CSE 451: Operating Systems
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Module 2
Architectural Support for Operating Systems

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Even coarse architectural trends impact tremendously the design of systems

- Processing power
  - doubling every 18 months
  - 60% improvement each year
  - factor of 100 every decade

  - 1980: 1 MHz Apple II+ = $2,000 (~$5,000 today)
    - 1980 also 1 MIPS VAX-11/780 = $120,000 (~$300,000 today)
  - 2006: 3.0GHz Pentium D = $800
  - 2010: 3.0GHz Dual Core = $500

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Power Consumption

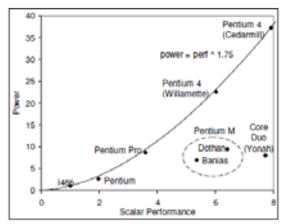

Figure 2: Normalized Power versus Normalized Scalar Performance for Multiple Generations of Intel Microprocessors

http://www.intel.com/pressroom/kits/core2duo/pdf/epi-trends-final2.pdf

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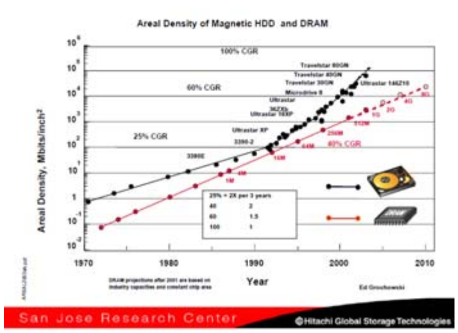
Primary Memory / Disk Capacity



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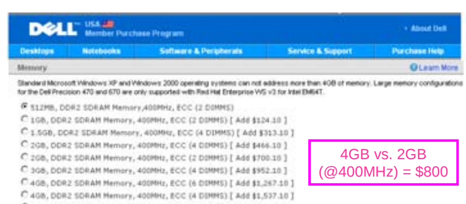
- Primary memory cost
  - 1972: 1MB = $1,000,000
  - 1982: I remember pulling all kinds of strings to get a special deal: 512K of VAX-11/780 memory for $30,000
  - 2005:



4GB vs. 2GB (@400MHz) = $800

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- 2007:

4GB vs. 2GB (@667MHz) = $290

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- Today:

2GB (@667MHz) = $31.84

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- Disk cost:
  - Only a few years ago, we purchased disks by the megabyte (and it hurt!)
  - Today, 1 GB (a billion bytes) costs ~~$1~~ ~~$0.50~~ $0.25 from Dell (except you have to buy in increments of ~~40~~ ~~80~~ 250 GB)
    - => 1 TB costs ~~$1K~~ ~~$500~~ $250, 1 PB costs ~~$1M~~ ~~$500K~~ $250K

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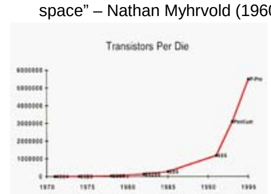
- Aside: Where does it all go?
  - Facetiously: “What Gordon giveth, Bill taketh away”
  - Realistically: our expectations for what the system will do increase relentlessly
    - e.g., GUI
  - “Software is like a gas – it expands to fill the available space” – Nathan Myhrvold (1960-)



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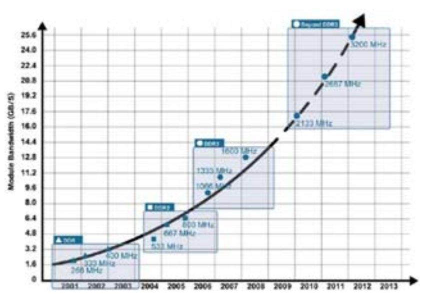
Primary Memory Bandwidth



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- Optical bandwidth today
  - *Doubling every 9 months*
  - 150% improvement each year
  - Factor of 10,000 every decade
  - 10x as fast as disk capacity!
  - 100x as fast as processor performance!!
- What are some of the implications of these trends?
  - Just one example: We have always designed systems so that they “spend” processing power in order to save “scarce” storage and bandwidth!

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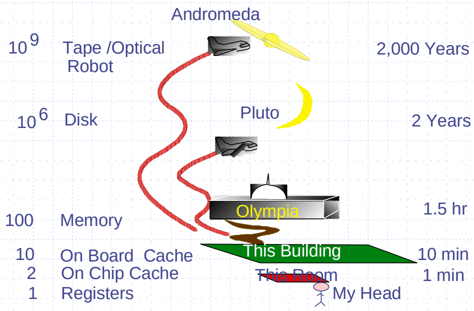
Storage Latency: How Far Away is the Data?



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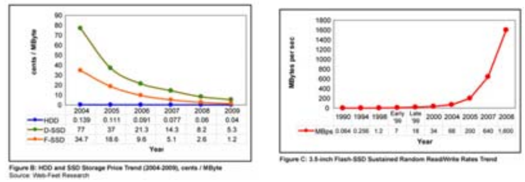
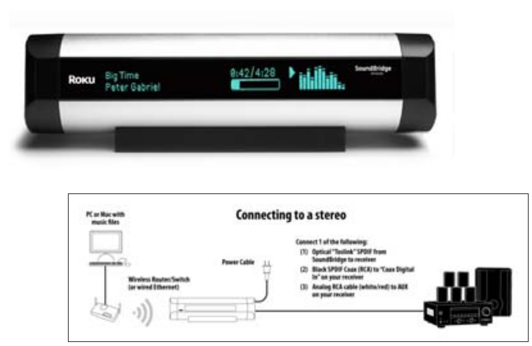
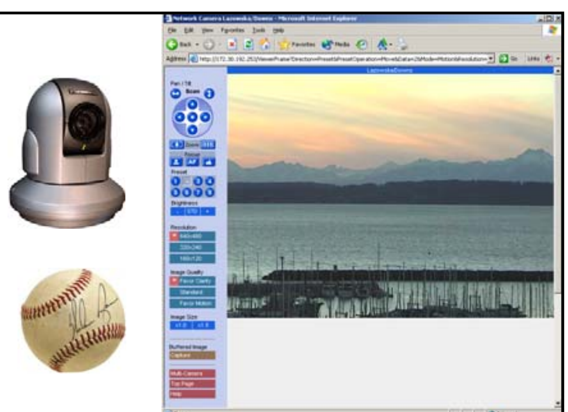
A Current Trend: Solid State Disks



http://www.embeddedstar.com/articles/2005/2/article20050207-4.html





Lower-level architecture affects the OS even more dramatically

- The operating system supports sharing and protection
  - multiple applications can run concurrently, sharing resources
  - a buggy or malicious application can't nail other applications or the system
- There are many approaches to achieving this
- The architecture determines which approaches are viable (reasonably efficient, or even possible)
  - includes instruction set (synchronization, I/O, …)
  - also hardware components like MMU or DMA controllers

- Architectural support can vastly simplify (or complicate!) OS tasks
  - e.g.: early PC operating systems (DOS, MacOS) lacked support for virtual memory, in part because at that time PCs lacked necessary hardware support
    - Apollo workstation used two CPUs as a bandaid for non-restartable instructions!
  - Until very recently, Intel-based PCs still lacked support for 64-bit addressing (which has been available for a decade on other platforms: MIPS, Alpha, IBM, etc…)
    - changing rapidly due to AMD's 64-bit architecture

Architectural features affecting OS's

- These features were built primarily to support OS's:
  - timer (clock) operation
  - synchronization instructions (e.g., atomic test-and-set)
  - memory protection
  - I/O control operations
  - interrupts and exceptions
  - protected modes of execution (kernel vs. user)
  - privileged instructions
  - system calls (and software interrupts)
  - virtualization architectures
    - Intel: http://www.intel.com/technology/itj/2006/v10i3/1-hardware/7-architecture-usage.htm
    - AMD: http://sites.amd.com/us/business/it-solutions/usage-models/virtualization/Pages/amd-v.aspx

Privileged/Protected instructions

- some instructions are restricted to the OS
  - known as protected or privileged instructions
- e.g., only the OS can:
  - directly access I/O devices (disks, network cards)
    - why?
  - manipulate memory state management
    - page table pointers, TLB loads, etc.
    - why?
  - manipulate special 'mode bits'
    - interrupt priority level
    - why?

OS protection

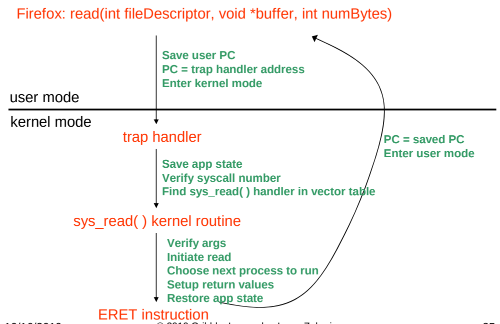
- So how does the processor know if a privileged instruction should be executed?
  - the architecture must support at least two modes of operation: kernel mode and user mode
    - VAX, x86 support 4 protection modes
  - mode is set by status bit in a protected processor register
    - user programs execute in user mode
    - OS executes in kernel (privileged) mode (OS == kernel)
- Privileged instructions can only be executed in kernel (privileged) mode
  - what happens if code running in user mode attempts to execute a privileged instruction?

Crossing protection boundaries

- So how do user programs do something privileged?
  - e.g., how can you write to a disk if you can't execute an I/O instructions?
- User programs must call an OS procedure – that is, get the OS to do it for them
  - OS defines a set of system calls
  - User-mode program executes system call instruction
- Syscall instruction
  - Like a protected procedure call

- The syscall instruction atomically:
  - Saves the current PC
  - Sets the execution mode to privileged
  - Sets the PC to a handler address
- With that, it's a lot like a local procedure call
  - Caller puts arguments in a place callee expects (registers or stack)
    - One of the args is a syscall number, indicating which OS function to invoke
  - Callee (OS) saves caller's state (registers, other control state) so it can use the CPU
  - OS function code runs
    - OS must verify caller's arguments (e.g., pointers)
  - OS returns using a special instruction
    - Automatically sets PC to return address and sets execution mode to user

A kernel crossing illustrated



System call issues

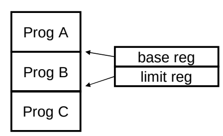
- What would be wrong if a syscall worked like a regular subroutine call, with the caller specifying the next PC?
- What would happen if kernel didn't save state?
- Why must the kernel verify arguments?
- How can you reference kernel objects as arguments to or results from system calls?

Exception Handling and Protection

- *All* entries to the OS occur via the mechanism just shown
  - Acquiring privileged mode and branching to the trap handler are inseparable
- Terminology:
  - **Interrupt**: asynchronous; caused by an external device
  - **Exception**: synchronous; unexpected problem with instruction
  - **Trap**: synchronous; intended transition to OS due to an instruction
- Privileged instructions and resources are the basis for most everything: memory protection, protected I/O, limiting user resource consumption, …

Memory protection

- OS must protect user programs from each other
  - maliciousness, ineptitude
- OS must also protect itself from user programs
  - integrity and security
  - what about protecting user programs from OS?
- Simplest scheme: base and limit registers
  - are these protected?



base and limit registers are loaded by OS before starting program

More sophisticated memory protection

- coming later in the course
- paging, segmentation, virtual memory
  - page tables, page table pointers
  - translation lookaside buffers (TLBs)
  - page fault handling

I/O control

- Issues:
  - how does the OS start an I/O?
    - special I/O instructions
    - memory-mapped I/O
  - how does the OS notice an I/O has finished?
    - polling
    - Interrupts
  - how does the OS exchange data with an I/O device?
    - Programmed I/O (PIO)
    - Direct Memory Access (DMA)

Asynchronous I/O

- Interrupts are the basis for asynchronous I/O
  - device performs an operation asynchronously to CPU
  - device sends an interrupt signal on bus when done
  - in memory, a vector table contains list of addresses of kernel routines to handle various interrupt types
    - who populates the vector table, and when?
  - CPU switches to address indicated by vector index specified by interrupt signal
- What's the advantage of asynchronous I/O?

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Timers

- How can the OS prevent runaway user programs from hogging the CPU (infinite loops?)
  - use a hardware timer that generates a periodic interrupt
  - before it transfers to a user program, the OS loads the timer with a time to interrupt
    - "quantum" – how big should it be set?
  - when timer fires, an interrupt transfers control back to OS
    - at which point OS must decide which program to schedule next
    - very interesting policy question: we'll dedicate a class to it
- Should access to the timer be privileged?
  - for reading or for writing?

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Synchronization

- Interrupts cause a wrinkle:
  - may occur any time, causing code to execute that interferes with code that was interrupted
  - OS must be able to synchronize concurrent processes
- Synchronization:
  - guarantee that short instruction sequences (e.g., read-modify-write) execute atomically
  - one method: turn off interrupts before the sequence, execute it, then re-enable interrupts
    - architecture must support disabling interrupts
      - Privileged???
  - another method: have special complex atomic instructions
    - read-modify-write
    - test-and-set
    - load-linked store-conditional

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"Concurrent programming"

- Management of concurrency and asynchronous events is biggest difference between "systems programming" and "traditional application programming"
  - modern "event-oriented" application programming is a middle ground
- Arises from the architecture
  - Can be sugar-coated, but cannot be totally abstracted away
- Huge intellectual challenge
  - Unlike vulnerabilities due to buffer overruns, which are just sloppy programming

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Architectures are still evolving

- New features are still being introduced to meet modern demands
  - Support for virtual machine monitors
  - Hardware transaction support (to simplify parallel programming)
  - Support for security (encryption, trusted modes)
  - Increasingly sophisticated video / graphics
  - Other stuff that hasn't been invented yet…
- In current technology transistors are free – CPU makers are looking for new ways to use transistors to make their chips more desirable
- Intel's big challenge: finding applications that require new hardware support, so that you will want to upgrade to a new computer to run them

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Some questions

- Why wouldn't you want a user program to be able to access an I/O device (e.g., the disk) directly?
- OK, so what keeps this from happening? What prevents user programs from directly accessing the disk?
- So, how does a user program cause disk I/O to occur?
- What prevents a user program from scribbling on the memory of another user program?
- What prevents a user program from scribbling on the memory of the operating system?
- What prevents a user program from running away with the CPU?

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