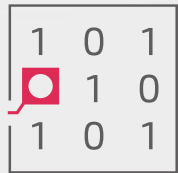


A MODEL-BASED APPROACH TO MASTERING COMPLEXITY IN FPGA-SoC SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT



MPSI
TECHNOLOGIES

Alexander Wirthmüller
aw@mpsitechnologies.com

Introduction

Me and MPSI Technologies

- Diploma in Electrical Engineering
- Based in Munich
- R&D Engineer at Mynaric (FPGA-based error-correction algorithms for free-space optical laser communications)
- Founder and Director at MPSI Technologies
- MPSI Technologies: make Embedded Software development more fun by replacing repetitive tasks by model-based source code generation



FPGA-SoC landscape

Devices and applications

Product lines

Selection discussed here: CPU complex can run Embedded Linux



- from 2011: Zynq 7000 with Dual 32-bit ARM CPU and SRAM-based FPGA, internally connected via AXI
- from 2016: Zynq UltraScale+ with Quad 64-bit ARM CPU and additional real-time cores / accelerators



- from 2012: CycloneV with Dual 32-bit ARM CPU
- from 2016: Stratix 10 with Quad 64-bit ARM CPU



- from 2019: PolarFire SoC with Quad 64-bit RISC-V CPU and antifuse-based FPGA

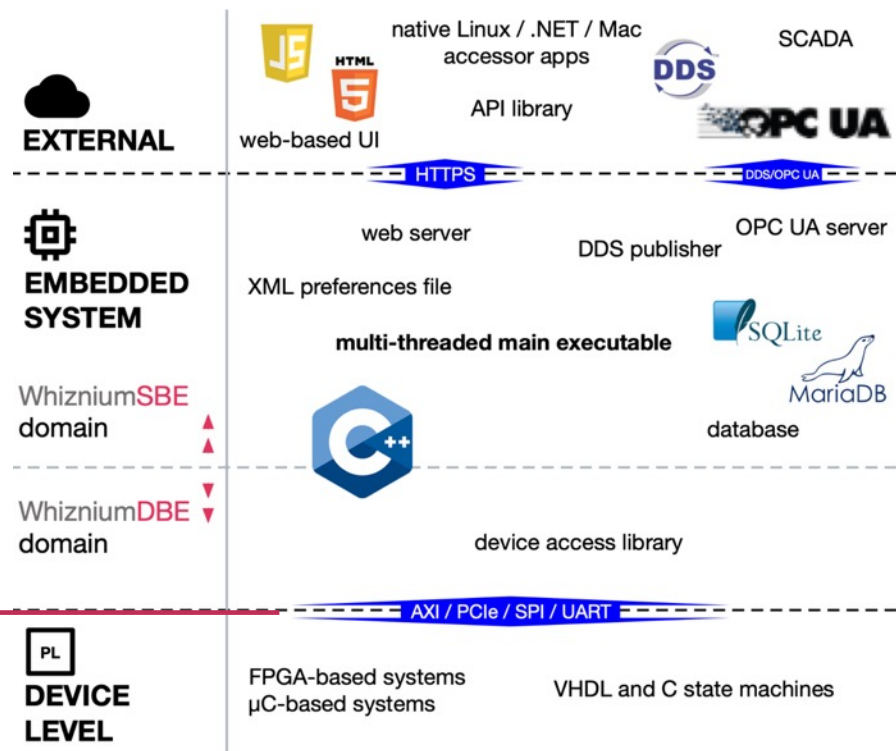
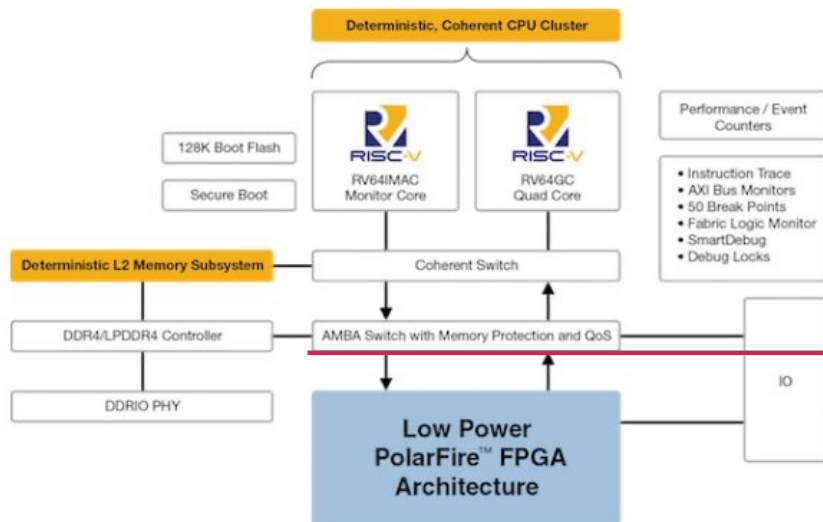
Typical applications

- classical FPGA applications where additional high-level control is of advantage
- "data reduction" or pre-processing of high-bandwidth sources
- cameras: binning, pixel-level filters, compression, feature and object detection
- ADC's: spectral analysis, DSP filters
- clock-precise signaling for mixed-signal ASIC's
- not considered here: data center and hardware acceleration applications

The FPGA-SoC software full stack

From VHDL to C++ to HTTPS and XML

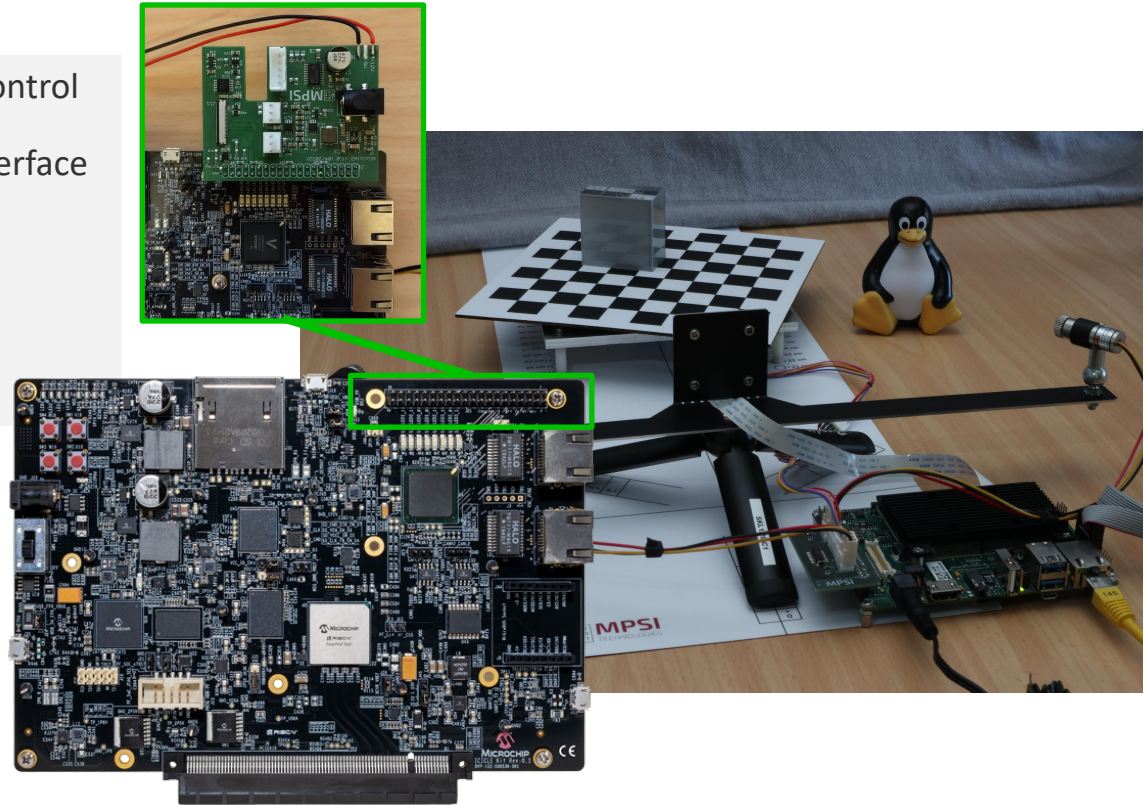
Microchip PolarFire SoC Block Diagram



Demo project: hardware

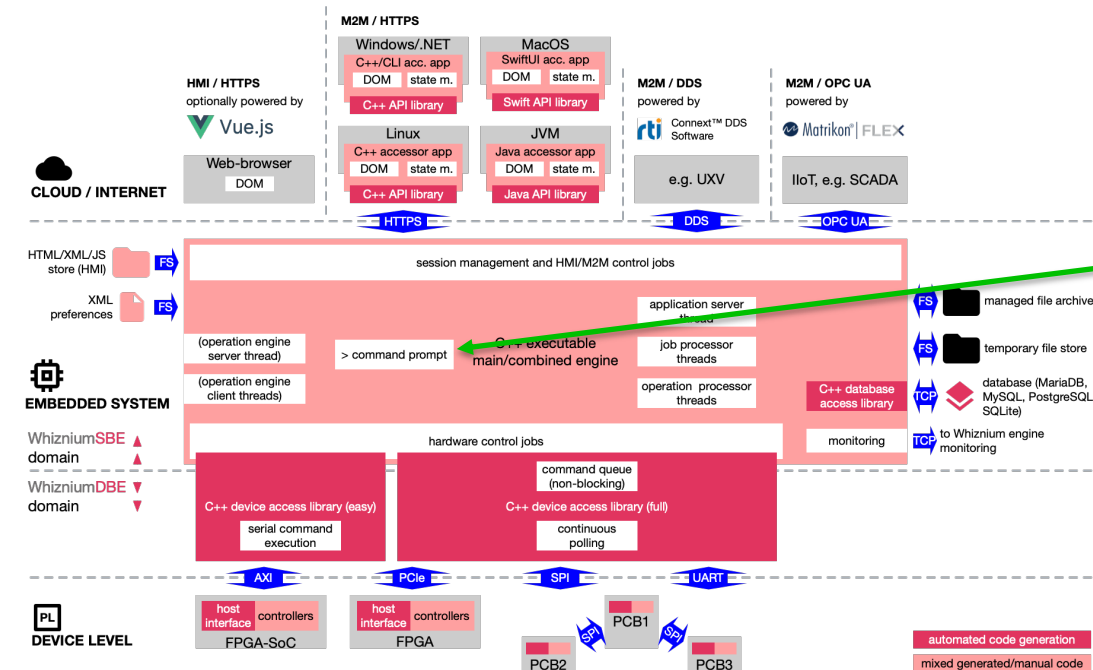
Tabletop 3D laser scanner

- turntable with with stepper motor control
- 5 megapixel camera with MIPI CSI interface
- two intensity-modulated line lasers
- Microchip PolarFire SoC Icicle kit with adapter PCB



Demo project: software

From camera raw data to point cloud display in web browser



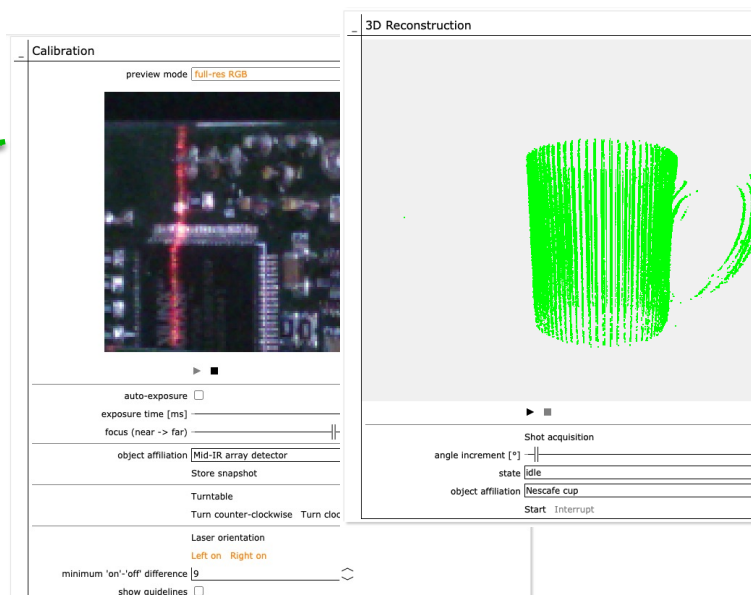
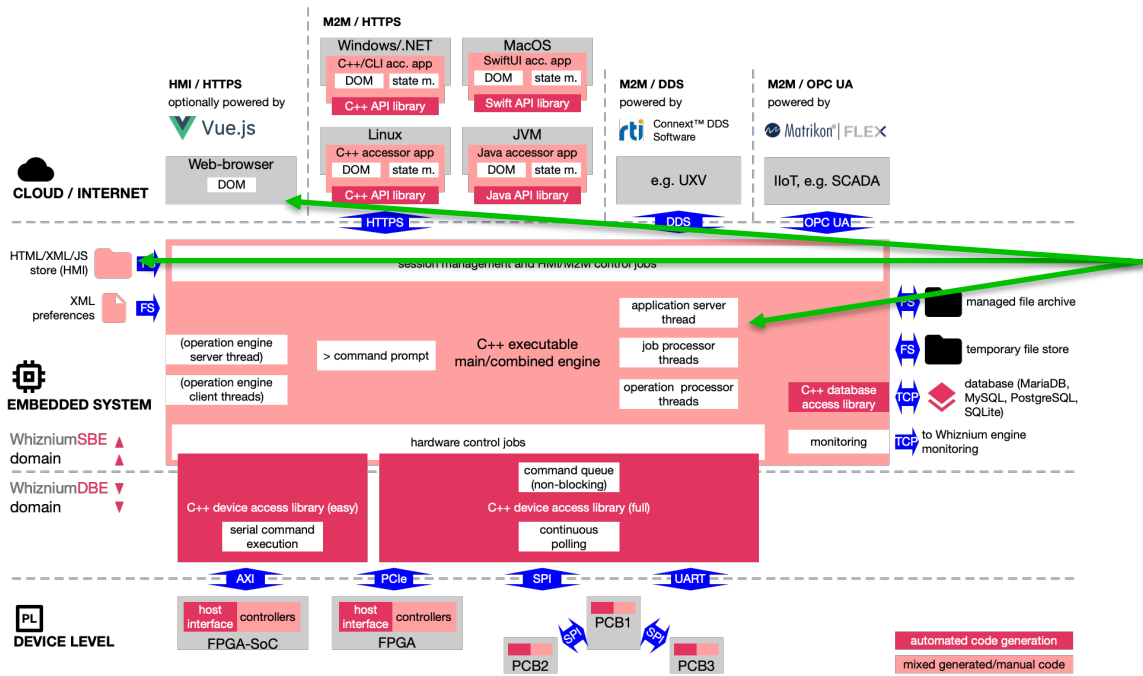
```
root@icicle-kit-es:~/whiznium/bin/wzskcmd# ./Wzskcmd
Welcome to Whiznium StarterKit v1.0.5!
starting 4 job processor threads ... {19255, 19256, 19257, 19258} success
starting 1 operation processor threads ... {19259} success
starting application server ... success
starting OPC UA server ... success
Initialization complete.

Wzskcmd >> showJobs
+ RootWzsk (1)
- JobWzskSrcV412/SRV (2)
- JobWzskSrcSysinfo/SRV (3)
- JobWzskSrcPpga/SRV (4)
+ JobWzskIprTrace/SRV (5)
- JobWzskActLaser/CLI (6)
- JobWzskSrcV412/CLI (7)
+ JobWzskIprCorner/SRV (8)
- JobWzskSrcV412/CLI (9)
+ JobWzskIprAngle/SRV (10)
- JobWzskIprCorner/CLI (11)
- JobWzskActServo/SRV (12)
- JobWzskActLaser/SRV (13)
+ JobWzskActExposure/SRV (14)
- JobWzskSrcV412/CLI (15)
+ JobWzskAcqPtlcloud/SRV (16)
- JobWzskIprTrace/CLI (17)
- JobWzskActServo/CLI (18)
+ JobWzskAcqPreview/SRV (19)
- JobWzskSrcV412/CLI (20)
+ JobWzskAcqPpgapvw/SRV (21)
- JobWzskSrcPpga/CLI (22)
+ JobWzskAcqPpgaf1g/SRV (23)
- JobWzskSrcPpga/CLI (24)
+ M2messWzsk (25)
- JobWzskSrcSysinfo/CLI (26)
- JobWzskIprTrace/CLI (27)
- JobWzskIprCorner/CLI (28)
- JobWzskActServo/CLI (29)
- JobWzskActExposure/CLI (30)
- JobWzskActLaser/CLI (31)
- JobWzskAcqPtlcloud/CLI (32)
- JobWzskAcqPreview/CLI (33)

Wzskcmd >>
```

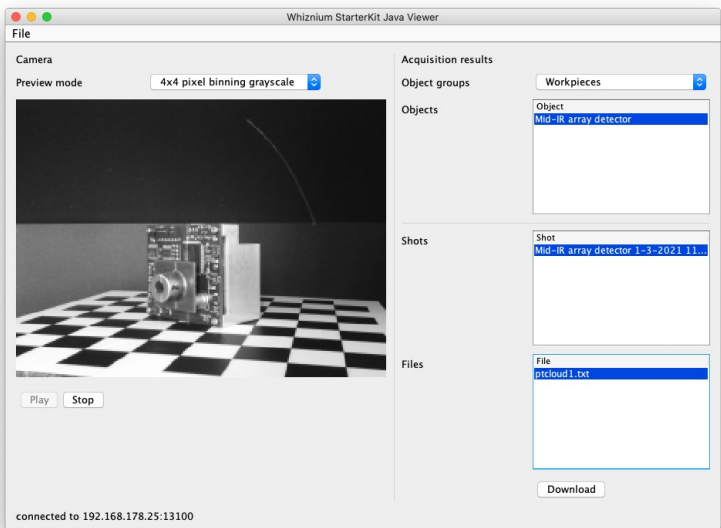
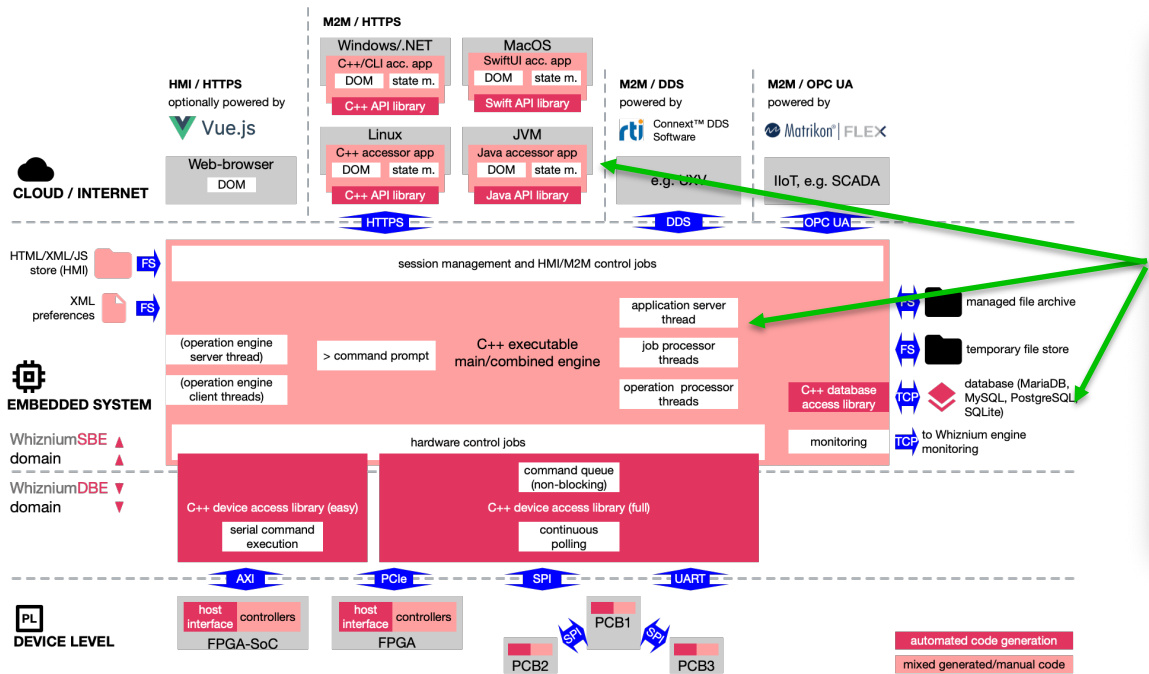
Demo project: software

From camera raw data to point cloud display in web browser



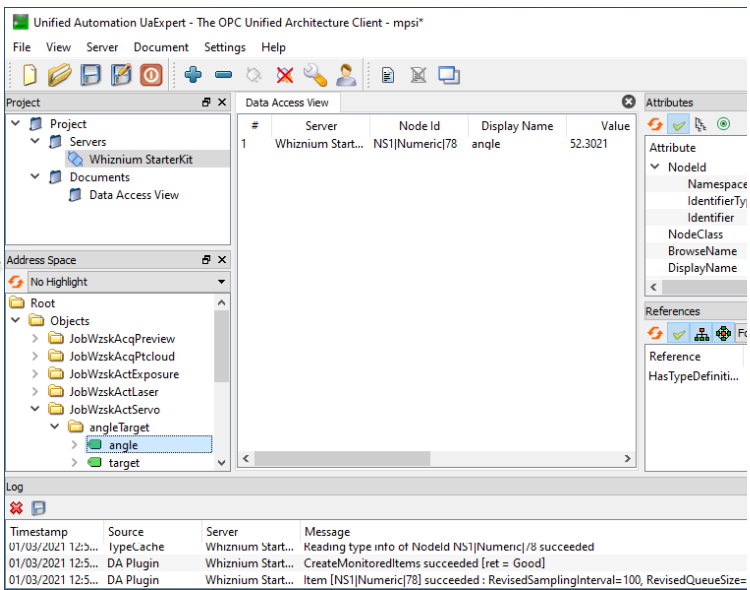
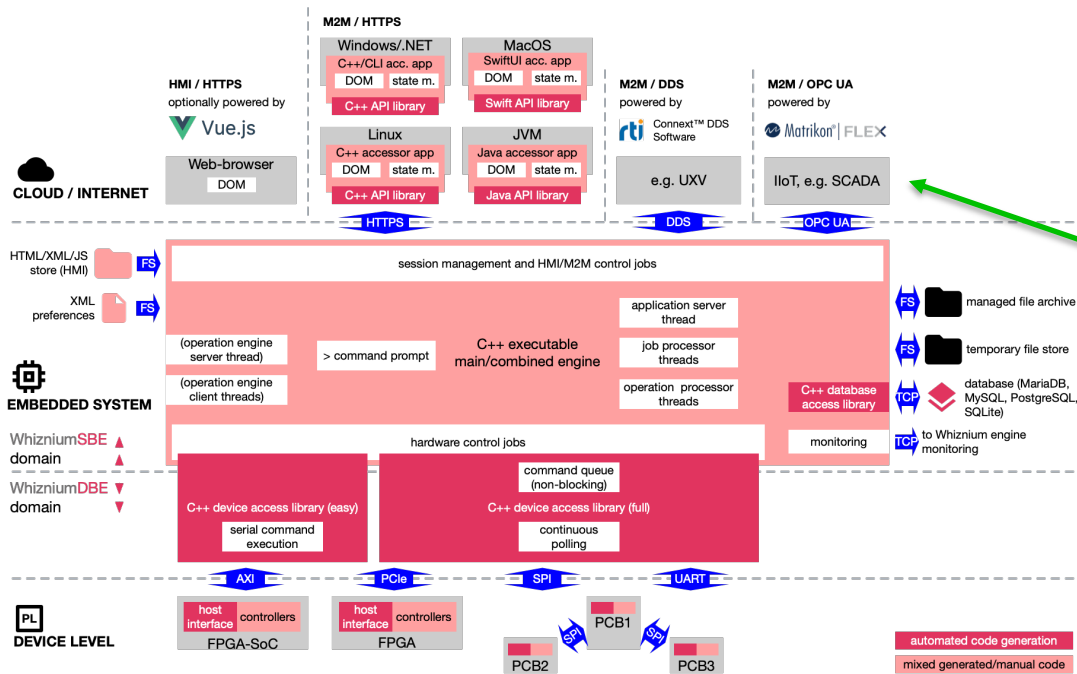
Demo project: software

From camera raw data to point cloud display in web browser



Demo project: software

From camera raw data to point cloud display in web browser



Embedded software model description

WhizniumDBE for FPGA layer, WhizniumSBE for Linux application software

- successive model composition within an SQL database using import (I) and generation (G) steps
- output of source code trees only thereafter
- text-based model files ("diffable")

WhizniumDBE (Device Builder's Edition)

- Modular structure (I)
- Command set and buffer transfers (I)
- Data flows and algorithms (I)
- Fine structure (G)
- Custom fine structure (I)
- Finalization (G)

WhizniumSBE (Service Builder's Edition)

- Deployment information (I)
- Global features (I)
- Database structure (I)
- Basic user interface structure (I)
- Import/export structure (I)
- Operation pack structure (I)
- Custom jobs (I)
- User interface (G)
- Custom user interface features (I)
- Job tree (G)
- Custom job tree features (I)
- Finalization (G)

Deep dive I: from C++ command to RTL finite state machine

Control of turntable stepper motor

- module definition, command definition, fine structure

Deep dive I: from C++ command to RTL finite state machine

Control of turntable stepper motor

lexWdbeMdl v1.1.14								
ImeIMUnit	srefSilRefWdbeMUnit	sref	Title	Easy	srefKToolch	Comment		
fpga	mpfs250t-fcvg484	iccl	Microchip PolarFire Soc Icicle kit	true	libero			
	ImeIMModule.srefIxVBa	hsrefSupRefWdb	srefTplRefWdbeMModule	sref	Comment			
	wrp		mpfs_ip_AXI_v1_0	iccl_ip_AXI				
	top	iccl_ip_AXI	top_mchp_v1_0	top				
		ImeIAMModuleF Val						
		fExtclk	125000					
		extresetNNotP	true					
		ImeIAMModulePar.end						
		ImeIMGeneric.s Defval						
		fMclk	50000					
		ImeIMGeneric.end						
	...							
	ectr	iccl_ip_AXI;top		step	stepper motor control (28BYJ-48 via ULN2003)			
	...							
	ImeIMModule.end							
ImeIMUnit.end								

Deep dive I: from C++ command to RTL finite state machine

Control of turntable stepper motor

lexWdbeCxx v1.1.9								
ImelMUnit.sref								
iccl								
ImelModule.hsrefSup sref								
iccl_ip_AXI;top step								
ImelMController.								
^								
ImelMVector2.srefIxVBase sref								
srefsKOption								
tixlin VecVWskdlcclStepState filfed;notit								
ImelMVectoritem2.sref Title Comment								
idle								
move								
ImelMVectoritem2.end								
ImelMVector2.end								
ImelMCommand2.refNum sref srefIxVRettype srefIvrRefWd srefRvrRef srefRerRe Comment								
...								
0 moveto void								
ImelAMCommandInvpar2.sref srefIxWdbeVPatype srefRefWdbe Length Defval srefRefWdbe Comment								
angle uint16 0 in stepper motor steps (4096 per rev.)								
Tstep uint8 150 in tkclk clocks: rps = 10000 / (Tstep * 64 * 64)								
ImelAMCommandInvpar2.end								
...								
ImelMCommand2.end								
ImelMController.end								
ImelModule.end								
ImelMUnit.end								

Deep dive I: from C++ command to RTL finite state machine

Control of turntable stepper motor

lexWdbeFin v1.1.9									
ImelMUnit.sref									
iccl									
ImelMModule.hsrefSup sref									
iccl_ip_AXI;top step									
...									
ImelMProcess.sref clkSrefWdbe asrSrefWdbeMS Falling Syncrst Extip Comment									
op mclk reset false state(init) or (sta false main operation									
ImelMFsm.									
^									
ImelMFsmstate sref Extip Comment									
0 init false									
ImelAMFsm: Cond1 Ip1 Cond2 Ip2 Cond3 Ip3 Cond4 Ip4									
inv reqInvMoveto moveto									
inv reqInvSet set									
inv reqInvZero zero									
ready else									
ImelAMFsmstateStep.end									
0 ready false									
ImelAMFsm: Cond1 Ip1 Cond2 Ip2 Cond3 Ip3 Cond4 Ip4									
runB Tstep/=0 not targetNotSteady and rng steady									
runB Tstep/=0 targetNotSteady and not atTarget target									
ready Tstep/=0 else hold									
ImelAMFsmstateStep.end									
...									
ImelMFsmstate.end									
ImelMFsm.end									
ImelMProcess.end									
ImelMModule.end									
ImelMUnit.end									

Deep dive I: from C++ command to RTL finite state machine

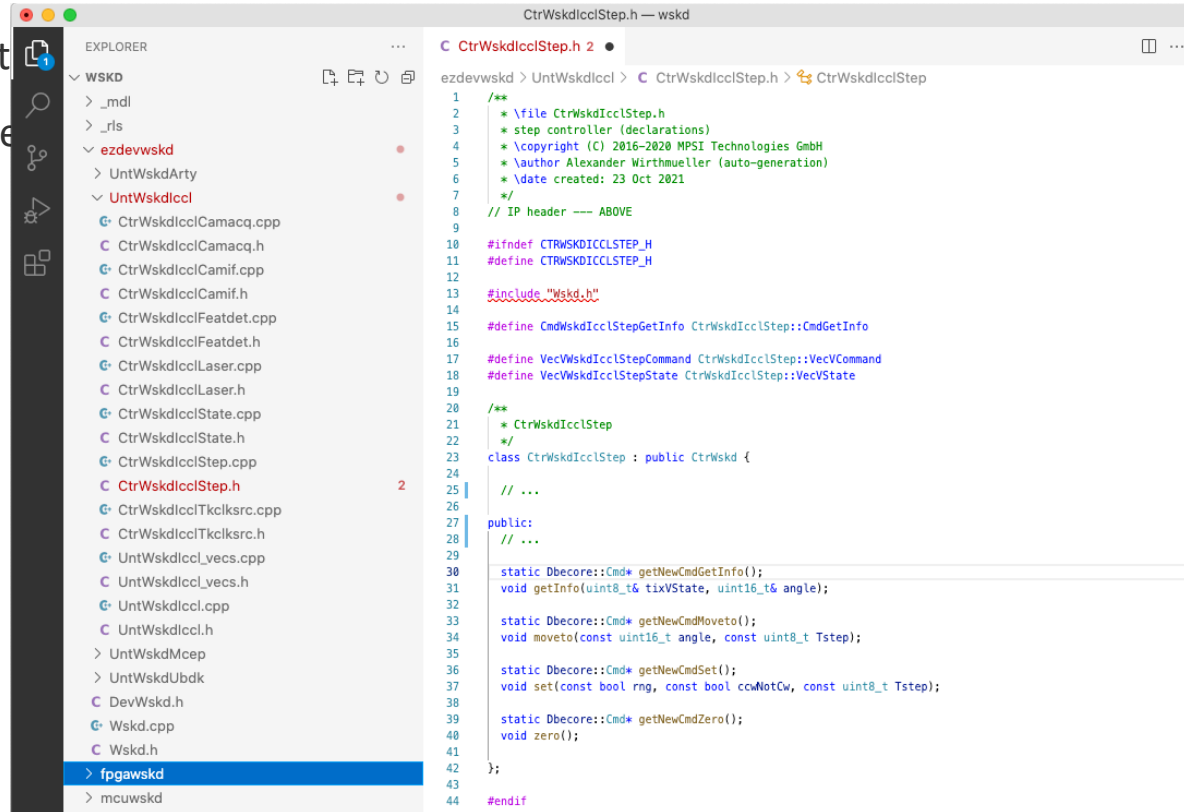
Control of turntable stepper motor

- module definition, command definition, fine structure
- Linux side developer-facing: executable API method

Deep dive I: from C++ command to RTL finite state machine

Control of turntable stepper motor

- module definition
- Linux side development



The screenshot displays a code editor interface. On the left, the 'EXPLORER' pane shows a project structure with folders like 'WSKD', 'ezdevwskd', and 'fpgawskd'. The file 'CtrWskdIcclStep.h' is selected. The main editor area shows the content of this header file, which includes comments, preprocessor directives for feature toggles, and the definition of the 'CtrWskdIcclStep' class.

```
1 /**
2  * \file CtrWskdIcclStep.h
3  * step controller (declarations)
4  * \copyright (C) 2016-2020 MPSI Technologies GmbH
5  * \author Alexander Wirthmueller (auto-generation)
6  * \date created: 23 Oct 2021
7  */
8 // IP header --- ABOVE
9
10 #ifndef CTRWSKDICCLSTEP_H
11 #define CTRWSKDICCLSTEP_H
12
13 #include "Wskd.h"
14
15 #define CmdWskdIcclStepGetInfo CtrWskdIcclStep::CmdGetInfo
16
17 #define VecWskdIcclStepCommand CtrWskdIcclStep::VecVCommand
18 #define VecWskdIcclStepState CtrWskdIcclStep::VecVState
19
20 /**
21  * CtrWskdIcclStep
22  */
23 class CtrWskdIcclStep : public CtrWskd {
24 // ...
25 public:
26 // ...
27
28 static Dbcore::Cmd* getNewCmdGetInfo();
29 void getInfo(uint8_t& tixVState, uint16_t& angle);
30
31 static Dbcore::Cmd* getNewCmdMoveto();
32 void moveto(const uint16_t angle, const uint8_t Tstep);
33
34 static Dbcore::Cmd* getNewCmdSet();
35 void set(const bool rng, const bool ccwNotCw, const uint8_t Tstep);
36
37 static Dbcore::Cmd* getNewCmdZero();
38 void zero();
39
40 };
41
42 #endif
```

Deep dive I: from C++ command to RTL finite state machine

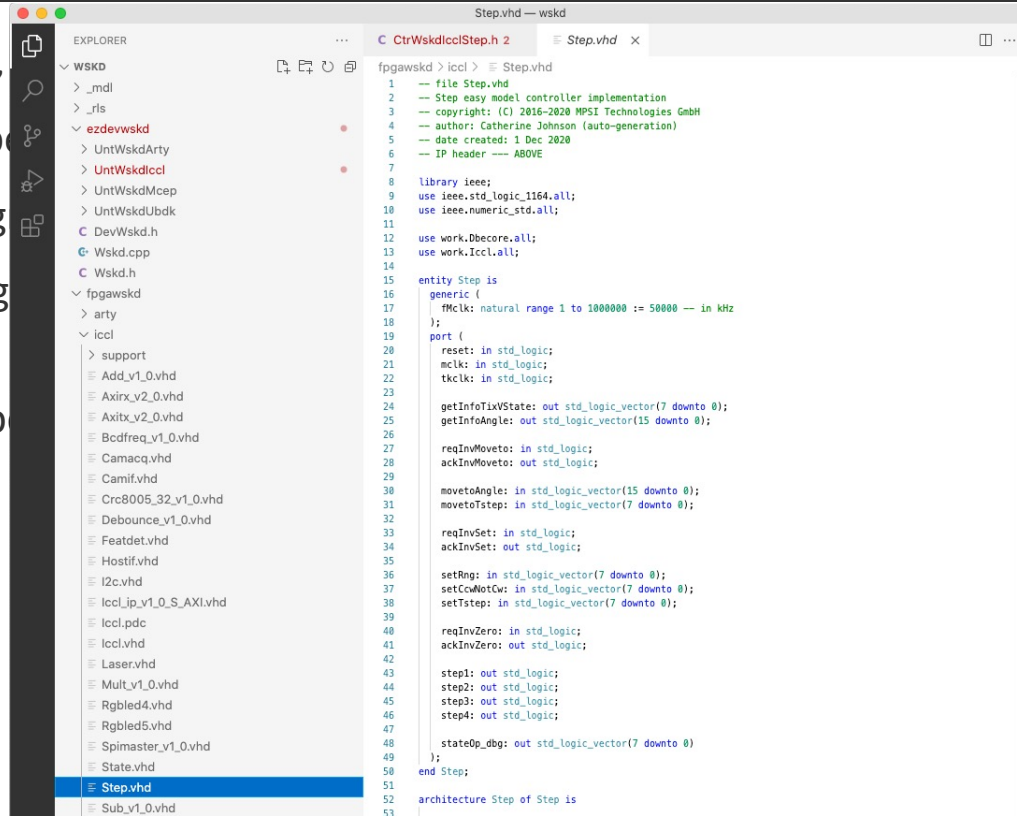
Control of turntable stepper motor

- module definition, command definition, fine structure
- Linux side developer-facing: executable API method
- Linux side in background: translation into byte code and invocation of character device driver (AXI)
- FPGA side in background: reception and decoding of byte code in “host interface” module, CRC evaluation
- FPGA side developer-facing: handshake signals

Deep dive I: from C++ command to RTL finite state machine

Control of turntable stepper motor

- module definition,
- Linux side development
- Linux side in background
- FPGA side in background evaluation
- FPGA side development



```
Step.vhd -- wskd
C CtrlWskdIcclStep.h 2 Step.vhd x
fpgawskd > iccl > Step.vhd
1 -- file Step.vhd
2 -- Step easy model controller implementation
3 -- copyright: (C) 2016-2020 MPSI Technologies GmbH
4 -- author: Catherine Johnson (auto-generation)
5 -- date created: 1 Dec 2020
6 -- IP header --- ABOVE
7
8 library ieee;
9 use ieee.std_logic_1164.all;
10 use ieee.numeric_std.all;
11
12 use work.DbcCore.all;
13 use work.Iccl.all;
14
15 entity Step is
16 generic (
17     Mclk: natural range 1 to 1000000 := 50000 -- in kHz
18 );
19 port (
20     reset: in std_logic;
21     mclk: in std_logic;
22     tkclk: in std_logic;
23
24     getInfoTxVState: out std_logic_vector(7 downto 0);
25     getInfoAngle: out std_logic_vector(15 downto 0);
26
27     reqInvMoveto: in std_logic;
28     ackInvMoveto: out std_logic;
29
30     movetoAngle: in std_logic_vector(15 downto 0);
31     movetoTstep: in std_logic_vector(7 downto 0);
32
33     reqInvSet: in std_logic;
34     ackInvSet: out std_logic;
35
36     setRng: in std_logic_vector(7 downto 0);
37     setCwMotCw: in std_logic_vector(7 downto 0);
38     setTstep: in std_logic_vector(7 downto 0);
39
40     reqInvZero: in std_logic;
41     ackInvZero: out std_logic;
42
43     step1: out std_logic;
44     step2: out std_logic;
45     step3: out std_logic;
46     step4: out std_logic;
47
48     stateOp_dbg: out std_logic_vector(7 downto 0)
49 );
50 end Step;
51
52 architecture Step of Step is
53
```

er device driver (AXI)

ace” module, CRC

Deep dive I: from C++ command to RTL finite state machine

Control of turntable stepper motor

- module definition, command definition, fine structure
- Linux side developer-facing: executable API method
- Linux side in background: translation into byte code and invocation of character device driver (AXI)
- FPGA side in background: reception and decoding of byte code in “host interface” module, CRC evaluation
- FPGA side developer-facing: handshake signals
- FPGA side left for manual implementation: finite state machine reacting to command invocation

Deep dive I: from C++ command to RTL finite state machine

Control of turntable stepper motor

- module definition, code
- Linux side developer
- Linux side in background
- FPGA side in background evaluation
- FPGA side developer
- FPGA side left for maintenance

```
Step.vhd -- wskd
C CtrlWskdCtrlStep.h 2 Step.vhd
fpgawskd > iccl > Step.vhd
184
185
186
187
188
189
190
191
192
193
194
195
196
197
198
199
200
201
202
203
204
205
206
207
208
209
210
211
212
213
214
215
216
217
218
219
220
221
222
223
224
225
226
227
228
229
230
231
232
233
234
235
236
237
238
239
240
241
242
243
244
245
246
247
248
249
250
251
252
253
254
255
256
257
258
259
260
261
262
263
264

if reqInMoveto='1' then
  -- IP impl.op.init.moveto --- IBEGIN
  targetNotSteady := true;

  -- determine shortest path
  target := to_integer(unsigned(movetoAngle));
  dAngle := target - angle;

  atTarget := (dAngle = 0);

  if not atTarget then
    if dAngle > 2048 then
      -- dAngle := dAngle - 4096; -- will become negative
      ccwMotCw := true;
    elseif dAngle < -2047 then
      --dAngle := dAngle + 4096; -- will become positive
      ccwMotCw := false;
    elseif dAngle > 0 then
      ccwMotCw := false;
    else
      ccwMotCw := true;
    end if;
  end if;

  Tstep := to_integer(unsigned(movetoTstep));

  ackInMoveto_sig <= '1';
  -- IP impl.op.init.moveto --- IEND

  stateOp <= stateOpInv;

  elsif reqInvSet='1' then--
  elsif reqInvZero='1' then--
  else--
  end if;

elsif stateOp=stateOpReady then
  if Tstep/=0 then
    if not targetNotSteady and rng then
      i := 0; -- IP impl.op.ready.steady --- ILINE
      stateOp <= stateOpRunB;

    elsif targetNotSteady and not atTarget then
      i := 0; -- IP impl.op.ready.target --- ILINE
      stateOp <= stateOpRunB;

    else
      -- IP impl.op.ready.hold --- IBEGIN
      step1_sig <= '0';
      step2_sig <= '0';
      step3_sig <= '0';
      step4_sig <= '0';
      -- IP impl.op.ready.hold --- IEND

      stateOp <= stateOpReady;
    end if;
  end if;
end if;
```

character device driver (AXI)

“interface” module, CRC

no command invocation

Deep dive II: camera preview images on the move

FPGA-based binning, processing in C++ code and forwarding to the UI

- pixels arrive over four-lane MIPI CSI at 576Mbps per lane and get deserialized into a 10-bit RAW10 data stream at about 20fps
- four preview modes (2560 x 1280 to 160 x 120 RGB vs. 2048 x 1536 to 256 x 192 grayscale), manual implementation using finite state machines and 2/4kB buffers
- "buffer transfers" are besides "commands" the second functionality which can be generated for the host interface
- polling in separate thread on host, insertion into "job tree" via "call"
- generation of XML block containing image data, Base64 coded transmission
- reception in web browser via HTTPS/1.1 "long polling", rendering in HTML5 <canvas/>

Deep dive III: meta data and the “lowering” process in Whiznium

From SQL database structure to code and UI elements to XML/JSON blocks

- all WhizniumSBE applications are backed by a SQLite3 database
- “Database structure”: tables “Object group” (1:N) “Object” (1:N) “Snapshot” and corresponding “Basic user interface”

Deep dive III: meta data and the “lowering” process in Whiznium

From SQL database structure to code and UI elements to XML/JSON blocks

Whiznium StarterKit 0.1.28 (no object group) - Whiznium StarterKit 0.1.28

Whiznium StarterKit Object group

Object groups

Identifier ↓	Name ↓	Super group ↓
> anms	Animals	Icons
> icons	Icons	(none)
> ofctis	Office tools	(none)
> pngs	Penguins	(icons) Animals

Showing 1 to 4 of 4 Go to ...

Object group (no object group)

Whiznium StarterKit 0.1.28 (icons;anms) Penguins - Whiznium StarterKit 0.1.28 Linux-Tux - Whiznium StarterKit 0.1.28

Whiznium StarterKit Object

Objects (1)

Object Linux-Tux

name Linux-Tux

object group (icons;anms) Penguins

comment

Shots (0)

Files (36)

lite3 database

“Object” (1:N) “Snapshot” and corresponding

Deep dive III: meta data and the “lowering” process in Whiznium

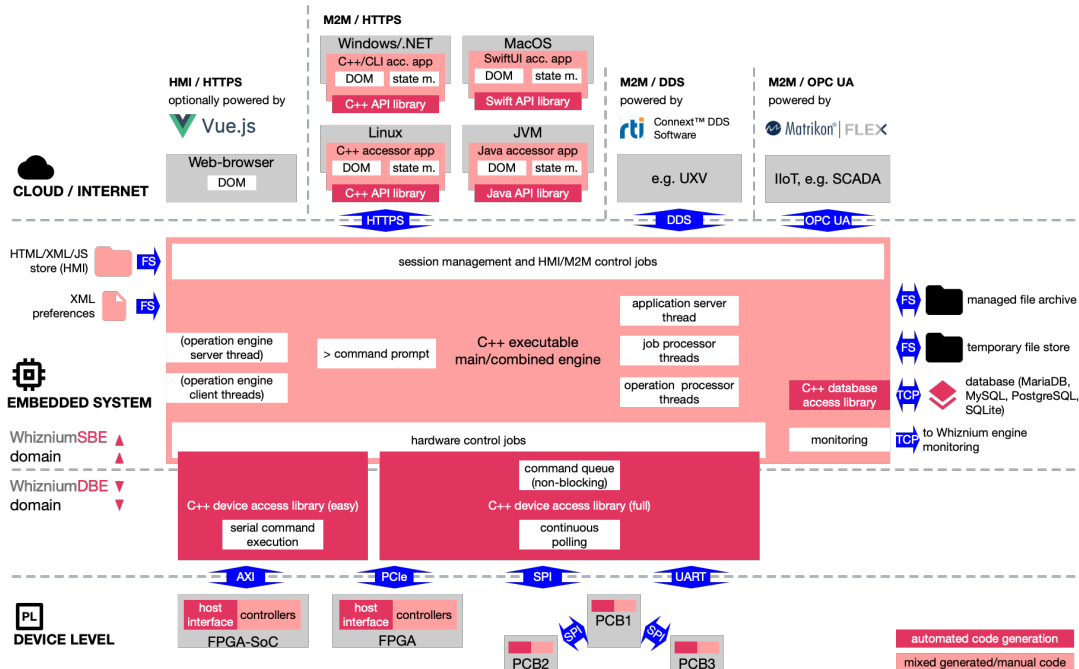
From SQL database structure to code and UI elements to XML/JSON blocks

- all WhizniumSBE applications are backed by a SQLite3 database
- “Database structure”: tables “Object group” (1:N) “Object” (1:N) “Snapshot” and corresponding “Basic user interface”
- first “lowering” step: multi-locale UI elements, “queries”, “panels” and “controls”
- second “lowering” step: “blocks” and “dispatches” for engine <-> app communication
- code generation “database access library”
- code generation on engine side: classes for “cards”, “panels” and “queries” which at runtime dynamically generate objects responsible for web UI sessions and react to user input
- code generation app side: HTML and JavaScript

Conclusion demo project

The model-based approach pays off

- the maze of software technologies relevant for FPGA-SoC's is cleanly covered by a single, coherent method



Whiznium concepts

Modularity, transparency and re-usability

- Whiznium is Open Source; the generated code is subject to no license restrictions
- Whiznium generates well-organized, human-readable source code trees which can be synthesized / compiled “out-of-the-box”
- manual modifications are enabled through the concept of “insertion points”
- upon source code iteration (e.g. following model extension) manual modifications are carried over to the next version
- generated code relies on few, well-proven external libraries, all of which are Open Source. Standards are strictly followed
- WhizniumDBE features parametrized “module templates”. Besides corresponding VHDL files, template-specific intervention in the WhizniumDBE master database through C++ code is possible
- WhizniumSBE features parametrized “capability templates”. Also here, template-specific intervention in the WhizniumSBE master database through C++ code is possible

Whiznium tools

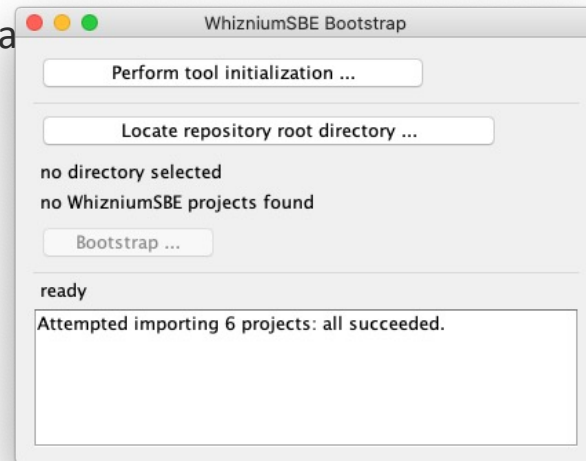
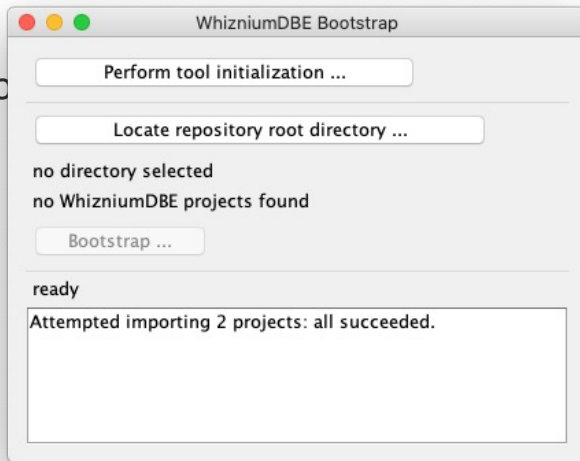
Incorporation into existing developer workflows

- WhizniumSBE and WhizniumDBE are Linux-based "daemons" (and [fun fact] WhizniumSBE projects), which receive model information and send source code trees via HTTPS
- Java tools WhizniumDBE/SBE Bootstrap offer initialization of WhizniumDBE/SBE with project information stored in a local folder structure

Whiznium tools

Incorporation into existing developer workflows

- WhizniumSBE and WhizniumDBE are Linux-based "daemons" (and [fun fact] WhizniumSBE projects), which receive model information and send source code trees via HTTPS
- Java tools receive model information



Whiznium tools

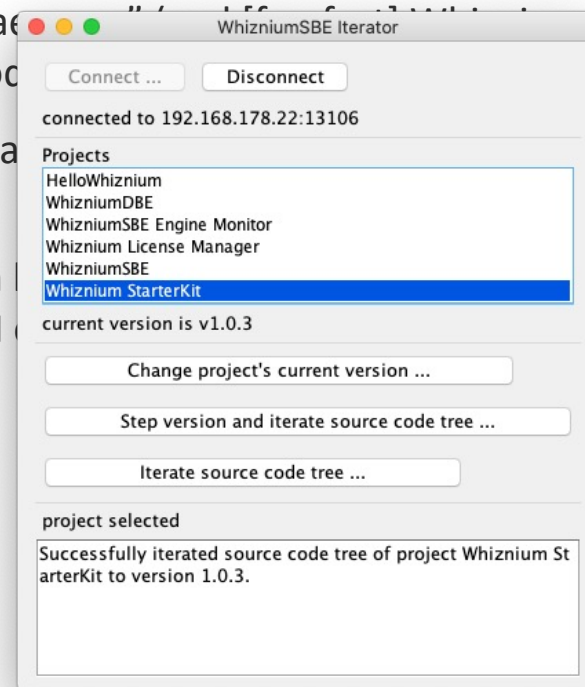
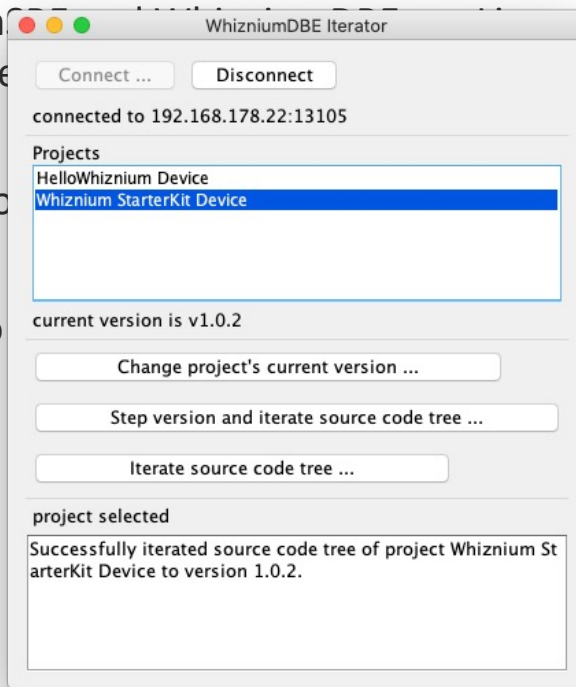
Incorporation into existing developer workflows

- WhizniumSBE and WhizniumDBE are Linux-based "daemons" (and [fun fact] WhizniumSBE projects), which receive model information and send source code trees via HTTPS
- Java tools WhizniumDBE/SBE Bootstrap offer initialization of WhizniumDBE/SBE with project information stored in a local folder structure
- Java tools WhizniumDBE/SBE Iterator help transform local source code trees from the current version to the next. Here, API calls replace manual UI clicks

Whiznium tools

Incorporation into existing developer workflows

- WhizniumDBE, a Java tool for database-based "data driven" development (DBE projects), which receives information from the database and generates source code.
- Java tools for project initialization and transformation.
- Java tools for version control and manual UI.



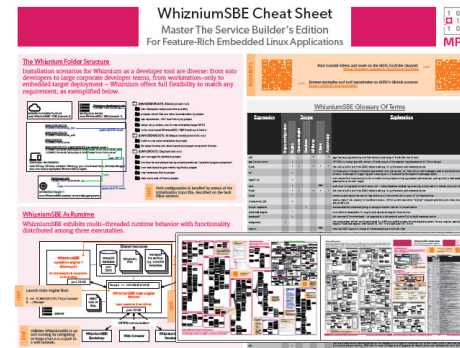
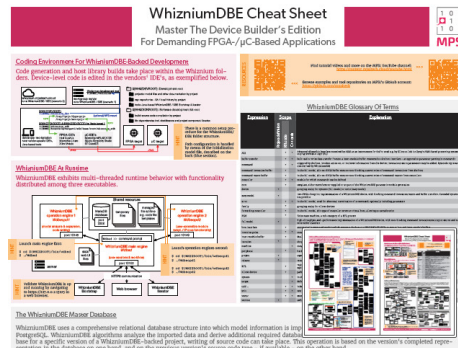
Whiznium tools

Incorporation into existing developer workflows

- WhizniumSBE and WhizniumDBE are Linux-based "daemons" (and [fun fact] WhizniumSBE projects), which receive model information and send source code trees via HTTPS
- Java tools WhizniumDBE/SBE Bootstrap offer initialization of WhizniumDBE/SBE with project information stored in a local folder structure
- Java tools WhizniumDBE/SBE Iterator help transform local source code trees from the current version to the next. Here, API calls replace manual UI clicks
- WhizniumDBE code can be developed using the vendor-provided tools, e.g. Vivado, Quartus, Libero SoC or Simplicity Studio
- WhizniumSBE code can be (cross-)compiled using the industry-standard tool chains gcc/Clang. (Remote-)Debugging can be done using e.g. VS Code
- the Yocto project helps building custom Embedded Linux distributions for each FPGA-SoC platform. WhizniumSBE projects run on those distributions

Resources

- both Whiznium tools are available free of charge on GitHub, including installation instructions
<https://github.com/mpsitech/The-Whiznium-Documentation>
- the Open Source StarterKit ist available for various hardware platforms, with vendor-specific instructions also available on [GitHub](#)
- “The Whiznium Developer Experience” on [YouTube](#) is an ongoing Webinar series on Whiznium
- for advanced users WhizniumSBE/DBE cheat sheets are available which serve as reference for writing model files



Thank You!

Don't hesitate to reach out
aw@mpsistechnologies.com