

Tutorial: Hardware Trojan Insertion on FPGA

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1. Introduction

To lower the cost of IC design and fabrication, the supply chain of the semiconductor industry has been distributed around the world. As the complexity of ICs increases, more and more highly specialized companies become involved in the IC fabrication process to improve efficiency and manufacturability, providing attackers (adversaries?) with more opportunities to make malicious inclusions and alterations. This is a serious problem for security-critical applications, such as military, transportation and financial systems. Some Trojans can be inserted into a design if any untrusted tools or IP blocks are used. Other Trojans can be implanted by modifying the layout of the design during GDSII development and fabrication. Trojans in ICs may cause malfunctions, lower reliability, leak confidential information to adversaries or even destroy the system under specifically designed conditions. Detecting these malicious inclusions and alterations is extremely difficult, due to the following characteristics of Trojans: First, Trojans are small compared to the designs they have altered, which makes attributes of Trojan-inserted ICs almost the same as those of Trojan-free ICs. Second, Trojans can be kept dormant during most of their operation, and be activated under very specific conditions. Third, a Trojan's behavior is unknown. Thus, it would be challenging to devise a Trojan detection technique that can target all types of Trojans.

2. FPGA Board and ISE Tool

This tutorial describes the flow to insert Trojan into a design and implement the design onto FPGAs. The FPGA board I use in this tutorial is **Basys™2 Spartan-3E FPGA Board** from Digilent Inc.

(<http://www.digilentinc.com/Products/Detail.cfm?NavPath=2,400,790&Prod=BASYS2>). The Design tool is ISE WebPACK 14.1 which is a free design suite which can be downloaded from Xilinx official websites (<http://www.xilinx.com/support/download/index.htm>). If you want to know more about Xilinx FPGA design flow, there are some helpful tutorials available on the Xilinx website (http://www.xilinx.com/support/documentation/dt_ise14-1_tutorials.htm). Note that this tutorial is based on the flow presented in the In-depth ISE tutorial. You can refer to it for more detail information.

3. Trojan Design for Different Detection Approaches

In general, hardware Trojan detection approaches can be divided into two categories: full Trojan activation approaches and side-channel analysis approaches. The first approach tries to activate Trojans by applying test vectors and comparing responses with the correct results.

Side-channel signal analysis has been developed to detect hardware Trojans by measuring circuit parameters, such as power (transient and leakage current) and delay.

In this tutorial, we only talk about the hardware Trojans which are implanted by modifying the layout of the design during GDSII development and fabrication. Unlike with ASICs, it is very difficult to insert a Hardware Trojan into an unused LUT in FPGAs because we lack knowledge of the internal structure of an FPGA and cannot completely control placement and routing by using the available design suites from Xilinx. Fortunately, we can design the hardware Trojan according to our requirements and objectives. In order to evaluate different Trojan detection approaches, different Trojan insertion methods are used. In general, the complexity of Trojan design likes: **full Trojan activation < power-based Trojan detection < delay-based Trojan detection**. The Trojan design flow for different detection methods will be presented in the next section.

3.1 Trojans for Full Trojan Activation

For full Trojan activation approach, only functional testing is performed. We just care about the function instead of the layout, so it is the easiest one. First, I will explain how to design and implement the Trojan-free circuits on an FPGA. Then I will describe how to implement Trojan-inserted circuits on an FPGA.

3.1.1 Trojan-free Design Implementation

To implement Trojan-free design on FPGA, we just need to use the basic implementation flow. In this subsection, I will go through the entire flow for an example. The example design we use can be downloaded with this tutorial.

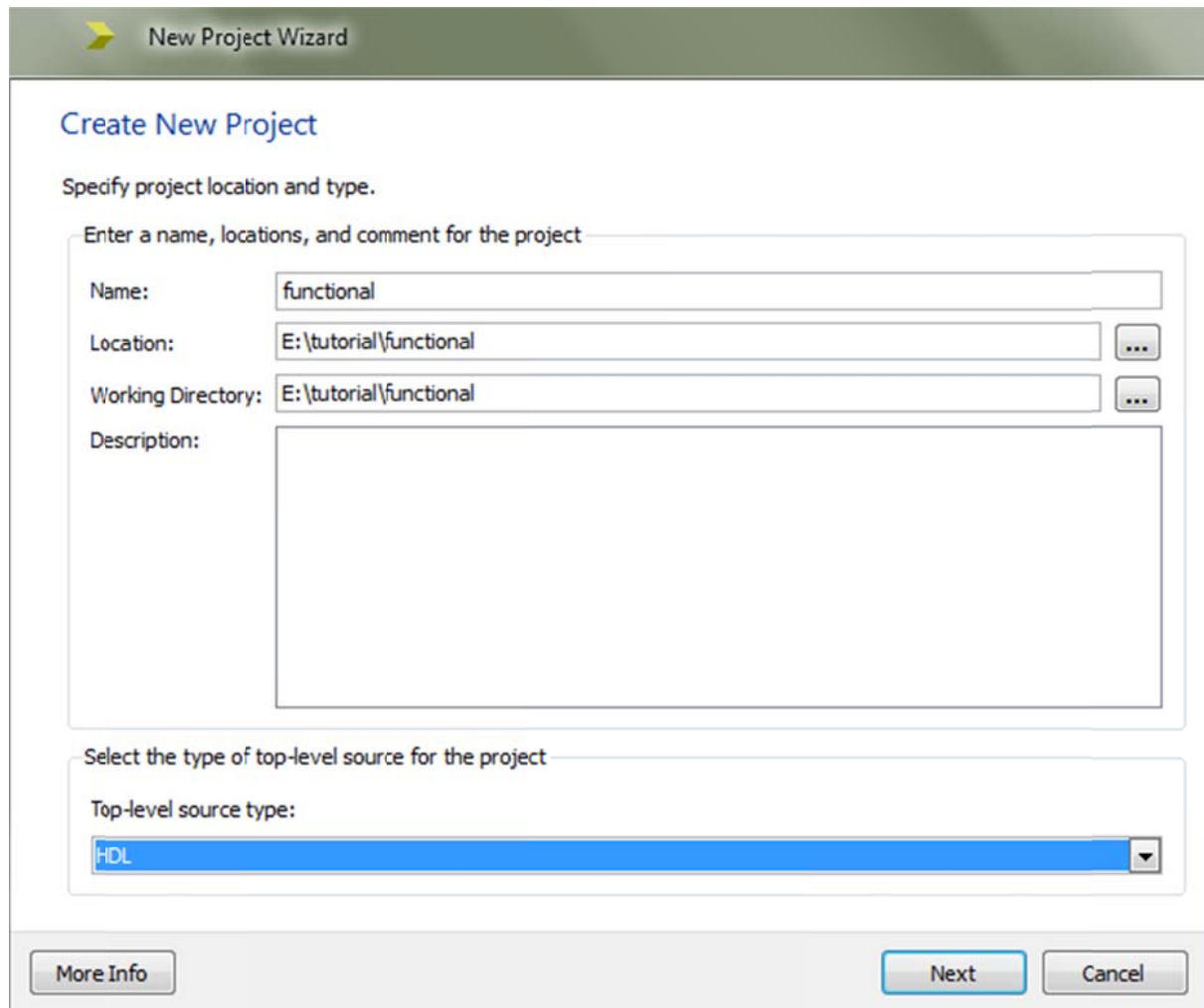
Starting ISE:

To start the ISE software, double-click the ISE project navigator icon on your desktop, or select **Start > All Program > Xilinx ISE Design Suite 14.1 > ISE Design Tools > Project Navigator**.

Creating a New Project:

To create a new project, do the following:

- a) Select **File > New Project**. A new window wizard appears.
- b) Choose Location and give project a name
- c) Choose HDL as the Top-level source type, and click **Next**.



The image shows a 'New Project Wizard' dialog box. The title bar is green with a yellow arrow icon and the text 'New Project Wizard'. The main area is white and titled 'Create New Project'. Below the title, it says 'Specify project location and type.' There are two sections. The first section is titled 'Enter a name, locations, and comment for the project' and contains four fields: 'Name:' with the value 'functional', 'Location:' with the value 'E:\tutorial\functional' and a browse button (...), 'Working Directory:' with the value 'E:\tutorial\functional' and a browse button (...), and 'Description:' with a large empty text area. The second section is titled 'Select the type of top-level source for the project' and contains a 'Top-level source type:' label and a dropdown menu with 'HDL' selected. At the bottom, there are three buttons: 'More Info', 'Next', and 'Cancel'.

New Project Wizard

Create New Project

Specify project location and type.

Enter a name, locations, and comment for the project

Name: functional

Location: E:\tutorial\functional ...

Working Directory: E:\tutorial\functional ...

Description:

Select the type of top-level source for the project

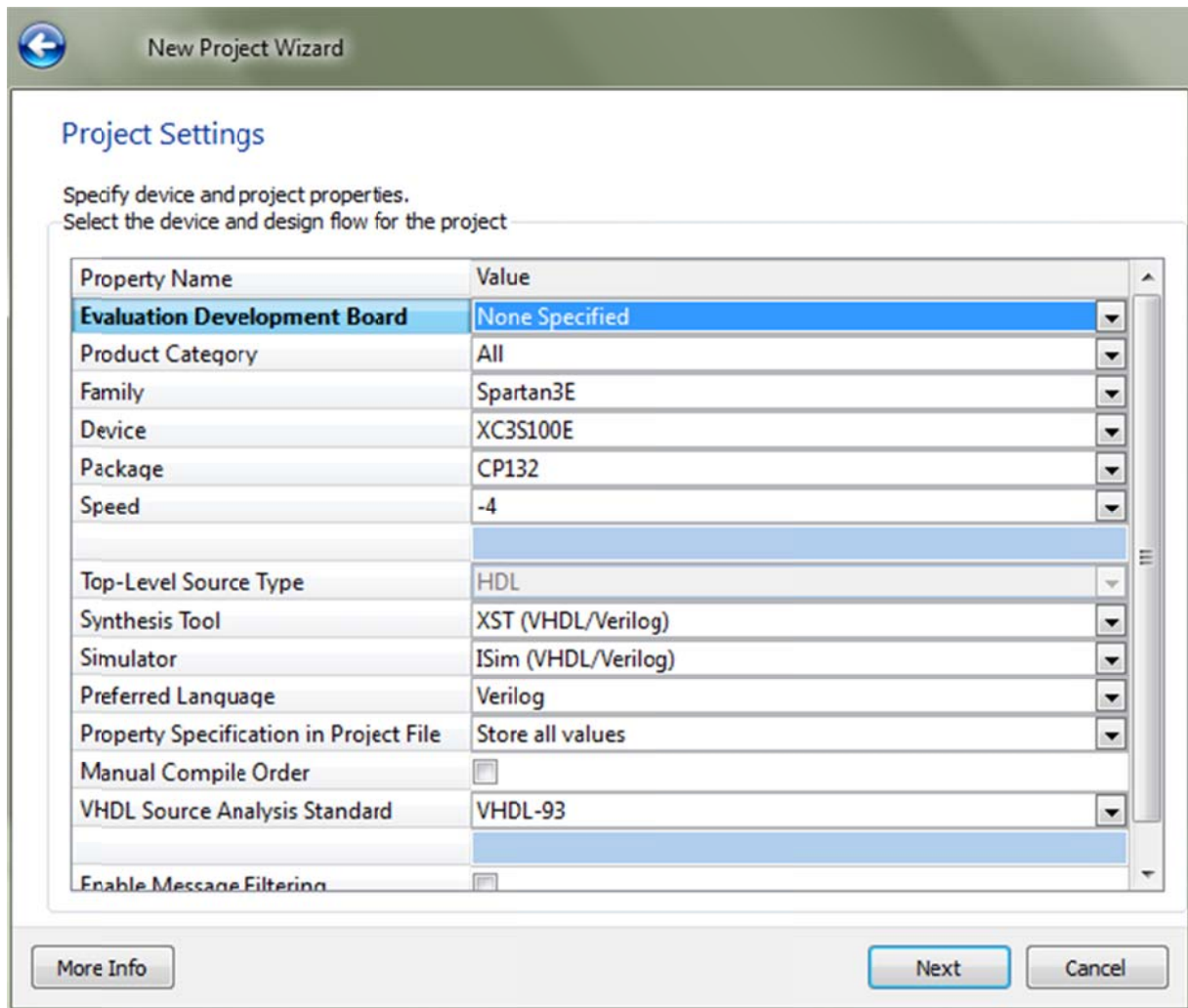
Top-level source type:

HDL

More Info Next Cancel

Figure 1

The new project wizard--- Device Properties page appears.



The image shows the 'New Project Wizard' dialog box, specifically the 'Project Settings' tab. The dialog has a title bar with a back arrow and the text 'New Project Wizard'. Below the title bar, the 'Project Settings' section is titled in blue. It contains instructions: 'Specify device and project properties. Select the device and design flow for the project'. A table lists various properties with their current values. At the bottom, there are three buttons: 'More Info', 'Next', and 'Cancel'.

Property Name	Value
Evaluation Development Board	None Specified
Product Category	All
Family	Spartan3E
Device	XC3S100E
Package	CP132
Speed	-4
Top-Level Source Type	HDL
Synthesis Tool	XST (VHDL/Verilog)
Simulator	ISim (VHDL/Verilog)
Preferred Language	Verilog
Property Specification in Project File	Store all values
Manual Compile Order	<input type="checkbox"/>
VHDL Source Analysis Standard	VHDL-93
Enable Message Filtering	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 2

d) Select required information as shown in Figure 2, and click **Next**.

The new project wizard--- Project summary appears.

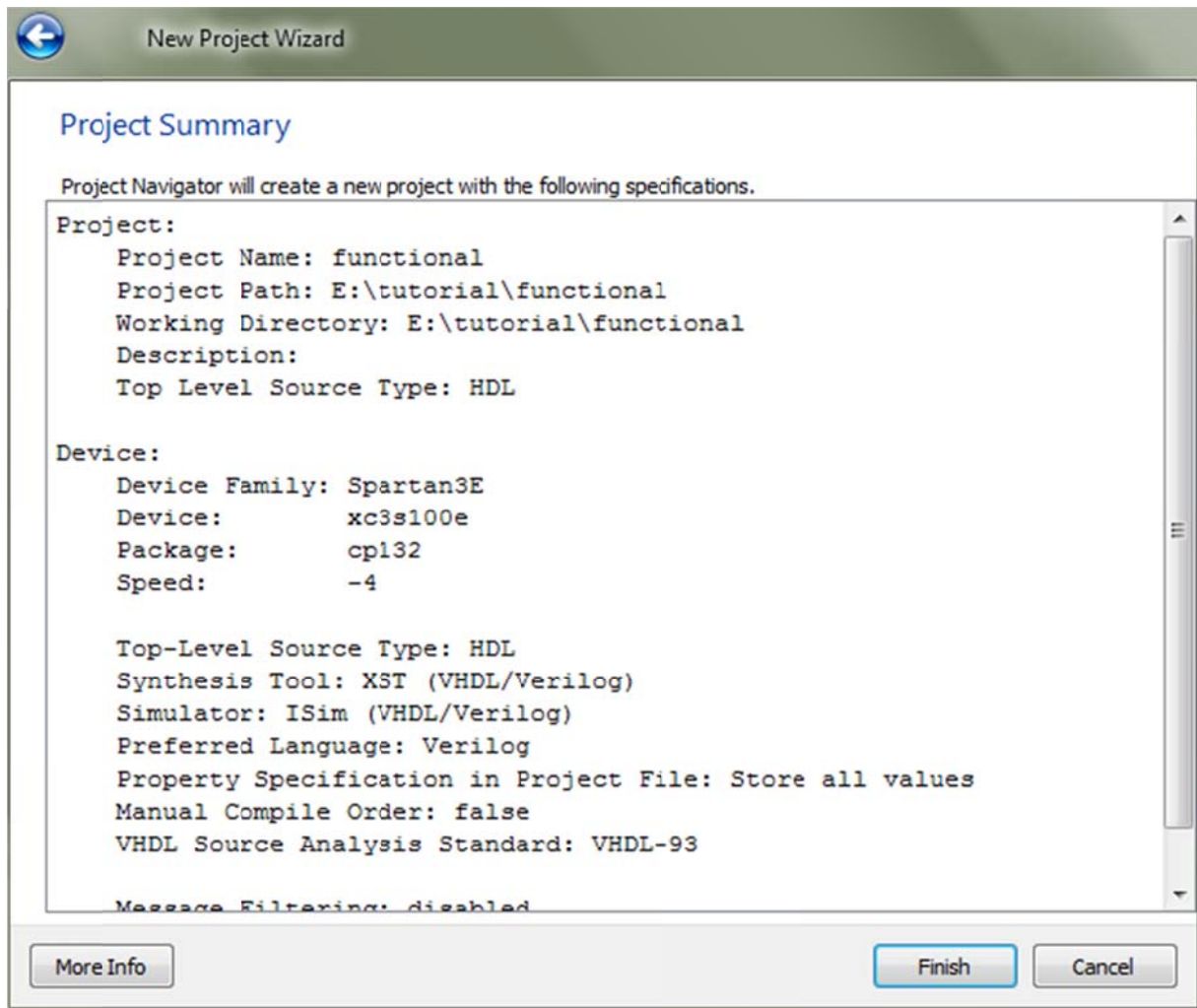


Figure 3

Click **Finish** and the new project is created.

Adding Sources:

For this hierarchical design, you will examine HDL files, correct syntax errors, create an HDL macro, and add a CORE Generator software core and a clocking module. You will create and use each type of design macro. All procedures used in the tutorial can be used later for your own designs.

HDL files must be added to the project before they can be synthesized. Otherwise, you need to create a new source and type the HDL code in it. You will add source files to the project as follows:

- Select **Project > Add Source** (or **Add Copy of Source** so that all HDL files will be copied to your project directory)
- Select the following files from the project directory, and click **Open**.
 - Top.v
 - c6288.v

mode_switch.v

c) In the Adding Source Files dialog box, verify that the files are associated with **All**, that the associated library is **work**, and click **OK**.

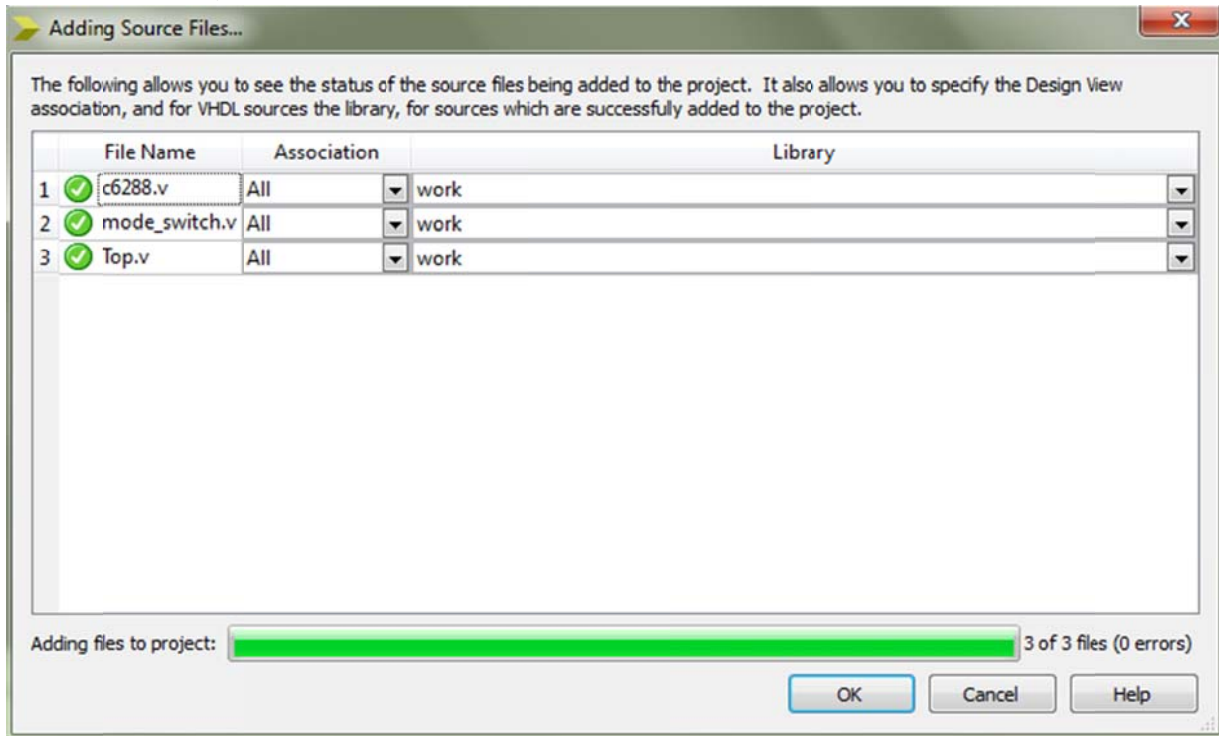


Figure 4

The Hierarchy pane in the Design panel displays all of the source files currently added to the project, with the associated entity or module names. Each source design unit is represented in the Hierarchy pane using the following syntax: instance name-entity name- (file name). Instantiated components with no entity or module declaration are displayed with a question mark.

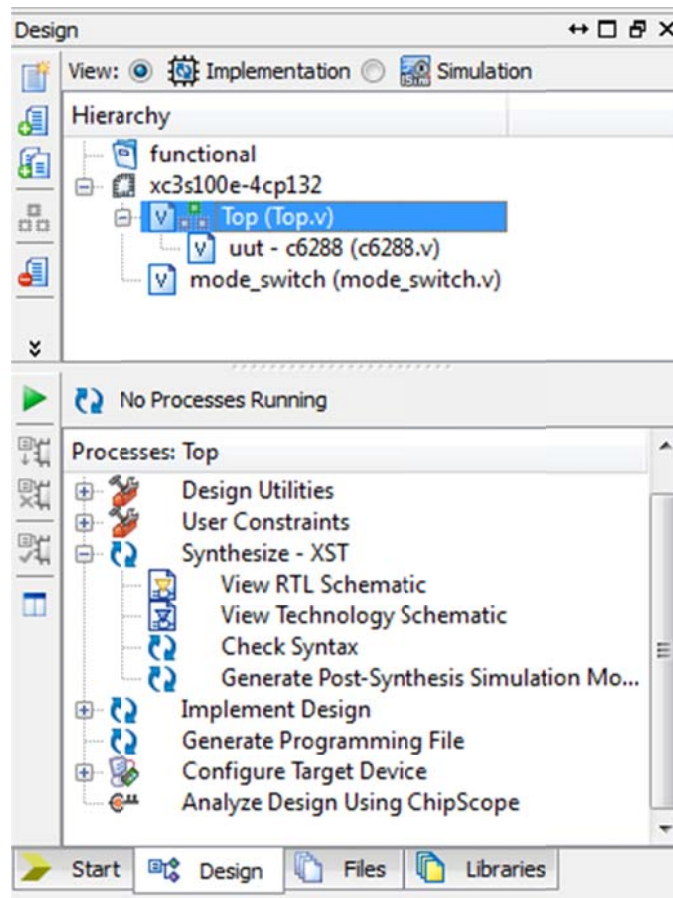


Figure 5

Check HDL Errors:

Select Top file in the Hierarchy pane, and double click Check Syntax in Synthesize-XST in the Processes pane as shown in Figure 5.

If there is an error, the “ERROR” message in the Console indicates the failure and provides a summary and the line number of the syntax problem.

Synthesizing the Design

So far you have been using Xilinx Synthesis Technology (XST) for syntax checking. Next, you will synthesize the design using either XST, Synplify, or Precision software. In this tutorial, we only use XST. The synthesis tool uses the design’s HDL code and generates a supported netlist type (EDIF or NGC) for the Xilinx implementation tools.

Enter Synthesis Options:

Synthesis options enable you to modify the behavior of the synthesis tool to make optimizations according to the needs of the design. To enter synthesis options, do the following:

- In the Hierarchy pane of the Project Navigator Design panel, select top module (top.v).
- In the Processes pane, right-click the **Synthesize** process, and select **Process Properties**.
- The Synthesis Options window will appear.

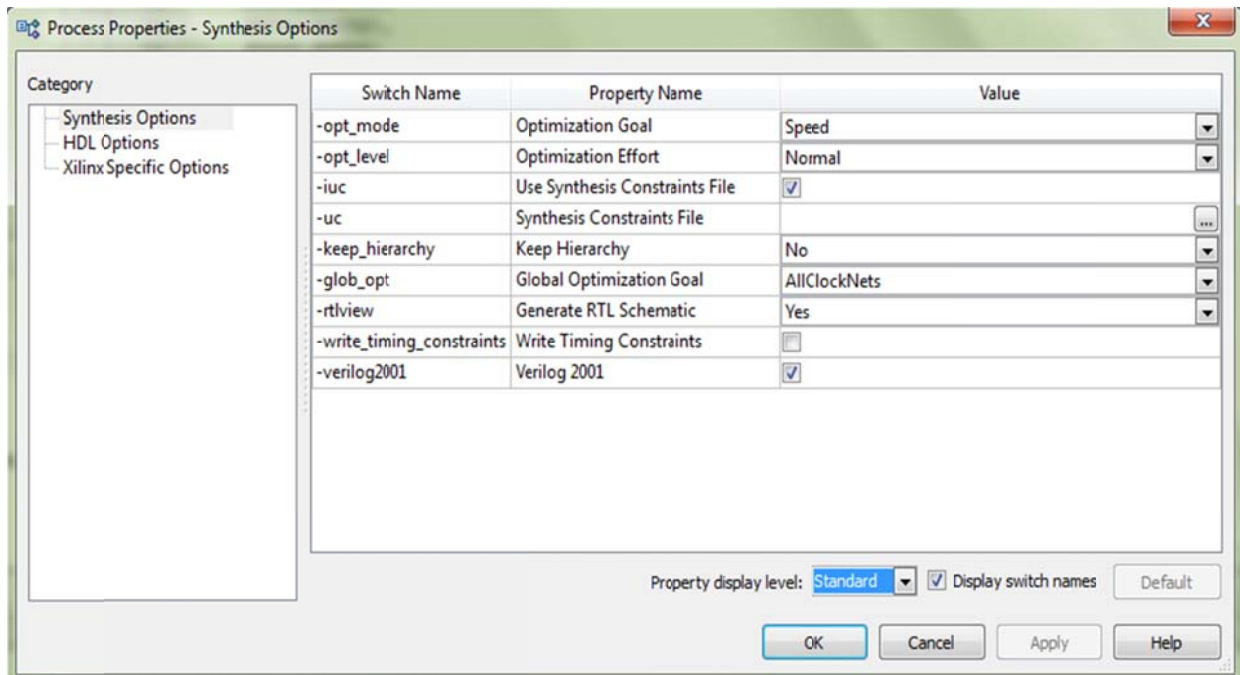


Figure 6

d) Click OK after changing options.

Synthesizing the Design:

Now you are ready to synthesize your design. To take the HDL code and generate a compatible netlist, do the following:

- In the Hierarchy pane, select top module (top.v).
- In the Processes pane, double-click the **Synthesize** process.

Implementing the Design

Creating Timing Constraints:

The User Constraints File (UCF) is a text file that can be edited directly with a text editor. To facilitate of this file, graphical tools are provided to create and edit constraints. The Constraints Editor and PlanAhead software are graphical tools that enable you to enter timing and I/O and placement constraints.

To launch the Constraints Editor, do the following:

- In the Hierarchy pane of the Project navigator Design panel, select the top module (top.v).
- In the Processes pane, expand **User Constraints**, and double-click **Create Timing Constraints**.

Our example is a combinational circuit, so we do not need to set timing constraints.

Assign I/O Locations:

We can use a text editor to edit I/O location constraints directly or use the PlanAhead to add and edit the pin locations and area group constraints defined in the NGD file. The PlanAhead software will write the constraints to the project UCF.

Adding the UCF is same as adding other source file:

- a) Select Project > Add Source (or Add Copy of Source so that all HDL files will be copied to your project directory)
- b) Select the top.ucf, and click Open.

If you want to assign pins using PlanAhead, do the following:

- a) In the Hierarchy pane of the Project navigator Design panel, select the top module (top.v).
- b) In the Processes pane, expand **User Constraints**, and double-click **I/O Pin Planning (PlanAhead) - Post-Synthesis**.

I/O pin planning can be performed either pre- or post-synthesis. Whenever possible, it is recommended that the process be run post-synthesis.

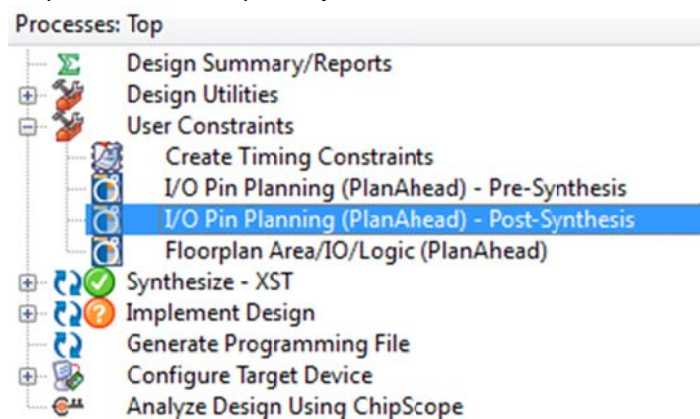


Figure 7

This process launches the PlanAhead software in Figure 8.

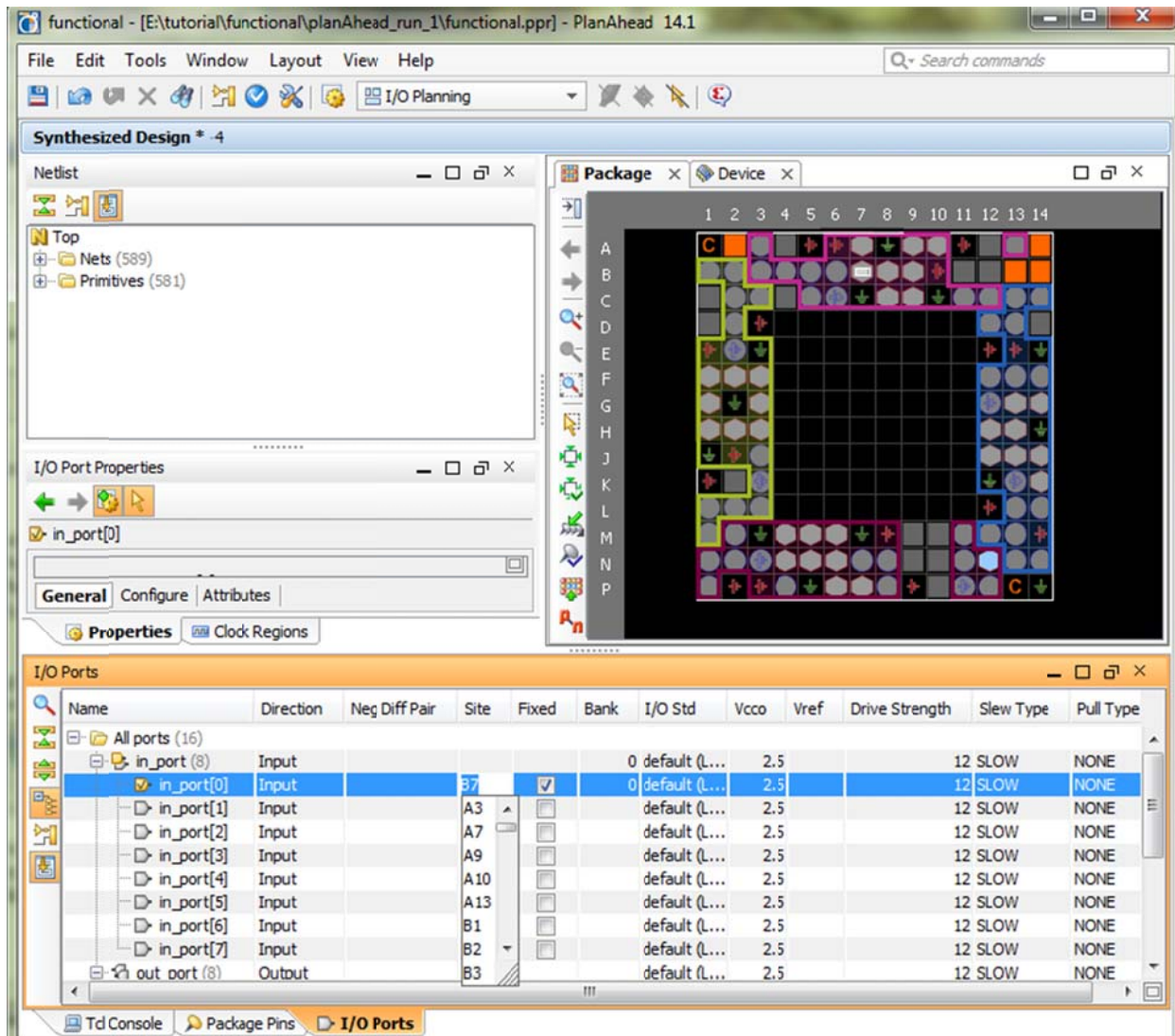


Figure 8

- c) In the I/O Port tab, expand the in_port and out_port under All ports. You will now create pin assignments for the in_port and out_port signals.
- d) You can type the location in the Site field, I/O standard, Vcco, Drive Strength Slew type for each Pin in the design. (All the information can be found in the UCF we provided.)
- e) After the pins are locked down, select **File > Save Project**. The changes are saved in the top.ucf file.
- f) To exit the PlanAhead software, select **File > Exit**.

Specifying Options:

The implementation properties control how the software maps, places, routes, and optimizes a design. To set the implementation properties, do the following:

- a) In the View pane of the Project Navigation Design panel, select **Implementation**.
- b) In the Hierarchy pane, select the top module (top.v).

- c) In the Processes pane, right-click the **Implementation Design** process, and select **Process Properties**.
- d) Ensure that you have set the Property display level to **Advanced**.
- e) Set properties you want.

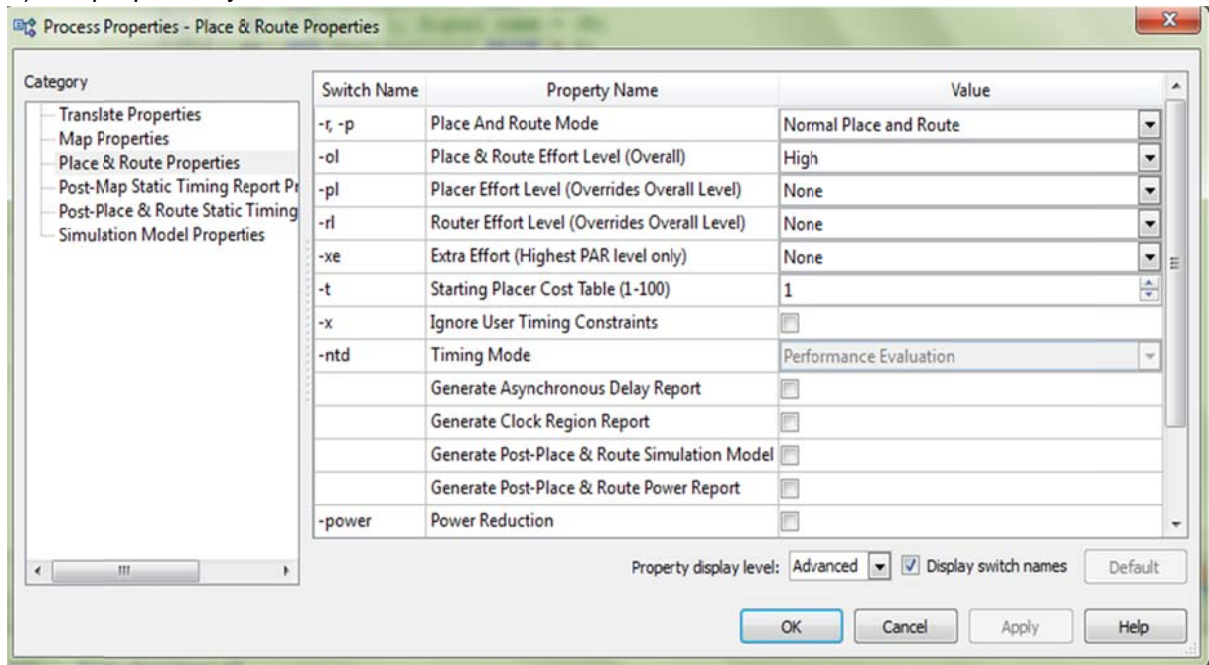


Figure 9

- f) Click **OK** to exit the Process Properties dialog box.

Generating Programming File:

After analyzing the design, you need to create configuration data. A configuration bitstream is created for downloading to a target device or for formatting into a PROM programming file.

- a) In the Hierarchy pane of the Project navigator Design panel, select the top module (top.v).
- b) In the Processes pane, right-click **Generate Programming File**, and select **Process Properties**.
- c) In the Process Properties dialog box, click the **Startup Options** category.
- d) Change the PFGA Start-Up Clock property from **CCLK** to **JTAG Clock**.

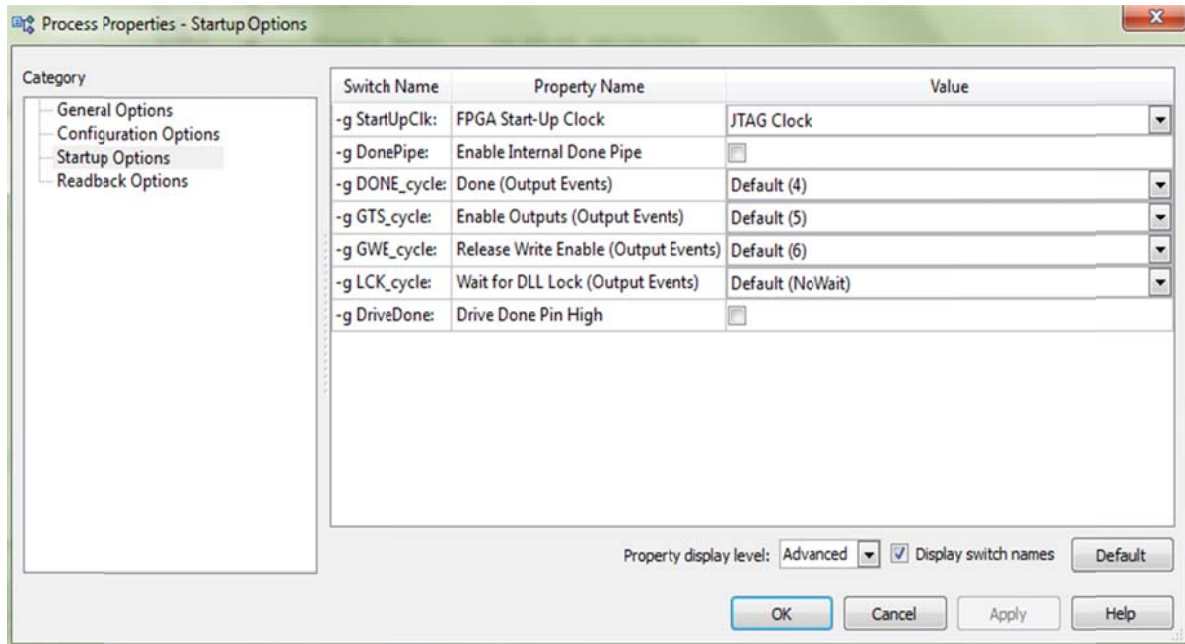


Figure 10

e) Click **OK**.

f) In the Processes panel, double-click **Generate Programming File** to create a bitstream of this design.

Downloading Program on FPGA

To start iMPACT:

To start iMPACT from Project Navigator, double-click Manage Configuration Project (iMPACT) in the Processes pane in the Design panel, as shown in Figure 11.

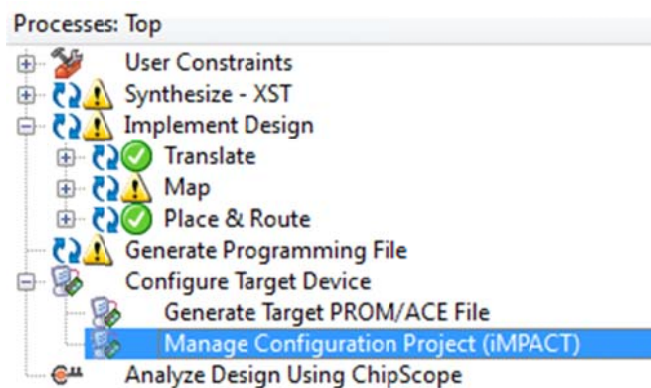


Figure 11

Specifying Boundary-Scan Configuration Mode:

In iMPACT, creating a new project includes specifying the configuration mode and the device to program. To select Boundary-Scan Mode, do the following:

a) Select **File > New Project**.

- b) In the Automatically create and save a project dialog box, select **Yes**.
- c) In the Welcome to iMPACT dialog box, select **Configure Devices using Boundary-Scan (JTAG)**.
- d) Ensure that **Automatically connect to a cable and identify Boundary-Scan chain** is selected.
- e) Make sure turn on the power of FPGA board, and Click **OK**.

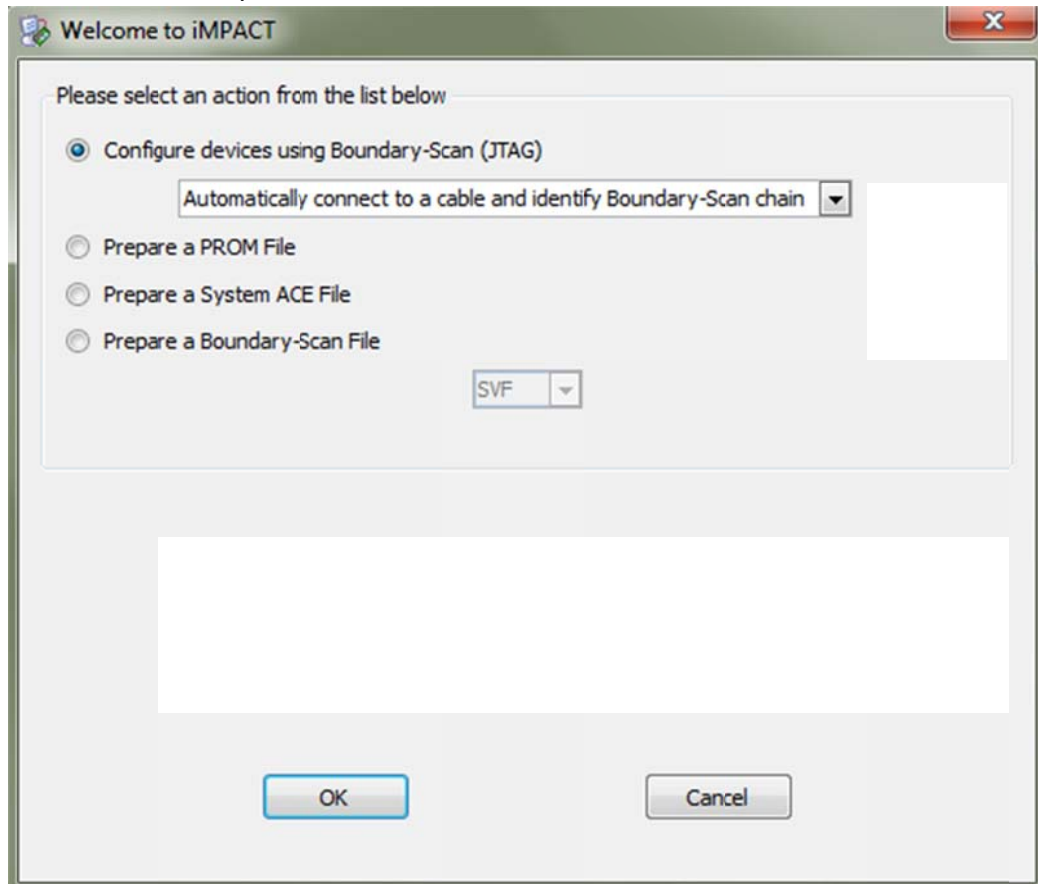


Figure 12

Performing Boundary-Scan Operations:

- a) Right-click on the xc3s100e device, and select **Get Device ID**.
- b) Right-click on the xc3s100e device, and select **Assign New Configuration File**. You need to browse and select the programming file (.bit) generated in step.
- c) Right-click on the xc3s100e device again, and select **Program**.

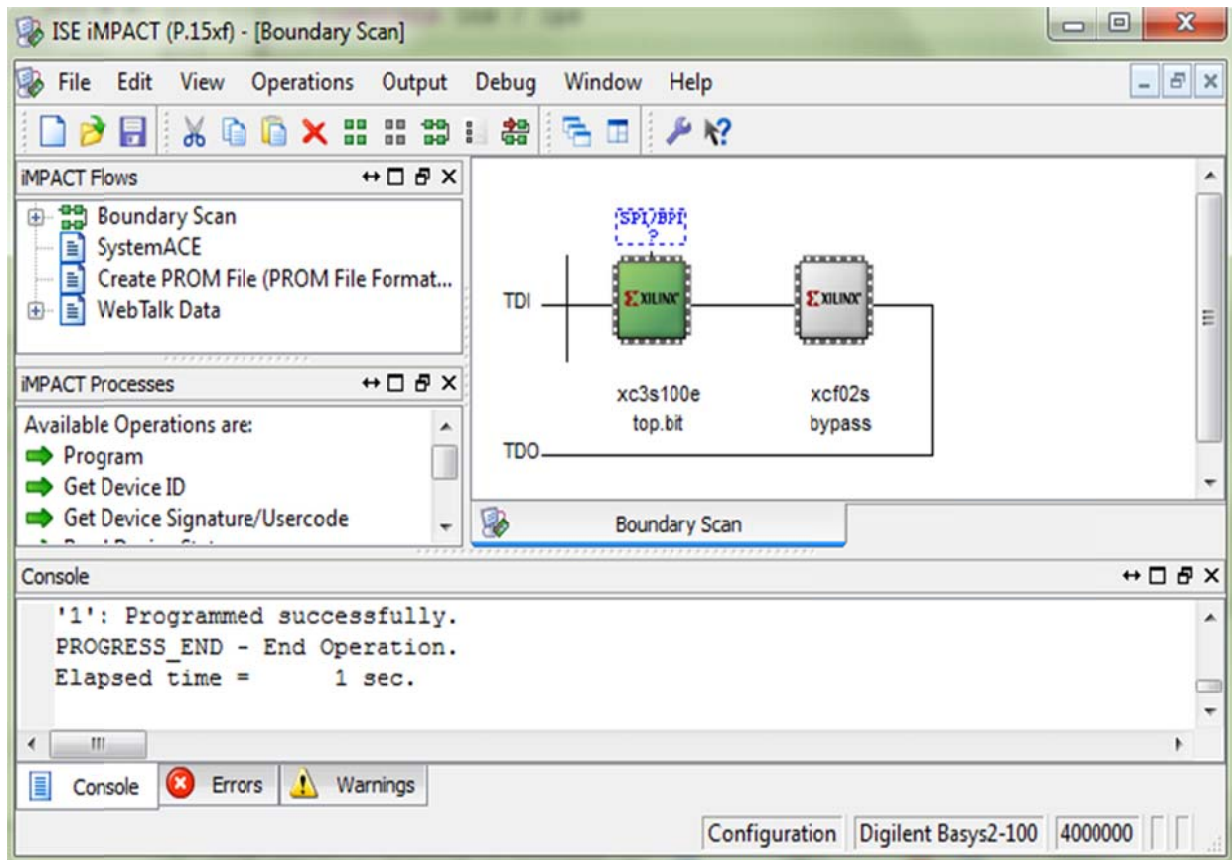


Figure 13

3.1.2 Trojan-Inserted Design Implementation

The procedure to implement Trojan-insert circuits on FPGA is the same as the procedure to implement Trojan-free circuits presented in 3.1.1. We simply need to insert the Trojan in HDL code, and then repeat the entire flow until downloading to FPGA board. By providing patterns to trigger Trojan inside, the faulty result induced by the Trojan will be detected.

3.2 Trojans for Power-based Detection Approach

An FPGA can be used to verify power-based detection approaches which detect Trojan-inserted circuits based on transient or dynamic power. Leakage power is very difficult to detect, because all LUTs are already in the FPGA and we cannot remove them or eliminate their leakage currents.

Since Trojan gates may create additional switching activities when proper patterns are applied, Trojan can be detected by measuring the transient current from a power pin. On the FPGA, the easiest way is to use one switch on the board to control an enable signal which can enable Trojan gates. If the Trojan is disabled, it will be always quiet no matter what patterns are applied. If the Trojan is enabled, it can produce switching activities when it is partially activated. By using

this method, we can guarantee that both Trojan-free and Trojan-inserted circuits have exactly the same layout.

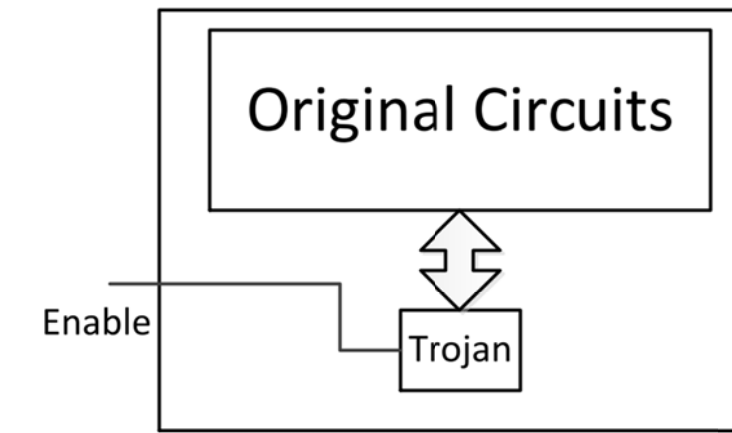


Figure 14

Therefore, one enable signal is required to be added to the original design, as shown in Figure 14. When you enable Trojans, the circuit becomes a Trojan-inserted FPGA. When you disable the Trojans, it is a Trojan-free FPGA.

3.3 Trojans for Delay-based Detection Method

For delay-based Trojan detection method, the change of path delay results from the extra capacitances induced by Trojan gates and their interconnections. We need two identical designs, one with Trojans and the other without. It is very difficult to control wire routing on an FPGA. Therefore, my strategy is to get a Trojan-inserted design first, and then disconnect the interconnections between Trojans LUTs and the original design to obtain the Trojan-free design.

3.3.1 Implement Trojan-Inserted Design

(Do the same thing, need to keep nets during synthesis)

We need to pay attention to the method of inserting the delay-based Trojan. Since many nets will be renamed or optimized during synthesis, we should set the do not touch attribute for these nets so that we can still find them after synthesis. Thus, when we start to design Trojans in HDL code, we need to keep all nets which connect between Trojans and original circuits so that we can identify and remove them in layout to obtain our Trojan-free design.

How to set don't touch attribute:

The syntax for preventing optimization in Exemplar is as follows:

```
library ieee;
use ieee.std_logic_1164.all;

entity test is port(    a: in std_logic;
                      y : out std_logic);
```

```

                                attribute preserve_signal : boolean;

end test;

architecture beh of test is
    signal b : std_logic;
    attribute preserve_signal of b : signal is true;
begin
    b <= not a;
    y <= not b;
end beh;

```

There are two highlighted commands in the example above which are needed to assure signal b will not be optimized during synthesis. Note that “don’t touch” operation is only valid in VHDL. Thus, for the module with Trojan, we need to use VHDL code to keep these nets.

To implement on FPGA:

After completing Trojan-inserted design, the implementation procedure is the same as presented in 3.1.1. Finally, the Trojan-inserted design is programmed on an FPGA.

3.3.2 Trojan-free Design Implementation

We already implemented the Trojan-inserted design on an FPGA so far. What we need to do is to disconnect the nets between Trojans and the original circuit. This task should be done in FPGA editor.

To start FPGA editor:

To launch FPGA editor, Select Tools > FPGA Editor > Post-Place & Route. This process launches the FPGA editor software as shown in Figure 15.

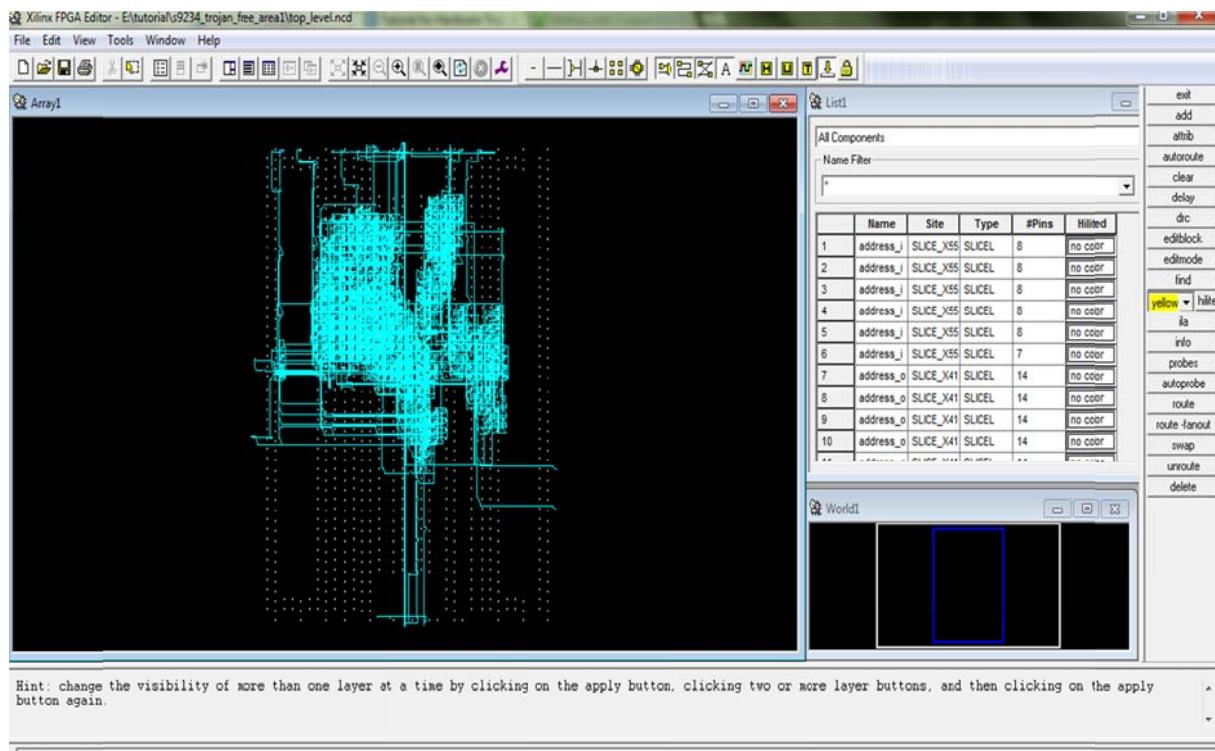


Figure 15

Change Edit Mode:

Before we make any changes, we need to change the edit mode.

- Select **File > Main Properties**, Main Properties window appear.
- Expand **Edit Mode**, and select **Read Write**.
- Click **OK**.

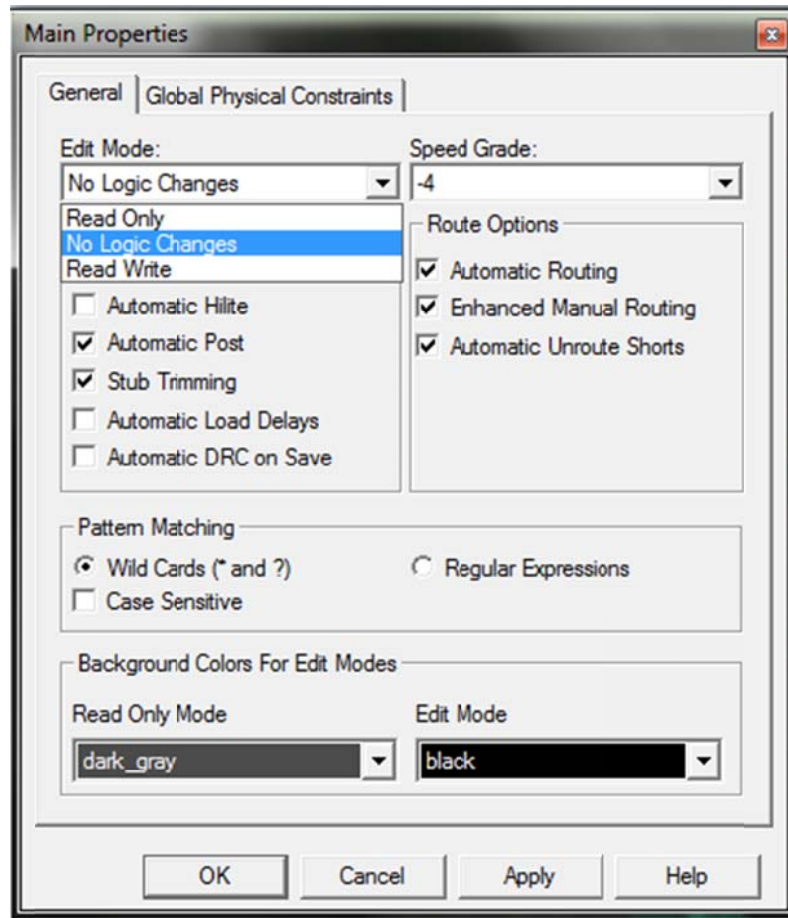


Figure 16

Modify Routing:

- Expand to select **All Nets** and then Type ***tr*** in **Name Filter** to search all nets containing string "tr" in their name.
- Click **Apply** and all specified nets are listed in the table below.
- Double-click to select the net you want to change in the table. For example, when we double-click **Design_under_Test/tr01**, the net is shown in the array window and highlighted in red.

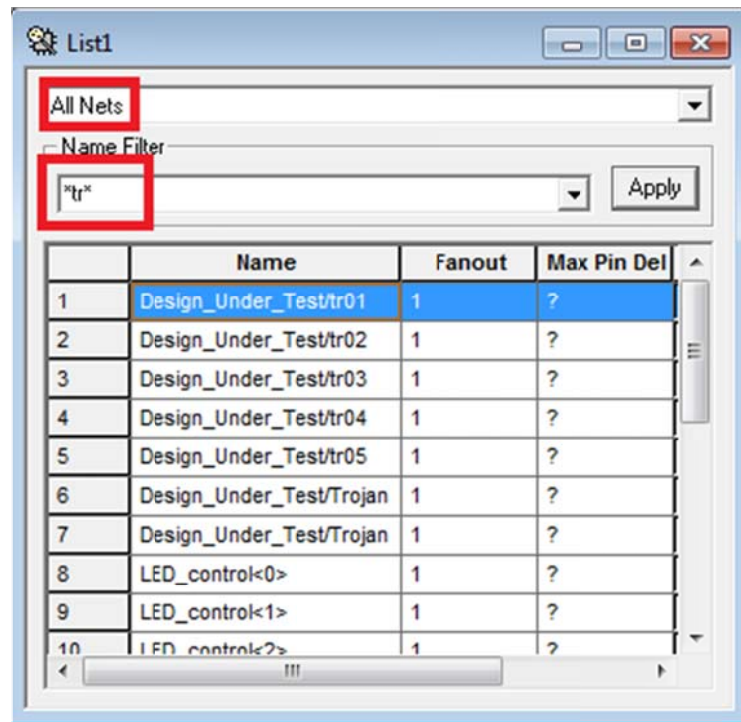


Figure 17

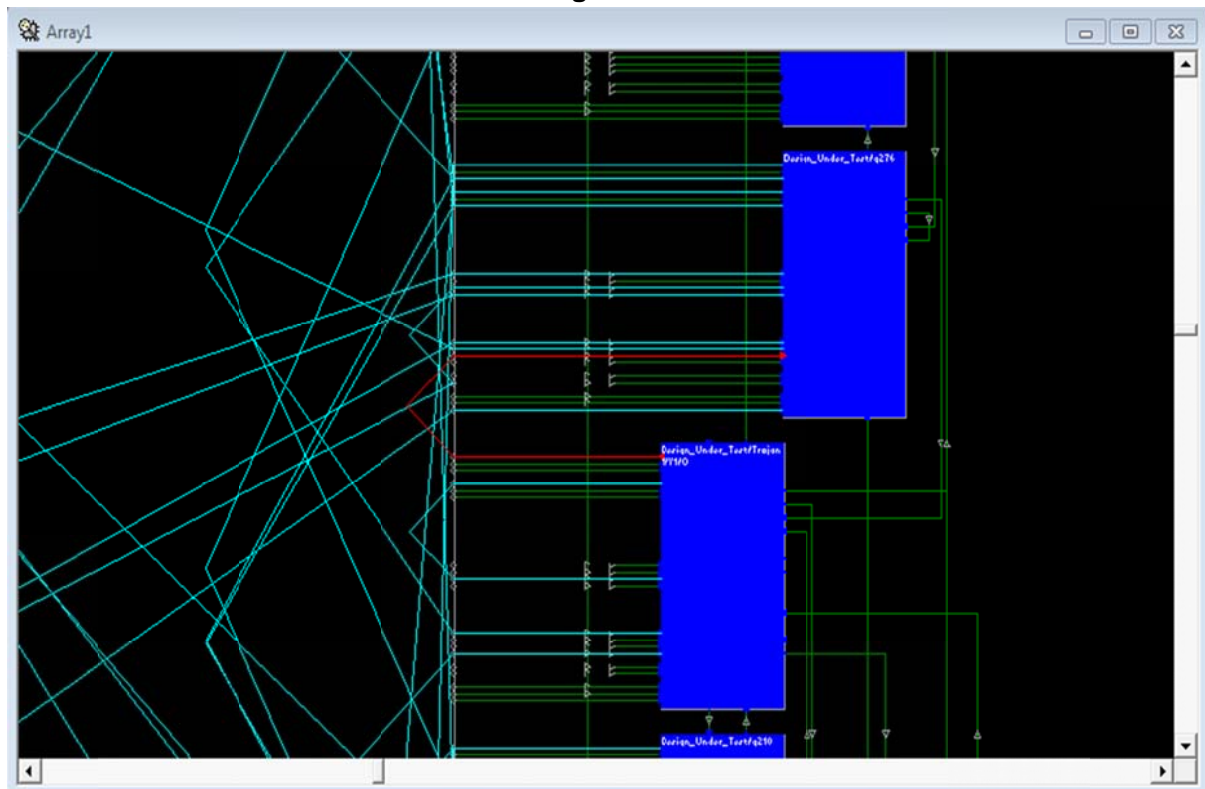


Figure 18

d) Select **Tools > Route > Unroute** to unroute the net which is indicated by the green line.

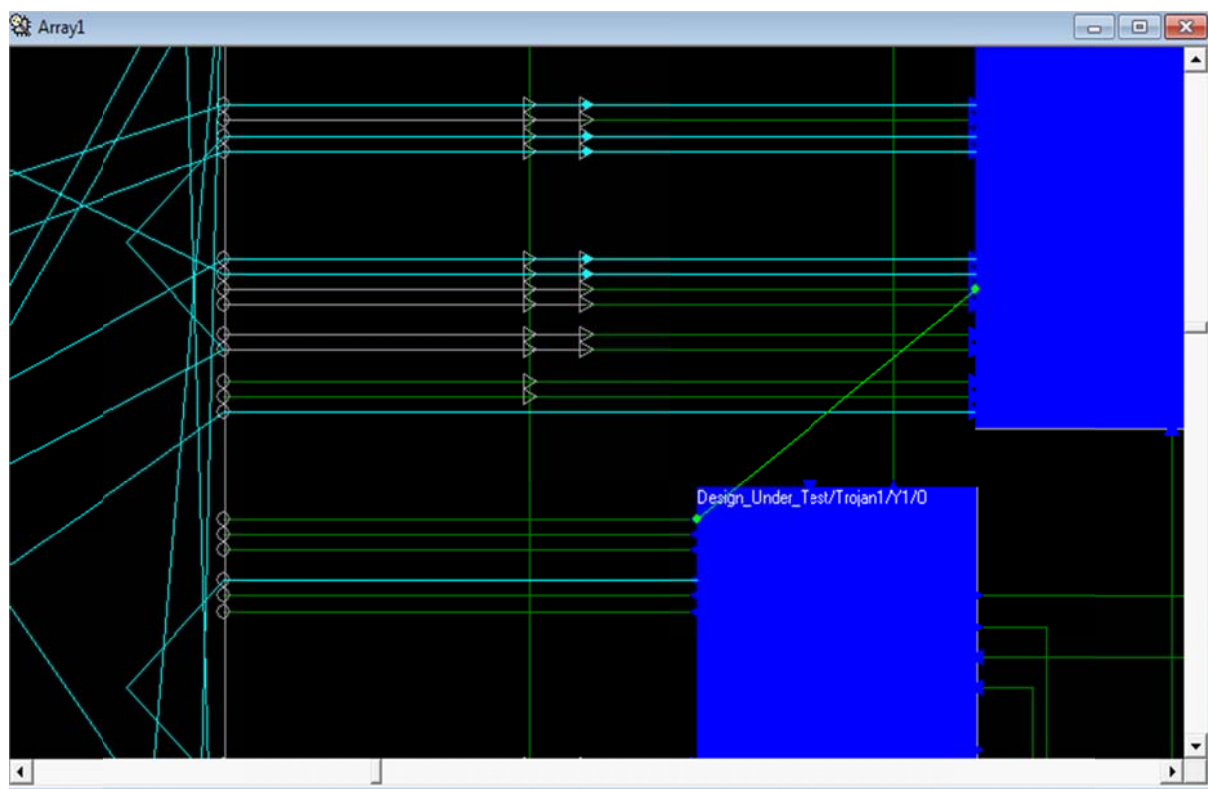


Figure 19

Manual Routing:

If the fanout of the unroute net is 1, it is done. If it is more than 1, that means this net also connect to other genuine gates besides the Trojan gates. Therefore, we need to manually route these genuine gates. We take net **Design_under_Test/n777** for example. The original routing is shown in Figure 20.

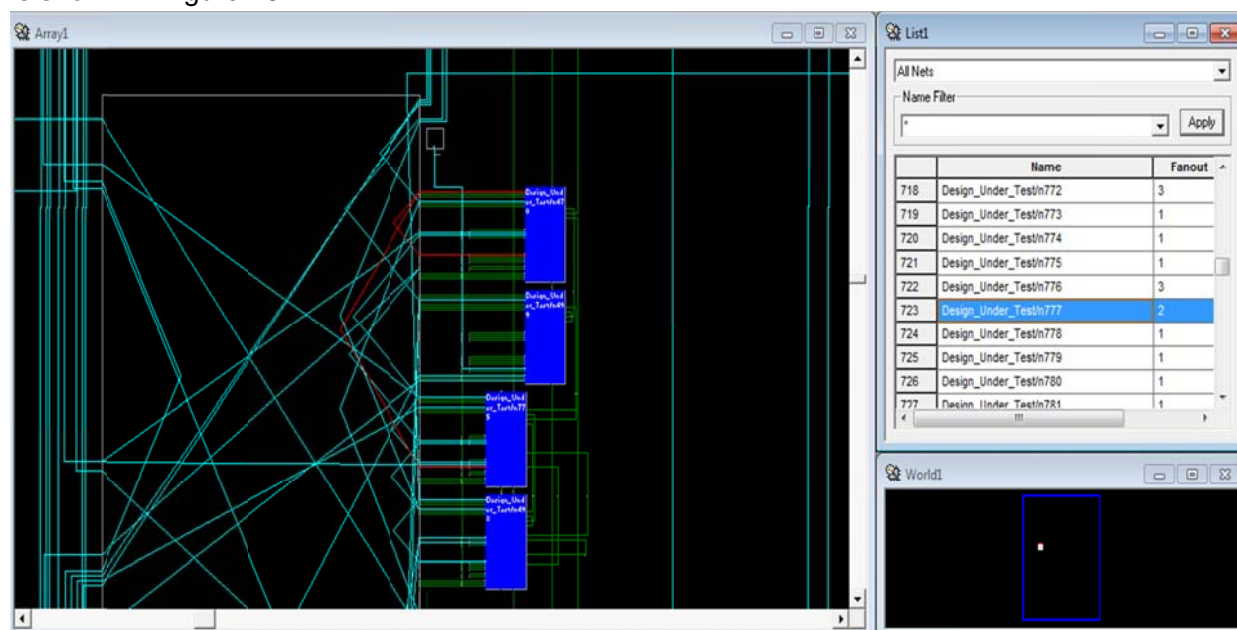


Figure 20

- a) Double-click the net to select it.
- b) Select **Tools > Route > Unroute** to unroute the net.
- c) If the net is selected, we can see the triangle at each pin. The triangle pointing to the cell means this is an input port. Otherwise, it is an output pin. We see that this net connects to one output port and two input ports, since its fanout is 2. Suppose the gates in cell **Design_Under_Test/n775** (left) is Trojan gate, we only need to route two ports in cell **Design_Under_Test/n470** (right) to assure original functionality.

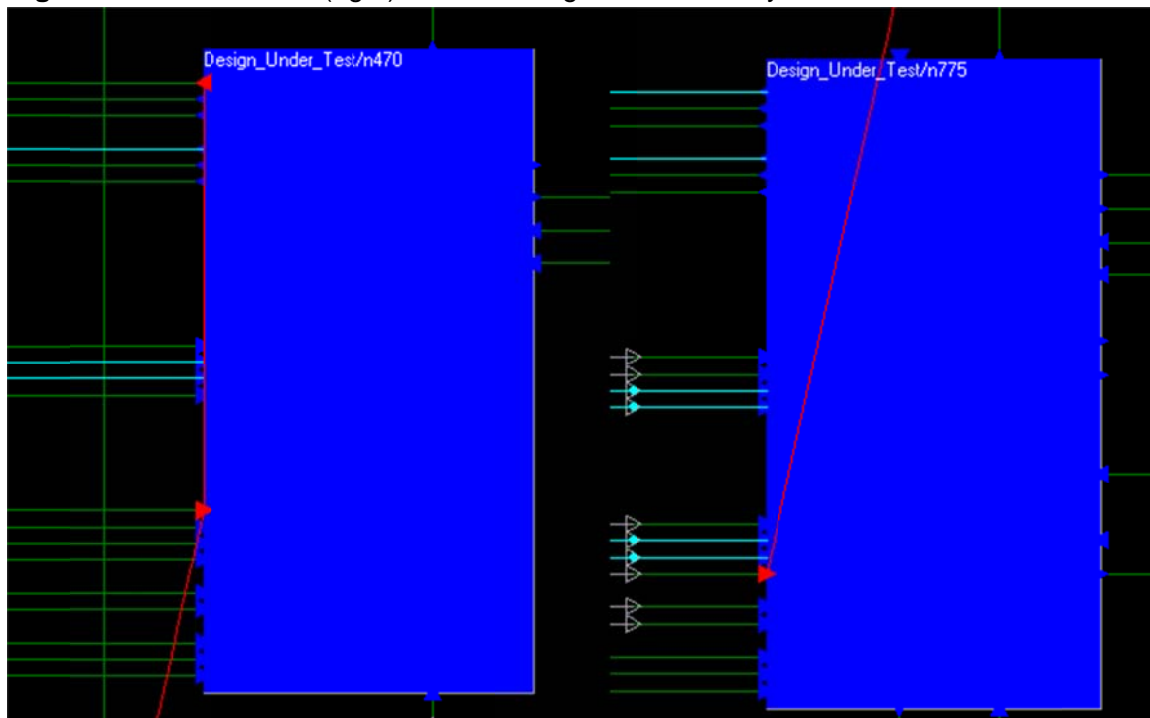


Figure 21

If you are not sure which is which, you can double-click the cell. A new window appears.

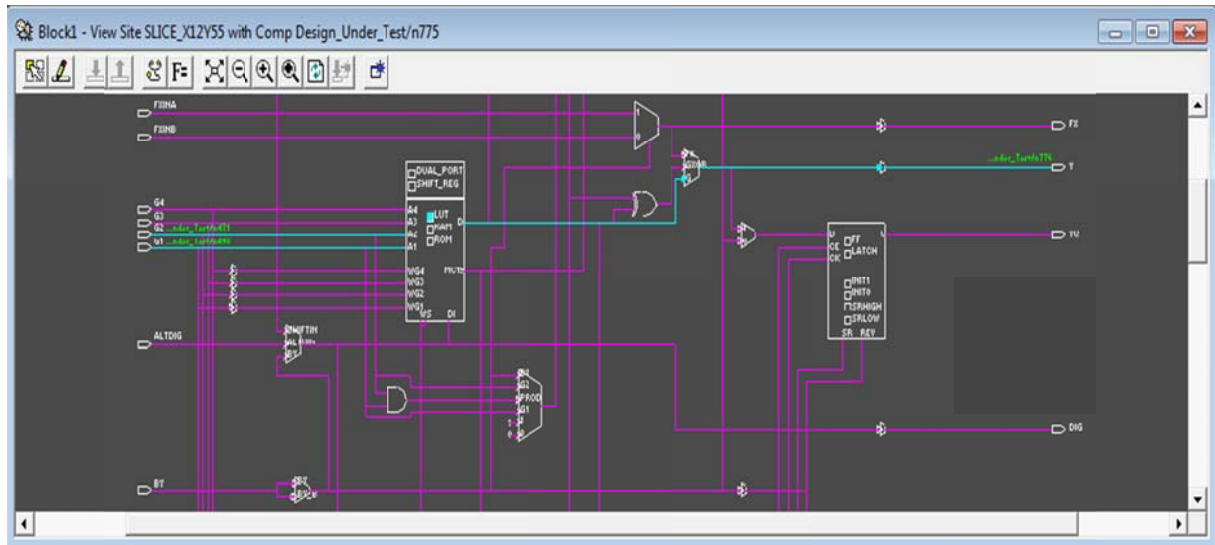


Figure 22

You can check interconnections inside and check the boolean equation by click **F=**.

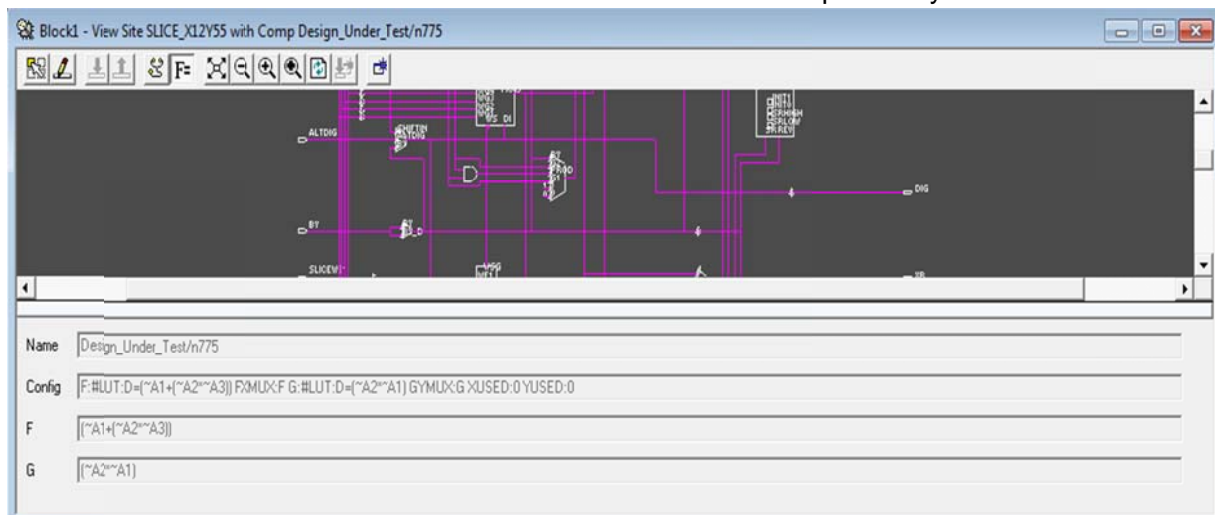


Figure 23

d) After you locate the ports you will route, you click to select the output port triangle and then select one input port triangle, as shown in Figure 24. You must follow this sequence. If you select input port first, manual routing will fail. Please note that manual routing can only work between two ports (one input port and one output port) every time. If there are several input ports, you need to do this multiple times to connect all input ports.

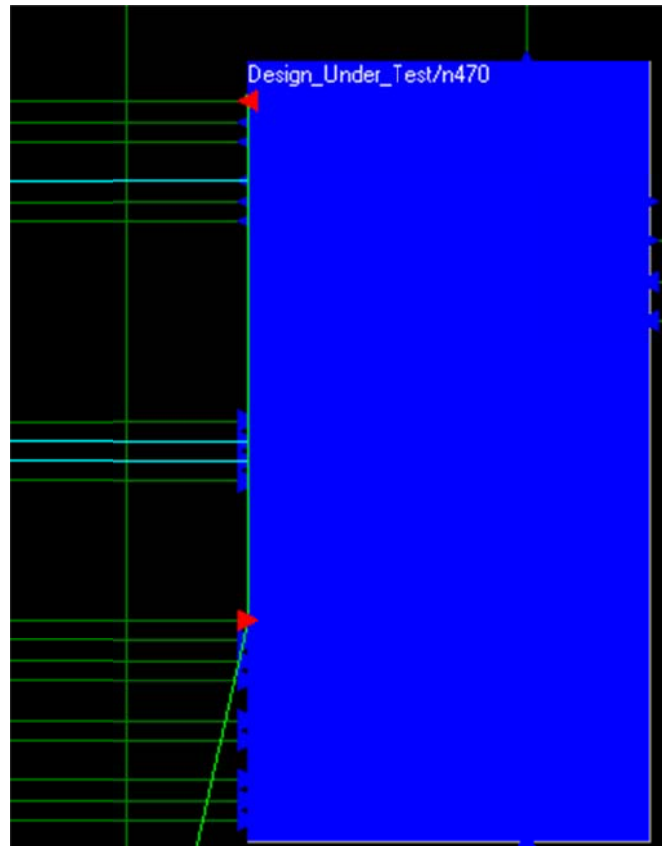


Figure 24

Select > Route > Manual Route, these two ports are routed.

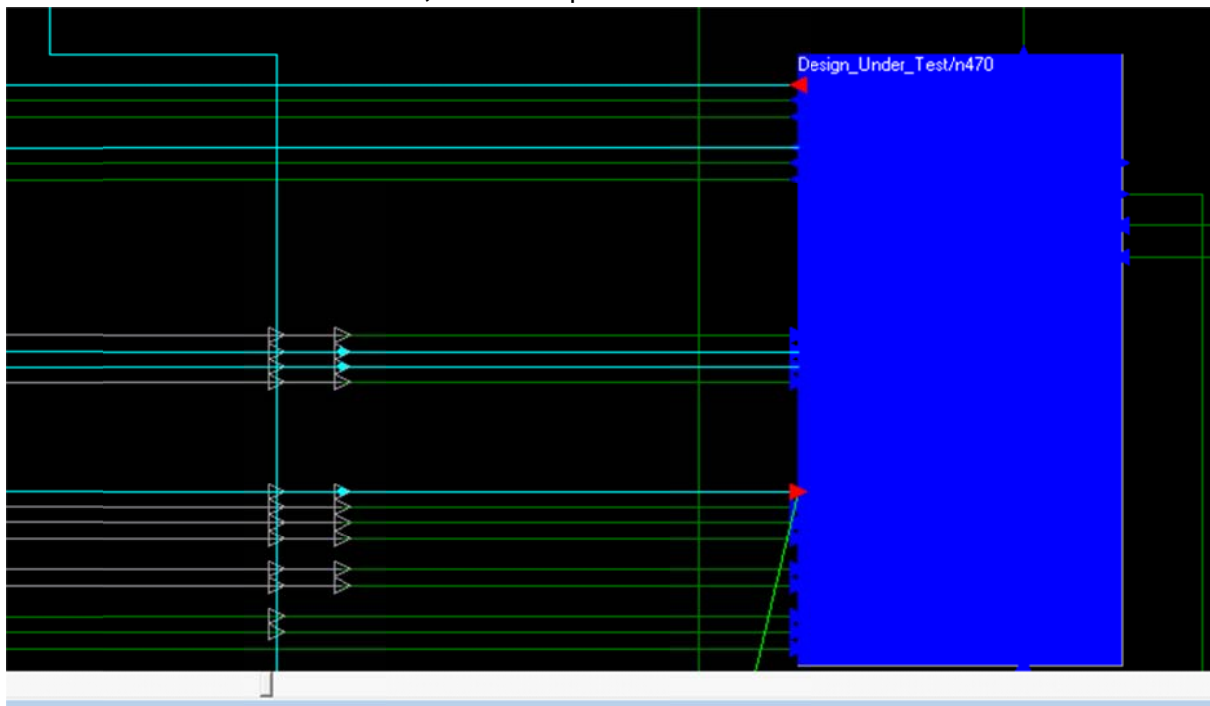


Figure 25

Save and exit:

- a) Repeat the previous process until the Trojans are disconnected from the original design.
- b) Select **File > Save**.
- c) Select **File > Exit**.

Generate Programming File Again:

- a) In the Hierarchy pane of the Project navigator Design panel, select the top module (top.v).
- b) In the Processes pane, right-click **Generate Programming File**, and select **Process Properties**.
- c) In the Process Properties dialog box, click the **Startup Options** category.
- d) Change the PFGA Start-Up Clock property from **CCLK** to **JTAG Clock**.

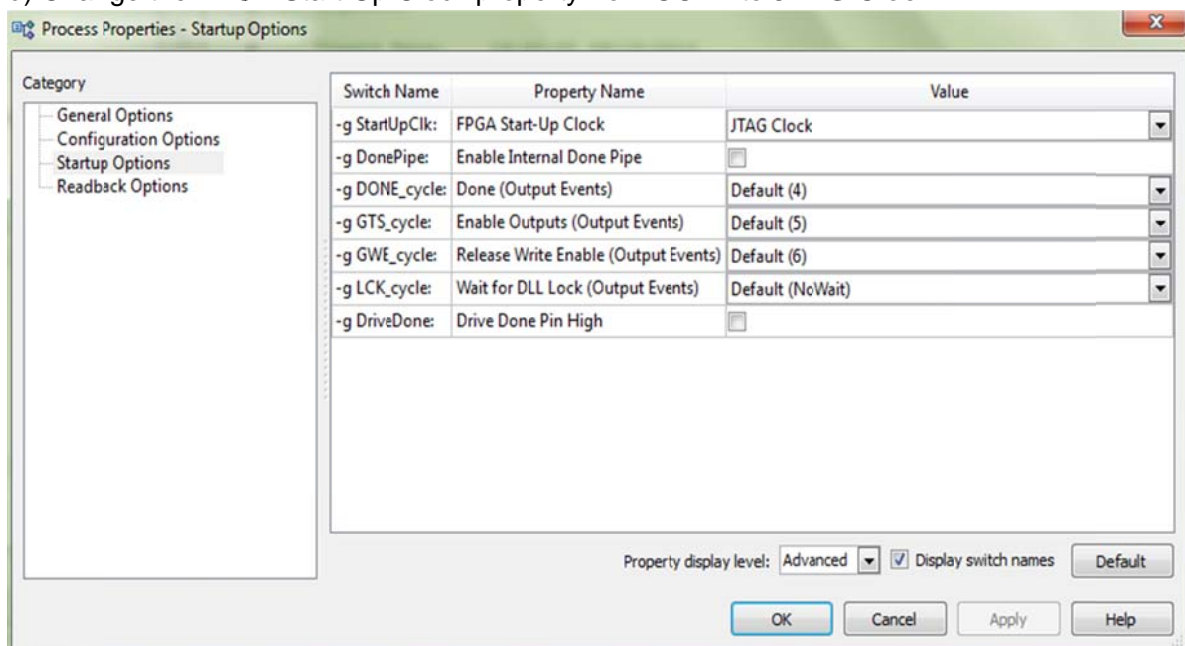


Figure 26

- e) Click **OK**.
- f) In the Processes panel, double-click **Generate Programming File** to create a bitstream of this design.

Downloading on the FPGA:

After downloading the program on the FPGA by using method in 3.1.1, the implementation for delay-based Trojan is done.