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# The Art of Java Benchmarking ...building harnesses, ugh

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MAKE THE  
FUTURE  
JAVA



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# Intro



# Intro: Speaker's Credentials

- ex-«Intel, Apache Harmony performance guy»
- ex-«SPEC tech. representative for Oracle»
- in-«Oracle/Open JDK performance guy»
- Guilty for:
  1. Lots of shameful internal stuff
  2. SPECjbb2013
  3. Concurrency improvements (e.g. @Contended)
  4. Java Microbenchmark Harness (jmh)
  5. Java Concurrency Stress Tests (jcstress)

# Basics



# Basics: Benchmarks are experiments

- Computer Science → Software Engineering
  - Build software to meet functional requirements
  - Mostly don't care about HW and data specifics
  - Abstract and composable, «formal science»
  
- Software Performance Engineering
  - «Real world strikes back!»
  - Exploring complex interactions between hardware, software, and data
  - Based on empirical evidence, i.e. «natural science»

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Any experiment requires the control

- Sometimes, just a few baseline measurements
- Sometimes, vast web of support experiments

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- Software-specific: peek under the hood!

Experiments **assume** the hypothesis (model),  
against which we do the control

# Basics: Common Wisdom

Microbenchmarks are bad



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# Basics: The Root Cause

«Premature optimization  
is the root of all evil»  
(Khuth, 1974)

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(Shipilev, 2013)

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Optimizations distort the performance models!

- Applied in «common» (>50%) cases
- Unclear interdependencies
- «Black box» abstraction fails big time

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Examples:

- interpreter vs. compiler: which is simpler to benchmark?

# Basics: Evil Optimizations

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- Applied in «common» (>50%) cases
- Unclear interdependencies
- «Black box» abstraction fails big time

Examples:

- interpreter vs. compiler: which is simpler to benchmark?
- `new MyObject()`: allocated in TLAB? allocated in LOB? scalarized? eliminated?



# Basics: Know Thy Optimizations

Understanding the performance model  
is the road to awe

- This is the endgame result for benchmarking
- Benchmarking is for exploring the performance models (which also helps to get better at benchmarking)
- Every new optimization  $\Rightarrow$  new hassle for everyone

# Basics: Benchmarks vs. Optimization

## Ground Rule

Benchmarking is the (endless) fight against the optimizations

## Collorary

Benchmarking harness #1 priority: managing the optimizations

# Basics: JMH

Java Microbenchmark Harness:  
`http://openjdk.java.net/projects/  
code-tools/jmh/`

- Works around pitfalls tailored to HotSpot/OpenJDK specifics
- Bug fixes as VM evolves, or we discover more
- We (perfteam) validate benches by rewriting them with JMH
- Facilitates peer review

# Basics: JMH API Sneak Peek

Let users declare the benchmark body:

```
@GenerateMicroBenchmark
public void helloWorld() {
    // do something here
}
```

...then generate lots of supporting synthetic code around that body.

(At this point, simply generating the auxiliary subclass works fine, but it is limiting for some cases)

# Basics: Getting the units right

\*Benchmarks:

■ micro:

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- micro: 1...1000 us, single webapp request

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- milli: 1...1000 ms, SPECjvm98, SPECjbb2005
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# Basics: Getting the units right

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- \_\_\_\_\_: 1...1000 s, SPECjvm2008, SPECjbb2013
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- milli: 1...1000 ms, SPECjvm98, SPECjbb2005
- micro: 1...1000 us, single webapp request
- nano: 1...1000 ns, single operations
- pico: 1...1000 ps, pipelining

# Basics: ...increaseth sorrow

Benchmarks amplify all the effects visible at the same scale.

- **Milli**benchmarks are not really hard
- **Micro**benchmarks are challenging, but OK
- **Nano**benchmarks are the damned beasts!
- **Pico**benchmarks...

# Basics: Warmup

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- Every online optimization requires warmup
- JIT compilation is **NOT** the only online optimization



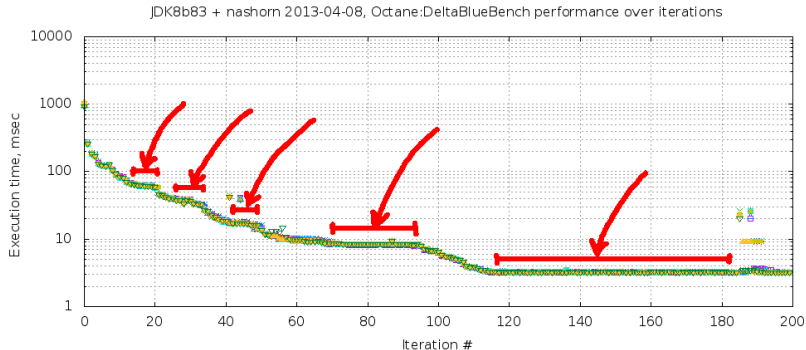
# Basics: Warmup

## Definition

«Warmup» = waiting for the transient responses to settle down

- Every online optimization requires warmup
- JIT compilation is **NOT** the only online optimization
- Ok, «Watch -XX:+PrintCompilation»?

# Basics: Warmup plateaus



# Major pitfalls



# Major pitfalls: The Goal

The goal for this section is  
to **scare you away** from:

- (blindly) building the benchmark harnesses
- (blindly) trusting the benchmark harnesses
- (blindly) trusting the benchmarks
- (blindly) being generally blind about benchmarks

# System: Optimization Quiz (A)

Let us run the empty benchmark.  
System reports 4 online CPUs.

Threads	Ops/nsec	Scale
1	3.06 ± 0.10	
2	5.72 ± 0.10	1.87 ± 0.03
4	5.87 ± 0.02	1.91 ± 0.03

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- Q(1): No change going for 2 → 4 threads?
- Q(2): Only 1.87x change for 1 → 2 threads?

# System: Power management

Running dummy benchmark,  
+ Down-clocking to 2.0 GHz

Threads	Ops/nsec	Scale
1	1.97 ± 0.02	
2	3.94 ± 0.05	2.00 ± 0.02
4	4.03 ± 0.04	2.04 ± 0.02



# System: Power management

Many subsystems balance  
power-vs-performance

(Ex.: cpufreq, SpeedStep, Cool&Quiet, TurboBoost)

- **Downside:** breaks the homogeneity of time
- **Remedy:** disable power management, fix CPU clock frequency
- **JMH Remedy:** run longer, do not park threads

# System: OS Schedulers

OS schedulers balance affinity-vs-power

(Ex.: Solaris schedulers, Linux power-efficient taskqueues)

- **Downside:** breaks the processing symmetry
- **Remedy:** tight up scheduling policies
- **JMH Remedy:** run longer, do not park threads

# System: Time Sharing

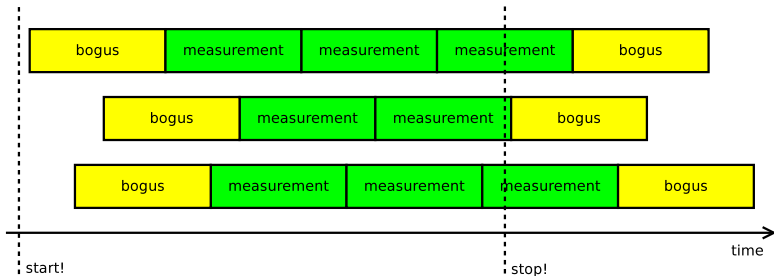
Time sharing systems balance utilization

(Ex.: everywhere)

- **Downside:** thread start/stop is not instantaneous, thread run time is non-deterministic, the load is non-uniform
- **Remedy:** make sure everything runs before measuring
- **JMH Remedy:** «bogus iterations»

# System: Time Sharing, #2

JMH provides the remedy – bogus iterations:



# VM: Optimization Quiz (B)

```
@GenerateMicroBenchmark  
public void baseline() { 0.5 ± 0.1 ns  
}
```

```
@GenerateMicroBenchmark  
public void measureWrong() { 0.5 ± 0.1 ns  
    Math.log(x);  
}
```

```
@GenerateMicroBenchmark  
public double measureRight() { 34.0 ± 1.0 ns  
    return Math.log(x);  
}
```

# VM: Dead-code elimination

Compilers are good at eliminating the redundant code.

- **Downside:** can remove (parts of) the benchmarked code
- **Remedy:** consume the results, depend on the results, provide the side effect
- **JMH Remedy:** API support

# VM: Avoiding dead-code elimination

DCE is somewhat easy to avoid for primitives:

- Primitives have binary combinators!
- Caveat #1: Combinator cost?
- Caveat #2: Low-range primitives enable speculation (boolean)

```
int sum = 0;
for (int i = 0; i < 100; i++) {
    sum += op(i);
}
return sum; // consume in caller
```

# VM: Avoiding dead-code elimination

DCE is hard to avoid for references:

- Caveat #1: Fast object combinator, anyone?
- Caveat #2: Need to escape object to limit thread-local optimizations.
- Caveat #3: Publishing the object  $\Rightarrow$  reference heap write  $\Rightarrow$  store barrier



# VM: DCE, Blackholes

JMH provides «Blackholes».  
Blackhole consumes the value.

```
class Blackhole {  
    void consume(int v) { doMagic(v); }  
    void consume(Object o) { doMagic(o); }  
}
```

- Returns are implicitly fed into the blackhole
- User can request additional blackhole  $\Rightarrow$  heap writes again, dammit!

# VM: Avoiding dead-code elimination, Blackholes

Relatively easy for primitives:

```
class Blackhole {
    static volatile Wrapper NULL;
    volatile int g1 = 1, g2 = 2;

    void consume(int v) {
        if (v == g1 & v == g2) {
            NULL.field = 0; // implicit NPE
        }
    }
}
```

# VM: DCE, Blackholes

Harder for references:

```
class Blackhole {
    Object sink;
    int prngState;
    int prngMask;

    void consume(Object v) {
        if ((next(prngState) & prngMask) == 0) {
            sink = v; // store barrier here
            prngMask = (prngMask << 1) + 1;
        }
    }
}
```

# VM: Optimization Quiz (C)

```
@GenerateMicroBenchmark  
public void baseline() { 0.5 ± 0.1 ns  
}
```

```
@GenerateMicroBenchmark  
public double measureWrong() { 1.0 ± 0.1 ns  
    return Math.log(42);  
}
```

```
private double x = 42;  
@GenerateMicroBenchmark  
public double measureRight() { 34.0 ± 1.0 ns  
    return Math.log(x);  
}
```

# VM: Constant folding, etc.

Compilers are good at partial evaluation<sup>1</sup>

- **Downside:** can remove (parts of) the benchmarked code
- **Remedy:** make the sources unpredictable
- **JMH Remedy:** API support

---

<sup>1</sup>All right, all right! It is not really *the* PE.

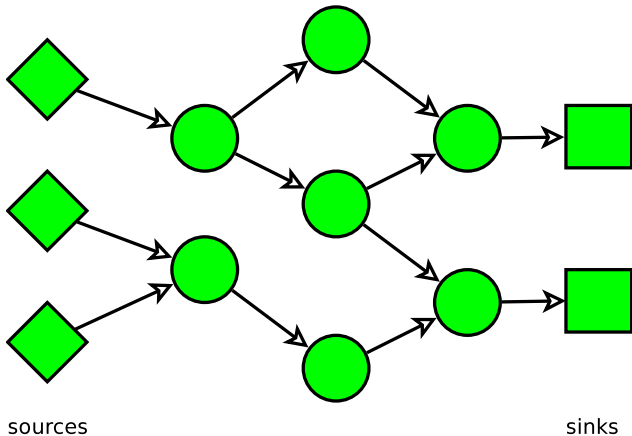
# VM: CSE

JMH prevents load commoning across @GMB calls

```
double x;
@GMB
double doWork() {
    doStuff(x);
}
|
volatile boolean done;
void doMeasure() {
    while (!done) {
        doWork();
    }
}
```

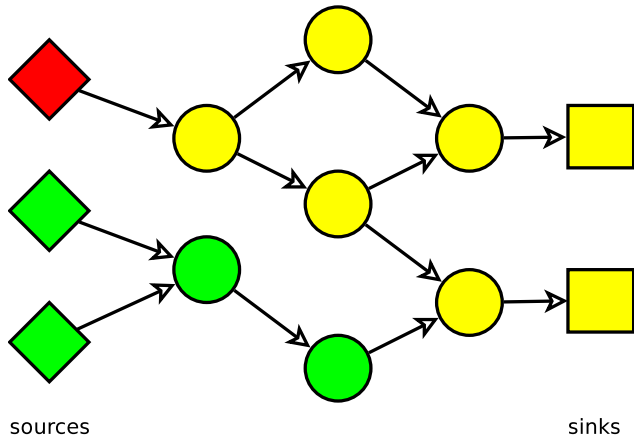
(i.e. read everything from heap  $\Rightarrow$  you are good!)

# VM: DCE, CSE... Same thing!



Losing either a source or a sink loses the part of the benchmark. Silently.

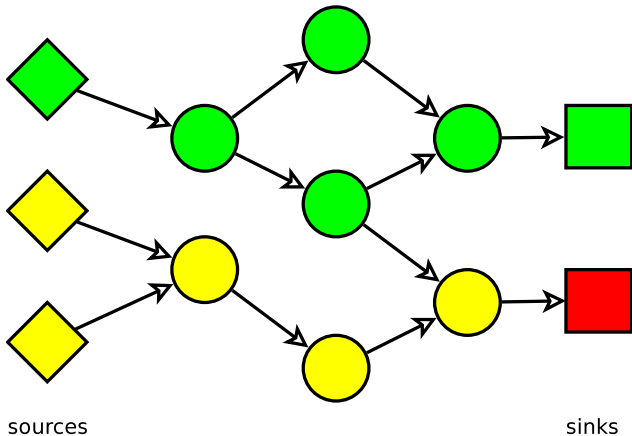
# VM: DCE, CSE... Same thing!



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# VM: DCE, CSE... Same thing!



Losing either a source or a sink loses the part of the benchmark. Silently.

# VM: Optimization Quiz (D)

```
// changing N, will performance differ?  
static int N = 100;  
  
@GenerateMicroBenchmark  
public int test() { return doWork(N); }  
  
int x = 1, y = 2;  
  
private int doWork(int reps) {  
    int s = 0;  
    for (int i = 0; i < reps; i++)  
        s += (x + y);  
    return s;  
}
```

## VM: Optimization Quiz (D), #2

N	ns/call	ns/add
1	1.5 ± 0.1	1.5 ± 0.1
10	2.0 ± 0.1	0.1 ± 0.01
100	2.7 ± 0.2	0.05 ± 0.02
1000	68.8 ± 0.9	0.07 ± 0.01
10000	410.3 ± 2.1	0.04 ± 0.01
100000	3836.1 ± 40.6	0.04 ± 0.01

## VM: Optimization Quiz (D), #2

N	ns/call	ns/add
1	1.5 ± 0.1	1.5 ± 0.1
10	2.0 ± 0.1	0.1 ± 0.01
100	2.7 ± 0.2	0.05 ± 0.02
1000	68.8 ± 0.9	0.07 ± 0.01
10000	410.3 ± 2.1	0.04 ± 0.01
100000	3836.1 ± 40.6	0.04 ± 0.01

Which one to believe?

0.04 ns/add  $\Rightarrow$  25 adds/ns  $\Rightarrow$  GTFO!

# VM: Loop unrolling

Loop unrolling greatly expands the scope of optimizations

- **Downside:** assume the single loop iteration is  $M$  ns. After unrolling the effective cost is  $\alpha M$  ns, where  $\alpha \in [0; +\infty)$
- **Remedy:** avoid unrollable loops, limit the effect of unrolling
- **JMH Remedy:** proper handling for CSE/DCE nils loop unrolling effects

# VM: Optimization Quiz (E)

```
interface M {  
    void inc();  
}
```

```
abstract class AM implements M {  
    int c;  
    void inc() {  
        c++;  
    }  
}
```

```
class M1 extends AM {}  
class M2 extends AM {}
```

# VM: Optimization Quiz (E), #2

```
M m1 = new M1();
```

```
M m2 = new M2();
```

```
@GenerateMicroBenchmark
```

```
public void testM1() { test(m1); }
```

```
@GenerateMicroBenchmark
```

```
public void testM2() { test(m2); }
```

```
void test(M m) {
```

```
    for (int i = 0; i < 100; i++)
```

```
        m.inc();
```

```
}
```

# VM: Optimization Quiz (E), #3

test	ns/op
testM1	4.6 ± 0.1
testM2	36.0 ± 0.4



# VM: Optimization Quiz (E), #3

test	ns/op
testM1	4.6 ± 0.1
testM2	36.0 ± 0.4
repeat testM1	35.8 ± 0.4

# VM: Optimization Quiz (E), #3

test	ns/op
testM1	4.6 ± 0.1
testM2	36.0 ± 0.4
repeat testM1	35.8 ± 0.4
forked testM1	4.5 ± 0.1
forked testM2	4.5 ± 0.1

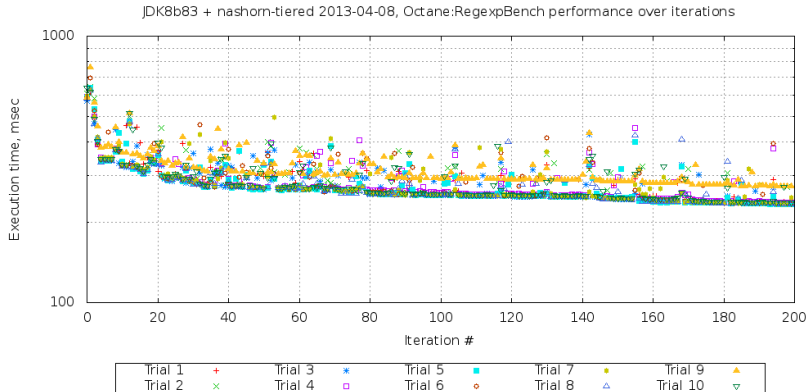
# VM: Profile feedback

Dynamic optimizations  
can use runtime information

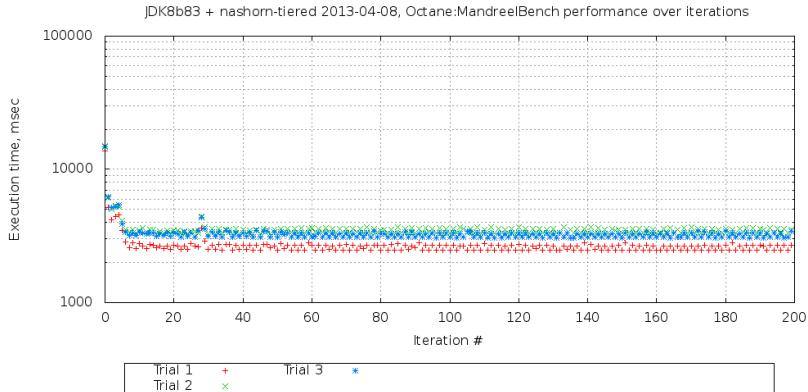
(Ex.: call profile, type profile, CHA info)

- **Downside:** Big difference in running multiple benchmarks, or a single benchmark in the VM
- **Remedy:** Warmup all benchmarks together;  
OR fork the JVMs
- **JMH Remedy:** Bulk warmup support; forking

# VM: Optimization Quiz (F)



# VM: Optimization Quiz (F), #2



# VM: Run-to-run variance

Many scalable algos are inherently non-deterministic!

(Ex.: memory allocators, profiler counters, non-fair locks, concurrent data structures, some other intelligent tricks up our sleeve...)

- **Downside:** (potentially) (devastatingly) large run-to-run variance
- **Remedy:** replays withing every subsystem, multiple JVM runs
- **JMH Remedy:** multiple forks



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# VM: Inlining budgets

Inlining is the uber-optimization

- **Downside:** You can not inline everything ⇒ subtle inlining budget considerations
- **Remedy:** Smaller methods, smaller loops, examining `-XX:+PrintInlining`, forcing inlining
- **JMH Remedy:** Generated code peels potentially hot loops, user-friendly  
`@CompileControl`

# VM: Inlining example

Small hot method: inlining budget starts here.

```
public void testLong_loop
    (Loop loop, Result r, MyBench bench) {
    long ops = 0;
    r.start = System.nanoTime();
    do {
        bench.testLong(); // @GMB
        ops++;
    } while(!loop.isDone);
    r.end = System.nanoTime();
    r.ops = ops;
}
```



# CPU: Optimization Quiz (G)

```
@State
public class TreeMapBench {
    Map<String, String> map = new TreeMap<>();

    @Setup
    public void setup() { populate(map); }

    @GenerateMicroBenchmark
    public void test(BlackHole bh) {
        for(String key : map.keySet()) {
            String value = map.get(key);
            bh.consume(value);
        }
    }
}
```

# CPU: Optimization Quiz (G), #2

```
@GenerateMicroBenchmark
public void test(BlackHole bh) {
    for(String key : map.keySet()) {
        String value = map.get(key);
        bh.consume(value);
    }
}
```

	Exclusive	Shared
Throughput, op/sec	615 ± 12	828 ± 21

# CPU: Optimization Quiz (G), #2

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@GenerateMicroBenchmark
public void test(BlackHole bh) {
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Threads	4	4
Maps	4	1

# CPU: Optimization Quiz (G), #2

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        bh.consume(value);
    }
}
```

	Exclusive	Shared
Throughput, op/sec	615 ± 12	828 ± 21
Threads	4	4
Maps	4	1
Footprint, Kb	1024	256

# CPU: Cache capacity

DRAM memory is too far and too slow.  
Cache the hottest stuff on-die SRAM cache!

- **Downside:** Remarkably different performance for memory accesses, depending on your luck
- **Remedy:** Track the memory footprint; multiple experiments with different problem sizes; shared/distinct data for the worker threads
- **JMH Remedy:** @State scopes

# CPU: Optimization Quiz (G)

How scalable is this?

```
@State(Scope.Benchmark) class Shared {  
    final int[] c = new int[64];  
}
```

```
@State(Scope.Thread) class Local {  
    static final AtomicInteger COUNTER = ...;  
    final int index = COUNTER.incrementAndGet();  
}
```

```
@GenerateMicroBenchmark  
void work(Shared s, Local l) {  
    s.c[l.index]++;  
}
```

# CPU: Optimization Quiz (G), #2

Threads	Average ns/call	Hit
1	2.0 ± 0.1	
2	18.5 ± 2.4	9x
4	32.9 ± 6.2	16x
8	85.4 ± 13.4	42x
16	208.9 ± 52.1	104x
32	464.2 ± 46.1	232x

Why?



# CPU: Bulk method transfers

Memory subsystem tracks data in cache-line quantas. Cache lines are 32, 64, 128 bytes long.

- **Downside:** the dense inter-thread accesses are very hard for memory subsystem (false sharing)
- **Remedy:** padding, subclass juggling, @Contended
- **JMH Remedy:** control structures are heavily padded, auto-padding for @State

# CPU: Optimization Quiz (H)<sup>2</sup>

## Exhibit B.

```
int sum = 0;
for (int x : a) {
    if (x < 0) {
        sum -= x;
    } else {
        sum += x;
    }
}
return sum;
```

## Exhibit P.

```
int sum = 0;
for (int x : a) {
    sum += Math.abs(x);
}
return sum;
```

Which one is faster?

<sup>2</sup>Credits: Sergey Kuksenko (@kuksen0)

# CPU: Optimization Quiz (H)

## E. Branched

```
L0: mov  0xc(%ecx,%ebp,4),%ebx
     test %ebx,%ebx
     jl   L1
     add  %ebx,%eax
     jmp  L2
L1: sub  %ebx,%eax
L2: inc  %ebp
     cmp  %edx,%ebp
     jl   L0
```

## E. Predicated

```
L0: mov  0xc(%ecx,%ebp,4),%ebx
     mov  %ebx,%esi
     neg  %esi
     test %ebx,%ebx
     cmovl %esi,%ebx
     add  %ebx,%eax
     inc  %ebp
     cmp  %edx,%ebp
     jl   Loop
```

Which one is faster?

# CPU: Optimization Quiz (H)

Regular Pattern = (+, -)\*

	NHM	Bldzr	C-A9 <sup>3</sup>	SNB
branch_regular	0.9	0.8	5.0	0.5
branch_shuffled	6.2	2.8	9.4	1.0
branch_sorted	0.9	1.0	5.0	0.6
predicated_regular	2.0	1.0	5.3	0.8
predicated_shuffled	2.0	1.0	9.3	0.8
predicated_sorted	2.0	1.0	5.7	0.8

time, nsec/op

---

<sup>3</sup>Using client compiler

# CPU: Branch Prediction

Out-of-Order engines speculate a lot.  
Most of the time (99%+) correct!

- **Downside:** Vastly different performance when speculation fails
- **Remedy:** Realistic data! Multiple diverse datasets

# Conclusion



# Conclusion: not as simple as it sounds

You should be scared by now!

Resist the urge to:

- believe the pleasant results
- reject the unpleasant results
- write the throw-away benchmarks
- write the «generic» benchmark harnesses
- believe the fancy reports and beautiful APIs
- trust the code

# Conclusion: Benchmarking is serious

More rigor is never a bad thing!

- Spending a day on benchmark is better than wasting a week implementing the wrong suggestion
- Never trust anything (unless checked before)
- Ever challenge everything (including these slides)
- Embrace failure (especially your failures)
- Grind your teeth, and redo the tests (especially yours)



# Conclusion: Things on list to do

JMH does one thing and does it right:  
gets you less «back to square one» moments

Other things to improve usability:

- Java API (in progress)
- Bindings to reporters (in progress)
- Bindings to the other JVM languages
- @Parameters

# Conclusion: JMH



**Java Plumb**

@JavaPlumb



"Any Java benchmarking framework contains an ad hoc, informally-specified, bug-ridden, slow implementation of half of JMH" via @shipilev



Reply



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FAVORITES



2:19 AM - 29 Oct 13

# Thanks!

