

# 國立交通大學

電子工程學系 電子研究所碩士班

## 碩士論文

時脈樹和正反器重新散布之共同合成方法



Cosynthesis of Clock Tree and Flip-Flop Redistribution

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指導教授：陳宏明 教授

中華民國一〇〇年八月

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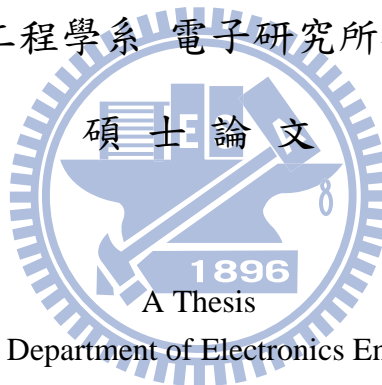
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## 摘 要

在這篇論文中，我們提出了一種優化方法為使用自下而上的群聚的正反器來降低功耗以及將信號線長最小化。比較以往對於減少正反器的研究，我們的方法能達到在正反器的功耗和減少信號線長之間的最佳優化。我們所提出的方法在正反器的功耗和減少信號線長方面優於[3]和[14]。與[8]比較，我們的方法可以減少 15.8%的信號線長以及增加 1.8%的正反器功耗。由於自下而上群聚方式的特性，我們提出的方法對於初始配置能夠達到最小的擾動。

我們進一步改善我們的方法，結合時鐘樹合成，利用 K-means 分群法識別正反器的群集和更換正反器處於最佳時鐘樹的位置，這樣可以減少功耗。實驗結果表明，我們的交錯機制可以達到最佳的時鐘樹功耗。

我們從所有以前出版的著作[3] [14] [8]獲得執行檔和評估執行結果使用完全相同的參數。正反器的最終位置轉換為 ISPD2010 標準格式[13]以及使用 NGSPICE[1]評估最後的時鐘樹合成結果。

# Cosynthesis of Clock Tree and Flip-Flop Redistribution

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## ABSTRACT

In this thesis, we propose an optimization methodology using agglomerative clustering for flip-flop's power reduction and signal wirelength minimization. Comparing to previous works on flip-flop reduction, our method can reach the best optimization between flip-flop's power and signal wirelength reduction. Our proposed methodology outperforms [3] and [14] in both flip-flop's power and signal wirelength reduction. Comparing with [8], our methodology can reduce signal wirelength by 15.8% with 1.8% increase in flip-flop power consumption. Due to the nature of agglomerative clustering, our proposed method also creates least perturbation to original placement.

We further improve our method by integrating with clock tree synthesis using k-means clustering to identify cluster of flip-flop and replace flip-flop in an optimal location such that clock tree power consumption can be reduced. Experimental result demonstrates that our interleaving mechanism can reach the best clock tree power consumption.

We obtained binaries from all of the previous published works[3][14][8] and evaluate them using exact same parameter. The final location of flip-flop is converted to ISPD 2010 benchmark format[13] and final result of clock tree synthesis is evaluated using NGSPICE[1].

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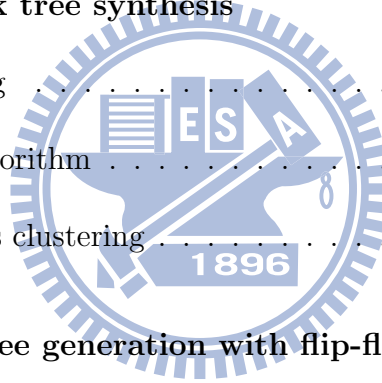
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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

In modern SoC design flow, recent research in industry and academia discovered that flip-flops in advance technology require less driving power. Less driving power for flip-flop indicates that a single inverter can drive multiple flip-flop which introduces the possibility to implement multi-bit flip-flop.

Multi-bit flip-flop has the advantage to share common inverter to reduce power consumption per bit and allow flip-flop layout area to be more compact. In addition, implementation of multi-bit flip-flop can reduce both sink number and sink capacitance. The reduction in sink number implies less clock tree wirelength which translates to lower clock tree power consumption. However, implementation of multi-bit flip-flop has the drawback of increasing in flip-flop's signal wirelength. Experimental result shows the improvement in power reduction by greedily merging flip-flop will eventually saturate due to increase in flip-flop's signal wirelength.

In addition to sink number, placement of flip-flop will also affect clock tree power consumption. It is shown in [11] that clock tree wirelength can be reduced up to 33% when topology of clock tree is considered during placement stage.

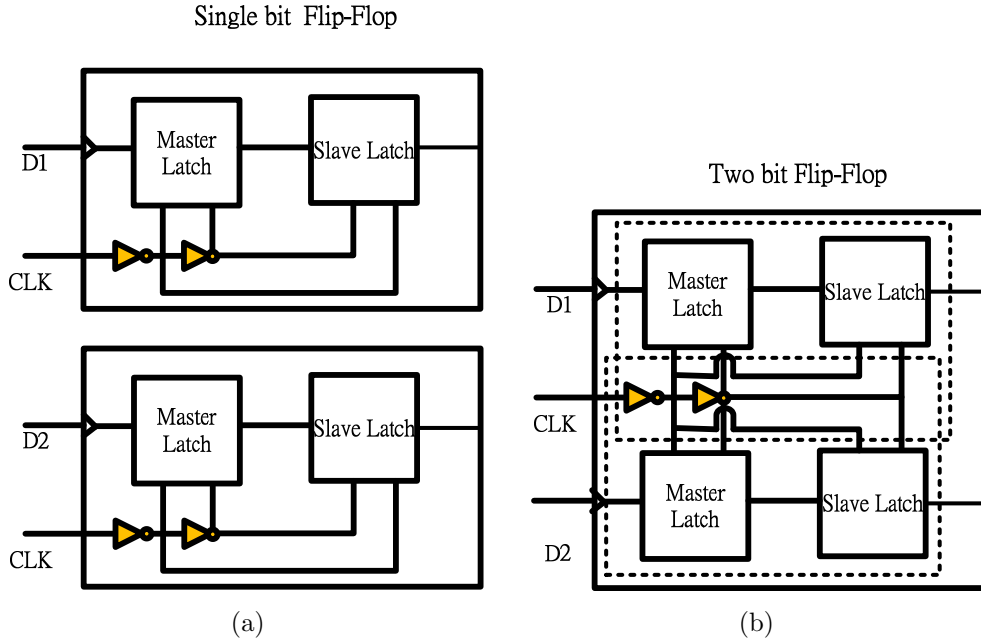


Figure 1.1: Inverter sharing using multi-bit flip-flop. (a) are two 1-bit flip-flops. (b) is a 2-bit flip-flop

## 1.1 Previous Works

Regarding to previous work on multi-bit flip-flop and flip-flop replacement, previous work can be categorized to optimization took place during placement and post-placement stage. Optimization techniques during placement stage including [4] and [11] relocates flip-flop by constructing pseudo clock tree during placement stage or integrate multi-bit flip-flop to existing library to reduce sink number. Figure 1.1 illustrates the implementation of a 2-bit flip-flop. A multi-bit flip-flop has the advantage to share common inverter comparing to 1-bit flip-flop. Figure 1.2 depicts how sink reduction affects the topology of a clock tree.

Post-placement optimization including [3][14][8] replaces severnal flip-flop with one multi-bit flip-flop and relocates the multi-bit flip-flop to minimize the total signal wirelength from all of its connected pins. The valid region for a flip-flop to be relocated is defined by the slack value from all of its connected pins.

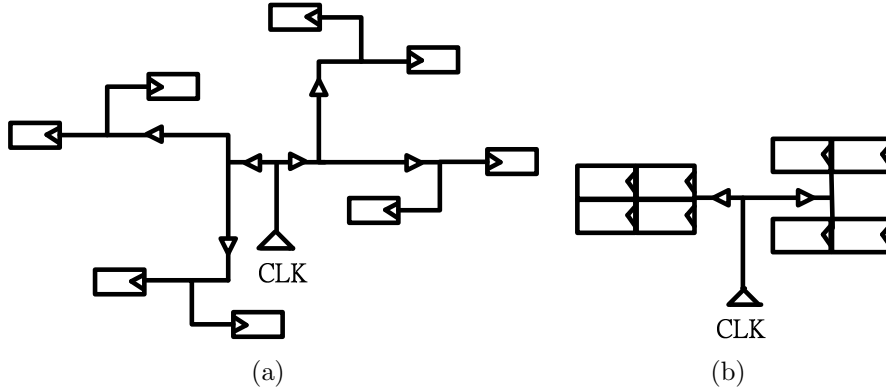


Figure 1.2: Reduction of sinks in clock tree. (a) is an illustration of a clock signal connecting to eight 1-bit flip-flop. (b) is an illustration using multi-bit flip-flop.

### 1.1.1 Optimization during placement stage

Regarding to flip-flop replacement, Lee *et al.* [11] integrates a virtual clock tree with its previously published force-directed placer [9]. In each iteration of placement, a virtual clock tree will be constructed to identify the topology of clock tree. A contraction force will then be applied on each flip-flop to motivate flip-flops to group into clusters. Eventually, clock tree wirelength can be reduced by reshaping the clock tree. Final clock tree synthesis is delegated to [10] for final evaluation. Experimental result shows that modifying sink position can reduce clock tree wirelength by 30% difference and 7% reduction in dynamic power consumption.

### 1.1.2 Optimization at post-placement stage

In terms of optimization of flip-flop at post-placement stage, all three of [14][3][8] shares same objective by optimizing between flip-flop and signal wirelength reduction. Given a set of flip-flop library, placement density constraint and slack constraint, flip-flop reduction is achieved by merging flip-flop to appropriate higher bit flip-flop. The main difference between the three works lies on selecting groups of flip-flop to be merged.

Chang *et al.* [3] solves the problem by applying progressive window-based op-

timization. As window sweeps across given layout, an intersection graph will be constructed within the window. The intersection graph is constructed with node representing flip-flop and edge represents that two flip-flop can be safely merged without violating slack constraint. After intersection graph is constructed, maximal independent set of cliques can be identified. Each set

Similar to [3], Wang *et al.* [14] also model the given problem as graph problem. The difference is that [14] applies minimum clique partition problem to identify a set of non-conflicting cliques. In addition, a clock tree synthesis using [5] is applied to demonstrate reduction in dynamic power and clock tree wirelength.

In contrast to [14] and [3], Jiang *et al.* [8] proposed a linear-size sequence representation to quickly identify optimal clustering combinations. Based on coordinate transformation, [8] generate interval graph corresponding to each flip-flop's feasible region with both  $X$  and  $Y$  direction. The  $X$  direction interval graph provides decision points to obtain essential flip-flops and the  $Y$  direction interval graph provides maximal clique for each essential flip-flops. Compare to [14] and [3], [8] can achieve most flip-flop reduction within fastest runtime.

## 1.2 Our Contributions

Despite previous effort in flip-flop merging, none considered the characteristic of clock tree when determining flip-flop relocation position. It is demonstrated in [11] that modifying sink position can achieve significant improvement in clock tree power consumption.

Regarding to [14] [3][8], a trade off between signal wirelength and flip-flop reduction can be observed. Greedily reducing flip-flop by merging flip-flop will increase signal wirelength dramatically. Power reduction achieved using multi-bit flip-flop will eventually be counteracted by increase in signal wirelength power consumption.

In [3], both signal wirelength and flip-flop reduction trails behind [8] and [14]. The inherent characteristic of window-based optimization prevents a global view of the entire problem. In [14], although clock tree synthesis is performed after flip-flop merging, the location flip-flop is unaffected by the clock tree synthesis. In addition, the clock tree synthesis performed in [14] is an unbuffered clock tree synthesis which lacks detail in buffer power consumption and lacks evaluation with spice model.

In [8], although flip-flop number is greatly reduced, it is achieved with a great expense in increasing in signal wirelength. In addition, more flip-flop reduction entails higher perturbation to original layout which adds burden to final legalization stage.

In this thesis, we applied flip-flop merging using agglomerative clustering. In contrast to previous work, we merge flip-flop in a bottom-up fashion. Flip-flop merging is performed by choosing pair of flip-flop with least increase to signal wirelength. Such approach can guarantee that total increase in signal wirelength is minimized with equivalent flip-flop number reduction. Unlike [3] and [14], our approach avoids identifying maximum clique which is unnecessary when given multi-bit flip-flop library is limited.

To optimize clock tree power consumption, we integrate our implementation of buffered clock tree synthesis with flip-flop merging, a pseudo clock tree based on k-means clustering is performed at each iteration of flip-flop merge to determine optimal relocation position for flip-flop to reduce clock tree wirelength.

All in all, our contribution in this work can be summarized as follows.

- Our agglomerative clustering based flip-flop merging can reach the best optimization between flip-flop's power reduction and signal wirelength.
- We proposed a k-means based clock tree topology construction to quickly identify cluster of flip-flops based on their physical location.

- We proposed a methodology to interleave clock tree synthesis with flip-flop merging to optimize clock tree power consumption.

The following sections are organized as follows: Chapter 2 defines problem formulation. Chapter 3 describes agglomerative clustering for flip-flop merging. Chapter 4 introduces a k-means based clock tree topology construction. Chapter 5 describes the interleaving mechanism of flip-flop merging and clock tree synthesis. Chapter 6 presents the experimental result and finally Chapter 7 concludes the thesis.





# Chapter 2

## Problem formulation

The problem of clock tree synthesis considering flip-flop merging can be defined as follows. Given a set of m-bit flip-flop library in Table 2.1 and a set of flip-flop each with a slack value, using the given multi-bit flip-flop to reduce sink number and place the merged flip-flop in position without violating any slack and placement density constraint. Next, we construct a clock tree with merged flip-flop that minimizes the total wirelength without violating any slack and placement density constraint.

Table 2.1: Bit, Power and Area for each Flip-Flop Type

Name	Bit#	Power	Area	Power/Bit	Area/Bit
FF1	1	100	100	100	100
FF2	2	172	192	86	96
FF4	4	299	398	74.75	99.5

## Chapter 3

# Agglomerative clustering based flip-flop merging

When dealing with flip-flop merging, determining which set of flip-flops to be merged should closely relate to sink merging in clock tree synthesis. Nearest Neighbor Selection(NNS) proposed by [7] is one of the popular methods to construct topology of clock tree. NNS first constructs a relation graph that calculates the nearest neighbor sink to every sink. After relation graph is constructed, edge with smallest distance between two sinks will be picked and merged as new sink and insert back to the relation graph. The process iterates until there is only one sink left in the relation graph. Thus, when a flip-flop selects the best merging candidate, flip-flop within nearest proximity should be selected. The benefit of such approach is two-fold. First, wirelength connecting to both merged flip-flop can be minimized. Second, the relocation position of merged flip-flop will not deviate too much from its original position.

### 3.1 Resemblance between agglomerative clustering and nearest neighbor selection

In short, NNS is a bottom-up approach that constructs a tree by selecting minimum cost edge in each iteration. The agglomerative(bottom-up) approach in hierarchical

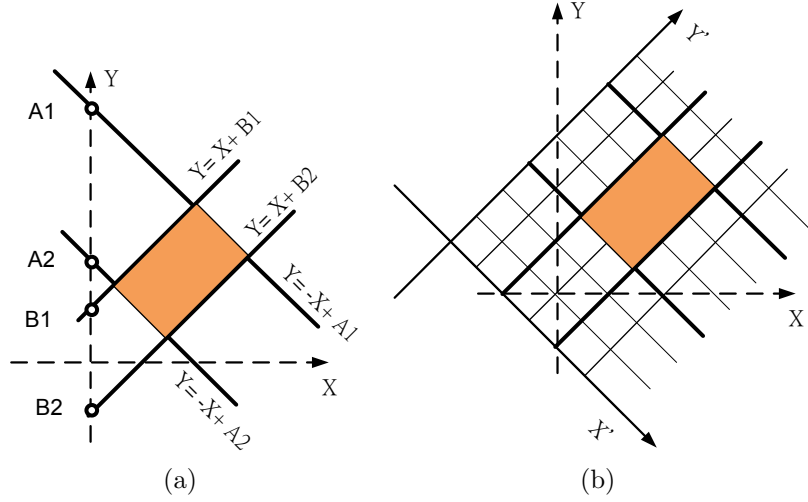


Figure 3.1: The rotate coordinate system to describe flip-flop movable zone(a) depicts the rotated coordinate system by 45 degrees. (b) coordinates representation for rotated rectangle.

clustering takes very similar approach compared to NNS. Agglomerative clustering iterates and merges two clusters with minimum cost based on certain cost function until one single cluster that contains all elements is formed. The major difference between agglomerative clustering and NNS is that graph constructed in agglomerative clustering calculates the distance between every single pair of sinks, while graph constructed in NNS only shows the nearest neighbor sink for a given sink.

## 3.2 Overlap graph construction using agglomerative clustering

The slack value for a flip-flop can be treated as a distance budget for a flip-flop. The farther away flip-flop moved from its original location, the less slack value a flip-flop has. In this regard, the slack value for a flip-flop can be modeled as a form of wire delay. The distance in this context refers to Manhattan distance, thus the region a flip-flop can be relocated without violating the given slack constraint forms a tilted rectangle region (TRR). The TRR for flip-flop merging takes the same concept of TRR in clock tree except that TRR in flip-flop merging has radius defined by its

---

**Algorithm 1** Segment-Overlap

---

Segment-Overlap( $n_i, n_j$ )

```
1: if  $\min[n_i] \leq \min[n_j]$  and  $\min[n_j] \leq \max[n_i]$  then  
2:   return true  
3: else  
4:   return false  
5: end if
```

---

slack value while the radius for TRR in clock tree is defined by its capacitance load.

If two flip-flop's TRR overlaps, it implies that two flip-flop can safely be merged in the overlapping region without violating slack constraint for both flip-flops. In graph representation, flip-flop is represented by a node and overlapping region of two flip-flops is represented by an edge. An edge is created between two flip-flops if and only if there exists an overlapping region between the two flip-flops.

The naive implementation of agglomerative clustering has time complexity  $O(N^2)$  which is to compare every node with every other node. However, not every node has an edge connecting to every other node. A more efficient approach is to sort all the rectangles on X-coordinate and find overlapping segment in Y-coordinate which can reduce number of comparisons. This approach is derived from Line Sweep Method[6]. Red-black tree is also used so that each insertion and deletion of TRR is guaranteed to be bounded in  $O(\lg N)$  rather than  $O(N)$ .

We formulate the flip-flop merging problem as a graph problem. In graph, node represents a flip-flop movable zone which is a rotated rectangle and edge represents there exists overlapping region between two nodes it connects. To identify all the overlapping rectangles, the straight forward method is to compare one rectangle with every other rectangle. However, it is rare that every rectangle overlaps with every other rectangle. A more efficient approach is to sort all the rectangles on X-coordinate and find overlapping segment in Y-coordinate which can reduce number of comparisons. This approach is commonly known as Line Sweep Method [6],

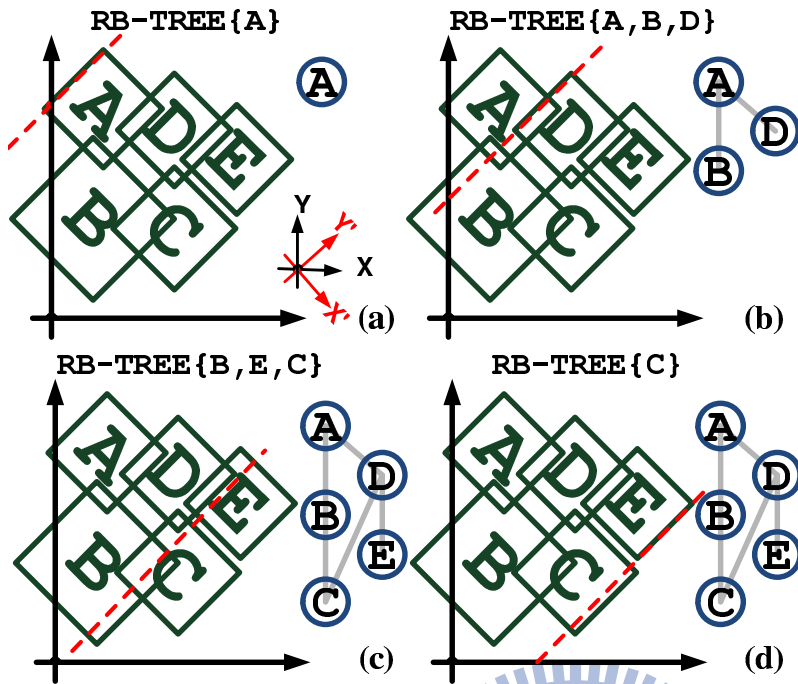


Figure 3.2: The sweep line method first sorts the rectangle based on their X-coordinate. When the sweep line touches a rectangle, the rectangle will compare with all the rectangles stored in the RB-Tree. When a sweep line leaves a rectangle, that rectangle is removed from the RB-Tree.

which is described in Algorithm 2. Red-black tree is used so that each insertion and deletion of rectangles is guaranteed to be bounded in  $O(\lg V)$  rather than  $O(V)$ .

The algorithm first takes all rectangle's minimum and maximum X-coordinates and store them in an array. The X-coordinates will then be sorted in non-decreasing order using heap sort which corresponds to line 1-4 in Algorithm 2. After the array is sorted, an imaginary line starts to sweep from the beginning of the array. If the X value is the starting point of a rectangle, the rectangle is stored into a red-black tree and compare with all the rectangles stored in the red-black tree to check whether if there exists overlapping region between the two rectangles. Given that rectangles are already sorted by their X-coordinate, if two rectangles were to be compared, then it implies that two rectangles must be overlapped in X-coordinate. Hence, checking whether if two rectangles exist overlapping region only needs to check whether the segments of two rectangle are overlapped in Y-coordinate, which reduces the problem

---

**Algorithm 2** Line Sweep Method to Identify Overlapping Rectangle

---

```
1: for  $n_i \in Q$  do
2:    $X \leftarrow X \cup \min X[n_i] \cup \max X[n_i]$ 
3: end for
4: Sort  $X$  in non-decreasing order
5: for  $x \in X$  do
6:   if  $x = \text{low}X$  then
7:     for  $n_j \in P$  do
8:       if Segment-Overlap( $n_i, n_j$ )=true then
9:          $E \leftarrow E \cup E(n_i, n_j)$ 
10:      end if
11:    end for
12:     $P \leftarrow P \cup n_i$ 
13:  else
14:     $P \leftarrow P - n_i$ 
15:  end if
16: end for
```

---

from 2-dimensional space to 1-dimensional space. The algorithm to check whether two segments overlap is described in Algorithm 1. If the  $X$  value is the ending point of a rectangle, the rectangle is removed from the red-black tree. When the sweep line reaches to the end of the list, all the edges can be generated.

Fig. 3.2 demonstrates a simple example using Line Sweep Method. In Fig. 3.2(a), sweep line first enters rectangle A and rectangle A is stored in the red-black tree. In Fig. 3.2(b), sweep line enters rectangle D. Rectangle D are then compared with rectangle A and B to check whether if there exist overlapping region. In Fig. 3.2(c), sweep line leaves rectangle D which is removed from the red-black tree. Finally, in Fig. 3.2(d), the sweep line leaves rectangle E and rectangle E is removed.

In worst case scenario in which every rectangle overlaps with every other rectangles, the graph representation of such circumstance is a complete graph. The time complexity for Line Sweep Method in a complete graph is  $O(N^2)$  since no rectangles will be removed from red-black tree and every inserted rectangle must compare with every other rectangles stored in the red-black tree.

---

**Algorithm 3** Hierarchical Agglomerative Clustering

---

HAC(Q)

```
1: while Q!=EMPTY do
2:   Edge  $\leftarrow$  Pop[Q]
3:   RB-TREE  $\leftarrow$   $\emptyset$ 
4:    $n_l \leftarrow$  Left[Edge]
5:    $n_r \leftarrow$  Right[Edge]
6:   if ( $Bit[n_l] + Bit[n_r]$ )  $\in$  FF-Library then
7:      $n_{new} =$  new Node
8:      $n_{mergeable} \leftarrow findCommonNode(n_l, n_r)$ 
9:      $E_{new} =$  new Edge( $n_{mergeable}, n_{new}$ )
10:     $Q \leftarrow Q \cup E_{new}$ 
11:   end if
12: end while
```

---

### 3.3 Flip-flop merging

After graph is constructed, the edge with minimum cost will be selected and checked whether if it is mergeable. For two flip-flop to be mergeable, there must exist corresponding type in given flip-flop library. For example, if FF-A is 1-bit, FF-B is 2-bit and there is no 3-bit flip-flop available, FF-A and FF-B can not be merged. In each iteration, each merge will select two flip-flops with least edge cost. If two flip-flops is successfully merged, new node representing the merged flip-flop will be created and added to the graph with corresponding edges. Edges connecting to two original flip-flops will be removed from the graph and new edges connecting to merged flip-flop will be added.

The algorithm will terminate until there is no more edge left in the graph. In Fig. 3.3(a), node A and B are picked to be merged, edges connected to node A and node B are removed. In Fig. 3.3(b), new node  $M_{AB}$  is created with two new edges added to the graph. Fig. 3.3(c) illustrates the same concept of merging node  $M_{AB}$  and node  $M_{CD}$  to a 4-bit node  $M_{ABCD}$ . The algorithm terminates in Fig. 3.3(d) since there is no more edge in the graph.

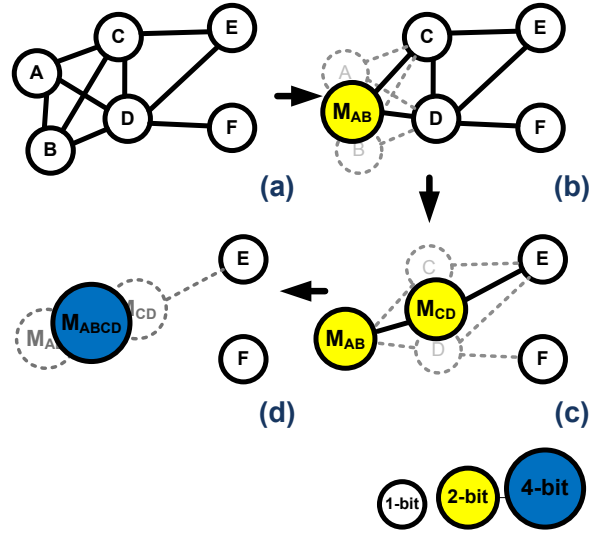


Figure 3.3: Example of agglomerative clustering in flip-flop merging

## 3.4 Placement of Flip-Flop

### 3.4.1 Flip-Flop Library

Flip-flop can not be merged to any arbitrary higher bit flip-flops. There are limited flip-flop types and every single flip-flop must have a corresponding flip-flop type in the flip-flop library. Table 1 lists all the available flip-flop types in this work.

### 3.4.2 Slack and Timing Constraint

The location of the clustered flip-flop must be placed in a distance that does not violate the original slack constraint. There is a slack value for each flip-flop to each pin it connects to.  $ff_i$  and  $p_j$  in (3.1) denotes flip-flop and pin respectively.  $FF$  denotes flip-flop set and  $Pin$  denotes pin set connected to a certain flip-flop. For each connected flip-flop and pin, the distance between the two must not violate the given slack constraint.

$$d(ff_i, p_j) \leq Slack_{ij}, ff_i \in FF, p_j \in Pin \quad (3.1)$$



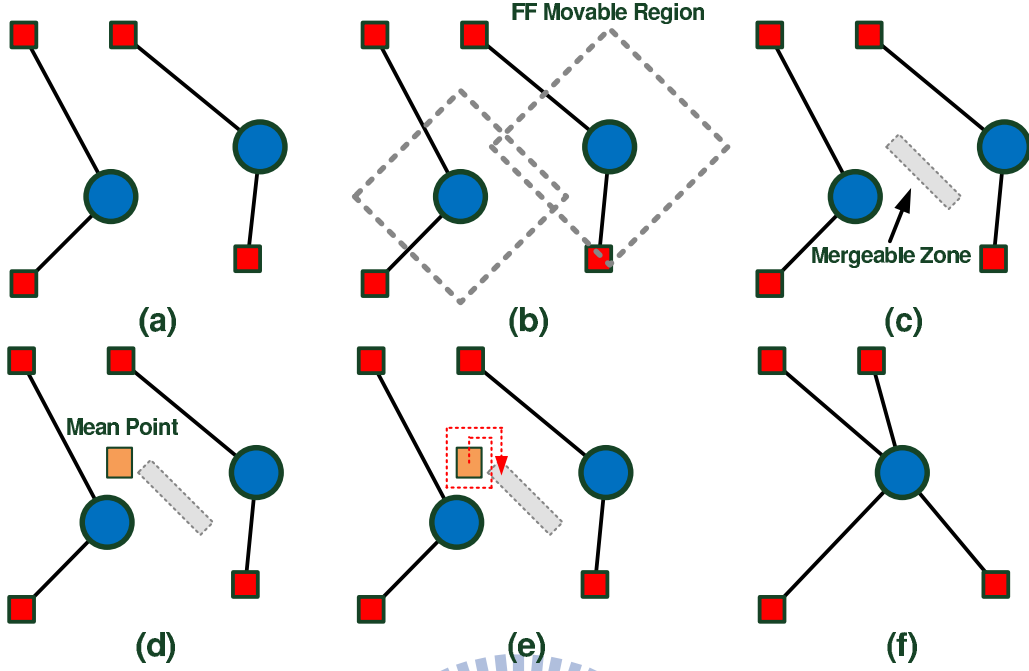


Figure 3.4: Placement of Merged Flip-Flop

### 3.4.3 Placement Density Constraint

When placing flip-flops, density of the circuit must be considered. The given layout is partitioned into different set of bins, each bin is given with a placement density constraint and pre-placed combinational logic. The final placement density after flip-flop clustering must not violate the placement density constraint for all bins. In (3.2),  $B$  is the given set of bins,  $CA_j$  denotes the combinational area in bin  $b_j$ , the summation of all flip-flop area and the combinational logic area in one bin can not exceed its pre-defined placement density constraint.

$$\frac{\sum_{j \in b_i} Area(ff_j) + CA_j}{w_i \cdot h_i} \leq D_{max}, \text{ for all } b_i \in B \quad (3.2)$$

For a merged flip-flop to be successfully relocated, three conditions must be satisfied.

- Slack constraint must be met for all flip-flops.

- Placement density for all bins can not be violated.
- The position of merged flip-flop must not overlap with other merged flip-flop.

The given layout is partitioned into a set of bins and placement density is calculated for each bin. When relocating a merged flip-flop, it will first check whether the relocation point is being occupied and whether the placement density of the corresponding bin is violated. If violated, a breadth-first search will be conducted to search for a nearest unoccupied point in which both slack and placement density are not violated. If such point does not exist, the merged flip-flop will split and return to its original state.

When flip-flop merge runs stand alone from clock tree synthesis, the mean point of all the pins connected to merged flip-flop will be selected as the relocation position of the merged flip-flop. When interleaved with clock tree construction which will be discussed in Chapter 5, a preferred merge position will be generated from CTS and fed to flip-flop merging. A breadth-first search will be conducted to search for the nearest valid point to the preferred merging position.

It should be noted that Nearest Neighbor Selection (NNS) and agglomerative clustering shares similar quality for wirelength minimization. However, NNS restricts one edge for each node which is not suitable to implement flip-flop merging. In flip-flop merging, not every pair of sink can be merged due to slack constraint and limited types of flip-flop in flip-flop library. In addition, to cope with clock tree synthesis, edge cost is required to update constantly. Agglomerative clustering in this regard is much more flexible and its high resemblance to NNS making it an optimal choice for flip-flop merging.

## Chapter 4

# K-means based clock tree synthesis

In this section, a two phase clock tree topology construction based on improved k-means clustering is proposed. The first phase of clock tree topology construction is an un-coarsening phase that separates  $k$  most distant cluster in each iteration and terminates until there is less than three sinks in each cluster. The second phase is a coarsening phase which constructs a binary tree that takes the cluster formed in first phase and iteratively clusters them together until one single cluster is formed. The benefit of k-means is that it can quickly identify  $k$  pair of sinks that is relatively close to each other. The  $k$  identified pairs can then be fed back to update edge cost in graph constructed during flip-flip merging.

Despite the apparent difference between k-means and NNS, k-means clustering shares similar quality compare to NNS. In NNS, a Delaunay triangulation is re-constructed every time a pair of cluster is merged which guarantees merge in next iteration will add least amount wirelength to clock tree. In contrast, k-means clustering identifies  $k$  centers in each iteration which also maintains a set Delaunay triangulation.

Delaunay Triangle is equivalent to Voronoi Diagram which guarantees that every center in each cluster is the closest point to every sink belonging to that cluster.

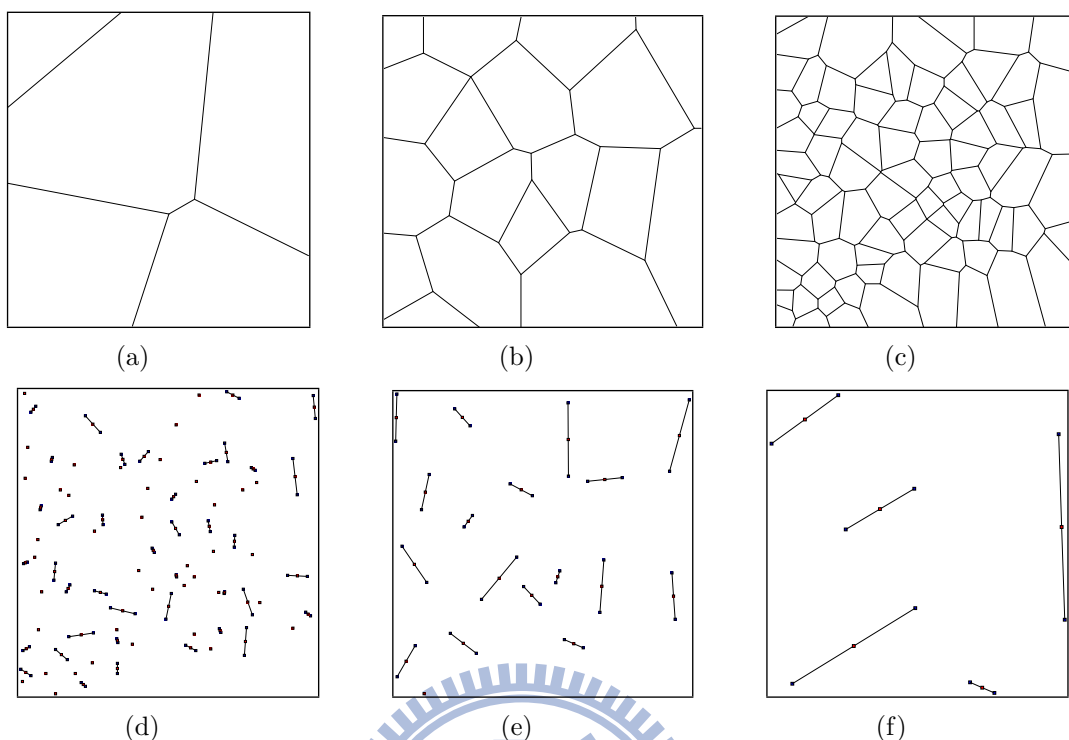


Figure 4.1: Illustration of coarsen and un-coarsen methodology to construct topology of clock tree.

---

**Algorithm 4** Lloyd's Algorithm

---

- 1: Randomly Choose  $k$  centers from sink set  $X$
  - 2: **repeat**
  - 3:   Assign sink  $x \in X$  to nearest center  $c \in C$
  - 4:   Re-Calculate Center for all  $c \in C$
  - 5: **until** All center  $c \in C$  is stable
- 

Both NNS and k-means clustering maintains  $k$  centers that forms Delaunay Triangle in each iteration. Fig.4.1(a), 4.1(b) and 4.1(c) illustrates the Voronoi Diagram for each cluster center during un-coarsening phase. Fig.4.1(d), 4.1(e) and 4.1(f) illustrates the construction of clock tree during coarsening phase. Once the topology of clock tree is constructed, Deferred Merge Embedding (DME) [7] for zero skew minimization using Elmore Delay model is implemented.

## 4.1 k-means clustering

The problem of clustering can be defined as follows. Given a set of sinks  $X = \{x_1 \dots x_n\}$ , divide the given sinks into  $k$  clusters ( $k \leq n$ ) and select  $k$  centers  $C = \{c_1 \dots c_k\}$  to minimize the following potential function.

$$\phi = \sum_{x \in X} \min_{c \in C} \|x - c\|^2 \quad (4.1)$$

#### 4.1.1 Lloyd's algorithm

The concept of k-means clustering was originally proposed by [12], also known as Lloyd's algorithm. Lloyd's algorithm begins by selecting  $k$  centers from given sinks  $X$  at random. After  $k$  centers are selected, Lloyd's algorithm then iterates to reassign sink to nearest center and re-calculates the center point position. The algorithm terminates when the position of centers remains stationary. Algorithm 4 describes detail step for Lloyd's algorithm and Fig. 4.2 demonstrates a simple example.

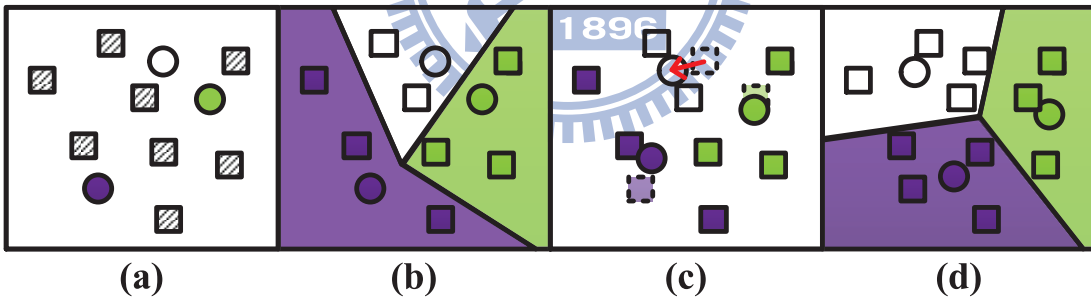


Figure 4.2: An example of k-means algorithm. (a) Randomly select 3 means which are shown in circle. (b) Assign sinks to the nearest means. (c) New centroid of each cluster are generated. (d) All sinks are reassigned to the new means, and the partitions which are generated by 3 means represent the Voronoi Diagram.

Although Lloyd's algorithm is able to quickly identify  $k$  independent clusters, Lloyd's algorithm suffers deficiency such that it easily resorts to local optimal solution. In this regard, an improved k-means clustering is implemented based on [2].

## 4.2 Improved k-means clustering

In Lloyd's algorithm, the selection for initial center dominates the quality of entire cluster and Lloyd's algorithm is susceptible to select centers that are close to each other. It is desirable to choose centers that are evenly separated from each other. Thus, [2] modifies the procedure to select centers at initial phase.

Let  $D(x)$  be the shortest distance between a sink  $x$  and the nearest center  $c$ . The improved k-means clustering randomly selects one sink as first center, and rest of  $k - 1$  centers is selected based on probability proportional  $D(x)^2$ . Each time a center is selected,  $D(x)$  will be updated for all sink  $x$ . Thus, sinks located farthest away from all centers will have higher probability being selected. The improved k-means clustering is described in Algorithm 5 and Fig.4.3.

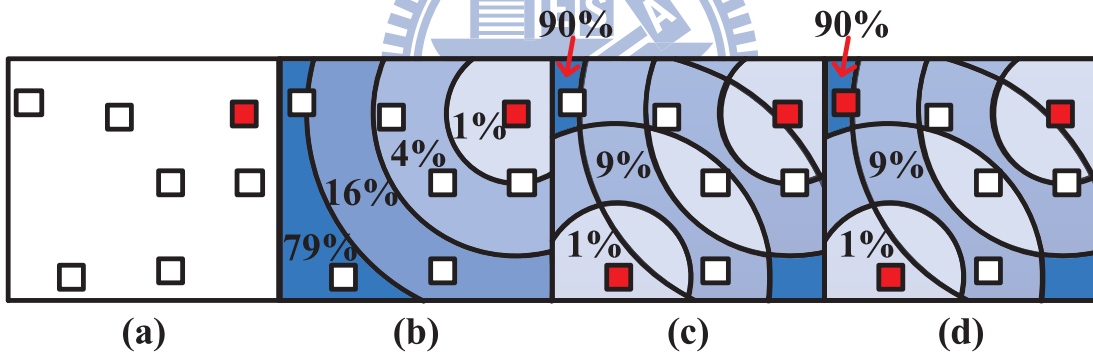


Figure 4.3: The first phase of improved k-means clustering. (a) The first center shown in colored square is randomly selected. (b) Calculate each sink probability with respect to the first center. (c) Select the sink with highest probability to be the second center. (d) Calculate probability with respect to both centers, then decide the third center.

Randomness in clustering offers approximation guarantee [2] and enables user to re-run the algorithm to get the best clustering. According to [2], the improved k-means clustering has an upper bound error  $O(\log k)$  which guarantees the quality of the cluster.

---

**Algorithm 5** Improved Lloyd's Algorithm

---

- 1: Randomly Choose one center from sink set  $X$
  - 2: **for** 1 to  $k - 1$  **do**
  - 3:   **for** each sink  $x \in X$  **do**
  - 4:     calculate  $D(x_i)$
  - 5:   **end for**
  - 6:   Random choose  $y$  between 0 and  $\sum_{i \in n} D(x_i)^2$
  - 7:   Find  $i$  such that  $\sum_0^i D(x_j)^2 \geq yi \sum_0^{i-1} D(x_{j-1})^2$
  - 8:   Add  $x_i$  to  $C$
  - 9: **end for**
  - 10: **repeat**
  - 11:   Assign sink  $x \in X$  to nearest center  $c \in C$
  - 12:   Re-Calculate Center for all  $c \in C$
  - 13: **until** All center  $c \in C$  is stable
-

## Chapter 5

# Interleaving clock tree generation with flip-flop merging

This section will describe how flip-flop merging in Chapter 3 interleaves with clock tree synthesis in Chapter 4. In a nutshell, the result generated by improved k-means clustering will affect the merging priority in flip-flop merging and result produced by flip-flop merging will feed back to clock tree synthesis which will iterate until sink position is stable. When sink position is stable, clock tree synthesis will be initiated to complete the clock tree based on reduced number of sinks.

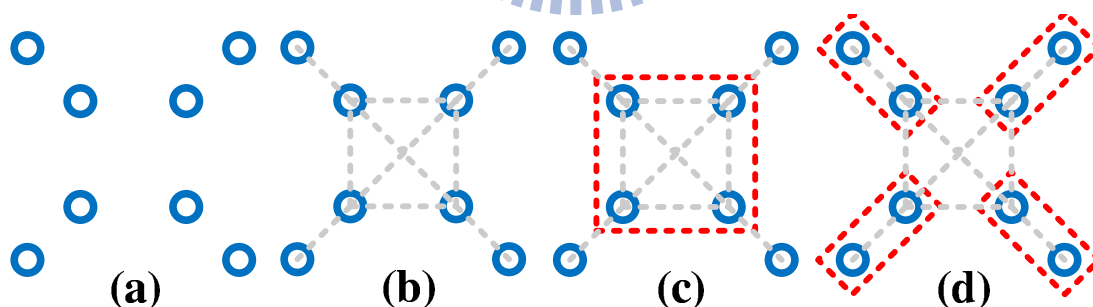


Figure 5.1: The effect of CTS due to selection of flip-flop merge. (a) is the original sink distribution (b) constructs the graph in FF-Merge (c) is an example of sink distribution with uneven load and (d) is an example of sink distribution with even load.

The objective of flip-flop merging is to maximize every possible merge. However, greedily merging flip-flop that maximizes utilization of multi-bit flip-flop may neglect quality of clock tree at global scale. Fig.5.1 illustrates such phenomenon. Assuming



all sinks have equivalent capacitance load. Fig.5.1(b) merges four sinks in the center. However, the unbalanced load will result in the additional wirelength in four corner sinks due to wire snaking for skew minimization. On the other hand, Fig. 5.1(c) that merges four sinks in the corner is a much more desirable sink topology for clock tree synthesis.

Thus, the global quality of cluster is essential to clock tree synthesis. Greedy flip-flop merging is prone to produce undesirable result that requires additional wire snaking to minimize skew. In addition, the relocation position of merged flip-flop will also affect the quality of clock tree. In flip-flop merging, merged flip-flop only needs to be placed in position that does not violate slack constraint. However, in scope of clock tree synthesis, sink position is preferably to place in position that requires less wire snaking. Viewed in this light, when determining the relocation position of the merged flip-flops, the merging point produced by clock tree synthesis should also be taken into consideration.

## 5.1 Interleaving procedure

Fig.5.2 demonstrates a simple example that interleaves clock tree synthesis with flip-flop merging. To begin with, in Fig.5.2(b),(c), flip-flop merging will first process the input sinks and construct overlapping graph using line sweep method described in Section 3.1. After graph is constructed, in Fig.5.2(d), the un-coarsening phase of clock tree will be initiated to iteratively un-coarsen the given sinks until each cluster have two or less sinks. The un-coarsened cluster will then select clusters with two sinks and check whether the contained sinks have corresponding edge in graph constructed during flip-flop merging. If a corresponding edge is found, it represents that not only both sinks is mergeable in flip-flop merging, it is also preferably to be merged in clock tree.

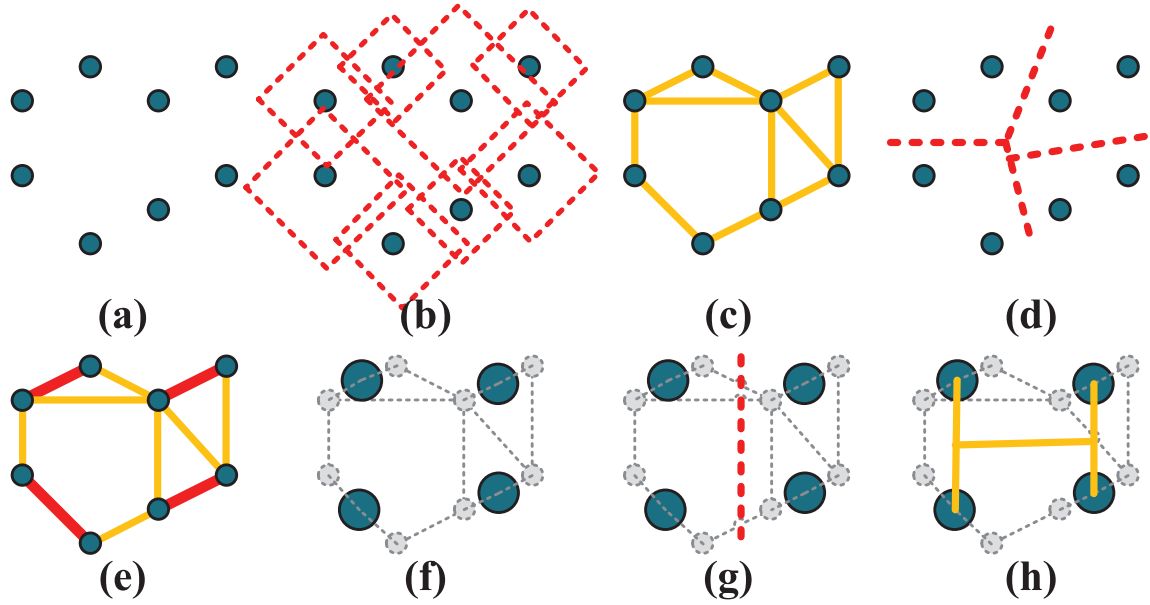


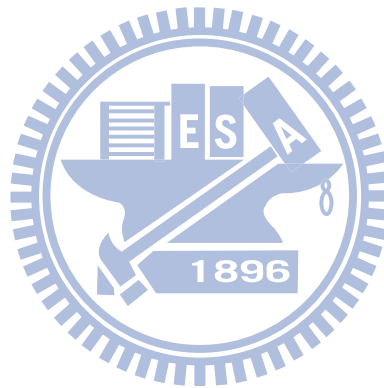
Figure 5.2: An example of interleaving CTS and FF-Merge. (b) draws out the slack-TRR of all FF. (c) constructs graph according to TRR in (b). (d) performs the un-coarsening phase in CTS. (e) updates the edge cost (f) performs one iteration of FF-Merge. (g) performs un-coarsening phase in CTS one more time. (h) constructs the clock tree based on DME.

If a corresponding edge is found, the edge is then updated with a cost proportional to the distance between two sinks allowing the edge to gain higher merging priority which is illustrated in Fig. 5.2(e). The merging segment of the parent sink calculated during clock tree synthesis will also feed to flip-flop merging. When merging two flip-flops, it will check whether there is a preferred merging point that is desirable to clock tree. If there exists a preferred merging point, the corresponding edge will be updated with a new cost.

In Fig. 5.2(f), when all of the edges are updated, one iteration of flip-flop merging will then be performed. In each iteration of flip-flop merging, sinks can only be merged once. The reduced number of sinks then becomes the next sink distribution for next clock tree synthesis iteration. The process iterates until sink number can not be further reduced. When sink number remains unchanged during flip-flop merging, clock tree synthesis is then initiated to complete the clock tree which corresponds

to Fig. 5.2(h).

The proposed interleaving mechanism allows flip-flop merge and clock tree synthesis to cope with one another. Regarding previous work on post placement flip-flop merging [14][8][3] which all focused on maximizing flip-flop merge and failed to consider the characteristic of clock tree. In this work, agglomerative clustering is implemented in flip-flop merging which focuses on wirelength minimization and k-means clustering considers the general clock tree topology during clock tree synthesis, the clustering characteristic allows both methods to collaborate in coherent congruency.



# Chapter 6

## Experimental results

In this thesis, we compare our algorithm with [3], [14] and [8]. Six testcases(C1~C6) are obtained from [3] which are also input benchmark for [14] and [8].

We obtained all of the binary executables from [3], [14] and [8]. Executables from [14], [8] and our algorithm are performed under Intel Xeon CPU 5160 Cent OS workstation running at 3.0 GHz. Executable from [3] is performed under Intel Core i3 CPU 550 Ubuntu workstation running at 3.2 GHz since it is compiled with g++ 4.5.4.

An evaluator is implemented to evaluate the flip-flop's power and signal wire-length reduction before and after flip-flop merging and examine whether if any of the given constraints are violated. The evaluated results for all of the obtained executables are verified with corresponding authors.

To examine clock tree power consumption, flip-flop merging result for all the executable is converted to 2010 ISPD clock tree format. We then used our implementation to perform final clock tree synthesis for all of the executables using exact same parameter. Final clock tree result is evaluated using script released by 2010 ISPD Clock Tree Contest with NGSPICE.

In this chapter, we present our experimental result in 2 sections. Section 6.1 will compare the detail of flip-flop merging result for all of the obtained executables by

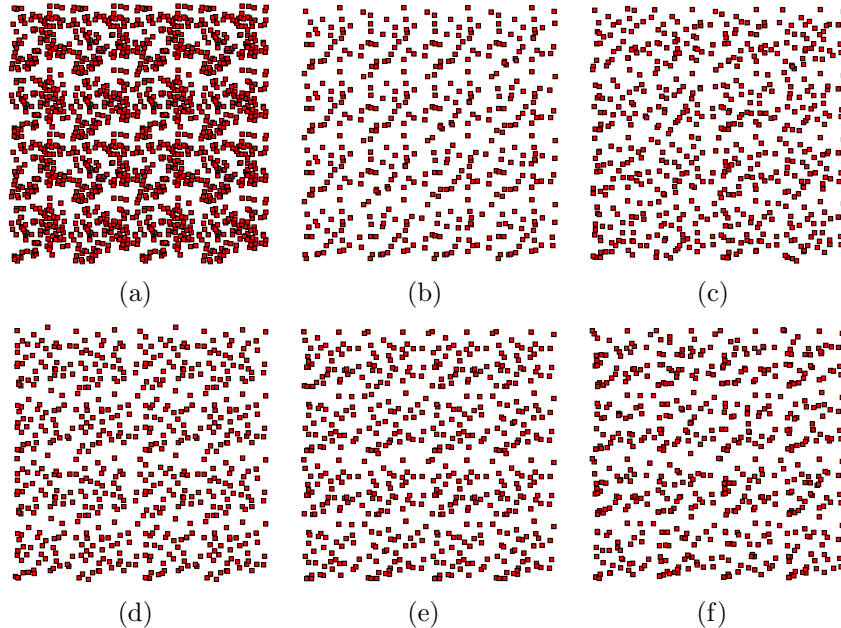


Figure 6.1: Illustration of the flip-flop merging result on testcase C3. (a) Original case (b) Result of [8] (c) Result of [14] (d) Result of [3] (e) Result of Our work without interleaving (f) Result of Our work with interleaving

analyzing flip-flop number reduction, flip-flop's signal wirelength minimization and average displacement of flip-flop. Section 6.2 will present the detail of clock tree by presenting sink, buffer and clock tree wirelength capacitance for all of testcases.

## 6.1 Flip-Flop's Power and Signal Wirelength Reduction

Table 6.1 presents the result of flip-flop number reduction. Compared with original benchmark without flip-flop merging, our algorithm can reduce flip-flop number by 65.66%. In comparison with [3] and [14], our proposed algorithm outperforms by 2.99% and 1.66% respectively. In comparison with [8], our algorithm trails behind by 2.99%. Figure 6.1 shows the flip-flop merging result of each algorithm.

Flip-flop number reduction in Table 6.1 is translated to flip-flop power reduction which is describe in Table 6.2. The detail of the given multi-bit flip-flop library is described in Table 2.1. Higher-bit flip-flop have the advantage of lower power

consumption and lower area per bit.

In Table 6.2, it can be observed that [8] achieves best flip-flop power reduction since it has fewest number of flip-flops. However, regarding to total signal wirelength connecting to each flip-flop, [8] increases most signal wirelength in all 6 testcases. In contrast, our algorithm trails behind [8] by 1.8% in terms of flip-flop power reduction but outperforms [8] by nearly 16% in terms of flip-flop's signal wirelength. Additional increase signal wirelength implies that flip-flop's power reduction will be counteract by increase in dynamic power consumption in signal wirelength. According to our analysis in 45nm design with  $0.0002\text{fC}/\text{nm}$ , our algorithm is on par with [8] in terms total power consumption if average switching activity factor is 0.1 and outperforms it if switching activity is higher.

In addition to analyzing flip-flop's power and signal wirelength, we also analyze average displacement of each merged flip-flop. Table 6.3 presents the result of average displacement of merged flip-flops for all of the obtained executables. For each merged flip-flop, we can identify which of the original flip-flops it consists. Then displacement between flip-flop's original location and its final relocation position can be calculated. In all 6 testcases, original flip-flop is given in 1-bit or 2-bit, we perform analysis on all of the testcases for each executable and present the result by taking the average displacement for 1-bit and 2-bit flip-flop.

The benefit of merging nearest neighbor flip-flops is two fold, it increases least signal wirelength and creates least perturbation to original layout. Regarding to Table 6.3, our algorithm have the least displacement with better flip-flop reduction comparing to [3] and [14]. Regarding to [8], since it have the most flip-flop reduction, it also creates most perturbation to original placement.

## 6.2 Result of Clock Tree Synthesis After Flip-Flop Merging

Table 6.4 depicts the clock tree synthesis result of sink, buffer, and wire capacitance. We apply a DME-based two-stage buffered clock tree synthesis to verify the obtained results of four algorithms, and the capacitance data is obtained from NGSPICE[1]. Compared with [8], [14], [3], and our results without interleaving technique, 3.68%, 4.96% and 2.51% additional total capacitance are obtained. However, our work with interleaving technique has 2.58% less total capacitance compared with [8]. Although [8] obtains the best flip-flop reduction rate, the distant merged flip-flops cause longer clock tree wirelength. In interleaving technique, k-means clustering tends to concentrate flip-flop merging in each cluster, and reduce clock tree wirelength at the same time.

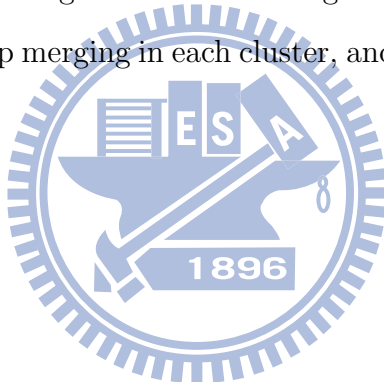


Table 6.1: Comparison on Flip-Flop Number Reduction and Detail of Multi-Bit Flip-Flop For Each Testcase

Circuit	Testcase	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	Total	Reduction Norm.
<b>Original</b>	# of FFs (1,2,4 bits)	76,22,0	366,57,0	1464,228,0	4378,751,0	9150,1425,0	146400,22800,0	-	-
	Total Sink#	98	423	1692	5128	10575	169200	187116	<b>100%</b>
<b>[8]</b>	# of FFs (1,2,4 bits)	0,4,28	0,6,117	0,14,473	2,21,1459	2,33,2983	18,113,47939	-	-
	Total Sink#	<b>32</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>1482</b>	<b>3018</b>	<b>48070</b>	<b>53212</b>	<b>29.40%</b>
<b>[14]</b>	# of FFs (1,2,4 bits)	6,7,25	16,30,101	70,125,400	232,402,1211	484,806,2476	7580,13508,39351	-	-
	Total Sink#	38	147	595	1845	3766	60439	66830	<b>36.00%</b>
<b>[3]</b>	# of FFs (1,2,4 bits)	8,10,23	24,36,96	84,146,386	242,469,1175	480,920,2420	7320,14780,38780	-	-
	Total Sink#	41	156	616	1886	3820	60880	67399	<b>37.33%</b>
<b>Our</b>	# of FFs (1,2,4 bits)	2,9,25	8,36,100	28,142,402	80,450,1225	160,880,2520	2440,14020,40380	-	-
	Total Sink#	36	144	572	1755	3560	56840	62907	<b>34.34%</b>



Table 6.2: Comparison on Flip-Flop's Power Reduction, Flip-Flop's Signal Wirelength and Execution Time

Circuit	Original		[8]			[14]			[3]			Our		
#	WL(nm)	PW	WL(nm)	PW	sec.	WL(nm)	PW	sec.	WL(nm)	PW	sec.	WL(nm)	PW	sec.
C1	8942500	11384	8606500	<b>9424</b>	0	8215500	9604	0	8196500	9696	0.01	<b>8112500</b>	9548	0
C2	34892000	46404	35495000	<b>37356</b>	0	31017000	38272	0.06	33032000	38544	0.03	<b>30534000</b>	38192	0.02
C3	139568000	185616	144232000	<b>149984</b>	0.04	123585000	153300	0.29	132321000	153944	0.07	<b>122790000</b>	152648	0.13
C4	429065500	566972	445319500	<b>459020</b>	0.11	379692500	470176	0.79	405594500	471468	0.2	<b>379287500</b>	467600	0.5
C5	872300000	1160100	911912000	<b>936572</b>	0.25	<b>755695000</b>	959544	1.95	827580000	961280	0.49	769890000	953600	1
C6	13956800000	18561600	14654546000	<b>14978204</b>	3.31	<b>12309247000</b>	15358888	36.45	13245195000	15373520	92.64	12338170000	15254000	21.86
Norm.	<b>1.130</b>	<b>1.233</b>	<b>1.157</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.002</b>	<b>1.023</b>	<b>11.012</b>	<b>1.065</b>	<b>1.028</b>	<b>27.988</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.018</b>	<b>6.604</b>

Table 6.3: Comparison on Average Displacement Distance of Merged Flip-Flops

Circuit	[8]		[14]		[3]		Our	
Testcase	1-bit(nm)	2-bit(nm)	1-bit(nm)	2-bit(nm)	1-bit(nm)	2-bit(nm)	1-bit(nm)	2-bit(nm)
C1	<b>37658</b>	49309	41875	19500	41426	22333	38270	<b>19477</b>
C2	40208	47922	38999	19760	38827	21350	<b>36989</b>	<b>18907</b>
C3	40717	48353	39820	19761	38399	21121	<b>37222</b>	<b>18907</b>
C4	41044	48129	40006	20361	38363	21098	<b>37433</b>	<b>19041</b>
C5	41027	48662	39429	20155	38159	21090	<b>37362</b>	<b>18907</b>
C6	41021	48898	39810	20395	38047	21103	<b>37430</b>	<b>18907</b>
Avg.	<b>40279</b>	<b>48546</b>	<b>39990</b>	<b>19989</b>	<b>38870</b>	<b>21349</b>	<b>37451</b>	<b>19027</b>

Table 6.4: Comparison on Clock Tree Synthesis Results including Sink, Buffer and Wire Capacitors after Multi-Bit Flip-Flop Construction among [8], [14], [3], and Our Work with and without Interleaving Technique

Circuit	Testcase	c1(ff)	c2(ff)	c3(ff)	c4(ff)	c5(ff)	Norm.
Original	Skew	0.2	1.586	2.104	2.069	2.86	-
	Sink	398.44	1624.14	6496.56	19844.02	40603.5	-
	Buffer	485.8	1927.8	7036.6	31911.1	65983.5	-
	Wire	586.426	2604.8	10873.25	34426.621	70841.548	-
	Total	<b>1470.666</b>	<b>6156.74</b>	<b>24406.41</b>	<b>86181.741</b>	<b>177428.548</b>	<b>1.556</b>
[8]	Skew	0.408	0.49	0.992	2.063	1.997	-
	Sink	327.32	1313.76	5249.44	16065.7	32780.02	-
	Buffer	485.8	1763	6377.4	14699.8	38431	-
	Wire	397.587	1608.361	6655.228	20600.921	42801.949	-
	Total	<b>1210.707</b>	<b>4685.121</b>	<b>18282.068</b>	<b>51366.421</b>	<b>114012.969</b>	<b>1</b>
[14]	Skew	0.252	1.145	0.87	2.834	1.829	-
	Sink	336.14	1339.52	5365.5	16456.16	33584	-
	Buffer	485.8	1763	6377.4	16183	39883.3	-
	Wire	380.335	1788.71	7310.818	21835.078	45611.517	-
	Total	<b>1202.275</b>	<b>4891.23</b>	<b>19053.718</b>	<b>54474.238</b>	<b>119078.817</b>	<b>1.037</b>
[3]	Skew	0.037	0.824	0.681	2.796	1.967	-
	Sink	339.36	1349.04	5388.04	16501.38	33644.8	-
	Buffer	485.8	1763	6377.4	16183	39749.4	-
	Wire	399.274	1793.078	7455.872	22734.639	47450.315	-
	Total	<b>1224.434</b>	<b>4905.118</b>	<b>19221.312</b>	<b>55419.019</b>	<b>120844.515</b>	<b>1.050</b>
Our work without interleaving	Skew	0.015	1.097	0.716	2.407	1.658	-
	Sink	334.18	1336.72	5342.68	16366	33376	-
	Buffer	485.8	1763	6377.4	15523.8	39749.4	-
	Wire	382.901	1716.058	7079.658	21492.976	45051.305	-
	Total	<b>1202.881</b>	<b>4815.778</b>	<b>18799.738</b>	<b>53382.776</b>	<b>118176.705</b>	<b>1.025</b>
Our work with interleaving	Skew	0.297	0.662	2.392	2.324	2.024	-
	Sink	334.18	1341.2	5357.24	16392.88	33440	-
	Buffer	485.8	1763	4811.8	14123	39749	-
	Wire	346.219	1557.159	6342.141	20601.14	42482.96	-
	Total	<b>1166.199</b>	<b>4661.359</b>	<b>16511.181</b>	<b>51117.02</b>	<b>115671.96</b>	<b>0.974</b>

# Chapter 7

## Conclusions

In this thesis, a co-synthesis method on clustering based flip-flop merging and clock tree synthesis is presented. According to observation, the proposed flip-flop merging can achieve roughly 60% in sink reduction. When interleaving with clock tree synthesis, it can reduce total clock tree wirelength by 33% by selecting optimal position for merged flip-flop. Agglomerative clustering shares common principle as Nearest Neighbor Selection which guarantees lowest cost to merge all nodes.

In addition to flip-flop merging, we also propose a two-phase clock tree synthesis based on improved k-means clustering. The selection of initial center based on [2] guarantees that the result error is bounded. Similar to Nearest Neighbor Selection, a Delaunay triangulation is maintained in each iteration of clock tree topology construction. Such approach will focus on topology of clock tree while taking wirelength minimization into consideration. In this regard, agglomerative clustering focus on local wirelength minimization and K-Means clustering considers global clock tree topology making both algorithms mutually complement to one another.

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