

Energy Autonomous Wireless Systems (EAWS)

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Course contents

Objectives :

PART-1

- To provide a basic introduction to power consumption in digital VLSI circuits
- To give an overview of the key techniques for designing low power digital VLSI circuits
- To raise awareness and introduce potential solutions for the difficulties associated with ultra-low-power design in advanced technology nodes

PART-2

- Provide an example of a low-power system design (ECG monitoring)
- Get acquainted with the anatomy of a basic low-power embedded system based on commercial off the shelf (COTS) components
- Learn about the various system components and modes to be able to make design decisions when using or selecting an embedded platform
- Collect some initial experience in using an embedded low-power system and its low-power modes

LESSON 2b – Low Power System Design

Prof. Andreas Burg

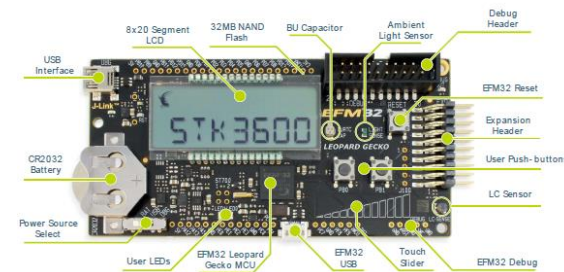
Case study: Energy Consumption of Wireless Transmission

Embedded Low-Power Microcontrollers

- Overview and Low-Power Modes
- Key Components

Hands-on Example: EFM32 ULP MCU

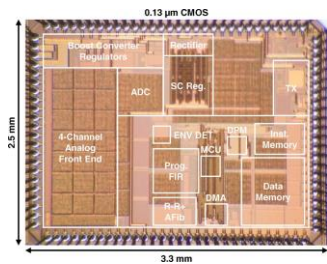
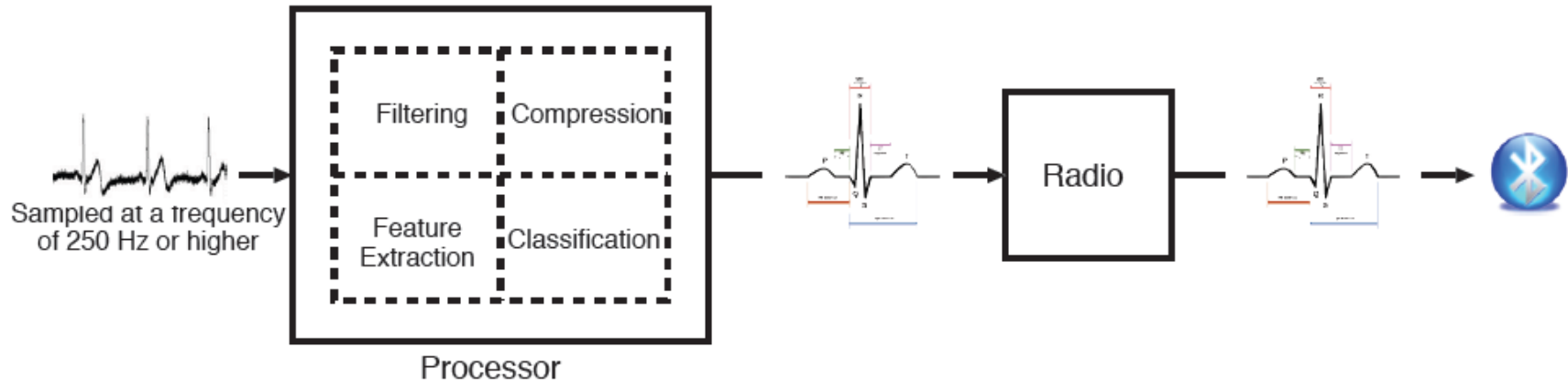
- Power Consumption and Low-Power Modes



Case study: energy consumption analysis and optimization of wireless transmission

Reducing the amount of data to be transmitted generally reduces radio interface power consumption, but requires

- reasonably efficient radio protocol (power-down between bursts)
- processing resources on the node to reduce data to the essence



Zhang (2012)



IMEC cardiac patch
(Yazicioglu, 2009)

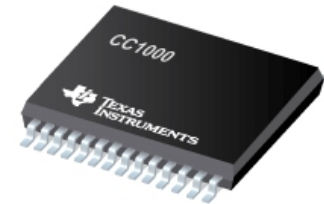


Holst Centre
(Masse, 2010-13)



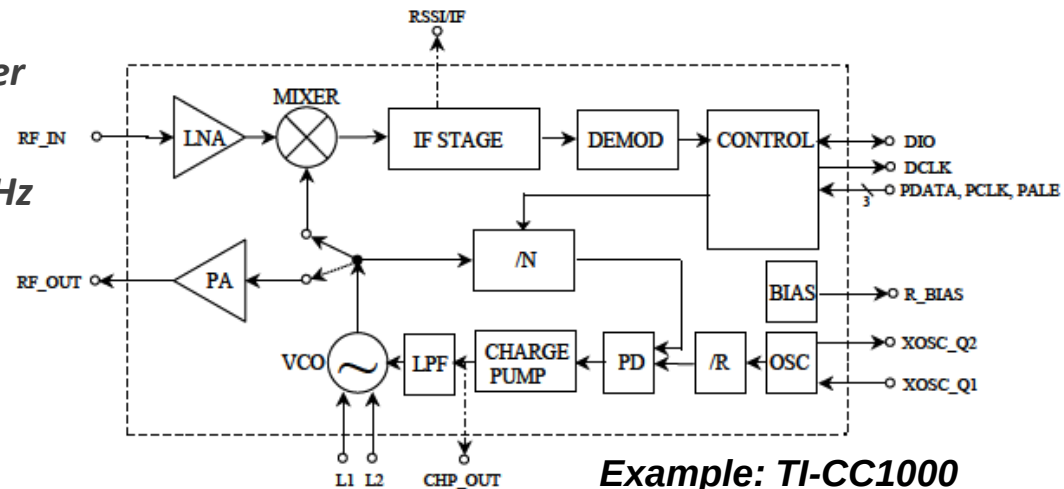
Shimmer
(shimmerresearch, 2010-13)

- Consider a system that comprises only the physical layer
- Simple RF radios are available as discrete components
 - TI, Analog Devices, Freescale, Microchip (often combined in SoCs with low power uControllers)
- A simple single-chip (UHF) transceiver
 - RF frequency synthesis from a low-frequency reference quartz (few MHz)
 - Modulation: alters the RF signal according to the data
 - Demodulation: analyzes the received signal to recover the data
 - Received signal strength indicator (RSSI): detects presence of an RF signal and its strength

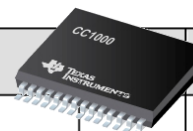


• Example: TI-CC1000

- *Combined transmitter and receiver*
- *Software-programmable freq. band: 315 / 433 / 868 and 915 MHz*
- FSK modulation up to 76.8 kbit/s
- Programmable output power

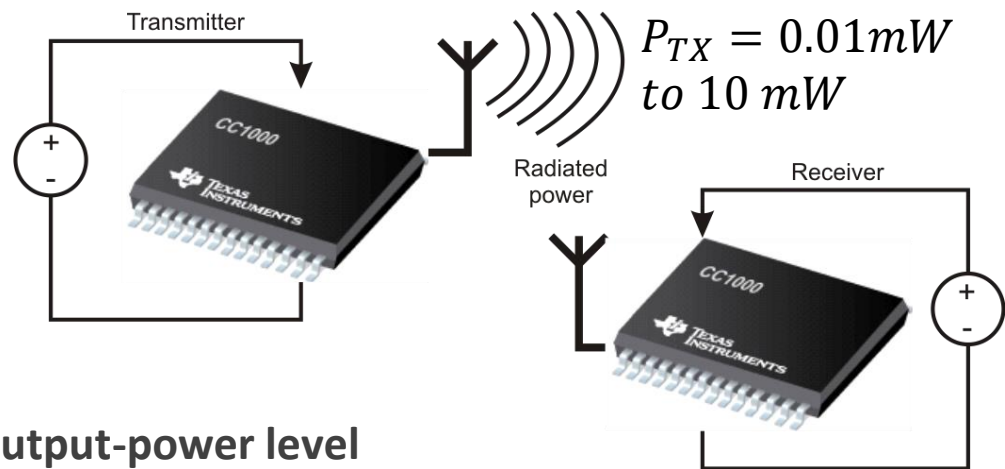


Example: TI-CC1000



Parameter	Typ.	Max.	Unit
Current Consumption, receive mode 433/868 MHz	7.4/9.6		mA
P=0.01mW (-20 dBm)	5.3/8.6		mA
P=0.3 mW (-5 dBm)	8.9/13.8		mA
P=1 mW (0 dBm)	10.4/16.5		mA
P=3 mW (5 dBm)	14.8/25.4		mA
P=10 mW (10 dBm)	26.7/NA		mA
Current Consumption, crystal osc.	30 80 105		μ A μ A μ A
Current Consumption, crystal osc. And bias	860		μ A
Current Consumption, crystal osc., bias and synthesiser, RX/TX	4/5 5/6		mA mA

- Transmitter W_{TX} :
 - 433 MHz: 16 – 80.1 mW
 - 868 MHz: 25.8 – 76.2 mW
- Receiver W_{RX} :
 - 433 MHz: 22.2 mW
 - 868 MHz: 28.6 mW



Transmitter

- Power consumption depends on the output-power level
- Radio output-power level P_{TX} is far below transmitter power consumption W_{TX}

Receiver

- Power consumption is comparable to the transmitter (at low power levels)

- For sensor node applications, power consumption is not the most relevant metric
 - Energy efficiency relates battery lifetime to the amount of data that can be transmitted
 - Energy efficiency is measured in Joules per (information) bit [J/bit] and depends on the active power consumption and the data rate

$$E \left[\frac{nJ}{bit} \right] = W_{Tx/Rx} \cdot T_{bit} = \frac{W_{Tx/Rx}}{f}$$

- Increasing the transmission rate f
 - improves energy efficiency, but also reduces radiated energy per information bit
 - Receiver: sensitivity drops for higher rates

Data rate [kBaud]	Separation [kHz]	433 MHz			868 MHz		
		NRZ mode	Manchester mode	UART mode	NRZ mode	Manchester mode	UART mode
0.6	64	-113	-114	-113	-110	-111	-110
1.2	64	-111	-112	-111	-108	-109	-108
2.4	64	-109	-110	-109	-106	-107	-106
4.8	64	-107	-108	-107	-104	-105	-104
9.6	64	-105	-106	-105	-102	-103	-102
19.2	64	-103	-104	-103	-100	-101	-100
38.4	64	-102	-103	-102	-98	-99	-98
76.8	64	-100	-101	-100	-97	-98	-97
Average current consumption		9.3 mA			11.8 mA		

toward higher
data rates
↓

↑
toward better
sensitivity

- Maintain a given signal to noise ratio as data rate f increases
 - Need to increase transmit power to maintain constant received energy per bit
 - From an information theoretic perspective we would expect

$$\frac{P_{RX}}{f} \equiv \text{const.} \Rightarrow P_{TX} \sim f \quad W_{TX} \sim P_{TX} \sim f$$

- “Luckily” reality is different: $P_{TX} < O(f)$ and $W_{TX} < O(P_{TX}) < O(f)$

Rate f	Duty cycle	Tx power	Sensitivity	Margin	Tx	Rx
4.8 kbit/s	1	-5 dBm	-107 dBm	102 dB	26.7 mW	22.2 mW
38.4 kbit/s	1/8	0 dBm	-102 dBm	102 dB	31.2 mW	22.2 mW

↓ 3x

↓ 1.2x

Overall improvement in energy efficiency with higher data rates

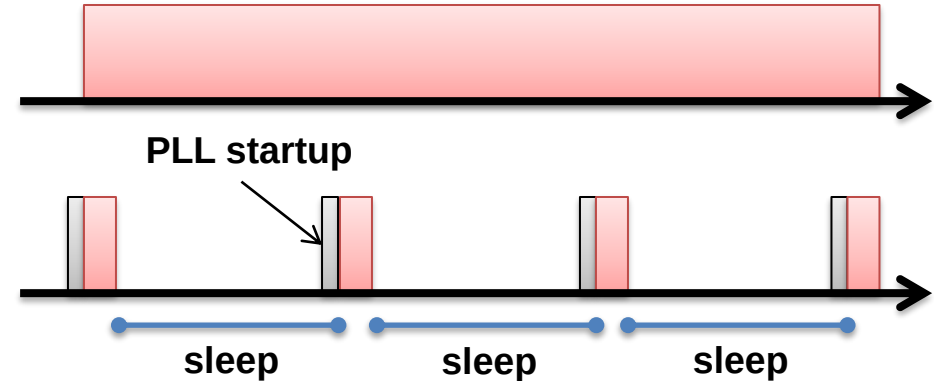
Rate f [kbps]	Tx energy efficiency	Rx energy efficiency
4.8 kbit/s	5.6 uJ/bit	4.6 uJ/bit
38.4 kbit/s	0.8 uJ/bit	0.6 uJ/bit

- Constant throughput requirement

- Higher rate allows to duty-cycle both transmitter and receiver
- Duty cycling is limited by the startup/locking time of the frequency synthesizer (typ: 0.1-1 ms)

Duty cycle	Rate f	Tx	Rx
1	4.8 kbit/s	26.7 mW	22.2 mW
1/8	38.4 kbit/s	3.9 mW	2.8 mW

$$L_{Burst}[bits] \gg T_{Startup} \cdot f$$

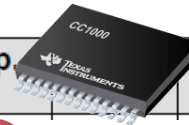


- Example: TI-CC1000

- $T_{Startup} = 250 \mu s$
- $f = 38.4 \text{ kbit/s}$

$$L_{Burst} \gg 10 \text{ bit}$$

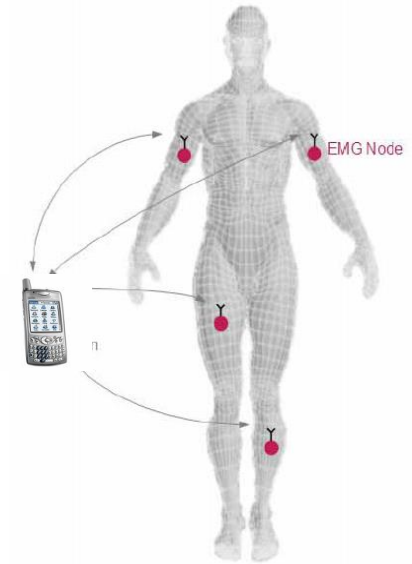
Parameter	Min.	Typ.	Unit	Condition / Note
PLL turn-on time, crystal oscillator on in power down mode		250	μs	Crystal oscillator running
Current Consumption, crystal osc. And bias		860	μA	
Current Consumption, crystal osc., bias and synthesiser, RX/TX		4/5 5/6	mA mA	< 500 MHz > 500 MHz



Sensor data is usually highly redundant (i.e., compressible)

- Data reduction through analysis and/or compression
- Requires computations (i.e., consumes power)
- Computations can often be done either after transmission on the central node *or* before transmission on the sensor node

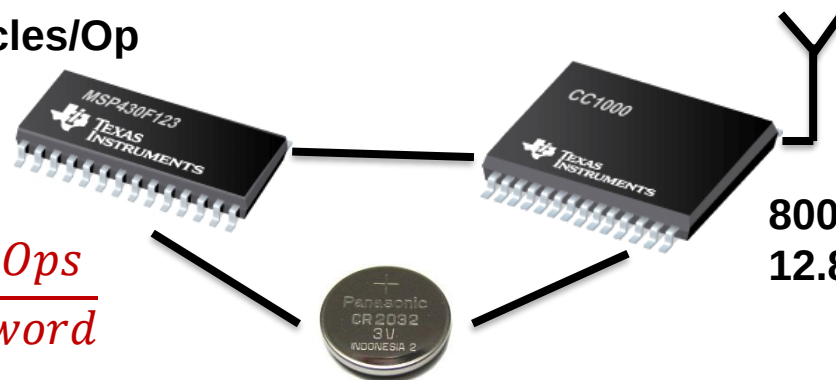
What is the cost of computation vs. the cost of transmission??



Example: MSP430 16-bit low-power uController with TI-CC1000 transceiver

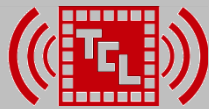
600 $\mu\text{W}/\text{MHz}$, 1-3 cycles/Op
200 pJ/Operation

$$\frac{12.8 \frac{\mu\text{J}}{\text{word}}}{200 \frac{\text{pJ}}{\text{Op}}} > 64'000 \frac{\text{Ops}}{\text{word}}$$



800 nJ/bit or
12.8 $\mu\text{J}/\text{word}$ (16-bit)

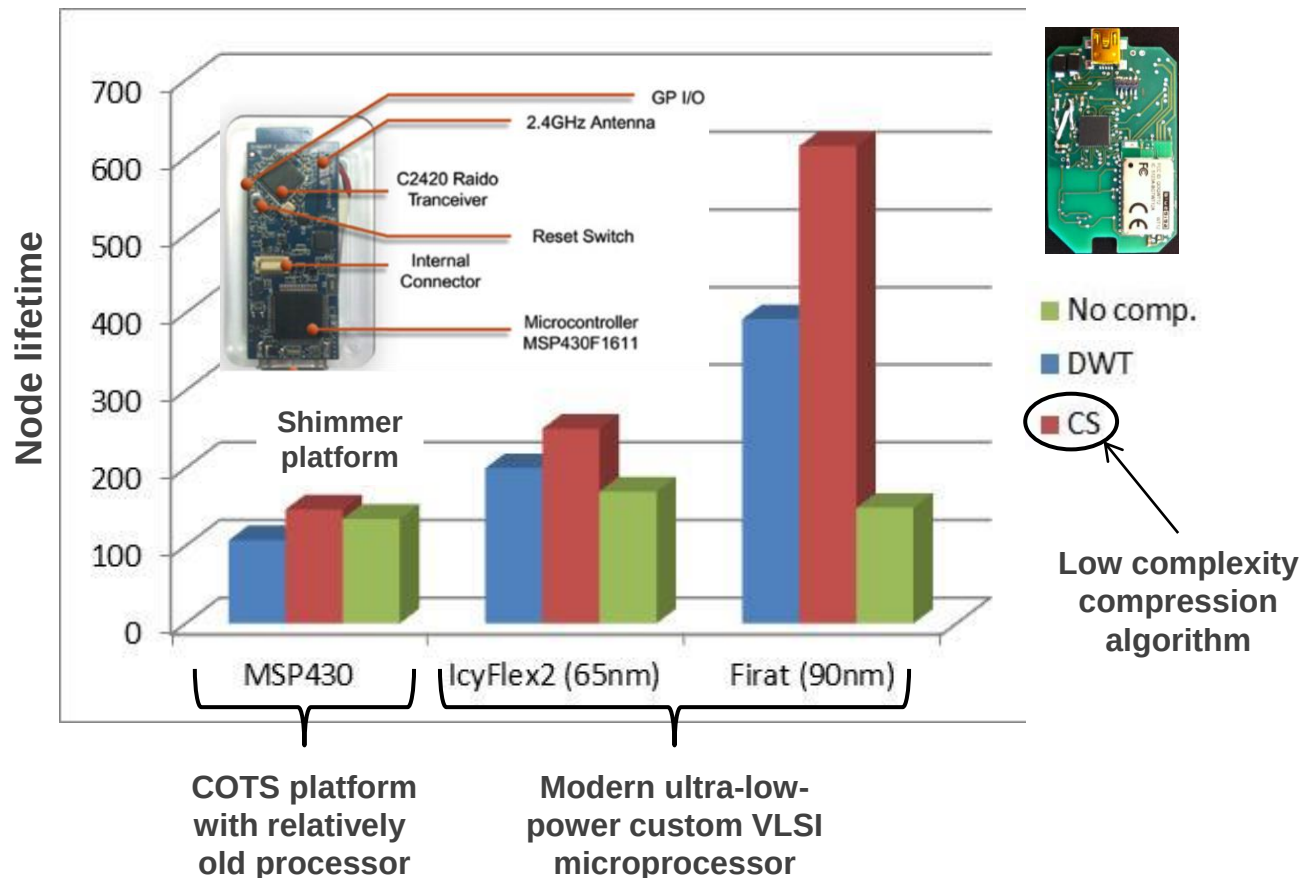
7 Lifetime extension from compression



Compression requires processing resources and consumes power

- Energy savings from reduced radio activity can get eaten up by
 - Poor energy efficiency of the embedded processor
 - Overly complex compression/analysis algorithms

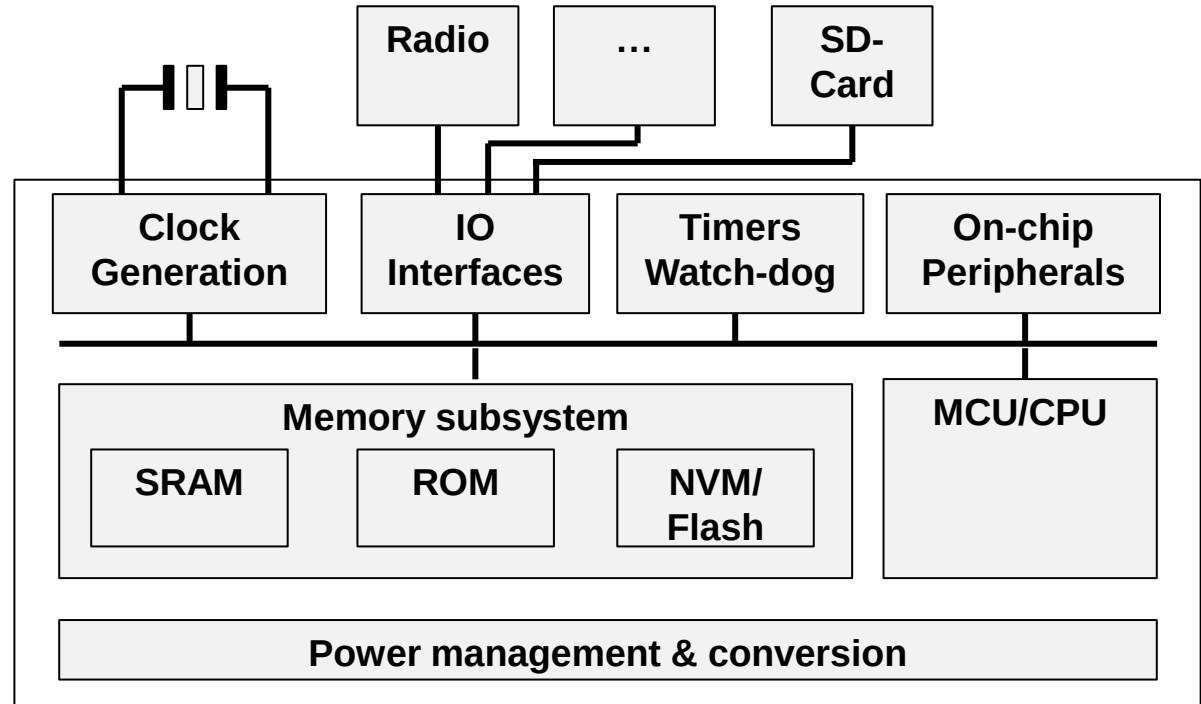
- Burden shifts to more energy-efficient data processing

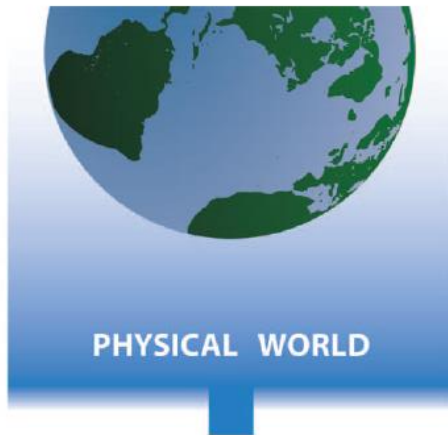


[Rincon et al., ITAB, 2011]

Embedded Low-Power Microcontrollers: Overview and Low-Power Modes

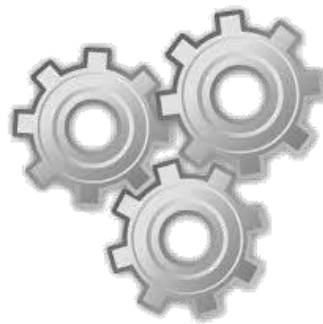
- Microcontroller
- Memory subsystem
 - SRAM
 - ROM
 - FLASH
- IO interfaces
- Clock generation and clock distribution
- Timers
- Interface peripherals
- Power management





- **Typical activities in a wireless sensor node**

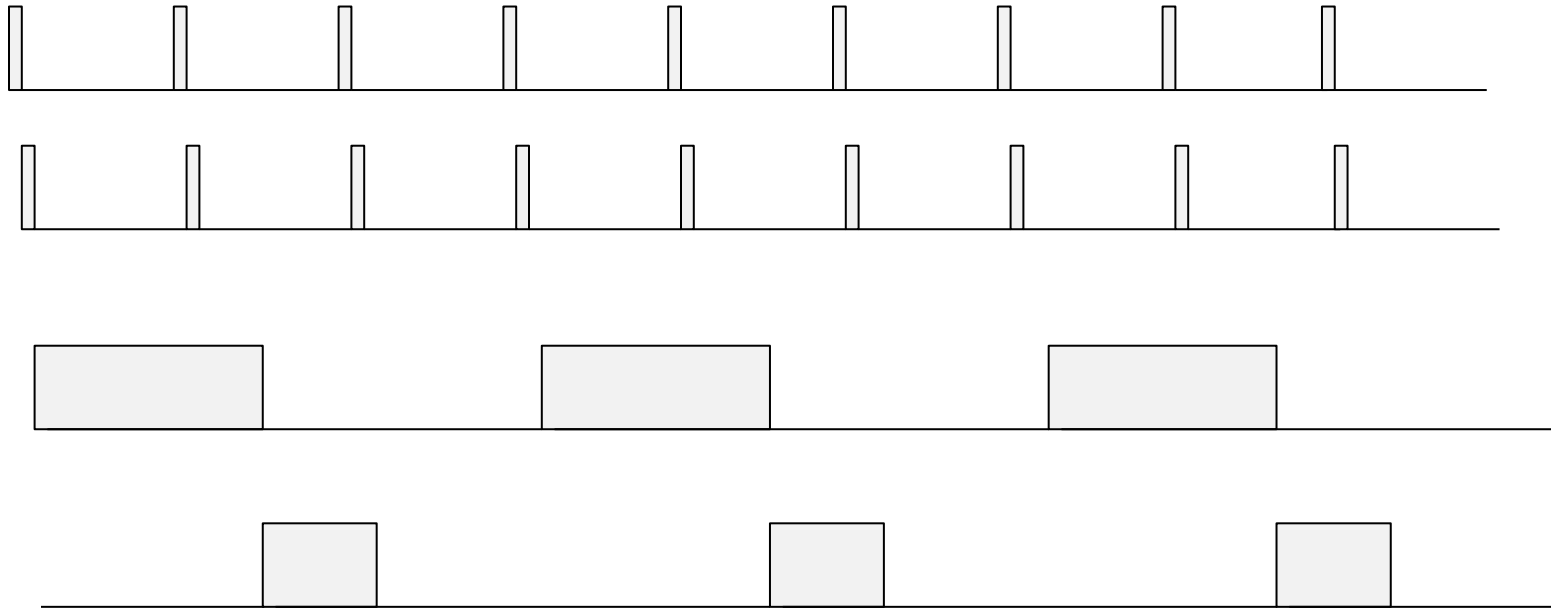
- Sampling/sensing
- Processing data on the node
- Storing data
- Transmitting data
- Waiting for an event or a fixed period



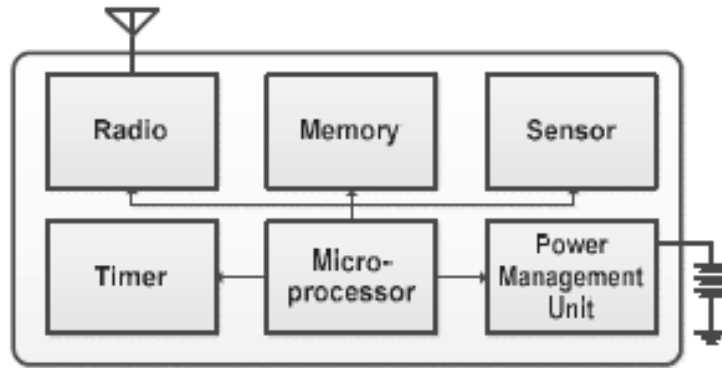
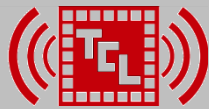
Handled by various system components in a more or less independent fashion from the processor core

- **A typical application schedule**
 - Data is sampled in regular intervals (typically relatively slowly)
 - Data acquisition handled by the core itself
 - Smart data converter with direct memory access (DMA)
 - Data can be processed each time a new sample arrives OR in larger junks (typically more efficient)
 - Processing speed is governed by deadlines
 - Processing speed (clock frequency) adjusted precisely to meet the deadline
 - Processing in short bursts with high clock frequency while sleeping in between

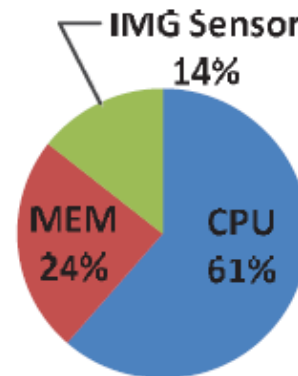
- Multiple parallel processes (partially overlapping) with different characteristics
 - Sampling and storage of data: on small chunks of data with hard real-time constraints
 - Processing and transmission: more energy efficient on larger data blocks
- Idle periods almost unavoidable
- Operation is driven by interrupts



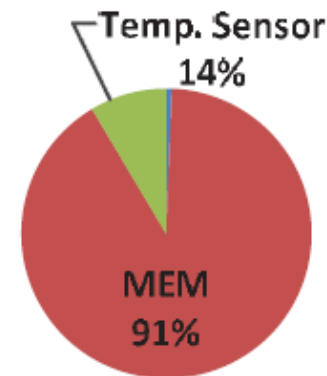
Power Consumption Depends on Usage Scenario



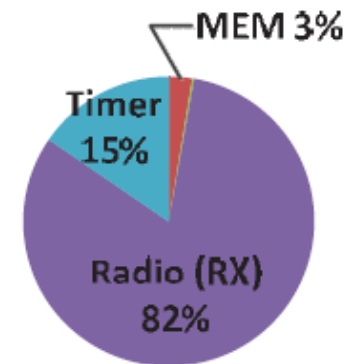
Unit	Scenario 1 (Surveillance)	Scenario 2 (Temp. monitor)	Scenario 3 (Temp. monitor /w symmetric communication)
(wake up period)	5 sec	10 min	10 min
Microprocessor	100k inst. / wake up	2k inst. / wake up	2k inst. / wake up
Memory	16kB, 229nW	1kB, 14.3nW	1kB, 14.3 nW
Timer	Not used	Not used	8.6 nW
Radio – TX	1 kb / wake up	100 b / 1 hr	100 b / 1 hr
Radio – RX	Not used	Not used	1.64mW for mismatch
Image Sensor	1 frame / wake up	Not used	Not used
Temperature Sensor	Not used	1 meas. / wake up	1 meas. / wake up



Scenario 1



Scenario 2



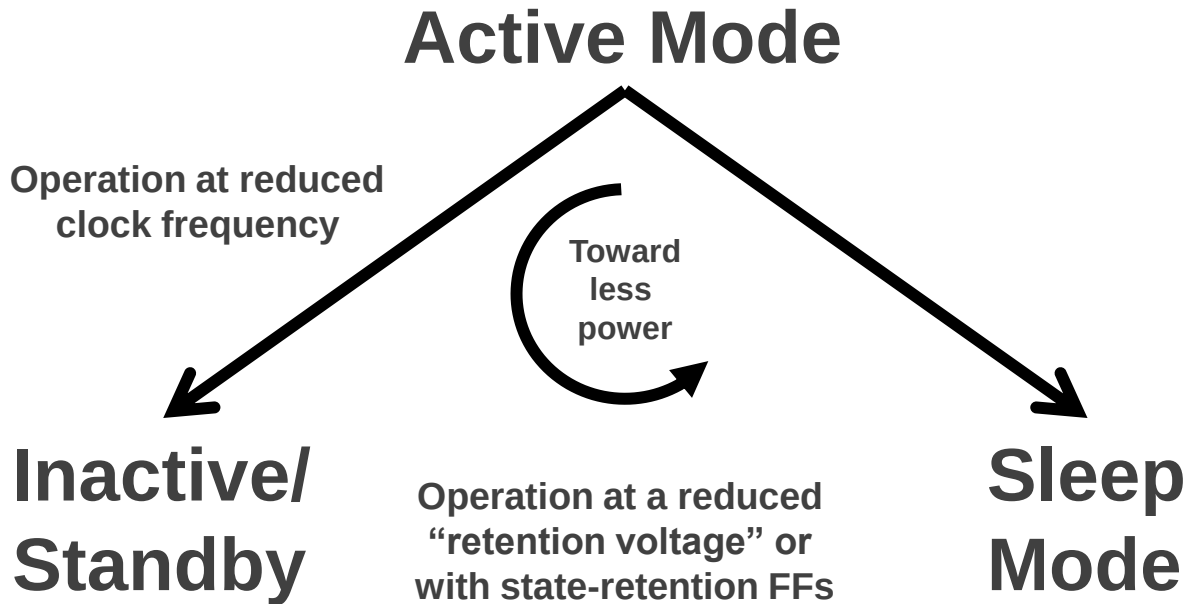
Scenario 3

- Start from a “reasonable” system configuration
- Decide on a processing schedule that maximizes the exploitation of low power modes available from the system
- Identify the distribution of power consumption among the system components and processing phases
- Address the part or phase with the largest contribution first by

- **Dynamic power consumption**
 - Active power of functional blocks
 - Power is consumed while circuit/component is active (operating)
 - Without DVFS: Power depends (linearly) on the operating frequency
 - With DVFS: Power depends super-linearly on frequency/voltage (often not supported in ULP embedded systems due to complexity of generating a variable voltage in an efficient way)
 - Power for clock generation and clock distribution
- **Static power consumption**
 - Static power of digital functional blocks
 - Power is consumed during both active and inactive periods
 - Often negligible while circuit is active (except at low frequencies)
 - Without power-gating: dominant (only) power during inactive periods
 - With power gating: can be very low
 - Static power consumed in analog circuitry (e.g., amplifiers)

Low power modes typically differ in

- Energy consumption
- CPU activity
- Reaction time
- Wake-up triggers
- Active peripherals
- Available clock sources

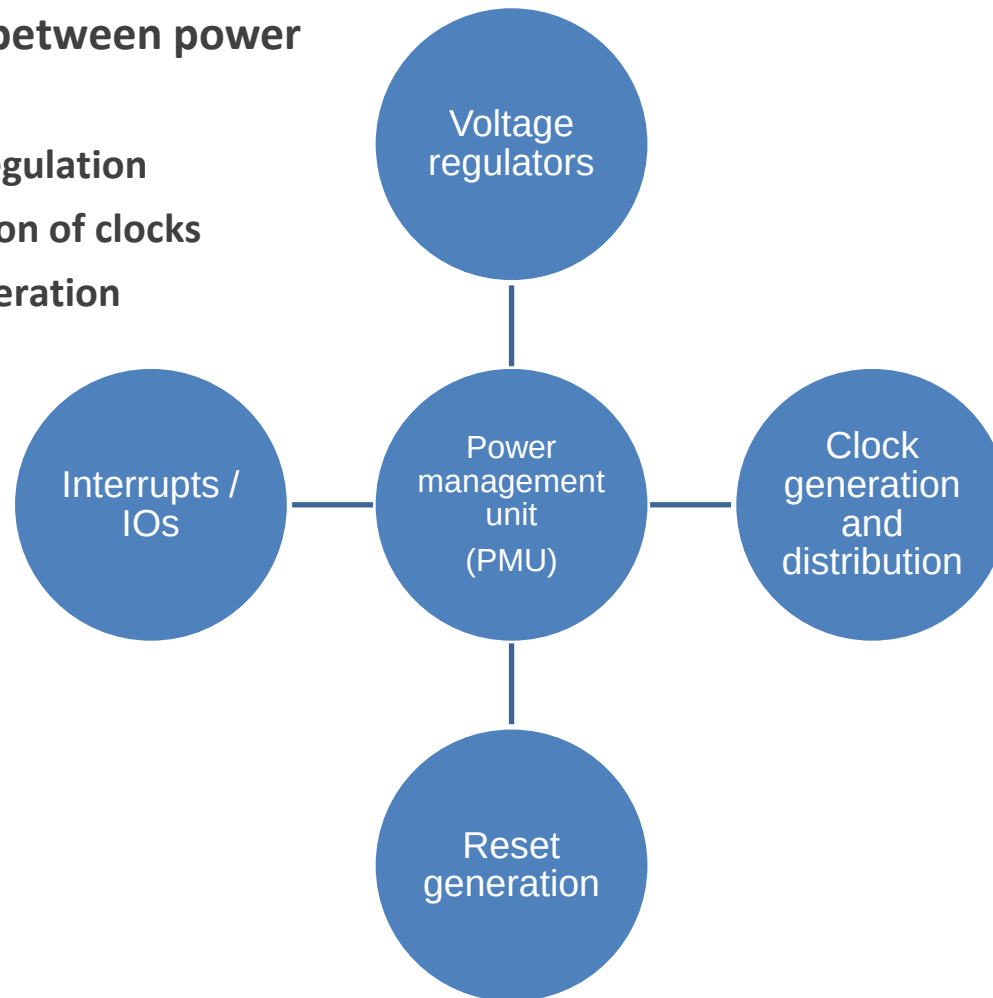


- Clock is deactivated, but supply is still on
 - No activity
 - State is retained
 - Rapid wakeup

- Clock is deactivated and supply is off (power-gating)
 - No activity
 - No state retention
 - Slow wakeup
 - Power-up delay
 - Need to restore state

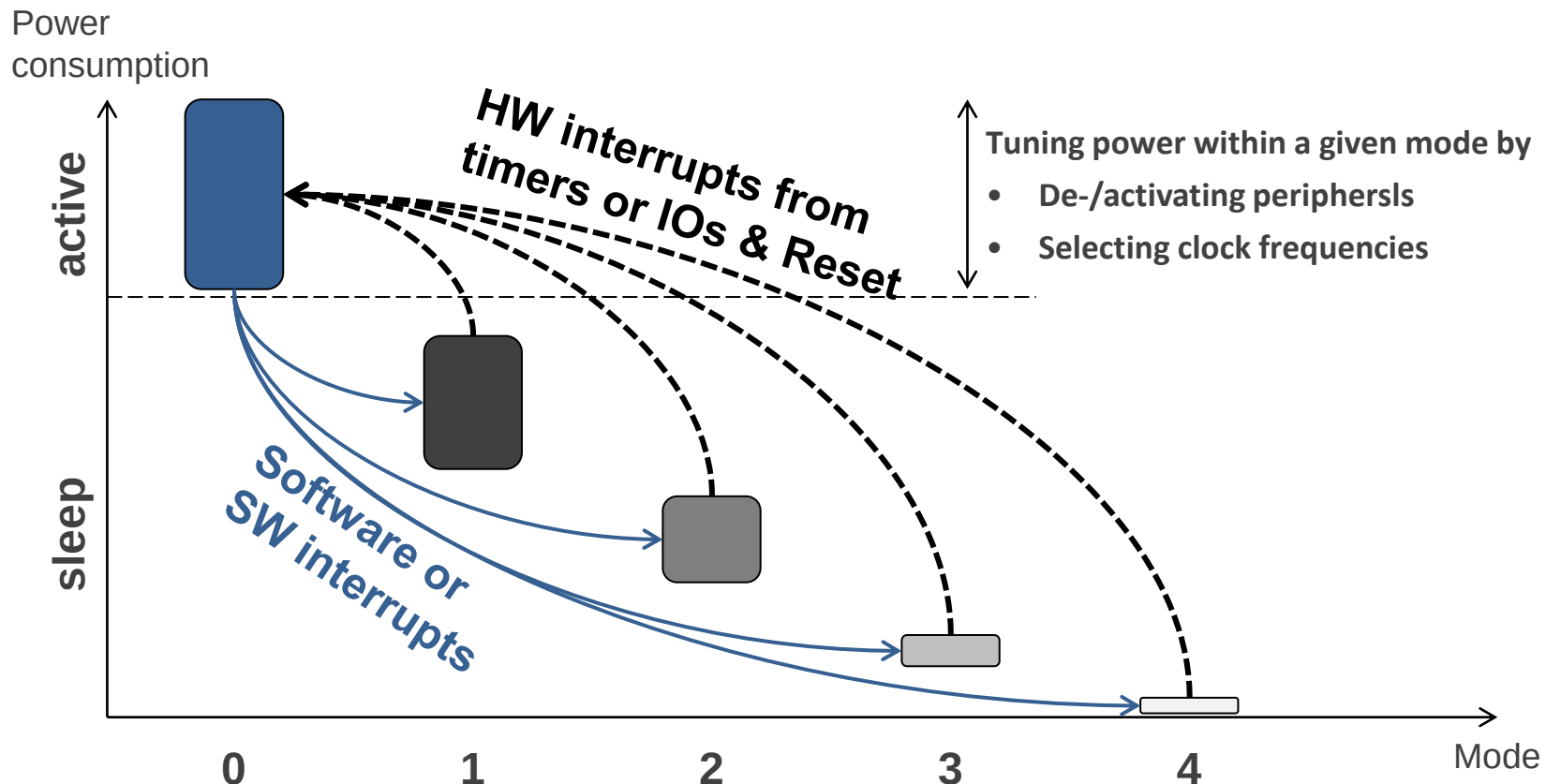
- **PMU: controls and coordinates the transition between power modes**

- **Voltage regulation**
- **Stabilization of clocks**
- **Reset generation**

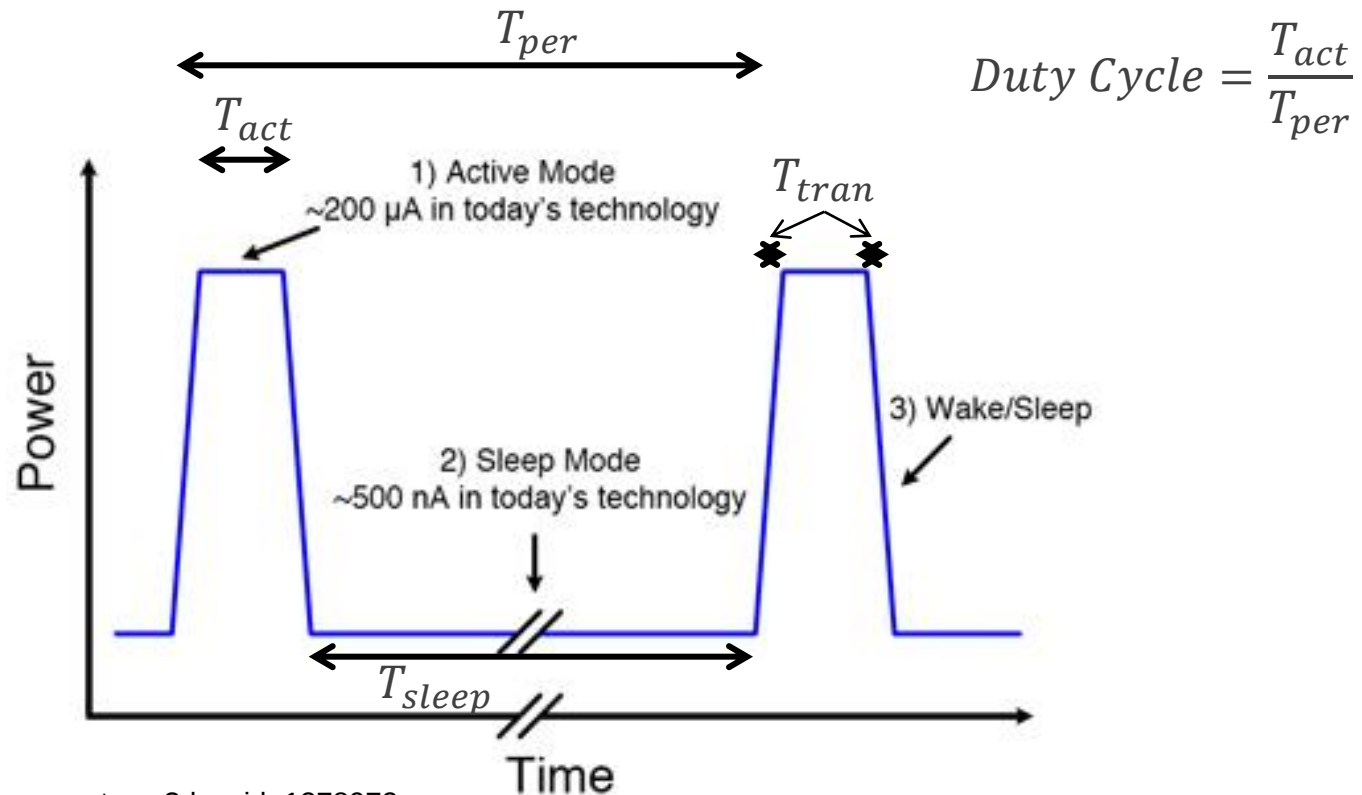


Different sleep modes and one configurable “active” mode:

- Transition from “active” into one of the “sleep” modes: triggered by software
- Waking up “sleep” to “active”: triggered by hardware

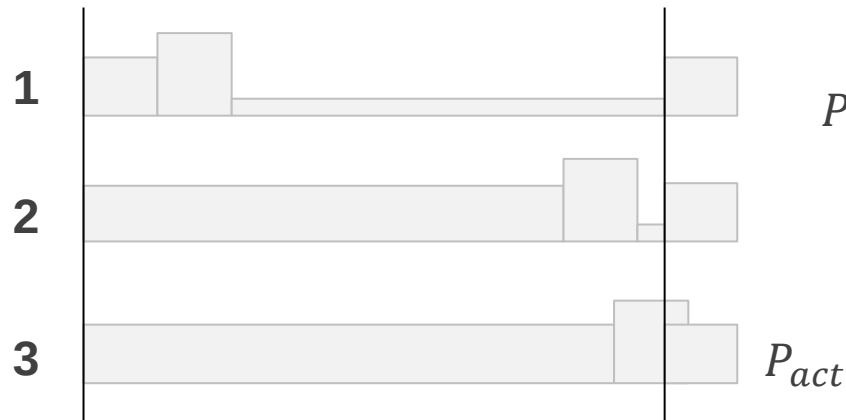


- Break energy consumption into three parts
 - 1) active energy
 - 2) sleep energy
 - 3) wake/sleep transition energy
(energy for moving between sleep and active modes)



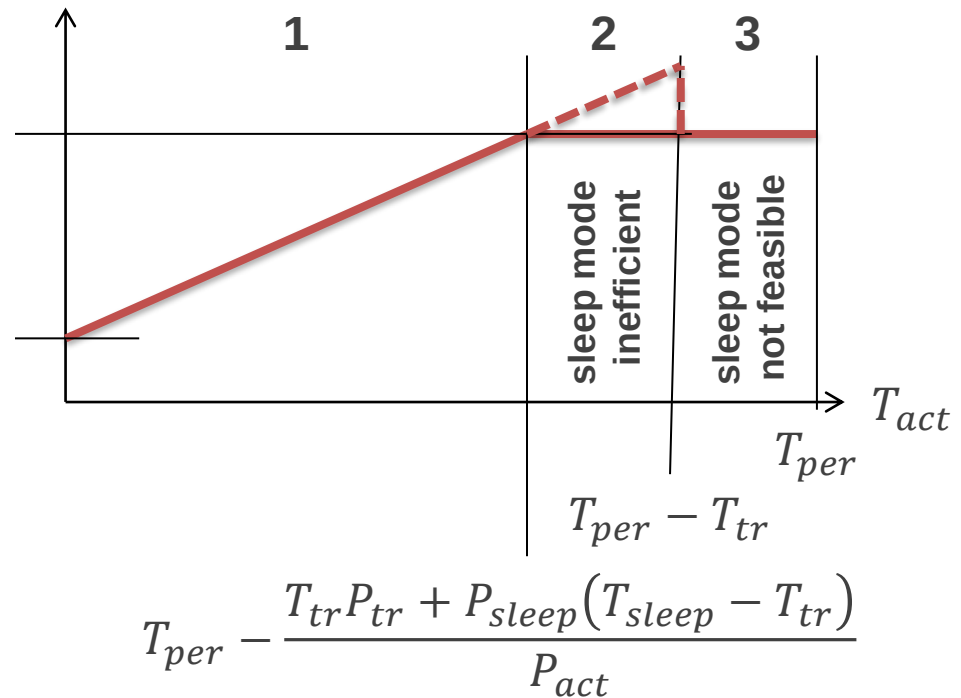
http://www.eetimes.com/document.asp?doc_id=1278972

- Power figures for active/transition/sleep: $P_{act}, P_{tr}, P_{sleep}$
 - Assume: $P_{tran} = P_{act}$
- Time for period/active/transition: $T_{act}, T_{tr}, T_{per} = T_{act} + T_{sleep}$



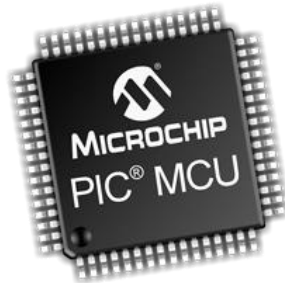
$$P = \frac{T_{act}P_{act} + T_{tr}(P_{tr} - P_{sleep}) + T_{sleep}P_{sleep}}{T_{per}}$$

$$P = \frac{T_{tr}(P_{tr} - P_{sleep}) + T_{sleep}P_{sleep}}{T_{per}}$$



Embedded Low-Power Microcontrollers: Key Components

- **Prominent examples:**



PIC Microcontroller

- 8 bit
- 16 bit
- 32 bit



MSP 430 Microcontroller

- 16 bit

More and more vendors offer
ARM core based solutions



ARM Microcontroller Series

- ARM Cortex M0(+)
- ARM Cortex M3

**Active power consumption
(CPU/Clock Generation/Regulators)**
ARM based: 80-250 $\mu\text{A}/\text{MHz}$ @ 1.8 – 3.3V
Older models: 250-500 $\mu\text{A}/\text{MHz}$ @ 1.8 – 3.3V

State-of-the-art cores generally outperform available microcontrollers

- COTS microcontrollers often use mature technology nodes (>130nm)
- Core-only specifications and research cores often exclude peripherals/SRAM/clocking
- Commercial MCUs typically do not yet exploit voltage/frequency scaling

research		Energy per Ops @ 1.0 V	Technology
	TamaRISC	12.1 pJ	90 nm
	16-bit [Kwong,2011]	> 47 pJ	130 nm
	32-bit [Ickes,2011]	19.7 pJ-27 pJ	65 nm

commercial	ARM Cortex-M0 Implementation Data***			
		180ULL 7-track, typical 1.8v, 25C)	90LP 7-track, typical 1.2v, 25C)	40LP 9-track, typical 1.1v, 25C)
	Dynamic Power	66μW/MHz	12.5μW/MHz	5.3μW/MHz
	Floorplanned Area	0.11 mm ²	0.03 mm ²	0.008 mm ²

Best ARM M0+ based COTS MCU from ST Micro with approximately 85 uW/MHz including memory & clocking

- **Motivation:**
 - Clock frequency determines power of active components
 - Clock generation and distribution can be a significant part of the overall power consumption (e.g., when most of the chip is inactive)
- **Performance criteria of clocking subsystem**
 - Power consumption
 - Flexibility to generate adjust frequency to the needs
 - Agility to change frequency during operation
 - Accuracy compared to a golden reference: measured in parts-per-million (PPM)
 - Startup time: time to restore a stable clock after shutdown
- **Tradeoffs associated with clock generation**
 - Fast clock vs. slow clock: jitter, frequency, basis for derived clocks
 - On-chip clock generation vs. off-chip components: cost, space on PCB, power consumption of external components, accuracy
 - Fixed vs. programmable: power consumption, area, analog components, ability to precisely adjust to the needs

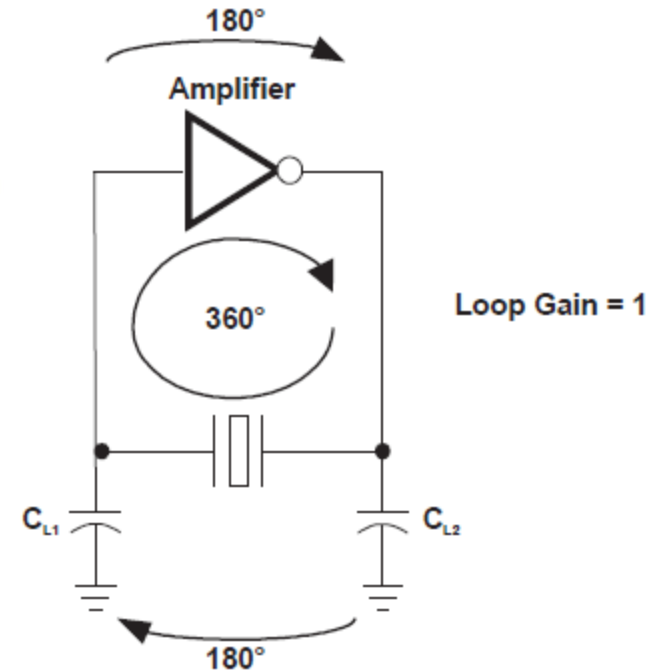
- **Quartz based frequency reference**

- Available in some standard frequencies from kHz to >100 MHz
- Accuracy 5-20 ppm
- High cost and power consumption



- **External quartz & capacitors with on-chip oscillator**

- On-chip feedback amplifier (often two for high and low target frequencies)
- Accuracy 1-20 ppm (low cost)
- Startup time in the milliseconds (ms) range and increases for lower frequencies
- Power consumption
 - Linear in frequency
 - Typical values in the ~50uW / MHz range
 - STM32L15xx6: [1.1uA@3V](#) for 32 KHz



Example: MSP430 oscillator startup times

OSCILLATOR FREQUENCY	OSCILLATOR TYPE	V _{CC} (V)	START-UP TIME (ms)
32 kHz C = none	Quartz crystal	3	201
		5	96.4
455 kHz C = 82 pF	Ceramic resonator	3	1.77
		5	—
1 MHz C = 47 pF	Quartz crystal	3	5.82
		5	3.81
4 MHz C = 56 pF	Quartz crystal	3	4.54
		5	3.07
8 MHz C = 39 pF	Quartz crystal	3	1.97
		5	1.27

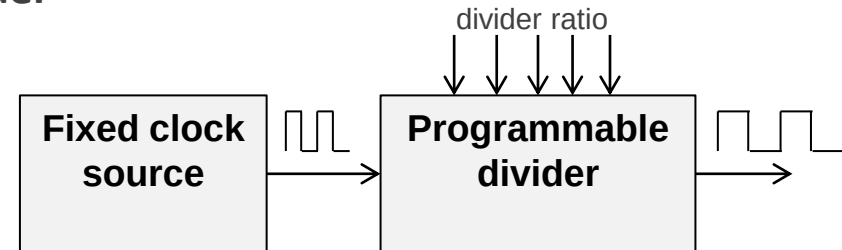
<http://www.st.com/web/en/resource/technical/document/datasheet/CD00277537.pdf>

<http://www.gaw.ru/pdf/TI/app/msp430/slao081.pdf>

- **On-chip digitally controlled oscillator (DCO)**
 - Programmable ring oscillator
 - Based on RC delays (low-power)
 - Few preselected frequency settings
 - DC reference controlled by an external or internal reference resistor (for calibration)
 - Mostly used for low power consumption at very low frequencies (e.g., during sleep periods as clock source for wakeup timers)
 - Startup times similar to clock period (1MHz: 1us, 100kHz: 10us)
 - Power consumption: ~50uW / MHz range
 - Accuracy is very poor: few % (@1MHz: 10'000 ppm)

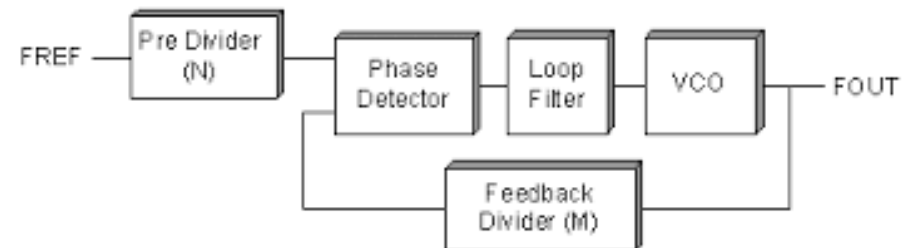
- **Reference clock with synchronous clock divider**

- Can only reduce clock frequency compared to reference input
- Only division by integers (coarse grained) for clocks not too far below the reference.

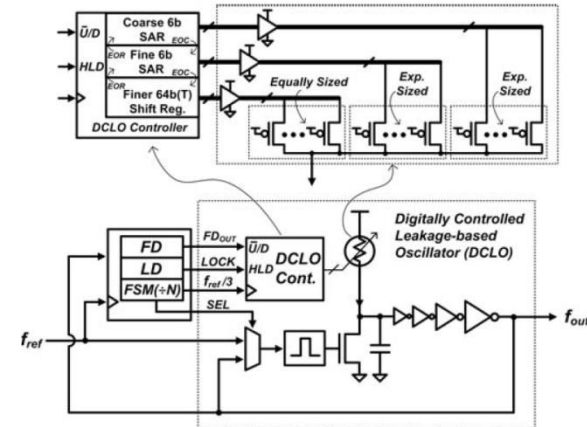
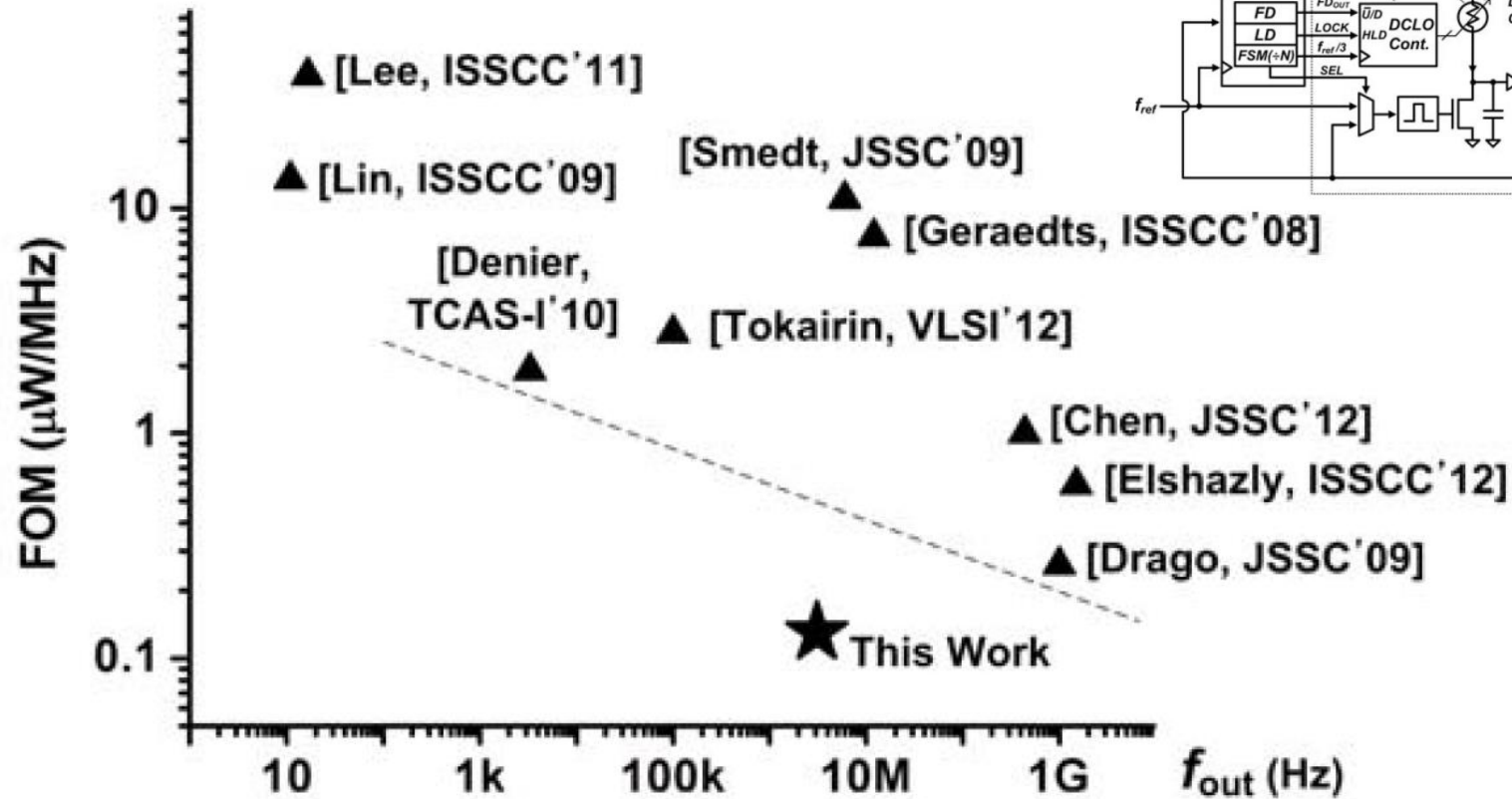


- **Reference clock with Phase Locked Loop (PLL)**

- PLL is comprised of
 - Voltage Controlled Oscillator
 - Phase/frequency detector
 - Loop filter
- Alternatives:
 - AD-PLL: all digital implementation
 - Frequency locked loop (FLL): phase not locked to the reference oscillator



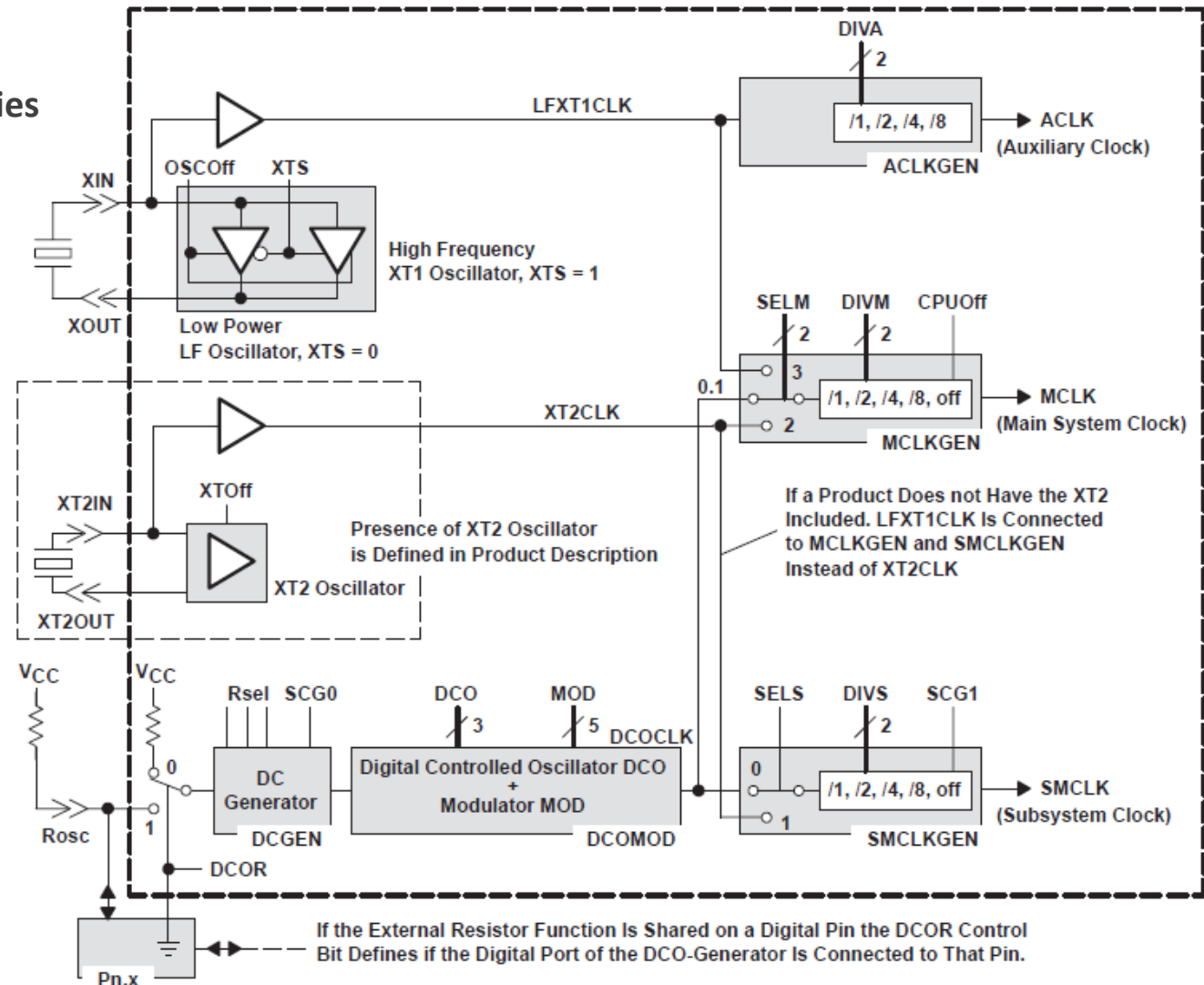
- Figure of merit (FOM): $\mu\text{W}/\text{MHz}$
- Main contributor to power consumption is the DCO
 - Implementations based on leakage currents



Dong-Woo Jee; Sylvester, D.; Blaauw, D.; Jae-Yoon Sim, "A 0.45V 423nW 3.2MHz multiplying DLL with leakage-based oscillator for ultra-low-power sensor platforms," *Solid-State Circuits Conference Digest of Technical Papers (ISSCC), 2013 IEEE International*

- Example: TI-MSP430 clock generation and distribution subsystem

- Different clock sources generate different frequencies
- Rapid selection of the best clock for different system components

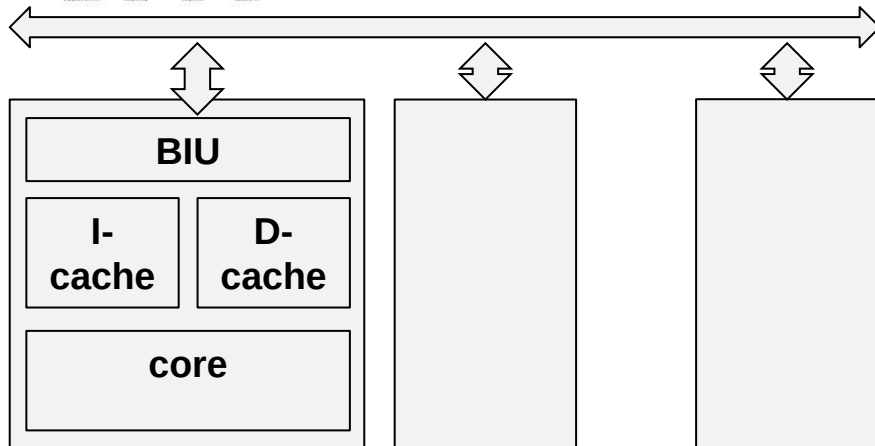


Architectures of the storage subsystem of two types of embedded systems

- Program and data: shared address space (von Neumann - like)

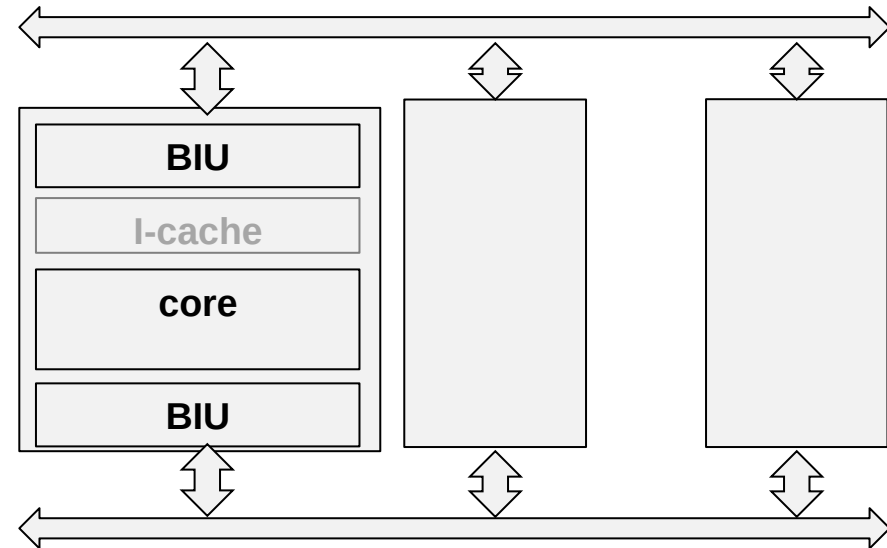
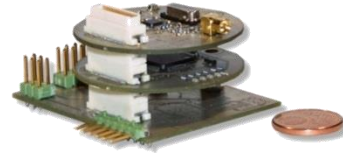
High performance

- Often single bus interface, but large caches for data and instruction

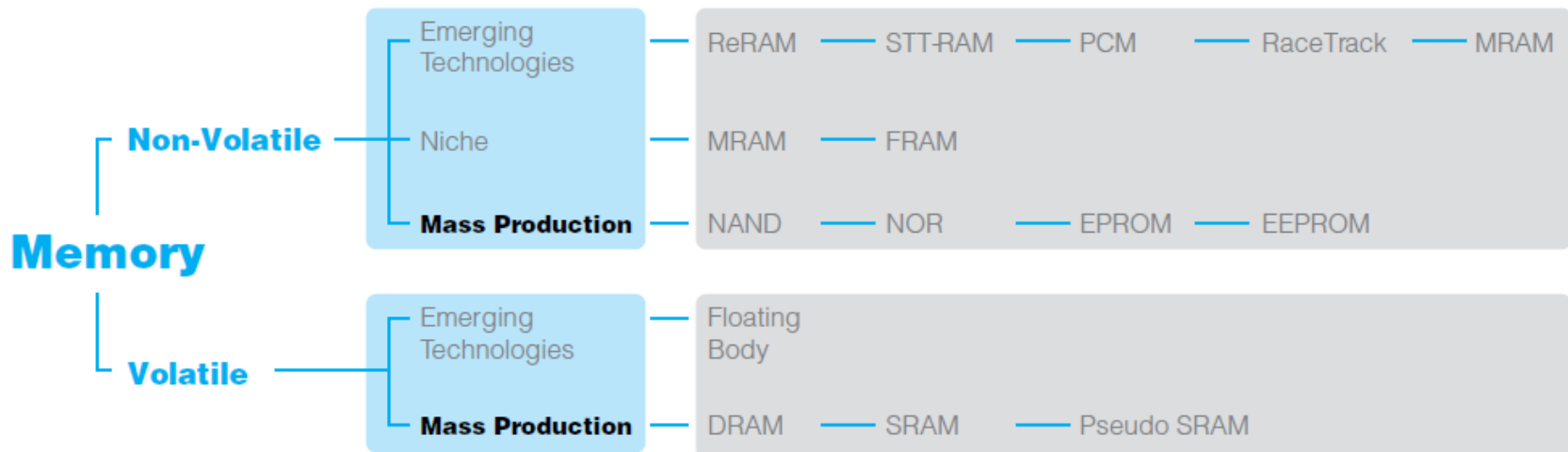


Ultra low power

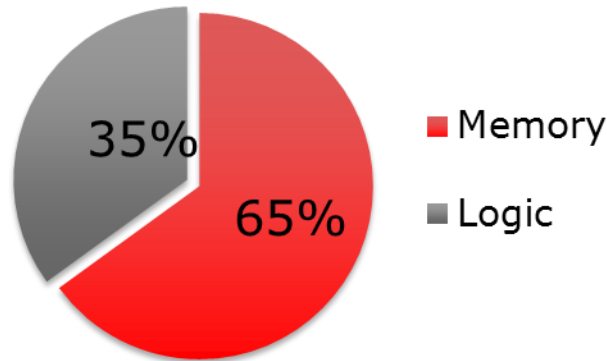
- Harvard architecture core with separate bus interfaces for data and instruction
- Multiple or multi-layer busses
- No or only small cache, often only for instructions



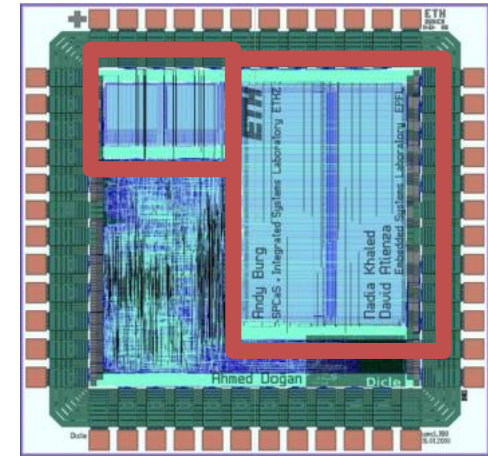
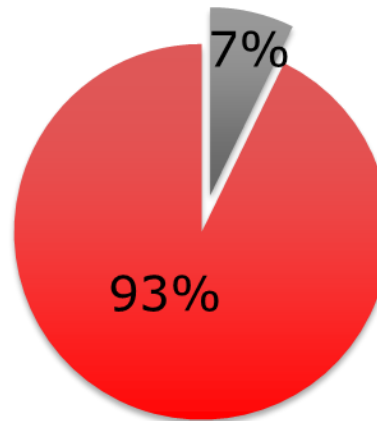
- Type of information to be stored
 - Program code (instructions)
 - Runtime intermediate variables (data)
 - Acquired data
 - System settings and state (registers in peripherals)
- Different types of storage
 - (Registers)
 - Volatile memory: retains its content only with power on, typically SRAM
 - Non-volatile memory: retains content after power-off



Active power



Leakage power

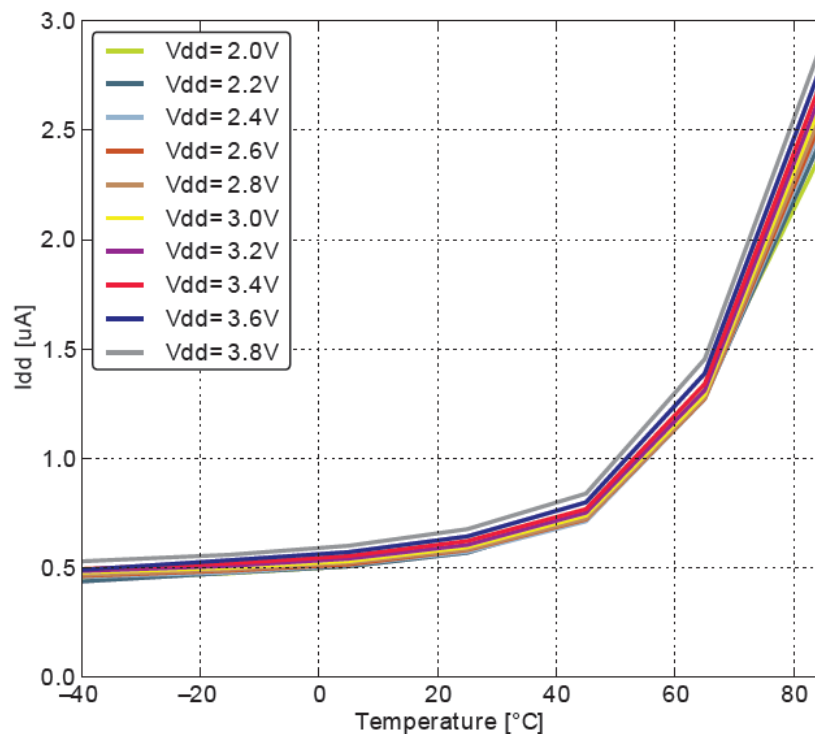


typical embedded processor

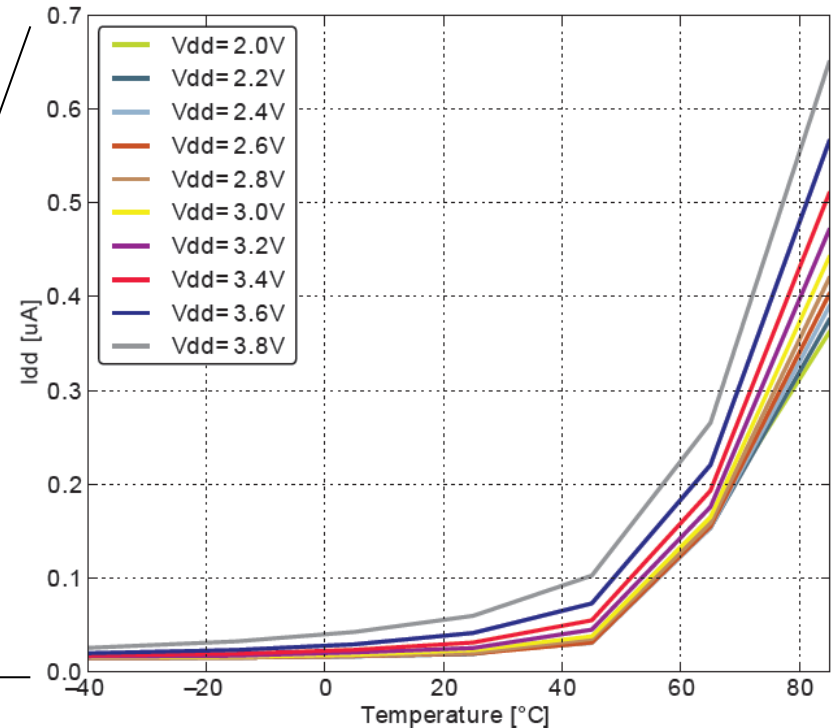
- For embedded processors, memories occupy a large percentage of the silicon area
- Active mode:
 - Data and program memory can consume 2/3 of total power
 - Low-frequency: SRAM leakage becomes visible
- Sleep modes:
 - Generally, no power gating to retain SRAM content
 - SRAM leakage becomes dominates system power consumption (3-4 pJ/bit in 180nm):
32kByte -> 400nW @ 1.8V

Example: EFM32 MCU (ARM-M3) with 32kByte SRAM

- Significant difference leakage reduction when SRAM is disabled
- Leakage increases exponentially with temperature

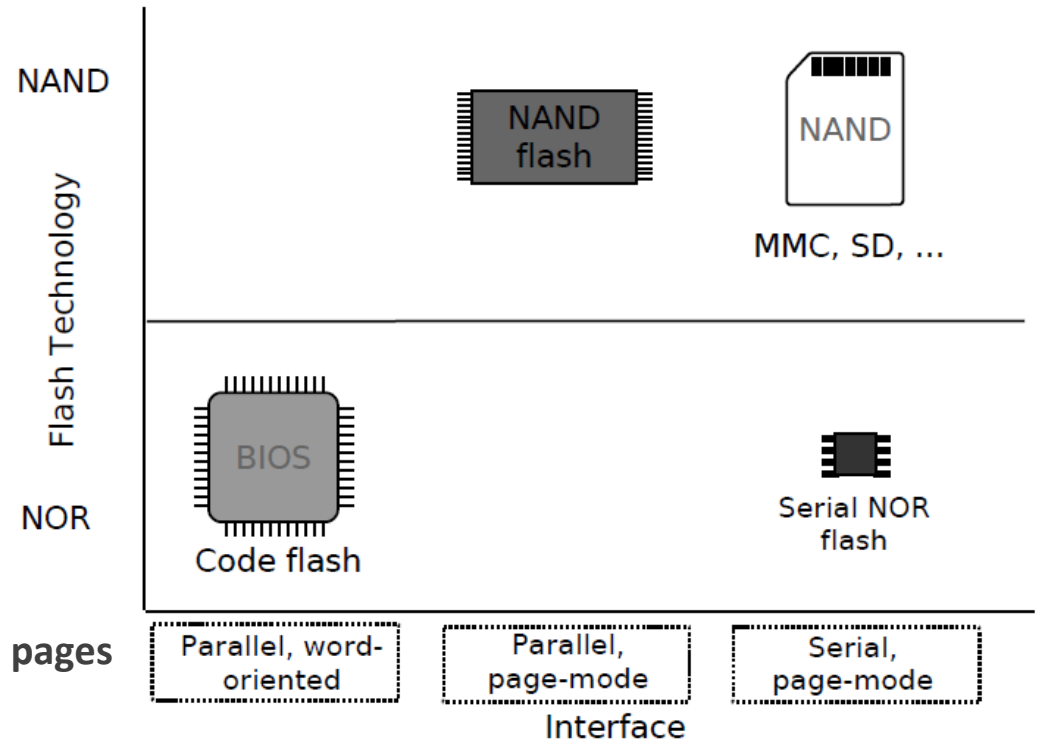


SRAM on



SRAM off

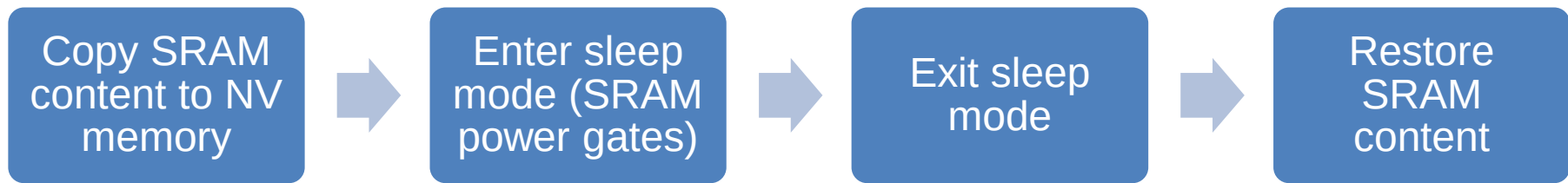
- Typically implemented as Flash
 - NOR or NAND flash
- Flash vs. SRAM: Flash has
 - Slower read access
 - Much slower write access
 - Much higher write power
- NAND Flash
 - High density, organized in large pages
 - Used for storing large amounts of data
 - Usually off chip
- NOR Flash
 - Medium density with word access possible
 - Can store program code
 - Program code can be executed directly from Flash



	NOR	NAND
Memory size	≤ 512 Mbit	1–8 Gbit
Sector size	~ 1 Mbit	~ 1 Mbit
Output parallelism	Byte/Word/Dword	Byte/Word
Read parallelism	8–16 Word	2 Kbyte
Write parallelism	8–16 Word	2 Kbyte
Read access time	< 80 ns	20 μ s
Program Time	9 μ s/Word	400 μ s/page
Erase time	1 s/sector	1 ms/sector

- Almost all components are OFF
- Leakage becomes THE dominant factor in power consumption
- Memory (SRAM) is often the largest contributor to leakage:
 - E.g., 3.5 pW/bit with 32kByte => 900 uW
- Memory power gating leads to a loss of data

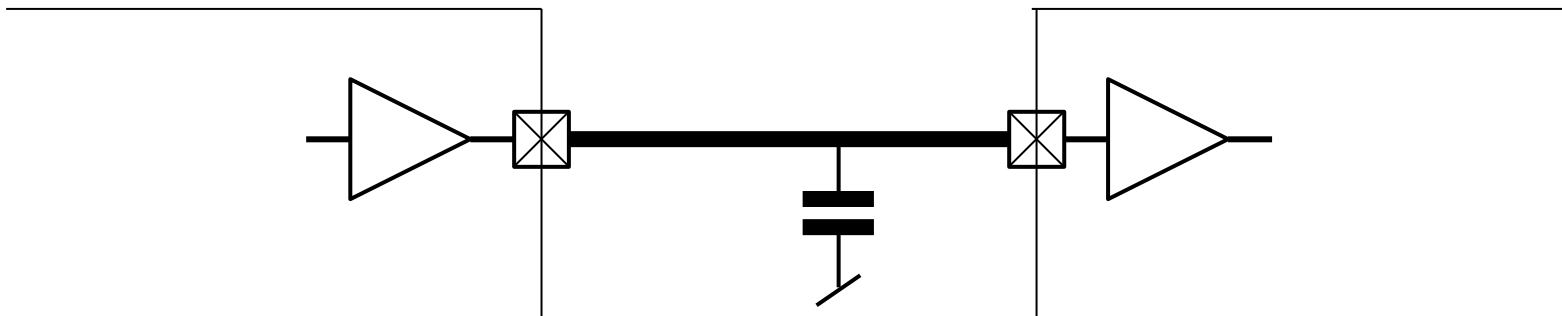
Flash SRAM based backup:



- **Caveat: writing to NV memory requires a lot of energy**
 - Transition to deep-sleep is expensive
 - Backup only the required data
- **Deep-sleep with SRAM backup to NV memory only efficient for long sleep periods**
 - **Alternative: very small backup SRAM with state retention for essential data (few Bytes)**

Off-chip communication consumes dynamic power

- IO-pad capacitance is around 2.5-10pF
- Typical voltages for IO-standards: 1.8V, 2.5V, 3.3V



- Energy per transition and pin:

$$E = \frac{1}{2} V_{IO}^2 C$$

- Power consumed by 8 IO pins $\alpha = 50\%$ activity @ $f = 1$ MHz ($C = 5$ pF, $V_{IO} = 1.8$ V)

$$P_{IO} = \alpha f \frac{1}{2} V_{IO}^2 C = 32 \mu W$$

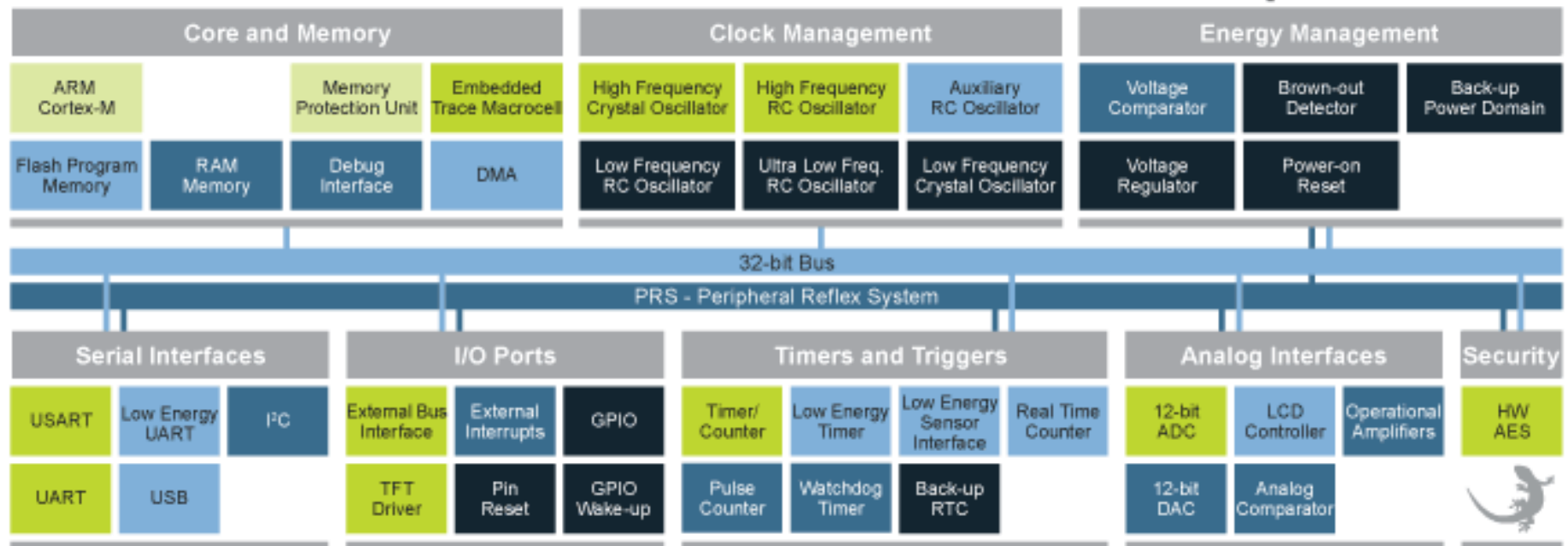
Hands-on Example: EFM32 ULP MCU: Power Consumption and Low-Power Modes

EFM32 is a series of microcontrollers with different capabilities and peripherals

EFM32LG: medium range ULP device

- ARM-M3 low-power 32 bit CPU up to 48MHz
- SRAM and Flash memory (read and write access)
- Clock generation and energy management unit
- Support for many peripherals
- Timer units

EFM32 Leopard Gecko



5 basic energy modes with different default settings for peripherals and clocks



EM0 – Energy Mode 0
(Run mode)

In EM0, the CPU is running and consuming as little as 211 $\mu\text{A}/\text{MHz}$, when running code from flash. All peripherals can be active.



EM1 – Energy Mode 1
(Sleep Mode)

In EM1, the CPU is sleeping and the power consumption is only 63 $\mu\text{A}/\text{MHz}$. All peripherals, including DMA, PRS and memory system, are still available.



EM2 – Energy Mode 2
(Deep Sleep Mode)

In EM2 the high frequency oscillator is turned off, but with the 32.768 kHz oscillator running, selected low energy peripherals (LCD, RTC, LETIMER, PCNT, LEUART, I²C, LESENSE, OPAMP, USB, WDOG and ACMP) are still available. This gives a high degree of autonomous operation with a current consumption as low as 0.95 μA with RTC enabled. Power-on Reset, Brown-out Detection and full RAM and CPU retention is also included.



EM3 - Energy Mode 3
(Stop Mode)

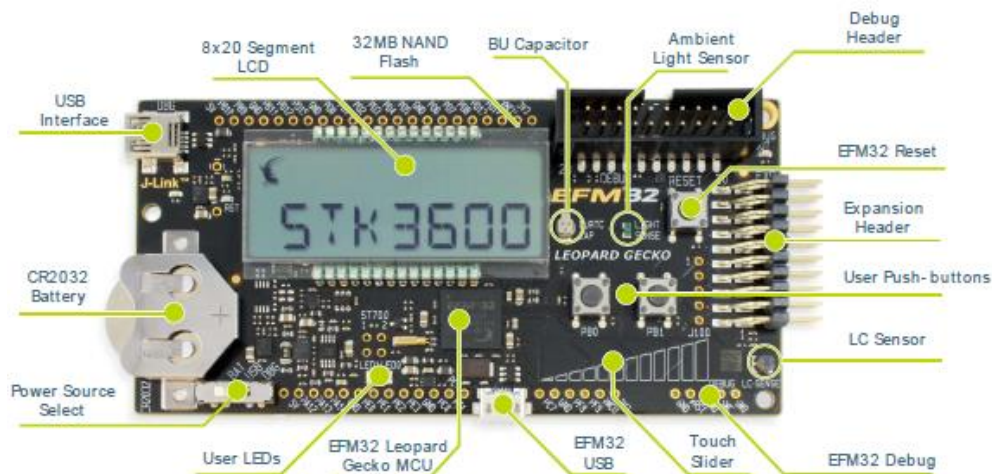
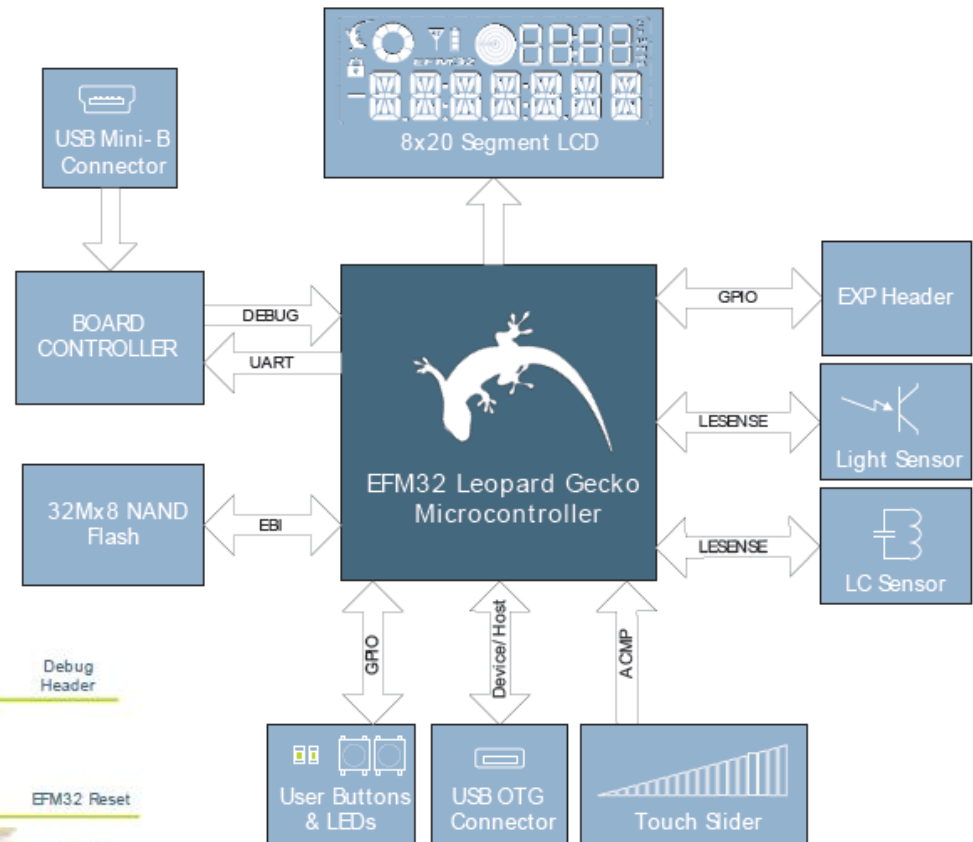
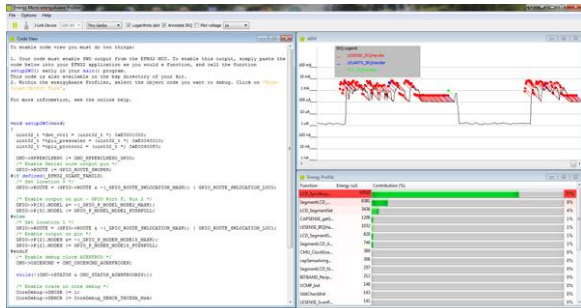
In EM3, the low-frequency oscillator is disabled, but there is still full CPU and RAM retention, as well as Power-on Reset, Pin reset, EM4 wake-up and Brown-out Detection, with a consumption of only 0.65 μA . The low-power ACMP, asynchronous external interrupt, PCNT, and I²C can wake-up the device. Even in this mode, the wake-up time is a few microseconds.



EM4 – Energy Mode 4
(Shutoff Mode)

In EM4, the current is down to 20 nA and all chip functionality is turned off except the pin reset, GPIO pin wake-up, GPIO pin retention, Backup RTC (including retention RAM) and the Power-On Reset. All pins are put into their reset state.

- EFM32LG990F256 MCU
- **Energy Monitoring system for current tracking**



- Various peripherals and IOs
- Power sources:
 - Battery
 - USB
 - 0.03 F supercap for backup