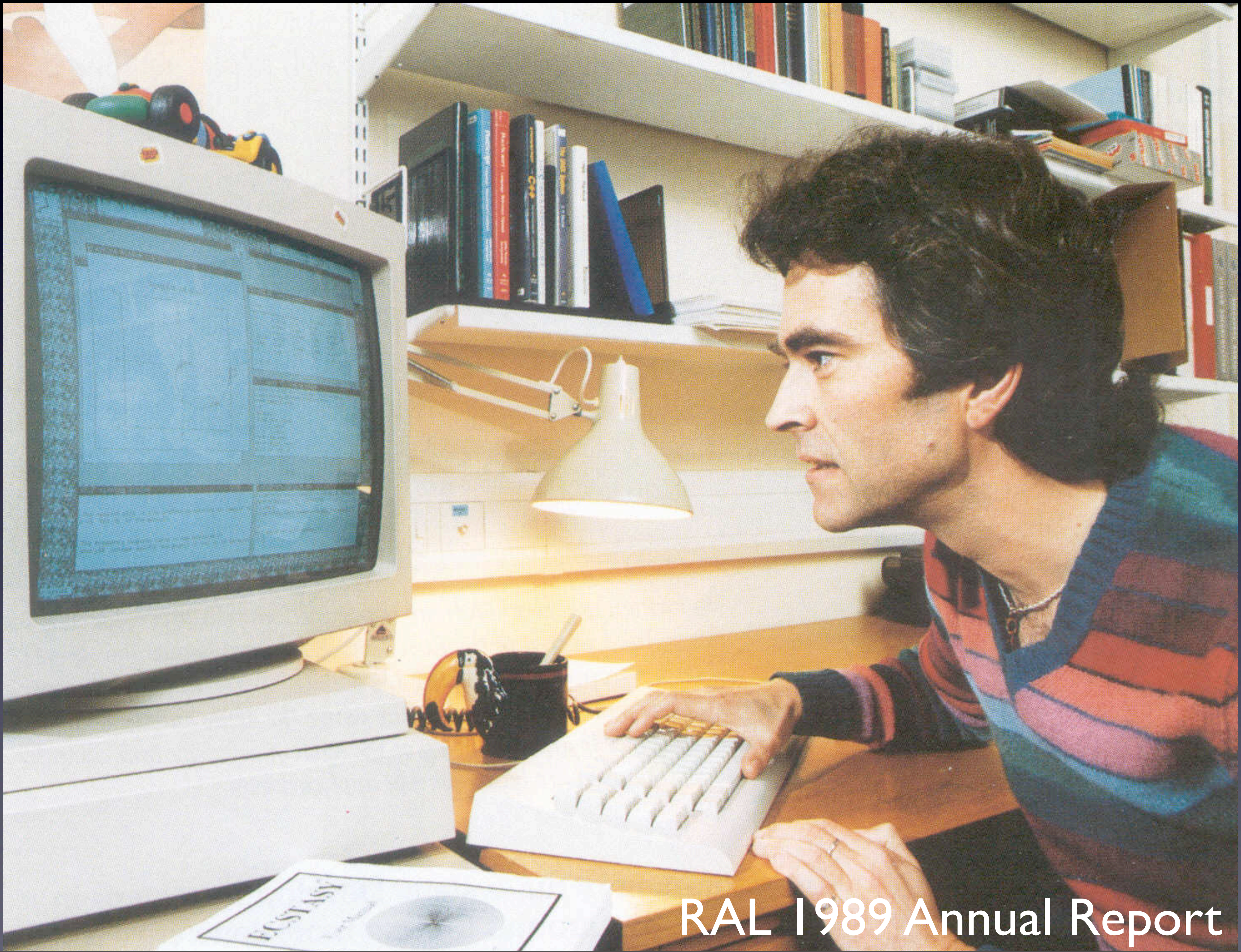
Surviving Verilog

avoiding pain in 378

Agenda

- Pep talk
- Lab overview
- Mapping code to hardware
- Verilog tips and traps

My desktop circa 1998



RAL 1989 Annual Report

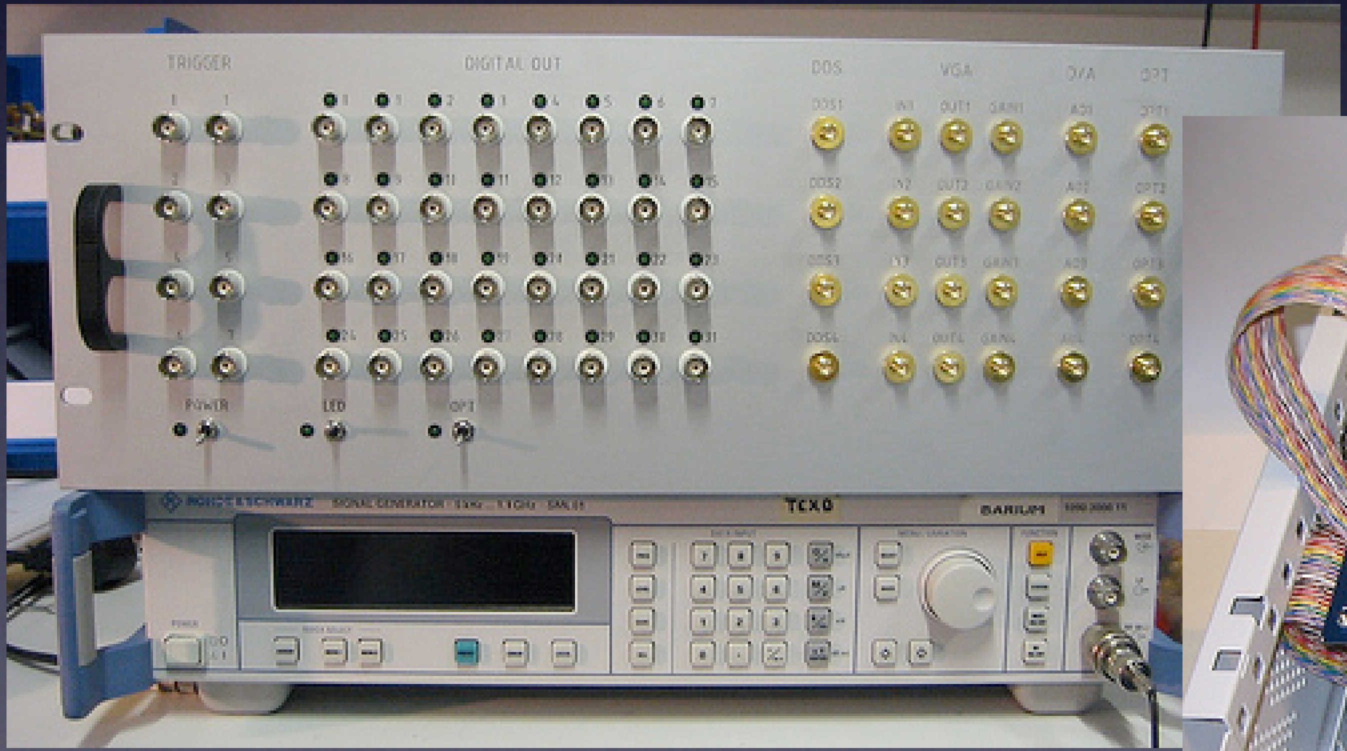
Your processor

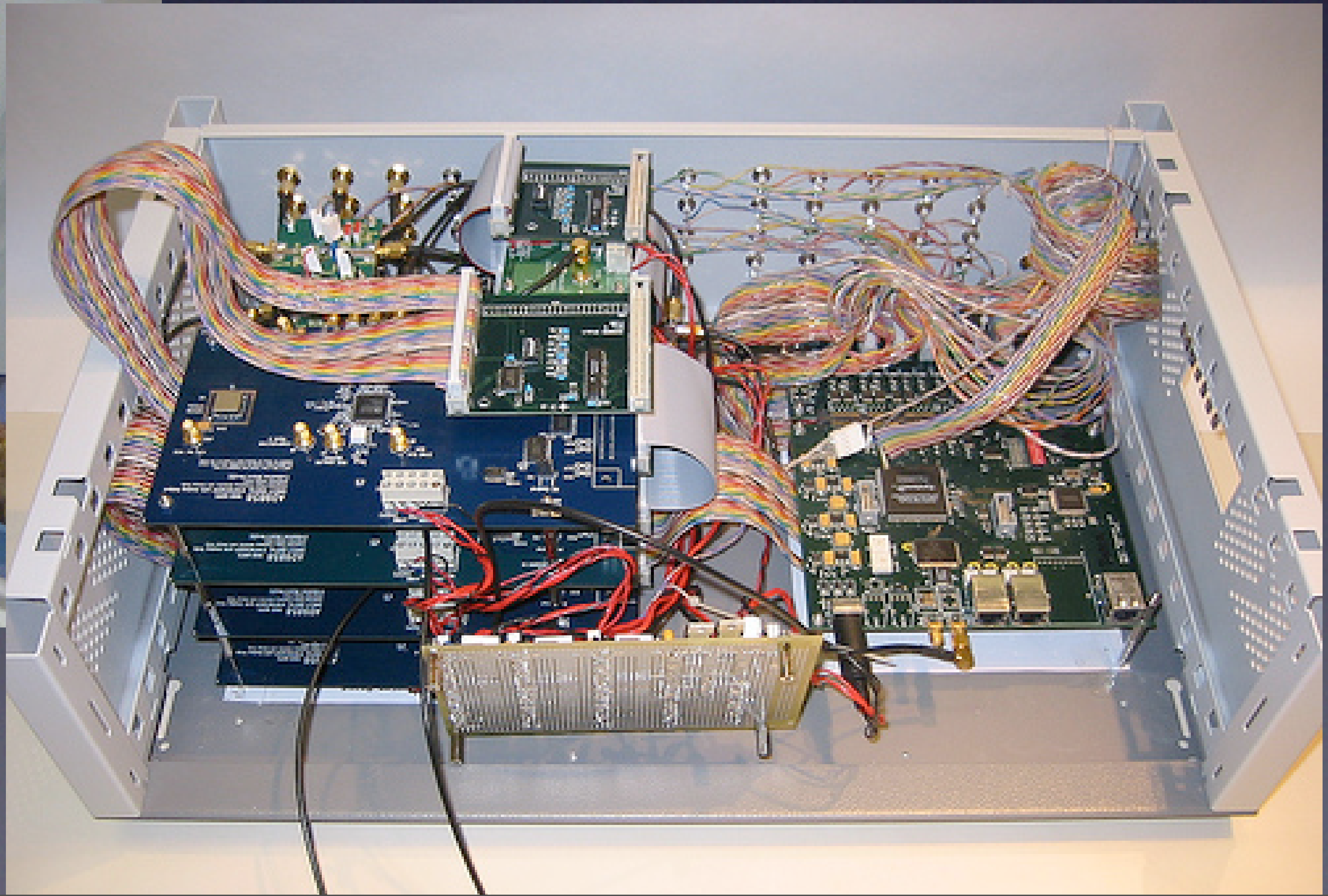
>>

Sun 3/50

What can we do?

http://www.xkl.com





http://pulse-sequencer.sourceforge.net

Free as in { freedom | beer }

simulation: Icarus Verilog; GTKWave

schematics/board design: gEDA

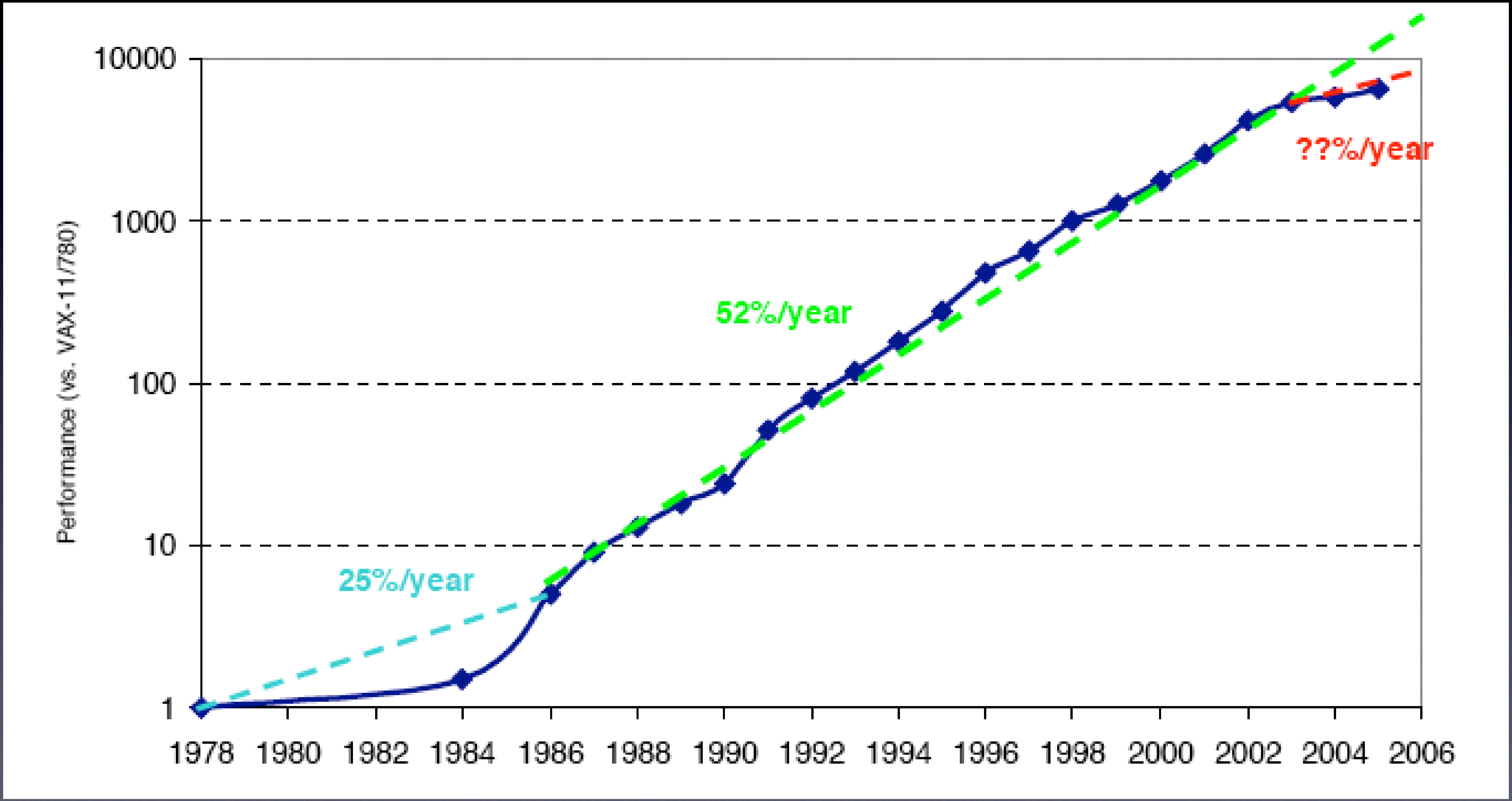
chips/implementation: Xilinx, Altera, etc.

boards: cheap PCB houses; toaster oven

programming/debugging: OpenOCD

Not doing it for you?

PARALLEL CRISIS!!!



The Landscape of Parallel Computing Research: A View From Berkeley

Funky parallelism

- Hardware is inherently parallel
- FPGA =
  Fine-grained massively parallel computer
- Verilog =
  Funky parallel programming language

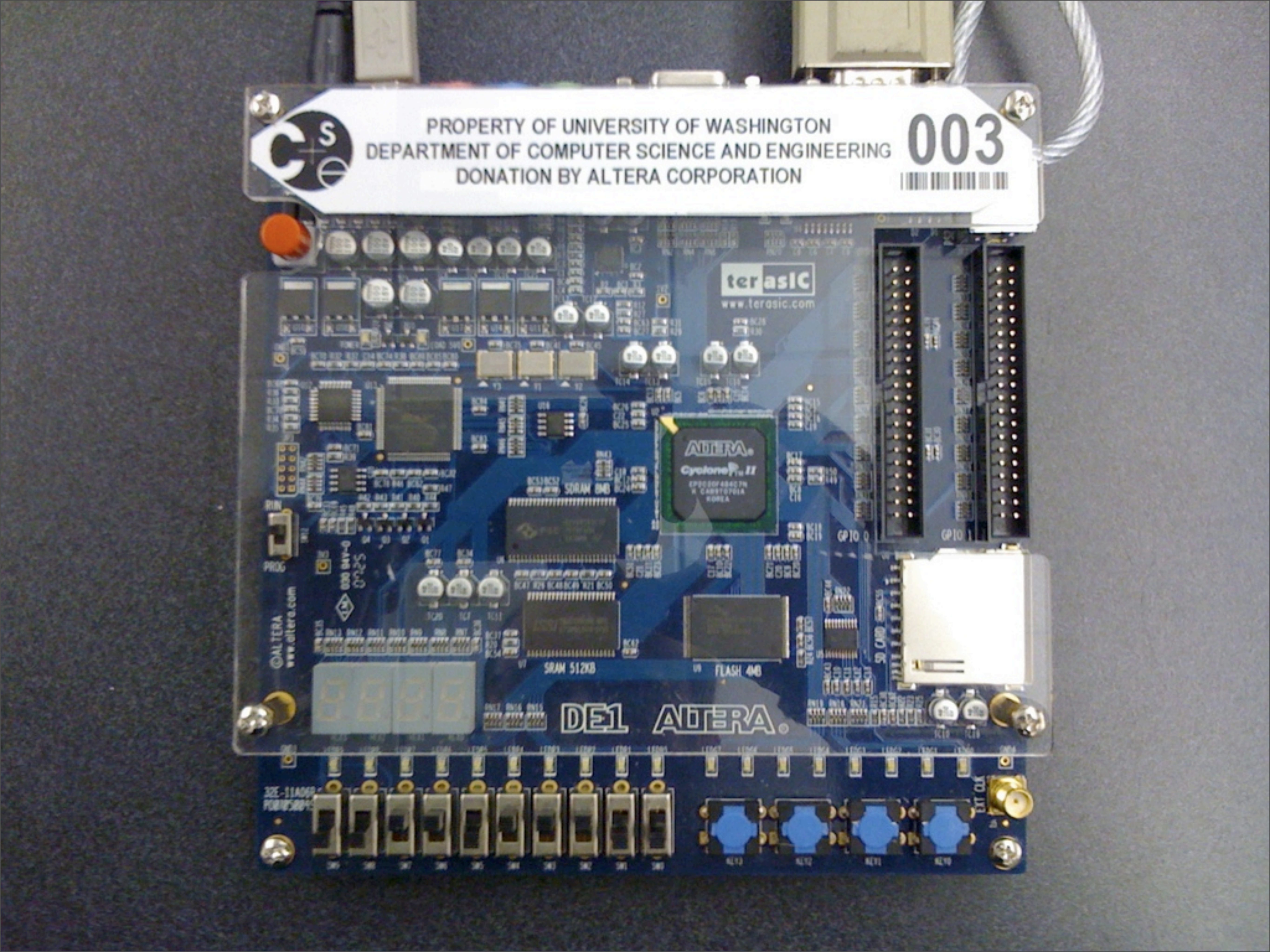
Lab Process and Goals

Four main lab tasks

- *One*: build single-cycle datapath; create jump/branch logic
- *Two*: build control logic for single-cycle CPU
- *Three*: add pipeline registers
- *Four*: finish pipline with forwarding and hazard detection

First task

- Mostly connecting things together in BDE; write Verilog for jumps and branches
- We provide testbenches, but they're incomplete (add tests?)
- Final step: write small program to flash lights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Our hardware

- Altera Cyclone II EP2C20
  - 18,752 4-input lookup tables
  - 18,752 one-bit registers
  - 240 kilobytes of memory

A few tools

- Aldec Active-HDL simulates Verilog and BDE
  - Assembler turns code into bits for memory
- Altera Quartus does three things:
  - translates Verilog to hardware primitives
  - arranges hardware primitives on the chip
  - downloads design to chip

Hardware primitives

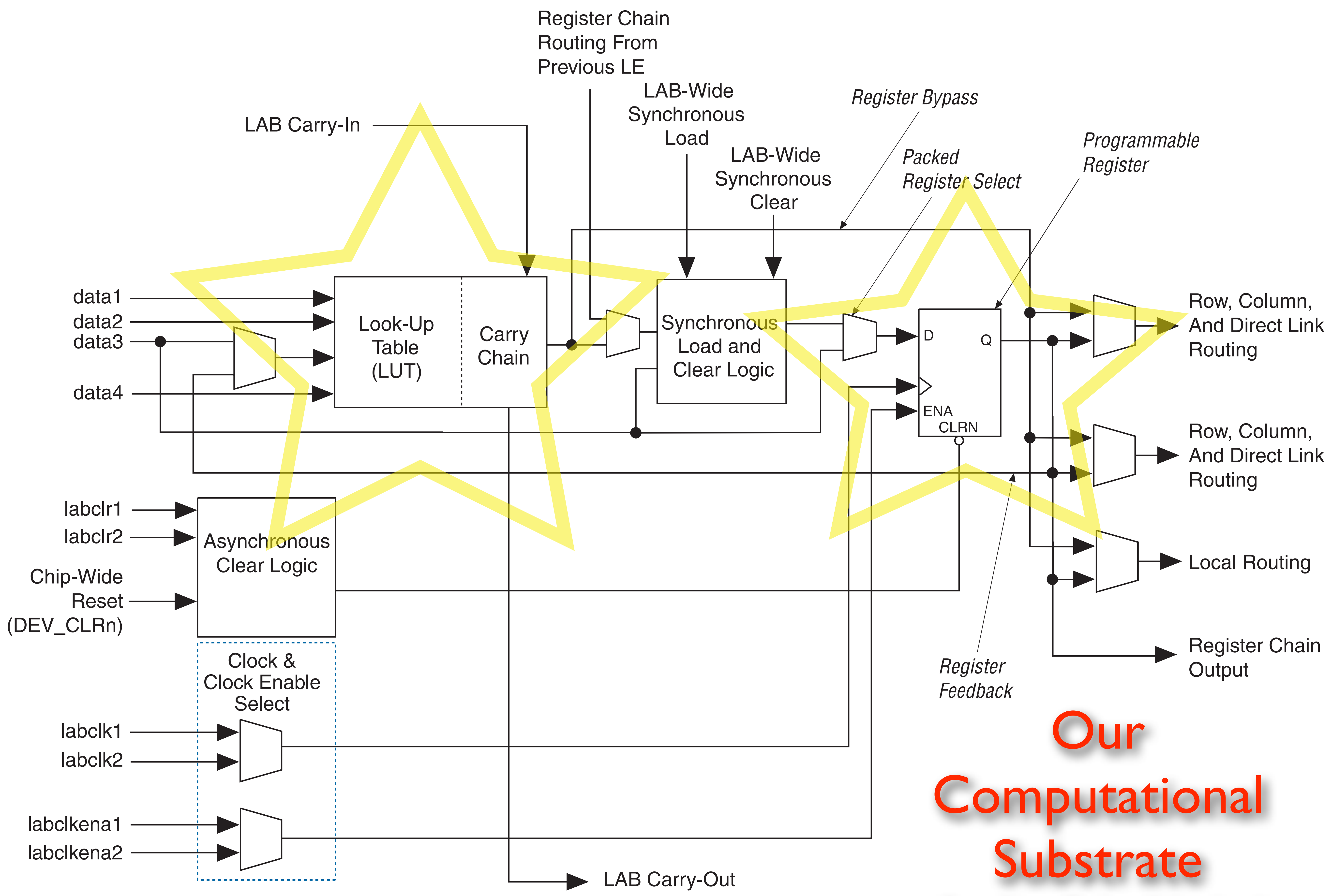
Logic

```
module foo (a,b,f,g);
  input wire a, b;
  output wire f;
  output reg g;

  assign f = a & b;
  always @(*)
    g = a & b;
endmodule
```

Registers

```
input wire nextFoo;
reg foo;

always @(posedge clk)
   foo <= nextFoo;
```

Figure 2–2. Cyclone II LE



Our Computational Substrate

(from Altera Cyclone II datasheet)

Muxes

- assign f =
```
  s[1] ?
    (s[0] ? a : b) :
    (s[0] ? c : d);

  always @(*)
    case (s)
      2'b00 : g = a;
      2'b01 : g = b;
      2'b10 : g = c;
      2'b11 : g = d;
    endcase
```

```
always @(*)
  if (s == 2'b00)
     h = a;
  else if (s == 2'b01)
     h = b;
  else if (s == 2'b10)
     h = c;
  else  // s == 2'b1
     h = d;
```

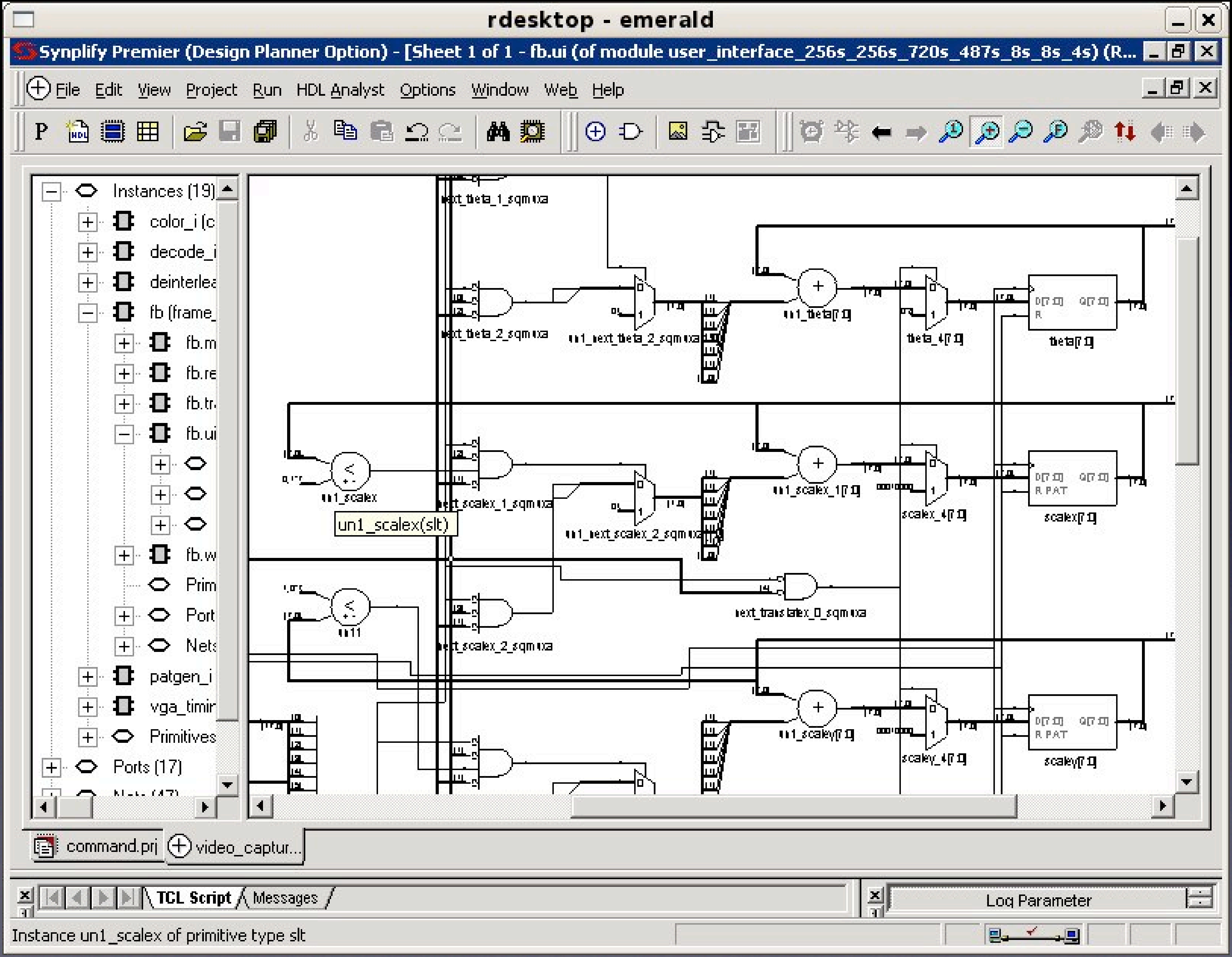
Adders/subtractors

- assign f = a + b;
  assign g = a - b;
- wire [8:0] s;
  wire [7:0] a, b;
  assign s = {0,a} + {0,b}; // pick up carry out
- How big are they? How fast?

Comparators

- assign isZero = (a == 0);
- assign isGreater = (a > b);   // unsigned!!!
  assign isLTZ = (a < 0);   // is this ever true?
- can do signed compares if ALL signals involved are declared "signed".
  wire signed [7:0] a, b;
- How big? How fast?

Check with RTL view



Instance un1_scalex of primitive type slt

Verilog tips and traps

HW Tools: pain in digital form?

- We should teach ideas, not tools!
  But tools help express ideas
- HW tools often kind of suck, but
  don’t blame tools for bad craftsmanship,
  do good craftsmanship with bad tools.
- Patience and care will win

Constants: 32 bits, decimal

- wire [7:0] foo = 127; // synthesis warning!
- wire [7:0] foo = 8'd127;
- wire [7:0] foo = 8'b11111111;
- wire [7:0] foo = 8'hff;
- wire [7:0] foo = 8'hFF;
- watch out: 1010 looks like 4'b1010!

Truncation

```
wire [7:0] a = 8’hAB;
wire b;                          // oops! forgot width
wire [7:0] c;

assign b = a;      // synthesis warning if lucky.

assign c = a;
```

reg vs. wire

-
  ```
  wire f;      reg g, h;

  assign f = a & b;

  always @(posedge clk)
    g <= a & b;

  always @(*)
    h = a & b;
  ```

Assign in one block

```
input wire a, b;
output reg f;

always @(posedge clk)
   if (a) f <= 1'b0; // race!

always @(posedge clk)
   if (b) f <= 1'b1; // race!
```

= vs. <=

- Simple rule:
  - If you want sequential logic, use always @(posedge clk) with <=.
  - If you want combinational logic, use always @(*) with =.

= vs. <=

-
  ```
  always @(posedge clk)
    begin
      f <= a + b;
      g <= f + c;
    end
  ```

-
  ```
  always @(posedge clk)
    begin
      f = a + b;
      g = f + c;  // a + b + c
    end
  ```

-
  ```
  always@(posedge clk)
    begin
      f2 <= f1;
      f3 <= f2;

      f4 = f3;
      f5 = f4;   // f5 = f3 !!

      f7 = f6;
      f6 = f5;
    end
  ```

More specifically,

```
initial
  state = 0;

always @(posedge clk)
  begin
    if (state == 0) state = 1;
    if (state == 1) state = 2;
    if (state == 2) state = 0;
  end
```

Aargh.

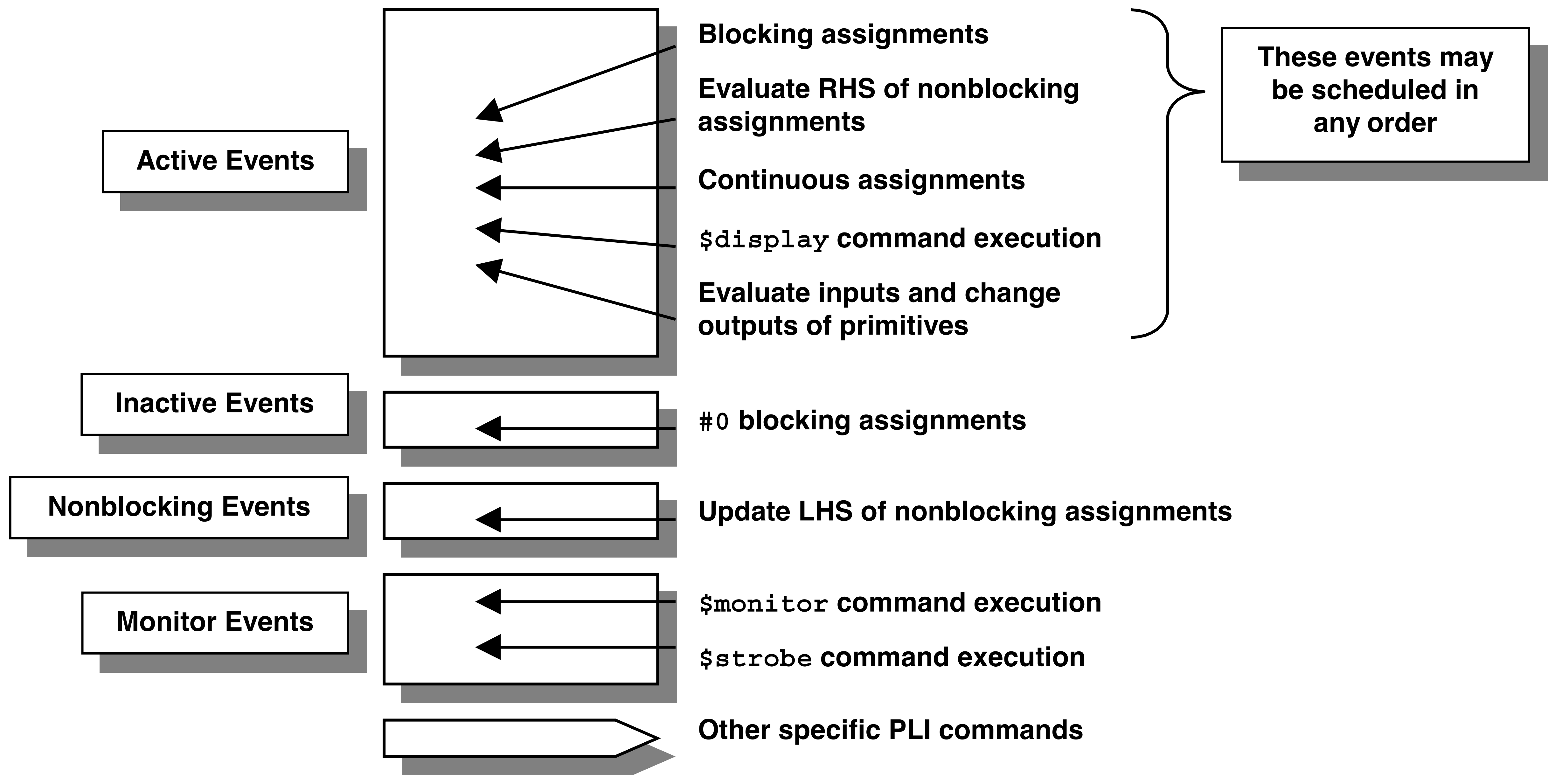

Active Events
Inactive Events
Nonblocking Events
Monitor Events
Blocking assignments
Evaluate RHS of nonblocking assignments
Continuous assignments
$display command execution
Evaluate inputs and change outputs of primitives
These events may be scheduled in any order
#0 blocking assignments
Update LHS of nonblocking assignments
$monitor command execution
$strobe command execution
Other specific PLI commands

Figure 1 - Verilog "stratified event queue"

from Cliff Cummings' "Nonblocking Assignments in Verilog Synthesis, Coding Styles That Kill!"

Incomplete sensitivity lists

- always @(a or b)   // it's or, not ||
  ```
  f = a & b;
  ```
- always @(a)
  ```
  f = a & b;
  ```
- always
  ```
  f = a & b;
  ```
- Just use always@(*) for combinational logic

Enables and Latches

-
  ```
  always @(posedge clk)
    if (a == 1)
      f <= 1;
    else if (a == 2)
      f <= 2;
    else if (a == 3)
      f <= 3;
  ```

- implicitly:
  ```
    else
      f <= f;
  ```

-
  ```
  always @(*)
    if (a == 1)
      f = 1;
    else if (a == 2)
      f = 2;
    else if (a == 3)
      f = 3;
  ```

- implicitly:
  ```
    else
      f = f;
  ```
  this is memory!

= vs. <=

- Simple rule:
  - If you want sequential logic, use always @(posedge clk) with <=.
  - If you want combinational logic, use always @(*) with =.

Combinational and Sequential

```
input wire a, b, s;
output reg f, g, h;

always @(posedge clk)
  begin

    f <= (a & ~s) | (b & s);                if (s)
                                              h <= a;
    g <= s ? a : b;                         else
                                              h <= b;

                                          end
```

Displaying things

- works for most stuff:
  ```
  $display(“the answer is %h.”, ans);
  ```
- for nonblocking assignments, you may sometimes want:
  ```
  $strobe(“the answer is %h.”, ans);
  ```
  (see Aargh. for reason)

X’s

- X’s are for undefined values:
```
wire a;
$display(a);   // prints an X
```
- Pins that aren’t hooked up will be X’s: Often, 32’hxxxxxxf4 indicates an Active-HDL bus with default width.
- 1’b1 & 1’bX yields 1’bX
  1’b1 + 1’bX yields 1’bX

Z’s

- Z’s are for bus sharing. You won’t need this.
- a <= 1’bZ;   b <= 1’bZ;
  a <= 2’b0;   b <= 1’b1;
  // a will be 0 and b will be 1
- Z’s turn into X’s sometimes:
  1’b1 & 1’bZ yields 1’bX.
  1’b1 + 1’bZ yields 1’bX.

Initial values

- Synthesis doesn't always pay attention. (!?!) Better to design in a reset line.
- Maybe:

```
  reg foo = 1'b1;
```

- Maybe:

```
  initial begin
    foo = 1'b1;
  end
```

Whew.

Questions?