

VLSI TESTING AT MULTIGIBPS RATES

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Abstract - Testing at Gbps needs high transfer rates among channels and functional units, and requires readdressing of data format and communication within a serial mode. This implies that a physical phenomenon-jitter, is becoming very essential to tester operation. This establishes a paradigm and design shift, which in turn dictates a corresponding shift in test and DFT methods. We, here, review various approaches and discuss the tradeoffs in using actual devices. Today's high performance manufacturing of digital systems requires VLSI testing at rates of multigigabits per second (multiGbps).

The industry, volume-production stage and testing of multigigahertz has economic challenges. A particular approach based on the conventional ATE resources, that bring into discussion, allows for accurate testing of ICs with many channels and this systems can test ICs at 2.5 Gbps per channel, with extensions planned that will have test rates exceeding 5 Gbps. With this approach, the cost of hardware to correspond to the driver and receiver modules is in hundreds of dollars per channel and even with several development costs, the cost per channel is still a thousand dollars, where so that is commercial systems are more than \$10,000 per channel for multigigahertz testing.

INTRODUCTION

The leading ATE manufacturer and suppliers today are offering a new solution with options for adding multigigahertz capability to their systems for testing. Currently produced test systems being of exceptionally high performance enable testing of VLSI circuit at rates of Gb per second. In recent years, we are witnessing significantly fast growth of requirements for testing of VLSI circuits and systems, that demand quality and fast testing times. High density, core-based ICs have significant popularity, although complexity of these chips can slow down development and increase cost which can enable high performance and profit margins in manufacturing. Today's economy and the rising role of new technologies, and expending costs for development of new products, are forcing the electronic industry to reexamine the existing approaches to design and test. For new product, the development of new technological environments promises to increase productivity increases and fastest time to market, while keeping costs under control. Although, testing and managing these devices represents very difficult problems, the industry and modern industry recognizes that testing rates are escalating faster than other costs related to the development phase. Future designs targeting 5 Gbps and 10 Gbps will require even tighter control of timing and jitter.

Testing at Gbps rates, is necessary to overcome between existing techniques, which rely extensively on ATE, and technology improvements in ICs and their high clock rate. This requires radical changes in the organization of the test as well as innovative and practical solutions to the support

equipment. These changes have a profound impact on many aspects of existing test techniques. For example, allowing high transfer rates among channels and functional units, such as in the I/O definition of a SoC, requires readdressing the implication of data format and communication within a serial mode. This contains feature into a shell, that physical phenomenon, such as jitter, are becoming very relevant to tester operation. It is today focus of all of these issues that makes multigigahertz testing a challenging problem in today's test technology.

1.1 Specifications of testing

We pay attention into two aspects of testing:

The first part, "Multiplexing ATE Channels for Production testing at 2.5 Gbps", analyze testing at multigigahertz using a different technique, namely to multiplex ATE channels for production testing. Several features of current-generation ATE-timing calibration, modularity, temperature effects for sampling logic, and the large number of high channels - all shows the need for multiplexing. There are two variants for testing using new multiplexer circuit to accelerate the speed up to 2.5 Gbps. First variant uses differential pair signals in an arrangement with embedded ATE circuitry to support accurate timing calibration albeit jitter makes it prone to timing errors. The second variant reducing the negative influence of jitter on test operations. This type of design is expected to ensure high Gbps rates in future systems.

The second part, which includes "Testing Gbps Interfaces without a Gigahertz tester" and this relations represent new approaches and frameworks that enable testing of multigigahertz digital devices with or without a modified ATE. There are novel testing problems - called the source synchronous interface. The proposed technique relies heavily on DFT (Design for Testability) and in particular use a new methodology called AC I/O loopback. This technique represents a significant improvement over a simple I/O loopback arrangement. This technique allows the measurements of multiple functional parameters inclusive of AC timing specifications. Own example represents application of AC I/O loopback and supporting DFT circuitry for the Processor Intel Pentium 4, showing that their technique can efficiently correlate different stress measurements at the physical layer within a self-test framework. A combination of timing stress and voltage stress generate diagrams with no need for a high-speed tester.

1.2 Automated test equipment, economics of test

The economics of test, especially in a case of need test equipment in particular, has received significant attention from many vendors and ATE manufacturers, customers of ATE and the research community at large. ATE is shown on Figure 1. Increasing cost of ATE, increases the price of the product. Features, such as multisite organization, architecture

modularization, and the increased presence of inexpensive testers such as those included in BIST techniques (BIST - *Built In Self Test*), are some of the significant developments of recent years. As a possible alternative to speeding up test application time represent a combination of BIST and ATE.

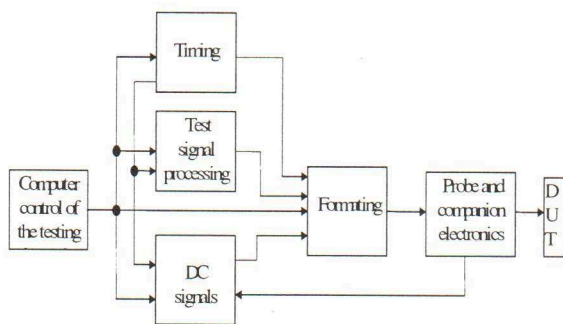


Figure 1. Architecture of an electronic tester, ATE

1.3 Equipment for testing

General block scheme of *Automated Test Equipment*, ATE, represented on Fig.1,[1], [2]. The tester contains the following components:

- the computer system used for "testing programming", the electronic subsystem enabling the synchronization, waveform generation, timing, forming,
- probe and companion electronics and
- computer control of testing.

Today exist many producer of such testing devices. Depending on configuration one tester of high performance may cost a pair millions dollar and more [3]. High quality probe and catcher, costs up to half million dollar [3], [4]. If we include and costs working premises, electrical installation and working staff, it is easy to come to a conclusion why testing is expensive business.

All of ATE must provide for the following:

Condition and impulse: power supply and ground; output, incoming signals; to adapt signal on site of reset impuls and consumer.

Measurements: impedance on input pin; threshold of logical level input digital signal; generation voltage on input pins; time of establishment an front and back edge of signals; propagation of delay; speed working; output signals.

Extraction: adequate DC features; adequate AC features; functioning properly logical function; Exact speed of work; Correct characteristic of signals.

Corresponding electronics, that is board for interface with DUT, (*Device Interface Board*, DIB), represents electrical interface between ATE and DUT. There are various form and size DIB, but their common function are to provide reliable and uncomplicated separable electrical interface between DUT and electrical instrument of the testers.

2. AUTOMATED TEST SYSTEM CONFIGURATION

A system for testing multi-gigahertz digital devices uses conventional automated test equipment (ATE), supplemented with multiplexing and sampling logic. The approach is similar to earlier work [1] that demonstrated feasibility. However, this current paper solves many of the practical problems that limited application in production environments. Specifically, embedded

logic is used for fast/reliable auto-calibration of critical signals to achieve improved accuracy (typically ± 25 ps). Variable output-level buffers are included in the multiplexing logic to provide a range of input levels to the device under test. Relays selectively switch between high-speed and DC multiplexing. Air- and liquid-cooling is used to maintain the electronics temperature, and thereby stabilize time delays. The production version of the system is scalable up to 144 high-speed differential pairs, each operating at 2.5 Gbps. Overall timing accuracy (OTA) is about ± 100 ps, and is typically much better. Timing errors are found to be dominated by the ATE measurement uncertainty, which is nevertheless improved through the use of the embedded calibration logic [patent pending]. The system includes peak-to-peak jitter (at a bit error rate of 10^{-12}) of 100ps. The system is demonstrated by applying it to an 17x17 S2018 cross point switch that supports data rates as high as 2.5 Gbps. Additional electronic modules are under development that will further extend the maximum data rate (initially to 5 Gbps, then to 5 Gbps and above), while tightening the OTA [5].

2.1 Automated test system configuration

Figure 2., depicts a top-level view of the multiplexing test system. This approach uses multiplexing-driver modules mounted on the application load board to produce high-speed stimuli signals. In this solution use sampling or demultiplexing-receiver modules to capture the high speed output response. This modular approach lets us separately develop the driver and receiver electronics and to characterize them before assembling them on the load board.

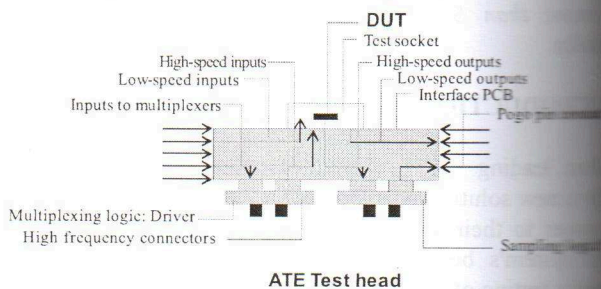


Figure 2. Multiplexing test configuration, including multiplexing and sampling modules mounted to the test board

Using high pin count, high-bandwidth, 50-ohm impedance connectors between the modules and the load board are replaceable, reusable modules. The same connectors are a convenient electrical calibration interface. We use domain reflectometry techniques to calibrate transmission time delays between the ATE electronics and connectors. Signals from the ATE contact the load board on the test side, via pogo pins, and they go through the multilayer PCB to the DUT test socket. This normal routing is used for low-speed signals (below the ATE frequency limits), but high-speed multigigahertz signals connect between the test socket and the driver and receiver modules.

2.2 Timing subsystem

One of the most important aspects of the tester's waveform synchronization. Duration of signal's edge is measured in hundred pico-seconds (or less) and discrepancy between (deviation) in this domain will probably be treated as well.

test conditions. The term timing will be used not only to express synchronization, but express control of logic conditions so that the tester should not always work with the fastest clock.

A typical shared-resource architecture includes a master clock generator, a number of timing generators (generally fewer than 20) followed by a complex switching matrix to distribute timing signals to waveform formatters, and a pin-electronics driver and comparators.

A straightforward arrangement is to provide every pin of the device to be tested with its own testing resources, or test-per-pin architecture. Thus each pin is supplied with a programmable independent timing generator, waveform formatter, DC reference unit, pin driver, pin comparator, and programmable current load. Since there is no longer a need to switch signal among greater accuracy is possible. Also, software is simpler and easier to develop.

On-chip testing has surfaced as a viable way of testing VLSI devices effectively and will have to be taken into account by new generations of test gear. Called by various names, including on-chip serial-scan, and level-sensitive-scan-design (LSSD), the technique structures the logic so that its response is independent both of the order in which inputs change and circuit delay between logic elements.

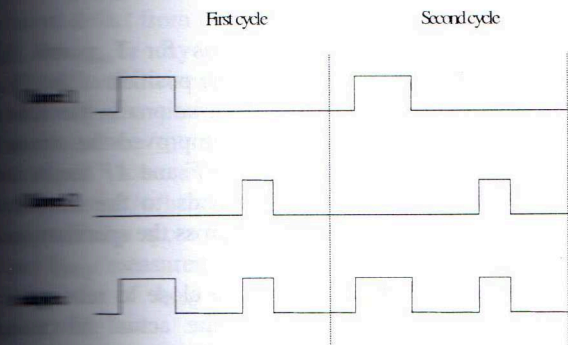


Figure 3. Multiplexed signals to avoid interference

Test signal processing and format subsystem generation of electrical signals are performed under the computer control. For every input pin impulse column are formed with their distribution of zero's and unities. Pulse amplitude (in volts) which is generated must be programmable too. Timing of signals means in fact determination of possible use of system work for every pin. This subsystem may also perform some specific functions that enable effective work of the tester with lower complexity of the electronic circuits which would be used later on. For bringing the signal on two neighboring pins multiplexing signal electronics could be used. In the Fig. 3. example of this effect is shown.

2.2 Techniques for increasing the accuracy and precision of logic diagnosis

Two techniques are used to increase the accuracy and precision of logic diagnosis as well as ability of the diagnostic tool to analyze complex and multiple defects using stuck-at and transition fault simulation for fault list pruning.

The first technique correlates the behavior of same predefined defect types, or *basic types*. The basic types are:

- stuck-at (S),
- transition (T),
- bridging (B) and
- net (N).

To classify a fault candidate as a stuck-at or transition fault, the original stuck-at or transition fault should explain some failing patterns and pass all passing patterns. Transition faults require a certain transition on the fault site for all failing patterns. Classifying a fault as a bridging fault requires that the representative stuck-at fault explain a subset of the failing patterns and be a path tracing is used to distinguish unrelated failing measures. Classifying a fault candidate as a net fault requires that the final diagnosis report include at least one additional stuck-at fault candidate as a different fan-out branch of the same stem.

The second technique is based on the iterative nature of diagnosis and focuses on increasing accuracy for multiple defects. The diagnostic algorithm is a multiphase procedure that's used to derive the high confidence defects during the first pass. After this pass, the diagnostic algorithm updates the failing measures for all unexplained failing patterns based on the already-extracted defects. All passes after the first one use less-restrictive constraints for faultlist pruning. The goals to extract additional information from the unexplained failing patterns, which might explain some multiple defects or complex defects that don't behave as stuck-at faults. An analysis based on cones of logic within the circuit and backward path tracing is used to distinguish unrelated failing measures.

3. AC I/O LOOPBACK TEST

3.1 Implementation source-synchronous (SS) Interfaces

The example of I/O performance changes include Intel's changing its processors' front-side bus from common-clock to source-synchronous (SS) signaling and increasing their bus transfer rate from less than 100 MHz to 800 megatransfers/second (1 MT/s = 1 Mbyte/s/pin). On the chipset side, Intel has upgraded its universal serial bus from 48 Mbps to 400 Mbps and has transitioned to the Serial Advanced Technology Attachment (SATA) standard at a 1.25-Gbps data rate. Also, we show how we have solved the testing problem of the SS interface and how this self-test scheme is extendable to other high-speed I/O circuits, including high-speed serial (HSS) signaling.

Intel designed the Pentium 4 so that has two strobes associated with each data signal. Strobe 1 captures even data bits; strobe 2 captures odd ones.

The specific elements of the Pentium 4 AC I/O loopback implementation are:

- per-pad, two-bit pattern generation, programmable through a TAP (*Test Access Port*), controlled scan chain;
- a timing stress mechanism that can shift the position of the strobe generation consisting of a delay chain programmable through a TAP-controlled test configuration chain;
- a comparator that compares expected values with results stored using a sticky bit mechanism accessible through boundary scan as the pass/fail detection; and
- the ability to exercise this circuitry over thousands of cycles.

Because it implemented a unidirectional stress mechanism on the Pentium 4 (it consider delay the strobe generation only with respect to its nominal position), it measured the following two points for each SS signal group:

1. First fail (FF). These are the first signals within a signal group that fail at least one cycle.
2. All fail (AF). All signals within a signal group fail for all cycles.

In an SS interface, the receiving agent captures data based on a strobe or clock provided by the driving agent along with the data. Front side bus of Intel's Pentium 4 is an example of an SS interface. The critical timing parameters in an SS interface are all skews between the output or input signal and an associated strobe. In the data bus, they are characteristics parameters: T_{vbd} -data output valid before strobe; T_{vad} -data output valid after strobe; T_{suss} -input setup time to strobe; and T_{hss} -input hold time after strobe..

One advantage of this signaling architecture is that *common-mode jitter* (variations that occur simultaneously in both the signal and the strobe) doesn't impact the interface's performance; only *differential jitter* (variations that affect the data or strobe differently in a given cycle) does.

The advent of serial communication links in chip-to-chip and system-to-system applications has resulted in intense focus on jitter and BER testing techniques, including jitter generation and measurement methodologies.

Long-term jitter measures the maximum change in a clock's output transition from its ideal over a large number of cycles. The actual number of cycles depends on the application and the clock frequency. For PC motherboards and graphics applications, this is usually 10-20 microseconds. For other applications, this number will be different.

Jitter is generally divided into three components: random jitter (RJ), data-dependent jitter (DDJ), and periodic jitter (PJ) [8]. Each of these components is correlated with physical sources and impact bit error rate (BER) differently.

The continued market demand for GHz processors and high-capacity communication systems has resulted in an increasing number of low-cost high volume ICs clocked at GHz rates and beyond and/or equipped with multi-Gb/s serial interfaces, e.g., PCIExpress, Infiniband, HyperTransport, Serial ATA, etc.

3.2 AC I/O loopback test

The developing plans about reducing tester capital spending and move to lower-capability structural testers. It is developing an I/O test methodology that required only an accurate clock source; it did not require probing individual signals [6]. Because the method relies on a loop in the I/O buffer and because the producer guarantee the AC timing parameters, it call this method AC I/O loopback. AC I/O loopback is a significant enhancement over a simple I/O loopback scheme targeted primarily at screening stuck-at (hard) failures.

Figure 4., is a simplified representation of an oscilloscope measurement showing an eye diagram for two consecutive data bits on three separate signals, synchronized in absolute time. The multiple waveforms forming the valid data eye represent across multiple cycles in the relative position of the data with respect to the strobe. These variations are due to various sources of differential jitter, such as noise on the local V_{DD} grid, pattern dependencies, and even defects. The dotted vertical lines represent the strobe positions (nominal, shifted to FF, and shifted to AF).

First fail is the minimum delay of the strobe (from its nominal position) that causes the input latch to capture

incorrect data for at least one signal of the signal group. This corresponds to the worst-case T_{vad} and T_{hss} the signal group. For a centered strobe interface like that in Pentium 4, we calculate expected delay D as

$$D1 = (0.5)T - (T_{vad} - T_{hss}),$$

where T is the period.

All fail is the maximum delay of the strobe, from its nominal position, that causes all cycles in all data signals of the signal group to fail. This corresponds to the worst-case T_{vbd} and T_{suss} of the next cycle:

$$D2 = T - (T_{vbd} - T_{suss}).$$

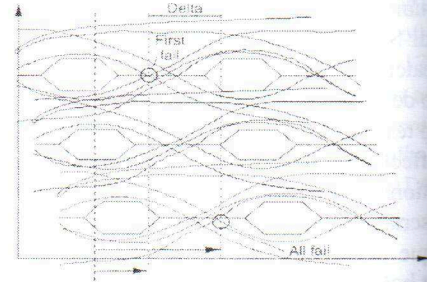


Figure 4. AC I/O loopback measurements

Because the product specifications for T_{suss} and T_{hss} account for some amount of shift in the position of the T_{vad} and T_{hss} window corresponding to variations in the individual devices' process skew, it further improved the accuracy by using the delta between FF and AF for these individual devices. This delta corresponds to the maximum width of the (T_{suss} and T_{hss}) window across the specific signal group being tested.

With these two formulas we come close to relating the AC I/O loopback measurement to the actual SS timing parameters. Some aliasing is possible because a faster T_{vad} could compensate for a slower T_{vbd} . However, because the latch T_{suss} and T_{hss} can vary only within a small range, the possibility of T_{suss} and T_{hss} covering up delays with T_{vad} and T_{vbd} (for any particular pin) is unlikely.

Test engineers have extended the AC I/O loopback methodology for other areas, such as DC tests, and advanced signaling technologies. A possibility exists to conduct DC tests using the same loopback configuration. The I/O loopback technique extended for other I/O circuitry, for example, simultaneous bidirectional (SBD) I/O. These interfaces can transmit and receive signals at both ends of the signal line. Thus, both transmitters, at either end of the interface pairs, are driving at the same time. Even though normal I/O pins are supposedly I/O, in reality they can drive or receive, not both at the same time.

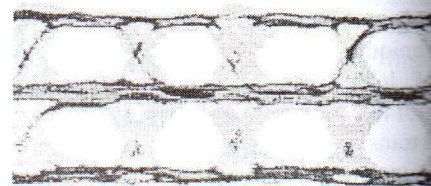


Figure 5. Simultaneous bidirectional (SBD) waveform diagram (from oscilloscope) at 2.5 Gbps per wire

When the signals collide midway or at any point along the transmission line, it creates a tertiary level, as the oscilloscope waveform in Figure 5. shows. To extract the polarity of the data received from the threshold so that we can sample the correct logic level. By controlling the receiver's threshold voltage while changing the delay elements in the AC I/O control mechanism, we extract the true dual-loop data eye.

USING DIAGNOSIS RESULTS

The first effort involves finding a tradeoff between the measurement test time and the diagnostic tool's accuracy and precision. For each defect, the typical diagnosis report highlights a list of fault candidates (pins), the corresponding voltages, and the associated behavior explaining a set of test patterns. This approach for extracting a list of the essential cells responsible for the failures has two main goals:

- Identification of the existing sources of design marginality;
- The critical process steps for the design.

The existence of an essential defect in each lot can cause overall yield loss. The key is to unscramble the the essential process defect from the repetitive failure mechanisms caused by design or layout marginalities that are not easily detectable otherwise.

Finally, the power supply subsystem is measuring the supply current, the so called I_{DDQ} which in some testing scenarios has a decisive role. We also use I_{DDQ} measurement to help classify defects. I_{DDQ} is used often in functional purpose too. This test flow uses ATPG vectors to do I_{DDQ} measurements on qualified strobe points. The most test of I_{DDQ} is the DFT method is intendend to uncovering an elegant (catastrophic, more exactly geometries) defects in digital circuits. It observes behaviour of CMOS circuits to stationary discipline and measurements of small current between power supply and grounding, [1], [8]. Any change of I_{DDQ} value from the expected one shows at defect.

I_{DDQ} testing is a very sensitive technique, able to detect problems in an early stage, even before they really harm the device. As such it also offers a window to the future design of a device. It is also a proper alternative to replace more expensive or more time-consuming test approaches, needed to guarantee the quality and reliability of a tested chip. In combination with emission spectroscopy and spectral analysis I_{DDQ} is also a very powerful technique for location and defect diagnosis, obviating the need for [9], [10].

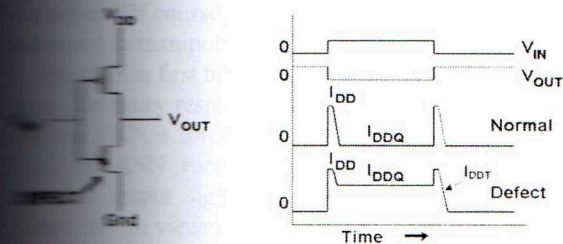


Figure 6.: Leakage of I_{DDQ}

The I_{DDQ} test technique can be applied at wafer level, at device level, during incoming inspection, during life

tests or even during on-line testing. Making use of an I_{DDQ} test approach supported by the use of proper measurement instrumentation offers the following advantages: increased product quality, replacement (or reduction) of burn-in tests, elimination of early lifetime failures, increased product reliability, reduction of the overall test cost, increase of engineering and failure analysis productivity.

I_{DDQ} Cov	#of I_{DDQ} tests	Test Time	
		PMU	Q-Star
50%	1	100 ms	100 μ s
80%	10-20	1 s	1-2 ms
98%	\pm 500	50 s	50 ms

Figure 7. Compared to the Q-Star Test solution, requiring only 100 μ s per (off-chip) measurement, a standard PMU is slow

Can to serve as an next example: manufacturer A is doing 10 I_{DDQ} measurements as part of his test program. To carry out this measurement he makes use of the available PMU on his test machine. This solution requires typically about 100ms per measurement. Compared to the Q-Star Test solution, requiring only 100 μ s per (off-chip) measurement, a standard PMU solution is slow [11]. The Q-Star monitor allows this user to complete his I_{DDQ} measurements (if he sticks to 10 measurements) 100 times faster than the time he needs for only 1 measurement or 1000 times faster in comparison to the described situation. (Q-Star monitor: 1ms for 10 measurements).

Using a Q-Star Test monitor offers you the possibility to apply a complete I_{DDQ} vector set of about 500 vectors in 50ms. Taking into consideration the overlapping test coverage of a functional/scan test and a full I_{DDQ} test, and the fact that an I_{DDQ} test is as well a good screen to detect quality and reliability problems, you can replace approximately 90% of your functional/scan vectors by running a full I_{DDQ} test set and using a Q-Star Test monitor, Figure 7. That brings you to an overall test time of 50ms, plus the time needed to run the remaining 10% of your functional/scan vectors [12].

4.1 Understanding test-mode functional marginalities

Yield improvement requires understanding failures and identifying potential sources of yield loss. We discuss yield losses determined by marginalities in the functionality of the chip under test. These types of factors often influence yield in various ways and typically, we associated yield variation with process variation. If there are presence parametars outside an acceptable range, that affects yield.

Catching these types of marginalities requires the ability to test chips under different conditions, exploring the operating margins. With different conditions, we changed the operating conditions (supply voltage, timing, and temperature) of the DUT. We then examined test data coming from corner lots, batches of chips manufactured with process parameters that we intentionally varied from what is typical.

The key of this analysis is to understed systematic marginalities that might unpredictably affect the yield. The well-known techniques such as SHMOO plots can be used to assert the behavior of a chip with respect to a given test pattern set when test condition such as power supply voltage,

temperature and timing are varied. Usually, shmoo plots are represented using 2D or 3D charts. Each test result is reported with green and red boxes to identify passes and failures of the given pattern set [13]. This methodology uses DFT, (DFT, *Design For Testability*), in which we vary parameters determining test conditions according to the DFT solutions in place.

The goal is to check the diagnostic tool's ability to locate the basic defect types and to minimize the number of initial fault candidates (potential locations) for consideration during diagnosis. The advantages of simulation over silicon-base experiments are numerous. Simulation's quickness and lower cost let us conduct many experiments to tuner the algorithms. It used 10 full-scan industrial circuits and ran 1.000 experiments for each defect type. The diagnosis algorithm is accuracy for simple defect types (single and multiple stuck-at faults and single transition faults) was in the 98%. For more complex defect types such as bridge faults the accuracy was in the 90%. Thus, the algorithm initially satisfied the necessary conditions of having high accuracy for real physical defects when a good correlation existed between the selected fault model and the behavior of real physical defects.

5. CONCLUSION

Research results are shown related to the problem of testing and diagnosis of digitale electronic circuits operated at very high frequencies. It is today focus of all of these issues that makes multigigahertz testing a challenging problem in today's test technology. Then impact on testing technology was considered including the ATE performance. Accordingly, new design architectures were discussed developing an I/O test methodology that required only an accurate clock source and enabling design for testability at GHz. Finally specific problems related to diagnosys of digital circuits were discussed and experience presented.

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Sadržaj-Testiranje na brzinama Gb po sekundi zahteva velike brzine prenosa između kanala i funkcionalnih jedinica i zahteva ponovno adresiranje podataka i komuniciranje serijskom modu rada. Ova aktivnost sadrži u sebi fenomen džiter, koji postaje suštinski element u procesu testiranja i uspostavlja funkcionalni i projektantski izazov koji predstavlja zaokret u testiranju i DFT metodu. Ovaj članak razmotri različite pristupe u testiranju elemenata. Proizvođači digitalnih sistema, danas zahtevaju testiranje VLSI na brzinama multigigabajta po sekundi.

Za današnju industriju, zahtevi za testiranjima iznad 2 GHz na nivou multigigahertza predstavlja i izazov ekonomskog stanovišta. Pojedinačna rešenja, bazirana na konvencionalnim uređajima za testiranje, usmeravaju razvoj pravcu postizanja što veće tačnosti, dozvoljavajući testiranje integrisanih kola na nivou 2.5 Gbps sa 144 kanala uz planiranjem uvećanja brzine testiranja do 5 Gbps. Sa ovom brzinom, cene materijala i odgovarajućih drajvera i razmatranje iznose približno sto dolara po modulu, cena sistema za testiranje po kanalu je još nekoliko hiljada dolara, tako da komercijalna cena sistema za testiranje ne prelazi 10.000 dolara po kanalu za kapacitet testiranja nivoa multigigahertza.

TESTIRANJE VLSI KOLA NA BRZINAMA MULTI GBPS

Dragan Topisirović