

1 Introduction to GNU *lightning*

This document describes installing and using the GNU *lightning* library for dynamic code generation.

Dynamic code generation is the generation of machine code at runtime. It is typically used to strip a layer of interpretation by allowing compilation to occur at runtime. One of the most well-known applications of dynamic code generation is perhaps that of interpreters that compile source code to an intermediate bytecode form, which is then recompiled to machine code at run-time: this approach effectively combines the portability of bytecode representations with the speed of machine code. Another common application of dynamic code generation is in the field of hardware simulators and binary emulators, which can use the same techniques to translate simulated instructions to the instructions of the underlying machine.

Yet other applications come to mind: for example, windowing *bitblt* operations, matrix manipulations, and network packet filters. Albeit very powerful and relatively well known within the compiler community, dynamic code generation techniques are rarely exploited to their full potential and, with the exception of the two applications described above, have remained curiosities because of their portability and functionality barriers: binary instructions are generated, so programs using dynamic code generation must be retargeted for each machine; in addition, coding a run-time code generator is a tedious and error-prone task more than a difficult one.

GNU *lightning* provides a portable, fast and easily retargetable dynamic code generation system.

To be portable, GNU *lightning* abstracts over current architectures' quirks and unorthogonality. The interface that it exposes to is that of a standardized RISC architecture loosely based on the SPARC and MIPS chips. There are a few general-purpose registers (six, not including those used to receive and pass parameters between subroutines), and arithmetic operations involve three operands—either three registers or two registers and an arbitrarily sized immediate value.

On one hand, this architecture is general enough that it is possible to generate pretty efficient code even on CISC architectures such as the Intel x86 or the Motorola 68k families. On the other hand, it matches real architectures closely enough that, most of the time, the compiler's constant folding pass ends up generating code which assembles machine instructions without further tests.

2 Configuring and installing GNU *lightning*

Here we will assume that your system already has the dependencies necessary to build GNU *lightning*. For more on dependencies, see GNU *lightning*'s README-hacking file.

The first thing to do to build GNU *lightning* is to configure the program, picking the set of macros to be used on the host architecture; this configuration is automatically performed by the `configure` shell script; to run it, merely type:

```
./configure
```

The `configure` accepts the `--enable-disassembler` option, that enables linking to GNU binutils and optionally print human readable disassembly of the jit code. This option can be disabled by the `--disable-disassembler` option.

`configure` also accepts the `--enable-devel-disassembler`, option useful to check exactly hat machine instructions were generated for a GNU *lightning* instruction. Basically mixing `jit_print` and `jit_disassembly`.

The `--enable-assertions` option, which enables several consistency checks in the runtime assemblers. These are not usually needed, so you can decide to simply forget about it; also remember that these consistency checks tend to slow down your code generator.

The `--enable-devel-strong-type-checking` option that does extra type checking using `assert`. This option also enables the `--enable-assertions` unless it is explicitly disabled.

The option `--enable-devel-get-jit-size` should only be used when doing updates or maintenance to *lightning*. It regenerates the `jit_${ARCH}-sz.c` creating a table of maximum bytes usage when translating a GNU *lightning* instruction to machine code.

After you've configured GNU *lightning*, run `make` as usual.

GNU *lightning* has an extensive set of tests to validate it is working correctly in the build host. To test it run:

```
make check
```

The next important step is:

```
make install
```

This ends the process of installing GNU *lightning*.

3 GNU *lightning*'s instruction set

GNU *lightning*'s instruction set was designed by deriving instructions that closely match those of most existing RISC architectures, or that can be easily synthesized if absent. Each instruction is composed of:

- an operation, like `sub` or `mul`
- most times, a register/immediate flag (`r` or `i`)
- an unsigned modifier (`u`), a type identifier or two, when applicable.

Examples of legal mnemonics are `addr` (integer add, with three register operands) and `mul_i` (integer multiply, with two register operands and an immediate operand). Each instruction takes two or three operands; in most cases, one of them can be an immediate value instead of a register.

Most GNU *lightning* integer operations are signed wordsize operations, with the exception of operations that convert types, or load or store values to/from memory. When applicable, the types and C types are as follow:

<code>_c</code>	signed char
<code>_uc</code>	unsigned char
<code>_s</code>	short
<code>_us</code>	unsigned short
<code>_i</code>	int
<code>_ui</code>	unsigned int
<code>_l</code>	long
<code>_f</code>	float
<code>_d</code>	double

Most integer operations do not need a type modifier, and when loading or storing values to memory there is an alias to the proper operation using wordsize operands, that is, if omitted, the type is `int` on 32-bit architectures and `long` on 64-bit architectures. Note that *lightning* also expects `sizeof(void*)` to match the wordsize.

When an unsigned operation result differs from the equivalent signed operation, there is a the `_u` modifier.

There are at least seven integer registers, of which six are general-purpose, while the last is used to contain the frame pointer (`FP`). The frame pointer can be used to allocate and access local variables on the stack, using the `alloca_i` or `alloca_r` instruction.

Of the general-purpose registers, at least three are guaranteed to be preserved across function calls (`V0`, `V1` and `V2`) and at least three are not (`R0`, `R1` and `R2`). Six registers are not very much, but this restriction was forced by the need to target CISC architectures which, like the x86, are poor of registers; anyway, backends can specify the actual number of available registers with the calls `JIT_R_NUM` (for caller-save registers) and `JIT_V_NUM` (for callee-save registers).

There are at least six floating-point registers, named `F0` to `F5`. These are usually caller-save and are separate from the integer registers on the supported architectures; on Intel architectures, in 32 bit mode if SSE2 is not available or use of X87 is forced, the register stack is mapped to a flat register file. As for the integer registers, the macro `JIT_F_NUM` yields the number of floating-point registers.

The complete instruction set follows; as you can see, most non-memory operations only take integers (either signed or unsigned) as operands; this was done in order to reduce the instruction set, and because most architectures only provide word and long word operations on registers. There are instructions that allow operands to be extended to fit a larger data type, both in a signed and in an unsigned way.

Binary ALU operations

These accept three operands; the last one can be an immediate. `addx` operations must directly follow `addc`, and `subx` must follow `subc`; otherwise, results are undefined. Most, if not all, architectures do not support float or double immediate operands; lightning emulates those operations by moving the immediate to a temporary register and emitting the call with only register operands.

```

addr      _f _d 01 = 02 + 03
addi     _f _d 01 = 02 + 03
addxr                    01 = 02 + (03 + carry)
addxi                    01 = 02 + (03 + carry)
addcr                    01 = 02 + 03, set carry
addci                    01 = 02 + 03, set carry
subr     _f _d 01 = 02 - 03
subi     _f _d 01 = 02 - 03
subxr                    01 = 02 - (03 + carry)
subxi                    01 = 02 - (03 + carry)
subcr                    01 = 02 - 03, set carry
subci                    01 = 02 - 03, set carry
rsbr     _f _d 01 = 03 - 01
rsbi     _f _d 01 = 03 - 01
mulr     _f _d 01 = 02 * 03
muli     _f _d 01 = 02 * 03
hmulr   _u          01 = ((02 * 03) >> WORDSIZE)
hmuli   _u          01 = ((02 * 03) >> WORDSIZE)
divr     _u _f _d 01 = 02 / 03
divi     _u _f _d 01 = 02 / 03
remr     _u          01 = 02 % 03
remi     _u          01 = 02 % 03
andr     _u          01 = 02 & 03
andi     _u          01 = 02 & 03
orr      _u          01 = 02 | 03
ori      _u          01 = 02 | 03
xorr     _u          01 = 02 ^ 03
xori     _u          01 = 02 ^ 03
lshr     _u          01 = 02 << 03
lshi     _u          01 = 02 << 03
rshr     _u          01 = 02 >> 031
rshi     _u          01 = 02 >> 032

```

¹ The sign bit is propagated unless using the `_u` modifier.

² The sign bit is propagated unless using the `_u` modifier.

<code>lrotr</code>	$O1 = (O2 \ll O3) \mid (O3 \gg (\text{WORDSIZE} - O3))$
<code>lroti</code>	$O1 = (O2 \ll O3) \mid (O3 \gg (\text{WORDSIZE} - O3))$
<code>rrotr</code>	$O1 = (O2 \gg O3) \mid (O3 \ll (\text{WORDSIZE} - O3))$
<code>rroti</code>	$O1 = (O2 \gg O3) \mid (O3 \ll (\text{WORDSIZE} - O3))$
<code>movzr</code>	$O1 = O3 \ ? \ O1 : O2$
<code>movnr</code>	$O1 = O3 \ ? \ O2 : O1$

Note that `lrotr`, `lroti`, `rrotr` and `rroti` are described as the fallback operation. These are bit shift/rotation operation.

Four operand binary ALU operations

These accept two result registers, and two operands; the last one can be an immediate. The first two arguments cannot be the same register.

`qmul` stores the low word of the result in `O1` and the high word in `O2`. For unsigned multiplication, `O2` zero means there was no overflow. For signed multiplication, no overflow check is based on sign, and can be detected if `O2` is zero or minus one.

`qdiv` stores the quotient in `O1` and the remainder in `O2`. It can be used as quick way to check if a division is exact, in which case the remainder is zero.

`qlsh` shifts from 0 to *wordsize*, doing a normal left shift for the first result register and setting the second result register to the overflow bits. `qlsh` can be used as a quick way to multiply by powers of two.

`qrsh` shifts from 0 to *wordsize*, doing a normal right shift for the first result register and setting the second result register to the overflow bits. `qrsh` can be used as a quick way to divide by powers of two.

Note that `qlsh` and `qrsh` are basically implemented as two shifts. It is undefined behavior to pass a value not in the range 0 to *wordsize*. Most cpus will usually and the shift amount with *wordsize* - 1, or possible use the *remainder*. GNU *lightning* only generates code to specially handle 0 and *wordsize* shifts. Since in a code generator for a *safe language* should usually check the shift amount, these instructions usually should be used as a fast path to check for division without remainder or multiplication that does not overflow.

<code>qmulr</code>	<code>_u</code>	$O1 \ O2 = O3 * O4$
<code>qmuli</code>	<code>_u</code>	$O1 \ O2 = O3 * O4$
<code>qdivr</code>	<code>_u</code>	$O1 \ O2 = O3 / O4$
<code>qdivi</code>	<code>_u</code>	$O1 \ O2 = O3 / O4$
<code>qlshr</code>	<code>_u</code>	$O1 = O3 \ll O4, \ O2 = O3 \gg (\text{WORDSIZE} - O4)$
<code>qlshi</code>	<code>_u</code>	$O1 = O3 \ll O4, \ O2 = O3 \gg (\text{WORDSIZE} - O4)$
<code>qrshr</code>	<code>_u</code>	$O1 = O3 \gg O4, \ O2 = O3 \ll (\text{WORDSIZE} - O4)$
<code>qrshi</code>	<code>_u</code>	$O1 = O3 \gg O4, \ O2 = O3 \ll (\text{WORDSIZE} - O4)$

These four operand ALU operations are only defined for float operands.

<code>fmar</code>	<code>_f</code>	<code>_d</code>	$O1 = O2 * O3 + O4$
<code>fmai</code>	<code>_f</code>	<code>_d</code>	$O1 = O2 * O3 + O4$
<code>fmsr</code>	<code>_f</code>	<code>_d</code>	$O1 = O2 * O3 - O4$
<code>fmsi</code>	<code>_f</code>	<code>_d</code>	$O1 = O2 * O3 - O4$
<code>fnmar</code>	<code>_f</code>	<code>_d</code>	$O1 = -O2 * O3 - O4$
<code>fnmai</code>	<code>_f</code>	<code>_d</code>	$O1 = -O2 * O3 - O4$

```

fnmsr      _f _d 01 = -02 * 03 + 04
fnmsi      _f _d 01 = -02 * 03 + 04

```

These are a family of fused multiply-add instructions. Note that GNU *lightning* does not handle rounding modes nor math exceptions. Also note that not all backends provide a instruction for the equivalent GNU *lightning* instruction presented above. Some are completely implemented as fallbacks and some are composed of one or more instructions. For common input this should not cause major issues, but note that when implemented by the cpu, these are implemented as the multiplication calculated with infinite precision, and after the addition step rounding is done. Due to this, For specially crafted input different ports might show different output. When implemented by the CPU, it is also possible to have exceptions that do not happen if implemented as a fallback.

Unary ALU operations

These accept two operands, the first must be a register and the second is a register if the `r` modifier is used, otherwise, the `i` modifier is used and the second argument is a constant.

```

negr      _f _d 01 = -02
negi      _f _d 01 = -02
comr      01 = ~02
comi      01 = ~02
clor      01 = number of leading one bits in 02
cloi      01 = number of leading one bits in 02
clzr      01 = number of leading zero bits in 02
clzi      01 = number of leading zero bits in 02
ctor      01 = number of trailing one bits in 02
ctoi      01 = number of trailing one bits in 02
ctzr      01 = number of trailing zero bits in 02
ctzi      01 = number of trailing zero bits in 02
rbitr     01 = bits of 02 reversed
rbiti     01 = bits of 02 reversed
popcntr   01 = number of bits set in 02
popcnti   01 = number of bits set in 02

```

Note that `ctzr` is basically equivalent of a C call `ffs` but indexed at bit zero, not one.

Contrary to `__builtin_ctz` and `__builtin_clz`, an input value of zero is not an error, it just returns the number of bits in a word, 64 if GNU *lightning* generates 64 bit instructions, otherwise it returns 32.

The `clor` and `ctor` are just counterparts of the versions that search for zero bits.

These unary ALU operations are only defined for float operands.

```

absr      _f _d 01 = fabs(02)
absi      _f _d 01 = fabs(02)
sqrtr     _f _d 01 = sqrt(02)
sqrtri    _f _d 01 = sqrt(02)

```

Note that for `float` and `double` unary operations, GNU *lightning* will generate code to actually execute the operation at runtime.

Compare instructions

These accept three operands; again, the last can be an immediate. The last two operands are compared, and the first operand, that must be an integer register, is set to either 0 or 1, according to whether the given condition was met or not.

The conditions given below are for the standard behavior of C, where the “un-ordered” comparison result is mapped to false.

```
ltr      _u _f _d 01 = (02 < 03)
lти      _u _f _d 01 = (02 < 03)
ler      _u _f _d 01 = (02 <= 03)
lei      _u _f _d 01 = (02 <= 03)
gtr      _u _f _d 01 = (02 > 03)
gtи      _u _f _d 01 = (02 > 03)
ger      _u _f _d 01 = (02 >= 03)
geи      _u _f _d 01 = (02 >= 03)
eqr      _f _d 01 = (02 == 03)
eqи      _f _d 01 = (02 == 03)
ner      _f _d 01 = (02 != 03)
neи      _f _d 01 = (02 != 03)
unltr    _f _d 01 = !(02 >= 03)
unler    _f _d 01 = !(02 > 03)
ungtr    _f _d 01 = !(02 <= 03)
unger    _f _d 01 = !(02 < 03)
uneqr    _f _d 01 = !(02 < 03) && !(02 > 03)
ltgtr    _f _d 01 = !(02 >= 03) || !(02 <= 03)
ordr     _f _d 01 = (02 == 02) && (03 == 03)
unordr   _f _d 01 = (02 != 02) || (03 != 03)
```

Transfer operations

These accept two operands; for `ext` both of them must be registers, while `mov` accepts an immediate value as the second operand.

Unlike `movr` and `movi`, the other instructions are used to truncate a wordsize operand to a smaller integer data type or to convert float data types. You can also use `extr` to convert an integer to a floating point value: the usual options are `extr_f` and `extr_d`.

```
movr                                _f _d 01 = 02
movi                                _f _d 01 = 02
extr      _c _uc _s _us _i _ui _f _d 01 = 02
truncr                                _f _d 01 = trunc(02)
extr                                01 = sign_extend(02[03:03+04])
extr_u                                01 = 02[03:03+04]
depr                                01[03:03+04] = 02
```

`extr`, `extr_u` and `depr` are useful to access C compatible bit fields, provided that these are contained in a machine word. `extr` is used to *extract* and signed

extend a value from a bit field. `extr_u` is used to *extract* and zero extend a value from a bit field. `depr` is used to *deposit* a value into a bit field.

```
extr(result, source, offset, length)
extr_u(result, source, offset, length)
depr(result, source, offset, length)
```

A common way to declare C and GNU *lightning* compatible bit fields is:

```
union {
    struct {
        jit_word_t  signed_bits: length;
        jit_ushort_t unsigned_bits: length;
        ...
    } s;
    jit_word_t  signed_value;
    jit_ushort_t unsigned_value;
} u;
```

In 64-bit architectures it may be required to use `truncr_f_i`, `truncr_f_l`, `truncr_d_i` and `truncr_d_l` to match the equivalent C code. Only the `_i` modifier is available in 32-bit architectures.

```
truncr_f_i    <int> 01 = <float> 02
truncr_f_l    <long>01 = <float> 02
truncr_d_i    <int> 01 = <double>02
truncr_d_l    <long>01 = <double>02
```

The float conversion operations are *destination first, source second*, but the order of the types is reversed. This happens for historical reasons.

```
extr_f_d      <double>01 = <float> 02
extr_d_f      <float> 01 = <double>02
```

The float to/from integer transfer operations are also *destination first, source second*. These were added later, but follow the pattern of historic patterns.

```
movr_w_f      <float>01 = <int>02
movi_w_f      <float>01 = <int>02
movr_f_w      <int>01 = <float>02
movi_f_w      <int>01 = <float>02
movr_w_d      <double>01 = <long>02
movi_w_d      <double>01 = <long>02
movr_d_w      <long>01 = <double>02
movi_d_w      <long>01 = <double>02
movr_ww_d     <double>01 = [<int>02:<int>03]
movi_ww_d     <double>01 = [<int>02:<int>03]
movr_d_ww     [<int>01:<int>02] = <double>03
movi_d_ww     [<int>01:<int>02] = <double>03
```

These are used to transfer bits to/from floats to/from integers, and are useful to access bits of floating point values.

`movr_w_d`, `movi_w_d`, `movr_d_w` and `movi_d_w` are only available in 64-bit. Conversely, `movr_ww_d`, `movi_ww_d`, `movr_d_ww` and `movi_d_ww` are only available

in 32-bit. For the int pair to/from double transfers, integer arguments must respect endianness, to match how the cpu handles the verbatim byte values.

Network extensions

These accept two operands, both of which must be registers; these two instructions actually perform the same task, yet they are assigned to two mnemonics for the sake of convenience and completeness. As usual, the first operand is the destination and the second is the source. The `_ul` variant is only available in 64-bit architectures.

```
htonr    _us _ui _ul Host-to-network (big endian) order
ntohr    _us _ui _ul Network-to-host order
```

`bswapr` can be used to unconditionally byte-swap an operand. On little-endian architectures, `htonr` and `ntohr` resolve to this. The `_ul` variant is only available in 64-bit architectures.

```
bswapr   _us _ui _ul 01 = byte_swap(02)
```

Load operations

`ld` accepts two operands while `ldx` accepts three; in both cases, the last can be either a register or an immediate value. Values are extended (with or without sign, according to the data type specification) to fit a whole register. The `_ui` and `_l` types are only available in 64-bit architectures. For convenience, there is a version without a type modifier for integer or pointer operands that uses the appropriate wordsize call.

```
ldr      _c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d 01 = *02
ldi      _c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d 01 = *02
ldxr     _c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d 01 = *(02+03)
ldxi     _c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d 01 = *(02+03)
ldxbr    _c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d 02 += 03, 01 = *02
ldxbr    _c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d 02 += 03, 01 = *02
ldxbr    _c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d 01 = *02, 02 += 03
ldxbr    _c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d 01 = *02, 02 += 03
```

Store operations

`st` accepts two operands while `stx` accepts three; in both cases, the first can be either a register or an immediate value. Values are sign-extended to fit a whole register.

```
str      _c      _s      _i      _l _f _d *01 = 02
sti      _c      _s      _i      _l _f _d *01 = 02
stxr     _c      _s      _i      _l _f _d *(01+02) = 03
stxi     _c      _s      _i      _l _f _d *(01+02) = 03
stxbr    _c      _s      _i      _l _f _d 02 += 01, *02 = 03
stxbr    _c      _s      _i      _l _f _d 02 += 01, *02 = 03
stxbr    _c      _s      _i      _l _f _d *02 = 03, 02 += 01
stxbr    _c      _s      _i      _l _f _d *02 = 03, 02 += 01
```

Note that the unsigned type modifier is not available, as the store only writes to the 1, 2, 4 or 8 sized memory address. The `_l` type is only available in 64-bit architectures, and for convenience, there is a version without a type modifier for integer or pointer operands that uses the appropriate wordsize call.

Unaligned memory access

These allow access to integers of size 3, in 32-bit, and extra sizes 5, 6 and 7 in 64-bit. For floating point values only support for size 4 and 8 is provided.

```
unldr      01 = *(signed 03 byte integer)* = 02
unldi      01 = *(signed 03 byte integer)* = 02
unldr_u    01 = *(unsigned 03 byte integer)* = 02
unldi_u    01 = *(unsigned 03 byte integer)* = 02
unldr_x    01 = *(03 byte float)* = 02
unldi_x    01 = *(03 byte float)* = 02
unstr      *(03 byte integer)01 = 02
unsti      *(03 byte integer)01 = 02
unstr_x    *(03 byte float)01 = 02
unsti_x    *(03 byte float)01 = 02
```

With the exception of non standard sized integers, these might be implemented as normal loads and stores, if the processor supports unaligned memory access, or, mode can be chosen at jit initialization time, to generate or not generate, code that does trap on unaligned memory access. Letting the kernel trap means smaller code generation as it is required to check alignment at runtime³.

Argument management

These are:

```
prepare    (not specified)
va_start   (not specified)
pushargr   _c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d
pushargi   _c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d
va_push    (not specified)
arg        _c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d
getarg     _c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d
va_arg     _d
putargr    _c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d
putargi    _c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d
ret        (not specified)
retr       _c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d
reti       _c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d
reti       _f _d
va_end     (not specified)
retval     _c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d
epilog     (not specified)
```

As with other operations that use a type modifier, the `_ui` and `_l` types are only available in 64-bit architectures, but there are operations without a type modifier that alias to the appropriate integer operation with wordsize operands. `prepare`, `pusharg`, and `retval` are used by the caller, while `arg`, `getarg` and `ret` are used by the callee. A code snippet that wants to call another procedure and has to pass arguments must, in order: use the `prepare` instruction and use

³ This requires changing `jit.cpu.unaligned` to 0 to disable or 1 to enable unaligned code generation. Not all ports have the C `jit.cpu.unaligned` value.

the `pushargr` or `pushargi` to push the arguments **in left to right order**; and use `finish` or `call` (explained below) to perform the actual call.

Note that `arg`, `pusharg`, `putarg` and `ret` when handling integer types can be used without a type modifier. It is suggested to use matching type modifiers to `arg`, `putarg` and `getarg` otherwise problems will happen if generating jit for environments that require arguments to be truncated and zero or sign extended by the caller and/or excess arguments might be passed packed in the stack. Currently only Apple systems with `aarch64` cpus are known to have this restriction.

`va_start` returns a C compatible `va_list`. To fetch arguments, use `va_arg` for integers and `va_arg_d` for doubles. `va_push` is required when passing a `va_list` to another function, because not all architectures expect it as a single pointer. Known case is DEC Alpha, that requires it as a structure passed by value.

`arg`, `getarg` and `putarg` are used by the callee. `arg` is different from other instruction in that it does not actually generate any code: instead, it is a function which returns a value to be passed to `getarg` or `putarg`.⁴ You should call `arg` as soon as possible, before any function call or, more easily, right after the `prolog` instructions (which is treated later).

`getarg` accepts a register argument and a value returned by `arg`, and will move that argument to the register, extending it (with or without sign, according to the data type specification) to fit a whole register. These instructions are more intimately related to the usage of the GNU *lightning* instruction set in code that generates other code, so they will be treated more specifically in Chapter 4 [Generating code at run-time], page 20.

`putarg` is a mix of `getarg` and `pusharg` in that it accepts as first argument a register or immediate, and as second argument a value returned by `arg`. It allows changing, or restoring an argument to the current function, and is a construct required to implement tail call optimization. Note that arguments in registers are very cheap, but will be overwritten at any moment, including on some operations, for example division, that on several ports is implemented as a function call.

Finally, the `retval` instruction fetches the return value of a called function in a register. The `retval` instruction takes a register argument and copies the return value of the previously called function in that register. A function with a return value should use `retr` or `reti` to put the return value in the return register before returning. See Section 4.4 [Fibonacci], page 27, for an example.

`epilog` is an optional call, that marks the end of a function body. It is automatically generated by GNU *lightning* if starting a new function (what should be done after a `ret` call) or finishing generating jit. It is very important to note that the fact that `epilog` being optional may cause a common mistake. Consider this:

```
fun1:
```

⁴ “Return a value” means that GNU *lightning* code that compile these instructions return a value when expanded.

```

    prolog
    ...
    ret
fun2:
    prolog

```

Because `epilog` is added when finding a new `prolog`, this will cause the `fun2` label to actually be before the return from `fun1`. Because GNU *lightning* will actually understand it as:

```

fun1:
    prolog
    ...
    ret
fun2:
    epilog
    prolog

```

You should observe a few rules when using these macros. First of all, if calling a varargs function, you should use the `ellipsis` call to mark the position of the ellipsis in the C prototype.

You should not nest calls to `prepare` inside a `prepare/finish` block. Doing this will result in undefined behavior. Note that for functions with zero arguments you can use just `call`.

Branch instructions

Like `arg`, these also return a value which, in this case, is to be used to compile forward branches as explained in Section 4.4 [Fibonacci numbers], page 27. They accept two operands to be compared; of these, the last can be either a register or an immediate. They are:

```

bltr      _u _f _d if (02 < 03) goto 01
blti      _u _f _d if (02 < 03) goto 01
bler      _u _f _d if (02 <= 03) goto 01
blei      _u _f _d if (02 <= 03) goto 01
bgtr      _u _f _d if (02 > 03) goto 01
bgti      _u _f _d if (02 > 03) goto 01
bger      _u _f _d if (02 >= 03) goto 01
bgei      _u _f _d if (02 >= 03) goto 01
beqr      _f _d if (02 == 03) goto 01
beqi      _f _d if (02 == 03) goto 01
bner      _f _d if (02 != 03) goto 01
bnei      _f _d if (02 != 03) goto 01

bunltr    _f _d if !(02 >= 03) goto 01
bunler    _f _d if !(02 > 03) goto 01
bungtr    _f _d if !(02 <= 03) goto 01
bunger    _f _d if !(02 < 03) goto 01
buneqr    _f _d if !(02 < 03) && !(02 > 03) goto 01
bltgtr    _f _d if !(02 >= 03) || !(02 <= 03) goto 01

```

```

bordr      _f _d if (O2 == O2) && (O3 == O3) goto O1
bunordr    _f _d if !(O2 != O2) || (O3 != O3) goto O1

bmsr      if O2 & O3 goto O1
bmsi      if O2 & O3 goto O1
bmcr      if !(O2 & O3) goto O1
bmci      if !(O2 & O3) goto O15
boaddr    _u      O2 += O3, goto O1 if overflow
boaddi    _u      O2 += O3, goto O1 if overflow
bxaddr    _u      O2 += O3, goto O1 if no overflow
bxaddi    _u      O2 += O3, goto O1 if no overflow
bosubr    _u      O2 -= O3, goto O1 if overflow
bosubi    _u      O2 -= O3, goto O1 if overflow
bxsubr    _u      O2 -= O3, goto O1 if no overflow
bxsubi    _u      O2 -= O3, goto O1 if no overflow

```

Note that the C code does not have an O1 argument. It is required to always use the return value as an argument to `patch`, `patch_at` or `patch_abs`.

Jump and return operations

These accept one argument except `ret` and `jmp` which have none; the difference between `finishi` and `calli` is that the latter does not clean the stack from pushed parameters (if any) and the former must **always** follow a `prepare` instruction.

<code>callr</code>	(not specified)	function call to register O1
<code>calli</code>	(not specified)	function call to immediate O1
<code>finishr</code>	(not specified)	function call to register O1
<code>finishi</code>	(not specified)	function call to immediate O1
<code>jmp</code>	(not specified)	unconditional jump to register
<code>jmp</code>	(not specified)	unconditional jump
<code>ret</code>	(not specified)	return from subroutine
<code>retr</code>	_c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d	
<code>reti</code>	_c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d	
<code>retval</code>	_c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d	move return value to register

Like branch instruction, `jmp` also returns a value which is to be used to compile forward branches. See Section 4.4 [Fibonacci numbers], page 27.

Labels There are 3 GNU *lightning* instructions to create labels:

<code>label</code>	(not specified)	simple label
<code>forward</code>	(not specified)	forward label
<code>indirect</code>	(not specified)	special simple label

The following instruction is used to specify a minimal alignment for the next instruction, usually with a label:

⁵ These mnemonics mean, respectively, *branch if mask set* and *branch if mask cleared*.

`align` (not specified) align code

Similar to `align` is the next instruction, also usually used with a label:

`skip` (not specified) skip code

It is used to specify a minimal number of bytes of nops to be inserted before the next instruction.

`label` is normally used as `patch_at` argument for backward jumps.

```
        jit_node_t *jump, *label;
label = jit_label();
...
        jump = jit_beqr(JIT_R0, JIT_R1);
        jit_patch_at(jump, label);
```

`forward` is used to patch code generation before the actual position of the label is known.

```
        jit_node_t *jump, *label;
label = jit_forward();
        jump = jit_beqr(JIT_R0, JIT_R1);
        jit_patch_at(jump, label);
...
        jit_link(label);
```

`indirect` is useful when creating jump tables, and tells GNU *lightning* to not optimize out a label that is not the target of any jump, because an indirect jump may land where it is defined.

```
        jit_node_t *jump, *label;
...
        jmp(JIT_R0);                /* may jump to label */
...
label = jit_indirect();
```

`indirect` is a special case of `note` and `name` because it is a valid argument to `address`.

Note that the usual idiom to write the previous example is

```
        jit_node_t *addr, *jump;
addr = jit_movi(JIT_R0, 0);        /* immediate is ignored */
...
        jmp(JIT_R0);
...
        jit_patch(addr);          /* implicit label added */
```

that automatically binds the implicit label added by `patch` with the `movi`, but on some special conditions it is required to create an "unbound" label.

`align` is useful for creating multiple entry points to a (trampoline) function that are all accessible through a single function pointer. `align` receives an integer argument that defines the minimal alignment of the address of a label directly following the `align` instruction. The integer argument must be a power of two and the effective alignment will be a power of two no less than the argument

to `align`. If the argument to `align` is 16 or more, the effective alignment will match the specified minimal alignment exactly.

```

        jit_node_t *forward, *label1, *label2, *jump;
        unsigned char *addr1, *addr2;
forward = jit_forward();
        jit_align(16);
label1  = jit_indirect();           /* first entry point */
jump    = jit_jmpi();               /* jump to first handler */
        jit_patch_at(jump, forward);
        jit_align(16);
label2  = jit_indirect();           /* second entry point */
        ...                          /* second handler */
        jit_jmpr(...);
        jit_link(forward);
        ...                             /* first handler */
        jit_jmpr(...);
        ...
        jit_emit();
        addr1 = jit_address(label1);
        addr2 = jit_address(label2);
        assert(addr2 - addr1 == 16); /* only one of the ad-
dresses needs to be remembered */

```

`skip` is useful for reserving space in the code buffer that can later be filled (possibly with the help of the pair of functions `jit_unprotect` and `jit_protect`).

Function prolog

These macros are used to set up a function prolog. The `allocai` call accept a single integer argument and returns an offset value for stack storage access. The `allocar` accepts two registers arguments, the first is set to the offset for stack access, and the second is the size in bytes argument.

<code>prolog</code>	(not specified)	function prolog
<code>allocai</code>	(not specified)	reserve space on the stack
<code>allocar</code>	(not specified)	allocate space on the stack

`allocai` receives the number of bytes to allocate and returns the offset from the frame pointer register `FP` to the base of the area.

`allocar` receives two register arguments. The first is where to store the offset from the frame pointer register `FP` to the base of the area. The second argument is the size in bytes. Note that `allocar` is dynamic allocation, and special attention should be taken when using it. If called in a loop, every iteration will allocate stack space. Stack space is aligned from 8 to 64 bytes depending on backend requirements, even if allocating only one byte. It is advisable to not use it with `frame` and `tramp`; it should work with `frame` with special care to call only once, but is not supported if used in `tramp`, even if called only once.

As a small appetizer, here is a small function that adds 1 to the input parameter (an `int`). I'm using an assembly-like syntax here which is a bit different from

the one used when writing real subroutines with GNU *lightning*; the real syntax will be introduced in See Chapter 4 [Generating code at run-time], page 20.

```
incr:
    prolog
in = arg                ! We have an integer argument
    getarg    R0, in    ! Move it to R0
    addi     R0, R0, 1  ! Add 1
    retr     R0        ! And return the result
```

And here is another function which uses the `printf` function from the standard C library to write a number in hexadecimal notation:

```
printhex:
    prolog
in = arg                ! Same as above
    getarg    R0, in
    prepare   ! Begin call sequence for printf
    pushargi  "%x"    ! Push format string
    ellipsis  ! Varargs start here
    pushargr  R0      ! Push second argument
    finishi   printf  ! Call printf
    ret       ! Return to caller
```

Register liveness

During code generation, GNU *lightning* occasionally needs scratch registers or needs to use architecture-defined registers. For that, GNU *lightning* internally maintains register liveness information.

In the following example, `qdivr` will need special registers like `R0` on some architectures. As GNU *lightning* understands that `R0` is used in the subsequent instruction, it will create save/restore code for `R0` in case.

```
...
qdivr V0, V1, V2, V3
movr  V3, R0
...
```

The same is not true in the example that follows. Here, `R0` is not alive after the division operation because `R0` is neither an argument register nor a callee-save register. Thus, no save/restore code for `R0` will be created in case.

```
...
qdivr V0, V1, V2, V3
jmp   R1
...
```

The `live` instruction can be used to mark a register as live after it as in the following example. Here, `R0` will be preserved across the division.

```
...
qdivr V0, V1, V2, V3
live  R0
jmp   R1
...
```

The `live` instruction is useful at code entry and exit points, like after and before a `callr` instruction.

Trampolines, continuations and tail call optimization

Frequently it is required to generate jit code that must jump to code generated later, possibly from another `jit_context_t`. These require compatible stack frames.

GNU *lightning* provides two primitives from where trampolines, continuations and tail call optimization can be implemented.

```

    frame (not specified)           create stack frame
    tramp (not specified)          assume stack frame

```

`frame` receives an integer argument⁶ that defines the size in bytes for the stack frame of the current, C callable, jit function. To calculate this value, a good formula is maximum number of arguments to any called native function times eight⁷, plus the sum of the arguments to any call to `jit_allocai`. GNU *lightning* automatically adjusts this value for any backend specific stack memory it may need, or any alignment constraint.

`frame` also instructs GNU *lightning* to save all callee save registers in the prolog and reload in the epilog.

```

main:                               ! jit entry point
    prolog                          ! function prolog
    frame 256                       ! save all callee save registers and
                                    ! reserve at least 256 bytes in stack

main_loop:
    ...
    jmp handler                     ! jumps to external code
    ...
    ret                             ! return to the caller

```

`tramp` differs from `frame` only that a prolog and epilog will not be generated. Note that `prolog` must still be used. The code under `tramp` must be ready to be entered with a jump at the prolog position, and instead of a return, it must end with a non conditional jump. `tramp` exists solely for the fact that it allows optimizing out prolog and epilog code that would never be executed.

```

handler:                             ! handler entry point
    prolog                          ! function prolog
    tramp 256                       ! assumes all callee save registers
                                    ! are saved and there is at least
                                    ! 256 bytes in stack

    ...
    jmp main_loop                   ! return to the main loop

```

GNU *lightning* only supports Tail Call Optimization using the `tramp` construct. Any other way is not guaranteed to work on all ports.

⁶ It is not automatically computed because it does not know about the requirement of later generated code.

⁷ Times eight so that it works for double arguments. And would not need conditionals for ports that pass arguments in the stack.

An example of a simple (recursive) tail call optimization:

```

factorial:                ! Entry point of the factorial function
    prolog
in = arg                  ! Receive an integer argument
    getarg R0, in         ! Move argument to R0
    prepare
        pushargi 1       ! This is the accumulator
        pushargr R0      ! This is the argument
    finishi fact         ! Call the tail call optimized function
    retval R0            ! Fetch the result
    retr R0              ! Return it
    epilg               ! Epilog *before* label before prolog

fact:                    ! Entry point of the helper function
    prolog
    frame 16             ! Reserve 16 bytes in the stack
fact_entry:              ! This is the tail call entry point
ac = arg                  ! The accumulator is the first argu-
ment
in = arg                  ! The factorial argument
    getarg R0, ac        ! Move the accumulator to R0
    getarg R1, in        ! Move the argument to R1
    blei fact_out, R1, 1 ! Done if argument is one or less
    mulr R0, R0, R1      ! accumulator *= argument
    putargr R0, ac       ! Update the accumulator
    subi R1, R1, 1       ! argument -= 1
    putargr R1, in       ! Update the argument
    jmpj fact_entry      ! Tail Call Optimize it!
fact_out:
    retr R0              ! Return the accumulator

```

Predicates

<code>forward_p</code>	(not specified)	forward label predicate
<code>indirect_p</code>	(not specified)	indirect label predicate
<code>target_p</code>	(not specified)	used label predicate
<code>arg_register_p</code>	(not specified)	argument kind predicate
<code>callee_save_p</code>	(not specified)	callee save predicate
<code>pointer_p</code>	(not specified)	pointer predicate

`forward_p` expects a `jit_node_t*` argument, and returns non zero if it is a forward label reference, that is, a label returned by `forward`, that still needs a link call.

`indirect_p` expects a `jit_node_t*` argument, and returns non zero if it is an indirect label reference, that is, a label that was returned by `indirect`.

`target_p` expects a `jit_node_t*` argument, that is any kind of label, and will return non zero if there is at least one jump or move referencing it.

`arg_register_p` expects a `jit_node_t*` argument, that must have been returned by `arg`, `arg_f` or `arg_d`, and will return non zero if the argument lives in a register. This call is useful to know the live range of register arguments, as those are very fast to read and write, but have volatile values.

`callee_save_p` expects a valid `JIT_Rn`, `JIT_Vn`, or `JIT_Fn`, and will return non zero if the register is callee save. This call is useful because on several ports, the `JIT_Rn` and `JIT_Fn` registers are actually callee save; no need to save and load the values when making function calls.

`pointer_p` expects a pointer argument, and will return non zero if the pointer is inside the generated jit code. Must be called after `jit_emit` and before `jit_destroy_state`.

Atomic operations

Only compare-and-swap is implemented. It accepts four operands; the second can be an immediate.

The first argument is set with a boolean value telling if the operation did succeed.

Arguments must be different, cannot use the result register to also pass an argument.

The second argument is the address of a machine word.

The third argument is the old value.

The fourth argument is the new value.

```
casr          01 = (*02 == 03) ? (*02 = 04, 1) : 0
casi          01 = (*02 == 03) ? (*02 = 04, 1) : 0
```

If value at the address in the second argument is equal to the third argument, the address value is atomically modified to the value of the fourth argument and the first argument is set to a non zero value.

If the value at the address in the second argument is not equal to the third argument nothing is done and the first argument is set to zero.

4 Generating code at run-time

To use GNU *lightning*, you should include the `lightning.h` file that is put in your include directory by the ‘`make install`’ command.

Each of the instructions above translates to a macro or function call. All you have to do is prepend `jit_` (lowercase) to opcode names and `JIT_` (uppercase) to register names. Of course, parameters are to be put between parentheses.

This small tutorial presents three examples:

- The `incr` function found in Chapter 3 [GNU *lightning*’s instruction set], page 3:
- A simple function call to `printf`
- An RPN calculator.
- Fibonacci numbers

4.1 A function which increments a number by one

Let’s see how to create and use the sample `incr` function created in Chapter 3 [GNU *lightning*’s instruction set], page 3:

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <lightning.h>

static jit_state_t *_jit;

typedef int (*pifi)(int);    /* Pointer to Int Function of Int */

int main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    jit_node_t *in;
    pifi      incr;

    init_jit(argv[0]);
    _jit = jit_new_state();

    jit_prolog();                /*      prolog          */
    in = jit_arg();              /*      in = arg        */
    jit_getarg(JIT_R0, in);      /*      getarg R0       */
    jit_addi(JIT_R0, JIT_R0, 1); /*      addi  R0, R0, 1  */
    jit_retr(JIT_R0);           /*      retr   R0       */

    incr = jit_emit();
    jit_clear_state();

    /* call the generated code, passing 5 as an argument */
    printf("%d + 1 = %d\n", 5, incr(5));

    jit_destroy_state();
    finish_jit();
}
```

```
    return 0;
}
```

Let's examine the code line by line (well, almost...):

```
#include <lightning.h>
```

You already know about this. It defines all of GNU *lightning*'s macros.

```
static jit_state_t *_jit;
```

You might wonder about what is `jit_state_t`. It is a structure that stores jit code generation information. The name `_jit` is special, because since multiple jit generators can run at the same time, you must either `#define` `_jit` `my_jit_state` or name it `_jit`.

```
typedef int (*pifi)(int);
```

Just a handy typedef for a pointer to a function that takes an `int` and returns another.

```
jit_node_t *in;
```

Declares a variable to hold an identifier for a function argument. It is an opaque pointer, that will hold the return of a call to `arg` and be used as argument to `getarg`.

```
pifi incr;
```

Declares a function pointer variable to a function that receives an `int` and returns an `int`.

```
init_jit(argv[0]);
```

You must call this function before creating a `jit_state_t` object. This function does global state initialization, and may need to detect CPU or Operating System features. It receives a string argument that is later used to read symbols from a shared object using GNU binutils if disassembly was enabled at configure time. If no disassembly will be performed a NULL pointer can be used as argument.

```
_jit = jit_new_state();
```

This call initializes a GNU *lightning* jit state.

```
jit_prolog();
```

Ok, so we start generating code for our beloved function...

```
in = jit_arg();
```

```
jit_getarg(JIT_R0, in);
```

We retrieve the first (and only) argument, an integer, and store it into the general-purpose register R0.

```
jit_addi(JIT_R0, JIT_R0, 1);
```

We add one to the content of the register.

```
jit_retr(JIT_R0);
```

This instruction generates a standard function epilog that returns the contents of the R0 register.

```
incr = jit_emit();
```

This instruction is very important. It actually translates the GNU *lightning* macros used before to machine code, flushes the generated code area out of the processor's instruction cache and return a pointer to the start of the code.

```
jit_clear_state();
```

This call cleans up any data not required for jit execution. Note that it must be called after any call to `jit_print` or `jit_address`, as this call destroy the GNU *lightning* intermediate representation.

```
printf("%d + 1 = %d", 5, incr(5));
```

Calling our function is this simple—it is not distinguishable from a normal C function call, the only difference being that `incr` is a variable.

```
jit_destroy_state();
```

Releases all memory associated with the jit context. It should be called after known the jit will no longer be called.

```
finish_jit();
```

This call cleans up any global state hold by GNU *lightning*, and is advisable to call it once jit code will no longer be generated.

GNU *lightning* abstracts two phases of dynamic code generation: selecting instructions that map the standard representation, and emitting binary code for these instructions. The client program has the responsibility of describing the code to be generated using the standard GNU *lightning* instruction set.

Let's examine the code generated for `incr` on the SPARC and x86_64 architecture (on the right is the code that an assembly-language programmer would write):

SPARC

```
save %sp, -112, %sp
mov %i0, %g2          retl
inc %g2              inc %o0
mov %g2, %i0
restore
retl
nop
```

In this case, GNU *lightning* introduces overhead to create a register window (not knowing that the procedure is a leaf procedure) and to move the argument to the general purpose register R0 (which maps to `%g2` on the SPARC).

x86_64

```
mov %rdi,%rax
add $0x1,%rax
ret
```

In this case, for the x86 port, GNU *lightning* has simple optimizations to understand it is a leaf function, and that it is not required to create a stack frame nor update the stack pointer.

4.2 A simple function call to printf

Again, here is the code for the example:

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <lightning.h>

static jit_state_t *_jit;

typedef void (*pvfi)(int);      /* Pointer to Void Function of Int */

int main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    pvfi      myFunction;      /* ptr to generated code */
    jit_node_t *start, *end;   /* a couple of labels */
    jit_node_t *in;           /* to get the argument */

    init_jit(argv[0]);
    _jit = jit_new_state();

    start = jit_note(__FILE__, __LINE__);
    jit_prolog();
    in = jit_arg();
    jit_getarg(JIT_R1, in);
    jit_prepare();
    jit_pushargi((jit_word_t)"generated %d bytes\n");
    jit_ellipsis();
    jit_pushargr(JIT_R1);
    jit_finishi(printf);
    jit_ret();
    jit_epilog();
    end = jit_note(__FILE__, __LINE__);

    myFunction = jit_emit();

    /* call the generated code, passing its size as argument */
    myFunction((char*)jit_address(end) - (char*)jit_address(start));
    jit_clear_state();

    jit_disassemble();

    jit_destroy_state();
    finish_jit();
    return 0;
}
```

The function shows how many bytes were generated. Most of the code is not very interesting, as it resembles very closely the program presented in Section 4.1 [A function which increments a number by one], page 20.

For this reason, we're going to concentrate on just a few statements.

```
start = jit_note(__FILE__, __LINE__);
```

```
...
```

```
end = jit_note(__FILE__, __LINE__);
```

These two instructions call the `jit_note` macro, which creates a note in the jit code; arguments to `jit_note` usually are a filename string and line number integer, but using `NULL` for the string argument is perfectly valid if only need to create a simple marker in the code.

```
jit_ellipsis();
```

`ellipsis` usually is only required if calling `varargs` functions with double arguments, but it is a good practice to properly describe the `...` in the call sequence.

```
jit_pushargi((jit_word_t)"generated %d bytes\n");
```

Note the use of the `(jit_word_t)` cast, that is used only to avoid a compiler warning, due to using a pointer where a wordsize integer type was expected.

```
jit_prepare();
```

```
...
```

```
jit_finishi(sprintf);
```

Once the arguments to `printf` have been pushed, what means moving them to stack or register arguments, the `printf` function is called and the stack cleaned. Note how GNU *lightning* abstracts the differences between different architectures and ABIs – the client program does not know how parameter passing works on the host architecture.

```
jit_epilog();
```

Usually it is not required to call `epilog`, but because it is implicitly called when noticing the end of a function, if the `end` variable was set with a `note` call after the `ret`, it would not consider the function epilog.

```
myFunction((char*)jit_address(end) - (char*)jit_address(start));
```

This calls the generate jit function passing as argument the offset difference from the `start` and `end` notes. The `address` call must be done after the `emit` call or either a fatal error will happen (if GNU *lightning* is built with assertions enable) or an undefined value will be returned.

```
jit_clear_state();
```

Note that `jit_clear_state` was called after executing jit in this example. It was done because it must be called after any call to `jit_address` or `jit_print`.

```
jit_disassemble();
```

`disassemble` will dump the generated code to standard output, unless GNU *lightning* was built with the disassembler disabled, in which case no output will be shown.

4.3 A more complex example, an RPN calculator

We create a small stack-based RPN calculator which applies a series of operators to a given parameter and to other numeric operands. Unlike previous examples, the code generator is

fully parameterized and is able to compile different formulas to different functions. Here is the code for the expression compiler; a sample usage will follow.

Since GNU *lightning* does not provide push/pop instruction, this example uses a stack-allocated area to store the data. Such an area can be allocated using the macro `allocai`, which receives the number of bytes to allocate and returns the offset from the frame pointer register FP to the base of the area.

Usually, you will use the `ldxi` and `stxi` instruction to access stack-allocated variables. However, it is possible to use operations such as `add` to compute the address of the variables, and pass the address around.

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <lightning.h>

typedef int (*pifi)(int);      /* Pointer to Int Function of Int */

static jit_state_t *_jit;

void stack_push(int reg, int *sp)
{
    jit_stxi_i (*sp, JIT_FP, reg);
    *sp += sizeof (int);
}

void stack_pop(int reg, int *sp)
{
    *sp -= sizeof (int);
    jit_ldxi_i (reg, JIT_FP, *sp);
}

jit_node_t *compile_rpn(char *expr)
{
    jit_node_t *in, *fn;
    int stack_base, stack_ptr;

    fn = jit_note(NULL, 0);
    jit_prolog();
    in = jit_arg();
    stack_ptr = stack_base = jit_allocai (32 * sizeof (int));

    jit_getarg(JIT_R2, in);

    while (*expr) {
        char buf[32];
        int n;
        if (sscanf(expr, "[%0-9]%n", buf, &n)) {
            expr += n - 1;
            stack_push(JIT_R0, &stack_ptr);
        }
    }
}
```

```

        jit_movi(JIT_R0, atoi(buf));
    } else if (*expr == 'x') {
        stack_push(JIT_R0, &stack_ptr);
        jit_movr(JIT_R0, JIT_R2);
    } else if (*expr == '+') {
        stack_pop(JIT_R1, &stack_ptr);
        jit_addr(JIT_R0, JIT_R1, JIT_R0);
    } else if (*expr == '-') {
        stack_pop(JIT_R1, &stack_ptr);
        jit_subr(JIT_R0, JIT_R1, JIT_R0);
    } else if (*expr == '*') {
        stack_pop(JIT_R1, &stack_ptr);
        jit_mulr(JIT_R0, JIT_R1, JIT_R0);
    } else if (*expr == '/') {
        stack_pop(JIT_R1, &stack_ptr);
        jit_divr(JIT_R0, JIT_R1, JIT_R0);
    } else {
        fprintf(stderr, "cannot compile: %s\n", expr);
        abort();
    }
    ++expr;
}
jit_retr(JIT_R0);
jit_epilog();
return fn;
}

```

The principle on which the calculator is based is easy: the stack top is held in R0, while the remaining items of the stack are held in the memory area that we allocate with `alloca`. Compiling a numeric operand or the argument `x` pushes the old stack top onto the stack and moves the operand into R0; compiling an operator pops the second operand off the stack into R1, and compiles the operation so that the result goes into R0, thus becoming the new stack top.

This example allocates a fixed area for 32 ints. This is not a problem when the function is a leaf like in this case; in a full-blown compiler you will want to analyze the input and determine the number of needed stack slots—a very simple example of register allocation. The area is then managed like a stack using `stack_push` and `stack_pop`.

Source code for the client (which lies in the same source file) follows:

```

int main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    jit_node_t *nc, *nf;
    pifi c2f, f2c;
    int i;

    init_jit(argv[0]);
    _jit = jit_new_state();

```

```

nc = compile_rpn("32x9*5/+");
nf = compile_rpn("x32-5*9/");
(void)jit_emit();
c2f = (pifi)jit_address(nc);
f2c = (pifi)jit_address(nf);
jit_clear_state();

printf("\nC:");
for (i = 0; i <= 100; i += 10) printf("%3d ", i);
printf("\nF:");
for (i = 0; i <= 100; i += 10) printf("%3d ", c2f(i));
printf("\n");

printf("\nF:");
for (i = 32; i <= 212; i += 18) printf("%3d ", i);
printf("\nC:");
for (i = 32; i <= 212; i += 18) printf("%3d ", f2c(i));
printf("\n");

jit_destroy_state();
finish_jit();
return 0;
}

```

The client displays a conversion table between Celsius and Fahrenheit degrees (both Celsius-to-Fahrenheit and Fahrenheit-to-Celsius). The formulas are, $F(c) = c * 9/5 + 32$ and $C(f) = (f - 32) * 5/9$, respectively.

Providing the formula as an argument to `compile_rpn` effectively parameterizes code generation, making it possible to use the same code to compile different functions; this is what makes dynamic code generation so powerful.

4.4 Fibonacci numbers

The code in this section calculates the Fibonacci sequence. That is modeled by the recurrence relation:

$$\begin{aligned}
 f(0) &= 0 \\
 f(1) &= f(2) = 1 \\
 f(n) &= f(n-1) + f(n-2)
 \end{aligned}$$

The purpose of this example is to introduce branches. There are two kind of branches: backward branches and forward branches. We'll present the calculation in a recursive and iterative form; the former only uses forward branches, while the latter uses both.

```

#include <stdio.h>
#include <lightning.h>

static jit_state_t *_jit;

typedef int (*pifi)(int);      /* Pointer to Int Function of Int */

```

```

int main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    pifi      fib;
    jit_node_t *label;
    jit_node_t *call;
    jit_node_t *in;           /* offset of the argument */
    jit_node_t *ref;         /* to patch the forward reference */
    jit_node_t *zero;        /* to patch the forward reference */

    init_jit(argv[0]);
    _jit = jit_new_state();

    label = jit_label();
        jit_prolog    ();
    in = jit_arg      ();
        jit_getarg    (JIT_V0, in);           /* R0 = n */
    zero = jit_beqi   (JIT_R0, 0);
        jit_movr      (JIT_V0, JIT_R0);       /* V0 = R0 */
        jit_movi      (JIT_R0, 1);
    ref = jit_blei    (JIT_V0, 2);
        jit_subi      (JIT_V1, JIT_V0, 1);    /* V1 = n-1 */
        jit_subi      (JIT_V2, JIT_V0, 2);    /* V2 = n-2 */
    jit_prepare();
        jit_pushargr(JIT_V1);
    call = jit_finishi(NULL);
    jit_patch_at(call, label);
    jit_retval(JIT_V1);       /* V1 = fib(n-1) */
    jit_prepare();
        jit_pushargr(JIT_V2);
    call = jit_finishi(NULL);
    jit_patch_at(call, label);
    jit_retval(JIT_R0);       /* R0 = fib(n-2) */
    jit_addr(JIT_R0, JIT_R0, JIT_V1);      /* R0 = R0 + V1 */

    jit_patch(ref);          /* patch jump */
    jit_patch(zero);         /* patch jump */
        jit_retr(JIT_R0);

    /* call the generated code, passing 32 as an argument */
    fib = jit_emit();
    jit_clear_state();
    printf("fib(%d) = %d\n", 32, fib(32));
    jit_destroy_state();
    finish_jit();
    return 0;
}

```

As said above, this is the first example of dynamically compiling branches. Branch instructions have two operands containing the values to be compared, and return a `jit_note_t *` object to be patched.

Because labels final address are only known after calling `emit`, it is required to call `patch` or `patch_at`, what does tell GNU *lightning* that the target to patch is actually a pointer to a `jit_node_t *` object, otherwise, it would assume that is a pointer to a C function. Note that conditional branches do not receive a label argument, so they must be patched.

You need to call `patch_at` on the return of value `calli`, `finishi`, and `calli` if it is actually referencing a label in the jit code. All branch instructions do not receive a label argument. Note that `movi` is an special case, and patching it is usually done to get the final address of a label, usually to later call `jmp`.

Now, here is the iterative version:

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <lightning.h>

static jit_state_t *_jit;

typedef int (*pifi)(int);      /* Pointer to Int Function of Int */

int main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    pifi      fib;
    jit_node_t *in;            /* offset of the argument */
    jit_node_t *ref;          /* to patch the forward reference */
    jit_node_t *zero;        /* to patch the forward reference */
    jit_node_t *jump;        /* jump to start of loop */
    jit_node_t *loop;        /* start of the loop */

    init_jit(argv[0]);
    _jit = jit_new_state();

        jit_prolog    ();
    in = jit_arg      ();
        jit_getarg    (JIT_R0, in);          /* R0 = n */
    zero = jit_beqi   (JIT_R0, 0);
        jit_movr     (JIT_R1, JIT_R0);
        jit_movi     (JIT_R0, 1);
    ref = jit_blti    (JIT_R1, 2);
        jit_subi     (JIT_R2, JIT_R2, 2);
        jit_movr     (JIT_R1, JIT_R0);

    loop= jit_label();
        jit_subi     (JIT_R2, JIT_R2, 1);    /* decr. counter */
        jit_movr     (JIT_V0, JIT_R0);      /* V0 = R0 */
        jit_addr     (JIT_R0, JIT_R0, JIT_R1); /* R0 = R0 + R1 */
        jit_movr     (JIT_R1, JIT_V0);     /* R1 = V0 */
```

```

    jump= jit_bnei      (JIT_R2, 0);           /* if (R2) goto loop; */
    jit_patch_at(jump, loop);

    jit_patch(ref);                          /* patch forward jump */
    jit_patch(zero);                          /* patch forward jump */
        jit_retr      (JIT_R0);

    /* call the generated code, passing 36 as an argument */
    fib = jit_emit();
    jit_clear_state();
    printf("fib(%d) = %d\n", 36, fib(36));
    jit_destroy_state();
    finish_jit();
    return 0;
}

```

This code calculates the recurrence relation using iteration (a `for` loop in high-level languages). There are no function calls anymore: instead, there is a backward jump (the `bnei` at the end of the loop).

Note that the program must remember the address for backward jumps; for forward jumps it is only required to remember the jump code, and call `patch` for the implicit label.

5 Re-entrant usage of GNU *lightning*

GNU *lightning* uses the special `_jit` identifier. To be able to use multiple jit generation states at the same time, it is required to use code similar to:

```
struct jit_state lightning;
#define lightning _jit
```

This will cause the symbol defined to `_jit` to be passed as the first argument to the underlying GNU *lightning* implementation, that is usually a function with an `_` (underscore) prefix and with an argument named `_jit`, in the pattern:

```
static void _jit_mnemonic(jit_state_t *, jit_gpr_t, jit_gpr_t);
#define jit_mnemonic(u, v) _jit_mnemonic(_jit, u, v);
```

The reason for this is to use the same syntax as the initial lightning implementation and to avoid needing the user to keep adding an extra argument to every call, as multiple jit states generating code in parallel should be very uncommon.

6 Accessing the whole register file

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, all GNU *lightning* back-ends are guaranteed to have at least six general-purpose integer registers and six floating-point registers, but many back-ends will have more.

To access the entire register files, you can use the `JIT_R`, `JIT_V` and `JIT_F` macros. They accept a parameter that identifies the register number, which must be strictly less than `JIT_R_NUM`, `JIT_V_NUM` and `JIT_F_NUM` respectively; the number need not be constant. Of course, expressions like `JIT_R0` and `JIT_R(0)` denote the same register, and likewise for integer callee-saved, or floating-point, registers.

6.1 Scratch registers

For operations, GNU *lightning* does not support directly, like storing a literal in memory, `jit_get_reg` and `jit_unget_reg` can be used to acquire and release a scratch register as in the following pattern:

```
jit_int32_t reg = jit_get_reg (jit_class_gpr);
jit_movi (reg, immediate);
jit_stxi (offsetof (some_struct, some_field), JIT_V0, reg);
jit_unget_reg (reg);
```

As `jit_get_reg` and `jit_unget_reg` may generate spills and reloads but don't follow branches, the code between both must be in the same basic block and must not contain any branches as in the following (bad) example.

```
jit_int32_t reg = jit_get_reg (jit_class_gpr);
jit_ldxi (reg, JIT_V0, offset);
jump = jit_bnei (reg, V0);
jit_movr (JIT_V1, reg);
jit_patch (jump);
jit_unget_reg (reg);
```

7 Customizations

Frequently it is desirable to have more control over how code is generated or how memory is used during jit generation or execution.

7.1 Memory functions

To aid in complete control of memory allocation and deallocation GNU *lightning* provides wrappers that default to standard `malloc`, `realloc` and `free`. These are loosely based on the GNU GMP counterparts, with the difference that they use the same prototype of the system allocation functions, that is, no `size` for `free` or `old_size` for `realloc`.

```
void jit_set_memory_functions ( [Function]
    void *(*alloc_func_ptr) (size_t),
    void *(*realloc_func_ptr) (void *, size_t),
    void (*free_func_ptr) (void *))
```

GNU *lightning* guarantees that memory is only allocated or released using these wrapped functions, but you must note that if *lightning* was linked to GNU `binutils`, `malloc` is probably will be called multiple times from there when initializing the disassembler.

Because `init_jit` may call memory functions, if you need to call `jit_set_memory_functions`, it must be called before `init_jit`, otherwise, when calling `finish_jit`, a pointer allocated with the previous or default wrappers will be passed.

```
void jit_get_memory_functions ( [Function]
    void (**alloc_func_ptr) (size_t),
    void (**realloc_func_ptr) (void *, size_t),
    void (**free_func_ptr) (void *))
```

Get the current memory allocation function. Also, unlike the GNU GMP counterpart, it is an error to pass NULL pointers as arguments.

7.2 Protection

Unless an alternate code buffer is used (see below), `jit_emit` set the access protections that the code buffer's memory can be read and executed, but not modified. One can use the following functions after `jit_emit` but before `jit_clear` to temporarily lift the protection:

```
void jit_unprotect () [Function]
    Changes the access protection that the code buffer's memory can be read and modified. Before the emitted code can be invoked, jit_protect has to be called to reset the change.
```

This procedure has no effect when an alternate code buffer (see below) is used.

```
void jit_protect () [Function]
    Changes the access protection that the code buffer's memory can be read and executed.
```

This procedure has no effect when an alternate code buffer (see below) is used.

7.3 Alternate code buffer

To instruct GNU *lightning* to use an alternate code buffer it is required to call `jit_realize` before `jit_emit`, and then query states and customize as appropriate.

```
void jit_realize () [Function]
    Must be called once, before jit_emit, to instruct GNU lightning that no other jit_
    xyz call will be made.
```

```
jit_pointer_t jit_get_code (jit_word_t *code_size) [Function]
    Returns NULL or the previous value set with jit_set_code, and sets the code_size
    argument to an appropriate value. If jit_get_code is called before jit_emit, the
    code_size argument is set to the expected amount of bytes required to generate code.
    If jit_get_code is called after jit_emit, the code_size argument is set to the exact
    amount of bytes used by the code.
```

```
void jit_set_code (jit_pointer_t code, jit_word_t size) [Function]
    Instructs GNU lightning to output to the code argument and use size as a guard to
    not write to invalid memory. If during jit_emit GNU lightning finds out that the
    code would not fit in size bytes, it halts code emit and returns NULL.
```

A simple example of a loop using an alternate buffer is:

```
jit_uint8_t *code;
int *(func)(int); /* function pointer */
jit_word_t code_size;
jit_word_t real_code_size;
...
jit_realize(); /* ready to generate code */
jit_get_code(&code_size); /* get expected code size */
code_size = (code_size + 4095) & -4096;
do (;;) {
    code = mmap(NULL, code_size, PROT_EXEC | PROT_READ | PROT_WRITE,
                MAP_PRIVATE | MAP_ANON, -1, 0);
    jit_set_code(code, code_size);
    if ((func = jit_emit()) == NULL) {
        munmap(code, code_size);
        code_size += 4096;
    }
} while (func == NULL);
jit_get_code(&real_code_size); /* query exact size of the code */
```

The first call to `jit_get_code` should return NULL and set the `code_size` argument to the expected amount of bytes required to emit code. The second call to `jit_get_code` is after a successful call to `jit_emit`, and will return the value previously set with `jit_set_code` and set the `real_code_size` argument to the exact amount of bytes used to emit the code.

7.4 Alternate data buffer

Sometimes it may be desirable to customize how, or to prevent GNU *lightning* from using an extra buffer for constants or debug annotation. Usually when also using an alternate code buffer.

```
jit_pointer_t jit_get_data (jit_word_t *data_size, jit_word_t      [Function]
                          *note_size)
```

Returns NULL or the previous value set with `jit_set_data`, and sets the `data_size` argument to how many bytes are required for the constants data buffer, and `note_size` to how many bytes are required to store the debug note information. Note that it always preallocate one debug note entry even if `jit_name` or `jit_note` are never called, but will return zero in the `data_size` argument if no constant is required; constants are only used for the `float` and `double` operations that have an immediate argument, and not in all GNU *lightning* ports.

```
void jit_set_data (jit_pointer_t data, jit_word_t size, jit_word_t      [Function]
                  flags)
```

`data` can be NULL if disabling constants and annotations, otherwise, a valid pointer must be passed. An assertion is done that the data will fit in `size` bytes (but that is a noop if GNU *lightning* was built with `-DNDEBUG`).

`size` tells the space in bytes available in `data`.

`flags` can be zero to tell to just use the alternate data buffer, or a composition of `JIT_DISABLE_DATA` and `JIT_DISABLE_NOTE`

JIT_DISABLE_DATA

Instructs GNU *lightning* to not use a constant table, but to use an alternate method to synthesize those, usually with a larger code sequence using stack space to transfer the value from a GPR to a FPR register.

JIT_DISABLE_NOTE

Instructs GNU *lightning* to not store file or function name, and line numbers in the constant buffer.

A simple example of a preventing usage of a data buffer is:

```
...
jit_realize();                               /* ready to generate code */
jit_get_data(NULL, NULL);
jit_set_data(NULL, 0, JIT_DISABLE_DATA | JIT_DISABLE_NOTE);
...
```

Or to only use a data buffer, if required:

```
jit_uint8_t  *data;
jit_word_t   data_size;
...
jit_realize();                               /* ready to generate code */
jit_get_data(&data_size, NULL);
if (data_size)
    data = malloc(data_size);
```

```
else
    data = NULL;
jit_set_data(data, data_size, JIT_DISABLE_NOTE);
...
if (data)
    free(data);
...
```

8 Acknowledgements

As far as I know, the first general-purpose portable dynamic code generator is DCG, by Dawson R. Engler and T. A. Proebsting. Further work by Dawson R. Engler resulted in the VCODE system; unlike DCG, VCODE used no intermediate representation and directly inspired GNU *lightning*.

Thanks go to Ian Piumarta, who kindly accepted to release his own program CCG under the GNU General Public License, thereby allowing GNU *lightning* to use the run-time assemblers he had wrote for CCG. CCG provides a way of dynamically assemble programs written in the underlying architecture's assembly language. So it is not portable, yet very interesting.

I also thank Steve Byrne for writing GNU Smalltalk, since GNU *lightning* was first developed as a tool to be used in GNU Smalltalk's dynamic translator from bytecodes to native code.