IIT ROORKEE

NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE

MICROELECTRONICS: DEVICES AND CIRCUITS

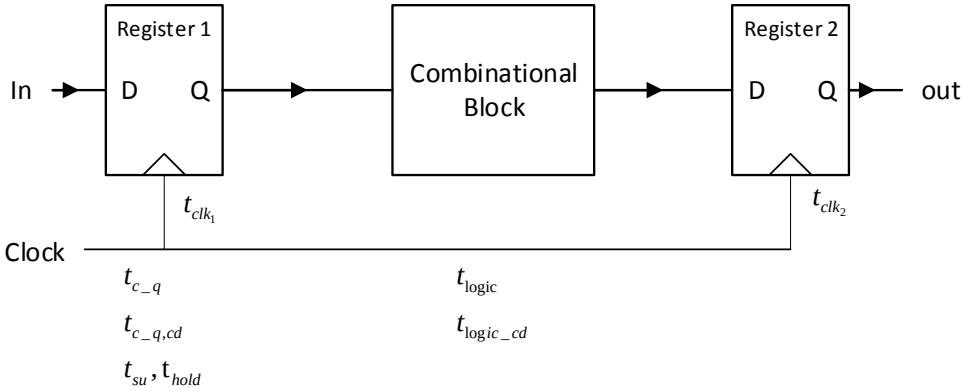
CLOCKING STRATEGIES FOR SEQUENTIAL DESIGN-II

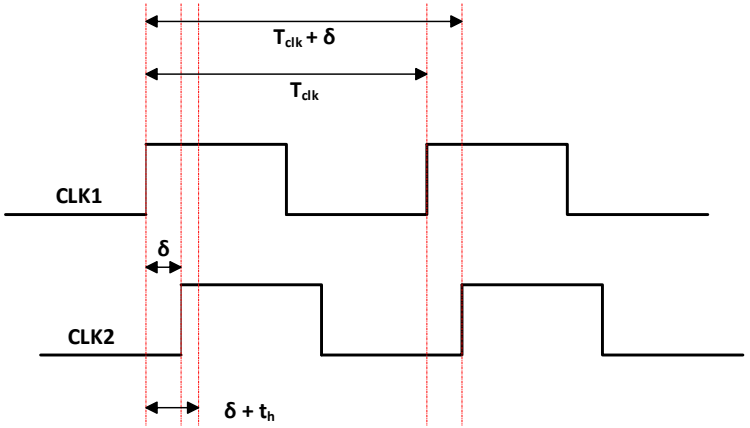
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Positive Clock Skew

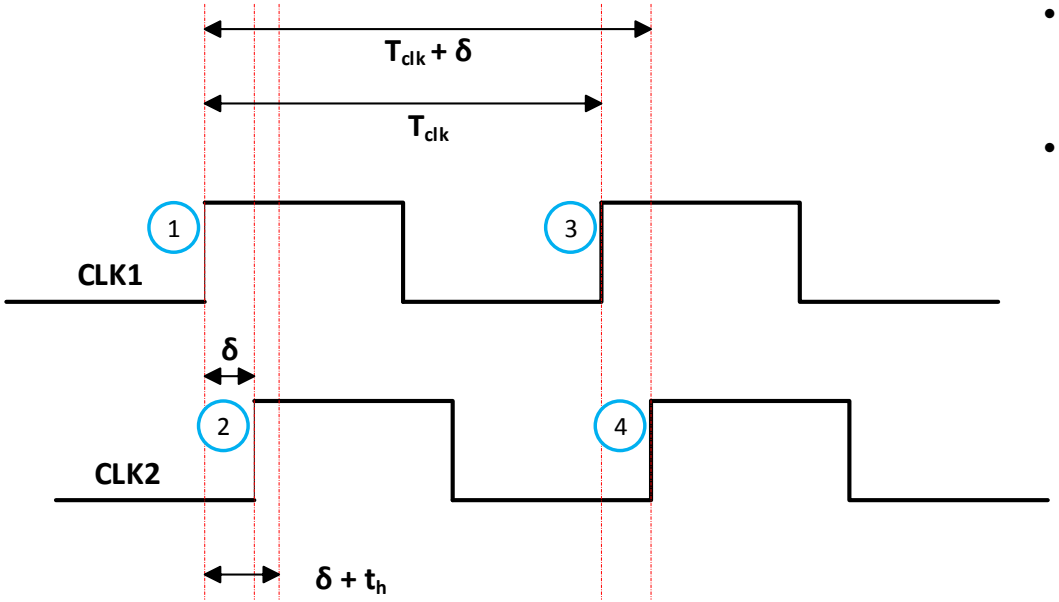




Timing diagram to study the impact of positive clock skew on performance and functionality.

The rising clock edge is delayed by a positive δ at the second register.

Positive Clock Skew



Timing constraint of positive clock skew

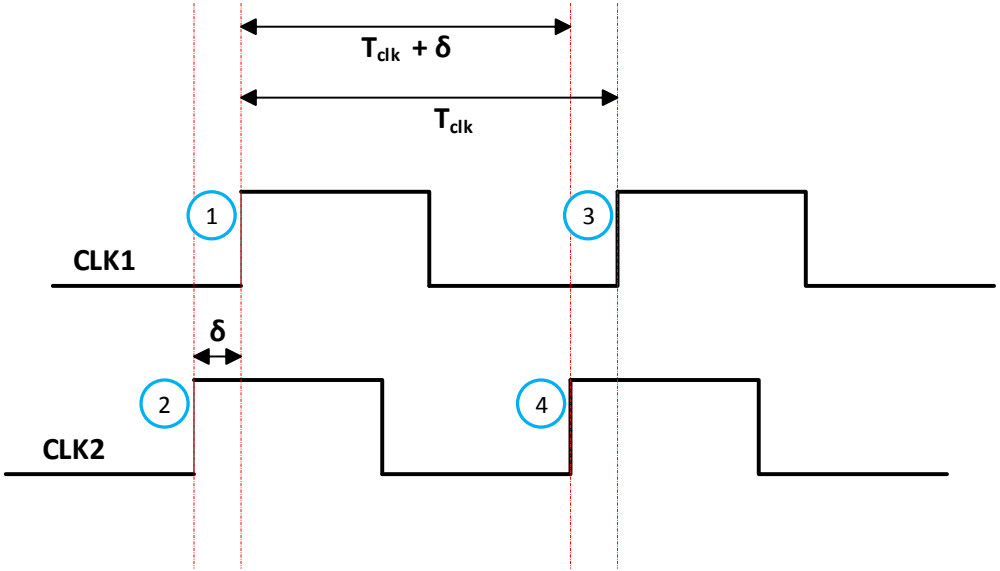
- If the clock skew is positive, the time available for signal to propagate from R1 to R2 is increased by the skew δ.
- The constraint on the minimum clock period can then be derived as:

$$T + \delta > t_{c_q} + t_{\text{logic}} + t_{su}$$

- if the minimum delay of the combinational logic block is small, the inputs to R2 may change before the clock edge 2, resulting in incorrect evaluation.
- The constraint of the minimum propagation delay through the register and logic would be

$$\delta + t_{hold} < t_{c_q,cd} + t_{\text{logic},cd}$$

Negative Clock Skew

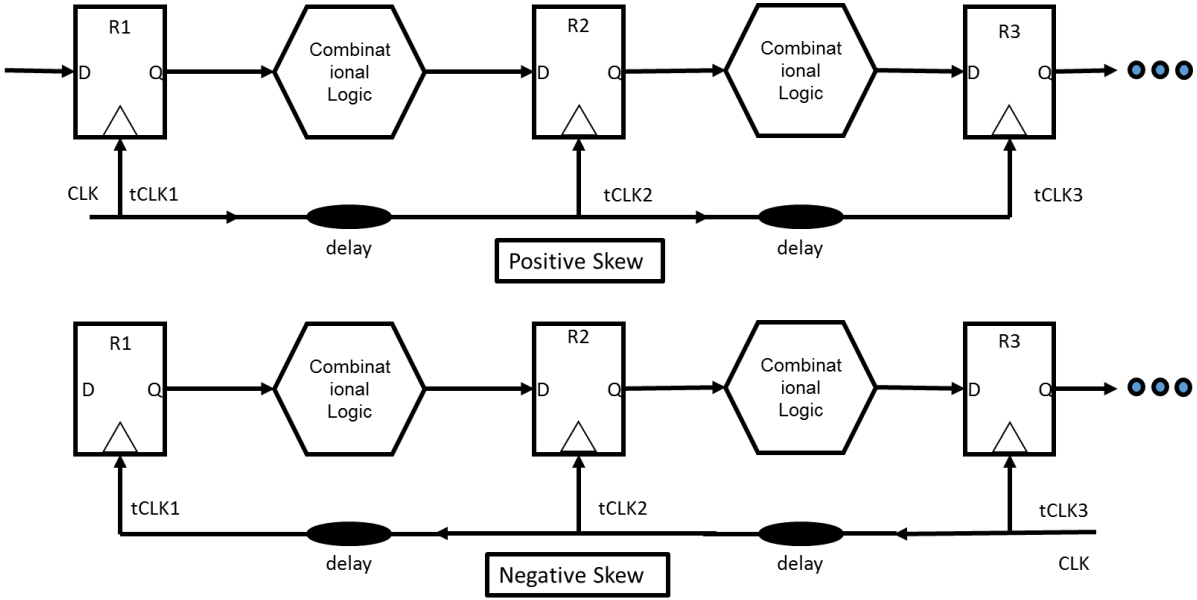


Timing diagram for negative clock skew (δ < 0).

- The rising edge of CLK2 happens before the rising edge of CLK1.
- Here δ is negative,
- The constraint on the minimum clock period becomes more stringent.

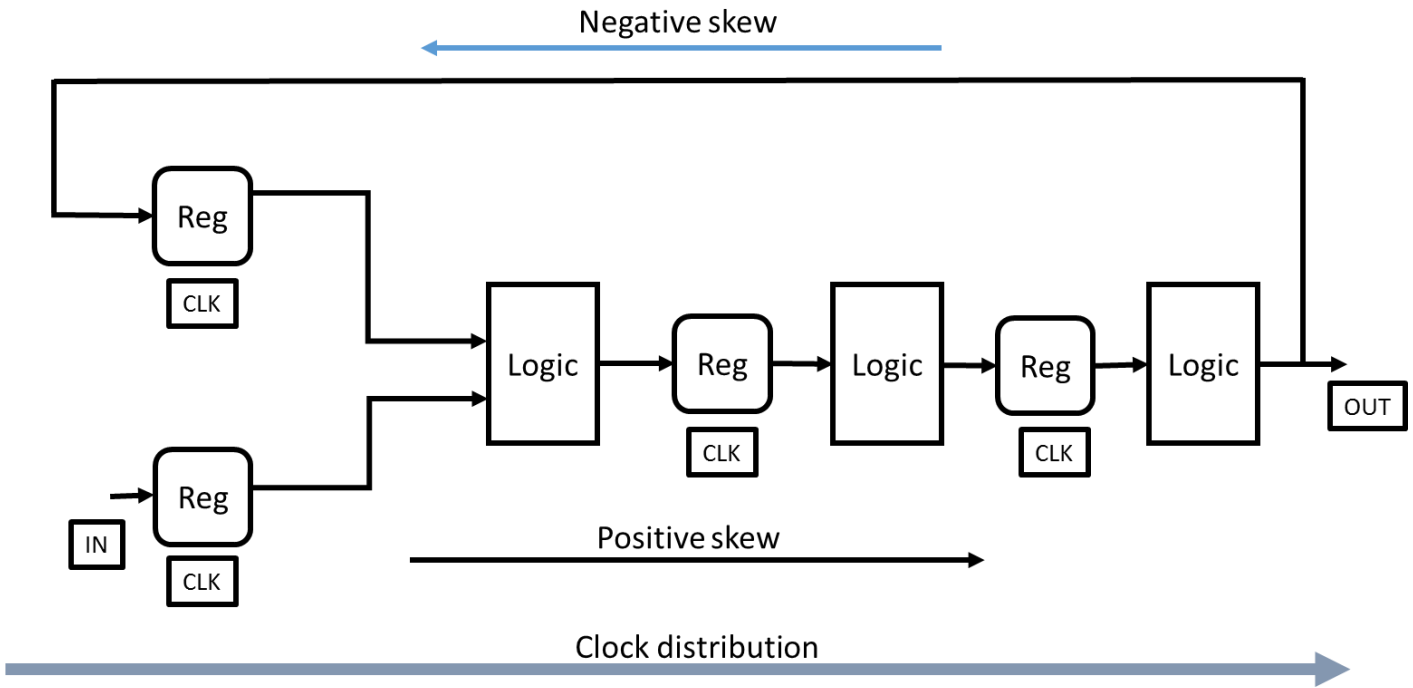
$$T + \delta > t_{c_q} + t_{\text{logic}} + t_{su}$$

Example scenarios for positive and negative clock skew



- During positive clock skew ($\delta > 0$), the main constraint is $\delta + t_{hold} < t_{c_q,cd} + t_{\log ic,cd}$
- The circuit does malfunction **independent of the clock period.**
- During negative clock skew ($\delta < 0$), When the clock is routed in the opposite direction of the data.

Timing issue in Datapath with feedback



Clock jitter

- **Clock jitter** refers to the **temporary variation** of the clock period at a given point. means the clock period can reduce or expand on a cycle-by-cycle basis.
- Cycle-to-cycle jitter refers to time varying deviation of a single clock period,
- At given location i,

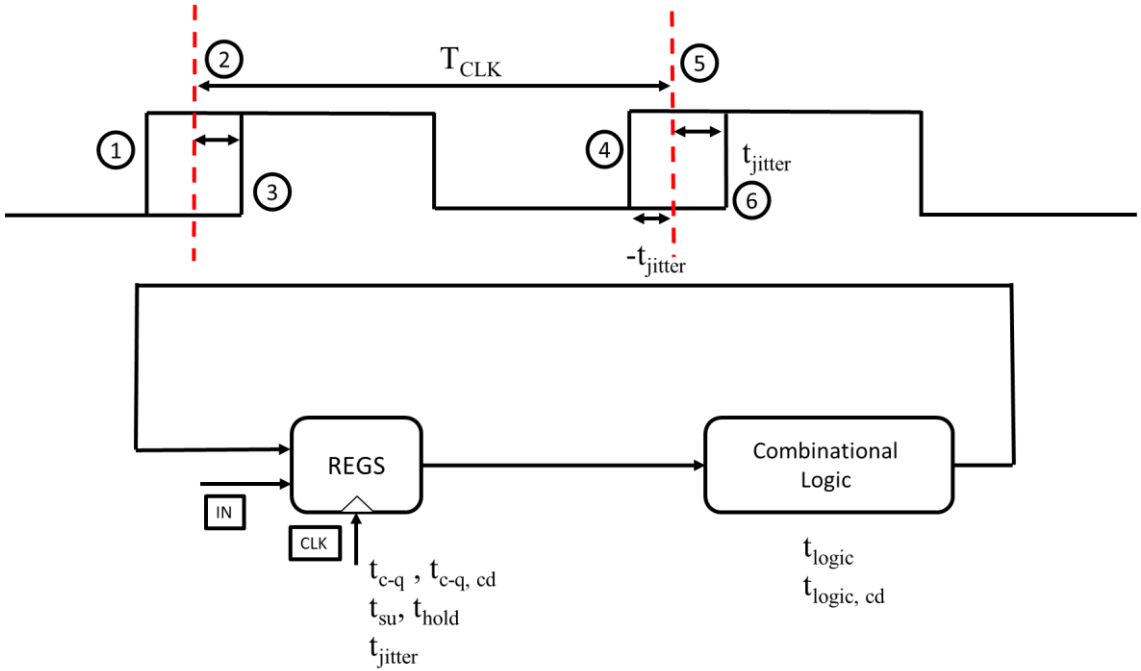
$$T_{jitter,i}(n) = T_{i,n+1} - T_{i,n} - T_{CLK}$$

Where, $T_{i,n}$ is the clock period for period n,
$T_{i,\,n+1}$ is clock period for period n+1,
T_{CLK} is the nominal clock period.

Circuit performance under clock jitter

- Jitter directly impacts the performance of a sequential system.
- The total time available to complete the operation is reduced by 2 t_{jiiter} in the worst case.

$$T_{clk} - 2t_{jitter} \geq t_{c_q} + t_{\text{logic}} + t_{su}$$



Timing diagram of a circuit under clock jitter

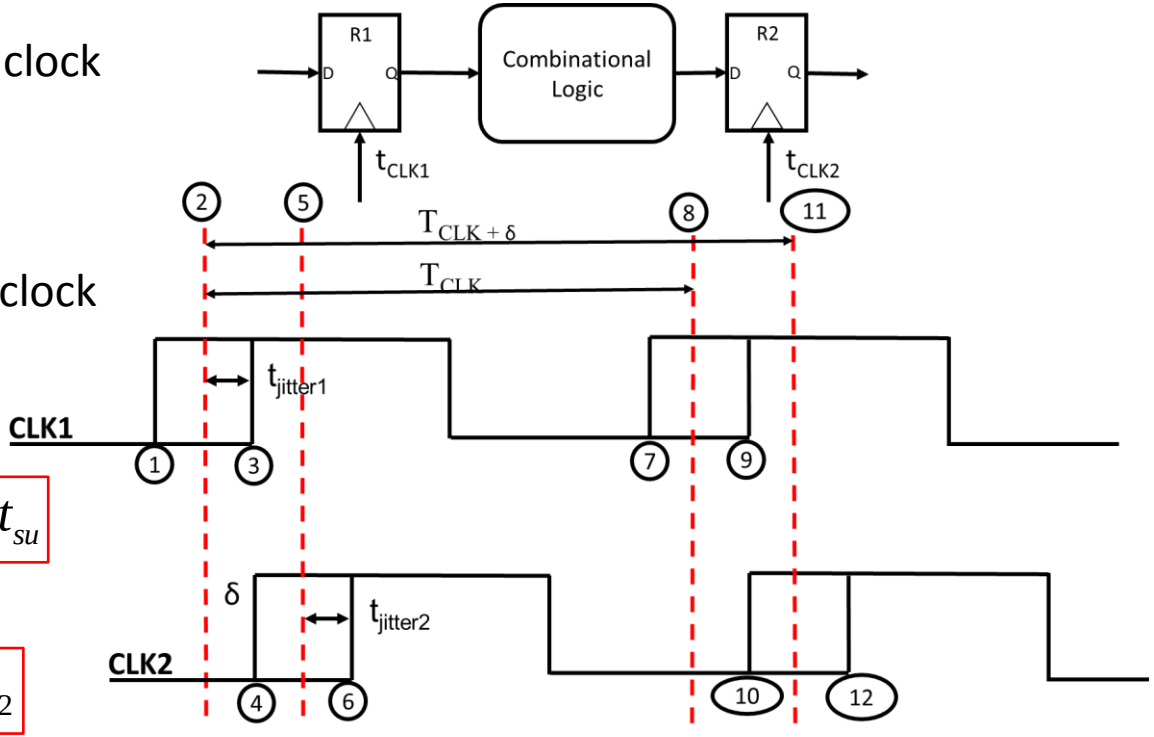
Impact of Clock Skew and Clock Jitter

- A static skew δ is present in two clock signals (CLK1 and CLK2). (δ >0).
- CLK1 has jitter of $t_{jitter1}$.
- CLK2 has jitter of $t_{jitter2}$.
- The constraint on the minimum clock period -

$$T_{CLK} + \delta - t_{jitter1} - t_{jitter2} \geq t_{c_q} + t_{logic} + t_{su}$$

or

$$T \geq t_{c_q} + t_{logic} + t_{su} - \delta + t_{jitter1} + t_{jitter2}$$



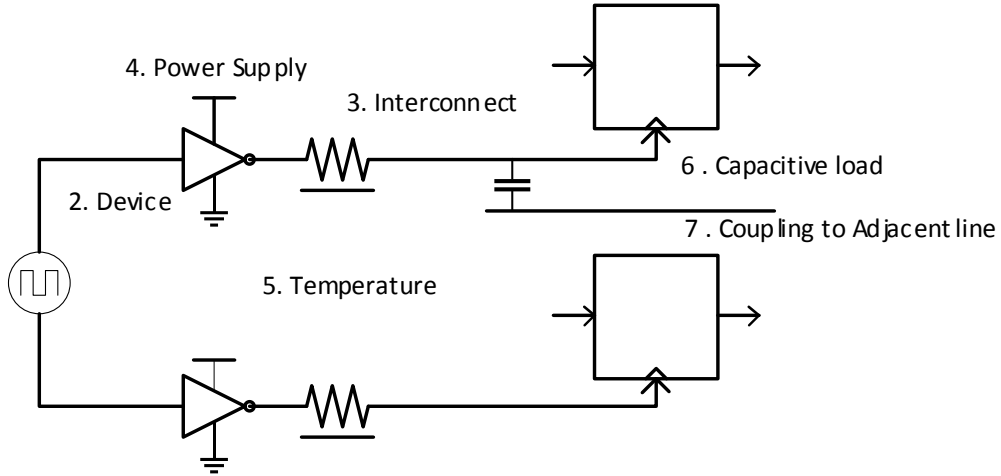
Circuit performance under skew (δ >0). and jitter

Source of Skew and Jitter

- A ideal clock signal can not be achieved because of the variety of the process and environmental variations.
- Off chip or on-chip generated clock signal is distributed through multiple “matched” path.
- Errors can be classified in to two categories :

- **1) Systematic Error**
  - Predictable.
  - Identical in chip to chip
  - Modeled and corrected at design time.

- **2) Random Error**
  - Manufacturing variations
  - Difficult to model and eliminate
  - e.g., dopant fluctuations



various sources of skew and jitter

Sources of Skew and Jitter

1. **Clock generation**
   - Source of clock generator itself causes jitter.
   - Core of a PLL is a Voltage Control Oscillator- which is very sensitive to the device noise and supply variation.
   - Analog circuits are affected by noisy digital circuits.
   - Cycle-to-cycle clock variation due to substrate noise.

2. **Manufacturing Device Variations**
   - Mismatch among the clock buffer circuits in the distributed network.
   - Because of the process variations, device parameters in buffer circuits vary –results static skew error.
   - Variation in oxide layer, dopant profile, dimension ratio affect the over all performance.

Sources of Skew and Jitter

3. **Mismatch in Interconnects**
   - The dimension variations in routing causes interconnect capacitance and resistances to vary – statics skew between different paths.
   - Inter-level-thickness variations.
   - Variation in polish rate in planarization process.
   - Deviation in the width of the wires and line spacing.

4. **Environmental variations**
   - Most significant sources to contribute jitter and skew.
   - Temperature gradient because of variation in power dissipation.
   - Activity region is chip varying depending on design.
   - Variation in temperature is time varying.

Sources of Skew and Jitter

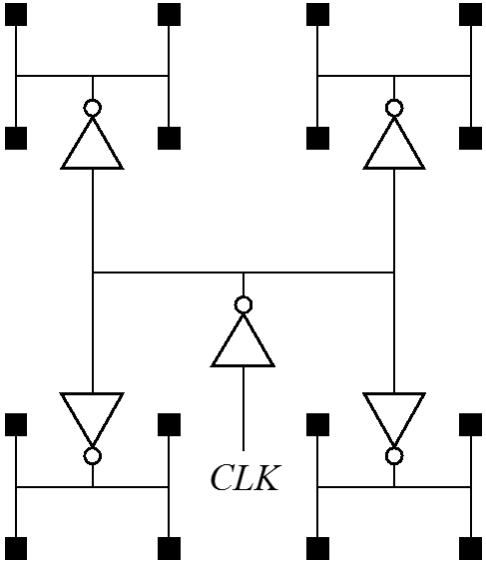
5. **Power supply variations**
   - Major source of clock jitter in circuit.
   - Delay through buffers is a very strong function of power supply.
   - The buffer delay along one path is very different than the buffer delay along another path.
   - Instantaneous IR drops along the power grid due to fluctuations in switching activity.
   - Clock signal is modulated on a cycle-by-cycle basis, resulting in jitter.

6. **Capacitive coupling**
   - The variation in capacitive load also contributes to timing uncertainty.
   - Coupling between the clock lines and adjacent signal wires.
   - Variation in gate capacitance.
   - The adjacent signal can transition in arbitrary directions and at arbitrary times, This results in clock jitter.

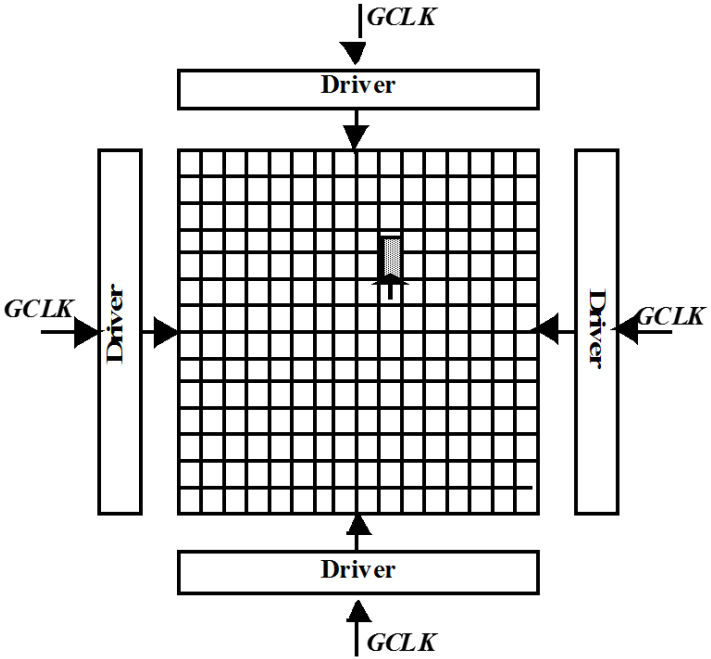
Design Techniques to Reduce of Skew and Jitter

- A balanced clock paths from a central distribution sources - using H-tree structures or routed tree structures.
- The use of local clock grids can reduce skew.
- If data flows in one direction, route data and clock in opposite directions.
- Avoid data dependent noise by shielding clock wires from adjacent signal wires.
- Dummy fills are very common and reduce skew by increasing uniformity.
- High frequency power supply variation can be reduced by addition of on-chip decoupling capacitors.

Clock Distribution



H-tree



Grid structures

Advantages of Synchronous Design

- **Ensures that the physical timing constraint are met**
  - After the system comes in steady state, only the next clock starts.
  - Allowed only the legal values for the next computation.
  - Always consider the worst case to ensure physical timing constraint.
- **Serves as a logical ordering mechanism**
  - For a global system events.
  - All the system events are clearly orchestrated by clock.
  - Structured and deterministic approach.

Recapitulation

- As a result of process and environmental variations, the clock signal can have spatial and temporal variations.
- Clock skew and jitter has a major impact on the functionality and performance of a system.
- Clock skew is caused by static path-length mismatches in the clock load and by definition skew is constant from cycle to cycle.
- Realize in clock distribution is that the absolute delay through a clock distribution path is not important; what matters is the relative arrival time between the output of each path at the register points.

Thank You