

Research Journal for Preston Maness during Senior Design I: A Hardware Random Number Generator

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Abstract—Just a dummy abstract here. Probably won't actually use an abstract for the journal.

CONTENTS

I	Sunday September 15 2013	1
II	Thursday September 19 2013	1
III	September 23 2013	1
IV	Initial Research - What I've Found	2
References		2

I. SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 15 2013

Was able to get dieharder compiled and running. Can feed in both /dev/urandom and a binary file of random, unsigned, 32-bit ints generated from Perl's rand() function. While /dev/urandom is passing most tests—it is marked WEAK in others—it seems that generating even a million random ints is not sufficient for dieharder. It will generate output stating that it "rewound" the file anywhere from tens of times to hundreds of times. Of course when it rewinds the file it is no longer "random" and so the tests fail. Good to know.

As well, it is becoming apparent that I will need to develop a rigorous statistical understanding of randomness. I should also familiarize myself with the GNU Scientific Library, as dieharder integrates tightly with it.

Regardless, I have the RNG stress-tester up and running. Now I need to focus on perhaps making a randomness bitstream a la /dev/customRandom, as our RNG will ultimately be speaking over a serial line and into the host that will then put the raw bits here.

II. THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 19 2013

Found an outstanding link on random noise generation using avalanche breakdown. He even utilized ngspice in the simulation process! This should prove to be an outstanding guidepost. Judging by his work, there's a good chance that avalanche noise might be the best source to work with if construction by hand is a requirement.

<http://holdenc.altevista.org/avalanche/>

Still reading. It looks like he's covered all the fundamental bases I wanted to cover. If his work proves to speed up mine considerably, I should consider investigating parallelizing these designs and having a microcontroller for de-skewing and de-biasing this semester, rather than second semester.

Going to test his netlist on my installation of ngspice now. Getting similar results. That's good.

However, looking at his schematic it looks like he's throwing enough voltage at the 2N3904's to kill them over time, though I could be reading it wrong. I suspect you'd need some heat sinking to keep them cool enough, but he's not exactly throwing a lot of current at them either.

When the current is changed, Vazzana states that "the noise 'pattern' seems to change on the oscilloscope." Will need to investigate this fully.

http://http.developer.nvidia.com/GPUGems3/gpugems3_ch37.html

The NVIDIA link has a nice list of references I should look into.

III. SEPTEMBER 23 2013

Been thinking about how to get this rapidly prototyped. The end of September is a lot closer than it seems. I don't want to fall behind schedule. For now, I'm looking into having an externally powered RNG that outputs its serial bitstream to something like a Raspberry Pi or an Arduino UNO. I own both of these pieces of hardware. I'm curious to see if I can accomplish debiasing and decorrelating with either of these bits of kit. I can then push out the purified bitstream over USB. Both of these devices have libraries available to take an input bitstream and send out a modified stream to a host via USB.

<https://github.com/infomaniac50/Random>

It looks like infomaniac50 is several steps ahead of me. Sidenote: It seems everyone is several steps ahead of me. I should think about how I can distinguish my work. The availability of the work of others means I should be able to get up and prototyping within the week. How can I take advantage of the additional time to produce a unique addition to this body of work? I'm leaning toward using several RNGs in parallel and then using a suitably fast uC to manipulate it into a single, high-speed bitstream over USB 2.0.

Anyway... infomaniac50's got an arduino library that takes the input from an RNG and debiases it. It should be simple enough to extend this library and have it output the bitstream over USB to a host. As well, it's licensed under the CC-AT-SA 3.0 Unported license. I don't know if this is compatible off the top of my head; my understanding is that CC licenses aren't really meant to cover code.

After that, it's just a matter of familiarizing myself with the internals of the Linux kernel to get a bitstream from a /dev/USB device into /dev/urandom or some other custom entropy pool (like /dev/myCustomEntropyPool).

Having some pretty graphs that show how much entropy is in this pool at any given time would be nice. Have a graph that shows how much entropy is used up during entropy-intensive processes. Ideally, we shouldn't be losing much entropy –that is to say, the hardware RNG should be able to keep up. In reality, I suspect my first Marks to not be able to keep up with dieharder's entropy demands.

IV. INITIAL RESEARCH - WHAT I'VE FOUND

BLAH blah blah... List of sources below. Going to keep adding text in here so that the itemize list doesn't get shoved up into the fancy 'B' character of "Blah."

- [1] Evaluating a TRNG in hardware.
- [2] Noise resistant TRNG. Stochastic model for parameter choicing.
- [3] Importance of RNG choice in GIS applications.
- [4] Ring-based RNG. Huh? What's that?
- [5] Investigating LFSR, LCG, and Blum Blum Shub on Xilinx FPGA
- [6] Non-Uniform RNG, Statistics of.
- [7] "Data-oriented" RNG? Not sure what this is about, but it mentions making distributions of random numbers with different characteristics (uniform, chi-squared, etc)
- [8] GPU Accelerated Scalable Parallel RNG.

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