CS 261 Spring 2024

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Sequential Circuits

Circuits

- Circuits are formed by linking gates (or other circuits) together
 - Inputs and outputs
 - Link output of one gate to input of another
 - Some circuits have multiple inputs and/or outputs
 - Combinational circuits: outputs are a boolean function of inputs
 - Not time-dependent
 - Used for computation
 - Sequential circuits: output is dependent on previous outputs
 - Time-dependent
 - Used for memory

Circuit memory

- Question: How do we make a circuit "remember" something?
 - Answer: Create a feedback loop!
 - Creates a "storage" circuit, often called a latch
 - Truth table must include previous state
 - Alternatively, draw a timing diagram
 - Shows how input/output signals change with respect to time
 - Given input signals in diagram, we can determine output signals

SR AND-OR latch



S = "set" R = "reset"







SR AND-OR latch





S = "set" R = "reset"

	Q (new)	Q (old)	R	S
	0	0	0	0
	1	1	0	0
	0	0	1	0
← "reset"	0	1	1	0
← "set"	1	0	0	1
	1	1	0	1
	0	0	1	1
\leftarrow the R "o	0	1	1	1

← the R "overrides"he S in this circuit

SR NOR latch



Works similarly to AND-OR, but requires one fewer gate (and it is a universal gate!)

Question: What happens if we turn both R and S on at the same time?



Disallow S=1, R=1 because Q' ≠ !Q

Aside: oscillation



Question: What happens if we turn both R and S off at the same time (from the position previously disallowed)?

The circuit will be unstable; it begins to oscillate back and forth as quickly as possible, generating heat and eventually melting the connection and destroying the circuit





From "Code" book: S = "Save that bit!"

- As long as S is on, Q reflects the value of D.
- When S turns off, Q is "frozen" and retains its previous value.
- D can change while S is off with no change in Q

Clocks

- Provide oscillating signal
- Often used as "set" signal for latches
- Keeps computation and memory in sync
- Clocked latches are called flip-flops
- The clock period is the inverse of the frequency (measured in *hertz*)
- The length of a clock period determines the minimum time an instruction takes to execute

Flip-flop types

- SR: "set-reset"
- D: "data" bit + clock
- T: "toggle"
- JK: like SR + T (toggle when S=1, R=1)
 - J is S, K is R
- Any of these can be used to build the others
- Also can be built from basic logic gates in multiple ways

Registers

- **Registers**: arrays of flip-flops with a single set/clock input
- Connected by buses (groups of wires) to other components
- Edge triggering allows computation to stabilize before results are saved



Register files

- Register files: multiple registers w/ read/write ports
 - Use multiplexors and decoders to differentiate



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Memory

- Memory: multiple flip-flops w/ address input
 - Random access memory (RAM) can access any address at any time
 - Use decoder (translates n-bit number to 2ⁿ "set" signals) to write data
 - Use selector (multiplexor) to read data



Single 8-element RAM array (3-bit addresses)



CPUs

 Combine ALU with registers and memory to make CPUs

(next time!)

