

Two Memory Allocators that Use Hints to Improve Locality

Fast Allocation Speed, Low Memory Fragmentation,
and High Spatial Locality: Pick Two.

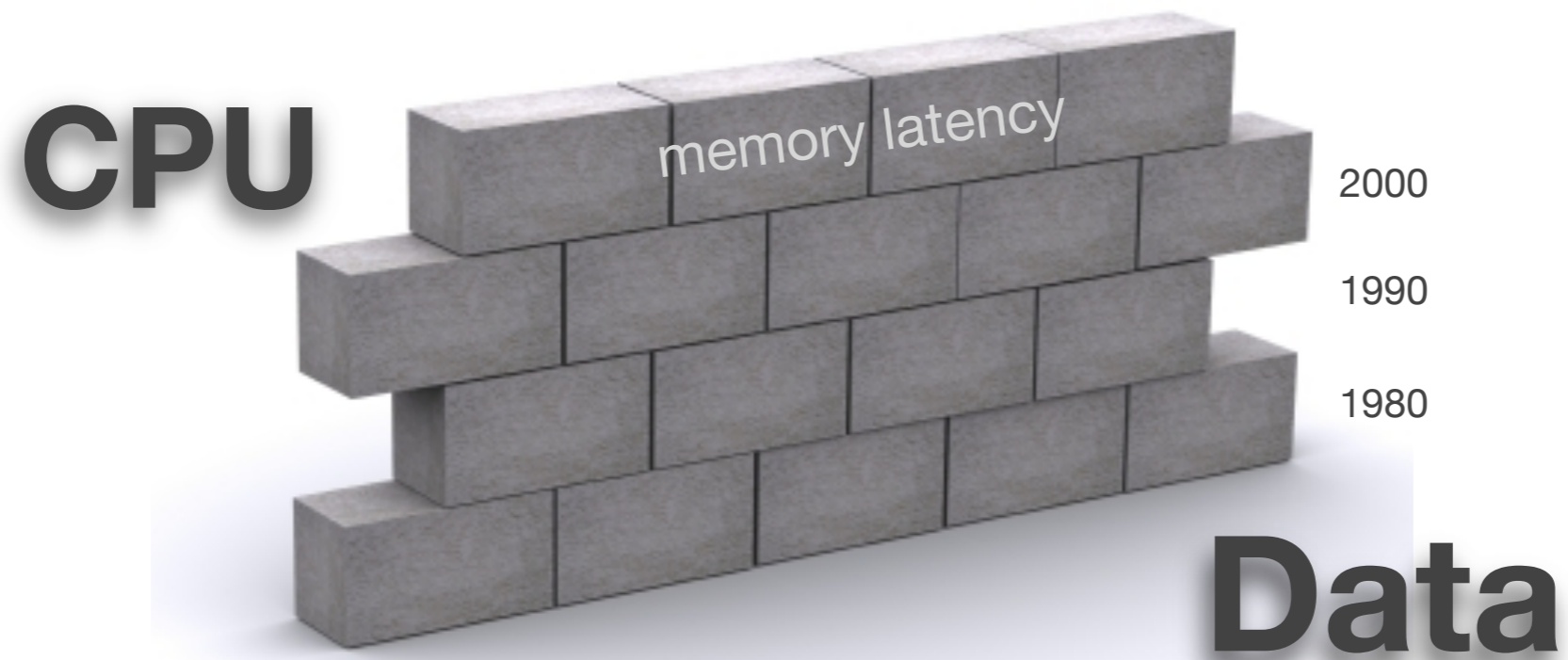


Lawrence Rauchwerger
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX, USA



Alin Jula
SAP Labs
Palo Alto, CA, USA

Locality - Performance Bottleneck



Memory management could reduce latency by **better data layout at runtime**

The Locality Problem: a Bird's Eye View

Allocator



Application

The Locality Problem: a Bird's Eye View

Allocator

allocation

Application

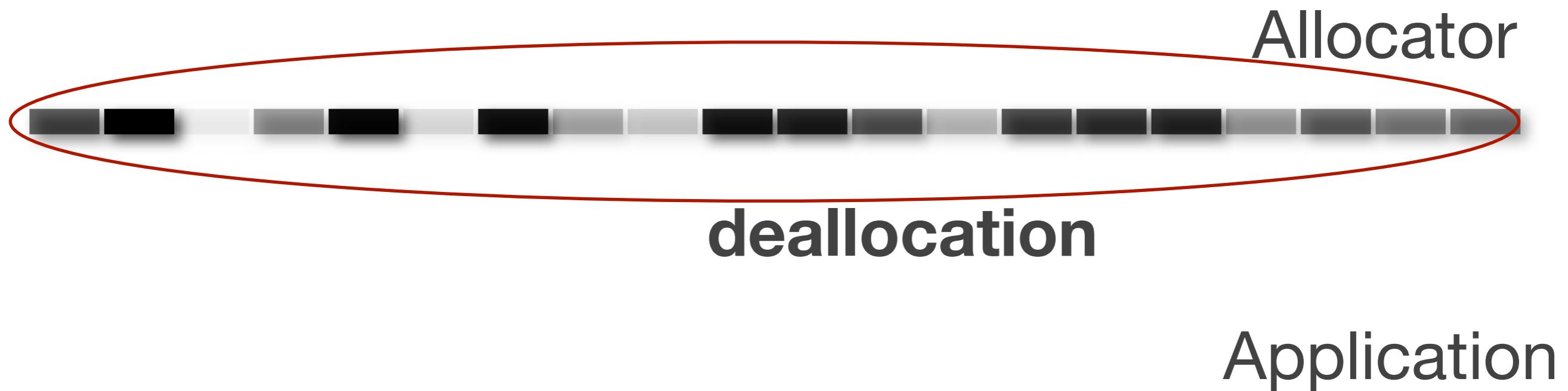


The Locality Problem: a Bird's Eye View



The Locality Problem: a Bird's Eye View

Memory chunks are now disordered !



Problem = next allocation will exhibit **poor locality**

Approaches to Improving Locality

- **Explicit** memory allocation, e.g. C/C++
 - Locality of reference: FreeBSD, Linux, Vm
 - Using allocation hints: ccmalloc, ialloc
 - Compiler
 - Software pre-fetching
 - Profiling (use context)
- **Implicit** - garbage collection, e.g. Java, M/L (region-based)

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What is the Challenge?

- Fragmentation = extra memory used by allocator
 - Theoretical lower bound 50% rule, Observed bound 20%
- Allocation speed = instructions spent in allocator
 - Participates directly in an application's performance
- Locality = data layout of allocated memory
 - Online algorithm (hard) - at runtime, with no chance to rearrange memory

What is the Challenge?

Fragmentation + Speed + Locality = Hard

- Fragmentation = extra memory used by allocator
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Locality Improving for C/C++

1. **Temporal**: Locality of Reference

- Allocates consecutive requests in same vicinity, e.g. FreeBSD, Vam
- ✓ Easy to use
- ✗ No application feedback

2. **Spatial**: Use Allocation Hints

- Cache line collocation and static tree organization, e.g. ccmalloc
- Instance interleaving, e.g. ialloc
- ✓ Tailored for each application
- ✗ Code modifications, manual hints impractical, cache only

Locality Improving for C/C++

Our Work - Both Temporal and Spatial

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2. Spatial: Use Allocation Hints

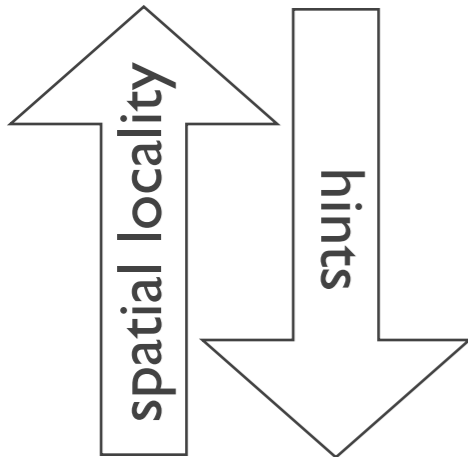
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The Idea:

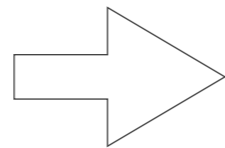
Standard Template Library (STL)
w/ Improved Locality

STL containers
give spatial hints to
their allocators

(ISO C++ Standard)



Allocators that
use spatial hints



C++ App

recompile w/ include
-I/path_to_STL



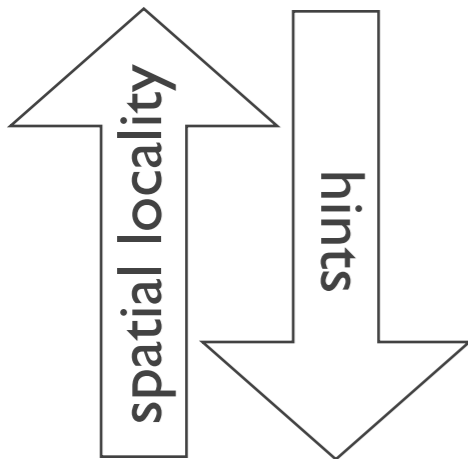
Optimized
for Locality

The Idea: *No costs!* Just recompile the application.

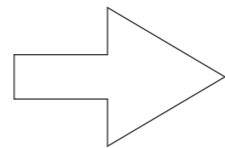
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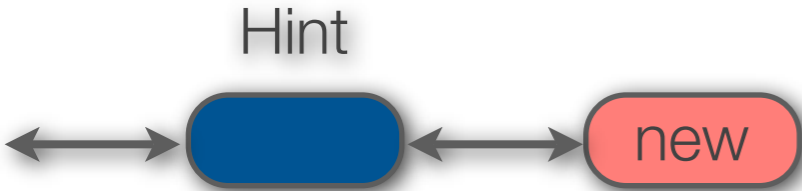


Optimized
for Locality

- 1) How to select hints?**
- 2) How does an allocator efficiently use the hints?**

How to Select Hints?

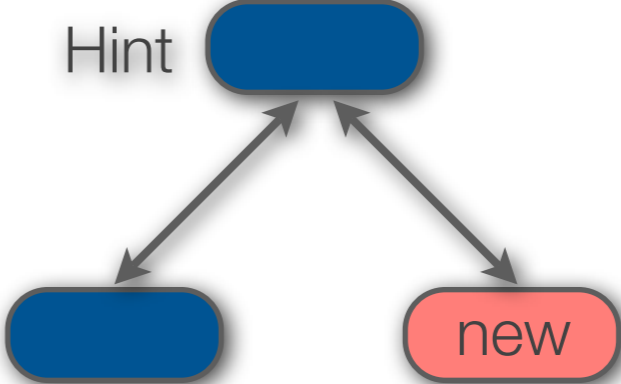
List



Linear traversal

Hint = address of previous element


Tree



DFS traversal (set, map)

Hint = parent's address (sibling's -BFS)

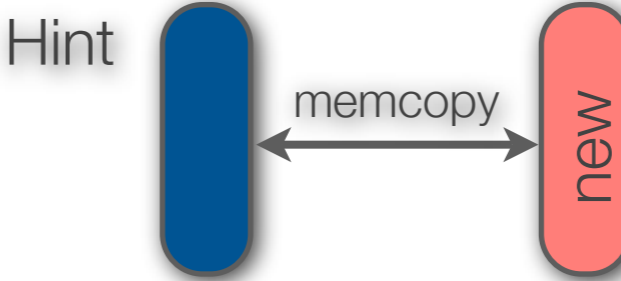
Deque



Linear traversal

Hint = neighboring array's address

Vector



`vector()` and `operator=`

Hint = source's address

How Does an Allocator Use Hints

1. Interface - ISO C++ Standard

- `void* allocator<T>::allocate(size_t size, void* address)`

2. Management Strategy

- Index free blocks on 'address', too

3. Allocation Strategy

1. Try to find a block in the hint's vicinity (fail fast)
2. Otherwise, abandon locality and allocate based on size

Managing Address for Locality

- The whole memory is organized in **K-regions**
- K-region = a contiguous block of size 2^{64-K} aligned to its size
 - $X, Y \in$ same K-region iff they share the 64-K most significant bits
 - Examples
 - 0x**0000**FFFF and 0x**0000**CCCC in same 16-region
 - A 64-byte cache line is a 6-region
 - A 4 KB virtual page is a 12-region
- $K \in [0,64)$ **adjustable**

Managing Address for Locality

Idea: Approximate address search within a K-region

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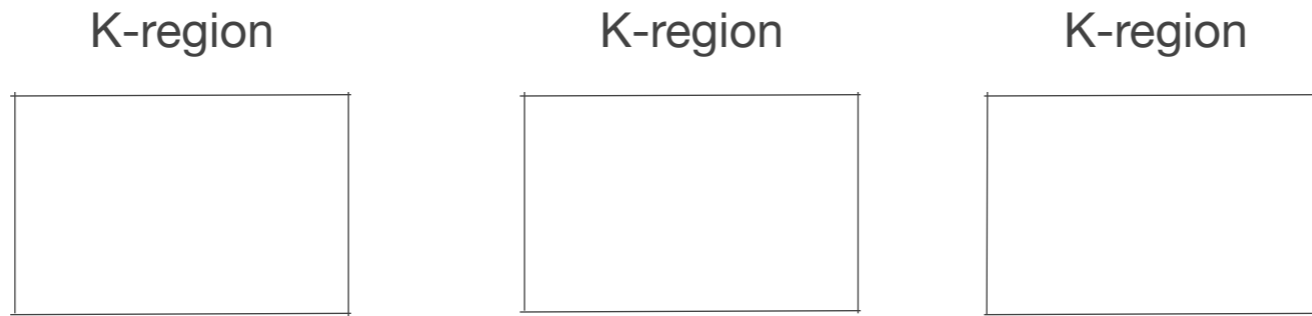
Locality Improved: a Bird's Eye View



Allocator

Application

Locality Improved: a Bird's Eye View



**Allocator
allocation**



Application

Locality Improved: a Bird's Eye View



Allocator
deallocation

Application

Locality Improved: a Bird's Eye View

Memory chunks are now **partially ordered**



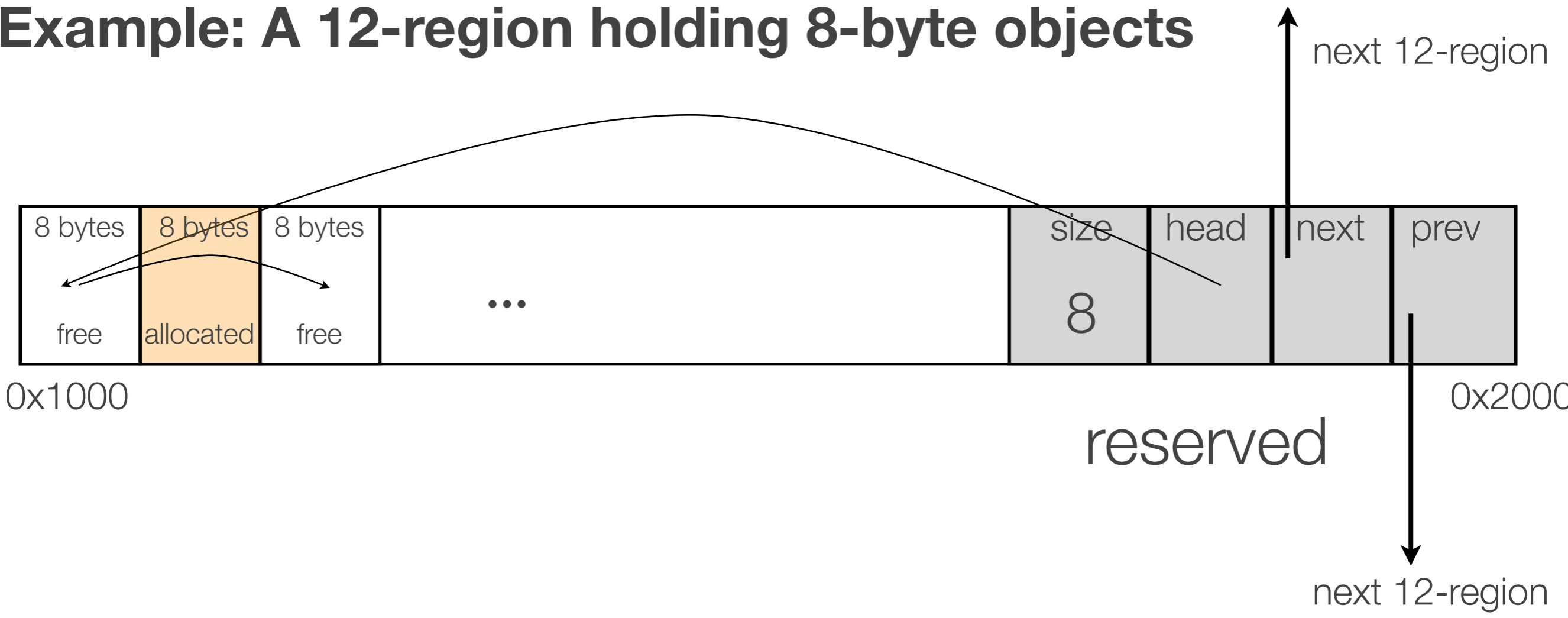
Allocator
deallocation

Application

Next allocation will exhibit **better locality**

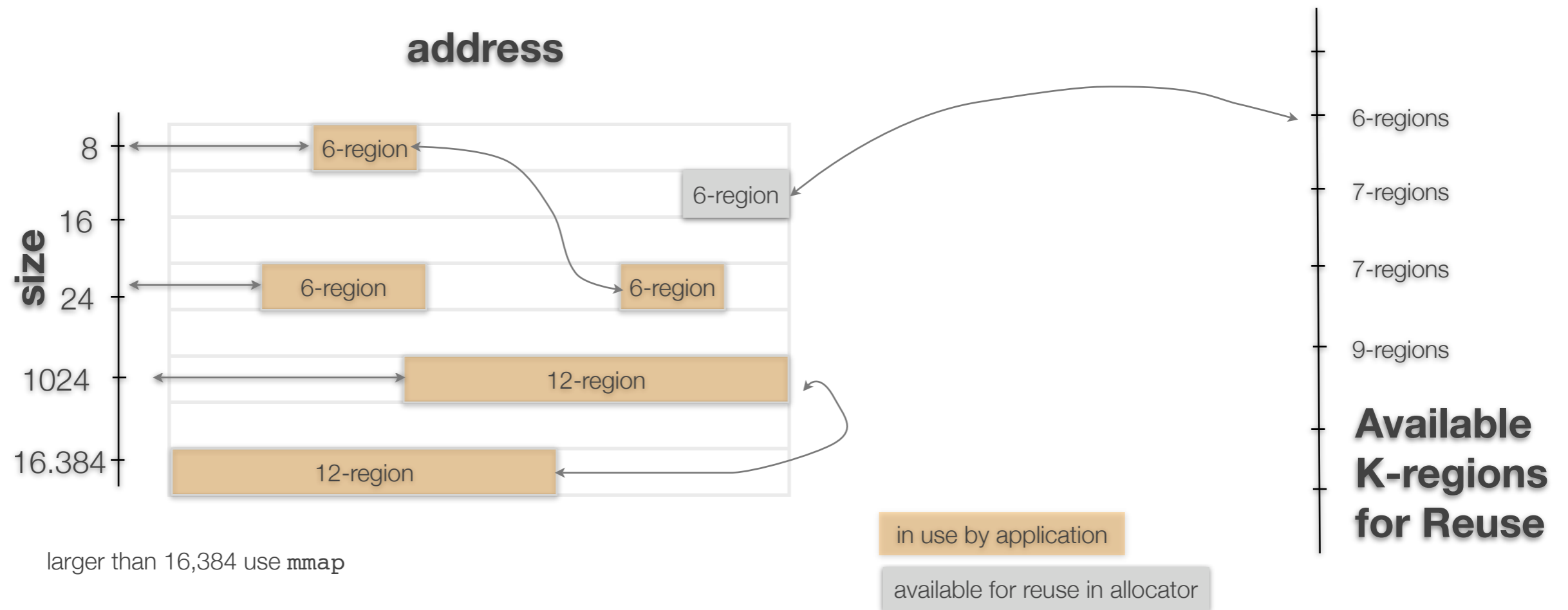
Anatomy of a K-region

Example: A 12-region holding 8-byte objects



- Holds objects of **same** size in a linked list
- Topmost 16 bytes reserved
- Software alignment

Two Partitions (TP) Allocator



- **Allocation Strategy: Address then Size. $O(1)$**
 - If hint's K-region is not empty then select first block
 - Else select first block on size
- **Deallocation: $O(1)$**
 - Return block to its K-region

TP's Size Segregation and Its Progressive K-Region Selection

Size Classes

K-region

0 - 512 B : 64 classes, 8 bytes apart

12-region (4 KB)

512 - 1KB : 8 classes, 64 bytes apart

13-region (8 KB)

1 KB - 2 KB : 8 classes, 128 bytes apart

14-region (16 KB)

2 KB - 4 KB : 8 classes, 256 bytes apart

15-region (32 KB)

4 KB - 8 KB : 8 classes, 512 bytes apart

16-region (64 KB)

8 KB - 16 KB : 8 classes, 1024 bytes apart

17-region (128 KB)

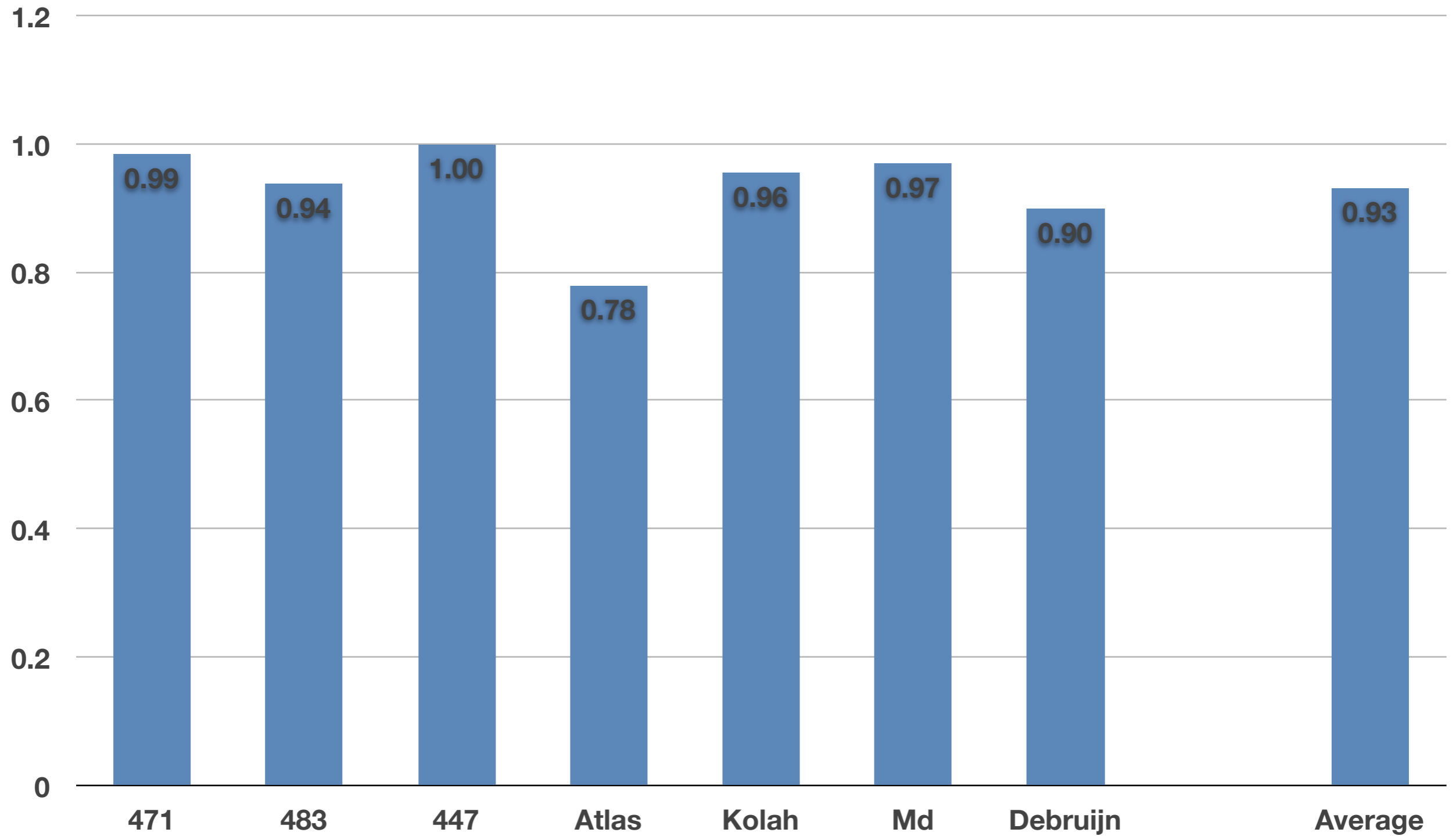
Larger than 16 KB managed by `mmap` and `munmapped`

C++ *STL* Benchmarks Suite

● Seven large and real world applications	Lines of code	Files	Execution time (sec)
• 447.dealll - adaptive finite elements (Spec 2006)	198,649	452	1,040
• 471.omnetpp - even simulation (Spec 2006)	47,910	155	1,152
• 483.xalancbmk - XML processor (Spec 2006)	553,643	1,773	841
• Atlas- mathematical application (Atlas Lie Group)	53,869	230	557
• Kolah - mesh transport (Lawrence National Labs)	52,921	227	70
• Md -Molecular dynamics (Sandia National Labs)	1,259	30	64
• Debruijn - network simulation (Texas A&M)	499	3	15

TP vs. Dlmalloc

Execution time normalized to dlmalloc (lower is better)



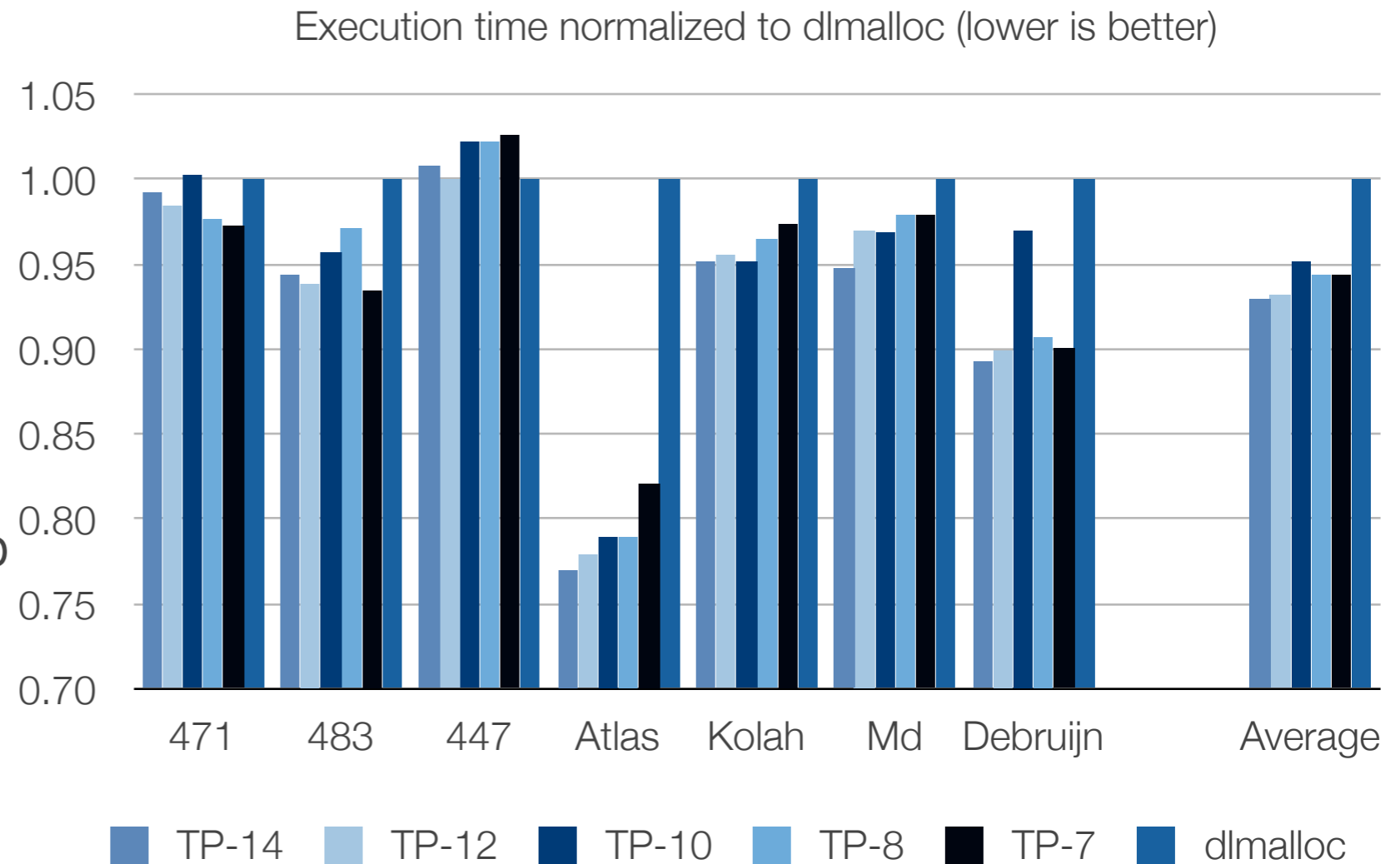
Locality Precision Study

- We varied K between 7 and 14
 - Only for objects < 512 bytes ($\approx 95\%$)
 - Notation: TP-7 uses 7-regions for small objects
- Why K-regions other than cache lines or virtual pages could improve locality?
 - They increase the **probability** of allocating in the same cache line or virtual page

TP's Performance Improvement

TP vs dlmalloc

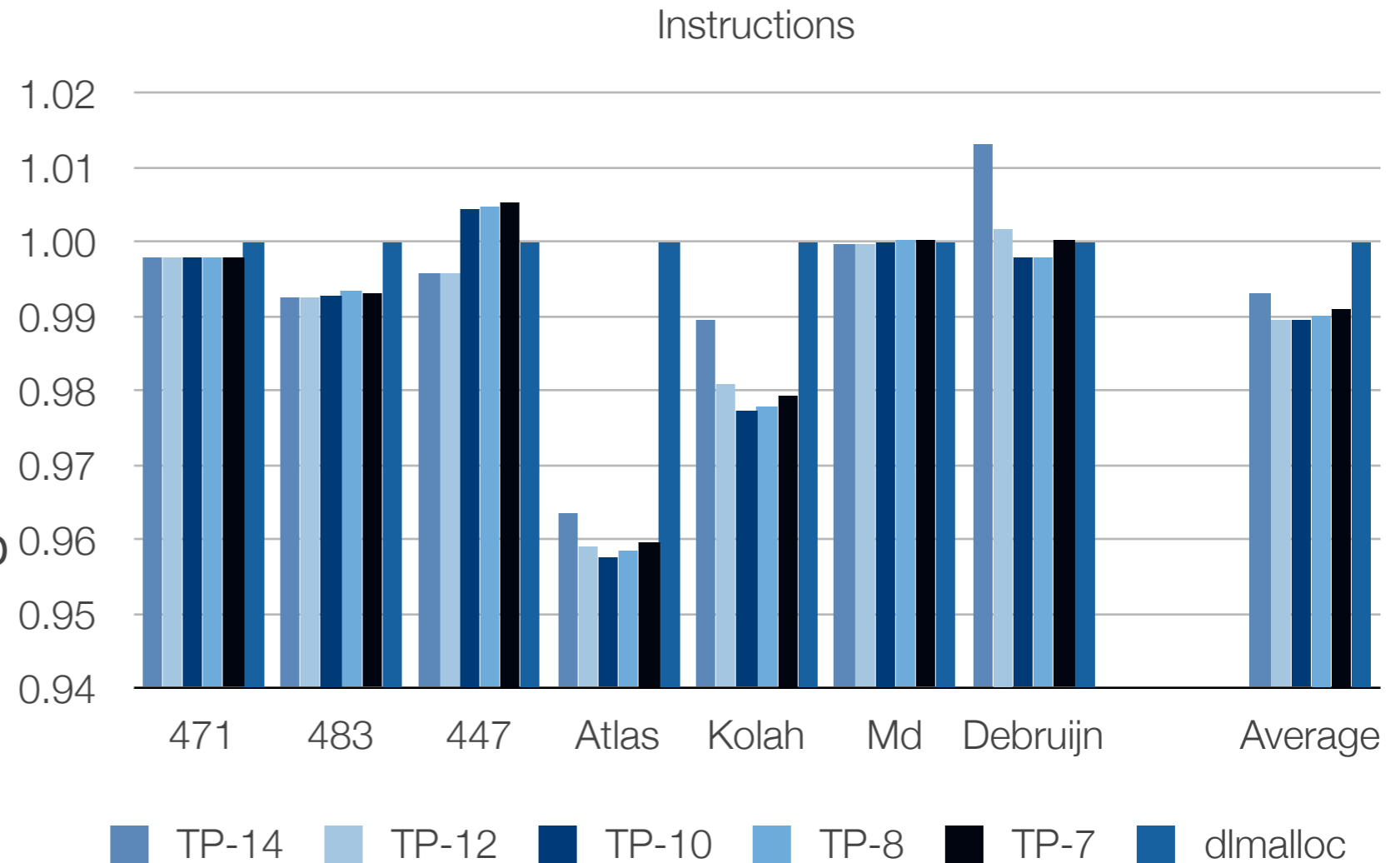
- Time: 5-7%
- Instructions: 1%
- TLB Misses: 13-18%
- L1 Misses: 1-5%
- L2 Misses: 10-12%
- Default K's value 12



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 - Default K's value 12
- Two pitfalls
1. Whole K-region acquisition
 2. Hint from allocated memory

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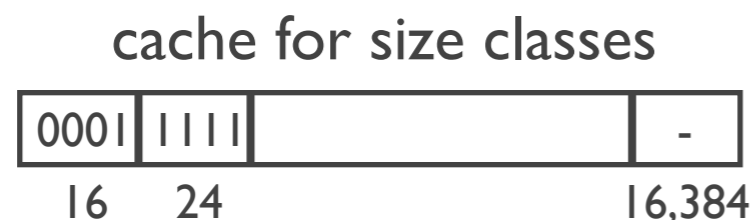
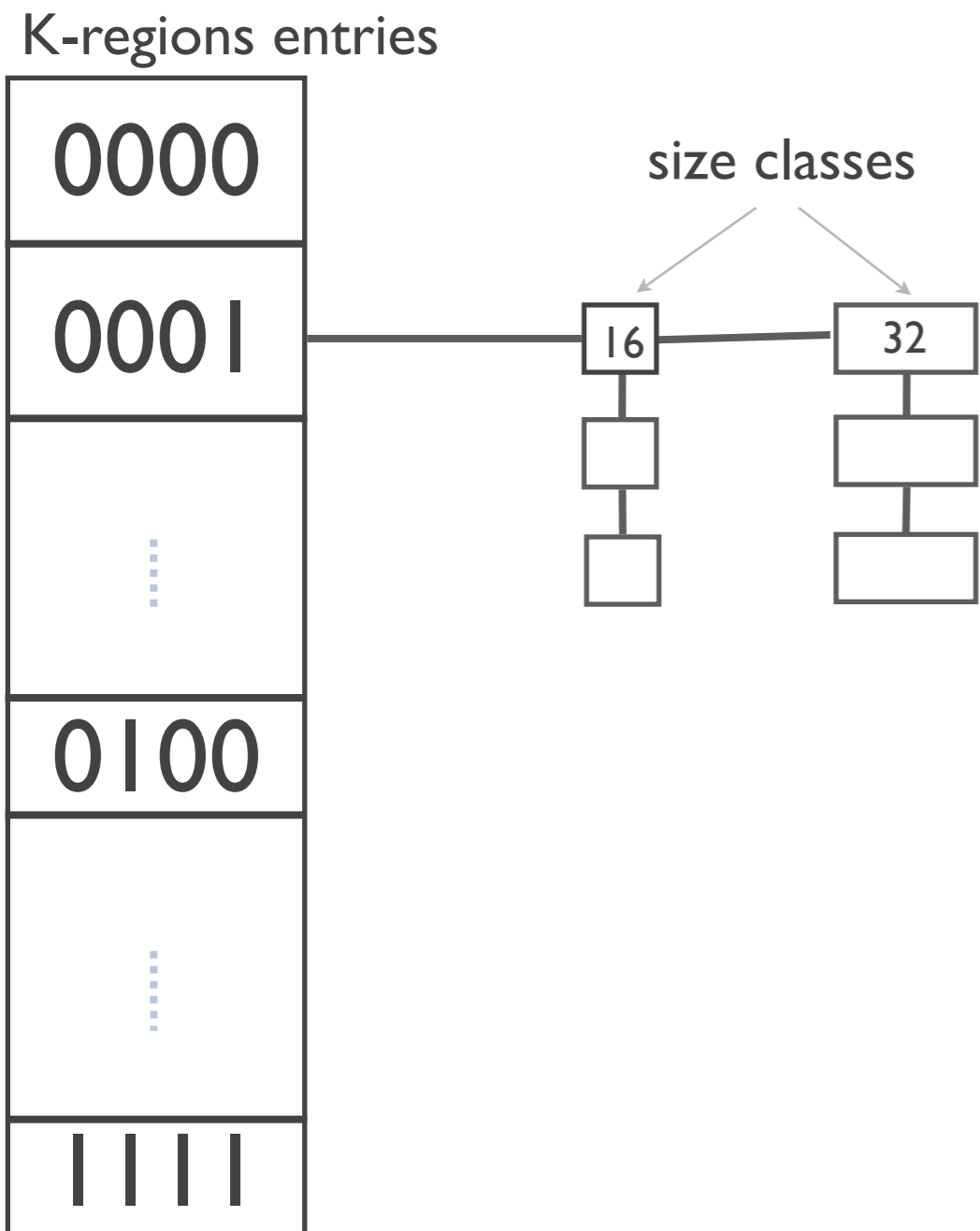
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- Two pitfalls
1. Whole K-region acquisition
 2. Hint from allocated memory
- Can we do better?

Medius - Another Approach

- Addresses TP's pitfalls
 - no alignment, hint need not be from allocated memory
- Uses same K-regions
 - stores them in an array 2^{32-K} size
- K-region = list of lists
 - size classes store blocks of same size in a list
 - K-regions store size classes in a list
- Prioritizes address over size
- $O(1)$ access to hint's K-region

Medius allocator



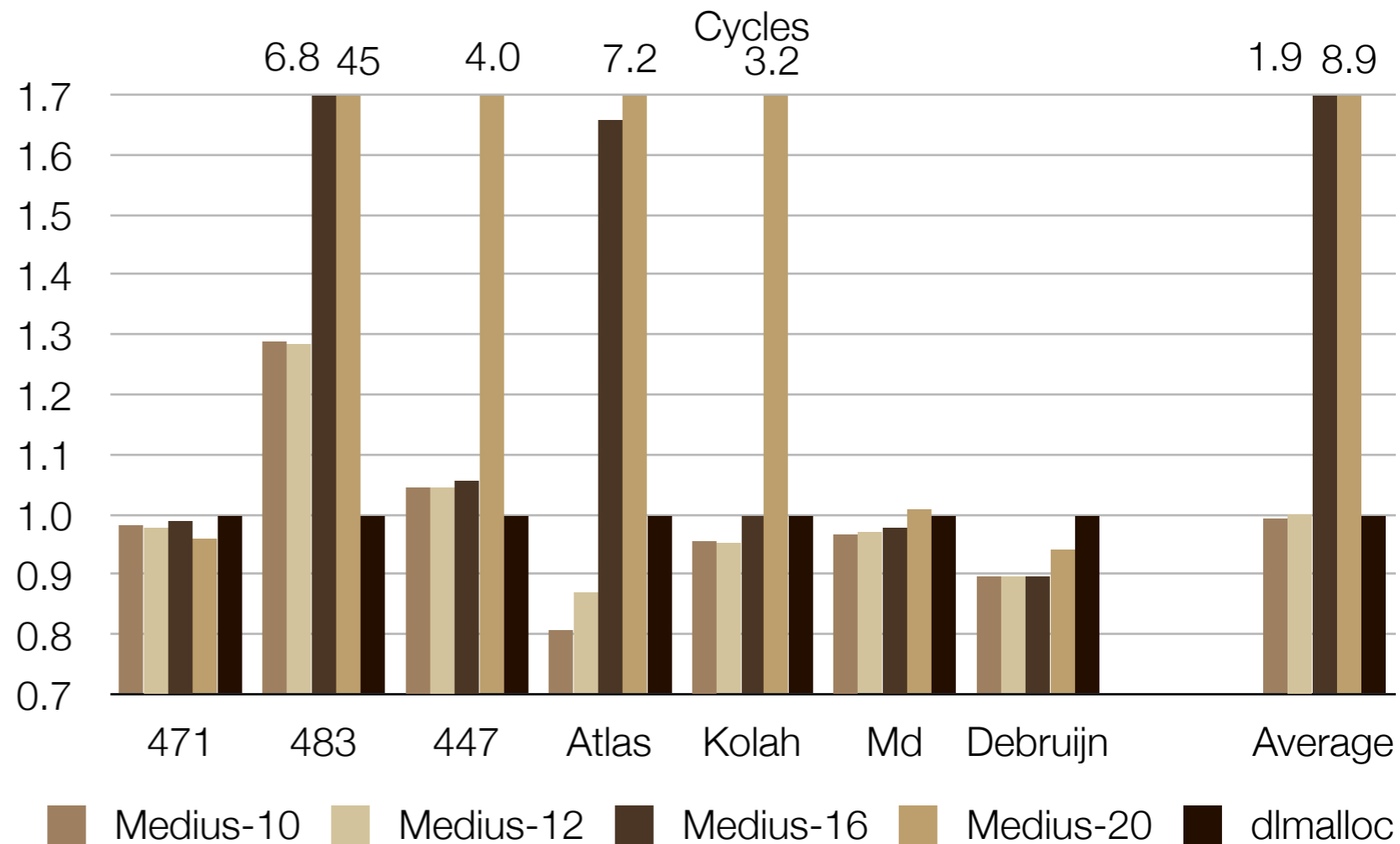
- **Allocation - $O(s)$ on average**
 - If hint's K-region is not empty select size class and return
 - Else select first K-region with size class (from cache)
- **Deallocation - $O(s)$**
 - return block to its K-region

- **Strategy: Address and then size**

Medius' Performance Improvement

Medius vs dlmalloc

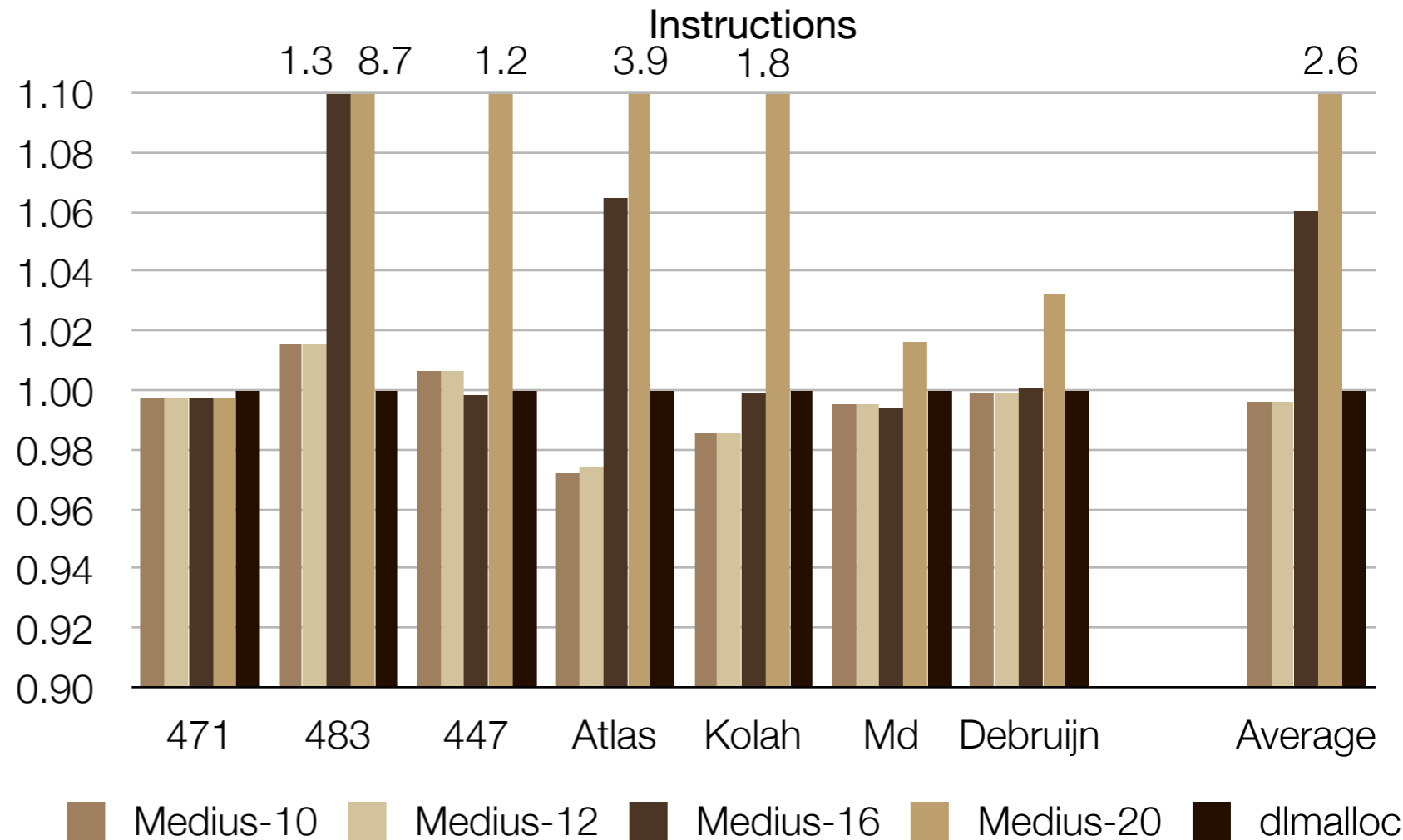
- Time: 0%
- Instructions: 0.36%
- TLB Misses: -13%
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- Time: 0%
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Two pitfalls

1. Slower
2. No memory reuse

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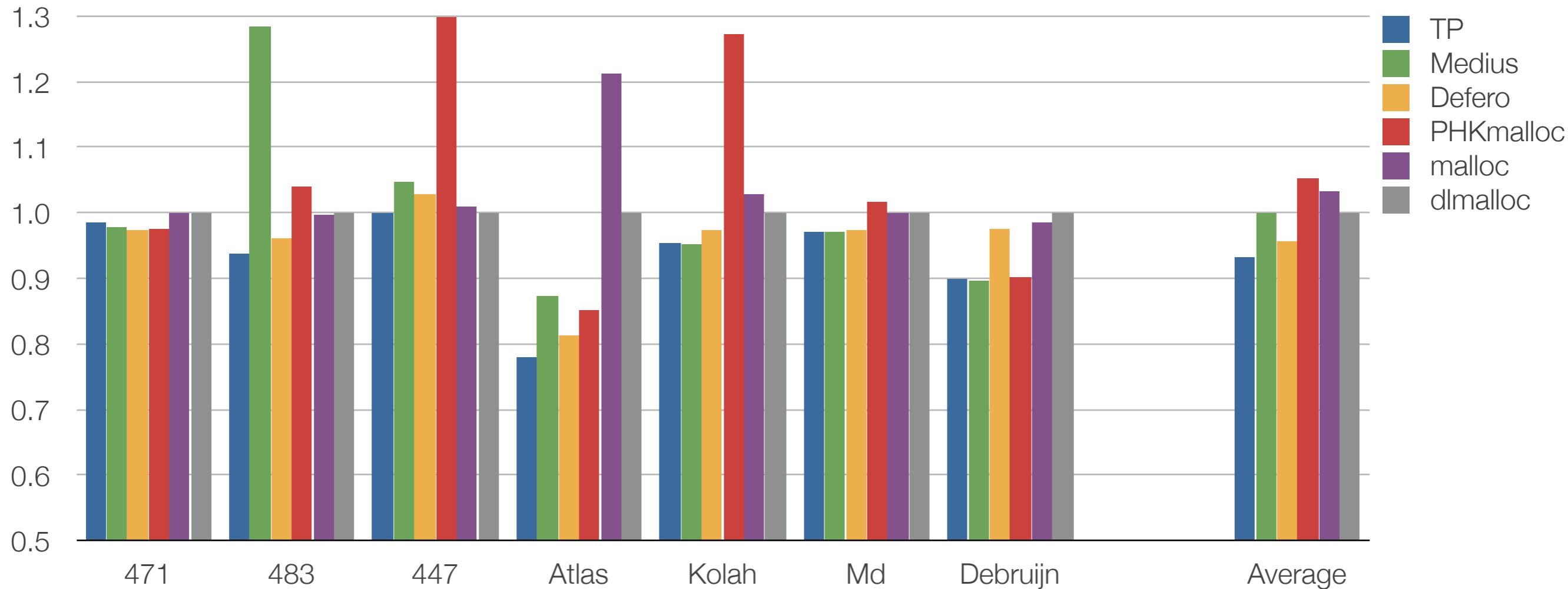
Two pitfalls

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2. No memory reuse

We did worse !

Comparison of Allocators

Execution time normalized to dlmalloc (lower is better)



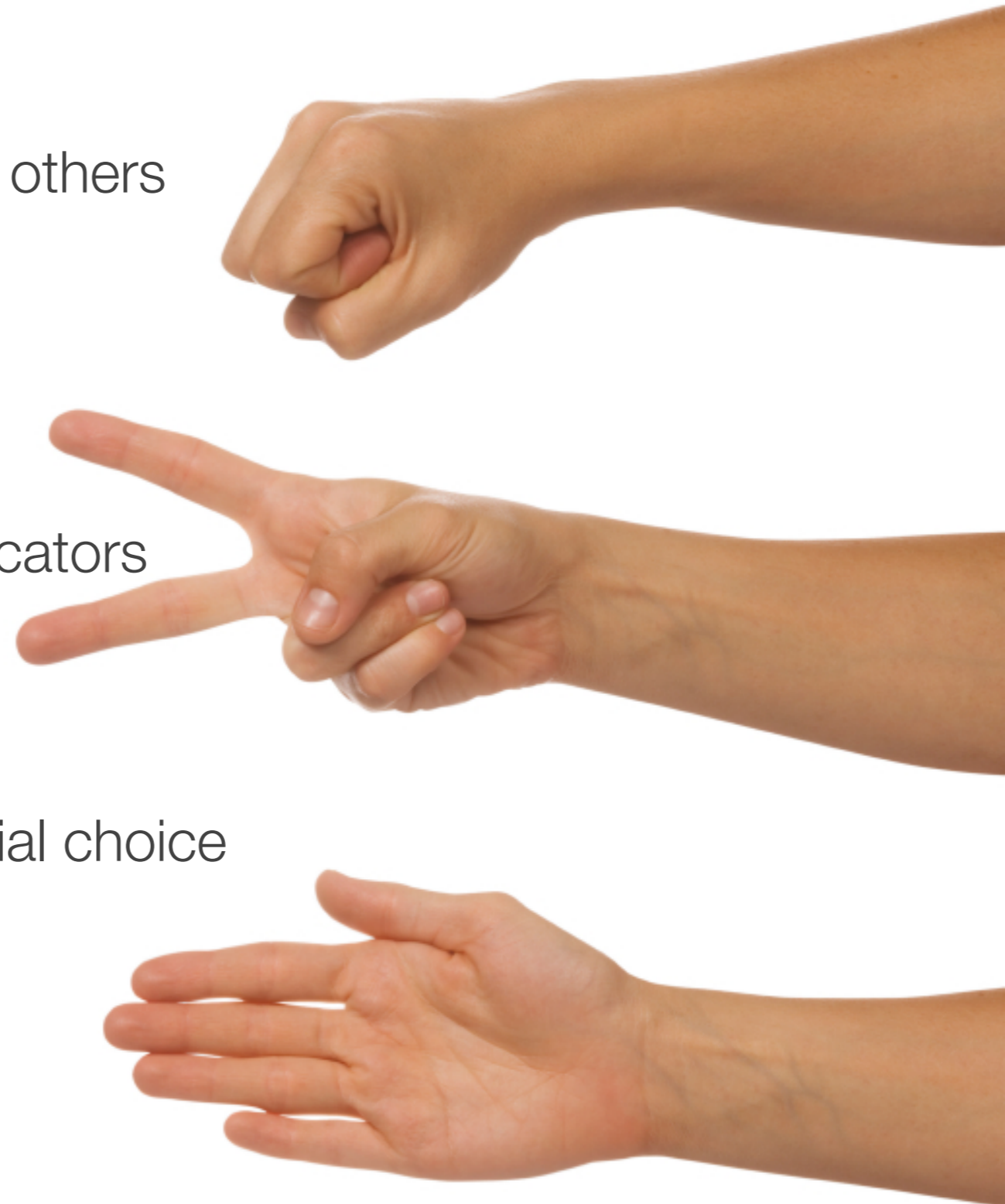
- FreeBSD's allocator - PHKmalloc
- Defero - locality improving allocator that uses hints
- Vam - locality of reference
- native 4.1.2 gnu malloc (older version of dlmalloc)

Fragmentation

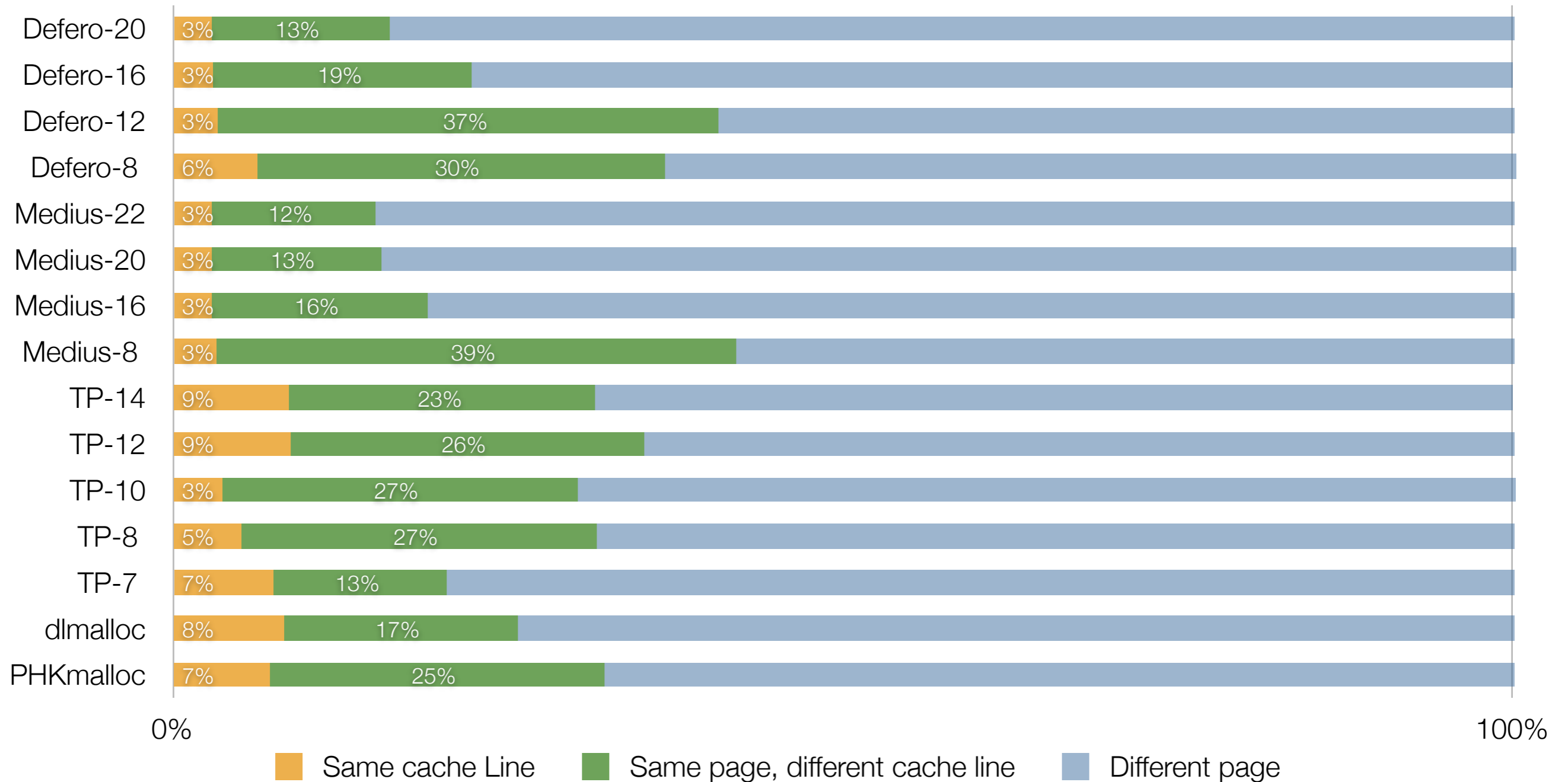
Benchmarks	TP	Medius	Defero	PHK	dlmalloc
471.omnetpp	0.6	3.2	1.5	58.0	23.5
483.xalancbmk	75.6	37.2	28.4	30.3	1.3
447.deall	21.2	25.3	24.7	57.0	18.2
Atlas	10.8	12.9	7.2	23.4	2.7
Kolah	1.1	0.9	0.9	5.4	12.3
Md	21.4	20.15	22.14	20.7	10.7
Debruijn	6.6	44.7	44.7	1.3	6.8
<i>Geometric Mean</i>	<i>7.7</i>	<i>11.7</i>	<i>9.5</i>	<i>18.1</i>	<i>7.2</i>

Speed, Fragmentation and Locality

- Rock, paper, scissors
 - Efforts to increase one trait hurt others
 - Intra and inter allocators
- Speed v. Fragmentation
 - Studied relation: the fastest allocators have high fragmentation
- Locality v. Fragmentation
 - Less searching space limits spatial choice
- Locality v. Speed
 - Searching takes additional time



Locality Accuracy - Benefits w/o Costs



**Fast Allocation Speed,
Low Memory Fragmentation,
and High Spatial Locality:
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Allocation Speed (instr)

- 1.TP-12 (98.96)
- 2.TP-10 (98.96)
- 3.TP-8 (99.00)
- 4.TP-7 (99.09)
- 5.Defero-20 (99.18)
- 6.TP-14 (99.31)
- 7.Defero-16 (99.55)
- 8.Medius-22 (99.61)
- 9.Medius-20 (99.64)
- 10.dlmalloc (100.00)
- 11.Defero-12 (100.08)
- 12.Defero-8 (100.90)
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Locality (page accuracy)

1. Medius-12 (42%)
2. Defero-12 (40%)
3. Defero-8 (36%)
4. TP-12 (35%)
5. TP-14 (32%)
6. TP-8 (32%)
7. PHKmalloc (32%)
8. TP-10 (30%)
9. dlmalloc (25%)
10. Defero-16 (22%)
11. TP-7 (20%)
12. Medius-16 (19%)
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Execution Time

1. TP-14 (93%)
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5. TP-10 (95%)
6. Defero-16 (95%)
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12. Medius-20
13. PHKmalloc
14. Medius-16
15. Medius-12

**Fast Allocation Speed,
Low Memory Fragmentation,
and High Spatial Locality:
Pick Two.**

Allocation Speed (instr)

- 1.TP-12
- 2.TP-10
- 3.TP-8
- 4.TP-7
- 5.Defero-20
- 6.TP-14
- 7.Defero-16
- 8.Medius-22
- 9.Medius-20
- 10.dlmalloc
- 11.Defero-12
- 12.Defero-8
- 13.PHKmalloc
- 14.Medius-16
- 15.Medius-12

Locality (page accuracy)

1. Medius-12
2. Defero-12
3. Defero-8
4. TP-12
5. TP-14
6. TP-8
7. PHKmalloc
8. TP-10
9. dlmalloc
10. Defero-16
11. TP-7
12. Medius-16
13. Medius-20
14. Defero-20
15. Medius-22

Fragmentation

1. dlmalloc
2. TP-12
3. Defero-20
4. Defero-16
5. Defero-12
6. Defero-8
7. Medius-22
8. Medius-20
9. Medius-16
10. PHKmalloc
11. TP-10
12. TP-8
13. Medius-12
14. TP-7
15. TP-14

Execution Time

1. TP-14
2. TP-12
3. TP-8
4. TP-7
5. TP-10
6. Defero-16
7. Defero-20
8. Defero-12
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7. Defero-20
8. Defero-12
9. Defero-8
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10. dlmalloc

9. dlmalloc

11. dlmalloc

11. Defero-12

10. Defero-16

12. Medius-20

12. Defero-8

11. TP-7

13. PHKmalloc

13. PHKmalloc

12. Medius-16

14. Medius-16

14. Medius-16

13. Medius-20

15. Medius-12

15. Medius-12

14. Defero-20

15. Medius-22

**Fast Allocation Speed,
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Speed

1. TP-12
2. TP-10
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5. Defero-20
6. TP-14
7. Defero-16
8. Medius-22
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Locality (page accuracy)

1. Medius-12
2. Defero-12
3. Defero-8
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5. TP-14
6. TP-8
7. PHKmalloc
8. TP-10

Execution Time

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2. TP-12
3. TP-8
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6. Defero-16
7. Defero-20
8. Defero-12
9. Defero-8
10. Medius-22

10. dlmalloc

9. dlmalloc

Fragmentation

1. dlmalloc

11. dlmalloc

11. Defero-12

10. Defero-16

2. TP-12

12. Medius-20

12. Defero-8

11. TP-7

3. Defero-20

13. PHKmalloc

13. PHKmalloc

12. Medius-16

4. Defero-16

14. Medius-16

14. Medius-16

13. Medius-20

5. Defero-12

15. Medius-12

15. Medius-12

14. Defero-20

6. Defero-8

15. Medius-22

7. Medius-22

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10. PHKmalloc

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14. TP-7

15. TP-14

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Locality (page accuracy)

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6. TP-8
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1. TP-14
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7. Defero-20
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9. Defero-8
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Fragmentation

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11.TP-7

3.Defero-20

13.PHKmalloc

13.PHKmalloc

12.Medius-16

4.Defero-16

14.Medius-16

14.Medius-16

13.Medius-20

5.Defero-12

15.Medius-12

15.Medius-12

14.Defero-20

6.Defero-8

7.Medius-22

8.Medius-20

9.Medius-16

10.PHKmalloc

11.TP-10

12.TP-8

13.Medius-12

14.TP-7

15.TP-14

**Fast Allocation Speed,
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Conclusions

- TP is 7% better than state-of-the-art
 - Benefits both temporal and spatial
- Fragmentation, allocation speed, and locality are antagonistic

Thank you