

The Embedded Muse 51

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Contest Results

Congratulations to Natalia Ovtchinnikova who won the random pick of contest entries for the Write Only Memory. Natalia wins the original datasheet plus one of the parts themselves.

About a thousand people entered, with half sending ideas for using the part. Some of the most common entries included a logger for spam, various suggestions for saving promises made by Bill Clinton and other politicians, quite a few thoughts about error loggers for Microsoft products, various mother-in-law ideas, and, of course, management report repositories.

Here's a few of the entries. Some are pretty funny. And, thanks to everyone who participated!

A device for maintaining a 'To-Do' list for procrastinators.

I would like to use WOM for the storage device in a telephone answering machine. I never really listen to the messages anyway. Or combine this with a voice detection circuit to detect my mother-in-law's voice. Everyone else gets stored in conventional memory and only hers goes to the WOM

As a backup device for the one I currently use to store the last location of my car keys.

In military rocketry apps, our pilots are comfortable with just "Shoot and Forget". This seems like the ideal chip for my "write and never worry" embedded project

Archival copy of the wedding vows shared with my wife (who divorced me for spending too much time working on embedded systems).

Personal Organizer for teenage girls when they want to store the phone number of potential dates. (This, of course, will be a gift from Father to his daughters)

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This memory device would be perfect for the new processor architecture I'm developing. It's the next generation for RISC processors - called NISC (No Instruction Set Computing). Forget single or even partial cycle instructions, this has zero cycle instructions.

Entering confessions of not testing all possible paths through embedded code

It can be very helpful for storing the Imaginary portion of any complex number. Since it's imaginary, it doesn't really matter.

Someplace to send the data when you flush the cache memory!

Logic gates are designed to lose a bit of information, and this is wasteful. For example, an NAND gate has two inputs, but only one output. One of the bits gets lost, and is usually dissipated as heat. This is why microprocessors tend to get hot. It would be ideal if that extra bit can be preserved, and rerouted to the WOM, rather than "destroyed". The WOM can then be disposed of properly when it can no longer hold those stray bits. Then faster microprocessors can be used which remain cool.

I would use it to store a database of the dericidious barachitides derived from the antithaflactic bromides used in the fabrication of xialaniplates

A data logger for my fridge. As far as I'm concerned, I don't *want* to know what goes on in there

Sometimes there is a secret that is so personal that you cannot tell anyone, but at the same time not being able to talk about it drives you to the insane asylum. So the So embed the write-only memory inside a stuffed puppy dog, and you get the satisfaction of knowing (1) you will be heard; (2) you will not be misinterpreted; and (3) your secret is safe with the stuffed puppy dog. No amount of torture or pleading will get the secret out

Digital voice recorder for a church confessional

A digital version of the Shroedigner's Cat experiment. Write a string to the chip--either "dead" or "alive"--to be randomly determined at the last moment. We don't know whether the cat is alive or dead unless we actually open up the chip

Loop it back to my wife's mouth and watch it explode

Voicemail storage device for Tech Support departments ("...your call is important to us

Storing corporate Mission, Vision, Value statements

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To store all those monthly reports that I am required to write

A write only memory sounds like a great place to store cookies. All you'd need is a device driver to make it look like a logical drive in your favorite OS

To store the boss's suggestions, memos, and any code he creates

Deep storage device for Mars probes produced by NASA

Engine Control Module - so mother-in-law can't drive to my house

Record Windows 2000 bug reports (bugs for previous versions never get fixed, so they must be going into WOM. Did you know Microsoft is the single largest purchaser of WOMs?).

I see the Write Only Memory as a sort of electronic wishing well. It represents the ultimate secure communications with God

I would use it for storage of impractical suggestions from pre-teenage daughters

The Marketing Department Feature Request Recorder! Yes, now every R&D department can have it's own MD-FRR featuring the Signetics WOM!

Place where the universe stores dark matter

Hardware accelerator for /dev/null

Storage of voicemail from telemarketers

Clinton White House e-mail storage

An automated ISO-9000 audit trail recorder. After all, the output doesn't matter as long as you follow the process

For creating a neural network to mimic a child's brain in response to parental advice

Recording promises made to employees

Memory for an absent-minded artificial intelligent

A PDA marketed to the mob

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Microsoft should not be broken up. Rather they should be required to store all of there code on WOM's. This will solve both their code bloat and bug control problems, while increasing competition in the software industry. In addition it can only help to improve their time to market delays.

A paperless fax shredder. A standard fax shredder consist of a fax machine coupled to a shredder -- if you need to shred a document you fax it to the right number. But, unfortunately, this process uses paper. By using a WOM for storing the incoming data stream inside the fax machine, no paper will be required. Think of the trees!

Keep track of all the suggestions for, "What is the ideal use for a Write Only Memory?"

About The Embedded Muse

The Embedded Muse is an occasional newsletter sent via email by Jack Ganssle. Send complaints, comments, and contributions to him at jack@ganssle.com.

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