Runtime Access to Variables
Roadmap

Last Time
– Parameter passing strategies

This time
– How do we deal with variables and scope
– How do we store variables on stack
We mostly worry about 3 flavors

– Local
  • Declared and used in the same function
  • Further divided into “block” scope in your language

– Global
  • Declared at the outermost level of the program

– Non-local
  • For static scope: variables declared in an outer nested sub-program
  • For dynamic scope: variables declared in the calling context
Local variables: Examples

What are the local variables here?

```c
int fun(int a, int b){
    int c;
    c = 1;
    if (a == 0){
        int d;
        d = 4;
    }
}
```
How do we access the Stack?

Need a little MIPS knowledge
– Full tutorial next week
– General anatomy of a MIPS instruction

opcode Operand1 Operand2
How do we access the Stack?

Use “load” and “store” instructions

– Recall that every memory cell has an address

– Calculate that memory address, then move data from/to that address
Basic memory operations

`lw register memoryAddress`

`sw register memoryAddress`
Load Word Example

Opcode register memory address

lw $t1, -20($fp)

General purpose register (4 bytes)

Address of the Frame pointer

Load word (4 bytes)

offset
Load Word in Action

lw $t1, -8($fp)
Store Word in Action

```
sw $t1, 0($fp)
```

Diagram showing the memory layout with addresses 0x3f0 to 0x3fc and a 4-byte storage area.
Relative Access for Locals

Why do we access locals from $fp?
– That’s where the activation record starts

What if we used $sp instead?
Simple Memory-Allocation Scheme

Reserve a slot for each variable in the function

```c
int test (int x, int y){
    int a, b;
    if (x){
        int s;
    } else {
        int t, u, v;
        u = b + y;
    }
}
```

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0x3d4</td>
<td>(v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0x3dc</td>
<td>(y)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0x3e0</td>
<td>(u)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0x3e4</td>
<td>(t)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0x3e8</td>
<td>(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0x3ec</td>
<td>(b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0x3f0</td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0x3f4</td>
<td>(control link)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0x3f8</td>
<td>(return addr)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0x3fc</td>
<td>(y)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0x400</td>
<td>(x)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$sp$ 0x3d4
$fp$ 0x400
Simple Memory-Allocation Algorithm

For each function
Set offset = 0
for each parameter
    add name to symbol table
    offset -= size of parameter
offset -= size of return address
offset -= size of control link
offset -= size of callee saved registers
for each local
    add name to symbol table
    offset -= size of variable
Simple Memory-Allocation Implementation

Add an offset field to each symbol table entry

During name analysis, add the offset along with the name (Wait until Project 6 to do this)

Walk the AST performing decrements at each declaration node
Algorithm Example

```c
int test (int x, int y){
    int a, b;
    if (x){
        int s;
    }
    else {
        int t, u, v;
        u = b + y;
    }
}
```
Handling Global Variables

In a sense, globals easier to handle than locals
- Space allocated directly at compile time instead of indirectly via \$fp and \$sp registers
- Never needs to be deallocated
Place in static data area
- In MIPS, handling with a special storage directive
- Variables referred to by name, not by address
Memory Region Example

.data

_x: .word 10
_y: .byte 1
_z: .asciiz "I am a string"

.text

lw $t0, _x  # Load from x into $t0
sw $t0, _x  # Store from $to into x
Accessing non-local variables

Static scope
– Variable declared in one procedure and accessed in a nested one

Dynamic scope
– Any variable use not locally declared
Static non-local scope example

Each function has its own AR
– Inner function accesses the outer AR

```cpp
function main(){
    int a = 0;
    function subprog(){
        a = a + 1;
    }
}
```
Static non-local scope memory access

void procA(){  // level 1
    int x, y;
    void procB(){ // level 2
        void procC(){ //level 3
            int z;
            void procD(){
                int x;
                x = z + y;
                procB();
            }
            x = 4;
            z = 2;
            procB();
            procD();
        }
        x = 3;
        y = 5;
    }
}
Access Links

Add an additional field to the AR

– Points to the locals area of the outer function
– Sometimes called the static link (since it refers to the static nesting)
How Access Links Work

We know how many *levels* to traverse statically

- Example: In nesting level 3 and the variable is in nesting level 1: go back access links

  \[(3 - 1) \text{ 2 levels}\]
Setting up access links

Using 1 access link

\[
\text{lw } \$t0, \ -4(\$fp) \\
\text{lw } \$t0, \ -12(\$t0)
\]

Where \$fp -4 is the location of the access link and the variable in the outer scope is at offset 12 from outer AR.

Using 2 access links

\[
\text{lw } \$t0, \ -4(\$fp) \\
\text{lw } \$t0, \ (\$t0) \\
\text{lw } \$t0, \ -12(\$t0)
\]
Thinking about access links

We know the variable we want to access statically
Why don’t we just index into the parent’s AR using a large positive offset from $fp?

```
lw $t0 38($fp)
```
Displays

High-level idea:
- Keep the transitive effects of multiple access link traversals
- Uses a side-table of this info

Tradeoffs vs Access Links?
- Faster to call far up the hierarchy
- Takes extra space
Questions about Static Scope?
Dynamic non-local scope example

```javascript
function main(){
    a = 0;
    fun();
}

function fun(){
    a = a + 1;
}
```
Dynamic Scope Storage

Key point
– We don’t know *which* non-local variable we are referring to

Two ways to set up dynamic access
1. Deep Access – somewhat similar to Access links
2. Shallow Access – somewhat similar to displays
Deep Access

If the variable isn’t local
– Follow the control link to the caller’s AR
– Check to see if it defines the variable
– If not, follow the next control link down the stack

Note that we somehow need to know if a variable is defined *by name* in an AR
– Usually means we’ll have to associate a name with a stack slot
Shallow Access

Keep a table with an entry for each variable declaration
– Compile a direct reference to that entry
– At a function call
  • Save all locals in the caller’s AR
  • Restore locals when the callee is finished
Roadmap

We learned about variable access
– Local vs global variables
– Static vs dynamic scopes

Next time
– We’ll start getting into the details of MIPS
– Code generation