Agenda

- Why is RISC-V being broadly adopted?

- Challenge: the RISC-V verification disconnect

- A RISC-V processor verification solution

- Dynamic verification

- Formal verification

- Summary

Agenda

- **Why is RISC-V being broadly adopted?**

- Challenge: the RISC-V verification disconnect

- A RISC-V processor verification solution

- Dynamic verification
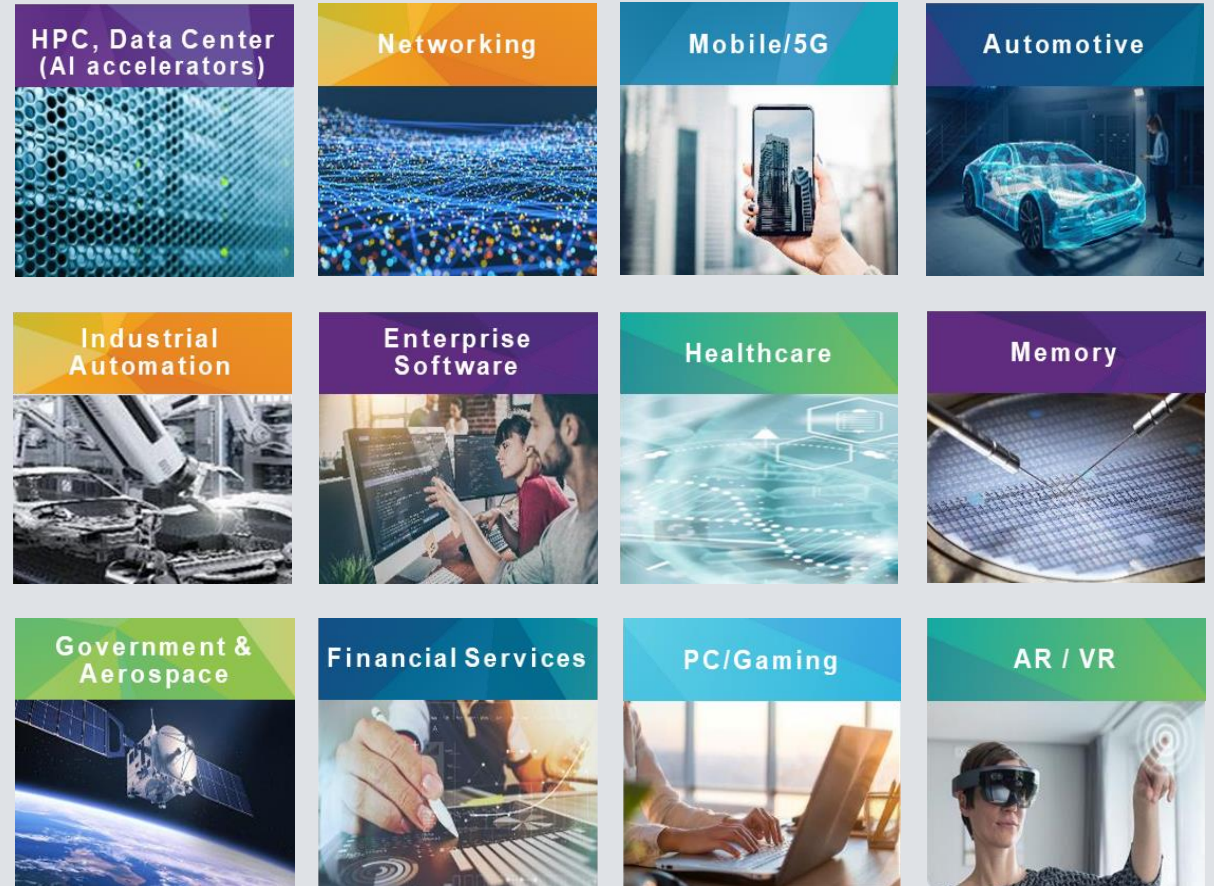
- Formal verification

- Summary

Why should we use RISC-V?

Anyone can design their own processor based on the RISC-V ISA

Modular ISA = choice of which features to include/exclude

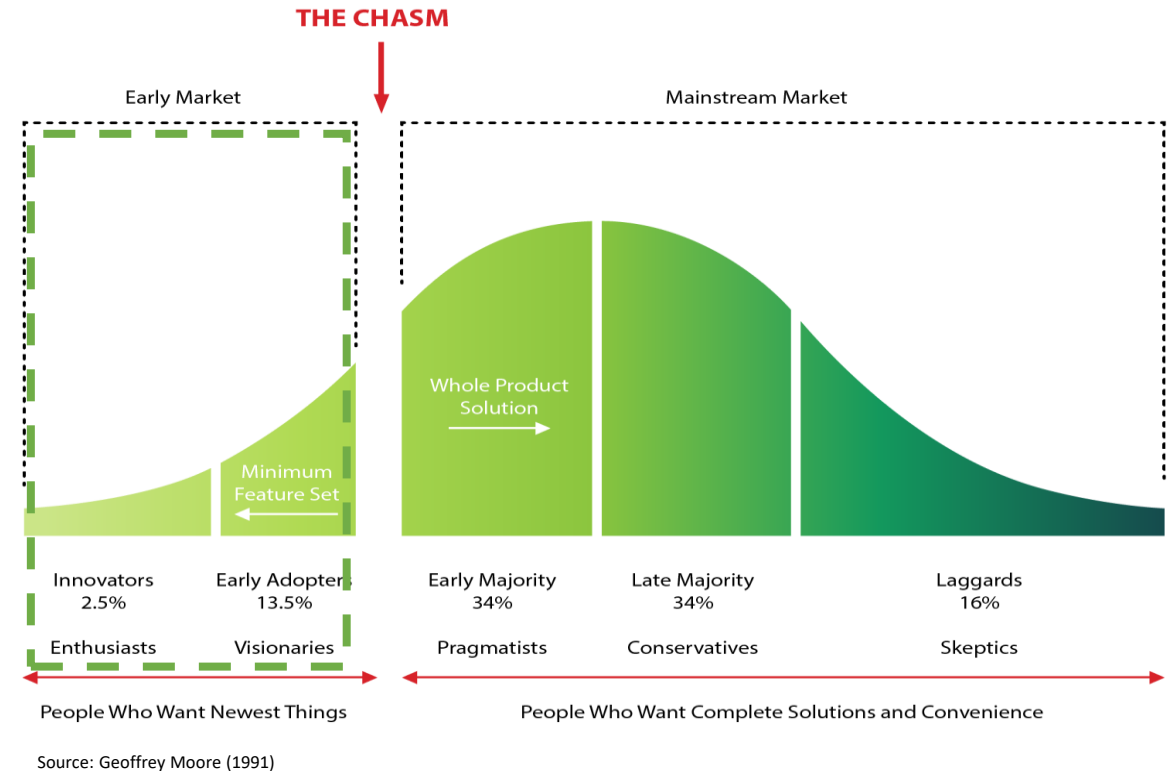Extensibility and freedom to customize at ISA and micro-architectural levels

RISC-V enables the creation of domain-specific differentiated processors

RISC-V is Crossing the Chasm: 2023-2024

Moving beyond early adopters, into early mainstream

- Initially only used by 'visionaries' like SiFive, Andes, Nvidia, Microchip

- Then systems companies wanting domain specific processors
  - Meta Infrastructure, Google, …
  - IoT companies
  - and early adopter semiconductor companies e.g. Qualcomm, Nvidia Networking (Mellanox), Silicon Labs

THE CHASM

Early Market | Mainstream Market

Whole Product Solution

Minimum Feature Set

Innovators 2.5% | Early Adopters 13.5% | Early Majority 34% | Late Majority 34% | Laggards 16%

Enthusiasts | Visionaries | Pragmatists | Conservatives | Skeptics

People Who Want Newest Things | People Who Want Complete Solutions and Convenience

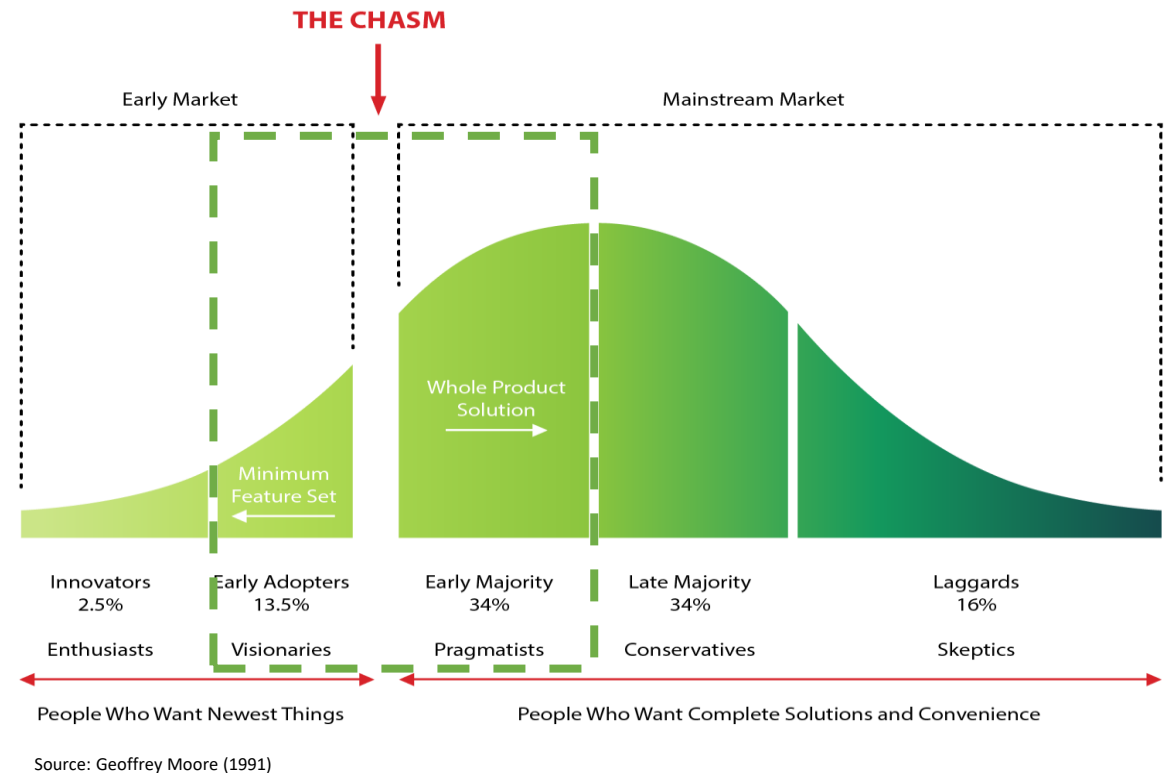Source: Geoffrey Moore (1991)
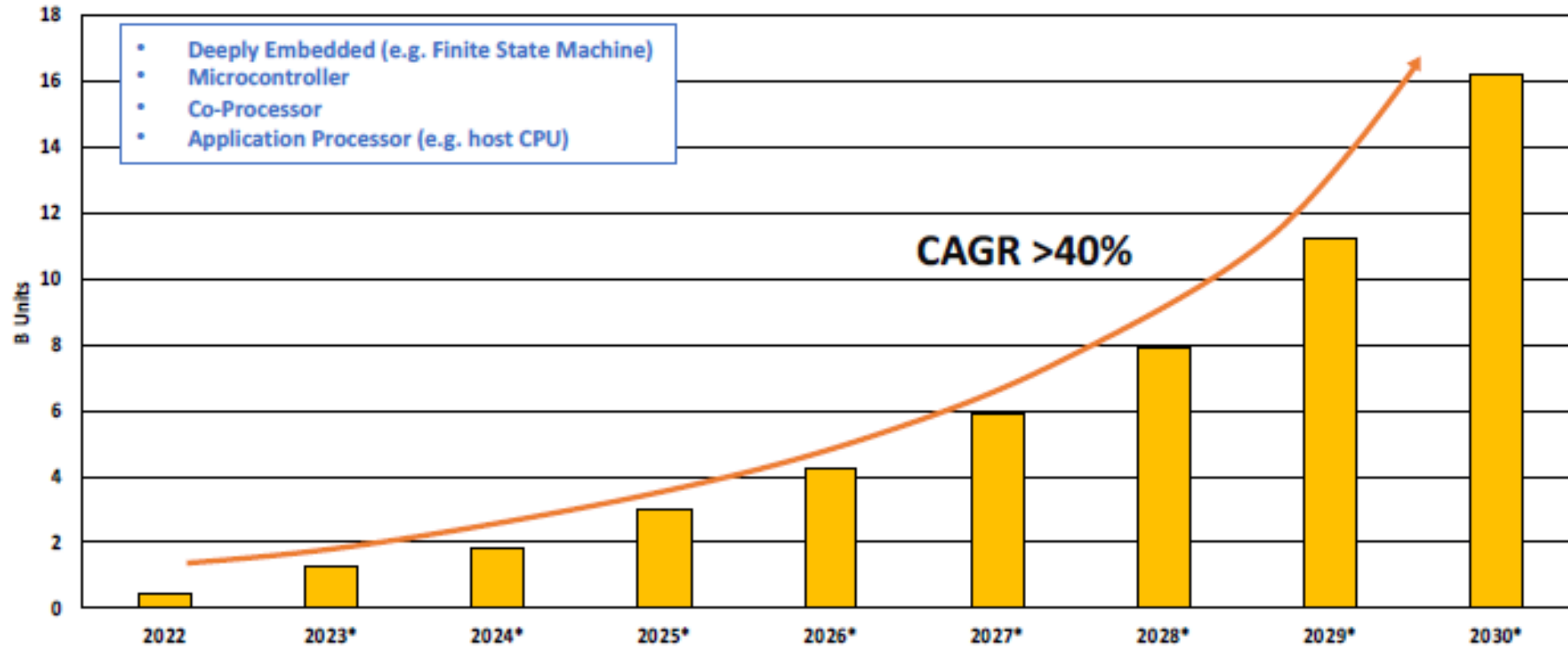
RISC-V is Crossing the Chasm: 2023-2024

Moving beyond early adopters, into early mainstream

- Now...
  - Every semiconductor vendor has a RISC-V SoC project in flight
  - Every hyperscaler company has a RISC-V project at least at the test chip phase
  - Every automotive OEM and Tier 1 has a RISC-V project at least at the test chip phase

Expected RISC-V Market Growth

Legend:
- Deeply Embedded (e.g. Finite State Machine)
- Microcontroller
- Co-Processor
- Application Processor (e.g. host CPU)

CAGR >40%

Y-axis: B Units (0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18)
X-axis: 2022, 2023*, 2024*, 2025*, 2026*, 2027*, 2028*, 2029*, 2030*

Source: RISC-V Market Report: Application Forecasts in a Heterogeneous World-Abridged, SHD Group

Agenda

- Why is RISC-V being broadly adopted?

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The RISC-V Verification Disconnect

RISC-V Core **User**:
- Expects core quality to be the same as ARM
- 10^{15} verification cycles $=10^4$ RTL simulators running 24/7!

RISC-V Core **Developer**:
- Needs to deliver high-quality core
- Potential issues with necessary expertise, methodologies, technologies, resources

Challenges in RISC-V Processor Verification

- Design complexity – architecture, micro-architecture, implementation choices, custom features

- Source of processor IP (in-house, open source, vendor + custom instructions)

- Use case: microcontroller –> application processor; closed versus open to external software development

- Processor verification methodology, throughout the project life cycle

- Team experience (designers and verification engineers)

- Verification productivity and time to closure

- Tool selection

Agenda

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What have we learned in the last 7 years?

- A verification plan is needed, addressing three orthogonal axes of processor verification:
  - Single core methodology
  - Multi-core processor complexities
  - Project life cycle (pre- to post-silicon)

- Different than with SoC DV, a high-quality, fully functional reference model is needed

- As with SoC DV, the full range of verification technologies is needed
  - Dynamic verification
  - Formal verification
  - Hardware-assisted verification

RISC-V Processor Verification Process

Design verification from unit to SoC

Design Level	Example	Tool/Methodology
Unit	Pipeline, FPU	Formal + predefined assertion IP
	Security	Formal + predefined security assertion IP
Architecture	ISA	Dynamic
		Formal + predefined assertion IP
Custom instructions, CSRs	Custom DSP, matrix	Dynamic
		Formal sequential equivalence checking, register verification, datapath validation
Processing subsystem	Coherent cache, multi- or many-processor accelerator	Dynamic, especially using hardware assisted verification
		Formal property verification for cache coherence verification

Synopsys RISC-V Processor Verification Solutions

Formal Verification

**VC Formal FPV +
RISC-V ISA AIP**

Functional Verification

VC Formal DPV

Verify computational correctness for RISC-V processors

VC Formal SEQ

Verify that custom instructions do not break the original core

VC Formal Portfolio

Dynamic Verification

VSO.ai
Coverage Optimization

STING
Test Generation

ImperasDV
Co-Simulation and Checking
Verification Environment

ImperasFPM
RISC-V Reference Model

ImperasFC
RISC-V ISA Functional Coverage

VCS & Verdi
Dynamic Simulation

ZeBu & HAPS
HW Assisted Verification

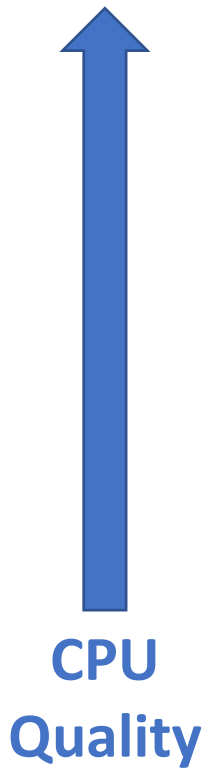## Verdi Verification Planning and Functional Coverage Platform

5 Levels of RISC-V Processor DV Methodology

CPU Quality ↑

1) Asynchronous lockstep continuous compare

2) Synchronous step-and-compare

3) Post-simulation trace log file compare

4) Self-checking tests

5) "Hello World", Linux boot, …

5 Levels of RISC-V Processor DV Methodology

CPU Quality ↑

1) Asynchronous lockstep continuous compare

2) Synchronous step-and-compare

3) **Post-simulation trace log file compare**

4) Self-checking tests

5) "Hello World", Linux boot, …

Post-sim Trace Compare (entry level DV): Pros and Cons

- Pros:
  - Simple to set up and use

- Cons:
  - Must run RTL simulation to the end
  - Cannot debug live
  - Incompatible trace formats (between RTL, ISS, …)
  - Easy to skip instructions, and only compare selected few
  - Difficult to verify asynchronous events (e.g. interrupts, debug requests)
  - Not a comprehensive DV strategy

- Key requirement: high quality model of the RISC-V processor
  - ImperasFPM is the high quality commercially supported model
  - Companies/engineers often think they can "easily" build their own model and Instruction Set Simulator (ISS) or use open source as a starting point
    - In our experience, building/maintaining an ISS is not nearly so easy

➤ Post-sim trace compare is widely used
➤ Most effective as a complementary methodology to asynchronous continuous compare
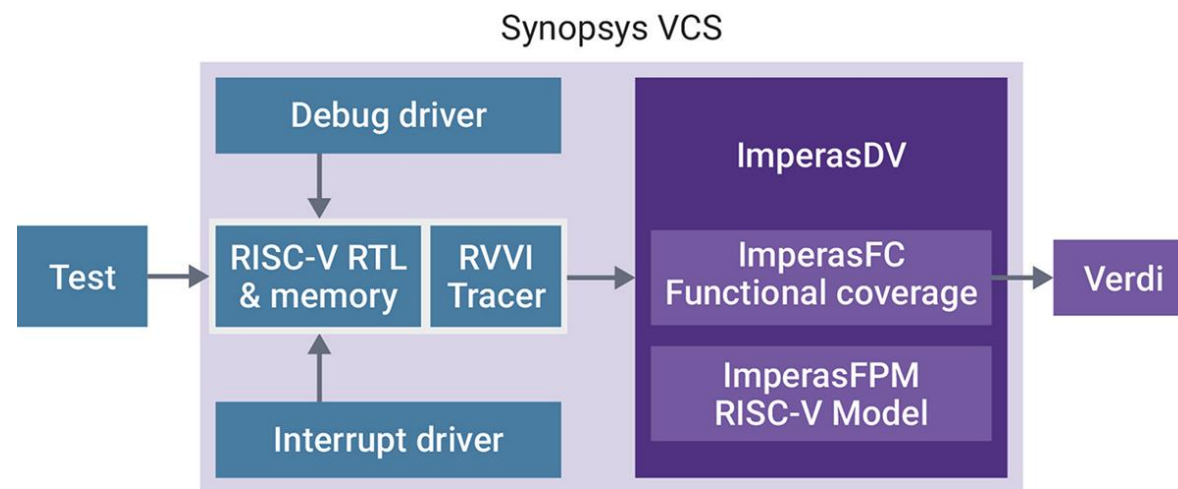
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5 Levels of RISC-V Processor DV Methodology

1) **Asynchronous lockstep continuous compare**

2) Synchronous step-and-compare

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4) Self-checking tests

5) "Hello World", Linux boot, …

CPU Quality

Asynchronous Lockstep Continuous Compare Methodology (highest quality processor DV)

- RTL and reference model are run in "lock-step" in the same simulation (co-simulation)

- Asynchronous events are driven into the DUT

- Tracer informs reference model about async events

- ImperasDV handles async events, scoreboarding, comparison, pass/fail

- Test source can be directed test suites for complex features, architecture validation tests, instruction stream generator or other constrained random generator

- Asynchronous events include interrupts, Debug mode, multi-hart processors, multi-issue and Out-of-Order pipeline, ...

Synopsys VCS

Debug driver

Test → RISC-V RTL & memory → RVVI Tracer → ImperasDV / ImperasFC Functional coverage → Verdi

ImperasFPM RISC-V Model

Interrupt driver

Asynchronous Lockstep Continuous Compare: Pros and Cons

- Pros:
  - Immediate comparison; immediate reporting of bugs
    - Allows for debug introspection at point of failure – very powerful
    - Does not waste execution cycles after failure
  - Most comprehensive DV methodology
    - Enables DV of complex features e.g. interrupts, Debug mode, privilege modes, virtual memory, multi-hart, multi-issue and OoO pipelines
    - Upon instruction retirement, full internal state of the processor is compared to the reference model
- Cons:
  - Users need to develop the RTL RVVI Tracer module, for communication between the DUT and reference model
    - For an engineer familiar with the processor RTL, this is typically 1-2 weeks
- Key requirements: high quality model of the RISC-V processor, co-simulation verification environment
  - ImperasFPM is the high quality commercially supported model
  - Building the verification environment is typically a make versus buy decision
    - ImperasDV provides a commercially supported, easy to use, asynchronous lockstep continuous compare processor verification environment, including functional coverage modules

➢ Asynchronous lockstep continuous compare methodology is used by the leading process IP vendors and companies building their own RISC-V processors
➢ ImperasDV and ImperasFPMs have been used for DV of processors in > 30 SoC tapeouts

Need For Software Driven DV Solution

SV/UVM Tests

OS Based Tests

Software Driven Functional Verification Methodology

Effectiveness of Tests

Verification Coverage Provided

| Pre-Silicon Simulations | In-Circuit Emulations | FPGA Prototype | Silicon |

Design Life Cycle

Increase in CPU Frequency

Allow **consistent execution on all verification environments**

Test stimulus once developed can be reused easily across the design life cycle

Failures hit on silicon can be easily migrated to an earlier stage for faster debug

Early enabling of software based stimulus increases the chances of hitting complex bugs early

Save on duplicate efforts spent on verification and validation by acting as a bridge between the two methodologies

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Dynamic Verification: ImperasDV + Test Stimuli

- **ImperasFPM RISC-V Processor Model**: for comparison of correct behavior; extendable for custom instructions

- **ImperasDV**: provides configuration, comparison and checking, pipeline synchronization and scoreboarding

- **ImperasFC**: deploys SystemVerilog functional coverage code for each ISA extension

- **riscvISATESTS/ImperasTS**: provides directed test suites

- **STING**: constrained random instruction stream generator

Synopsys VCS

ImperasTS
riscvISATESTS
STING

Debug driver

RISC-V RTL & memory | RVVI Tracer

Interrupt driver

ImperasDV

ImperasFC
Functional coverage

ImperasFPM
RISC-V Model

Verdi

ImperasFPMs (Fast Processor Models) for RISC-V

ImperasFPM

RISC-V Base Model

Model Config 250+ params

User Extension: custom instructions & CSRs

- Base Model implements RISC-V specification in full

- Fully user configurable to select ISA extensions and versions

- Pre-defined configurations and custom instructions for processor IP vendors

- User extensions built in a separate library do not perturb the verified Base Model, help reduce maintenance

- Because every ImperasFPM uses the RISC-V Base Model, and including users of both commercial and free tools, over 150 companies, organizations and universities have used the ImperasFPM

ImperasFPMs (Fast Processor Models) for RISC-V

ImperasFPM

| RISC-V Base Model | Model Config 250+ params | User Extension: custom instructions & CSRs |

- Model architecture and features
  - Base Model implements RISC-V specification in full
  - Fully user configurable to select ISA extensions and versions
  - Pre-defined configurations and custom instructions for processor IP vendors
  - User extensions built in a separate library do not perturb the verified Base Model, help reduce maintenance

- ImperasFPM model testing and validation
  - ImperasFPMs are built using Test Driven Development methodology
  - Synopsys uses Continuous Integration flow – ~20,000 tests run each time engineer checks in code
  - Code coverage metrics and mutation testing tools also used internally
  - Because every ImperasFPM uses the RISC-V Base Model, and including users of both commercial and free tools, over 150 companies, organizations and universities have used the ImperasFPM
  - Models of processor IP vendor cores are validated together with the vendor

RISC-V Base Model is used by 150+ Companies and Organizations

ImperasFPM Architecture

ImperasFPM

RISC-V Base Model	Model Config 250+ params	User Extension: custom instructions & CSRs

OVP APIs

Just-In-Time Binary Translation Simulator Engine

- OVP APIs support …
  - Model functionality
  - Processor analysis tools

- APIs are supported by a Just-In-Time (JIT) binary translation simulator engine
  - Translates RISC-V instructions to x86 on host PC
  - Adds in analysis "instrumentation" to the simulator, so analysis is non-intrusive

- APIs are publicly available:
  https://github.com/OVPworld/information

- The OVP APIs have been used to develop models of 18 different instruction set architectures (ISAs), including 3 proprietary ISAs
  - Matured by supporting ISAs such as Arm and MIPS before being used for RISC-V

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Models Drive Customization

- In the RISC-V world, custom instructions are added to optimize a specific application or set of applications within a domain
  - "Domain-Specific Processors"

- Models let you explore custom instructions quickly
  - Much faster to develop/analyze custom instructions in the model than by writing RTL
  - Better profiling data and other analytical tools
  - Better software debug capabilities

- Methodology
  - Start by characterizing the application to be optimized
  - Then add custom instructions, evaluate and iterate

ImperasDV RISC-V Processor Verification Environment

RISC-V Processor Verification using RVVI

- RVVI = RISC-V Verification Interface
  - https://github.com/riscv-verification/RVVI
- Open standard: result of collaboration between industry and open-source
- Standardizes communication between testbench and RISC-V VIP
  - **RVVI-TRACE**: interface between tracer and testbench
  - **RVVI-API**: interface between RISC-V verification component and reference model

RVVI-TRACE Enables Verification of DUT internal state

- Defines information to be extracted by tracer
  - e.g. PC, CSRs, GPRs, instr. binary
- SystemVerilog interface
- Includes functions to handle asynchronous events
  - e.g. interrupts, debug requests

ImperasFC: SystemVerilog Functional Coverage for RISC-V

- Functional coverage code generation
  - Manual creation would be tedious, time consuming and error prone
  - >100K lines of code
  - Synopsys tools can automatically generate functional coverage code for custom instructions

Machine-readable RISC-V ISA specification → SystemVerilog coverage code generator → ImperasFC functional coverage

- Functional coverage is the key verification metric

https://github.com/riscv-verification/riscvISACOV/tree/v20240124/documentation for list of covered extensions

Integrating ImperasDV with Verdi

- Auto-generated documentation in markdown and csv formats for inclusion in Verification Plans

- Functional coverage data is reported in verification tools such as Verdi

riscvISATESTS & ImperasTS
Test Stimulus

riscvISATESTS

- Directed test suites for architectural validation ("compliance")
- Provided free to licensed users

ImperasTS

- Directed test suites for complex, configurable extensions (Vector, MMU, PMP)
- Test suite generated to match customer's core configuration

ImperasTS

- MMU
  - Supports Sv32, Sv39, and Sv48 virtual memory systems
  - Separate tests for User and Supervisor modes
  - Tests are generated for a specific physical memory location, will run on a bare metal platform
  - Tests are all self-checking

- PMP, EPMP
  - Supports 32 bit and 64 bit PMP
  - Tests are generated to target specific pmpcfg/pmpaddr regions
  - Allows read-only fields and custom reset values in CSRs

- Vector
  - Configured for specific core setup
  - 7 separate suites

Vector tests

7 test suites

Test Suites	Test Files	Ins. Types	Unique Ins.	Total Ins.	Basic Coverage
Vb	324	2	48	412,064	89.79%
Vf	698	17	91	575,164	86.86%
Vi	1402	12	137	1,112,780	93.54%
Vm	180	2	15	160,680	99.92%
Vp	184	4	21	141,228	91.90%
Vr	146	2	16	110,676	91.67%
Vx	348	6	32	277,504	96.70%

STING Generates Self-Checking Tests for RISC-V Processors and Systems

STING

RISC-V design

Target Platforms

Generate
constrained random, directed and graph-based tests

Verify **RISC-V ISA, custom extensions, multi-hart, memory coherence, concurrency**

Test
on **multiple platforms** including silicon devices

Software-Driven Verification

- Supporting verification throughout the design life cycle, pre- to post-silicon
  - Portable across simulation, emulation, prototyping and silicon

- Supports higher levels of processor complexity and integration, including multi-hart, coherent cache, processing subsystem
  - Full support for the RISC-V ISA specification
  - Extensible to custom instructions and peripheral devices
  - Addressing single CPU and complex many core SoC designs

- Self-checking test generation (use standalone) or instruction stream generation (use with ImperasDV) for RISC-V

Accelerating RISC-V Processor Verification Using Hardware Assisted Verification (HAV) Tools

ImperasDV + HAPS (FPGA prototyping)

✓ **Execution speed**
  - Faster than simulation

✓ **Large designs**
  - Impractical to simulate

✓ **Highest quality verification**
  - ImperasDV compare technology

✓ **Verification metrics**
  - ImperasFC functional coverage

RISC-V design running on HAPS
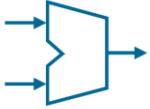
RVVI-TRACE data sent to ImperasDV

ImperasDV

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Synopsys VC Formal – Leading Formal Innovations

Unified Compile with VCS

Unified Formal Debugger with Verdi

FPV Property Verification	**FTA** Testbench Analyzer	**SEQ** Sequential Equivalence	**DPV** Datapath Validation
CC Connectivity Checking	**FCA** Coverage Analyzer	**FXP** X-Propagation Verification	**FRV** Register Verification
AEP Auto Checks	**FuSa** Functional Safety	**FSV** Security Verification	**FLP** Low Power

Rich Set of Assertion IPs (Including RISC-V AIP)

ML-Enabled Formal Engines and Orchestrations

Industry's Fastest Growing Formal Solution!

Deliver highest performance
Innovative formal engines and ML-based orchestrations find more bugs and achieve more proofs on larger designs

Enable formal signoff
Exhaustive formal analysis catches corner-case bugs and enables formal signoff for control and datapath blocks
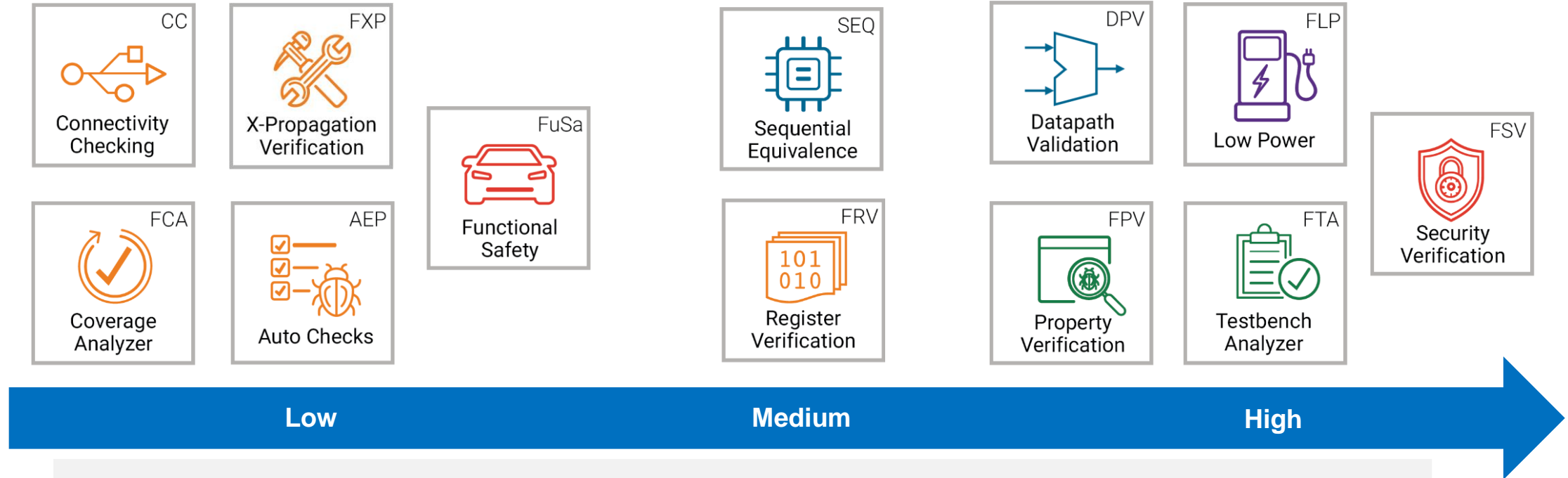
Ease Formal adoption
Easy-to-use formal apps, native integration with VCS and Verdi, and Formal Consulting Services reduce formal adoption effort

Synopsys VC Formal: Innovative Formal Verification Solutions

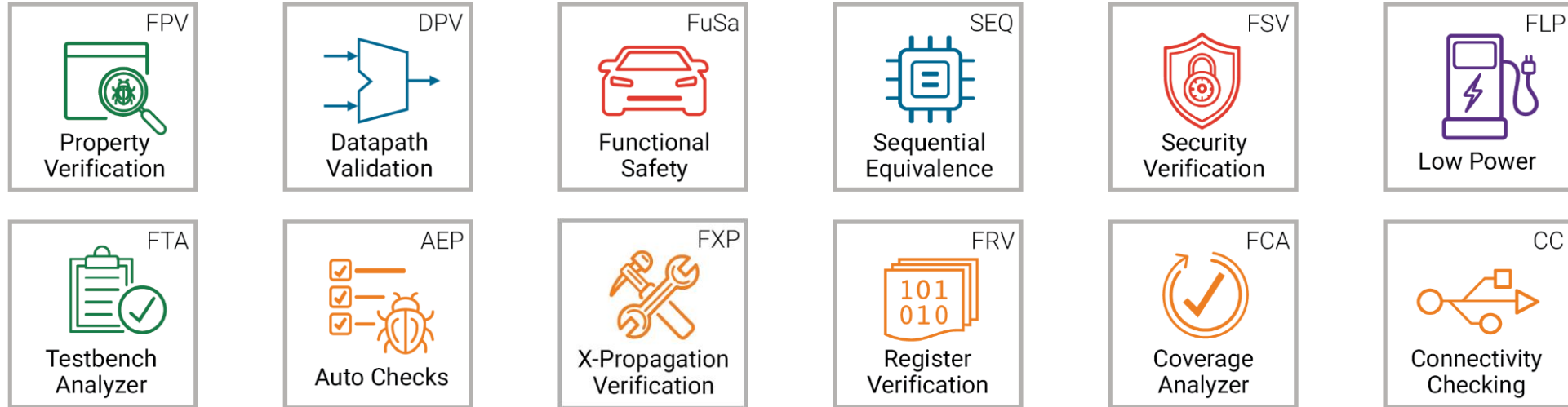VC Formal Apps Adoption Effort – Formal Expertise Not Always Required

Verification Complexity: In terms of exhaustive computation analysis required to verify the DUT

Adoption Effort: In terms of formal expertise and testbench required to apply the specific APP

Synopsys VC Formal: Innovative Formal Verification Solutions

VC Formal Apps Can Be Used Throughout the SoC Flow

FPV	DPV	FuSa	SEQ	FSV	FLP
Property Verification	Datapath Validation	Functional Safety	Sequential Equivalence	Security Verification	Low Power

FTA	AEP	FXP	FRV	FCA	CC
Testbench Analyzer	Auto Checks	X-Propagation Verification	Register Verification	Coverage Analyzer	Connectivity Checking

Block/IP   **Subsystem**   **SoC**

<u>High Performance</u>: ML powered proprietary engines for hard proofs, liveness, and deep bug-hunting

<u>High Confidence Formal Signoff</u>: Native Certitude integration for fast and high-quality Formal Signoff

RISC-V Core Formal Verification Overview

- **FPV (Model Checking):**
  - Prefetch Buffer
  - LSU – Load/Store unit
  - Pipeline
  - RISC-V AIP

- **DPV (Equivalence Checking):**
  - ALU/MULT/Dotp
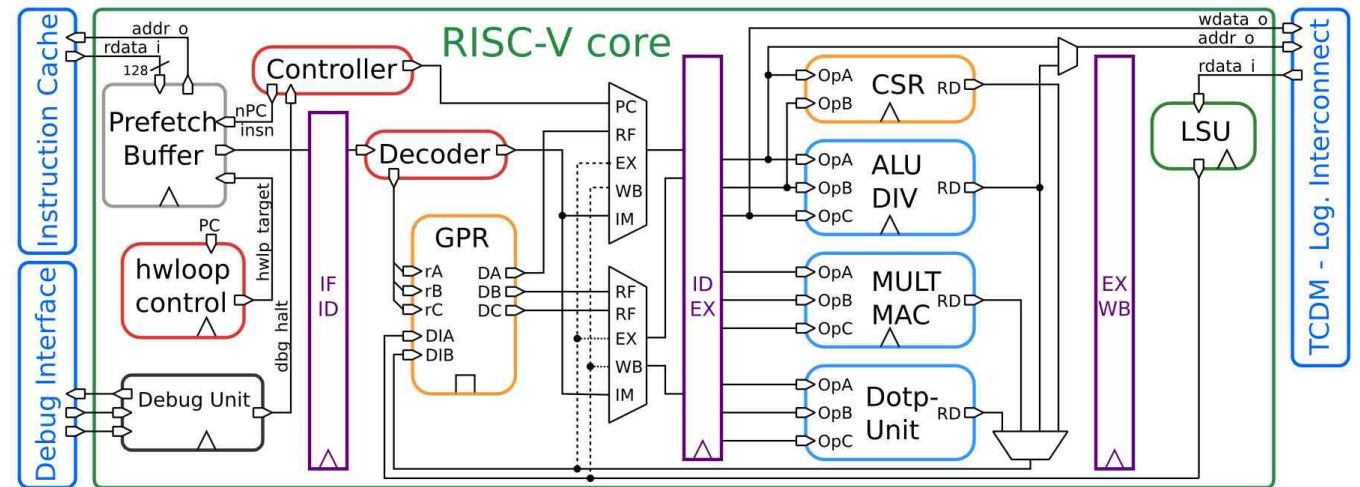 - Decoder

- **SEQ (Equivalence Checking):**
  - Clock gating verification in every functional unit
  - Designs comparison in presence of new features/timing changes

- **FRV (Formal Register Verification)**
  - Control and Status Registers (Zicsr)

- **FSV (Formal Security Verification)**
  - Secure/Non-secure data propagation

Source: https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Near-Threshold-RISC-V-Core-With-DSP-Extensions-for-GautschiSchiavone/47f8ce7e0f0f64d0707a13c83c32c30959aa64d5/figure/6

- RV32I base ISA, for example:
  - LOAD - LSU
  - STORE - LSU
  - BRANCH/JUMP/LUI/AUIPC - PFU
  - OP-IMM - EXU
  - OP - EXU
  - Environment call/break point
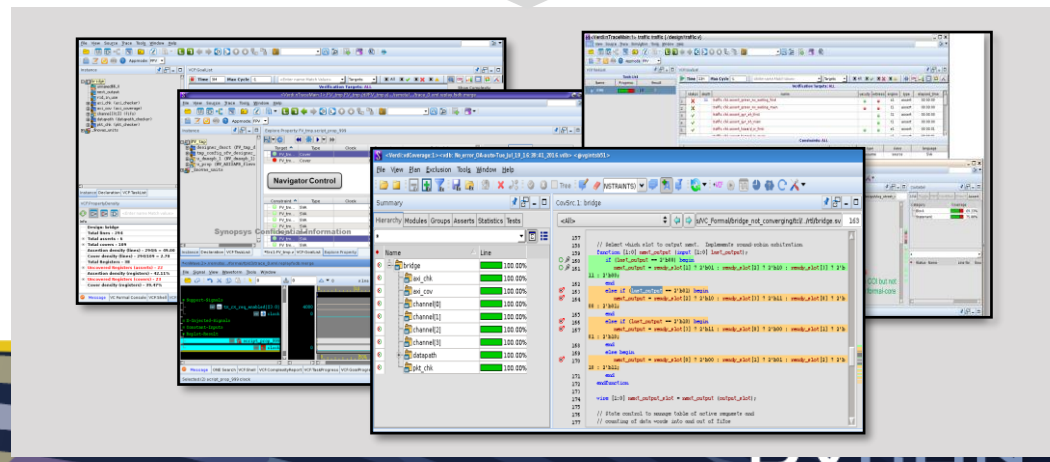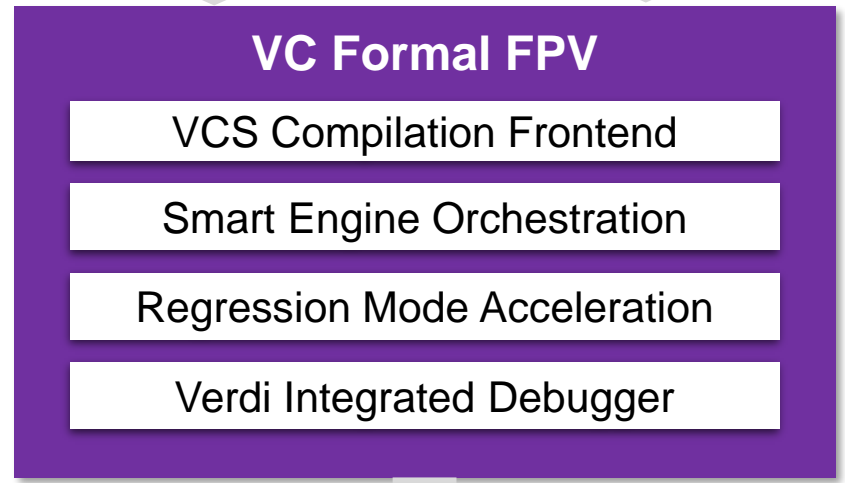- Zicsr extension
  - CSR Write
  - CSR Read

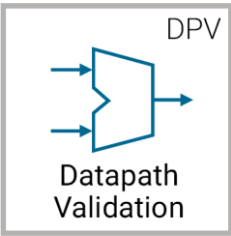# VC Formal FPV: Formal Property Verification

FPV BENEFITS

- Verify functional correctness of design blocks through exhaustive formal analysis

- Find corner-case bugs early without simulation and reduce time to verification closure

- Enable formal signoff methodology

FPV FEATURES

- State-of-the-art ML-powered formal analysis engines and orchestration offer best performance and capacity

- Integrated Verdi GUI offers the most familiar debugging

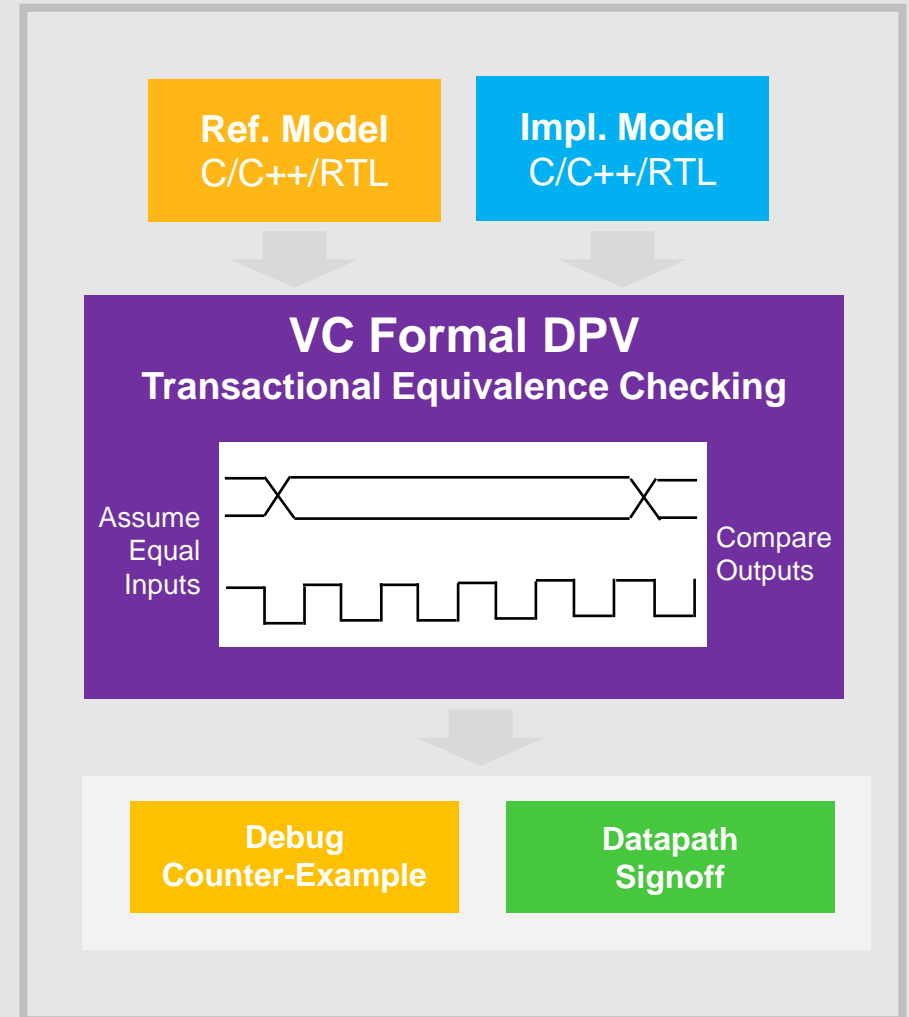- Deep bug hunting and advanced proof techniques Proof Assist, Proof Architect

Properties Constraints

DUT

VC Formal FPV

VCS Compilation Frontend

Smart Engine Orchestration

Regression Mode Acceleration

Verdi Integrated Debugger

VC Formal DPV: Datapath Validation

DPV BENEFITS

- Exhaustively verify datapath design refinements

- Prove consistency of independently developed reference & implementation models

- Achieve datapath signoff without any testbench

DPV FEATURES

- Integrated mature HECTOR technology

- Supports ADD, SUB, MULT, DIV, SQRT operators

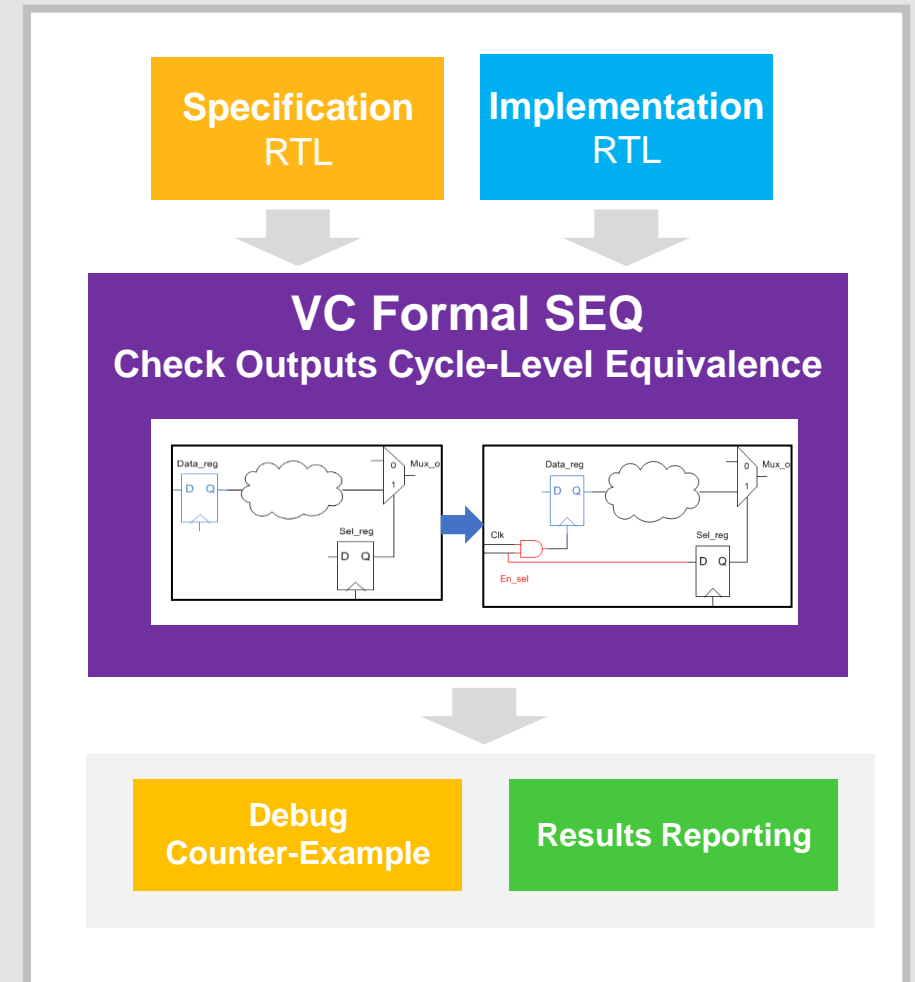- Applicable to CPU, GPU, DSP, AI/ML (CNN) and other data processing designs

Ref. Model C/C++/RTL

Impl. Model C/C++/RTL

VC Formal DPV
Transactional Equivalence Checking

Assume Equal Inputs

Compare Outputs

Debug Counter-Example

Datapath Signoff

VC Formal SEQ: Sequential Equivalence Checking

SEQ BENEFITS

- Exhaustively verify and signoff the design optimizations without any testbench

- Push the frontier of performance, power, and area (PPA) optimizations

- Save weeks/months simulation regression time

SEQ FEATURES

- Supports clock gating, retiming, microarchitecture optimizations

- Automatically creates equivalence mapping between specification and implementation RTL

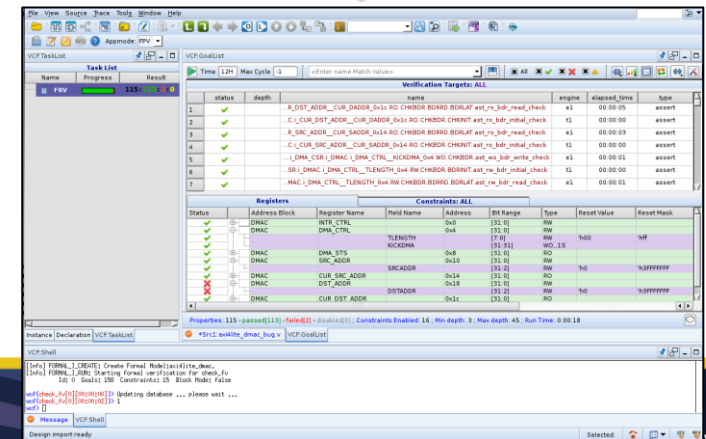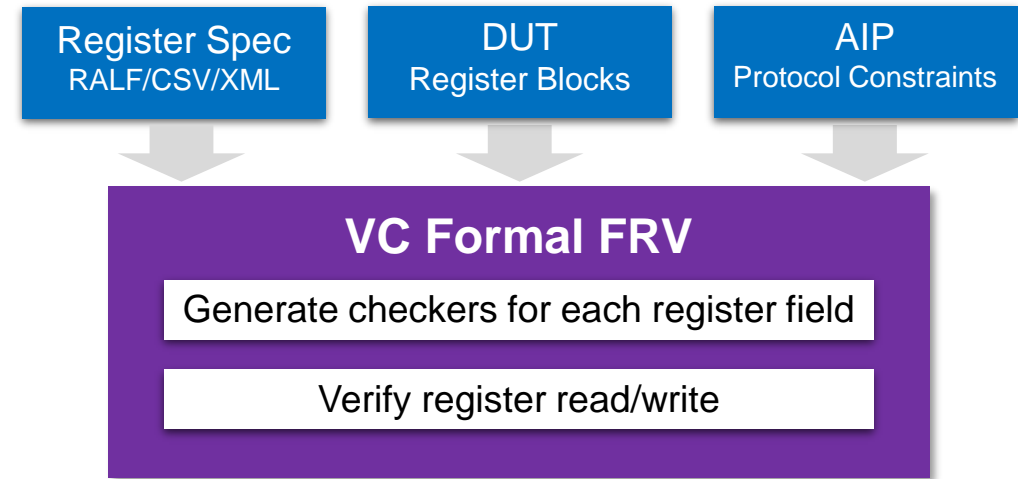- State-of-the-art ML powered formal engine for best performance

Specification RTL

Implementation RTL

VC Formal SEQ
Check Outputs Cycle-Level Equivalence

Debug Counter-Example

Results Reporting

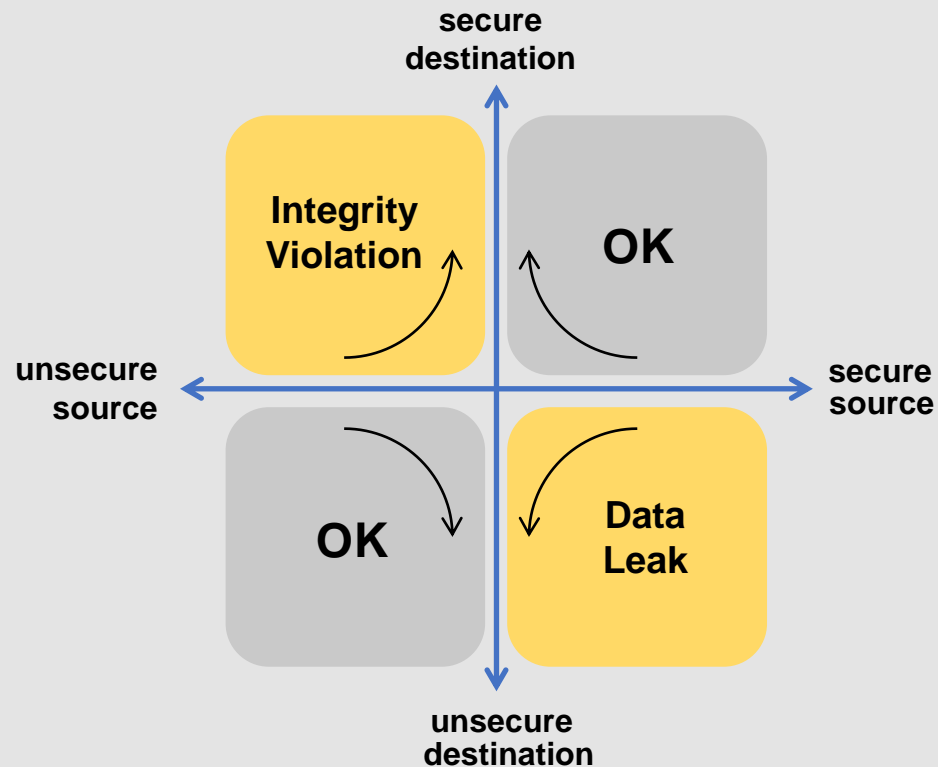# VC Formal FRV: Formal Register Verification

FRV BENEFITS

- Exhaustively verify the consistency of register model against specification

- Find corner-case bugs earlier in the design cycle, shorten debug time

- Save time and effort compared with manual directed simulation tests

FRV FEATURES

- Accept IP-XACT, CSV, RALF spec formats

- Verify that Control Status Registers are correctly implemented using standard or proprietary bus protocols

- Applicable at both the block and SoC level

Register Spec RALF/CSV/XML

DUT Register Blocks

AIP Protocol Constraints

VC Formal FRV

Generate checkers for each register field

Verify register read/write

2024 VERIFICATION

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VC Formal FSV: Formal Security Verification

FSV FEATURES

- Flexible property creation & management

- ML powered engines for fast performance

- Data propagation analysis and debug with temporal flow view

- Verification of multiple scenarios in one session

FSV BENEFITS

- Ensure data security objectives are met through exhaustive formal analysis

- Ensure secure data cannot be read illegally or be written from an unsecure source

- Detect security issues that are hard to find through other techniques

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- Formal verification

- **Summary**

How to close the RISC-V Verification Disconnect?

- Need verification plan including metrics

- Need to consider multiple, complementary methodologies and technologies

  – Dynamic and formal simulation

  – Processor only or higher level of integration

  – RTL through SoC

- High quality RISC-V reference model

  – Support the full RISC-V specification

  – Support custom instructions

- Use silicon-proven processor verification tools and models

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Thank you!

Questions?