Designing for Acceleration: Methodologies for Creating Reconfigurable Applications

Presented By

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Topics

> Partial Reconfiguration Technology Review

> SDAccel and Dynamic Platforms

> Future Enhancements
Partial Reconfiguration
Silicon and Software Technology
Partial Reconfiguration is mainstream

> **In production since 2010**
  >> Starting with Virtex-4, through UltraScale+
  >> Continuous silicon improvements with each generation
  >> Major advancement with the introduction of Vivado

> **System Flexibility**
  >> Swap functions on the fly
  >> Enables hardware acceleration platforms
  >> Perform remote updates while system is operational

> **Cost and Size Reduction**
  >> Time-multiplexing hardware requires a smaller FPGA
  >> Reduces board space
  >> Minimizes bitstream storage
Reconfigurable granularity in UltraScale/+ 

- Reconfiguration tiles for core fabric based on shared interconnect
  - Base regions combined two columns of resources with single INT
  - Bitstream granularity is larger, matching clock region height

- IO and special elements have coarser rules, shared with column of CLBs
  - IO and clocks: 1 bank
  - Transceivers: 1 quad
  - PCIe, CMAC, Interlaken: 1 clock region

CLB–BRAM  CLB–DSP  CLB–CLB

60 CLB Tiles

PLL 1
PLL 2
BFUG
MMCM

60 Interconnect Tiles

52 IOB

XiPhy

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Dedicated silicon features provide design safety

> Dedicated initialization for reconfigured regions
  >> Reconfigured region is masked and receives GSR for all synchronous elements in partial bitstream
  >> Behaves just like the initial configuration of the device

> Encryption and Compression natively supported
  >> Authentication is also supported for Zynq SoCs

> CRC checking for partial bitstreams
  >> Standard single CRC at the end of a partial bitstream can report errors
  >> Per-frame CRC feature injects CRC checks at intervals in partial bitstream
    – Failures are found and reported before bad frames are loaded into the device
Glitchless transitions and routing flexibility

> Static routes pass through reconfigurable regions without disruption
  >> Routing structure and global controls designed for glitchless static operation

> Expanded routing regions provide solution flexibility
  >> Alleviates congestion near corners and edges
Capable Vivado toolset for compilation

> **Major software overhaul for PR completed in 2013**
  >> PR included in all paid editions and kits since 2017

> **Technology improvements for performance and efficiency**
  >> Example: Partition Pins
    - No overhead between static and dynamic logic
    - Vivado optimized location and distribution

> **Partial Reconfiguration IP helps users easily build up designs**
  >> Partial bitstream delivery management
  >> AXI transitional behavior
  >> Logical isolation
  >> Version compatibility

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Evolution of SDAccel Acceleration Platforms
SDAccel software development environment

**Source code**
- Host Code
  - C/C++
  - Xilinx Runtime API / OpenCL API
  - GCC
- Kernel
  - OpenCL
  - C/C++
  - RTL
  - xocc

**Emulation & Debug**
- Executable
- xclbin

**Runtime**
- OpenCL
- Xilinx Runtime
- Drivers
- Shell

**Platform**
- x86
- PCIe
- Pre-existing Platform
  - FPGA
  - Shell
  - Kernels

**Application Development**

**Optimization / Debug**

**Execution with pre-existing shell**
(shell wraps around developer design and establishes a thin communication layer for the drivers)

**Board Deployment**
(on the cloud or on premises)
What is a platform?

> A platform is the hardware design which operates on an accelerator board’s FPGA to enable integration of the board and host computer with the user’s accelerator (kernel) logic
  >> Think “Device Support Archive”, not just its “shell”

> Examples of platform content:
  >> Persistent PCI Express link to the host computer
  >> DMA controller and interconnect for fast memory access
  >> Memory controllers for DDR4 SDRAM global memory
  >> Security and board management features
  >> A Partial Reconfiguration-enabled design and floorplan

> In most acceleration platforms, a small static region (shell) provides this core functionality while a large reconfigurable region is available for user kernels
  >> The platform also implements the bridging between the two regions
In static logic, basic infrastructure to connect to the host machine remains up during partial reconfiguration of kernels.

PCI Express link:
- DMA controller and memory-mapped interconnect for fast data path & global memory access.
- DDR memory controller(s) for high-capacity global memory.

A reconfigurable partition which can be reprogrammed without disrupting the static logic.

Large logical region for kernels – the user's accelerator logic.
Where it started
Virtex-7 690T platform with Partial Reconfiguration

- Natural static/PR partitioning and simple device floorplan
- Relatively large rectangular dynamic region
- Single memory controller in the shell
- A good starting point, but not much bandwidth
The first UltraScale platform
Kintex UltraScale KU060 platform with Partial Reconfiguration

> Second memory controller and DDR4 for more bandwidth
> But awkward memory controller locations
> Shell is relatively large for the device
Larger SSI device, same shell
Kintex UltraScale KU115 platform with Partial Reconfiguration

> Almost the same platform as the KU060 variant, on larger device
> Second SLR offered >2x the available area for kernels
> But unmanaged SLR crossings proved problematic
> Still 2 DDR4 channels, despite enough HPIO banks for 4 channels
A new kind of platform
Kintex UltraScale KU115 platform with Expanded PR

- First Xilinx-built board for SDAccel
- Four DDR4 memory controllers for 2x bandwidth
- ... but no good floorplan with the standard platform approach
- Adopted a new approach: Expanded Partial Reconfiguration
  - Static shell is much smaller
  - Distributed interconnect better manages SLR crossings
  - Dynamic region for kernels now a subset of the reconfigurable module
Pushing the limits
Virtex UltraScale+ VU9P platform with **Expanded** PR

> Same approach as in KU115-based expanded PR platform
> Now with 3 SLRs and more interconnect logic
> But several inefficiencies becoming more prominent
  >> Just too much static logic for simple use cases
  >> Automatic placement of kernels sometimes inconsistent with manually-placed platform infrastructure
  >> Still no variability of platform contents … DIMMs?, debug IP?, etc.
The reality

> VU9P platform with Expanded Partial Reconfiguration is a powerful, full-featured platform

> And maybe it is perfect for the user
  >> Exactly the right number of DDR4 memory channels vs. free fabric resources
  >> Just the right performance tuning
  >> Works perfectly with user kernels (no debug necessary)
  >> Performance profiling taps are in the right places
  >> Ideal logic placement for kernels relative to platform interconnect

> But if not…
  >> For a different number of DDR4 channels: new platform
  >> For different performance tuning / memory parameters: new platform
  >> Any issues requiring debug IP inserted at the problematic location: new platform
  >> Modified performance profiling tap points: new platform
  >> Different interconnect topology or for required kernel placement: new platform
A better way

- Platform logic in the reconfigurable module was fixed for every kernel build...
A better way

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> ...leading to wasted FPGA area, power, and Vivado runtime when unused
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> ...then the platform infrastructure could best suit the kernels for every build, automatically
A better way – Dynamic Platforms

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> But if the entire dynamic region – not just the user kernels – could be modified by SDx…
> …then the platform infrastructure could best suit the kernels for every build, automatically
> And we’d have the framework for SDx to dynamically build up just what the user needs
Memory subsystem Hierarchical IP

> Encapsulate and abstract DDR-based memory resources and associated data-interconnect instances
  >> Data-driven dynamic generation of interconnect and MIG instances based on application use

> Simplify dynamic region design
  >> Single IP instance versus hand constructed network of SmartConnect and MIG instances

> Simplify linking of kernels
  >> Resource based model of platform memory
  >> Resource-Connection API hides IP-specific details of attaching Kernel’s AXI interface to memory subsystem
Board-driven DDR resources

> What DDR resources are available in the platform?
  >> Avoid manual configuration specified by each DSA developer

> Board infrastructure provides a better experience for DSA developer
  >> Xilinx standard approach for board modeling
  >> Board components document which DDR memory resources are available
  >> Board infrastructure presets can be embedded in the board definition to provide a working configuration for the memory controller IPs
> AXI Interfaces advertise the set of available DDR memory resources within the memory subsystem to IPI’s address editor

   >> Dynamic region memory controllers not actually instantiated at this point

   >> Only create memory controllers for the memory resources that actually get mapped into Kernel’s address space
SLR automation

- FaaS platforms commonly use SLR-based devices
  - Sometimes a kernel doesn’t reside in the same SLR as the memory bank(s) it accesses

- Memory Subsystem automates SLR crossings and IPI SLR automation provides a simple way for the user to allocate kernels to SLR
  - Memory Subsystem samples IPI’s SLR annotations to determine how to apply SLR crossing resources
  - SDx ‘software developer’ can avoid low level details of XDC placement constraints and microarchitectural options for SLR timing pipes
Only build what you need
Future Enhancements for Partial Reconfiguration and Platform Design
Dynamic Shell

> Support multiple platforms on a single shell

> Example
  >> Locked static design
  >> Dynamic shell with specific features (e.g. DMA)
  >> Multiple workloads for this shell

> New shell features loaded without changing static
  >> New dynamic shells can have:
    - Different sizes and floorplans
    - Different features
    - Different interfaces to workload space
    - Optimized for user application
  >> Workloads must be compatible with a specific dynamic shell
    - Bitstream manager must keep track of current state
The next generation: ACAP

> **Hardened Memory Controllers + DDRIO**
  >> Allows DDR memory controllers to remain active while fabric is reconfigured
  >> Moving DDRIO out of fabric improves ease of PR floorplanning

> **Hardened PCIe + DMA**
  >> PCIe interface can be brought into operation with minimal programming

> **NoC Ports in Fabric**
  >> High bandwidth datapath to PMC for PR

> **Configuration Performance Increase**
  >> Max bandwidth 8X faster than Zynq US+ MPSoC (6.4GByte/sec)*
  >> Capable of reconfiguring 1M logic cells in under 8ms

* When using an external interface such as PCIe, DDR memory, etc.
Summary

Robust Silicon Technology
> Decades of investment coupled with extensive validation of dynamic configuration solutions

Evolution of Platform Development
> Steadily increasing optimization for dynamic acceleration

Exciting Future Ahead
> Enhanced flexibility for the most efficient use of silicon