



Centip3De: A 64-Core, 3D Stacked, Near-Threshold System

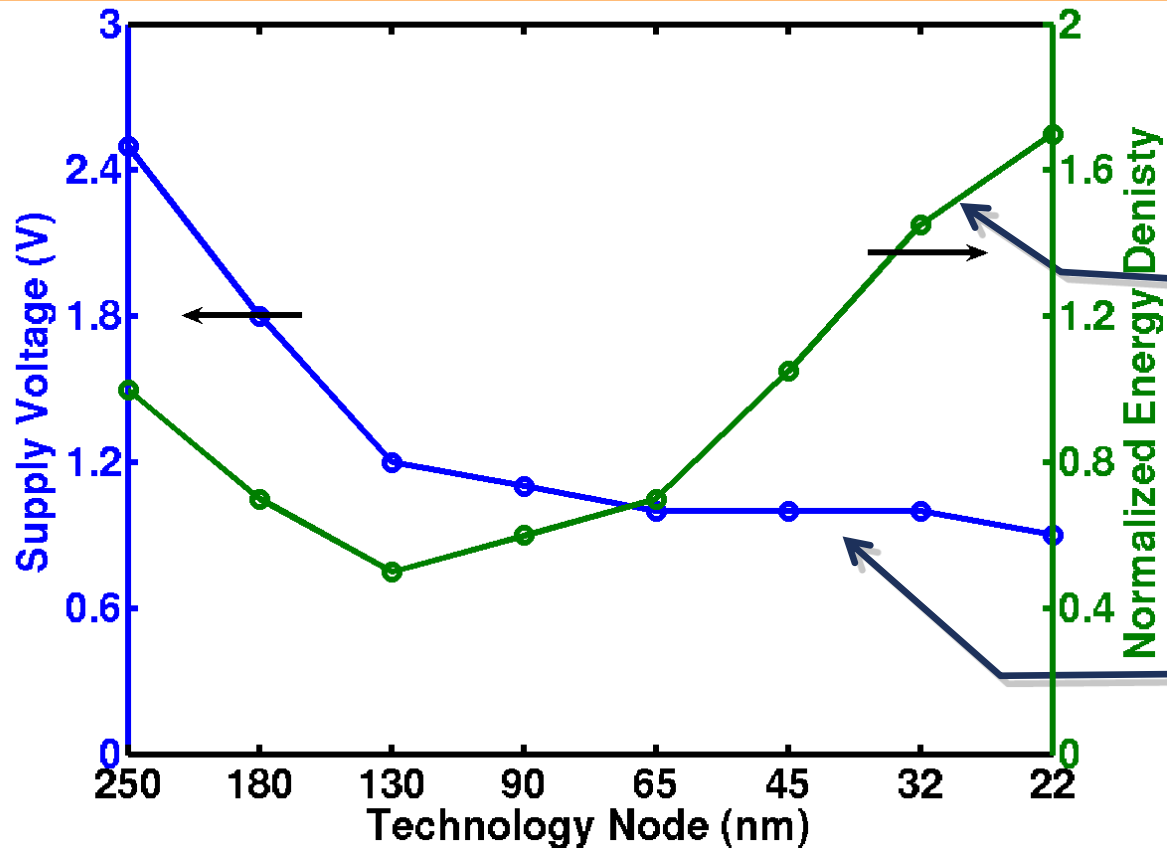
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The Problem of Power



Power does not decrease at the same rate that transistor count increases, resulting in increased energy density

Circuit supply voltages are no longer scaling...

Dynamic dominates

$$U \approx \frac{CV_{dd}^2}{A} + \frac{I_{leak}V_{dd}}{Af}$$

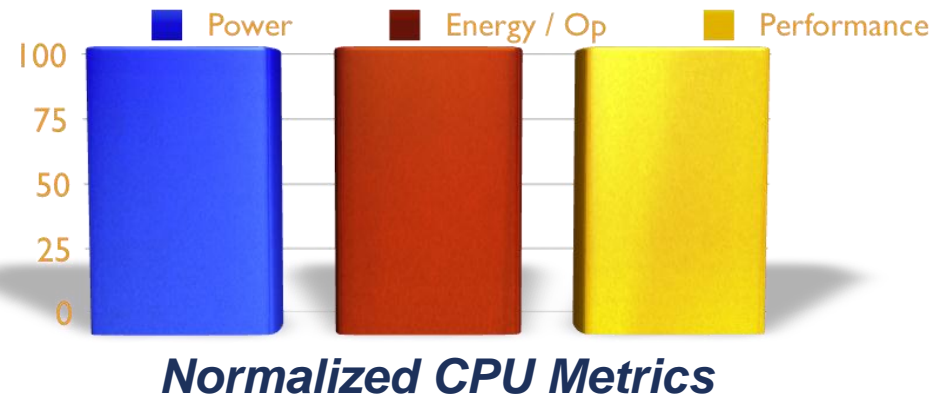
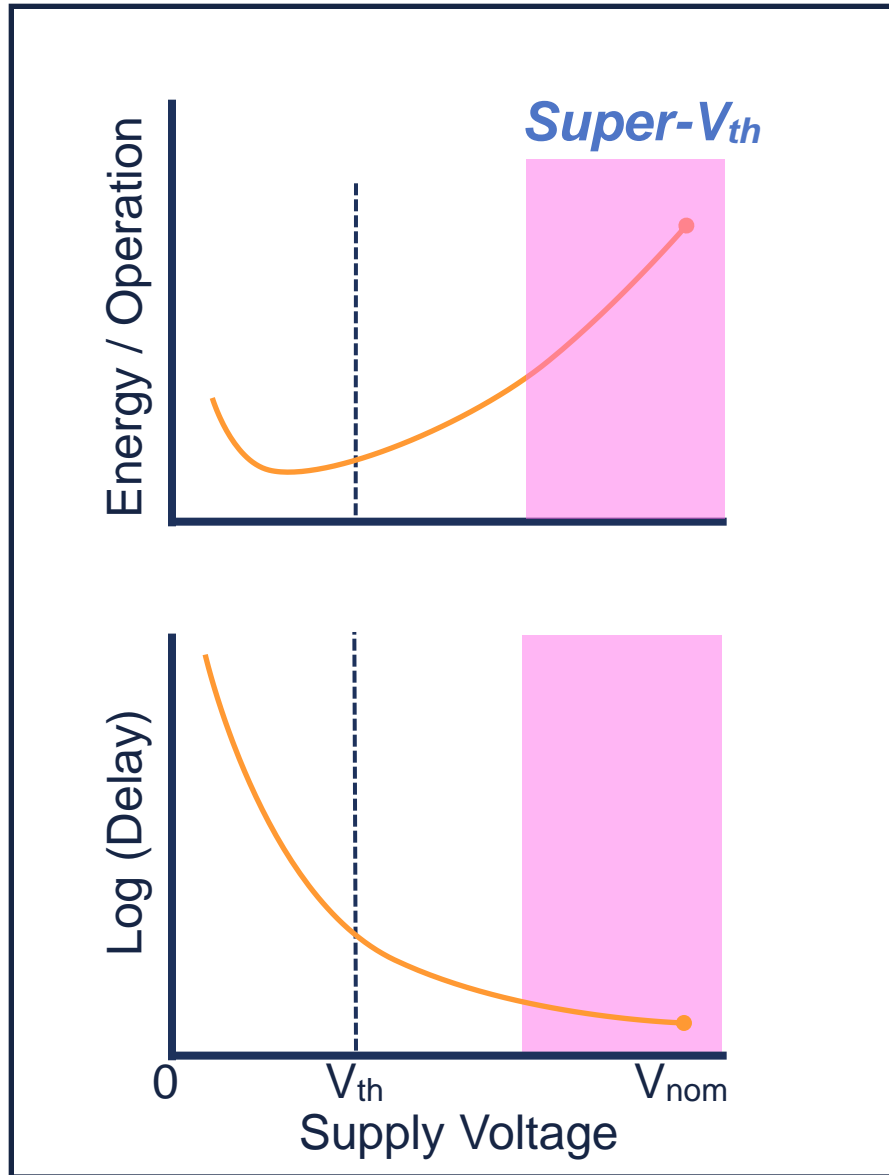
A = gate area → scaling $1/s^2$

C = capacitance → scaling $< 1/s$

The emerging dilemma:

*More and more gates can fit on a die,
but cooling constraints are restricting their use*

Today: Super- V_{th} , High Performance, Power Constrained

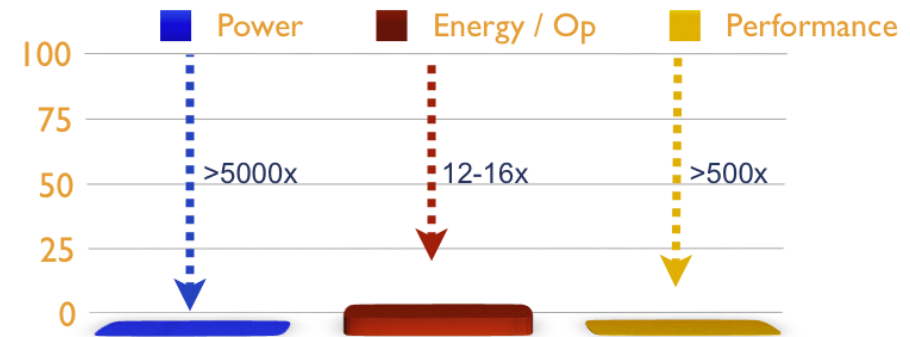
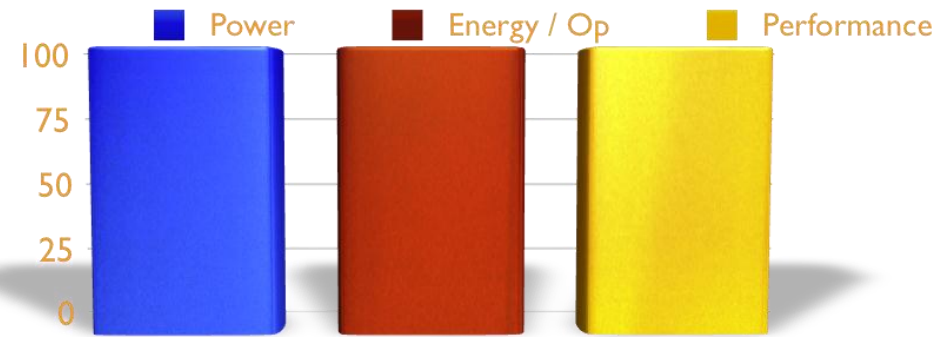
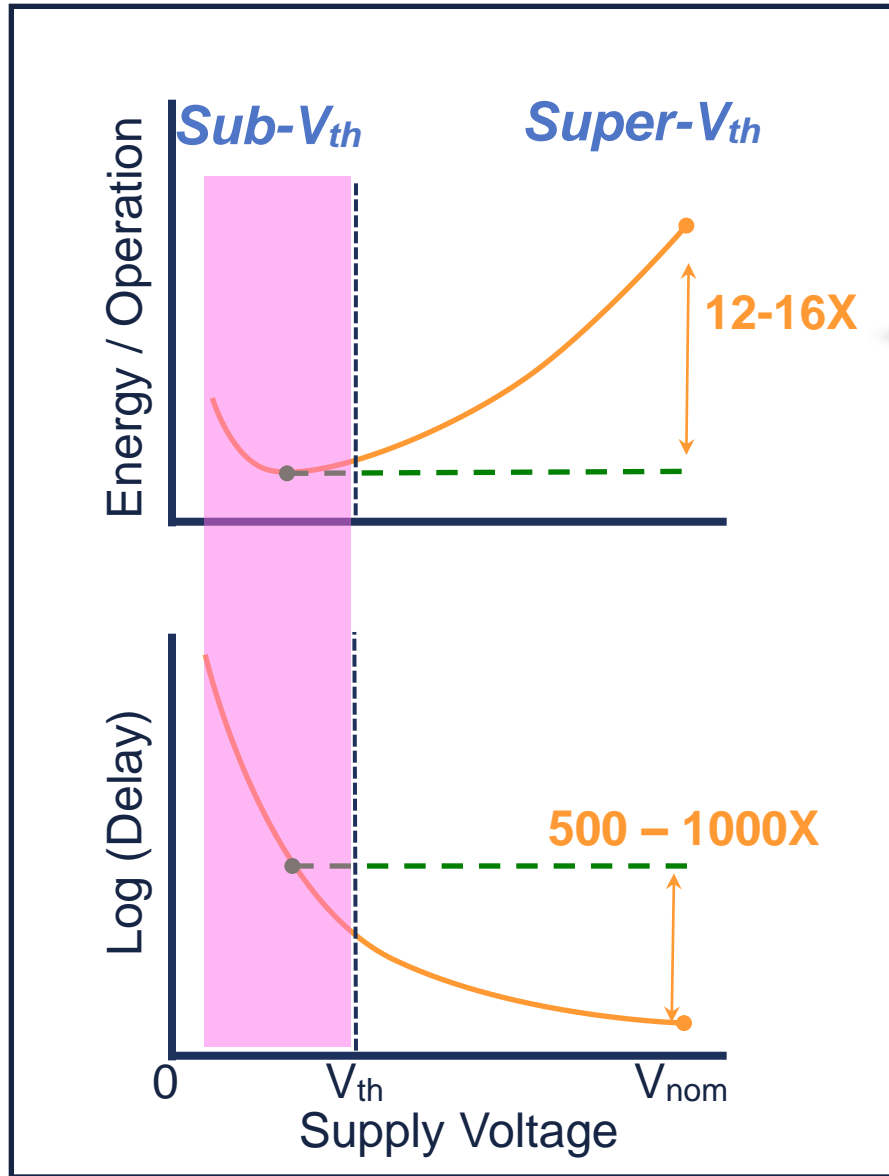


Large gate overdrive favors performance with unsustainable power density

Must design within fixed TDP

Goal: maintain performance, improved Energy/Operation

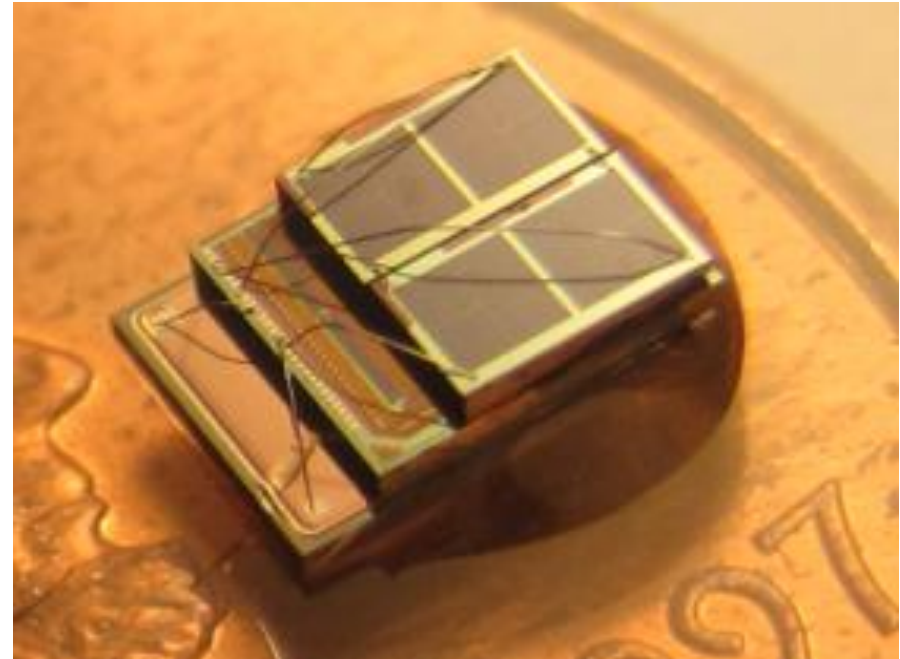
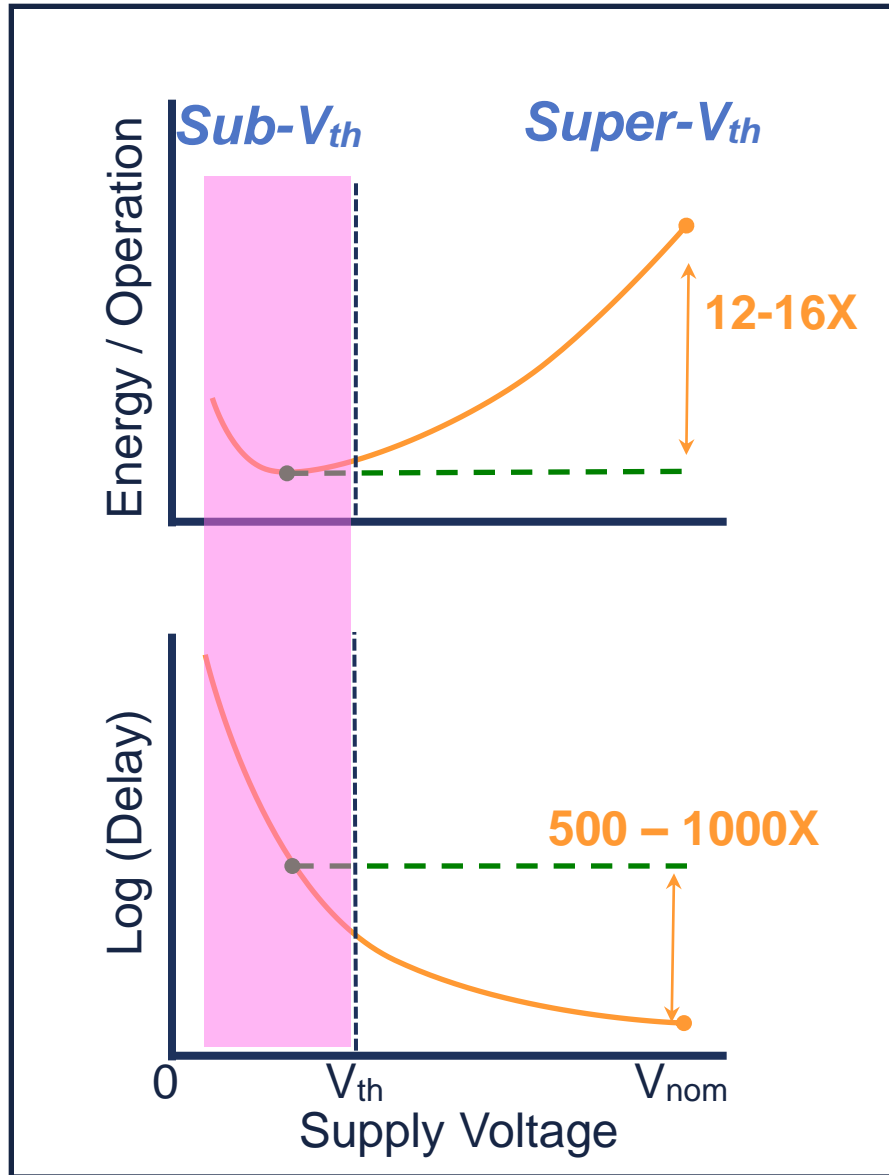
Subthreshold Design



Operating in sub-threshold yields large power gains at the expense of performance.

Applications: sensors, medical

Subthreshold Design

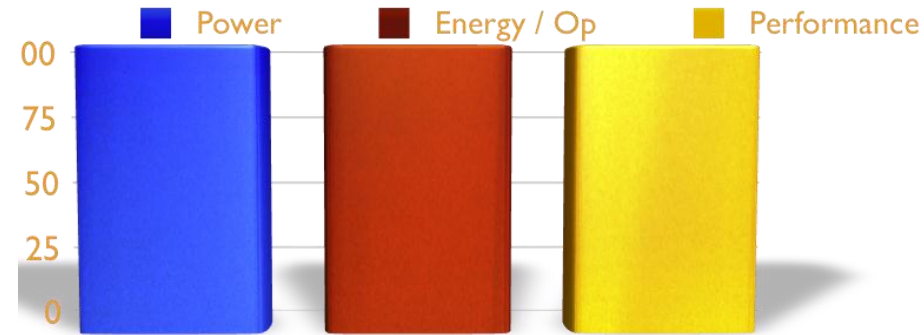
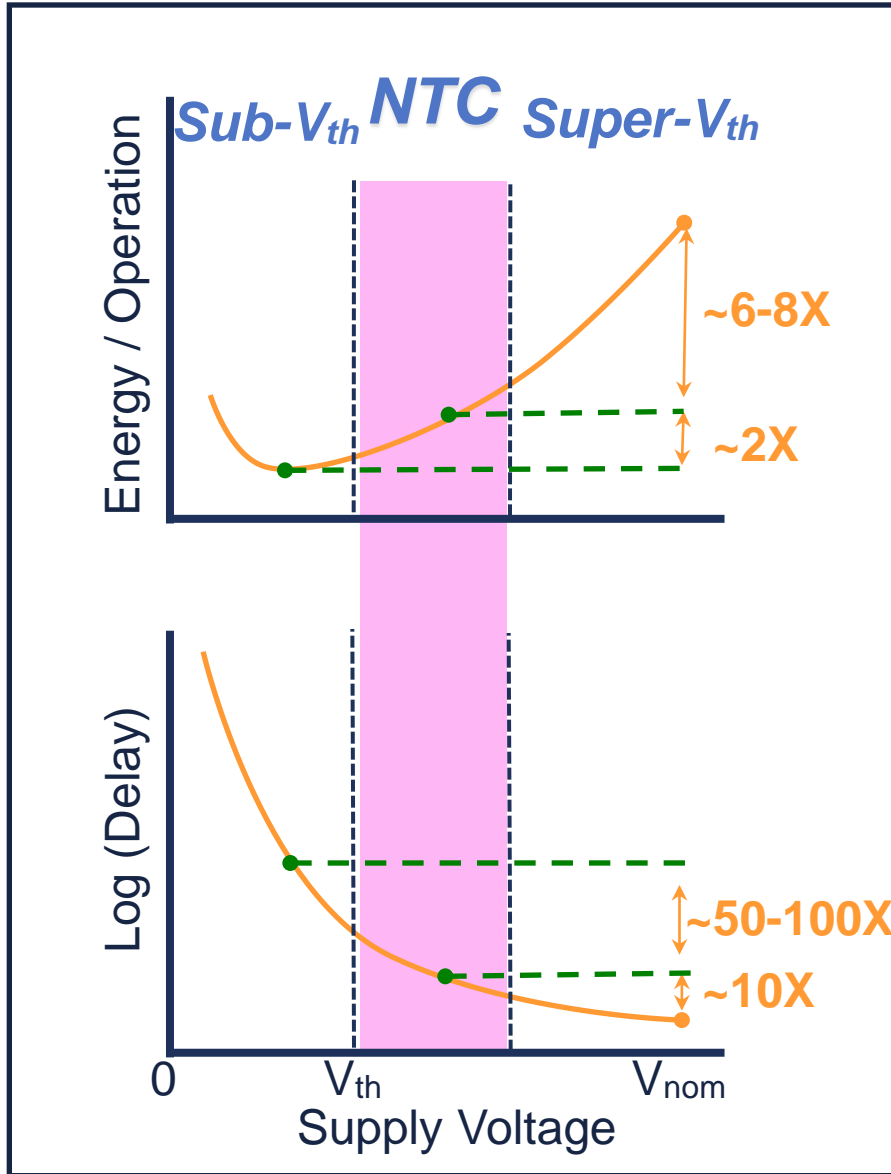


Phoenix 2 Processor, ISSCC'10

Operating in sub-threshold yields large power gains at the expense of performance.

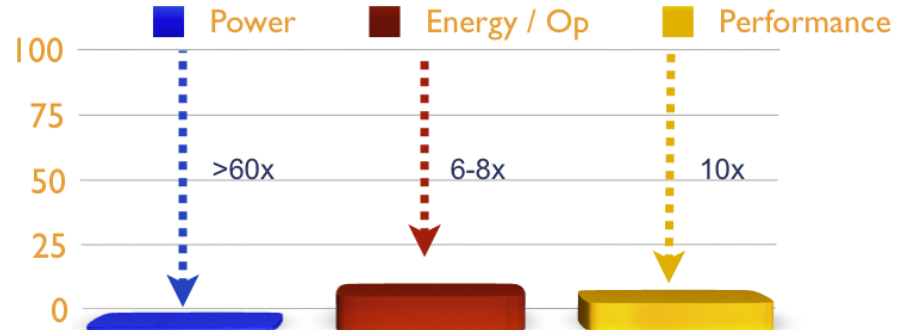
Applications: sensors, medical

Near-Threshold Computing (NTC)

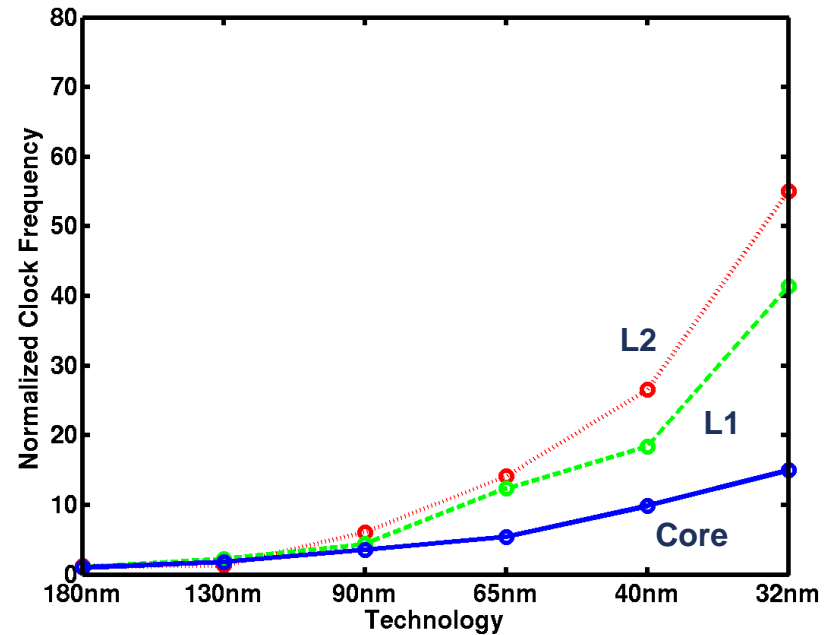
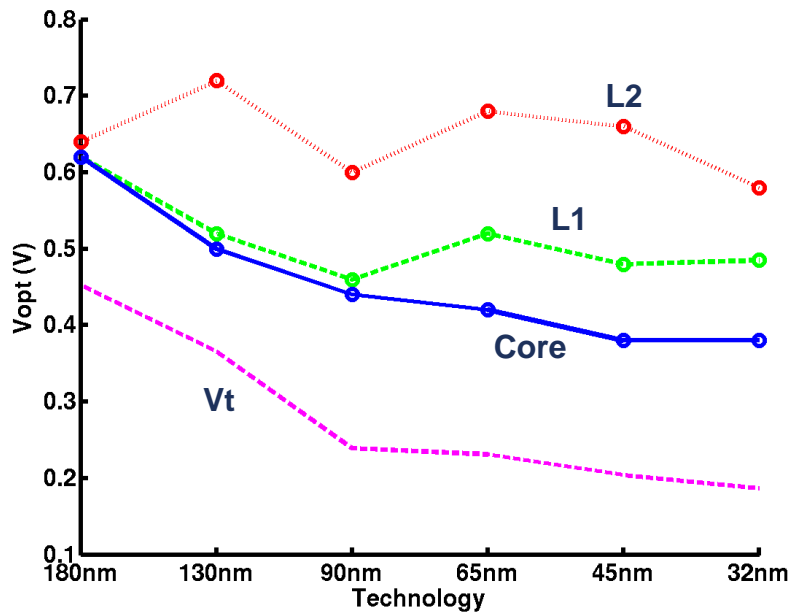


Near-Threshold Computing (NTC):

- $>60X$ power reduction
- 6-8X energy reduction
- Enables 3D integration



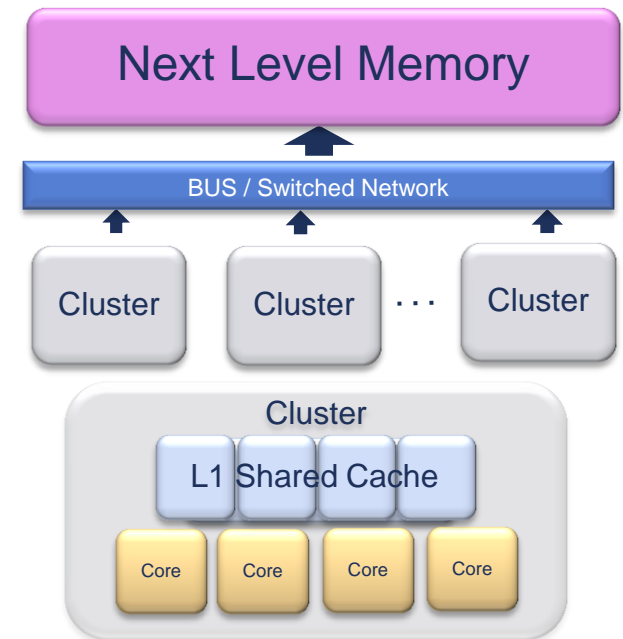
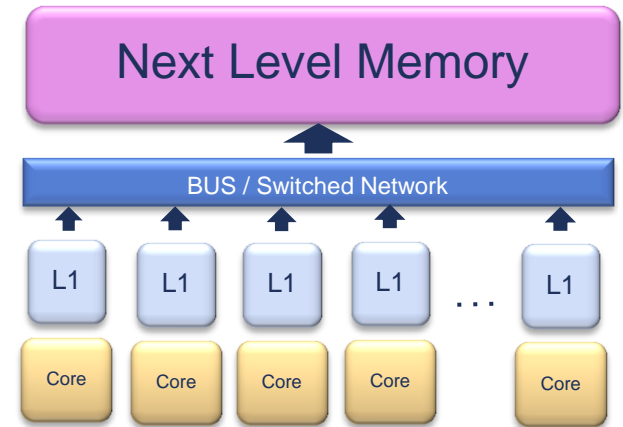
Architectural Impact of NTC



- Caches have higher V_{opt} and operating frequency
- Smaller activity rate when compared to core logic
- Leakage larger proportion of total power in caches
- New Architectures Possible

Proposed NTC Architecture

- SRAM is run at a higher V_{DD}
 - Caches operate faster than core
- Can introduce clustered architecture
 - Multiple cores share L1
 - Cores see private L1
 - L1 still provides single-cycle latency
- Advantages:
 - Less coherence/snoop traffic
 - Larger cache for processes that need it
- Drawbacks:
 - Core conflicts evicting L1 data
 - Not dominant in simulation
 - Longer interconnect
 - 3D addressable



Proposed Boosting Approach

Measured results for 130nm LP design

10MHz becomes ~110MHz in 32nm simulation

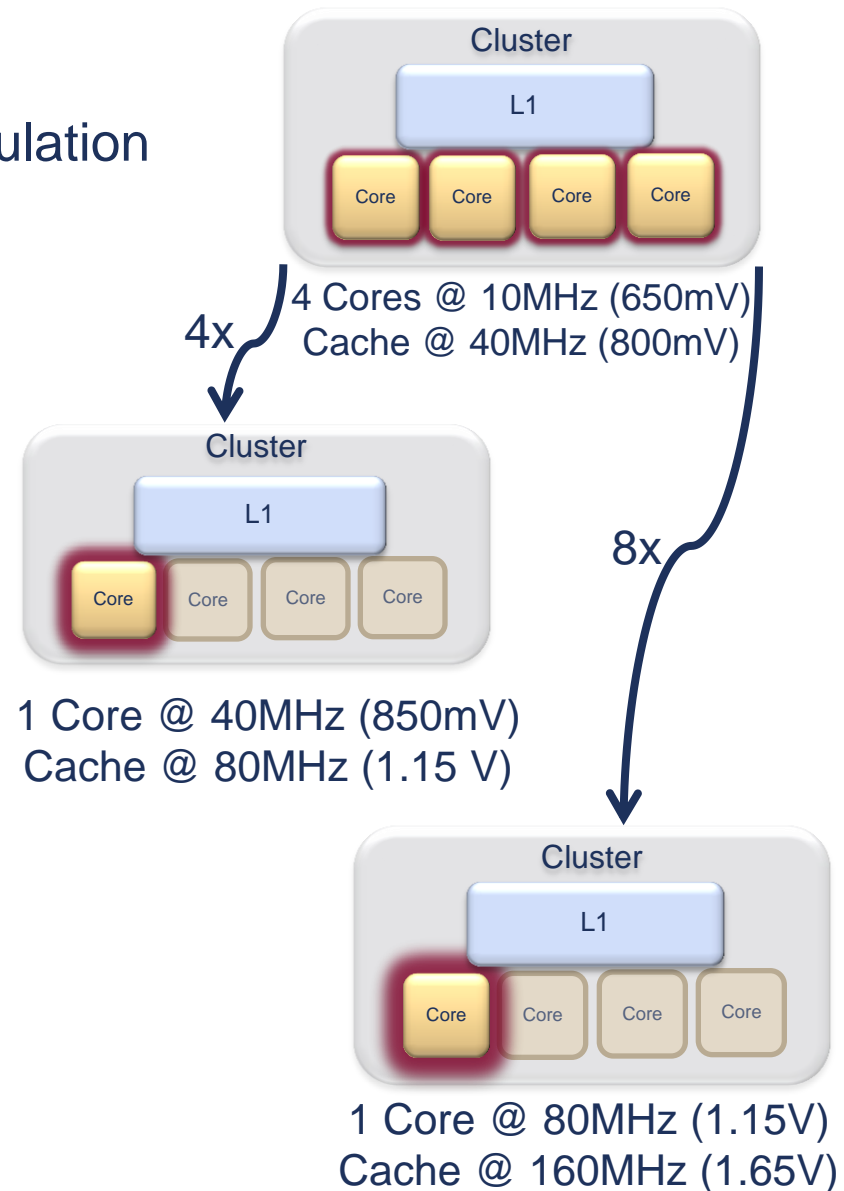
140 FO4 delay core

Baseline

- Cache runs 4x core frequency
- Pipelined cache

Better Single Thread Performance

- Turn some cores off, speed up the rest
- Cache de-pipelined
- Faster response time, *same* throughput
- Core sees larger cache
 - Faster cores needs larger caches



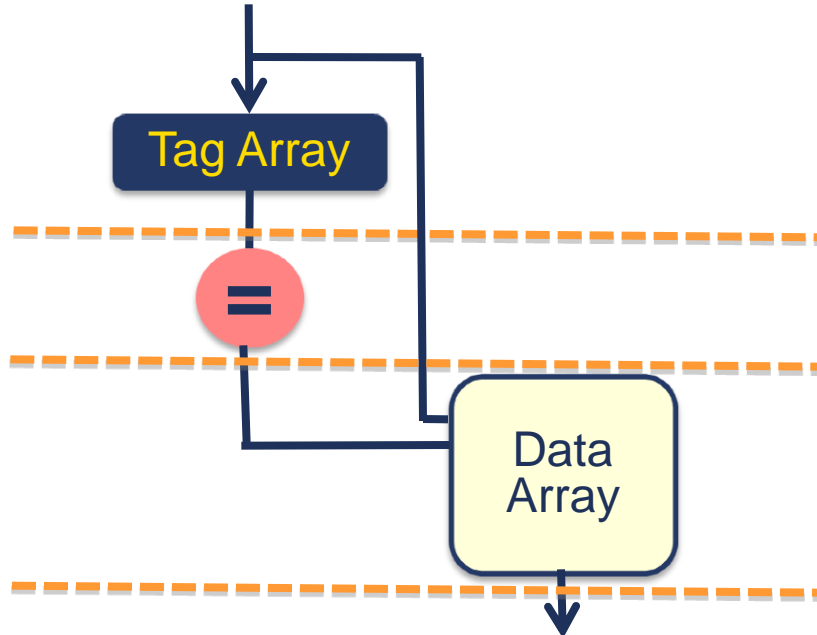
Cache Timing

NTC Mode (3/4 Cores)

Low power

Tag arrays read first

0-1 data arrays accessed

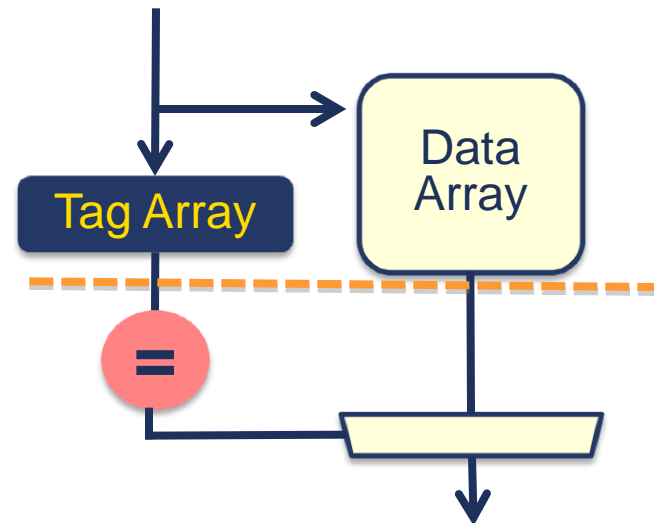


Boost Mode (1/2)

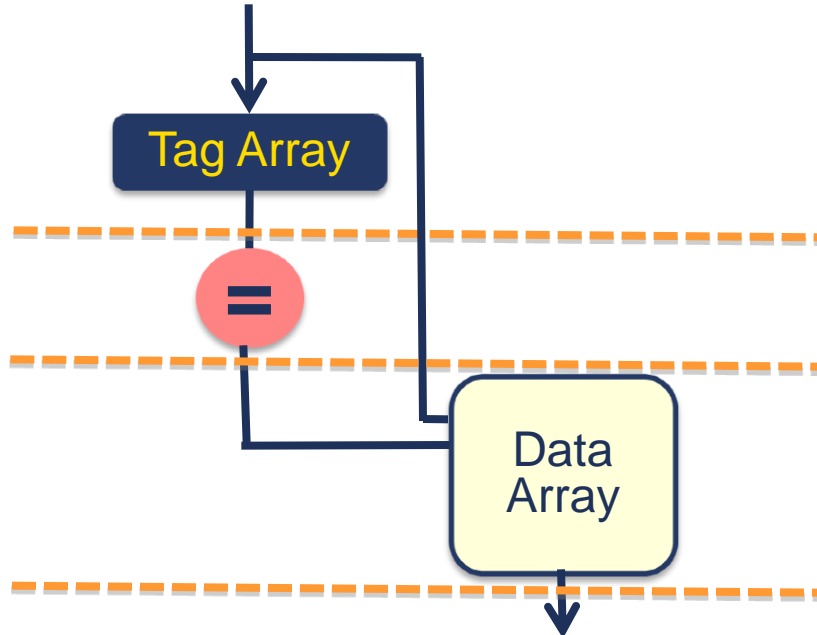
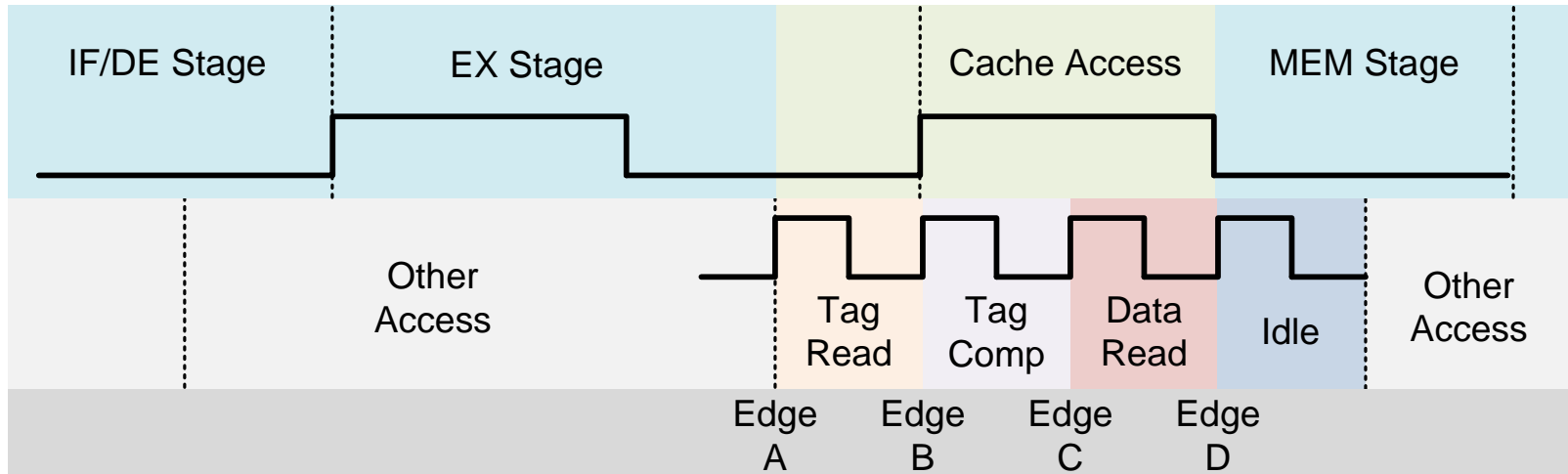
Low latency

Data and tags read in parallel

4 data arrays accessed

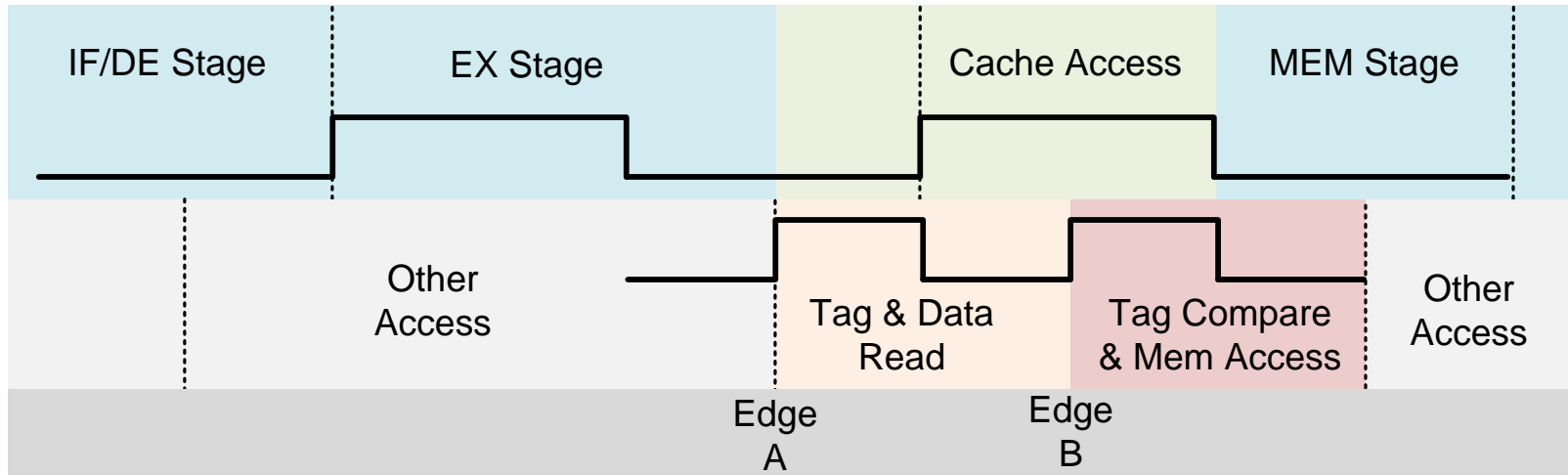


Cache Timing



NTC Mode (3/4 Cores)
Low power
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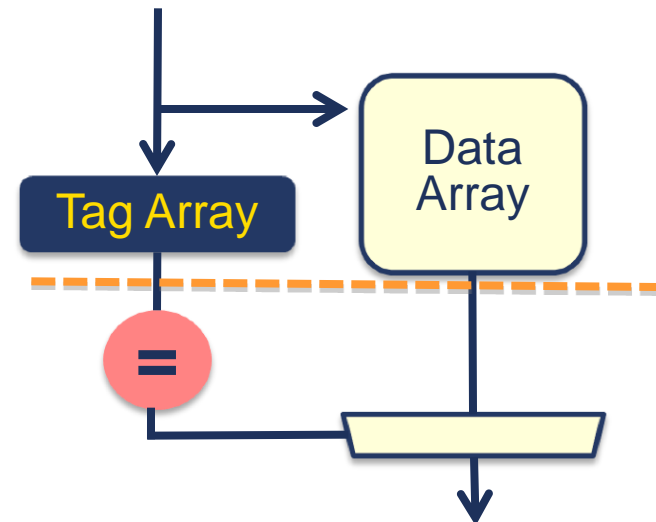
Cache Timing



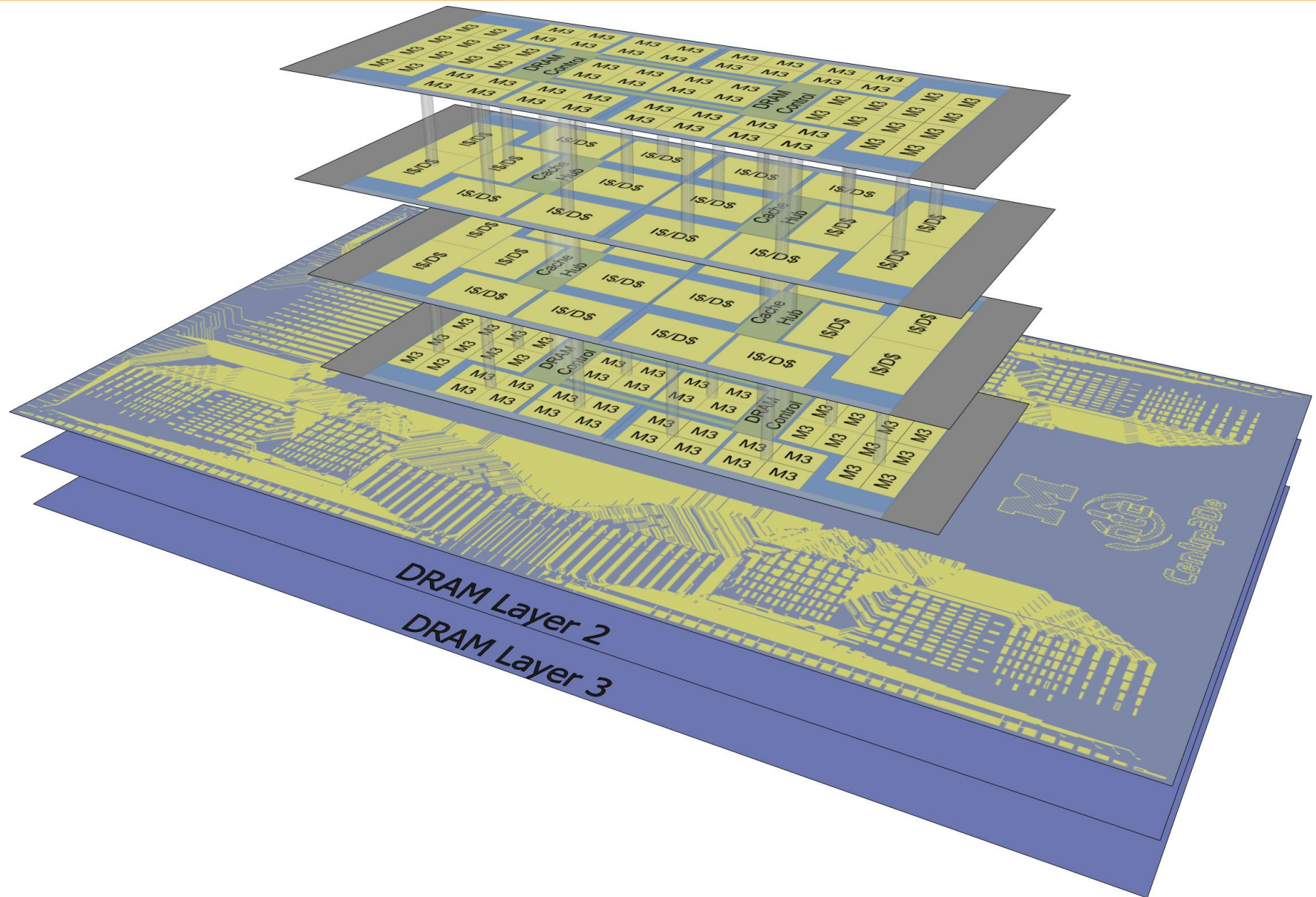
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Low latency

Data and tags read in parallel
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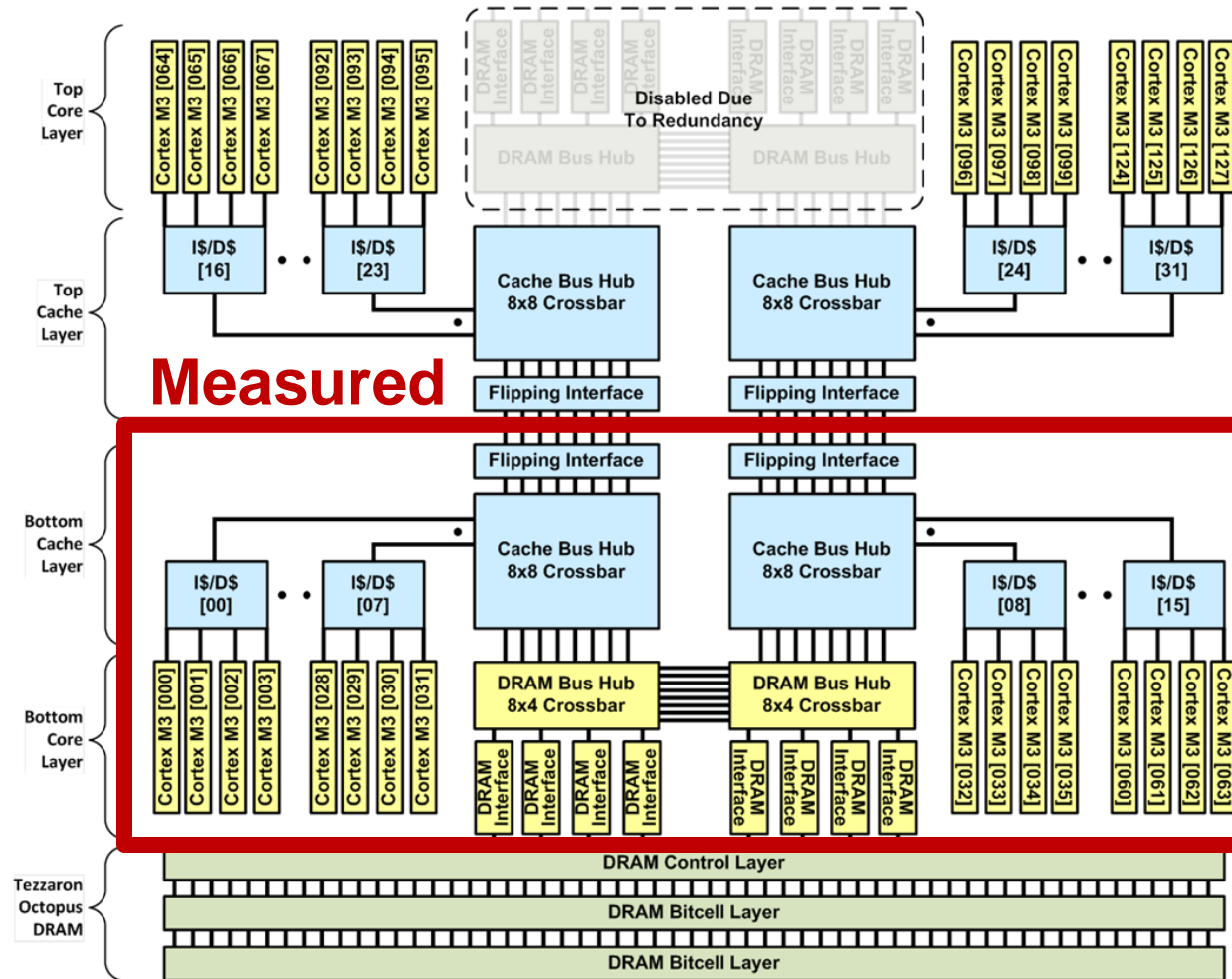


Centip3De System Overview



Centip3De System Overview

- 7-Layer NTC system
- 2-Layer system completed fabrication with measured results
- Full 7-layer system expected
End of 2012



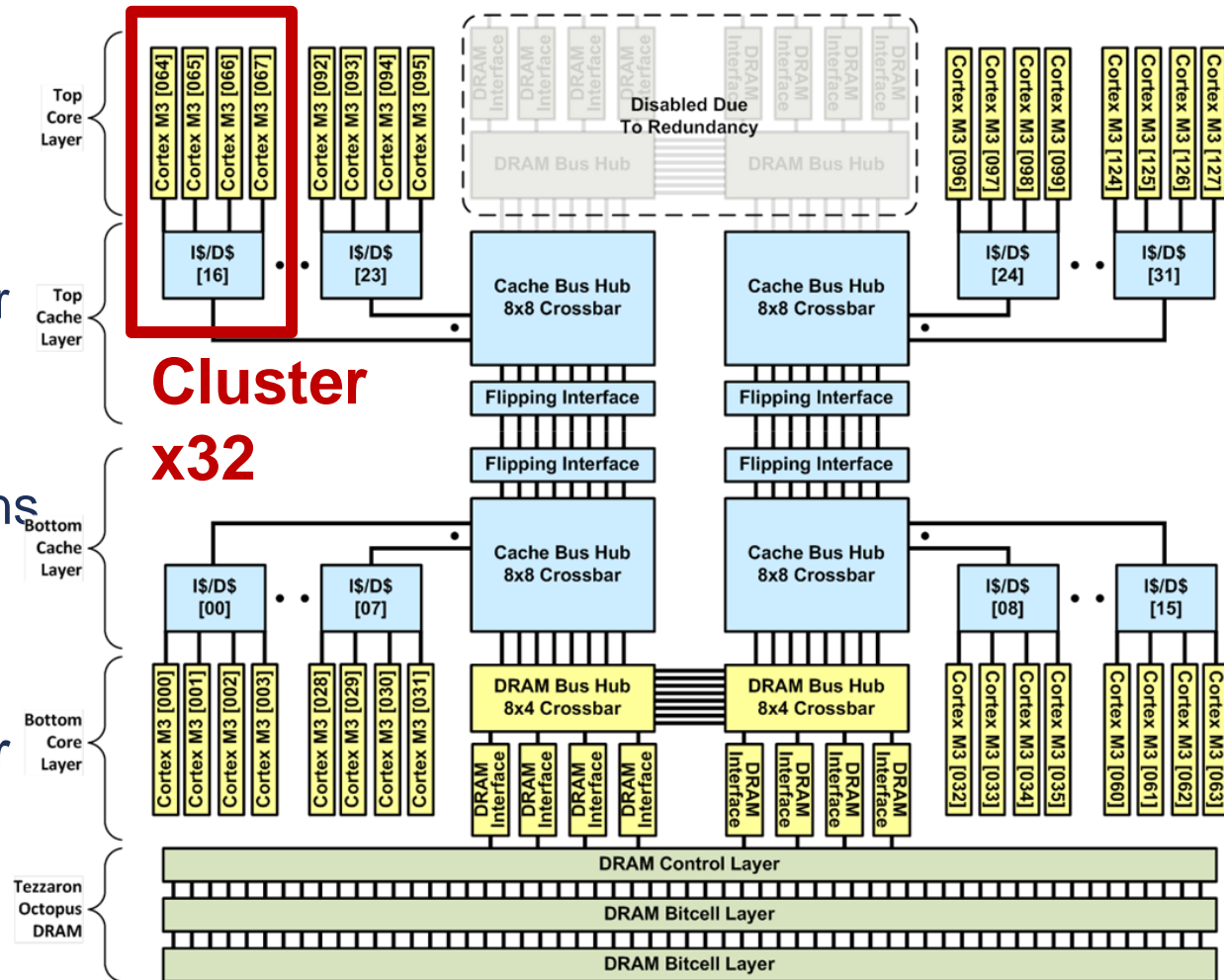
Centip3De System Overview

Cluster architecture

- 4 Cores/cluster
- 1kB I\$, 8kB D\$
- Local clock controller operates cores 90° Out-of-phase
- 1591 F2F connections per cluster

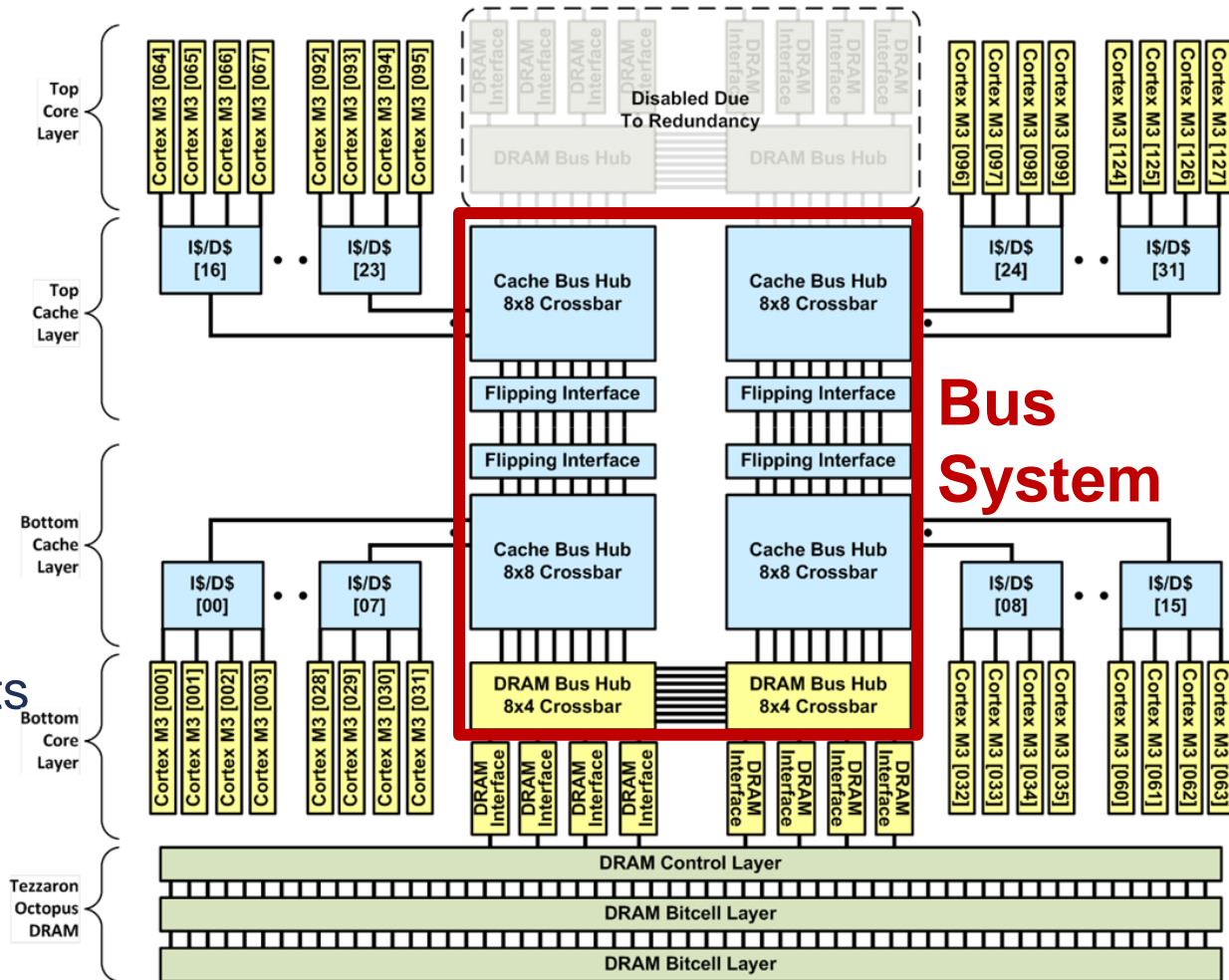
Organized into layer pairs (cache↔core)

- Minimizes routing
- Up to two pairs
- 16 clusters per pair
- Cores have only vertical interconnections



Centip3De System Overview

- Bus interconnect architecture
 - Up to 500 MHz
 - 9-11 cycle latency
 - 1-3 core cycles
- 8 lanes, each 128b
 - One per DRAM interface
 - Each cluster connects to all eight
 - 1024b total
- Vertically connected through all four layers
 - Flipping interface enables 128-core system



Centip3De System Overview

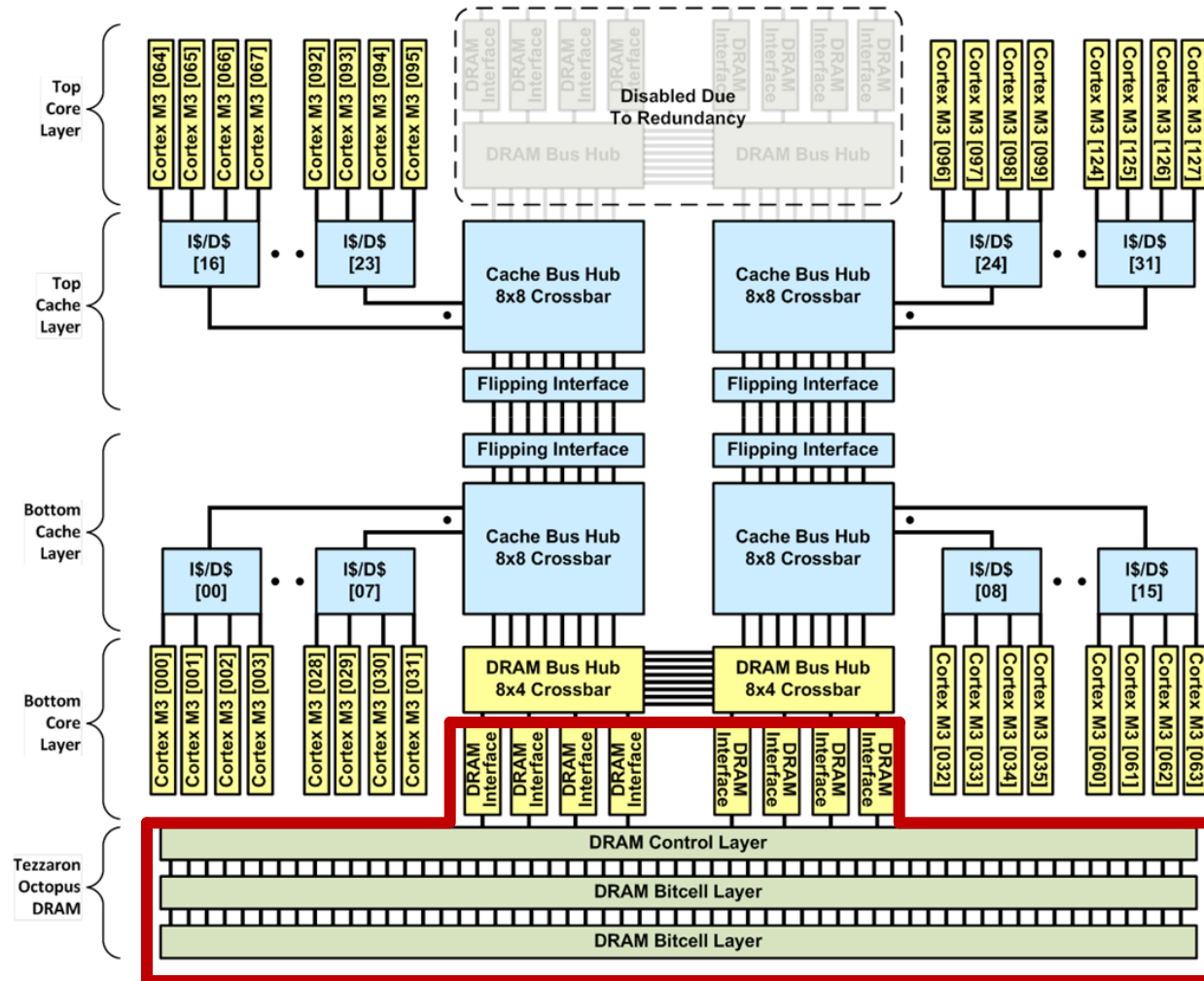
- 3D-Stacked DRAM
 - Tezzaron Octopus

- 1 control layer
 - 130nm CMOS

- 1 Gb bitcell layers
 - Up to two layers
 - DRAM process

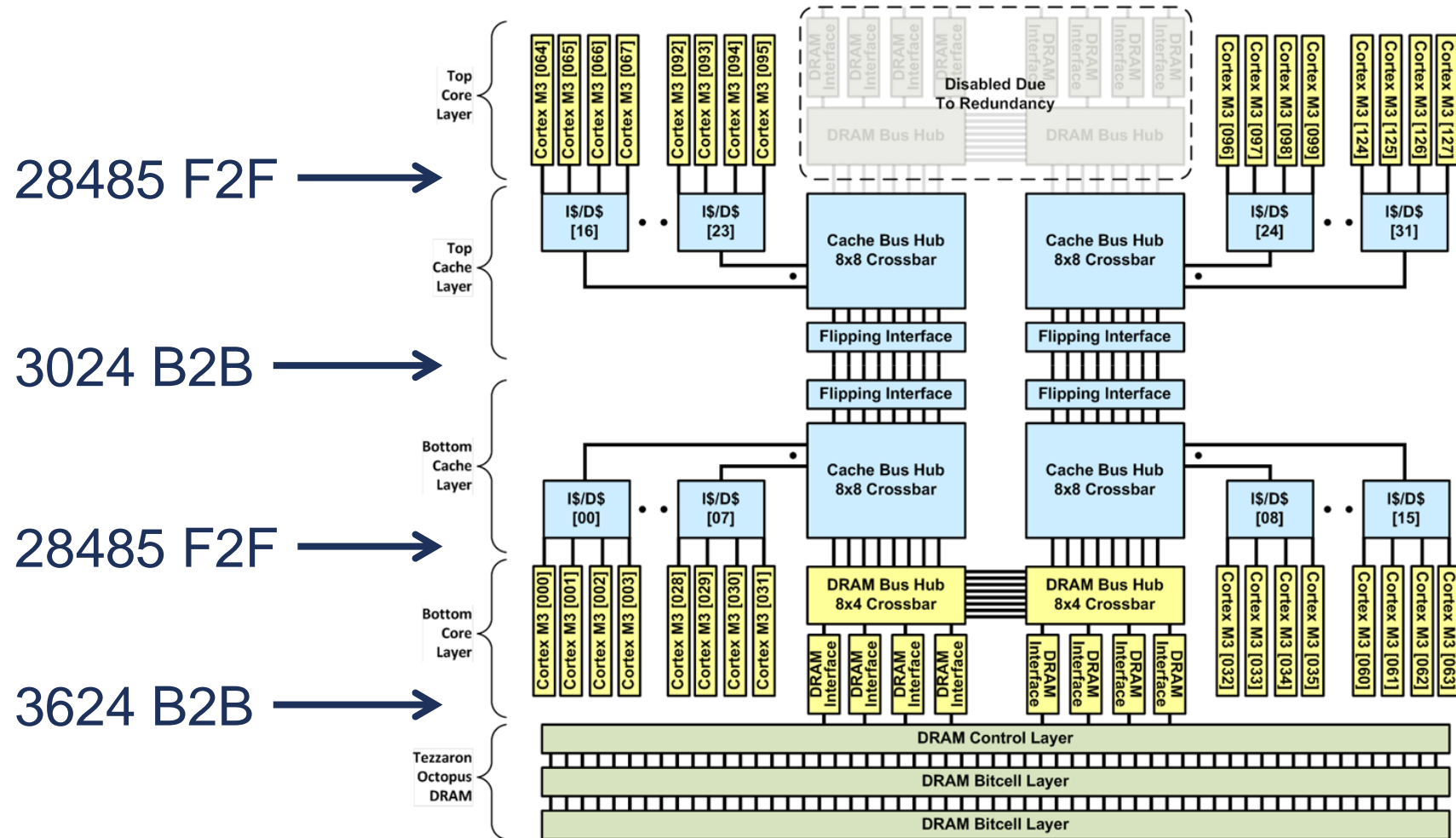
- 8x 128b DDR2 interfaces

- Operated at bus frequency (up to 500 MHz)

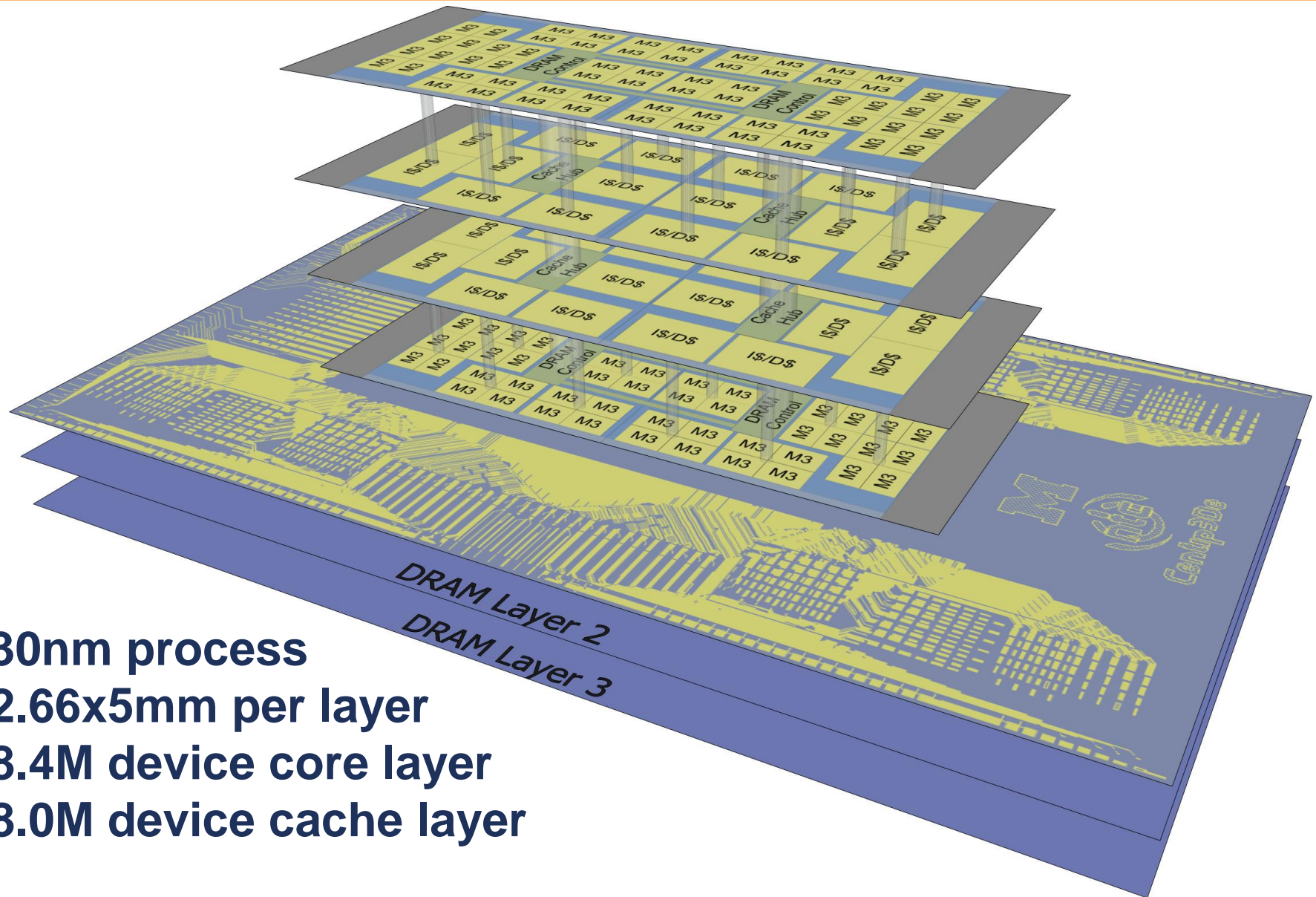


DRAM System

Centip3De System Overview

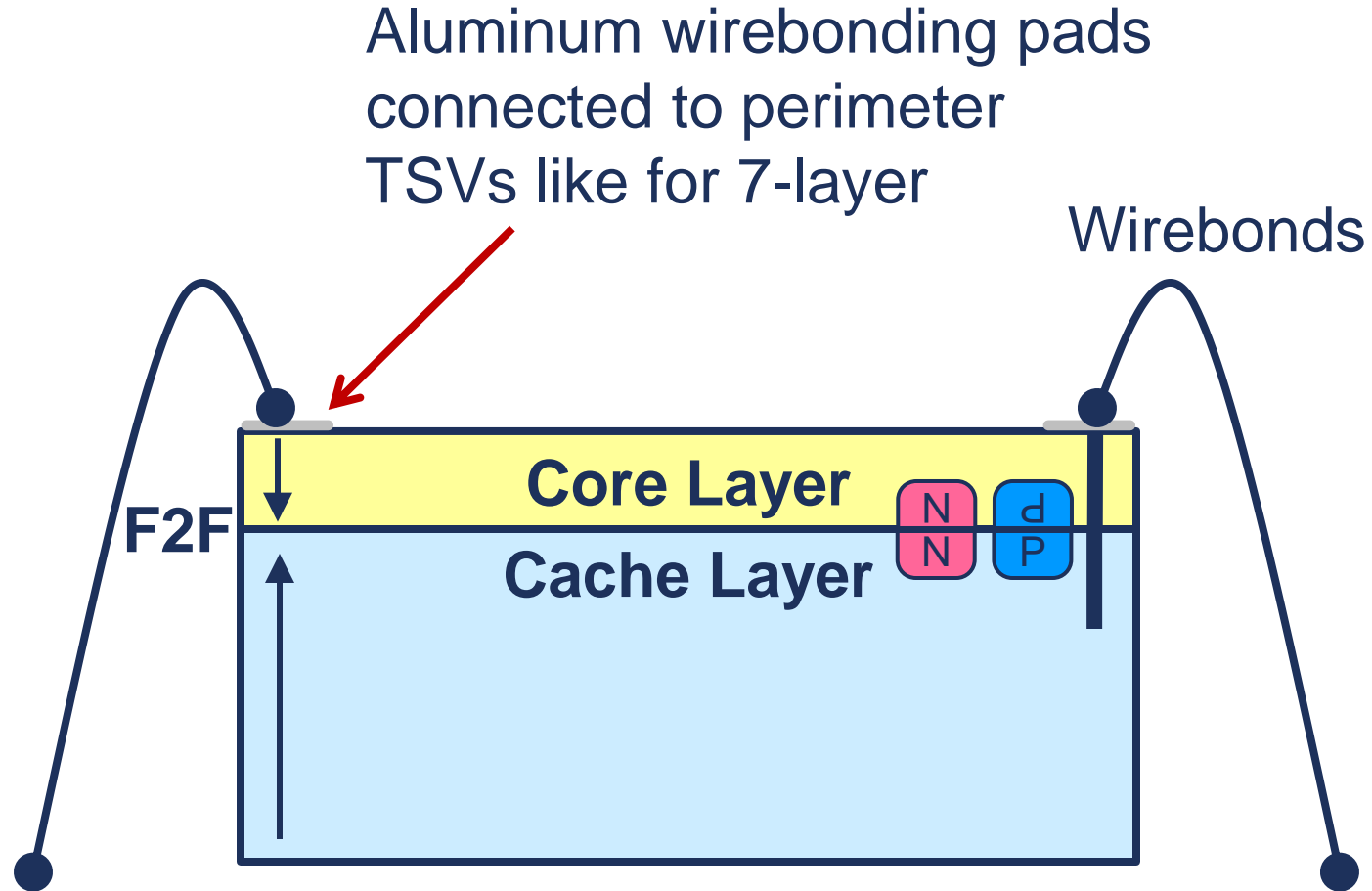


Centip3De System Overview



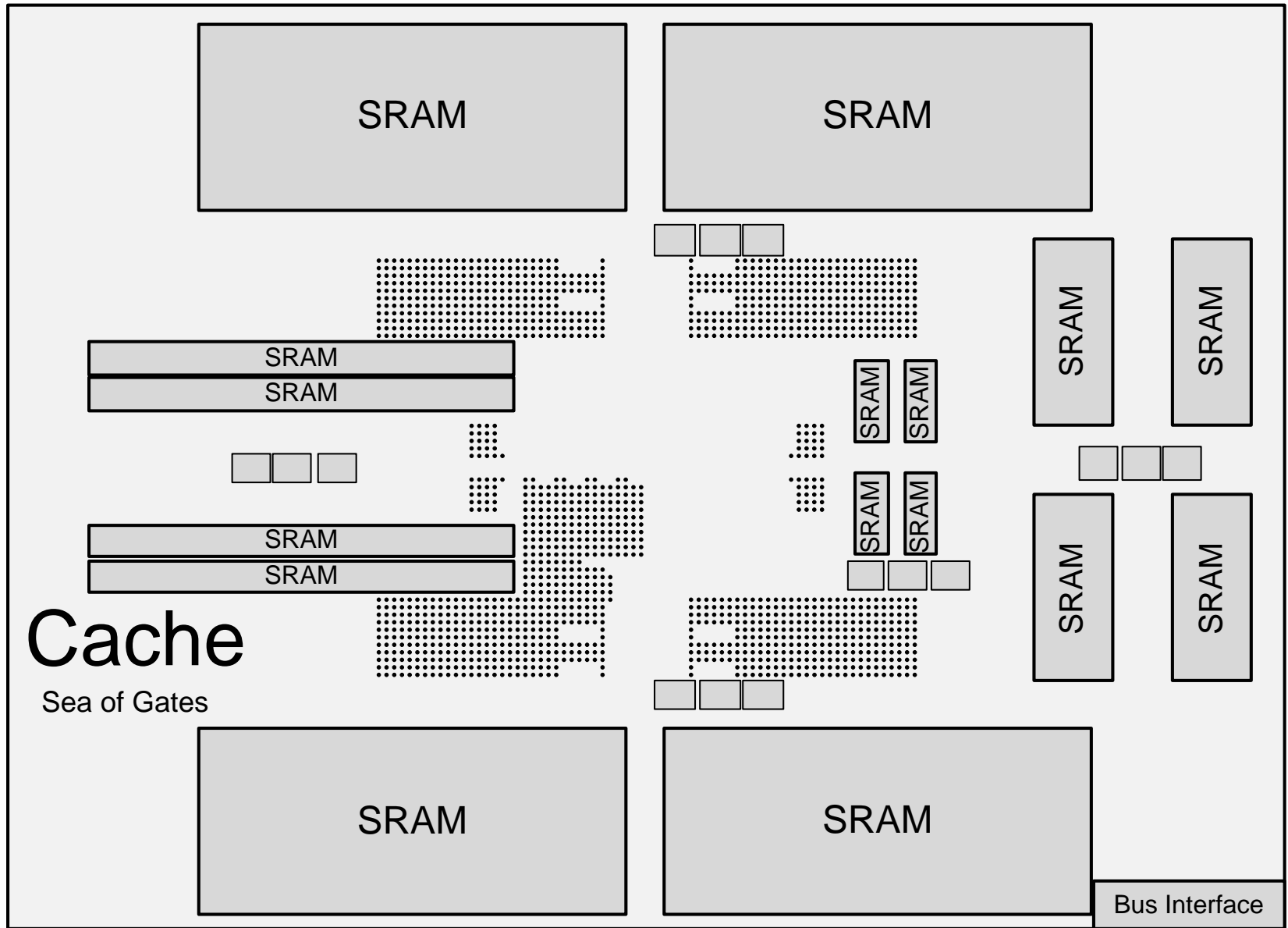
130nm process
12.66x5mm per layer
28.4M device core layer
18.0M device cache layer

2-Layer Stacking Process Evaluated

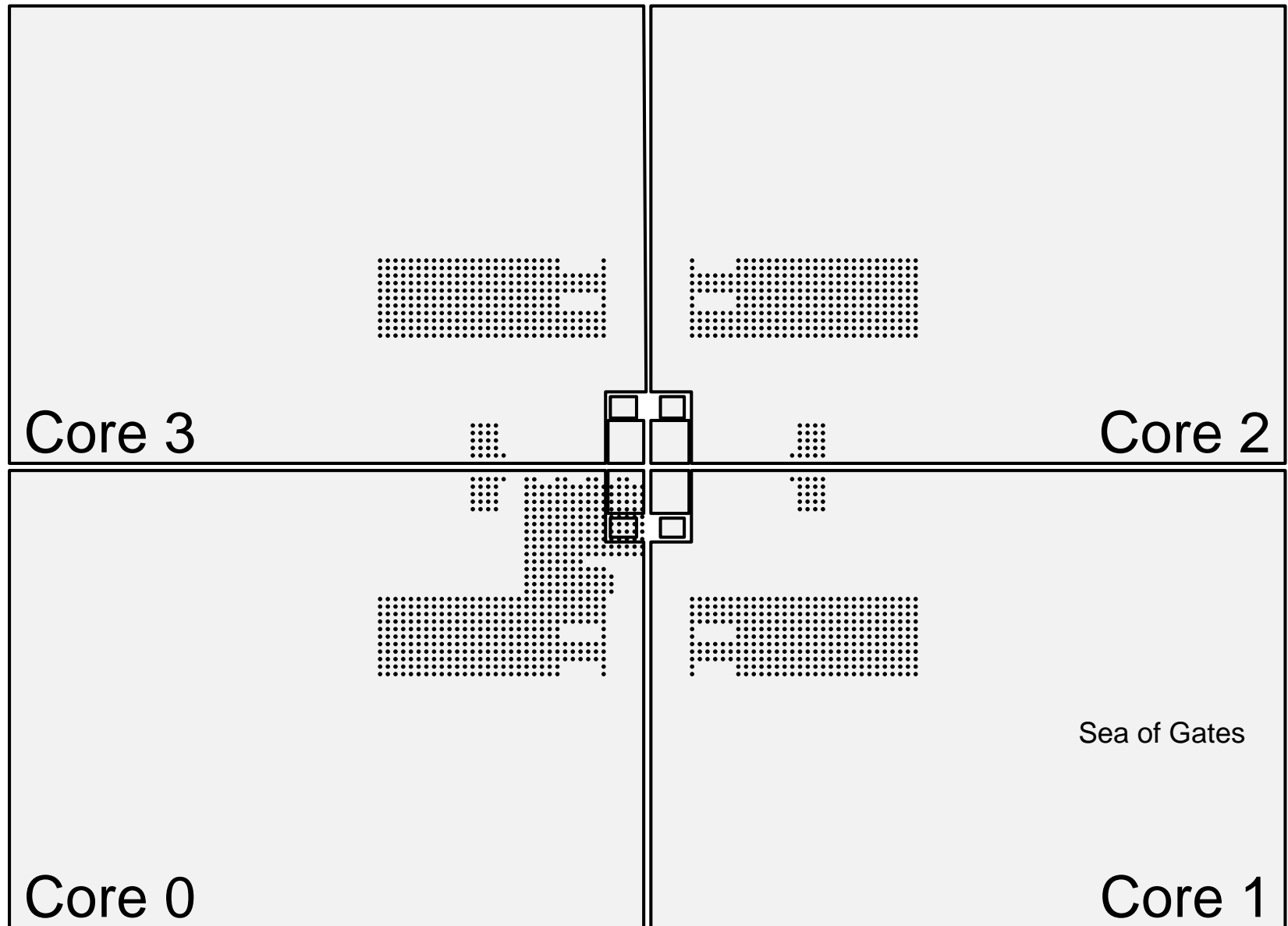


**For the measured 2-layer system,
aluminum wirebond pads were used instead**

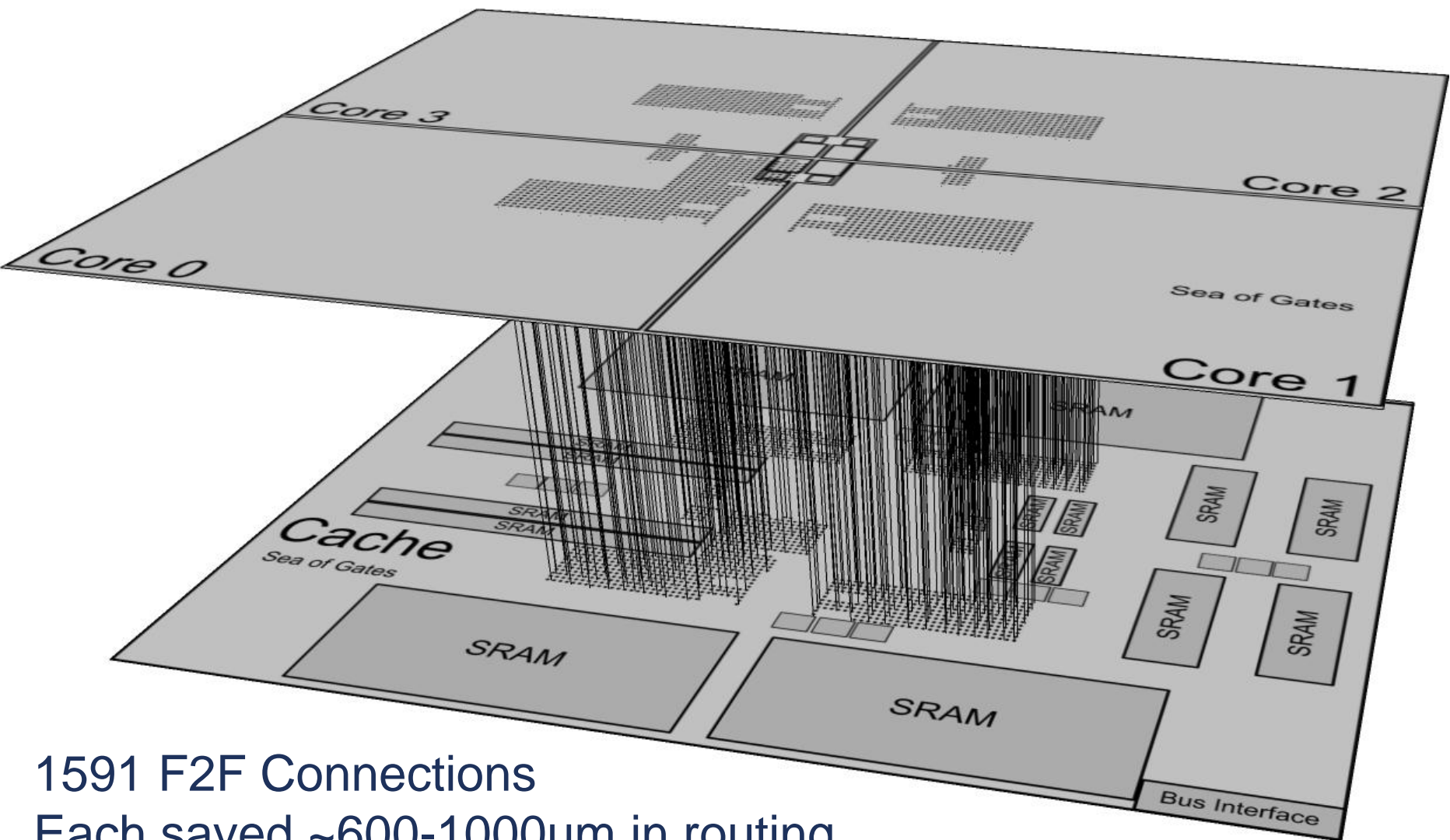
Cache 3D Connections



Core 3D Connections



Cluster 3D Connections

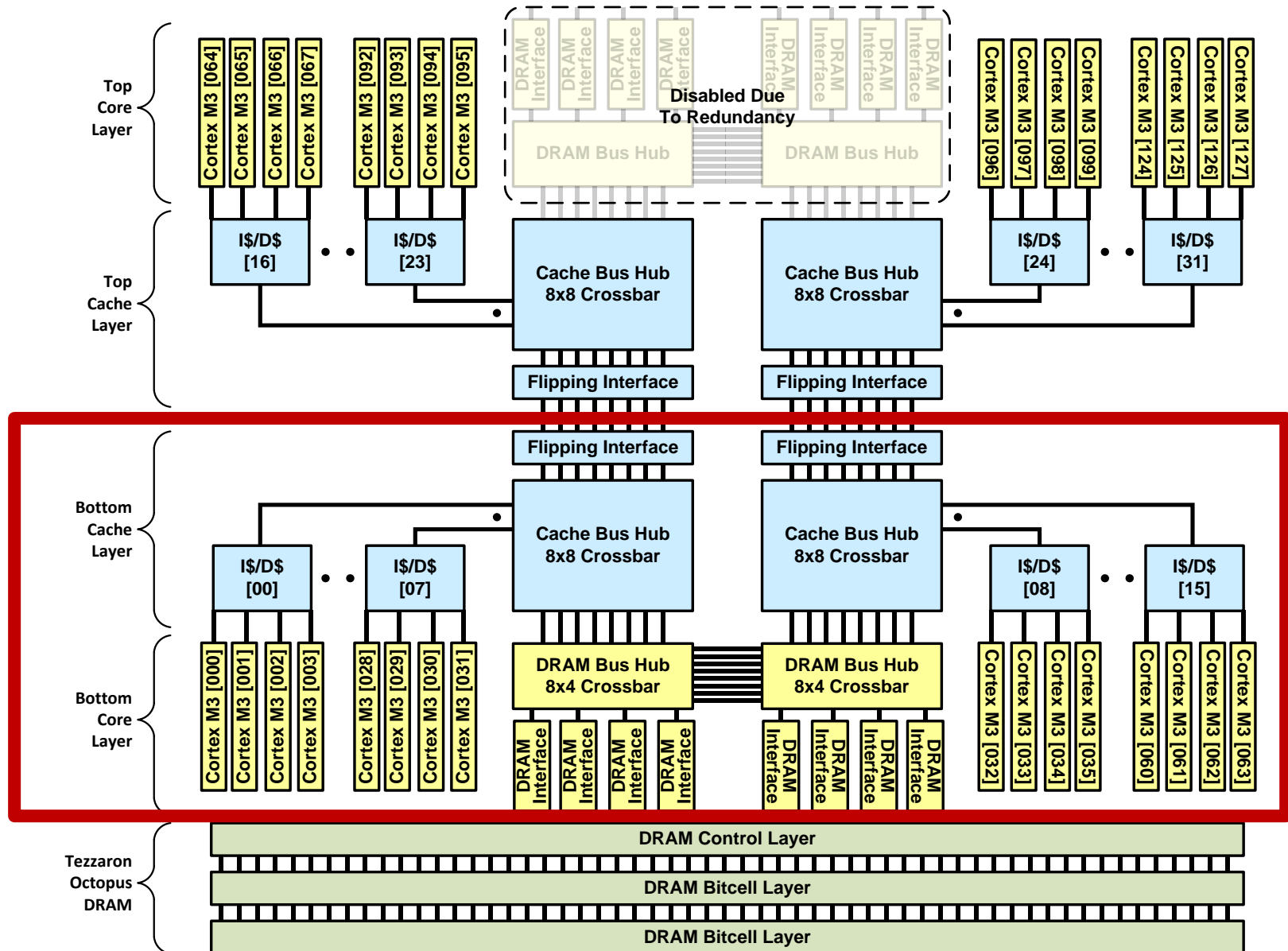


1591 F2F Connections

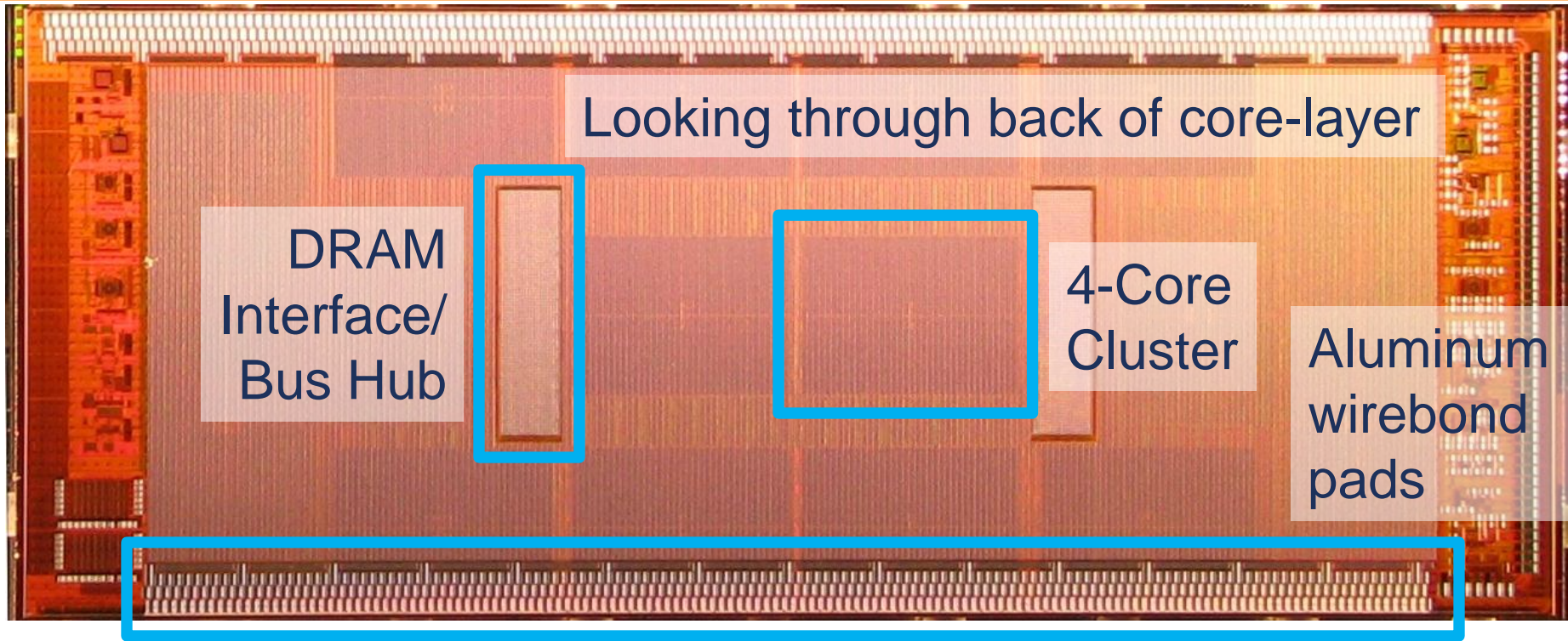
Each saved ~600-1000um in routing

Prevented wiring congestion around SRAMS

Silicon Results

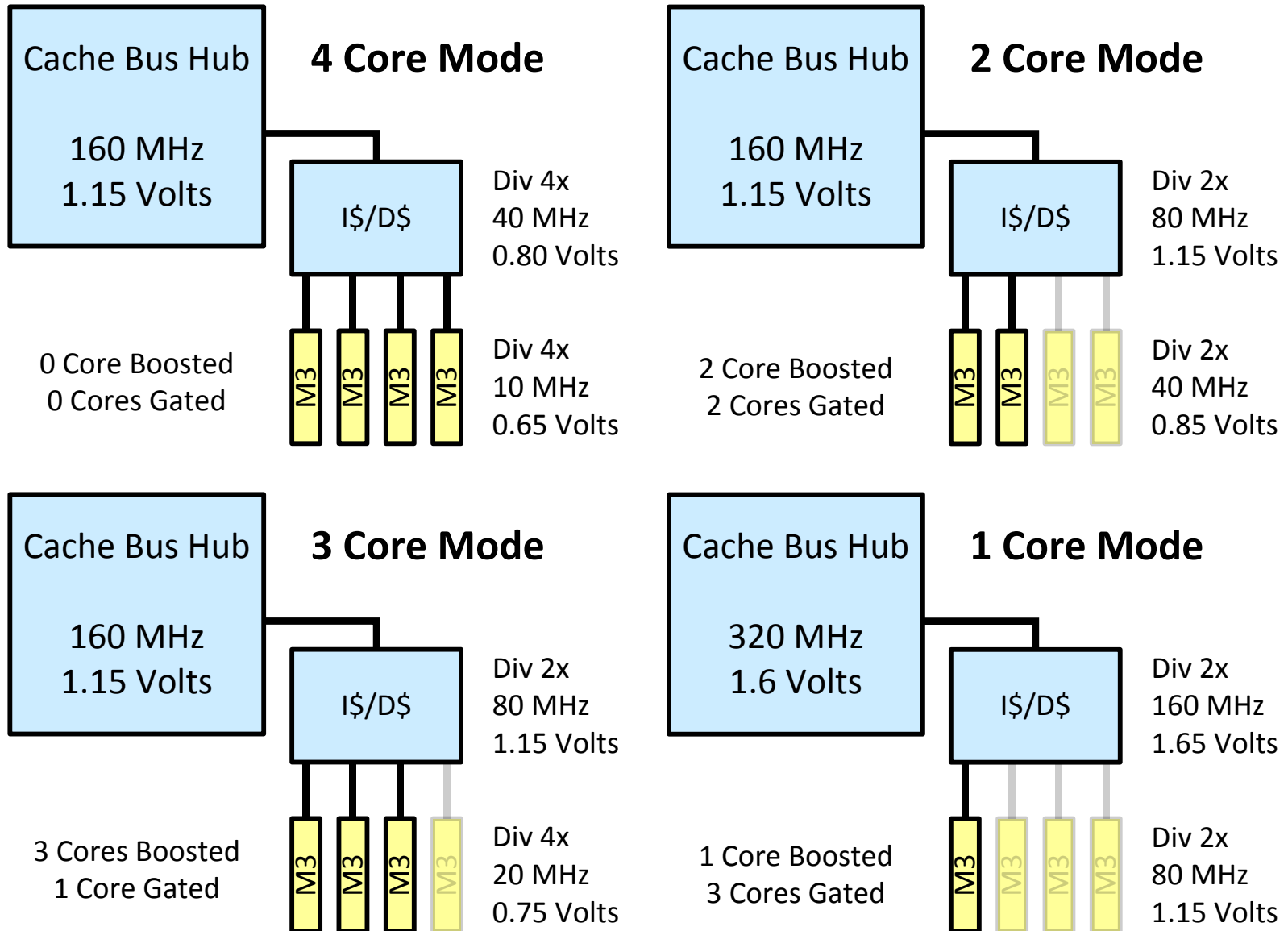


Die Shot



130nm process
12.66x5mm per layer
28.4M device core layer
18.0M device cache layer

System Configurations

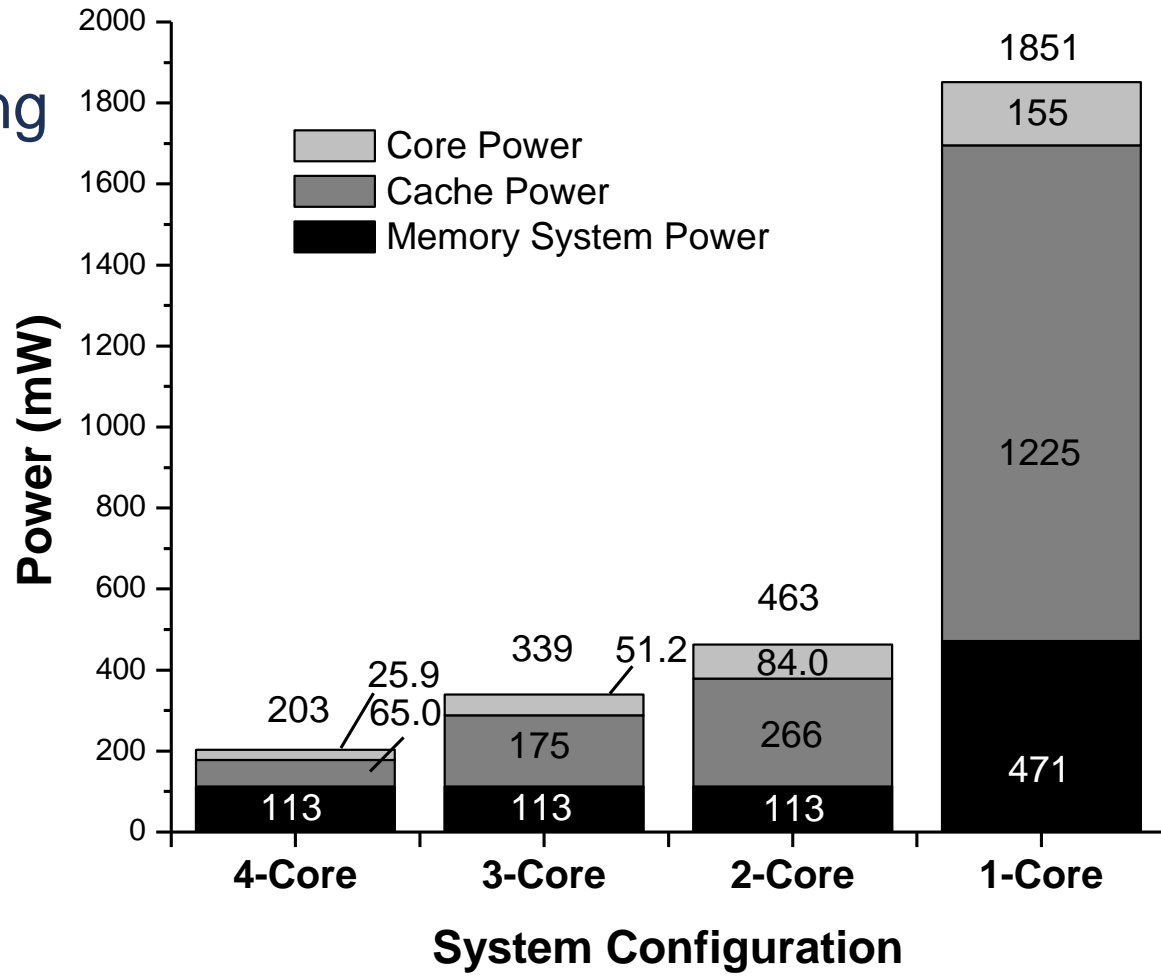


Measured Results

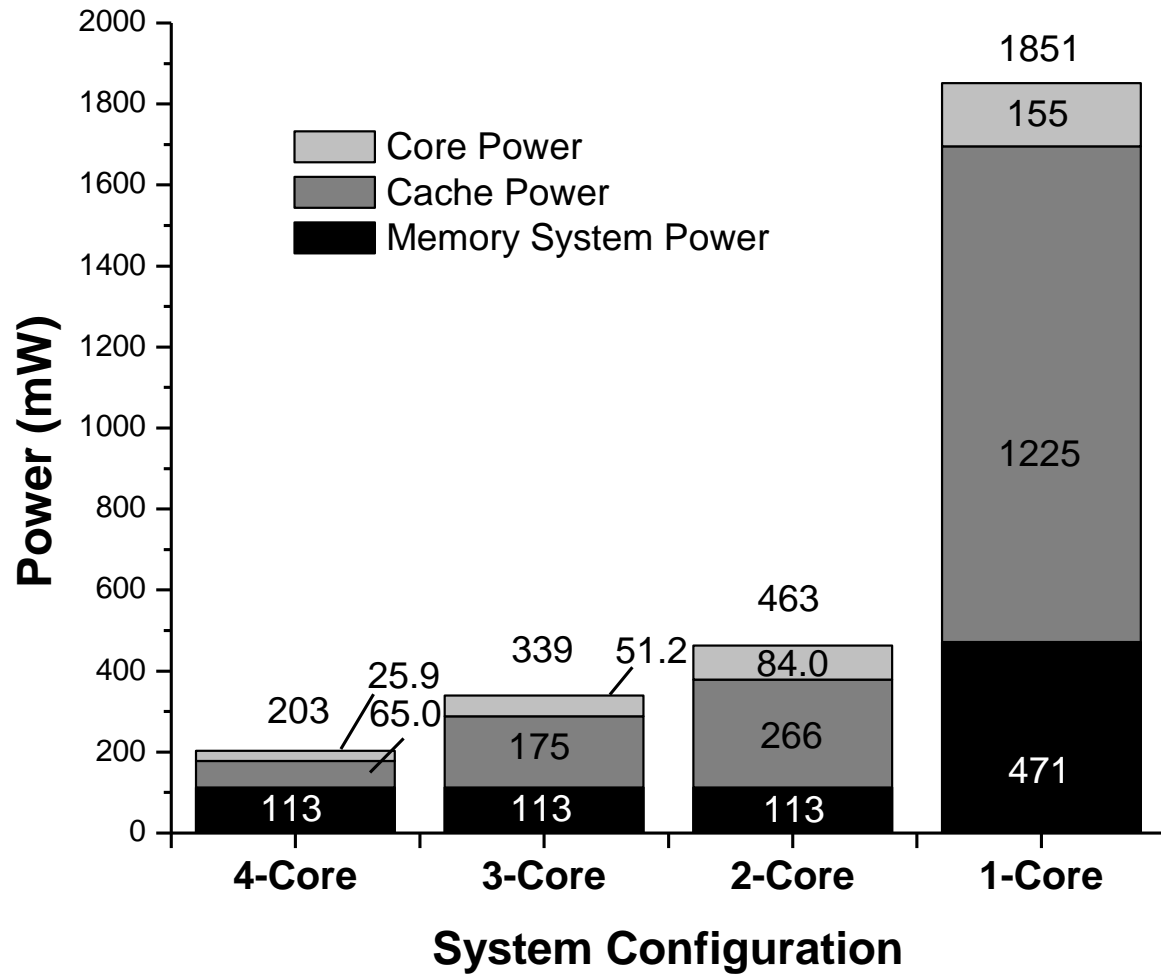
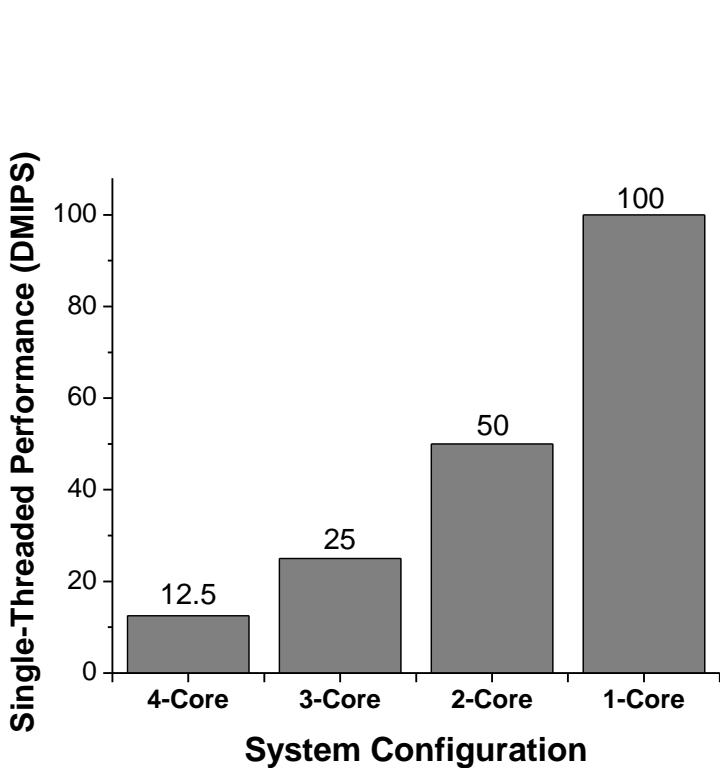
Boosting a single cluster to 1-core mode requires disabling, or down-boosting other clusters

1-core cluster:
= 15x 4-core clusters
= 6x 3-core clusters
= 4.5x 2-core clusters

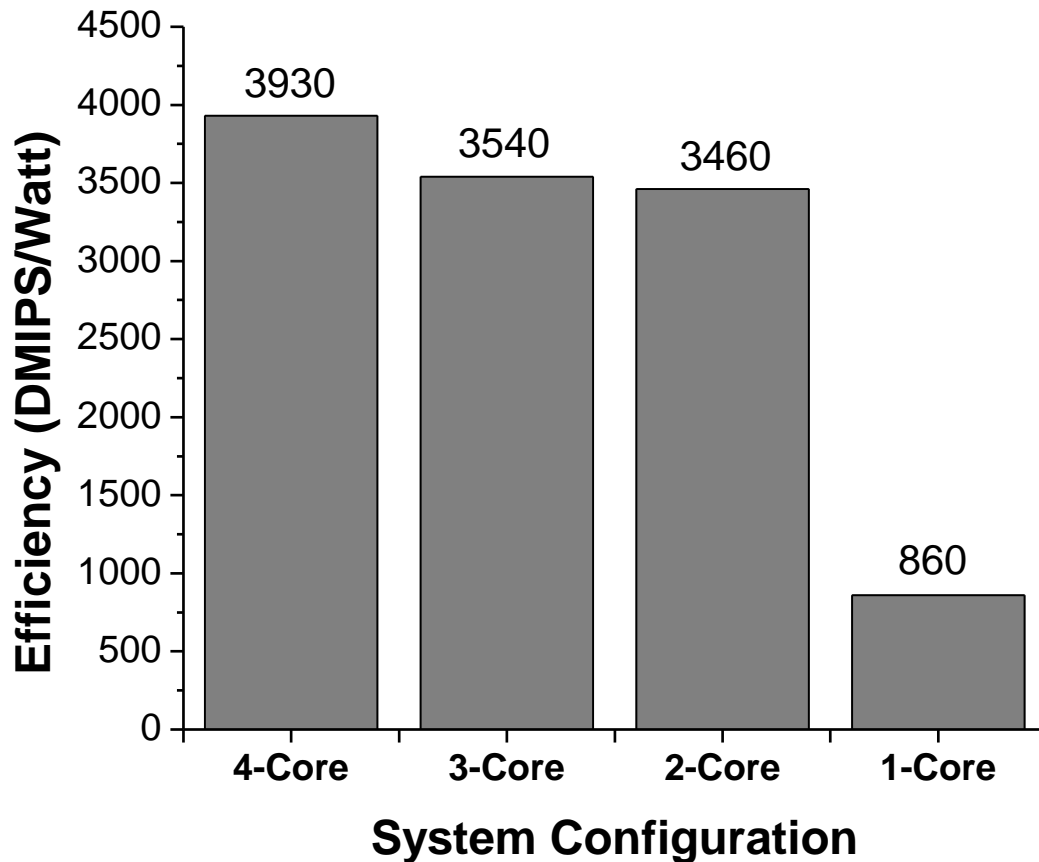
Baseline configuration depends on TDP and processing needs



Measured Results



Measured Results



Measured Results:

Centip3De – 3,930 (130nm)

Industry Comparison:

ARM A9 – 8,000 (40nm) [1]

Estimated Results:

Centip3De – 18,500 (45nm)

[1] <http://arm.com/products/processors/cortex-a/cortex-a9.php>, ARM Ltd, 2011.

Conclusion

- Near threshold computing (NTC)
 - Need low power solutions to maintain TDP
 - Achieves 10x energy efficiency => 10x more computation to give TDP
 - Offers optimum balance between performance and energy
 - Allows boosting for single threaded performance (Amdahl's law)
- Large scale 3D CMP demonstrated
 - 64 cores currently
 - 128 cores + DRAM in the future
 - 3D design shown to be feasible
- This work was funded and organized with the help of DARPA, Tezzaron, ARM, and the National Science Foundation