PART I: Theory
WHAT IS AN FPGA?
Field-Programmable Gate Arrays

• A field-programmable gate array (FPGA) is an integrated circuit designed to be configured by a customer or a designer after manufacturing.

• In short, programmable circuit.

Image Courtesy: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4e/Xilinx_Spartan-3E_%28XC3S500E%29.jpg
Field-Programmable Gate Arrays

- **Logic blocks**
  - to implement combinational and sequential logic
- **Interconnect**
  - wires to connect inputs and outputs to logic blocks
- **I/O blocks**
  - special logic blocks at periphery of device for external connections

Slide Courtesy: [http://courses.cs.washington.edu/courses/cse467/00wi/lectures/ppt/FPGAIntro/FPGAIntro.ppt](http://courses.cs.washington.edu/courses/cse467/00wi/lectures/ppt/FPGAIntro/FPGAIntro.ppt)
Applications of FPGA

• Aerospace and Defense
  – Communications, Missiles, Mars Rovers
• ASIC Prototyping
• Consumer Electronics
  – Digital displays, digital camera
• Data Centers
  – Servers, Routers
• High Performance Computing
• ...

http://www.xilinx.com/training/fpga/fpga-field-programmable-gate-array.htm
Plan

1. The tool: Verilog HDL
2. Some theory: FPGA Design and Implementation
3. Some practice: Lab 0
FPGA DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION FUNDAMENTALS
FPGA Design Fundamentals

• Step 1 – Design
  – Know what it is that you want to implement, e.g. an adding machine, or a traffic controller
  – Module-level diagrams and interactions between modules
  – Control logic and state machine drawings
  – Understand how your FPGA design will interact with the physical world, e.g. Ethernet, VGA, LCD.
  – Plan **everything** out before writing a single line of code! Explain the plan to someone else.
FPGA Design Fundamentals

• Step 2 – Implementation
  – Translate your plan to source code!
  – Express each module in HDL source code
  – Connect the modules in hierarchical order like building LEGO blocks. You should end up with a single top-level file.
  – Use any text editor (even Notepad or Wordpad will do) as long as the file name ends with “.v”
FPGA Design Fundamentals

• Step 3 – Simulation
  – Simulation is the single most important debugging tool you will ever use in a FPGA design
  – You will have access to real-time debugging tools (e.g. chipScope) but simulation is far easier to find and fix the bugs.
FPGA Design Fundamentals

• Step 4 – Logic Synthesis
  – Once the bugs are out, a logic synthesis tool analyzes the design and generates a netlist with common cells available to the FPGA target
  – The netlist should be functionally equivalent to the original source code.
  – We will use ISE’s XST to synthesize the project
FPGA Design Fundamentals

• Step 5 – Technology Mapping
  – The synthesized netlist is mapped to the device-specific libraries.
  – The result is another netlist that’s closer to the final target device.
  – On ISE this is performed by NGDBUILD
FPGA Design Fundamentals

• Step 6 – Cell Placement
  – The cells instantiated by final netlist are placed in the FPGA layout, i.e. each cell is assigned a physical location on the target device.
  – Can be a time-consuming process depending on the size of the design and complexity of timing and physical constraints.
  – On ISE this process is done by the program MAP (i.e. map to physical location)
FPGA Design Fundamentals

• Step 7 – Route
  – Often referred to as “Place-and-Route” in combination with cell placement.
  – In this process, the placement tool determines how to connect (“route”) the cells in the device to match the netlist.
  – Can be a time-consuming process depending on the size of the design and complexity of timing and physical constraints.
  – Done by program PAR on ISE.
FPGA Design Fundamentals

• Step 8 – Bitstream Generation
  – A placed and routed design can be used to produce a programming file to program the FPGA.
  – The programming file is called a “bitstream.” It contains everything there is about how to configure the cells and connecting them.
  – Done by program BITGEN on ISE.
  – Now you have a “compiled” FPGA design.
Tools of Trade

• Text editor of choice

• Simulator
  – ISE Webpack provides ISIM
  – Alternatively use free Modelsim PE

• Synthesis
  – ISE Webpack provides XST
  – Alternatively use Synplify Pro (evaluation version)

• Map, Place-and-Route
  – ISE Webpack
PART II: Practice
EXAMPLE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION
Open the Xilinx ISE

- Click the ISE Design Suite 14.6 icon
- Or search for “project navigator” in the start menu
Create an ISE Project

1. Open ISE
2. Click on “New Project”
New Project Dialogue

- No spaces in the path!
- Choose “HDL” project
Device Properties

Make sure the fields match what you see here
Project Created

Now let’s add some source files!
Add Source Files

1. Click on “Add sources”
2. Select `combinational_gates_muxed.v`, `combinational_gates_muxed.ucf`
3. Make sure the file association is correct
New Source Files

- Alternatively if you want to write your own code, click on “New Source”
- Select “Verilog Module” then follow the instructions
Source Files

• .v files are Verilog source code
• .ucf files are *User Constraint Files*

UCF lists all the available pin mappings in the FPGA in the following format:

Net “your_signal_name<bit_index>” LOC = XX | IOSTANDARD = LVCMOS33; # More details about the pin

For example:

Net "sw<0>" LOC = T10 | IOSTANDARD = LVCMOS33; #Bank = 2, pin name = IO_L29N_GCLK2, Sch name = SW0
Add Testbench Code

1. Click on “Add sources” again

2. Select the combinational_gates_muxed_TB.v

3. Make sure the file association is correct
Create Testbench Code

- Alternatively if you want to write your own testbench, click on “New Source”
- Select “Verilog Test Fixture”
Create Testbench Code

• Select the module to test and then follow the instructions
Almost Ready for Simulation!

1. Switch to simulation view
2. Select ...TB.v from Hierarchy view
3. Right click on “Simulate Behavioral Model” in process view
4. Click on “Process Properties”
ISIM Process Properties

Uncheck “Run for Specified Time”
Our simulation is terminated by making a “$finish” system task call
Launch ISIM

- Right click on “Simulate Behavioral Model” again, this time choose “run all”
- ISIM will be launched
- ISIM is the simulation environment where you can dynamically debug the circuit, much like a software debugger
- Your main focus should be on the console window and the waveform window
To debug, you can add any signals to the waveform view by right click and select add.
Post Simulation Examination

Zoom in and out to get the best view of the waveform

Use these buttons to find the exact edges/transitions of signals

Shortcuts for running simulation
Ready for Synthesis

Switch back to implementation view if you haven’t already.

Double click on synthesis to start. You can also view the auto generated schematics here.
View Schematics

Select how the RTL/Tech Viewer behaves when it is initially invoked

Start with the Explorer Wizard

In this mode, the Explorer Wizard is the initial screen, and allows you to select the elements that you want to see on the initial schematic.

Start with a schematic of the top-level block

In this mode, the Explorer Wizard is bypassed and an initial schematic is created with only the top-level block displayed. You can then use the logic expansion capabilities of the Viewer to start expanding from the top-level block.

You can also change the startup mode by selecting Edit->Preferences under the RTL/Tech Viewer page.

Show this dialog on startup

OK
Double click on “Implement Design” and then “Generate Programming File”
Download Bitstream to FPGA

• By now you should have a top_module_name.bit(combinational_gate_muxed.bit) file generated in the project folder.
• You will now program the FPGA using this file.
• Click on “Configure Target Device” to open the Impact program.
Connect the board

Make sure the programming cable is connected to the machine.

The power source is selected as USB by the blue jumper.
ISE Impact

This screen is blank now because the boundary scan chain has not been initialized.

Make sure that the micro USB programming cable is connected to the Nexys3 board.

Click on this to initialize the chain.
Scan Chain Initialization

A properly initialized chain should contain a single FPGA (xc6slx16).

Assign the bit file to this FPGA

Do not assign any SPI flash programming files.

Click on the FPGA symbol to show the available options.
Double-click on the “Program” action to program the FPGA.

Wait for the programming to finish.
Play Time

• Did you see the rightmost LED light up?
  – If yes, the board is programmed!

• Can you use the switches to control the LED?
  – Study code to understand how this is done