

Lecture 36: Local Optimization

[Adapted from notes by R. Bodik and G. Necula]

Introduction to Code Optimization

Code optimization is the usual term, but is grossly misnamed, since code produced by "optimizers" is not optimal in any reasonable sense. *Program improvement* would be more appropriate.

Topics:

- Basic blocks
- Control-flow graphs (CFGs)
- Algebraic simplification
- Constant folding
- Static single-assignment form (SSA)
- Common-subexpression elimination (CSE)
- Copy propagation
- Dead-code elimination
- Peephole optimizations

Basic Blocks

- A *basic block* is a maximal sequence of instructions with:
 - no labels (except at the first instruction), and
 - no jumps (except in the last instruction)
- Idea:
 - Cannot jump into a basic block, except at the beginning.
 - Cannot jump within a basic block, except at end.
 - Therefore, each instruction in a basic block is executed after all the preceding instructions have been executed

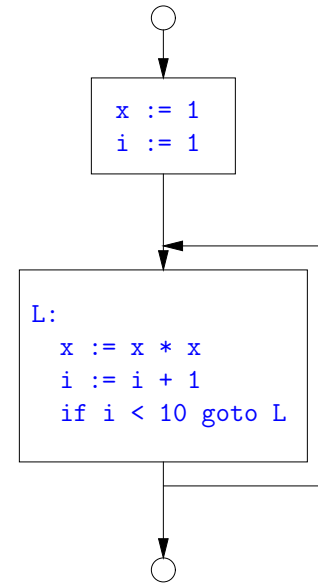
Basic-Block Example

- Consider the basic block
 1. L1:
 2. $t := 2 * x$
 3. $w := t + x$
 4. if $w > 0$ goto L2
- No way for (3) to be executed without (2) having been executed right before
- We can change (3) to $w := 3 * x$
- Can we eliminate (2) as well?

Control-Flow Graphs (CFGs)

- A control-flow graph is a directed graph with basic blocks as nodes
- There is an edge from block *A* to block *B* if the execution can flow from the last instruction in *A* to the first instruction in *B*:
 - The last instruction in *A* can be a jump to the label of *B*.
 - Or execution can fall through from the end of block *A* to the beginning of block *B*.

Control-Flow Graphs: Example



- The body of a method (or procedure) can be represented as a CFG
- There is one initial node
- All "return" nodes are terminal

Optimization Overview

- Optimization seeks to improve a program's utilization of some resource:
 - Execution time (most often)
 - Code size
 - Network messages sent
 - Battery power used, etc.
- Optimization should not depart from the programming language's semantics
- So if the semantics of a particular program is deterministic, optimization must not change the answer.
- On the other hand, some program behavior is undefined (e.g., what happens when an unchecked rule in *C* is violated), and in those cases, optimization may cause differences in results.

A Classification of Optimizations

- For languages like *C* and *Java* there are three granularities of optimizations
 1. *Local optimizations*: Apply to a basic block in isolation.
 2. *Global optimizations*: Apply to a control-flow graph (single function body) in isolation.
 3. *Inter-procedural optimizations*: Apply across function boundaries.
- Most compilers do (1), many do (2) and very few do (3)
- Problem is expense: (2) and (3) typically require superlinear time. Can usually handle that when limited to a single function, but gets problematic for larger program.
- In practice, generally *don't* implement fanciest known optimizations: some are hard to implement (esp., hard to get right), some require a lot of compilation time.
- The goal: maximum improvement with minimum cost.

Local Optimizations: Algebraic Simplification

- Some statements can be deleted

```
x := x + 0
x := x * 1
```

- Some statements can be simplified or converted to use faster operations:

Original	Simplified
<code>x := x * 0</code>	<code>x := 0</code>
<code>y := y ** 2</code>	<code>y := y * y</code>
<code>x := x * 8</code>	<code>x := x << 3</code>
<code>x := x * 15</code>	<code>t := x << 4; x := t - x</code>

(on some machines << is faster than *; but not on all!)

Local Optimization: Constant Folding

- Operations on constants can be computed at compile time.
- Example: `x := 2 + 2` becomes `x := 4`.
- Example: `if 2 < 0 jump L` becomes a no-op.
- When might constant folding be dangerous?

Global Optimization: Unreachable code elimination

- Basic blocks that are not reachable from the entry point of the CFG may be eliminated.
- Why would such basic blocks occur?
- Removing unreachable code makes the program smaller (sometimes also faster, due to instruction-cache effects, but this is probably not a terribly large effect.)

Single Assignment Form

- Some optimizations are simplified if each assignment is to a temporary that has not appeared already in the basic block.
- Intermediate code can be rewritten to be in *(static) single assignment (SSA) form*:

```
x := a + y          x := a + y
a := x              a1 := x
x := a * x          x1 := a1 * x
b := x + a          b := x1 + a1
```

where `x1` and `a1` are fresh temporaries.

Common SubExpression (CSE) Elimination in Basic Blocks

- A *common subexpression* is an expression that appears multiple times on a right-hand side in contexts where the operands have the same values in each case (so that the expression will yield the same value).
- Assume that the basic block on the left is in single assignment form.

```
x := y + z
...
w := y + z
```

```
x := y + z
...
w := x
```

- That is, if two assignments have the same right-hand side, we can replace the second instance of that right-hand side with the variable that was assigned the first instance.
- How did we use the assumption of single assignment here?

Copy Propagation

- If $w := x$ appears in a block, can replace all subsequent uses of w with uses of x .
- Example:

```
b:=z+y      b:=z+y
a := b      a := b
x:=2*a      x:=2*b
```

- This does not make the program smaller or faster but might enable other optimizations. For example, if a is not used after this statement, we need not assign to it.
- Or consider:

```
b:=13      b:=13
x:=2*b      x:=2*13
```

which immediately enables constant folding.

- Again, the optimization, as described, won't work unless the block is in single assignment form.

Another Example of Copy Propagation and Constant Folding

```
a := 5      a := 5      a := 5      a := 5      a := 5
x := 2 * a  x := 2 * 5    x := 10     x := 10     x := 10
y := x + 6  y := x + 6    y := 10 + 6 y := 16     y := 16
t := x * y  t := x * y    t := 10 * y t := 10 * 16 t := 160
```

Dead Code Elimination

- If that statement $w := rhs$ appears in a basic block and w does not appear anywhere else in the program, we say that the statement is *dead* and can be eliminated; it does not contribute to the program's result.
- Example: (a is not used anywhere else)

```
b := z + y      b := z + y      b := z + y
a := b          a := b
x := 2 * a      x := 2 * b      x := 2 * b
```

- How have I used SSA here?

Applying Local Optimizations

- As the examples show, each local optimization does very little by itself.
- Typically, optimizations interact: performing one optimization enables others.
- So typical optimizing compilers repeatedly perform optimizations until no improvement is possible, or it is no longer cost effective.

An Example: Initial Code

```
a := x ** 2
b := 3
c := x
d := c * c
e := b * 2
f := a + d
g := e * f
```

An Example II: Algebraic simplification

```
a := x * x
b := 3
c := x
d := c * c
e := b + b
f := a + d
g := e * f
```

An Example: Copy propagation

```
a := x * x
b := 3
c := x
d := x * x
e := 3 + 3
f := a + d
g := e * f
```

An Example: Constant folding

```
a := x * x
b := 3
c := x
d := x * x
e := 6
f := a + d
g := e * f
```

An Example: Common Subexpression Elimination

```
a := x * x
b := 3
c := x
d := a
e := 6
f := a + d
g := e * f
```

An Example: Copy propagation

```
a := x * x
b := 3
c := x
d := a
e := 6
f := a + a
g := 6 * f
```

An Example: Dead code elimination

```
a := x * x

f := a + a
g := 6 * f
```

This is the final form.

Peephole Optimizations on Assembly Code

- The optimizations presented before work on intermediate code.
- *Peephole optimization* is a technique for improving assembly code directly
 - The "*peephole*" is a short subsequence of (usually contiguous) instructions, either contiguous, or linked together by the fact that they operate on certain registers that no intervening instructions modify.
 - The optimizer replaces the sequence with another equivalent, but (one hopes) better one.
 - Write peephole optimizations as replacement rules
 - $i1; \dots; in \Rightarrow j1; \dots; jm$possibly plus additional constraints. The *j*'s are the improved version of the *i*'s.

Peephole optimization examples:

- We'll use the notation '@A' for pattern variables.
- Example:
 $movl\ \%@a\ \%@b; L; movl\ \%@b\ \%@a \Rightarrow movl\ \%@a\ \%@b$
assuming *L* is not the target of a jump.
- Example:
 $addl\ \$@k1,\ \%@a; movl\ @k2(\%@a),\ \%@b$
 $\Rightarrow movl\ @k1+@k2(\%@a),\ \%@b$
assuming *%@a* is "dead".
- Example (PDP11):
 $mov\ #@I,\ @I(@ra) \Rightarrow mov\ (r7),\ @I(@ra)$
This is a real hack: we reuse the value *I* as both the immediate value and the offset from *ra*. On the PDP11, the program counter is *r7*.
- As for local optimizations, peephole optimizations need to be applied repeatedly to get maximum effect.

Problems:

- Serious problem: what to do with pointers? Problem is *aliasing*: two names for the same variable:
 - As a result, **t* may change even if local variable *t* does not and we never assign to **t*.
 - Affects language design: rules about overlapping parameters in Fortran, and the *restrict* keyword in C.
 - Arrays are a special case (address calculation): is *A[i]* the same as *A[j]*? Sometimes the compiler can tell, depending on what it knows about *i* and *j*.
- What about global variables and calls?
 - Calls are not exactly jumps, because they (almost) always return.
 - Can modify global variables used by caller