Debug Governor

with AXI-Lite

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1.0 Introduction

Computer hardware, particularly FPGAs, are growing in popularity as data centres and machine learning becomes more computationally demanding. Ironically, there is little software support for the tools that allow for hardware design, and developers consequently have to endure countless hours debugging trivial discrepancies. The tools required to offer a software-like IDE experience still remain unsupported on CAD platforms (i.e. Vivado and Quartus) unlike software supported with built in tools, such as Netbeans and Eclipse. This issue presents the need for a new debugging tool that implements a backend for the fundamental building blocks of a debugger, a Debug Governor.

1.1 Past Work

The original version of the Debug Governor supports AXI-Stream interfaces, and can be controlled to carry out several functions: Pause, Log, Drop, and Inject.

• Pause: Put a transaction on hold

• Log: Log data from transaction

Drop: Cancel a transaction and move on Inject: Forcibly add new data on a stream

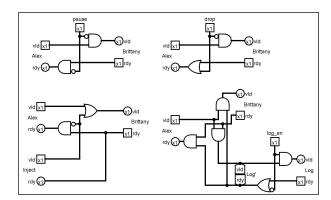


Figure 1: logic circuits of Pause, Log, Drop, and Inject

In AXI-Stream, transactions occur on data streams connecting a Master to a Slave. AXI-Stream follows a protocol in which transactions occur upon a handshake: when either the Master or Slave sends out VALID and READY signals. It is the role of the Debug Governor to manipulate the handshaking protocol to implement the four functions mentioned above.

The Debug Governor contains a high-level component that manages the command input, and low level components known as handshake governors. The handshake governors use the Pause, Log,

Drop, and Inject signals to control the logic in the following figure to manipulate the AXI Streams.

2.0 Motivation

AXI Stream can be limiting. The protocol does not provide any support for addressing, which can be problematic for applications that use memory. Arguably, this implementation is trivial given the current iteration of the Debug Governor. It would seem intuitive to add an AXI Stream debug governor on each stream of the AXI Lite protocol, and send in commands. Interestingly, it fails to take into account the discrepancies between the AXI Lite and AXI Stream protocols.

While it is still possible to implement an AXI Lite Debug Governor with five AXI Stream governors in theory, it will be practically impossible to use. The user must manually handle the response signals and manually input every piece of information needed which occurs in nanoseconds.

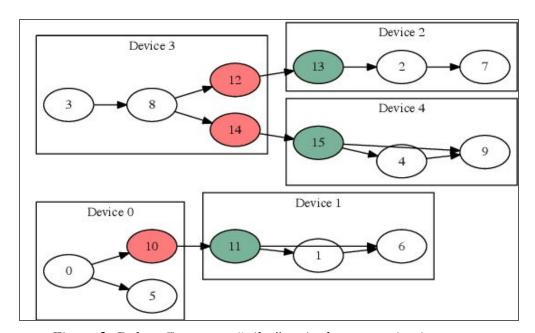
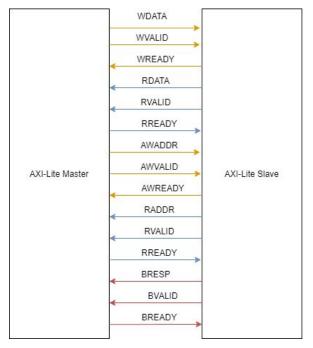


Figure 2: Debug Governors "pilot" a single communication stream

2.1 Transition to AXI-Lite



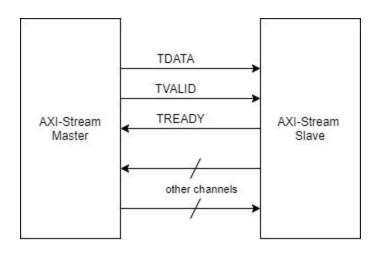


Figure 3: AXI-Lite Interface

Figure 4: AXI-Stream Interface

The AXI-Stream protocol contains 3 main channels: TDATA for sent data, TVALID a one directional handshake signal from the master, and TREADY a one directional handshake signal from the slave. Information is only sent when TVALID and TREADY are both high, otherwise nothing occurs.

The AXI-Lite protocol contains multiple AXI-Stream interfaces to allow for memory-mappeds transactions. The protocol contains the following: WDATA for write data, AWADDR for an address associated with written data, RDATA for read data, RADDR for an address associated with read data, and BRESP as an acknowledgement signal. Each data stream has a respective address stream, and both pieces of information must be provided. Additionally, when a write transaction successfully sends data to a slave, a BRESP signal is sent to the master.

In order to transition from AXI-Stream to AXI-Lite, the debug governor must consider corner cases in implementing injecting to WDATA/RDATA and rudimentary write/read transactions.

- 1. For each WDATA and RDATA being, there must be AWADDR and ARADDR
- 2. For injecting into WDATA, BRESP must immediately be dropped with the drop command, so it never reaches the master. Otherwise this will violate the protocol.
- 3. For injecting into RDATA, one must consider supplying ARADDR, and dropping ARADDR before it reaches the slave.

2.2 Redesign of Hardware

Debug Governor for AXI-Lite implemented the hardware using an FSM in Verilog HDL. However, Marco, the author of the original Debug Governor, mentions that it is "Spaghetti Code" due to its complexity. It is difficult to understand for a developer with no prior experience with Debug Governors because everything is done inside a single module, with the exception of the handshake governors. I propose a modularized approach that will make the system easier to understand and less cumbersome to debug (see 3.0 Implementation).

3.0 Implementation

The handshake governors are an important component in the Debug Governor for AXI Lite. Each stream on the AXI Lite protocol contains an Axis Governor to carry out the four functions of the original Debug Governor. The objective was to condense everything into one Intellectual Property (IP) core and implement an interface that takes in a command to perform a function on any of the AXI Streams. The design was divided into three components: a top-level arbiter for command input, a control path, and a datapath.

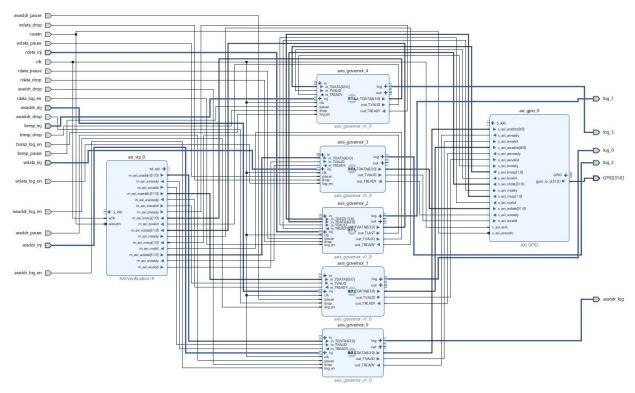


Figure 5: Master-Slave interface containing handshake governors in the middle column

3.1 Top-Level Design

The top level module takes in a command input that is structured as an operation code (OP code). Part of the OP code consists of an encoded command on a certain stream, and the remaining bits correspond to data for write data.

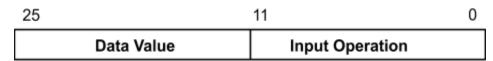


Figure 6: Operational code for Debug Governor

The input command also follows the handshaking protocol, and will only be registered when both VALID and READY are received. The Input operation is decoded inside the control path, and the Finite State Machine (FSM) iterates through several states in order to satisfy the AXI Lite Protocol. Each state has a different behaviour and controls a different wire on one of the handshake governors, which control the streams on AXI-Lite. For example, by definition, a save will send a BRESP DATA to the master when a write to WDATA is successful. Inside the inject state for the WDATA stream, we set inject enable wire high, connected to a handshake governor. This causes the handshake governor to set VALID high and DATA 0 for BRESP. This is done such that the master will not unexpectedly get a success signal BRESP, after injection. (see Appendix C)

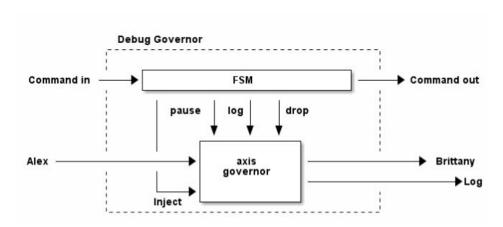


Figure 7: High level architecture of previous Debug Governor

3.2 Datapath

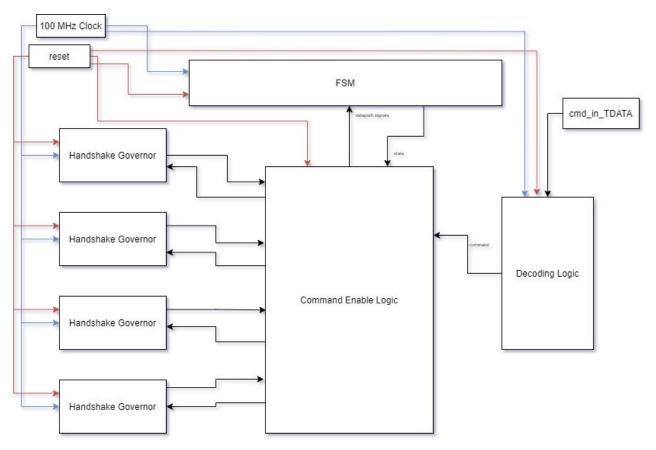


Figure 8: Datapath

(see Appendix B)

3.3 Control path

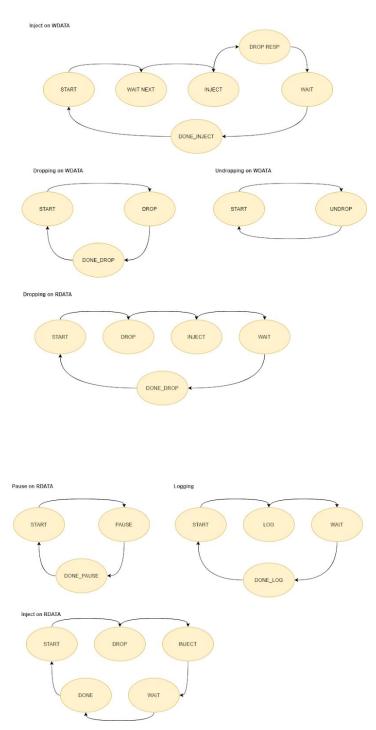


Figure 9: ControlPath

In total, the control path contains 12 states: START, DROP, INJECT, LOG, PAUSE, DONE_DROP, DONE_LOG, DONE_INJECT, DONE_PAUSE, WAIT_NEXT, UNPAUSE, and QUIT_DROP.

Wait states are used to pause the FSM until handshaking occurs, and done states are provided to reset signals back to low such as drop enable and inject enable. Without done states, the system will continue to trigger debugging actions forever.

The most complex function was found to be injecting on write data because it involved the most states. Three streams had to be monitored: BRESP, Write data, and Write Address. Thus, injecting on write data was decided to be a measure of success for this project. (see Appendix A)

3.4 Block Design

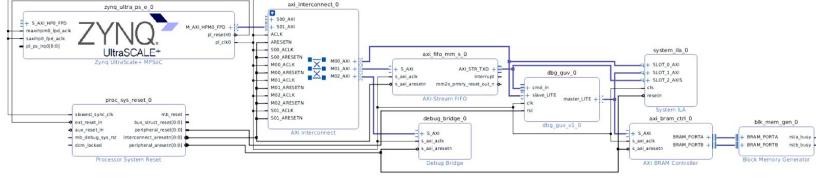


Figure 10: Debug Governor block design

The Debug Governor interface contains the following IPs:

- 1. Zync Ultrascale+ MPSoC
- 2. Processor System reset
- 3. AXI-Interconnect
- 4. AXI FIFO
- 5. Debug Bridge
- 6. Debug Governor
- 7. System ILA (for debugging purposes)
- 8. AXI BRAM
- 9. Block Mempory Generator

4.0 Report of Success

The Debug Governor was successfully packaged into a single IP core, and was used to create a block design on Vivado which utilized a BRAM and MPSoC FPGA. For measures of success, testbenches were constructed on Vivado to verify the IP's correct behaviour. A testbench to observe injecting on write data was successful in demonstrating that it will satisfy AXI Lite protocol while artificially placing new data on the write data stream. Additional testing was also performed using ModelSim to verify the correct state transitions of each operation.

For a final test, the generated bitstream was converted into a .bin file to be programmed on the MPSoC via XVC server and ssh tunneling to Vivado's Hardware Manager. In observing that inject WDATA, pause, and log were able to be carried out, it showed that the debug governor

functioned properly. We do not mention operations on RDATA because although the operations worked, it was not practical to be used for debugging. I left it as a basic building block for further development.

4.1 Testbenches

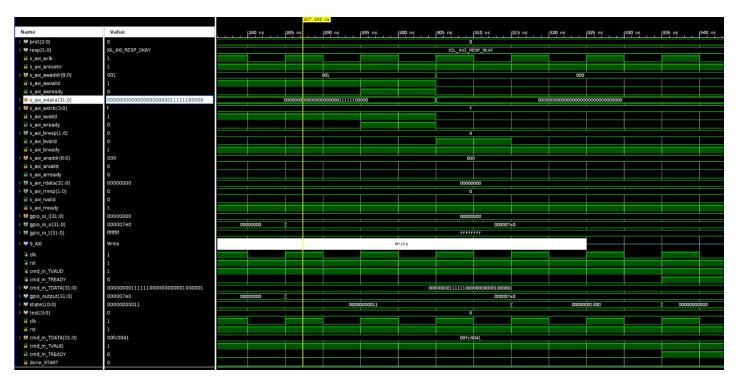


Figure 11: Injecting on WDATA (with Vivado)

*For testbenching on Vivado, a block diagram was made using an AXI-VIP master and AXI-GPIO slave

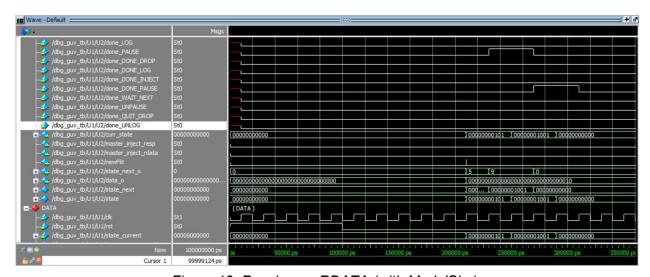


Figure 12: Pausing on RDATA (with ModelSim)

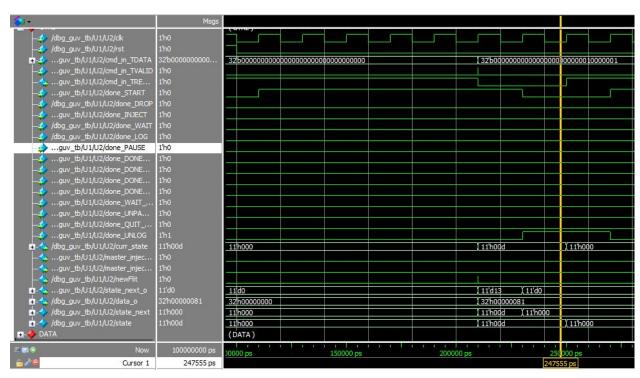


Figure 13: Logging on RDATA (with ModelSim)

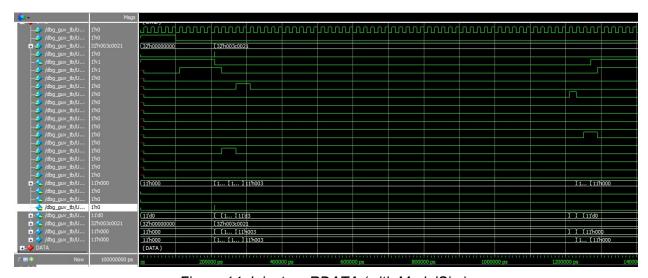


Figure 14: Inject on RDATA (with ModelSim)

4.2 Test on MPSoC



Figure 15: Sending test data for injecting on WDATA

Criteria for success for inject WDATA:

- 1. WDATA was updated with the proper data value from the op code (cmd_in_TDATA)
- 2. AWADDR was simultaneously updated with a new address value for WDATA
- 3. No red flags were raised by the MPSoC, which proved that BRESP was dropped before it could reach the master
- 4. VALID and READY signals went high for both WDATA and AWADDR when inject command was sent in
- 5. In addition to inject, this also tests the functionality of dropping. Inject and drop are the more complicated functions of the 4 available

5.0 Summer Timeline

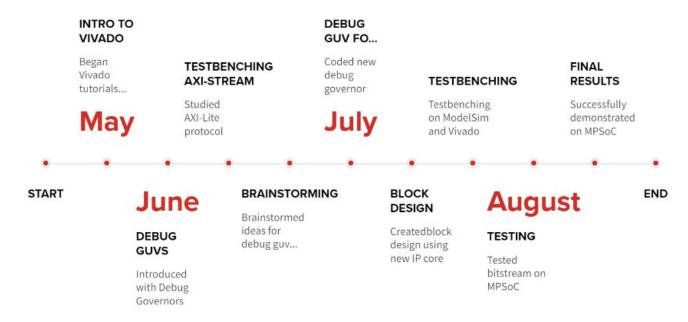


Figure 16: Progress timeline over 3-4 months

6.0 Conclusion and Future Work

The new iteration of the Debug Governor presents a novel backend framework for AXI-Lite systems i.e. allowing for memory-mapped transactions. In future work, the design may be optimized via pipelining techniques for more efficient performance, and further state optimizations may be made to reduce code complexity. A developer may use this code to develop more practical functions that resemble software debugging tools such as single-stepping.

Finally, the current design needs improvement on ease of use. Since users with no background on Debug Governors should be able to use the tool, an intuitive user interface should be designed to interact between the FPGA and Debug Governor. It is important for the user to easily observe that the debug governor is communicating correctly with the hardware.

Link to Github: https://github.com/isamumu/dbg_guv.git

Appendix A: Controlpath code

```
`timescale 1ns / 1ps
module control_FSM(
   input wire done QUIT DROP,
   output wire master_inject_resp,
   output wire newFlit,
```

```
localparam QUIT DROP = 6'd12;
assign master inject resp = cmd in TDATA[4]; // just make sure we have these
always@(posedge clk or posedge rst) begin
```

```
!cmd in TDATA[0])) && done START)
                     else if (cmd in TDATA[3] && cmd in TDATA[0] && done START)
                          state next = QUIT DROP;
&& !cmd in TDATA[0]) || (cmd in TDATA[9] && !cmd in TDATA[0]) || (cmd in TDATA[10] &&
!cmd_in_TDATA[0]) || (cmd_in_TDATA[11] && !cmd_in_TDATA[0])) && done_START)
&& cmd in \mathtt{TDATA}[0]) || (cmd in \mathtt{TDATA}[9] && cmd in \mathtt{TDATA}[0]) || (cmd in \mathtt{TDATA}[10] &&
cmd in TDATA[0]) || (cmd in TDATA[11] && cmd in TDATA[0])) && done START)
resp
&& cmd in TDATA[0]) && done START)
```

```
state_next = WAIT_NEXT;
```

```
if(done_DONE_DROP)
       state_next = DONE_DROP;
DONE_PAUSE: begin
```

Appendix B: Datapath code

```
`define SAFE DEST WIDTH (DEST WIDTH < 1 ? 1 : DEST WIDTH)
quv)
module datapath # (
   input wire master_inject_enable_resp,
```

```
output logic done QUIT DROP,
);
```

```
assign log_TVALID_awaddr_o = log_TVALID_awaddr;
wire log en;
wire pause_rdata;
wire pause_raddr;
wire pause_awaddr;
wire log_en_awaddr;
wire pause_resp;
```

```
wire log_en_resp;
wire inj_success_resp;
logic pause_enable_rdata = 0;
logic pause_enable_wdata = 0;
logic log enable wdata = 0;
```

```
logic log enable awaddr = 0;
logic pause_enable_resp = 0;
logic log enable resp = 0;
assign pause_wdata = pause_enable_wdata;
```

```
assign log_en_raddr = log enable raddr;
assign pause_awaddr = pause_enable_awaddr;
assign drop resp = drop enable resp;
assign log en resp = log enable resp;
localparam START = 6'd0;
localparam DROP = 6'd1;
localparam WAIT = 6'd3;
localparam LOG = 6'd4;
localparam QUIT DROP = 6'd12;
```

```
always @(posedge clk) begin
        drop enable rdata = 0;
        drop enable wdata = 0;
        pause_enable_resp = 0; // will not use
```

```
done QUIT DROP = 0;
            drop_enable_awaddr = 1;
            drop_enable_resp = 1;
```

```
WAIT: begin
```

```
resp or drop wdata
for inject rdata
for inject wdata
                        log_enable_rdata = 1;
                        log_TREADY_r = 1;
```

```
log_enable_wdata = 1;
log_enable_raddr = 1;
log_TREADY_r = 1;
log_enable_awaddr = 1;
log_TREADY_r = 1;
log_enable_resp = 1;
log_enable_rdata = 0;
log_TREADY_r = 0;
log_enable_wdata = 0;
log enable raddr = 0;
log_TREADY_r = 0;
log_enable_awaddr = 0;
```

```
log_TREADY_r = 0;
log_enable_resp = 0;
log_TREADY_r = 0;
pause_enable_rdata = 1;
pause_enable_wdata = 1;
pause_enable_rdata = 0;
pause_enable_wdata = 0;
```

```
drop_enable_rdata = 0;
```

```
.DEST WIDTH(`SAFE DEST WIDTH),
.ID WIDTH(`SAFE ID WIDTH)
```

```
.out TVALID(dout TVALID rdata),
        .log TVALID(log TVALID rdata),
        .log_TREADY(log_TREADY_rdata),
        .log_TDEST(log_TDEST_rdata),
        .pause(pause rdata),
        .drop(drop_rdata),
        .log_en(log_en_rdata)
axis governor #(
        .DEST WIDTH(`SAFE DEST WIDTH),
        .ID WIDTH(`SAFE ID WIDTH)
```

```
.out TREADY (din TREADY wdata),
.log_TDATA(log_TDATA_wdata),
.log_TVALID(log_TVALID_wdata),
.log_TREADY(log_TREADY_wdata),
.log_TDEST(),
.pause(pause_wdata),
.drop(drop_wdata),
.log_en(log_en_wdata)
.DATA WIDTH(DATA WIDTH),
.in TVALID(dout TVALID raddr),
.out TVALID(din TVALID raddr),
```

```
.log_TDATA(log_TDATA_raddr),
        .log TVALID(log TVALID raddr),
        .log_TREADY(log_TREADY_raddr),
        .log_TDEST(),
        .pause(pause_raddr),
        .drop(drop_raddr),
        .log_en(log_en_raddr)
axis governor #(
        .in TVALID(dout TVALID awaddr),
        .in TDEST(),
        .out TDEST(),
```

```
.log_TVALID(log_TVALID_awaddr),
        .log_TREADY(log_TREADY_awaddr),
        .log TDEST(),
        .pause(pause awaddr),
        .drop(drop_awaddr),
        .log_en(log_en_awaddr)
axis governor #(
        .DEST WIDTH(`SAFE DEST WIDTH),
        .in_TDATA(din_TDATA_resp),
        .in_TVALID(din_TVALID_resp),
        .in TDEST(),
        .inj_TDATA(inj_TDATA_resp),
        .out_TDATA(dout_TDATA_resp),
        .out_TVALID(dout_TVALID_resp),
        .out TREADY (dout TREADY resp),
        .log_TDATA(log_TDATA_resp),
        .log_TVALID(log_TVALID_resp),
```

```
.log_TREADY(log_TREADY_resp),
.log_TDEST(),

//Control signals
.pause(pause_resp),
.drop(drop_resp),
.log_en(log_en_resp)
);
endmodule
```

Appendix C: Top module code

```
timescale 1ns / 1ps
module dbg guv # (
   input wire [DATA_WIDTH-1:0] din_TDATA_resp,
```

```
input wire din TVALID resp,
input wire [DATA_WIDTH-1:0] dout_TDATA wdata,
output wire [DATA_WIDTH-1:0] dout_TDATA_resp,
```

```
output wire [DATA_WIDTH-1:0] log_TDATA_raddr_o,
);
   wire done QUIT DROP;
```

```
done_QUIT_DROP,
master_inject_enable_resp,
```

```
dout_TVALID_resp,
dout_TREADY_resp,
log_TDATA_rdata,
log_TVALID_rdata,
log_TREADY_rdata,
log_TDEST_rdata,
log_TDATA_wdata,
log_TVALID_wdata,
log_TREADY_wdata,
log_TVALID_raddr,
log_TREADY_raddr,
log_TDATA_awaddr,
log_TVALID_awaddr,
```

```
log_TREADY_awaddr,

log_TDATA_resp,
log_TVALID_resp,
log_TREADY_resp
);
endmodule
```