A generic approach to the definition of low-level components for multi-architecture binary analysis

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# High Performance Computing

#### Supercomputers

- Front-line of the computing capacity
- Multiprocessor systems
- Current top speed 33 Petaflop/s

#### Applications

- Physical simulations
- Natural resources exploration
- Molecular modeling
- Weather forecasts



## Performance analysis for optimisation

#### Optimising performance of HPC applications

- Optimise use of processors in terms of speed and power
- Pinpoint bottlenecks
- Estimate gain from improvements

#### Performance analysis

- Static or dynamic
- Instrumentation
- Possible in all steps of the design process











## Performance analysis levels



#### Source code

- Knowledge of source language
- Requires access to source files
- Compilation may perform complex transformations
- Instrumenting at the source level may modify these transformations

## Performance analysis levels



#### Compiler Internal Representation

- More accurate
- Requires access to compiler internals
- Requires intrusion into compilation process
- Ineffective for code written in assembly

## Performance analysis levels



#### Assembly analysis

- Closer to the actual executable
- Not available by default
- Requires intrusion into compilation process

## Performance analysis levels



#### **Binary analysis**

- "What you see is what you run"
- Allows to retrieve additional information
- More complex

## Challenges of binary analysis

#### Dependent on the architecture

- Multiple architectures may be used by a single application
- Binary architectures evolve frequently

#### Static Analysis

Requires disassembly of binary code

#### Instrumentation

- Requires static or dynamic patching
- Extensive changes can be needed

## Contribution

#### Low level binary encoder and decoder

- Able to support multiple architectures
- Minimised implementation workload

#### Usage in analysis context

- Customisable behaviour
- Unified output format
- Acceptable performance
- Static analysis and instrumentation

#### Introduction

Multi architecture support Disassembly of binary files Binary rewriting Conclusion

## Outline



- 2 Multi architecture support
- Oisassembly of binary files

## 4 Binary rewriting



# Objectives

#### Generic encoder and decoder

- Multi-architecture support
- Customisable output and behaviour
- Reduced implementation workload

#### Challenges

- Complex binary coding rules
- Coding rules and assembly vary significantly between architectures
- Avoid hard coding

## Example: Encoding of an Intel 64 instruction

## Example: Encoding of an Intel 64 instruction

#### 0x66 49 89 4C 90 20 <=> mov %r9, 0x20(%eax,%edx,4)

#### $01100111 \quad 01001100 \quad 10001001 \quad 01001100 \quad 10\,010000 \quad 00100000$

mov %r9,0x20 (%eax,%edx,4)

## Example: Encoding of an Intel 64 instruction

#### 0x66 49 89 4C 90 20 <=> mov %r9, 0x20(%eax,%edx,4)

#### 

mov %r9,0x20 (%eax,%edx,4)

## Example: Encoding of an Intel 64 instruction

#### 0x66 49 89 4C 90 20 <=> mov %r9, 0x20(%eax,%edx,4)

# 

## Example: Encoding of an Intel 64 instruction



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## Example: Encoding of an ARM instruction

## 0x15 2D 40 05 <=> strne r4, [sp, #-5]!

Example: Encoding of an ARM instruction

## 0x15 2D 40 05 <=> strne r4, [sp, #-5]!

#### 00010101 00101101 01000000 00000101

strne r4,[sp,#-5]!

Example: Encoding of an ARM instruction

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strne r4,[sp,#-5]

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0x15 2D 40 05 <=> strne r4, [sp, #-5]!



### Requirements

#### Ensuring agnosticism with regard to architecture

- Unified representation of an architecture encoding rules
- Decorrelation of decoding from post parsing actions
- Same representation to generate encoder and decoder

#### Remaining close to the documentation format

- Handling exclusions and restricted cases
- Possibility of fields with no fixed value

# Using a context-free grammar formalism

#### Advantages

- Allows to decorrelate the encoding rules from the actions performed
- Decoder implemented as the corresponding parser
- Multiple possible uses for the decoder
- Encoder built from the same grammar

#### Challenges

- Grammars usually operate at the character level
- Using a bit by bit parsing would be inefficient
- Lookahead challenged by instructions of variable sizes

# Standard notions

#### Context free grammars

- Symbols associated to list of productions
- A production contains terminal and nonterminal symbols
- Terminal symbols have no production
- Semantic actions associated to productions

#### LR parsers

- Processing left to right
- Bottom-up matching
- Implemented as finite state automata
- Shift and reduction states

# Our algorithm for parser generation

#### New principles

- Bits can have a fixed or unfixed value
- Terminals are defined as groups of bits
- A state represents the matching of bits anywhere in the production
- Transitions over terminals can include bits ahead of the parsing step
- Shift/reduce states are authorised

#### Parser execution

- Processing left to right
- Terminals containing less unfixed bits are tested first

### Example: Context free grammar

%token <2> d Start: A 00 |B 01 A: С 0111 B: 0111 |d 11 ٠ , C: 00 d 0000 . .

### Example: Context free grammar

%token <2> d Start: A 00 |B 01 A: С 0111 B: 0111 |d 11 . , C: 00 d 0000 . .

00 🗲
100 🗲



%token <2> d	
Start:	
A 00	
B 01	
,	
A:	
С	
0111	00xx 00
,	
В:	011100
0111	011100
d 11	
;	
C:	
00 d	
0000	

%token <2> d	
Start:	
A 00	
B 01	
;	
A:	
С	
0111	00xx 00
;	0000 00
В:	0111 00
0111	→011101 ←
d 11	→ xx11 01 ←
;	
C:	
00 d	
0000	
;	

00xx 00
0000 00
011100
011101
xx11 01





















# Encoder generation

#### Building an encoder from the same grammar file

- Semantic actions are redefined as matching functions
- Input tentatively matched over all productions of nonterminals
- Shortest productions are matched first
- Nonterminals in a matching production are recursively matched
- Resulting encoder algorithm corresponds to a top-down parser

# Example: Encoder algorithm

%token <2> d
Stat:
A 00 #[S\_ACT1(\$1)]#
|B 01 #[S\_ACT2(\$1)]#;
A: #[A\_ACT1(\$1)]#;
[0111 #[A\_ACT2()]#;
B:
0111 #[B\_ACT2(\$1)]#;
C:
00 d #[C\_ACT1(\$1)]#
[0000 #[C\_ACT2(\$1)]#;

# Example: Encoder algorithm

```
%token <2> d
Stat:
A 00 #[S_ACT1($1)]#
|B 01 #[S_ACT2($1)]#;
A: #[A_ACT1($1)]#;
[0111 #[A_ACT2()]#;
B:
0111 #[B_ACT2($1)]#;
C:
00 d #[C_ACT1($1)]#
[0000 #[C_ACT2($1)]#;
```

#### INPUT

```
%token <2> d
%token <2> d
%tart:
A 00 #[ S_ACT1($1) ]#
| B 01 #[ S_ACT2($1) ]#;
( 0111 #[ A_ACT2($1) ]#;
[ 0111 #[ A_ACT2($1) ]#;
] d 11 #[ B_ACT2($1) ]#;
] C:
C:
00 d #[ C_ACT2($1) ]#;
] 0000 #[ C_ACT2($1) ]#;
```



INPUT for A






















# Validation

### MINJAG

- Uses a context-free grammar describing the architecture
- Grammar generated from architecture documentation through simple transformations
- Generates the code for decoder and encoder from the same grammar
- Functional tool used in a production context
- Tested over Intel 64, Intel Xeon Phi coprocessor and ARM

### Characteristics of implemented architectures

Architecture	Intel 64	Intel Xeon Phi	ARM
Lines in instruction list	2,398	1,194	1,512
Lines in grammar	6,082	3,082	1,491
Reduction states	5,950	2,406	1,625
Shift states	4,019	1,468	2,916
Shift/reduce states	2	2	6
Total states	9,971	3,876	4,547



- 2 Multi architecture support
- Oisassembly of binary files
- 4 Binary rewriting

### 5 Conclusion

# Challenges of disassembly

#### Binary code is not intended to be read

- No constraints on the code as long as the program can be executed
- No separation between instructions
- Instructions may be of varying sizes

#### Specific examples

- Interleaved foreign bytes
- Overlapping instructions
- Obfuscated code or binary format
- Self rewriting code

# Example: Interleaved foreign bytes

Correct disassembly up to that point	Binary code           67 4C 89 4C 90 20           EB 04           80           4C 89 C8           F2 0F 10 EE           F2 0F 10 F4	Corresponding assembly ins mov %r9,0x20(%eax,%edx,4) jmp <+4 bytes> Alignment byte, never executed mov %r9,%rax movsd %xmm6, %xmm5 movsd %xmm4, %xmm6	tructions
	Disa	ssembly	
Mistaking the alignment	67 4C 89 4C 90 20	<pre>mov %r9,0x20(%eax,%edx,4) jmp &lt;+4 bytes&gt; or \$0xf2,-0x38(%rcx,%rcx,4)</pre>	Instructions correctly
byte for the beginning of	►B 04		disassembled
the next instruction	→80 4C 89 C8 F2		Erroneous instructions
Realignement of the parser on a valid boundary	0F 10 EE	movups %xmm6, %xmm5	Instructions correctly
	→F2 0F 10 F4	movsd %xmm4, %xmm6	disassembled

# Disassembly algorithms

#### Linear sweep

- Decoding one instruction after another
- Errors when encountering interleaved foreign bytes
- Vulnerability to obfuscation methods
- Faster disassembly

#### Recursive traversal

- Decoding following the actual execution of the program
- Resists to some obfuscation techniques
- Finding the destination of a branch can be difficult
- Slower disassembly

### Linear Sweep vs Recursive Traversal

Linear sweep

**Recursive traversal** 

### Linear Sweep vs Recursive Traversal

Linear sweep

**Recursive traversal** 

00: mov %r9,0x20(%eax,%edx,4)

\_\_00: mov %r9,0x20(%eax,%edx,4)

### Linear Sweep vs Recursive Traversal

Linear sweep

**Recursive traversal** 

00: mov %r9,0x20(%eax,%edx,4) \_06: jmp <0C> #+4 bytes 00: mov %r9,0x20(%eax,%edx,4) →06: jmp <0C> #+4 bytes

### Linear Sweep vs Recursive Traversal

Linear sweep

00: mov %r9,0x20(%eax,%edx,4) 06: jmp <0C> #+4 bytes .08: mov %rcx,%r14 **Recursive traversal** 

00: mov %r9,0x20(%eax,%edx,4) 06: jmp <0C> #+4 bytes

\_\_0C: movsd %xmm6,%xmm5

### Our constraints

#### Disassembler intended to be used by analysis tools

- Retrieve all possible available information from the file
- Architecture independent output format
- Possibility to add customisable additional information
- Acceptable performance in terms of speed and accuracy

# Our disassembling algorithm

#### General execution

- Linear sweep parsing
- Extraction of executable code from binary format
- Retrieval of labels and debug information if present

#### Additional processing

- Resolving destination of direct branches
- Associating labels and debug information to instructions
- Post parsing actions to fill additional information
- Detection of unreachable instructions
- Identification of dubious disassembled data

### Implementation: the MADRAS disassembler

#### Multi Architecture Disassembler, Rewriter and ASsembler

- Relies on MINJAG for source code of decoder
- $\bullet$  Processes binaries using the  $\operatorname{ELF}$  format used by Unix and Linux
- Disassembler available for Intel 64, Xeon Phi coprocessor and ARM
- $\bullet$  Base component of the  $\mathrm{MAQAO}$  framework

### Performance tests

#### Protocol

- Comparison between MADRAS and hard coded disassemblers
- Disassembling SPEC benchmarks and test files
  - Size of executable code varying between 1 and 23 MBytes
  - Executables compiled for Intel 64 and Xeon Phi coprocessor
- Speed measured as disassembled instructions per second

### Disassembler performance on Intel 64 files







### Disassembler performance on Xeon Phi files



madras objdump





Disassembly of binary files

# Parallel disassembler performance

#### 1200000 1000000 Instructions per second 800000 600000 400000 20000 0 Small fma3d calculix qcc dealII Xalan tonto wrf gamess Large 1 Large 2





Xeon Phi files





### Disassembler accuracy



### 1 Introduction

- 2 Multi architecture support
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4 Binary rewriting

### 5 Conclusion

### Instrumentation

#### Retrieving information during execution

- Monitoring memory usage
- Value profiling

#### Dynamic: Performed during execution

- Monitoring code execution using a supervising thread
- Invoking functions under specified conditions
- Modifying the image loaded in memory

#### Static: Modifying the executable file

- Probe insertion
- Instructions modification

# Binary rewriting

#### Static instrumentation

- No recompilation needed
- No overhead from instrumentation process
- No additional requirements for execution

#### Binary rewriting allows other modifications to the program

- Deleting or adding instructions to test their overall impact
- Modifying variables defined in the file

# Challenges of binary rewriting

#### Patched file must remain valid

- Preservation of the structure of the binary file
- Preservation of the control flow
- Preservation of data environment

#### Executables are not intended to be modified

- All references are fixed
- No relocation tables
- Addresses can appear as immediate operands

### Example of patching pitfalls





jmp \*%rax

add \$1, -8(%rbp)

cmp \$1, -8(%rbp)

jle 0A

mov \$0, %eax

# Example of patching pitfalls



### Example of patching pitfalls

00: 48 8B 04 25 0E 00 00 00 mov \$0x14, %rax



19: B8 00 00 00 00

jmp \*%rax

add \$1, -8(%rbp)

callq <myfunc>

cmpl \$1, -8(%rbp)

jle 0A

mov \$0, %eax

# Binary rewriting algorithm

#### Block relocation

- The code to be modified is moved in a new section in the executable
- Code moved at the basic block level
- Use of trampolines if the patching site is too small

### Code relocation



## Code relocation

### Original code



**Modification site** 

### Code relocation

### Original code

Basic block surrounding the site	
--	--

44 / 55

### Code relocation

### Original code



**Branch instruction** 

### Code relocation

### Original code



#### Added code section



Relocated block

# Code relocation

### Original code



### Added code section



Modifications

### Code relocation



## Trampolines



# Trampolines

Basic block surrounding	
the site	

# Trampolines

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# Implementation: the MADRAS patcher

### Multi Architecture Disassembler, Rewriter and ASsembler

- Relies on MINJAG for source code of assembler
- $\bullet\,$  Processes binaries under the  ${\rm ELF}$  format used by Unix and Linux
- Available for Intel 64 and Xeon Phi coprocessor

### A production tool

- C API
- Back end of the MAQAO Instrumentation Language (MIL)
- $\bullet$  Used by the  $\operatorname{DECAN}$  module

### Patcher features

#### Code insertion

- Insertion of calls to functions from external or static libraries
- Insertion of lists of assembly instructions

### Conditions

- Possibility to set conditions on the execution of an inserted code
- Possibility to specify code to execute if such a condition is not met

### Other features

- Modification or deletion of instructions
- Insertion of global variables usable by inserted code

### Example: Using MADRAS API to insert a function call

```
void insert(char* in,char* lib,char* fct,uint addr,char* out) {
//Disassemble the file and inits the modifications
elfdis_t* madras = madras_disass_file(in);
madras_modifs_init(madras, STACK_SHIFT, 512);
//Adds a function call at the given address
insert_t* ifct = madras_fctcall_new(madras, fct, lib, addr, 0);
//Adds the given address as an immediate parameter
madras_fctcall_addparam_imm(madras, ifct, addr, 0);
//Commit changes
madras_modifs_commit(madras,out);
//Terminates the madras structure
madras_terminate(madras);
```

### Interface with the MAQAO Instrumentation Language



# Performance of code patched by MIL

#### MIL DynInst PEBIL



### 1 Introduction

- 2 Multi architecture support
- Oisassembly of binary files

④ Binary rewriting



# Contributions

#### Generic representation of binary encoding rules

- Unified format
- Use of the same grammar for encoder and decoder generation
- Validated for the Intel and ARM architectures
- $\bullet$  Implemented as the functional tool  $\rm MINJAG$

#### Disassembly

- Easier updates of architecture specific code
- Performance comparable to existing hard coded tools
- Customisable output

# Contributions

#### Patching

- Fine granularity offering wide range of options
- Patched code has similar or better performance than existing tools

### MADRAS

- Functional tool
- Standalone implementation of the whole disassembly and instrumentation chain
- Handling of multiple architectures from a single executable
- $\bullet\,$  Integral component of the  $\rm MAQAO$  framework
- $\bullet$  Used by the  $\operatorname{DECAN}$  module

### Future work

#### General

- Implement additional architectures
- Support additional binary file formats

#### Generic encoder and decoder

- Generic meta language for representing instruction lists
- Extensions allowing to specialise generated parser

### Future work

#### Disassembler

- Improve accuracy through use of recursive traversal
- Detection of switch tables
- Improve speed
- Parallel disassembly
- Application to domains outside performance analysis

#### Patcher

- Improve safety of patching
- Update of indirect branch destinations



Thank you for your attention!

### Additional slides

Example: Encoding of an ARM instruction



### Example of grammar for binary definition

%token <3.b> reg %% Start: template ; template: Legacy3 Insn #[ FULLINSN\_L3PREFIX(\$1,\$2) ]# Insn #[ FULLINSN(\$1) ]# ; MemModRM: 00 reg RMSIB\_00 #[ OPRS\_REG\_MEM(\$1,\$2) ]# | 01 reg RMSIB\_01 #[ OPRS\_REG\_MEM(\$1,\$2) ]# 10 reg RMSIB\_10 #[ OPRS\_REG\_MEM(\$1,\$2) ]# ; RegModRM: 11 reg RMSIB\_11 #[ OPRS\_REG\_REG(\$1,\$2) ]# ; Insn: 00010000 RegModRM #[ INSN(ADC, REG(GEN8b,R,\$1),REG(GEN8b,RW,\$1)) ]# | REX 00010000 MemModRM #[ INSN(ADC, REG(GEN8b,R,\$1,\$2),MEM(MEM8b,RW,\$1,\$2)) ]# ;

### Overlapping instructions

#### Destination of the branch instruction

$\downarrow$	
F3 AB	rep stos
48 FF C1	inc %rcx
48 83 F9 7F	cmp \$127,%rcx
75 F6	jne <-10 bytes>

The first iteration of the loop will execute instruction rep stos Later iterations will skip the F3 (rep) prefix and execute only the stos instruction

### Obfuscated code



### Performance tests

Disassemblers	
objdump	
• XED	
• udis86	
• distorm	
• ndisasm	

### Disassembly modes

- Print only mode for comparison against objdump and XED
- Without parsing of the binary file against udis86 and distorm

Intel 64 files used for the disassembler performance tests

File	File size (MByte)	Code size (MByte)	Description
Small	0,96	0,96	Test file
fma3d	3,78	1,75	SPEC2001
calculix	5	2,31	SPEC2006
gcc	9,02	2,56	SPEC2006
deallI	60,94	2,83	SPEC2006
Xalan	130,64	3,46	SPEC2006
tonto	33,27	5,81	SPEC2006
wrf	19,52	6,83	SPEC2006
gamess	18,2	10,55	SPEC2006
Large 1	11,95	11,94	Test file
Large 2	23,22	23,22	Test file

Xeon Phi files used for the disassembler performance tests

File	File size (Mb)	Code size (Mb)	Description
equake	0,12	0,05	SPEC2001
art	0,21	0,12	SPEC2001
ammp	0,84	0,44	SPEC2001
swim	0,96	0,57	SPEC2001
wupwise	0,96	0,66	SPEC2001
mgrid	0,95	0,68	SPEC2001
applu	1,03	0,71	SPEC2001
apsi	2,61	1,72	SPEC2001
galgel	2,84	2,08	SPEC2001
fma3d	4,62	2,35	SPEC2001

### Disassembler performance on Intel 64 files



### Parallel disassembler performance



■ raw mute ■ raw mute 2 threads ■ raw mute 4 threads ■ raw mute 8 threads

#### raw mute araw mute 2 threads araw mute 4 threads araw mute 8 threads



### Performance of patched code

#### ■ Original ■ Instrumented



### Performance of instrumentation



### Performance of patched code

#### ■MIL ■DynInst ■PEBIL



### MADRAS overall architecture



#### **MAQAO** Framework

