\*



1

# What is a Flowpro Machine?

From US patent No. 10181003 Column 2, Line 63 with emphasis added

The presently disclosed Flowpro Machine <u>design model</u> is a parallel asynchronous Stateless <u>event model</u> and a Flowpro Machine <u>implementation model</u> is also an <u>event model</u>. A Flowpro Machine Computation is an evolution of events (not States) that determines a computation. The process of asynchronous design may now involve <u>drawing parallel asynchronous flowcharts</u> of a process, synthesizing those flowcharts to <u>Action, Test and Task Object</u> flowchart devices, and downloading those devices to a substrate for <u>execution as parallel</u> <u>asynchronous flowcharts</u>.

**Restated**, A Flowpro Machine is a propagation flow based computational machine and a common software/hardware approach to parallel asynchronous design and implementation of intelligent systems, by synthesizing design flowcharts as parallel hierarchical flowchart Action Object, Test Object and Task Object constructs.

### How does a Flowpro Machine work?

By propagating multiple decision flowcharts simultaneously and starting event functions as the propagation proceeds. This propagation processing can be in a physical, biological or chemical substrate.

### Please explain?

Picture a decision flowchart

It is constructed using graphic symbols for an Enable bubble, Action rectangles and Test diamonds each representing event functions. These symbols are referred to as Blocks or Objects and sometimes as elements

These Action (Control) and Test (Decision) BLcks are assembled into rectangle Action Objects, diamond Test Objects and parallel flowcharts called Task Objects. A Flowpro Machine project is an assembly of flowcharts constructed in a hierarchical fashion using Task Objects

All flowchart blocks are ordered (numbered) according to the flow lines and an algorithm that attempts to number all ordered blocks higher than any blocks leading to it.

The leading edge of the propagation signal travels along the flow lines and Starts (triggers without stopping) Action or Test functions as the flowchart Blocks or Objects are encountered

All functions are built from a few Atomic Action and Test function blocks Other than the propagation signal, spike signals are used to Start (initiate) functions

## **Flowpro Computational Machine Genesis**

| The 1980s | <ul> <li>* US patent 4,852,047 granted, describes flowcharts to control factory automation</li> <li>* Micro-controller and I/O developed for factory automation control</li> </ul> |
|-----------|--|
| The 1990s | - FloPro PC Control Software adopted by General Motors Powertrain and deployed   |
|           | <ul> <li>Flowpro Control Software and US patent 4,852,047 sold</li> </ul>  |
| The 2000s | * US Patent 6,421,821 granted, describes flowchart objects   |
|           | * FloPro Software is reborn as Flowpro Software  |
|           | * US patent 9,003,383 granted, Parallelizing serial code into parallel flowcharts  |
| The 2010s | <ul> <li>Flowpro Software focused on educational Vex and Lego robots</li> </ul>  |
|           | <ul> <li>- US patent 1,181,003 granted (2019), Flowpro computational machine</li> </ul>  |
| The 2020s | * Flowpro software becomes an open system  |
|           | * A Flowpro Software to Verilog utility for FPGAs is available   |

## Flowpro Machine to Verilog 'Reference Design' Objective

- 1. Demonstrate the fundamental concepts of a Flowpro Computational Machine design and implementation including ....
  - Flowchart to RTL FPGA synthesis using Verilog

Provide a software utility to translate parallel Flowpro Software flowcharts to parallel Verilog flowchart structures Provide a basic design of flowchart Enable, Decision, and Control blocks

Show Flowpro Machine Action, Test, and Task Objects and it's hierarchy of execution within Verilog

- 2. Promote Flowpro Software as an open system with source code and documentation
- 3. Provide a basic development and evaluation system for potential licensees

# Flowpro Machine 'Reference Design' Implementation Flow

- 1. Input the application's parallel design flowcharts using PC based open Flowpro Software V 3.0
- 2. Debug the application functionality using Flowpro Software with Flowpro compatible MCU and Flowpro style SPI I/O
- 3. Download your compiled Flowpro Software application to disc
- 4. Using the proprietary Flowpro to Verilog utility, add real time monitor points to your design and translate the flowcharts to a Verilog v file
- 5. Manually install the Verilog file into a project you have created with the Intel Quartus FPGA programming system
- 6. Compile the Verilog file using System Verilog
- 7. Download the program to the Intel FPGA
- 8. Be amazed !

## Project Flow for Reference Design: Rev 2.0



# From FloPro Software to a Flowpro Machine

The original FloPro was a Microsoft DOS based application when it was sold. In the early 2000s the original Flowpro team and new members developed Windows-based Flowpro Software that carried forward fundamental execution rules from FloPro. These fundamental execution rules ensure that there is some compatibility between Flowpro Software that is a multitasked execution and a Flowpro Machine that is true parallel execution. As the Flowpro Software was enhanced and newly patented art (i.e. objects) added the art implementation was flexible as the new ideas were refined. Therefore there are slight differences between the hierarchy rules for Flowpro Software and the hierarchy rules when implementing a Flowpro Machine in hardware. The Flowpro Software to Verilog utility implements the processing of Flowpro Software objects in a manner described in US patent 10,181,003 and below.

## From FloPro Software to a Flowpro Machine - Objects

Flowpro objects consists of three types, Action Object, Test Object and Task Object. An Action Object is the encapsulation of a portion of a flowchart that has one entry point, one exit point and does not contain any flowline loopback's in the encapsulation. All Blocks on a flowchart are ordered and numbered and so are the blocks inside of Objects. In effect, placing an Action Object block on a flowchart is equivalent to expanding the contents of that Object encapsulation in the flowchart between the object block's entry and exit points. A Test Object is the encapsulation of a portion of a flowchart that has one entry point, two exit points and does not contain any flowline loopback's in the encapsulation. Placing a Test Object on a flowchart is equivalent to expanding the contents of the Test Object encapsulation on the flowchart between the object block entry point and both exit points. A Task Object is equivalent to a flowchart except that a Task Object cannot be the top level of a project hierarchy. Flowpro Software and Flowpro Machine projects must always begins with a flowchart or flowcharts. A Task Object can be controlled from flowcharts and Task Objects.



A Flowpro Machine has only one copy of a Task Object and that Task Object can be controlled and monitored from any flowchart or Task Object within the Flowpro Machine project. A Flowpro Software project will potentially contain multiple copies of the same Task Object. This was early Flowpro Software thinking, this thinking is incorrect, and should be rectified in the open system Flowpro Software V3.0.

The Flowpro Machine US patent 10,181,003 describes controlling and monitoring of Task Objects. The Task Object controls are: Start (begin, resume operation after a Stop), Restart (begin, resume operation from the beginning of the Task Object), Stop (pause operation), Abort (disable task operation), and the monitoring is: Done (task complete), and Running (task operation enabled). The Flowpro Software supports Start, Restart, Stop, Abort and Done. Task Running is not supported although the Flowpro Software debugger shows status of a Task Object by applying colors to the Enable bubble of a Task Object. Deep blue if the Task Object is executing, light blue if the Task Object Is Done, orange if the Task Object is Stopped (paused) and red if the task object is not running. Rev 0 of the Flowpro to Verilog utility only supports Start, Abort and Done. A Restart function can be accomplished using an 'Abort - Wait Block - Start' sequence in a user's program. Re-issuing the same Task Object command while the command is processing has no effect on the processing. The FP to Verilog utility has a monitor point feature. A monitor point can be added to any flowchart flowline in the Flowpro project. This means that a monitor point will be routed to an output pin or LED as specified by the user.

Hierarchy of Flowpro Task Objects is an important concept to understand and it differs slightly between Flowpro Software and the Verilog implementation. This is another example of 'early thinking' that has been corrected when running the Verilog code. In Flowpro Software when a Task Object becomes Done it Aborts all Task Objects under it. This may be an issue in some applications but the workaround is easy if you are aware of it. In the Verilog code when a Task Object is Done, it is just that. A user must implicitly Abort the desired underlying Task Objects when Done. When a Flowchart or Task Object is disabled it generates a Hierarchy Abort spike (\*\*#hracyabrt\_spk) that is connected to the Enables bubble of all Task Objects immediately under it. Their Hierarchy Abort spike (\*\*#hracyabrt\_spk) is connected to the Enable bubble of all Task Objects immediately under it, and so on, and so on. Although one top level Abort spike could be used for all Task Objects under it, the cascade method above avoids fan out issues.

There can be a hierarchy of Action and Test Objects when either one is used inside one another or inside themselves. The Verilog utility allows sixteen levels of this kind of encapsulation and sixteen levels of Task Objects. Action and Test Objects are not controlled, they live and die with the Flowchart or Task Object they are within.

## From FloPro Software to a Flowpro Machine - Design

The philosophy behind our approach to implementing the Flowpro to Verilog reference design utility was not to make any changes to the Flowpro Software source files. This decision was made because of unfamiliarity with the Flowpro Software development code. A secondary reason was that the Flowpro Software compiler output guarantees that the Flowpro project is ready to run. The Flowpro Software run time code is an image of the project flowcharts along with many other parameters, but, if the code format is known, the flowcharts can be recovered. We have been able to recover most the parts of the project flowcharts with the exception of the Test Object. The Flowpro Machine patent describes the Block numbering inside an Action or Test Object as ordered beginning with number 1. Flowpro Software's early thinking did not do this. Action and Tesk Objects are expanded and then the entire flowchart or Task Object is renumbered in a normal fashion. The Action and Test Object. This should be corrected in Flowpro Software but will require multiple module updates.

Flowpro Software is a fairly complete hobbyist control system and parallel programming educational platform. The Flowpro to Verilog 'reference design' utility is intended to show flowchart to hardware structures and not build a control system or product. The following table lists the features of Flowpro Software and which features are supported in the Verilog code.

#### Flowpro Software to Verilog Features Supported

#### Flowpro Software Atomic Blocks

### Enable Bubble - I/O, Flags Control Block - I/O, Flags, T/C, Register Math Block - Integer Math Move Block - Parallel Data Move Decision Block - I/O, Flags, T/C, Register Wait Block - 1 ms or sec Compare Block - T/C, Register, Fixed Value

#### Objects

Action Object Test Object Task Object Start, Restart, Stop, Abort, Done

#### **General Flowpro Software Specifications**

#### Capacity

Blocks/Project - 1400 Maximum Blocks/Flowchart - 480 Maximum Tasks/Project - 128 Maximum 16 Object Levels

#### Data Types

Inputs (256) - Binary (on/off) value Outputs (256) - Binary (on/off) value Flags (256) - Binary (on/off) value Timers/Counters (64) - 8 digit, xxxx.xxx sec., h:m:s Registers (64) - for holding or counting values, integer, time, date

#### FP to Verilog Atomic Blocks

Enable Bubble - I/O, Flags Control Block - I/O, Flags

Decision Block - I/O, Flags Wait Block - 1 ms or 1 us Time Base

#### Objects

Action Object Test Object Task Object Start, Abort, Done

#### **General FP to Verilog Specifications**

#### Capacity

Blocks/Project - 1400 Maximum Blocks/Flowchart - 480 Maximum Tasks/Project - 128 Maximum 16 Object Levels

#### Data Types

Inputs (256) - Binary (on/off) value Outputs (256) - Binary (on/off) value Flags (256) - Binary (on/off) value

# Flowpro to Verilog Utility Signal Naming Conventions

Signal names used in Verilog originate with Flowpro Software flowchart and object features Each flowchart and Task Object has a unique name and number (see Flowpro Software 'Controller-Verify-Object Map') All blocks and objects on Flowcharts and Objects are numbered beginning with number 1 There are only three types of flowchart blocks, <u>Enable 'ena', Control 'ctl', Decision 'dec' and three types of objects, Action 'act', Test 'tst', Task 'tsk'</u> The signal identifier field is followed by an underscore and the signal's function Flowpro can use upper and lower case characters but only lower case characters are used for Verilog signal naming Flowpro characters / and \ and (space) and - (dash) are converted to \_ (underscore) when named in the Verilog utility Input and Output are key words in Verilog, Flowpro therefore uses fm\_in# and fm\_out# are Flowpro I/O system references used in Verilog

## **Examples- Flowchart or Task Object Block Verilog Signals**

The numbering of all flowcharts and objects begins with the number 1 and in order to have a unique ID for each Verilog signal in all objects, a prefix can be added to each Verilog signal to achieve a unique ID. Each Flowchart and Task Object in a Flowpro Software project has an identifying number assigned to it and shown in the Flowpro Software Object Map. Flowcharts and Task Object Verilog signals are labeled with the prefix of the Flowchart number or the Task Object number assigned to it by the Flowpro Software Object Map.



Action and Test Objects are not assigned a number by the Flowpro Software, so one must be developed and assigned to each instantiation of these objects. One way to do this is to use the hierarchy path to each Action and Test Object instantiation. All hierarchies begin at the flowchart level and go through a Task Object, which is identifiable, and/or Action and/or Test Objects which are not. Each Action and Test Object will have a unique element (Block) number that can be used as part of a unique signal naming prefix. The prefix can be easily expanded as the hierarchy gets deeper and deeper, by using the object element number at each level of the hierarchy. (See below and next page)









#### **Flowpro to Verilog Decision Block Conversion REV 1.0** Verilog ///// fcldecblk2 I-2 OFF AND I-5 OFF module fc1decblk2 (input fc1clock, input 2, input 5, fc1actblk1 out, fc1decblk3 out no, fc1actblk14 out, output fcldecblk2 out yes, fcldecblk2 out no); req fcldecblk2 DFF1 Q, fcldecblk2 DFF2 Q, fcldecblk2 DFF3 Q, fcldecblk2 DFF4 Q; assign fcldecblk2 test ena = fclactblk1 out ^ fcldecblk3 out no ^ fclactblk14 out; assign fcldecblk2 test = fcldecblk2 DFF2 Q & fcldecblk2 test ena; **Original Flowpro Machine Concept** assign fcldecblk2 criteria = ~input 2 & ~input 5; always @(posedge fclclock or negedge fcldecblk2 test ena) begin fc1actblk1 out if (fcldecblk2 test ena == 0) begin fcldecblk2 DFF1 Q <= 0; 2 fcldecblk2 DFF2 Q <= 0; fc1decblk3 out no end fc1decblk2 test else fc1decblk2 test ena begin fc1decblk13 out fcldecblk2 DFF1\_Q <= fcldecblk2\_test\_ena;</pre> fc1clock fcldecblk2 DFF2 Q <= fcldecblk2 DFF1 Q; DFF end DFF2 DFF1 end No always @ (posedge fc1decb1k2 test or negedge fc1decb1k2 test ena) begin DFF4 fc1decblk2 outno if (fcldecblk2 test ena == 0) begin fc1decblk2 criteria fcldecblk2 DFF3 Q = 0;Δ Can be 2 inputs fcldecblk2 DFF4 Q = 0;**Flowpro Software** AND or OR end else 2 Not input 2 "Tested I/O and begin IS Not input 5 fcldecblk2 DFF3 Q <= fcldecblk2 criteria; SW\_2 Flags" fcldecblk2 DFF4 Q <= ~fcldecblk2 criteria; OFF AND Yes Computationa PB\_1 NC end OFF Wave end assign fcldecblk2 out no = fcldecblk2 DFF4 Q; assign fcldecblk2 out yes = fcldecblk2 DFF3 Q; I-002 OFF fc1decblk2 outyes endmodule AND I-005 OFF Yes A3



