VLSI System Design Part I: Introduction

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Lecture Notes, Course Assignments, Grades

- Lecture notes are to be downloaded from OCW/OCWi sites
- Course assignments will be given after each lecture chapter (2-3 lectures per chapter)
- Course grade is based upon the score of each course assignment only.
- Each course assignments includes several regular problems and a few "extra credit" problems.
- Regular problems are due ONE WEEK after the actual assignment. Late submission will be reflected in the score
- Extra credit problems can be submitted any time before the due date of the final assignment. Scores of extra credit problems will be added to the course grade as bonus points. Students are strongly encouraged to submit at least one extra credit problem.

Course Outline

1. Introduction to VLSI system design

- VLSI design methodology and computer-Aided Design (CAD) tools
- Hardware description language and hardware behavior model

2. Logic synthesis

- Logic minimization
 - Combinational and sequential circuits
 - > Two-level logic minimization
 - Multi-level logic minimization
- Technology mapping
 - Implementation technology: PLA, gate-array, standard cell, FPGA
 - Area-optimal mapping
 - > Delay-optimal mapping, fan-out optimization

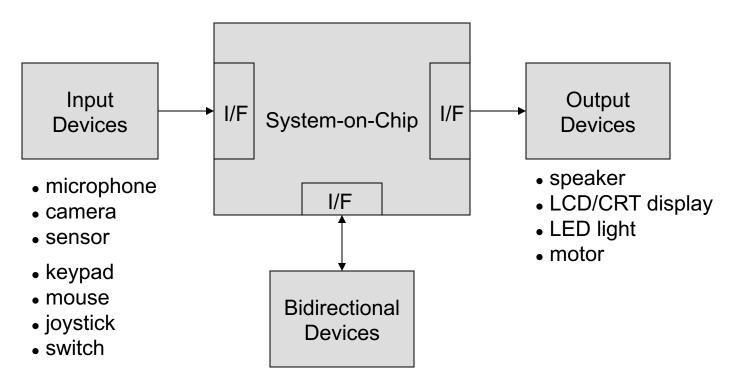
3. High-level synthesis

- High-level design methodology
 - Register-transfer level and behavioral level descriptions
 - Architecture (datapath, register, memory, bus, control logic)
- Operation scheduling
- Resource allocation

4. Advanced topics in system-level design issues

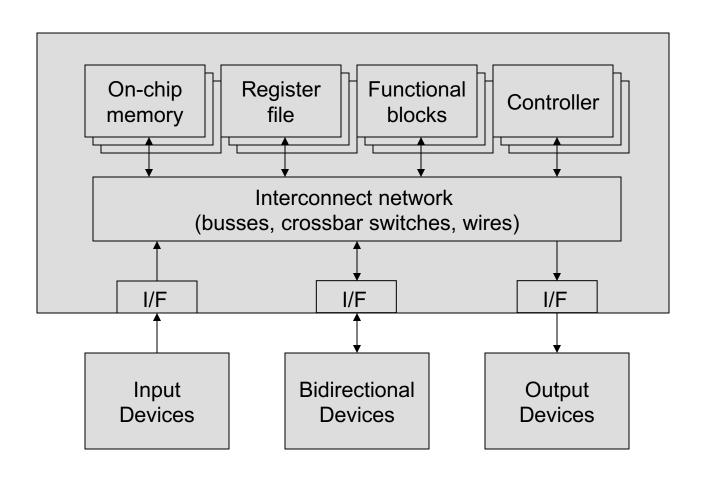
- Description language issues (C-based system description)
- Design verification (simulation, emulation, formal verification)
- Platform-based design (CPU-core, standard bus interface, IPs)

Today's VLSI: System-on-Chip (SoC)

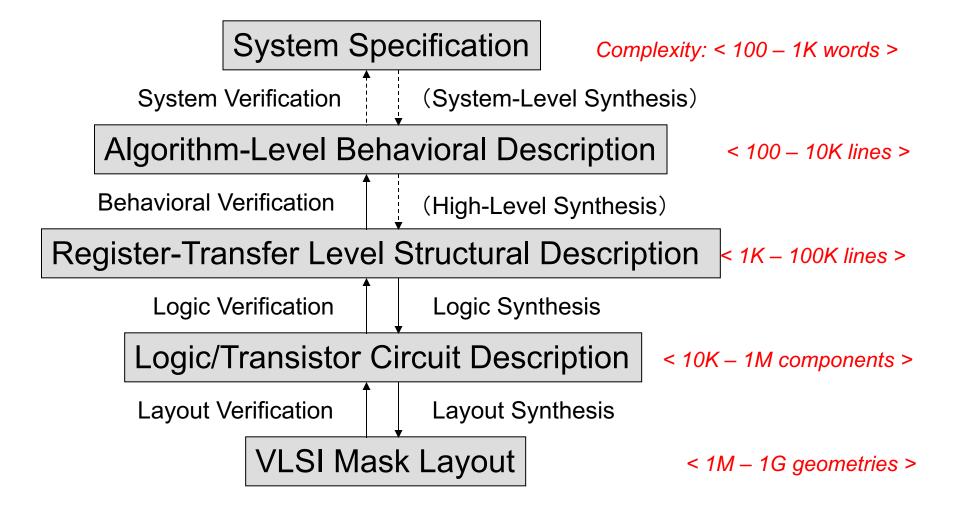


- peripheral bus (IEEE1394, USB, RS232C, PCI, SCSI, AGP, ISA, ATA, ...)
- storage (SRAM, DRAM, FLASH-ROM, disk drive)
- network (Modem, Ethernet, wireless)

SoC – A simplified (logical) view



Systematic VLSI Design Flow



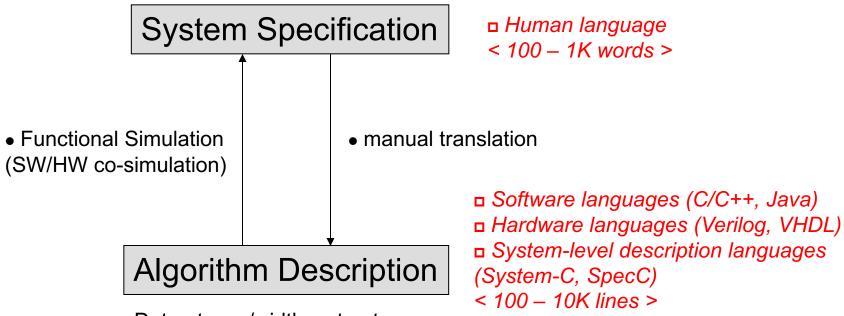
System Specification

System Specification

```
□ Human language
(English, Japanese, etc.)
< 100 – 1K words >
```

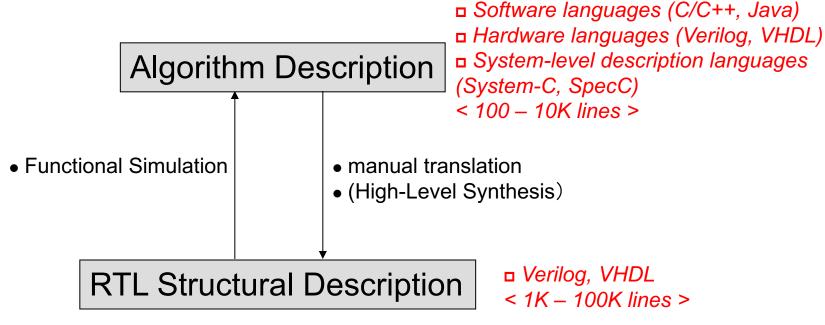
- System functionality (application)
- ✓ Operating environment (IO interface)
- Cost (development, manufacture, test)
- ✓ Size/weight (# of chips, board area, box size)
- ✓ Power consumption
- Flexibility (specification changes, added functionality)

System Synthesis/Verification



- ✓ Data : types/widths, structures, arrays
- ✓ Process : expressions, control-flow, procedures, functions
- ✓ Communication : protocols
- Simulation: input stimulus, output verification

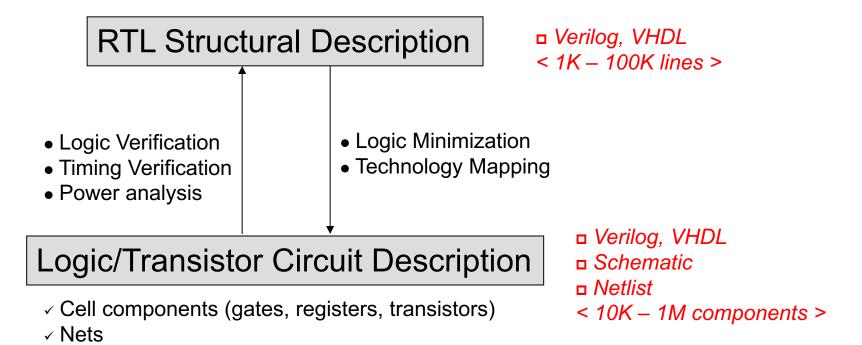
High-Level Synthesis/Verification



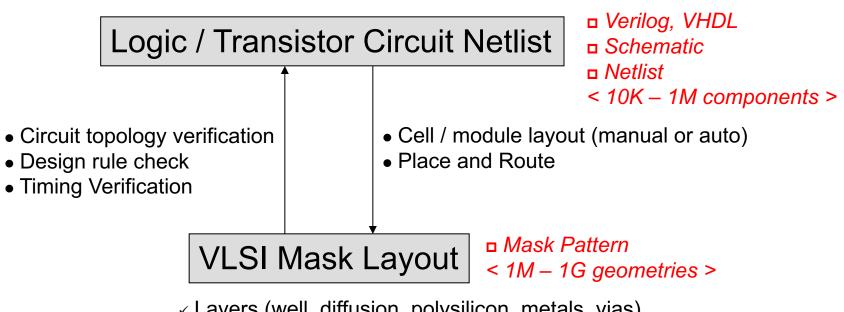
- Architecture description
 - Module (CPU, memory, register, functional unit, IO interface)
 - > Bus architecture
- Module description (functional/structural)
 - Combinational/sequential circuit description

Logic Synthesis/Verification

✓ IO pins

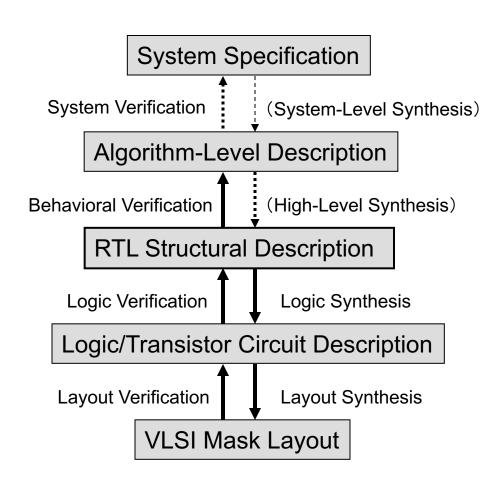


Layout Synthesis/Verification



- ✓ Layers (well, diffusion, polysilicon, metals, vias)
- ✓ Rectangle, polygons

CAD Technology in VLSI Design



Synthesis tools: transformation of a design description into a more detailed form of description (logic synthesis, layout synthesis)

Verification tools: checking the correctness of the description (simulators, symbolic verification)

- Logic synthesis and layout synthesis tools have matured enough to be used by most designers
- High-level synthesis tools started to appear in real design cases (but many designers still prefer RTL as their design entry)
- System-level synthesis tools do not yet exist. (currently an active research area)

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- High-level design methodology
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- Description language issues (C-based system description)
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Modeling the Hardware Behavior Using Hardware Description Language (HDL)

- Hardware Description Language (HDL) is designed to describe the behavior of all kinds of digital circuits in text format (to be readable by human).
 - Primary objective of HDLs was to model the hardware and do simulation (logic synthesis was initially not the main objective).
- HDL is similar to software programming languages,
 BUT the execution model is different:
 - All processes occur simultaneously (concurrency)
 - All processes are either event-triggered or self-timed

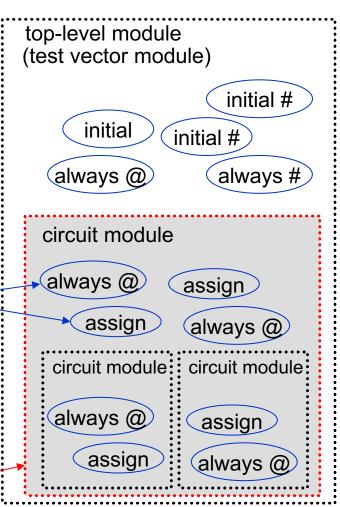
Verilog Hardware Model

- Test vector module describes the behavior of the environment external to the circuit (usually with self-timed processes)
- Circuit modules describes the reactive behavior of the circuit with respect to the environment
- Hardware behavior is described by a set of concurrent processes whose information is exchanged via signals.

Concurrent processes

 Not all of the HDL description can be automatically synthesized into gate-level circuits. A synthesizable code is composed of a subset of HDL constructs which can be directly translated into logic equations and storage elements.

Synthesizable code



Basic Constructs in Verilog-HDL (1)

 A module is the basic unit for circuits to describe hierarchical structure

```
module mux(a,b,sel,c);
input a, b, sel; // input port list
output c; // output port list
   Module_description
endmodule
```

- Signals connect the circuit elements and transfer logic values
 - Register data type : special type of signal that can store logic value
 - Net data type (wire): used for circuit connection (cannot store logic value)

Basic Constructs in Verilog-HDL (2)

- Logic values: 0, 1, x (undefined), z (high impedance)
- Bit-vector signal: signal with multiple bits (unsigned integer)
 example: wire [7:0] dbus; // 8-bit signal
- Bit-vector constants: <size>' <base><value>
 - size : # of bits (default size is 32 bits, when not specified)
 - base: b,B = binary, o,O = octal, d,D = decimal, h,H = hex (default base is decimal, when not specified)

example	size	base	value in binary
101	32	decimal	00001100101
8'hb9	8	hex	10111001
6'b100100	6	binary	100100
6'b111	6	binary	000111
8'z	8	binary	ZZZZZZZ

Hierarchy Structure on Verilog (1)

```
module DFF(clk,d,q);
module mux(a,b,sel,c);
                                  input clk, d;
input a, b, sel;
output c;
                                  output q;
  Module description
                                  req q;
endmodule
                                    Module description
                                  endmodule
  module name instance name
module/ mux DFF (clk,a,b,sel,c);
input/clk, a, b, sel;
output c;
                                                    d d
wire/d;
                                           b
  mux M0 (a,b,sel,d);
                                                      clk
                                      sel
                                           sel
  DFF D0 (clk,d,c);
                                                M0
endmodule
```

- Ports (input,output,inout) are considered as nets unless explicitly specified as registers.
- Only nets (wire) can be used to connect module instance ports

Hierarchy Structure on Verilog (2)

```
in[3:0]
                                                    <0> a
                                                             c <0>out[3:0]
                                                    <0> b
                                            ld
                                                       sel
                                            clk
                                                       clk MO
                                                    < 1 > a
module REG4(clk,ld,in,out);
input clk, ld;
                                                    < 1 > b
input [3:0] in;
                                                       sel
output [3:0] out;
                                                       clk M1
mux DFF M0 (clk,in[0],out[0],ld,out[0]);
                                                    \langle 2 \rangle a
mux DFF M1 (clk,in[1],out[1],ld,out[1]);
mux DFF M2 (clk,in[2],out[2],ld,out[2]);
                                                    <2> b
mux DFF M3 (clk,in[3],out[3],ld,out[3]);
                                                       sel
endmodule
                                                       clk M2
                                                    <3> a
                                                             c |<3>
                                                       sel
                                                       clk
```

Combinational Logic on Verilog (1)

Event triggered repeated procedure (always)

```
reg sum, count; // register data type declaration
always @ (a or b or c) begin
  sum = a ^ b ^ c;
  cout = (a & b) | (b & c) | (a & c);
end
("&":AND, "|":OR, "^":EXOR)
```

- Sensitivity list (triggers block evaluation)
 - (a or b or c): one of the signals a, b, c changes its value
 - ✓ In describing combinational logic, <u>all signals</u> on the right-hand side of the expression needs to be included in the sensitivity list.
 - Implication: if none of the signals in the sensitivity list changes, output signal does not change; therefore no need to reevaluate the expression.

> Statement group

- ✓ begin end : evaluate multiple statements sequentially
- fork join : evaluate multiple statements concurrently (rarely used)

Data types

reg: register data type (required for assigned signals inside procedural blocks. But in this case, this does not represent an actual "register")

Combinational Logic on Verilog (2)

If-else statement

```
reg sum, cout;
                 arithmetic addition
reg [1:0] a plus b;
always @ (a or b or c) begin
 a plus b = a + b;
 if (a plus b == 0) begin
         sum = c;
         cout = 0;
 end
 else if (a plus b == 1) begin
         sum = ~c;
         cout = c;
 end
 else begin
         sum = c;
         cout = 1;
 end
end
```

```
reg sum, cout;
reg [1:0] a plus b;
always @ (a or b or c) begin
 a plus b = a + b;
 sum = c; Initial assignments
 if (a_plus_b == 0) begin
         sum = c;
         cout = 0;
 end
 else if (a plus b == 1) begin
         sum = ~c;
         cout = c;
 end
end
```

Same behavior

These assignments

override the initial

assignments

Combinational Logic on Verilog (3)

Case statement

```
reg sum, cout;
reg [1:0] a plus b;
always @ (a or b or c) begin
 a plus b = a + b;
 case (a plus b)
         0: begin
                 sum = c;
                 cout = 0;
         end
         1: begin
                 sum = ~c;
                 cout = c;
         end
         default: begin
                 sum = c;
                 cout = 1;
         end
 endcase
end
```

```
reg sum, cout;
reg [1:0] a plus b;
always @ (a or b or c) begin
 a plus b = a + b;
 sum = c;
 cout = 1;
 case (a plus b)
         0: begin
                 sum = c;
                 cout = 0;
         end
         1: begin
                 sum = ~c;
                 cout = c;
         end
 endcase
end
```

Combinational Logic on Verilog (4)

Continuous assignment (assign)

```
wire sum; // net data type declaration
assign sum = a ^ b ^ c;
  (explicit continuous assignment)
wire cout = (a & b) | (b & c) | (a & c);
  (implicit continuous assignment)
```

- > Sensitivity list
 - By default, all signals on the right-hand side of the expression are included in the sensitivity list (if one of the signal changes, assignment is triggered and reevaluated)
- Data types
 - wire : net data type (required for assigned signals in continuous assignment)
- > Continuous assignment using conditional expression

```
assign sum = (a == 1) ? \sim (b ^ c) : (b ^ c);
```

Combinational Logic on Verilog (5)

Function call

```
function F sum;
input a, b, c;
reg a plus b;
begin
  a plus b = a + b;
  case (a plus b)
           0: F sum = c;
           1: F sum = \sim c;
           2: F sum = c;
  endcase
end
endfunction
wire sum = F_sum(a, b, c);
```

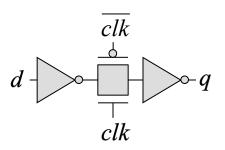
- Function call is used to describe complex combinational logic
- Input ports become the sensitivity list (if one of the input changes, the function is reevaluated)
- Function definition must be inside the module definition

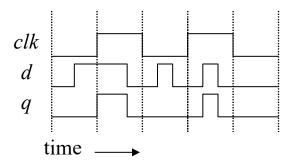
Sequential Logic on Verilog (1)

Transparent latch using repeated procedure

```
reg q;
always @(clk or d) begin
  if(clk == 1) q = d;
end
```

- What is different from combinational logic description?
 - Case (clk == 0) is not specified.
- Circuit behavior
 - When (clk == 1), value of d is transferred to q (transparent).
 - When (clk == 0), value of q is unchanged (regardless of value of d)





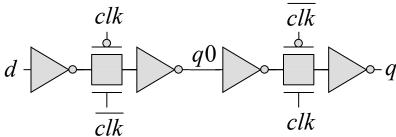
Sequential Logic on Verilog (2)

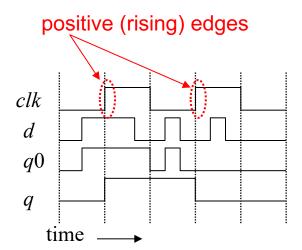
D flip-flop using 2 latches

```
reg q0, q;
always @(clk or d) begin
  if(clk == 0) q0 = d;
  else if(clk == 1) q = q0;
end
```

 D flip-flop using edge sensitivity list (simpler and more common way to describe D flip-flops)

```
reg q;
always @(posedge clk) begin
  q = d;
end
```





Sequential Logic on Verilog (3)

• 3-bit shift register using *blocking procedural assignment*

```
reg [2:0] q;
always @(posedge clk)
begin
  q[2] = q[1];
  q[1] = q[0];
  q[0] = d;
end
```

> Below description is incorrect!!

```
reg [2:0] q;
always @ (posedge clk)
begin
  q[0] = d;
  q[1] = q[0];
  q[2] = q[1];
end
```

```
1. q[2]_{next} = q[1];

2. q[2] = q[2]_{next};

3. q[1]_{next} = q[0];

4. q[1] = q[1]_{next};

5. q[0]_{next} = d; left side assignment

6. q[0] = q[0]_{next};
```

```
1. q[0]_{next} = d;

2. q[0] = q[0]_{next};

3. q[1]_{next} = q[0];

4. q[1] = q[1]_{next};

5. q[2]_{next} = q[1];

6. q[2] = q[2]_{next};
```

<u>Blocking assignment</u> executes left side assignment *immediately after* the evaluation of the right side of the expression
 (It "blocks" the following statements from entering evaluation phase until its left side assignment is completed)

Sequential Logic on Verilog (4)

- 3-bit shift register using *non-blocking procedural assignment*
 - Below description is correct!!

```
reg [2:0] q;

always @ (posedge clk)

begin

q[0] <= d;
q[1] <= q[0];
q[1];
q[2] <= q[1];
end

1. q[0]<sub>next</sub> = d;
2. q[1]<sub>next</sub> = q[0];
4. q[0] = q[0]<sub>next</sub>;
5. q[1] = q[1]<sub>next</sub>;
6. q[2] = q[2]<sub>next</sub>;
end
```

Non-blocking assignment delays the left side assignment until all expressions have completed the right side evaluation.

Sequential Logic on Verilog (5)

- Blocking vs non-blocking procedural assignments
 - Blocking assignment
 - Evaluation timing is consistent with software programming (easy to understand)
 - Description becomes simpler in some cases
 - Need to be careful with statement ordering
 - Non-blocking assignment
 - Statement ordering is more flexible
 - Description is more closer to actual circuit implementation
 - Behavior is sometimes hard to understand
 - Cannot be used in combinational logic
- Common practice
 - Use blocking assignment for combinational logic
 - Use non-blocking assignment for sequential logic

Finite State Machine on Verilog

• (1101)-String recognizer: when a sequence {1, 1, 0, 1} is detected at the input, the circuit outputs 1, otherwise outputs 0.

```
module str1101(clk, in, out);
input clk, in;
output out;
reg [1:0] state;
reg out;
always@(posedge clk) begin
   state <= 2'b00;  
2-bit binary value "00"
   out <= 0:
   case(state)
     2'b00 : if(in == 1) state <= 2'b01;
     2'b01 : if(in == 1) state <= 2'b10:
     2'b10 : if(in == 0) state <= 2'b11;
             else state <= 2'b10;
     2'b11 : if(in == 1) begin
             out <= 1;
             state <= 2'b01:
             end
   endcase
end
endmodule
```

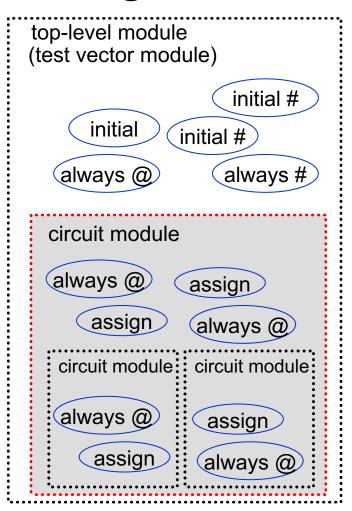
Memory Model on Verilog

Synchronous RAM

```
module mem1k 8 sync(clk, ce, we, addr, din, dout);
  input ce, we; // ce : chip enable, we : write enable
  input [9:0] addr; // 10-bit address
  input [7:0] din; // 8-bit data input
  output [7:0] dout; // 8-bit data output
  reg [7:0] dout; // dout : reg-type
  reg [7:0] ram[0:1023]; // 1024 address space
  always@(posedge clk) begin
    if(ce) begin
      if(we) ram[addr] <= din;</pre>
      else dout <= ram[addr];</pre>
    end
  end
  endmodule
> @ (posedge clk) : read/write access occurs on clk positive edge
Read (we == 0) : ram[addr] is transferred to dout
Write (we == 1) : din is transferred to ram[addr]
```

Simulation on Verilog

- Test vector module describes the behavior of the environment external to the circuit (usually with self-timed processes)
- Simulation results can be displayed with wave viewer software, or can be displayed on console



Self-Timed Process on Verilog

• One-time procedure

initial begin

#10 a = 0; b = 0;

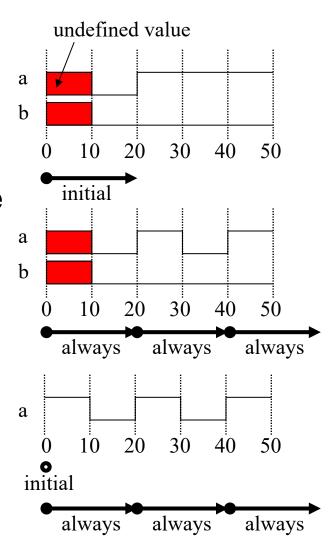
Delay #10 a = 1;

10 time units end;

Self-timed repeated procedure
 always begin

Concurrent procedures

```
initial a = 1;
always begin
  #10 a = 0;
  #10 a = 1;
end;
```



Example of Test Vector Module

Example #1:

```
module test:
reg clk, in;
               0101 1101 0110 1100
wire out;
req [4:0] i;
wire [15:0] seq = 16'h5d6c;
initial begin
   clk = 0;
   for(i=0;i<16;i=i+1)
  begin
        in = seq >> i;
        #50 clk = 1;
        #50 clk = 0;
   end
end
str1101 SO(clk, in, out);
endmodule
```

Simulation automatically stops when all processes have terminated.

Example #2:

```
module test:
reg clk, in;
wire out;
req [4:0] i;
wire [15:0] seq = 16'h5dc6;
initial
   for(i=0;i<16;i=i+1) begin
        in = seq >> i; #100;
  end
always #50 clk = ~clk;
initial begin
   clk = 0;
   wait(i == 16) $finish;
end
str1101 S0(clk, in, out);
endmodule
```

When there is an endless process, simulation can be explicitly terminated by \$finish command

Simulation Output Command

```
module str1101(clk, in, out);
input clk, in;
output out;
reg [1:0] state;
reg out;
always@(posedge clk) begin
   $display($stime, "in(%b),out(%b),state(%b)",
          in, out, state);
   state <= 2'b00:
   out <= 0:
   case(state)
     2'b00 : if(in == 1) state <= 2'b01;
     2'b01 : if(in == 1) state <= 2'b10;
     2'b10 : if(in == 0) state <= 2'b11;
             else state <= 2'b10;
     2'b11 : if(in == 1) begin
             out <= 1;
             state <= 2'b01;
             end
   endcase
end
endmodule
```

Simulation Output Result

```
50 \text{ in}(0), \text{out}(x), \text{state}(xx)
 150 in(0), out(0), state(00)
250 in(1), out(0), state(00)
350 in(1), out(0), state(01)
450 in(0), out(0), state(10)
550 in(1); out(0), state(11)
 650 in(1), out(1);, state(01)
750 in(0) out(0), state(10)
 850 in(1), out(0), state(11)
 950 in(0), out(1); state(01)
1050 in(1), out(0), state(00)
1150 in(1), out(0), state(01)
1250 in(1); out(0), state(10)
1350 in(0) out(0), state(10)
1450 in(1), out(0), state(11)
1550 in(0), out(1), state(01)
```

Tips on Simulation and Verification (1)

State initialization

- In simulation, register values are initially undefined.
- In real circuits, registers can take arbitrary initial values
- In order to force the state to a known desired state, a proper input sequence needs to be fed into the circuit.

- Regardless of the initial state, the first two 0s at the input forces the state to go into initial state at the 2nd clock cycle.
- → HOWEVER, many state machine does not have a proper input sequence to force to a known desired state from arbitrary (possibly unreachable) states → add "reset" input

Tips on Simulation and Verification (2)

 In general, forcing the state to a known desired state is simply done by adding a "reset" signal input

```
module str1101(clk, rst n, in, out);
    input clk, rst n, in; // rst n : asynchronous reset (active low)
   output out;
   reg [1:0] state;
   reg out;
   always@(posedge clk or negedge rst n) begin
       state <= 2'b00:
       out <= 0:
       if(~rst n) // if reset is deactivated
       case(state)
         2'b00 : if(in == 1) state <= 2'b01:
         2'b01 : if(in == 1) state <= 2'b10;
         2'b10 : if(in == 0) state <= 2'b11;
                 else state <= 2'b10;
         2'b11 : if(in == 1) begin
                 out <= 1;
                 state <= 2'b01;
                 end
       endcase
   end
   endmodule
```

Tips on Simulation and Verification (3)

- In any system, coding the appropriate test vectors is not easy (probably harder than coding the actual circuit)
 - The designer needs to take account all the possible input patterns so as to cover the complete behavior of the circuit
 - For a large system, test vector covering only a small portion of the complete behavior takes very long time to simulate. This results in very low design productivity, and also leaves a large number of "bugs" left undetected.
 - To verify a large system, Circuit Emulation technique is often used (the system is implemented on a set of programmable logic devices and run on actual environment).

Verilog Reference on the WEB

• On-line Verilog HDL Quick Reference Guide by Stuart Sutherland of Sutherland HDL, Inc. -Portland, Oregon, USA

http://www.emmelmann.org/Library/Tutorials/docs/verilog_ref_guide/vlog_ref_top.html

HDL Summary

- Hardware Description Languages (HDLs) are designed to describe the behavior of all kinds of digital circuits in text format (to be readable by human).
- A subset of HDL description can be automatically transformed to gatelevel circuit by logic synthesis tools ("synthesizable" RTL code).
- With the current increase in design complexity, doing designs on RTL is becoming too time consuming
 - Although the description is in text format, concurrent behavior of HDL is still hard to track by human, giving more opportunities for errors and making debugging even harder.
 - Software languages are far more easy to track, since everything occurs sequentially.
 - Population of HDL programmers is much smaller than that of software programmers.
 - Strong need for high-level synthesis tools

Problem 1.1

Design the following circuits in Verilog.

- Give complete module description for each circuit
- Explain the behavior
- (If you have access to Verilog simulator) create simple test vector module and confirm the behavior on simulation
- A) 4-bit ripple-carry adder using full-adder modules
- B) 4-bit counter with enable/reset inputs in register-transter level description (use arithmetic operators directly on the 4-bit signals)
 - increment only when "enable" is 1
 - set the counter to 0 when "reset" is 1
- C) Describe the 4-bit counter in B) using 4-bit ripple-carry adder in A)
- D) Unsigned multiplier (4-bit inputs, 8-bit output) (use whatever architecture such as "shift-and-add", "array", "Booth")

Problem 1.2

Consider the following integer divider module

```
module divide8(clk, start, a, b, ready, q, r);
input clk, start;
input [7:0] a, b;
output ready;
                                          always@(posedge clk) begin
output [7:0] q, r;
                                            if(state < 8) state <= state + 1;</pre>
                                            if(start == 0) begin
reg [7:0] q, r, a0, b0;
                                              state <= 0; ready <= 0;
reg [3:0] state;
                                              q \le 0; r \le 0;
reg ready;
                                            end
                                            else if(state == 0) begin
wire [7:0] a1;
                                              a0 \le a; b0 \le b;
assign a1[7:1] = r[6:0];
                                            end
assign a1[0] = a0[7];
                                            else if(ready == 0) begin
                                              if(state == 8) ready <= 1;</pre>
wire sub = (a1 \ge b0);
                                              r \le (sub)? a1 - b0 : a1;
                                              q \le (q \le 1) + sub;
                                              a0 \le a0 \le 1;
                                            end
                                          end
                                          endmodule
```

Problem 1.2

- A) Explain the algorithm of this divider.
 - How is the division computed?
 - What are the roles for each variable?
- B) Assume:
 - a = 8' b01100100 (=100), b = 8' b00001001 (=9)
 - start = 0 for the first clock cycle, and start = 1
 after that.

Explain the behavior of the circuit at each clock cycle (explain the values of each variable at each clock cycle).

- C) Modify this divider module so that it can handle 16-bit inputs.
- D) Using the above 16-bit divider module, design a circuit which converts 16-bit binary value into 5-digit decimal value (each decimal digit consumes 4-bit)

Problem 1.3 (extra credit)

Design a simple calculator on Verilog with the following specification

- There are 14 keys ('0', '1', ..., '9', '+', '=', 'C'). When a key is pushed, a 4-bit signal associated with the key is generated with a proper control signal.
- There is a 4-digit decimal number display which can display 12 types of characters ('0', '1', ..., '9', 'E', ''). To control the 4-digit display, the calculator circuit outputs 16-bit signal, each 4-bit group controlling each digit position.
- Entering 'C' resets the calculator. ['', '', '', '0'] is displayed.
- If the result is greater than 9999, ['', '', '', 'E'] is displayed to indicate error.
- For other specifications, follow the conventions of actual calculator.