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simSIMD

Development and Simulation
Framework for Application Specific
Vector Processor

Cambridge 2019



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OVERVIEW



Objectives

- Develop a framework and building blocks for the application specific vector processor, make simulation software.
 - Simplify the development of the hardware architecture which performs operations on the data structures of finite length (vectors)
 - signal processing - OFDM symbols, code blocks
 - cryptography - cipher blocks
 - networking - data packets



Objectives

- Framework should provide unified approach for the development of the functional components: Execution Units (EU) and Data Memories (DM) as well as for their interoperation
 - Specific set and configuration of the functional units are identified by the target application



Objectives

- Elaborate development and simulation methodology of the hardware architecture from system specifications (algorithms) and throughput requirements
- Follow top-down development and optimization strategy
 - Area: improvement of the utilization rate of the processing blocks and storage elements (RAMs)
 - Throughput: datapath is elaborated at the stage of the architecture development
 - Power
 - Non-recurring engineering (NRE) resources and risks

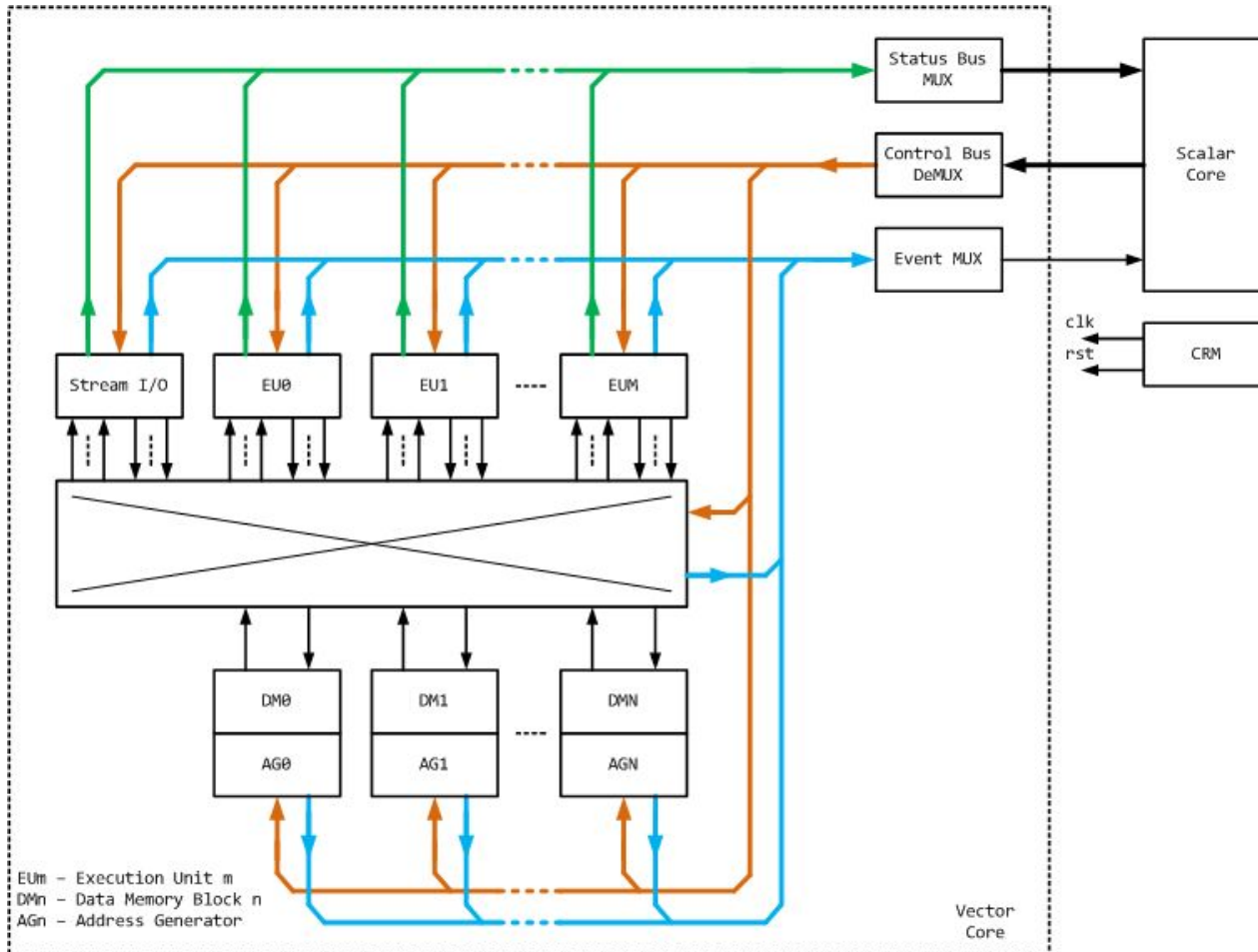


Objectives

- Employ SystemC
 - Short simulation-analysis-update cycle which allows for simulation driven development and optimization
 - Cycle accurate simulation for the vector core to obtain realistic timing and throughput estimates at the earlier stages
 - High level of abstraction for Vector Core preferences, runtime configuration and status to stay focused on the architectural tasks
 - Large ecosystem of C/C++ libraries for data manipulation and processing allows for top-down development approach: from high level processing functions down to elementary arithmetic operations
 - Allows for integration into the existing simulation workflows
 - Open source



Block Diagram



Components in Brief

- Vector Core functions
 - Performing vector computations in accordance to the configuration supplied from the Scalar Core
 - Generation of the events at the different stages of the execution of the vector operations
 - Synchronization of the processing threads
 - Update of the statuses of the vector operations
 - Data dependent processing
 - Sequencing of the vector operations



Components in Brief

- Vector Core components
 - Data Memories (DM): temporary storage of the vectors.
 - A set of Address Generators (AG) associated with each DM allows for flexible addressing/fetching of the elements of the vector.
 - Execution Units (EU): perform successive processing of the elements of the vectors.
 - This part of the Vector Core is specific for target application



Components in Brief

- Streaming Devices: interfacing Vector Core with the external devices
 - ADC or DAC
 - Preliminary or subsequent processing blocks
 - Interface to the external storage (DMA)
- XBAR: Network-On-Chip (NOC) intended for routing of the vector streams between Execution Units (EU), Data Memories (DM) and/or Streaming Devices
 - DMs, EUs and Streaming Devices have a unified interface for connection to XBAR



Components in Brief

- Functions of the Scalar Infrastructure
 - Respond to the events and statuses from the Vector Core components
 - Control the execution flow inside the Vector Core
 - Synchronization of the vector processing threads
 - Generate and deliver configuration data to the Vector Core components



Components in Brief

- Scalar Infrastructure components
 - Scalar Core processes the events and statuses from Vector Core, and generates configurations for the components of the Vector Core.
 - It can be implemented as a programmable general purpose CPU subsystem or an FSM depending on the complexity of the control procedures
 - Event MUX: delivers events which were generated by the Vector Core components to the Scalar Core



Components in Brief

- Scalar Infrastructure components (cont'd)
 - Config De-multiplexer: distributes commands and data supplied from to the Scalar Core to the Vector Core components.
 - Broadcasting commands are supported for the execution control
 - Status MUX: delivers the status data, which was sent by the Vector Core components in response to the request commands from the Scalar Core, to the Scalar Core



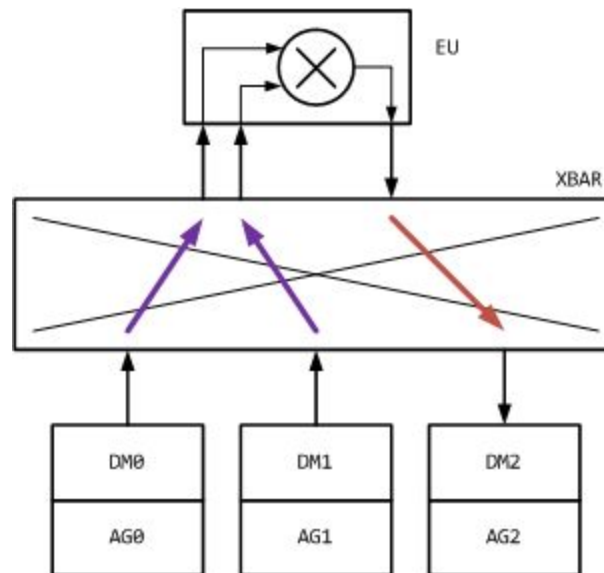
Outline of the development strategy

- Decompose the processing algorithm down to the level of functional blocks and storage elements
- Develop the functional blocks having the specified interface with XBAR and Scalar Infrastructure
- Assemble the functional blocks and storage elements to the framework
- Develop control FSM and/or CPU FW



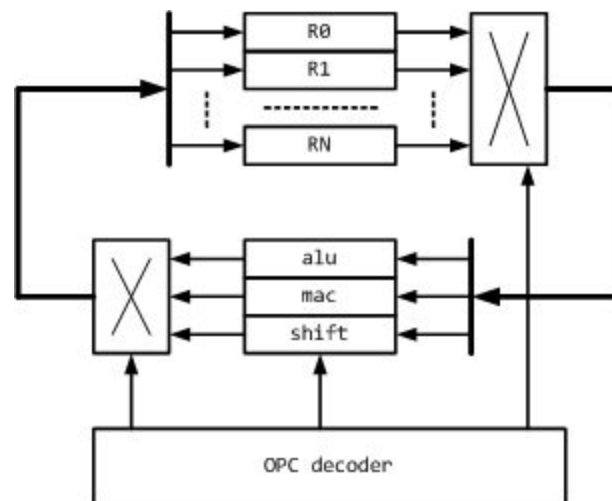
Exemplar Data Flow

- Compute Hadamard product (element-wise multiplication) of 2 vectors $\bar{C} = \bar{A} \otimes \bar{B}$
 - Elements of A reside in DM0
 - Elements of B reside in DM1
 - Elements of the product C are placed into DM2



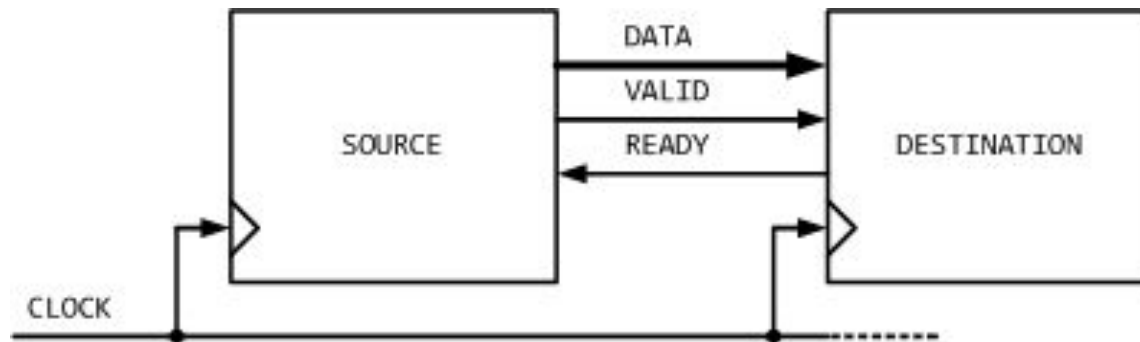
Similarity to General Purpose CPUs

- Registers R0..RN in the register file (RF) are scalars
- Controls from OPCode Decoder
 - RF Output MUX
 - Processing Unit
 - RF Input MUX
- Parallel operation of the computational blocks [4]



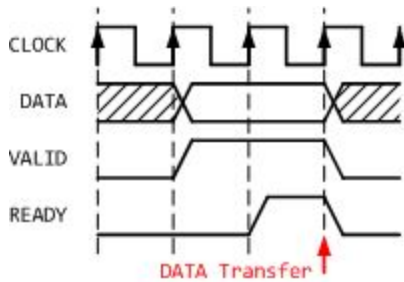
VALID-READY Channel

- Decentralized coordination of the data transfers through the stages of the processing pipeline

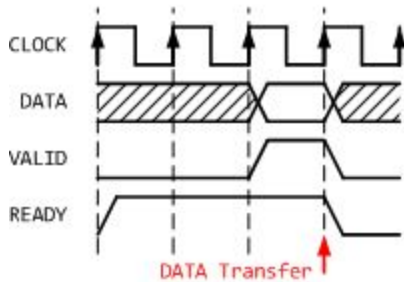


- Main rule: Data is transferred at the active clock edge when both VALID and READY are asserted
- SOURCE and DESTINATION can be stages of the processing pipeline or DM/EU modules

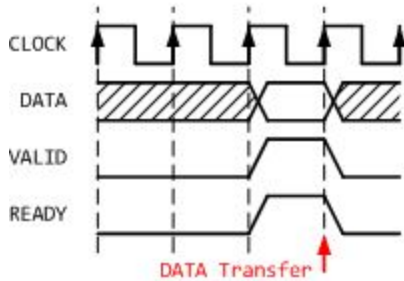
VALID-READY Channel



VALID before READY handshake



READY before VALID handshake



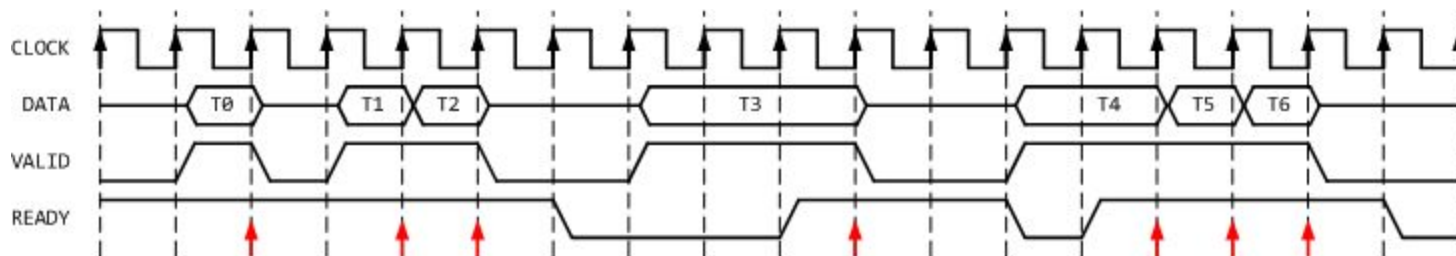
VALID with READY handshake

*Refer to [2],[3] for more details



VALID-READY Channel

- SOURCE retains the state of VALID and DATA signals until the transaction is acknowledged by the DESTINATION with its READY output asserted
- READY signal may change its state at any time. DESTINATION may implement a multi-cycle processing or use a shared resource which availability is changed from cycle to cycle



VALID-READY Channel

- At the DM/EU interface DATA signal which is transferred in 1 clock cycle contains 4 data slots
- Contents of 1 slot
 - Flag which identifies that the data field is valid
 - Data field of type “complex double” representing 1 element of the vector or 1 sample
- Other application-specific data structures are possible e.g. fixed-point types, pixel colours, etc.



VALID-READY Channel

- VALID signal is extended to 4 states (2 bits) to support of vectors transfers of finite length
- IDLE – Inactive state
- HEAD – first data transaction if the number of data transactions is more than 1
- BODY – intermediate data transaction if the number of data transactions is more than 2
- TAIL – last data transaction or data transaction with a single element
- Extended application-specific set of states is possible



VALID-READY Channel

- In the simulator DM/EU modules are connected to the XBAR via VALID-READY sc_channel.
- It monitors if both SOURCE and DESTINATION respect VALID-READY protocol.



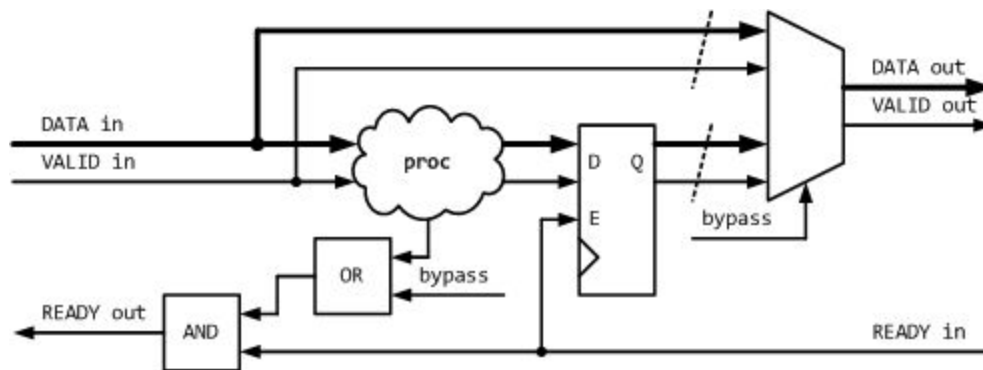
VALID-READY Channel

- VALID output of the SOURCE must have no combinatorial dependency from its READY input. Otherwise a combinatorial loop is created
- READY output of the DESTINATION can be generated with combinatorial logic from its VALID and/or DATA inputs.



VALID-READY Channel

- In RTL DATA and VALID outputs of the SOURCE stage should normally be the outputs of the registers
- It is acceptable to implement bypass mux after these registers if the DESTINATION is connected via the VALID-READY channel



VALID-READY Channel

- Breaking combinatorial path of the READY signal is described in [2] Sections 2.1.2, 2.1.3

- SV outline:

```
always_ff @(posedge CLK or posedge RESET_IN)
  if(RESET_IN)
    READY_OUT <= 1;    // Ready on reset
  else begin
    if(CLEAR_IN) begin
      READY_OUT <= 1;  // Ready on reset
    end
    else if(READY_OUT) begin
      if(VALID_IN!=ST_IDLE & ~READY_IN)
        READY_OUT <= 0;
    end
    else begin
      if(READY_IN)
        READY_OUT <= 1;
    end
  end
end

always_ff @(posedge CLK) // no reset
  if(READY_OUT & (VALID_IN!=ST_IDLE & ~READY_IN)) begin
    DataBuffer <= DATA_IN;
    ValidBuffer <= VALID_IN;
  end
end

assign VALID_OUT = READY_OUT ? VALID_IN : ValidBuffer;
assign DATA_OUT = READY_OUT ? DATA_IN : DataBuffer;
```



VALID-READY Channel

- When merging streams, a processing stage should rely on all the upstream SOURCES to generate VALID output and wait for an acknowledge from the DESTINATION stage
 - Time alignment buffers can be used to supply vector elements from all the SOURCES at a single clock cycle
- There are 2 ways of splitting streams:
 - DESTINATION which stalls is nominated to be a master and VALID signal to other DESTINATION s is AND'ed with the READY signal from the master DESTINATION.
 - For DMs and EUs this feature is implemented as a function of XBAR.
 - Supply VALID signal and process READY signal individually for each DESTINATION, latching the acknowledges for the given transaction.
 - This requires dedicated source ports in the DM/EU interface.



VALID-READY Channel

- To constrain combinational paths through the XBAR, both input and output signals of VALID, DATA and READY in DM or EU should be constrained.
- Full-bandwidth elastic buffers described in [2] Section 2.1.2 can be used from both input and output sides.
 - Elastic buffer should be extended to support 4-state VALID signal
- These buffers add to the datapath a delay of 2 clock cycles per single DM or EU.



SYSTEM COMPONENT: EU



SYSTEM COMPONENT: DM



SYSTEM COMPONENT: XBAR



SYSTEM COMPONENT: STREAMING UNIT



SYSTEM COMPONENT: SCALAR INFRASTRUCTURE



PROGRAM EXECUTION



General Considerations

- Efficient operation of the Vector Core from the perspective of the utilization rate and throughput:
 - Vectors are processed back to back, and
 - Multiple processing chains or threads run concurrently
- The configuration of the Vector Core should be placed inside the corresponding components before the processing of the new vector starts.
 - Pick up new configuration upon the completion of the current vector
 - Start the processing of the new vector without involving Scalar Infrastructure and thus less delay



General Considerations

- Utilization rate and throughput of the Vector Core set the requirements on:
 - The partitioning of the target processing task
 - The set of the Vector Core components
 - The throughput and the performance of the Scalar Infrastructure



Synchronization between Cores: Scalar Core to Vector Core

- The processing in the Vector Core is managed with the commands from the Scalar Core
 - **put** configuration to a component of the Vector Core
 - **get** status of a component of the Vector Core
 - **run** configuration with `exec_id` which is broadcasted into all the components of the Vector Core



Synchronization between Cores: Scalar Core to Vector Core

- Configuration
 - Each Vector Core component can have a number of slots to store the configuration.
- Compulsory fields in a configuration slot
 - `exec_id`: the configuration becomes active when the block receives "run" command with the matching `exec_id`. The block picks up the configuration from the slot and starts its execution.
 - `status_slot`: the execution status is updated at the slot which is pointed by `status_slot`
 - This field is not applicable for XBAR
 - `events`: the block issues specific events during the execution of the configuration.
 - This field is not applicable for XBAR



Synchronization between Cores: Scalar Core to Vector Core

- Compulsory fields in a configuration slot (cont'd)
 - config_next: when the execution of the current configuration is complete i.e.
 - DM/EU received or transmitted vector TAIL
 - XBAR identified that all the blocks have completed their processing

the block picks up the configuration from the slot which is pointed by config_next and starts its execution.

- This forms a processing chain
- Invalid or inexistent config_next completes the chain
- Looped chains are possible



Synchronization between Cores: Vector Core to Scalar Core

- Status
 - EU components can have a number of slots to store the results of the vector processing.
 - Can reflect runtime state of the component.
 - This state is visible to Scalar Core
 - Data fields inside the status slot are specific to a particular block
- Events
 - Components of the Vector Core can notify Scalar Core on the progress of the execution of the configuration.
 - Full set of events is specific to DM/EU.



Synchronization between Cores: Vector Core to Scalar Core

- Events (cont'd)
 - The subset of events to be issued for the vector being processed is selected in the configuration
 - XBAR can issue an event when all the connected components are finished the processing of the vector.
 - This is useful when the components are executing looped chains
 - In the simulator events are implemented with transfers through the FIFO channels with polling and readout on the side of the Scalar Core.



Execution Model

Command sequencing under the control of the Scalar Core

- Scalar Core configures DMs and EUs, which are employed in the processing chains
 - Multiple processing chains can run concurrently
- Scalar Core configures routing through the XBAR
- Same `exec_id` is programmed for all the DMs, EUs and XBAR configuration
- Scalar Core issues **run** command with the specific `exec_id`



Execution Model

Command sequencing under the control of the Scalar Core

- Scalar Core waits for the TAIL event from the blocks which are employed in the processing chain
- Scalar Core read and process blocks' status
- Scalar Core issues **run** command for the new chain which has been previously configured
- Repeat
- This behavior is tested in vri_test1..3



Execution Model

Command sequencing under the control of the Vector Core

- Configuration Chaining
 - Cycle stationary (data independent) execution can be handled by the Vector Core without the need for the intervention from the Scalar Core
- Events from DMs/EUs/XBAR can be issued in the process of the chain execution to notify the Scalar Core.
 - The status of the blocks, which have completed the processing, can be read out.
 - Any of the configuration slots of the blocks, which completed the processing, can be reconfigured
 - The blocks, which completed the processing, can execute another configuration
- FFT with 1 EU and 2 DMs for ping-pong is a good application example of this mode
- This behavior is reflected in vri_test4



Execution model:

Example of the Configuration Chaining

Succession of the operations in the processing chain:

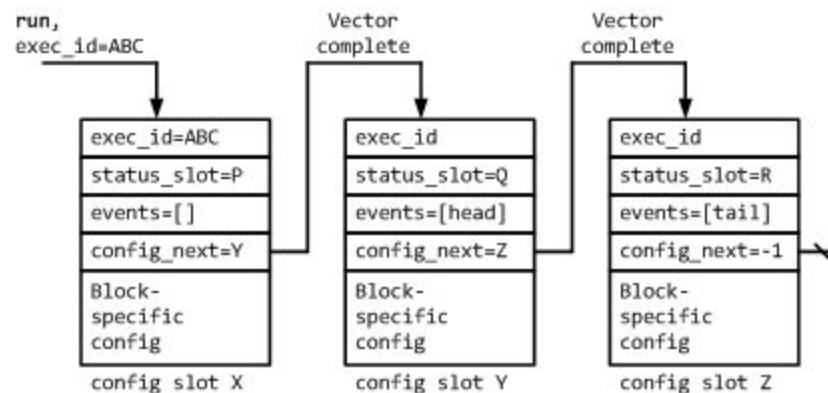
Processing chain is initiated when the block receives run command with `exec_id=ABC`

Configuration slot X becomes active. A vector is processed. Block status is updated in the slot P. No events are generated.

Configuration slot Y becomes active. A vector is processed. Block status is updated in the slot Q. Event is generated when vector HEAD marker is received.

Configuration slot Z becomes active. A vector is processed. Block status is updated in the slot R. Event is generated when vector TAIL marker is received.

The processing chain is complete.



Execution Model

Deferred Execution

- Deferred Execution allows writing configuration and issuing **run** command to DMs, EUs and XBAR while they are busy with the processing.
 - This relaxes performance constraints on Scalar Core
 - Configuration chaining prevails over the deferred execution
- DM or EU operation
 - If DM or EU is busy with processing a chain at the moment they receive **run** command, then the valid `exec_id` is placed into the FIFO buffer to be processed after the chain execution is complete.
 - This behavior is reflected in `vri_test6`



Execution Model

Deferred Execution

- XBAR
 - If XBAR receives **run** command for a configuration which connects DMs/EUs and at least one of them is busy, then it postpones the execution until all of the DMs and EUs for the requested configuration become idle.
 - This behavior is reflected in vri_test5, 6
 - Request for changing or running a configuration which is already active is illegal.



Execution Model

Data Exchange and Data Dependent Execution

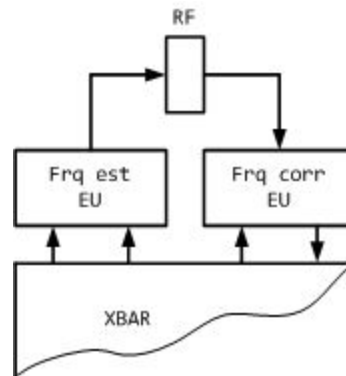
- Components of the Vector Core can exchange small amounts of data on their own without involving Scalar Core or communication through XBAR
 - This data can be used as a Processing Parameter, or
 - A configuration pointer and/or execution trigger
- Simple data transfers should not involve Scalar Core
 - Relaxes throughput constraints for Scalar Infrastructure
- This exchange can be done via common register files or FIFOs on the top of the EUs
 - HW semaphores
- Currently this feature is outside of the scope of the simulation framework but it can be implemented as a specific feature of the simulated application.



Execution Model

Data Exchange and Data Dependent Execution

- Exemplar task: frequency offset estimation in one chain and frequency offset correction in another
 - Estimation task processes a vector and produces a resulting scalar value
 - Estimation task upon the completion sends its result to the correction task
 - Correction task uses the scalar value in its processing



“DESIGN BY SIMULATION” STRATEGY



HARDWARE CONSIDERATIONS



STRUCTURE OF THE SIMULATOR SOFTWARE



TESTS AND EXAMPLES



vri_test

- Verifies system integration and overall functionality
 - Vector transfers
 - Block configuration, status and events transfers
- Verifies operation of VALID-READY interface and XBAR functionality
- Verifies execution modes and command sequencing
 - Under the control of the Scalar Core
 - Under the control of the Vector Core
- vrisrc: Streaming block which simulates VALID-READY source
 - Configurable random VALID or always VALID
 - Transmits random DATA with checksum at TAIL
- vridst: Streaming block which simulates VALID-READY destination
 - Configurable random READY or always READY
 - Receives DATA and verifies the checksum
- Assertions inside VALID-READY channel
- Inspection of the VCD trace
- Tests 01..07 run continuously in the random order for 1 ms



vri_test

- Clean

```
make EXAMPLE=basic/vri_test clean
```

- Build

```
make EXAMPLE=basic/vri_test all
```

- Run

```
./build/Release/out/simsimd
```

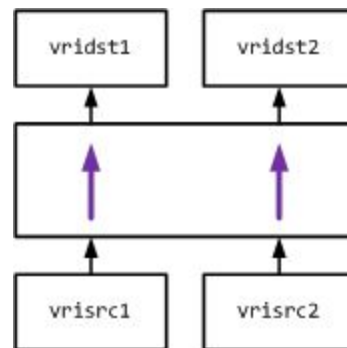
- Inspect the result:

```
In gtkwave File->Open New Window->trace.vcd
```



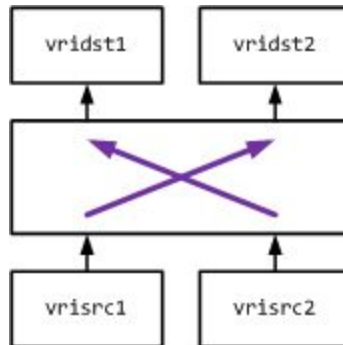
vri_test / test01

- Verifies basic operation
- Scalar core configures vector core components
 - src1->dst1, src2->dst2
- Scalar core initiates 2 concurrent vector transfers
- Wait for transfer completion by polling the events from XBAR and EUs



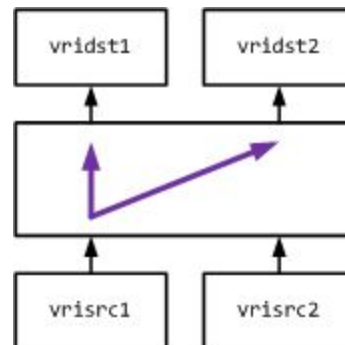
vri_test / test02

- Verifies operation of the “always ready” destination
- Scalar core configures vector core components
 - src1->dst2 with READY=1, src2->dst1
- Scalar core initiates 2 concurrent vector transfers.
- Wait for transfer completion by polling the events from XBAR and EUs



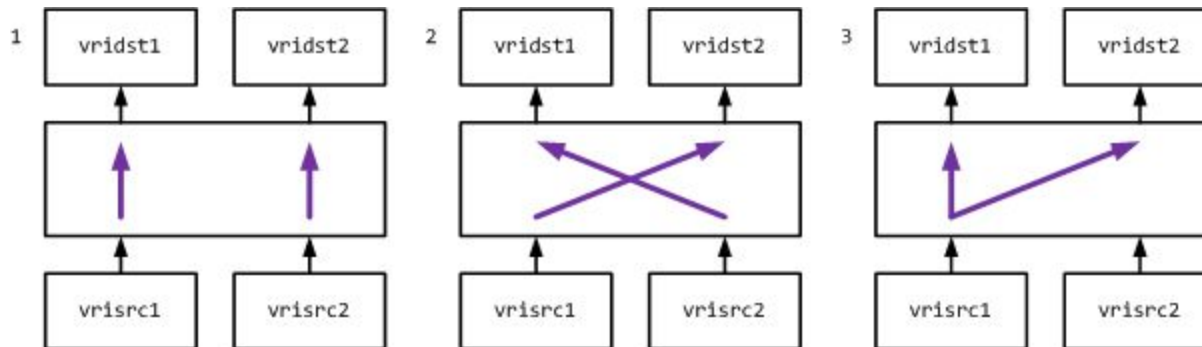
vri_test / test03

- Verifies data multicasting
- Scalar core configures vector core components
 - src1->dst1, dst2. dst1 set as master, dst2 has READY=1
- Scalar core initiates 2 concurrent vector transfers.
- Wait for transfer completion by polling the events from XBAR and EUs



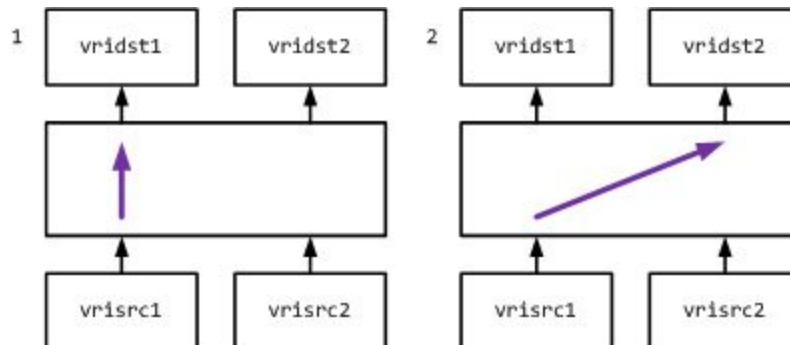
vri_test / test04

- Verifies automatic stepping through the EU and XBAR configuration slots
- Scalar core configures vector core components to execute 3 configuration slots in a succession.
 1. src1->dst1, src2->dst2
 2. src1->dst2, src2->dst1
 3. src1->dst1, dst2. dst1 set as master, dst2 has READY=1
- Scalar core initiates vector transfers which correspond to slot 1.
- Scalar core waits for the completion of the transfers which correspond to slot 3 by polling the corresponding events



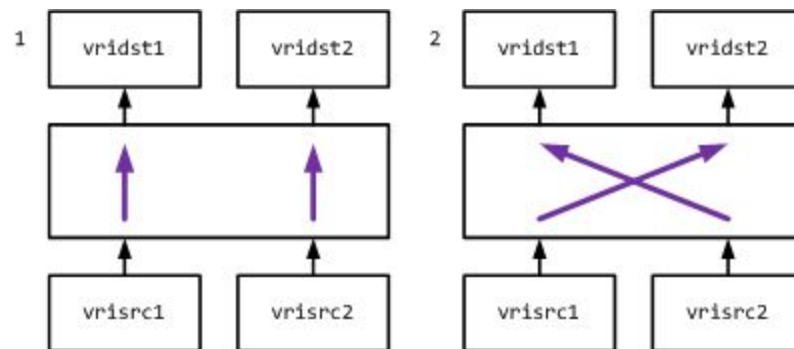
vri_test / test05

- Verifies deferred execution in XBAR
- Scalar core configures vector core components in slot 1
 - src1->dst1
- Scalar core initiates vector transfers which correspond to slot1.
- Without waiting for completion Scalar core configures vector core components in slot 2
 - src1->dst2
- Scalar core initiates vector transfers which correspond to slot 2. Vector core defers the execution of slot 2 until slot 1 is complete and src1 becomes available.
- Scalar core waits for the completion of the transfers which correspond to slot 2.



vri_test / test06

- Verifies deferred execution in XBAR and EUs
- Scalar core configures vector core components in slot 1
 - src1->dst1
 - src2->dst2
- Scalar core initiates vector transfers which correspond to slot1.
- Without waiting for completion Scalar core configures vector core components in slot 2
 - src1->dst2
 - src2->dst1
- Scalar core initiates vector transfers which correspond to slot 2. Vector core defers the execution of slot 2 until slot 1 is complete and EUs become available.
- Scalar core waits for the completion of the transfers which correspond to slot 2.



vri_test / test07

- Verifies execution priorities
- Scalar core configures vector core components to execute configuration slots 1 and 2 in a succession.
 1. src1->dst1
 2. src1->dst2
- Scalar core initiates vector transfers which correspond to slot 1.
- Without waiting for completion Scalar core configures vector core components in slot 3
 - src1->dst1
- Scalar core initiates vector transfers which correspond to slot 3. Vector core defers the execution of slot 3 until slots 1 and 2 are complete and EUs become available.
- The resulting succession of transfers:
 1. src1->dst1
 2. src1->dst2
 3. src1->dst1



dm2dm

- Verifies operation of the DM RAM blocks
 - dm_ram_1rw – Single port RAM with non-simultaneous read and write operations from a single address
 - dm_ram_1r1w – simple dual-port RAM with simultaneous one read and one write operations to different locations
- The test checks
 - Integration into the vector core structure
 - Operational modes of address generator
 - AG register and configuration
- Test runs continuously with the random vector sizes and VRI parameters for 1 ms



dm2dm

- Clean

```
make EXAMPLE=basic/dm2dm clean
```

- Build

```
make EXAMPLE=basic/dm2dm all
```

- Run

```
./build/Release/out/simsimd
```

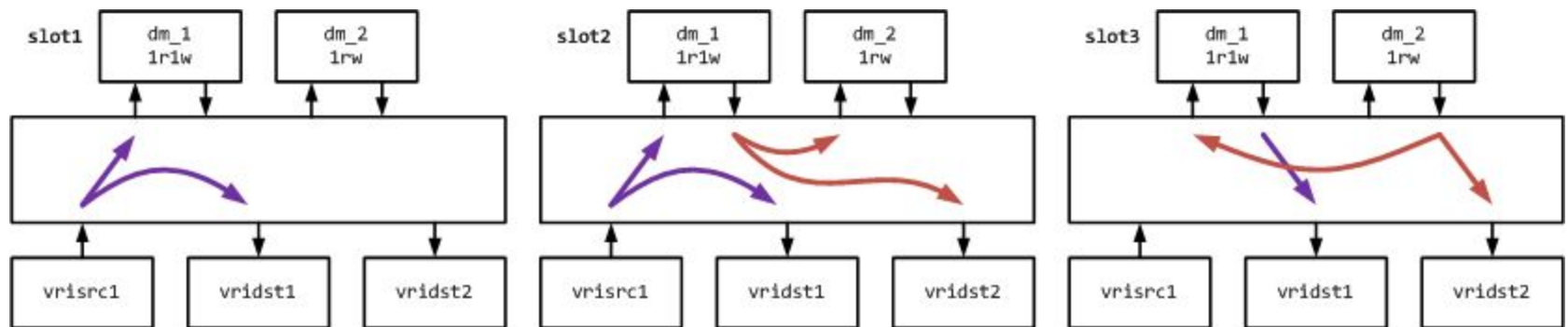
- Inspect the result:

```
In gtkwave File->Open New Window->trace.vcd
```



dm2dm

- Scalar core configures vector core components to execute configuration slots 1..3 in a succession.
 1. src1->dm1 (lower half), dst1
 2. src1->dm1 (upper half), dst1; dm1 (lower half)->dm2, dst2
 3. dm1 (upper half)->dst1; dm2-> dm1 (lower half),dm2
- Scalar core initiates vector transfers which correspond to slot1.



dm_init

- Verifies initialization of the DM block from .mat file
 - .mat file is generated with Matlab
- The test checks
 - Integration of matIO library
 - DM initialization functionality
- Test runs continuously with the random VRI parameters for 100 us



dm_init

- Clean

`make EXAMPLE=basic/dm_init clean`

- Build

`make EXAMPLE=basic/dm_init all`

- Generate initialization .mat file

Execute `./examples/basic/dm/init/mat/dm_init.m`

`dm_init.mat` should be created in the same directory

- Run

`./build/Release/out/simsimd`

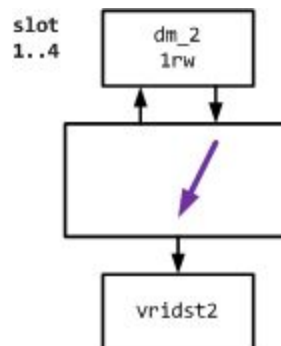
- Inspect the result:

In gtkwave File->Open New Window->trace.vcd



dm_init

- 4 regions of dm1 block are initialized from the file at before the simulation starts
 - Initialize with the data accepted by vridst
- Scalar core configures vector core components to configuration slots 1..3 in a succession.
 1. dm1-> dst1, Initialized region 1
 2. dm1-> dst1, Initialized region 2
 3. dm1-> dst1, Initialized region 3
 4. dm1-> dst1, Initialized region 4
- Scalar core initiates vector transfers which correspond to slot1.



transp

- Verifies operation of the Transparent EU blocks
 - Synchronous input-to-output transfer: via the register
 - Asynchronous input-to-output transfer: wires
- The test checks
 - Integration into the vector core structure
 - Operational of the basic EU block
 - Asynchronous operation inside EU
- Test runs continuously with the random vector sizes and VRI parameters for 100 us



transp

- Clean

```
make EXAMPLE=basic/transp clean
```

- Build

```
make EXAMPLE=basic/transp all
```

- Run

```
./build/Release/out/simsimd
```

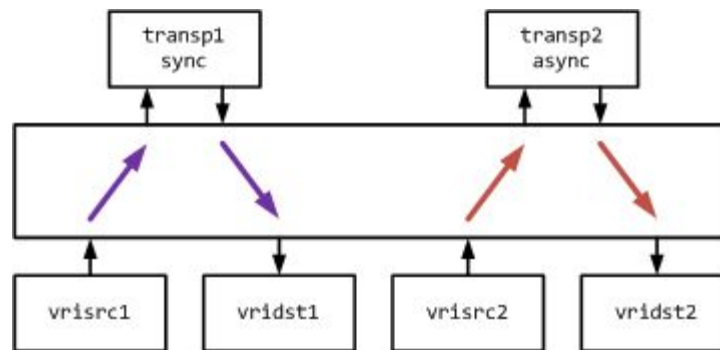
- Inspect the result:

```
In gtkwave File->Open New Window->trace.vcd
```



transp

- Scalar core configures vector core components to execute single configuration.
 - src1->transp1->dst1 (synchronously transparent EU)
 - src2->transp2->dst2 (asynchronously transparent EU)
- Scalar core initiates vector transfers which correspond to slot1.



TODO'S AND PLANS



Runtime Statistics

- For the specific application collect runtime usage data for the resources which were allocated in the preferences
 - Access to DMs and EUs. Are they actually used?
 - Which blocks need supporting command sequencing under the control of the Vector Core
 - Range of the execution indexes
 - Internals of the DMs and EUs:
 - Configuration and status slots , bitwidth of the fields
 - Execution modes
 - Depth of the FIFO for the execution indexes
 - EU operational modes
 - DM AG modes
 - Events which were issued and processed



Runtime Statistics

- Logging of the of the XBAR
 - Switching matrix
 - For the particular application not all of the switching routes are used.
 - Matrixes for data/valid and for ready can be different if data transfers to multiple destinations are used
 - Configuration slots, bitwidth of the fields
 - Execution modes
 - Events which were issued and processed



RTL Code and Testbench Generator

- Generate RTL code on the basis of the initial preferences and runtime statistics
 - Generate vector core and parameters for XBAR, DMs and EUs
- Use VRI interfaces or modules
 - Data injection
 - Data pickup
 - VRI protocol assertions
- Generate testbench
 - Verifies system integration of the vector core



Common Pool of Address Generators for DMs

- Additional cross-bar switch (AG -> 4way DMs) can make the area savings negligible



Debug Interface for the Vector Core

- Debug Interface for the Vector Core



Data Dump

- Data Dump



FXP

- FXP



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