

In-order vs. Out-of-order Execution

In-order instruction execution

- instructions are fetched, executed & committed in compiler-generated order
 - if one instruction stalls, all instructions behind it stall
- instructions are **statically scheduled** by the hardware
 - scheduled in compiler-generated order
 - how many of the next n instructions can be issued, where n is the superscalar issue width
 - superscalars can have structural & data hazards within the n instructions
- advantage of in-order instruction scheduling: simpler implementation
 - faster clock cycle
 - fewer transistors
 - lower power
 - faster design/development/debug time

In-order vs. Out-of-order Execution

Out-of-order instruction execution

- instructions are fetched in compiler-generated order
- instruction commit is in-order (today) or out-of-order (older computers)
- in between they may be executed in some other order
- instructions are **dynamically scheduled** by the hardware
 - hardware decides in what order instructions can be executed
 - instructions behind a stalled instruction can pass it if not dependent upon it
- advantages: higher performance
 - better at hiding latencies, less processor stalling
 - higher utilization of functional units

In-order instruction issue

(at least) 2 styles of static instruction scheduling

- dispatch buffer & instruction slotting (Alpha 21164)
- shift register model (UltraSPARC-1)

In-order instruction issue: Alpha 21164

Instruction slotting

- can issue up to 4 instructions
 - completely empty the instruction buffer before filling it again
 - compiler can pad with `nops` so a conflicting instruction is issued with the following instructions, not alone

21164 Instruction Unit Pipeline

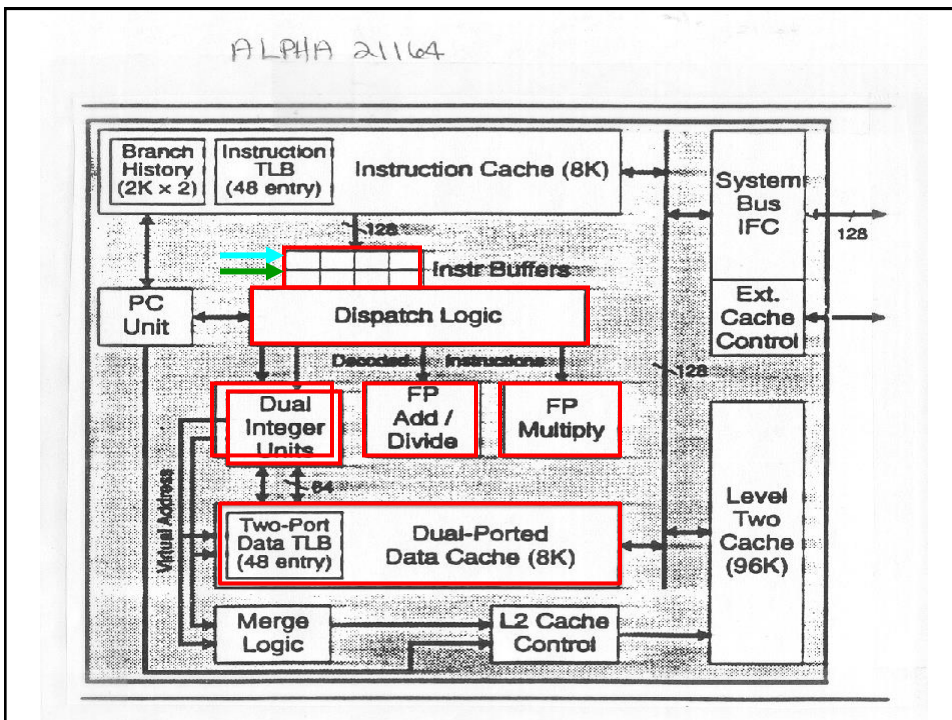
Fetch & issue

- S0:** instruction fetch
branch prediction bits read
- S1:** opcode decode
target address calculation
if predict taken, redirect the fetch
- S2: instruction slotting:** decide which of the next 4 instructions can be issued
 - intra-cycle structural hazard check
 - intra-cycle data hazard check
- S3: instruction dispatch**
 - inter-cycle load-use hazard check
 - register read

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In-order instruction issue: UltraSparc 1

Shift register model

- can issue up to 4 instructions per cycle
- shift in new instructions after every group of instructions is issued