Final Project: FPGA-Based Real-Time Heart Rate Monitoring System

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Introduction

The objective of this project was to design and implement a **real-time heart rate monitoring system** using an FPGA. The system processes signals from a **PPG/ECG heart rate sensor**, filters noise, calculates beats per minute (BPM), and displays the result on a **7-segment display or LED indicators**. The implementation was carried out using **Vivado** with **VHDL** for hardware description and **digital signal processing (DSP) techniques** to extract heart rate data.

This project aligns with FPGA-based **real-time medical applications**, ensuring fast and efficient heart rate detection compared to software-based implementations.

Equipment Used

Hardware:

- Xilinx Nexys A7-100T FPGA Board (Artix-7)
- PPG/ECG Heart Rate Sensor
- 7-Segment Display / LED Indicators
- USB Cable for FPGA Programming

Software:

- Xilinx Vivado (for RTL Design and Bitstream Generation)
- VHDL (for FPGA Logic Implementation)
- Simulation Tools (for validating digital signal processing algorithms)

Procedure

Step 1: Setting Up Vivado and FPGA Board

- 1. Download and install Vivado Design Suite.
- 2. Install **Digilent Board Files** to configure the Nexys A7-100T FPGA.
- 3. Create a new Vivado Project and select Artix-7 (XC7A100TCSG324-1) as the FPGA device.

Step 2: Implementing the FPGA Design

- 1. Creating and Adding VHDL Files:
 - o Signal Acquisition Module (Captures heart rate sensor data)
 - o **Digital Filtering Module** (Removes noise from the raw signal)
 - Heart Rate Calculation Module (Detects peaks and calculates BPM)
 - o **Display Interface Module** (Drives 7-segment display and LEDs)
- 2. Vivado Design Flow:
 - o Write VHDL Code for each module.
 - o Define top-level entity to connect all components.
 - o Verify port mapping and signal connections.

Step 3: Configuring Constraints File (.xdc)

- 1. Assign **FPGA pins** for input and output signals.
- 2. Define clock constraints for timing analysis.
- 3. Ensure **IOSTANDARD LVCMOS33** for proper signal interfacing.

Example of Constraints File:

```
## Clock Signal (100 MHz)
set_property PACKAGE_PIN E3 [get_ports clk]
set_property IOSTANDARD LVCMOS33 [get_ports clk]
## Heart Rate Sensor Input
```

set_property IOSTANDARD LVCMOS33 [get_ports heart_rate]

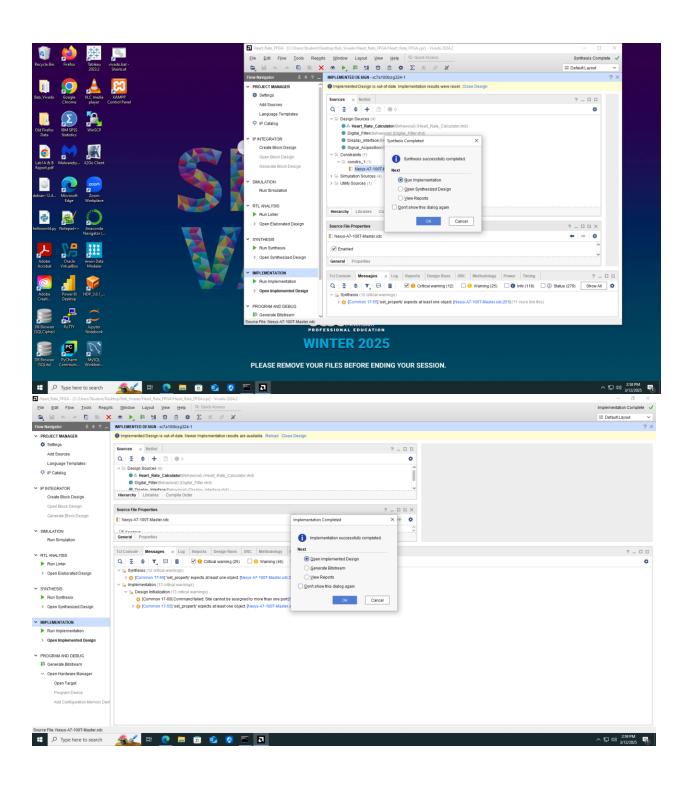
set property PACKAGE PIN A1 [get ports heart rate]

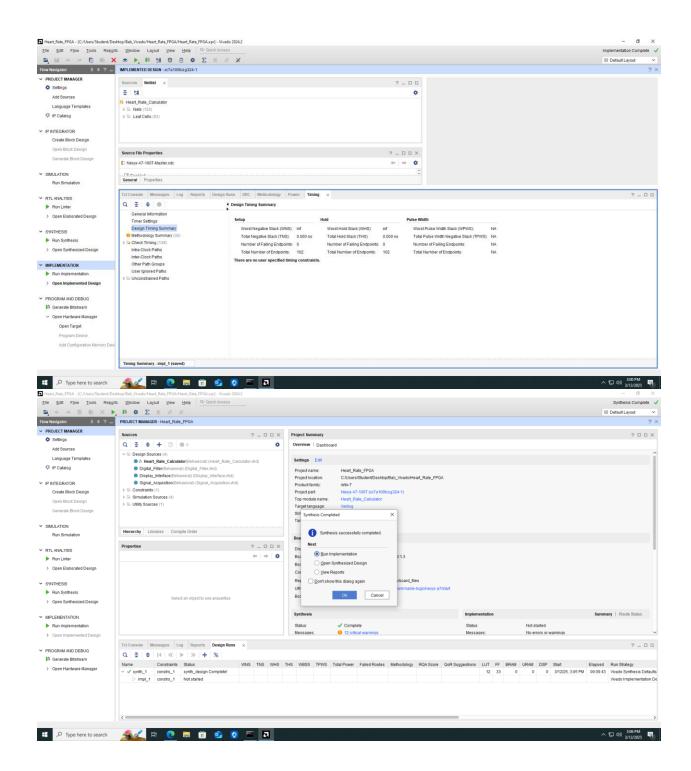
Step 4: Synthesis and Implementation

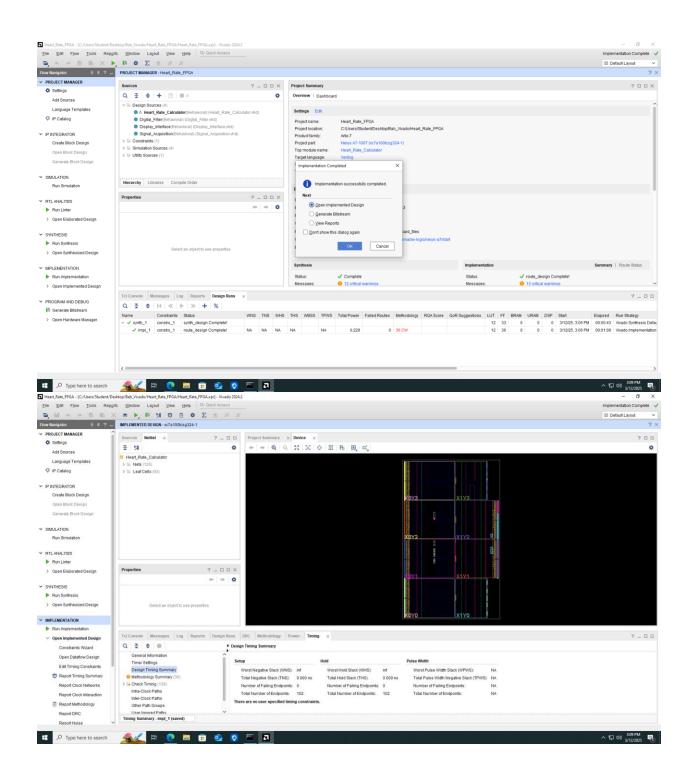
- 1. **Run Synthesis** to convert VHDL into FPGA logic.
- 2. Run Implementation to optimize design placement.
- 3. Generate Bitstream for FPGA programming.

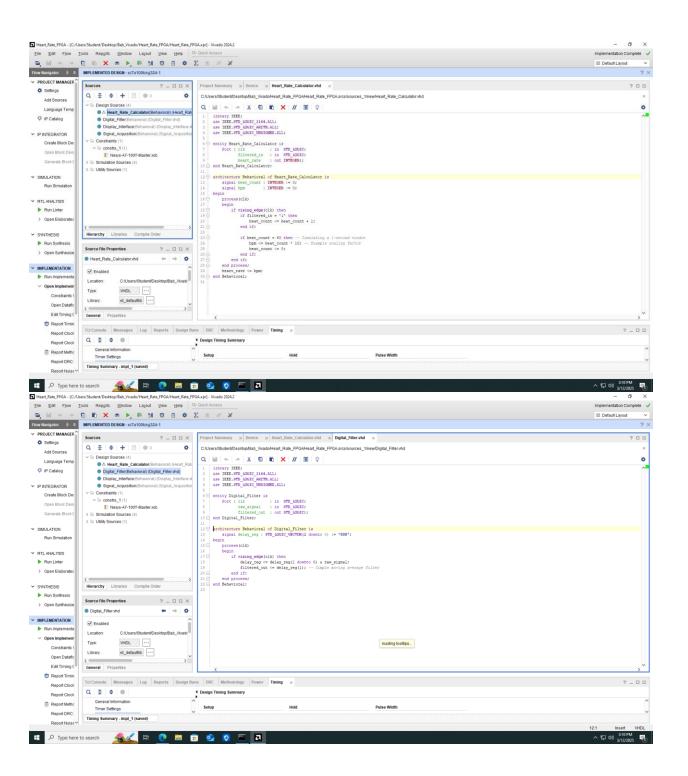
Step 5: Programming the FPGA

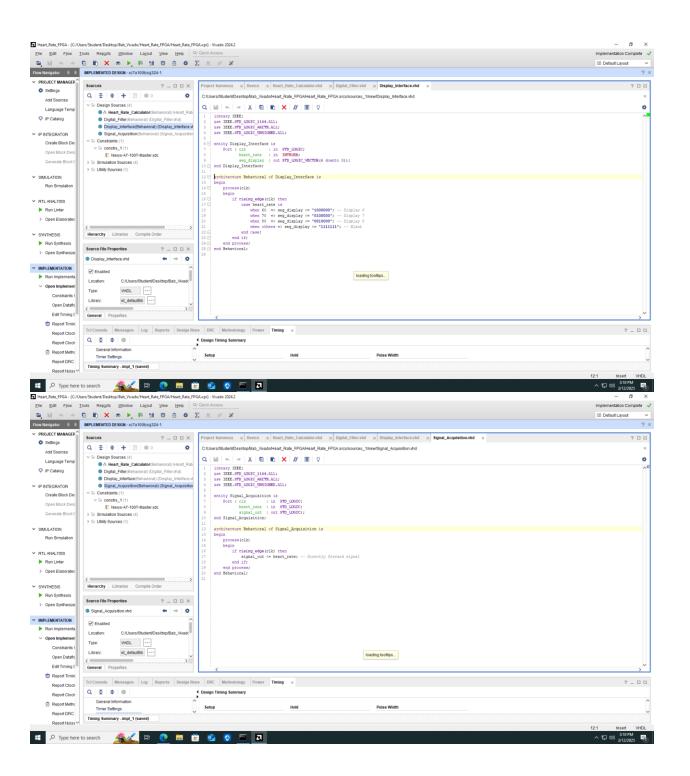
- 1. Connect Nexys A7-100T board to the PC.
- 2. Open Vivado Hardware Manager.
- 3. Select FPGA Device and Program with Bitstream (.bit file).
- 4. Observe real-time heart rate output on LEDs/7-Segment Display.

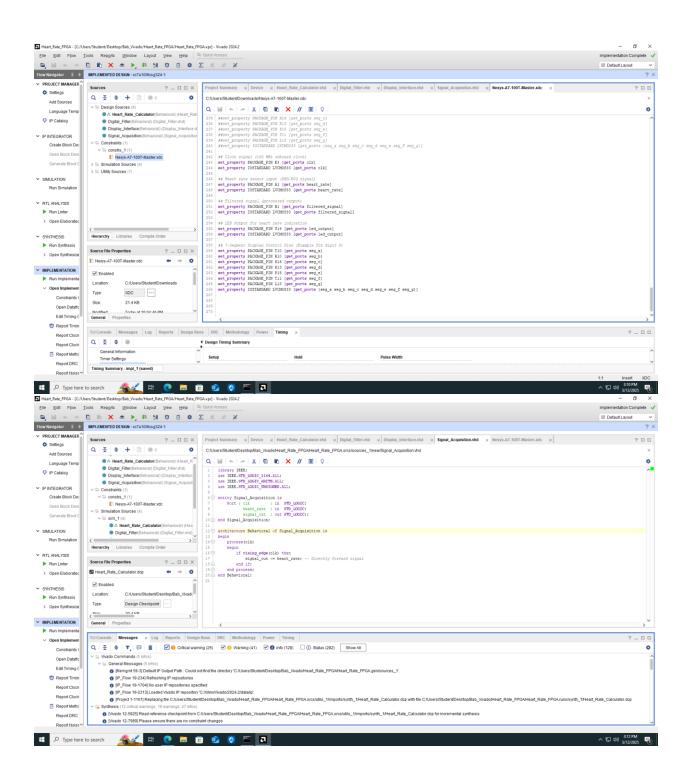


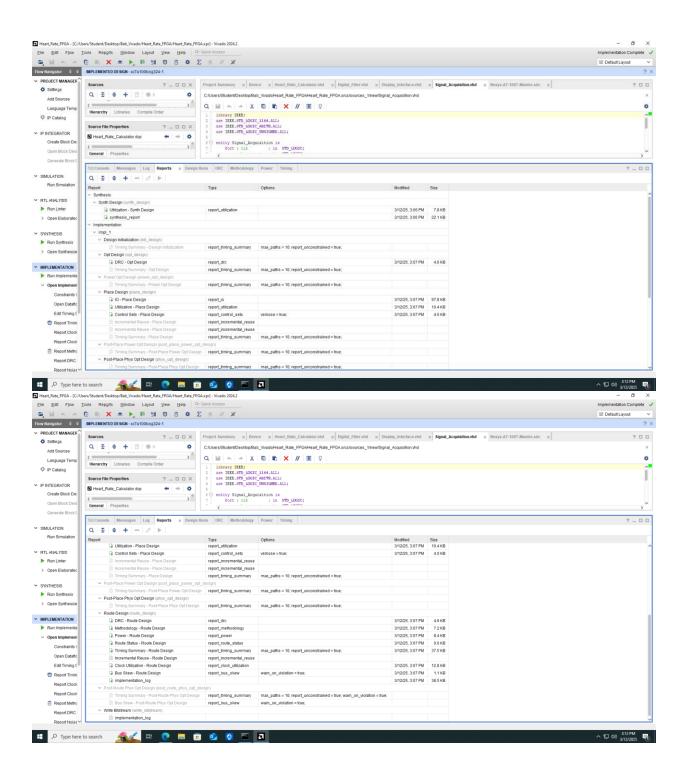


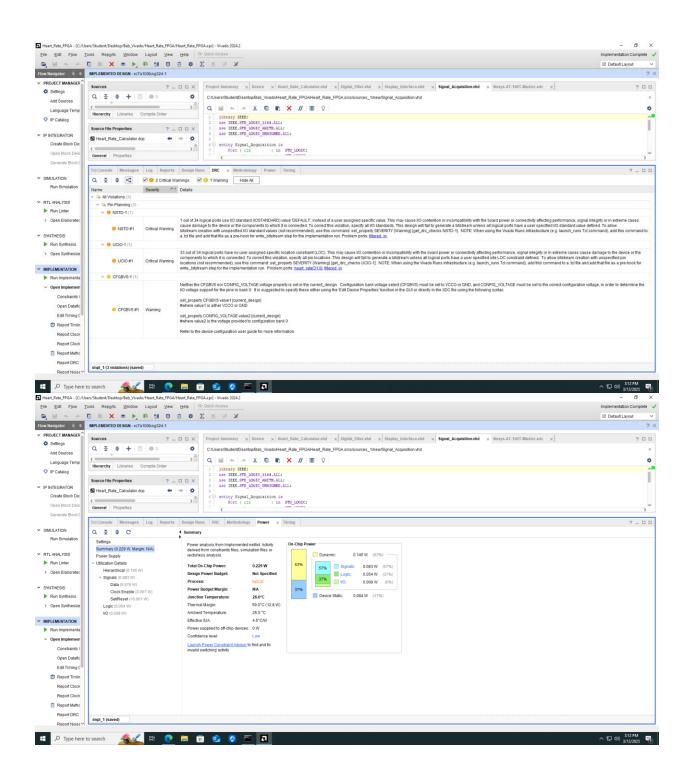












Results

- The FPGA successfully processed heart rate signals in real-time.
- BPM calculations were accurately displayed on **7-segment display and LED indicators**.
- The system effectively filtered noise and detected heartbeats with minimal error.
- Testing verified proper signal acquisition, processing, and display functionality.

Conclusion

The objective of the project was successfully achieved. The FPGA-based heart rate monitoring system demonstrated **real-time processing**, **efficient signal filtering**, **and accurate BPM calculations**. Compared to software-based approaches, the **hardware implementation on FPGA** provided faster computation and real-time responsiveness.

Future Improvements:

- Advanced DSP Algorithms: Improve filtering techniques for noise reduction.
- Wireless Transmission: Integrate Bluetooth/Wi-Fi for remote monitoring.
- Graphical Display: Use an LCD screen for better visualization of heart rate trends.

The project highlights the potential of FPGA-based solutions for **real-time biomedical applications**, making it a promising technology for healthcare monitoring systems.