

Description

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to the field of information transfer. In particular, the invention relates to the field of data buses.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Serial data buses send data bits on one line. Additional lines may be included for transmitting clock, handshaking, and reset signals that indicate, among other things, when the data line output has stabilized and is no longer switching from one state to another. Additionally, data buses use these lines to separate messages. The HPIB, a parallel data bus, has special lines to indicate the beginning and the end of a message. Some serial data buses use a reset line to identify the beginning and end of message. Other serial data buses eliminate the reset lines by using a header/trailer scheme to identify new messages. One serial data bus combines the clock and the data on one line and uses a separate reset line to identify the beginning and end of messages. Hardware is used to extract the clock signal. Once the clock signal is extracted it is used to extract the data. This scheme has the disadvantage of requiring extensive hardware to extract the clock signal from the data/clock line. Also this scheme requires a reset line.

A separate line for signalling the beginning of a new message has several disadvantages. In addition to the reset wire, hardware is needed to drive the wire, to send the information, and to receive the information. This additional hardware increases computer system cost and increased computer system failure rate. Using headers and trailers to identify the beginning and end of messages has the disadvantage of increasing the amount of time required to send a message and consuming bus bandwidth (where bandwidth is the maximum possible number of signal transitions per second). Headers and trailers have the further disadvantage of requiring the message to be encoded so that the header or trailer cannot occur in a message. Message encoding further decreases bus bandwidth.

JP-A-61141232 (Sony Corp.) describes, referring to the abstract, 2-way serial data communication on a single line between a master and a slave set. Successive transmit and receive time intervals are defined on the communication line, the transmit and receive intervals occurring in pairs, successive pairs being separated by a pause interval in which no data communication takes place. The transmit interval for the master set (i.e. the receive interval for the slave set) is signified by a first master bit being transmitted. The subsequent receive interval

for the master set (i.e. the transmit interval for the slave set) is signified by a second master bit being transmitted.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a method for transferring a message comprising the steps of:

sending a message classifier during a first interval;

sending a message data bit during a second interval; and

sending the message classifier and the message data bit on the same line;

characterised by the message classifier indicating the continuation of a message when the message classifier has a first polarity, and the message classifier indicating the beginning of a new message when the message classifier has a second polarity, and further characterised by:

using a clock to delineate the first interval and the second interval, wherein the first half of the clock cycle is used for the first interval, and the second half of the clock cycle is used for the second interval.

The present invention also provides apparatus for transferring a message comprising:

an interval designator means for dividing time into alternating first and second intervals;

a message classifier generator means for transmitting a message classifier during said first interval; and

a data line for carrying said message classifiers during said first interval and data bits of said message during said second interval;

characterised in that the message classifier indicates the continuation of a message when the message classifier has a first polarity and indicates the beginning of a new message when the message classifier has a second polarity, and further characterised in that said interval designator means is a clock transmitted on a clock line, the first half of the clock cycle being used for the first interval, and the second half of the clock cycle being used for the second interval.

As illustrated in the preferred embodiment described below, the invention signals the end of one message and the beginning of another without using a reset line or the header/trailer scheme. Message separators identify the end of one message and the beginning of another. The present invention transmits message separators and message data bits on the same line and in alternating fashion. The present invention transmits the message separators during a first interval and message data bits during a second interval. The first and second intervals are defined by the first half cycle and second half cycle of a clock signal sent on a clock

line. When the message separator has a first polarity, the message data bits following it continue an existing command. When the message separator has a second polarity, the message data bits following it begin a new message.

The present invention can be implemented as a precharged data bus. In this configuration, a bus master transmits the message separators during the first interval and the message data bits during the second interval to various bus slaves. The bus master announces a new message by discharging the data line during the first interval. This produces message separators having a second polarity. The bus master announces the continuation of an existing message by precharging the data line during the first interval. This produces message separators having a first polarity.

The method and apparatus for transferring information according to the present invention has the advantage of requiring less hardware. The hardware reduction decreases system cost and failure rate. When the present invention is implemented as a precharged data bus, it obtains an unambiguous message separator without reducing the data rate or adding additional hardware. This unambiguous message separator results from the bus master's exclusive control of the data line. If any erroneous bus operation occurs when the message separators are sent, the erroneous operation will immediately cease. Additionally, when the present invention is implemented as a precharged data bus, it obtains the benefits of a precharged data bus. These benefits arise because only the bus master can send messages. The benefits include reduced bus contention, reduced hardware since only the bus master sends messages, and 1/3 the bus capacitance. The reduced bus capacitance allows the bus to run three times faster.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 shows the transmission of messages and message separators according to the preferred embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 1B shows the transmission of message and message separators according to an alternate embodiment of the invention.

Figure 2 shows an apparatus that transmits messages and message separators according to the preferred embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

This description assigns two part numbers to the elements. The first part refers to the figure number and the second part refers to the element.

The method according to the preferred embodiment of the present invention sends message

data bits 1-3 and message separators 1-1, 1-9 on the same precharged data line. The message separators 1-1, 1-9 are transmitted during the first interval 1-5 and the message data bits 1-3 are transmitted during the second interval 1-7. The clock signal creates the first interval 1-5 and the second interval 1-7.

The precharged data line, in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the invention, is shown in Figure 1A. When continuing a message, the precharged data line is precharged during the first interval 1-5 to produce the message separator 1-1 having a first polarity. When beginning a new message, the precharged data line is discharged during the second interval 1-1 to produce the message separator 1-9 having a second polarity. Message data bits 1-3 are always sent during the second interval 1-7. Thus, in the preferred embodiment of the invention, one message separator 1-1 is sent for each message data bit 1-3.

The method and apparatus according to the preferred embodiment of the invention is implemented in a system similar to that shown in Figure 2. Figure 2 represents a memory system with a block memory architecture described in United States Patent Application, High Yield Semiconductor Memory Devices, Serial Number 847,411 filed on April 3, 1986 and incorporated herein by reference. This memory system has a memory system controller 2-1 and numerous memory block controllers 2-3. Each memory block controller 2-3 controls a block of memory. The memory system controller 2-1 controls all of the memory block controllers 2-3. In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the precharged data line and clock line are connected between the memory system controller 2-1 and the memory block controllers 2-3. The memory system controller 2-1 is the bus master and the memory block controllers 2-3 are the bus slaves. Only the bus master, the memory system controller 2-1, can precharge the data line during the first interval 1-5 to create the message separators 1-1. If this memory system has six different commands, then three bits are required to identify the commands. Figure 1A shows the transmission of a message separator 1-11 having a second polarity. This message separator 1-11 identifies the beginning of a new message, a reset. The following message data bit 1-13 is a zero and is followed by a message separator 1-15 of the first polarity which signifies the continuation of the present message. The next two message data bits 1-17 and 1-21 0 and 1 complete the command 001. The two message data bits 1-25 and 1-29 are the data. The data is followed by a message separator 1-31 having a second polarity that identifies the end of the present message and the beginning of the next command.

Claims

1. A method for transferring a message comprising the steps of:
 - sending a message classifier (1-1) during a first interval (1-5);
 - sending a message data bit (1-3) during a second interval (1-7); and
 - sending the message classifier (1-1) and the message data bit (1-3) on the same line;
 characterised by the message classifier (1-1) indicating the continuation of a message when the message classifier (1-1) has a first polarity, and the message classifier (1-1) indicating the beginning of a new message when the message classifier (1-1) has a second polarity, and further characterised by using a clock to delineate the first interval (1-5) and the second interval (1-7), wherein the first half of the clock cycle is used for the first interval (1-5), and the second half of the clock cycle is used for the second interval (1-7).

2. A method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of:
 - transmitting the message classifier (1-1) and the message data bits (1-3) on a pre-charged data line;
 - pre-charging the pre-charged data line during the first interval (1-5) to transmit the message classifier (1-1) that signals the continuation of the present message; and
 - discharging the pre-charged data line during said first interval (1-5) to transmit the message classifier (1-1) that signals the beginning of a new message.

A method according to claim 2 further comprising the steps of:

- beginning the transmission of the new message during the second interval (1-7) when the message classifier (1-1) has the second polarity; and
- continuing the transmission of the present message during the second interval (1-7) when the message classifier (1-1) has the first polarity.

4. Apparatus for transferring a message comprising:
 - an interval designator means for dividing time into alternating first (1-5) and second (1-7) intervals;
 - a message classifier generator means for transmitting a message classifier (1-1) during said first interval (1-5);
 - a data line for carrying said message classifiers (1-1) during said first interval (1-5) and

data bits (1-3) of said message during said second interval (1-7);

characterised in that the message classifier (1-1) indicates the continuation of a message when the message classifier (1-1) has a first polarity and indicates the beginning of a new message when the message classifier (1-1) has a second polarity, and further characterised in that said interval designator means is a clock transmitted on a clock line, the first half of the clock cycle being used for the first interval (1-5), and the second half of the clock cycle being used for the second interval (1-7).

5. Apparatus according to claim 4 wherein:
 - said message classifier generator means is a bus master (2-1).
6. Apparatus according to claim 5 wherein:
 - said bus master (2-1) precharges said data line during said first interval (1-5) to produce said message classifier (1-1) having a first polarity.
7. Apparatus according to claim 5 or 6 wherein:
 - said bus master (2-1) discharges said data line during said first interval (1-5) to produce said message classifier (1-1) having a second polarity.
8. Apparatus according to claim 5, 6 or 7 further comprising:
 - a bus slave (2-3) connected to said data line for receiving said message classifiers (1-1) and said message data bits (1-3).

Patentansprüche

1. Ein Verfahren zum Übertragen einer Nachricht, das folgende Schritte umfaßt:
 - Senden eines Nachrichtenklassifizierers (1-1) während eines ersten Intervalls (1-5);
 - Senden eines Nachrichtendatenbits (1-3) während eines zweiten Intervalls (1-7); und
 - Senden des Nachrichtenklassifizierers (1-1) und des Nachrichtendatenbits (1-3) auf der gleichen Leitung; dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß der Nachrichtenklassifizierer (1-1) die Fortsetzung einer Nachricht anzeigt, wenn der Nachrichtenklassifizierer (1-1) eine erste Polarität hat, und
 - daß der Nachrichtenklassifizierer (1-1) den Anfang einer neuen Nachricht anzeigt, wenn der Nachrichtenklassifizierer (1-1) eine zweite Polarität hat, und ferner gekennzeichnet durch,
 - das Verwenden eines Takts, um das erste Intervall (1-5) und das zweite Intervall (1-7) aufzuzeichnen, bei dem die erste Hälfte des Takt-



zyklus für das erste Intervall (1-5) verwendet wird, und die zweite Hälfte des Taktzyklus für das zweite Intervall (1-7) verwendet wird.

2. Ein Verfahren gemäß Anspruch 1, das ferner folgende Schritte umfaßt:
Senden des Nachrichtenklassifizierers (1-1) und der Nachrichtendatenbits (1-3) auf einer vorgeladenen Datenleitung;
Vorladen der vorgeladenen Datenleitung während des ersten Intervalls (1-5), um den Nachrichtenklassifizierer (1-1) zu senden, was die Fortsetzung der gegenwärtigen Nachricht signalisiert; und
Entladen der vorgeladenen Datenleitung während des ersten Intervalls (1-5), um den Nachrichtenklassifizierer (1-1) zu senden, was den Anfang einer neuen Nachricht signalisiert.
3. Ein Verfahren gemäß Anspruch 2, das ferner folgende Schritte umfaßt:
Beginnen des Sendens einer neuen Nachricht während des zweiten Intervalls (1-7), wenn der Nachrichtenklassifizierer (1-1) die zweite Polarität aufweist; und
Fortsetzen des Sendens der gegenwärtigen Nachricht während des zweiten Intervalls (1-7), wenn der Nachrichtenklassifizierer (1-1) die erste Polarität aufweist.
4. Vorrichtung zum Übertragen einer Nachricht, die folgende Merkmale aufweist:
eine Intervallbezeichnereinrichtung zur Teilung der Zeit in abwechselnd erste (1-5) und zweite (1-7) Intervalle;
eine Nachrichtenklassifizierergeneratoreinrichtung zum Senden eines Nachrichtenklassifizierers (1-1) während des ersten Intervalls (1-5);
eine Datenleitung zur Übertragung des Nachrichtenklassifizierers (1-1) während des ersten Intervalls (1-5) und der Datenbits (1-3) der Nachricht während des zweiten Intervalls (1-7);
dadurch gekennzeichnet,
daß der Nachrichtenklassifizierer (1-1) die Fortsetzung einer Nachricht anzeigt, wenn der Nachrichtenklassifizierer (1-1) eine erste Polarität aufweist, und den Anfang einer neuen Nachricht anzeigt, wenn der Nachrichtenklassifizierer (1-1) eine zweite Polarität aufweist, und ferner dadurch gekennzeichnet,
daß die Intervallbezeichnereinrichtung ein Takt ist, der auf einer Taktleitung gesendet wird, wobei die erste Hälfte des Taktzyklus für das erste Intervall (1-5) benutzt wird, und die zweite Hälfte des Taktzyklus für das zweite Intervall (1-7) benutzt wird.

5. Vorrichtung gemäß Anspruch 4, bei der die Nachrichtenklassifiziererzeugungseinrichtung eine Bushaupteinheit (2-1) ist.

6. Vorrichtung gemäß Anspruch 5, bei der die Bushaupteinheit (2-1) die Datenleitung während dem ersten Intervall (1-5) vorlädt, um den Nachrichtenklassifizierer (1-1) mit einer ersten Polarität zu erzeugen.
7. Vorrichtung gemäß den Ansprüchen 5 oder 6, bei der die Bushaupteinheit (2-1) die Datenleitung während dem ersten Intervall (1-5) entlädt, um den Nachrichtenklassifizierer mit einer zweiten Polarität zu erzeugen.
8. Vorrichtung gemäß den Ansprüchen 5, 6 oder 7, die ferner folgendes Merkmal aufweist:
eine Busnebeneinheit (2-3), die mit der Datenleitung verbunden ist, um den Nachrichtenklassifizierer (1-1) und die Nachrichtendatenbits (1-3) zu empfangen.

Revendications

1. Procédé de transfert de message comportant les étapes de:
envoi d'un classificateur de message (1-1) pendant un premier intervalle (1-5);
envoi d'un bit de données de message (1-3) pendant un second intervalle (1-7); et
envoi du classificateur de message (1-1) et du bit de données de message sur la même ligne;
caractérisé par le classificateur de message (1-1) qui indique la poursuite d'un message lorsque le classificateur de message (1-1) possède une première polarité, et le classificateur de message (1-1) qui indique le début d'un nouveau message lorsque le classificateur de message (1-1) possède une seconde polarité, et caractérisé en outre par l'utilisation d'une horloge pour délimiter le premier intervalle (1-5) et le second intervalle (1-7), dans lequel la première moitié du cycle d'horloge est utilisée pour le premier intervalle (1-5) et la seconde moitié du cycle d'horloge est utilisée pour le second intervalle (1-7).
2. Procédé selon la revendication 1, comportant en outre l'étape de:
transmission du classificateur de message (1-1) et des bits de données de message (1-3) sur une ligne de données pré-chargée;
pré-chargement de la ligne de données pré-chargée pendant le premier intervalle (1-5) pour transmettre le classificateur de message (1-1) qui signale la poursuite du message pré-



sont; et

déchargement de la ligne de données pré-chargée pendant ledit premier intervalle (1-5) pour transmettre le classificateur de message (1-1) qui signale le début d'un nouveau message.

3. Procédé selon la revendication 2, comportant en outre les étapes de:

commencement de la transmission du nouveau message pendant le second intervalle (1-7) lorsque le classificateur de message (1-1) possède la seconde polarité; et

poursuite de la transmission du message actuel pendant le second intervalle (1-7) lorsque le classificateur de message (1-1) possède la première polarité.

4. Appareil de transfert de message comportant:

un moyen de désignation d'intervalle pour diviser le temps en premier (1-5) et second (1-7) intervalles alternés;

un moyen de génération de classificateur de message pour transmettre un classificateur de message (1-1) pendant ledit premier intervalle (1-5);

une ligne de données pour acheminer lesdits classificateurs de message (1-1) pendant ledit premier intervalle (1-5) et les bits de données (1-3) dudit message pendant ledit second intervalle (1-7);

caractérisé en ce que le classificateur de message (1-1) indique la poursuite d'un message lorsque le classificateur de message (1-1) possède une première polarité, et indique le début d'un nouveau message lorsque le classificateur de message (1-1) possède une seconde polarité, et caractérisé en outre en ce que ledit moyen de désignation d'intervalle est une horloge transmise sur une ligne d'horloge, la première moitié du cycle d'horloge étant utilisée pour le premier intervalle (1-5), et la seconde moitié du cycle d'horloge étant utilisée pour le second intervalle (1-7).

5. Appareil selon la revendication 4, dans lequel: ledit moyen de génération de classificateur de message (1-1) est un maître de bus (2-1).

6. Appareil selon la revendication 5, dans lequel: ledit maître de bus (2-1) précharge ladite ligne de données pendant ledit premier intervalle (1-5) pour produire ledit classificateur de message (1-1) possédant une première polarité.

7. Appareil selon la revendication 5 ou 6, dans lequel:

ledit maître de bus (2-1) décharge ladite ligne de données pendant ledit premier intervalle (1-5) pour produire ledit classificateur de message (1-1) possédant une seconde polarité.

8. Appareil selon la revendication 5, 6, ou 7, comportant en outre:

un esclave de bus (2-3) connecté à ladite ligne de données pour recevoir lesdits classificateurs de message (1-1) et lesdits bits de données de message (1-3).

