Shared Memory Multiprocessors

What is a Shared Memory Architecture?
- All processors can access all memory
- Processors share memory resources, but can operate independently
- One processor's memory changes is seen by all other processors
- Easier to program
  - Communication through shared memory
  - Synchronization through locks stored in shared memory
- Need cache coherence in hardware – why?
- Need interconnection network between all processors and all memory

Shared Memory Architectures

- Uniform Memory Access (UMA) Architecture
  - Example: Symmetric Multiprocessor (SMP) machines
  - Identical processors with equal access and equal access time to memory
  - Also called CC-UMA - Cache Coherent UMA. Cache coherence means if one processor updates a location in shared memory, all the other processors know about the update

- Non-Uniform Memory Access (NUMA) Architecture
  - Often made by physically linking two or more SMPs
  - One processor can directly access memory of another processor
  - Not all processors have equal access time to all memories
  - Memory access across link is slower
  - Called CC-NUMA if Cache Coherence is maintained

Pros and Cons?

Shared Bus Architectures

- Contention for bus and memory may degrade performance
- Need arbitration for the bus (whenever more than one bus master exists)
- Some (old) examples for shared bus architectures:
  - Encore's Multimax: Paper figure 1
  - Sequent Balance: Paper figure 2
  - Alliant FX/80: Paper figure 3
  - ELXSI System 6400: Paper figure 4

Network Multiprocessors

- More scalable than shared bus architectures
- Less contention for shared interconnection resources
- Usually higher latency to communicate
- May need arbitration to access shared memory (if more than one processor requests access to same bank)
- Some (old) examples:
  - BBN Butterfly: Paper figure 5, 6
  - Intel IPSC/2
  - NCUBE/n
  - FPS T Series

Interconnection Networks

- In a shared memory MP, we need to connect different processors and memory modules
- Types of interconnect:
  - Shared bus
  - Crossbar: Fully connected
  - Ring
  - Mesh
  - 2-D Torus
  - Hypercube
- Number of hops vs. number of links: Compare N processors and M memory modules
- More details later in the course
Memory Hierarchy

- Problem: sharing memory means more than one processor can send requests to memory
  - High memory bandwidth requirements
- To avoid sending lots of memory requests, processors use caches to:
  - Filter out many memory requests
  - Reduce average memory latency
  - Reduce memory bandwidth requirements
- Typically more than one level of caches is used
  - L1 caches: Usually Split I & D caches, small and fast
  - L2 caches: Usually on die, composed of SRAM cells

Cache Coherence

- Problem: Using caches mean multiple copies of the same memory location may exist
  - Updates to the same location may lead to bugs
- Example:
  - Processor 1 reads A
  - Processor 2 reads A
  - Processor 1 writes to A
  - Now, processor 2’s cache contains stale data
- Cache coherence need to be implemented in hardware using a cache coherence protocol

Conditions for Cache Coherence

- Program Order. A read by processor P to location A that follows a write by P to A, with no writes to A by another processor in between, should always return the value of A written by P
- Coherent View of Memory. A read by processor P1 to location A that follows a write by another processor P2 to location A should return the written value by P2 if:
  - The read and write are sufficiently separated in time
  - No other writes to A by another processor occur between the read and the write
- Write Serialization. Writes to the same location are serialized: Two writes to the same location by any two processors are seen in the same order by all processors

Cache Coherence (Cont.)

- Cache coherence defines behavior of reads and writes to the same memory location
- Memory consistency models define the behavior of reads and writes with respect to accesses to other memory locations (More details later in the course)
- Two main types of cache coherence protocols:
  - Snooping
    - Caches keep track of the sharing status of all blocks
    - No centralized state is kept
    - Cache controllers snoop shared interconnect to know when a requested block exists in the cache
  - Directory
    - Sharing status of any block in memory is kept in one location

Very Simple Coherence Protocol

- MI protocol
  - Two states: M (Modified) and I (Invalid)
  - Only one cache contains a copy of a certain memory location
  - When another cache requests a block, the cache currently containing the block invalidates it
  - Protocol limits sharing and degrades performance

- Optimization: MSI protocol allows read sharing

Reading Assignment

- Monday
  - Homework 2 due on Wednesday
  - Project proposals due on Monday
  - Discuss project information