

In order to deliver high computational throughputs through parallelism detection, the data-flow approach has been demonstrated. While conventional explicit parallelism approaches can sometimes show high performance, they require a focused effort on the part of the programmer in order to understand and describe the parallelism of the programmed problem. On the other hand, the functional programming approach allows the implicit detection of parallelism at runtime. At the same time, only a fraction of the programming effort needs to be expended. This shows that one of the main advantages brought by a data-flow architecture is its *programmability* which, in turn, translates into *higher performance for a given amount of programming effort*. In addition, the approach is completely scalable and the configuration of the multiprocessor systems can be adapted to the size of the application. On the other hand, the runtime scheduling of instructions imposes overhead on regular operations and lowers the expectable performance. This expected loss of performance has been traced to the high level of resolution (small granularity) which has been adopted by many data-flow projects. In a signal processing application, the regularity of the low level of processing makes it more appropriate to design a system with multiple levels of resolution. Indeed, we have demonstrated here an architecture with two hierarchy constructs. The lowest consists in a layer of vector processors while the highest provides a true data-flow approach. Future research will study how multiple layers could even include systolic arrays as leaf processors for dedicated applications. These would then be included into multiple hierarchy systems.

In summary, it can be said that the data-driven principles of execution are a necessity in the design of multiprocessor systems, be they incorporated at design, compile, or runtime. The granularity of the scheduling model often presents a tradeoff between delivering maximum amounts of parallelism and reducing communication costs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to gratefully acknowledge the many helpful suggestions for improvement made by the anonymous referees.

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Document Type: Journal / Magazine / Newspaper, Computer File, Internet Resource

All Authors / Contributors: [Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers](#)

ISSN: 1558-2256, 0018-9219

OCLC Number: 973858925

Description: Online-Ressource

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