

Digital Design and Computer Architecture LU

Lab Exercises I and II

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1 Introduction

This document contains the assignments for exercises I and II. The deadlines for these exercises are:

- Exercise I: 02.04.2021, 23:55
- Exercise II: 30.04.2021, 23:55

The combined points achieved in Exercises I and II count 25 % to the overall grade of the course. Please hand in your solutions via TUWEL. We would like to encourage you to fill out the feedback form in TUWEL after you submitted your solution. The feedback is anonymous and helps us to improve the course.

Please note that this document is only one part of the assignment. Take a look at the protocol template for all required measurements, screenshots and questions to be answered. Make sure that all necessary details can be seen in the figures you put into your report, otherwise they will be graded with zero points.

The application created in Exercises I and II is a simple “retro gaming sytem”, which uses an NES controller ¹ for user input and generates a video baseband signal (VBS, i.e., an unmodulated analog black and white TV signal²) as its main output. Additionally the large LCD attached to the board as well as the seven-segment displays and LEDs will be used.

In the game (implemented in Exercise II) the player controls a ball that is falling downwards and is blocked by upwards moving bricks. If the player hits the upper or lower border of the screen the game is over. To score points the player has to collect items placed on the bricks.

1.1 Coding Style

Refer to the “VHDL Coding and Design Guidelines” document before starting your solution. Moreover, we highly recommend to implement state machines with the 2 or 3-process method discussed in the Hardware Modeling lecture, since the 1-process method can easily lead to very hard-to-find bugs. We further recommend to use “named mapping” for connecting wires to an instantiated entity.

1.2 Software

As discussed in more detail in the Design Flow Tutorial, we are using Quartus and QuestaSim (formerly ModelSim) in the lab. If you want to work on your own computer you can download a free version of Quartus (Quartus Prime Lite Edition) and Questa/Modelsim (ModelSim-Intel) from the Intel website.³ However, note that the simulation performance of ModelSim-Intel might be lower than the full version of Questa/Modelsim provided in the lab (especially for large designs).

We also provide you with a (Virtual Box) VM image, which has the free version of these tools installed under CentOS 7 (the same operating system as used in the lab). You can download the VM using scp from `ssh.tilab.tuwien.ac.at:/opt/eda/vm/ECS-EDA-Tools_vm.02102020.txz`.

¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo_Entertainment_System#Controllers

²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Composite_video

³<https://www.intel.com/content/www/us/en/software/programmable/quartus-prime/download.html>

1.3 Submission

Do not change the latex template in any way. Most importantly do not delete, add or reorder any questions/subtasks (i.e., the “qa” environments). If you don’t answer a particular question, just leave it empty, but don’t delete it. Everything you enter into the lab protocol must be inside one of the “qa” environments, everything outside of these environments will not be considered for grading.

When including simulation screenshots, remove the window border and menus. Only show the relevant parts!

Further note that it is mandatory to put the files exactly in the required folders! The submission script will assist you to avoid mistakes.

1.4 Allowed Warnings

Although your design might be correct, Quartus still outputs some warnings during the compilation process. Table 1.1 lists all allowed warnings, i.e., warnings that won’t have a negative impact on your grade. All other warnings, however, indicate problems with your design and will hence reduce the total number of points you get for your solution.

ID	Description
18236	Number of processors has not been specified which may cause overloading on shared machines. Set the global assignment NUM_PARALLEL_PROCESSORS in your QSF to an appropriate value for best performance.
13009	TRI or OPNDRN buffers permanently enabled.
276020	Inferred RAM node [...] from synchronous design logic. Pass-through logic has been added to match the read-during-write behavior of the original design.
15064	PLL [...]altpll:altpll_component pll_altpll:auto_generated pll1" output port clk[0] feeds output pin "nclk~output" via non-dedicated routing -- jitter performance depends on switching rate of other design elements. Use PLL dedicated clock outputs to ensure jitter performance
169177	[...] pins must meet Intel FPGA requirements for 3.3-, 3.0-, and 2.5-V interfaces. For more information, refer to AN 447: Interfacing Cyclone IV E Devices with 3.3/3.0/2.5-V LVTTTL/LVCMOS I/O Systems.
171167	Found invalid Fitter assignments. See the Ignored Assignments panel in the Fitter Compilation Report for more information.
15705	Ignored locations or region assignments to the following nodes
15714	Some pins have incomplete I/O assignments. Refer to the I/O Assignment Warnings report for details
12240	Synthesis found one or more imported partitions that will be treated as black boxes for timing analysis during synthesis
13024	Output pins are stuck at VCC or GND
21074	Design contains [...] input pin(s) that do not drive logic

Table 1.1: Allowed warnings

The last two warnings in Table 1.1 may still indicate problems with your design. So thoroughly check which signals these warnings are reported for! If you have, for example, an input button that should trigger some action in your design but Quartus reports that it does not drive any logic, then there is certainly a problem. If you intentionally drive some output with a certain constant logic level (for example an unused seven segment display), then the “stuck at VCC or GND” warning is fine.

2 Exercise I (Deadline: 02.04.2021)

2.1 Overview

In the first exercise you will already design your first FPGA application using VHDL. Prior to that it is, however, necessary that you make yourself acquainted with the tools and the remote working environment used in this lab course. A basic FPGA design flow consists of simulation, synthesis and place&route. The simulation is used to verify and debug functionality and timing of the circuits. During synthesis the behavioral and/or structural description is translated into a gate-level netlist. This netlist can then be mapped to the FPGA's logic cells. Finally the produced bitstream file is used to configure the FPGA.

Note that we provide you with a reference implementation in the form of an SOF (bitstream) file, that can be downloaded from TUWEL. If some explanation in this document is unclear, this implementation can be used as a guideline for how the finished system should behave. Nonetheless, don't hesitate to contact the teaching personal using the provided communication channels. Please note that the TU Chat can also be used to ask questions outside of the tutor lab slots. This way simpler questions can be answered immediately by the staff and you don't have to wait for the next tutor slot.

2.2 Required and Recommended Reading

All documents are available in TUWEL.

Essentials (read before you start!)

- Design flow tutorial
- VHDL introduction slides (Hardware Modeling)
- VHDL Coding and Design Guidelines

Consult as needed

- IP Cores Manual
- Datasheets and Manuals (e.g., for the board)

2.3 Task Descriptions

Task 1: Structural Modeling [8 Points]

Your task is to implement a top-level structural VHDL description of the system shown in Figures 2.3-2.5. The description must be done in VHDL and should contain only structural primitives (component instantiations and concurrent signal assignments). All information needed to wire the IP cores together is contained in the figures.

System Assembly: Create a new Quartus project in the `top/quartus/` directory of the template and add all needed IP cores and your top-level description to it. The name of this project shall be `top`. Quartus will create two files named `top.qpf` and `top.qsf`. Set the VHDL version of the project to VHDL-2008. We also provide you with a Makefile located in the `top/quartus/` directory, that allows you to start the synthesis process from the command line. This can be useful if you work on the lab computers over an SSH connection.

We already provide you with a template for the entity description (`top/src/top.vhd`). It already contains two instances and some connections. Leave them as they are. There are also some signals that are connected to an instance but which are not used in the design yet. These signals are marked with NC in the figures and will be used late in Exercise II. You may ignore the warnings that Quartus produces because of that.

The constants used for the generics in the figures are defined in Table 2.1. Make sure you use constants in VHDL. Do not set these values directly in the generic map sections.

Constant	Value	Description
SYNC_STAGES	2	The number of synchronizer stages used when (asynchronous) external signals are read.
WIDTH	400	The horizontal resolution of the game.
HEIGHT	240	The vertical resolution of the game.

Table 2.1: Constants

The `ball_game` module internally uses the module `prng`, which must also be added to the Quartus project. Note that some of the IP cores are only provided as precompiled modules. This includes the `audio_cntrl`, the `prng`, the `dbg_port` and the `lcd_graphics_controller`. These modules always come with one or more `*.vhd` files as well as a `*.qxp` and a `*.vho` file. For your Quartus project add all `*.vhd` as well as the `*.qxp` file (the `*.vho` is only required for simulations). For example, for the `audio_cntrl` the files `audio_cntrl_top.qxp`, `audio_cntrl_2s.vhd` and `audio_cntrl_pkg.vhd` are needed.

Unused (i.e., unconnected) outputs of instances (e.g., `game_state` or `player_points`) shall be marked with the “open” keyword. For your report include a screenshot of the overall system from the RTL netlist viewer in Quartus.

System Explanation: The shown design is the top-level module of our gaming system, which will be used and extended throughout exercises I and II.

Normally this top-level module provides connections to all required peripheral devices, such that a user is able to interact with the design. However, since this is a remote-only semester we had to make some slight adjustments, because using e.g., the board’s buttons and switches (see Figure 2.1) is simply not possible in such a setup. Hence, we developed the `dbg_port` module which provides outputs for the buttons (`dbg_keys`) and switches (`dbg_switches`), which we will use instead of the “real” ones. In our remote lab environment these “virtual” buttons/switches can then be controlled using a simple python tool (`remote.py`). The `dbg_port` also outputs the `dbg_nes.buttons` signals, which we will use until Task 6, where the NES controller interface will be implemented. However, for the same reasons as for the board buttons/switches you will not be interfacing with a “real” controller. Instead the `dbg_port` will emulate the controller’s behavior over a external loop back using the GPIO pins of the FPGA.

Additionally the `dbg_port` module is also able to read the state of the LEDs and the HEX displays, which can then be retrieved using `remote.py`. Another feature is the ability to send

instruction to a graphics controller using the `gfx_*` signals. This will be relevant for Exercise II since there you will implement your own graphics controller.

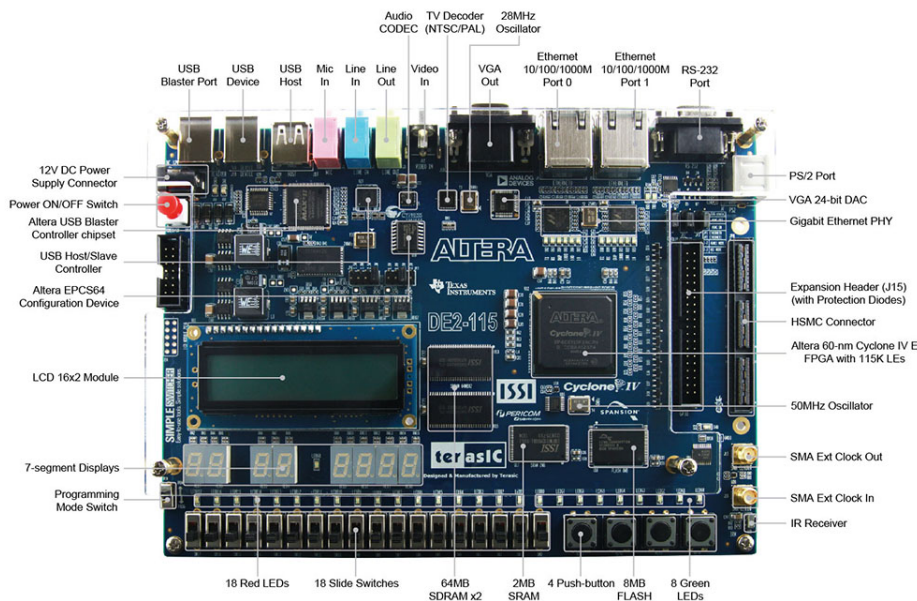


Figure 2.1: DE2-115 FPGA Development Board

The “heart” of the system is the `ball_game` module which implements the actual game logic (Exercise II), processes controller input, sends instructions to graphics controller and plays sounds using the `audio_cntrl`. The `display_switch` module selects which graphics controller the game should use and is controlled by `dbg_port`.

After everything is assembled correctly you should have a system that draws a ball on the board’s LCD, that can be moved using the arrow keys of the virtual controller in the `remote.py` tool. Whenever the ball is moved a sound is played.

To use the `remote.py` tool in the TILab, please execute the following commands (when logged in at a TILab computer).

```
1 pip3 install --user termcolor dataclasses docopt pyserial pyusb PyVISA PyVISA-py
```

PLL Generation: The PLL shown in Figure 2.3 is not supplied. You need to generate it using the corresponding wizard in Quartus (see the Design Flow Tutorial for further information). The frequency of the display clock (first PLL output) must be 8 MHz. The second clock output of the PLL is required by the audio controller and must be configured to 12 MHz. Place the PLL generated by the wizard in the `top/src/` folder.

Create and add an SDC file as discussed in the Design Flow Tutorial. Additionally add the following lines to end of this file:

```
1 set_false_path -from [get_clocks {clk}] -to [get_clocks {PLL_INST_NAME|altpll_component
  |auto_generated|pll1|clk[0]}];
2 set_false_path -from [get_clocks {clk}] -to [get_clocks {PLL_INST_NAME|altpll_component
  |auto_generated|pll1|clk[1]}];
```

`PLL_INST_NAME` must be replaced by the name of your PLL instance in the top-level design architecture.

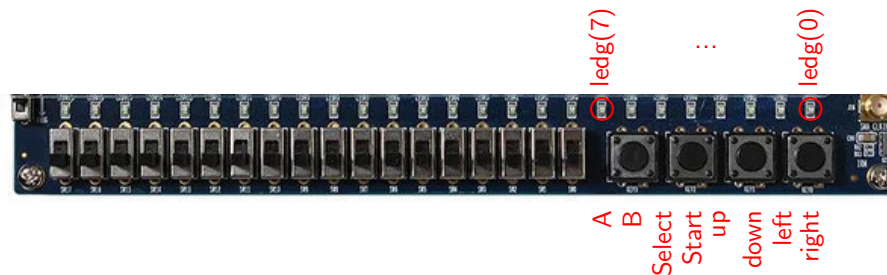


Figure 2.2: Controller button/LED mapping

Reset: Notice that the `dbg_port` module's reset is directly connected to `keys(0)`. All other components are reset by the signals `res_n`, `audio_res_n` and/or `display_res_n`. These signals are generated using the (synchronized) output of the AND gate in Figure 2.3. Hence, the design can be reset by either a “virtual” button press on `dbg_keys(0)` or a “real” button press on the board (`keys(0)`). This feature is important for the `top` testbench used in Tasks 3 and 4, so be sure to implement it correctly.

Connecting the LEDs: The current state of the NES controller buttons (i.e., which button is pressed/not pressed) is represented using the record data type `nes_buttons_t` declared in the `nes_controller_pkg` package. This data type contains one flag (`std_logic`) for each of the controller's buttons. As long as a button on the controller is pressed, the corresponding flag in this record is set to one. Connect the individual button signals in accordance with Figure 2.2 (i.e., `ledg(0)` shall be connected to `dbg_nes.buttons.btn_right` and so on).

The `ledg(8)` output shall be set to constant `'0'`; The red LEDs (`ledr`) shall be directly connected to `dbg_switches`. The `hex{0-7}` outputs shall be set to constant `'1'` for now.

Pin Assignments: You don't have to take care of (most of) the pin assignments by yourself. Simply import the provided pinout file located in `top/quartus/top_pinout.csv`, as discussed in the Design Flow Tutorial. Now everything *except* for the 50 MHz clock signal is connected. Consult the FPGA board manual to find out its exact location (the signal is called `CLOCK_50` in the manual) and assign it using the Pin Planner in Quartus. Be sure to select the correct I/O Standard (3.3-V LVTTL).

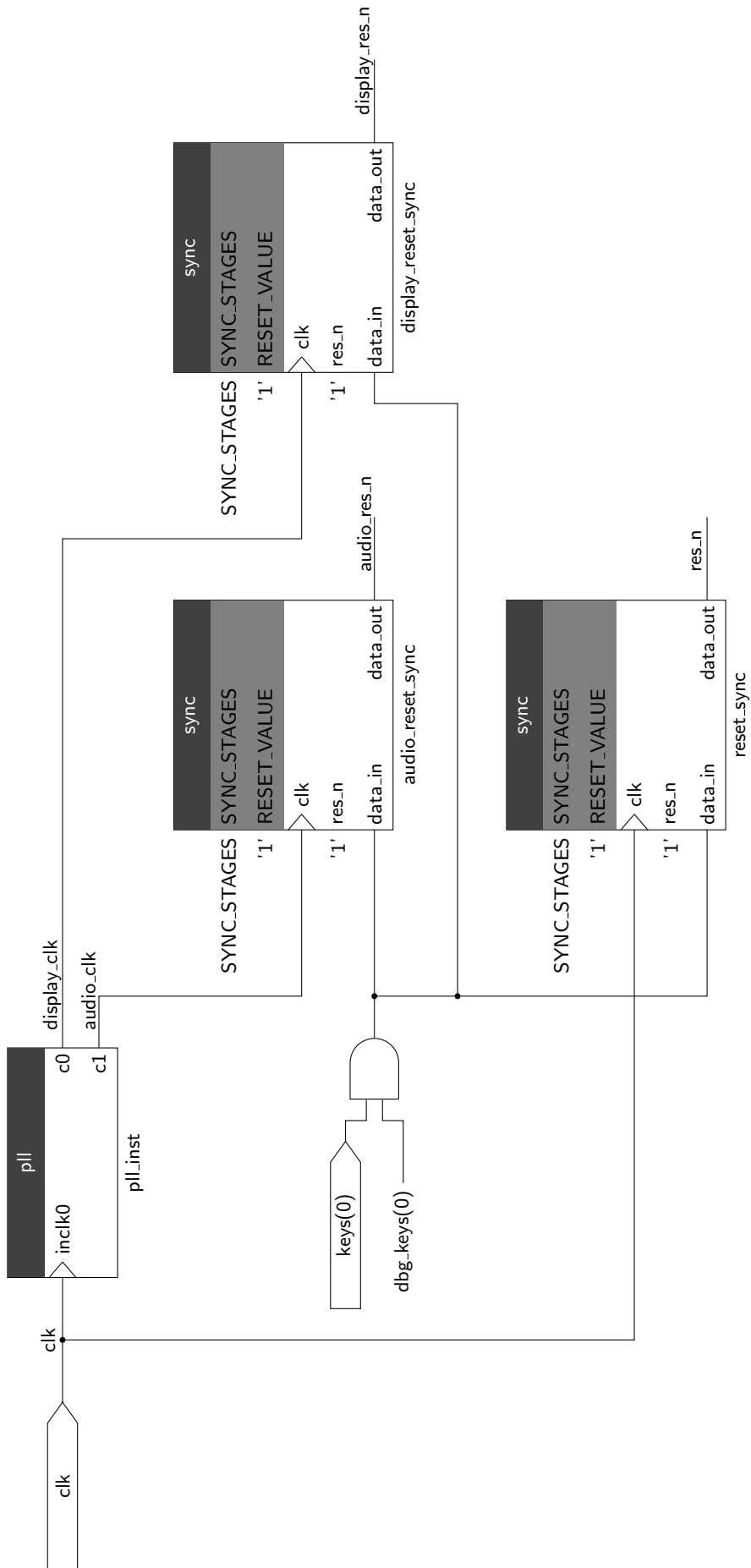
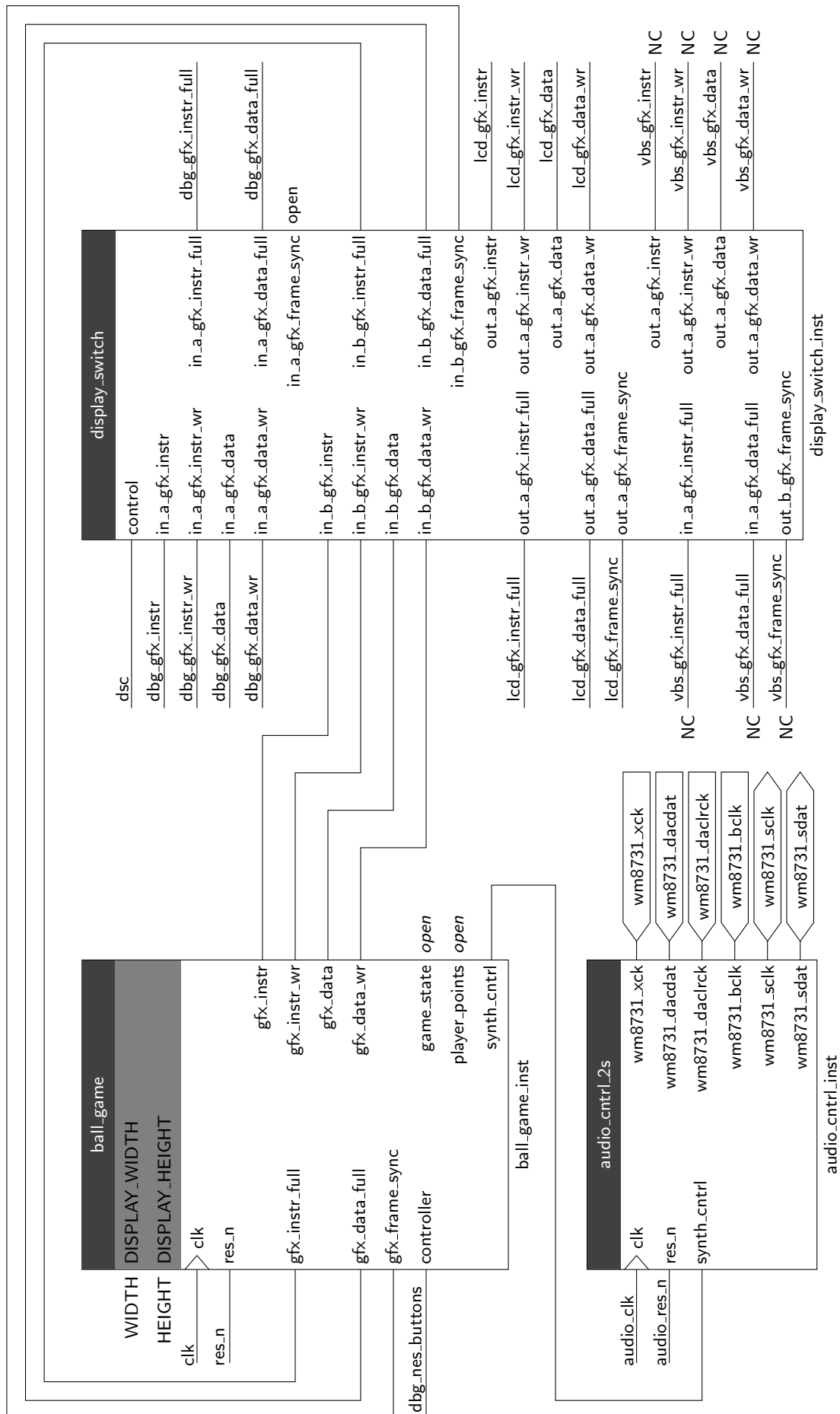


Figure 2.3: Structural system description (part 1)



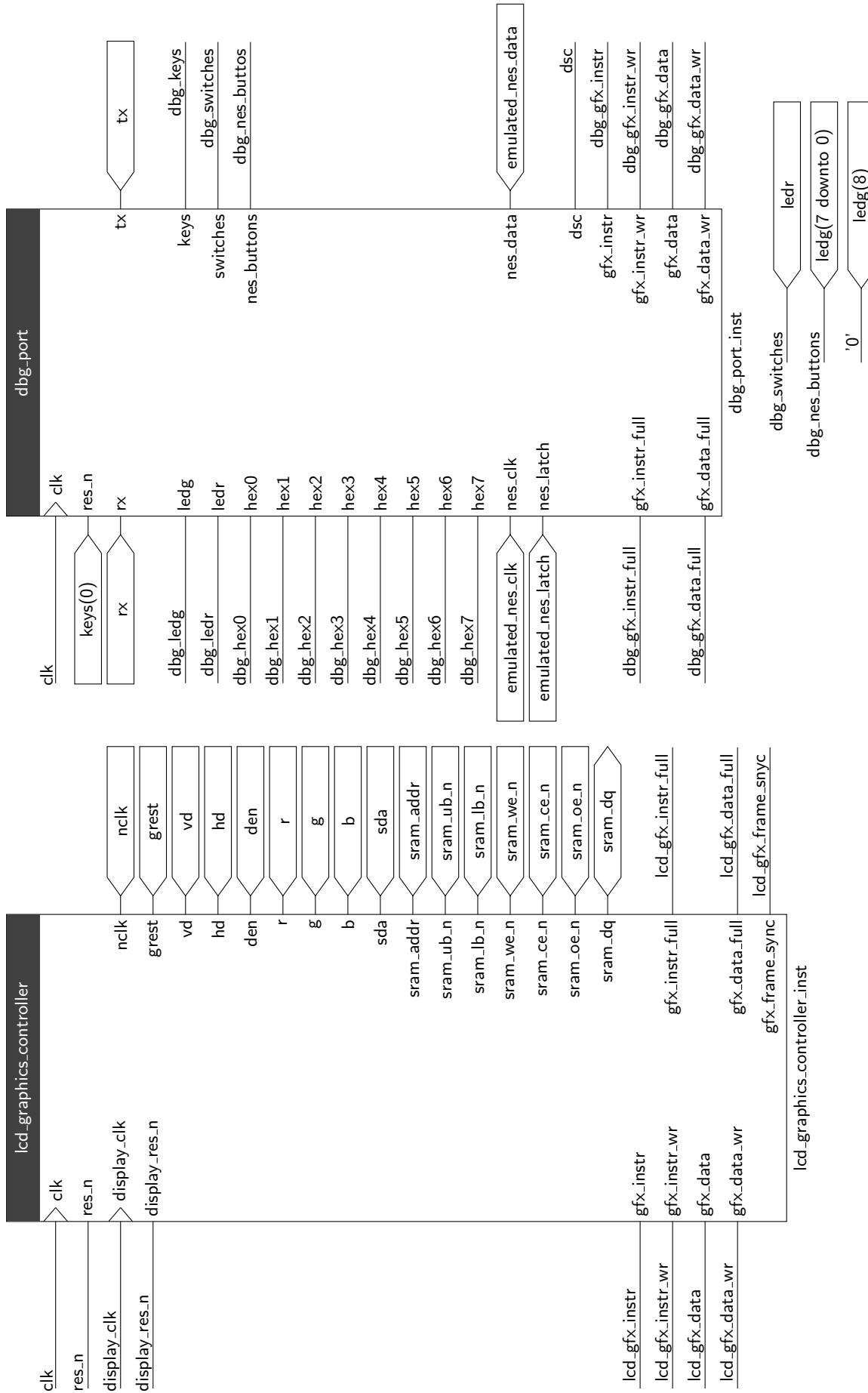


Figure 2.5: Structural system description (part 3)

Task 2: Seven Segment Display I [14 Points]

In this task you will extend your design with a simple combinational module that outputs the current state of the game on the seven segment display of the board. Moreover, it will also display whether the left or right key of the controller is pressed. For this purpose create a new entity called `ssd_controller` and place it in the file `ssd_controller/src/ssd_controller.vhd`. Table 2.2 specifies the interface of this entity. The `clk` and `res_n` inputs are not required for this task, but will be used for Task 7.

Name	Dir.	Width	Functionality
<code>clk</code>	in	1	Global clock signal
<code>res_n</code>	in	1	Global reset signal (low active, not internally synchronized)
<code>game_state</code>	in	<code>game_state_t</code>	The current game state
<code>controller</code>	in	<code>nes_buttons_t</code>	The NES controller input
<code>hex0</code>	out	7	The right-most seven segment display: analog stick value
<code>hex1</code>	out	7	The 2. display: analog stick value
<code>hex2</code>	out	7	The 3. display: analog stick value
<code>hex3</code>	out	7	The 4. display: analog stick value
<code>hex4</code>	out	7	The 5. display: current direction
<code>hex5</code>	out	7	The 6. display: current direction
<code>hex6</code>	out	7	The 7. display: game state
<code>hex7</code>	out	7	The left-most seven segment display: game State

Table 2.2: `ssd_controller` interface specification

The `game_state` output of the `ball_game` module is an enumerated data type, comprised of the values `IDLE`, `RUNNING`, `PAUSED`, `GAME_OVER` (it is defined in the `ball_game_pkg`). Since the actual game logic is not yet implemented, the `game_state` output can be changed using the NES controller inputs as listed in Table 2.3. Note that if neither of the buttons is pressed, the output game state will be determined by a PRNG in the `ball_game` entity. Table 2.4 shows the patterns that shall be displayed on the outputs `hex{6-7}` for the different game states.

To display the current direction (i.e., whether the left or right key of the controller is pressed) use the pattern shown in Figure 2.5 for the outputs `hex{4-5}`. Note that, when the left and right buttons are pressed simultaneously the error code shall be displayed. When neither of the two buttons is pressed both segments shall be switched off.

The outputs `hex{0-3}` should be permanently switched off for now.

Don't use the `all` keyword for this task, but create explicit sensitivity lists for your processes (if you have any). Consult the FPGA board manual for more information on how to control the individual segments of the seven segment display. After your module is complete, create a

Input pattern	Game state
$\overline{\text{Start}} \wedge \overline{\text{Select}} \wedge \overline{\text{A}} \wedge \overline{\text{B}}$	Random State
Start	IDLE
Select	RUNNING
A	PAUSED
B	GAME_OVER

Table 2.3: Input patterns to activate the different game states





IDLE	
RUNNING	
PAUSED	
GAME_OVER	

Table 2.4: Game state display




Left button pressed	
Right button pressed	
Left and Right buttons pressed simultaneously	

Table 2.5: Direction Patterns

package for it (`ssd_controller/src/ssd_controller_pkg.vhd`) and add an instance to the top-level module. Connect the `game_state` input to the `game_state` output of the `ball_game` module and connect the `controller` input to `dbg_nes_buttons`. Finally connect the `hex{0-7}` outputs to the corresponding outputs of the top level entity. The correct pin assignment should have already been configured in Task 1.

Task 3: Behavioral Simulation [8 Points]

In this task you will simulate the top-level entity with the provided testbench in `top/tb/top_tb.vhd`. To automate the compilation and simulation process use the makefile example, provided in the `ram/` directory, to create your own makefile-based simulation flow for the top-level design. The makefile for the top-level entity shall be placed in `top/Makefile`.

To get better acquainted with the tools, you can also create a Questa/Modelsim project using the GUI as outlined in the Design Flow Tutorial. However, this is not needed for the submission or the grading. Your makefile should support at least the targets `compile`, `sim_gui` and `clean`. The `compile` target should compile all required source files (i.e., `vhd` and `vho` files) using the Questa/Modelsim compiler (`vcom`). The simulation target (`sim_gui`) should start the graphical user interface of Questa/Modelsim, load an appropriate waveform viewer configuration script to add the relevant signals to the waveform viewer `top/scripts/wave.do` and run the simulation for a few microseconds. Make a simulation showing the signals controlling the SRAM (`sram_we_n`, `sram_ub_n`, `sram_oe_n`, `sram_lb_n`, `sram_ce_n`, `sram_dq`, and `sram_addr`) as well as the signals of the serial interface of the LCD driver IC (`scen`, `sda`, `sclk`). Answer the questions in the report and provide the required screenshots. The `clean` target should delete all files generated during the compilation and simulation process.

Note that the example makefile of the `ram` module is just a suggestion. You are free to change the makefile in any way you like or create a completely different implementation altogether. The only requirement is that the targets `compile`, `sim_gui` and `clean` work as specified.

Task 4: Postlayout Simulation [8 Points]

Use the netlist file (.vho) and the timing file (.sdo), which were generated during Task 2 by Quartus⁴, for performing a post-layout simulation on the top-level entity. The testbench file used in the behavioral simulation can also be employed for post-layout simulation.

The timing file provides information on the real physical signal delays. Therefore, in contrast to a behavioral simulation, signals do not switch instantaneously after the clock edge. Every single bit of a signal vector switches individually depending on the propagation and routing delays of the corresponding circuitry. Run the simulation long enough in order to take a screenshot of the switching of `hex{6-7}`. Zoom into the waveform until you can see the different delays of the signals and use two markers to measure

- the duration between the first and the last bit toggling and
- the time between the (last) active clock edge (of `nclk`) and the point in time when the `hex{6-7}` outputs have stabilized.

Note that the markers must be visible in the screenshot (You may use a single screenshot for both values). You don't have to provide a simulation script for this task, the screenshot is sufficient.

Important: The time resolution for the post-layout simulation must be set to pico seconds. If not set correctly Questa/Modelsim produces an error. Using the command line interface this is achieved using the `-t` argument. In the GUI the time resolution is set in the “*Start Simulation*” window.

Task 5: Testbench Design [10+12+(5) Points]

In this task you will design testbenches for two of the cores provided in the exercise template. Both simulations are purely text-based, i.e., the waveform viewer is not used to examine the results of the simulation, although you can use it to design and debug your testbenches. Furthermore, the simulations shall be controlled by the Makefiles (`prng/Makefile` and `lcd_graphics_controller/Makefile`) similar to Task 3. Both makefiles should support the targets `compile sim` and `clean`. You can, however, add further targets for your use during development. Before you start your work on the testbenches consult the IP Cores Manual to learn about the features and interfaces of the two cores.

(A) PRNG (Pseudo Random Number Generator) [10 Points]

Create a testbench for the `prng` named `prng_tb` and place it in the `prng/tb/prng_tb.vhd` file. This testbench should apply a clock (the frequency can be chosen freely) and monitor the output sequence of the `prdata` signal. Your task is to determine the period of the output sequence generated by the PRNG for different values of `seed` and record the maximum and minimum periods. After all required seed values (defined later) have been tried the simulation shall be stopped, i.e., the clock shall be switched off and the results shall be reported (and the simulator program shall exit).

As documented in the IP Cores Manual, the PRNG internally uses a 16-bit linear feedback shift register (LFSR), whose initial state and feedback polynomial can be controlled by the `seed` input. Unfortunately nothing is known about how this seed value is processed and how it affects the aforementioned parameters. Hence the period of the PRNG (i.e., its internal LFSR) can only be determined by observing the `prdata` output. To do this in the testbench attach a shift register to the `prdata` output of the PRNG (see Figure 2.6) and observe its value. Note that the shift register

⁴Depending on the settings, the Quartus timing analyzer might produce multiple sets of vho and sdo files: with fast/slow timings. For this exercise use the conservative (slow) timing estimates.

must be 16 bits wide⁵, to allow it to capture the complete internal state of the LFSR. Recall that the maximum period of a 16-bit LFSR is $2^{16} - 1 = 65535$.

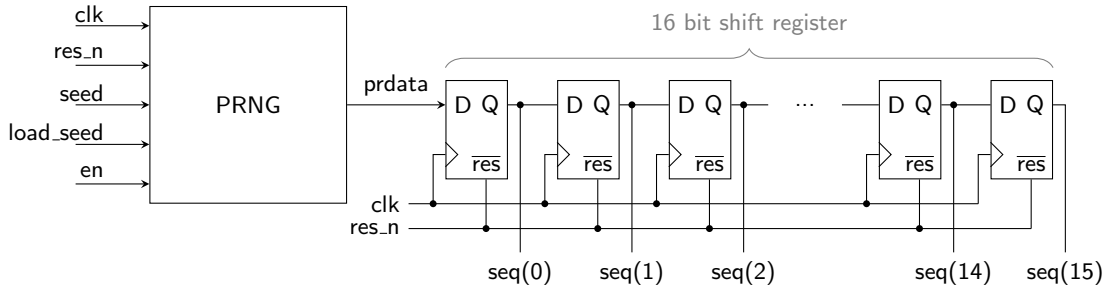


Figure 2.6: PRNG with shift register attached at prdata

To measure the period of the PRNG take a snapshot of the shift register's output (`seq` in the figure) and count the number of clock cycles until this value appears again. The value or point in time of the initial snapshot does not matter, you only have to make sure that the shift register is completely filled with data from the PRNG. when you take the snapshot. This means that you have to wait a certain number of clock cycles after a reset or when you change the seed before taking a snapshot.

Figure 2.7 shows an example simulation for the PRNG initialized with the seed 0x00 (the default seed after startup). It can be seen that in this case the period is 7.

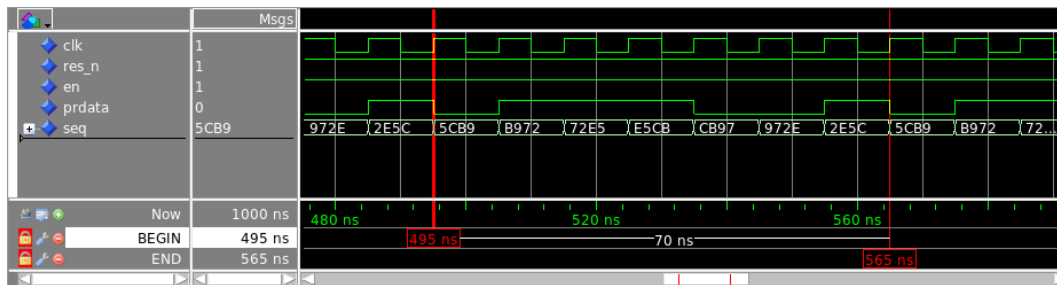


Figure 2.7: Example simulation of the PRNG

The range $[n_a, n_b]$ of seed values to check in your simulation is based on your matriculation number.

$$n_a = (([\text{Your Matriculation Number}] \bmod 15) + 1) \ll 4, n_b = n_a + 15$$

For each of the 16 seed values your testbench should produce an output line reporting the seed value itself and the measured period.

When `make sim` is executed in the `prng/` directory, the simulation shall be performed and the cycle count should be reported. After that the simulator should exit. The graphical user interface of Questa/Modelsim should not be opened during this process. You can either use the `textio` package or simple report statements for your output, which should look something like this:

```
seed: [SEED0], period: [PERIOD0]
seed: [SEED1], period: [PERIOD1]
[...]
seed: [SEED15], period: [PERIOD15]
min period: [MIN_PERIOD], max period: [MAX_PERIOD]
```

⁵In fact it could also be larger, but then it would record the additional bits unnecessarily.

If report statements are used additional information will be printed (e.g., the simulation time step when the report occurred), this is completely fine for your submission.

(B) LCD Graphics Controller [12 Points]

Create a testbench for the `lcd_graphics_controller` named `lcd_graphics_controller_tb` and place it in `lcd_graphics_controller/tb/lcd_graphics_controller_tb.vhd`. This testbench shall generate the necessary clock signals with the right frequencies, set a user pattern (you are free to design one) and use this user pattern to draw two $n \times n$ rectangles at $(x, y) = (0, 0)$ and $(x, y) = (400 - n, 240 - n)$ with $n = 16$.

From the IP Cores Manual we know that the `lcd_graphics_controller` uses the external SRAM of the board to store its frame buffer(s). Hence implement a simple model of this SRAM chip (the datasheet is available in TUWEL) that can be attached to the SRAM interface signals of the `lcd_graphics_controller` in the testbench. We already prepared an entity named `sram` in the file `lcd_graphics_controller/tb/sram.vhd`. Be sure to not change the interface of this entity in any way!

Your SRAM model shall have an internal memory reflecting the size of the real SRAM chip on the FPGA board, where data written by the graphics controller is recorded. You don't have to support every write operation mode listed in the datasheet. The only constraint is that your SRAM model has to work with the `lcd_graphics_controller`. For the sake of simplicity initialize every location of the internal memory to zero. Note, however, that this is not the case with real SRAM, which powers up to a random state.

In order to visualize the data stored in your SRAM, the entity of the SRAM module features the `write_file` input. Whenever the `sram` sees a rising edge on this signal it shall dump the image with the resolution defined by the inputs `width` and `height` which is stored at the location specified by the input `base_address` to an image file. For that purpose we use the ASCII version of the Portable PixMap⁶ format (magic number: P3). The file names of the dumped images shall be `sram_dump_[N].ppm`, where `[N]` is a number increased with every image dump, starting at 0. The image files should be placed in the directory specified by the generic `OUTPUT_DIRECTORY`.

The layout of the image in memory is line based. The address of a pixel in memory can be calculated with the following formula:

$$\text{address_of}(x, y) = \text{base_address} + y * \text{width} + x$$

The pixel $(x, y) = (0, 0)$ is stored at `base_address`, while pixel $(1, 0)$ is stored at `base_address+1`. The location `base_address+width` refers to the pixel $(0, 1)$.

Figure 2.8 shows the expected output of the simulation. For better visibility, we used larger rectangles ($n = 64$) and a different primary color.

The `lcd_graphics_controller_tb` shall wait for the issued graphics instructions to be completed and then start a memory dump. Make sure that the image is saved in the same directory where the Makefile of the `lcd_graphics_controller` module resides (the name of this image shall be `sram_dump_0.ppm`). The testbench shall consider the graphics controller to be finished when there was no write operation for 100 clock cycles. After that the simulation shall be stopped and the simulator shall exit. The whole simulation process should again be started by executing the `make sim` command (without the Questa/Modelsim GUI opening).

While solving this task, it may be beneficial to write only a few pixels to the SRAM for testing purposes and only change to the required image after the SRAM model works. The netlist of the `lcd_graphics_controller` is quite large, which leads to quite long simulation times with the free version of ModelSim. Hence it is also a good idea to use the TILab computers with the licensed (i.e., faster) version of Questa/Modelsim.

⁶<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netpbm>



Figure 2.8: Sample SRAM dump ($n = 64$ and blue primary color for better visibility)

Bonus Task: SRAM reads [5 Points]

Extend your SRAM implementation to also support read operations, i.e., if the `lcd.graphics.controller` performs a read operation supply the correct data from your internal memory. Add a screenshot of a read access to your lab protocol.

Task 6: NES Controller [20 Points]

In this task you will implement the NES controller interface to be able to process inputs from a controller attached to the board. The original NES as well as the SNES controller are based on a simple parallel-in/serial-out shift register (like the CMOS 4021 shift register). The controller uses a serial interface consisting of three signals, as shown in the timing diagram in Figure 2.9.

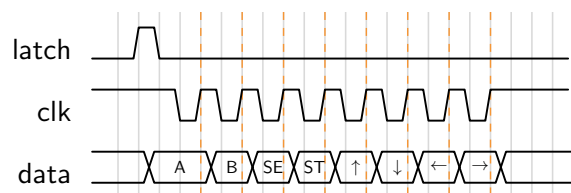


Figure 2.9: NES controller serial interface protocol

To start a new transmission reading the state (pressed/not pressed) of each button, a pulse must be generated at the `latch` signal. This pulse causes the shift register inside the controller to *latch* the current state of every button (parallel load). Now a clock signal can be applied at the `clk` input to serially shift out the button state over the `data` signal. Note that the `data` signal changes with the rising edge of `clk`. However, to be on the safe side we only sample it at the next rising edge indicated by the orange lines. This way the input signal at `nes.data` has the maximum time to stabilize (setup constraint).

Implementation Create an entity named `nes_controller` and place it in the file `nes_controller/src/nes_controller.vhd`. The required generics and the port signals are described in Tables 2.6 and 2.7, respectively.

Name	Functionality
CLK_FREQ	Actual clock frequency of the <i>clk</i> signal given in Hz
CLK_OUT_FREQ	The desired clock frequency that should be generated for the <i>nes_clk</i> signal in Hz. Don't use frequencies higher than 1 MHz.
REFRESH_TIMEOUT	The timeout in <i>clk</i> cycles the controller should wait in between button read-outs. Set this generic to the equivalent of 8 ms.

Table 2.6: `nes_controller` generics description

Name	Dir.	Width	Functionality
<i>clk</i>	in	1	Global clock signal
<i>res_n</i>	in	1	Global reset signal (low active, not internally synchronized)
<i>nes_latch</i>	out	1	The latch signal used to load the shift register in the NES controller with the current state of all buttons.
<i>nes_clk</i>	out	1	The clock signal for the shift register in the NES controller.
<i>nes_data</i>	in	1	The data from the shift register in the NES controller.
<i>button_state</i>	out	<i>nes_buttons.t</i>	This is a record type defined in the <code>nes_controller_pkg</code> package.

Table 2.7: `nes_controller` signal description

The state diagram of the `nes_controller` is shown in Figure 2.10. Implement a state machine according to this specification. The initial state is `WAIT_TIMEOUT`.

Note that the *button_state* output is updated only in the `WAIT_TIMEOUT` state. Otherwise it must hold the value of the last known button state. This implies that a register must be used to buffer this output value. However, you don't need (and shall not use) registers for the *nes_clk* and *nes_latch* outputs. Don't forget to initialize all used registers during reset.

The `BIT_TIME` constant used in Figure 2.10 is the duration of a single bit transmitted on the *nes_data* line in clock cycles of *clk*. You have to calculate this constant from the generics.

Simulation: After implementation create a testbench for the `nes_controller` entity and place it in `nes_controller/tb/nes_controller_tb.vhd`. Add a makefile to control the simulation process (again implement the targets `compile`, `clean` and `sim_gui`).

The `sim_gui` target shall start a graphical (behavioral) simulation that shows the transmission of two button state information frames. The waveform viewer shall show all inputs and outputs of the controller as well as all internal state signals (FSM state, counters). Add a screenshot to your lab protocol. Be sure to expand the *button_state* output in the waveform viewer such that the individual record elements are visible in the screenshot.

Your testbench shall simulate two button state transmissions, i.e., it has to wait for an appropriate trigger on the *nes_latch* signal and then generate the appropriate input data on the *nes_data* signal. Both transmissions shall be visible in the screenshot. Hence set the `REFRESH_TIMEOUT` to a rather low value.

To calculate the two button state values b_0 and b_1 in your testbench take the binary representation of your matriculation number modulo 2^{16} and use the lower 8 bits for b_0 and the upper 8 bits for b_1 . Should one of these values only contain zeros or ones, take an alternating pattern

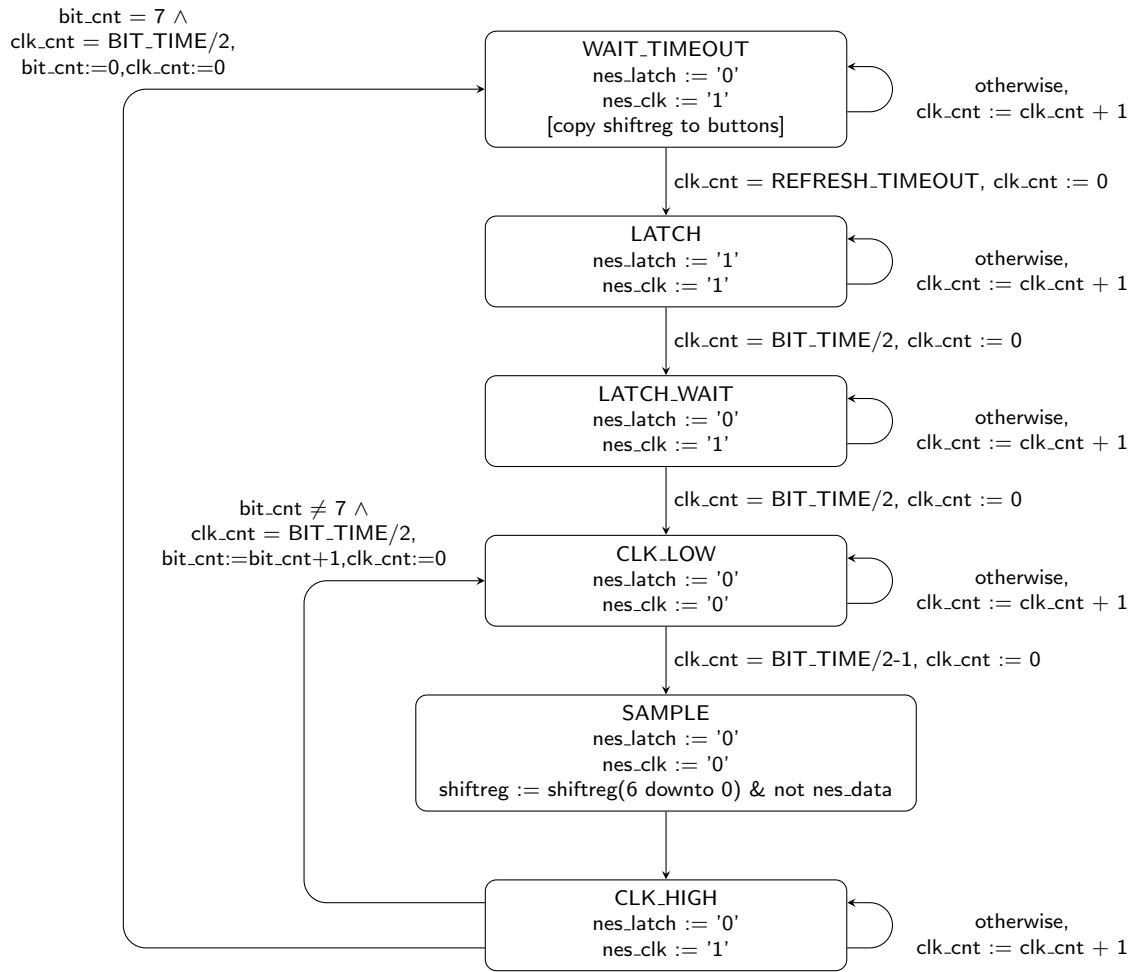


Figure 2.10: nes_controller state diagram

instead. The values b_0 and b_1 should be mapped to the vector given by the individual buttons signals (A,B,Select,Start, \uparrow , \downarrow , \leftarrow , \rightarrow), where A is the MSB.

Example:

$$mn = 123456$$

$$123456 \bmod 2^{16} = 57920 = 0xE240 \Rightarrow b_1 = 0xE2, b_0 = 0x40$$

System Integration If your simulation shows that your design works, add an instance of `nes_controller` to your top-level design and test it in hardware. Because of this year's remote working environment you will, of course, not be able to use a "real" controller with your design. Moreover, there isn't even a real controller connected to the boards. You might already have noticed the NES related signals that connect the `dbg_port` to inputs/outputs of the top-level entity. These inputs/outputs are externally fed back into other GPIO pins of the FPGA (where normally the real NES controller would be attached). Using these signals the `dbg_port` is able to emulate the behavior of a real controller

Figure 2.11 shows how the controller is connected to the board's GPIO connector. Consult the FPGA board manual for the pin locations and use the Pin Planner in Quartus to make the appropriate configurations. Be sure to select the correct I/O Standard (3.3-V LVTTL).

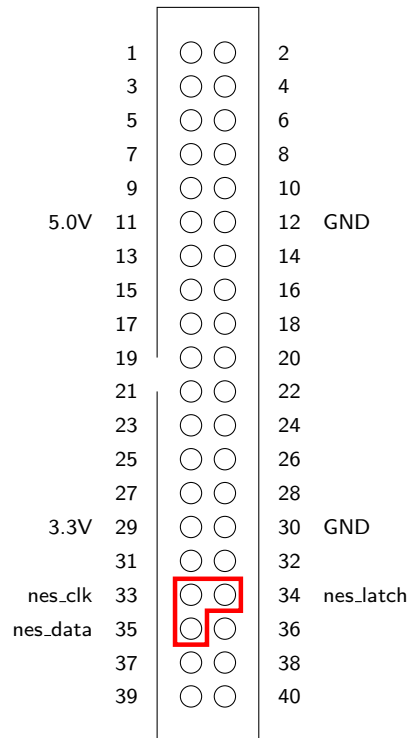


Figure 2.11: Physical controller/board interface

Reading the state of the emulated controller will return the value currently output by the `dbg_port` at the `nes_buttons` output. Hence after integration of your `nes_controller` simply replace the `dbg_nes_buttons` signals with a signal connecting to the `nes_buttons` output of your controller. Additionally set the `nes_buttons` output of the `dbg_port` instance to open.

Task 7: Seven Segment Display II [20+(5) Points]

In this task you will extend the `ssd_controller`, such that it is able to show a decimal representation of the current player points on `hex{0-3}`. The points shall be read from the `player_points` input.

For that purpose design and implement a state machine that converts the `player_points` from their binary representation to a BCD value⁷ and then convert this BCD value to the corresponding seven segment symbols (see Figure 2.12). Initially the FSM should start in state where it **waits** for a change at the `player_points` input and then starts the conversion process. After completion of the conversion the state machine either directly returns to this initial state or lets the new output value first blink for a certain number of times and then returns to the initial state. The decision which path to take is based on the difference between the new and the old `player_points` value. If the new value exceeds the old one by 25 points or more, the hex display should blink. While the hex display is blinking no new `player_points` value shall be read or converted.



Figure 2.12: Seven segment decimal number patterns

Add the generics shown in Table 2.8 and use them in your implementation. Configure the

⁷https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Binary-coded_decimal

instance in the `top` module, such that `BLINK_COUNT` is set to three and `BLINK_INTERVAL` is set to a value corresponding to 0.25 seconds.

Generic	Description
<code>BLINK_INTERVAL</code>	The amount of time in clock cycles the hex display should be on/off.
<code>BLINK_COUNT</code>	The number of times the hex display should blink. A value of one indicates that after the conversion the hex display shall on for <code>BLINK_INTERVAL</code> and then off for <code>BLINK_INTERVAL</code> . After that it should stay on.

Table 2.8: Constants

The conversion itself **must not** be implemented using a division operation, but by successively subtracting decimal powers (i.e., once every clock cycle) from the binary value. Start by subtracting 1000 until the value is smaller or equal to 999. By counting the number of times 1000 could be subtracted, the thousands digit is obtained. Now repeat the process by subtracting 100 to obtain the hundreds digit and finally 10 to obtain the tens digit. The rest corresponds to the ones digit. Since we are dealing with 16-bit unsigned number the highest value that could appear at the input is 65535. However, the highest value we can display using 4 decimal places is 9999. Hence, if the input exceeds this number simply display four dashes, as shown in Figure 2.13.



Figure 2.13: Output pattern for number greater 9999

Again, don't use the `all` keyword for this task, but create explicit sensitivity lists for your processes. Make sure that all required signals are contained in these lists and don't add superfluous signals!

Implement a testbench for your design (place it in `ssd_controller/tb/ssd_controller_tb.vhd`) and add a makefile to control the simulation process (again implement the targets `compile`, `clean` and `sim_gui`). The `sim_gui` target should open the GUI of Questa/Modelsim and load an appropriate waveform file showing all inputs and outputs of the `ssd_controller` core, as well as the internal state variables (this also includes counters). In the testbench use the following value for `player_points`.

`player_points = 1234 + ([Your Matriculation Number] mod 500).`

Include a simulation screenshot of the conversion process in your report. Make sure that the values of all intermediate states are visible in the simulation screenshot. You can make multiple screenshots if this is not possible with one.

The `ball_game` module increments the `player_points` output every second. When the A button on the controller is pressed, 50 is added to the `player_points`.

Note that after finishing this task your `ssd_controller` core should still display the game state at `hex{6-7}`, and the direction at `hex{4-5}` as implemented in Task 2.

Bonus Task: Animation [5 Points]

Animate the outputs `hex6` to `hex7` whenever the game is in the `RUNNING` state. Use the patterns shown in Figure 2.14. Add a generic to your entity that specifies how many cycles the individual animation steps should be shown by your core. In the top-level design, configure this value to the equivalent of one second. Include a screenshot in your lab report showing a simulation run of your

core generating the outputs of one complete animation cycle. Set the generic to 4 clock cycles for this simulation.

Note that the points for this task are only awarded if the other parts of your `ssd_controller` core are fully implemented.



Figure 2.14: Animation steps for the RUNNING state (Bonus Task)

2.4 Submission

To create an archive for submission in TUWEL execute the `submission_exercise1` makefile target of the template we provided you with.

```
1 cd path/to/your/project
2 make submission_exercise1
```

The makefile creates a file named `submission.tar.gz` which should contain the following information.

- Your lab protocol as PDF
- The source code of **all** IP cores
- The source code of the PLL
- The source code of your top-level module
- The source code and testbenches of your IP cores
- Your Quartus project (don't forget a cleanup!)
- The SDC file containing the clock definition
- Your makefiles to start the individual simulations

Most of these points are automatically checked by the submission script. If the script reports an error, no archive will be created. Carefully check the warnings that are generated. The created archive should have the following structure.

```
submission.tar.gz
├── report.pdf ..... Your lab report
├── vhdl ..... The source code of all IP cores
│   ├── top
│   ├── nes_controller
│   ├── ssd_controller
│   └── [... all other IP cores]
```

Make sure the submitted Quartus project compiles and that your makefiles are working. All submissions which can not be compiled will be graded with zero points! **Don't create the archive manually.** If you have problems running the makefile target consult a tutor.

Revision History

Revision	Date	Author(s)	Description
1.0	08.03.2020	FH	Initial version

Author Abbreviations:

FH Florian Huemer
JM Jürgen Maier