DRAFT 1

Design

The ambition with our CPU design was to have a high CPI as well as a low CPS. One way to achieve this is to distribute as much workload across each state, reducing the CPUs critical path. This design choice was to make the CPU pipelined as easy as possible.

The CPU has 6 states: Instruction Fetch (IF); Instruction Decode (ID); Execution (EX); Memory (MEM); Write Back (WB) and HALT.

* MEM
  + IFF load or store operation:
    - Access memory
    - Read/Write flags handled
  + IFF branch
    - Replace PC\_next with destination address
* WB
  + Write ALUOut to registers or memory
  + Handles alignment errors
* HALT
  + TODO: HALT
* IF
  + Retrieve instruction sotred in memory
  + Increment Program Counter(PC)
* ID
  + Determine operands and opcodes from retrieved data
* EX
  + Compute operation determined by opcode using appropriate operands

The instruction which most likely will define the critical path are load/store instructions and branch instructions since they require utilising all 5 functional states. All other instructions would take 4 cycles to execute.

The maintainability and scalability of the CPU also affected design choices made in the implementation of the CPU. An example of this is to have the control black manage instruction handling as well as any simple interrupt handling (e.g., misaligned load/stores or invalid instructions intending to write on the $zero register), whereas the ALU only computed the solution of the instruction itself. With such a simple and robust design, introducing new instructions would be quite unchallenging.

All instructions handled within the ALU were done using in-built Verilog operators. This is because the Icarus Verilog Module synthesis would further optimise all prewritten instructions, furthermore, using well written, documented instructions reduces risk of overcomplexity as well as utilises stable modern features which an industry made CPU would utilise.

Although exception handling is not required by the specification, rudimentary trap handling have been made in place, such as accessing invalid register addresses. By virtue of this, an illegal operation to a register would never execute, which further adds to the reliability of the CPU itself.

Special Registers

* HI/LO
  + Store the 64-bit output of both multiplication and division type instructions
* PC\_jump
  + PC\_jump will store the address to jump to give the branch or jump instruction computed appropriately.
* PC\_next
  + Stores the next address which the PC will use

To always compute the instruction stored adjacent to the branch instruction regardless of the branch case being successful, a 2-bit finite-state-machine which determines if the following instruction computed, then branch, if successful. The case where two branches are sequential to each over is an exception and is not required to be handled, hence any other instruction asides branch or jump can follow a branch or jump type instruction. This was implemented to ease the process of making this CPU pipelined.

Flags

Stall: Specifies if CPU has is attempted to access memory when *waitrequest* is high. The outcome of this is the state is stalled and re-executed

Test Bench

Timing & Area