Specifications, Modeling, and Model of Computation

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Hypothetical design flow

1: Application Knowledge

2: Specification

3: ES-hardware

4: System software (RTOS, middleware, …)

5: Evaluation & Validation (energy, cost, performance, …)

6: Application mapping

7: Optimization

Design repository

Design

8. Test *

* Could be integrated into loop

Numbers denote sequence of chapters
Motivation for considering specs & models

- Why considering specs and models in detail?
- If something is wrong with the specs, then it will be difficult to get the design right, potentially wasting a lot of time.
- Typically, we work with models of the system under design (SUD)

What is a model?
Models

Definition: A model is a simplification of another entity, which can be a physical thing or another model. The model contains exactly those characteristics and properties of the modeled entity that are relevant for a given task. A model is minimal with respect to a task if it does not contain any other characteristics than those relevant for the task.

[Jantsch, 2004]:

Which requirements do we have for our models?
Requirements for specification & modeling techniques: Hierarchy

Hierarchy
Humans not capable to understand systems containing more than ~5 objects. Most actual systems require more objects

Hierarchy (+ abstraction)

- Behavioral hierarchy
  Examples: states, processes, procedures.

- Structural hierarchy
  Examples: processors, racks, printed circuit boards
Requirem. for specification & modeling techniques (2): Component-based design

- Systems must be designed from components
- Must be “easy” to derive behavior from behavior of subsystems
  - Work of Sifakis, Thiele, Lee, Lee, Ernst, …
- Concurrency
- Synchronization and communication
Requirements for specification & modeling techniques (3): Timing

- Timing behavior
  Essential for embedded and cy-phy systems!
  - Additional information (periods, dependences, scenarios, use cases) welcome
  - Also, the structure of the underlying platform must be known
Requirements for specification & modeling techniques (3): Timing (2)

4 types of timing specs required, according to Burns, 1990:

1. Measure elapsed time
   Check, how much time has elapsed since last call

2. Means for delaying processes
3. Possibility to specify timeouts
   Stay in a certain state a maximum time.

4. Methods for specifying deadlines
   Not available or in separate control file.
Specification of ES (4): Support for designing reactive systems

- **State-oriented behavior**
  Required for reactive systems; classical automata insufficient.

- **Event-handling**
  (external or internal events)

- **Exception-oriented behavior**
  Not acceptable to describe exceptions for every state
Then, Always Remember

Concrete System

Concrete problem instance

messy infeasible

Solution to concrete problem

Concretized abstract solution

abstraction and Model

Concretized abstract solution

Solution to abstract problem

Models

Abstract problem instance

elegant insightful

Concretized abstract solution

concretization

Abstract problem instance
Problems with classical CS theory and von Neumann (thread) computing

Even the core … notion of “computable” is at odds with the requirements of embedded software. In this notion, useful computation terminates, but termination is undecidable. In embedded software, termination is failure, and yet to get predictable timing, subcomputations must decidably terminate.

What is needed is nearly a reinvention of computer science.


Search for non-thread-based, non-von-Neumann MoCs.
What does it mean, “to compute”? Models of computation define:

- Components and an execution model for computations for each component
- Communication model for exchange of information between components.
Dependence graph: Definition

Def.: A dependence graph is a directed graph $G=(V,E)$ in which $E \subseteq V \times V$ is a relation. If $(v_1, v_2) \in E$, then $v_1$ is called an immediate predecessor of $v_2$ and $v_2$ is called an immediate successor of $v_1$. Suppose $E^*$ is the transitive closure of $E$. If $(v_1, v_2) \in E^*$, then $v_1$ is called a predecessor of $v_2$ and $v_2$ is called a successor of $v_1$.
Dependence graph: Timing information

Dependence graphs may contain additional information, for example:
- Timing information

Arrival time  deadline

(0,7]  (1,8]  (3,10]

$T_1$  $T_2$  $T_3$
Dependence graph: I/O-information
Dependence graph: Hierarchical task graphs
Dependence graph: Shared resources

T₁ → T₂ → T₃ → T₄ → T₅
Communication

- Shared memory

Variables accessible to several components/tasks.

Model mostly restricted to local systems.
Shared memory

```
thread a {
  u = 1; ..
  P(S) //obtain mutex
  if u<5 {u = u + 1; ..}
  // critical section
  V(S) //release mutex
}
```

```
thread b {
  ..
  P(S) //obtain mutex
  u = 5
  // critical section
  V(S) //release mutex
}
```

- Unexpected u=6 possible if P(S) and V(S) is not used (double context switch before execution of {u = u+1})
- S: semaphore
- P(S) grants up to $n$ concurrent accesses to resource
  - $n=1$ in this case (mutex/lock)
- V(S) increases number of allowed accesses to resource
- Thread-based (imperative) model should be supported by mutual exclusion for critical sections
Non-blocking/asynchronous message passing

Sender does not have to wait until message has arrived;

Potential problem: buffer overflow
Blocking/synchronous message passing - rendez-vous

Sender will wait until receiver has received message

No buffer overflow, but reduced performance.
Summary

Requirements for specification & modeling

- Hierarchy
- ..
- Appropriate model of computation

Models of computation =

- Dependence graphs
- models for communication
- models of components