



# Trace Debugging in lowRISC

lowRISC release v0.3 with Open SoC Debug

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1. lowRISC and University of Cambridge
2. Open SoC Debug

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# lowRISC

lowRISC (<http://lowrisc.org>) is a not-for-profit community project providing complete open source SoC designs.

- Open source hardware: ‘Linux of the hardware world’
- Aim to offer complete SoCs that run Linux well
- Extensible platforms: Base design for derivative designs
- RISC-V ISA: Rocket, BOOM, and PULPino
- Produce volume silicon, low-cost development boards and reference designs: ‘Raspberry Pi for grownups’
- Research focuses: security and flexibility
- Core team based in Computer Laboratory, University of Cambridge

# lowRISC cont.

- Approaches
  - Simple and permissive licenses
  - Active community collaboration
  - Regular tape-outs with community contribution
  - Minion cores and shims:
    - Flexible/programmable IO, performance counters, accelerators, security co-processor, etc.
  - Tagged memory:
    - Security, performance monitoring, synchronization, etc.
- Progress
  - Initial funding from private donor, recently from Google, eventually self-sustaining
  - Two major code releases: *tagged memory* and *untethered SoC*

# Open SoC Debug

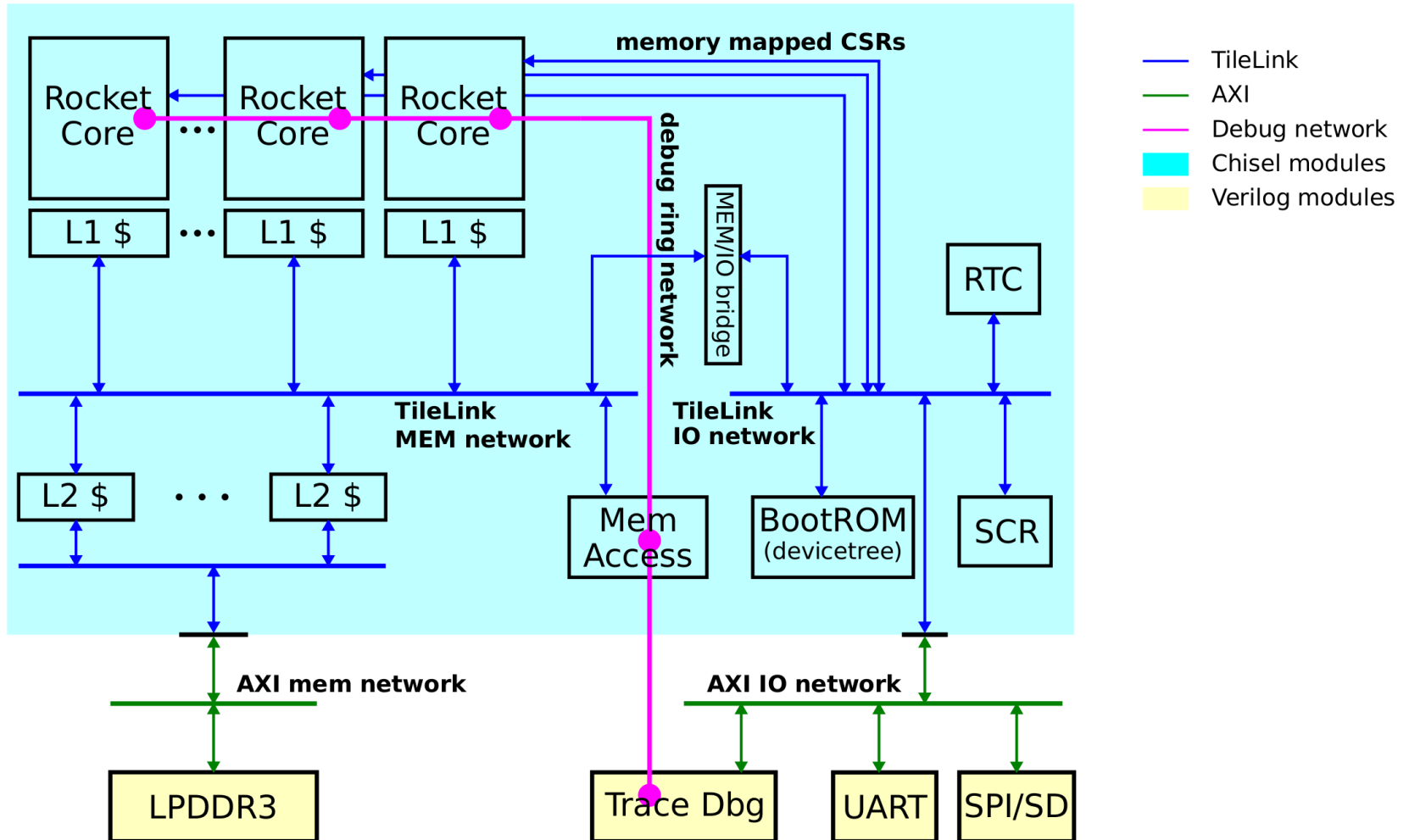
This is a combined release with lowRISC and Open SoC Debug.

- Open SoC Debug (<http://opensocdebug.org>)
  - An umbrella project for unified debug infrastructure
  - Provide shared building blocks, interfaces and tools among different platforms
- Design principles
  - **Abstraction from host interface connection:** 16-bit parallel connection provided by Glip (<http://www.glip.io>) over UART/USB/JTAG/Ethernet
  - **Easy adoption:** Modular design of debug modules
  - **Unified on-chip communication:** Packet-switched on-chip network connecting all debug components
  - **Functionality:** On-chip trace processing and off-chip trace analyses

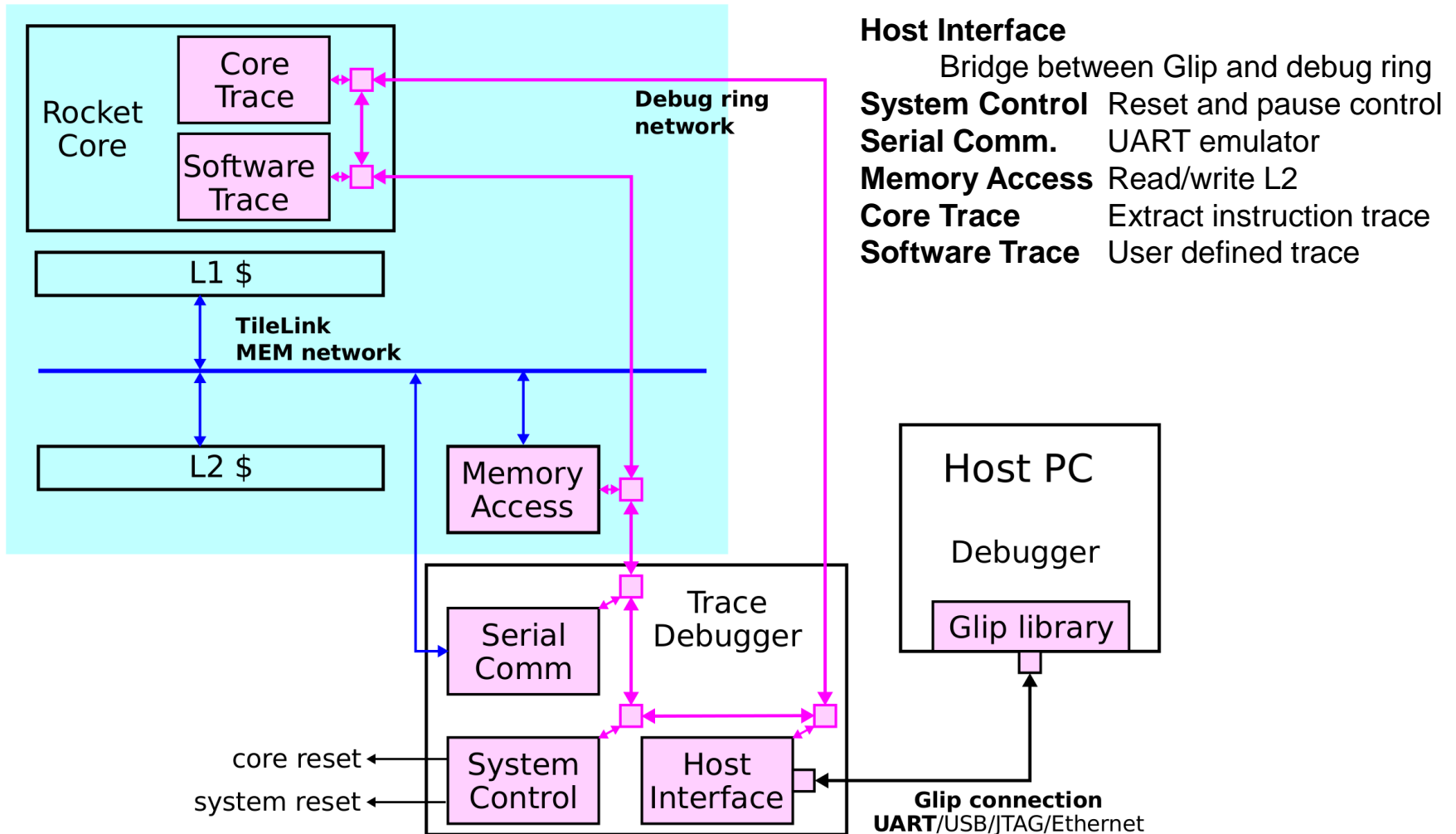
# Trace Debugging

- What is trace debugging
  - Collect instruction and user-defined traces for on/off chip analysis
  - Unlike run-control debugging
  - Non-intrusive, no interruption, minimal performance overhead
- Why use trace debugging
  - Multicore: timing, synchronization, race condition, etc.
  - Detect performance inefficiency
  - Complementary to run-control debugging
  - Light-weight instrumentation

# Overall Structure



# Trace Debugger Internals



# Enumeration & System Control

- System Enumeration
  - Each debug module has a unique ID used as destination for debug packets
  - Fixed ID for **Host Interface** (0) and **System Control** (1)
  - **System Control** has the total number of modules and communication parameters of the on-chip debug network
  - Each debug module has a set of compulsory registers: type, vendor, version
  - Host side debug software is then able to discover all modules by enumeration
- System Control
  - Total number of modules and parameters for debug network
  - Set/Reset system and processor cores



# Memory Access & Serial Comm.

- Memory Access
  - Provide a coherent access to L2
  - Allow debugger to read/write memory/cache
  - Allow load elf (program) or binary data
- Serial Comm.
  - Emulate a UART16550 IP.
  - Allow UART communication through debugger (share debugger & UART cable)
  - Can be instantiated multiple times if needed

# Core Trace

- Function: collect information from the core execution
  - Reconstruct program flow
  - Verify register values
  - Performance analysis
- Trace collection
  - JAL (function call), jump and branch, change of privilege modes
  - ToDo: more traces and run-time configurable filters
- Trace event generation
  - Packetized with timestamp, send to host over debug network
  - Current: Simple overflow handling (drop but record #drops)
  - Future:
    - Better network flow control / QoS
    - Circular buffering and trace recording to DRAM

# Example Core Trace

```
# time  event
06570d02 enter  init_tls
06570d22 enter  memcpy
06570d67 leave  memcpy
06570d76 enter  memset
06570dae leave  memset
06570dcd leave  memset
06570dd5 leave  init_tls
06570ddb enter  thread_entry
06570e22 leave  thread_entry
06570e28 enter  main
06570e60 enter  trace_event0
06570e91 leave  trace_event0
06570e96 enter  trace_event1
06570ea9 leave  trace_event1
06570eb3 enter  trace_event2
06570eca leave  trace_event2
06570ee3 leave  main
06571085 enter  exit
065710b3 enter  syscall
06571131 change mode to 3
065711ba enter  handle_trap
0657127e enter  tohost_exit
Overflow, missed 12 events
Overflow, missed 25 events
Overflow, missed 28 events
Overflow, missed 28 events
Overflow, missed 28 events
```

# Software Trace

- Function: minimally-invasive code instrumentation
  - Light-weighted alternative to printf()
  - Performance measurement between code points, etc.
  - Can be release unchanged (safety) with minimal performance impact
- Thread-safe trace procedure
  - A trace event: (id, value)
  - Write to \$a0 (value), tracked by **Software Trace**
  - Write to a dedicated CSR with (id), which triggers an event
- Trace event generation (same with **Core Trace**)
  - Trace event generation
  - Packetized with timestamp, send to host over debug network
  - Future: Better network flow control / QoS

# Example Software Trace

- Trace DMA durations

```
#define TRACE(id,v) \
asm volatile ("mv a0,%0": : "r" ((uint64_t)v) : "a0"); \
asm volatile ("csrw 0x8f0, %0" :: "r"(id));
```

```
#define TRACE_DMA_BUFFER(b) TRACE(0x1001,b)
#define TRACE_DMA_START(i,s,b) TRACE(0x1002,i) \
                                TRACE(0x1002,s) \
                                TRACE(0x1002,b)
#define TRACE_DMA_FINISH(i) TRACE(0x1003,i)
```

```
uint8_t *buffer = malloc(42);
TRACE_DMA_BUFFER(buffer);

TRACE_DMA_START(slotid,src,buffer);
dma_transfer(slotid,incoming,buffer);
TRACE_DMA_FINISH(slotid);
```

Header

Source



```
# time id value
00002590 0x1001 0xe20c000ac20fc588
00002593 0x1002 0x0000000000000001
00002595 0x1002 0xffff0800000c0000
00002597 0x1002 0xe20c000ac20fc588
00002985 0x1003 0x0000000000000001
```

Trace Log



Visualization

# Debug Procedure

## Command Line Interface

```
# reset and pause cores
reset -halt
# load a test program
mem loadelf test.elf 3
# enable core trace
ctm log ctm.log 4
# enable software trace
stm log stm.log 5
# open a terminal (xterm)
terminal 2
# run the test
start
```

<u>ID</u>	<u>Module</u>
0	Host interface
1	System Control
2	Ser. Comm.
3	Mem. Access
4	Core Trace
5	Software Trace

## Python Script

```
import opensocdebug
import sys

if len(sys.argv) < 2:
    print "Usage: runelf.py <filename>"
    exit(1)

elffile = sys.argv[1]

osd = opensocdebug.Session()

osd.reset(halt=True)

for m in osd.get_modules("STM"):
    m.log("stm{:03x}.log".format(m.get_id()))

for m in osd.get_modules("CTM"):
    m.log("ctm{:03x}.log".format(m.get_id()),
elffile)

for m in osd.get_modules("MAM"):
    m.loadelf(elffile)

osd.start()
```

# Extra Features of the Debugger

- Uniform debug environment for both Sim/FPGA
  - DPI based Glip interface for simulation.
  - Support UART and trace debugging in both RTL and FPGA simulation.
- Python frontend
  - Allow further tool integration (deliver as a python library).
  - Off-line trace analysis.
  - Easy command extension.

# Future Work for Debugger

- Improve trace collection:
  - Trace compression: Reduce event number and size
  - Trace filtering: Run-time filter configuration
  - Trace triggering: (Cross-) trigger events
  - GUI tools for better trace analysis
- Integrate run-control solution(s):
  - Traditional GDB-like debugger
  - SiFive, Roa Logic & PULP
  - Hopefully support both through a common interface
- On-chip trace processing (research):
  - Analyse/process traces on-chip possibly on minion cores
  - Get from basic information to knowledge!



# Available Boot Procedure

- Load from debugger (tethered)
  - Start FPGA and connect it with debugger
  - Load program (Linux) by debugger
  - Start the SoC from debugger
  
- Load from SD (untethered)
  - FPGA starts from an on-chip boot RAM
  - Boot program load program (Linux) from SD
  - Jump to the program loaded

# Release v0.3

- Release available in July
  - A tutorial  
<http://www.lowrisc.org/docs/debug-v0.3/>
  - GitHub repository  
<http://github.com/lowrisc/lowrisc-chip>
- Key features
  - Trace debugging
  - Low-cost FPGA board: Digilent NEXYS4-DDR
  - Latest updates from Rocket-chip (up to 06/2016)
  - Free development environment (Verilator + WebPACK)
  - Full set of scripts/Makefiles

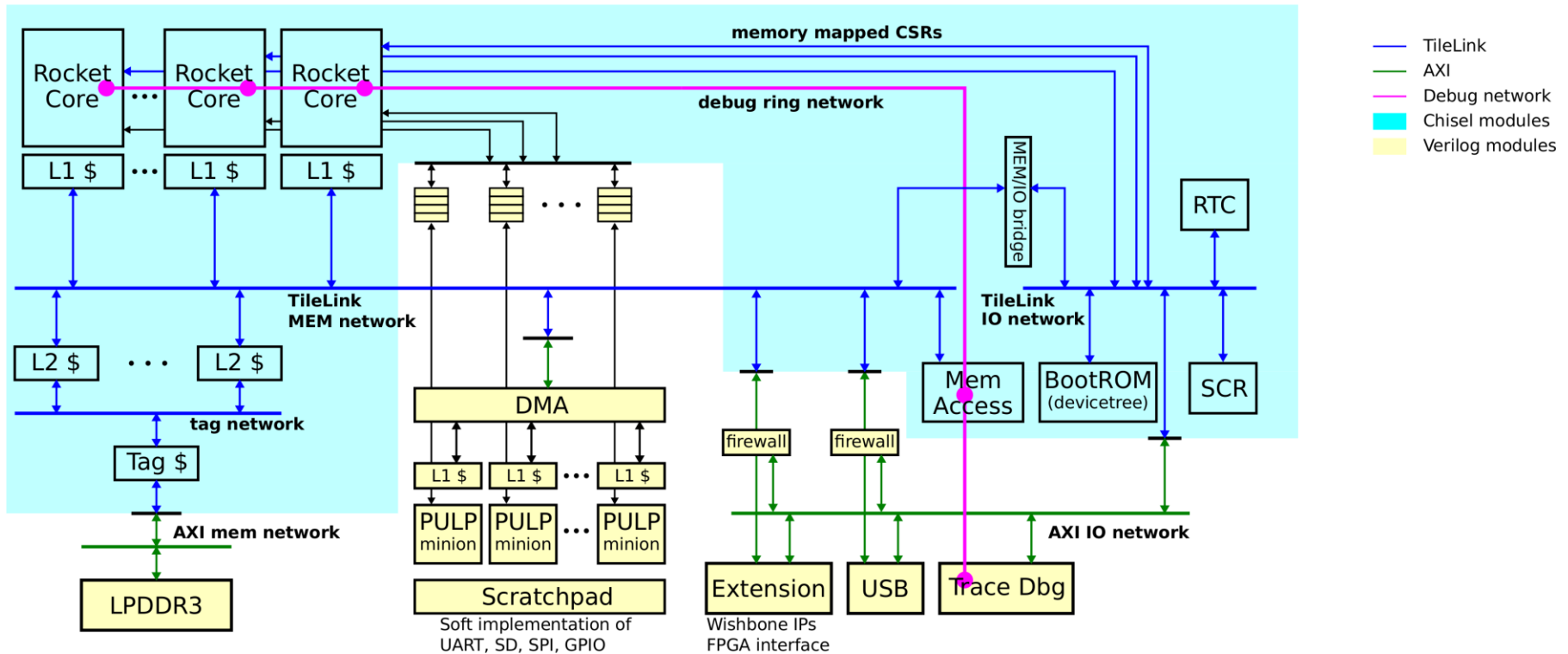
# Schedule for Future Releases

- April 2015: v0.1 basic tagged memory
- December 2015: v0.2 untethered SoC
- **July 2016: v0.3 trace debugger**
- Optimizing tag cache
- Run-time tag checking
- Integrating minion cores (PULP)

# General Updates from lowRISC

- Summer 2016
  - 4 IMC interns: video / 2-D acceleration / performance counter (tutorial/documentation)
  - 5 GSoC projects: xv6 port, DDRx controller, Arduino library port to PULPino, Musl libc, OP-TEE trusted execution environment
- lowRISC development
  - New hire to look at minion core concepts
  - Add tagged memory back to untethered SoC, thanks to Philipp Jantscher, Graz University of Technology
  - Shim implementation currently under-way (Clifford Wolf)

# Test Chip



Plan to finish the test chip RTL early 2017 and tape out afterwards.

# Get Involved

- All on GitHub, no hidden code.
- Submit pull request for bug fixes.
- Contact us for ideas, improvement, extensions.

Contribution is needed ...

**lowRISC:** Peripherals, testing, compiler, Linux kernel, benchmarking, etc.

**Open SoC Debug:** GUI, trace analysis, support for more SoC platforms.

## lowRISC

Website: <http://www.lowrisc.org/>  
Mail list: [lowrisc-dev@lists.lowrisc.org](mailto:lowrisc-dev@lists.lowrisc.org)  
GitHub: <https://github.com/lowrisc/>  
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## Open SoC Debug

Website: <http://opensocdebug.org/>  
Mail List: [opensocdebug@lists.librecores.org](mailto:opensocdebug@lists.librecores.org)  
GitHub: <https://github.com/opensocdebug/>