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Implementation and Optimization of Video Coding Techniques

Thesis

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STATEMENT

This dissertation is submitted to Ain Shams University for the degree of Master of Science in Electrical Engineering (Computer and Systems Engineering).

The work included in this thesis was carried out by the author at the Software Engineering Competence Center (SECC), Information Technology Industry Development Agency (ITIDA), Cairo, Egypt.

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ABSTRACT

With the multimedia revolution in full swing and with the continuously-emerging multimedia codecs and formats, portable multimedia players have become one of the most popular electronic devices. Some players support a single codec and receive its input in a single way like DVD players. Designing a portable multimedia player that supports several codecs encloses many design issues and challenges. The main challenge is optimizing the decoding process for enhancing the player performance, especially for the latest coding standard H.264.

Many approaches for the implementation and optimization of H.264 Baseline profile decoder have been developed in previous researches. In addition, several enhancement and speedup techniques for improving the H.264 deblocking filter performance have been developed in the literature.

In this research, a new parallelization approach for video player on an embedded asymmetric dual-core architecture with the two cores having significantly different performances was proposed, the player supports H.264 Baseline profile and Xvid video files. In addition, several enhancement and optimization techniques were presented at the system level and code level. It was proven through a performance comparison using many test samples that the implemented video player with the proposed parallelization approach and optimization techniques has a significant performance improvement versus previous implementations in the literature survey.

H.264 deblocking filter is one of the most powerful tools in H.264 decoding software that is used to improve the visual quality of decoded frames by removing the blocking artifacts; however it increases the computational complexity of the H.264. Two categories of enhancement and speedup techniques were proposed: standard-compliant techniques improving the deblocking performance by reducing the computation complexity, and standard-noncompliant techniques which propose some modifications on the original deblocking filter algorithm for further improvement of

the performance with tiny quality degradation. The proposed enhancement techniques showed significant performance improvement with tiny quality degradation, especially for videos encoded in low-bit rates.

Keywords: embedded system, video player, video coding, H.264, Xvid, dual-core architecture, parallelization, Deblocking filter, Optimization, Performance improvement

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	X
LIST OF FIGURES	XII
LIST OF TABLES	XIV
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 General Research Objective.....	1
1.3 Specific Research Objectives.....	2
1.4 Research Contributions	3
1.3.1 H.264 video player parallelization and optimization for embedded asymmetric Dual-Core architecture.....	3
1.3.2 H.264 Deblocking Filter Enhancement.....	4
1.5 Thesis Organization	4
CHAPTER 2 - RELEVANT BACKGROUND	6
2.1 Video Coding Standards	6
2.2 H.264 Codec Standard Overview	9
2.3 H.264 Baseline Profile Synopsis	13
2.4 H.264 Deblocking Filter Operation.....	15
2.5 Implementation Approaches of H.264 Baseline Decoder	20
2.5.1 Hardware Implementation of H.264 Baseline Decoder	21
2.5.2 Optimized Software of H.264 Baseline Decoder Utilizing One-Core Architecture ..	25
2.5.3 Optimized Software of H.264 Baseline Decoder Utilizing Multi-Core Architecture	33

2.6 H.264 Deblocking Filter Speedup	48
2.7 Conclusion	56
CHAPTER 3 - CONTRIBUTION I: H.264 VIDEO PLAYER PARALLELIZATION AND OPTIMIZATION FOR EMBEDDED ASYMMETRIC DUAL-CORE ARCHITECTURE	59
3.1 System Architecture of the Video Player	61
3.2 Video Player Parallelization Approach	66
3.3 Software Optimization techniques	72
3.4 Experimental Results.....	79
3.5 Conclusion	81
CHAPTER 4 - CONTRIBUTION II: H.264 DEBLOCKING FILTER ENHANCEMENT	82
4.1 Implementation of Previous Enhancement Techniques for the Deblocking Filter .	84
4.2 Proposed Enhancement techniques for the Deblocking Filter.....	85
4.2.1 Standard-Compliant Enhancement Techniques	85
4.2.2 Standard-Noncompliant Enhancement Techniques	91
4.3 Experimental Results.....	94
4.4 Conclusion	101
CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	102
5.1 Conclusions.....	102
5.1.1 H.264 Video Player Parallelization and Optimization for Embedded Asymmetric Dual-Core Architecture.....	103
5.1.2 H.264 Deblocking Filter Enhancement.....	104
5.2 Recommendations for Future Research.....	105
REFERENCES	106

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

3GPP	3rd Generation Partnership Project
ARM	Advanced RISC Machine
ASIC	Application-Specific Integrated Circuit
AVC	Advanced Video Coding
BIOS	Basic Input/Output System
BS	Boundary Strength
CAVLC	Context-Adaptive Variable Length Coding
CE	Codec Engine
CIF	Common Intermediate Format (352 × 288 resolution)
CMEM	Codec Memory
CODEC	enCOder / DECoder pair
DEM	Data Exchange Mechanism
DMA	Direct Memory Access
DSP	Digital Signal Processor
DVB-H	Digital Video Broadcasting-Handheld
DVD	Digital Versatile Disc
FFmpeg	Fast Forward MPEG
GPL	General Public License
IDCT	Inverse Discrete Cosine Transform
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
IMS	IP Multimedia Subsystem
IQ	Inverse Quantization
I-slice	Intra Slice
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITU-T	International Telecommunication Union Telecommunication Sector
LGPL	Lesser/Library General Public License
JVT	Joint Video Team
LF	Loop Filter
LOP	Line Of Pixels
MB	MacroBlock
MC	Motion Compensation
MMS	Multimedia Messaging Service
MMU	memory management unit
MPE	Media Processing Engine
MPEG	Moving Picture Experts Group
MV	Motion Vector
NAL	Network Abstraction Layer
PAL	Phase Alternating Line

PE	Processing Element
PPE	Power Processor Element
P-slice	Predicted Slice
PSNR	Peak Signal to Noise Ratio
PSTN	Public Switched Telephone Network
QCIF	Quarter CIF (176 × 144 resolution)
QP	Quantizer Parameter
QVGA	Quarter Video Graphics Array (320 × 240 resolution)
RGB	Red-Green-Blue
RISC	Reduced Instruction Set Computer
SIMD	Single Instruction Multiple Data
SoC	System-on-Chip
SPE	Synergistic Processor Elements
SPI	Server Programming Interface
TCP/IP	Transmission Control Protocol / Internet Protocol
USB	Universal Serial Bus
VCEG	Visual Coding Experts Group
VCL	Video Coding Layer
VGA	Video Graphics Array
VLC	VideoLAN Client media player
VLD	Variable Length Decoder
VLIW	Very Long Instruction Word
VPSS	Video Processing Subsystem
xDM	eXpress Digital Media
YUV	Luminance/Chrominance color space
3GPP	3rd Generation Partnership Project
ARM	Advanced RISC Machine
ASIC	Application-Specific Integrated Circuit
AVC	Advanced Video Coding
BIOS	Basic Input/Output System
BS	Boundary Strength
CAVLC	Context-Adaptive Variable Length Coding
CE	Codec Engine
CIF	Common Intermediate Format (352 × 288 resolution)
CMEM	Codec Memory
CODEC	enCOder / DECoder pair
DEM	Data Exchange Mechanism
DMA	Direct Memory Access
DSP	Digital Signal Processor
DVB-H	Digital Video Broadcasting-Handheld
DVD	Digital Versatile Disc
FFmpeg	Fast Forward MPEG
GPL	General Public License

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2-1: ITU-T and MPEG multimedia standards	7
Figure 2-2: Picture quality versus bitrate for H.264, MPEG-4, and JPEG	9
Figure 2-3: H.264 encoder dataflow	11
Figure 2-4: H.264 decoder dataflow	11
Figure 2-5: H.264 profiles relationships.....	12
Figure 2-6: H.264 decoding filter order.....	15
Figure 2-7: BS derivation process	17
Figure 2-8: Line of pixels across an edge.....	18
Figure 2-9: Hardware-Software co-design of H.264 baseline profile decoder.....	22
Figure 2-10: Influence of instruction and data cache sizes on the H.264 decoding	23
Figure 2-11: H.264 decoding companion chip with specialized coprocessors for mobile applications	24
Figure 2-12: Parallelization of data movement with the decoding operations.....	26
Figure 2-13: H.264 decoder flowchart with multithreading technology.....	27
Figure 2-14: Skipping of all-zero residual blocks mechanism	28
Figure 2-15: Modifying H.264 decoding flow to reduce memory access	29
Figure 2-16: Reducing boundary checking.....	30
Figure 2-17: Summary of the improvements achieved by joint algorithm/code-level optimization scheme and memory access minimization on general processor ARM	31
Figure 2-18: Dependence among macroblocks	34
Figure 2-19: Wave approach for exploiting macroblock parallelism.....	35
Figure 2-20: 3D-Wave strategy utilizing the limited spatial range of inter frame dependencies	36
Figure 2-21: H.264 decoder architecture using preparsing and dynamic scheduling at macroblock level	37
Figure 2-22: H.264 decoding speedup comparison of different scheduling techniques using preparsing and dynamic scheduling at macroblock level.....	38
Figure 2-23: The thread parallelization and scheduler design of multi-core parallelization of H.264 decoding.....	39
Figure 2-24: Using spatial and temporal dependencies for multi-core parallelization of H.264 decoding.....	40
Figure 2-25: Computation profile results for H.264 decoder using one PPE.....	41
Figure 2-26: Pipeline structures of H.264 parallel decoder using motion compensation queue partitioning for dynamic load balancing	43

Figure 2-27: Partitioning and assignment of one frame process using fixed coarse-grained function level parallelization of H.264.....	44
Figure 2-28: Performance with preloading a percentage of a single frame to L2 cache....	45
Figure 2-29: Software memory throttling for solving memory access contention.....	46
Figure 2-30: BS derivation order of H.264 deblocking filter.....	49
Figure 2-31: Huffman tree for I and P slice boundary strength derivation.....	52
Figure 2-32: Simplified deblocking filter by computing the maximum and minimum values among the six pixels across an edge.....	53
Figure 2-33: Flowchart for Nbs derivation for deblocking filter.....	54
Figure 2-34: Deblocking filter based on motion vectors.....	55
Figure 3-1: DM6446 digital media evaluation module.....	61
Figure 3-2: TMS320DM6446 SoC architecture.....	62
Figure 3-3: VLC threads and data flow.....	64
Figure 3-4: Profiling results of VLC threads.....	66
Figure 3-5: System architecture of the parallelized video player.....	68
Figure 3-6: Parallel operation of video player.....	69
Figure 3-7: Codec Engine framework usage flow.....	70
Figure 3-8: C64x+ DSP cache memory architecture.....	74
Figure 3-9: Replacing branching instructions by pointers to functions.....	74
Figure 3-10: Memory size retrieval operation of the memory allocation and re-allocation algorithms.....	77
Figure 3-11: Memory allocation and re-allocation algorithms.....	78
Figure 4-1: Profiling results of H.264 Baseline profile decoder.....	82
Figure 4-2: BS derivation process.....	86
Figure 4-3: Proposed BS derivation procedure.....	87
Figure 4-4: Proposed BS derivation procedure with frame boundary check.....	88
Figure 4-5: Skipping BS derivation based on macroblock size.....	89
Figure 4-6: LOP across every edge in the macroblock.....	92
Figure 4-7: Proposed true edge detection procedure.....	93
Figure 4-8: Δ PSNR between the deblocking filter with proposed standard-noncompliant enhancement techniques and the standard H.264 deblocking filter.....	99

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2-1: H.264 decoding functions properties used for fixed coarse-grained function level parallelization.....	44
Table 2-2: BS value distribution for QCIF Sequences	52
Table 3-1: Priorities of VLC threads	65
Table 3-2: Intrinsic DSP Functions of TMS320C64x+	75
Table 3-3: Samples specifications of Xvid and H.264 files	79
Table 3-4: Xvid decoding results after parallelization.....	80
Table 3-5: H.264 Baseline profile decoding results after parallelization	80
Table 3-6: H.264 Baseline profile decoding results after optimization	80
Table 3-7: H.264 decoding performance versus other implementations.....	80
Table 4-1: BS truth table for BS derivation process	86
Table 4-2: Samples Specifications files for evaluating H.264 deblocking filter enhancement.....	94
Table 4-3: Performance improvement of the previous enhancement techniques on DM6446	96
Table 4-4: Performance improvement of the previous enhancement techniques on PC	96
Table 4-5: Performance improvement of the previous and proposed standard-compliant enhancement techniques on DM6446	97
Table 4-6: Performance improvement of the previous and proposed standard-compliant enhancement techniques on PC	97
Table 4-7: Performance improvement of the previous, proposed standard-compliant and standard-noncompliant enhancement techniques on DM6446.....	98
Table 4-8: Performance improvement of the previous, proposed standard-compliant and standard-noncompliant enhancement techniques on PC	98
Table 4-9: H.264 Baseline profile decoding results after deblocking filter enhancement	100

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

Embedded multimedia applications became vital for almost all aspects of modern life. Designing an embedded video player requires the optimizing the decoding process for enhancing the player performance, especially for the latest coding standard H.264. Many approaches for the implementation and optimization of H.264 Baseline profile decoder have been developed in previous researches. In addition, several enhancement and speedup techniques for improving the H.264 deblocking filter performance have been developed in the literature.

In this thesis, we propose a video player parallelization and optimization approach for embedded asymmetric dual-core architecture along with implementation which proved to have significant performance improvement versus previous implementations.

For H.264 deblocking filter several enhancement techniques were proposed, which proved to achieve performance improvement with little quality degradation whilst subjective quality was maintained.

1.2 GENERAL RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

With the multimedia revolution in full swing and with the continuously-emerging multimedia codecs and formats, portable multimedia players have become one of the most popular electronic devices. Designing a portable multimedia player that supports several codecs and receives its input from different sources like a USB flash or real-