Datapath Design, Coding Standards, and Lab 2
Separating Control From Data

- The datapath is where data moves from place to place.
  - Computation happens in the datapath
  - No decisions are made here.
- Things you should find in a datapath
  - Muxes
  - Registers
  - ALUs
  - Wide busses (34 bits for data. 17 bits for instructions)
  - These components are physically large
  - In a real machine, their spatial relationship are important.
- Mostly about wiring things up.
Separating Control From Data

• Control is where decisions are made
  • Things you will there
    • State machines
    • Random lots of complex logic
    • Little state (maybe just a single register)
  • Spatial relationships are harder to reason about or exploit.

• Because they are qualitatively so different, we will use different coding styles for each.
  • These are best practices from people who build real chips.
  • Following them will save you lots of pain
  • If you don’t follow them, and you have problem, the TAs and I will tell you to go fix the coding style issues first.
Basic Design

Control

Datapath

Signals controlling the datapath
Signals providing information to control

Data inputs

Control inputs

Outputs

Control outputs

clk
reset

clk
reset
Separating Design from Implementation

- As you will learn, debugging hardware is slow
- Design first
  - Draw your schematic in complete detail.
  - Signal names and everything.
  - Design the state machine for your control
  - Write out the truth tables for your control signals.
- The implement
  - Our coding standards are recipe for implementing datapath and control.
  - Writing Verilog is really just about translating your design into Verilog.
  - It should be almost completely mechanical.
Designing the Datapath

• Designing datapaths is easier than it may seem.

• Design
  • You start with a specification of the algorithm your circuit should implement
  • Figure out what operations need to be performed on the data and how data will flow between operations
  • Draw the schematic
  • Remember: the datapath does not make decisions.
    • It generates data needed to make the decisions
    • It provides the flexibility implement decisions that the control might make.

• Implement
  • Instantiate those components and connect them with wires.
  • Test.
Example: Greatest Common Devisor

- See second set of slides from Arvind.
- The code in the slides is buggy.
- The source code for a correct implementation is available on the course web site.
Datapath Coding Standards

- Non-leaf nodes should contain only
  - Module instantiations
  - Wires
  - Simple assigns for renaming: assign foo = bar (and not many of these)

- Leaf nodes are either stateful or not.

- Stateful leafs
  - Registers
  - Register files
  - Memory modules.
  - Need to have clk and reset.
  - May contain always @(posedge clk), always @(\*), and ‘<=’ assignments

- Non-stateful leafs
  - May contain always @(\*), and ‘=’ assignments
  - No clk or reset input.
Datapath Coding Standards

- Consistently use a good naming conventions
- Label all inputs and outputs
  - e.g. foo_in, foo_out
- Include module types in their names
  - A_mux -- the instantiated mux
- Give control lines descriptive and consistent names
  - A_mux_sel_in -- the input that controls the mux
  - A_mux_sel -- should not exist since it would be a control line (and would come from the control path)
  - The control unit would have a corresponding A_mux_sel_out
Build Useful Modules

• Parameterize!
• You should only ever write code for one
  • Register (of any width)
  • 2-input mux (of any width)
  • 3-input mux
  • etc.
• Give your modules descriptive names
  • my3Mux
  • my4Mux
  • myFF
  • gcd_control
  • gcd_datapath
  • gcd -- top-level.