# tinyML. EMEA

Enabling Ultra-low Power Machine Learning at the Edge

tinyML EMEA Technical Forum 2021 Proceedings

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## Bottom-Up and Top-Down Neural Processing Systems Design:

Unveiling the Road toward Neuromorphic Intelligence

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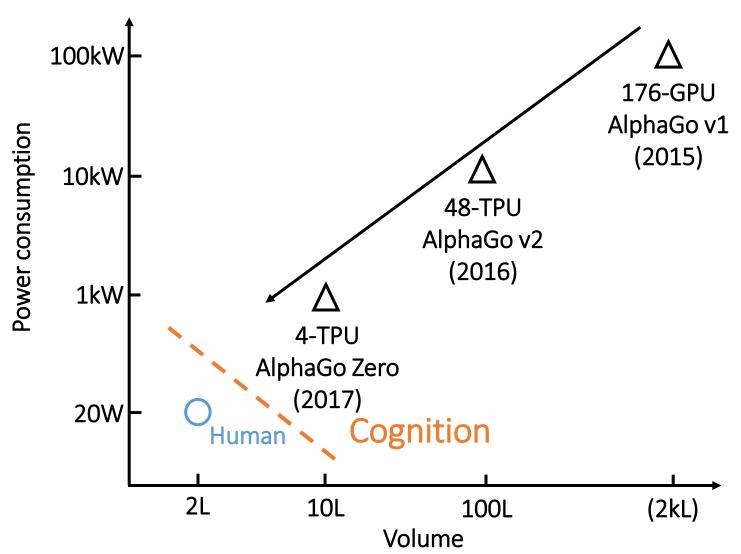


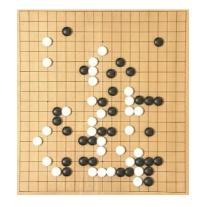




#### Neuromorphic Engineering – Why?

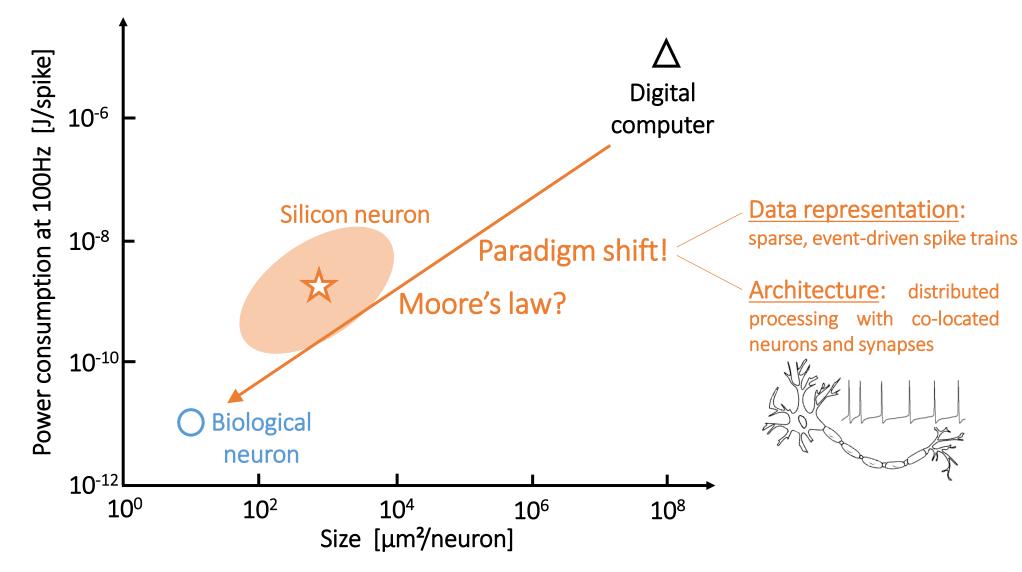
Efficiency of artificial intelligence vs. natural intelligence?





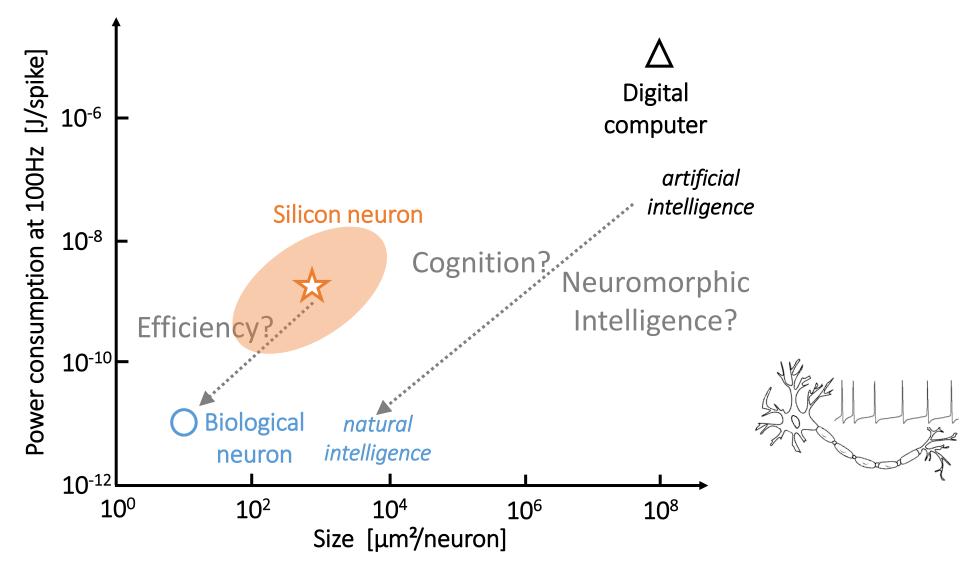
## Neuromorphic Engineering – Why?

Efficiency of bio-inspired neuromorphic computing?



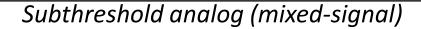
## Neuromorphic Engineering – How?

A design strategy toward efficiency and cognition?



## Neuromorphic Engineering – How?

A design strategy toward efficiency and cognition?



Biological-time brain emulation and basic research

ROLLS (UZH/ETHZ) DYNAPs (UZH/ETHZ)

NeuroGrid (Stanford)

Above-threshold analog (mixed-signal)

Neuroscience simulation acceleration

BrainScaleS 1/2 (Heidelberg)

Software

Low-cost simulation: neuromorphic (slow), neural networks (fast)

CPU / GPU

Dedicated/distributed sim.

Simulation acceleration for neuroscience and neural networks

FPGA

SpiNNaker 1/2 (Manchester, TUD)

Large-scale full-custom digital designs

Cognitive computing

TrueNorth (IBM)

Loihi (Intel)

Small-scale full-custom digital designs

Bio-inspired edge computing (experimentation platforms)

ODIN (UCLouvain)

MorphIC (UCLouvain)

Low-cost adaptive edge computing (dedicated accelerators)

[Seo, CICC'11] [Knag, JSSC'15]

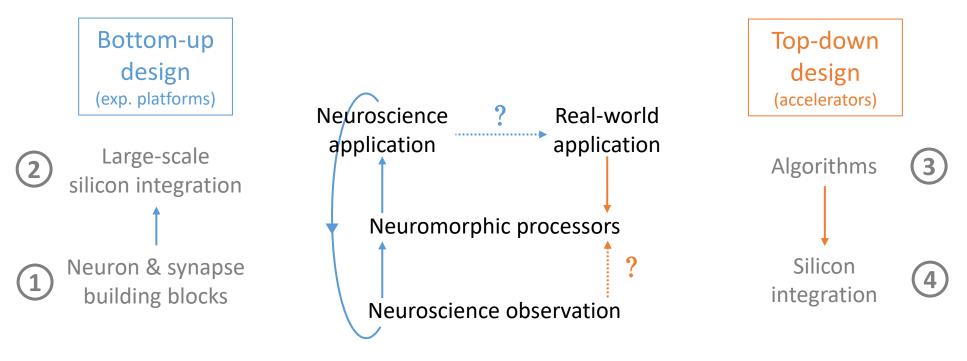
See also:

SPOON (UCLouvain)

[Park, ISSCC'19]

## Neuromorphic Engineering – How?

Unveiling roads to embedded cognition



Versatility / efficiency<br/>tradeoffEfficiency<br/>CognitionAccuracy / efficiency<br/>tradeoff

## Outline

Part I — Bottom-up neuromorphic design

- Building blocks
- Integration

Part II – Top-down neuromorphic design

- Algorithms
- Integration

Conclusion and perspectives

#### Outline

Part I – Bottom-up neuromorphic design

Building blocks

Neurons and synapses as adaptive processing and memory elements

Integration [Frenkel, *ISCAS*, 2017] [Frenkel, *BioCAS*, 2017]

Part II – Top-down neuromorphic design

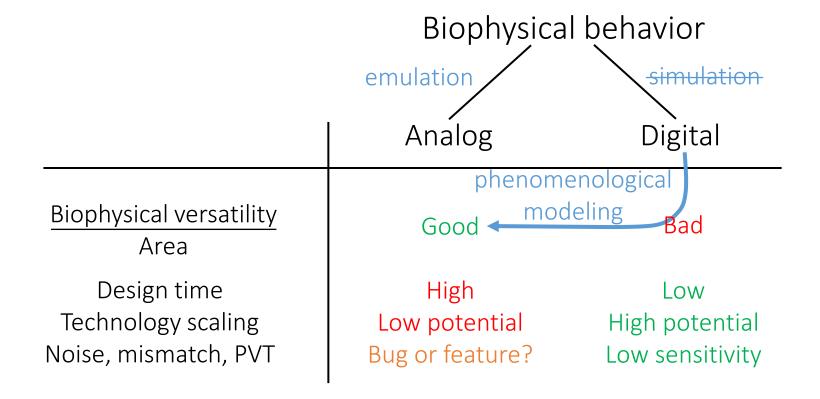
- Algorithms
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Conclusion and perspectives

## Design strategy

Analog or digital?



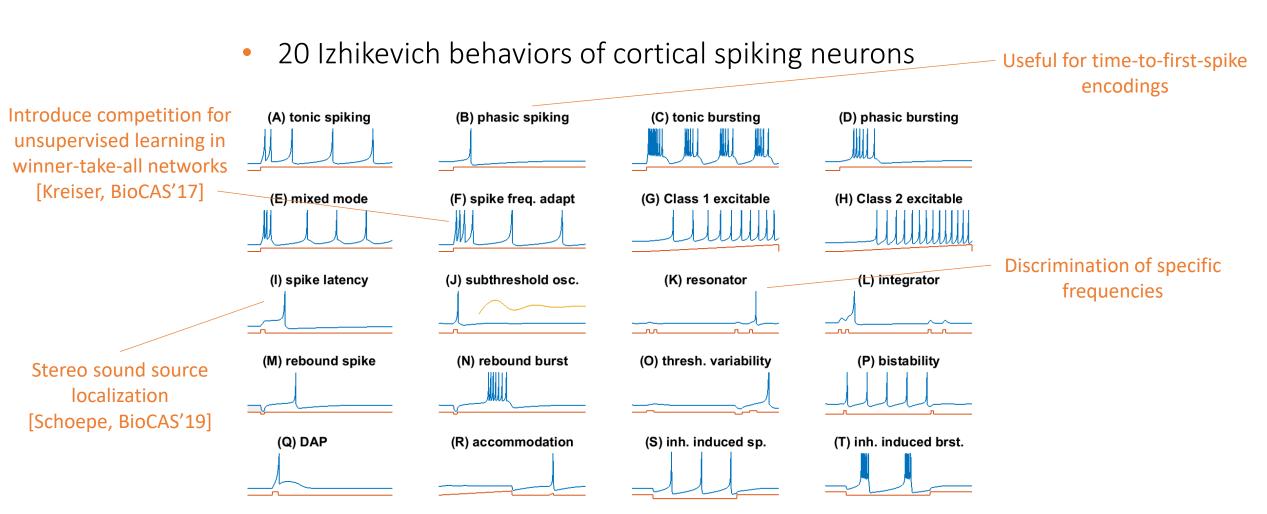


How can we make the best of both worlds?

## Design strategy

What should we aim for and phenomenologically implement?

#### **Neurons**

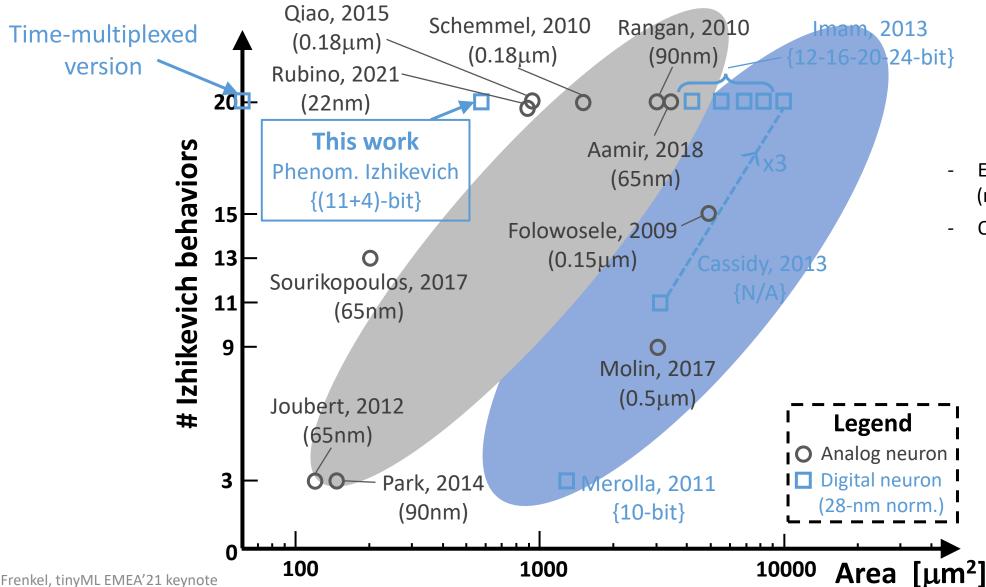


[Izhikevich, IEEE Trans. NN, 2004]

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## Proposed phenomenological digital neuron

Tackling the versatility/efficiency tradeoff



#### Key features:

- Entirely event-driven (no time-stepped integration)
- Only 4 functions necessary:
  - Threshold adaptation
  - Time window generation
  - Simple template matching
  - Membrane potential sign rotation

#### Design strategy

What should we aim for and phenomenologically implement?

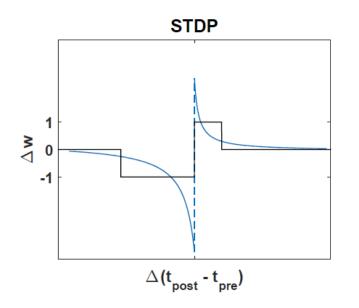


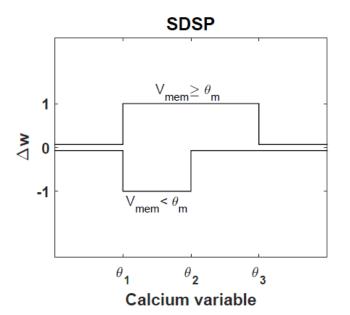
#### Neurons

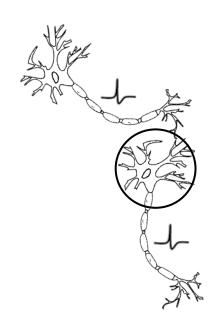
• 20 Izhikevich behaviors of cortical spiking neurons

#### Synapses

Spike-based online learning



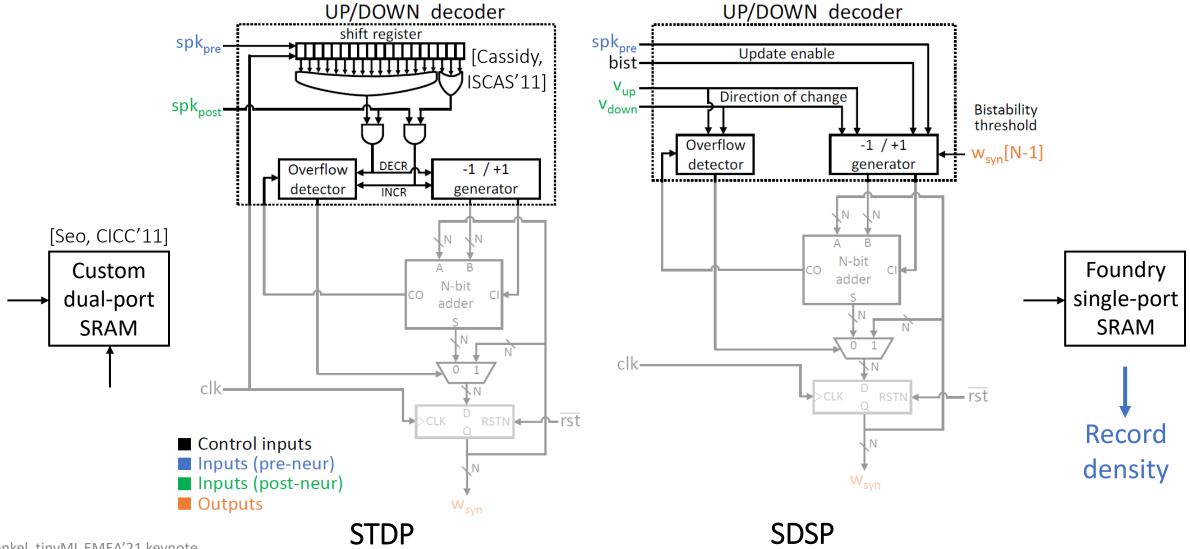




## Proposed digital synapse

Tackling the versatility/efficiency tradeoff

#### Key challenge – Fan-in = 100-10000 synapses/neuron



#### Outline

Part I – Bottom-up neuromorphic design

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Proposed neuromorphic experimentation platforms

Part II – Top-down neuromorphic design

[Frenkel, *Trans. BioCAS*, 2019a] [Frenkel, *Trans. BioCAS*, 2019b]

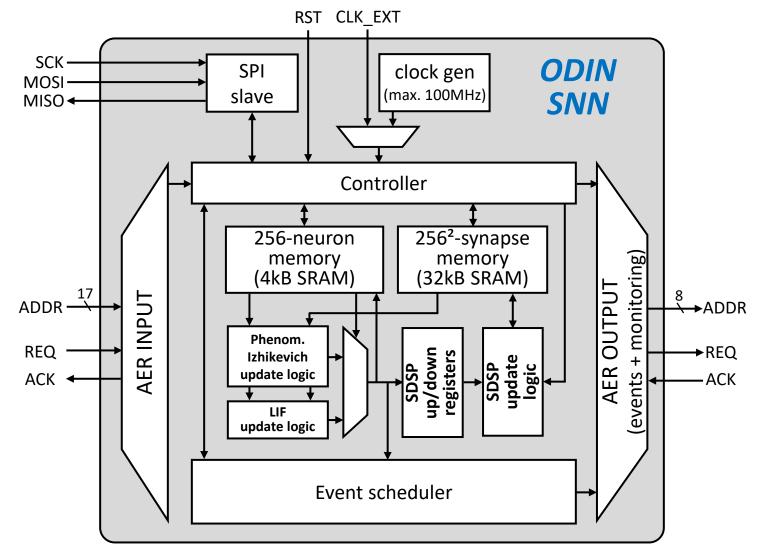
- Algorithms
- Integration

Conclusion and perspectives

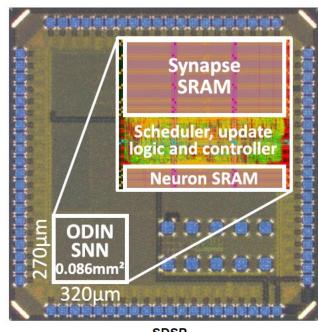
#### Architecture of ODIN

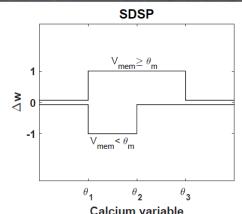


ODIN – A 256-neuron 64k-synapse Online-learning Digital Neurosynaptic core



## ODIN – Chip microphotograph and specifications





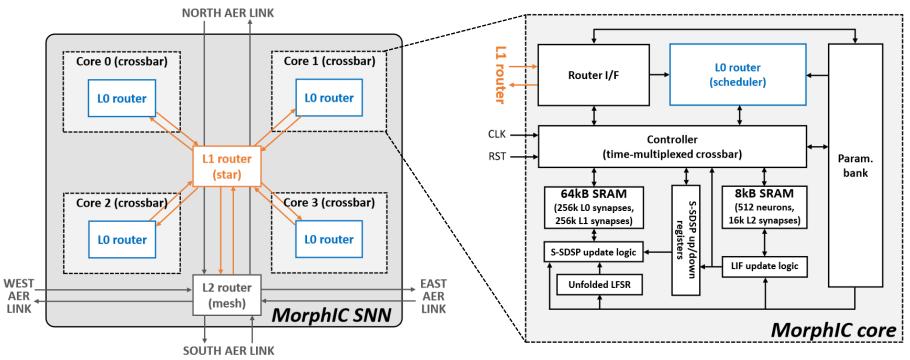
Technology	28nm FDSOI
Implementation	Digital
Area	0.086mm <sup>2</sup>
# neurons	256
# synapses	64k
# Izhikevich behav.	20
Online learning	SDSP, (3+1)-bit weight
Time constant	Biological to accelerated
Supply voltage	0.55V - 1.0V
Leakage power (P <sub>leak</sub> )	27.3μW @0.55V
Idle power (P <sub>idle</sub> )	1.78μW/MHz @0.55V
Incr. energy/SOP (E <sub>SOP</sub> )	8.43pJ @0.55V
Global energy/SOP (E <sub>tot.S</sub>	<sub>ор</sub> ) >12.7pJ @0.55V
Routing flexibility/effici	ency 🙁 (AER)
Fan-in	256
Fan-out	256

Frenkel, tinyML EMEA'21 keynote Calcium variable

## Architecture of MorphIC

#### Chip-level architecture

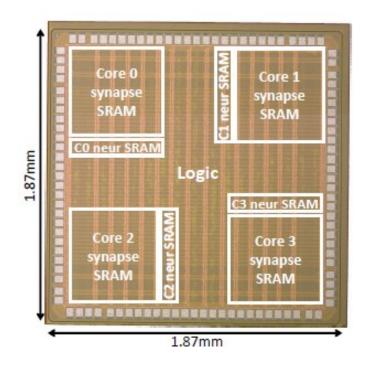
#### Core architecture



Neurons/core 512 Synapses/core 528k

Fan-in 1k Fan-out 2k Stochastic SDSP (S-SDSP) on binary synapses

## MorphIC – Chip microphotograph and specifications



Technology 65nm LP CMOS Implementation Digital 3.5mm<sup>2</sup> (incl. pads) Area 2.86mm<sup>2</sup> (excl. pads) Number of cores Total # neurons (type) 2048 (LIF) Total # synapses (hier.) 1M (L0), 1M (L1), 64k (L2) Fan-in (hier.) 512 (L0), 512 (L1), 32 (L2) Fan-out (hier.) 512 (L0), 3x512 (L1), 4 (L2) Stochastic SDSP, 1-bit weight Online learning Time constant Biological to accelerated Supply voltage 0.8V - 1.2VMax. clock frequency 55MHz (0.8V) – 210MHz (1.2V) Leakage power (Pleak) 45µW @0.8V Idle power (P<sub>idle</sub>) 41.3µW/MHz @0.8V Energy/SOP (E<sub>SOP</sub>) 30pJ @0.8V

#### Comparison with SoA experimentation platforms

Mixed-signal	Digita
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Author	Schemmel	Benjamin	Qiao	Moradi	Painkras	Akopyan	Davies	Frenkel	Frenkel
Publication	ISCAS, 2010	PIEEE, 2014	Front. NS, 2015	TBioCAS, 2017	JSSC, 2013	TCAD, 2015	IEEE Micro, 2018	TBCAS, 2019a	TBCAS, 2019b
Chip name	HICANN	Neurogrid	ROLLS	DYNAPs	SpiNNaker	TrueNorth	Loihi	ODIN	MorphIC
Implementation	Mixed-signal	Mixed-signal	Mixed-signal	Mixed-signal	Digital	Digital	Digital	Digital	Digital
Technology	$0.18 \mu \mathrm{m}$	$0.18 \mu \mathrm{m}$	$0.18 \mu \mathrm{m}$	$0.18 \mu \mathrm{m}$	$0.13 \mu \mathrm{m}$	$28\mathrm{nm}$	14nm FinFET	28nm FDSOI	65nm LP
# cores	1	16	1	4	18	4096	128	1	4
Neurosynaptic core area [mm <sup>2</sup> ]	49	168	51.4	7.5	3.75	0.095	0.4	0.086	0.715
# Izhikevich behaviors	(20)	N/A	(20)	(20)	Programmable	11 (3 neur: 20)	(6)	20	3
# neurons per core	512	64k	256	256	max. 1000	256	max. 1024	256	512
Synaptic weight storage	4-bit (SRAM)	Off-chip	Capacitor	12-bit (CAM)	Off-chip	1-bit (SRAM)	1- to 9-bit (SRAM)	(3+1)-bit (SRAM)	1-bit (SRAM)
Embedded online learning	STDP	No	SDSP	No	Programmable	No	Programmable	SDSP	S-SDSP
# synapses per core	112k	_	128k	16k	_	64k	1M to 114k (1-9 bits)	64k	528k
Time constant	Accelerated	Biological	Biological	Biological	Bio. to accel.	Biological	N/A	Bio. to accel.	Bio. to accel.
routing routing	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	High	Medium	High	Low	Medium
Flexibility learning	Low	_	Low	Low	-	_	High	Low	Low
N 21 raw	10.5	390	5	34	max. 267	2.6k	max. 2.5k	3.0k	716
Neuron core density [neur/mm <sup>2</sup> ] norm.	_	_	_	_	max. 5.8k	2.6k	max. 1k	3.0k	3.9k
c	2.3k		2.5k	2.1k		674k	2.5M to 282k	741k	738k
Synapse core density [syn/mm <sup>2</sup> ] norm.	_	_	_	_	_	674k	1M to 113k	741k	4M
Supply voltage	1.8V	3.0V	1.8V	1.3V-1.8V	1.2V	0.7V-1.05V	0.5V-1.25V	0.55V-1.0V	0.8V-1.2V
NOTE:	NT / A	(941pJ)▲	>77fJ <sup>△</sup>	134fJ <sup>△</sup> /30pJ <sup>▲</sup> (1.3V)	$> 11.3 \mathrm{nJ}^{\Delta}/26.6 \mathrm{nJ}^{\blacktriangle}$	26pJ <sup>▲</sup> (0.775V)	$>23.6 pJ^{\Delta} (0.75V)$	8.4pJ <sup>△</sup> /12.7pJ <sup>▲</sup> (0.55V)	30pJ <sup>△</sup> /51pJ <sup>▲</sup> (0.8V)
Energy per SOP norm.	N/A	-	_		>2.4nJ <sup>△</sup> /5.7nJ <sup>▲</sup>	26pJ▲	(66.1pJ△)	8.4pJ <sup>△</sup> /12.7pJ <sup>▲</sup>	12.9pJ△/22pJ▲

Most direct comparison: IBM TrueNorth core vs. ODIN (same technology node, same number of neurons and synapses per neurosynaptic core, same area).



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#### Comparison with SoA experimentation platforms

Mixed-signal

Digital

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Embedded online learning	STDP	No	SDSP	No	Programmable	No	Programmable	SDSP	S-SDSP
# synapses per core	112k	_	128k	16k	_	64k	1M to 114k (1-9 bits)	64k	528k
Time constant	Accelerated	Biological	Biological	Biological	Bio. to accel.	Biological	N/A	Bio. to accel.	Bio. to accel.
ru and routing	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	High	Medium	High	Low	Medium
Flexibility learning	Low	_	Low	Low	_	_	High	Low	Low
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Supply voltage	1.8V	3.0V	1.8V	1.3V-1.8V	1.2V	0.7V-1.05V	0.5V-1.25V	0.55V-1.0V	0.8V-1.2V
None	NT / A	(941pJ)▲	>77fJ <sup>△</sup>	134fJ <sup>△</sup> /30pJ <sup>▲</sup> (1.3V)	>11.3nJ <sup>∆</sup> /26.6nJ <sup>▲</sup>	26pJ <sup>▲</sup> (0.775V)	>23.6pJ <sup>△</sup> (0.75V)	8.4pJ <sup>△</sup> /12.7pJ <sup>▲</sup> (0.55V)	30pJ <sup>△</sup> /51pJ <sup>▲</sup> (0.8V
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#### Area

ODIN and Morphic have the highest neuron and synapse densities among all SNNs with embedded synaptic weight storage

#### Comparison with SoA experimentation platforms

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Time constant	Accelerated	Biological	Biological	Biological	Bio. to accel.	Biological	N/A	Bio. to accel.	Bio. to accel.
routing routing	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	High	Medium	High	Low	Medium
Flexibility learning	Low	_	Low	Low	_	_	High	Low	Low
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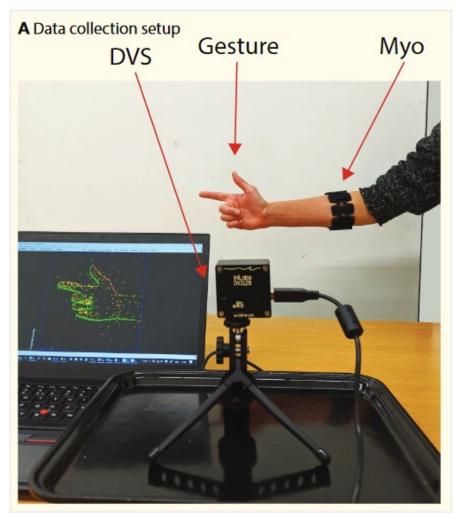
#### Power

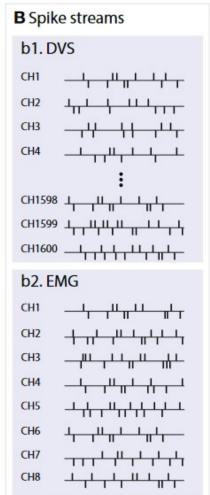
ODIN has the lowest energy per synaptic event among all digital SNNs, MorphIC keeps a competitive energy efficiency.

They outperform subthreshold analog SNNs in accelerated time, but not for biological-time processing.

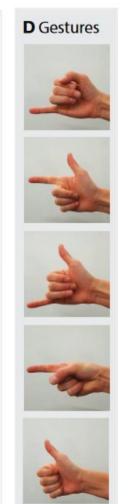
## Results on the spiking EMG/DVS sensor fusion benchmark

[Ceolini, Frenkel, Shrestha et al., Front. Neurosci., 2020]



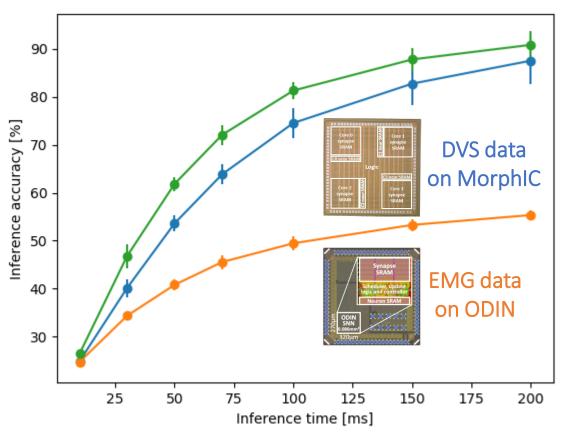


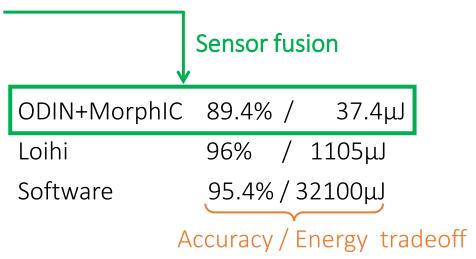




## Results on the spiking EMG/DVS sensor fusion benchmark

[Ceolini, Frenkel, Shrestha et al., Front. Neurosci., 2020]





Neuromorphic designs are more efficient than GPUs, as would be expected from dedicated hardware. But are they more efficient than conventional accelerators?



See the ODIN and MorphIC papers for more benchmarking, incl. online- and offline-trained MNIST.

#### Outline

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- Integration

Part II – Top-down neuromorphic design

Algorithms

Minimizing the training cost of neural networks for adaptive edge computing

Integration

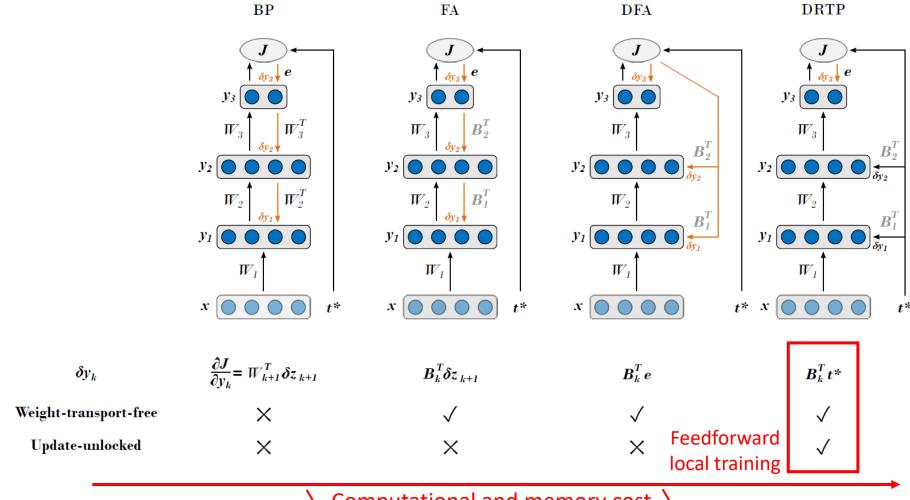
[Frenkel & Lefebvre, Front. Neurosci., 2021]

Conclusion and perspectives

## Learning without feedback







Computational and memory cost \

## Direct Random Target Projection (DRTP)

*Ideal use cases?* 

#### Adaptive edge computing

- Very low power and area overheads can be expected for an on-chip implementation.
- Datasets representative of the complexity associated to autonomous smart sensors: MNIST or CIFAR-10.

→ We'll verify these claims in silico.

<u>Disclaimer</u>: whether DRTP scales to ImageNET is probably **not** the right question. ©

#### Neuroscience

DRTP could come in line with recent findings in cortical areas that reveal the existence of output-independent target signals in the dendritic instructive pathways of intermediate-layer neurons.

[Magee & Grienberger, Annual Review of Neuroscience, 2020]

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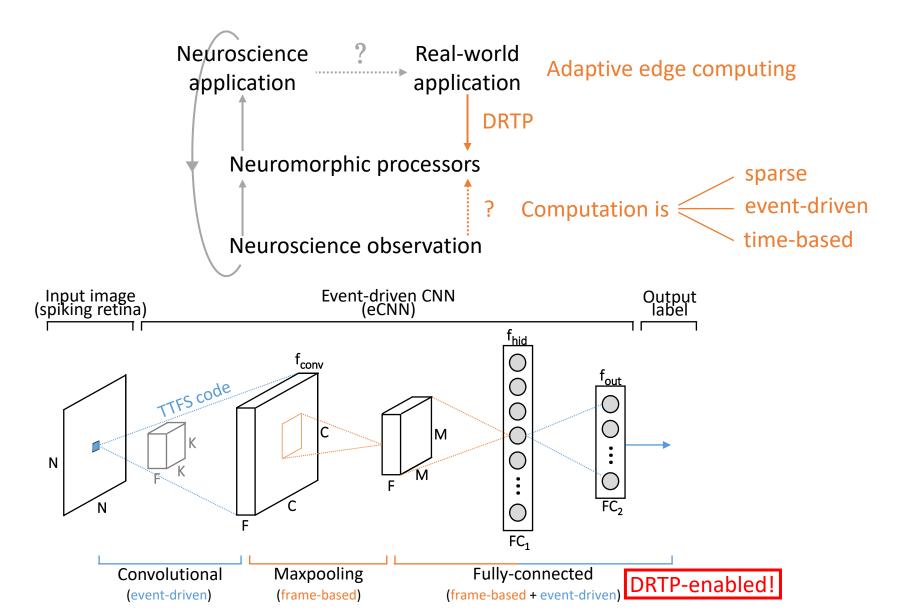
Neuromorphic accelerators

[Frenkel, *ISCAS*, 2020] (*Best paper award* \(\bigveereq\))

Conclusion and perspectives

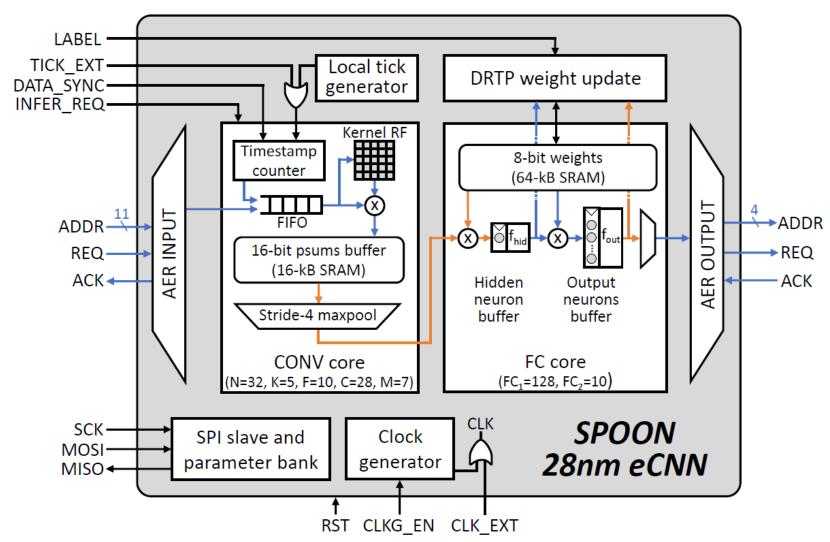
## Which bio-inspired elements?

Taking a step back with the top-down design strategy



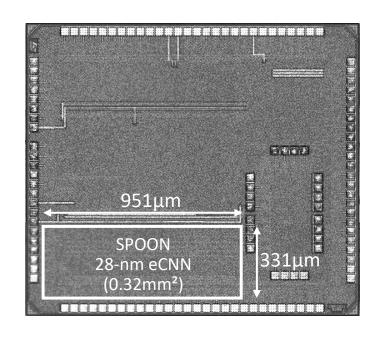
#### Architecture of SPOON

SPOON – A <u>Spiking Online-Learning Convolutional Neuromorphic Processor</u>



## SPOON – Chip microphotograph and specifications





#### (pre-silicon numbers, not yet updated)

28nm FDSOI CMOS Technology Implementation Digital 0.32mm<sup>2</sup> (0.26mm<sup>2</sup> excl. rails) Area Topology C5×5@10-FC128-FC10 Online learning Stochastic DRTP, 8-bit weights Time constant Biological to accelerated 0.6V - 1.0VSupply voltage Max. clock frequency 150MHz Leakage power  $61\mu W$  at 0.6VEnergy for CONV core 1.7nJ/event at 0.6V Energy for FC core 55nJ/inference at 0.6V Online learning overhead 16.8% in power, 11.8% in area

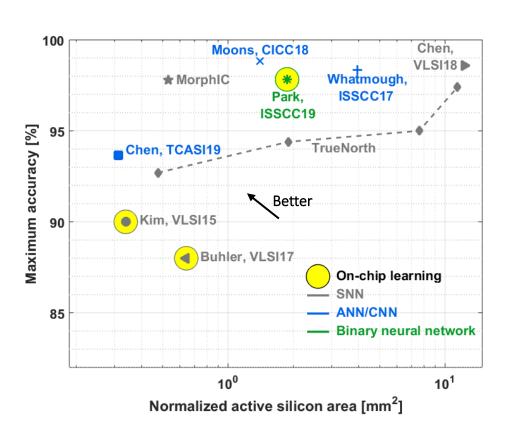
Stay tuned for the journal extension!

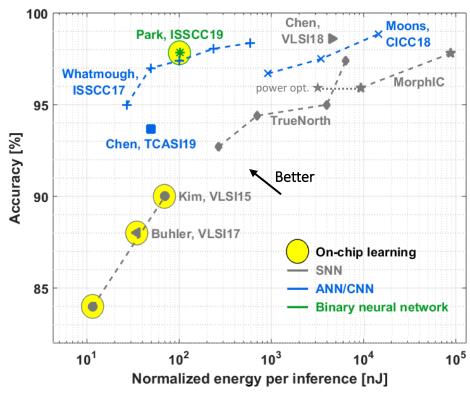
DRTP can be implemented on-chip at a very low cost!

Benchmarking: MNIST and N-MNIST

## SPOON benchmarking

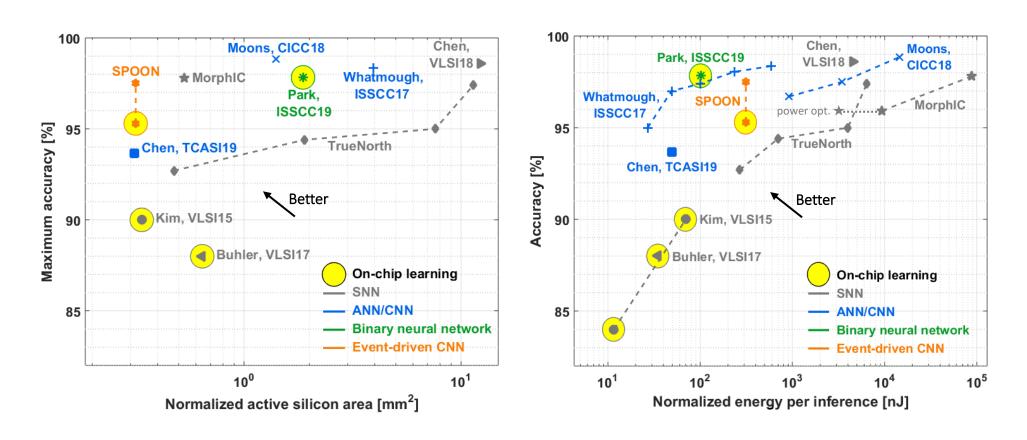
Against SoA spiking neural networks on MNIST





## SPOON benchmarking

Against SoA spiking neural networks on MNIST



Only SPOON allows reaching the efficiency of ANN/CNN/BNN accelerators while enabling online learning with event-based sensors.

#### Outline

Part I – Bottom-up neuromorphic design

- Building blocks
- Integration

Part II – Top-down neuromorphic design

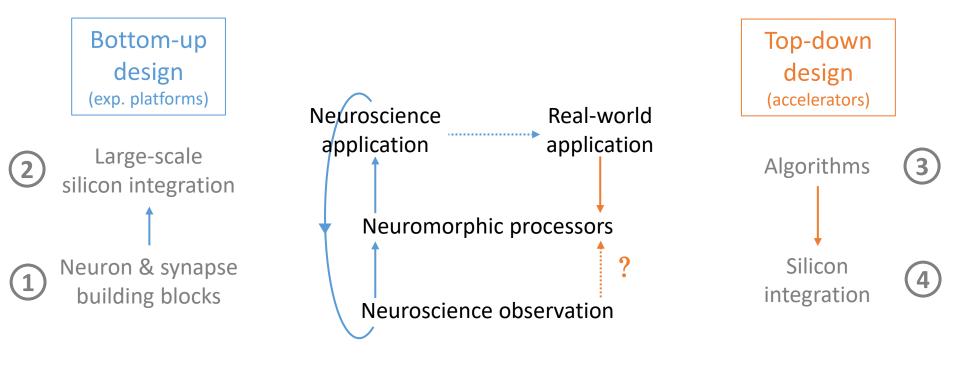
- Algorithms
- Integration

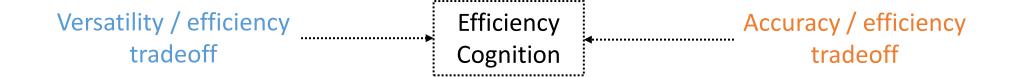
#### Conclusion and perspectives

Summary of the key messages, next directions

## Neuromorphic Engineering – Key Claims

Unveiling roads to embedded cognition



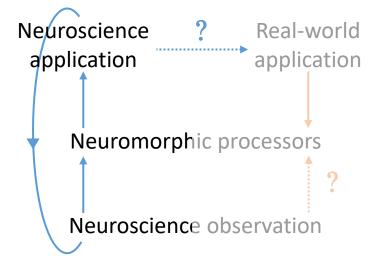


#### Neuromorphic Engineering – Key Claims

Unveiling roads to embedded cognition

Bottom-up design (exp. platforms)

- Large-scale silicon integration
- Neuron & synapse building blocks



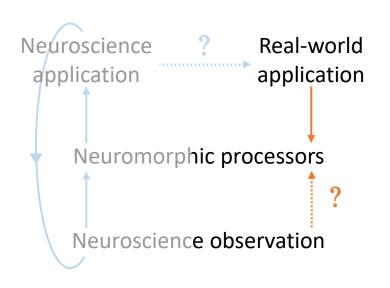
Versatility / efficiency tradeoff

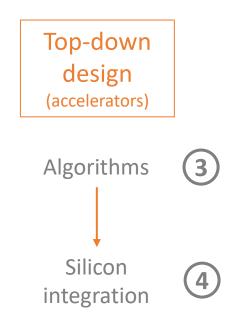
#### Claim 1

Hardware-aware neuroscience model design and selection allows reaching record neuron and synapse densities with low-power operation for large-scale integration *in silico*.

#### Neuromorphic Engineering – Key Claims

Unveiling roads to embedded cognition





#### Claim 2

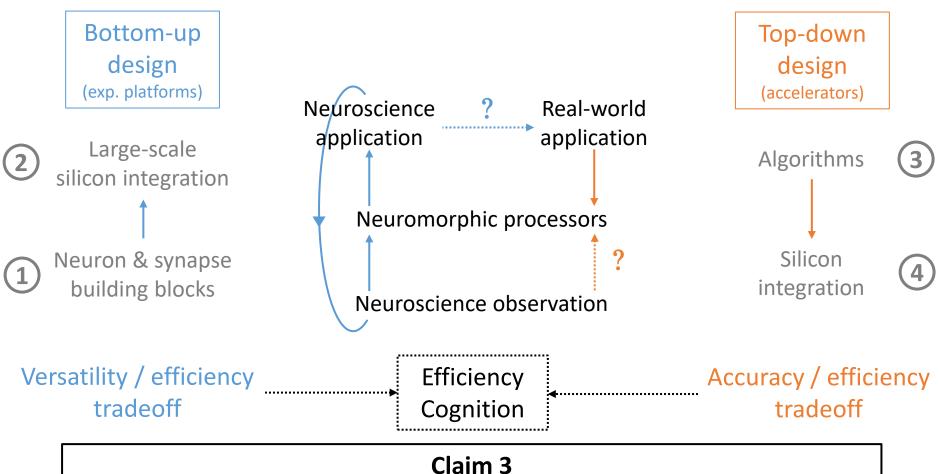
Combining event-driven and frame-based processing with weight-transport-free update-unlocked training supports low-cost adaptive edge computing with spike-based sensors.

Accuracy / efficiency tradeoff

Frenkel, tinyML EMEA'21 keynote

#### Neuromorphic Engineering – Key Claims

Unveiling roads to embedded cognition



Top-down guidance helps pushing bottom-up neuron and synapse integration beyond the purpose of neuroscience experimentation platforms, while bottom-up guidance supports top-down design toward brain reverse-engineering.

#### Perspectives

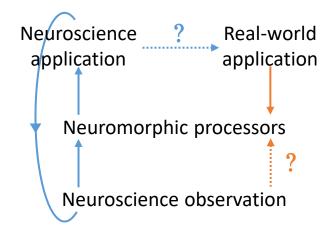
Neuromorphic engineering and spiking neural networks:

"Can we make it work?" ——"Will it bring a competitive advantage?" (not only against GPUs)

Need something better than MNIST —— Audio (KWS) and bio-signal processing (time, biological-time)

[Davies, Nat. Mach. Intel., 2019]

- Phenomenological digital design: pragmatic short-to-midterm approach.
   Promising avenues: leveraging the variability of subthreshold analog design; fine-grained mixed-signal design.
- Bottom-up trend: dendrites
- Top-down trend: new wave of training algorithms mapping onto bio-plausible primitives
- Cognition: a case for neuromorphic robots?
   [Man & Damasio, Nat. Mach. Intel., 2019]



[Sacramento, NeurlPS'18] [Payeur, bioRxiv, 2020] [Bellec, Nat. Comms., 2020]

Frenkel, tinyML EMEA'21 keynote

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Key colleagues:



#### Postdoc











Prof. Giacomo Indiveri



















#### Questions?

#### Main references:

[C. Frenkel et al., "A 0.086-mm<sup>2</sup> 12.7-pJ/SOP 64k-synapse 256-neuron - ODIN:

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[C. Frenkel et al. "MorphIC: A 65-nm 738k-synapse/mm<sup>2</sup> quad-core binary-- MorphIC:

weight digital neuromorphic processor with stochastic spike-driven online

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processing systems design: Neuromorphic intelligence as the convergence of natural and artificial intelligence", arXiv preprint arXiv:2106.01288, 2021]

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Open-sourced! github.com/ChFrenkel/ODIN

Open-sourced! github.com/ChFrenkel/Direct RandomTargetProjection

Journal extension coming soon

Just released!



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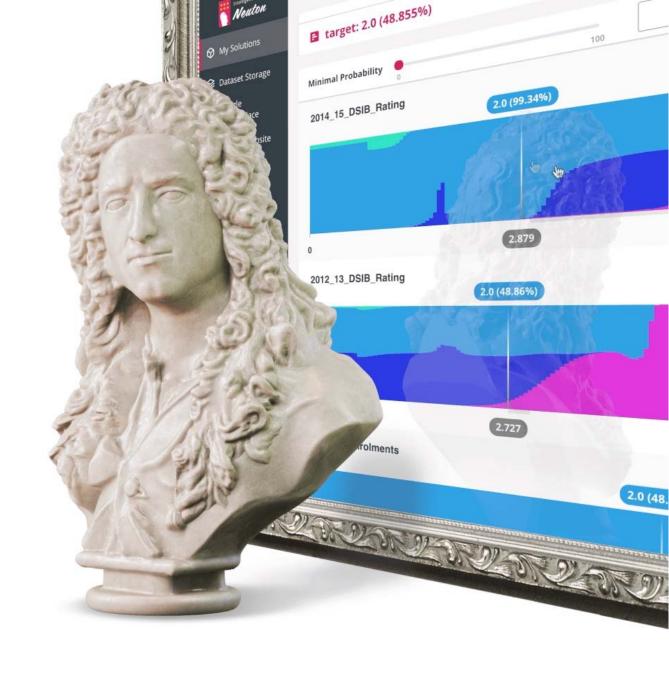
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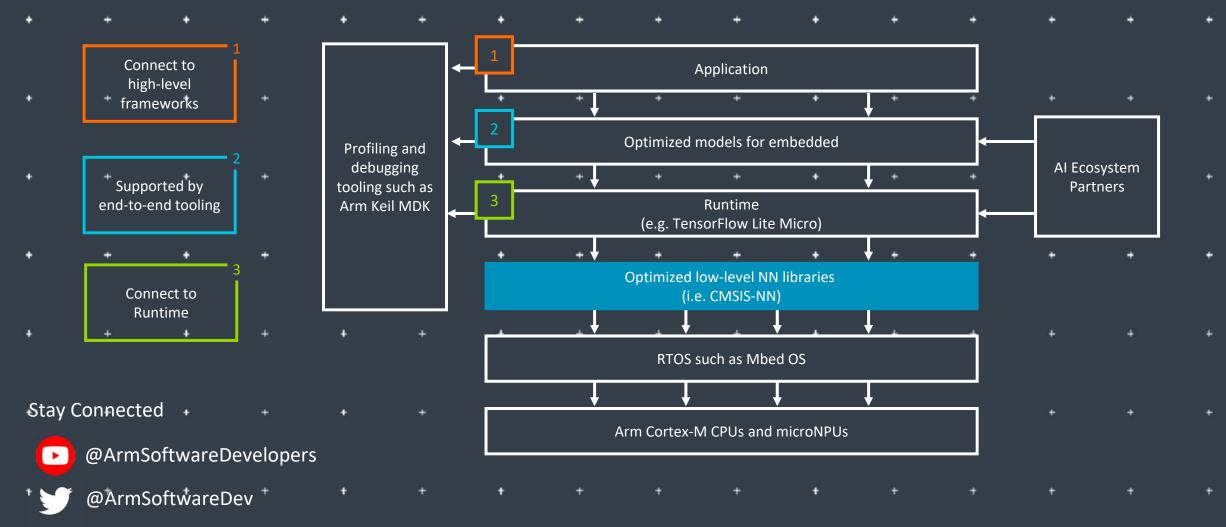
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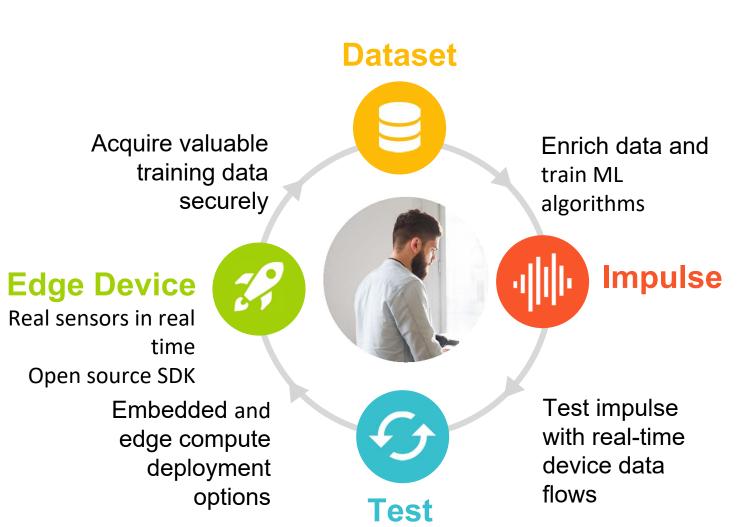


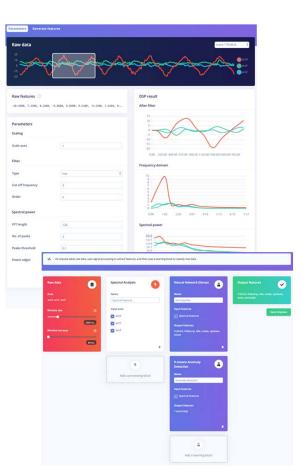
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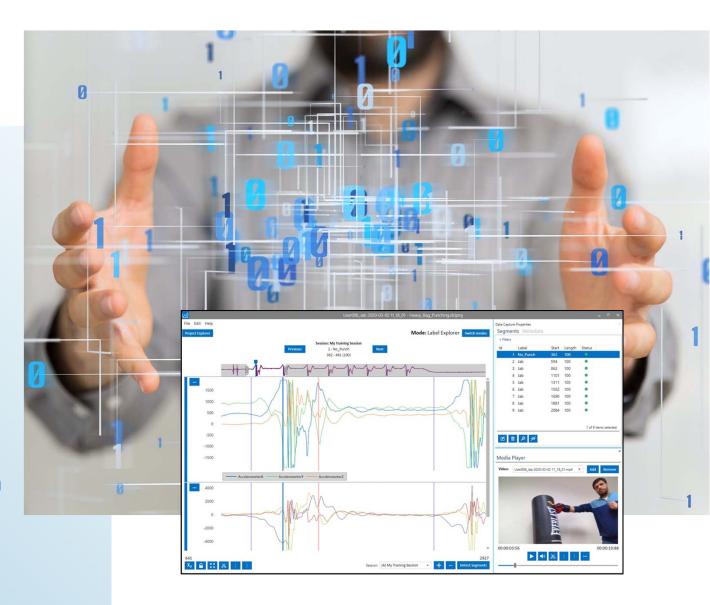


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