EITF35: Introduction to Structured VLSI Design

Part 2.2.1: Sequential circuit

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Outline

- Sequential vs. Combinational
- Synchronous vs. Asynchronous
- Basic Storage Elements
- Timing
- Folding & Pipeline

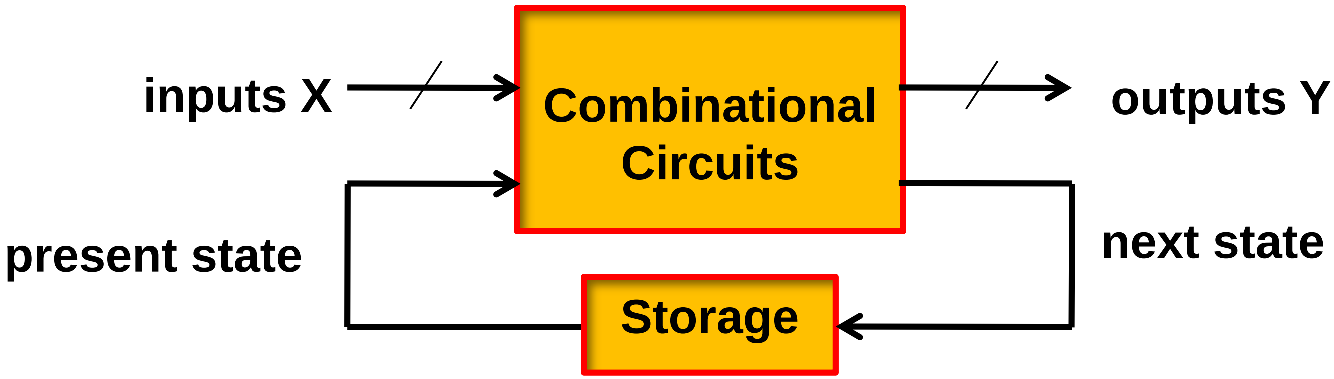
Sequential vs. Combinational

- **A combinational circuit:**

- **At any time, outputs depend only on present inputs**
  - Changing inputs changes outputs
- **No regard for previous inputs**
  - No memory (history)
- **Time is “ignored” !**
  - Time-independent circuit

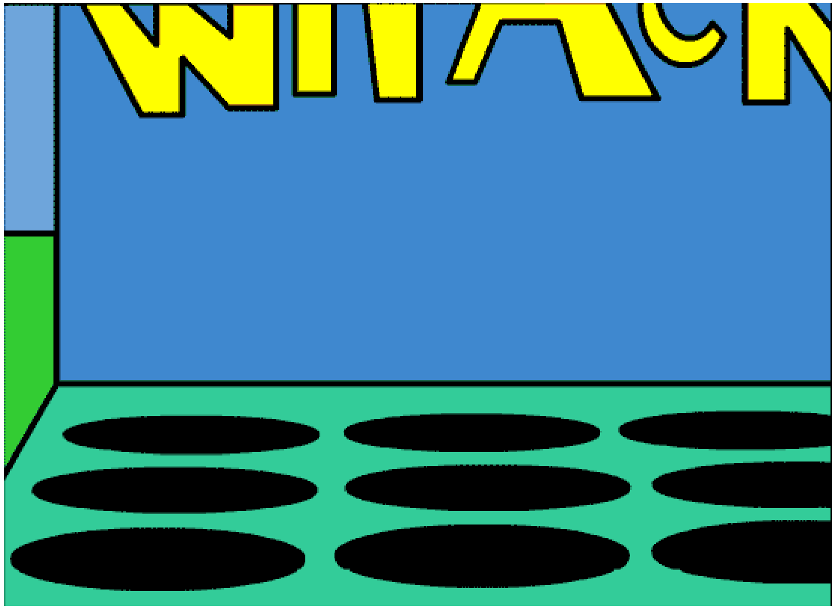
Sequential vs. Combinational

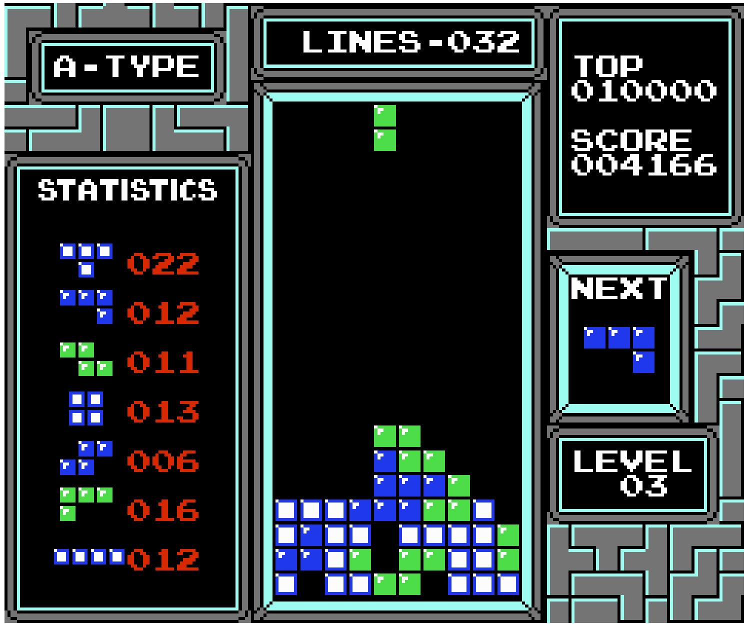
- **A sequential circuit:**



- **Outputs depends on inputs and past history of inputs**
  - Previous inputs can be stored into **storage elements**
  - **Input order matters**

Sequential vs. Combinational

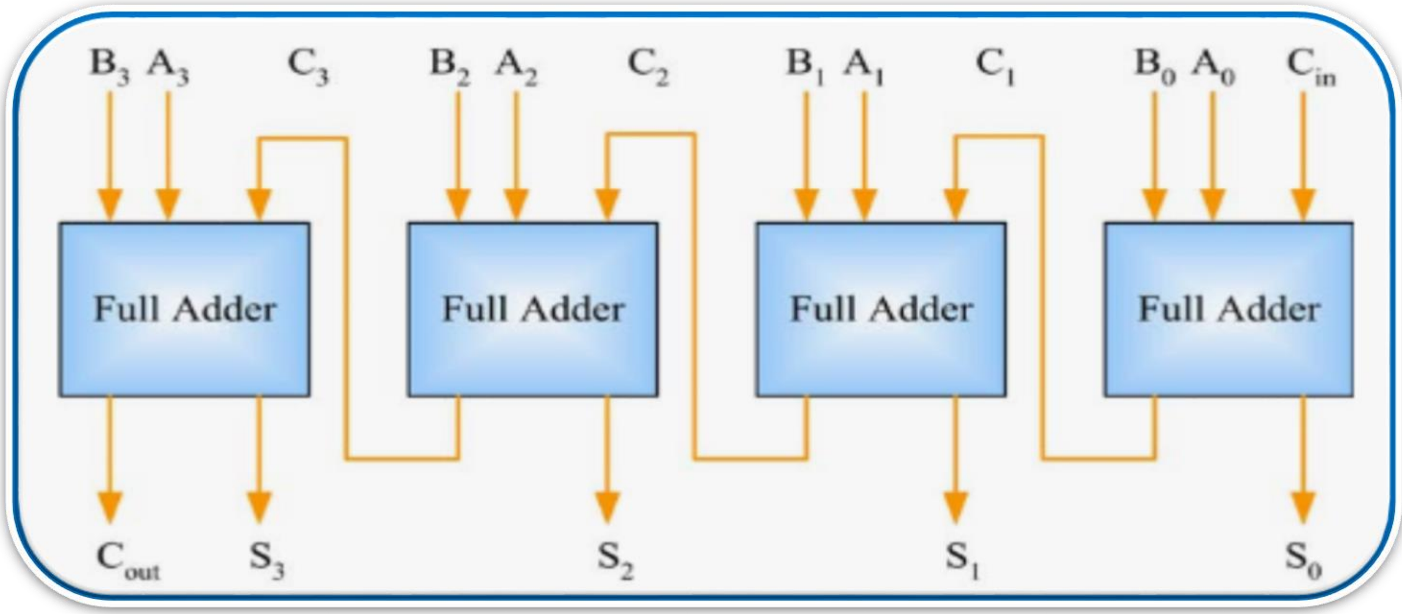




Sequential vs. Combinational: adders

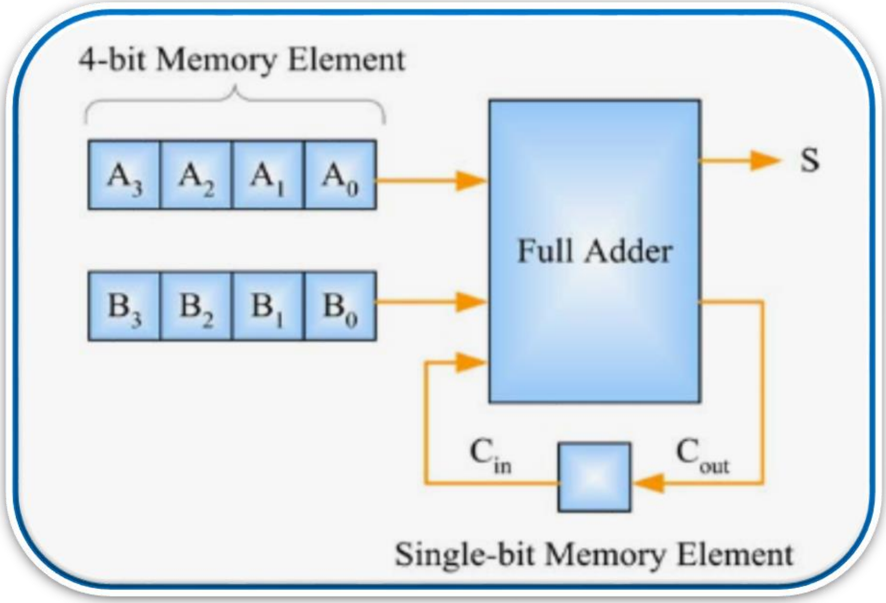
- **Calculate** $A_3A_2A_1A_0 + B_3B_2B_1B_0$

- **Combinational adder**
  - 4 full adders are required
  - One adder is active at a time slot



What we can do with storage elements?

- **Sequential Adder**



- **Folding!**
  - One full adder
  - 1-bit memory for carry
  - Two 4-bit memory for operators
- **4 clock cycles to get the output**

Outline

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- **Synchronous vs. Asynchronous**
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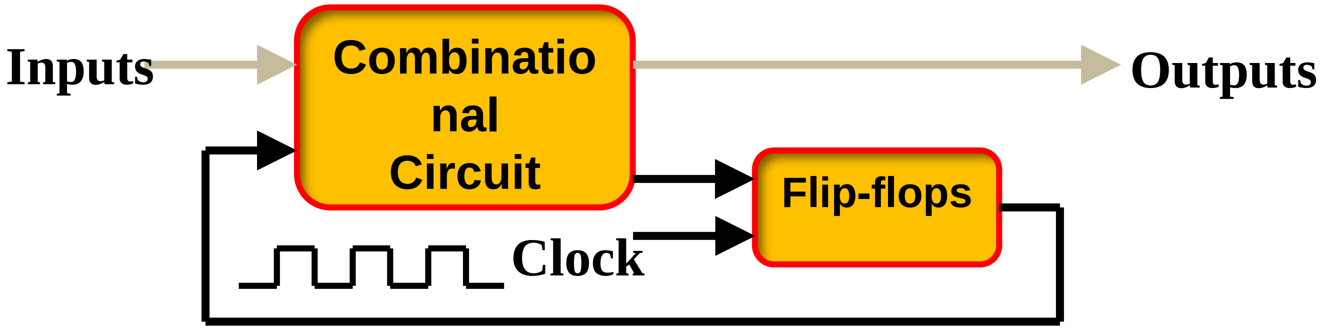
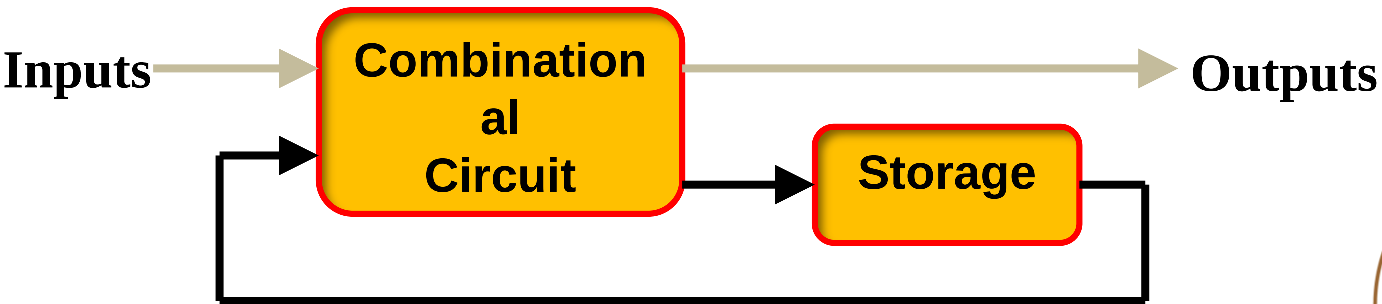
Synchronous vs. Asynchronous

Two types of sequential circuits:

- Synchronous: The behavior of the circuit depends on the input signal at discrete instances of time (also called **clocked**)



- Asynchronous: The behavior of the circuit depends on the input signals at ***any instance of time***



Synchronous vs. Asynchronous

- When you have a clock
- You know that washer takes 1 hour
- You put the laundry in the washer and leave
- Dry 1hour later

Synchronous vs. Asynchronous

- What if you don't have a clock …

Synchronous or Asynchronous?

- **Sync. Advantages: Simplicity to design, debug, and test**
  - Timing is controlled by one simple clock
  - No hand-shake circuits
  - Well supported by EDA tools
  - Recommended for **VLSI**
- **Sync. Disadvantages:**
  - Performance constrained by worst-case: critical path
  - Overhead for clock network
  - Less power efficient

We will focus on synchronous circuits in this course

Power Example

Power Group	Internal Power	Switching Power	Leakage Power	Total Power (%)	Attrs
io_pad	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000 (0.00%)	
memory	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000 (0.00%)	
black_box	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000 (0.00%)	
clock_network	0.0137	4.982e-03	3.116e-05	0.0187 (13.76%)	
register	3.029e-03	1.298e-03	8.082e-04	5.136e-03 (3.79%)	
combinational	0.0518	0.0557	4.337e-03	0.1118 (82.45%)	

Outline

- Sequential vs. Combinational
- Synchronous vs. Asynchronous
- **Basic Storage Elements**
- Timing
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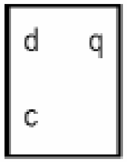
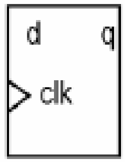
Basic storage element

- D latch: level sensitive
- D flip-flop (D-FF): edge sensitive



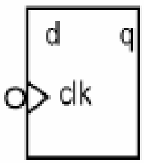
c	q*
0	q
1	d

D latch



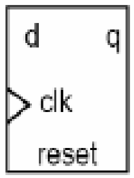
clk	q*
0	q
1	q
↑	d

pos-edge triggered D-FF



clk	q*
0	q
1	q
↓	d

neg-edge triggered D-FF



reset	clk	q*
1	-	0
0	0	q
0	1	q
0	↑	d

D-FF with reset

Why Reset?

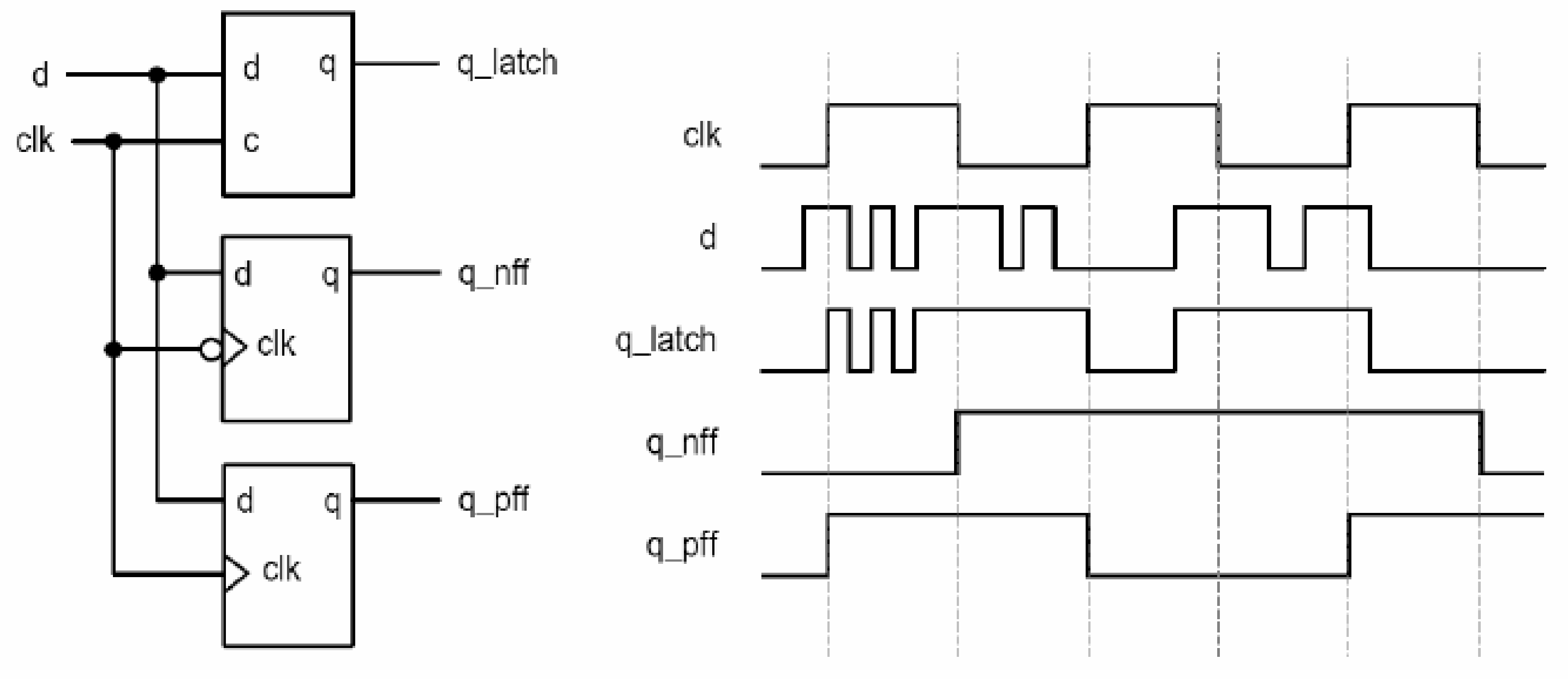
Initial State

Why Reset?

- **Initial State**
- **Some Hints**
  - Efficient sync. design for complicated system
  - The importance of sync initial state
  - A good clock is crucial
  - No timing violation

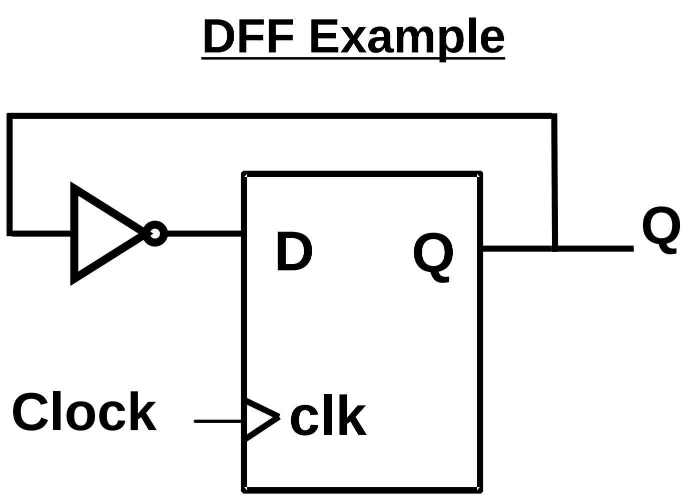
Basic storage element (Timing)

- D latch: level sensitive
- D flip-flop (D-FF): edge sensitive



Problem with Latches

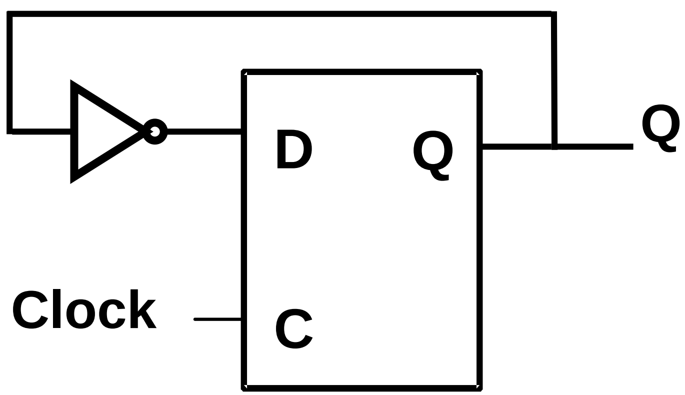
- Problem: A latch is transparent; state keep changing as long as the clock remains active
- Due to this uncertainty, latches can not be reliably used as storage elements.
- What is the output (Q), assume has been reset to 0



Problem with Latches

- Problem: A latch is transparent; state keep changing as long as the clock remains active
- Due to this uncertainty, latches can not be reliably used as storage elements.
- What happens if Clock=1? What will be the value of Q when Clock goes to 0?

Latch Example



Most EDA software tools have difficulty with latches.

Outline

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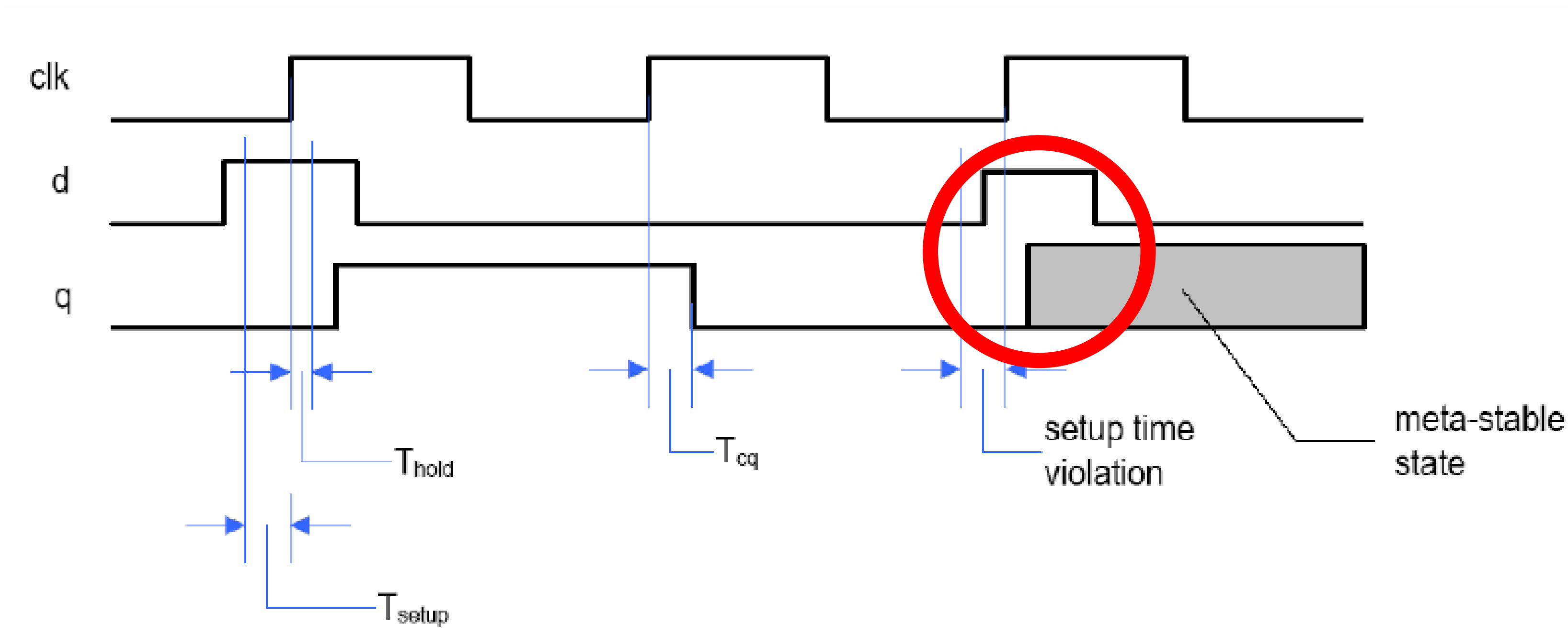
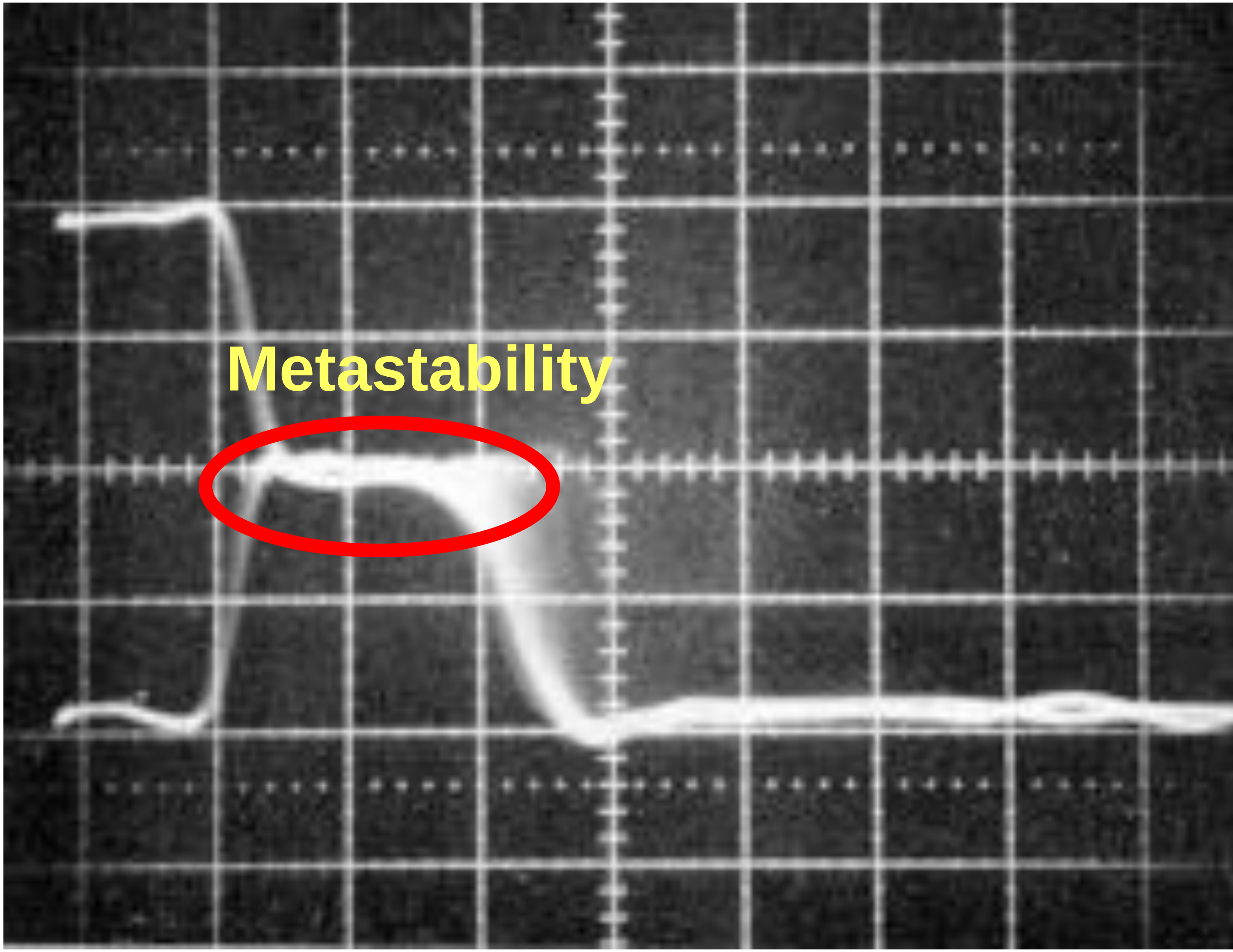
Flip Flops Timing

Very Important Timing Considerations!

- ***Setup Time*** **(Ts): The minimum time during which D input must be maintained before the clock transition occurs.**
- ***Hold Time*** **(Th): The minimum time during which D input must not be changed after the clock transition occurs.**

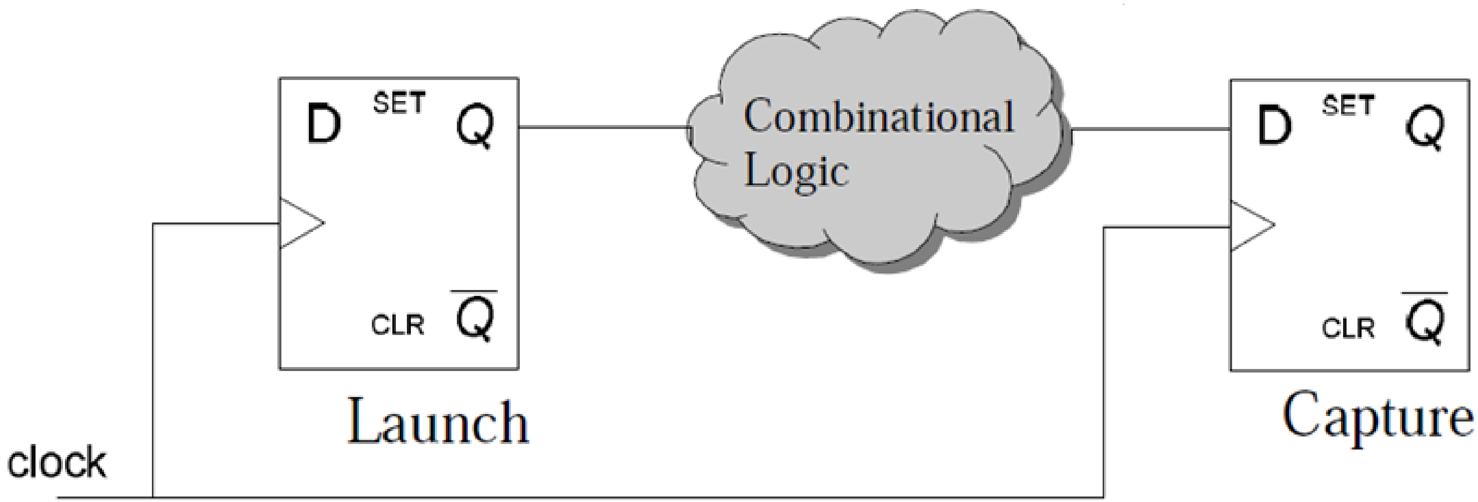


Metastability in Digital Logic



How fast can a synchronous circuit run?

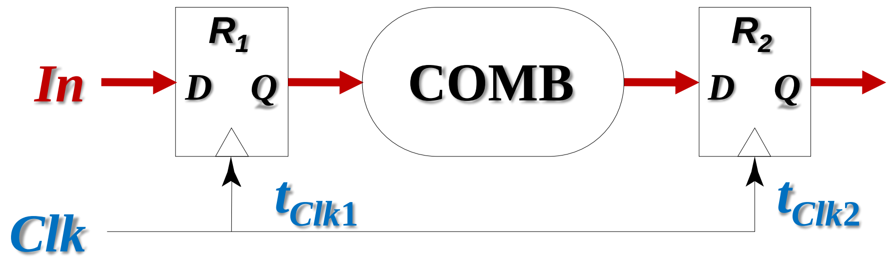
- **RTL (Register Transfer Level)**



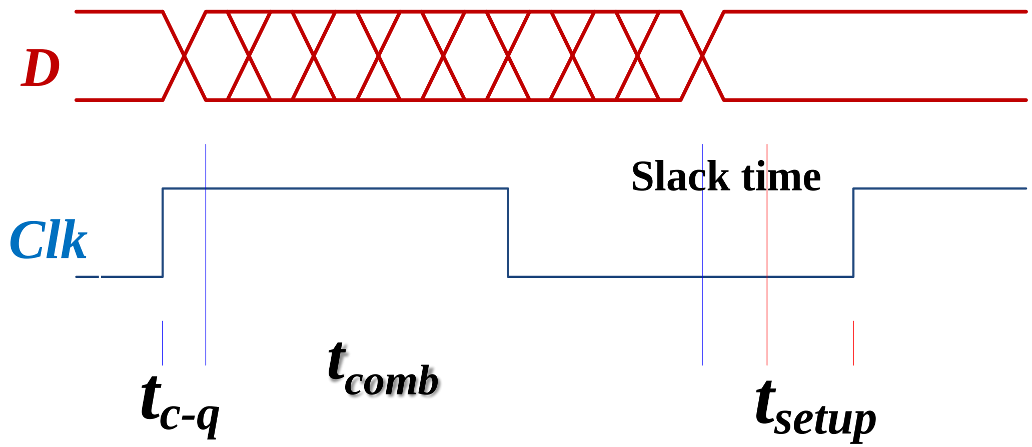
- **Timing analysis:**
  - Starting with the clock rising edge at the launch FF, end with the clock rising edge (next period or same period) of the capture FF

Setup Time

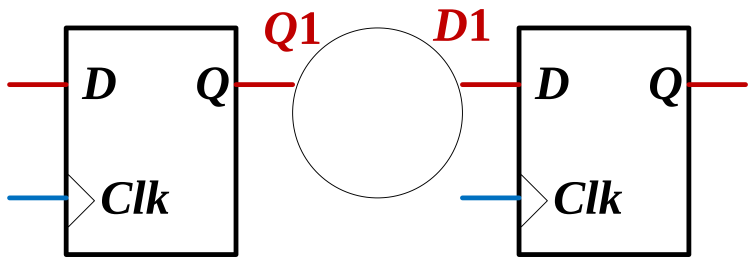
- **Setup Timing analysis:**
  - Starting with the clock rising edge at the launch FF, end with the clock rising edge (next period) of the capture FF



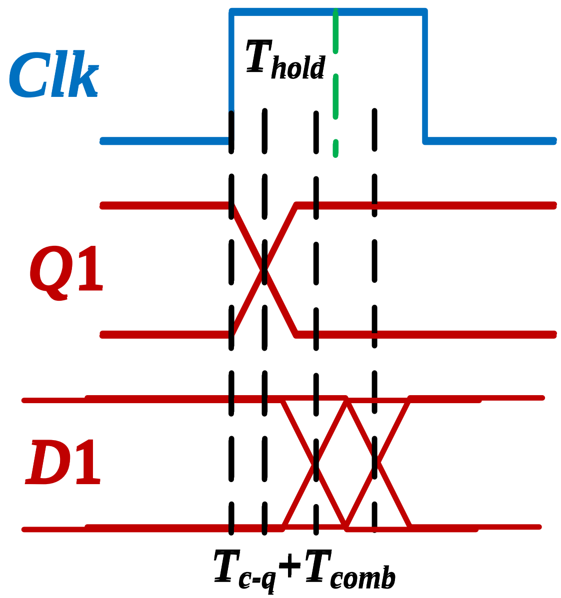
- **Data-Path (arrive time):** $T_{\text{Combinational logic}} + FF_{\text{launch}}(\text{clk} \rightarrow Q)$
- **Clock-Path (required time):** Clock Period - FF_{tSetup}
- **Timing constraint :** $T_{\text{Combinational logic}} + FF_{\text{launch}}(\text{clk} \rightarrow Q) < \text{Clock Period} - FF_{\text{tSetup}}$



Hold Time

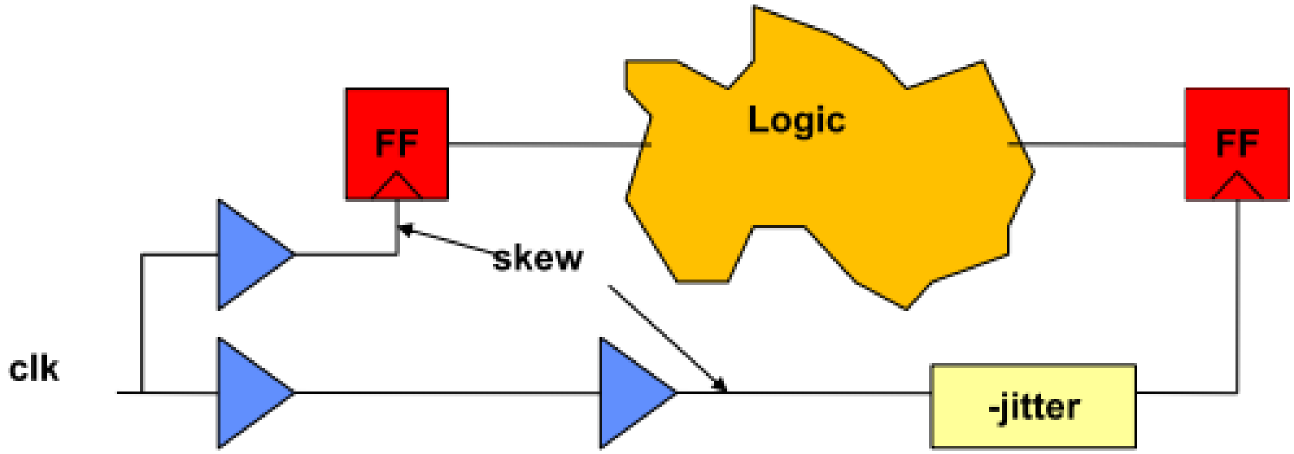


- **Hold Timing analysis:**
  - Starting with the clock rising edge at the launch FF, end with the clock rising edge (same period) of the capture FF
- **Data-Path (arrive time):** $T_{Combinational\ logic}$ + FF_{launch}(clk -> Q)
- **Clock-Path (required time):** FF_{tHold}
- **Timing constraint :** $T_{Combinational\ logic}$ + FF_{launch}(clk -> Q)> FF_{tHold}



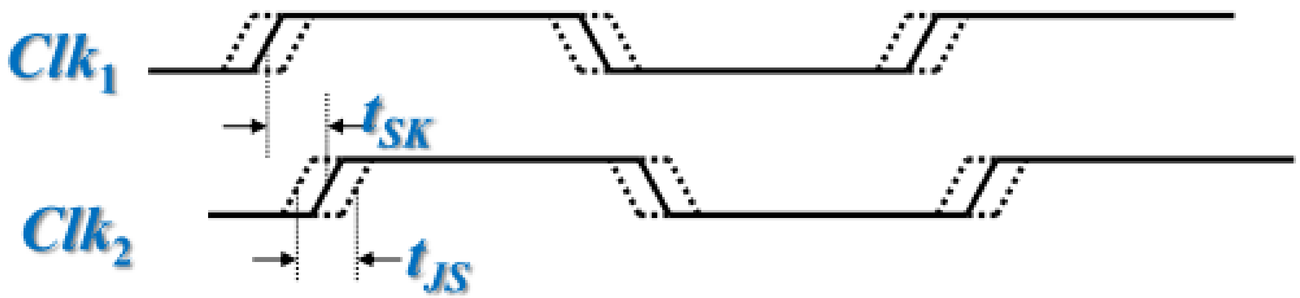
Clock uncertainty

- **Clock uncertainty = skew ±jitter**
- **Clock skew**
  - The (knowable) difference in clock arrival times at each flip-flop
  - Caused mainly by imperfect balancing of clock tree/mesh
- **Clock jitter**
  - The random (unknowable) difference in clock arrival times at each flip-flop
  - Caused by on-die process, V_{dd}, temperature variation, PLL jitter, crosstalk.
- **Clock tree to minimize clock uncertainty**

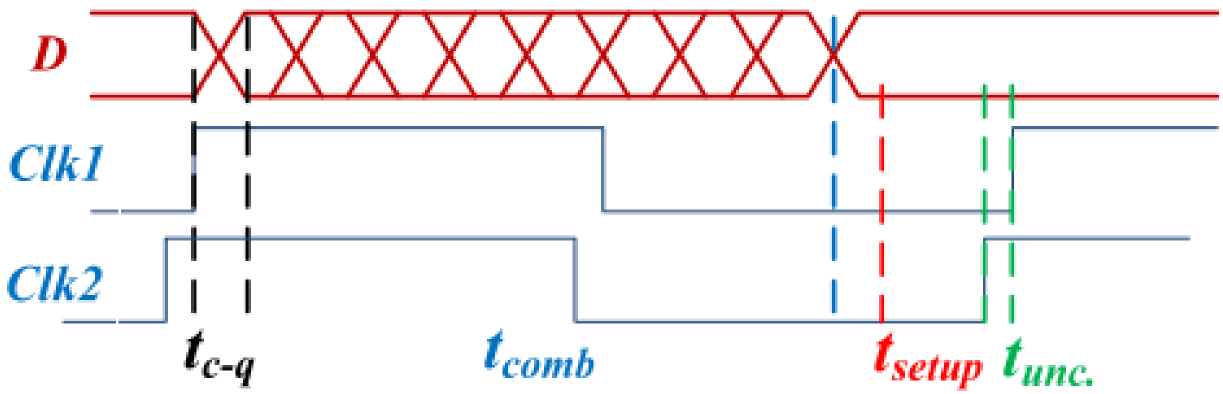


Clock uncertainty

- Clock uncertainty = skew ±jitter

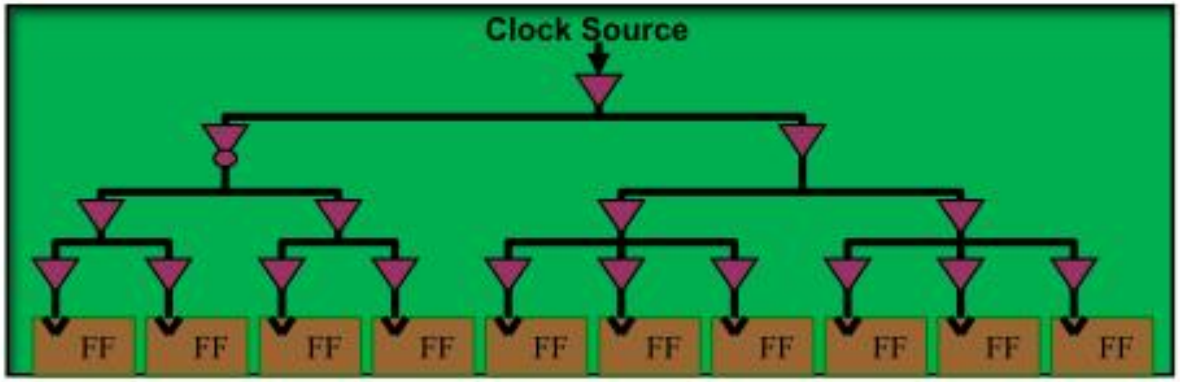


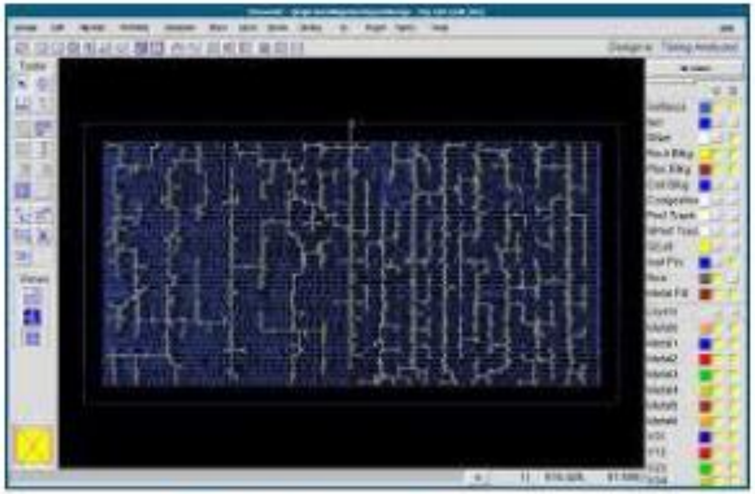
- Timing analysis with clock uncertainty



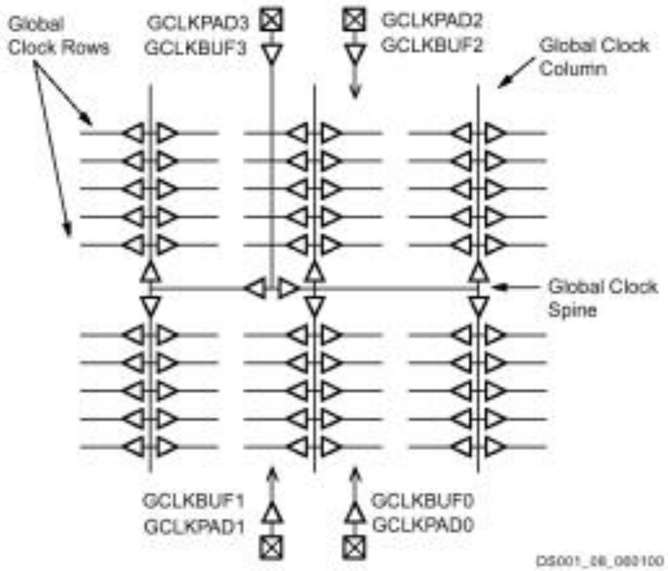
$T_{Combinational\ logic} + FF_{lauch}(clk \rightarrow Q) < Clock\ Period - FF_{tSetup}$ - Clock Uncertainty

Clock tree





Clock-tree Asic



Global clock network in Xilinx FPGA

Outline

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- Synchronous vs. Asynchronous
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- Timing
- **Folding & Pipeline**

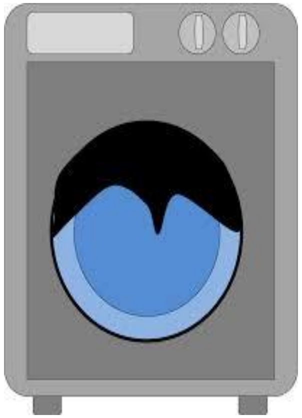
Pipeline

Acknowledgement:

- The following slides have been provided by Prof. Ward in September 2004.
- Reformatting of PowerPoint and addition of two more slide done September 2007 by Jens Sparsø.
- Slides are used in DTU course 02154 Digital Systems Engineering (fall 2008).
- Due to Joachim Rodrigues' position at DTU, I used some of the slides in EITF35.

Pipelining

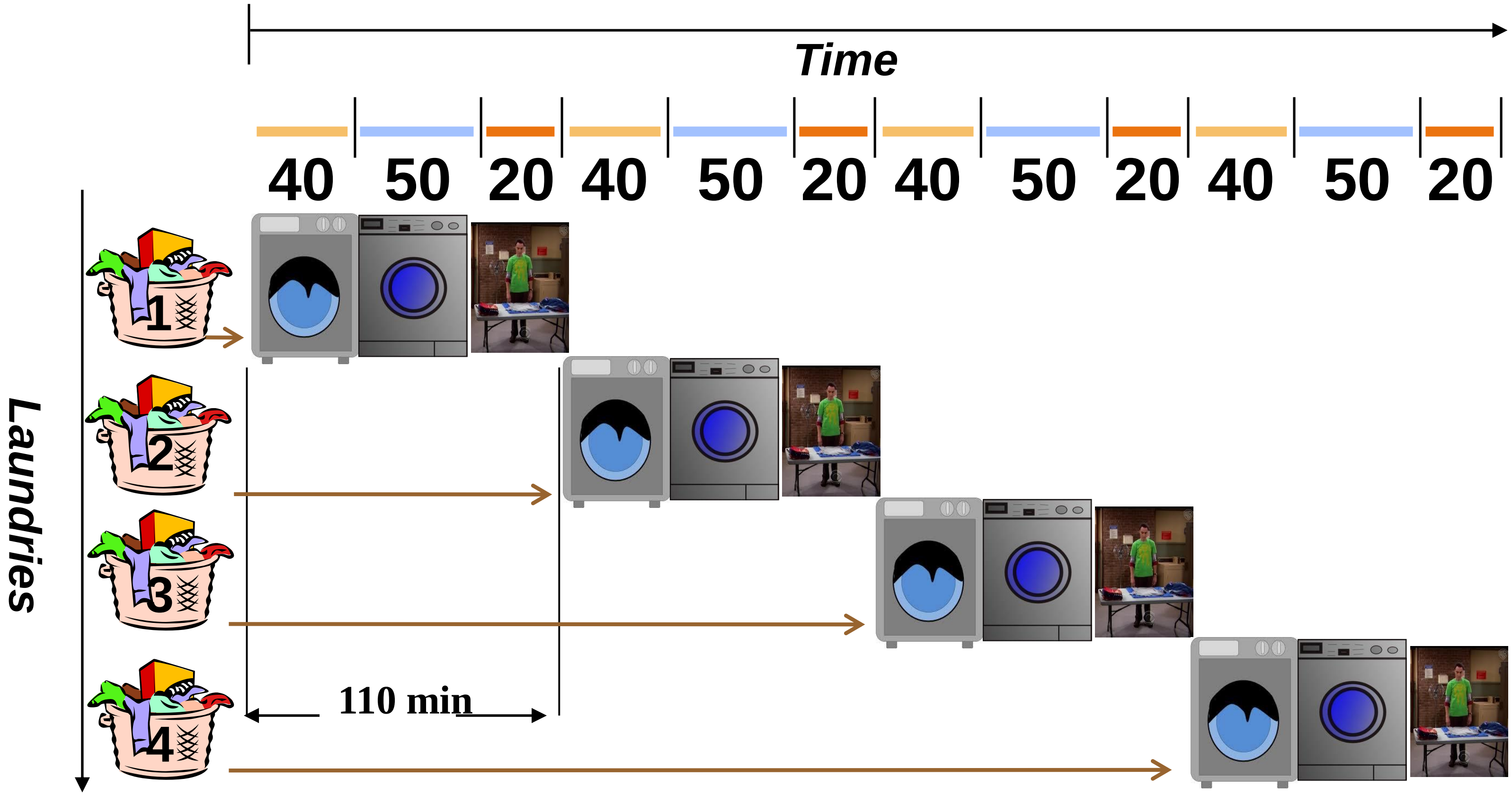
- **Start again from laundry room**



- **Small laundry has one washer, one dryer and one folder, it takes 110 minutes to finish one load:**
  - Washer takes 40 minutes
  - Dryer takes 50 minutes
  - “Folding” takes 20 minutes

- **Need to do 4 laundries**

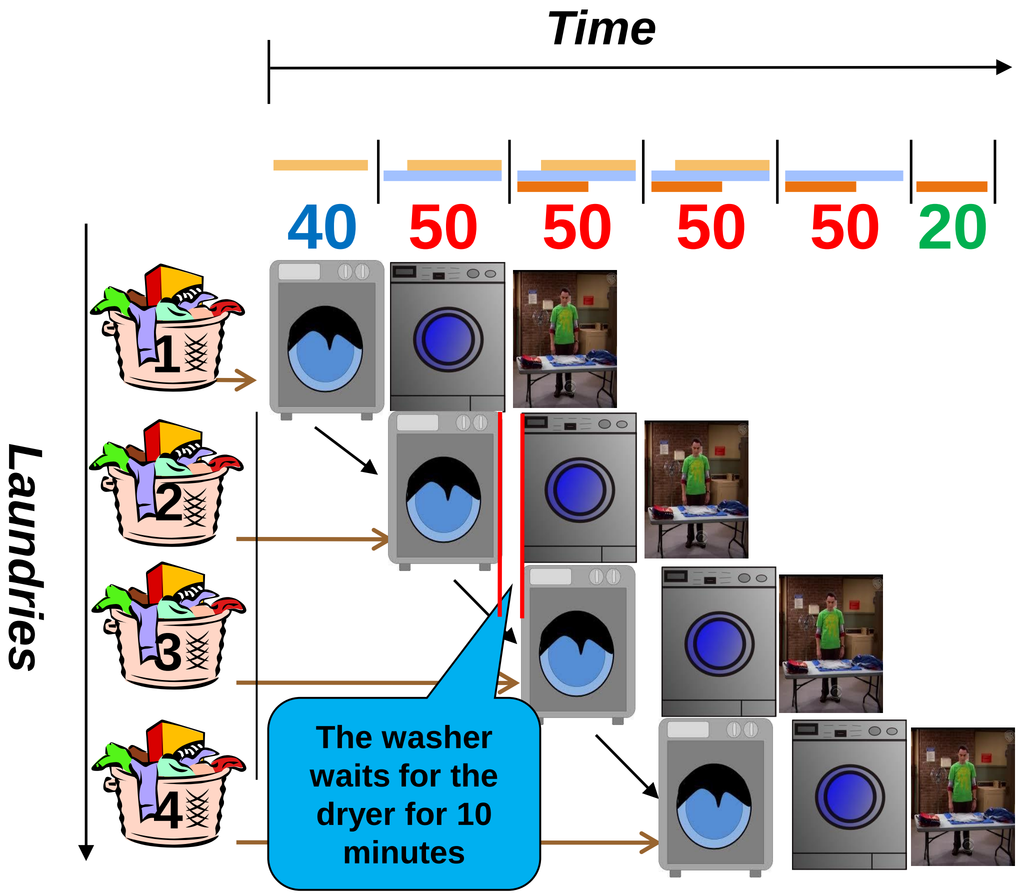
A not very smart way...



Total = N*(Washer+ Dryer+Folder)

= ___440___ mins

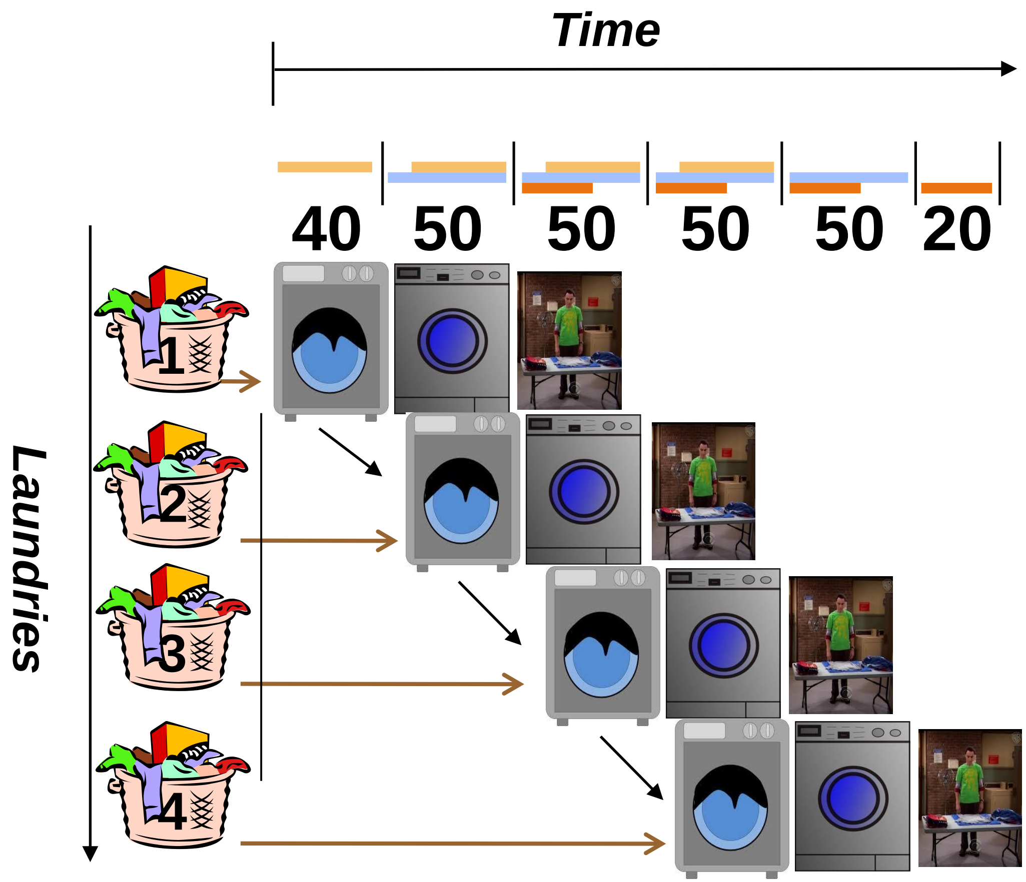
If we pipelining



Total = Washer+N*Max(Washer,Dryer,Folder)+Folder

= ___260___ mins

Pipeline Facts



- Multiple tasks operating simultaneously
- Pipelining doesn't help latency of single task, it helps throughput of entire workload
- Pipeline rate limited by slowest pipeline stage
- Unbalanced lengths of pipe stages reduces speedup
- Potential speedup ∝ Number of pipe stages

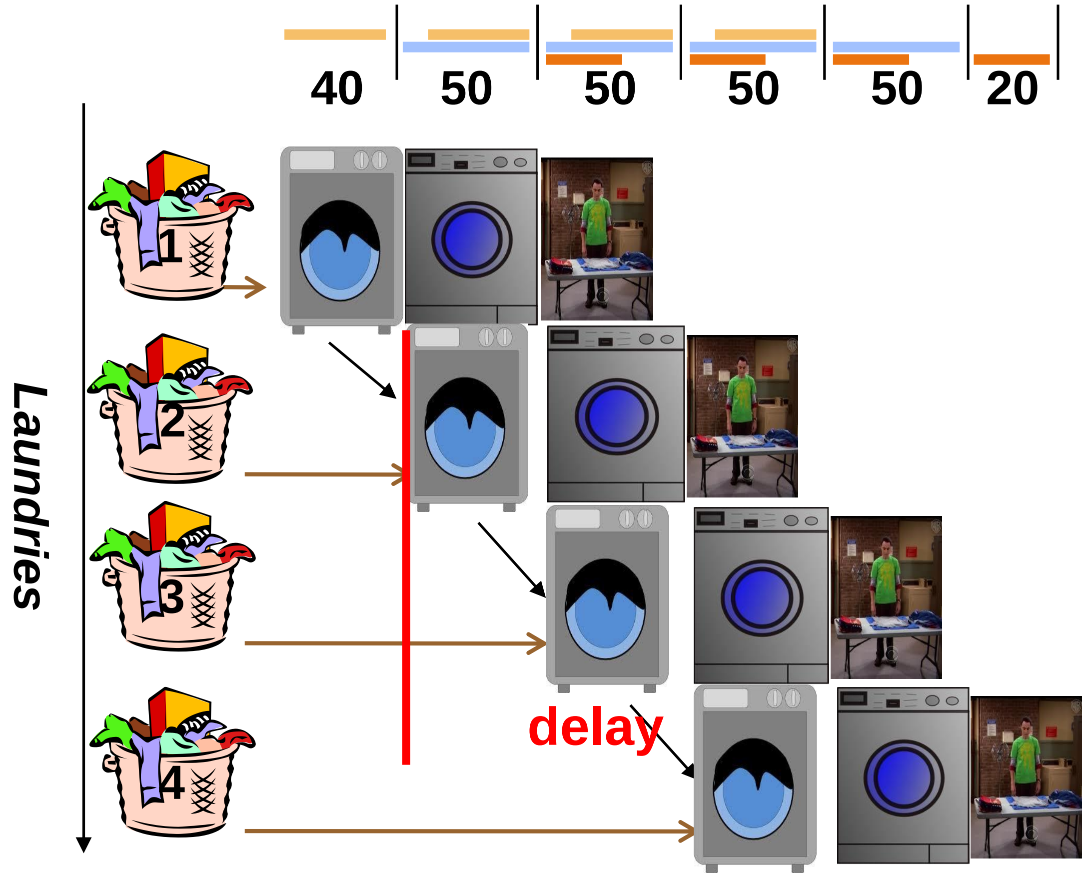
Some definitions

Very Important!

- **Latency: The delay from when an input is established until the output associated with that input becomes valid.**

  (non-pipeline Laundry = **110** *mins)*

  (pipeline Laundry = **120** *mins)*



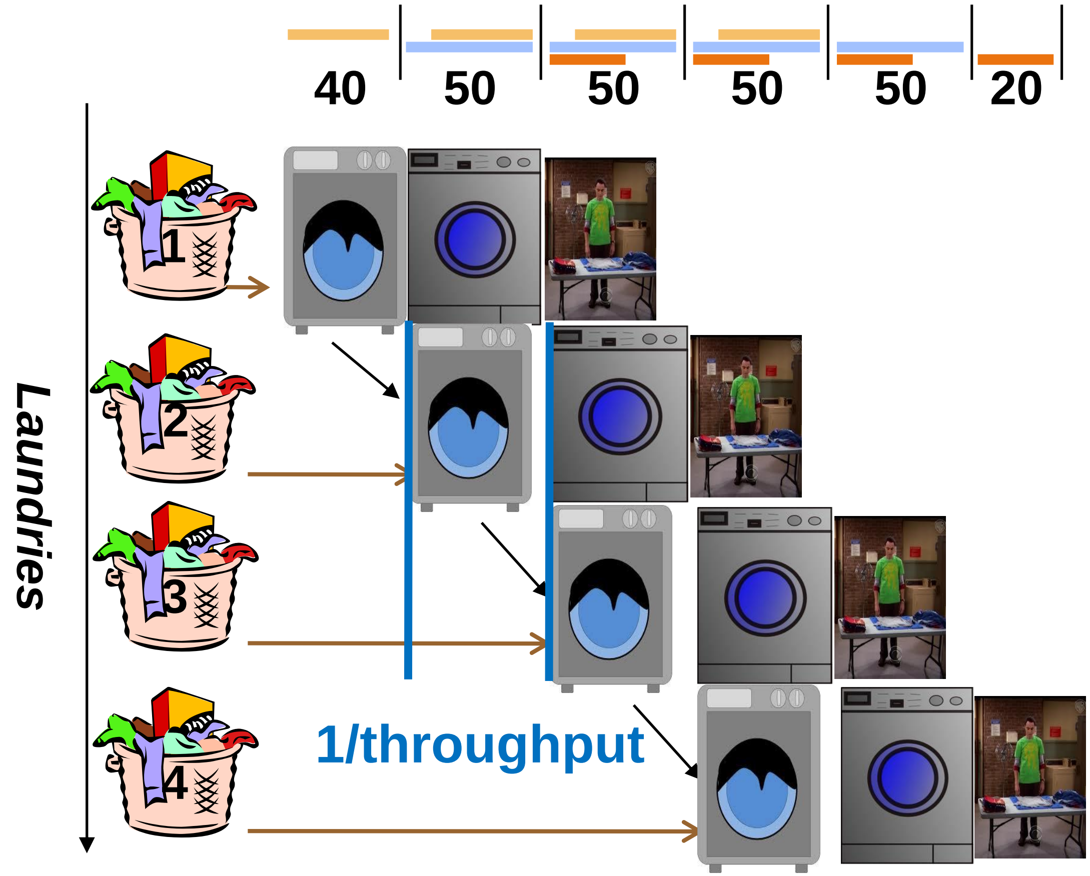
Some definitions

Very Important!

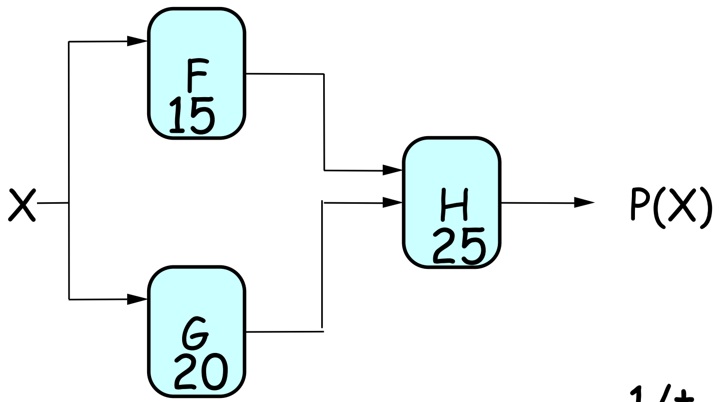
- **Throughput: The rate of which inputs or outputs are processed or how frequently a laundry can be loaded**

  (non-pipeline Laundry = **1/110** *outputs/min)*

  (pipeline Laundry = **1/50** *outputs/min)*

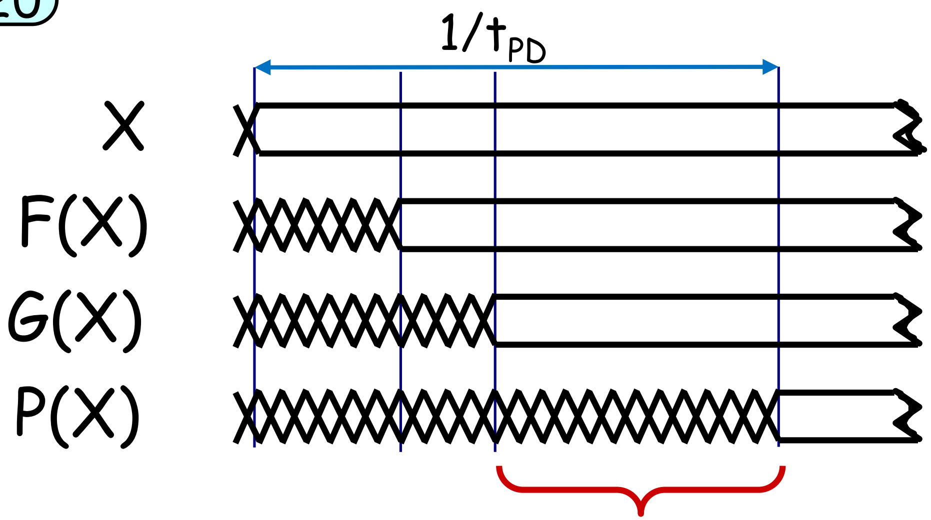


Okay, back to circuits…



- **Combinational logic:**
  latency = t_{PD},
  throughput = $1/t_{PD}$.

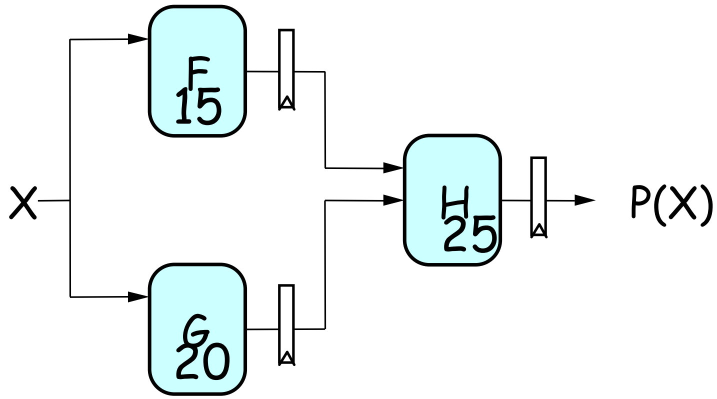
- **Can we use the hardware more efficiently?**



F & G are "idle", just holding their outputs stable while H performs its computation

Pipelined Circuits

use registers to hold H's input stable!



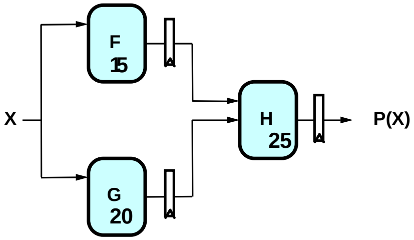
Pipelined circuit:

- 2-stage *pipeline*: if we have a valid input X during clock cycle j, P(X) is valid during clock j+2.
- Now F & G can be working on input X_{i+1} while H is performing its computation on X_i.

Suppose F, G, H have propagation delays of 15, 20, 25 ns and we are using ideal zero-delay registers:

	latency	throughput
un-pipelined	45	1/45
2-stage pipelined	50	1/25
	worse	better

Pipeline timing diagrams



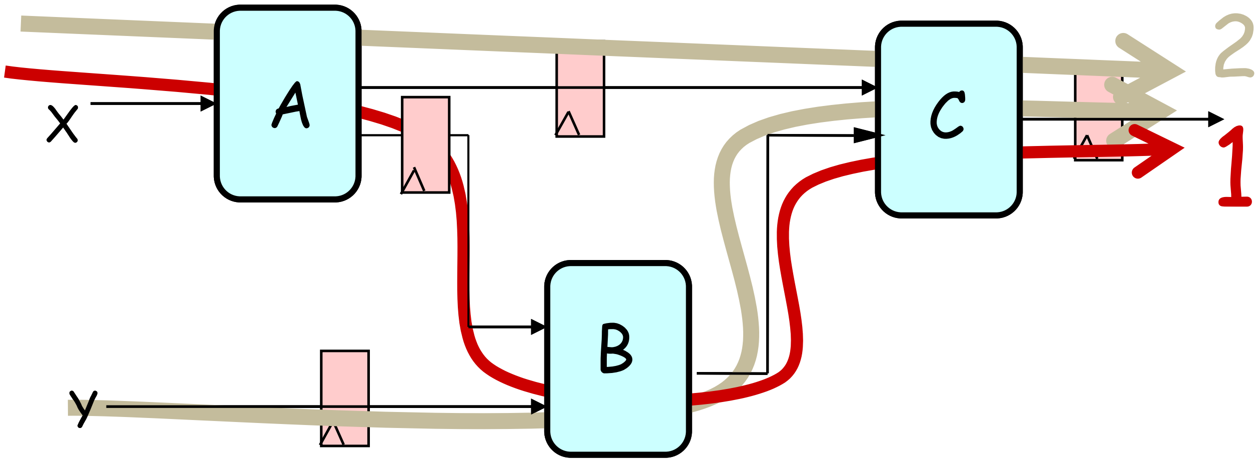
Clock cycle →

Pipeline stages ↓

	i	i+1	i+2	i+3	
Input	X_i	X_{i+1}	X_{i+2}	X_{i+3}	...
F Reg		$F(X_i)$	$F(X_{i+1})$	$F(X_{i+2})$	...
G Reg		$G(X_i)$	$G(X_{i+1})$	$G(X_{i+2})$	
H Reg			$H(X_i)$	$H(X_{i+1})$	$H(X_{i+2})$

Ill-formed pipelines

Consider a BAD job of pipelining:



Problem:

Some paths from inputs to outputs had 2 registers, and some had only 1!

Make sure every paths have been pipelined with same stages

Combinational, Folding and Pipelined

Combinational Circuits

- Advantage: low latency
- Disadvantage: low throughput, more hardware, low utilization

Folding

- Advantage: less hardware, high utilization
- Disadvantage: high latency, limited application

Pipeline

- Advantage: very high throughput
- Disadvantages: pipeline latency, more hardware

Thanks!