86-64 instead had 512 registers?
 - Most of the registers would never be used
 - For any realistic program
 - Could have spent that silicon on something more important

Outline

Assembly Languages

• Registers

x86-64 Assembly

- Introduction
- Move Instruction
- Memory Addressing Modes

Memory Addressing Modes: Basic

- Common need: interact with memory
 - Exact address might be made of multiple parts
- **Indirect:** (R) **Mem[Reg[**R**]**]
 - Data in register $\ensuremath{\mathbb{R}}$ specifies the memory address
 - Like pointer dereference in C
 - Example: movq (%rcx), %rax
- Displacement: D(R) Mem[Reg[R]+D]
 - Data in register $\ensuremath{\mathbb{R}}$ specifies the start of some memory region
 - Constant displacement $\ensuremath{\,\square}$ specifies the offset from that address
 - Example: movq 8(%rbp), %rdx

Complete Memory Addressing Modes

• General:

- D(Rb,Ri,S) Mem[Reg[Rb]+Reg[Ri]*S+D]
 - Rb: Base register (any register)
 - Ri: Index register (any register except %rsp)
 - S: Scale factor (1, 2, 4, 8) *why these numbers?*
 - D: Constant displacement value (a.k.a. immediate)

Sizes of common C types!

• Special cases (see textbook Figure 3.3 or next slide)

- D(Rb,Ri) Mem[Reg[Rb]+Reg[Ri]+D] (S=1)
- (Rb,Ri,S) Mem[Reg[Rb]+Reg[Ri]*S]
- (Rb,Ri) Mem[Reg[Rb]+Reg[Ri]]
- (,Ri,S) Mem[Reg[Ri]*S]

- (D=0) (S=1,D=0)
- (Rb=0, D=0)

Full list of addressing mode forms

Туре	Form	Operand value	Name
Immediate	\$Imm	Imm	Immediate
Register	r _a	R[r _a]	Register
Memory	Imm	M[Imm]	Absolute
Memory	(r _a)	$M[R[r_a]]$	Indirect
Memory	$Imm(r_b)$	$M[Imm + R[r_b]]$	Base + displacement
Memory	$(\mathbf{r}_b,\mathbf{r}_i)$	$M[R[r_b] + R[r_i]]$	Indexed
Memory	$Imm(\mathbf{r}_b,\mathbf{r}_i)$	$M[Imm + R[r_b] + R[r_i]]$	Indexed
Memory	$(\mathbf{r}_i, \mathbf{s})$	$M[R[r_i] \cdot s]$	Scaled indexed
Memory	$Imm(, r_i, s)$	$M[Imm + R[r_i] \cdot s]$	Scaled indexed
Memory	$(\mathbf{r}_b,\mathbf{r}_i,s)$	$M[R[r_b] + R[r_i] \cdot s]$	Scaled indexed
Memory	$Imm(\mathbf{r}_b,\mathbf{r}_i,s)$	$M[Imm + R[\mathbf{r}_b] + R[\mathbf{r}_i] \cdot s]$	Scaled indexed

Figure 3.3 Operand forms. Operands can denote immediate (constant) values, register values, or values from memory. The scaling factor *s* must be either 1, 2, 4, or 8.

%rdx	0xf000
%rcx	0x0100

Expression	Address Computation	Address
0x8(%rdx)		
(%rdx,%rcx)		
(%rdx,%rcx,4)		
0x80(,%rdx,2)		

%rdx	0xf000
%rcx	0x0100

Expression	Address Computation	Address
0x8(%rdx)	%rdx + 0x8	0xf008
(%rdx,%rcx)		
(%rdx,%rcx,4)		
0x80(,%rdx,2)		

%rdx	0xf000
%rcx	0x0100

Expression	Address Computation	Address
0x8(%rdx)	%rdx + 0x8	0xf008
(%rdx,%rcx)	%rdx + %rcx*1	0xf100
(%rdx,%rcx,4)		
0x80(,%rdx,2)		

%rdx	0xf000
%rcx	0x0100

Expression	Address Computation	Address
0x8(%rdx)	%rdx + 0x8	0xf008
(%rdx,%rcx)	%rdx + %rcx*1	0xf100
(%rdx,%rcx,4)	%rdx + %rcx*4	0xf400
0x80(,%rdx,2)		

%rdx	0xf000
%rcx	0x0100

Expression	Address Computation	Address
0x8(%rdx)	%rdx + 0x8	0xf008
(%rdx,%rcx)	%rdx + %rcx*1	0xf100
(%rdx,%rcx,4)	%rdx + %rcx*4	0xf400
0x80(,%rdx,2)	%rdx*2 + 0x80	0x1e080

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