Introduction to Commodity SIMD

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What Are Vector Instructions?

Single Instruction Multiple Data (SIMD)

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- Multiple vector elements are combined in a single operation.

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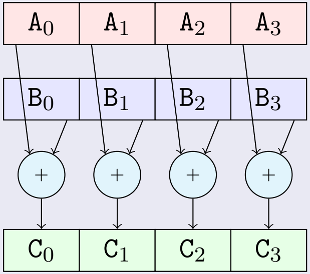
Example: `<4 x i16>` Vector Addition



- Four 16-bit additions at once.
- Replaces the loop:

```
for (int i=0; i<4; i++) {
  C[i] = A[i] + B[i];
}
```

- Intel `paddw` MMX instruction.

Two Decades of Intel SIMD Extensions

MMX, SSE, AVX, AVX-512

- 1997: Intel Pentium processors introduce 64-bit SIMD (MMX).
- 1999: 128-bit floating point SIMD vectors (SSE).
- 2000: SSE2 adds 128-bit integer vector operations.
    - Widespread Intel/AMD standard: all x86-64 processors.
- SSE3 (2004), SSSE3 (2005), SSE4 (2008).
- 256-bit SIMD: Intel AVX (2011), AVX2 (2013).
- 512-bit SIMD: Intel AVX-512 (2017)

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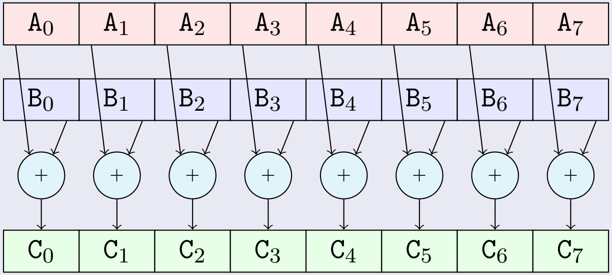
Not Just Intel/AMD

- Altivec/VMX (2004): 128-bit SIMD
- ARM Neon (2008): 128-bit SIMD
- ARM SVE: scalable SIMD up to 2048 bits (in progress)

Doubling Register Size, Repeatedly

128-bit SSE2: `<8 x i16>` Vector Addition



A_0 A_1 A_2 A_3 A_4 A_5 A_6 A_7
B_0 B_1 B_2 B_3 B_4 B_5 B_6 B_7
+ + + + + + + +
C_0 C_1 C_2 C_3 C_4 C_5 C_6 C_7

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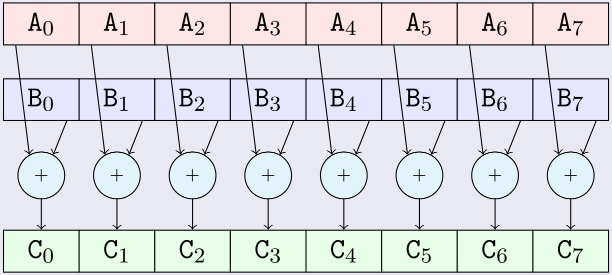
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AVX2, AVX-512

- 256-bit AVX2: `<16 x i16>` vector addition in a single operation.
- 512-bit AVX-512: `<32 x i16>` vector addition in a single operation.

Why SIMD?

SIMD Costs

- Intel has added hundreds of SIMD instructions over two decades.
    - More SIMD instructions added than any other kind.
    - Substantial transistor count, chip area devoted to SIMD.
    - Larger cores, so fewer cores per package possible.

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SIMD Benefits

- SIMD naturally supports data parallel applications.
    - Graphics, signal and image processing.
    - Physical simulation.
    - Database queries, financial analytics.
- SIMD has natural advantages over multicore.
    - Cost of instruction fetch/decode divided by SIMD vector length.
    - SIMD ALUs share common control and data path logic.
    - Synchronization of parallel execution is automatic.

What's new in AVX-512?

Several New Instruction Families

- AVX-512F: Foundation - core 32/64 bit operations (extending AVX).
- AVX-512DQ: New doubleword/quadword (32/64-bit) operations.
- AVX-512BW: AVX-2 byte/word operations extended to 512 bits.
- AVX-512VBMI: Full byte-level permutation selecting from 128 bytes.
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Systematic New Features

- Systematic masking and blending using bitmask registers.
- Constant parameter broadcasting, rounding and exception control.
- Register count increased from 16 to 32.
- Ternary logic - all possible 3-bit Boolean functions.

Opportunity and Challenge

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- The expected speed-up is potentally very large.
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Challenge

- Existing sequential programs generally cannot be autovectorized.
    - Too many sequential dependencies between data elements.
    - Programmer code optimizations often obscure parallelizable logic.
- Language technology may limit access to SIMD capabilities.
- Text processing may involve variable-length items not well-matched to fixed SIMD field and register widths.
- Data parallel algorithmic approaches may be hard to find.