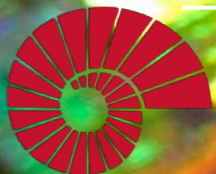


# COMP201

## Computer Systems & Programming

Lecture #14 – Introduction to x86-64 Assembly

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**KOÇ**  
**UNIVERSITY**

Aykut Erdem // Koç University // Fall 2023



# Recap

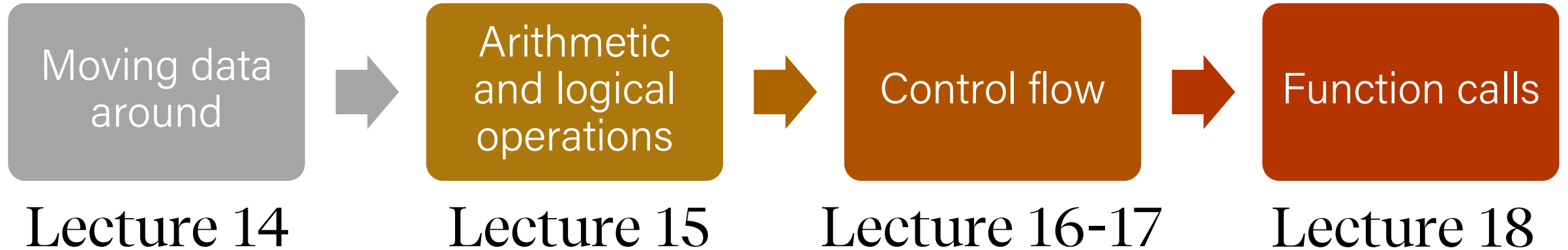
1. **Bits and Bytes** - *How can a computer represent numbers?*
2. **Chars and C-Strings** - *How can a computer represent and manipulate more complex data like text?*
3. **Pointers, Stack and Heap** - *How can we effectively manage all types of memory in our programs?*
4. **Generics** - *How can we use our knowledge of memory and data representation to write code that works with any data type?*
5. **Working with Multiple Files** - *What really happens in GCC? How to write your own Makefiles?*

# Course Overview

1. **Bits and Bytes** - *How can a computer represent numbers?*
  2. **Chars and C-Strings** - *How can a computer represent and manipulate more complex data like text?*
  3. **Pointers, Stack and Heap** - *How can we effectively manage all types of memory in our programs?*
  4. **Generics** - *How can we use our knowledge of memory and data representation to write code that works with any data type?*
  5. **Working with Multiple Files** - *What really happens in GCC? How to write your own Makefiles?*
- 
6. **Assembly** - *How does a computer interpret and execute C programs?*
  7. **The Memory Hierarchy** - *How to improve the performance of application programs by improving their temporal and spatial locality?*
  8. **Code Optimization** - *How write C code so that a compiler can then generate efficient machine code?*
  9. **Linking** - *How static and dynamic linking work?*
  10. **Heap Allocators** - *How do core memory-allocation operations like malloc and free work?*

COMP201 Topic 6: How does  
a computer interpret and  
execute C programs?

# Learning Assembly



# Learning Goals

- Learn what assembly language is and why it is important
- Become familiar with the format of human-readable assembly and x86
- Learn the **mov** instruction and how data moves around at the assembly level

# Plan for Today

- **Overview:** GCC and Assembly
- **Demo:** Looking at an executable
- Registers and The Assembly Level of Abstraction
- The **mov** instruction

**Disclaimer:** Slides for this lecture were borrowed from  
—Nick Troccoli's Stanford CS107 class

# Lecture Plan

- **Overview:** GCC and Assembly
- **Demo:** Looking at an executable
- Registers and The Assembly Level of Abstraction
- The **mov** instruction



# Bits all the way down

## Data representation so far

- Integer (unsigned `int`, 2's complement signed `int`)
- Floating Points (IEEE single (`float`) and double (`double`) precision)
- `char` (ASCII)
- Address (unsigned long)
- Aggregates (arrays, `structs`)

## The code itself is binary too!

- Instructions (machine encoding)

# GCC

- **GCC** is the compiler that converts your human-readable code into machine-readable instructions.
- C, and other languages, are high-level abstractions we use to write code efficiently. But computers don't really understand things like data structures, variable types, etc. Compilers are the translator!
- Pure machine code is 1s and 0s – everything is bits, even your programs! But we can read it in a human-readable form called **assembly**. (Engineers used to write code in assembly before C).
- There may be multiple assembly instructions needed to encode a single C instruction.
- We're going to go behind the curtain to see what the assembly code for our programs looks like.

# Lecture Plan

- Overview: GCC and Assembly
- **Demo:** Looking at an executable
- Registers and The Assembly Level of Abstraction
- The `mov` instruction

# Demo: Looking at an Executable (objdump -d)



# Our First Assembly

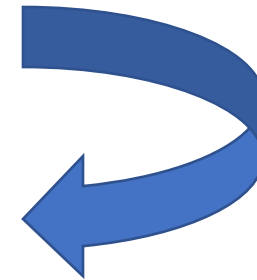
```
int sum_array(int arr[], int nelems) {  
    int sum = 0;  
    for (int i = 0; i < nelems; i++) {  
        sum += arr[i];  
    }  
    return sum;  
}
```

**What does this look like in assembly?**



# Our First Assembly

```
int sum_array(int arr[], int nelems) {  
    int sum = 0;  
    for (int i = 0; i < nelems; i++) {  
        sum += arr[i];  
    }  
    return sum;  
}
```



make  
objdump -d sum

**0000000004005b6 <sum\_array>:**

4005b6:	ba 00 00 00 00	mov	\$0x0,%edx
4005bb:	b8 00 00 00 00	mov	\$0x0,%eax
4005c0:	eb 09	jmp	4005cb <sum_array+0x15>
4005c2:	48 63 ca	movslq	%edx,%rcx
4005c5:	03 04 8f	add	(%rdi,%rcx,4),%eax
4005c8:	83 c2 01	add	\$0x1,%edx
4005cb:	39 f2	cmp	%esi,%edx
4005cd:	7c f3	j1	4005c2 <sum_array+0xc>
4005cf:	f3 c3	repz	retq

# Our First Assembly

00000000004005b6 <sum\_array>:

```
4005b6:    ba 00 00 00 00
4005bb:    b8 00 00 00 00
4005c0:    eb 09
4005c2:    48 63 ca
4005c5:    03 04 8f
4005c8:    83 c2 01
4005cb:    39 f2
4005cd:    7c f3
4005cf:    f3 c3
```

```
mov     $0x0,%edx
mov     $0x0,%eax
jmp     4005cb <sum_array+0x15>
movslq  %edx,%rcx
add     (%rdi,%rcx,4),%eax
add     $0x1,%edx
cmp     %esi,%edx
jl      4005c2 <sum_array+0xc>
repz   retq
```

# Our First Assembly

**0000000004005b6 <sum\_array>;**

This is the name of the function (same as C) and the memory address where the code for this function starts.

```
4005b6: 4a 00 00 00 00 00 mov     $0x0,%edx
4005bb: 49 00 00 00 00 00 mov     $0x0,%eax
4005c0: 48 00 00 00 00 00 pshlq  4005cb <sum_array+0x15>
4005c6: 47 00 00 00 00 00 vsiq   %edx,%rcx
4005cb: 46 00 00 00 00 00 d      (%rdi,%rcx,4),%eax
4005c8: 83 c2 01          add     $0x1,%edx
4005cb: 39 f2           cmp     %esi,%edx
4005cd: 7c f3          jl     4005c2 <sum_array+0xc>
4005cf: f3 c3          repz  retq
```

# Our First Assembly

0000000004005b6 <sum\_array>:

4005b6:	ba 00 00 00 00	mov	\$0x0,%edx
4005bb:	b8 00 00 00 00	mov	\$0x0,%eax
4005c0:	eb 09	jmp	4005cb <sum_array+0x15>
4005c2:	44 44 44 44 44	mov	0x44(4),%eax
4005c5:	00 00 00 00 00	mov	\$0,%eax
4005c8:	8b 00 00 00 00	mov	%eax,%eax
4005cb:	35 12	cmp	%eax,%edx
4005cd:	7c f3	j1	4005c2 <sum_array+0xc>
4005cf:	f3 c3	repz	retq

These are the memory addresses where each of the instructions live. Sequential instructions are sequential in memory.

# Our First Assembly

00000000004005b6 <sum\_array>:

4005b6: ba 00 00 00 00

4005bb: b8 00 00 00 00

4005c0: eb 09

This is the assembly code:  
"human-readable" versions of  
each machine code instruction.

4005c5: 59 12

4005cd: 7c f3

4005cf: f3 c3

```
mov    $0x0,%edx
mov    $0x0,%eax
jmp    4005cb <sum_array+0x15>
movslq %edx,%rcx
add    (%rdi,%rcx,4),%eax
add    $0x1,%edx
cmp    %esi,%edx
jl     4005c2 <sum_array+0xc>
repz  retq
```



# Our First Assembly

00000000004005b6 <sum\_array>:

```
4005b6:  ba 00 00 00 00
4005bb:  b8 00 00 00 00
4005c0:  eb 09
4005c2:  48 63 ca
4005c5:  03 04 8f
4005c8:  83 c2 01
4005cb:  39 f2
4005cd:  7c f3
4005cf:  f3 c3
```

This is the machine code: raw hexadecimal instructions, representing binary as read by the computer. Different instructions may be different byte lengths.

# Our First Assembly

00000000004005b6 <sum\_array>:


```
4005b6:    ba 00 00 00 00
4005bb:    b8 00 00 00 00
4005c0:    eb 09
4005c2:    48 63 ca
4005c5:    03 04 8f
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```

```
mov     $0x0,%edx
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jmp     4005cb <sum_array+0x15>
movslq  %edx,%rcx
add     (%rdi,%rcx,4),%eax
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cmp     %esi,%edx
jl      4005c2 <sum_array+0xc>
repz   retq
```

# Our First Assembly

**0000000004005b6 <sum\_array>:**

4005b6:	ba 00 00 00 00	mov	\$0x0,%edx
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4005c2:	48 63 ca	movslq	%edx,%rcx
4005c5:	03 04 8f	add	(%rdi,%rcx,4),%eax
<b>4005c8:</b>	<b>83 c2 01</b>	<b>add</b>	<b>\$0x1,%edx</b>
4005cb:	39 f2	cmp	%esi,%edx
4005cd:	7c f3	jle	4005c2 <sum_array+0xc>
4005cf:	f3 c3	repz	retq



Each instruction has an operation name ("opcode").

# Our First Assembly

**00000000004005b6 <sum\_array>:**

```
4005b6:  ba 00 00 00 00
4005bb:  b8 00 00 00 00
4005c0:  eb 09
4005c2:  48 63 ca
4005c5:  03 04 8f
4005c8:  83 c2 01
4005cb:  39 f2
4005cd:  7c f3
4005cf:  f3 c3
```

```
mov    $0x0,%edx
mov    $0x0,%eax
jmp    4005cb <sum_array+0x15>
movslq %edx,%rcx
add    (%rdi,%rcx,4),%eax
add    $0x1,%edx
cmp    %esi,%edx
jl     4005c2 <sum_array+0xc>
```


Each instruction can also have arguments ("operands").

# Our First Assembly

0000000004005b6 <sum\_array>:

```
4005b6:  ba 00 00 00 00
4005bb:  b8 00 00 00 00
4005c0:  eb 09
4005c2:  48 63 ca
4005c5:  03 04 8f
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4005cd:  7c f3
4005cf:  f3 c3
```

```
mov    $0x0,%edx
mov    $0x0,%eax
jmp    4005cb <sum_array+0x15>
movslq %edx,%rcx
add    (%rdi,%rcx,4),%eax
add    $0x1,%edx
cmp    %eax,%edx
jl     4005c2 <sum_array+0xc>
repz  retq
```



**`$(number)`** means a constant value, or “immediate” (e.g. 1 here).



# Our First Assembly

0000000004005b6 <sum\_array>:

```
4005b6:  ba 00 00 00 00
4005bb:  b8 00 00 00 00
4005c0:  eb 09
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```

```
mov    $0x0,%edx
mov    $0x0,%eax
jmp    4005cb <sum_array+0x15>
movslq %edx,%rcx
add    (%rdi,%rcx,4),%eax
add    $0x1,%edx
cmp    %esi,%edx
jl     4005c2 <sum_array+0xc>
repz  retq
```

**%[name]** means a register, a storage location on the CPU (e.g. edx here).

# Lecture Plan

- **Overview:** GCC and Assembly
- **Demo:** Looking at an executable
- **Registers and The Assembly Level of Abstraction**
- The **mov** instruction

# Assembly Abstraction

- C abstracts away the low-level details of machine code. It lets us work using variables, variable types, and other higher-level abstractions.
- C and other languages let us write code that works on most machines.
- Assembly code is just bytes! No variable types, no type checking, etc.
- Assembly/machine code is processor-specific.
- What is the level of abstraction for assembly code?

# Registers



`%rax`

# Registers



`%rax`



`%rsi`



`%r8`



`%r12`



`%rbx`



`%rdi`



`%r9`



`%r13`



`%rcx`



`%rbp`



`%r10`



`%r14`



`%rdx`



`%rsp`



`%r11`



`%r15`

# Registers

## What is a register?

A register is a fast read/write memory slot right on the CPU that can hold variable values.

Registers are **not** located in memory.

# Registers

- A **register** is a 64-bit space inside the processor.
- There are 16 registers available, each with a unique name.
- Registers are like “scratch paper” for the processor. Data being calculated or manipulated is moved to registers first. Operations are performed on registers.
- Registers also hold parameters and return values for functions.
- Registers are extremely *fast* memory!
- Processor instructions consist mostly of moving data into/out of registers and performing arithmetic on them. This is the level of logic your program must be in to execute!

# Machine-Level Code

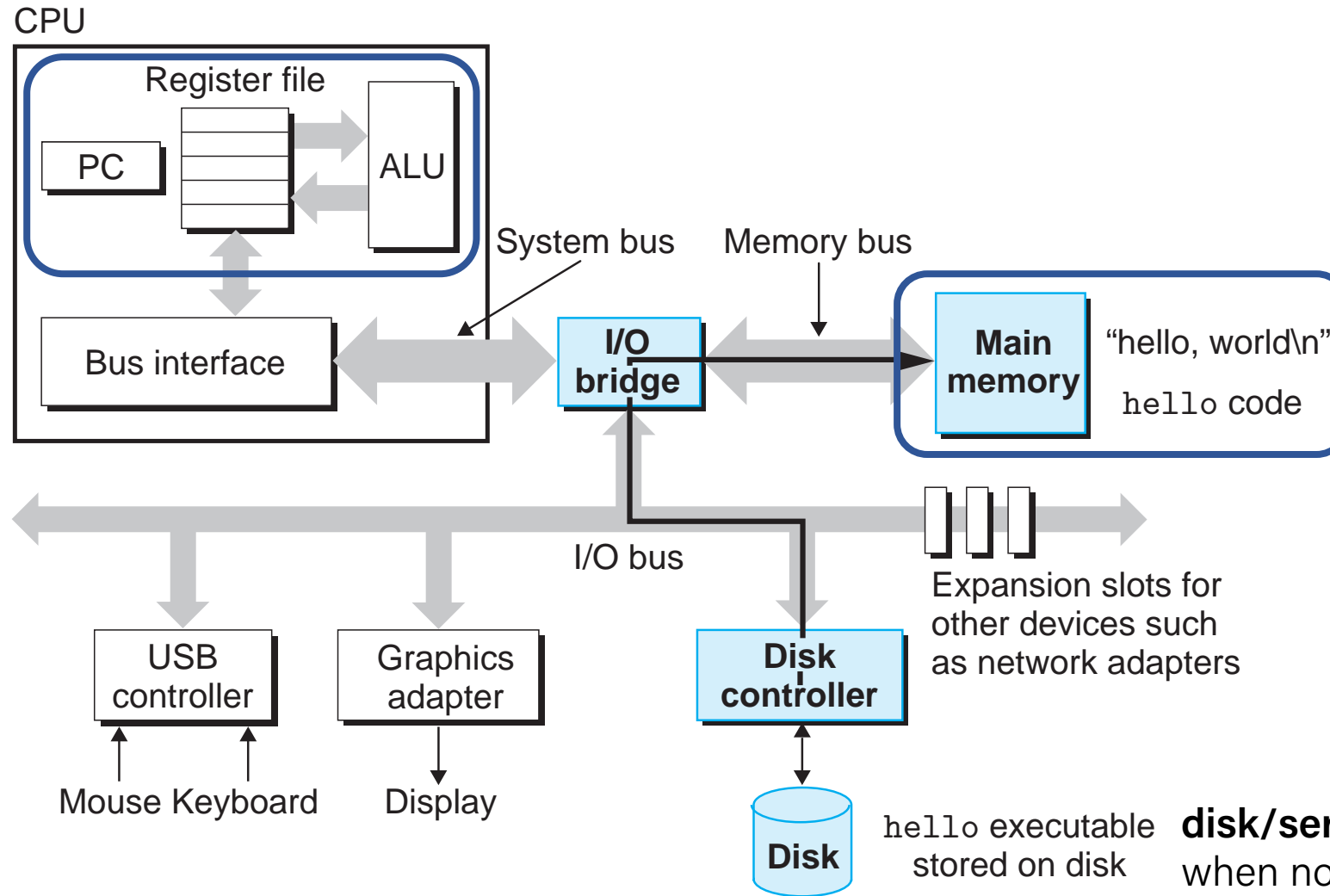
Assembly instructions manipulate these registers. For example:

- One instruction adds two numbers in registers
- One instruction transfers data from a register to memory
- One instruction transfers data from memory to a register



# Computer architecture

**registers** accessed by name  
**ALU** is main workhorse of CPU



**memory** needed for program execution (stack, heap, etc.) accessed by address

**disk/server** stores program when not executing

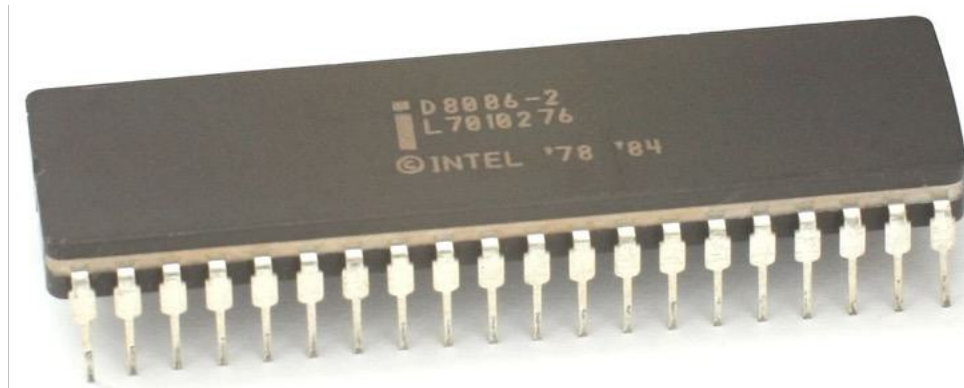
# GCC And Assembly

- GCC compiles your program – it lays out memory on the stack and heap and generates assembly instructions to access and do calculations on those memory locations.
- Here's what the “assembly-level abstraction” of C code might look like:

C	Assembly Abstraction
<b>int sum = x + y;</b>	<i>1) Copy x into register 1 2) Copy y into register 2 3) Add register 2 to register 1 4) Write register 1 to memory for sum</i>

# Assembly

- We are going to learn the **x86-64** instruction set architecture. This instruction set is used by Intel and AMD processors.
- There are many other instruction sets: ARM, MIPS, etc.



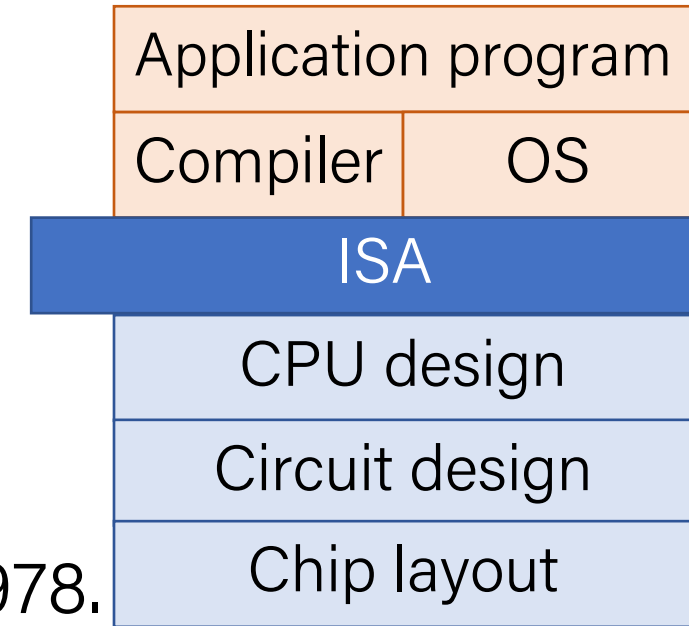
# Instruction set architecture (ISA)

A contract between program/compiler and hardware:

- Defines operations that the processor (CPU) can execute
- Data read/write/transfer operations
- Control mechanisms

Intel originally designed their instruction set back in 1978.

- Legacy support is a huge issue for x86-64
- Originally 16-bit processor, then 32 bit, now 64 bit. These design choices dictated the register sizes (and even register/instruction names).



# Lecture Plan

- **Overview:** GCC and Assembly
- **Demo:** Looking at an executable
- Registers and The Assembly Level of Abstraction
- The **mov** instruction

# mov

The **mov** instruction copies bytes from one place to another; it is similar to the assignment operator (=) in C.

**mov**            **src, dst**

The **src** and **dst** can each be one of:

- Immediate (constant value, like a number) (*only src*)

**\$0x104**

- Register

**%rbx**

- Memory Location  
(*at most one of **src**, **dst***)

Direct address

**0x6005c0**

# Operand Forms: Immediate

**mov**      **\$0x104,** \_\_\_\_\_



*Copy the value  
0x104 into some  
destination.*

# Operand Forms: Registers

**mov**

**%rbx, \_\_\_\_\_**

*Copy the value in register %rbx into some destination.*

**mov**

**\_\_\_\_\_, %rbx**

*Copy the value from some source into register %rbx.*



# Operand Forms: Absolute Addresses

**mov**      **0x104**, \_\_\_\_\_

*Copy the value at address 0x104 into some destination.*

**mov**      \_\_\_\_\_, **0x104**

*Copy the value from some source into the memory at address 0x104.*

# Practice #1: Operand Forms

What are the results of the following move instructions (executed separately)? For this problem, assume the value 5 is stored at address 0x42, and the value 8 is stored in %rbx.

1. **mov     \$0x42,%rax**     Move 0x42 into %rax
2. **mov     0x42,%rax**     Move 5 into %rax
3. **mov     %rbx,0x55**     Move 8 to address 0x55

# Operand Forms: Indirect

**mov**      **(%rbx), \_\_\_\_\_**

*Copy the value at the address stored in register %rbx into some destination.*

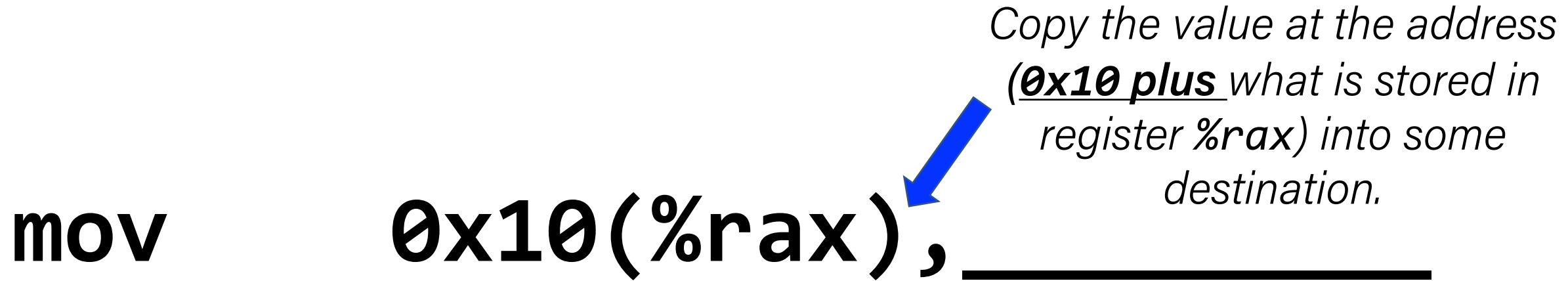
**mov**      **\_\_\_\_\_, (%rbx)**

*Copy the value from some source into the memory at the address stored in register %rbx.*

# Operand Forms: Base + Displacement

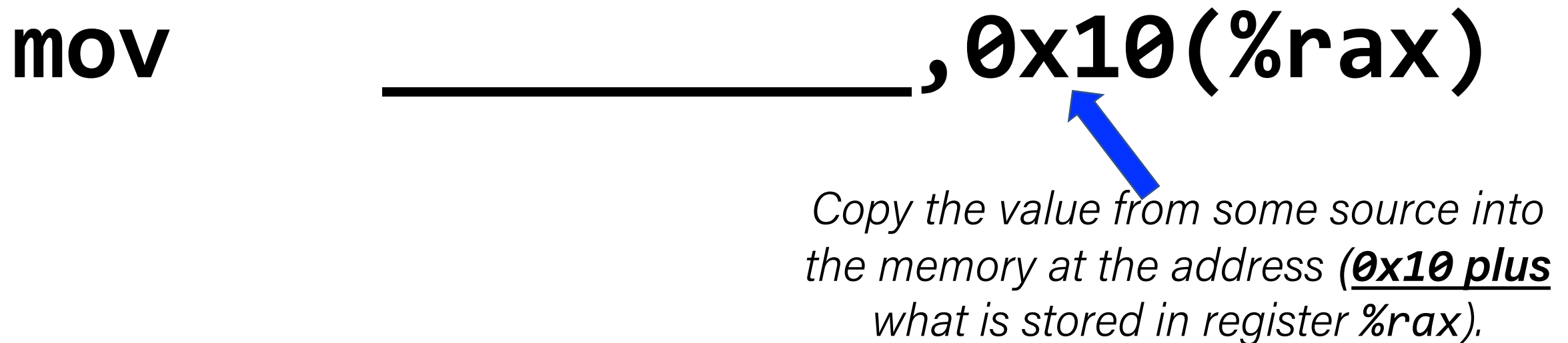
**mov**      **0x10(%rax),** \_\_\_\_\_

*Copy the value at the address (0x10 plus what is stored in register %rax) into some destination.*

A diagram illustrating the memory-to-register operand form of the mov instruction. The instruction is shown as 'mov 0x10(%rax), \_\_\_\_\_'. A blue arrow points from the explanatory text to the '0x10(%rax)' part of the instruction. The text explains that the value at the address (0x10 plus the value in register %rax) is copied into the destination.

**mov**      \_\_\_\_\_, **0x10(%rax)**

*Copy the value from some source into the memory at the address (0x10 plus what is stored in register %rax).*

A diagram illustrating the register-to-memory operand form of the mov instruction. The instruction is shown as 'mov \_\_\_\_\_, 0x10(%rax)'. A blue arrow points from the explanatory text to the '0x10(%rax)' part of the instruction. The text explains that the value from the source is copied into the memory at the address (0x10 plus the value in register %rax).

# Operand Forms: Indexed

*Copy the value at the address which is (the sum of the values in registers %rax and %rdx) into some destination.*

**mov**

**(%rax, %rdx), \_\_\_\_\_**

**mov**

**\_\_\_\_\_, (%rax, %rdx)**

*Copy the value from some source into the memory at the address which is (the sum of the values in registers %rax and %rdx).*

# Operand Forms: Indexed

*Copy the value at the address which is (the sum of **0x10 plus** the values in registers %rax and %rdx) into some destination.*

**mov**      **0x10(%rax,%rdx), \_\_\_\_\_**

**mov**      **\_\_\_\_\_, 0x10(%rax,%rdx)**

*Copy the value from some source into the memory at the address which is (the sum of **0x10 plus** the values in registers %rax and %rdx).*

# Practice #2: Operand Forms

What are the results of the following move instructions (executed separately)? For this problem, assume

the value `0x11` is stored at address `0x10C`,  
the value `0xAB` is stored at address `0x104`,  
`0x100` is stored in register `%rax` and `0x3` is stored in `%rdx`.

1. `mov $0x42, (%rax)`      Move `0x42` to memory address `0x100`
2. `mov 4(%rax), %rcx`      Move `0xAB` into `%rcx`
3. `mov 9(%rax,%rdx), %rcx`      Move `0x11` into `%rcx`

$\text{Imm}(r_b, r_i)$  is equivalent to address  $\text{Imm} + R[r_b] + R[r_i]$

**Displacement:** positive or negative constant (if missing, = 0)

**Base:** register (if missing, = 0)

**Index:** register (if missing, = 0)

# Operand Forms: Scaled Indexed

*Copy the value at the address which is (4 times the value in register %rdx) into some destination.*

**mov**      **(, %rdx, 4), \_\_\_\_\_**

**mov**      **\_\_\_\_\_, (, %rdx, 4)**

The scaling factor (e.g. 4 here) must be hardcoded to be either 1, 2, 4 or 8.

*Copy the value from some source into the memory at the address which is (4 times the value in register %rdx).*



# Operand Forms: Scaled Indexed

*Copy the value at the address which is (4 times the value in register `%rdx`, **plus 0x4**), into some destination.*

**mov**

**`0x4(, %rdx, 4), _____`**

**mov**

**`_____, 0x4(, %rdx, 4)`**

*Copy the value from some source into the memory at the address which is (4 times the value in register `%rdx`, **plus 0x4**).*

# Operand Forms: Scaled Indexed

Copy the value at the address which is (**the value in register %rax** plus 2 times the value in register %rdx) into some destination.

**mov**

**(%rax, %rdx, 2), \_\_\_\_\_**

**mov**

**\_\_\_\_\_, (%rax, %rdx, 2)**

Copy the value from some source into the memory at the address which is (**the value in register %rax** plus 2 times the value in register %rdx).

# Operand Forms: Scaled Indexed

*Copy the value at the address which is (**0x4 plus** the value in register %rax plus 2 times the value in register %rdx) into some destination.*

**mov**

**0x4(%rax,%rdx,2), \_\_\_\_\_**

**mov**

**\_\_\_\_\_, 0x4(%rax,%rdx,2)**

*Copy the value from some source into the memory at the address which is (**0x4 plus** the value in register %rax plus 2 times the value in register %rdx).*

# Most General Operand Form

**Imm( $r_b, r_i, s$ )**

*is equivalent to...*

**Imm + R[ $r_b$ ] + R[ $r_i$ ]\* $s$**

# Most General Operand Form

$\text{Imm}(r_b, r_i, s)$  is equivalent to  
address  $\text{Imm} + R[r_b] + R[r_i]*s$

**Displacement:**  
pos/neg constant  
(if missing, = 0)

**Base:** register  
(if missing, = 0)

**Index:** register  
(if missing, = 0)

**Scale** must be  
1,2,4, or 8  
(if missing, = 1)

# Memory Location Syntax

Syntax	Meaning
<code>0x104</code>	Address <code>0x104</code> (no <code>\$</code> )
<code>(%rax)</code>	What's in <code>%rax</code>
<code>4(%rax)</code>	What's in <code>%rax</code> , plus 4
<code>(%rax, %rdx)</code>	Sum of what's in <code>%rax</code> and <code>%rdx</code>
<code>4(%rax, %rdx)</code>	Sum of values in <code>%rax</code> and <code>%rdx</code> , plus 4
<code>(, %rcx, 4)</code>	What's in <code>%rcx</code> , times 4 (multiplier can be 1, 2, 4, 8)
<code>(%rax, %rcx, 2)</code>	What's in <code>%rax</code> , plus 2 times what's in <code>%rcx</code>
<code>8(%rax, %rcx, 2)</code>	What's in <code>%rax</code> , plus 2 times what's in <code>%rcx</code> , plus 8

# Operand Forms

Type	Form	Operand Value	Name
Immediate	\$Imm	Imm	Immediate
Register	$r_a$	$R[r_a]$	Register
Memory	Imm	$M[\text{Imm}]$	Absolute
Memory	$(r_a)$	$M[R[r_a]]$	Indirect
Memory	$\text{Imm}(r_b)$	$M[\text{Imm} + R[r_b]]$	Base + displacement
Memory	$(r_b, r_i)$	$M[R[r_b] + R[r_i]]$	Indexed
Memory	$\text{Imm}(r_b, r_i)$	$M[\text{Imm} + R[r_b] + R[r_i]]$	Indexed
Memory	$(, r_i, s)$	$M[R[r_i] \cdot s]$	Scaled indexed
Memory	$\text{Imm}(, r_i, s)$	$M[\text{Imm} + R[r_i] \cdot s]$	Scaled indexed
Memory	$(r_b, r_i, s)$	$M[R[r_b] + R[r_i] \cdot s]$	Scaled indexed
Memory	$\text{Imm}(r_b, r_i, s)$	$M[\text{Imm} + R[r_b] + R[r_i] \cdot s]$	Scaled indexed

**Figure 3.3 from the book: “Operand forms.** Operands can denote immediate (constant) values, register values, or values from memory. The scaling factor  $s$  must be either 1, 2, 4, or 8.”

# Practice #3: Operand Forms

What are the results of the following move instructions (executed separately)? For this problem, assume

the value `0x1` is stored in register `%rcx`,  
the value `0x100` is stored in register `%rax`,  
the value `0x3` is stored in register `%rdx`, and  
the value `0x11` is stored at address `0x10C`.

1. `mov $0x42,0xfc(,%rcx,4)`

Move `0x42` to memory address `0x100`

2. `mov (%rax,%rdx,4),%rbx`

Move `0x11` into `%rbx`

$\text{Imm}(r_b, r_i, s)$  is equivalent to  
address  $\text{Imm} + R[r_b] + R[r_i]*s$   
Displacement Base Index Scale  
(1,2,4,8)



# Goals of indirect addressing: C

Why are there so many forms of indirect addressing?

We see these indirect addressing paradigms in C as well!

# Our First Assembly

```
int sum_array(int arr[], int nelems) {
    int sum = 0;
    for (int i = 0; i < nelems; i++) {
        sum += arr[i];
    }
    return sum;
}
```

We're 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the way to understanding assembly!  
**What looks understandable right now?**

Some notes:

- Registers store addresses and values
- `mov src, dst` ***copies*** value into `dst`
- `sizeof(int)` is 4
- Instructions executed sequentially

**0000000004005b6 <sum\_array>:**

4005b6: ba 00 00 00 00

4005bb: b8 00 00 00 00

4005c0: eb 09

4005c2: 48 63 ca

4005c5: 03 04 8f

4005c8: 82 c2 01

mov \$0x0,%edx

mov \$0x0,%eax

jmp 4005cb <sum\_array+0x15>

movslq %edx,%rcx

add (%rdi,%rcx,4),%eax

add \$0x1,%edx

cmp %esi,%edx

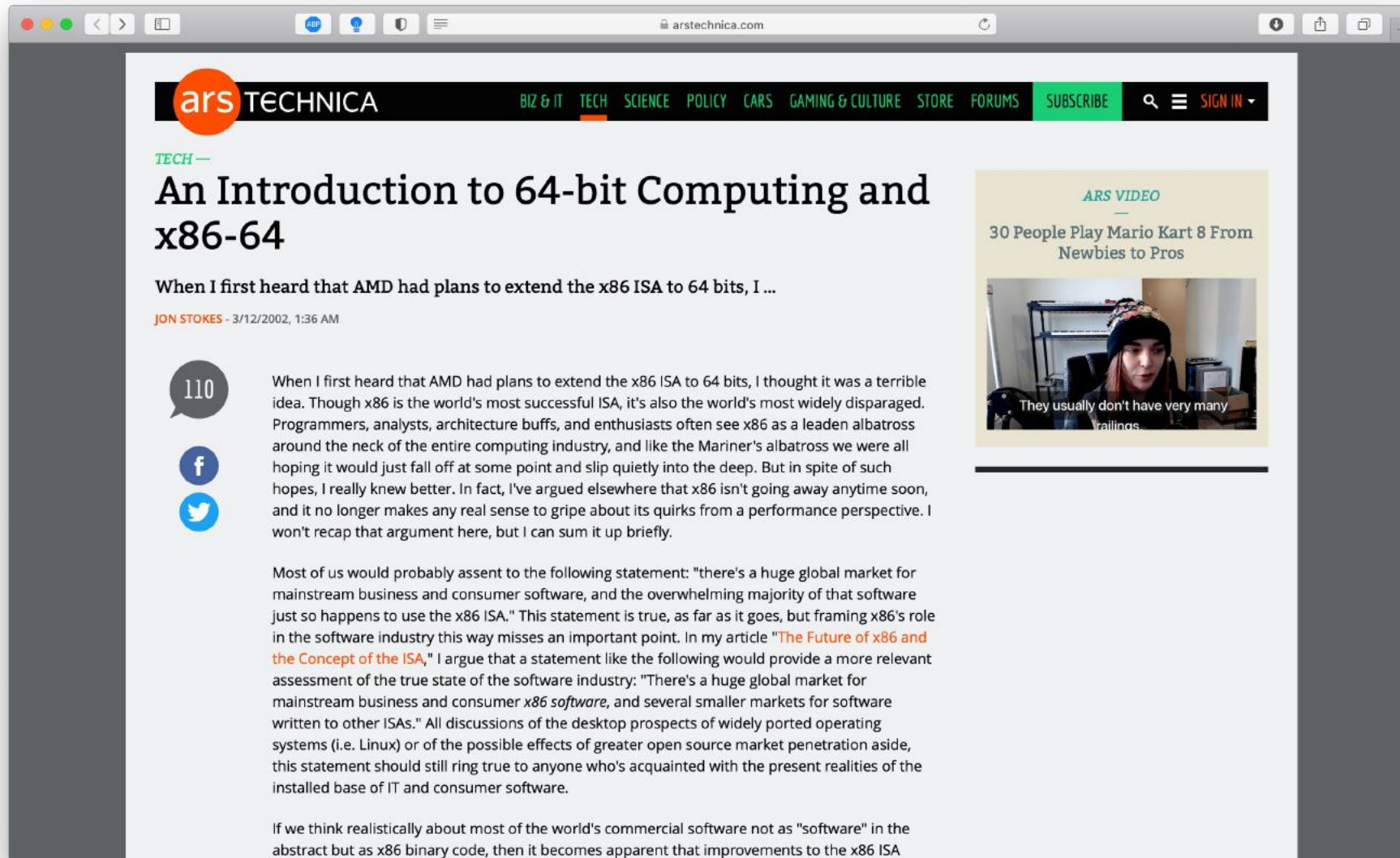
j1 4005c2 <sum\_array+0xc>

repz retq

We'll come back to this example in future lectures!



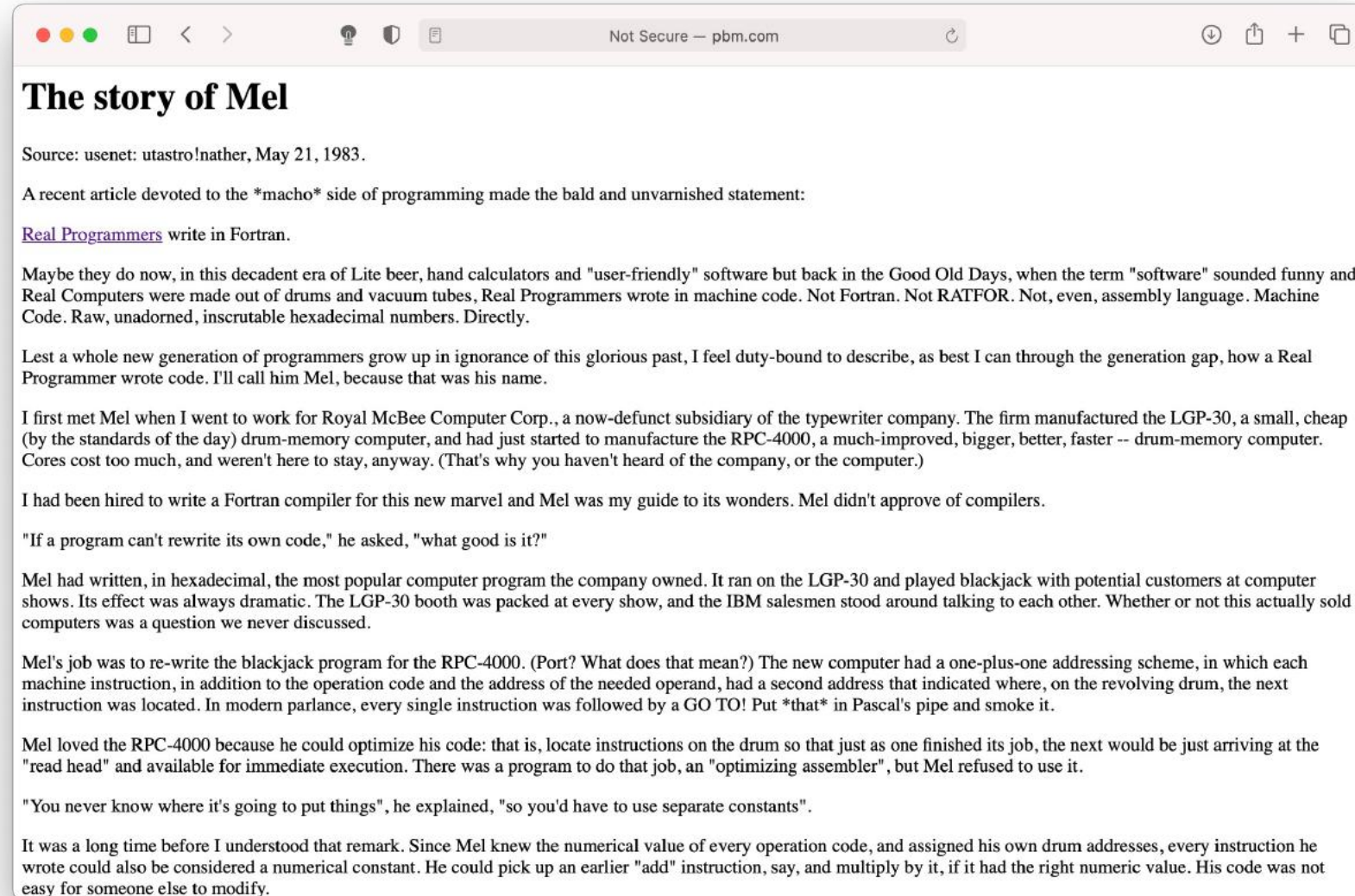
# Additional Reading



The screenshot shows the Ars Technica website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the site logo 'ars TECHNICA' and menu items: BIZ & IT, TECH (highlighted), SCIENCE, POLICY, CARS, GAMING & CULTURE, STORE, FORUMS, SUBSCRIBE, a search icon, and a SIGN IN dropdown. Below the navigation bar, the article title 'An Introduction to 64-bit Computing and x86-64' is displayed in a large, bold font. The author's name 'JON STOKES' and the date '3/12/2002, 1:36 AM' are shown below the title. To the left of the main text, there is a comment count '110' and social media sharing icons for Facebook and Twitter. The main text begins with the sentence: 'When I first heard that AMD had plans to extend the x86 ISA to 64 bits, I ...'. To the right of the article, there is a video player titled 'ARS VIDEO' with the subtitle '30 People Play Mario Kart 8 From Newbies to Pros'. The video player shows a person wearing a black beanie and a black jacket, sitting at a desk with a computer monitor and keyboard. The video player has a play button and a progress bar.

<https://arstechnica.com/gadgets/2002/03/an-introduction-to-64-bit-computing-and-x86-64/>

# Additional Reading



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying "Not Secure - pbm.com". The page title is "The story of Mel". The content of the page is as follows:

Source: usenet: utastro!nather, May 21, 1983.

A recent article devoted to the \*macho\* side of programming made the bald and unvarnished statement:

[Real Programmers](#) write in Fortran.

Maybe they do now, in this decadent era of Lite beer, hand calculators and "user-friendly" software but back in the Good Old Days, when the term "software" sounded funny and Real Computers were made out of drums and vacuum tubes, Real Programmers wrote in machine code. Not Fortran. Not RATFOR. Not, even, assembly language. Machine Code. Raw, unadorned, inscrutable hexadecimal numbers. Directly.

Lest a whole new generation of programmers grow up in ignorance of this glorious past, I feel duty-bound to describe, as best I can through the generation gap, how a Real Programmer wrote code. I'll call him Mel, because that was his name.

I first met Mel when I went to work for Royal McBee Computer Corp., a now-defunct subsidiary of the typewriter company. The firm manufactured the LGP-30, a small, cheap (by the standards of the day) drum-memory computer, and had just started to manufacture the RPC-4000, a much-improved, bigger, better, faster -- drum-memory computer. Cores cost too much, and weren't here to stay, anyway. (That's why you haven't heard of the company, or the computer.)

I had been hired to write a Fortran compiler for this new marvel and Mel was my guide to its wonders. Mel didn't approve of compilers.

"If a program can't rewrite its own code," he asked, "what good is it?"

Mel had written, in hexadecimal, the most popular computer program the company owned. It ran on the LGP-30 and played blackjack with potential customers at computer shows. Its effect was always dramatic. The LGP-30 booth was packed at every show, and the IBM salesmen stood around talking to each other. Whether or not this actually sold computers was a question we never discussed.

Mel's job was to re-write the blackjack program for the RPC-4000. (Port? What does that mean?) The new computer had a one-plus-one addressing scheme, in which each machine instruction, in addition to the operation code and the address of the needed operand, had a second address that indicated where, on the revolving drum, the next instruction was located. In modern parlance, every single instruction was followed by a GO TO! Put \*that\* in Pascal's pipe and smoke it.

Mel loved the RPC-4000 because he could optimize his code: that is, locate instructions on the drum so that just as one finished its job, the next would be just arriving at the "read head" and available for immediate execution. There was a program to do that job, an "optimizing assembler", but Mel refused to use it.

"You never know where it's going to put things", he explained, "so you'd have to use separate constants".

It was a long time before I understood that remark. Since Mel knew the numerical value of every operation code, and assigned his own drum addresses, every instruction he wrote could also be considered a numerical constant. He could pick up an earlier "add" instruction, say, and multiply by it, if it had the right numeric value. His code was not easy for someone else to modify.

<http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/mel.html>

# Extra Practice

# Extra Practice

Fill in the blank to complete the code that generated the assembly below.

```
long arr[5];
```

```
...
```

```
long num = _____???
```

---

```
// %rdi stores arr, %rcx stores 3, and %rax stores num  
mov (%rdi, %rcx, 8),%rax
```

# Extra Practice

Fill in the blank to complete the code that generated the assembly below.

```
long arr[5];
```

```
...
```

```
long num = arr[3];
```

---

```
// %rdi stores arr, %rcx stores 3, and %rax stores num  
mov (%rdi, %rcx, 8),%rax
```

# Extra Practice

Fill in the blank to complete the code that generated the assembly below.

```
int x = ...  
int *ptr = malloc(...);  
____? ?? ____ = x;
```

---

```
// %ecx stores x, %rax stores ptr  
mov %ecx, (%rax)
```



# Extra Practice

Fill in the blank to complete the code that generated the assembly below.

```
int x = ...  
int *ptr = malloc(...);  
*ptr = x;
```

---

```
// %ecx stores x, %rax stores ptr  
mov %ecx, (%rax)
```

# Extra Practice

Fill in the blank to complete the code that generated the assembly below.

```
char str[5];
```

```
...
```

```
____? ?? ____ = 'c';
```

---

```
// %rcx stores str, %rdx stores 2
```

```
mov $0x63, (%rcx,%rdx,1)
```

# Extra Practice

Fill in the blank to complete the code that generated the assembly below.

```
char str[5];  
...  
str[2] = 'c';
```

---

```
// %rcx stores str, %rdx stores 2  
mov $0x63, (%rcx,%rdx,1)
```

# Recap

- **Overview:** GCC and Assembly
- **Demo:** Looking at an executable
- Registers and The Assembly Level of Abstraction
- The **mov** instruction

**Next time:** *diving deeper into assembly*