

Jump Code

The JVM code we generate for the following if statement is quite simple and efficient.

```
if (B)
  A = 1;
else
  A = 0;

    iload 2 ; Push local #2 (B) onto stack
    ifeq L1 ; Goto L1 if B is 0 (false)
    iconst_1 ; Push literal 1 onto stack
    istore 1 ; Store stk top into local #1(A)
    goto L2 ; Skip around else part
L1: iconst_0 ; Push literal 0 onto stack
    istore 1 ; Store stk top into local #1(A)
L2:
```

In contrast, the code generated for

```
if (F == G)
  A = 1;
else
  A = 0;
```

(where F and G are local variables of type integer) is significantly more complex:

```
    iload 4 ; Push local #4 (F) onto stack
    iload 5 ; Push local #5 (G) onto stack
    if_icmpeq L1 ; Goto L1 if F == G
    iconst_0 ; Push 0 (false) onto stack
    goto L2 ; Skip around next instruction
L1:
    iconst_1 ; Push 1 (true) onto the stack
L2:
    ifeq L3 ; Goto L3 if F==G is 0 (false)
    iconst_1 ; Push literal 1 onto stack
    istore 1 ; Store top into local #1(A)
    goto L4 ; Skip around else part
L3:
    iconst_0 ; Push literal 0 onto stack
    istore 1 ; Store top into local #1(A)
L4:
```

The problem is that in the JVM relational operators don't store a boolean value (0 or 1) onto the stack. Rather, instructions like `if_icmpeq` do a *conditional branch*.

So we branch to a push of 0 or 1 just so we can test the value and do a *second* conditional branch to the else part of the conditional.

Why did the JVM designers create such an odd way of evaluating relational operators?

A moment's reflection shows that we rarely actually *want* the value of a relational or logical expression. Rather, we usually

only want to do a conditional branch based on the expression's value in the context of a conditional or looping statement.

Jump code is an alternative representation of boolean values. Rather than placing a boolean value directly on the stack, we generate a conditional branch to either a **true label** or a **false label**. These labels are defined at the places where we wish execution to proceed once the boolean expression's value is known.

Returning to our previous example, we can generate **F==G** in jump code form as

```
iload 4      ; Push local #4 (F) onto stack
iload5      ; Push local #5 (G) onto stack
if_icmpne L1 ; Goto L1 if F != G
```

The label **L1** is the “false label.” We branch to it if the expression **F == G** is false; otherwise, we fall through, executing the code that follows. We can then generate the then part, defining **L1** at the point where the else part is to be computed. The code we generate is

```
iload 4      ; Push local #4 (F) onto stack
iload5      ; Push local #5 (G) onto stack
if_icmpne L1 ; Goto L1 if F != G
iconst_1    ; Push literal 1 onto stack
istore 1    ; Store top into local #1(A)
goto L2     ; Skip around else part
L1:
iconst_0    ; Push literal 0 onto stack
istore 1    ; Store top into local #1(A)
L2:
```

This instruction sequence is significantly shorter (and faster) than our original translation. Jump code is routinely used in ifs, whiles and fors where we wish to alter flow-of-control rather than compute an explicit boolean value.

Jump code comes in two forms, **JumpIfTrue** and **JumpIfFalse**.

In **JumpIfTrue** form, the code sequence does a conditional jump (branch) if the expression is true, and “falls through” if the expression is false.

Analogously, in **JumpIfFalse** form, the code sequence does a conditional jump (branch) if the expression is false, and “falls through” if the expression is true. We have two forms because different contexts prefer one or the other.

It is important to emphasize that even though jump code looks unusual, it is just an alternative representation of boolean values. We can convert

a boolean value on the stack to jump code by conditionally branching on its value to a true or false label.

Similarly, we convert from jump code to an explicit boolean value, by placing the jump code’s true label at a load of 1 and the false label at a load of 0.

SHORT-CIRCUIT EVALUATION

Our translation of the `&&` and `||` operators parallels that of all other binary operators: evaluate both operands onto the stack and then do an “and” or “or” operation.

But in C, C++, C#, Java (and most other languages), `&&` and `||` are handled specially.

These two operators are defined to work in “short circuit” mode. That is, if the left operand is sufficient to determine the result of the operation, the right operand *isn't evaluated*.

In particular `a&&b` is defined as **if a then b else false**.

Similarly `a || b` is defined as **if a then true else b**.

The conditional evaluation of the second operand isn't just an optimization—it's essential for correctness. For example, in `(a!=0)&&(b/a>100)` we would perform a division by zero if the right operand were evaluated when `a==0`.

Jump code meshes nicely with the short-circuit definitions of `&&` and `||`, since they are already defined in terms of conditional branches.

In particular if `exp1` and `exp2` are in jump code form, then we need generate *no further code* to evaluate `exp1&&exp2`.

To evaluate `&&`, we first translate `exp1` into `JumpIfFalse` form, followed by `exp2`. If `exp1` is false, we jump out of the whole expression. If `exp1` is true, we fall through to `exp2` and evaluate it. In this way, `exp2` is evaluated only when necessary (when `exp1` is true).

Similarly, once `exp1` and `exp2` are in jump code form, `exp1 || exp2` is easy to evaluate. We first translate `exp1` into `JumpIfTrue` form, followed by `exp2`. If `exp1` is true, we jump out of the whole expression. If `exp1` is false, we fall through to `exp2` and evaluate it. In this way, `exp2` is evaluated only when necessary (when `exp1` is false).

As an example, let's consider

```
if ((A>0) || (B<0 && C==10))
    A = 1;
else
    A = 0;
```

Assume **A**, **B** and **C** are all local integers, with indices of 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

We'll produce a **JumpIfFalse** translation, jumping to label **F** (the else part) if the expression is false and falling through to the then part if the expression is true.

Code generators for relational operators can be easily modified to produce both kinds of jump code—we can either jump if the relation holds

(**JumpIfTrue**) or jump if it doesn't hold (**JumpIfFalse**). We produce the following JVM code sequence which is quite compact and efficient.

```
iload 1      ; Push local #1 (A) onto stack
ifgt L1     ; Goto L1 if A > 0 is true
iload 2      ; Push local #2 (B) onto stack
ifge F      ; Goto F if B < 0 is false
iload 3      ; Push local #3 (C) onto stack
bipush 10   ; Push a byte immediate (10)
if_icmpne F ; Goto F if C != 10
L1:
  iconst_1   ; Push literal 1 onto stack
  istore 1   ; Store top into local #1(A)
  goto L2   ; Skip around else part
F:
  iconst_0   ; Push literal 0 onto stack
  istore 1   ; Store top into local #1(A)
L2:
```

First **A** is tested. If it is greater than zero, the control expression must be true, so we skip the rest of the expression and execute the then part.

Otherwise, we continue evaluating the control expression.

We next test **B**. If it is greater than or equal to zero, **B<0** is false, and so is the whole expression. We therefore branch to label **F** and execute the else part.

Otherwise, we finally test **C**. If **C** is not equal to 10, the control expression is false, so we branch to label **F** and execute the else part.

If **C** is equal to 10, the control expression is true, and we fall through to the then part.