

IC DESIGN PHYSICAL VERIFICATION

Vikram Gautam¹, Dr. Pawan Kumar Dahiya²

¹M.Tech. student in ECE (VLSI Design)

²Assistant Professor of Electronics & Communication Department,

^{1,2}Deenbandhu Chhotu Ram University of Science and Technology, Sonapat, India

Abstract— This paper will discuss how physical verification flow optimized in IC Design having various rule decks from foundries. Objective is to avoid delay and reduce time to tape-out. With increased number of design rules, design complexity and size of the designed chip run time and memory used drastically increased. Number of solutions presented to check design violations during physical verification. DRC (design rule check), LVS (layout vs. schematic), and XRC (extraction) are most crucial and important milestones considered for chip making. Since multiple foundries present different process for design tape-outs, flow depends on foundry to check turnaround time and the physical verification process followed. Time to market depends on the design and verification as well, physical verification is most critical since it is last stage before design on silicon.

Key Words: VLSI, Physical verification, DRC, LVS, XRC, Design flow

1. INTRODUCTION

While in the digital domain many design steps have been automated through synthesis algorithms attempts to apply such methods in analog design typically fail due to the number and complexity of design constraints that typically emerge from analog circuits. This work presents a practical automation method for IC design assembly using various automation methods for its layout physical verification [1]. These methods can be used along with design verification flow followed in the verification as various violations encountered. Violations are encountered at various stages of verification to automate the determined solution layouts generated. The presented concept shows an enhanced way of verification automation by considering designs for layout versus schematic issues, in order to generate the possible solution for entire circuit, hierarchically consisting of other designs as well as their interconnections. This approach has two vital objectives: first to extensively include designer’s human expertise, knowledge and creativity into the automation, and second to take only small automation steps which enhance the design flow in verification stage [7]. A basic overview of previous design automation techniques evolved in the digital and analog domain. The idea of employing the isolation with respect to different layout

objects interacting at top level and the implementation based on schematic guided layout. The objective is to have the functionality observed in the schematic is as such reflecting in the layout.

Physical verification tool has to do layout processing & proximity correction comprising rule files for manufacturing. Runtime depends on size of the layout & rules to be checked with increasing complexity of designs. The operation of a circuit by means of reenactments at the schematic level before endeavoring to design is confirmed. LVS verifies the schematic and layout match, so if schematic is not functioning properly layout would not either. Passing LVS at lower levels of hierarchy reduces time and effort at later stages. Any change in schematic or layout requires re-run of LVS tool. Recent improvement in the tools doesn’t require re-run of the LVS tool, but in the same job can be checked against the changes made in the layout.



Fig -1: Physical verification top view [8]

Fig. 1 shows how the problem in layout physical verification is resolved using several commands running to produce error output and modified layout (where physical verification for layout modification is used for optimal correction). Turnaround time is reduced to extent possible by using optimal processing platform to determine the command run and part of the layout subject to change, and these combinations used as separate blocks for processing. The results reassembled at the end can be generalised [2].

2. BACKGROUND

EDA tools with sign-off checks are used to perform physical verification on the layout before tape out. Number of iterative steps involved in fixing the problems

used incrementally between front end designers and back end designers. With shrinking technology geometries, design constraints are becoming time Verification is a later stage process in design cycle. Design problems occurring at later stages results in the delayed tape out. Since lack of information in layout stage of design is in practice because foundry doesn't need much of the information. Due to which verification becomes cumbersome and tedious task at times. Every tape out run results in the cost involved in fabrication and affect time to market. Fig. 2 shows VLSI design flow.

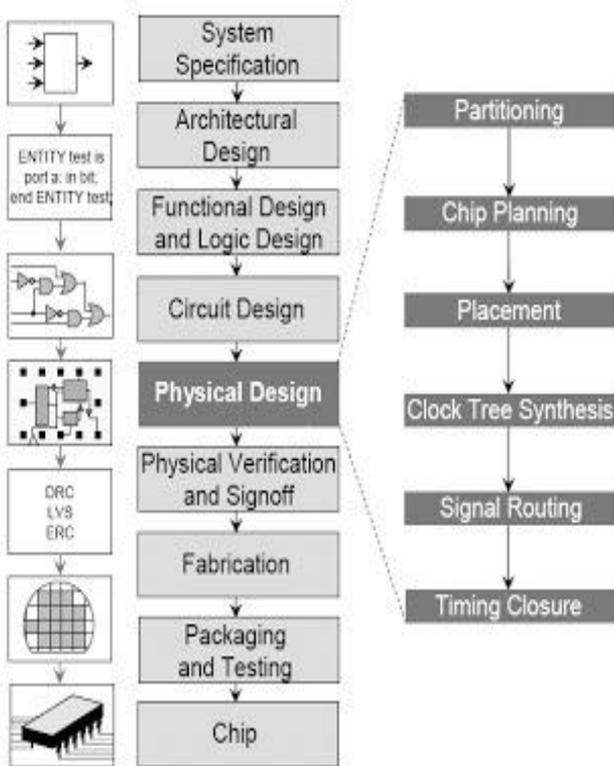


Fig -2: The diagram of VLSI design flow

The VLSI design flow comprising various small steps and widely related to the design constraints. The abstract layout flow for IC design is discussed in this paper.

3. VERIFICATION FLOW

Advances in process technology and increasing design complexity have placed growing demand on physical verification products to check many more design rules. Evolving new physical verification solution geared specifically to address these challenges faced by IC designers. Tool has to be a comprehensive physical verification product which may include DRC, LVS checks, electrical rule checking and metal fill insertion. A layout

consuming & complex. Design cycle time mostly increased due to lack of information and communication between different stages of implementation. Physical can be viewed as a schematic drawing for verification and modification. For large designs schematic drawing to represent layout is not preferred for obvious reasons. To tackle this problem database format is used. GDSII serves as a stream format database file format and has been as the standard used by industry for data exchange of integrated circuit or IC layout artwork. It represents planar geometric shapes, text labels and other information about the IC layout. It can be used in sharing, transferring layout artwork between different EDA tools, or creating photo masks for fabrication.

Fig. 3 shows the summary of physical verification flow for a digital layout. Place and route tool is used to generate the layout for digital design automatically generated based on design. Fig. 4 shows the summary of physical verification for an analog layout. Based on different foundries physical layout engineers perform different run based on flow requirement.

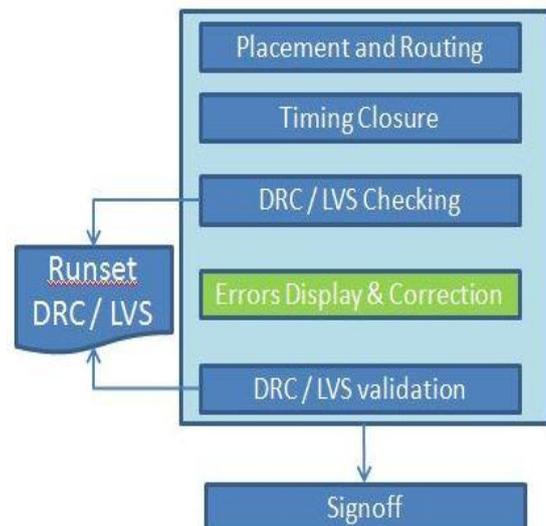


Fig -3: Digital design verification flow

Design-to-silicon success with the different tools is flow dependent and vary in time elapsed to perform chip design. The functionality and performance required for continued success at established nodes demand scalable advancements in tools. To integrate and assemble chips, from first pass to successful tape-out time taking and cumbersome. With increasing complexity in designs and size, layout editors lack in quick and efficient visualization, revision and processing. To perform chip finishing on full chip designs, layout making tool lack in efficiency. Layout viewing tools find application in rapid loading and processing large layout files.

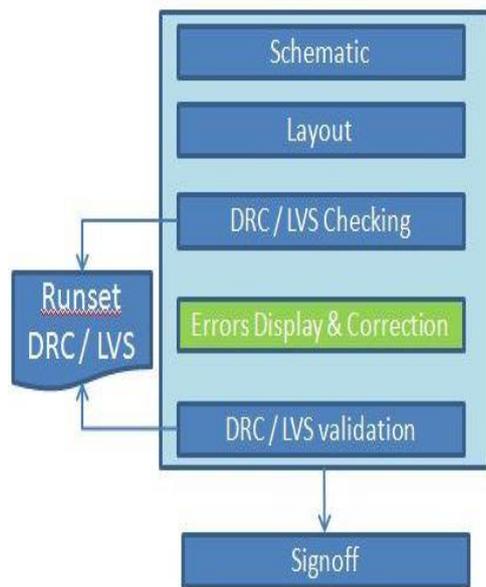


Fig -4: Verification flow for analog design

4. CONCLUSION

Designs are getting larger and complex day by day, time for physical designs schedule continuing same or shorter. Verification is continuous process regarding flow automation because rule files are subject to change from time to time based on foundries. Runset might get Confluence with the updated runset in order to obtain necessary adjustments based on automation of flow. As advancements observed in technology, older versions of EDA tools might not be useful and new features in tools need to cater latest problems in deep submicron technologies. Different EDA tools might be different from each other in flow automation. Hence new structure demand development in the flow from time to time. Fully automation in design and verification is still not practical in complex design constraints. The main objective is to avoid the delayed tape out.

5. REFERENCES

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