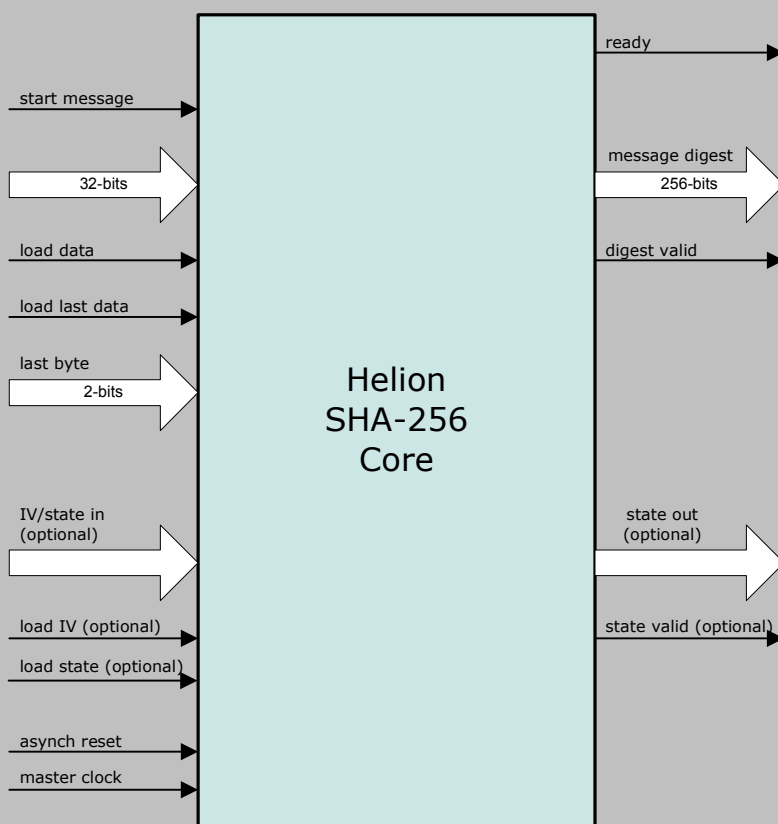


Helion Technology

FULL DATASHEET - Fast SHA-256 Hash Core for Altera FPGA



Features

- Implements SHA-256 secure hash algorithm to NIST FIPS 180-2
- Fast operation – each 512-bit block requires only 66 master clock cycles
- Performs automatic message length calculation and padding insertion
- Optional user initialisation of IVs for efficient HMAC support
- HMAC wrapper available to make implementations quick and easy
- Optional state unload/reload feature for handling fragmented messages
- Simple external interface
- Highly optimised for use in Altera FPGA technologies

Deliverables

- Target specific netlist or fully synthesisable RTL VHDL/Verilog
- VHDL/Verilog simulation model and testbench with FIPS test vectors
- Comprehensive user documentation

Overview

The Helion Fast SHA-256 core implements the SHA-256 secure hash algorithm according to FIPS 180-2. It is a high performance core which has been designed especially for use in Altera FPGA. The SHA-256 hash algorithm takes as input a message of arbitrary length, processes the message as a series of 512-bit blocks, and produces as output a compressed representation of the message data in the form of a 256-bit message digest.

Applications for the core include implementations of the standard keyed-Hash Message Authentication Code (HMAC) described in FIPS 198. The SHA-256 algorithm has been proposed for use in the IPsec and TLS/SSL protocols, as well as Digital Signature applications, where a hash function is required to ensure both data integrity and origin authentication. It has also been specified by the NSA as part of the Suite B set of cryptographic algorithms for protecting classified US Government information.

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Functional Description

The Helion Fast SHA-256 hash core implements one of the most commonly used secure hash algorithms which is used where data integrity and/or origin authentication is a requirement. The SHA-256 hash processes an arbitrary length message by operating on successive 512-bit blocks of data, producing as output a 256-bit message digest.

The core contains an internal 512-bit block store which may be loaded with message data under the control of external logic or a microprocessor while the core indicates it is ready. Once the block store is full the core indicates it is busy and executes the hash algorithm; on completion the core indicates it is ready to accept a further message block. The external logic is responsible for informing the core when the last message word is available at the data inputs and the location of the last message byte within the last word. This allows the core to calculate the exact message length and append message padding accordingly. When the last message block has been processed the core outputs the resulting message digest and indicates its validity.

Optionally, whilst loading the first message word, the external logic may also load customised initial values into the core. This allows pre-computed initial values to be used for efficient implementation of a Hash-based Message Authentication Code (HMAC); loading of these incurs no throughput penalty since they have their own dedicated input port. In addition, the internal hash state can be made accessible, so that it may be stored externally and subsequently reloaded; this may be a useful option where fragmented messages are being hashed.

Logic Utilisation and Performance

Helion has a long history in high-end FPGA design, and we therefore take great care when implementing our IP cores. As a result they have been designed from the ground up to be highly optimal in Altera FPGA technology - they are not simply based on a synthesised generic RTL ASIC design like much of the competition.

The Helion Fast SHA-256 core makes use of Altera-specific architectural features in order to achieve high performance and efficient logic resource utilisation. It is available for all of the current Altera device families including legacy Cyclone and Stratix devices.

The table below shows typical logic area and performance figures for the most popular version of the core which does not include the state unload/reload capability. Alternative versions of the core are available for Stratix II which uses M512 instead of M4K RAM blocks, and for Stratix III which uses Memory LABs (MLAB) instead of M9K RAM blocks.

	SHA-256 (no reload)			
technology	Cyclone II C6	Cyclone III C6	Stratix II C3	Stratix III C2
logic resource	1873 LEs 4x M4K	1822 LEs 4x M9K	1105 ALUTs 4x M4K	1148 ALUTs 4x M9K
max clock	112 MHz	133 MHz	185 MHz	246 MHz
max throughput	868 Mbps	1031 Mbps	1435 Mbps	1908 Mbps

More Information

For more detailed information on this or any of our other products and services, please contact Helion and we will be pleased to discuss how we can assist with your individual requirements.



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