EECE-4740 Advanced VHDL and FPGA Design
Lecture 1

Field Programmable Gate Arrays (FPGAs)

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Overview

- FPGA Devices
  - ASIC vs. FPGA
  - FPGA architecture
- FPGA Design Flow
  - Synthesis
  - Place
  - Route

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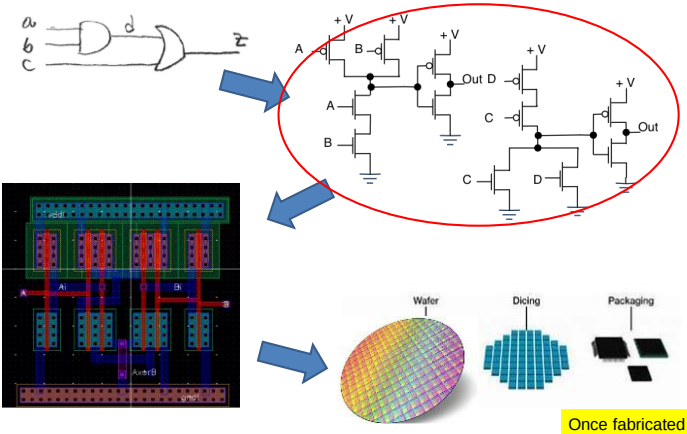
Traditional CMOS Circuits
(think of application specific integrated circuits, ASICs)



Once fabricated cannot be changed!

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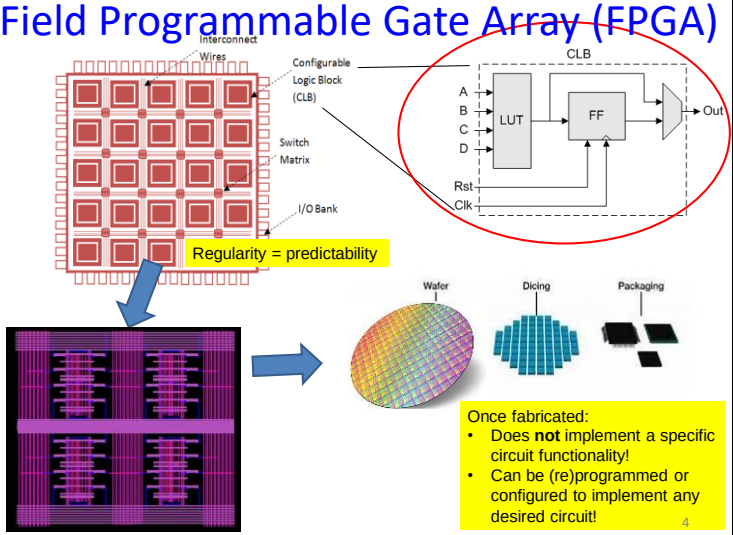
Field Programmable Gate Array (FPGA)



Regularity = predictability

Once fabricated:
- Does **not** implement a specific circuit functionality!
- Can be (re)programmed or configured to implement any desired circuit!

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ASIC vs. FPGA

ASIC
Application **S**pecific
Integrated **C**ircuit

- designed all the way from behavioral description to physical layout
- designs must be sent for expensive and time consuming fabrication in semiconductor foundry

FPGA
Field **P**rogrammable
Gate **A**rray

- no physical layout design; design ends with a bitstream used to configure a device
- bought off the shelf and reconfigured by designers themselves

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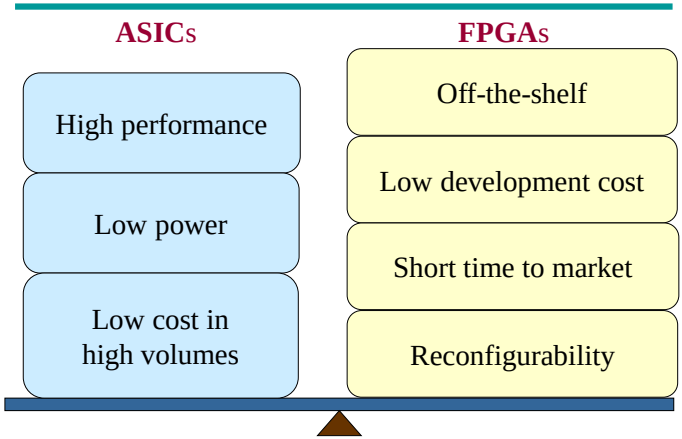
Which way to go?



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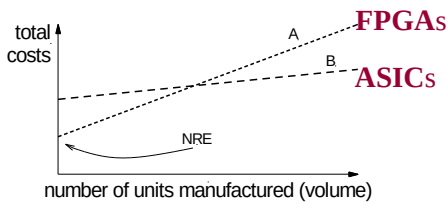
Why FPGAs?

- Custom ICs are very expensive to develop, and delay introduction of product to market (time to market) because of increased design time.
- Note: need to worry about two kinds of costs:
  - 1. cost of development, called non-recurring engineering (NRE)
  - 2. cost of manufacture
- A tradeoff usually exists between NRE cost and manufacturing costs



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Applications of FPGAs

- Implementation of random logic
  - easier changes at system-level (one device is modified)
  - can eliminate need for full-custom chips
- Prototyping
  - ensemble of gate arrays used to emulate a circuit to be manufactured
  - get more/better/faster debugging done than possible with simulation
- Reconfigurable hardware
  - one hardware block used to implement more than one function
  - functions must be mutually-exclusive in time
  - can greatly reduce cost while enhancing flexibility
- Special-purpose computation engines
  - hardware dedicated to solving one problem (or class of problems)
  - accelerators attached to general-purpose computers

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Applications of FPGAs

- Early on, used to serve as "glue logic" and for prototyping. Now? Everywhere!
  - Communications, software-defined radio, digital signal processing, ASIC prototyping, computer hardware emulation, medical imaging, computer vision, automotive, speech recognition, cryptography, bioinformatics, financial, bitcoin, …
  - https://www.intel.com/content/www/us/en/industries/overview.html
  - https://www.xilinx.com/applications.html
  - https://www.xilinx.com/about/customer-innovation/aerospace-and-defense/mars-exploration-rovers.html
  - HW accelerators in datacenter servers (Intel purchased Altera for $16 billion, AMD purchased Xilinx for $35 billion).

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Major FPGA Vendors

SRAM-based FPGAs

- **Altera Corp. ($16B Intel 2015)**
- **Xilinx Inc. ($30B AMD 2020)**

} **Share about 90% of the market**

- Atmel ($3.6B Microchip 2016)
- Lattice Semiconductor

Flash & antifuse FPGAs

- Actel Corp.
- Quick Logic Corp.

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Xilinx FPGA Families

- **Old families**
  - XC3000, XC4000, XC5200
  - Old 0.5µm, 0.35µm and 0.25µm technology. Not recommended for modern designs.
- **High-performance families**
  - Virtex (220 nm)
  - Virtex-E, Virtex-EM (180 nm)
  - Virtex-II, Virtex-II PRO (130 nm)
  - Virtex-4 (90 nm)
  - Virtex-5 (65 nm)
  - Virtex-6
- **Low Cost Family**
  - Spartan/XL – derived from XC4000
  - Spartan-II – derived from Virtex
  - Spartan-IIE – derived from Virtex-E
  - Spartan-3 (90 nm)
  - Spartan-3E (90 nm) – logic optimized
  - Spartan-3A (90 nm) – I/O optimized
  - Spartan-3AN (90 nm) – non-volatile
  - Spartan-3A DSP (90 nm) – DSP optimized
  - Spartan-6

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Zynq-7000

- Based on the Xilinx All programmable SoC architecture; 28nm technology node
- ARM dual-core Cortex-A9 MPCore processors
- Fixed processing system that can operate independently from the programmable logic
- Processor boots on reset like any processor-based device or ASSP
- Processor acts as “system master” and controls the configuration of the programmable logic enabling full or partial reconfiguration of the programmable logic during operation
- Standard development flows providing a familiar programming environment for software developers
- Additional documentation and resources:
  - http://www.xilinx.com/products/silicon-devices/soc/zynq-7000.html

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Intel Altera FPGA Families

- High & Medium Density FPGAs
  - Stratix™ II, Stratix, APEX™ II, APEX 20K, & FLEX® 10K
- Low-Cost FPGAs
  - Cyclone™ & ACEX® 1K
- FPGAs with Clock Data Recovery
  - Stratix GX & Mercury™
- CPLDs
  - MAX® 7000 & MAX 3000
- Embedded Processor Solutions
  - Nios™, Excalibur™
- Configuration Devices
  - EPC

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Altera: Cyclone V

- Extends the Cyclone FPGA series
- Wide spectrum of general logic applications
- Up to 300,000 logic elements (LEs)
- Additional documentation and resources:
  - https://www.altera.com/products/fpga/cyclone-series/cyclone-v/features.html

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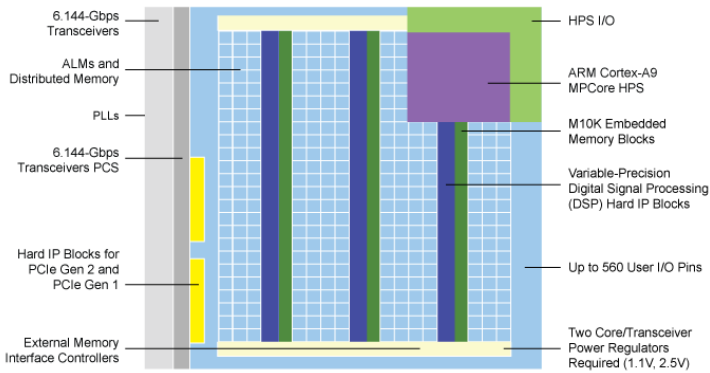
Cyclone V Key Architectural Features



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Cyclone V Devices

Cyclone V Device Variants and Packages

Table 3: Device Variants for the Cyclone V Device Family

Variant	Description
Cyclone V E	Optimized for the lowest system cost and power requirement for a wide spectrum of general logic and DSP applications
Cyclone V GX	Optimized for the lowest cost and power requirement for 614 Mbps to 3.125 Gbps transceiver applications
Cyclone V GT	The FPGA industry's lowest cost and lowest power requirement for 6.144 Gbps transceiver applications
Cyclone V SE	SoC with integrated ARM-based HPS
Cyclone V SX	SoC with integrated ARM-based HPS and 3.125 Gbps transceivers
Cyclone V ST	SoC with integrated ARM-based HPS and 6.144 Gbps transceivers

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Table 10: Maximum Resource Counts for Cyclone V SE Devices

Resource		Member Code			
		A2	A4	A5	A6
Logic Elements (LE) (K)		25	40	85	110
ALM		9,434	15,094	32,075	41,509
Register		37,736	60,376	128,300	166,036
Memory (Kb)	M10K	1,400	2,700	3,970	5,570
	MLAB	138	231	480	621
Variable-precision DSP Block		36	84	87	112
18 x 18 Multiplier		72	168	174	224
FPGA PLL		5	5	6	6
HPS PLL		3	3	3	3
FPGA GPIO		145	145	288	288
HPS I/O		181	181	181	181
LVDS	Transmitter	32	32	72	72
	Receiver	37	37	72	72
FPGA Hard Memory Controller		1	1	1	1
HPS Hard Memory Controller		1	1	1	1
ARM Cortex-A9 MPCore Processor		Single- or dual-core	Single- or dual-core	Single- or dual-core	Single- or dual-core

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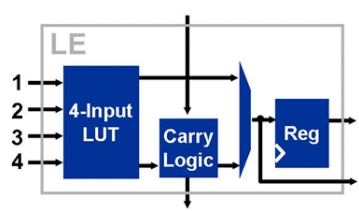
Logic Element (LE)

- The smallest unit of logic located in a LAB of all Altera devices supported by the Quartus software.
- Logic element (LE) is also generally known as a logic cell.
- In supported device (Arria series, Cyclone series, and Stratix series) family devices, a logic element consists of:
  - a four-input LUT
  - a programmable register
  - a carry chain



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Adaptive Logic Module (ALM)

- Basic building block of supported device (Arria series, Cyclone V, Stratix IV, and Stratix V) families
- Contains among others:
  - two or four register logic cells
  - two combinational logic cells
  - two dedicated full adders
  - a carry chain
  - a register chain
- https://www.intel.com/content/www/us/en/docs/programmable/683152/24-1/adaptive-logic-module-alm.html

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8-input Adaptive Logic Module (ALM)

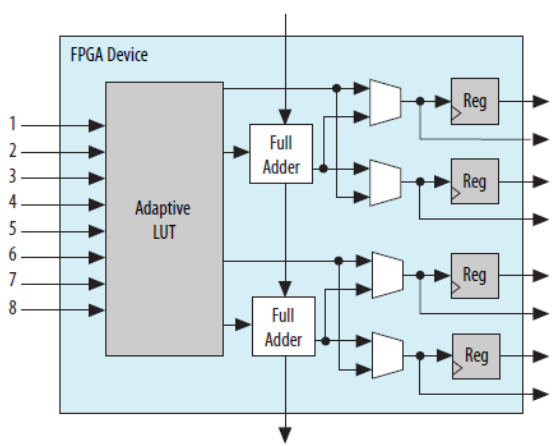

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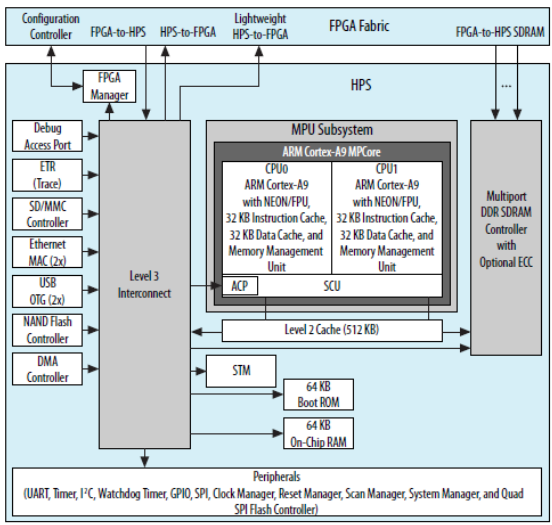
Figure 11: HPS with Dual-Core ARM Cortex-A9 MPCore Processor



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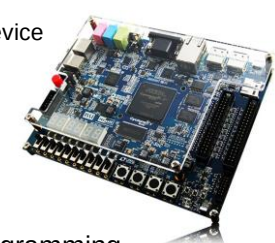
DE1-SoC Board

- $175 USD (academic)
- FPGA Device
  - Cyclone V SoC 5CSEMA5F31C6 Device
  - Dual-core ARM Cortex-A9 (HPS)
  - 85K Programmable Logic Elements
  - 4,450 Kbits embedded memory
  - 6 Fractional PLLs
  - 2 Hard Memory Controllers
- Built-in USB Blaster for FPGA programming
- http://www.terasic.com.tw/cgi-bin/page/archive.pl?Language=English&CategoryNo=205&No=836&PartNo=2



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Overview

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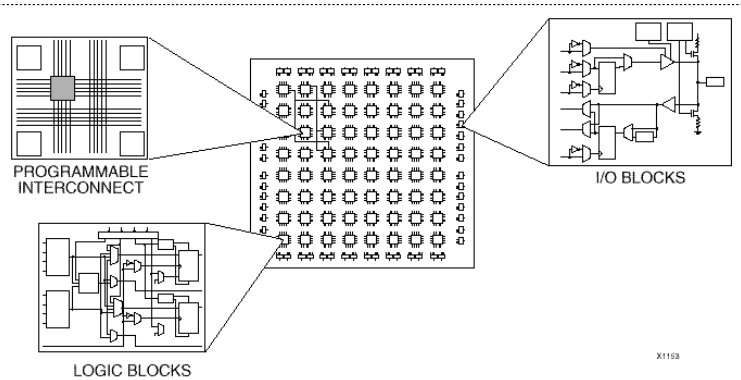
FPGA Architecture – General



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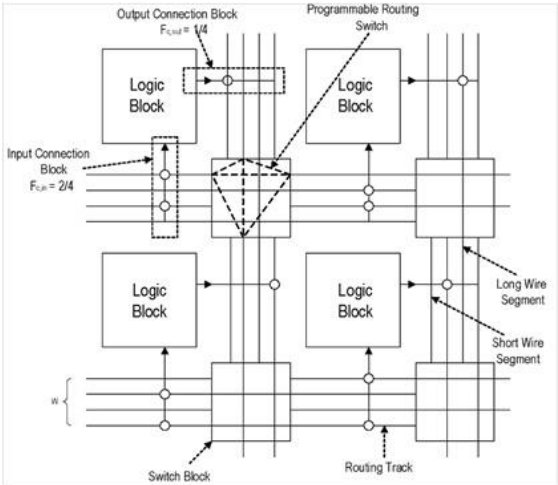
FPGA Architecture – Detail



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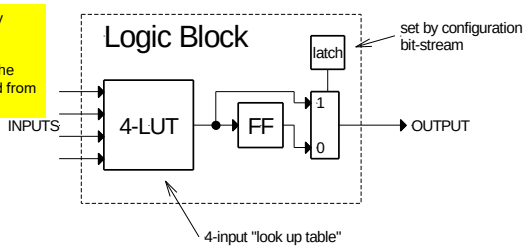
1) Configurable Logic Block (CLB)

> Think of LUT as of memory that stores truth table of any Boolean function of 4 inputs!
> The four inputs represent the "address" from where to read from this memory!



- 4-input **look-up table (LUT)**
  - Implements combinational logic functions (essentially store truth table of the function)
  - How do we implement LUT's?
- Register
  - Optionally stores output of LUT

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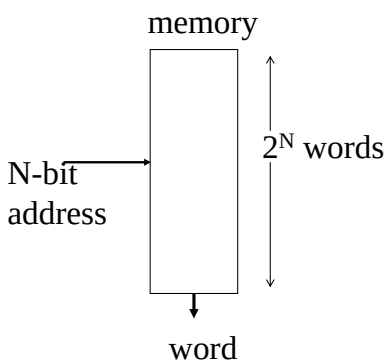
How could you build a generic Boolean logic circuit? Memories as LUTs



- 1-bit memory to hold boolean value
- Address is vector of boolean input values
- Contents encode a boolean function
- Read out logical value (col) for associated row

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LUT as general logic gate

- An n-LUT as a direct implementation of a function truth-table.
- Each latch location holds the value of the function corresponding to one input combination.

Example: 2-LUT

INPUTS	AND	OR
00	0	0
01	0	1
10	0	1
11	1	1

Can be used to implement *any* function of 2 inputs.
How many of these are there?
How many functions of n inputs?

Example: 4-lut

INPUTS	
0000	F(0,0,0,0) ← store in 1st latch
0001	F(0,0,0,1) ← store in 2nd latch
0010	F(0,0,1,0) ←
0011	F(0,0,1,1) ←
0011	
0100	
0101	
0110	
0111	
1000	
1001	
1010	
1011	
1100	
1101	
1110	
1111	

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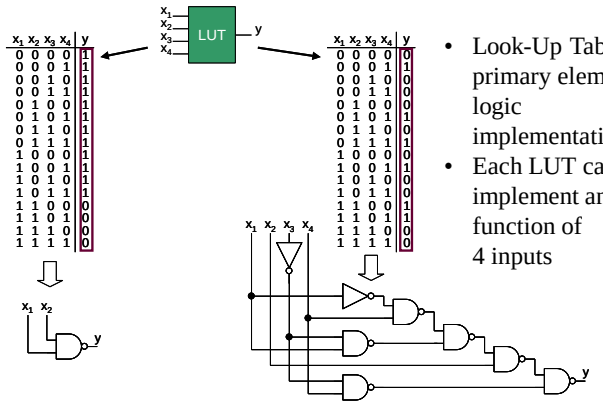
LUT as general logic gate



- Look-Up Tables are primary elements for logic implementation
- Each LUT can implement any function of 4 inputs

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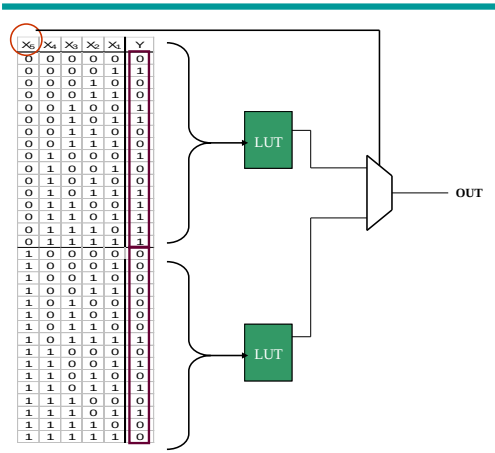
5-Input functions implemented using two LUTs



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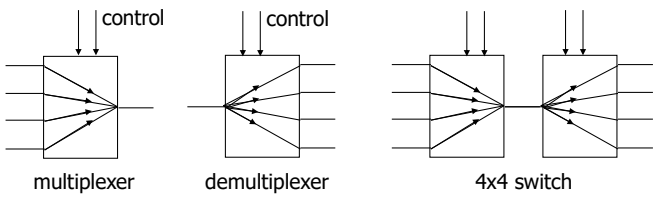
Recall: Multiplexer/Demultiplexer

- *Multiplexer:* route one of many inputs to a single output
- *Demultiplexer:* route single input to one of many outputs



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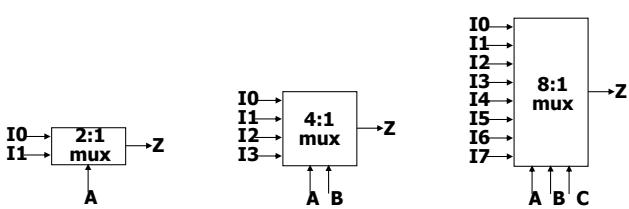
Multiplexers/Selectors: to implement logic

- 2:1 mux: Z = A' I0 + A I1
- 4:1 mux: Z = A' B' I0 + A' B I1 + A B' I2 + A B I3
- 8:1 mux: Z = A'B'C'I0 + A'B'CI1 + A'BC'I2 + A'BCI3 + AB'C'I4 + AB'CI5 + ABC'I6 + ABCI7



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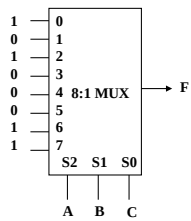
Multiplexers as LUTs

- 2^n:1 multiplexer implements any function of n variables
  - With the variables used as control inputs and
  - Data inputs tied to 0 or 1
  - In essence, *a look-up table*
- Example:
  - F(A,B,C) = m0 + m2 + m6 + m7
    = A'B'C' + A'BC' + ABC' + ABC
    = A'B'(C') + A'B(C') + AB'(0) + AB(1)



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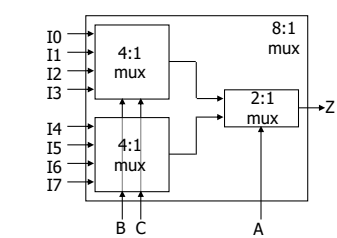
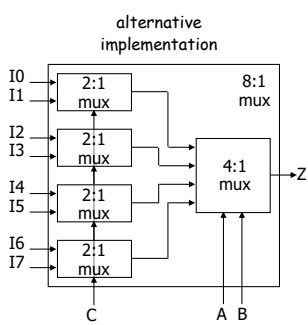
Cascading Multiplexers

- Large multiplexers implemented by cascading smaller ones



control signals B and C simultaneously choose one of I0, I1, I2, I3 and one of I4, I5, I6, I7

control signal A chooses which of the upper or lower mux's output to gate to Z



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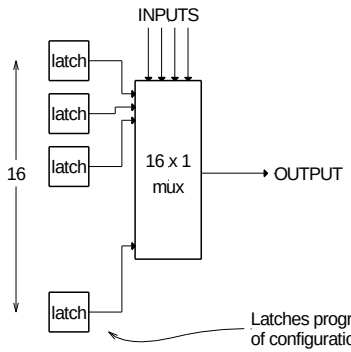
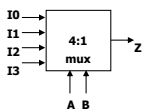
4-LUT Implementation



- n-bit LUT is implemented as a 2^n x 1 memory:
  - Inputs choose one of 2^n memory locations.
  - Memory locations (latches) are normally loaded with values from user's configuration bit stream.
  - Inputs to mux control are the CLB inputs.
- Result is a general purpose "logic gate"
  - n-LUT can implement *any* function of n inputs!
- Example:



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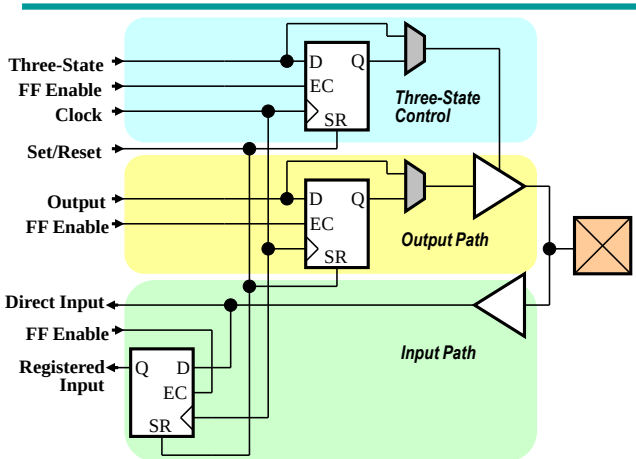
2) Basic I/O Block (IOB) Structure



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IOB Functionality

- IOB provides interface between the package pins and CLBs
- Each IOB can work as uni- or bi-directional I/O
- Outputs can be forced into High Impedance
- Inputs and outputs can be registered
  - advised for high-performance I/O
- Inputs can be delayed

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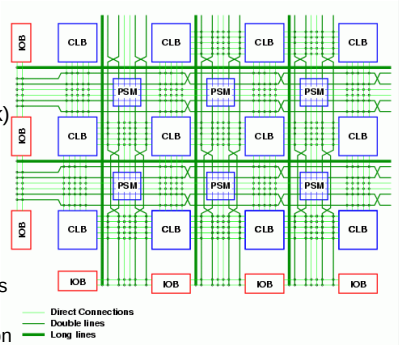
3-a) Routing Resources: Interconnects

- Logic blocks embedded in a 'sea' of connection resources
- CLB = logic block
  IOB = I/O buffer
  PSM = programmable switch matrix (switch block)
- Interconnections critical
  - Transmission gates on paths
    - ⇨ Flexibility
    - ⇨ Connect any LB to any other

  but

  - ✕ Much slower than connections within a logic block
  - ✕ Much slower than long lines on an ASIC



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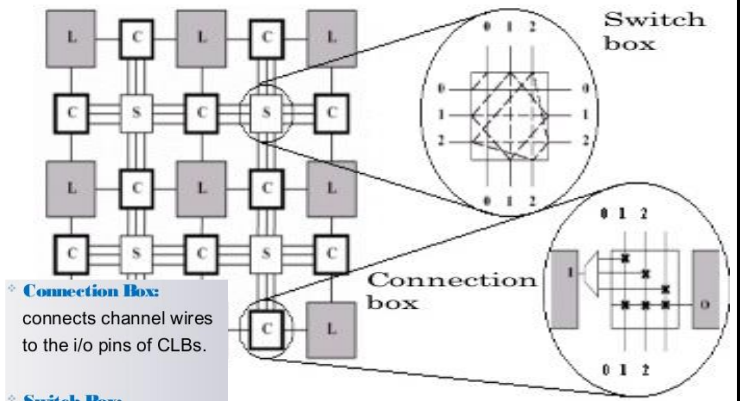
3-b) Routing Resources: Switch and Connection Boxes



- **Connection Box:** connects channel wires to the i/o pins of CLBs.
- **Switch Box:** allow wires to switch between vertical and horizontal wires.

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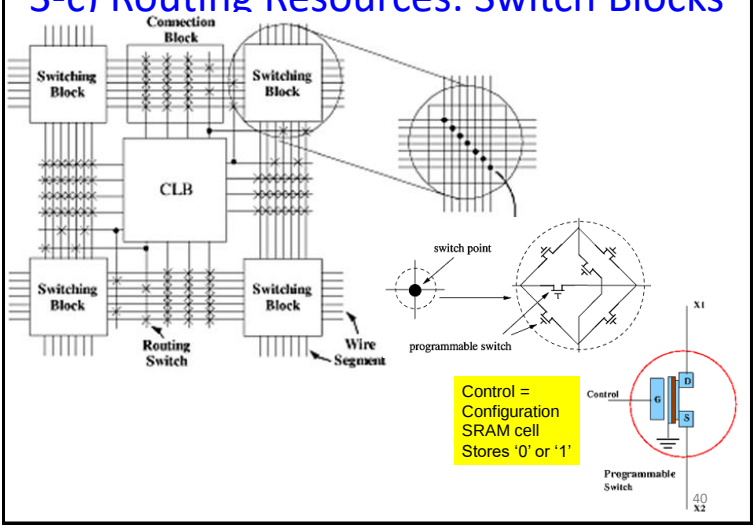
3-c) Routing Resources: Switch Blocks



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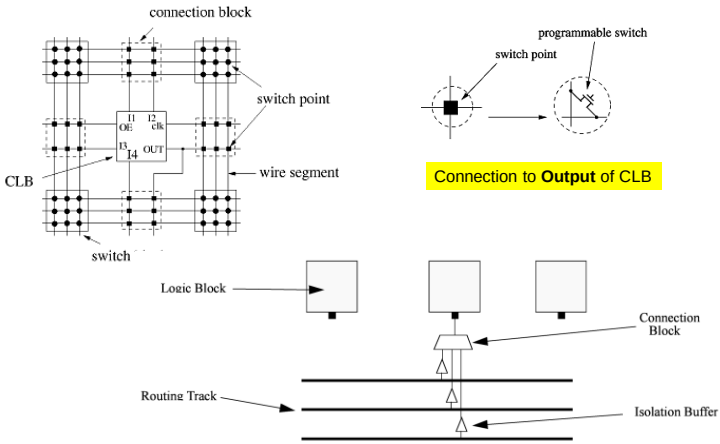
Connection Blocks



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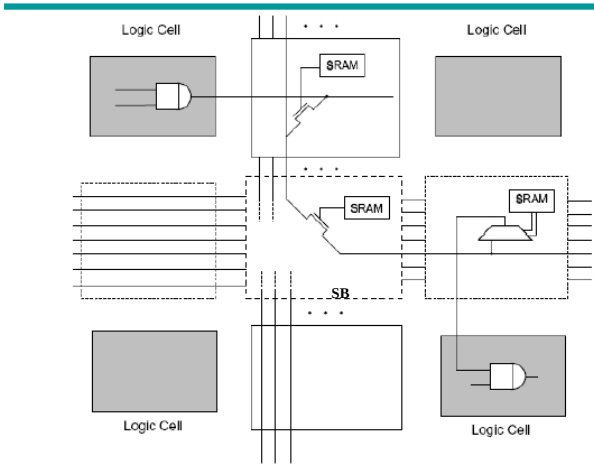
Example: SRAM-type FPGA Interconnection



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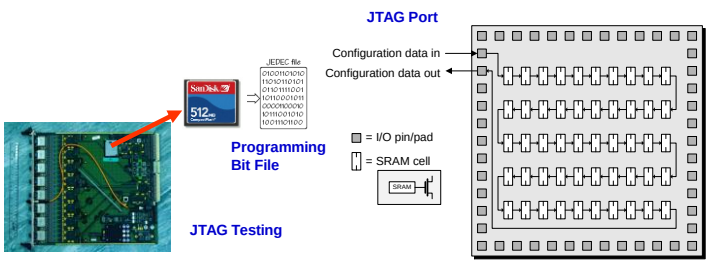
Configuring an FPGA

- Millions of SRAM cells holding LUTs and Interconnect Routing info
- Volatile Memory. Loses configuration when board power is turned off
- Keep Bit Pattern describing the SRAM cells in non-Volatile Memory
- Configuration takes ~ secs



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Overview

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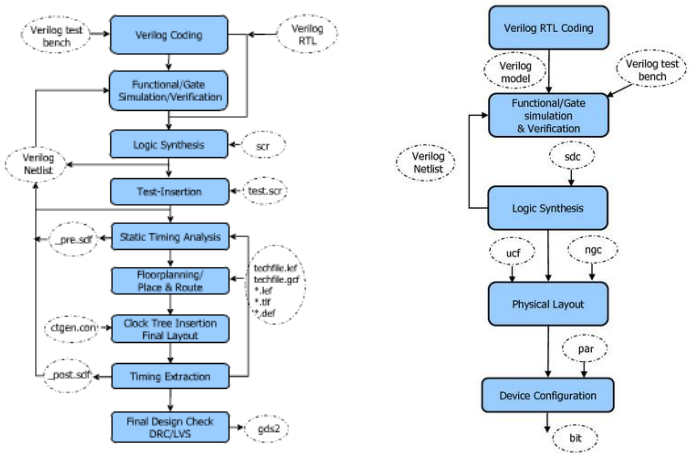
ASIC Digital IC Design Flow Vs. FPGA Design Flow



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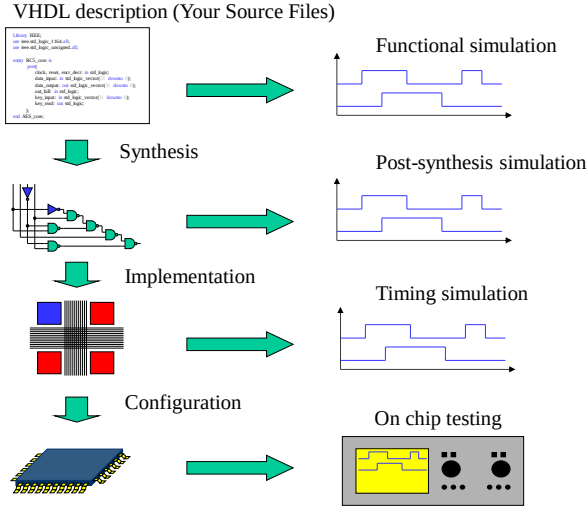
VHDL description (Your Source Files)



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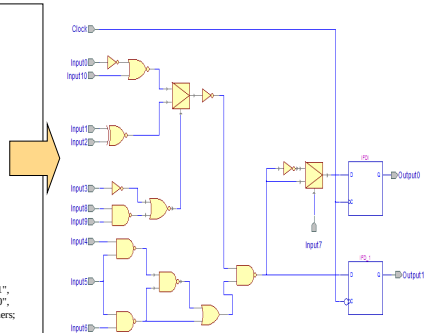
Logic Synthesis

VHDL description

```
architecture MLU_DATAFLOW of MLU is

signal A1:STD_LOGIC;
signal B1:STD_LOGIC;
signal Y1:STD_LOGIC;
signal MUX_0, MUX_1, MUX_2, MUX_3: STD_LOGIC;

begin
                A1<=A when (NEG_A='0') else
                        not A;
                B1<=B when (NEG_B='0') else
                        not B;
                Y<=Y1 when (NEG_Y='0') else
                        not Y1;

                MUX_0<=A1 and B1;
                MUX_1<=A1 or B1;
                MUX_2<=A1 xor B1;
                MUX_3<=A1 xnor B1;

                with (L1 & L0) select
                        Y1<=MUX_0 when "00",
                                MUX_1 when "01",
                                MUX_2 when "10",
                                MUX_3 when others;

end MLU_DATAFLOW;
```

Circuit netlist



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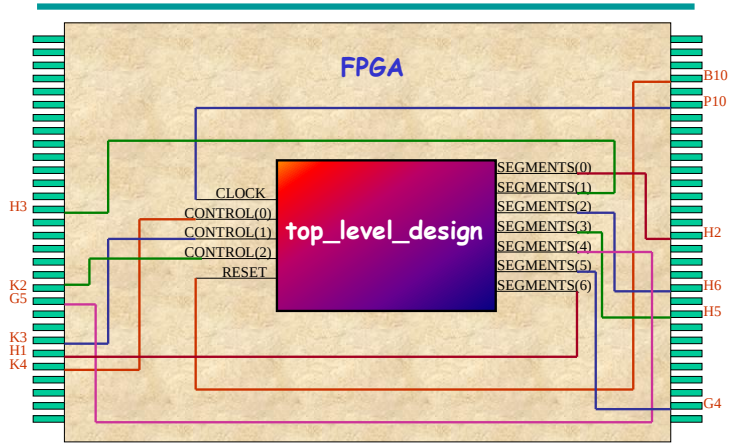
Pin Assignment



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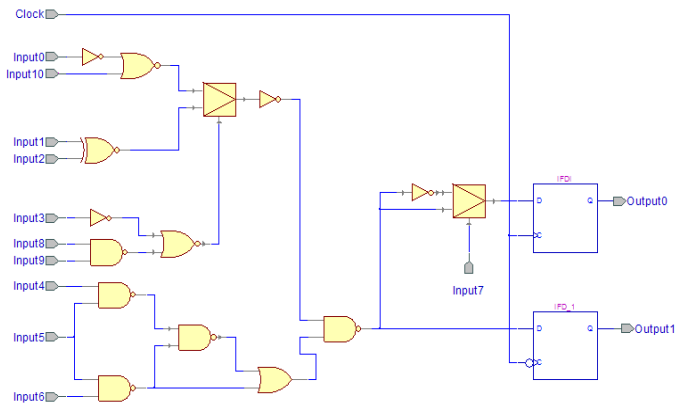
Circuit Netlist



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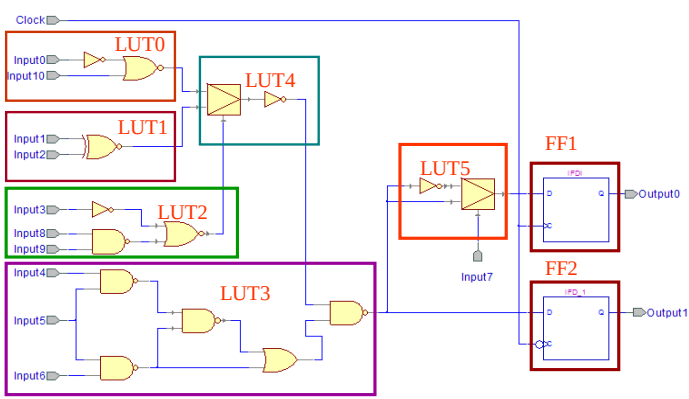
Mapping



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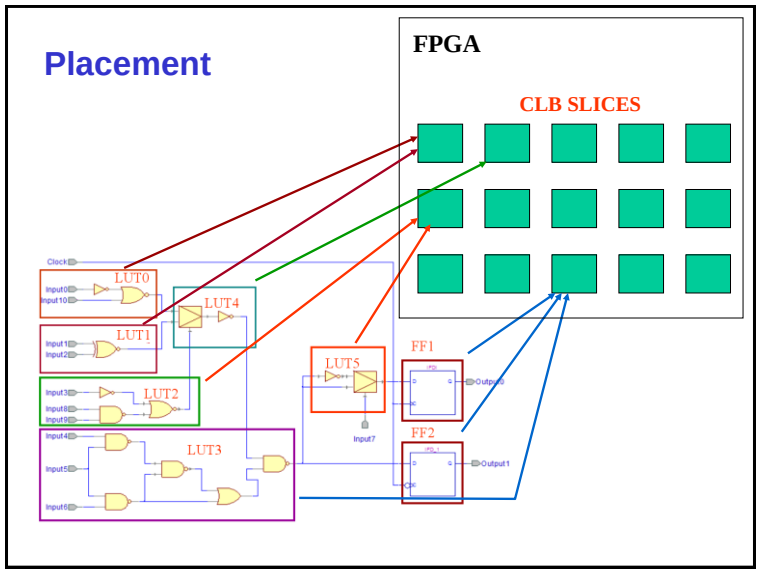
Placement
FPGA
CLB SLICES
Clock
LUT0
LUT1
LUT2
LUT3
LUT4
LUT5
FF1
FF2
Input7
Output0
Output1

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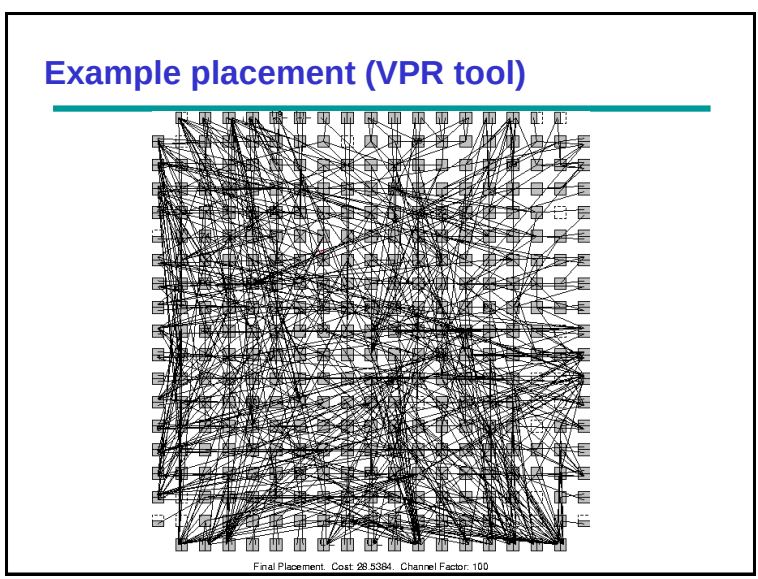
Example placement (VPR tool)
Final Placement. Cost: 28.5384. Channel Factor: 100

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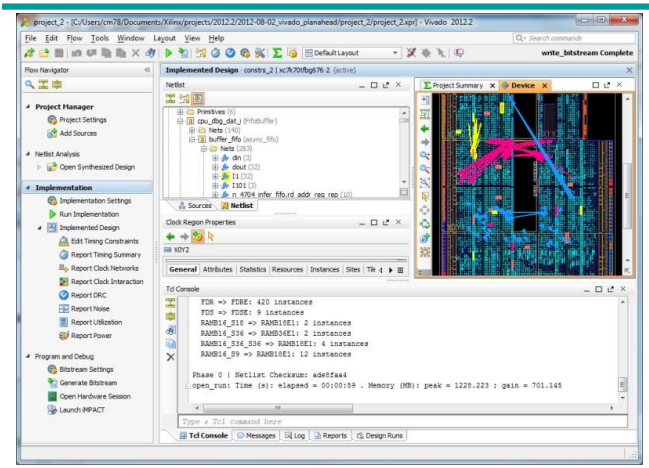
Example placement (ISE tool)



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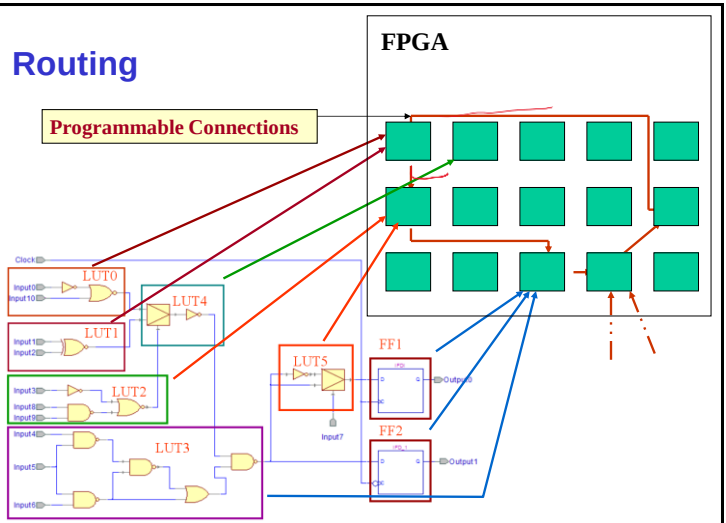
Routing



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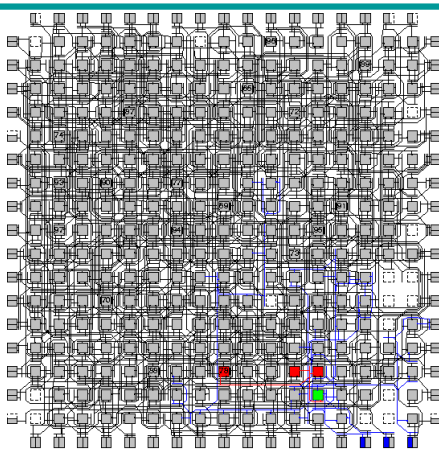
Example routing (VPR tool)



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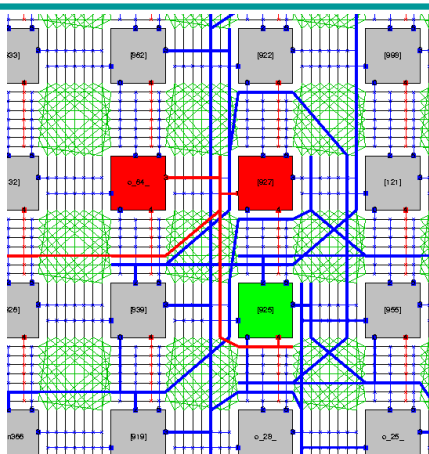
Example routing (VPR tool) – zoom-in



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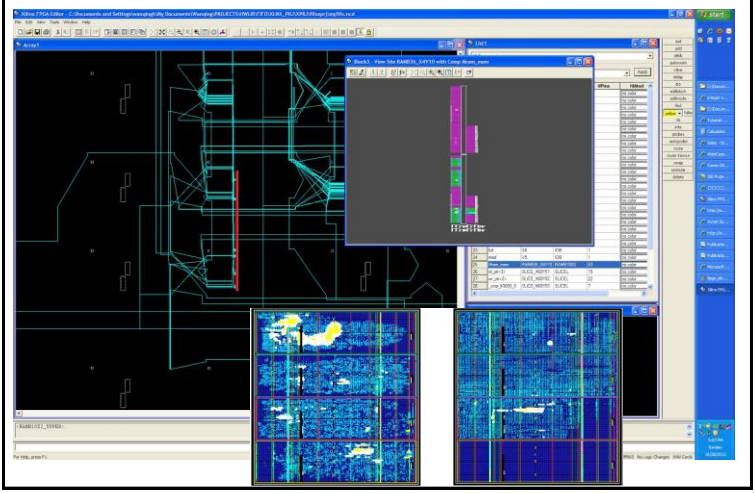
Xilinx FPGA Editor



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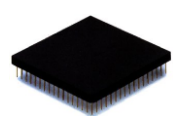
Configuration

- Once a design is implemented, you must create a file that the FPGA can understand
  - This file is called a **bitstream**: a BIT file (.bit extension)
- The BIT file can be downloaded directly to the FPGA, or can be converted into a PROM file which stores the programming information



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Summary

- FPGAs are more and more prevalent!
- They are here to stay!
- They offer a flexible platform for increasingly complex systems
- Design automation tools (i.e., CAD tools) take care of the entire design process from VHDL → configuration bitstream file

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