Deployment of Software Components into Heterogeneous SCA Platforms

Using the SCA with DSPs and FPGAs

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Outline

- Reusability through Portability
- SCA Deployment Basics
- SCA Devices
- Computational Elements
- Mapping the SCA to a Software Defined Radio
Reusability through Portability
Reusability Alternatives

• **Implementation Reuse**
  – interpreters or virtual machines
  – binary-compatible family of processors

• **Source Code Portability**
  – Operating Systems (POSIX AEP)
  – Middleware (CORBA, MHAL)
  – Platform Devices (APIs)

• **Installation, Instantiation and Connection**
  – Core Framework
SCA Deployment Basics
Software Components

• SCA component is reusable binary code that performs a well defined function

• SCA Components are modeled as having ports to allow data flow and/or control

• SCA Component are modeled as having properties that can change their behaviour
Software Components (cont.)

- Typical graphical representation of a SCA component:

![Diagram of FM3TREncoder component]

- Component Type Properties
- Component Properties
  - LLC_Control_Disable boolean : true
  - Operational_Mode string : voice
- Implementations
  - WinNT - x86

Connections:
- LLC_Ctrl_Input
- FM3TR_WaveformPacketizerIn
- FM3TR_WaveformPacketizerOut
SCA applications

- SCA applications are composed of software components and connections

Diagram:
- Audio Device
- fm3tr_encoder
- USRP Device
- cvsd_encoder
- msk_modulator
- SCA application
SCA Platforms

• SCA platforms are made of software components called SCA *Devices* used as proxies to hardware components.
SCA Application Deployment

• *LoadableDevices* and *ExecutableDevices* are containers for software deployment
  – Used for loading and/or running software

• *Devices* advertise properties while application components specify requirements
  – Capacity properties (MIPS, RAM, etc.)
  – Capability properties (OS, processor, etc.)

• Deployment of an SCA application is a matching process
  – Requirements versus Advertisements
SCA Application Deployment

- SCA application components are deployed to *LoadableDevices* or *ExecutableDevices*

![Diagram showing deployment of SCA components to different devices](image)
SCA Devices
SCA Devices

- **Device:**
  - Capacity model
  - Cannot load anything

- **LoadableDevice:**
  - Can be used to load files (bit streams, executable code, etc)

- **ExecutableDevice:**
  - Can be used to create multiple tasks
**LoadableDevice**

- **Used to represent single-load devices**
  - Used by the deployment engine to load artifacts of software components.
  - Capable of loading new artifacts, but not capable of launching new tasks (also known as processes)
    - Not capable of instantiating a component.
  - Loading the device will change the device’s behaviour
    - Ex: loading an ‘image’ on a DSP
    - Cannot be used by two applications to load different functionality at the same time
**ExecutableDevice**

- Used to represent a Computational Element capable of running several software components concurrently
  - Used by the deployment engine to load and execute artifacts of potentially many software components.
  - Capable of creating several tasks at the same time without having to reboot to launch a newly loaded task
  - Capable of instantiating a component.
Computational Elements
SDR Platforms

- SDR platforms can provide three types of Computational Elements (CEs):
  - General Purpose Processor (GPP)
  - Digital Signal Processor (DSP)
  - Field-Programmable Gate Array (FPGA)
Computational Elements

• **Field Programmable Gate Array**
  – Special purpose device used to implement complex logical circuits evaluated in parallel
  – SDR: Used for very fast and highly specialized RF/IF signals processing
  – Popular FPGAs:
    • Xilinx’s Virtex family
    • Altera’s Stratix family
Computational Elements (cont.)

• Digital Signal Processor
  – Special purpose processing unit designed for high speed arithmetic and high data throughput
  – SDR: typically used for baseband/IF signals processing
  – Popular DSPs:
    • Texas Instrument’s C6000 family
    • Freescale’s StarCore family
Computational Elements (cont.)

- **General Purpose Processor**
  - The “Jack of all trades, master of none” processor
  - SDR: GPP typically used for implementing MAC/networking layers
  - Popular GPPs:
    - Intel’s x86 family
    - AMD’s Kx family
    - FreeScale’s PowerQuicc family
Key Features

• **Incremental Loading:**
  – Allows new binary code to be loaded into execution memory during runtime without rebooting the CE.
  – Most operating systems that provide this feature do so through what is called a loader (usually requires a file system).
  – For instance, the POSIX standard provides access to a loader through the ‘exec()’ system calls.
Key Features (cont.)

• **Multi-tasking:**
  – Allows multiple tasks (also known as processes) to share a single CE.
  – Allows several tasks to run concurrently without requiring a reboot every time a new task is launched.
  – Most operating systems implement this feature through what is called a task scheduler.
Mapping the SCA to a Software Defined Radio
• How can the SCA concepts be mapped to a Software Defined Radio platform?
  – SCA models in terms of application components being deployed to SCA Devices
  – While SDR platforms are made of Computational Elements that can be programmed
ExecutableDevice
ExecutableDevice

- **GPP:** can be mapped as an *ExecutableDevice*
  - GPP Operating Systems always provide a loader
  - CRC’s *ExecutableDevice* has been used as a proxy to processors such as x86, PPCs, ARM9, and Xscale using INTEGRITY, VxWorks, LynxOS, Linux, and soon Windows

- **DSP:** can be mapped as an *ExecutableDevice*
  - Some DSP Operating Systems provide a loader along with multi-task support
  - Unaware of any SDR platform mapping a DSP as an *ExecutableDevice*
ExecutableDevice (cont.)

- **FPGA:** can be mapped as an *ExecutableDevice*
  - An FPGA is in fact a parallel processing Computational Element
    - Provides multitasking without the need for a scheduler
  - Can provide support for incremental loading through ‘partial reconfiguration’
    - Can load new components into a ‘running’ FPGA without rebooting
  - CRC helped ISR Technologies support a Xilinx Virtex FPGA with partial reconfiguration using an *ExecutableDevice* (IDP-100 platform)
LoadableDevice

- **DSP**: are typically used without an operating system
  - This generally means no support for multi-tasking and no support for a loader
  - Once the DSP has been programmed, no new code can be injected without rebooting
  - In such a case, the DSP cannot be mapped as an ExecutableDevice

- **Note:**
  - DSP/BIOS supports multi-tasking but does not provide a loader (and no file system)
LoadableDevice (cont.)

• **FGPA**: is quite often mapped as an SCA LoadableDevice
  – Loads one single bit stream
  – No new code can be injected without rebooting

• **GPP**: is always used with an operating system that provides multi-tasking and a loader
  – Always mapped as an *ExecutableDevice*
Conclusion

• Most current SDR platforms provide all three types of Computational Elements
  – FPGA, DSP, and GPP

• Mapping a Computational Element as an SCA ExecutableDevice requires the support of multi-tasking and incremental loading
  – Many RTOS provide a scheduler for multi-tasking and provide a loader for incremental loading
  – Even some DSP RTOS provide the two characteristics
Conclusion

• Currently, DSPs and FPGAs are generally mapped as a *LoadableDevices*
  – Added complexity for post-manufacturing technology insertion

• For fully flexible Software Defined Radios, Computational Elements should be mapped as *ExecutableDevices*
  – This does not necessarily require the use of a GPP!
Questions?

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