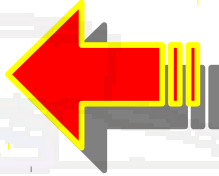


# Introduction to the Design of Full-Custom Front-End & Data Transmission ASICs\*

## Table of Contents

### ■ The Big (but Brief) Picture

- Briefly **front-end** - FE
- Briefly **read-out** - RO
- Briefly **serializer** - SER
- Briefly **phase-lock loop** - PLL



### ■ Feed-Back Concept

- A **qualitative** introduction
- **Natural frequency** concept -  $\omega_n$
- Real-world examples:
  - **Binary** read-out
  - **Time-over threshold**
- Adjusting/optimizing loop behavior
  - Damping ratio

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- Photodetectors **vs** photon counters
- **Position-sensitive** detectors NEW
  - Resistive charge division
  - Discrete array of elements
- **Time-resolved** detection

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- **Pre-Amp**: basic idea –  $V_{OUT} / V_{IN}$
- **Transconductance** of a transistor -  $g_m$
- Evolving a **single-stage amplifier** into a real-world application

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- **Transistor** switch – A masterpiece
  - **Lithography**
  - Formation of an **nMOS** transistor
- VLSI design flow
  - Parasitic **extraction**
- Real-world ASIC examples

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  - **Single event upset, analog single event transient, latch-up**
- **Simulating** radiation effects on analog circuits

\* Application Specific Integrated Circuit

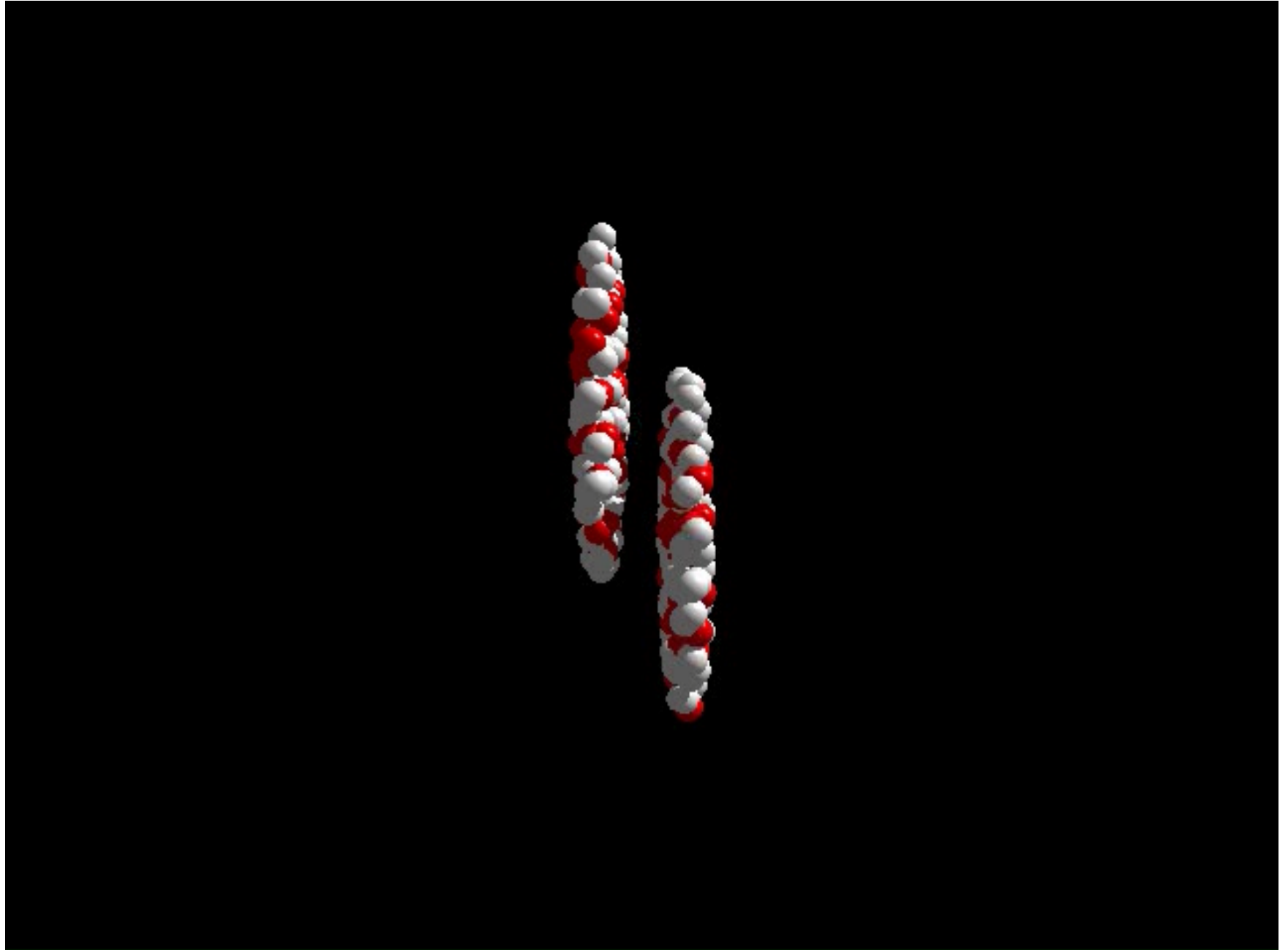
# Motivation for the TOC

## Composition within the ISOTDAQ curriculum

- One of the **official goals** of the school is to “**expose the participants to a maximum variety of topics**”
- What comes just after the “detector” is the **first link** of the **DAQ chain**
- Therefore this lecture will try to deliver:
  - ➔ an **intuitive approach** to what is listed in the **TOC**
  - ➔ **without** providing “**dry and ugly**” math **phrases**
- This lecture will have **no specific hands-on laboratory session** in the current program of the school
  - ➔ However it will **always** be there at the lowest level of all the laboratory sessions you will attend
- The pages will contain **enough amount of text** necessary for you **NOT** to need a lecturer in order to understand the slides at home (naively assuming that you will refer to this lecture in near future)
  - ➔ Therefore please be aware of the above fact, in case you start feeling that the pages are a little bit **overloaded**

# *An Ordinary Heavy Ion Collusion*

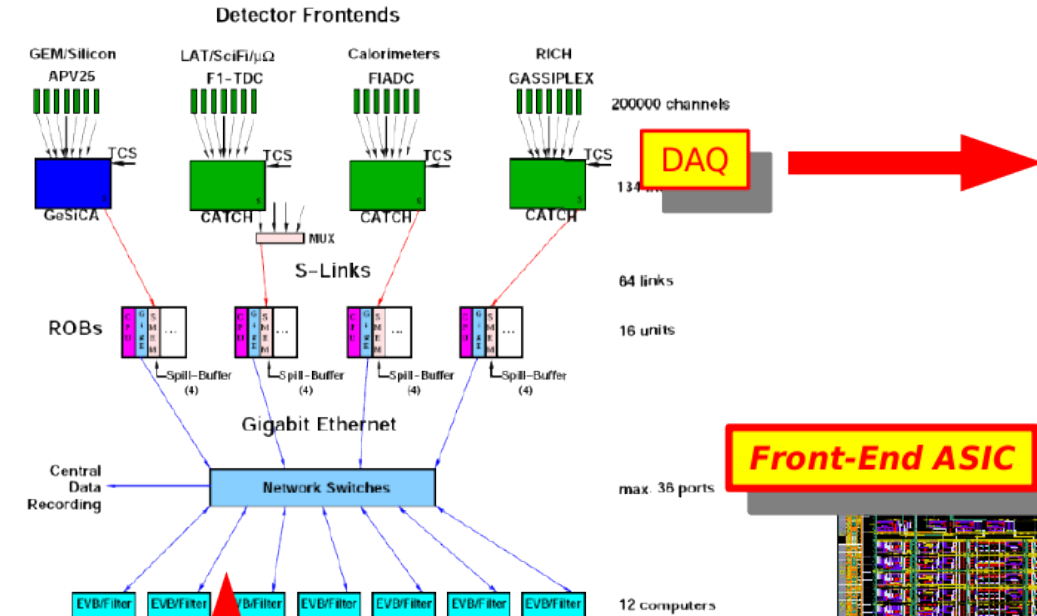
*Heavy ions at the center of ALICE detector; a short movie of 5 ns*



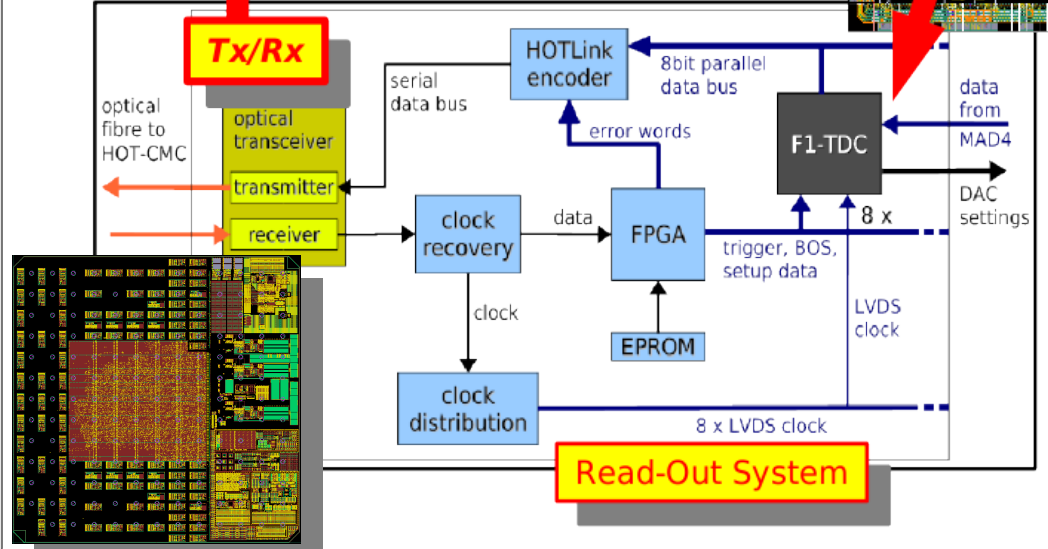
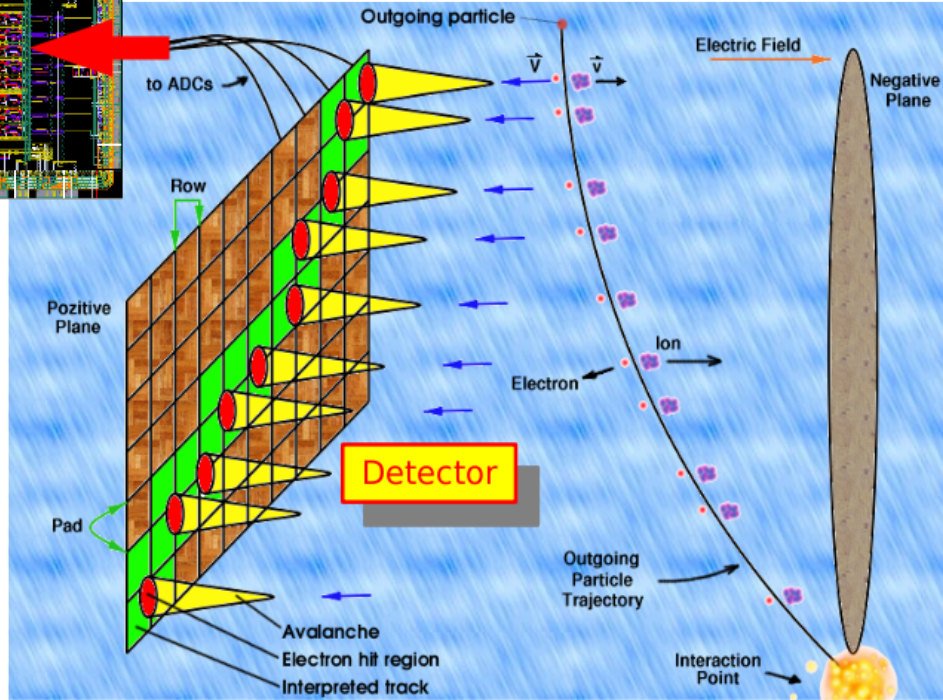
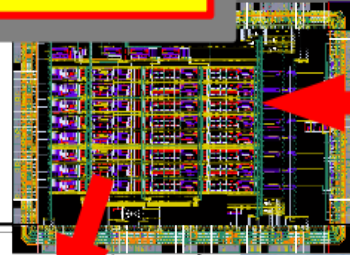
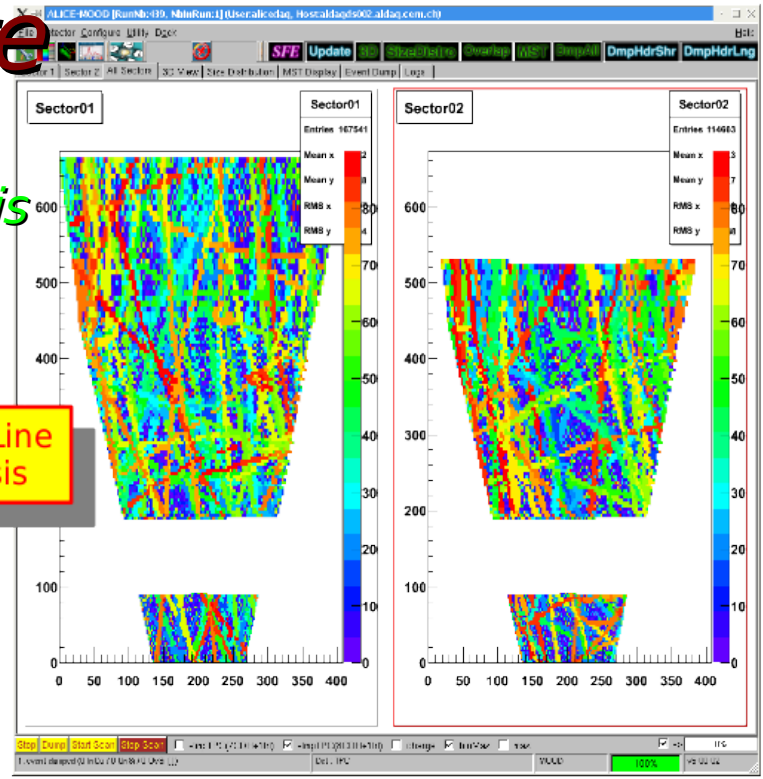
# The Big (but Brief) Picture

From colliding particles at the interaction point to the generation of meaningful data for analysis

Design of Low-Level Front-End and Data Transmission ASICs - Özgür Çobanoğlu



On/Off-Line Analysis



# Briefly Front-End

First interpretation of detector data

- Integrate the **charge** as a **pulse**

- Shape this **pulse**

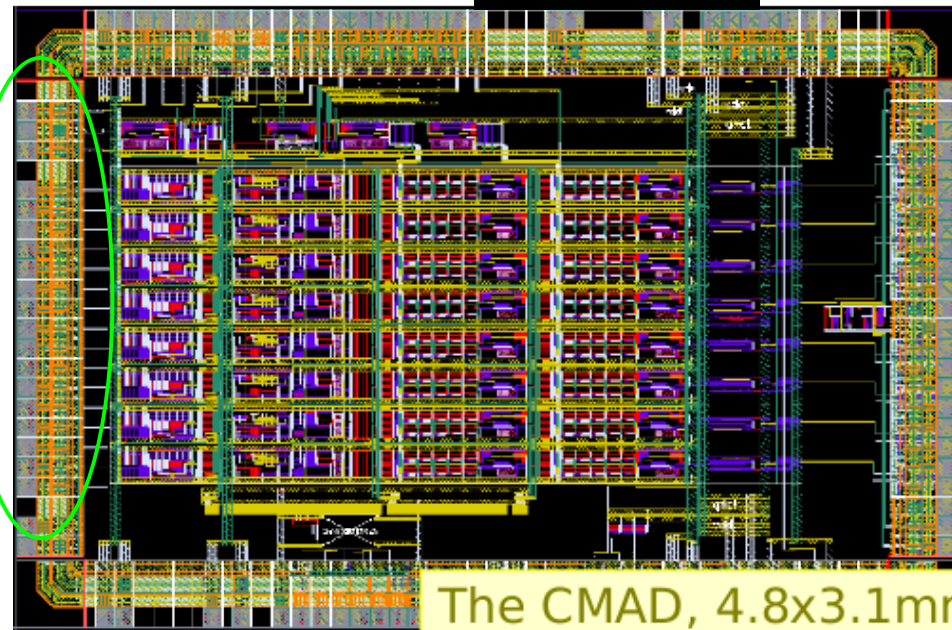
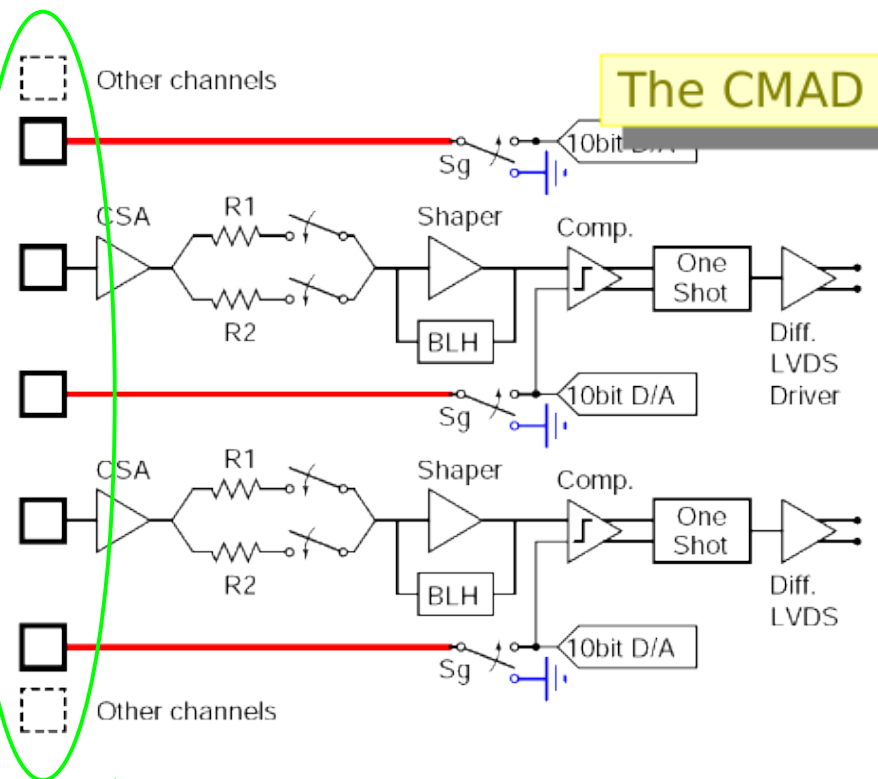
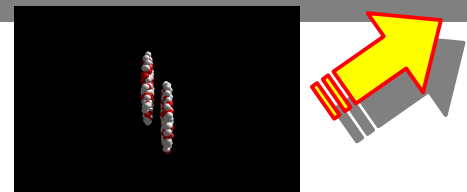
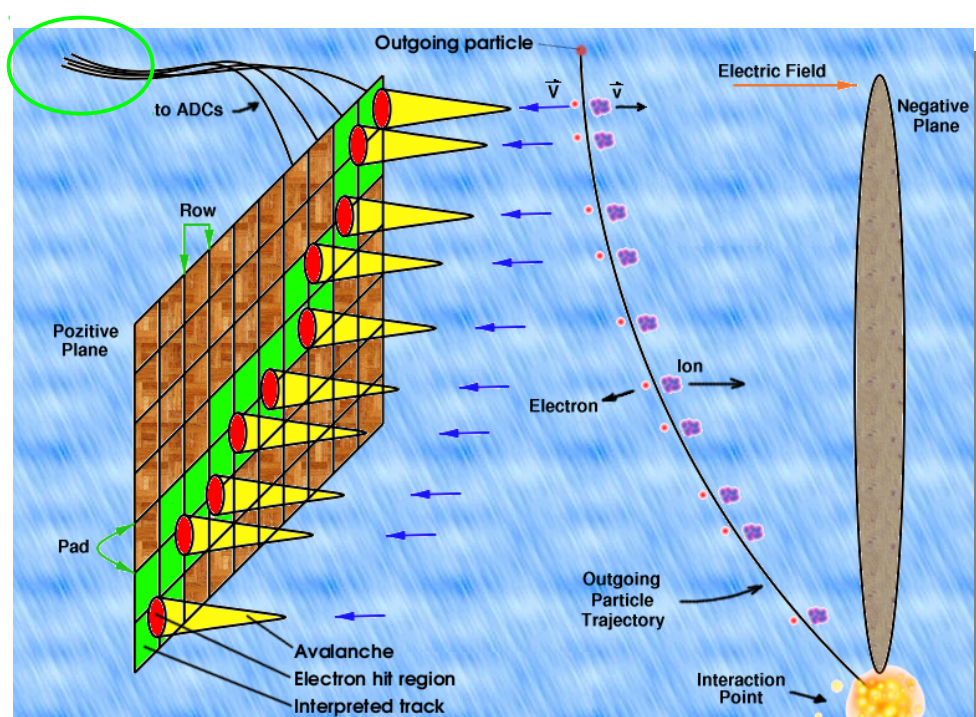
1) **Compare** pulse height to a threshold

→ Higher ? Yes : No

2) **Digitize** the pulse for further processing

→ Digital filters, corrections, etc.

- Send the result to **read-out**

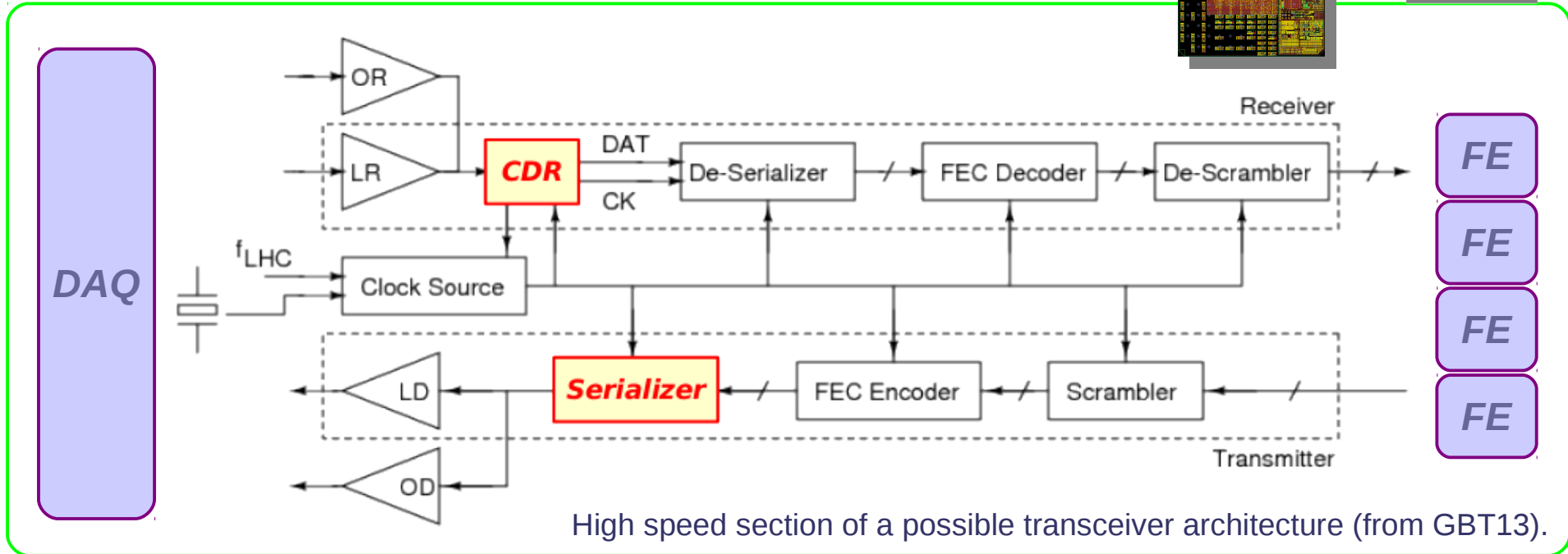
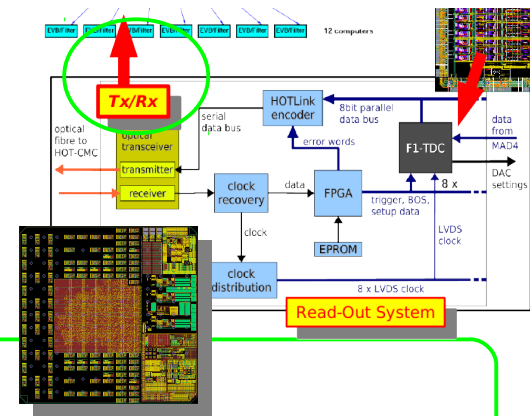


The CMAD, 4.8x3.1mm<sup>2</sup>

# Briefly Read-Out

How to get data from FE and deliver to DAQ

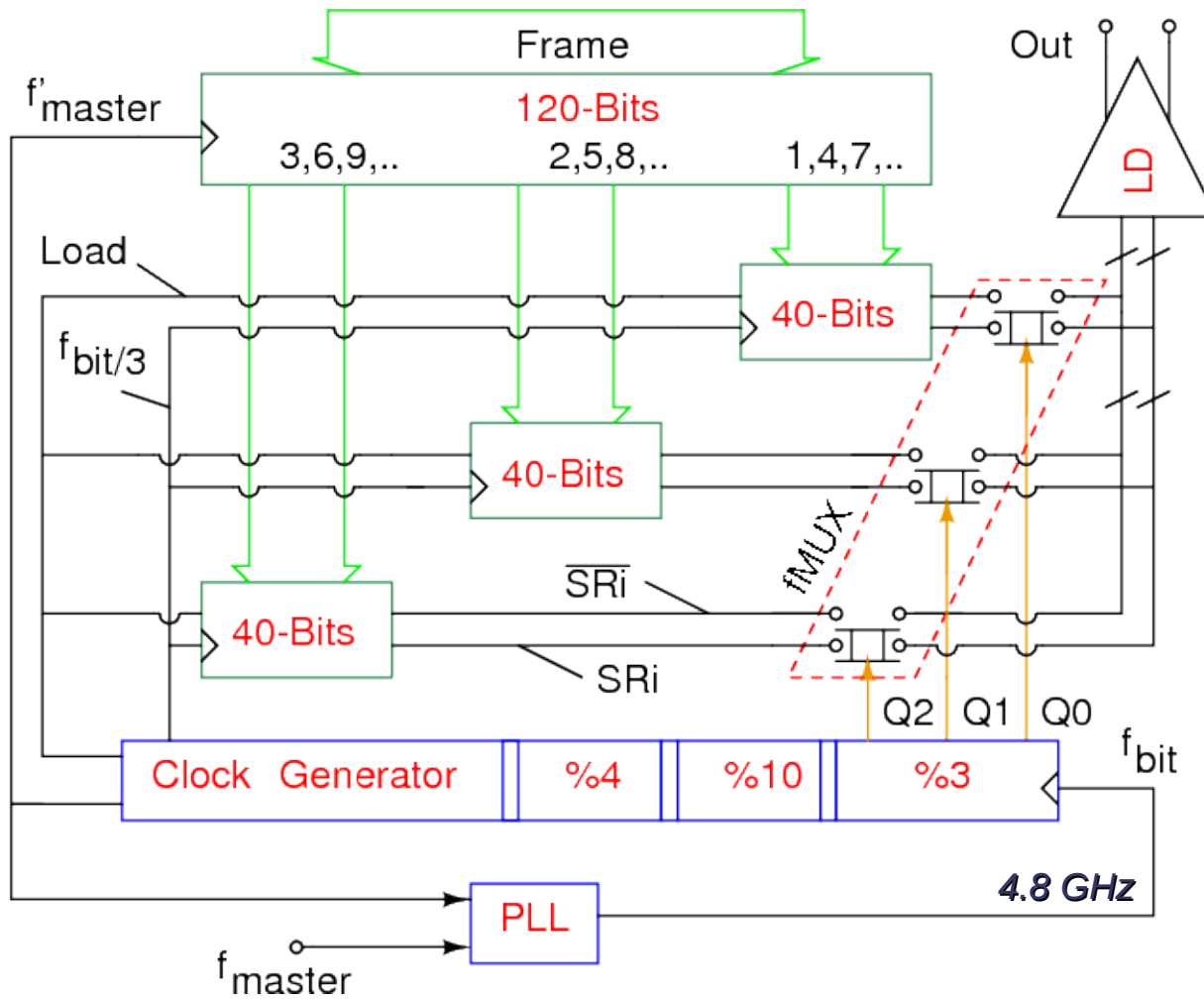
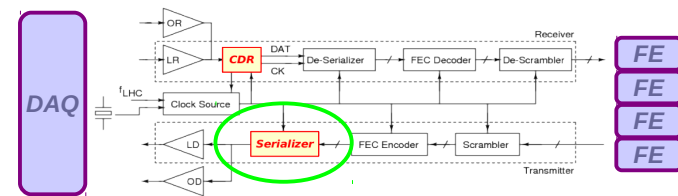
- Add **header/trailer** to the data created by the detector FEs
- Combine payload fragments into **frames** to be transmitted to DAQ



- **Receiver**
  - ➔ **Receive** laser light representing **serial data** from fiber
  - ➔ Check **FEC** code and **correct** errors (if possible)
  - ➔ **Parallelize** data
  - ➔ **Deliver** data to the next stage e.g. FE
- **Transmitter:**
  - ➔ Get data **from FE**
  - ➔ **Calculate** FEC and **add** to frame, increasing resistance against transmission errors
  - ➔ **Serialize** parallel data
  - ➔ Drive a **laser diode** over fiber to DAQ

# Briefly SER

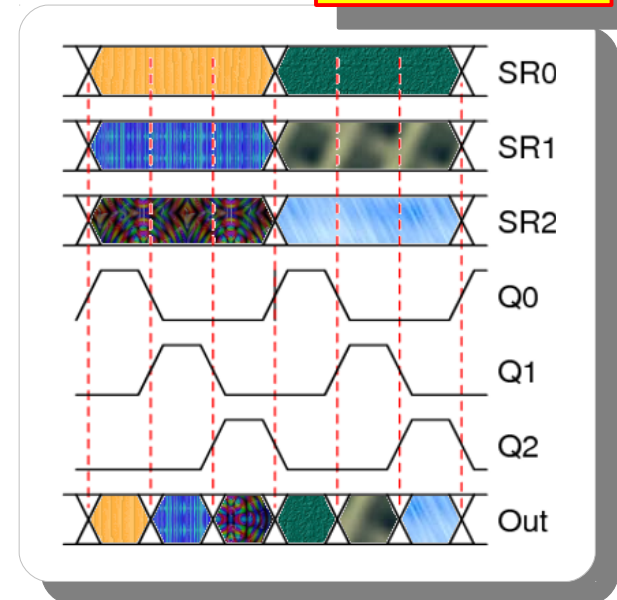
## Parallel → Serial



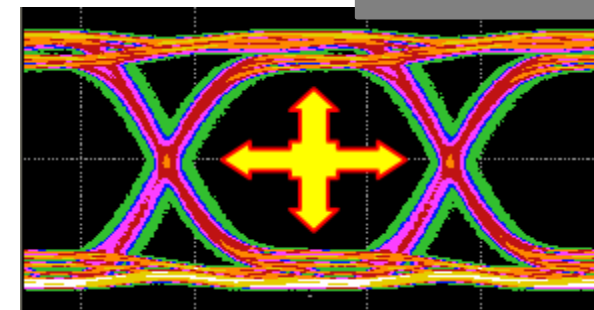
### Operation:

- @ rising edge of  $f_{MASTER}$ , **load** 120-bit-wide **frame** into input register (**40 MHz**)
- @ rising edge of **LOAD**, **divide** the frame into 3 **40-bit-wide** words (**40 MHz**)
- @ rising edge of  $f_{BIT/3}$ , **right shift** 30-bit-wide words **sequentially** (**1.6 GHz**)
- After every shifting, **multiplex** the right bit **to output** (**4.8 GHz**)

Timing Diagram



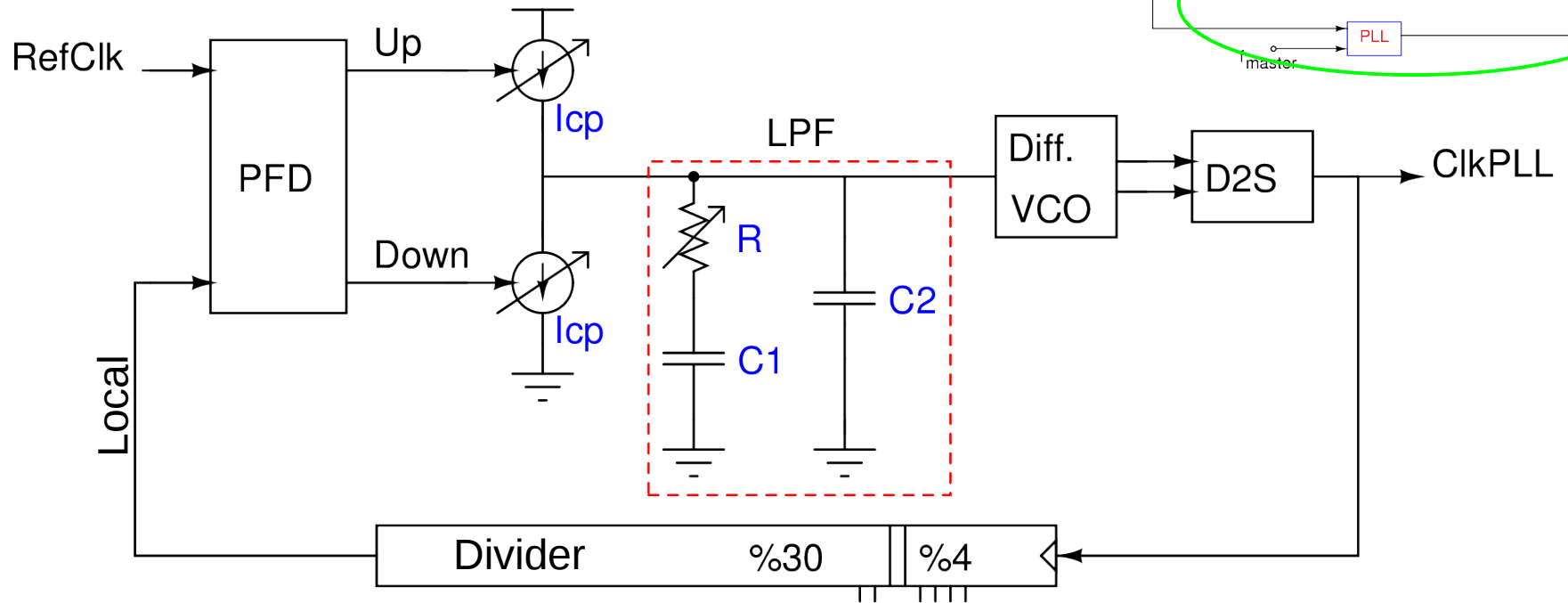
Eye Diagram



# Briefly PLL

## Phase-lock loop

- Locking a clock to a (pseudo) periodic signal
- ClkPLL is what we generate locally and RefClk is the reference to be tracked or to be locked to



- **Measure** the rising instant **timing difference** between **RefClk** and **ClkPLL** by the phase-frequency detector (PFD)
  - ➔ **Generate** correction commands depending on this measurement (**Up, Down**)
- Correction commands control the charge pump ( $I_{cp}$ ) **pumping/sinking current** into/from the filter capacitor, varying the **control voltage** for the Voltage Controlled Oscillator (VCO)
  - ➔ Gradually, the **timing error** of the two signals at the inputs of the PFD would **vanish** (ideal locked condition)

\* Please refer to Phaselock Techniques by F. M. Gardner



# Introduction to the Design of Full-Custom Front-End & Data Transmission ASICs\*

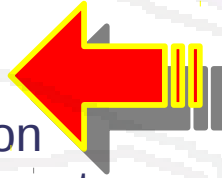
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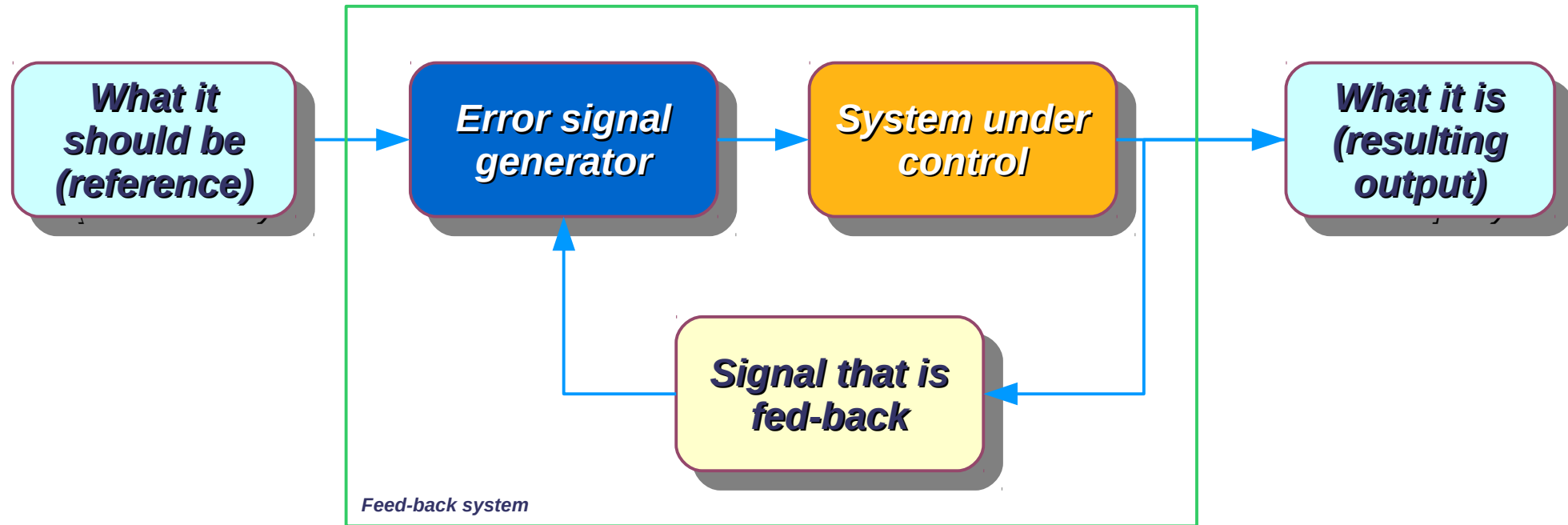
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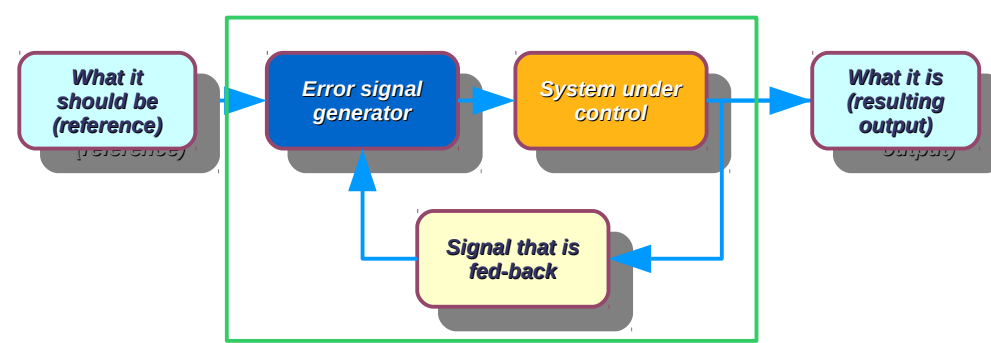
Actually a *very familiar* concept from *daily life*



- **Aim**, is decreasing the **difference** (the error signal) between the **reference** and the **output**
- **How ?** For each cycle:
  - A **portion of the output** is fed-back. Make the system be **sensitive** to a portion of what it outputs
  - **Measure** the difference between the reference and what is fed-back (only a portion of the output)
  - Depending on the difference, an **error signal** is generated which in turn causes a **correction step** to be taken **controlling the system** under control
  - **Repeat** the cycle

# Feed-Back

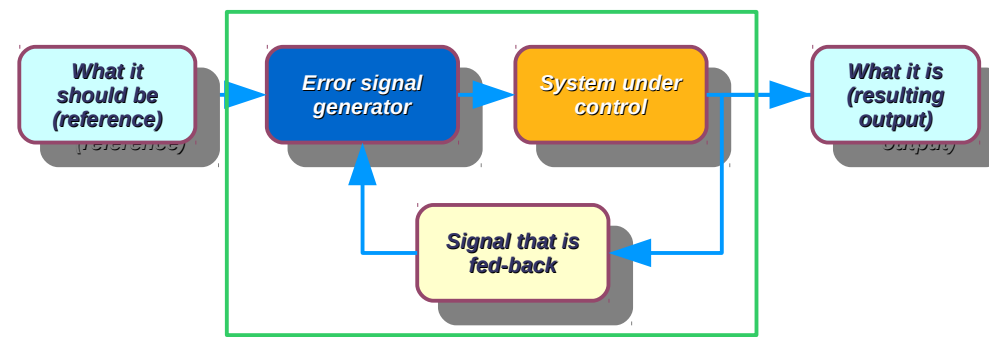
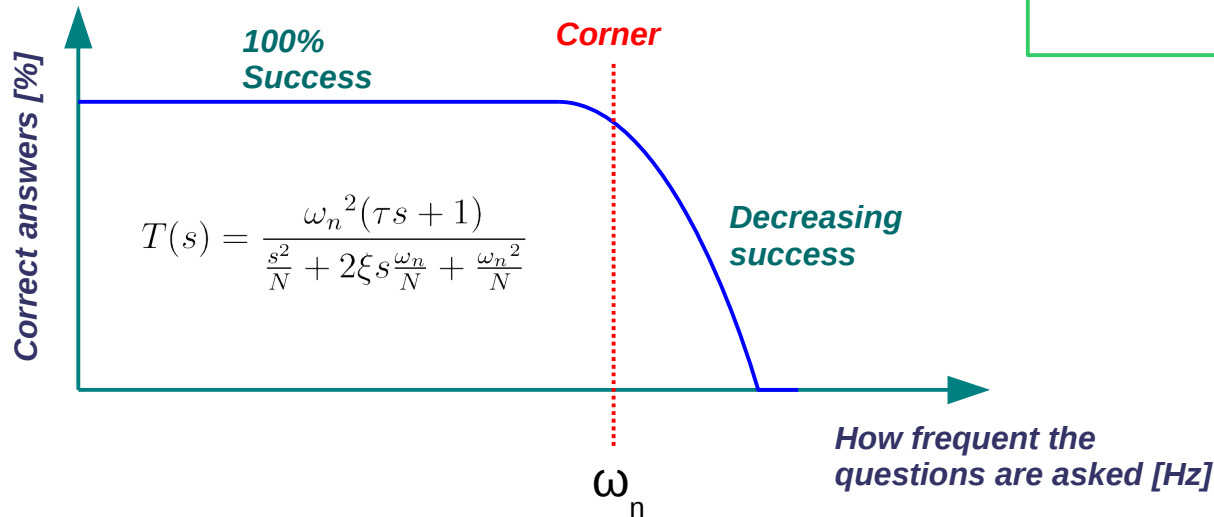
Actually a **very familiar** concept from **daily life**



- Whistling or playing an instrument ?
  - How do I **know** what I play is “**Do**” but not “**Re**” ?
  - Does it make sense to say “I whistle **better** than you” ?
  - What happens when I try **to find the right** guitar solo for an existing song ?
- Drinking a glass of water ?
  - **Adjust** the angle & position of the glass accordingly **to keep** the water flow as it is **necessary** ?
  - Remember the childhood: sometimes the water gets dropped to the ground accidentally (What is the **failure mechanism** ?)
- Walking and biking ?
  - How do I **decide the frequency** of my steps **not to** fall down or **to be able to** reach somewhere ?
  - What about walking or biking **when drunk** ? (What is the **failure mechanism** ?)
- Ruling a country ?
  - Can “**referendum**” be a term borrowed from the **control theory** ?
  - How come politicians of the same ideology can **decide** in substantially different manners ? < Questionably ignoring corruption :D >

# Feed-Back

## Natural frequency concept

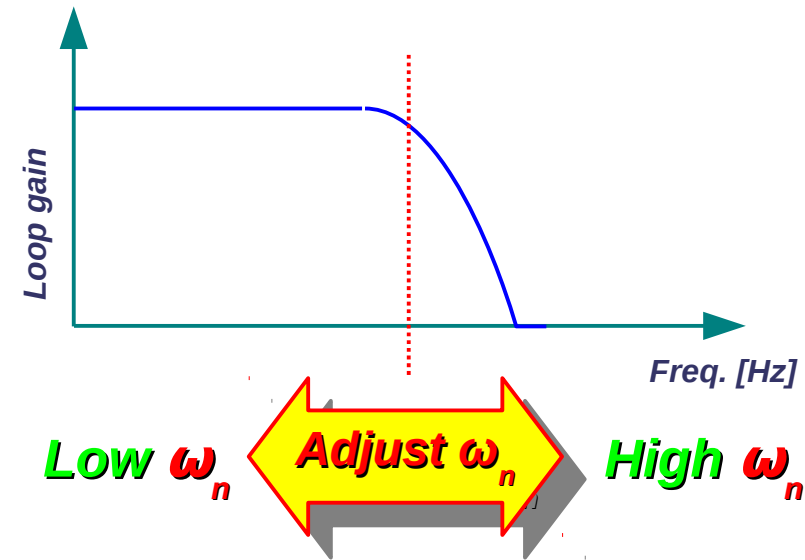


- An imaginary **system answering questions** asked continuously
- **Plot** (both logarithmic scale) the **success** level within a certain time window as a function of **frequency** of questions asked (transfer function)
- If the questions are asked **slow enough**, the system answers **all**, thus 100% success level
- Once the questions start to be asked **faster**, the system **starts failing** answering all, thus transfer function begins going down
- **Corner** is **at the natural frequency** of the control loop where the system **starts impairing significantly**

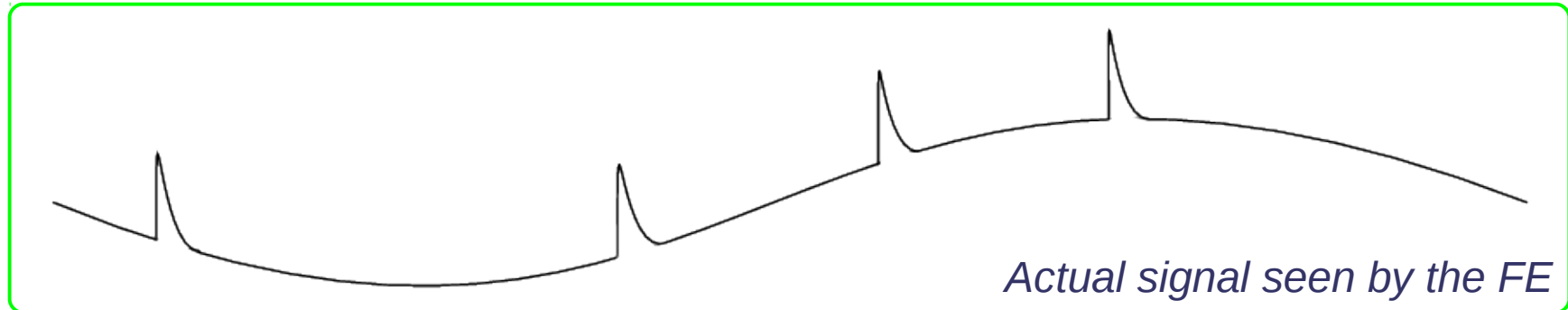
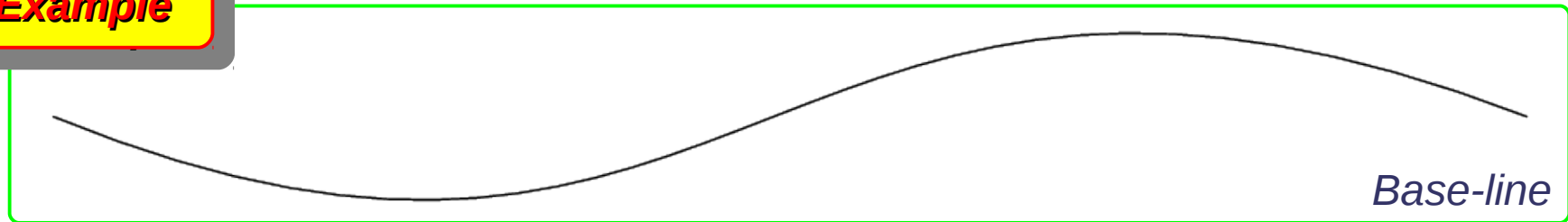
# Feed-Back

Choosing for what to be sensitive

- **Low  $\omega_n$**  → Sense **slow variations**
  - Loop **acts** on **slowly varying** signals
  - Narrow bandwidth – slow loop
- **High  $\omega_n$**  → Sense **fast variations**
  - Loop **acts** on **rapidly varying** signals
  - Wide bandwidth – fast loop



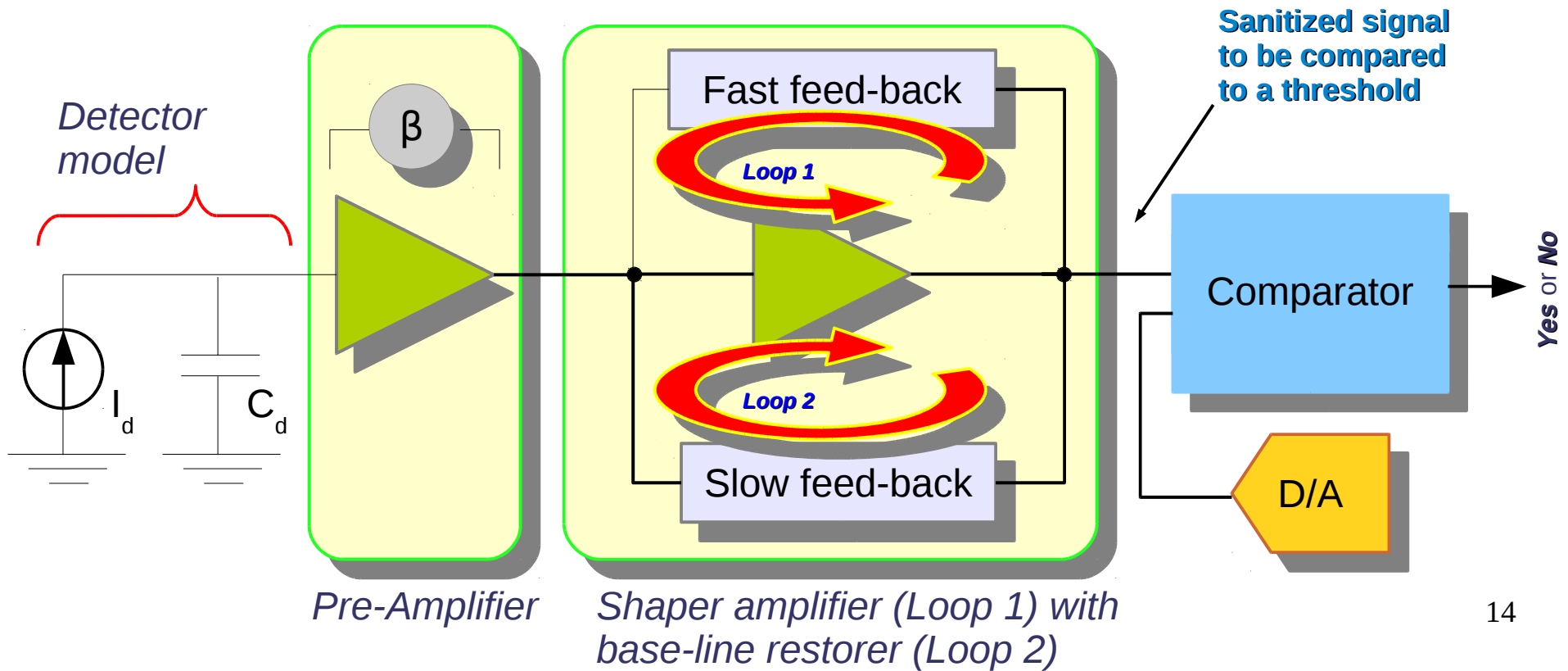
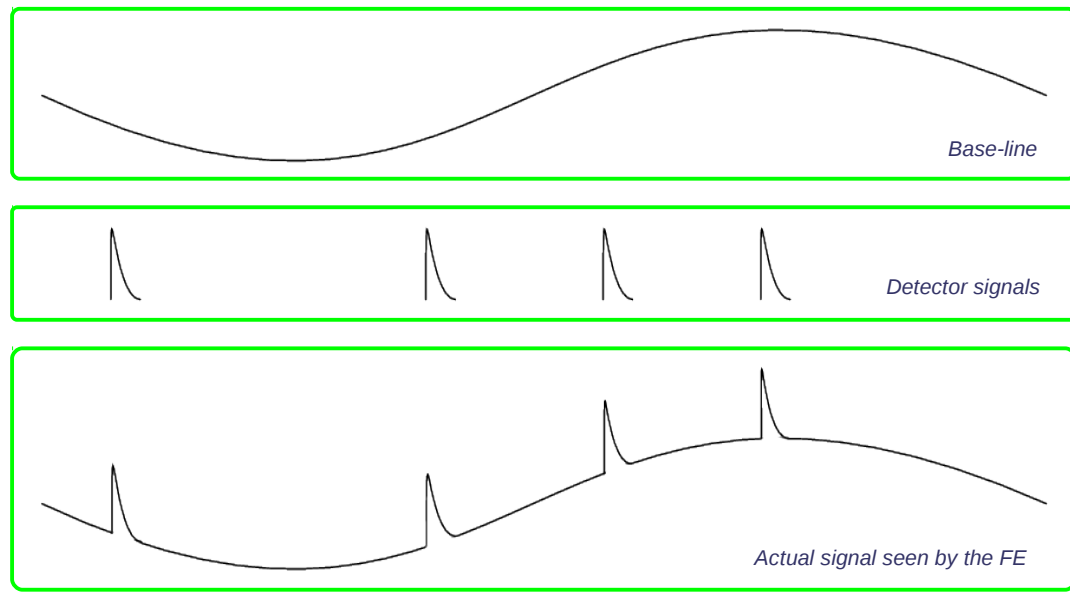
## Example



# Example

## Binary read-out

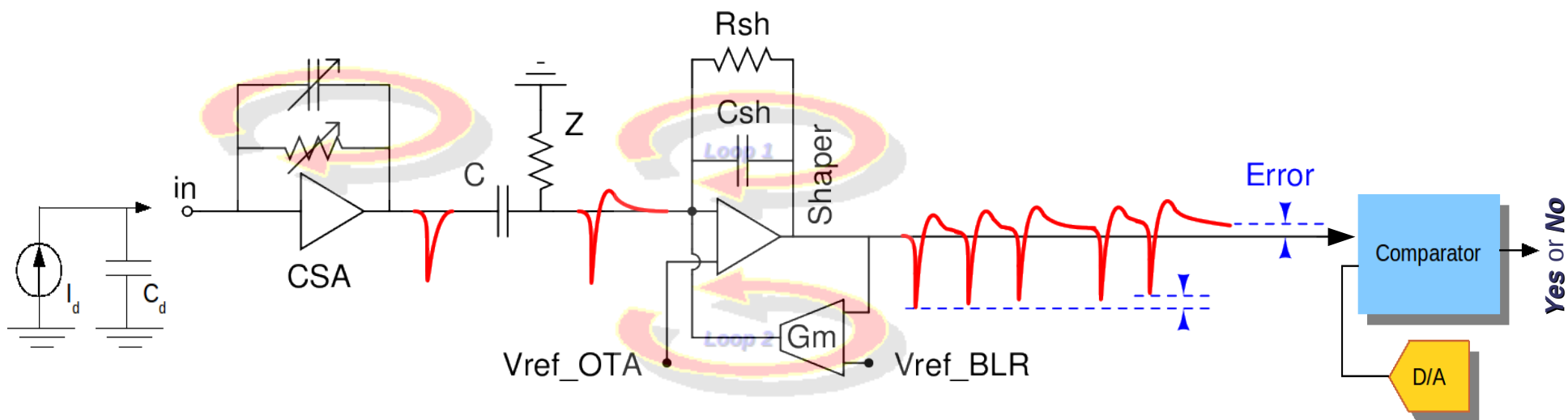
- Requires stable **base-line**
  - Which varies slowly
  - A **narrow** loop bandwidth is needed (**Loop 2**)
- Requires a fast signal **shaper**
  - Which varies rapidly
  - A **wide** bandwidth is needed (**Loop 1**)



# Real-World Example

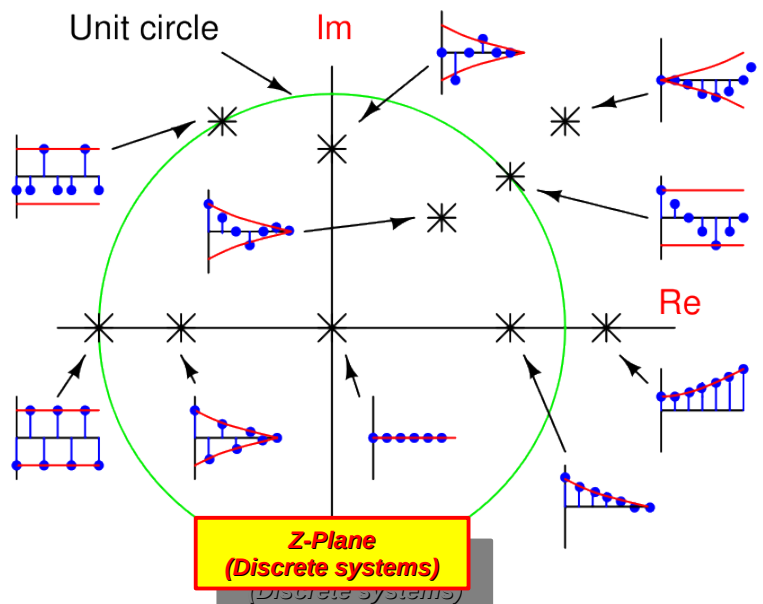
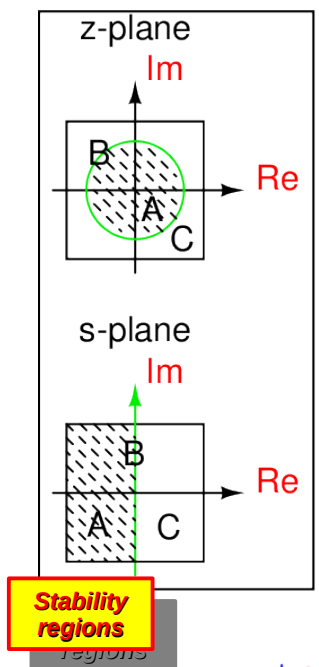
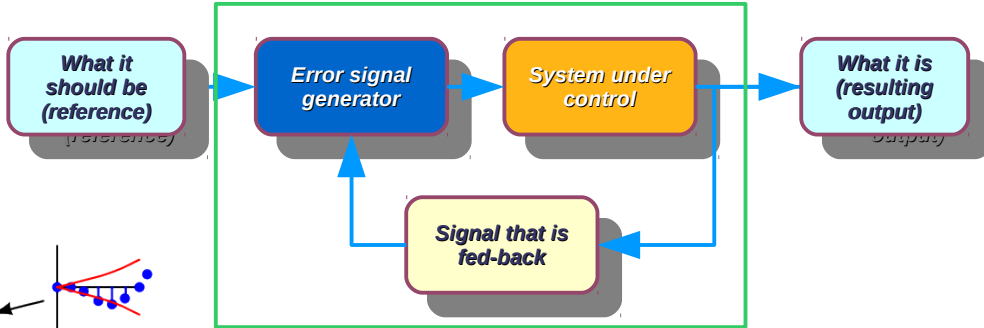
Binary read-out for time-over threshold measurement

- **Random** detector **pulses** with **a few MHz** frequency; then...
  - **How fast** is the **fast loop** ?
  - **How slow** is the **slow loop** ?
- Depending on the read-out **speed** and the operating **environment**, parameters are **optimized**
  - **Natural frequencies and gains of the loops, rise/fall-times, etc.**
  - **Settling behavior, radiation tolerance, damping ratio, power, etc.**
  - **Circuit footprint, robustness, redundancy, channel efficiency, etc.**



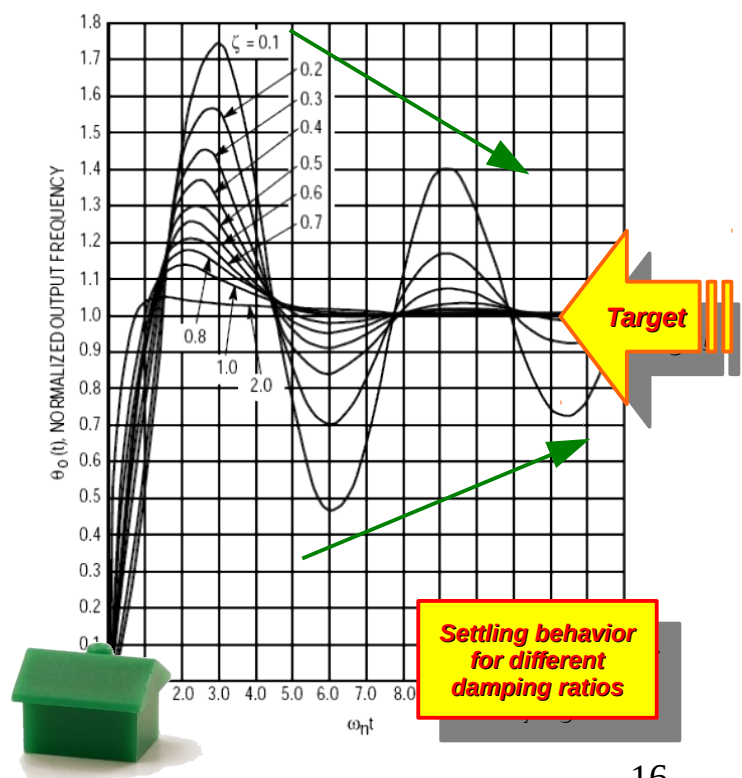
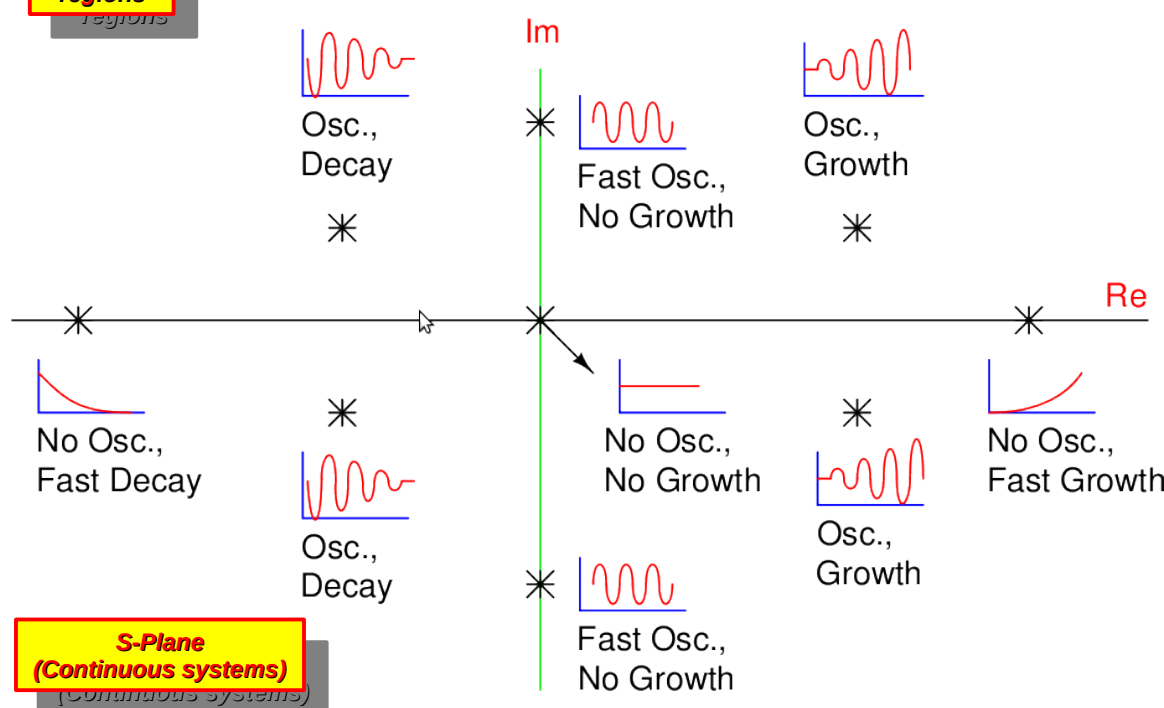
# Feed-Back

Optimizing the loop behavior



**Transfer function**

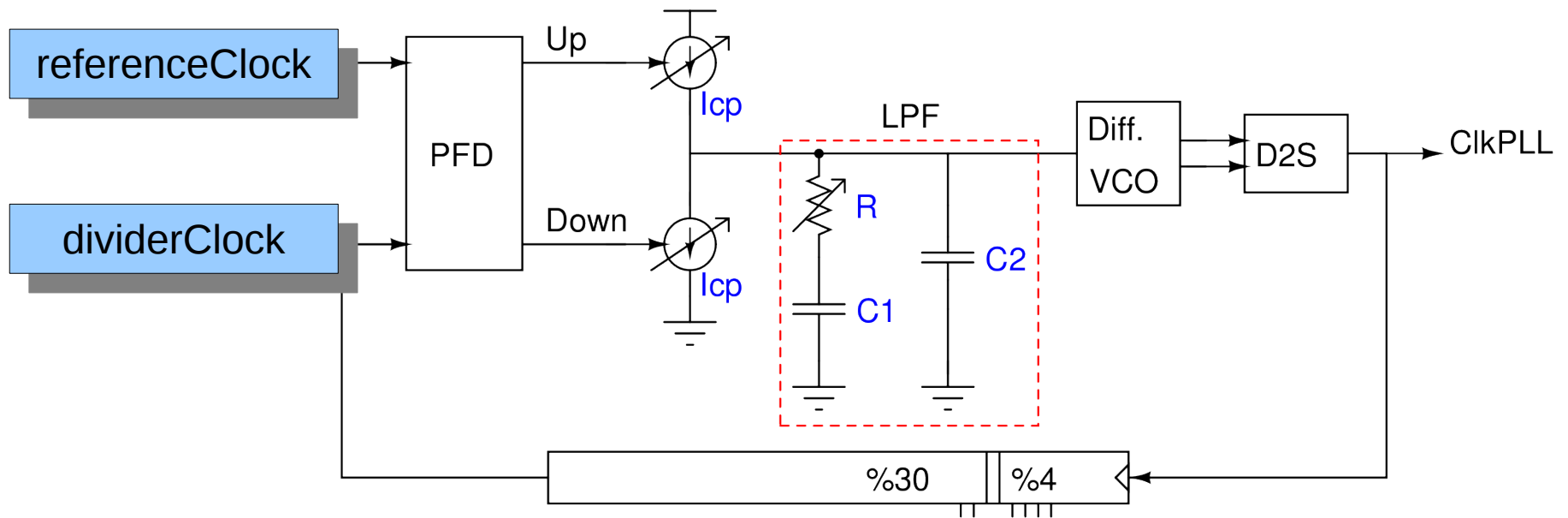
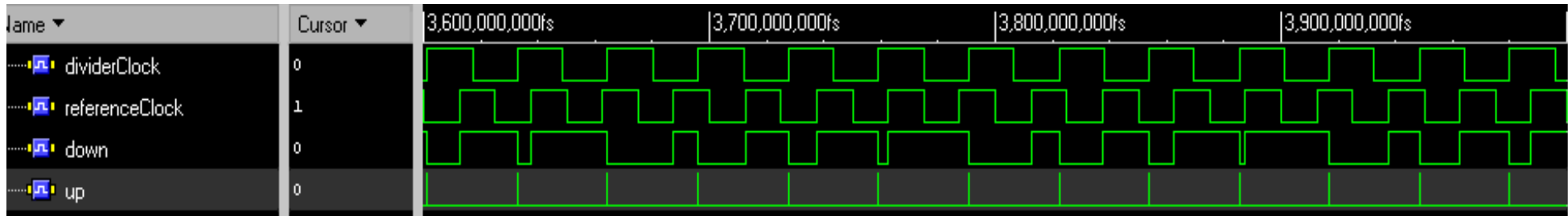
$$T(s) = \frac{\omega_n^2 (\tau s + 1)}{s^2 + 2\zeta s \frac{\omega_n}{N} + \frac{\omega_n^2}{N}}$$





# Simulation Movie Quiz

Remember the PLL

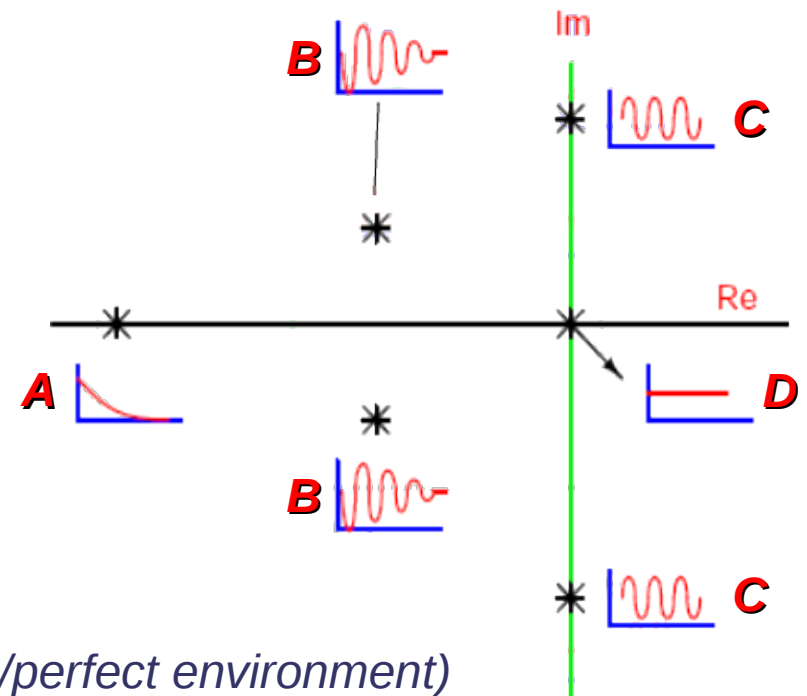


- **Slow down** the VCO, **if** it is **too fast** with respect to the reference
- **Speed up** the VCO, **if** it is **too slow** with respect to the reference

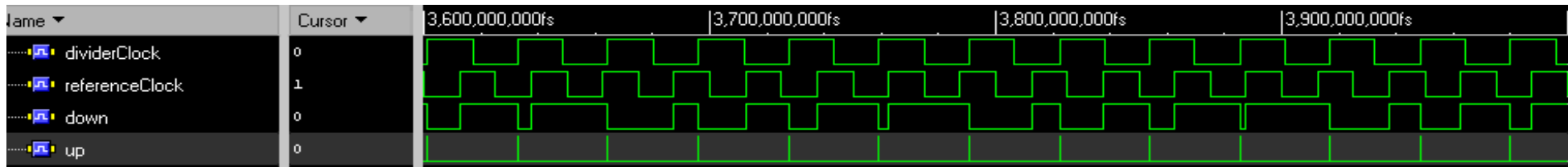
# Simulation Movie Quiz

Different loop behaviors

- See the movies and **associate** the **behavior** to the **poles** on the **s-plane** (complex plane)
- Use your **intuition**



? - **Slow-loop** with **low damping** ratio (**noiseless**/perfect environment)



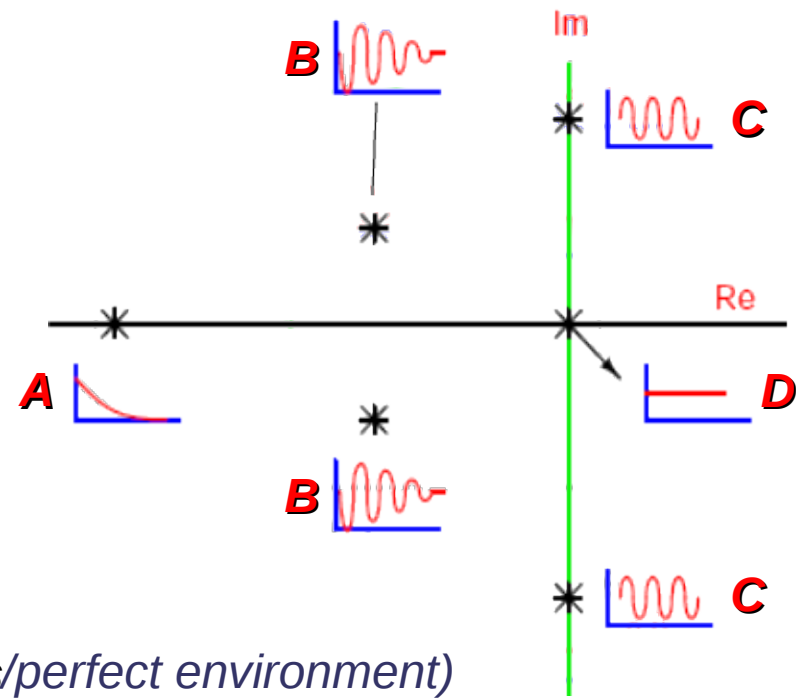
? - **Fast-loop** with **high damping** ratio (**noiseless** environment)

? - **Slow-loop** with **low damping** ratio (**noisy** environment)

# Simulation Movie Quiz

Different loop behaviors

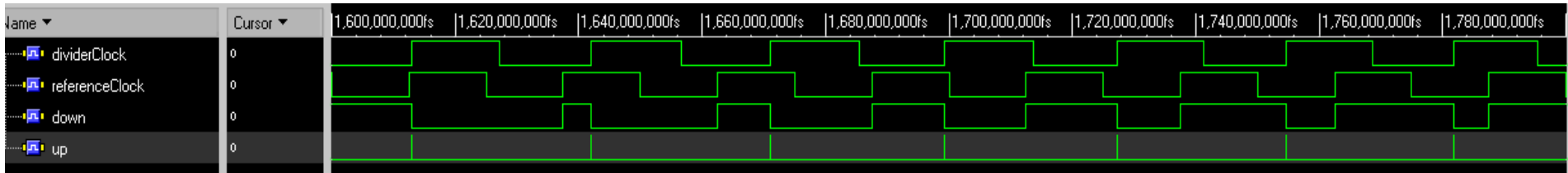
- See the movies and **associate** the **behavior** to the **poles** on the **s-plane** (complex plane) →
- Use your **intuition**



**B - Slow-loop with low damping ratio (noiseless/perfect environment)**



**? - Fast-loop with high damping ratio (noiseless environment)**



**? - Slow-loop with low damping ratio (noisy environment)**

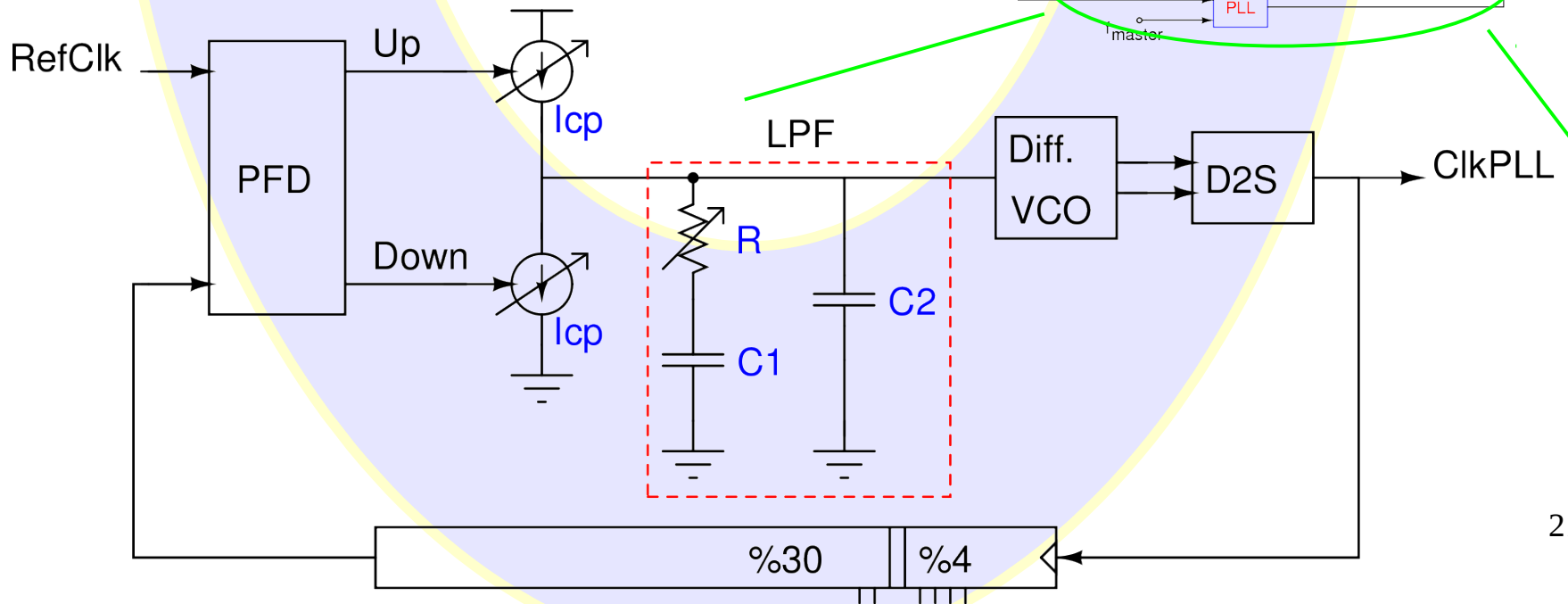
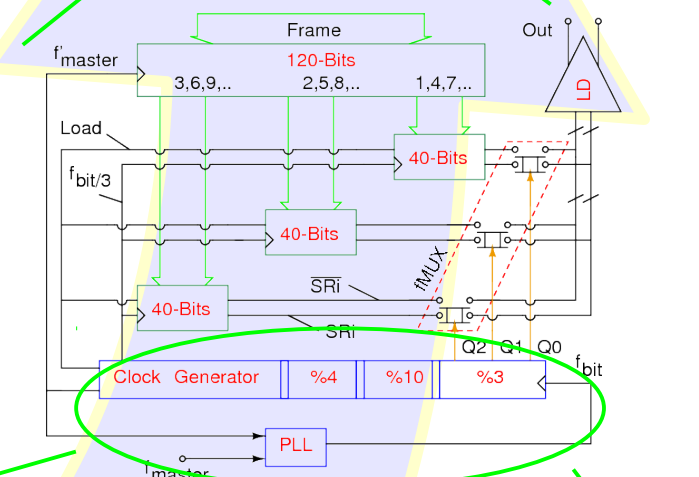
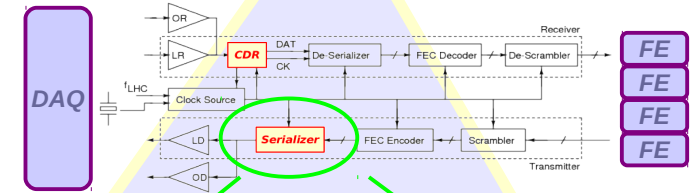




# Back to the big picture

If the PLL fails, then nothing works !..

- In case the loop **parametrization** is wrong:
  - ➔ PLL can not deliver a proper **clock**
    - ➔ No phase/frequency locked ClkPLL signal
    - ➔ Ignored LHC clock, no synchronization
  - ➔ SER fails
    - ➔ Some of the bits get **lost** or **duplicated**
    - ➔ High **jitter** leading to closed **eye diagram**
  - ➔ RO fails delivering the data from FE to DAQ
  - ➔ No DAQ → **Fatal error** !..



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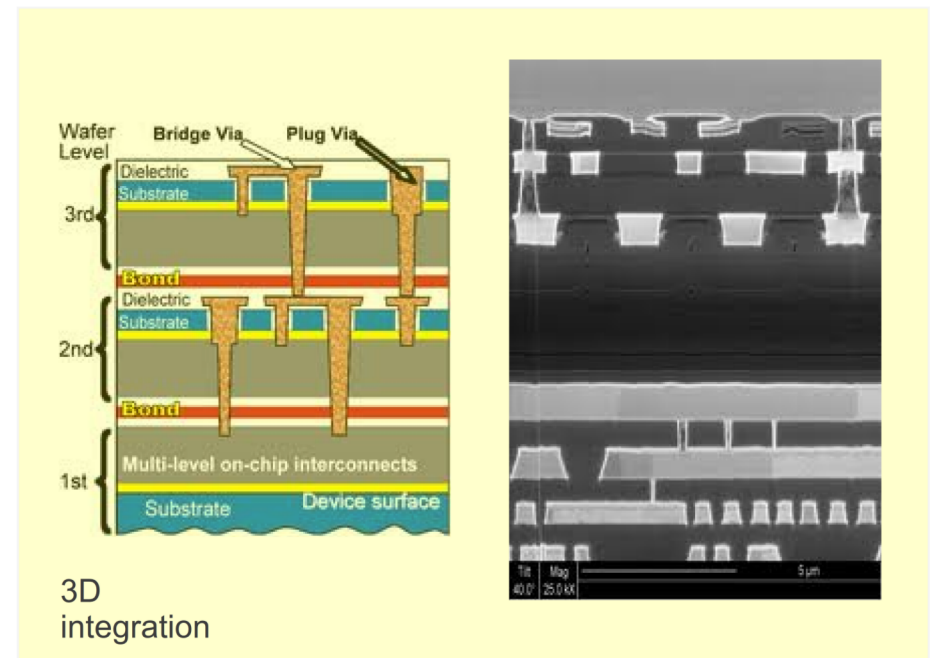
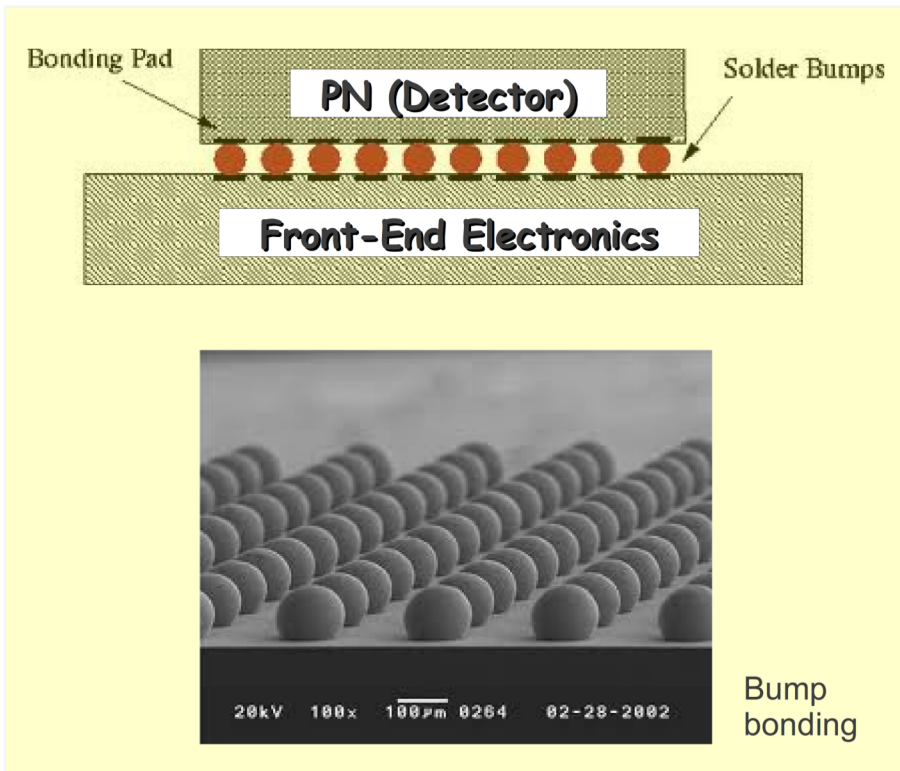
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# An Example

*Pilatus System: A hybrid of "sensor + electronics"*

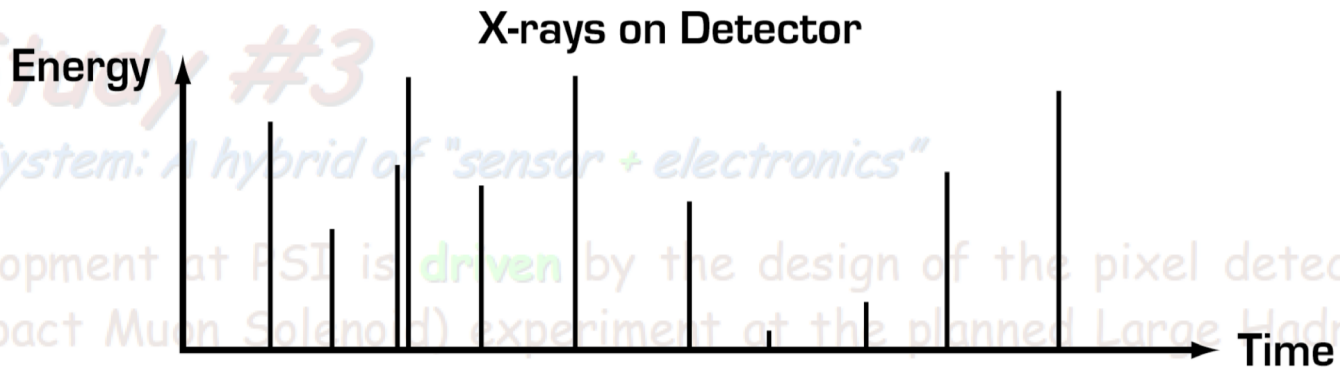
- "The development at PSI is **driven** by the design of the pixel detector for the **CMS** (Compact Muon Solenoid) experiment at the planned Large Hadron Collider (**LHC**) at **CERN**." (Ref: <http://pilatus.web.psi.ch/publications.htm>)
- **Hybrid**: fully depleted **detector** sitting on top of the **front end** electronics, reading out the detector, integrated within each of the pixels
- Composed of the **detector**, **charge-sensitive preamplifier**, **shaper**, **comparator** and **counter**



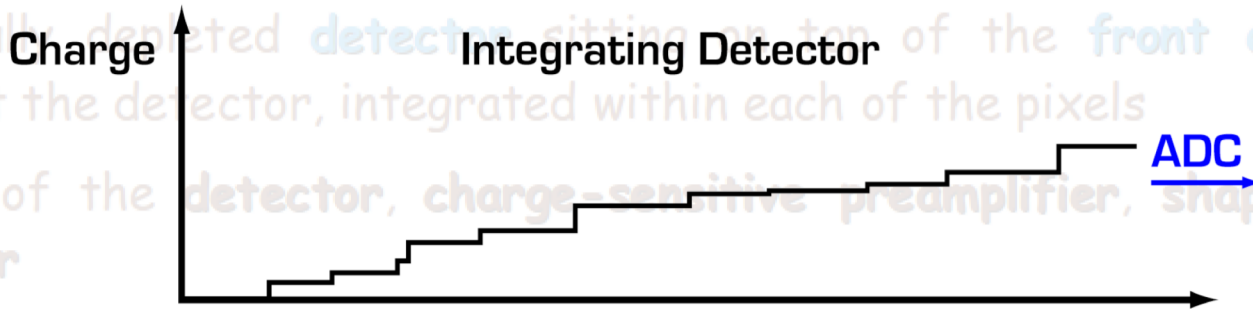
# Case Study #3

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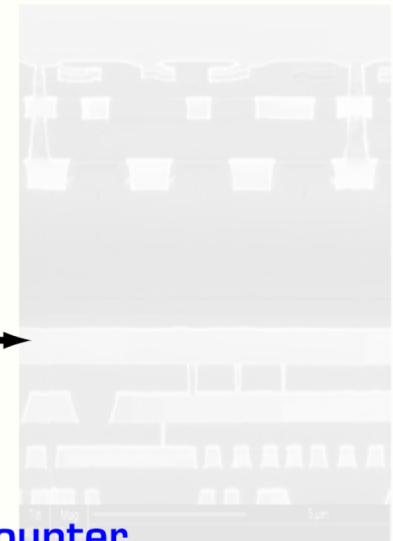
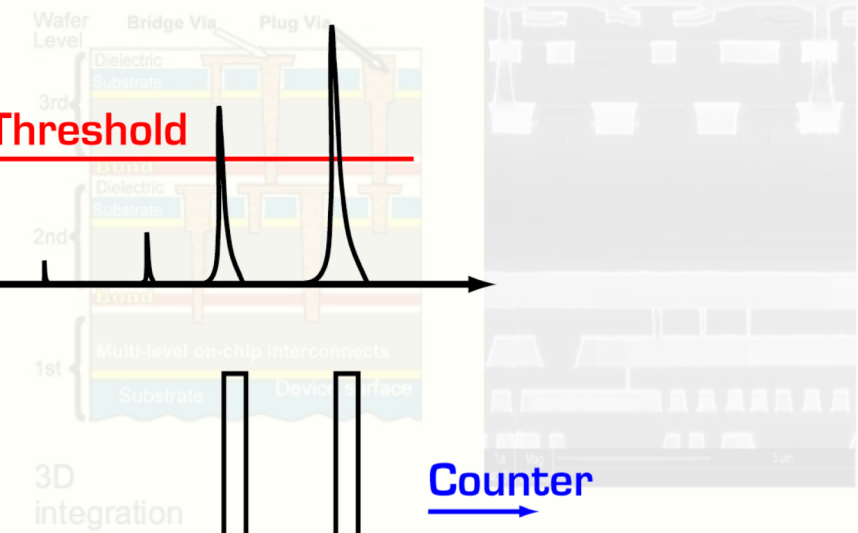
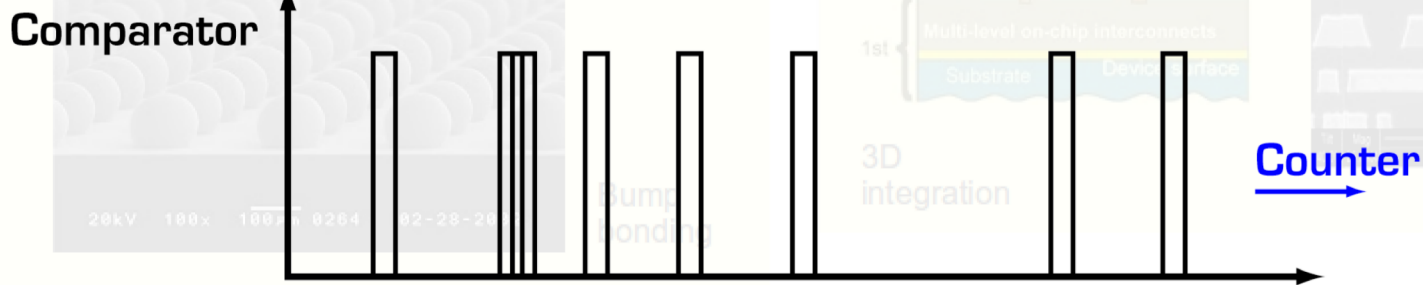
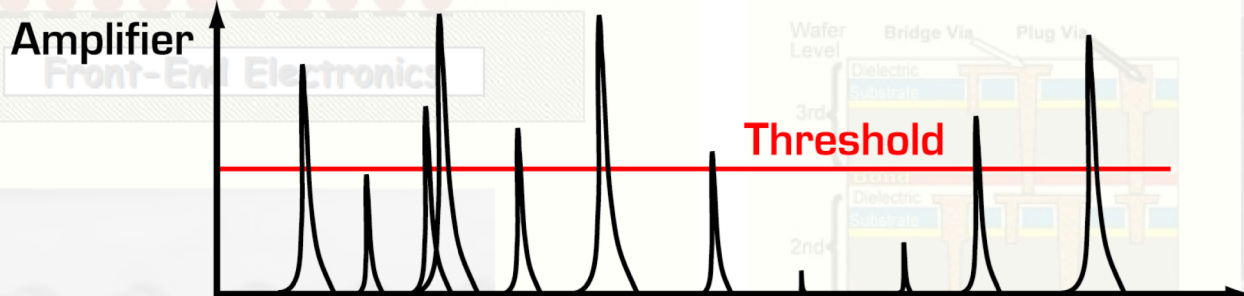
- **Hybrid:** full depleted detector sitting on top of the front end electronics, reading out the detector, integrated within each of the pixels



- Composed of the detector, charge-sensitive preamplifier, shaper, comparator and counter



## Single Photon Counting Detector





# Case Study #3

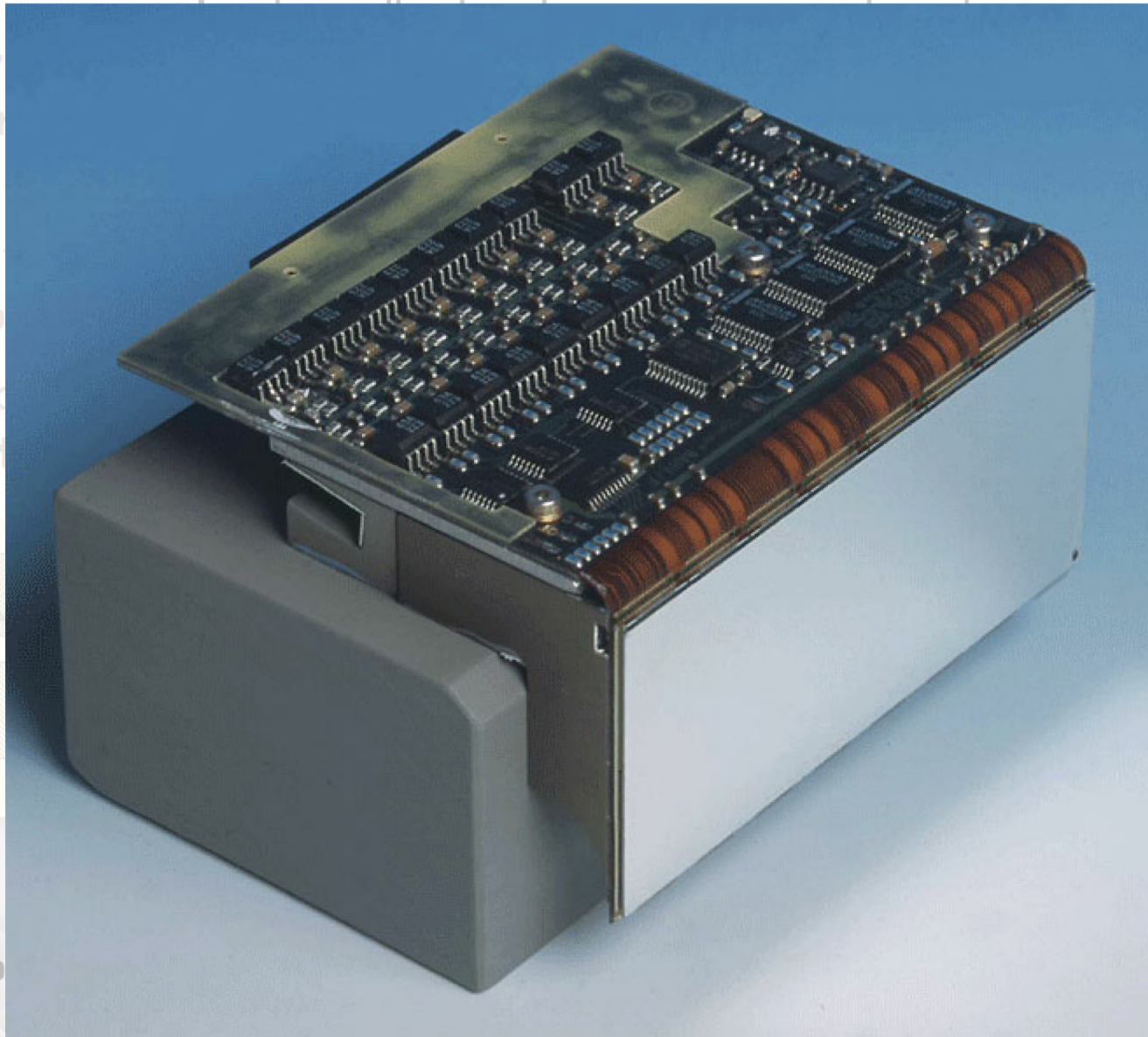
Energy

X-rays on Detector

*Pilatus System: A hybrid of "sensor + electronics"*

- "The dev
- CMS (Com
- (LHC) at
- Hybrid:
- reading o
- Composed
- and count

ector for the  
adron Collider  
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nd electronics,  
er, comparator



Bonding Pad



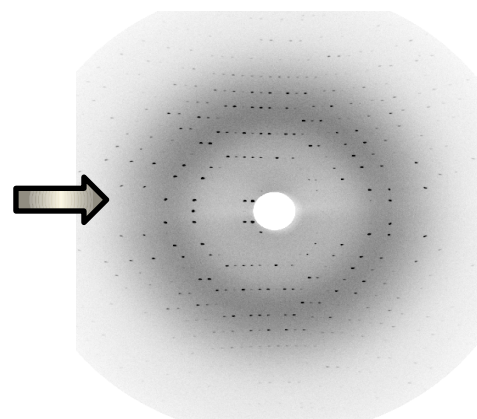
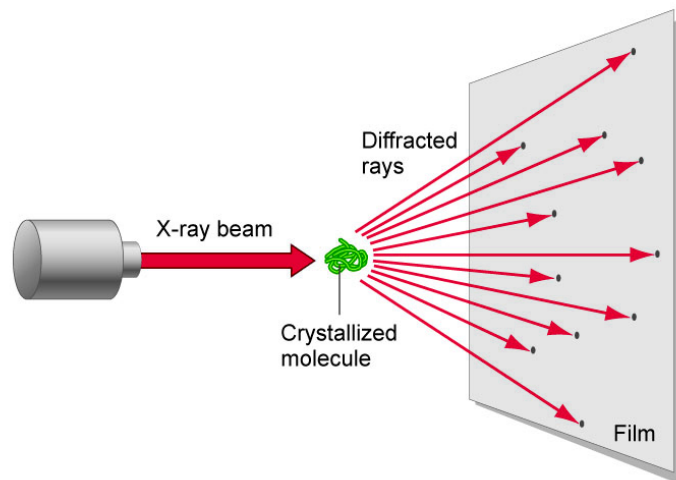
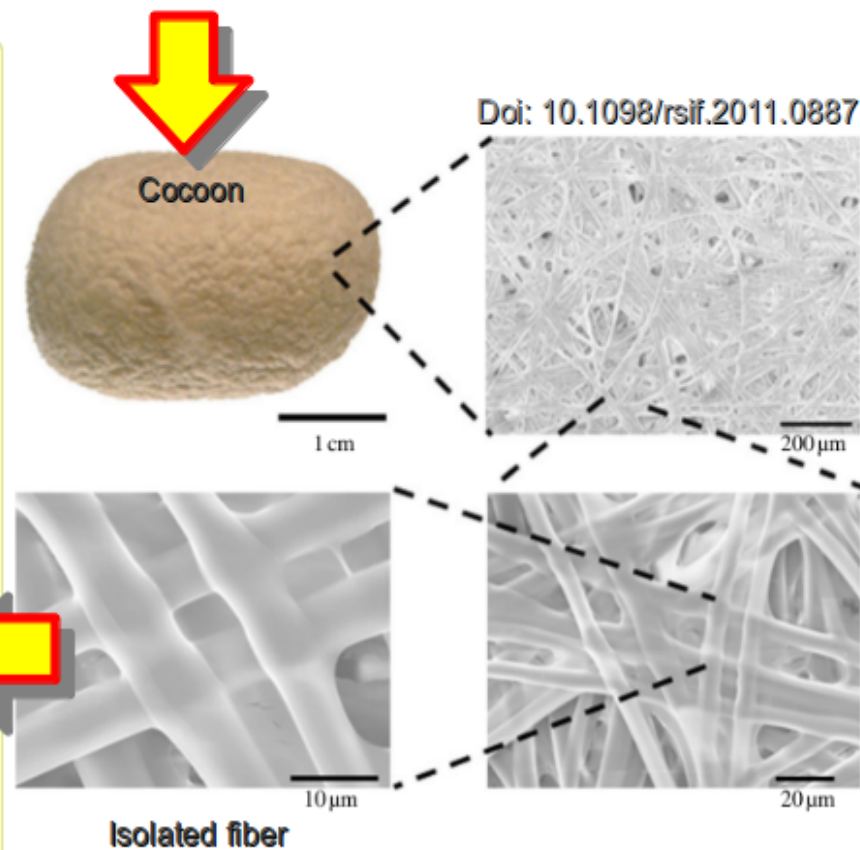
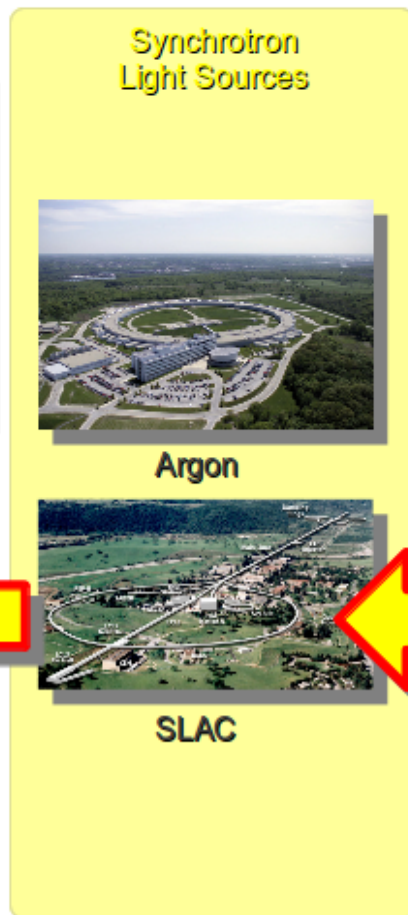
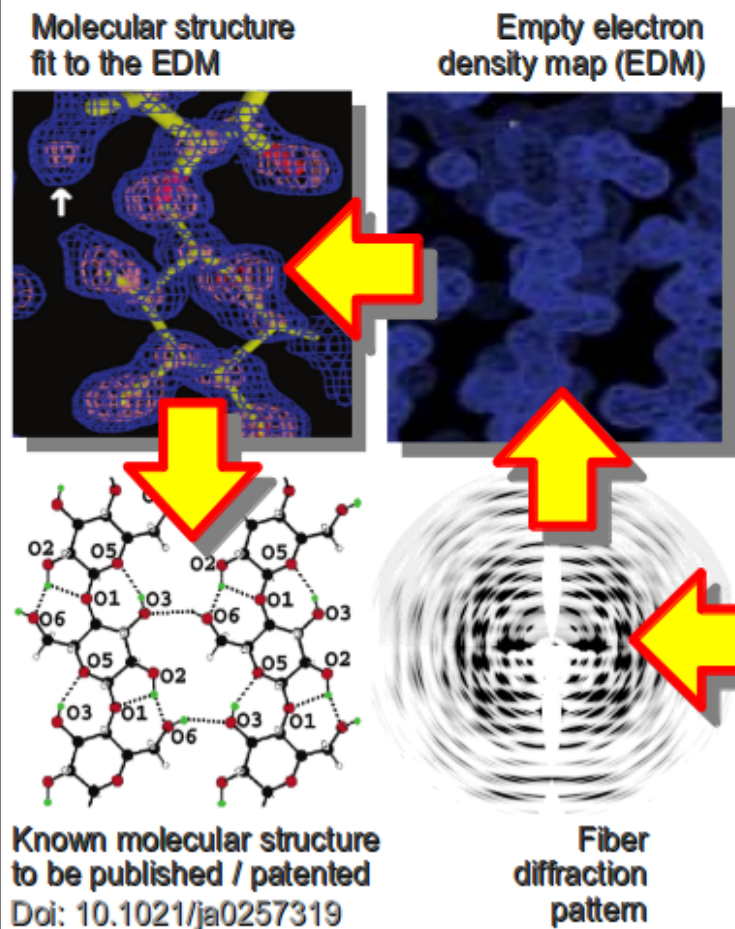
Co

20kV 100x 100µm 0264 02-28-2011

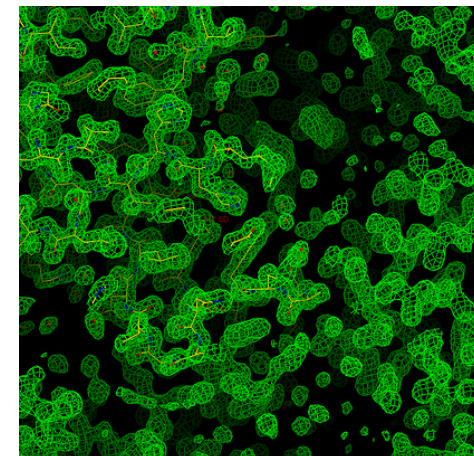
Bump bonding

3D integration

Counter



Diffraction pattern

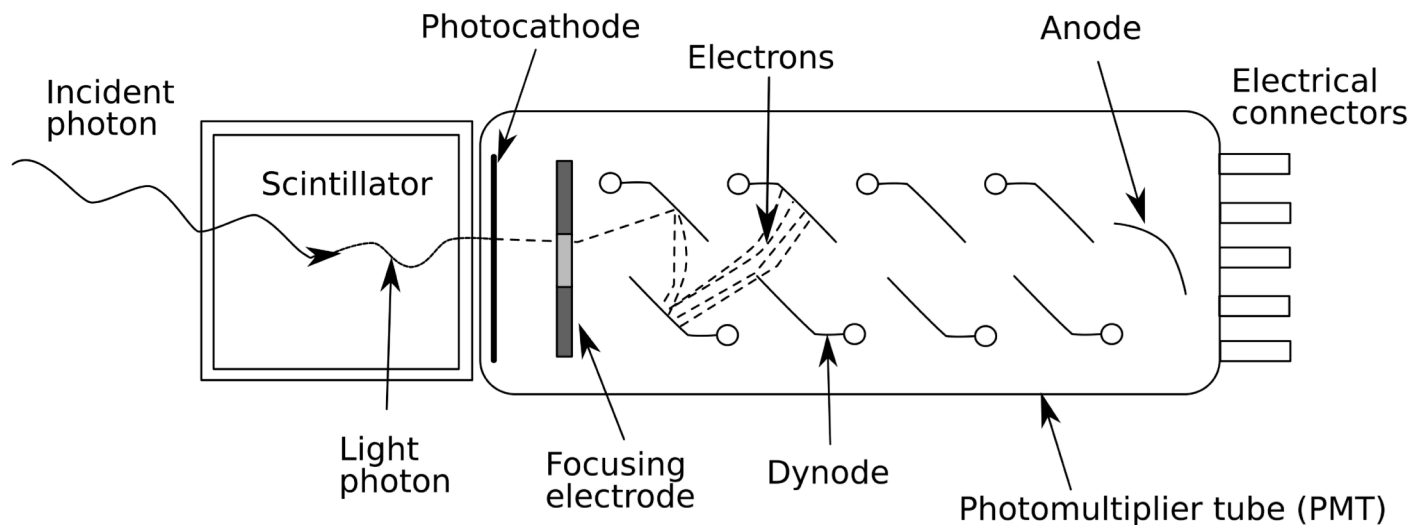
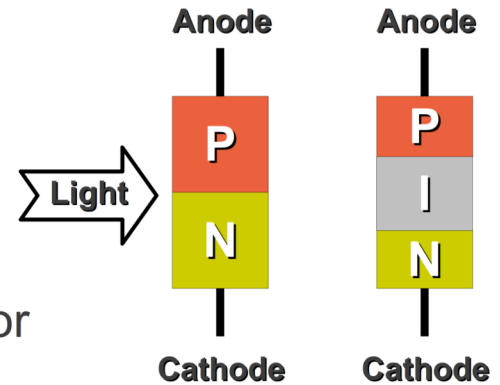


Electron density map

# Crowd vs Counted Individuals

First interaction with the photons (and/or particles)

- Impossible to cover all
  - There are **many types** and even **many more examples** of particle detectors
- Therefore limited
  - Just a few types and examples **should be enough**, given the limited **time**
- “Seeing” the photons → **photodetector != photon counter**
  - **Photo-detectors**: generate an **analog level** (i.e. **I** or **V**) as a **function** of “light” **intensity** (e.g. **PN** and **PIN** structures)
  - **Photon counters**: **count** individual bursts of **photon bundles** or **single photons** (e.g. **PMTs** and **avalanche diodes**)



# Crowd vs Counted Individuals

First interaction with the photons (and/or particles)

→ **Photo-detectors**: generate an **analog level** (i.e.  $I$  or  $V$ ) as a **function** of “light” **intensity** (e.g. **PN** and **PIN** structures)

→ **Two modes** of operation:

◆ **Photo-voltaic** mode

→ Depleted region is **exposed to light** and **voltage** is measured, with **no bias**

◆ **Photo-conductive** mode

→ **Exposed light** generates a **current** flow, under **reverse-bias**

→ Some important features:

→ Responsivity ( $I/P_{\text{optic}}$ )

→ Active **area**

→ Max **photo current** (limited by saturation)

→ **Dark current** (in photoconductive mode)

→ **Bandwidth** (rise, fall times)

→ ...

→ ...

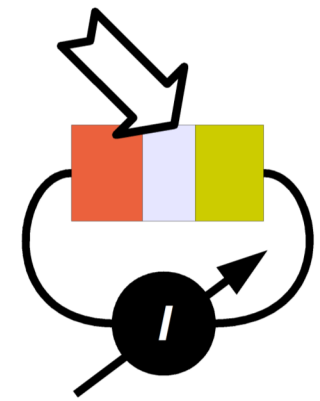


Photo-voltaic mode

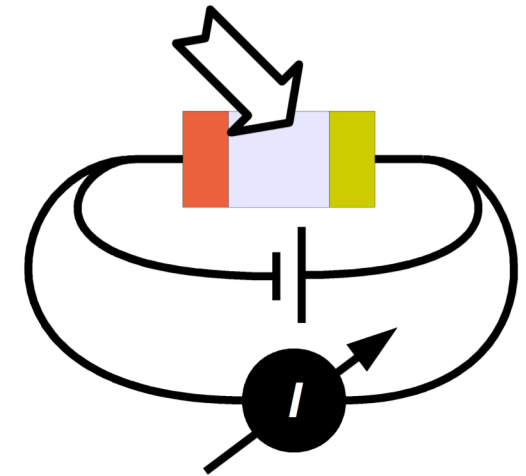
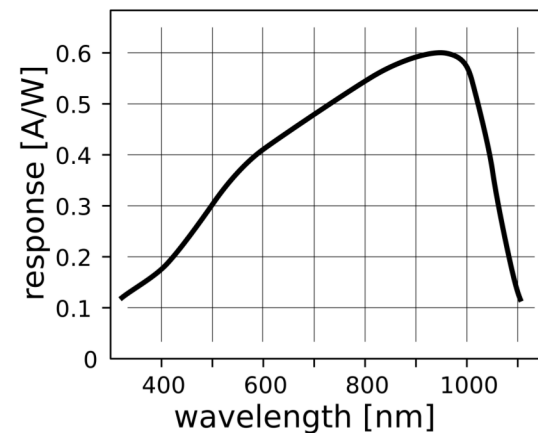


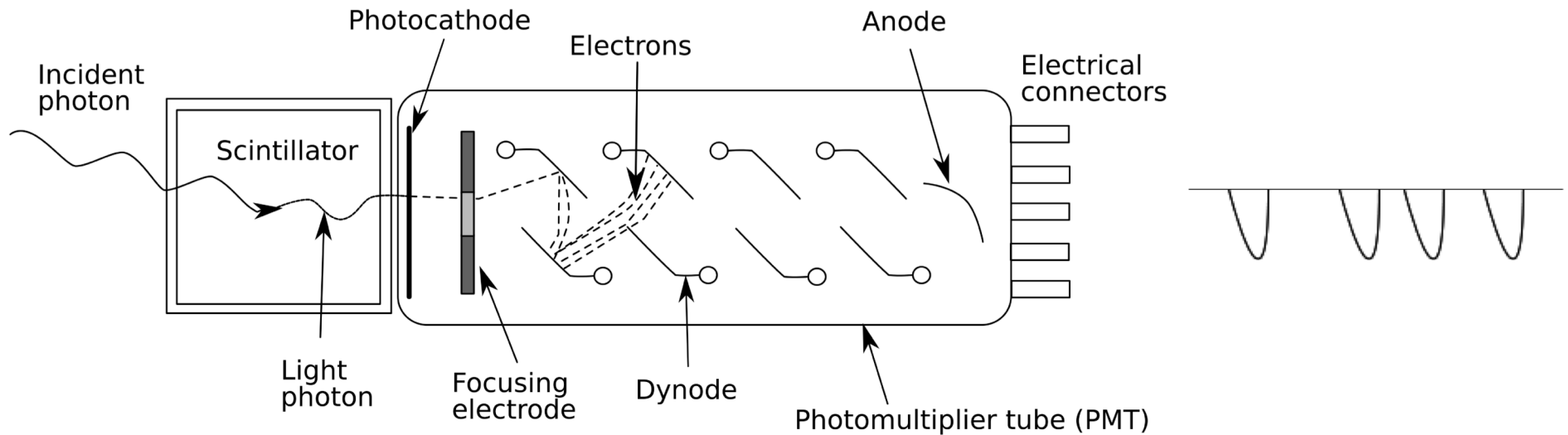
Photo-conductive mode



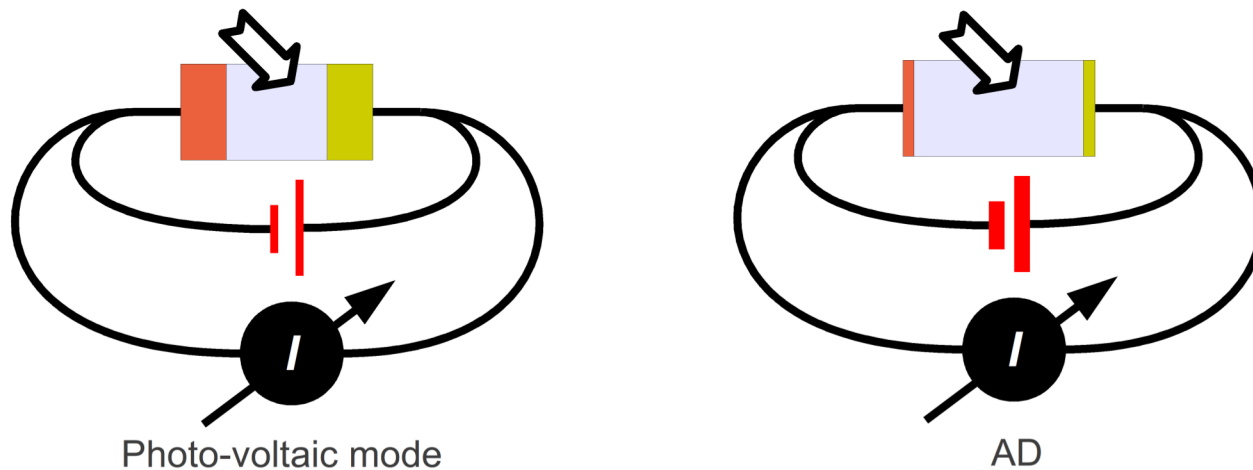
# Growed vs Counted Individuals

First interaction with the photons (and/or particles)

- **Photon counters**: count individual bursts of **photon bundles** or **single photons** (e.g. **PMTs** and **avalanche diodes or SPADs**)
- **Photomultipliers**: if photons arrive at the detector with **low-enough frequency**



- **Single Photon Avalanche Diodes (AD)**: PN junctions under strong reverse-bias



# Growed vs Counted Individuals

First interaction with the photons (and/or particles)

→ **Photon counters**: count individual bursts of **photon bundles** or **single photons** (e.g. **PMTs** and **avalanche diodes or SPADs**)

→ **Avalanche Diodes (AD)** are PN junctions **reverse-biassed** just **below** the break-down voltage such that single-photon induced electrons are accelerated within a few  $\mu\text{ms}$

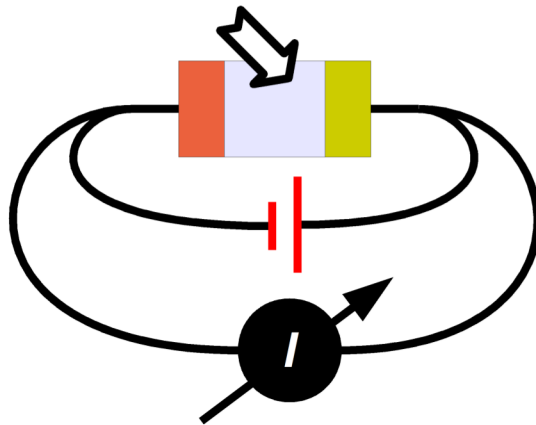
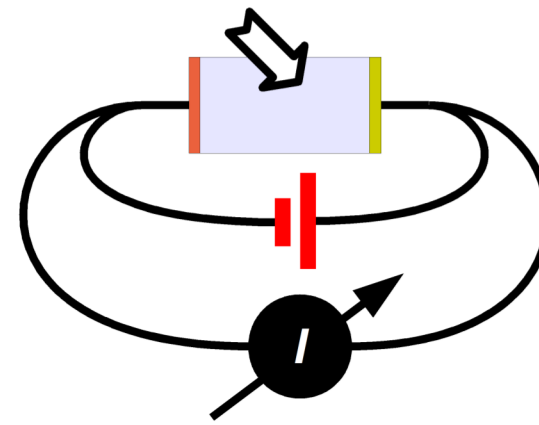


Photo-voltaic mode



AD

→ **Single-Photon Avalanche Diodes (SPAD)** are PN junctions **reverse-biassed** just **above** the break-down voltage. When a photon strikes, bias voltage is dropped down **below the threshold** (but not to break-down) for a short time (e.g. 100 ns) by carefully designed electronics to recover, such that the detector is ready for the next detection

→ **SPADs** can also be used for **time-resolved** techniques as they can provide information on photons **time of arrival** in addition

# Position Sensitive Architecture

First interaction with the photons (and/or particles)

- Detect particles with the sensitivity of **where** they land; two main **paradigms**:

➔ **Resistive charge division** on a single detection element:

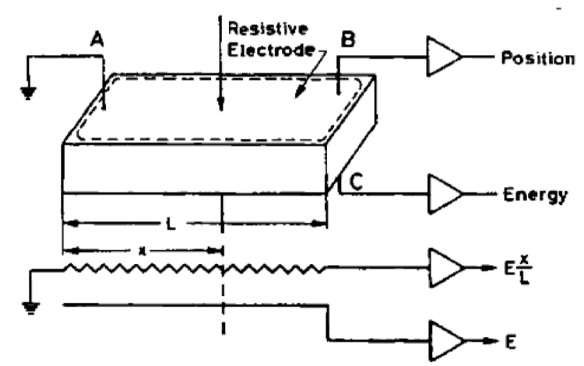
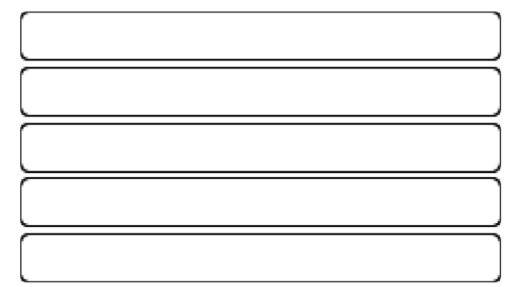


Fig. 10.14. Layout of a one-dimensional continuous position-sensitive detector using resistive charge division. A simplified equivalent circuit is shown below

\* From Leo, p. 227

$$Position = \frac{B}{C}$$



A hybrid: Discrete array of resistive charge division

➔ **Discrete array** of individual detection elements:

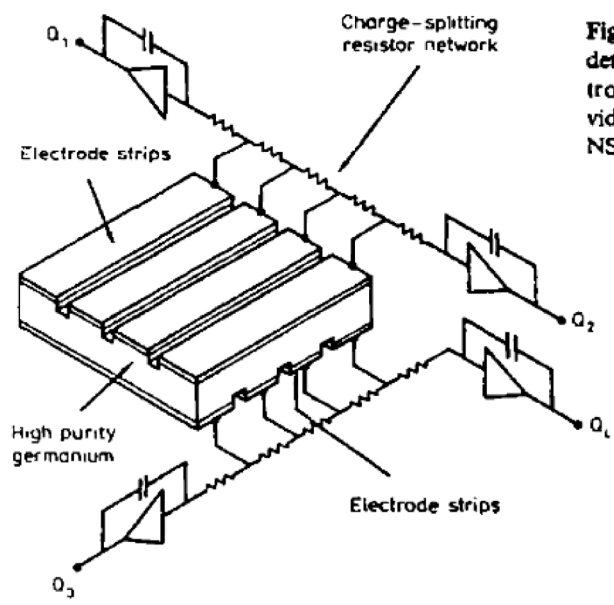
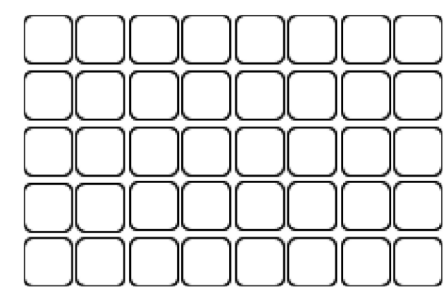
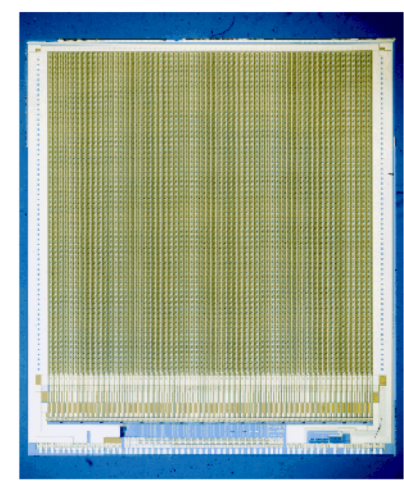


Fig. 10.15. Layout of a two-dimensional matrix detector. To reduce the readout electronics, the electrodes may be connected to an external resistive divider [from Gerber et al.: IEEE Trans. Nucl. Sci. NS-24, No. 1, 182 (1977)]

\* From Leo, p. 229



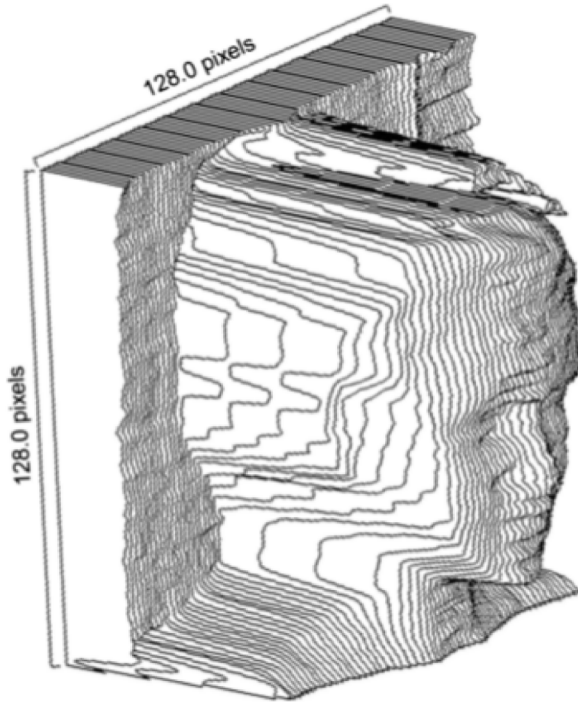
Pixel detector



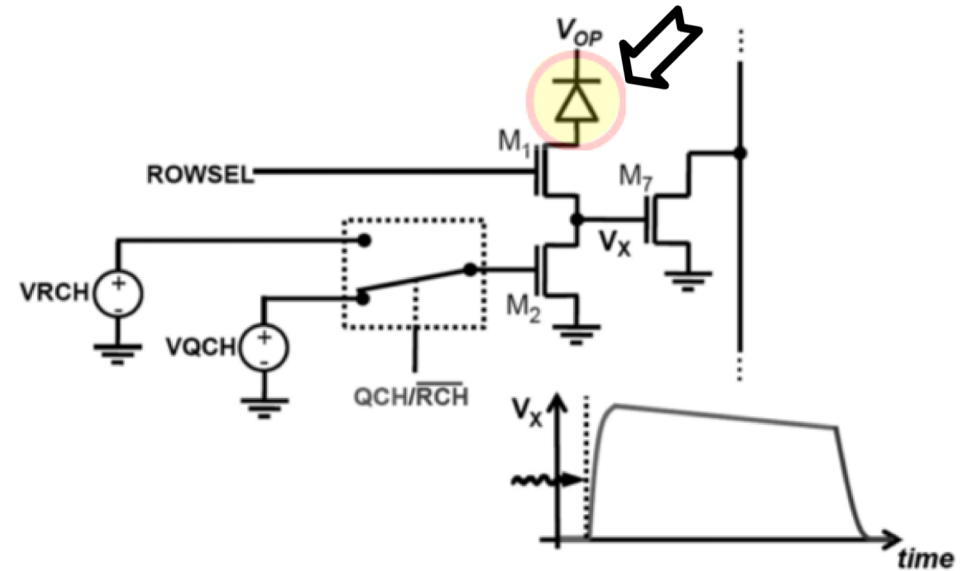
MEDIPIX

# Time Resolved Architecture

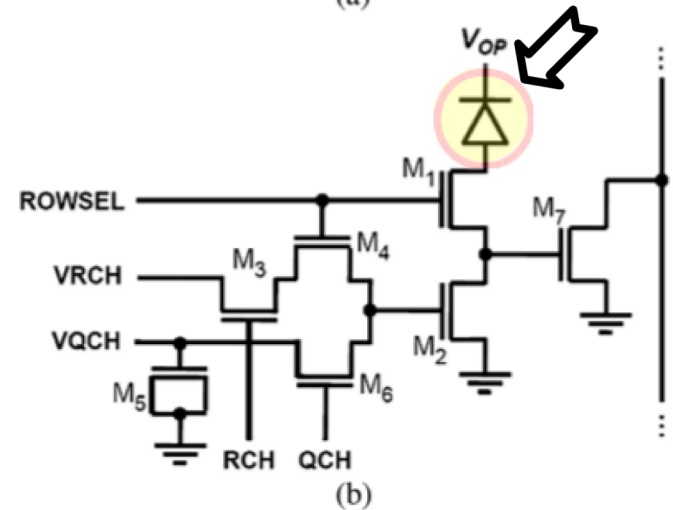
Flash the sample, start a timer, acquire single photons and their arrival times



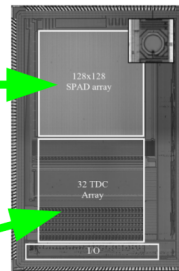
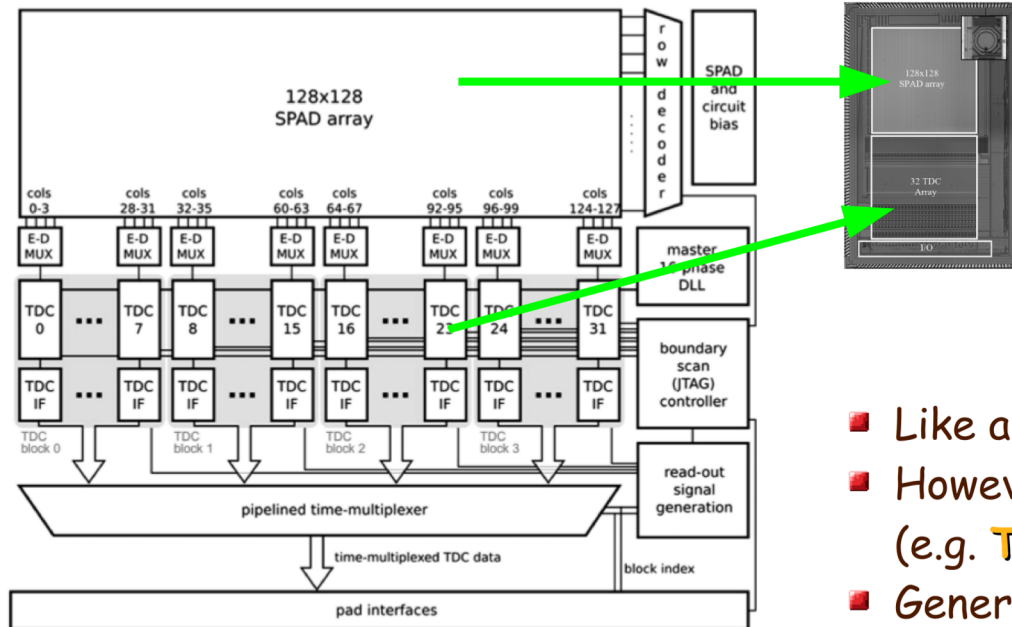
A 128 128 Single-Photon Image Sensor, With Column-Level 10-Bit Time-to-Digital Converter Array, IEEE JOURNAL OF SOLID-STATE CIRCUITS, VOL. 43, NO. 12, DECEMBER 2008



(a)



(b)



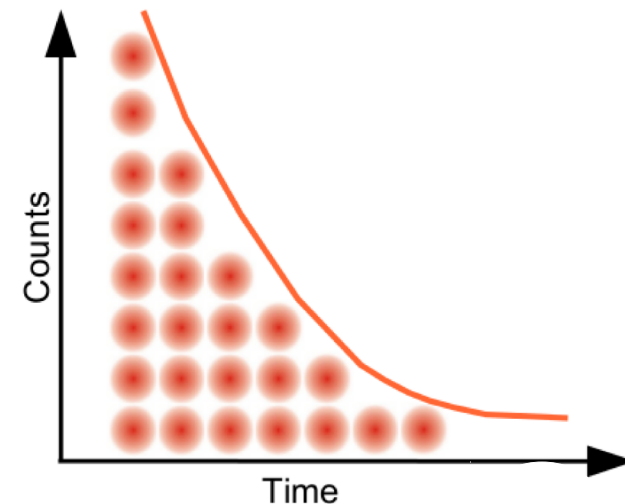
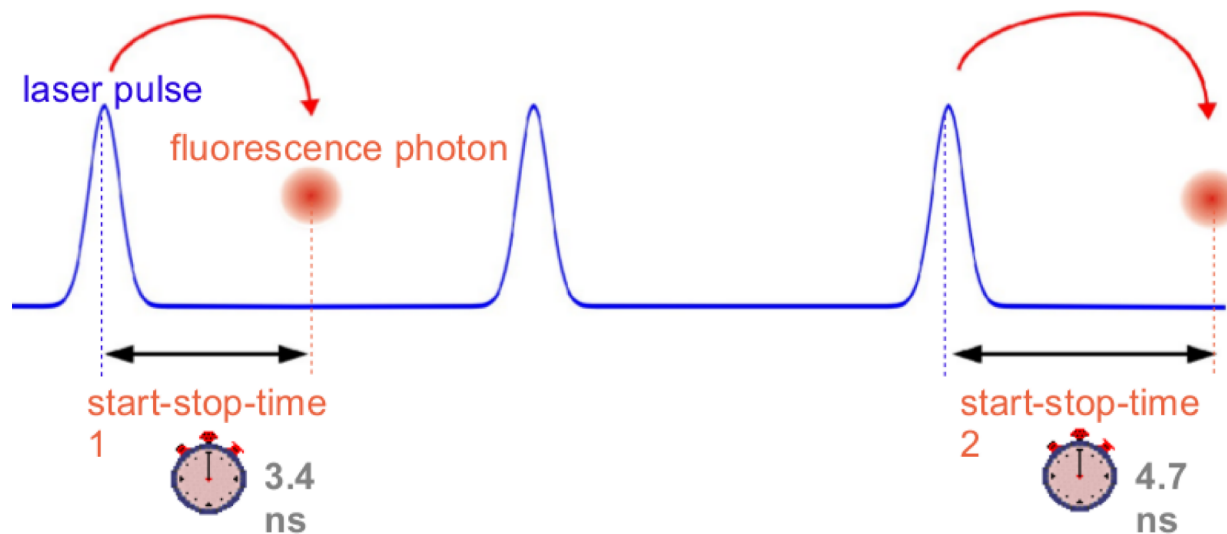
- Like an ordinary pixel detector (e.g. **CCD**)
- However measures "time" instead of "color" (e.g. **TPC**)
- Generates **3D** and **color-less** images



# Time Correlated Architecture

First interaction with the photons (and/or particles)

- Measuring the profile of a **fast** (e.g. fluorescence, from ps to ns) and/or **weak** decay is tricky
- Recovering not only the **lifetimes** but also the **decay shape** requires the decay to be represented by at least 10s of samples
- The idea:
  - Meet the single photon counting **condition**(?)
    - Make your detector **fast**
    - Decrease the number of **photon creation** at the source
  - **Excite** the system to be probed (e.g. via a laser)
  - **Count** photons **per** reference excitation
  - Fill a **histogram** to visualize **decay profile**



# Introduction to the Design of Full-Custom Front-End & Data Transmission ASICs\*

## Table of Contents

### ■ The Big (but Brief) Picture

- Briefly **front-end** - FE
- Briefly **read-out** - RO
- Briefly **serializer** - SER
- Briefly **phase-lock loop** - PLL



### ■ Detector Front-End ASICs

- **Pre-Amp**: basic idea –  $V_{OUT} / V_{IN}$
- **Transconductance** of a transistor -  $g_m$
- Evolving a **single-stage amplifier** into a real-world application


### ■ Feed-Back Concept

- A **qualitative** introduction
- **Natural frequency** concept -  $\omega_n$
- Real-world examples:
  - **Binary** read-out
  - **Time-over threshold**
- Adjusting/optimizing loop behavior
  - Damping ratio

### ■ Processing Technology

- **Transistor** switch – A masterpiece
  - **Lithography**
  - Formation of an **nMOS** transistor
- VLSI design flow
  - Parasitic **extraction**
- Real-world ASIC examples

### ■ Reminder on Detectors

- Photodetectors **vs** photon counters
- **Position-sensitive** detectors 
  - Resistive charge division
  - Discrete array of elements
- **Time-resolved** detection

### ■ Radiation Tolerance Issues

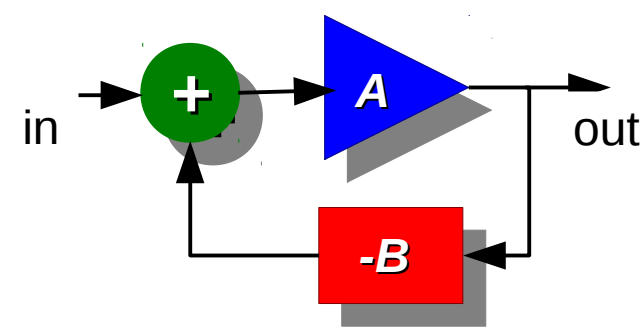
- Definitions:
  - **Single event upset, analog single event transient, latch-up**
- **Simulating** radiation effects on analog circuits

\* Application Specific Integrated Circuit

# Pre-Amplifier

The first stage of the *interpretation*

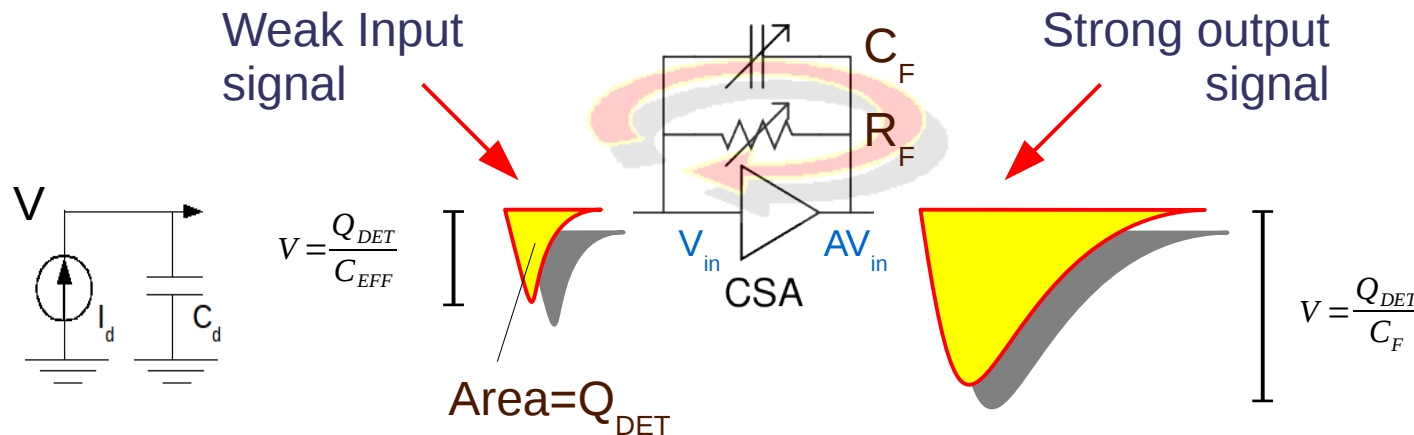
- Standardized experimental techniques **over time**
- Our discussion on **intuitive** & **descriptive** level
- Three types of pre-amplifiers:



$$T = \frac{V_{OUT}}{V_{IN}} = \frac{A}{1 + AB}$$

**sage:**  $T(A, B) = A/(1+A*B)$   
**sage:**  $T.limit(A=infinity)$   
 $(A, B) | \rightarrow 1/B$

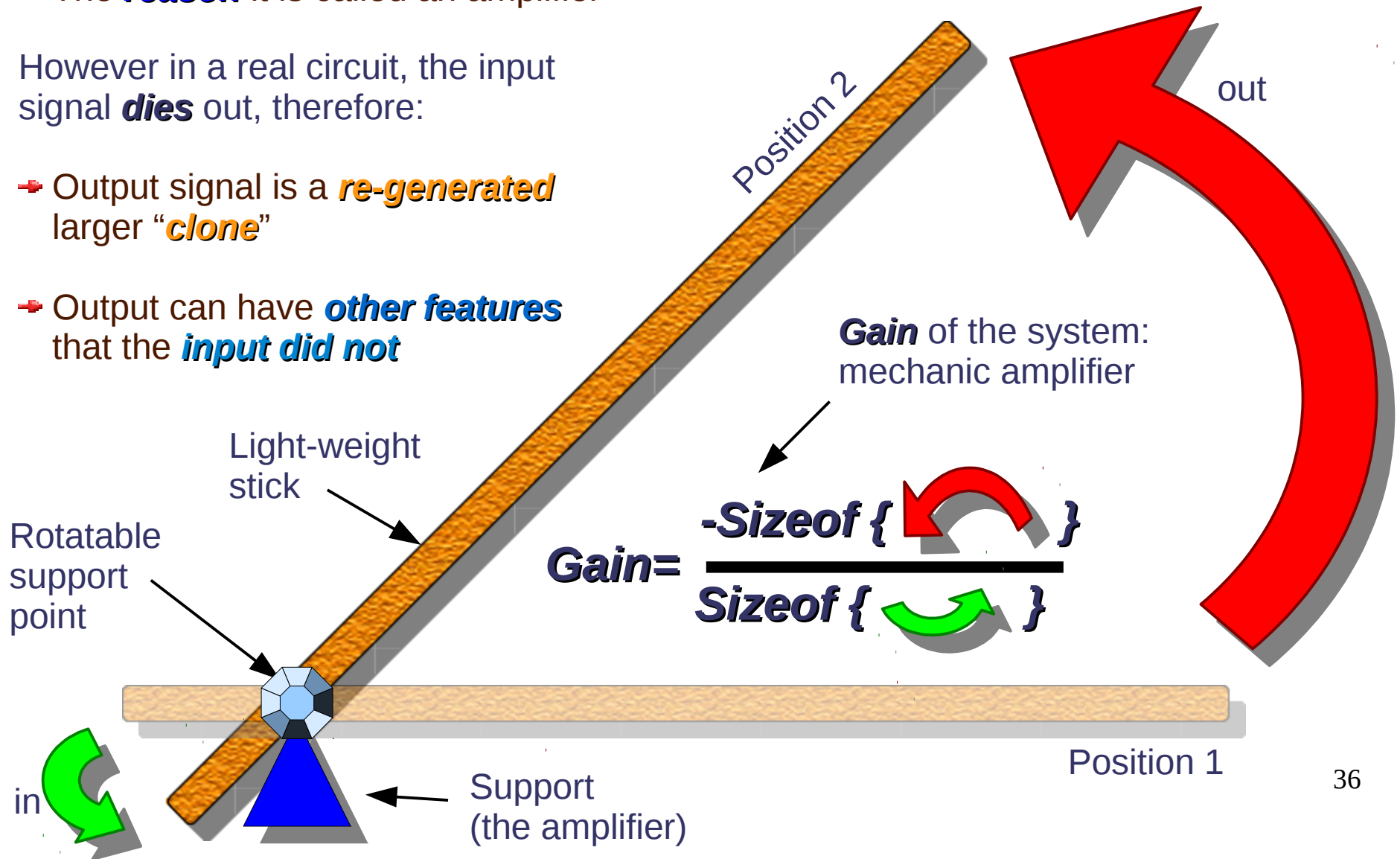
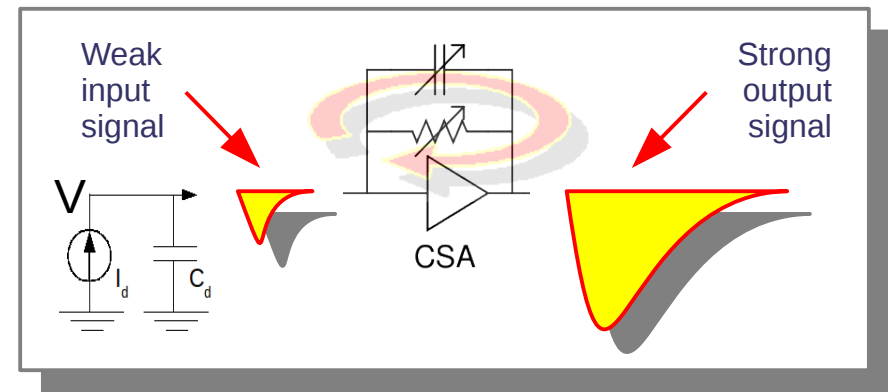
- ➔ **Voltage sensitive:** usually **not preferred** due to the fact that, for a given amount of charge generated by the detector ( $Q_{DET}$ ), the **output voltage** of the detector ( $V$ ) is a **function** of the **effective capacitance** ( $C_{EFF}$ ) of the detector which is **variable**
- ➔ **Current sensitive:** **not preferred** because they are **suitable** to be used with **low impedance** devices, **however** radiation **detectors** have usually **high impedance**
- ➔ **Charge sensitive:** **preferred** type because its output is **only** a function of the charge ( $Q_{DET}$ ) and a fixed  $C_F$ , provided that amplifier **gain** is sufficiently **high**



# Amplifier Basic

How to amplify something

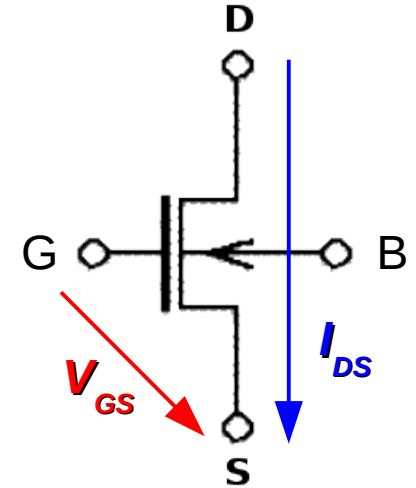
- We want a **small change** in the input to **cause** a **big change** at the output
  - ➔ The **reason** it is called an amplifier
- However in a real circuit, the input signal **dies** out, therefore:
  - ➔ Output signal is a **re-generated** larger "**clone**"
  - ➔ Output can have **other features** that the **input did not**



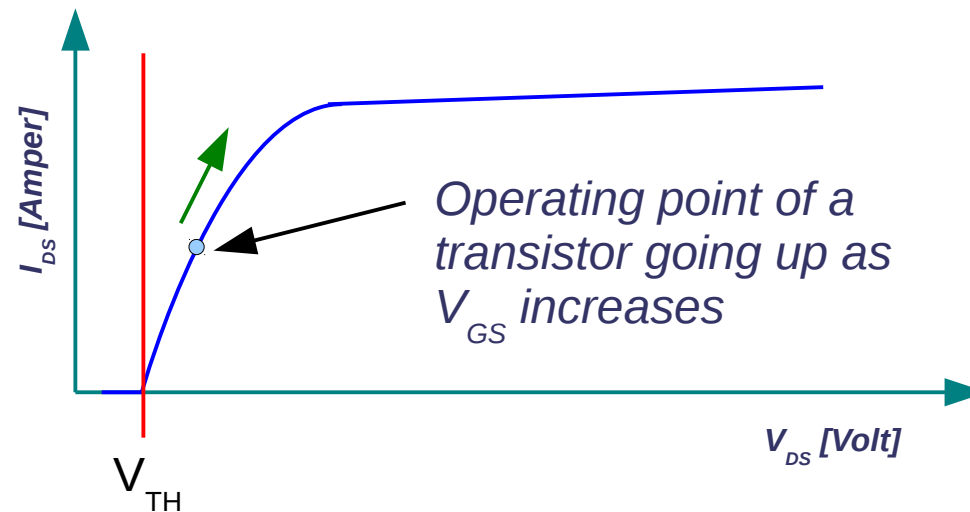
# Transconductance - $g_m$

Figure-of-merit for a transistor

- Define a figure-of-merit (**FOM**) for a single nMOS
  - How well a transistor **converts** voltage into current
  - From input  $V_{GS}$  to output  $I_{DS}$



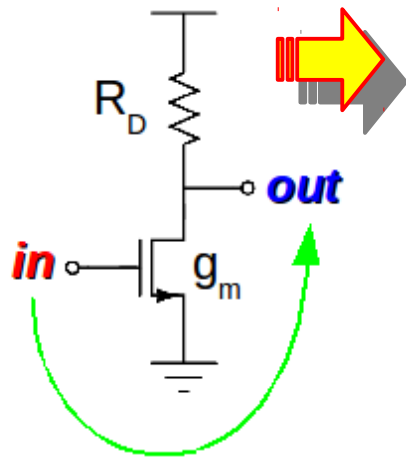
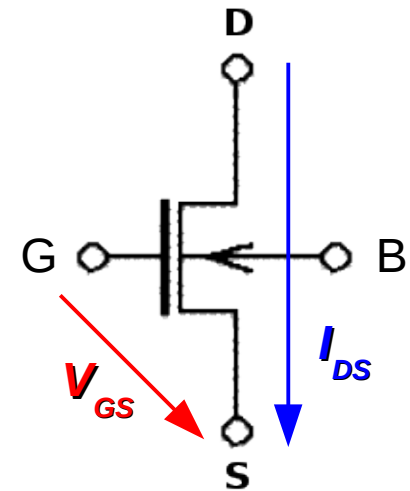
$$g_m = \frac{dI_{DS}}{dV_{GS}} = \frac{2I_D}{V_{GS} - V_{TH}}$$



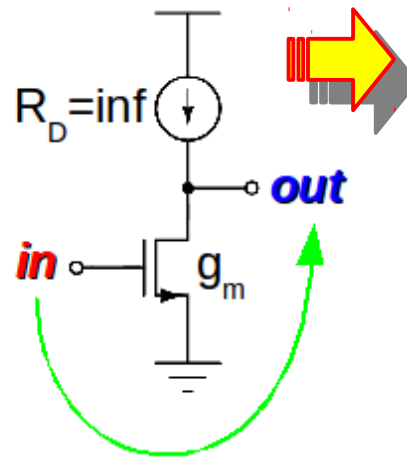
# Basic CMOS Amplifier

Single-stage **common-source** amplifier and its evolution into a complete circuit

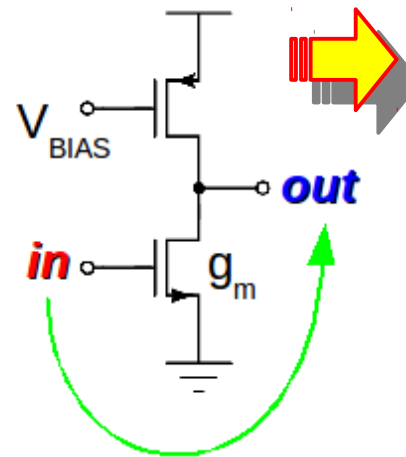
- Sink current through  $R_D$ 
  - ➔ As **in** increases, **out** decreases (faster)
- $-g_m R_D$  suggests that we should increase the **load impedance** to have **higher voltage gain**
  - ➔ An **ideal** current source has **infinite impedance**
- A **current mirror** is a practical **current source**
  - ➔ Simply a transistor biased as a current source
- Transconductance ( $g_m$ ) **increases** with current
  - ➔ Supply **additional current** to the gain device to have higher gain



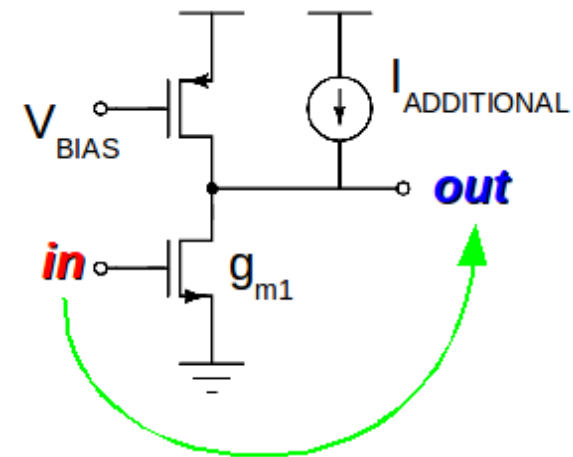
$A_V = -g_m R_D$   
Common-source amplifier



$A_V = -g_m r_o$   
Common-source amplifier



$A_V = -g_m (r_{o1} || r_{o2})$   
Common-source amplifier

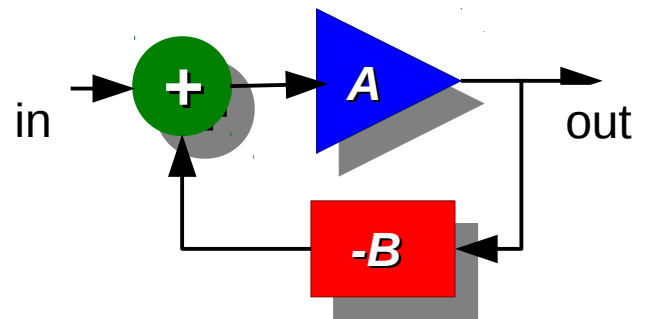


$A_V > -g_m (r_{o1} || r_{o2})$   
Common-source amplifier with current source load featuring higher gain due to increased current

# Basic CMOS Amplifier

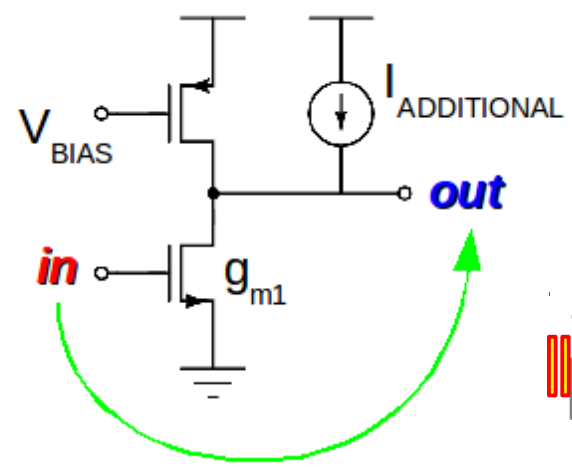
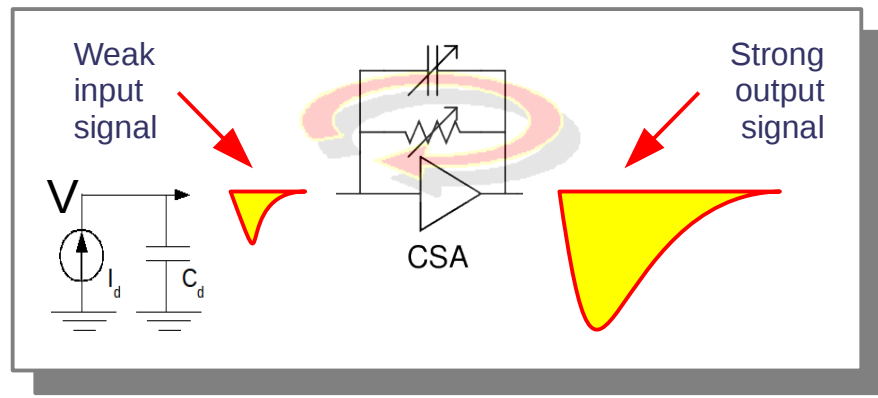
Single-stage common-source amplifier and its evolution into a complete circuit

- Add the feedback network  $C_F$  &  $R_F$  forming the  $B$  such that
  - ➔ For high enough  $A_V$ , closed loop gain is  $1/B$



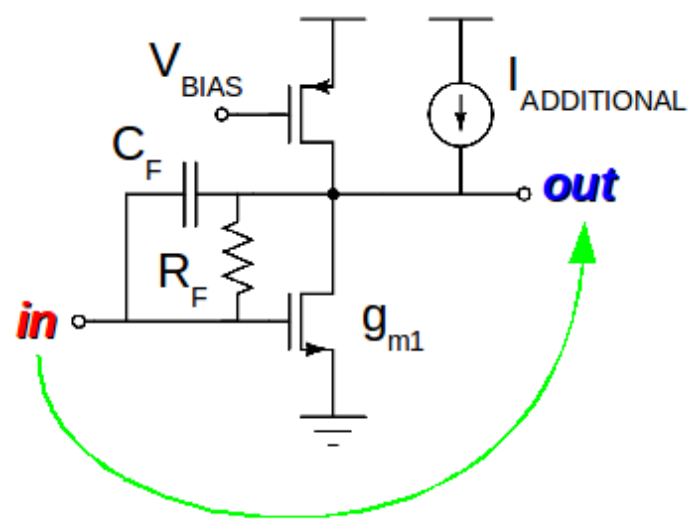
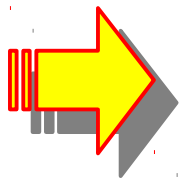
$$T = \frac{V_{OUT}}{V_{IN}} = \frac{A}{1+AB}$$

**sage:**  $T(A, B) = A/(1+A*B)$   
**sage:**  $T.limit(A=infinity)$   
 $(A, B) | \rightarrow 1/B$



$$A_V > -g_m(r_{o1} || r_{o2})$$

Common-source amplifier with current source load featuring higher gain due to increased current

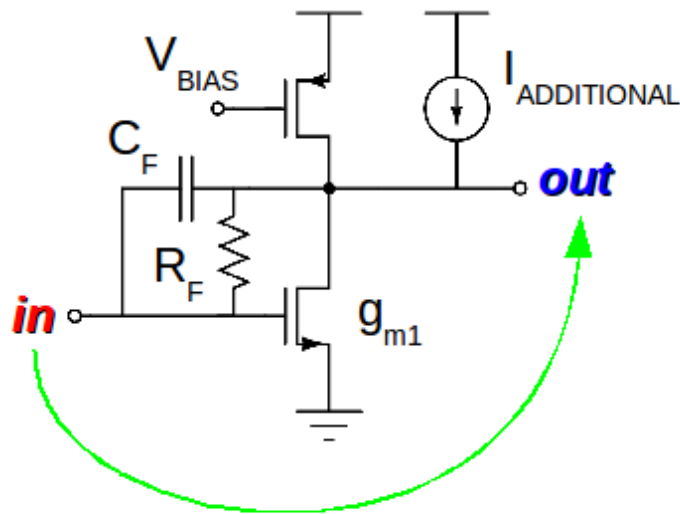
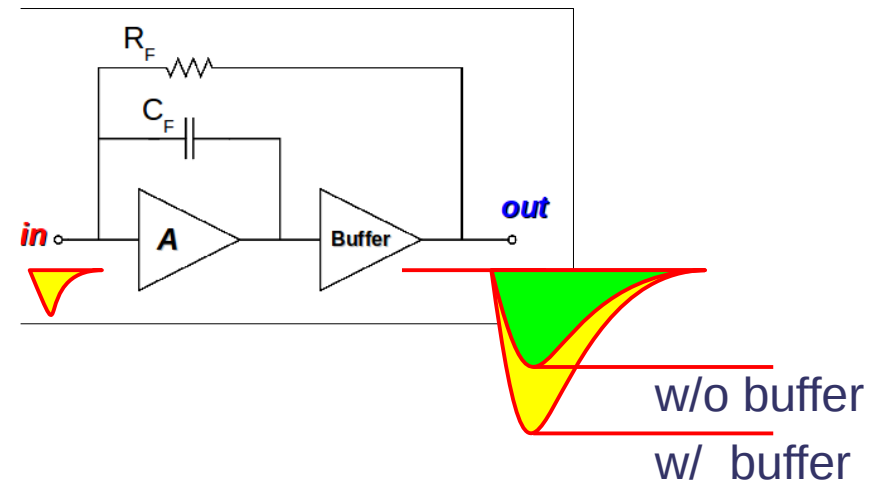


Full circuit with feedback network

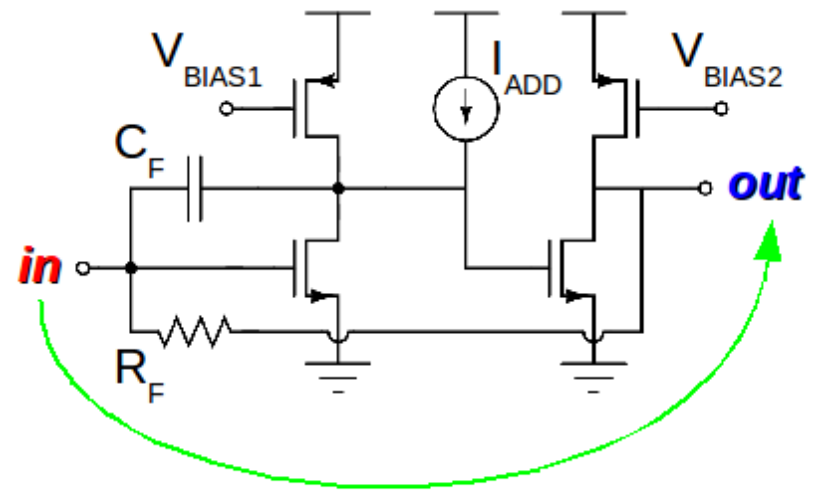
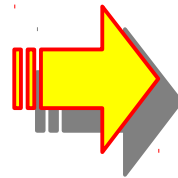
# Basic CMOS Amplifier

Avoid loading effect of the resetting resistor

- Problem: while  $C_F$  is charged,  $R_F$  resets **at the same time**
  - ➔ **Lowering** the voltage gain, therefore:
  - ➔ **Loading effect** of the feedback **resistor** should be **avoided**
  - ➔ **Integration** and **resetting** should be **de-coupled**
  - ➔ Employing a **buffer** is one of the possible solutions



Full circuit with feedback network



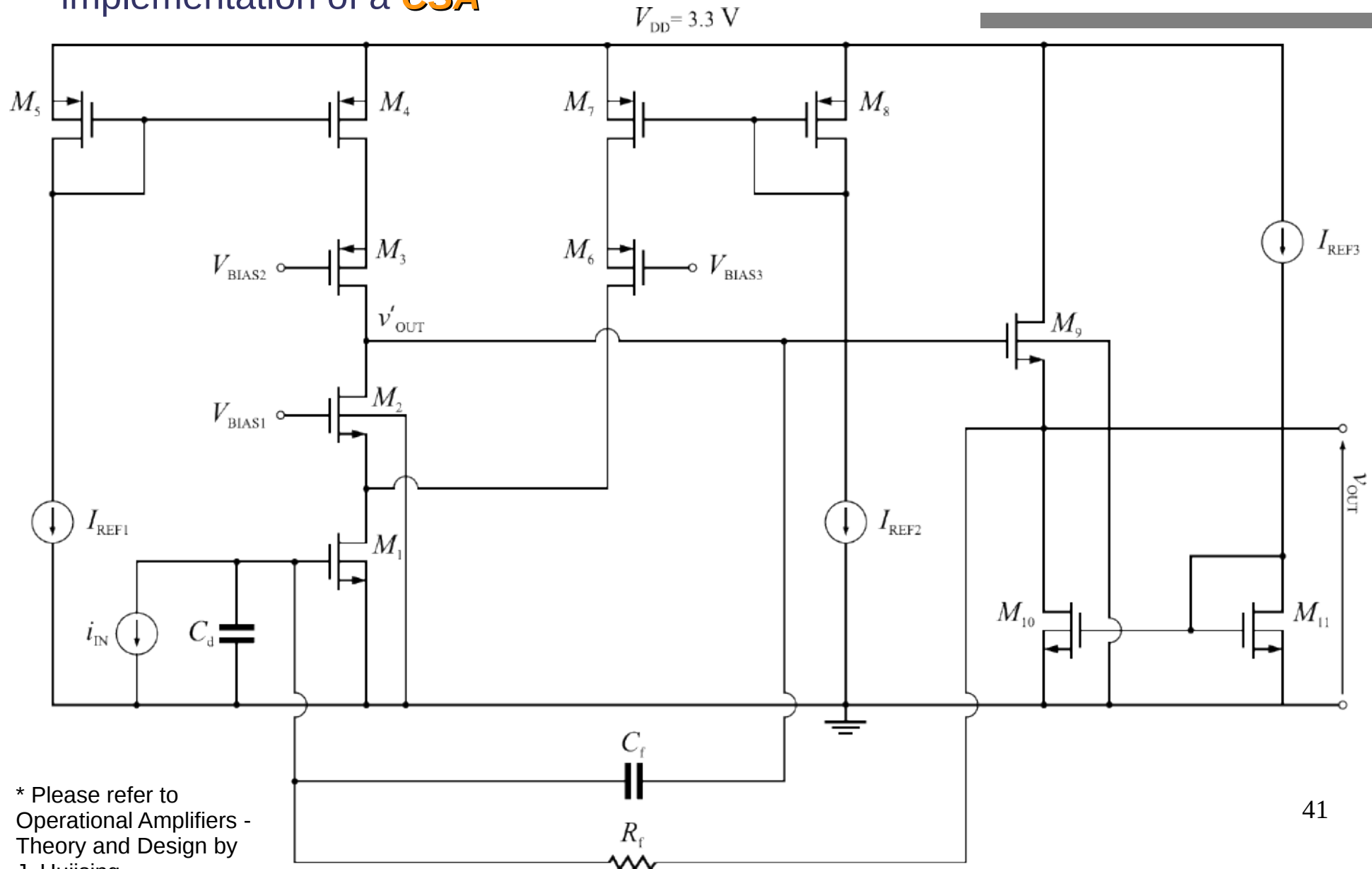
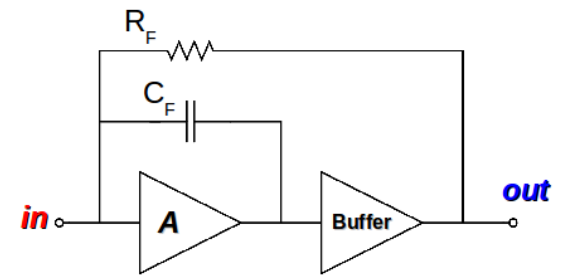
Full circuit avoiding resistor loading effect



# Pre-Amplifier

Full circuit (currently in use at a RICH detector)

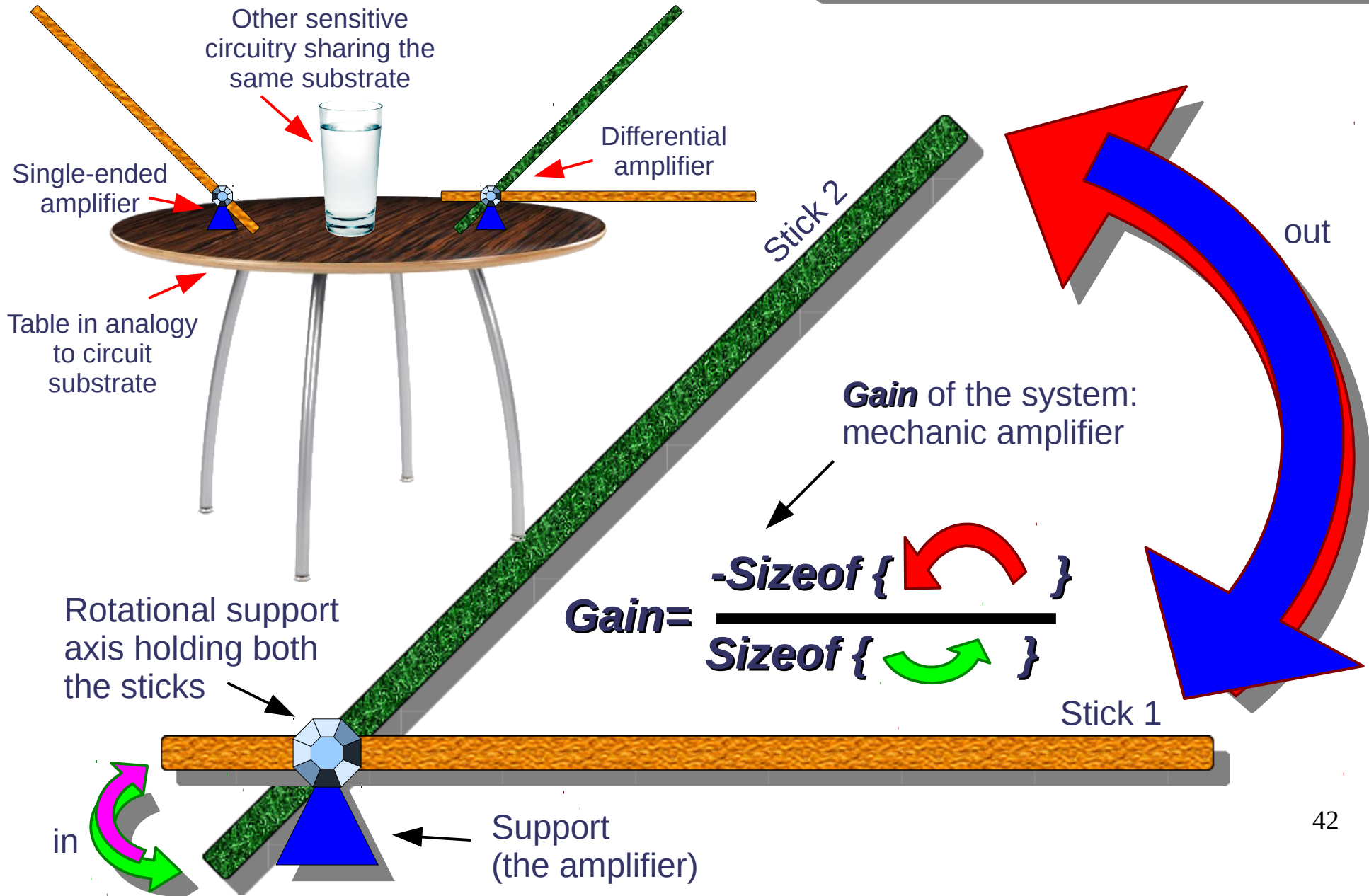
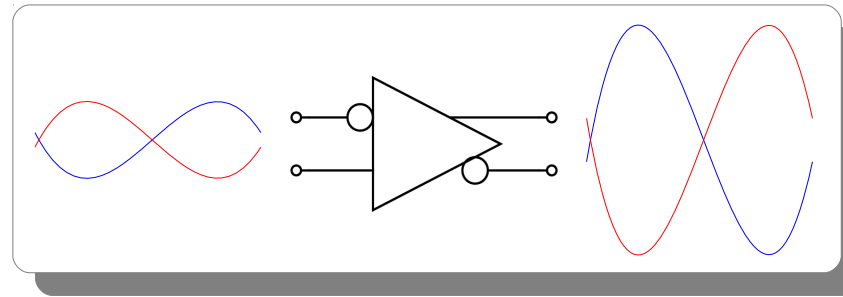
- Actual CMOS device-level implementation of a **CSA**



\* Please refer to  
Operational Amplifiers -  
Theory and Design by  
J. Huijsing

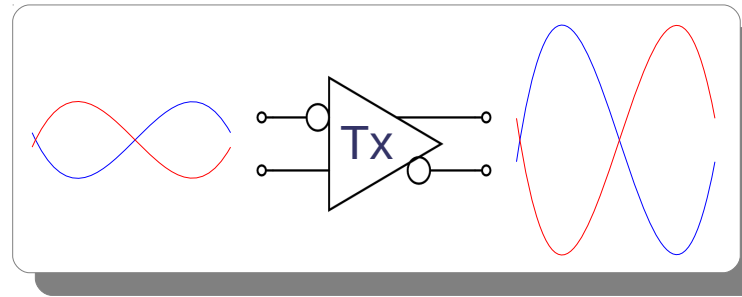
# Differential Amplifier

Generating *less noise* (also for others) in the cost of more *complex design*

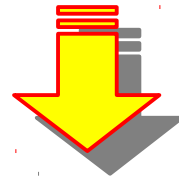


# Differential Signaling

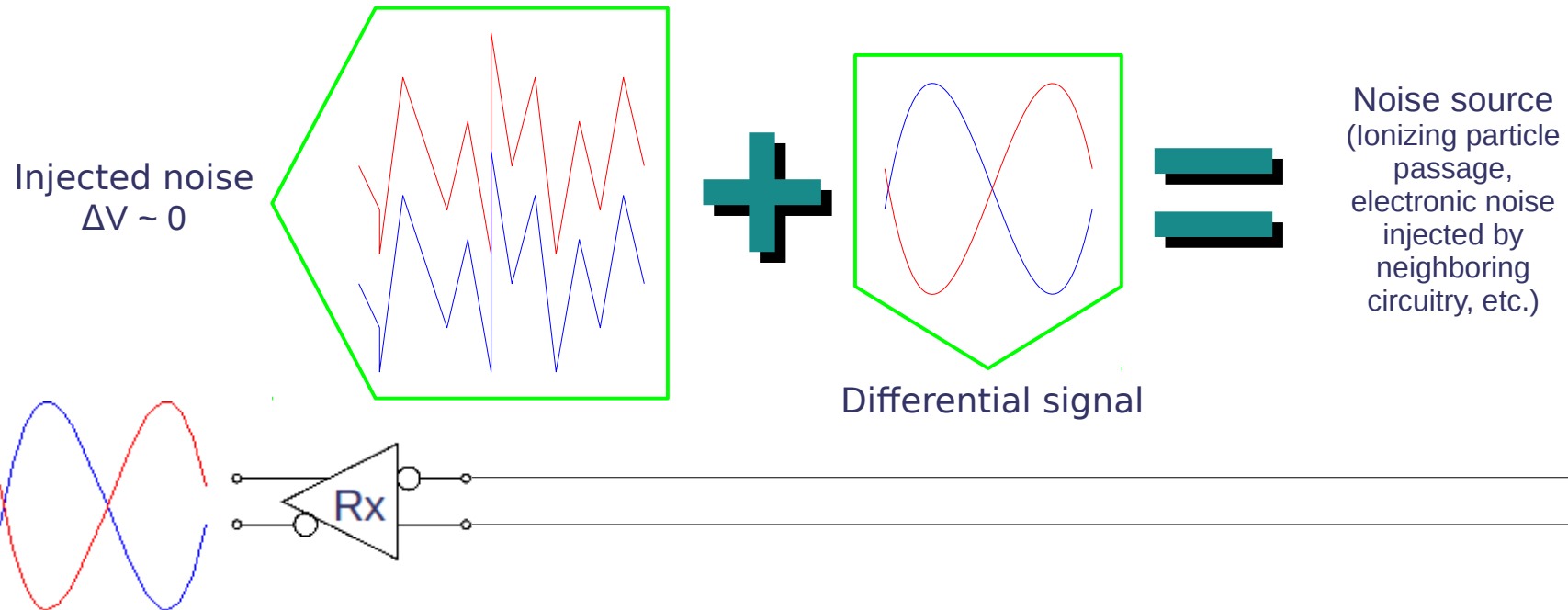
## Rejecting noise



- The **information** Tx generates is in the **difference**
  - ➔ Signal creates **complementary current images** on the substrate
  - ➔ Generating **less noise** for neighboring circuitry
- Rx **compares** the voltage levels of the pair
- Any noise source should affect both of the lines similarly
  - ➔ Generating almost **identical transients** on both of the wires
  - ➔ Pair wires are **close** to each other
- Practically high **noise rejection** is feasible

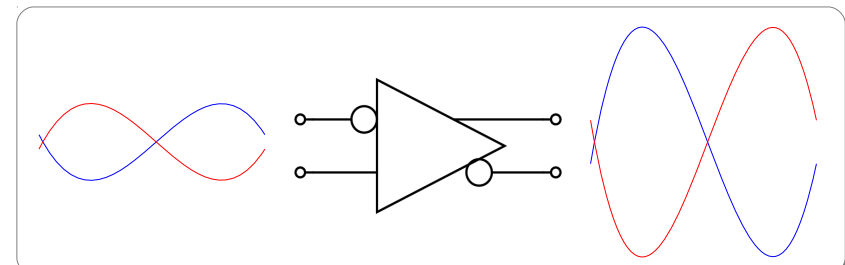


Metal wires

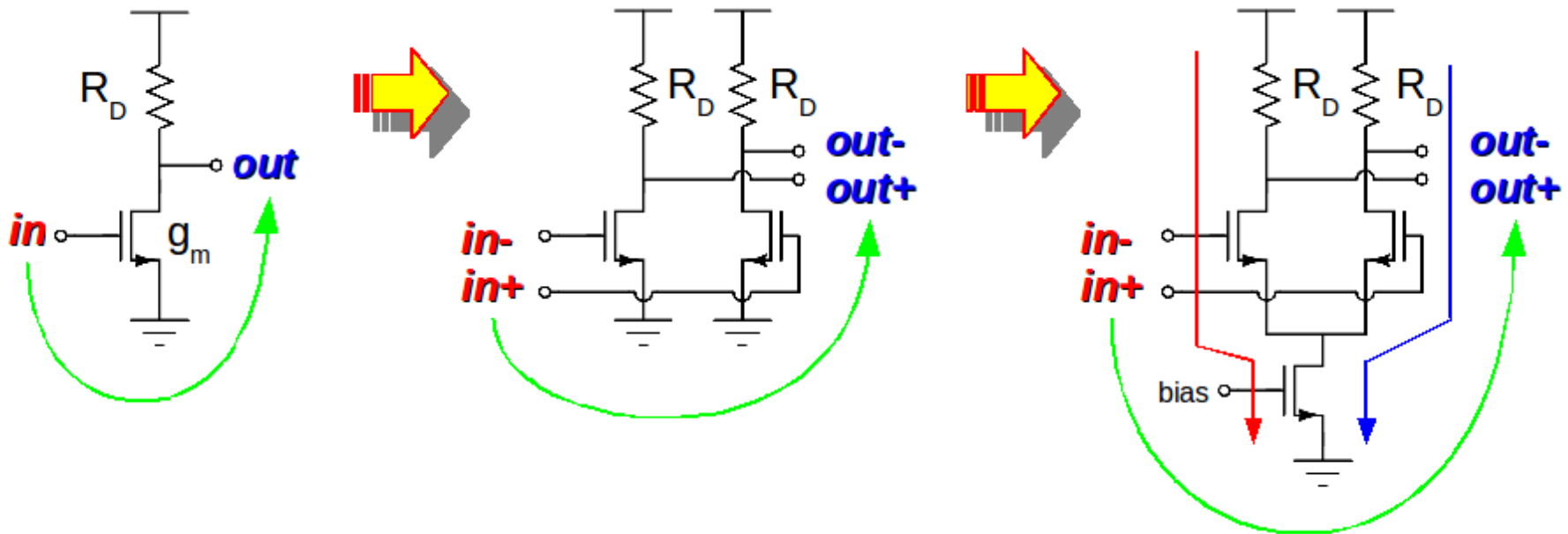


# Differential Signaling

## Differential gain stage



- Sink current through  $R_D$ 
  - ➔ As **in** increases, **out** decreases (faster)
- Double the structure to act on both the signals
  - ➔ Drawback: signals can be identical (no differential information)
- Steer the current either through one inverter or the other
  - ➔ Transition at the input changes the path through which the current is steered
  - ➔ Unless metastable, the amplifier has always differential information at the output



# Introduction to the Design of Full-Custom Front-End & Data Transmission ASICs\*

## Table of Contents


### ■ The Big (but Brief) Picture

- Briefly **front-end** - FE
- Briefly **read-out** - RO
- Briefly **serializer** - SER
- Briefly **phase-lock loop** - PLL

### ■ Feed-Back Concept

- A **qualitative** introduction
- **Natural frequency** concept -  $\omega_n$
- Real-world examples:
  - **Binary** read-out
  - **Time-over threshold**
- Adjusting/optimizing loop behavior
  - Damping ratio

### ■ Reminder on Detectors

- Photodetectors **vs** photon counters
- **Position-sensitive** detectors 
  - Resistive charge division
  - Discrete array of elements
- **Time-resolved** detection

### ■ Detector Front-End ASICs

- **Pre-Amp**: basic idea –  $V_{OUT} / V_{IN}$
- **Transconductance** of a transistor -  $g_m$
- Evolving a **single-stage amplifier** into a real-world application

### ■ Processing Technology

- **Transistor** switch – A masterpiece
  - **Lithography**
  - Formation of an **nMOS** transistor
- VLSI design flow
  - Parasitic **extraction**
- Real-world ASIC examples

### ■ Radiation Tolerance Issues

- Definitions:
  - **Single event upset, analog single event transient, latch-up**
- **Simulating** radiation effects on analog circuits

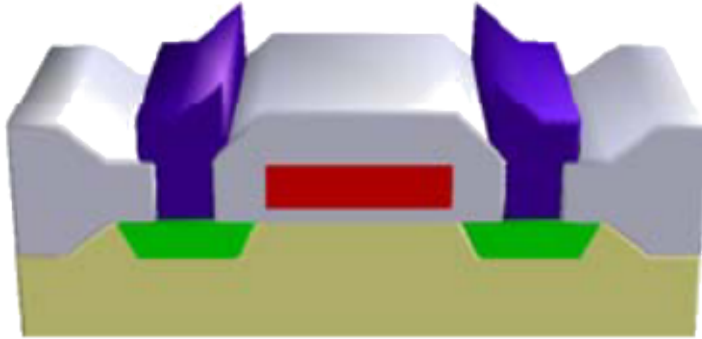


# Semiconductor Switch - Transistor

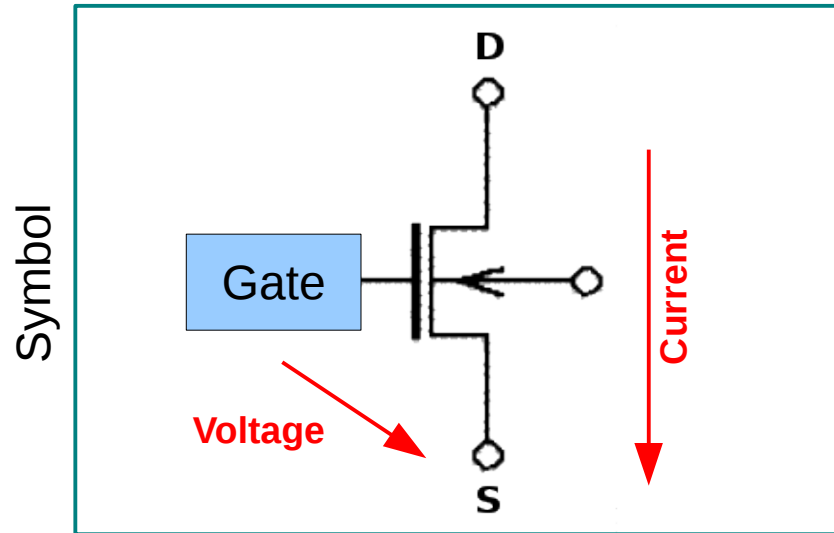
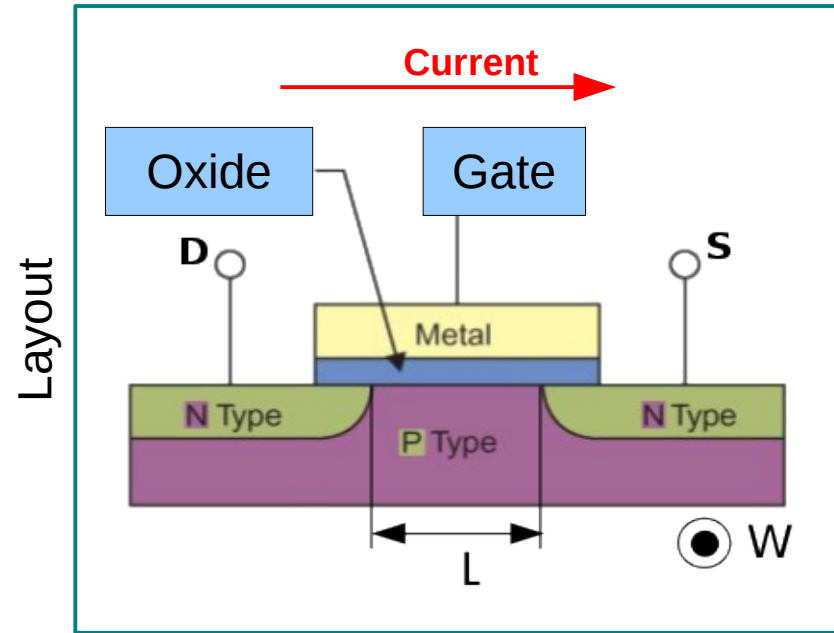
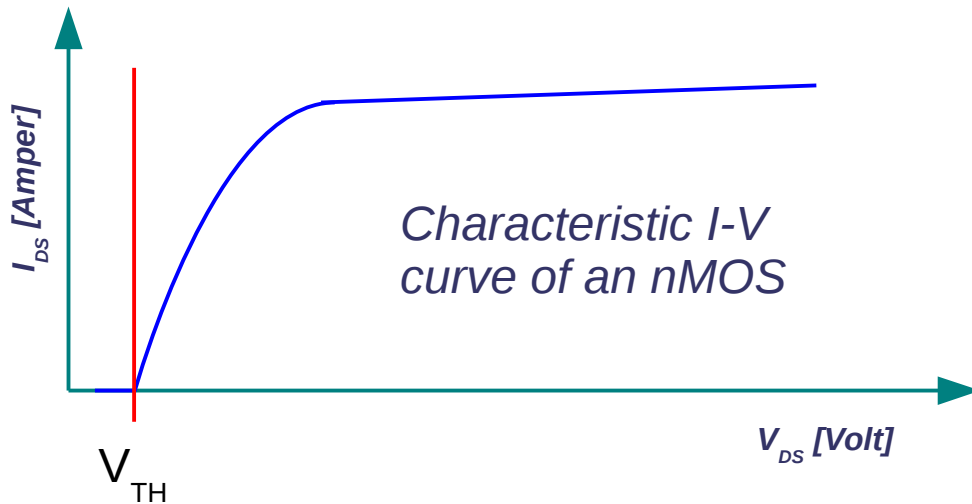
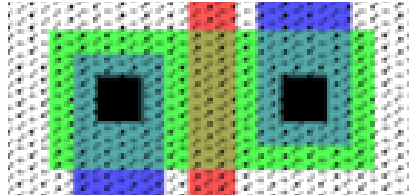
*A masterpiece*

- Current conduction between **Drain-Source** as a function of **Gate-Source** voltage

**3D view** of a single MOS transistor



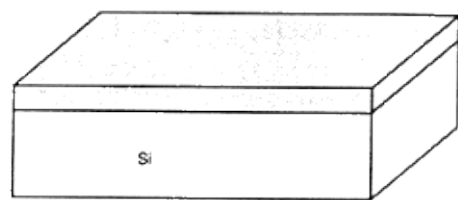
A single MOS transistor **as drawn by a designer**



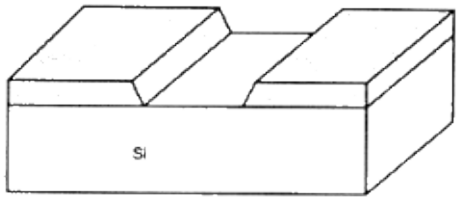
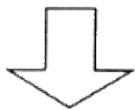
# Lithography

The art of *light drawing*

- A real microelectronic circuit is like a **city** composed of **many layers**
- A specific **lithographic mask** is needed **for each layer** to be created
- As an **example** we will create a **"line"** on an **oxide layer**

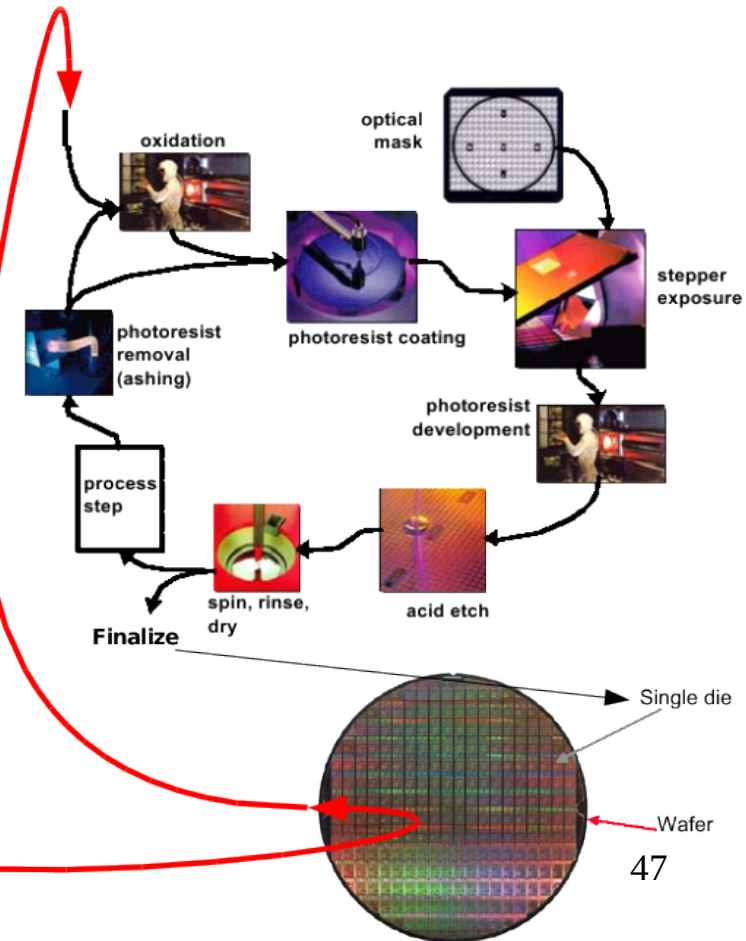


Initial state



Target

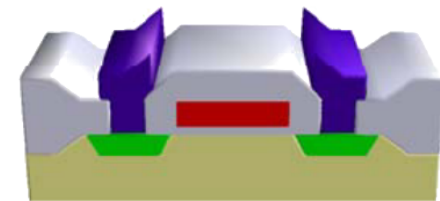
The **ingot** to be sliced into **wafers**



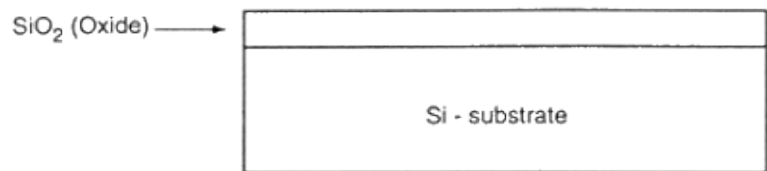
\* Please refer to Semiconductor Devices: Physics and Technology by S. M. Sze

# Just to draw a single line

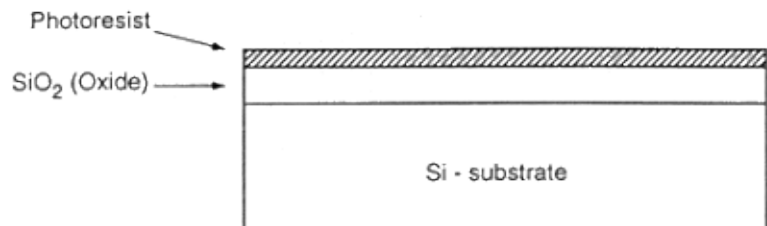
Seven simplified steps



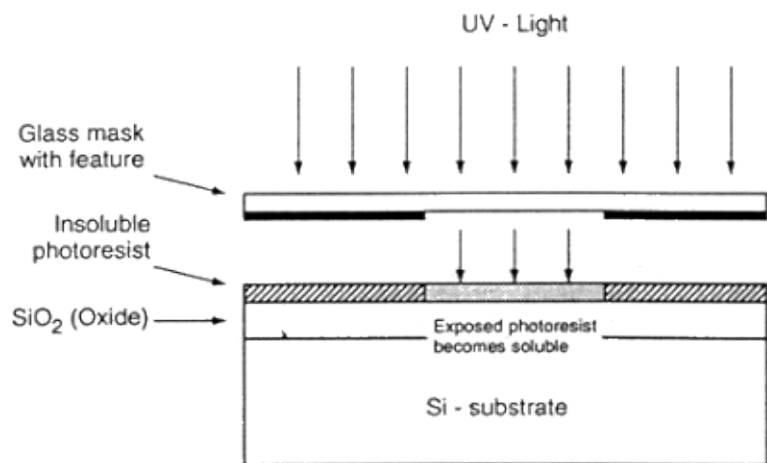
A



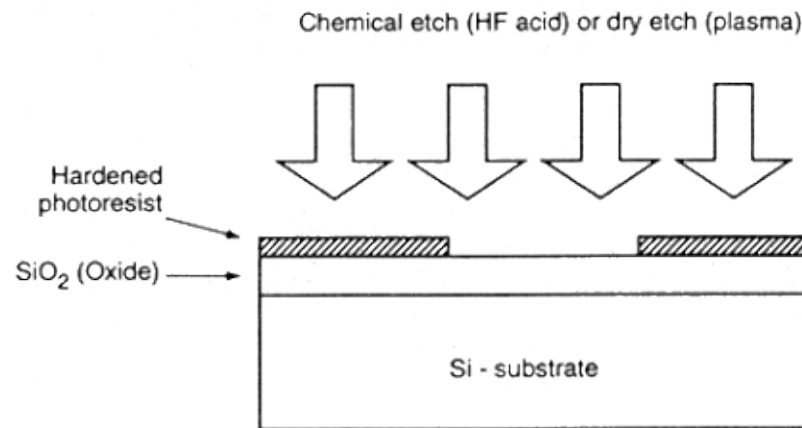
B



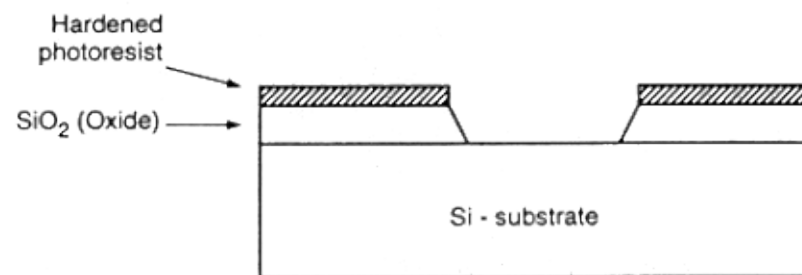
C



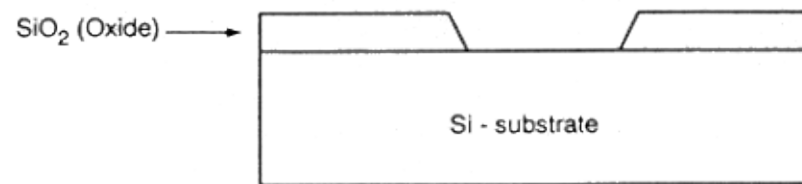
D



E



F

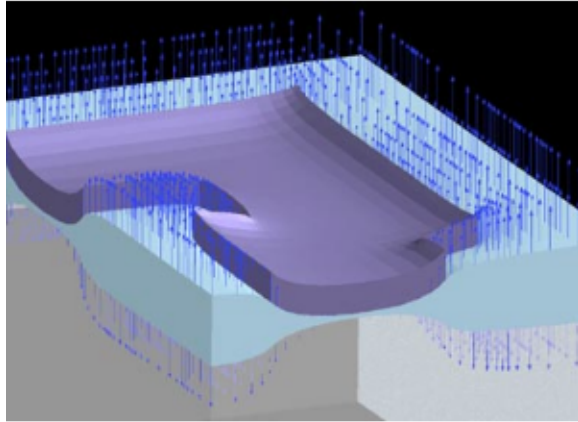


G



# Fabrication of an nMOS

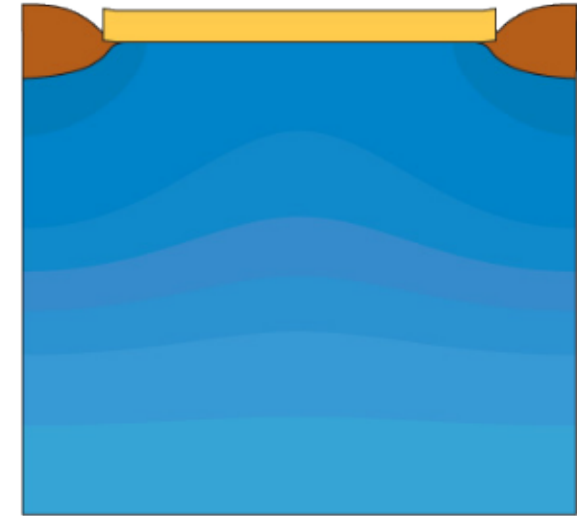
## Simplified steps - Part I



A. Definition of active area



B. Anneal and field oxide growth

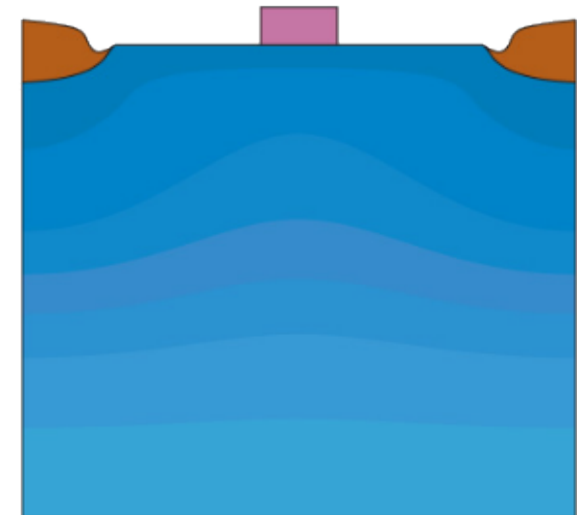


- **Nitride** defines the active areas
- **FOX** is developed
- Nitride is removed by a solvent
- Polysilicon is deposited

C. Channel implant



D. Gate formation (polysilicon deposition)



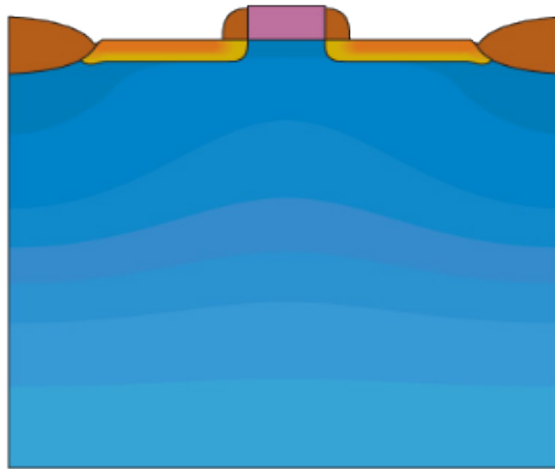
10 <sup>20</sup>
10 <sup>19</sup>
10 <sup>18</sup>
10 <sup>17</sup>
10 <sup>16</sup>
10 <sup>15</sup>
-10 <sup>15</sup>
-10 <sup>16</sup>
-10 <sup>17</sup>
Net[cm <sup>3</sup> ]
PO
OX
SI

# Fabrication of an nMOS

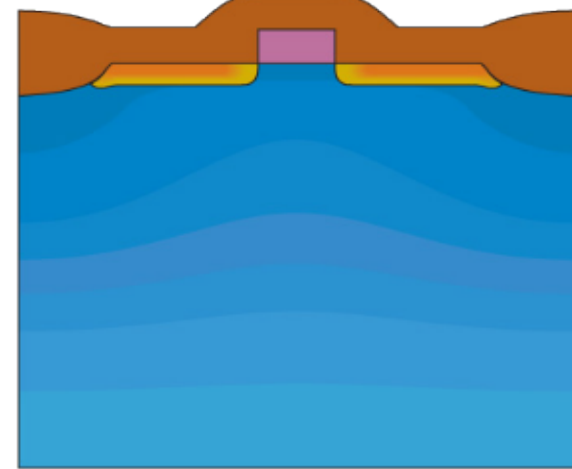
## Simplified steps - Part II

- **Spacer & active field formation**
- Dep. of **SiO<sub>2</sub>**
- **Etching** contact holes
- **Metal** dep.

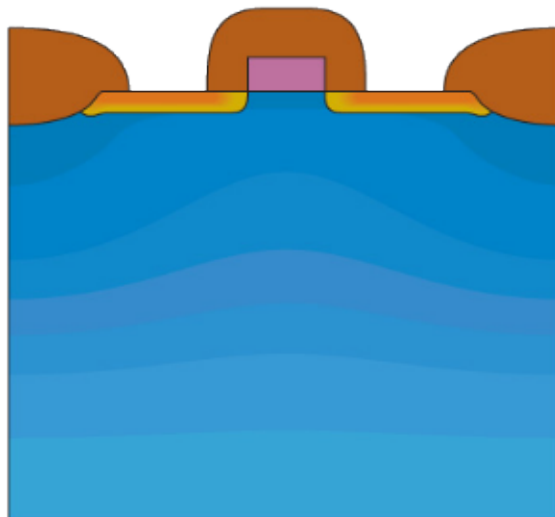
E. Spacer formation and S/D implant



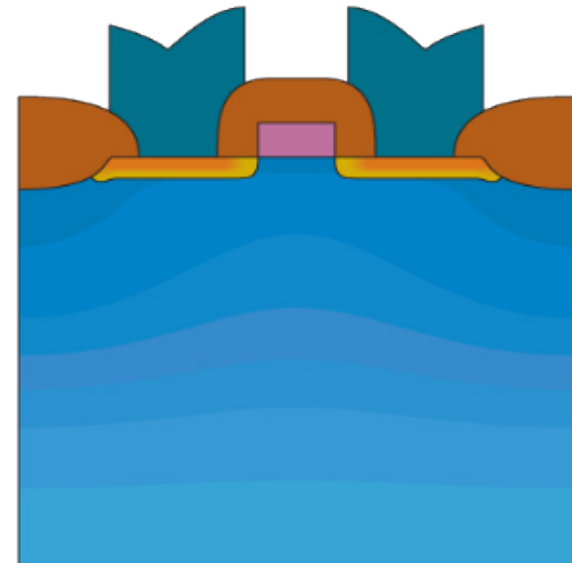
F. Oxide deposition



G. Contact hole etch



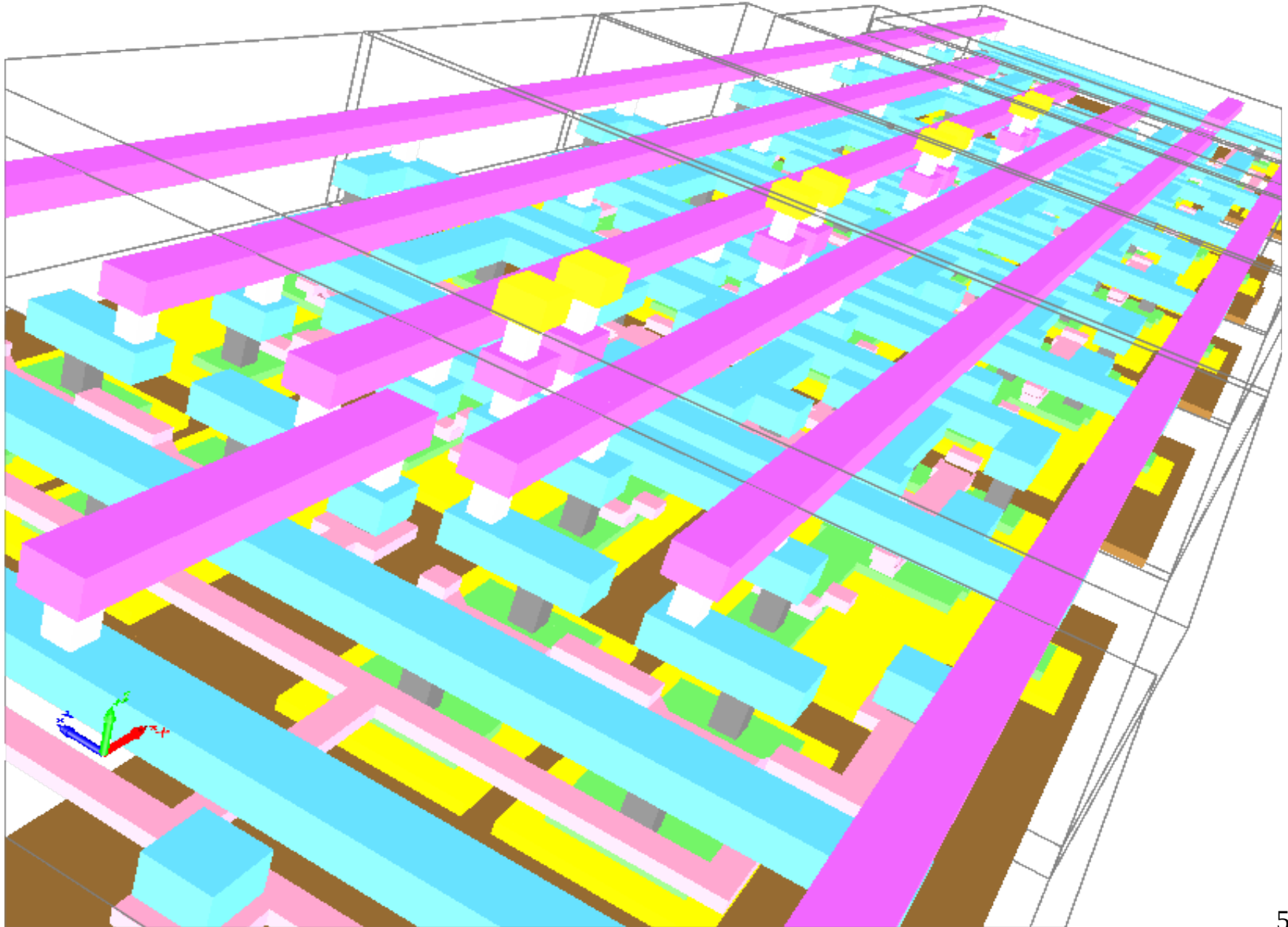
H. Metal deposition



pn
10 <sup>19</sup>
10 <sup>18</sup>
10 <sup>17</sup>
10 <sup>16</sup>
10 <sup>15</sup>
0
-10 <sup>15</sup>
-10 <sup>16</sup>
-10 <sup>17</sup>
Net[cm <sup>3</sup> ]
AL
PO
OX
SI

# How many layers do you see ?

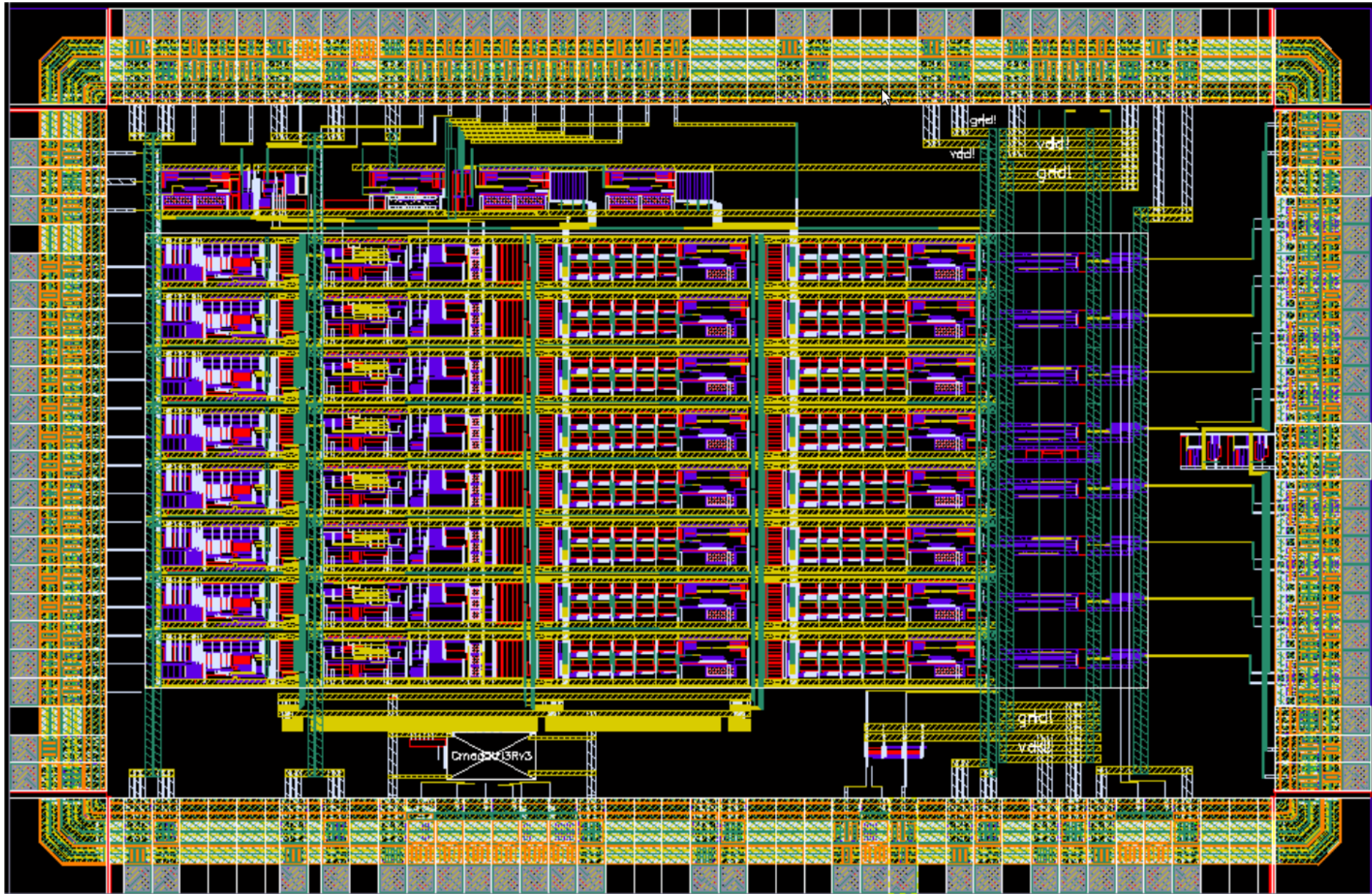
*A process repeated a few hundred times*



*A ring-type oscillator*

# How many layers do you see ?

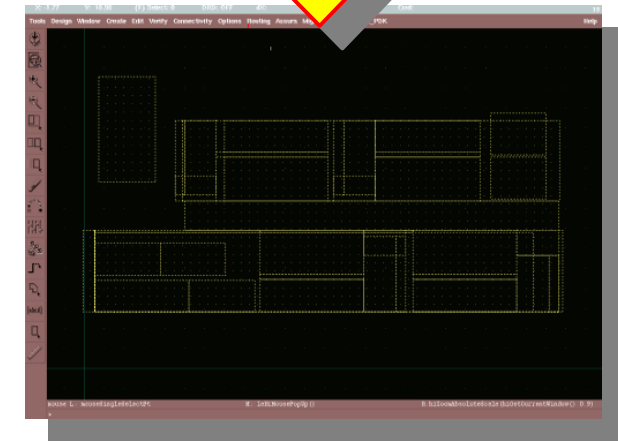
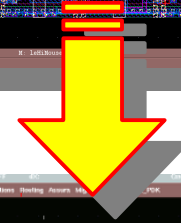
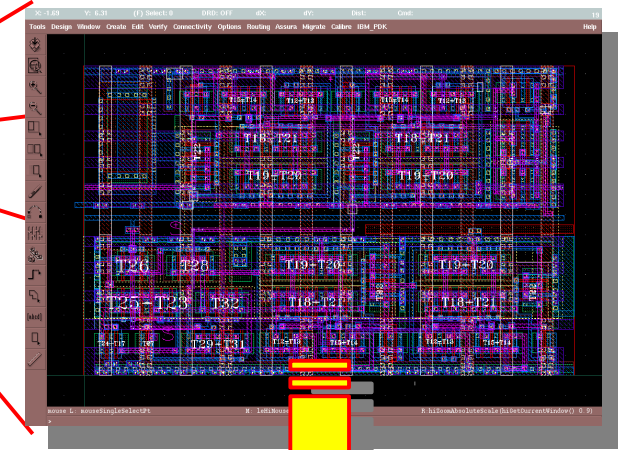
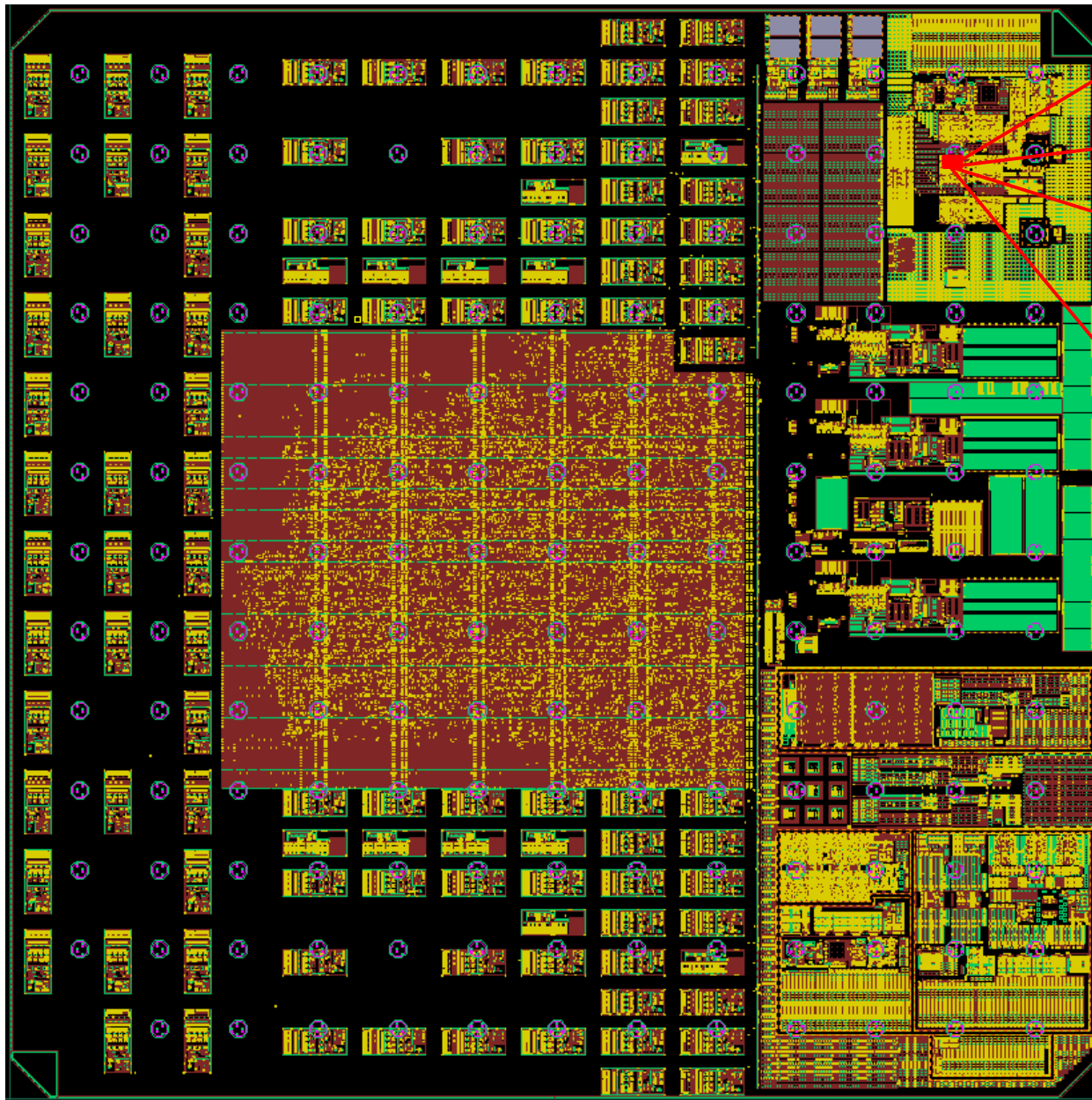
A process repeated a few hundred times



The CAMD front-end ASIC designed for RICH-1 detector of COMPASS experiment at CERN. (350 nm CMOS).

# How many layers do you see ?

*A process repeated a few hundred times*



*A sub-set of masks forming the above block  
(Animated GIF image)*

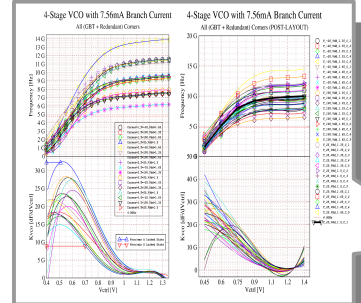
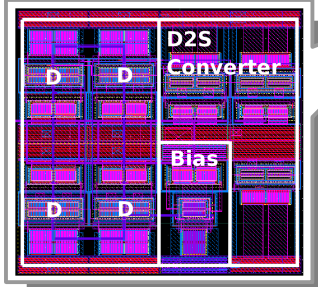
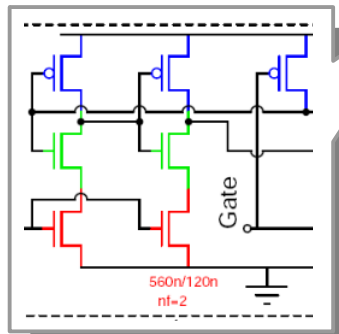
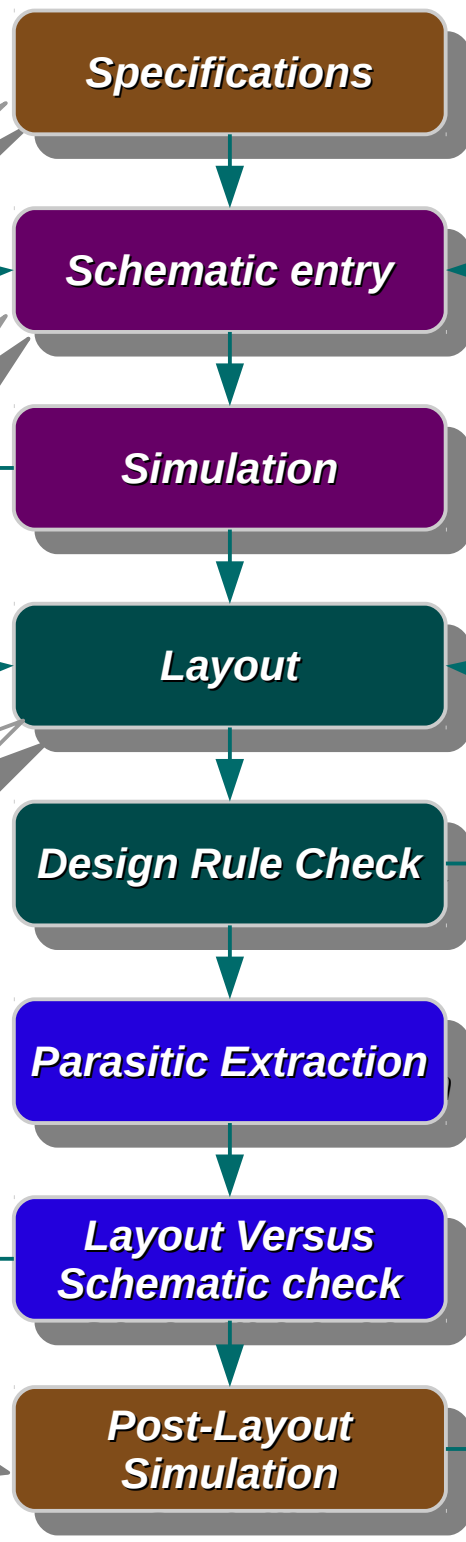
*The first prototype of the SER-DES ASIC for the GBT13 chip-set under development for the Super-LHC at CERN. (130 nm CMOS)*

# VLSI Design in Practice

## Daily life of an ASIC designer

- Interface between **process scientist** and **designer**
- Focus on **reliability** and increased **manufacturability**

$$T(s) = \frac{\omega_n^2(\tau s + 1)}{\frac{s^2}{N} + 2\xi s \frac{\omega_n}{N} + \frac{\omega_n^2}{N}}$$



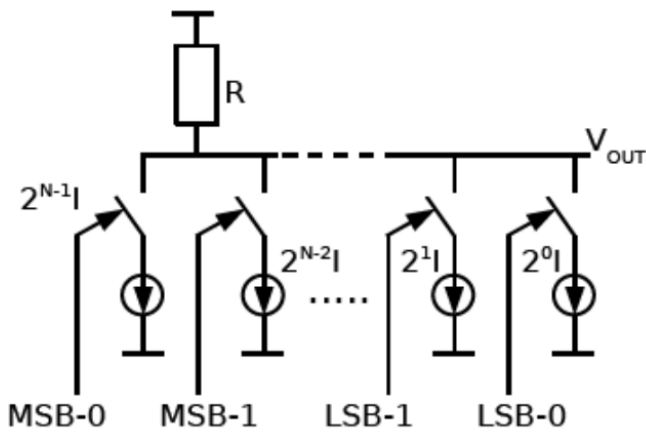
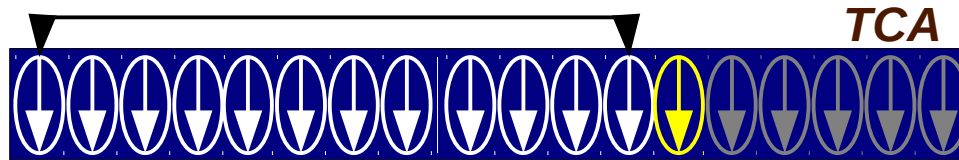
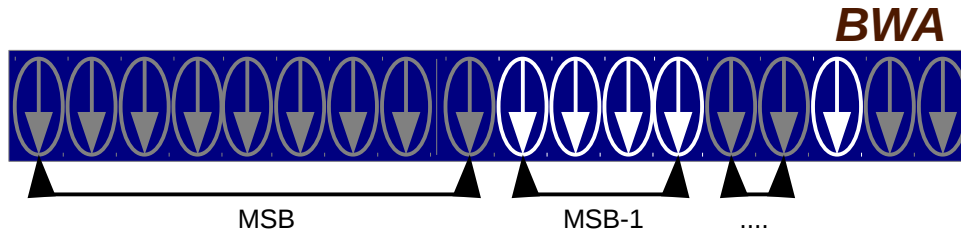
Contact		
5.1	Exact contact size	2λ
5.2	Min. poly overlap	1.5λ
5.3	Min. spacing	2λ
5.4	Min. spacing to gate	2λ
6.1	Exact contact size	2λ
6.2	Min. active overlap	1.5λ
6.3	Min. spacing	2λ
6.4	Min. spacing to gate	2λ
Metal1		
7.1	Min. width	3λ
7.2.a	Min. spacing	3λ
7.3	Min. overlap of any contact	1λ
Vial		
8.1	Exact size	2λ
8.2	Min. spacing	3λ
8.3	Min. overlap by metall	1λ
8.4	Min. spacing to contact	2λ
8.5	Min. spac. to poly or act. edge	2λ
Metal2		
9.1	Min. width	3λ
9.2.a	Min. spacing	4λ
9.3	Min. overlap to vial	1λ

(\*) Not Drawn

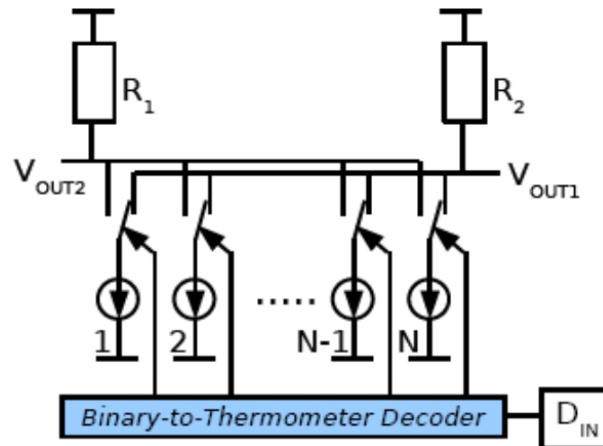
# Architectural Choice

Quantitative comparison between different approaches

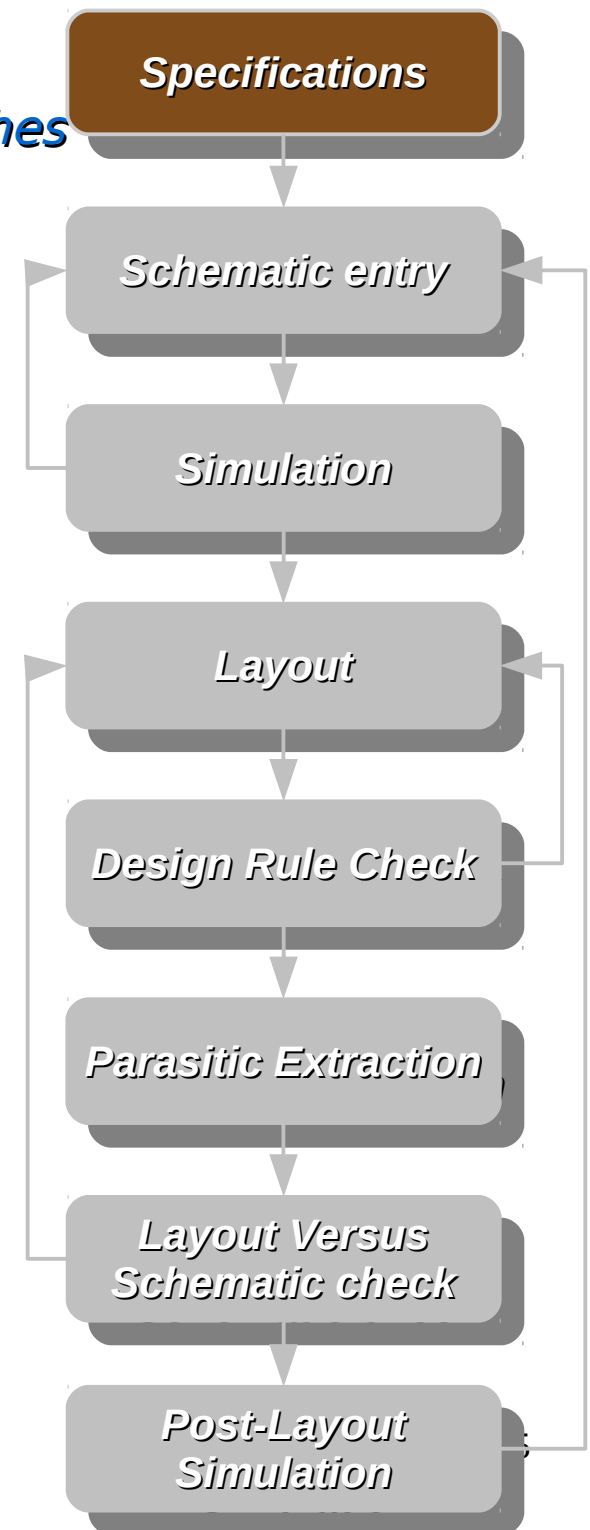
- A **10-Bit** current-mode D/A converter
- Two possible **architectures**; have to **choose one**
- Need for **qualitative comparison**: MC is a **must**



**Binary weighted (BWA)**



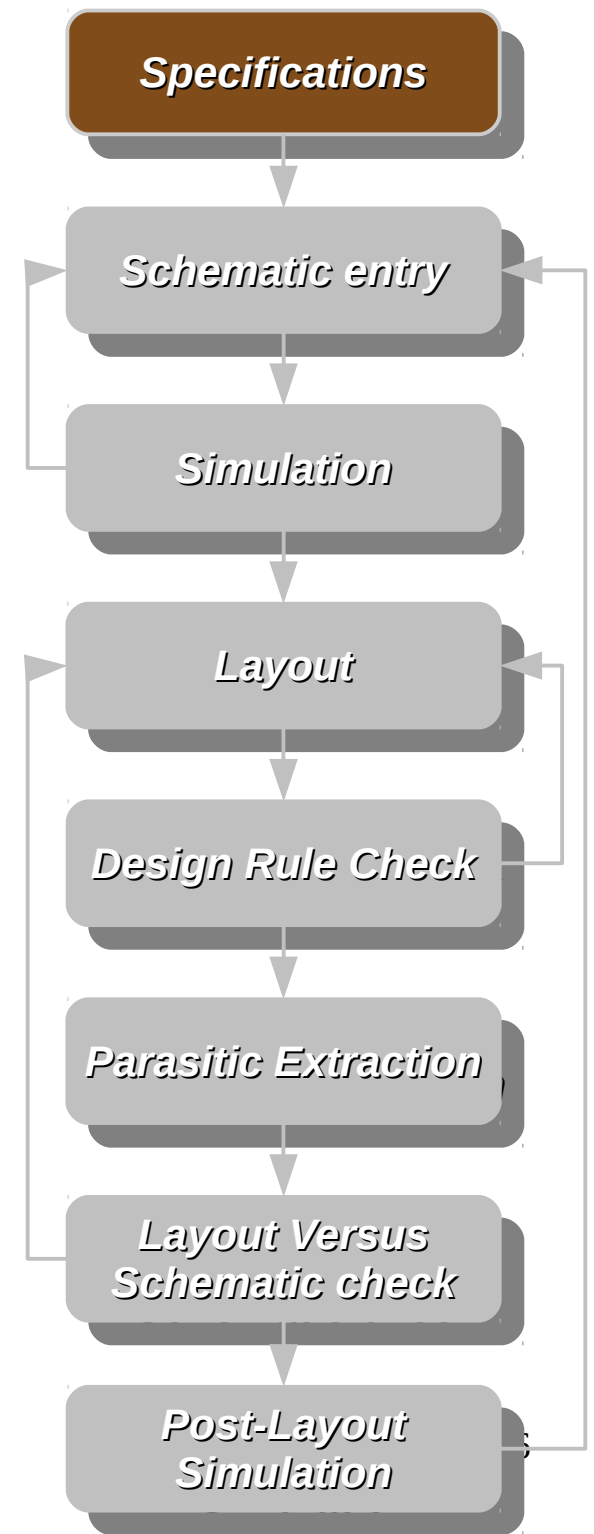
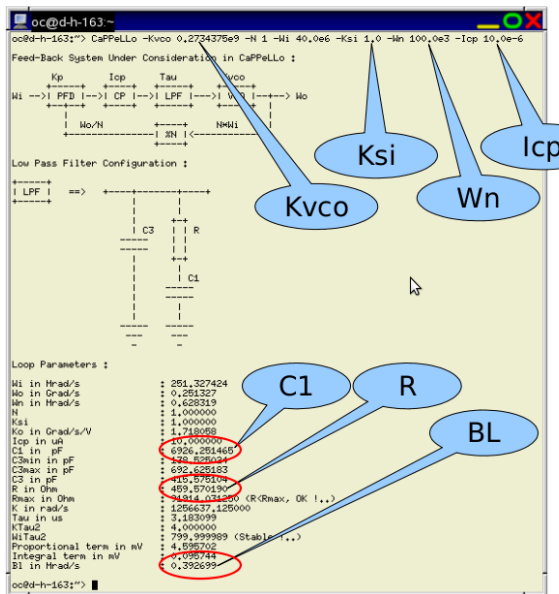
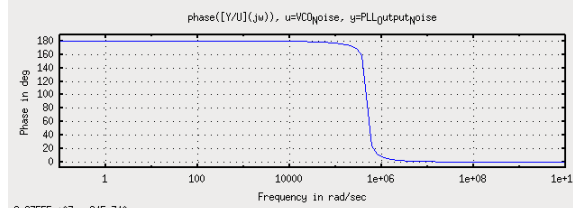
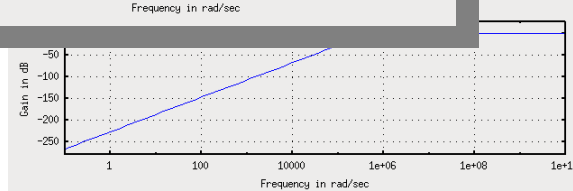
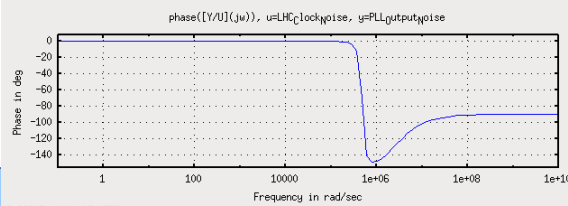
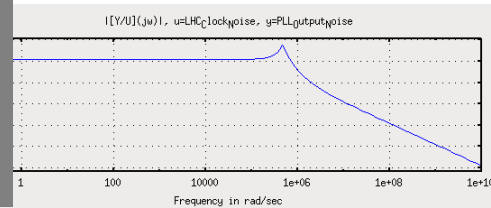
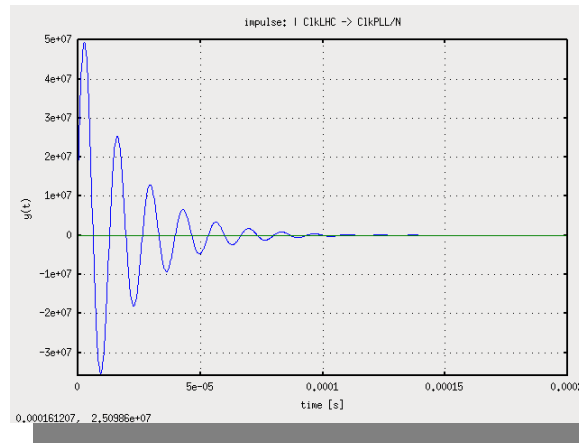
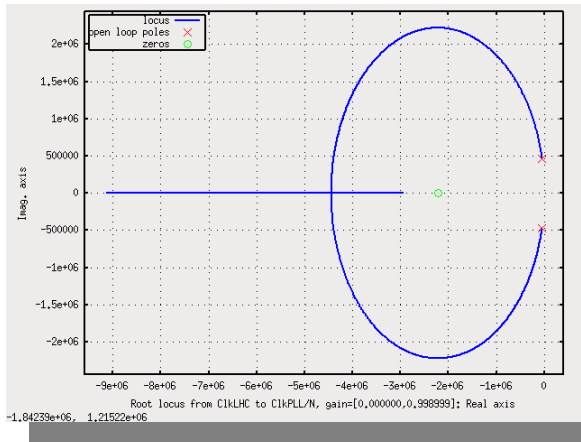
**Thermometer coded (TCA)**



# Parametrization

Optimizing the choice according to the application

- ◆ Hand **calculations**
- ◆ Corresponding time & frequency domain **behavior**
- ◆ **Judgment**





The screenshot shows the QaPPeLLO software interface. The main window is titled "QaPPeLLO - Version: 13-1". It features a menu bar (QaPPeLLO, Debug, Help), a toolbar, and several panels:

- Inputs Panel:** Contains fields for Kvco [GHz/V], N (divider), Wi [MHz], Wn [MHz], Ico [μA], and Ksi (damp). A "Grab Selected OP" button is located below.
- External Tools Panel:** Lists tools like M-interpret (octave), Report Comp. (pdflatex), Verilog (iverilog), Editor (nedit), and Plotter (xmgrace).
- Results Panel:** Displays a table of parameters such as Wz [MHz], C3max [pF], C3min [pF], C3 [pF], C1 [pF], R [Ohm], Rm [KOhm], BI [MHz], and Wo [GHz]. It also shows K [Hz], Tau [μs], KTAu, WiTau, Vpro [mV], Vint [mV], Loop stable (Yes), and # of OPs.
- Log View Panel:** Shows the output of the simulation, including "INFO:" messages and "Extracted parameters:" for two different operating points.
- Architecture Diagram:** A block diagram showing the internal structure with blocks labeled CP, LPF, VCO, PFD, and %N, along with input (Wi) and output (Wo) signals.

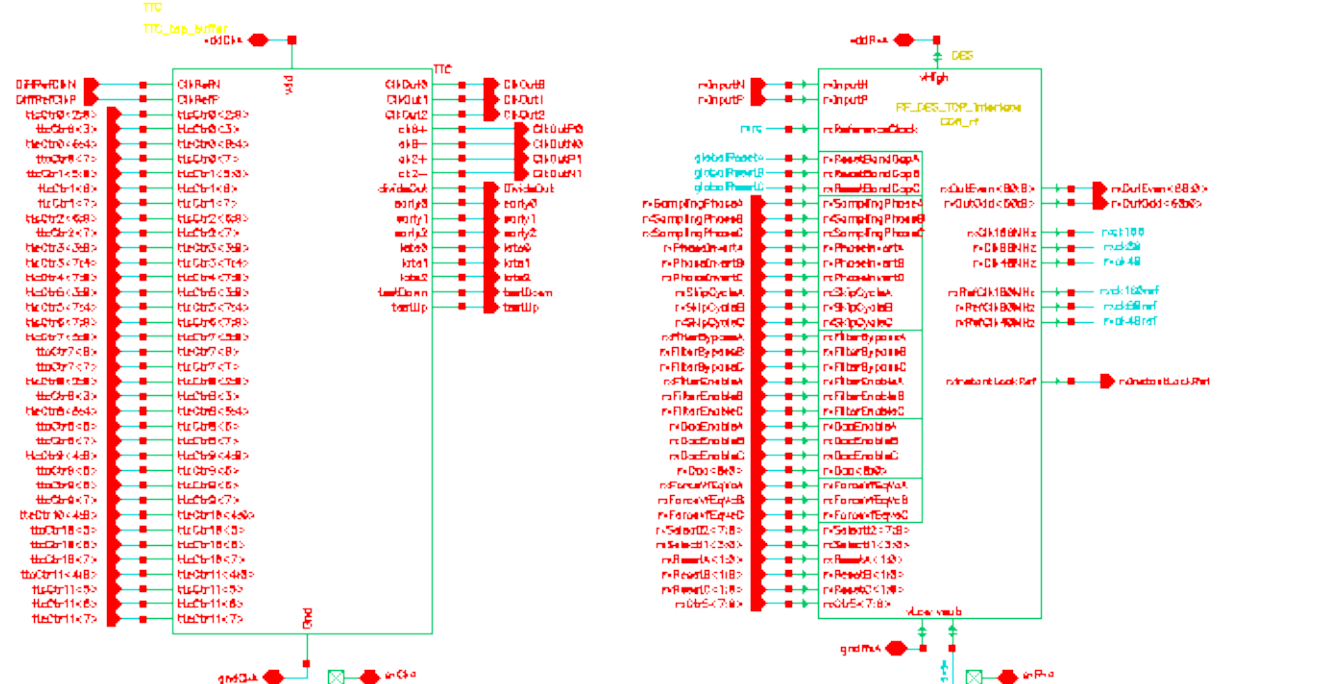
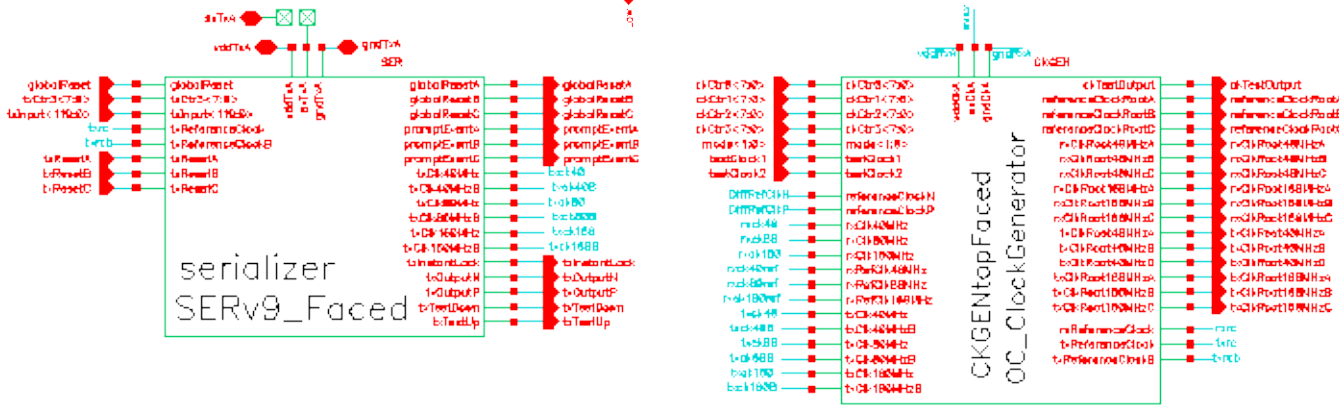
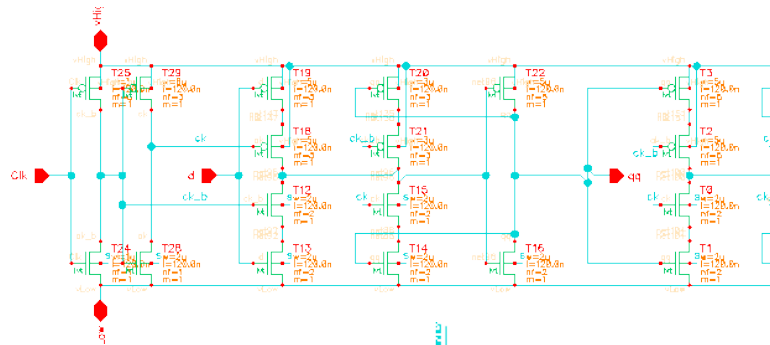
Yellow callout boxes highlight the following areas:

- User inputs:** Points to the Inputs panel.
- External tools:** Points to the External Tools panel.
- Resulting loop parametrization:** Points to the Results panel.
- Memory of selected loop operating points:** Points to the list of operating points in the Results panel.
- Architecture under treatment:** Points to the block diagram.
- Log view:** Points to the Log View panel.

- ➔ **CaPPeLLO** gets just a few numbers and **all automatically**:
- ➔ Calculates loop parameters and generates the stability map for comparison
- ➔ Calculates frequency domain loop response as
  - ➔ Bode and root locus plots, step & impulse responses, noise transfer functions, etc.
- ➔ Generates the verilog model of the architecture with the selected parameters
  - ➔ Compiles and runs the verilog model, displays the wave forms
  - ➔ Analyzes the jitter data generated during the this simulation
- ➔ Searches for chaos by means of time series analysis and creates attractors, etc.
- ➔ Generates a report summarizing all above actions

# Schematic-Level Design

- Place **devices**
- Connect **ports**
- Build a **hierarchy**



Specifications

Schematic entry

Simulation

Layout

Design Rule Check

Parasitic Extraction

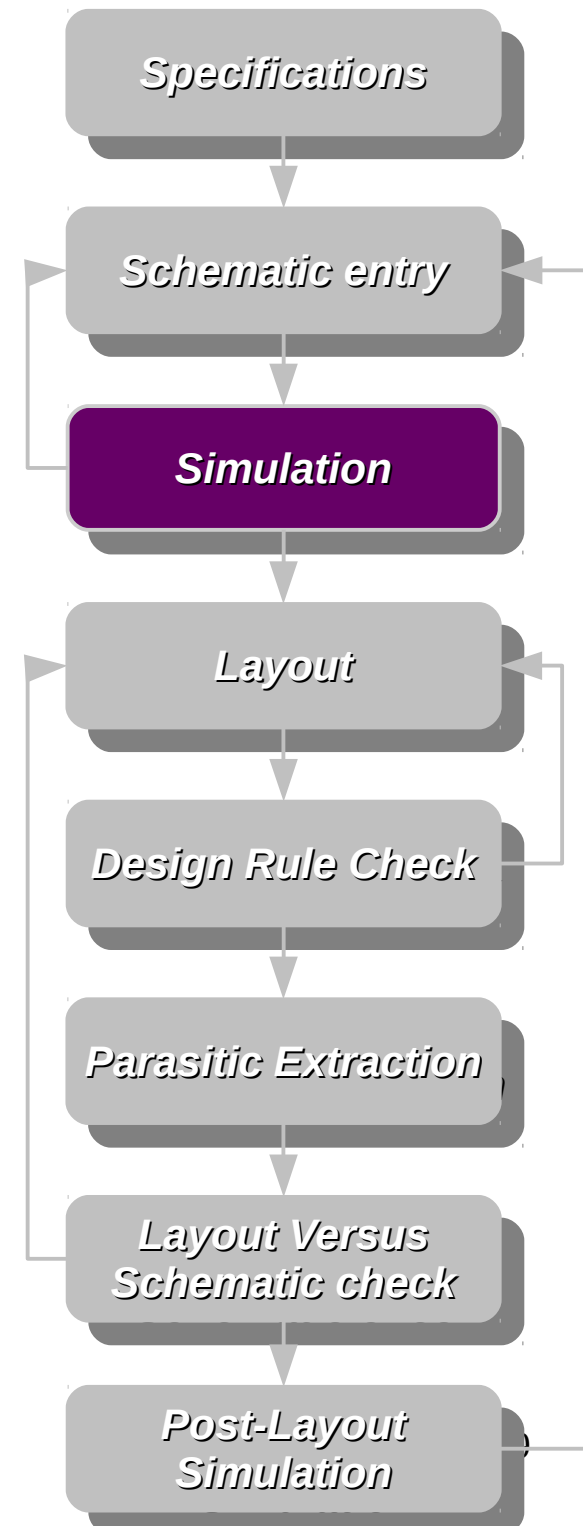
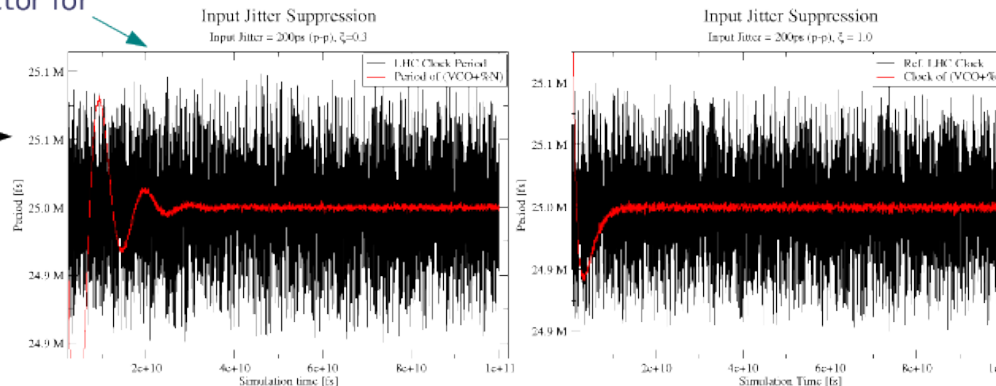
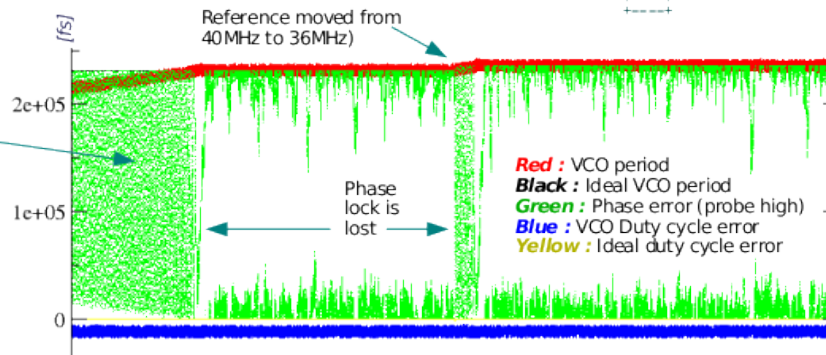
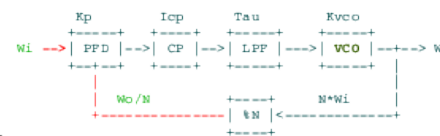
Layout Versus Schematic check

Post-Layout Simulation

# Simulation

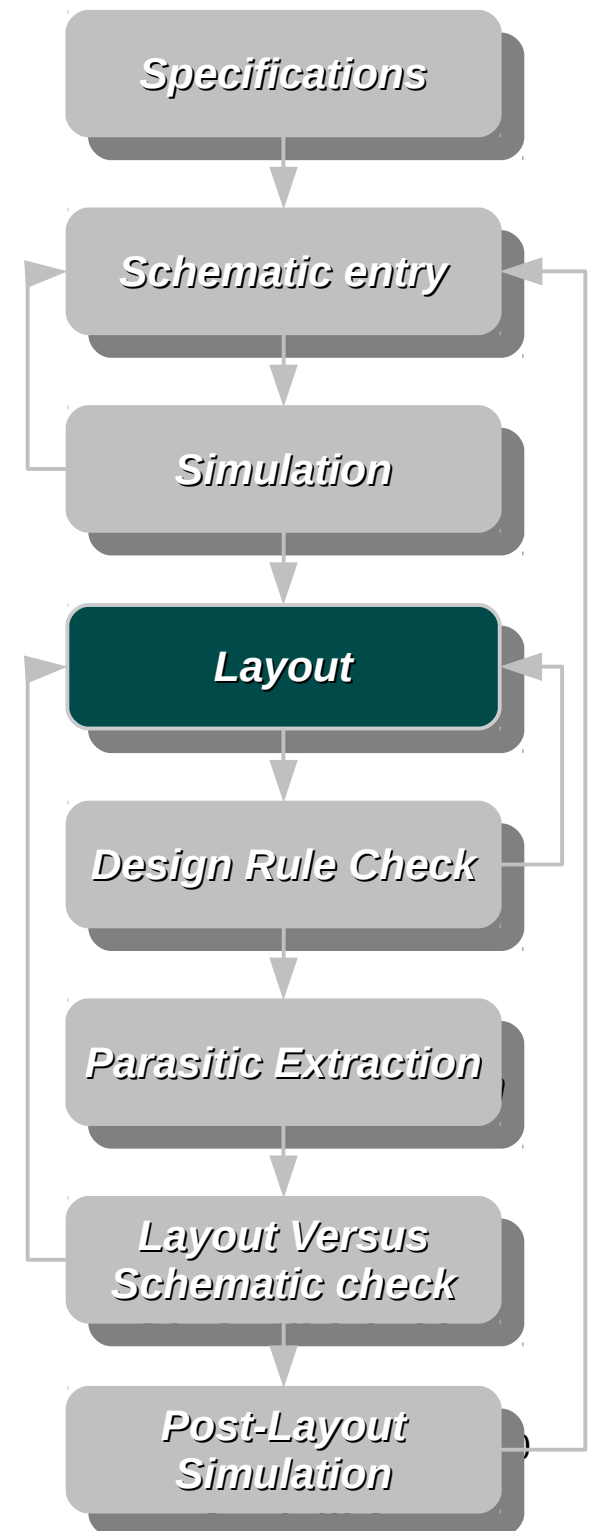
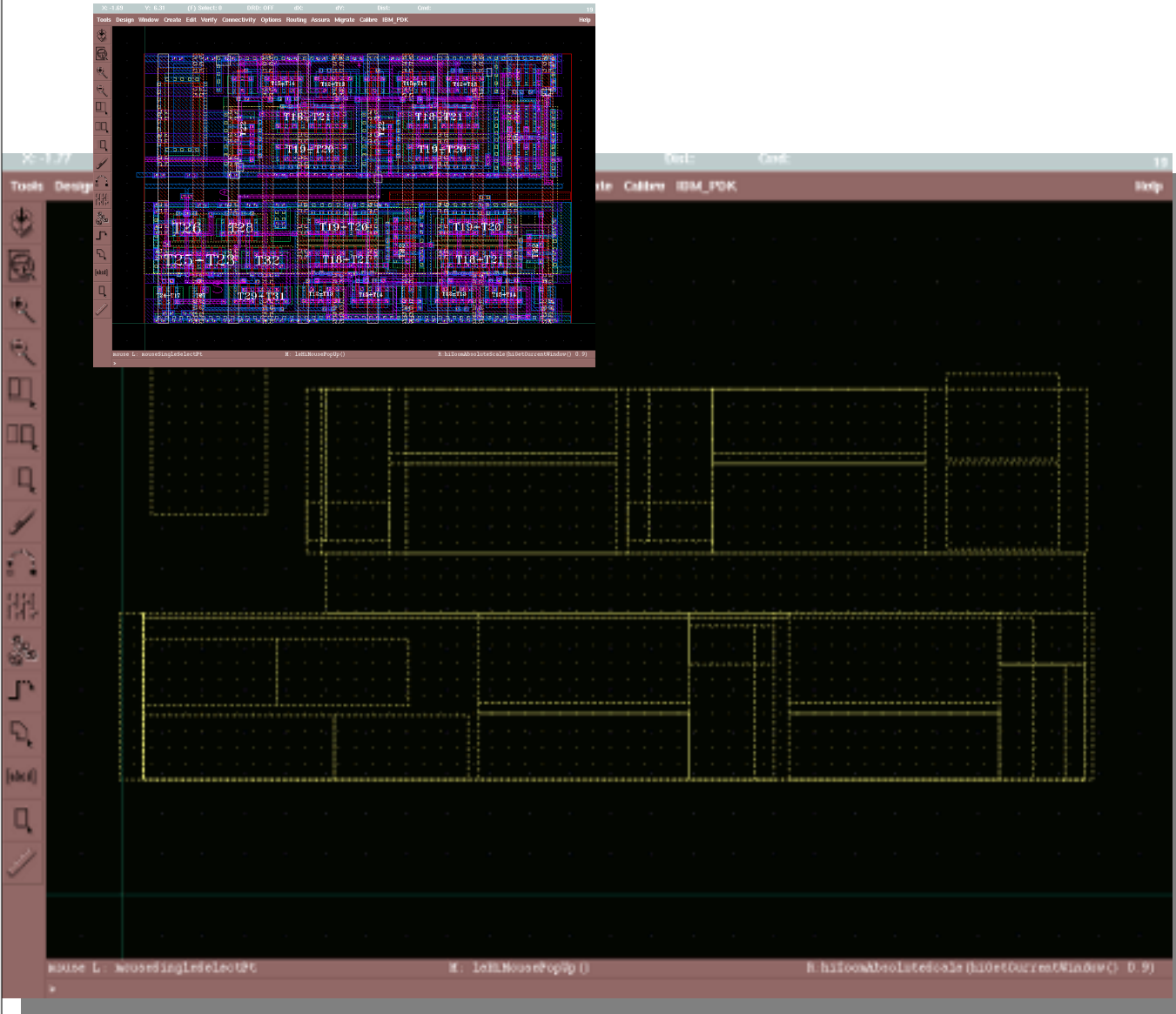
- ◆ **Model-based** time-step simulations (HDLs, MatLab, Octave, Cadence, etc.)
- ◆ **Transistor-level** SPICE simulations (Spectre, UltraSim, etc.)
- ◆ **Radiation** simulations (Process simulators, Spectre, etc.)

- Very noisy VCO + very noisy reference
- Initially not locked
- Reference frequency step of 10% some time after locking
- Low bandwidth CP-PLL filters out the noise at the reference input (i.e. slow loop)
- Effect of damping factor for 0.3 and 1.0







# Layout

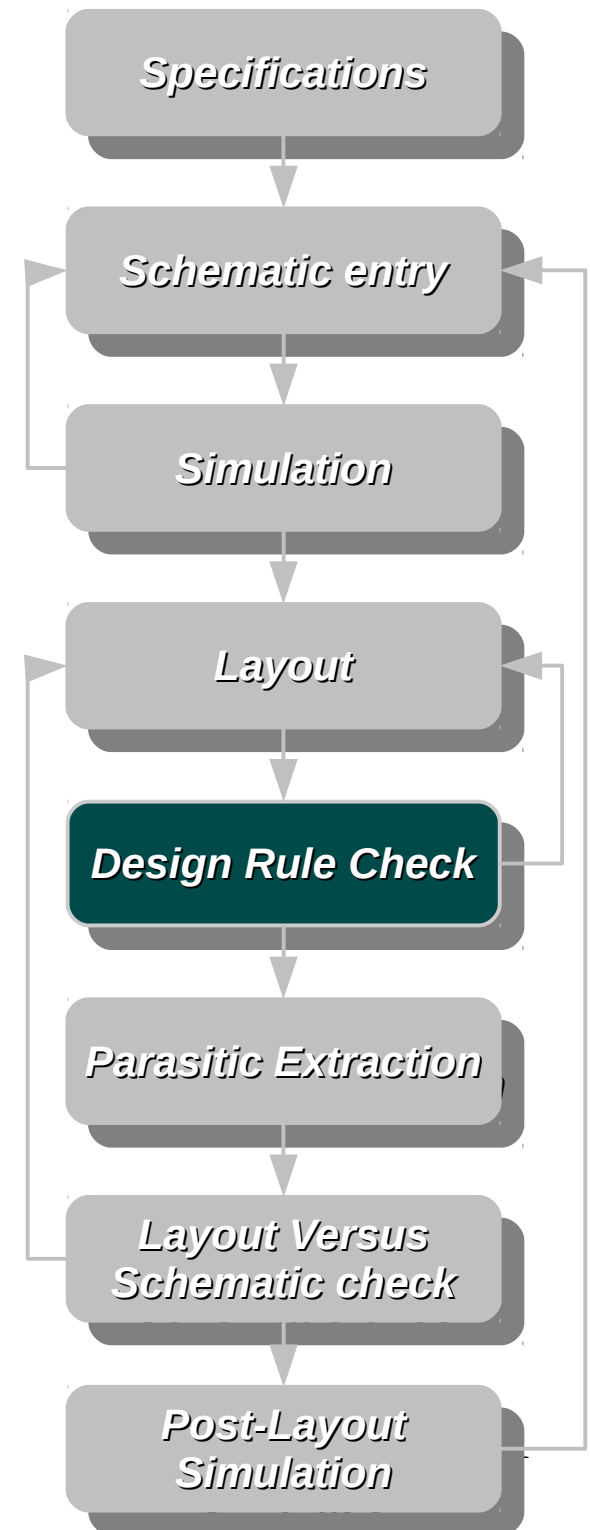
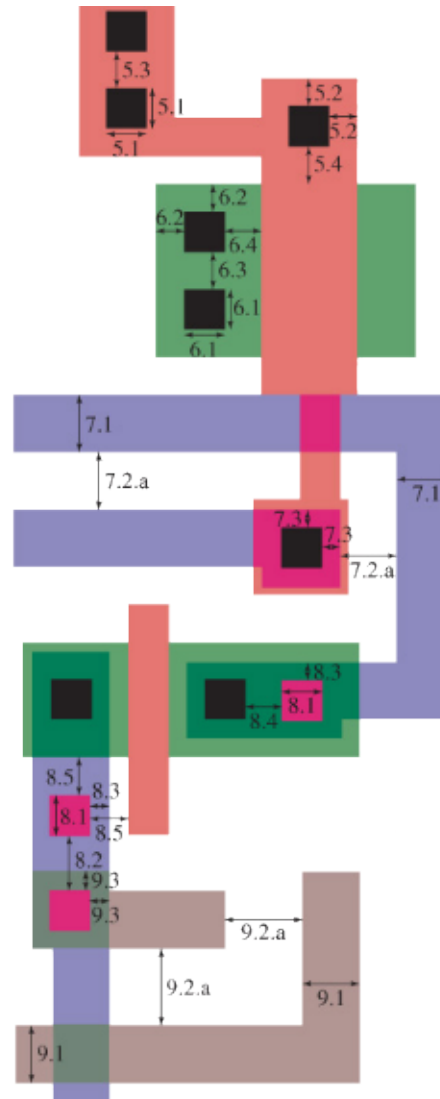
- ▶ Lithographic **masks** are designed
- ▶ Actual representation of a circuit on the **die**



# DRC

► **Infinite** different paths of matching what the schematic represent (art)

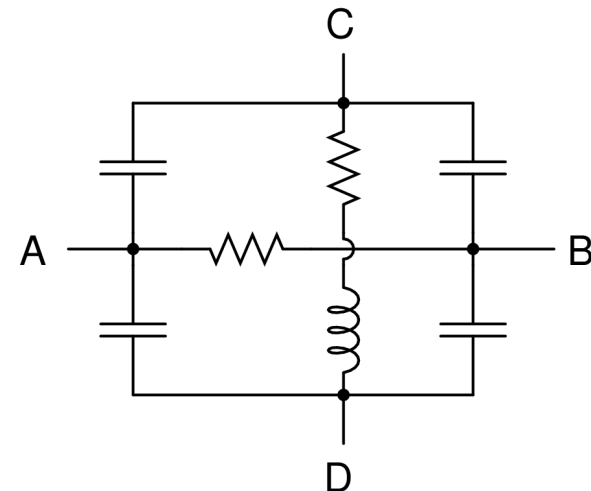
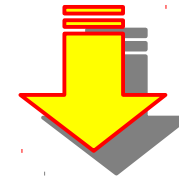
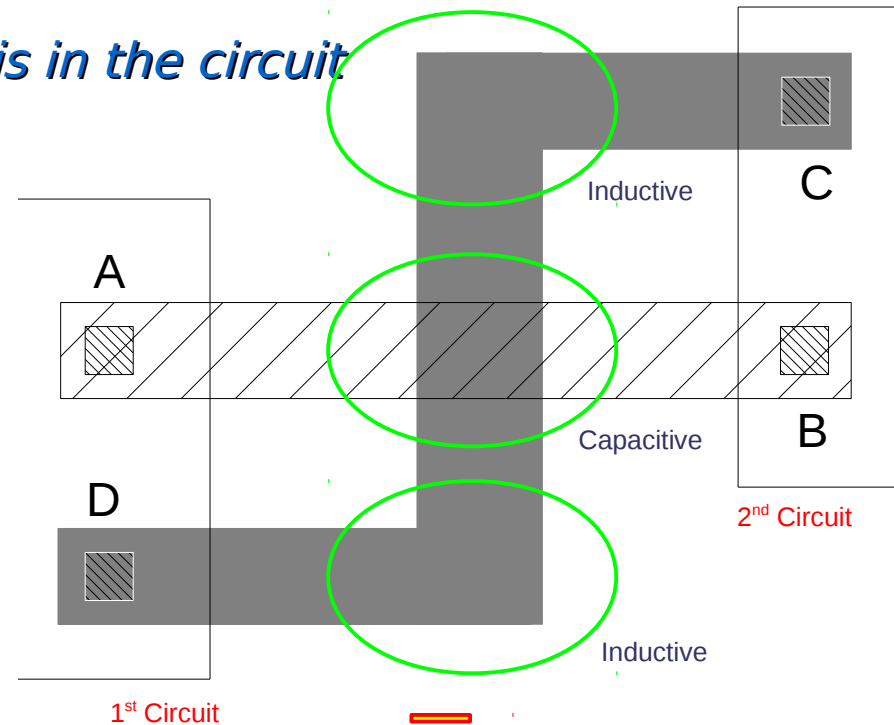
	<b>Contact</b>		
	5.1	Exact contact size	2 λ
	5.2	Min. poly overlap	1.5 λ
	5.3	Min. spacing	2 λ
	5.4	Min. spacing to gate	2 λ
	<b>Metal1</b>		
	7.1	Min. width	3 λ
	7.2.a	Min. spacing	3 λ
	7.3	Min. overlap of any contact	1 λ
	<b>Vial</b>		
	8.1	Exact size	2 λ
	8.2	Min. spacing	3 λ
	8.3	Min. overlap by metal1	1 λ
	8.4	Min. spacing to contact	2 λ
	8.5	Min. spac. to poly or act. edge	2 λ
	<b>Metal2</b>		
	9.1	Min. width	3 λ
	9.2.a	Min. spacing	4 λ
	9.3	Min. overlap to vial	1 λ
(*)	Not Drawn		



# Parasitic Extraction

For a better physical representation of what is in the circuit

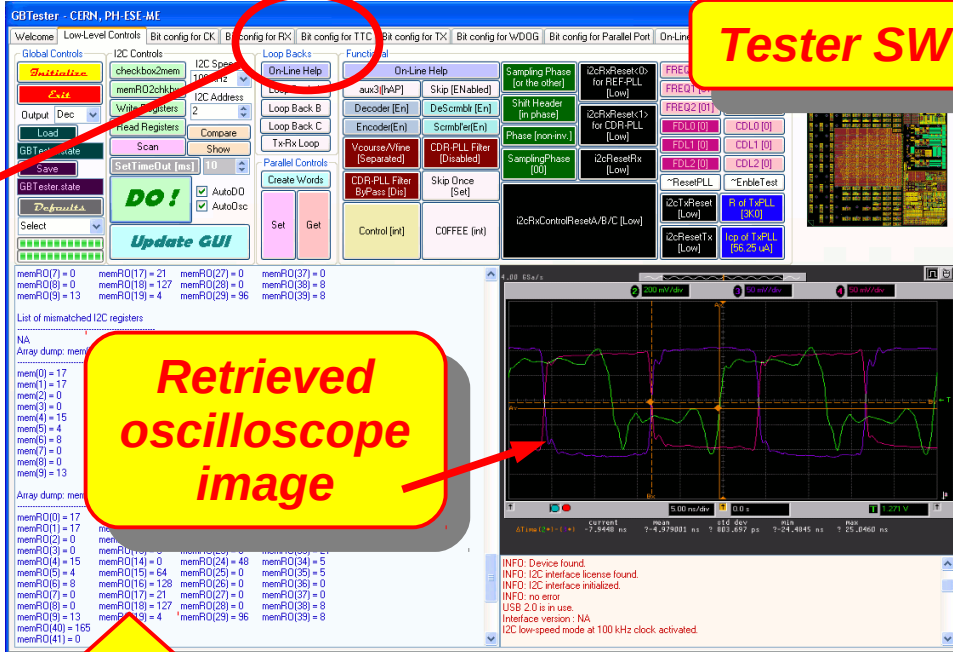
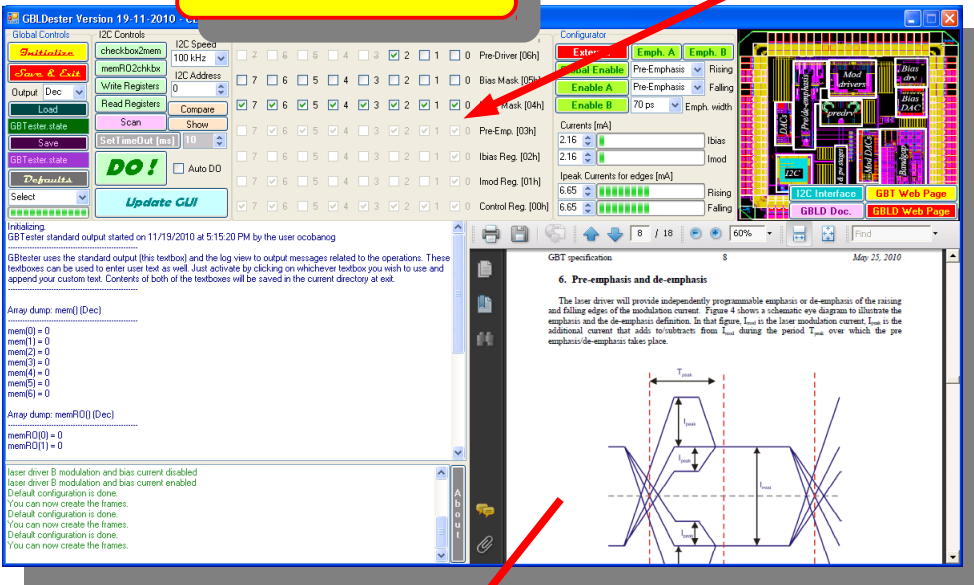
- Perform two **simple connections**:
  - Connect the pin **A** to pin **B** with **metal-1**
  - Connect the pin **C** to pin **D** with **metal-2**
- Designer **did not draw** any device but the **effective circuit** has at least the followings:
  - 4 capacitors
  - 2 resistors
  - 1 inductor
- Things which are not taken into account in schematic are the parasitic devices that **can not be avoided** but minimized/maximized
  - e.g. minimize input capacitance of a FE or wire capacitances between building blocks
  - e.g. maximize narrow-band PLL filter capacitance or de-coupling capacitors of any ASIC



# Test Boards and tester/configurator application

Tester SW

Control bits



Retrieved oscilloscope image

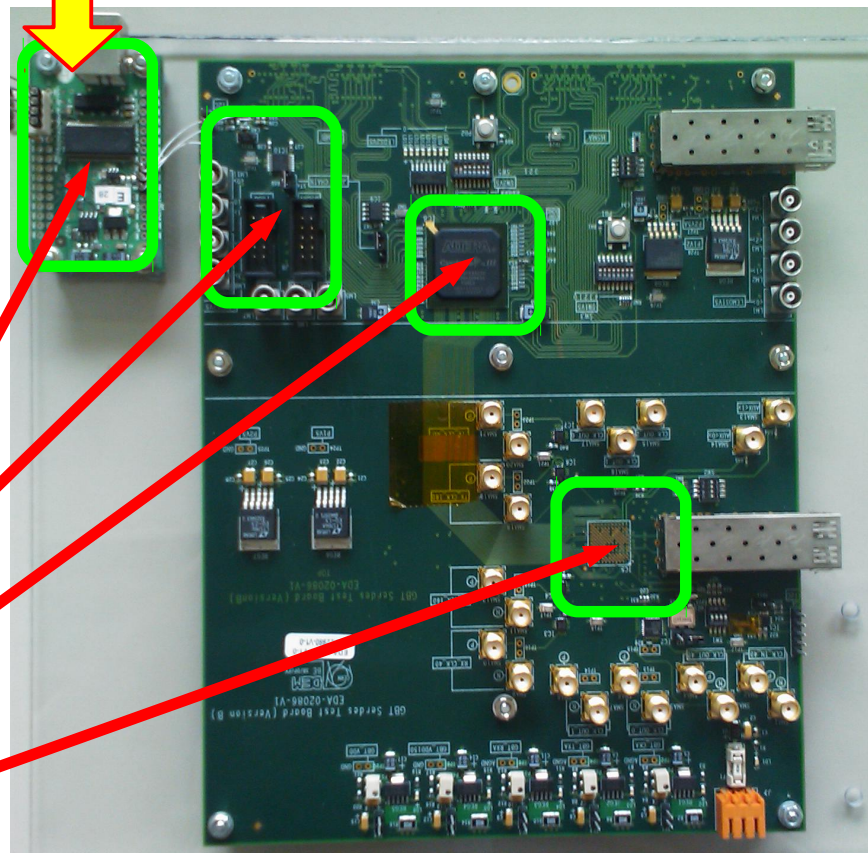
On-line documentation

USB → I2C adapter

I2C & JTAG ports

FPGA (Cyclon-III)

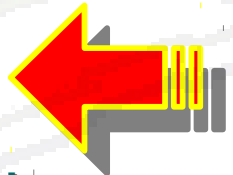
Where the DUT resides  
(DUT: Device Under Test)



# Introduction to the Design of Full-Custom Front-End & Data Transmission ASICs\*

## Table of Contents

- **The Big (but Brief) Picture**
  - Briefly **front-end** - FE
  - Briefly **read-out** - RO
  - Briefly **serializer** - SER
  - Briefly **phase-lock loop** - PLL
- **Detector Front-End ASICs**
  - **Pre-Amp**: basic idea –  $V_{OUT} / V_{IN}$
  - **Transconductance** of a transistor -  $g_m$
  - Evolving a **single-stage amplifier** into a real-world application
- **Feed-Back Concept**
  - A **qualitative** introduction
  - **Natural frequency** concept -  $\omega_n$
  - Real-world examples:
    - **Binary** read-out
    - **Time-over threshold**
  - Adjusting/optimizing loop behavior
    - Damping ratio
- **Processing Technology**
  - **Transistor** switch – A masterpiece
    - **Lithography**
    - Formation of an **nMOS** transistor
  - VLSI design flow
    - Parasitic **extraction**
  - Real-world ASIC examples
- **Radiation Tolerance Issues**
  - Definitions:
    - **Single event upset, analog single event transient, latch-up**
  - **Simulating** radiation effects on analog circuits
- **Reminder on Detectors**
  - Photodetectors **vs** photon counters
  - **Position-sensitive** detectors NEW
    - Resistive charge division
    - Discrete array of elements
  - **Time-resolved** detection



\* Application Specific Integrated Circuit



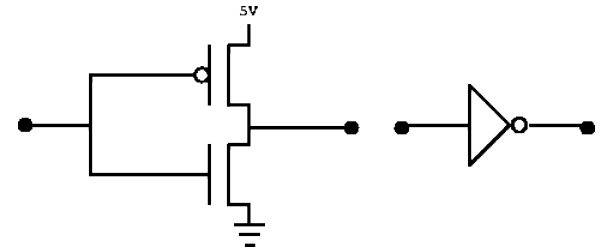
# Radiation Issues

## Definitions and failure mechanism

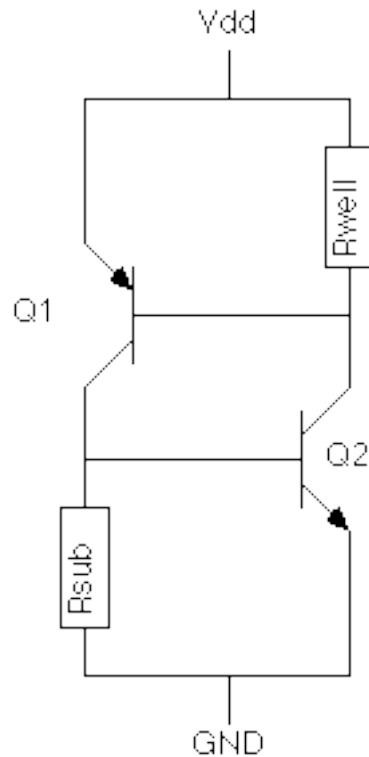
- Single Event Transient (**SET**)
  - ➔ A transient perturbation on an analog signal due to charge released by an ionizing radiation.
- Single Event Upset (**SEU**)
  - ➔ State change of a digital circuit due to charge released by an ionizing radiation.

- **Latch-Up**

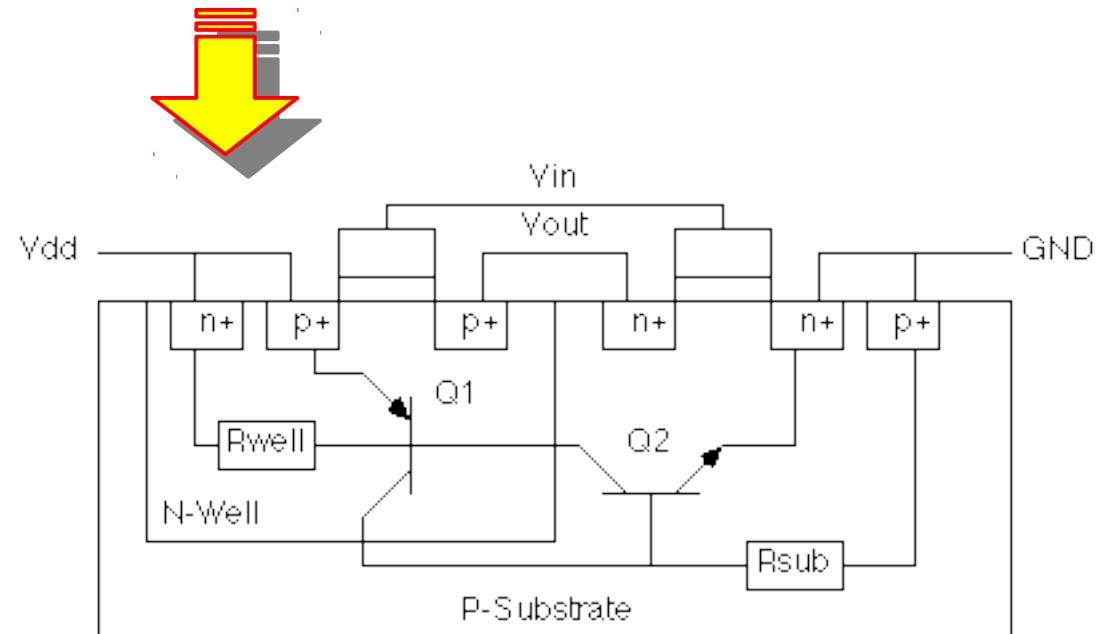
- ➔ Creation of a low-resistance path between Vdd and Gnd due to a positive feedback loop formed by parasitic devices.



CMOS inverter and its symbol



Equivalent parasitic BiPolar circuit



vertical PNP

lateral NPN

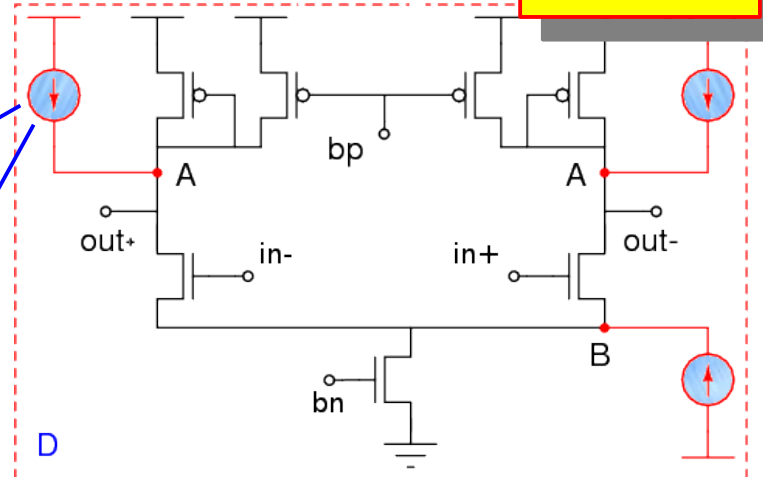
Wafer cross-section of the inverter

# Modeling Radiation Effects

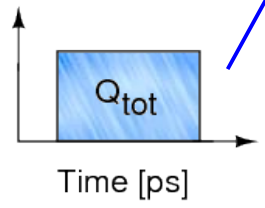
Taking radiation into account in simulations

- Radiation = current pulse
  - ➔ E.g.: 0.3 **pC** in 130 nm CMOS
- Plot: Effect vs  $Q$ 
  - ➔ Define/check specifications
  - ➔ Repeat the cycle

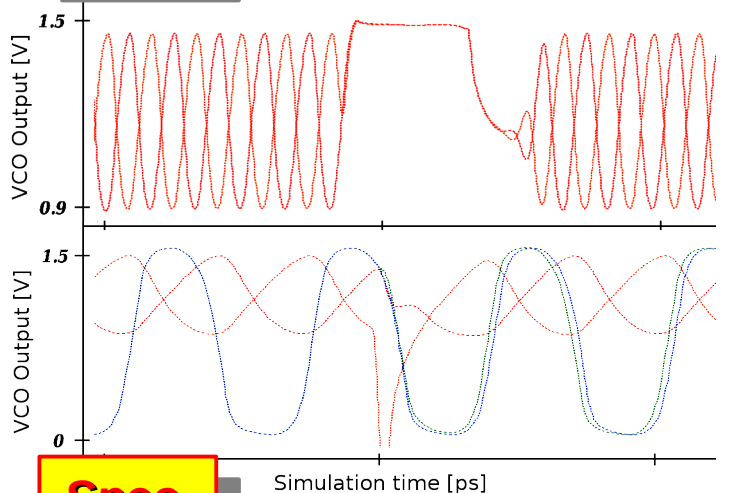
**Circuit**



**Q**



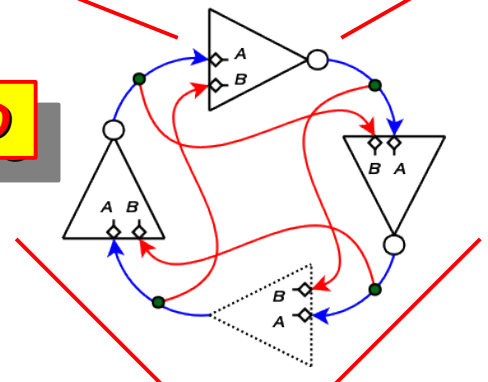
**SETs**



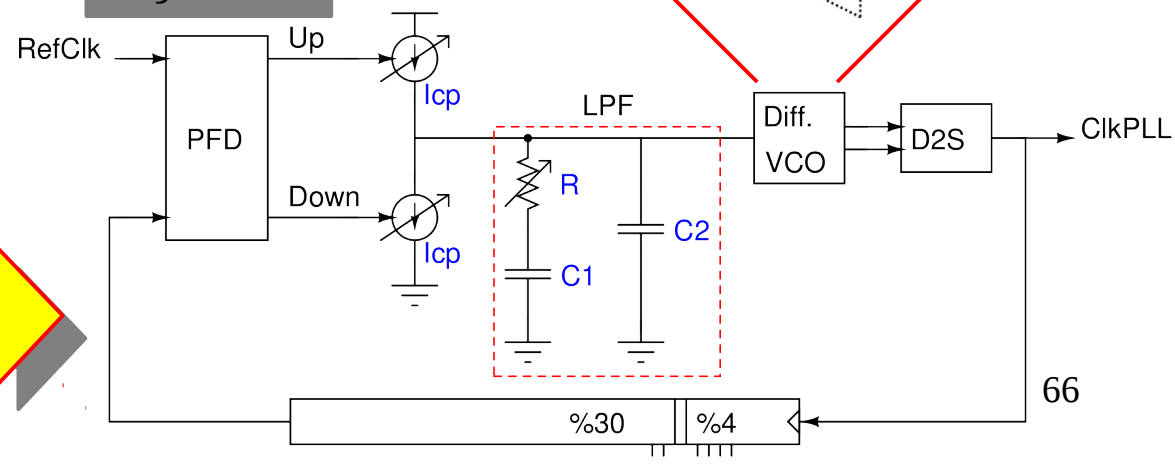
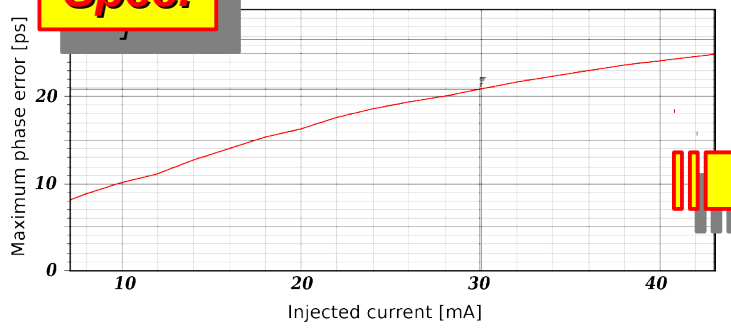
**You start here !!**

**System**

**VCO**



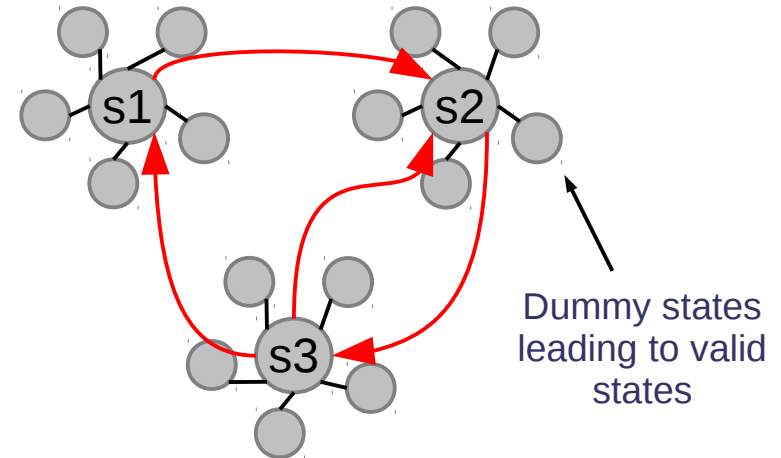
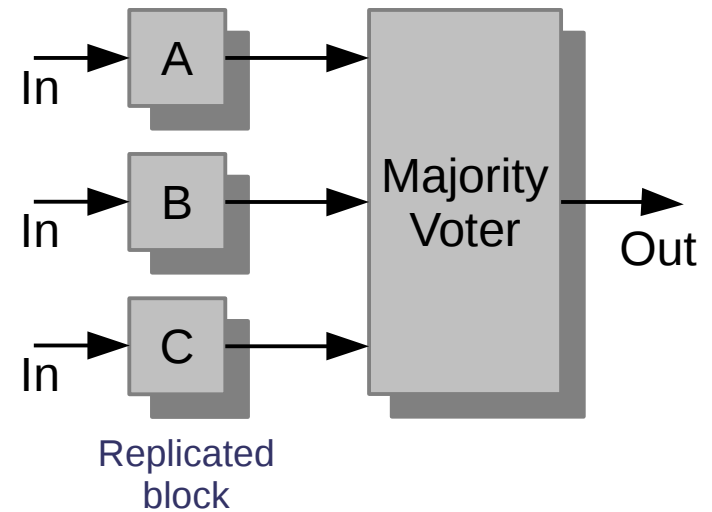
**Spec.**



# Rad-Hard Design Tricks

## Adding robustness to circuits

- Use **higher current levels** and/or larger devices
  - The current/voltage excursions ionizing particles generate stay insignificant
  - Prise to pay: increased circuit footprint and power dissipation, slower operation, etc.
- Use **triple-well** and/or **guard-ring** structures frequently
  - To ground any noise before it reaches to sensitive circuitry
- Use **Modular Redundancy** (nMR)
  - Replicate circuitry and vote at the output, Triple Modular Redundancy (TMR) is commonly used
  - The probability for an ionizing particle to affect all the three blocks at the same time is very low, therefore this technique is commonly used to harden designs against SEU
- Use **dummy states** to protect Finite State Machines (**FSM**) against SEUs
  - If a state change occurs due to an ionizing particle passage, the FSM can return to a valid state without impairing
  - Prise to pay: more complex FSM design, increased power dissipation and circuit footprint
- Place the ASICs within magnet **shadows** (where applicable)
  - To decrease radiation tolerance requirements



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