Chapter Six
Pipelining
Pipelining

• Improve performance by increasing instruction throughput

Ideal speedup is number of stages in the pipeline. Do we achieve this?
Pipelining

• What makes it easy
  – all instructions are the same length
  – just a few instruction formats
  – memory operands appear only in loads and stores

• What makes it hard?
  – structural hazards: suppose we had only one memory
  – control hazards: need to worry about branch instructions
  – data hazards: an instruction depends on a previous instruction

• We’ll build a simple pipeline and look at these issues

• We’ll talk about modern processors and what really makes it hard:
  – exception handling
  – trying to improve performance with out-of-order execution, etc.
Basic Idea

- What do we need to add to actually split the datapath into stages?
Can you find a problem even if there are no dependencies?
What instructions can we execute to manifest the problem?
Corrected Datapath
Graphically Representing Pipelines

- Can help with answering questions like:
  - how many cycles does it take to execute this code?
  - what is the ALU doing during cycle 4?
  - use this representation to help understand datapaths
Pipeline control

• We have 5 stages. What needs to be controlled in each stage?
  – Instruction Fetch and PC Increment
  – Instruction Decode / Register Fetch
  – Execution
  – Memory Stage
  – Write Back

• How would control be handled in an automobile plant?
  – a fancy control center telling everyone what to do?
  – should we use a finite state machine?
Pipeline Control

- Pass control signals along just like the data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Execution/Address Calculation stage control lines</th>
<th>Memory access stage control lines</th>
<th>stage control lines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reg Dst</td>
<td>ALU Op1</td>
<td>ALU Op0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-format</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lw</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sw</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beq</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Datapath with Control
Dependencies

- Problem with starting next instruction before first is finished
  – dependencies that “go backward in time” are data hazards
Software Solution

- Have compiler guarantee no hazards
- Where do we insert the “nops”?

```
sub $2, $1, $3
and $12, $2, $5
or $13, $6, $2
add $14, $2, $2
sw $15, 100($2)
```

- Problem: this really slows us down!
Forwarding

- Use temporary results, don’t wait for them to be written
  - register file forwarding to handle read/write to same register
  - ALU forwarding

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what if this $2 was $13?
Forwarding
Can't always forward

- Load word can still cause a hazard:
  - an instruction tries to read a register following a load instruction that writes to the same register.

  
  
  

  Time (in clock cycles)
  ![](image)

  
  
  

  - Thus, we need a hazard detection unit to “stall” the load instruction
Stalling

- We can stall the pipeline by keeping an instruction in the same stage

Program execution order (in instructions)

- `lw $2, 20($1)`
- `and $4, $2, $5`
- `or $8, $2, $6`
- `add $9, $4, $2`
- `slt $1, $6, $7`
Hazard Detection Unit

- Stall by letting an instruction that won’t write anything go forward
Branch Hazards

- When we decide to branch, other instructions are in the pipeline!

- We are predicting “branch not taken”
  - need to add hardware for flushing instructions if we are wrong
Flush Instructions
Improving Performance

• Try and avoid stalls! E.g., reorder these instructions:

```plaintext
lw $t0, 0($t1)
lw $t2, 4($t1)
sw $t2, 0($t1)
sw $t0, 4($t1)
```

• Add a “branch delay slot”
  – the next instruction after a branch is always executed
  – rely on compiler to “fill” the slot with something useful

• Superscalar: start more than one instruction in the same cycle
Dynamic Scheduling

- The hardware performs the “scheduling”
  - hardware tries to find instructions to execute
  - out of order execution is possible
  - speculative execution and dynamic branch prediction
- All modern processors are very complicated
  - DEC Alpha 21264: 9 stage pipeline, 6 instruction issue
  - PowerPC and Pentium: branch history table
  - Compiler technology important

- This class has given you the background you need to learn more