CPE 626
Advanced VLSI Design
Lecture 8: Power and Designing for Low Power

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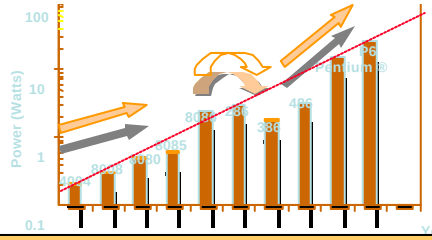
Why Power Matters

- Packaging costs
- Power supply rail design
- Chip and system cooling costs
- Noise immunity and system reliability
- Battery life (in portable systems)
- Environmental concerns
  - Office equipment accounted for 5% of total US commercial energy usage in 1993
  - Energy Star compliant systems

Why worry about power? – Power Dissipation

Lead microprocessors power continues to increase

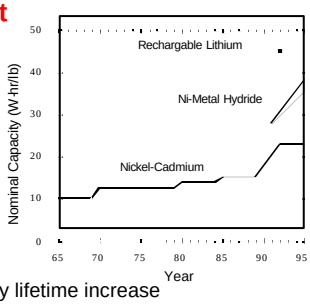


Power delivery and dissipation will be prohibitive

 Source: Borkar, De Intel 3

Problem Illustration

Why worry about power ? – Battery Size/Weight



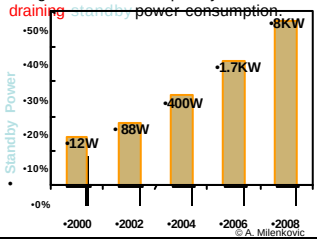
Expected battery lifetime increase over the next 5 years: 30 to 40%

From Rabaey, 1995

Why worry about power? – Standby Power

Year	2002	2005	2008	2011	2014
Power supply V_{dd} (V)	1.5	1.2	0.9	0.7	0.6
Threshold V_T (V)	0.4	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25

- Drain leakage will increase as V_T decreases to maintain noise margins and meet frequency demands, leading to excessive battery draining standby power consumption.



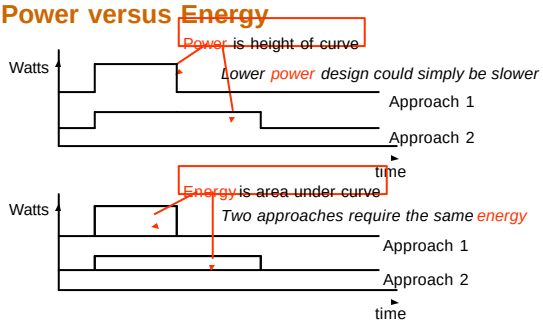
...and phones leaky!

Source: Borkar, De Intel

Power and Energy Figures of Merit

- Power consumption in Watts
  - determines battery life in hours
- Peak power
  - determines power ground wiring designs
  - sets packaging limits
  - impacts signal noise margin and reliability analysis
- Energy efficiency in Joules
  - rate at which power is consumed over time
- Energy = power * delay
  - Joules = Watts * seconds
  - lower energy number means less power to perform a computation at the same frequency

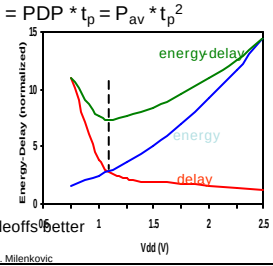
Power versus Energy



PDP and EDP

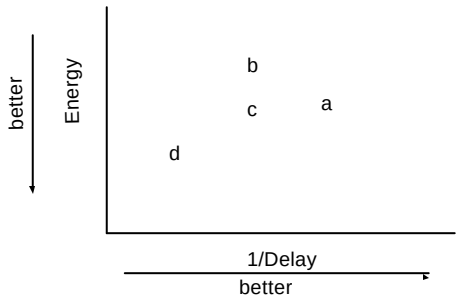
- Power-delay product (PDP) = $P_{av} * t_p = (C_L V_{DD}^2)/2$
  - PDP is the average energy consumed per switching event (Watts * sec = Joule)
  - lower power design could simply be a slower design

- Energy-delay product (EDP) = PDP * t_p = $P_{av} * t_p^2$
  - EDP is the average energy consumed multiplied by the computation time required
  - takes into account that one can trade increased delay for lower energy/operation (e.g., via supply voltage scaling that increases delay, but decreases energy consumption)
  - allows one to understand tradeoffs better



Understanding Tradeoffs

Which design is the "best" (fastest, coolest, both) ?



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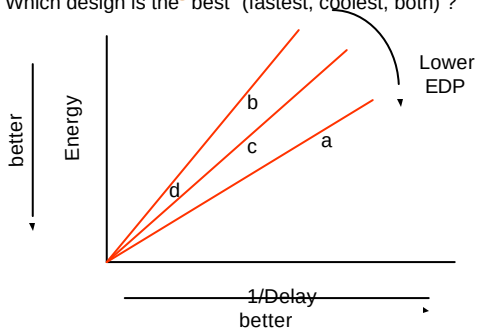


CMOS Energy & Power Equations

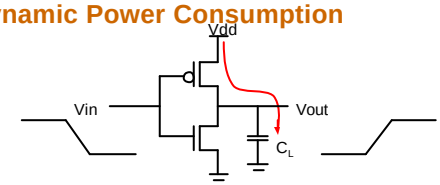
$$E = C_L V_{DD}^2 P_{0\to1} + t_{sc} V_{DD} I_{peak} P_{0\to1} + V_{DD} I_{leakage}$$

$$f_{0\to1} = P_{0\to1} * f_{clock}$$

$$P = C_L V_{DD}^2 f_{0\to1} + t_{sc} V_{DD} I_{peak} f_{0\to1} + V_{DD} I_{leakage}$$

Dynamic power | Short-circuit power | Leakage power

Dynamic Power Consumption



Energy/transition = $C_L * V_{DD}^2 * P_{0\to1}$

P_{dyn} = Energy/transition * f = $C_L * V_{DD}^2 * P_{0\to1} * f$

$P_{dyn} = C_{EFF} * V_{DD}^2 * f$ where $C_{EFF} = P_{0\to1} C_L$

Not a function of transistor sizes!
Data dependent - a function of switching activity!

Pop Quiz

- Consider a 0.25 micron chip, 500 MHz clock, average load cap of 15fF/gate (fanout of 4), 2.5V supply.
  - Dynamic Power consumption per gate is ??
- With 1 million gates (assuming each transitions every clock)
  - Dynamic Power of entire chip = ??.

Lowering Dynamic Power

Capacitance:
Function of fan-out, wire length, transistor sizes

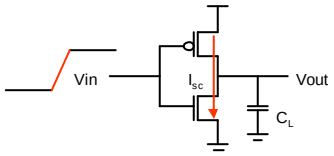
Supply Voltage:
Has been dropping with successive generations

$P_{dyn} = C_L V_{DD}^2 P_{0\to1} f$

Activity factor:
How often, on average, do wires switch?

Clock frequency:
Increasing...

Short Circuit Power Consumption



Finite slope of the input signal causes a direct current path between V_{DD} and GND for a short period of time during switching when both the NMOS and PMOS transistors are conducting.

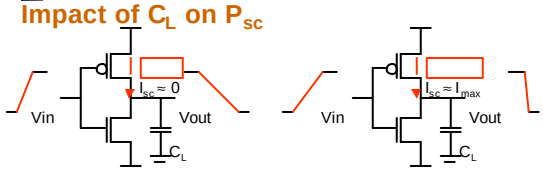
Short Circuit Currents Determinates

$$E_{sc} = t_{sc}\ V_{DD}\ I_{peak}\ P_{0\to1}$$

$$P_{sc} = t_{sc}\ V_{DD}\ I_{peak}\ f_{0\to1}$$

- Duration and slope of the input signal, t_{sc}
- I_{peak} determined by
  - the saturation current of the P and N transistors which depend on their sizes, process technology, temperature, etc.
  - strong function of the ratio between input and output slopes
    - a function of C_L

Impact of C_L on P_{sc}



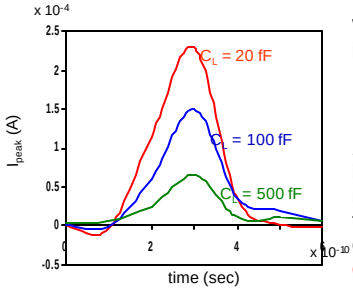
Large capacitive load

Output fall time significantly larger than input rise time.

Small capacitive load

Output fall time substantially smaller than the input rise time.

I_{peak} as a Function of C_L

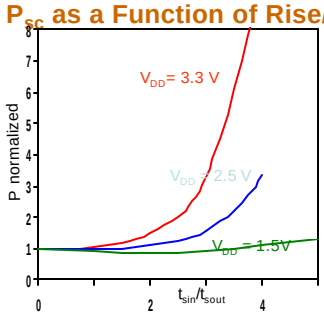


500 psec input slope

When load capacitance is small, I_{peak} is large.

Short circuit dissipation is minimized by matching the rise/fall times of the input and output signals - slope engineering.

P_{sc} as a Function of Rise/Fall Times



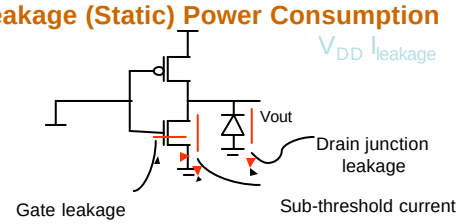
When load capacitance is small ($t_{sin}/t_{sout} > 2$ for $V_{DD} > 2V$) the power is dominated by P_{sc}

If $V_{DD} < V_{Tn} + |V_{Tp}|$ then P_{sc} is eliminated since both devices are never on at the same time.

$W/L_p = 1.125\ \mu m/0.25\ \mu m$
$W/L_n = 0.375\ \mu m/0.25\ \mu m$
$C_L = 30$ fF

normalized wrt zero input rise-time dissipation

Leakage (Static) Power Consumption

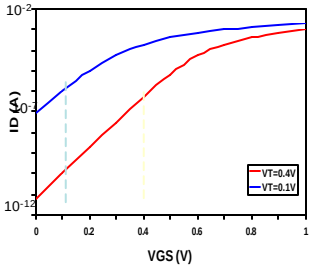


Sub-threshold current is the dominant factor.

All increase exponentially with temperature!

Leakage as a Function of V_T

- Continued scaling of supply voltage and the subsequent scaling of threshold voltage will make subthreshold conduction a dominate component of power dissipation.



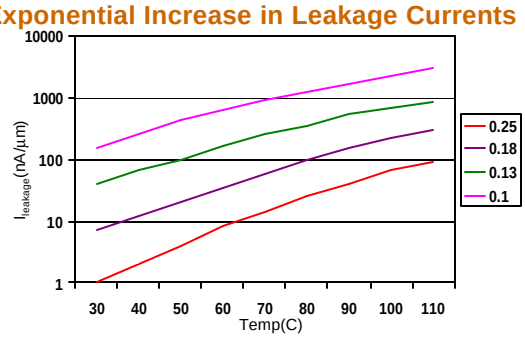
- An 90mV/decade V_T roll-off - so each 255mV increase in V_T gives 3 orders of magnitude reduction in leakage (but adversely affects performance)

TSMC Processes Leakage and V_T

	CL018 G	CL018 LP	CL018 ULP	CL018 HS	CL015 HS	CL013 HS
V_{dd}	1.8 V	1.8 V	1.8 V	2 V	1.5 V	1.2 V
T_{ox} (effective)	42 Å	42 Å	42 Å	42 Å	29 Å	24 Å
L_{gate}	0.16 µm	0.16 µm	0.18 µm	0.13 µm	0.11 µm	0.08 µm
I_{DSat}(n/p) (µA/µm)	600/260	500/180	320/130	780/360	860/370	920/400
I_{off} (leakage) (pA/µm)	20	1.60	0.15	300	1,800	13,000
V_{Tn}	0.42 V	0.63 V	0.73 V	0.40 V	0.29 V	0.25 V
FET Perf. (GHz)	30	22	14	43	52	80

From MPR, 2000

Exponential Increase in Leakage Currents



From De,1999

Review: Energy & Power Equations

$$E = C_L V_{DD}^2 P_{0\to1} + t_{sc} V_{DD} I_{peak} P_{0\to1} + V_{DD} I_{leakage}$$

$$f_{0\to1} = P_{0\to1} * f_{clock}$$

$$P = C_L V_{DD}^2 f_{0\to1} + t_{sc} V_{DD} I_{peak} f_{0\to1} + V_{DD} I_{leakage}$$

Dynamic power (~90% today and decreasing relatively)

Short-circuit power (~8% today and decreasing absolutely)

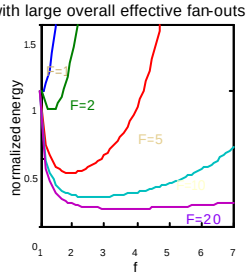
Leakage power (~2% today and increasing)

Power and Energy Design Space

	Constant Throughput/Latency		Variable Throughput/Latency
Energy	Design Time	Non-active Modules	Run Time
Active	Logic Design Reduced V_{dd} Sizing Multi V_{dd}	Clock Gating	DFS, DVS (Dynamic Freq, Voltage Scaling)
Leakage	+ Multi-V_T	Sleep Transistors Multi-V_{dd} Variable V_t	+ Variable V_T

Dynamic Power as a Function of Device Size

- Device sizing affects dynamic energy consumption
  - gain is largest for networks with large overall effective fan-outs ($F = C_L/C_{g1}$)
- The optimal gate sizing factor (f) for dynamic energy is smaller than the one for performance, especially for large F's
  - e.g., for F=20, f_{opt}(energy) = 3.53 while f_{opt}(performance) = 4.47
- If energy is a concern avoid oversizing beyond the optimal



From Nikolic, UCB

Dynamic Power Consumption is Data Dependent

- Switching activity, $P_{0\to1}$, has two components
  - A static component – function of the logic topology
  - A dynamic component – function of the timing behavior (glitching)

2-input NOR Gate

A	B	Out
0	0	1
0	1	0
1	0	0
1	1	0

Static transition probability

$P_{0\to1} = P_{out=0} \times P_{out=1}$

$= P_0 \times (1-P_0)$

With input signal probabilities

$P_{A=1} = 1/2$

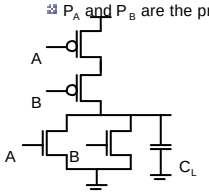
$P_{B=1} = 1/2$

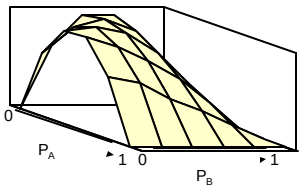
NOR static transition probability

$= 3/4 \times 1/4 = 3/16$

NOR Gate Transition Probabilities

- Switching activity is a strong function of the input signal statistics
  - P_A and P_B are the probabilities that inputs A and B are one

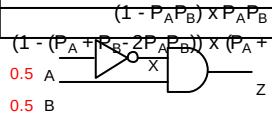




$P_{0\to1} = P_0 \times P_1 = (1-(1-P_A)(1-P_B))\,(1-P_A)(1-P_B)$

Transition Probabilities for Some Basic Gates

	$P_{0\to1} = P_{out=0} \times P_{out=1}$
NOR	$(1 - (1 - P_A)(1 - P_B)) \times (1 - P_A)(1 - P_B)$
OR	$(1 - P_A)(1 - P_B) \times (1 - (1 - P_A)(1 - P_B))$
NAND	$P_A P_B \times (1 - P_A P_B)$
AND	$(1 - P_A P_B) \times P_A P_B$
XOR	$(1 - (P_A + P_B - 2P_A P_B)) \times (P_A + P_B - 2P_A P_B)$



For X: $P_{0\to1} =$

For Z: $P_{0\to1} =$

Transition Probabilities for Some Basic Gates

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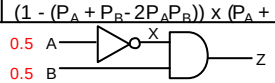
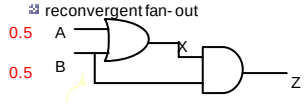


For X: $P_{0\to1} = P_0 \times P_1 = (1-P_A)\, P_A$
$= 0.5 \times 0.5 = 0.25$

For Z: $P_{0\to1} = P_0 \times P_1 = (1-P_X P_B)\, P_X P_B$
$= (1 - (0.5 \times 0.5)) \times (0.5 \times 0.5) = 3/16$

Inter-signal Correlations

- Determining switching activity is complicated by the fact that signals exhibit correlation in space and time
  - reconvergent fan-out



Reconvergent fan-out

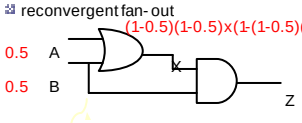
P(Z=1) = P(B=1) & P(A=1 | B=1)

- Have to use conditional probabilities

Inter-signal Correlations

- Determining switching activity is complicated by the fact that signals exhibit correlation in space and time
  - reconvergent fan-out

(1-0.5)(1-0.5)x(1-(1-0.5)(1-0.5)) = 3/16



Reconvergent

P(Z=1) = P(B=1) * P(X=1 | B=1)
= 0.5 * 1 = 0.5
P(Z=0) = 1 – P(B=1)*P(X=1 | B=1) = 0.5
P(0->1) = 0.5*0.5 = 0.25

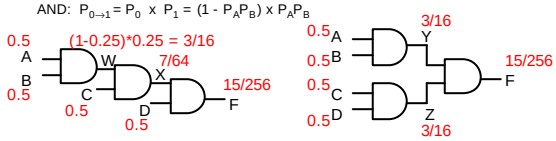
P(Z=1) = P(B=1) & P(A=1 | B=1)

- Have to use conditional probabilities

Logic Restructuring

Logic restructuring: changing the topology of a logic network to reduce transitions

AND: $P_{0\to1} = P_0 \times P_1 = (1 - P_A P_B) \times P_A P_B$



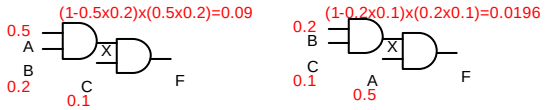
- Chain implementation has a lower overall switching activity than the tree implementation for random inputs

Ignores glitching effects

Input Ordering

Beneficial to postpone the introduction of signals with a high transition rate (signals with signal probability close to 0.5)

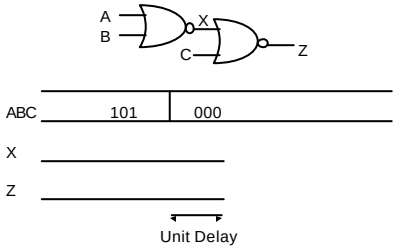
Input Ordering



Beneficial to postpone the introduction of signals with a high transition rate (signals with signal probability close to 0.5)

Glitching in Static CMOS Networks

- Gates have a nonzero propagation delay resulting in spurious transitions or glitches (dynamic hazards)
  - glitch: node exhibits multiple transitions in a single cycle before settling to the correct logic value



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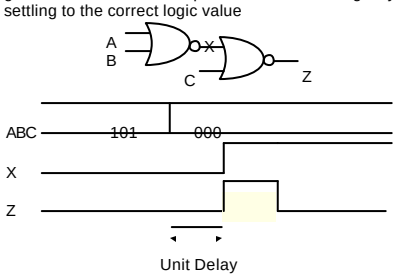
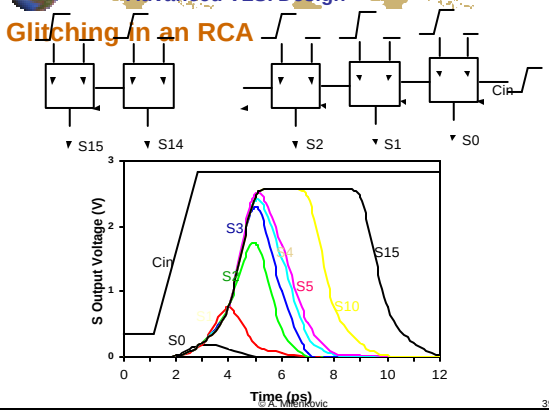
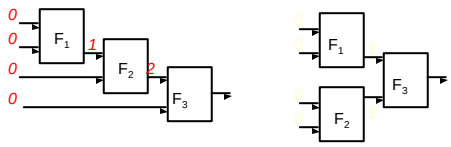


Glitching in an RCA



Balanced Delay Paths to Reduce Glitching

Glitching is due to a mismatch in the path lengths in the logic network; if all input signals of a gate change simultaneously, no glitching occurs



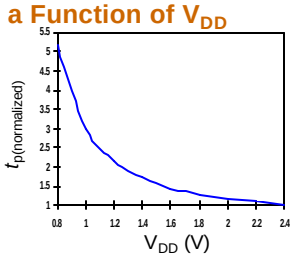
So equalize the lengths of timing paths through logic

Power and Energy Design Space

	Constant Throughput/Latency		Variable Throughput/Latency
Energy	Design Time	Non-active Modules	Run Time
Active	Logic Design Reduced V_{dd} Sizing Multi-V_{dd}	Clock Gating	DFS, DVS (Dynamic Freq, Voltage Scaling)
Leakage	+ Multi-V_T	Sleep Transistors Multi-V_{dd} Variable V_T	+ Variable V_T

Dynamic Power as a Function of V_{DD}

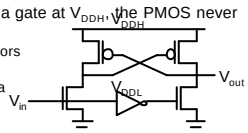
- Decreasing the V_{DD} decreases dynamic energy consumption (quadratically)
- But, increases gate delay (decreases performance)



- Determine the critical path(s) at design time and use high V_{DD} for the transistors on those paths for speed. Use a lower V_{DD} on the other gates, especially those that drive large capacitances (as this yields the largest energy benefits).

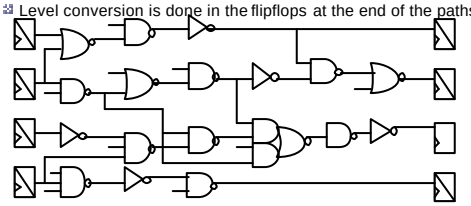
Multiple V_{DD} Considerations

- How many V_{DD}? – Two is becoming common
  - Many chips already have two supplies (one for core and one for I/O)
- When combining multiple supplies, level converters are required whenever a module at the lower supply drives a gate at the higher supply (step-up)
  - If a gate supplied with V_{DDL} drives a gate at V_{DDH}, the PMOS never turns off
    - The cross-coupled PMOS transistors do the level conversion
    - The NMOS transistor operate on a reduced supply
  - Level converters are not needed for a step-down change in voltage
  - Overhead of level converters can be mitigated by doing conversions at register boundaries and embedding the level conversion inside the flipflop (see Figure 11.47)



Dual-Supply Inside a Logic Block

- Minimum energy consumption is achieved if all logic paths are critical (have the same delay)
- Clustered voltage-scaling
  - Each path starts with V_{DDH} and switches to V_{DDL} (gray logic gates) when delay slack is available
  - Level conversion is done in the flipflops at the end of the paths



Power and Energy Design Space

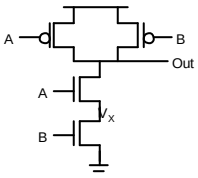
	Constant Throughput/Latency		Variable Throughput/Latency
Energy	Design Time	Non-active Modules	Run Time
Active	Logic Design Reduced V_{dd} Sizing	Clock Gating	DFS, DVS (Dynamic Freq, Voltage Scaling)
Leakage	Multi-V_{dd} + Multi-V_T	Sleep Transistors Multi-V_{dd} Variable V_T	+ Variable V_T

Stack Effect

- Leakage is a function of the circuit topology and the value of the inputs

$$V_T = V_{T0} + \gamma(\sqrt{|-2\phi_F + V_{SB}|} - \sqrt{|-2\phi_F|})$$

where V_{T0} is the threshold voltage at $V_{SB} = 0$; V_{SB} is the source-bulk (substrate) voltage; γ is the body-effect coefficient



A	B	V_X	I_{SUB}
0	0	$V_T \ln(1+n)$	$V_{GS}=V_{BS}=-V_X$
0	1	0	$V_{GS}=V_{BS}=0$
1	0	$V_{DD}-V_T$	$V_{GS}=V_{BS}=0$
1	1	0	$V_{SG}=V_{SB}=0$

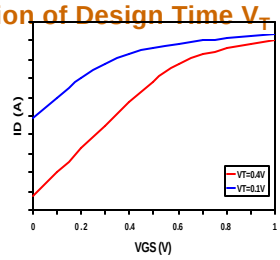
- Leakage is least when A = B = 0
- Leakage reduction due to stacked transistors is called the stack effect

Short Channel Factors and Stack Effect

- In short-channel devices, the subthreshold leakage current depends on V_{GS}, V_{BS} and V_{DS}. The V_T of a short-channel device decreases with increasing V_{DS} due to DIBL (drain-induced barrier loading).
  - Typical values for DIBL are 20 to 150mV change in V_T per voltage change in V_{DS} so the stack effect is even more significant for short-channel devices.
  - V_X reduces the drain-source voltage of the top nfet, increasing its V_T and lowering its leakage
- For our 0.25 micron technology, V_X settles to ~100mV in steady state so V_{BS} = -100mV and $V_{DS} = V_{DD}$ -100mV which is 20 times smaller than the leakage of a device with V_{BS} = 0mV and $V_{DS} = V_{DD}$

Leakage as a Function of Design Time V_T

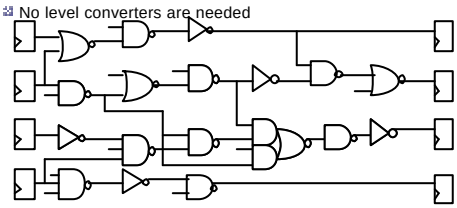
- Reducing the V_T increases the sub-threshold leakage current (exponentially)
  - 90mV reduction in V_T increases leakage by an order of magnitude
- But, reducing V_T decreases gate delay (increases performance)



- Determine the critical path(s) at design time and use low V_T devices on the transistors on those paths for speed. Use a high V_T on the other logic for leakage control.
  - A careful assignment of V_T's can reduce the leakage by as much as 80%

Dual-Thresholds Inside a Logic Block

- Minimum energy consumption is achieved if all logic paths are critical (have the same delay)
- Use lower threshold on timing-critical paths
  - Assignment can be done on a per gate or transistor basis; no clustering of the logic is needed
  - No level converters are needed



Variable V_T (ABB) at Run Time

- $V_T = V_{T0} + \gamma(\sqrt{|-2\phi_F + V_{SB}|} - \sqrt{|-2\phi_F|})$

• For an n-channel device, the substrate is normally tied to ground ($V_{SB} = 0$)

• A negative bias on V_{SB} causes V_T to increase

• Adjusting the substrate bias at run time is called adaptive body-biasing (ABB)

  • Requires a dual well fab process