Radiation effects in devices and technologies

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Radiation effects in devices and technologies

Outline

- ✓ General view
- ✓ Total Ionizing Dose (TID)
- ✓ Displacement damage
- ✓ Single Event Effects
  - SEU, SET
  - Destructive events

Summary of radiation effects

Cumulative effects

Total Ionizing Dose (TID)

Potentially all components

Displacement damage

Bipolar technologies
Optocouplers
Optical sources
Optical detectors (photodiodes)

Single Event Effects (SEE)

Permanent SEEs

SEL
CMOS technologies
SEB
Power MOSFETs, BJT and diodes
SEGR
Power MOSFETs

Static SEEs

SEU, SEFI
Digital ICs

Transient SEEs

Combinational logic
Operational amplifiers

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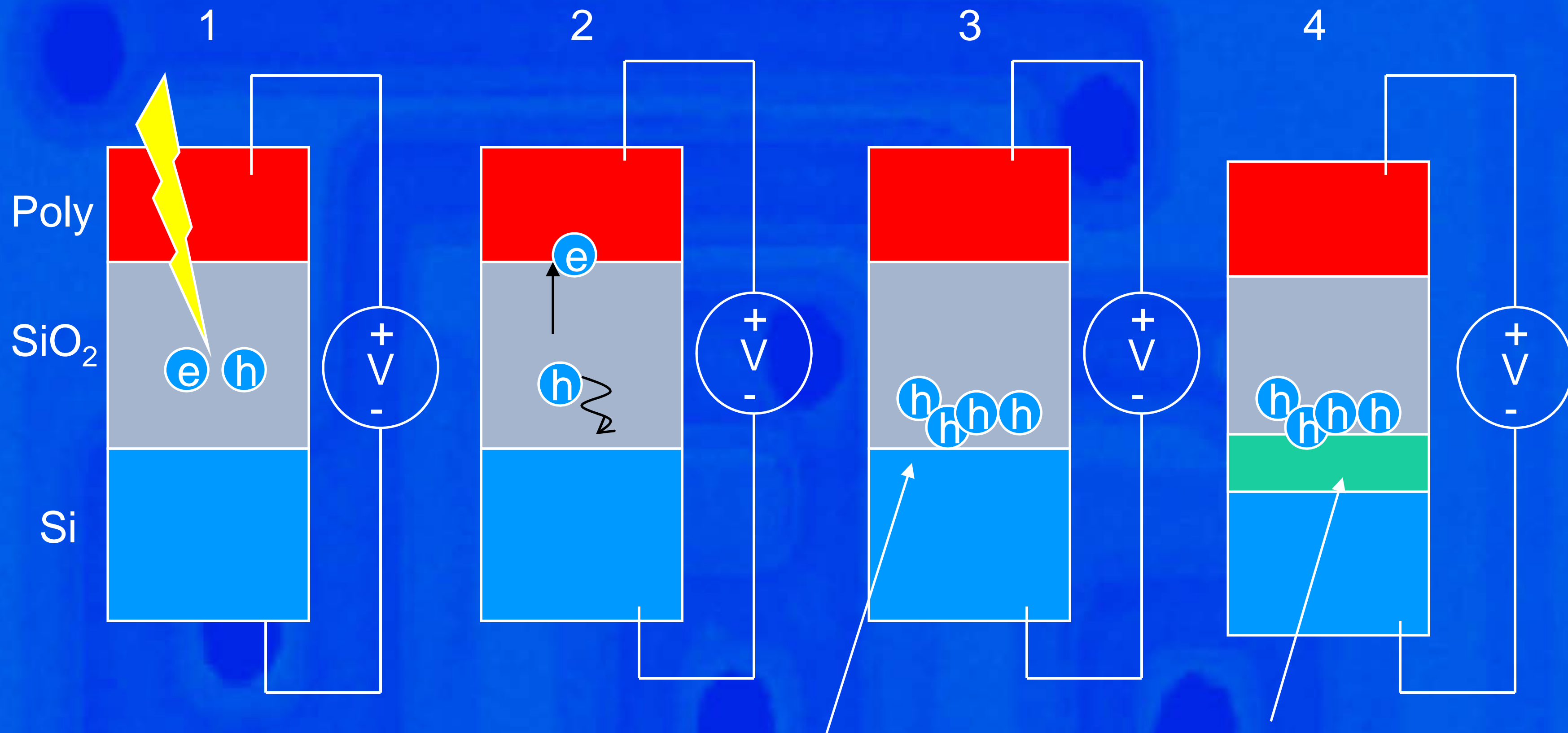
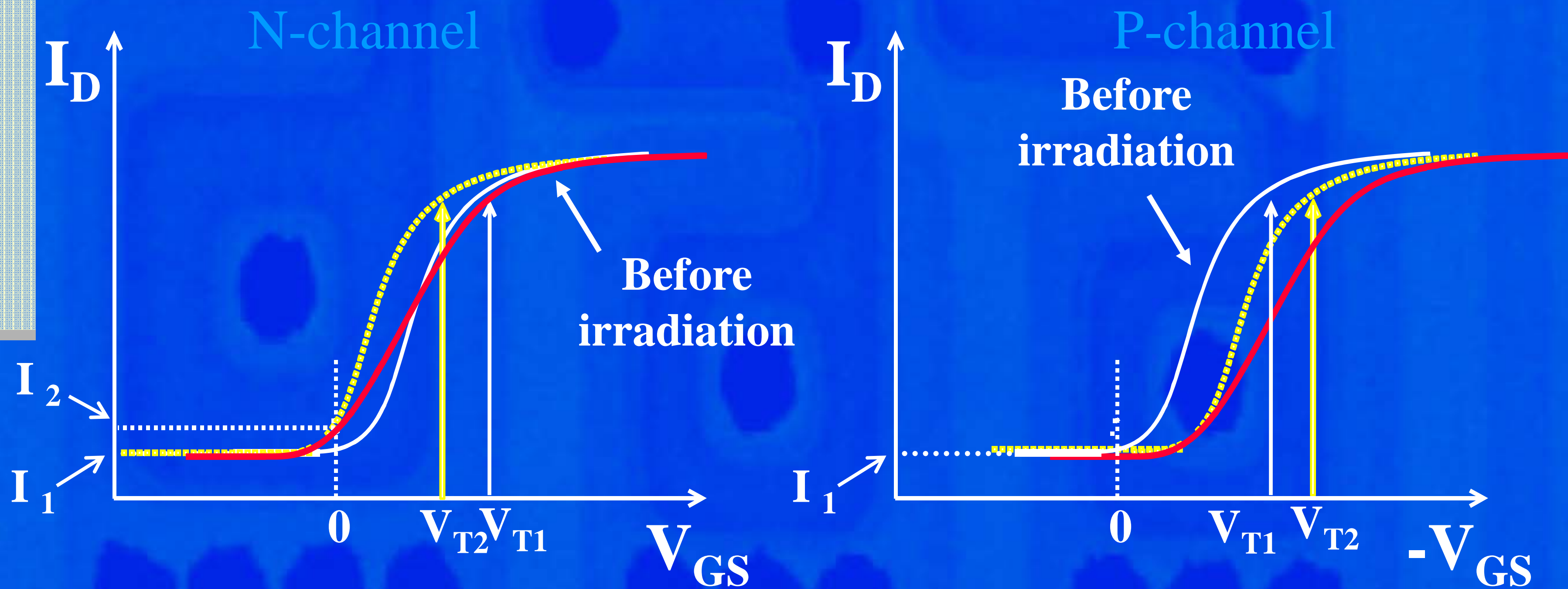
TID in MOS structures



Contributions to the V_T shift

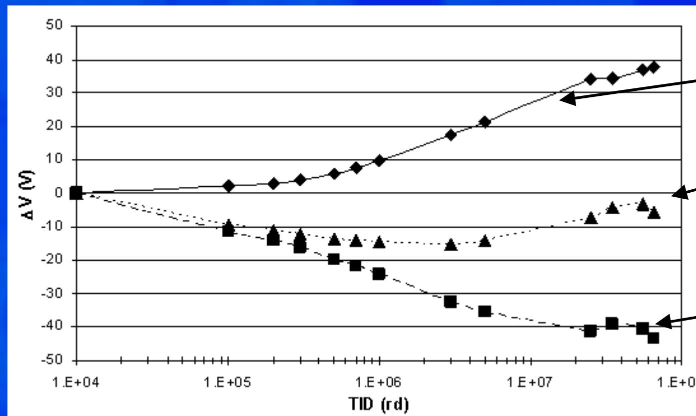
	n-channel	p-channel
• Oxide charges	—	—
• Interface states	+	—



Different evolution of defects

- All charge trapped in the oxide or in the interface states affect the electric field across the oxide (hence the Vt of the structure).
- The evolution of charge trapping and interface state formation during and after irradiation is different. This is very relevant for the overall evolution of the measured behavior.

Example: very thick oxide NMOS



Contrib from interface states

Net effect on Vth

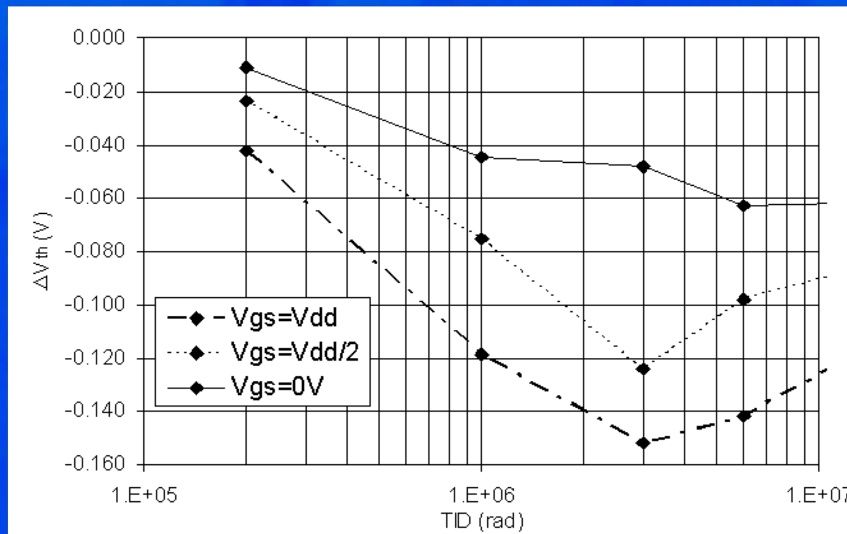
Contrib from charge trapped in oxide

- Annealing, or self-healing, is typically driven by thermal energy or hopping of carriers from the Si layer (only about 3nm range). It is normally effective for trapped charge only, not for interface states (exception recently pointed out for thick field oxides)

Bias dependence

Bias condition during irradiation is VERY relevant for the radiation effects. During irradiation, the worst-case bias condition “pushes” holes towards the Si-SiO_2 interface.

Example: Vth shift of NMOS in 3 different bias conditions

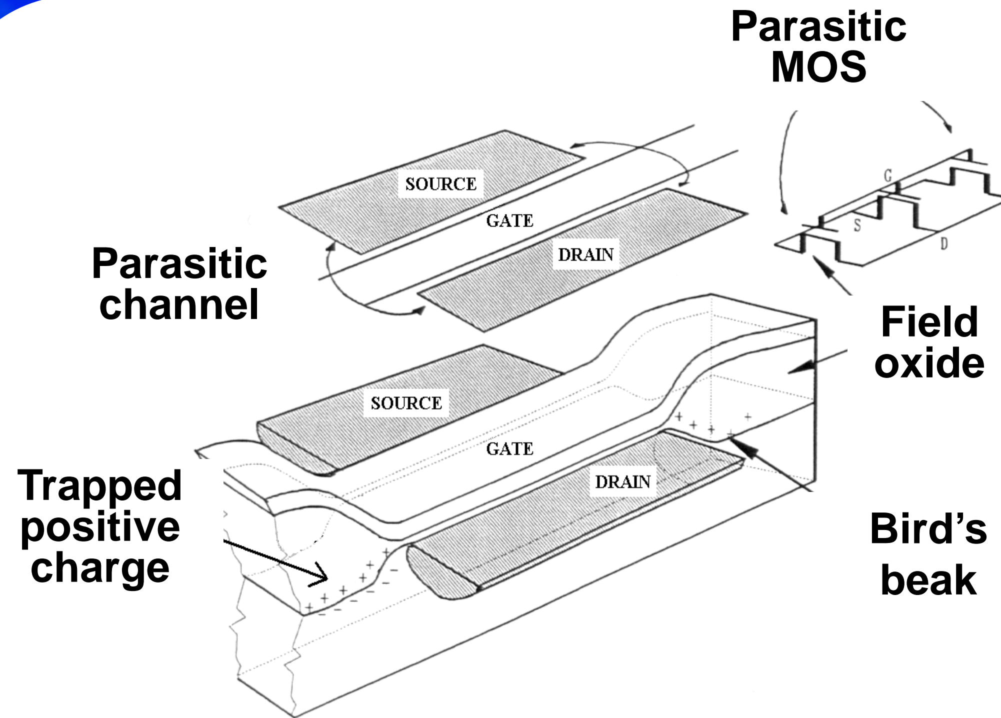


CMOS 130nm tech
W/L=0.16/0.12um

The larger the positive bias, the larger the Vth shift

RULE: Power circuits in their operational condition, or a condition known to be worst-case!

Transistor level leakage

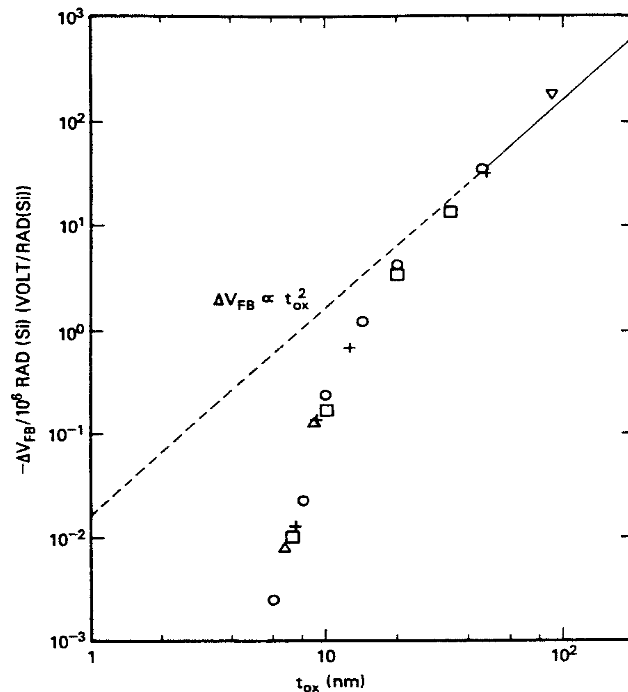


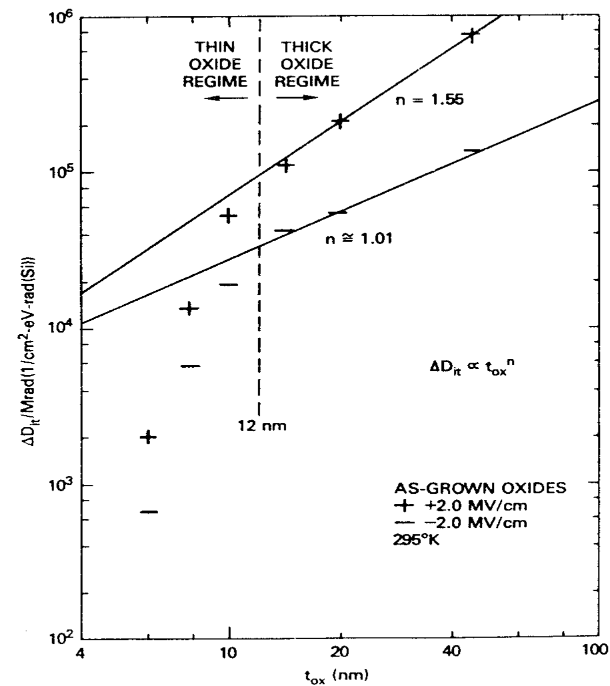
Source

Drain

TID effects and t_{ox}

Damage decreases with oxide thickness

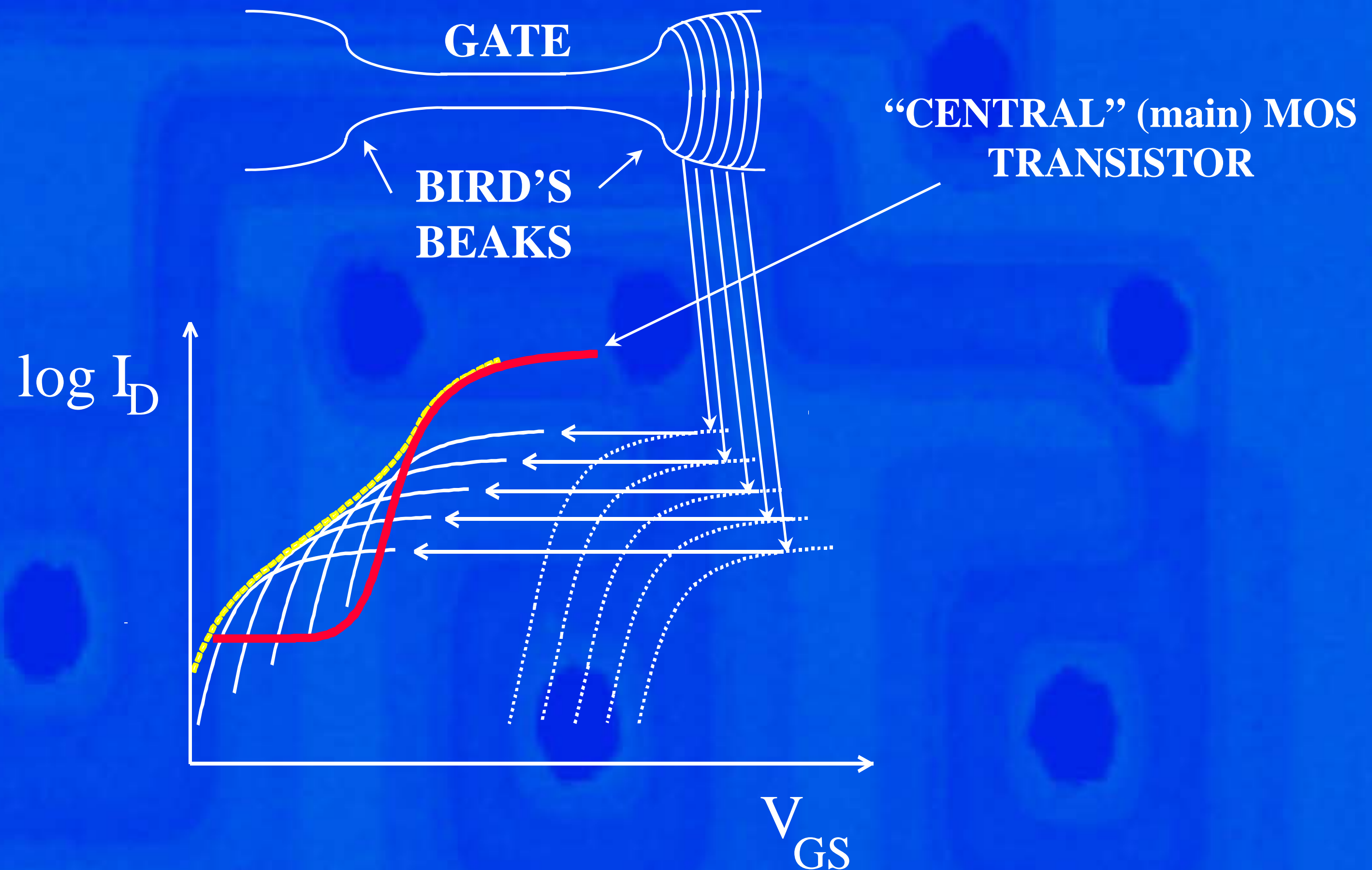




N.S. Saks et al., IEEE TNS, Dec. 1984 and Dec. 1986

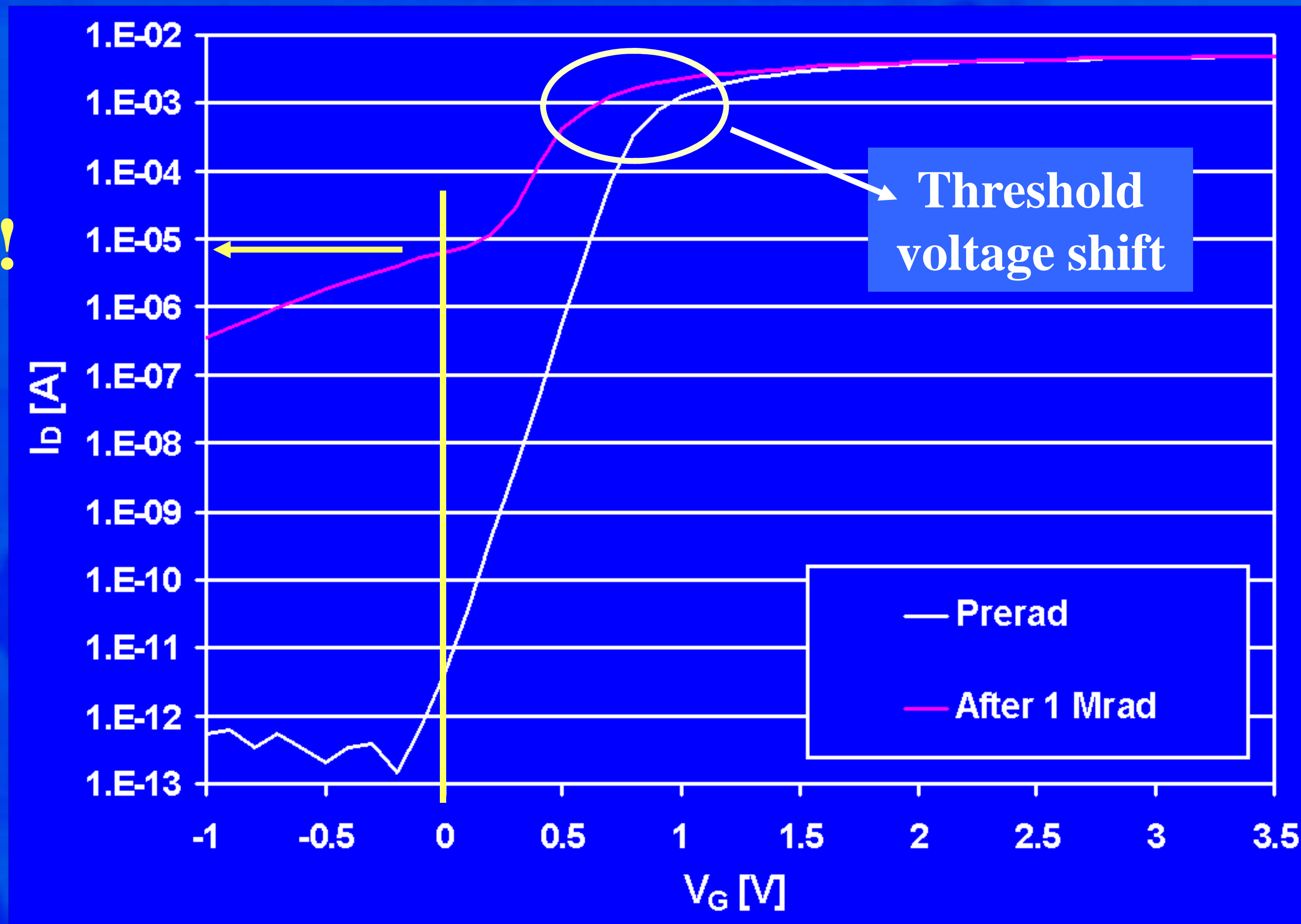
Transistor level leakage

This is for LOCOS, very similar for STI

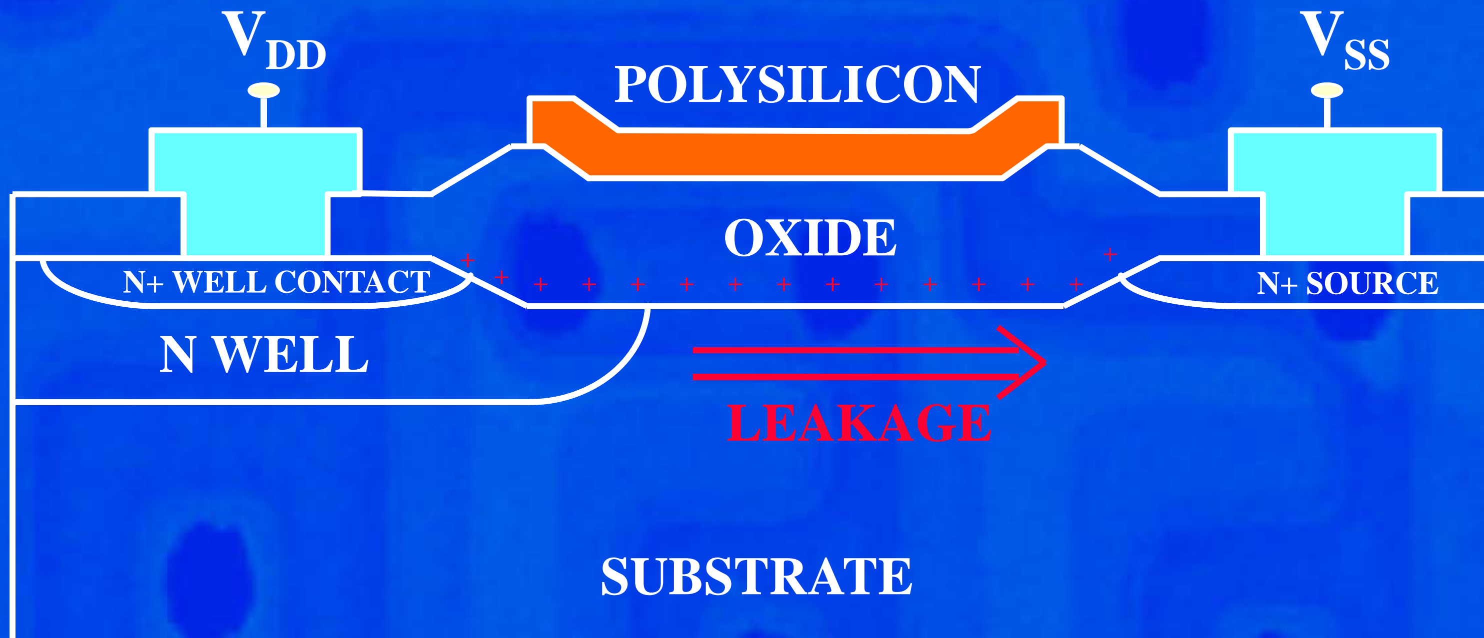


Transistor level leakage: example

NMOS - 0.7 μm technology - t_{ox} = 17 nm



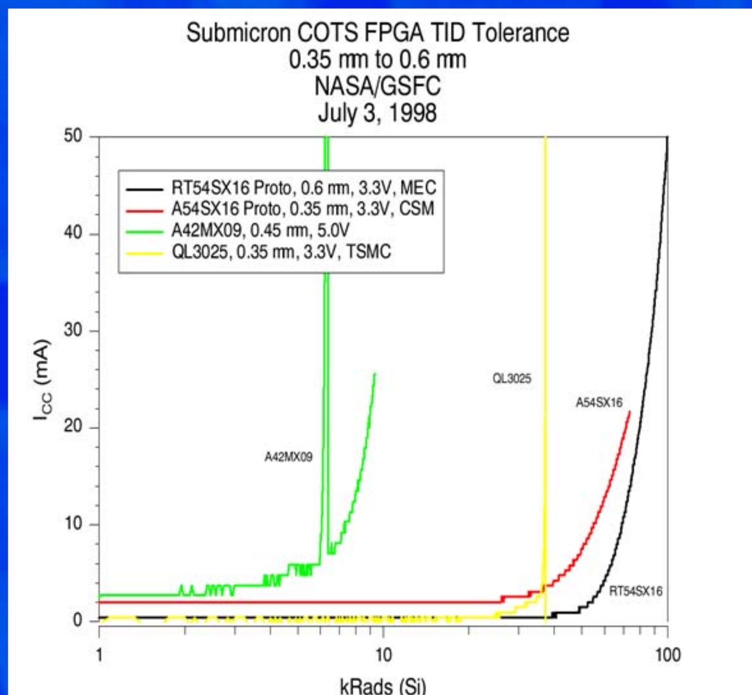
IC level leakage



The charges trapped in the thick oxide (LOCOS or STI) decrease the Vth of the MOS structure, and the p substrate can be inverted even in the absence of an electric field. A leakage current can appear.

TID-induced failure

- ✓ In modern technologies, leakage current is typically the killer



TID in CMOS

Summary of the problems

- ✓ Main transistor:
  - Threshold voltage shift, transconductance and noise degradation
  - Effects get negligible in modern deep submicron (as from 250-180 nm techs)
- ✓ Parasitic leakage paths:
  - Source – drain leakage
  - Leakage between devices
  - This are still potentially deleterious – although things looks to be better as from 130nm techs

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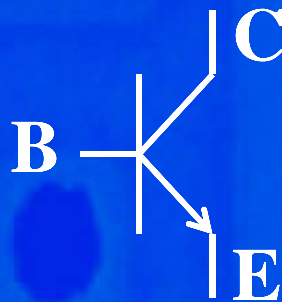
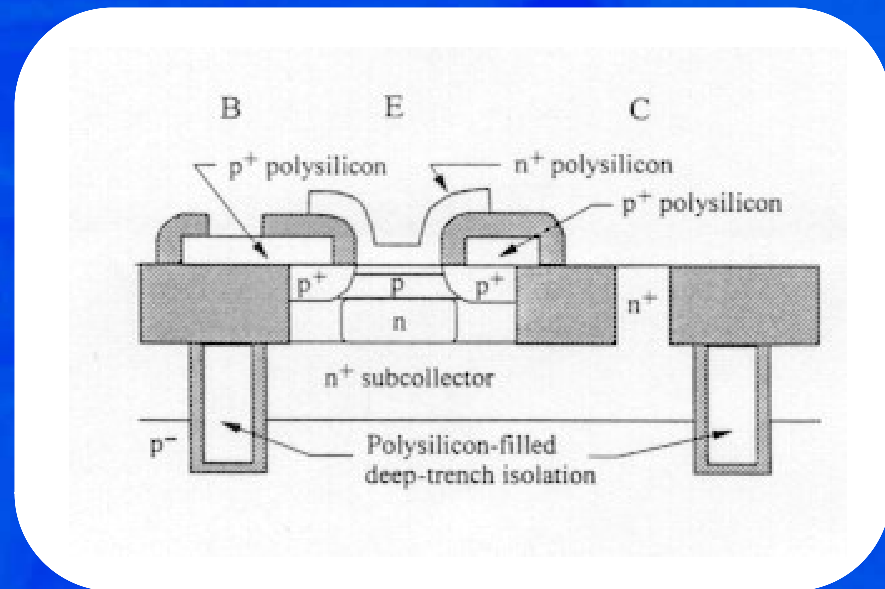
Bipolar transistors



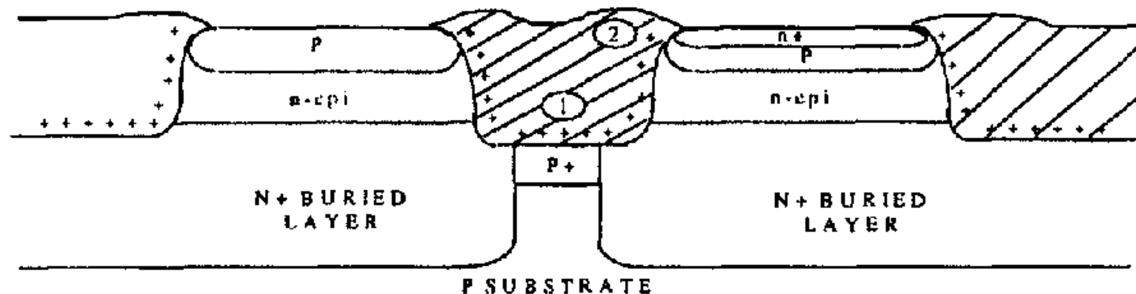


Current Gain = $\beta = I_C / I_B$

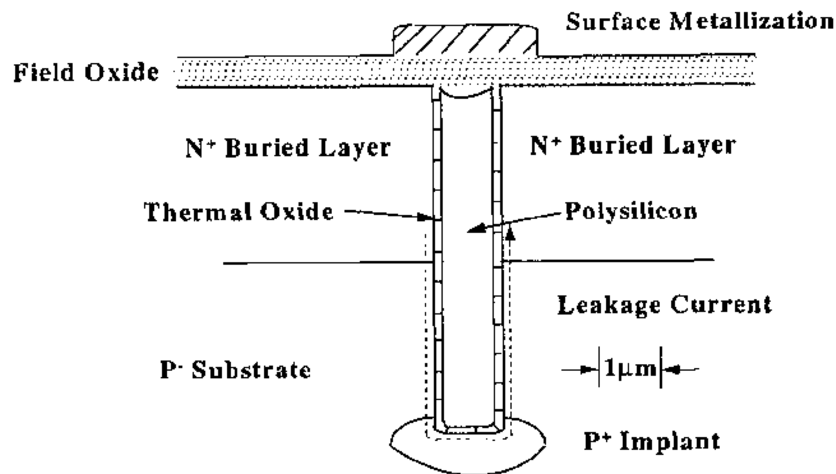
$g_m = I_C/\phi_t$

TID in bipolar devices

Substrate, sidewall and surface inversion (in oxide-isolated processes)



R.L.Pease et al., IEEE Trans. Nucl. Science. Vol.32, N.6, 1985

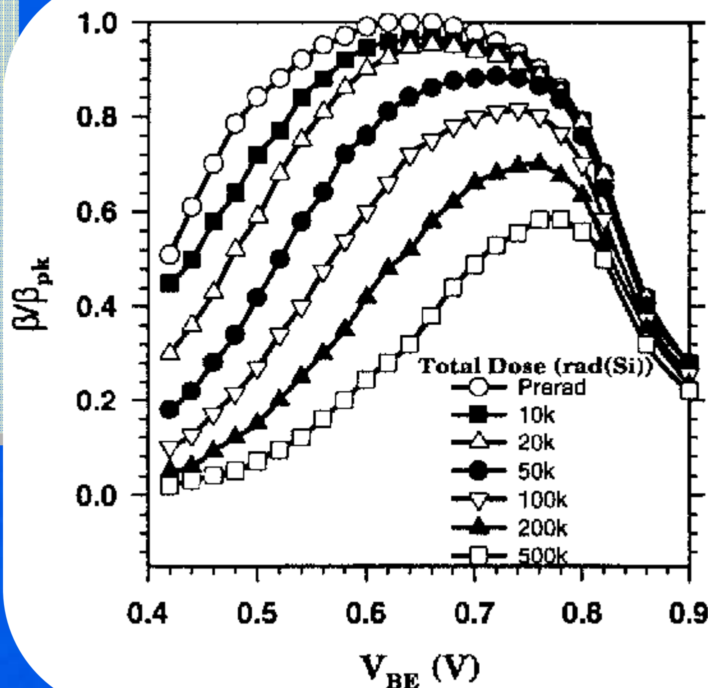


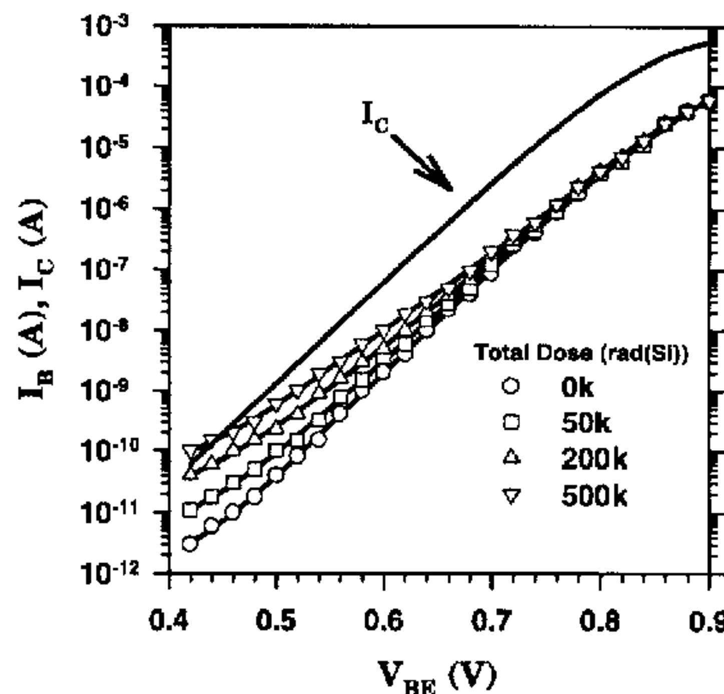
E.W.Enlow et al., IEEE Trans. Nucl. Science. Vol.36, N.6, 1989

TID in bipolar devices

Gain degradation:

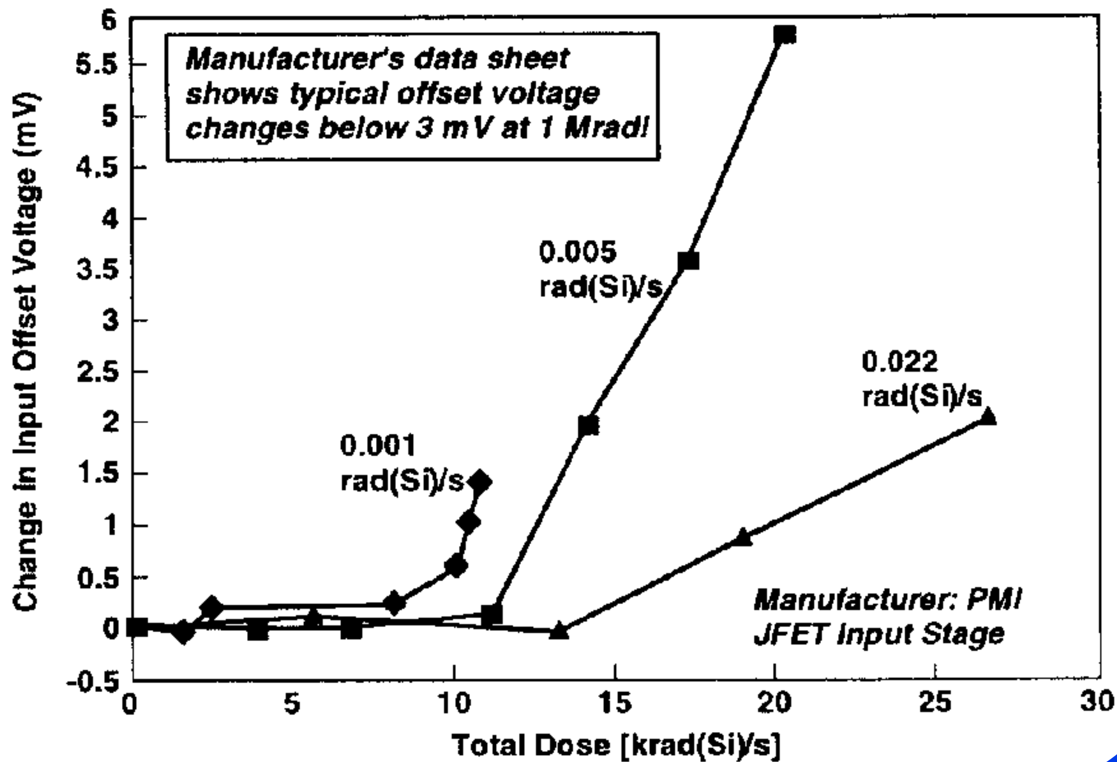
Increase of the surface component of the base current





R.N.Nowlin et al., IEEE Trans. Nucl. Science. Vol.39, N.6, 1992

ELDR effects in bipolars



A.H.Johnston et al., JPL internal report, 1999

Larger degradation can be observed at low dose rate, which can not be simply anticipated with laboratory tests

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Displacement in bipolar devices

- ✓ Gain degradation due to increased recombination of minority carriers in the base

Displacement damage equation:

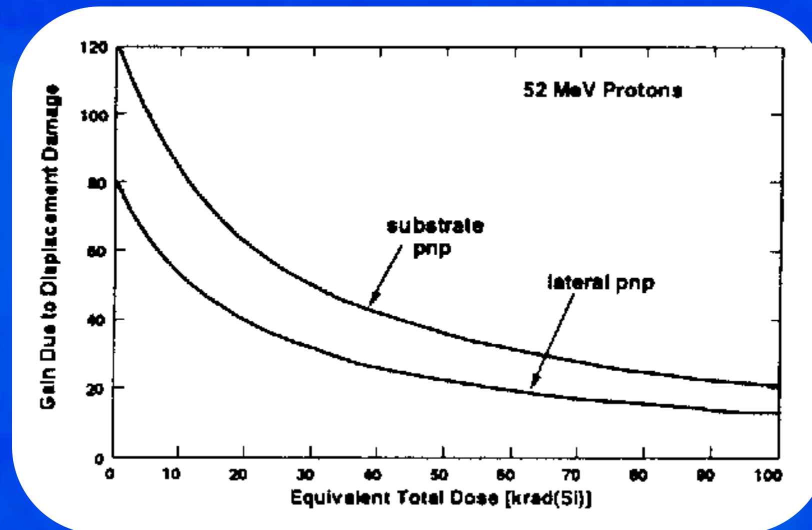
$$1/\beta - 1/\beta_0 = \Phi / [K(2\pi f_T)]$$

β_0 is the pre-rad value, β is the value at a cumulative fluence Φ
NB: The majority of linear ICs are still manufactured in old junction-isolated processes, BUT using less conservative approaches (more PNP transistors used in critical places)

- ✓ Results on biased and unbiased devices are almost identical

Displacement in bipolar devices

Effects for lateral and substrate PNP



B.G.Rax et al., to be published in IEEE Trans. Nucl. Science, Vol.46, n.6, December 1999

B.G.Rax et al., to be published in IEEE Trans. Nucl. Science, Vol.46, n.6, December 1999

Displacement damage effects are generally negligible below $3{\cdot}10^{10}$ p/cm^2 (50MeV) also for PNP transistors

At levels above about $3{\cdot}10^{11}$ p/cm^2 , they start to become significant also for NPN transistors

Bipolar technologies

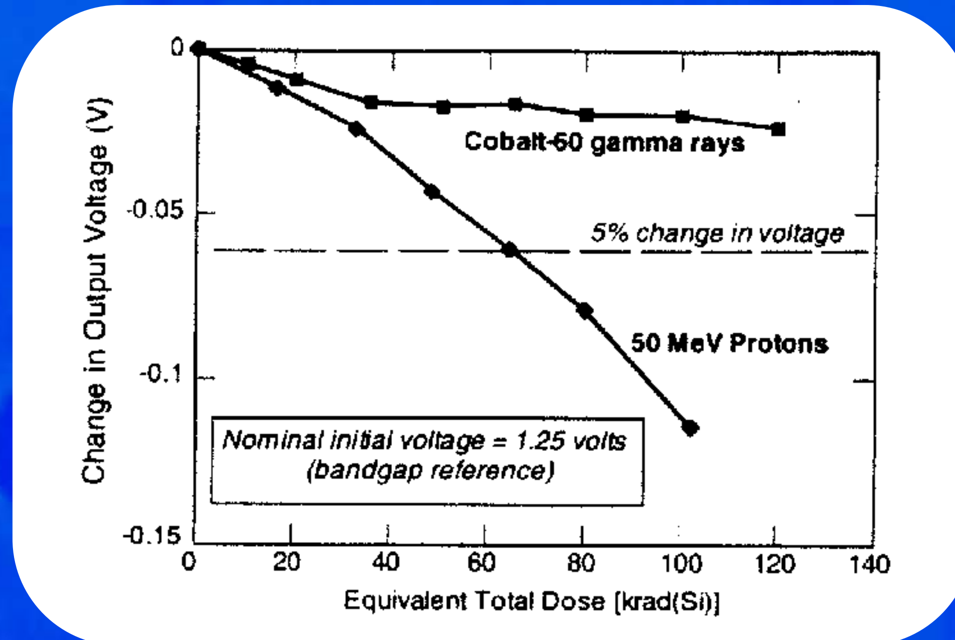
Simultaneous effects: they add up

TID
Leakage paths and β degradation
Sensitive with dose rate effects
Variable failure levels

Displacement damage
β degradation
Voltage regulators, comparators, op amps

Displacement in bipolar devices: example

LM117 positive voltage regulator; effect of TID and displacement add up!



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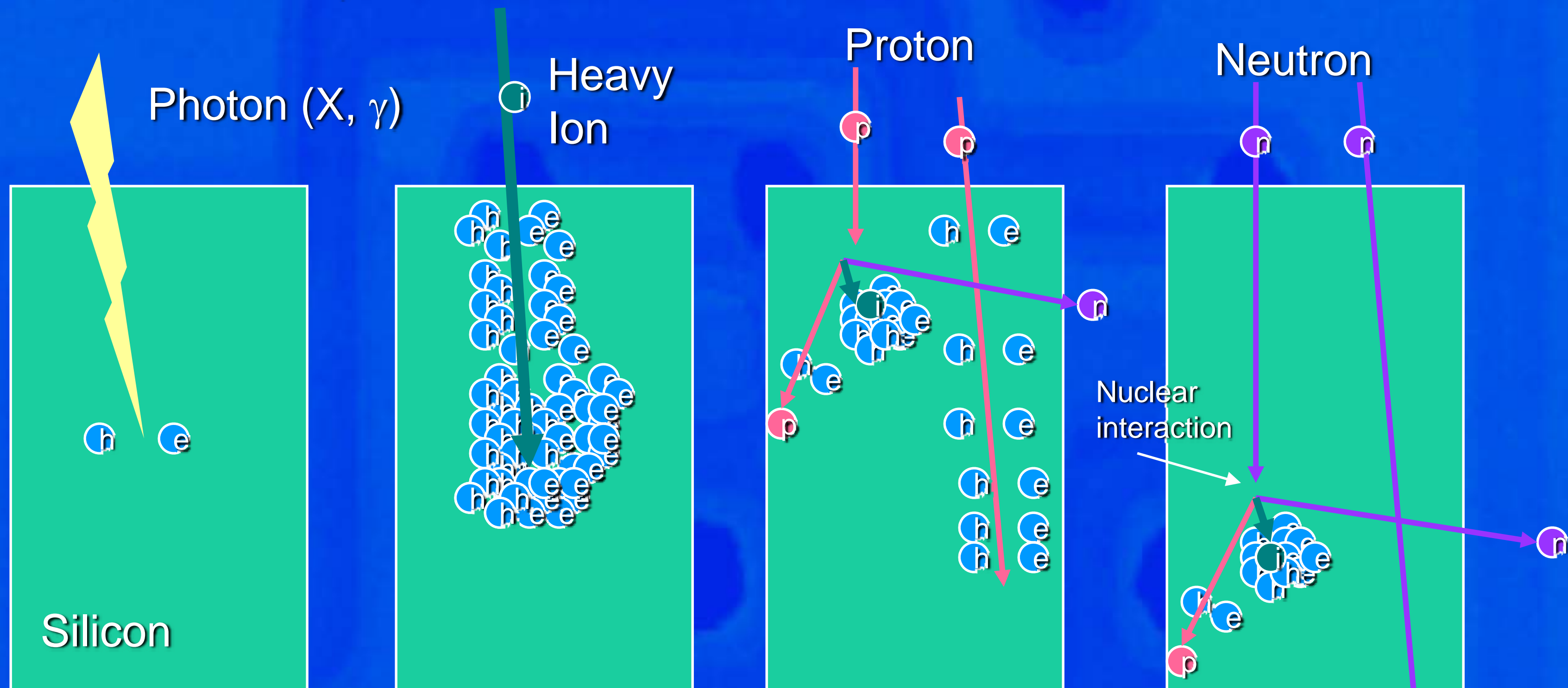
Ionization from different radiation

- ✓ Traceable to the energy deposition initiated by one single particle, in a precise instant in time. Due to its stochastic nature, this can happen at any time – even at the very beginning of the irradiation
- ✓ Which particles can induce SEEs? In the figure below, a schematic view of the density of e-h pairs created by different radiation is shown.



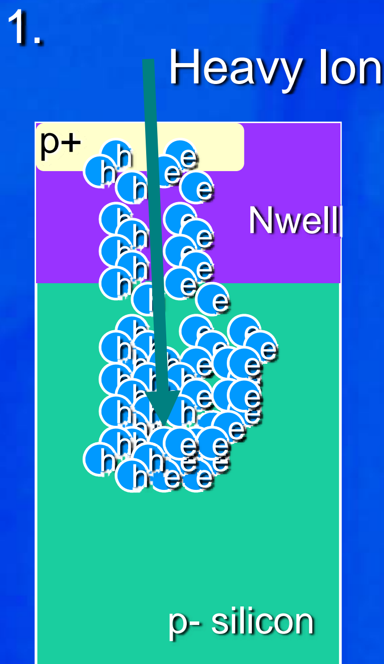
Small density of e-h pairs

Large density of e-h pairs

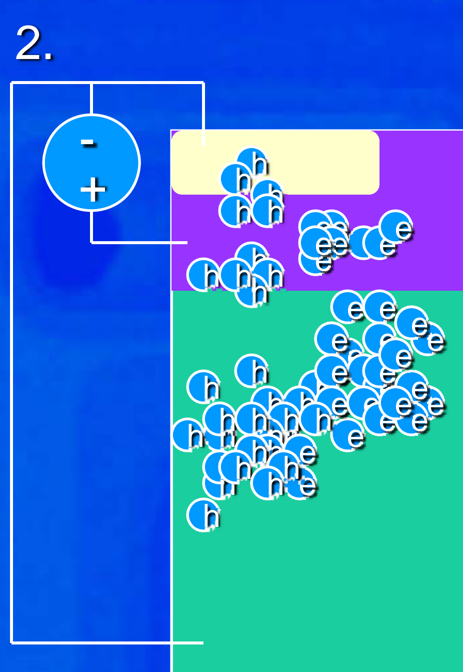
Small (proton) or no (neutron) density for direct ionization. Possible high density from Heavy Ion produced from nuclear interaction of the particle with Silicon nucleus.

Density of e-h pairs is important (1)

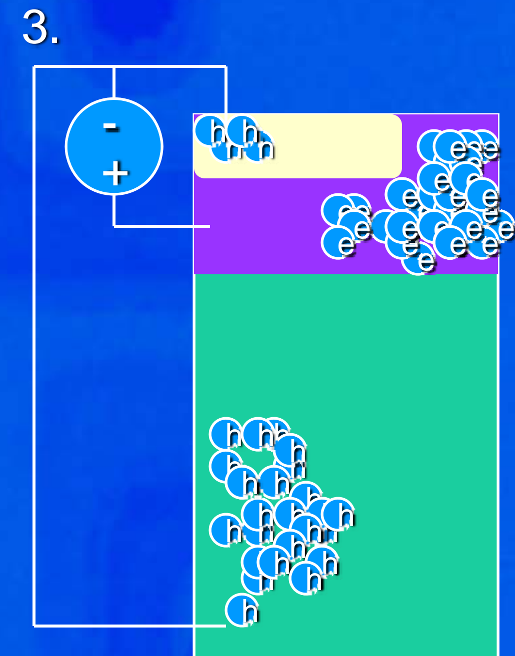
- ✓ Not all the free charge (e-h pairs) generated by radiation contributes to SEEs. Only charge in a given volume, where it can be collected in the relevant amount of time by the appropriate circuit node, matters



1. Ion strike: ionization takes place along the track (column of high-density pairs)

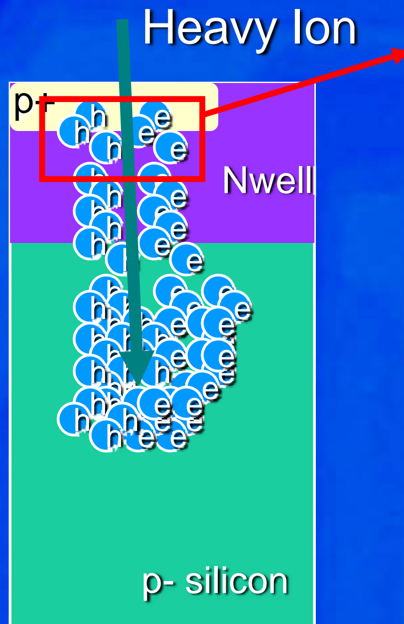


2. Charges start to migrate in the electric field across the junctions. Some drift (fast collection, relevant for SEEs), some diffuse (slow collection, less relevant for SEEs)

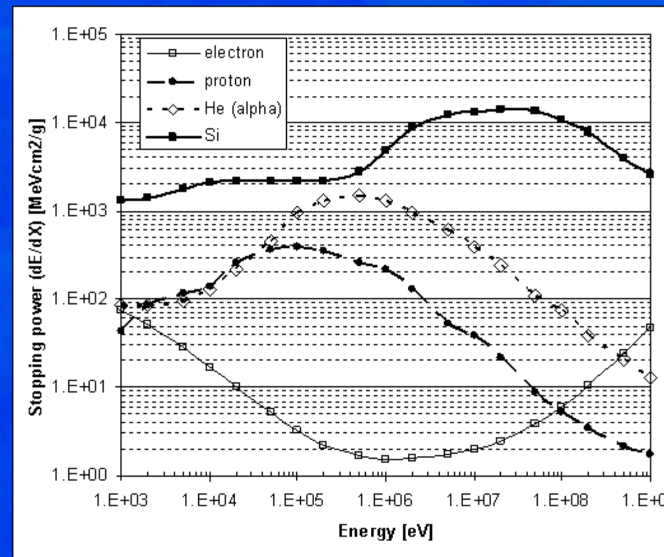


3. Charges are collected at circuit nodes. Note that, if the relevant node for the SEE is the p+ diffusion, not all charge deposited by the ion is collected there.

Density of e-h pairs is important (2)



Of all e-h pairs created by radiation, only those in (roughly) this volume are collected fast enough to contribute to an SEE at the node corresponding to the p+ diffusion (for instance, S or D of a PMOS FET). Density of pairs in this region determines if the SEE takes place or not! This is called the "SENSITIVE VOLUME" (SV)

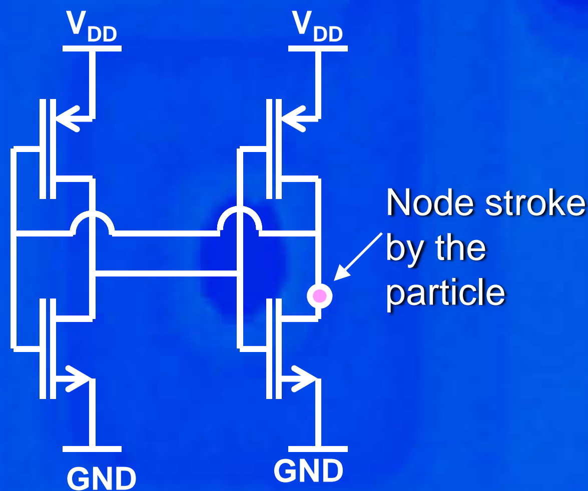


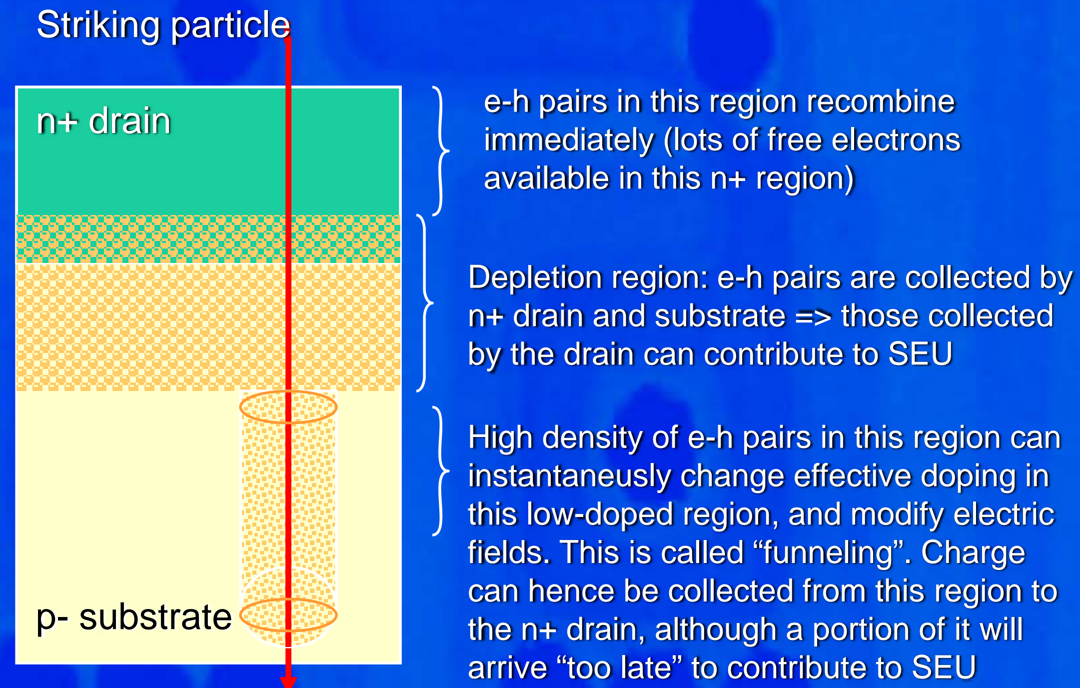
Warning: data points are approximate in this figure

The density of pairs depends on the stopping power of the particle, or dE/dx, or Linear Energy Transfer (LET). The figure above (right) shows this quantity in Si for different particles. Even protons, at their maximum stopping power, can not induce SEE in electronics circuits. Only ions, either directly from the radiation environment or from nuclear interaction of radiation (p, n, …) in Silicon can deposit enough energy in the SV to induce SEEs.

Single Event Upset (SEU) (1)

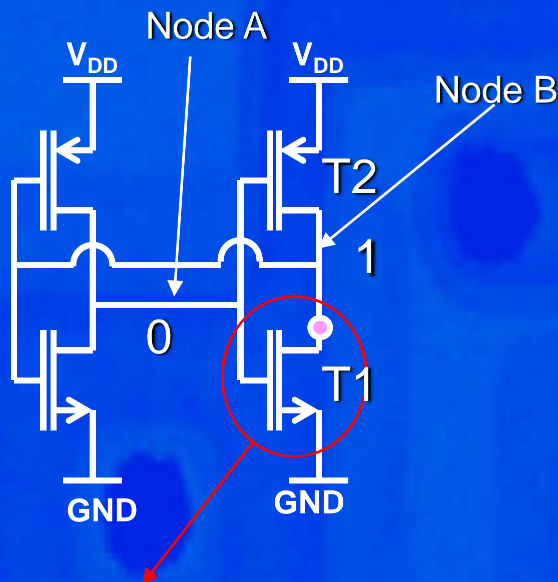
The e-h pairs created by an ionizing particle can be collected by a junction that is part of a circuit where a logic level is stored (logic 0 or 1). This can induce the "flip" of the logic level stored. This event is called an "upset" or a "soft error".
This typically happens in memories and registers. The following example is for an SRAM cell.





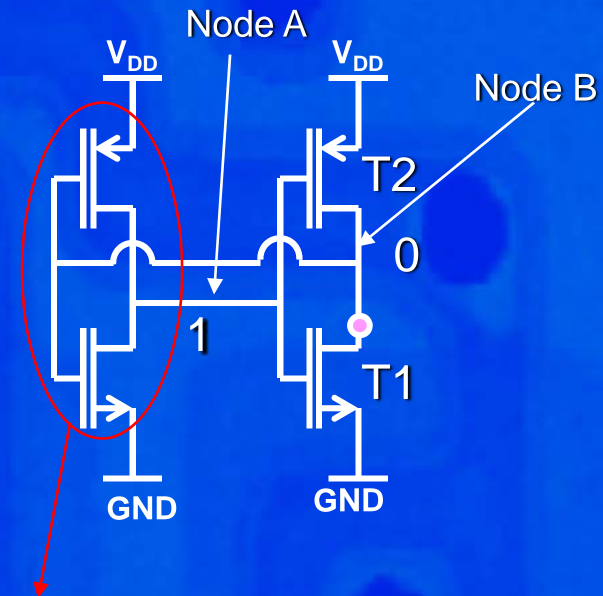
Single Event Upset (SEU) (2)

1. Initial condition
(correct value stored)



Charge collected at the drain of NMOS T1 tends to lower the potential of the node B to gnd. PMOS T2 provides current from Vdd to compensate, but has a limited current capability. If the collected charge is large enough, the voltage of node B drops below Vdd/2

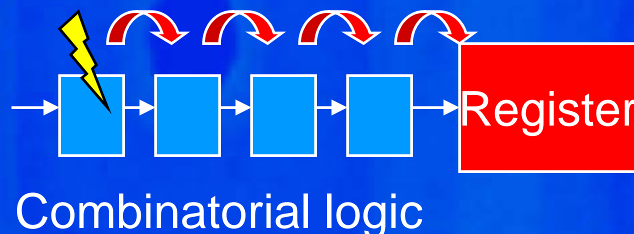
2. Final condition
(wrong value stored)

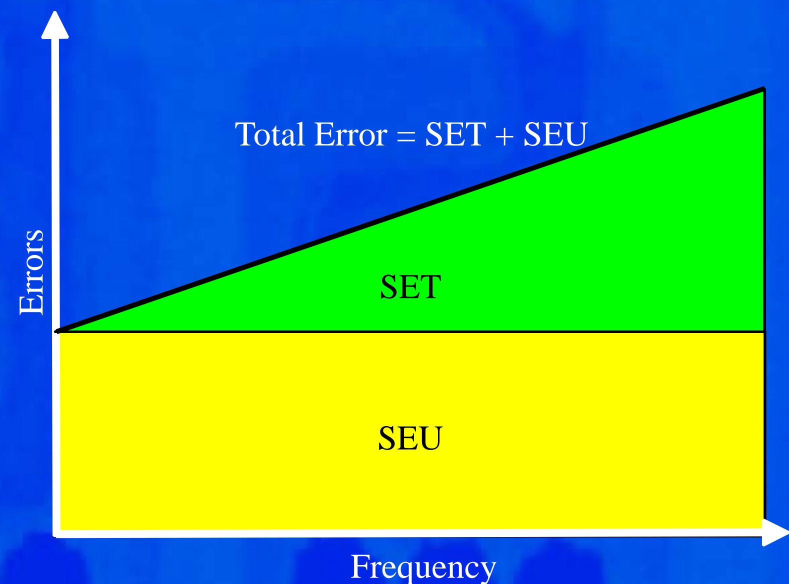


When node B drops below Vdd/2, the other inverter in the SRAM cell changes its output (node A) to logic 1. This opens T2 and closes T1, latching the wrong data in the memory cell.

"Digital" Single Event Transient (SET)

- ✓ Particle hit in combinatorial logic: with modern fast technologies, the induced pulse can propagate through the logic until it is possibly latched in a register
- ✓ Latching probability proportional to clock frequency
- ✓ Linear behaviour with clock frequency is observed



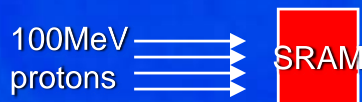


SEU cross-section (1)

- ✓ Sensitivity of a circuit to SEU (or in general to any SEE) is characterized by a cross-section
- ✓ The cross-section contains the information about the probability of the event in a radiation environment

Example: what is the error rate of an SRAM in a beam of 100MeV protons of flux 10^5 p/cm^{2}s?

1. Take the SRAM and irradiate with 100MeV proton beam. To get good statistics, use maximum flux available (unless the error rate observed during test is too large, which might imply double errors are not counted => error in the estimate)



2. Count the number of errors corresponding to a measured fluence (=flux x time) of particles used to irradiate

Example:
N of errors = 1000
Fluence = 10^{12} p/cm^2

Cross-section (σ)= N/F = 10^{-9} cm^2

3. Multiply the cross-section for the estimated flux of particles in the radiation environment. The result is directly the error rate, or number of errors per unit time.

If (σ) = 10^{-9} cm^2

and flux = 10^5 p/cm^{2}s

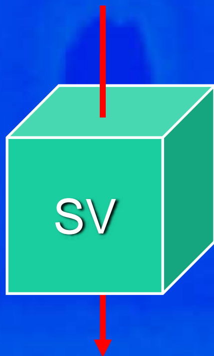
Error rate = 10^{-4} errors/s

SEU cross-section (2)

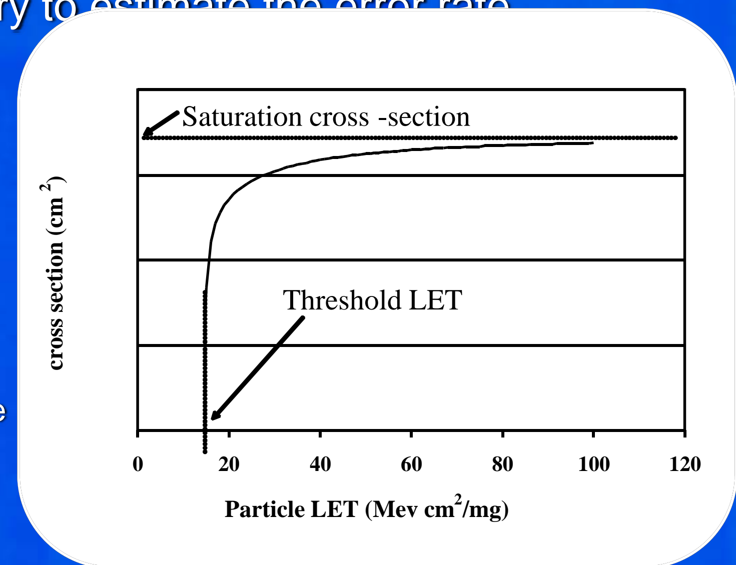
- ✓ In reality, things are generally more difficult – the real radiation environment is a complex field of particles
- ✓ One needs models to translate cross-sections measured at experimental facilities (protons or heavy ions beams) into error rates in the field
- ✓ The better the experimenter knows the sensitivity of the circuit, the better he/she can estimate the error rate in the real environment
- ✓ Heavy Ions (HI) irradiation tests are very good to probe completely the sensitivity of a circuit. With HI, it is possible to vary the LET of the particles (hence the energy deposited in the SV), and measure the correspondent cross-section
- ✓ A model of the environment is then necessary to estimate the error rate

LET= 1 MeVcm²/mg

Example SV: Cube with 1um sides



The path of this particle in the SV is 1um. Since the density of Si is 2.32g/cm³, the energy deposited in the SV is about 232keV.
If the LET is changed, by changing the ion, to 5, then the deposited energy exceeds 1MeV.
It is possible to chart the measured cross-section for different LET of the ions, as shown in the figure to the right.



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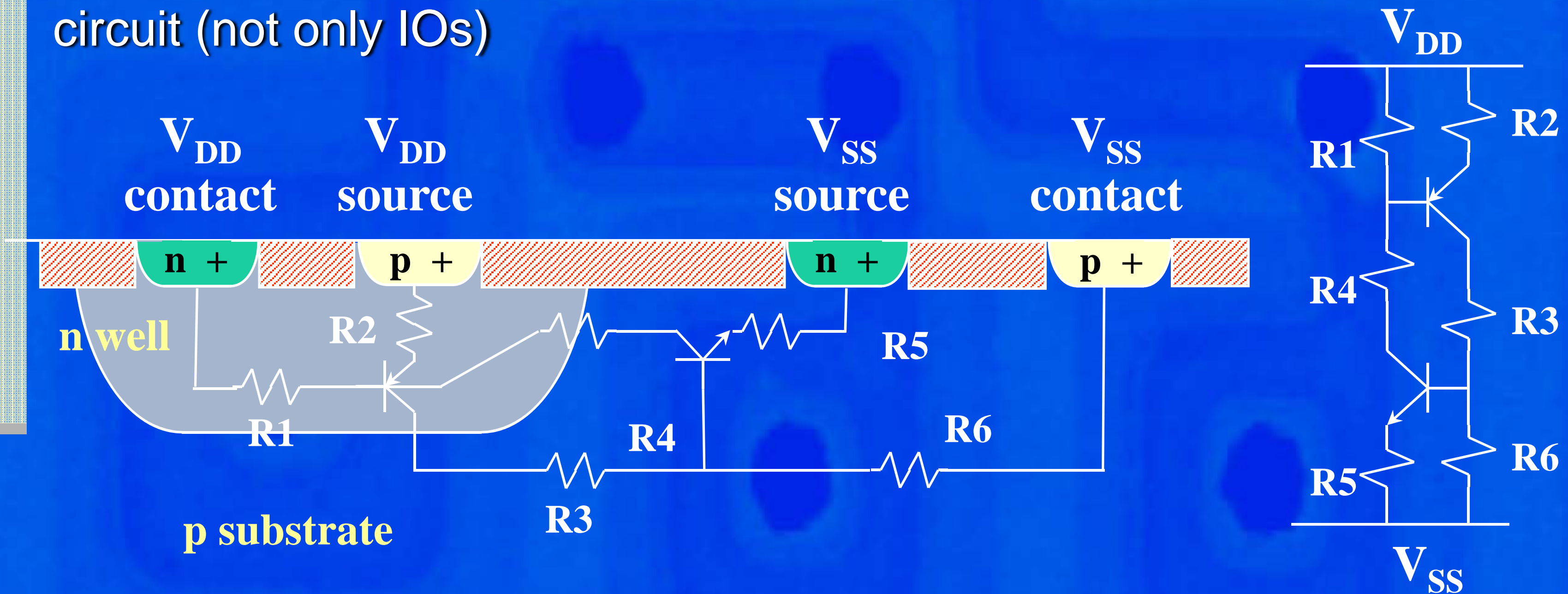
Destructive SEEs (Hard errors)

- ✓ SEBO => Single Event Burnout occurring in power MOSFET, BJT (IGBT) and power diodes
- ✓ SEGR => Single Event Gate Rupture occurring in power MOSFET
- ✓ SEL => Single Event Latchup occurring in CMOS ICs
- ✓ They can be triggered by the nuclear interaction of charged hadrons and neutrons

Single Event Latchup (SEL)

Electrical latchup might be initiated by electrical transients on input/output lines, elevated T or improper sequencing of power supply biases. These modes are normally addressed by the manufacturer.

Latchup can be initiated by ionizing particles (SEL) in any place of the circuit (not only IOs)



A.H. Johnston et al., IEEE TNS, Apr. 1996

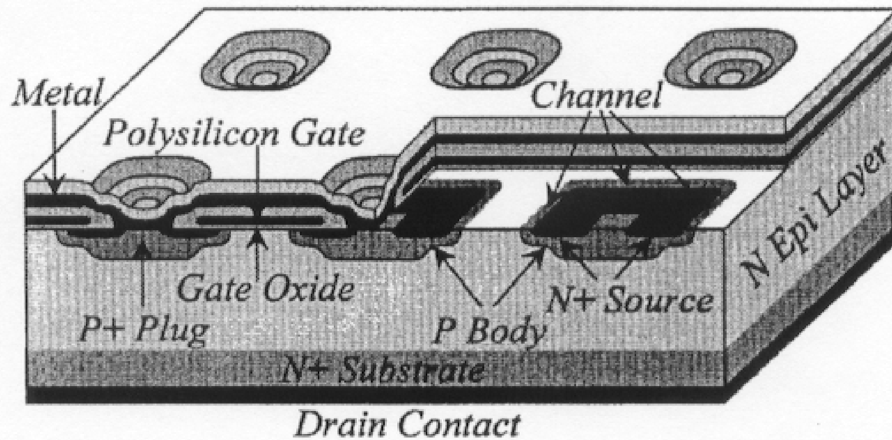
SEL: experiments

- ✓ Experiments aim at measuring the cross-section. To avoid destruction after the first occurrence, power (both core and I/Os) has to be shut off promptly upon detection of the SEL
- ✓ SEL sensitivity is enhanced by temperature, hence the test should be done at the maximum foreseen T
- ✓ Though in general modern technologies should be less sensitive to SEL, there are exceptions!
- ✓ SEL can be induced by high energy protons and neutrons
  - This is not very frequent, but in literature one can find at least 15-20 devices for which SEL was experimentally induced by proton or neutron irradiation
  - When looking at devices for which Heavy Ion data exist in literature, a rule of a thumb is: if they do not latch below an LET of 15 $MeVcm^2mg^{-1}$, they will not latch in a proton-neutron environment. In fact, typically they need to have an SEL threshold around 4 $MeVcm^2mg^{-1}$ to be sensitive (but take this figure with precaution, since it is base on little statistics available…)
  - If a component is suspected to be sensitive, use high energy protons for the test (the SEL cross-section can be even 15 times larger for tests at 200MeV than for tests with 50MeV protons). Also, use a large fluence of particles for the test – at least $5x10^{10}$ cm^{-2} – and to enhance SEL probability increase the T during the test

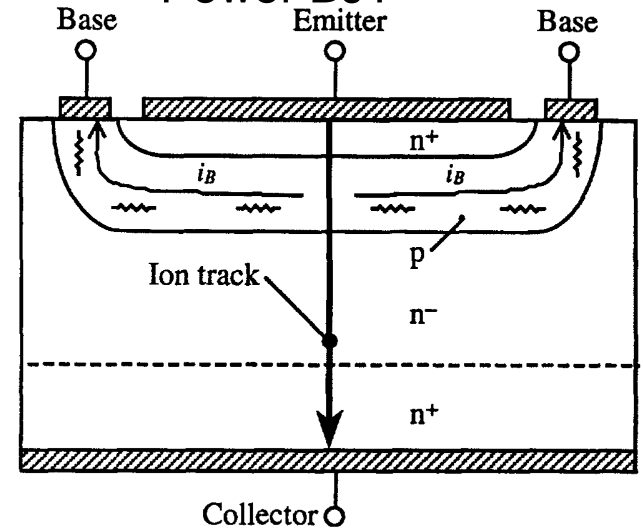
SEBO (SEB)

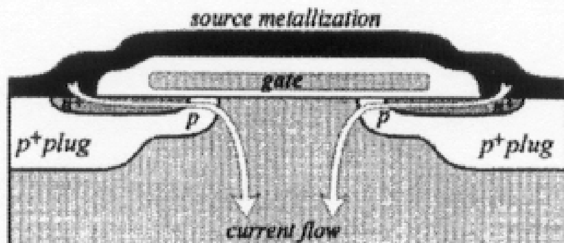
Double-diffused MOS (DMOS) power transistor and power BJT transistors are vulnerable

Power DMOS



Power BJT

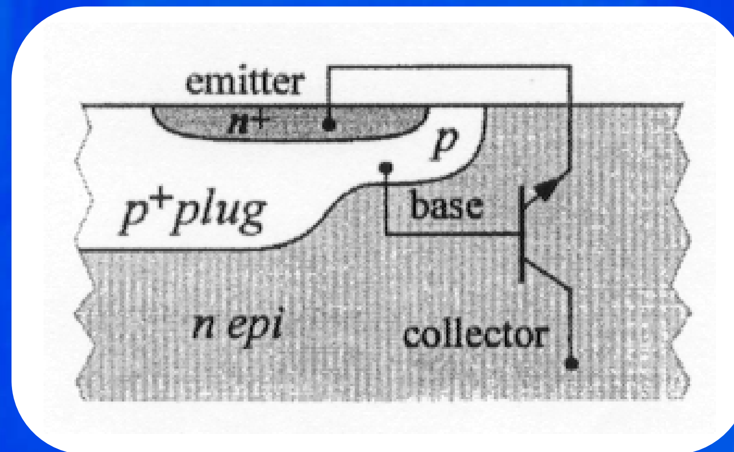




J.H.Johnson & K.F.Galloway, IEEE NSREC short course, 1996

SEBO (SEB)

Mechanism: passage of the ion in the OFF state, generating a transient current. A regenerative feedback occurs until second breakdown sets in and permanently destroys the device (short source-drain or emitter-collector).

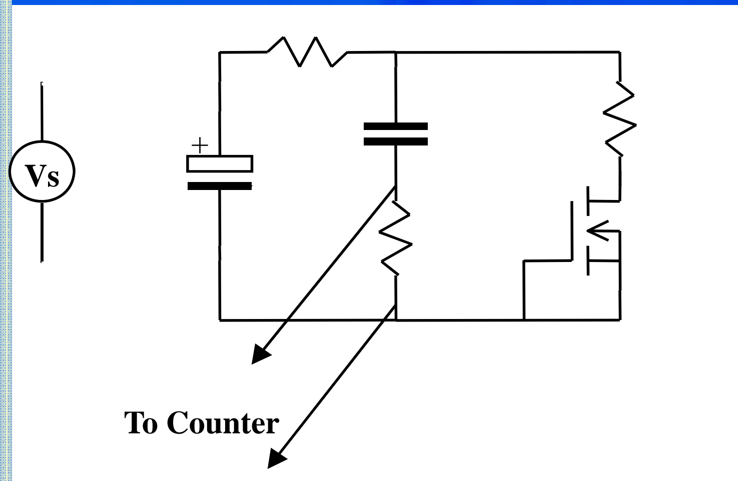


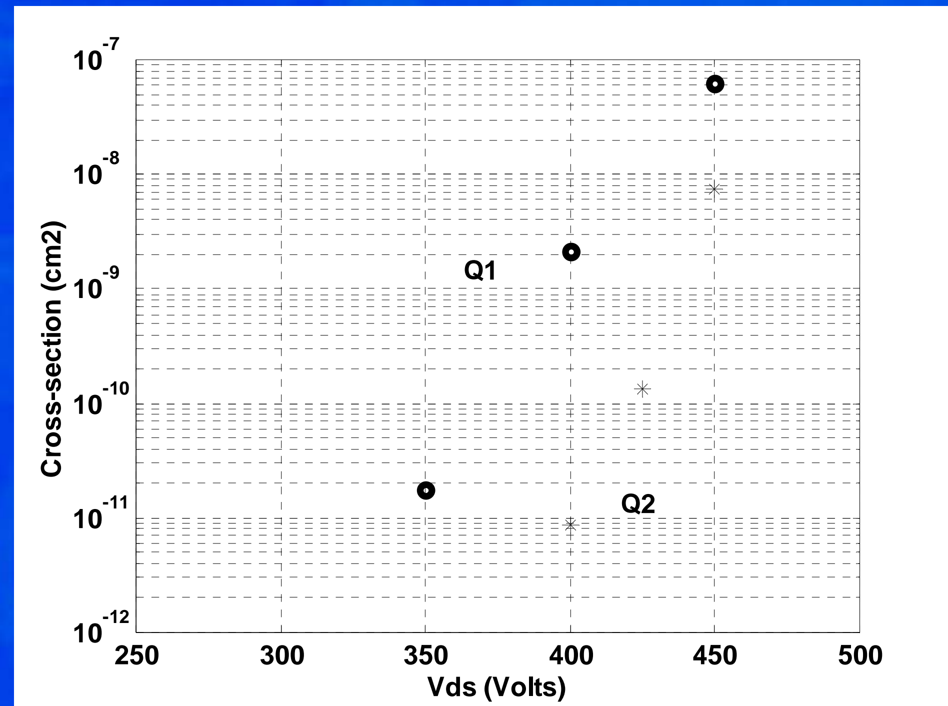
J.H.Johnson & K.F.Galloway, IEEE NSREC short course, 1996

Important mechanism in the regenerative feedback: avalanche-generated hole current in the collector region of the parasitic (or main) bipolar transistor.

SEB Example: DC-DC converter (1)

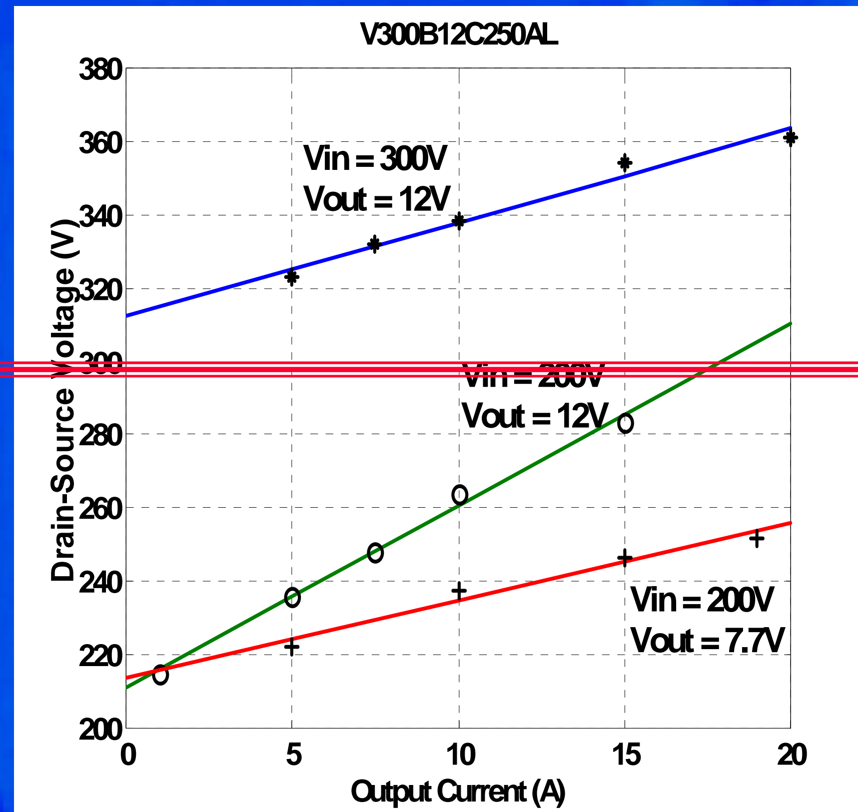
Power MOSFETs used in candidate DC-DC converter for LHC were mounted in test cards (below, left) and irradiated a different Vds with 60MeV protons. Burnout started from a Vds of about 350V.





SEB Example: DC-DC converter (2)

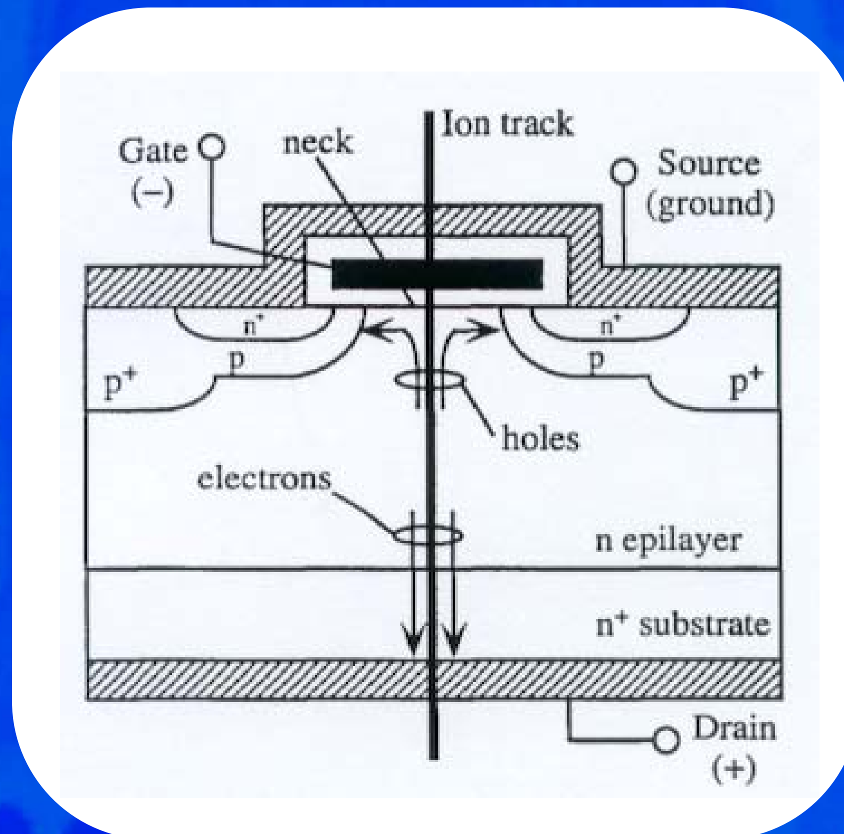
From previous curve and with analysis of the converter, it is possible to select a working condition where Vds of the MOSFET never exceeds 300V (this technique is called "derating" and is often used)



Safe area

SEGR in power MOSFETs

SEGR is caused by heavy-ion-induced localized dielectric breakdown of the gate oxide. SEGR test is destructive!



J.H.Johnson & K.F.Galloway, IEEE NSREC short course, 1996

Radiation effects in devices and technologies

Summary Table

Device	TID	Displacement	SEEs
Low voltage CMOS	Yes[1]	No	SEUs in logic and memories SETs relevant if fast logic (1GHz) SEL possible[2]
Low voltage Bipolar	Yes, with ELDR possible	Yes[3]	SEL extremely rare – if at all SETs
Low voltage BiCMOS	Yes	Yes	Combination of CMOS and Bipolar
Power MOSFETs	Yes	Yes at very large fluence ($>10^{f}$)	SEB SEGR
Power BJTs	Yes	Yes	SEB
Optocouplers	Yes	Yes	SETs
Optical receivers	Yes	Yes (tech dependent)	"SEUs"

[1]The threshold for sensitivity varies with technology generation and function. Typically failures are observed from a minimum of 1-3krd, and sensitivity decreases with technology node (130nm less sensitive than 250nm for instance)
[2]Sensitivity typically decreases with technology node. When Vdd goes below about 0.8-1V, then SEL should not appear any more
[3]Sensitivity depends on doping and thickness of the base, hence decreasing in modern fast processes

Particles and damages

Radiation	TID	Displacement (NIEL)	SEE
X-rays ^{60}Co γ	Expressed in SiO_2 Almost identical in Si or SiO_2	No	No
p	Equivalences in Si$^{\$}$ @60MeV 10^{11}p/cm^2=13.8krd @100MeV 10^{11}p/cm^2=9.4krd @150MeV 10^{11}p/cm^2=7.0krd @200MeV 10^{11}p/cm^2=5.8krd @250MeV 10^{11}p/cm^2=5.1krd @300MeV 10^{11}p/cm^2=4.6krd @23GeV 10^{11}p/cm^2=3.2krd	Equivalences in Si$^{\$,*}$ @53MeV 1 p/cm^2 = 1.25 n/cm^2 @98MeV 1 p/cm^2 = 0.92 n/cm^2 @154MeV 1 p/cm^2 = 0.74 n/cm^2 @197MeV 1 p/cm^2 = 0.66 n/cm^2 @244MeV 1 p/cm^2 = 0.63 n/cm^2 @294MeV 1 p/cm^2 = 0.61 n/cm^2 @23GeV 1 p/cm^2 = 0.50 n/cm^2	Only via nuclear interaction. Max LET of recoil in Silicon = 15MeVcm^{2}mg^{-1}
n	Negligible	Equivalences in Si$^{\$,*}$ @1MeV 1 n/cm^2 = 0.81 n/cm^2 @2MeV 1 n/cm^2 = 0.74 n/cm^2 @14MeV 1 n/cm^2 = 1.50 n/cm^2	As for protons, actually above 20MeV p and n can roughly be considered to have the same effect for SEEs
Heavy Ions	Negligible for practical purposes (example: 10^6 HI with LET=50MeVcm^{2}mg^{-1} deposit about 800 rd)	Negligible	Yes

$^{\$}$ Energy here is only kinetic (for total particle energy, add the rest energy mc^2)
*The equivalence is referred to “equivalent 1Mev neutrons”, where the NIEL of “1MeV neutrons” is DEFINED to be 95 MeVmb. This explains why for 1MeV neutrons the equivalence is different than 1

To study further…

- General material on radiation effects:
  - The best source is the "archive of Radiation Effects Short Course Notebooks, 1980-2006" collecting the courses given at the IEEE NSREC conference (CD sold by IEEE)
  - "Classic" books on the subject
    - "Ionizing radiation effects in MOS devices and circuits", edited by T.Ma and P.Dressendorfer, published by Wiley (2001), ISBN 978-0471848936
    - "Handbook of radiation effects", by A.Holmes-Siedle and L.Adams, published by Oxford University Press (2002), ISBN 978-0198507338
  - Recent Books with good overview of all effects:
    - "Radiation effects on Embedded Systems", edited by R.Velazco, P.Fouillat, R.Reis, published by Springer (2007), ISBN 978-1-4020-5645-1
    - "Radiation effects and soft errors in integrated circuits and electronic devices", edited by R.Schrimpf and D.Fleetwood, published by World Scientific (2004), ISBN 981-238-940-7
  - Best papers from the Nuclear and Space Radiation Effects Conference (NSREC) are published yearly in the IEEE TNS in the december special Issue
- Specialized conferences:
  - NSREC in the US, yearly in July
  - RADECs in Europe, conference (1 week) or workshop (2-3 days) every year in September