

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN-MADISON  
Computer Sciences Department

CS 537  
Introduction to Operating Systems

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# VIRTUALIZING MEMORY: FASTER WITH TLBS

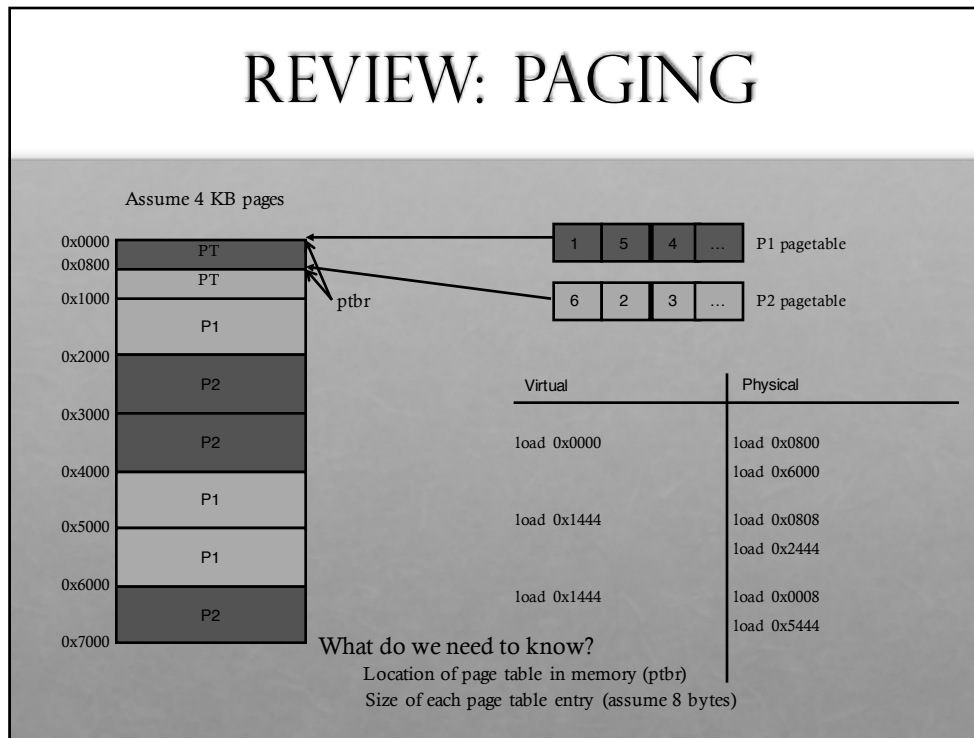
## Questions answered in this lecture:

- Review paging...
- How can page translations be made faster?
- What is the basic idea of a TLB (Translation Lookaside Buffer)?
- What types of workloads perform well with TLBs?
- How do TLBs interact with context-switches?

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

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- Project 2: Available now
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  - Can work with project partner in your discussion section (unofficial)
  - Two parts:
    - Linux: Shell – fork() and exec(), file redirection, history
    - Xv6: Scheduler – simplistic MLFQ
    - Two discussion videos again; watch early and often!
  - **Fill out form on course web page if you would like project partner assigned (5:35 Wed)**
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- Reading for today: Chapter 19

# REVIEW: PAGING



# REVIEW: PAGING PROS AND CONS

## Advantages

- No external fragmentation
  - don't need to find contiguous RAM
- All free pages are equivalent
  - Easy to manage, allocate, and free pages

## Disadvantages

- Page tables are too big
  - Must have one entry for every page of address space
- Accessing page tables is too slow [today's focus]
  - Doubles number of memory references per instruction

## TRANSLATION STEPS

H/W: for each mem reference:

- (cheap) 1. extract **VPN** (virt page num) from **VA** (virt addr)
- (cheap) 2. calculate addr of **PTE** (page table entry)
- (expensive) 3. read **PTE** from memory
- (cheap) 4. extract **PFN** (page frame num)
- (cheap) 5. build **PA** (phys addr)
- (expensive) 6. read contents of **PA** from memory into register

Which steps are expensive?

Which expensive step will we avoid in today's lecture?

- 3) Don't always have to read PTE from memory!

## EXAMPLE: ARRAY ITERATOR

	What virtual addresses?	What physical addresses?
<code>int sum = 0;</code>		
<code>for (i=0; i&lt;N; i++){</code>	<code>load 0x3000</code>	<code>load 0x100C</code>
<code>sum += a[i];</code>	<code>load 0x3004</code>	<code>load 0x7000</code>
<code>}</code>	<code>load 0x3008</code>	<code>load 0x100C</code>
Assume 'a' starts at 0x3000	<code>load 0x300C</code>	<code>load 0x7004</code>
Ignore instruction fetches	...	<code>load 0x100C</code>
		<code>load 0x700C</code>

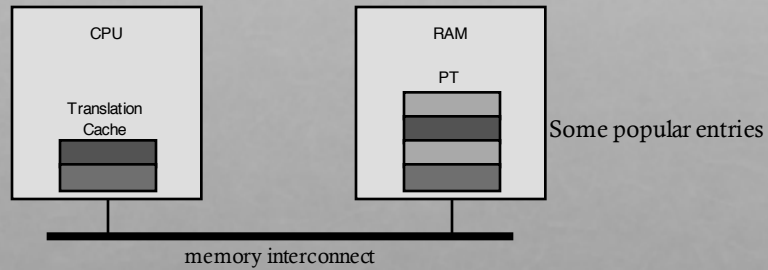
Aside: What can you infer?

- ptbr: 0x1000; PTE 4 bytes each
- VPN 3 -> PPN 7

Observation:

Repeatedly access same PTE because program repeatedly accesses same virtual page

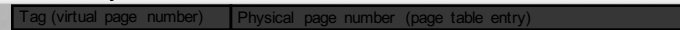
# STRATEGY: CACHE PAGE TRANSLATIONS



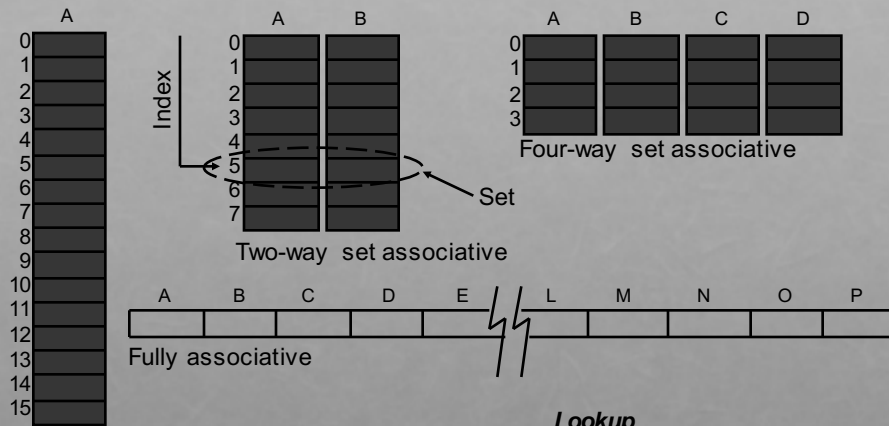
TLB: **T**ranslation **L**ookaside **B**uffer  
 (yes, a poor name!)

# TLB ORGANIZATION

TLB Entry



Various ways to organize a 16-entry TLB (artificially small)



**Lookup**

- Calculate set ( $\text{tag} \% \text{num\_sets}$ )
- Search for tag within resulting set

## TLB ASSOCIATIVITY TRADE-OFFS

### Higher associativity

- + Better utilization, fewer collisions
- Slower
- More hardware

### Lower associativity

- + Fast
- + Simple, less hardware
- Greater chance of collisions

TLBs usually fully associative

## ARRAY ITERATOR (W/ TLB)

```
int sum = 0;
for (i = 0; i < 2048; i++){
    sum += a[i];
}
```

Assume following virtual address stream:

load 0x1000

load 0x1004

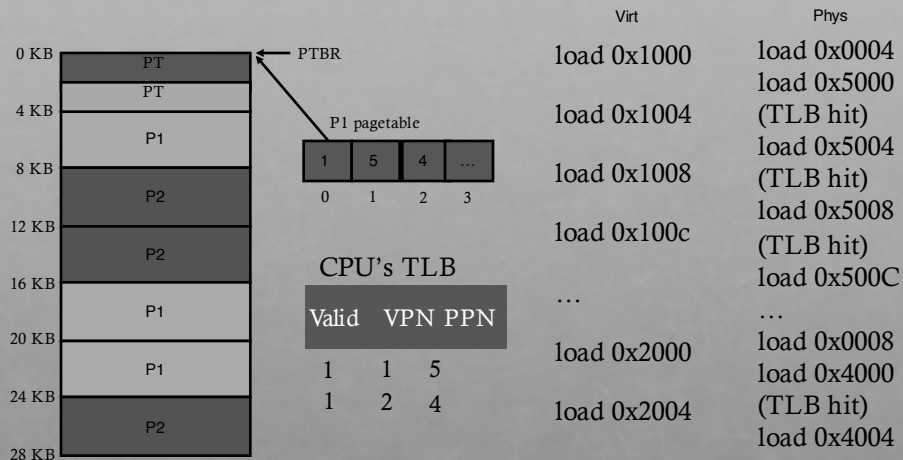
load 0x1008

load 0x100C

...

What will TLB behavior look like?

## TLB ACCESSES: SEQUENTIAL EXAMPLE



## PERFORMANCE OF TLB?

Calculate miss rate of TLB for data:

# TLB misses / # TLB lookups

# TLB lookups?

= number of accesses to a = 2048

```
int sum = 0;
for (i=0; i<2048; i++) {
    sum += a[i];
}
```

# TLB misses?

= number of unique pages accessed  
 = 2048 / (elements of 'a' per 4K page)  
 = 2K / (4K / sizeof(int)) = 2K / 1K  
 = 2

Miss rate?

$2/2048 = 0.1\%$

Hit rate? (1 - miss rate)

99.9%

Would hit rate get better or worse with smaller pages?

Worse

## TLB PERFORMANCE

How can system improve TLB performance (hit rate) given fixed number of TLB entries?

Increase page size

Fewer unique page translations needed to access same amount of memory

TLB Reach:

Number of TLB entries \* Page Size

## TLB PERFORMANCE WITH WORKLOADS

Sequential array accesses almost always hit in TLB

- Very fast!

What access pattern will be slow?

- Highly random, with no repeat accesses

# WORKLOAD ACCESS PATTERNS

Workload A

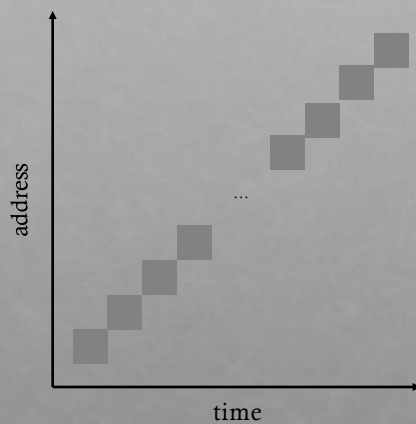
```
int sum = 0;
for (i=0; i<2048; i++) {
    sum += a[i];
}
```

Workload B

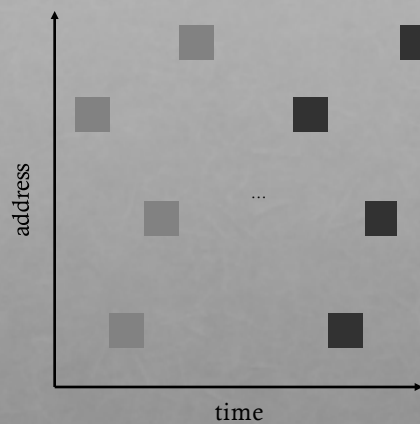
```
int sum = 0;
srand(1234);
for (i=0; i<1000; i++) {
    sum += a[rand() % N];
}
srand(1234);
for (i=0; i<1000; i++) {
    sum += a[rand() % N];
}
```

# WORKLOAD ACCESS PATTERNS

Spatial Locality  
Sequential Accesses



Temporal Locality  
Repeated Random Accesses





## WORKLOAD LOCALITY

**Spatial Locality:** future access will be to nearby addresses

**Temporal Locality:** future access will be repeats to the same data

What TLB characteristics are best for each type?

Spatial:

- Access same page repeatedly; need same vpn->ppn translation
- Same TLB entry re-used

Temporal:

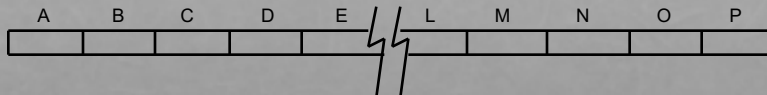
- Access same address near in future
- Same TLB entry re-used in near future
- How near in future? How many TLB entries are there?

## TLB REPLACEMENT POLICIES

**LRU:** evict Least-Recently Used TLB slot when needed  
(More on LRU later in policies next week)

**Random:** Evict randomly chosen entry

Which is better?



## LRU TROUBLES



Workload repeatedly accesses same offset across 5 pages (strided access)  
but only 4 TLB entries

What will TLB contents be over time?  
How will TLB perform?

## TLB REPLACEMENT POLICIES

**LRU:** evict Least-Recently Used TLB slot when needed  
(More on LRU later in policies next week)

**Random:** Evict randomly chosen entry

Sometimes random is better than a “smart” policy!

## TLB PERFORMANCE

How can system improve TLB performance (hit rate) given fixed number of TLB entries?

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Fewer unique translations needed to access same amount of memory)

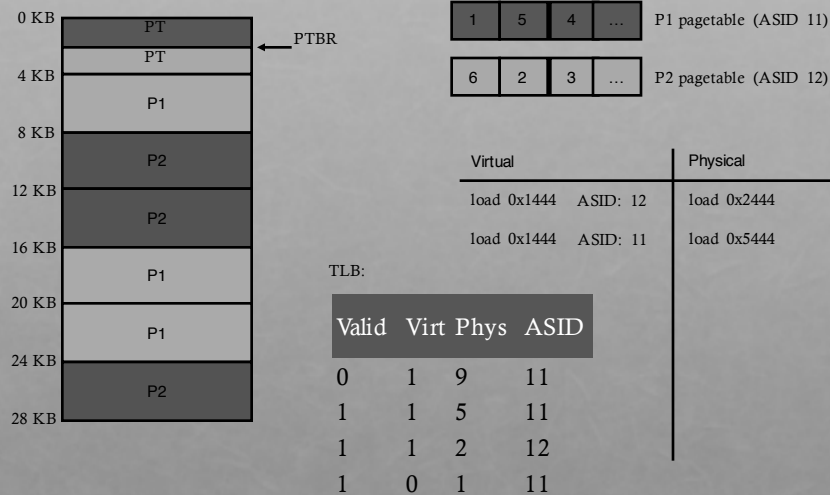
## CONTEXT SWITCHES

What happens if a process uses cached TLB entries from another process?

Solutions?

1. Flush TLB on each switch
  - Costly; lose all recently cached translations
2. Track which entries are for which process
  - Address Space Identifier
  - Tag each TLB entry with an 8-bit ASID
    - how many ASIDs do we get?
    - why not use PIDs?

## TLB EXAMPLE WITH ASID



## TLB PERFORMANCE

Context switches are expensive

Even with ASID, other processes “pollute” TLB

- Discard process A’s TLB entries for process B’s entries

Architectures can have multiple TLBs

- 1 TLB for data, 1 TLB for instructions
- 1 TLB for regular pages, 1 TLB for “super pages”

# HW AND OS ROLES

Who Handles TLB MISS? **H/W** or **OS**?

**H/W**: CPU must know where pagetables are

- CR3 register on x86
- Pagetable structure fixed and agreed upon between HW and OS
- HW “walks” the pagetable and fills TLB

**OS**: CPU traps into OS upon TLB miss

- “Software-managed TLB”
- OS interprets pagetables as it chooses
- Modifying TLB entries is privileged  
- otherwise what could process do?

Need same protection bits in TLB as pagetable

- rwx

# SUMMARY

- Pages are great, but accessing page tables for every memory access is slow
- Cache recent page translations → TLB
  - Hardware performs TLB lookup on every memory access
- TLB performance depends strongly on workload
  - Sequential workloads perform well
  - Workloads with temporal locality can perform well
  - Increase **TLB reach** by increasing page size
- In different systems, hardware or OS handles TLB misses
- TLBs increase cost of context switches
  - Flush TLB on every context switch
  - Add ASID to every TLB entry

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