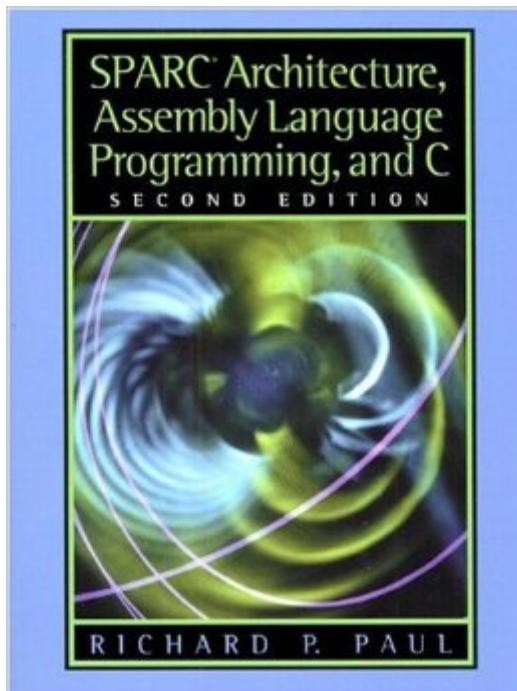


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SPARC Architecture, Assembly Language Programming, And C (2nd Edition)



Synopsis

Written from a programmer's perspective, this long-awaited revision introduces the SPARC assembly language to readers early on. Other introductory material encompasses making use of UNIX tools. Further coverage includes a formal definition of the von Neumann machine, its relationship to programmable calculators, and to the JAVA bytecode and JAVA virtual machine. For engineers, computer scientists, and people in business who want to learn about SPARC Architecture.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

at best, this book is a quick gloss over a small, safe subset of sparc programming. a very pricey quick gloss. at worst, this book is an exercise in futility and frustration. the author's reliance and excessive use on the m4 macro processor is enough to make one walk into oncoming traffic. none of the examples in the book are decipherable without running through the author's library of m4 macro routines - rather, the reader is presented with an indirect representation of sparc assembly that makes concepts hard to learn. the author's misdirected aims of symbolic abstractions are ok in the context of a higher-level programming language, but are absolutely worthless in the context of assembly-level programming. through this book, one is encouraged to program sparc assembly in a high-level manner similar to C - actual pragmatic and real-world assembly programming idioms are nowhere to be found. needless to say, any reader will be sorrowfully disappointed to find that m4 is

about as common as leprosy in production environments. i would be beaten like a red-headed step child if i were to incorporate any of the author's practices at work. do yourself a favor and pick up the documentation at sparc.com and leave richard p. paul to nance around with the m4 processor by himself in his more aptly title book "M4, C, and Sparc Architecture"

I picked up this book to familiarize myself with the SPARC architecture for an upcoming project and I was extremely disappointed in the presentation of the material, both grammatically and intuitively. First, when learning assembly language, the last thing a reader or student needs is the code to be obfuscated by a preprocessing tool such as m4. Hiding address offsets and variable alignments in nearly impossible to decipher macros is NOT helpful. This does not make it easier to learn assembly. I found myself learning more about a tool that I'll never use after finishing this book than about SPARC assembly. Second, whoever edited the manuscript for this book should be fired. I found myself editing the book as I read so I could understand what the author was trying to say. I also found the language to be a bit obtuse in a few, unfortunately important, places. Third, the diagrams in the book need some serious help as well. They were almost useless. Many of them made the topic being discussed more confusing. I found myself using Wikipedia or the Sparc V8 manual more than once. All that said, the book does try to cover the important aspects of the SPARC architecture. I did get the needed information from the book, but it could have been organized and presented much better. The book could be a great SPARC reference and tutorial book if these problems were addressed in a future edition.

For starters, the first apparent detail of this book is the glaring grammatical errors. Ok, no big deal, but still, it's an eyesore. The book is complex for the sake of complexity. Each chapter could easily be 2/3 or less the length it is now. The M4 macro is over-used and under-explained. If it used this much, a whole chapter should be devoted to it (at least more than a four page section covering few basics). The examples are poor and many of them simply don't work. A total lack of explanation as to what is actually going on "behind the scenes" as the macro does its work left me hung out to dry on many occasions. With way too much work, I reaped very little knowledge from this book. I can see this being a half-decent reference for those who have extensive knowledge of the M4 macro and previous experience in assembly language. If you're a beginner, stay miles away from this book. Books on a topic as inherently confusing as this need to be clearer and more extensive in their explanations and have examples that work.

I found the book quite useful as an introduction to SPARC assembly language. There is a lot of material on program optimization, which could be skipped or read. The extensive use of the m4 preprocessor gets slightly annoying at times, but the programs generally remain easy to read. The reason for a four star review is that although I feel the book does not cover the subject in a lot of depth, it wasn't very user-friendly to the absolute beginner either. As such, the book would make a good textbook for a course, but it is not that good for the independent learner. By the way, I'm basing this on the first edition.

This book sucks, its too confusing. Sparc or any other assembly level language is very very simple, you can only understand by doing it. And this book doesn't help much, apart from some exercises, the rest of it is very poor. Not worth it.

Given the rare technical SPARC books, I have to give the author some credit. The book includes some good background and thorough examples of SPARC stack, windows...etc. However, I found that the paper quality to be very bad. Given the price of the book "100+" you would expect a decent material in return. My coworker bought "the same version" of this book some years back and the paper quality was much better and the book stays in place when left on the desk opened. I ordered the book twice to make sure the one I had was a defected unit, but found that all of them are the same bad quality. I believe the book is way over priced for both the content and the quality of paper.

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