Cache Performance

CMPU 224 – Computer Organization
Jason Waterman
Cache Lookup Practice

- Memory is byte addressable
- Addresses are 12 bits wide, cache is 4-way set associative, with a 4-byte block size, and 8 total lines
- Address: 0xE34
  - Fill out the tables below

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Parameter | Value
---|---
Block offset | 0
Set Index | 1
Cache Tag | 0x1C6
Cache Hit? (Y/N) | Y
Cache Byte returned | 0x22
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3/22/2023
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Cache Tag | 0x125
Cache Hit? (Y/N) | N
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Today

• Cache performance metrics

• The graph on the cover of your textbook explained

• Writing cache friendly code
What about writes?

- Multiple copies of the data exist:
  - Cache and Main Memory

- What to do on a write-hit?
  - Update cache block with new contents
  - **Write-through** (write immediately to memory)
  - **Write-back** (defer write to memory until line is evicted)
    - Need a dirty bit (whether line is different from memory or not)

- What to do on a write-miss?
  - **No-write-allocate** (writes straight to memory, does not load into cache)
  - **Write-allocate** (load into cache, update line in cache)
    - Good if more writes to the location follow

- Typical Pairings
  - Write-through + No-write-allocate
    - Simpler
  - **Write-back** + **Write-allocate**
    - Better performance
Types of Cache Misses

• Cold (compulsory) miss
  • Cold misses occur because the cache is empty

• Conflict miss
  • Conflict misses occur when the cache is large enough, but multiple data objects all map to the same set in the cache
    • E.g., referencing blocks 0, 8, 0, 8, 0, 8 in our direct-mapped example would miss every time
    • If the cache were fully associative, this access pattern wouldn’t be a miss

• Capacity miss
  • Occurs when the set of active cache blocks (working set) is larger than the cache
Cache Performance Metrics

• Miss Rate
  • Fraction of memory references not found in cache (misses / accesses) = 1 – hit rate
  • Typical numbers:
    • 3-10% for L1
    • can be quite small (e.g., < 1%) for L2, depending on size, etc.

• Hit Time
  • Time to deliver a line in the cache to the processor
    • includes time to determine whether the line is in the cache
  • Typical numbers:
    • 4 clock cycles for L1
    • 10 clock cycles for L2

• Miss Penalty
  • Additional time required because of a miss
    • typically 50-200 cycles for main memory (Trend: increasing!)
Let’s think about those numbers

• Huge difference between a hit and a miss
  • Could be 100x, if just L1 and main memory

• Would you believe 99% hits is twice as good as 97%?
  • Consider:
    cache hit time of 1 cycle
    miss penalty of 100 cycles

  • Average access time:
    97% hits: 1 cycle + 0.03 * 100 cycles = 4 cycles
    99% hits: 1 cycle + 0.01 * 100 cycles = 2 cycles

• This is why “miss rate” is typically used instead of “hit rate”
  • 3% versus 1%
Writing Cache Friendly Code

• Make the common case go fast
  • Focus on the inner loops of the core functions

• Minimize the misses in the inner loops
  • Repeated references to variables are good (temporal locality)
  • Stride-1 reference patterns are good (spatial locality)

Key idea: Our qualitative notion of locality is quantified through our understanding of cache memories
The Memory Mountain

• **Read throughput** (read bandwidth)
  - Number of bytes read from memory per second (MB/s)

• **Memory mountain**
  - Measured read throughput as a function of spatial and temporal locality
  - Compact way to characterize memory system performance
long data[MAXELEMS]; /* Global array to traverse */

/* test - Iterate over first "elems" elements of array "data"
* with stride of "stride", using using 4x4 loop unrolling. */
int test(int elems, int stride) {
    long i, sx2=stride*2, sx3=stride*3, sx4=stride*4;
    long acc0 = 0, acc1 = 0, acc2 = 0, acc3 = 0;
    long length = elems, limit = length - sx4;

    /* Combine 4 elements at a time */
    for (i = 0; i < limit; i += sx4) {
        acc0 = acc0 + data[i];
        acc1 = acc1 + data[i+stride];
        acc2 = acc2 + data[i+sx2];
        acc3 = acc3 + data[i+sx3];
    }

    /* Finish any remaining elements */
    for (; i < length; i += stride) {
        acc0 = acc0 + data[i];
    }
    return ((acc0 + acc1) + (acc2 + acc3));
}

Call test() with many combinations of elems and stride.

For each elems and stride:

1. Call test() once to warm up the caches
2. Call test() again and measure the read throughput (MB/s)
The Memory Mountain

Core i7 Haswell
2.1 GHz
32 KB L1 d-cache
256 KB L2 cache
8 MB L3 cache
64 B block size

Aggressive prefetching

Ridges of temporal locality

Slopes of spatial locality

Read throughput (MB/s)

Stride (x8 bytes)

Size (bytes)
Matrix Multiplication Example

• Description:
  • Multiply N x N matrices
  • Matrix elements are doubles (8 bytes)
  • $O(N^3)$ total operations
    • 2*N reads per source element
    • $N^2$ elements
  • N values summed per destination
    • But may be able to hold in register

```c
/* ijk */
for (i=0; i<n; i++) {
    for (j=0; j<n; j++) {
        sum = 0.0;
        for (k=0; k<n; k++)
            sum += a[i][k] * b[k][j];
        c[i][j] = sum;
    }
}
```

Variable `sum` held in register
Miss Rate Analysis for Matrix Multiply

• Assume:
  • Block size = 32B (big enough for four doubles)
  • Matrix dimension (N) is very large
  • Cache is not even big enough to hold multiple rows

• Analysis Method:
  • Look at access pattern of inner loop

\[
C_{i,j} = A_{i,k} \times B_{k,j}
\]
C arrays allocated in row-major order
  • Each row in contiguous memory locations

Stepping through columns in one row:
  • for (i = 0; i < N; i++)
    sum += a[0][i];
  • Accesses successive elements
  • If block size (B) > sizeof(a_{ij}) bytes, exploit spatial locality
    • miss rate = sizeof(a_{ij}) / B

Stepping through rows in one column:
  • for (i = 0; i < n; i++)
    sum += a[i][0];
  • Accesses distant elements
  • No spatial locality!
    • Miss rate = 1 (i.e., 100%)
Matrix Multiplication (ijk)

```c
/* ijk */
for (i=0; i<n; i++) {
    for (j=0; j<n; j++) {
        sum = 0.0;
        for (k=0; k<n; k++)
            sum += a[i][k] * b[k][j];
        c[i][j] = sum;
    }
}
```

Inner loop:
- Row-wise Misses per inner loop iteration:
  - A: 0.25
  - B: 1.0
  - C: 0.0
Matrix Multiplication (jik)

```c
/* jik */
for (j=0; j<n; j++) {
    for (i=0; i<n; i++) {
        sum = 0.0;
        for (k=0; k<n; k++)
            sum += a[i][k] * b[k][j];
        c[i][j] = sum;
    }
}
```

Misses per inner loop iteration:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Matrix Multiplication ($kij$)

```c
/* kij */
for (k=0; k<n; k++) {
    for (i=0; i<n; i++) {
        r = a[i][k];
        for (j=0; j<n; j++)
            c[i][j] += r * b[k][j];
    }
}
```

Inner loop:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Misses</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Matrix Multiplication (ikj)

```c
/* ikj */
for (i=0; i<n; i++) {
    for (k=0; k<n; k++) {
        r = a[i][k];
        for (j=0; j<n; j++)
            c[i][j] += r * b[k][j];
    }
}
```

Inner loop:

```
(i,k)        (k,*)      (i,*)
```

Misses per inner loop iteration:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Matrix Multiplication (jki)

```c
/* jki */
for (j=0; j<n; j++) {
    for (k=0; k<n; k++) {
        r = b[k][j];
        for (i=0; i<n; i++)
            c[i][j] += a[i][k] * r;
    }
}
```

Inner loop:

- Fixed: 
  - Column-wise

Misses per inner loop iteration:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Misses</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Matrix Multiplication (kji)

```c
/* kji */
for (k=0; k<n; k++) {
    for (j=0; j<n; j++) {
        r = b[k][j];
        for (i=0; i<n; i++)
            c[i][j] += a[i][k] * r;
    }
}
```

**Misses per inner loop iteration:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Matrix Multiplication

```
for (i=0; i<n; i++) {
    for (j=0; j<n; j++) {
        sum = 0.0;
        for (k=0; k<n; k++)
            sum += a[i][k] * b[k][j];
        c[i][j] = sum;
    }
}
```

```
for (k=0; k<n; k++) {
    for (i=0; i<n; i++) {
        r = a[i][k];
        for (j=0; j<n; j++)
            c[i][j] += r * b[k][j];
    }
}
```

```
for (j=0; j<n; j++) {
    for (k=0; k<n; k++)
        r = b[k][j];
    for (i=0; i<n; i++)
        c[i][j] += a[i][k] * r;
}
```

**ijk (& jik):**
- 2 loads, 0 stores
- misses/iter = 1.25

**kij (& ikj):**
- 2 loads, 1 store
- misses/iter = 0.5

**jki (& kji):**
- 2 loads, 1 store
- misses/iter = 2.0
Core i7 Matrix Multiply Performance

Cycles per inner loop iteration vs. Array size (n)

- jki / kji
- ijk / jik
- kij / ikj

Graph showing performance for different array sizes and loop iteration orders.
Cache Summary

- Cache memories can have significant performance impact

- You can write your programs to exploit this!
  - Focus on the inner loops, where bulk of computations and memory accesses occur
  - Try to maximize spatial locality by reading data objects sequentially with stride 1
  - Try to maximize temporal locality by using a data object as often as possible once it’s read from memory