A 167-processor Computational Array for Highly-Efficient DSP and Embedded Application Processing

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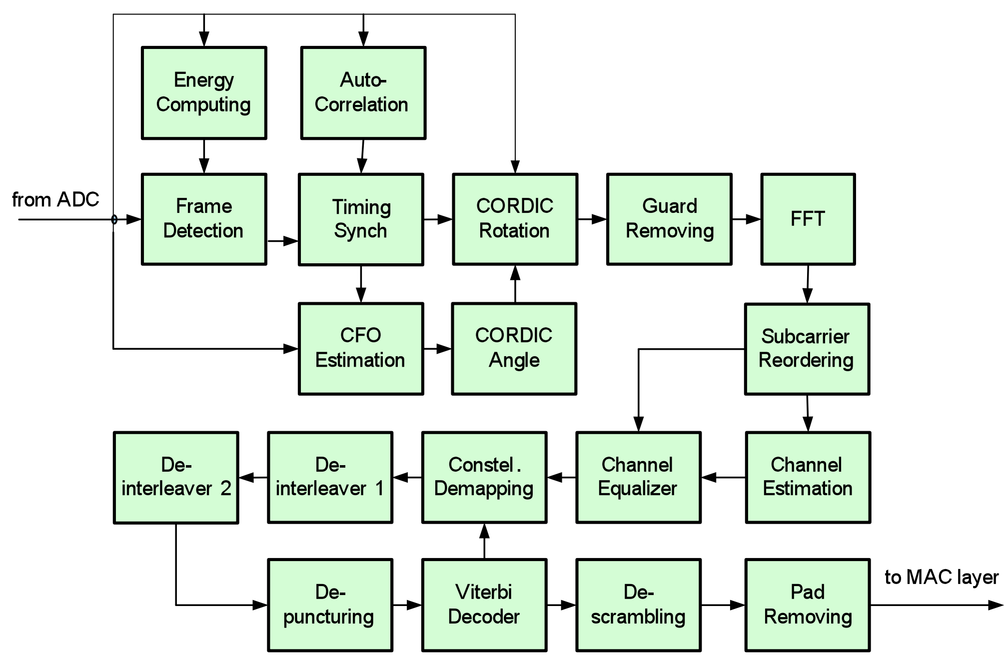
Outline

- **Goals and Key Ideas**
- The Second Generation AsAP
  - Processors and Shared Memories
  - On-chip Communication
  - Dynamic Voltage & Clock Frequency
- Analysis and Summary

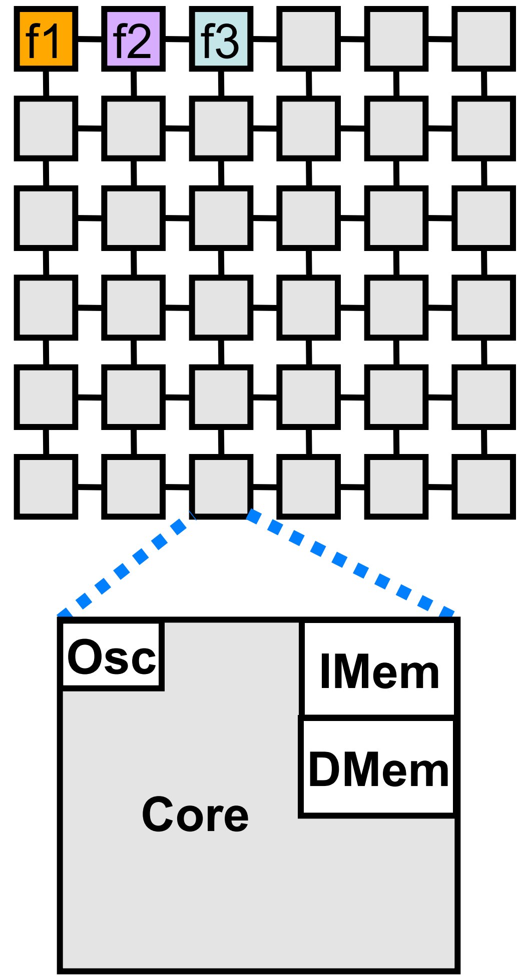
Project Goals

- Fully programmable and reconfig. architecture
- High energy efficiency and performance
- Exploit task-level parallelism in:
  - Digital Signal Processing
  - Multimedia
- Example: 802.11a Wi-Fi baseband receiver



Asynchronous **A**rray of Simple **P**rocessors (AsAP)

- Key Ideas:
  - Programmable, small, and simple fine-grained cores
  - Small local memories sufficient for DSP kernels
  - Globally Asynchronous and Locally Synchronous (GALS) clocking
    - Independent clock frequencies on every core
    - Local oscillator halts when processor is idle



Asynchronous **A**rray of Simple **P**rocessors (AsAP)

- Key Ideas, con't:
  - 2D mesh, circuit-switched network architecture
    - High throughput of one word per clock cycle
    - Low area overhead
    - Easily scalable array
  - Increased tolerance to process variations
- 36-processor fully-functional chip, 0.18 µm, 610 MHz @ 2.0 V, 0.66 mm^2 per processor [HotChips 06, ISSCC 06, TVLSI 07, JSSC 08,…]

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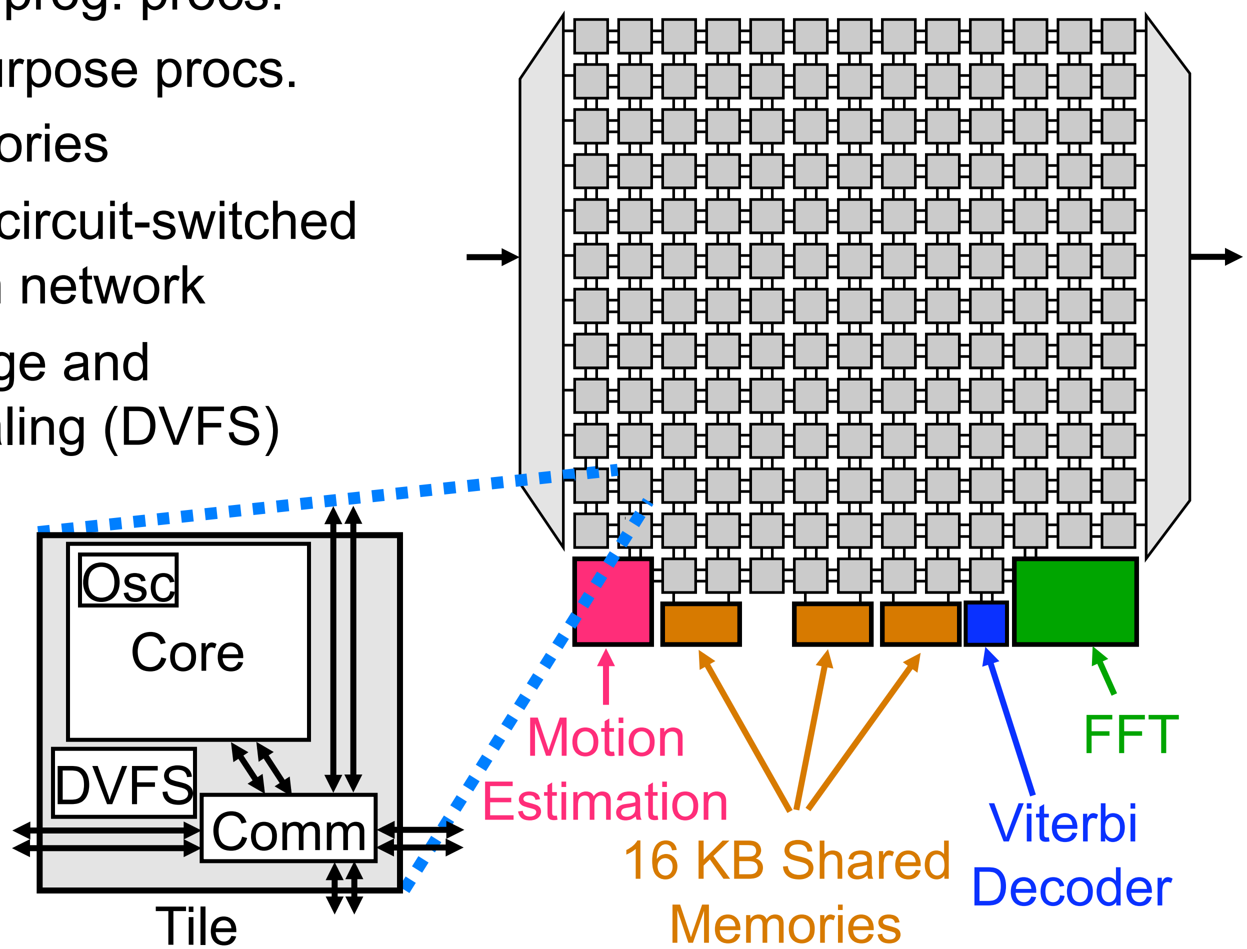
New Challenges Addressed

1. Reduction in the power dissipation of
   - Lightly-loaded processors (lowering *Vdd*)
   - Unused processors (leakage)
2. Achieving very high efficiencies and speed on common demanding tasks such as FFTs, video motion estimation, and Viterbi decoding
3. Larger, area efficient on-chip memories
4. Efficient, low overhead communication between distant processors

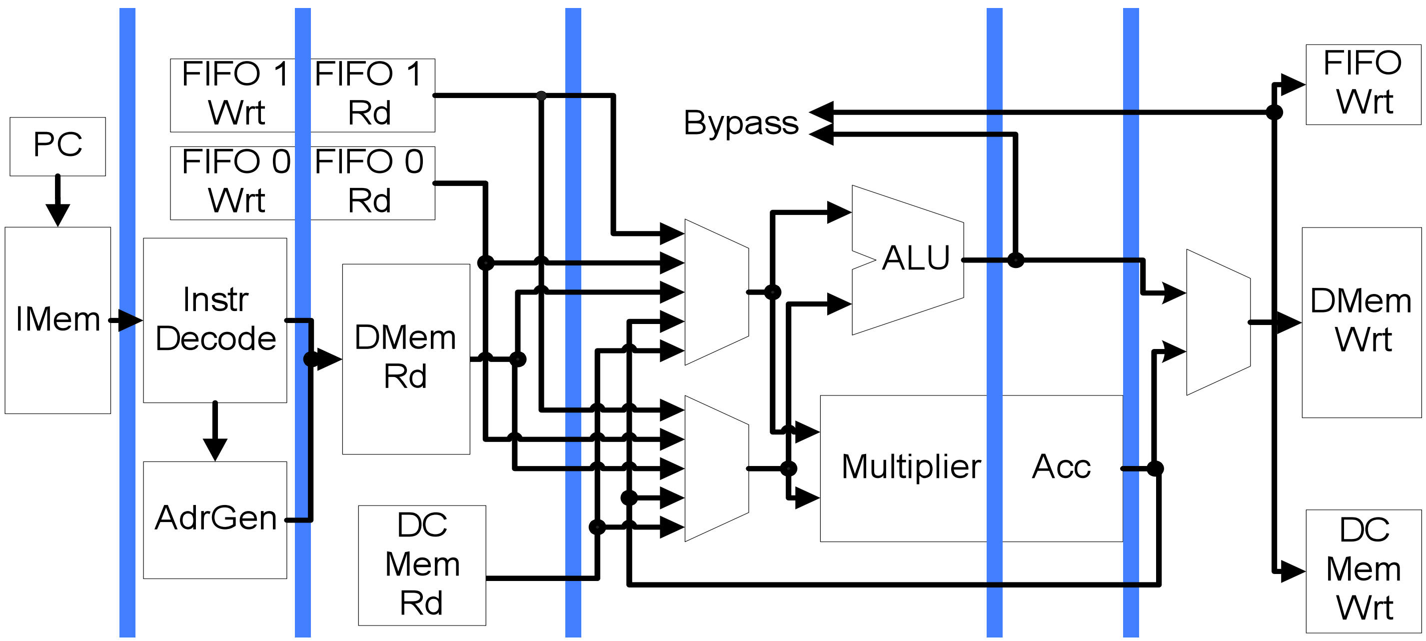
167-processor Computational Platform

- Key features
  - 164 Enhanced prog. procs.
  - 3 Dedicated-purpose procs.
  - 3 Shared memories
  - Long-distance circuit-switched communication network
  - Dynamic Voltage and Frequency Scaling (DVFS)



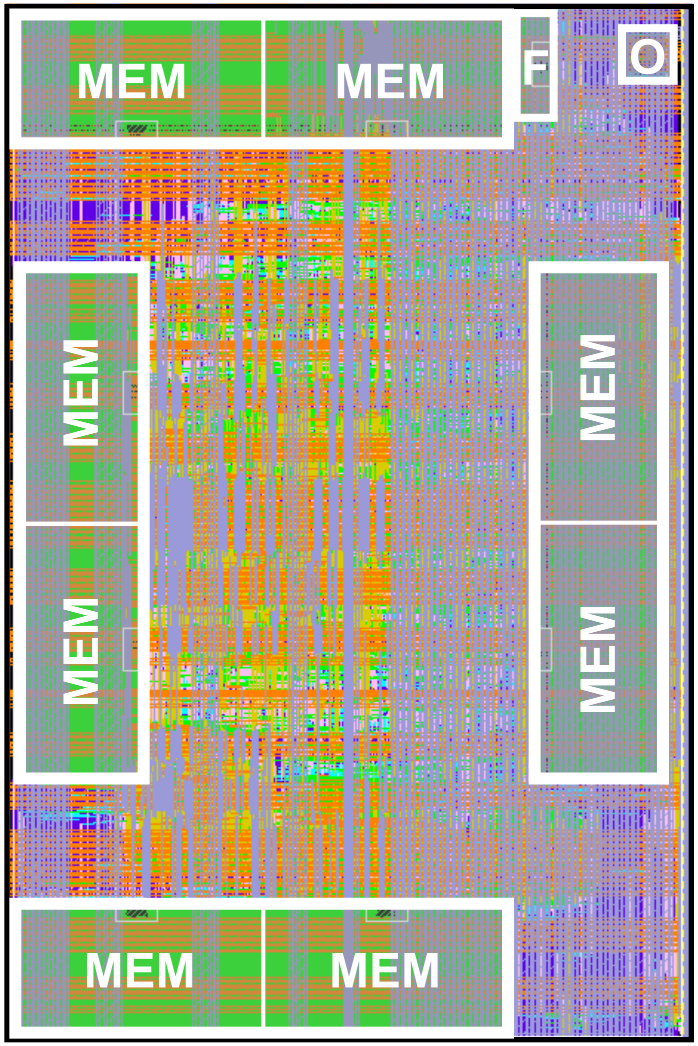
Homogenous Processors

- In-order, single-issue, 6-stage processors
  - 16-bit datapath with MAC and 40-bit accumulator
  - 128x16-bit data memory
  - 128x35-bit instruction memory
  - Two 64x16-bit FIFOs for inter-processor communication
  - Over 60 basic instructions and features geared for DSP and multimedia workloads



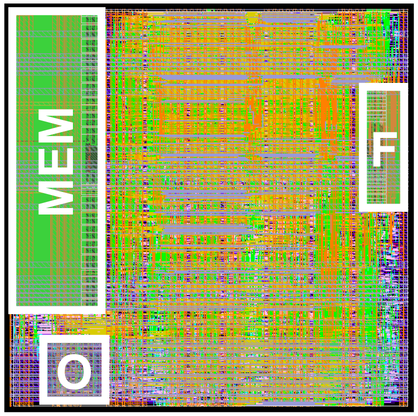
Fast Fourier Transform (FFT)

- Uses
  - OFDM modulation
  - Spectral analysis, synthesis
- Runtime configurable from 16-pt to 4096-pt transforms, FFT and IFFT
- 1.01 mm^2
- Preliminary measurements functional at 866 MHz, 34.97 mW @ 1.3 V
  - 681 M complex Sample/s with 1024-pt complex FFTs



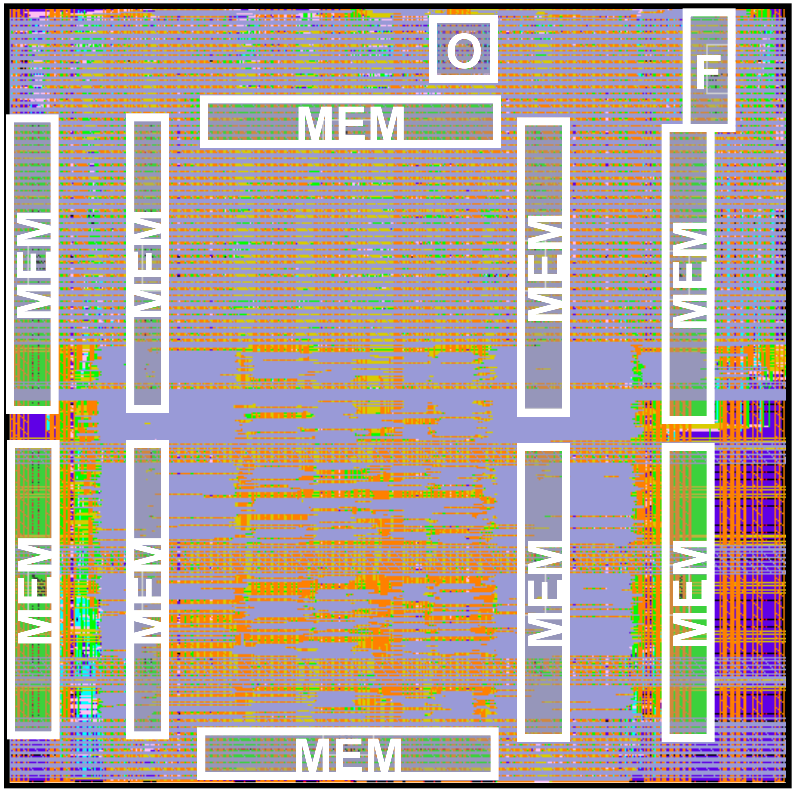
Viterbi Decoder

- Uses
  - Fundamental communications function (wired, wireless, etc.)
  - Storage apps; e.g., hard drives
- Decodes configurable codes up to constraint length 10 with up to 32 different rates
- 0.17 mm^2
- Preliminary measurements functional at 894 MHz, 17.55 mW @ 1.3 V
  - 82 Mbps at rate=1/2



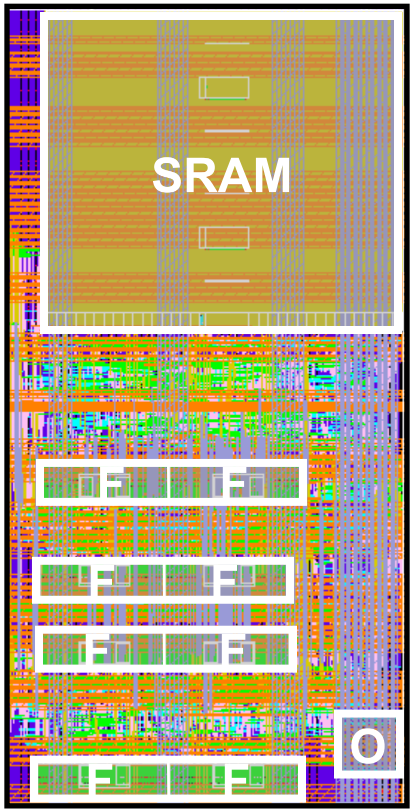
Motion Estimation for Video Encoding

- Uses
  - H.264, MPEG-2, etc. encoders
- Supports a number of fixed and programmable search patterns including all H.264 specified block sizes within a 48x48 search range
- 0.67 mm^2
- Preliminary measurements functional at 938 MHz, 196.17 mW @ 1.3 V
  - 15 billion SADs/sec
  - Supports 1080p HDTV @ 30fps



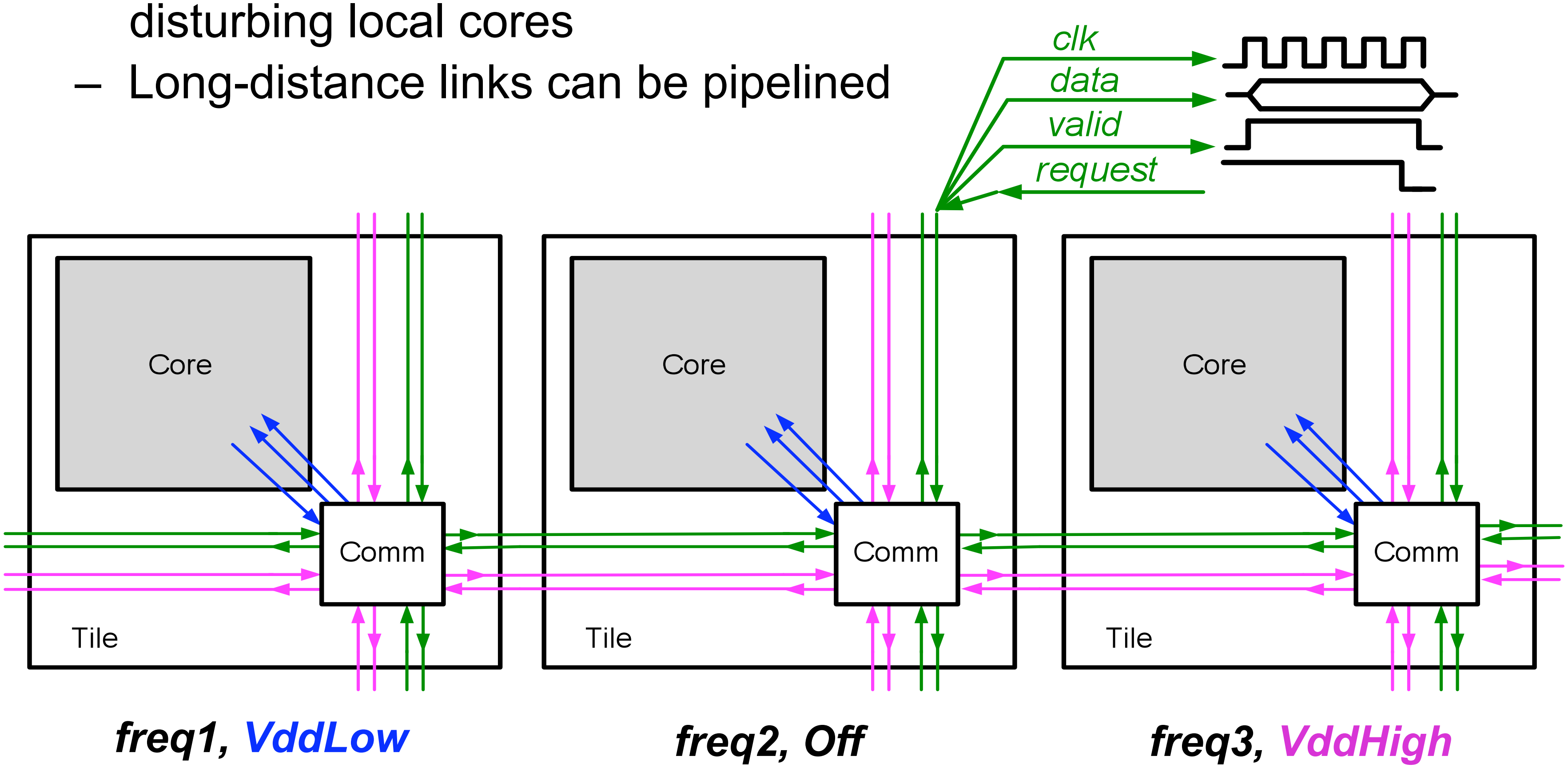
Shared Memories

- Ports for up to four processors (two connected in this chip) to directly connect to the memory block
  - Port priority
  - Port request arbitration
  - Programmable address generation supporting multiple addressing modes
  - Uses a 16 KByte single-ported SRAM
  - One read or write per cycle
- 0.34 mm^2
- Preliminary measurements functional at 1.3 GHz, 4.55 mW @ 1.3 V
  - 20.8 Gbps peak throughput



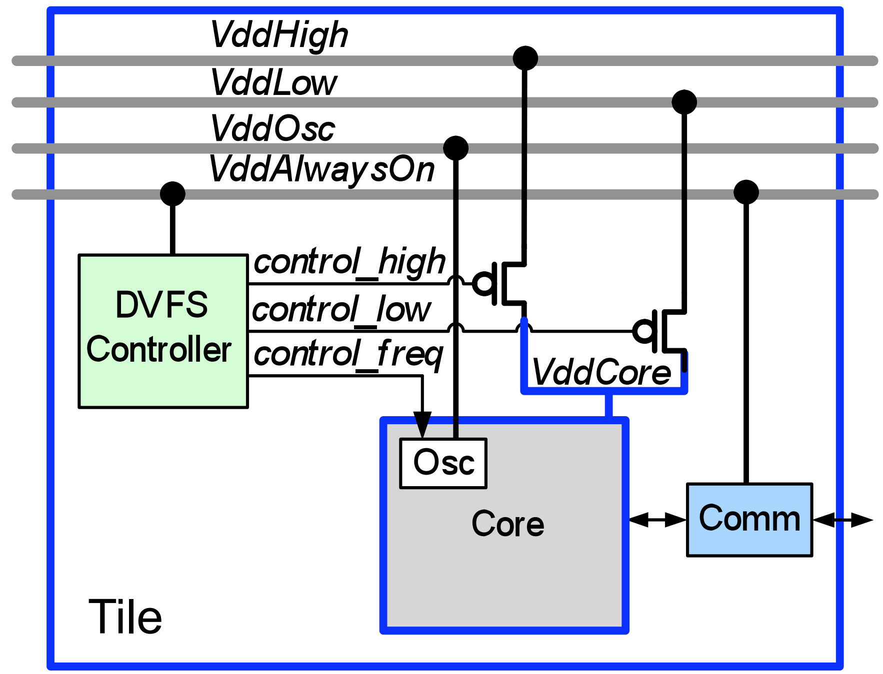
Inter-Processor Communication

- Circuit-switched source-synchronous comm.
  - 8 software controlled outputs and 2 configurable circuit-switched inputs (out of 8 total possible inputs)
  - Long-distance communication can occur across tiles without disturbing local cores
  - Long-distance links can be pipelined



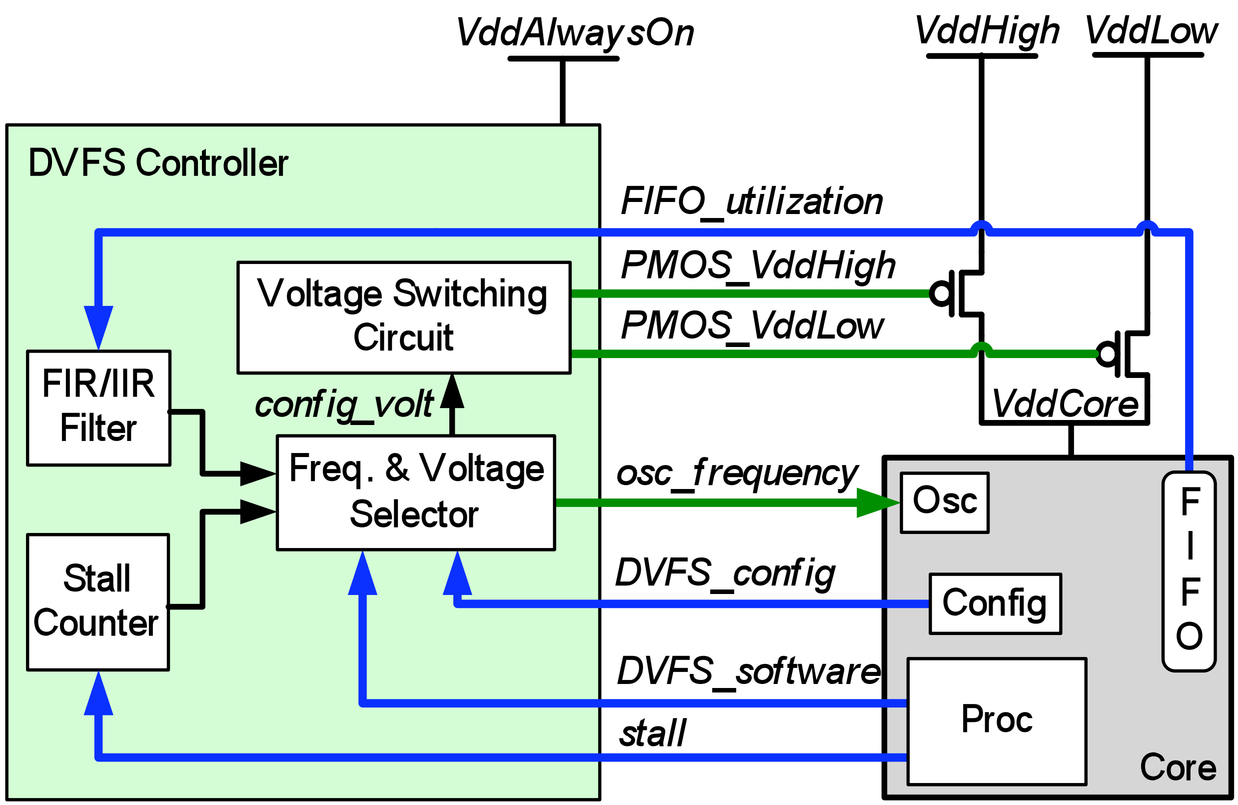
Per-Processor Dynamic Voltage & Clock Frequency

- Each processor tile contains a core that operates at:
  - A fully-independent clock frequency
    - Any frequency below maximum
    - Halts, restarts, and changes arbitrarily
  - Dynamically-changeable supply voltage
    - *VddHigh* or *VddLow*
    - Disconnected for leakage reduction
    - Each power gate comprises 48 individually-controllable parallel transistors
- *VddAlwaysOn* powers DVFS and inter-processor comm.



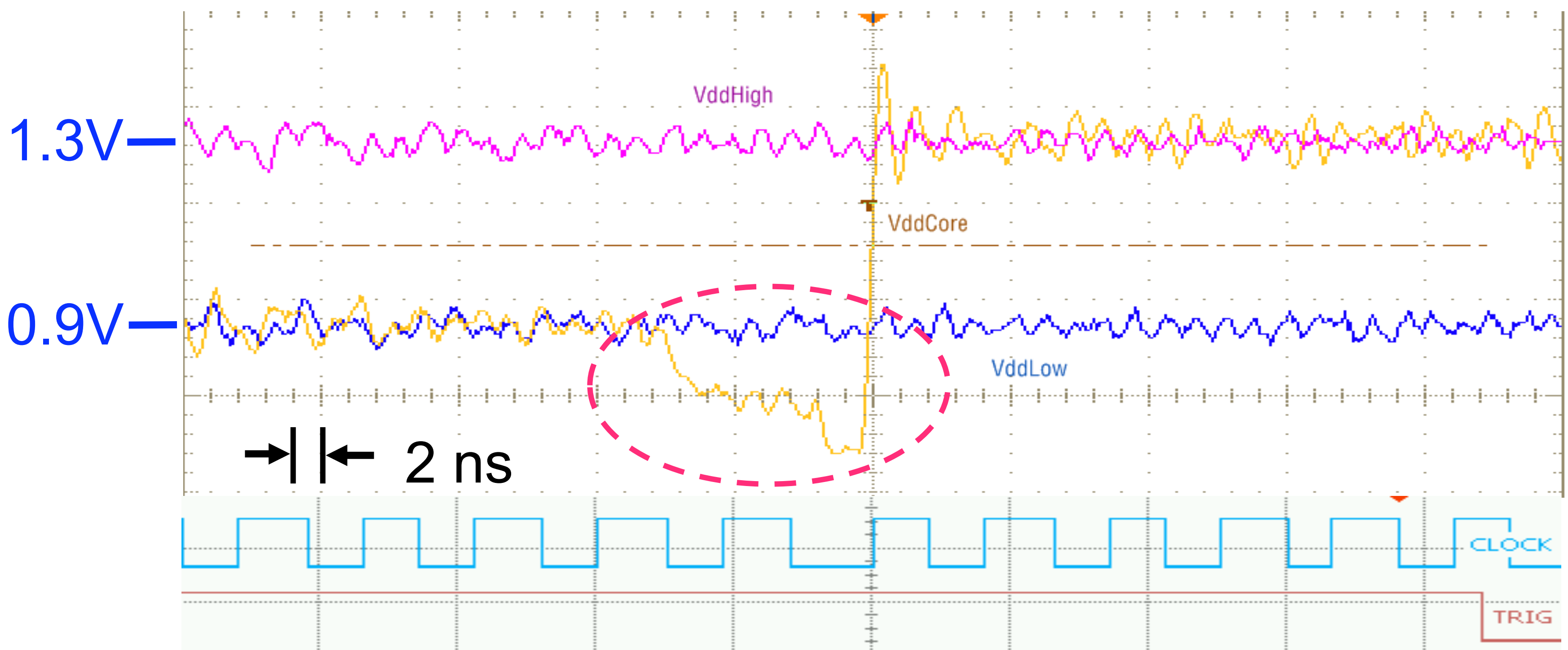
Dynamic Voltage & Frequency Controller

- Voltage and frequency are set by:
  - Static configuration
  - Software
  - Hardware (controller)
    - FIFO “fullness”
    - Processor “stalling frequency”



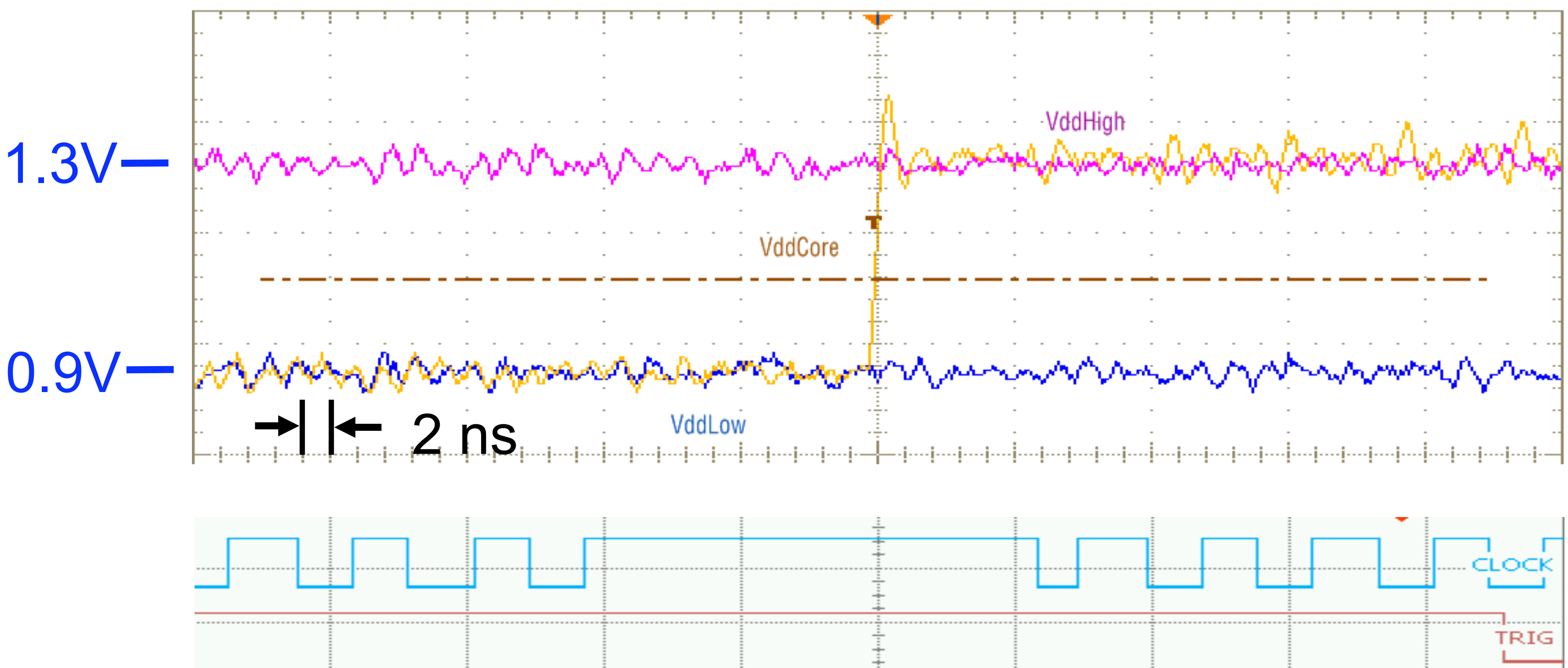
Measured Supply Voltage Switching

- Slow switching results in negligible power grid noise
- Early ***VddCore*** disconnect from ***VddLow*** with oscillator running results in a momentary ***VddCore*** voltage droop (circled below)



Measured Supply Voltage Switching

- Oscillator halting while ***VddCore*** disconnects from ***VddLow*** and connects to ***VddHigh*** results in a negligible voltage droop due to leakage



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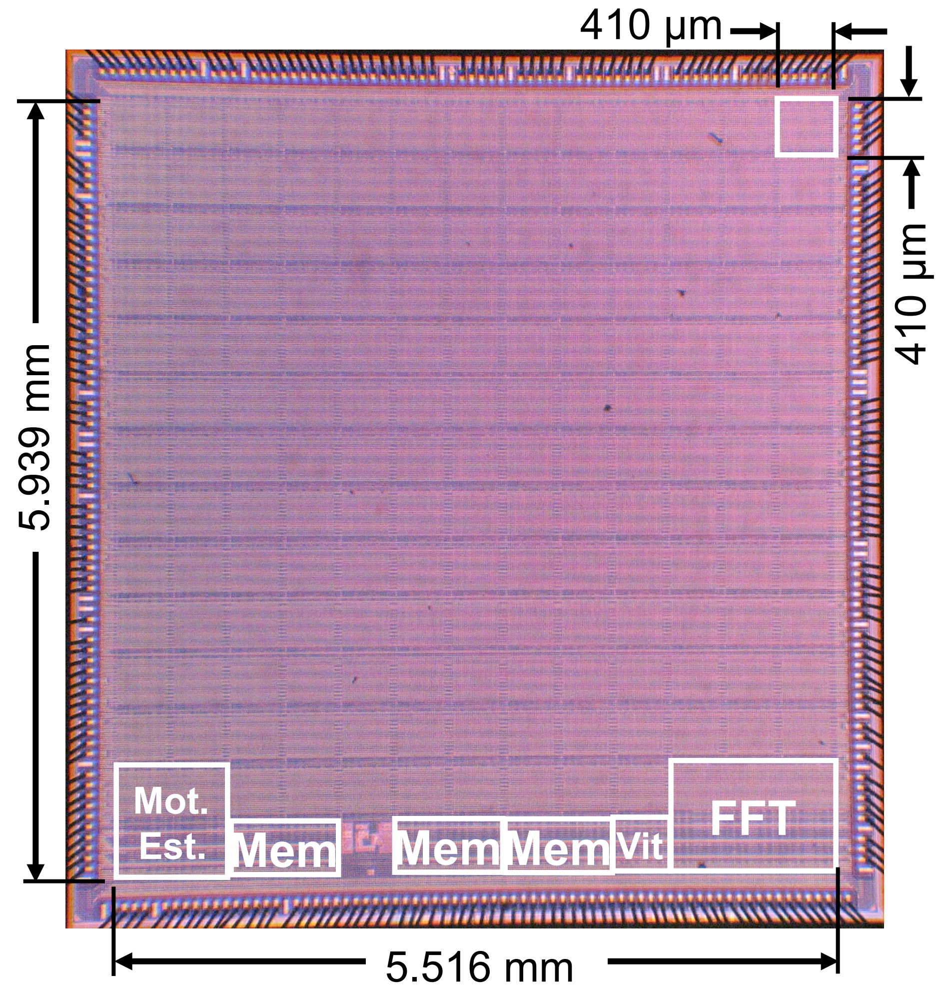
Die Micrograph and Key Data

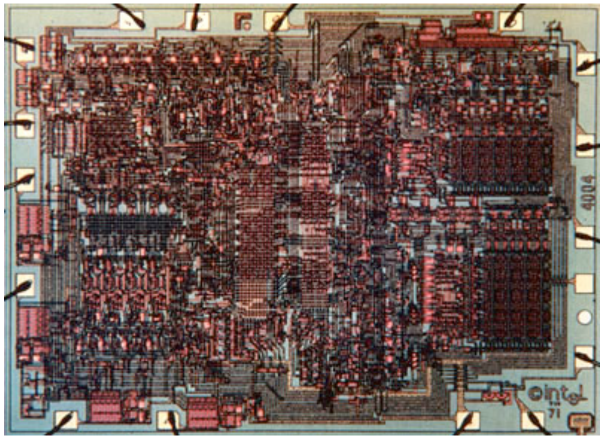
Single Tile	
Transistors	325,000
Area	0.17 mm^2
CMOS Tech.	65 nm ST Microelectronics low-leakage
Max. frequency	1.19 GHz @ 1.3 V
Power (100% active)	59 mW @ 1.19 GHz, 1.3 V
	608 µW @ 66 MHz, 0.675 V
App. power (802.11a rx)	16 mW @ 590 MHz, 1.3 V

55 million transistors, 39.4 mm^2



New Parallel Processing Paradigm

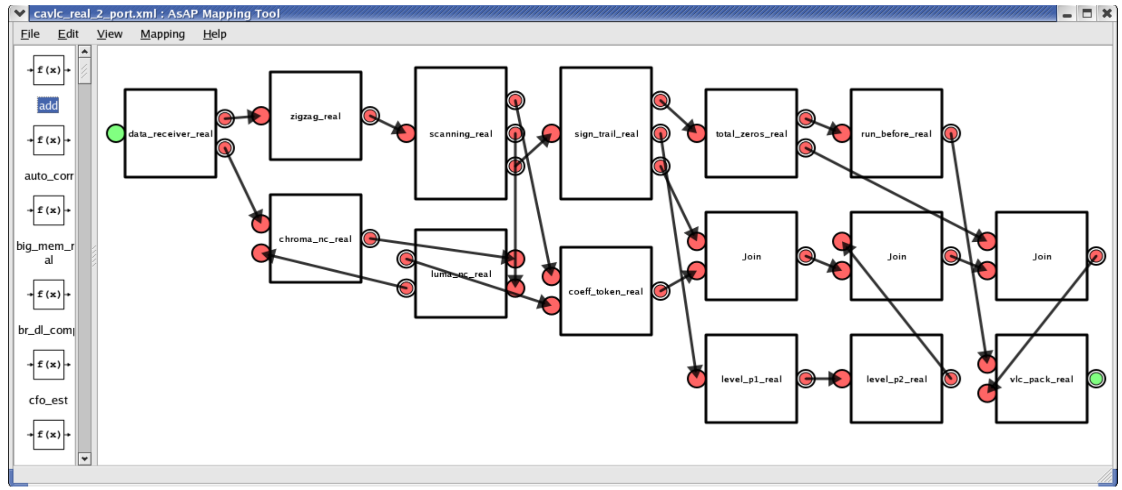
- Intel 4004 4-bit CPU, 1971
  - Utilized 2300 transistors
- The presented chip would have 2300 *processors* in 19.8mm x 19.8mm

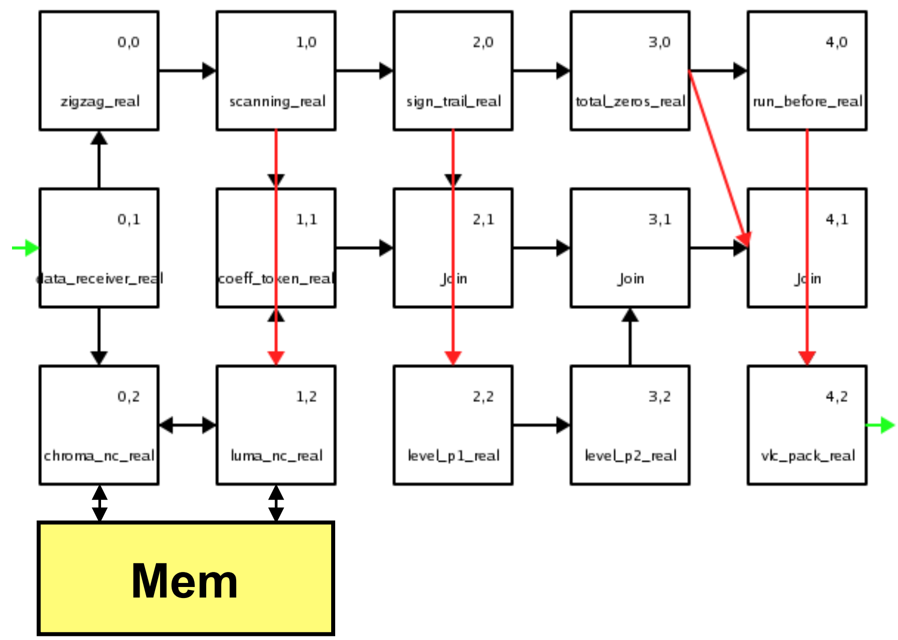


- New parallel processing paradigm
  - Enabled by numerous efficient processors
  - Focus on simplified programming and access to large data sets
  - Much less focus on load balancing or “wasting” processors for things like memories or routing data

H.264 CAVLC Encoder

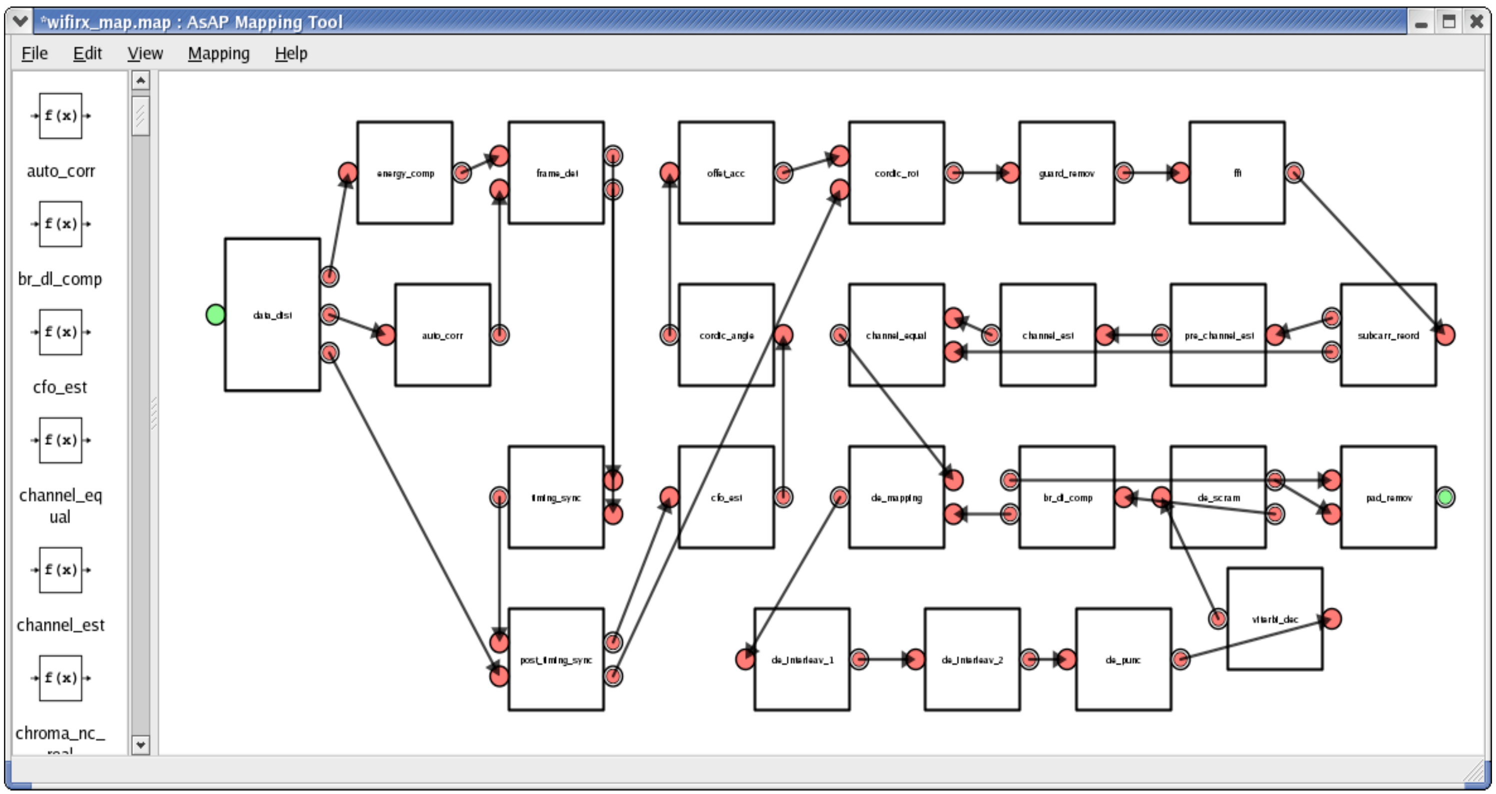
- Context-adaptive variable length coding (CAVLC) used in H.264 baseline encoder
- 15 processors with one shared memory
- 30fps 720p HDTV @ 1.07GHz
- ~1.0-6.15 times the throughput of TI C62x and ADSP BF561 (scaled to 65 nm, 1.3 V)





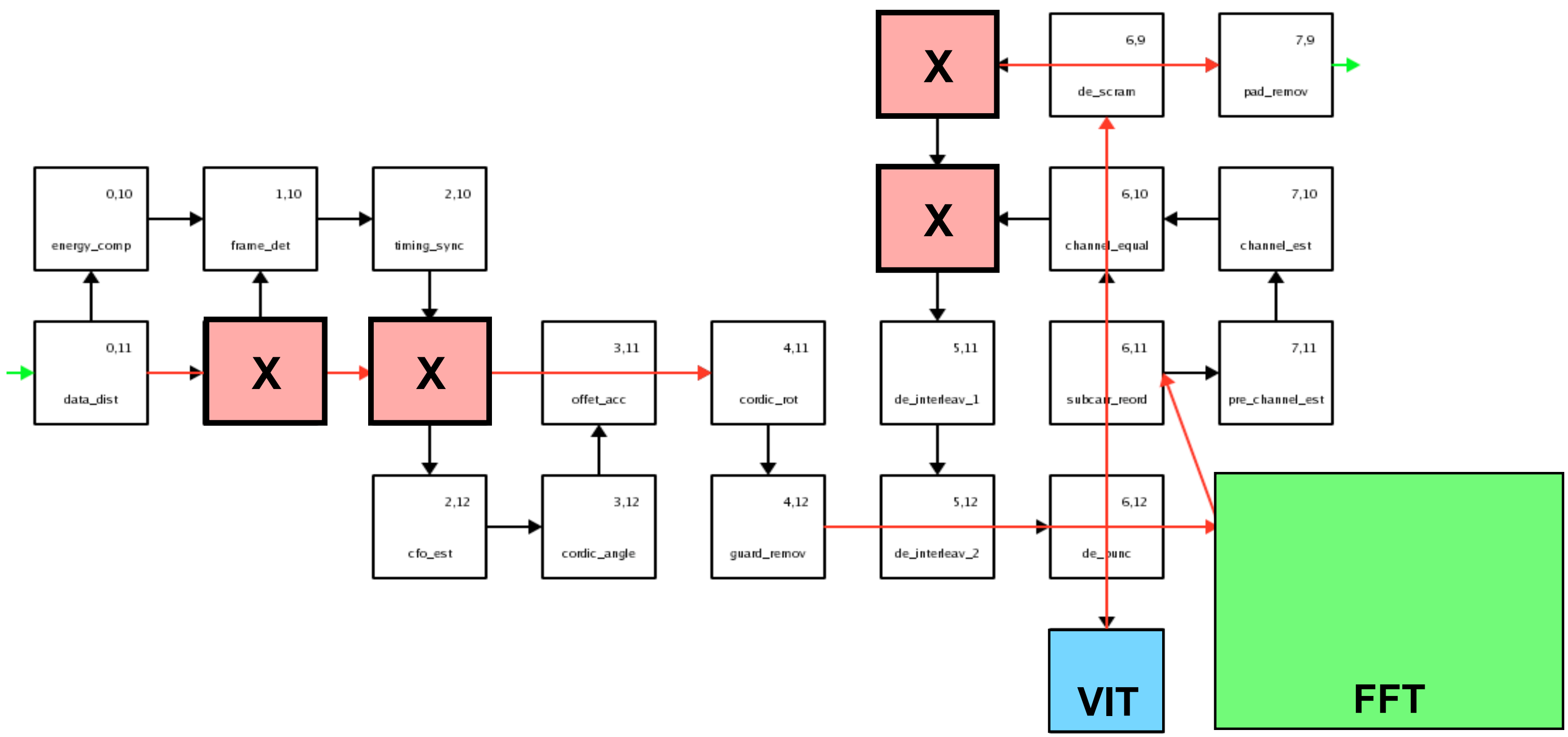
Complete 802.11a Baseband Receiver

- 22 processors plus Viterbi and FFT accelerators
- Includes: frame detection and synchronization, carrier-frequency offset estimation and compensation, channel equalization



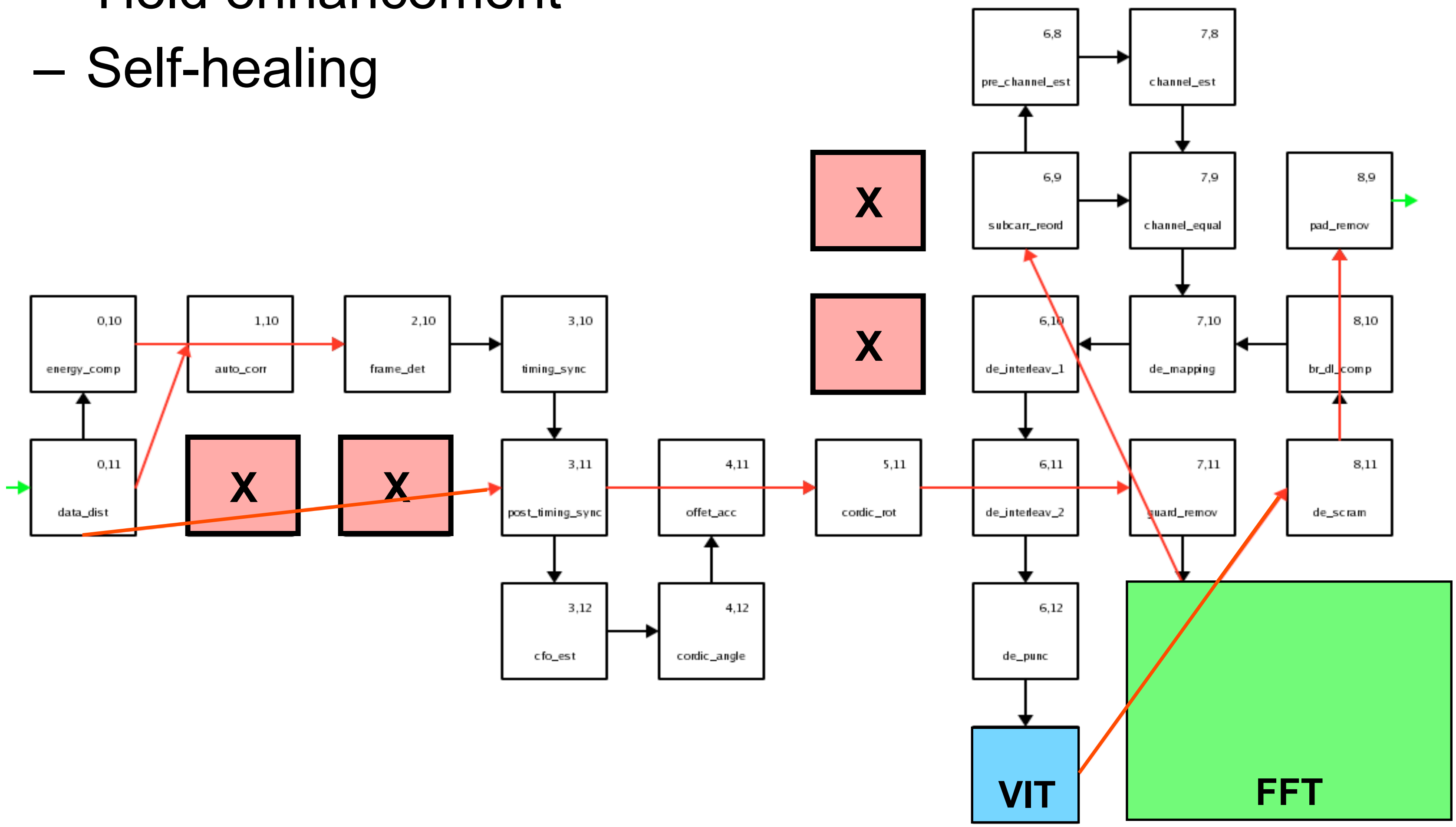
Complete 802.11a Baseband Receiver

- 54 Mbps throughput, 342 mW @ 590 MHz, 1.3 V
- 23x faster than TI C62x, 5x faster than strongARM, 2x faster than SODA (all scaled to 65 nm @ 1.3 V)



Complete 802.11a Baseband Receiver

- Re-mapped graph avoids bad processors
  - Yield enhancement
  - Self-healing



Summary

- All processors and shared memories contain fully independent clock oscillators
- 164 homogenous processors
  - 1.2 GHz, 59 mW, 100% active @ 1.3 V
  - 608 μW, 100% active @ 66 MHz, 0.675 V
- Three 16 KB shared memories
- Three dedicated-purpose processors
- Long-distance circuit-switched communication increases mapping efficiency with low overhead
- DVFS nets a 48% reduction in energy for JPEG application with an 8% performance loss

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