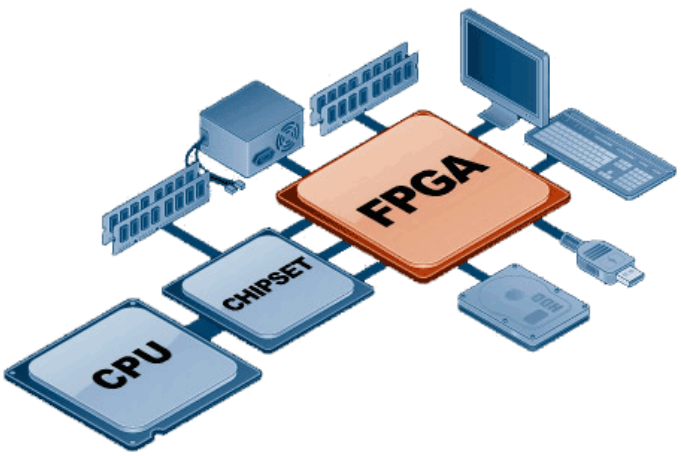
The Case for FPGAs
The Case for More FPGAs

Outline

- Introduction
- Popularity of FPGAs
- Advantages of FPGAs
- New Era for FPGAs



A Weird Idea

- Back in the early 1980s, chip designers tried to get the most out of each and every transistor on their circuits
- Ross Freeman
  - proposed a chip packed with transistors that formed loosely organized logic blocks that in turn could be configured and reconfigured with software
  - sometimes a bunch of transistors wouldn't be used
  - betted that Moore's Law would eventually make transistors really cheap

World's first commercial FPGA introduced in 1985

What is an FPGA?

- Field-programmable gate array (FPGA)
  - An IC whose function and wiring can be re-programmed
  - Different from ASIC (application specific integrated circuit), it is not designed and made for a specific system

It's Hot

EE Times

News & Analysis

Intel Seals $16.7 Billion Altera Deal

Dylan McGrath

12/28/2015 04:02 PM EST

> Waxman said that by 2020 Intel believes a third of the data center market could be using the type of chips that Altera specializes in.

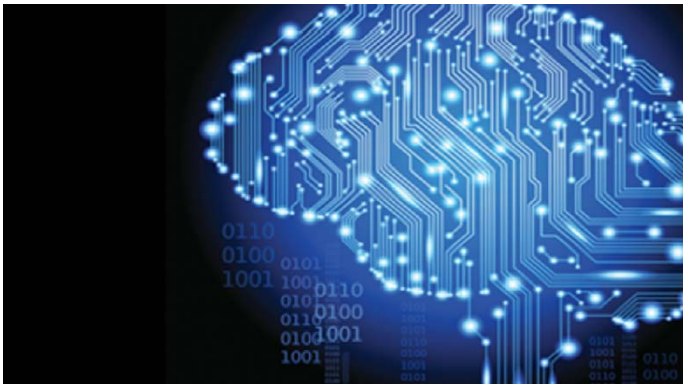
FPGA Everywhere

- FPGAs inside a lot of consumer electronics

Numerous FPGA Applications

- Medical
- Advanced driving assistance
- Emulation system
- Military
- Aerospace

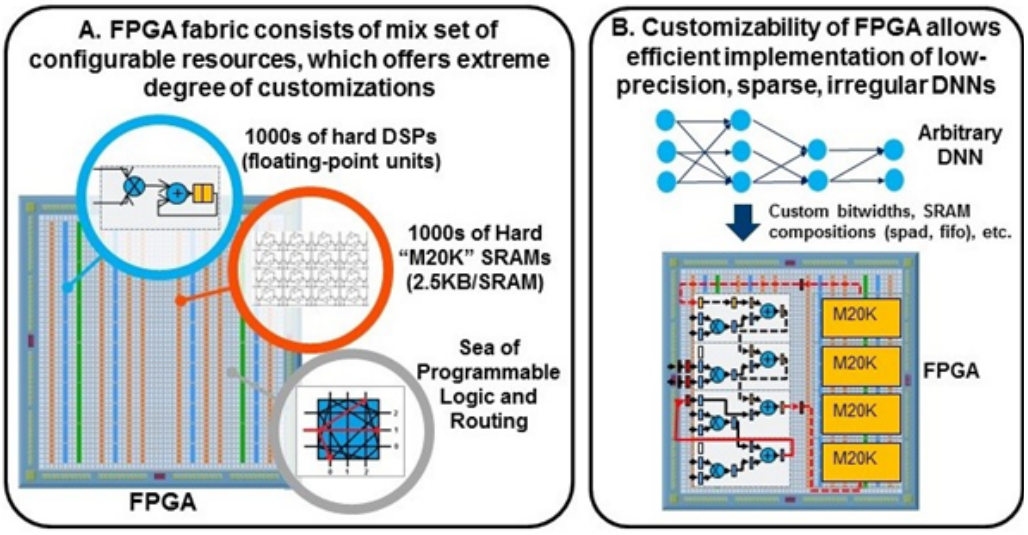
More FPGA Deployment



- Data center
- Machine learning
- Telecommunication

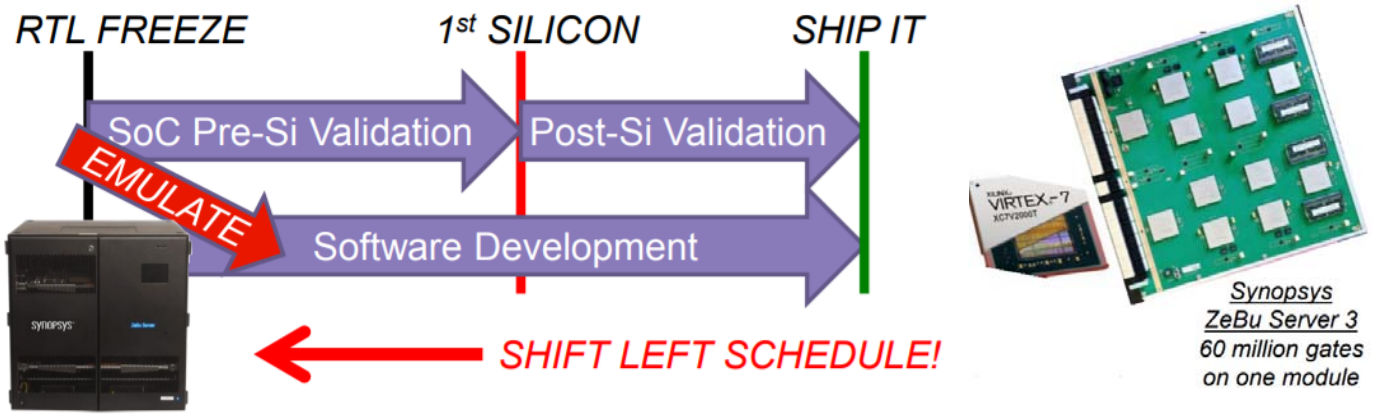
Why FPGA is a good match for Convolution Neural Network?

- FPGA offers
  - massively parallel architectures
  - efficient DSP resources (for numerical operations like dot-product accumulation)
  - adaptable to any numerical representations and sizes
  - large amount of on-chip memory



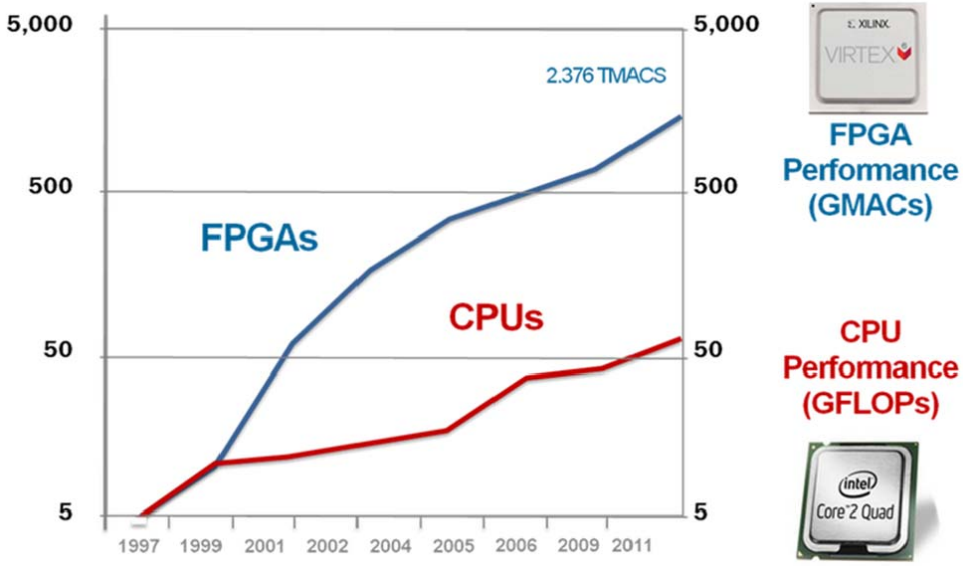
FPGAs for Logic Emulation

- State-of-the-art electronic system
  - Huge gate count (over hundreds of millions)
  - Before committing to silicon, need to verify that it can function correctly under all operating conditions
- FPGA-based logic emulation of electronic system can
  - Provide orders-of-magnitude faster debugging and functional verification compared to software based simulation
  - Bringup/develop/validate software part before silicon is ready

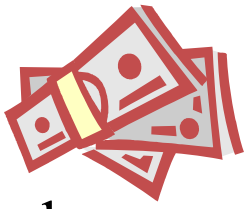


Moore's Law and FPGAs

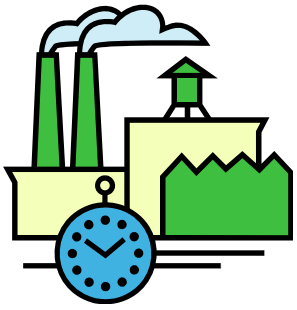
- With technology scaling, FPGAs achieve
  - Increasing capacity
  - Faster performance
  - More functionality



Cost of IC Fabrication



- Cost: billions of US dollars
- Typical fab line occupies about 1 city block, employs a few hundred people.
- New fabrication processes require 6-8 month turnaround.
- Most profitable period is first 18 months-2 years.



Massive Investment for Advanced-Node Design and Manufacturing

	32/28nm node	22/20nm node
Fab Costs	$3B	$4B-7B
Process R&D	$1.2B	$2.1B-3B
Design Costs	$50M-90M	$120M-500M
Mask Costs	$2M-3M	$5M-8M
EDA Costs	$400M-500M	$800M-1.2B

Source: IBS May 2011

Breakeven 30-40M units

Breakeven 60-100M units

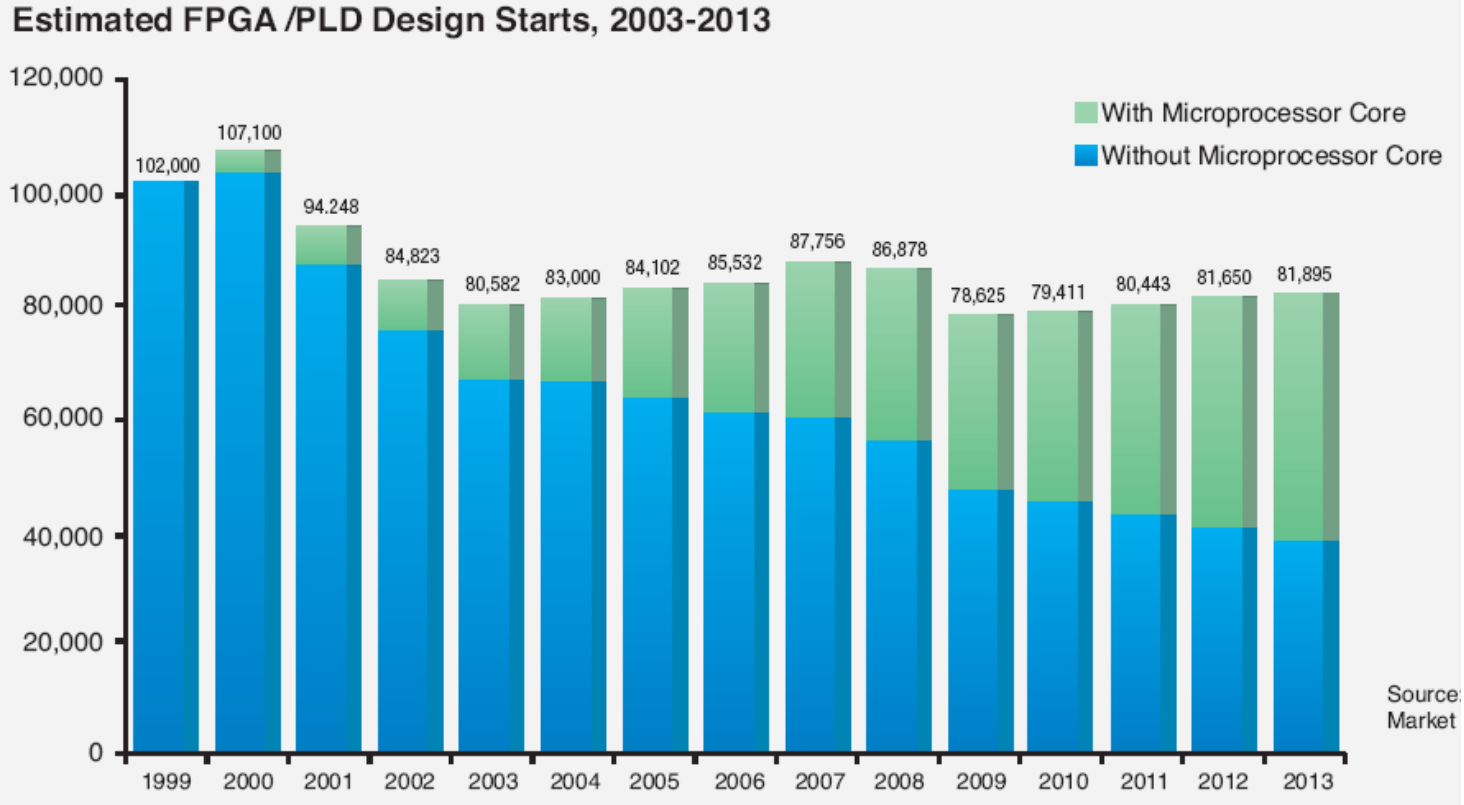
Why FPGAs in Consumer Products?

- Prohibitive fabrication cost for custom silicon in advanced process nodes

  → not viable except for large volume requiring extremely high performance

- Need a cheaper *alternative*!
- FPGAs come to the rescue

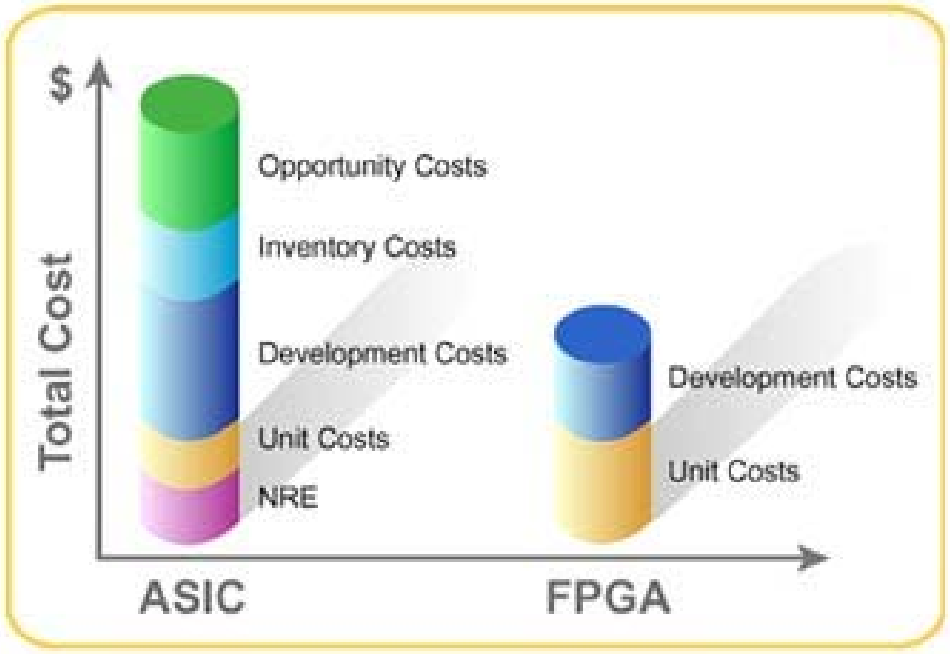
Estimated FPGA/PLD Design Starts



FPGA vs ASIC

- FPGAs (field-programmable gate arrays) are standard parts:
  - Off-the-shelf
  - Pre-manufactured
  - Millions of customers share manufacturing costs
- ASIC:
  - Tailored to your application
  - Require own set of masks for manufacturing
  - High startup cost

FPGA vs ASIC

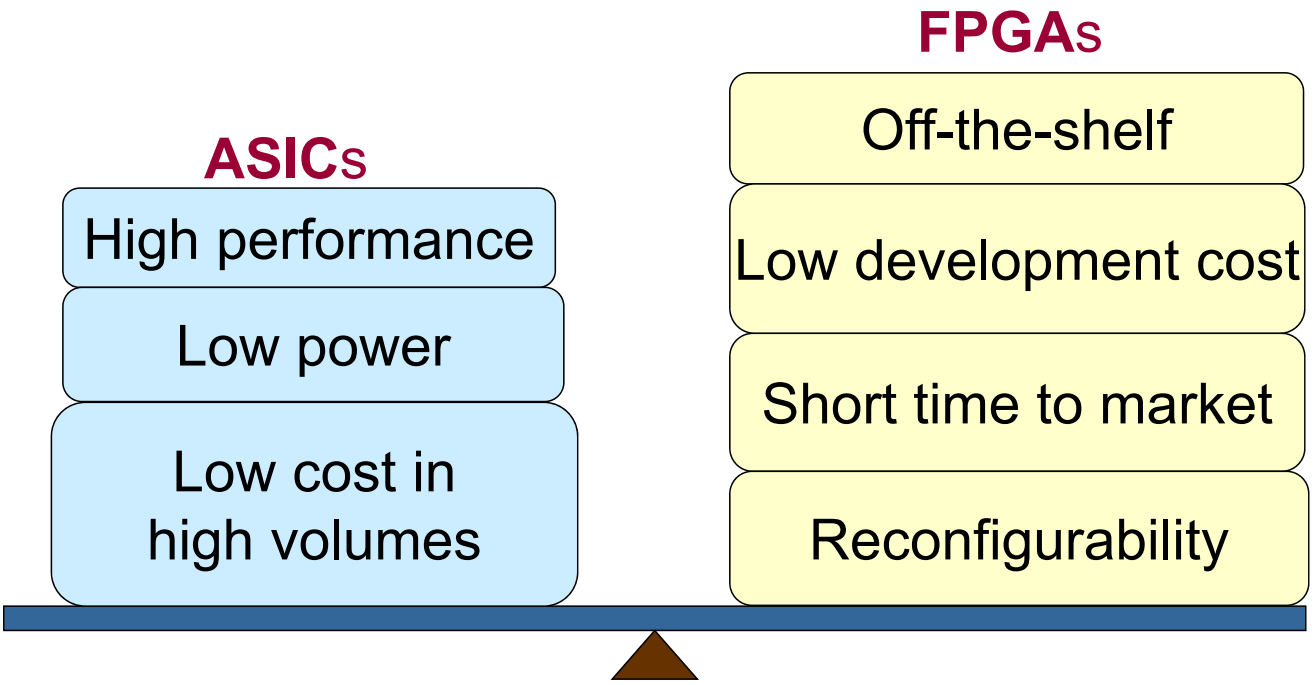


Source: Xilinx

Standard Parts vs Custom Silicon

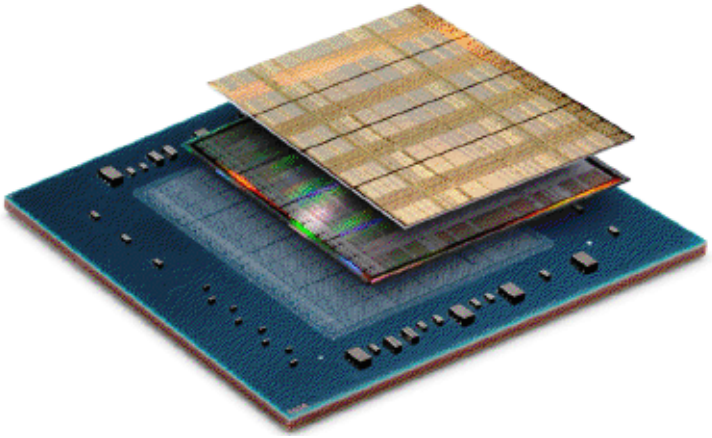
- When to build your design with an FPGA or with custom silicon?
  - FPGAs have shorter design cycle
  - FPGAs have no manufacturing delay
  - FPGAs reduce inventory
  - FPGAs are slower, larger, more power-hungry

Which Way to Go?



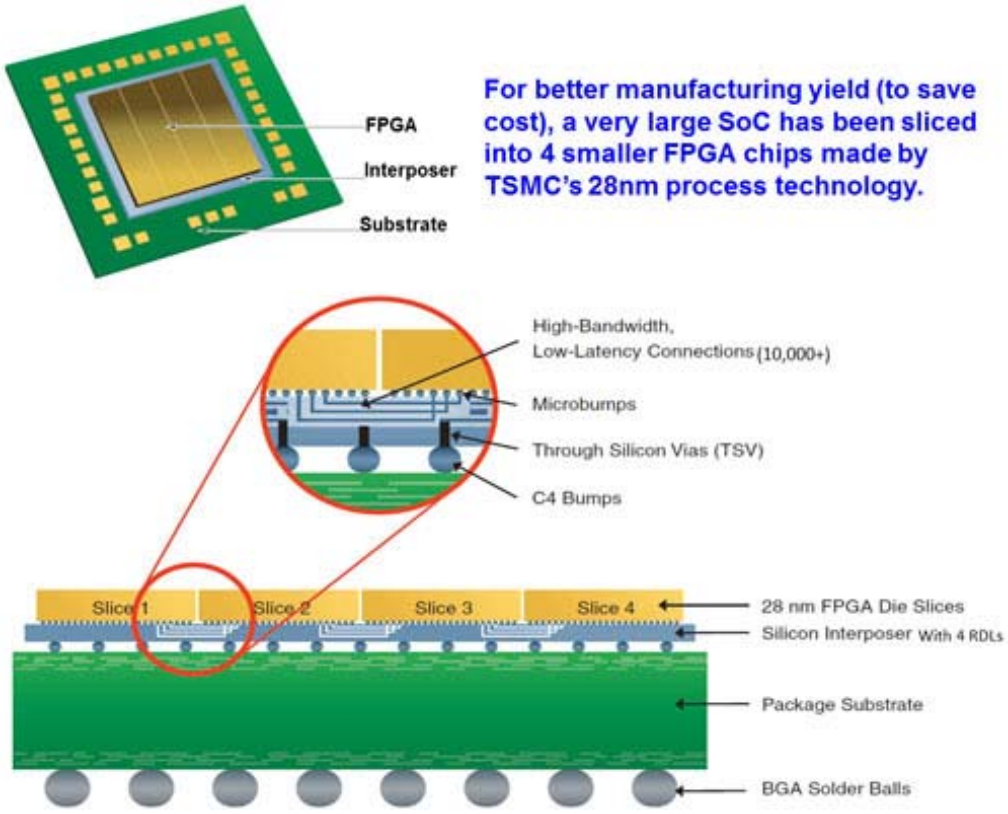
2.5D FPGAs

- First commercial 2.5D IC
  - Xilinx Virtex-7 2000T
    - 4 dies
    - Die-to-die connection through interposer-based 2.5D technology
    - 6.8 billion transistors (~ 20 million ASIC gates)



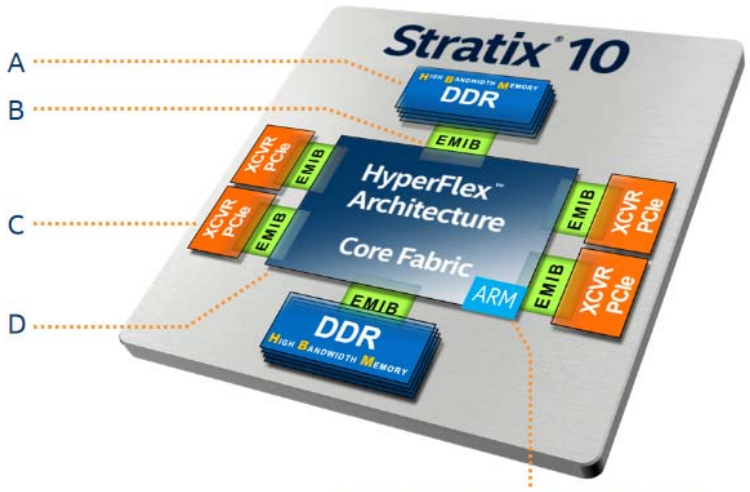
2.5D FPGAs

- Interposer-based inter-die connection



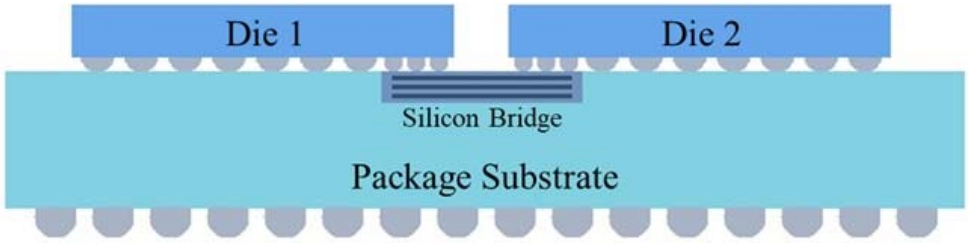
2.5D FPGAs

- Intel Stratix 10
  - Use Embedded Multi-Die Interconnect Bridge (EMIB) to connect two adjacent dies



2.5D FPGAs

- Silicon-bridge based connection



Hybrid CPU-FPGA Device

- Hybrid Xeon CPU-Arria 10 FPGA chip