

# ECE 471 – Embedded Systems

## Lecture 13

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# Announcements

- Homework #2 grades finally posted
- Don't forget homework #4



# Homework #3 Review – Exit in Assembly

- Exit – value is an integer which goes into r0
- Note it is an integer, not ASCII
- Be sure to comment your code and fix any wrong comments



# Homework 3 – ARM32 vs THUMB2

- be sure to specify base!
- ARM32 –  $0x1048C - 0x1041c = 0x70 = 112$  bytes
- Thumb2 –  $0x1046C - 0x10414 = 0x58 = 88$  bytes  
On new compiler? nop/align at end? Some were getting 84
- Note it's bytes not bits. Also no need to divide by 4.  
Also each hex digit is a nibble
- Differences?
  - Thumb2 some instructions are 16-bit rather than 32-



bit

- Thumb2 different instructions (like movt/movw)



# Homework 3 – Code Density

- You need to run `strip` on this to see it. Why?  
Debug info, including extra thumb debug as well as the longer filename.
- You can use `readelf -a` and `readelf -s` to see the space the various segments take up.  
Look at executables, *\*not\** the C source code.
- Sizes



arch	unstripped	stripped
C arm32	11584	5544
C thumb2	11580	5548
asm arm32	1308	536
C static	493572	414820

- You would think THUMB2 would be much smaller, but the assembler makes some poor decisions about wide/narrow instructions.
- Reference my LL work
- C code is larger, but also remember to include the C



## library:

```
ls -lart /lib/arm-linux-gnueabi/libc-2.31.so  
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 1321488 Sep  8 09:17 /lib/arm-linux-gnueabi/libc-2.31.so
```

- There are embedded C libraries, musl, newlib, uclibc, which are much smaller and often used in embedded systems.





# Homework 3 – gdb

- crashes!
- have to use awful gdb interface
- line 9 is the crash
- the assembly is

```
ldr r3, [r3]
```

load byte from the 32-bit address pointed to by r3, store the resulting zero-extended byte into r3 (replacing the old value)

- if you look at src code or info assem you can see it's



dereferencing (following) a NULL (uninitialized) pointer, which is always a segfault on Linux

- Note in this particular case it's not an "off the end of the array" issue, but rather the array doesn't exist at all problem



# Homework 3 – Something Cool

- How would you convert `print_number` to hexadecimal?
- Is it easier to divide by 16 than 10? Especially w/o a divide instruction?
- Yes, shift and masks. Trick part is to special case 10 to 15 to be A to F

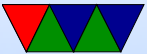


# Homework 3 – Linux Tools

- Debian Linux dropped “cal” from the default install, it’s now in the “ncal” package
- cal missing days
- Julian to Gregorian calendar.
- People sad who paid weekly but paid rent monthly.
- George Washington’s birthday
- Hunt for Red October
- Beware believing any page you google. Some urban legends / joke sites about this. If it were some sort of



programmer bug it would have been fixed years ago.



# Briefly reviewed Virtual Memory from Last Time



# Coding Directly for the Hardware

One way of developing embedded systems is coding to the raw hardware, as you did with the STM Discovery Boards in ECE271.

- Compile code
- Prepare for upload (hexbin?)
- Upload into FLASH
- Boots to offset



- Setup, flat memory (usually), stack at top, code near bottom, IRQ vectors
- Handle Interrupts
- Must do I/O directly (no drivers)  
Although if lucky, can find existing code.
- **Code is specific to the hardware you are on**





# Instead, one can use an Operating System



# Why Use an Operating System?

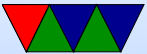
- Provides Layers of Abstraction
  - Abstract hardware: hide hardware differences. same hardware interface for classes of hardware (things like video cameras, disks, keyboards, etc) despite differing implementation details
  - Abstract software: with VM get linear address space, same system calls on all systems
- Other benefits:
  - Multi-tasking / Multi-user



- Security, permissions (Linus dial out onto /dev/hda)
- Common code in kernel and libraries, no need to re-invent
- Handle complex low-level tasks (interrupts, DMA, task-switching)
- Abstraction has a cost
  - Higher overhead (speed)
  - Higher overhead (memory)
  - Unknown timing
- What about other things?
  - Easy to code for? Provide examples



- Nice GUI interface? Sometimes



# What's included with an OS

- kernel / drivers (syscall barrier) – Linux definition
- also system libraries – Solaris definition
- low-level utils / software / GUI – Windows definition  
Web Browser included?
- Linux usually makes distinction between the OS Kernel and distribution. OSX/Windows usually doesn't.



# Bypassing Linux to hit hardware directly

- Linux does not support things like pullups, but people have written code that will poke the relevant bits directly.



# Bypassing Linux for speed

<http://codeandlife.com/2012/07/03/benchmarking-raspberry-pi-gpio-speed/>

Trying to generate fastest GPIO square wave.

shell	gpio util	40Hz
shell	sysfs	2.8kHz
Python	WiringPi	28kHz
Python	RPi.GPIO	70kHz
C	sysfs (vmw)	400kHz
C	WiringPi	4.6MHz
C	libbcm2835	5.4MHz
C	Rpi Foundation "Native"	22MHz



# Operating Systems Types

- Monolithic kernel – everything in one big address space. Something goes wrong, lose it all. Faster
- Microkernel – separate parts that communicate by message passing. can restart independently. Slower.
- Microkernels were supposed to take over the world. Didn't happen. (GNU Hurd?)
- Famous Torvalds (Linux) vs Tannenbaum (Minix) flamewar





# Common Desktop/Server Operating Systems

- Windows
- OSX
- Linux
- FreeBSD / NetBSD / OpenBSD
- UNIX (Irix/Solaris/AIX/etc.)
- BeOS/Haiku



# Embedded Operating Systems

- Microsoft WinCE, Windows Mobile
- Linux / Android
- VXworks – realtime OS, used on many space probes
- Apple iOS
- QNX – realtime microkernel UNIX-like OS, owned by Blackberry now
- Cisco iOS
- ThreadX – found in Pi GPU



# Embedded Linux Distributions

- linaro – consortium that work on ARM software
- openwrt – small distro initially designed for wireless routers
- yocto – Linux Foundation sponsored embedded distro
- maemo – embedded distro originally by Nokia (obsolete)
- MeeGo – continuation of maemo, also obsolete
- Tizen – Follow up on MeeGo, by Samsung and Intel
- Ångstrom – Merger of various projects
- And many others. It's very easy to put together a Linux



distribution

