

ECEN 449: Microprocessor System Design  
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering  
Texas A&M University

Prof. Sunil P. Khatri

Lab exercise created and tested by:  
Kushagra Gupta, Cheng-Yen Lee, Abbas Fairouz, Ramu Endluri, He Zhou,  
Andrew Douglass and Sunil P. Khatri

**Laboratory Exercise #2**  
**Using the Software Development Kit (SDK)**

## **Objective**

The purpose of lab this week is to familiarize you with Vivado by developing a software based solution for controlling the LEDs in a manner similar to that which was done last week in pure FPGA hardware. To accomplish this goal, you will be guided through the process of creating a MicroBlaze processor system using the Vivado Block Design Builder . You will then add General Purpose Input/Output (GPIO) capabilities to the microprocessor via Intellectual Property (IP) hardware blocks from Xilinx. Finally, you will create software using the C programming language, which will run on the MicroBlaze processor in order to implement the appropriate LED functionality.

## **System Overview**

The microprocessor system you will build in this lab is depicted in Figure 1. To the left of the diagram is the MicroBlaze soft IP processor. Connected to it are two Local Memory Buses (LMBs), iLMB and dLMB for instruction fetch and data access respectively. Each LMB has its own block RAM (BRAM) controller which provides the interconnect logic between the MicroBlaze and BRAM (local memory). The AXI interconnect connects the MicroBlaze (bus master) to peripherals (bus slaves) external to the microprocessor. Typically

included in the list of peripherals are the debugger module. The debugger allows the SDK to interact with the MicroBlaze processor after the FPGA has been programmed. This is useful for initializing regions of memory outside of the FPGA and for general software debugging. The GPIO blocks provide the microprocessor with a means of controlling the LEDs and reading user input from the DIP switches and push buttons.

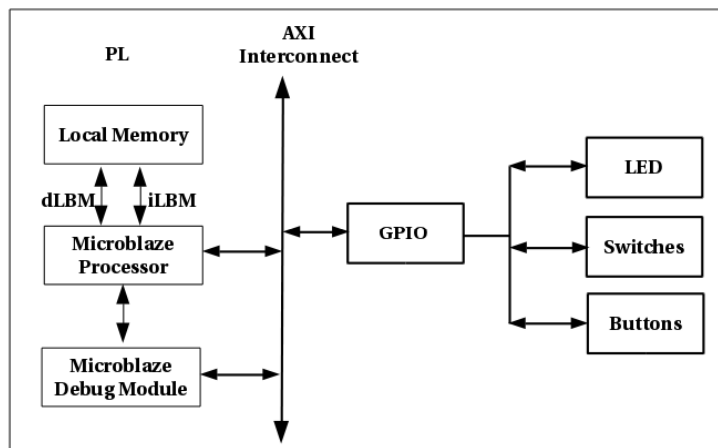


Figure 1: MicroBlaze System Diagram

## Procedure

1. In the following steps we will launch Vivado and create a block design.
  - (a) Before beginning, create a directory in your home folder for today's lab. Try to avoid spaces and special characters in the directory name as they have the potential for causing problems during the system build process. You may use the 'mkdir' command in an open terminal to create a directory.
  - (b) Next, type the following commands in the terminal window:
 

```
>source /opt/coe/Xilinx/Vivado/2022.1/settings64.sh
>vivado
```

The first command will setup the environment for Vivado, and the second command runs Vivado.

- (c) Once Vivado launches, select 'Create New Project' and follow the same procedure as shown in Lab1 to create a new RTL project except do not add a source file in the project. In this lab you will use Xilinx Microblaze Processor.
- (d) On the left side, in the Flow Navigator under the IP Integrator section, click on 'Create Block Design'. A window opens where you can specify the name of your design(eg. led\_sw). Leave the 'Directory' and the 'Specify source set' as they are. Click on the 'OK' button. (Figure 2)

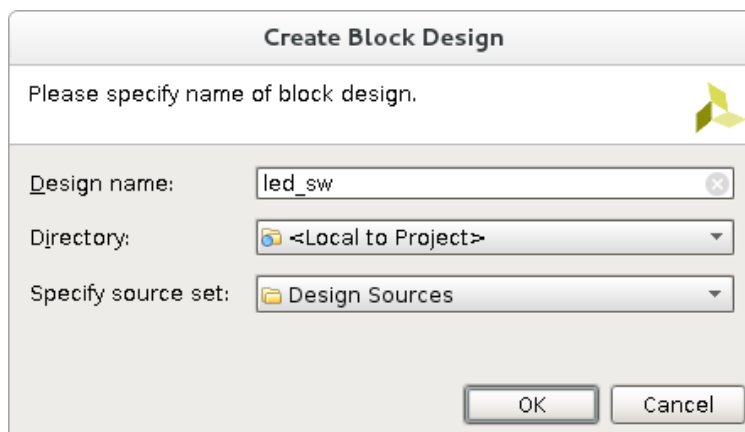


Figure 2: Create Block Design

- (e) The Block Design Diagram opened (tab called Diagram) is empty. Right click within the diagram tab and select 'Add IP'. Search 'MicroBlaze' and double click on 'MicroBlaze' to add it to our design. Right click and select 'Run Block Automation'. Select the following configuration for the MicroBlaze processor and click 'OK'. (Figure 3)

Preset: None

Local Memory: 64KB

Local Memory ECC: None

Cache Configuration : None

Debug Module: Debug & UART

Peripheral AXI Port: Enabled

Interrupt Controller: Unchecked.

Clock Connection: New Clocking Wizard

- (f) Once the Diagram is generated, double-click on the 'Clocking Wizard' block named 'clk\_wiz\_1'. This launches the 'Re-customize IP' window. Select 'Clocking Options' and change the source

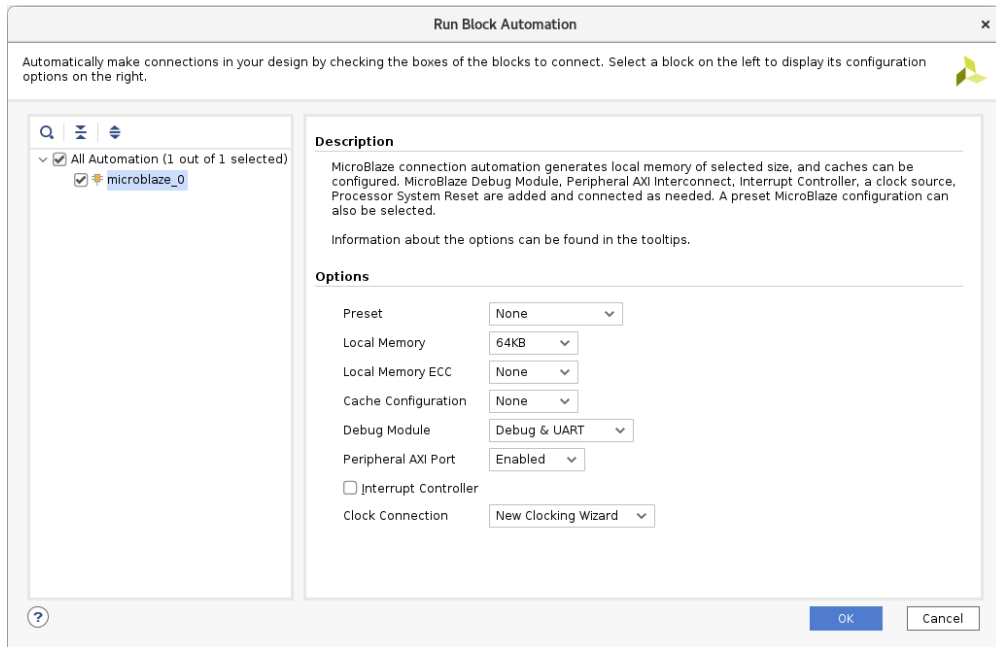


Figure 3: Run Block Automation

of the 'Primary Input Clock' from 'Differential clock capable pin' to 'Single ended clock capable pin'. Click 'OK'.

- (g) Right click and select 'Run Connection Automation' in the diagram. In the 'Run Connection Automation window' check 'All Automation' and click 'OK'.
- (h) The processor is set up, now we need to add General Purpose IO (GPIO) blocks to interact with LEDs, Switches and Buttons on the ZYBO Z7-10 board. Right click and select 'ADD IP'. Search for 'GPIO' and select 'AXI GPIO' to add it to the design. Double click on the GPIO block named 'axi\_gpio\_0' and select the 'IP configuration' tab. Set the following configuration for the GPIO and click 'OK' (Figure 4).

All Inputs: (not checked)

All Outputs (checked)

GPIO Width: 4

Leave the remaining values unchanged.

- (i) Right click and select 'Run Connection Automation', check 'All Automation', and click 'OK'. Now design is connected. To make it look neat, right click and select 'Regenerate Layout'.

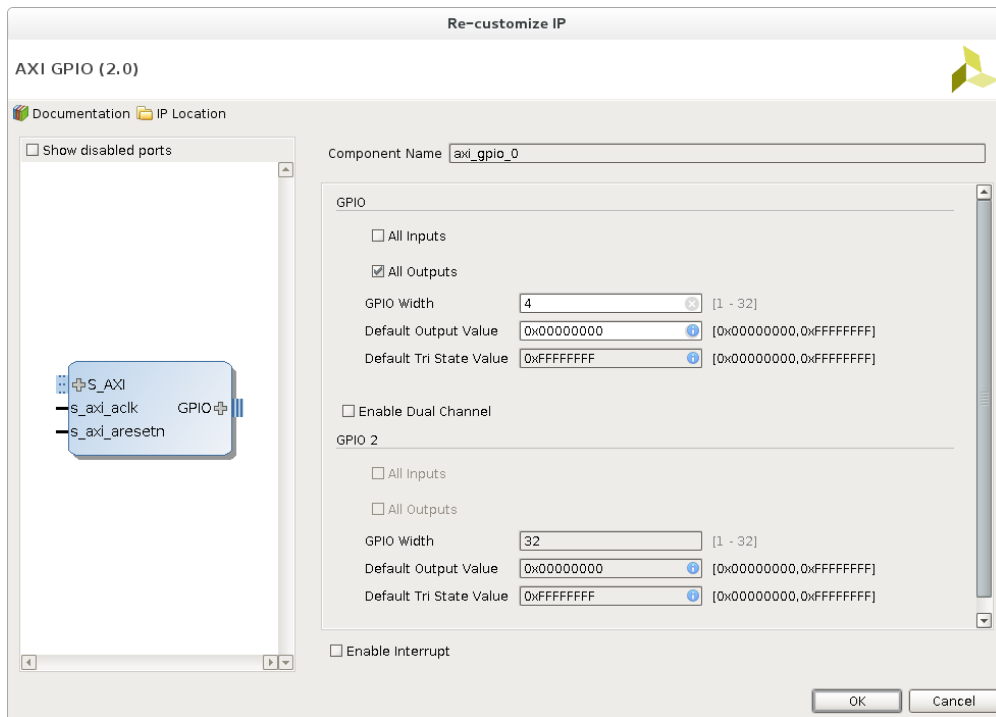


Figure 4: Customize GPIO

- (j) You are using the GPIO block to configure LEDs, so let's rename the 'AXI GPIO' block. Select the 'AXI GPIO' block and rename the block to 'led' in the 'Block Properties' panel and press 'Enter'. Repeat the same procedure for the port connected to the 'AXI GPIO' block and rename it to 'led'. The layout should look like Figure 5
- (k) Double click the 'reset\_rtl\_0' port in the diagram. You can see that it is 'ACTIVE LOW'.
- (l) That's the reset port for Microblaze. On ZYBO Z7-10 board we have dedicated reset pins for reset. Refer to the manual - "Zybo Board Reference Manual" on the course website and see the functionality of BTN6 and BTN7.
- (m) This port can be configured to a push button on the board. For the purpose of this lab, we will connect the port to a constant value and use the dedicated pins on the board for reset.
- (n) Select 'Constant' IP from the IP repository (Right click and ADD IP) and add an instance to the diagram. Double click on the constant IP block and set 'Constant Width' to 1 and 'Constant Value' to 1. Rename this block to 'VDD'. Now, right click on the 'reset\_rtl\_0' port and select 'Delete' to delete it. Connect the constant block to 'ext\_rst\_in' of the 'Processor System Reset'

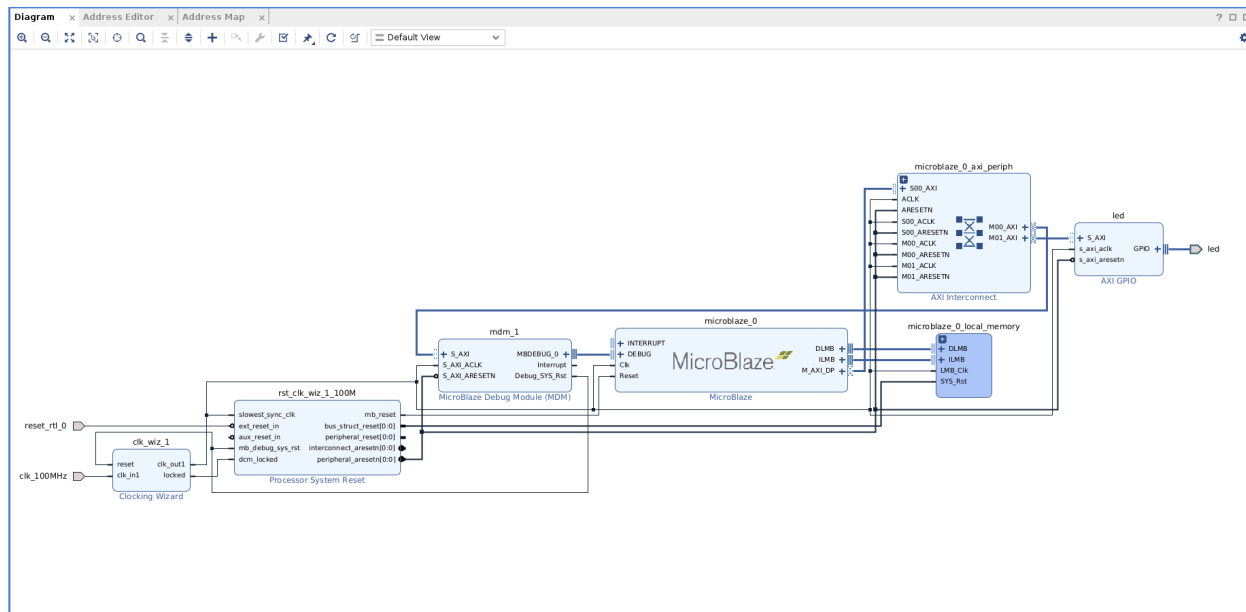


Figure 5: Layout

because it is 'ACTIVE LOW'. Connect the constant block by clicking on the output of the constant block and dragging it to the 'ext\_rst.in' pin.

- (o) Right click on the diagram and select 'Regenerate Layout'. The final layout should look like Figure 6.

2. In the following steps we map the IO ports to the LEDs and buttons.

- (a) In the design tab, expand 'External Interfaces' and 'Ports' and examine the ports listed. When 'led' is expanded it shows the 'led\_tri\_o' and 'clk\_100MHz' ports listed. We need to connect these ports to the ZYBO Z7-10 board.
- (b) In the sources panel, right click on the constraints and select 'Add sources'. Next, in the add sources window, select 'Add or create constraints' and click 'Next'. Click on the blue '+' button and select 'create file'. The 'Create Constraints File' window will open, give a file name (eg. led), and click 'OK'. Select 'Finish' to create a constraint file.
- (c) In the sources panel, expand 'Constraints' and double click on the created XDC file to open it.
- (d) Add the following code to attach the above ports to the pins on ZYBO Z7-10 board.

```
#clock_rtl
set_property PACKAGE_PIN K17 [get_ports clk_100MHz]
```

```
set_property IOSTANDARD LVCMOS33 [get_ports clk_100MHz]
create_clock -add -name sys_clk_pin -period 10.00 -waveform {0 5} [get_ports clk_100MHz]
```

```
#led_tri_o
set_property PACKAGE_PIN M14 [get_ports {led_tri_o[0]}]
set_property IOSTANDARD LVCMOS33 [get_ports {led_tri_o[0]}]
```

```
set_property PACKAGE_PIN M15 [get_ports {led_tri_o[1]}]
set_property IOSTANDARD LVCMOS33 [get_ports {led_tri_o[1]}]
```

```
set_property PACKAGE_PIN G14 [get_ports {led_tri_o[2]}]
set_property IOSTANDARD LVCMOS33 [get_ports {led_tri_o[2]}]
```

```
set_property PACKAGE_PIN D18 [get_ports {led_tri_o[3]}]
set_property IOSTANDARD LVCMOS33 [get_ports {led_tri_o[3]}]
```

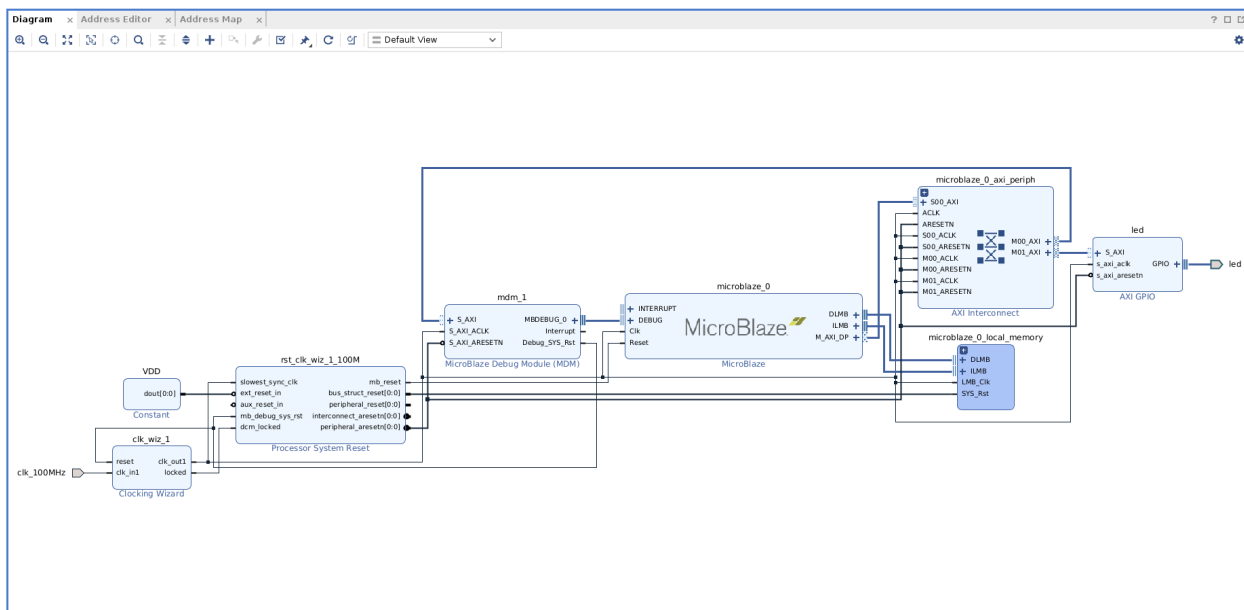


Figure 6: Final Layout

3. In the following steps we will Generate Bitstream and launch the Vitis IDE.

- (a) Right click in the diagram and select 'Validate Design' to check for any errors in the design. If everything is correct, you have successfully built the hardware platform.
  - (b) Right click on your project in the sources panel and select 'Create HDL wrapper'. Select 'Let Vivado manage wrapper and auto update' and click 'OK' to create the top level module for the design. Finally, click 'Generate Bitstream' to create the program file. Once this is done, we will be able to export our hardware design and switch over to the Vitis window to program the FPGA and run the program to manage LEDs.
  - (c) If any errors are found please rectify them. Once successfully completed, select File → 'Export' → 'Export Hardware'. Click 'Next' in the Export Hardware Platform window. Check 'Include bitstream' to export the hardware platform. Click 'Next'. Vivado exports the hardware platform in a .xsa file. The next window will show the XSA file name and location it is exported to. You can keep the default values and click 'Next'. Then click 'Finish' to complete the hardware export.
  - (d) Now, launch Xilinx Vitis using 'Tools' → 'Launch Vitis IDE'. The next window will ask you select the Workspace directory for the Vitis related development. Click 'Browse' to choose the Lab 2 project directory as the workspace for Vitis.
4. In the following steps we will use Vitis to create the software application.
- (a) Once the Vitis is open. Select 'File' → 'New' → 'Application Project'. Click 'Next' on the welcome page.
  - (b) In the Platform page, select 'Create a new platform from hardware (XSA)' tab and then use the browse option to select the XSA file created in step 3.c. Click 'Next'.
  - (c) In the Application Project Details page, give an application project name (eg. counter\_sw) and click 'Next'. In the Domain page, you should see the domain name, as 'standalone\_microblaze\_0'. Click 'Next'.
  - (d) In the Templates page, select 'Empty Application (C)' and click 'Finish'.
  - (e) You will now have two entries in the 'Explorer' panel: counter\_sw\_system as the software system and led\_sw\_wrapper as the hardware platform.
  - (f) Using your favorite editor, create a file called 'lab2a.c'. Type the C code shown below in your file and save it in your lab2 directory.

```
#include <xparameters.h>
#include <xgpio.h>
#include <xstatus.h>
#include <xil_printf.h>
/* Definitions */
#define GPIO_DEVICE_ID XPAR_LED_DEVICE_ID /* GPIO device that LEDs are connected to */
#define WAIT_VAL 10000000

int delay (void) ;
```



```

int main()
{
    int count;
    int count_masked;
    XGpio leds;
    int status;

    status=XGpio_Initialize(&leds,GPIO_DEVICE_ID);
    XGpio_SetDataDirection(&leds,1,0x00);
    if (status != XST_SUCCESS) {
        xil_printf("Initialization failed ");
    }
    count=0;
    while(1)
    {
        count_masked=count & 0xF ;
        XGpio_DiscreteWrite(&leds,1,count_masked);
        xil_printf("Value of LEDs = 0x%x\n\r", count_masked);
        delay();
        count++;
    }
    return (0);
}

int delay(void)
{
    volatile int delay_count=0;
    while(delay_count < WAIT_VAL)
        delay_count++;
    return (0);
}

```

- (g) Look through the code you just wrote and try to understand what exactly is going on. Notice we include the 'xparameters.h', 'xstatus.h', and 'xgpio.h' header files. Open up these files from the 'Outline' panel to the right of the window and understand what they provide. At the end of the lab, you will find questions on these files.
- (h) In the project explorer, expand 'counter\_sw', right click on 'src' and select 'Import Sources'. Click 'Browse' and select the folder where you saved the lab2a.c file and click 'OK'. Select the lab2a.c file from the import window and click 'Finish'.
- (i) Build the hardware platform by the right clicking on 'led\_sw\_wrapper' in the explorer view and selecting 'Build Project'. Similarly build the software system ('counter\_sw\_system') in the explorer view. The latter build will generate the application binary file (counter\_sw.elf) which can be seen in the explorer view (under counter\_sw\_system → counter\_sw → Binaries).
- (j) The next step is to program the FPGA. Click 'Xilinx' and select 'Program Device'. In the Program Device window, ensure the application binary file (created in the previous step) is

pointed in the tab 'ELF/MEM File to Initialize in Block RAM'. Click on 'Program'. A warning will appear indicating that there is no PS in the design. PS is short for processing system which represents the ARM Cortex Processor in the ZYBO Z7-10 board. In this lab, the Microblaze processor is used which is implemented completely on the FPGA, and hence it is called a soft processor. Click 'OK' on the message to program the FPGA. If everything is correct, you should now be able to see the LEDs glowing in the order from 0 to 15 on the FPGA board.

- (k) The next step is to attach the Vitis console to the hardware output. Right click on 'counter\_sw' in the Explorer view and select 'Run As' → 'Run Configurations'. In the 'Run Configuration' window, select 'Single Application Debug'. Click on the icon which resembles a document with a '+' sign on top left corner of the window to create a configuration file. Name the configuration (eg. led\_sw) and select the 'Debug Type' as 'Attach to running target'. Click on 'Apply' and then 'Run' to see the output from the printf statements on the console in the Vitis IDE.

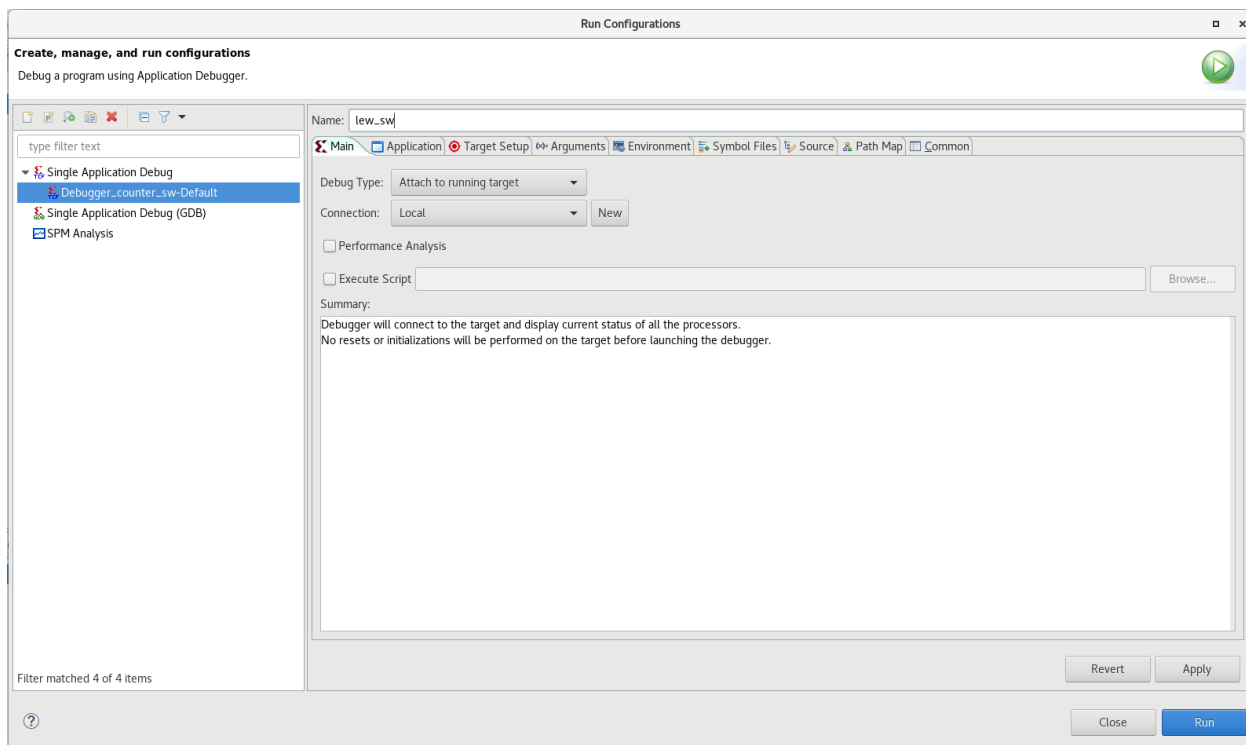


Figure 7: Run Configuration

Demonstrate your progress to the TA.

## Deliverables

1. [4 points.] Demonstrate your work to the TA after downloading the bitstream for the design created using the steps provided in the manual. Add comments to your C code and the modified portion of the XDC file and include them in your lab write-up.
2. [5 points.] Add an 8-bit GPIO IP block to your system and connect the lower 4-bits to the switches and the upper 4-bits to the push buttons on the ZYBO Z7-10 board (all bits should be inputs). Then, develop software to implement the following functionality:

Your program should keep track of a COUNT value. When the push button 0 is held down, the COUNT should increment at approximately 1 Hz. When push button 1 is held down COUNT should decrement at 1 HZ. When the push button 2 is held down, the status of the switches should be displayed. When the push button 4 is pressed, COUNT should be displayed on the LEDs. The console should display the current action and LEDs value. Be sure to demo this to your TA.

### Hints:

- Skim through the user manual for the ZYBO Z7-10 board and Master XDC file to determine the pin assignments for additional signals. The user manual may be found on the course website.
  - Do not forget to add the DIP switches and push buttons to your XDC file before generating the netlist.
  - Your source code must detect a change on the push buttons and DIP switches and react accordingly. When a change is detected, print the current action and LEDs value to the terminal window. Also, print to the terminal everytime the LEDs value changes.
  - You must regenerate the bitstream after completing the design and constraints in order for the switches and buttons to appear in the xparameters.h file.
3. [5 points.] Correct format including an Introduction, Procedure, Results, and Conclusion.
  4. [2 points.] The output of the TCL console from the part 2 demo.
  5. [4 points.] Answer the following questions:
    - (a) In the first part of the lab, we created a delay function by implementing a counter. The goal was to update the LEDs approximately every second as we did in the previous lab. Compare the count value in this lab to the count value you used as a delay in the previous lab. If they are different, explain why? Can you determine approximately how many clock cycles are required to execute one iteration of the delay for-loop? If so, how many?
    - (b) Why is the count variable in our software delay declared as volatile?

- (c) What does the while(1) expression in our code do?
- (d) Compare and contrast this lab with the previous lab. Which implementation do you feel is easier? What are the advantages and disadvantages associated with a purely software implementation such as this when compared to a purely hardware implementation such as the previous lab?