

Transmeta Architecture

Major Ideas
General Architecture
Emulated Precise Exceptions
What to do with It

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Background

- Transmeta Corporation
 - Paul Allen (Microsoft), George Soros (Soros Funds)
 - David R. Ditzel (Sun) CEO
 - Edmund J. Kelly, Malcolm John Wing, Robert F. Cmelik (?)
 - Linus B. Torvalds, February 1997 → ...
- Patent 5958061
 - applied July 24, 1996
 - granted September 28, 1999
 - other patents
- Crusoe processor
 - to be published January 19, 2000

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Basic Idea

faster

cheaper

- Create a new processor which, when coupled with “morph host” emulator, can run Intel/Windows code faster than state-of-the-art Intel processor
- New processor can be implemented with significantly fewer gates than competitive processors
- Compete with Intel, friendly with Microsoft
 - sell chip with emulator code to system manufacturers (Dell, IBM, Sun, etc etc)
- x86 binary is new binary standard
- Native OS not so important
 - could be Linux

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Major General Ideas

- Emulation can be faster than direct execution
- TLB used to solve new problems
 - track memory accesses for memory mapped I/O
 - track memory accesses for self-modifying code
- Most of executed code generated “on-the fly”
 - not compiled before execution begins
 - extremely optimized dynamic code generation
- Optimized code allows for simpler machine

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Major General Ideas (contd)

- Self-modified code (dynamically created code) can be generated so that it is extremely optimized for execution
 - issue dependencies, reorder, reschedule problems solved at code generation
 - processor does not need to solve these
- Optimize for speed only when needed
 - do not optimize for speed when exact state change is required
- Alias detection to assist keeping globals in registers

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Major Emulation Ideas

- Target processor state kept in dedicated HW registers
 - working state, committed state
- Memory store buffer keeps uncommitted emulated memory state
- Specific instructions support emulation
 - commit, rollback (exact exceptions)
 - prot (aliases)
- TLB (and VM) designed to support emulation
 - A/N-bit (mem-mapped I/O), T-bit (self-mod. code)

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General Architecture

- VLIW implementation
 - 3-8 simultaneous RISC instructions
 - no circuitry for issue dependencies, reorder, optimize, reschedule
 - compiler takes care of these
 - what about data, control and structural dependencies?
 - part of issue dependencies
 - data & structural dependencies under compiler control?

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General Architecture (contd)

- Large register set
 - native regs: 64 INT, 32 FP
 - extra regs for renaming
 - target architecture regs: complete CPU state
 - INT, FP, control Reax, Recx, Rseq, Reip
 - working regs for normal emulation
 - committed regs for saving emulated processor state

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General Architecture (contd)

- TLB
 - new features to solve new problems
 - before: solve also memory protection problems in addition to plain VM address mapping
 - A/N-bit for memory-mapped I/O detection
 - trap to emulator, which creates precise code
 - memory-mapped I/O requires precise emulated processor state changes
 - T-bit for self-modifying code detection
 - trap to emulator, which recreates emulating code in instruction cache (“translation buffer”)

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General Architecture (contd)

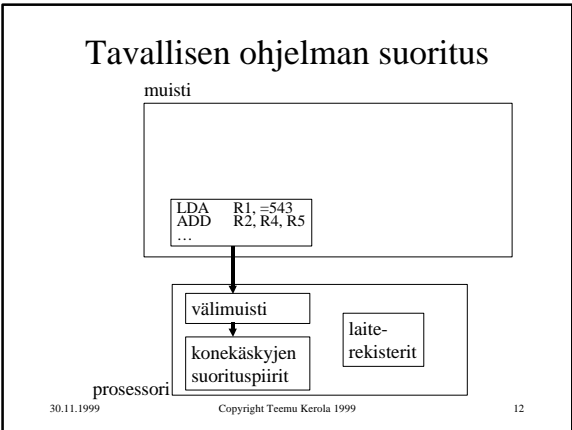
- Target memory store buffer
 - implemented with special register to support emulation
 - keeps track on which target processor memory stores are committed and which are not
 - uncommitted memory stores can be discarded at rollback
 - modify HW registers implementing it
 - commit & rollback controlled from outside, not internally as is usual with speculative instructions

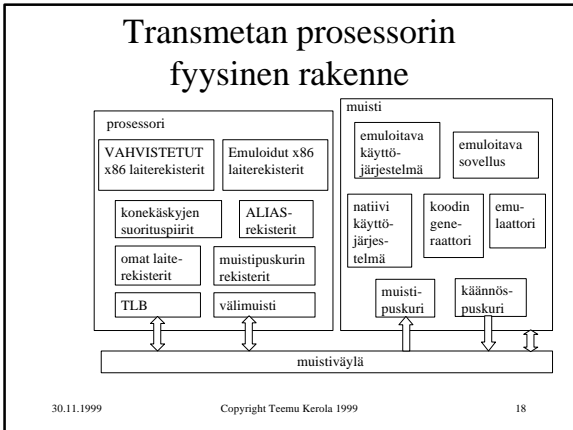
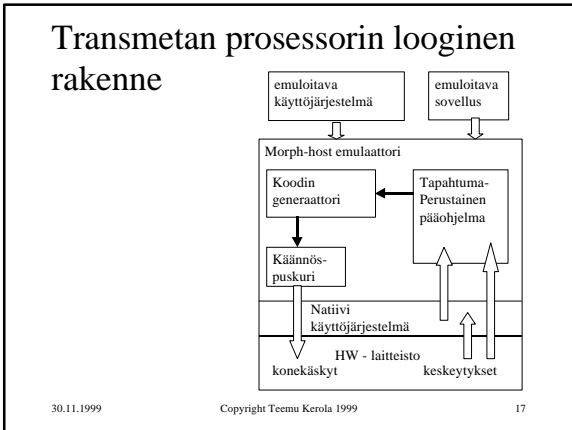
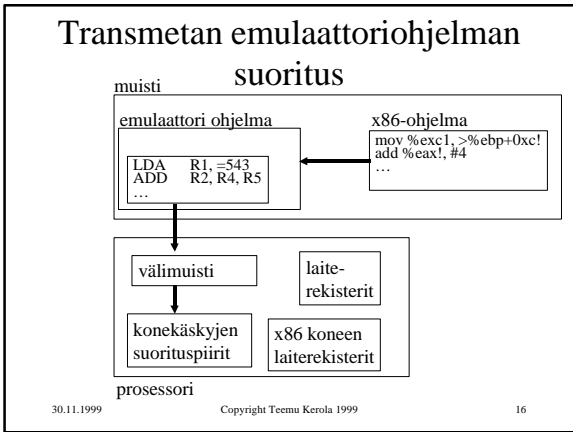
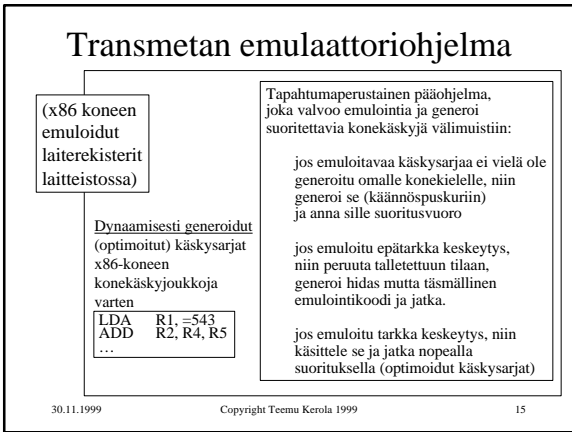
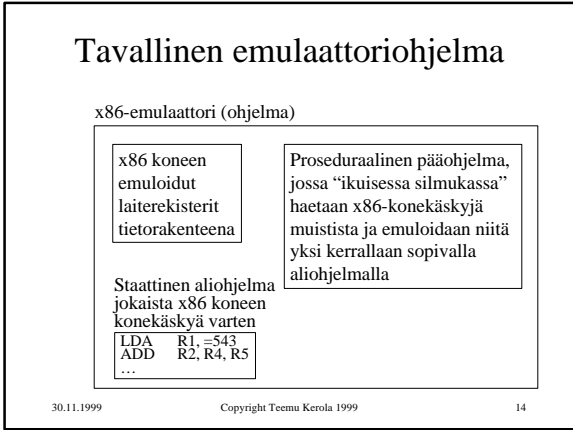
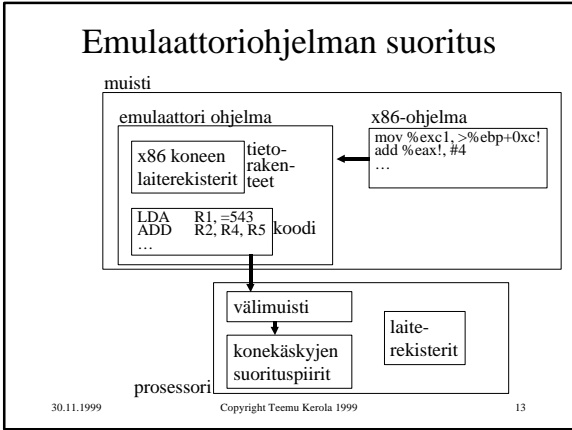
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General Architecture (contd)

- RISC instruction set
 - explicitly parallel code (VLIW)
 - commit instruction supports emulation
 - commits emulated processor and memory state
 - use only when coherent target processor state!
 - rollback instruction (?) supports emulation
 - some or all of it can be in emulator code
 - recover latest committed emulated register state
 - delete uncommitted writes from store buffer
 - retranslate emulation code for precise state changes
 - commit after every emulated instruction
 - prot instruction for alias detection

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What Will Transmeta do with Crusoe?

- Optimize for speed or size?
 - Small size \Rightarrow cheaper, less power consumption
- License it to Intel?
- Have someone else manufacture it and compete with Intel?
 - IBM, Motorola, AMD?
- Make products based on Crusoe?
 - Internet window?
 - Visual phone?

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