

Global Standards for the Microelectronics Industry

Google Study: Could those memory failures be caused by design flaws?

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What was the Google Study?

- DRAM Errors in the Wild: A Large-Scale Field Study Schroeder, Pinheiro, Weber; SIGMETRICS/Performance '09 June
- This study tried to make sense of memory failures in Google's fleet of servers
 - Concluded that failures were orders of magnitude more prevalent than advertised
 - No specific conclusion could be reached as to the source of the errors
 - Noted that some failures followed the server versus the memory



Additional Conclusions

- 1.3% was the average Uncorrectable error rate across the fleet per year
 - Some platforms experienced 2-4% error rate per year
- Temperature had a small effect on error rate
- Newer Generation DIMMs did not show worse error rates as commonly feared (DDR1,DDR2 and FBDIMM)



A Paradigm Shift for Memory Compliance Testing

- The Google Study did not have the advantage of the new tools that can automate Protocol Compliance Testing *In The Wild*
- Their conclusions could not find the source of the unexpectedly high error rate
- Improvement in error rates is critical to industries that rely upon large fleets of Servers



What is Protocol Compliance?

- Correct Timing between events on the DDR memory bus
- DDR3 Example:
 - Read operation followed by a Precharge
 - Write command followed too quickly by a Read command
 - -Average Refresh rate



Our Study



- Commercially available motherboards
- FuturePlus Systems DDR3 Detective[™]
- DIMMs and a FuturePlus DIMM interposer

Examples of Protocol Compliance Failures



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A READ to PRECHARGE Rank 0 Bank 5 separation fails by 1 clock

Fi	le Windows	Help	0	0				B
-		Mode Registers	Violations A	Perform	ance Log File State Listing Eye Detector Setup Wizard			
olui	mns 🗸 🕅 🎢	M 🔳 🦯 🤇	Shou	Ы	be 8 clks			
	• M1 • 70		JIIOU					
		Liks						
						F		I.
	State	TIME	Addr	BA	DDR3	PV	PC	CKE
	-16	4.2717ns	0358	6	WR Rank 1 Bank=6 Row=2B4E Column=358	0		1
	-15	3.2038ns	0388	5	RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=2AF2 Column=388	0		1
	-14	4.2717ns	0390	5	RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=2AF2 Column=390	0		1
	-13	4.2717ns	03A0	5	RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=2AF2 Column=3A0	0		1
	-12	4.2717ns	0398	5	RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=2AF2 Column=398	0		1
	-11	4.2717ns	03A8	5	RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=2AF2 Column=3A8	0		1
	-10	4.2717ns	03B0	5	RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=2AF2 Column=3B0	0		1
	-9	4.2717ns	03C0	5	RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=2AF2 Column=3C0	0		1
	-8	4.2717ns	03B8	5	RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=2AF2 Column=3B8	0		1
	-7	4.2717ns	03C8	5	RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=2AF2 Column=3C8	0		1
	-6	4.2717ns	03D0	5	RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=2AF2 Column=3D0	0		1
	-5	4.2717ns 4.2717ns	03E0 03D8	5	RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=2AF2 Column=3E0 RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=2AF2 Column=3D8	0		1
	-4	4.2717ns	03D8 03E8	5	RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=2AF2 Column=3D8 RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=2AF2 Column=3E8	ő		
	-3	4.2717ns	03E0	5	RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=2AF2 Column=3E0 RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=2AF2 Column=3F0	ő		1
	M1 -1	4.2717ns	03F8	5	RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=2AF2 Column=3F8	ŏ		1
T	TO	7.4755ns	0000	5	PRE Rank 0 Bank=5	1	V4	1
*	1	4.2717ns	02F0	3	WR Rank 0 Bank=3 Row=2AB8 Column=2F0	0		1
	2	4.2717ns	0348	3	WR Rank 0 Bank=3 Row=2AB8 Column=348	o	\sim	1 î
	3	1.0679ns	3F6E	5	ACT Rank 0 Bank=5 Addr=3F6E	o		1
	4	3.2038ns	0218	3	WR Rank 0 Bank=3 Row=2AB8 Column=218	0		1
	5	7.4755ns	03F8	6	WR Rank 1 Bank=6 Row=2B4E Column=3F8	0		1
	6	4.2717ns	0320	6	WR Rank 1 Bank=6 Row=2B4E Column=320	0		1
	7	4.2717ns	0330	6	WR Rank 1 Bank=6 Row=2B4E Column=330	0		1
	8	4.2717ns	0175	5	RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=3F6E Column=175	0		1
	9	4.2717ns	0370	5	RD Rank 0 Bank=5 Row=3F6E Column=370	0		1
	10	11.7472ns	03A0	3	WR Rank 0 Bank=3 Row=2AB8 Column=3A0	0		1
	11	4.2717ns	0308	3	WR Rank 0 Bank=3 Row=2AB8 Column=308	0		1
	12	4.2717ns	0368	3	WR Rank 0 Bank=3 Row=2AB8 Column=368	0		1
	13	4.2717ns	0238	3	WR Rank 0 Bank=3 Row=2AB8 Column=238	0		1
	14	4.2717ns	0328	3	WR Rank 0 Bank=3 Row=2AB8 Column=328	0		1
	15	4.2717ns	0380	3	WR Rank 0 Bank=3 Row=2AB8 Column=380	0		1

Ready

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How critical is this failure?

- A Precharge closes a bank
- Read latency dictates when the data is to be returned
- Command telling the bank to close could be coincident with the data being returned from the bank



Write followed too quickly by a Read to the same RANK

e n	Windows Hel		o o o formance Log File State Listing Eye Detector Setup Wiza	rd			
tel	isting						
		Shoul	d be 20 clks				
				_	_	_	
ſ	• M0 • 19 C	ks					
	State	TIME	DDR3	BA	Addr	PV	PC
	-20	1.0679ns	Deselect	1	0200	0	_
	M0 -19	1.0679ns	WR Rank 0 Bank=1 Row=2BCA Column=22	1	0220	ŏ	
	-18	1.0679ns	Deselect	1	0220	0	
	-17	1.0679ns	Deselect	1	0220	0	
T	-16	1.0679ns	Deselect	1	0220	0	
	-15	1.0679ns	Deselect	1	0220	0	
	-14	1.0679ns	Deselect	1	0220	0	
	-13	1.0679ns	Deselect	1	0220	0	
	-12	1.0679ns	WR Rank 1 Bank=7 Row=2BA4 Column=21	7	0210	0	
	-11	1.0679ns	Deselect	7	0208	0	
	-10	1.0679ns	Deselect	7	0208	0	
	- 9	1.0679ns	Deselect	7	0208	0	
	-8	1.0679ns	WR Rank 1 Bank=7 Row=2BA4 Column=20	7	0208	0	
	-7	1.0679ns	Deselect	7	0210	0	
	-6	1.0679ns	Deselect	7	0210	0	
	-5	1.0679ns	Deselect	7	0210	0	
	-4	1.0679ns	WR Rank 1 Bank=7 Row=2BA4 Column=25	7	0250	0	
	-3	1.0679ns	Deselect	7	0228	0	
	-2	1.0679ns	Deselect	7	0228	0	
	-1	1.0679ns	Deselect	7	0228	0	
	TO	1.0679ns	RD Rank 0 Bank=7 Row=2C00 Column=24	_7	0240	1	V16
	1	1.0679ns	Deselect	7	0240	0	
	2	1.0679ns	Deselect	7	0240	0	
	3	1.0679ns	Deselect	7	0240	0	
	4	1.0679ns	RD Rank 0 Bank=7 Row=2C00 Column=23	7	0238	0	
	5	1.0679ns	Deselect	7	0238	0	
	6	1.0679ns	Deselect	7	0238	0	
	/	1.0679ns	Deselect	1.1			
	8	1.0679ns	RD Rank 0 Bank=7 Row=2C00 Column=25	7	0250	0	



How critical is this failure?

- The parameters for the separation of the Write and the Read are based on the latencies
- The Data bus is shared and overlapping events can lead to data corruption



Data Corruption?

	Markers Run/Stop Listing Window Help		Windows Help			
6 🖬 🎒 👫 👘 🖡	顾태│ [11] [11] [11] [12] [22] [22] [22] [22]	4 7 7 1		de Registers Violations Perfor	mance Log File State Listing Eye Detector Setup Wi	zard
to M2 = 17.04 ns		Li	istingsForm			
		L Col	lumns 👻			
Sample Number Ti	me DDR3 Decoder COMMAND	RE	• T •		TRIG=1; TBFIN=1; WRAP=0; preTrigCount=984; postTrig	Count=40
	Click here for trigger menu			(j)		_
-218.5	DATA = E/BE9AA2 55546263		State	TIME	DDR3	PC
-218.6	Data = DBF3B18F FD98B5E8 Data = 789205EB 47F682C7		-18[966]	-19.1494ns[972]	Deselect	
-218.7	Data = F46B1F17 93A453DB		-17[967]		Deselect	
-218.9	Data = 711A8D63 1ED7DEA7		-16[968]		WR #SO Active Bank=5 Column=1B8	
-218.10	Data = D0E13D9D 7BC614F7		-15[969]	_15_01_JHS[975]	Deselect	
-218.11	Data - DOLISDSD (BCOIGI)		1010		Deselect	
-217 -115.	440 ng		-13[971]		Deselect	
	640 ns Write CKE0 and CKE1 Enabled	T	-12[972]		Deselect	
-208.1	Bank = 5 Rank 0		-11[973]		Deselect	
-208.2	Address = 2BA3 01B8		-10[974]		Deselect Deselect	
-208.3	Data = FB9B55E7 BFD5F7FB		-9[975] -8[976]	-9.5747ns[981] -8.5109ns[982]	Deselect	
-208.4	Data = 2DAEC6B2 2719C028		-7[977]	-7.4470ns [983]	Deselect	
-208.5	Data = C0373C2E FF12956E		-6[978]	-6.3831ns[984]	Deselect	
-208.6	Data = 0CB066A9 9656DB67		-5[979]	-5.3193ns [985]	Deselect	
-208.7	Data = CD65B61C EB7F0505		-4[980]	-4.2554ns[986]	Deselect	
-208.8	Data = BB95D1EC D44EBB75		-3[981]	-3.1916ns[987]	Deselect	
-208.9	Data = 615A8C43 E5E8A1D0		-2[982]	-2.1277ns[988]	Deselect	
-208.10	Data = 026A6813 B644D973		-1[983]	-1.0639ns[989]	Deselect	
-208.11			T 0[984]	0.0000ns[990]	RD #S0 Active Bank=7 Column=F8	V16
-207 -110.	080 ns		1[985]	1.0639ns[991]	Deselect	
	600 ns Read CKE0 and CKE1 Enabled		2 [986]	2.1277ns[992]	Deselect	
-176.1	Bank = 7 Rank 0		3[987]	3.1916ns[993]	Deselect	
-176.2	Col = 00F8		4 [988]	4.2554ns[994]	RD #S0 Active Bank=7 Column=100	
-176.3	Data = FFFFFFFF FFEFFFFF		5[989]	5.3193ns[995]	Deselect Deselect	
-176.4	Data = 5945A55C BF26D55F		6[990] 7[991]	6.3831ns[996] 7.4470ns[997]	Deselect	
-176.5	Data = 0591EEED C6CF8BB5		8[992]	8.5109ns[998]	RD #S0 Active Bank=7 Column=F0	
-176.6	Data = 9DFAF783 DA8C1FF9		126616	9.5747ns[999]	Deselect	
-176.7	Data = 5E33232F 72531826		10[994]	10.6386ns[1000]	Deselect	
-176.8	Data = B6D25BCB 113C7249		11[995]	11.7024ns[1001]	Deselect	
-176.9	Data = 2717CA6E EE3E8D0D	- <u>-</u>	12 [996]	12.7663ns [1002]	RD #S0 Active Bank=7 Column=E8	



A Write command followed too closely by a Precharge to the same bank

		0	0 0	0	0		D		
Run	Stop Setup M	ode Regiet	ers Violations Performance	O Fil	 State Listing 	Eve Detector			
Run	Sub Demb IN	ioue Regist	-			Live Detector	Setup Mizaru		
-014	mns 🕶 📶 🛗 🦷		Should be	2	6 alka				
÷т	▼ M0 ▼ 24 Clks			2	U UINS				
	State 🔾	Addr	TIME	BA		DDR3		PV	PC
	-30	0098	1.0679ns	5	Deselect			0	
	-29	0098	1.0679ns	5	Deselect			0	
	-28	0048	1.0679ns	5		Bank=5 Row=.	AOA Column=A8	0	
	-27	0048	1.0679ns	5	Deselect			0	
	-26	0048	1.0679ns	5	Deselect			0	
	-25 MO -24	00A8 0160	1.0679ns 1.0679ns	5	Deselect		AOA Column=160	0	
	-23	0160	1.0679ns	5	Deselect	Dank-S RUW	KOA COTUMN-160		II
	-22	0160	1.0679ns	5	Deselect			o I	
	-21	0170	1.0679ns	ŏ		Bank=0 Row=.	A27 Column=170		
	-20	OOES	1.0679ns	ō	Deselect			ō	
	-19	OOE8	1.0679ns	0	Deselect			0	
	-18	OOE8	1.0679ns	0	Deselect			0	
	-17	0168	1.0679ns	0	RD Rank 1	Bank=0 Row=.	A27 Column=168	0	
	-16	OOFO	1.0679ns	0	Deselect			0	
	-15	OOFO	1.0679ns	0	Deselect			0	
	-14	OOFO	1.0679ns	0	Deselect			0	
	-13	0178	1.0679ns	0		Bank=0 Row=.	A27 Column=178	0	
	-12 -11	00F8 00F8	1.0679ns 1.0679ns		Deselect Deselect				
	-11	0078	1.0679ns 1.0679ns		Deselect				
	-10	0080	1.0679ns	o o		Benkel Rows	A27 Column=80		
	-8	0100	1.0679ns	ŏ	Deselect	bank o kow .	ALT COLUMN DO	o I	
	-7	0100	1.0679ns	ō	Deselect			ō	
Т	-6	0100	1.0679ns	ō	Deselect			ō	
	-5	0088	1.0679ns	0	RD Rank 1	Bank=0 Row=.	A27 Column=88	0	
	-4	0110	1.0679ns	0	Deselect			0	
	-3	0110	1.0679ns	0	Deselect			0	
	-2	0110	1.0679ns	0	Deselect			0	
	-1	0090	1.0679ns	0			A27 Column=90	0	
	<u>T 0</u> 1	0000	1.0679ns	<u>5</u> 5	PRE Rank O	Bank=5		1	V15
	2	0000	1.0679ns 1.0679ns	5	Deselect Deselect				
	3	0000	1.0679ns	o o		Benkel Bowe	A27 Column=98		
	4	0118	1.0679ns	ŏ	Deselect	Dank-0 Kow	kz / COltanii-90		
	5	0118	1.0679ns	ŏ	Deselect			ŏ	
	6	0118	1.0679ns	ō	Deselect			ō	
	7	ooco	1.0679ns	0	RD Rank 1	Bank=0 Row=.	A27 Column=CO	0	
	8	0120	1.0679ns	0	Deselect			0	
	9	3F6E	1.0679ns	5		Bank=5 Add	=3F6E	0	
	10	3F6E	1.0679ns	5	Deselect			0	
	11	0000	1.0679ns	0		Bank=0 Row=.	A27 Column=D0	0	
	12	0128	1.0679ns	0	Deselect			0	
	13	0128	1.0679ns	0	Deselect			0	
	14	0128	1.0679ns	0	Deselect	Device D		0	
	15 16	00C8	1.0679ns 1.0679ns		Deselect	bank=0 Row=.	A27 Column=C8		
	10	0130	1.007908		Deserect			0	, I I



How critical is this failure?

- A Precharge command closes the bank
- The DRAM is not expecting the Precharge command and may depend on that time to complete the Write
- Thousands of times per minute over months and years of operation may lead to data corruption



Activate command too soon after a Calibration command

	Listing Should be 75 clks								
State	TIME	DDR3	BA	Addr	PV	PC			
-2		ZQCS Rank 0	0	0000	0				
-1	15.9290ms	ZQCS Rank 1	0	0000	0				
TO	72.6191ns	ACT Rank 1 Bank=7 Addr=1A5F	7	1A5F	1	V29			
1	6.4076ns	ACT Rank 1 Bank=2 Addr=1A6D	2	1A6D	1	V29			
2	111.4840ms	ZQCS Rank 0	0	0000	0				
3	72.6191ns	ACT Rank 0 Bank=1 Addr=5E0	1	05E0	1	V29			
M0 4	15.9285ms	ZOCS Rank 1	0	0000	0				
<u>M1 5</u>	72.6191ns	ACT Rank 1 Bank=1 Addr=374	1	0374	_1_	V29			
6	111.4837ms	ZQCS Rank 0	0	0000	0				
7	71.5512ns	ACT Rank 0 Bank=1 Addr=1204	1	1204	1	V29			
8	6.4076ns	ACT Rank 0 Bank=5 Addr=11CC	5	11CC	1	V29			
9	15.9286ms	ZQCS Rank 1	0	0000	0				
10	72.6191ns	ACT Rank 1 Bank=2 Addr=155C	2	155C	1	V29			
11	111.4841ms	ZQCS Rank 0	0	0000	0				
12	72.6191ns	ACT Rank 0 Bank=0 Addr=29A5	0	29A5	1	V29			
13	6.4076ns	ACT Rank 0 Bank=7 Addr=296E	7	296E	1	V29			
14	15.9288ms	ZQCS Rank 1	0	0000	0				
15	72.6191ns	ACT Rank 1 Bank=0 Addr=2D19	0	2D19	1	V29			
16	6.4076ns	ACT Rank 1 Bank=6 Addr=2C60	6	2C60	1	V29			
17	111.4840ms	ZQCS Rank 0	0	0000	0				
18	71.5512ns	ACT Rank 0 Bank=2 Addr=3D95	2	3D95	1	V29			
19	6.4076ns	ACT Rank 0 Bank=7 Addr=3DCC	7	3DCC	1	V29			
20	15.9282ms	ZQCS Rank 1	0	0000	0				
21	72.6191ns	ACT Rank 1 Bank=3 Addr=3B44	3	3B44	1	V29			
22	6.4076ns	ACT Rank 1 Bank=7 Addr=3B3C	7	3B3C	1	V29			
23	111.4843ms	ZQCS Rank 0	0	0000	0	These dis			
24	72.6191ns	ACT Rank 0 Bank=3 Addr=2609	3	2609	1	V29			
25	6.4076ns	ACT Rank 0 Bank=2 Addr=2678	2	2678	1	V29			
26	15.9285ms	ZQCS Rank 1	0	0000	0				
27	111.4840ms	ZQCS Rank 0	0	0000	0				
28	71.5512ns	ACT Rank 0 Bank=6 Addr=E7C	6	0E7C	1	V29			
20	6 4076na	ACT Dank (Rank=1 Addr=FR7	1	OFB7	1	1720			



How critical is this failure?

- Calibration commands Purpose of calibrations is to account for voltage and temperature variations
- "No other activities should be performed on the DRAM channel by the controller for the duration of tZQinit, tZQoper, or tZQCS. The quiet time on the DRAM channel allows accurate calibrations of output driver and on-die termination values"
- If the DRAM does not expect the Activate Command it may be missed and the row not opened



A study of tREFI for the system under test

				(2) 73			
	State	TIME	DDR3	BA	Addr	PV	PC
	-26	3.8638us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-25	24.4940us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-24	25.2693us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-23	7.8439us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-22	3.1290us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-21	665.3184ns	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-20	8.1675us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-19	417.5594ns	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-18	2.5897us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-17	4.8804us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-16	363.0951ns	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-15	12.0398us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-14	8.6822us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-13	4.4255us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-12	25.8257us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-11	8.0052us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-10	441.0538ns	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
T	-9	7.8397us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
-	-8	517.9445ns	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-7	2.2971us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-6	11.7408us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-5	7.5737us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-4	9.3070us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-3	2.7350us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	-2	14.9403us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	<u>M0 -1</u>	484.8388ns	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	TO	4.9210us	RD Rank 0 Bank=6 Row=22 Column=3E8	6	03E8	1	V281
	1	5.4827us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	2	7.7756us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	3	10.0374us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	4	3.1162us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	5	10.7818us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	6	3.8787us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	
	7	8.2177us	REF Rank 0	0	0000	0	



Refreshes

- Purpose is to maintain the integrity of the stored data
- Refresh too much: Waste power and bandwidth
- Refresh too little: Risk losing the data



Performance Metrics *Real time measurement gives insight*

- Is power management as expected?
- Is Command bus and data bus utilization as expected?

DDR Bus Frequency: 936.3922 MHz formance Counters		
nomance Counters		Graphs Command Bus Utilization Percentage
Setup Cmd Bus Utilization 0 1 2 3 Ranks V V Power Management Both CKE Enabled	Performance Counts Command Bus Percentage 22.07.2	Percent
Data Bus Utilization Total Data Bus (RD/WR) Utilization 0 1 2 Ranks	Data Bus Percentage	0 Time (60 Seconds) Data Bus Utilization Percentage Percent 0 Time (60 Seconds)



Summary

- Real Time Protocol Compliance Analysis of this type is now possible
- Designers can now make systems more reliable and gain a better understanding of compliance and performance metrics
- As memory technology becomes more critical to our society this insight will help us write better specifications and provide better products



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