Introduction to MIC

Steve Lantz
Senior Research Associate
Cornell University Center for Advanced Computing (CAC)
slantz@cac.cornell.edu

With contributions from Aaron Birkland at CAC, and Lars Koesterke, Bill Barth, Kent Milfield, John Cazes, and Lucas Wilson at TACC

www.cac.cornell.edu
Stampede Specs

• 6400+ Dell PowerEdge C8220z server nodes in system
  – 16 Intel Xeon E5-2680 “Sandy Bridge” cores per node, 102400 total
  – 32GB memory per node, 200TB total
• Over 6400 Intel Xeon Phi™ SE10P coprocessor cards
• 2+ petaflop/s Intel Xeon E5
• 7+ additional petaflop/s of Intel Xeon Phi™ SE10P coprocessors to change the power/performance curves of supercomputing
• Over 70% of cycles are from Xeon Phi
• Learn to leverage those 7+ Pflop/s
Xeon Phi: What Is It?

- Complete system on PCIe card (Linux OS, processor, memory)
- x86-derived processor featuring large number of simplified cores
  - Many Integrated Core (MIC) architecture
- Optimized for floating point throughput
- Modified 64-bit x86 instruction set
  - Code compatible (C, C++, FORTRAN) with re-compile
  - Not binary compatible with x86_64
- Supports same HPC programming paradigms with same code (MPI, OpenMP, Hybrid).
- Offers new Offload paradigm
  - C/FORTRAN markup to denote code to execute on Phi at runtime
  - Link to MKL library implementation which can offload automatically
Stampede Footprint vs. Ranger

- Capabilities are 17x; footprint is 2.7x; power draw is 2.1x
How Does Stampede Reach Petaflop/s?

• Hardware trend since around 2004: processors gain more cores (execution engines) rather than greater clock speed
  – IBM POWER4 (2001) became the first chip with 2 cores, 1.1–1.9 GHz; meanwhile, Intel’s single-core Pentium 4 was a bust at >3.8 GHz
  – Top server and workstation chips in 2014 (Intel Xeon, AMD Opteron) now have 4, 8, even 15 or 16 cores, running at 1.6–3.2 GHz
• Does it mean Moore’s Law is dead? No!
  – Transistor densities are still doubling every 2 years
  – Clock rates have stalled at < 4 GHz due to power consumption
  – Only way to increase flop/s/watt is through greater on-die parallelism…
CPU Speed and Complexity Trends

Trends for Petaflop/s Machines

- **CPUs:** Wider vector units, more cores
  - General-purpose in nature
  - High single-thread performance, moderate floating point throughput
  - 2x E5-2680 on Stampede: 0.34 Tflop/s, 260W

- **GPUs:** Thousands of very simple stream processors
  - Specialized for floating point
  - New programming models: CUDA, OpenCL, OpenACC
  - Tesla K20 on Stampede: 1.17 Tflop/s, 225W

- **MIC:** Take CPU trends to an extreme, optimize for floating point
  - Retain general-purpose nature and programming models from CPU
  - Low single-thread performance, high aggregate FP throughput
  - SE10P on Stampede: 1.06 Tflops/s, 300W
Attractiveness of MIC

- Programming MIC is similar to programming for CPUs
  - C/C++, Fortran
  - OpenMP, MPI
  - MPI on host and coprocessor
  - General purpose computing, not just kernels
  - In many cases, just re-compile

- Optimizing for MIC is similar to optimizing for CPUs
  - “Optimize once, run anywhere”
  - Fundamental architectural similarities

- Offers a new, flexible Offload programming paradigm
  - Resembles GPU computing patterns in some ways
MIC Architecture

- SE10P is first production version used in Stampede
  - Chip, memory on PCIe card
  - 61 cores, each containing:
    - 64 KB L1 cache
    - 512 KB L2 cache
    - 512 byte vector unit
  - 31.5 MB total coherent L2 cache, connected by ring bus
  - 8 GB GDDR5 memory
    - Very fast, 352 GB/s vs 50 GB/s/socket for E5

Courtesy Intel
Key Design Decisions: Saving Power

• Omit power-hungry features such as branch prediction, out-of-order execution (at the cost of single-thread performance)
• Simplify instruction decoder so that instructions are issued every other clock cycle from a given thread (a single thread can utilize at most 50% of a core)
• Reduce clock speed (at the cost of single-thread performance, obviously)
• Eliminate a shared L3 cache in favor of coherent L2 caches (performance impacts are subtle – can help and hurt)
Key Design Decisions: Floating Point Performance

- Use wide vector units (512-bit vs. 256-bit for Xeon E5)
- Use more cores
- Use up to four hardware threads per core
  - Compensates for some of the power-saving compromises, such as the in-order execution and the simplified instruction decoder
- Use fast GDDR5 memory

As a result:
Performance characteristics are very different from server CPUs!
## MIC vs. CPU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MIC (SE10P)</th>
<th>CPU (E5)</th>
<th>MIC is…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of cores</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>much higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clock speed (GHz)</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIMD width</strong> (bit)</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP Gflop/s/core</td>
<td>16+</td>
<td>21+</td>
<td>lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW threads/core</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>higher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- CPUs designed for all workloads, high single-thread performance
- MIC also general purpose, though optimized for number crunching
  - Focus on high aggregate throughput via lots of weaker threads
  - Regularly achieve >2x performance compared to dual E5 CPUs
Two Types of CPU/MIC Parallelism

• Threading (work-level parallelism)
  – OpenMP, Cilk Plus, TBB, Pthreads, etc.
  – It’s all about sharing work and scheduling

• Vectorization (data-level parallelism)
  – “Lock step” Instruction Level Parallelization (SIMD)
  – Requires management of synchronized instruction execution
  – It’s all about finding simultaneous operations

• To fully utilize MIC, both types of parallelism need to be identified and exploited
  – Need 2–4+ threads to keep a MIC core busy (in-order execution stalls)
  – Vectorized loops gain 8x performance on MIC!
  – Important for CPUs as well: gain of 4x on Sandy Bridge
Parallelism and Performance on MIC and CPU

Courtesy Intel
Typical Configuration of a Stampede Node

- Host with dual Intel Xeon “Sandy Bridge” (CPU)
- PCIe card with Intel Xeon Phi™ (MIC)

Access from network:
ssh <host> (OS)
ssh <coprocessor> (μOS)

Virtual IP* service for MIC

Linux OS

HCA

PCle

Linux micro OS
MIC Resembles a Compute Node

- Participates in network via established APIs
  - TCP/IP, SSH, NFS; MIC has its own hostname
- Runs its own OS, you can log into it and open a Linux shell
- $HOME, $WORK, $SCRATCH are mounted on it
  - You or your programs can read/write/execute files
- MPI infrastructure can launch jobs on it

But, there are some key differences

- SLURM and batch system don’t directly interact with MIC cards
- Minimal 3rd party software modules are installed on it
- The cluster is heterogeneous when MPI is used on MIC and hosts
MIC Execution Models for Stampede

Native Execution

• Compile one executable for MIC architecture
  
  \texttt{icc -O2 -mmic -openmp myprog.c -o myprog.mic}

• Convenient to use .mic suffix for executables to serve as a reminder

• Run directly on MIC coprocessor
  – Use ssh or TACC’s convenient \texttt{micrun} launcher

  \texttt{c123-456$ ssh mic0}
  \texttt{~ $ export OMP_NUM_THREADS=180}
  \texttt{~ $ /path/to/myprog.mic}
MIC Execution Models for Stampede

Native Execution

- `micrun` launcher is designed to make running MIC executables simple from host.
  - Set specific environment variables with `MIC_` prefix
  - Receive proper return value
  - Can be used explicitly via `micrun`, or implicitly

```bash
c123-456$ export MIC_OMP_NUM_THREADS=180
c123-456$ /path/to/myprog.mic

c123-456$ export MIC_OMP_NUM_THREADS=180
c123-456$ micrun /path/to/myprog.mic
```
MIC Execution Models for Stampede

“Symmetric” Execution
• Message passing (MPI) on CPUs and MICs alike
• Unified source code
• Code modifications optional
  – Assign different work to CPUs vs. MICs
  – Multithread with OpenMP for CPUs, MICs, or both
• Compile twice, 2 executables
  – One for MIC, one for host
• Run in parallel using MPI

Courtesy Scott McMillan, Intel
MIC Execution Models for Stampede

Symmetric Execution

- Use `ibrun.symm` MPI launcher.
  - Like `ibrun`, but adds capability of launching processes on MIC coprocessors
  - Use `-c` argument to specify host CPU executable, `-m` to specify MIC executable
  - Standard SLURM params (`-N`, `-n`) determine total number of compute nodes, and host processes
  - `MIC_PPN` environment variable to control number of MIC processes per Phi card
  - Only `MIC_` prefixed environment variables are sent to MIC processes
- Right now, only Intel MPI implementation (`impi`) supported.
**MIC Execution Models for Stampede**

**Offload Execution**
- Directives indicate data and functions to send from CPU to MIC for execution
- Unified source code
- Code modifications required
- Compile once
- Run in parallel using MPI and/or scripting, if desired

Courtesy Scott McMillan, Intel
MIC Execution Models for Stampede

Offload Execution

• Option 1: With compiler-assisted offload, you write code and offload annotations
  – No specific compiler flags needed, offload is implicit where markup is encountered
  – Offload code will automatically run on MIC at runtime if MIC is present, otherwise host version is run

• Option 2: With automatic offload, you link to a library that can perform offload operations (e.g. MKL)
  – Stampede MKL is offload-capable, all you do is link to it (`-lmkl`)!
  – Need to explicitly tell MKL to use offload at runtime via environment variable `MKL_MIC_ENABLE=1`
Which Execution Model?

• Native is very useful for performance testing, empirical analysis
  – Works well for interactive jobs
  – Re-compile and run!

• Use Symmetric to run existing MPI code on MIC only, or Host+MIC
  – MIC coprocessor is just another node
  – Using both Host and MIC creates a heterogeneous cluster
  – Potential balancing issues, but these may possibly be addressed by runtime parameters, not necessarily code changes

• Use automatic offload for code that uses an API implemented by MKL (e.g., BLAS, LAPACK)

• Compiler-assisted offload can give fine-grained control: keep slow, serial parts on CPU, run tight parallel loops on MIC or both
Labs

- **Interactive Launching**
  - Run a simple script on host, MIC interactively
  - Use the script to see how environment variables are handled on each
- **Native OpenMP**
  - Compare native performance on host to native performance on MIC for the same OpenMP source code
  - Note that this code is very friendly to MIC: floating-point intensive, light on usage of memory, easy to multithread, easy to vectorize
References

• Some information in this talk was gathered from presentations at the TACC–Intel Highly Parallel Computing Symposium, Austin, Texas, April 10–11, 2012: http://www.tacc.utexas.edu/ti-hpcs12.

• Stampede User Guide https://portal.tacc.utexas.edu/user-guides/stampede

• Intel press materials http://newsroom.intel.com/docs/DOC-3126

• Intel MIC developer information http://software.intel.com/mic-developer
(Previous Labs)

- Interactive Launching
  - Run native code on host, MIC interactively
- Simple Symmetric MPI
  - Use `ibrun.symm` to control number of jobs running on host and MIC, verify that they’re running where you think they are
  - If you use `wget` to download code, use the `--no-check-certificate` option

Next week in advanced MIC:
- Non-trivial Symmetric example
  - Use hybrid code (MPI+OpenMP) to calculate PI
  - Investigate issues related to performance disparity between host and coprocessor