Hardware Synthesis of Complex System-on-Chip Designs for Embedded Systems Using a Behavioural Programming and Multi-Process Model

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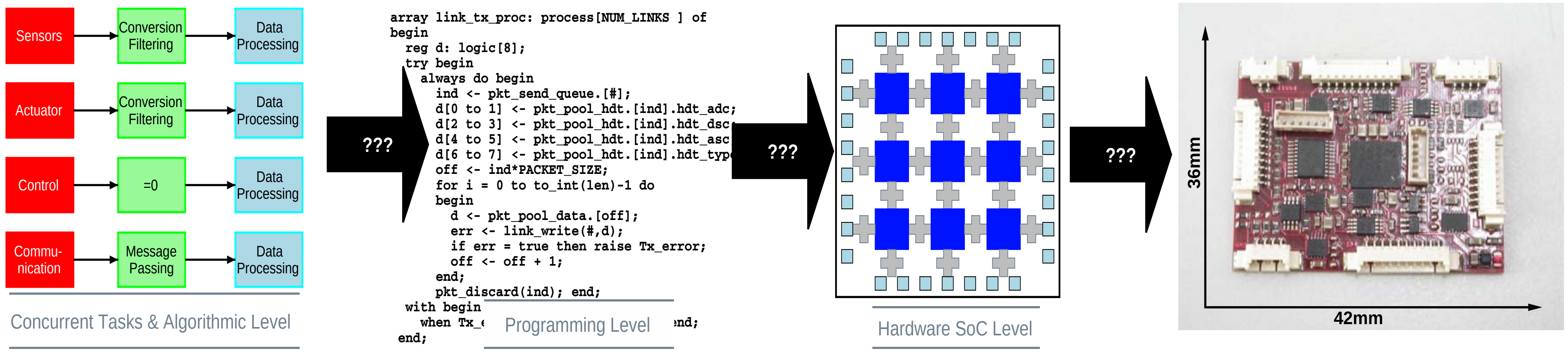
Overview

Goals and Questions in Embedded System Design

1. *Requirements* and applications of embedded systems in cyber-physical-systems (CPS) and Sensorial Materials (SM)
2. Design of *embedded systems* using different system architectures and design models
3. Behaviourial modelling on programming level using a *multi-process model* with interprocess-communication and atomic guarded actions
4. ConPro: **Concurrent Programming** of **complex** hardware and software systems
5. *Abstraction of hardware blocks* and access from programming level
6. *Design example*: **SensoNET** - a complete sensor network communication and data processing unit implemented 1. in FPGA/ASIC hardware, and 2. in software



```
array link_tx_proc: process[NUM_LINKS ] of
begin
  reg d: logic[8];
  try begin
    always do begin
      ind <- pkt_send_queue.[#];
      d[0 to 1] <- pkt_pool_hdt.[ind].hdt_adc;
      d[2 to 3] <- pkt_pool_hdt.[ind].hdt_dsc
      d[4 to 5] <- pkt_pool_hdt.[ind].hdt_asc
      d[6 to 7] <- pkt_pool_hdt.[ind].hdt_typ
      off <- ind*PACKET_SIZE;
      for i = 0 to to_int(len)-1 do
      begin
        d <- pkt_pool_data.[off];
        err <- link_write(#,d);
        if err = true then raise Tx_error;
        off <- off + 1;
      end;
      pkt_discard(ind); end;
  with begin
    when Tx_e                              nd;
end;
```

Cyber-Physical-Systems (CPS) And Sensorial Materials (SM)

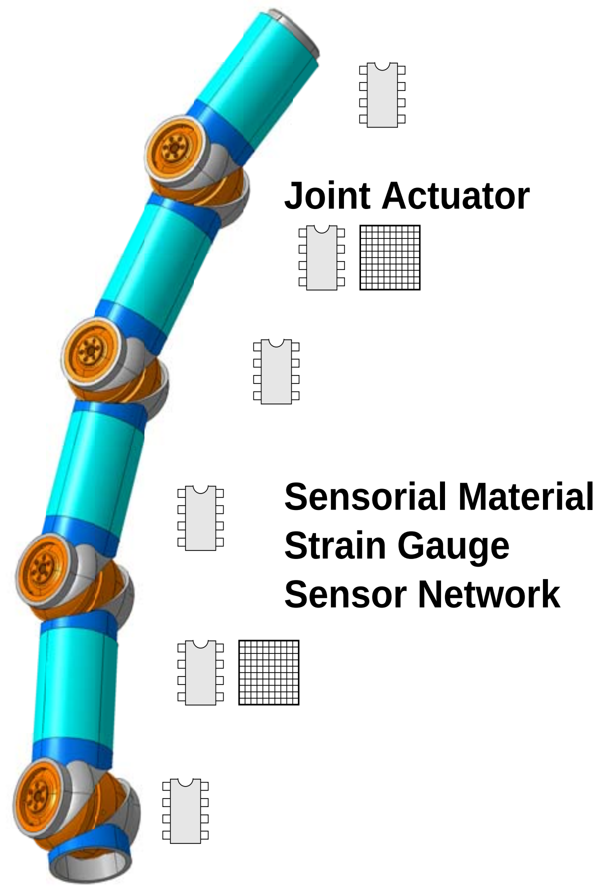
Cyber-Physical-Systems

- Defined by the interaction of the system with its environment
- Tight integration of computation and control with sensing and actuation physical components
- System components: sensors, actuators, data processing, communication ➟ application specific
- CPS must be reliable, adaptable, easy-to-use, and low-power
- **Operation defined on algorithmic level - requires concurrency**

Sensorial Materials

- Network of smart sensor nodes
- Sensor node: sensor, electronics, and data processing
- SM must be reliable, adaptable, highly minaturized, and low-power

Figure 1. ModuACT robot arm manipulator with network of sensorial materials and actuator joints



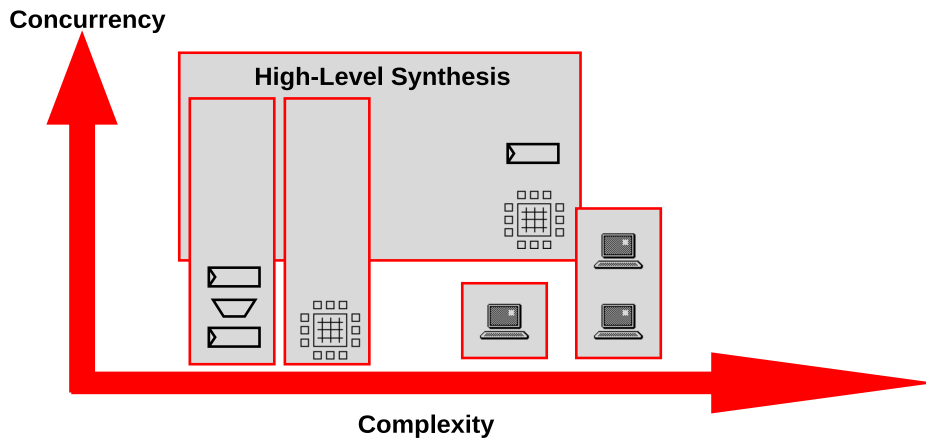
Embedded Systems: Architectures and Design Methodologies

Architectures

- Single-processor (SP)
- Multi-processor (MP)
- System-One-Chip (SoC)
- Multi-processor System-On-Chip (MPSoC)
- Network-On-Chip (NoC)
- **Application spec. RTL System-On-Chip**
- Application spec./extensible processor systems

Design Methodologies

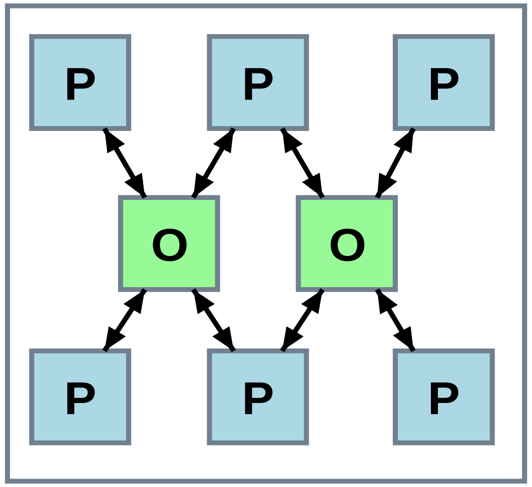
- Software development (C)
- Application specific: hardware-software-co design (C,SystemC)
- Application specific: hardware design on hardware behavioural level
- Top-down / Bottom-up design flows
- **Application specific: from behavioural programming level to hardware SoC using High-level Synthesis**



Concurrent Programming with a Multi-Process Model

- Execution Environment: processes executing instructions in sequential (imperative) order ➠ *Finite State Machine*
- Interaction between processes: always using global *shared objects* ➠ *Interprocess-Communication (IPC)*
- Interprocess-Communication = Synchronization: Mutex, Semaphore, ...
- Access of shared resources is serialized: *guarded atomic actions*
- Access of shared resources is managed by a *scheduler*: processes blocked untill resource is available.
- *Hardware Implementation*: Mapping of processes to concurrently executing state machines and RTL
- *Software Implementation*: Mapping of processes to threads (simulated multiprocessing)

Figure 2. Multi-Process Model [mod. CSP/Hoare]

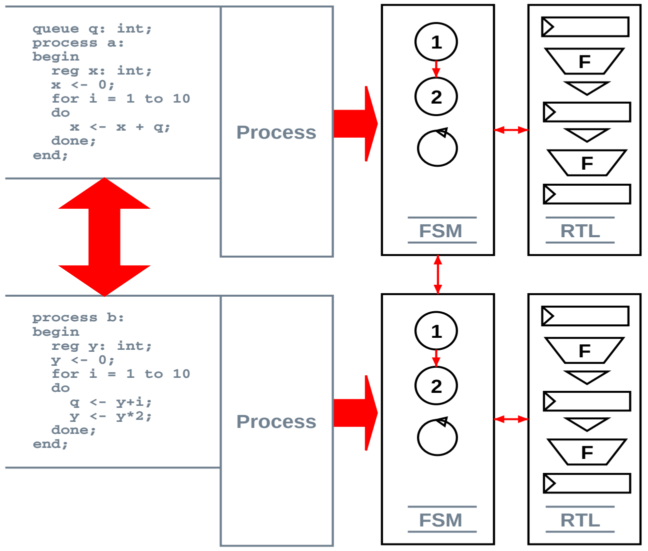


Multi-Process Model

P: Sequential Process

O: Shared Object

-: Atomic Guarded Action (Communication)



```
queue q: int;
process a:
begin
  reg x: int;
  x <- 0;
  for i = 1 to 10
  do
    x <- x + q;
  done;
end;
```

```
process b:
begin
  reg y: int;
  y <- 0;
  for i = 1 to 10
  do
    q <- y+i;
    y <- y*2;
  done;
end;
```

ConPro: From Concurrent Programming to Processing

Synthesis of massive parallel application specific SoC designs AND parallel software from algorithmic & behavioural programming level

Programming Model

- Communicating Sequentail Processes
- Guarded shared objects

Concurrency Model

- *Control path*: concurrently executed processes
- *Data path*: bounded instruction blocks

Synchronization

- Interprocess-Communication ➟ directly implemented in hardware: *Mutex, Semaphore, Event, Timer, Queue, ...*
- Shared objects guarded by mutex scheduler (atomic guarded access)

Execution Model

- Process: strict sequential
- HW:Finite-State-Machine & RTL
- SW: light weighted process/thread

Objects

- Data storage: registers (CREW), variables (RAM,EREW), ...
- Object orientated programming: abstract objects accessed with methods (like monitors)

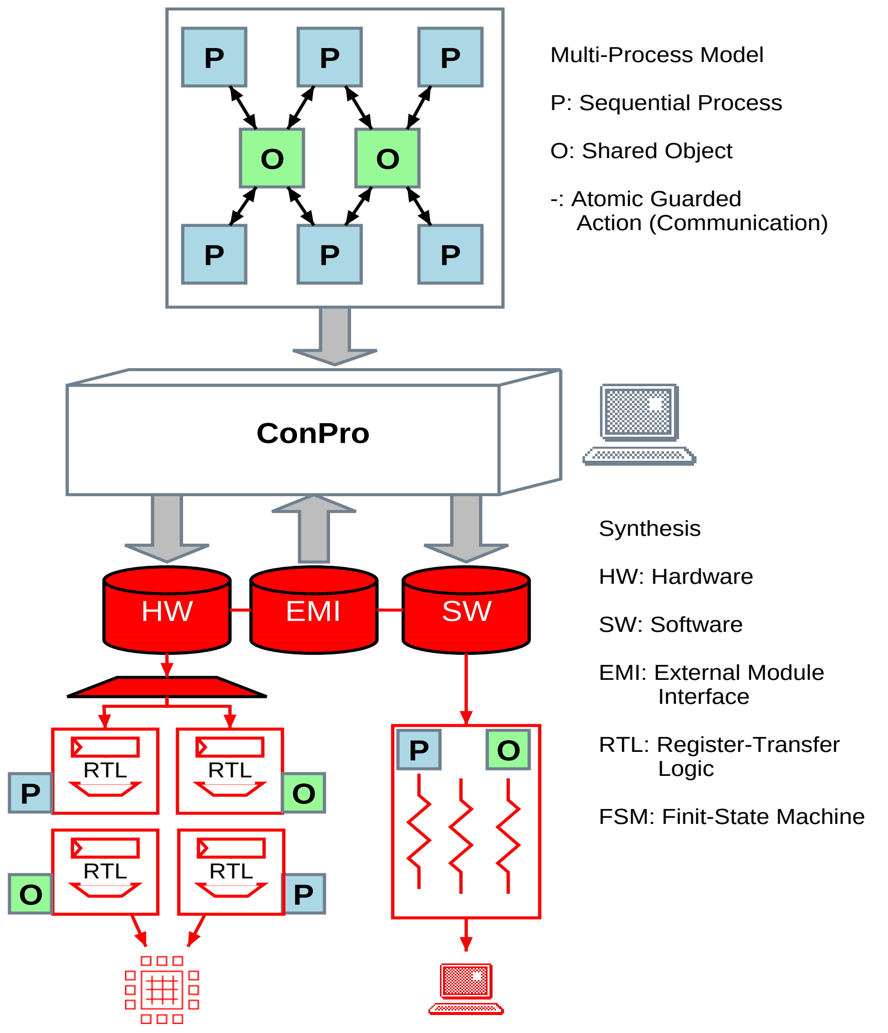
Programming Language

- Imperative with data and control statements
- Explicitly modelled parallelism
- Parameterization on block level: synthesis, scheduling, allocation, object parameters, ...

ConPro Synthesis

- Multi-stage synthesis flow (HW/SW*):
  - I. Parser, Lexer, Analysis
  - II. Transformations
  - III. Reference-Stack Scheduler & Optimizer
  - IV. Optimiziations (constant folding...)
  - V. Compiling of process instruction syntax tree to linear list of µCode (intermediate representation) using *parameterizable rule sets*
  - VI. Transformations
  - VII. Basicblock Scheduler & Optimizer
  - VIII. Compiling of state transition-graphs from µCode, finally VHDL
- *Hardware Implementation*: Mapping of processes to concurrently executing state machines and RTL
- *Software Implementation*: Mapping of processes to threads with *different abstraction levels* (high,mid,low)

Figure 3. ConPro Synthesis with HW/SW targets



ConPro Programming Language: Highlights

- Execution environment is a process:

```
process pxyz:
begin ... end;
```

- Shared function blocks (process env.):

```
function fxyz (x:int[8])
         return (t: bool):
begin ... end;
```

- Data types: true bit-scaled:

```
int[N], logic[N], char, bool
```

- Product types: structures and arrays:

```
type s: { x: int[8]; y: int[10];};
array a: reg[10] of int[5];
```

- Storage objects: registers, variables (in memory blocks), queues:

```
reg xyz: int[21];
var v1,v2: char in ram1;
```

- **Exceptions** `try .. raise .. with`

- Parameterizable block environments:

```
begin
end with param=value [and p2=v2..]
```

- Parameterizable abstract objects:

```
open ADT;
object o1: adt with width=10;
o1.write(x,1);
```

- Interprocess-communication = abstract object types

```
open Mutex; object mu1: mutex with
   scheduler="static";
```

- Control statements: branches, loops:

```
for i = 1 to 10 do ...
if x < y then ... else
while a = true do ...
match c with ...
z ← fxyz(1); -- Function call
mu1.lock (); -- ADTO call
```

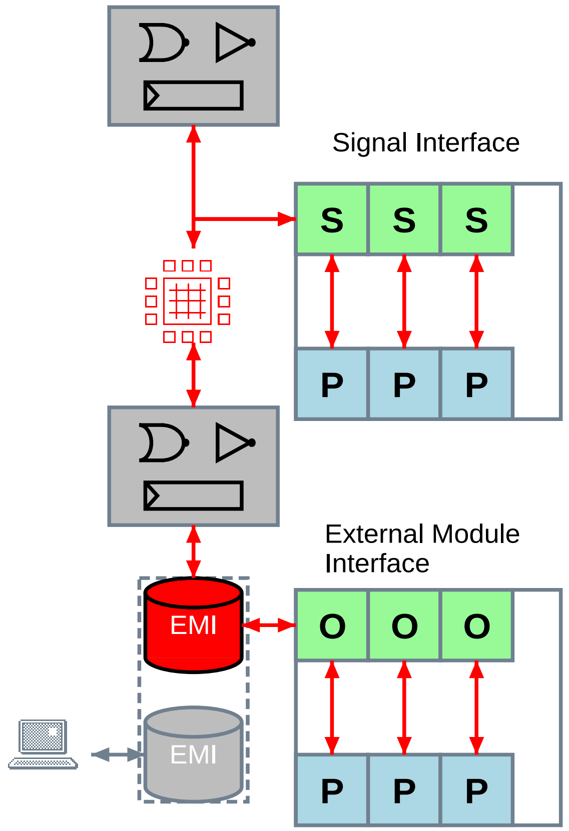
ConPro: Abstracting & Interfacing of Hardware Blocks

Component Structures and Signals

- **Signals** are interconnection elements without a storage model
- **Component Structures** bind signals to a port structure
- A component structure can be used 1. to instantiate and access external hardware, 2. to create the toplevel hardware interface
- Signals can be used in expressions

External Module Interface EMI

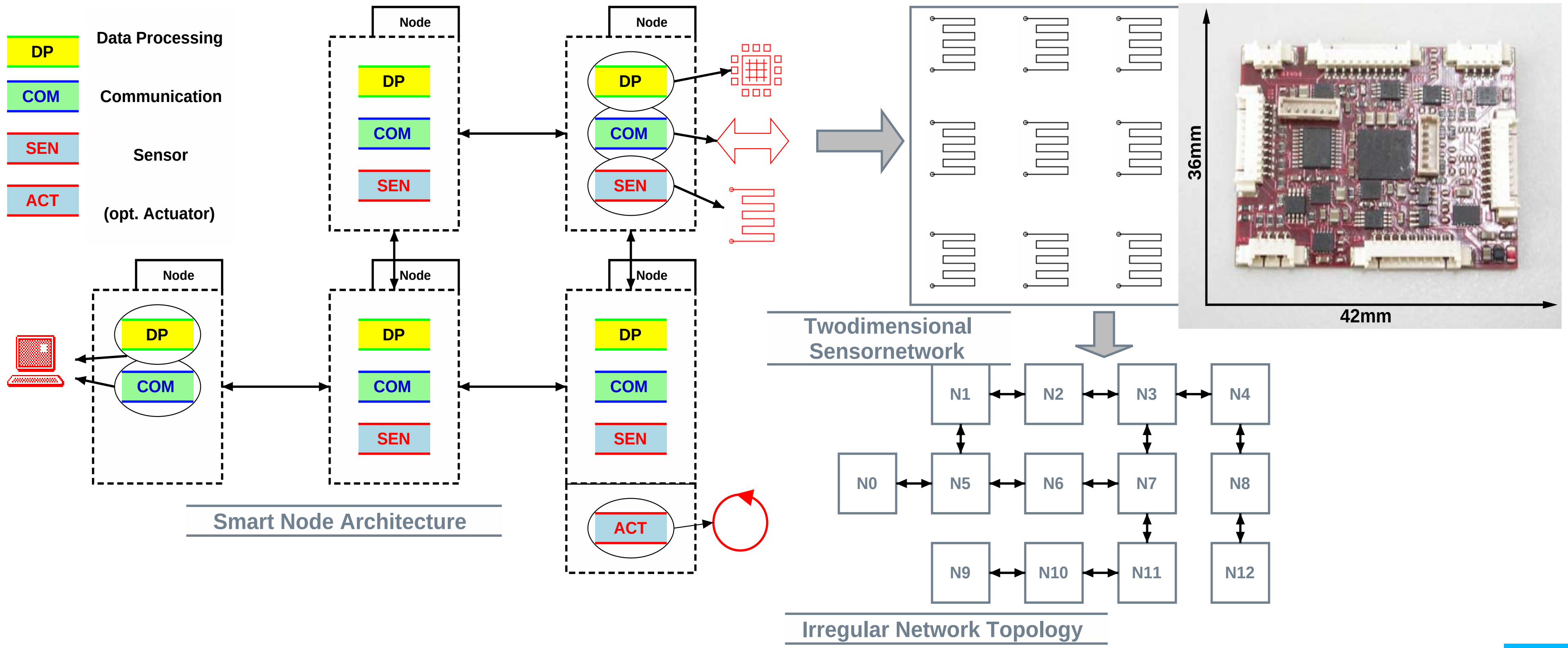
- **Abstraction & Interconnect** of hardware blocks to algorithmic programming level using abstract *objects* and *methods* to access hardware blocks.
- Hardware blocks are modelled on hardware behaviour level (VHDL) and meta language statements (interpreted during synthesis)
- Hardware blocks are accessed by a set of **methods** from programming level, e.g. read, write, and control operations
- EMI provides software models, too!



Design Example: SensoNET

- Complete application of a sensor node in a sensor network (sensorial mat.)
- Smart and robust communication with Simple Local Intranet Protocol SLIP
- Remote procedure call interface (RPC, application layer)
- Data acquisition with preprocessing of sensor signals

Figure 4. SensoNET used in sensorial material: network of smart strain gauge sensor nodes



- Mapping of algorithms and massive parallel data processing to SoC sensor node with high-level synthesis using ConPro: ➠ ❶ low power ❷ mina-turization ❸ low latency✓
- Mapping of same sources to software (C) using ConPro, too: ➠ ❶ interfacing computers ❷ test/simulation✓

Table 1. Characteristics of SensoNET implementation (HW: Hardware, SW: Software)

Parameter	Value
HLS source code, ConPro	~ 4000 lines, 34 processes 30 shared objects (16 queues, 2 timers)
HW: synthesized VHDL sources	~ 32000 lines
SW: synthesized C sources	~ 5500 lines
HW: FPGA, Xilinx Spartan III - 1000k	11261/15360 LUT (73 %), 2925 FF
HW: ASIC, standard cell library LSI_10K	~ 244k gates, 15k FF ≅ 2.5mm^2 | 0.18μm
HW: power consumption (FPGA board)	< 250mW (including analog electr.)
HW: performance benchmark R1*	82 clock cycles
SW: performance benchmark R1*	2305 unit machine instructions

*R1: Sequential part of message routing in SLIP

Summary and Outlook

Desgin of parallel SoC

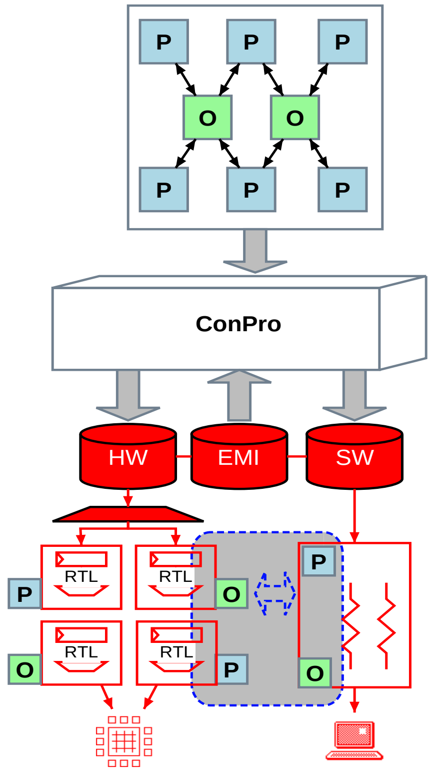
- Complex SoC systems with concurrency on control- and data path level can be efficiently designed from programming level
- The concurrent multi-process model with interprocess-communication and guarded atomic access of shared resources allows designing of complex parallel systems
- Hardware blocks are abstracted and accessed using a method based object-orientated programming style

Design of parallel software

- Parallel software can be synthesized using the same synthesis frame work and programming language

Outlook: Design of distributed systems

- From parallel to distributed systems
- Actually shared objects on hardware level are accessed by signals ➠ transformation of signals to message based communication
- Objects and processes distributed over hardware and software components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