



## GTKWave 3.3 Wave Analyzer User's Guide



**User's Guide**  
**GTKWave**

Updated November 2, 2017.

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# Using This Manual

## Printing Conventions

Text printed in the font `courier` reflects messages that will be seen on screen at a command prompt or as program output.

Text printed in **`courier bold`** is to be entered by the user.

Text printed in smaller monospace is help available either as a manual page or as a program help option.

Text printed in *italics* is a pathname in the file system or is the name of an application program.



# Compiling and Installing GTKWave

## Unix and Linux Operating Systems

Compiling GTKWave on Unix or Linux operating systems should be a relatively straightforward process as GTKWave was developed under both Linux and AIX. External software packages required are GTK (<http://www.gtk.org>) with versions 1.3 or 2.x (3.x not yet supported), and *gperf* (for RTLBrowse) which can be downloaded from the GNU website (<http://www.gnu.org>). The compression libraries *libz* (*zlib*) and *libbz2* (*bzip2*) are not required to be installed on a target system as their source code is already included in the GTKWave tarball, however the system ones will be used if located. The PCCTS-1.33 source code (required for compiling *vermin*) is included in the *contrib/* directory. Note that PCCTS-2.0 or later will not work as the grammar file format for v2.0 is incompatible with v1.33.

## Compiling and Installing

Un-tar the source code into any temporary directory then change directory into it. After doing this, invoke the configure script. Note that if you wish to change the install point, use the double dash **--prefix** option to point to the absolute pathname. For example, to install in /usr, type **./configure --prefix=/usr**.

```
1 :/tmp/gtkwave-3.1.3> ./configure
```

Use the **--help** flag to see which options are available. Typically, outside of **--prefix**, no flags are needed.

```
2 :/tmp/gtkwave-3.1.3> make
```

Wait for the compile to finish. This will take some amount of time. Then log on as the superuser.

```
3 :/tmp/gtkwave-3.1.3> su
```

**Password:**

```
[root@localhost gtkwave-3.1.3]# make install
```

Wait for the install to finish. It should proceed relatively quickly. When finished, exit as superuser.

```
[root@localhost gtkwave-3.1.3]# exit  
exit
```

GTKWave is now installed on your Unix or Linux system. To use it, make sure that the *bin/* directory off the install point is in your path. For example, if the install point is */usr/local*, ensure that */usr/local/bin* is in your path. How to do this will vary from shell to shell.

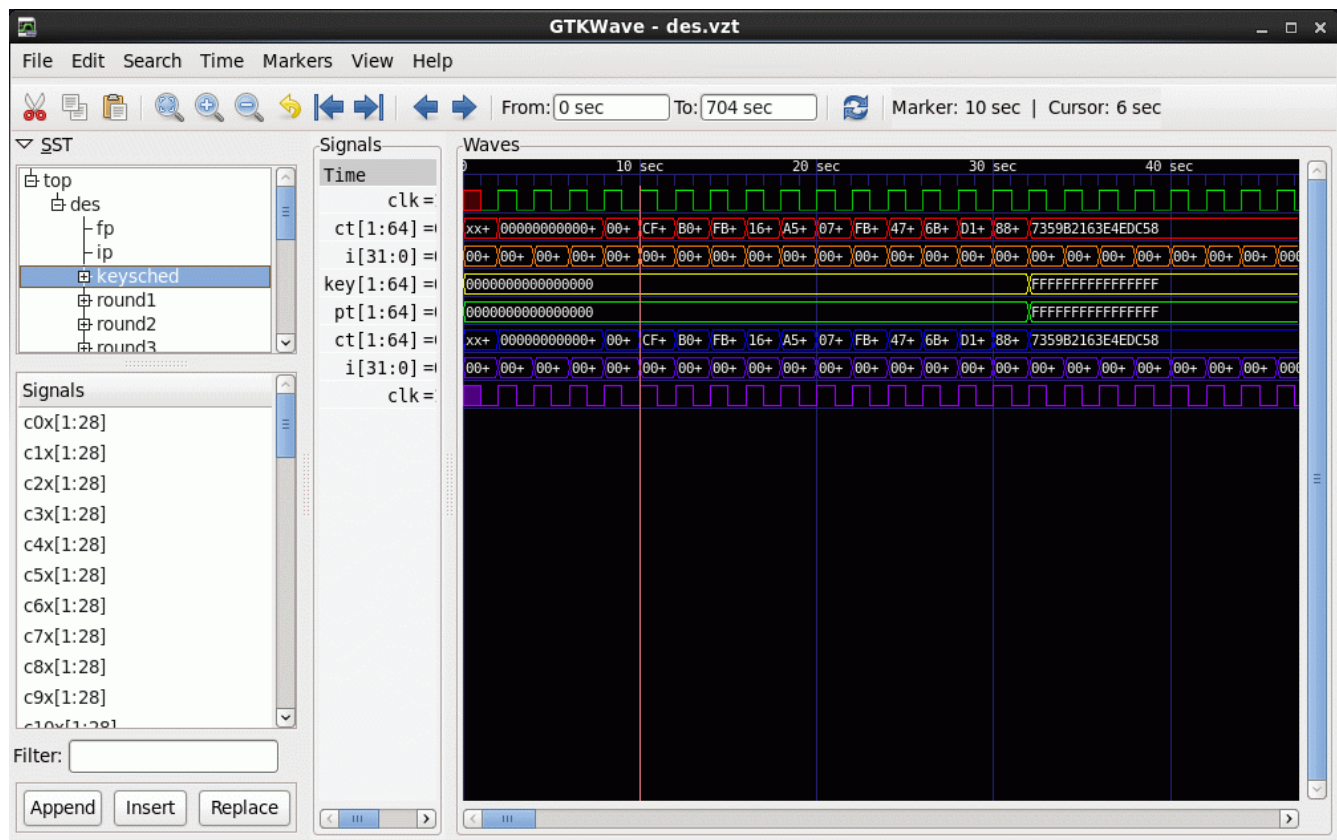


Figure 1: GTKWave running under Linux.

# Microsoft Windows Operating Systems

## Cygwin

The best way to run GTKWave under Windows is to compile it to run under Cygwin. This will provide the same functionality as compared to the Unix/Linux version and better graphical performance than the native binary version. Follow the directions for Unix compiles in the preceding section. Note that launching RTLBrowser requires Cygserver to be enabled. Please see the Cygwin documentation for information on how to enable Cygserver for your version of Cygwin. (<http://www.cygwin.com/cygwin-ug-net/using-cygserver.html>)

## MinGW versus VC++ for Native Binaries

It is recommended that Windows compiles and installs are done in the MinGW environment in order to mimic the Unix shell environment as well as produce binaries that are natively usable on Windows. Producing native binaries with VisualC++ has not been attempted for some time so it is currently untested.

## MinGW with GTK-1.2

If you are missing a working version of *gtk-config*, you will need a fake *gtk-config* file in order to compile under GTK-1.2. It will look like this with the include and linker search directories modified accordingly:

```
#!/bin/sh

if [ "$1" == "--libs" ]
then
    echo -L/home/bybell/libs -lgck -lgdk-1.3 -lgimp-1.2 -lgimpi -lgimpui-1.2
    -lglib-1.3 -lgmodule-1.3 -lgnu-intl -lgobject-1.3 -lgthr
    ead-1.3 -lgtk-1.3 -liconv-1.3 -ljpeg -llibgplugin_a -llibgplugin_b -lpng
    -lpthread32 -ltiff-lzw -ltiff-nolzw -ltiff
fi

if [ "$1" == "--cflags" ]
then
    echo " -mms-bitfields -I/home/bybell/src/glib -I/home/bybell/src/gtk+/gtk
    -I/home/bybell/src/gtk+/gdk -I/home/bybell/src/gtk+ "
fi
```

Compiling as under Unix/Linux is the same.

## MinGW with GTK-2.0

You do not need to do anything special except ensure that *pkg-config* is pointed to by your PATH environment variable. Proceed as with GTK-1.2. Pre-made binaries can be found at the <http://www.dspsia.com/gtkwave.html> website.

# Apple Macintosh Operating Systems

## OSX / Macports

All functionality of the Linux/UNIX version is present in the OSX version when GDK/GTK is compiled for X11. If GDK/GTK is compiled for Quartz (i.e., `/opt/local/etc/macports/variants.conf` has a line of the form `+no_x11 +quartz`) and the package `gtk-osx-application` is also installed, GTKWave will behave more like a Mac application with native menus, an icon on the dock, etc. as shown below.

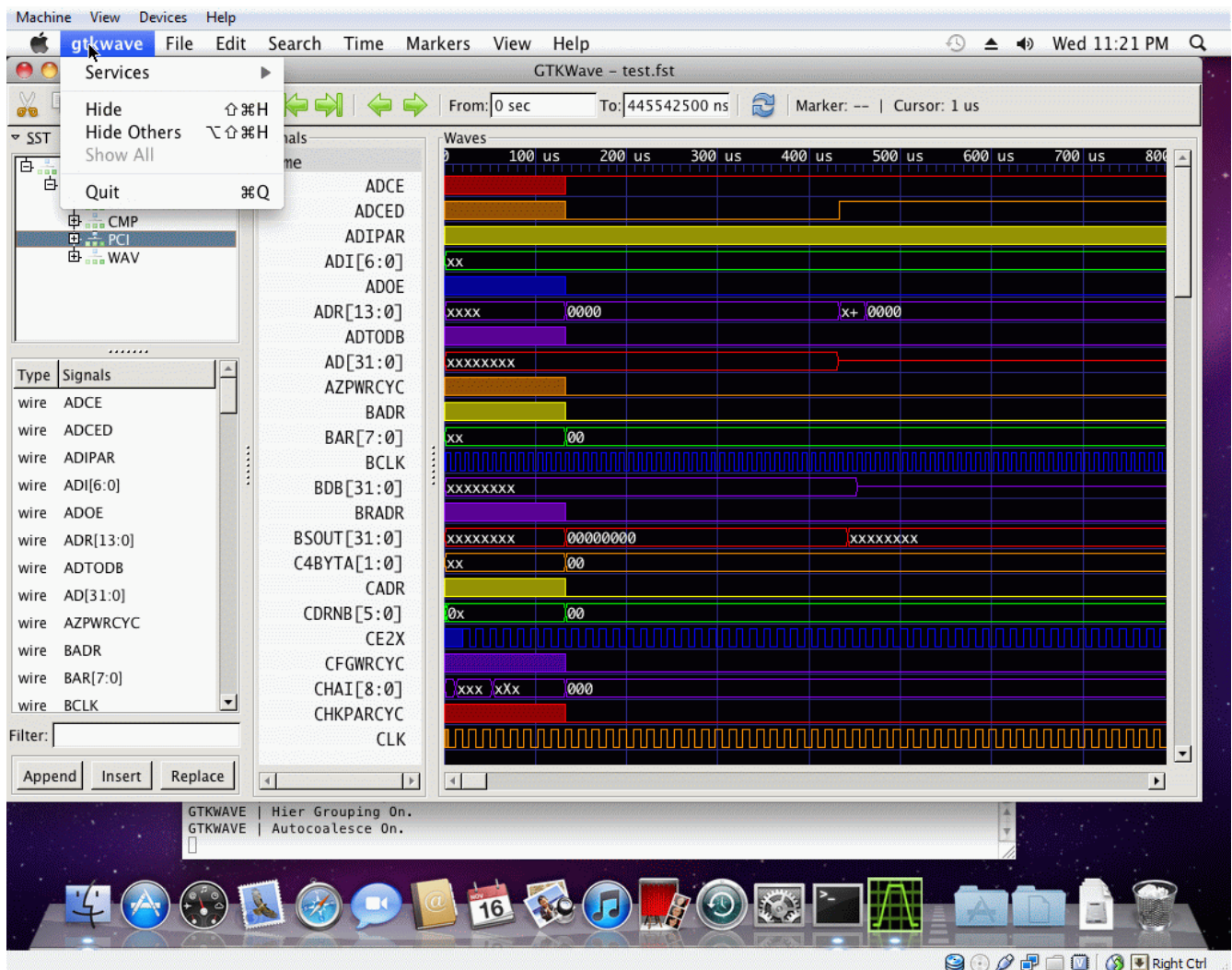


Figure 2: Demonstrating application integration with Mac OSX / Quartz

Note that if running GTKWave on the command line out of a precompiled bundle `gtkwave.app`, it is required that the Perl script `gtkwave.app/Contents/Resources/bin/gtkwave` is invoked to start the program. Please see the `gtkwave(1)` man page for more information.

# Introduction

## GTKWave Overview

GTKWave is an analysis tool used to perform debugging on Verilog or VHDL simulation models. With the exception of interactive VCD viewing, it is not intended to be run interactively with simulation, but instead relies on a post-mortem approach through the use of dumpfiles. Various dumpfile formats are supported:

- VCD: Value Change Dump. This is an industry standard file format generated by most Verilog simulators and is specified in IEEE-1364. This is the slowest of the formats for the viewer to process and requires the most memory, however the format is ubiquitous and almost all tools support it, which is why native support remains. Note that recent versions of the viewer default to dynamic VCD recoding in memory through some interesting tricks with zlib compressed VLists. (See Appendix C: VCD Recoding on page 97.) This greatly reduces the amount of memory required to store a large, full (non-interactive) VCD trace in memory such that in many cases, less memory is required than the actual size of the trace itself. Nevertheless, using one of the database formats will almost always be more efficient for larger traces, especially if they are to be viewed repeatedly. (i.e., the speed hit for converting a trace to a database format is offset by the repeated cost of recoding VCD every time the trace is viewed.) The more physical memory that is available on a machine being used to view VCD, the better.
- LXT: InterLaced eXtensible Trace. This is an optimized format utilizing interleaved back pointers and value changes. Processing LXT files is faster than VCD. It was created specifically for use with GTKWave, however some other simulators (notably, Icarus Verilog) support it natively.
- LXT2: InterLaced eXtensible Trace Version 2. This is a block-based variant of LXT that allows for greater compression and access speeds than can be achieved with LXT. It allows random-access at the block level and also optionally allows partial loading of blocks for even faster operation. Icarus

Verilog also supports LXT2 natively.

- VZT: Verilog Zipped Trace. This is an outgrowth of LXT2 as it is also block based, however it employs a different heuristic for compression that allows for file sizes much smaller than most other dumpfile formats including commercial ones. VZT file write performance is the slowest of all the formats, however reading them can be extremely fast on multiprocessor machines as the file format has been designed such that the reader was able to be parallelized.
- GHW: GHDL Wave file. This is a nine state ("01XZHUWL-") file format written by the VHDL simulator GHDL.
- AET2: All Events Trace Version 2. This is a format used by various IBM EDA tools. File size is very small and access is extremely fast. Support for it is determined at compile time. If the AET2 reader API libraries are not found, it is disabled. Users of IBM tool sets can set the environment variable `SIMARAMA_BASE` to point to the *libae2rw.a* and/or *libae2rw.so* files in order to enable this feature.
- IDX: VCD Recoder Index File. This format is written by GTKWave when instructed to generate fastload files.
- FST: Fast Signal Trace. This format is a block-based variant of IDX which is designed for very fast sequential and random access.
- VPD: VCD Plus Dump. This is generated by Synopsys VCS. In order to read these files, the executable *vpd2vcd* must be in your `$PATH` during *configure* and *gtkwave* must be invoked with the `-o` option.
- WLF: Wave Log File. This is generated by ModelSim. In order to read these files, the executable *wlf2vcd* must be in your `$PATH` during *configure* and *gtkwave* must be invoked with the `-o` option.
- FSDB: Fast Signal Database. Reading these files generally requires that the executables *fsdb2vcd* and *fsdbdebug* are in your `$PATH` during *configure* and *gtkwave* must be invoked with the `-o` option. FSDB files can also be read without conversion with a processing speed similar to FST if the *FsdbReader* libraries *nffr* and *nsys* are found during *configure*, pointed to by the environment variable `FSDBREADER_LIBS`. Headers are pointed to by `FSDBREADER_HDRS`.

Converter helper applications are packaged with the viewer in order to convert VCD files into LXT, LXT2, VZT, or FST files. Conversion from LXT2, VZT, and FST back into VCD is possible. Wholesale conversion from LXT is not currently possible, however it is possible to save the traces visible in the main GTKWave window as VCD so conversion to LXT is not strictly irreversible.

## Why Use GTKWave?



GTKWave has been developed to perform debug tasks on large systems on a chip and has been used in this capacity as an offline replacement for third-party debug tools. It is 64-bit clean and is ready for the largest of designs given that it is run on a workstation with a sufficient amount of physical memory. The file formats LXT2 and VZT have been specifically designed to cope with large, real-world designs, and AET2 (available to IBM EDA tool users only) and FST have been designed to handle extremely large designs efficiently.

For Verilog, GTKWave allows users to debug simulation results at both the net level by providing a bird's eye view of multiple signal values over varying periods of time and also at the RTL level through annotation of signal values back into the RTL for a given timestep. The RTL browser frees up users from needing to be concerned with the actual location of where a given module resides in the RTL as the view provided by the RTL browser defaults to the module level. This provides quick access to modules in the RTL as navigation has been reduced simply to moving up and down in a tree structure that represents the actual design.

Source code annotation is currently not available for VHDL, however all of GTKWave's other debug features are readily accessible. VHDL support is planned for a future release.

## What Is GTKWave?

GTKWave as a collection of binaries is comprised of two interlocking tools: the *gtkwave* viewer application and *rtlbrowse*. In addition, a collection of helper applications are used to facilitate such tasks as file conversions and simulation data mining. They are intended to function together in a cohesive system although their modular design allows each to function independently of the others if need be.

*gtkwave* is the waveform analyzer and is the primary tool used for visualization. It provides a method for viewing simulation results for both analog and digital data, allows for various search operations and temporal manipulations, can save partial results (i.e., “signals of interest”) extracted from a full simulation dump, and finally can generate PostScript and FrameMaker output for hard copy.

*rtlbrowse* is used to view and navigate through RTL source code that has been parsed and processed into a stems file by the helper application *vermin*. It allows for viewing of RTL at both the file and module level and when invoked by *gtkwave*, allows for source code annotation.

The helper applications perform various specialized tasks such as file conversion, RTL parsing, and other data manipulation operations considered outside of the scope of what a visualization tool needs to perform.

# GTKWave User Interface

## GTKWave

### Main Window

The GTKWave visualization tool main window is comprised of a menu bar section, a status window, several groups of buttons, a time status section, and signal and wave value sections. New with GTKWave 3.0 is the inclusion of an embedded Signal Search Tree (SST) expander to the left of the signal section. The viewer typically appears as below when the embedded SST is disabled.

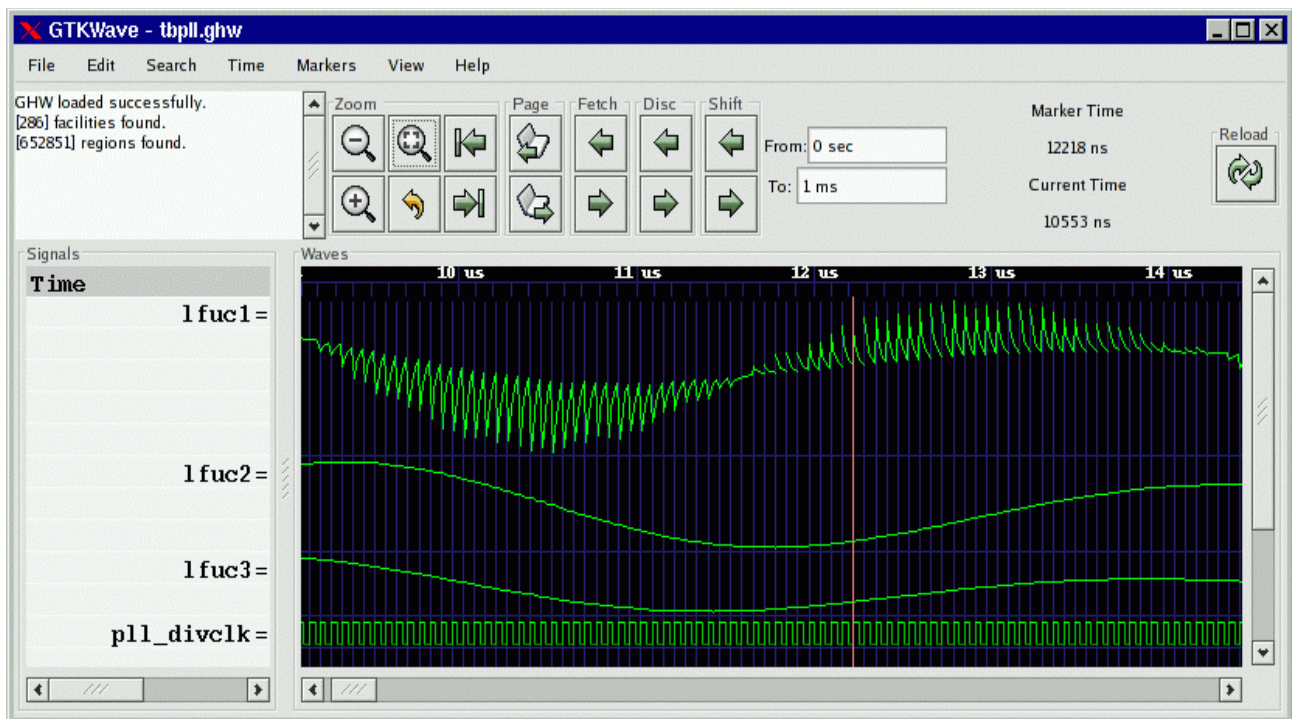


Figure 3: The GTKWave main window

To the extreme left in a frame marked “Signals” is the signal section. Signal names can be left or right aligned (left aligned being useful for detection of hierarchy differences) and the number of levels of hierarchy (as counting from the rightmost side of a signal name) displayed can be set by the user.

To the right of the signal section is the wave section in a frame marked “Waves”. The top line is used as a timescale and all other lines are used to render trace value data with respect the timescale. The vertical blue lines in the trace value data section are not normally present. In this case they are the result of keying on the rising edge of the digital signal “pll\_divclk”. Analog traces of varying heights can be seen as well. Analog traces can dynamically be made as tall or short as desired in order to make the viewing of them easier, however the size is limited to integer multiples of the height of one digital trace.

With GTK versions greater than or equal to 2.4, an embedded SST is available. Drag and Drop of signals from the “Signals” pane inside the SST into the “Signals” pane outside of the SST is a convenient way to import signals into the viewer.

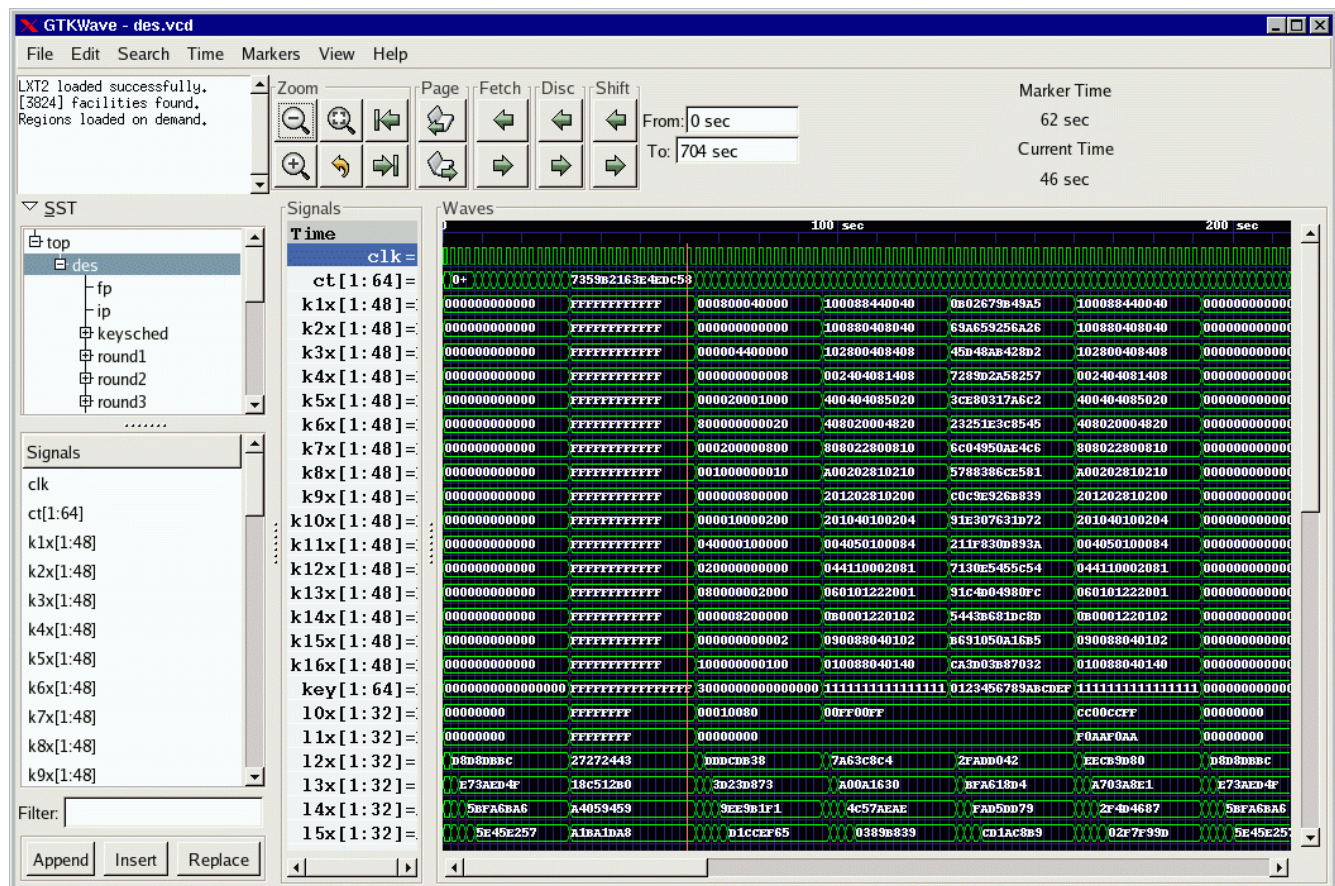


Figure 4: The main window with an embedded SST

The main window size and position can be saved between sessions as well as the current viewer state. (i.e., which signals are visible, any attributes set for those

signals such as alignment and inversion, where the markers are set, and what pattern marking is active.)

Depending on the capabilities of the file format loaded into GTKWave, the SST frame/window may also depict the type of hierarchy being shown. The figures below are representative of FST.

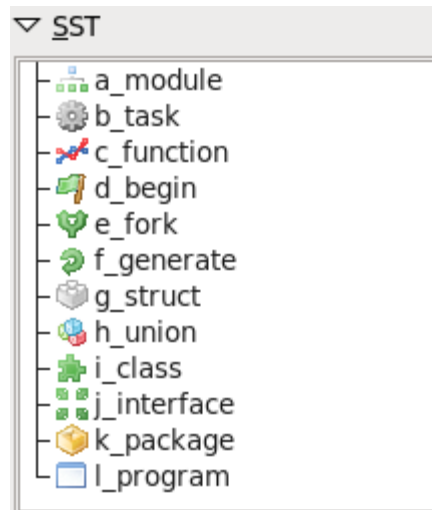


Figure 5: Verilog hierarchy type icons in SST frame

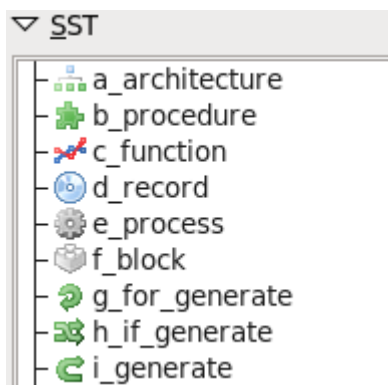
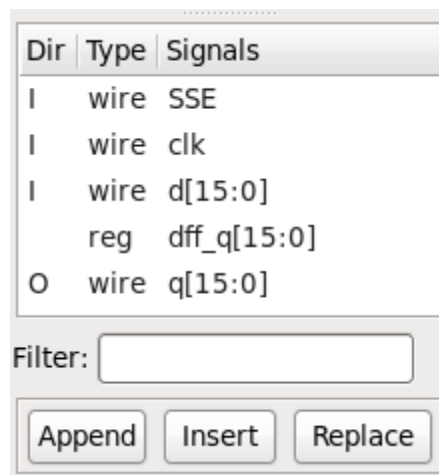


Figure 6: VHDL (not GHDL) hierarchy type icons in SST frame

In addition, signal direction and type information may be displayed in the lower portion of the SST frame/window as shown. To filter based on I/O port direction, prefix the search regular expression with case-insensitive +I+ for input, +IO+ for input/output, +O+ for output, +L+ for linkage (VHDL), and +B+ for buffer (VHDL).



*Figure 7: Verilog I/O and type information in SST frame*

## Toolbutton Interface

The `use_toolbutton_interface` rc variable controls how the user interface appears. Recent versions of the viewer have this variable set to “on” which modifies the viewer to use GTK themes and a more compact button layout as shown below.

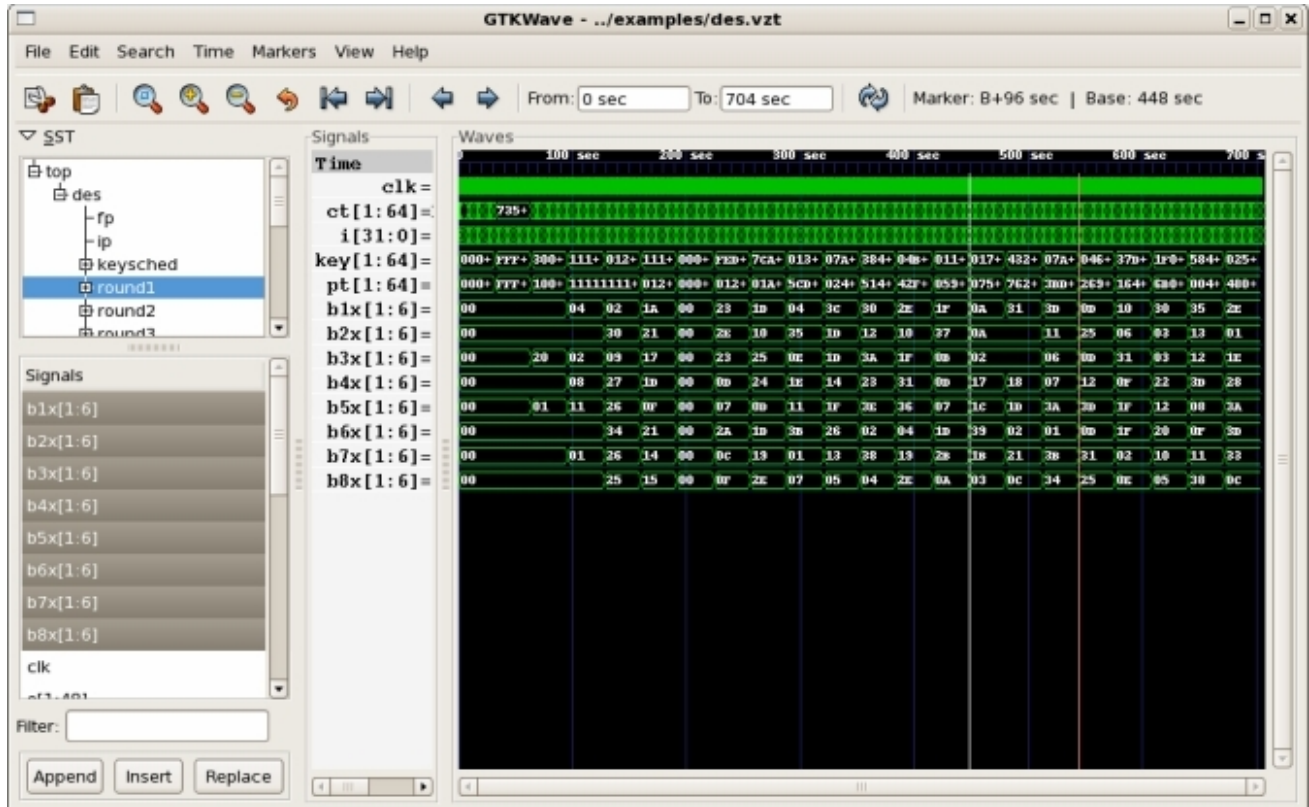


Figure 8: The main window using the toolbutton interface

For those who wish to use the old interface, the rc variable must be set to “off.” In future versions of the viewer, it will be possible for the layout of the Toolbutton bar to be specified by a user's configuration.



## Signal Subwindow

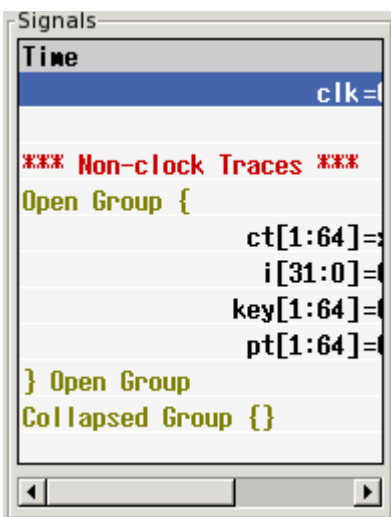


Figure 9: Signal subwindow with scrollbar and an “open” collapsible trace

The signal subwindow is nothing more than a list of signals, optional comments, and optional blank lines. The following is a sample view of the signal subwindow showing a highlighted trace (“clk”) and a comment trace, “Non-clock Traces \*\*\*”. In between the two is a blank trace inserted by the user. Note that the highlighting of a trace can be accomplished by clicking the left mouse button on an entry in the signal subwindow. (Use ctrl-click to deselect.)

You will notice that the scrollbar along the bottom of the subwindow in Figure 10 indicates that there is a hidden section to the right. This hidden area contains the values of the signals shown. The scrollbar can be manually moved to show this area or the pane to the right of the signal subwindow can be enlarged in order to allow full viewing of the subwindow.

Expanding the size of the subwindow by increasing the width of the pane is illustrated in

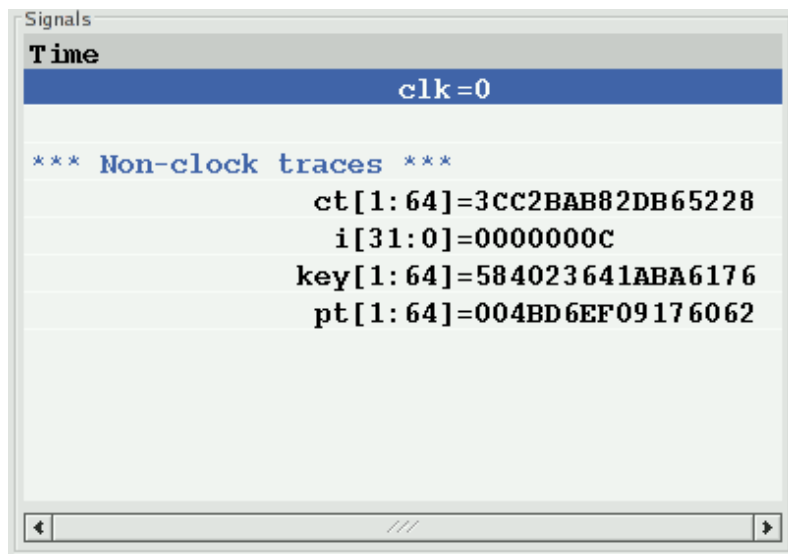


Figure 10: Signal subwindow with no hidden area from left to right

Figure 11. No area is hidden as reflected by the scrollbar which is completely filled in from left to right along its length. In addition, the signal values which are present can be read. Any time the primary marker is nailed down, there will be an equals (“=”) sign indicating that signal values are present.



As seen in both Figure 10 and Figure 11, the signal names are right justified and are flush against the equals signs. This is only a matter of personal preference, and if desired, as shown in Figure 12, the signals can be left justified against the left margin of the signal subwindow by pressing the key combination of Shift-Home. This is useful when looking at signals if one is attempting to determine where hierarchies for different net names differ. Press Shift-End to right justify the signal names. (Right justification is the default behavior). Regardless of the state of signal name justification, the signal values are left justified against the equals sign and cannot be moved.

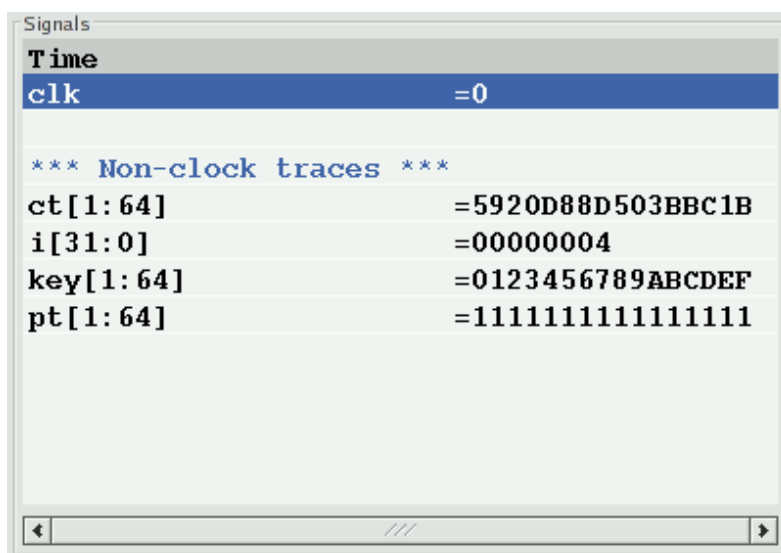


Figure 11: Signal subwindow with left justified signal names

Note that the signal subwindow supports a form of self-contained Drag and Drop such that the right mouse button can be used to harvest all the highlighted traces in the window. By holding the right button and moving the mouse up and down, a destination for the traces can be selected. When the mouse button is released, the traces are dropped at the trace following the one the mouse pointer is pointing to.

Multiple traces can be selected by marking the first trace to highlight, move the cursor to the destination trace, and Shift click with the left mouse button. All the traces between the two will highlight or unhighlight accordingly. To highlight all the traces in the signal subwindow, Alt-H can be pressed. To unhighlight them, also press the Shift key in conjunction with Alt-H. (This can also be achieved by clicking on Highlight All or Unhighlight All in the Edit menu.)

Highlighting or unhighlighting traces by entering regular expressions will be covered in the menu section.

Note: the rc variable `use_standard_clicking` no longer has any effect. Regular GTK semantics for this subwindow are always enabled: shift and control function as most users expect. In addition, the scroll wheel will scroll the traces up and down provided the signal subwindow has input focus.

## Wave Subwindow

The wave subwindow reformats simulation data into a visual format similar to that seen for digital storage scopes. As seen in Figure 13, the wave subwindow

contains two scrollbars and a viewing area.

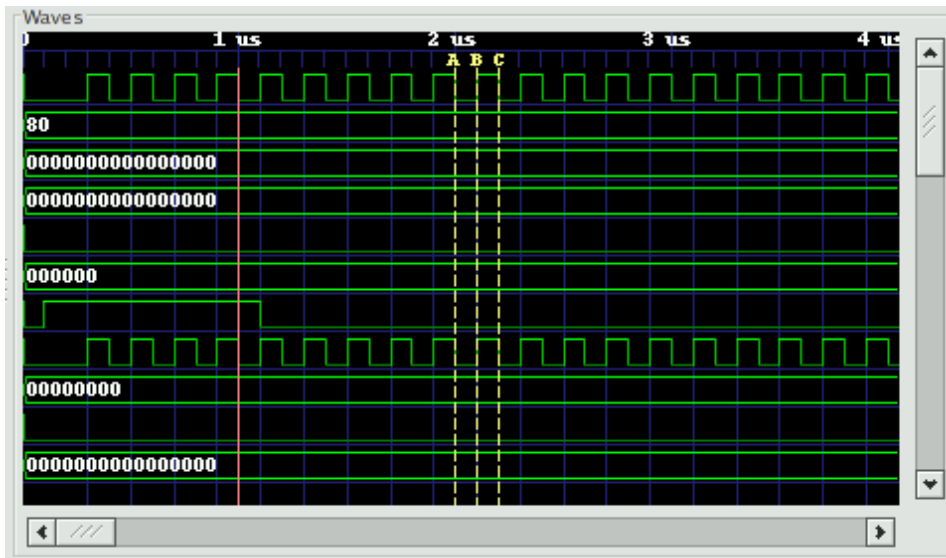


Figure 12: A typical view of the wave subwindow

The scrollbar on the right scrolls not only the wave subwindow, but the signal subwindow in lockstep as well. The scrollbar on the bottom is used to scroll the simulation data with respect to the timescale that is shown on the top line of the wave subwindow.

The simulation data itself is shown as a horizontal series of traces. Values for multi-bit signals can be displayed in varying numeric bases such as binary, octal, hexadecimal, decimal, and ASCII. Values for single-bit traces are shown as “high” for zero and “low” for one, “z” (middle), and “x” (filled-in box). VHDL values are represented in a similar fashion but with different colors. The signal subwindow can always be used to verify the value of a value, so don't be too concerned right now if you are not sure of what the single-bit representation of a signal looks like or are not sure if you can remember.

Two functional markers are available: the primary marker (red, left mouse button) which the signal window uses as its pointer for value data, and the baseline marker (white, middle mouse button) which is used to perform time measurements with respect to the primary marker. Twenty-six lettered markers “A” through “Z” (dropped or collected through menu options) are provided to the user as convenience markers for indexing various points of interest in a simulation.

The primary marker can also be used to navigate with respect to time. It can be dropped with the right mouse button and dragged to “open” up a region for zooming in closer or out farther in time. It can also be used to scroll by holding down the left mouse button and dragging the mouse outside the signal subwindow. The simulation data outside of the window will then scroll into view with the scrolling being in the opposite direction that the primary marker is

“pulling” outside of the subwindow.

Trace data in the signal subwindow can also be timeshifted as shown in Figure 14. In order to timeshift a trace, highlight the trace in the signal window then move over to the wave subwindow and then hold down the left mouse button in order to set the primary marker. Press the Ctrl key then move the primary marker left or right. When the timeshift is as desired, release the mouse button then release Ctrl. If you do not wish to go through with the timeshift, release the Ctrl key before releasing the left mouse button. The trace(s) will then spring back to their original pre-shifted position.

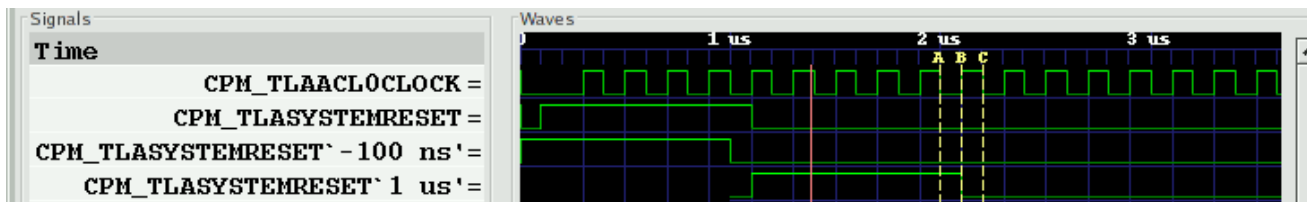


Figure 13: An example of both positively and negatively timeshifted traces

To achieve a finer level of granularity for timeshifting, menu options are available that allow the user to set specific values for a time shift. In this way, the pixel resolution of zoom is not the limiting factor in achieving an “exact” shift that suits a user's needs.

## Navigation and Status Panel

The navigation and status panel occupies the top part of the main window just below the menu bar.



Figure 14: The Navigation and Status Panel

The leftmost part contains a status window used for displaying various relevant messages to the user such as the dumpfile type, the number of facilities (nets) in a dumpfile, and any other information such as an operation that fails or completes successfully.

The Zoom subframe contains six buttons. Three are magnifying glass icons. The one marked with a minus (“-”) zooms out which displays a larger amount of simulation time. The one marked with a plus (“+”) zooms in closer, displaying less simulation time. The one with a square in it is “Zoom Full” which is used either to zoom out to display the full range of simulation time or zooms between the primary and baseline marker when the baseline marker is set. The

remaining non-magnifying glass buttons are a back arrow which is a zoom undo. The left arrow “zooms” to the start time of simulation and the right arrow zooms to the end time. The left and right arrows do not affect the zoom level in or out like the plus and minus buttons do; they simply are a shortcut to keep from having to move the scrollbar at the bottom of the wave subwindow.

The Page subframe contains left and right arrows. It scrolls the wave window left or right the granularity of one page. It is similar to clicking to the left or right of the “visible” gadget in a scrollbar, however, given the limited resolution of the GTK scrollbar (floating point), for simulations that have large time values, it might be necessary to use the page buttons rather than the scrollbar.

The Shift subframe contains similar arrows that scroll the display one pixel or timestep (depending on what the zoom level is).

The “From” and “To” boxes indicate the start and end times for what part of the simulation run shall be visible and can be navigated inside the wave subwindow. Values can directly be entered into these boxes and units (e.g., ns, ps, fs) can also be affixed to values.

The Fetch and Discard subframes modify the “From” and “To” box times. Clicking the left Fetch arrow decreases the “From” value. Clicking the right Fetch arrow increases the “To” value. Clicking the left Discard value increases the “From” value and clicking the right Discard button decreases the “To” value.

The Marker Time label indicates where the primary marker is located. If it is not present, a double-dash (“--”) is displayed. The Current Time label indicates where the mouse is pointing. Its function is to determine the time under the cursor without having to activate or move the primary marker. Note that when the primary marker is being click-dragged, the Marker Time label will indicate the delta time off the initial marker click.

When the baseline marker is set, the Marker Time and Current Time labels change. The Marker time label indicates the delta time between the baseline marker and the primary marker. The Current Time label is replaced with a Base Time label that indicates the value of the baseline marker.

With some dumpfile types, a reload button can be found at the extreme right side of the Navigation and Status Panel. It may be seen in Figure 4: The main window with an embedded SST on page 20.

## **Menu Bar**

There are seven submenus in the menu bar: File, Edit, Search, Time, Markers, View, and Help. The functions of the individual items in each of those submenus will be covered in GTKWave Menu Functions on page 35.

## TwinWave

TwinWave is a front end to GTKWave that allows two sessions to be open at one time in a single window. The horizontal scrolling, zoom factor, primary marker, and secondary marker are synchronized between the two sessions.

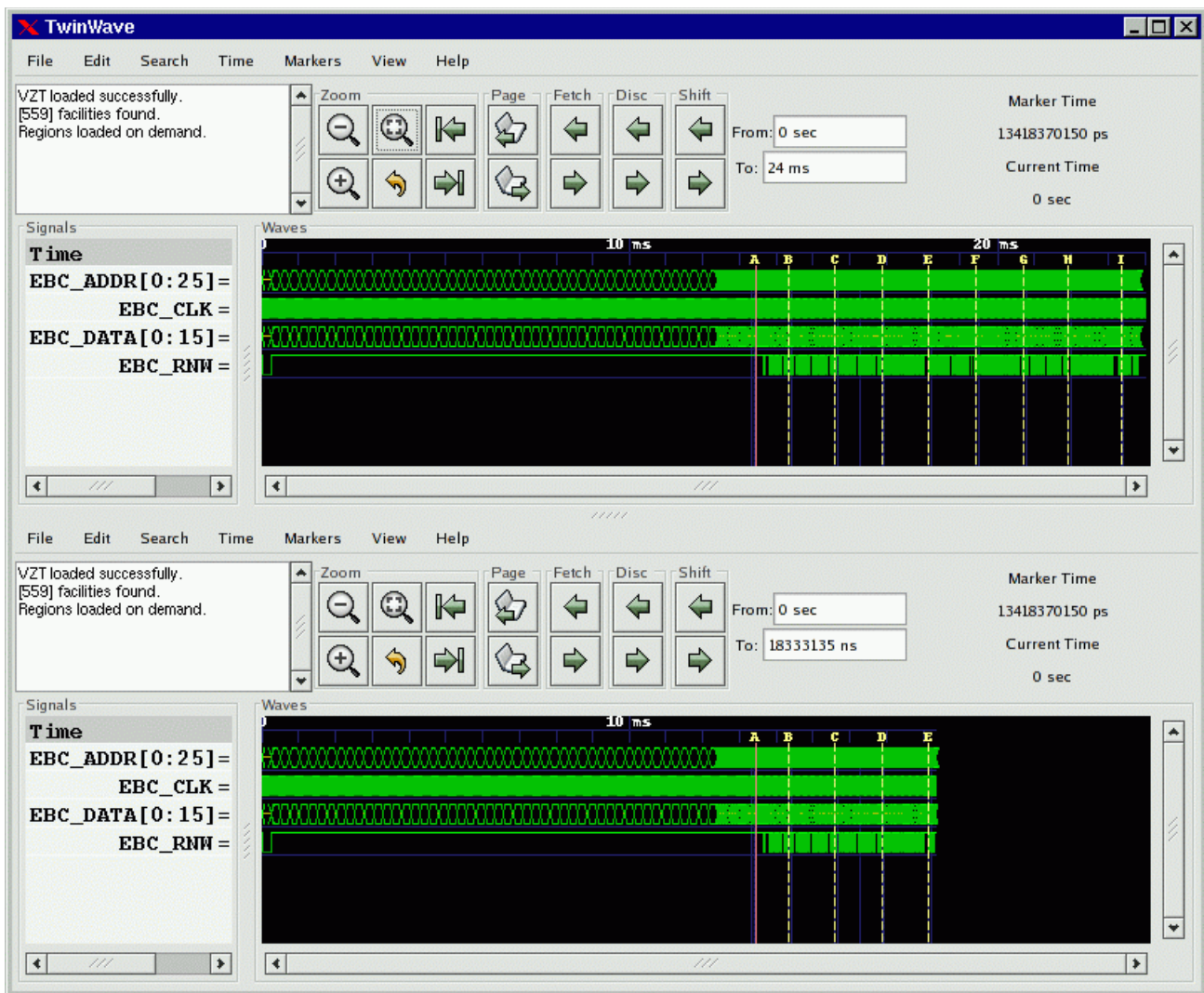


Figure 15: TwinWave managing two GTKWave sessions in a single window

Starting a TwinWave session is easy: simply invoke `twinwave` with the arguments for each `gtkwave` session listed fully separating them with a plus sign.

```
twinwave a.vcd a.sav + b.vcd b.sav
```

## RTLBrowse

*rtlbrowse* is usually called as a helper application by *gtkwave*. In order to use RTLBrowse, Verilog source code must first be compiled with *vermin* in order to generate a stems file. A stems file contains hierarchy and component instantiation information used to navigate quickly through the source code. If GTKWave is started with the **--stems** option, the stems file is parsed and *rtlbrowse* is launched.

The main window for RTLBrowse depicts the design as a tree-like structure. (See Figure 17: Source code annotated by RTLBrowse on page 32.) Nodes in the tree may be clicked open or closed in order to navigate through the design hierarchy. Missing modules (unparsed, but instantiated as components) will be marked as “[MISSING]”.

When an item is selected, another window is opened showing only the source code the selected module. If the primary marker is set, then the source code will be annotated with values as shown in Figure 18: The main window with viewer state loaded from a save file on page 53. If the primary marker moves or is deleted, then the values annotated into the source code will be updated dynamically. The values shown are the full, wide value of the signal. RTLBrowse currently does not perform bit extractions on multi-bit vectors. If it is desired to see the full source code file for a module, click on the “View Full File” button at the bottom of the window.

Note that it is possible to descend deeper into the design hierarchy by selecting the component name in the annotated or unannotated source code.



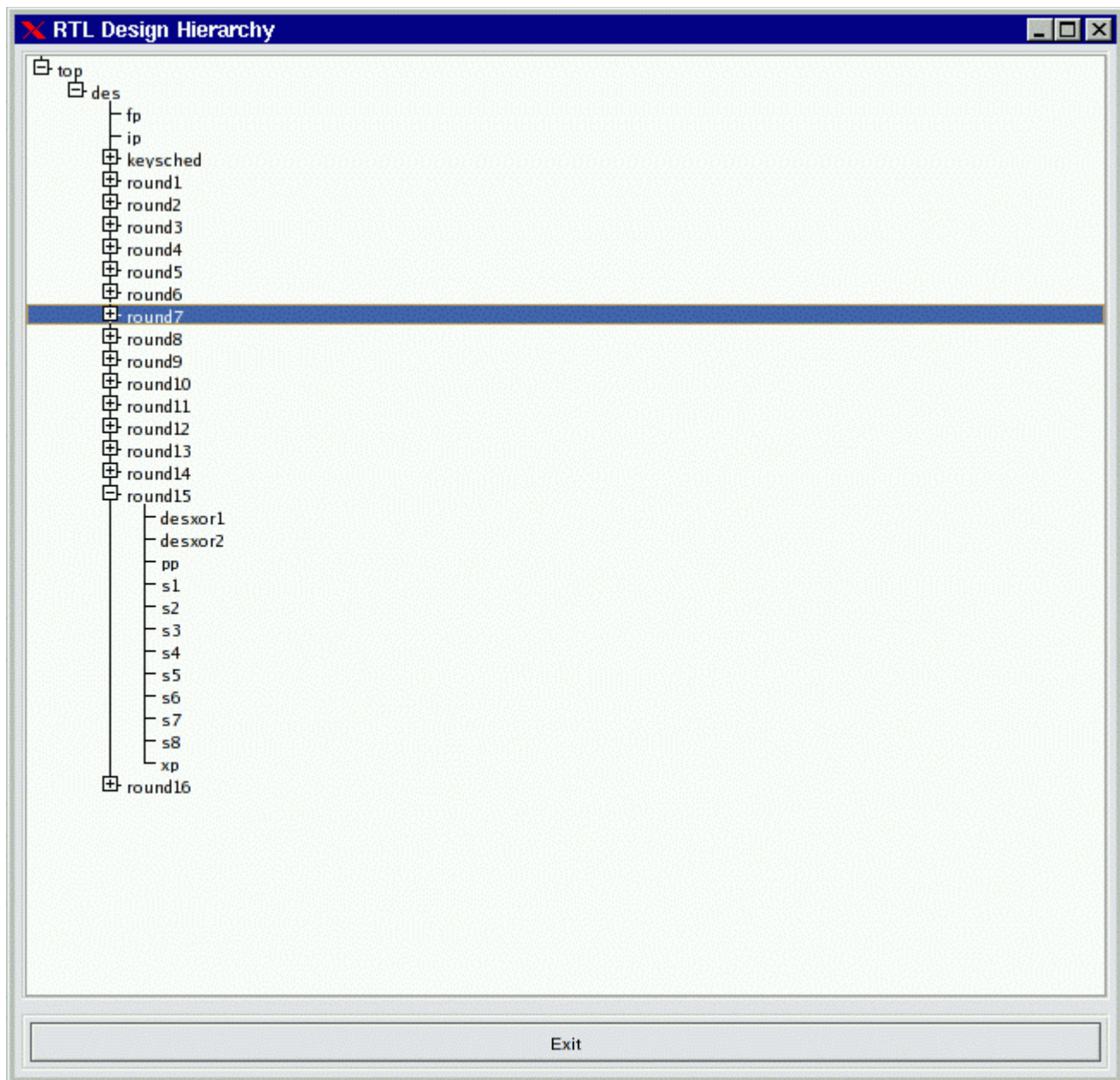


Figure 16: The RTLBrowse RTL Design Hierarchy window

```

top.des.round7
/tmp/verilog-0.8.2/examples/des.v
Design unit 'roundfunc' occupies lines 991 - 1017.
Marker time for 'des.vcd.lx2' is 336 sec.

module roundfunc(clk[b1], li[28E7D50F], ri[E44F2DA9], lo[E44F2DA9], ro[B204237A], k[614800D8547F]);
input  clk[b1];
input  [1:32] li[28E7D50F], ri[E44F2DA9];
input  [1:48] k[614800D8547F];
output [1:32] lo[E44F2DA9], ro[B204237A];

wire    [1:48] e[F0825E95BD53];
wire    [1:6]  b1x[24], b2x[1C], b3x[29], b4x[1E], b5x[13], b6x[1E], b7x[24], b8x[2C];
wire    [1:4]  s01x[E], s02x[5], s03x[6], s04x[F], s05x[0], s06x[B], s07x[B], s08x[E];
wire    [1:32] ppo[9AE3F675];

xp xp(ri[E44F2DA9], e[F0825E95BD53]);
desxor1 desxor1(e[F0825E95BD53], b1x[24], b2x[1C], b3x[29], b4x[1E], b5x[13], b6x[1E], b7x[24], b8x[2C], k[614800D8547F]);
s1 s1(clk[b1], b1x[24], s01x[E]);
s2 s2(clk[b1], b2x[1C], s02x[5]);
s3 s3(clk[b1], b3x[29], s03x[6]);
s4 s4(clk[b1], b4x[1E], s04x[F]);
s5 s5(clk[b1], b5x[13], s05x[0]);
s6 s6(clk[b1], b6x[1E], s06x[B]);
s7 s7(clk[b1], b7x[24], s07x[B]);
s8 s8(clk[b1], b8x[2C], s08x[E]);
pp pp(s01x[E], s02x[5], s03x[6], s04x[F], s05x[0], s06x[B], s07x[B], s08x[E], ppo[9AE3F675]);
desxor2 desxor2(ppo[9AE3F675], li[28E7D50F], ro[B204237A]);

assign lo[E44F2DA9]=ri[E44F2DA9];

endmodule

```

View Full File

Figure 17: Source code annotated by RTLBrowser



## Ergonomic Extras

### Scroll Wheels

Users with a scroll wheel mouse have some extra one-handed operations options available which correspond to some functions found in the Navigation and Status Panel description on page 27.

- Shift Right - Ctrl + scroll wheel down
- Shift Left - Ctrl + scroll wheel up
- Page Right - scroll wheel down
- Page Left - scroll wheel up
- Zoom In - Alt + scroll wheel down
- Zoom Out - Alt + scroll wheel up

Turning the scroll wheel “presses” the shift, page, and zoom options repeatedly far faster than is possible with the navigation buttons. Zoom functions are especially smooth this way.

### The Primary Marker

The primary marker has also had function overloaded onto it for user convenience. Besides being used as a marker, it can also be used to navigate with respect to time. It can be dropped with the right mouse button and dragged to “open” up a region for zooming in closer or out farther in time. It can also be used to scroll by holding down the left mouse button and dragging the mouse outside the signal subwindow. The simulation data outside of the window will then scroll into view with the scrolling being in the opposite direction that the primary marker is “pulling” outside of the subwindow.

### Interactive VCD

VCD files may be viewed as they are generated provided that they are written to a fifo (pipe) and are trampolined through shmidcat first (assume the simulator will normally generate **outfile.vcd**):

```
mkfifo outfile.vcd
cver myverilog.v &
shmidcat outfile.vcd | gtkwave -v -I myverilog.sav
```

You can then navigate the file as simulation is running and watch it update.



# GTKWave Menu Functions

## File

The File submenu contains various items related to the accessing of files, printing, and application respawning and exiting.

Open New Viewer will open a file requester that will ask for the name of a VCD or AET file to view. This will fork off a new viewer process.

Open New Tab will open a file requester that will ask for the name of a VCD or AET file to view. This will create a tabbed page.

Reload Current Waveform will reload the currently displayed waveform from a potentially updated file. Note that this menu option will only be displayed if the current waveform type supports reloading. (i.e., it is not sourced from standard input or from shared memory)

Export-Write VCD File As will open a file requester that will ask for the name of a VCD dumpfile. The contents of the dumpfile generated will be the vcd representation of the traces onscreen that can be seen by manipulating the signal and wavewindow scrollbars. The data saved corresponds to the trace information needed to allow viewing when used in tandem with the corresponding GTKWave save file.

Export-Write LXT File As will open a file requester that will ask for the name of an LXT dumpfile. The contents of the dumpfile generated will be the vcd representation of the traces onscreen that can be seen by manipulating the signal and wavewindow scrollbars. The data saved corresponds to the trace information needed to allow viewing when used in tandem with the corresponding GTKWave save file.

Export-Write TIM File As will open a file requester that will ask for the name of a TimingAnalyzer .tim file. The contents of the file generated will be the representation of the traces onscreen. If the baseline and primary marker are

set, the time range written to the file will be between the two markers, otherwise it will be the entire time range.

Close immediately closes the current tab if multiple tabs exist or exits GTKWave after an additional confirmation requester is given the OK to quit.

Print To File will open up a requester that will allow you to select print options (PS or MIF; Letter, A4, or Legal; Full or Minimal). After selecting the options you want, a file requester will ask for the name of the output file to generate that reflects the current main window display's contents.

Grab To File will open a file requester that will ask for the name to be used for a PNG format image grab of the main GTKWave window. Note that if the main window is covered by other windows or is partially offscreen, the grabbed image might not appear properly.

Read Save File will open a file requester that will ask for the name of a GTKWave save file. The contents of the save file will determine which traces and vectors as well as their format (binary, decimal, hex, reverse, etc.) are to be appended to the display. Note that the marker positional data and zoom factor present in the save file will replace any current settings.

Write Save File will invoke Write Save File As if no save file name has been specified previously. Otherwise it will write the save file data without prompting.

Write Save File As will open a file requester that will ask for the name of a GTKWave save file. The contents of the save file generated will be the traces as well as their format (binary, decimal, hex, reverse, etc.) which are currently a part of the display. Marker positional data and the zoom factor are also a part of the save file.

Read Logfile will open a file requester that will ask for the name of a plaintext simulation log. By clicking on the numbers in the logfile, the marker will jump to the appropriate time value in the wave window.

Read Verilog Stemsfile will open a file requester that will ask for the name of a Verilog stemsfile. This will then launch an RTL browser and allow source code annotation based on the primary marker position. Stems files are generated by Vermin. Please see its manpage for syntax and more information on stems file generation.

Read Script File will open a file requester that will ask for the name of a Tcl script to run. This menu option itself is not callable by Tcl scripts.

Quit exits GTKWave.

## Edit

The Edit submenu is used to perform sorts on net names, perform various utility functions such as attaching disassemblers and other external programs to GTKWave, and to change the data representation of values in the wave subwindow.

Set Max Hier sets the maximum hierarchy depth (counting from the right with bit numbers or ranges ignored) that is displayable for trace names. Zero indicates that no truncation will be performed (default). Note that any aliased signals (prefix of a "+") will not have truncated names.

Toggle Trace Hier toggles the maximum hierarchy depth from zero to whatever was previously set.

Insert Blank inserts a blank trace after the last highlighted trace. If no traces are highlighted, the blank is inserted after the last trace.

Insert Comment inserts a comment trace after the last highlighted trace. If no traces are highlighted, the comment is inserted after the last trace.

Insert Analog Height Extension inserts a blank analog extension trace after the last highlighted trace. If no traces are highlighted, the blank is inserted after the last trace. This type of trace is used to increase the height of analog traces.

Alias Highlighted Trace only works when at least one trace has been highlighted. With this function, you will be prompted for an alias name for the first highlighted trace. After successfully aliasing a trace, the aliased trace will be unhighlighted. Single bits will be marked with a leading "+" and vectors will have no such designation. The purpose of this is to provide a fast method of determining which trace names are real and which ones are aliases.

Remove Highlighted Aliases only works when at least one trace has been highlighted. Any aliased traces will have their names restored to their original names. As vectors get their names from aliases, vector aliases will not be removed.

Cut removes highlighted signals from the display and places them in an offscreen cut buffer for later Paste operations. Cut implicitly destroys the previous contents of the cut buffer.

Copy copies highlighted signals from the display and places them in an offscreen cut/copy buffer for later Paste operations. Copy implicitly destroys the previous contents of the cut/copy buffer.

Paste pastes signals from an offscreen cut buffer and places them in a group

after the last highlighted signal, or at the end of the display if no signal is highlighted.

Delete removes highlighted signals from the display and discards them without affecting the previous contents of the cut/copy buffer.

Expand decomposes the highlighted signals into their individual bits. The resulting bits are converted to traces and inserted after the last highlighted trace. The original unexpanded traces will be placed in the cut buffer. It will function seemingly randomly when used upon real valued single-bit traces. When used upon multi-bit vectors that contain real valued traces, those traces will expand to their normal "correct" values, not individual bits.

Combine Down coalesces the highlighted signals into a single vector named "<Vector>" in a top to bottom fashion placed after the last highlighted trace. The original traces will be placed in the cut buffer. It will function seemingly randomly when used upon real valued single-bit traces.

Combine Up coalesces the highlighted signals into a single vector named "<Vector>" in a bottom to top fashion placed after the last highlighted trace. The original traces will be placed in the cut buffer. It will function seemingly randomly when used upon real valued single-bit traces.

Data Format-Hex will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that vectors with this qualifier will be displayed with hexadecimal values.

Data Format-Decimal will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that vectors with this qualifier will be displayed with decimal values.

Data Format-Signed will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that vectors with this qualifier will be displayed as sign extended decimal values.

Data Format-Binary will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that vectors with this qualifier will be displayed with binary values.

Data Format-Octal will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that vectors with this qualifier will be displayed with octal values.

Data Format-ASCII will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that vectors with this qualifier will be displayed with ASCII values.

Data Format-BitsToReal will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that vectors with this qualifier will be displayed with Real values. Note that this only works for 64-bit values and that ones of other sizes will display as binary.

Data Format-RealToBits-On will step through all highlighted traces and ensure

that Real vectors with this qualifier will be displayed as Hex values. Note that this only works for Real quantities and other ones will remain to be displayed as binary. This is a pre-filter so it is possible to invert, reverse, apply Decimal, etc. It will not be possible however to expand those values into their constituent bits.

Data Format-RealToBits-Off will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that the RealToBits qualifier is removed from those traces.

Data Format-Right Justify-On will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that vectors with this qualifier will be displayed right justified.

Data Format-Right Justify-Off will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that vectors with this qualifier will not be displayed right justified.

Data Format-Invert-On will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that bits and vectors with this qualifier will be displayed with 1's and 0's inverted.

Data Format-Invert-Off will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that bits and vectors with this qualifier will not be displayed with 1's and 0's inverted.

Data Format-Reverse Bits-On will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that vectors with this qualifier will be displayed in reversed bit order.

Data Format-Reverse Bits-Off will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that vectors with this qualifier will not be displayed in reversed bit order.

Data Format-Popcnt-On will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that bits and vectors with this qualifier will be displayed after going through a population count conversion. This is a filter which sits before other Data Format options such as hex, etc.

Data Format-Popcnt-Off will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that bits and vectors with this qualifier will be displayed with normal encoding.

Data Format-Fixed Point Shift-On will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that bits and vectors with this qualifier will be right shifted prior to being displayed as Signed Decimal or Decimal values.

Data Format-Fixed Point Shift-Off will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that bits and vectors with this qualifier will not be right shifted prior to being displayed as Signed Decimal or Decimal values.

Data Format-Fixed Point Shift-Specify will open up a requester to specify a shift count then will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that bits and vectors with this qualifier will be right shifted prior to being displayed as Signed Decimal or Decimal values.

Color Format-Normal uses normal waveform colorings for all selected traces.

Color Format-Red uses red waveform colorings for all selected traces.

Color Format-Orange uses orange waveform colorings for all selected traces.

Color Format-Yellow uses yellow waveform colorings for all selected traces.

Color Format-Green uses green waveform colorings for all selected traces.

Color Format-Blue uses blue waveform colorings for all selected traces.

Color Format-Indigo uses indigo waveform colorings for all selected traces.

Color Format-Violet uses violet waveform colorings for all selected traces.

Color Format-Cycle uses cycling waveform colorings for all selected traces.

Color Format-Keep xz Colors when enabled keeps the old non 0/1 signal value colors when a user specifies a color override by using Edit/Color Format.

Translate Filter File Disable will remove translation filtering used to reconstruct enums for marked traces.

Translate Filter File will enable translation on marked traces using a filter file. A requester will appear to get the filter filename.

Translate Filter Process Disable will remove translation filtering used to reconstruct enums for marked traces.

Translate Filter Process will enable translation on marked traces using a filter process. A requester will appear to get the filter filename.

Transaction Filter Process will enable transaction filtering on marked traces using a filter process. A requester will appear to get the filter filename.

Transaction Filter Process Disable will remove transaction filtering.

Analog Off causes the waveform data for all currently highlighted traces to be displayed as normal.

Analog Step causes the waveform data for all currently highlighted traces to be displayed as stepwise analog waveform.



Analog Interpolate causes the waveform data for all currently highlighted traces to be displayed as interpolated analog waveform.

Analog Resizing-Screen Data causes the waveform data for all currently highlighted traces to be displayed such that the y-value scaling maximizes the on-screen trace data so it fills the whole trace width at all times.

Analog Resizing-All Data causes the waveform data for all currently highlighted traces to be displayed such that the y-value scaling maximizes the on-screen trace data so it fills the whole trace width only when fully zoomed out. (i.e., the scale used goes across all trace data)

Data Format-Range Fill With 0s will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that vectors with this qualifier will be displayed as if the bitrange of the MSB or LSB as appropriate goes to zero. Zero bits will be filled in for the missing bits.

Data Format-Range Fill With 1s will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that vectors with this qualifier will be displayed as if the bitrange of the MSB or LSB as appropriate goes to zero. One bits will be filled in for the missing bits; this is mostly intended to be used when viewing values which are inverted in the logic and need to be inverted in the viewer.

Data Format-Zero Range Fill Off will step through all highlighted traces and ensure that normal bitrange displays are used.

Show-Change All Highlighted provides an easy means of changing trace attributes en masse. Various functions are provided in a Show-Change requester.

Show-Change First Highlighted provides a means of changing trace attributes for the first highlighted trace. Various functions are provided in a Show-Change requester. When a function is applied, the trace will be unhighlighted.

Warp Marked offsets all highlighted traces by the amount of time entered in the requester. (Positive values will shift traces to the right.) Attempting to shift greater than the absolute value of total simulation time will cap the shift magnitude at the length of simulation. Note that you can also warp traces dynamically by holding down CTRL and dragging a group of highlighted traces to the left or right with the left mouse button pressed. When you release the mouse button, if CTRL is pressed, the drag warp commits, else it reverts to its pre-drag condition.

Unwarp Marked removes all offsets on all highlighted traces.

Unwarp All unconditionally removes all offsets on all traces.

Exclude causes the waveform data for all currently highlighted traces to be blanked out.

Show causes the waveform data for all currently highlighted traces to be displayed as normal if the exclude attribute is currently set on the highlighted traces.

Toggle Group toggles a group opened or closed. Double-clicking does the same action as selecting this menu option.

Create Group creates a group of traces which may be opened or closed. It is permitted for groups to be nested.

Highlight Regexp brings up a text requester that will ask for a regular expression that may contain text with POSIX regular expressions. All traces meeting this criterion / these criteria will be highlighted.

UnHighlight Regexp brings up a text requester that will ask for a regular expression that may contain text with POSIX regular expressions. All traces meeting this criterion / these criteria will be unhighlighted if they are currently highlighted.

Highlight All simply highlights all displayed traces.

UnHighlight All simply unhighlights all displayed traces.

Alphabetize All alphabetizes all displayed traces. Blank traces are sorted to the bottom.

Alphabetize All (CaseIns) alphabetizes all displayed traces without regard to case. Blank traces are sorted to the bottom.

Sigsort All sorts all displayed traces with the numeric parts being taken into account. Blank traces are sorted to the bottom.

Reverse All reverses all displayed traces unconditionally.

## **Search**

The Search submenu is used to perform searches on net names and values.

Pattern Search only works when at least one trace is highlighted. A requester will appear that lists all the selected traces (maximum of 500) and allows various criteria to be specified for each trace. Searches can go forward or backward from the primary (unnamed) marker. If the primary marker has not been set, the search starts at the beginning of the displayed data ("From") for a forwards

search and starts at the end of the displayed data ("To") for a backwards search. "Mark" and "Clear" are used to modify the normal time vertical markings such that they can be used to indicate all the times that a specific pattern search condition is true (e.g., every upclock of a specific signal). The "Mark Count" field indicates how many times the specific pattern search condition was encountered. The "Marking Begins at" and "Marking Stops at" fields are used to limit the time over which marking is applied (but they have no effect on searching).

Signal Search Regexp provides an easy means of adding traces to the display. Various functions are provided in the Signal Search requester which allow searching using POSIX regular expressions and bundling (coalescing individual bits into a single vector).

Signal Search Hierarchy provides an easy means of adding traces to the display in a text based treelike fashion.

Signal Search Tree provides an easy means of adding traces to the display. Various functions are provided in the Signal Search Tree requester which allow searching a treelike hierarchy and bundling (coalescing individual bits into a single vector).

Autocoalesce when enabled allows the wave viewer to reconstruct split vectors. Split vectors will be indicated by a "[" prefix in the search requesters.

Autocoalesce Reversal causes split vectors to be reconstructed in reverse order (only if autocoalesce is also active). This is necessary with some simulators. Split vectors will be indicated by a "]" prefix in the search requesters.

Autoname Bundles when enabled modifies the bundle up/down operations in the hierarchy and tree searches such that a NULL bundle name is implicitly created which informs GTKWave to create bundle and signal names based on the position in the hierarchy. When disabled, it modifies the bundle up/down operations in the hierarchy and tree searches such that a NULL bundle name is not implicitly created. This informs GTKWave to create bundle and signal names based on the position in the hierarchy only if the user enters a zero-length bundle name. This behavior is the default.

Search Hierarchy Grouping when enabled ensures that new members added to the ``Tree Search" and ``Hierarchy Search" widgets are added alphanumerically: first hierarchy names as a group followed by signal names as a group. This is the default and is recommended. When disabled, hierarchy names and signal names are interleaved together in strict alphabetical ordering. Note that due to the caching mechanism in ``Tree Search", dynamically changing this flag when the widget is active may not produce immediately obvious results. Closing the widget then opening it up again will ensure that it follows the behavior of this flag.

Set Pattern Search Repeat Count sets the number of times that both edge and pattern searches iterate forward or backward when marker forward/backward is selected. Default value is one. This can be used, for example, to skip forward 10 clock edges at a time rather than a single edge.

Open Scope opens and selects the appropriate level of hierarchy in the SST for the first selected signal. This can be used to quickly move to a level of hierarchy in the SST frame, for example, when viewing signals across multiple units in a design.

Open Source Definition opens and selects the appropriate level of hierarchy in the SST for the first selected signal and also invokes \$GTKWAVE\_EDITOR or gedit (if found) on the appropriate source unit.

Open Source Instantiation opens and selects the appropriate level of hierarchy in the SST for the first selected signal and also invokes \$GTKWAVE\_EDITOR or gedit (if found) on the appropriate source unit.

## **Time**

The Time submenu contains a superset of the functions performed by the Navigation and Status Panel button groups (see page 27).

Move To Time scrolls the waveform display such that the left border is the time entered in the requester. Use one of the letters A-Z to move to a named marker.

Zoom Amount allows entry of zero or a negative value for the display zoom. Zero is no magnification.

Zoom Base allows entry of a zoom base for the zoom (magnification per integer step) Allowable values are 1.5 to 10.0. Default is 2.0.

Zoom In is used to increase the zoom factor. Alt + Scrollwheel Down also performs this function.

Zoom Out is used to decrease the zoom factor. Alt + Scrollwheel Up also performs this function.

Zoom Full attempts a "best fit" to get the whole trace onscreen. Note that the trace may be more or less than a whole screen since this isn't a "perfect fit."

Zoom Best Fit attempts a "best fit" to get the whole trace onscreen. Note that the trace may be more or less than a whole screen since this isn't a "perfect fit." Also, if the middle button baseline marker is nailed down, the zoom instead of

getting the whole trace onscreen will use the part of the trace between the primary marker and the baseline marker.

Zoom To Start is used to jump scroll to the trace's beginning.

Zoom To End is used to jump scroll to the trace's end.

Zoom Undo is used to revert to the previous zoom value used. Undo only works one level deep.

Fetch Size brings up a requester which allows input of the number of ticks used for fetch/discard operations. Default is 100.

Fetch Right increases the "To" time, which allows more of the trace to be displayed if the "From" and "To" times do not match the actual bounds of the trace.

Fetch Left decreases the "From" time, which allows more of the trace to be displayed if the "From" and "To" times do not match the actual bounds of the trace.

Discard Right decreases the "To" time, which allows less of the trace to be displayed.

Discard Left increases the "From" time, which allows less of the trace to be displayed.

Shift Right scrolls the display window right one tick worth of data. The net action is that the data scrolls left a tick. Ctrl + Scrollwheel Down also performs this function.

Shift Left scrolls the display window left one tick worth of data. The net action is that the data scrolls right a tick. Ctrl + Scrollwheel Up also performs this function.

Page Right scrolls the display window right one page worth of data. The net action is that the data scrolls left a page. Scrollwheel Down also performs this function.

Page Left scrolls the display window left one page worth of data. The net action is that the data scrolls right a page. Scrollwheel Up also performs this function.

## **Markers**

The Markers submenu is used to perform various manipulations on the markers

as well as control scrolling offscreen.

Show-Change Marker Data displays and allows the modification of the times for all 26 named markers by filling in the leftmost entry boxes. In addition, optional marker text rather than a generic single letter name may be specified by filling in the rightmost entry boxes. Note that the time for each marker must be unique.

Drop Named Marker drops a named marker where the current primary (unnamed) marker is placed. A maximum of 26 named markers are allowed and the times for all must be different.

Collect Named Marker collects a named marker where the current primary (unnamed) marker is placed if there is a named marker at its position.

Collect All Named Markers simply collects any and all named markers which have been dropped.

Delete Primary Marker removes the primary marker from the display if present.

Wave Scrolling allows movement of the primary marker beyond screen boundaries which causes the wave window to scroll when enabled. When disabled, it disallows movement of the primary marker beyond screen boundaries.

Alternate Wheel Mode makes the mouse wheel act how TomB expects it to. Wheel alone will pan part of a page (so you can still see where you were). Ctrl+Wheel will zoom around the cursor (not where the marker is), and Alt+Wheel will edge left or right on the selected signal.

Copy Primary -> B Marker copies the primary marker position to the B marker (handy for measuring deltas).

Lock to Lesser Named Marker locks the primary marker to a named marker. If no named marker is currently selected, the last defined one is used, otherwise the marker selected will be one lower in the alphabet, scrolling through to the end of the alphabet on wrap. If no named marker exists, one is dropped down for 'A' and the primary marker is locked to it.

Lock to Greater Named Marker locks the primary marker to a named marker. If no named marker is currently selected, the first defined one is used, otherwise the marker selected will be one higher in the alphabet, scrolling through to the beginning of the alphabet on wrap. If no named marker exists, one is dropped down for 'A' and the primary marker is locked to it.

Unlock from Named Marker unlocks the primary marker from the currently selected named marker.

## View

The View submenu is used to control various attributes dealing with the graphical rendering of status items as well as values in the signal subwindow.

Show Grid toggles the drawing of gridlines in the waveform display.

Show Wave Highlight toggles the drawing of highlighted waveforms (instead of gridlines) in the waveform display.

Show Mouseover toggles the dynamic tooltip for signal names and values which follow the marker on mouse button presses in the waveform display. This is useful for examining the values of closely packed value changes without having to zoom outward and without having to refer to the signal name pane to the left. Note that an encoded string will be displayed next to the signal name that indicates what data format flags are currently active for that signal. Flags are as follows:

- + = Signed Decimal
- X = Hexadecimal
- A = ASCII
- D = Decimal
- B = Binary
- O = Octal
- J = Right Justify
- ~ = Invert
- V = Reverse
- \* = Analog Step+Interpolated
- S = Analog Step
- I = Analog Interpolated
- R = Real
- r = Real to Bits
- 0 = Range Fill with 0s
- 1 = Range Fill with 1s
- G = Binary to Gray
- g = Gray to Binary
- F = File Filter
- P = Process Filter
- T = Transaction Filter
- p = Population Count
- s = Fixed Point Shift (count)

Show Base Symbols enables the display of leading base symbols ('\$' for hex, '%' for binary, '#' for octal if they are turned off and disables the drawing of leading

base symbols if they are turned on. Base symbols are displayed by default.

Standard Trace Select when enabled, keeps the currently selected traces from deselecting on mouse button press. This allows drag and drop to function more smoothly. As this behavior is not how GTK normally functions, it is by default disabled.

Dynamic Resize allows GTKWave to dynamically resize the signal window for you when toggled active. This can be helpful during numerous signal additions and/or deletions. This is the default behavior.

Center Zooms when enabled configures zoom in/out operations such that all zooms use the center of the display as the fixed zoom origin if the primary (unnamed) marker is not present, otherwise, the primary marker is used as the center origin. When disabled, it configures zoom in/out operations such that all zooms use the left margin of the display as the fixed zoom origin.

Toggle Delta-Frequency allows you to switch between the delta time and frequency display in the upper right corner of the main window when measuring distances between markers. Default behavior is that the delta time is displayed.

Toggle Max-Marker allows you to switch between the maximum time and marker time for display in the upper right corner of the main window. Default behavior is that the maximum time is displayed.

Constant Marker Update when enabled, allows GTKWave to dynamically show the changing values of the traces under the primary marker while it is being dragged across the screen. This works best with dynamic resizing disabled. When disabled, it restricts GTKWave to only update the trace values when the left mouse button is initially pressed then again when it is released. This is the default behavior.

Draw Roundcapped Vectors draws vector transitions that have sloping edges when enabled. Draws vector transitions that have sharp edges when disabled; this is the default.

Left Justify Signals draws signal names flushed to the left border of the signal window.

Right Justify Signals draws signal names flushed to the right ("equals") side of the signal window.

Zoom Pow10 Snap snaps time values to a power of ten boundary when active. Fractional zooms are internally stored, but what is actually displayed will be rounded up/down to the nearest power of 10. This only works when the ticks per frame is greater than 100 units.



Partial VCD Dynamic Zoom Full causes the screen to be in full zoom mode while a VCD file is loading incrementally.

Partial VCD Dynamic Zoom To End causes the screen to zoom to the end while a VCD file is loading incrementally.

Full Precision does not round time values when the number of ticks per pixel onscreen is greater than 10 when active. The default is that this feature is disabled.

Define Time Ruler Marks changes the ruler markings such that the Baseline marker defines the origin and the Primary marker distance from the Baseline marker defines the period. If either the Baseline marker or Primary marker are not present, the default ruler markers are used. If the Baseline marker and Primary marker have the same value, the default ruler markers are used.

Remove Pattern Marks removes any vertical traces on the display caused by the Mark feature in pattern search and reverts to the normal format.

Use Color draws signal names and trace data in color. This is normal operation.

Use Black and White draws signal names and trace data in black and white. This is intended for use in black and white screen dumps.

Scale To Time Dimension: None turns off time dimension conversion.

Scale To Time Dimension: sec changes the time dimension conversion value to seconds.

Scale To Time Dimension: ms changes the time dimension conversion value to milliseconds.

Scale To Time Dimension: us changes the time dimension conversion value to microseconds.

Scale To Time Dimension: ns changes the time dimension conversion value to nanoseconds.

Scale To Time Dimension: ps changes the time dimension conversion value to picoseconds.

Scale To Time Dimension: fs changes the time dimension conversion value to femtoseconds.

LXT Clock Compress to Z reduces memory usage when active as clocks

compressed in LXT format are kept at Z in order to save memory. Traces imported with this are permanently kept at Z.

## **Help**

The Help submenu contains options for enabling on-line help as well as displaying program version information.

Wave Help brings up a help window that will show the function of any menu option when that option is selected. Closing the help window will turn off help and return back to normal menu function.

Wave Version merely brings up a requester which indicates the current version of this program.

# Quick Start

## Sample Design

In the *examples/* directory of the source code distribution a sample Verilog design and testbench for a DES encryptor can be found as *des.v*.

```
10 ~/home/bybell/gtkwave-3.0.0pre21/examples> ls -al
total 132
drwxrwxr-x    2 bybell  bybell          4096 Apr 30 14:12 .
drwxr-xr-x    8 bybell  bybell          4096 Apr 29 22:05 ..
-rw-rw-r--    1 bybell  bybell           187 Apr 29 22:09 des.sav
-rw-r--r--    1 bybell  bybell        47995 Apr 29 22:05 des.v
-rw-rw-r--    1 bybell  bybell        68801 Apr 29 22:06 des.vzt
```

If you have a Verilog simulator handy, you can simulate the design to create a VCD file. To try the example in Icarus Verilog (<http://www.icarus.com>), type the following:

```
/tmp/gtkwave-3.0.0/examples> iverilog des.v && a.out
VCD info: dumpfile des.vcd opened for output.
/tmp/gtkwave-3.0.0/examples> ls -la des.vcd
-rw-rw-r--    1 bybell  bybell       3465481 Apr 30 13:39 des.vcd
```

If you do not have a simulator readily available, you can expand the *des.vzt* file into *des.vcd* by typing the following:

```
/tmp/gtkwave-3.0.0/examples> vzt2vcd des.vzt >des.vcd
VZTLOAD | 1432 facilities
VZTLOAD | Total value bits: 22921
VZTLOAD | Read 1 block header OK
VZTLOAD | [0] start time
VZTLOAD | [704] end time
VZTLOAD |
```

```
VZTLOAD | block [0] processing 0 / 704
/tmp/gtkwave-3.0.0/examples> ls -la des.vcd
-rw-rw-r-- 1 bybell bybell 3456247 Apr 30 13:42 des.vcd
```

You will notice that the generated VCD file is about fifty times larger than the VZT file. This illustrates the compressibility of VCD files and the space saving advantages of using the database formats that GTKWave supports. Normally we would not want to work with VCD as GTKWave is forced to process the whole file rather than access only the data needed, but in the next section we will show how to invoke GTKWave such that VCD files are automatically converted into LXT2 ones.

Next, let's create a stems file that allows us to bring up RTLBrowse.

```
/tmp/gtkwave-3.0.0/examples> vermin des.v -emitstems >des.stems
Vermin: Verilog Parser v0.1.0 (w)1999-2006 BSI
```

```
Processing file 'des.v' ...
/tmp/gtkwave-3.0.0/examples> ls -la des.stems
-rw-rw-r-- 1 bybell bybell 4662 Apr 30 13:50 des.stems
```

Stems files only need to be generated when the source code undergoes file layout and/or hierarchy changes.

Now that we have a VCD file and a stems file, we can bring up the viewer.

## Launching GTKWave

We already have a VZT file available, but to illustrate the automatic conversion of VCD files, let's use the `-o` option. The `-t` option is used to specify the stems file. The `.sav` file is a “save file” that contains GTKWave scope state.

```
/tmp/gtkwave-3.0.0/examples> gtkwave -o -t des.stems des.vcd des.sav
```

```
GTKWave Analyzer v3.3.18 (w)1999-2010 BSI
```

```
FSTLOAD | Processing 1432 facs.
FSTLOAD | Built 1287 signals and 145 aliases.
FSTLOAD | Building facility hierarchy tree.
FSTLOAD | Sorting facility hierarchy tree.
```

In some cases, for example if the dumpfile format is LXT2, you will see two sets of loader messages. This is normal as RTLBrowse is launched as an external

process in order to keep its operations from bogging down the viewer. After these messages scroll by, the GTKWave main window and an RTLBrowse hierarchy window will appear. We are now ready to start experimenting with

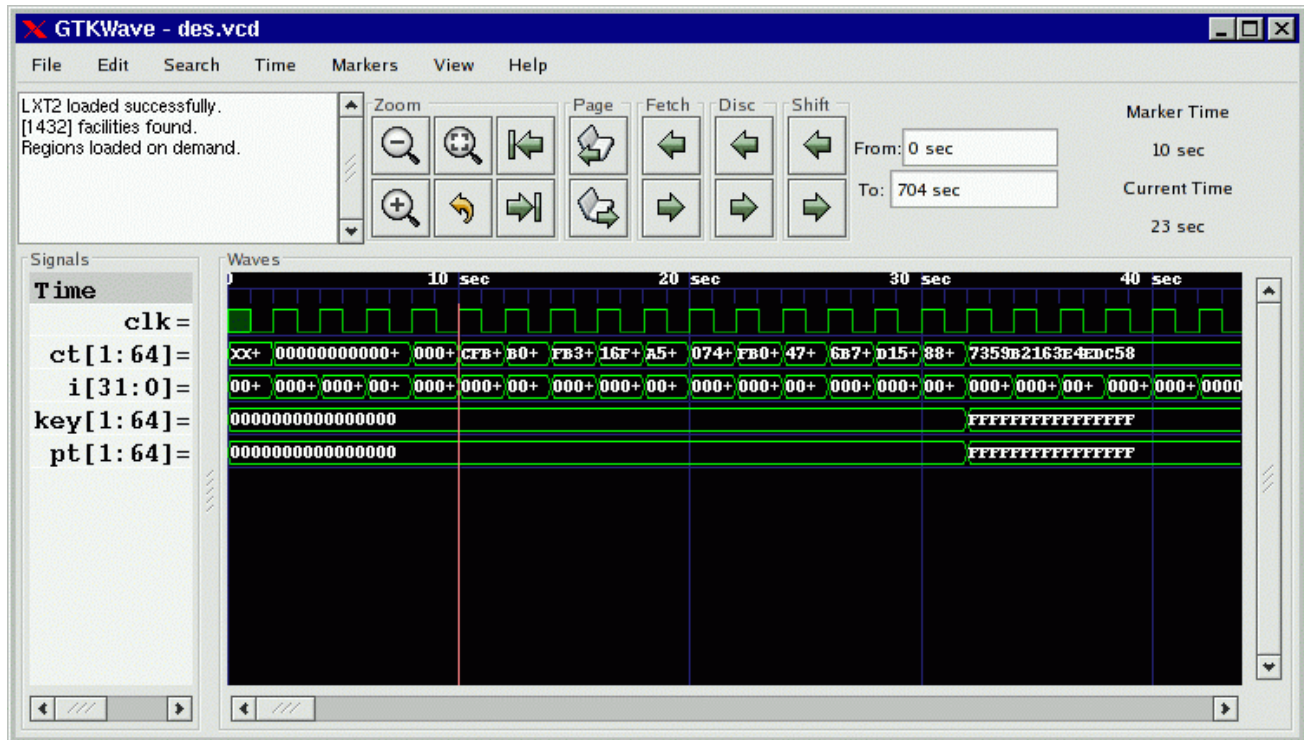


Figure 18: The main window with viewer state loaded from a save file

various features of the wave viewer and RTLBrowse. The RTLBrowse window will come up as seen in Figure 17: Source code annotated by RTLBrowse on page 32, however none of the tree nodes will be opened yet.

## Displaying Waveforms

In the preceding section, the viewer was brought up with a save file so when the viewer did appear, the main window already had signals present as seen in Figure 19 on page 54. All the signals in a model do not appear on their own as this would be unwieldy for large models. Instead, it is up to the user to import signals manually. An exception to this exists for VCD files, see the definition of the `enable_vcd_autosave` `.gtkwaverc` variable on page Error: Reference source not found. That said, several requesters exist for importing signals into the main window.

### Signal Search

The signal search requester accepts a search string as a POSIX regular expression. Any signals found in the dumpfile that match that regular expression are listed in the Matches box and may be individually or multiply selected and imported into the viewer window. The regular expression can be modified in one of four ways: WRange, WStrand, Range, and Strand. No modification is possible with None. This optionally matches the string you enter in the search string above with a Verilog format range (signal[7:0]), a strand (signal.1, signal.0), or with no suffix. The “W” modifier for “Range” and “Strand” explicitly matches on word boundaries. (addr matches unit.freezeaddr[63:0] for “Range” but only unit.addr[63:0] for “WRange” since addr has to be on a word boundary.) Note that when “None” is selected, the search string may be located anywhere in the signal name.

Append will add the selected signals to end of the display on the main window.

Insert will add selected signals after last highlighted signal on the main window.

Replace will replace highlighted signals on

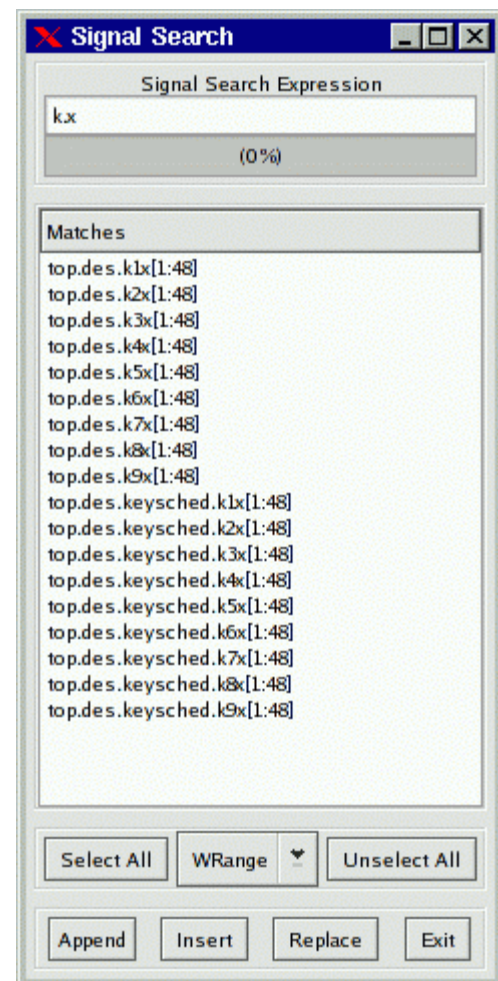


Figure 19: The Signal Search  
(regular expression search)  
Requester

the main window with signals selected.

## Hierarchy Search

The hierarchy search requester provides a view of the hierarchy in a format similar to the current working directory of a file in a file system on a computer. The Signal Hierarchy box contains the current hierarchy and the Children box contain all of the signals in that immediate level of hierarchy and all of the component instantiation names for that level of hierarchy (denoted by a “(+)” prefix). To navigate down a level of hierarchy, click on an item with a “(+)” prefix. To move up a level of hierarchy, click on the “..” line.

Selecting individual items allow you to import traces singly when the Append, Insert, or Replace buttons are clicked. Not selecting anything will do a “deep import” such that all the child signals are imported. Use of that feature is not recommended for very large designs.

Note that it is possible to modify the display order such that components and signals are intermixed in this gadget rather than being separated such that all the components for a given level of hierarchy are listed alphabetically at the top and all signals are listed alphabetically at the bottom. In order to do this, toggle the Search submenu item Search Hierarchy Grouping as described on page 43.



Figure 20: The Hierarchy Search Requester

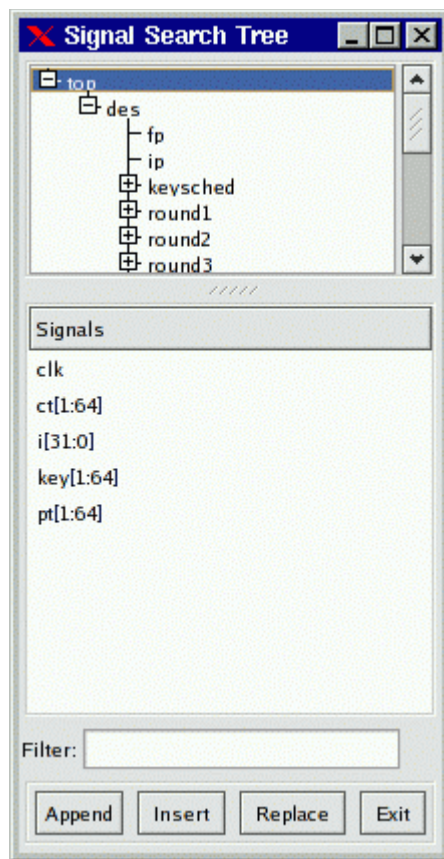
## Tree Search

The Tree Search Requester is the requester that most users will feel comfortable using and is also the requester that can optionally be embedded in the main window on versions of GTK greater than or equal to 2.4. See Figure 8: The main window using the toolbutton interface on page 23 for an example of this.

The Tree Search Requester is composed of a top tree selection box, a signals box, and a POSIX regular expression filter. The tree selection box is used to navigate at the hierarchy level. Click on an item in order to show the signals at that level of hierarchy. In the figure on page 57, the “top” level of hierarchy is selected and the signals box shows what signals are available at that level of hierarchy. Signals may be individually or multiply selected and can be dragged and dropped into the signal window. In addition, a POSIX filter can be specified



that allows the selective filtering of signal names at a level of hierarchy which is handy for finding a specific signal at a level of hierarchy that is very large (e.g., in a synthesized netlist).



*Figure 21: The Signal Search Tree Requester*

## Signal Save Files

The signals show in the main window can be saved to a file so they can automatically be imported without reselection the next time the viewer is started. In order to save signals to a save file, select the File submenu option Write Save File (As). Save files can also be loaded at any time by selecting the Read Save File option.

## Pattern Search

Values, not only nets may be searched on and marked in the wave window. In order to do this, select one or more nets in the signal window and then click on the Search submenu option Pattern Search. A Pattern Search Requester will then appear that will allow various types of search operations for the signals that



have been selected.

The following is an example of a Pattern Search Requester being used to mark the rising edges for the clock signal in a simulation model.

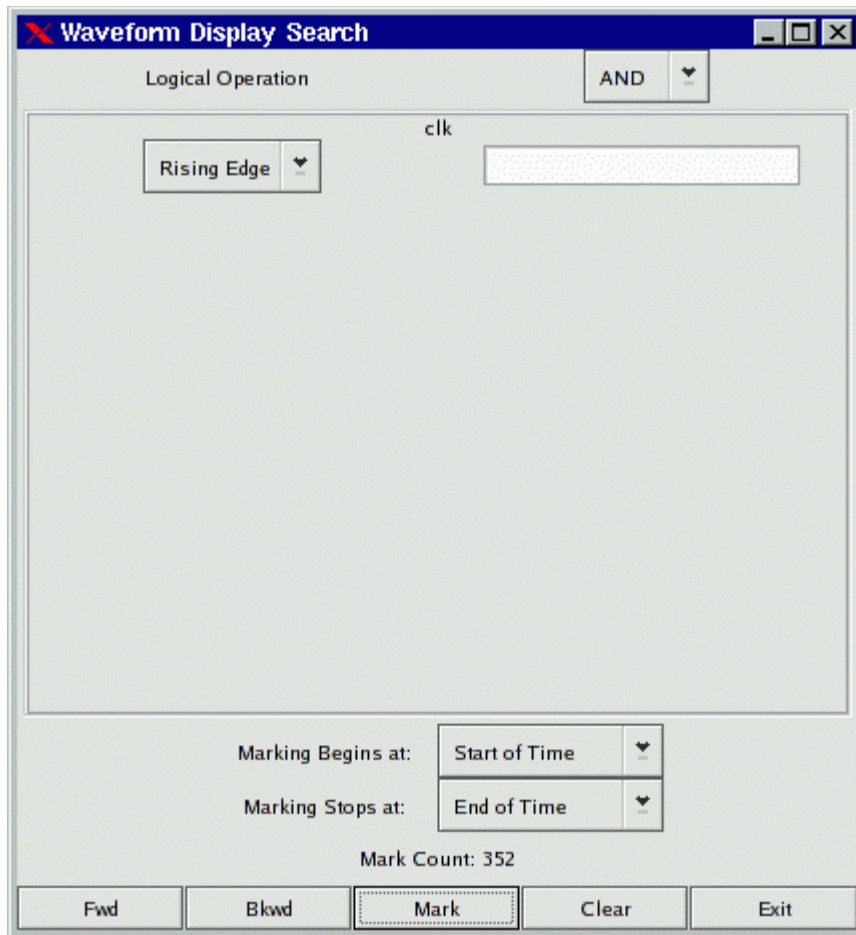


Figure 22: The Pattern Search Requester

The edges as they are marked by the configuration of the Requester in Figure Error: Reference source not found can be seen in Figure 8: The main window using the toolbar interface on page 23.

To remove pattern marks, either select another pattern or select the View submenu option Remove Pattern Marks. Note that pattern marks save to the save file and that the actual pattern search criteria is saved, not the absolute times of the individual marks themselves.

Search criteria for individual nets can be edge or value based. For “String” searches (the

entry box to the right of the search type box which in the case above is marked “Rising Edge”), note that it is no longer required that you must press Enter for the string in order to commit the value to the search.

## Alias Files and Attaching External Disassemblers

The viewer supports signal aliasing through both plaintext filters and through external program filters. Note that signal aliasing is a strict one-to-one correspondence so the value represented in the viewer must exactly represent what format your filter expects. (e.g., binary, hexadecimal, with leading base markers, etc.) For your convenience, the comparisons are case insensitive.

For text filters, the viewer looks at an ASCII text file of the following format:

```
#
# this is a comment
#
00 Idle
01 Advance
10 Stop
11 Reset
```

The first non-whitespace item is treated as a literal value that would normally be printed by the viewer and the remaining items on the line are substitution text. Any time this text is encountered if the filter is active, it will replace the left-hand side text with the right-hand side. Leading and trailing whitespaces are removed from the right-hand side item.

To turn on the filter:

- 1) Highlight the signals you want filtered
- 2) Edit->Data Format->Translate Filter File->Enable and Select
- 3) Add Filter to List
- 4) Click on filter filename
- 5) Select filter filename from list
- 6) OK

To turn off the filter:

- 1) Highlight the signals you want unfiltered.
- 2) Edit->Data Format->Translate Filter File->Disable

*NOTE: Filter configurations load and save properly to and from save files.*

An external process that accepts one line in from stdin and returns with data on stdout can be used as a process filter. An example of this are disassemblers. The following sample code would show how to interface with a disassembler function in C:

```
int main(int argc, char **argv)
{
while(!feof(stdin))
{
char buf[1025], buf2[1025];

buf[0] = 0;
fscanf(stdin, "%s", buf);
if(buf[0])
{
```

```

        int hx;
        sscanf(buf, "%x", &hx);
        ppc_dasm_one(buf2, 0, hx);
        printf("%s\n", buf2);
        fflush(stdout);
    }

    return(0);
}

```

Note that the `fflush(stdout)` is necessary, otherwise *gtkwave* will hang. Also note that every line of input needs to generate a line of output or the viewer will hang too.

To turn on the filter:

- 1) Highlight the signals you want filtered
- 2) Edit->Data Format->Translate Filter Process->Enable and Select
- 3) Add Proc Filter to List
- 4) Click on filter filename
- 5) Select filter filename from list
- 6) OK

To turn off the filter:

- 1) Highlight the signals you want unfiltered.
- 2) Edit->Data Format->Translate Filter Process->Disable

Note: In order to use the filter to modify the background color of a trace, you can prefix the return string to `stdout` with the X11 color name surrounded by '?' characters as follows:

```

?CadetBlue?isync
?red?xor r0,r0,r0
?lavender?lwz r2,0(r7)

```

Legal color names may be found in the `rgb.c` file in the source code distribution.

## Transaction Filters

Either single traces or grouped vector data (created by Combine Down (F4) on some signals) can be used to signify a transaction that can be parsed by an external process.

An external process that can accept a simplified VCD file from stdin and return with trace data on stdout can be used as a transaction filter. An example of the VCD file received from stdin is the following:

```
$comment data_start 0x124c0798 $end
$comment val[7:0] $end
$timescale 1ms $end
$comment min_time 0 $end
$comment max_time 348927 $end
$comment max_seqn 1 $end
$scope module top $end
$comment seqn 1 top.val[7:0] $end
$var wire 8 1 val[7:0] $end
$upscope $end
$enddefinitions $end
$dumpvars
#0
b10000000 1
#1
b10000101 1
#2
b10001010 1
...
#348927
b110010 1
$comment data_end 0x124c0798 $end
```

To aid in processing and parsing, some extra comments are added to the VCD file:

data\_start, a value to match against data end to know that all trace data has been received

min\_time, the start time of the wave data

max\_time, the ending time of the wave data

max\_seqn, indicates the relative ordering of the trace data being presented. This can be used to provide “anonymous” signal name matching

seqn, gives the “flat earth” signal name

Note that the VCD identifies are numbers starting from 1. These are to be correlated with the max\_seqn count.

An example of data generated on stdout after all data has been received is as follows:

```
$name Decoded Data
#0
#186608 ?darkblue?sync
MA196608 Sync Mark
#196860
```

```

MB196864 Num Blocks
#196864 ?gray24?04
#197116
MC197120 Hdr 0
#197120 ?purple3?04
#197372
$next
$name Another Trace
#0
#10000 This is a test!
#200000
$finish

```

Time values with no data after them are rendered as a horizontal “z” bar.  
 Lines that start with M are used to place the markers A-Z.  
 \$name indicates the name to give to the trace.  
 \$next indicated that more trace data follows for a new trace.  
 \$finish is used to signal to gtkwave that there is no more trace data.

The data received by gtkwave will be used to generate transaction traces in the viewer. In order to make traces created by \$next visible, insert blank lines under the trace that the transaction filter has been added.

To turn on the filter:

- 1) Highlight the signals you want filtered
- 2) Edit->Data Format->Transaction Filter Process->Enable and Select
- 3) Add Transaction Filter to List
- 4) Click on filter filename
- 5) Select filter filename from list
- 6) OK

To turn off the filter:

- 1) Highlight the signals you want unfiltered.
- 2) Edit->Data Format->Transaction Filter Process->Disable

Note: In order to use the filter to modify the background color of a trace, you can prefix the return string to stdout with the X11 color name surrounded by '?' characters as follows:

```

?CadetBlue?isync
?red?xor r0,r0,r0
?lavender?lwz r2,0(r7)

```

Legal color names may be found in the rgb.c file in the source code distribution.

## **Debugging the Source Code**

See the description for RTLBrowse on page 30. More features are planned to be added in future releases.

## Appendix A: Command Line Options Reference

# gtkwave

GTKWAVE(1)

Simulation Wave Viewer

GTKWAVE(1)

NAME

# gtkwave - Visualization tool for VCD, LXT, and VZT files

## SYNTAX

```
gtkwave [option]... [DUMPFIL] [SAVEFILE] [RCFILE]
```

DESCRIPTION

Visualization tool for VCD, LXT, LXT2, VZT, and GHW. VCD is an industry standard simulation dump format. LXT, LXT2, and VZT have been designed specifically for use with gtkwave. GHW is the native VHDL format generated by GHDL. Native dumpers exist in Icarus Verilog for the LXT formats so conversion with vcd2lxt(1) or vcd2lxt2(1) is not necessary to take direct advantage of LXT with that simulator. AET2 files can also be processed provided that libae2rw is available but this is only of interest to people who use IBM EDA toolsets.

## OPTIONS

`-n, --nocli <directory name>`

Use file requester for dumpfile name.

`-f, --dump <filename>`

Specify dumpfile name.

-F, --fastload

generate/use VCD recoder fastload files. This is similar to the -g,--giga option, however the spill file generated is not deleted. Reloading the VCD file another time (either through pressing the reload button or by re-invoking gtkwave at a later time) will use this generated spill file rather than read the value change section of the VCD file. This will speed up reloads on large files greatly as only the variable declaration section needs to be parsed. Note that the spill file contains the file size and modification date of the VCD file in order to

detect if it is stale and needs to be regenerated.

- o,--optimize  
optimize VCD to FST. This will automatically call `vcd2fst(1)` to perform the file conversion. This option is highly recommended with large VCD files in order to cut down on the memory usage required for file viewing. Can be used in conjunction with `-v,--vcd`.
- a, --save=FILE  
Specify savefile name. Useful suffixes for desktop integration are `.gtkw` and `.sav` (deprecated).
- A, --autosavename  
Assume savefile is suffix modified dumpfile name (i.e., remove and replace with `".gtkw"`).
- r,--rcfile <filename>  
Specify override `.gtkwaverc` filename.
- l,--logfile <filename>  
Specify simulation logfile name. Multiple logfiles may be specified by preceding each with the command flag. By selecting the numbers in the text widget, the marker will immediately zoom to the specific time value.
- d,--defaultskip  
If there is not a `.gtkwaverc` file in the home directory or current directory and it is not explicitly specified on the command line, when this option is enabled, do not use an implicit configuration file and instead default to the old "whitescreen" behavior.
- D,--dualid <which>  
Specify multisession identifier information. The format of "which" is `m+nnnnnnnn` where `m` is the session number 0 or 1 and `nnnnnnnn` is a hexadecimal value indicating the shared memory ID of an array of two `gtkwave_dual_ipc_t` data structures. The intended use of this flag is for front ends such as `twinwave(1)`.
- s,--start <time>  
Specify start time for LXT2/VZT block skip.
- e,--end <time>  
Specify end time for LXT2/VZT block skip.
- t,--stems <filename>  
Specify stems file for source code annotation. This will automatically launch the `rtlbrowse(1)` helper process. See `vermin(1)` for information on stems file generation.
- c,--cpu <numcpus>  
Specify number of CPUs available for parallelizable ops (e.g., block prefetching on VZT reads).



- N,--nowm  
Disable window manager for most windows. The intended use of this is to be used in conjunction with the --script option, however this also can be used to reparent into an alternate window manager.
- M,--nomenus  
Do not render menubar. This is mainly used for making a restricted applet that cannot initiate file I/O on its own, however it also can be used as a workaround in earlier versions of GTK+ that do not handle GTKSocket/GTKPlug focus interactions properly.
- S,--script <filename>  
Specify Tcl script for execution.
- R,--repscript <filename>  
Specifies Tcl command script file for periodic execution.
- P,--repperiod <filename>  
Specifies delay in milliseconds between successive executions of the repscript. Default is 500.
- T,--tcl\_script <filename>  
Specifies Tcl command script file to be loaded on startup. Implies --wish command flag.
- W,--wish  
Enables Tcl command line on stdio. All script commands can be typed in on stdin.
- X,--xid <XID>  
Specify XID (in hexadecimal) of window for a GtkPlug to connect to. GTKWave does not directly render to a window but instead renders into a Gtk-Plug expecting a GtkSocket at the other end. Note that there are issues with accelerators working properly so menus are disabled in the componentized version of GTKWave when it functions as a plug-in.
- 1,--rpcid <RPCID>  
Specify RPCID of GConf session. This is a decimal value zero or greater and is the identifier used by GConf to know what update data to listen to. This option only works if --with-gconf was specified during ./configure.
- 2,--chdir <DIRNAME>  
Specify new current working directory. This is typically used in OSX to run gtkwave if it was compiled and placed in an .app bundle. Note that if the environment variable GTKWAVE\_CHDIR is defined, the argument is a dummy argument. This is to support OSX in that the open command has difficulty in passing spaces as command line arguments and it is possible for pwd(1) to return spaces.
- 3,--restore

Restore previous default (0) or --rpcid RPCID numbered session. This only works for one dumpfile, savefile, rcfile, and current working directory so it has the effect of restoring the most recently loaded file. If used in conjunction with the --rpcid option, that option must be specified earlier in the command line than the --restore option. If RPCID is not specified, then the default of 0 is used. This option only works if --with-gconf was specified during ./configure.

-4,--rcvar

Specify single rc variable values individually. These take effect after any other rc variables have been loaded from internal defaults or from configuration files.

-I,--interactive

Specifies that "interactive" VCD mode is to be used which allows a viewer to navigate a VCD trace while GTKWave is processing the VCD file. When this option is used, the filename is overloaded such that it is the hexadecimal value for the shared memory ID of a writer. Note that the shared memory ID can be passed straight from stdin by using the --vcd option; see the manpage for shmidcat(1) for more details.

-g,--giga

Specifies to use gigabyte mempacking when recoding (slower).

-L,--legacy

Specifies that the viewer should use legacy VCD mode rather than the VCD recoder. Note that using legacy mode will require considerably more memory than the recoder and its use is discouraged for very large traces.

-C,--comphier

Specifies that the viewer should use compressed hierarchy names when loading the dumpfile (available for VCD recoder, LXT, LXT2, and VZT). This will use less memory at the expense of compression/decompression delay.

-v,--vcd

Use stdin as a VCD dumpfile.

-O,--output <filename>

Specify filename for stdout/stderr redirect. To disable messages to the console, use /dev/null as the filename.

-z,--slider-zoom

Enable slider stretch zoom for the horizontal time slider. Clicking then dragging the very left or right edge of the slider can be used to provide fine-grained real-time zooming.

-V,--version

Display version banner then exit.

-h,--help

Display help then exit.

-x,--exit  
Exit after loading trace (for loader benchmarking).

## FILES

~/.gtkwaverc

## EXAMPLES

To run this program the standard way type:  
gtkwave dumpfile.vcd

Alternatively you can run it with a save file as:  
gtkwave dumpfile.vcd dumpfile.gtkw

To run interactively using shared memory handle 0x00050003:  
gtkwave -I 00050003 dumpfile.gtkw

To pick up a dumpfile automatically from a save file (e.g., when launching from an icon):  
gtkwave --save dumpfile.gtkw

To run from the app bundle gtwave.app in OSX using /bin/sh:  
GTKWAVE\_CHDIR=`pwd`;export GTKWAVE\_CHDIR;open -n -W -a gtwave  
--args --chdir dummy --dump des.vzt --save des.gtkw

Alternatively, run the following Perl script gtwave.app/Contents/Resources/bin/gtwave to process command line arguments from OSX shell scripts.

Note that to pass non-flag items which start with a dash, that it is required to specify -- in order to turn off flag parsing. A second -- will disable parsing of any following arguments such that they can be passed on to Tcl scripts and retrieved via gtwave::getArgv.

Command line options are not necessary for representing the dumpfile, savefile, and rcfile names. They are merely provided to allow specifying them out of order.

## BUGS

AIX requires -bmaxdata:0x80000000 to be added to your list of compiler flags for xlc if you want GTKWave to be able to access more than 256MB of virtual memory. The value shown allows the VMM to use up to 2GB. This may be necessary for very large traces.

Shift and Page operations using the wave window hscrollbar may be non-functional as you move away from the dump start for very large traces. A trace that goes out to 45 billion ticks has been known to exhibit this problem. This stems from using the gfloat element of the horizontal slider to encode the time value for the left margin. The result is a loss of precision for very large values. Use the hotkeys or buttons at the top of the screen if this is a problem.

When running under Cygwin, it is required to enable Cygserver if shared memory IPC is being used. Specifically, this occurs when rtlbrowse(1) is launched as a helper process. See the Cygwin documentation for more

information on how to enable Cygserver.

#### AUTHORS

Anthony Bybell <bybell@rocketmail.com>

#### SEE ALSO

gtkwaverc(5) lxt2vcd(1) vcd2lxt(1) vcd2lxt2(1) vzt2vcd(1) vcd2vzt(1)  
vermin(1) rtlbrowse(1) twinwave(1) shmidcat(1)

Anthony Bybell 3.3.29 GTKWAVE(1)

## fst2vcd

FST2VCD(1) Filetype Conversion FST2VCD(1)

#### NAME

fst2vcd - Converts FST files to VCD

#### SYNTAX

fst2vcd [option]... [FSTFILE]

#### DESCRIPTION

Converts FST files to VCD files on stdout.

#### OPTIONS

-f,--fstname <filename>  
Specify FST input filename.

-o,--output <filename>  
Specify optional VCD output filename.

-e,--extensions  
Emit FST extensions to VCD. Enabling this may create VCD files unreadable by other tools. This is generally intended to be used as a debugging tool when developing FST writer interfaces to simulators.

-h,--help  
Display help then exit.

#### EXAMPLES

To run this program the standard way type:

fst2vcd filename.fst  
The VCD conversion is emitted to stdout.

#### AUTHORS

Anthony Bybell <bybell@rocketmail.com>

#### SEE ALSO

vcd2fst(1) gtkwave(1)

Anthony Bybell 3.3.52 FST2VCD(1)

## **vcd2fst**

VCD2FST(1)

Filetype Conversion

VCD2FST(1)

### NAME

vcd2fst - Converts VCD files to FST files

### SYNTAX

vcd2fst [option]... [VCDFILE] [FSTFILE]

### DESCRIPTION

Converts VCD files to FST files.

### OPTIONS

- v,--vcdname <filename>  
Specify VCD/FSDB/VPD/WLF input filename. Processing of file-types other than VCD requires that the appropriate 2vcd converter was found during ./configure.
- f,--fstname <filename>  
Specify FST output filename.
- 4,--fourpack  
Indicates that LZ4 should be used for value change data (default).
- F,--fastpack  
Indicates that fastlz should be used instead of LZ4 for value change data.
- Z,--zlibpack  
Indicates that zlib should be used instead of LZ4 for value change data.
- c,--compress  
Indicates that the entire file should be run through gzip on close. This results in much smaller files at the expense of a one-time decompression penalty on file open during reads.
- p,--parallel  
Indicates that parallel mode should be enabled. This spawns a worker thread to continue with FST block processing while conversion continues on the main thread for new FST block data.
- h,--help  
Show help screen.

### EXAMPLES

Note that you should specify `dumpfile.vcd` directly or use `"-"` for `stdin`.

```
vcd2fst dumpfile.vcd dumpfile.fst --compress
    This indicates that the FST file should be post-compressed on
    close.
```

#### AUTHORS

Anthony Bybell <bybell@rocketmail.com>

#### SEE ALSO

fst2vcd(1) vcd2lxt(1) vcd2lxt2(1) lxt2vcd(1) vcd2vzt(1) vzt2vcd(1) gtk-wave(1)

Anthony Bybell 3.3.53 VCD2FST(1)

## evcd2vcd

EVCD2VCD(1) Filetype Conversion EVCD2VCD(1)

#### NAME

evcd2vcd - Converts EVCD files to VCD files

#### SYNTAX

evcd2vcd [option]... [EVCDFILE]

#### DESCRIPTION

Converts EVCD files with bidirectional port definitions to VCD files with separate in and out ports.

#### OPTIONS

-f,--filename <filename>  
Specify EVCD input filename.

-h,--help  
Show help screen.

#### EXAMPLES

Note that you should specify dumpfile.vcd directly or use "-" for stdin.

```
evcd2vcd dumpfile.evcd
    VCD is emitted to stdout.
```

#### AUTHORS

Anthony Bybell <bybell@rocketmail.com>

#### SEE ALSO

vcd2fst(1) fst2vcd(1) vcd2lxt(1) vcd2lxt2(1) lxt2vcd(1) vcd2vzt(1) vzt2vcd(1) gtkwave(1)

Anthony Bybell 3.2.2 EVCD2VCD(1)

## **twinwave**

TWINWAVE(1)                      Simulation Wave Viewer Multiplexer                      TWINWAVE(1)

### NAME

twinwave - Wraps multiple GTKWave sessions in one window

### SYNTAX

twinwave <arglist1> <separator> <arglist2>

### DESCRIPTION

Wraps multiple GTKWave sessions with synchronized markers, horizontal scrolling, and zooming.

### EXAMPLES

To run this program the standard way type:

```
twinwave filename1.vcd filename1.sav + filename2.vcd filename2.sav
    Two synchronized viewers are then opened in one window.
```

```
twinwave filename1.vcd filename1.sav ++ filename2.vcd filename2.sav
    Two synchronized viewers are then opened in two windows.
```

### LIMITATIONS

twinwave uses the GtkSocket/GtkPlug mechanism to embed two gtkwave(1) sessions into one window. The amount of coupling is currently limited to communication of temporal information. Other than that, the two gtkwave processes are isolated from each other as if the viewers were spawned separately. Keep in mind that using the same save file for each session may cause unintended behavior problems if the save file is written back to disk: only the session written last will be saved. (i.e., the save file isn't cloned and made unique to each session.) Note that twinwave compiled against Quartz (not X11) on OSX as well as MinGW does not place both sessions in a single window.

### AUTHORS

Anthony Bybell <bybell@rocketmail.com>

### SEE ALSO

gtkwave(1)

Anthony Bybell                      3.3.39                      TWINWAVE(1)

## **lxt2miner**

LXT2MINER(1)                      Dumpfile Data Mining                      LXT2MINER(1)

### NAME

lxt2miner - Data mining of LXT2 files

### SYNTAX

lxt2miner [option]... [LXT2FILE]

#### DESCRIPTION

Mines LXT2 files for specific data values and generates gtkwave save files to stdout for future reload.

#### OPTIONS

- d,--dumpfile <filename>  
Specify LXT2 input dumpfile.
- m,--match <value>  
Specifies "bitwise" match data (binary, real, string)
- x,--hex <value>  
Specifies hexadecimal match data that will automatically be converted to binary for searches
- n,--namesonly  
Indicates that only facnames should be printed in a gtkwave savefile compatible format. By doing this, the file can be used to specify which traces are to be imported into gtkwave.
- c,--comprehensive  
Indicates that results are not to stop after the first match. This can be used to extract all the matching values in the trace.
- h,--help  
Show help screen.

#### EXAMPLES

```
lxt2miner dumpfile.lxt2 --hex 20470000 -n
```

This attempts to match the hex value 20470000 across all facilities and when the value is encountered, the facname only is printed to stdout in order to generate a gtkwave compatible save file.

#### LIMITATIONS

lxt2miner only prints the first time a value is encountered for a specific net. This is done in order to cut down on the size of output files and to aid in following data such as addresses through a simulation model.

#### AUTHORS

Anthony Bybell <bybell@rocketmail.com>

#### SEE ALSO

vztminer(1) vzt2vcd(1) lxt2vcd(1) vcd2lxt2(1) gtkwave(1)

Anthony Bybell

3.2.1

LXT2MINER(1)



## **lxt2vcd**

LXT2VCD(1) Filetype Conversion LXT2VCD(1)

### NAME

lxt2vcd - Converts LXT2 files to VCD

### SYNTAX

lxt2vcd <filename>

### DESCRIPTION

Converts LXT2 files to VCD files on stdout. Note that "regular" LXT2 files will convert to VCD files with monotonically increasing time values. LXT2 files which are dumped with the "partial" option (to speed up access in wave viewers) will dump with monotonically increasing time values per 2k block of nets. This may be fixed in later versions of lxt2vcd.

### EXAMPLES

To run this program the standard way type:

```
lxt2vcd filename.lxt
```

The VCD conversion is emitted to stdout.

### LIMITATIONS

lxt2vcd does not re-create glitches as these are coalesced together into one value change during the writing of the LXT2 file.

### AUTHORS

Anthony Bybell <bybell@rocketmail.com>

### SEE ALSO

vcd2lxt2(1) vcd2lxt(1) gtkwave(1)

Anthony Bybell 1.3.64 LXT2VCD(1)

## **rtlbrowse**

RTL BrowSE(1) File Viewing RTL BrowSE(1)

### NAME

rtlbrowse - Allows hierarchical browsing of Verilog HDL source code and library design files.

### SYNTAX

rtlbrowse <stemfilename>

### DESCRIPTION

Allows hierarchical browsing of Verilog HDL source code and library design files. Navigation through the hierarchy may be done by clicking open areas of the tree widget and clicking on the individual levels of

hierarchy. Inside the source code, selecting the module instantiation name by double clicking or selecting part of the name through drag-clicking will descend deeper into the RTL hierarchy. Note that it performs optional source code annotation when called as a helper application by `gtkwave(1)` and when the primary marker is set. Source code annotation is not available for all supported dumpfile types. It is directly available for LXT2, VZT, FST, and AET2. For VCD, use the `-o,--optimize` option of `gtkwave(1)` in order to optimize the VCD file into FST. All other dumpfile types (LXT, GHW) are unsupported at this time.

## EXAMPLES

To run this program the standard way type:

```
rtlbrowse stemsfile
```

The RTL is then brought up in a GTK tree viewer. Stems must have been previously generated with `vermin(1)`. Note that `gtkwave(1)` will bring up this program as a client application for source code annotation. It does that by bringing up the viewer with the shared memory ID of a segment of memory in the viewer rather than using a stems filename.

## AUTHORS

Anthony Bybell <bybell@rocketmail.com>

## SEE ALSO

`vermin(1)` `gtkwave(1)`

Anthony Bybell

3.3.28

RTL BrowSe(1)

## **vcd2lxt**

VCD2LXT(1)

Filetype Conversion

VCD2LXT(1)

## NAME

`vcd2lxt` - Converts VCD files to interlaced or linear LXT files

## SYNTAX

`vcd2lxt` [VCDFILE] [LXTFILE] [option]...

## DESCRIPTION

Converts VCD files to interlaced or linear LXT files. Noncompressed interlaced files will provide the fastest access, linear files will provide the slowest yet have the greatest compression ratios.

## OPTIONS

`-stats` Prints out statistics on all nets in VCD file in addition to performing the conversion.

`-clockpack`

Apply two-way subtraction algorithm in order to identify nets

whose value changes by a constant XOR or whose value increases/decreases by a constant amount per constant unit of time. This option can reduce dumpfile size dramatically as value changes can be represented by an equation rather than explicitly as a triple of time, net, and value.

**-chgpak**

Emit data to file after being filtered through zlib (gzip).

**-linear**

Write out LXT in "linear" format with no backpointers. These are re-generated during initialization in gtkwave. Additionally, use libbz2 (bzip2) as the compression filter.

**-dictpack <size>**

Store value changes greater than or equal to size bits as an index into a dictionary. Experimentation shows that a value of 18 is optimal for most cases.

**EXAMPLES**

Note that you should specify dumpfile.vcd directly or use "-" for stdin.

```
vcd2lxt dumpfile.vcd dumpfile.lxt -clockpack -chgpak -dictpack 18
```

This turns on clock packing, zlib compression, and enables the dictionary encoding. Note that using no options writes out a normal LXT file.

```
vcd2lxt dumpfile.vcd dumpfile.lxt -clockpack -linear -dictpack 18
```

Uses linear mode for even smaller files.

**AUTHORS**

Anthony Bybell <bybell@rocketmail.com>

## **vcd2lxt2**

VCD2LXT2(1)	Filetype Conversion	VCD2LXT2(1)
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**NAME**

vcd2lxt2 - Converts VCD files to LXT2 files

**SYNTAX**

vcd2lxt2 [option]... [VCDFILE] [LXTFILE]

**DESCRIPTION**

Converts VCD files to LXT2 files.

**OPTIONS**

-v, --vcdname <filename>  
Specify VCD input filename.

-l,--lxtname <filename>  
Specify LXT2 output filename.

-d,--depth <value>  
Specify 0..9 gzip compression depth, default is 4.

-m,--maxgranule <value>  
Specify number of granules per section, default is 8. One granule is equal to 32 timesteps.

-b,--break <value>  
Specify break size (default = 0 = off). When the break size is exceeded, the LXT2 dumper will dump all state information at the next convenient granule plus dictionary boundary.

-p,--partialmode <mode>  
Specify partial zip mode 0 = monolithic, 1 = separation. Using a value of 1 expands LXT2 filesize but provides fast access for very large traces. Note that the default mode is neither monolithic nor separation: partial zip is disabled.

-c,--checkpoint <mode>  
Specify checkpoint mode. 0 is on which is default, and 1 is off. This is disabled when the break size is active.

-h,--help  
Show help screen.

#### EXAMPLES

Note that you should specify `dumpfile.vcd` directly or use `"-"` for `stdin`.

```
vcd2lxt dumpfile.vcd dumpfile.lxt --depth 9 --break 1073741824
```

This sets the compression level to 9 and sets the break size to 1GB.

```
vcd2lxt dumpfile.vcd dumpfile.lxt --depth 9 --maxgranule 256
```

Allows more granules per section which allows for greater compression.

#### LIMITATIONS

`vcd2lxt2` does not store glitches as these are coalesced together into one value change during the writing of the LXT2 file.

#### AUTHORS

Anthony Bybell <bybell@rocketmail.com>

#### SEE ALSO

`lxt2vcd(1)` `vcd2lxt2(1)` `gtkwave(1)`

Anthony Bybell

1.3.42

VCD2LXT2(1)

## **vcd2vzt**

VCD2VZT(1) Filetype Conversion VCD2VZT(1)

### NAME

vcd2vzt - Converts VCD files to VZT files

### SYNTAX

vcd2vzt [option]... [VCDFILE] [VZTFILE]

### DESCRIPTION

Converts VCD files to VZT files.

### OPTIONS

- v,--vcdname <filename>  
Specify VCD input filename.
- l,--vztname <filename>  
Specify VZT output filename.
- d,--depth <value>  
Specify 0..9 gzip compression depth, default is 4.
- m,--maxgranule <value>  
Specify number of granules per section, default is 8. One granule is equal to 32 timesteps.
- b,--break <value>  
Specify break size (default = 0 = off). When the break size is exceeded, the VZT dumper will dump all state information at the next convenient granule plus dictionary boundary.
- z,--ziptype <value>  
Specify zip type (default = 0 gzip, 1 = bzip2, 2 = lzma). This allows you to override the default compression algorithm to use a more effective one at the expense of greater runtime. Note that bzip2 does not decompress as fast as gzip so the viewer will be about two times slower when decompressing blocks.
- t,--twostate  
Forces MVL2 twostate mode (default is MVL4). When enabled, the trace will only store 0/1 values for binary facilities. This is useful for functional simulation and will speed up dumping as well as make traces somewhat smaller.
- r, --rle  
Uses an bitwise RLE compression on the value table. Default is off. When enabled, this causes the trace data table to be stored using an alternate representation which can improve compression in many cases.

```
-h, --help
    Show help screen.
```

## EXAMPLES

Note that you should specify `dumpfile.vcd` directly or use `"-"` for `stdin`.

```
vcd2vzt dumpfile.vcd dumpfile.lxt --depth 9 --break 1073741824
```

This sets the compression level to 9 and sets the break size to 1GB.

```
vcd2vzt dumpfile.vcd dumpfile.lxt --depth 9 --maxgranule 512
```

Allows more granules per section which allows for greater compression at the expense of memory usage.

## LIMITATIONS

vcd2vzt does not store glitches as these are coalesced together into one value change during the writing of the VZT file.

## AUTHORS

Anthony Bybell <[bybell@rocketmail.com](mailto:bybell@rocketmail.com)>

SEE ALSO

vzt2vcd(1) lxt2vcd(1) vcd2lxt2(1) gtkwave(1)

Anthony Bybell	3.1.21	VCD2VZT(1)
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## vermin

```
vermin(1)                               Verilog Compilation                               vermin(1)
```

## NAME

```
vermin - Parses and processes Verilog HDL files
```

## SYNTAX

```
vermin [VERILOGFILE]... [option]...
```

## DESCRIPTION

Parses Verilog HDL files for use by other tools. The Verilog grammar used is 1364-1995.

## OPTIONS

```
-h[elp]      Prints out help screen.
```

```
-emitmono fname
    Emit monolithic (parser view of) file to fname.
```

```
-emitstems
    Emit source code stems to stdout.
```

-emitvars  
Emit source code variables to stdout.

-Dx=y Equivalent to `define X Y in source.

+define+x=y  
Equivalent to `define X Y in source.

+incdir+dirname  
Add dirname to include search path.

+libext+ext  
Add ext to filename when searching for files.

-pragma name  
Add name (synopsys, verilint, vermin) to accepted pragmas.

-y dirname  
Add directory dirname to source input path.

-yi dirname  
Add directory dirname to source input path (case insensitive search).

-f filename  
Insert args from filename. Does not work recursively.

#### EXAMPLES

The following indicates that the library extension is .v and that the include directory is the current working directory and that the library directory is also the current working directory. Stems generation is enabled to generate a stems file for use with other tools. Various compile-time defines are also defined on the command line.

```
vermin XYZ450AC6V1.v -emitstems -y . +incdir+. +libext+.v -DUTLB_Out-
putData=0 -D__PORTALS_VERILOG__
```

#### AUTHORS

Anthony Bybell <bybell@rocketmail.com>

#### SEE ALSO

rtlbrowse(1) gtkwave(1)

Anthony Bybell

0.1.1

vermin(1)

## vzt2vcd

VZT2VCD(1)

Filetype Conversion

VZT2VCD(1)

#### NAME

vzt2vcd - Converts VZT files to VCD

#### SYNTAX

vzt2vcd <filename>

#### DESCRIPTION

Converts VZT files to VCD files on stdout.

#### EXAMPLES

To run this program the standard way type:

vzt2vcd filename.vzt

The VCD conversion is emitted to stdout.

#### LIMITATIONS

vzt2vcd does not re-create glitches as these are coalesced together into one value change during the writing of the VZT file.

#### AUTHORS

Anthony Bybell <bybell@rocketmail.com>

#### SEE ALSO

vcd2lxt2(1) vcd2lxt(1) lxt2vcd(1) gtkwave(1)

Anthony Bybell

1.3.44

VZT2VCD(1)

## **vztminer**

VZTMINER(1)

Dumpfile Data Mining

VZTMINER(1)

#### NAME

vztminer - Data mining of VZT files

#### SYNTAX

vztminer [option]... [VZTFILE]

#### DESCRIPTION

Mines VZT files for specific data values and generates gtkwave save files to stdout for future reload.

#### OPTIONS

-d,--dumpfile <filename>  
Specify VZT input dumpfile.

-m,--match <value>  
Specifies "bitwise" match data (binary, real, string)

-x,--hex <value>  
Specifies hexadecimal match data that will automatically be converted to binary for searches

-n,--namesonly



Indicates that only facnames should be printed in a gtkwave savefile compatible format. By doing this, the file can be used to specify which traces are to be imported into gtkwave.

-c,--comprehensive

Indicates that results are not to stop after the first match. This can be used to extract all the matching values in the trace.

-h,--help

Show help screen.

#### EXAMPLES

```
vztminer dumpfile.vzt --hex 20470000 -n
```

This attempts to match the hex value 20470000 across all facilities and when the value is encountered, the facname only is printed to stdout in order to generate a gtkwave compatible save file.

#### LIMITATIONS

vztminer only prints the first time a value is encountered for a specific net. This is done in order to cut down on the size of output files and to aid in following data such as addresses through a simulation model.

#### AUTHORS

Anthony Bybell <bybell@rocketmail.com>

#### SEE ALSO

lxt2miner(1) vzt2vcd(1) lxt2vcd(1) vcd2lxt2(1) gtkwave(1)

Anthony Bybell

3.2.1

VZTMINER(1)

## shmidcat

SHMIDCAT(1)

Shared Memory Trampoline

SHMIDCAT(1)

#### NAME

shmidcat - Copies stdin/file to a shared memory block for gtkwave(1)

#### SYNTAX

shmidcat [VCDFILE]

#### DESCRIPTION

Copies either the file specified at the command line or stdin (if no file specified) line by line to a shared memory block. stdout will contain a shared memory ID which should be passed on to gtkwave(1).

#### EXAMPLES

To run this program the standard way type:



to specify which traces are to be imported into gtkwave.

-c,--comprehensive

Indicates that results are not to stop after the first match. This can be used to extract all the matching values in the trace.

-h,--help

Show help screen.

#### EXAMPLES

```
fstminer dumpfile.fst --hex 20470000 -n
```

This attempts to match the hex value 20470000 across all facilities and when the value is encountered, the facname only is printed to stdout in order to generate a gtkwave compatible save file.

#### LIMITATIONS

fstminer only prints the first time a value is encountered for a specific net. This is done in order to cut down on the size of output files and to aid in following data such as addresses through a simulation model.

#### AUTHORS

Anthony Bybell <bybell@rocketmail.com>

#### SEE ALSO

vztminer(1) lxt2miner(1) fst2vcd(1) vcd2fst2(1) gtkwave(1)

Anthony Bybell

3.3.38

FSTMINER(1)



## Appendix B: .gtkwaverc Variable Reference

A difference in Windows to be aware of is that the default (if unspecified) *.gtkwaverc* file is known as *gtkwave.ini* and resides in the current working directory.

GTKWAVERC(5)                      GTKWave Configuration File                      GTKWAVERC(5)

### NAME

gtkwaverc - GTKWave Configuration File

### SYNTAX

option <value>

The configuration file is a series of option and value pairs. Comment lines marked with an initial '#' character are permissible. Blank lines are ignored.

### DESCRIPTION

Configuration file for gtwave(1). The search path for the configuration file (if unspecified) is the current working directory followed by the user's home directory.

### OPTIONS

accel <"pathvalue" accelerator>

This allows replacement of menu accelerator keys. See the *.gtkwaverc* file in the source distribution for examples on pathvalue and accelerator syntax. The special accelerator value of (null) means that no accelerator is bound to the menu item.

alt\_hier\_delimeter <value>

This allows another character in addition to the hier\_delimeter to be used to delimit levels in the hierarchy for VCD. Only the first character in the value is significant. Note that this is normally off. The intended use is to resolve the hierarchies of netlist based models that often contain slashes to delimit hierarchy inside of \$var statements.

`alt_wheel_mode <value>`  
 Default is on. Scrollwheel alone pans along a quarter at a time rather than a full page, so you don't get lost. Ctrl+wheel zooms in/out around the mouse cursor position, not the marker position. Alt+wheel edges left/right based on the currently selected signal. This makes measuring deltas easier.

`analog_redraw_skip_count <value>`  
 Specifies how many overlapping analog segments can be drawn for a given X position onscreen. (Default: 20) If there are gaps in analog traces, this value is too low.

`append_vcd_hier <value>`  
 Allows the specification of a prefix hierarchy for VCD files. This can be done in "pieces," so that multiple layers of hierarchy are prepended to symbol names with the most significant addition occurring first (see `.gtkwaverc` in the `examples/vcd` directory). The intended use of this is to have the ability to add "project" prefixes which allow easier selection of everything from the tree hierarchy.

`atomic_vectors <value>`  
 Speeds up vcd loading and takes up less memory. This option is deprecated; it is currently the default.

`autocoalesce <value>`  
 A nonzero value enables autocoalescing of VCD vectors when applicable. This may be toggled dynamically during wave viewer usage.

`autocoalesce_reversal <value>`  
 causes split vectors to be reconstructed in reverse order (only if autocoalesce is also active).

`autoname_bundles <value>`  
 A nonzero value indicates that GTKWave will create its own bundle names rather than prompting the user for them.

`color_0 <value>`  
 trace color when 0.

`color_1 <value>`  
 trace color when 1.

`color_back <value>`  
 background color.

`color_brkred <value>`  
 brick red color for comments.

`color_black <value>`  
 color value for "black" in signal window.

`color_black <value>`  
 color value for "black" in signal window.

`color_dash <value>`  
 trace color when don't care ("-").

`color_dashfill <value>`  
 trace color (inside of box) when don't care ("-").

`color_dkblue <value>`  
 color value for "dark blue" in signal window.

`color_dkgray <value>`  
 color value for "dark gray" in signal window.

`color_gmstrd <value>`  
 color value for trace groupings.

`color_grid <value>`  
 grid color (use Alt-G/Shift-Alt-G to show/hide grid). This is also the color used for `highlight_wavewindow` when enabled.

`color_grid2 <value>`  
 grid color for secondary pattern search.

`color_high <value>`  
 trace color when high ("H").

`color_low <value>`  
 trace color when low ("L").

`color_ltblue <value>`  
 color value for shadowed traces.

`color_ltgray <value>`  
 color value for "light gray" in signal window.

`color_mark <value>`  
 color of the named markers.

`color_mdgray <value>`  
 color value for "medium gray" in signal window.

`color_mid <value>`  
 trace color when floating ("Z").

`color_normal <value>`  
 color value for "normal" GTK state in signal window.

`color_time <value>`  
 text color for timebar.

`color_timeb <value>`  
 text color for timebar's background.

`color_trans <value>`  
 trace color when transitioning.

`color_u <value>`  
 trace color when undefined ("U").

`color_ufill <value>`  
 trace color (inside of box) when undefined ("U").

`color_umark <value>`  
 color of the unnamed (primary) marker.

`color_value <value>`  
 text color for vector values.

`color_vbox <value>`  
 vector color (horizontal).

`color_vtrans <value>`  
 vector color (verticals/transitions).

`color_w <value>`  
 trace color when weak ("W").

`color_wfill <value>`  
 trace color (inside of box) when weak ("W").

`color_white <value>`  
 color value for "white" in signal window.

`color_x <value>`  
 trace color when undefined ("X") (collision for VHDL).

`color_xfill <value>`  
 trace color (inside of box) when undefined ("X") (collision for VHDL).

`constant_marker_update <value>`  
 A nonzero value indicates that the values for traces listed in the signal window are to be updated constantly when the left mouse button is being held down rather than only when it is first pressed then when released (which is the default).

`context_tabposition <value>`  
 Use zero for tabbed viewing with named tabs at the top. Nonzero places numerically indexed tabs at the left.

`convert_to_reals <value>`  
 Converts all integer and parameter VCD declarations to real-valued ones when set to a nonzero/yes value. The positive aspect of this is that integers and parameters will take up less space in memory and will automatically display in decimal format. The negative aspect of this is that integers and parameters will only be displayable as decimals and can't be bit reversed, inverted, etc.

`cursor_snap <value>`  
 A nonzero value indicates the number of pixels the marker should



snap to for the nearest signal transition.

`disable_ae2_alias <value>`

A nonzero value indicates that the AE2 loader is to ignore the aliasdb keyword and is not to construct facility aliases.

`disable_empty_gui <value>`

A nonzero value indicates that if gtkwave is invoked without a dumpfile name, then an empty gtkwave session is to be suppressed. Default is a zero value: to bring up an empty session which needs a file loaded or dragged into it.

`disable_mouseover <value>`

A nonzero value indicates that signal/value tooltip pop up bubbles on mouse button presses should be disabled in the value window. A zero value indicates that value tooltips should be active. (default is disabled).

`disable_tooltips <value>`

A nonzero value indicates that tooltip pop up bubbles should be disabled. A zero value indicates that tooltips should be active (default).

`do_initial_zoom_fit <value>`

A nonzero value indicates that the trace should initially be crunched to fit the screen. A zero value indicates that the initial zoom should be zero (default).

`dragzoom_threshold <value>`

A nonzero value indicates the number of pixels in the x direction the marker must move in order for a dragzoom to be triggered. This is largely to handle noisy input devices.

`dynamic_resizing <value>`

A nonzero value indicates that dynamic resizing should be initially enabled (default). A zero value indicates that dynamic resizing should be initially disabled.

`editor <"value">`

This is used to specify a string (quotes mandatory) for when gtkwave invokes a text editor (e.g., Open Source Definition). Examples are: editor "vimx -g +%d %s", editor "gedit +%d %s", editor "emacs +%d %s", and for OSX, editor "mate -l %d %s". The %d may be combined with other characters in a string such as +, etc. The %s argument must stand by itself. Note that if this rc variable is not set, then the environment variable GTKWAVE\_EDITOR will be consulted next, then finally gedit will be used (if found).

`enable_fast_exit <value>`

Allows exit without bringing up a confirmation requester.

`enable_ghost_marker <value>`

lets the user turn on/off the ghost marker during primary marker dragging. Default is enabled.

`enable_horiz_grid <value>`  
 A nonzero value indicates that when grid drawing is enabled, horizontal lines are to be drawn. This is the default.

`enable_vcd_autosave <value>`  
 causes the vcd loader to automatically generate a .sav file (vcd\_autosave.sav) in the cwd if a save file is not specified on the command line. Note that this mirrors the VCD \$var defs and no attempt is made to coalesce split bitvectors back together.

`enable_vert_grid <value>`  
 A nonzero value indicates that when grid drawing is enabled, vertical lines are to be drawn. This is the default. Note that all possible combinations of `enable_horiz_grid` and `enable_vert_grid` values are acceptable.

`fontname_logfile <value>`  
 When followed by an argument, this indicates the name of the X11 font that you wish to use for the logfile browser. You may generate appropriate fontnames using the `xfontsel` program.

`fontname_signals <value>`  
 When followed by an argument, this indicates the name of the X11 font that you wish to use for signals. You may generate appropriate fontnames using the `xfontsel` program.

`fontname_waves <value>`  
 When followed by an argument, this indicates the name of the X11 font that you wish to use for waves. You may generate appropriate fontnames using the `xfontsel` program. Note that the signal font must be taller than the wave font or the viewer will complain then terminate.

`force_toolbars <value>`  
 When enabled, this forces everything above the signal and wave windows to be rendered as toolbars. This allows for them to be detached which allows for more usable wave viewer space. By default this is off.

`hide_sst <value>`  
 Hides the Signal Search Tree widget for GTK2.4 and greater such that it is not embedded into the main viewer window. It is still reachable as an external widget through the menus.

`hier_delimiter <value>`  
 This allows characters other than '/' to be used to delimit levels in the hierarchy. Only the first character in the value is significant.

`hier_ignore_escapes <value>`  
 A nonzero value indicates that the signal pane ignores escapes in identifiers when determining the hierarchy maximum depth. Default is disabled so that escapes are examined.

**hier\_grouping <value>**  
 For the tree widgets, this allows the hierarchies to be grouped in a single place rather than spread among the netnames.

**hier\_max\_level <value>**  
 Sets the maximum hierarchy depth (from the right side) to display for trace names. Note that a value of zero displays the full hierarchy name.

**highlight\_wavewindow <value>**  
 When enabled, this causes traces highlighted in the signal window also to be highlighted in the wave window.

**hpane\_pack <value>**  
 A nonzero value indicates that the horizontal pane should be constructed using the `gtk_paned_pack` functions (default and recommended). A zero value indicates that `gtk_paned_add` will be used instead.

**ignore\_savefile\_pane\_pos <value>**  
 If nonzero, specifies that the pane position attributes (i.e., signal window width size, SST is expanded, etc.) are to be ignored during savefile loading and is to be skipped during saving. Default is that the attribute is used.

**ignore\_savefile\_pos <value>**  
 If nonzero, specifies that the window position attribute is to be ignored during savefile loading and is to be skipped during saving. Default is that the position attribute is used.

**ignore\_savefile\_size <value>**  
 If nonzero, specifies that the window size attribute is to be ignored during savefile loading and is to be skipped during saving. Default is that the size attribute is used.

**initial\_signal\_window\_width <value>**  
 Sets the creation width for the signal pane on GUI initialization. Also sets another potential minimum value for dynamic resizing.

**initial\_window\_x <value>**  
 Sets the size of the initial width of the wave viewer window. Values less than or equal to zero will set the initial width equal to -1 which will let GTK determine the minimum size.

**initial\_window\_xpos <value>**  
 Sets the size of the initial x coordinate of the wave viewer window. -1 which will let the window manager determine the position.

**initial\_window\_y <value>**  
 Sets the size of the initial height of the wave viewer window. Values less than or equal to zero will set the initial width equal to -1 which will let GTK determine the minimum size.

`initial_window_ypos <value>`  
 Sets the size of the initial y coordinate of the wave viewer window. -1 which will let the window manager determine the position.

`keep_xz_colors <value>`  
 When nonzero, indicates that the original color scheme for non 0/1 signal values is to be used when Color Format overrides are in effect. Default is off.

`left_justify_sigs <value>`  
 When nonzero, indicates that the signal window signal name justification should default to left, else the justification is to the right (default).

`lxt_clock_compress_to_z <value>`  
 For LXT (not LXT2) allows clocks to compress to a 'z' value so that regular/periodic value changes may be noted.

`page_divisor <value>`  
 Sets the scroll amount for page left and right operations. (The buttons, not the hscrollbar.) Values over 1.0 are taken as 1/x and values equal to and less than 1.0 are taken literally. (i.e., 2 gives a half-page scroll and .67 gives 2/3). The default is 1.0.

`ruler_origin <value>`  
 sets the zero origin for alternate time tick marks.

`ruler_step <value>`  
 sets the left/right step value for the alternate time tick marks from the origin. When this value is zero, alternate time tick marks are disabled.

`ps_maxveclen <value>`  
 sets the maximum number of characters that can be printed for a value in the signal window portion of a postscript file (not including the net name itself). Legal values are 4 through 66 (default).

`scale_to_time_dimension <value>`  
 The value can be any of the characters m, u, n, f, p, or s, which indicates which time dimension to convert the time values to. The default for this is \* which means that time dimension conversion is disabled.

`show_base_symbols <value>`  
 A nonzero value (default) indicates that the numeric base symbols for hexadecimal ('\$'), binary ('%'), and octal ('#') should be rendered. Otherwise they will be omitted.

`show_grid <value>`  
 A nonzero value (default) indicates that a grid should be drawn behind the traces. A zero indicates that no grid should be

drawn.

`splash_disable <value>`

Turning this off enables the splash screen with the GTKWave mascot when loading a trace. Default is on.

`sst_dynamic_filter <value>`

When true (default) allows the SST dialog signal filter to filter signals while keys are being pressed, otherwise enter must be pressed to cause the filter to go active.

`sst_expanded <value>`

When true allows the SST dialog (when not hidden) to come up already expanded.

`strace_repeat_count <value>`

Determines how many times that edge search and pattern search will iterate on a search. This allows, for example, skipping ahead 10 clock edges instead of 1.

`use_big_fonts <value>`

A nonzero value indicates that any text rendered into the wave window will use fonts that are four points larger in size than normal. This can enhance readability. A zero value indicates that normal font sizes should be used.

`use_frequency_delta <value>`

allows you to switch between the delta time and frequency display in the upper right corner of the main window when measuring distances between markers. Default behavior is that the delta time is displayed (off).

`use_full_precision <value>`

does not round time values when the number of ticks per pixel onscreen is greater than 10 when active. The default is that this feature is disabled.

`use_maxtime_display <value>`

A nonzero value indicates that the maximum time will be displayed in the upper right corner of the screen. Otherwise, the current primary (unnamed) marker time will be displayed. This can be toggled at any time with the Toggle Max-Marker menu option.

`use_nonprop_fonts <value>`

Allows accelerated redraws of the signalwindow that can be done because the font width is constant. Default is off.

`use_pango_fonts <value>`

Uses anti-aliased pango fonts (GTK2) rather than bitmapped X11 ones. Default is on.

`use_roundcaps <value>`

A nonzero value indicates that vector traces should be drawn with rounded caps rather than perpendicular ones. The default

for this is zero.

`use_scrollbar_only <value>`

A nonzero value indicates that the page, shift, fetch, and discard buttons should not be drawn (i.e., time manipulations should be through the scrollbar only rather than front panel buttons). The default for this is zero.

`use_scrollwheel_as_y <value>`

A nonzero value indicates that the scroll wheel on the mouse should be used to scroll the signals up and down rather than scrolling the time value from left to right.

`use_standard_clicking <value>`

This option no longer has any effect in gtkwave: normal GTK click semantics are used in the signalwindow.

`use_toolbutton_interface <value>`

A nonzero value indicates that a toolbar with buttons should be at the top of the screen instead of the traditional style gtk-wave button groups. Default is on.

`vcd_explicit_zero_subscripts <value>`

indicates that signal names should be stored internally as `name.bitnumber` when enabled. When disabled, a more "normal" ordering of `name[bitnumber]` is used. Note that when disabled, the Bundle Up and Bundle Down options are disabled in the Signal Search Regexp, Signal Search Hierarchy, and Signal Search Tree options. This is necessary as the internal data structures for signals are represented with one "less" level of hierarchy than when enabled and those functions would not work properly. This should not be an issue if `atomic_vectors` are enabled. Default for `vcd_explicit_zero_subscripts` is disabled.

`vcd_preserve_glitches <value>`

indicates that any repeat equal values for a net spanning different time values in the VCD/FST file are not to be compressed into a single value change but should remain in order to allow glitches to be present for this case. Default for `vcd_preserve_glitches` is disabled.

`vcd_preserve_glitches_real <value>`

indicates that any repeat equal values for a real net spanning different time values in the VCD/FST file are not to be compressed into a single value change but should remain for this case. Default for `vcd_preserve_glitches` is disabled. The intended use is for when viewing analog interpolated data such that removing duplicate values would incorrectly deform the interpolation.

`vcd_warning_filesize <value>`

produces a warning message if the VCD filesize is greater than the argument's size in MB. Set to zero to disable this.

`vector_padding <value>`

indicates the number of pixels of extra whitespace that should be added to any strings for the purpose of calculating text in vectors. Permissible values are 0 to 16 with the default being 4.

`vlist_compression <value>`

indicates the value to pass to zlib during vlist processing (which is used in the VCD recoder). -1 disables compression, 0-9 correspond to the value zlib expects. 4 is default.

`vlist_prepack <value>`

indicates that the VCD recoder should pre-compress data going into the value change vlists in order to reduce memory usage. This is done before potential zlib packing. Default is off.

`vlist_spill <value>`

indicates that the VCD recoder should spill all generated vlists to a tempfile on disk in order to reduce memory usage. Default is off.

`wave_scrolling <value>`

a nonzero value enables scrolling by dragging the marker off the left or right sides of the wave window. A zero value disables it.

`zoom_base <value>`

allows setting of the zoom base with a value between 1.5 and 10.0. Default is 2.0.

`zoom_center <value>`

a nonzero value enables center zooming, a zero value disables it.

`zoom_dynamic <value>`

a nonzero value enables dynamic full zooming when using the partial VCD (incremental) loader, a zero value disables it.

`zoom_dynamic_end <value>`

a nonzero value enables dynamic zoom to the end when using the partial VCD (incremental) loader, a zero value disables it.

`zoom_pow10_snap <value>`

corresponds to the Zoom Pow10 Snap menu option. Default for this is disabled (zero).

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#### SEE ALSO

`gtkwave(1)`

Anthony Bybell

3.2.0

GTKWAVERC(5)





# Appendix C: VCD Recoding

## VList Recoding Strategy

VCD files can now be recoded in gtkwave on a per-signal basis using a modified form of VList. The VList structure used by gtkwave is as follows:

```
struct vlist_t
{
    struct vlist_t *next;
    unsigned int siz;
    int offs;
    unsigned int elem_siz;
};
```

The `elem_siz` is always equal to 1 byte. For the first structure, the `siz` field is 1. For the next one, it will be 2, then 4, and so forth. Given this doubling property, this structure allows a dynamically growing *indexable* array. The `offs` field is a pointer to the next element to be written to the array. It starts at zero. When the `offs` value is equal to `siz`, another VList is prepended in front of the existing one. Note that the `siz` number of elements are allocated directly after the `vlist_t` structure, so the first element can be found by skipping `sizeof(vlist_t)` bytes from the start of the `vlist_t` structure.

When a new `vlist_t` is prepended in front of an old one, a compaction of the data elements following the old `vlist_t` is attempted with `zlib` when the number of bytes to compact is 64 or greater. If the compaction results in a savings of space, the uncompressed `vlist_t` is discarded and the compressed one is kept. To signify that a particular `vlist_t` is compressed, the `offs` field is negated. (Thus, when accessing the list later, a negative offset indicates that the `vlist_t` structure in question is compressed.) Note that for a given VList, it is possible

that there will be both compressed and uncompressed `vlist_t` structures, and this will have to be taken into account when they are accessed later.

When a `vlist_t` is finalized (i.e., when no more elements are to be added to it), a compression is attempted. If that fails (i.e., not appreciable size savings), a naive truncation of the unused bytes  $(\text{siz} - \text{offs}) * \text{elem\_siz}$  is done. Given the nature of the data in this list, compression usually succeeds.

These VList structures remain dormant in memory in their (possibly) compressed form until they are needed to be accessed. At that time they are decompressed (if required), traversed, and destroyed as they will no longer be needed. The actual data contained in the memory area following the `vlist_t` structures to represent VHDL/Verilog value changes will now be described.

## Time Encoding

Along with the value changes, an uncompressed VList of 64-bit integers is also generated as time values are parsed from the VCD file. (i.e., lines of the form "#1000") As the time values are added to that VList, a numerical index (zeroth, first, second) is maintained separately that indicates what the current time index is.

The reason for maintaining a list of indices is so that value changes can be encoded as relative distances in this list rather than actual 64-bit integers.

## Single-bit Encoding

Single bit value changes are encoded as a variable length integer of the format  $(\text{delta} < 2) | (\text{zero\_one\_bit} < 1)$  when the value is zero or one, or  $(\text{delta} < 4) | \text{rcv\_bit\_value}$  for all other bit values.

The "delta" value represents how many timesteps in the VCD file have taken place since the previous value change for a signal. Look at the following for an example:

#1000	clk = 0	index = n
#1001		n + 1
#1010		n + 2

```
#1013          n + 3
#1100 clk = 1    n + 4
```

...so for the value change on `clk` at time `#1100`, the delta is 4.

The `rcv_bit_value` when the bit value is not zero or one is encoded as the position numbered 0-7 in the string "XZHUWL-?" multiplied by 2 with one added to the result. (i.e., 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15)

The variable length integer is generated with the following algorithm. It shifts the value out seven bits at a time and sets the high bit on the last byte of the variable length integer:

```
unsigned int v;  // value
char *pnt;      // destination pointer

while((nxt = v>>7))
{
    *(pnt++) = (v&0x7f);
    v = nxt;
}

*pnt = (v&0x7f) | 0x80;
```

Using this scheme, most value changes can be encoded in one or two (uncompressed) bytes. For the example above, the tuple (4, '1') encodes into an integer as:

```
(4<<2) | (1<<1) = 0x12
```

As a variable length integer, it is stored as a single (uncompressed) byte 0x92.

## Multi-bit Encoding

Multiple bits are encoded as a variable length integer representing the time delta (without any left shifting), and immediately after that a reformatted string is encoded as packed nybbles against the MVL9 string "0XZ1HUWL-". As multi-bit strings can be of any length, the value of 15 is used to signify the end of string marker. An example:

```
#1000 val = 1010 index = n
#1001          n + 1
```

```
#1010          n + 2
#1013          n + 3
#1100 val = 1zz0      n + 4
```

Thus, the tuple (4, "1ZZ0") at time #1100 is encoded bitwise as:

```
0x84 [variable length integer for delta of 4]
0x32 ["1Z": "0XZ1HUWL-"[3], "0XZ1HUWL-"[2]]
0x20 ["Z0": "0XZ1HUWL-"[2], "0XZ1HUWL-"[0]]
0xf0 [end of string marker + nybble pad to byte boundary]
```

For longer strings, this provides a 2:1 space compaction prior to calling zlib.

## Reals and String Encoding

They are stored simply as (delta, null terminated string) without any re-encoding of the real or string from its ASCII representation. So for the value (4, "3.14159"), it is encoded bitwise as

```
0x84 [variable length integer for delta of 4]
0x33 0x2e 0x31 0x34 0x31 0x35 0x39 0x00 ["3.14159" with null termination]
```

## Final Notes on VCD Recoding

Even with zlib compression disabled (which gtkwave allows for performance), the memory usage savings are substantial. There are several reasons for this:

- Storing VCD identifiers is completely unnecessary as the value change data is routed to its appropriate VList. Hence, the identifier implicitly is represented by the VList itself.
- Single-bit changes can be represented in only one or two bytes in most cases.
- Multi-bit changes can be represented with slightly less than half the amount of memory required normally (as the VCD identifier is no longer required).
- The amount of "next" pointers required per-VList is  $\lg(n)$  bytes). This allows a low overhead even when having a large number of active growable VList "streams" in memory at once.

- VList truncation when the lists are finalized at the end of the VCD file read ensure that unused VList space is returned to the operating system.



# Appendix D: LXT File Format

## LXT Framing

The three most important values in an LXT(interLaced eXtensible Trace) file are the following:

```
#define LT_HDRID (0x0138)
#define LT_VERSION (0x0001)
#define LT_TRLID (0xB4)
```

An LXT file starts with a two byte LT\_HDRID with the two byte version number LT\_VERSION concatenated onto it. The last byte in the file is the LT\_TRLID. These five bytes are the only "absolutes" in an LXT file.

```
01 38 00 01 ...file body... B4
```

As one may guess from the example above, *all* integer values represented in LXT files are stored in big endian order.

Note that all constant definitions found in this appendix may be found in the header file `src/helpers/lxt_write.h`. Note that LXT2 files use a completely different file format as well as different constant values.

---

## LXT Section Pointers

Preceding the trailing ID byte B4 is a series of tag bytes which themselves are preceded by 32-bit offsets into the file which indicate where the sections pointed

to by the tags are located. The exception is tag 00 (LT\_SECTION\_END) which indicates that no more tags/sections are specified:

00 ... *offset\_for\_tag\_2, tag\_2, offset\_for\_tag\_1, tag\_1*, B4

Currently defined tags are:

```
#define LT_SECTION_END           (0)
#define LT_SECTION_CHG          (1)
#define LT_SECTION_SYNC_TABLE   (2)
#define LT_SECTION_FACNAME      (3)
#define LT_SECTION_FACNAME_GEOMETRY (4)
#define LT_SECTION_TIMESCALE    (5)
#define LT_SECTION_TIME_TABLE   (6)
#define LT_SECTION_INITIAL_VALUE (7)
#define LT_SECTION_DOUBLE_TEST   (8)
#define LT_SECTION_TIME_TABLE64  (9)
```

Let's put this all together with an example:

The first tag encountered is 08 (LT\_SECTION\_DOUBLE\_TEST) at 339. Its offset value indicates the position of the double sized floating point comparison testword. Thus, the section location for the testword is at 0309 from the beginning of the file.

```
00000300: XX XX XX XX XX XX XX XX 6e 86 1b f0 f9 21 09 .....n....!.
00000310: 40 00 00 00 00 04 01 00 00 02 4b 02 00 00 00 be @.....K.....
00000320: 03 00 00 01 4b 04 00 00 03 08 05 00 00 02 8b 06 ....K.....
00000330: 00 00 03 07 07 00 00 03 09 08 b4 -- -- -- -- .....
```

The next tag encountered is 07 (LT\_SECTION\_INITIAL\_VALUE) at 334. Its offset value indicates the position of the simulation initial value. Even though this value is a single byte, its own section is defined. The reasoning behind this is that older versions of LXT readers would be able to skip unknown sections without needing to know the size of the section, how it functions, etc.

```
00000300: XX XX XX XX XX XX XX XX 6e 86 1b f0 f9 21 09 .....n....!.
00000310: 40 00 00 00 00 04 01 00 00 02 4b 02 00 00 00 be @.....K.....
00000320: 03 00 00 01 4b 04 00 00 03 08 05 00 00 02 8b 06 ....K.....
00000330: 00 00 03 07 07 00 00 03 09 08 b4 -- -- -- -- .....
```

The next tag encountered is 06 (LT\_SECTION\_TIME\_TABLE) at 32F. Its offset value (the underlined four byte number) indicates the position of the time table which stores the time value vs positional offset for the value change data.

```
00000300: XX XX XX XX XX XX XX XX 6e 86 1b f0 f9 21 09 .....n....!.
00000310: 40 00 00 00 00 04 01 00 00 02 4b 02 00 00 00 be @.....K.....
00000320: 03 00 00 01 4b 04 00 00 03 08 05 00 00 02 8b 06 ....K.....
00000330: 00 00 03 07 07 00 00 03 09 08 b4 -- -- -- -- .....
```



The next tag encountered is 05 (LT\_SECTION\_TIMESCALE) at 32A. Its offset value indicates the position of the timescale byte.

```
00000300: XX XX XX XX XX XX XX XX 6e 86 1b f0 f9 21 09 .....n....!.
00000310: 40 00 00 00 00 04 01 00 00 02 4b 02 00 00 00 be @.....K....
00000320: 03 00 00 01 4b 04 00 00 03 08 05 00 00 02 8b 06 ....K.....
00000330: 00 00 03 07 07 00 00 03 09 08 b4 -- -- -- -- -- .....
```

The next tag encountered is 04 (LT\_SECTION\_FACNAME\_GEOMETRY) at 325. Its offset value indicates the geometry (array/msb/lsb/type/etc) of the dumped facilities (signals) in the file.

```
00000300: XX XX XX XX XX XX XX XX 6e 86 1b f0 f9 21 09 .....n....!.
00000310: 40 00 00 00 00 04 01 00 00 02 4b 02 00 00 00 be @.....K....
00000320: 03 00 00 01 4b 04 00 00 03 08 05 00 00 02 8b 06 ....K.....
00000330: 00 00 03 07 07 00 00 03 09 08 b4 -- -- -- -- -- .....
```

The next tag encountered is 03 (LT\_SECTION\_FACNAME) at 320. Its offset value indicates where the compressed facility names are stored.

```
00000300: XX XX XX XX XX XX XX XX 6e 86 1b f0 f9 21 09 .....n....!.
00000310: 40 00 00 00 00 04 01 00 00 02 4b 02 00 00 00 be @.....K....
00000320: 03 00 00 01 4b 04 00 00 03 08 05 00 00 02 8b 06 ....K.....
00000330: 00 00 03 07 07 00 00 03 09 08 b4 -- -- -- -- -- .....
```

The next tag encountered is 02 (LT\_SECTION\_SYNC\_TABLE) at 31B. Its offset value points to a table where the final value changes for each facility may be found.

```
00000300: XX XX XX XX XX XX XX XX 6e 86 1b f0 f9 21 09 .....n....!.
00000310: 40 00 00 00 00 04 01 00 00 02 4b 02 00 00 00 be @.....K....
00000320: 03 00 00 01 4b 04 00 00 03 08 05 00 00 02 8b 06 ....K.....
00000330: 00 00 03 07 07 00 00 03 09 08 b4 -- -- -- -- -- .....
```

The next tag encountered is 01 (LT\_SECTION\_CHG) at 316. Its offset value points to the actual value changes in the file.

```
00000300: XX XX XX XX XX XX XX XX 6e 86 1b f0 f9 21 09 .....n....!.
00000310: 40 00 00 00 00 04 01 00 00 02 4b 02 00 00 00 be @.....K....
00000320: 03 00 00 01 4b 04 00 00 03 08 05 00 00 02 8b 06 ....K.....
00000330: 00 00 03 07 07 00 00 03 09 08 b4 -- -- -- -- -- .....
```

The final tag encountered is 00 at 311. It signifies that there are no more tags.

```
00000300: XX XX XX XX XX XX XX XX 6e 86 1b f0 f9 21 09 .....n....!.
00000310: 40 00 00 00 00 04 01 00 00 02 4b 02 00 00 00 be @.....K....
00000320: 03 00 00 01 4b 04 00 00 03 08 05 00 00 02 8b 06 ....K.....
00000330: 00 00 03 07 07 00 00 03 09 08 b4 -- -- -- -- -- .....
```

Note that with the exception of the termination tag 00, tags may be encountered in any order. The fact that they are encountered in monotonically decreasing

order in the example above is an implementation detail of the lxt\_write dumper. Code which processes LXT files should be able to handle tags which appear in any order. For tags which are defined multiple times, it is to be assumed that the tag instance closest to the termination tag is the one to be used unless each unique instantiation possesses a special meaning. Currently, repeated tags have no special semantics.

---

## LXT Section Definitions

The body of each section (as currently defined) will now be explained in detail.

### 08: LT\_SECTION\_DOUBLE\_TEST

This section is only present if double precision floating point data is to be found in the file. In order to resolve byte ordering issues across various platforms, a rounded version of pi (3.14159) is stored in eight consecutive bytes. This value was picked because each of its eight bytes are unique. It is the responsibility of an LXT reader to compare the byte ordering found in the LT\_SECTION\_DOUBLE\_TEST section to that of the same rounded version of pi as represented by reader's processor. By comparing the position on the host and in the file, it may be determined how the values stored in the LXT file need to be rearranged. The following bit of code shows one possible implementation for this:

```
static char double_mask[8]={0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0};
static char double_is_native=0;

static void create_double_endian_mask(double *pnt)
{
    static double p = 3.14159;
    double d;
    int i, j;

    d= *pnt;
    if(p==d)
    {
        double_is_native=1;
    }
    else
    {
        char *remote, *here;

        remote = (char *)&d;
        here = (char *)&p;
        for(i=0;i<8;i++)
```

```

        {
        for(j=0;j<8;j++)
        {
            if(here[i]==remote[j])
            {
                double_mask[i]=j;
                break;
            }
        }
    }
}

```

If `double_is_native` is zero, the following function will then be needed to be called to rearrange the file byte ordering to match the host every time a double is encountered in the value change data:

```

static char *swab_double_via_mask(double *d)
{
    char swapbuf[8];
    char *pnt = malloc(8*sizeof(char));
    int i;

    memcpy(swapbuf, (char *)d, 8);
    for(i=0;i<8;i++)
    {
        pnt[i]=swapbuf[double_mask[i]];
    }

    return(pnt);
}

```

## 07: LT\_SECTION\_INITIAL\_VALUE

This section is used as a "shortcut" representation to flash all facilities in a dumpfile to a specific value at the initial time. Permissible values are '0', '1', 'Z', 'X', 'H', 'U', 'W', 'L', and '-' stored as the byte values 00 through 08 in the LXT file.

## 06: LT\_SECTION\_TIME\_TABLE / 08: LT\_SECTION\_TIME\_TABLE64

This section marks the time vs positional data for the LXT file. It is represented in the following format:

4 bytes: *number of entries (n)*

4 bytes: *min time in dump* (8 bytes for LT\_SECTION\_TIME\_TABLE64)

4 bytes: *max time in dump* (8 bytes for LT\_SECTION\_TIME\_TABLE64)

*n* 4-byte positional delta entries follow

*n* 4-byte time delta entries follow (8 byte entries for LT\_SECTION\_TIME\_TABLE64)

It is assumed that the delta values are represented as *current\_value* - *previous\_value*, which means that deltas should always be positive. In addition, the *previous\_value* for delta number zero for both position and time is zero. This will allow for sanity checking between the time table and the min/max time fields if it is so desired or if the min/max fields are needed before the delta entries are traversed.

Example:

```
00000005    5 entries are in the table
00000000    Min time of simulation is 0
00000004    Max time of simulation is 4.
```

```
00000000    time[0]=0
00000001    time[1]=1
00000001    time[2]=2
00000001    time[3]=3
00000001    time[4]=4
```

```
00000004    pos[0]=0x4
00000010    pos[1]=0x14
00000020    pos[2]=0x34
00000002    pos[3]=0x36
00000300    pos[4]=0x336
```

## 05: LT\_SECTION\_TIMESCALE

This section consists of a single signed byte. Its value (x) is the exponent of a base-10 timescale. Thus, each increment of '1' in the time value table represented in the previous section represents  $10^x$  seconds. Use -9 for nanoseconds, -12 for picoseconds, etc. Any eight-bit signed value (-128 to +127) is permissible, but in actual practice only a handful are useful.

## 03: LT\_SECTION\_FACNAME

No, section 04: LT\_SECTION\_FACNAME\_GEOMETRY hasn't been forgotten. It's more logical to cover the facilities themselves before their geometries.

4 bytes: *number of facilities (n)*

4 bytes: *amount of memory required in bytes for the decompressed facilities*

*n* compressed facilities follow, where a compressed facility consists of two values:

2 bytes: *number of prefix bytes* (min=0, max=65535)

zero terminated string: *suffix bytes*

An example should clarify things (prefix lengths are in bold):

```
00000020: 00 00 00 04 00 00 00 1d 00 00 61 6c 70 68 61 00 .....alpha.
00000030: 00 01 70 70 6c 65 00 00 04 69 63 61 74 69 6f 6e ..pple...ication
00000040: 00 00 00 7a 65 72 6f 00 00 00 00 01 00 00 00 00 ...zero.....
```

Four facilities (underlined) are defined and they occupy 0x0000001d bytes (second underlined value).

This first prefix length is 0000 (offset 28).

The first suffix is "alpha", therefore the first facility is "alpha". This requires six bytes.

The second prefix length is 0001 (offset 30).

The second suffix is "pple", therefore the second facility is "apple". This requires six bytes.

The third prefix length is 0004 (offset 37).

The third suffix is "ication", therefore the third facility is "application". This requires twelve bytes.

The fourth prefix length is 0000 (offset 41).

The fourth suffix is "zero", therefore the fourth facility is "zero". This requires five bytes.

$6 + 6 + 12 + 5 = 29$  which indeed is 0x1d.

It is suggested that the facilities are dumped out in alphabetically sorted order in order to increase the compression ratio of this section.

#### **04: LT\_SECTION\_FACNAME\_GEOMETRY**

This section consists of a repeating series of sixteen byte entries. Each entry corresponds in order with a facility as defined in 03: LT\_SECTION\_FACNAME. As such there is a 1:1 in-order correspondence between the two sections.

4 bytes: *rows* (typically zero, only used when defining arrays: this indicates the max row value+1)

4 bytes: *msb*

4 bytes: *lsb*

4 bytes: *flags*

*flags* are defined as follows:

```
#define LT_SYM_F_BITS          (0)
#define LT_SYM_F_INTEGER      (1<0)
```

```
#define LT_SYM_F_DOUBLE      (1<<1)
#define LT_SYM_F_STRING     (1<<2)
#define LT_SYM_F_ALIAS      (1<<3)
```

When an LT\_SYM\_F\_ALIAS is encountered, it indicates that the rows field instead means "alias this to facility number *rows*", there the facility number corresponds to the definition order in 03: LT\_SECTION\_FACNAME and starts from zero.

## 02: LT\_SECTION\_SYNC\_TABLE

This section indicates where the final value change (as a four-byte offset from the beginning of the file) for every facility is to be found. Facilities which do not change value contain a value of zero for their final value change. This section is necessary as value changes are stored as a linked list of backward directed pointers. There is a 1:1 in-order correspondence between this section and the definitions found in LT\_SECTION\_FACNAME.

4 bytes: *final offset for facility* (repeated for each facility in order as they were defined)

## 01: LT\_SECTION\_CHG

This section is usually the largest section in a file as is composed of value changes, however its structure is set up such that individual facilities can be quickly accessed without the necessity of reading in the entire file. In spite of this format, this does not prevent one from stepping through the entire section *backwards* in order to process it in one pass. The method to achieve this will be described later.

The final offset for a value change for a specific facility is found in 02: LT\_SECTION\_SYNC\_TABLE. Since value changes for a facility are linked together, one may follow pointers backward from the sync value offset for a facility in order to read in an entire trace. This is used to accelerate sparse reads of an LXT file's change data such as those that a visualization tool such as a wave viewer would perform.

The format for a value change is as follows:

*command\_byte, delta\_offset\_of\_previous\_change[, [row\_changed,] change\_data ]*

### Command Bytes

The *command\_byte* is broken into two (as currently defined) bitfields: bits [5:4] contain a byte count (minus one) required for the *delta\_offset\_of\_previous\_change* (thus a value from one to four bytes), and bits [3:0] contain the command used to determine the format of the change data (if

any change data is necessary as dictated by the command byte).

Bits [3:0] of the *command\_byte* are defined as follows. Note that this portion of the *command\_byte* is ignored for strings and doubles and typically x0 is placed in the dumpfile in those cases:

0	MVL_2 [or default (for datatype) value change follows]
1	MVL_4
2	MVL_9
3	flash whole value to 0s
4	flash whole value to 1s
5	flash whole value to Zs
6	flash whole value to Xs
7	flash whole value to Hs
8	flash whole value to Us
9	flash whole value to Ws
A	flash whole value to Ls
B	flash whole value to -s
C	clock compress use 1 byte repeat count
D	clock compress use 2 byte repeat count
E	clock compress use 3 byte repeat count
F	clock compress use 4 byte repeat count

Commands x3-xB only make sense for MVL\_2/4/9 (and integer in the case for x3 and x4 when an integer is 0 or ~0) facilities. They are provided as a space saving device which obviates the need for dumping value change data when all the bits in a facility are set to the same exact value. For single bit facilities, these commands suffice in all cases.

Command x0 is used when *change\_data* can be stored as MVL\_2. Bits defined in MVL\_2 are '0' and '1' and as such, one bit of storage in an LXT file corresponds to one bit in the facility value.

Command x1 is used when *change\_data* can't be stored as MVL\_2 but can be stored as MVL\_4. Bits defined in MVL\_4 are '0', '1', 'Z', and 'X' are stored in an LXT file as the two-bit values 00, 01, 10, and 11.

Command x2 is used when *change\_data* can't be stored as either MVL\_2 or MVL\_4 but can be stored as MVL\_9. Bits defined in MVL\_9 are '0', '1', 'Z', 'X', 'H', 'U', 'W', 'L', and '-' corresponding to the four-bit values 0000 through 1000.

Commands xC-xF are used to repeat a clock. It is assumed that at least two clock phase changes are present before the current command. Their time values are subtracted in order to obtain a delta. The delta is used as the change time between future phase changes with respect to the time value of the previous command which is used as a "base time" and "base value" for repeat\_count+1

phase changes.

Note that these repeat command nybbles *also* are applicable to multi-bit facilities which are 32-bits or less and MVL\_2 in nature. In this case, the preceding two deltas are subtracted such that a recurrence equation can reconstruct any specific item of the compressed data:

```
unsigned int j    = item_in_series_to_create + 1;  
unsigned int res = base + (j/2)*rle_delta[1] + ((j/2)+(j&1))*rle_delta[0];
```

For a sequence of: 7B 7C 7D 7E 7F 80 81 82 ...

```
base = 82  
rle_delta[1] = 82 - 81 == 01  
rle_delta[0] = 81 - 80 == 01
```

Two deltas are used in order to handle the case where a vector which changes value by a constant XOR. In that case, the `rle_delta` values will be different. In this way, one command encoding can handle both XOR and incrementer/decrementer type compression ops.

## Delta Offsets

Delta offsets indicate where the preceding change may be found with respect to the beginning of the LXT file. In order to calculate where the preceding change for a facility is, take the offset of the *command\_byte*, subtract the *delta\_offset\_of\_previous\_change* from it, then subtract 2 bytes more. As an example:

00001000: 13 02 10 ...

The command byte is 13. Since bits [5:4] are "01", this means that the *delta\_offset\_of\_previous\_change* is two bytes since  $1 + 1 = 2$ .

The next two bytes are 0210, so  $1000 - 0210 - 2 = 0DEE$ . Hence, the preceding value change can be found at 0DEE. This process is to be continued until a value change offset of 0 is obtained. This is impossible because of the existence of the LXT header bytes.

## Row Changed

This field is *only* present in value changes for arrays. The value is 2, 3, or 4 bytes depending on the magnitude of the array size: greater than 16777215 rows requires 4 bytes, greater than 65535 requires 3 bytes, and so on down to one byte. Note that any value type can be part of an array.

## Change Data

This is only present for *command\_bytes* x0-x2 for MVL\_2, MVL\_4, and MVL\_9 data, and any *command\_byte* for strings and doubles. Strings are stored in zero terminated format and doubles are stored as eight bytes in machine-native



format with 08: LT\_SECTION\_DOUBLE\_TEST being used to resolve possible differences in endianness on the machine reading the LXT file.

Values are stored left justified in big endian order and unused bits are zeroed out. Examples with "\_" used to represent the boundary between consecutive bytes:

MVL\_2: "0101010110101010" (16 bits) is stored as 01010101\_10101010

MVL\_2: "011" (3 bits) is stored as 01100000

MVL\_2: "11111110011" (11 bits) is stored as 11111110\_01100000

MVL\_4: "01ZX01ZX" (8 bits) is stored as 00011011\_00011011

MVL\_4: "ZX1" (3 bits) is stored as 10110100

MVL\_4: "XXXXZ" (5 bits) is stored as 11111111\_10000000

MVL\_9: "01XZHUWL-" (9 bits) is stored as  
00000001\_00100011\_01000101\_01100111\_10000000

## Correlating Time Values to Offsets

This is what the purpose of 06: LT\_SECTION\_TIME\_TABLE is. Given the offset of a *command\_byte*, bsearch(3) an array of ascending position values (not deltas) and pick out the maximum position value which is less than or equal to the offset of the *command\_byte*. The following code sequence illustrates this given two arrays *positional\_information[]* and *time\_information[]*. Note that *total\_cycles* corresponds to *number\_of\_entries* as defined in 06: LT\_SECTION\_TIME\_TABLE.

```
static int max_compare_time_tc, max_compare_pos_tc;
static int compar_mvl_timechain(const void *s1, const void *s2)
{
    int key, obj, delta;
    int rv;

    key=((int *)s1);
    obj=((int *)s2);

    if((obj<=key)&&(obj>max_compare_time_tc))
    {
        max_compare_time_tc=obj;
        max_compare_pos_tc=(int *)s2 - positional_information;
    }

    delta=key-obj;
    if(delta<0) rv=-1;
    else if(delta>0) rv=1;
    else rv=0;

    return(rv);
}
```

```

static int bsearch_position_versus_time(int key)
{
    max_compare_time_tc=-1; max_compare_pos_tc=-1;

    bsearch((void *)&key, (void *)positional_information, total_cycles, sizeof(int),
    compar_mvl_timechain);
    if((max_compare_pos_tc<=0)|| (max_compare_time_tc<0))
    {
        max_compare_pos_tc=0; /* aix bsearch fix */
    }

    return(time_information[max_compare_pos_tc]);
}

```

## Reading All Value Changes in One Pass

This requires a little bit more work but it can be done. Basically what you have to do is the following:

1. Read in all the sync offsets from 02: LT\_SECTION\_SYNC\_TABLE and put each in a structure which contains the sync offset and the facility index. All of these structures will compose an array that is as large as the number of facilities which exist.
2. Heapify the array such that the topmost element of the heap has the largest positional offset.
3. Change the topmost element's offset to its preceding offset (as determined by examining the *command\_byte*, bits [5:4] and calculating the preceding offset by subtracting the *delta\_offset\_of\_previous\_change* then subtracting 2 bytes.
4. Continue with step 2 until the topmost element's offset is zero after performing a heapify().

## 00: LT\_SECTION\_END

As a section pointer doesn't exist for this, there's no section body either.

---

## The lxt\_write API

In order to facilitate the writing of LXT files, an API has been provided which does most of the hard work.

```
struct lt_trace *lt_init(const char *name)
```

This opens an LXT file. The pointer returned by this function is NULL if

unsuccessful. If successful, the pointer is to be used as a "context" for all the remaining functions in the API. In this way, multiple LXT files may be generated at once.

```
void lt_close(struct lt_trace *lt)
```

This fixates and closes an LXT file. This is extremely important because if the file is not fixated, it will be impossible to use the value change data in it! For this reason, it is recommended that the function be placed in an `atexit(3)` handler in environments where trace generation can be interrupted through program crashes or external signals such as control-C.

```
struct lt_symbol *lt_symbol_add(struct lt_trace *lt, const char *name, unsigned  
int rows, int msb, int lsb, int flags)
```

This creates a facility. Since the facility and related tables are written out during fixation, one may arbitrarily add facilities up until the very moment that `lt_close()` is called. For facilities which are not arrays, a value of 0 or 1 for rows. As such, only values 2 and greater are used to signify arrays. Flags are defined above as in 04: `LT_SECTION_FACNAME_GEOMETRY`.

```
struct lt_symbol *lt_symbol_find(struct lt_trace *lt, const char *name)
```

This finds if a symbol has been previously defined. If returns non-NULL on success. It actually returns a symbol pointer, but you shouldn't be dereferencing the fields inside it unless you know what you are doing.

```
struct lt_symbol *lt_symbol_alias(struct lt_trace *lt, const char *existing_name,  
const char *alias, int msb, int lsb)
```

This assigns an alias to an existing facility. This is to create signals which traverse multiple levels of hierarchy, but are the same net, possibly with different MSB and LSB values (though the distance between them will be the same).

```
void lt_symbol_bracket_stripping(struct lt_trace *lt, int doit)
```

This is to be used when facilities are defined in Verilog format such that exploded bitvectors are dumped as `x[0]`, `x[1]`, `x[2]`, etc. If `doit` is set to a nonzero value, the bracketed values will be stripped off. In order to keep visualization and other tools from becoming confused, the MSB/LSB values must be unique for every bit. The tool `vcd2lxt` shows how this works and should be used. If vectors are dumped atomically, this function need not be called.

```
void lt_set_timescale(struct lt_trace *lt, int timescale)
```

This sets the simulation timescale to  $10^{\text{timescale}}$  seconds where `timescale` is an 8-bit signed value. As such, negative values are the only useful ones.

```
void lt_set_initial_value(struct lt_trace *lt, char value)
```

This sets the initial value of every MVL (bitwise) facility to whatever the value is. Permissible values are '0', '1', 'Z', 'X', 'H', 'U', 'W', 'L', and '-'.

```
int lt_set_time(struct lt_trace *lt, unsigned int timeval)
int lt_inc_time_by_delta(struct lt_trace *lt, unsigned int timeval)
int lt_set_time64(struct lt_trace *lt, lxttime_t timeval)
int lt_inc_time_by_delta64(struct lt_trace *lt, lxttime_t timeval)
```

This is how time is dynamically updated in the LXT file. Note that for the non-delta functions, timeval changes are expected to be monotonically increasing. In addition, time values dumped to the LXT file are coalesced if there are no value changes for a specific time value. (Note: lxttime\_t is defined as an unsigned long long.)

```
void lt_set_clock_compress(struct lt_trace *lt)
```

Enables clock compression heuristics for the current trace. This cannot be turned off once it is on.

```
int lt_emit_value_int(struct lt_trace *lt, struct lt_symbol *s, unsigned int row,
int value)
```

This dumps an MVL\_2 value for a specific facility which is 32-bits or less. Note that this does not work for strings or doubles.

```
int lt_emit_value_double(struct lt_trace *lt, struct lt_symbol *s, unsigned int
row, double value)
```

This dumps a double value for a specific facility. Note that this only works for doubles.

```
int lt_emit_value_string(struct lt_trace *lt, struct lt_symbol *s, unsigned int
row, char *value)
```

This dumps a string value for a specific facility. Note that this only works for strings.

```
int lt_emit_value_bit_string(struct lt_trace *lt, struct lt_symbol *s, unsigned
int row, char *value)
```

This dumps an MVL\_2, MVL\_4, or MVL\_9 value out to the LXT file for a specific facility. Note that the value is parsed in order to determine how to optimally represent it in the file. In addition, note that if the value's string length is shorter than the facility length, it will be left justified with the rightmost character will be propagated to the right in order to pad the value string out to the correct length. Therefore, "10x" for 8-bits becomes "10xxxxxx" and "z" for 8-bits becomes "zzzzzzzz".





# Appendix E: Tcl Command Syntax

## Tcl Command Syntax

Besides being able to access the menu options (e.g., gtkwave::File/Quit), within Tcl scripts there are more commands available for manipulating the viewer.

---

addSignalsFromList: adds signals to the viewer

Syntax:     **set num\_found [ gtkwave::addSignalsFromList list ]**

Example:

```
set clk48 [list]
lappend clk48 "$facname1"
lappend clk48 "$facname2"
...
set num_added [ gtkwave::addSignalsFromList $clk48 ]
```

---

deleteSignalsFromList: deletes signals from the viewer. This deletes only the first instance found unless the signal is specified multiple times in the list.

Syntax:     **set num\_deleted [ gtkwave::deleteSignalsFromList list ]**

Example:

```
set clk48 [list]
lappend clk48 "$facname1"
lappend clk48 "$facname2"
...
set num_deleted [ gtkwave::deleteSignalsFromList $clk48 ]
```

---

deleteSignalsFromListIncludingDuplicates: deletes signals from the viewer. This deletes all the instances found so there is no need to specify the same signal multiple times in the list.

Syntax:     **set num\_deleted**  
[ **gtkwave::deleteSignalsFromListIncludingDuplicates list** ]

Example:

```
set clk48 [list]  
lappend clk48 "$facname1"  
lappend clk48 "$facname2"  
...
```

```
set num_deleted [ gtkwave::deleteSignalsFromListIncludingDuplicates  
$clk48 ]
```

---

**findNextEdge:** advances the marker to the next edge for highlighted signals

Syntax:     **set marker\_time [ gtkwave::findNextEdge ]**

Example:

```
gtkwave::highlightSignalsFromList "top.clk"  
set time_value [ gtkwave::findNextEdge ]  
puts "time_value: $time_value"
```

---

**findPrevEdge:** moves the marker to the previous edge for highlighted signals

Syntax:     **set marker\_time [ gtkwave::findPrevEdge ]**

Example:

```
gtkwave::highlightSignalsFromList "top.clk"  
set time_value [ gtkwave::findPrevEdge ]  
puts "time_value: $time_value"
```

---

**forceOpenTreeNode:** forces open one tree node in the Signal Search Tree and closes the rest. If upper levels are not open, the tree will remain closed however once the upper levels are opened, the hierarchy specified will become open. If path is missing or is an empty string, the function returns the current hierarchy path selected by the SST or -1 in case of error.

Syntax:     **gtkwave::forceOpenTreeNode hierarchy\_path**

Returned value:

- 0 - success
- 1 - path not found in the tree
- 1 - SST tree does not exist

Example:

```
set path tb.HDT.cpu  
switch -- [gtkwavetcl::forceOpenTreeNode $path] {  
  -1 {puts "Error: SST is not supported here"}  
  1 {puts "Error: '$path' was not recorder to dump file"}
```



```
    0 {}  
}
```

---

getArgv: returns a list of arguments which were used to start gtkwave from the command line

Syntax: `set argvlist [ gtkwave::getArgv ]`

Example:

```
set args [ gtkwave::getArgv ]  
puts "$args"
```

---

getBaselineMarker: returns the numeric value of the baseline marker time

Syntax: `set baseline_time [ gtkwave::getBaselineMarker ]`

Example:

```
set baseline [ gtkwave::getBaselineMarker ]  
puts "$baseline"
```

---

getDisplayedSignals: returns a list of all signals currently on display

Syntax: `set display_list [ gtkwave::getDisplayedSignals ]`

Example:

```
set display_list [ gtkwave::getDisplayedSignals ]  
puts "$display_list"
```

---

getDumpFileName: returns the filename for the loaded dumpfile

Syntax: `set loaded_file_name [ gtkwave::getDumpFileName ]`

Example: `set nfacs [ gtkwave::getNumFacs ]`

```
set dumpname [ gtkwave::getDumpFileName ]
```

```
set dmt [ gtkwave::getDumpType ]
```

```
puts "number of signals in dumpfile '$dumpname' of type $dmt: $nfacs"
```

---

getDumpType: returns the dump type as a string (VCD, PVCD, LXT, LXT2, GHW, VZT)

Syntax: `set dump_type [ gtkwave::getDumpType ]`

Example:

```
set nfacs [ gtkwave::getNumFacs ]
```

```
set dumpname [ gtkwave::getDumpFileName ]
```

```
set dmt [ gtkwave::getDumpType ]
```

```
puts "number of signals in dumpfile '$dumpname' of type $dmt: $nfacs"
```

---

getFacName: returns a string for the facility name which corresponds to a given

facility number

Syntax:     **set fac\_name [ gtkwave::getFacName fac\_number ]**

Example:

```
set nfacs [ gtkwave::getNumFacs ]  
for {set i 0} {$i < $nfacs } {incr i} {  
    set facname [ gtkwave::getFacName $i ]  
    puts "$i: $facname"  
}
```

---

getFontHeight: returns the font height for signal names

Syntax:     **set font\_height [ gtkwave::getFontHeight ]**

Example:

```
set font_height [ gtkwave::getFontHeight ]  
puts "$font_height"
```

---

getFromEntry: returns the time value string in the "From:" box.

Syntax:     **set from\_entry [ gtkwave::getFromEntry ]**

Example:

```
set from_entry [ gtkwave::getFromEntry ]  
puts "$from_entry"
```

---

getHierMaxLevel: returns the max hier value which is set in the viewer

Syntax:     **set hier\_max\_level [ gtkwave::getHierMaxLevel ]**

Example:

```
set max_level [ gtkwave::getHierMaxLevel ]  
puts "$max_level"
```

---

getLeftJustifySigs: returns 1 if signals are left justified, else 0

Syntax:     **set left\_justify [ gtkwave::getLeftJustifySigs ]**

Example:

```
set justify [ gtkwave::getLeftJustifySigs ]  
puts "$justify"
```

---

getLongestName: returns number of characters of the longest name in the dumpfile

Syntax:     **set longestname\_len [ gtkwave::getLongestName ]**

Example:

```
set longest [ gtkwave::getLongestName ]  
puts "$longest"
```

---

getMarker: returns the numeric value of the primary marker position

Syntax:     **set marker\_time [ gtkwave::getMarker ]**

Example:

```
set marker_time [ gtkwave::getMarker ]  
puts "$marker_time"
```

---

getMaxTime: returns the numeric value of the last time value in the dumpfile

Syntax:     **set max\_time [ gtkwave::getMaxTime ]**

Example:

```
set max_time [ gtkwave::getMaxTime ]  
puts "$max_time"
```

---

getMinTime: returns the numeric value of the first time value in the dumpfile

Syntax:     **set min\_time [ gtkwave::getMinTime ]**

Example:

```
set min_time [ gtkwave::getMinTime ]  
puts "$min_time"
```

---

getNamedMarker: returns the numeric value of the named marker position

Syntax:     **set time\_value [ gtkwave::getNamedMarker which ]**  
**such that which = A-Z or a-z**

Example:

```
set marker_time [ gtkwave::getNamedMarker A ]  
puts "$marker_time"
```

---

getNumFacs: returns the number of facilities encountered in the dumpfile

Syntax:     **set numfacs [ gtkwave::getNumFacs ]**

Example:

```
set nfacs [ gtkwave::getNumFacs ]  
set dumpname [ gtkwave::getDumpFileName ]  
set dmt [ gtkwave::getDumpType ]  
puts "number of signals in dumpfile '$dumpname' of type $dmt: $nfacs"
```

---

getNumTabs: returns the number of tabs shown on the viewer

Syntax:     **set numtabs [ gtkwave::getNumTabs ]**

Example:

```
set ntabs [ gtkwave::getNumTabs ]  
puts "number of tabs: $ntabs"
```

---

getPixelsUnitTime: returns the number of pixels per unit time

Syntax:     **set pxut [ gtkwave::getPixelsUnitTime ]**

Example:

```
set pxut [ gtkwave::getPixelsUnitTime ]  
puts "$pxut"
```

---

getSaveFileName: returns the save filename

Syntax:     **set save\_file\_name [ gtkwave::getSaveFileName ]**

Example:

```
set savename [ gtkwave::getSaveFileName ]  
puts "$savename"
```

---

getStemsFileName: returns the stems filename

Syntax:     **set stems\_file\_name [ gtkwave::getStemsFileName ]**

Example:

```
set stemsname [ gtkwave::getStemsFileName ]  
puts "$stemsname"
```

---

getTimeDimension: returns the first character of the time units that the trace was saved in (e.g., "u" for us, "n" for "ns", "s" for sec, etc.)

Syntax:     **set dimension\_first\_char [ gtkwave::getTimeDimension ]**

Example:

```
set dimch [ gtkwave::getTimeDimension ]  
puts "$dimch"
```

---

getTimeZero: returns the numeric value for what represents the time #0 in the dumpfile. This is only of interest if the \$timezero directive is encountered in the dumpfile.

Syntax:     **set zero\_time [ gtkwave::getTimeZero ]**

Example:

```
set zero_time [ gtkwave::getTimeZero ]  
puts "$zero_time"
```

---

getToEntry: returns the time value string in the "To:" box.

Syntax:     **set to\_entry [ gtkwave::getToEntry ]**

Example:

```
set to_entry [ gtkwave::getFromEntry ]  
puts "$to_entry"
```

---

getTotalNumTraces: returns the total number of traces that are being displayed currently

Syntax:     **set total\_traces [ gtkwave::getTotalNumTraces ]**

Example:

```
set totnum [ gtkwave::getTotalNumTraces ]  
puts "$totnum"
```

---

getTraceFlagsFromIndex: returns the decimal value of the sum of all flags for a given trace

Syntax:     **set flags [ gtkwave::getTraceFlagsFromIndex trace\_number ]**

Example:

```
set tflags [ gtkwave::getTraceFlagsFromIndex 0 ]  
puts "$tflags"
```

---

getTraceFlagsFromName: returns the decimal value of the sum of all flags for a given trace

Syntax:     **set flags [ gtkwave::getTraceFlagsFromName trace\_name ]**

Example:

```
set tflags [ gtkwave::getTraceFlagsFromName {top.des.k1x[1:48]} ]  
puts "$tflags"
```

---

getTraceNameFromIndex: returns the name of a trace when given the index value

Syntax:     **set trace\_name [ gtkwave::getTraceNameFromIndex  
trace\_number ]**

Example:

```
set tname [ gtkwave::getTraceNameFromIndex 1 ]  
puts "$tname"
```

---

getTraceScrollbarRowValue: returns the scrollbar value (which corresponds to the trace index for the topmost trace on screen)

Syntax:     **set scroller\_value [ gtkwave::getTraceScrollbarRowValue ]**

Example:

```
set scroller [ gtkwave::getTraceScrollbarRowValue ]
```

**puts "\$scroller"**

---

getTraceValueAtMarkerFromIndex: returns the value under the marker for the trace numbered trace index

Syntax:     **set ascii\_value [ gtkwave::getTraceValueAtMarkerFromIndex  
trace\_number ]**

Example:

**set tvi [ gtkwave::getTraceValueAtMarkerFromIndex 2 ]  
puts "\$tvi"**

---

getTraceValueAtMarkerFromName: returns the value under the primary marker for the given trace name

Syntax:     **set ascii\_value [ gtkwave::getTraceValueAtMarkerFromName  
fac\_name ]**

Example:

**set tvn [ gtkwave::getTraceValueAtMarkerFromName  
{top.des.k2x[1:48]} ]  
puts "\$tvn"**

---

getTraceValueAtNamedMarkerFromName: returns the value under the named marker for the given trace name

Syntax:     **set ascii\_value  
[ gtkwave::getTraceValueAtNamedMarkerFromName which fac\_name ]  
such that which = A-Z or a-z**

Example:

**set tvn [ gtkwave::getTraceValueAtNamedMarkerFromName A  
{top.des.k2x[1:48]} ]  
puts "\$tvn"**

---

getUnitTimePixels: returns the number of time units per pixel

Syntax:     **set utpx [ gtkwave::getUnitTimePixels ]**

Example:

**set utpx [ gtkwave::getUnitTimePixels ]  
puts "\$utpx"**

---

getVisibleNumTraces: returns number of non-collapsed traces

Syntax:     **set num\_visible\_traces [ gtkwave::getVisibleNumTraces ]**

Example:

**set nvt [ gtkwave::getVisibleNumTraces ]**

```
puts "$nvt"
```

---

getWaveHeight: returns the height of the wave window in pixels

Syntax:     **set wave\_height [ gtkwave::getWaveHeight ]**

Example:

```
set wht [ gtkwave::getWaveHeight ]  
puts "$wht"
```

---

getWaveWidth: returns the width of the wave window in pixels

Syntax:     **set wave\_width [ gtkwave::getWaveWidth ]**

Example:

```
set wwt [ gtkwave::getWaveWidth ]  
puts "$wwt"
```

---

getWindowEndTime: returns the end time of the wave window

Syntax:     **set end\_time\_value [ gtkwave::getWindowEndTime ]**

Example:

```
set wet [ gtkwave::getWindowEndTime ]  
puts "$wet"
```

---

getWindowStartTime: returns the start time of the wave window

Syntax:     **set start\_time\_value [ gtkwave::getWindowStartTime ]**

Example:

```
set wst [ gtkwave::getWindowStartTime ]  
puts "$wst"
```

---

getZoomFactor: returns the zoom factor of the wave window

Syntax:     **set zoom\_value [ gtkwave::getZoomFactor ]**

Example:

```
set zf [ gtkwave::getZoomFactor ]  
puts "$zf"
```

---

highlightSignalsFromList: highlights the facilities contained in the list argument

Syntax:     **set num\_highlighted [ gtkwave::highlightSignalsFromList**  
**list ]**

Example:

```
set clk48 [list]  
lappend clk48 "$facname1"
```

```
lappend clk48 "$facname2"
```

```
...
```

```
set num_highlighted [ gtkwave::highlightSignalsFromList $clk48 ]
```

---

**installFileFilter:** installs file filter number which across all highlighted traces. Using zero for which removes the filter.

Syntax: `set num_updated [ gtkwave::installFileFilter which ]`

Example:

```
set num_updated [ gtkwave::installFileFilter 0 ]
```

```
puts "$num_updated"
```

---

**installProcFilter:** installs process filter number which across all highlighted traces. Using zero for which removes the filter.

Syntax: `set num_updated [ gtkwave::installProcFilter which ]`

Example:

```
set num_updated [ gtkwave::installProcFilter 0 ]
```

```
puts "$num_updated"
```

---

**installTransFilter:** installs transaction process filter number which across all highlighted traces. Using zero for which removes the filter.

Syntax: `set num_updated [ gtkwave::installTransFilter which ]`

Example:

```
set num_updated [ gtkwave::installTransFilter 0 ]
```

```
puts "$num_updated"
```

---

**loadFile:** loads a new file

Syntax: `gtkwave::loadFile filename`

Example:

```
gtkwave::loadFile "$filename"
```

---

**nop:** calls the GTK main loop in order to update the gtkwave GUI

Syntax: `gtkwave::nop`

Example:

```
gtkwave::nop
```

---

**presentWindow:** raises the main window in the stacking order or deiconifies it

Syntax: `gtkwave::presentWindow`

Example:



## **gtkwave::presentWindow**

---

reLoadFile: reloads the current active file

Syntax:     **gtkwave::reLoadFile**

Example:

**gtkwave::reLoadFile**

---

setBaselineMarker: sets the time for the baseline marker (-1 removes it)

Syntax:     **gtkwave::setBaselineMarker time\_value**

Example:

**gtkwave::setBaselineMarker 128**

---

setCurrentTranslateEnums: sets the enum list to function as the current translate file and returns the corresponding which value to be used with gtkwave::installFileFilter. As a real file is not used, the results of this are not recreated when a save file is loaded or if the waveform is reloaded.

Syntax:     set which\_f [ **gtkwave::setCurrentTranslateEnums** elist ]

Example:

```
set enums [list]
lappend enums 0000000000000000 IDLE
lappend enums FFFFFFFFFFFFFFFF BUSY
lappend enums 3000000000000000 OTHER
lappend enums 0123456789ABCDEF HEXSTATE
lappend enums 1111111111111111 "All 1s"
set which_f [ gtkwave::setCurrentTranslateFile $enums ]
puts "$which_f"
```

---

setCurrentTranslateFile: sets the filename to the current translate file and returns the corresponding which value to be used with gtkwave::installFileFilter.

Syntax:     set which\_f [ **gtkwave::setCurrentTranslateFile** filename ]

Example:

```
set which_f [ gtkwave::setCurrentTranslateFile ./zzz.txt ]
puts "$which_f"
```

---

setCurrentTranslateProc: sets the filename to the current translate process (executable) and returns the corresponding which value to be used with gtkwave::installProcFilter.

Syntax:     set which\_f [ **gtkwave::setCurrentTranslateProc** filename ]

Example:

```
set which_f [ gtkwave::setCurrentTranslateProc ./zzz.exe ]  
puts "$which_f"
```

---

setCurrentTranslateTransProc: sets the filename to the current transaction translate process (executable) and returns the corresponding which value to be used with gtkwave::installTransFilter.

Syntax:     **set which\_f [ gtkwave::setCurrentTranslateTransProc**  
              **filename ]**

Example:

```
set which_f [ gtkwave::setCurrentTranslateTransProc ./zzz.exe ]  
puts "$which_f"
```

---

setFromEntry: sets the time in the "From:" box.

Syntax:     **gtkwave::setFromEntry time\_value**

Example:

```
gtkwave::setFromEntry 100
```

---

setLeftJustifySigs: turns left justification for signal names on or off

Syntax:     **gtkwave::setLeftJustifySigs on\_off\_value**

Example:

```
gtkwave::setLeftJustifySigs on  
gtkwave::setLeftJustifySigs off
```

---

setMarker: sets the time for the primary marker (-1 removes it)

Syntax:     **gtkwave::setMarker time\_value**

Example:

```
gtkwave::setMarker 128
```

---

setNamedMarker: sets named marker A-Z (a-z) to a given time value and optionally renames the marker text to a string (-1 removes the marker)

Syntax:     **gtkwave::setNamedMarker which time\_value [string]**

Example:

```
gtkwave::setNamedMarker A 400 "Example Named Marker"  
gtkwave::setNamedMarker A 400
```

---

setTabActive: sets the active tab in the viewer (0..getNumTabs-1)

Syntax:     **gtkwave::setTabActive which**

Example:

**gtkwave::setTabActive 0**

---

setToEntry: sets the time in the "To:" box.

Syntax: **gtkwave::setToEntry time\_value**

Example:

**gtkwave::setToEntry 600**

---

setTraceHighlightFromIndex: highlights or unhighlights the specified trace

Syntax: **gtkwave::setTraceHighlightFromIndex trace\_index on\_off**

Example:

**gtkwave::setTraceHighlightFromIndex 2 on**

**gtkwave::setTraceHighlightFromIndex 2 off**

---

setTraceHighlightFromNameMatch: highlights or unhighlights the specified trace

Syntax: **gtkwave::setTraceHighlightFromNameMatch fac\_name on\_off**

Example:

**gtkwave::setTraceHighlightFromNameMatch top.des.clk on**

**gtkwave::setTraceHighlightFromNameMatch top.clk off**

---

setTraceScrollbarRowValue: sets the scrollbar for traces a number of traces down from the very top

Syntax: **gtkwave::setTraceScrollbarRowValue scroller\_value**

Example:

**gtkwave::setTraceScrollbarRowValue 10**

---

setWindowStartTime: scrolls the traces such that the start time is at the left margin (as long as the zoom level permits this)

Syntax: **gtkwave::setWindowStartTime start\_time**

Example:

**gtkwave::setWindowStartTime 100**

---

setZoomFactor: sets the zoom factor for the trace data (i.e., how compressed it is with respect to time)

Syntax: **gtkwave::setZoomFactor zoom\_value**

Example:

**gtkwave::setZoomFactor -3**

---

setZoomRangeTimes: sets the visible time range for the trace data

Syntax: `gtkwave::setZoomRangeTimes time1 time2`

Example:

`gtkwave::setZoomRangeTimes 100 217`

---

showSignal: sets the scrollbar for traces a number of traces down from the very top (0), center (1), or bottom (2)

Syntax: `gtkwave::setTraceScrollbarRowValue scroller_value position`

Example:

`gtkwave::setTraceScrollbarRowValue 10 0`

---

signalChangeList: returns time and value changes for the signals indicated by the argument names

Syntax: `gtkwave::signalChangeList signal_name options`

Where **options** is are one or more of the following:

**-start\_time** start-time (default 0)

**-end\_time** end-time (default last sample in dump file)

**-max** maximum-number-of-samples (default 0x7fffffff)

**-dir** forward|backward (default forward)

The function returns a Tcl list of value changes for the **signal-name** starting at **start-time** and ending at **end-time** or an empty list in any other case.

Even members of the list hold the time of change and odd members hold the value that is associated with the time the precedes it. Values are given as strings in the base of the signal.

If **signal-name** is not present then the first highlighted signal is taken.

Length of the list is defined by both **end-time** and **max**, whichever comes first.

To specify backward search, **end-time** should be smaller than **start-time** or **dir** should have the value of **backward** and **end-time** is not defined.

A conflict between timing (start/end-time) and direction (forward/backward) returns an empty list.

Examples:

1. prints the first 100 changes of the signal tb.HDT.cpu.CS starting at time 10000

```
set signal tb.HDT.cpu.CS
set start_time 10000
foreach {time value} [gtkwave::signalChangeList $signal -start_time
$start_time -max 100] {
    puts "Time: $time value: $value"
}
```

2. retrieve the value of tb.HDT.cpu.CS at time 123456

```
lassign [gtkwave::signalChangeList tb.HDT.cpu.CS -start_time
123456
-max 1] dont_care value
```

---

unhighlightSignalsFromList: unhighlights the facilities contained in the list argument

Syntax:     **set num\_unhighlighted [ gtwave::unhighlightSignalsFromList list ]**

Example:

```
set clk48 [list]
lappend clk48 "$facname1"
lappend clk48 "$facname2"
...
set num_highlighted [ gtwave::unhighlightSignalsFromList $clk48 ]
```

---

## Tcl Callbacks

When gtwave performs various functions, global callback variables prepended with gtwave:: are modified within the Tcl interpreter. By using the trace write feature in Tcl, scripts can achieve a very tight integration with gtwave. Global variables which may be used to register callback procedures are as follows:

gtkwave::cbCloseTabNumber contains the value returned is the number of the tab which is going to be closed, starting from zero. As this is set before the tab actually closes, scripts can interrogate for further information.

gtkwave::cbCloseTraceGroup contains the name of the expanded trace or trace group being closed.

gtkwave::cbCurrentActiveTab contains the number of the tab currently selected. Note that when new tabs are being created, this callback sometimes will oscillate between the old and new tab number, finally settling on the new tab being

created.

`gtkwave::cbError` contains an error string such as “reload failed”, “`gtkwave::loadFile` prohibited in callback”, “`gtkwave::reLoadFile` prohibited in callback”, or “`gtkwave::setTabActive` prohibited in callback”.

`gtkwave::cbFromEntryUpdated` contains the value stored in the “From:” widget when it is updated.

`gtkwave::cbOpenTraceGroup` contains the name of a trace being expanded or trace group being opened.

`gtkwave::cbQuitProgram` contains the tab number which initiated a Quit operation. Tabs are numbered starting from zero.

`gtkwave::cbReloadBegin` contains the name of a trace being reloaded. This is called at the start of a reload sequence.

`gtkwave::cbReloadEnd` contains the name of a trace being reloaded. This is called at the end of a reload sequence.

`gtkwave::cbStatusText` contains the status text which goes to `stderr`.

`gtkwave::cbTimerPeriod` contains the timer period in milliseconds (default is 250), and this callback is invoked every timer period expiration. If Tcl code modifies this value, the timer period can be changed dynamically.

`gtkwave::cbToEntryUpdated` contains the value stored in the “To:” widget when it is updated.

`gtkwave::cbTracesUpdated` contains the total number of traces. This is called when traces are added, deleted, etc. from the viewer.

`gtkwave::cbTreeCollapse` contains the flattened hierarchical name of the SST tree node being collapsed.

`gtkwave::cbTreeExpand` contains the flattened hierarchical name of the SST tree node being expanded.

`gtkwave::cbTreeSelect` contains the flattened hierarchical name of the SST tree node being selected.

`gtkwave::cbTreeSigDoubleClick` contains the name of the signal being double-clicked in the signals section of the SST.

`gtkwave::cbTreeSigSelect` contains the name of the signal being selected in the

signals section of the SST.

gtkwave::cbTreeSigUnselect contains the name of the signal being unselected in the signals section of the SST.

gtkwave::cbTreeUnselect contains the flattened hierarchical name of the SST tree node being unselected.

An example Tcl script follows to illustrate usage.

```
proc tracer {varname args} {
    upvar #0 $varname var
    puts "$varname was updated to be \"$var\""
}

proc tracer_error {varname args} {
    upvar #0 $varname var
    puts "*** ERROR: $varname was updated to be \"$var\""
}

set ie [ info exists tracer_defined ]
if { $ie == 0 } {
    set tracer_defined 1

    trace add variable gtwave::cbTreeExpand write "tracer
gtkwave::cbTreeExpand"
    trace add variable gtwave::cbTreeCollapse write "tracer
gtkwave::cbTreeCollapse"

    trace add variable gtwave::cbTreeSelect write "tracer
gtkwave::cbTreeSelect"
    trace add variable gtwave::cbTreeUnselect write "tracer
gtkwave::cbTreeUnselect"

    trace add variable gtwave::cbTreeSigSelect write "tracer
gtkwave::cbTreeSigSelect"
    trace add variable gtwave::cbTreeSigUnselect write "tracer
gtkwave::cbTreeSigUnselect"

    trace add variable gtwave::cbTreeSigDoubleClick write
"tracer gtwave::cbTreeSigDoubleClick"
}

puts "Exiting script!"
```





# Appendix F: Implementation of an Efficient Method for Digital Waveform Compression

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**Abstract**—An efficient method in both speed and size for the reformatting, compression, and storage of digital waveform data as generated by digital system simulators is described.

**Keywords**—Verilog; VCD; digital; waveform; compression

## I. Introduction

Compression of analog waveform data has received much attention due to the shift from analog to digital media for the storage and delivery of entertainment content. A large number of lossy formats (e.g., MP3, ATRAC, RealAudio) and lossless formats (e.g., ALAC, MPEG-4 ALS, FLAC) exist ranging from proprietary to open source offerings. Much less focus has been directed toward the efficient compression and retrieval of digital waveform data. One significant source of such data is the simulation of digital systems representing complex VLSI designs. IEEE 1800 [1] describes a format known as Value Change Dump (VCD), which although well-documented and supported, leaves much to be desired in file size and reader access speed: a flat text file is not a compressed, random access database. To this end, various commercial products [2][3][4][5] have surfaced to address size and performance issues, but the algorithms used by them to process digital waveform data have not been disclosed. Nevertheless, for [4] its writer API [6] which provides an interface to simulators, and its reader API [7] which provides an interface to other tools such as waveform viewers can yield substantial hints to the details of a commercial database's implementation. Of the sparse published information to be found regarding the topic of digital waveform compression, the approach described in [8] is an instructive starting point for study. The approach described in this paper separates the waveform data generated by a simulator into a number of independent, temporal streams that are individually preprocessed, compressed, deduplicated, and finally emitted into a database either literally or as a reference to a previously encountered equivalent stream.

## II. VCD file format

As described in [1], VCD is an ASCII-based file format for the storage of digital waveform data that is relatively easy to generate and to parse. VCD files contain three sections: header information, node information, and value changes.

### A. Header Information

Header information is trivial. It contains information such as the simulator version, the timescale of the simulation, and optional comments.

### B. Node Information

Node information contains a series of scope/upscope declarations and variable declarations.

Scope declarations contain a scope name and a scope type (such as "module") along with an appropriately paired "upscope" declaration.

A variable declaration contains variable type, size, and name fields, as well as an encoded version of an unsigned nonzero integer *identifier\_code* value. *Identifier\_code* values are encoded by most commercial simulators from an unsigned nonzero value  $v$  into bijective base-94 printable ASCII in character array  $V$  according to the following algorithm:

```
1:  $i \leftarrow 0$ 
2: while  $v \neq 0$  do
3:    $v \leftarrow v - 1$ 
4:    $V_i \leftarrow (v \bmod 94) + 33$ 
5:    $v \leftarrow v / 94$ 
6:    $i \leftarrow i + 1$ 
7: end while
```

Fig. 1. Conversion of an unsigned nonzero integer value into a bijectively encoded character array

This bijective encoding is significant in that the values 1 to 94 are encoded, not 0 to 93. An interesting side effect of this is that it is impossible to construct two or more strings representing the same integer value as this number system lacks a zero symbol [9]. As each string in the set of all possible strings generates a unique integer value, it can be exploited for perfect hashing, thus eliminating the need during subsequent

VCD file reading to process *identifier\_codes* as strings.

Decoding of an encoded value from character array *V* into unsigned integer value *v* is similar:

```

1:  $i \leftarrow V_{\text{length}} - 1$ 
2:  $v \leftarrow 0$ 
3: while  $i \geq 0$  do
4:    $v \leftarrow v * 94 + (V_i - 32)$ 
5:    $i \leftarrow i - 1$ 
6: end while

```

Fig. 2. Decoding a bijectively encoded character array into an unsigned nonzero integer

The *identifier\_code* is used to correlate a given variable declaration to its entries in the value changes section. As a space optimization, if a simulator identifies that two or more variables are functionally equivalent (e.g., as with a clock that propagates across a functional model), then it may reuse the same *identifier\_code* for all of the *aliases* of the initial declaration.

To assist in parsing a VCD file so that associative arrays are not required to look up *identifier\_codes*, the *identifier\_code* starts at a value of one and increments by one from its previous maximum for each succeeding variable declaration that is not an *alias*. Thus, a simple array where the *identifier\_code* functions as an array index suffices for lookups. VCD parsers taking advantage of this “parse by value” scheme must revert to using associative arrays (“parse by handle”) of unsigned integers or some similar method to process *identifier\_codes* when this property does not hold.

### C. Value Changes

The value changes section is the final section of the VCD file and generally is the most substantial portion of the file with regard to the percentage of total file size. It contains digital waveform data stored as a series of *simulation\_time* items and *value\_change* items. A *value\_change* item as specified by [1] is an encoded *identifier\_code* paired with a value that is an integer, a double-precision floating-point number, or a multi-value 4-state “01XZ” (MVL-4) bit string. A *simulation\_time* item associates with all *value\_change* items that follow until the next encountered *simulation\_time* item. Thus, the value changes section encodes a series of {time, *identifier\_code*, value} *transition triples* representative of all the traced variables in a simulation. As there is no limitation on where a *value\_change* for a given *identifier\_code* can be located, the determination of all of the *transition triples* for a given variable requires processing of the entire value changes section. This is clearly inefficient for interactive tools such as waveform viewers as much irrelevant data must be processed. To ameliorate this situation, most commercial tools such as [3][4][5] will convert a VCD file to a native database format rather than process the VCD file directly.

### III. Limitations and acceptable shortcuts

Some simulation tools such as [5] provide precise reconstruction of the ordering for all the *value\_change*

items that share the same *simulation\_time* value.

Other commercial tools such as [4] by default do not preserve this ordering unless a sequence ordering option is specifically enabled. In [4], it is stated that enabling sequence ordering increases file size and simulation run time. The precise ordering offered by [5] is generally not enabled in [4] as it is not useful for functional debug of race-free zero-delay designs. It does have its place however, for debugging test bench code.

It is to be noted that for a variable that glitches (i.e., a single *identifier\_code* contains multiple *value\_change* items for a given *simulation\_time* value), at least the final *value\_change* for the variable must be stored. This is to ensure that the final state a variable settles at for a given *simulation\_time* value is visible when the database is queried. A well-known glitch suppression method employed by Verilog simulators is that simulation data for all variables that change within a time step are written all at once during the REASON\_ROSYNCH callback for the time step.

In order to minimize file size, sequence ordering is not preserved by the approach described in this paper. For the FST file format implementation in [10] that implements the algorithms described in this paper, glitch transitions are preserved as doing so simplifies file generation, though a compile-time option is available that permits elision of all glitch *value\_changes* except the final one.

### IV. Design goals

The features listed below are found in most commercial digital waveform database implementations and were treated as design goals for the implementation in [10].

#### A. Fast generation

Given that a common usage case is the interactive viewing of waveform data, there should be minimal overhead in the generation of a database file in order to make it available quickly for viewing.

#### B. Small file size

A small file size is highly desired; however this must be balanced with generation time.

#### C. Fast reader initialization

Opening up a database file for reading should proceed quickly in that large, irrelevant portions of the database do not need to be processed.

#### D. Fast extraction of a handful of variables or all variables

It is to be expected that extracting all of the data from a large database file will take some amount of time, but it is certainly not desired that extracting a handful of variables in order to perform debug will take much time at all, especially given that adding new signals into an interactive waveform viewer session is often an incremental and repetitive process.

#### E. Allow reading of a database that is still writing

It is helpful if a file can be accessed while it is being written as debugging can start with no need to wait for simulation to finish. An easy way to accomplish this is to segment the writing of the database into a series of independent blocks or sections such that a

reader is permitted to access blocks whose contents have finalized.

## V. Database writer API

As the internal format of any database is subject to change, a database writer API was created for [10] similar to that of [6] to shield users from the implementation. A reader API also was created for [10], but it is beyond the scope of this paper. The database writer API was designed to map its function onto a superset of VCD constructs and also provide for future expansion. It achieves this by using tagged blocks in conjunction with a tagged binary format.

Similar to [6], the handle value returned by the API upon variable creation maintains the exact VCD “parse by value” property of the incrementing *identifier\_code* values described earlier. Thus, for most simulators, there is no additional memory required to be allocated in a simulator for the storage of variable handles returned by the writer API. As such, much existing VCD emission code can be converted with minimal modification to use the database writer API instead. In order to allow multiple, separate databases to be written simultaneously in a thread-safe lock-free manner, upon database creation the API generates an opaque *context* value representing the database. All subsequent API operations up to and including the closing of the database then refer to the *context*.

## VI. Compression techniques and compressed data types used by the database writer API

The following three subsections are relevant to database construction so they will now be discussed.

### A. Iterative compression

To facilitate late signal additions, node information is stored in a *hierarchy tree*, which is a separate file whose filename contains a “.hier” extension. When the writer API is directed to close the database, this file is compressed twice with byte-based compressor LZ4 [11], it is appended as a block in the database, and then the “.hier” file is deleted. Experimentation has shown that [6] also double compresses data with its own proprietary byte-based LZ4-like compressors prior to writing into its database. Why was a compressor library such as zlib (used by gzip) not used instead?

One reason discovered from performance analysis is that zlib is slow when very many small, discontinuous regions of memory need to be compressed: zlib must reinitialize a non-trivial amount of its compressor state for every new invocation.

Another reason is that an iterative, multi-layered approach performs better for some data. The following table compares zlib against an iterative LZ4 compression strategy and also a combination of the two. In the final row of the table, LZ4 functions as a preprocessor for zlib, providing the smallest resulting file size at a total compression speed even faster than gzip executing at its weakest compression level.

TABLE I. COMPRESSION OF 111MB OF HIERARCHY TREE DATA (4.5 MILLION VARIABLE DECLARATIONS)\*

<i>Compressor</i>	<i>Compressed size (bytes)</i>	<i>Compression time (seconds)</i>
gzip -1	15,213,337	1.15
gzip -4	13,345,371	1.53
gzip -9	12,236,236	13.39
lz4 (run once)	23,825,848	0.28
lz4 (run twice)	13,807,145	0.39
lz4 (run twice) then gzip -1	11,045,828	1.00

\* All execution runs documented in this paper were run single-threaded on a Dell Optiplex 760 with a 3.0GHz Core2Duo processor and 8GB of RAM.

Processing any data through zlib destroys the alignment of data at byte boundaries due to the properties of Huffman encoding [12], so if zlib is used, it should be the last step for any form of byte-based iterative compression. It is to be noted that files created by [6] are often quite compressible by gzip and other compressors, so it may be deduced that to maintain high performance, [6] does not process much or any of its data using compression routines that employ statistical encoding or other bit reduction techniques.

### B. Variable-length unsigned integer storage

In keeping with the previous observation concerning the usage of byte-based compressors, to save space prior to compression, various items of data are encoded throughout the database as variable-length unsigned integers using the formatting as documented in [13]. The algorithm to convert an unsigned integer *v* into a variable-length unsigned integer representation contained in array *V* is shown in Figure 3.

```

1: i ← 0
2: while (k ← v >> 7) ≠ 0 do
3:   Vi ← (v & 0x7F) | 0x80
4:   i ← i + 1
5:   v ← k
6: end while
7: Vi ← v & 0x7F

```

Fig. 3. Conversion of an unsigned integer to an array of bytes

The following table illustrates a number of edge case values and the variable-length unsigned integer representations resulting from processing by this algorithm.

TABLE II. COMPARISON OF REPRESENTATIONS OF DECIMAL, HEXADECIMAL, AND VARIABLE-LENGTH UNSIGNED INTEGERS

<i>Decimal</i>	<i>Hexadecimal</i>	<i>Variable-Length Unsigned Integer</i>
0	00	00
1	01	01
127	7F	7F
128	80	80 01
130	82	82 01
16383	3FFF	FF 7F
16384	4000	80 80 01
65535	FFFF	FF FF 03
65536	10000	80 80 04

As shown in the table, this method achieves very good space savings for relatively small positive values. These small values occur quite often in the database. It is sometimes useful for a payload of known bit width to “hitchhike” onto the low-order bits of another integer such that the shifted and combined result is encoded as a single variable-length integer. This feature is exploited in various places in the writer, most significantly for the encoding and compression of a stream of values for a single-bit MVL-4 variable. It is often the case that a *value\_change* item in these streams can be transformed into a single byte. In a VCD file, such value changes occupy at least three bytes and do not compress well as they lack locality with related value changes.

### C. Variable-length signed integer storage

As the sign of a number can function as a flag bit, variable-length signed integers as documented in [13] occasionally prove useful. The algorithm to convert a signed integer  $v$  into a variable-length signed integer representation contained in array  $V$  is shown in Figure 4.

```

1:  $i \leftarrow 0$ 
2:  $more \leftarrow \text{true}$ 
3: do
4:    $b \leftarrow (v \& 0x7F) \mid 0x80$ 
5:    $v \leftarrow v \gg 7$ 
6:   if  $((v = 0) \text{ and } (b \& 0x40 = 0))$  or
7:      $((v = -1) \text{ and } (b \& 0x40 = 1))$ 
8:      $more \leftarrow \text{false}$ 
9:      $b \leftarrow b \& 0x7F$ 
10:  end if
11:   $V_i \leftarrow b$ 
12:   $i \leftarrow i + 1$ 
13: while  $more \neq \text{false}$ 

```

Fig. 4. Conversion of a signed integer to an array of bytes

The following table illustrates a number of edge case values and the variable-length signed integer representations resulting from processing by this algorithm.

TABLE III. COMPARISON OF REPRESENTATIONS OF DECIMAL, HEXADECIMAL, AND VARIABLE-LENGTH SIGNED INTEGERS

<i>Decimal</i>	<i>Hexadecimal</i>	<i>Variable-Length Signed Integer</i>
0	0000	00
1	0001	01
-1	FFFF	7F
2	0002	02
-2	FFFE	7E
63	003F	3F
-63	FFC1	41
64	0040	C0 00
-64	FFC0	40
127	007F	FF 00
-127	FF81	81 7F
128	0080	80 01
-128	FF80	80 7F

As this encoding is not as space efficient as the encoding for variable-length unsigned integers, usage of signed variable-length integers in the writer in [10] was limited to a handful of areas where experimentation determined that it was beneficial.

### VII. Processing of declarations and time/value change data into the database format

As shown in Figure 5, there are four basic phases that the database writer cycles through based on the API calls it receives.

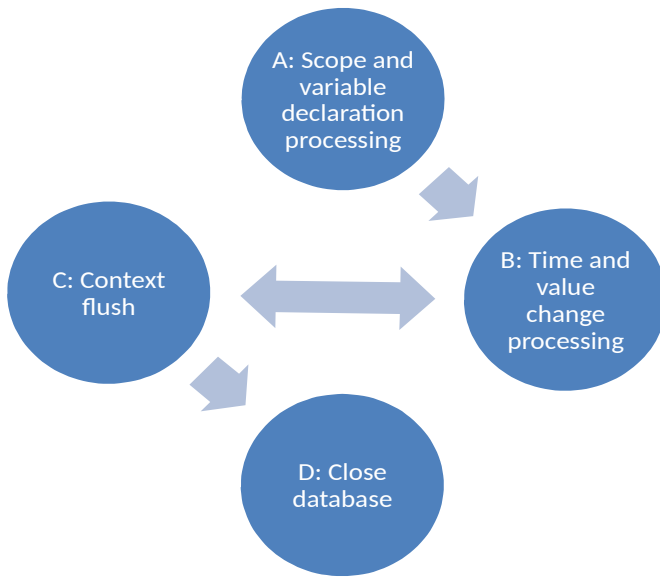


Fig. 5. Four basic phases of database writer execution

#### A. Scope and variable declaration processing

Minimal processing is performed upon node information. Mostly, this involves converting scope/upscope/variable declarations into an easily processed tagged binary format. Ordering of declarations as encountered by the writer API is strictly maintained as there is no compelling reason to modify the declared order prior to emission into the *hierarchy tree*. Some commercial tools such as [6][7] maintain separate data structures for scope declarations and for variable declarations. This allows for scope data to be retrieved faster by a reader during initialization and may aid in compression. Once scope and upscope declarations are written into the *hierarchy tree*, they are no longer needed by the writer. These declarations are only useful for database reader code: the writer is more concerned with variable declarations. During the writer API call for a variable declaration, various auxiliary structure arrays are updated by the writer. In [10], all of the following arrays exist as hidden temporary files and are subject to being mmap()'d in and munmap()'d out as necessary:

- **Geometry**: contains each variable's storage requirements, namely the length and number of bytes per unit of length. This is used by readers to speed up initialization for variables by not requiring a traversal of the *hierarchy tree*. Upon the closing of the database, *geometry* data are compressed and appended to their own block in the database.
- **Bits Array**: contains a full checkpoint of the database state across all variables. It exists to allow for reads to start at a time other than the initial simulation time, as well as to allow the opportunity for the future implementation of block splicing utilities.
- **Time Chain**: stores each *simulation\_time* value encountered by the writer. Values in the *time chain* as emitted by simulators are

monotonically increasing. When elements comprising the *time chain* are emitted to the database, a *simulation\_time* value is compared to its preceding *simulation\_time* value and the mathematical delta between the two is stored in the database. A 64-bit time value thus can reduce to a much smaller variable-length unsigned integer value in the database. Additionally, the *time chain* aids in allowing for efficient value change compression as *value\_changes* are transformed by the writer into a consecutive sequence of *time chain* index deltas paired with a "hitchhiker" value. The *time chain* is analogous to XTags in [6][7], however this implementation detail is hidden from the writer API.

- **Value/Position Structure Array**: contains a four element structure for each variable consisting of {position in *bits array*, variable-length, position in *value change preprocessing buffer*, *time chain* index}. Each time the writer processes a *value\_change* for a variable, the final two fields of this structure are updated. This structure is used solely by the writer to provide bookkeeping and is not written into the database.

#### B. Time and value change processing

As writer API calls generate time changes, each change is added to the *time chain* and the current *time chain* index is incremented. As the APIs in [6][7] can be interfaced to various digital and analog simulators, integer or floating-point values are possible for their XTags. For Verilog simulation, all time values generated are 64-bit integers. The example that follows in the next subsection will use only integer time values for clarity. The implementation in [10] currently uses only 64-bit integer time values.

For value changes, the *value\_change* items are reformatted and stored in the *value change preprocessing buffer*. This buffer is a large holding area that receives dynamically converted *value\_change* items prepended onto a linked list of {previous list item pointer, *time\_chain* index delta, value} triples. There is one linked list per variable, with each variable's corresponding element in the *value/position structure array* storing the head pointer for the variable's list of time reversed value changes. To demonstrate value change processing, the following series of time and value changes are received by the writer API:

```

#0
A = '0'
B = '1'
#10
A = '1'
#15
B = '0'
#20
B = '1'
#30
A = '0'
  
```

After time value 30, the time index value would be 4 (starting the index count from zero) and the *time chain* would appear as follows in memory on a little-endian machine:

```
0000: 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
0008: 0A 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
0010: 0F 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
0018: 14 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
0020: 1E 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
```

In the *value change preprocessing buffer*, previous list item pointers are currently stored in [10] as 32-bit unsigned integers (limiting the size of the buffer to 4GB), the *time chain* index deltas are stored as variable-length unsigned integers, and finally the values themselves are stored as raw ASCII. This was a design choice dictated by performance in order to simplify this portion of value change processing.

For the example time and value changes, the final state of the *value change preprocessing buffer* would appear as follows:

```
0000: 21 00 00 00 00 00 30 00
0008: 00 00 00 00 31 01 00 00
0010: 00 01 31 07 00 00 00 02
0018: 30 13 00 00 00 01 31 0D
0020: 00 00 00 03 30 -- -- --
```

The first character (0x21 / “!”) shown in the buffer at offset zero is nothing more than an unreachable placeholder character. During list traversal, a list item pointer containing a value of zero signifies the end of a list traversal.

To assist in demonstrating the traversal of the list for variable “A”, only the bytes relevant to variable “A” will be shown such that the back pointers are shaded, the time change index values are in boldface italics, and the values are unformatted text:

```
0000: .. 00 00 00 00 00 30 ..
0008: .. .. .. .. 01 00 00
0010: 00 01 31 .. .. .. ..
0018: .. .. .. .. .. 0D
0020: 00 00 00 03 30 -- -- --
```

Now showing only the bytes relevant to variable “B” such that the back pointers are shaded, the time change index values are in boldface italics, and the values are unformatted text:

```
0000: .. .. .. .. .. 00
0008: 00 00 00 00 31 .. ..
0010: .. .. .. 07 00 00 00 02
0018: 30 13 00 00 00 01 31 ..
0020: .. .. .. .. -- -- --
```

The *value/position* structures {position in *bits array*, variable-length, position in *value change preprocessing buffer*, *time chain* index} for each variable would appear as follows at the end of time value 30:

```
A: {0, 1, 0x1F, 4}
B: {1, 1, 0x19, 3}
```

It is not necessary when processing value changes to update the *bits array*. As the *value/position* structure for each variable points to its final value change in the block, the *bits array* can easily be updated later to avoid unnecessary overwrites.

### C. Context flush

When the *value change preprocessing buffer* is full or is about to become full, a *context flush* sequence will occur either when the next time change is encountered or when the database is closed. To prevent buffer overruns, the *value change preprocessing buffer* is dynamically enlarged as needed.

A *context flush* is analogous to the “flush session” documented in [6] and it performs the following actions which are summarized in Figure 6:

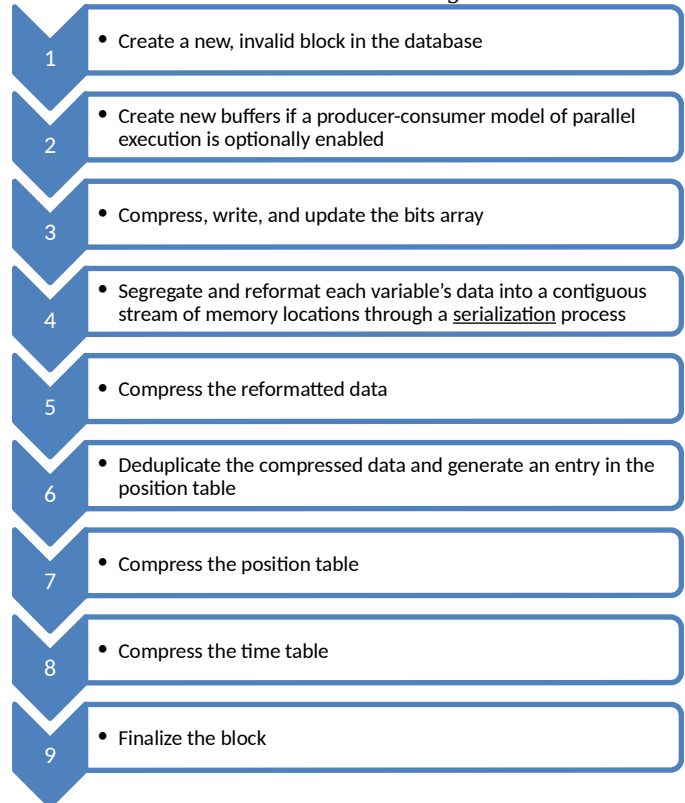


Fig. 6. Summary of the operations performed by a *context flush*

#### 1) Create a new, invalid block in the database.

**A major advantage of segmenting the data into independent blocks is that it gives reader code the ability to access all the currently valid blocks previously generated by a simulation while the simulation is still running.**

**2) Create new buffers if a producer-consumer model of parallel execution is optionally enabled. Upon creation of new buffers, a separate context flush thread is spawned to process the old buffers while the writer API returns control back to the calling process. By making time and value change processing as described earlier simple,**



more work can be offloaded to the context flush thread. This minimizes how long a simulator is blocked by a context flush. Parallel execution is more useful when zlib is enabled to compress transformed value\_change data: LZ4 is so fast that the overhead of parallel execution can slow writing down.

3) Compress, write, and update the bits array. The bits array represents the checkpoint of simulation before any value changes in the block have been encountered. After the bits array has been emitted to the database, it may then be updated to reflect the final value change for each variable. As the value/position structure for each variable contains the position of its final value change in the block, the bits array can be quickly updated.

4) Segregate and reformat each variable's data into a contiguous stream of memory locations through a serialization process. For each variable, the linked list pointed to by its value/position structure is traversed and the time changes and values are reformatted and emitted into another buffer. As the list traversal proceeds in the reverse of simulation order, the reformatted data is built by [10] into descending memory locations in the destination buffer in order to reconstruct the original simulation order in a single pass.

Recall from the earlier example how the relevant bytes of the *value change preprocessing buffer* for variable "A" would appear as follows at the end of time value 30:

```
0000: .. 00 00 00 00 00 30 ..
0008: .. .. .. .. 01 00 00
0010: 00 01 31 .. .. .. ..
0018: .. .. .. .. .. 0D
0020: 00 00 00 03 30 -- -- --
```

Again, recall the *value/position* structure {position in bits array, variable-length, position in *value change preprocessing buffer*, *time chain* index} for variable "A" as it would appear at the end of time value 30:

A: {0, 1, 0x1F, 4}

Starting at 0x1F, the following sets of value change data are encountered:

```
0x1F: 03 30 ('0')
0x0D: 01 31 ('1')
0x01: 00 30 ('0')
```

As this variable is a single-bit variable (shown by the length = 1 field for the *value/position* structure for "A"), time/value changes may be encoded using a variable-length unsigned integer with a fixed-width payload for the value specified in the low-order bits. For this example, assume an MVL-4 encoding where '0' equals 0, '1' equals 1, 'x' equals 2, and 'z' equals 3.

```
03 30 ('0') = (0x03 << 2)|0 = 0x0C
01 31 ('1') = (0x01 << 2)|1 = 0x05
```

```
00 30 ('0') = (0x00 << 2)|0 = 0x00
```

It follows that VHDL would use a larger payload to encode the MVL-9 values "01XZHUWL-". Thus, the following sequence of bytes when correlated against the *time chain* and built in reverse in memory represent the time and value changes for variable "A":

```
00 05 0C
```

It should be obvious that for repetitive value changes such as those generated by clocks, a highly compressible, recurring stream of bytes such as the following will result:

```
04 05 04 05 04 05 04 05 04 05 ...
```

Variables occupying more than one byte (bit vectors, integers, reals, strings, etc.) are handled differently in [10] in that the time delta value is stored as its own variable-length unsigned integer and the value is stored either in a packed binary representation or as raw ASCII. For reader code to determine which representation was used when an item was written into the database, a "hitchhiker" payload is contained in the low-order bits of the time delta value.

Unlike the approach taken in [8], there was no attempt made to predict values in a variable's value change stream. As a simple example of prediction, for a single-bit variable, if its value is '0', it can be predicted with a high degree of confidence that its next value change is almost always a '1', and vice-versa. Thus, to create a stream of bytes that is more compressible, the XOR of the actual value versus the predicted value would be stored instead of the actual value.

5) Compress the reformatted data. After serialization, a variable's data are compressed using LZ4. Unlike [6], in [10] this is only performed once. In lieu of double compression, multi-bit MVL-4/MVL-9 values are stored packed as eight bits per byte when a value is scanned and discovered to contain only '0' and '1' value bits. A modified form of Duff's Device [14] is used to perform the packing operation.

6) Deduplicate the compressed data and generate an entry in the position table. Deduplication of the compressed, serialized data then occurs where the data are either compared against existing data stored in a Judy array [15] or a structure based on a move-to-front reference sorted Jenkins hash [16] array. The Jenkins hash deduplication performs slightly faster than the Judy array, however it may be subject to patent issues described in [17] so its selection is determined at compile time for [10] by a compile time option.

If the compressed and *serialized* data are not already present in the deduplication structure, then the data are inserted into the deduplication structure, are emitted into the database, and the offset representing where the data are stored in the block is then stored in an element in the *position table* indexed by the *identifier\_code* for the variable. Otherwise, a *dynamic*

*alias* (the *identifier\_code* for the matching data subtracted from zero, thus making it a negative value) is stored into the *position table* and no redundant data are added to the database. Variables which have no value changes are assigned the offset of zero, which never represents valid data and never represents a valid *identifier\_code*.

The *position table* as stored in the database is not compressed further in order to aid in reader access speed. This is to give reader code the opportunity to perform a partial decompression of this table if all variables do not need to be accessed. (e.g., if there are two million variables and the maximum *identifier\_code* for a variable that needs to be read is 500000, then decompression to determine variable offsets can stop approximately one-quarter of the way through this table.) It is to be noted that as the transformed value change data for a variable have been *serialized* and are located in a contiguous range of locations in the database, reader code can immediately and directly seek to and process a variable's data once the offset for the location of the data is known.

7) **Compress the position table.** After all variables have been deduplicated, consecutive elements of the position table for non-dynamic aliases (positive values) are delta compressed and stored in the database as a positive variable-length signed integer. Dynamic aliases (negative values) are stored as a variable-length negative signed integer. To save additional space, a match of the current dynamic alias with the most recent previous one is represented as a value of zero. When one or more consecutive elements in the position table contain a value of zero (meaning each has no value changes), the zeros are run-length encoded then stored in the database as a variable-length unsigned integer. To differentiate in the reader between the two types of data (delta offsets or dynamic aliases versus counts of runs of zeros), the least significant bit of the variable-length integer is treated as a "hitchhiker" flag that differentiates between the two types of data, and either the signed or unsigned variable-length integer decoder are invoked appropriately.

8) **Compress the time table.** The final structure requiring emission into the database is a compressed version of the time table. It is first preprocessed by converting it to a series of variable-length unsigned integers representing deltas of consecutive time values. Recall the time table values encountered earlier:

```
0000: 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
0008: 0A 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
0010: 0F 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
0018: 14 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
0020: 1E 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
```

The variable-length unsigned integers representing

the delta compressed values would occupy this series of bytes:

```
00 0A 05 05 0A
```

This data exhibits the property that it is highly repetitive as time deltas in a simulation tend to occupy a small number of fixed "pound delay" values. As there is only one *time table* per block, zlib compression overhead with respect to processing of the full block is low, so the data are run through zlib at its highest compression level and then are emitted into the database. Floating-point time values would require different compression techniques such as that described in [18].

9) **Finalize the block.** At this point, the context memory has been processed into a block in the database. The block is then marked as valid (in order to allow simultaneous reading of the database as it is generating), the context memory is recycled, and the writer API continues collecting more time changes and value changes until the database is closed.

#### D. Close the database

Closing the database compresses and appends the *hierarchy tree* as a block and marks the entire database as finalized. Any externally visible temporary files that were created are deleted. In addition, the full database can optionally be recompressed using zlib and be emitted as a single special block. Compression as a single block overcomes the zlib performance issues discussed earlier.

#### VIII. Experimental results

Compression size and speed results for two non-trivial VCD files will be shown below. The tool *vfast* can be found in [4], the tool *vcd2fst* (results in italics) which implements the approach described in this paper can be found in [10], the tool *vcd2vpd* can be found in [2], and the tool *vcd2wlf* can be found in [5]. The utility *gzip* can be found in any Linux distribution. Results for [10] are shown in italics.

TABLE IV. COMPRESSION OF 1.5GB OF VCD (57312 TOTAL VARIABLE DECLARATIONS, 20826 ARE ALIASES)

<i>Compressor</i>	<i>Compressed size (bytes)</i>	<i>Compress time (seconds)</i>
gzip -1	483,489,275	28.88
gzip -4	453,921,410	39.74
gzip -9	425,526,503	338.32
<i>vcd2fst (LZ4)</i>	<i>19,964,916</i>	<i>18.34</i>
<b><i>vcd2fst (LZ4) plus gzip -4</i></b>	<b><i>11,528,306</i></b>	<b><i>19.39</i></b>
<i>vcd2fst (zlib)</i>	<i>12,144,313</i>	<i>23.89</i>
<i>vcd2fst (zlib) plus gzip -4</i>	<i>11,164,461</i>	<i>24.41</i>
<i>vcd2fst (LZ4)</i>	<i>71,600,821</i>	<i>18.68</i>



<b>Compressor</b>	<b>Compressed size (bytes)</b>	<b>Compress time (seconds)</b>
<i>no deduplication</i>		
vfast	Sanitized in public release due to anti-benchmarking clause in simulator EULAs.	
vfast plus gzip -4		
vfast -compact		
vfast -compact plus gzip -4		
vcd2vpd		
vcd2vpd plus gzip -4		
vcd2wlf		
vcd2wlf plus gzip -4		

TABLE V. COMPRESSION OF 5.0GB OF VCD (5.8 MILLION TOTAL VARIABLE DECLARATIONS, 0 ARE ALIASES)

<b>Compressor</b>	<b>Compressed size (bytes)</b>	<b>Compress time (seconds)</b>
gzip -1	1,331,508,502	87.44
gzip -4	1,262,303,074	124.12
gzip -9	1,258,996,174	1024.90
<i>vcd2fst (LZ4)</i>	<i>35,087,853</i>	<i>76.20</i>
<b><i>vcd2fst (LZ4) plus gzip -4</i></b>	<b><i>18,905,265</i></b>	<b><i>77.71</i></b>
<i>vcd2fst (zlib)</i>	<i>30,582,983</i>	<i>100.85</i>
<i>vcd2fst (zlib) plus gzip -4</i>	<i>16,852,741</i>	<i>101.76</i>
<i>vcd2fst (LZ4) no deduplication</i>	<i>88,209,725</i>	<i>75.76</i>
vfast	Sanitized in public release due to anti-benchmarking clause in simulator EULAs.	
vfast plus gzip -4		
vfast -compact		
vfast -compact plus gzip -4		
vcd2vpd		
vcd2vpd plus gzip -4		
vcd2wlf		
vcd2wlf plus gzip -4		

## IX. Conclusion

Processing digital waveform data for efficient storage and retrieval does not require computationally expensive analysis heuristics. Instead, a fast method can be employed that separates value change data into individual streams that are reformatted and compressed independently. Streams identified as

equal can be deduplicated dynamically, further reducing database size.

The experimental results show that compression ratios and execution speeds achieved by this method can significantly exceed those of prior art.

## X. Future work

Simulation data such as EVCD as described in [1] appear to compress much better with FastLZ [19] than LZ4 in [10], so it may be advantageous to employ multiple fast compression algorithms that are automatically selected based on the type of data being compressed.

Using [18] in conjunction with [11] could prove highly effective for reducing the storage requirements of IEEE-754 floating-point time change data in implementations that store such data.

Bijjective encoding of MVL-4 and MVL-9 value change strings into variable-length perfect hash integers could merit further study as a space saving technique.

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