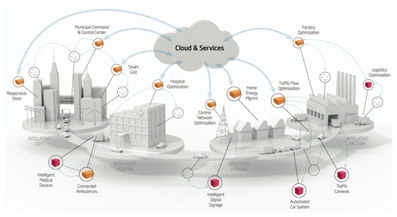
Rambus

SESSION 39.3

Memory Systems for AI and Leading-edge Applications

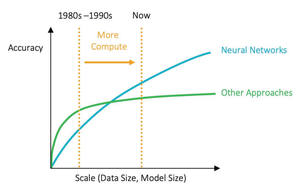
Pervasive Connectivity and the Internet of Things

- Memory, link, and storage performance must continue to increase
- Data and insights are increasingly more valuable, security a growing concern
- Compute and I/O power efficiency must also continue to improve

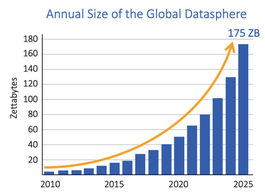


In our increasingly connected world, architectures are evolving to more efficiently capture, secure, move, and process the growing volume of digital data

Faster Compute + Big Data Enabling Explosive Growth in AI



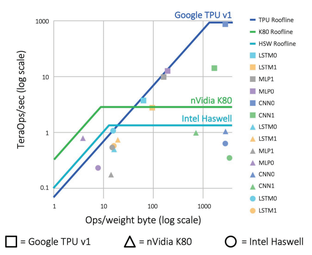
Source: Adapted from Jeff Dean, "Recent Advances in Artificial Intelligence and the Implications for Computer System Design," HotChips 29 Keynote, August 2017



Source: Adapted from Data Age 2025, sponsored by Seagate with data from IDC Global DataSphere, Nov 2018

- Faster compute and memory + large training sets have enabled modern AI
- Much more left to do, more performance needed
- Key challenges: Moore's Law ending, energy efficiency growing in importance

AI Accelerators Need Memory Bandwidth



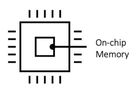
Source: N. Jouppi, et.al., "In-Datacenter Performance Analysis of a Tensor Processing Unit™"

- Inference on **older, general purpose hardware** (Haswell, K80) performs well, applications can benefit from compute and memory optimizations
- Inference on **AI-specific silicon** (Google TPU v1) **largely limited by memory bandwidth**

Memory bandwidth is a critical resource for AI applications

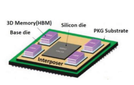
AI Needs Memory Bandwidth: Common AI Memory Systems

On-Chip Memory



Highest Bandwidth and Power Efficiency

HBM



Very High Bandwidth and Density

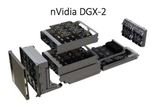
GDDR

Good tradeoff between bandwidth, power efficiency, cost, and reliability

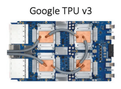
Multiple options suited to different needs

Example AI Hardware on the Market

nVidia DGX-2



Google TPU v3



Google Edge TPU

Graphcore IPU

Pure Storage AIRI
3x nVidia DGX-2 + 2x Pure Flashblade

nVidia Tesla V100

nVidia Tesla T4 GPU

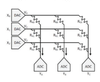
Apple A11 and A12 Bionic Processors

Microsoft BrainWave

nVidia GeForceRTX 2080 Ti

nVidia DRIVE PX 2

Mythic Analog MAC

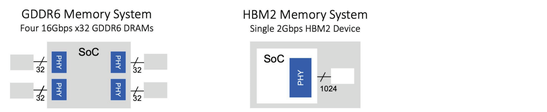


Wave Computing

AMD Radeon Vega 56

Intel Nervana NNP

Memory System Comparison: 256GB/s GDDR6 vs. HBM2

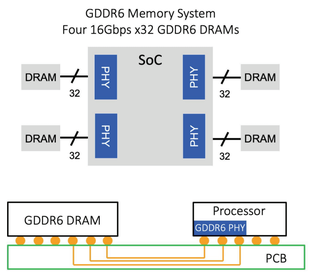


Total Bandwidth	256 GB/s	256 GB/s	
Per-pin data rate	16 Gbps	2 Gbps	
Relative Controller PHY Area[1]	1.5-1.75	1.0	Area advantage for HBM2
Relative Controller PHY Power[1]	3.5-4.5	1.0	Power advantage for HBM2
Interposer	None	Added cost[2]	Cost and complexity advantage for GDDR6
Memory	Similar to GDDR5, DDR4	Stacked, adds cost[2]	Cost advantage for GDDR6

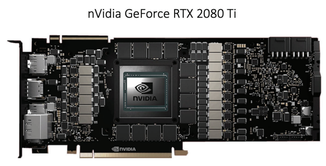
[1] Source: Rambus Inc.
[2] Source: The Cost of HBM2 vs. GDDR5 & Why AMD Had to Use It, https://www.gamersnexus.net/guides/3032-vega-56-cost-of-hbm2-and-necessity-to-use-it

GDDR6 and HBM2 offer different system design tradeoffs

256GB/s GDDR6 Memory System

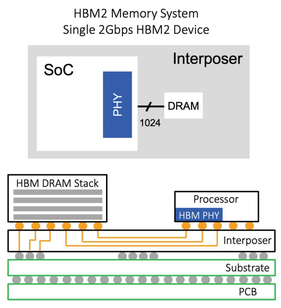


nVidia GeForce RTX 2080 Ti

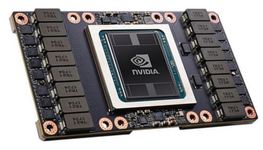


- Good tradeoff between bandwidth, capacity, power-efficiency, cost, reliability, design complexity
- Easier integration / system engineering compared to HBM
- Well-understood assembly and manufacturing (similar to DDR)

256GB/s HBM2 Memory System



nVidia Tesla V100 with HBM2



- Additional interposer/substrate, new manufacturing and assembly methods (not like DDR or GDDR)
- Very high bandwidth (256GB/s per HBM2 DRAM)
- High power-efficiency (short interconnects, wide and slow interface, 1024b@2Gbps)

Summary/Conclusion

- AI driving the development of new silicon and new system architectures
- Memory bandwidth a critical resource for AI applications, memory systems are once again a hot topic in the semiconductor industry
- Multiple memory options to suit different AI application needs
  - On-chip memory: Highest bandwidth and power efficiency, lowest latency, but storage capacity limited
  - HBM: Extremely high bandwidth and power efficiency, but higher cost and more challenging integration and design complexity
  - GDDR: Good tradeoff between bandwidth, capacity, power efficiency, cost, reliability, design complexity

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