CS61C : Machine Structures

Lecture 2.1.2
Garbage Collection & Intro to MIPS

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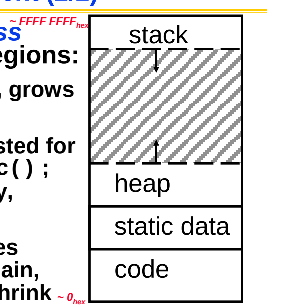
Lecture Outline

- Buddy System Allocator
- Garbage Collection
- MIPS

Memory Management (2/2)

- A program's *address space* contains 4 regions:
  - stack: proc frames, grows downward
  - heap: space requested for pointers via `malloc()`; resizes dynamically, grows upward
  - static data: variables declared outside main, does not grow or shrink
  - code: loaded when program starts, does not change



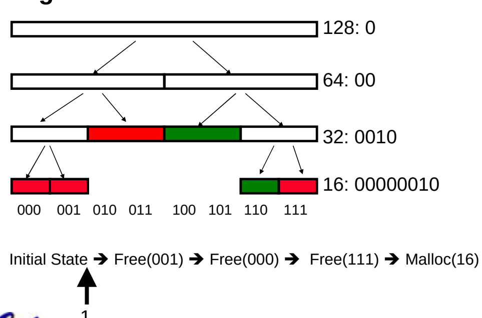
For now, OS somehow prevents accesses between stack and heap (gray hash lines). Wait for virtual memory

Buddy System

- Yet another memory management technique (used in Linux kernel)
- Like GNU's "slab allocator", but only allocate blocks in sizes that are powers of 2 (internal fragmentation is possible)
- Keep separate free lists for each size
  - e.g., separate free lists for 16 byte, 32 byte, 64 byte blocks, etc.

Buddy System

- Legend: FREE ALLOCATED SPLIT



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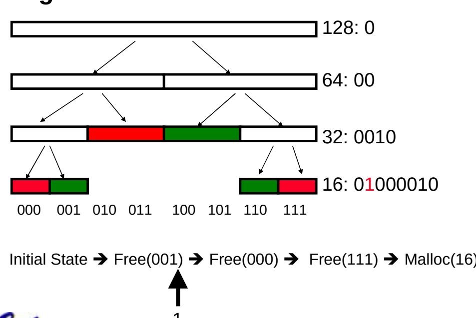

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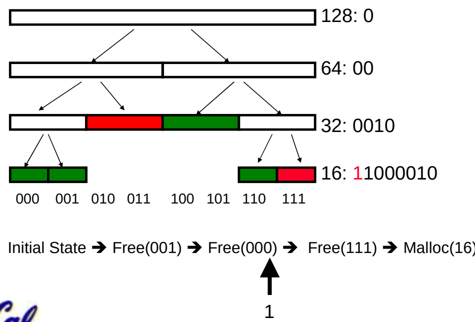

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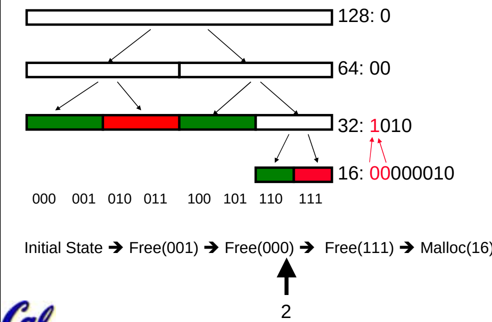

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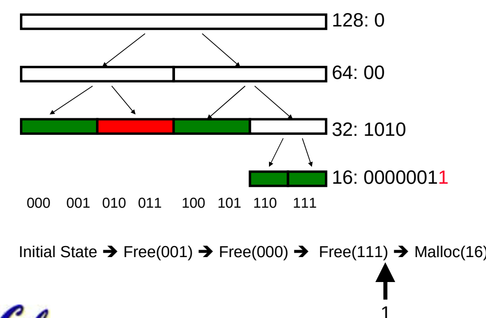

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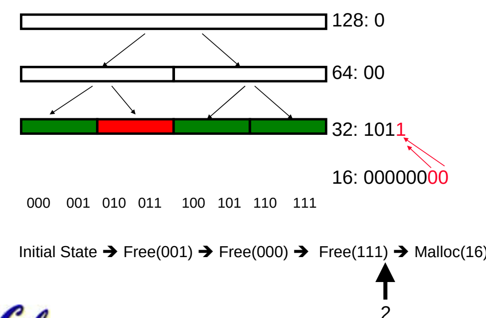

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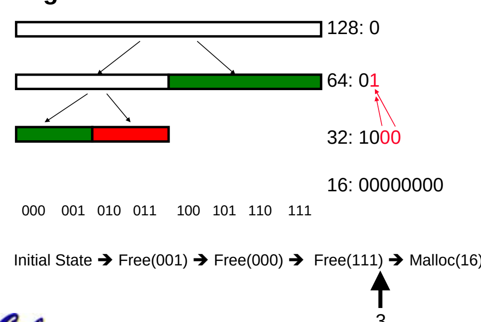

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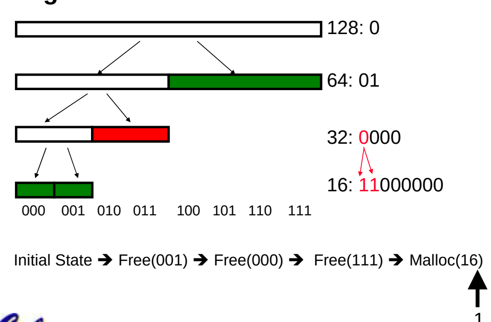

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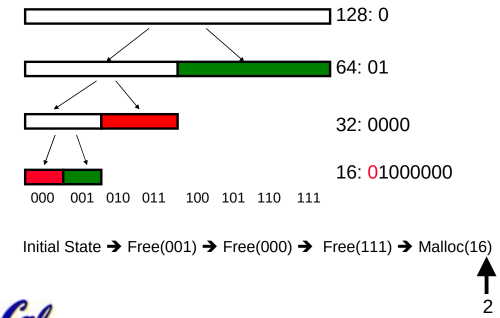

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Automatic Memory Management

- Dynamically allocated memory is difficult to track – why not track it automatically?
- If we can keep track of what memory is in use, we can reclaim everything else.
  - Unreachable memory is called *garbage*, the process of reclaiming it is called *garbage collection*.
- So how do we track what is in use?

Tracking Memory Usage

- Techniques depend heavily on the programming language and rely on help from the compiler.
- Start with all pointers in global variables and local variables (root set).
- Recursively examine dynamically allocated objects we see a pointer to.
  - We can do this in constant space by reversing the pointers on the way down
- How do we recursively find pointers in dynamically allocated memory?

Tracking Memory Usage

- Again, it depends heavily on the programming language and compiler.
- Could have only a single type of dynamically allocated object in memory
  - E.g., simple Lisp/Scheme system with only cons cells (61A's Scheme not "simple")
- Could use a *strongly typed* language (e.g., Java)
  - Don't allow conversion (casting) between arbitrary types.
  - C/C++ are not strongly typed.
- Here are 3 schemes to collect garbage

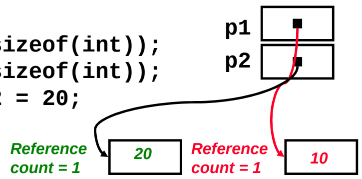
Scheme 1: Reference Counting

- For every chunk of dynamically allocated memory, keep a count of number of pointers that point to it.
- When the count reaches 0, reclaim.
- Simple assignment statements can result in a lot of work, since may update reference counts of many items

Reference Counting Example

- For every chunk of dynamically allocated memory, keep a count of number of pointers that point to it.
  - When the count reaches 0, reclaim.

```
int *p1, *p2;
p1 = malloc(sizeof(int));
p2 = malloc(sizeof(int));
*p1 = 10; *p2 = 20;
```



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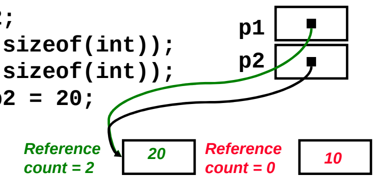


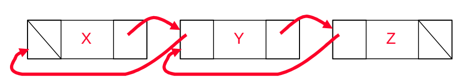
Reference Counting (p1, p2 are pointers)

`p1 = p2;`

- Increment reference count for p2
- If p1 held a valid value, decrement its reference count
- If the reference count for p1 is now 0, reclaim the storage it points to.
  - If the storage pointed to by p1 held other pointers, decrement all of their reference counts, and so on…
- Must also decrement reference count when local variables cease to exist.

Reference Counting Flaws

- Extra overhead added to assignments, as well as ending a block of code.
- Does not work for circular structures!
  - E.g., doubly linked list:



Scheme 2: Mark and Sweep Garbage Col.

- Keep allocating new memory until memory is exhausted, then try to find unused memory.
- Consider objects in heap a graph, chunks of memory (objects) are graph nodes, pointers to memory are graph edges.
  - Edge from A to B => A stores pointer to B
- Can start with the root set, perform a graph traversal, find all usable memory!
- 2 Phases: (1) Mark used nodes;(2) Sweep free ones, returning list of free nodes

Mark and Sweep

- Graph traversal is relatively easy to implement recursively

```
void traverse(struct graph_node *node) {
    /* visit this node */
    foreach child in node->children {
        traverse(child);
    }
}
```

- But with recursion, state is stored on the execution stack.
  - Garbage collection is invoked when not much memory left
- As before, we could traverse in constant space (by reversing pointers)

Scheme 3: Copying Garbage Collection

- Divide memory into two spaces, only one in use at any time.
- When active space is exhausted, traverse the active space, copying all objects to the other space, then make the new space active and continue.
  - Only reachable objects are copied!
- Use "forwarding pointers" to keep consistency
  - Simple solution to avoiding having to have a table of old and new addresses, and to mark objects already copied (see bonus slides)

Review

- Several techniques for managing heap w/ malloc/free: best-, first-, next-fit, slab,buddy
  - 2 types of memory fragmentation: internal & external; all suffer from some kind of frag.
  - Each technique has strengths and weaknesses, none is definitively best
- Automatic memory management relieves programmer from managing memory.
  - All require help from language and compiler
  - Reference Count: not for circular structures
  - Mark and Sweep: complicated and slow, works
  - Copying: move active objects back and forth

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Assembly Language

- Basic job of a CPU: execute lots of *instructions*.
- Instructions are the primitive operations that the CPU may execute.
- Different CPUs implement different sets of instructions. The set of instructions a particular CPU implements is an *Instruction Set Architecture* (*ISA*).
  - Examples: Intel 80x86 (Pentium 4), IBM/Motorola PowerPC (Macintosh), MIPS, Intel IA64, ...

Instruction Set Architectures

- Early trend was to add more and more instructions to new CPUs to do elaborate operations
  - VAX architecture had an instruction to multiply polynomials!
- RISC philosophy (Cocke IBM, Patterson, Hennessy, 1980s) – Reduced Instruction Set Computing
  - Keep the instruction set small and simple, makes it easier to build fast hardware.
  - Let software do complicated operations by composing simpler ones.

ISA Design

- Must Run Fast In Hardware ➔ Eliminate sources of complexity.

Software	Hardware
• Symbolic Lookup	➔ fixed var names/#
• Strong typing	➔ No Typing
• Nested expressions	➔ Fixed format Inst
• Many operators	➔ small set of insts

Assembly Variables: Registers (1/4)

- Unlike HLL like C or Java, assembly cannot use variables
  - Why not? Keep Hardware Simple
- Assembly Operands are registers
  - limited number of special locations built directly into the hardware
  - operations can only be performed on these!
- Benefit: Since registers are directly in hardware, they are very fast (faster than 1 billionth of a second)

Assembly Variables: Registers (2/4)

- Drawback: Since registers are in hardware, there are a predetermined number of them
  - Solution: MIPS code must be very carefully put together to efficiently use registers
- 32 registers in MIPS
  - Why 32? Smaller is faster
- Each MIPS register is 32 bits wide
  - Groups of 32 bits called a word in MIPS

Assembly Variables: Registers (3/4)

- Registers are numbered from 0 to 31
- Each register can be referred to by number or name
- Number references:

  `$0, $1, $2, … $30, $31`

Assembly Variables: Registers (4/4)

- By convention, each register also has a name to make it easier to code
- For now:

  `$16 - $23` ➔ `$s0 - $s7`

  (correspond to C variables)

  `$8 - $15` ➔ `$t0 - $t7`

  (correspond to temporary variables)

  Later will explain other 16 register names
- In general, use names to make your code more readable

C, Java variables vs. registers

- In C (and most High Level Languages) variables declared first and given a type
  - Example:

```
int fahr, celsius;
char a, b, c, d, e;
```

- Each variable can ONLY represent a value of the type it was declared as (cannot mix and match `int` and `char` variables).
- In Assembly Language, the registers have no type; operation determines how register contents are treated

Comments in Assembly

- Another way to make your code more readable: comments!
- Hash (#) is used for MIPS comments
  - anything from hash mark to end of line is a comment and will be ignored
- Note: Different from C.
  - C comments have format `/* comment */` so they can span many lines

Assembly Instructions

- In assembly language, each statement (called an Instruction), executes exactly one of a short list of simple commands
- Unlike in C (and most other High Level Languages), each line of assembly code contains at most 1 instruction
- Instructions are related to operations (=, +, -, *, /) in C or Java

MIPS Addition and Subtraction (1/4)

- Syntax of Instructions:

  “<op> <dest> <src1> <src2> “

  where:

  op) operation by name

  dest) operand getting result (“destination”)

  src1) 1st operand for operation (“source1”)

  src2) 2nd operand for operation (“source2”)
- Syntax is rigid:
  - 1 operator, 3 operands
  - Why? Keep Hardware simple via regularity

Addition and Subtraction of Integers (2/4)

- Addition in Assembly
  - Example: `add $s0,$s1,$s2` (in MIPS)

    Equivalent to: `s0 = s1 + s2` (in C)

  where MIPS registers `$s0,$s1,$s2` are associated with C variables `s0, s1, s2`
- Subtraction in Assembly
  - Example: `sub $s3,$s4,$s5` (in MIPS)

    Equivalent to: `d = e - f` (in C)

  where MIPS registers `$s3,$s4,$s5` are associated with C variables `d, e, f`

Addition and Subtraction of Integers (3/4)

- How do the following C statement?

```
a = b + c + d - e;
```

- Break into multiple instructions

```
add $t0, $s1, $s2 # temp = b + c
add $t0, $t0, $s3 # temp = temp + d
sub $s0, $t0, $s4 # a = temp - e
```

- Notice: A single line of C may break up into several lines of MIPS.
- Notice: Everything after the hash mark on each line is ignored (comments)

Addition and Subtraction of Integers (4/4)

- How do we do this?

```
f = (g + h) - (i + j);
```

- Use intermediate temporary register

```
add $t0,$s1,$s2     # temp = g + h
add $t1,$s3,$s4     # temp = i + j
sub $s0,$t0,$t1     # f=(g+h)-(i+j)
```


Register Zero

- One particular immediate, the number zero (0), appears very often in code.
- So we define register zero (`$0` or `$zero`) to always have the value 0; eg

  `add $s0,$s1,$zero` (in MIPS)

  `f = g` (in C)

  where MIPS registers `$s0,$s1` are associated with C variables `f, g`
- defined in hardware, so an instruction

  `add $zero,$zero,$s0`

  will not do anything!

Immediates

- Immediates are numerical constants.
- They appear often in code, so there are special instructions for them.
- Add Immediate:

  `addi $s0,$s1,10` (in MIPS)

  `f = g + 10` (in C)

  where MIPS registers `$s0,$s1` are associated with C variables `f, g`
- Syntax similar to add instruction, except that last argument is a number instead of a register.

Immediates

- There is no Subtract Immediate in MIPS: Why?
- Limit types of operations that can be done to absolute minimum
  - if an operation can be decomposed into a simpler operation, don't include it
  - `addi …, -X` = `subi …, X` => so no `subi`
- `addi $s0,$s1,-10` (in MIPS)

  `f = g - 10` (in C)

  where MIPS registers `$s0,$s1` are associated with C variables `f, g`

"And in Conclusion…"

- In MIPS Assembly Language:
  - Registers replace C variables
  - One Instruction (simple operation) per line
  - Simpler is Better
  - Smaller is Faster
- New Instructions:

  `add, addi, sub`
- New Registers:

  C Variables: `$s0` - `$s7`

  Temporary Variables: `$t0` - `$t9`

  Zero: `$zero`