

CyberMAGICS Workshop: Reactive Molecular Dynamics

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RMD hands-on: Marco Olguin, Tian Sang, Nitish Baradwaj,
Pranab Sarker



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CyberMAGICS Workshop, June 5, 2025

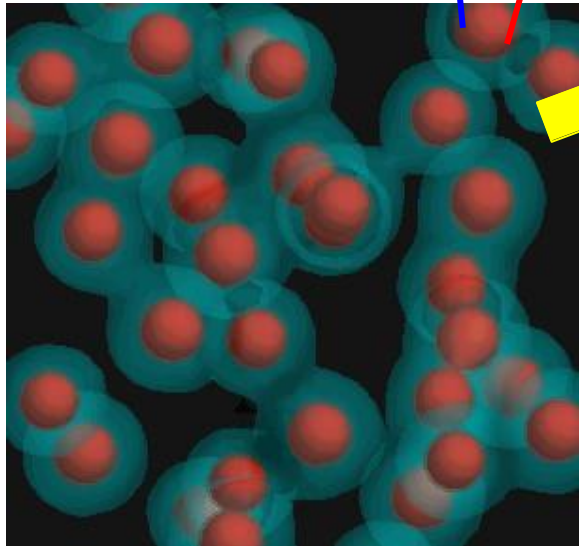


Hierarchy of Molecular Dynamics Methods

$$m_i \frac{d^2 \mathbf{r}_i}{dt^2} = - \frac{\partial}{\partial \mathbf{r}_i} E_{\text{MD}}(\{\mathbf{r}_i\})$$

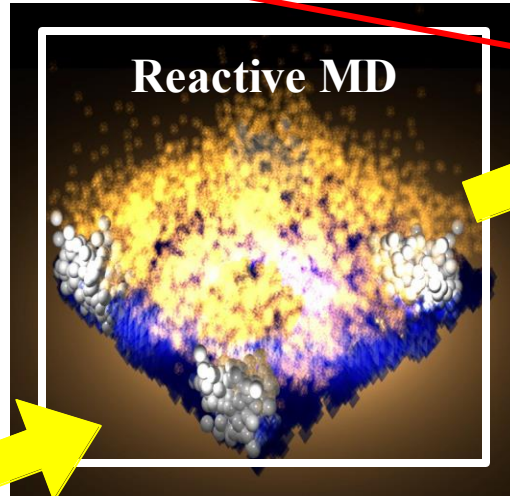
$$\min E_{\text{QM}}(\{\psi_n(\mathbf{r})\})$$

Electron wave
function

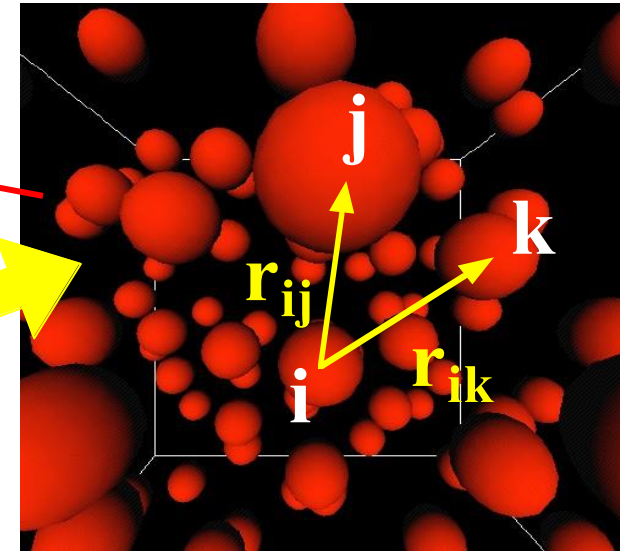


Quantum Mechanics (QM)

Atom

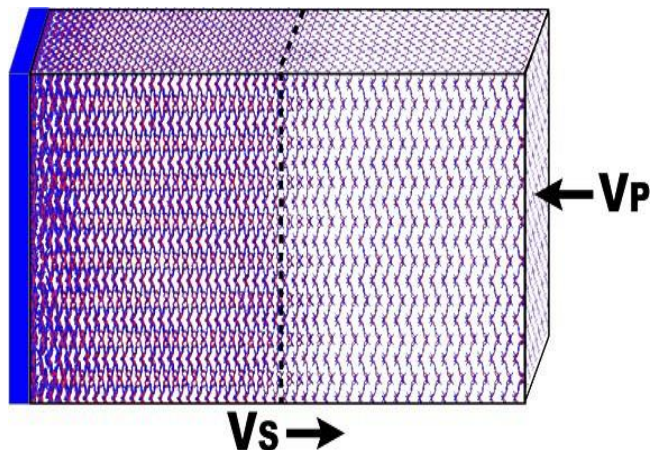


Molecular Dynamics (MD)

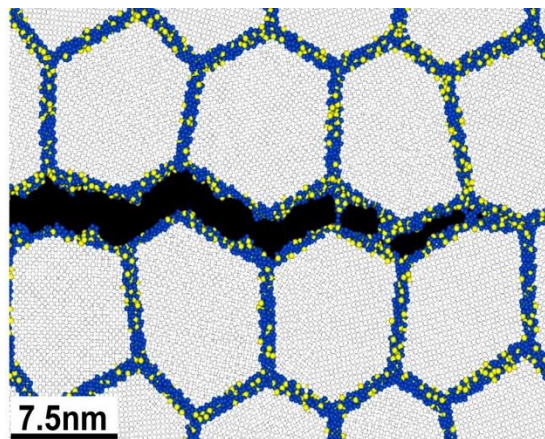


- **MD with empirical interactions** $\sim O(N)$
Long-time (**10^9 steps**) & large size (**10^{12} atoms**)
- **DFT quantum MD** $\sim O(N^3)$
Short-time (**10^4 steps**) & small size (**~ 400 atoms**)
- **Divide-and-Conquer QMD** $\sim O(N)$: Al/Li
nanoparticle in water using **16K atoms** for **30,000** steps

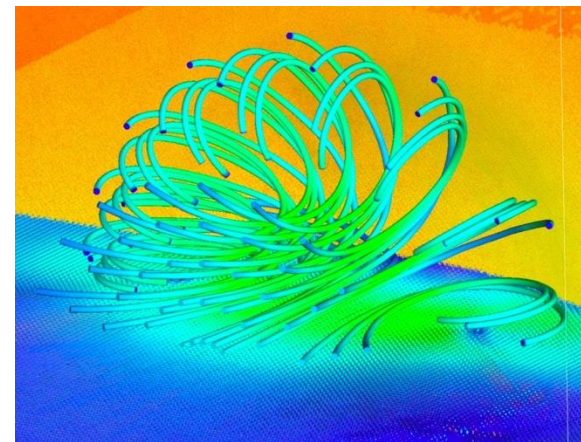
Large-Scale Reactive MD Simulations



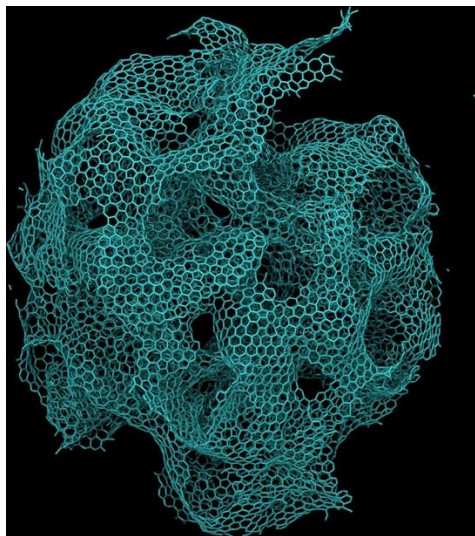
Shock-induced chemical reaction



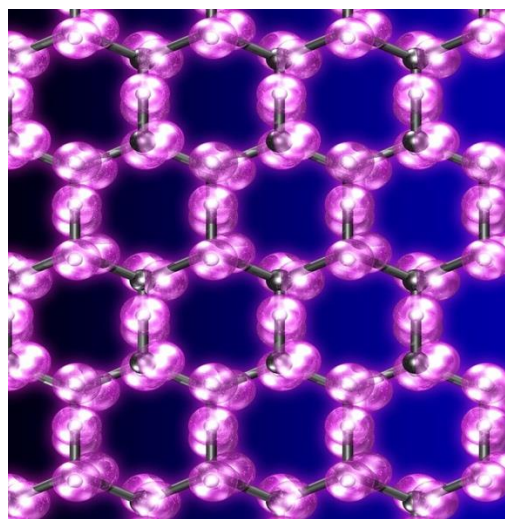
Stress corrosion cracking



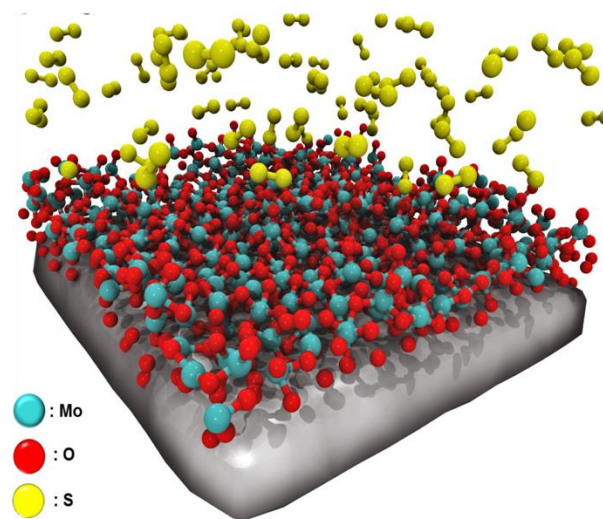
Underwater bubble collapse



Oxidation of nanoparticle



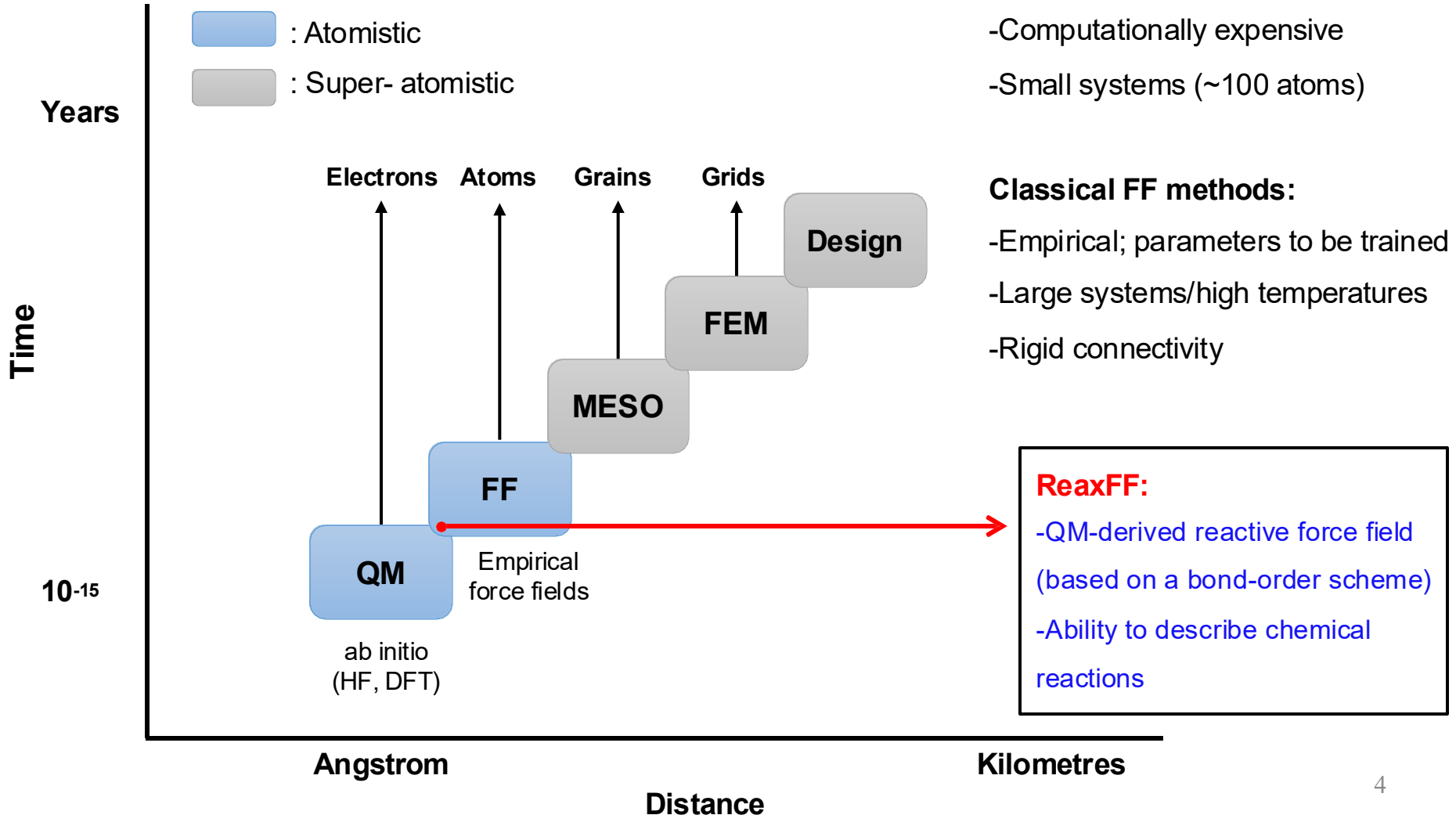
Dielectric polymers



2D material synthesis

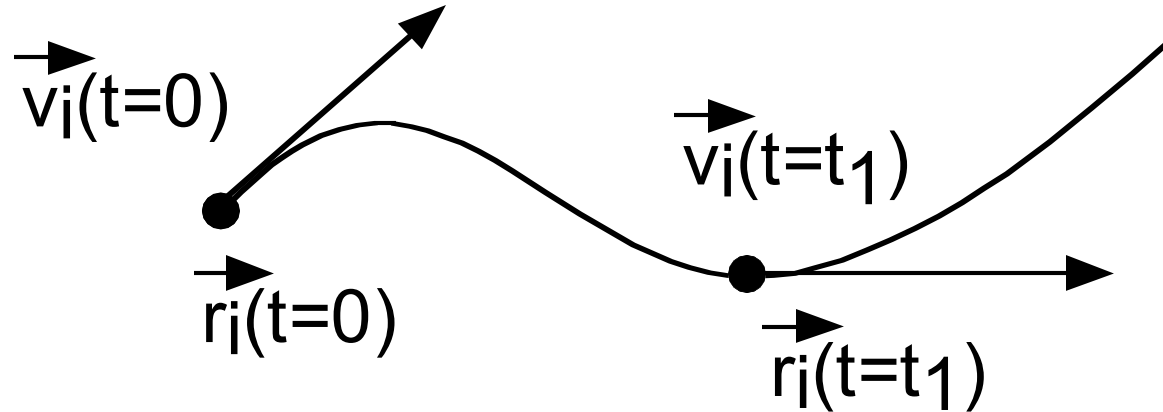
Basic Concepts of ReaxFF Forcefield

• Multi-scale Computational Modeling



Basic Concepts of ReaxFF Forcefield

- What is Molecular dynamics (MD) simulation?



Numerically solve Newton's
equation of motion

$$\vec{F}(t) = m \frac{d^2 \vec{r}_i}{dt^2} = - \frac{d}{d\vec{r}_i} V(\vec{r}_i \dots \vec{r}_N)$$

Interatomic potential; force field

Basic Concepts of ReaxFF Forcefield

- ReaxFF general energy terms*

$$E_{system} = E_{bond} + E_{over} + E_{val} + E_{tors} + E_{vdWaals} + E_{Coulomb}$$

Bonded interactions **Non-bonded interactions**

E_{bond} : Bond energy; two-body attractive term

E_{over} : Over-coordination energy; penalty for overcoordinating atoms

E_{val} : Angle strain energy; three-body term

E_{tors} : Torsion energy; four-body term

$E_{vdWaals}$: van der Waals interactions

$E_{Coulomb}$: Coulomb interactions

*van Duin, Adri CT, *et al.* *The Journal of Physical Chemistry A* **105** (2001): 9396-9409.

Basic Concepts of ReaxFF Forcefield

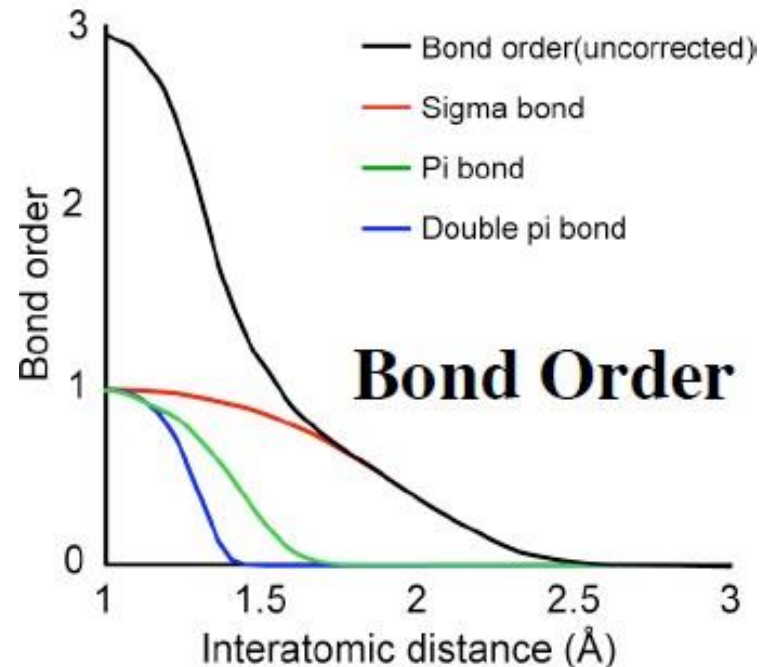
- Key features of ReaxFF – 1*

- A bond order is calculated and updated every step, thus allowing for **chemical reactions** during MD simulations.

A bond-order/distance relationship

$$BO'_{ij} = \exp \left[p_{bo,1} \cdot \left(\frac{r_{ij}}{r_o^\sigma} \right)^{p_{bo,2}} \right] + \exp \left[p_{bo,3} \cdot \left(\frac{r_{ij}}{r_o^\pi} \right)^{p_{bo,4}} \right] + \exp \left[p_{bo,5} \cdot \left(\frac{r_{ij}}{r_o^{\pi\pi}} \right)^{p_{bo,6}} \right]$$

C-C bond order



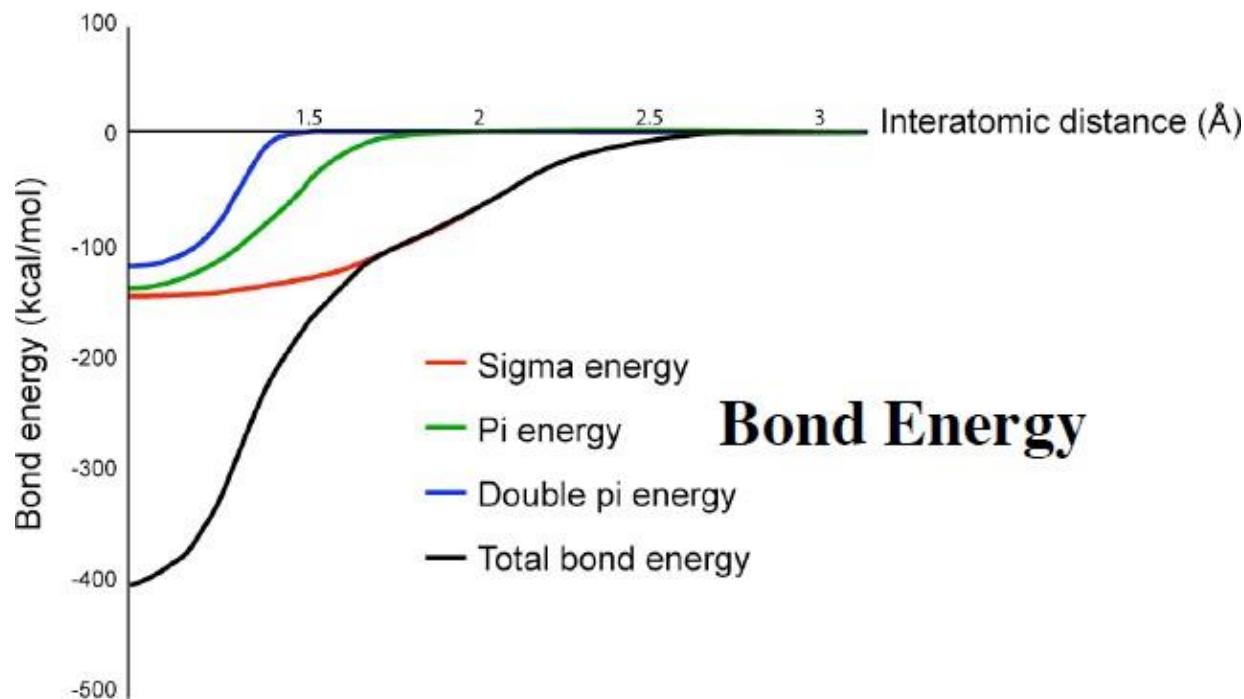
*Russo, Michael F., and Adri CT van Duin. *Nuclear Instruments and Methods in Physics Research Section B: Beam Interactions with Materials and Atoms* **269** (2011): 1549-1554.

Basic Concepts of ReaxFF Forcefield

- Key features of ReaxFF – 2*

- All bonded-interactions are made of bond-order dependent.

$$E_{bond} = -D_e^\sigma \cdot BO_{ij}^\sigma \cdot f(BO_{ij}^\sigma) - D_e^\pi \cdot BO_{ij}^\pi - D_e^{\pi\pi} \cdot BO_{ij}^{\pi\pi}$$



Basic Concepts of ReaxFF Forcefield

• Key features of ReaxFF – 3*

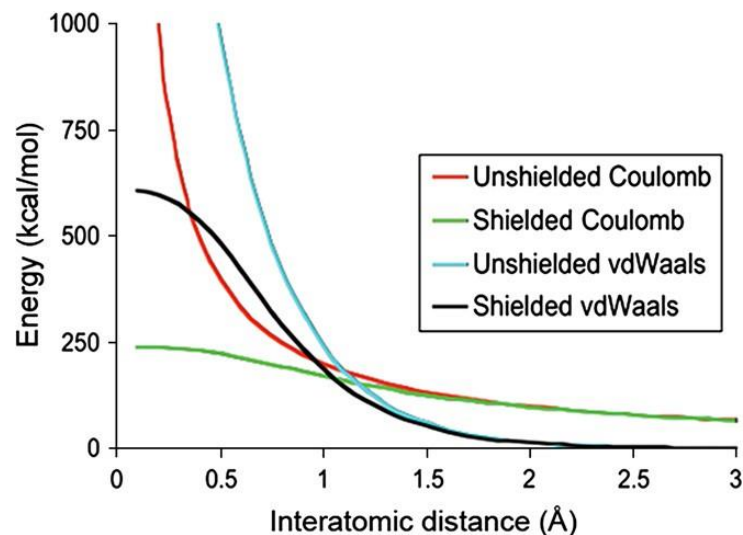
- Non-bonded interactions (van der Waals and Coulomb) are calculated between every atom pair. (*i.e.*, no exception)
- ReaxFF employs the QEq method,** a geometry-dependent point charge calculations scheme, to update point charges for the entire system.

$$E_{vdWaals} = Tap \cdot D_{ij} \cdot \left\{ \exp \left[\alpha_{ij} \cdot \left(1 - \frac{f_{13}(r_{ij})}{r_{vdW}} \right) \right] - 2 \cdot \exp \left[\frac{1}{2} \cdot \alpha_{ij} \cdot \left(1 - \frac{f_{13}(r_{ij})}{r_{vdW}} \right) \right] \right\} \quad \text{A shielded Morse potential}$$

$$f_{13}(r_{ij}) = \left[r_{ij}^{P_{vdW1}} + \left(\frac{1}{\gamma_w} \right)^{P_{vdW1}} \right]^{\frac{1}{P_{vdW1}}}$$

$$E_{Coulomb} = C \cdot \frac{q_i \cdot q_j}{[r_{ij}^3 + (1/\gamma_{ij})^3]^{1/3}}$$

A shielded Coulomb potential



*.Russo, Michael F., and Adri CT van Duin. *Nuclear Instruments and Methods in Physics Research Section B: Beam Interactions with Materials and Atoms* **269** (2011): 1549-1554.

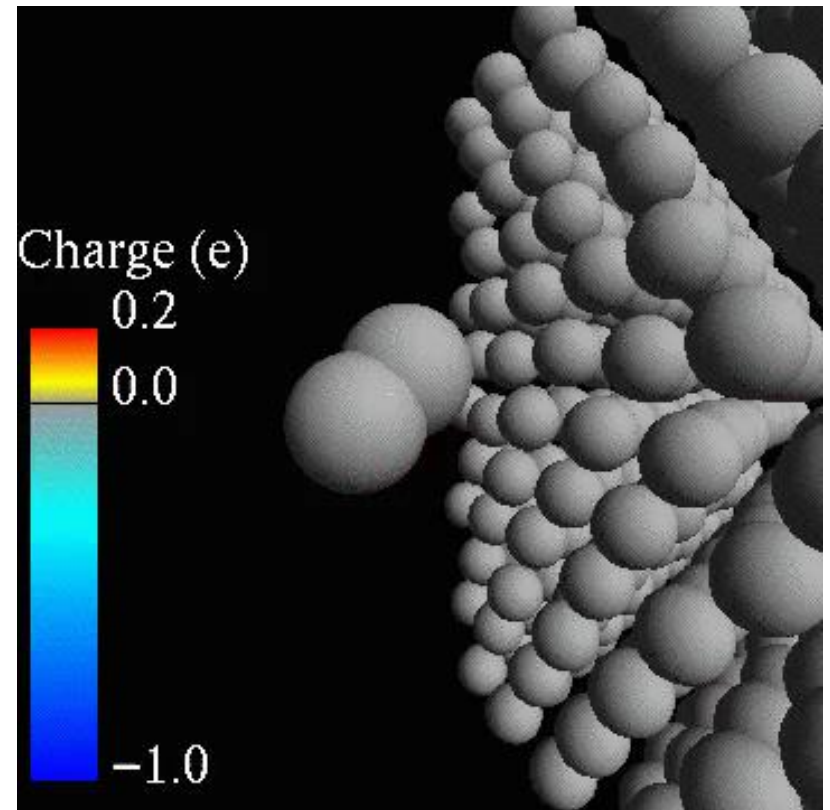
Rappe, Anthony K., and William A. Goddard III. *The Journal of Physical Chemistry* **95 (1991): 3358-3363.

Basic Concepts of ReaxFF Forcefield

Key features of ReaxFF – 4**

- **Charge-equilibration (QEq)**
→ Charge transfer

Determine atomic charges
 $\{q_i \mid i = 1, \dots, N\}$ every MD step
 to minimize $E_{\text{ES}}(\mathbf{r}^N, \mathbf{q}^N)$ with
 charge-neutrality constraint:
 $\sum_i q_i = 0$

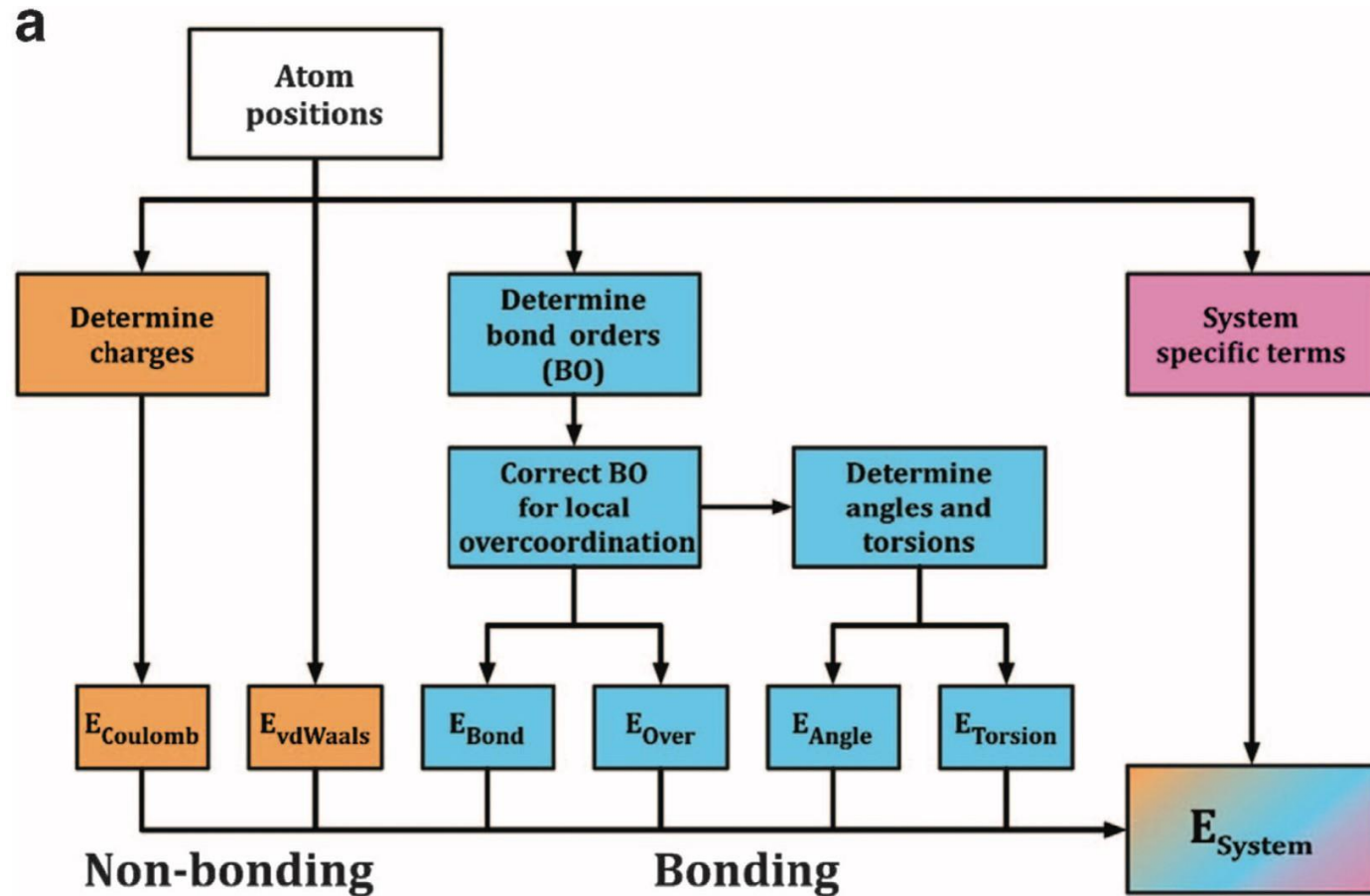


O₂ dissociation on Al(111)

$$E_{\text{ES}}(\mathbf{r}^N, \mathbf{q}^N) = \sum_i \left[\chi_i q_i + \frac{1}{2} J_i q_i^2 \right] + \sum_{i < j} \int d\mathbf{x} \int d\mathbf{x}' \frac{\rho_i(q_i; \mathbf{x} - \mathbf{r}_i) \rho_j(q_j; \mathbf{x}' - \mathbf{r}_j)}{|\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}'|}$$

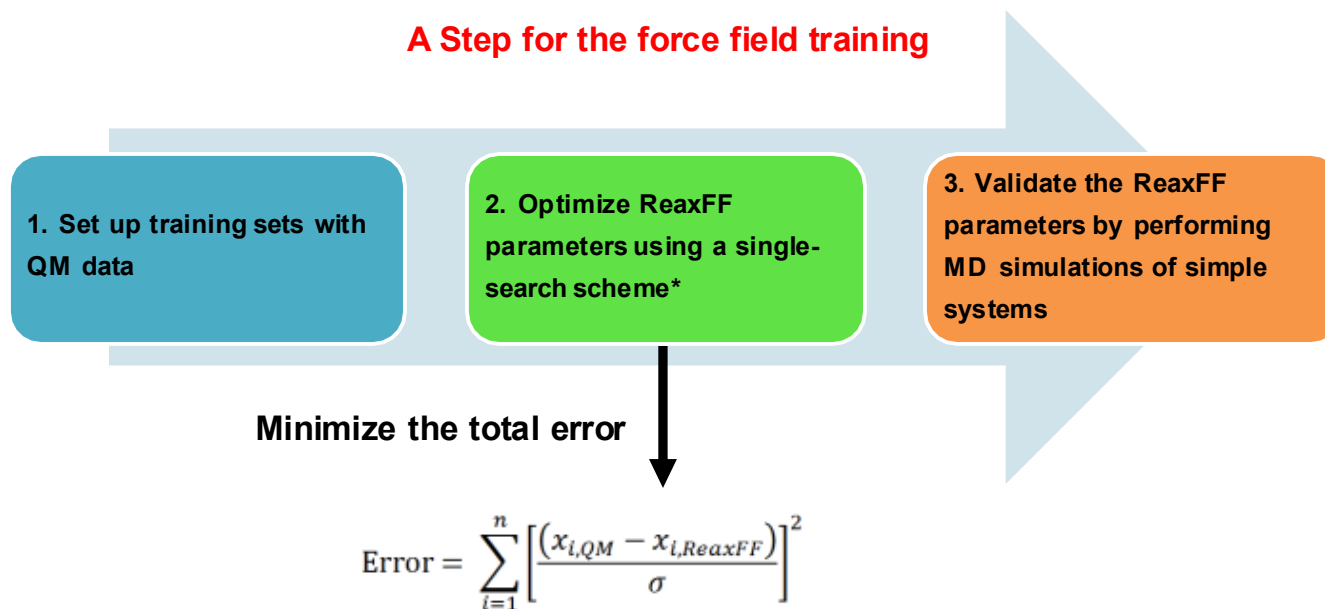
Basic Concepts of ReaxFF Forcefield

- ReaxFF flow diagram*



Basic Concepts of ReaxFF Forcefield

- How to get ReaxFF reactive force field parameters?
 - Do search Google Scholar:
<https://scholar.google.com/>
 - Develop your ReaxFF force field parameters (non-trivial)

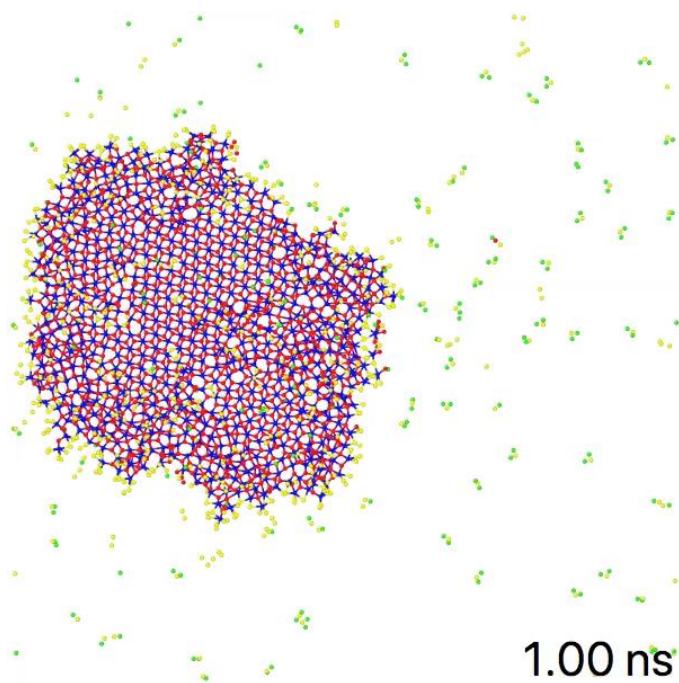


* van Duin, A. C.T.; Jan, M.; de Graaf, B. *J. Chem. Soc., Faraday Trans.* **1994**, 90, (19), 2881-2895.

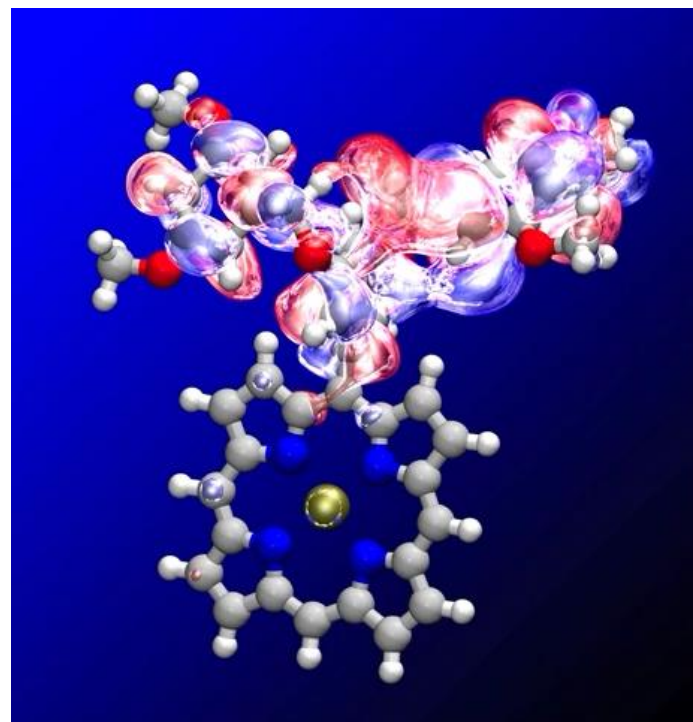
Reactive and Quantum MD Software

RXMD: Reactive molecular dynamics software for desktop to supercomputing platforms

QXMD: Quantum dynamics software with non-adiabatic extensions



Sulfidization of MoO_3 nanoflake



Electron transfer in light-harvesting molecule

Extended-Lagrangian Method

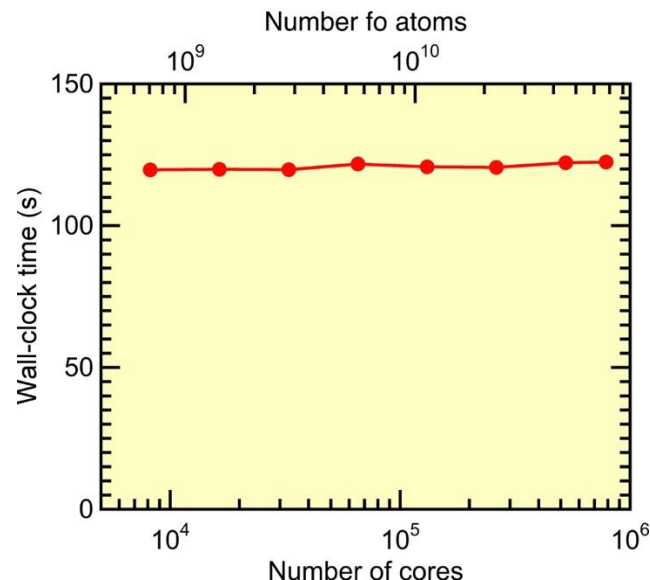
- **Eliminated speed-limiting iteration for charge-equilibration (QEq) in ReaxFF by adapting an extended-Lagrangian scheme proposed for QMD**

$$L_{\text{XRMD}} = L_{\text{RMD}} + \frac{\mu}{2} \sum_i \dot{\theta}_i^2 - \frac{\mu \omega^2}{2} \sum_i (\theta_i - q_i)^2$$

Auxiliary charge: dynamic variable

Physical charge

- **Extended-Lagrangian RXMD achieves 8.6x speed up with the same energy conservation as fully converged QEq**
- **Parallel efficiency 0.977 on 786,432 Blue Gene/Q cores for 67.6 billion atoms**

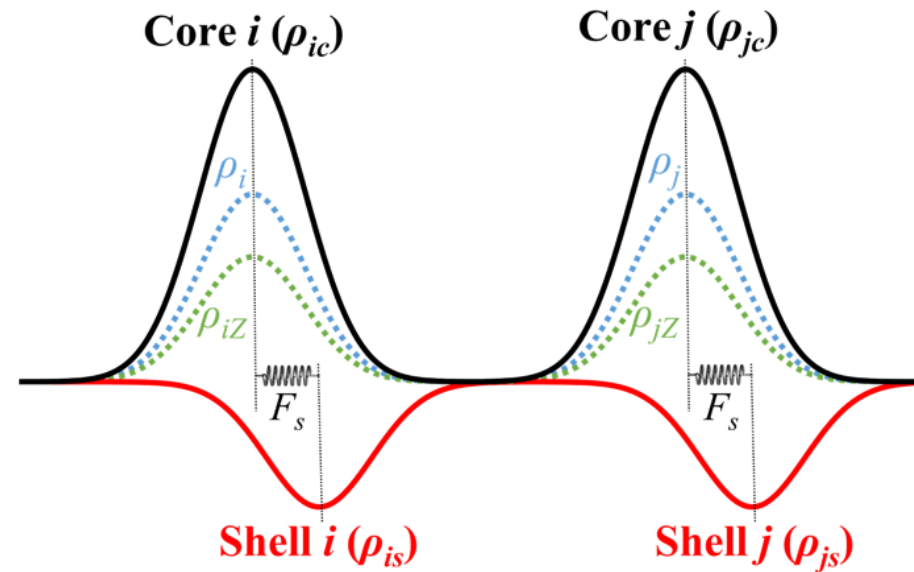


P. Souvatzis & A. Niklasson, *J. Chem. Phys.* **140**, 044117 ('14)

Nomura *et al.*, *Comput. Phys. Commun.* **192**, 91 ('15)

Polarizable Charge Equilibration (PQEq) Method

- PQEq method has been implemented in RXMD to study dielectric response as a function of time, electric field and temperature.
- Each atom is partitioned into two charged sites, i.e., core and shell
- The core consists of variable charge ρ_i and with fixed charge ρ_{iZ}
- The shell is connected with the core by an isotropic harmonic spring with force constant F_s



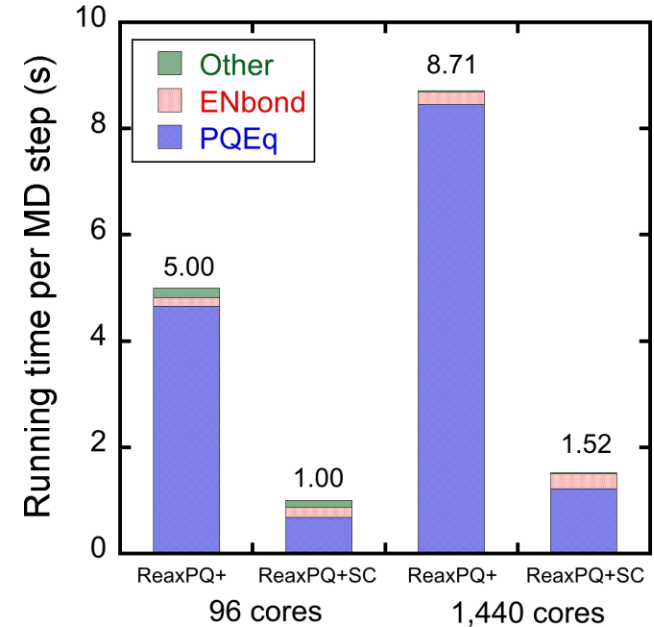
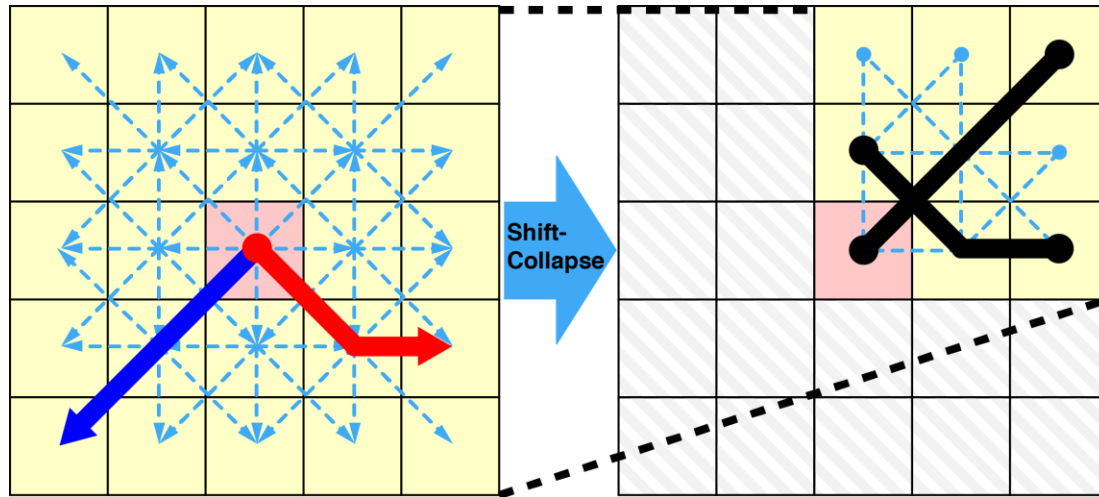
$$\begin{aligned}
 E(\{\vec{r}_{ic}, \vec{r}_{is}, q_i\}) = & \sum_i \left\{ E_i^0 + \chi_i^0 q_i + \frac{1}{2} J_{ii}^0 q_i^2 + \boxed{\frac{1}{2} K_s r_{ic, is}^2} \right\} \\
 & + \sum_{i>j} \left[C(\vec{r}_{ic, jc}) q_{ic} q_{jc} - C(\vec{r}_{ic, js}) q_{ic} Z_j - C(\vec{r}_{is, jc}) q_{jc} Z_i + C(\vec{r}_{is, js}) Z_i Z_j \right]
 \end{aligned}$$

self energy of *i*-atom

core-shell interaction on *i*-atom

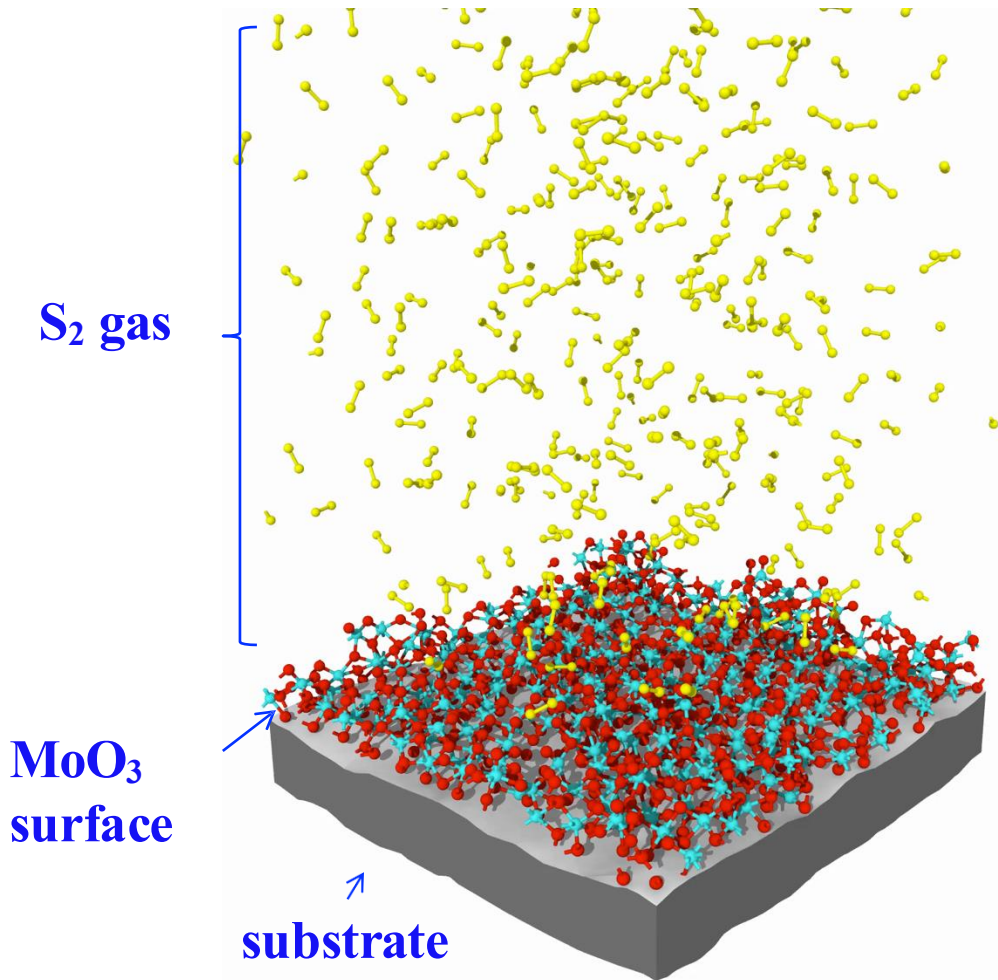
core-shell interaction between *i*- and *j*-atoms

Shift-Collapse (SC) Algorithm for Time-to-Solution



- SC algorithm generates optimal computation pattern for general finite-range n -tuple energy/force computations.
- SC-accelerated PQEq+SC achieves 5.0x speedup compare to the original PQEq.

RMD Simulations of MoS₂ Monolayer Synthesis



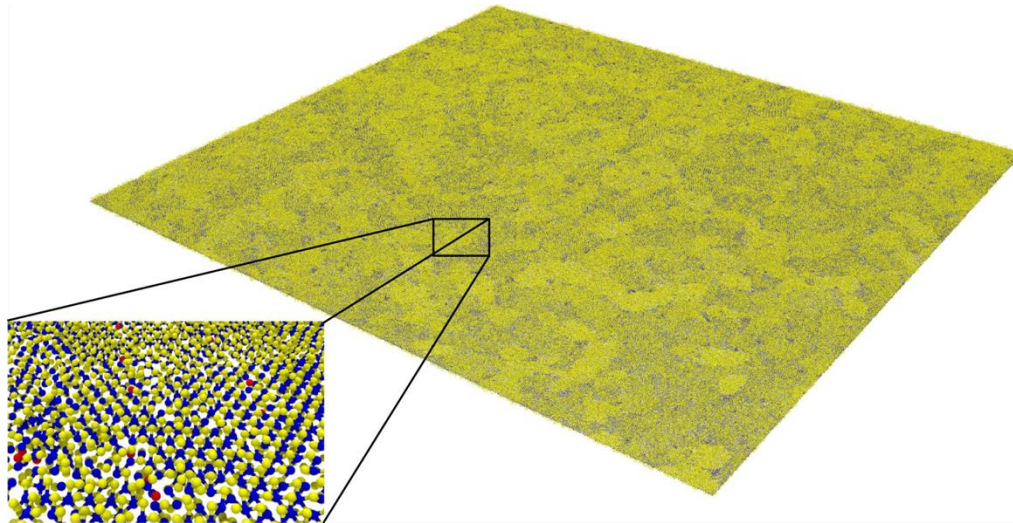
High-temperature
sulfurization of MoO₃
monolayer with S₂ gas

Step 1. O₂ evolution
from a MoO₃ surface

Step 2. SO/SO₂
formation from a
MoO_{2.6} surface

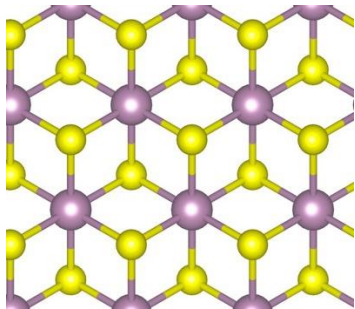
Step 3. Mo-S bond
formation on MoO_xS_y

MoS₂ Crystal Growth Simulation

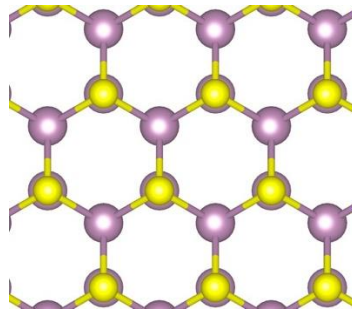


- **Number of atoms:**
4,305,600 atoms (1,497,600 O; 2,347,200 S and 460,800 Mo)
- **System dimensions:**
 $211.0 \times 196.3 \times 14.5$ (nm³)
- **Timestep:** 0.75 fs.

1T Structure



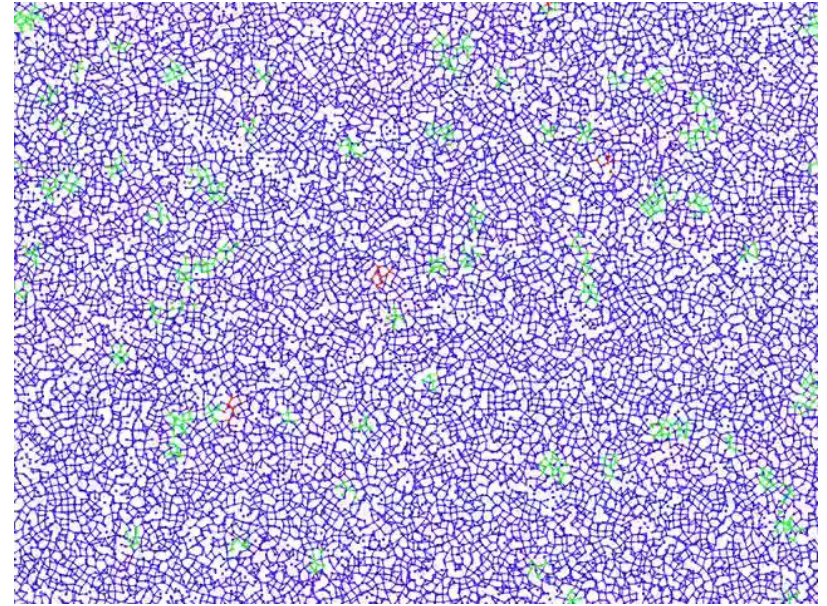
2H Structure



● Sulfur ● Molybdenum

The pre-sulfurized MoS slab is thermalized at 3000K for 1 nsec, quenched to 1000K, then subjected to temperature cycle to improve its crystallinity.

Grain Growth by Annealing



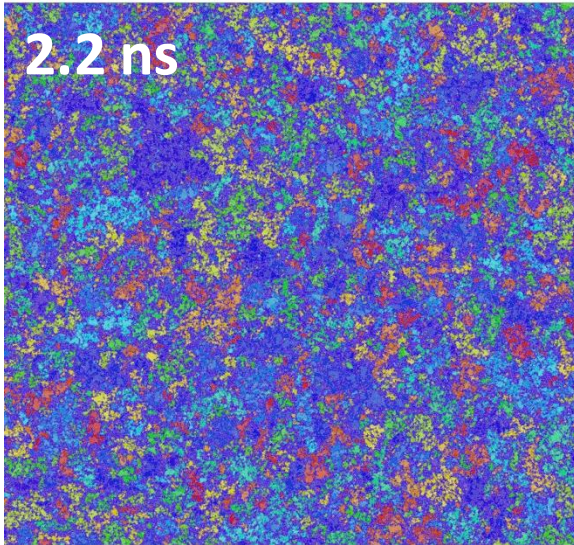
Zoom-in view

● 1T ● 2H ● disordered

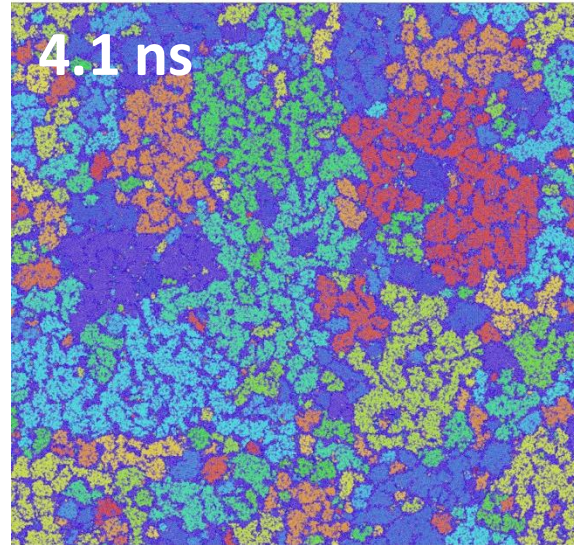
- Atoms in the sulfurdized slab are classified into 1T, 2H and disordered phases.
- Areas of connected 2H phase atoms indicates MoS_2 crystal grains, separated by 1T or disordered phases.

Grain Growth by Annealing

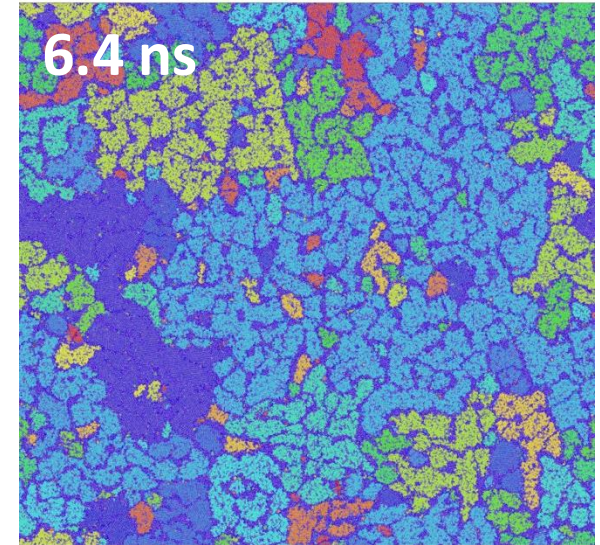
After 1st quench



1st annealing



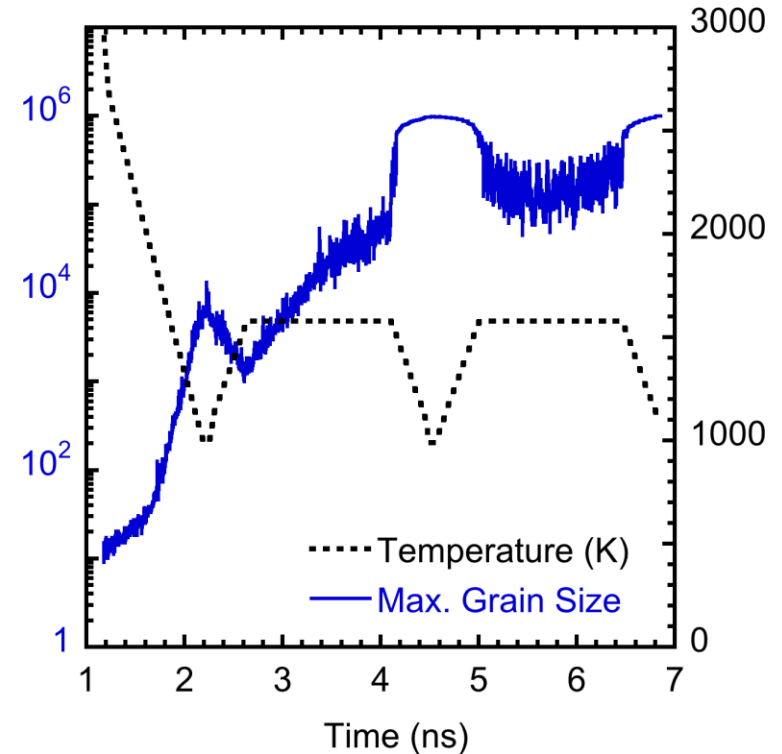
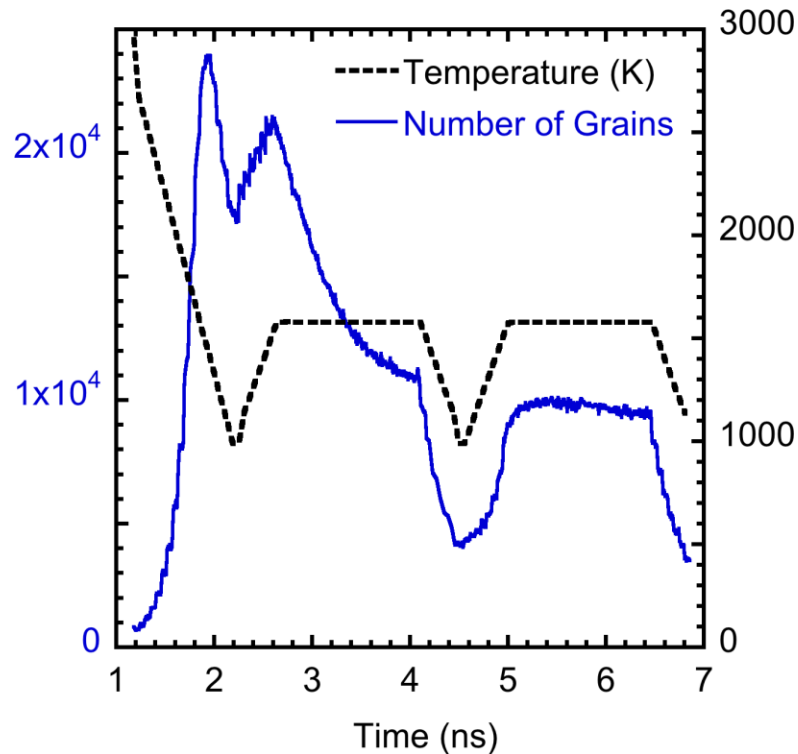
2nd annealing



Color-coded by grain IDs

- **Highly disordered structure is obtained by the rapid quenching at 2.2ns.**
- **Grain growth and crystallinity improvement at 6.4 ns due to the active grain boundary migration.**

Grain Growth by Annealing



- **Rapid decrease in the number of grains and increase in the size of grain during the 1st annealing.**
- **The largest grain continues to grow with a lower rate during the 2nd annealing step.**

Moving Forward

Review: The ReaxFF reactive force-field: development, applications and future directions*

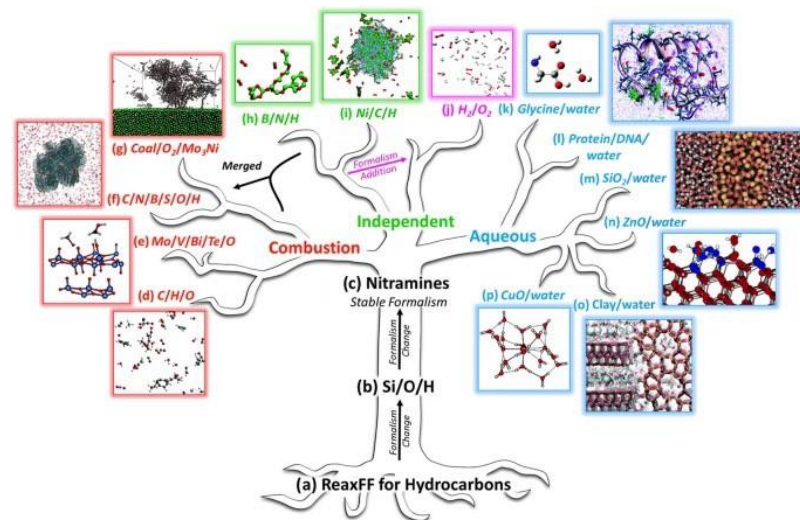
<https://www.nature.com/articles/npjcompumats201511>

List of published ReaxFF force fields

https://www.scm.com/doc/ReaxFF/Included_Forcefields.html

Interatomic potential repository

<https://www.ctcms.nist.gov/potentials/>



ReaxFF development tree*

Recent advances in RMD:

- eReaxFF: A Pseudoclassical Treatment of Explicit Electrons within Reactive Force Field Simulations <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.jctc.6b00432>
- JAX-ReaxFF: A Gradient Based Framework for Extremely Fast Optimization of Reactive Force Fields <https://chemrxiv.org/engage/chemrxiv/article-details/60e0d9496b8d89786e6b8a06>
- Allegro-FM: Towards Equivariant Foundation Model for Exascale Molecular Dynamics Simulations <https://arxiv.org/abs/2502.06073>