AN EXPERIMENTAL TOOLCHAIN BASED ON HIGH-LEVEL DATAFLOW MODELS OF COMPUTATION FOR HETEROGENEOUS MPSOC

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AN EXPERIMENTAL TOOLCHAIN BASED ON HIGH-LEVEL DATAFLOW MODELS OF COMPUTATION FOR HETEROGENEOUS MPSOC

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ABSTRACT

A chain of three state-of-the-art tools is demonstrated to generate efficient code for Multi-Processors System-on-Chips (MPSoCs) from a high-level dataflow language. The experimental platform is based on a 5-core Texas Instruments OMAP4 heterogeneous MPSoC running an image processing application.

Index Terms—Embedded software, Multicore processing, Data flow computing, Signal processing

1. EXTENDED ABSTRACT

High-level languages respecting dynamic dataflow Models of Computation (MoCs) are convenient to specify an algorithm in a user-friendly fashion. However, static dataflow MoCs provide more compile-time knowledge of an application parallelism. This knowledge is necessary to produce efficient code for a MPSoC. In this paper, we demonstrate a transformation flow that eases the design of retargetable applications for heterogeneous MPSoCs by transforming a high-level specification based on a dynamic dataflow MoC into an MPSoC-optimized application based on a static dataflow MoC. This flow consists of three dataflow-based tools: Modae Studio, Open RVC-CAL Compiler (Orcc), and Preesm. The demonstrated hardware is based on a 5-core Texas Instruments OMAP4 heterogeneous MPSoC.

2. INTRODUCTION

Modern handheld embedded systems offer an increasing number of functionalities and processing capabilities while respecting a fixed power budget of a few Watts. Recent improvements in embedded systems are due to MPSoCs that combine general purpose cores, dedicated cores, and hardware accelerators within a single chip. Generating efficient code for heterogeneous MPSoCs remains a complex and error-prone task. This demonstration illustrates how dataflow MoCs, having precise semantics, favor interoperability between tools and can be used to program MPSoCs. Three dataflow-based tools (Section 3): Modæ Studio, Orcc, and Preesm, are combined to program a heterogeneous MPSoC from a high-level retargetable code with Kahn Process Network (KPN) MoC semantics [1]. The demonstrator is then presented in Section 4.

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3. MODEL TRANSFORMATION FLOW

The transformation flow presented in Figure 1 is performed by a tool chain composed of: Modæ Studio, Orcc, and Preesm. Each of these tools is successively used on a high-level description of the application in order to introduce more behavioral knowledge into its MoC. The transformation flow both offers a high-level front-end to the application designer, and generates an efficient mapping of the application on the targeted architecture.

Modæ Studio is the first tool of this chain and is used as a schematic entry tool: a system is described as a set of interacting processes, communicating via channels, usually depicted as boxes and arrows. Channels link ports point-to-point. Different MoCs can be tagged on channels. Processes are organized as KPNs: processes communicate via infinite FIFOs, with blocking read semantics.

![Transformation Flow](http://www.modae-tech.com)

Fig. 1. Transformation Flow

The main novelty of Modæ approach relies on the resort to Ruby and Python interpreted languages to describe the algorithmic content of the processes. These languages are dynamically typed and user-friendly. Processes are described using an internal Domain Specific Language (DSL), a technique that popularized Ruby-on-rails web...
implementing the internal is that they both have a strong predictability, thus opening the way to efficient compile-time optimizations. In the DSP flow, is an open source compiler for applications modeled with RVC-CAL and a DPN. When converted into DPNs, processes from KPN are replaced with actors that still communicate via infinite FIFOs. Contrary to KPN processes, actors have a set of firing rules that dictate when an actor is fired and how many data tokens are exchanged. DPNs actors also have the ability to peek in FIFOs, i.e., they can read data-tokens in input FIFOs without consuming them.

The main purpose of Orcc in the flow is to analyze the behavior of the actors generated by Modâa Studio and classify their behavior as Synchronous Dataflow (SDF), Cyclo-Static Dataflow (CSDF), or DPN. CSDF is a restriction of DPN where actor firings follow a cyclic fashion and SDF is a restriction of CSDF where the exchanged tokens are constant over firings. The advantage of CSDF and SDF is that they both have a strong predictability, thus opening the way to efficient compile-time optimizations. If the DPN is classified as CSDF, Orcc is asked to convert the graph into a SDF graph before generating the tool’s outputs. Applications classified as DPN are currently not supported by this tool chain. Orcc outputs C files, each implementing the internal behavior of an actor, and a SDF graph interconnecting the actors.

Preesm3, the last element of the tool chain, is an open source rapid prototyping tool that automatically maps and schedules hierarchical SDF graphs on heterogeneous MPSoCs. Beside the SDF graph provided by Orcc, another input of Preesm is a graphically edited System-Level Architecture Model (S-LAM) of the targeted architecture. Using what is called a scenario, the user can also specify a set of parameters and constraints for the mapping and scheduling tasks, restricting for instance the mapping of an actor on a subset of cores of the architecture.

Before mapping the actors on the heterogeneous MPSoC, Preesm performs a set of conversions on the application model so as to reveal the parallelism embedded in the MoC. Once a static mapping and schedule are obtained, Preesm generates a specific C file for each core of the architecture, handling inter-core communication and synchronization, and containing ordered calls to the C functions of the actors generated by Orcc.

4. DEMONSTRATOR
Developed by Texas Instruments, Open Multimedia Applications Platform (OMAP) is a family of MPSoC designed for embedded handheld multimedia applications. OMAP devices include a general-purpose ARM processor core with one or more specialized coprocessors. The 4th generation OMAP processors are based on a dual-core ARM Cortex-A9 as main processing unit. The OMAP4460 additionally contains two Cortex-M3 microcontrollers

5. REFERENCES