

Mastering Digital Design

with Verilog on FPGAs

John Wickerson

Lecture 1

Module aims

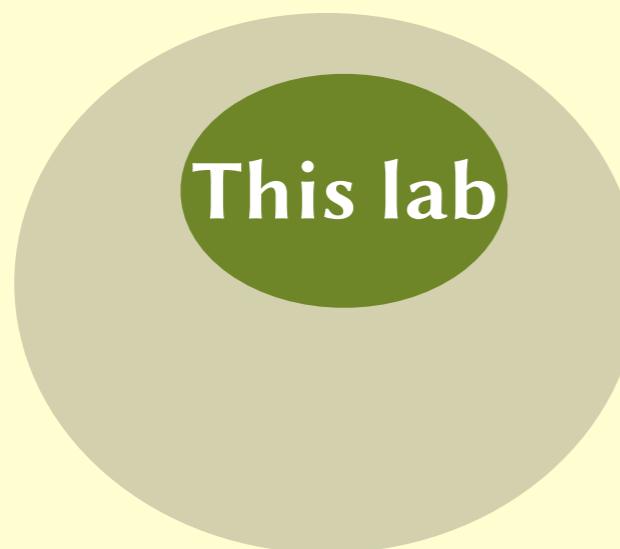
- To ensure that all MSc students reach a **common competence level** in RTL design using FPGAs in a hardware description language.
- To act as a **revision exercise** for those already competent in Verilog and FPGAs.

Format

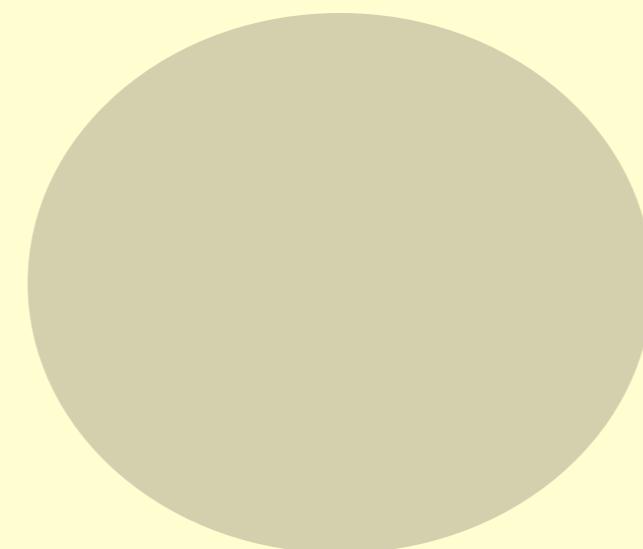
- The lab experiment is divided into four parts.
- It is hoped that you will finish one part each week.
- Each part has clearly defined Learning Outcomes.
- These lectures will supplement the lab with some background information.

Grading

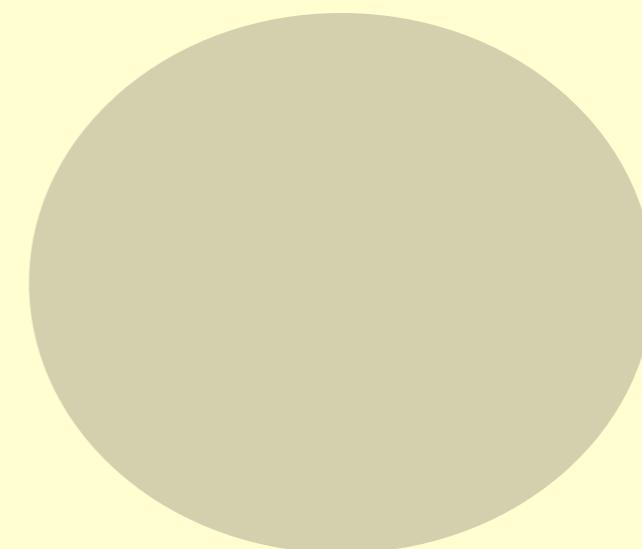
- This lab is part of the Coursework component of the MSc course.
- You must pass this component, but it does not count towards your final MSc grade.



Coursework



Exams



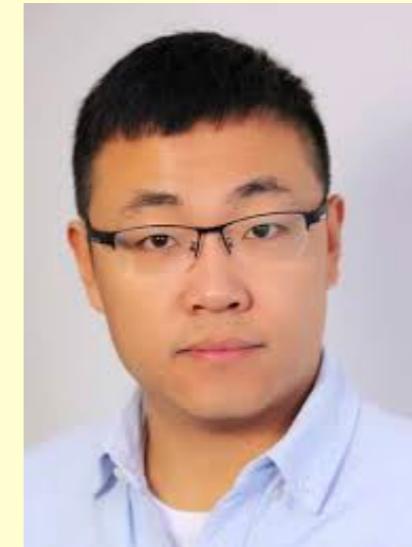
Project

Assessment

- Assessment will be via a 15-minute **oral interview**. This will assess:
 - how many parts of the experiment you have completed,
 - the extent to which you have understood the underlying principles of digital design, and
 - whether you have used a logbook (electronic or paper) to help you learn through planning and reflection.
- Please have your equipment set up and ready to demo.

Admin

- **Lectures:** Fridays at 0900–1100, for three more weeks.
- **Labs:** Fridays at 1300–1600, today and the next three weeks.
- **Teaching assistants:** Mr Jianyi Cheng and Mr He Li.



- **Course webpage:**
https://github.com/johnwickerson/mastering_digital_design

Credits

- This course was conceived and designed by **Professor Peter Cheung.**

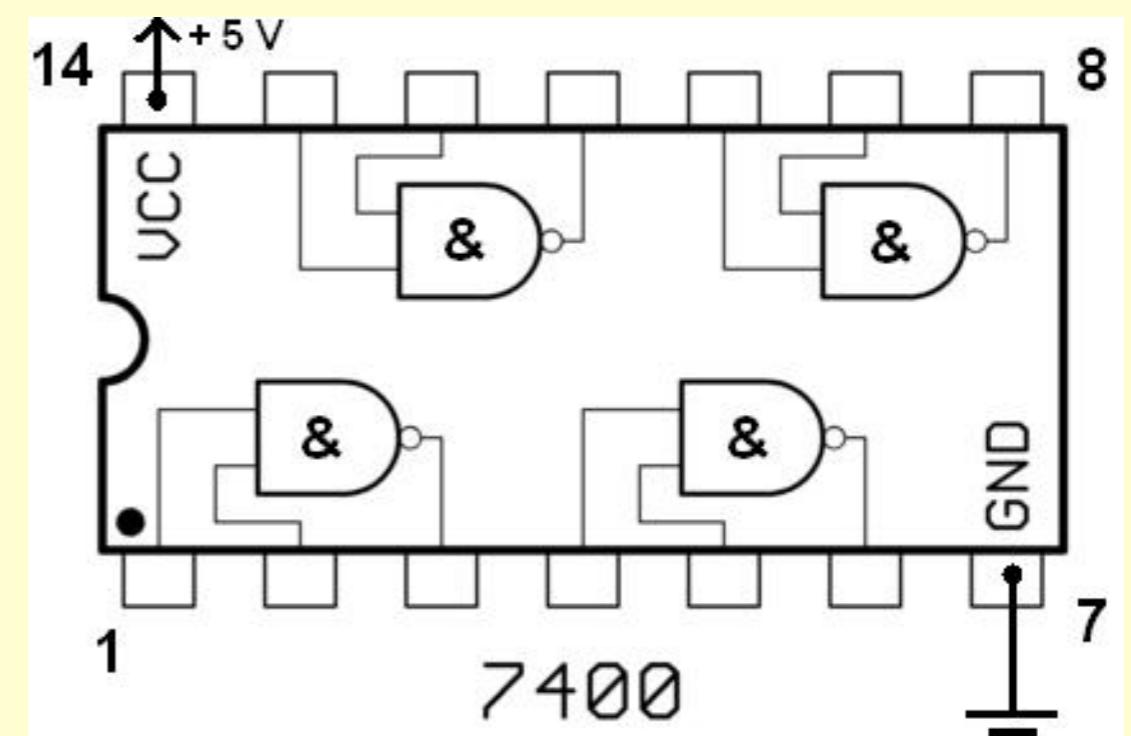
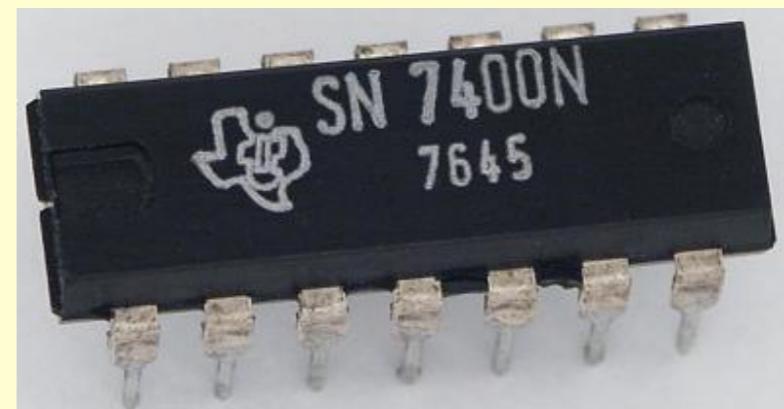


- Any errors in the lectures or the labs are mine. (And please do let me know if you find any!)

Digital Design

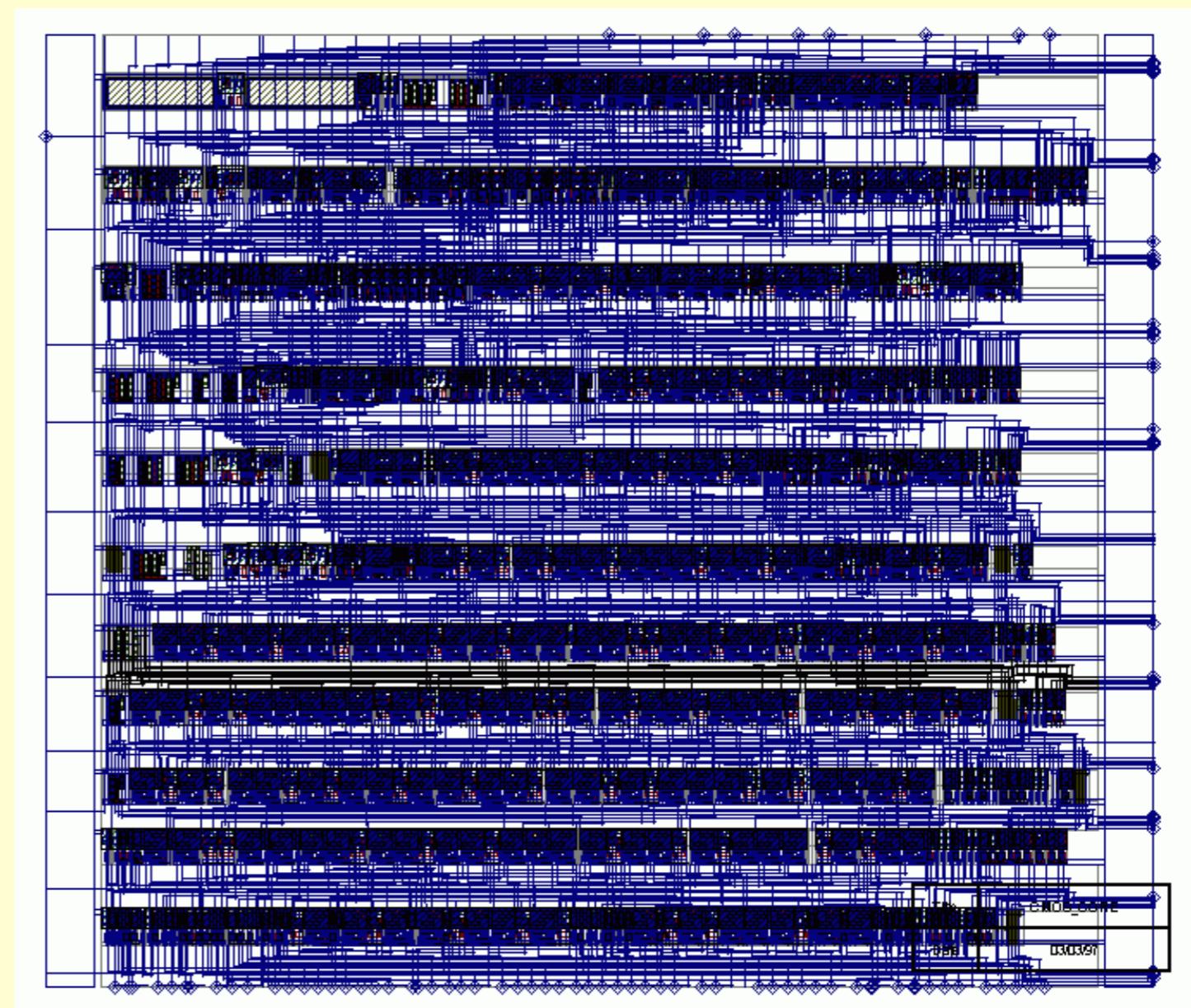
The old days

- **Discrete logic**, built from individual gates or packages containing small digital building blocks (e.g. a 1-bit adder).
 - Thanks to De Morgan, we can build *anything* using 2-input NAND gates!
 - But this is tedious, expensive, and prone to wiring errors.



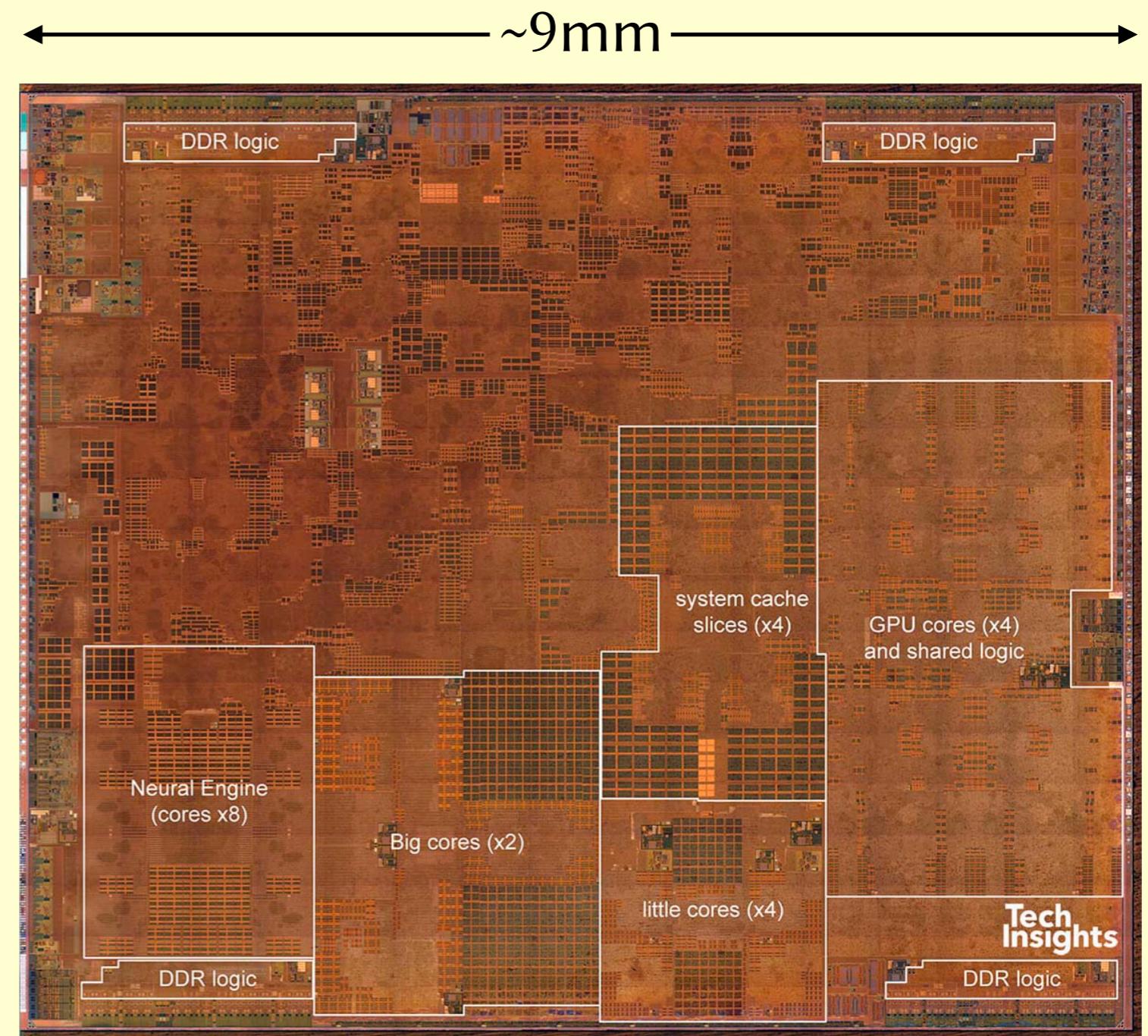
Early integrated circuits

- Rows of gates, connected to form **application-specific integrated circuits** (ASICs).
- Can be **full-custom** (fabricated from scratch), or **semi-custom** (can only adjust the wiring between rows).
- Functionality cannot be later changed.



Full-custom ICs

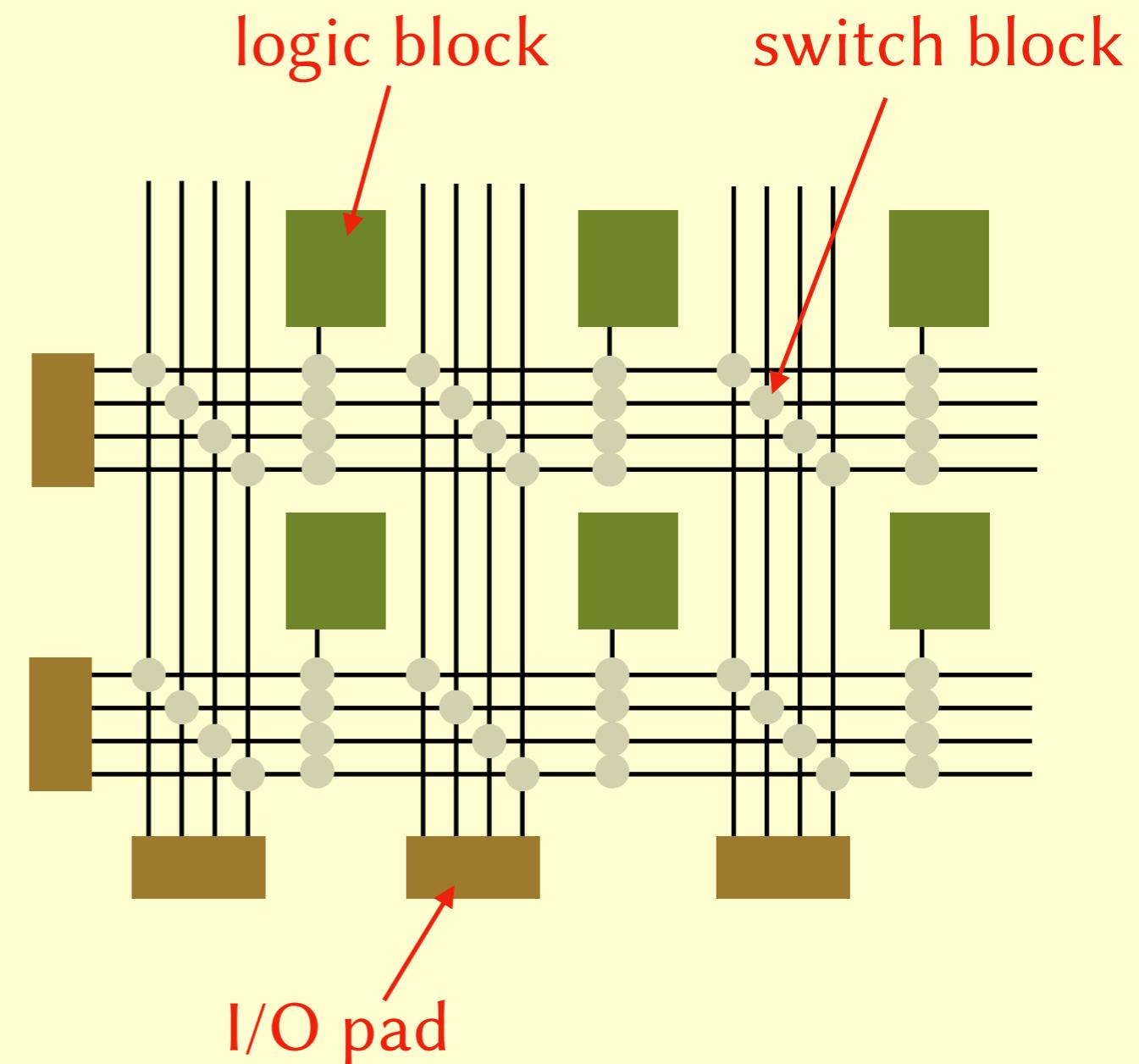
- Here is an **Apple A12** processor from the **iPhone XS**. It has about 6.9 billion transistors.
- Very expensive to design and manufacture, so not viable unless the market is very large.



<https://www.techinsights.com/blog/apple-iphone-xs-max-teardown>

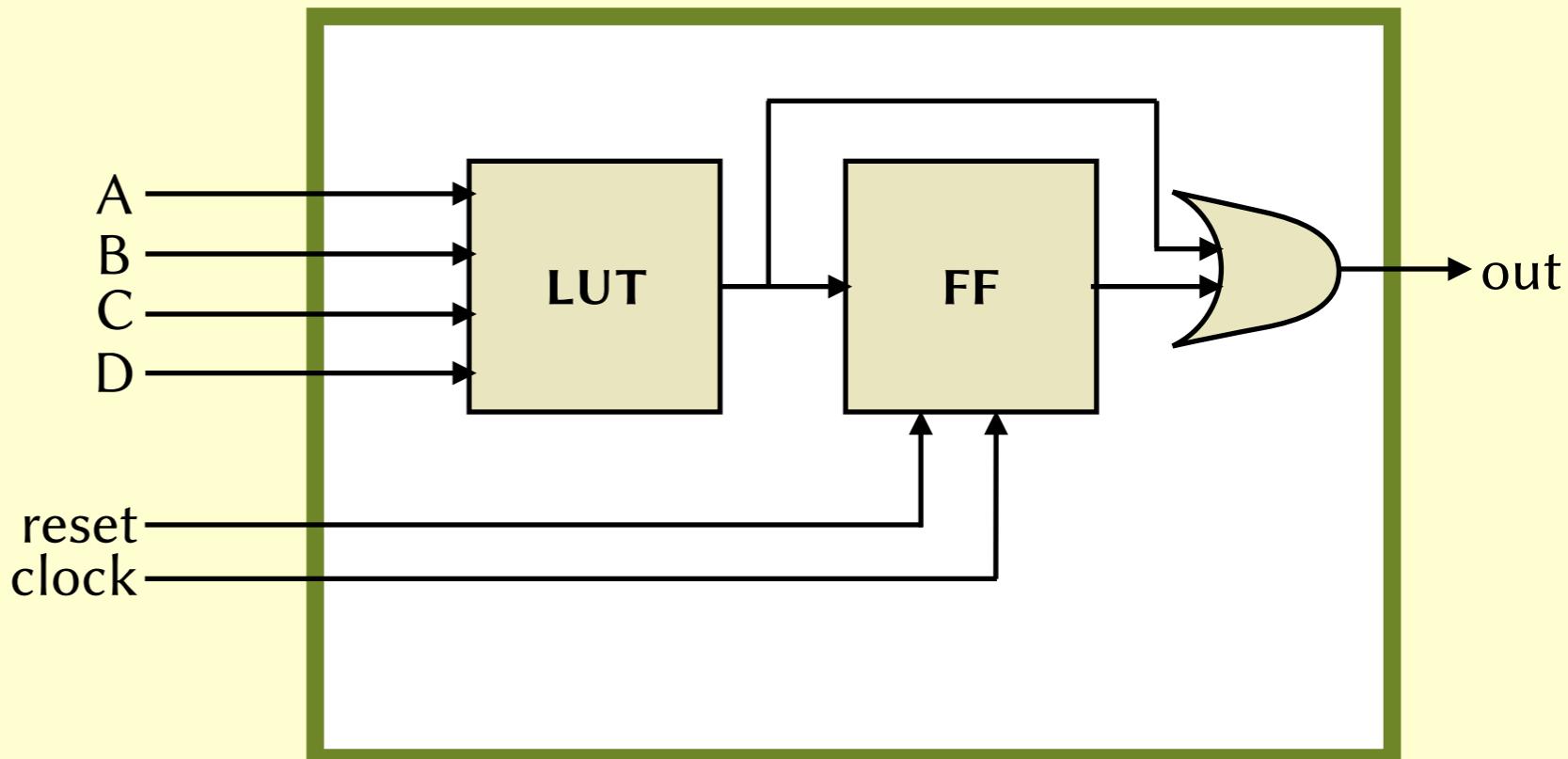
Field-programmable gate arrays (FPGAs)

- Introduced by **Xilinx** in 1985. Other manufacturers include **Altera** (now part of **Intel**), **Microsemi** (now part of **Microchip**), and **Lattice**.
- Arrays of programmable logic blocks, programmable wiring in between, and flexible I/O.

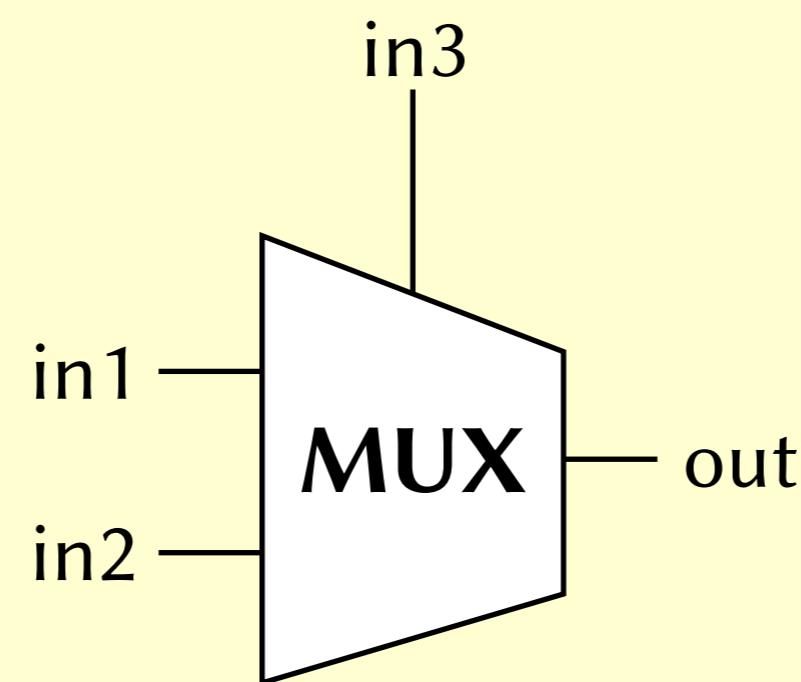


Logic blocks

- Also called *logic elements*.
- Based around **look-up tables** (LUTs), usually with 4 inputs.
- Optional flipflop (FF) at the output.
- These can implement *any* 4-input Boolean function (truth table).

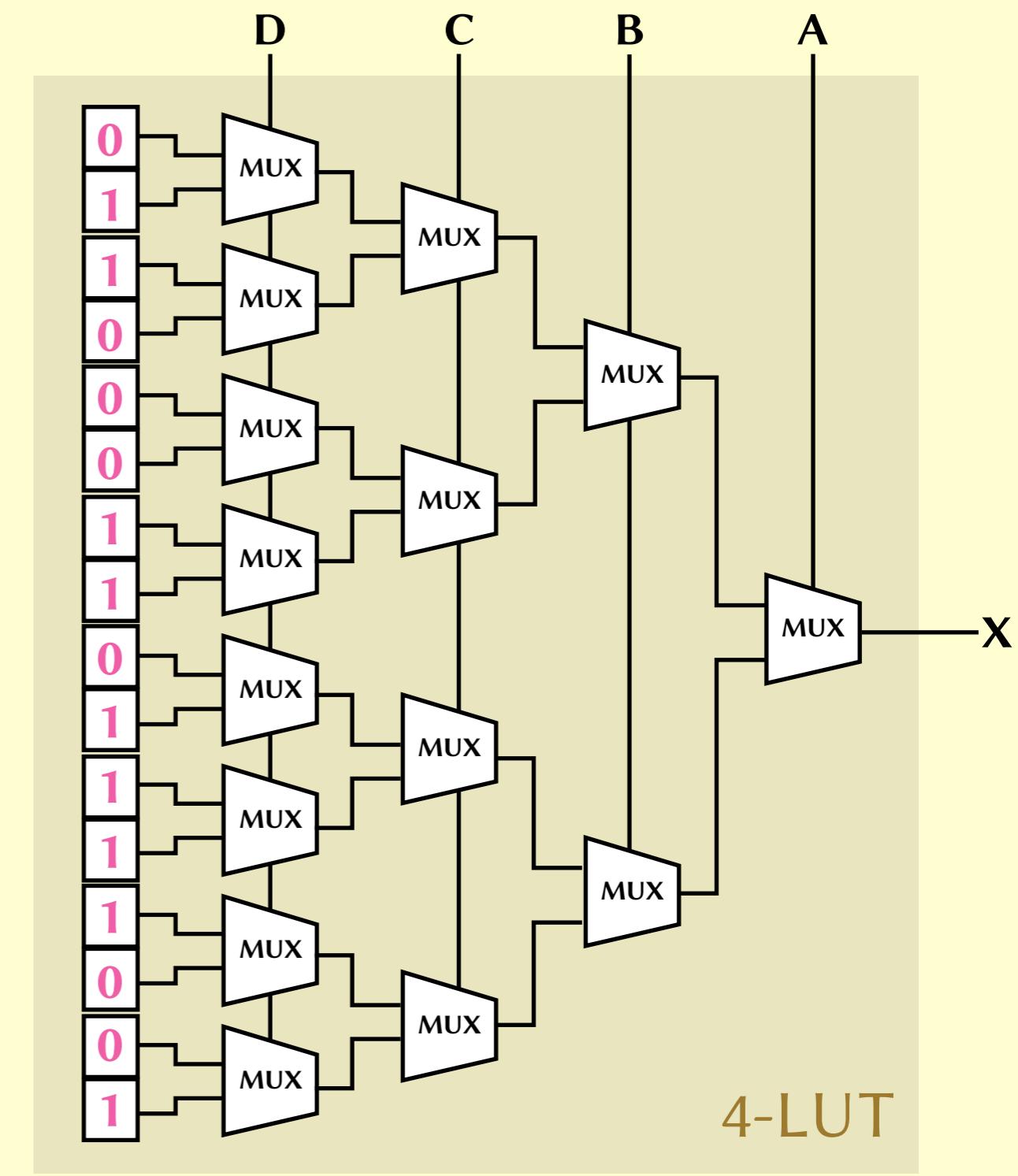


Multiplexer (MUX)



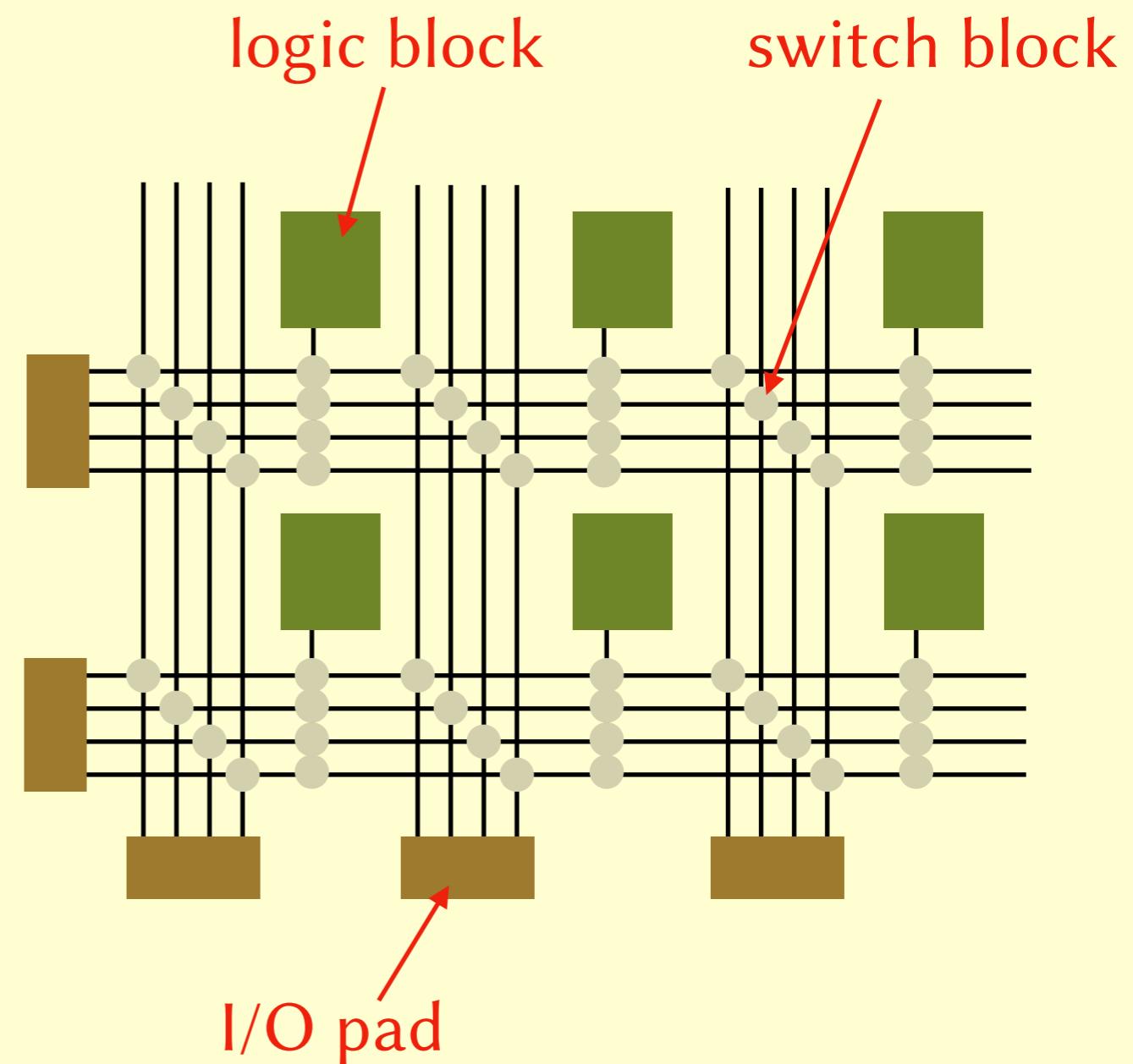
Logic blocks

A	B	C	D	X
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	1	1
0	0	1	0	1
0	0	1	1	0
0	1	0	0	0
0	1	0	1	0
0	1	1	0	1
0	1	1	1	1
1	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	1	1
1	0	1	0	1
1	0	1	1	1
1	1	0	0	1
1	1	0	1	0
1	1	1	0	0
1	1	1	1	1

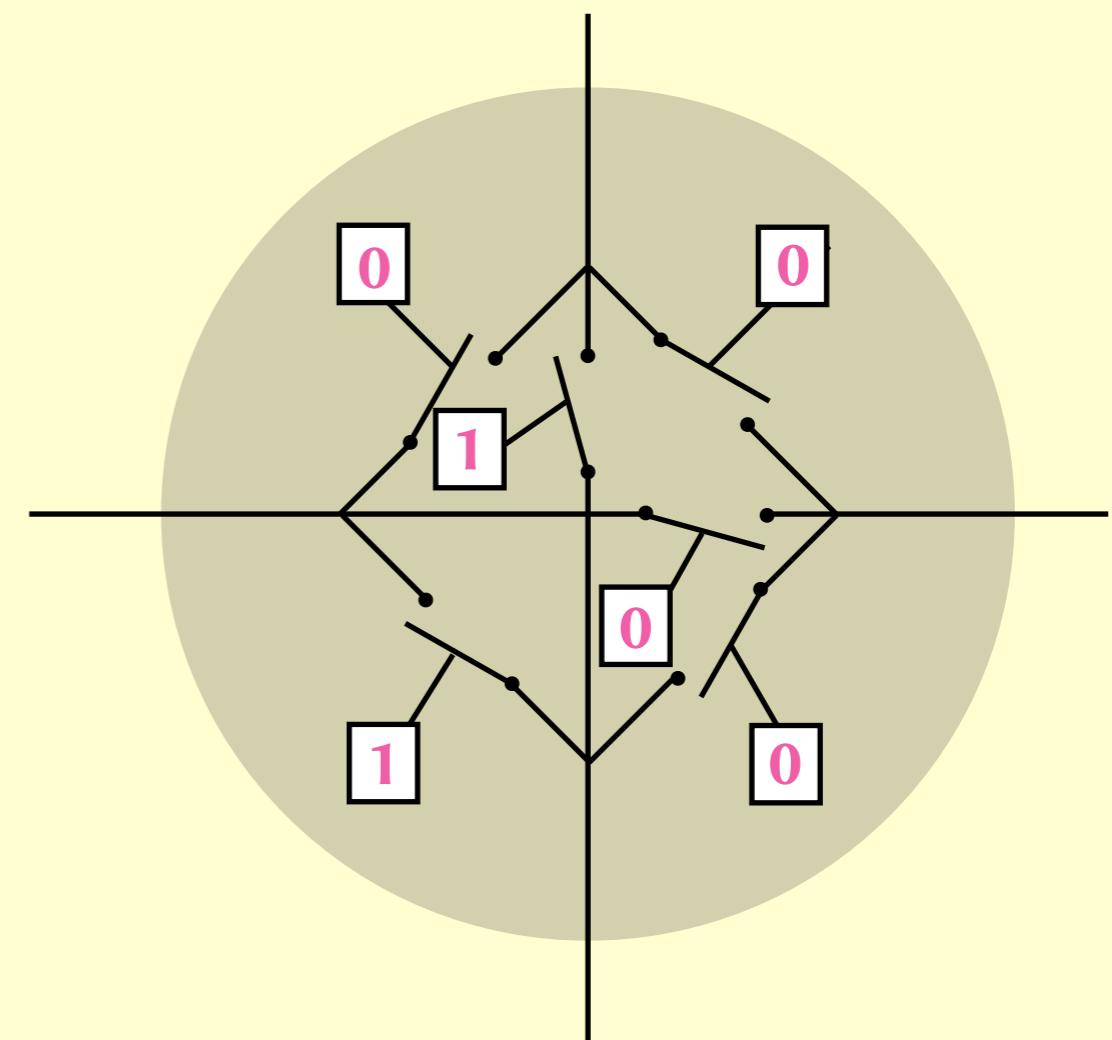
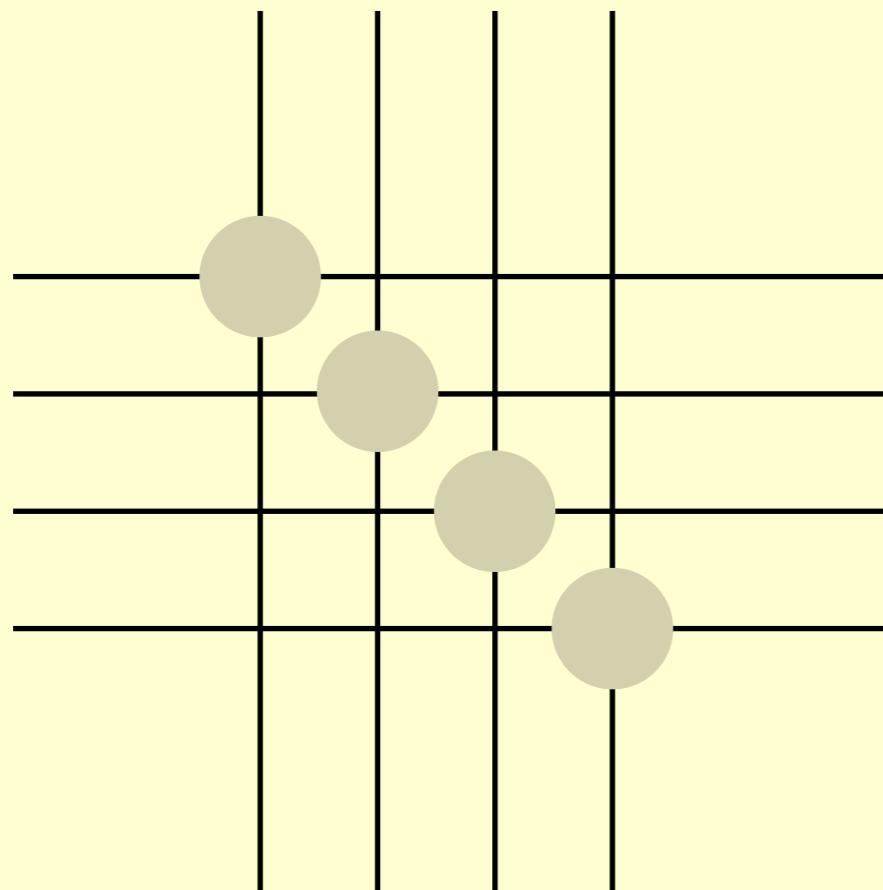


Field-programmable gate arrays (FPGAs)

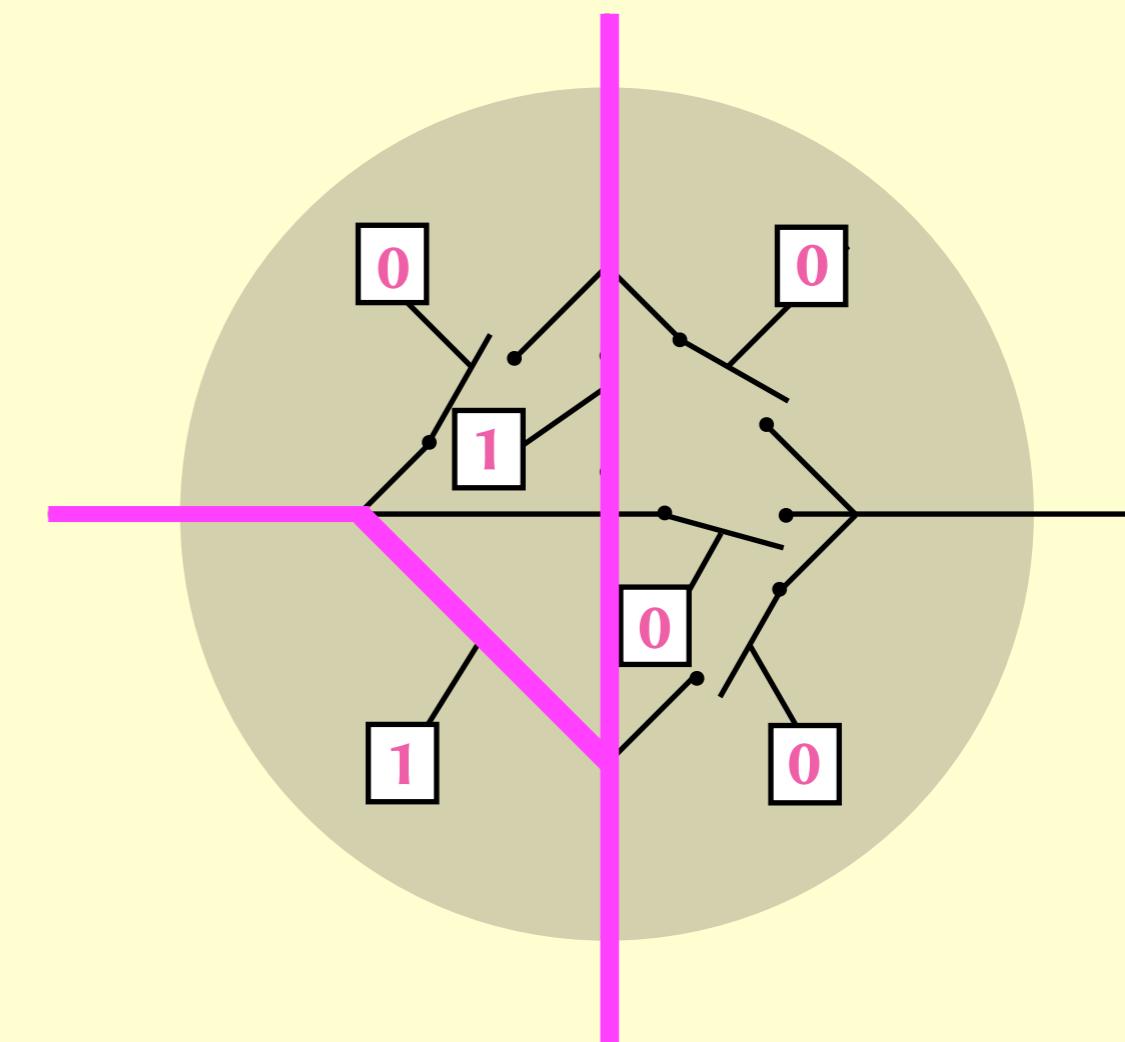
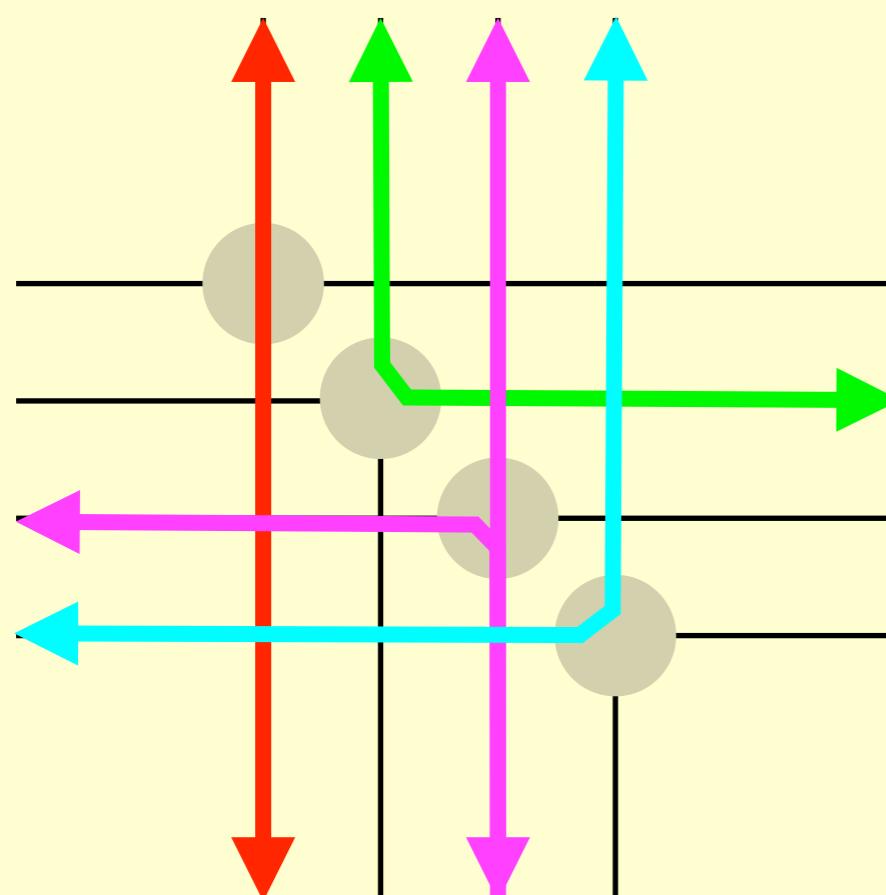
- Introduced by **Xilinx** in 1985. Other manufacturers include **Altera** (now part of **Intel**), **Microsemi** (now part of **Microchip**), and **Lattice**.
- Arrays of programmable logic blocks, programmable wiring in between, and flexible I/O.



Programmable routing



Programmable routing

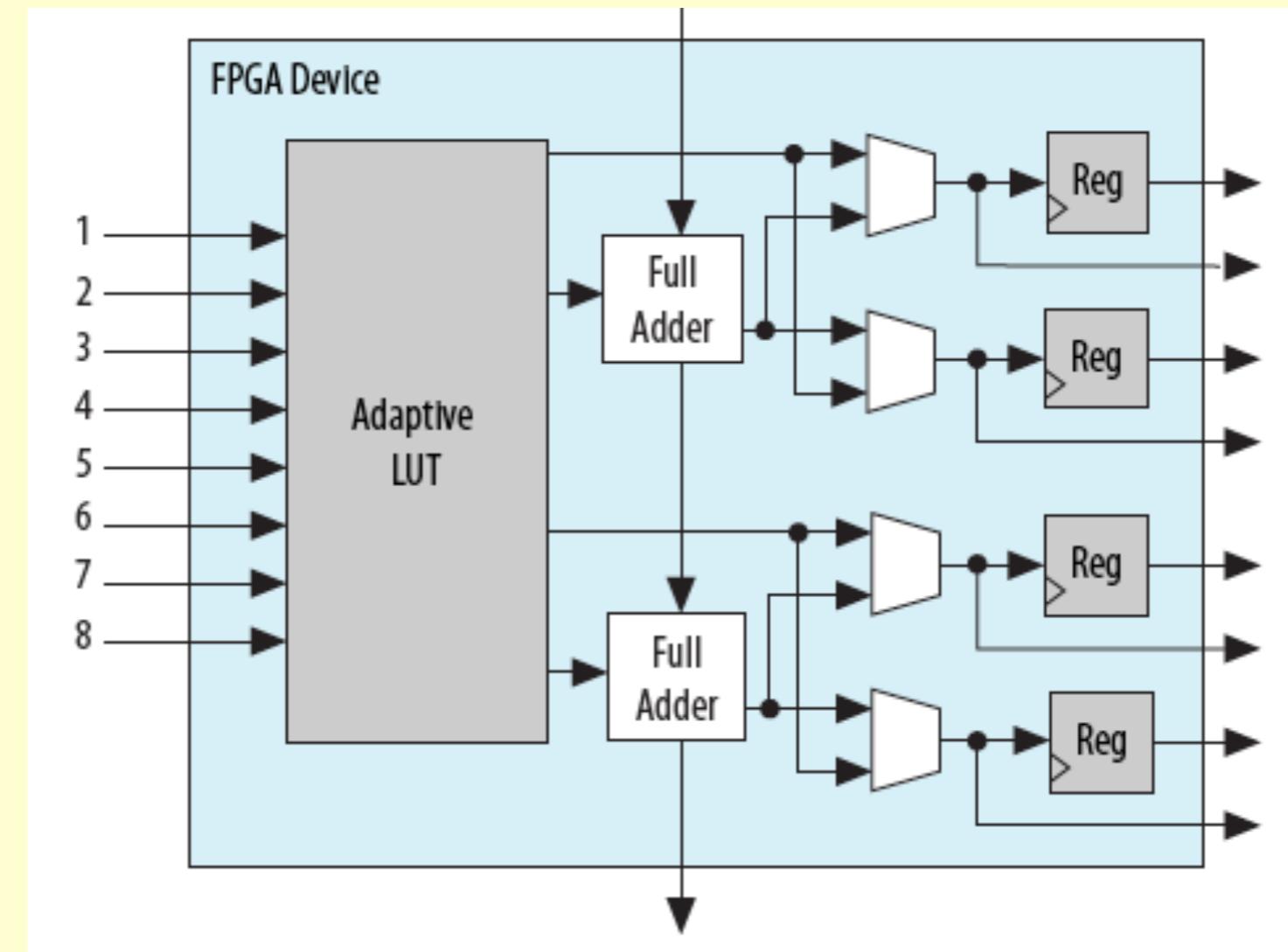


Configuring an FPGA

- All these configuration registers are set by passing the FPGA a **configuration bitstream**.
- Powering up the board puts the FPGA chip into a "waiting" mode (LEDs flashing). You then send the board the bitstream of your design via the USB port.

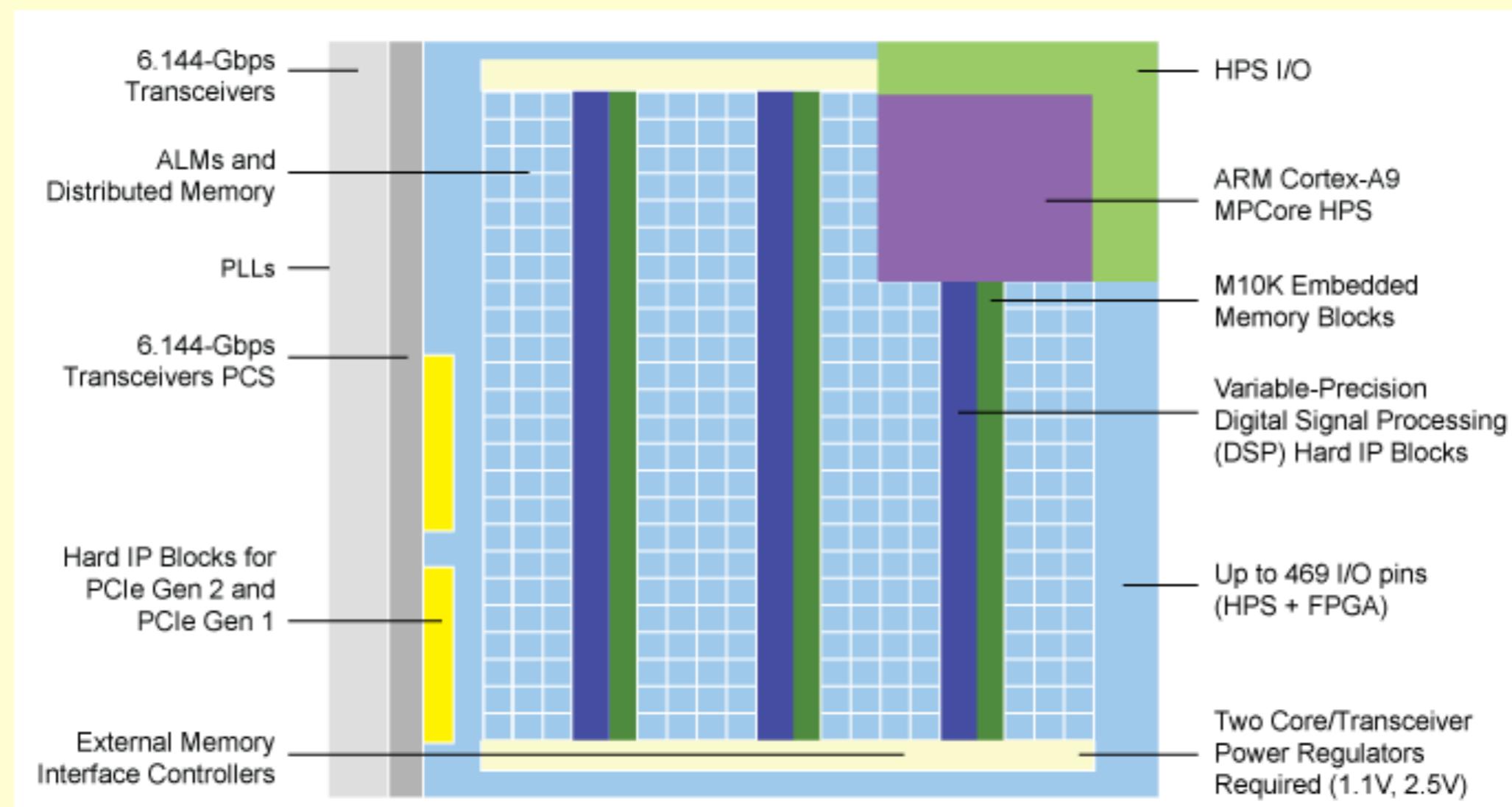
Cyclone V FPGA

- The Altera **Cyclone V** FPGA uses a more complex FPGA logic blocks called Adaptive Logic Modules (ALMs).
- The device we use (5CSEMA5F31C6N) has 32000 ALMs. That's roughly equivalent to 85000 4-LUTs, or about 2000 32-bit binary adders.
- Not that this particularly matters for FPGA *users*.



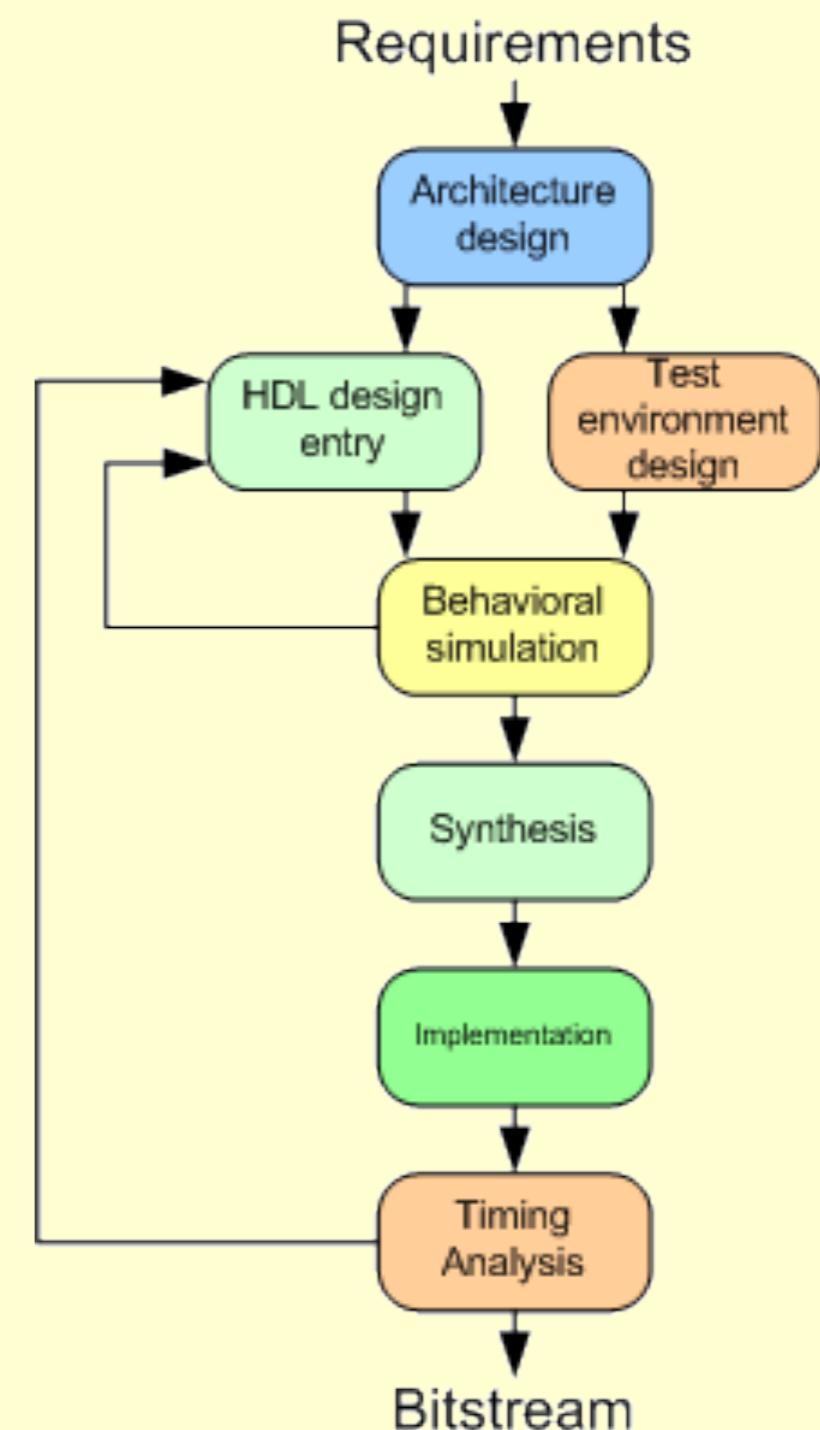
Cyclone V FPGA

- The Cyclone V also has 4MB of embedded memory, 87 DSP blocks (for multiply-accumulate), a 2-core ARM processor, and hard logic for interfacing with PCIe and external memory.



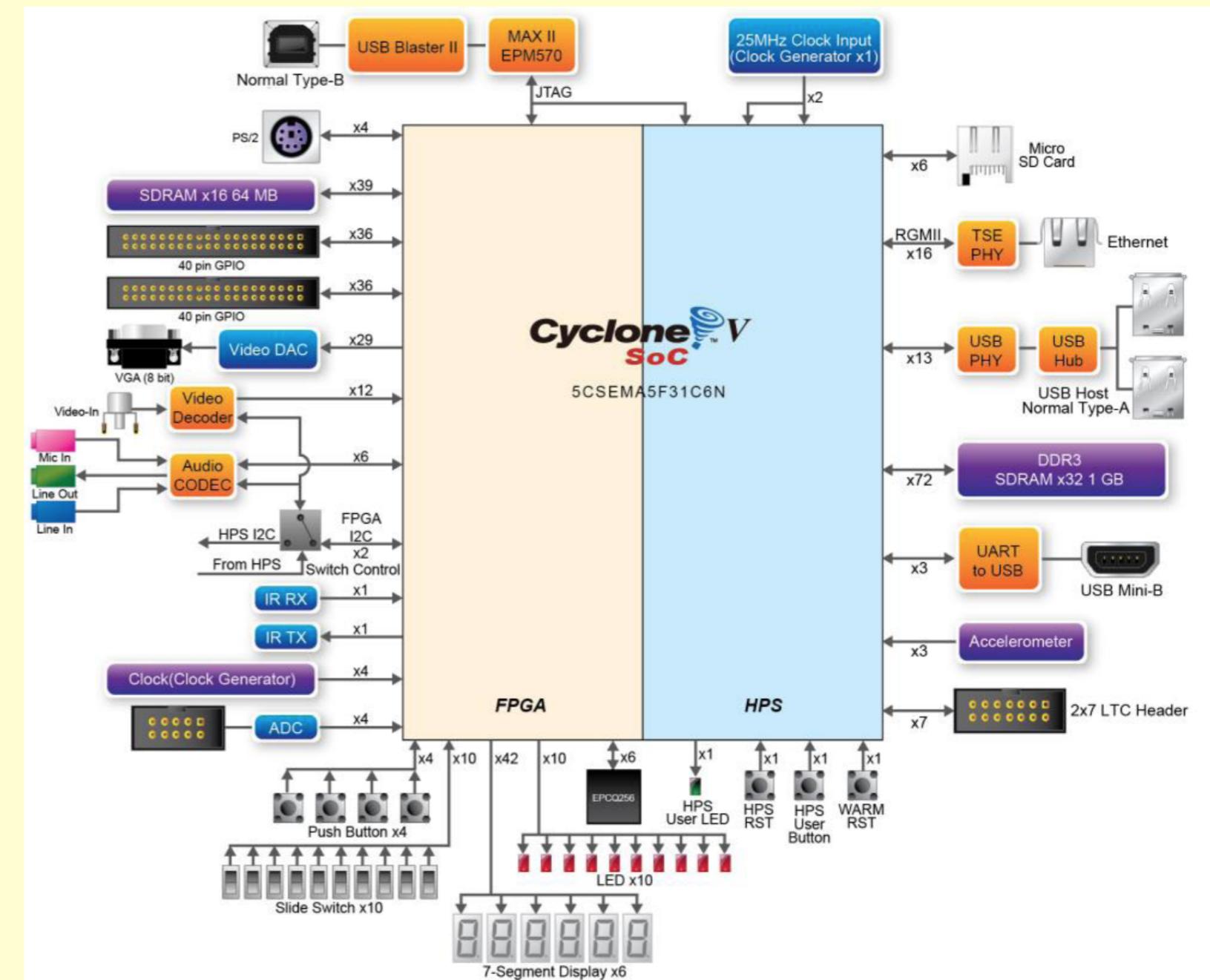
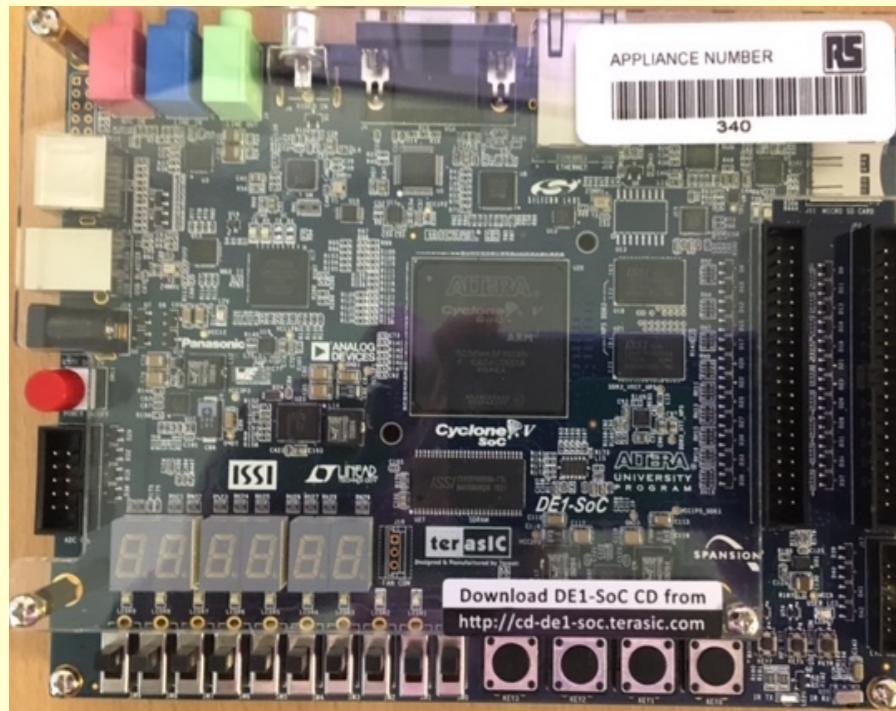
Design Tools

- We use **Altera Quartus II** to design for FPGA.
- Features include: design entry, compilation from HDL, synthesis, simulation, timing analysis, power analysis, project management.
- The software is installed on all the PCs in the department. You might manage to run it on your own machine, but beware that you'll want about 8 GB disk space.



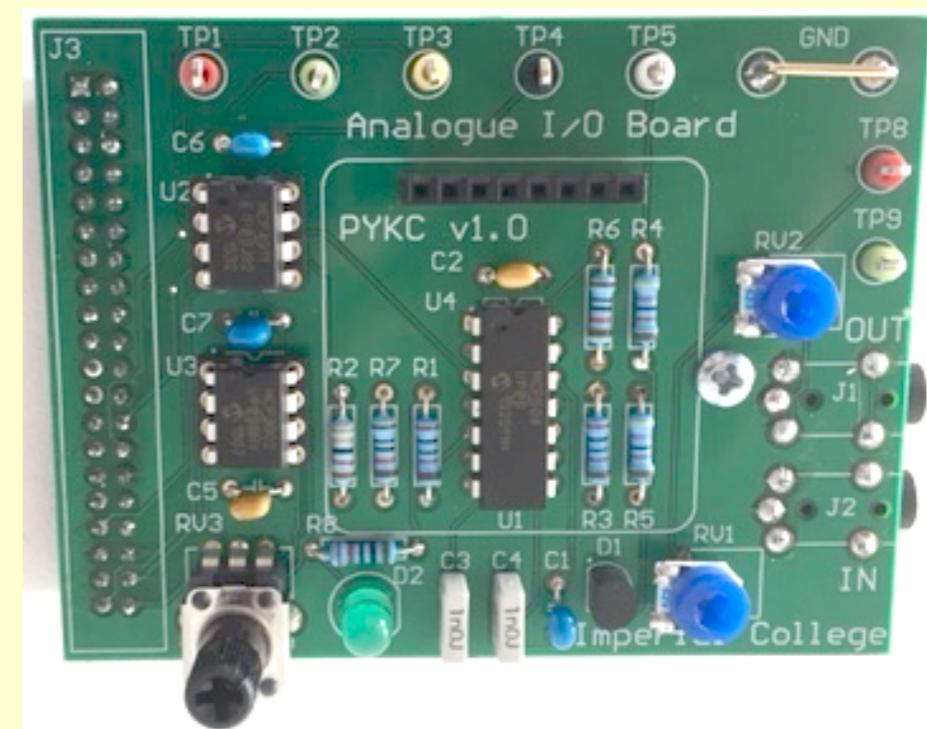
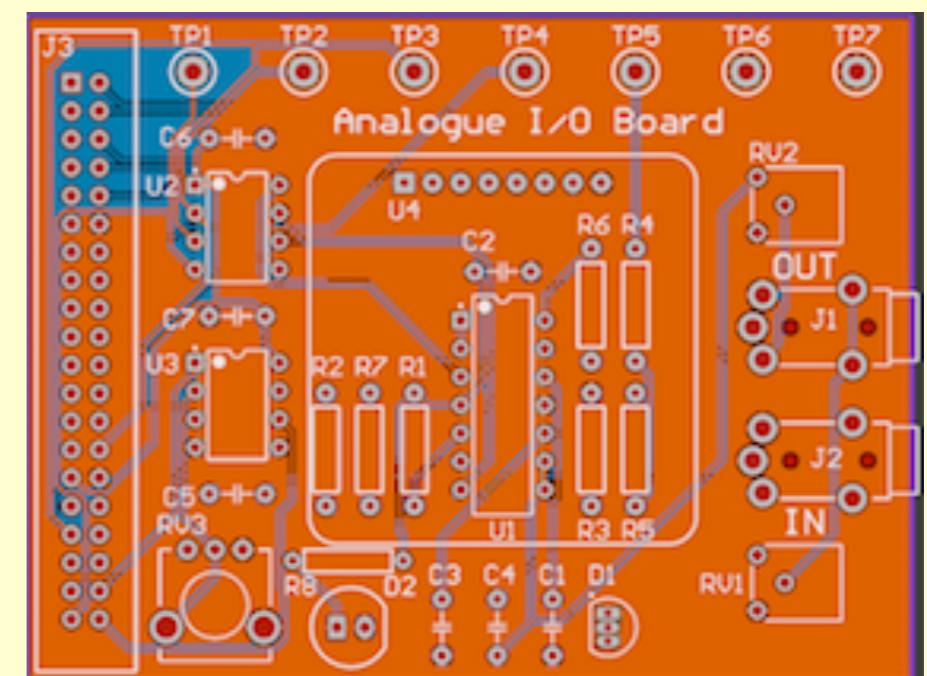
The DE1-SoC board

- Everything you need to test basic designs involving switches, 7-segment displays, and even VGA output.



Add-on board

- Provides analogue inputs (from microphone) and outputs (to headphone jack).
- Will feature in the third and fourth parts of the lab – you can ignore it for now.



Verilog

Verilog

- A **hardware description language** based on C syntax.
- Description can be at **behavioural level, register-transfer level (RTL), or gate level**.
- May be easier to learn than its competitor, VHDL. Other HDLs include Chisel and Bluespec.

Schematic vs HDL

Schematics:

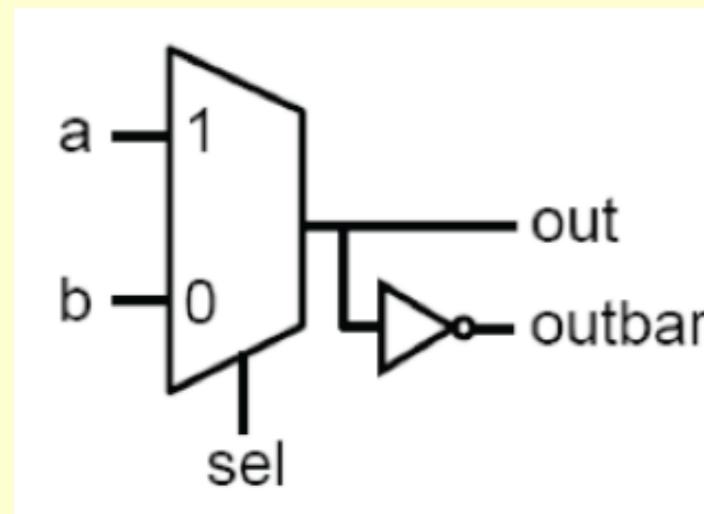
- ✓ Provide overview
- ✓ Direct connection to hardware
- ✓ No programming needed

HDL:

- ✓ Flexible and parameterisable
- ✓ Simple textual format
- ✓ Connection to high-level languages

Verilog modules

- A Verilog design consists of many interconnected **modules**.
- A module contains low-level gates, statements, and other modules.



a	b	sel	out	outbar
0	0	0	0	1
0	0	1	0	1
0	1	0	1	0
0	1	1	0	1
1	0	0	0	1
1	0	1	1	0
1	1	0	1	0
1	1	1	1	0
0	0	0	0	1
0	0	1	0	1
0	1	0	1	0
0	1	1	0	1
1	0	0	0	1
1	0	1	1	0
1	1	0	1	0
1	1	1	1	0

```
// Function: 2-to-1 multiplexer
module mux2tol (out, outbar,
                  a, b, sel);
    output out, outbar;
    input a, b, sel;

    assign out = sel ? a : b;
    assign outbar = ~out;
endmodule
```

Verilog syntax

Specify port as **input**/
output/inout

Express module's behaviour.
Each statement executes in
parallel. Order doesn't matter.

This is continuous assignment.
Output responds to changes in
input **immediately**.

Declare module,
list its ports,
terminate with ;

Comments can also
use **/* ... */**

```
//Function: 2-to-1 multiplexer
module mux2to1 (out, outbar,
                  a, b, sel);
    output out, outbar;
    input a, b, sel;
    assign out = sel ? a : b;
    assign outbar = ~out;
endmodule
```

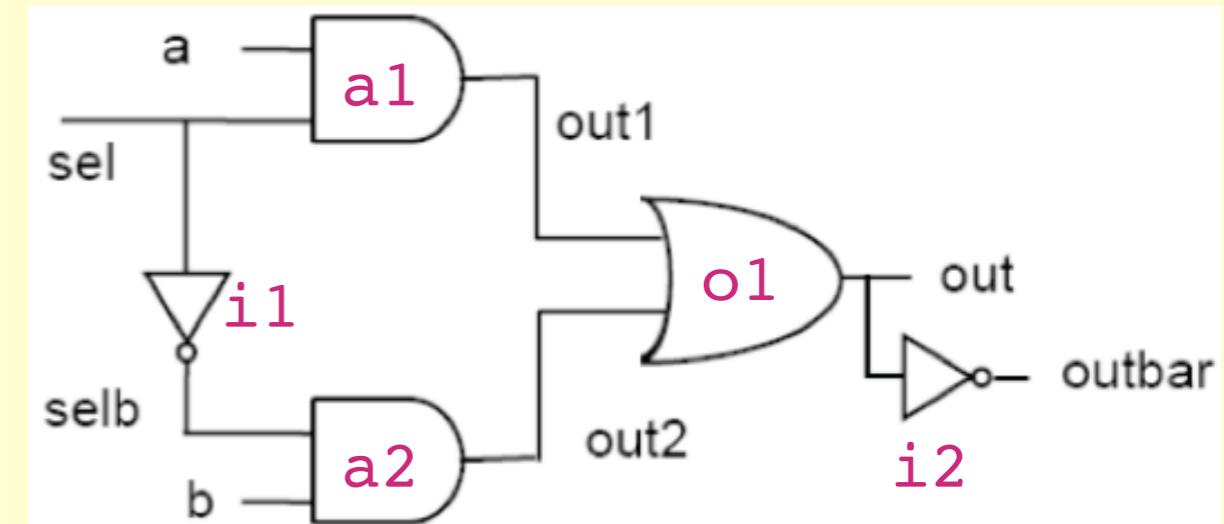
Other operators include: **&**, **|**, **+**, **-**, *****

Gate-level description

- Built-in logic gates include: **and**, **nand**, **or**, **nor**, **xor**, **xnor**, **not**, **buf**.

```
// Function: 2-to-1 multiplexer as gates
module mux_gate (out, outbar,
                  a, b, sel);
  output out, outbar;
  input a, b, sel;
  wire out1, out2, selb;

  not i1 (selb, sel);
  and a1 (out1, a, sel);
  and a2 (out2, b, selb);
  or o1 (out, out1, out2);
  not i2 (outbar, out);
endmodule
```



- In practice, "gate-level description" depends on what primitives are provided by your target chip.

Always blocks

- Verilog provides **always** blocks for defining **sequential** logic.

Variables (not registers)

```
module mux2to1 (out, outbar,
                 a, b, sel);
    output out, outbar;
    input a, b, sel;
    reg out, outbar;

    always @ (a or b or sel)
    begin
        if (sel) out = a;
        else out = b;

        outbar = ~out;
    end
endmodule
```

Sensitivity list

Can also contain
case, for, while

Executed in sequence
(order matters!)

Always blocks

- Can mix procedural and continuous assignments.

```
module mux2to1 (out, outbar,
                 a, b, sel);
  output out, outbar;
  input a, b, sel;
  reg out, outbar;

  always @ (a or b or sel)
  begin
    if (sel) out = a;
    else out = b;

    outbar = ~out;
  end
endmodule
```

```
module mux2to1 (out, outbar,
                 a, b, sel);
  output out, outbar;
  input a, b, sel;
  reg out;

  always @ (a or b or sel)
  begin
    if (sel) out = a;
    else out = b;
  end

  assign outbar = ~out;
endmodule
```

Numerical constants

- Format is $<\text{size}>^{\prime} <\text{signedness}><\text{base}><\text{number}>$
- $<\text{size}>$ defaults to **32**.
- $<\text{base}>$ is either **b** (binary=2), **o** (octal=8), **d** (decimal=10), or **h** (hexadecimal=16). Decimal is the default.
- $<\text{signedness}>$ is either blank (unsigned, default) or **s** (signed).

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- Examples: **2'b10**,

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- Examples: **2'b10**, **'b10**, **31**,

Numerical constants

- Format is $\langle\text{size}\rangle' \langle\text{signedness}\rangle \langle\text{base}\rangle \langle\text{number}\rangle$
- $\langle\text{size}\rangle$ defaults to **32**.
- $\langle\text{base}\rangle$ is either **b** (binary=2), **o** (octal=8), **d** (decimal=10), or **h** (hexadecimal=16). Decimal is the default.
- $\langle\text{signedness}\rangle$ is either blank (unsigned, default) or **s** (signed).
- Examples: **2'b10**, **'b10**, **31**, **8'hAf**,

Numerical constants

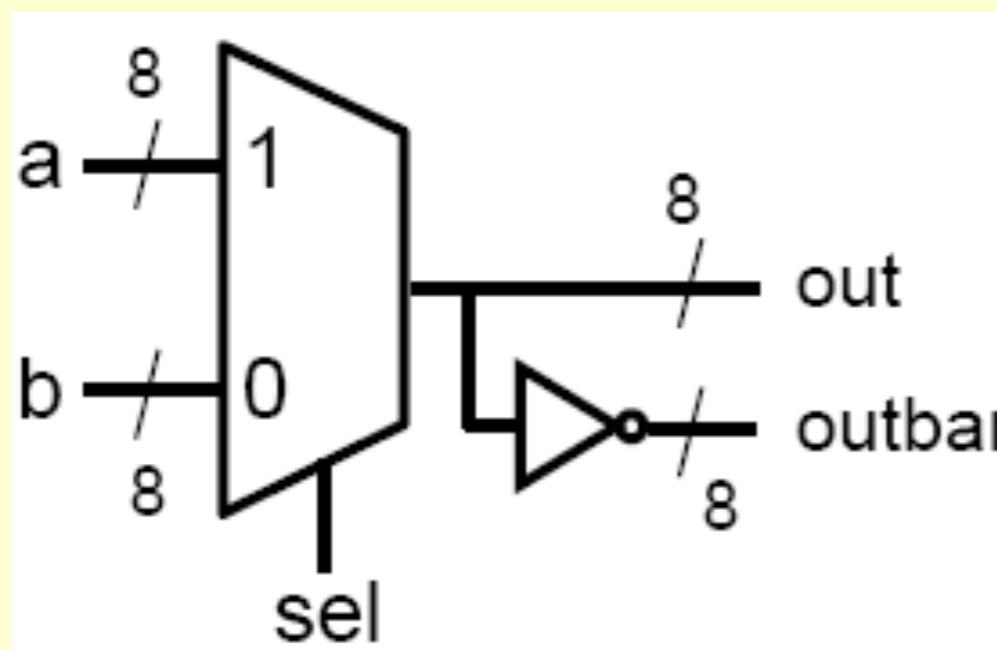
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- $<\text{signedness}>$ is either blank (unsigned, default) or **s** (signed).
- Examples: **2'b10**, **'b10**, **31**, **8'hAf**, **2'sb10**

Buses

- Concatenate wires into a **bus** using `{ . . . }` syntax. E.g.:

```
input [15:0] x;  
output [15:0] y;  
assign y = { x[7:0], x[15:8] };
```

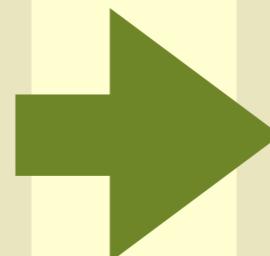
- An 8-bit multiplexer:



```
module mux2to1 (out, outbar,  
                 a, b, sel);  
    output[7:0] out, outbar;  
    input[7:0] a, b;  
    input sel;  
    reg[7:0] out;  
  
    always @ (a or b or sel)  
    begin  
        if (sel) out = a;  
        else out = b;  
    end  
    assign outbar = ~out;  
endmodule
```

Case statements

```
always @ (a or b or sel)
begin
    if (sel) out = a;
    else out = b;
end
```

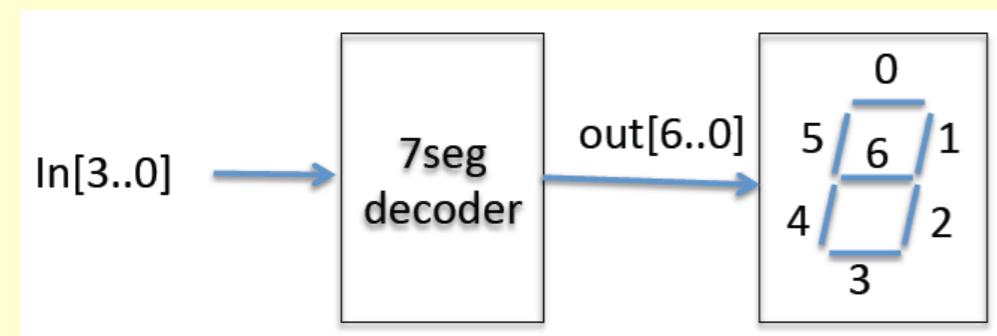


could write
always @ *

```
always @ (a or b or sel)
begin
    case (sel)
        1'b0: out = b;
        1'b1: out = a;
    endcase
end
```

Putting it all together

7-seg decoder



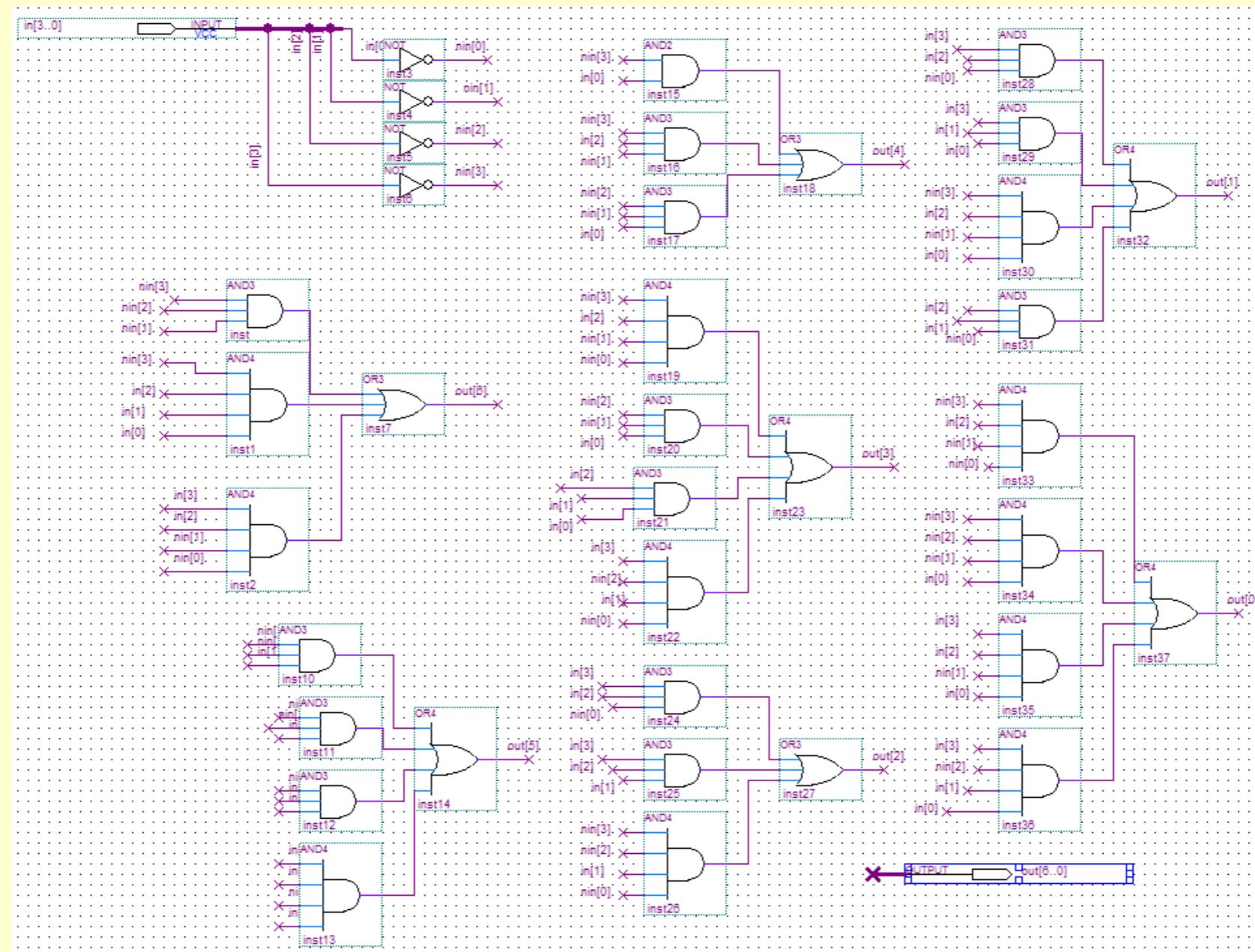
<code>in[3..0]</code>	<code>out[6:0]</code>	Digit	<code>in[3..0]</code>	<code>out[6:0]</code>	Digit
0000	1000000	0	1000	0000000	B
0001	1111001	/	1001	0010000	9
0010	0100100	2	1010	0001000	A
0011	0110000	3	1011	0000011	b
0100	0011001	4	1100	1000110	C
0101	0010010	5	1101	0100001	d
0110	0000010	6	1110	0000110	E
0111	1111000	7	1111	0001110	F

<code>In3 : in2</code>				
<code>out6</code>	00	01	11	10
00	1	0	1	0
01	1	0	0	0
11	0	1	0	0
10	0	0	0	0

$$\text{out6} = (\overline{\text{in3}} \wedge \overline{\text{in2}} \wedge \overline{\text{in1}}) \vee (\text{in3} \wedge \text{in2} \wedge \overline{\text{in1}} \wedge \overline{\text{in0}}) \vee (\overline{\text{in3}} \wedge \text{in2} \wedge \text{in1} \wedge \text{in0})$$

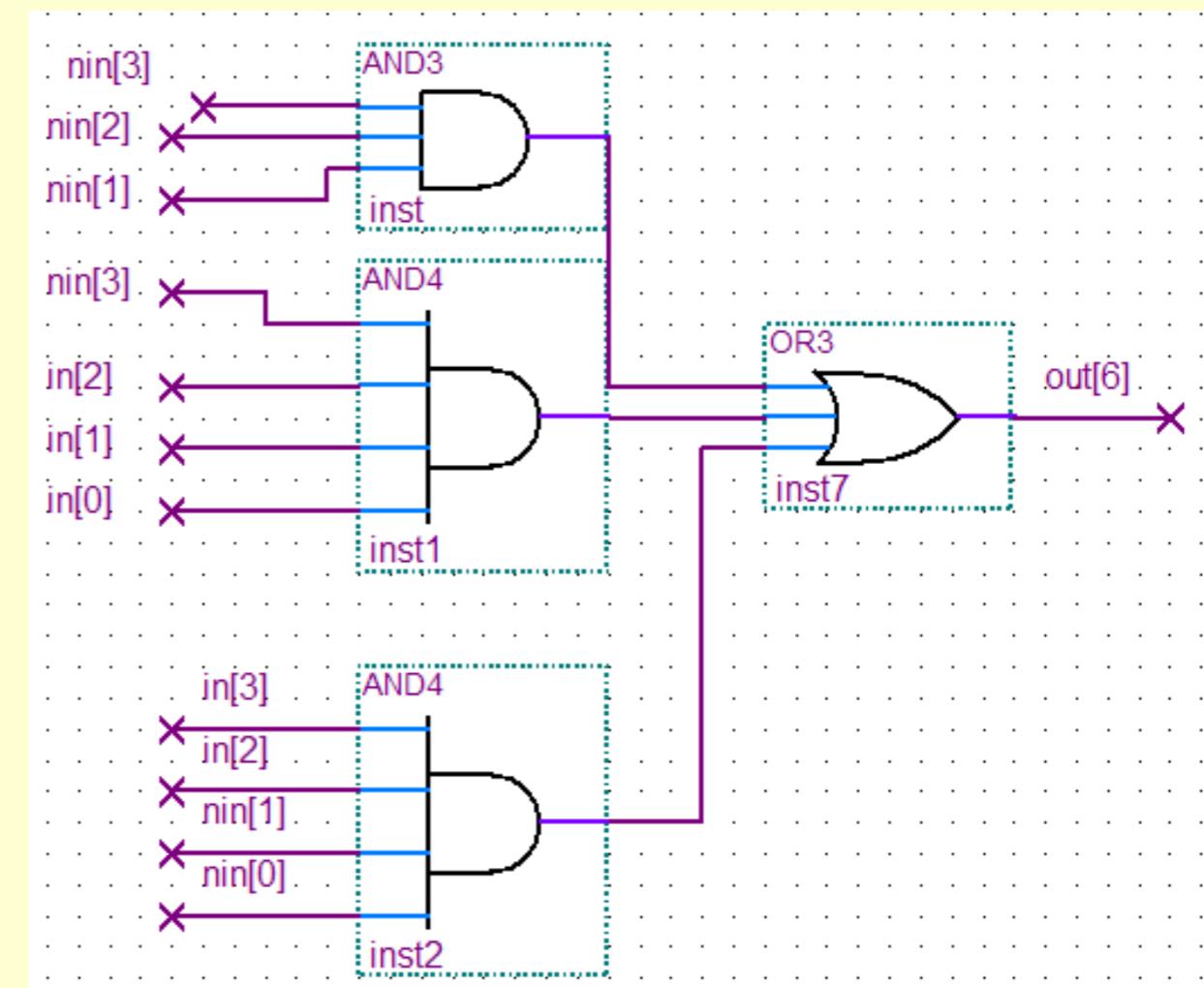
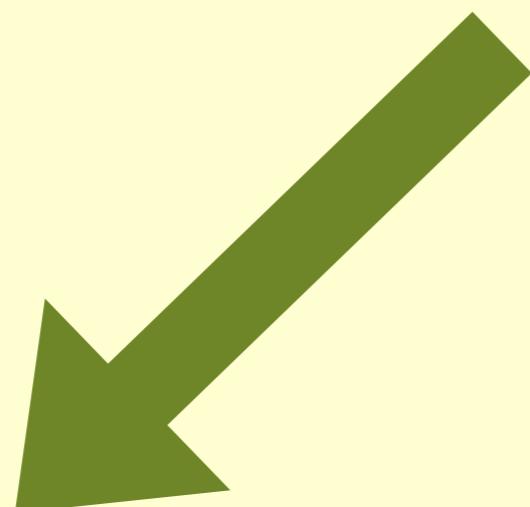
First attempt

- Draw a schematic:



Second attempt

- Gate-level description:

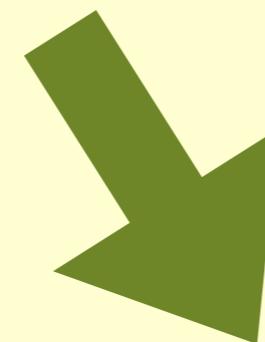


```
and AND1 (A, nin[3], nin[2], nin[1]);  
and AND2 (B, nin[3], in[2], in[1], in[0]);  
and AND3 (C, in[3], in[2], nin[1], nin[0]);  
or OR1 (out[6], A, B, C);
```

Third attempt

- Use continuous assignment:

```
and AND1 (A, nin[3], nin[2], nin[1]);  
and AND2 (B, nin[3], in[2], in[1], in[0]);  
and AND3 (C, in[3], in[2], nin[1], nin[0]);  
or OR1 (out[6], A, B, C);
```



```
assign out[6] = ~in[3]&~in[2]&~in[1] |  
            in[3]&in[2]&~in[1]&~in[0] |  
            ~in[3]&in[2]&in[1]&in[0];
```

```
//-----
// Module name: hex_to_7seg
// Function: convert 4-bit hex value to drive 7 segment display
//           output is low active
// Creator: Peter Cheung
// Version: 1.0
// Date:    22 Oct 2011
//-----

module hex_to_7seg  (out,in);

    output [6:0]    out;      // low-active output to drive 7 segment display
    input  [3:0]    in;       // 4-bit binary input of a hexadematical number

    assign out[6] = ~in[3]&~in[2]&~in[1] | in[3]&in[2]&~in[1]&~in[0] |
                  ~in[3]&in[2]&in[1]&in[0];
    assign out[5] = ~in[3]&~in[2]&in[0] | ~in[3]&~in[2]&in[1] |
                  ~in[3]&in[1]&in[0] | in[3]&in[2]&~in[1]&in[0];
    assign out[4] = ~in[3]&in[0] | ~in[3]&in[2]&~in[1] | in[3]&~in[2]&~in[1]&in[0];
    assign out[3] = ~in[3]&in[2]&~in[1]&~in[0] | ~in[3]&~in[2]&~in[1]&in[0] |
                  in[2]&in[1]&in[0] | ~in[2]&in[1]&~in[0];
    assign out[2] = ~in[3]&~in[2]&in[1]&~in[0] | in[3]&in[2]&~in[0] |
                  in[3]&in[2]&in[1];
    assign out[1] = in[3]&in[2]&~in[0] | ~in[3]&in[2]&~in[1]&in[0] |
                  in[3]&in[1]&in[0] | in[2]&in[1]&~in[0];
    assign out[0] = ~in[3]&~in[2]&~in[1]&in[0] | ~in[3]&in[2]&~in[1]&~in[0] |
                  in[3]&in[2]&~in[1]&in[0] | in[3]&~in[2]&in[1]&in[0];

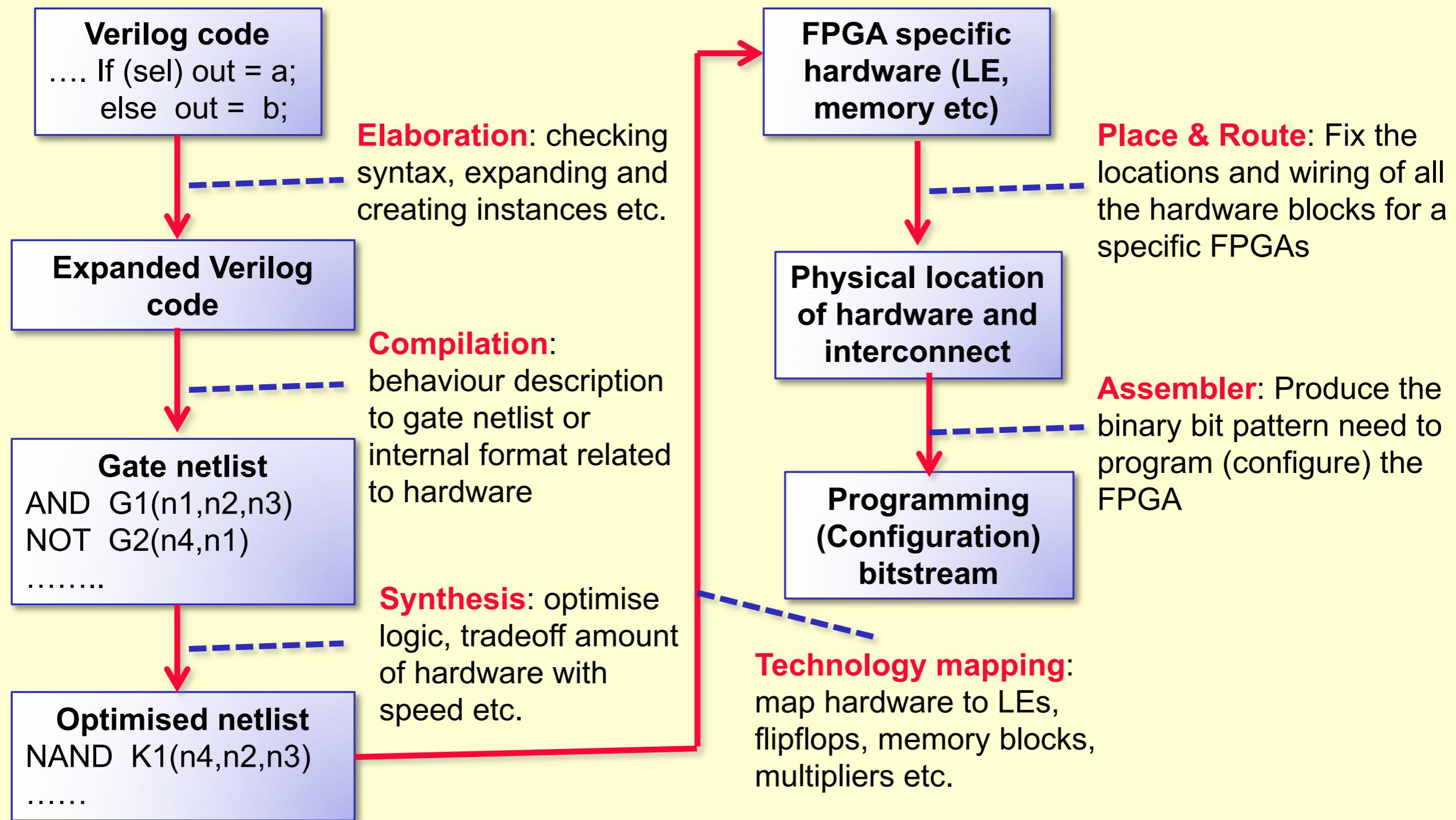
endmodule
```

Fourth attempt

```
module hex_to_7seg (out,in);  
  
    output [6:0] out; // low-active output to  
    input  [3:0] in; // 4-bit binary input o  
  
    reg      [6:0] out; // make out a variable  
  
    always @ (in)  
        case (in)  
            4'h0: out = 7'b1000000;  
            4'h1: out = 7'b1111001; // -- 0 ---  
            4'h2: out = 7'b0100100; // | |  
            4'h3: out = 7'b0110000; // 5 1  
            4'h4: out = 7'b0011001; // | |  
            4'h5: out = 7'b0010010; // -- 6 ---  
            4'h6: out = 7'b0000010; // | |  
            4'h7: out = 7'b1111000; // 4 2  
            4'h8: out = 7'b0000000; // | |  
            4'h9: out = 7'b0011000; // -- 3 ---  
            4'ha: out = 7'b0001000;  
            4'hb: out = 7'b0000011;  
            4'hc: out = 7'b1000110;  
            4'hd: out = 7'b0100001;  
            4'he: out = 7'b0000110;  
            4'hf: out = 7'b0001110;  
        endcase  
    endmodule
```

in[3..0]	out[6:0]	Digit
0000	1000000	0
0001	1111001	1
0010	0100100	2
0011	0110000	3
0100	0011001	4
0101	0010010	5
0110	0000010	6
0111	1111000	7
1000	0000000	8
1001	0010000	9
1010	0001000	A
1011	0000011	b
1100	1000110	C
1101	0100001	d
1110	0000110	E
1111	0001110	F

From Verilog to Hardware



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