

# Datapath Synthesis for Overclocking: Online Arithmetic for Latency-Accuracy Trade-offs

Authors

## ABSTRACT

Digital circuits are currently designed to ensure timing closure. Releasing this constraint by allowing timing violations could lead to significant performance improvements, but conventional forms of computer arithmetic do not fail gracefully when pushed beyond deterministic operation. In this paper we take a fresh look at Online Arithmetic, originally proposed for digit serial operation, and synthesize unrolled digit parallel online operators to allow for graceful degradation. We quantify the impact of timing violation on key arithmetic primitives, and show that substantial performance benefits can be obtained in comparison to binary arithmetic. Since timing errors are caused by long carry chains, these result in errors in least significant digits with online arithmetic, causing less impact than conventional implementations. Using analytical models and empirical FPGA results from an image processing application, we demonstrate an error reduction over 89% and an improvement in SNR of over 20dB for the same clock rate.

## Categories and Subject Descriptors

B.2.4 [Arithmetic and Logic Structures]: High-Speed Arithmetic—*Algorithms, Cost/performance*

## General Terms

Design, Performance, Reliability

## Keywords

Online Arithmetic, Overclocking, Imprecise Design, Approximate Computing

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Circuit performance has increased tremendously over the past decades with the continuous scaling of CMOS technology. Typically hardware designers tend to employ conservative safety margins for timing closure. However, continuing with this approach could become very costly in the short term future. This is because the highly scaled CMOS devices would inevitably exhibit probabilistic behavior, mean-

ing that we can no longer expect a uniform circuit performance. Covering all possible worst cases would become increasingly difficult, expensive and result in large yield loss due to the variation.

While standard approaches such as heavily pipelining the datapath can be used to boost the frequency, the overall latency will not tend to be reduced. As a result, this method will not be applicable to many embedded applications, which normally have strict latency requirements, or in any datapath containing feedback, where C-slow retiming is inappropriate. Besides, the conservative timing margin will not be removed by these approaches. To tackle this problem, a large volume of current studies has demonstrated that relaxing the absolute accuracy requirement can provide the freedom to create designs with better performance or energy efficiency [1, 7, 9, 10].

However, we notice that research in this area focuses on standard binary arithmetic, which potentially suffers from large magnitude of timing errors. This is because in standard arithmetic operators such as ripple-carry adders, the most significant digit (MSD) is updated last due to carry propagation, so timing violation initially affects the MSD. In this paper, for the first time we attempt to solve this problem by adopting an alternative form of MSD-first arithmetic known as online arithmetic. We evaluate the probabilistic behavior of basic arithmetic primitives with different types of arithmetic when operating beyond the deterministic clocking region. We suggest that in comparison to conventional arithmetic, operators with employing this arithmetic are less sensitive to overclocking, because timing errors only affect the least significant digits. To support this hypothesis, we propose probabilistic models of errors generated in this process for the online multiplier. We back up the models with experimental results on an image processing application. We demonstrate that our novel design methodology can lead to substantial performance benefits compared to the design method using conventional arithmetic. The contributions of this paper are:

- to our knowledge, the first “overclocking friendly” computer arithmetic,
- probabilistic models of overclocking errors for a digit-parallel online multiplier,
- analytical and empirical results which demonstrate that the impact of timing violations is ameliorated with online arithmetic and that large performance benefits can be achieved.

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Online Arithmetic

In conventional arithmetic, the computation results are generated either from the least significant digit (LSD), e.g. addition and multiplication, or the MSD, e.g. division and square root. This inconsistency in computing directions can result in large latency when propagating data among different operations. To tackle this problem, online arithmetic has been proposed and studied over the past few decades [4, 13, 11]. Both the inputs and outputs are processed in a MSD-first manner using online arithmetic, enabling parallelism among multiple operations. Therefore the overall latency can be greatly reduced.

Originally online arithmetic was designed for digit-serial operation. In order to generate the first output digit,  $\delta$  digits of inputs are required, as illustrated in Figure 1.  $\delta$  is known as the online delay, which is a constant, independent of the precision in a given operation. For ease of discussion, the input to our circuit is normalized to a fixed point number in the range  $(-1, 1)$ . Based on this premise, the online representations of the operands and the results are given by (1) [5] for  $j \in [-\delta, N - 1]$  and  $r$  denotes the radix.

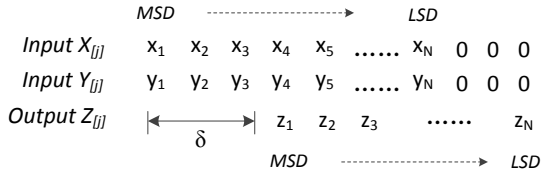


Figure 1: Dataflow in Online Arithmetic.

$$X[j] = \sum_{i=1}^{j+\delta} x_i r^{-i}, \quad Y[j] = \sum_{i=1}^{j+\delta} y_i r^{-i}, \quad Z[j] = \sum_{i=1}^j z_i r^{-i} \quad (1)$$

The MSD-first operation in the online arithmetic is accomplished by utilizing a redundant number system [2], in which each digit is represented with a redundant digit set  $\{-a, \dots, -1, 0, 1, \dots, a\}$ , where  $a \in [r/2, r - 1]$ . Due to the redundancy, the MSDs of the result can be estimated only based on partial information of the inputs and then the value of the number can be revised by the following digits.

### 2.2 Radix-2 Digit-parallel Online Adder

Adders serve as a critical building block for arithmetic operations. To perform digit-parallel online addition, a redundant adder can be directly utilized. The adder structure diagram is shown in Figure 2. A major advantage with the redundant number system over the standard ripple-carry based arithmetic is that the propagation of carry is eliminated, resulting in a precision-independent computation time for addition. As seen in Figure 2, the computation delay of this adder is only 2 full adder (FA) delays for any operand word-length, with the cost of one extra FA for each digit of operands. Therefore it is unlikely that timing violations happen on the online adder. For this reason, this adder structure has been widely used as a part of other arithmetic operators such as multipliers to accelerate the sum of partial products [8, 12].

### 2.3 Radix-2 Digit-parallel Online Multiplier

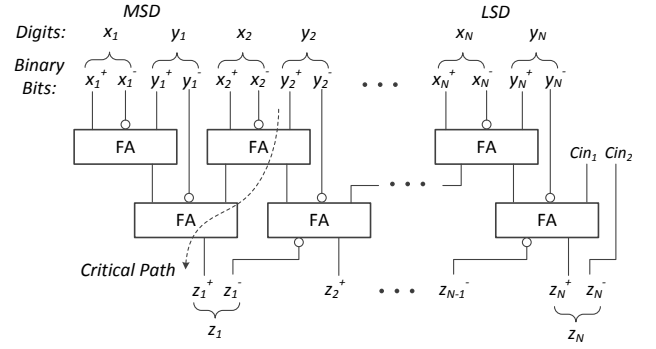


Figure 2: An  $N$ -digit radix-2 online adder.

#### Algorithm 1 Online Multiplication

**Initialization:**  $X[-\delta] = Y[-\delta] = P[-\delta] = 0$

**Recurrence:** for  $j = -\delta, -\delta + 1, \dots, N - 1$  do

$$\begin{aligned} H[j] &= r^{-\delta} (x_{j+\delta+1} \cdot Y[j+1] + y_{j+\delta+1} \cdot X[j]) \\ W[j] &= P[j] + H[j] \\ z_j &= \text{sel}(W[j]) \\ P[j+1] &= r(W[j] - z_j) \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

Multiplication is another key primitive of arithmetic operations. Typically the online multiplication is performed in a recursive manner, as illustrated in Algorithm 1 where both inputs and outputs are  $N$ -digit number as represented in (1) [5, 14]. For a given iteration  $j$ , the product digit  $z_j$  is generated through a selection function  $\text{sel}()$ . In order to ensure the convergence of the algorithm, appropriate selection method and the value of  $\delta$  should be determined on the basis of radix  $r$  and the digit set. As radix-2 is used most commonly in computer arithmetic, we keep  $r = 2$  throughout this paper with the corresponding redundant digit set  $\{\bar{1}, 0, 1\}$ . In this case we have  $\delta = 3$ , and  $\text{sel}()$  is given by (3) [6]. It can be seen that the decision is made only based on 1 integer bit and 1 fractional bit of  $W[j]$ .

$$\text{sel}(W[j]) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } W[j] \geq \frac{1}{2} \\ 0 & \text{if } -\frac{1}{2} \leq W[j] < \frac{1}{2} \\ \bar{1} & \text{if } W[j] < -\frac{1}{2} \end{cases} \quad (3)$$

Algorithm 1 can be synthesized into a unrolled digit parallel structure as shown in Figure 3(a). In an  $N$ -digit OM, there are totally  $N + \delta$  stages, of which the online inputs are generated from the appending logic according to (1). For each stage, an online adder is used as shown in Figure 3(b). The SDVM module performs the signed-digit vector multiplication. When  $r = 2$  and the digit set  $\{\bar{1}, 0, 1\}$  is used, the implementation of SDVM is straight forward, because for instance the output of  $(y_{j+\delta+1} \cdot X[j])$  is 0,  $X[j]$  or  $-X[j]$  when  $y$  is equal to 0, 1 and  $-1$  respectively.

Instead of duplicating the digit-serial implementation  $N + \delta$  times, each stage in the digit-parallel architecture can be optimized for area reduction. For instance, the SDVM modules and the appending logic are not required in the last  $\delta$  stages because the inputs are 0. This leads to a smaller online adder in these stages. Similarly for the first  $\delta$  stages the selection logic can be removed, as the first digit of the result is generated at  $S_0$ .

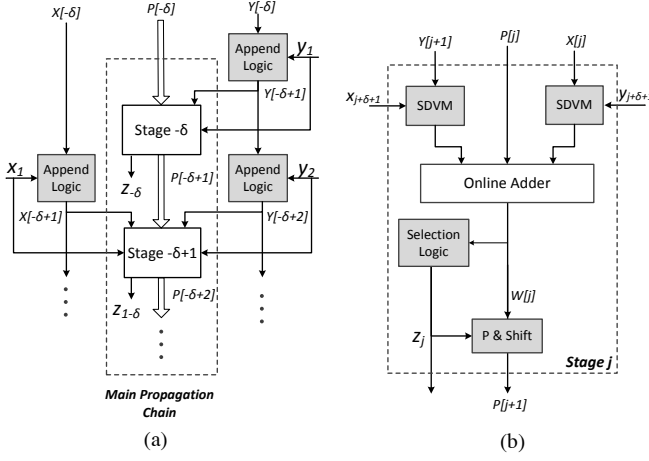


Figure 3: (a) Synthesis of Algorithm 1 into a digit-parallel online multiplier (b) Structure of one stage.

### 3. PROBABILISTIC MODEL OF OVERCLOCKING ERROR

As it is unlikely that timing violation happens in the online adder, in this section we model the overclocking error in the radix-2 online multiplier (OM). From Figure 3 we observe two types of delay chains. One is caused by generation and propagation of  $P_{[j]}$  among different stages. The other is the generation of online inputs from the appending logic. Since the appending logic is basically wires and simple combinational logic [3], the overall latency will eventually be determined by the delay of the first type, especially with increasing operand word-lengths. As such, we initially model the delay of each stage within an online multiplier to be a constant value  $\mu$ . We also assume that the generation of online inputs costs no delay.

Let  $\mu_{OM}$  denote the worst-case delay of an OM. It follows that if the clock period  $T_S$  is greater than  $\mu_{OM}$ , correct results will be sampled. If, however, faster-than-rated sampling frequencies are applied such that  $T_S < \mu_{OM}$ , timing violations might happen and intermediate results will be sampled, potentially generating errors. For a given  $T_S$ , the maximum length of error-free propagation is described by (4) where  $f_S$  denotes the sampling frequency. To avoid too large frequencies, we always ensure that the first digit of the result will be generated correctly, i.e.  $b > \delta$ .

$$b := \left\lceil \frac{T_S}{\mu} \right\rceil = \left\lceil \frac{1}{\mu \cdot f_S} \right\rceil \quad (4)$$

We then model the errors assuming that every digit of each input to our circuit is uniformly and independently generated with the digit set  $\{\bar{1}, 0, 1\}$ . This assumption will be relaxed in Section 4 where real image data are used.

#### 3.1 Probability of Timing Violations

For an  $N$ -digit OM, let a propagation chain be generated at  $S_\tau$  with the length of  $d(\tau)$  digits, then  $\tau$  is bounded by (5). The presence of timing violation requires  $d(\tau) > b$ . Besides, the chain cannot propagate over stage  $N-1$ . Therefore parameter the bound of  $d(\tau)$  is given by (6).

$$-\delta \leq \tau \leq N - 1 - b = \tau_{max} \quad (5)$$

$$b < d(\tau) \leq N - 1 - \tau \quad (6)$$

However, the actual length of a propagation chain is dependent upon input patterns. Let  $C(\tau)$  represent the specific input pattern of  $S_\tau$ , then generally there are four types of inputs as listed in (7). Under the assumption that all digits of input signal are mutually independent, the probability of  $C_1 \sim C_4$  equal to  $1/9, 4/9, 2/9$  and  $2/9$  respectively.

$$C(\tau) = \begin{cases} \text{Case 1 } (C_1): & x_{\tau+\delta+1} = 0, y_{\tau+\delta+1} = 0 \\ \text{Case 2 } (C_2): & x_{\tau+\delta+1} \neq 0, y_{\tau+\delta+1} \neq 0 \\ \text{Case 3 } (C_3): & x_{\tau+\delta+1} \neq 0, y_{\tau+\delta+1} = 0 \\ \text{Case 4 } (C_4): & x_{\tau+\delta+1} = 0, y_{\tau+\delta+1} \neq 0 \end{cases} \quad (7)$$

If all internal signals are reset to 0 initially, then (2) can be modified to give (8) for  $\tau > -\delta$ . Consequently no propagation chain will be generated at  $S_\tau$  if  $C(\tau) = C_1$ .

$$\begin{aligned} P_{[\tau+1]} &= r \cdot W_{[\tau]} \\ &= r^{-\delta+1} (x_{\tau+\delta+1} Y_{[\tau+1]} + y_{\tau+\delta+1} X_{[\tau]}) \end{aligned} \quad (8)$$

In other cases, a new propagation chain will be generated at  $S_\tau$ . If, for example, the word-length of  $P_{[\tau+1]}$  is  $D$  digits. That is,  $P_{[\tau+1]}$  changes  $D$  digits for chain generation. From (2) we notice that  $D = D - 1$  when  $P_{[\tau+1]}$  propagates to the next stage, because of the 1-digit shifting when computing  $P_{[\tau+1]} = r(W_{[\tau]} - z_\tau)$ , and this process is irrelevant to the inputs. Finally this chain is annihilated when  $D = 1$ . Hence the actual chain length corresponds to the word-length of  $P_{[\tau+1]}$ , of which the value we consider separately for different values of  $C(\tau)$ .

According to (1) the word-lengths of  $X_{[\tau]}$  and  $Y_{[\tau+1]}$  are  $(\tau + \delta + 1)$  digits  $(\tau + \delta + 2)$  digits, respectively. If  $C(\tau) = C_2$ ,  $P_{[\tau+1]}$  embodies the maximum word-length, i.e.  $D = \tau + \delta + 1 + \delta$  from (8). Combining  $D$  and (6) gives the longest chain length in (9).

$$d(\tau)_{max} = \text{Min}(D, N - 1 - \tau) \quad (9)$$

Since  $C_3$  and  $C_4$  are statistically identical, we only discuss the situation that  $C(\tau) = C_3$ . In this case the word-length of  $P_{[\tau+1]}$  only depends on that of  $Y_{[\tau+1]}$ . Besides, we have  $Y_{[\tau+1]} = Y_{[\tau]}$  because the appending digit  $y_{\tau+\delta+1} = 0$ . It means  $d(\tau)$  becomes dependent of the inputs of previous stage  $S_{\tau-1}$ . There are 2 possible situations for  $\tau > -\delta$  as stated below:

- For the previous stage if  $y_{\tau+\delta} \neq 0$ , then the word-length of  $Y_{[\tau]}$  is maximized. Thus  $d(\tau) = d(\tau)_{max} - 1$ .
- If  $y_{\tau+\delta} = 0$ , then  $Y_{[\tau]} = Y_{[\tau-1]}$ . This is a recursive process and these two judgements will be performed again for  $\tau = \tau - 1$ . It terminates when  $\tau = -\delta$  or the first judgement is satisfied.

For the first stage where  $\tau = -\delta$ , (8) can be modified further yielding  $P_{[-\delta+1]} = r^{\delta+1} (x_1 Y_{[-\delta+1]})$ . Therefore the value in (9) can only be achieved when  $C(-\delta) = C_1$ , otherwise  $d(-\delta) = 0$ .

In summary, we derive Algorithm 2 to go through all possible stages that timing violations may occur and the corresponding inputs. This algorithm returns  $\text{Prob}(T_S)$ , which denotes the probability that timing violations happen in an  $N$ -digit online multiplier under a given  $T_S$ .  $\text{Prob}(i, C(i))$  denotes the probability of the input pattern for stage  $i$ .

**Algorithm 2** Probability of Timing Violations

---

```

1:  $Prob(T_S) = 0$ 
2: for all stages  $\tau \in \{-\delta, -\delta+1, \dots, \tau_{upp}\}$  and input cases  $C(\tau) \in \{C_1, \dots, C_4\}$  do
3:   Determine  $d(\tau)$  based on  $C(\tau)$ 
4:   if  $d(\tau) > b$  then
5:      $Prob(T_S) = Prob(T_S) + \prod_{i=-\delta}^{\tau} Prob(i, C(i))$ 
6:   end if
7: end for
8: return  $Prob(T_S)$ 

```

---

### 3.2 Magnitude of Overclocking Error

In the presence of timing violation, multiple chains might not be correctly propagated. Let us consider the first chain that timing violation may occur, i.e.  $d(\tau)_{max} > b$ , denote that it annihilates at  $S_\lambda$  where  $\lambda = \tau + d_{max}(\tau) - 1$ . Therefore overclocking errors may happen from digit  $\lambda$  to digit  $N - 1$  of the result. In general, the magnitude of overclocking error is given by (10), where  $z_i$  and  $z_i'$  denote the correct value and the actual value of the output digit of  $S_i$ , separately, and  $\varepsilon_i \in \{\pm 2, \pm 1\}$ .

$$|\varepsilon| = \left| \sum_{i=\lambda}^{N-1} 2^{-i-1} (z_i - z_i') \right| = \left| \sum_{i=\lambda}^{N-1} \varepsilon_i \right| \quad (10)$$

However, the change of output digits may not result in a different number with online arithmetic, because the number is represented in a redundant form. For instance, the two's complement number 0.111 can be represented in the online form as 0.10 $\bar{1}$ , 0.1 $\bar{1}$ 1 and 0.111. In contrast, errors will always be generated in this case with conventional arithmetic.

### 3.3 Expectation of Overclocking Error

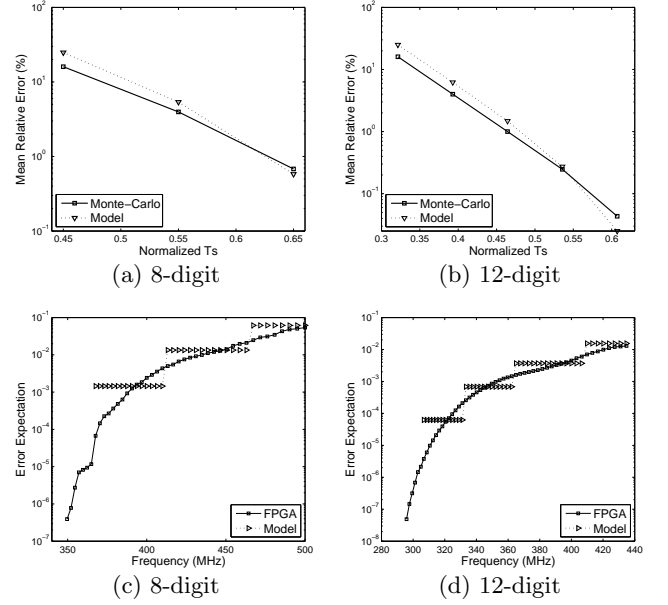
For a given  $T_S$ , the combination of  $Prob(T_S)$  and  $E(|\varepsilon|)$  in Algorithm 2 and (10) yields the overall expectation of overclocking error, as presented in (11). The verification of the proposed model is illustrated in the top row of Figure 4 against the results from Monte-Carlo simulations based on the aforementioned timing model.  $T_S$  is normalized with respect to the value from structural timing analysis, i.e.  $(N + \delta)\mu$ . Note that both results are obtained when assuming the input data are randomly generated following uniform distribution. It can be seen that the modeled value match well with the simulation results. We also verify the models against the FPGA results without timing assumptions, as illustrated in the bottom row in Figure 4. We see that our model does not capture the small errors, because the other sources of delay are not modeled.

$$E_{ovc} = Prob(T_S) \cdot |\varepsilon| \quad (11)$$

For all possible  $\tau$  as bounded by (5), the probability of different chain lengths within an  $N$ -digit OM and the corresponding magnitude of overclocking error can be obtained, as shown in Figure 5 with  $N = 8, 12, 16, 32$ , respectively. For a given  $T_S$ , the overall expectation of overclocking error in (11) can also be computed by (12).

$$E_{ovc} = \sum_{d>b} P_d \cdot \varepsilon_d \quad (12)$$

From Figure 5 several observations can be made. First, the error magnitude decreases exponentially with longer chain



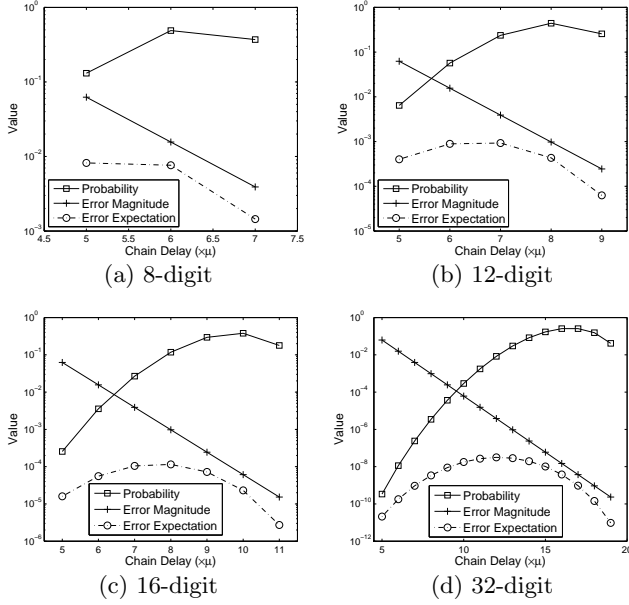
**Figure 4: Expectation of overclocking error for on-line multipliers: verification of the proposed model against Monte-Carlo simulations with timing assumptions (top row) and FPGA results with real timing information (bottom row).**

lengths, because in contrast to the conventional arithmetic, timing violation firstly affects LSDs with online arithmetic. Second, chains with longer delay would happen with greater probabilities in an OM, because the delay is mainly dependent upon the inputs that generate the chain, while the chain propagation and annihilation will not be affected by the inputs. For the traditional ripple-carry-based arithmetic, specific input patterns are required to decide carry generation, propagation and annihilation. In addition, carry chains could not be overlapped with traditional arithmetic, whereas long chains might occur simultaneously and mutually overlapped within the OM. However, we also notice that for chains with long delays, the increasing speed of probability is much slower than the decreasing speed of error magnitude with long chain delays. Therefore the combination of both would result in a decline in error expectation. In traditional arithmetic, the decrease of probability is offset by the growth of error magnitude, as both of them vary exponentially. Hence the error expectation with respect to each chain delay keeps almost constant. This finding indicates that the OM is less sensitive to overclocking error than the multiplier using traditional arithmetic, especially when timing violations initially appear.

## 4. CASE STUDY: IMAGE FILTER

### 4.1 Experimental Setup

The benefits of the proposed methodology are demonstrated by using a Gaussian image filter with two types of computer arithmetic. One is the radix-2 traditional arithmetic and data are represented in the 2's complemented form. In this case, adders and multipliers are created using Xilinx Core Generator [15] with speed optimization. The other is the radix-2 online arithmetic, of which basic building blocks are



**Figure 5: Probabilities of different chain delay, the corresponding magnitude of overclocking error and the combination of both in terms of error expectation in a radix-2 OM.**

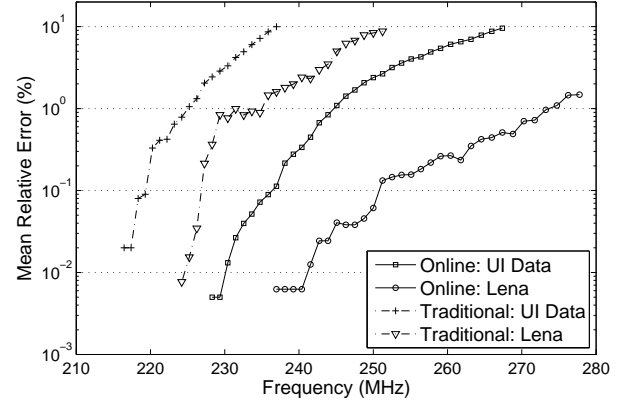
described in previous sections. In this case, all inputs and outputs are represented in the online format. In order to achieve the desired latency between input and output, both designs are overclocked and the errors seen at the output are recorded. The results are obtained from a Xilinx Virtex-6 FPGA through post place-and-route simulations. In our experiments, the results are evaluated in terms of mean relative error (MRE), which represents the percentage of error at outputs, as given by (13) where  $E_{error}$  and  $E_{out}$  refer to the mean value of error and correct output, respectively.

$$MRE = \left| \frac{E_{error}}{E_{out}} \right| \times 100\% \quad (13)$$

In our experiments, two types of input data are utilized. One is randomly sampled from a uniform distribution of  $N$ -digit numbers. This type is referred to as “Uniform Independent (UI) inputs”. The other is called “real inputs”, which are the pixel values of several benchmark images.

## 4.2 Impact of Overclocking on Different Arithmetic

The values of overclocking error of the image filter based on traditional arithmetic (dotted lines) and online arithmetic (solid lines) when  $N = 8$  are illustrated in Figure 6. According to the timing analysis tool, the rated operating frequencies of the two designs are 168.7MHz and 148.3MHz, respectively. However as seen in Figure 6, for both input types the online image filter actually operates at a higher frequency without timing violations in comparison to the design using traditional arithmetic. In addition, this error-free frequency is even larger when using the real image data as inputs, since the real data do not exactly follow the uniform distribution or the independent assumption. In Figure 6 the “Lena” benchmark image is used as the real inputs.



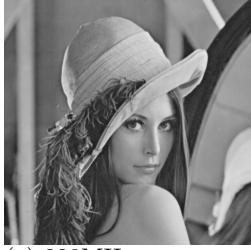
**Figure 6: Overclocking error in an image filter with two types of computer arithmetic: online arithmetic and standard binary arithmetic, of which the rated frequencies are 148.3MHz and 168.7MHz, respectively, according to the timing analysis tool.**

If errors can be tolerated, we may allow timing violations to happen for better performance. The sensitivity of overclocking error for a given arithmetic can be evaluated by the data slope in Figure 6. For instance under an error budget of 1%  $MRE$ , using the UI inputs the frequency of the traditional design can be improved by 3.89% with respect to the maximum frequency without errors, whereas the design with online arithmetic can be overclocked by 6.85%. This finding indicates that online arithmetic is less sensitive to overclocking error, as illustrated in Section 3.3. The difference is even greater using real image data: 13.74% frequency speedup using online arithmetic against 4.04% with traditional arithmetic, because fewer long chains are generated with real inputs.

The output images for both design scenarios are presented in Figure 7. The left column illustrates the output image from the online image filter. Since the overclocking errors are in the LSDs of the results, the degradation on the image can be hardly observed. In contrast, timing violations cause error in the MSDs when using traditional arithmetic. This leads to “salt and pepper noise”, as seen on the images in the right column of Figure 7. Meanwhile, errors in the MSDs would result in large noise power and therefore the signal-to-noise ratio (SNR) for the traditional design is small.

## 4.3 Potential Benefits in Circuit Design

In general, our results could be of interest to a circuit designer in two folds. By choosing different arithmetic and data representations, either a circuit can be designed to operate at a certain frequency with the minimum possible MRE, or a given error budget specified by the algorithm designer can be met with the fastest achievable operating frequency. For the first case, the experimental results obtained by UI inputs together with 4 benchmark images are summarized in Table 1 in terms of the relative reduction of MRE as given by (14) where  $MRE_{OL}$  and  $MRE_{Trad}$  denote the value obtained with online arithmetic and with traditional arithmetic, respectively, and in Table 2 for the difference of



(a) 229MHz, no errors



(b) 229MHz, SNR:20.6dB



(c) 242MHz, SNR:38.3dB



(d) 242MHz, SNR:15.6dB



(e) 250MHz, SNR:36.2dB



(f) 250MHz, SNR:8.5dB

**Figure 7: Output images of image filter using online arithmetic (left column) and traditional arithmetic (right column).**

**Table 1: Relative Reduction of MRE with Online Arithmetic for Various Normalized Frequencies.**

Inputs	Normalized Frequency					Geo. Mean
	1.05	1.10	1.15	1.20	1.25	
Uniform	94.5%	89.1%	90.1%	88.3%	84.3%	89.2%
Lena	99.3%	99.2%	98.9%	97.7%	94.9%	97.9%
Pepper	99.7%	98.3%	98.1%	97.2%	95.1%	97.7%
Sailboat	99.5%	97.9%	97.3%	96.8%	95.1%	97.3%
Tiffany	99.9%	97.6%	98.4%	97.8%	97.2%	98.2%

**Table 2: Improvement of SNR (dB) with Online Arithmetic for Various Normalized Frequencies**

Inputs	Normalized Frequency				
	1.05	1.10	1.15	1.20	1.25
Lena	44.6	36.3	33.2	29.1	22.9
Pepper	35.7	28.3	28.7	25.9	24.1
Sailboat	33.7	27.5	26.3	25.0	21.7
Tiffany	43.9	25.9	29.5	25.6	24.5

SNR.

$$\frac{MRE_{Trad} - MRE_{OL}}{MRE_{Trad}} \times 100\% \quad (14)$$

For a fairer comparison, the frequency is normalized to the maximum error-free frequency for each arithmetic. A significant reduction of MRE can be observed using online arithmetic for all input types. The geometric mean reduction varies from 97.3% to 98.2%. In addition, larger differences of MRE reduction can be achieved in practice. This is because long chains occur with even smaller probabilities with real data. Similarly from Table 2, the differences in SNR vary from 21.4dB to 43.9dB.

For the second design perspective, Table 3 illustrates the frequency speedups with different input types when specific error budgets can be tolerated. We see that for all input types using online arithmetic still outperforms the traditional design for each MRE budget in terms of operating frequency. Likewise the geometric mean of frequency speed-ups is larger for real image inputs.

The area comparison between two designs when  $N = 9$  is illustrated in Table 4. The area overhead with online arithmetic is 2.08 in terms of LUTs and 1.62 in terms of Slices in the FPGA.

## 5. REFERENCES

- [1] T. Austin, D. Blaauw, T. Mudge, and K. Flautner. Making typical silicon matter with razor. *IEEE Trans. on Computer*, 37(3):57–65, 2004.
- [2] A. Avizienis. Signed-digit number representations for fast parallel arithmetic. *IRE Trans. on Electronic*

**Table 3: Relative Reduction of MRE with Online Arithmetic for Various Error Budgets.**

Inputs	Error Budget				Geo. Mean
	0.01%	0.1%	1%	10%	
Uniform	N/A	4.59%	8.78%	12.83%	8.03%
Lena	7.96%	11.50%	16.39%	13.71%	11.88%
Pepper	6.22%	8.87%	18.68%	15.94%	11.32%
Sailboat	5.71%	8.87%	16.93%	15.29%	10.70%
Tiffany	2.35%	6.90%	18.58%	12.22%	7.79%

**Table 4: Area Comparison between Two Designs.**

Metric	Arithmetic Type		Overhead
	Traditional	Online	
LUTs	304	632	2.08
Slices	108	175	1.62

*Computers*, EC-10(3):389–400, 1961.

- [3] M. Ercegovac and T. Lang. On-the-fly conversion of redundant into conventional representations. *IEEE Trans. on Computer*, C-36(7):895–897, 1987.
- [4] M. D. Ercegovac. On-line arithmetic: An overview. In *Proc. Annual Technical Symp. Real time signal processing VII*, pages 86–93, 1984.
- [5] M. D. Ercegovac and T. Lang. *Digital arithmetic*. Morgan Kaufmann, 2003.
- [6] R. Galli and A. Tenca. A design methodology for networks of online modules and its application to the levinson-durbin algorithm. *IEEE Trans. on VLSI*, 12(1):52–66, 2004.
- [7] V. Gupta, D. Mohapatra, A. Raghunathan, and K. Roy. Low-power digital signal processing using approximate adders. *IEEE Trans. on Computer-Aided Design of Integrated Circuits and Systems*, 32(1):124–137, 2013.
- [8] Y. Harata, Y. Nakamura, H. Nagase, M. Takigawa, and N. Takagi. A high-speed multiplier using a redundant binary adder tree. *IEEE Jourl. of Solid-State Circuits*, 22(1):28–34, 1987.
- [9] Z. M. Kedem, V. J. Mooney, K. K. Muntimadugu, and K. V. Palem. An approach to energy-error tradeoffs in approximate ripple carry adders. In *Proc. Int. Symp. on Low Power Electronics and Design*, pages 211–216, 2011.
- [10] P. Kulkarni, P. Gupta, and M. Ercegovac. Trading accuracy for power with an underdesigned multiplier architecture. In *Proc. Int. Conf. on VLSI Design*, pages 346–351, 2011.
- [11] S. Rajagopal and J. Cavallaro. Truncated online arithmetic with applications to communication systems. *IEEE Trans. on Computers*, 55(10):1240–1252, 2006.
- [12] N. Takagi, H. Yasuura, and S. Yajima. High-speed vlsi multiplication algorithm with a redundant binary addition tree. *IEEE Trans. on Computers*, 100(9):789–796, 1985.
- [13] K. S. Trivedi and M. Ercegovac. On-line algorithms for division and multiplication. *IEEE Trans. on Computers*, 26:161–167, 1975.
- [14] D. M. Tullsen and M. Ercegovac. Design and VLSI implementation of an on-line algorithm, 1986.
- [15] Xilinx. *Virtex-6 FPGA Configurable Logic Block User Guide*.