



**AB-36**

**APPLICATION  
BRIEF**

**80186/80188 DMA Latency**

**STEVE FARRER**  
APPLICATIONS ENGINEER

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**80186/80188 DMA  
LATENCY**

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When using the DMA controller of the 80186 and 80188, there are several operating conditions which affect the service time (latency) between when the DMA request is generated and when the bus cycles associated to the DMA transfer are actually run. This application brief describes those conditions which affect DMA Latency.

### DMA REQUEST GENERATION

The minimum DMA latency is 4 clocks and, depending on when the signal arrives (i.e. if the signal just missed the setup time), it might appear to be almost 5 clocks. This 4 to 5 clock delay is due to a two phase synchronizer and various transfer gate delays the DRQ signal must take before reaching the BIU. Conceptually the circuit looks like Figure 1.

If the Bus Interface Unit (BIU) is available when the DRQ signal reaches it, then a DMA cycle will proceed at T1 of the bus cycle as the next clock.

Also note that the DRQ signal is not latched, and must remain active until serviced. If the DRQ signal is brought low after being asserted high, then a '0' will propagate through and; if the request had not yet been serviced, then the BIU will see a '0' and the cycle will never take place.

### Conditions Affecting DMA Latency

The circumstances that affect DMA latency in order of worst case are as follows:

- 1) HOLD
- 2) LOCK - INTA
- 3) Odd byte accesses
- 4) Effective Address Calculations (EA)

HOLD can indefinitely delay a DMA cycle. There is no mechanism internally to remove HLDA when a DMA request is pending.

LOCKed instructions can also delay a DMA cycle by a significant amount, depending on the type of instruction locked. A typical locked XCHG instruction from memory to register could delay the DMA cycle by as much as 18 clocks if the memory access required two bus cycles (80188 or odd locations on the 80186). On the other hand, a locked repeat MOVs could delay a DMA cycle by up to 1.05 million clocks depending on the number of transfers and the number of bus cycles per transfers.

Interrupt acknowledges can also affect DMA latency because the bus is locked out during the first two bus cycles required to fetch the interrupt vector type. This causes the worst case latency during interrupt acknowledges to be:

4	Clocks (Minimum Setup)
10	Clocks (2 Bus Cycles + 2 Idle Clocks) Min
14	Clocks Total

Both HOLD and LOCK are extremely dependent on the type of system being designed and therefore are not really considered to be normal worst case latency. However, odd byte accesses and effective address calculations are conditions that frequently occur in almost all systems. Under these conditions of no HOLD, no LOCK, and no wait states, the worst case occurs when the DMA request loses to an instruction data cycle requiring an effective address calculation.

Effective addresses (EA) always require 4 clocks for calculation and can only take place during T3-T4-TI-TI, T4-TI-TI-TI, or TI-TI-TI-TI. This creates an extra minimum insertion of 2 T-idle cycles. If the EA requires an immediate value in the prefetch queue, then a signal goes active which places the EA bus cycle at a higher priority than any other BIU requests. This is so the execution unit won't be waiting on the bus interface unit. If the EA hadn't required the value in the queue, then the EU could proceed with the next instruction shortly after it had sent the request to the BIU. Figure 2 shows the effects EA calculations have on DMA Latency.

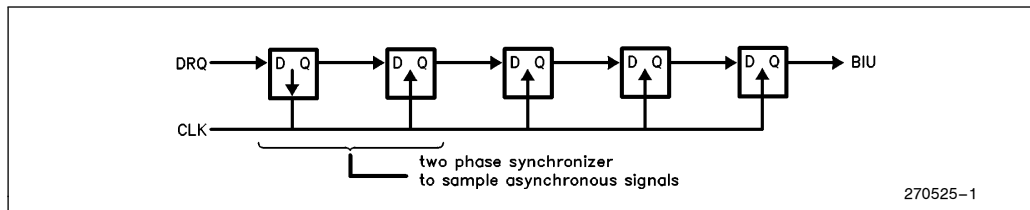


Figure 1. DMA Request Synchronization



Address	Code	Instruction
FA058	90	NOP
FA059	90	NOP
FA05A	2E87060100	XCHG AX, CS:WORD PTR 0001

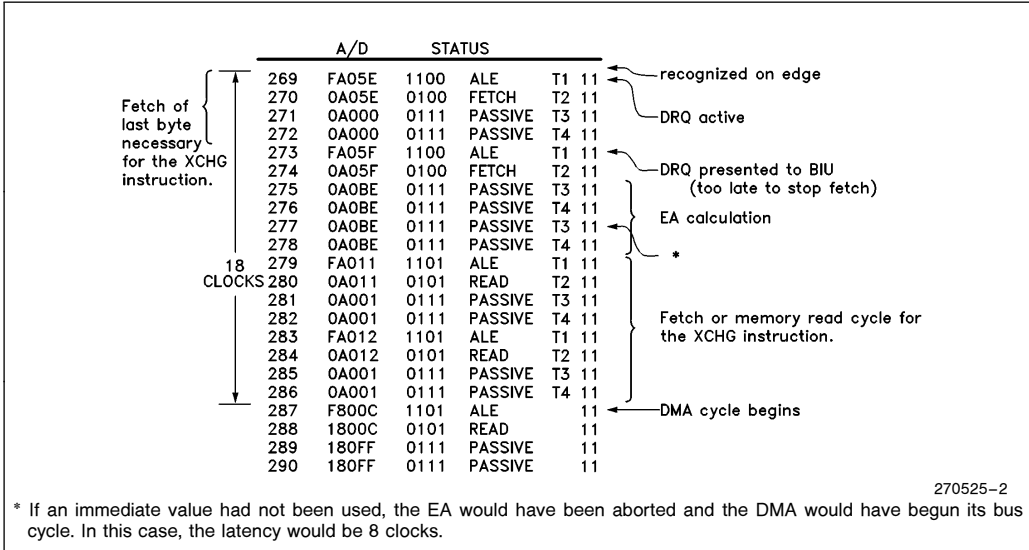


Figure 2. Logic State Analyzer Trace and Accompanying Program Code



INTEL CORPORATION, 2200 Mission College Blvd., Santa Clara, CA 95052; Tel. (408) 765-8080

INTEL CORPORATION (U.K.) Ltd., Swindon, United Kingdom; Tel. (0793) 696 000

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