Comparing functional Embedded Domain-Specific Languages for hardware description

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February 13th, 2014

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Chosen EDSLs
Evaluation criteria

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Hardware design

Hardware design is very complex and very expensive:

- ▶ Mistakes discovered after sales are much more serious
 - No such thing as an "update" to a chip
- ▶ Thus the need for extensive simulation
 - Sometimes even exhaustive simulation
 - Using specific and expensive systems
- ► The downfall of *Moore's Law* doesn't help either
 - More need for parallelism, fault-tolerance, etc.
 - Design even more error-prone and validation even more complex

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Hardware design

- ▶ The level of abstraction has been lifted already...
 - Verilog and VHDL in the 1980s
 - Popular, de facto industry standards
- ► Functional hardware design languages, also since the 1980s
 - Expressive type systems, equational reasoning, etc.
 - First, languages designed from scratch
 - Then, embedded in general-purpose functional languages
 - · Prominently, in Haskell
 - Several of them available nowadays
 - Each with its own strengths and weaknesses

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Goals of this project

Compare exisiting functional Embedded Domain-Specific Languages (EDSLs) for hardware description.

- ► A representative sample of EDSLs
- Analyze a well-defined set of criteria
- Practical analysis, with a set of circuits as case studies

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Goals of this project

Compare exisiting functional Embedded Domain-Specific Languages (EDSLs) for hardware description.

- ▶ A representative sample of EDSLs
- Analyze a well-defined set of criteria
- Practical analysis, with a set of circuits as case studies

Let's first review out object of study

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Domain-Specific Languages

A computer language (turing-complete or *not*) targeting a specific application domain.

Example DSLs:

- SQL (database queries)
- CSS (document formatting)
- MATLAB (Matrix programming)
- VHDL (Hardware description)

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Domain-Specific Languages

A computer language (turing-complete or *not*) targeting a specific application domain.

Example DSLs:

- SQL (database queries)
- CSS (document formatting)
- MATLAB (Matrix programming)
- VHDL (Hardware description)

A DSL can also be *embedded* in a general-purpose language. **Example EDSLs:**

- ▶ Boost.Proto (C++ / parser combinators)
- Diagrams (Haskell / programmatic drawing)
- Parsec (Haskell / parser combinators)

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Example of an EDSL: Parsec

A simple parser for a "Game of Life"-like input format:

```
dead, alive :: Parser Bool
dead = fmap (const False) (char '.')
alive = fmap (const True) (char '*')
line :: Parser [Bool]
line = many1 (dead <|> alive)
board :: Parser [[Bool]]
board = line 'endBy1' newline
parseBoardFromFile :: FilePath -> IO [[Bool]]
parseBoardFromFile filename = do
    result <- parseFromFile board filename</pre>
    return $ either (error . show) id result
```

- ► The shallow vs. deep-embedded divide
 - Parsec is shallow-embedded

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Hardware EDSLs

An EDSL used for hardware design-related tasks. Can encompass:

- Modeling / description
- Simulation (validation)
- Formal verification
- Synthesis to other (lower-level) languages

Example of a hardware EDSL (Lava):

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Choice criteria

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Chosen EDSLs

The language we chose to evaluate, with the respective host language, were:

- ▶ Lava (Haskell chalmers-lava dialect)
- ForSyDe (Haskell)
- Coquet (Coq interactive theorem prover)

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Evaluation criteria

- Simulation
- Verification
- Genericity
- Depth of embedding
- ▶ Tool integration
- Extensibility

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Modeled Circuits

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Choice criteria

- ▶ Not too simple, not too complex
- ► Familiar to any hardware designer
 - No signal processing, etc.
- ► Well-defined, pre-specification
 - · Results to verify the models against

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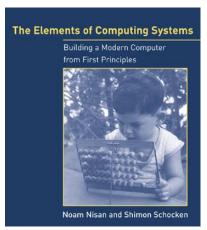
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Chosen circuits

We cherry-picked circuits from the book "Elements of Computing Systems", as they satisfied all of our demands.



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Figure: "Elements of Computing Systems" - Nisan, Schocken, available at http://www.nand2tetris.org.



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Chosen circuits

Circuit 1 A 2-input, 16-bit-wide, simple ALU Circuit 2 A 64-word long, 16-bit wide memory block Circuit 3 An extremely reduced instruction set CPU, the

Hack CPU.

Let's take a quick look at each of these circuit's specification. . .

Modeled Circuits

ALU



Circuit 1: ALU

Some of the circuit's key characteristics:

- ▶ 2 operand inputs and 1 operand output, each 16-bit wide
- ▶ 1 output flag
- Can execute 18 different functions, among which:
 - Addition, subtraction
 - Bitwise AND / OR
 - Constant outputs
 - · Addition of constants to an operand
 - Sign inversion

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Circuit 1: block diagram

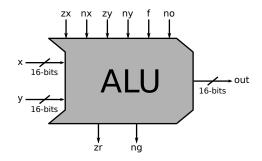


Figure: Input/Output ports of circuit 1, the ALU.

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Circuit 1: specification

The behaviour of the ALU is specified by the values of the *control bits* and *flags*:

```
zx and zy Zeroes the "x" and "y" inputs, respectively nx and ny bitwise negation on the "x" and "y" inputs f Selects the function to be applied: "f" = 1 for addition, "f" = 0 for bitwise AND no bitwise negation on the output ALU output zr and ng The output flag "zr" = 1 iff the ALU output is zero. "ng" = 1 iff the output is negative.
```

Formal definition and test cases in the book.

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Circuit 2: RAM64

Some of the circuit's key characteristics:

- ► Sequential circuit, with clock input
- ▶ 64 memory words stored, each 16-bit wide
- ▶ Address port has width log₂ 64 = 6 bit

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Circuit 2: block diagram

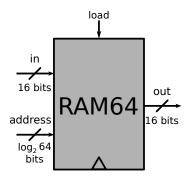


Figure: Input/Output ports of circuit 2, the RAM64 block.

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Circuit 2: specification

- ► The output "out" holds the value at the memory line indicated by "address".
- ► Iff "load" = 1, then the value at input "in" will be loaded into memory line "address".
- ► The loaded value will be emitted on "out" at the *next* clock cycle.

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Circuit 3: Hack CPU

- A very reduced instruction set CPU
 - Only 2 instructions: "C" and "A"
- ► Follows the Harvard architecture
 - Separate address spaces for data and instruction memory.
- Instructions are 16-bits wide
 - · As well as the memory input and output
- ► Two internal registers: "D" and "A"

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Circuit 3: block diagram

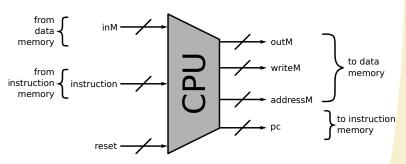


Figure: Input/Output ports of circuit 3, the Hack CPU.

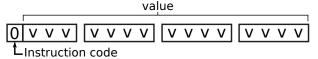
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Circuit 3: specification

Circuit 3 runs "A" and "C" instructions, according to the *Hack* assembly specification.

► The "A" instruction: sets the "A" register.



- ▶ The value in "A" can be used:
 - As operand for a subsequent computation
 - As address for jumps

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Circuit 3: specification

Circuit 3 runs "A" and "C" instructions, according to the *Hack* assembly specification.

► The "C" instruction: sets the "C" register, performs computation or jumps.

	comp	dest	jump
	•	· ·	
1 x x a	c1 c2 c3 c4 c5 c	6 d1 d2 d3	j1 j2 j3
Linstruction	code		

- Some peculiarities:
 - Bits "c1" to "c6" control the ALU
 - · conditional or unconditional jumps
 - destination of the computation result: "A", "D", "M"

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Circuit 3: specification (parts)

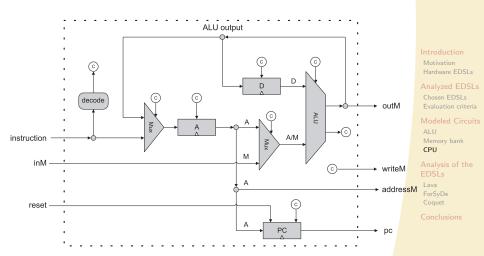


Figure: Parts used to build the *Hack* CPU, and their interconnection.



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Lava

- Developed at Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden
 - Initially by Koen Claessen and Mary Sheeran
 - Later also Per Bjesse and David Sands
- Has several dialects
 - chalmers-lava, xilinx-lava, kansas-lava, etc.
 - We focus on the "canonical" chalmers-lava

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Lava's key characteristics

- Deep-embedded
- ► Observable sharing
 - "Type-safe pointer equality" to detect sharing and recursion
 - Advantages and disadvantages clearer with examples
- Capable of simulation, verification and synthesis
 - Generates flat VHDL
 - External tools for verification
- Very "functional" style of hardware description
 - Will become clearer with examples

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Lava: Adders

```
type SB = Signal Bool
halfAdder :: (SB, SB) -> (SB, SB)
halfAdder inputs = (xor2 inputs, and2 inputs)
fullAdder :: (SB, (SB, SB)) -> (SB, SB)
fullAdder (cin, (a, b)) = (s, cout)
   where
      (ab, c1) = halfAdder (a, b)
      (s, c2) = halfAdder (ab, cin)
     cout = or2 (c1, c2)
rippleCarryAdder :: [(SB, SB)] -> [SB]
rippleCarryAdder ab = s
   where (s, _) = row fullAdder (low, ab)
```

- Straightforward Haskell constructs
- "and2", "xor2", etc. are Lava's atomic circuits

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Lava: Simulation and verification

A taste of simulation in Lava:

- Cannot be easily automated: equality of Signal is non-trivial
- And verification...

```
prop_FullAdderCommutative :: (SB, (SB, SB)) -> SB
prop_FullAdderCommutative (c, (a, b)) =
  fullAdder (c, (a, b)) <==> fullAdder (c, (b, a))
```

-- satzoo prop_FullAdderCommutative

- Advantage: Used in conjunction with an external SAT solver (e.g. Satzoo)
- Disadvantage: Only verifies instances of specific size

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Lava: ALU

```
type ALUControlBits = (SB, SB, SB, SB, SB, SB, SB)
alu :: ([SB], [SB], ALUControlBits) -> ([SB], SB, SB)
alu (x, y, (zx, nx, zy, ny, f, no)) = (out', zr, ng)
   where x' = mux (zx, (x, replicate (length x) low))
               = mux (nx, (x', map inv x'))
          ٧,
                = mux (zy, (y, replicate (length x) low))
          y'' = mux (ny, (y', map inv y'))
         out
               = let xv'' = zip x'' v''
                  in mux (f, (andl xy'', adder xy''))
         out'
                = mux (no, (out, map inv out))
                = foldl (curry and2) low out'
          zr
                = equalBool high (last out')
          ng
          adder = rippleCarryAdder
```

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Remarks

- Cannot introduce new, meaningful datatypes
 - Only Signal Bool is synthesizable
 - Or tuples/lists thereof
- ▶ Input/Output types have to be *uncurried*
- Weak type-safety over the inputs/outputs
 - · Working with tuples is tiresome and has limitations
 - Lists don't enforce size constraints

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Lava: RAM64

```
reg :: (SB, SB) -> SB
reg (input, load) = out
    where dff = mux (load, (out, input))
          out = delay low dff
regN :: Int -> ([SB], SB) -> [SB]
regN n (input, load) = map reg $ zip input (replicate n load)
ram64Rows :: Int -> ([SB], (SB,SB,SB,SB,SB,SB), SB) -> [SB]
ram64Rows n (input, addr, load) = mux64WordN n (addr, regs)
   where memLine sel = regN n (input, sel <&> load)
                      = map memLine (decode6To64 addr)
          regs
```

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Remarks

Positive:

- Uses host language for binding (let/where) and recursion
- Uses host language for structural combinators

Negative:

- Again, weak type-safety of lists
 - Extra Int parameter controls port sizes
- ▶ No modularity in the generated VHDL code.

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Lava: Hack CPU (some parts)

```
programCounter :: Int -> (SB, SB, [SB]) -> [SB]
programCounter n (reset, set, input) = out where
    incr
            = increment out
    out = delay (replicate n low) increset
    incinput = mux (set, (incr, input))
    increset = mux (reset, (incinput, replicate n low))
type Dest = (SB, SB, SB)
type JumpCond = (SB, SB, SB)
type CPUCtrl = (SB, SB, Dest, JumpCond, ALUCtrl)
instructionDecoder :: HackInstruction -> CPUCtrl
instructionDecoder (i0,_,_,i3,i4,i5,i6,i7,i8,i9,...,i15)
    = (aFlag, cAM, cDest, cJump, cALU) where
    aFlag = i0
    cAM = inv i3
    cDest = (i10, i11, i12)
    cJump = (i13, i14, i15)
    cALU = (i4, i5, i6, i7, i8, i9)
```

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Remarks

Could benefit from:

- ► Fixed-length vectors
 - ForSyDe-style or with type-level naturals in recent GHC.
- Slicing operators over vectors
- Synthesizable user-defined datatypes

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ForSyDe

- ▶ Based on the "Formal System Design" approach
 - Royal Institute of Technology KTH, Sweden
- Available for Haskell and SystemC
- Has BOTH shallow and deep-embedded "versions"
 - Same library, subtle distinction
 - · Will become clearer with examples
- ► Template Haskell to express circuits with Haskell syntax

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ForSyDe's key concepts

- Models of Computation (MoCs)
 - We focus on the synchronous MoC
- Processes
 - A process belongs to a MoC
 - Built with a process constructor
- Signals
 - Connections among processes

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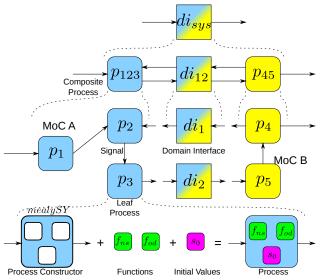
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ForSyDe's key concepts



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ForSyDe: ALU (non-synth)

```
type S = Signal
type Word = Int16
data ALUOp = ALUSum | ALUAnd
    deriving (Typeable, Data, Show)
$(deriveLift1 ''ALUOp)
type ALUCtrl = (Bit, Bit, Bit, Bit, ALUOp, Bit)
type ALUFlag = (Bit, Bit)
bo, bb :: Bit -> Bool
bo = bitToBool
bb = boolToBit
```

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ForSyDe: ALU (non-synth)

```
aluFunc :: ProcFunc (ALUCtrl -> Word -> Word -> (Word, ALUFlag)) Introduction Mativation
aluFunc = $(newProcFun [d]
  aluFunc' (zx,nx,zy,ny,f,no) x y =
      (out, (bb (out == 0), bb (out < 0)))
    where
      zfzw = if bo z then 0 else w
                                                                   ALLI
      nf n w = if bo n then complement welse w
      (xn, yn) = (nf nx \$ zf zx \$ x, nf ny \$ zf zy \$ y)
      out
              = nf no $ case f of
                                                                   Lava
                           ALUSum -> xn + yn
                                                                   ForSvDe
                           ALUAnd -> xn .&. yn |] )
```

```
aluProc :: S ALUCtrl -> S Word -> S (Word,ALUFlag)
aluProc = zipWith3SY "aluProc" aluFunc
```

ForSyDe: synthesis restrictions

Restrictions imposed on a model by ForSyDe so that it can be translated to VHDL:

- ProcFun-related:
 - Limited argument types (instances of ProcType)
 - Int, Int8, ..., Bool, Bit
 - Enumerated types (deriving Data and Lift)
 - Tuples and FSVec's
- VHDL engine-related:
 - No point-free notation
 - Single clause / no pattern matching
 - No where or let bindings

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ForSyDe: ALU (synthesizable)

```
zProc :: ProcId -> S Bit -> S Word -> S Word
zProc name = zipWithSY name $(newProcFun [d|
    f :: Bit -> Word -> Word
    f z w = if z == H then 0 else w | 1)
nProc :: ProcId -> S Bit -> S Word -> S Word
nProc name = zipWithSY name $(newProcFun [d])
    f :: Bit -> Word -> Word
    f n w = if n == H then negate w else w | ])
compProc :: S Bit -> S Word -> S Word -> S Word
compProc = zipWith3SY "compProc" $(newProcFun [d|
    f :: Bit -> Word -> Word -> Word
    f \circ x y = if \circ == H \text{ then } x + y \text{ else } x \cdot \&. y \mid ]
tzProc :: S Word -> S Bit ...
```

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tnProc :: S Word -> S Bit

ForSyDe: ALU (synthesizable)

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ForSyDe: Muxes

```
mux2 :: S Bit -> S Word -> S Word -> S Word
mux2 = zipWith3SY "zipWith3SY" $(newProcFun [d]
  f s x y = if s == L then x else y | ])
mux2SysDef :: SysDef (S Bit -> S Word -> S Word -> S Word)
mux2SysDef = newSysDef mux2 "mux2" ["s","i1","i2"] ["o"]
mux4 :: S (FSVec D2 Bit) -> S (FSVec D4 Word) -> S Word
mux4 ss is = (mux2' "m1") (sv ! d1) m00 m01 where
  mux2' 1 = instantiate 1 mux2SysDef
          = unzipxSY "unzipSel" ss
  SV
  iv
          = unzipxSY "unzipInp" is
  mOO
          = (mux2' "m00") (sv ! d0) (iv ! d0) (iv ! d1)
  m01
          = (mux2' "m01") (sv ! d0) (iv ! d2) (iv ! d3)
mux4SysDef :: SysDef ( S (FSVec D2 Bit) -> S (FSVec D4 Word)
                    -> S Word)
mux4SysDef = newSysDef mux4 "mux4" ["s","is"] ["o"]
```

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Remarks

Positive:

- Generated VHDL is very modular
 - One VHDL entity per ForSyDe component
 - Good for tool integration

Negative:

- Interface "conflicts" caused by FSVec and process constructors
 - "zip-unzip" pattern

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ForSyDe: RAM64

```
reg :: S Word -> S Bit -> S Word
reg input load = out where
    out = delaySY "delay" (0 :: WordType) dff
                                                               Hardware EDSLs
    dff = (instantiate "mux2" mux2SysDef) load out input
ram64 :: S Word -> S (FSVec D6 Bit) -> S Bit -> S Word
ram64 input addr load = mux' addr (zipxSY "zipRows" rs) where
                                                               ALLI
 mux'
        = instantiate "mux" mux64SysDef
  decoder' = instantiate "decoder" decode6To64SysDef
  reg' l = instantiate l regSysDef
 and' l = instantiate l andSysDef
                                                               Lava
                                                               ForSvDe
  r(s,l) = (reg' l) input ((and' (l ++ ":and")) load s)
  rs'
          = unzipxSY "unzipAddr" $ decoder' addr
          = V.map r $ V.zip rs' (V.map (\n -> "r" ++ show n)
  rs
                                 (V.unsafeVector d64 [0..63]))
```

ram64SysDef = newSysDef ram64 "ram64" ["i", "a", "l"] ["o"]

Remarks

- ► Component instantiation
 - Introduces hierarchy in the design
 - Influences generated VHDL
- Manual name management
 - Error-prone
 - Every process must have a unique identifier
 - Already was a (lesser) issue with the muxes

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ForSyDe: Hack CPU (part)

```
type HackInstruction = FSVec D16 Bit
type Dest = (Bit, Bit, Bit)
type Jump = (Bit, Bit, Bit)
instructionDecoder :: S HackInstruction
                     -> S (Bit, Bit, Dest, Jump, ALUCtrl)
instructionDecoder = mapSY "mapSYdecoder" decoderFun where
  decoderFun = $(newProcFun [d]
    f :: HackInstruction -> (Bit, Bit, Dest, Jump, ALUCtrl)
   f i = (i!d0)
          , not (i!d3)
          , (i!d10, i!d11, i!d12)
          , (i!d13, i!d14, i!d15)
          , (i!d4, i!d5, i!d6, i!d7, i!d8, i!d9)
          ) [])
```

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Coquet

- Developed by Thomas Braibant (INRIA, France)
 - Seminal paper published in 2011
- ► Library embedded in the *Coq* proof assistant
 - Deep-embedded
 - Models the architecture of circuits
- Allows for correctness proofs of circuits
 - According to a given specification
 - Provides tactics to help with these proofs
 - More powerful, inductive proofs

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Coquet: The Circuit type

```
Context {tech : Techno}
Inductive Circuit: Type -> Type -> Type :=
| Atom : forall {n m : Type} {Hfn : Fin n} {Hfm : Fin m},
             techno n m -> Circuit n m
 Plug : forall {n m : Type} {Hfn : Fin n} {Hfm : Fin m}
            (f : m -> n), Circuit n m
 Ser : forall {n m p : Type},
             Circuit n m -> Circuit m p -> Circuit n p
 Par : forall {n m p q : Type},
             Circuit n p -> Circuit m q
             \rightarrow Circuit (n + m) (p + q)
 Loop : forall {n m p : Type},
             Circuit (n + p) (n + p) -> Circuit n m
```

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Features from the Circuit type

- Circuit structure as constructors of the datatype
 - Explicit loops (recursion) as constructor
- ▶ Parameterized by one type of fundamental gate (Atom)
 - For example, NOR or NAND
- Circuit I/O ports are defined by finite types
 - Instances of the "Fin" typeclass

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Coquet: circuit example

```
Definition HADD a b s c: circuit ([:a]+[:b]) ([:s]+[:c]) :=
    Fork2 ([:a] + [:b]) |> (XOR a b s & AND a b c).
Program Definition FADD a b cin sum cout :
    circuit ([:cin] + ([:a] + [:b])) ([:sum] + [:cout]) :=
   (ONE [: cin] & HADD a b "s" "co1")
|> Rewire (* (a, (b,c)) => ((a,b), c) *)
|> (HADD cin "s" sum "co2" & ONE [: "co1"])
|> Rewire (* ((a,b), c) => (a, (b,c)) *)
|> (ONE [:sum] & OR "co2" "co1" cout).
Next Obligation. revert H; plug_def. Defined.
Next Obligation. plug_auto. Defined.
Next Obligation. revert H; plug_def. Defined.
Next Obligation. plug_auto.Defined.
```

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Features from the example

- Circuit I/O types (finite types)
 - Parameterized by strings: tagged units
 - Default "Fin" instances for sums, units
- Serial/Parallel composition
- Associativity plugs (reordering) automatically defined
 - With help of proof search

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Coquet: How to prove correctness

To understand Coquet proofs, we need 2 concepts:

- Meaning relation
 - Circuit $\rightarrow Prop$
- Behavioural specification
 - What should a circuit do with its inputs

Let's take a look at the definition for each of these concepts. . .

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Coquet: Meaning relation

```
Inductive Sem : forall {n} {m},
   C \cap m \rightarrow (n \rightarrow Data) \rightarrow (m \rightarrow Data) \rightarrow Prop :=
| KAtom: forall n m {Hfn: Fin n} {Hfm: Fin m}
           (t: techno n m) i o, spec t i o -> Sem (Atom t) i o
| KSer: forall n m p (x: C n m) (y: C m p) i mid o,
         Sem x i mid -> Sem y mid o -> Sem (Ser x y) i o
| KPar: forall n m p q (x: C n p) (y: C m q) i o,
             Sem x (select_left i) (select_left o)
         -> Sem y (select_right i) (select_right o)
         -> Sem (Par x v) i o
| KPlug: forall n m {Hfn: Fin n} {Hfm: Fin m} (f: m -> n) i,
          Sem (Plug f) i (Data.lift f i)
 KLoop: forall n m l (x: C (n + l) (m + l)) i o ret,
              Sem x (Data.app i ret) (Data.app o ret)
          -> Sem (Loop x) i o
```

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Coquet: Specification

The semantics of a circuit *entails* (implies):

- ► A *relation* between inputs and outputs
- ▶ The application of a *function* to the inputs
- ▶ Up to isomorphisms...

Now for a (small) example of correctness proof...

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Coquet: Correctness proofs

```
Instance HADD_Implement {a b s c}:
    Implement (HADD a b s c) _ _
        (fun (x : bool * bool) =>
            match x with (a,b) => (xorb a b, andb a b) end).
Proof.
    unfold HADD; intros ins outs H; tac.
Qed.
```

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Results

Summary of our findings, by aspect:

Depth of embedding

- Lava: deep-embedded, recursion and sharing through host
- ForSyDe: both shallow and deep-embedded signals
- Coquet: the *deepest* of all, circuit *structure* in the AST

Simulation

- Lava: straightforward, but not easily automated
- ForSyDe: easy in both embedding depths
- Coquet: one of the example interpretations, not sequential

Verification

- Lava: safety properties through external SAT solver
- ForSyDe: no capabilities of verification whatsoever
- Coquet: Interactive theorem proving, verifies families of circuits.

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Results

Summary of our findings, by aspect:

Genericity

- Lava: families of circuits, with extra arguments
- ForSyDe: weak genericity, monomorphic types in ProcFun's
- Coquet: similar approach to Lava

Tool integration

- Lava: flat VHDL code (Signal Bool) and CNF formulas
- ForSyDe: modular VHDL code and GraphML files
- Coquet: no circuit extraction whatsoever

Extensibility

- Lava: no data extensibility, high structural extensibility
- ForSyDe: possible to use custom *enumerated* types
- Coquet: flexible approach to data extensibility with meaning relation

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Future work

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Thank you!

Questions?

