

AN 797: Partially Reconfiguring a Design on Intel® Arria® 10 GX FPGA Development Board

Updated for Intel® Quartus® Prime Design Suite: 18.1



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Partially Reconfiguring a Design on Intel[®] Arria[®] 10 GX FPGA Development Board

This application note demonstrates transforming a simple design into a partially reconfigurable design and implementing the design on the Intel® Arria® 10 GX FPGA development board.

Partial reconfiguration (PR) feature allows you to reconfigure a portion of the FPGA dynamically, while the remaining FPGA design continues to function. You can create multiple personas for a particular region in your design, without impacting operation in areas outside this region. This methodology is effective in systems where multiple functions time-share the same FPGA device resources. The current version of the software introduces a new and simplified compilation flow for partial reconfiguration.

Partial reconfiguration has the following advantages over a flat design:

- · Allows run-time design reconfiguration
- Increases scalability of the design
- Reduces system down-time
- Supports dynamic time-multiplexing functions in the design
- Lowers cost and power consumption through efficient use of board space

Implementation of this reference design requires basic familiarity with the Intel Quartus® Prime FPGA implementation flow and knowledge of the primary Intel Quartus Prime project files. This tutorial uses the Intel Arria 10 GX FPGA development board on the bench, outside of the PCIe* slot in your workstation.

Related Information

- Intel Arria 10 FPGA Development Kit User Guide
- Partial Reconfiguration Concepts
- · Partial Reconfiguration Design Flow
- Partial Reconfiguration Design Considerations
- · Partial Reconfiguration Design Guidelines

Reference Design Requirements

This reference design requires the following:

- Installation and basic familiarity with the Intel Quartus Prime Pro Edition version 18.1 design flow and project files for the design implementation.
- Connection with the Intel Arria 10 GX FPGA development board on the bench.

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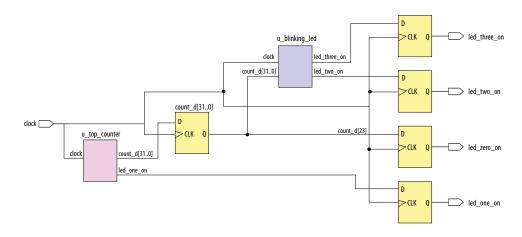
ISO 9001:2015 Registered



Reference Design Overview

This reference design consists of one 32-bit counter. At the board level, the design connects the clock to a 50 MHz source, and connects the output to four LEDs on the FPGA. Selecting the output from the counter bits in a specific sequence causes the LEDs to blink at a specific frequency.

Figure 1. Flat Reference Design without PR Partitioning



Reference Design Files

The partial reconfiguration tutorial is available in the following location:

https://github.com/intel/fpga-partial-reconfig

To download the tutorial:

- 1. Click Clone or download.
- 2. Click **Download ZIP**. Unzip the fpga-partial-reconfig-master.zip file.
- 3. Navigate to the tutorials/al0_pcie_devkit_blinking_led sub-folder to access the reference design.

The flat folder consists of the following files:

Table 1. Reference Design Files

| File Name | Description |
|------------------|--|
| top.sv | Top-level file containing the flat implementation of the design. This module instantiates the blinking_led sub-partition and the top_counter module. |
| top_counter.sv | Top-level 32-bit counter that controls LED[1] directly. The registered output of the counter controls LED[0], and also powers LED[2] and LED[3] via the blinking_led module. |
| blinking_led.sdc | Defines the timing constraints for the project. |
| | continued |



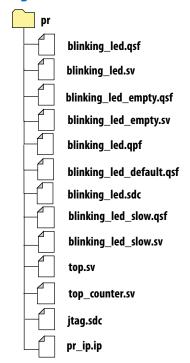


| File Name | Description |
|------------------|--|
| blinking_led.sv | This module acts as the PR partition. The module receives the registered output of top_counter module, which controls LED[2] and LED[3]. |
| blinking_led.qpf | Intel Quartus Prime project file containing the list of all the revisions in the project. |
| blinking_led.qsf | Intel Quartus Prime settings file containing the assignments and settings for the project. |

Note:

The pr folder contains the complete set of files you create using this application note. Reference these files at any point during the walkthrough.

Figure 2. Reference Design Files



Reference Design Walkthrough

The following steps describe the application of partial reconfiguration to a flat design. The tutorial uses the Intel Quartus Prime Pro Edition software for the Intel Arria 10 GX FPGA development board:

- Step 1: Getting Started on page 6
- Step 2: Creating a Design Partition on page 6
- Step 3: Allocating Placement and Routing Region for a PR Partition on page 7
- Step 4: Adding the Intel Arria 10 Partial Reconfiguration Controller IP Core on page 9
- Step 5: Defining Personas on page 11
- Step 6: Creating Revisions on page 13





- Step 7: Compiling the Base Revision on page 15
- Step 8: Preparing PR Implementation Revisions on page 16
- Step 9: Programming the Board on page 18

Step 1: Getting Started

To copy the reference design files to your working environment and compile the blinking_led flat design:

- 1. Create a directory in your working environment, a10_pcie_devkit_blinking_led_pr.
- 2. Copy the downloaded tutorials/a10_pcie_devkit_blinking_led/flat sub-folder to the directory, a10_pcie_devkit_blinking_led_pr.
- 3. In the Intel Quartus Prime Pro Edition software, click **File ➤ Open Project** and select blinking_led.qpf.
- 4. To compile the flat design, click **Processing** ➤ **Start Compilation**.

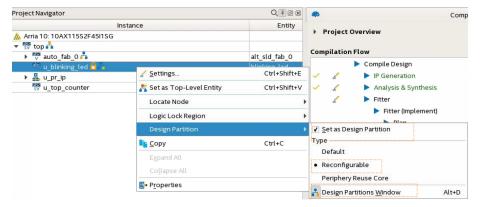
Step 2: Creating a Design Partition

You must create design partitions for each PR region that you want to partially reconfigure. You can create any number of independent partitions or PR regions in your design. This tutorial creates a design partition for the u_blinking_led instance.

To create design partition for partial reconfiguration:

 Right-click the u_blinking_led instance in the Project Navigator and click Design Partition ➤ Set as Design Partition. A design partition icon appears next to each instance that is set as a partition.

Figure 3. Creating Design Partitions from Project Navigator



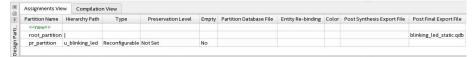
 To define the partition Type, right-click the u_blinking_led instance in the Hierarchy tab, click Design Partition ➤ Reconfigurable. You can only define the partition Type after setting the instance as a partition.

The design partition appears on the **Assignments View** tab of the Design Partitions Window.





Figure 4. Design Partitions Window



3. Edit the partition name in the Design Partitions Window by double-clicking the name. For this reference design, rename the partition name to pr partition.

Note: When you create a partition, the Intel Quartus Prime software automatically generates a partition name based on the instance name and hierarchy path. This default partition name can vary with each instance.

4. To export the finalized static region from the base revision compile, double-click the entry for root_partition in the **Post Final Export File** column, and type blinking_led_static.qdb.

Verify that the blinking_led.qsf contains the following assignments, corresponding to your reconfigurable design partition:

Related Information

Create Design Partitions for Partial Reconfiguration

Step 3: Allocating Placement and Routing Region for a PR Partition

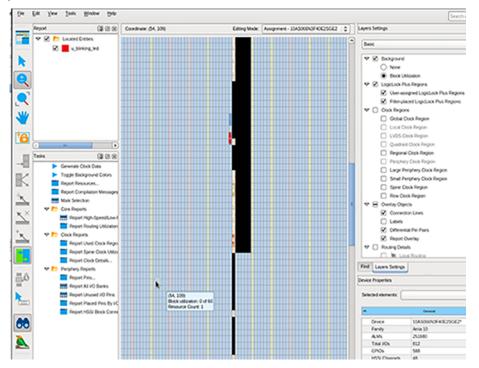
For every base revision you create, the PR design flow uses your PR partition region allocation to place the corresponding persona core in the reserved region. To locate and assign the PR region in the device floorplan for your base revision:

- Right-click the u_blinking_led instance in the Project Navigator and click Logic Lock Region ➤ Create New Logic Lock Region. The region appears on the Logic Lock Regions Window.
- Your placement region must enclose the blinking_led logic. Select the
 placement region by locating the node in Chip Planner. Right-click the
 u_blinking_led region name in the Logic Lock Regions Window and click
 Locate Node > Locate in Chip Planner.

The u_blinking_led region is color-coded.



Figure 5. Chip Planner Node Location for blinking_led



3. In the Logic Lock Regions window, specify the placement region co-ordinates in the **Origin** column. The origin corresponds to the lower-left corner of the region. For example, to set a placement region with (X1 Y1) co-ordinates as (69 10), specify the **Origin** as X69_Y10. The Intel Quartus Prime software automatically calculates the (X2 Y2) co-ordinates (top-right) for the placement region, based on the height and width you specify.

Note: This tutorial uses the (X1 Y1) co-ordinates - (69 10), and a height and width of 20 for the placement region. Define any value for the placement region, as long as the region covers the blinking_led logic.

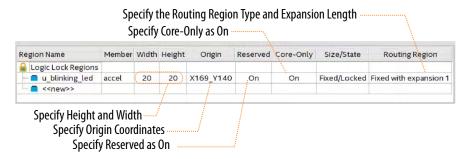
- 4. Enable the **Reserved** and **Core-Only** options.
- 5. Double-click the **Routing Region** option. The **Logic Lock Routing Region Settings** dialog box appears.
- 6. Select **Fixed with expansion** for the **Routing type**. Selecting this option automatically assigns an expansion length of 1.

Note: The routing region must be larger than the placement region, to provide extra flexibility for the Fitter when the engine routes different personas.





Figure 6. Logic Lock Regions Window



Verify that the blinking_led.qsf contains the following assignments, corresponding to your floorplanning:

```
set_instance_assignment -name PLACE_REGION "69 10 88 29" -to u_blinking_led set_instance_assignment -name RESERVE_PLACE_REGION ON -to u_blinking_led set_instance_assignment -name CORE_ONLY_PLACE_REGION ON -to u_blinking_led set_instance_assignment -name ROUTE_REGION "68 9 89 30" -to u_blinking_led
```

Related Information

- Floorplan the Partial Reconfiguration Design
- Applying Floorplan Constraints Incrementally

Step 4: Adding the Intel Arria 10 Partial Reconfiguration Controller IP Core

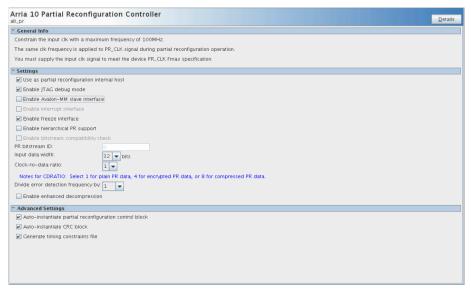
The Intel Arria 10 Partial Reconfiguration Controller IP core enables reconfiguration of the PR partition. This IP core uses JTAG to reconfigure the PR partition. To add the Intel Arria 10 Partial Reconfiguration Controller IP core to your Intel Quartus Prime project:

- Type Partial Reconfiguration in the IP Catalog (Tools ➤ IP Catalog).
- 2. Double-click the Intel Arria 10 Partial Reconfiguration Controller IP core.
- 3. In the Create IP Variant dialog box, type pr_ip as the file name, and then click Create. Use the default parameterization for pr_ip. Ensure that the Enable JTAG debug mode and Enable freeze interface options are turned on and Enable Avalon-MM slave interface option is turned off.





Figure 7. Intel Arria 10 Partial Reconfiguration Controller IP Core Parameters



- 4. Click **Finish**, and exit the parameter editor without generating the system. The parameter editor generates the pr_ip.ip IP variation file and adds the file to the blinking_led project.
 - Note: a. If you are copying the pr_ip.ip file from the pr folder, manually edit the blinking_led.qsf file to include the following line:

```
set_global_assignment -name IP_FILE pr_ip.ip
```

b. Place the IP_FILE assignment after the SDC_FILE assignments (jtag.sdc and blinking_led.sdc) in your blinking_led.qsf file. This ordering ensures appropriate constraining of the Partial Reconfiguration Controller IP core.

Note: To detect the clocks, the .sdc file for the PR IP must follow any .sdc that creates the clocks that the IP core uses. You facilitate this order by ensuring the .ip file for the PR IP core comes after any .ip files or .sdc files that you use to create these clocks in the .qsf file for your Intel Quartus Prime project revision. For more information, refer to the Partial Reconfiguration IP Solutions User Guide.

Related Information

Partial Reconfiguration IP Solutions User Guide

For information on all Partial Reconfiguration IP cores.

Updating the Top-Level Design

To update the top.sv file with the PR_IP instance:





1. To add the pr_{ip} instance to the top-level design, uncomment the following code block in top.sv file:

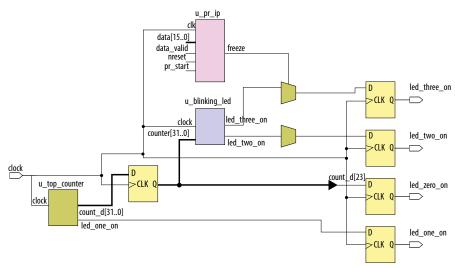
```
pr_ip u_pr_ip
        .clk
                        (clock),
                        (1'b1),
        .nreset
        .freeze
                        (freeze),
                        (1'b0),
        .pr_start
                                            // ignored for JTAG
                        (pr_ip_status),
        .status
                        (16'b0),
        .data
                        (1'b0),
        .data_valid
        .data_ready
                        ()
    );
```

2. To force the output ports to logic 1 during reconfiguration, use the freeze control signal output from PR_IP. Uncomment the following lines of code:

```
assign led_two_on_w = freeze ? 1'b1 : pr_led_two_on;
assign led_three_on_w = freeze ? 1'b1 : pr_led_three_on;
```

3. To assign an instance of the default persona (blinking_led), update the top.sv file with the following block of code:

Figure 8. Partial Reconfiguration IP Core Integration



Step 5: Defining Personas

This reference design defines three separate personas for the single PR partition. To define and include the personas in your project:

1. Create three SystemVerilog files, blinking_led.sv, blinking_led_slow.sv, and blinking_led_empty.sv in your working directory for the three personas.





- Note: blinking_led.sv is already available as part of the files you copy from the flat/ sub-directory. You can simply reuse this file.
 - If you create the SystemVerilog files from the Intel Quartus Prime Text Editor, disable the Add file to current project option, when saving the files.

Table 2. Reference Design Personas

| File Name | Description | Code |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| blinking_led.sv | Default persona with same design as the flat implementation | `timescale 1 ps / 1 ps `default_nettype none |
| | | <pre>module blinking_led (</pre> |
| blinking_led_slo w.sv | LEDs blink slower | <pre>`timescale 1 ps / 1 ps `default_nettype none module blinking_led_slow (// clock input wire clock, input wire [31:0] counter, // Control signals for the LEDs output wire led_two_on, output wire led_tmee_on); localparam COUNTER_TAP = 27; reg led_two_on_r; reg led_three_on_r; assign led_two_on = led_two_on_r; assign led_three_on = led_three_on_r; always_ff @(posedge clock) begin</pre> |
| | | continued |



| File Name | Description | Code |
|---------------------------|--------------|--|
| blinking_led_emp ty.sv | LEDs stay ON | <pre>`timescale 1 ps / 1 ps `default_nettype none module blinking_led_empty(// clock input wire clock, input wire [31:0] counter, // Control signals for the LEDs output wire led_two_on, output wire led_three_on); // LED is active low assign led_two_on = 1'b0; assign led_three_on = 1'b0; //Lissy added all from here down // clock input wire clock, input wire [31:0] counter, // Control signals for the LEDs output wire led_two_on, output wire led_two_on, output wire led_three_on); // LED is active low assign led_two_on = 1'b0; assign led_tree_on = 1'b0; endmodule</pre> |

Related Information

Step 2: Creating a Design Partition on page 6

Step 6: Creating Revisions

The PR design flow uses the project revisions feature in the Intel Quartus Prime software. Your initial design is the base revision, where you define the static region boundaries and reconfigurable regions on the FPGA.

From the base revision, you create multiple revisions. These revisions contain the different implementations for the PR regions. However, all PR implementation revisions use the same top-level placement and routing results from the base revision.

To compile a PR design, you must create a PR implementation revision for each persona. In addition, you must assign revision types for each of the revisions. There are the following revision types:

- Partial Reconfiguration Base
- Partial Reconfiguration Persona Implementation

The following table lists the revision name and the revision type for each of the revisions:

Table 3. Revision Names and Types

| Revision Name | Revision Type |
|--------------------------|--|
| blinking_led.qsf | Partial Reconfiguration - Base |
| blinking_led_default.qsf | Partial Reconfiguration - Persona Implementation |
| blinking_led_slow.qsf | Partial Reconfiguration - Persona Implementation |
| blinking_led_empty.qsf | Partial Reconfiguration - Persona Implementation |





Setting the Base Revision Type

- 1. Click **Project** ➤ **Revisions**.
- 2. In Revision Name, select the blinking_led revision, and then click Set Current.
- 3. Click **Apply**. The blinking led revision displays as the current revision.
- To set the Revision Type for blinking_led, click Assignments ➤ Settings ➤ General.
- 5. For Revision Type, select Partial Reconfiguration Base, and then click OK.
- 6. Verify that the blinking led.qsf now contains the following assignment:

```
##blinking_led.qsf
set_global_assignment -name REVISION_TYPE PR_BASE
```

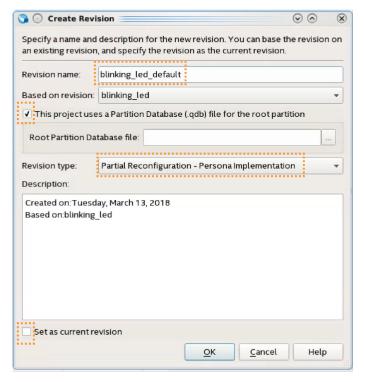
Creating Implementation Revisions

- 1. To open the **Revisions** dialog box, click **Project** ➤ **Revisions**.
- 2. To create a new revision, double-click << new revision>>.
- In Revision name, specify blinking_led_default and select blinking_led for Based on revision.
- 4. For the Revision type, select Partial Reconfiguration Persona Implementation.
- Enable This project uses a Partition Database (.qdb) file for the root partition. You do not need to specify the Root Partition Database file at this point. You can input this name at a later stage from the Design Partitions Window.





Figure 9. Creating Revisions



- 6. Similarly, set the **Revision type** for the other revisions:
 - blinking led slow
 - blinking_led_empty
- 7. Verify that each .qsf file now contains the following assignment:

```
set_global_assignment -name REVISION_TYPE PR_IMPL
set_instance_assignment -name ENTITY_REBINDING place_holder -to
u_blinking_led
```

where, $place_holder$ is the default entity name for the newly created PR implementation revision.

Step 7: Compiling the Base Revision

- 1. Set blinking led as the Current Revision.
- 2. Ensure the blinking_led.qsf contains the following assignments:

```
set_global_assignment -name GENERATE_PR_RBF_FILE ON set_global_assignment -name ON_CHIP_BITSTREAM_DECOMPRESSION OFF
```

These assignments allow the assembler to automatically generate the required PR bitstreams.

 To compile the base revision, click Processing ➤ Start Compilation. Alternatively, the following command compiles the base revision:

```
quartus_sh --flow compile blinking_led -c blinking_led
```





On successful compilation, the blinking_led_static.qdb file is generated in the output_files directory.

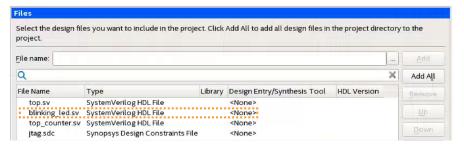
Related Information

- Floorplan the Design
- Applying Floorplan Constraints Incrementally

Step 8: Preparing PR Implementation Revisions

You must prepare the PR implementation revisions before you can compile and generate the PR bitstream for device programming. This setup includes adding the static region . qdb file as the source file for each implementation revision. In addition, you must specify the corresponding entity of the PR region.

- To set the current revision, click Project ➤ Revisions, select blinking_default
 as the Revision name, and then click Set Current.
- To verify the correct source for each implementation revision, click Project ➤
 Add/Remove Files in Project. The blinking_led.sv file appears in the file
 list.



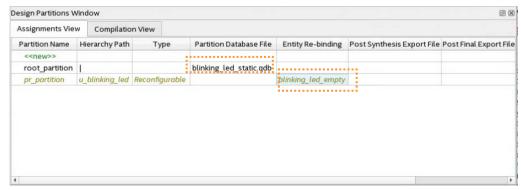
3. Repeat steps 1 through 2 to verify the other implementation revision source files:

| Implementation Revision Name | Source File |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| blinking_led_default | blinking_led.sv |
| blinking_led_empty | blinking_led_empty.sv |
| blinking_led_slow | blinking_led_slow.sv |

4. To verify the .qdb file associated with the root partition, click Assignments ➤ Design Partitions Window. Confirm that the Partition Database File specifies the blinking_led_static.qdb file, or double-click the Partition Database File cell to specify this file.







Alternatively, the following command assigns this file:

```
set_instance_assignment -name QDB_FILE_PARTITION \
   output_files/blinking_led_static.qdb -to |
```

5. In the **Entity Re-binding** cell, specify the entity name of each PR partition that you change in the implementation revision. For the blinking_led_default implementation revision, the entity name is blinking_led. In this tutorial, you overwrite the u_blinking_led instance from the base revision compile with the new blinking_led entity.

| Implementation Revision Name | Entity Re-binding |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| blinking_led_default | blinking_led |
| blinking_led_slow | blinking_led_slow |
| blinking_led_empty | blinking_led_empty |



Verify that the following line now exists in the .qsf:

6. Before compiling the implementation revision, ensure the blinking_led_default.qsf contains the following assignments:

```
set_global_assignment -name GENERATE_PR_RBF_FILE ON set_global_assignment -name ON_CHIP_BITSTREAM_DECOMPRESSION OFF
```

These assignments allow the assembler to automatically generate the required PR bitstreams.





7. To compile the design, click **Processing ➤ Start Compilation**. Alternatively, the following command compiles this project:

```
quartus_sh --flow compile blinking_led -c blinking_led_default
```

8. Repeat steps 1 through 7 to prepare blinking_led_slow and blinking led empty implementation revisions.

Note: You can specify any Fitter specific settings that you want to apply during the PR implementation compilation. Fitter specific settings impact only the fit of the persona, without affecting the imported static region.

Step 9: Programming the Board

Before you begin:

- 1. Connect the power supply to the Intel Arria 10 GX FPGA development board.
- 2. Connect the Intel FPGA Download Cable between your PC USB port and the Intel FPGA Download Cable port on the development board.

Note: This tutorial utilizes the Intel Arria 10 GX FPGA development board on the bench, outside of the PCIe slot in your host machine.

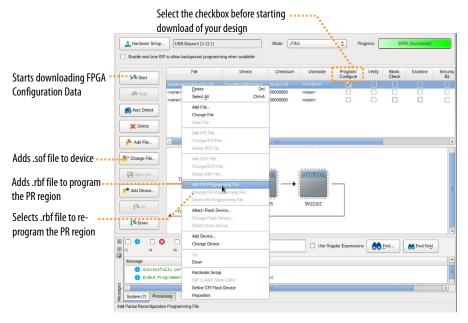
To run the design on the Intel Arria 10 GX FPGA development board:

- 1. Open the Intel Quartus Prime software and click **Tools** ➤ **Programmer**.
- 2. In the Programmer, click Hardware Setup and select USB-Blaster.
- 3. Click **Auto Detect** and select the device, **10AX115S2**.
- 4. Click **OK**. The Intel Quartus Prime software detects and updates the Programmer with the three FPGA chips on the board.
- 5. Select the 10AX115S2 device, click **Change File** and load the blinking_led_default.sof file.
- 6. Enable Program/Configure for blinking_led_default.sof file.
- 7. Click **Start** and wait for the progress bar to reach 100%.
- 8. Observe the LEDs on the board blinking at the same frequency as the original flat design.
- 9. To program only the PR region, right-click the blinking_led_default.sof file in the Programmer and click **Add PR Programming File**.
- 10. Select the blinking_led_default.pr_partition.rbf file.
- 11. Disable Program/Configure for blinking_led_default.sof file.
- 12. Enable **Program/Configure** for blinking_led_slow.pr_partition.rbf file and click **Start**. On the board, observe LED[0] and LED[1] continuing to blink. When the progress bar reaches 100%, LED[2] and LED[3] blink slower.
- 13. To re-program the PR region, right-click the .rbf file in the Programmer and click **Change PR Programing File**.
- 14. Select the .rbf files for the other two personas to observe the behavior on the board. Loading the blinking_led_default.pr_partition.rbf file causes the LEDs to blink at a specific frequency, and loading the blinking_led_empty.pr_partition.rbf file causes the LEDs to stay ON.





Figure 10. Programming the Intel Arria 10 GX FPGA Development Board



Troubleshooting PR Programming Errors

Ensuring proper setup of the Intel Quartus Prime Programmer and connected hardware helps to avoid any errors during PR programming.

If you face any PR programming errors, refer to *Troubleshooting PR Programming Errors* in the *Partial Reconfiguration User Guide* for step-by-step troubleshooting tips.

Related Information

Avoiding PR Programming Errors

Modifying an Existing Persona

You can change an existing persona, even after fully compiling the base revision.

For example, to cause the blinking_led_slow persona to blink even slower:

- In the blinking_led_slow.sv file, modify the COUNTER_TAP parameter from 27 to 28.
- 2. Recompile only the blinking_led_slow revision. There is no requirement to modify or recompile the other revisions.

Adding a New Persona to the Design

After fully compiling your base revisions, you can still add new personas and individually compile these personas.



For example, to define a new persona that keeps one LED on and the other LED off:

- 1. Copy blinking_led_empty.sv to blinking_led_wink.sv.
- 2. In the blinking_led_wink.sv file, modify the assignment, assign led_three_on = 1'b0; to assign led_three_on = 1'b1;.
- 3. Create a new implementation revision, blinking_led_wink, by following the steps in Creating Implementation Revisions on page 14.

Note: The blinking_led_wink revision must use the blinking_led_wink.sv file, and use the blinking_led_wink in the entity rebinding assignment.

4. Compile the revision by clicking **Processing** ➤ **Start Compilation**.

For complete information on partially reconfiguring your design for Intel Arria 10 devices, refer to *Creating a Partial Reconfiguration Design* in Volume 1 of the *Intel Quartus Prime Pro Edition Handbook*.

Related Information

- Creating a Partial Reconfiguration Design
- Partial Reconfiguration Online Training

Document Revision History for AN 797: Partially Reconfiguring a Design on Intel Arria 10 GX FPGA Development Board

| Date | Intel Quartus Prime Version | Changes |
|------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 2018.09.24 | 18.1.0 | Updated sections - Step 2: Creating a Design Partition, Step 7: Compiling the Base Revision and Exporting the Static Region, and Step 8: Preparing PR Implementation Revisions with the new PR flow that eliminates the need for manual export of finalized snapshot of the static region. Other minor text edits and image updates. |
| 2018.05.07 | 18.0.0 | Compilation flow change Other minor text edits |
| 2017.11.06 | 17.1.0 | Updated the Reference Design Requirements section with software version Updated the Flat Reference Design without PR Partitioning figure with design block changes Updated the Reference Design Files table with information on the Top_counter.sv module Updated the Partial Reconfiguration IP Core Integration figure with design block changes Updated the figures - Design Partitions Window and Logic Lock Regions Window to reflect the new GUI Text edits |
| 2017.05.08 | 17.0.0 | Updated software version in Reference Design Requirements section Added information about enable freeze interface option in Step 4: Adding the Partial Reconfiguration IP Core section Added information on the importance of SDC ordering in Step 4: Adding the Partial Reconfiguration IP Core section Added an overview on base, synthesis, and implementation revisions in Step 6: Creating Revisions section Text edits |
| 2016.12.21 | 16.1.0 | Initial release of the document |

