

IOB-SoC

A RISC-V-based System on Chip

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July 22, 2020



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Introduction

- Building processor-based systems from scratch is challenging
- The IOB-SoC template eases this task
- Provides a base Verilog SoC equipped with
 - a RISC-V CPU
 - a memory system including boot ROM, RAM and AXI4 interface to DDR
 - a UART communications module
- Users can add IP cores and software to build more complex SoCs
- Here, the addition of a timer IP and its software driver is exemplified



Project setup

- Use a Linux machine or VM
- Install the latest stable version of the open source Icarus Verilog simulator (iverilog.icarus.com)
- Make sure you can access github.com using an ssh key
- Clone the repository github.com/IObundle/iob-soc
- Follow the instructions in its the README file



Create an IP core to instantiate in your SoC

- Create a timer IP core repository or, alternatively, use the one at www.github.com/IObundle/iob-timer.git
- An IP core can be integrated in an IOB-SoC if it provides the following X files:
 - ① hardware/hardware.mk
 - ② software/software.mk
 - Please refer to the files hardware/simulation/simulation.mk and hardware/hardware.mk in IOB-SoC for specific configurations (not necessary for this tutorial)
- Add the IP core repository as a git submodule of your IOB-SoC repository:

```
git submodule add https://github.com/IObundle/iob-timer.git submodules/TIMER
```

- To configure the system to host the IP core, edit the ./system.mk file as in the next slide



Edit the ./system.mk configuration file to configure the system with a new peripheral

```
#FIRMWARE
FIRM_ADDR_W:=13

#SRAM
SRAM_ADDR_W=13

#DDR
USE_DDR:=0
RUN_DDR:=0
DDR_ADDR_W:=30
CACHE_ADDR_W:=24

#ROM
BOOTROM_ADDR_W:=12

#Init memory (only works in simulation or FPGA running from internal RAM memory)
INIT_MEM:=1

#Peripheral list (must match respective submodule or folder name in the submodules directory)
PERIPHERALS:=UART TIMER

...
```



Edit the `firmware.c` file to drive the new peripheral

`./software/firmware/firmware.c`

```
#include "system.h"
#include "periphs.h"
#include "iob-uart.h"
#include "iob_timer.h"

int main()
{
    unsigned long long elapsed;
    unsigned int elapsedu;

    //read current timer count, compute elapsed time
    elapsed = timer_get_count(TIMER_BASE);
    elapsedu = timer_time_us(TIMER_BASE);

    //init uart
    uart_init(UART_BASE, FREQ/BAUD);

    uart_printf("\nHello world!\n");

    uart_txdwait();

    uart_printf("\nExecution time: %d clocks in %dus @%dMHz",
               (unsigned int)elapsed, elapsedu, FREQ/1000000);

    uart_txdwait();
    return 0;
}
```



Run the firmware in internal SRAM

- ❶ Initialize the internal RAM with the firmware
 - Define `USE_DDR=0` and `INIT_MEM=1`
 - Works in simulation and FPGA
 - Loading programs after the FPGA is programmed is enabled: if the firmware is modified it is automatically recompiled
- ❷ Do not initialize the internal RAM with the firmware
 - Assign `USE_DDR=0` `INIT_MEM=0`
 - Works in simulation, FPGA and ASIC
 - The firmware is (re)compiled and (re)loaded via UART



Run the firmware in external DDR

- ❶ Initialize the DDR with the firmware
 - Define `USE_DDR=1` and `INIT_MEM=1`
 - Works in simulation only
 - In FPGA or ASIC the external DDR cannot be initialized
- ❷ Do not initialize the DDR with the firmware
 - Define `USE_DDR=1` `INIT_MEM=0`
 - This option is valid for simulation, FPGA and ASIC
 - The firmware is (re)compiled and (re)loaded via UART
 - In FPGA or ASIC a third party DDR controller IP core is required



Simulate IOb-SoC

- Add your simulation folder in `./hardware/simulation` using the other folders in there as examples
- In file `./system.mk`:
 - ① Define `SIMULATOR` with the name of your simulation folder
 - ② Define `SIM_SERVER` with the URL or IP address of the computer where the RTL simulator runs.
 - ③ Define `SIM_ROOT_DIR` with the name of the remote root directory for the repository files
- To run locally, do not define `SIM_SERVER` and `SIM_ROOT_DIR`
- To run the simulator, type `make` or `make USER=your_user_name` if you have a different username on the remote simulation server
- The firmware, bootloader and system verilog description are compiled as you can see from the printed messages
- During simulation the following is printed:

IOb-SoC Bootloader:

Reboot CPU and run program...

Hello world!



Implement in FPGA

- Add your FPGA folder in `./hardware/fpga` using the other folders in there as examples
- In file `./system.mk`:
 - 1 Define `FPGA_BOARD` with the name of your FPGA folder
 - 2 Define `FPGA_BOARD_SERVER` with the URL or IP address of the computer connected to the board
 - 3 Define ...
- To compile and load the hardware design in the FPGA, type `make fpga-load`
- To load and run your firmware in the FPGA, type `make run-firmware`



Implement in ASIC (WIP)

- Add your ASIC folder in `./hardware/asic` using the other folders in there as examples
- In the file `./system.mk`:
 - 1 Add your ASIC node name in `ASIC_NODE`
 - 2 Add your server URL connected to the microcontroller in `ASIC_SERVER`
 - 3 Add further server info such as username and work directories
- To compile the ASIC, type `make asic`



Conclusions and future work

- Conclusions

- A tutorial on SoC creation using IOb-SoC is presented
- The addition of a peripheral IP core (timer) is illustrated
- A simple software driver for the IP core is exemplified
- How to compile and run the system is explained
- Options for implementing the main memory are presented
- Implementation of FPGA and ASIC is explained

- Future work

- Non-volatile (flash) external memory support
- Real Time Operating System (RTOS)

