

A Systems Engineering Approach to Genetic Circuit Synthesis

Curtis Madsen¹, Evan Appleton², Prashant Vaidyanathan¹, Katherine Elkind¹, Rizki Mardian¹, Nicholas Roehner¹, Alan Pacheco¹, Calin Belta¹, and Douglas Densmore¹

¹Boston University Biological Design Center, ²Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts, USA

Motivation

Systems engineering is an interdisciplinary field that focuses on building and maintaining complex engineering systems over their entire life cycles. Applying standards and core concepts of related sub-fields such as **performance engineering** (ensuring that a system meets its expected performance requirements) and **reliability engineering** (a system does not fail more than expected during its life cycle) is a promising way to advance synthetic biology's potential applications in research areas.

Approach

We have created a software platform (Phoenix) that encapsulates the procedures required during the **specify-design-build-test** workflow to enable iterative design of complex genetic systems. The framework is designed to ensure that the **functional, performance, and structural** specifications of the genetic system are well defined, reproducible, and reliable. The iterative process will use principles of **reinforcement learning** to improve the performance of the synthesis and assignment algorithms.

Acknowledgments

Research reported on this poster was supported by the National Science Foundation under grant CPS Frontier 1446607 and the Office of Naval Research MURI Award. The authors would also like to acknowledge Ernst Oberortner, Zachary Chapsko, Cristian-Ioan Vasile, Iman Haghghi, Masakazu Nagata, Yash Agarwal for their valuable feedback, suggestions, and contributions.

Phoenix Workflow

