

The LibreSilicon project

- In 2017 leviathan already has found a clean room to rent at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
- Last year at 34c3 he gave a Lightning Talk about LibreSilicon
- Since then we're meeting every week on Sunday 2100 HKT at Mumble
- Communicating, planing and working via mailing list and Mumble
- Held a tool chain hackathon end of May 2018
- Already two of us got qualification for clean room access at HKUST
- Processing our first test wafer for characterization (→ pics follow)

Basic points

- Starting with $1\mu m$ "feature size" because still well documented in text books
- Robust, at least 5 Volt tolerant, well suited for maker, tinkerer and hacker
- Twin-Well process for CMOS with 3 metal layer w/ very interesting additions
- Quite suitable for "low tec" in the basement
- For analog circuits, regarding their huge transistor sizes, small feature sizes do not matter

Main (re-)construction areas

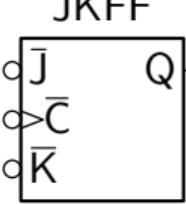
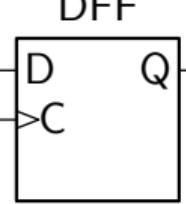
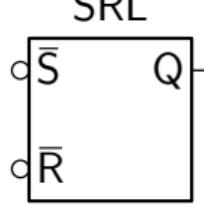
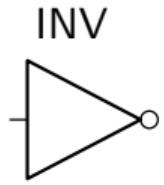
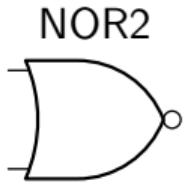
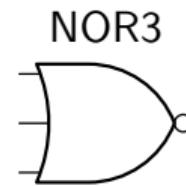
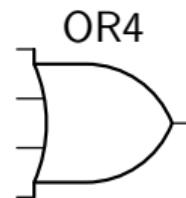
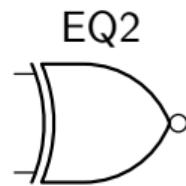
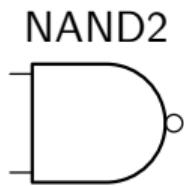
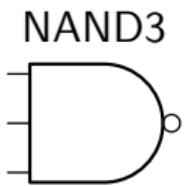
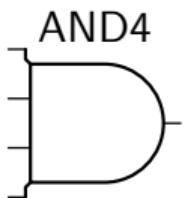
- ① Figure out / develop the process itself (→ almost done)
- ② Rebuild / modernize the tools / design flow (→ ongoing)
- ③ Compile / design a almost complete standard cell library (→ ongoing)

Standard Cells

Standard Cells are usually

- A collection of some dozens of combinatorial + sequential cells
- Instantiated many, many times in a netlist
- Used also as layout primitives

Typical cells



... and much more

Design goals

here are

- Being almost complete (more cells → better netlist)
- Being low energy consuming (less Watts per square)
- Being as fast as possible (w/ small timing delay)
- Having a small footprint (small cell size)

Well, does not fit all together well.

Cell representations

every single cell needs different representation for working smooth with different tools,
e.g.

- For simulation (→ Verilog and Spice)
- For synthesis (→ Liberty file format)
- For timing (→ standard delay format)
- For layout (→ library exchange format)
- Or, even for dedicated tools (e.g. Magic)
- And documentation (schematics, truth tables, data sheets, ..)

Cell representations

Regarding our goal of several hundreds cells (estimated 300+), generating **all** cell representations, becomes a huge task.

Nobody likes to do this manually.

We need a tool for that!

A cell generator.

Cell generator

This cell generator, named "Popcorn", is still work-in-progress.

Starting from one source this tool

- Should generate all representation formats
- Already helps drawing the schematics
- Already generates a couple of data sheet like LaTeX file
- Was written in Tcl first, but
- Needs a rewrite in a more sophisticated / AI-ish language
- Now when test wafer characterization is done

Standard cell library

- <https://www.github.com/chipforge/StdCellLib> (→ repository)
- https://vcs.in-berlin.de/chipforge_stdcelllib/index (→ wiki)

maintained by chipforge

Open source tools

- yosys
- graywolf
- qrouter
- several FPGA routers

graywolf

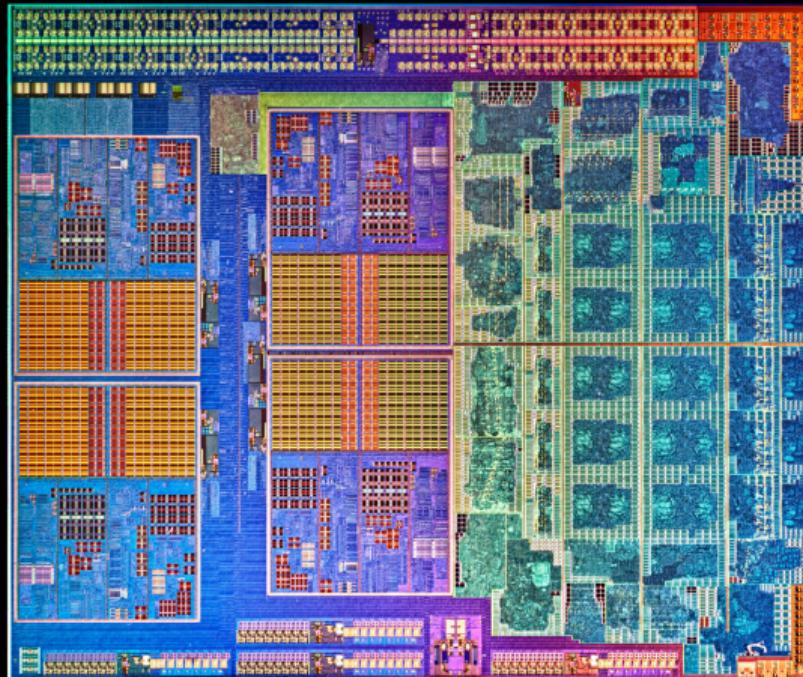
- Originates in academia: TimberWolf
- Simulated annealing
 - Meta heuristic that is useful not only for placement
- Inline syscalls
 - This is just a bad idea

qrouter

- Started in 2011 by Tim Edwards
- Widely used for FPGA
 - Not ready for silicon
- Sequential routing
 - Parallelism not in scope
- Difficult to prove formal correctness
 - Prove that C implementation of rip-up and re-route is correct

Productive tools

- Different tool sets like BonnRoute, Cadence suite, Alliance tools, etc.
- Similar capabilities with respect to silicon
- Just throw man-power at VLSI — what is automation?



Routing: State of the art

- Place components for a large chip
- Route wires roughly along a chessboard for a large chip
- Route detailed tracks and vias for a large chip
- Formal correctness: Rip-up and Re-route
- Formal style: Sequential/Imperative code

Routing: Proposed

- Decomposition for a large chip
- Place components and route for small chips in parallel
- Place abstract gates and route recursively
- Formal correctness: Reduction from SMT
- Formal style: Parallel/Declarative code

Divide and Conquer

Academia + Industry:

- Placement and Routing are different problems
- All components map to the same problem

LibreSilicon:

- Placement and Routing are the same problem
- Different components map to different problems

Routing Hierarchy

Academia + Industry:

- Geographical partitioning of a wafer → *cut tree*
- Based on preceding placement steps

LibreSilicon:

- Modular chip development → *subcell hierarchy*
- Subcells carry implicit and explicit subcells

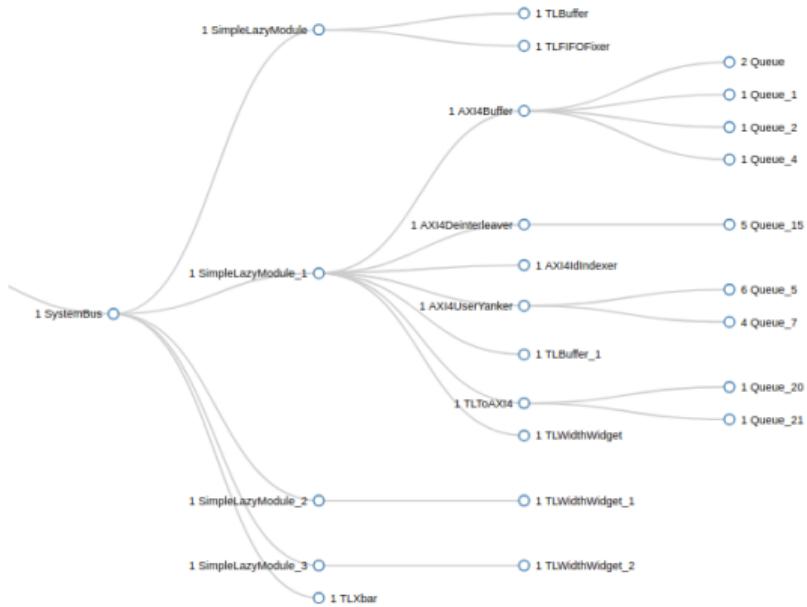
Frontier: Parallelism

- BonnRoute: concurrency + shared memory model
- qrouter: none
- lsc: map + reduce

Subcell hierarchies

- Explicit subcell hierarchies through high modularization
- Implicit subcell hierarchies through exlining
- Preserve hierarchy in compiler interfaces

High modularization



Exlining

- Proof of concept: picorv

<https://murmur.libresilicon.com/lsc/rocket-chip-exline>

Unconstrained Small Unified Silicon Problem

- Components and nets → *rectilinear geometries*
- Components do not overlap
- Nets overlap with their pins on components

Minimizing Goals

- Layout area
- Maximum wire length
- Via count
- Crossing number (computational)
- Wire jogs (minor)

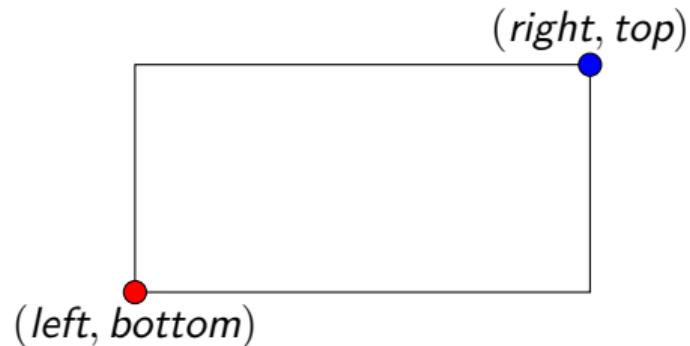
Satisfiability Modulo Theories

- Optimization problems
- Abstraction from Boolean satisfiability
- Several solvers implement smtlib2
 - ABC from University of Berkeley
 - CVC4 from Stanford
 - Boolector from Johannes Kepler University
 - MathSAT from Fondazione Bruno Kessler and DISI-University of Trento
 - Yices from SRI
 - Z3 from Microsoft

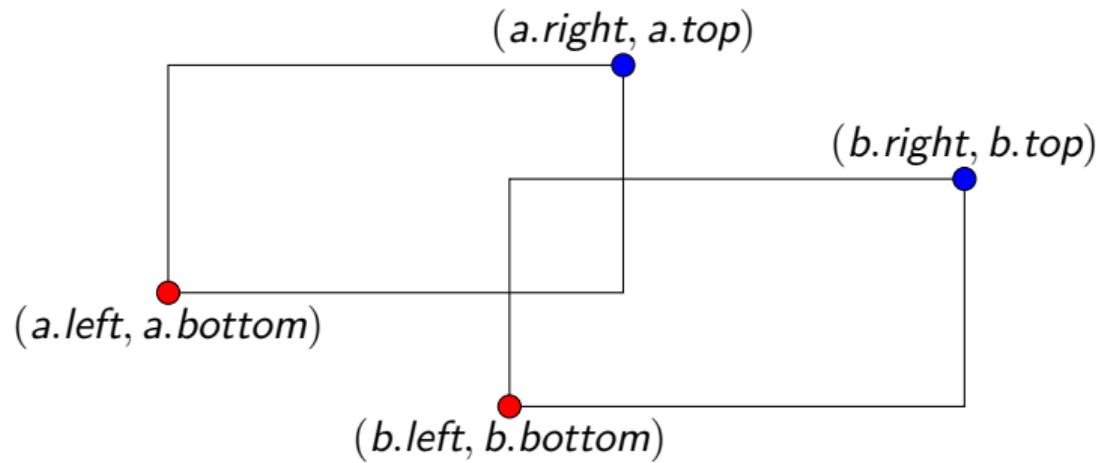
Boolean Satisfiability

$$(\alpha_1 \vee \alpha_2 \vee \alpha_3) \wedge (\neg\alpha_4 \vee \alpha_5 \vee \alpha_6)$$

Defining rectangular components



Overlaps



Reduction from SMT

$$a.right - a.left = dimension.x$$

$$b.right - b.left = dimension.y$$

$$a.top - a.bottom = dimension.x$$

$$b.top - b.bottom = dimension.y$$

$$b.left > a.right$$

$$\vee \quad a.left > b.right$$

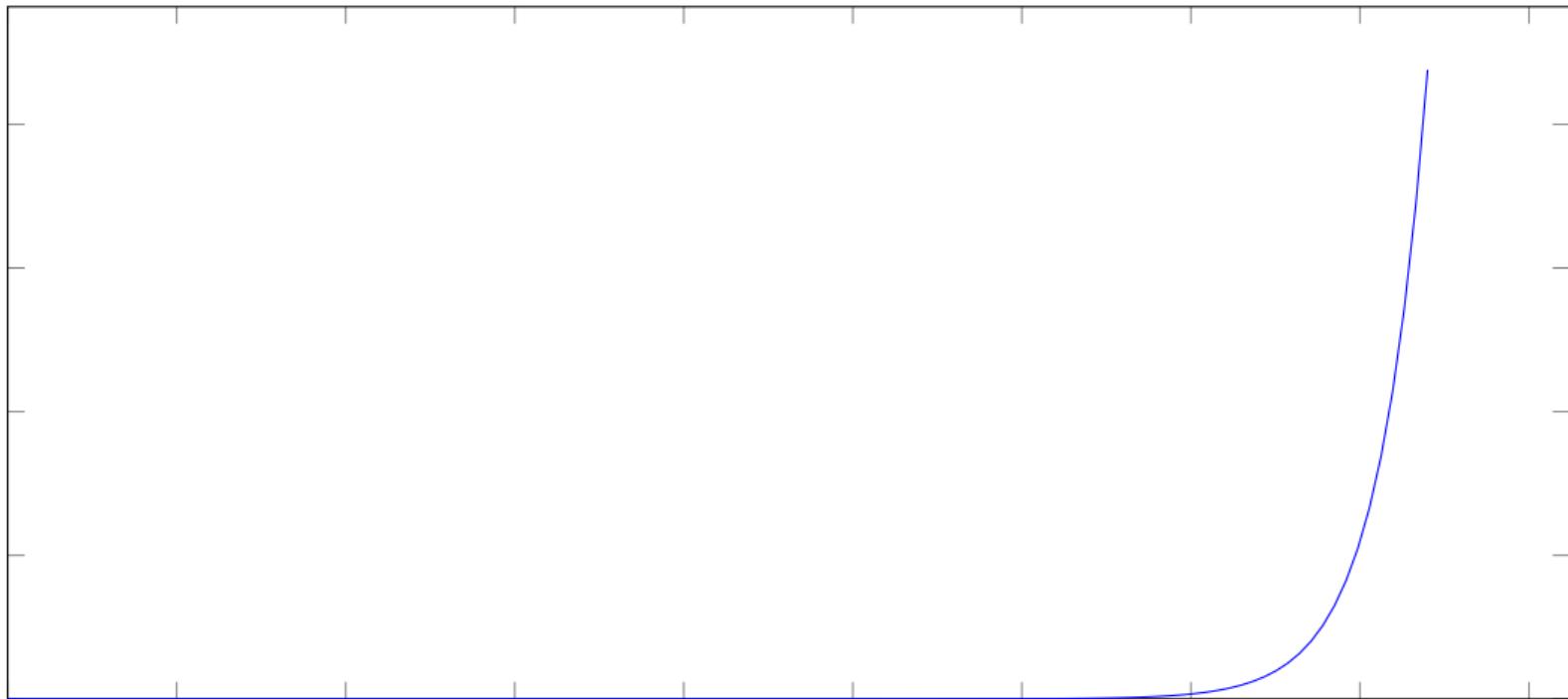
$$\vee a.bottom > b.top$$

$$\vee b.bottom > a.top$$

Combining in the LSC Semigroup

overlaps + pin connect + arbitrary constraint

Stay low



Maximize yield

- Minimize area of a chip → *silicon compiler*
- Minimize physical errors → **silicon process**

Libre Silicon Compiler

- <https://www.github.com/foshardware/lsc> (→ repository)

maintained by foshardware

Why Hong Kong?

History



Why Hong Kong?



Why Hong Kong?



RCL Semiconductors Limited
興華半導體工業有限公司



Why Hong Kong?

Conclusion

- Advanced labs available for R&D
- Shenzhen and Hong Kong have fabs which are willing to introduce LibreSilicon
- Channels for easy export to Europe already established (One belt, one road)
- Climate is better
- Payment is better
- Food is better
- * is better
- The sun shines brightest in the east ;-)

Features

- MOSFETs
- LDMOSFETs (High voltage)
- BJTs
- Zener polysilicon diodes
- SONOS flash cells
- Polysilicon resistors
- Metal caps

Process design considerations

- Should be portable
- Robust
- Low amount of layers
- KISS (Keep it simple and stupid)
- Avoid expensive machines
- Can be manufactured in a home lab

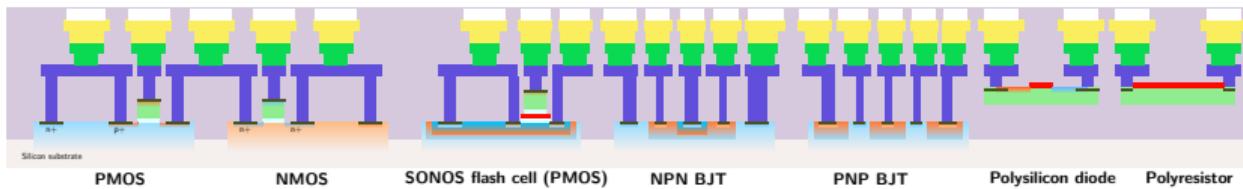
Process design considerations



Process design considerations



Cross section



PearlRiver (珠江芯片一号)

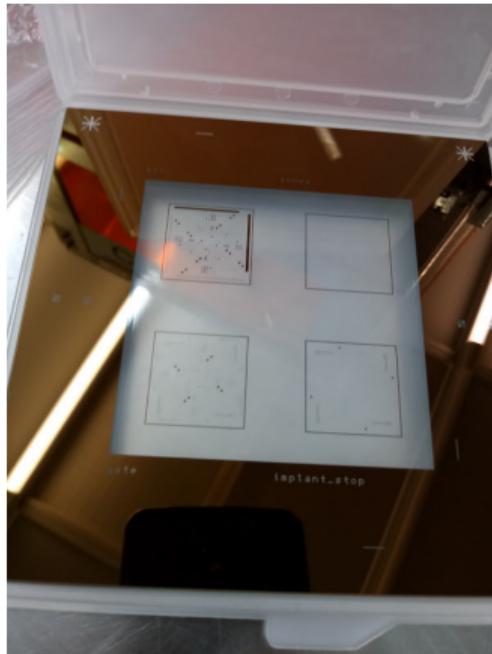


PearlRiver (珠江芯片一号)

Fulfills following functions:

- Debugging
- Calibration of new equipment to LibreSilicon
- Research of new features
- Syncing process features between fabs

Photomask



Photomask

- Is stepper/aligner brand specific
- ASML stepper masks contain 4 layers each
- The NFF stepper has a reduction value of 5:1
- A 5 micron gate on the mask is 1 micron on the wafer

Photo resist (HKUST)

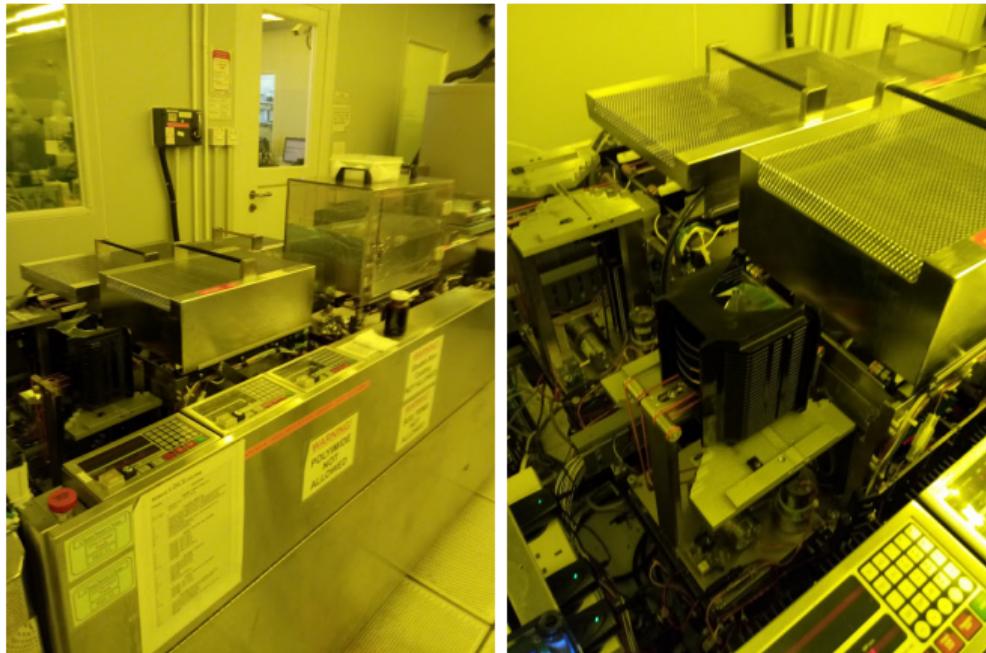


Photo resist (HKUST)

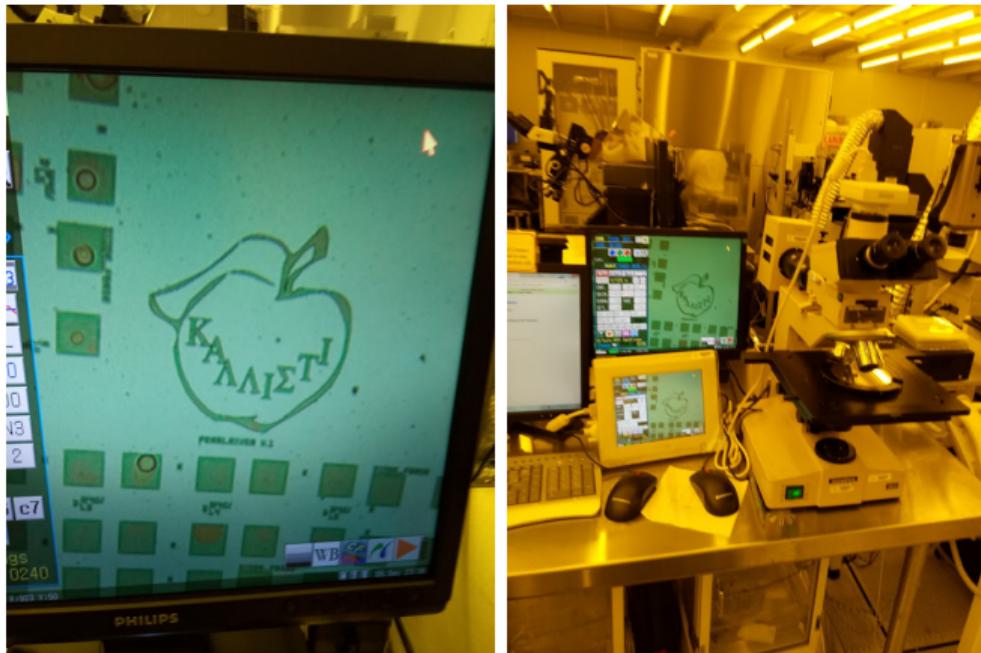
Two types of photo resist:

- FH 6400L (implantation)
- HPR 504 (normal etch)

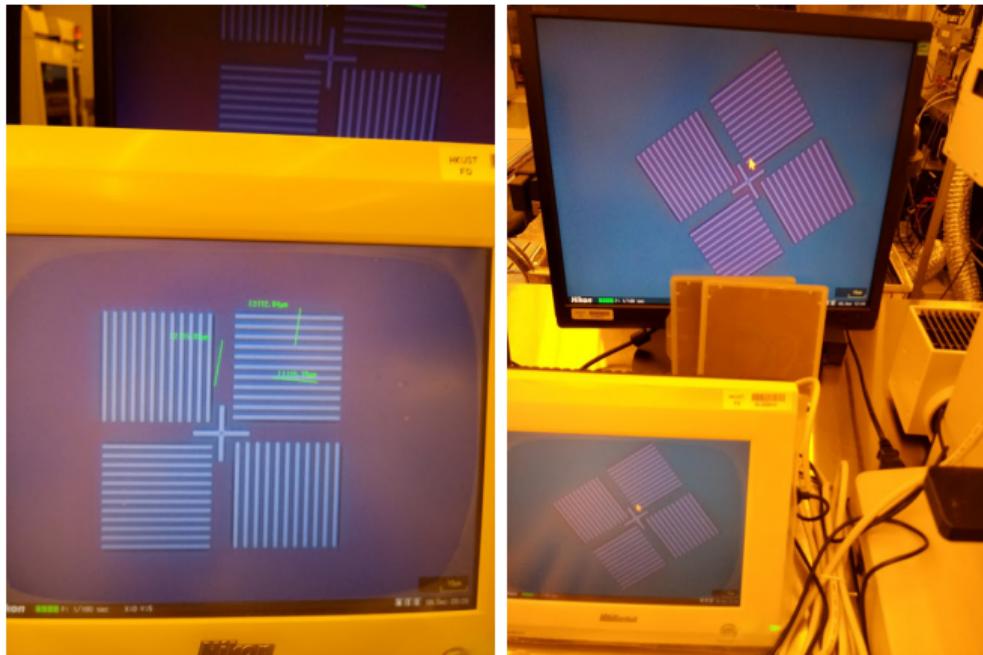
Factors to consider:

- Thickness of FH 6400L and implantation energy are interlinked
- Thickness of HPR 504 and etching time are interlinked (selectivity)

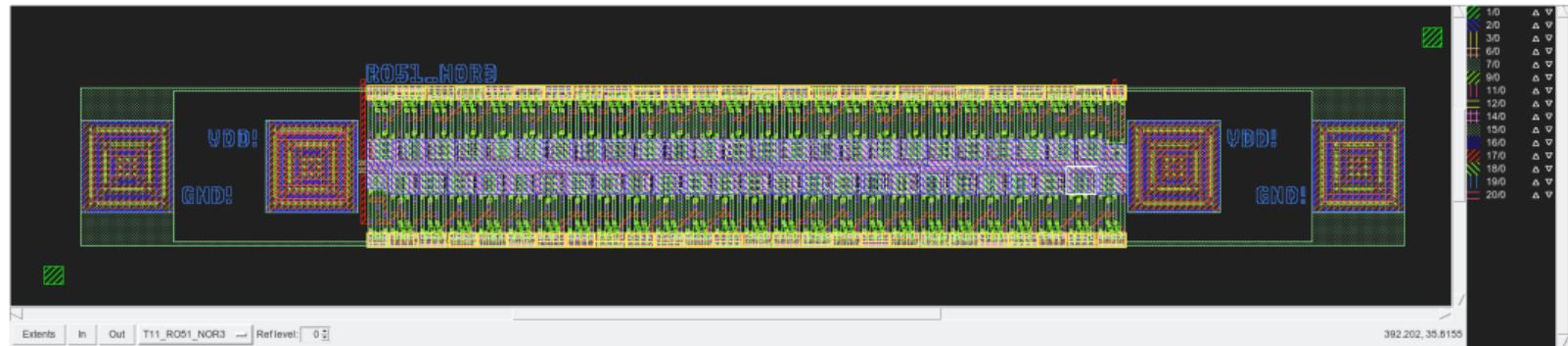
After exposure



Alignment

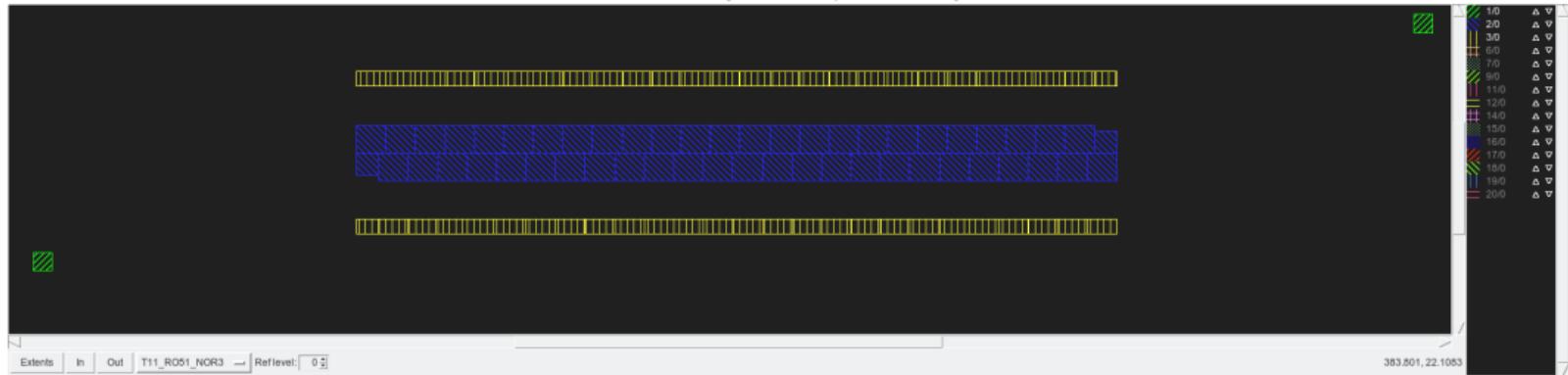


Example: NOR3 ring oscillator



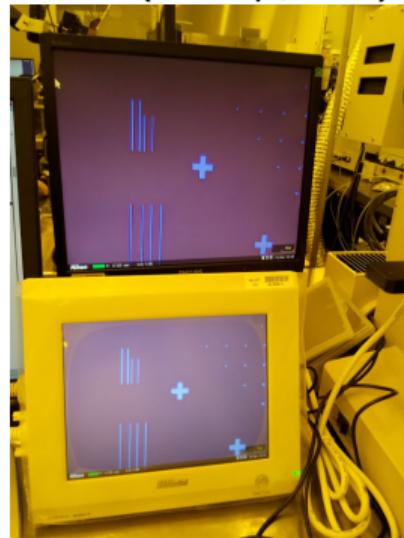
Example: NOR3 ring oscillator

Wells (nwell/pwell):



Example: NOR3 ring oscillator

Wells (nwell/pwell):



Example: NOR3 ring oscillator

Recipe for nwell:

- Coat with implant resist (soft bake 60 seconds, 110°C)
- Expose nwell-mask
- Puddle develop 69 seconds and hard bake 60 seconds at 120°C
- Implant Phosphorus, $2.33 \times 10^{12} cm^{-2}$ @ 70keV
- Strip resist with plasma ash or 20 minutes in 120°C hot sulfuric acid

Note: Alternatively predisposition can be used

Example: NOR3 ring oscillator

Recipe for pwell:

- Coat with implant resist (soft bake 60 seconds, 110°C)
- Expose pwell-mask
- Puddle develop 69 seconds and hard bake 60 seconds at 120°C
- Implant Boron, $1.93 \times 10^{12} cm^{-2}$ @ 40keV
- Strip resist with plasma ash or 20 minutes in 120°C hot sulfuric acid
- Diffuse both wells together for 4 hours at 1050°C in inert atmosphere (N_2)

Note: Alternatively predisposition can be used

The Fick's equation

$$\frac{\partial N}{\partial t} = D \cdot \frac{\partial^2 N}{\partial x^2}$$

The Fick's equation

$$x_I(t) = 2 \cdot \sqrt{D_e \cdot t} = 2 \cdot \sqrt{D_0 \cdot \exp\left(-\frac{E_a}{k \cdot T}\right) \cdot t}$$

Element	$D_0 \left[\frac{cm^2}{s} \right]$	$E_a [eV]$
P	10.50	3.69
As	0.32	3.56
Sb	5.60	3.95
B	10.50	3.69
Al	8.00	3.47
Ga	3.60	3.51
Cu	0.0025	0.65

The Fick's equation

$$N(x, t) = \frac{Q}{\sqrt{\pi \cdot D_e \cdot t}} \cdot \exp \left(\frac{-x^2}{4 \cdot D_e \cdot t} \right)$$

The Fick's equation

For the concentration within the channel may $x = 0$

This results in the concentration at the surface (around 100nm deep $\ll 2$ microns)

$$N = \frac{Q}{\sqrt{\pi \cdot D_e \cdot t}}$$

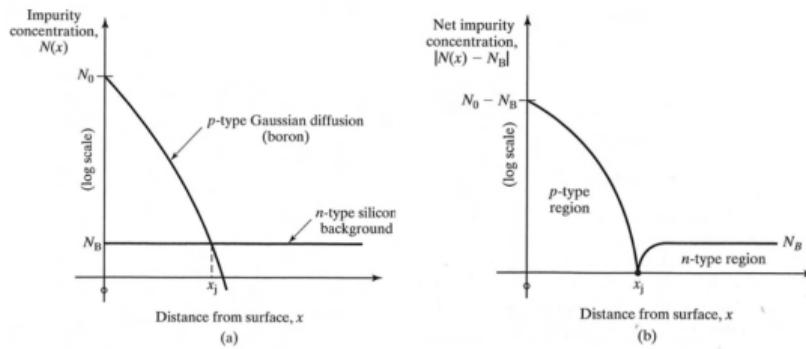
Or the implant dosage:

$$Q = N \cdot \sqrt{\pi \cdot D_e \cdot t}$$

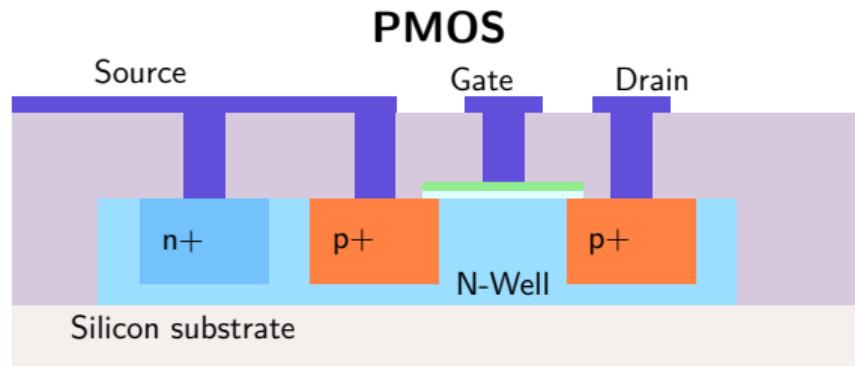
The Fick's equation

Fixed source diffusion:

$$x_j = 2 \cdot \sqrt{D \cdot t \cdot \ln \left(\frac{N_0}{N_B} \right)}$$



Threshold calculation



Threshold calculation

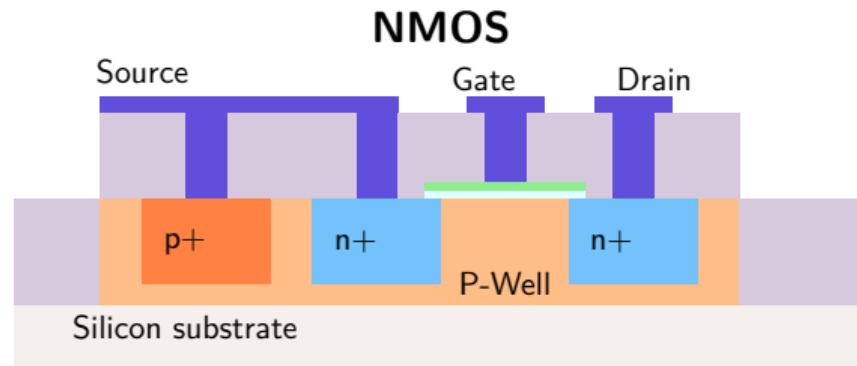
PMOS

$$|\phi_F| = V_T \ln \frac{N_d}{n_i} \quad (1)$$

$$V_T = V_{FB} - 2 \cdot |\phi_F| - \frac{\sqrt{2 \cdot \epsilon_s \cdot q \cdot N_d \cdot (2 \cdot |\phi_F| - V_{SB})}}{C_{ox}} \quad (2)$$

$$V_{FB} = - \left(\frac{E_g}{2} - \phi_F \right) - \frac{Q_{SS}}{C_{ox}} \quad (3)$$

Threshold calculation



Threshold calculation

NMOS

$$\phi_F = V_T \ln \frac{N_a}{n_i} \quad (4)$$

$$V_T = V_{FB} + 2 \cdot \phi_F + \frac{\sqrt{2 \cdot \epsilon_s \cdot q \cdot N_a \cdot (2 \cdot \phi_F + V_{SB})}}{C_{ox}} \quad (5)$$

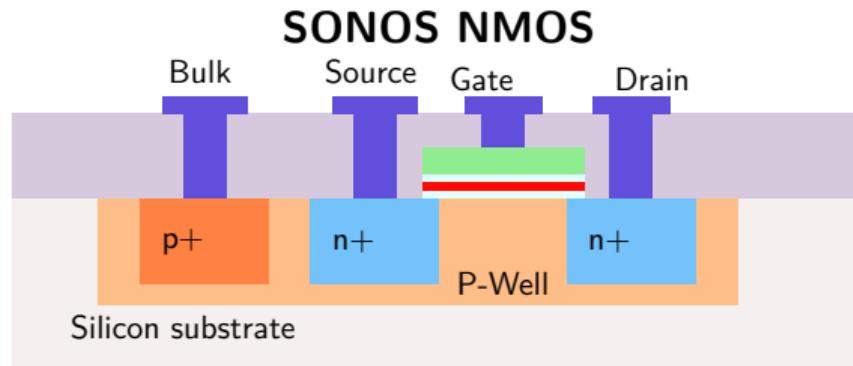
$$V_{FB} = - \left(\frac{E_g}{2} + \phi_F \right) - \frac{Q_{SS}}{C_{ox}} \quad (6)$$

SONOS flash

Stands for

Silicon
Oxide
Nitride
Oxide
Silicon

SONOS flash



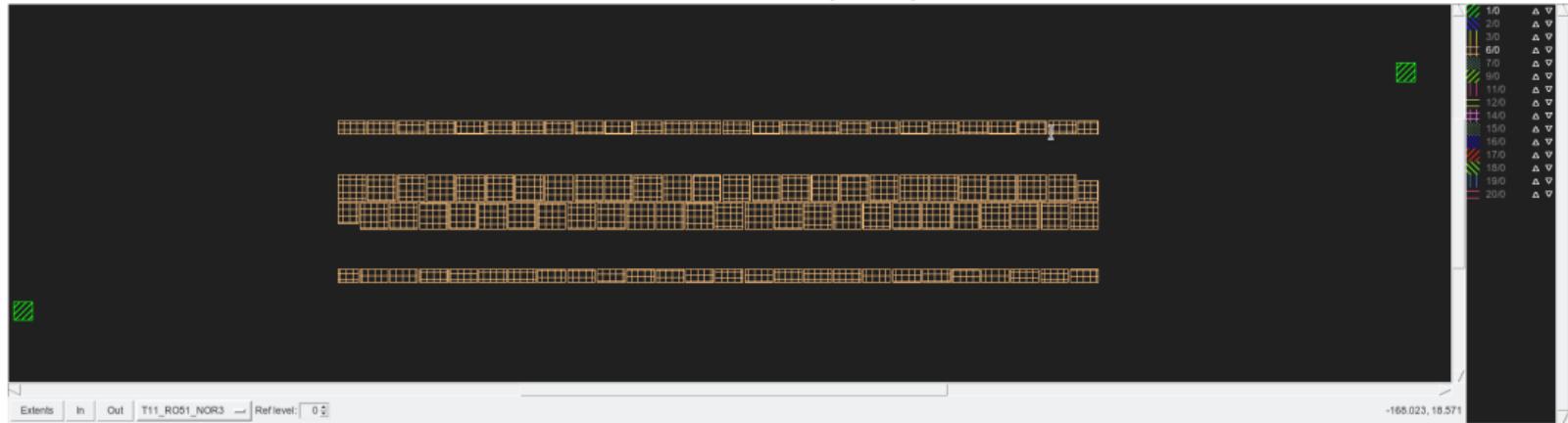
SONOS flash

SONOS NMOS

- Programming/Erasing happens by changing Q_{SS}
- A variation of Q_{SS} shifts the threshold voltage
- Q_{SS} can be changed by applying an enough high voltage between bulk and gate (approx. 20 V)
- High enough voltage tunnels electrons into the nitride
- Shifting the threshold voltage away from 0.8 V / -0.8 V makes it stay turned off when a "1" is applied

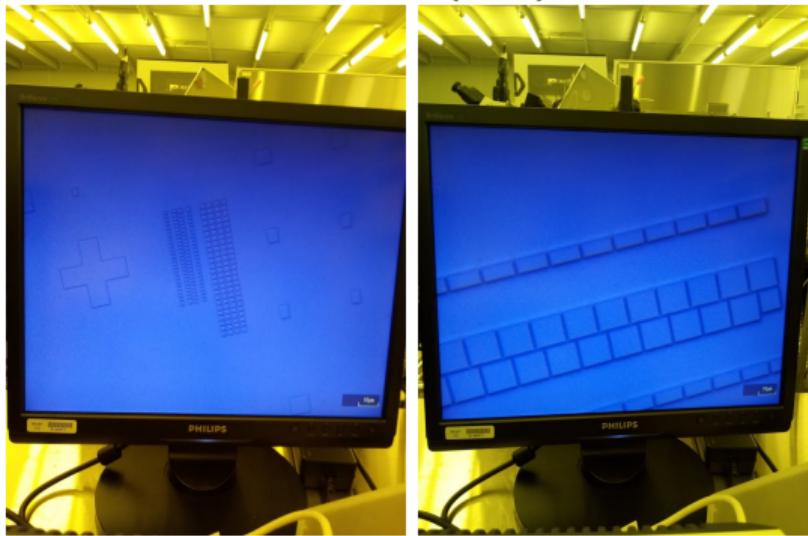
Example: NOR3 ring oscillator

Isolation (STI):



Example: NOR3 ring oscillator

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Example: NOR3 ring oscillator

Recipe for STI:

- **Dry**

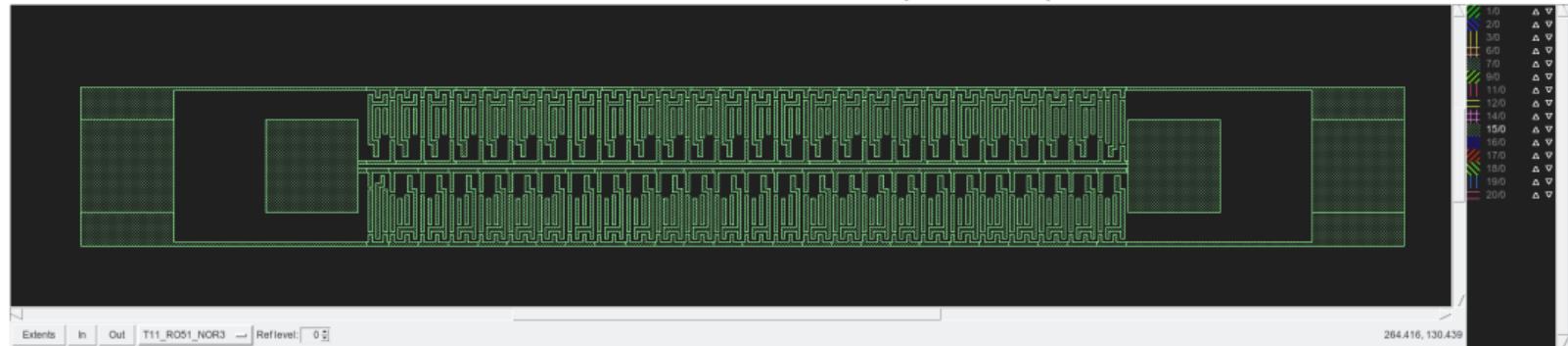
- Plasma etching recipes are machine specific
- Variate the cycles for your recipe to match 2 microns

- **Wet**

- Take TMAH: $N(CH_3)_4^+ OH^-$ (Tetramethylammonium hydroxide)
- Dilute with deionized water with DI:TMAH (3:1)
- Heat TMAH (25%) to 80°C
- Dip wafer into the solution for around 6 minutes and 15 seconds (320nm/min, 2 microns)

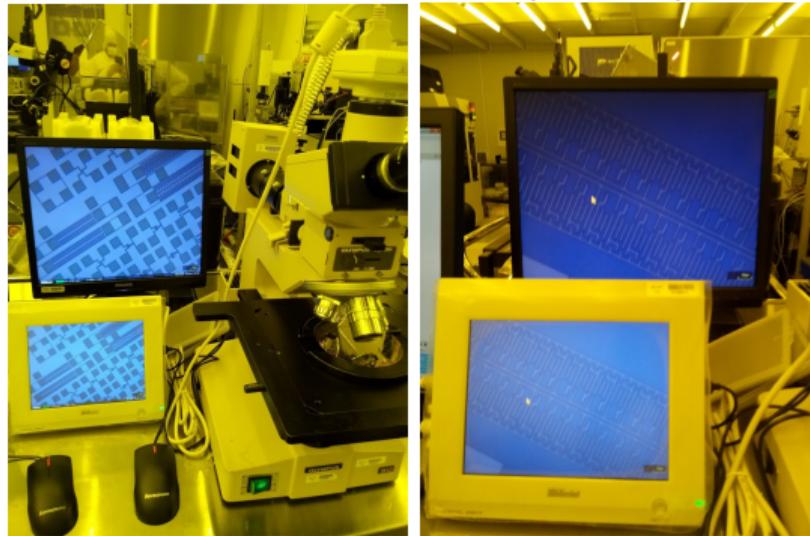
Example: NOR3 ring oscillator

Metal interconnect (metal1):



Example: NOR3 ring oscillator

Metal interconnect (metal1):



Example: NOR3 ring oscillator

Recipe for metal interconnects:

- Make a vacuum (low pressure)
- Deposit 100nm Aluminum
- Deposit 30nm Titanium over the Aluminum
- Take out of vacuum
- Dip into HF:DI (1:10) water solution for a few seconds until Titanium is gone
- Dip into FeCl₃ or other suitable Aluminum etchant for around 30 seconds until Aluminum is gone

Example: NOR3 ring oscillator

Passivation/Isolation materials

- Low temperature oxide (LTO)
- Phosphosilicate glass (PSG)

Can both be wet or dry etched

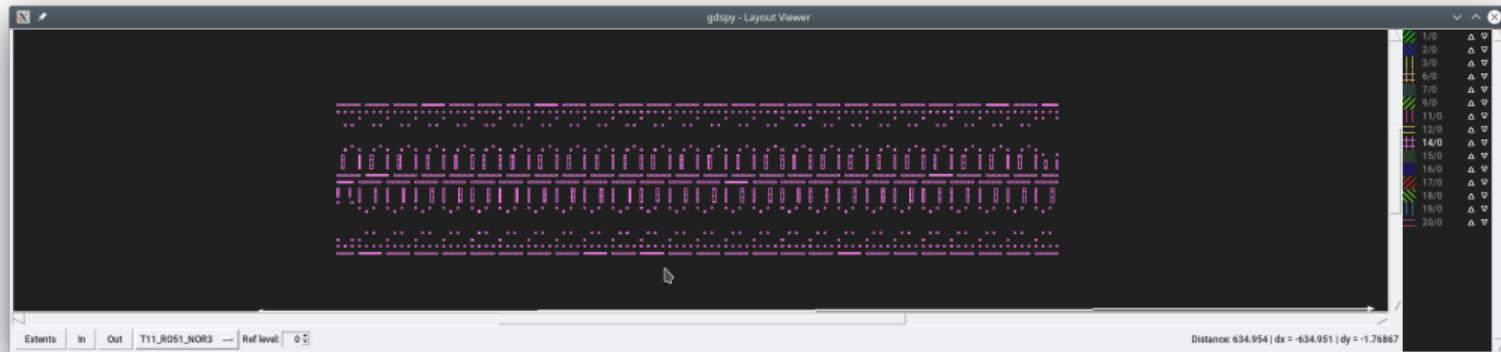
Example: NOR3 ring oscillator

Passivation/Isolation conceptional



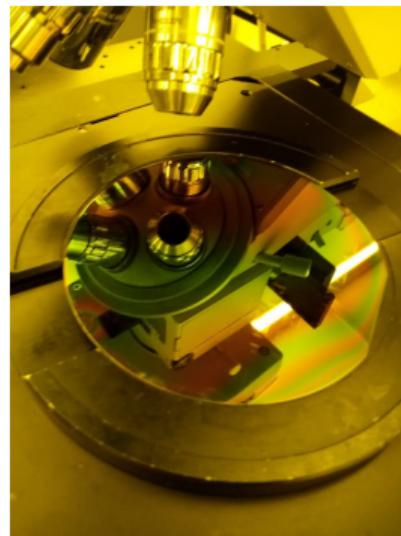
Example: NOR3 ring oscillator

Passivation/Isolation layout



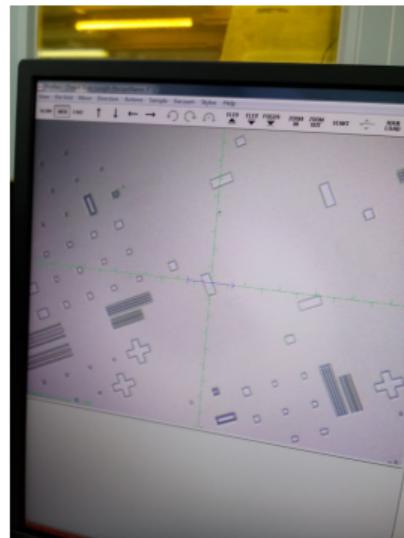
Example: NOR3 ring oscillator

Passivation/Isolation in reality



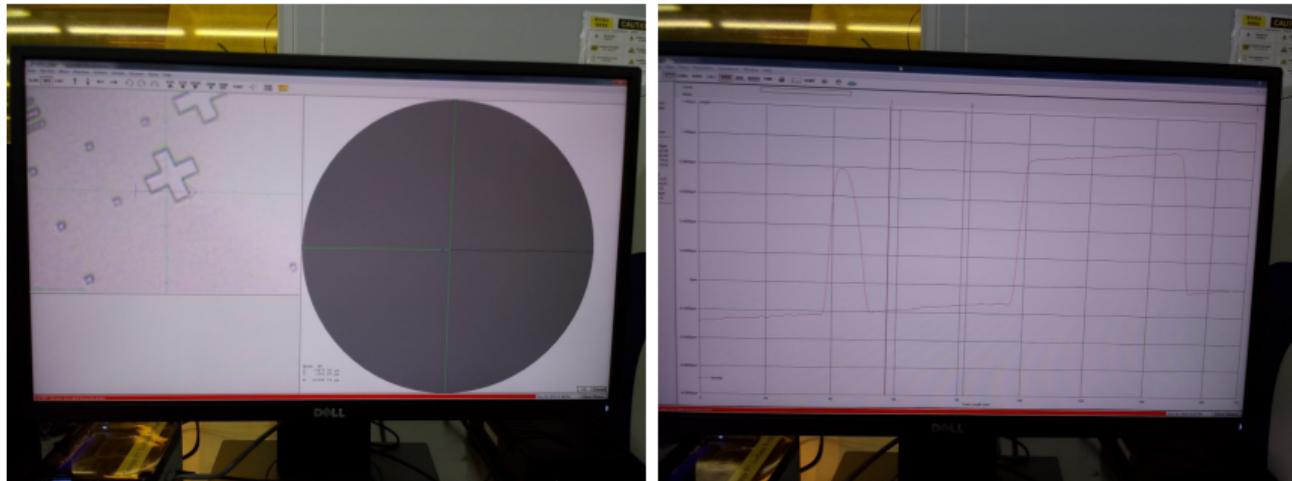
Example: NOR3 ring oscillator

Passivation/Isolation



Example: NOR3 ring oscillator

Passivation/Isolation



Example: NOR3 ring oscillator

Passivation/Isolation

- 1 micron is not enough
- 2 more microns need to be deposited
- Can be then be etched with BOE after exposure and development

Process

- <https://www.github.com/libresilicon/process> (→ repository)

maintained by leviathanch

Next



Victor and I

Next

We will

- ① Finish debugging all the features of PearlRiver (珠江芯片一号)
- ② Create preliminary Verilog and Spice models
- ③ Autogenerating standard cells with Popcorn scripts
- ④ Building ADCs/DACs and much more analog stuff
- ⑤ Build the North Point MCU (北角芯片)
- ⑥ Build the Sau Mau Ping SoC (秀茂坪芯片)

Next



With lots of luck from the goddess

North Point (北角芯片)

Features

- RISC-V core based on RV32EAC ISA
- Pin compatible to ATMega8
- Same features as ATMega8
- Tolerates up to 40V

North Point (北角芯片)

Survey

<https://survey.libresilicon.com>

Future

- Equipment we are using is ready for going down to 500 nm (\rightarrow 2 nodes shrinking)
:-)

Request for Chips

Which Free and Open Silicon do you like to see also?

- More Analog Stuff? (→ NE555?, uA741?)
- More Digital Stuff? (→ CD4000-series? LISP-CPU?)
- More Mixed-Signal Stuff? (→ SoC w/ Analog-Digital / Digital-Analog Converter?)
- ?

Keep on track, let us know your wish list!

Mailing List: <http://list.o2s.ch/mailman/listinfo/libre-silicon-devel>

Thanks!

非常感谢你们!
Thank you very much!
Vielen herzlichen Dank!

