

µCore/µForth is a hardware/software co-design environment.

You must have docker installed, which may either run under Linux, MacOS, or Windows10.

'docker pull microcore/gforth_062' will pull a gforth_0.6.2 system into your host (https://hub.docker.com/r/microcore/gforth_062). It is the basis of µForth, the assembler/cross compiler, OS, and debugger for µCore. Please note that the docker image requires an RS232 serial interface.

µCore is written in VHDL and the code is available on [github.com](https://github.com/microCore-VHDL/microCore). During development, modelSim has been used for simulation and synplify for synthesis.

'git clone <https://github.com/microCore-VHDL/microCore>' will initially pull the basic µCore kernel without application specific additions. Documentation on µCore is available in the documents directory.

'git clone https://github.com/microCore-VHDL/LFXP2_8_protoboard' will initially pull a customized version for a simple prototyping board around the LFXP2-8E FPGA from Lattice. This is meant as a model on how to use µCore in applications. Documentation on the prototyping board is available in the documents directory.

Both projects have the same subdirectory structure:

<project>	
documents	Documentation
<technology>	Only present for lfxp2_8_protoboard.
modelSim	Simulator config file and wave display scripts for various tests
work	'work' library for the simulator's compiled µCore code
software	µForth cross compiler and basic sim/load files
test	Additional load/sim files. Copy the ones to use into 'software'.
synplify	Synthesizer onfiguration files for synplify
vhdl	VHDL files of µCore

Please note that this structure is different from what the FPGA-vendor specific design environments would like to see. Unfortunately, they all expect something different. Therefore, I abandoned the use of the environments, just using the simulator, the synthesizer, and the FPGA-specific P&R suite as stand alone software.

In the following discussion, a Linux system is assumed as host OS.

To get started, µCore's instruction set test **coretest.fs** will be executed assuming modelSim on Linux and the `/dev/ttyUSB0` serial port. When using a different OS or serial interface, both **umbilical.fs** and the bin/bash file **gforth_062.sh** have to be modified accordingly.

1. At first, **sim_core.fs** must be cross compiled. To this end, open a terminal in the microCore directory. Start the docker image with '**gforth_062.sh**'. This should display gforth's signon message if all goes well. If not, make sure that you did specify a valid serial port in the .sh-script.
2. '**include sim_core.fs**' will produce an object code file for initializing µCore's program memory at the start of simulation. A couple of information lines will be displayed and the last line should read '**sim_core.fs written to program.mem ok**'.
3. `cd` into modelSim and start modelSim by double-clicking **microCore.mpf**. This will open the project display.
4. Create a **work** library by clicking 'File' -> 'New' -> 'Library'. Select "a new library and a logical mapping to it" and enter **work** for both 'Library Name:' and 'Library Physical Name:'.

5. 'Compile' -> 'Compile All' will compile the μ Core design. It should produce one warning and no errors. (Perhaps your modelSim version needs different initialization files in the simulator/work directory.)
6. Double click **simulation** in the project tab. This will, amongst others, open the wave window.
7. In the wave window, click on the 'file' pull down menu and select 'load', which will open the **simulator** directory. Double click **core.do**. This will select a set of basic μ Core signals for the wave window.
8. Simulate for 300 usec and take a look at the right end of the wave display. If all went well, signal **ctrl(0)** will be high and signal **r.tos** will toggle between \$FFFFFFFE and 0. A number different from 0 indicates an error. You can search for the error location in **coretest.fs** using the error number.