Introduzione all'utilizzo di FPGA in esperimenti di Fisica

Introduzione alle Tecniche di Trigger e Data Acquisition in Esperimenti di Fisica

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Trigger systems for High Energy Physics experiments

HEP event rate in a collider

- LHC nominal luminosity: 10³⁴ cm⁻² s⁻¹
- LHC proton-proton inelastic cross section: ~90 mb
- Cross section for most of the SM processes: ~1 fb



- LHC inelastic event rate at nominal luminosity: luminosity x cross section = $10^{34}x90x10^{-3}x10^{-24} = 900$ million/s
- SM events rate: 10³⁴x1x10⁻¹⁵x10⁻²⁴ = 10⁻⁵ = 1 every 2.8 hours

HEP data rate

- LHC experiments:
 - Data size for a typical event up to ~MB per Bunch Crossing (ATLAS, CMS)
 - Total data rate before selection: ~TB/s
- Two possibilities:
 - Record all the produced event (if you can, then select and study them offline)
 - Record only the interesting events using a real-time system
- A trigger system allows to distinguish interesting signals from background, and to select rare events
- Trigger-able events in HEP: electrons, gamma, muons, jets, ...
 - Trigger conditions: geometrical, energy or p_T cut, topological selection, ...
- Data flow: Beam Crossing
 Detector
 Trigger
 Data Acquisition
 Storage

HEP Trigger Parameters

- Collision frequency: 40 MHz for LHC (multiple events originated at each collision)
- Event size: ~1 MB for ATLAS or CMS
- Data acquisition write bandwidth: ~1 kHz for ATLAS/CMS
- Latency: time needed to take the hardware trigger decision (few µs for ATLAS/CMS)
- Efficiency: % of accepted interesting events (turn-on curve)



- Rejection: % of rejected not-interesting events
- Dead-time: % of time the trigger system cannot process events (for failures, out-ofmemory states, ...). Dead-time causes inefficiency
- Synchronisation: keeping track of the event identifier during the full triggering process. Loss of sync causes inefficiency

The Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN

https://hilumilhc.web.cern.ch/content/hl-lhc-project



- 27 km p-p circular accelerator
- 2835 + 2835 bunches in the LHC ring
- 10¹¹ protons/bunch
- 40 MHz collision rate
- Most of the interesting events are rare



Readout channels: ~90 millions (ATLAS and CMS), ~1 million (LHCb and ALICE)

Increasing luminosity impact on LHC experiments

- High luminosity is needed to achieve physics goals
- The experiment has to stand the Run4 foreseen peak luminosity of 7.5 x 10³⁴ cm⁻² s⁻¹
 - high pile-up ~200 collisions/crossing for Run4
 - high radiation levels, up to ~10¹⁶ neq/cm², 10
 MGy
- Requirements:
 - maintain good physics performances in the challenging environment
 - keep acceptable trigger rate for low p_T threshold
 - mitigate pile-up up to high η





Pipeline processing in HEP trigger



- One collision every Bunch Crossing (25 ns)
- BCn represents the data of the nth Bunch Crossing
- Each step is a different operation made on the BC data to perform the trigger
- Selection process in this example takes 40 steps
- In this example trigger processing rate 40 MHz (1 μs trigger latency)

ATLAS Run3 trigger system

- The Level-1 trigger:
 - hardware system, custom-made electronics
 - Low granularity: works on a subset of information from the calorimeter and muon detectors
 - Low latency: decision $\sim 2.5 \mu s$ after the collision
 - Pipeline storage: the selected event is retrieved from pipelined buffers
 - Maximum output event rate: 100 kHz
- The High Level Trigger (HLT):
 - Software based trigger, farm of CPUs
 - Refines the selection of the Level-1 trigger
 - Detailed analysis of the detectors full granular information
 - Maximum output event rate: 1 kHz
 - The reconstructed events are passed to the data storage system for offline analysis





ATLAS Run4 Trigger and DAQ

- Calorimeters and muons front-end full granularity readout at 40 MHz
- Level-0 hardware trigger with an output rate of 1 MHz, Level-0 readout latency is 10 µs
- Global event processor replaces the Run3 L1Topo and integrates topological functions with additional selection algorithms using information from muons and calorimeters
- Detectors readout based on FELIX system
- FPGA-based boards off-detector, on-detector where possible
- Possible hardware accelerator system for tracking at the Event Filter
- Goal of better e, γ, τ, jet identification and measurement, at hardware and software trigger levels and offline
- Event Filter output rate up to 10 kHz



ATLAS Run4 TDAQ parameters

- About 100 million detector channels
- L0 output rate: 1 MHz
- L0 latency: 10 µs
- HLT output rate: 10 kHz
- Expected event size ~4.5 MB
- HLT out ~40 GB/s
- L0 hardware: ATCA FPGA-based boards, each board equipped with hundreds of ~10 Gb/s links, SoC FPGA for slow control and monitoring
- Readout hardware: new FELIX board with double PCIe bandwidth (PCIe gen4), 25 Gb/s links
- HLT hardware: CPU-based farm with thousands of servers, each one equipped with 25 Gb/s links
 - hardware accelerators (heterogeneous CPU/GPU/ FPGA commodity processors) to reduce the number of servers and to reduce power consumption

Flow of the physics goals through the hardware systems



FELIX readout prototype board







The First Level Muon Trigger in the Barrel region of the ATLAS experiment



ATLAS public web page ATLAS public results web page

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ATLAS/Phase-II TDAQ Upgrade TDP

Run3 Level-1 muon trigger in the barrel region

- Muon detector: Resistive Plate Chamber (RPC). A hit signal is generated when a muon crosses the detector gas gap
- Every 25 ns the trigger system looks for muon hit coincidences of three concentric RPC stations
- Low-p_T trigger (< 10 GeV) makes use of the two BM stations
- High-p_T trigger (> 10 GeV) requires an additional confirmation on the BO station
- RPC detector coverage is limited to 74% because of the ATLAS mechanical support structures (toroid ribs in small sectors of BM, toroid feet in the lower part of the barrel)



Run4 Level-0 Muon Trigger in the Barrel Region

- ATLAS Run4 upgrade: 2026-2028
- LHC Run-4: 2029-...
- Install additional RPC layer in the Barrel inner region to increase the current detector coverage
- Perform the trigger coincidence logic in 9 RPC layers
- Trigger coverage can increase from ~74% to ~96%



Barrel Muon trigger electronics upgrade



AI Level-0 muon trigger for ATLAS experiment

slide from S.Giagu

ULTRAFAST CNN ON FPGAS FOR THE ATLAS LEVEL-0 RPC MUON TRIGGER @HL-LHC

Goal: accurately reconstruct the momentum and angle of the muon track from the RPC detector hit information **in less than 400ns** (3 orders of magnitude faster than fastest AI models on CPUs and GPUs)

Latency and FPGA resource occupancy are in a trade-off relationship, while AI model performance strongly depends on the neural network scale



Strategy: muon identification and reconstruction via Convolutional Neural Network + multi-stage Al model compression and simplification based on aggressive quantisation and knowledge transfer techniques to avoid degradation of physics performances



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What is an FPGA?

- Field Programmable Gate Array:
 - Field programmable: can be programmed by the user
 - Gate array: matrix of logic gates
- The internal logic is programmable:
 - Programmable I/O blocks
 - Matrix of user programmable logic blocks
 - Programmable network connecting the logic blocks
 - Clock trees
- One logic block is made of:
 - Combinatorial logic (LUT-RAM)
 - Sequential logic (flip-flops)
- Can contain several specific function blocks



What's inside an FPGA?

- I/O standard blocks (~100 to ~1000 IOs, input/output speed up to ~1Gb/s)
- I/O serialiser/deserialiser blocks (0 to ~100, transmission speed 1 Gb/s to 30 Gb/s)
- Programmable logic blocks (~10k to ~5M)
- DSP (Digital Signal Processing) blocks (~10 to ~15k)
- Clock multipliers and clock generators blocks (a few)
- RAM (~100 kB to ~500 MB)
- Memory interface controllers
- Ethernet interface
- PCl interface
- Analog functions (ADC)
- ARM processors (up to quad-core)
- Artificial Intelligence engines



Example of a (complex) FPGA

AMD-Xilinx Versal ACAP (Adaptive Compute Acceleration Platform)



FPGA technology

- Different possible ways to implement the FPGA programmable logic:
 - SRAM, antifuse, flash, EEPROM, ...
 - SRAM technology is currently the most commonly used

- Chip transistor size (CMOS technology):
 - FPGA (AMD-Xilinx): from 28 nm (lower cost) down to 7 nm (more expensive)
 - CPU: 10 nm Intel, 7nm AMD, 3nm Apple (TSMC manufacturing company)
 - GPU: 12 nm (Nvidia)

Why FPGA for HEP trigger?

- HEP experiments are using FPGA since many years
- Future hardware-based trigger systems are more and more FPGA based:
 - High number of I/O transceivers (>50 Gb/s), used to receive the incoming detector data (many channels)
 - High level of complexity, allow to perform complex algorithms in real time and low latency
 - High level of flexibility: peak finding, pattern recognition, track finding, clustering/energy summing, sorting, topological algorithms, control system, fast signal merging, neural networks and Artificial Intelligence based algorithms
 - Upgradable logic, very useful to change/upgrade the algorithms and to adapt to new physics requirements

Main FPGA companies

FPGA market shares in 2019



- AMD (SRAM technology, ex-Xilinx acquired by AMD in 2017 for 35 billion\$)
- Intel (SRAM technology, ex-Altera acquired by Intel in 2015 for 17 billion\$)
- Microchip (anti-fuse and flash, low power low cost)
- Lattice (SRAM and flash, low power mixed signals)



FPGA market



FPGA vs. ASIC

	FPGA	ASIC
Internal circuitry	Reconfigurable	Permanent
Learning curve	Easy 🙂	Difficult 😕
Development time	Small 🙂	High 😕
Power consumption	Less optimised 😕	Very optimised 🙂
Maximum clock frequency	Lower 😕	High 🙂
Analog logic	Limited	Not limited
Suitable for upgradable applications	Yes 🙂	No 😕
Cost	Small for few devices	Small for many devices

- FPGA vs CPU:
 - CPU: software instructions are executed in sequence, parallelism achievable with multiple cores
 - FPGA: intrinsically parallel, many concurrent process run independently
 - Some FPGA models host multi core processors for maximum flexibility

FPGA possible applications

- Data Centres: video and image processing, speech recognition, cryptography, computational storage, database and data analytics, financial technology, high performance computing, network acceleration
- Communications: 5G wireless, wired and wireless communications
- Industry: aerospace, automotive, broadcast, consumer electronics, emulation, prototyping, medical, test and measurement
- Compute acceleration
- Artificial intelligence acceleration
- High Energy Physics





HEP and FPGA summary

- HEP trigger systems need to face increasing detector data bandwidths and challenging event selection requests (~Tb/s detector data down to ~Mb/s permanent storage)
- Moving complexity to off-detector electronics, keep detector frontend electronics as simple as possible, raw data sent to the offdetector trigger system
- First level trigger systems mostly (not always) based on FPGA boards:
 - high flexibility, high IO bandwidth
 - different algorithms can run on the same board, algorithms can adapt/evolve over time
- Higher level trigger systems mostly based on CPU farms with hardware accelerators (GPU or FPGA)
 - hardware accelerators allow to reduce the number of servers and power
 - high performance network needed for servers interconnectivity
 - FPGAs/GPUs hardware/software moving towards Al







Intel acquired Altera FPGA company in 2015 for 17 billion\$

AMD acquired Xilinx FPGA company in 2017 for 35 billion\$

FPGA implementation workflow

example with AMD-Xilinx Vivado software

FPGA inside look

- Many different FPGA models on the market with programmable logic, some with processor cores and AI engines logic
- Let's look at the AMD-Xilinx Kintex-7 family, medium complexity FPGA family, no processors and no Al
- Package size: (2.3 x 2.3) cm² to (3.5 x 3.5) cm²
- Medium cost FPGA (150€ to 5000€) depending on the device size, speed grade, working temperature range, voltage
- Biggest device has: ~500k logic cells (corresponding to millions of transistors), ~600k flip-flops, ~7MB distributed RAM, ~35 MB block RAM, ~2k DSP slices, 10 clock multipliers, 1 ADC, 1 PCI block module, 500 user I/O pins (max speed 1.3 Gb/s), 32 high speed transceiver (12.5 Gb/s)
- Higher performances FPGA families also available, with much more resources, and at a much higher cost (more than 50 k€)



FPGA internal blocks



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Programmable logic blocks

- A programmable logic block of a Xilinx Kintex-7 FPGA is made of:
 - 4 SRAM LUT (5-bit address)
 - 3 MUXes (2 in 1 out)
 - 1 CARRY logic block (useful to perform arithmetics operations like adders, ...)
 - 8 flip-flops



Hardware Description Languages

- Describe the behaviour of electronic circuits, most commonly digital logic
- Main languages used: VHDL and Verilog
- Simulator programs allow to verify the correctness of the HDL logic
- Usage of C++ or similar languages lately possible (in combination with VHDL/Verilog or not), useful for FPGAs with embedded processors, CPU interfaces and AI cores

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```
entity bcid_counter is
    port (
        reset : in std_logic;
        clock40 : in std_logic;
        BCID : out std_logic_vector(11 downto 0);
    );
end bcid_counter;
```

architecture RTL of bcid_counter is

begin

```
counter_logic : process(clock40)
begin
    if rising_edge(clock40) then
        if reset = '1' then
            BCID <= (others => '0');
        else
            BCID <= BCID + 1;
        end if;
    end if;
end process;</pre>
```

end RTL;

RTL analysis

• Register Transfer Level analysis translates the HDL code into a digital circuit schema



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RTL analysis logic elements

• Logic elements used are generic, independent from the FPGA chosen family



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Synthesis

 Translates the analysed circuit into an equivalent circuit that uses the chosen FPGA logic blocks

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Synthesis logic blocks

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Implementation

• Performs the final step: FPGA routing (logic block placement and interconnections) and checks the circuit timing. Logic can be changed/optimised during this process.

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Implementation result

• The circuit schema is changed if necessary, to achieve correct timing and taking into consideration the final cell placement.



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Implementation report

• A detailed report shows all implementation steps details and the FPGA resource usage (and the errors/warnings, if any) including timing results and power estimate.

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Implemented design I/O

 I/O signals can be automatically or manually assigned to the FPGA pins (and their voltage logic levels).

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Implemented design placement & routing view

Detailed view of the FPGA logic cells used

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Firmware file generation and FPGA programming

- If FPGA implementation was successful we can proceed with the firmware file generation
- Firmware file contains the FPGA programmable logic implementation represented by the used logic
- At power-up the FPGA does not have any logic, until the firmware file is uploaded into the FPGA configuration memory
- Firmware file can be uploaded from a computer via USB/JTAG or from an external flash memory at boot-up.

Fine!