

Propeller Programming Protocol

Software developers use the Propeller Programming Protocol to build downloader systems that can deliver compiled applications to an embedded Propeller P8X32A microcontroller. This document describes the protocol in detail, covering basic principles, timing constraints, and specific implementation for different transmission mediums.

NOTICE: This document is still a work-in-progress. All items currently documented are accurate; however, there are many enhancements and tips still being developed for inclusion here.

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Programming Interface (Electrical Connections)

The Propeller P8X32A is in-circuit programmable via a simple electrical interface. Programming can be done by a host device (PC, Mac, microcontroller, etc.) without the need for any special programmer device. In its simplest form, the programming interface may be only 4-wires. More sophisticated communication interfaces (like RS-232 or USB-to-Serial) may be used, but will require extra circuitry and data manipulation for proper electrical and protocol conversion.

Programming Interface (Protocol)

The Propeller Programming Protocol (referred to as "protocol" from here on) is a variable bit-size, flexible bit-rate, asynchronous serial communication mechanism that functions even with inaccurate clock sources. It is designed for communicating through direct-connect digital circuitry (simple wires) and also through RS-232 devices. The protocol is described here in the following ways:

- [General Principles](#) - attributes that apply to all forms of the protocol
- [Protocol Proper](#) - its pure form, compatible with digital I/O pins
- [Protocol RS-232](#) - compatible with UART and USB Virtual COM Port based serial mediums

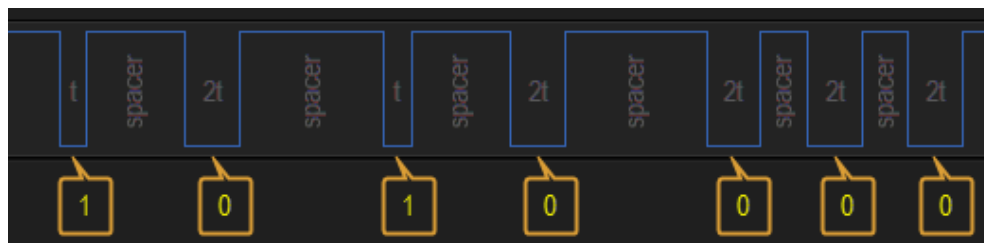
Developers should deploy the form most appropriate for an application's needs. However, it is recommended that they study General Principles and Protocol Proper in order to fully understand other variations.

General Principles

Protocol assumes two participants; a Propeller to be programmed and a "host" that initiates contact and serves the new program content. To maximize throughput, communication consists mostly of host transmissions and very few Propeller transmissions (host receptions). Throughout the transaction, the Propeller doesn't speak unless spoken to, even during a response phase of the protocol.

Data bits are transferred as low pulses of two different widths, with values of 1 and 0 being communicated as low pulses of time t and $2t$ (twice the width of t), respectively. The width of t is flexible as long as it remains consistent within the given serial stream. High pulses serve only as data bit spacers (separators) whose widths are unimportant. The high pulse between any two low pulses must not exceed 100 ms or the Propeller will give up and move on, ignoring any further communication.

Image G1 - Example Host Tx Signal (blue)



Only low pulses matter; t -width pulse means binary 1, $2t$ -width pulse means binary 0.
High pulses vary in width and are interpreted as spacers between data bits.

The first half of the protocol always communicates the same information (calibration, handshake, connection, and version) and the second half communicates differing information (command, application size, application image, and acknowledgments).

Calibration

At strategic points in the communication, the host transmits calibration pulses; conveying the two bit values (1 and 0) as their t -sized and $2t$ -sized low pulses. The Propeller expects and measures these calibration pulses in order to reliably read, and occasionally respond to, the transmission.

Handshake and Connection

The handshake and connection streams are specific patterns of bits used to validate the host and the Propeller. See [Appendix A - Handshake and Connection](#) for detailed information on this pattern.

Version

The Propeller version is an 8-bit value transmitted by the Propeller LSB-First; value of 1 = P8X32A.

Command

The protocol command is issued by the host to indicate the intent of the communication.

Table G1: Protocol Commands (32-bits each)

Name	Value	Definition
Shutdown (aka Identify)	\$00000000	Terminate all cogs until next reset/power-up. This command is issued immediately after receiving the Propeller's Version value if identification was the only intent.
LoadRun	\$00000001	Load application into RAM, then execute application.
ProgramShutdown	\$00000002	Load application into RAM, program into EEPROM, then terminate all cogs until next reset/power-up. This command is usually not implemented by hosts.
ProgramRun	\$00000003	Load application into RAM, program into EEPROM, then execute application.

After version is received, the host sends a command (a 32-bit value from this table) telling the Propeller what it intends to do next.

Protocol Proper

Protocol Proper is the pure form of the protocol designed for communication over simple direct-connect digital circuitry. The Spin object PropellerLoader.spin implements Protocol Proper between one Propeller (acting as the host) and another Propeller (the one being programmed). Developers knowledgeable in Spin can gain insight into Protocol Proper by reading this code example; see [Appendix B - PropellerLoader.spin](#).

Metrics

- **Reset Pulse** - Drive low > 10 μ s, then release (hi-z)
- **Post-Reset Delay** - 60 ms to 210 ms (90 ms to 100 ms is recommended)
- **Data Bit Order** - LSB-First
- **Low Pulse (t)** - Represents bit value 1
- **Low Pulse (2t)** - Represents bit value 0
- **Low Pulse (t) Width** - 4.3 μ s to 26 μ s (recommend \approx 8.6 μ s)
- **High Pulse Width** - 4.3 μ s to 90 ms (recommend \geq t μ s)

Protocol Proper Algorithm

The following describes the steps for Protocol Proper from the perspective of the host. The images afterwards contain additional vital information using actual annotated examples.

When implementing this protocol from scratch, try attempting only an identification operation (the first half of the algorithm) then the final steps (in the second half) will generally be easier to implement.

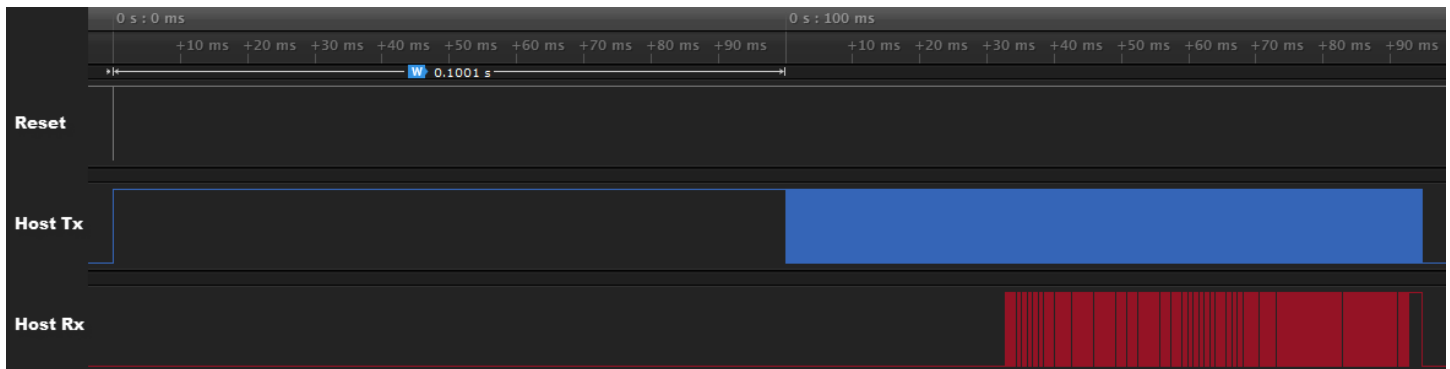
- **Reset the Propeller** [[Image P1](#), [Image P2](#)]
 - Drive RESn low > 10 μ s, set Tx high / Rx input, then release RESn (hi-z)
- **Wait for Post-Reset Delay** [[Image P1](#), [Image P2](#)]
 - 90 to 100 ms recommended
- **Transmit Calibration Pulses** [[Image P3](#)]
 - 2-bits (%01) LSB-First
- **Transmit Handshake Pattern** [[Image P4](#)]
 - 250-bits; see [Appendix A - Handshake and Connection](#)
- **Receive Connection Response** [[Image P5](#)]
 - 250 iterations of: transmit 2-bit Calibration Pulse, receive 1-bit Connection Response Bit; see [Appendix A](#)
 - If Propeller does not respond to any Calibration Pulse pair, or Connection Response bit is invalid, abort communication; connection error
- **Receive Version** [[Image P6](#)]
 - 8 iterations of: transmit 2-bit Calibration Pulse, receive 1-bit Version Pulse
 - If Propeller does not respond to any Calibration Pulse pair, or if Version is bad, transmit Shutdown Command, abort communication; version error
 - Valid Propeller Version = 1 (8-bit value, received LSB-first)
- **Transmit Command** [[Image P7](#), [Image P8](#) - [Image P9](#)]
 - 32-bits; often Shutdown (ID only), LoadRun (RAM only) or ProgramRun (RAM & EEPROM); see [Table G1](#)
 - If transmitted Command is Shutdown (aka Identify), success; terminate communication
- **Transmit Size of Application in longs** [[Image P9](#)]
 - 32-bits; this value should come from word 9:8 of the application image, shifted right by 2 bits
- **Transmit Application Image** [[Image P10](#)]
 - Stream of 8-bit bytes
- **Wait for Acknowledge (RAM Checksum)** [[Image P11](#)]
 - Up to 250 ms of: transmit 2-bit Calibration Pulse, check for 1-bit Ack (0) or Nak (1)
 - If no response before timeout or Negative Acknowledge (Nak) received, abort communication; transmission error or RAM verify error, respectively
- **If Command is LoadRun** [[Image P11](#)]
 - Success; terminate communication
- **Else, Command is ProgramShutdown or ProgramRun** [[Image P12](#)]
 - **Wait for EEPROM Program** [[Image P13](#)]
 - Up to 5 s of: transmit 2-bit Calibration Pulse, check for 1-bit Ack (0) or Nak (1)
 - If no response before timeout or Negative Acknowledge (Nak) received, abort communication; EEPROM program error
 - **Wait for EEPROM Verify** [[Image P13](#)]
 - Up to 2 s of: transmit 2-bit Calibration Pulse, check for 1-bit Ack (0) or Nak (1))
 - If no response before timeout or Negative Acknowledge (Nak) received, abort communication; EEPROM verify error
 - **Success; terminate communication**

The following images are actual [logic analyzer captures](#) of Protocol Proper. The example system consists of a “host” Propeller, running [PropellerLoader.spin](#), that is connected to a Propeller to-be-programmed.

Identification Sequence

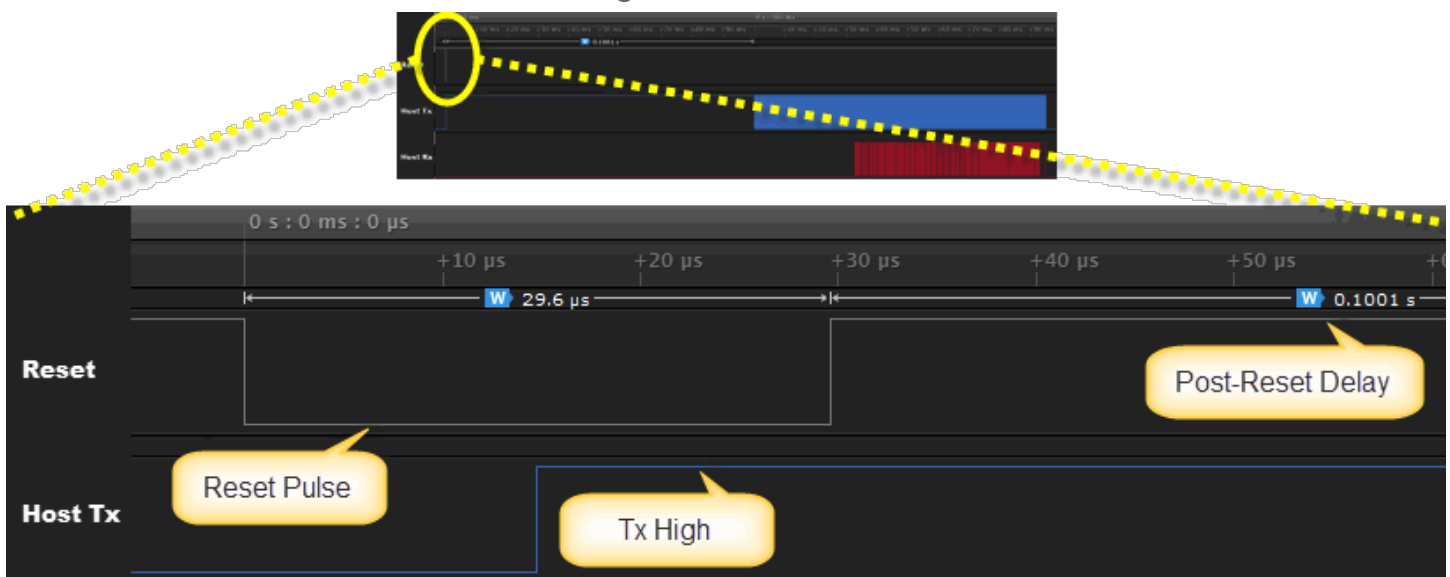
The first set of images demonstrates the identification process (Reset through Command) which covers the first half of the Propeller Proper Algorithm.

Image P1 - Full Identification Sequence



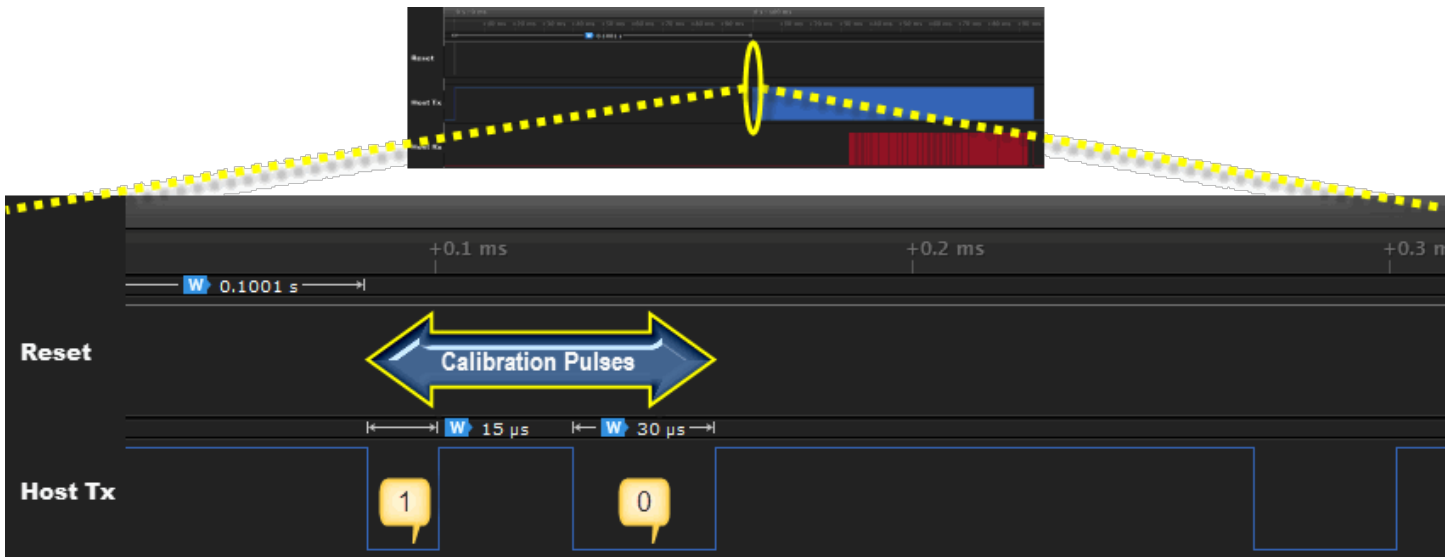
This image shows a full identification sequence with Protocol Proper. Driven signals rest high; Host Rx isn't driven by the Propeller until it recognizes the host. Note the approximate 100 ms post-reset delay (after Reset's low pulse) before host transmission begins (Host Tx). The following are zoomed-in views of this image.

Image P2 - Reset Pulse



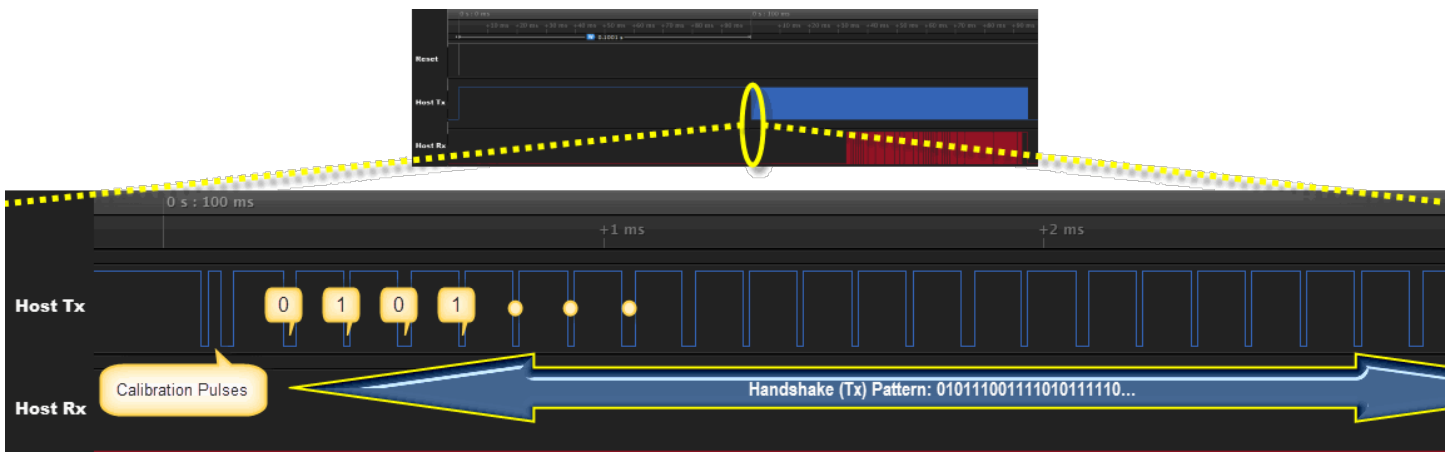
The Host-driven Reset Pulse (when connected to the Propeller's RESn pin) causes the Propeller to stop any activity and perform a boot sequence. The Reset Pulse is shown here followed by an approximate 100 ms delay before Host Tx communication begins. The Host Tx signal (connected to the Propeller's Rx pin) must “rest” high before the Propeller wakes up on the rising edge of the Reset signal.

Image P3 - Calibration Pulses



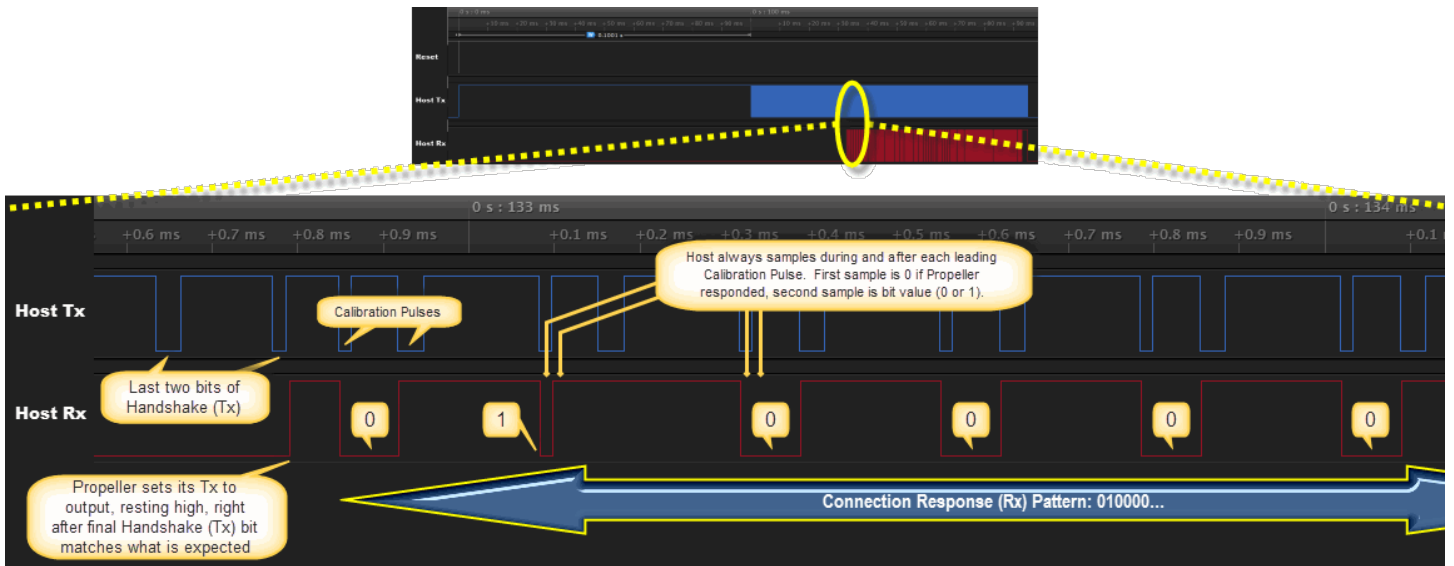
Approximately 100 ms after the rising edge of the Reset Pulse, Host Tx communication begins with Calibration Pulses. This is the host's way of saying, "This is how I talk." The 2-bit calibration sequence consists of a low pulse (of width t), a spacer (high) pulse, and a second low pulse (of width $2t$) followed by a spacer (high).

Image P4 - Handshake Pattern



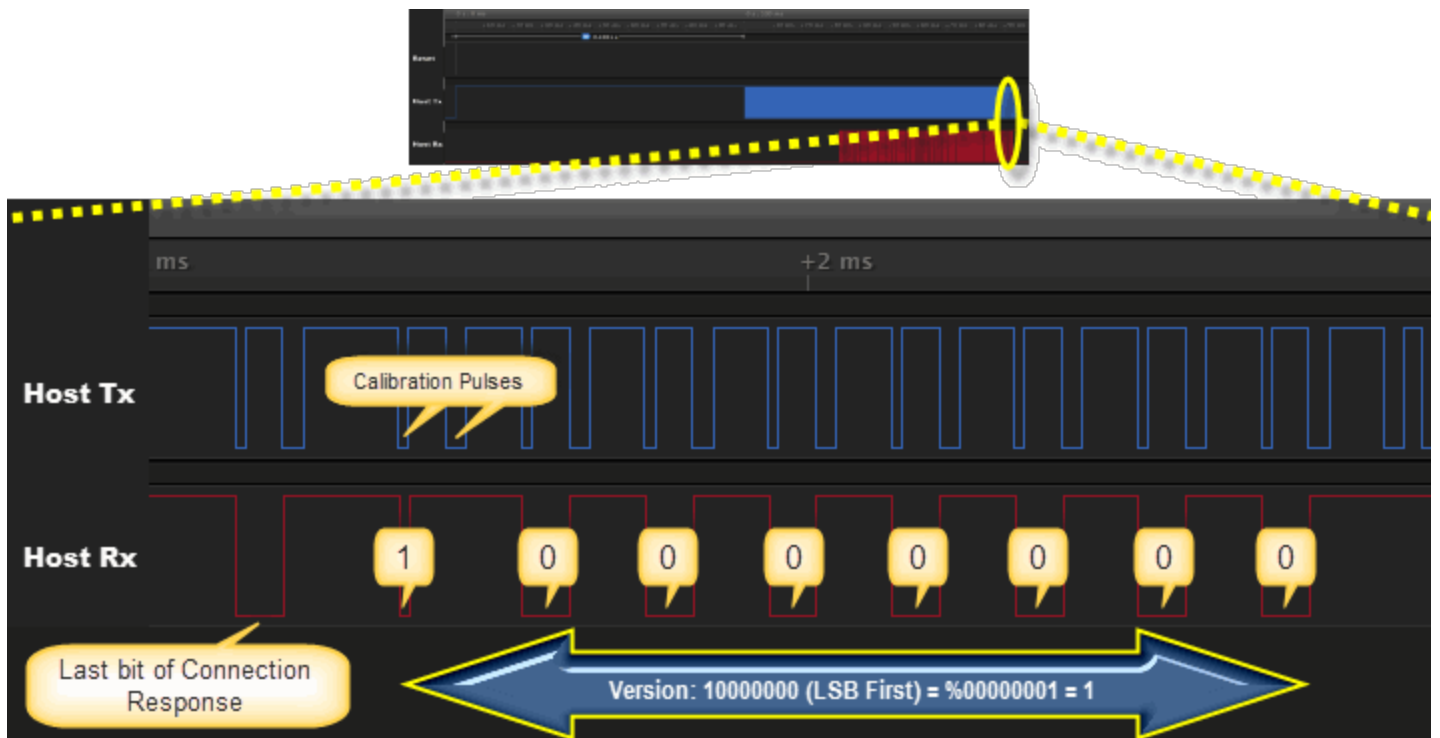
The Handshake pattern (the host-transmitted pattern of 250 bits) immediately follows the Calibration Pulses. This is the host's way of saying, "I'm a qualified Propeller host trying to speak to a Propeller." Pulse widths of the 250-bit pattern closely match the timing indicated by the Calibration Pulses. The contents of this pattern is described in [Appendix A](#).

Image P5 - Connection Response



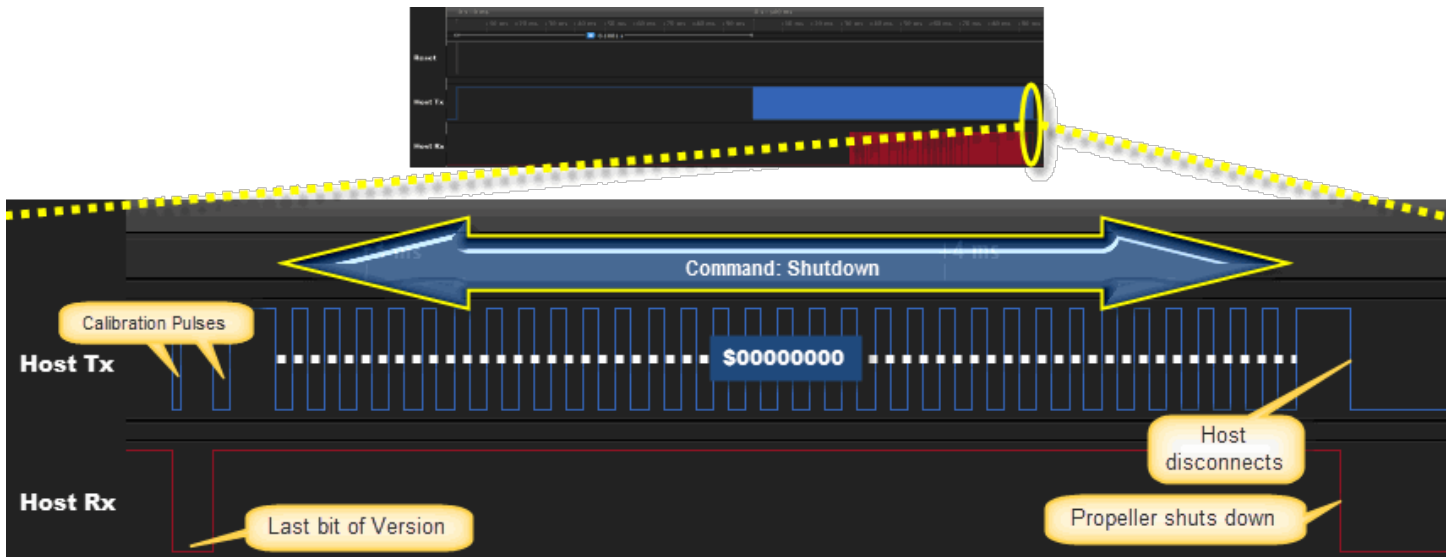
The Connection Response (a Propeller-transmitted pattern of 250 bits) occurs right after the Handshake. It is the Propeller's way of saying, "I'm a Propeller that hears and acknowledges the qualifications of the host." After the last bit of the Handshake, the Propeller transmits one bit of the Connection Response for each Calibration Pulse pair it receives from the host. The host transmits 250 Calibration Pulse pairs in order to receive all Connection Response bits. The host always samples the Propeller's transmission (Host Rx) during and right after each leading Calibration Pulse bit; the first sample is always 0 if the Propeller responded at all and the second sample is 0 or 1, the actual bit value of the Connection bit. NOTE: The Propeller doesn't set its Tx line (connected to Host Rx) to output (resting high) until after the last correct Handshake pattern bit is received. The contents of this Connection Response pattern is described in [Appendix A](#).

Image P6 - Version



The Version is an 8-bit value transmitted by the Propeller immediately after the Connection Response; 1 bit (LSB-first) for every Calibration Pulse pair the host transmits.

Image P7 - Command (Shutdown)

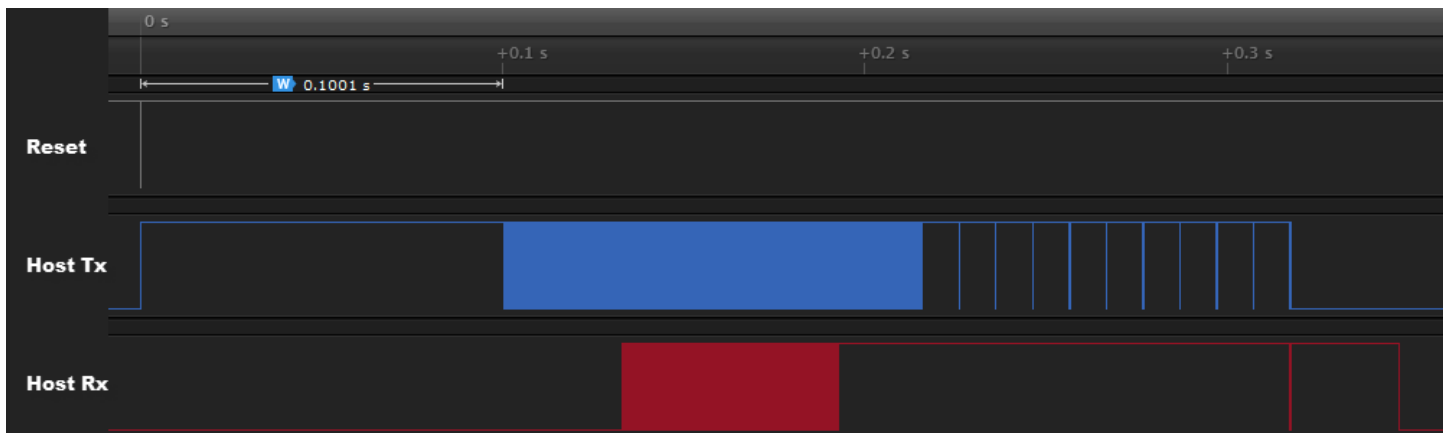


After Version is received, the host transmits the Command (the intent of the communication); in this case, Shutdown, aka Identify. The Command is a 32-bit value (LSB-first). If the Command were other than Shutdown, communication would continue as shown in the images below.

Program RAM Sequence

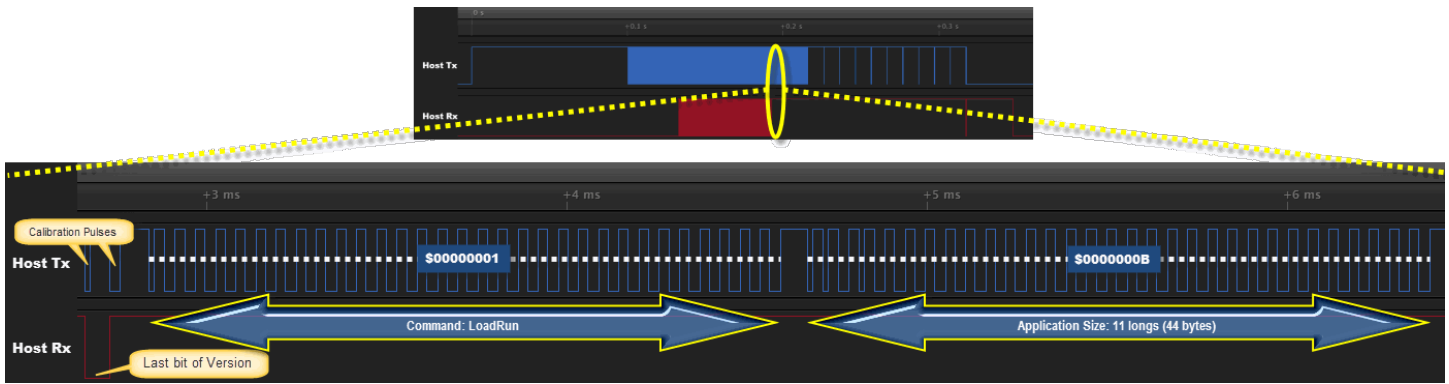
The next set of images expands on the sequence shown above by demonstrating a Program RAM sequence, where the LoadRun command is used and an actual Propeller Application is transmitted. All communication prior to the LoadRun command is exactly the same as before.

Image P8 - Full Program RAM Sequence



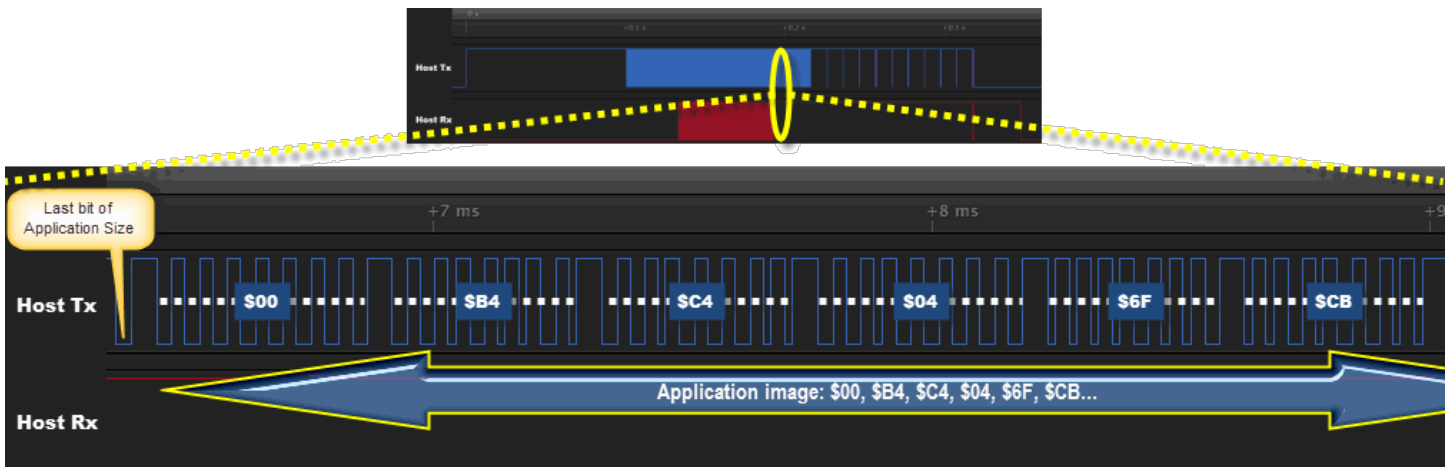
This is an entire Program RAM sequence with Protocol Proper (LoadRun Command). The leading signals, up until the LoadRun command is transmitted, is exactly the same as in the Identification sequence shown in prior images. The following are zoomed-in views of this image.

Image P9 - Command (LoadRun) and Application Size



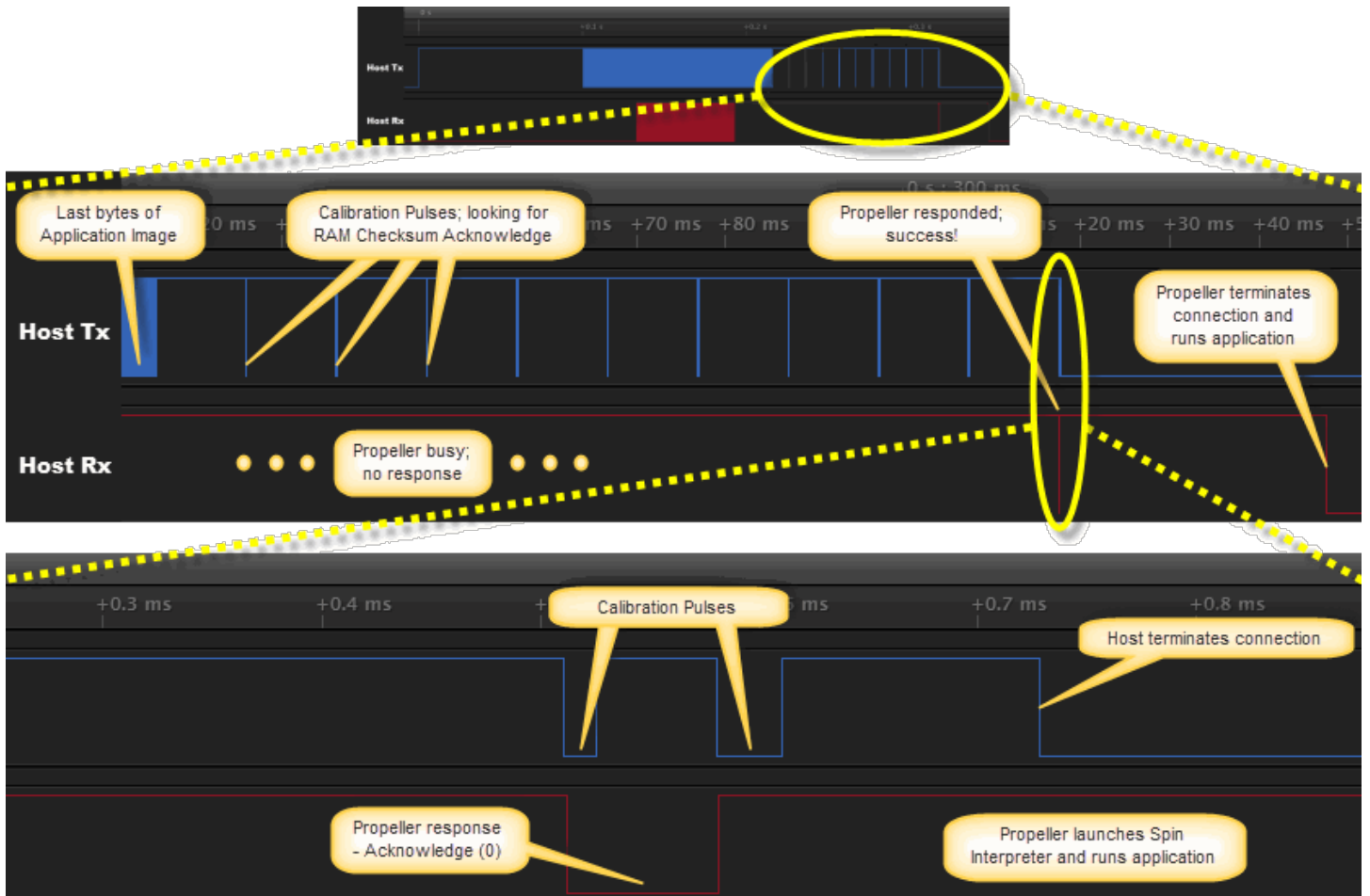
After Version is received, the host transmits the LoadRun command followed by the Application Size. Each are 32-bit values transmitted LSB-first. The actual Propeller Application image is expected to follow.

Image P10 - Application Image



After the Application Size is transmitted, the host transmits each byte of the Application Image. Each 8-bit value is transmitted LSB-first. The small Propeller Application used in this example consists of 44 bytes, transmitted using the same low-pulse method as before: 00 B4 C4 04 6F CB 10 00 2C 00 34 00 18 00 38 00 1C 00 02 00 08 00 00 00 37 03 3D D6 1C 37 03 3D D4 47 35 C0 3F 91 EC 23 04 73 32 00. You can use this same application data during protocol development; when successfully downloaded, it will make the Propeller toggle I/O pin P16 high or low every second (assuming the Propeller has a 5 MHz crystal connected).

Image P11 - Acknowledge (RAM Checksum)

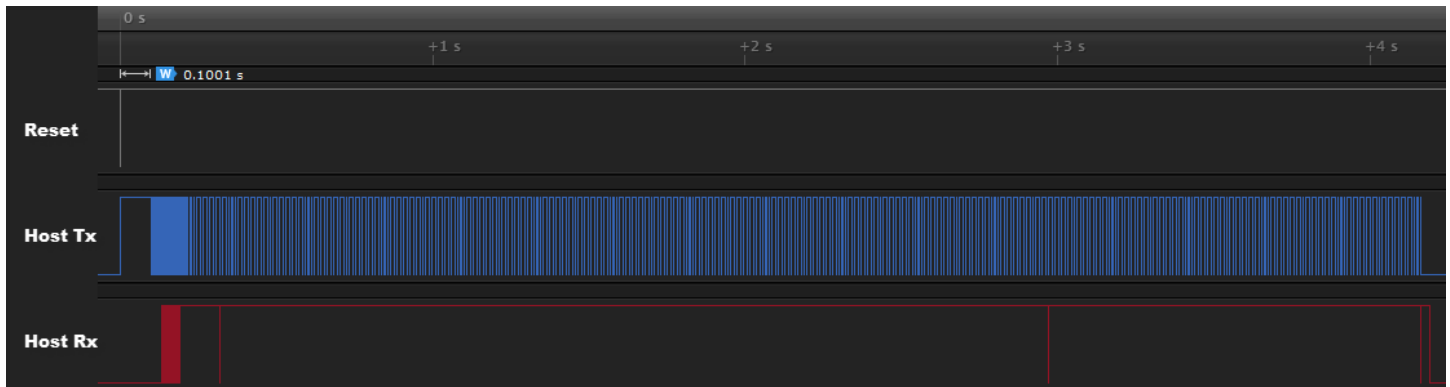


After the last bytes of the Application Image are transmitted, the host polls for a RAM Checksum Acknowledgement by periodically transmitting Calibration Pulses and checking for a Propeller response. Polling may continue for up to 250 ms with delays between polls of > 10 ms and < 100 ms recommended. The Propeller responds with an Ack (0) if the received Application Image has been verified in RAM (via RAM Checksum) or with a Nak (1) if RAM verification failed. If Ack is received and the Command is LoadRun (as in this example), this is the end of the download process. If Ack is received and the Command is ProgramRun or ProgramShutdown, communication continues as in the following images.

Program EEPROM Sequence

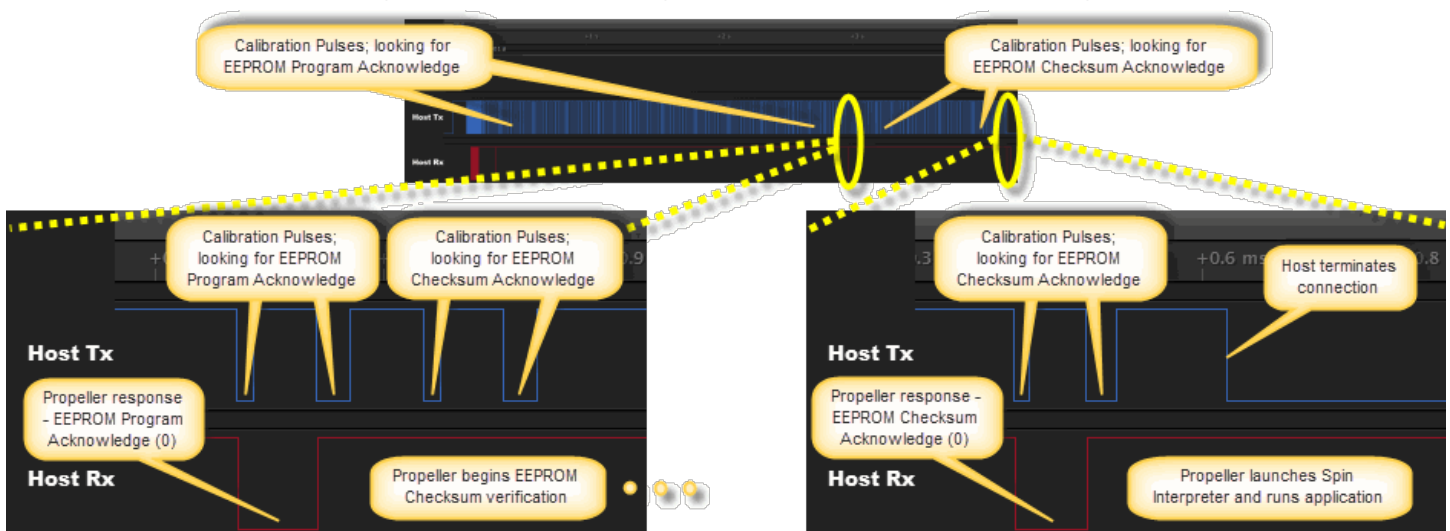
The final set of Protocol Proper images, below, expands on the previous by demonstrating a Program EEPROM sequence, where the ProgramRun command is used instead. All communication is exactly like above except the Command is ProgramRun and two more polling sequences occur after the positive Acknowledge (RAM Checksum) is received.

Image P12 - Full Program EEPROM Sequence



This is an entire Program EEPROM sequence with Protocol Proper (ProgramRun Command). Communication is exactly like in previous images, except for the ProgramRun command and the extra polling sequences. The following is a zoomed-in view of this image.

Image P13 - EEPROM Program and Checksum Acknowledge



Assuming the Command is ProgramRun or ProgramShutdown, after the Propeller acknowledges the RAM Checksum, it immediately starts the EEPROM programming and verification processes. The host polls for an EEPROM Program Acknowledgement by periodically transmitting Calibration Pulses and checking for a Propeller response. Polling may continue for up to 5 s with delays between polls of > 10 ms and < 100 ms recommended. The Propeller responds with an Ack (0) if EEPROM Programming is done, or with a Nak (1) if EEPROM programming failed. If Ack is received, the host once again polls (this time for EEPROM checksum verification) similar to before, but only for up to 2 s. Once a final Ack is received, that marks the end of the download process. NOTE: If the Command is ProgramShutdown, the Propeller terminates the connection swiftly after final acknowledgement, rather than launching the Spin Interpreter and application.

Protocol RS-232

This implementation is fit for UART and USB Virtual COM Port based connections from the host to the Propeller. Developers are urged to read through and understand [Protocol Proper](#), even if they only intend to implement Protocol RS-232, since full understanding of the intent can not be gained otherwise.

Protocol RS-232 takes the nature of Protocol Proper and carefully translates it to fit the constraints of the RS-232 protocol. The resulting signals are, from the Propeller's perspective, indistinguishable from that of Protocol Proper except in terms of timing. The same exact [General Principles](#) apply here as well.

Except for cases where special techniques are applied to overcome behaviors of typical host systems, it can be said that Protocol RS-232 is simply a translation wrapper around Protocol Proper.

Metrics

- **Baud Rate** - 38,400 to 230,400 bps (115,200 recommended).
- **Data Bits** - 8
- **Parity** - None
- **Stop Bits** - 1
- **Flow Control** - Off
- **Delay Between Bytes** - ≤ 90 ms

Protocol RS-232 Algorithm

The following describes the steps for Protocol RS-232 from the perspective of the host. The images afterwards contain additional vital information using actual annotated examples.

When implementing this protocol from scratch, try attempting only an identification operation (the first half of the algorithm) then the final steps (in the second half) will generally be easier to implement.

- **Reset the Propeller** [[Image RS1](#), [Image RS2](#)]
 - Set DTR/RTS (which drives Propeller RESn low) $> 10 \mu\text{s}$, then clear DTR/RTS
- **Wait for Post-Reset Delay** [[Image RS1](#), [Image RS2](#)]
 - 90 to 100 ms recommended
- **Transmit Calibration Pulses** [[Image RS3](#)]
 - 2-bits encoded in 1 byte (\$F9; %11111001)
- **Transmit Handshake Pattern** [[Image RS4](#)]
 - 250-bits encoded into multiple bytes; see [Appendix A - Handshake and Connection](#)
- **Receive Connection Response** [[Image RS5](#)]
 - 250 iterations of: transmit 2-bit Calibration Pulse as 1 byte (\$F9), receive 1-bit Connection Response Bit as byte (\$FE or \$FF); see [Appendix A](#)
 - If Propeller does not respond to any Calibration Pulse, or Connection Response bit is invalid, abort communication; connection error
- **Receive Version** [[Image RS6](#)]
 - 8 iterations of: transmit 2-bit Calibration Pulse as 1 byte (\$F9), receive 1-bit Version Pulse as byte (\$FE or \$FF)
 - If Propeller does not respond to any Calibration Pulse, or if Version is bad, transmit Shutdown Command, abort communication; version error
 - Valid Propeller Version = 1 (8-bit value, received LSB-first)
- **Transmit Command** [[Image RS7](#)]

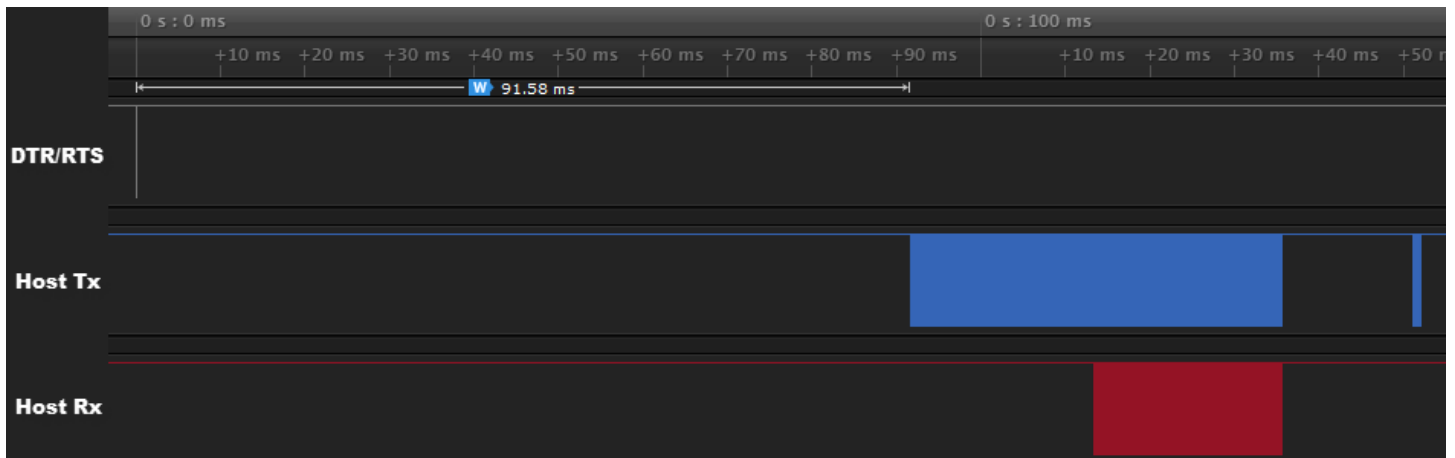
- 32-bits as multiple bytes; often Shutdown (ID), LoadRun (RAM) or ProgramRun (EEPROM); see [Table G1](#)
- If transmitted Command is Shutdown (aka Identify), success; terminate communication
- **Transmit Size of Application in longs []**
 - 32-bits as multiple bytes; value should come from word 9:8 of the application image, shifted right by 2 bits
- **Transmit Application Image []**
 - Stream of bits encoded into multiple bytes
- **Wait for Acknowledge (RAM Checksum) []**
 - Up to 250 ms of: transmit 2-bit Calibration Pulse as 1 byte (\$F9), check for Ack (\$FE) or Nak (\$FF)
 - If no response before timeout or Negative Acknowledge (Nak) received, abort communication; transmission error or RAM verify error, respectively
- **If Command is LoadRun []**
 - Success; terminate communication
- **Else, Command is ProgramShutdown or ProgramRun []**
 - **Wait for EEPROM Program []**
 - Up to 5 s of: transmit 2-bit Calibration Pulse as 1 byte (\$F9), check for Ack (\$FE) or Nak (\$FF)
 - If no response before timeout or Negative Acknowledge (Nak) received, abort communication; EEPROM program error
 - **Wait for EEPROM Verify []**
 - Up to 2 s of: transmit 2-bit Calibration Pulse as 1 byte (\$F9), check for Ack (\$FE) or Nak (\$FF)
 - If no response before timeout or Negative Acknowledge (Nak) received, abort communication; EEPROM verify error
 - **Success; terminate communication**

The following images are actual [logic analyzer captures](#) of Protocol RS-232. The example system consists of a “host” computer whose USB-based serial converter device is connected to a Propeller. The host’s RS-232 baud rate is set to 115.2 k. The signals are illustrated from the host’s perspective but were captured from the Propeller side of the connection.

Identification Sequence

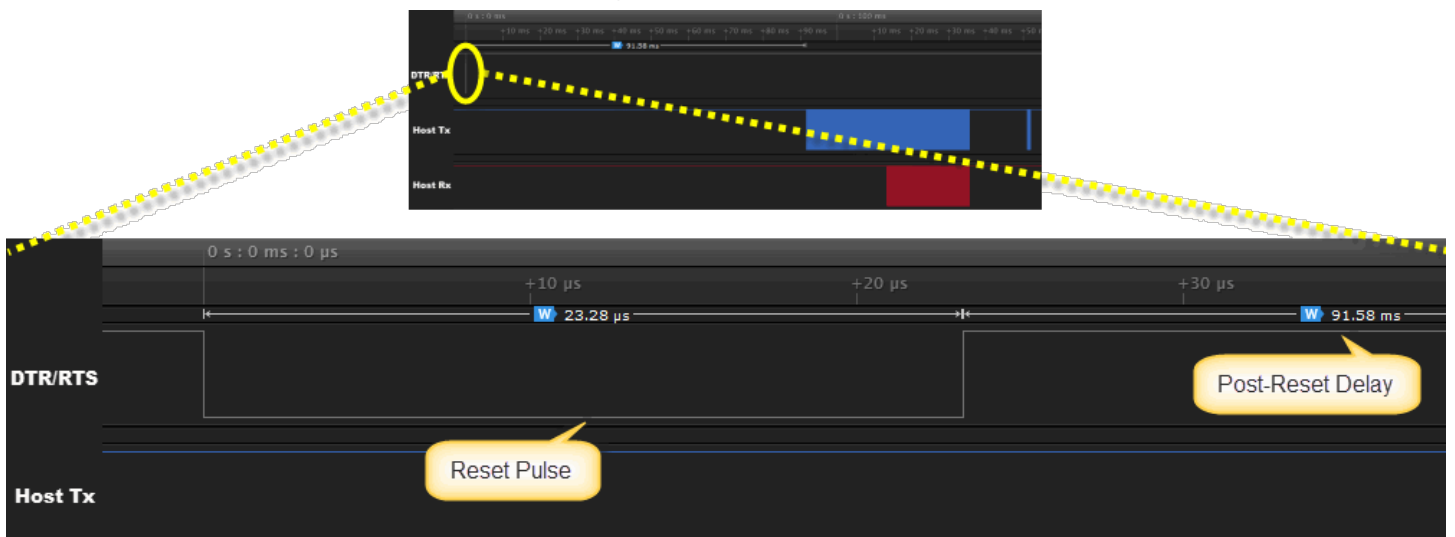
The first set of images demonstrates the identification process (Reset through Command) which covers the first half of the Propeller RS-232 Algorithm.

Image RS1 - Full Identification Sequence



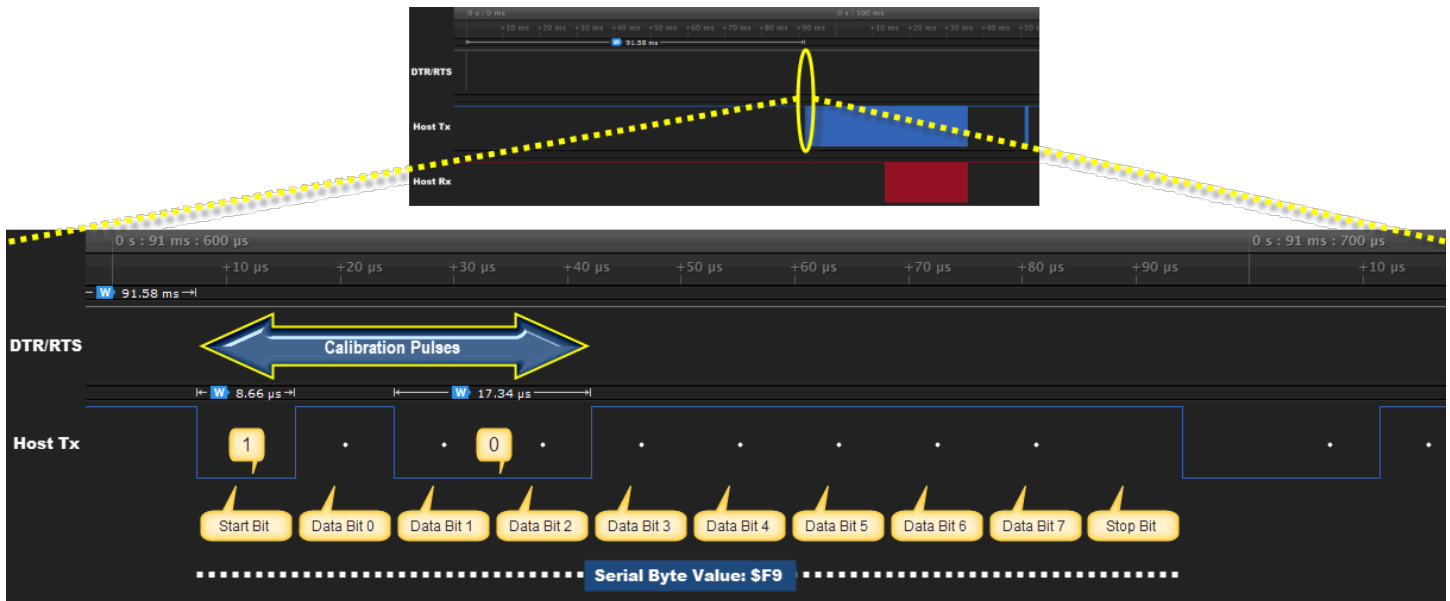
This image shows a full identification sequence with Protocol RS-232. Signals rest high. Note the approximate 90 ms post-reset delay (after DTR/RTS’s low pulse) before host transmission begins (Host Tx). The following are zoomed-in views of this image.

Image RS2 - Reset Pulse



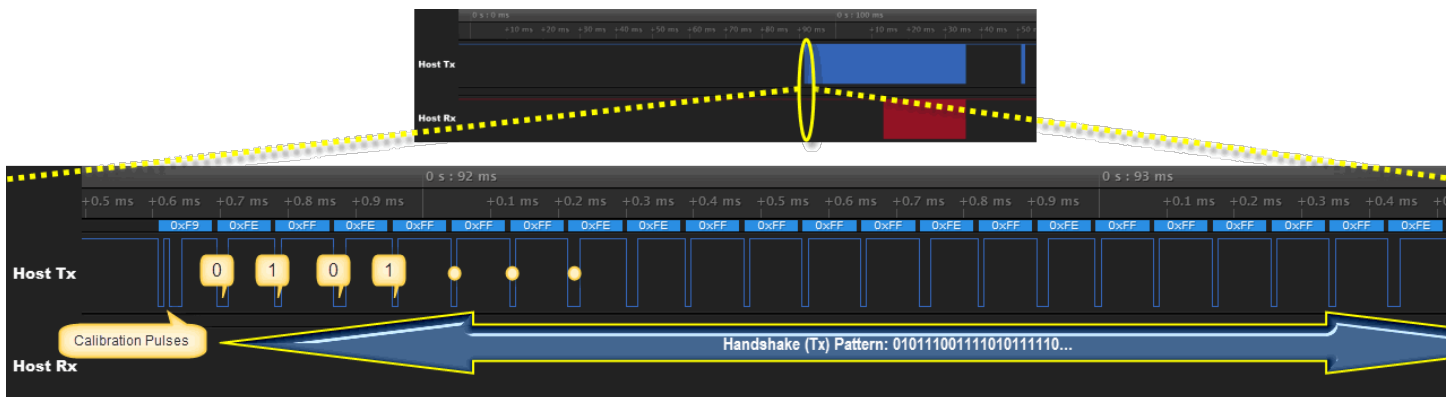
The host-driven Reset Pulse on DTR/RTS (when connected to the Propeller’s RESn pin) causes the Propeller to stop any activity and perform a boot sequence. The Reset Pulse is shown here followed by an approximate 90 ms delay before Host Tx communication begins.

Image RS3 - Calibration Pulses



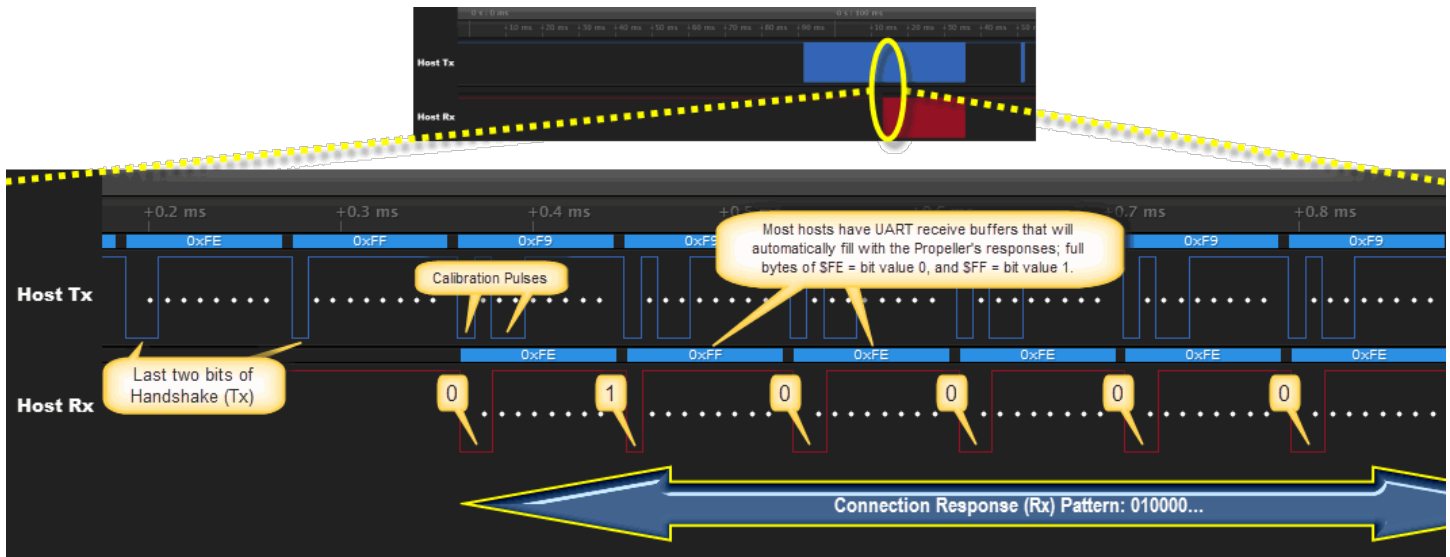
Approximately 90 ms after the rising edge of the Reset Pulse (DTR/RTS), Host Tx communication begins with Calibration Pulses. This is the host's way of saying, "This is how I talk." The same 2-bit calibration sequence described by [Protocol Proper](#) is actually communicated by Protocol RS-232 as a serial byte value of \$F9 (%11111001), at 115.2 kbaud in this case. Note that the effective signal looks very similar to [Protocol Proper's Calibration Pulses](#) and, with the [General Principles](#) in mind, translates to *exactly* the same data; a binary 1 and a binary 0 communicated as a low pulse (of width t), a spacer (high), and a second low pulse (of width $2t$) followed by a spacer (high). Also note that the serial start bit itself (a low pulse signaling the beginning of a serial byte) is always a data bit as interpreted by Protocol Proper. Similarly, the stop bit itself (a high pulse marking the end of a serial byte) is always a spacer as interpreted by Protocol Proper.

Image RS4 - Handshake Pattern



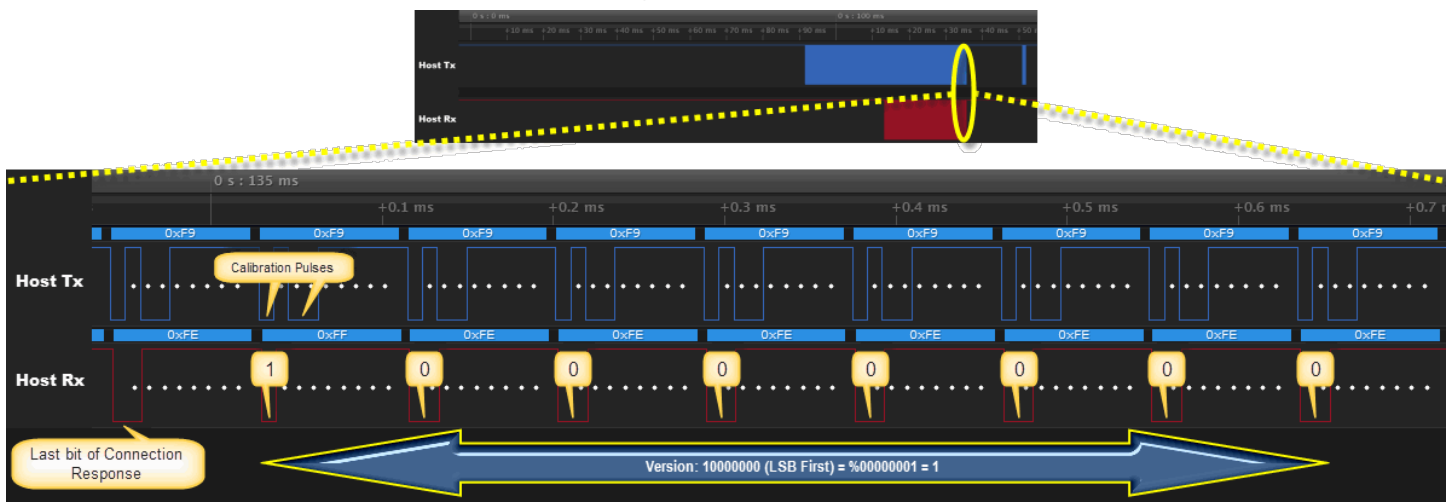
The Handshake pattern (the host-transmitted pattern of 250 bits) immediately follows the Calibration Pulses. This is the host's way of saying, "I'm a qualified Propeller host trying to speak to a Propeller." As with the Calibration Pulses, the 250-bit pattern matches that of Protocol Proper (looking at low pulses only). In this example of Protocol RS-232, binary 0 is expressed with serial byte value \$FE (%11111110) and a binary 1 as serial byte value \$FF (%11111111). Remember, the start bit of each serial byte is a data bit as interpreted by Protocol Proper. This serial stream translates to the same data as, and looks similar to, Protocol Proper's [Handshake](#). The contents of the Handshake pattern is described in [Appendix A](#).

Image RS5 - Connection Response



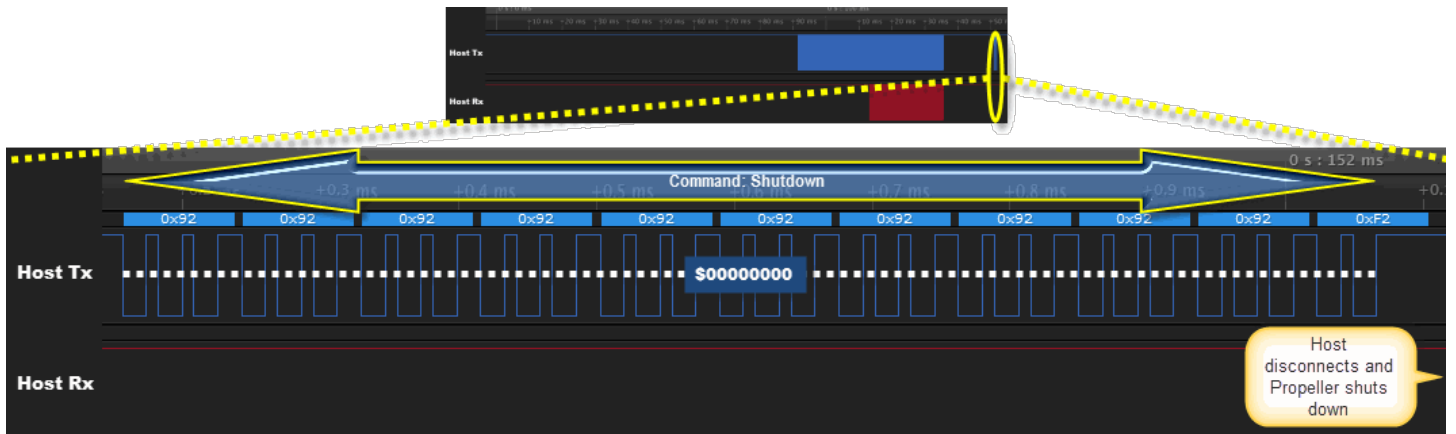
The Connection Response (a Propeller-transmitted pattern of 250 bits) occurs right after the Handshake. It is the Propeller's way of saying, "I'm a Propeller that hears and acknowledges the qualifications of the host." After the last bit of the Handshake, the Propeller transmits one bit of the Connection Response for each Calibration Pulse pair it receives from the host. The host transmits 250 Calibration Pulse pairs (as serial bytes \$F9) in order to receive all Connection Response bits; 1 bit per response byte. The host usually has a UART receive buffer that automatically fills with the Propeller's responses; full bytes of \$FE (meaning bit value 0) and \$FF (meaning bit value 1). NOTE: The Propeller doesn't set its Tx line (connected to Host Rx) to output until after the last correct Handshake bit is received. Some circuitry mistakenly treats this initially-floating signal as actual bytes received— this necessitates careful flushing of the host's receive buffer to properly parse the Connection Response. The contents of this Connection Response pattern is described in [Appendix A](#).

Image RS6 - Version



The Version is an 8-bit value transmitted by the Propeller immediately after the Connection Response; 1 bit per byte (LSB-first) for every Calibration Pulse pair (byte) the host transmits. The host should parse the LSBs of the 8 response bytes into a single 8-bit value to validate the Version response.

Image RS7 - Command (Shutdown)



After Version is received, the host transmits the Command (the intent of the communication); in this case, Shutdown, aka Identify. The Command is a 32-bit value (LSB-first) encoded into multiple bytes (11 in this case). If the Command were other than Shutdown, communication would continue as shown in the images below.

Appendix A - Handshake and Connection

The Handshake and Connection pattern (aka Handshake Tx and Handshake Rx) is a pseudo-random sequence of 500-bits that the host and Propeller use to identify and validate each other. The bit pattern is derived from an 8-bit Linear Feedback Shift Register (LFSR) tap that generates 255 different 8-bit values (pseudo-randomly) before repeating (on the 256th iteration). The host and the Propeller use the same LFSR tap value to independently generate the same bit sequence, and each relies on the nature of the repetition boundary as part of the sequence.

The bit pattern itself can easily be auto-generated at run time (algorithmically) or can be pre-generated and read from memory at run-time. Both methods are described below.

Auto-generated Values

This algorithm assumes that a globally-scoped, byte-sized variable (named LFSR) is pre-set to the initial seed value of 80 (\$50), the ASCII value of character 'P'. The LFSR tap bits are 7, 5, 4, and 1. Upon every iteration, the current values of the LFSR variable's tap bits are exclusive-or'd together, the current 8-bit LFSR value is shifted left 1 bit, and the 1-bit result of the aforementioned exclusive-or'd tap set is stored into the LFSR's bit 0.

Algorithm for function *IterateLFSR*:

1. Set Result to: LFSR
2. Set LFSR to: $(\text{LFSR} \ll 1) \mid (((\text{LFSR} \gg 7) \wedge (\text{LFSR} \gg 5) \wedge (\text{LFSR} \gg 4) \wedge (\text{LFSR} \gg 1)) \& 1)$

NOTE: $\&$ is bitwise AND, \wedge is bitwise XOR, \mid is bitwise OR, \ll is bitwise shift left, and \gg is bitwise shift right

Each call of the function *IterateLFSR* returns the current value of LFSR and then updates LFSR to the next 8-bit value in the pseudo-random number sequence. Though the LFSR variable holds an 8-bit value, only the least significant bit (LSB; bit 0) of each generated value is transmitted or received as part of the Handshake or Connection stream. NOTE: For simplicity, the *IterateLFSR* function can be made to return only the current LSB, instead of the entire LFSR value.

Pre-generated Values

The *IterateLFSR* function noted above generates the 255 values shown here, in order. Further iterations beyond the 255th call of *IterateLFSR* repeat this exact sequence again.

LFSR Output (255 8-bit Hex Values)

```
50 A1 42 85 0B 17 2E 5C B9 73 E7 CF 9E 3D 7A F5 EB D7 AF 5F BE 7C F8 F1 E3 C7 8E 1C 39 72 E5 CA
94 28 51 A3 47 8F 1E 3C 78 F0 E1 C2 84 09 12 24 49 92 25 4B 97 2F 5E BC 79 F2 E4 C8 91 22 44 88
11 23 46 8D 1B 36 6D DB B7 6E DC B8 71 E2 C5 8B 16 2C 59 B3 66 CC 99 32 65 CB 96 2D 5B B6 6C D9
B2 64 C9 93 27 4E 9D 3A 75 EA D5 AA 55 AB 57 AE 5D BB 76 ED DA B5 6B D6 AD 5A B4 69 D3 A7 4F 9F
3F 7F FF FE FC F9 F3 E6 CD 9B 37 6F DE BD 7B F7 EE DD BA 74 E8 D0 A0 40 80 01 02 05 0A 15 2B 56
AC 58 B1 63 C6 8C 19 33 67 CE 9C 38 70 E0 C0 81 03 07 0F 1F 3E 7D FA F4 E9 D2 A5 4A 95 2A 54 A9
52 A4 48 90 20 41 82 04 08 10 21 43 87 0E 1D 3B 77 EF DF BF 7E FD FB F6 EC D8 B0 61 C3 86 0C 18
31 62 C4 89 13 26 4C 98 30 60 C1 83 06 0D 1A 34 68 D1 A2 45 8A 14 29 53 A6 4D 9A 35 6A D4 A8
```

The least significant bits of the sequence above, assembled as a 255-bit stream, looks like the following. As should be expected, beyond the 255th bit, the exact sequence repeats again.

LSB of LFSR Output (255-bit stream)

```
0101110011110101111100011100101000111100001001001011110010001000
1101101110001011001100101101100100111010101011101101011010011111
1110011011110111010000000101011000110011100000011111010010101001
000001000011101111110110000110001001100000110100010100110101000
```

Either one of the above value sequences can be stored and retrieved from memory to process the Handshake and Connection phase of communication.

Usage During Communication

When protocol communication begins, both the host and the Propeller prepare for their own copy of the Handshake and Connection sequence, whether it be auto-generated or pre-generated.

During the Handshake phase, the host transmits the LSB of each of the first 250 values in the LFSR sequence. The Propeller follows along, comparing those received bits to its own sequence, and if they all match, the Propeller switches to the Connection phase. In the Connection phase, the two sides swap roles; the Propeller transmits the LSB of each of the next 250 values in the sequence (ie: starting at value 251) and the host follows along, comparing those to the rest of its own sequence. The pattern of the two 250-bit sequences intentionally overlaps the repetition boundary by 5 bits. If both sides see that the streams match what was expected, each considers the other side validated and qualified to continue the conversation.

This is illustrated in the [Protocol Proper Algorithm](#) and the data can be seen when you compare the first bits of the sequences (shown above) to the patterns in [Image P4 - Handshake Pattern](#) and [Image P5 - Connection Response](#) as well as [Image RS4 - Handshake Pattern](#) and [Image RS5 - Connection Response](#). Keep in mind, the sequence repeats after 255 bits, but the Handshake phase only outputs the first 250 bits. The Connection phase (which also outputs 250 bits) continues where the other left off... first using the last 5 bits of the remaining sequence and then repeating the first 245 bits of the same sequence.

Appendix B - PropellerLoader.spin

The Spin object, PropellerLoader.spin, implements Protocol Proper from one Propeller (the host) to another (being programmed). The source is provided below for review and the object file can also be downloaded from the [Propeller Object Exchange](#).

PropellerLoader.spin

```
*****
'*  Propeller Loader v1.0          *
'*  Author: Chip Gracey           *
'*  Copyright (c) 2006 Parallax, Inc. *
'*  See end of file for terms of use. *
*****

' v1.0 - 13 June 2006 - original version

''
''
''This object lets a Propeller chip load up another Propeller chip in the same
''way the PC normally does.
''
''To do this, the program to be loaded into the other Propeller chip must be
''compiled using "F8" (be sure to enable "Show Hex") and then a "Save Binary
''File" must be done. This binary file must then be included so that it will be
''resident and its address can be conveyed to this object for loading.
''
''Say that the file was saved as "loadme.binary". Also, say that the Propeller
''which will be performing the load/program operation has its pins 0..2 tied to
''the other Propeller's pins RESn, P31, and P30, respectively. And we'll say
''we're working with Version 1 chips and you just want to load and execute the
''program. Your code would look something like this:
''
''
''OBJ loader : "PropellerLoader"
''
''DAT loadme file "loadme.binary"
''
''PUB LoadPropeller
''
''  loader.Connect(0, 1, 2, 1, loader#LoadRun, @loadme)
''
''
''This object drives the other Propeller's RESn line, so it is recommended that
''the other Propeller's BOEn pin be tied high and that its RESn pin be pulled
''to VSS with a 1M resistor to keep it on ice until showtime.
''
''
CON

#1, ErrorConnect, ErrorVersion, ErrorChecksum, ErrorProgram, ErrorVerify
#0, Shutdown, LoadRun, ProgramShutdown, ProgramRun
```

VAR

```
long P31, P30, LFSR, Ver, Echo
```

PUB Connect(PinRESn, PinP31, PinP30, Version, Command, CodePtr) : Error

```
'set P31 and P30
P31 := PinP31
P30 := PinP30

'RESn low
outa[PinRESn] := 0
dira[PinRESn] := 1

'P31 high (our TX)
outa[PinP31] := 1
dira[PinP31] := 1

'P30 input (our RX)
dira[PinP30] := 0

'RESn high
outa[PinRESn] := 1

'wait 100ms
waitcnt(clkfreq / 10 + cnt)

'Communicate (may abort with error code)
if Error := \Communicate(Version, Command, CodePtr)
    dira[PinRESn] := 0

'P31 float
dira[PinP31] := 0
```

PRI Communicate(Version, Command, CodePtr) | ByteCount

```
'output calibration pulses
BitsOut(%01, 2)

'send LFSR pattern
LFSR := "P"
repeat 250
    BitsOut(IterateLFSR, 1)

'receive and verify LFSR pattern
repeat 250
    if WaitBit(1) <> IterateLFSR
        abort ErrorConnect

'receive chip version
repeat 8
    Ver := WaitBit(1) << 7 + Ver >> 1

'if version mismatch, shutdown and abort
if Ver <> Version
    BitsOut(Shutdown, 32)
    abort ErrorVersion
```

```

'send command
BitsOut(Command, 32)

'handle command details
if Command

    'send long count
    ByteCount := byte[CodePtr][8] | byte[CodePtr][9] << 8
    BitsOut(ByteCount >> 2, 32)

    'send bytes
    repeat ByteCount
        BitsOut(byte[CodePtr++], 8)

    'allow 250ms for positive checksum response
    if WaitBit(25)
        abort ErrorChecksum

    'eeprom program command
    if Command > 1

        'allow 5s for positive program response
        if WaitBit(500)
            abort ErrorProgram

        'allow 2s for positive verify response
        if WaitBit(200)
            abort ErrorVerify

```

PRI IterateLFSR : Bit

```

'get return bit
Bit := LFSR & 1

'iterate LFSR (8-bit, $B2 taps)
LFSR := LFSR << 1 | (LFSR >> 7 ^ LFSR >> 5 ^ LFSR >> 4 ^ LFSR >> 1) & 1

```

PRI WaitBit(Hundredths) : Bit | PriorEcho

```

repeat Hundredths

    'output 1t pulse
    BitsOut(1, 1)

    'sample bit and echo
    Bit := ina[P30]
    PriorEcho := Echo

    'output 2t pulse
    BitsOut(0, 1)

    'if echo was low, got bit
    if not PriorEcho
        return

    'wait 10ms
    waitcnt(clkfreg / 100 + cnt)

```

```
'timeout, abort
abort ErrorConnect
```

PRI BitsOut(Value, Bits)

```
repeat Bits

  if Value & 1

    'output '1' (1t pulse)
    outa[P31] := 0
    Echo := ina[P30]
    outa[P31] := 1

  else

    'output '0' (2t pulse)
    outa[P31] := 0
    outa[P31] := 0
    Echo := ina[P30]
    Echo := ina[P30]
    outa[P31] := 1

  Value >>= 1
```

```
{{
```

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```
}}
```


Appendix C - Propeller's ROM-Based Boot Loader

The following Propeller assembly code (PASM) is the actual source used to build the ROM-resident Boot Loader that starts up in the Propeller when it is powered up or reset. Developers that know PASM can gain important insight into [Protocol Proper](#), and more, by studying this code. Note: During development, the codename for the Propeller was "PNut."

```
' *****
' *
' *      PNut Booter      *
' *
' *      Version 0.1   12/10/2004      *
' *
' *      (C) 2004 Parallax, Inc.      *
' *
' *****
'
'
' Entry
'
DAT          org

          test    mask_rx,ina      wc      'if rx high, check for host
if_nc      jmp    #boot            'else, boot from eeprom

          call    #rx_bit           'measure rx calibration pulses ($F9)
          mov     threshold,delta   'and calculate threshold
          call    #rx_bit           '(any timeout results in eeprom boot)
          add     threshold,delta
          shr     threshold,#1

          mov     count,#250        'ready to receive/verify 250 lfsr bits
:lfsrin    call    #rx_bit           'receive bit ($FE/$FF) into c
          muxc    lfsr,#$100        'compare to lfsr lsb
          test    lfsr,#$101        wc
if_c      jmp    #boot            'if mismatch, boot from eeprom
          test    lfsr,#$B2        wc      'advance lfsr
          rcl     lfsr,#1
          djnz    count,#:lfsrin

          or      outa,mask_tx      'host present, make tx high output
          or      dira,mask_tx

          mov     count,#250        'ready to transmit 250 lfsr bits
:lfsrout   test    lfsr,#$01        wz      'send lfsr bit ($FE/$FF)
          call    #tx_bit
          test    lfsr,#$B2        wc      'advance lfsr
          rcl     lfsr,#1
          djnz    count,#:lfsrout

          rdbyte   bits,hFFF9FFFF   'get version byte at $FFFF
          mov     count,#8          'send version byte
:version   test    bits,$01        wz
          call    #tx_bit
          shr     bits,#1
          djnz    count,#:version

          call    #rx_long           'receive command
          mov     command,rxdata

          tjz     command,#shutdown 'if command 0, shutdown
if_nc      cmp     command,#4        wc      'if command 4+, shutdown
          jmp     #shutdown

          call    #rx_long           'get long count
          mov     count,rxdata

          mov     address,#0         'get longs into ram
```

```

:longs      call    #rx_long
            wrlong  rxdata,address
            add     address,#4
            djnz   count,#:longs

            mov     count,h8000      'zero remainder of ram
            sub     count,address
            shr     count,#2         wz
:zero      if_nz   wrlong  zero,address
            if_nz   add     address,#4
            if_nz   djnz   count,#:zero      '(count=0, address=$8000)

            rdword  bits,$0004+6    'get dbase address
            sub     bits,#4          'set pcurr to $FFF9
            wrlong  hFFF9FFFF,bits
            sub     bits,#4          'set pbase flags
            wrlong  hFFF9FFFF,bits

:checksum   mov     bits,#0          'compute ram checksum
            rdbyte  rxdata,count
            add     bits,rxdata
            add     count,#1
            djnz   address,#:checksum
            test    bits,$$FF        wz      'z=1 if checksum okay

            call    #tx_bit_align    'send checksum okay/error

            if_nz   jmp     #shutdown  'if checksum error, shutdown

            djnz   command,#program  'if command 2-3, program eeprom
            jmp    #launch            'else command 1, launch
,
,
' Program and verify eeprom from ram
,
program     mov     smode,#1          'set mode in case error

:page       mov     address,#0        'reset address
            call    #ee_write         'send program command
            mov     count,$$40        'page-program $40 bytes
:byte       rdbyte  eedata,address    'get ram byte
            call    #ee_transmit      'send ram byte
            if_c    jmp     #shutdown  'if no ack, shutdown
            add     address,#1        'inc address
            djnz   count,#:byte       'loop until page sent
            call    #ee_stop          'initiate page-program cycle
            cmp     address,h8000     wz    'check for address $8000
            if_nz   jmp     #:page     'loop until done (z=1 after)

            call    #tx_bit_align    'program done, send okay (z=1)

:verify     call    #ee_read          'send read command
            call    #ee_receive       'get eeprom byte
            rdbyte  bits,address      'get ram byte
            cmp     bits,eedata      wz    'compare bytes
            if_nz   jmp     #shutdown  'if verify error, shutdown (sends error)
            add     address,#1        'inc address
            djnz   count,#:verify     'loop until done
            call    #ee_stop          'end read (z=1 from before)

            call    #tx_bit_align    'verify done, send okay (z=1)

            mov     smode,#0          'clear mode in case error

            djnz   command,#launch    'if command 3, launch
            jmp    #shutdown          'else command 2, shutdown
,
,
' Load ram from eeprom and launch
,
boot        mov     smode,#0          'clear mode in case error

            call    #ee_read          'send read command

```

```

:loop                call    #ee_receive          'get eeprom byte
                    wrbyte  eedata,address        'write to ram
                    add     address,#1           'inc address
                    djnz    count,#:loop         'loop until done
                    call    #ee_stop            'end read (followed by launch)
,
,
' Launch program in ram
,
launch              rdword  address,#$0004+2      'if pbase address invalid, shutdown
                    cmp     address,$0010 wz      '
                    jmp     #shutdown            '
                    rdbyte  address,$0004         'if xtal/p11 enabled, start up now
                    and     address,$F8          '..while remaining in rcfast mode
                    clkset  address
,
:delay              djnz    time_xtal,#:delay     'allow 20ms @20MHz for xtal/p11 to settle
                    rdbyte  address,$0004         'switch to selected clock
                    clkset  address
                    coginit interpreter          'reboot cog with interpreter
,
,
' Shutdown
,
shutdown           mov     ee_jump,#0            'deselect eeprom (replace jmp with nop)
:call              call    #ee_stop              '(always returns)
                    cmp     smode,#0             'if serial mode, send error (z=0)
                    if_nz   mov     smode,#0      '(only do once)
                    if_nz   :call,#0            '(replace call with nop)
                    if_nz   call    #tx_bit_align '(may return to shutdown, no problem)
                    mov     dira,#0             'cancel any outputs
                    mov     smode,$02           'stop clock
                    clkset  smode               '(suspend until reset)
,
,
'*****
'* I2C routines for 24x256/512 EEPROM *
'* assumes fastest RC timing - 20MHz *
'* SCL low time = 8 inst, >1.6us *
'* SCL high time = 4 inst, >0.8us *
'* SCL period = 12 inst, >2.4us *
'*****
,
,
' Begin eeprom read
,
ee_read            mov     address,#0            'reset address
                    call    #ee_write            'begin write (sets address)
                    mov     eedata,$A1          'send read command
                    call    #ee_start
                    if_c     jmp     #shutdown     'if no ack, shutdown
                    mov     count,h8000         'set count to $8000
ee_read_ret        ret
,
,
' Begin eeprom write
,
ee_write           call    #ee_wait              'wait for ack and begin write
                    mov     eedata,address      'send high address
                    shr     eedata,#8
                    call    #ee_transmit
                    if_c     jmp     #shutdown     'if no ack, shutdown

```

```

mov    eedata,address      'send low address
call   #ee_transmit
if_c   jmp    #shutdown     'if no ack, shutdown

ee_write_ret    ret

;
;
; Wait for eeprom ack
;
ee_wait    mov    count,#400      '    400 attempts > 10ms @20MHz
:loop      mov    eedata,#$A0     '1    send write command
           call   #ee_start       '132+
           if_c   djnz   count,#:loop  '1    if no ack, loop until done

           if_c   jmp    #shutdown   '    if no ack, shutdown

ee_wait_ret    ret

;
;
; Start + transmit
;
ee_start    mov    bits,#9         '1    ready 9 start attempts
:loop      andn   outa,mask_scl    '1(!)   ready scl low
           or     dira,mask_scl    '1!    scl low
           nop
           andn   dira,mask_sda    '1!    sda float
           call   #delay5          '5
           or     outa,mask_scl    '1!    scl high
           nop
           test   mask_sda,ina      wc      'h?h    sample sda
           if_nc  djnz   bits,#:loop  '1,2    if sda not high, loop until done

           if_nc  jmp    #shutdown   '1    if sda still not high, shutdown

           or     dira,mask_sda    '1!    sda low

;
;
; Transmit/receive
;
ee_transmit    shl    eedata,#1      '1    ready to transmit byte and receive ack
              or     eedata,#%00000000_1  '1
              jmp    #ee_tr         '1

ee_receive     mov    eedata,#%11111111_0  '1    ready to receive byte and transmit ack

ee_tr          mov    bits,#9         '1    transmit/receive byte and ack
:loop      test   eedata,$100        wz      '1    get next sda output state
           andn   outa,mask_scl    '1!    scl low
           rcl    eedata,#1         '1    shift in prior sda input state
           muxz   dira,mask_sda    '1!    sda low/float
           call   #delay4          '4
           test   mask_sda,ina      wc      'h?h    sample sda
           or     outa,mask_scl    '1!    scl high
           nop
           djnz   bits,#:loop        '1,2    if another bit, loop

           and    eedata,$$FF        '1    isolate byte received

ee_receive_ret
ee_transmit_ret
ee_start_ret    ret

;
;
; Stop
;
ee_stop      mov    bits,#9         '1    ready 9 stop attempts
:loop      andn   outa,mask_scl    '1!    scl low
           nop
           or     dira,mask_sda    '1!    sda low
           call   #delay5          '5
           or     outa,mask_scl    '1!    scl high
           call   #delay3          '3
           andn   dira,mask_sda    '1!    sda float

```

```

        call    #delay4                '4
        test    mask_sda,ina          wc    'h?h    sample sda
        if_nc   djnz    bits,#:loop    '1,2    if sda not high, loop until done

ee_jump    if_nc        jmp    #shutdown    '1    if sda still not high, shutdown

ee_stop_ret    ret    '1
,
,
' Cycle delays
,
delay5        nop    '1
delay4        nop    '1
delay3        nop    '1
delay2
delay2_ret
delay3_ret
delay4_ret
delay5_ret    ret    '1
,
,
'*****
'* Serial routines *
'*****
,
,
' Transmit bit (nz)
' conveys incoming $F9 on rx to $FE/$FF on tx
,
tx_bit_align    mov    time,time_load    'reset time limit

:align
    if_c        call    #rx_bit    'align to next $F9
                jmp    #:align

tx_bit        mov    time,time_load    'reset time limit

:high
    if_c        test    mask_rx,ina    wc    'wait while high
    if_c        djnz    time,#:high
    if_c        jmp    #shutdown    'if timeout, shutdown

                andn    outa,mask_tx    'tx low

:low
    if_nc       test    mask_rx,ina    wc    'wait while low
    if_nc       djnz    time,#:low
    if_nc       jmp    #shutdown    'if timeout, shutdown

                muxnz   outa,mask_tx    'tx low/high

:high2
    if_c        test    mask_rx,ina    wc    'wait while high
    if_c        djnz    time,#:high2
    if_c        jmp    #shutdown    'if timeout, shutdown

                or      outa,mask_tx    'tx high

:low2
    if_nc       test    mask_rx,ina    wc    'wait while low
    if_nc       djnz    time,#:low2
    if_nc       jmp    #shutdown    'if timeout, shutdown

tx_bit_ret
tx_bit_align_ret    ret
,
,
' Receive long
,
rx_long        mov    time,time_load    'reset time limit

                mov     bits,#32    'ready for 32 bits

:loop
    call    #rx_bit    'input bit
    rcr     rxdata,#1    'shift into long
    djnz    bits,#:loop    'loop until done

rx_long_ret    ret
,

```

```

'
' Receive bit (c)
'
rx_bit      test    mask_rx,ina    wc    'wait while rx high
            if_c     djnz   time,#rx_bit
            if_c     jmp     #boot    'if timeout, boot from eeprom

            mov     delta,time      'time while rx low

:loop       test    mask_rx,ina    wc    'h?h    2 instructions/loop
            if_nc    djnz   time,#:loop  '1      400ns @20MHz...1us @8MHz
            if_nc    jmp     #boot    'if timeout, boot from eeprom

            sub     delta,time      'delta = rx low time in loops
            cmp     delta,threshold wc  'resolve bit into c

rx_bit_ret  ret

'
' Constants
'
mask_rx     long    $80000000
mask_tx     long    $40000000
mask_sda    long    $20000000
mask_scl    long    $10000000
time        long    150 * 20000 / 4 / 2    '150ms (@20MHz, 2 inst/loop)
time_load   long    100 * 20000 / 4 / 2    '100ms (@20MHz, 2 inst/loop)
time_xtal   long    20 * 20000 / 4 / 1     '20ms (@20MHz, 1 inst/loop)
lfsr        long    "P"
zero        long    0
smode       long    0
hFFF9FFFF  long    $FFF9FFFF
h8000       long    $8000
interpreter long    $0001 << 18 + $3C01 << 4 + %0000

'
' Variables
'
command     res     1
address     res     1
count       res     1
bits        res     1
eedata      res     1
rxdata      res     1
delta       res     1
threshold   res     1

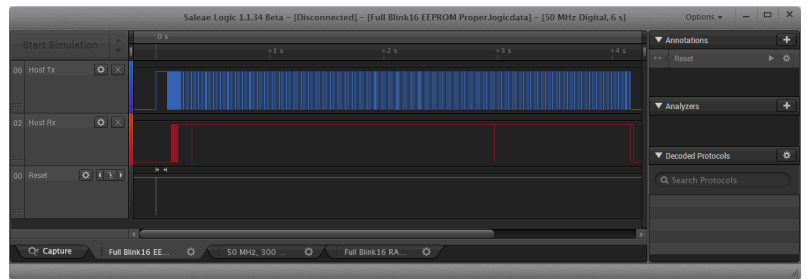
```

Appendix D - Logic Analyzer

A critical tool for properly implementing protocols is a logic analyzer or oscilloscope to see what's actually going on at the signal level, in a digital and analog sense.

Parallax recommends the very compact and affordable [Saleae Logic](#) series of analyzers that provide both digital and analog measurement. These small hardware devices plug into a computer's USB port for analyzing signals using dedicated software. Capture, zoom, protocol analysis, and many other features make this a great tool; a vital part of an embedded system designer's toolkit.

The Saleae Logic 8 model was used to create all the logic capture images in this document.



Scratch Pad (To be moved or deleted when document is finished).

Encoded LFSR (8-bit Bin) [Tx Handshake Pattern for Protocol RS-232]

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Encoded LFSR (8-bit Bin) [Rx Connection Pattern for Protocol RS-232]

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