7–1 Latches

The **latch** is a type of temporary storage device that has two stable states (bistable) and is normally placed in a category separate from that of flip-flops. Latches are similar to flip-flops because they are bistable devices that can reside in either of two states using a feedback arrangement, in which the outputs are connected back to the opposite inputs. The main difference between latches and flip-flops is in the method used for changing their state.

After completing this section, you should be able to

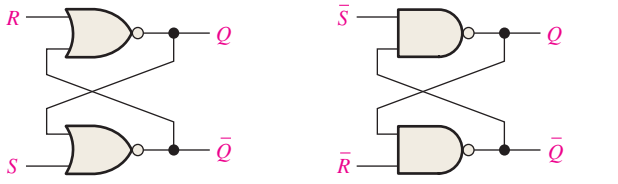
- Explain the operation of a basic S-R latch
- Explain the operation of a gated S-R latch
- Explain the operation of a gated D latch
- Implement an S-R or D latch with logic gates
- Describe the 74HC279A and 74HC75 quad latches

InfoNote

Latches are sometimes used for multiplexing data onto a bus. For example, data being input to a computer from an external source have to share the data bus with data from other sources. When the data bus becomes unavailable to the external source, the existing data must be temporarily stored, and latches placed between the external source and the data bus may be used to do this.

The S-R (SET-RESET) Latch

A latch is a type of **bistable** logic device or **multivibrator.** An active-HIGH input S-R (SET-RESET) latch is formed with two cross-coupled NOR gates, as shown in Figure 7–1(a); an active-LOW input $\overline{S}$-$\overline{R}$ latch is formed with two cross-coupled NAND gates, as shown in Figure 7–1(b). Notice that the output of each gate is connected to an input of the opposite gate. This produces the regenerative **feedback** that is characteristic of all latches and flip-flops.



(a) Active-HIGH input S-R latch (b) Active-LOW input $\overline{S}$-$\overline{R}$ latch

MultiSim

FIGURE 7–1 Two versions of SET-RESET (S-R) latches. Open files F07-01(a) and (b) and verify the operation of both latches. *A Multisim tutorial is available on the website.*

To explain the operation of the latch, we will use the NAND gate $\overline{S}$-$\overline{R}$ latch in Figure 7–1(b). This latch is redrawn in Figure 7–2 with the negative-OR equivalent symbols used for the NAND gates. This is done because LOWs on the $\overline{S}$ and $\overline{R}$ lines are the activating inputs.

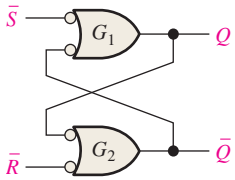


FIGURE 7–2 Negative-OR equivalent of the NAND gate $\overline{S}$-$\overline{R}$ latch in Figure 7–1(b).

A latch can reside in either of its two states, SET or RESET.

The latch in Figure 7–2 has two inputs, $\overline{S}$ and $\overline{R}$, and two outputs, Q and $\overline{Q}$. Let's start by assuming that both inputs and the Q output are HIGH, which is the normal latched state. Since the Q output is connected back to an input of gate G_2, and the $\overline{R}$ input is HIGH, the output of G_2 must be LOW. This LOW output is coupled back to an input of gate G_1, ensuring that its output is HIGH.

When the Q output is HIGH, the latch is in the **SET** state. It will remain in this state indefinitely until a LOW is temporarily applied to the $\overline{R}$ input. With a LOW on the $\overline{R}$ input and a HIGH on $\overline{S}$, the output of gate G_2 is forced HIGH. This HIGH on the $\overline{Q}$ output is coupled back to an input of G_1, and since the $\overline{S}$ input is HIGH, the output of G_1 goes LOW. This LOW on the Q output is then coupled back to an input of G_2, ensuring that the $\overline{Q}$ output remains HIGH even when the LOW on the $\overline{R}$ input is removed. When the Q output is LOW, the latch is in the **RESET** state. Now the latch remains indefinitely in the RESET state until a momentary LOW is applied to the $\overline{S}$ input.

In normal operation, the outputs of a latch are always complements of each other.

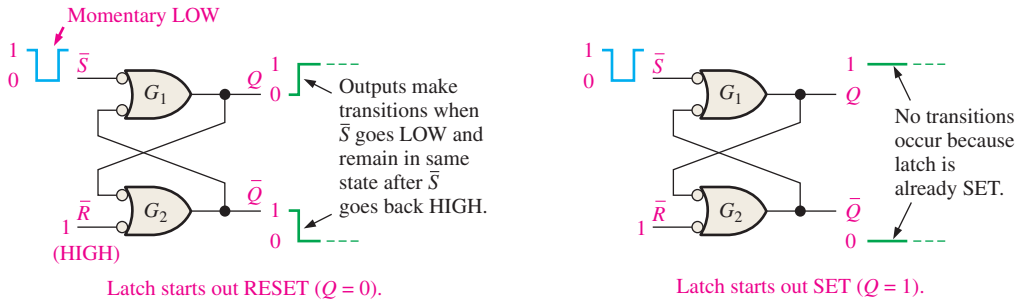
When Q is HIGH, $\overline{Q}$ is LOW, and when Q is LOW, $\overline{Q}$ is HIGH.

SET means that the Q output is HIGH.

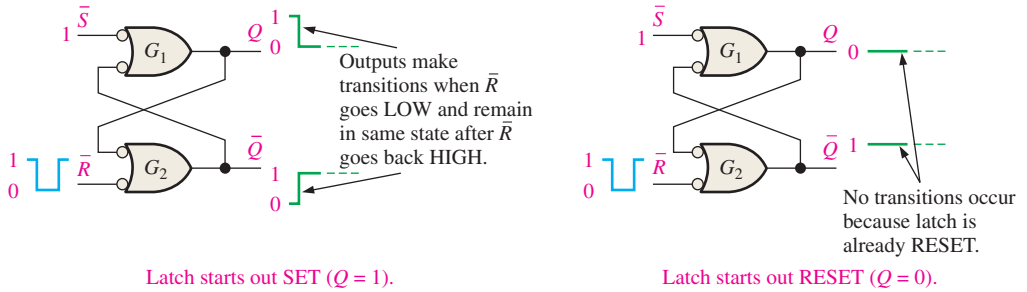
An invalid condition in the operation of an active-LOW input $\overline{S}$-$\overline{R}$ latch occurs when LOWs are applied to both $\overline{S}$ and $\overline{R}$ at the same time. As long as the LOW levels are simultaneously held on the inputs, both the Q and $\overline{Q}$ outputs are forced HIGH, thus violating the basic complementary operation of the outputs. Also, if the LOWs are released simultaneously, both outputs will attempt to go LOW. Since there is always some small difference in the propagation delay time of the gates, one of the gates will dominate in its transition to the LOW output state. This, in turn, forces the output of the slower gate to remain HIGH. In this situation, you cannot reliably predict the next state of the latch.

RESET means that the Q output is LOW.

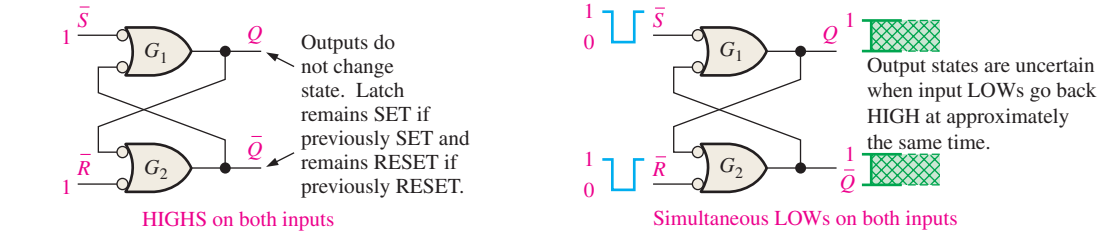
Figure 7–3 illustrates the active-LOW input $\overline{S}$-$\overline{R}$ latch operation for each of the four possible combinations of levels on the inputs. (The first three combinations are valid, but the last is not.) Table 7–1 summarizes the logic operation in truth table form. Operation of the active-HIGH input NOR gate latch in Figure 7–1(a) is similar but requires the use of opposite logic levels.



(a) Two possibilities for the SET operation



(b) Two possibilities for the RESET operation



(c) No-change condition

(d) Invalid condition

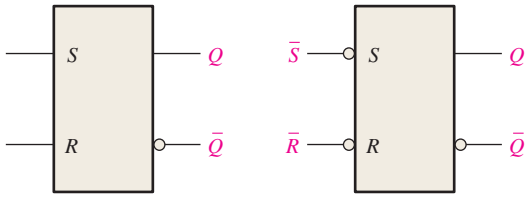
FIGURE 7–3 The three modes of basic $\overline{S}$-$\overline{R}$ latch operation (SET, RESET, no-change) and the invalid condition.

TABLE 7–1

Truth table for an active-LOW input $\overline{S}$-$\overline{R}$ latch.

Inputs		Outputs		
$\overline{S}$	$\overline{R}$	Q	$\overline{Q}$	Comments
1	1	NC	NC	No change. Latch remains in present state.
0	1	1	0	Latch SET.
1	0	0	1	Latch RESET.
0	0	1	1	Invalid condition

Logic symbols for both the active-HIGH input and the active-LOW input latches are shown in Figure 7–4.



(a) Active-HIGH input S-R latch (b) Active-LOW input $\overline{S}$-$\overline{R}$ latch

FIGURE 7–4 Logic symbols for the S-R and $\overline{S}$-$\overline{R}$ latch.

Example 7–1 illustrates how an active-LOW input $\overline{S}$-$\overline{R}$ latch responds to conditions on its inputs. LOW levels are pulsed on each input in a certain sequence and the resulting Q output waveform is observed. The $\overline{S} = 0, \overline{R} = 0$ condition is avoided because it results in an invalid mode of operation and is a major drawback of any SET-RESET type of latch.

EXAMPLE 7–1

If the $\overline{S}$ and $\overline{R}$ waveforms in Figure 7–5(a) are applied to the inputs of the latch in Figure 7–4(b), determine the waveform that will be observed on the Q output. Assume that Q is initially LOW.

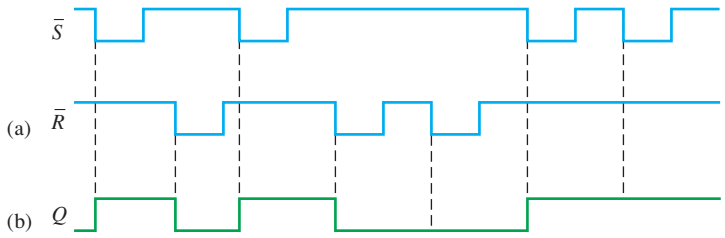


FIGURE 7–5

Solution

See Figure 7–5(b).

Related Problem*

Determine the Q output of an active-HIGH input S-R latch if the waveforms in Figure 7–5(a) are inverted and applied to the inputs.

*Answers are at the end of the chapter.