

Testable Design of Sequential Circuits with Improved Fault Efficiency

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Abstract: A new synthesis and design-for-testability (DFT) technique is proposed for improving fault efficiency in non-scan synchronous sequential circuits. Certain simple constraints are imposed on state encoding prior to synthesis, and then a DFT technique is employed that guarantees absence of all sequentially undetectable faults, such as invalid, equivalent and isomorph. If the netlist is available instead of state description, only the DFT technique is applied, by skipping the synthesis part. The proposed design guarantees significantly lower test generation time, higher fault coverage, and almost complete fault efficiency, when sequential test generation tools are used. Experiments on MCNC and ISCAS 89 benchmark circuits show encouraging results. Hardware overhead of the proposed method compares favorably with that of full-scan.

1. Introduction

To reduce the complexity of test generation in sequential circuits, several attempts were made to achieve testable design, or to synthesize them for ensuring high testability. Full-scan techniques reduce the test generation problem for a sequential circuit to a combinational one [1]. The area overhead associated with full-scan can be reduced by adopting partial scan [2]. The main problem with scan techniques is that they may fail to allow at-speed testing. To overcome the shortcomings of scan techniques, non-scan approaches are proposed [3-7]. However, the presence of sequentially undetectable faults makes test generation in non-scan circuits very complex. Combinational ATPG was used in [6, 7], along with certain DFT methods to obtain complete fault efficiency. The ratio of the number of faults detected or proved redundant by a test algorithm, to the total number of faults in a circuit, is called *fault efficiency*. Several techniques for removal of undetectability and redundancy in sequential circuits appeared earlier in [9-14].

To improve fault efficiency in non-scan synchronous sequential circuits, we propose a new technique, based on removal of sequential undetectability. If the state transition graph (STG) is available, we use certain constraints on state encoding to synthesize the machine that ensures detection of invalid faults. We then employ a DFT technique [5] using some additional logic that guarantees absence of other sequentially undetectable

faults such as, equivalent and isomorph. For large circuits, where only netlist is available instead of STG, we skip the synthesis part, and apply DFT technique only. Removal of these undetectable faults significantly lowers test generation time, and enhances fault efficiency when sequential ATPG is used, as evident from experimental results on several benchmark circuits. Our approach is simple, and hardware overhead compares favorably with that of full-scan.

2. Preliminaries

We assume the classical stuck-at fault model. A gate-level combinational circuit is said to be *irredundant* if all faults, single or multiple, are detectable by input-output experiments. Let the given synchronous sequential machine be denoted by M . Assume that M has l primary input lines x_1, x_2, \dots, x_l , and m primary output lines Z_1, Z_2, \dots, Z_m . The outputs y_1, y_2, \dots, y_k of k flip-flops define the present state of the machine. The inputs Y_1, Y_2, \dots, Y_k to the memory elements at time t determine the values of y_i 's at $t+1$, and define the next state of M . A sequential machine M can be described as a quintuple: $M = \{I, O, S, \delta, Z\}$, where I, O, S are finite, nonempty sets of inputs, outputs, and states, respectively; $\delta: I \times S \rightarrow S$, is the state transition function; $Z: I \times S \rightarrow O$, is the output function. A *differentiating sequence* (DS) of a pair of states S_i and S_j , is a minimal-length sequence of input vectors, such that the output response obtained by applying the sequence when the circuit is initially in S_i , is different from that obtained when the circuit is initially in S_j [16]. Two states are said to be *equivalent*, if they do not have a DS.

A machine is in *synchronization mode*, if the operation starts with a specified input sequence, referred to as power-up sequence [17]. Hardware reset may exist as a special input. Under this mode, the starting or *reset state* is a state in which the machine starts, after using power-up sequence or hardware reset. A state is called a *valid state* if it can be reached from the reset state by applying an input sequence, otherwise it is an *invalid state*. A machine is said to be operated in *free mode*, if no restriction on the power-up sequence exists; the machine

may start operation at the state it happens to be in that time. Let us consider a fault f in the machine M , and let the faulty machine be denoted by $M^f = \{I, O, S^f, \delta^f, Z^f\}$. Two states S_i in M and S_i^f in M^f are called *corresponding states*, if they have the same encoding [8]. States S_i and S_i^f are called *corresponding equivalent states*, if they produce identical response to any input sequence. The machine M is assumed to be in synchronization mode with hardware reset if the STG description of M is available, otherwise it is assumed to be in free mode.

3. Redundancy and undetectability

Though the concepts of redundancy and undetectability are synonymous in combinational circuits, they differ in sequential circuits [17, 18] where a fault may be irredundant, but undetectable. A fault f is said to be *detectable* in a sequential circuit if, for every pair of initial states S in M and S^f in M^f , there exists an input sequence X , such that response $Z(X, S)$ of M to X , is different from the response $Z^f(X, S^f)$ of M^f at some time unit on some output [17]. A fault is said to be *undetectable* if it is not detectable.

Definition: A fault in a sequential circuit M is said to be *combinationally redundant* if starting from any input state with any sequence of input vectors, its effect cannot be observed at the primary outputs, or by only probing next state lines, i.e., they are undetectable under full-scan.

Definition: If a fault is not combinational redundant, but changes the state diagram such that no input sequence starting from any state, can detect the change, then the fault is *sequentially redundant fault (SRF)*.

SRFs are broadly classified into three groups under the synchronization mode [15].

Definition: If a fault changes the transitions only from the invalid states, but does not corrupt any transition from the valid states, it is an *invalid fault*. An *equivalent fault* is a fault that causes an interchange and/or creation of equivalent states only. A fault in a sequential machine is an *isomorph fault* if the state table of the faulty machine is identical to that of the fault-free machine under renaming (i.e., some permutation) of the states.

3.1 Equivalent fault

If an equivalent fault causes an interchange of equivalent states alone, then it is undetectable under both synchronization and free mode while testing with single or multiple observation time approaches. However, some equivalent faults caused by creation of new states (and interchange) may be detectable as a probabilistically detectable fault [23].

Lemma 1 [5]: If for all S_i ($0 \leq i \leq 2^k - 1$), $Z\{I_a, S_i\}$ is distinct from $Z\{I_a, S_j\}$ $i \neq j$ for at least an input $I_a \in I$, then an equivalent fault can never exist regardless of the circuit

realization (that uses k flip-flops).

3.2 Isomorph fault

An isomorph fault is generally undetectable under both synchronization and free mode with single or multiple observation time approaches. However, some isomorph faults may be detectable, if the machine operates in synchronization mode [19].

3.3 Invalid fault

This can occur only in synchronization mode.

Lemma 2: If an invalid fault appears, then there exist at least an invalid state S_i and one input $I_a \in I$, such that

- (i) $\delta^f\{I_a, S_i\} \neq \delta\{I_a, S_i\}$, or $Z^f\{I_a, S_i^f\} \neq Z\{I_a, S_i\}$ or both *and*
- (ii) $\forall I_a \in I, \delta^f\{I_a, S_j^f\} = \delta\{I_a, S_j\}$ and $Z^f\{I_a, S_j^f\} = Z\{I_a, S_j\}$ if S_j is a valid state, where, S_i and S_i^f (similarly S_j and S_j^f) are corresponding states.

Corollary 1: If all 2^k states are valid in the machine, an invalid fault cannot occur.

Next, we present a design technique that eliminates three types of SRFs from a sequential circuit.

4. Testable design

Given a sequential circuit $M \{I, O, S, \delta, Z\}$ with l inputs, m outputs, and k flip-flops. First, we assume that the STG of M is available. We then synthesize a modified machine $M' \{I, O, S', \delta', Z'\}$ with a control input C , such that M' is devoid of redundancy and easily testable. Further, M' reduces to M when $C = 0$.

4.1 Synthesis for detecting invalid faults

We assume that the number of invalid states in M can be at most $2^{k-1} - 1$. Now, we impose a simple restriction on the state assignment of the machine.

4.1.1 State-assignment: We assume that all the invalid states are encoded such that the state variable y_1 is assigned logic value 1. Since the number of invalid states $\leq 2^{k-1} - 1$, this can always be done. The remaining bits may be assigned arbitrarily. With this constraint, we synthesize the sequential circuit without any restriction on its structure; then we augment the circuit with some extra logic as indicated in the following procedure.

4.1.2 Circuit design: To detect invalid faults, all states are made valid by adding a 2-input OR gate and a control input C in the test mode. We change the next-state function Y_1 to Y_1' as: $Y_1' = Y_1 + C$. Only *one* next-state function is modified (Fig. 1). The output functions are then changed by augmenting the circuit with an additional combinational logic C_{add} according to a DFT method described in subsection 4.2.

Theorem 1: The modified circuit M' is devoid of all invalid faults.

Proof: The encoding of any invalid state in M begins with $y_1=1$. Consider an invalid state S_{inv} in M with the code $(1, y_2^*, y_3^*, \dots, y_k^*)$ where $y_i^* \in (0,1)$, for $2 \leq i \leq k$. Obviously, there exists a valid state S_v whose code is $(0, y_2^*, y_3^*, \dots, y_k^*)$. As S_v is a valid state, in the original machine M , there exists a valid state $S^* \in S$ and an input $I_a \in I$, s. t. $\delta\{I_a, S^*\} = S_v$. Then in the modified machine M' , the following conditions are true: for $C = 0$, $\delta\{I_a, S^*\} = S_v$ and for $C = 1$, $\delta\{I_a, S^*\} = S_{inv}$. Thus, the invalid state S_{inv} in M becomes valid in M' . So an invalid fault can never occur in M' . ■

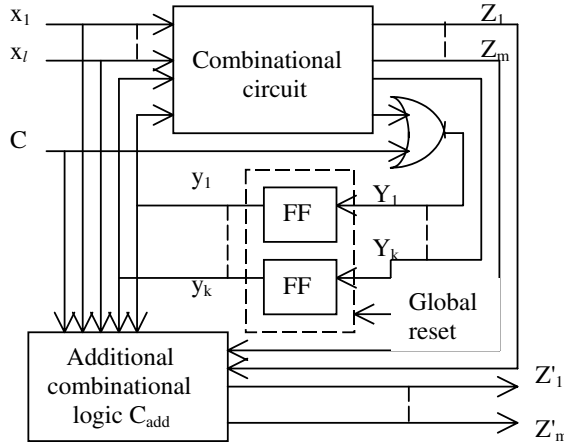


Fig. 1: Testable design for detection of invalid, equivalent, and isomorph faults

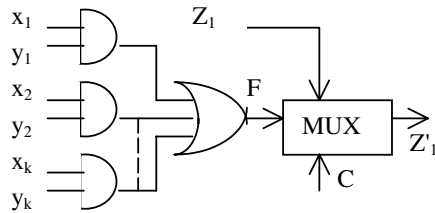


Fig. 2a: C_{add} for $l \geq k$ (Case 1)

4.2 DFT to remove equivalent and isomorph faults

For eliminating equivalent and isomorph faults, we use an additional logic C_{add} as in [5]. If the STG is available, we adopt this procedure following the technique described in subsection 4.1. If only netlist is known, then we skip the encoding part, and apply this DFT technique alone to the circuit. In that case, the machine is considered to be in free mode, without the necessity of using a reset line. Three cases may arise.

Case 1 ($k \leq l$): Consider only one output line, say Z_1 of M . Then modify it as $Z_1' = CZ_1 + CF$, where C is the same control input used earlier, and $F = \{x_1 y_1 + x_2 y_2 + \dots + x_k y_k\}$ (Fig. 2a). The other functional outputs are kept unchanged. For every combination of (y_1, y_2, \dots, y_k) ,

$y_i \in (0,1)$, the sub-function consists of a unique sum term of $\{x_i\}$'s. The K-map of F for $k = 3$ is shown in Fig. 2b. Variables x_i 's (y_i 's) are used to label the map horizontally (vertically). No two rows (i.e., states) in the map have identical patterns.

Hardware overhead: C_{add} requires $(3k+6)$ gate inputs.

Case 2 ($l < k \leq l \times m$): This is similar to Case 1, but needs slight modification. Let $r = \lceil k / l \rceil$. Modify output lines Z_1, Z_2, \dots, Z_r as: $Z_{j+1}' = \overline{C}Z_{j+1} + CF_{j+1}$, where, $0 \leq j \leq r-1$, C is a control input and F_j realized by a two-level AND-OR circuit (Fig. 3) has the following expression: $F_{j+1} = x_1 y_{j1+1} + x_2 y_{j1+2} + \dots + x_a y_{jn+a}$ where $a = 1$ for $(0 \leq j < r-1)$, and $a = k - (r-1)n$ for $j = r-1$. If a is found to be 1, then we replace F_{j+1} by y_{j1+1} .

Hardware overhead: In general, C_{add} requires $(3k+6r)$ gate inputs, for $(k \bmod l) = 1$, this value is $(3k+6r-3)$.

Case 3 ($l \times m < k$): The proposed technique does not fit in this case. We however, observe that this case seldom appears among benchmarks.

Theorem 2 [5]: The modified circuit is devoid of all equivalent and isomorph faults.

Theorem 3 [5]: The differentiating sequence for every pair of states in M' is of unit length.

Besides removing sequential redundancies, our technique has an added advantage. As the differentiating sequence for any pair of states is of unit length in our design, sequential test generation time reduces drastically. This is highly desirable for inducing testability [24].

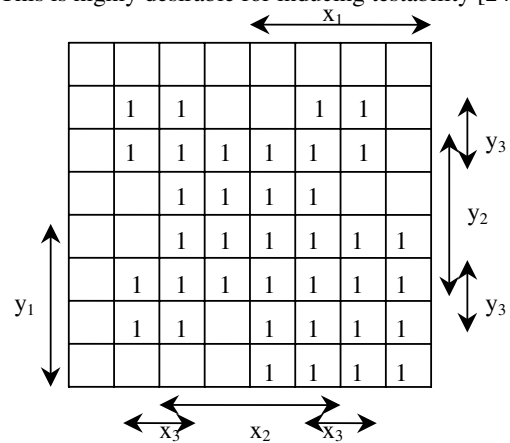


Fig. 2b: K-map of C_{add} for $k = 3$ and $l \geq 3$, when $C = 1$.

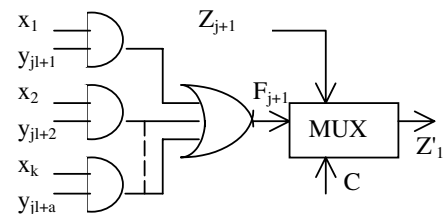


Fig. 3: C_{add} for Case 2

The use of only a single OR gate transforms all invalid states to valid states in test mode. Thus, it becomes easier for a sequential ATPG to initialize the machine to a desired state during test generation. As a result, test generation time is reduced, and fault efficiency is increased. We performed our experiments on MCNC [20], as well as on ISCAS 89 [21] benchmarks.

Table 1: Hardware overhead for MCNC benchmarks: scan design vs. our method

name	# of PIs	# of POs	# of FFs	DFT Case	# extra gate inputs	
	l	m	k		full scan	proposed design
bbara	4	2	4	1	24	20
bbsse	7	7	4	1	24	20
bbtas	2	2	3	2	18	20
beecount	3	4	3	1	18	17
cse	7	7	4	1	24	20
dk14	3	5	3	1	18	17
dk15	3	5	2	1	12	14
dk16	2	3	5	2	30	32
dk17	2	3	3	2	18	20
ex1	9	19	5	1	30	23
ex2	2	2	5	3	30	NA
ex3	2	2	4	2	24	26
ex4	6	9	4	1	24	20
ex5	2	2	4	2	24	26
ex6	5	8	3	1	18	17
ex7	2	2	4	2	24	26
keyb	7	2	5	1	30	23
kirkman	12	6	4	1	24	20
lion	2	1	2	1	12	14
lion9	2	1	4	3	24	NA
mc	3	5	2	1	12	14
opus	5	6	4	1	24	20
planet	7	19	6	1	36	26
planet1	7	19	6	1	36	26
pma	8	8	5	1	30	23
s1	8	6	5	1	30	23
s1488	8	19	6	1	36	26
s1494	8	19	6	1	36	26
s208	11	2	5	1	30	23
s27	4	1	3	1	18	17
s298	3	6	8	2	48	44
s386	7	7	4	1	24	20
s420	19	2	5	1	30	23
s510	19	7	6	1	36	26
s820	18	19	5	1	30	23
s832	18	19	5	1	30	23
sand	11	9	5	1	30	23
sse	7	7	4	1	24	20
styr	9	10	5	1	30	23
tav	4	4	2	1	12	14
tbk	6	3	5	1	30	23
tma	7	6	5	1	30	23
train11	2	1	4	3	18	NA
train4	2	1	2	1	12	14

NA: not applicable

5. Experimental results

Comparison of hardware overhead of our design with that of full-scan in terms of additional circuit area estimated by the number of literals, is given in Tables 1 and 3. For most of these circuits, Case 1 of the proposed DFT fits well, and for some circuits Case 2 is appropriate.

Table 2: Test generation results for MCNC benchmarks

Name	Original circuit			Proposed design		
	TG Time	Fault Cover -age	Fault Effi- ciency	TG Time	Fault Cover -age	Fault Effi- ciency
	(sec.)	(%)	(%)	(sec.)	(%)	(%)
bbara	805.55	42.91	90.71	147.76	56.87	98.81
bbsse	46.89	77.61	99.95	4.04	80.09	100
bbtas	0.95	90.32	100	0.26	97.46	100
beecount	26.39	90.4	99.88	1.36	92.65	100
cse	15.25	78.41	100	10.38	78.8	100
dk14	3.01	95.38	100	0.63	98.84	100
dk15	0.36	98.85	100	0.36	98.93	100
dk16	146.2	94.14	99.69	6.42	97.96	100
dk17	0.41	98.31	100	0.37	98.52	100
ex1	3366.4	72.7	92.13	147.75	84.19	100
ex3	108.27	80.13	98.72	1.56	96.39	100
ex4	96.25	78.85	99.16	2.98	83.36	100
ex5	331.25	72.65	93.95	1.07	96.83	100
ex6	2.2	83.16	100	2.21	83.54	100
ex7	86.12	62.61	98.42	0.82	96.02	100
keyb	756.41	62.92	98.02	76.48	68.47	100
kirkman	3796.3	85.91	96.12	138.21	89.59	99.99
lion	5.94	16.8	100	0.28	71.53	100
mc	0.2	72.22	100	0.13	76.52	100
opus	140.96	76.18	98.89	3.33	85.92	100
planet	2301.6	71.8	97.32	139.8	78.23	99.99
planet1	2302.8	71.8	97.32	141.27	78.23	99.99
pma	883.9	79.98	96.74	125.27	85.96	100
s1	1252.7	73.13	98.23	57.89	78.71	100
s1488	2799.1	73.28	98.96	1917.9	77.09	100
s1494	5346.6	70.9	97.77	591.58	75.51	100
s208	1082.9	58.88	99.26	122.12	62.5	100
s27	42.23	73.52	99.81	1.6	81.79	100
s298	145189	18.35	30.51	5883.6	88.29	99.97
s386	10.2	74.01	100	6.11	75.6	100
s420	1126.1	58.36	99.08	126.11	62.4	100
s510	1236.4	71.78	96.46	75.71	81.32	100
s820	823.88	77.35	99.81	240.06	78.78	100
s832	1177.3	75.1	99.84	190.78	76.55	100
sand	350.68	78.85	99.78	66.56	79.2	100
sse	44.94	77.61	99.95	3.85	80.09	100
styr	373.62	80.45	99.68	57.09	81.95	100
tav	1.11	65.32	100	0.87	67.25	100
tbk	16124	56.9	89.99	1471.1	81.17	99.62

Table 3: Hardware overhead for ISCAS 89 benchmarks: scan design vs. our method

Name	# of PIs (l)	# of POs (m)	# of FFs (k)	DFT Case	# extra gate inputs	
					Full scan	proposed design
s27	4	1	3	1	18	15
s208.1	10	1	8	1	48	30
s298	3	6	14	2	84	72
s344	9	11	15	2	90	57
s349	9	11	15	2	90	57
s382	3	6	21	3	126	NA
s386	7	7	6	1	36	24
s400	3	6	21	3	126	NA
s420.1	18	1	16	1	96	54
s444	3	6	21	3	126	NA
s526	3	6	21	3	126	NA
s526n	3	6	21	3	126	NA
s641	35	24	19	1	114	63
s713	35	23	19	1	114	63
s820	18	19	5	1	30	21
s832	18	19	5	1	30	21
s838.1	34	1	32	1	192	102
s1196	14	14	18	2	108	66
s1238	14	14	18	2	108	66
s1423	17	5	74	2	444	252
s1488	8	19	6	1	36	24
s1494	8	19	6	1	36	24
s5378	35	49	179	2	1074	563
s9234.1	36	39	211	2	1266	669
s15850.1	77	150	534	2	3204	1644
s35932	35	320	1728	2	10368	5484
s38584	12	278	1452	2	8712	5082
s38584.1	38	304	1426	2	8556	4506

Very few of the benchmark circuits belong to Case 3, for which our technique is not applicable. We assume that a full-scan design with k latches requires k pieces of 2-input multiplexers, i.e., $6k$ gate inputs.

For MCNC circuits [20], where STGs are available, we first encode the states according to our proposed method, and then use AutoLogic II (Mentor Graphics) to synthesize the circuit for the original machine. With this circuit, we add only one OR gate with a control input as described in Section 4.1 to make all invalid faults of the original machine testable. Then we augment the circuit with some extra logic as discussed in Section 4.2. This removes all equivalent and isomorph faults. Test generation results (Table 2) show that our technique not only decreases test generation time, but also attains almost 100% fault efficiency in all cases.

Table 4: Test generation results for ISCAS 89 benchmarks

Name	Original Circuit			Proposed design		
	TG Time (sec.)	Fault Coverage (%)	Fault Efficiency (%)	TG Time (sec.)	Fault Coverage (%)	Fault Efficiency (%)
s27	0.05	100	100	0.07	100	100
s208.1	1137.4	10.68	72.01	257.41	12.72	95.23
s298	141.2	90.12	98.15	7.13	91.77	100
s344	228.13	93.67	96.52	183.16	95.31	98.25
s349	171.68	94.26	97.7	140.23	94.54	97.91
s386	3.59	92.08	100	3.55	92.41	100
s420.1	3324.9	9.4	34.9	2597.7	11.14	50.49
s641	1.62	87.85	100	1.61	87.83	100
s713	1.48	84.1	100	1.73	84.31	100
s820	127.39	96.51	99.39	97.37	96.64	99.63
s832	134.26	95.61	99.16	101.7	95.71	99.64
s838.1	4546.5	8.8	51.69	4966.6	10.4	50.72
s1196	1.42	99.91	100	1.54	100	100
s1238	1.78	97.16	100	1.83	97.39	100
s1423	11422	49.76	52.64	5446.3	80.44	81.92
s1488	122.06	98.91	99.98	119.8	98.92	99.98
s1494	54.88	98.49	99.98	52.24	98.51	99.98
s5378	17784	71.5	76.47	14447	78.09	83.73
s9234.1	46211	10.42	55.63	68148	36.87	45.29
s15850.1	83676	44.71	58.75	65176	63.91	74.62
s35932	30873	89.6	99.34	6138.3	91.55	99.97
s38584	310757	24.35	48.77	149202	59.14	80.22

A significant improvement in test generation results can be observed with our technique for the circuit s298. Without any testable design, the fault efficiency is only 30.51%. Using our synthesis and DFT technique, fault efficiency reaches 99.97% (Table 2).

For ISCAS 89 [21] benchmarks, only netlists are available, and hence we use the DFT technique alone (Section 4.2), which eliminates all equivalent and isomorph faults. Further, test generation time is decreased to a large extent, as for every pair of states, there exists a differentiating sequence of unit length in test mode. The results are summarized in Table 4. In most of the cases, we observe higher fault coverage and improved fault efficiency. However, in some cases, our design requires higher test generation time and also attains lower fault efficiency. We have marked these cases by shaded area in Table 4. Addition of extra logic in our design ensures detection of more faults, some of which were possibly aborted during test generation in the original circuit; this might have caused an increase in test generation time. However, the sequential test generation tool detects more faults when DFT is incorporated, as evident from higher fault coverage observed in these cases.

The sequential ATPG TestGen (Sunrise) [22] is run on a SUN workstation, and AutoLogic II (Mentor Graphics) is used for synthesis.

6. Conclusion

As redundancy and undetectability make test generation more complex in sequential circuits, we attempt to achieve high testability by removing undetectable faults in these circuits. We have proposed a novel and simple technique that differs significantly from the previous approaches to redundancy removal. For circuits with STG descriptions, we propose a simple encoding of states before synthesis, and then use a control input and some additional logic to make all invalid, equivalent and isomorph faults detectable. If only netlist is available for the circuits, we skip the synthesis part, and apply the DFT technique for removal of equivalent and isomorph faults. The additional logic is independent of the structure and functionality of the given machine, and depends only on the number of PI's, PO's and memory elements. Since there exists a unit-length differentiating sequence for every pair of states in the modified machine, the approach simplifies test generation, as evident from experimental results. A sequential ATPG needs less time for test generation, and achieves improved fault efficiency for most of the cases. The proposed method does not require a synthesis procedure involving computationally intensive search, and as a non-scan approach, it offers at-speed testing. Its hardware overhead compares favorably with that of full-scan designs.

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