

3 Combinatorial Logic

Student Group

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3. Combinatorial Logic

introductory example

Fig. 1: Simulation of a 7-segment encoder and display

The combinatorial logic shown in `<impref pic1>` enables to output distinct logic values for each logic input. When you change the input nibble you can see that the correct number appears on the 7-segment-display. By clicking onto the bits of the input nibble, you can change the number.

Tasks:

1. Which output Y_0 ... Y_6 is generated from the input nibble 1000? Which from 1001?
2. Is the output only depending on the input? Is there a dependence on the history?

3.1 Combinatorial Circuit

Up to now, we looked onto simple logic circuits. These are relatively easy to analyze and synthesize (=develop). The main question in this chapter is: how can we set up and optimize logic circuits?

In the following we have a look onto combinatorial circuits. These are generally logic circuits with

- n inputs X_0, X_1, \dots, X_{n-1}
- m outputs Y_0, Y_1, \dots, Y_{m-1}
- no "memory", that is: a given set of input bits results in a distinct output

They can be described by

- truth table
- boolean formula
- hardware description language

The latter one is not in the focus of this course.

The applications range:

- (simple) half/full adder
- [digital comparators](#) (logic circuit to compare 2 values)
- Multiplexer / demultiplexer
- Arithmetic logic units in microcontrollers and processors
- much more

3.1.1 Example

In order to understand the synthesis of a combinatorial logic we will follow a step-by-step example for

this chapter.

Imagine you are working for a company called “mechatronics and robotics”. One customer wants to have an intelligent switch as input device connected to a microcontroller for controlling an oven. For this project “Therm-o-Safety” he needs a combinatoric logic:

- The intelligent switch has 4 user selectable positions: \$1\$, \$2\$, \$3\$, \$4\$
- Additionally there are 2 non-selectable positions for the case of failure.
- The output \$Y=1\$ will activate a temperature monitoring.
- The temperature monitoring has to be active for \$3\$ and \$4\$ and in case of a major failure. A major failure is for example, when the switch position is unclear. In this case the input of the combinatorial circuit is “ON”.
- There are no other cases of inputs.

This requirements are put into a truth table:

Therm-o-Safety				
Input	X2	X1	X0	Y
	0	0	0	-
1	0	0	1	0
2	0	1	0	0
3	0	1	1	1
4	1	0	0	1
	1	0	1	-
OFF	1	1	0	0
ON	1	1	1	1



Fig. 2: Therm-o-Safety truth table

figure 2 shows one implementation of this requirements. The inputs 001 ... 011 represent the inputs \$1\$...\$4\$. The cases of failure are coded with 110 and 111.

The output \$Y\$ is activated as requested. For the two combinations 000 and 101 there is no output value defined. Depending on the requirements for a project these shall either better be 0 or 1 or the output of these does not matter. We had this “does not matter” before: the technical term is “I don't care”, and it is written as a - or a x.

By this, we have done the first step in order to synthesize the requested logic.

3.1.2 Sum of Products

Now, we want to investigate some of the input combinations (= lines in the truth table). At first, we have a look onto the input combination 011, where the output has to be \$Y=1\$.

If this input combination would be the only one for the output of \$Y=1\$, the following could be stated: “\$Y=1\$ (only) when the \$X_0\$ is \$1\$ AND \$X_1\$ is \$1\$ AND \$X_2\$ is \$0\$”. It can also be re-arranged to:

“ $Y=1$ (only) when the X_0 is 1 AND X_1 is 1 AND X_2 is not 1 ”.

This statement is similar to $X_0 \& X_1 \& \overline{X_2}$. The used conjunction results only in 1 , when all inputs are 1 . The negation of X_2 takes account of the fact, that X_2 has to be 0 .

Fig. 3: Therm-o-Safety truth table - first analysis

Therm-o-Safety				
Input	X2	X1	X0	Y
	0	0	0	-
1	0	0	1	0
2	0	1	0	0
3	0	1	1	1
4	1	0	0	1
	1	0	1	-
OFF	1	1	0	0
ON	1	1	1	1

$$\overline{X_2} \& X_1 \& X_0$$

figure 3 shows the boolean expression for ths combination. In figure 4, this boolean expression is converted into a struction with logic gates.

Fig. 4: logic circuit for the combination '100'

With the same idea in mind, we can have a look for the other combinations resulting in $Y=1$. These are the combinations 100 and 111:

- For 100 The statement would be: “ $Y=1$ (only) when the X_0 is 0 AND X_1 is 0 AND X_2 is 1 ”. Similary to the combination above this leads to: $\overline{X_0} \& \overline{X_1} \& X_2$.
- For 111, the boolean expression is $X_0 \& X_1 \& X_2$.

Note!

- Each row in a truth table (=one distinct combination) can be represented by a **minterm** or **maxterm**
- A **minterm** is the conjunction (AND'ing) of all inputs, where unter certain instances a negation have to be used
- In a minterm an input variable with 0 has to be negated, in order to use it as an input for the AND.
e.g. $X_0 = 0$ AND $X_1 = 1 \quad \rightarrow \quad \overline{X_0} \& X_1$

Fig. 5: Therm-o-Safety truth table - sum of products

Therm-o-Safety					
Input	X2	X1	X0	Y	minterm
	0	0	0	-	
1	0	0	1	0	
2	0	1	0	0	
3	0	1	1	1	$\overline{X_2} \cdot X_1 \cdot X_0$
4	1	0	0	1	$X_2 \cdot \overline{X_1} \cdot \overline{X_0}$
	1	0	1	-	
OFF	1	1	0	0	
ON	1	1	1	1	$X_2 \cdot X_1 \cdot X_0$

In [figure 5](#) all minterms for $Y=1$ are shown. The [figure 6](#) depicts all the logic circuits for the three minterms. These lead to the outputs Y' , Y'' , and Y''' .

Fig. 6: logic circuit for the combinations '100', '110', '111'

For the final step we have to combine the single results for the minterms. The output has to be 1 when at least one of the minterms is 1 . Therefore, the minterms have to be connected disjunctive:

$$Y = Y' + Y'' + Y''' \quad Y = (\overline{X_0} \cdot \overline{X_1} \cdot \overline{X_2}) + (\overline{X_0} \cdot \overline{X_1} \cdot X_2) + (X_0 \cdot \overline{X_1} \cdot \overline{X_2}) + (X_0 \cdot \overline{X_1} \cdot X_2)$$

This leads to the logic circuit shown in [figure 7](#). Here, you can input the different combinations by clicking onto the bits of the input nibble.

Fig. 7: logic circuit for therm-o-safety

Note!

- The disjunction of the minterms is called **sum of products, SoP, disjunctive normal form** or **DNF**.
- When all inputs are used in each of the minterms the normal form is called **full disjunctive normal form**
- When synthesizing a logic circuit by sum of products, all 'don't care' terms outputting 0 .

We have seen, that the sum of products is one tool to derive a logic circuit based on a truth table. Alternatively it is also possible to insert an intermediate step, where the logic formula is simplified.

In the following one possible optimization is shown:

$$\begin{aligned} Y &= (X_0 \& X_1 \& \overline{X_2}) \& \quad + \quad (\overline{X_0} \& \overline{X_1} \& X_2) \& \quad + \quad (X_0 \& X_1 \& \overline{X_2}) \& \quad + \quad (\overline{X_0} \& X_1 \& X_2) \& \quad + \quad (X_0 \& \overline{X_1} \& X_2) \& \quad + \quad (\overline{X_0} \& \overline{X_1} \& \overline{X_2}) \& \quad + \quad (\overline{X_0} \& X_1 \& \overline{X_2}) \& \quad + \quad (X_0 \& \overline{X_1} \& \overline{X_2}) \& \quad + \quad (X_0 \& X_1 \& X_2) \& \quad + \quad (\overline{X_0} \& X_1 \& \overline{X_2}) \& \quad + \quad (\overline{X_0} \& \overline{X_1} \& X_2) \& \quad + \quad (X_0 \& \overline{X_1} \& X_2) \& \quad + \quad (\overline{X_0} \& X_1 \& X_2) \& \quad + \quad (X_0 \& \overline{X_1} \& \overline{X_2}) \& \quad + \quad (\overline{X_0} \& \overline{X_1} \& \overline{X_2}) \end{aligned}$$

3.1.3 Product of Sums

In the sub-chapter before we had a look onto the combinations which generates an output of $Y=1$ by means of the AND operator. Now we are investigating the combinations with $Y=0$. Therefore, we need an operator, which results in 0 for only one distinct combination.

The first combination to look for is 001 . If this input combination would be the only one for the output of $Y=0$, the following could be stated:

" $Y=0$ (only) when the X_0 is 1 AND X_1 is 0 AND X_2 is 0 ".

With having the duality in mind (see cpt. [The Set of Rules](#)) the opposite is also true:

" $Y=1$ when X_0 is 0 OR X_1 is 1 OR X_2 is 1 ".

This is the same like: $\overline{X_0} + X_1 + X_2$

The boolean operator we need here is the OR-operator.

Similarly, the combinations 010 and 110 can be transformed. Keep in mind, that this time we are looking for a formula with results in 0 only for the given one distinct combination.

Note!

- A **maxterm** is the disjunction (OR'ing) of all inputs, where under certain instances a negation have to be used.
- In a maxterm an input variable with 1 has to be negated, in order to use it as an input for the OR.

The [figure 8](#) shows all the maxterms for the example.

Fig. 8: Therm-o-Safety truth table

Therm-o-Safety						
Input	X2	X1	X0	Y	minterm	maxterm
	0	0	0	-		
1	0	0	1	0		$X_2 + X_1 + \overline{X_0}$
2	0	1	0	0		$X_2 + \overline{X_1} + X_0$
3	0	1	1	1	$\overline{X_2} \cdot X_1 \cdot X_0$	
4	1	0	0	1	$X_2 \cdot \overline{X_1} \cdot \overline{X_0}$	
	1	0	1	-		
OFF	1	1	0	0		$\overline{X_2} + \overline{X_1} + X_0$
ON	1	1	1	1	$X_2 \cdot X_1 \cdot X_0$	

Fig. 9: logic circuit for the combinations '001', '010', '110'

Note!

- The disjunction of the minterms is called **products of sum, PoS, conjunctive normal form** or **CNF**.
- The products of sum is the DeMorgan dual of the sum of products.

3.2

3.2.1 The Karnaugh Map

[interactive example](#)

Exercise 3.1.x Further Questions

1. compare the results with the output given [here](#) (the output \$\$ can be changed by clicking onto it)

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