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Outline

• Introduction to LLVM

• Homework steps

• Hacking LLVM with its IR
LLVM

• LLVM is a great, hackable compiler for C/C++ languages
  • C, C++, Objective-C, Swift, Rust, ...
• But it’s also (this is not a complete list)
  • A dynamic compiler
  • A compiler for bytecode languages (e.g., Java, CIL bytecode)
• LLVM IR: bitcode
• LLVM is modular and well documented
• Started from UIUC, it’s now the research tool of choice
• It’s an industrial-strength compiler
  Apple, AMD, Intel, NVIDIA, …
LLVM tools

- **clang**: compile C/C++ code as well as OpenMP code
- **clang-format**: to format C/C++ code
- **clang-tidy**: to detect and fix bug-prone patterns, performance, portability and maintainability issues
- **clangd**: to make editors (e.g., vim) smart
- **clang-rename**: to refactor C/C++ code
- **SAFECode**: memory checker
- **lldb**: debugger
- **lld**: linker
- **polly**: parallelizing compiler for numerical and regular workloads (e.g., matrix multiplication)
- **libclc**: OpenCL standard library
- **dragonegg**: integrate GCC parsers
- **vmkit**: bytecode virtual machines
- ... and many more
LLVM common use at 10000 feet

Source files

clang

Binary
LLVM common use at 10000 feet

Source files

Binary

$ clang hello_world.c -o hello_world
[ simonec@peroni:~/classes/CAT/Lectures/LLVM introduction/code/LLVM/1 ]$

[ simonec@peroni:~/classes/CAT/Lectures/LLVM introduction/code/LLVM/1 ]$

$ ./hello_world
[ simonec@peroni:~/classes/CAT/Lectures/LLVM introduction/code/LLVM/1 ]$

$
LLVM common use at 10000 feet

Source files

Lib/tool...
Lib/tool 1
Lib/tool 2
Lib/tool 3
Lib/tool 4
Lib/tool...

clang

Binary

LLVM Most of them talk IR
LLVM internals

• A component is composed of pipelines
  • Each stage: reads something as input and generates something as output
  • To develop a stage: specify how to transform the input to generate the output

• Most complexity in linking stages is kept outside the development of a stage

• In this class: we’ll look at concepts and internals of middle-end
  But some of them are still valid for front-end/back-end
LLVM and other compilers

• LLVM middle-end is designed around it’s IR
A middle-end pass in LLVM

- A compilation pass reads and (sometime) modifies the bitcode (LLVM IR)

- If you want to analyze code: you need to understand the IR

- If you want to modify the bitcode: you need to understand the IR
Adding a pass

• Internally
  - clang
  - vmkit
  - ...

• Externally
  • More convenient to develop (compile-debug loop is much faster!)
  - clang
  - vmkit
  - ...
Pass types

Use the “smallest” one for your CAT

• CallGraphSCCPass
• ModulePass
• FunctionPass
• LoopPass
• BasicBlockPass

```c
int bar (void){
    return foo(2);
}

int foo (int p){
    return p+1;
}
```
Pass manager

• The pass manager orchestrates passes

• It builds the pipeline of passes in the middle-end

• The pipeline is created by respecting the dependences declared by each pass
  Pass X depends on Y
  Y will be invoked before X
Learning LLVM

• Login (e.g., hanlon.wot.eecs.northwestern.edu) and play with LLVM
  • LLVM 14.0.6 is installed in /home/software/llvm
  • Add the following code in both ~/.bash_profile and ~/.bashrc files
    LLVM_HOME=/home/software/llvm
    export PATH=$LLVM_HOME/bin:$PATH
    export LD_LIBRARY_PATH=$LLVM_HOME/lib:$LD_LIBRARY_PATH

• Read the documentation
• Read the documentation
• Read the documentation

• Get familiar with LLVM documentation
  • Doxygen pages (API docs)
  • Language reference manual (IR)
  • Programmer’s manual (LLVM-specific data structures, tools)
  • Writing an LLVM pass
LLVM summary

• LLVM is an industrial-strength compiler also used in academia
  • Very hard to know in detail every component
  • Focus on what’s important to your goal
  • Become a ninja at jumping around the documentation

• It’s well organized, documented with a large community behind it

• Basic C++ skills are required
Final tips

• LLVM includes a LOT of passes
  • Analyses
  • Transformations
  • Normalization

• Take advantage of existing code

• I have a pointer to something. What is it?
  
getName() works on most things
errs() << TheThingYouDon’tKnow ;
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Homework: build your own compiler

• You have a skeleton of a compiler (cat-c) built upon clang
  • [https://github.com/scampanoni/LLVM_middleend_template](https://github.com/scampanoni/LLVM_middleend_template)
  • Switch to the branch v14: git checkout v14
  • This extends only the middle-end of clang by adding a new pass
  • This new pass will be invoked as last pass in the middle-end (independently whether you use O0, O1, O2, ...)

• You will extend this skeleton to do all of your assignments

• You can only rely on what’s included in LLVM (no external tools/analyses/transformations)
Homework: build your own compiler

To install cat-c (this needs to be done only once):

1. Login to a machine
   (e.g., hanlon.wot.eecs.northwestern.edu)
2. Clone the git repository:
   git clone https://github.com/scampanoni/LLVM_middleend_template.git cat-c
3. Compile it and install it:
   cd cat-c ; ./run_me.sh
4. Add the cat-c compiler to your environment
   I. echo "export PATH=~/CAT/bin:$PATH" >> ~/.bash_profile
   II. Logout and login back
Homework: build your own compiler

To use cat-c

1. Login to a machine
   (e.g., hanlon.wot.eecs.northwestern.edu)
2. You need to use “cat-c” rather than “clang” in your command line
   (that’s it)
   • For example, if before you run:
     clang myprogram.c –o myprogram
   • Now you need to run:
     cat-c myprogram.c –o myprogram
   • The only difference between cat-c and clang is that
     cat-c invokes a new pass at the end of the middle-end
Homework: build your own compiler

Source files

Your work

LLVM IR

clang

A bash script

cat-c

Binary
The cat-c structure

$ git clone https://github.com/scampanoni/LLVM_middleend_template.git cat-c
Cloning into 'cat-c'...
remote: Enumerating objects: 22, done.
remote: Counting objects: 100% (22/22), done.
remote: Compressing objects: 100% (15/15), done.
remote: Total 22 (delta 4), reused 21 (delta 3), pack-reused 0
Unpacking objects: 100% (22/22), done.
Checking connectivity... done.

$ cd cat-c
$ ll
16K total
drwxr-xr-x 2 simonec authors 26 Apr 9 13:21 bin
-rw-r--r-- 1 simonec authors 738 Apr 9 13:21 CMakeLists.txt
-rw-r--r-- 1 simonec authors 1.1K Apr 9 13:21 LICENSE.md
-rw-r--r-- 1 simonec authors 689 Apr 9 13:21 README.md
-rw-r--r-- 1 simonec authors 235 Apr 9 13:21 run_me.sh
drwxr-xr-x 2 simonec authors 57 Apr 9 13:21 src
$
namespace 
{
    struct CAT : public FunctionPass {
        static char ID;
        CAT() : FunctionPass(ID) {} 
        bool doInitialization (Module &M) override {
            errs() << "Hello LLVM World at "doInitialization"\n";
            return false;
        }
    }
    bool runOnFunction (Function *F) override {
        errs() << "Hello CAT!
";
        return false;
    }
    static RegisterPass<CAT> X("CAT", "Homework for the CAT class");
    static CAT * _PassMaker = NULL;
    static RegisterStandardPasses _RegPass1(PassManagerBuilder::EP_OptimizerLast, 
        getAnalysisInfo, 
        errs() << "Hello CAT!
";
        return false;
    
    static RegisterStandardPasses _RegPass2(PassManagerBuilder::EP_Optimized, 
        getAnalysisInfo, 
        errs() << "Hello CAT!
";
        return false;
    }
};
Your cat-c compiler

```
$ tree ~/CAT/
/home/simonec/CAT/
  └── bin
      └── cat-c
  └── lib
      └── CAT.so
2 directories, 2 files
```

Source files

1. A bash script
2. cat-c
3. clang

Your work

Binary
Using your cat-c compiler

```
[ simonec@peroni:~/test$ ]
$ ll
total 4.0K
-rw-r--r-- 1 simonec authors 27 Apr  9 13:31 test.c
[ simonec@peroni:~/test$ ]
$ cat-c test.c -o test
Hello LLVM World at "getAnalysisUsage"
Hello LLVM World at "doInitialization"
Hello LLVM World at "runOnFunction"
[ simonec@peroni:~/test$ ]
$ ./test
[ simonec@peroni:~/test$ ]
$ [ simonec@peroni:~/cat-c$ ]
$ tree
.
├── bin
│   ├── cat-c
│   ├── CMakeLists.txt
│   └── LICENSE.md
├── README.md
├── run_me.sh
├── src
│   └── CatPass.cpp
└── 2 directories, 7 files
```

To do more than a hello world pass: modify
Homework: build your own compiler

To modify cat-c

1. **Modify** cat-c/src/CatPass.cpp
   cd cat-c/build ; vim ../src/CatPass.cpp

2. **Go to the build directory**
   cd cat-c/build

3. **Recompile your CAT and install it**
   make install
10 assignments: from H0 to H9

- Hi depends on Hi-1
- For every assignment:
  - You have to modify your previous CatPass.cpp
  - You have to pass all tests distributed
- Assignment i: Hi.tar.bz2
  - The description of the homework (Hi.pdf)
  - The tests you have to pass (tests)
- Each assignment is an LLVM pass
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LLVM middle-end is designed around its IR
LLVM tools to read/generate IR

• `clang` to generate/optimize/translate LLVM IR code
  • To generate binaries from source code or IR code
  • Check Makefile you have in LLVM_introduction.tar.bz2 (Canvas)

• `lli` to execute (interpret/JIT) LLVM IR code
  `lli FILE.bc`

• `llc` to generate assembly from LLVM IR code
  `llc FILE.bc`
  or
  `clang FILE.bc`
LLVM tools to read/generate IR

• opt to analyze/transform LLVM IR code
  • Read LLVM IR file
  • Load external passes
  • Run specified passes
  • Respect pass order you specify as input
    • opt -pass1 -pass2 FILE.ll
  • Optionally generate transformed IR

• Useful passes
  • opt -view-cfg FILE.ll
  • opt -view-dom FILE.ll

• opt -help
LLVM IR

• RISC-based
  • Instructions operate on variables

```c
int myF (int p0, int p1){
    int a = p0 + p1;
    int b = a * 42;
    return b;
}
```

```llvm
define dso_local i32 @myF(i32, i32) local_unnamed_addr #0 {
  %3 = add nsw i32 %1, %0
  %4 = mul nsw i32 %3, 42
  ret i32 %4
}
```
LLVM IR

• RISC-based
  • Instructions operate on variables
  • Load and store to access memory

```c
void myF (int *p){
  int c = *p;
  c *= 42;
  *p = c;
}
```
LLVM IR

• RISC-based
  • Instructions operate on variables
  • Load and store to access memory

It seems IR variables are 1:1 with C variables but they aren’t
LLVM IR

• RISC-based
  • Instructions operate on variables
  • Load and store to access memory

• Include a few high level instructions
  • Function calls (invoke)
  • Pointer arithmetics (getelementptr)
  • Switch semantic (switch)
• Strongly typed for variables
  • No assignments of variables with different types
  • You need to explicitly cast variables

• No class hierarchy for memory objects

• Variables
  • Global (@myVar)
  • Local to a function (%myVar)
  • Function parameter (define i32 @myF (i32 %myPar))
LLVM IR (3)

• A program is composed by modules (Module), one per source file
  clang –emit-llvm –c myFile1.c –o myFile1.bc
  clang –emit-llvm –c myFile2.c –o myFile2.bc

• Modules can be merged
  llvm-link myFile1.bc myFile2.bc –o mergedModule.bc
LLVM IR (4)

LLVM organizes “compiler concepts” in containers

• A module is a container of functions
  • Given an object Module &M
    for (Function &f : M){ }
    Function *sqrtF = M.getFunction(“sqrt”)
  • Given an object Function *f
    Module *m = f->getParent();

• More concepts will come later
LLVM IR (5)

• 3 different (but 100% equivalent) formats
  • Assembly: human-readable format (FILENAME.ll)
  • Bitcode: machine binary on-disk (FILENAME.bc)
  • In memory: in memory binary

• Generating IR
  • clang for C and C++ languages (similar options w.r.t. GCC)
  • Different front-ends available (e.g., flang)
LLVM IR (6)

Print IR concepts: `<<` operator

- To print Function `*f`
  ```c
  errs() << *f << "\n";
  ```

- To print Function `&f`
  ```c
  errs() << f << "\n";
  ```

- To print Instruction `*i`
  ```c
  errs() << *i << "\n";
  ```

- To print Module `*m`
  ```c
  errs() << *m << "\n";
  ```
Functions and instructions

```cpp
bool runOnFunction (Function &F) override {
  errs() << "Hello LLVM World at " "runOnFunction" \n";
  return false;
}
```

runOnFunction’s job is to analyze/transform a function F
... by analyzing/transforming its instructions
Functions and instructions

```
#include "llvm/IR/InstIterator.h"

for (auto& inst : instructions(F)) {
  errs() << inst << "\n";
}
```

runOnFunction’s job is to analyze/transform a function F
... by analyzing/transforming its instructions

Iteration order:
Follows the order used to store instructions in a function F
Instructions in LLVM

• All instructions are instances of the class `llvm::Instruction`

• Different instructions are instances of different sub-classes: `#include "llvm/IR/Instructions.h"

```plaintext
define dso_local i32 @myF(i32, i32) local_unnamed_addr #0 {
  %3 = add nsw i32 %1, %0
  %4 = mul nsw i32 %3, 42
  ret i32 %4
}
```
Instructions in LLVM

• All instructions are instances of `llvm::Instruction`

• Different instructions are instances of different sub-classes

• Each instruction sub-class has extra methods for this type of instructions
  • E.g., `Function * CallInst::getCalledFunction()`

```cpp
for (auto& inst : instructions(F)){
    errs() << inst << "\n";
}
```
Instructions in LLVM

- You need to cast Instruction objects to access instruction-specific methods
- LLVM redefined casting: `#include "llvm/Support/Casting.h"
- bool isa<CLASS>(objectPointer)

```cpp
for (auto &inst : instructions(&F)){
    if (isa<CallInst>(&inst)){
        CallInst *callInst = cast<CallInst>(&I);
        Function *callee = callInst->getCalledFunction();
    }
}
```

- CLASS *ptrCasted = cast<CLASS>(objectPointer)

```cpp
for (auto &inst : instructions(&F)){
    CallInst *callInst = dyn_cast<CallInst>(&inst);
    if (callInst != nullptr){
    }
}
```
A great alternative to casting: the visitor pattern

```cpp
#include "llvm/IR/InstVisitor.h"

class MyInstVisitor : public InstVisitor<MyInstVisitor> {
    public:
        MyInstVisitor(bool enableMyFancyFeature) {
            this->enableFeature = enableMyFancyFeature;
        }

        void visitCallInst (CallInst &inst) {
            errs() << "CALL = " << inst << "\n";
        }

    private:
        bool enableFeature;
};

MyInstVisitor wow{true};
wow.visit(F);
```
Now you are ready for your first assignment!

In Canvas: homework/H0.tar.bz2

Test your code in
one of the machine available for this class
(e.g., hanlon.wot.eecs.northwestern.edu)
As Linus Torvalds says ...

_Talk is cheap. Show me the code._

Let’s start hacking LLVM

LLVM examples: LLVM_introduction.tar.bz2