

Programmable Logic Design

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Lecture 9: Attributes and Constraints

Choose yourself and new technologies



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Plan

- Introduction
 - Attributes vs Constraints
- UCF
- Constraints in FPGAs



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Introduction



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Attributes vs Constraints

- There are two classes of attributes:
 - predefined as a part of the 1076 standard,
 - introduced outside of the standard:
 - by the designer
 - by the design tool supplier (like Xilinx or Altera)





Custom Xilinx attributes

- Attributes vs Constraints:
 - Names can be used interchangeably for custom attributes
 - We can define subcategories:
 - Attributes - property associated with a device architecture primitive component that generally affects an instantiated component's functionality or implementation
 - Synthesis constraints - direct the synthesis tool optimization technique for a particular design or piece of HDL code
 - Implementation constraints - instructions given to the FPGA implementation tools to direct the mapping, placement, timing, etc. for the implementation tools





FPGA constraints

- FPGA constraints can be split into:
 - **Grouping Constraints**
 - **Logical Constraints**
 - **Physical Constraints**
 - **Mapping Directives**
 - **Placement Constraints**
 - **Routing Directives**
 - **Synthesis Constraints**
 - **Timing Constraints**
 - **Configuration Constraints**





Constraints usage in VHDL

- Before a constraint can be used, it must be declared with the following syntax:
 - **attribute** *attribute_name* : **string**;
- Example:
 - **attribute** RLOC : **string**;
- Once the attribute is declared, a VHDL attribute can be specified as:
 - **attribute** *bufg of my_clock*: **signal** is “clk”;





Constraints usage in VHDL

- An attribute can be declared in an entity or architecture.
 - If the attribute is declared in the entity, it is visible both in the entity and the architecture body.
 - If the attribute is declared in the architecture, it cannot be used in the entity declaration.





Where to define constraints

- Depending on a attribute they can be defined in different places:
 - Constraints Editor – *Timing Constraints*
 - Floorplanner – *Non-timing placement constraints*
 - PACE – *IO placement and area constraints*
 - Floorplan Editor - *IO placement and area constraints*
 - Schematic and Symbol Editors - *IO placement and RLOC constraints*





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UCF / NCF



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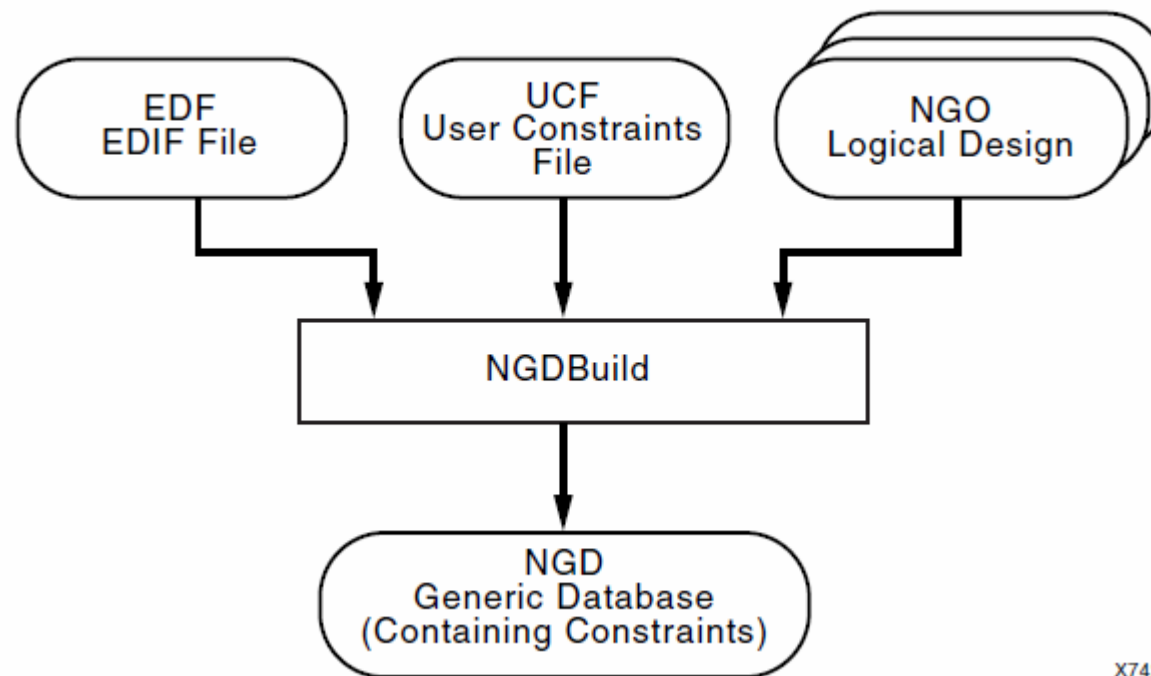


User Constraints File

- The UCF file is an ASCII file specifying constraints on the logical design
- The UCF file can be created with any text editor
- NCF - Netlist Constraint File, an ASCII file generated by synthesis programs



UCF file flow



X7423



UCF/NCF rules

- The UCF and NCF files are case sensitive.
- However, any Xilinx constraint keyword (for example, LOC, PERIOD, HIGH, LOW) may be entered in all upper-case, all lower-case, or mixed case.
- Each statement is terminated by a semicolon (;)
- No continuation characters are necessary if a statement exceeds one line, since a semicolon marks the end of the statement



UCF/NCF rules

- To comment a line a pound sign (#) is used
- C and C++ style comments (/ * */ and respectively) are supported
- Statements need not be placed in any particular order in the UCF and NCF file
- Enclose inverted signal names that contain a tilde (for example, ~OUTSIG1) in double quotes
- Multiple constraints for a given instance can be entered



UCF/NCF example

- The UCF file supports a basic syntax that can be expressed as:

- **{NET|INST|PIN}** *“full_name” constraint;*

or as

- **SET** *set_name set_constraint;*

- Example:

```
INST DCM_INST CLK_FEEDBACK = NONE;
```

```
INST DCM_INST CLKDV_DIVIDE = 2.0;
```

```
INST SDA_pin LOC=P44;
```



UCF/NCF addons

- If using Reserved Words (like „net”) double quote is mandatory
- Wildcard characters, asterisk (*) and question mark (?) can be used in as follows:
 - The asterisk (*) represents any string of zero or more characters.
 - The question mark (?) indicates a single character
- Example:

– NET “*AT?” FAST;





UCF/NCF addons

- If multiple constraints necessary then:
 - **INST** *instanceName constraintName = constraintValue*
| *constraintName =constraintValue*;
- For example:
 - INST myInst LOC = P53 | IOSTANDARD =
LVPECL33 | SLEW = FAST;



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PCF



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PCF

- The NGD file produced when a design netlist is read into the Xilinx Development System may contain a number of logical constraints from:
 - UCF
 - NCF
 - VHDL code
- Logical constraints in the NGD file are read by MAP. MAP uses some of the constraints to map the design and converts logical constraints to physical constraints.





PCF

- MAP writes these physical constraints into a Physical Constraints File (PCF)
- The PCF file is an ASCII file containing two separate sections:
 - A section for those physical constraints created by the mapper
 - A section for physical constraints entered by the user





PCF

- The structure of the PCF file is as follows.
 - schematic start;
 - *translated schematic and UCF and NCF constraints in PCF format*
 - schematic end;
 - *user-entered physical constraints*
- **Caution!** All user-entered physical constraints MUST be put after the “schematic end” statement. *Any constraints preceding this section or within this section may be overwritten or ignored.*





PCF example

- UCF file:
 - INST LED1 LOC=P65;
 - INST LED2 LOC=P64;
- PCF file
 - COMP "LED1" LOCATE = SITE "P65" LEVEL 1;
 - COMP "LED2" LOCATE = SITE "P64" LEVEL 1;



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Constraints Editor



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Constraints Editor

- Constraints Editor can be found in the ISE environment
- Constraints Editor is used to enter timing constraints
- The user interface simplifies constraint entry by guiding through constraint creation without needing to understand UCF file syntax.



Constraints Editor

- Constraints Editor requires:
 - A User Constraints File (UCF)
 - A Native Generic Database (NGD) file
- After the constraints are created or modified with Constraints Editor, NGDBuild must be run again, using the new UCF and design source netlist files as input and generating a new NGD file as output





Xilinx - ISE - C:\GB\WHDL_projekty\HS_counter_5\HS_counter_5.ise - [Timing Constraints*]

File Edit View Project Source Process Window Help

Sources

Constraint Files

ddl2.ucf

Show Constraints from Specified File only

Show Constraints from All Files

Constraint Type

Timing Constraints

Global

Ports

Advanced

Group Constraints

Miscellaneous

Processes

Processes for: HS_counter_main - Behavior

Add Existing Source

Create New Source

View Design Summary

Design Utilities

User Constraints

Create Timing Constraints

Floorplan IO - Pre-Synthesis

Floorplan Area / IO / Logic

Synthesize - XST

Processes

Design Summary

HS_counter_main.vhd

Timing Constraints*

Pad to Pad... 20 ns.

Clock To Pad

Output interface detail

☒ Single data rate ☐ Dual data rate

Output clock pad net:
Clk_ext

Output pad timegroup:
Create ...

Rising edge constraints

Offset out: Units: ns

Output skew reference pin:
<Default>

Output register timegroup:
Create ...

Rising edge comment:

Falling edge constraints

Offset out: Units: ns

Output skew reference pin:
<Default>

Output register timegroup:
Create ...

Falling edge comment:

Output Interface Detail:

- The **Single Data Rate** and **Dual Data Rate** determine the output interface type.
- The Output clock Pad Net is the clock net used to trigger the outgoing data.
- The optional Output pad timegroup limits the scope of the OFFSET OUT constraint to only those data pins defined in the PAD timegroup.
- A new Pad Group may be defined by selecting the Create New Pad Group button.

Rising Constraint Parameters:

- The optional Rising Clock-to-Output (OFFSET OUT) is the time from the rising clock edge at the input pin of the FPGA until data becomes valid at the output pin of the FPGA. For source-synchronous designs, the OFFSET OUT value can be left blank and only a skew report will be generated.
- The Output Skew Reference Pin is the reference signal in which the skew of all bits in the bus will be reported against.
- The optional Output Register Timegroup is used to limit the scope of the constraint to a subset of registers.
- RISING is a predefined Output Register Group which indicates the constraint applied to all rising edge registers.

Falling Constraint Parameters:

OK Cancel Apply Help

Diagram showing a clock input (ClkIn) connected to a register (REG) and a clock output (TxClk) connected to a register (REG). The output (TxData) is connected to a TxData pin. A blue arrow indicates the clock signal path from ClkIn to TxClk.



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Floorplanner



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Floorplanner

- Floorplanner is a part of the ISE environment
- It is used for defining parameters of input/output signals and for defining the positioning of the logic nets inside the chip
- **Easy** way of making area constraints
- Floorplanner can be used after translation and/or before mapping
- Floorplanner reads the UCF file constraints





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Xilinx PACE - C:\GB\VHDL_projekt\filter_design\main_filter.ucf

File Edit View IOBs Areas Tools Window Help

Loading device for application Rf_Device from file '3s200.nph' in environment C:\Xilinx\10.1\ISE.
Compiling vhdl file "C:/GB/VHDL_projekt/filter_design/main_filter.vhd" in Library work.
Entity <main_filter> compiled.
ERROR:HDLParas:164 - "C:/GB/VHDL_projekt/filter_design/main_filter.vhd" Line 40: parse error, unexpected SIGNAL
ERROR:HDLParas:3312 - "C:/GB/VHDL_projekt/filter_design/main_filter.vhd" Line 45: Undefined symbol 't'.
ERROR:HDLParas:1209 - "C:/GB/VHDL_projekt/filter_design/main_filter.vhd" Line 47: t: Undefined symbol (last report in this block)
ERROR:HDLParas:808 - "C:/GB/VHDL_projekt/filter_design/main_filter.vhd" Line 47: or can not have such operands in this context.
ERROR:HDLParas:3312 - "C:/GB/VHDL_projekt/filter_design/main_filter.vhd" Line 51: Undefined symbol 't'.
ERROR:HDLParas:1209 - "C:/GB/VHDL_projekt/filter_design/main_filter.vhd" Line 51: t: Undefined symbol (last report in this block)

Design Browser

- I/O Pins
 - A
 - Clk
 - Reset
 - Q
- Global Logic
- Logic

Design Object List - I/O Pins

I/O Name	I/O Direction	Loc	Bank	I/O Std.
A	Input			
Clk	Input	BANK3		
Q	Input			
Reset	Input			

Package Pins for xc3s200-5-pq208

Top View

Package View Architecture View

Total Com... C/C++ - ma... EC01_prj - C... Constraints... IPCall_dialer PLD_10 Xilinx - ISE - ... Xilinx ISE Help Xilinx PACE ... PL 12:08



Floorplanner

- Floorplanner™ interactive graphical tool can be used to perform the following functions:
 - Doing detailed-level floorplanning
 - Creating an RPM core that can be used in other designs
 - Viewing and editing location constraints
 - Finding logic or nets by name or connectivity
 - Cross probing from the Timing Analyzer to the Floorplanner
 - Placing ports automatically for modular design





RPM

- RPM – Relationally Placed Macro
- Defines the spatial relationship of the primitives that comprise the RPM
- Can be reused between designs



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FPGA Editor



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FPGA Editor

- In the FPGA Editor certain constraints can be added or deleted from the PCF (Physical Constraints File)
- In the FPGA Editor, net, site, and component constraints are supported as property fields in the individual nets and components



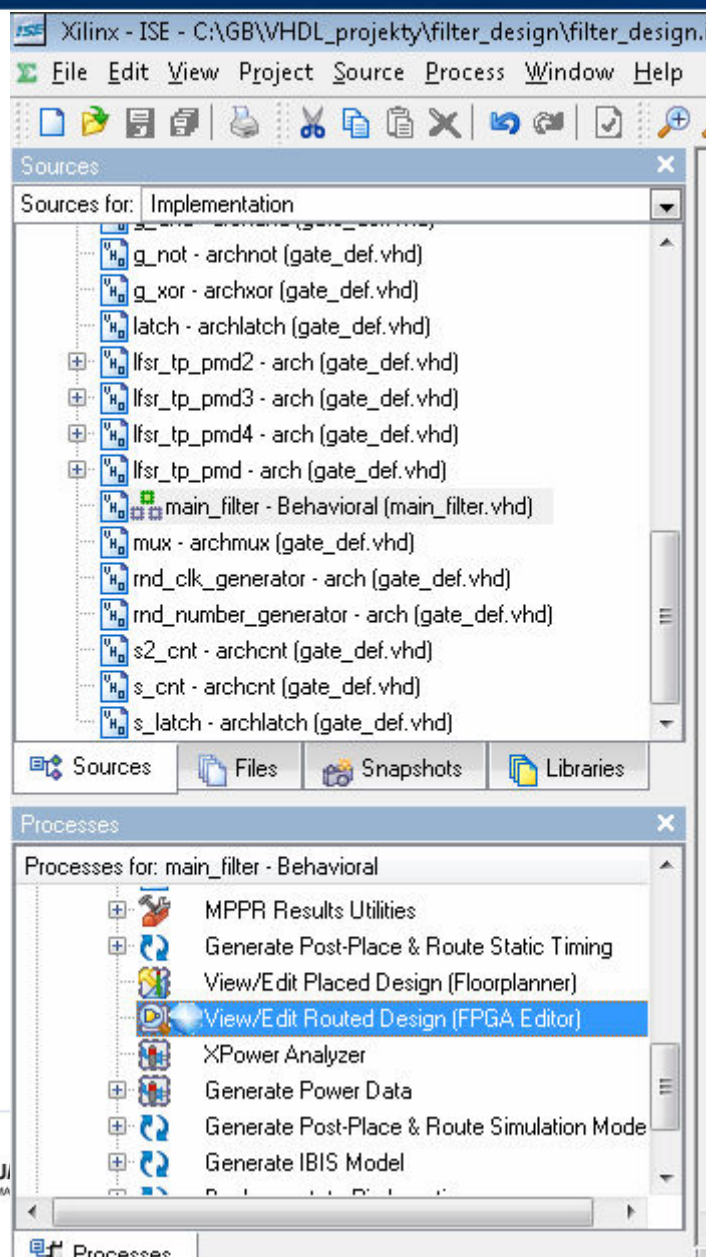
FPGA Editor function 1/2

- Functions that can be performed in the FPGA Editor:
 - Placing and routing critical components before running the automatic place and route tools.
 - Finishing placement and routing if the routing program does not completely route the design.
 - Adding probes to the design to examine the signal states of the targeted device. Probes are used to route the value of internal nets to an IOB for analysis during the debugging of a device.
 - Cross-probing the design with Timing Analyzer.



FPGA Editor function 2/2

- Functions that can be performed in the FPGA Editor:
 - Running the BitGen program and downloading the resulting BIT file to the targeted device.
 - Viewing and changing the nets connected to the capture units of an ILA core in your design.
 - Using the ILA command to write a .cdc file
 - Creating an entire design by hand (advanced users)
 - Modifying some constraints



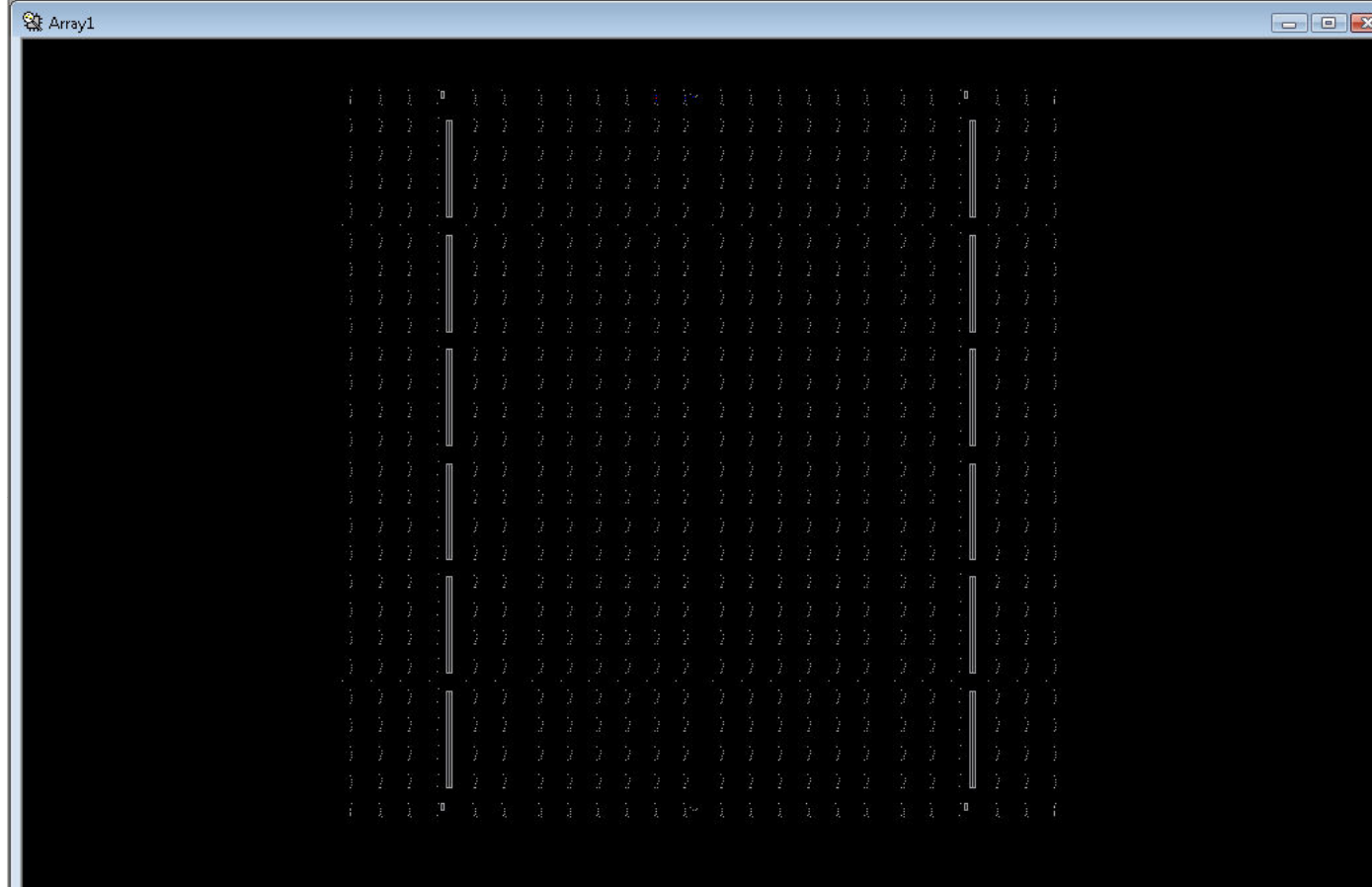


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Xilinx FPGA Editor - main_filter.ncd

File Edit View Tools Window Help



List1

All Components

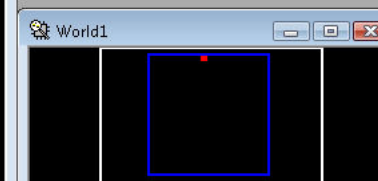
Name Filter

*

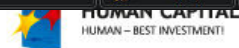
Apply

	Name	Site	Type	#Pins	Highlighted
1	A	P185	IOB	3	no color
2	Clk	P184	IOB	1	no color
3	Clk_BU	BUFG	BUFG	3	no color
4	O	P187	IOB	1	blue
5	Reset	P189	IOB	1	no color

exit
add
attrib
autoroute
clear
delay
delete
drc
editblock
editmode
find
highlight
ila
info
probes
autoprobe
route
route-fanout
swap
unroute



For Help, press F1



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Timing Constraint Strategies



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Timing Constraints Strategies

- The easiest way to modify time critical path is to use *global coinstraints*
- Main timing constraints methods:
 - Global Timing Assignments
 - Specific Timing Assignments
 - Multi-Cycle and Fast or Slow Timing Assignments



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Xilinx Constraint



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Xilinx Constraints

- FPGA constraints can be split into:
 - **Grouping Constraints**
 - **Logical Constraints**
 - **Physical Constraints**
 - **Mapping Directives**
 - **Placement Constraints**
 - **Routing Directives**
 - **Synthesis Constraints**
 - **Timing Constraints**
 - **Configuration Constraints**



AREA_GROUP constraint

- AREA_GROUP is a design implementation constraint that enables partitioning of the design into physical regions for mapping, packing, placement, and routing
- AREA_GROUP is attached to logical blocks in the design, and the string value of the constraint identifies a named group of logical blocks that are to be packed together by mapper and placed in the ranges if specified by PAR





AREA_GROUP constraint

- Applicable to:
 - Logic groups
 - Timing groups
- Syntax example:
 - **INST “X” AREA_GROUP=groupname;**
 - AREA_GROUP “groupname” RANGE=range;





BLKNM constraint

- BLKNM (Block Name) assigns block names to qualifying primitives and logic elements
- If the same BLKNM constraint is assigned to more than one instance, the software attempts to map them into the same block
- Placing BLKNM constraints on instances that do not fit within one block creates an error



BLKNM constraint

- Applicable to:
 - Flip-flop and latch primitives
 - Any I/O element or pad
 - ROM primitives
 - RAMS and RAMD primitives
 - Carry logic primitives
- Syntax Example:
 - INST "\$1I87/block1" BLKNM=U1358;



BUFG (CPLD) constraint

- When applied to an input buffer or input pad net, the BUFG attribute maps the tagged signal to a global net.
- When applied to an internal net, the tagged signal is either routed directly to a global net or brought out to a global control pin to drive the global net, as supported by the target device family architecture





BUFG constraint

- Applicable to (CPLD only):
 - Any input buffer (IBUF),
 - input pad net,
 - internal net that drives a CLK, OE, SR,
 - DATA_GATE pin
- Syntax Example:
 - NET “fastclk” BUFG=CLK;



DCI_VALUE constraint

- DCI_VALUE determines which buffer behavioral models are associated with the IOBs of a design in the generation of an IBS file using IBISWriter
- Applicable to:
 - IOB
- Syntax Example:
 - INST pin_name DCI_VALUE = integer;
 - DCI_VALUE are integers 25 through 100 with an implied units of ohms (default 50 ohms)



DRIVE constraint

- DRIVE is a basic mapping directive that selects the output for SPARTAN and VIRTEX devices
- DRIVE selects output drive strength (mA) for the SelectIO buffers that use the:
 - LVTTTL, LVCMOS12, LVCMOS15, LVCMOS18, LVCMOS25, or LVCMOS33 interface I/O standard.



FAST constraint

- FAST is a basic mapping constraint. It increases the speed of an IOB output. While FAST produces a faster output, it may increase noise and power consumption.
- Applicable to:
 - Output primitives
 - Output pads
 - Bidirectional pads



FROM TO constraint

- FROM-TO defines a timing constraint between two groups.
- It is associated with the Period constraint of the high or low time.
- A group can be user-defined or predefined.
- From synchronous paths, a FROM-TO constraint controls only the setup path, not the hold path.



FROM TO constraint

- Applicable to:
 - Predefined and user-defined groups
- Syntax Example:
 - **TIMESPEC TS $_{name}$ =FROM “group1” TO “group2”**
value {DATAPATHONLY};
 - **TIMESPEC TS_MY_PathA = FROM “my_src_grp” TO**
“my_dst_grp” 23.5 ns DATAPATHONLY;



IBUF_DELAY_VALUE constraint

- The IBUF_DELAY_VALUE constraint is a mapping constraint that adds additional static delay to the input path of the FPGA array
- This constraint can be applied to any input or bidirectional signal that is not directly driving a clock or IOB (Input Output Block) register
- The IBUF_DELAY_VALUE constraint can be set to an integer value from 0-16
- These values do not directly correlate to a unit of time but rather additional buffer delay





IBUF_DELAY_VALUE constraint

- Applicable to:
 - Any top-level I/O port
- Syntax Example:
 - **attribute IBUF_DELAY_VALUE : string;**
 - **attribute IBUF_DELAY_VALUE of DataIn1: label is "5";**





IFD_DELAY_VALUE constraint

- The IFD_DELAY_VALUE constraint is a mapping constraint that adds additional static delay to the input path of the FPGA array
- This constraint can be applied to any input or bidirectional signal which drives an IOB (Input Output Block) register
- The IFD_DELAY_VALUE constraint can be set to an integer value from 0-8
- These values do not directly correlate to a unit of time but rather additional buffer delay





IFD_DELAY_VALUE constraint

- Applicable to:
 - Any top-level I/O port
- Syntax Example:
 - **attribute IFD_DELAY_VALUE : string;**
 - **attribute IFD_DELAY_VALUE of DataIn1: label is "5";**





IOSTANDARD constraint

- IOSTANDARD is a basic mapping constraint and synthesis constraint
- IOSTANDARD is used to assign an I/O standard to an I/O primitive
- IOSTANDARD works differently for FPGA and CPLD devices





IOSTANDARD constraint

- Applicable to:
 - IBUF, IBUFG, OBUF, OBUFT
 - IBUFDS, IBUFGDS, OBUFDS, OBUFTDS
 - Output Voltage Banks
- Syntax Example:
 - **INST** "*instance_name*"
IOSTANDARD=*iostandard_name*;
 - **NET** "*pad_net_name*"
IOSTANDARD=*iostandard_name*;
- *Where iostandard_name is an IO Standard name as specified in the device data sheet*





KEEP constraint

- When a design is mapped, some nets may be absorbed into logic blocks.
- When a net is absorbed into a block, it can no longer be seen in the physical design database
- The net may then be absorbed into the block containing the components.
- KEEP prevents this from happening



KEEP constraint

- Applicable to:
 - signals
- Syntax Example:
 - **attribute keep of *signal_name*: signal is “{TRUE|FALSE}”;**
 - **NET “\$1I3245/\$SIG_0” KEEP;**





LOC constraint

- LOC defines where a design element can be placed within an FPGA
- It specifies the absolute placement of a design element on the FPGA die
- It can be a single location, a range of locations, or a list of locations
- LOC can be specified from the design file and also direct placement with statements in a constraints file



NOREDUCE constraint

- NOREDUCE is a fitter and synthesis constraint for CPLD devices
- It prevents minimization of redundant logic terms that are typically included in a design to avoid logic hazards or race conditions
- When constructing combinatorial feedback latches in a design, always apply NOREDUCE to the latch's output net and include redundant logic terms when necessary to avoid race conditions.





NOREDUCE constraint

- Applicable to:
 - CPLD devices
 - All nets
- Syntax Example:
 - **attribute NOREDUCE of *signal_name*: signal is “{TRUE|FALSE}”;**
 - **NET “\$SIG_12” NOREDUCE;**



PIN constraint

- The PIN constraint in conjunction with LOC defines a net location
- Applicable to:
 - Nets
- Syntax Example:
 - **PIN** “*module.pin*” **LOC**=*location*;





RLOC constraint

- RLOC (Relative Location) constraints group logic elements into discrete sets and allow to define the location of any element within the set relative to other elements in the set, regardless of eventual placement in the overall design
- The Blocks are set relative to each other to increase speed and use of die resources efficiently





RLOC constraint

- Applicable to:
 - Registers
 - ROM
 - RAMS, RAMD
 - BUFT
 - LUTs, MUXCY, XORCY, MULT_AND, SRL16, SRL16E
 - DSP48
 - MULT18x18



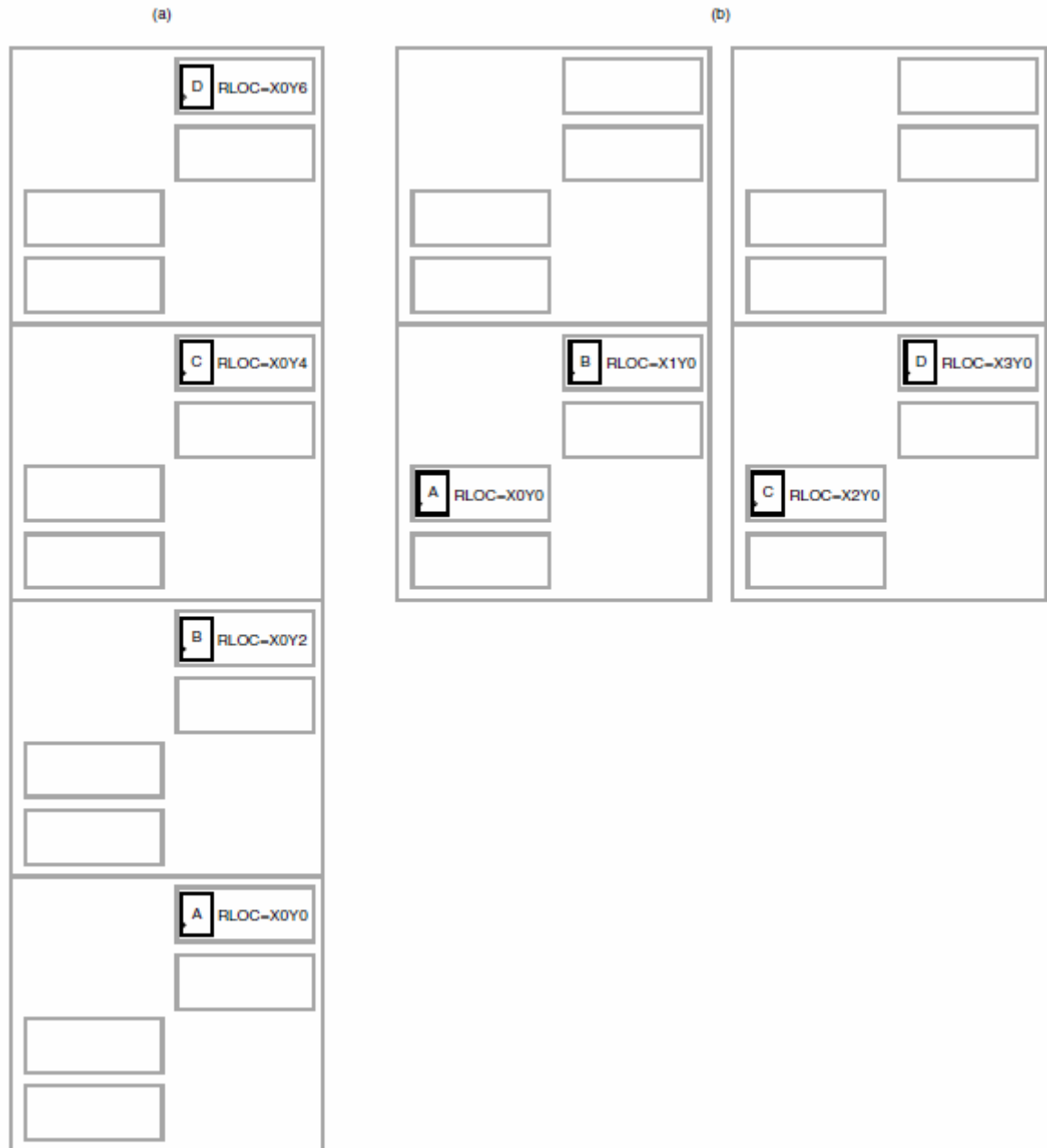
RLOC constraint

- Syntax Example:
 - Syntax depends on the device
 - For Spartan-3 and most Virtex devices:
 - **$RLOC=XmYn$**
 - *where*
 - m and n are the relative X-axis (left/right) value and the relative Y-axis (up/down) value, respectively
 - the X and Y numbers can be any positive or negative integer including zero





- Two RLOC specifications for four flip-flops





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Thank you for your attention



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References

- [1] Spartan-6 family documentation; www.xilinx.com
- [2] Constraints Guide, Rev 10.1, www.xilinx.com

