BUS STRUCTURE AND PERFORMANCE OF A COMPUTER

The simplest and most common way of interconnecting various parts of the computer. To achieve a reasonable speed of operation, a computer must be organized so that all its units can handle one full word of data at a given time.A group of lines that serve as a connecting port for several devices is called a bus.

In addition to the lines that carry the data, the bus must have lines for address and control purpose. Simplest way to interconnect is to use the single bus as shown

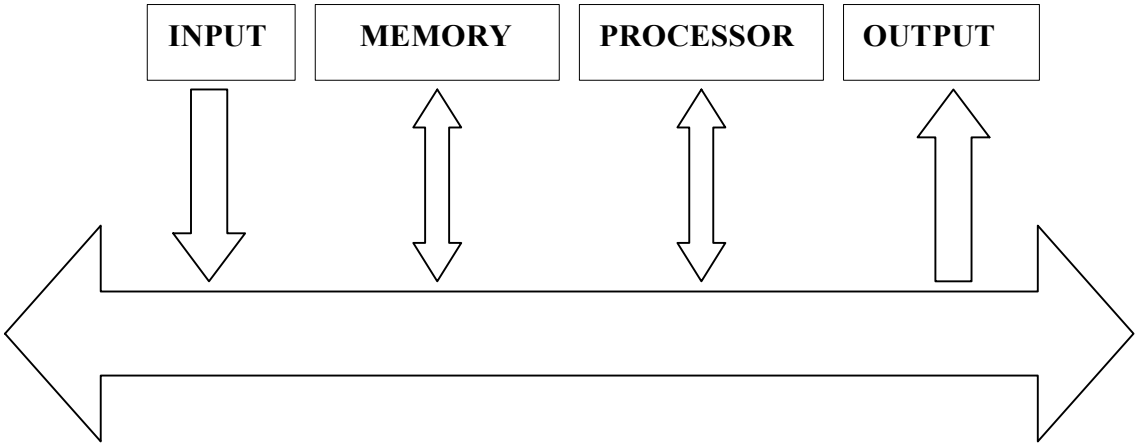

Fig c: Single bus structure

Since the bus can be used for only one transfer at a time, only two units can actively use the bus at any given time. Bus control lines are used to arbitrate multiple requests for use of one bus.

Single bus structure is

- Low cost
- Very flexible for attaching peripheral devices

Multiple bus structure certainly increases, the performance but also increases the cost significantly.

All the interconnected devices are not of same speed & time, leads to a bit of a problem. This is solved by using cache registers (ie buffer registers). These buffers are electronic registers of small capacity when compared to the main memory but of comparable speed.

The instructions from the processor at once are loaded into these buffers and then the complete transfer of data at a fast rate will take place.

Performance

The most important measure of the performance of a computer is how quickly it can execute programs. The speed with which a computer executes program is affected by the design of its hardware. For best performance, it is necessary to design the compiles, the machine instruction set, and the hardware in a coordinated way.

The total time required to execute the program is elapsed time is a measure of the performance of the entire computer system. It is affected by the speed of the processor, the disk and the printer. The time needed to execute a instruction is called the processor time.

Just as the elapsed time for the execution of a program depends on all units in a computer system, the processor time depends on the hardware involved in the execution of individual machine instructions. This hardware comprises the processor and the memory which are usually connected by the bus as shown in the fig c.

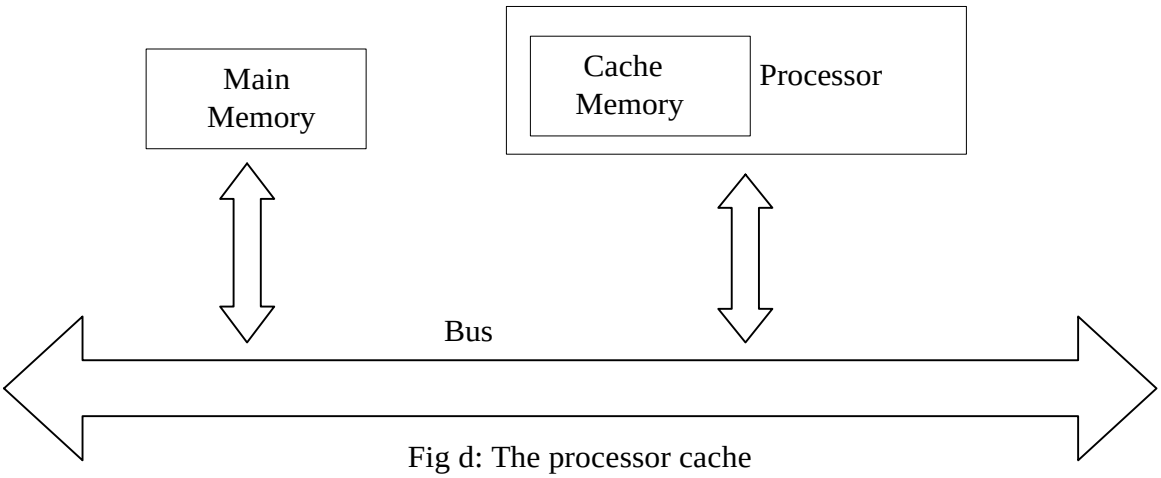

Fig d: The processor cache

The pertinent parts of the fig. c are repeated in fig. d which includes the cache memory as part of the processor unit.

Let us examine the flow of program instructions and data between the memory and the processor. At the start of execution, all program instructions and the required data are stored in the main memory. As the execution proceeds, instructions are fetched one by one over the bus into the processor, and a copy is placed in the cache later if the same instruction or data item is needed a second time, it is read directly from the cache.

The processor and relatively small cache memory can be fabricated on a single IC chip. The internal speed of performing the basic steps of instruction processing on chip is very high and is considerably faster than the speed at which the instruction and data can be fetched from the main memory. A program will be executed faster if the movement of instructions and data between the main memory and the processor is minimized, which is achieved by using the cache.

For example:- Suppose a number of instructions are executed repeatedly over a short period of time as happens in a program loop. If these instructions are available in the cache, they can be fetched quickly during the period of repeated use. The same applies to the data that are used repeatedly.

Processor clock: -

Processor circuits are controlled by a timing signal called clock. The clock designer the regular time intervals called clock cycles. To execute a machine instruction the processor divides the action to be performed into a sequence of basic steps that each step can be completed in one clock cycle. The length P of one clock cycle is an important parameter that affects the processor performance.

Processor used in today's personal computer and work station have a clock rates that range from a few hundred million to over a billion cycles per second.

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