

CAD and Routing Architecture for Interposer-Based Multi-FPGA Systems

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ABSTRACT

Interposer-based multi-FPGA systems are composed of multiple FPGA dice connected through a silicon interposer. Such devices allow larger FPGA systems to be built than one monolithic die can accommodate and are now commercially available. An open question, however, is how efficient such systems are compared to a monolithic FPGA, as the number of signals passing between dice is reduced and the signal delay between dice is increased in an interposer system vs. a monolithic FPGA.

We create a new version of VPR to investigate the architecture of such systems, and show that by modifying the placement cost function to minimize the number of signals that must cross between dice we can reduce routing demand by 18% and delay by 2%. We also show that the signal count between dice and the signal delay between dice are key architecture parameters for interposer-based FPGA systems. We find that if an interposer supplies (between dice) 60% of the routing capacity that the normal (within-die) FPGA routing channels supply, there is little impact on the routability of circuits. Smaller routing capacities in the interposer do impact routability however: minimum channel width increases by 20% and 50% when an interposer supplies only 40% and 30% of the within-die routing, respectively. The interposer also impacts delay, increasing circuit delay by 34% on average for a 1 ns interposer signal delay and a four-die system. Reducing the interposer delay has a greater benefit in improving circuit speed than does reducing the number of dice in the system.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

B.7.1 [Integrated Circuits]: Types and Design Style—VLSI; B.7.2 [Integrated Circuits]: Design Aids—Placement and Routing

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General Terms

Algorithms, Design

Keywords

FPGA; Silicon interposer; 2.5D ICs

1. INTRODUCTION

Interposer-based multi-FPGA systems are composed of multiple FPGA dice, which are connected through a silicon interposer. The interposer is fabricated with an older technology than that used for the dies, and links between dice include both a micro-bump on each FPGA die and a metal wire on the interposer [12]. This results in a reduced connectivity between dice and increased delay for connections between dice, as compared to the total routing connectivity and the delay one can achieve within a single die. In this paper we present an architecture study of silicon interposer-based FPGAs that analyzes how the reduced connectivity and increased delay impact their performance.

The silicon interposer FPGA technology is interesting because it enables the creation of large FPGAs composed of small dies and also of very large FPGAs, with higher logic capacity than one can achieve with a single die. Such FPGA systems are sometimes called 2.5D FPGAs, since they make use of vertical stacking of dies on an interposer to enable higher integration levels.

Being able to make large FPGAs with multiple smaller dies is particularly interesting at the beginning of a new manufacturing process, when defect densities are high. In such a case, good-die yield drops dramatically as the die size increases, and this drastically impacts the availability of large FPGAs early in the process lifetime.

The idea of using 3 dimensions to design FPGAs is not new. [1] proposed the creation of 3D FPGAs by stacking 2D FPGAs and connecting them with solder bumps. Lin et al also studied 3D FPGAs, but using a different approach [9], proposing multiple active layers, with different FPGA functions in each. While promising, both approaches have manufacturing challenges: [1] requires a higher density of through-silicon vias than can currently be manufactured and the multiple active layers required by [9] are not yet widely available. In contrast, silicon interposers linked to dies via microbumps are now manufacturable.

Chaware et al presented Xilinx's approach to silicon interposer FPGAs [4]. They describe the physical characteristics

of their implementation, including the bump pitch and estimates of the amount of die-to-die connectivity and the die-to-die delay. However [4] does not analyze the architecture question of the routability of the resulting system, nor describe possible CAD optimizations, which are the questions we investigate.

The main contributions of our work are as follows:

- A detailed study of how the multi-FPGA system routability is impacted by the amount of connectivity between dice provided by the interposer.
- An Analysis of the impact of the interposer on timing.
- Modification of the VPR CAD tool to model and target 2.5D silicon interposer-based FPGAs, as well as CAD changes to optimize for 2.5D FPGAs.
- Analysis of the commercially available Xilinx Virtex-7 silicon interposer FPGAs [14][15]. We measure the connectivity reduction and delay increase between dies caused by the interposer on such FPGAs in order to see where these devices lie within the architecture space we explore.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 gives more information about silicon interposer technology. Section 3 describes the changes made to the FPGA architecture description and to VPR to target 2.5D FPGAs. Section 4 describes optimizations made to the VPR placement algorithm to improve quality on such FPGAs and Section 5 presents architectural results for 2.5D FPGAs.

2. SILICON INTERPOSER BACKGROUND

As mentioned in the previous section, interposer-based FPGAs allow the creation of chips larger than a single die, making a "More than Moore" improvement on the size and number of logic elements possible, and with chips combined far more tightly and with more connectivity than if they were on separate boards connected through conventional means.

The improvement in the number of logic elements of 2.5D FPGAs over conventional ones is very significant. Xilinx's largest interposer-based FPGA, the Virtex-7 XC7V2000T, has 4 dies (which Xilinx calls Super Logic Regions) and 1.954 million logic elements [15], while the largest non-interposer Virtex-7 die (the XC7VX980T), has 979k logic elements and Altera's largest FPGA, the Stratix V 5SGXBB, has 952k logic elements [2]. Even though all these FPGAs use a 28 nm process, silicon interposer technology allows the creation of FPGAs with twice the resources possible on even an extremely large single die.

Another major advantage of interposer-based FPGAs comes at the beginning of a new manufacturing process, when the defect density is high [12]. Bigger dice suffer a much reduced yield compared to smaller dice, and this greatly affects the supply and cost of top-of-the-line FPGAs to early adopters.

To illustrate this impact, consider a new process in which the defect density is $1/cm^2$, which is a reasonable value early in the process lifecycle, and the die area is $6cm^2$, which roughly matches the size of the largest member of a high-end FPGA family such as Virtex 7. Using the Poisson Yield Model [6], the yield is only 0.25% of die. If instead the chip is composed of four $1.5cm^2$ dies, the yield is 22%. This

means that a 12 inch silicon wafer with $730cm^2$ of area would produce on average 0.3 working $6cm^2$ dies, while the same wafer would produce on average 107 working $1.5cm^2$ dies. Therefore, as a $6cm^2$ chip would be composed of four $1.5cm^2$ dies, the wafer would yield 26.75 systems on average, as the "assembly yield" of placing these four die on an interposer is very high [4]. Hence the number of interposer-based FPGAs created from the same silicon wafer would be almost $100\times$ greater than a monolithic FPGA of the same size.

When the process matures and the defect density decreases this advantage drops significantly. Consider a mature process with defect density of $0.1/cm^2$. The yield for a $6cm^2$ die is 55% and the yield for a $1.5cm^2$ die is 86%. Hence the number of single die FPGAs created from a $730cm^2$ silicon wafer would be 66.9 and the number of interposer-based FPGAs created would be 104.6. While the interposer-based FPGA still has a yield advantage it might not lead to a major cost advantage, particularly when the cost of the interposer and assembling the die to it are included. For the large, state-of-the-art FPGAs that are built early in a process cycle and heavily used for prototyping, however, there is clearly a compelling cost advantage to an interposer-based solution.

2.1 Virtex-7 Interposer-based FPGAs

The Xilinx 2.5D FPGAs from the Virtex-7 family are currently the only commercially available silicon interposer-based FPGAs. As described in Section 3 we are studying the impact of several key interposer parameters on the performance of the multi-FPGA system, including (i) the percentage of the wiring normally present between rows of the FPGA which are cut when crossing between dice, and (ii) the extra delay (vs. a normal connection between adjacent rows) added when one must traverse the interposer. To locate where Virtex-7 lies in this architecture space, we combined published information on the implementation of Xilinx's interposer-based FPGAs [4] with a detailed analysis of the XC7V2000T FPGA routing resources visible in the *Vivado Device View*.

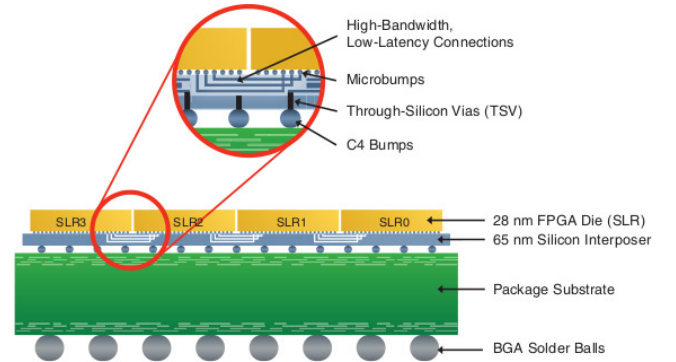


Figure 1: Lateral view of an interposer-based FPGA[14]. The FPGA dice are at the top, and are connected to the silicon interposer through microbumps. The interposer is then connected to the substrate through C4 bumps.

The XC7V2000T is composed of four identical dice arranged such that the vertical routing crosses between the dice. Each horizontal edge of each die has 280 groups of

48 length-12 wires crossing the interposer, which sums to a total of 13440 wires between dice. There are also 40 clock wires crossing the interposer. The average number of wires per vertical channel of this FPGA is 210 and there are approximately 280 vertical channels on the FPGA, resulting in approximately 58800 vertical wires crossing a horizontal outline within a die. Hence the number of wires which cross the interposer is about 23% of the total number of within-die vertical wires.

The 28nm dies are connected to the 65nm silicon interposer through microbumps with a $45\mu\text{m}$ pitch. Hence the area occupied by microbumps at one edge of one die is $13440 \times (45\mu\text{m})^2 = 27\text{mm}^2$. If we assume each die is $7 \times 12\text{mm}$, as presented by Chaware et al. in [4], the bumps have to be spread out near the edge and need to go as far as 2.25mm away from the edge of the die. This greater distance from the border increases the length of the inter-die connections, and along with the presence of the micro-bumps and their capacitance, leads to an increased delay for these crossing wires vs. that of a typical on-die routing wire. Chaware et al. state that the latency to cross the interposer is approximately 1ns . For comparison, a typical medium length 28 nm FPGA routing wire (e.g. spanning four logic blocks) has a delay of approximately 125 ps, while a longer wire (e.g. spanning 12 logic blocks) has a delay of approximately 250 ps.

Overall, these interposer-based FPGAs have increased delay and reduced connectivity between dies, with approximately 23% of the usual number of vertical wires crossing between dies and approximately 1ns of increased delay to cross the interposer.

3. ARCHITECTURE MODELS

To properly model a silicon interposer FPGA, the popular FPGA exploration toolset, Verilog-to-Routing (VTR) [13], was used. The logic synthesis portions of the flow (ODIN II and ABC) were left untouched, while the placement and routing portion of the flow (VPR [3]) was modified to model and optimize for interposer-based FPGAs. The modifications were made in such a way that they require no changes to any of the input files, so one can experiment with interposer-based FPGAs with any existing benchmark circuits and any existing VPR-format FPGA architecture description simply by specifying appropriate command-line parameters.

The following parameters were added to VPR: *number of cuts*, *% wires cut*, *increased delay*, and *interposer-routing interface*. These parameters describe the interposer portion of the 2.5D FPGA as detailed below.

3.1 Number of cuts

Number of cuts describes how many cuts were made to the interposer-based FPGA versus a monolithic die. If *number of cuts* equals 1 then there are 2 dies, and so on. We investigate values of 1 and 3 (2 and 4 dies). The Virtex 7 family has members with *number of cuts* = 2 and 3. Figure 2 shows a sample architecture with one cutline.

3.2 % wires cut

This variable describes and models the reduced connectivity between different dice by specifying the fraction of routing wires that are removed at the border between dice. For example, if a channel had 200 wires and *% wires cut* was 70, 140 of them would be cut and only 60 would pass

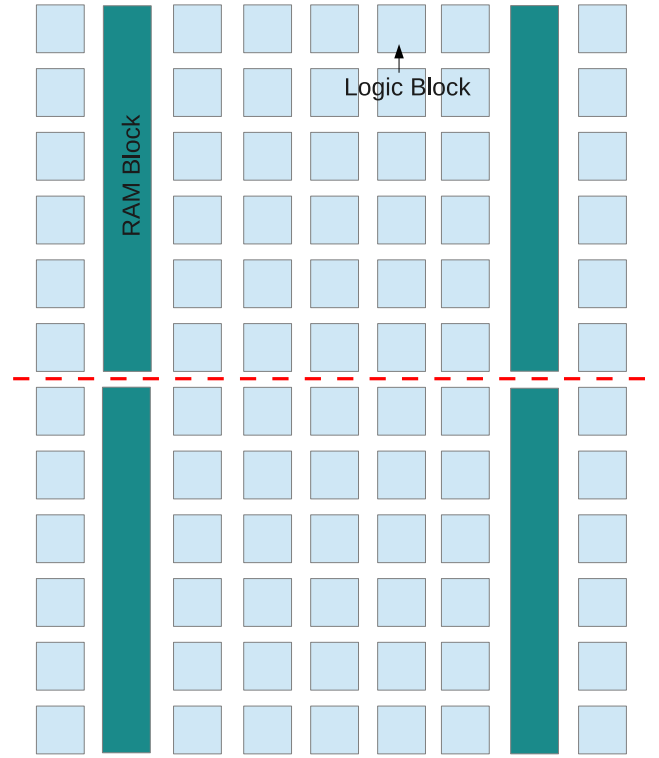


Figure 2: A sample two-die / 1-cutline architecture containing both logic blocks and RAM blocks.

through the interposer. Higher values of *% wires cut* make an interposer easier to manufacture, and can reduce the interposer delay by allowing all the microbumps linking dice to be placed near the die edge. However, the higher *% wires cut* is, the less routable the multi-die system becomes. As described in 2.1, the Virtex 7 family has *% wires cut* = 77%.

3.3 Increased delay

Interposer wires are longer and wider than on-die wires and have microbumps on each end. *Increased delay* models the resulting larger delay when compared with wires which are internal to a die. A reasonable estimate for this variable is around 1ns , as presented by Chaware et al[4].

3.4 Interposer-Routing interface

In a simple architecture, the vertical routing wires that can not connect to an interposer wire are dangling. Since interposer wires are scarce, we want to be able to study architectures in which the interposer wires are more accessible. To do so, we have enhanced the router to understand the following interposer-routing interfaces.

(a) Fan-in Transfer for Interposer Wires

For an architecture with *% wires cut* = 0, all vertical routing wires have a corresponding interposer wire that connects them to the adjacent die. Practical interposers, however, can only accommodate a fraction of all vertical routing wires. So, we place a multiplexer at the input of each available interposer wire and connect some adjacent “dangling” vertical routing wires to the multiplexer. This allows for additional flexibility

in routing. As an example, if $\% \text{ wires cut} = 75\%$, 3 of every 4 interposer wires are cut. Therefore, we place a 4-to-1 multiplexer at the input of the one interposer wire that is not cut, and we connect the 3 vertical routing wires that do not have a corresponding interposer wire to the multiplexer.

- (b) Fan-out Transfer for Interposer Wires
We allow the interposer wire output to drive not only its own corresponding vertical wire at the other side of the cut, but also the other “dangling” vertical routing wires that are not driven by anything because their corresponding interposer wires are cut.
- (c) Bidirectional Interposer Wires
We allow interposer wires to be driven from one end or the other.

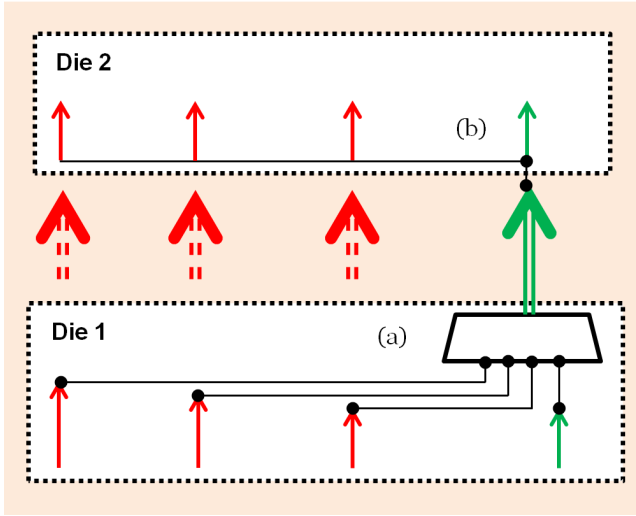


Figure 3: For channel width of 4 and 75% wires cut, only 1 interposer wire exists (in green) and 3 interposer wires are cut (in red). (a) Fan-in Transfer for Interposer Wires allows red routing wires in die 1 to cross the interposer layer. (b) Fan-out Transfer for Interposer Wires allows the output of the interposer wire to drive wires in other tracks in die 2.

3.5 Implementation

To model an interposer-based multi-FPGA system in the CAD tool, we use the existing VPR infrastructure for monolithic FPGAs and make several modifications to it.

First, The presence of multiple dice in an interposer-based FPGA was modeled by creating horizontal cuts in the FPGA. The *number of cuts* is specified by the user, and we use that to determine the y-location of the cuts. The cutlines “snap to the grid” such that the height of all dies are equal and no cutline cuts through a block. For instance, a RAM block of height 4 must remain as a unit and can not be sliced by a cutline.

Second, knowing the location of the cutlines, the placer uses the (x, y) coordinate of any pin or block to determine which die it belongs to. The placer uses this information as well as *interposer delay* to better decide where to place

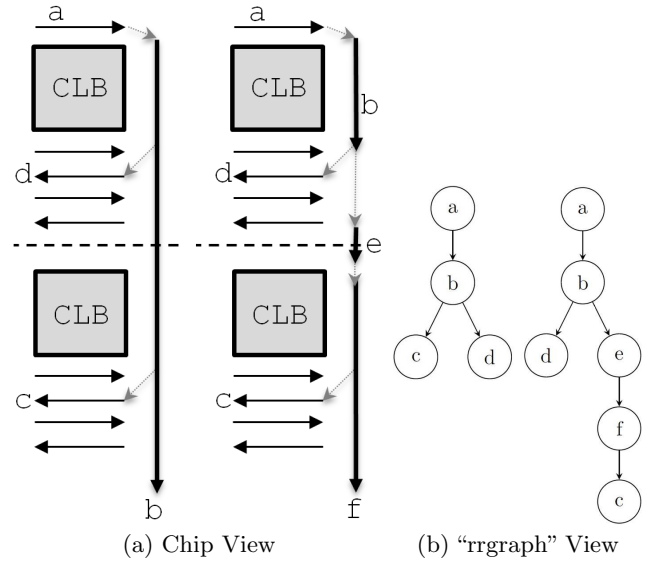


Figure 4: (a) Left: regular routing wire connectivity. Right: replacing the long wire with two wires and connecting them via an interposer wire. (b) Left: rrgraph for regular connectivity. Right: rrgraph after modifications

each block in order to minimize the cost of inter-die signal transfer as described in Section 4.1.

Third, the Routing Resource Graph (*rrgraph*) must be modified. The *rrgraph* is the data structure that defines all the available routing wires and switches in the FPGA, as well as the delay of each. Given a suitable *rrgraph*, the VPR router can implement circuits in the desired FPGA, and the VPR timing analyzer can estimate their delay. In the experiments below, we use an architecture that has only unidirectional wires [10], as these are the dominant routing architecture in modern FPGAs. Such wires can only be driven at their beginning.

Previous work by Andre et al [7] modified the *rrgraph* by directly removing $\% \text{ wires cut}$ percent of edges from the graph at nodes located at the cutline and increased the switch delay of the remaining edges of the nodes at the cutline. While this is a reasonable method to model such architectures, it makes it difficult to experiment with different routing-interposer interfaces such as placing input muxes for interposer wires. Therefore, we modify the *rrgraph* differently to more accurately reflect the interposer layer:

For every vertical routing wire in the channel, we add a new routing node (“*interposer node*”) into the *rrgraph*. Then, we determine routing nodes (e.g. vertical routing wires) that cross a cutline in the *rrgraph*, and we replace them with 2 routing nodes: one that is above the cutline and one that is below the cutline. We properly transfer fan-ins and fan-outs of the original node onto the two newly created nodes and we connect the two nodes using an interposer node. Finally, we remove *all* edges from $\% \text{ wires cut}$ percent of interposer nodes and increase the switch delay of output edges of the remaining interposer nodes by *increased delay*. Figure 4 shows an example of these operations.

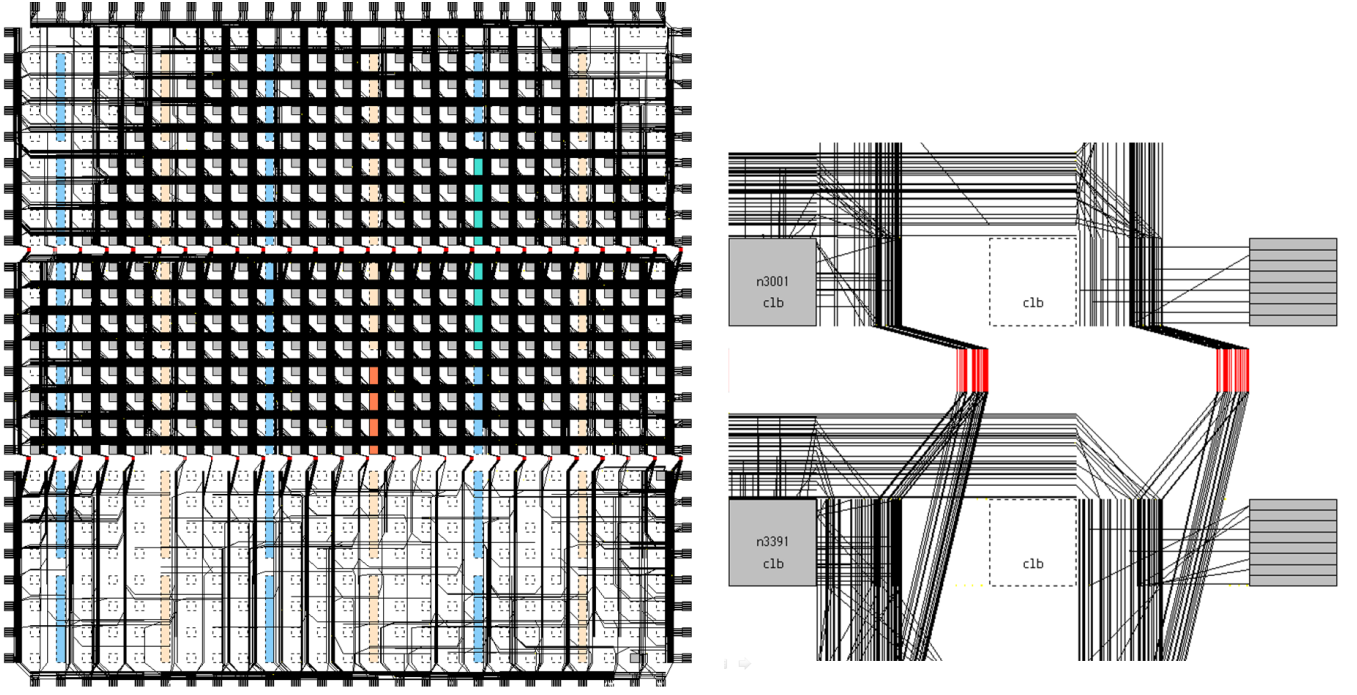


Figure 5: VPR Graphical User Interface. Left: Full chip view. Right: Connectivity at the cutline. Interposer wires are drawn in red. Due to limited number of interposer wires, some vertical routing wires are not able to connect to any interposer wire and are left dangling. Routing wires do not cross the cutline.

As illustrated in Figure 5, no vertical routing wires cross a cutline boundary and a fraction of them connect to other dies via interposer wires.

4. CAD ENHANCEMENTS

4.1 Placer Optimization

Placement is crucial in mitigating the impact of the reduced wiring and increased delay when crossing between dice; a good placement should minimize the number of signals crossing between dice, particularly time-critical ones. VPR uses 2 different costs as the metrics for its placer algorithm: the timing cost and the bounding box (wiring) cost. We modified the placer's bounding box and timing costs to account for the increased latency to cross the interposer and for the reduced wire capacity close to the cutlines, as the wire availability becomes more sparse.

4.1.1 Placer timing cost

The usual VPR timing cost is a (criticality-weighted) summation of the estimated delay (given the current placement) of every connection required by the circuit [11]:

$$Timing_Cost = \sum_{\forall i,j \in circuit} delay(\Delta x_{ij}, \Delta y_{ij}) \times criticality(i,j) \quad (1)$$

where ij denotes a connection from block i to block j that exists in the circuit netlist.

This cost function assumes that the FPGA is homogeneous and consequently the delay between 2 points (x_1, y_1) and (x_2, y_2) only depends on $(\Delta x, \Delta y)$. This is obviously not

true for interposer-based FPGAs, as the cutlines make them heterogeneous in the y direction. To solve this problem and improve the quality of the results, an extra term was added to the delay function. The delay function becomes:

$$delay(i,j) = delay(\Delta x_{ij}, \Delta y_{ij}) + times_crossed(i,j) \times delay_increase \quad (2)$$

where $times_crossed(i,j)$ is the number of times this path has to cross the interposer to go from (x_i, y_i) to (x_j, y_j) and $delay_increase$ is the timing penalty of crossing the interposer.

4.1.2 Placer wiring cost

The bounding box cost estimates the amount of wiring required for a net, based on the number of pins and size of the net's bounding box. VPR's original formulation is [3]:

$$wiring_cost_{orig} = \sum_{n=1}^{N_{nets}} q(n) \times \left[\frac{bb_x(n)}{avg_chanx_W(n)} + \frac{bb_y(n)}{avg_chany_W(n)} \right] \quad (3)$$

where $bb_x(n)$ and $bb_y(n)$ are the dimensions of the bounding box of net n in the x and y directions, respectively. avg_chanx_W and avg_chany_W are the average x -directed and y -directed channel widths over this bounding box. Finally, $q(n)$ is a function obtained from [5] which models the fact that bounding boxes underpredict the required routing for high fanout nets. $q(n)$ slowly increases with the fanout

of net n , rising from 1 for nets with 3 or fewer terminals to 2.79 for nets with 50 terminals.

VPR's wiring cost also considers the FPGA to be homogeneous, and uses only the number of nets, the size of the net's bounding box and the average number of wires per channel to calculate the cost. Thus, to account for the reduced connectivity near the cutlines an extra cost term, cut_cost , was created. This new cost is added to (3) to create the total wiring cost.

$$wiring_cost = wiring_cost_{orig} + cut_cost \quad (4)$$

In [7], Andre et al. tested several different cut_cost formulations, as well as different weighting for each. They found that the following cut_cost results in the best quality of results in terms of minimum routable channel width and critical path delay.

$$cut_cost = \sum_{n=1}^{N_{nets}} C' \times bbHeight(i) \times times_crossed(n) \quad (5)$$

where

$$C' = \frac{ratio_wires_cut}{avg_chany_W(n)} \quad (6)$$

$bbHeight(n)$ is the height of the bounding box of the net n and $ratio_wires_cut$ is the ratio of wires cut at the cutline. This formulation of C' ensures that the new cost term is of roughly the same magnitude as $wire_cost_{orig}$ in (3) and that it is weighted more heavily for interposer architectures in which the wiring between dice is more scarce.

4.2 Router Optimization

Once the Routing Resource Graph was modified as detailed in Section 3, the VPR router adapted automatically to the interposer architecture. However, the router's *lookahead algorithm* which decides the front on which the router should expand the current search to the destination was not interposer-aware. Hence it took a long time to converge to a good routing decision.

The VPR router uses the following to calculate a cost for any routing element on the route from i to j :

$$Cost(k) = Criticality(i, j) \times Delay_{Elmore}(k, topology) + [1 - Criticality(i, j)] \times Congestion(k) \quad (7)$$

Given this cost function, router's lookahead algorithm determines the total cost of the route from i to j when routing node n is used:

$$Total_Cost(n) = \sum_{\forall l \in RT(i, n)} Cost(l) + \alpha \times ExpectedCost(n, j) \quad (8)$$

where $RT(i, n)$ is the set of all routing nodes used so far from i to n and α is a constant number that determines the aggressiveness of the directed search. α of 0 results in a purely Breadth First Search of the routing graph from i to j . VPR's original $ExpectedCost(n, j)$ function is [3]:

$$ExpectedCost(n, j) = Criticality_{fac} \times T_{delay} + (1 - Criticality_{fac}) \times ExpectedCongestionCost(n, j); \quad (9)$$

T_{delay} is an estimate of the delay that the router predicts it will see on the route from n to j . Since (9) assumes a homogeneous FPGA, T_{delay} does not include the additional delay some routes experience by going through the interposer. Thus, for interposer-based architectures, we have replaced T_{delay} in (9) with T'_{delay} to include the delay of expected interposer hops that are on the way from n to j .

$$T'_{delay} = T_{delay} + T_{interposer} \times ExpectedInterposerHops \quad (10)$$

The interposer-aware router lookahead is able to make routing decisions quicker given the large delay difference of a path that crosses the interposer as opposed to a path that doesn't.

4.3 Effectiveness of the enhancements

For all experiments in this paper, the remaining architecture parameters of the FPGA are taken from the "flagship" architecture of the VTR project (*k6_frac_N10_mem32K_40nm.xml*). The parameters of this architecture are in line with both current commercial FPGAs and academic research into best practices. It consists of logic clusters with 10 fracturable 6-LUTs per block ($N=10, k=6$), and also includes 32kb RAM blocks and DSP blocks configurable to perform 9×9 , 18×18 or 36×36 multipliers. The delay values in the architecture are taken from 40 nm circuit simulations and 40 nm commercial FPGAs. It uses unidirectional routing, with all wire segments having length $L = 4$.

We used VPR 7.0, with the enhancements we detailed above, and the architecture file *k6_frac_N10_mem32K_40nm* in the experiments below. All experiments targeted the smallest FPGA (with number of rows equal to number of columns) which could accommodate a benchmark circuit; this represents a very full FPGA with little white space left, and hence presents a difficult case to an interposer-based FPGA as no die can be left mostly empty.

Figures 6 and 7 show the efficacy of the five placer wiring cost modifications as their weight, C varies. Each point in the graphs is the geometric mean of the results with % wires cut = 60 and 80, and the results for 60% and 80% are themselves geometric means of the results of 6 circuits from the VTR benchmark suite [13]: *stereovision0*, *stereovision1*, *mkDelayWorker32B*, *mkSMAdapter4B*, *or1200* and *blob.merge*. These values for % wires cut were chosen because they in the likely range of wires which can cross the interposer without exceeding the microbump capacity, as described in Section 2.1. The *area-delay product* is the product of the *minimum channel width* and the *critical path delay*. To obtain the *critical path delay* the circuits were run with a low stress routing with a channel width, $W = 1.3 \times minW$, where $minW$ is the minimum channel width for which the circuit is still routable.

The best C value and the resulting performance for each term is summarized in Table 1. Note that cost term (5) with weighting $C = 1.0$ has the best performance; this is the configuration used in the rest of our experiments.

We believe the key to the good performance of this cost function is that it produces gradual gains as bounding boxes

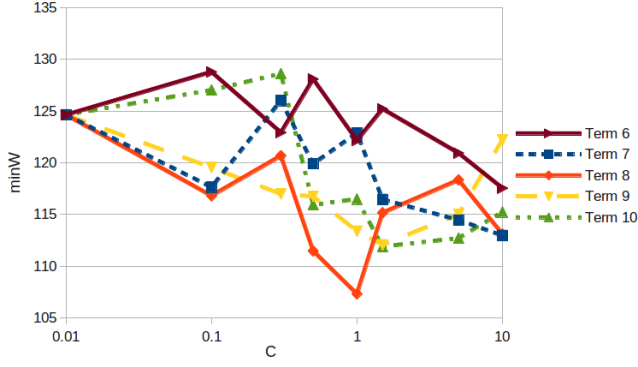


Figure 6: Minimum channel width vs. weighting for different *cut_cost* terms.

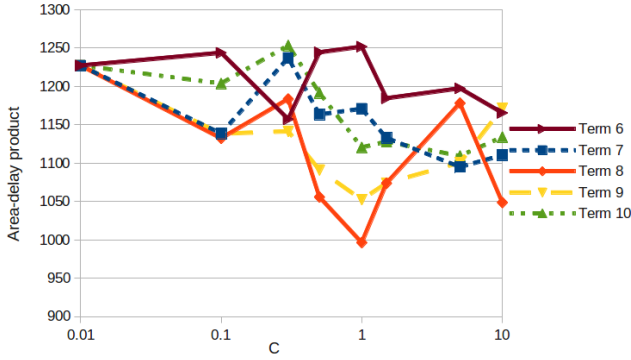


Figure 7: Area-delay product vs. weighting for different *cut_cost* terms.

Term	Best C	minW	crit_path(ns)	Area-delay
None	-	124.636	9.844	1226.955
??	0.3	122.929	9.413	1157.09
??	5	114.444	9.565	1094.68
5	1	107.303	9.285	996.26
??	1	113.381	9.280	1052.16
??	5	112.703	9.841	1109.11

Table 1: Best weighting and performance for each *cut_cost* term.

crossing the cutline shrink to be closer and closer to being captured entirely on one side of the cutline. Consider for example the 3 bounding boxes shown in Figure 8. Note that bounding box (a) and (b) both cross the cutline and hence are penalized equally by (??), while bounding box (c) does not cross a cutline and hence is not penalized. However, bounding box (b) is mostly on the lower side of the cutline; it is more likely that later smaller placement changes will result in the bounding box moving entirely below the cutline, reducing interposer wiring demand. Cost function terms (5) and (??) will both penalize bounding box (a) more than bounding box (b) to guide placement to gradually move bounding boxes to one side or the other of a cutline. Figure 7 shows that these are the two best performing *cut_cost* terms.

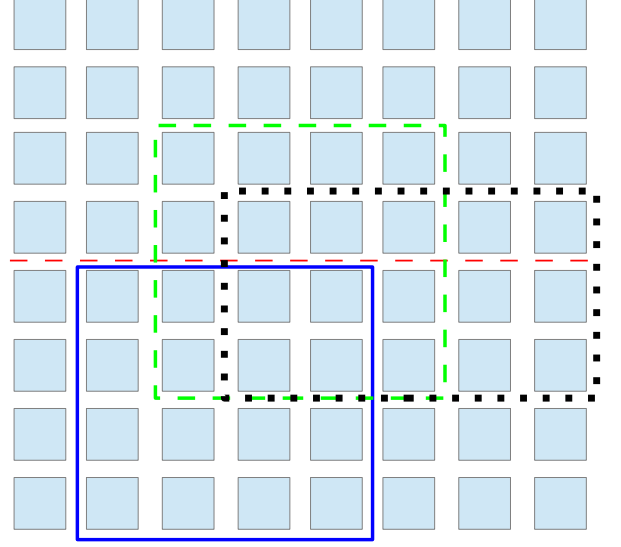


Figure 8: Illustration of three different scenarios for the wiring cost. The dashed green box shows a case where (a) it crosses the interposer, the dotted black box shows a case where (b) it barely crosses the cutline, and the solid blue one shows a case where (c) the bounding box does not span the cutline.

Figure 9 shows the minimum channel width for different values of % wires cut when there are no optimizations and when *cut_const* (5) is used. Figure 10 compares result quality with both enhanced timing and wiring cost functions. These experiments were run with term (5), and are the geometric means of the runs with % wires cut = 60, 70, 80.

The graphs show that combining the timing with the bounding box optimizations led to an average of 20% improvement on the area-delay product and the most significant contribution was made by incorporation of *cut_cost* into the wire cost function.

5. ARCHITECTURE RESULTS

Using the best CAD settings found in Section 4 we analyzed the impact of three key architecture parameters: % wires cut, delay increase and number of cuts. All the experiments were run with the eight largest circuits from the VTR benchmark [13], namely: *bgm*, *LU8PEEng*, *LU32PEEng*,

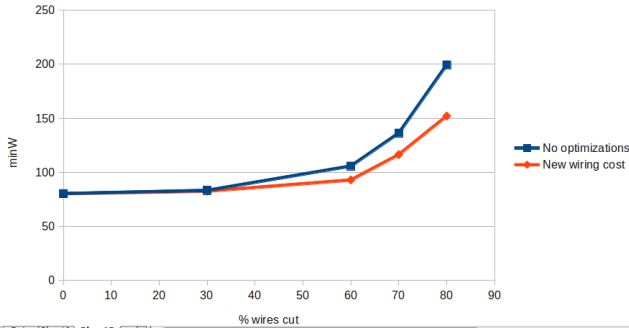


Figure 9: Minimum channel width vs. % wires cut.

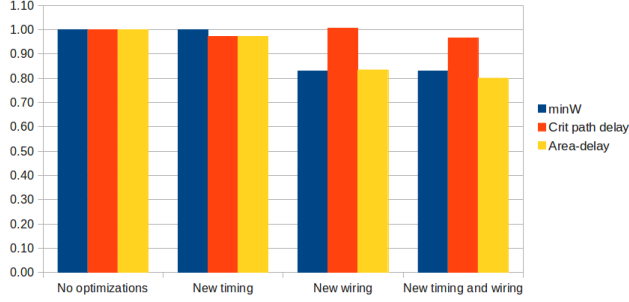


Figure 10: Performance of different placer optimizations, relative to the original VPR results. The area-delay product is calculated as the product $minW \times criticalpathdelay$.

mcml, *mkDelayWorker32B*, *stereovision0*, *stereovision1* and *stereovision2*. The size of these circuits ranges from 9,100 to 153,000 primitives (LUTs, FFs, etc.), with an average size of 52,600 primitives. All results are the geometric mean over all circuits for a given interposer architecture.

5.1 Interposer Wiring Capacity (% wires cut)

To analyze the impact of the number of cut wires we ran experiments varying only this parameter while leaving the number of cuts and the increased delay constant. The values used for these parameters were *number of cuts* = 3 (corresponding to four dice) and *increased delay* = 1ns, as these values are similar to those of the *XC7V2000T* device.

Figure 11 shows the graph of minimum channel width versus % wires cut. It can be noted from this graph that the minimum channel width increases slowly up to 60% of wires cut, indicating that the placement engine is able to avoid saturating the interposer routing until that point. When more than 60% of the wires are cut however (i.e. the interposer provides less than 40% of the usual within-die routing capacity), the minimum channel width grows rapidly indicating that the interposer routing bandwidth has become a limiting factor. The minW value at 60% is 20% greater than with no wires cut, while at 70% it is 52% above and at 80% it is 125% larger than the minW with no cut wires.

The critical path delay, depicted in Figure 12, on the other hand, is not strongly influenced by the percentage of wires cut, as the critical path delay at 60% of the wires cut is essentially the same as at 0% wires cut. At 80% of the wires cut the critical path delay does rise somewhat, by 6%; this is due to two factors: the placement is being modified

to improve routability at the expense of timing, and some circuitous routes are occurring due to saturated interconnect across the interposer.

Tables 2 and 3 show the minimum channel width and critical path delay for each circuit. The trends for individual circuits follow those of the averages quite closely.

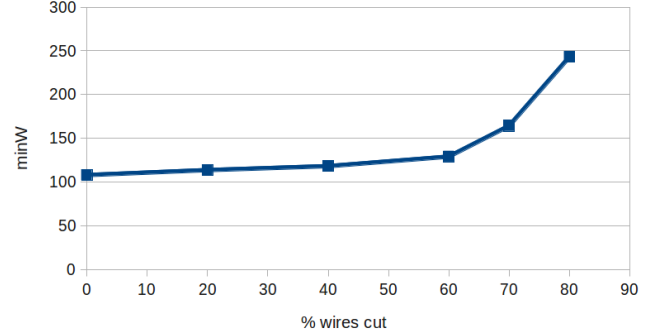


Figure 11: Minimum channel width vs. % wires cut for 3 cuts and 1ns of delay increase.

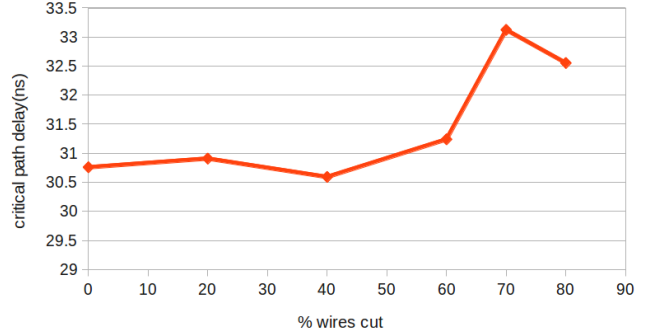


Figure 12: Critical path delay vs. % wires cut for 3 cuts and 1ns of delay increase.

% wires cut	0	20	40	60	70	80
bgm	114	128	124	132	152	226
LU32PEEng	172	178	182	218	304	426
LU8PEEng	110	116	118	128	158	236
mcml	108	124	128	116	152	218
mkDelayWorker32B	76	80	82	88	100	132
stereovision0	62	60	70	88	110	166
stereovision1	104	108	116	120	178	312
stereovision2	162	164	168	194	244	360
Geometric mean	108	114	118	129	164	243

Table 2: Minimum channel width when *number of cuts* = 3 and *increased delay* = 1ns.

Figure 13 provides an alternative way to visualize the relationship between interposer routing supply and routability. This figure shows how the geometric average minimum channel width required within the FPGA dice varies as the geometric average of the *absolute* number of wires crossing the interposer in each channel varies, again for 4-die system.

% wires cut	0	20	40	60	70	80
bgm	35.1	33.6	32.2	32.9	37.8	40.3
LU32PEEng	115	114	114	114	115	113
LU8PEEng	118	117	119	116	117	124
mcml	82.3	82.9	84.0	83.4	88.3	85.7
mkDelayWorker32B	11.0	12.3	12.0	12.3	14.4	12.8
stereovision0	6.9	7.8	7.0	7.4	7.6	7.0
stereovision1	11.6	9.2	10.4	11.0	11.6	11.8
stereovision2	23.3	25.4	23.9	24.9	25.6	24.8
Geometric mean	30.8	30.9	30.6	31.2	33.1	32.6

Table 3: Critical path delay (in ns) when number of cuts = 3 and increased delay = 1ns.

When 108 tracks cross the interposer, the interposer channels have the same capacity as the vertical routing channels within each FPGA die. As fewer wires cross the interposer, the channel width required within the FPGA dice increases to compensate for the routing difficulty in crossing the interposer. The increase is gradual as the interposer routing is reduced from 108 tracks per channel to 52 tracks per channel; over this range the routing per channel required in the FPGA dice increases from 108 tracks per channel to 129 tracks per channel. As the routing crossing the interposer is further reduced however, it becomes very difficult to increase the within-die routing sufficiently to compensate. At 49 tracks crossing the interposer channels, for example, the within-die routing must have a channel width of 243 tracks to successfully route the designs. Clearly the CAD tools have the ability to trade-off interposer routing for within-die routing over a reasonable range but below a certain level (48% of the original within-die minimum channel width in our experiments) routability becomes almost solely limited by the wiring crossing the interposer and further reduction in interposer routing is not productive.

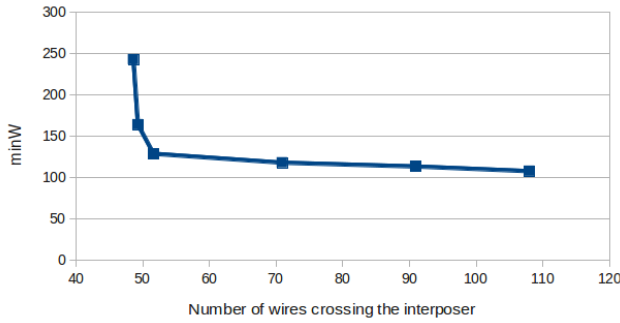


Figure 13: Geometric mean of required intra-die minimum channel width vs. geometric mean of the number of wires crossing the interposer for 3 cuts and 1ns of delay increase.

5.2 Circuit Speed vs. Interposer Delay

To investigate the impact of the interposer delay (*delay increase*), we kept the number of cuts constant at 3 while *delay increase* was swept between 0 and 1.5ns.

Figure 14 shows critical path delay versus % wires cut for 4 different values of *delay increase*. The penalty in critical path delay is significant, ranging between 5 and 9 times the

interposer *delay increase*, when compared to the case where the interposer adds no delay. Note that the 0% wires cut with a 0 ns *delay increase* in Figure 14 corresponds to a traditional monolithic FPGA. The speed of an interposer-based FPGA is strongly correlated to *delay increase*: a 0.5ns interposer delay increases the critical path delay by 20%, while a 1ns interposer delay increases critical path delay by approximately 35% vs. a monolithic FPGA. Once again, the critical path increase shows little correlation to the % wires cut, however. Tables 4, 5, 3 and 6 show the critical path delay for each circuit for each of the different values of *delay increase*. Once again the results for individual circuits closely parallel the overall averages.

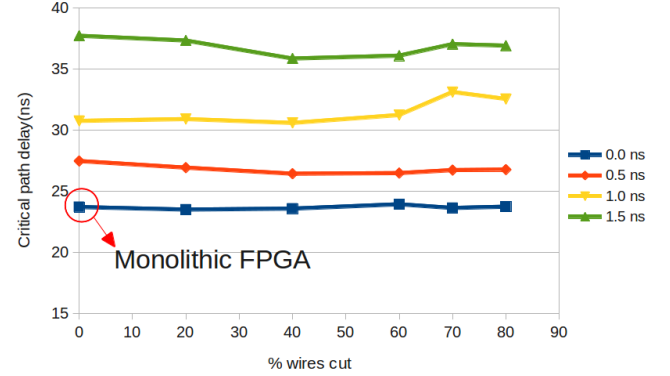


Figure 14: Critical path delay vs. % wires cut for 3 cuts and 0.0, 0.5, 1.0 and 1.5ns of delay increase.

% wires cut	0	20	40	60	70	80
bgm	25.9	26.3	25.8	26.1	25.8	26.7
LU32PEEng	113	113	117	118	113	114
LU8PEEng	115	114	116	115	118	115
mcml	77.2	78.7	79.5	80.5	77.3	76.7
mkDelayWorker32B	7.8	7.6	7.5	7.7	7.5	7.6
stereovision0	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
stereovision1	6.0	6.2	5.9	6.3	6.2	6.2
stereovision2	18.0	17.1	17.1	17.5	17.6	17.7
Geometric mean	23.7	23.5	23.6	23.9	23.6	23.7

Table 4: Critical path delay (in ns) when number of cuts = 3 and increased delay = 0ns.

% wires cut	0	20	40	60	70	80
bgm	31.6	30.3	29.2	29.2	29.9	31.6
LU32PEEng	119	114	115	114	115	115
LU8PEEng	118	116	119	117	114	115
mcml	82.6	82.7	79.6	81.9	84.5	82.6
mkDelayWorker32B	9.8	10.6	10.4	9.6	10.2	9.1
stereovision0	5.7	5.3	4.8	4.9	4.9	4.8
stereovision1	8.0	7.5	7.4	8.2	7.9	8.0
stereovision2	20.1	19.7	20.3	19.9	20.2	21.6
Geometric mean	27.5	26.9	26.4	26.5	26.7	26.8

Table 5: Critical path delay (in ns) when number of cuts = 3 and increased delay = 0.5ns.

% wires cut	0	20	40	60	70	80
bgm	47.2	52.4	43.1	42.7	44.8	48.3
LU32PEEng	115	112	117	114	116	113
LU8PEEng	161	159	122	146	118	129
mcml	94.0	86.0	93.9	88.7	77.3	87.5
mkDelayWorker32B	15.3	13.8	14.3	15.3	17.9	15.4
stereovision0	7.5	9.4	8.9	7.8	9.6	8.3
stereovision1	14.6	12.0	13.1	12.7	14.6	14.8
stereovision2	29.9	30.3	28.7	30.3	30.1	29.8
Geometric mean	37.7	37.3	35.9	36.1	37.0	36.9

Table 6: Critical path delay (in ns) when number of cuts = 3 and increased delay = 1.5ns.

5.3 Impact of Number of Dice

To examine the impact of the number of die used to construct an interposer-based FPGA, we varied the number of cuts from 1 to 3 (which varies the number of die from 2 to 4). In these experiments, the *delay increase* was kept constant at 1ns.

As shown in Figure 15, the number of cuts does have an impact on the minimum channel width, but not a very large or constant one. At 80% of wires cut the experiments with 2 and 3 cuts had the minimum channel width only 8% and 10%, respectively, greater than the scenario with only 1 cut. At lower values of % wires cut the difference was even smaller.

Figure 16 shows that the number of dice in an interposer-based FPGA impacts circuit speed significantly, as the critical path delay rises significantly as systems have more cuts. Recall that a monolithic FPGA has a geometric average critical path delay of 23.7ns for our test architecture. With *number of cuts* = 1 the critical path delay increases by 3 to 4 ns, while with *number of cuts* = 2 the critical path delay increases by 5 to 6 ns. With *number of cuts* = 3, the critical path delay is typically 7 ns higher than that of a monolithic FPGA.

Tables 7, 8, 9, 10, 2 and 3 show the minimum channel width and critical path delay for each circuit for each of the different scenarios. The critical path results for individual circuits again follow the overall averages well. Some of the minimum channel widths for individual circuits show anomalous trends as the number of cutlines increase, however. For example, *mcml* often has a smaller minimum channel width with 2 cuts than with 1 cut. This may be due to a circuit structure that leads to easier division into thirds than halves, but also likely indicates room for further CAD optimization.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

We have extended VPR to model and optimize for interposer-based multi-FPGA systems. While such systems are now a commercial reality, we do not know of any prior study of their key architectural parameters. We found that by modifying VPR’s placement cost function we could improve the routability (reduce minW) by 18%, while simultaneously improving speed by 2%. Interestingly, we found that a smooth cost function that less precisely models the interposing wiring demand outperformed direct monitoring of the number of required interposer connections during annealing.

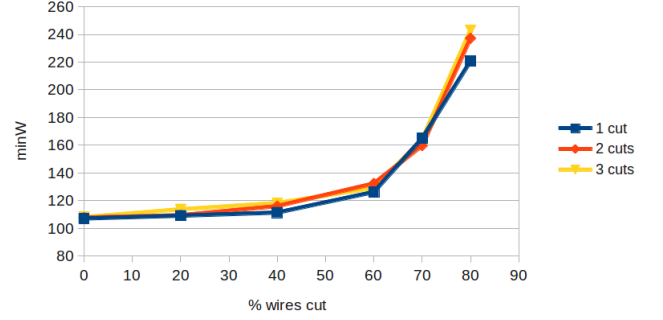


Figure 15: Minimum channel width vs. % wires cut for 1, 2 and 3 cuts and 1ns of delay increase.

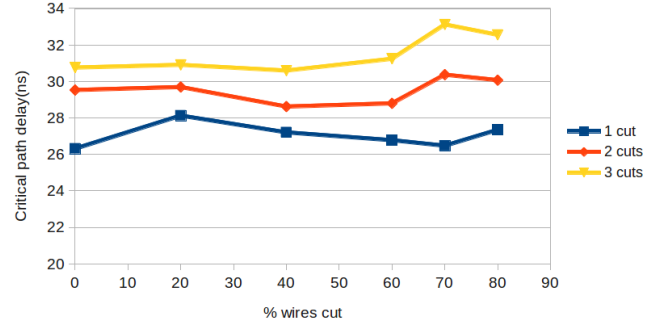


Figure 16: Critical path delay vs. % wires cut for 1, 2 and 3 cuts and 1ns of delay increase.

% wires cut	0	20	40	60	70	80
bgm	114	114	122	126	142	156
LU32PEEng	170	176	182	206	318	396
LU8PEEng	110	114	116	138	164	236
mcml	108	114	106	124	150	238
mkDelayWorker32B	74	78	80	88	98	138
stereovision0	62	60	62	76	132	146
stereovision1	102	104	106	108	144	186
stereovision2	160	158	164	200	264	432
Geometric mean	107	109	111	126	165	221

Table 7: Minimum channel width when number of cuts = 1 and increased delay = 1ns.

% wires cut	0	20	40	60	70	80
bgm	26.5	32.1	28.3	30.2	27.5	30.0
LU32PEEng	113	113	113	115	114	111
LU8PEEng	117	118	116	114	114	116
mcml	82.5	82.0	83.0	84.5	83.2	77.9
mkDelayWorker32B	11.2	11.4	11.2	9.9	10.6	11.5
stereovision0	4.5	5.1	5.0	4.9	4.9	5.4
stereovision1	7.4	8.2	8.4	7.2	7.2	7.9
stereovision2	21.3	23.1	20.9	22.3	21.6	20.9
Geometric mean	26.3	28.1	27.2	26.8	26.5	27.3

Table 8: Critical path delay (in ns) when number of cuts = 1 and increased delay = 1ns.

% wires cut	0	20	40	60	70	80
bgm	114	116	130	140	172	272
LU32PEEng	170	180	186	198	264	426
LU8PEEng	110	114	116	124	158	246
mcml	108	110	126	138	114	150
mkDelayWorker32B	76	80	82	88	100	132
stereovision0	62	58	60	88	114	166
stereovision1	104	108	116	136	184	296
stereovision2	160	156	162	188	246	362
Geometric mean	108	109	116	132	160	237

Table 9: Minimum channel width when number of cuts = 2 and increased delay = 1ns.

% wires cut	0	20	40	60	70	80
bgm	31.0	30.3	28.3	36.1	35.9	37.5
LU32PEEng	113	113	119	113	117	112
LU8PEEng	118	118	117	116	118	114
mcml	82.9	86.3	81.3	80.9	82.4	82.8
mkDelayWorker32B	12.3	12.1	9.8	11.1	13.5	11.3
stereovision0	6.4	5.7	6.3	5.3	5.3	5.9
stereovision1	9.3	10.4	9.5	9.6	10.2	9.9
stereovision2	22.9	24.2	24.0	21.6	24.2	25.5
Geometric mean	29.5	29.7	28.6	28.8	30.4	30.1

Table 10: Critical path delay (in ns) when number of cuts = 2 and increased delay = 1ns.

We defined three key architecture parameters for interposer-based FPGAs, and used this extended VPR to analyze their impact on minimum channel width and critical path delay. We found that the *minimum channel width* increases steeply after more than 60% of the within-die wires are cut at the interposer, and when 80% of wires are cut the *minimum channel width* is more than double that required by a monolithic FPGA. The Xilinx *XC7V2000T* FPGA has 77% of the normal wiring cut at the interposer, indicating that commercial interposer-based FPGAs will require high-quality CAD optimization to maintain good routability. The *critical path delay* is not strongly influenced by the % wires cut but is strongly influenced by the interposer delay and the number of cuts. Our results show that the critical path usually crosses the interposer cutline more than once, as the *critical path delay* is increased by more than the interposer delay increase. Increasing the number of dice in an interposer-based FPGA does not significantly impact the *minimum channel width*, but does lead to a larger *critical path delay*.

There are many interesting CAD and architecture questions for interposer-based FPGAs which we plan to investigate. Currently the wires that cross the interposer are accessed with the same switch structure as other wires in the FPGA. Since interposer wires are more scarce, possibly these wires should have larger multiplexers feeding them, which would make them easier to use; this may help routability of the system. Such changes will have to be carefully considered however, to make sure the FPGA can still be laid out as an array of regular tiles. Alternative CAD flows to improve the interposer routability are also possible. For example, instead of following the synthesize, place and route CAD flow of a conventional FPGA, we could add a partitioning step before placement which would divide the circuit into one

partition per die. Such a flow may improve routability, as a partitioner's main focus is minimizing the number of cut signals. Enhanced partitioners will be required, as current partitioners such as hMetis [8] cannot model the heterogeneous balance constraint (i.e. use no more than the available device logic, RAM, DSP and I/O blocks in any die) present in FPGAs. Additionally, by dividing the placement problem into two pieces – partitioning and within-die placement – we may increase the critical path delay as we can no longer globally optimize the placement of timing critical paths in one unified placement step. Nonetheless, this is a viable alternative approach and a comparison to the approach taken in this paper would be very interesting.

7. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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