

Some of the slides in this lecture are either from or adapted from slides provided by the authors of the textbook "Computer Systems: A Programmer's Perspective," 2nd Edition and are provided from the website of Carnegie-Mellon University, course 15-213, taught by Randy Bryant and David O'Hallaron in Fall 2010. These slides are indicated "Supplied by CMU" in the notes section of the slides.



These operations allow one to set a byte depending on the values of the condition codes.

Some of these conditions aren't all that obvious. Suppose we are comparing A with B (**cmpl** B,A). Thus the condition codes would be set as if we computed A-B. For signed arithmetic, If  $A \geq B$ , then the true result is non-negative. But some issues come up because of two's complement arithmetic with a finite word size. If overflow does not occur, then the sign flag should not be set. If overflow does occur (because A is positive, B is negative, and A-B is a large positive number that does not fit in an int), then even though the true result should have been positive, the actual result is negative. So, if both the sign flag and the overflow flag are not set, we know that  $A \ge B$ . If both flags are set, we know the true result of the subtraction is positive and thus A>=B. But if one of the two flags is set and the other isn't, then A must be less than B. Thus if  $\sim$ (SF $\sim$ OF) is 1, we know that A>=B. If ZF (zero flag) is set, we know that A==B. Thus for A>B, ZF is not set.

For unsigned arithmetic, if A>B, then subtracting B from A doesn't require a borrow and thus CF is not set; and since A is not equal to B,  $ZF$  is not set. If  $A < B$ , then subtracting B from A requires a borrow and thus CF is set.

The other cases can be worked out similarly.

## **Jumping**

#### • **jX instructions**

– **Jump to different part of program depending on condition codes**



Supplied by CMU.

See the notes for slide 28.



Supplied by CMU, but converted to x86-64.

The function computes the absolute value of the difference between its two arguments.



Supplied by CMU, but converted to x86-64.



C's conditional expression, as shown in the slide, is sometimes useful, but often results in really difficult-to-read code.

(There's an "International Obfuscated C Code Contest" (IOCCC) that awards prizes to those who use valid syntax to write the most difficult-to-understand implementations of simple functions. The conditional expression features prominently in winners' code. See https://www.ioccc.org/.)





Note that the condition codes are set as part of the execution of the **shrl** instruction.





Supplied by CMU.















Code very much like this appears in level three of the traps project.



Adapted from slide supplied by CMU to account for changes in gcc.

The translation is "approximate" because C doesn't have the notion of the target of a goto being a variable. But, if it did, then the translation is what we'd want!

**Otab** (for "offset table") is a table of relative address of the jump targets. The idea is, given a value of x, **Otab[x]** contains a reference to the code block that should be handled for that case in the switch statement (this code block is known as the **jump target**). These references are offsets from the address **Otab**. In other words, **Otab** is an address, if we add to it the offset of a particular jump target, we get the absolute address of that jump target.



Here's the assembler code obtained by compiling our C code in gcc with the  $-O1$ optimization flag (specifying that some, but not lots of optimization should be done). We explain this code in subsequent slides. The jump offset table starts at label .L4.

# **Assembler Code (2)**



### **Assembler Code Explanation (1)**



The first three instructions cause control to go to .L1 if the second argument (d) is less than 1. At .L1 is code that simply returns (with a return value of 0).

### **CS33 Intro to Computer Systems XII–22** Copyright © 2024 Thomas W. Doeppner. All rights reserved. **Assembler Code Explanation (2)** switch\_eg: movl \$0, %eax # return value set to 0 testq %rsi, %rsi # sets cc based on %rsi & %rsi jle .L1 # go to L1, where it returns 0 **cmpq \$12, %rdi # %rdi : 12 ja .L8 # go to L8 if %rdi > 12 or < 0** leaq .L4(%rip), %rdx movslq (%rdx,%rdi,4), %rax addq %rdx, %rax jmp \*%rax • **ja .L8** • **unsigned comparison, though m is signed!** • **jumps if %rdi > 12** • **also jumps if %rdi is negative**

The next two instructions simply check to make sure that %rdi (the first argument, m) is less than or equal to 12. If not, control goes to .L8, which sets the return value to 0 and returns. Of course, the return value (in %rax/%eax) is already zero, so setting it to zero again is unnecessary.

Note that we're using **ja** (jump if above), which is normally used after comparing unsigned values. The first argument, m, is a (signed) **long**. But if it is interpreted as an unsigned value, then if the leftmost bit (the sign bit) is set, it appears to be a very large unsigned value, and thus the jump is taken.



The table on the right is known as an **offset table**. Each line refers to the code to be executed for the corresponding value of m. Each entry in the table is a long (recall that in x86-64 assembler, long means 32 bits). The value of each entry is the difference between the address of the table (.L4) and the address of the code to be executed for a particular value of m (the other .L labels). Thus each entry is the distance (or offset) from the beginning of the table to the code for each case. Note that this offset will be negative, as explained below. It's assumed that the offset fits in a 32-bit signed quantity (which the system guarantees to be true.)

One might ask why we put 32-bit offsets in the table rather than 64-bit addresses. The reason is to reduce the size of these tables – if we used addresses, they'd be twice the size.

This table is not executable (it just contains offsets), but it should be treated as readonly – its contents will never change. The directive ".section .rodata" tells the assembler that we want this table to be located in memory that is read-only, but not executable. The directive at the end of the table (".text") tells the assembler that what follows is (again) executable code. This read-only, non-executable memory is located at a higher address than the executable code is (accept this as a fact for now, we'll see later why it is so). Thus the offsets in the table are negative.

The highlighted code on the left is what interprets the table, We examine it next.



The highlighted code makes use of an indirect jump instruction, indicated by having an asterisk before its register operand. The register contains an address, and the jump is made to the code at that address. Note that jump instructions that are not indirect have constants as their operands. We'll see later on that, because of this, indirect jumps are often much slower than non-indirect jumps.



The **leaq** instruction (load effective address, quad), performs an address computation, but rather than fetching the data at the address, it stores the address itself in %rdx.

What's unusual about the instruction is that it uses %rip (the instruction pointer) as the base register, and has a displacement that is a label. This is a special case for the assembler, which can compute the offset between the leaq instruction and the label, and use that value for the displacement field. Thus the instruction puts the address of the offset table (.L4) into %rdx.



The **movslq** instruction copies a long (32 bits) into a quad (64 bits), and does sign extension so as to preserve the sign of the value being copied.

%rdi contains m, the first argument, which is also the argument of the switch statement. We use it to index into the offset table: As we saw in the previous slide, %rdx contains the address of the table, whose entries are each 4 bytes long. Thus we use %rdi as an index register, with a scale factor of 4. The contents of that entry (which is the distance from the table to the code that should be executed to handle this case) is copied into %rax, using sign extension to fill the register.



The offset of the code we want to jump to is in %rax. To convert this offset into an absolute address, we need to add to it the address of the table. That's what the **addq** instruction does.

We can now do the indirect jump, to the address contained in %rax.





So, now that we know how switch statements are implemented, how might we "reverse engineer" object code to figure out the switch statement it implements?

Here we're running gdb on a program that contains a call to **switch\_eg**. We gave the command "layout asm" so that we can see the assembly listing at the top of the slide. We set a breakpoint at **switch\_eg**.

Assuming no knowledge of the original source code, we look at the code for **switch\_eg** and see an indirect jump instruction at switch\_eg+30, which is a definite indication that the C code contained a switch statement. We can see that %rdx contains the address of the offset table, and that %rax will be set to the entry in the table at the index given in %rdi. The contents of %rdx are added to %rax, thus causing %rax to point to the instruction the indirect jump will go to.

Note also that for **leaq** instructions in which the base register is %rip, gdb indicates (as a comment) what the computed address is  $(0 \times 55555556004$  in this case, which is the address of the offset table).

So, with all this in mind, after the breakpoint was reached, we issued the **stepi** (si) command 8 times so that we could see the values of all registers just before the indirect jmp. We then used the **x/14dw** gdb command to print 14 entries of a jump offset table starting at the address contained in %rdx. We had to guess how many entries there are – 14 seems reasonable in that it seems unlikely that a switch statement has more than 14 cases, though it might. We know that the table comes after the executable code, so the entries are negative. We see seven entries with values reasonably close to one another, while the remaining entry is very different, so we conclude that the jump table contains 13 entries.



The code for some case of the switch should come immediately after the **jmp** (what else would go there?!). So the smallest (most negative) offset in the jump offset table must be the offset for this first code segment. Thus offset -3711 corresponds to switch\_eg+32 in the assembly listing. It's at indices 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, and 12 of the table, so it's this code that's executed when the first argument of switch\_eg is 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, or 12.

Knowing this, we can figure out the rest. The slide contains all the code of switch\_eg from the indirect jump to the end of the function (and thus the code for all the cases of the switch statement).

## **Quiz 1**

**What C code would you compile to get the following assembler code?**





Here we revisit the slide we saw a few lectures ago, this time drawing it with high addresses at the top and low addresses at the bottom. The point is that a large amount of virtual memory is reserved for the stack. In most cases there's plenty of room for the stack and we don't have to worry about exceeding its bounds. However, if we do exceed its bounds (by accessing memory outside of what's been allocated), the program will get a seg fault.

Note that read-only data (such as the offset tables used for switch statements) is placed just above the executable code.





Stacks, as implemented on the X86 for most operating systems (and, in particular, Linux, OSX, and Windows) grow "downwards", from high memory addresses to low memory addresses. To avoid confusion, we will not use the works "top of stack" or "bottom of stack" but will instead use "stack begin" and "current stack end". The total amount of memory available for the stack is that between the beginning of the stack and the "stack limit". When the stack end reaches the stack limit, we're out of memory for the stack.



The stack-pointer register (%rsp) points to the last byte of the stack. Thus, with littleendian addressing, it points to the least-significant byte of the data item at the end of the stack. Thus, %rsp in the slide points to what's perhaps an 8-byte item at the end of the stack.



Here we execute **pushl** to push a 4-byte item onto the end of the stack. First %rsp is decremented by 4 bytes, then the item is copied into the 4-byte location now pointed to by %rsp.



Here we pop an item off the stack. The **popl** instruction copies the 4-byte item pointed to by %rsp into its argument, then increments %rsp by 4.



When a function is called (using the **call** instruction), the (8-byte) address of the instruction just after the **call** (the "return address") is pushed onto the stack. Then when the called function returns (via the **ret** instruction), the 8-byte address at the end of the stack (pointed to by %rsp) is copied into the instruction pointer (%rip), thus causing control to resume at the instruction following the original call.



Here we begin walking through what happens during a call and return.

Initially, <sup>%</sup> orip (the instruction pointer – what it points to is shown with a red arrow pointing to the right) points to the call instruction – thus it's the next instruction to be executed. %rsp (the stack pointer, shown with a green arrow pointing to the left) points to the current end of the stack. The actual values contained in the relevant registers are shown at the bottom of the slide (%rax isn't relevant yet, but will be soon!).



When the **call** instruction is executed, the address of the instruction after the **call** is pushed onto the stack. Thus %rsp is decremented by eight and 0x1004 is copied to the 8-byte location that is now at the end of the stack. The instruction pointer, %rip, now points to the first instruction of **func**.



Our function **func** puts its return value (6) into %rax, then executes the **ret** instruction. At this point, the address of the instruction following the **call** is at the end of the stack.



The address at the end of the stack (0x1004) is popped off the stack and into %rip. Thus execution resumes at the instruction following the **call** and %rsp is incremented by 8, The function's return value is in %rax, for access by its caller.