Memory-Block Basics

- **Uses:**
  Whenever a large collection of state elements is required.
  - data & program storage
  - general purpose registers
  - data buffering
  - table lookups
  - CL implementation

- **Basic Types:**
  - RAM - random access memory
  - ROM - read only memory
  - EPROM, FLASH - electrically programmable read only memory

\[ \log_2(M) \]

M X N memory:
- Depth = M, Width = N.
- M words of memory, each word N bits wide.
Memory Components Types:

- **Volatile:**
  - Random Access Memory (RAM):
    - DRAM "dynamic"
    - SRAM "static" Focus Today

- **Non-volatile:**
  - Read Only Memory (ROM):
    - Mask ROM "mask programmable"
    - EPROM "electrically programmable"
    - EEPROM "erasable electrically programmable"
    - FLASH memory - similar to EEPROM with programmer integrated on chip

All these types are available as stand alone chips or as blocks in other chips.

Standard Internal Memory Organization

- **RAM/ROM naming convention:**
  - examples: 32 X 8, "32 by 8" => 32 8-bit words
  - 1M X 1, "1 meg by 1" => 1M 1-bit words

Special circuit tricks are used for the cell array to improve storage density.
**Address Decoding**

- The function of the address decoder is to generate a one-hot code word from the address.
- The output is used for row selection.
- Many different circuits exist for this function. A simple one is shown to the right.

**Memory Block Internals**

For read operation, functionally the memory is equivalent to a 2-D array of flip-flops with tristate outputs on each:

For write operation, functionally equivalent includes a means to change state value:

These circuits are just functional abstractions of the actual circuits used.
SRAM Cell Array Details

Most common is 6-transistor (6T) cell array.

Word selects this cell, and all others in a row.

For write operation, column bit lines are driven differentially (0 on one, 1 on the other). Values overwrites cell state.

For read operation, column bit lines are equalized (set to same voltage), then released. Cell pulls down one bit line or the other.

Column MUX in ROMs and RAMs:

• Permits input/output data widths different from row width.
• Controls physical aspect ratio
  - Important for physical layout and to control delay on wires.

Technique illustrated for read operation. Similar approach for write.
Cascading Memory-Blocks

How to make larger memory blocks out of smaller ones.

Increasing the width. Example: given 1Kx8, want 1Kx16

Increasing the depth. Example: given 1Kx8, want 2Kx8
Multi-ported Memory

- **Motivation:**
  - Consider CPU core register file:
    - 1 read or write per cycle limits processor performance.
    - Complicates pipelining. Difficult for different instructions to simultaneously read or write regfile.
  - Common arrangement in pipelined CPUs is 2 read ports and 1 write port.
  - I/O data buffering:
    - Dual-ported Memory
      - Dual-porting allows both sides to simultaneously access memory at full bandwidth.

Dual-ported Memory Internals

- Add decoder, another set of read/write logic, bits lines, word lines:
  - Example cell: SRAM
    - Repeat everything but cross-coupled inverters.
    - This scheme extends up to a couple more ports, then need to add additional transistors.
Adding Ports to Primitive Memory Blocks

Adding a read port to a simple dual port (SDP) memory.

Example: given 1Kx8 SDP, want 1 write & 2 read ports.

Adding Ports to Primitive Memory Blocks

How to add a write port to a simple dual port memory.

Example: given 1Kx8 SDP, want 1 read & 2 write ports.
Virtex-5 LX110T memory blocks.

Distributed RAM using LUTs among the CLBs.

Block RAMs in four columns.

A SLICEM 6-LUT ...

Memory data input

Normal 6-LUT inputs.

Normal 5/6-LUT outputs.

Memory data input.

Control output for chaining LUTs to make larger memories.

Synchronous write / asynchronous read

A 1.1 Mb distributed RAM can be made if all SLICEMs of an LX110T are used as RAM.
SLICEL vs SLICEM ...

SLICEL

SLICEM

SLICEM adds memory features to LUTs, + muxes.

Example Distributed RAM (LUT RAM)

Example configuration: Single-port 256b x 1, registered output.

A 128 x 32b LUT RAM has a 1.1ns access time.
Distributed RAM Primitives

- Single-Port 32 x 1-bit RAM
- Dual-Port 32 x 1-bit RAM
- Quad-Port 32 x 2-bit RAM
- Simple Dual-Port 32 x 6-bit RAM
- Single-Port 64 x 1-bit RAM
- Dual-Port 64 x 1-bit RAM
- Quad-Port 64 x 1-bit RAM
- Simple Dual-Port 64 x 3-bit RAM
- Single-Port 128 x 1-bit RAM
- Dual-Port 128 x 1-bit RAM
- Single-Port 256 x 1-bit RAM

All are built from a single slice or less.

Remember, though, that the SLICEM LUT is naturally only 1 read and 1 write port.

Example Dual Port Configurations

Figure 5-11: Distributed RAM (RAM64X3SDP)  Figure 5-6: Distributed RAM (RAM32X2Q)
Distributed RAM Timing

Table 1: Virtex-5 FPGA Family Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Device</th>
<th>Configurable Logic Blocks (CLBs)</th>
<th>Virtex-5 Distributed RAM (Kb)</th>
<th>Max Distributed RAM (Kb)</th>
<th>DSP48E Blocks</th>
<th>PowerPC Processor Blocks</th>
<th>Endpoint Routing for Express</th>
<th>Ethernet MAC(s)</th>
<th>Total I/O Banks</th>
<th>Max User I/O</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>912</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Block RAM Overview

- 36K bits of data total, can be configured as:
  - 2 independent 18Kb RAMs, or one 36Kb RAM.
- Each 36Kb block RAM can be configured as:
  - 64Kx1 (when cascaded with an adjacent 36Kb block RAM), 32Kx2, 16Kx4, 8Kx9, 4Kx18, or 1Kx36 memory.
- Each 18Kb block RAM can be configured as:
  - 16Kx1, 8Kx2, 4Kx4, 2Kx9, or 1Kx18 memory.
- Write and Read are synchronous operations.
- The two ports are symmetrical and totally independent (can have different clocks), sharing only the stored data.
- Each port can be configured in one of the available widths, independent of the other.

Block RAM Timing

- Note this is in the default mode, “WRITE_FIRST”. Other possible modes are “READ_FIRST”, and “NO_CHANGE”.
- Optional output register, would delay appearance
Verilog Synthesis Notes

- Block RAMS and LUT RAMS all exist as primitive library elements. However, it is much more convenient to use inference.
- Depending on how you write your verilog, you will get either a collection of block RAMs, a collection of LUT RAMs, or a collection of flip-flops.
- The synthesizer uses size, and read style (synch versus asynch) to determine the best primitive type to use.
- It is possible to force mapping to a particular primitive by using synthesis directives. However, if you write your verilog correctly, you will not need to use directives.
- The synthesizer has limited capabilities (eg., it can combine primitives for more depth and width, but is limited on porting options). Be careful, as you might not get what you want.
- See XST User Guide for examples.

Inferring RAMs in Verilog

// 64X1 RAM implementation using distributed RAM

```verilog
module ram64X1 (clk, we, d, addr, q);
    input clk, we, d;
    input [5:0] addr;
    output q;

    reg [63:0] temp;
    always @(posedge clk)
        if(we)
            temp[addr] <= d;
    assign q = temp[addr];
endmodule
```

Verilog reg array used with "always @ (posedge ... infers memory array.

Asynchronous read infers LUT RAM
Dual-read-port LUT RAM

// Multiple-Port RAM Descriptions

module v_rams_17 (clk, we, wa, ra1, ra2, di, do1, do2);
  input  clk;
  input  we;
  input  [5:0] wa;
  input  [5:0] ra1;
  input  [5:0] ra2;
  input  [15:0] di;
  output [15:0] do1;
  output [15:0] do2;
  reg    [15:0] ram [63:0];
  always @(posedge clk)
    begin
      if (we) 
        ram[wa] <= di;
    end
  assign do1 = ram[ra1];
  assign do2 = ram[ra2];
endmodule

Block RAM Inference

// Single-Port RAM with Synchronous Read

module v_rams_07 (clk, we, a, di, do);
  input  clk;
  input  we;
  input  [5:0] a;
  input  [15:0] di;
  output [15:0] do;
  reg    [15:0] ram [63:0];
  reg    [5:0] read_a;
  always @(posedge clk) begin
    if (we)
      ram[a] <= di;
    read_a <= a;
  end
  assign do = ram[read_a];
endmodule
Block RAM initialization

module RAMB4_S4 (data_out, ADDR, data_in, CLK, WE);
output[3:0] data_out;
input [2:0] ADDR;
input [3:0] data_in;
input CLK, WE;
reg [3:0] mem [7:0];
reg [3:0] read_addr;

initial
begin

$readmemb("data.dat", mem);
end

always@(posedge CLK)
read_addr <= ADDR;

assign data_out = mem[read_addr];

always @(posedge CLK)
if (WE) mem[ADDR] = data_in;
endmodule

“data.dat” contains initial RAM contents, it gets put into the bitfile and loaded at configuration time. (Remake bits to change contents)

Dual-Port Block RAM

module test (data0, data1, waddr0, waddr1, we0, we1, clk0, clk1, q0, q1);

parameter d_width = 8; parameter addr_width = 8; parameter mem_depth = 256;

input [d_width-1:0] data0, data1;
input [addr_width-1:0] waddr0, waddr1;
input we0, we1, clk0, clk1;

reg [d_width-1:0] mem [mem_depth-1:0]
reg [addr_width-1:0] reg_waddr0, reg_waddr1;
output [d_width-1:0] q0, q1;

assign q0 = mem[reg_waddr0];
assign q1 = mem[reg_waddr1];

always @(posedge clk0)
begin
if (we0)
mem[waddr0] <= data0;
reg_waddr0 <= waddr0;
end

always @(posedge clk1)
begin
if (we1)
mem[waddr1] <= data1;
reg_waddr1 <= waddr1;
end
endmodule
Processor Design Considerations (1/2)

• Register File: Consider distributed RAM (LUT RAM)
  - Size is close to what is needed: distributed RAM primitive configurations are 32 or 64 bits deep. Extra width is easily achieved by parallel arrangements.
  - LUT-RAM configurations offer multi-porting options - useful for register files.
  - Asynchronous read, might be useful by providing flexibility on where to put register read in the pipeline.

• Instruction / Data Caches: Consider Block RAM
  - Higher density, lower cost for large number of bits
  - A single 36kbit Block RAM implements 1K 32-bit words.
  - Configuration stream based initialization, permits a simple “boot” procedure.

• Other Memories? FIFOs? Video “Frame Buffer”? How big?

XUP Board External SRAM

“ZBT” synchronous SRAM, 9 Mb on 32-bit data bus, with four “parity” bits
256K x 36 bits (located under the removable LCD)

*ZBT (ZBT stands for zero bus turnaround) — the turnaround is the number of clock cycles it takes to change access to the SRAM from write to read and vice versa. The turnaround for ZBT SRAMs or the latency between read and write cycle is zero.
More generally, how does software interface to I/O devices?

*SO-DIMM stands for small outline dual in-line memory module. SO-DIMMs are often used in systems which have space restrictions such as notebooks.

*DDR2 stands for second generation double data rate. DDR transfers data both on the rising and falling edges of the clock signal.