

# APPLICATION OF DYNAMICALLY RECONFIGURABLE PROCESSORS IN DIGITAL SIGNAL PROCESSING

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**Abstract:** The paper describes a new approach to processor construction, which combines a general purpose processor and a program reconfigurable device, as well as its implementation in digital signal processing applications. Significant flexibility and adaptability of such a processor is obtained through the possibility of varying the components of the processor architecture. A simple change of architecture enables easy adaptation to various applications in which such processors are used. Furthermore, to achieve even greater functionality, a dynamic adjustment of the processor is enabled, by enabling the change of function of individual processor components without the need to turn the processor off. The functionality change itself is conducted in such a way that it is made in a single clock, which allows for a great flexibility of the processor, increases the functionality and enables simple implementation in various applications. Such processor architecture is broadly used in embedded computer systems for various multimedia, encryption and digital signal applications.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

If we look at the modern computer systems from the perspective of the processor embedded in such systems, we can roughly divide them into two basic groups: personal computers and server workstations, and embedded computers. The basic difference between these two computer systems is their processing power. PCs and server workstations are limited by the current technology, while the energy consumption or their price is not important. Contrary to that, for embedded computer systems the energy consumption and even the price of the computer systems are very important. Consequently, the processors used in personal computers are unsuitable for the construction of the majority of embedded systems. In order to reduce the price and energy consumption, embedded computers have simpler processors whose power is significantly reduced, which then reduces their price and energy consumption. Such processors mostly satisfy the requirements of embedded systems. If the need arises for solving more complex problems,

specialised devices are added which can improve the performance of the whole system, such as audio or video signal decoding devices and others. The downside of such additional devices is the increase in price and energy consumption of the whole system. Furthermore, the role of specialised devices is narrowly specialised, which renders them unused most of the time. The concept of this paper is to add a specialised device to the processors, which will be dynamically variable and functionally adaptable, thus enabling the implementation of such a device in a large number of applications, which will ultimately lead to a reduction in price and energy consumption of the whole system.

## 2 ARCHITECTURE

The processor architecture consists of a 32 bit RISC general purpose processor closely connected to a dynamically reconfigurable device. The overall architecture was tested and conducted on XILINX Spartan-3 FPGAs (Field-Programmable Gate Array).

The dynamically reconfigurable processor had to be adapted to the Spartan-3 architecture limitations. Figure 1 shows a block diagram of the dynamically reconfigurable device described in this paper. There are four major units which are characteristics of a dynamically reconfigurable processor: input block, output block, switching network and functional unit

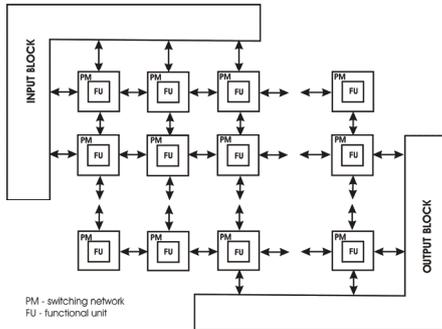


Figure 1: Block diagram of the dynamically reconfigurable device.

Due to the complexity of the entry-exit problem and different functionalities, the input and output blocks are separated. The purpose of the input and output blocks are data retrieval, which are then processed and the results stored. The switching network connects all the system components and its task is to provide the correct data flow through the whole system. Each block of the switching network is allocated to an appropriate functional block, with the purpose to perform various mathematical operations by which the appropriate functionality of the whole device is achieved. There are two basic types of functional blocks: multiplier and adder. Apart from the four basic components, the system requires three memory blocks: memory block for input data storage, memory block for result storage and memory block for registration of the variable device configuration. The input and output memory are separated in order to improve the system performance. Having only one memory would slow down the writing and reading of data, as it would require that data be both written into and read from the same memory within a single cycle.

The switching network controls the data flow within the dynamically reconfigurable structure. The alterable architecture of a switching network enables data distribution across the entire device. Figure 2 is a block diagram of a switching network. Each block of the switching network is attached a functional unit which is not a component of the switching network. The switching network block input consists of four inputs representing the links with four adjoining elements surrounding the switching block.

Each of the four inputs can be connected to one of the inputs in the functional unit through entry multiplexers.

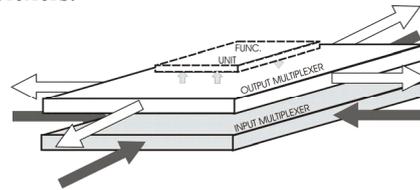


Figure 2: Block diagram of the switching network.

The central processing unit of a reconfigurable device consists of a functional unit with the task to process the data posted on its entries. During each clock the functional units process two new pieces of entry data and generate a result. The functional unit consists of two 16 bit inputs and one 16 bit output. The function performed by the functional unit is not unique, it can vary from one unit to the next. The analysis we had done before the development of the processor resulted in two basic blocks with which almost any function can be performed. The blocks are: functional unit for addition and functional unit for multiplication.

As its name suggests, the functional unit for addition performs the addition and subtraction of the input values. The inputs to the arithmetic block contain two devices for dual complement operations. The application of these devices results in the possibility to perform various combinations of addition and subtraction.

The functional unit for multiplication multiplies two input parameters. The B entry can be replaced with a constant, which enables multiplication of the A entry values with a constant value. The multiplication is done by multiplying two 16 bit data resulting in a 32 bit multiplication value. As the functional unit exit is 16 bit, result scaling device is added to the multiplier exit. Scaling is achieved by a right shift of the results i.e. only the selected 16 bits in a row are taken into consideration. The overall multiplication operation with scaling is known as shift multiplication. The basic purpose of the shift multiplication is conducting multiplication with numbers in the fixed comma format, where the shift is used to position the comma in both operands, in a way that will ensure that the commas in the operands are placed properly for the next operation.

### 3 PROGRAMMING

The dynamically reconfigurable device would not be functional without the possibility of programming. The functional blocks and switching networks have a variable component which can be programmed. The programming is done through a series of program blocks, connected into a chain. The exit from one block is connected to the entry to another. Once we are in the programming mode, a shift of the data in the program chain occurs with each clock. In order to program the whole device, we have to spend as many clocks as there are blocks. The Figure 3. represents a program chain.

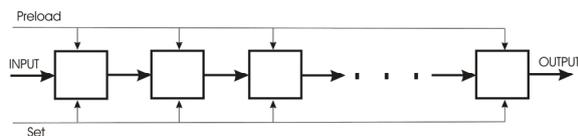


Figure 3: Programming chain.

The size of the program which is to be programmed depends on the size of the reconfigurable device. The  $8 \times 8$  element matrix requires 64 functional units and 64 switching networks, while programming of such a block requires 128 programming words. In order not to waste the time required for programming, one more register is added to the program block. This register is called the *preload* register for configuration loading. The real program chain consists of such preload registers. When the whole configuration is loaded into the program series for a certain clock, the configuration of the whole device changes so that the data from the preload register is transferred into the configuration register. Thereby, the function of the device will seemingly have changed within a single clock. While the configuration loading into the preload registers is in progress, the reconfigurable component can perform its current function without being hindered by the loading of the new configuration.

### 4 COMPUTATION EXAMPLES

To demonstrate the functionality and applicability of this type of architecture, we will analyse its application in two examples. The first example is the calculation of a simple function:

$$y = (a + b) \times c - d .$$

This example is used to explain the basic principles of how the device functions. The

dynamically reconfigurable device consists of a single input and a single output block, three functional units, two adders and one multiplier. To keep the construction simple, we will not use a larger number of elements. First comes the adder, then the multiplier and then the other adder. The input block is located on the entry to the device, and the output on the exit from the block.

The program chain corresponds to the element layout, therefore the chain begins with the input block, which is followed by the adder, multiplier, adder and ends in the output block. The input block sends the data through the *dout\_0* exit, parameter *a*, *dout\_1* parameter *b*, *dout\_2* parameter *c* and *dout\_4* parameter *d*. In the first addition block, the value  $a + b$  is calculated. After that, the result of the  $a + b$  addition is routed into the multiplier, where it is multiplied by the *c* parameter value. The result of the multiplication is routed to the other adder, where it is added the  $-d$  parameter value. The result obtained in the second adder is stored in the output block.

The first step when programming the reconfigurable device is setting the data route delay in a way that the data arrival to the function blocks is synchronised. The configuration of the multiplier ensures that the *A* and *B* entry values are multiplied and the scaling of results is not necessary. It is also specified that the *b* parameter has to be delayed by one clock. The delay is necessary in order to achieve synchronisation. Since the *a*, *b* and *c* parameters leave the exit block at the same time, the *c* parameter reaches the multiplier before the sum of  $a + b$ . It is for that reason that the *c* parameter is purposefully delayed by one clock. The switching matrix is programmed so that it allows the signal *in\_w* to enter through the *A entry* of the functional unit, while the *in\_s* signal enters through the *B entry*. The multiplication results are sent to *out\_s* and *out\_n*.

Finally, the second adder is configured in a way that the *B entry* of the functional unit is negated and added to the *A entry* value. There are no *A entry* delays, while the *B entry* is delayed by two clocks. The reason for the delay is the same as in multiplying. The *B entry* contains the result of the  $(a + b) \times c$  operation, which required two clocks. The switching matrix will take the *A parameter* from the *in\_i* input, and the *B parameter* from the *in\_s* input. The result is sent to the *out\_s* output. The final result and all the inter-results from every block will come to the exit block. In order to synchronise the final results and the intermediate results, additional delay was added on the exit, which synchronises the data upload into the output block.

## 5 YUV-RGB CONVERSION

For the conversion of YUV to RGB colours, we used the basic formation of the dynamically reconfigurable device. The basic idea of applying the reconfigurable device is the use of the block of alternated  $N \times M$  functional units. Figure 4 represents such a dynamically reconfigurable device. We used a  $3 \times 3$  element block for the colour conversion. The YUV to RGB conversion itself represents the final phase of most of image and video compression algorithms. The conversion process is defined by the following formulas

$$\begin{aligned} R &= Y + 1.4 \cdot V \\ G &= Y - 0.35 \cdot U - 0.7 \cdot V \\ B &= Y - 1.7 \cdot U \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

By introducing:

$$r = 0.7 \cdot V \quad q = 0.35 \cdot U \quad (2)$$

into the arithmetic expressions (1) we will get

$$\begin{aligned} R &= Y + 2 \cdot r \\ G &= Y - q - r \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

$$B = Y - 4.9 \cdot q$$

The formulas obtained in (3) were used for the implementation of YUV-RGB conversion on a dynamically reconfigurable device. Figure 4 represents the calculation process within the blocks. To provide simpler orientation, we will number the blocks by columns and rows. The first block is marked (1,1) and the last (3,3). Let's start from the multiplier block (1,2), which calculates the  $q$  value by multiplying the input value with the constant. The result is sent to the (1,3) and (1,1) blocks. In the (1,3) block, the  $q$  value is shifted left by one, which corresponds the multiplication by two, and added the  $Y$  value, resulting in the  $R$  component. In the (1,1) block, the  $q$  value is subtracted from the  $Y$  component and this value is sent to the (2,2) block. In the (1,2) block, the  $r$  constant is calculated and sent to the (2,2) block. The input values are subtracted in the (2,2) block, resulting in  $Y - q - r$ , which is the  $G$  component. In the (2,3) block, the forwarded value  $r$  is multiplied by 4.9 and the result is sent to the (3,3) block, which at one entry has a  $Y$  and on the other  $4.9 \cdot q$  value, which, when subtracted, results in the  $B$  component. The conversion result is provided on exit, on every clock with the initial delay of four clocks. The colour conversion on a hypothetical processor according to expressions (2) and (3) requires: Three readings from the memory, one addition, three subtractions, four multiplications and three memory storages. The algorithm thus derived on a hypothetical processor

requires 14 clocks. Unlike the hypothetical processor, the dynamically reconfigurable processor will provide the result in a single clock with the initial delay of four clocks. As the colour conversion process always includes entire images, and not only a single point, we can say that the conversion lasts no longer than a single clock.

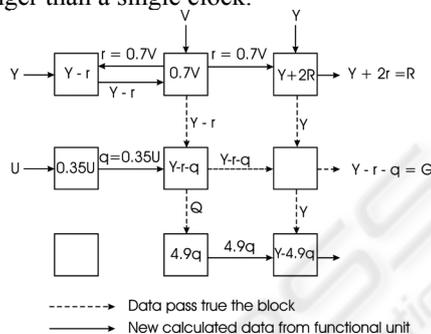


Figure 4: Calculation process within the blocks for YUV-RGB colour conversion.

## 6 CONCLUSION

The two simple examples show that the suggested architecture of a dynamically reconfigurable processor can be broadly implemented in digital signal processing systems. Instead of adding a range of specialised devices, it is simpler and easier to use a dynamically reconfigurable processor, which by a simple alteration of functionality can replace several specialised devices, thus reducing the price and energy consumption of the whole system. We will direct our further efforts to the improvement and simplification of the processor architecture, development of complex applications on such a processor and its application in solving problems in real systems, such as audio and video signal decoding systems, cryptographic systems and many others.

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