

Lecture 21

- Interrupts, exceptions

A Timely Question.

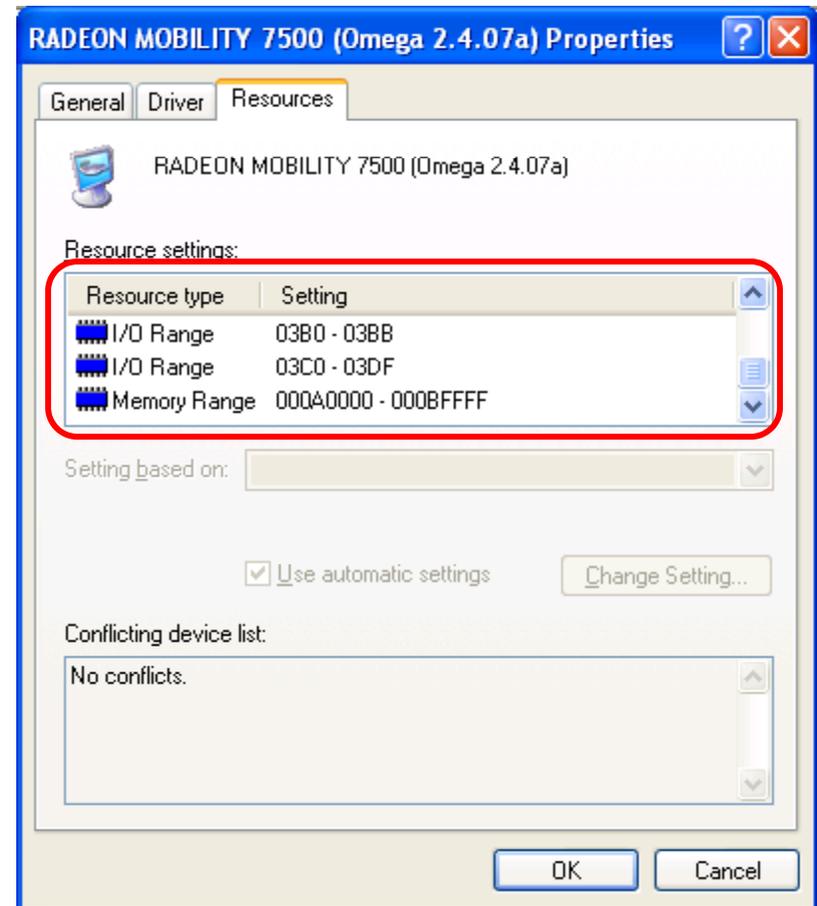
- Most modern operating systems **pre-emptively** schedule programs.
 - If you are simultaneously running two programs A and B, the O/S will periodically switch between them, as it sees fit.
 - Specifically, the O/S will:
 - Stop A from running
 - Copy A's register values to memory
 - Copy B's register values from memory
 - Start B running
- How does the O/S stop program A?

I/O Programming, Interrupts, and Exceptions

- Most I/O requests are made by applications or the operating system, and involve moving data between a peripheral device and main memory.
- There are two main ways that programs communicate with devices.
 - Memory-mapped I/O
 - Isolated I/O
- There are also several ways of managing data transfers between devices and main memory.
 - Programmed I/O
 - Interrupt-driven I/O
 - Direct memory access
- Interrupt-driven I/O motivates a discussion about:
 - Interrupts
 - Exceptions
 - and how to program them...

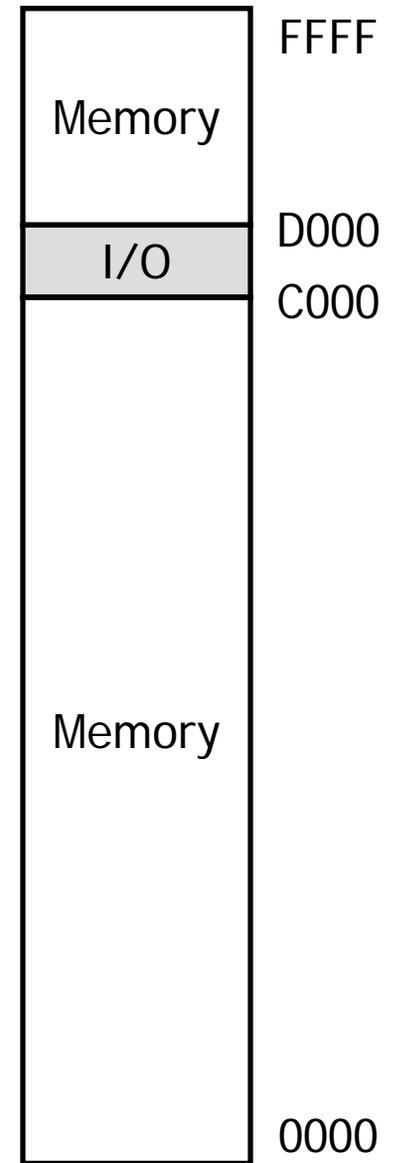
Communicating with devices

- Most devices can be considered as memories, with an “address” for reading or writing.
- Many instruction sets often make this analogy explicit. To transfer data to or from a particular device, the CPU can access special addresses.
- Here you can see a video card can be accessed via addresses 3B0-3BB, 3C0-3DF and A0000-BFFFF.
- There are two ways these addresses can be accessed.

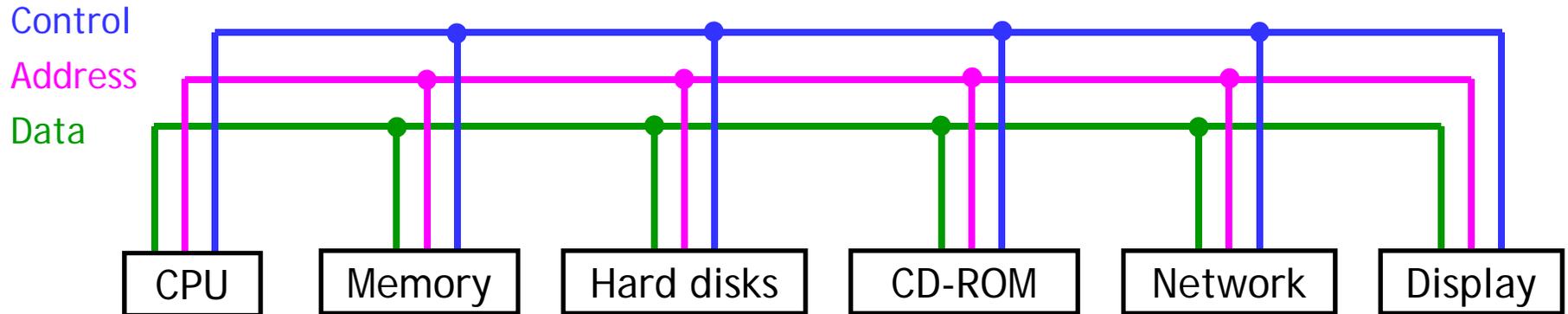


Memory-mapped I/O

- With **memory-mapped I/O**, one address space is divided into two parts.
 - Some addresses refer to physical memory locations.
 - Other addresses actually reference peripherals.
- For example, an Apple IIe had a 16-bit address bus which could access a whole 64KB of memory.
 - Addresses **C000-CFFF** in hexadecimal were not part of memory, but were used to access I/O devices.
 - All the other addresses did reference main memory.
- The I/O addresses are shared by many peripherals. In the Apple IIe, for instance, C010 is attached to the keyboard while C030 goes to the speaker.
- Some devices may need several I/O addresses.



Programming memory-mapped I/O

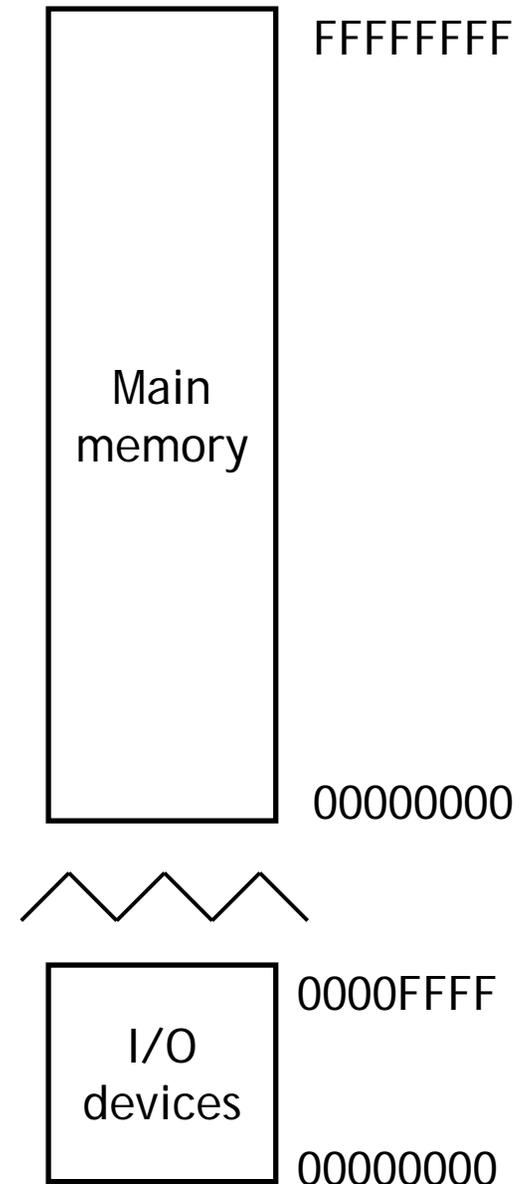


- To send data to a device, the CPU writes to the appropriate I/O address. The address and data are then transmitted along the bus.
- Each device has to monitor the address bus to see if it is the target.
 - The Apple IIe main memory ignores any transactions whose address begins with bits 1100 (addresses C000-CFFF).
 - The speaker only responds when C030 appears on the address bus.



Isolated I/O

- Another approach is to support *separate* address spaces for memory and I/O devices, with special instructions that access the I/O space.
- For instance, 8086 machines have a 32-bit address space.
 - Regular instructions like **MOV** reference RAM.
 - The special instructions **IN** and **OUT** access a separate 64KB I/O address space.



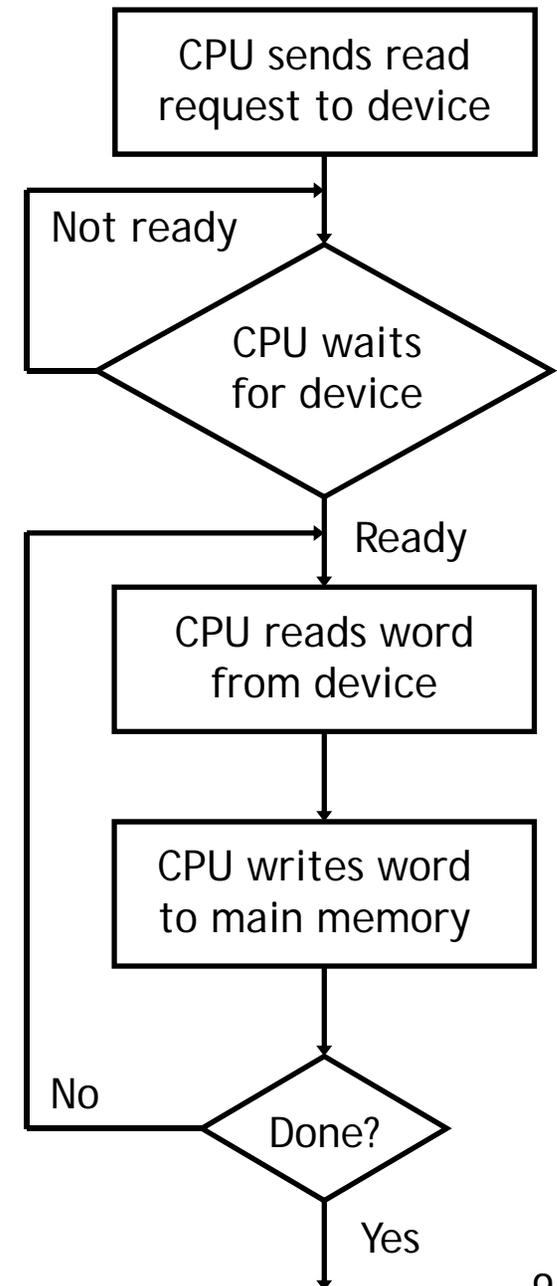
Comparing memory-mapped and isolated I/O

- Memory-mapped I/O with a single address space is nice because the same instructions that access memory can also access I/O devices.
 - For example, issuing MIPS sw instructions to the proper addresses can store data to an external device.
- With isolated I/O, special instructions are used to access devices.
 - This is less flexible for programming.

Transferring data with programmed I/O

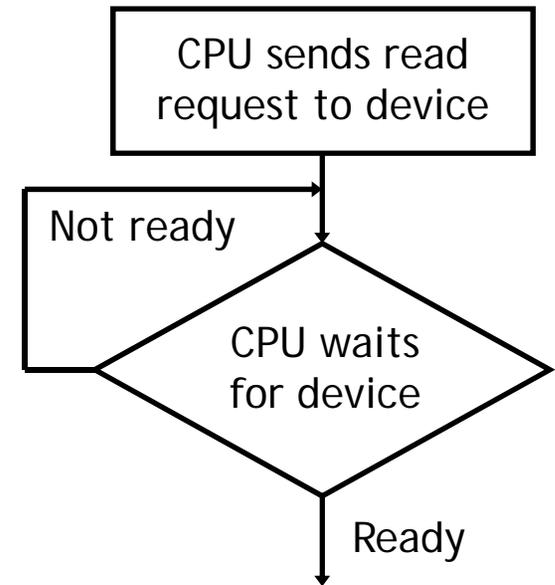
- The second important question is how data is transferred between a device and memory.
- Under **programmed I/O**, it's all up to a user program or the operating system.
 - The CPU makes a request and then waits for the device to become ready (*e.g.*, to move the disk head).
 - Buses are only 32-64 bits wide, so the last few steps are repeated for large transfers.
- A lot of CPU time is needed for this!
 - If the device is slow the CPU might have to wait a long time—as we will see, most devices *are* slow compared to modern CPUs.
 - The CPU is also involved as a middleman for the actual data transfer.

(This CPU flowchart is based on one from *Computer Organization and Architecture* by William Stallings.)



Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now?

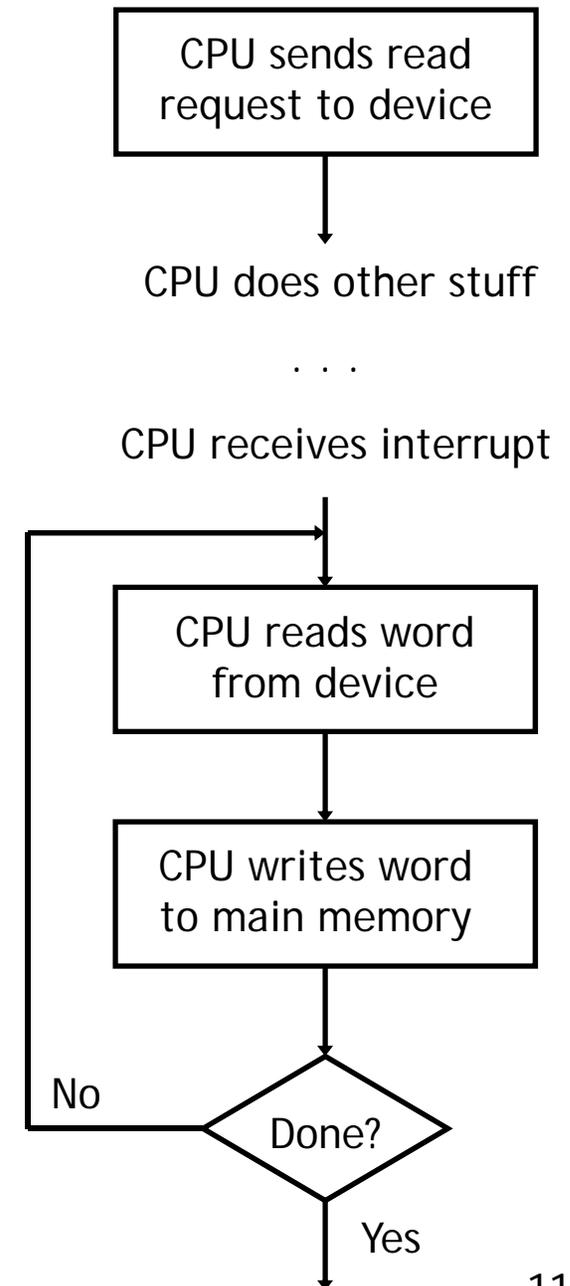
- Continually checking to see if a device is ready is called **polling**.
- It's not a particularly efficient use of the CPU.
 - The CPU repeatedly asks the device if it's ready or not.
 - The processor has to ask often enough to ensure that it doesn't miss anything, which means it can't do much else while waiting.
- An analogy is waiting for your car to be fixed.
 - You could call the mechanic every minute, but that takes up all your time.
 - A better idea is to wait for the mechanic to call *you*.



Interrupt-driven I/O

- **Interrupt-driven I/O** attacks the problem of the processor having to wait for a slow device.
- Instead of waiting, the CPU continues with other calculations. The device **interrupts** the processor when the data is ready.
- The data transfer steps are still the same as with programmed I/O, and still occupy the CPU.

(Flowchart based on Stallings again.)



Interrupts

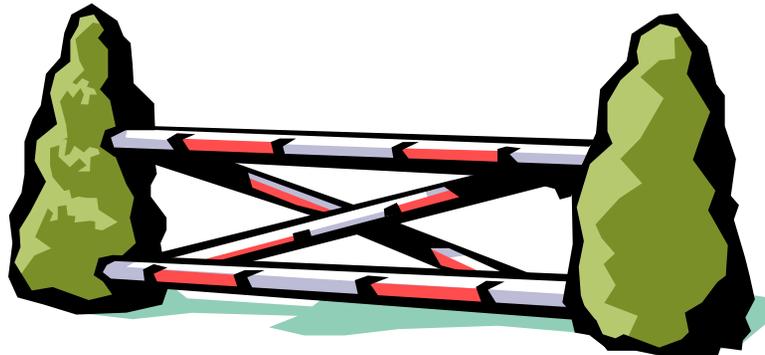
- **Interrupts** are external events that require the processor's attention.
 - Peripherals and other I/O devices may need attention.
 - Timer interrupts to mark the passage of time.
- These situations are not errors.
 - They happen normally.
 - All interrupts are recoverable:
 - The interrupted program will need to be resumed after the interrupt is handled.
- It is the operating system's responsibility to do the right thing, such as:
 - Save the current state.
 - Find and load the correct data from the hard disk
 - Transfer data to/from the I/O device.

Exception handling

- **Exceptions** are typically errors that are detected within the processor.
 - The CPU tries to execute an illegal instruction opcode.
 - An arithmetic instruction overflows, or attempts to divide by 0.
 - The a load or store cannot complete because it is accessing a virtual address currently on disk
 - Virtual Memory!
- There are two possible ways of resolving these errors.
 - If the error is **un-recoverable**, the operating system kills the program.
 - Less serious problems can often be fixed by the O/S or the program itself.

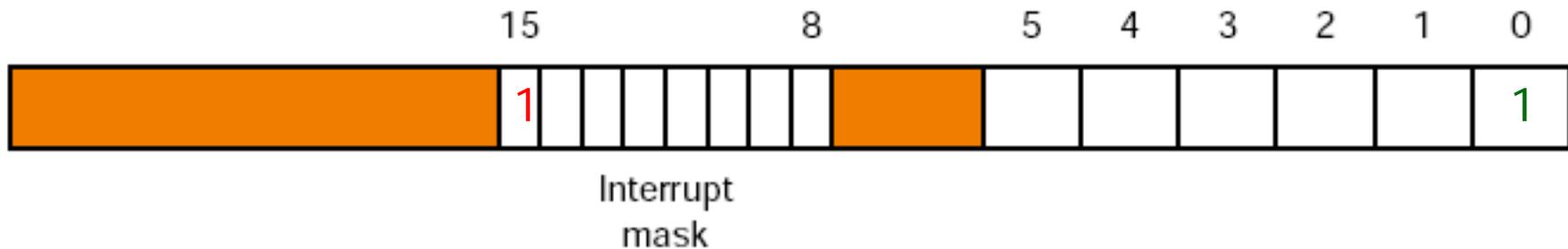
How interrupts/exceptions are handled

- For simplicity exceptions and interrupts are handled the same way.
- When an exception/interrupt occurs, we stop execution and transfer control to the operating system, which executes an “**exception handler**” to decide how it should be processed.
- The exception handler needs to know two things.
 - The cause of the exception (e.g., overflow or illegal opcode).
 - What instruction was executing when the exception occurred. This helps the operating system report the error or resume the program.
- This is another example of interaction between software and hardware, as the cause and current instruction must be supplied to the operating system by the processor.



MIPS Interrupt Programming

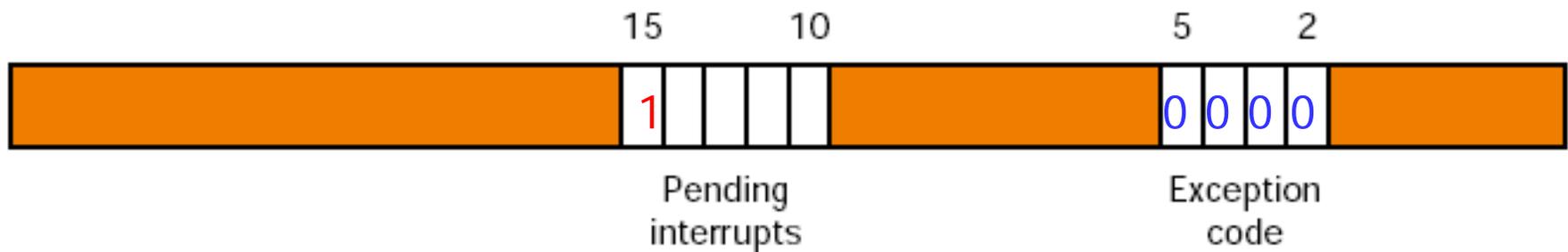
- In order to receive interrupts, the software has to enable them.
 - On a MIPS processor, this is done by writing to the [Status register](#).
 - Interrupts are enabled by setting [bit zero](#).



- MIPS has multiple interrupt levels
 - Interrupts for different levels can be selectively enabled.
 - To receive an interrupt, it's bit in the [interrupt mask](#) (bits 8-15 of the Status register) must be set.
 - In the Figure, interrupt level 15 is enabled.

MIPS Interrupt Programming

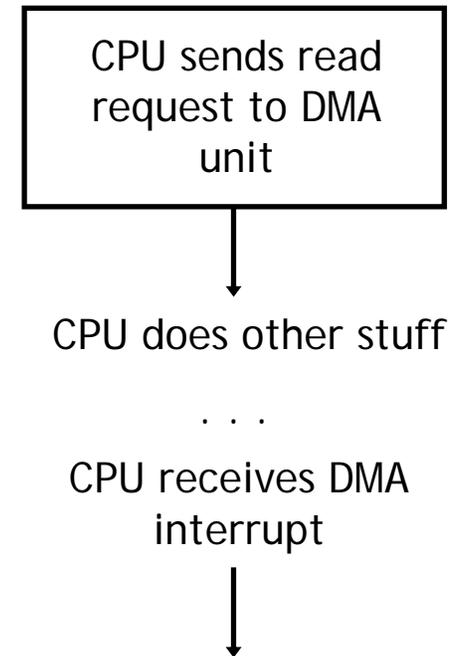
- When an interrupt occurs, the Cause register indicates which one.
 - For an **exception**, the **exception code field** holds the exception type.
 - For an **interrupt**, the **exception code field** is **0000** and bits will be set for pending interrupts.
 - The register below shows a pending interrupt at level 15



- The exception handler is generally part of the operating system.

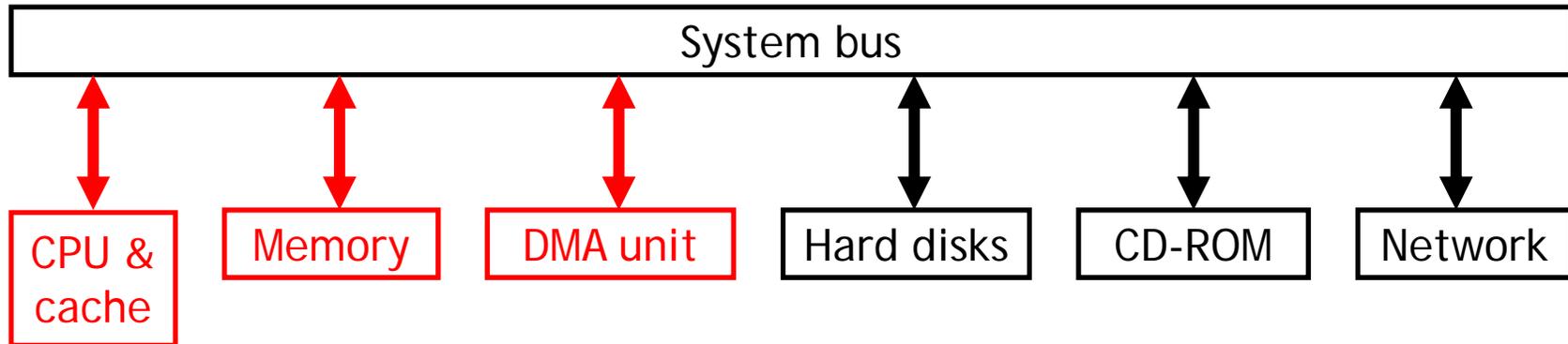
Direct memory access

- One final method of data transfer is to introduce a **direct memory access**, or **DMA**, controller.
- The DMA controller is a simple processor which does most of the functions that the CPU would otherwise have to handle.
 - The CPU asks the DMA controller to transfer data between a device and main memory. After that, the CPU can continue with other tasks.
 - The DMA controller issues requests to the right I/O device, waits, and manages the transfers between the device and main memory.
 - Once finished, the DMA controller interrupts the CPU.



(Flowchart again.)

Main memory problems



- As you might guess, there are some complications with DMA.
 - Since both the processor and the DMA controller may need to access main memory, some form of arbitration is required.
 - If the DMA unit writes to a memory location that is also contained in the cache, the cache and memory could become inconsistent.