8279 programmable keyboard/display controller

8279 programmable keyboard/display controller is designed by Intel that interfaces a keyboard with the CPU. The keyboard first scans the keyboard and identifies if any key has been pressed. It then sends their relative response of the pressed key to the CPU and vice-a-versa.

How Many Ways the Keyboard is Interfaced with the CPU?

The Keyboard can be interfaced either in the interrupt or the polled mode. In the **Interrupt mode**, the processor is requested service only if any key is pressed, otherwise the CPU will continue with its main task.

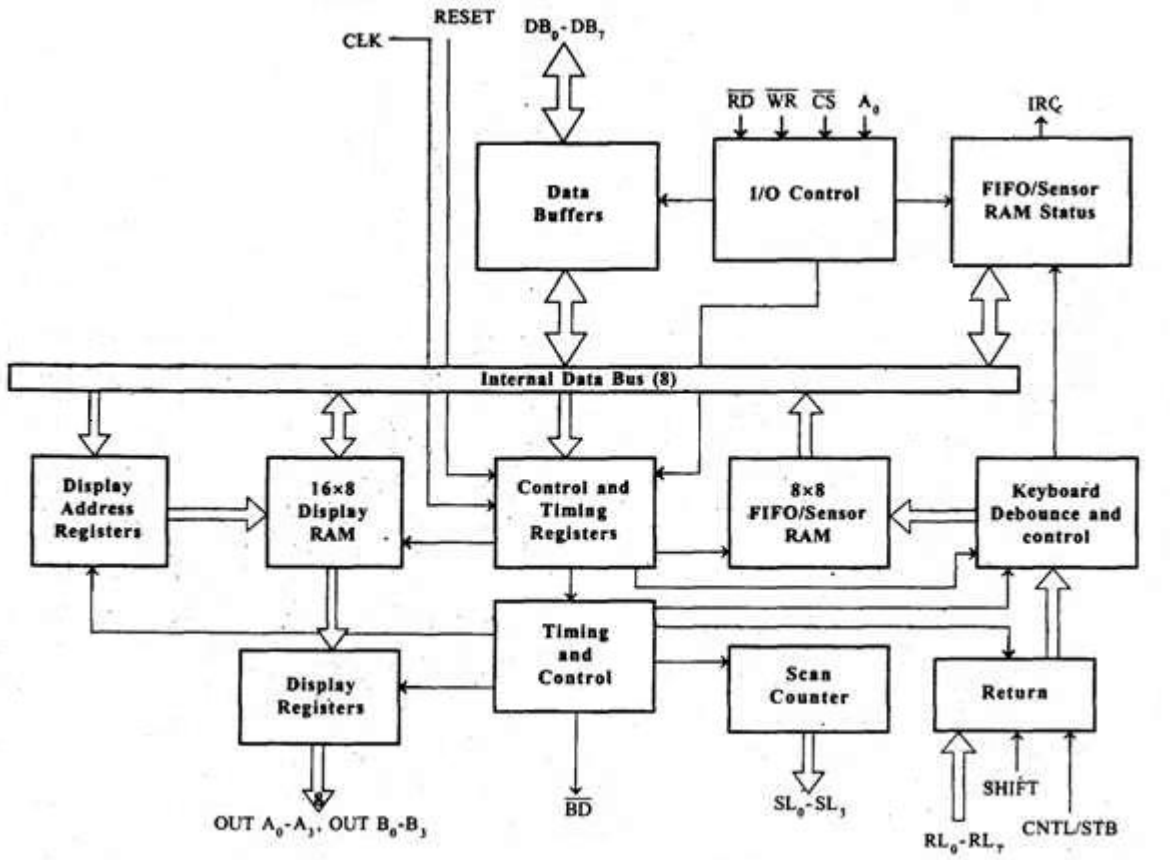
In the **Polled mode**, the CPU periodically reads an internal flag of 8279 to check whether any key is pressed or not with key pressure.

How Does 8279 Keyboard Work?

The keyboard consists of maximum 64 keys, which are interfaced with the CPU by using the key-codes. These key-codes are de-bounced and stored in an 8-byte FIFORAM, which can be accessed by the CPU. If more than 8 characters are entered in the FIFO, then it means more than eight keys are pressed at a time. This is when the overrun status is set.

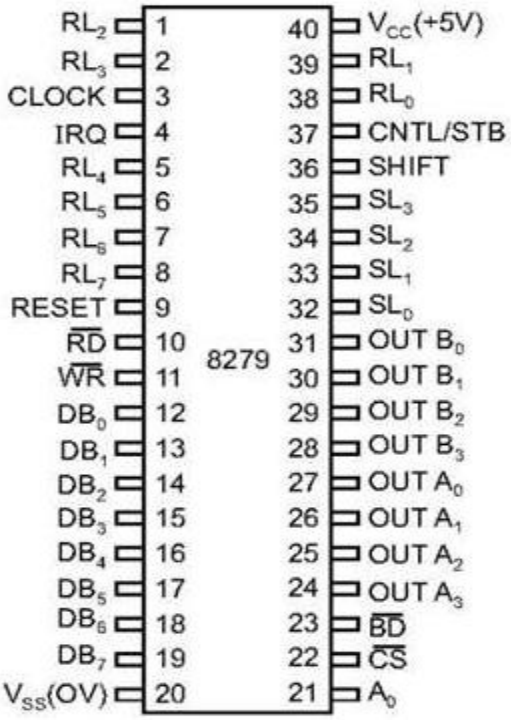
If a FIFO contains a valid key entry, then the CPU is interrupted in an interrupt mode else the CPU checks the status in polling to read the entry. Once the CPU reads a key entry, then FIFO is updated, and the key entry is pushed out of the FIFO to generate space for new entries.

Architecture and Description



8279 − Pin Description

The following figure shows the pin diagram of 8279 −



Data Bus Lines, DB_0 - DB_7

These are 8 bidirectional data bus lines used to transfer the data to/from the CPU.

CLK

The clock input is used to generate internal timings required by the microprocessor.

RESET

As the name suggests this pin is used to reset the microprocessor.

CS Chip Select

When this pin is set to low, it allows read/write operations, else this pin should be set to high.

A_0

This pin indicates the transfer of command/status information. When it is low, it indicates the transfer of data.

RD , WR

This Read/Write pin enables the data buffer to send/receive data over the data bus.

IRQ

This interrupt output line goes high when there is data in the FIFO sensor RAM.

V_{ss}, V_{cc}

These are the ground and power supply lines of the microprocessor.

SL_0 − SL_3

These are the scan lines used to scan the keyboard matrix and display the digits.

RL_0 − RL_7

These are the Return Lines which are connected to one terminal of keys, while the other terminal of the keys is connected to the decoded scan lines. These lines are set to 0 when any key is pressed.

SHIFT

The Shift input line status is stored along with every key code in FIFO in the scanned keyboard mode.

CNTL/STB - CONTROL/STROBED I/P Mode

In the keyboard mode, this line is used as a control input and stored in FIFO on a key closure.

BD

It stands for blank display. It is used to blank the display during digit switching.

$OUTA_0$ – $OUTA_3$ and $OUTB_0$ – $OUTB_3$

These are the output ports for two 16x4 or one 16x8 internal display refresh registers. The data from these lines is synchronized with the scan lines to scan the display and the keyboard.

Operational Modes of 8279

There are two modes of operation on 8279 − **Input Mode** and **Output Mode**.

Input Mode

This mode deals with the input given by the keyboard and this mode is further classified into 3 modes.

- **Scanned Keyboard Mode** − The code of key pressed with SHIFT and CONTROL status is stored into the FIFO RAM.

- **Scanned Sensor Matrix**
- **Strobed Input** − In this mode, when the control line is set to 0, the data on the return lines is stored in the FIFO byte by byte.

Output Mode

This mode deals with display-related operations. This mode is further classified into two output modes.

- **Display Scan** − This mode allows 8/16character multiplexed displays to be organized as dual 4-bit/single 8-bit display units.
- **Display Entry** − This mode allows the data to be entered for display either from the right side/left side.