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 unorthogonalities. 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*

The first thing to do to use 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
```

GNU *lightning* supports 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.

Another option that `configure` accepts is `--enable-assertions`, which enables several consistency checks in the run-time 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.

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 syntesized 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 `muli` (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:

`_c`	signed char
`_uc`	unsigned char
`_s`	short
`_us`	unsigned short
`_i`	int
`_ui`	unsigned int
`_l`	long
`_f`	float
`_d`	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 ommited, 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 `allocai` 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 emiting the call with only register operands.

```
addr         _f  _d  O1 = O2 + O3
addi         _f  _d  O1 = O2 + O3
addxr                O1 = O2 + (O3 + carry)
addxi                O1 = O2 + (O3 + carry)
addcr                O1 = O2 + O3, set carry
addci                O1 = O2 + O3, set carry
subr         _f  _d  O1 = O2 - O3
subi         _f  _d  O1 = O2 - O3
subxr                O1 = O2 - (O3 + carry)
subxi                O1 = O2 - (O3 + carry)
subcr                O1 = O2 - O3, set carry
subci                O1 = O2 - O3, set carry
rsbr         _f  _d  O1 = O3 - O1
rsbi         _f  _d  O1 = O3 - O1
mulr         _f  _d  O1 = O2 * O3
muli         _f  _d  O1 = O2 * O3
divr     _u  _f  _d  O1 = O2 / O3
divi     _u  _f  _d  O1 = O2 / O3
remr     _u          O1 = O2 % O3
remi     _u          O1 = O2 % O3
andr                 O1 = O2 & O3
andi                 O1 = O2 & O3
orr                  O1 = O2 | O3
ori                  O1 = O2 | O3
xorr                 O1 = O2 ^ O3
xori                 O1 = O2 ^ O3
lshr                 O1 = O2 << O3
lshi                 O1 = O2 << O3
rshr     _u          O1 = O2 >> O3[1]
rshi     _u          O1 = O2 >> O3[2]
```

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

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

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.

```
qmulr    _u       O1 O2 = O3 * O4
qmuli    _u       O1 O2 = O3 * O4
qdivr    _u       O1 O2 = O3 / O4
qdivi    _u       O1 O2 = O3 / O4
```

Unary ALU operations

These accept two operands, both of which must be registers.

```
negr         _f   _d  O1 = -O2
comr                  O1 = ~O2
```

These unary ALU operations are only defined for float operands.

```
absr         _f   _d  O1 = fabs(O2)
sqrtr                 O1 = sqrt(O2)
```

Besides requiring the `r` modifier, there are no unary operations with an immediate operand.

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 "unordered" comparison result is mapped to false.

```
ltr       _u   _f   _d   O1 =  (O2 <  O3)
lti       _u   _f   _d   O1 =  (O2 <  O3)
ler       _u   _f   _d   O1 =  (O2 <= O3)
lei       _u   _f   _d   O1 =  (O2 <= O3)
gtr       _u   _f   _d   O1 =  (O2 >  O3)
gti       _u   _f   _d   O1 =  (O2 >  O3)
ger       _u   _f   _d   O1 =  (O2 >= O3)
gei       _u   _f   _d   O1 =  (O2 >= O3)
eqr            _f   _d   O1 =  (O2 == O3)
eqi            _f   _d   O1 =  (O2 == O3)
ner            _f   _d   O1 =  (O2 != O3)
nei            _f   _d   O1 =  (O2 != O3)
unltr          _f   _d   O1 = !(O2 >= O3)
unler          _f   _d   O1 = !(O2 >  O3)
ungtr          _f   _d   O1 = !(O2 <= O3)
unger          _f   _d   O1 = !(O2 <  O3)
```

```
uneqr          _f  _d  O1 = !(O2 <  O3) && !(O2 >  O3)
ltgtr          _f  _d  O1 = !(O2 >= O3) || !(O2 <= O3)
ordr           _f  _d  O1 =  (O2 == O2) &&  (O3 == O3)
unordr         _f  _d  O1 =  (O2 != O2) ||  (O3 != O3)
```

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  O1 = O2
movi                                 _f  _d  O1 = O2
extr     _c  _uc  _s  _us  _i  _ui   _f  _d  O1 = O2
truncr                               _f  _d  O1 = trunc(O2)
```

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> O1 = <float> O2
truncr_f_l    = <long>O1 = <float> O2
truncr_d_i    = <int> O1 = <double>O2
truncr_d_l    = <long>O1 = <double>O2
```

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>O1 = <float> O2
extr_d_f    = <float> O1 = <double>O2
```

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

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  O1 = *O2
ldi     _c  _uc  _s  _us  _i  _ui  _l  _f  _d  O1 = *O2
ldxr    _c  _uc  _s  _us  _i  _ui  _l  _f  _d  O1 = *(O2+O3)
```

```
ldxi    _c  _uc  _s  _us  _i  _ui  _l  _f  _d  O1 = *(O2+O3)
```

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  _uc  _s  _us  _i  _ui  _l  _f  _d  *O1 = O2
sti     _c  _uc  _s  _us  _i  _ui  _l  _f  _d  *O1 = O2
stxr    _c  _uc  _s  _us  _i  _ui  _l  _f  _d  *(O1+O2) = O3
stxi    _c  _uc  _s  _us  _i  _ui  _l  _f  _d  *(O1+O2) = O3
```

As for the load operations, the _ui and _l types are 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.

Argument management

These are:

```
prepare     (not specified)
pushargr                                         _f  _d
pushargi                                         _f  _d
arg         _c  _uc  _s  _us  _i  _ui  _l  _f  _d
getarg      _c  _uc  _s  _us  _i  _ui  _l  _f  _d
putargr                                          _f  _d
putargi                                          _f  _d
ret         (not specified)
retr                                             _f  _d
reti                                             _f  _d
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 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.

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.[3] 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

[3] "Return a value" means that GNU *lightning* code that compile these instructions return a value when expanded.

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 15.

`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 23, 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:
    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 23.

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 (O2 <  O3) goto O1
blti      _u  _f  _d  if (O2 <  O3) goto O1
bler      _u  _f  _d  if (O2 <= O3) goto O1
blei      _u  _f  _d  if (O2 <= O3) goto O1
bgtr      _u  _f  _d  if (O2 >  O3) goto O1
bgti      _u  _f  _d  if (O2 >  O3) goto O1
bger      _u  _f  _d  if (O2 >= O3) goto O1
bgei      _u  _f  _d  if (O2 >= O3) goto O1
beqr          _f  _d  if (O2 == O3) goto O1
beqi          _f  _d  if (O2 == O3) goto O1
bner          _f  _d  if (O2 != O3) goto O1
bnei          _f  _d  if (O2 != O3) goto O1

bunltr        _f  _d  if !(O2 >= O3) goto O1
bunler        _f  _d  if !(O2 >  O3) goto O1
bungtr        _f  _d  if !(O2 <= O3) goto O1
bunger        _f  _d  if !(O2 <  O3) goto O1
buneqr        _f  _d  if !(O2 <  O3) && !(O2 >  O3) goto O1
bltgtr        _f  _d  if !(O2 >= O3) || !(O2 <= O3) goto O1
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 O1[4]
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
```

Jump and return operations

These accept one argument except `ret` which has 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.

```
callr     (not specified)     function call to a register
calli     (not specified)     function call to O1
finishr   (not specified)     function call to a register
finishi   (not specified)     function call to O1
```

[4] These mnemonics mean, respectively, *branch if mask set* and *branch if mask cleared*.

`jmpr`	`(not specified)`	unconditional jump to register
`jmpi`	`(not specified)`	unconditional jump
`ret`	`(not specified)`	return from subroutine
`retr`	`_c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d`	
`reti`	`_c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d`	
`retval`	`_c _uc _s _us _i _ui _l _f _d`	move return value to register

Like branch instruction, `jmpi` also returns a value which is to be used to compile forward branches. See Section 4.4 [Fibonacci numbers], page 23.

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

`label`	`(not specified)`	simple label
`forward`	`(not specified)`	forward label
`indirect`	`(not specified)`	special simple label

`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;
                ...
                jmpr(JIT_R0);                    /* may jump to label */

                ...
label = jit_indirect();
```

`indirect` is an 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
*/

                ...
```

```
                jmpr(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.

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.

`prolog`	`(not specified)`	function prolog
`allocai`	`(not specified)`	reserve 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.

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 15.

```
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
```

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 argument[5] 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 eight[6], 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:
        ...
        jmpi    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
```

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

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

```
        tramp  256              ! assumes all callee save registers

                                ! are saved and there is at least

                                ! 256 bytes in stack

        ...
        jmpi   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.

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 RO

        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

        epilog                  ! 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

     jmpi fact_entry            ! Tail Call Optimize it!

fact_out:
     retr R0                    ! Return the accumulator
```

Predicates

```
forward_p      (not specified)          forward label predicate
indirect_p     (not specified)          indirect label predicate
target_p       (not specified)          used label predicate
arg_register_p (not specified)          argument kind predicate
callee_save_p  (not specified)          callee save predicate
pointer_p      (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` exects 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`.

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 cleanups 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 cleanups 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

```
sub   $0x30,%rsp
mov   %rbp,(%rsp)
```

```
mov   %rsp,%rbp
sub   $0x18,%rsp
mov   %rdi,%rax                mov %rdi, %rax
add   $0x1,%rax                inc %rax
mov   %rbp,%rsp
mov   (%rsp),%rbp
add   $0x30,%rsp
retq                           retq
```

In this case, the main overhead is due to the function's prolog and epilog, and stack alignment after reserving stack space for word to/from float conversions or moving data from/to x87 to/from SSE. Note that besides allocating space to save callee saved registers, no registers are saved/restored because GNU *lightning* notices those registers are not modified. There is currently no logic to detect if it needs to allocate stack space for type conversions neither proper leaf function detection, but these are subject to change (FIXME).

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_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 15.

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 instruction 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(printf);`

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 ABI's – 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_i(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 `allocai`. 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 `int`s. 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 a variant of the Fibonacci sequence. While the traditional Fibonacci sequence is modeled by the recurrence relation:

f(0) = f(1) = 1
f(n) = f(n-1) + f(n-2)

the functions in this section calculates the following sequence, which is more interesting as a benchmark[1]:

fib(0) = fib(1) = 1
fib(n) = fib(n-1) + fib(n-2) + 1

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 */


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

  label = jit_label();
        jit_prolog   ();
```

[1] That's because, as is easily seen, the sequence represents the number of activations of the `nfibs` procedure that are needed to compute its value through recursion.

```
    in =  jit_arg      ();
          jit_getarg   (JIT_V0, in);                /* V0 = n */

    ref = jit_blti     (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_V2);                       /* V2 = fib(n-2) */

          jit_addi(JIT_V1,  JIT_V1,  1);
          jit_addr(JIT_R0, JIT_V1, JIT_V2);         /* R0 = V1 + V2 + 1 */

          jit_retr(JIT_R0);

    jit_patch(ref);                                 /* patch jump */

          jit_movi(JIT_R0, 1);                      /* R0 = 1 */

          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 `jmpr`.

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 *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_R2, in);              /* R2 = n */

        jit_movi     (JIT_R1, 1);
  ref = jit_blti     (JIT_R2, 2);
        jit_subi     (JIT_R2, JIT_R2, 1);
        jit_movi     (JIT_R0, 1);

  loop= jit_label();
        jit_subi     (JIT_R2, JIT_R2, 1);       /* decr. counter */

        jit_addr     (JIT_V0, JIT_R0, JIT_R1);  /* V0 = R0 + R1 */

        jit_movr     (JIT_R0, JIT_R1);          /* R0 = R1 */
```

```
        jit_addi     (JIT_R1, JIT_V0, 1);       /* R1 = V0 + 1 */

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

  jit_patch_at(jump, label);

  jit_patch(ref);                               /* patch forward jump */

        jit_movr     (JIT_R0, JIT_R1);          /* R0 = R1 */

        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 be able to use multiple jit generation states at the same time, it is required to used 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 `_` (underscode) 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 paralell should be very uncommon.

5.1 Registers

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.

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 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_ponter_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.

7.3 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* ***note_size**) [Function]

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* **flags**) [Function]

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.