Project #2

Simulation of CPU, Cache, Bus, and Memory Datapath

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**II. Executive Summary**

This report goes over what project the group was assigned with, how the group went about designing and implementing the project by making certain assumptions, backing up those assumptions with correct output data. The report finishes with a longer conclusion and all the related code attached.

**III. Introduction**

# Goal

The goal of this project is to build a VHDL simulation of a 32-bit version of the MIPS processor. The developed architecture is to include a CPU, cache, bus, and memory modules that emphasize the simulation of hit/miss and data-path cache scenarios for different types of instructions.

# Theoretical Background

**Cache:**In modern computing systems, accessing data directly from disk or memory is relatively time consuming or *expensive.* This could pose an issue if a set variables stored in memory are extensively required by the computing unit since accessing the respective variables could be time consuming. To deal with this, caches are utilized to minimize this overhead. Caches acts a less expensive intermediate storage block that stores blocks of memory that have been access, been accessed or are going to be accessed be the program.  If the requested data is in fact present contained in the cache a ***cache hit*** is identified, this request can be served by simply reading the cache, which is comparatively faster than accessing the memory. Otherwise, if the data block is not present a ***cache mis*s** is identified and the data has to be fetched from its respective location in memory. For efficiency, multiple caches are usually implemented to perform difference functions. Widely implemented abstractions usually involve the separation of cache into two main functions, *Instruction Cache* *and Data Cache.*

**Instruction Cache:** A stores instruction which helps in reducing the cost of going to memory to fetch instructions. In some other cases it also has other functions, such as branch prediction information. Instructions are only read/brought to the iCache and cannot be modified. So when the I-cache is full and a block of instructions is to be placed into the cache, it can usually over-wite anywhere in the cache.

**Data Cache** is a intermediate storage component that contains the application data that is going to be utilized by the processor. Data is loaded from memory into the data cache. The element needed is then loaded from the cache line into a register and the instruction using this value can operate on it.

Along with different cache functions, there also exist different algorithms or *writing policies* that dictate the interaction between the cache and the memory. In this project’s case the chosen writing policy implemented was the ***Write Back with write Allocate*** policy which involves the following:

- Write to main memory whenever a write-hit is performed to the cache

- If a write misses, allocate a line in the cache for the data written.

# Group Specific Specifications

**Instructions**

The MIPS processor is to support the three instruction formats of R, I, and J, along with store word and load word. A table was provided in the project specifications that included all the instructions to be designed



As seen in the table, there is a custom set of instructions that are to be implemented, which is chosen based on the last digit of the student ID’. In this groups case, the 4th set (BNE LUI) was chosen. Another group specific specification was the writing policy, which in our case was set to Write Through with Write Allocate.

**IV. Design**

The group decided after lots of discussion to split all of the required pieces of structure into separate modules and then combine them into an overall dataflow. This allowed for each individual component to be thoroughly tested. The overall dataflow can be seen below as well as in the appendix.



Figure X: Datapath design of cache/memory system

Based on the figure above, the black lines are mostly data lines, and the orange lines are control inputs for specific block. There are six main blocks where a majority of the functionality takes place.

The ICache block is 256-Byte word-addressable cache (implemented as a 64x32 array, 2048 bits) The cache is directly mapped from memory so the following formula was used to calculate the index of the cache.

(1)

This block takes in the Instruction Address (Program Counter) from the test bench program, as well as a flag, IHC, to test the different functionality of either an Icache Hit or Icache Miss. Since we implemented a write through policy, on a cache hit we take the word value from cache and update it to memory. Upon a instruction miss in cache, the data will be fetched from memory. Since the Write Allocate strategy was implemented, a block of memory was put back in the cache to update it. The data is then correct and outputted. The mux on the top is to select either from the memory (ICache Hit) or from the cache after a block update (ICache Miss). The access time for the ICache operation is just 1 cycle (10 ns).

The Bus block is simply to model the bus delay. Since the specifications of the bandwidth of the bus stated, 32 words/cycle, the assumption was made that the bus will delay a full cycle when 32 words or less are put on the bus. Since the most that will put across the bus is a memory block (8 words) this assumption works.

The memory Block is 1024 Bytes of Byte-addressable storage (implemented as a 1024x8 array). The memory then has addresses from 0x0 0x3FF. When there is an ICache Hit, a word is brought into the memory to perform a word update, when there is an ICache Miss the Block of memory at the inputted address is outputted and write allocated back to cache to update the values in cache. After the correct instruction is retrieved from either the cache or memory, the Op-Code is inputted into the CPU Block. The memory has a port access time of 5 cycles/word for reads, and an additional memory read time of 3 cycles/word for a total of 8 cycles/word for reading. The memory has a port access time of 3 cycles/word for writes, and an additional memory write time of 4 cycles/word for a total of 7 cycles/word for writing.

The CPU is a simple block, based on the Op-code inputted from the instruction cache/memory process it will determine a couple output signals. The instructions that needed to be implemented are shown below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Common Name | Register Names |
| lw $s1, 200 ($t3) | lw R17,200(R11) |
| sw $s3, 100 ($t4) | sw R19,100(R12) |
| add $s3, $t3, $t2 | add R19,R11,R10 |
| beq $s5, $t6, 400 | beq R21,R14,0[400-PC] |
| bne $s5, $t6, 500 | bne R21,R14,0[500-PC] |
| lui $s6, 40 | lui R22,40 |

There are two types of instructions implemented ALU/Branch Instructions and Memory Access functions. The last four on the list above are the ALU/Branch instructions. These only require the use of register values. The Op-codes are determined to match specific instructions. For the beq and bne instructions in the CPU the ALU\_DONE flag will be set. For the other two, the register value will be updated with the proper value (add, lui). The Initial values of the register can be seen below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Register Number | Initial value | Register Number | Initial value |
| Reg 8 | 0x00000008 | Reg 17 | 0x00000017 |
| Reg 9 | 0x00000009 | Reg 18 | 0x00000018 |
| Reg 10 | 0x00000010 | Reg 19 | 0x00000019 |
| Reg 11 | 0x00000011 | Reg 20 | 0x00000020 |
| Reg 12 | 0x00000012 | Reg 21 | 0x00000021 |
| Reg 13 | 0x00000013 | Reg 22 | 0x00000022 |
| Reg 14 | 0x00000014 | Reg 23 | 0x00000023 |
| Reg 15 | 0x00000015 | Reg 24 | 0x00000024 |
| Reg 16 | 0x00000016 | Reg 25 | 0x00000025 |

This will give the following results for the Add and LUI.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Register Names | Results |
| add R19,R11,R10 | R19 <= 0x00000021 |
| lui R22,40 | R22<= 0x00280022 |

These two instructions, like the branch instructions will output the ALU\_DONE flag to signal that this branch is complete. For Load Word the ALU calculates the Data Address, sets the R\_W flag to 1 to signal a read, D\_Type flag to signal for the data memory access, and finally the Register number where the data in the memory will be loaded into the register. For Store Word the ALU calculates the Data Address, sets the R\_W falg to 0 to signal a write, D\_Type flag to signal for the data memory access, and the data in Register 19 (which is initially 0x19).

The DCache datapath will only be run through when there is a data memory access. This is only for the instructions Load word and Store Word, and signaled from the CPU as the D\_Type signal. The DCache block is 128-Byte word-addressable cache (implemented as a 32x32 array). The cache is directly mapped from memory so the following formula was used to calculate the index of the cache.

(2)

Once the correct value of the block is reached on a read hit (DCache Hit and Load Word), it will update the word in memory and output that data at the memory address, finally updating the value in the register file. On a read miss (DCache Miss and Load word), it will find the correct value in memory, and write allocate a memory block back to the DCache, updating 8 words in the DCache. On a write hit (DCache Hit and Store Word), the DCache will write Data value output from the ALU to the DCache, then it will be updated in memory. On a write miss (DCache Miss and Store Word), the DCache will store the correct value in memory, and then write allocate a block of memory back to the DCache.

**V. Implementation**

To show the implementation of the cache/memory system, code snippets will be shown in respect to their programs. Almost everything related specific values in the cache and memory were hardcoded; it made the process of debugging a lot simpler. In order to run through the entire memory sub systems the testbench was written to initialize the Instruction addresses and the Cache Hit types.

TEST BENCH IMPLMENTATION GOES HERE

**VI. Results**

**VI. Discussion**

* A discussion on how you tried to optimize your design
* A discussion on any improvements or additional features made to your design
* A discussion on what does not work correctly in your design

**VII. Conclusions**

**Attachments**

Each individual program’s code will be attached, the individual test benches for the components won’t be necessary, since the overall test bench works without issue.