VHDL Short Course – Module 1
Introduction

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Topics

• Background to VHDL
• Introduction to language
• Programmable Logic Devices
  – CPLDs and FPGAs
  – FPGA architecture
  – Nexys 2 Board
• Using VHDL to synthesize and implement a design
• Verilog overview
Hardware Description Languages

- Example HDL's: ABEL, VERILOG, VHDL
- Advantages:
  - Documentation
  - Flexibility (easier to make design changes or mods)
  - Portability (if HDL is standard)
  - One language for modeling, simulation (test benches), and synthesis
  - Let synthesis worry about gate generation
- Engineer productivity
- However: A different way of approaching design
  - Engineers are used to thinking and designing using graphics (schematics) instead of text.
VHDL

- **VHSIC Hardware Description Language**
  - Very High Speed Integrated Circuit
- Standard language used to describe digital hardware devices, systems and components
  - Developed initially for documentation
- VHDL program was an offshoot of the US Government's VHSIC Program
  - Revised - now 1076-1993 (supported by all tools)
  - Latest version VHDL-2008 (not yet supported by tools!)
    - Integration of 1164 std
    - General improvements, etc
VHDL References

What exactly is VHDL?

- A way of **describing** the operation of a system.
  - Example: a 2-input multiplexer

```vhdl
ENTITY mux IS
  PORT (a, b, sel : IN std_logic;
         y : OUT std_logic);
END mux;

ARCHITECTURE behavior OF mux IS
BEGIN
  y <= a WHEN sel = '0' ELSE b;
END behavior;
```
Example Synthesis Results (not Xilinx)
Basic Terminology

• Note: VHDL is case insensitive, free format.
• Comments are preceded by two consecutive dashes.
  – comment ends at end of current line
• A digital component is described using an
  – ENTITY DECLARATION and a corresponding
  – ARCHITECTURE BODY.
• Std_logic is an enumeration type defined in an IEEE package
  – has the values '0' and ‘1’ and ‘Z’ (and others)
• Ports are like IC pins, connected by wires called SIGNALS
IEEE STANDARD 1164

• Provides a standard data type (std_logic) - nine values
  – U unitialized
  – X forcing unknown
  – 0 forcing logic 0
  – 1 forcing logic 1
  – Z high impedance
  – W weak unknown
  – L weak logic 0
  – H weak logic 1
  – - don’t care

• To use standard logic data types place at top of source file
  – LIBRARY ieee; -- library
  – USE ieee.std_logic_1164.ALL; -- package
Entity

- The ENTITY defines the external view of the component
- PORTS are the communication links between entities or connections to the device pins
- Note the use of libraries before entity description

```vhdl
LIBRARY ieee;
USE ieee.std_logic_1164.ALL;

ENTITY mux IS
  PORT (a, b, sel : IN std_logic;
      y : OUT std_logic);
END mux;
```
Architecture

• The ARCHITECTURE defines the function or behavior or structure of the ENTITY

• Consists of concurrent statements, e.g.
  – Process statements
  – Concurrent Signal Assignment statements
  – Conditional Signal Assignment statements

• An entity may have several architectures

ARCHITECTURE behavior OF mux IS
BEGIN

  y <= a WHEN sel = '0' ELSE
  b;

END behavior;
VHDL Notes

• There is no explicit reference to actual hardware components
  – There are no D-type flip-flops, mux, etc
  – Required logic is inferred from the VHDL description
  – Same VHDL can target many different devices

• There are many alternative ways to describe the required behavior of the final system
  – Exactly the same hardware will be produced
  – Some ways are more intuitive and easier to read

• Remember that the synthesis tools must be able to deduce your intent and system requirements
  – For sequential circuits it is usually necessary to follow recommended templates and style
Programmable Logic Devices

- **Xilinx user programmable devices**
  - **FPGAs** – Field Programmable Gate Array
    - Virtex 4, 5, 6, 7
    - Spartan 3, Spartan 6
    - Consist of configurable logic blocks
      - Provides look-up tables to implement logic
      - Storage devices to implement flip-flops and latches
  - **CPLDs** – Complex Programmable Logic Devices
    - CoolRunner-II CPLDS (1.8 and 3.3 volt devices)
    - XC9500 Series (3.3 and 5 volt devices)
    - Consist of macrocells that contain programmable and-or matrix with flip-flops
Electronic Components (Xilinx)

**Acronyms**
- SPLD = Simple Prog. Logic Device
- PAL  = Prog. Array of Logic
- CPLD = Complex PLD
- FPGA = Field Prog. Gate Array

**Common Resources**
- Configurable Logic Blocks (CLB)
  - Memory Look-Up Table
  - AND-OR planes
  - Simple gates
- Input / Output Blocks (IOB)
  - Bidirectional, latches, inverters, pullup/pulldowns
- Interconnect or Routing
  - Local, internal feedback, and global
### Xilinx Products (Xilinx)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPLDs and FPGAs</th>
<th>Complex Programmable Logic Device (CPLD)</th>
<th>Field-Programmable Gate Array (FPGA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Architecture</strong></td>
<td>PAL/22V10-like</td>
<td>Gate array-like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More Combinational</td>
<td>More Registers + RAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Density</strong></td>
<td>Low-to-medium</td>
<td>Medium-to-high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.5-10K logic gates</td>
<td>1K to 3.2M system gates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance</strong></td>
<td>Predictable timing</td>
<td>Application dependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Up to 250 MHz today</td>
<td>Up to 200 MHz today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interconnect</strong></td>
<td>“Crossbar Switch”</td>
<td>Incremental</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview of Xilinx FPGA Architecture (Xilinx)
Spartan-3 FPGA Family

- “Designed to meet the needs of high-volume, cost-sensitive consumer electronic applications”
- 326 MHz system clock rate
- Programmed by loading configuration data into static memory cells – place serial PROM on board

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Device</th>
<th>System Gates</th>
<th>CLBs (4 slices)</th>
<th>CLB flip-flops</th>
<th>Block Ram (bits)</th>
<th>User IO</th>
<th>Price (250K)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XC3S200</td>
<td>200K</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>3,840</td>
<td>216K</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>$2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XC3S1000</td>
<td>1M</td>
<td>1,920</td>
<td>15,360</td>
<td>432K</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>$12</td>
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<tr>
<td>XC3S4000</td>
<td>4M</td>
<td>6,912</td>
<td>55,296</td>
<td>1,728K</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Spartan-3E FPGA Family

- Also “specifically designed to meet the needs of high volume, cost-sensitive consumer electronic applications.
- builds on the success of the earlier Spartan-3 family by increasing the amount of logic per I/O, significantly reducing the cost per logic cell. New features improve system performance.
- Because of their exceptionally low cost, are ideally suited to a wide range of consumer electronics applications, including broadband access, home networking, display/projection, and digital television equipment”.

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<th>Block Ram (bits)</th>
<th>User IO</th>
<th>Price (250K)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XC3S100E</td>
<td>100K</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>1,920</td>
<td>72K</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>&lt;$2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XC3S500E</td>
<td>500K</td>
<td>1,164</td>
<td>9,312</td>
<td>360K</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>$25 1-off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XC3S1600E</td>
<td>1.6M</td>
<td>3,688</td>
<td>29,504</td>
<td>648K</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>&lt;$9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Programmable Functional Elements

- Configurable Logic Blocks (CLBs)
  - RAM-based look-up tables to implement logic
  - Storage elements for flip-flops or latches
- Input/Output Blocks
  - Supports bidirectional data flow and 3-state operation
  - Supports different signal standards including LVDS
  - Double-data rate registers included
  - Digitally controlled impedance provides on-chip terminations
- Block RAM provides data storage
  - 18-Kbit dual-port blocks
- Multiplier blocks (accepts two 18-bit binary numbers)
- Digital Clock Manager (DCM)
  - Provides distribution, delaying, mult, div, phase shift of clocks
Slices and CLBs (Xilinx)

- Each Virtex™-II CLB contains four slices
  - Local routing provides feedback between slices in the same CLB, and it provides routing to neighboring CLBs
  - A switch matrix provides access to general routing resources
Each slice has four outputs
  - Two registered outputs,
  - Two non-registered outputs
  - Two BUFTs associated with each CLB, accessible by all 16 CLB outputs

Carry logic runs vertically, up only
  - Two independent carry chains per CLB
Detailed Slice Structure (Xilinx)

- The next slides will discuss the slice features
  - LUTs
  - MUXF5, MUXF6, MUXF7, MUXF8 (only the F5 and F6 MUX are shown in the diagram)
  - Carry Logic
  - MULT_ANDs
  - Sequential Elements
Look-Up Tables (Xilinx)

- Combinatorial logic is stored in Look-Up Tables (LUTs)
  - Also called Function Generators (FGs)
  - Capacity is limited by number of inputs, not complexity
- Delay through the LUT is constant
Flexible Sequential Elements (Xilinx)

- Can be flip-flops or latches
- Two in each slice; eight in each CLB
- Inputs can come from LUTs or from an independent CLB input
- Separate set and reset controls
  - Can be synchronous or asynchronous
- All controls are shared within a slice
  - Control signals can be inverted locally within a slice
IOB Element (Xilinx)

- **Input path**
  - Two DDR registers
- **Output path**
  - Two DDR registers
  - Two 3-state enable DDR registers
- **Separate clocks and clock enables for I and O**
- **Set and reset signals are shared**
SelectIO Standard (Xilinx)

- Allows direct connections to external signals of varied voltages and thresholds
  - Optimizes the speed/noise tradeoff
  - Saves having to place interface components onto your board
- Differential signaling standards
  - LVDS, BLVDS, ULVDS
  - LDT
  - LVPECL
- Single-ended I/O standards
  - LVTTL, LVCMOS (3.3V, 2.5V, 1.8V, and 1.5V)
  - PCI-X at 133 MHz, PCI (3.3V at 33 MHz and 66 MHz)
  - GTL, GTLP
  - and more!
Digital Controlled Impedance (DCI)

- **DCI provides**
  - Output drivers that match the impedance of the traces
  - On-chip termination for receivers and transmitters

- **DCI advantages**
  - Improves signal integrity by eliminating stub reflections
  - Reduces board routing complexity and component count by eliminating external resistors
  - Internal feedback circuit eliminates the effects of temperature, voltage, and process variations
Block SelectRAM Resources (Xilinx)

- Up to 3.5 Mb of RAM in 18-kb blocks
  - Synchronous read and write
- True dual-port memory
  - Each port has synchronous read and write capability
  - Different clocks for each port
- Supports initial values
- Synchronous reset on output latches
- Supports parity bits
  - One parity bit per eight data bits
Dedicated Multiplier Blocks (Xilinx)

- 18-bit twos complement signed operation
- Optimized to implement multiply and accumulate functions
- Multipliers are physically located next to block SelectRAM™ memory

![Diagram of 18 x 18 Multiplier with Data_A and Data_B inputs and Output of 36 bits]
Nexys 2 Board ($99)
Logic Synthesis

• A process which takes a digital circuit description and translates it into a gate level design, optimized for a particular implementation technology.
Xilinx Design Process (Xilinx)

- **Step 1**: Design
  - Two design entry methods: HDL (Verilog or VHDL) or schematic drawings
- **Step 2**: Synthesize to create Netlist
  - Translates V, VHD, SCH files into an industry standard format EDIF file
- **Step 3**: Implement design (netlist)
  - Translate, Map, Place & Route
- **Step 4**: Configure FPGA
  - Download BIT file into FPGA
Xilinx Design Flow (Xilinx)

Plan & Budget

Create Code/Schematic

HDL RTL Simulation

Synthesize to create netlist

Implement

Translate

Map

Place & Route

Attain Timing Closure

Functional Simulation

Timing Simulation

Create Bit File
There are three ways to program an FPGA

- Through a PROM device
  - You will need to generate a file that the PROM programmer will understand
- Directly from the computer
  - Use the iMPACT configuration tool
    - (need JTAG)
  - Use USB connector
    - Digilent Adept tool
Decoder Tutorial Demo Example

Diagram showing a decoder with inputs sel0, sel1, and sel2, and outputs y0, y1, y2, y3, y4, y5, y6, and y7.
VHDL Source Code

```vhdl
library IEEE;
use IEEE.STD_LOGIC_1164.ALL;
use IEEE.STD_LOGIC_ARITH.ALL;
use IEEE.STD_LOGIC_UNSIGNED.ALL;

-- Uncomment the following lines to use the declarations that are
-- provided for instantiating Xilinx primitive components.
--library UNISIM;
--use UNISIM.VComponents.all;

entity decoder is
    Port ( sel : in std_logic_vector(2 downto 0);
y : out std_logic_vector(7 downto 0));
end decoder;

architecture Behavioral of decoder is
begin

    y <= "00000000" when sel = "000" else
        "00000010" when sel = "001" else
        "00000100" when sel = "010" else
        "00001000" when sel = "011" else
        "00010000" when sel = "100" else
        "00100000" when sel = "101" else
        "01000000" when sel = "110" else
        "10000000";

end Behavioral;
```

Synthesizing the Design

Synthesizing Unit <decoder>.
Related source file is "C:/ee574/nexsys2/decoder/decoder.vhd".
Found 1-of-8 decoder for signal <y>.
Summary:
   inferred 1 Decoder(s).
Unit <decoder> synthesized.
View the Schematic Representation
Decoder Implemented on FPGA
Zooming in on Logic Slice
Assigning Package Pins
New Implementation to Match Target
Verilog Background

- 1983: Gateway Design Automation released Verilog HDL “Verilog” and simulator
- 1985: Verilog enhanced version – “Verilog-XL”
- 1987: Verilog-XL becoming more popular (same year VHDL released as IEEE standard)
- 1989: Cadence bought Gateway
- 1995: Verilog adopted by IEEE as standard 1364
  - Verilog HDL, Verilog 1995
- 2001: First major revision (cleanup and enhancements)
  - Standard 1364-2001 (or Verilog 2001)
- System Verilog under development
Create Verilog Module
Module Created

- No separate entity and arch – just module
- Ports can be input, output, or inout
- Note: Verilog 2001 has alternative port style:
  - (input a, b, sel, output y);
Add Assign Statement

- Similar to VHDL conditional signal assignment – continuous assignment
- Exactly same hardware produced
Verilog - General Comments

- VHDL is like ADA and Pascal in style
  - Strongly typed – more robust
- Verilog is more like the ‘C’ language
- Verilog is case sensitive
- White space is OK (tabs, new lines, etc)
- Statements terminated with semicolon (;)
- Verilog statements between
  - module and endmodule
- Comments // single line and /* and */
Verilog Logic

• Four-value logic system
  • 0 – logic zero, or false condition
  • 1 – logic 1, or true condition
  • x, X – unknown logic value
  • z, Z - high-impedance state

• Number formats
  • b, B binary
  • d, D decimal (default)
  • h, H hexadecimal
  • o, O octal

• 16’H789A – 16-bit number in hex format
• 1’b0 – 1-bit
Verilog and VHDL – Reminder

• VHDL - like Pascal and Ada programming languages
• Verilog - more like ‘C’ programming language
• But remember they are Hardware Description Languages - They are NOT programming languages
  – FPGAs do NOT contain an hidden microprocessor or interpreter or memory that executes the VHDL or Verilog code
  – Synthesis tools prepare a hardware design that is inferred from the behavior described by the HDL
  – A bit stream is transferred to the programmable device to configure the device
  – No shortcuts! Need to understand combinational/sequential logic
• Uses subset of language for synthesis
• Check - could you design circuit from description?