



Architecture specification

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Abstract

This document is a description of the architecture of the Verilog documentation tool that is to be developed for the department of electrical engineering at Linköping University. As such, it is an extension to the requirements specification [Hilding, 2005] detailing the architecture of a system implementing the given requirements.

The tool will be realized as an extension to Doxygen, an existing tool for generation of documentation from code written in C, C++, Java and a handful of other languages.

This document describes the architecture of the system, as well as the design decisions that have been made in order to arrive at this architecture. The intended readers are the developers of the system as well as the customer.

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Document history

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2005-09-30	0.2	Document revised after internal inspection. Corrected some spelling errors and added a reference chapter.	Johan Lissing
2005-10-07	0.3	<p>Document revised after opposition.</p> <p>The tree printer module has been added. The verilog front-end module has been divided into sub-modules and a description of the AST datatype has been added along with an example tree (section 4.3.5) and an example of the debug output (section 4.3.6). The module interfaces chapter has been extended with a definition of the comment formats allowed in the source code.</p> <p>Minor changes and clarifications have been introduced in most parts of the document.</p>	Jonas Norling

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1 Introduction

This chapter contains information about the disposition and contents of this document. It is intended to work as a guide for the reader, as well as for anyone introducing modifications to this document.

1.1 Purpose of this document

This architecture specification is intended to serve as an overview of the system that is to be constructed. In this document the architecture of the system is described, as well as the design decisions that have been made in order to arrive at this architecture.

This document describes what is needed to implement the requirements in the requirement specification. A more detailed and careful design will be made in the design specification, using the architecture described in this document.

1.2 Document overview

This section describes the contents of each chapter of the document.

1.2.1 Introduction

Describes the disposition and contents of the architecture specification.

1.2.2 System overview

Gives a background of the project and an overview of the system to be developed.

1.2.3 Design decisions

Presents important design decisions affecting the architecture.

1.2.4 Architectural description

Contains a description of the architecture of the Doxygen and the Verilog documentation tool.

1.2.5 Module interfaces

Describes the interfaces between the modules in the system.

1.2.6 File formats

Lists and describes the file formats that will be used by the Verilog documentation tool.

1.2.7 Code libraries and components

This chapter gives a list and an introduction to components that will or might be used in the product.

1.2.8 Design guidelines

This chapter contains guidelines and recommendations for implementing the system.

1.2.9 Connection to requirements

Maps the requirements from the requirements specification to the parts of the architecture that implement them.

1.2.10 References

Lists all referenced resources. Text within square brackets refer to this section.

1.3 Related documents

In this document, many references are made to the requirements specification [Hilding 2005]. The following things can be found in that document, apart from the basic requirements of the system: a brief description of the project, a use case, product components to be shipped and tests for each requirement.

1.4 Reading instructions

To get a grasp of what the system is expected to do, read chapter 2 "System overview". For an understanding of the proposed architecture, read chapter 2 to chapter 5. The part on design decisions can be safely skipped. In order to get a grip on how to implement the system, reading the whole document is recommended. You are not expected to have read the requirements specification, but it is recommended for a full understanding of this document.

For evaluation of traceability and the connection to the requirements specification, chapter 9 is recommended reading along with the referenced sections.

The references made to the Doxygen source code in this document are to version 1.4.4. See [Doxygen] on how to obtain the source code.

1.5 Document dependencies

Changes in these documents might result in changes in the architecture specification:

- Requirements specification [Hilding, 2005]

Changes in this architecture specification might result in changes in the following documents:

- Project plan [Jormedal, 2005]
- Design specification [Lissing, 2005]
- Technical documentation [Lissing, 2005]
- Test plan [Åberg, 2005]

1.6 Distribution

This document should be distributed to:

- Hans Olsén and Johan Fagerström, examiners of the architecture specification.

- Per Karlström, the customer.
- The project folder.

1.7 Glossary

AST -- Abstract Syntax Tree. A tree describing the structure of a source file.

Parser -- A piece of software that determines the syntactic structure of a language.

Lexical analyzer -- (lexer or scanner) A piece of software that breaks down the input into word-like tokens.

Language front-end -- The part of a compiler or similar tool that reads and parses source code, generating an AST.

Bison -- The GNU parser generator (a variant of YACC). See [Bison].

Flex -- The GNU lexical analyzer generator (a variant of lex). See [Flex].

BNF -- Backus-Naur Form. A way to describe a context-free grammar, useful for describing programming languages.

2 System overview

This chapter gives a background of the project and an overview of the system to be developed. See the requirements specification [Hilding, 2005] for further details.

2.1 Background

Verilog [Verilog] is a common hardware design language (HDL) used by electrical engineers worldwide and specifically by the customer. Structurally, it resembles normal computer programming languages but naturally it has some special features and data structures, such as modules, wires and so on.

A documentation tool is a program that automatically creates documentation from source code files. The documentation gives the reader a good overview by showing relations between classes and brief descriptions of them.

While there are several documentation tools for the most popular computer programming languages, such as C++ and Java, there is no tool capable of documenting Verilog code.

2.2 Goal of project

This project will probably not have sufficient resources to produce a complete Verilog documentation tool. The goal with this project is therefore to make a foundation for a documentation tool and to investigate whether this could be done using existing tools for other languages, e.g. Doxygen [Doxygen].

All findings, research and/or source code, will be extensively documented for future projects on the same topic.

2.3 Users and environment

Our product is not meant to be a complete and usable tool, but merely a foundation for such. The final product, should it ever be developed, is targeted at employees at the department of electrical engineering, Linköping University, with programming experience. The program will be run at their computer system, which is mainly UNIX and GNU/Linux.

Use cases detailing the intended uses of the system can be found in the requirements specification.

2.4 Properties of the system

The focus of the developed system is on extendability and documentation of the implementation. Completeness, usability, user interface and performance are not considered very important.

3 Design decisions

In this chapter, important design decisions that have been made during the work on the architecture are presented.

3.1 Platform

Early on in the negotiations with the customer, Doxygen was introduced as the preferred platform to build the Verilog documentation tool upon. Some time has been invested in investigating Doxygen's suitability as a base for this project, resulting in the decision to make this product an extension to said program. This decision represents a great risk, as we are very dependent on Doxygen's flexibility and extendability, but is in line with the customer's intentions and goal of the project.

Doxygen runs on all major platforms (of which UNIX and Windows are of interest in this project) due to the use of portable code and Qt as a portability layer. The code written in the scope of this project should use the same mechanisms in order to be portable. Development will be made on UNIX and tests will be run on GNU/Linux during development, thus satisfying requirement F-4 (see section 9.1 "Basic functional requirements").

See [Doxygen] for further details.

3.2 Languages and tools

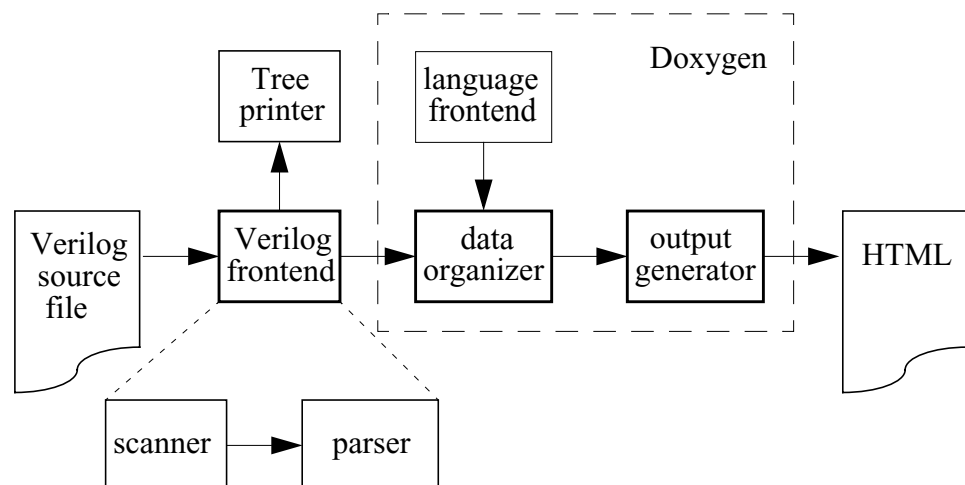
The decision to use Doxygen as a base for the product implies using C++ as a programming language. This is also the wish of the customer and is given as a requirement in the requirements specification. Flex (the GNU lexical analyser generator) and possibly Bison (the GNU parser generator) will be used to generate C/C++ code for the Verilog parser.

See [Flex] and [Bison] for more information.

4 Architectural description

The system will be realised as an extension to and modification of Doxygen. This means that many design and architectural decisions already have been made for us.

This chapter describes Doxygen's architecture and the changes that will be made to it. An overview of this architecture is presented in figure 1.



Figur 1: An overview of the proposed architecture. Doxygen is modified and extended to be able to parse and generate documentation from Verilog files. The main modules in the system are the Verilog front-end (containing a scanner/lexical analyzer and a parser), the data organizer and the output generator.

4.1 Doxygen's architecture

Doxygen is roughly composed of a language front-end, a data organizer and a number of output generators. The parts have the following roles:

- **Language front-end:** This module is used to parse source code files in a multitude of languages such as C, C++, Java and IDL. It is implemented as a monolithic lexical analyzer and parser in Flex. An abstract syntax tree (AST) is generated from each source file.
- **Data organizer:** This is a loosely coupled set of functions used to extract hierarchies from the AST. Lists of files, functions, classes, namespaces etc are extracted in this module.
- **Output generators:** This is a number of classes used to generate output in formats such as HTML, LaTeX, man files and so on.
- **The program flow** is driven by Doxygen's main function performing a few basic steps: reading the configuration, parsing of input files and generation of output files. Output generation is mainly driven by the nodes in the AST.

4.2 Our architecture, an extension to Doxygen

For each module, these changes and extensions are covered by this project. See section 5 "Module interfaces" for definitions of the module interfaces. The syntax tree datatype is described in section 4.3 "The AST datatype".

4.2.1 Verilog front-end

Input: A Verilog file

Output: A syntax tree

This is a new module replacing or working alongside Doxygen's language frontend. It implements Doxygen's abstract ParserInterface class.

The Verilog front-end will be written in C++, Flex (scanner) and Bison (parser). It will output an abstract syntax tree describing the input code (see section 4.3 "The AST datatype"). Apart from parsing the Verilog code, comments in the source code are extracted and passed to Doxygen's comment parser.

For testing and verification purposes the Verilog front-end will be written as a self-sustaining module, making it easy to write a test framework that will output the generated AST in a human-readable form.

The Verilog front-end is divided into two sub-modules, a scanner and a parser.

4.2.1.1 Sub-module scanner

Input: A Verilog file

Output: A string of tokens

This is the scanner, also called lexical analyzer. It will be written using Flex. Flex reads an inputfile with syntax rules for a specific language, in our case Verilog, and produces a scanner implemented in C/C++.

The scanner produced by Flex divides the Verilog code into tokens according to the Verilog syntax and produces a string of these tokens. The scanner uses an extended set of regular expressions to scan the source code, see [Flex].

4.2.1.2 Sub-module parser

Input: A string of tokens.

Output: A syntax tree

The parser uses the string of tokens produced by the scanner to generate a syntax tree.

As with the scanner, the parser is constructed from a file with rules, in this case grammar rules. The parser will be created with Bison, which produces a parser implemented in C/C++.

The BNF for the Verilog syntax is included in [Verilog].

4.2.2 Tree printer

Input: A syntax tree

Output: A textual description of the nodelist

The sole purpose of this module is to validate the output from the Verilog front-end module. Its input is the syntax tree generated by the parser sub-module. The tree printer formats and prints the contents of the syntax tree to the standard output. See section 4.3.6 "An output example" for a sample output.

4.2.3 Data organizer

Input: A syntax tree

Output: A number of lists and tables

This is a part of Doxygen. It generates lists and tables of files, classes, namespaces and so on from the extracted syntax tree. This module will have to be extended to handle new types of structures, such as instantiation of modules in Verilog. The following structures (at least) will be extracted from the syntax tree:

- Source files (already in Doxygen)
- Module declarations (will need an extension to Doxygen)
- In/out signals in modules (will need an extension to Doxygen)
- Processes (will need an extension to Doxygen)

4.2.4 Output generator

Input: A number of lists and tables

Output: Formatted HTML files

The output generator for HTML should work with our extensions, possibly after minor modifications. The output interface of the output generator is described in [Doxygen].

4.3 The AST datatype

This chapter describes the abstract syntax tree datatype and its relation to Verilog source code.

The specification of the syntax tree is in many respects a subset of the AST used in Doxygen. All the intricacies of Doxygen's tree format, complex and extensive as it is, are not fully understood by the system architect at this moment. Gaining a full understanding of and producing documentation of how Doxygen's syntax tree may be used and modified for use in a Verilog documentation tool is an important and large part of the latter phases of this project. This means that a full specification of the syntax tree cannot be offered at this point of time.

The first experimental implementation of the Verilog parser will use the syntax tree described in this section. In later stages, the full-blown AST from Doxygen will be used, possibly with extensions and modifications. See section 8.1 "AST format" .

4.3.1 Usage

The AST (abstract syntax tree) datatype is used to communicate the parsed Verilog code and embedded comments to the data organizer module.

4.3.2 Composition

The bulk of the abstract syntax tree is composed of nodes of class **Entry**. An instance of AST is thus referenced using a pointer to the root Entry node.

Argument lists are represented as lists of class **Argument**.

Extracted documenting comments are stored in the Entry and Argument instances that they pertain to.

4.3.3 Class Entry: a tree node

The Entry class, a tree node, contains a definition of a language construct from the Verilog source code. This can be for example a module, a process (always block), a component instantiation, a function and so on.

This is the subset of the Entry class defined in entry.h in Doxygen's source code that is most important for this project. Implementation details are left out for brevity. The definition is given in pseudo-C++ code.

```
class Entry {
public:
    list<Entry> sublist; //eg. processes in a module
    String fileName; //File where declaration was found
    String name; //Name of construct (symbol)
    String type; //Type of construct: module, process,...
    list<Argument> argList; //Arguments to this entity
    String docs; //Documentation block

    void addSubEntry(Entry*); //Add an entry to sublist
};
```

4.3.4 Class Argument: a generalized argument

The Argument class defines an argument to a process, a module or a function. The documentation pertaining to this specific argument is stored along with the name and data type of the argument.

This is a subset of the Argument class defined in entry.h in Doxygen's source code. The definition is given in pseudo-C++ code.

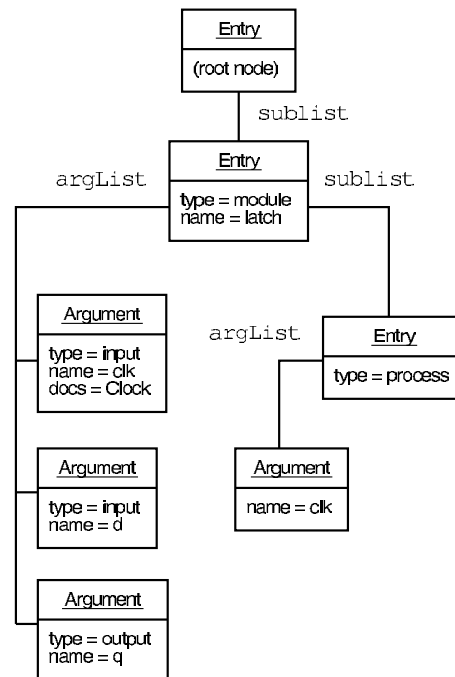
```
class Argument {
    String type; //Data type of argument, if applicable
    String name; //Name of argument
    String docs; //Documentation block for argument
};
```

4.3.5 Mapping to Verilog code, an example

To illustrate how a piece of Verilog code is parsed and mapped to a syntax tree, an example is given. The following definition of an edge triggered flip-flop is mapped to the tree of objects shown below. Note how only statements and definitions that are important to the documentation are extracted.

```
module latch(clk, d, q);
    input clk; ///< Clock
    input d;
    output q;
```

```
always@(posedge clk) begin
    q <= d;
end
endmodule
```



Figur 2: Abstract syntax tree extracted from a piece of Verilog code. The diagram shows a module having three arguments (clk, d, q) that contains one process (always block) that is given one argument named clk.

4.3.6 An output example

This is an example output from the Tree printer module, using the same example as in figure 2:

File name: example.v

```
ENTRY
Name: latch Type: module
Docs: -
ARGUMENTS:
  Name: clk Type: input
  Docs: Clock

  Name: d Type: input
  Docs: -

  Name: q Type: output
  Docs: -

SUBENTRIES:
  ENTRY
  Name: - Type: process
  Docs: -
```

ARGUMENTS:

Name: clk Type: -

Docs: -

4.4 Alternative architectures

4.4.1 Filter to Doxygen

Doxygen support for some languages have been implemented as a filter executed before Doxygen that translates the source language to (pseudo-) C++ or Java code. This method was rejected because it was thought to prove inflexible and a mapping to C++ and Java concepts could be hard to find.

4.4.2 Own architecture (no Doxygen involved)

The documentation tool does not necessarily have to be an extension to an existing tool. The question whether to use Doxygen as a base for the Verilog documentation tool led to lengthy discussions and investigations during the early weeks of the project. The decision to use Doxygen was made because of the so much greater potential for getting a useful Verilog documentation tool even though the risk of running into problems related to Doxygen cannot be neglected.

4.5 Testability

The Verilog front-end is written as a self-containing module so that module and regression tests can be performed. We expect to be able to use Doxygen's XML and/or HTML output for manual inspection of parsing results.

5 Module interfaces

This chapter describes the interfaces between the different modules in the architecture.

5.1 Verilog source file - Verilog front-end

The input interface to the Verilog front-end is the contents of the Verilog source file. The front-end will look for three types of information in this plain text file: Verilog source code, marked-up comment blocks and custom comment directives. The exact format of the scanner's syntax rules or the parser's grammar rules are not specified at this time, but will be defined in the design specification.

5.1.1 Verilog source code

The commands of the Verilog source code are specified by the IEEE standards 1364 and P1800 [IEEE].

One of the key concepts in Verilog language is the module, which reads its input parameters from its signal inputs, performs some kind of function and then writes the result to its signal outputs. The module's function may be implemented using logic primitives, bit operations, other modules, and so on.

5.1.2 Comments

Verilog files are commented using either the short comment (//) or the long comment (/* and */) format. Both have the same functionality as their C++ equivalents. Normally, Doxygen ignores these comment blocks. However, Doxygen supports several kinds of comment styles to connect a piece of comment text with a language structure. For example, the "Javadoc style":

```
/**
 * This comment starts with an extra asterisk. It will
 * be connected to the following language construct.
 */
class Ex1 {}
```

Another supported comment style is the "Qt-style":

```
/*!
 * This is the Qt-style, beginning with an exclamation
 * mark. It works like the previous example.
 */
class Ex2 {}
```

As for requirement F-7 in the requirements specification, our tool will be capable of extracting Javadoc style comments from the Verilog code.

The comments may contain anything without interfering with the source code. Therefore, we can use the comment blocks to introduce special directives. See the following section.

5.1.3 Custom directives

Doxygen also supports special tags or directives in the comment blocks. These directives are used to indicate what kind of information the com-

ment block contains and will affect the output from Doxygen's output generator. In the following example, the directives state that the author of the code is John Doe and that the code was created on January 1, 2005:

```
/**
 * This is an example with custom directives.
 *
 * \author John Doe
 * \date 2005-01-01
 */
class Ex3 {}
```

The Verilog source code file may contain Verilog-specific directives in the code comments. These directives should be handled by the Verilog front-end to fulfill requirement F-8 in the requirements specification [Hilding, 2005]. The following directives will be implemented to fulfill the requirement:

- `\author {author_name}`
The author of the source code.
- `\date {date}`
The date when the source code was last updated.
- `\bug {bug_list}`
Known bugs in the source code.
- `\clock {signal_name}`
Specifies which signal is used as clock signal.
- `\reset {signal_name}`
Specifies which signal is used as reset signal.
- `\comb`
Indicates that the following code block is purely combinatorial.
- `\state {state_alias}`
An alias for a state in a state machine.
- `\class {class_name signal_list}`
Denotes that all signals in the signal list belong to the same class.

5.2 Verilog front-end - Tree printer

This module will be implemented as a C++ class with a single public method taking an AST as an argument. It will output a textual representation of the AST (see section 4.3.6 "An output example") on standard output.

5.3 Verilog front-end - Data organizer

The Verilog front-end will construct an AST of the processed Verilog source code. This AST will constitute the front-end's output interface and it has two, possibly different, specifications.

As stated in requirement F-2 in the requirements specification [Hilding, 2005], a basic requirement is to implement an arbitrary data type for the AST.

If possible, the AST will be represented in a way that it can be understood by Doxygen's data organizer. This is stated in requirement F-5 in the requi-

rements specification [Hilding, 2005]. See section 4.3 "The AST datatype" for more information.

The Verilog front-end will be a C++ class inheriting from the abstract parser class in Doxygen (class `ParserInterface`). The front-end will need to implement the `parseInput()` method, taking a buffer with source code as argument, returning an AST, possibly constructed by Entry nodes.

To make Doxygen's data organizer compatible with Verilog, some modifications to the data organizer will probably be necessary. For instance, the introduction of Verilog constructs, such as "module" and "wire", or the custom directives listed in section 5.1.3 "Custom directives" .

5.4 Data organizer - Output generator

The data organizer is not a module per se, but more like a loosely connected set of Doxygen functions. When the input files are parsed, the AST is found in a global variable. Information is extracted from this AST in a number of steps and put in a collection of global lists.

The output generation step takes the data generated by the data organizer (a number of global lists) and iterates through it calling the output generator classes for each datum to be output. The interface to the output generation classes are extensive, but we expect no need to modify them.

6 File formats

This chapter lists the file formats used in the project. The file extension is given in the heading and then a description of that file format follows.

6.1 .V - Verilog source file

Verilog source files are plain text files whose source code syntax follow the IEEE standards 1364 and P1800 [IEEE].

For more information, and an extensive BNF notation, see [Verilog].

6.2 .HTML - HyperText Markup Language

HTML is a popular and versatile file format for presenting practically any kind of information. The files consist of text blocks surrounded by tags that describe how to format the text. For more information on HTML, see [W3C].

7 Code libraries and components

7.1 Doxygen

The source code documentation tool Doxygen will be the main component of the product. It is written in C++ and Flex and is heavily used for documentation of C++ code as well as a number of other languages. The official homepage can be found at [Doxygen].

7.2 The Icarus parser

Icarus is a free software Verilog simulation and synthesis tool. We hope to be able to use the parser from Icarus as a part of our project or as a reference. The official homepage can be found at [Icarus].

8 Design guidelines

This chapter contains guidelines for the design and particularly the design specification [Lissing, 2005].

8.1 AST format

The first step towards implementing a working parser will be using the simplified AST described in section 4.3 "The AST datatype", thus satisfying requirement F-2 (see section 9.1 "Basic functional requirements"). When this parser has been shown to work, it will be integrated into Doxygen along with the necessary changes to Doxygen, satisfying requirement F-5 (see section 9.2 "Normal functional requirements").

9 Connection to requirements

In this section, each requirement from the requirements specification [Hilding, 2005, revision 1.1] is listed along with a reference to the part of the architecture to which it can be traced.

Some requirements can't be connected to a single part of the architecture. For these requirements a short description of how they affect the architecture is given.

9.1 Basic functional requirements

Requirement	Point of implementation
F-1 Parser for verilog code	section 4.2.1 "Verilog front-end"
F-2 Create a syntax tree	section 4.2.1 "Verilog front-end" and section 4.3 "The AST datatype"
F-3 Print syntax tree	section 4.2.2 "Tree printer"
F-4 Linux compatible	section 3.1 "Platform"

9.2 Normal functional requirements

Requirement	Point of implementation
F-5 Doxygen compatible entry tree	section 4.3 "The AST datatype"
F-6 Extract hierarchy	section 4.2.3 "Data organizer"
F-7 Extract comments	section 4.2.1 "Verilog front-end"

9.3 Extra functional requirements

Requirement	Point of implementation
F-8 Custom directives	section 5.1 "Verilog source code - Verilog parser"
F-9 Generate HTML	section 4.2.4 "Output generator"
F-10 Windows compatible	section 3.1 "Platform"
F-11 Other outputs	section 4.2.3 "Output generator"

9.4 Basic non-functional requirements

Requirement	Point of implementation
N-1 Programming language	section 3.2 "Languages and tools"
N-2 Documented with doxygen	-
N-3 Upgradeable	-
N-4 English usage	-
N-5 Documentation format	-
N-6 Revision control	-

A number of these requirements can't be connected to a specific part of the architecture and some of them are not applicable to the architecture at all:

N-2: This requirement only affects the actual implementation.

N-3: Upgradeability has been kept in mind during the architecture work, but can't be attributed to one single part of the architecture.

N-4: This is not applicable to the architecture. All documents are written in english, and all documentation will be.

N-5: This requirement states that documents are to be written in FrameMaker format and is as such not applicable to the architecture.

N-6: All code should be put in a Subversion repository. Not applicable to the architecture.

10 References

10.1 Internal documents

- [Jormedal, 2005] Jormedal, Martin, "Project plan" (2005)
- [Hilding, 2005] Hilding, Daniel, "Requirements specification" (2005)
- [Lissing, 2005] Norling, Jonas, "Design specification" (2005)
- [Lissing, 2005] Lissing, Johan, "Technical documentation" (2005)
- [Åberg, 2005] Åberg, Eric, "Test plan" (2005)

10.2 External documents

- [Bison] Free Software Foundation,
WWW: <http://www.gnu.org/software/bison/>
- [Flex] Free Software Foundation,
WWW: <http://www.gnu.org/software/flex/>
- [Verilog] McNamara, Michael, WWW: <http://www.verilog.com/>
- [Doxygen] van Heesch, Dimitri, WWW: <http://www.doxygen.org/>
- [IEEE] IEEE Standards Association,
WWW: <http://standards.ieee.org/>
- [W3C] World Wide Web Consortium,
WWW: <http://www.w3.org/MarkUp/>
- [Icarus] Williams, Stephen,
WWW: <http://www.icarus.com/eda/verilog/>

