To: T10 Technical Committee
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Subject: 06-463r1 SAS-2 OOB transmission requirements

Related document
sas2r06 - Serial Attached SCSI - 2 (SAS-2) revision 6

Overview
When Serial Attached SCSI was first implemented, some disk drives could not transmit OOB signals at 1,5 Gbps if the other port had already negotiated a speed of 3,0 Gbps. The OOB specification was written to allow this situation and extended the concept to future generations such that the ALIGN (0) primitive used for the OOB signal may be transmitted at the lowest supported transmission rate. Increasing the allowed OOB signal frequency, especially beyond G2, increasingly complicates the OOB detection circuitry requirements.

SATA allows the transmission of D24.3 characters at 1,5 Gbps as an alternative to the ALIGN primitive at 1,5 Gbps during OOB. The D24.3 pattern provides better signal frequency content for detection and can be generated rather easily by higher-speed transmitter by simply doubling bits as required to match the timing of the repeating 1100 pattern at 1,5 Gbps.

This proposal changes SAS-2 OOB transmission requirements to restrict it to a G1 rate (1,5 Gbps) and to allow the D24.3 character pattern as an alternative to ALIGN (0) for easier implementation of both the transmitter device and OOB detection circuitry as the lowest supported rate increases in future generations. The requirement for the receiver to detect the OOB signal of ALIGN (0)'s at G2 rates (3 Gbps) is specifically included for backwards compatibility with SAS-1.1.
Suggested changes:

5.3.7.1 Receiver device characteristics overview

(Table 57: Delete the present note f and replace with note g. Change reference to note g with a reference to note f.)

6.6.2 Transmitting OOB signals

To transmit an OOB signal, the transmitter device shall repeat these steps six times:

1) transmit D.C. idle for an idle time; and
2) transmit an OOB burst consisting of D24.3 characters with either starting disparity or ALIGN (0) primitives for a burst time.

The transmitter device shall then transmit D.C. idle for an OOB signal negation time.

The transmitter device shall use signal output levels during burst time and idle time as described in 5.3.6.5.
The D24.3 characters or ALIGN (0) primitives used in OOB signals should be transmitted at 1,5 Gbps (i.e., the generation 1 (G1) physical link rate). The OOB signals ALIGN (0) primitives are only required to generate an envelope for the detection circuitry, as required for any signaling that may be A.C. coupled. If G2 ALIGN (0) primitives are used, the number of ALIGN (0) primitives doubles compared with G1 ALIGN (0) primitives. A burst of D24.3 characters at 1,5 Gbps is equivalent to a square wave pattern that has a high time of 2 OOB1 and a low time of 2 OOB1. A transmitter device that does not support the G1 physical link rate may use this square wave pattern for the OOB signal. The start of the pattern may be high or low. The signal rise and fall times may be equal to or greater than the minimum rise and fall times allowed by the fastest supported rate of the transmitter device and shall be equal to or less than the maximum rise and fall times allowed by the G1 physical link rate (see Table 64).

When transmitting an OOB burst, if the phy supports SATA, the transmitter device shall transmit ALIGN (0) primitives at G1. If the phy does not support SATA, the transmitter device:

a) should transmit ALIGN (0) primitives at G1;
b) may transmit ALIGN (0) primitives at its lowest supported physical link rate if it is not able to transmit at G1; and
c) shall not transmit ALIGN (0) primitives at a physical link rate faster than its lowest supported physical link rate.

6.6.3 Receiving OOB signals

A SAS receiver device shall detect OOB bursts comprised of ALIGN (0) primitives transmitted at any rate up to its highest supported physical link rate. This includes physical link rates below its lowest supported physical link rate (e.g., a SAS receiver device supporting only 3 Gbps detects 1,5 Gbps based ALIGN (0) primitives, providing interoperability with a SAS transmitter device supporting both 1,5 Gbps and 3 Gbps).

A SAS receiver device shall detect OOB bursts comprised of:
a) ALIGN (0) primitives at 1,5 Gbps;
b) ALIGN (0) primitives at 3 Gbps; and
   NOTE: This provides interoperability with transmitters compliant with previous versions of this standard.
c) D24.3 characters at 1,5 Gbps.

NOTE 21 – SAS transmitter devices compliant with future versions of this standard may not support transmitting OOB signals using the G1 physical link rate.

A SAS receiver device that supports SATA shall also detect OOB bursts comprised of D24.3 characters transmitted at 1,5 Gbps (see SATAII-PHY).

A SAS receiver device shall not check the characters used to form the OOB burst; only the frequency content of the burst matters.