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4.4 A 1.3TOPS/W @ 32GOPS Fully Integrated 10-Core SoC for IoT End-Nodes with 1.7 μ W Cognitive Wake-Up from MRAM-Based State-Retentive Sleep Mode

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4.4 A 1.3TOPS/W @ 32GOPS Fully Integrated 10-Core SoC for IoT End-Nodes with 1.7 μ W Cognitive Wake-Up From MRAM-Based State-Retentive Sleep Mode

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The Internet-of-Things requires end-nodes with ultra-low-power always-on capability for long battery lifetime, as well as high performance, energy efficiency and extreme flexibility to deal with complex and fast-evolving near-sensor analytics algorithms (NSAAs). We present *Vega*, an always-on IoT end-node SoC capable to scale from a 1.7 μ W fully retentive *cognitive* sleep mode up to 32.2GOPS (@49.4mW) peak performance on NSAAs, including mobile DNN inference, exploiting 1.6MB of state-retentive SRAM, and 4MB of non-volatile MRAM. To meet the performance and flexibility requirements of NSAAs, the SoC features 10 RISC-V cores: one core for SoC and IO management and a 9-cores cluster supporting multi-precision SIMD integer and floating-point computation. Two programmable machine-learning (ML) accelerators boost energy efficiency in sleep and active state, respectively.

As shown in Fig. 1, the SoC consists of two main switchable power domains (SoC and Cluster), plus an always-on domain operating from 0.6V to 0.8V supplied by two commercial off-the-shelf on-chip DCDC plus an LDOs from 3.6V (VBAT). Two body-bias generators are included for process compensation of SoC and Cluster domains. A Power Management Unit (PMU), clocked by a 1MHz internal ring oscillator, manages transitions between the power states of the SoC. The wake-up sources are an external pad, an RTC, and the power-gateable Cognitive Wake-up Unit (CWU) implemented with UHVT standard cells. The CWU (Fig. 2) enables autonomous ML-based classification of sensor data patterns while the SoC remains in deep sleep. The CWU interfaces with external sensors using 4 SPI interfaces; sensor data is classified by a novel hyper-dimensional computing (HDC) [1] accelerator that supports binary HD-vectors of 2048 bits stored in a 4kB associative latch-based Standard Cell Memory (SCM). The HDC encoding and classification algorithm is stored in a secondary user-programmable 200B microcode SCM that orchestrates the 512-bit wide datapath and, conditionally on the classification outcome, triggers the PMU to wake up the SoC. When operating from the 32kHz reference clock, the SWU consumes 1.69 μ W at 25°C (1 μ W dynamic, 690nW leakage) while classifying data in real-time from 3 SPI peripherals (16 bit, 150SPS/channel). With 31nW/kHz, the SWU logic's dynamic power is 20% lower than the SPI dynamic I/O power (40nW/kHz). To retain the SoC program and data when sleeping, the physical SRAM banks can selectively be configured in retentive mode, leading to retention power ranging from 1.2 to 112 μ W for 16kB to 1.6MB of state-retentive L2 SRAM. A 4MB non-volatile Magnetoresistive Random Access Memory (MRAM) resides in an independent switchable power domain. Warm boot can either be performed from L2 SRAM or from the MRAM; in the latter case, sleep power for data retention is zero, but the program must be restored into L2 after wake-up.

The SoC Domain is an advanced MCU featuring a RISC-V processor named Fabric Controller (FC) and several peripherals, including an 1.6 Gbit/s DDR interface supporting external IoT DRAMs such as Cypress Semiconductor's HyperRAM (Fig. 1). The cluster, built around 9 70kGE 4-pipeline stage RISC-V cores, is turned on and adjusted to the required frequency when applications running on the FC offload computation-intensive kernels. The cores share data on a 128kB shared multi-banked L1 memory through a 1-cycle latency logarithmic interconnect. The cluster L1 memory can serve 16 parallel memory requests with <10% contention rate even on data-intensive kernels, delivering up to 28.8GB/s at 450MHz. The program cache is hierarchical: 512B private per-core plus 4kB of 2-cycle latency shared cache to maximize efficiency with data-parallel code. The RISC-V cores feature extensions (RVC32IMF-Xpulp) for NSAAs, such as hardware loops, post-incremented LD/ST, Single Instruction Multiple Data (SIMD) such as dot products operating on narrow 16- and 8-bit data types. The cores share 4 FP units, supporting FP32, FP16 and bfloat operations. Fine-grain parallel thread dispatching is accelerated by a dedicated hardware event unit, which also manages clock gating of idle cores waiting for synchronization and enables resuming execution in 2 cycles. ISA extensions coupled with parallelism and optimized memory hierarchy deliver a MAC/cycle performance 62x larger than a baseline RISC-V ISA running on a single core, similar to [2]. The cluster delivers up to 15.6 8-bit GOPS and up to 614 GOPS/W, and up to 3.3 GFLOPS and 129 GFLOPS/W, on GP processors, demonstrating leading-edge performance on a wide range of NSAA (Fig. 3). Efficiency can be further increased exploiting a dedicated ML accelerator (HW computing element - HWCE) sharing L1 memory with the RISC-V cluster through four additional ports for streamlined zero-copy HW-SW cooperation. The HWCE

has three multi-precision (4b/8b/16b) 3x3 convolution units with 27 MACs in total, as well as integrated normalization / activation, leading to 32.2 GOPS and 1.3TOPS/W. Fig. 4 shows performance and efficiency of multi-precision matrix multiplication running on General-Purpose (GP) processors and 8-bit DNN workloads running on the SoC and on the Cluster.

The proposed SoC features a three-levels memory architecture: L1 and L2 are globally addressed, while MRAM and off-chip HyperRAM are mapped on private spaces. Memory is explicitly managed by means of two DMA engines (Cluster and I/O), removing area/power overheads of cache coherency. Full overlap of L3/L2, L2/L1 transfers with computation is achieved by means of tiling and double buffering, orchestrated by one of the nine cluster cores. The cluster DMA has 4 32-bit ports on the L1 interconnect, enough to saturate 7.2 GB/s@450 MHz read/write aggregate bandwidth of the 64-bit AXI4 cluster bus (Fig.1). The DMA features 2D transfers to ease data tiling. The SoC I/O DMA transfers data in a fully autonomous way between the I/O peripherals (including the HyperRAM) and the L2 memory. The MRAM resides in a dedicated clock domain (1 to 40 MHz), and is connected to the I/O DMA with dual-clock FIFOs (Fig. 1), with 320 MB/s of peak read bandwidth consuming 6.2 mW.

In Fig. 5, we show end-to-end fully on-chip inference of a MobileNetV2 (depth multiplier=1.0, input size=224x224) [5] with int8 weights and activations, achieving full-precision accuracy (71.8%). Full-network weights are stored in non-volatile MRAM, while intermediate in/out tensors are allocated in L2 and deallocated as soon as they are consumed by following layers. To use the cluster, data is split in working tiles so that for each tile double-buffered weights and in/out collectively fit the 128 KB L1. Computation is organized so that computation and data transfers are fully overlapped. While the current layer is run, next-layer weights are prefetched from MRAM to L2 with the I/O DMA, as the MRAM is not directly connected to the L1. At the same time, a single cluster core orchestrates the double-buffered copy of in/out/weight tiles from L2 to L1 using the Cluster DMA; the other 8 cores compute on available tiles. End-to-end inference of MobileNetV2 requires 84.7ms @ 250MHz and 1.19mJ per frame - 3.5x less energy than when using off-chip HyperRAM for weight storage.

Fig. 6 shows a comparison with SoA. With respect to fully programmable IoT end-nodes [2][3], the proposed SoC delivers more than 1.3x - 2x better performance and 3.2x - 4.3x better efficiency on NPAA workloads. With respect to most efficient hardware-accelerated IoT end-nodes [4], it performs with similar energy efficiency on DNN inference workloads at 5.5x better performance. On non-DNN, NSAA workloads, our SoC achieves 10x and 2.5x higher performance and energy-efficiency, respectively. The proposed SoC is the first in his class capable of fully on-chip execution of SoA mobile DNN (MobileNetV2). Figure 7 shows a die micrograph, highlighting system components included in the measurements.

Acknowledgments

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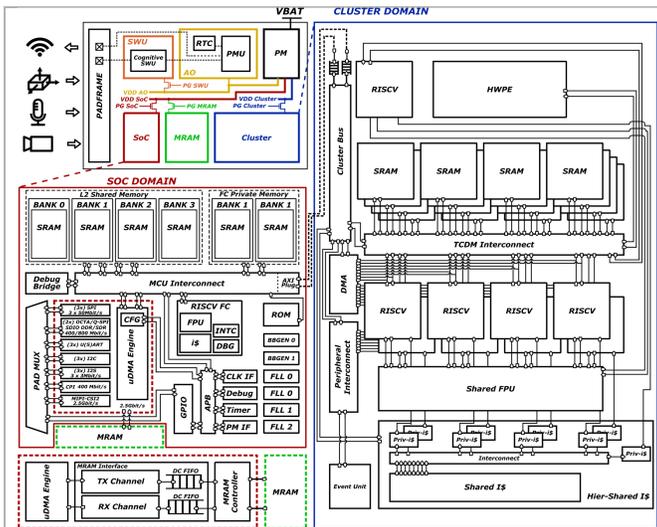


Figure 4.4.1: SoC architecture, and power domains.

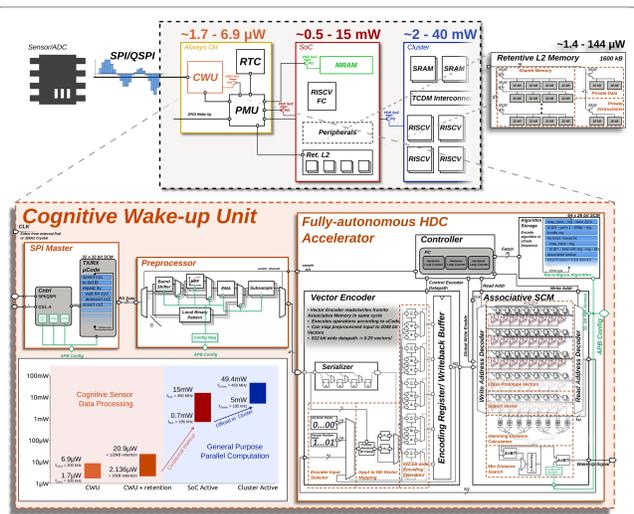


Figure 4.4.2: Cognitive Smart Wake-Up Architecture.

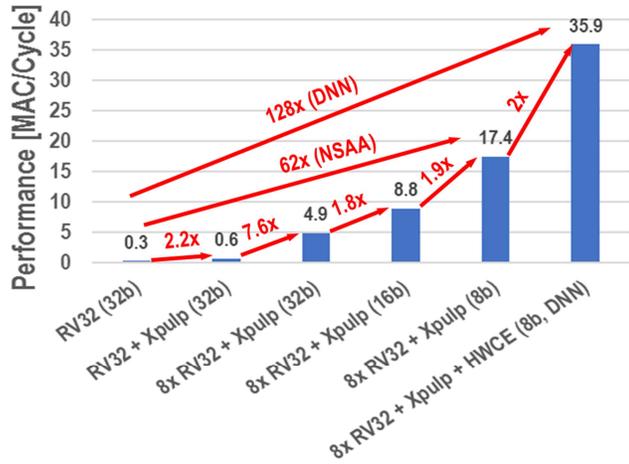


Figure 4.4.3: Performance of integer matrix multiplication exploiting Xpulp Extensions, software parallelism on 8 cores, SIMD parallelism on 16- and 8-datatypes, HWCE. Similar performance gains can be achieved on FP kernel when applicable.

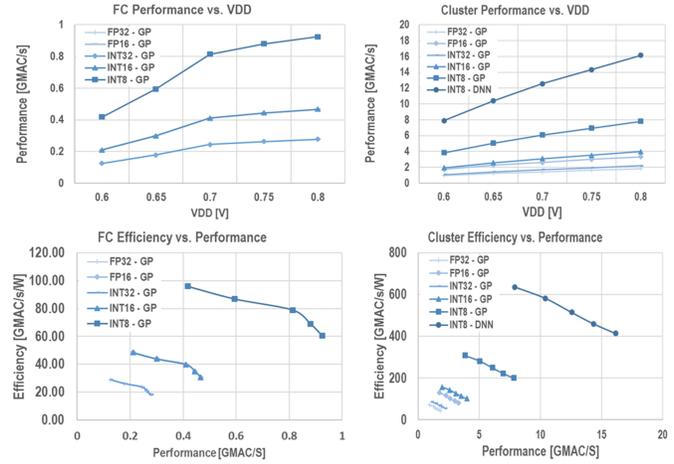


Figure 4.4.4: Performance and efficiency of a MatrixMul kernel running with multiple-precision on general-purpose and DNN-specific cores of the FC (SoC domain) and Cluster.

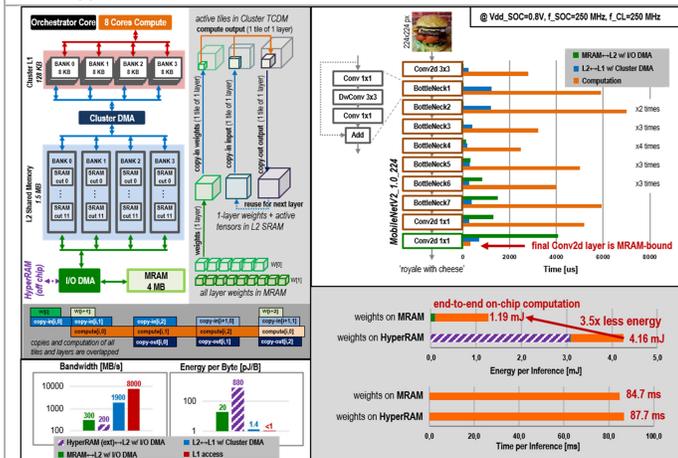


Figure 4.4.5: Top-left: DNN execution model with layer-wise tensor tiling; bottom-left: bandwidth and energy per byte of available memories; top-right: MobileNetV2 use case executed at INT-8 GP precision, showing transfer/compute overlap; bottom-right: time and energy of end-to-end on-chip execution with weights on MRAM vs off-chip on HyperRAM.

	SleepRunner [2]	Mr.Wolf [3]	Samurai [4]	Vega (this work)
Technology	CMOS 28nm FDSOI	CMOS 40nm LP	CMOS 28nm FDSOI	CMOS 22nm FDSOI
Die Area	0.68 mm ²	10 mm ²	4.5 mm ²	12 mm ²
Applications	IoT GP	IoT GP + NSAA	IoT GP + NSAA + DNN	IoT GP + NSAA + DNN
CPU/ISA	CMDS	9 x RISCY	1x RISCY	10 x RISCY
Embedded SRAM (State Retentive)	64 kB s.r.	64 kB (L1)	464 kB	128 kB (L1) 1600 kB s.r. (L2)
Embedded NVM	-	-	-	4 MB MRAM
Wake-up Sources	WiC	GPIO, RTC	WiC, RTC, Int, GPIO	GPIO, RTC, Cognitive
Sleep Power	5.4 μW	72 μW	6.4 μW	1.7 μW (GWU)
SRAM Ret. Slp. Power (St. Ret. SRAM)	9.4 μW (64 kB s.r.)	76.5 - 108 μW (32 kB - 512 kB s.r.)	49 kB s.r.)	2.8 - 123.7 μW (16 kB - 1.6 MB s.r.)
Int Precision	32	8, 16, 32	8, 16, 32	8, 16, 32
FP Precision	-	FP32	n.a.	FP32, FP16, bfloat
Supply Voltage	0.4 - 0.8 V	0.8 - 1.1 V	0.45 - 0.9 V	0.5 - 0.8 V
Max Frequency	80 MHz	450 MHz	350 MHz	450 MHz
Power Range	5.4 - 320 μW	72 μW - 153 mW	6.4 μW - 96 mW	1.7 μW - 49.4 mW
¹ Best Int Perf.	31 MOPS (32b)	12.1 GOPS	1.5 GOPS	15.6 GOPS ¹
² Best FP Perf.	97 MOPS/mW (32b) @ 18.6 MOPS (32b)	190 GOPS/W @ 3.8 GOPS	230 GOPS/W @ 110 MOPS	614 GOPS/W ² @ 7.6 GOPS ⁴
³ Best ML Perf.	-	1 GFLOPS 18 GFLOPS/W @ 350 MFLOPS	36 GOPS 1.3 TOPS/W @ 2.8 GOPS	3.3 GFLOPS (FP16) ⁴ 79 GFLOPS/W ⁴ 129 GFLOPS/W (FP16) ⁴ @ 1.7 GFLOPS (FP16) ⁴
⁴ Best ML Perf.	-	-	36 GOPS 1.3 TOPS/W @ 2.8 GOPS	32.2 GOPS ⁴ 1.3 TOPS/W ⁴ @ 15.6 GOPS ⁴

¹2 OPs = 1 8-bit MAC on MatMul benchmark unless differently specified. ²8-bit ML Workloads
³2 FLOPSs = 1 32-bit FMAC on MatMul benchmark unless differently specified. ⁴Execution from SRAM

Figure 4.4.6: Comparison with state of the art.

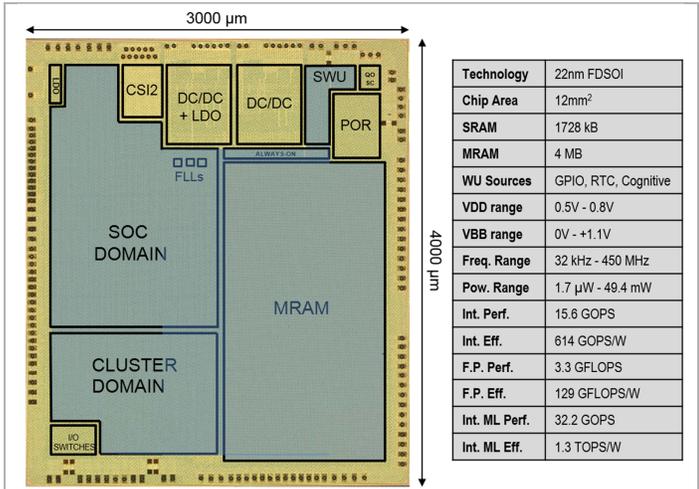


Figure 4.4.7: Chip micrograph and specifications.