Digital Design & Computer Arch.

Lecture 16b: Handling Out-of-Order Execution of Loads and Stores

Prof. Onur Mutlu

ETH Zürich

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Handling Out-of-Order Execution of Loads and Stores

Registers versus Memory

- So far, we considered mainly registers as part of state
- What about memory?
- What are the fundamental differences between registers and memory?
  - Register dependences known statically – memory dependences determined dynamically
  - Register state is small – memory state is large
  - Register state is not visible to other threads/processors – memory state is shared between threads/processors (in a shared memory multiprocessor)

Memory Dependence Handling (I)

- Need to obey memory dependences in an out-of-order machine
  - and need to do so while providing high performance

- Observation and Problem: Memory address is not known until a load/store executes

- Corollary 1: Renaming memory addresses is difficult
- Corollary 2: Determining dependence or independence of loads/stores has to be handled *after* their (partial) execution
- Corollary 3: When a load/store has its address ready, there may be older/younger stores/loads with unknown addresses in the machine

Memory Dependence Handling (II)

- When do you schedule a load instruction in an OOO engine?
  - Problem: A younger load can have its address ready before an older store's address is known
  - Known as the memory disambiguation problem or the unknown address problem

- Approaches
  - Conservative: Stall the load until all previous stores have computed their addresses (or even retired from the machine)
  - Aggressive: Assume load is independent of unknown-address stores and schedule the load right away
  - Intelligent: Predict (with a more sophisticated predictor) if the load is dependent on any unknown address store

Handling of Store-Load Dependences

- **A load's dependence status is not known** until all previous store addresses are available.

- How does the OOO engine detect dependence of a load instruction on a previous store?
  - Option 1: Wait until all previous stores committed (no need to check for address match)
  - Option 2: Keep a list of pending stores in a store buffer and check whether load address matches a previous store address

- How does the OOO engine treat the scheduling of a load instruction wrt previous stores?
  - Option 1: Assume load dependent on all previous stores
  - Option 2: Assume load independent of all previous stores
  - Option 3: Predict the dependence of a load on an outstanding store

Memory Disambiguation (I)

- Option 1: Assume load is dependent on all previous stores

  + No need for recovery

  -- Too conservative: delays independent loads unnecessarily

- Option 2: Assume load is independent of all previous stores

  + Simple and can be common case: no delay for independent loads

  -- Requires recovery and re-execution of load and dependents on misprediction

- Option 3: Predict the dependence of a load on an outstanding store

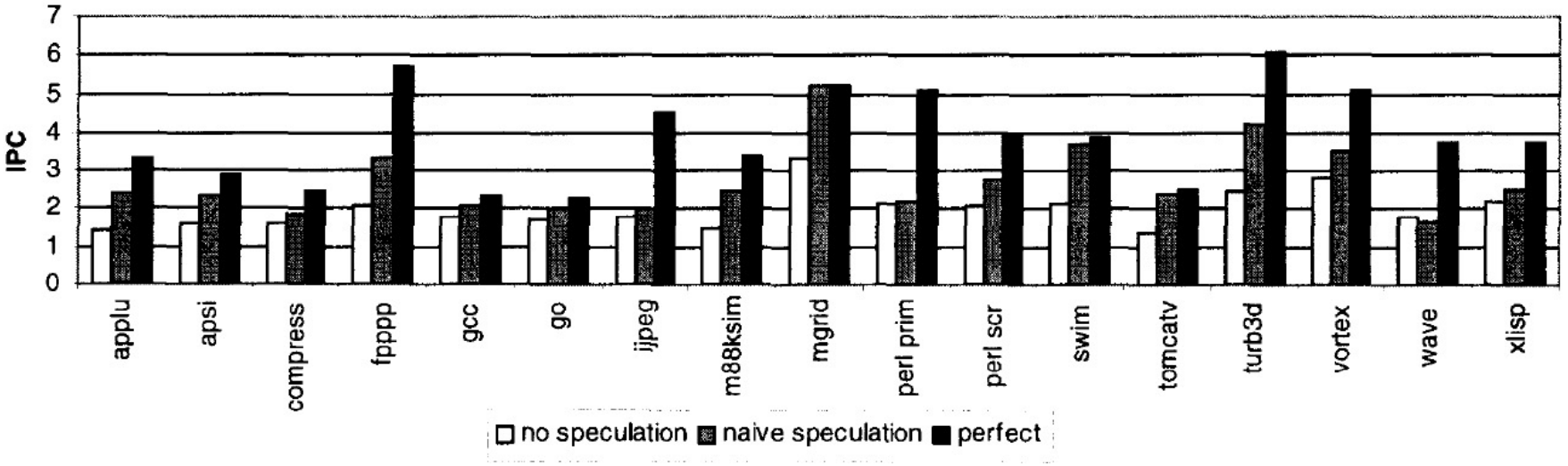
  + More accurate. Load store dependences persist over time

  -- Still requires recovery/re-execution on misprediction

  - Alpha 21264 : Initially assume load independent, delay loads found to be dependent
  - Moshovos et al., "Dynamic speculation and synchronization of data dependences," ISCA 1997.
  - Chrysos and Emer, "Memory Dependence Prediction Using Store Sets," ISCA 1998.

Memory Disambiguation (II)

- Chrysos and Emer, "Memory Dependence Prediction Using Store Sets," ISCA 1998.



- Predicting store-load dependences important for performance
- Simple predictors (based on past history) can achieve most of the potential performance

Data Forwarding Between Stores and Loads

- We cannot update memory out of program order
  → Need to buffer all store and load instructions in instruction window

- Even if we **know** all addresses of past stores when we generate the address of a load, two questions still remain:
  1. How do we check whether or not it is dependent on a store
  2. How do we forward data to the load if it is dependent on a store

- Modern processors use a LQ (load queue) and a SQ for this
  - Can be combined or separate between loads and stores
  - A load searches the SQ after it computes its address. Why?
  - A store searches the LQ after it computes its address. Why?

Out-of-Order Completion of Memory Ops

- When a store instruction finishes execution, it writes its address and data in its reorder buffer entry (or SQ entry)

- When a later load instruction generates its address, it:
  - searches the SQ with its address
  - accesses memory with its address
  - receives the value from the youngest older instruction that wrote to that address (either from ROB or memory)

- This is a complicated "search logic" implemented as a Content Addressable Memory
  - Content is "memory address" (but also need *size* and *age*)
  - Called **store-to-load forwarding logic**

Store-Load Forwarding Complexity

- Content Addressable Search (based on Load Address)
- Range Search (based on Address and Size of both the Load and earlier Stores)
- Age-Based Search (for last written values)
- Load data can come from a combination of multiple places
  - One or more stores in the Store Buffer (SQ)
  - Memory/cache

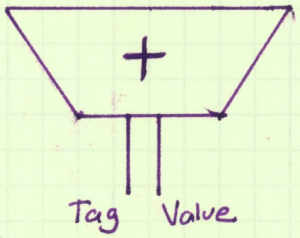
CYCLE ___

MUL R1, R2 → R3
ADD R3, R4 → R5
ADD R2, R6 → R7
ADD R8, R9 → R10
MUL R7, R10 → R11
ADD R5, R11 → R5

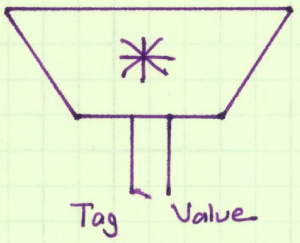
Register Alias Table

	V	Tag	Value
R1			
R2			
R3			
R4			
R5			
R6			
R7			
R8			
R9			
R10			
R11			

	SOURCE 1			SOURCE 2		
	V	Tag	Value	V	Tag	Value
a						
b						
c						
d						



	SOURCE 1			SOURCE 2		
	V	Tag	Value	V	Tag	Value
x						
y						
z						
t						



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