DMON and the AGGA-4

The move towards chips containing many functional units as well as one or more CPUs poses new challenges for developers. The complexity of these 'Systems on Chip', with perhaps thirty or forty functional units of many different types can make what is happening difficult to visualize or understand. Interactions can no longer be monitored using traditional tools such as in-circuit emulators and logic analyzers as the units are within one chip, and the already difficult task of software debugging becomes even more challenging and time consuming. DMON was created to help address these problems and to be the system of choice for visualizing, monitoring and debugging SoCs.

DMON can be run on PCs and Unix workstations. It connects to a debug unit on the SoC that allows it access the SoC's internal bus, and can use UART, Ethernet, USB, JTAG and SpaceWire debug links. It takes a GUI based approach, providing an overall view of all units in the system and their states. The user can open detail windows for any units of interest, displaying information in real time and drilling down to read and perhaps modify a fully documented version of a unit's registers. Programs can be downloaded and debugged using powerful software debugging aids and data monitoring facilities. A client server configuration allows the user be located remotely, linked over an SSL secured Internet connection to the DMON server connected to the SoC. DMON automatically detects the devices on an SoC if plug-and-play information is present, or can use a configuration file. Its library of known CPUs and other functional units is large and continually expanding, and can be added to by the user to support user defined units, making it well suited for monitoring and debugging all kinds of heterogeneous systems. Command entry and scripting can be done using DMON's own commands, TCL, and Python. DMON places minimal demands on the SoC, stealing some bus cycles, and has no SoC memory footprint.

DMON was originally developed for the market in China, then extended with support from ESA (DMON2) under contract No. 4000112849/14/NL, and subsequently developed under contract from ESA to support the AGGA-4. The tool can be downloaded from www.ocetechnology.com

