

Lab2: Cortex M3 Features for Performance Efficiency

Introduction:

The ARM architecture optimizes execution time through the implementation of several key performance enhancing features. The first feature is bit-banding, which allows read and write operation to be executed on registers in a single machine cycle without the risk of additional delay from interrupts. This is accomplished through a bit-to-word memory association feature in the ARM architecture. The second feature is the use of predictive logic through the use the "S" suffix and the ITE-block assembly commands to more efficiently implement control flow through use of the PSR flags. Additional, "the barrel shifting feature" allows multiplication to be executed in one machine cycle through bit-shifting saving time in comparison to other methods of multiplication which may require multiple machine cycles to do the same task. These performance enhancing features will be studied and compared through the illumination of LEDs connected to PORT1 PIN 28 and PORT2 PIN2 on the NXP LPC 1768 microcontroller.

Procedure:

- 1) Create new project by selecting Project>New uVision Project.
- 2) A window will open prompting the work directory and Project name. Create a new work directory titled "Lab2" using the "New Folder" button and create the project under the name "Bitband".
- 3) A window will open. Specify the hardware to be used as LPC1768. This can be selecting by the hardware selection tree or found through the search bar.
- 4) Select the following Packages for the Run-Time-Environment
Board Support> LED
CMSIS>CORE
Compiler>Event Recorder
Device>Startup, GPIO, PIN
- 5) Select "Source Group 1" from the Project tree, right click and select "Add New Item to Source Group 1".
- 6) Add the C file and H file titled "bitband" to the "Project Group 1".
- 7) Under the "Options for Target" area do the following:
 - a) Under Target tab>select "Use MicroLIB", set the ARM compiler to "Use default compiler version 5" and unselect IRAM2 option.
 - b) Under C/C++ tab> select "C99 Mode"

- c) Under Debug tab> select "Use Simulator", set the left-side Dialog DLL to DARMPI.DLL, set the associated left-side Parameter to "-LPC1768", set the right-side Dialog DLL to "TARMP1.DLL" and the associated right-side Parameter to "-LPC1768".
- 8) To execute "Bit Banding" example application, add the contents of the provided template "bitband.h" and "bitband.c" to the previously create uVision C and H files created in Step 6 under the same names.
- 9) Build the project and enter the debugging mode. Under the "View" tab selecting Serial Window>Debug (printf) Viewer. (Refer to Fig1 for Viewer output)

```

Debug (printf) Viewer

Mask mode
Addr: 0x01000001
Addr: 0x00000001

function mode
Addr: 0x00000001
Addr: 0x01000001
Addr: 0x00000001

Bit Masking mode
Addr: 0x01000001
Addr: 0x00000001

```

Fig 1: Debug Viewer Demo (Part 3.4)

- 10) Under the "Debug" tab select the following Execution Profiling>Show Times, to show the execution times of each of the three methods implementing the "bitband.c" script. (Refer to Fig 2 for timing output)

33		//mask mode
34	0.040 us	printf("\nMask mode\n");
35	0.090 us	LPC_ADC->ADCR = (1 << 24); // start conversion
36	0.070 us	printf("Addr: 0x%08X \n", LPC_ADC->ADCR);
37	0.090 us	LPC_ADC->ADCR &= ~(7 << 24); // stop conversion
38	0.070 us	printf("Addr: 0x%08X \n", LPC_ADC->ADCR);
39		
40		//function mode
41	0.040 us	printf("\nfunction mode\n");
42	0.060 us	bit = &BitBand(&LPC_ADC->ADCR, 24);
43	0.050 us	*bit = 0;
44	0.080 us	printf("Addr: 0x%08X \n", LPC_ADC->ADCR);
45	0.070 us	*bit = 1;
46	0.080 us	printf("Addr: 0x%08X \n", LPC_ADC->ADCR);
47	0.070 us	*bit = 0;
48	0.080 us	printf("Addr: 0x%08X \n", LPC_ADC->ADCR);
49		
50		//bit band mode
51	0.040 us	printf("\nBit Masking mode\n");
52	0.060 us	ADCR_Bit24 = 1;
53	0.080 us	printf("Addr: 0x%08X \n", LPC_ADC->ADCR);
54	0.060 us	ADCR_Bit24 = 0;
55	0.080 us	printf("Addr: 0x%08X \n", LPC_ADC->ADCR);
56		

Fig 1: Timing for three methods of bit manipulation

- 11) Compare the execution time between the three methods to register bit assignment.
(Refer to Table 1 for total execution time of each method)

Mask Mode: Total time w/o Print statements = $0.090\text{us} + 0.090 = 0.18\text{us}$
Function Mode: Total time w/o Print statements = $0.060 + 0.050 + 0.070 + 0.070 = 0.25\text{us}$
Bit Masking Mode: Total time w/o Print statements = $0.060 + 0.060 = 0.12\text{us}$

Table 1: Register Bit Toggle Timing Summation.

The “bitband.c” code partial shown in Figure 1 toggles bit-24 of the LPC_ADC->ADCR register, where the following bit assignment methods are shown below:

- 1) The code from line 34-38 implements “Mask mode” which toggles bit-24 by using bit-operation.
- 2) The code from line 41-48 implements “function mode” by implementing a Bitband() function which accepts a target address (such as the register for LPC_ADC->ADCR) and applies Bit-banding to toggle bit-24 based on the formula described in section 3.2 of the lab manual.
- 3) The code from line 51-55 toggles implements “bit band mode” where bit-24 of address 0x42680060 (address of register LPC_ADC->ADCR) is directly toggled.

Comparing the execution time of “Mask”, “function” and “bit band” mode listed in Table 1, assignment of a bit on a register is most quickly executed using bit-banding directly on the address of a register. It should be noted that if the actual address of the register is unknown, the additional steps required to determine the address may increase the execution time to the point where it is more time efficient to toggle the bit using a mask with bit operations.

- 12) To execute “Conditional Execution” example select the “Source Group 1” tab under the Project tree and right-click. Under the option menu select “Manage Project Items”.
- 13) Remove “bitband.c” and “bitband.h” from the project and add template code “cond_ex.c”.
- 14) Under the “Options for Target” menu set the following options:
 - a) the Under C/C++ tab>select Optimization>set to “-O0”.
- 15) Build the project and enter Debug mode. Under “View” tab select Analysis Windows>Performance Analyzer.

16) Run the code and note the execution time in the Performance Analyzer. Repeat Step 14 with Optimization set to “-O3” and select “Optimize for Time”. (Refer to Fig 3 and Fig4 for execution time comparison)

Module / File Name	Code	Time (μs)	Time (%)
Bitband		92.595 ms	98%
RTE/Device/LPC1768/system_LPC17xx.c		92.565 ms	98%
cond_ex.c		30.730 us	0%
RTE/Device/LPC1768/startup_LPC17xx.s		0.100 us	0%
C:/Users/brandonho/AppData/Local/Arm/Packs/Keil/AR...		0us	0%
RTE/Device/LPC1768/startup_LPC17xx.s		0us	0%

Fig 3: Level 0 Optimization

Module / File Name	Code	Time (μs)	Time (%)
C:/Users/brandonho/AppData/Local/Arm/Packs/Keil/AR...		72.280 us	100%
cond_ex.c		30.180 us	42%
RTE/Device/LPC1768/startup_LPC17xx.s		0us	0%
RTE/Device/LPC1768/startup_LPC17xx.s		0.100 us	0%
RTE/Device/LPC1768/system_LPC17xx.c		42.000 us	58%

Fig 4: Level 3 Optimization

17) To execute the “Barrel Shift” example append the main function to include the code that is commented out and conversely comment out the code that is currently active. Ensure Optimization is set to “-O3” and “Show Times” are selected under the “Execution Profiling” menu. Build the project and run the Debug mode. Take note of the shift, “S” suffix and IT-block commands in the disassembly window. (See Fig 5 for output example)

The screenshot displays the Keil IDE interface during a debug session. On the left, the 'Registers' window shows the state of various registers, with R12, R13 (SP), R14 (LR), and R15 (PC) highlighted. The main window is split into two panes. The top pane, titled 'Disassembly', shows the assembly code for the 'cond_ex.c' file. The code includes instructions for subtracting, comparing, and performing barrel shifts (LSL and ASRS). The bottom pane, titled 'Performance Analyzer', shows the execution time for the 'cond_ex.c' file as 0.580 us. The code in the bottom pane is also highlighted, showing a 'while' loop with barrel shift instructions.

Fig 5: ITE / “S” suffix / Barrel shift execution- PSR flag triggered –O3

Summary:

Part 1 Debug (Performance Analysis) -- SEE code Section1.txt

Referring to the submitted code titled Section1.txt, the “masked mode” method directly assigns values to the required registers through the OR-bit operation with the register of interest and a mask to toggle the LEDs per the lab manual. The implementation is shown in the following steps below:

- 1) The GPIO for PORT1 and PORT2 are configured for output through their respective FIODIR registers, by setting all PIN assignments to bit-value-one by ORing the register FIODIR with a mask featuring all bit-positions set to bit-value-one.
- 2) Toggling the LEDs ON is accomplished by assigning a bit-value-one on PORT1 PIN28 and PORT2 PIN2 by ORing the register FIOSET for each port with a mask specifying the PIN position of the LED to illuminate. For example, ORing the FIOSET PORT1 register with a mask that has bit-position 28 set to bit-value-one and the rest of the bits set to bit-value-zero will illuminate the LED at PORT1 PIN28. Similarly, ORing the FIOSET PORT1 register with a mask that has bit-position-two set to bit-value-one and the rest of the bits set to bit-value-zero will illuminate the LED at PORT2 PIN2.
- 3) Toggling the LEDs OFF is accomplished similarly to toggling the LEDs ON in Step 2, however the respective masks for each LED of interest must be Ored with register FIOCLR for each port instead.

The “function mode” method toggles the LEDs through manipulation of the registers through bit-banding, where a bit in a certain section of memory (bit-band region) maps to a word in a secondary section of memory (bit-band alias region). Consequently, modifying the word value in the alias region of memory associated with the registers of interest also modifies the respective bit position of the register. The “function mode” method is implemented as follows:

- 1) As with the masked mode implementation of the LEDs, all the pins associated with PORT1 and PORT2 need to be configured to output through their respective FIODIR registers. These are accessed by their aliased memory address determined automatically by the bitband() function provided in the lab template code. Once the alias addresses for FIODIR registers are determined for all the PINs, setting the value associated with the alias address to word-value-one also sets that respective bit in the FIODIR register to bit-value-one. This is executed by a loop by assigning the alias memory address for each FIODIR register PIN with a word-value-one.
- 2) Similar to the “masked method”, to toggle the LED ON the bits associated with PIN28 on PORT1 and PIN2 on PORT2 at their respective FIOSET registers must be set to bit-value-one. This is implemented by determining the alias memory address of

the register associated with PIN28 PORT1 and PIN2 PORT2 using the bitband() function and assigning a word-value-one to those alias memory addresses. Consequently, due to bit-banding, the bits on the FIOSET register associated with the alias memory addresses for the register are set to bit-value-one illuminating the LEDs.

- 3) Toggling the LEDs OFF is accomplished similar to toggling the LEDs ON, except that the FIOCLR register alias memory addresses must be determined by the bitband() function and assigned a word-value-one as opposed to the FIOSET register alias memory address.

The “Bit Masking mode” method logically functions similar to the “function mode” method as both methods modify the registers required to operate the LEDs by use of bit-banding. However, what differentiates the two implementation is that the “Bit Masking mode” method does not use the provided lab template bitband() function to determines the appropriate alias memory addresses to modify. All the alias memory addresses required to implement LED functionality via the FIODIR, FIOSET and FIOCLR registers are predetermined and define at the beginning of the “one.c” program show in Section1.txt. The correct alias memory addresses are determined by first selecting the appropriate Bit-Band-Base address specified in the User manual in Table101, then using the formula provided below, to determine the alias memory address associated with the register of interest. Once the alias memory address is determined, setting that alias memory address to word-value-one associated with the register of interest will also set the bit value of the register associate with that alias memory address to bit-value-one. For example, to set PIN0 on PORT1 to output via register FIODIR, we select the Bit-Band-Base memory address for FIODIR from Table101 of the user manual as 0x2009C020 and apply the following formula provided in the lab manual below:

where ARM M3 has, $\text{bit band base address} = 0x20000000$
and, $\text{bit band alias base address} = 0x22000000$

$\text{byte offset} = \text{bit of interest bit band base address} - \text{bit band base address}$

$\text{byte offset} = \text{bit band base address} - 0x20000000$

$= 0x2009C020 - 0x20000000$

$= 0x0009C020$

$\text{bit band alias address} = \text{bit band alias base address} + (\text{byte offset} * 0x00000020) + (\text{bit postion} * 0x00000004)$

$\text{bit band alias address} = 0x22000000 + (\text{byte offset} * 0x00000020) + (\text{bit postion} * 0x00000004)$

$= 0x22000000 + (0x0009C020 * 0x00000020) + (0 * 0x00000004)$

$= 0x23380400$

Assigning word-value-one to the alias memory address determined above at 0x23380400 consequently assigns the bit position zero on register FIODIR PORT1 to bit-value-one enabling the GPIO PIN0 PORT1 to output. Therefore, to enable all the PINS on PORT1 and PORT2 as

output, the alias memory address for each PIN from 0-31 on each PORT must be determined manually and subsequently set to word-value-one. Similarly, to toggle the LEDs ON and OFF the alias memory addresses for PIN28 on PORT1 and PIN2 on PORT2 for the register FIOSET must be set to word-value-one to activate the LED and the register FIOCLR must be set to word-value-one to deactivate the LED.

The execution time was compared between the three methods of implementing LED functionality by use of the performance analyzer and breakpoint in accordance to the uVision IDE Debugger execution support document [1]. By placing breakpoint between two common points of references in all three implementation methods and running the “one.c” program file between the breakpoint, accurate timings of each method could be determined and compared.

NOTE: To emphasize the performance of optimization level more accurately, the delay function was removed as it was determined -O3 optimization would remove any non-critical loops greatly skewing execution times.

Method	Execution time (-O0) No Delay	Execution time (-O3) No Delay	Performance Improvement
Mask	5.520us	3.860us	30%
BitBand() Function	17.570us	10.230us	41.7%
Direct Bit-Banding	9.490us	7.720us	18.6%

Table 2: Run-time performance (NO DELAY)

Referring to Table2, the “mask mode” method was determined to be the quickest, followed by the “Bit-Mask mode” method and the “function mode” method being the slowest. These results are consistent in both -O0 and -O3 optimization levels. The “masked mode” performed the best executing this specific “one.c” script, however, this may not always be the case as the execution time is dependent on the number of bit values assignments required. This is because the bit operations required to execute an OR operation between a mask and register require multiple cycles (fetch, modify and store) and can be slowed further by interrupt routines. In comparison, bit-banding can execute single instruction fetch and stores and consequently is a much more efficient operation. Referring to Fig 5 and Fig 7, assigning the GPIO PORT1 FIODIR register a bit-value-one requires more execution time using the “Mask mode” method (0.090us) in comparison to the “Bit-Mask mode” method (0.050us), as was originally expected (See Table 1). However, these results conflict with the run-times determined in Table 2 for the complete LED script to execute using each implementation method. Table 2 suggests that for a large amount of bit assignments on a few key registers the “Masked mode” method implementation is most efficient. This makes sense, as the “Mask mode” method re-writes the entire register no matter the number of individual bits required to be changed. However, for single bit assignments on multiple registers the “Mask-bit mode” method is the most efficient. Consequently, the “Mask mode” was most efficient method to implement the “one.c” script because to illuminate the LEDs the bit assignments were almost entirely required on the register FIODIR with sixty-four required bit assignments across the two FIODIR registers. Only four additional bit assignments to toggle the LEDs on and off are required on registers FIOSET

and FIOCLR. In comparison, when modifying the FIODIR register the “Bit-mask mode” method must individually assign each bit values one at a time increasing overall execution time. Referring to Table 2, the “function mode” method required the most amount of time to execute the “one.c” script, which can be attributed this implementation containing the most complexity. For each bit assignment, the bitband() function embedded in the “function mode” method needs to determine the appropriate alias memory address significantly increasing complexity and the execution time of this method. Additionally, since this method is also based on bit-banding it features all the disadvantages of the “Bit-Mask mode” method as well. However, referring to Fig 6, it should be noted that the execution time for a single bit assignment with the “function mode” method (0.070us) is still quicker than the “Mask mode” method (0.090us). Therefore, when structuring code on ARM based architecture, bit-banding based methods should be used for individual bit assignments and masking based methods should be used when an entire register needs its bit values re-written.

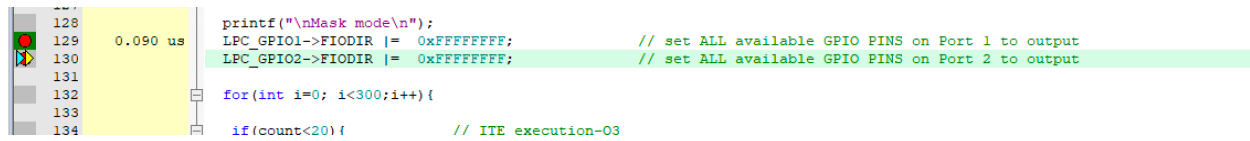


Fig 5: Mask method execution time

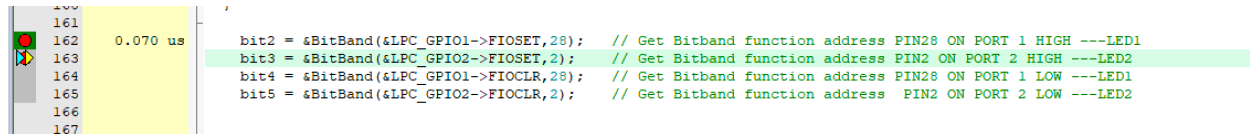


Fig 6: Function() method execution time

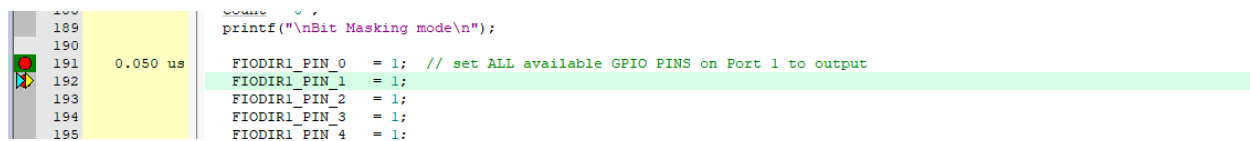


Fig 7: Bit-Mask method execution time

Referring to Fig 8, when the “demo” version of the “one.c” program is simulated, it can be observed in the -O3 optimization that the “if” statements in the script is executed in assembly using the ITE-block implementation. In comparison, referring to Fig 9 when executing the “one.c” program in simulation at -O0 optimization the same “if” statement in the script is executed non-conditionally using a branch command. No implementation of the “S” suffix operator was observed.

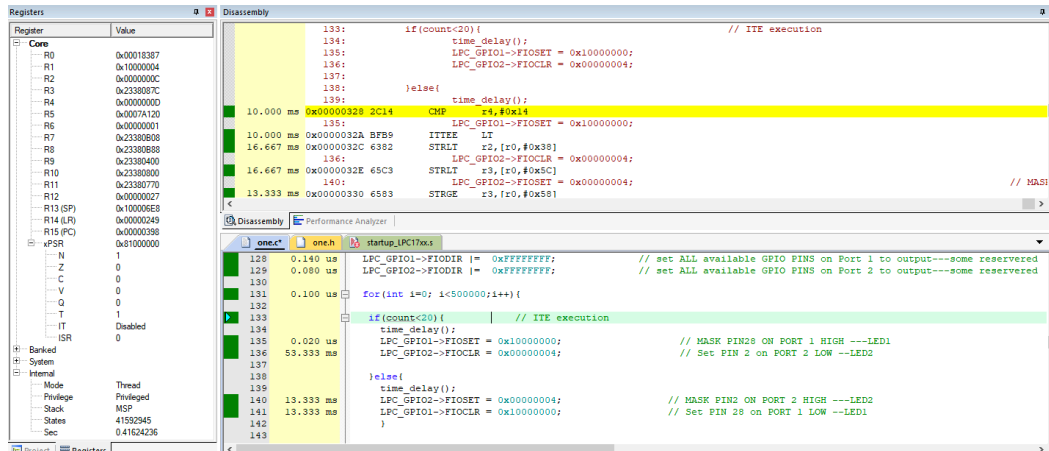


Fig 8: Example Conditional ITE execution --O3 (demo code)

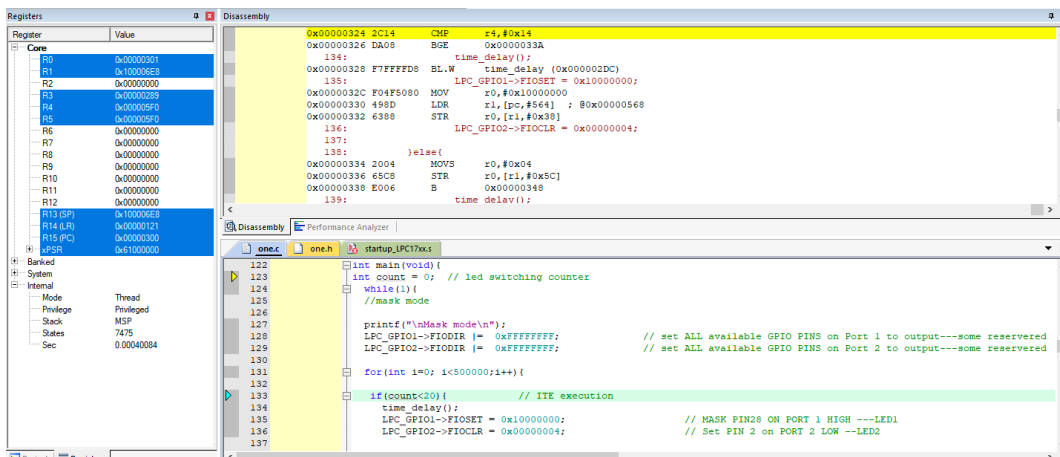


Fig 9: Example: Non-Conditional execution CMP via BGE command -O1 (demo-code)

Part 2 Target (Demo) -- SEE code Section2.txt

The delay() function required to strobe the LED ON and OFF for Part 2 of the lab is based off a "for loop". It can be observed from Fig 10 by using the execution profiling tool to show the execution times, that the delay adds approximately 451.8ms to the run-time (each time the delay function is called).

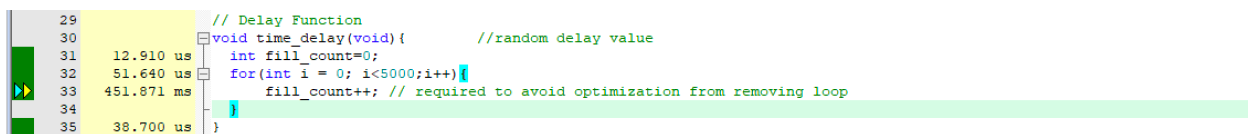


Fig 10: Example: Delay Function -O1 only (451.871ms)

The “barrel function” was implemented as a counter to strobe LED1 and LED2 alternatively for each method using conditional statements (See Fig 11). It should be noted, that the “LSL” shift operator only requires one machine cycle to execute. In comparison, the multiply function would require multiple machine cycles to execute. Consequently, shifting is a more time efficient process for multiplication operations.

Register	Value
R0	0x0018387
R1	0x10000004
R2	0x0000000C
R3	0x2338087C
R4	0x0000000D
R5	0x0007A120
R6	0x00000001
R7	0x23380808
R8	0x23380888
R9	0x23380400
R10	0x23380800
R11	0x23380770
R12	0x00000027
R13 (SP)	0x100006E8
R14 (LR)	0x00000249
R15 (PC)	0x00000398
xPSR	0x81000000

```

187:      if((count = 1 + (count*3))>= 200){ // Barrel shift implemented / ITE execution
S.992 ms 0x0000003AC EB040244 ADD    r2,r4,LSL #1
S.992 ms 0x0000003B0 1C54    ADDS   r4,r2,#1
S.992 ms 0x0000003B2 2CC8    CMP    r4,#0xC8
          188:      count = 0;
          189:      }
          190:      }
          191:
          192:
          193:      //bit band mode
S.992 ms 0x0000003B4 BFA8    IT      GE
S.992 ms 0x0000003B6 2400    MOVGE  r4,#0x00
S.992 ms 0x0000003B8 1C40    ADDS   r0,r0,#1
          174:      for( int i=0; i<500000;i++){
          175:

```

Fig 11: Example Barrel shift -O3 (demo-code)

Comparing the different script versions of “one.c” to evaluate Part 1 and Part 2 of the lab, one key difference was the drastic difference in execution speed between optimization levels and how this interacted with the “for loop” based delay function. It can be observed from Table 2, that as much as a 42% improve in execution times were measured. It should be noted that this improvement in execution time is directly related to the script being executed using LTE-block implementation (-O3) instead of non-conditionally execution via branch statements. Additionally, when executing “one.c” script in -O3 optimization, the “for loop” based delay function is “optimized out” by the compiler, essentially removing the delay to further improve execution time of the script. To execute the “demo” of the “one.c” script in -O3 optimization, large modifications are required to the loops implementing the LED illumination to slow down execution. Implementing the delay function using the timer capabilities of the LPC1768 should be used for time critical/sensitive applications.

References:

- 1) μ VISION DEBUGGER: MEASURING EXECUTION TIME, <https://www.keil.com/support/docs/971.htm>, 2020
- 2) NXP User Manual, <https://www.nxp.com/docs/en/user-guide/UM10360.pdf>, 2020
- 3) ARM Keil User Guide, https://www.keil.com/support/man/docs/mcb1700/mcb1700_intro.htm, 2020