The Procedure Abstraction
Procedure Abstraction

• Begins Chapter 6 in EAC
• The compiler must deal with interface between compile time and run time (static versus dynamic)
  → Most of the tricky issues arise in implementing “procedures”

• Issues
  → Compile-time versus run-time behaviour
  → Finding storage for EVERYTHING, and mapping names to addresses
  → Generating code to compute addresses that the compiler cannot know!
  → Interfaces with other programs, other languages, and the OS
  → Efficiency of implementation
Where are we?

The latter half of a compiler contains more open problems, more challenges, and more grey areas than the front half.

- This is “compilation,” as opposed to “parsing” or “translation.”
- Implementing promised behaviour
  - What defines the meaning of the program
- Managing target machine resources
  - Registers, memory, issue slots, locality, power, ...
  - These issues determine the quality of the compiler
The Procedure: Three Abstractions

- **Control Abstraction**
  - Well defined entries & exits
  - Mechanism to return control to caller
  - Some notion of parameterisation (usually)

- **Clean Name Space**
  - Clean slate for writing locally visible names
  - Local names may obscure identical, non-local names
  - Local names cannot be seen outside

- **External Interface**
  - Access is by procedure name & parameters
  - Clear protection for both caller & callee
  - Invoked procedure can ignore calling context

- Procedures permit a critical separation of concerns
The Procedure (Realist’s View)

Procedures are the key to building large systems

- Requires **system-wide contract**
  - Conventions on memory layout, protection, resource allocation, calling sequences, & error handling
  - Must involve architecture (**ISA**), **OS**, & compiler

- Provides shared **access to system-wide facilities**
  - Storage management, flow of control, interrupts
  - Interface to input/output devices, protection facilities, timers, synchronization flags, counters, ...

- Establishes a **private context**
  - Create private storage for each procedure invocation
  - Encapsulate information about control flow & data abstractions
Procedures allow us to use **separate compilation**

- Separate compilation allows us to build non-trivial programs
- Keeps compile times reasonable
- Lets multiple programmers collaborate
- Requires independent procedures

Without separate compilation, we *would not* build large systems

The procedure **linkage convention**

- Ensures that each procedure inherits a valid run-time environment and that the callers environment is restored on return
  - The compiler must generate code to ensure this happens according to conventions established by the system
A procedure is an abstract structure constructed via software

Underlying hardware directly supports little of the abstraction—it understands bits, bytes, integers, reals, and addresses, but not:

- Entries and exits
- Interfaces
- Call and return mechanisms
  - may be a special instruction to save context at point of call
- Name space
- Nested scopes

All these are established by a carefully-crafted system of mechanisms provided by compiler, run-time system, linkage editor and loader, and OS
Run Time versus Compile Time

These concepts are often confusing to the newcomer

• Linkages execute at run time
• Code for the linkage is emitted at compile time
• The linkage is designed long before either of these

“This issue (compile time versus run time) confuses students more than any other issue in Comp 412”—Keith Cooper
The Procedure as a Control Abstraction
The Procedure as a Control Abstraction

Procedures have well-defined control-flow

The Algol-60 procedure call
- Invoked at a call site, with some set of actual parameters
- Control returns to call site, immediately after invocation
The Procedure as a Control Abstraction

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The Algol-60 procedure call
• Invoked at a call site, with some set of actual parameters
• Control returns to call site, immediately after invocation

```plaintext
int p(a,b,c)
int a, b, c;
{
    int d;
    d = q(c,b);
    ...
}
...
int p(10,t,u);
...
The Procedure as a Control Abstraction

Procedures have well-defined control-flow

The Algol-60 procedure call

- Invoked at a call site, with some set of *actual parameters*
- Control returns to call site, immediately after invocation

```plaintext
int p(a,b,c)
    int a, b, c;
    {
        int d;
        d = q(c,b);
        ...
    }

int q(x,y)
    int x,y;
    {
        return x + y;
    }
```

... s = p(10,t,u);
...
The Procedure as a Control Abstraction

Procedures have well-defined control-flow

The Algol-60 procedure call
• Invoked at a call site, with some set of *actual parameters*
• Control returns to call site, immediately after invocation

```c
int p(a,b,c)
int a, b, c;
{
    int   d;
    d = q(c,b);
    ...
}

int q(x,y)
int x,y;
{
    return x + y;
    }

s = p(10,t,u);
...
The Procedure as a Control Abstraction

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    return x + y;
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...

The Procedure as a Control Abstraction

Procedures have well-defined control-flow

The Algol-60 procedure call

- Invoked at a call site, with some set of actual parameters
- Control returns to call site, immediately after invocation

```
int p(a,b,c)
  int a, b, c;
  {
    int d;
    d = q(c,b);
    ...
  }

int q(x,y)
  int x,y;
  {
    return x + y;
  }
```

```
s = p(10,t,u);
...
```

- Most languages allow recursion
The Procedure as a Control Abstraction

Implementing procedures with this behaviour

- Requires code to **save** and **restore** a “return address”
- Must map **actual parameters** to **formal parameters**  \((c\rightarrow x, \ b\rightarrow y)\)
- Must create storage for **local variables** \((\&, \text{maybe, parameters})\)
  - \(p\) needs space for \(d\) \((\&, \text{maybe, a, b, & c})\)
  - Where does this space go in recursive invocations?

```c
int p(a,b,c)
int a, b, c;
{
    int d;
    d = q(c,b);
}
```

```c
int q(x,y)
int x,y;
{
    return x + y;
}
```

\(s = p(10,t,u);\)
The Procedure as a Control Abstraction

Implementing procedures with this behaviour

- Must preserve p’s state while q executes
  → recursion causes the real problem here
- Strategy: Create unique location for each procedure activation
  → Can use a “stack” of memory blocks to hold local storage and return addresses

```
int p(a,b,c)
int a, b, c;
{
    int d;
    d = q(c,b);
    ...
}
```

```
int q(x,y)
int x,y;
{
    return x + y;
}
```

```
s = p(10,t,u);
...
```

Compiler emits code that causes all this to happen at run time
The Procedure as a Name Space
The Procedure as a Name Space

Each procedure creates its own name space

- Any name (almost) can be declared locally
- Local names obscure identical non-local names
- Local names cannot be seen outside the procedure
  → Nested procedures are “inside” by definition
- We call this set of rules & conventions “lexical scoping”

Examples

- C has global, static, local, and block scopes \((\text{Fortran-like})\)
  → Blocks can be nested, procedures cannot
- Scheme has global, procedure-wide, and nested scopes \((let)\)
  → Procedure scope (typically) contains formal parameters
The Procedure as a Name Space

Why introduce lexical scoping?
• Provides a compile-time mechanism for binding “free” variables
• Simplifies rules for naming & resolves conflicts

How can the compiler keep track of all those names?

The Problem
• At point $p$, which declaration of $x$ is current?
• At run-time, where is $x$ found?
• As parser goes in & out of scopes, how does it delete $x$?

The Answer
• Lexically scoped symbol tables (see § 5.7.3)
Lexically-scoped Symbol Tables

The problem
- The compiler needs a distinct record for each declaration
- Nested lexical scopes admit duplicate declarations

The interface
- \textbf{insert}(\textit{name}, \textit{level}) – creates record for \textit{name} at \textit{level}
- \textbf{lookup}(\textit{name}, \textit{level}) – returns pointer or index
- \textbf{delete}(\textit{level}) – removes all names declared at \textit{level}

Many implementation schemes have been proposed (see § B.4)
- We’ll stay at the conceptual level
- Hash table implementation is tricky, detailed, & fun

Symbol tables are compile-time structures the compiler use to resolve references to names. We’ll see the corresponding run-time structures that are used to establish addressability later.
Example

procedure p {
  int a, b, c
  procedure q {
    int v, b, x, w
    procedure r {
      int x, y, z
      ...
    }
  }
  procedure s {
    int x, a, v
    ...
  }
  ...
  r ... s
}
...
q ...
}

B0: {
  int a, b, c
B1: {
    int v, b, x, w
B2: {
      int x, y, z
      ...
    }
B3: {
      int x, a, v
      ...
    }
...
  }
Lexically-scoped Symbol Tables

High-level idea
• Create a new table for each scope
• Chain them together for lookup

```
procedure p {
  int a, b, c
  procedure q {
    int v, b, x, w
    procedure r {
      int x, y, z
      ...
    }
    procedure s {
      int x, a, v
      ...
    }
    ...
  }
  ...
}
```
Lexically-scoped Symbol Tables

High-level idea
• Create a new table for each scope
• Chain them together for lookup

“Sheaf of tables” implementation
• `insert()` may need to create table
• it always inserts at current level
• `lookup()` walks chain of tables & returns first occurrence of name
• `delete()` throws away table for level $p$, if it is top table in the chain

If the compiler must preserve the table (for, say, the debugger), this idea is actually practical.
Individual tables can be hash tables.
Implementing Lexically Scoped Symbol Tables

Stack organization

Implementation
- **insert ()** creates new level pointer if needed and inserts at `nextFree`
- **lookup ()** searches linearly from `nextFree-1` forward
- **delete ()** sets `nextFree` to the equal the start location of the level deleted.

Advantage
- Uses much less space

Disadvantage
- Lookups can be expensive
The Procedure as an External Interface
The Procedure as an External Interface

OS needs a way to start the program’s execution

• Programmer needs a way to indicate where it begins
  → The “main” procedure in most languages

• When user invokes “ls” at a command line
  → OS finds the executable
  → OS creates a process and arranges for it to run “ls”
  → “ls” is code from the compiler, linked with run-time system
    ♦ Starts the run-time environment & calls “main”
    ♦ After main, it shuts down run-time environment & returns

• When “ls” needs system services
  → It makes a system call, such as fopen()
Where Do All These Variables Go?

Automatic & Local
• Keep them in the procedure activation record or in a register
• Automatic ⇒ lifetime matches procedure’s lifetime

Static
• Procedure scope ⇒ storage area affixed with procedure name
  → &_p.x
• File scope ⇒ storage area affixed with file name
• Lifetime is entire execution

Global
• One or more named global data areas
• One per variable, or per file, or per program, ...
• Lifetime is entire execution
Placing Run-time Data Structures

Classic Organization

- Code, static, & global data have known size
  - Use symbolic labels in the code
- Heap & stack both grow & shrink over time
- This is a virtual address space

• Better utilization if stack & heap grow toward each other
• Very old result (Knuth)
• Code & data separate or interleaved
• Uses address space, not allocated memory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Stack &amp; Global</th>
<th>Heap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Single Logical Address Space
How Does This Really Work?

The Big Picture

Compiler’s view

OS’s view

Hardware’s view

Physical address space

Compiler’s view

OS’s view

Hardware’s view

Physical address space

...
Where Do Local Variables Live?

A Simplistic model
• Allocate a data area for each distinct scope
• One data area per “sheaf” in scoped table

What about recursion?
• Need a data area per invocation (or activation) of a scope
• We call this the scope’s activation record
• The compiler can also store control information there!

More complex scheme
• One activation record (AR) per procedure instance
• All the procedure’s scopes share a single AR (may share space)
• Static relationship between scopes in single procedure

Used this way, “static” means knowable at compile time (and, therefore, fixed).
Translating Local Names

How does the compiler represent a specific instance of \( x \) ?

- Name is translated into a *static coordinate*  
  \( < \text{level},\text{offset} > \) pair
  
- “level” is lexical nesting level of the procedure
  
- “offset” is *unique* within that scope

- Subsequent code will use the static coordinate to generate addresses and references

- “level” is a function of the table in which \( x \) is found
  
  - Stored in the entry for each \( x \)

- “offset” must be assigned and stored in the symbol table
  
  - Assigned at compile time
  
  - Known at compile time
  
  - Used to generate code that executes at run-time
Storage for Blocks within a Single Procedure

- Fixed length data can always be at a constant offset from the beginning of a procedure
  - In our example, the \( a \) declared at level 0 will always be the first data element, stored at byte 0 in the fixed-length data area
  - The \( x \) declared at level 1 will always be the sixth data item, stored at byte 20 in the fixed data area
  - The \( x \) declared at level 2 will always be the eighth data item, stored at byte 28 in the fixed data area
  - But what about the \( a \) declared in the second block at level 2?
Variable-length Data

Arrays

→ If size is fixed at compile time, store in fixed-length data area
→ If size is variable, store descriptor in fixed length area, with pointer to variable length area
→ Variable-length data area is assigned at the end of the fixed length area for block in which it is allocated

B0: {  
    int a, b  
    ... assign value to a
B1:  
    {  
        int v(a), b, x  
B2:  
    {  
        int x, y(8)  
        ....
    
    }  

Includes variable length data for all blocks in the procedure ...
Activation Record Basics

parameters
register save area
return value
return address
addressability
caller’s ARP
local variables

Space for parameters to the current routine
Saved register contents
If function, space for return value
Address to resume caller
Help with non-local access
To restore caller’s AR on a return
Space for local values & variables (including spills)

One AR for each invocation of a procedure
Activation Record Details

How does the compiler find the variables?
• They are at known offsets from the AR pointer
• The static coordinate leads to a “loadAI” operation
  → Level specifies an ARP, offset is the constant

Variable-length data
• If AR can be extended, put it below local variables
• Leave a pointer at a known offset from ARP
• Otherwise, put variable-length data on the heap

Initializing local variables
• Must generate explicit code to store the values
• Among the procedure’s first actions
Activation Record Details

Where do activation records live?

• If lifetime of AR matches lifetime of invocation, AND
• If code normally executes a “return”
  ⇒ Keep ARs on a stack

• If a procedure can outlive its caller, OR
• If it can return an object that can reference its execution state
  ⇒ ARs must be kept in the heap

• If a procedure makes no calls
  ⇒ AR can be allocated statically

Efficiency prefers static, stack, then heap
Communicating Between Procedures

Most languages provide a parameter passing mechanism
⇒ Expression used at “call site” becomes variable in callee

Two common binding mechanisms

• **Call-by-reference** passes a pointer to actual parameter
  ⇒ Requires slot in the AR (for address of parameter)
  ⇒ Multiple names with the same address?

  ```
  call fee(x,x,x);
  ```

• **Call-by-value** passes a copy of its value at time of call
  ⇒ Requires slot in the AR
  ⇒ Each name gets a unique location *(may have same value)*
  ⇒ Arrays are mostly passed by reference, not value

• Can always use global variables ...
Establishing Addressability

Must create base addresses

• Global & static variables
  → Construct a label by mangling names (i.e., &_fee)

• Local variables
  → Convert to static data coordinate and use ARP + offset

• Local variables of other procedures
  → Convert to static coordinates
  → Find appropriate ARP
  → Use that ARP + offset

{ Must find the right AR
  Need links to nameable ARs }
procedure p {
  int a, b, c
  procedure q {
    int v, b, x, w
    procedure r {
      int x, y, z
      ....
    }
    procedure s {
      int x, a, v
      ...
      c \leftarrow \text{access to } c
    }
  ...
  }
  ...
  }
Establishing Addressability

Using access links

- Each AR has a pointer to AR of lexical ancestor
- Lexical ancestor need not be the caller

- Reference to $<p,16>$ runs up access link chain to $p$
- Cost of access is proportional to lexical distance

Some setup cost on each call
Establishing Addressability

Using access links

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC</th>
<th>Generated Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;2,8&gt;</td>
<td>loadAl r₀, 8 ⇒ r₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1,12&gt;</td>
<td>loadAl r₀, -4 ⇒ r₁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>loadAl r₁, 12 ⇒ r₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;0,16&gt;</td>
<td>loadAl r₀, -4 ⇒ r₁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>loadAl r₁, -4 ⇒ r₁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>loadAl r₁, 16 ⇒ r₂</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assume
• Current lexical level is 2
• Access link is at ARP - 4

Maintaining access link
• Calling level \( k+1 \)
  → Use current ARP as link
• Calling level \( j < k \)
  → Find ARP for \( j - 1 \)
  → Use that ARP as link

Access & maintenance cost varies with level
All accesses are relative to ARP \((r₀)\)
Procedure Linkages

How do procedure calls actually work?

- At compile time, callee may not be available for inspection
  - Different calls may be in different compilation units
  - Compiler may not know system code from user code
  - All calls must use the same protocol

Compiler must use a standard sequence of operations

- Enforces control & data abstractions
- Divides responsibility between caller & callee

Usually a system-wide agreement *(for interoperability)*
Procedure Linkages

Standard procedure linkage

Procedure has
• standard prolog
• standard epilog

Each call involves a
• pre-call sequence
• post-return sequence

These are completely predictable from the call site ⇒ depend on the number & type of the actual parameters
Procedure Linkages

Pre-call Sequence
• Sets up callee’s basic AR
• Helps preserve its own environment

The Details
• Allocate space for the callee’s AR
  → except space for local variables
• Evaluates each parameter & stores value or address
• Saves return address, caller’s ARP into callee’s AR
• If access links are used
  → Find appropriate lexical ancestor & copy into callee’s AR
• Save any caller-save registers
  → Save into space in caller’s AR
• Jump to address of callee’s prolog code
Procedure Linkages

Post-return Sequence
• Finish restoring caller’s environment
• Place any value back where it belongs

The Details
• Copy return value from callee’s AR, if necessary
• Free the callee’s AR
• Restore any caller-save registers
• Restore any call-by-reference parameters to registers, if needed
  → Also copy back call-by-value/result parameters
• Continue execution after the call
Procedure Linkages

Prolog Code

• Finish setting up the callee’s environment
• Preserve parts of the caller’s environment that will be disturbed

The Details

• Preserve any callee-save registers
• Allocate space for local data
  → Easiest scenario is to extend the AR
• Find any static data areas referenced in the callee
• Handle any local variable initializations

With heap allocated AR, may need to use a separate heap object for local variables
Procedure Linkages

**Epilog Code**

- Wind up the business of the callee
- Start restoring the caller’s environment

**The Details**

- Store return value? No, this happens on the return statement
- Restore callee-save registers
- Free space for local data, if necessary (on the heap)
- Load return address from AR
- Restore caller’s ARP
- Jump to the return address

If ARs are stack allocated, this may not be necessary. (Caller can reset stacktop to its pre-call value.)