5EC3-01: Computer Architecture

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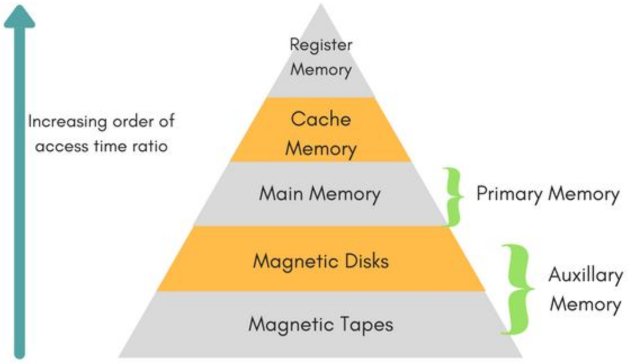
UNIT-4

Memory Organization in Computer Architecture

A memory unit is the collection of storage units or devices together. The memory unit stores the binary information in the form of bits. Generally, memory/storage is classified into 2 categories:

- **Volatile Memory**: This loses its data, when power is switched off.
- **Non-Volatile Memory**: This is a permanent storage and does not lose any data when power is switched off.

Memory Hierarchy



The total memory capacity of a computer can be visualized by hierarchy of components. The memory hierarchy system consists of all storage devices contained in a computer system from the slow Auxiliary Memory to fast Main Memory and to smaller Cache memory.

Auxillary memory access time is generally **1000 times** that of the main memory, hence it is at the bottom of the hierarchy.

The **main memory** occupies the central position because it is equipped to communicate directly with the CPU and with auxiliary memory devices through Input/output processor (I/O).

When the program not residing in main memory is needed by the CPU, they are brought in from auxiliary memory. Programs not currently needed in main memory are transferred into auxiliary memory to provide space in main memory for other programs that are currently in use.

The **cache memory** is used to store program data which is currently being executed in the CPU. Approximate access time ratio between cache memory and main memory is about **1 to 7~10**

Memory Access Methods

Each memory type, is a collection of numerous memory locations. To access data from any memory, first it must be located and then the data is read from the memory location. Following are the methods to access information from memory locations:

1. **Random Access**: Main memories are random access memories, in which each memory location has a unique address. Using this unique address any memory location can be reached in the same amount of time in any order.
2. **Sequential Access**: This methods allows memory access in a sequence or in order.
3. **Direct Access**: In this mode, information is stored in tracks, with each track having a separate read/write head.

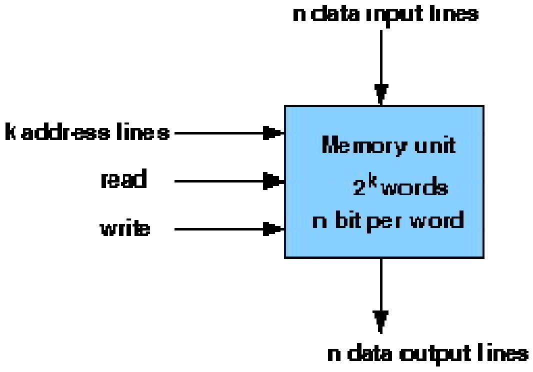
Main Memory

The memory unit that communicates directly within the CPU, Auxillary memory and Cache memory, is called main memory. It is the central storage unit of the computer system. It is a large and fast memory used to store data during computer operations. Main memory is made up of **RAM** and **ROM**, with RAM integrated circuit chips holing the major share.

- RAM: Random Access Memory
  - **DRAM**: Dynamic RAM, is made of capacitors and transistors, and must be refreshed every 10~100 ms. It is slower and cheaper than SRAM.
  - **SRAM**: Static RAM, has a six transistor circuit in each cell and retains data, until powered off.
  - **NVRAM**: Non-Volatile RAM, retains its data, even when turned off. Example: Flash memory.
- ROM: Read Only Memory, is non-volatile and is more like a permanent storage for information. It also stores the **bootstrap loader** program, to load and start the operating system when computer is turned on. **PROM**(Programmable ROM), **EPROM**(Erasable PROM) and **EEPROM**(Electrically Erasable PROM) are some commonly used ROMs.

Design of Memory:

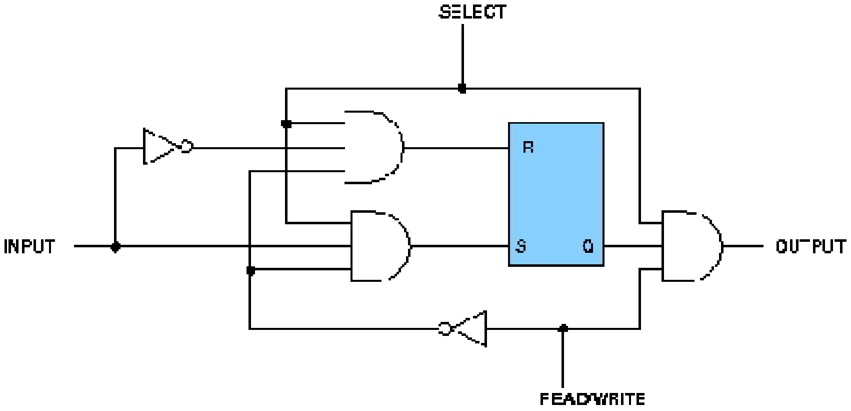
A memory unit is a collection of storage cells together with associated circuits needed to transform information in and out of the device. Memory cells which can be accessed for information transfer to or from any desired random location is called random access memory (RAM). The block diagram of a memory unit-



Internal Construction: The internal construction of a random-access memory of m words with n bits per word consists of m*n binary storage cells and associated decoding circuits for selecting individual words. The binary cell is the basic building block of a memory unit.

Design of a RAM cell :

The binary cell has three inputs and one output. The select input enables the cell for reading or writing and the reda/write input determines the cell operation when it is selected. A 1 in the read/write input provides the read operation by forming a path from the flip-flop to the output terminal. A 0 in the read/write input provides the write operation by forming a path from the input terminal to the flip-flop. the logic diagram is-

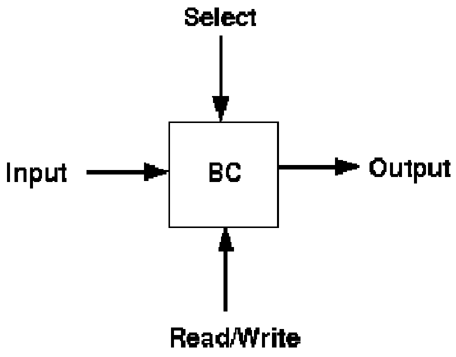


Designing M X N memory with D X W chips

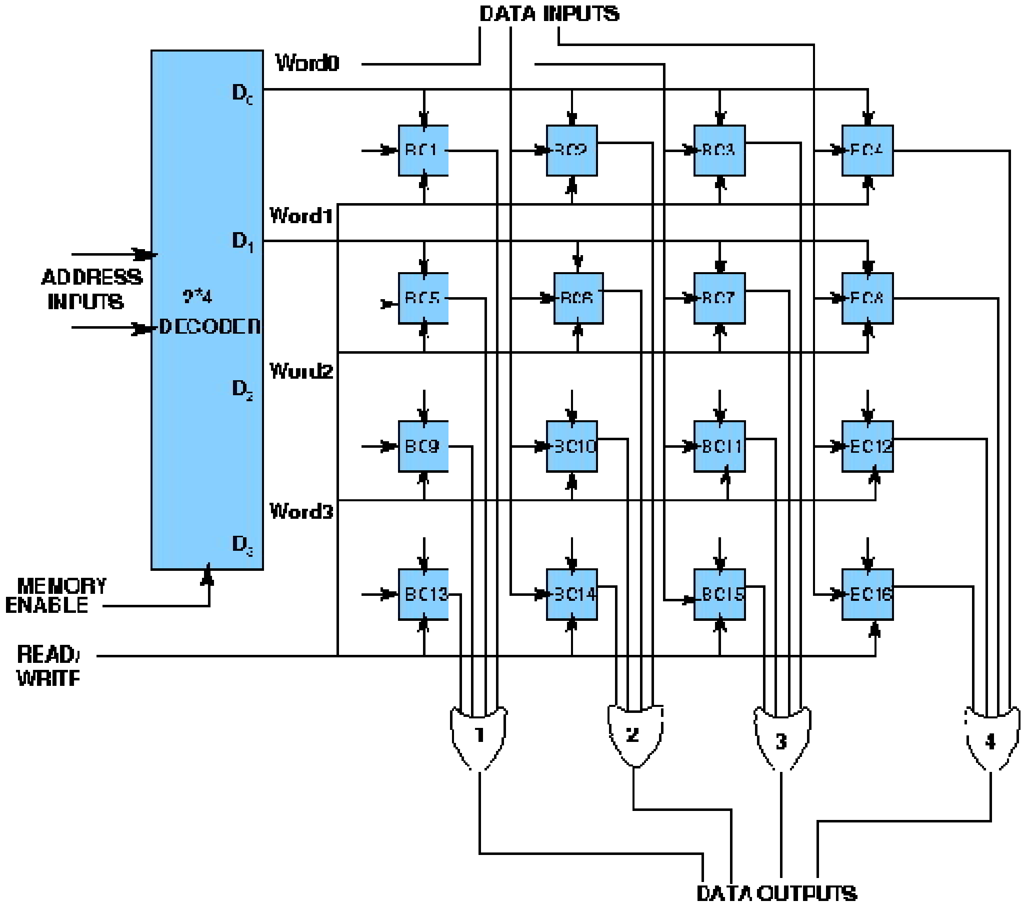
- Number of chips = M*N / D*W
- Number of rows = M / D
- Number of columns = N / W

Design of a 4X4 RAM :

The logical construction of a small RAM 4X3 is shown below. It consists of 4 words of 3 bits each and has a total of 12 binary cells. Each block labeled BC represents the binary cell with its 3 inputs and 1 output. The block diagram of a binary cell-



A memory with 4 words needs two address lines. The two address inputs go through a 2*4 decoder to select one of the four words. The decoder is enabled with the memory enable input. When the memory enable is 0, all outputs of the decoder are 0 and none of the memory words are selected. With the memory enable at 1, one of the four words is selected, dictated by the value in the two address lines. Once a word has been selected, the read/write input determines the operation. The logic diagram is-



Auxiliary Memory

Devices that provide backup storage are called auxiliary memory. **For example:** Magnetic disks and tapes are commonly used auxiliary devices. Other devices used as auxiliary memory are magnetic drums, magnetic bubble memory and optical disks.

It is not directly accessible to the CPU, and is accessed using the Input/Output channels.

Cache Memory

The data or contents of the main memory that are used again and again by CPU are stored in the cache memory so that we can easily access that data in shorter time.

Whenever the CPU needs to access memory, it first checks the cache memory. If the data is not found in cache memory then the CPU moves onto the main memory. It also transfers block of recent data into the cache and keeps on deleting the old data in cache to accommodate the new one.

Hit Ratio

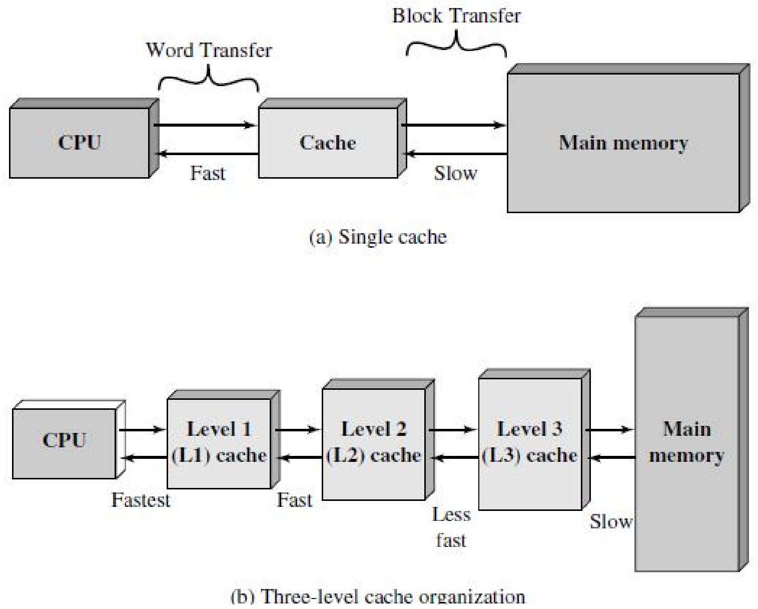
The performance of cache memory is measured in terms of a quantity called **hit ratio**. When the CPU refers to memory and finds the word in cache it is said to produce a **hit**. If the word is not found in cache, it is in main memory then it counts as a **miss**.

The ratio of the number of hits to the total CPU references to memory is called hit ratio.

`Hit Ratio = Hit/(Hit + Miss)`

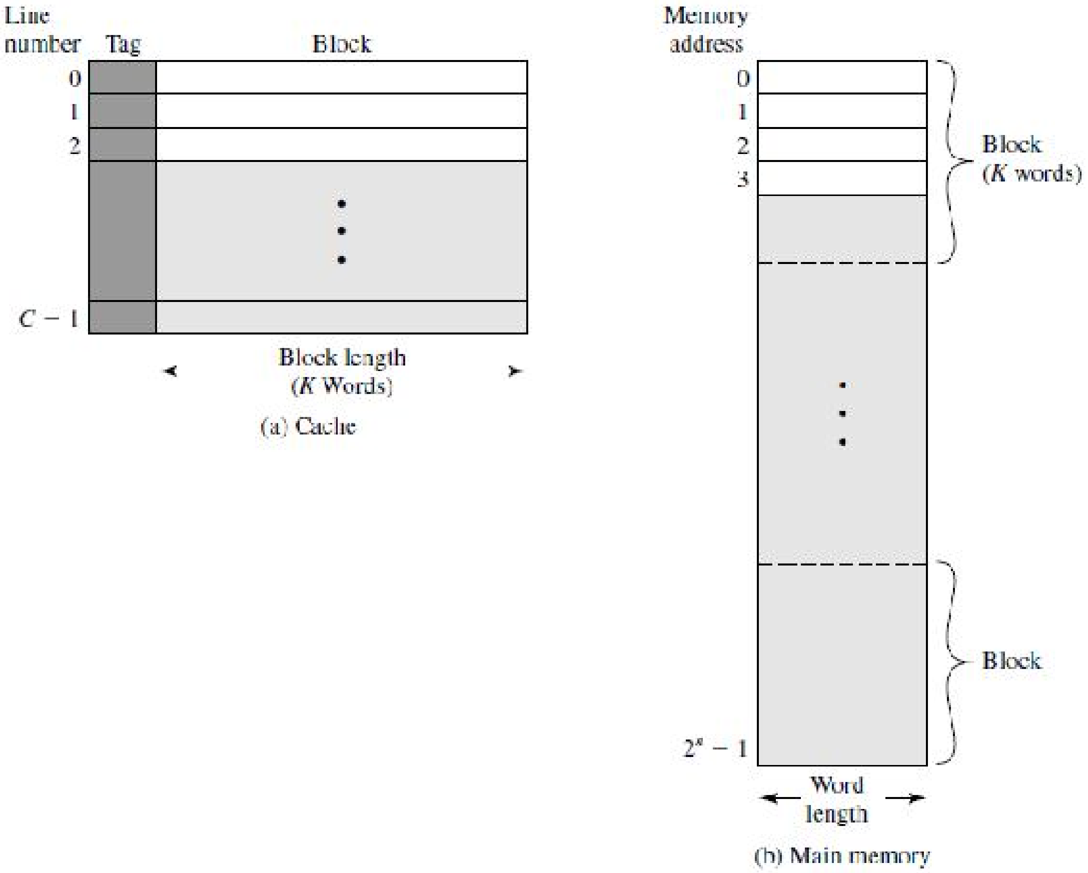
CACHE MEMORY PRINCIPLES

Cache memory is intended to give memory speed approaching that of the fastest memories available, and at the same time provide a large memory size at the price of less expensive types of semiconductor memories. The concept is illustrated in Figure(a). There is a relatively large and slow main memory together with a smaller, faster cache memory. The cache contains a copy of portions of main memory. When the processor attempts to read a word of memory, a check is made to determine if the word is in the cache. If so, the word is delivered to the processor. If not, a block of main memory, consisting of some fixed number of words, is read into the cache and then the word is delivered to the processor. Because of the phenomenon of locality of reference, when a block of data is fetched into the cache to satisfy a single memory reference, it is likely that there will be future references to that same memory location or to other words in the block. Figure (b) depicts the use of multiple levels of cache. The L2 cache is slower and typically larger than the L1 cache, and the L3 cache is slower and typically larger than the L2 cache.



Cache and Main Memory

Figure shown below depicts the structure of a cache/main-memory system. Main memory consists of up to 2^n addressable words, with each word having a unique n-bit address. For mapping purposes, this memory is considered to consist of a number of fixed length blocks of K words each .That is, there are **M =2^n/K** blocks in main memory. The cache consists of m blocks, called **lines**. Each line contains K words, plus a tag of a few bits. Each line also includes control bits (not shown), such as a bit to indicate whether the line has been modified since being loaded into the cache.



Cache/Main Memory Structure

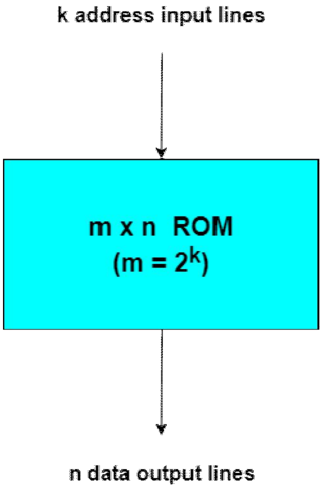
Read Only Memory(ROM)

As the name implies, a **read-only memory(ROM)** is a memory unit that performs the read operation only; it does not have a write capability. This implies that the binary information stored in a ROM is made permanent during the hardware production of the unit and cannot be altered by writing different words into it.

Whereas a RAM is a general-purpose device whose contents can be altered during the computational process, a ROM is restricted to reading words that are **permanently** stored within the unit. The binary information to be stored, specified by the designer, is then embedded in the unit to form the required interconnection pattern.

ROMs come with special internal electronic fuses that can be **programmed** for a specific configuration. Once the pattern is established, it stays within the unit even when power is turned off and on again.

An **m x n** ROM is an array of binary cells organized into **m** words of **n** bits each. As shown in the block diagram below, a ROM has **k** address input lines to select one of $\mathbf{2^k = m}$ words of memory, and n input lines, one for each bit of the word. An integrated circuit ROM may also have one or more enable inputs for expanding a number of packages into a ROM with larger capacity.



The ROM does not need a read-control line since at any given time, the output lines automatically provide the n bits of the word selected by the address value. Because the outputs are a function of only the present inputs (the address lines), a ROM is classified as a combinational circuit. In fact, a ROM is constructed internally with decoders and a set of OR gates. There is no need for providing storage capabilities as in RAM, since the values of the bits in the ROM are permanently fixed.

ROMs find a wide range of applications in the design of digital systems. As such, it can implement any combinational circuit with **k** inputs and **n** outputs. When employed in a computer system as a memory unit, the ROM is used for storing fixed programs that are not to be altered and for tables of constants that are not subject to change. ROM is also employed in the design of control units for digital computers. As such, they are used to store coded information that represents the sequence of internal control variables needed for enabling the various operations in the computer. A control unit that utilizes a ROM to store binary control information is called a micro-programmed control unit.

ROM: Different Types of ROM

The required paths in a ROM may be programmed in three different ways.

1. The first, **mask programming**, is done by the semiconductor company during the last fabrication process of the unit. This procedure is costly because the vendor charges the customer a special fee for custom masking the particular ROM. For this reason, mask programming is economical only if a large quantity of the same ROM configuration is to be ordered.
2. For small quantities it is more economical to use a second type of ROM called a **Programmable Read Only Memory(PROM)**. The hardware procedure for programming ROMs or PROMs is **irreversible**, and once

programmed, the fixed pattern is permanent and cannot be altered. Once a bit pattern has been established, the unit must be discarded if the bit pattern is to be changed.

3. A third type of ROM available is called **Erasable PROM** or **EPROM**. The EPROM can be restructured to the initial value even though its fuses have been blown previously. Certain PROMs can be erased with electrical signals instead of ultraviolet light. These PROMs are called **Electrically Erasable PROM** or **EEPROM**. Flash memory is a form of EEPROM in which a block of bytes can be erased in a very short duration.

Example applications of **EEPROM** devices are:

- Storing current time and date in a machine.
- Storing port statuses.

Example of **Flash memory device** applications are:

- Storing messages in a mobile phone.
- Storing photographs in a digital camera.

Associative Memory

It is also known as **content addressable memory (CAM)**. It is a memory chip in which each bit position can be compared. In this the content is compared in each bit cell which allows very fast table lookup. Since the entire chip can be compared, contents are randomly stored without considering addressing scheme. These chips have less storage capacity than regular memory chips.

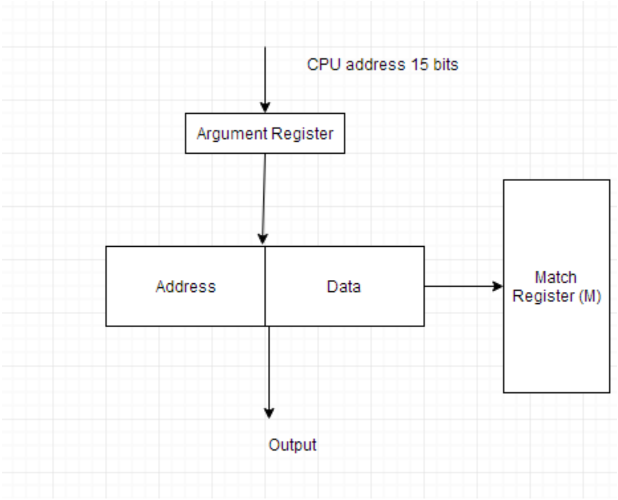
Memory Mapping and Concept of Virtual Memory

The transformation of data from main memory to cache memory is called mapping. There are 3 main types of mapping:

- Associative Mapping
- Direct Mapping
- Set Associative Mapping

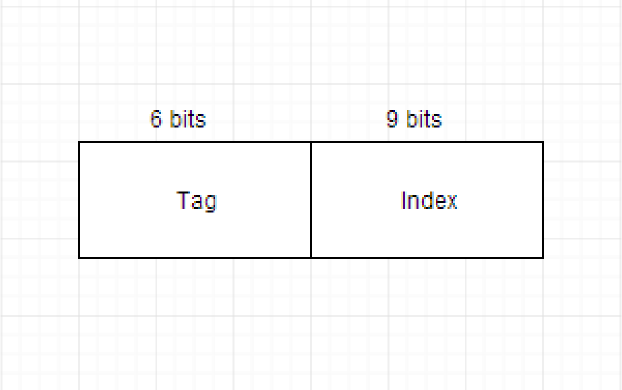
Associative Mapping

The associative memory stores both address and data. The address value of 15 bits is 5 digit octal numbers and data is of 12 bits word in 4 digit octal number. A CPU address of 15 bits is placed in **argument register** and the associative memory is searched for matching address.



Direct Mapping

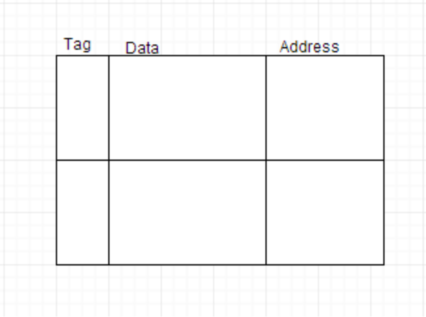
The CPU address of 15 bits is divided into 2 fields. In this the 9 least significant bits constitute the **index** field and the remaining 6 bits constitute the **tag** field. The number of bits in index field is equal to the number of address bits required to access cache memory.



Set Associative Mapping

The disadvantage of direct mapping is that two words with same index address can't reside in cache memory at the same time. This problem can be overcome by set associative mapping.

In this we can store two or more words of memory under the same index address. Each data word is stored together with its tag and this forms a set.



Replacement Algorithms

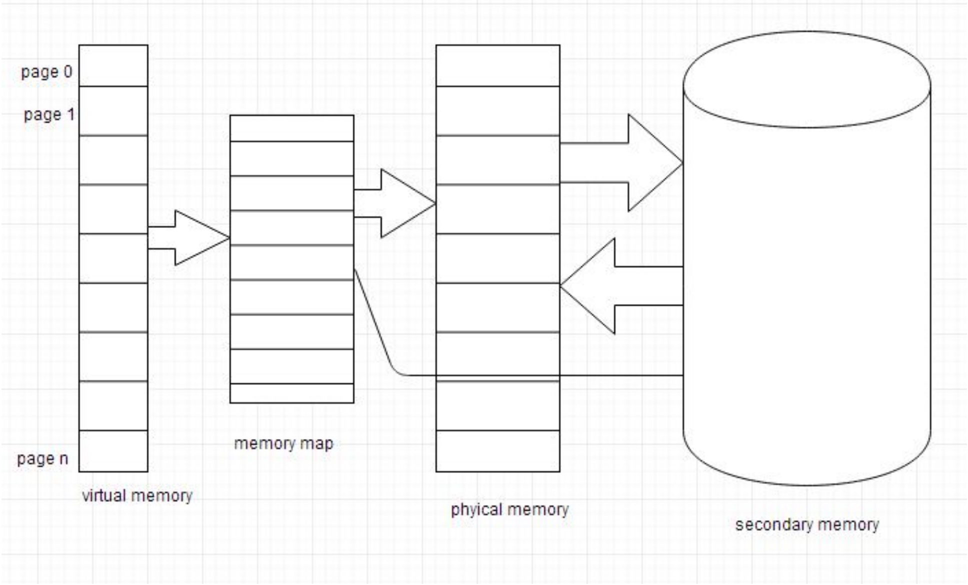
Data is continuously replaced with new data in the cache memory using replacement algorithms. Following are the 2 replacement algorithms used:

- FIFO - First in First out. Oldest item is replaced with the latest item.
- LRU - Least Recently Used. Item which is least recently used by CPU is removed.

Virtual Memory

Virtual memory is the separation of logical memory from physical memory. This separation provides large virtual memory for programmers when only small physical memory is available.

Virtual memory is used to give programmers the illusion that they have a very large memory even though the computer has a small main memory. It makes the task of programming easier because the programmer no longer needs to worry about the amount of physical memory available.


page 0
page 1
page n
virtual memory
memory map
phyical memory
secondary memory