

- **Problem:** design a cyclic n -bit **counter**, i.e., a component whose output r steps through values

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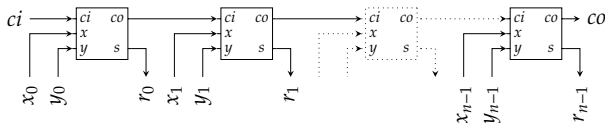
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- (Potential) **solution:** we already have an n -bit adder that can compute $x + y$, i.e.,

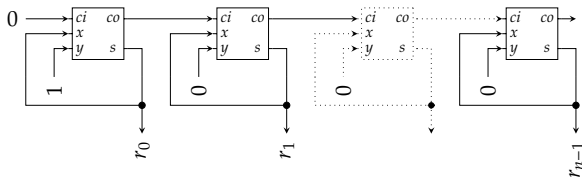


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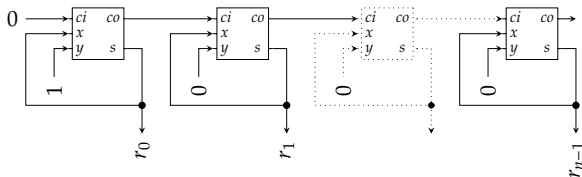
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so we'll just have it compute $r \leftarrow r + 1$ over and over again;

- (New) **problem(s):** this **won't work**, because, for example,

1. we can't initialise the value,
2. we can't control when a given output is produced,
3. we don't let the output settle before it's used again as an input,
4. ...

- ▶ (Actual) **problem**: combinatorial logic has some limitations, namely we can't
 - ▶ control *when* a design computes some output (it does so continuously), nor
 - ▶ *remember* the output when produced.
- ▶ (Actual) **solution**, and so **agenda**: **sequential logic** design, where, crucially,
 - ▶ the output is a function of the input plus any state (e.g., stemming from previous inputs),
 - ▶ computation is viewed as being discrete, i.e., step-by-step,

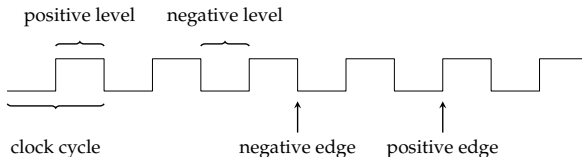
via coverage of

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|----|------------------------------------|
| 1. | synchronisation of components | ~> | clocks |
| 2. | components that maintain state | ~> | latches, flip-flops, and registers |
| 3. | mechanism for computational steps | ~> | structure plus strategy |

Part 1: clocks (1)

- **Concept:** a **clock** is a signal that oscillates (or alternates) between 1 and 0.

Definition



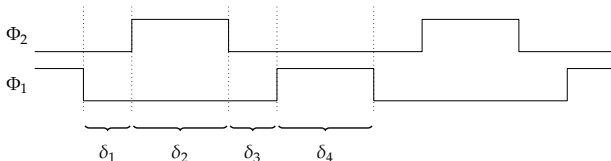
where

- the clock signal is typically either
 1. an input which needs to be supplied externally, or
 2. produced internally by a **clock generator**.
- we use features of the clock to
 1. trigger events (e.g., steps in some sequence of computations), and/or
 2. synchronise components.
- the **clock frequency** is how many clock cycles happen per-second; it must be
 - fast enough to satisfy the design goals, yet
 - slow enough to cope with the critical path of a given step.

Part 1: clocks (2)

- **Concept:** an n -phase clock is distributed as n separate signals along n separate wires.

Definition



where for $n = 2$, for example,

- features in a 1-phase clock (e.g., cycle, levels and edges), generalise to Φ_1 and Φ_2 ,
- there is a guarantee that positive levels of Φ_1 and Φ_2 don't overlap, and
- the behaviour is parameterisable by altering δ_i .

Part 2: latches, flip-flops, and registers (1)

Concepts

Definition

A bistable component can exist in two stable states, i.e., 0 or 1: at a given point, it can

- ▶ retain some **current state** Q (which can also be read as an output), *and*
- ▶ be updated to some **next state** Q' (which is provided as an input)

under control of an **enable signal** en .

Definition

The behaviour of a bistable is described by an **excitation table**, and sometimes expressed using a **characteristic equation**: versus, e.g., a truth table, the idea is to capture the notion of time (cf. current and next).

Definition

A given bistable component controlled by an enable signal en can be

1. **level-triggered**, i.e., updated by a given level on en , or
2. **edge-triggered**, i.e., updated by a given edge on en .

The former type is termed a **latch**, whereas the latter type is termed a **flip-flop**.

Part 2: latches, flip-flops, and registers (2)

Concepts

Definition

An “SR” latch/flip-flop component has two inputs S (or **set**) and R (or **reset**):

- ▶ when enabled, if
 - ▶ $S = 0$ and $R = 0$, the component retains Q ,
 - ▶ $S = 1$ and $R = 0$, the component updates to $Q = 1$,
 - ▶ $S = 0$ and $R = 1$, the component updates to $Q = 0$,
 - ▶ $S = 1$ and $R = 1$, the component is meta-stable
- but
- ▶ when not enabled, the component is in storage mode so retains Q .

The behaviour of such a component is specified by

$$Q' = S \vee (\neg R \wedge Q),$$

and/or

S	R	Current		Next	
		Q	$\neg Q$	Q'	$\neg Q'$
0	0	0	1	0	1
0	0	1	0	1	0
0	1	?	?	0	1
1	0	?	?	1	0
1	1	?	?	?	?

Definition

A “D” latch/flip-flop component has one input D :

- ▶ when enabled, if
 - ▶ $D = 1$, the component updates to $Q = 1$,
 - ▶ $D = 0$, the component updates to $Q = 0$,
- but
- ▶ when not enabled, the component is in storage mode so retains Q .

The behaviour of such a component is specified by

$$Q' = D,$$

and/or

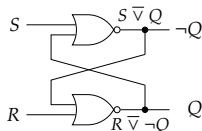
D	Current		Next	
	Q	$\neg Q$	Q'	$\neg Q'$
0	?	?	0	1
1	?	?	1	0

Part 2: latches, flip-flops, and registers (4)

Design(s)

- **Problem #1:** we need an initial design for, e.g., an SR latch.
- **Solution:** use two *cross-coupled* NOR gates.

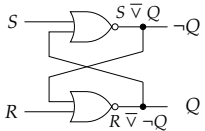
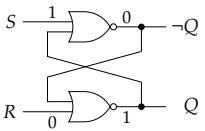
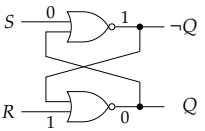
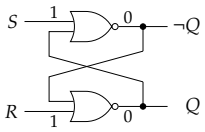
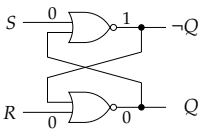
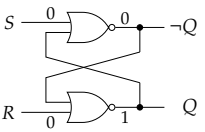
Circuit



Part 2: latches, flip-flops, and registers (4)

Design(s)

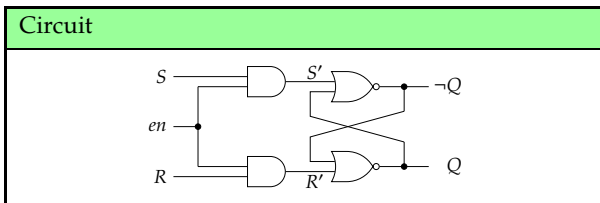
- **Problem #1:** we need an initial design for, e.g., an SR latch.
- **Solution:** use two *cross-coupled* NOR gates.

Circuit	Example ($S = 1, R = 0, \checkmark$)	Example ($S = 0, R = 1, \checkmark$)
		
Example ($S = 1, R = 1, \times$)	Example ($S = 0, R = 0, \checkmark$)	Example ($S = 0, R = 0, \checkmark$)
		

Part 2: latches, flip-flops, and registers (5)

Design(s)

- ▶ **Problem #2:** we'd like to control when updates occur.
- ▶ **Solution:** *gate* S and R , i.e.,



noting that

- ▶ the same internal latch is evident, now with inputs S' and R' ,
- ▶ the external latch is such that

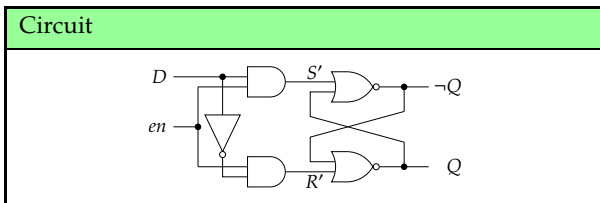
$$\begin{aligned} en = 0 &\Rightarrow S' = S \wedge en = S \wedge 0 = 0 \\ &\Rightarrow R' = R \wedge en = R \wedge 0 = 0 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} en = 1 &\Rightarrow S' = S \wedge en = S \wedge 1 = S \\ &\Rightarrow R' = R \wedge en = R \wedge 1 = R \end{aligned}$$

Part 2: latches, flip-flops, and registers (6)

Design(s)

- **Problem #3:** we'd like to avoid the issue of meta-stability.
- **Solution:** force $R = \neg S$ so we get either $S = 0$ and $R = 1$, or $S = 1$ and $R = 0$.



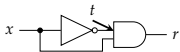
Part 2: latches, flip-flops, and registers (7)

Design(s)

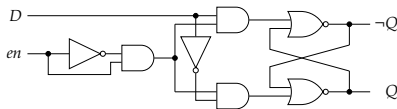
- **Problem #4:** we'd like an edge-triggered, rather than level-triggered design.
- **Solution #1:** "cheat" by approximation of an edge via a **pulse generator**.

Circuit

The pulse generator component



is attached to the previous SR latch to give:

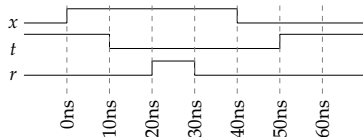


Example

Imagine we set the delay of

1. a NOT gate to 10ns, and
2. an AND gate to 20ns

and then flip $en = 0$ to $en = 1$ and back again:



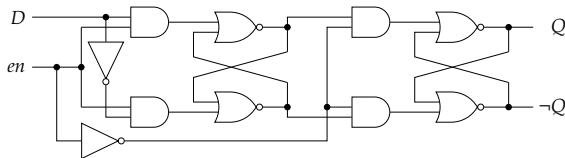
The result is a "pulse" matching the delay of a NOT gate that approximates an edge because it is so short.

Part 2: latches, flip-flops, and registers (8)

Design(s)

- **Problem #4:** we'd like an edge-triggered, rather than level-triggered design.
- **Solution #2:** adopt a **primary-secondary** organisation of *two* latches, i.e.,

Circuit



where the idea is to split a clock cycle into two half-cycles:

$en = 1 \Rightarrow$ **primary** latch is enabled

$en = 0 \Rightarrow$ **secondary** latch is enabled

meaning

1. *while* $en = 1$, i.e., positive level on en , primary latch stores input, and
2. *when* $en = 0$, i.e., negative edge on en , secondary latch stores output of primary latch, and hence we get edge-triggered behaviour.

Part 2: latches, flip-flops, and registers (9)

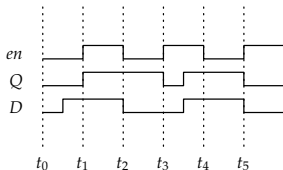
Abstraction, via symbols

Definition

- ▶ A **D-type latch** is described symbolically as



- ▶ The associated behaviour is, for example,



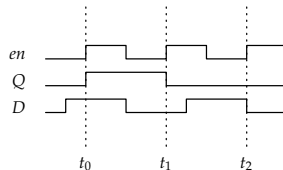
such that updates are level-triggered by *en*.

Definition

- ▶ A **D-type flip-flop** is described symbolically as



- ▶ The associated behaviour is, for example,



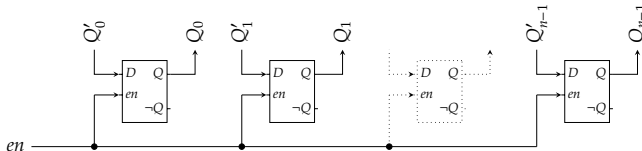
such that updates are edge-triggered by *en*.

Part 2: latches, flip-flops, and registers (10)

Aggregation, via registers

- **Concept:** we typically combine latches (resp. flip-flops) into **registers**, i.e.,

Circuit (latch version)



where

- there are n instances, so we can store an n -bit value: the i -th instance stores the i -th bit,
- access is conceptually straightforward:

read from register : use current value Q

write to register : drive next value onto Q' , then trigger update via en

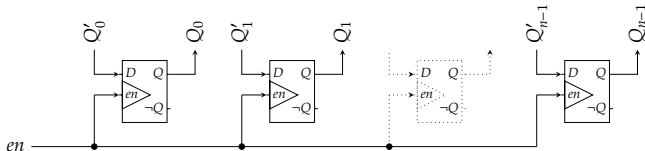
- all instance share same en , so access to them is synchronised.

Part 2: latches, flip-flops, and registers (10)

Aggregation, via registers

- **Concept:** we typically combine latches (resp. flip-flops) into **registers**, i.e.,

Circuit (flip-flop version)



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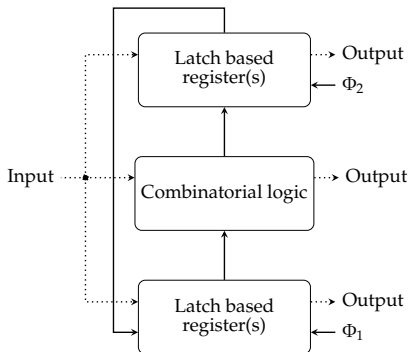
write to register : drive next value onto Q' , then trigger update via en

- all instance share same en , so access to them is synchronised.

Part 3: structure plus strategy (1)

Outcome: latch version, 2-phase clock

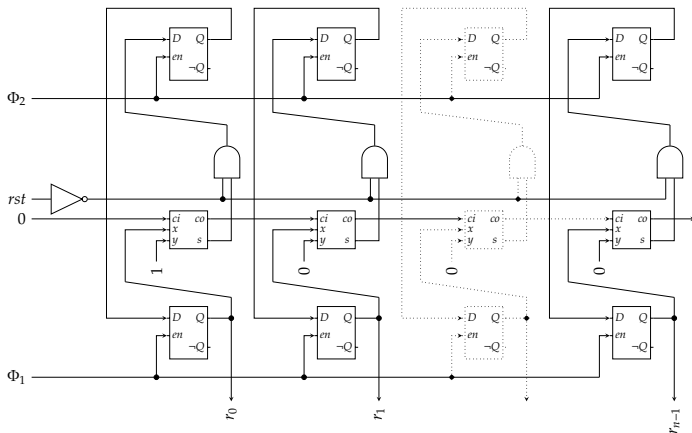
Design (latch version)



Part 3: structure plus strategy (2)

Outcome: latch version, 2-phase clock

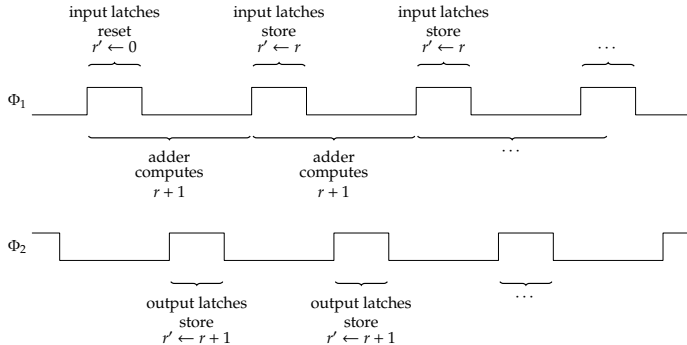
Circuit (latch version)



Part 3: structure plus strategy (3)

Outcome: latch version, 2-phase clock

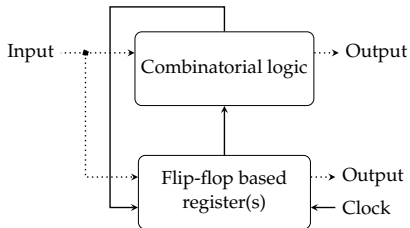
Example (latch version)



Part 3: structure plus strategy (4)

Outcome: flip-flop version, 1-phase clock

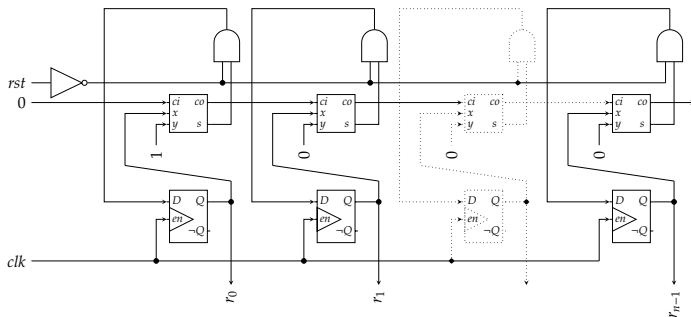
Design (flip-flop version)



Part 3: structure plus strategy (5)

Outcome: flip-flop version, 1-phase clock

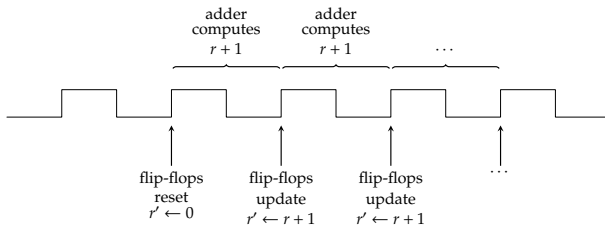
Circuit (flip-flop version)



Part 3: structure plus strategy (6)

Outcome: flip-flop version, 1-phase clock

Example (flip-flop version)



► Take away points:

1. Sequential logic design is typically hard(er) to understand (at first) than combinatorial logic design: invest some effort to address this now!
2. The main concept and challenge is *time*:
 - this goes beyond time in the sense of delay,
 - the goal is step-by-step, controlled (versus continuous, uncontrolled) computation,
 - we need to understand and manage, e.g., with parallelism and synchronisation.

► Take away points:

3. There is at least one higher-level design principle evident: we often see
 - a **data-path**, of computational and/or storage components, and
 - a **control-path**, that tells components in the data-path what to do and when to do it, although the counter control-path is (very) simple.
4. The next step is to formalise this, allowing solution of more complex problems, e.g., through more complex forms of control.

Additional Reading

- ▶ *Wikipedia: Sequential logic*. URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sequential_logic.
- ▶ D. Page. “Chapter 2: Basics of digital logic”. In: *A Practical Introduction to Computer Architecture*. 1st ed. Springer, 2009.
- ▶ W. Stallings. “Chapter 11: Digital logic”. In: *Computer Organisation and Architecture*. 9th ed. Prentice Hall, 2013.
- ▶ A.S. Tanenbaum and T. Austin. “Section 3.2.2: Clocks”. In: *Structured Computer Organisation*. 6th ed. Prentice Hall, 2012.
- ▶ A.S. Tanenbaum and T. Austin. “Section 3.3.4: Latches”. In: *Structured Computer Organisation*. 6th ed. Prentice Hall, 2012.
- ▶ A.S. Tanenbaum and T. Austin. “Section 3.3.4: Flip-flops”. In: *Structured Computer Organisation*. 6th ed. Prentice Hall, 2012.
- ▶ A.S. Tanenbaum and T. Austin. “Section 3.3.4: Registers”. In: *Structured Computer Organisation*. 6th ed. Prentice Hall, 2012.

References

- [1] [Wikipedia: Sequential logic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sequential_logic). URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sequential_logic (see p. 27).
- [2] D. Page. “Chapter 2: Basics of digital logic”. In: *A Practical Introduction to Computer Architecture*. 1st ed. Springer, 2009 (see p. 27).
- [3] W. Stallings. “Chapter 11: Digital logic”. In: *Computer Organisation and Architecture*. 9th ed. Prentice Hall, 2013 (see p. 27).
- [4] A.S. Tanenbaum and T. Austin. “Section 3.2.2: Clocks”. In: *Structured Computer Organisation*. 6th ed. Prentice Hall, 2012 (see p. 27).
- [5] A.S. Tanenbaum and T. Austin. “Section 3.3.4: Flip-flops”. In: *Structured Computer Organisation*. 6th ed. Prentice Hall, 2012 (see p. 27).
- [6] A.S. Tanenbaum and T. Austin. “Section 3.3.4: Latches”. In: *Structured Computer Organisation*. 6th ed. Prentice Hall, 2012 (see p. 27).
- [7] A.S. Tanenbaum and T. Austin. “Section 3.3.4: Registers”. In: *Structured Computer Organisation*. 6th ed. Prentice Hall, 2012 (see p. 27).