COMS30026 Design Verification

# Coverage

## Part I: Code Coverage

Kerstin Eder

(Acknowledgement: Avi Ziv from the IBM Research Labs in Haifa has kindly permitted the re-use of some of his slides.)

University of BRISTOL

Department of COMPUTER SCIENCE

# Outline

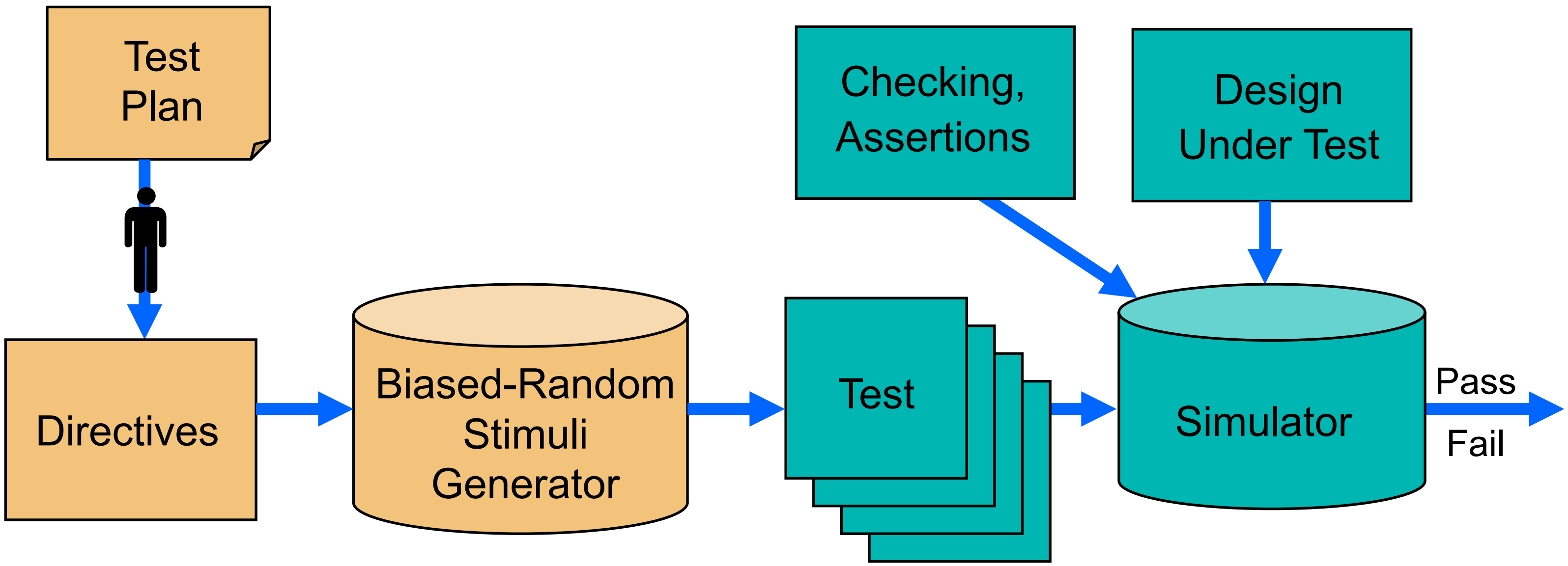
- Introduction to coverage
- Part I: Coverage Types
  - Code coverage models
  - (Structural coverage models)
- Part II: Coverage Types (continued)
  - Functional coverage models
- Part III: Coverage Analysis

Previously: Verification Tools

- Coverage is part of the Verification Tools.

# INTRODUCTION

# Simulation-based Verification Environment



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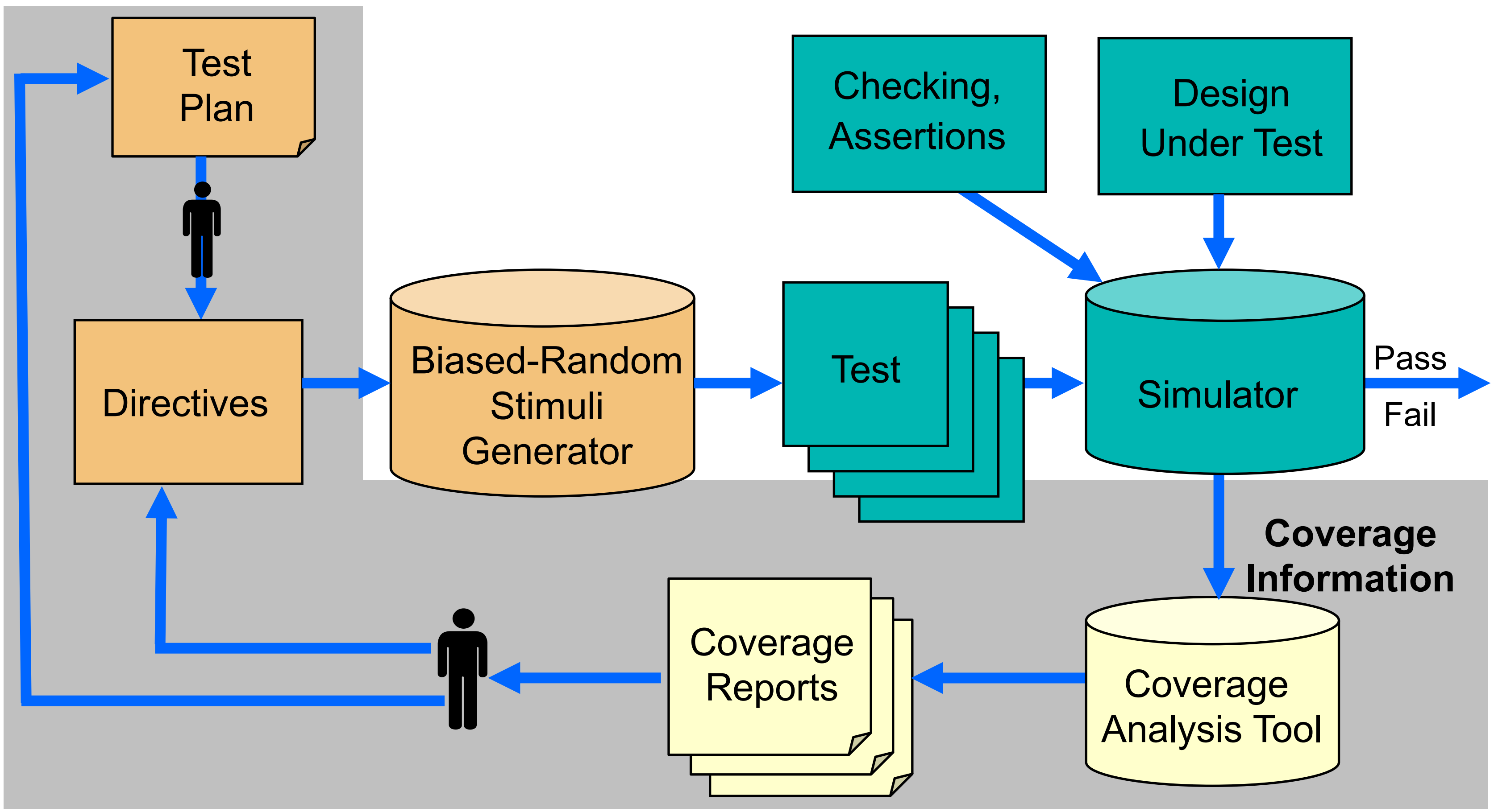

# Why coverage?

- Simulation is based on limited execution samples
  - We cannot run all possible scenarios, but
  - we need to know that all (important) areas of the DUV have been exercised (and thus verified).
- Solution: Coverage measurement and analysis
- The main ideas behind coverage
  - Features (of the specification and implementation) are identified
  - Coverage models capture these features

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- Measure the "quality" of a set of tests
  - Coverage gives us an insight into what **has not been** verified!
  - Coverage completeness does not imply functional correctness of the design! **Why?**

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- Help create regression suites
  - Ensure that all parts of the DUV are covered by regression suite
- Provide stopping criteria for unit testing

  Why “only” for unit testing?
- Improve understanding of the design

# Coverage Types

- Code coverage
- Structural coverage
- Functional coverage

- Other classifications
  - Implicit vs. explicit
  - Specification vs. implementation

# CODE COVERAGE

# Code Coverage - Basics

- Coverage models are based on the (HDL) code
- Generic models – fit (almost) any programming language
  – Used in both software development and hardware design
- Coverage models are syntactic
  – Model definition is based on syntax and structure of the code
  – Implicit, implementation-specific coverage models

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- **Useful for profiling:**

  – Run coverage on testbench to indicate which areas are executed most often.

  – **Gives insights on what to optimize!**

# Types of Code Coverage Models

- Control flow
  - Used to determine whether the control flow of a program has been fully exercised
- Data flow
  - Used to track the flow of data in and between programs and modules
- Mutation
  - Models that can detect common bugs by mutating the code and comparing results

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- Routine (function entry)
  - Each function / procedure has been called
- Function call
  - Each function has been called from every possible location
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- Branch/Path
  - Each branch in branching statements has been taken
    - `if, switch, case, when, …`
- Expression/Condition
  - Each input in a Boolean expression (condition) has evaluated to true and also to false
    - (See further details later on MC/DC coverage)

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- Loop
  - All possible numbers of iterations in (bounded) loops have been executed

# Statement/Block Coverage

Measures which lines (statements) have been executed by the test suite.

```
✓ if (parity==ODD || parity==EVEN) begin
❑ parity_bit = compute_parity(data,parity);
  end
✓ else begin
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  end
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- Why has this never occurred?
- Was it simply forgotten?
- Is it a condition that can never occur?
  - (Dead code might be “ok”!) WHEN & WHY?

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- **Dead code: default** branch on exhaustive **case**
- Don't measure coverage for code that was not meant to run!
  - Consider using ignore tags!

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Measures the various ways Boolean expressions and subexpressions can be executed.

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– **Analysis:** Understand WHY part of an expression was not executed

- Reaching 100% expression coverage is extremely difficult.

(See also MC/DC coverage, used in certification!) ☺

# Modified Condition/Decision (MC/DC) Coverage

Tutorial on MC/DC Coverage: *"A Practical Tutorial on Modified Condition/Decision Coverage" by Kelly Heyhurst et. al.*

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- **Decision coverage = branch coverage**
  - Requires that each decision toggles between true and false.
    - e.g. in `a || b` vectors TF and FF satisfy this requirement
- **Condition coverage** (also called expression coverage)
  - Requires that each condition (literal in a Boolean expression) takes all possible values at least once, but does not require that the decision takes all possible outcomes at least once.
    - e.g. in `a || b` vectors TF and FT satisfy this requirement

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- **Multiple Condition / Decision coverage**
  - Requires that all conditions and all decisions take all possible values.
  - This is exhaustive expression coverage.
    - e.g. in `a || b` vectors TT, TF, FT and FF satisfy this requirement
  - **Exponential growth of the number of test cases in number of conditions.**

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- The independence requirement ensures that the effect of each condition is tested relative to the other conditions.
- A minimum of (N + 1) test cases for a decision with N inputs is required for MC/DC in general.
- In some tools MC/DC coverage is referred to as **Focused Expression Coverage (fec).**

# Data Flow Models

- Coverage models that are based on flow of data during execution
- Each coverage task has two attributes
  - **Define** – where a value is assigned to a variable (signal, register, …)
  - **Use** – where the value is being used

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process (a, b)
begin
  s <= a  + b;
end process

process (clk)
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  if (reset)
    a <= 0; b <= 0;
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  - Wrong variable
  - Offset in loop boundaries
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  - Strong mutation – the difference is visible in the primary outputs
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- For more on Mutation Coverage see:

  *J Offutt and R.H. Untch. "Mutation 2000: Uniting the Orthogonal"*
- Commercial tools: Certitude by Synopsys

  https://www.synopsys.com/verification/simulation/certitude.html

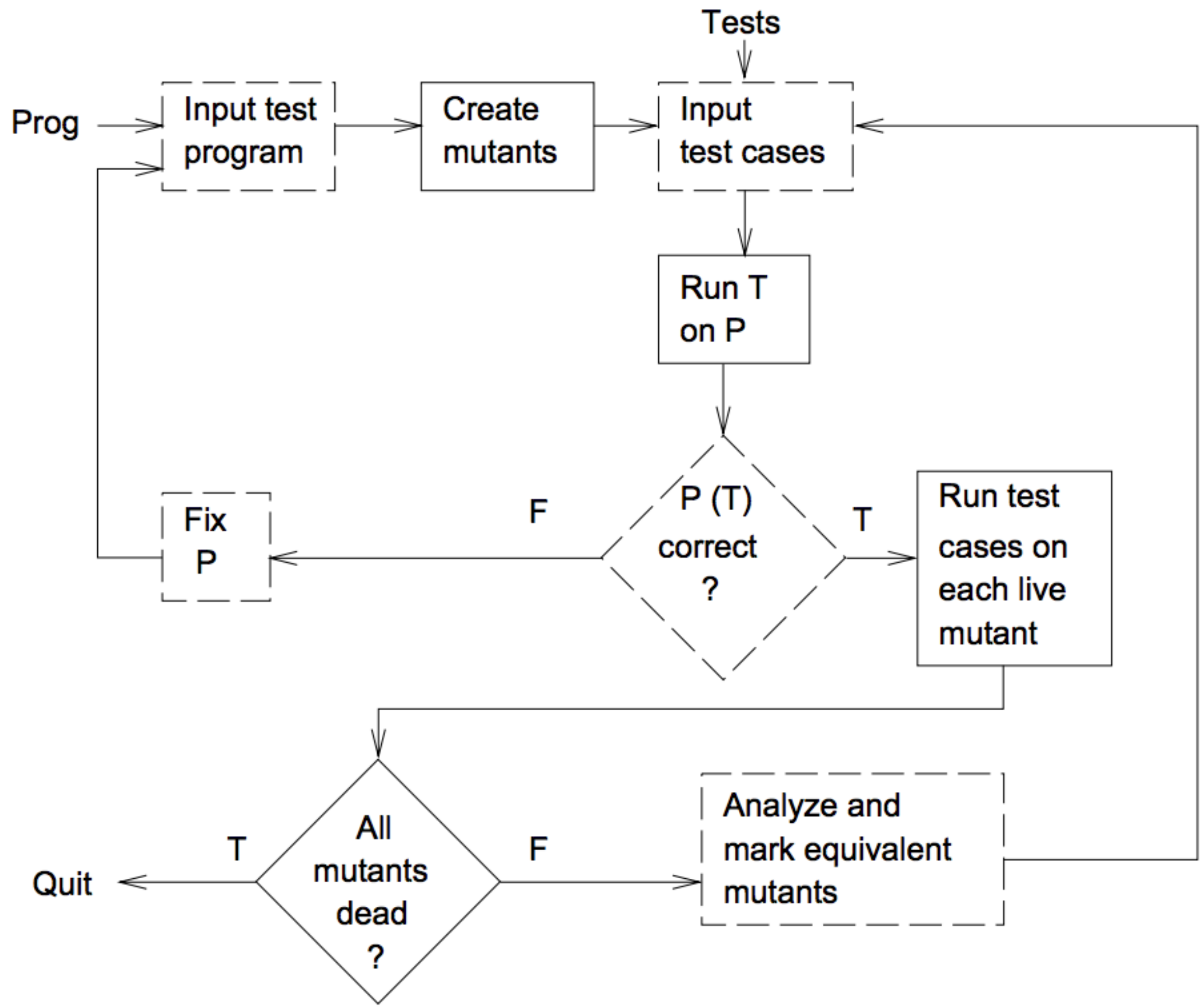


Figure 1: **Traditional Mutation Testing Process. Solid boxes represent steps that are automated and dashed boxes represent steps that are manual.**

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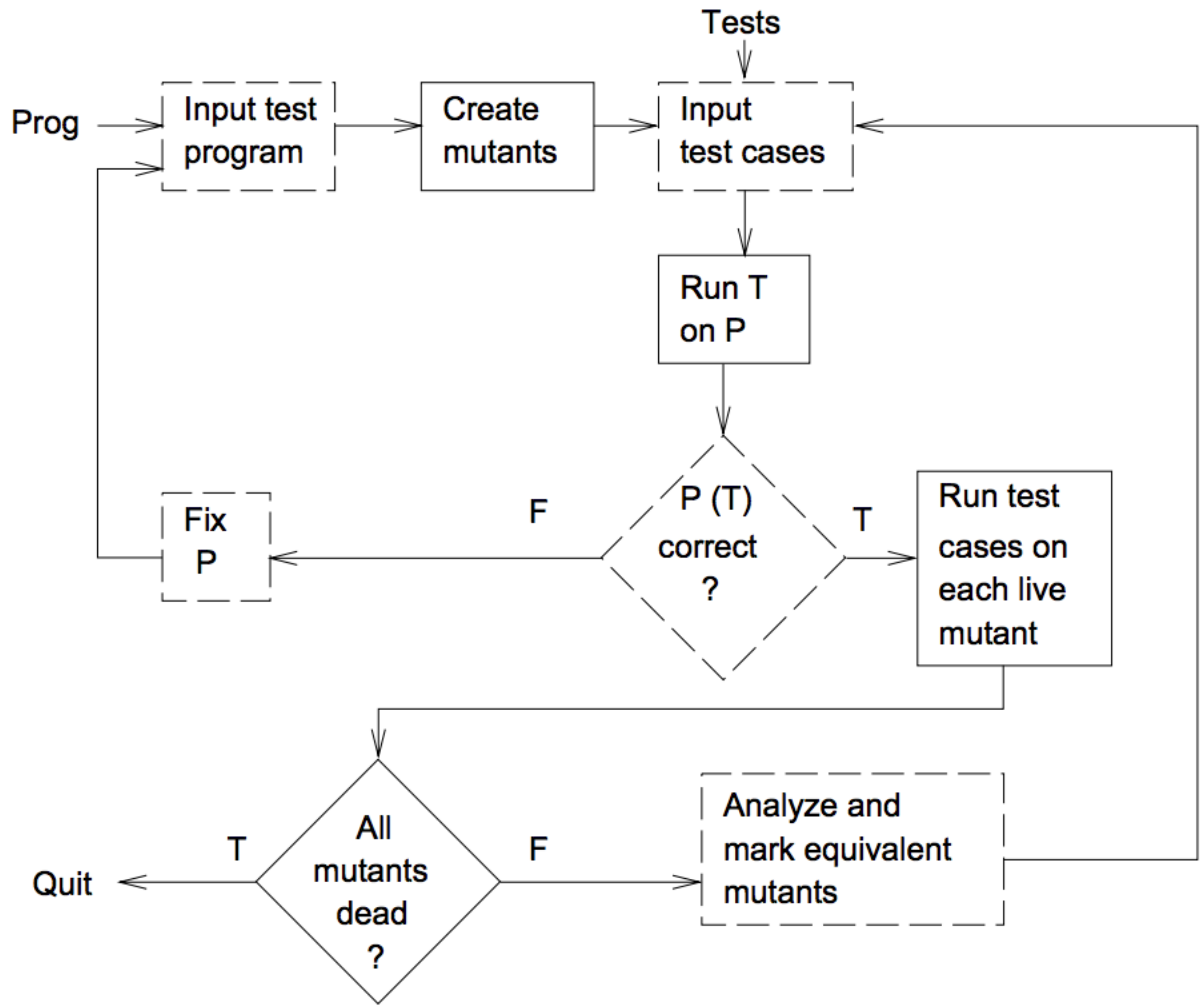


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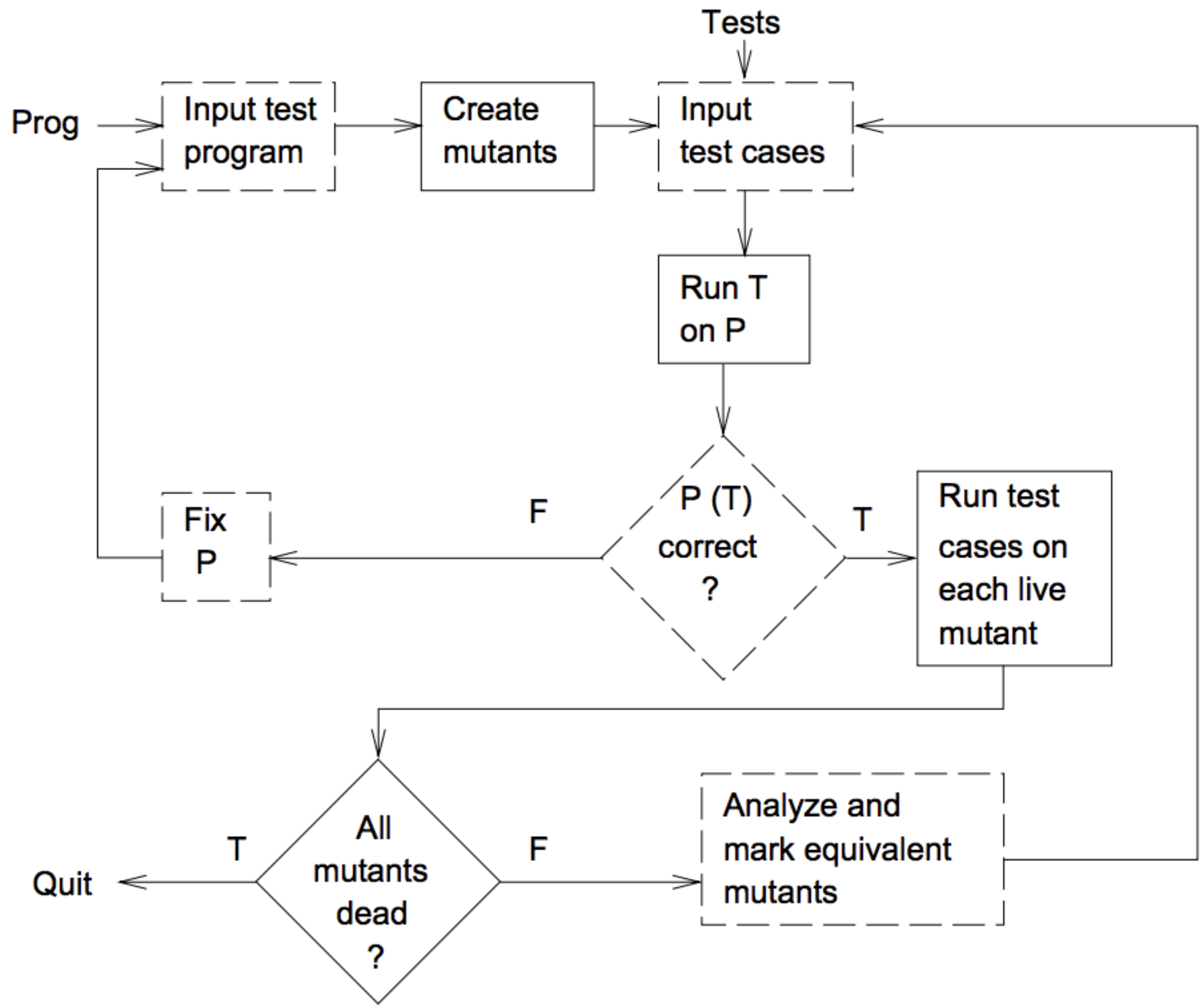


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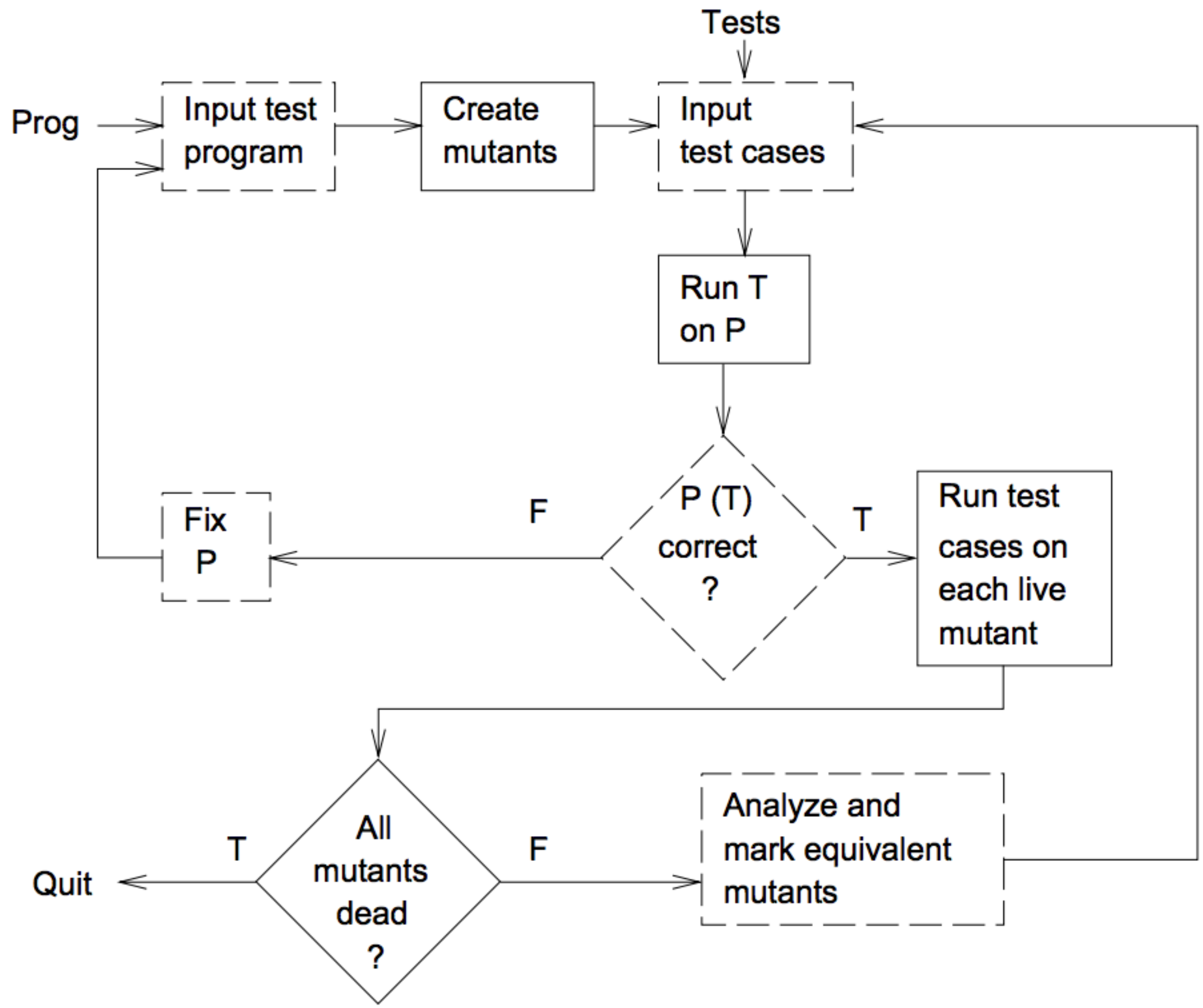


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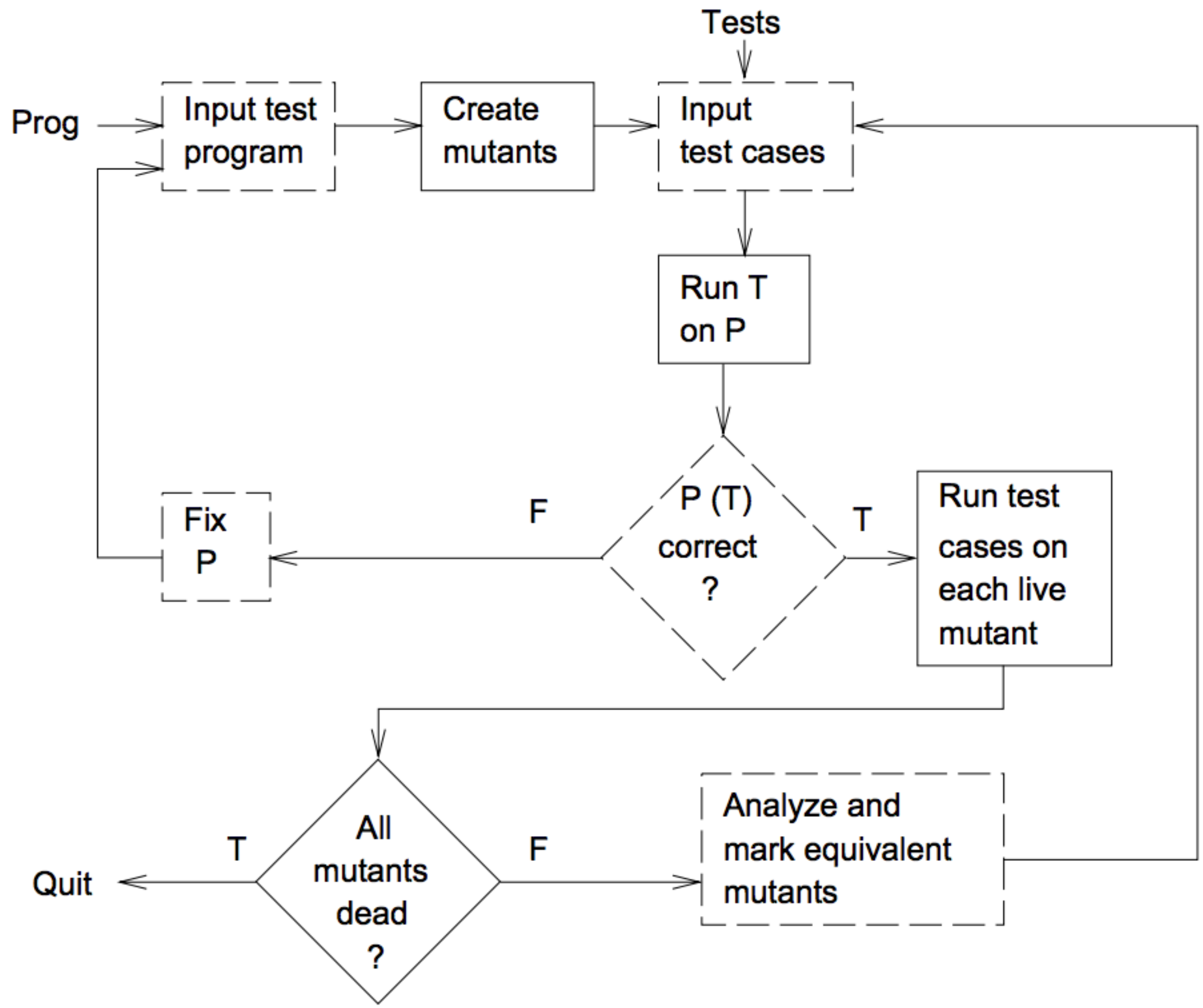


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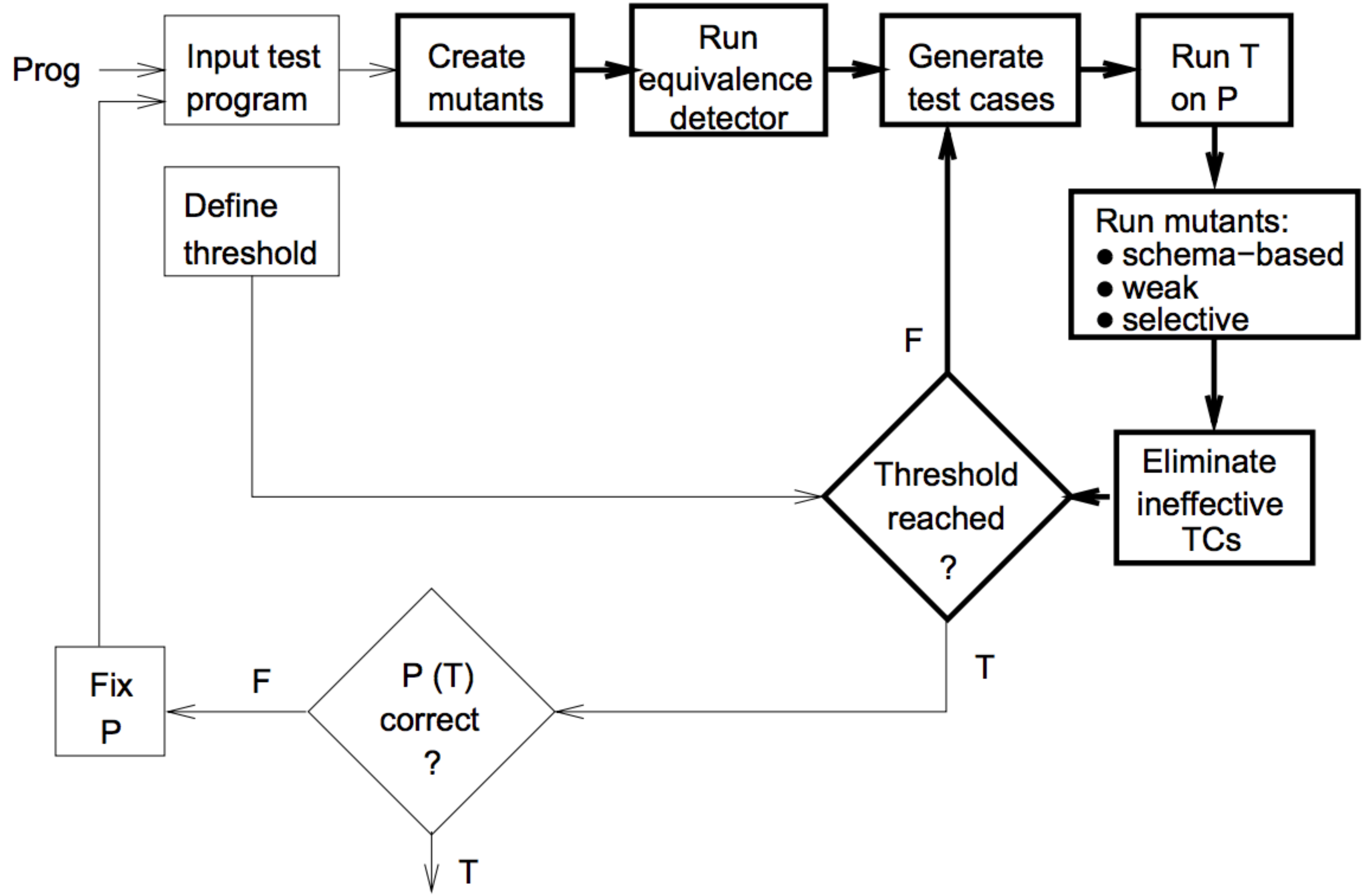


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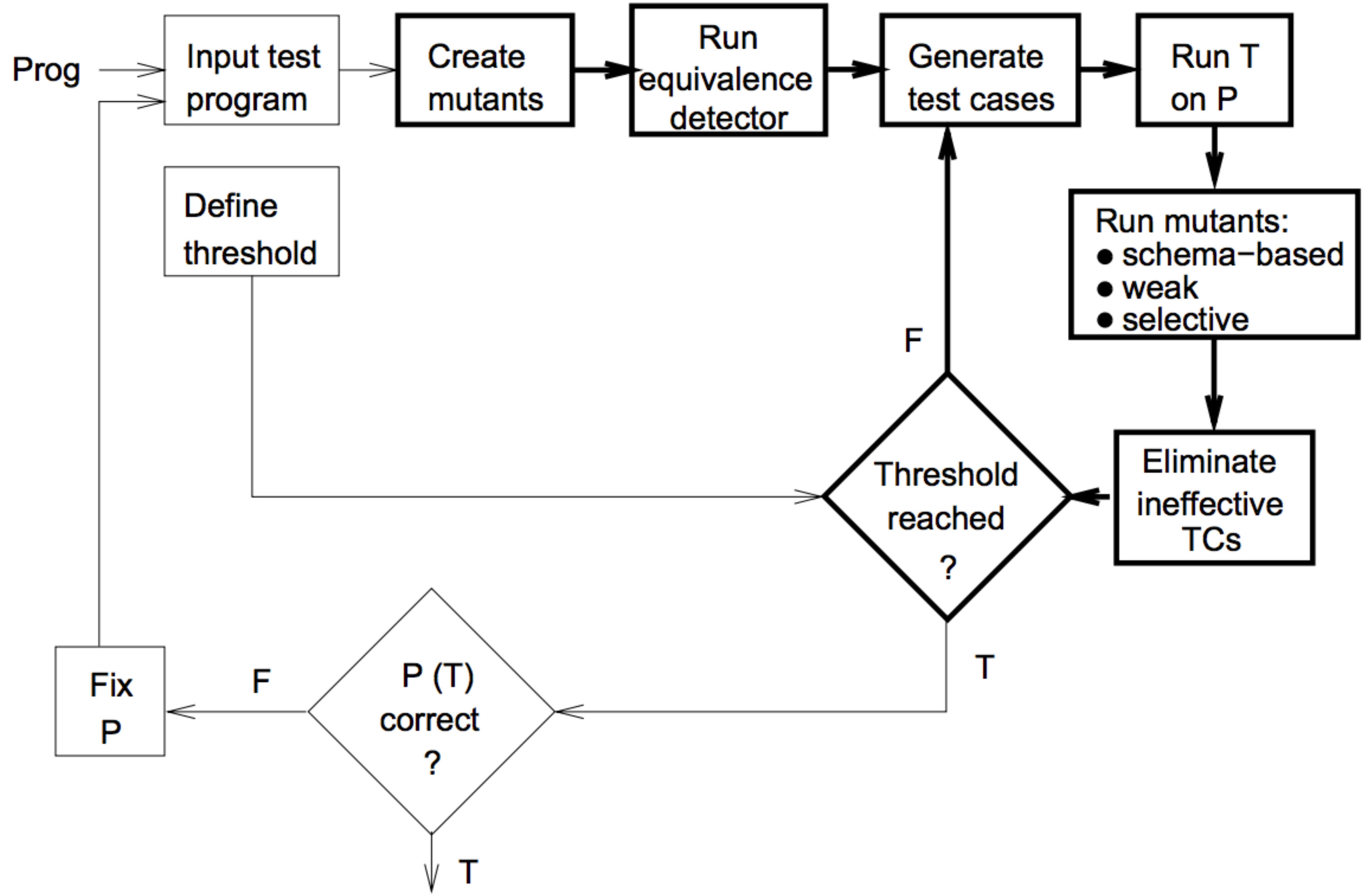


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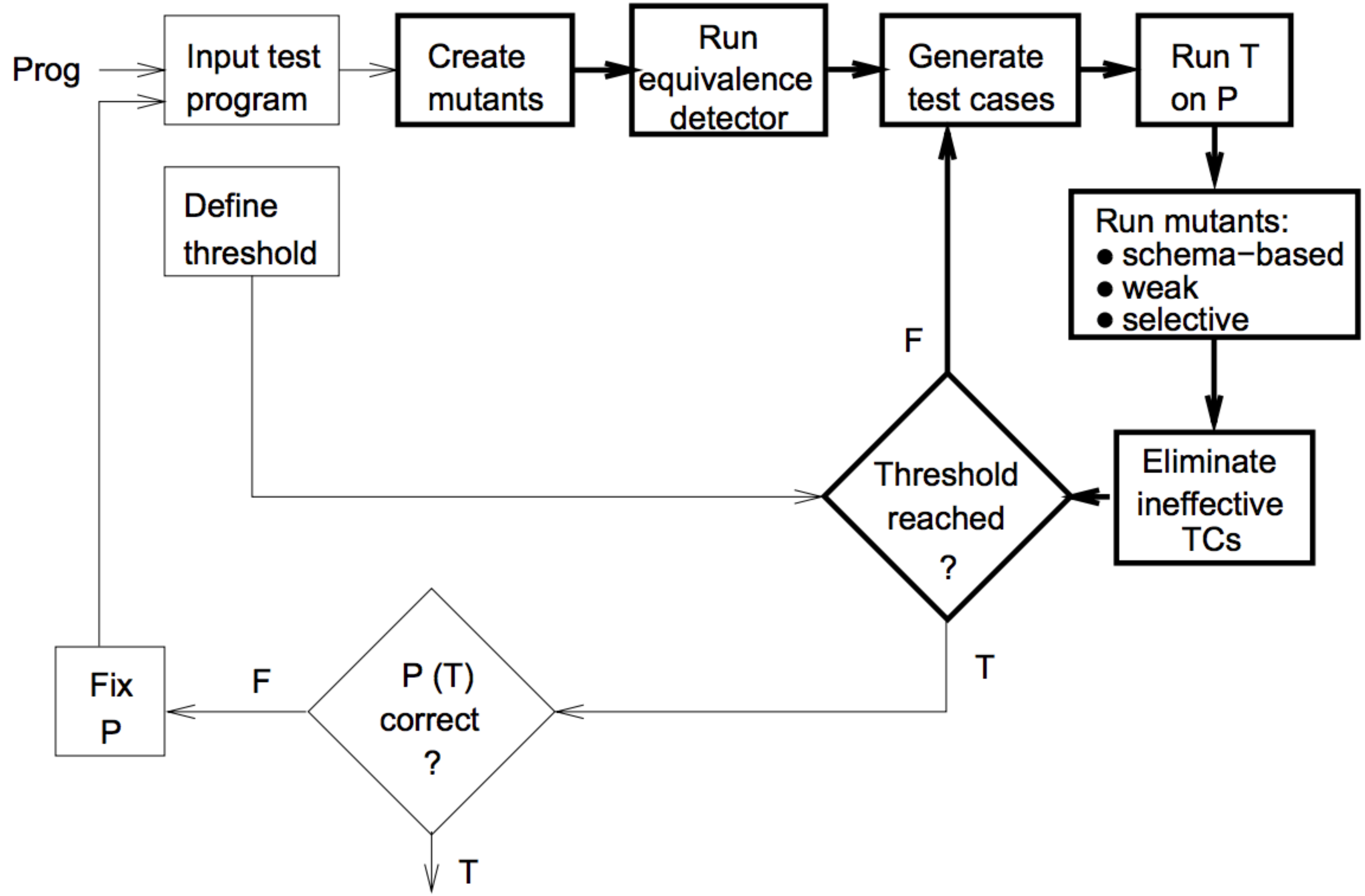


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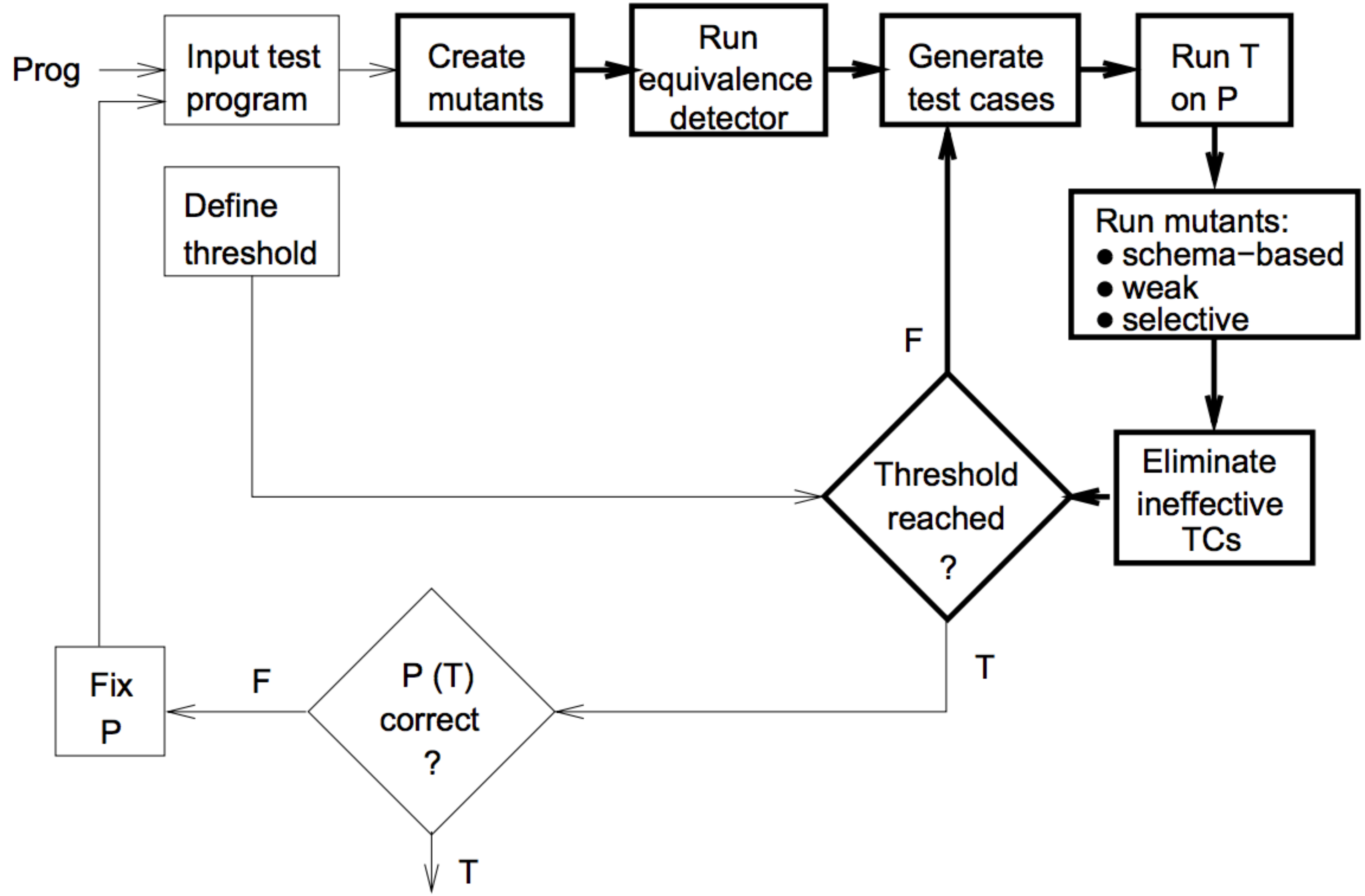


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# Code Coverage Models for Hardware

- Toggle coverage
  - Each (bit) signal changed its value from 0 to 1 and from 1 to 0
- All-values coverage
  - Each (multi-bit) signal got all possible values
  - Used only for signals with small number of values
    - For example, state variables of FSMs

# CODE COVERAGE STRATEGY

# Code Coverage Strategy

- Set **minimum % of code coverage** depending on available verification resources and importance of preventing post tape-out bugs.
  - A failure in low-level code may affect multiple high-level callers.
  - Hence, set a higher level of code coverage for unit testing than for system-level testing.

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  - Some feel that less than 100% does not ensure quality.
  - Beware:
    - Reaching full code coverage closure can cost a lot of effort!
    - This effort could be more wisely invested into other verification techniques.

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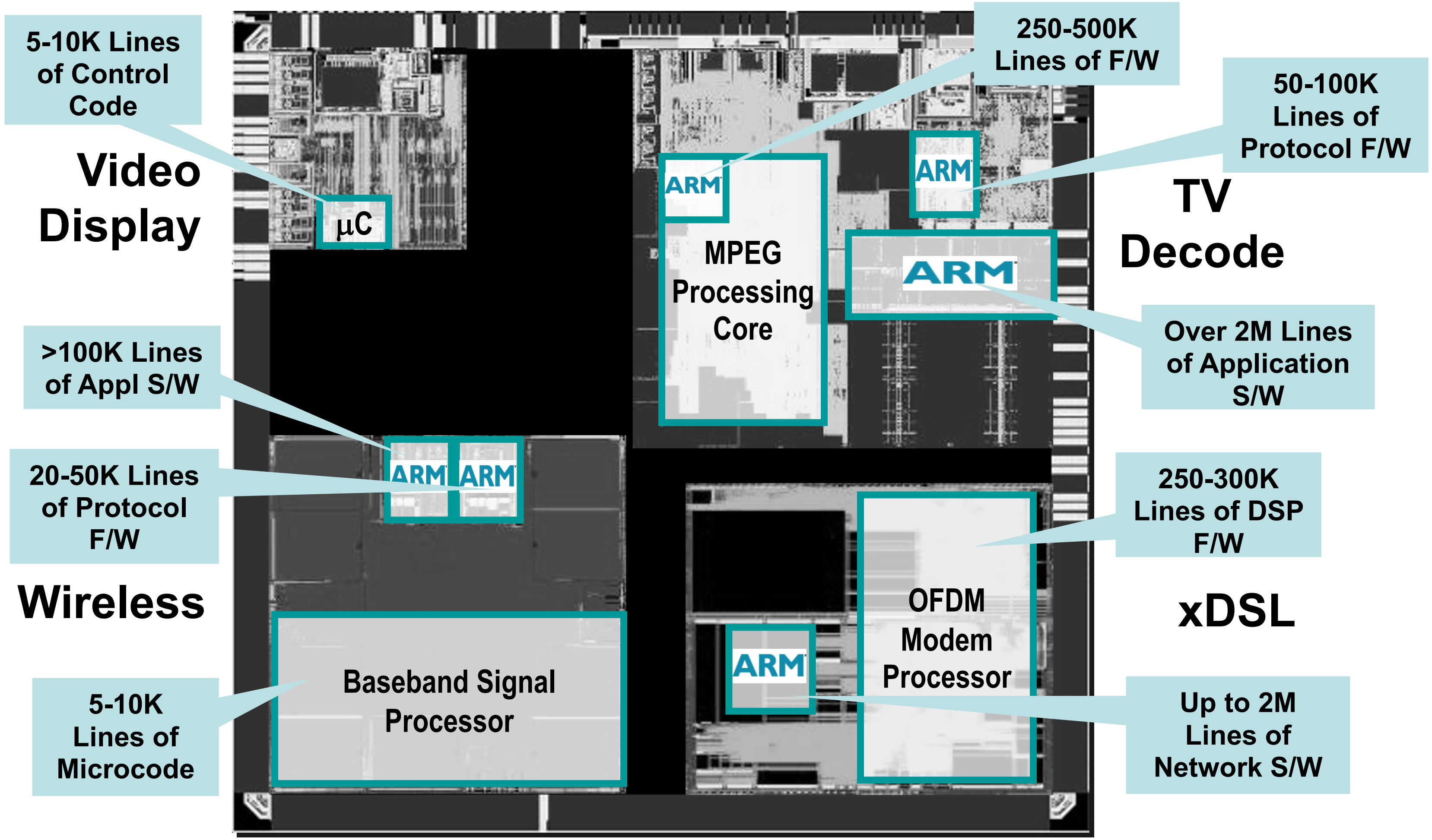
- Avoid setting a goal lower than 80%.

# Increasing Design Complexity




**Multiple Power Domains, Security, Virtualisation**
**Nearly five million lines of code to enable Media gateway**

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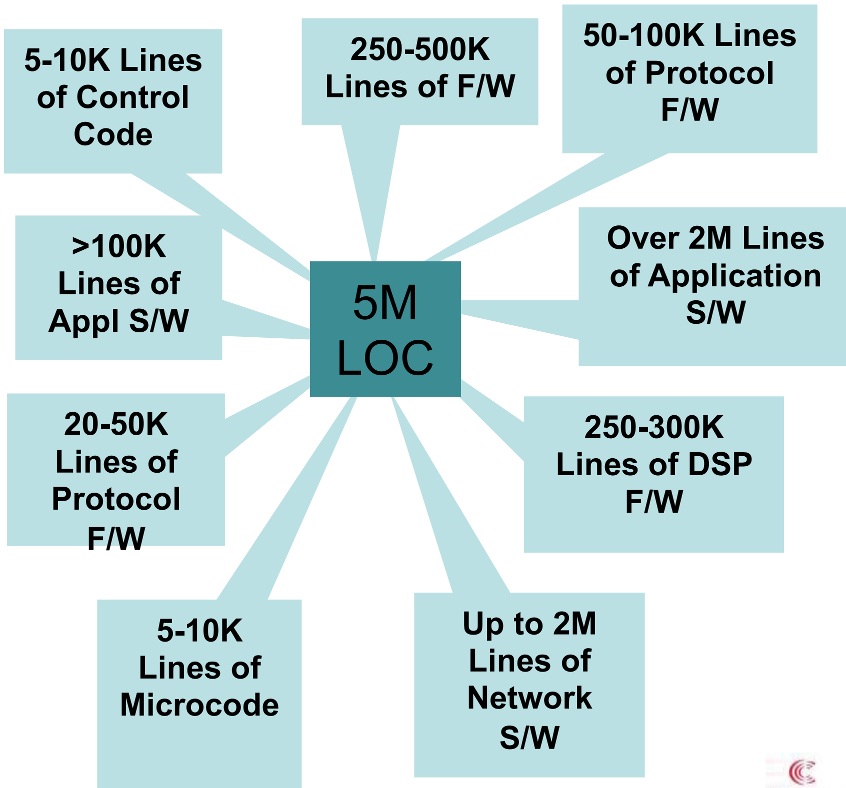



LOC count:

| | |
|---|---|
| | 10K |
| | 100K |
| | 50K |
| | 10K |
| | 500K |
| | 100K |
| | 2M |
| | 300K |
| | 2M |
| TOTAL: | ~5M LOC |

**At 95% coverage, this leaves 250K LOC not exercised during simulation!**

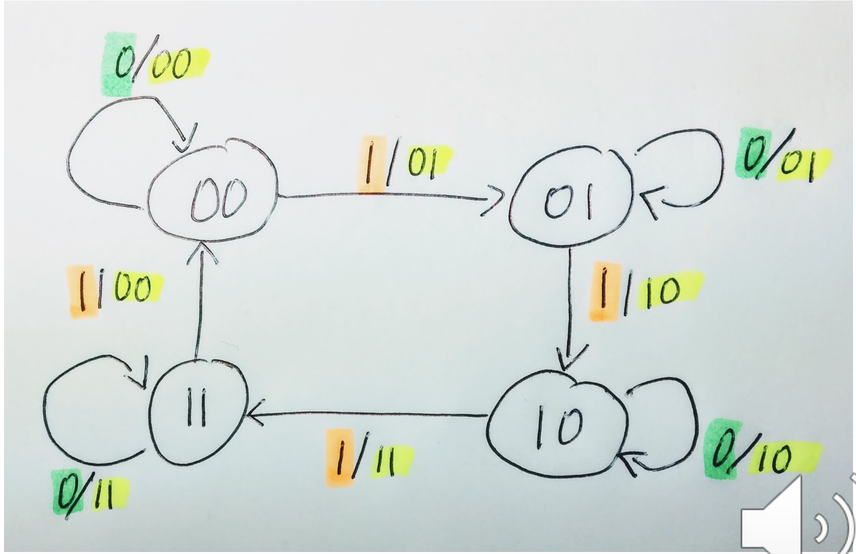
# STRUCTURAL COVERAGE

# Structural Coverage

- Implicit coverage models that are based on common structures in the code
  - FSMs, Queues, Pipelines, …
- The structures are extracted automatically from the design and pre-defined coverage models are applied to them
- Users may refine the coverage models
  - Identify and declare illegal events

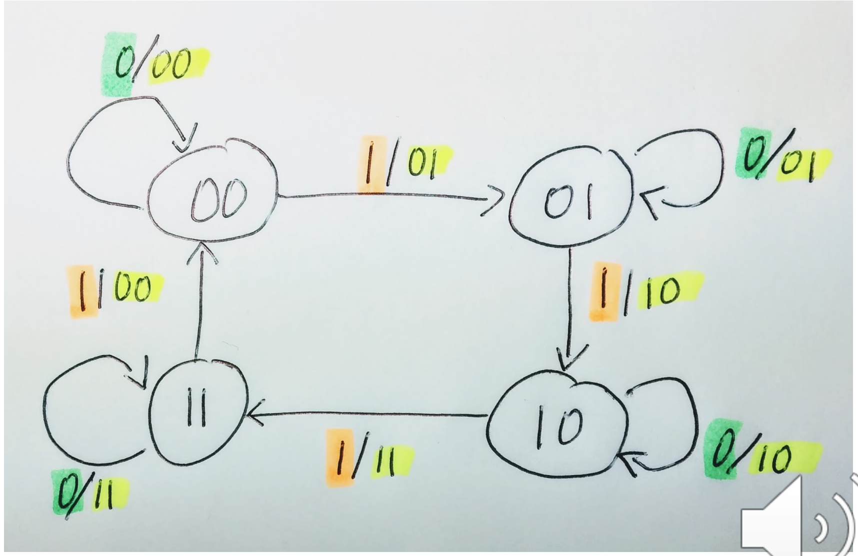
# State-Machine Coverage

- State-machines are the essence of RTL design
- FSM coverage models are the most commonly used structural coverage models
- Types of coverage models
  - State coverage
  - Transition (or arc) coverage
  - Path coverage

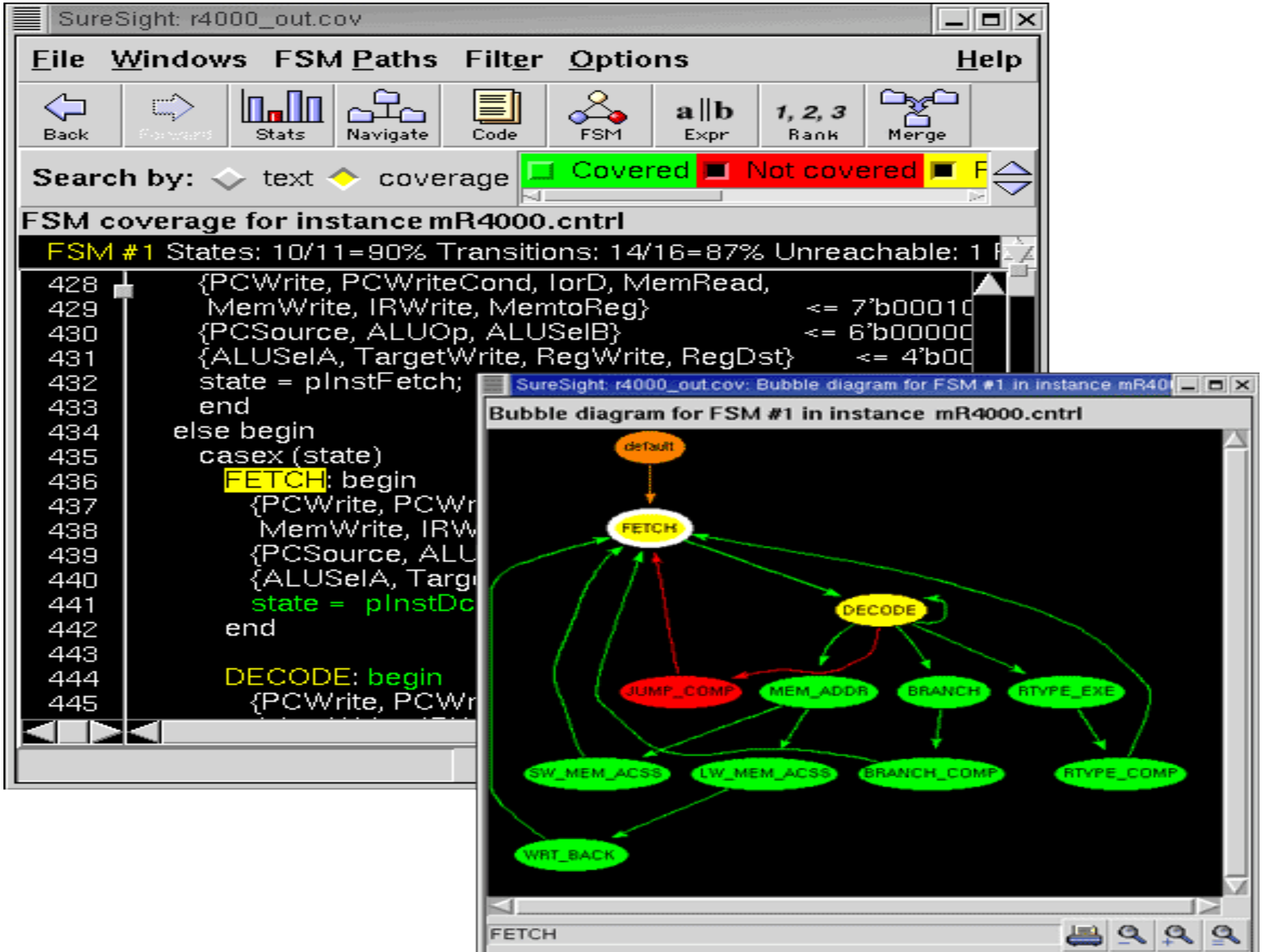


# State-Machine Coverage

- State-machines are the essence of RTL design
- FSM coverage models are the most commonly used structural coverage models
- Types of coverage models
  - State coverage
  - Transition (or arc) coverage
  - Path coverage



# FSM Coverage Report



# Code Coverage - Limitations

- Coverage questions not answered by code coverage
  - Did every instruction take every exception?
  - Did two instructions access a specific register at the same time?
  - How many times did a cache miss take more than 10 cycles?
  - …(and many more)
  - Does the implementation cover the functionality specified?
    [Need RBT!]

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  - …(and many more)
  - Does the implementation cover the functionality specified? [Need RBT!]
- Code coverage only indicates how thoroughly the test suite exercises the source code!
  - Can be used to identify outstanding corner cases
- Code coverage lets you know if you are not done!
  - It does not permit any conclusions about the functional correctness of the code, nor does it help us understand whether all the functionality was covered!

**So, 100% code coverage does not mean very much. ☹**

- We need another form of coverage!