



Université
de Toulouse

CMOS Image Sensors in Harsh Radiation Environments

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Purpose/Scope of the presentation

- Present the basic radiation effects on CMOS Image Sensors

- Only **CIS specific** radiation effects

- *Typical technology node for the discussion: 180 nm CIS process*

- *No discussion about irrelevant effects for CIS*

- *e.g. SEU, MBU in highly integrated digital circuits*

- *e.g. Advanced CMOS (FinFETs, FDSOI, beyond 90 nm...)*

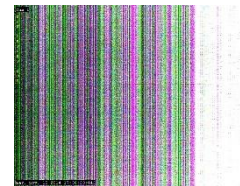
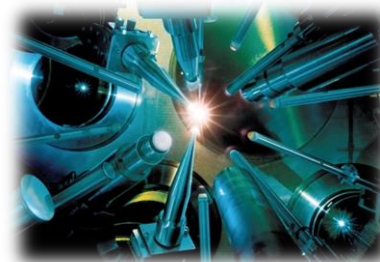
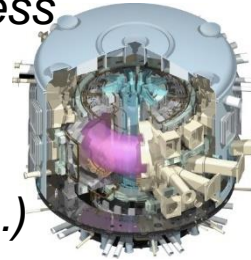
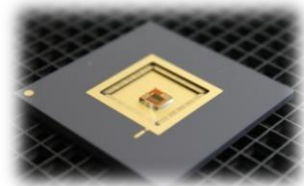
- Mainly for harsh radiation environments

- *High TID levels (MGy – Grad)*

- *High hadron flux ($> 10^{18} \text{ cm}^{-2} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$)*

- *High hadron fluence ($> 10^{12} \text{ cm}^{-2}$)*

- Illustrate these basics degradation mechanisms by presenting results achieved in recent developments



- **CMOS Image Sensor (CIS) technology: a brief overview**
- **Basic radiation induced degradation mechanisms and illustrations**
 - **Total Ionizing Dose (TID) effects**
 - *Hardening and use of CIS for ITER remote handling operations*
 - **Single Event Effects (SEE)**
 - *Use of CIS for Megajoule class Inertial Confinement Fusion (ICF) experiments*
 - **Displacement Damage (DD) effects**
 - *Prediction of DD effects for high fluence environment*

CIS technology: an overview

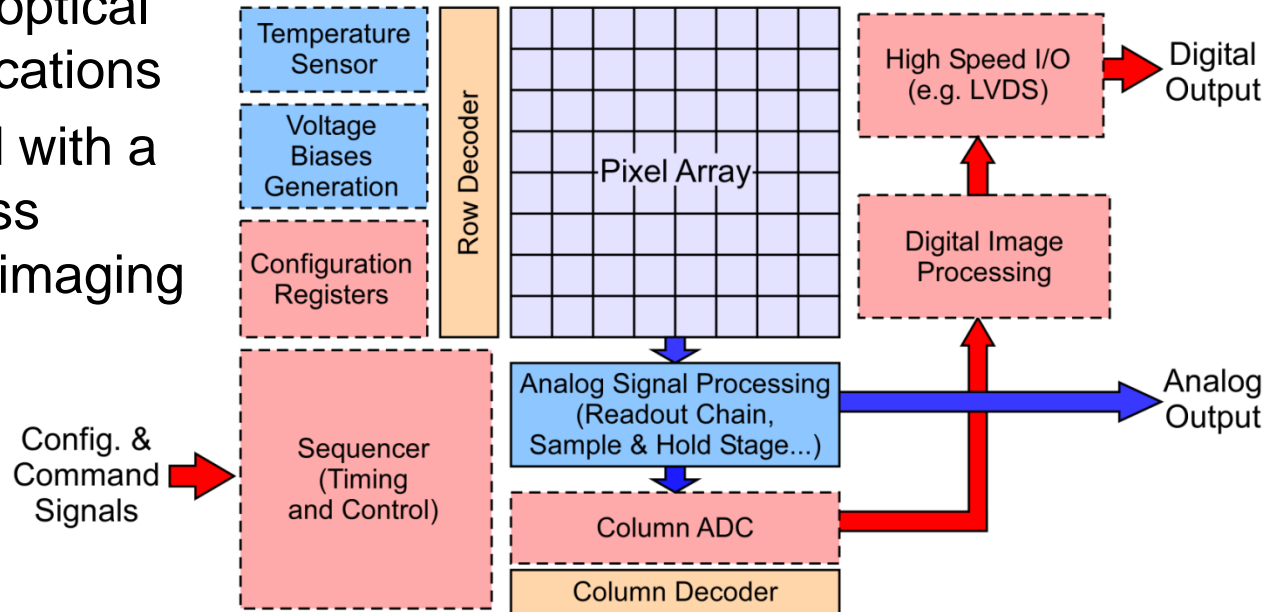
- **CMOS Image Sensors (CIS)**

- Most popular solid state imager technology (95% of the market)

- **CIS = CMOS Integrated Circuit**

- Designed for optical imaging applications
- Manufactured with a CMOS process optimized for imaging

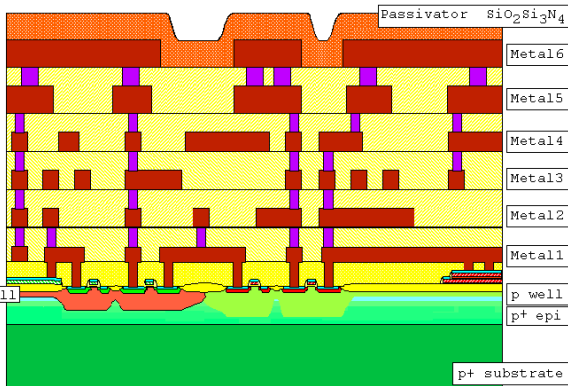
Typical CIS architecture



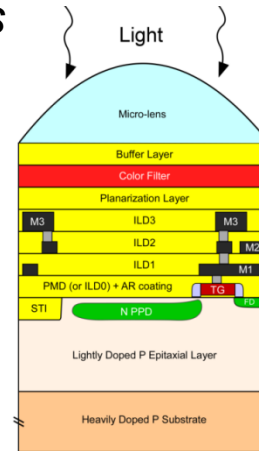
CIS manufacturing process: CMOS vs CIS

- Compared to standard CMOS, CIS processes have:
 - Optimized dielectric stack (reduced number of metal levels, planarization, anti-reflection coating, color filters, microlenses...)
 - Optimized epitaxial layer and doping profiles (for photo-detection)
 - *Dedicated photodiode doping profiles*
 - *Optimized threshold voltages...*

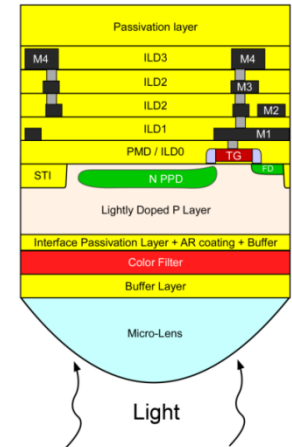
<http://www2.imm.dtu.dk/courses/02216/rules018/graphics/018CrossSection.gif>



Classical CMOS Process



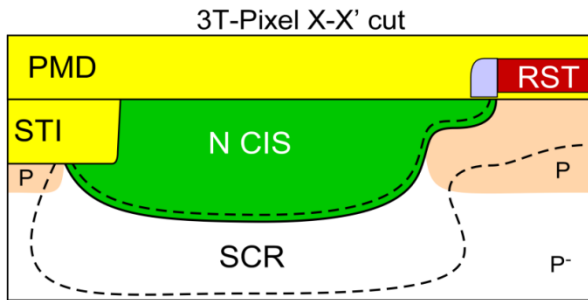
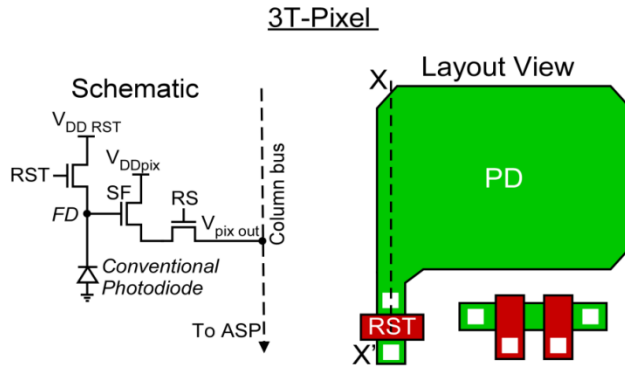
Front-side illuminated CIS process



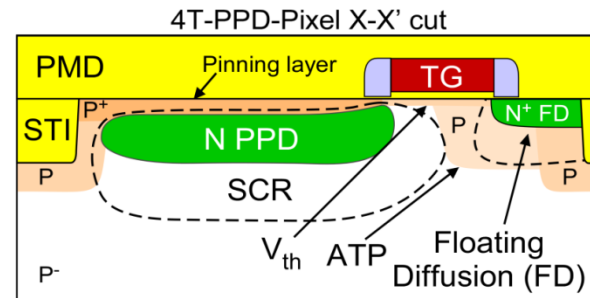
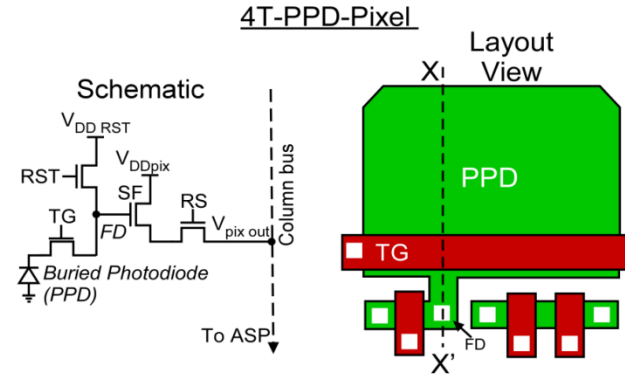
Back-side illuminated CIS process

CIS technology: pixel architecture

- Two basic pixel designs used in most of CIS



Conventional photodiode



Pinned (buried) PhotoDiode (PPD)

CIS, APS & MAPS?

Feature	CIS	MAPS
Active Pixel Sensor*	Yes	Yes
CMOS Integrated Circuit	Yes	Yes
Monolithic	Yes	Yes
Dedicated CMOS process	Yes	No
Optimized/dedicated photodiode doping profiles	Yes	No
Optimized/dedicated optical interfaces (AR coating / color filters / microlenses / light-guide...)	Yes	No
Usual purpose	Optical imaging	Particle detection

**CMOS Image Sensor =
 CMOS APS + optical imager design
 + dedicated CIS process**

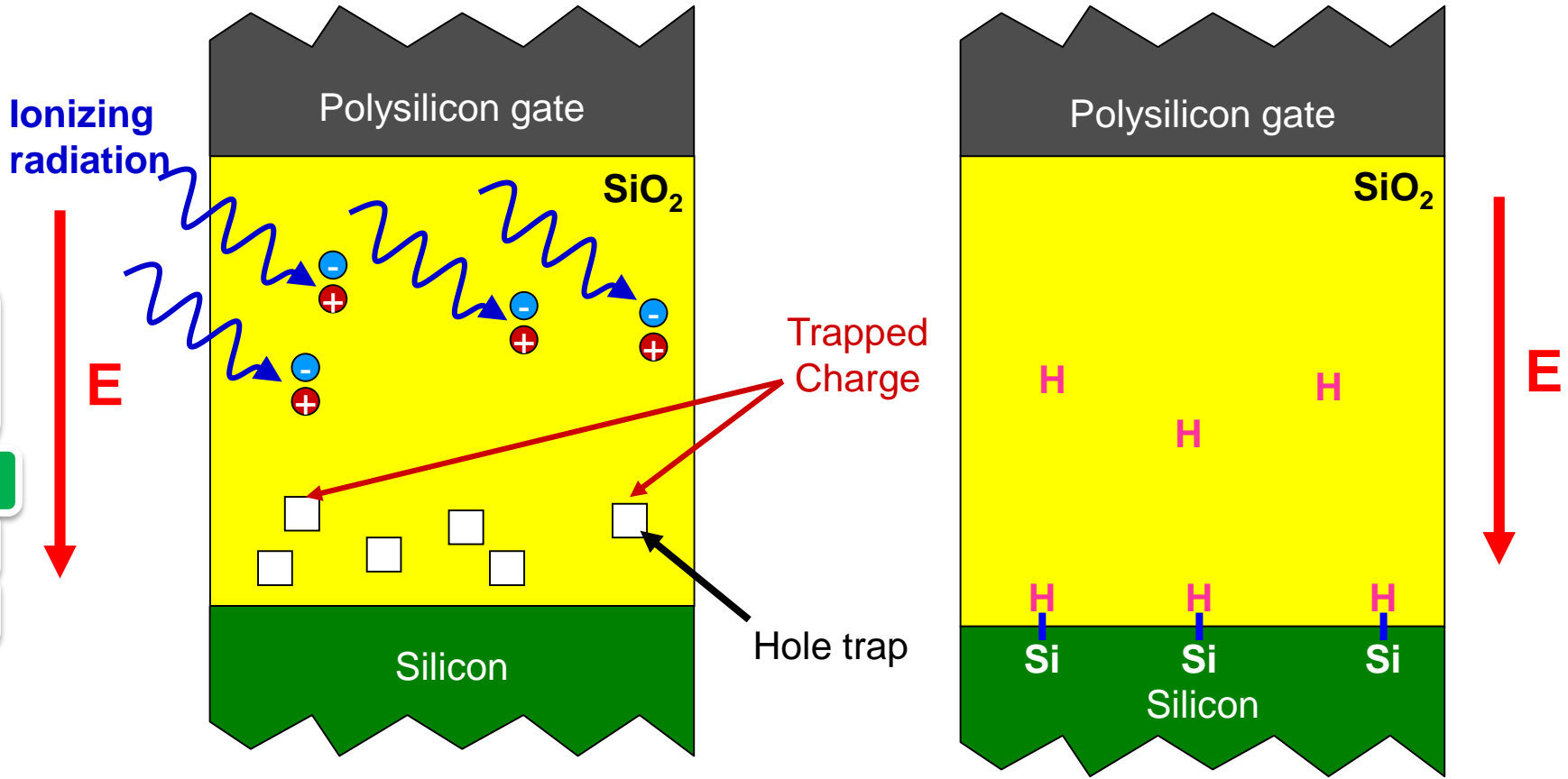
*E. R. Fossum, Proc SPIE, vol. 1900, 1993

- Outline
- CIS overview**
- Overview
- Pixel
- APS/
CIS/
MAPS
- Rad.
Effects

Total Ionizing Dose (TID) effects

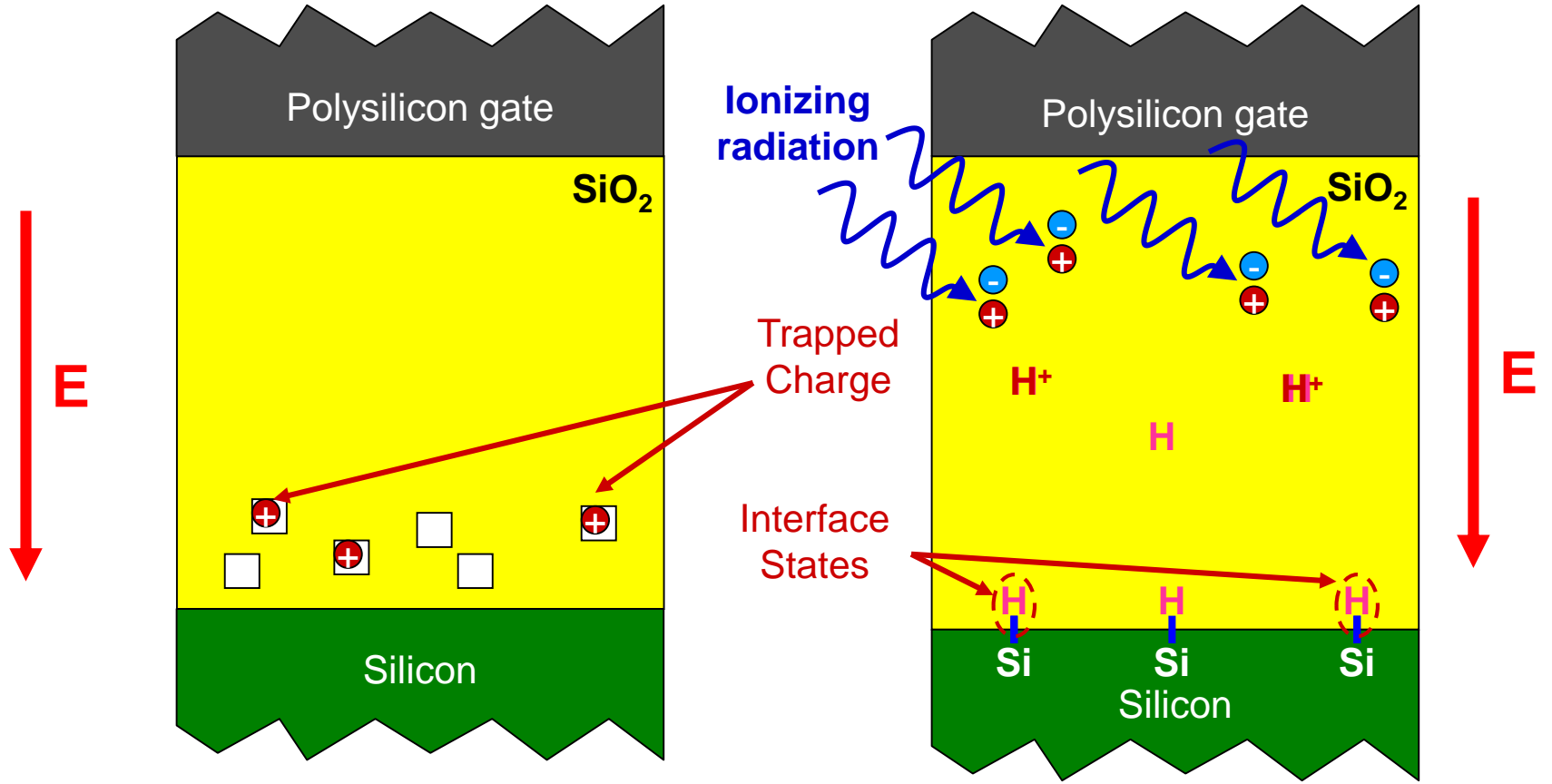
Basic radiation effects: TID

- Outline
- CIS overview
- Rad. Effects
- TID
- SEE
- DD



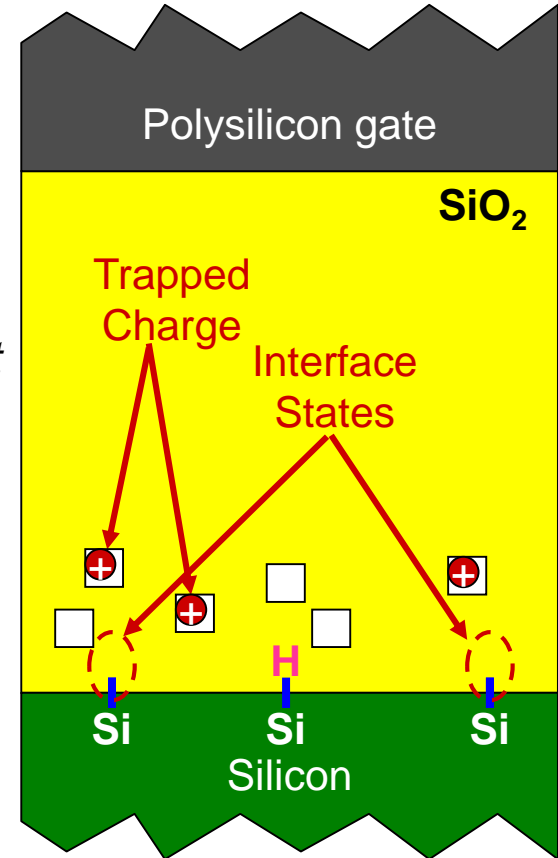
Basic radiation effects: TID

- Outline
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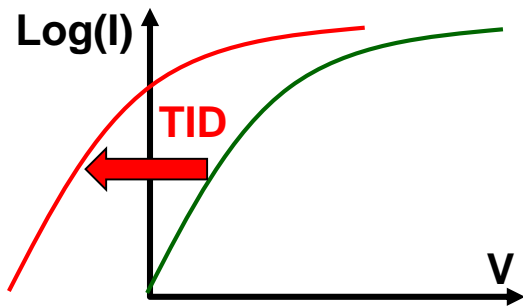
Basic radiation effects: TID

- **Ionizing radiation (X, γ , charged particles...)**
 - Generate electron-hole pairs in dielectrics
 - Leading to the buildup of permanent defects:
 - **Oxide Trapped (OT) charge** (positive in most cases)
 - **Interface states (IT)** at Si/Oxide interface

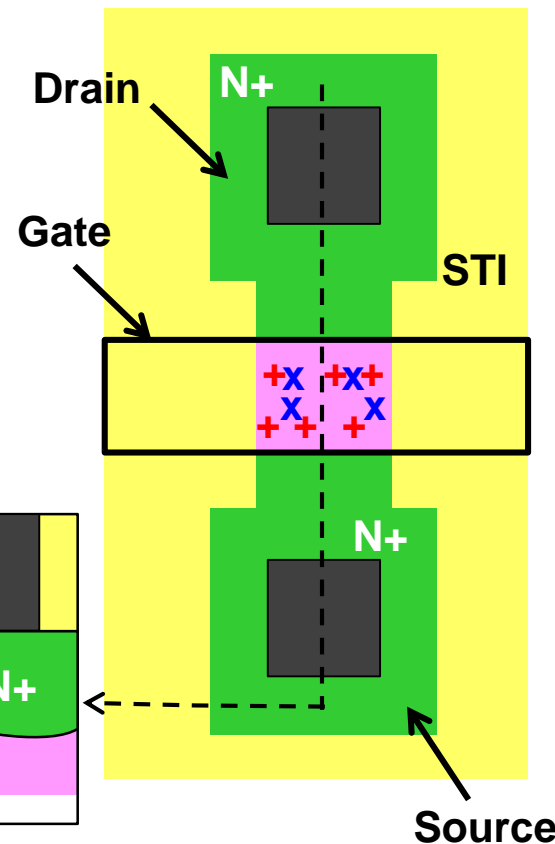
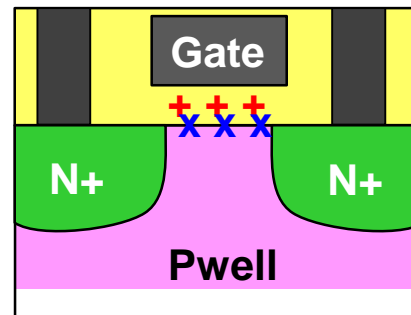
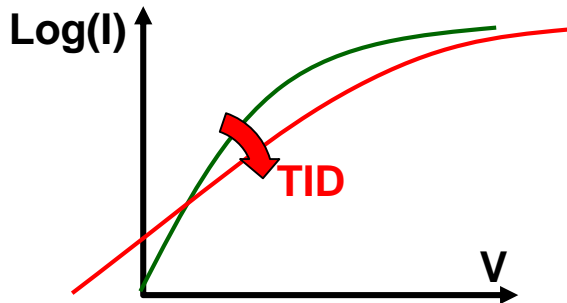


TID effects in CIS MOSFETs: gate oxide

- Gate oxide trapped charge (+):
 - Negative threshold voltage shift ($\Delta V_{th} < 0$)



- Gate oxide interface states (x):
 - Subthreshold slope decrease



TID effects in CIS MOSFETs: STI

Outline

CIS overview

Rad. Effects

TID

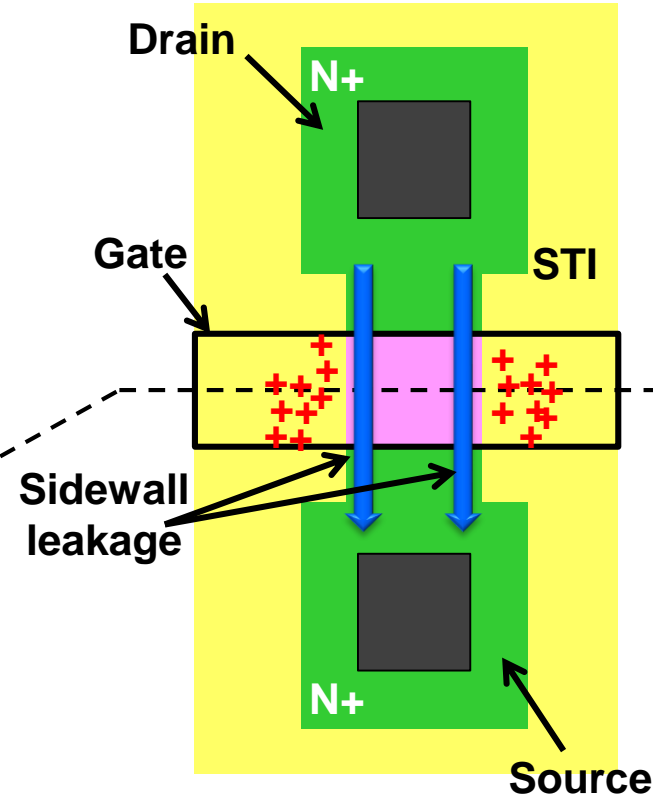
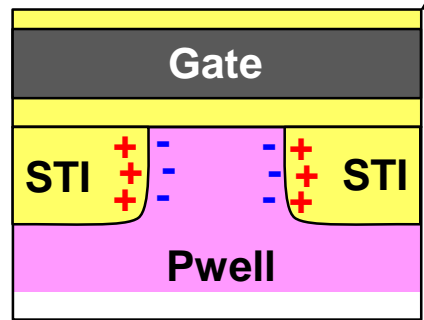
SEE

DD

- **Shallow Trench Isolation (STI) trapped charge (+):**

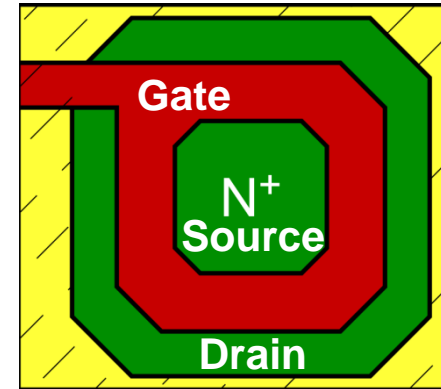
- Sidewall (drain to source) leakage
- Further negative threshold voltage shift ($\Delta V_{th} < 0$) called **R**adiation **I**nduced **N**arrow **C**hannel **E**ffect (**RINCE***)

- (Inter-device leakage)



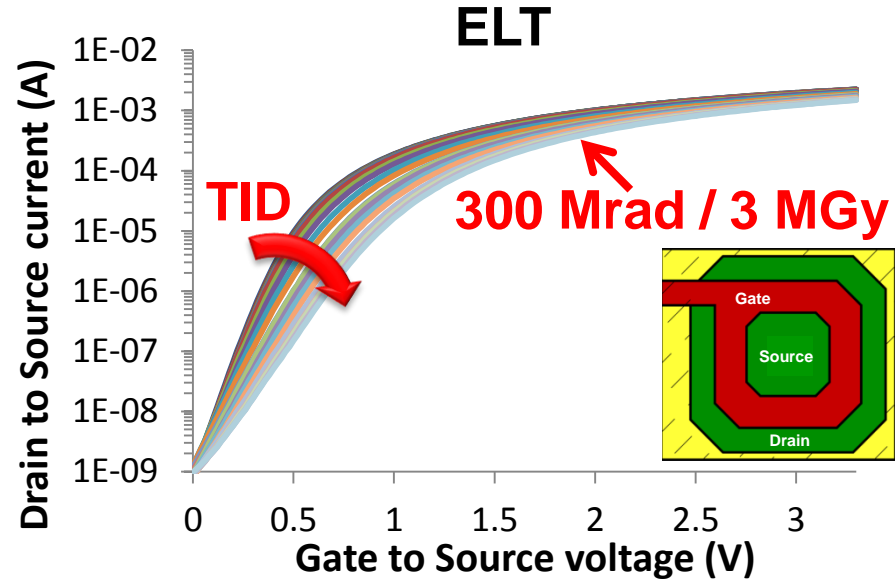
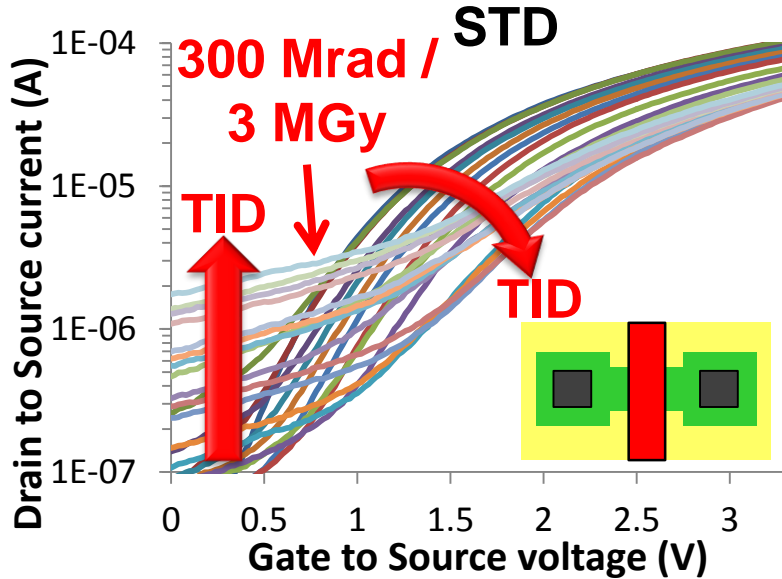
*F. Faccio et al., IEEE TNS, Dec. 2005

- **Enclosed Layout Transistor (ELT)***
 - Circular gate design
 - No more channel edges
 - ➔ **no more STI related effects**
 - *No more RINCE*
 - *No more sidewall leakage*
- Other enclosed geometry designs exist (see for exemple W. Snoeys et al, IEEE TNS, Aug. 2002.)



*G. Anelli et al., IEEE TNS, 1999.

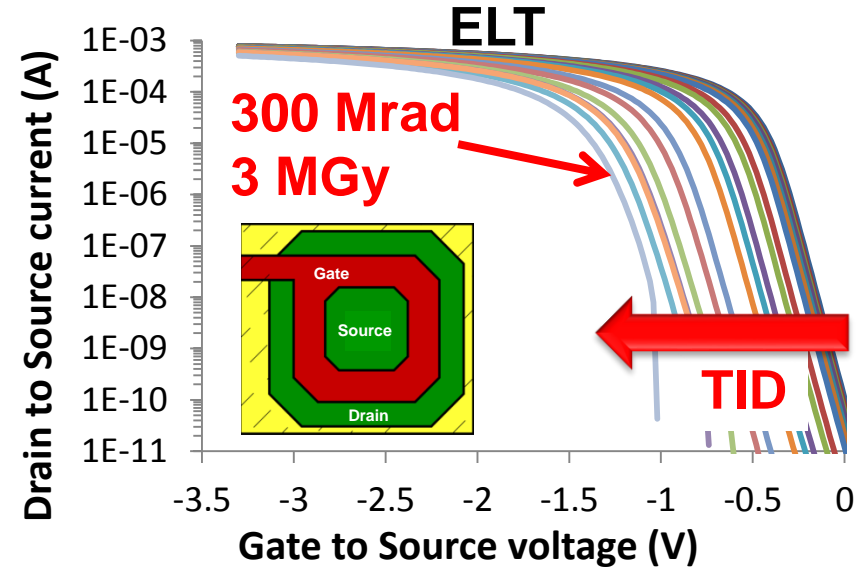
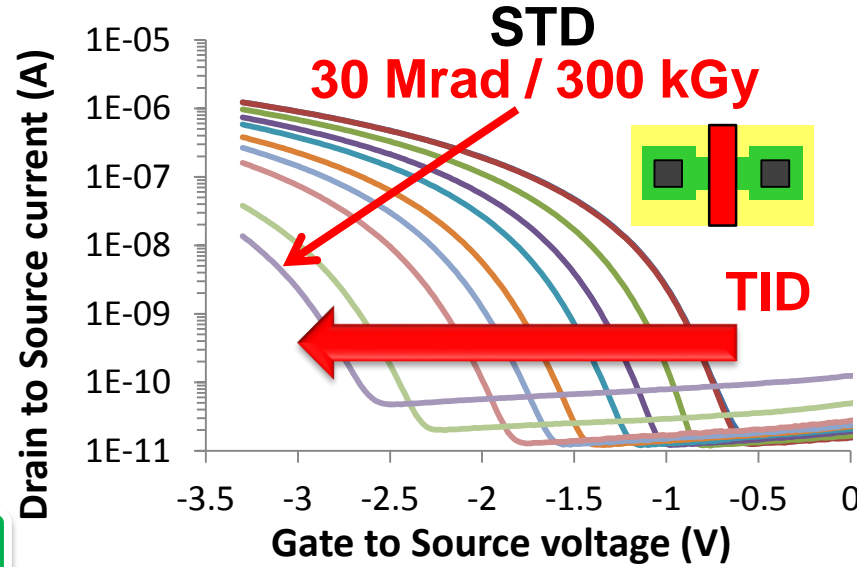
MGy/Grad irradiation effects on N-MOSFETs (180 nm CIS)



Courtesy of Marc Gaillardin (CEA DAM)

- Standard N-MOSFET seriously degraded @ 100 Mrad / 1 MGy
- **ELT mandatory** to avoid **RINCE** and **sidewall leakage**

MGy/Grad irradiation effects on P-MOSFETs (180 nm CIS)



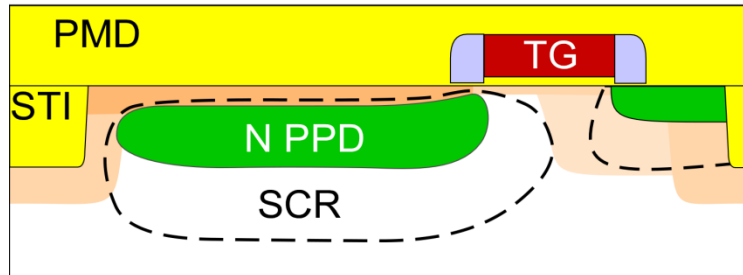
Courtesy of Marc Gaillardin (CEA DAM)

- Standard P-MOSFET unusable after ≈ 10 Mrad / 100 kGy
- **ELT mandatory** to avoid **RINCE**

M Gy/Grad irradiation effects: Pinned PhotoDiode (PPD) (4T pixel)

Before Irradiation

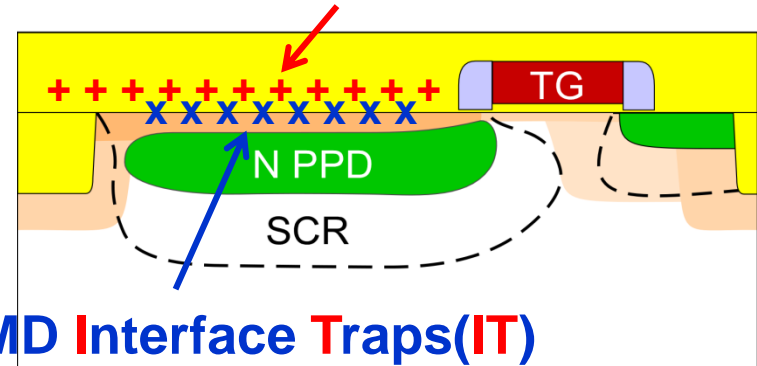
- Depleted region well protected from the interfaces
- Ultra low dark current
- High Charge Transfer Efficiency (CTE)



After Irradiation (high TID)

- Intense dark current
- Very poor CTE

PMD Oxide Trapped charge (OT)
→ Pinning layer depletion



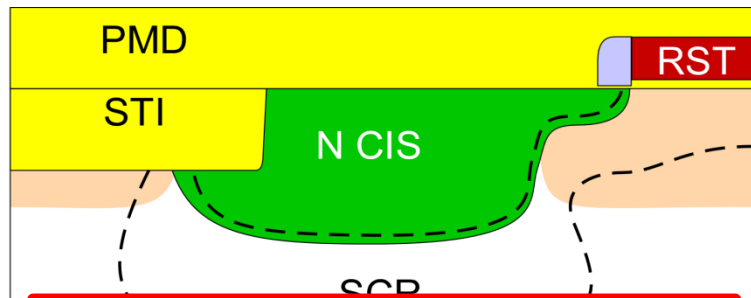
PMD Interface Traps (IT)
→ Large dark current

No Radiation-Hardening-By-Design Solution (thus far)

MGy/Grad irradiation effects: Conventional Photodiode (3T pixel)

Before Irradiation

- Depletion region in contact with Si/SiO₂ interface
- Higher dark current than PPD
- No CTE issue (no transfer)

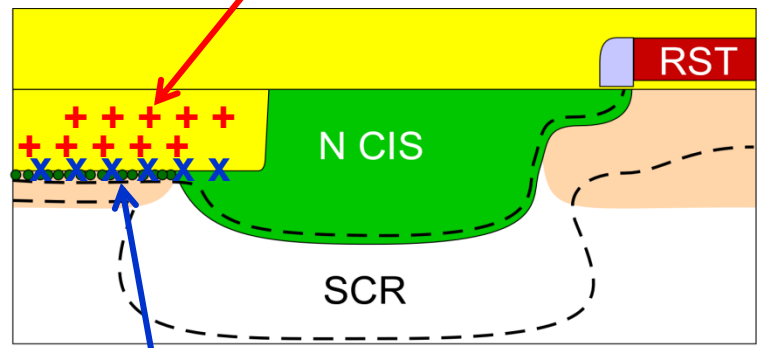


Can be mitigated by design!

After Irradiation (high TID)

- Short-circuit between diodes
- Intense dark current
- No CTE issue (no transfer)

STI OT → Large dark current
STI OT → STI inversion (short circuit)



STI IT → Large dark current

Basic TID radiation effects on CIS : a summary

- For MGy range CIS design **Enclosed Geometries are mandatory** for both **N and P** MOSFETs
 - But gate oxide can still induce a threshold voltage shift
 - *Due to OT or IT*
 - *In both N and P channel MOSFETs*
- Both photodiodes (pinned and conventional) are **seriously degraded** by high levels of TID
 - Large dark current increase
 - Loss of functionality
- Radiation-Hardened-By-Design photodiodes are required:
 - Solutions **only** exist **for conventional photodiodes**

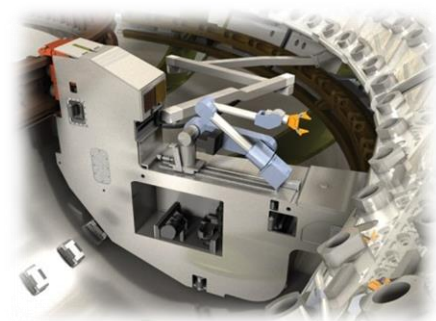
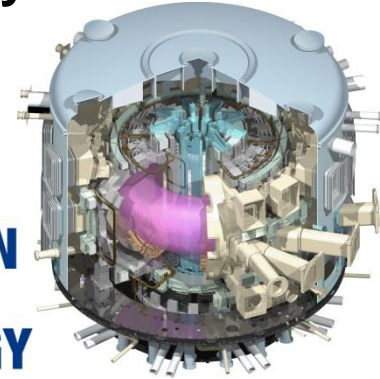
**Conventional photodiode
recommended for high TID!**

TID effects/hardening illustration: ITER remote handling imaging system

- ITER remote handling operations require imaging systems
 - Compact, lightweight and low power/voltage
 - Radiation hard (failure TID $\gg 1\text{MGy}(\text{SiO}_2)$)
 - **Gamma radiation only** (*plasma OFF*)
 - Color and high definition ($\geq 1\text{Mpix}$)
- Tube camera, **not suitable** because of
 - Size, cabling, voltage, resolution and reliability
- Existing solid-state image sensor based camera
 - **Limited** by their radiation **hardness: $\leq 100\text{ kGy}$**



FUSION
FOR
ENERGY



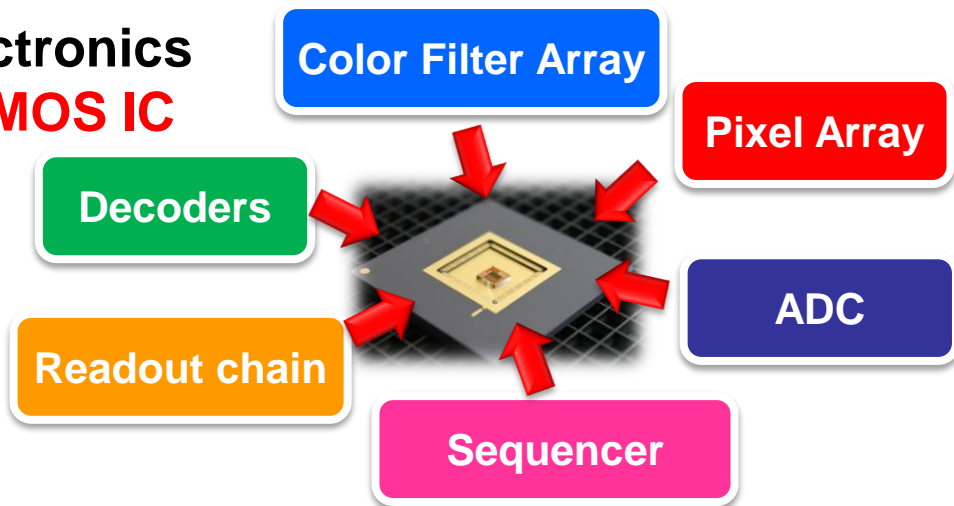
Dedicated development required

Camera Radiation Hardening Strategy

- Integrate all the required electronics on a **single** Rad Hard (RH) **CMOS IC**



- No need for additional MGy RH electronics
- Very compact
- Complete control of the radiation hardness



- Associated RH developments



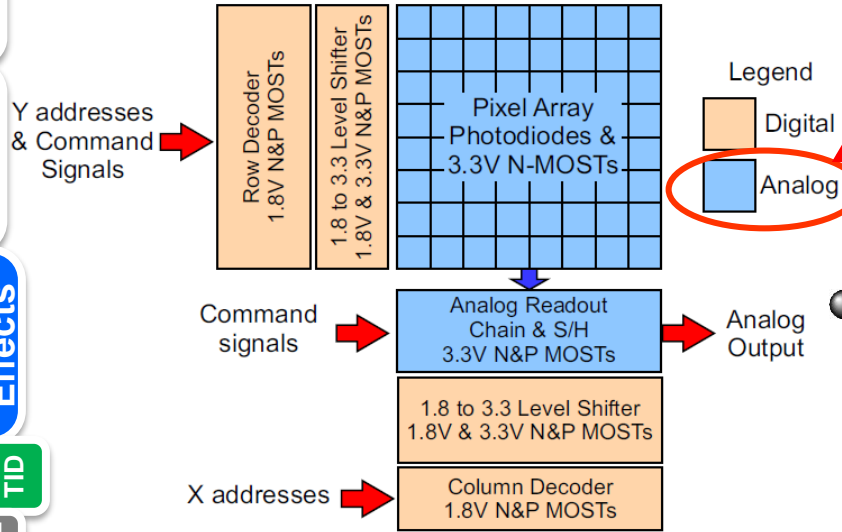
- Rad-Hard **optical system** (led by Univ. Saint-Etienne)
- Rad-Hard LED based **illumination system** (led by CEA)



First technology evaluation demonstrator*

Outline
CIS overview
Rad. Effects
TID
SEE
DD

128x128 10 μ m pitch pixels



Most sensitive part: 3.3V analog circuits

180 nm commercial CIS technology (Europractice MPW)

FULL ELT DESIGN (N&P MOSTs)

- Pure 1.8V digital and I/O pads: **imec DARE 180 nm platform**

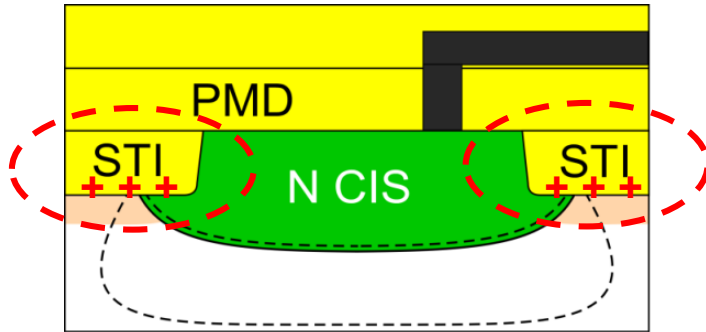


- 3.3V Analog/Mixed signal circuits and pixels **← Rad-Hard by ISAE**

*V. Goiffon et al., IEEE TNS, Dec. 2015

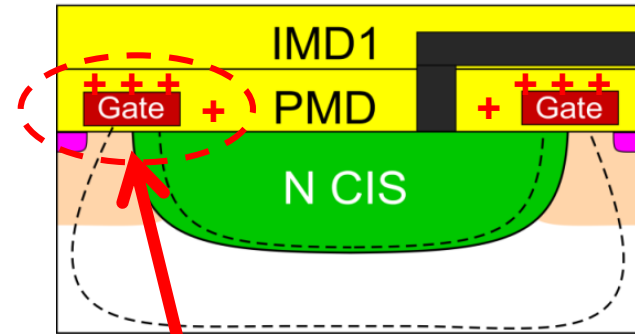
CMOS Image Sensor (CIS) Design : photodiode radiation hardening

- Issue with standard diode: peripheral oxide (STI here):



- Selected RHBD technique: use of a polysilicon gate to shield the junction from the trapped positive charge:

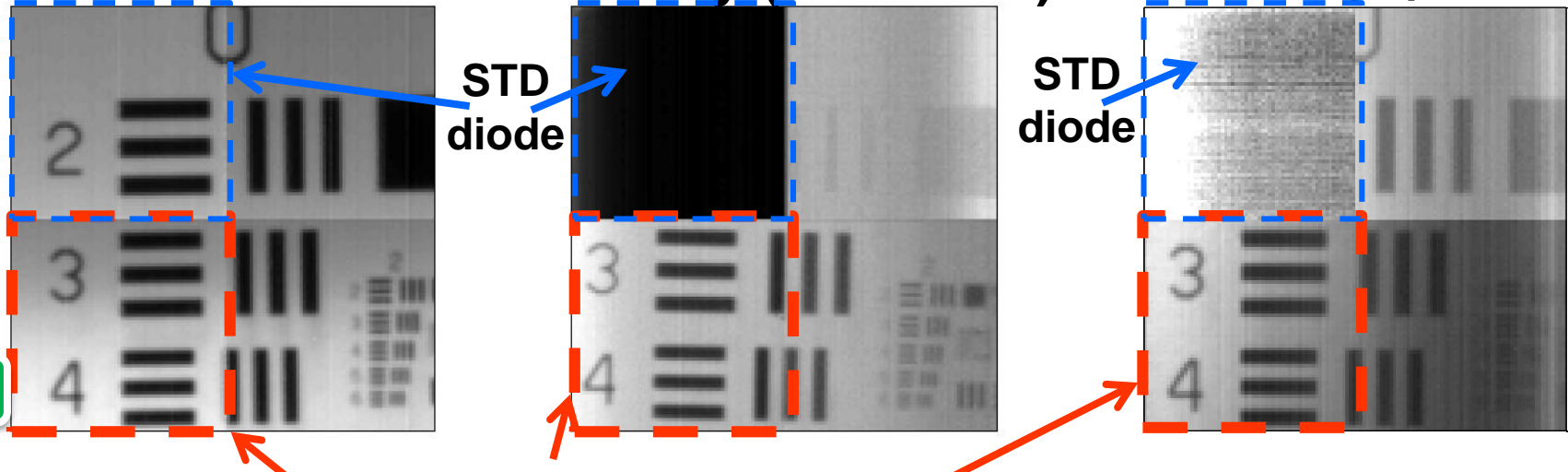
- Principle of the gate diode



+ voluntary gate-to-N overlap to shield the junction

Post Irradiation Results: Raw Images (no image correction)

Before Irradiation @4 MGy (400 Mrad) @10 MGy (1 Grad)

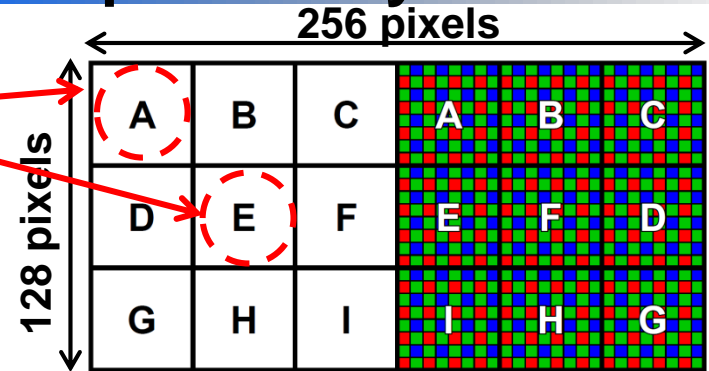


Gate-on-N-Overlap Rad-Hard pixel

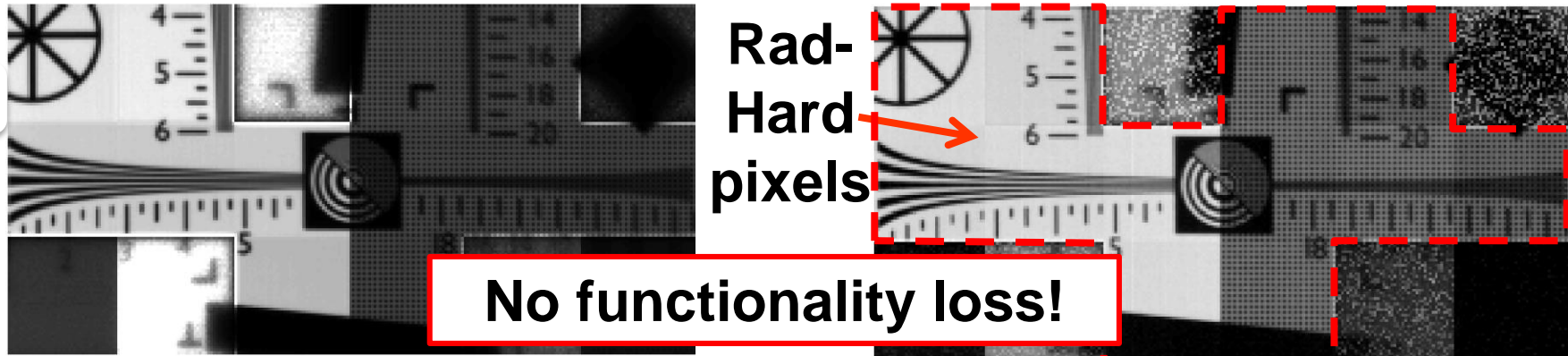
Acceptable image degradation
even after 1 Grad (10 MGy)!

Second technology evaluation demonstrator: 1.8V RHBD pixel array

- Full 1.8V instead of 1.8/3.3V
- 9 pixel design variations
- Half of the sensor covered by a Color Filter Array (CFA)



Raw images captured by the manufactured CMOS image sensor:

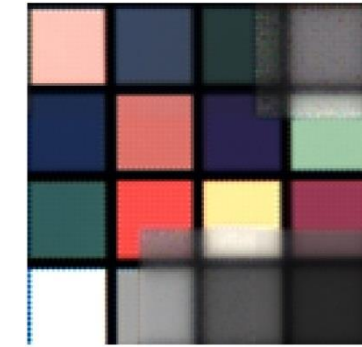
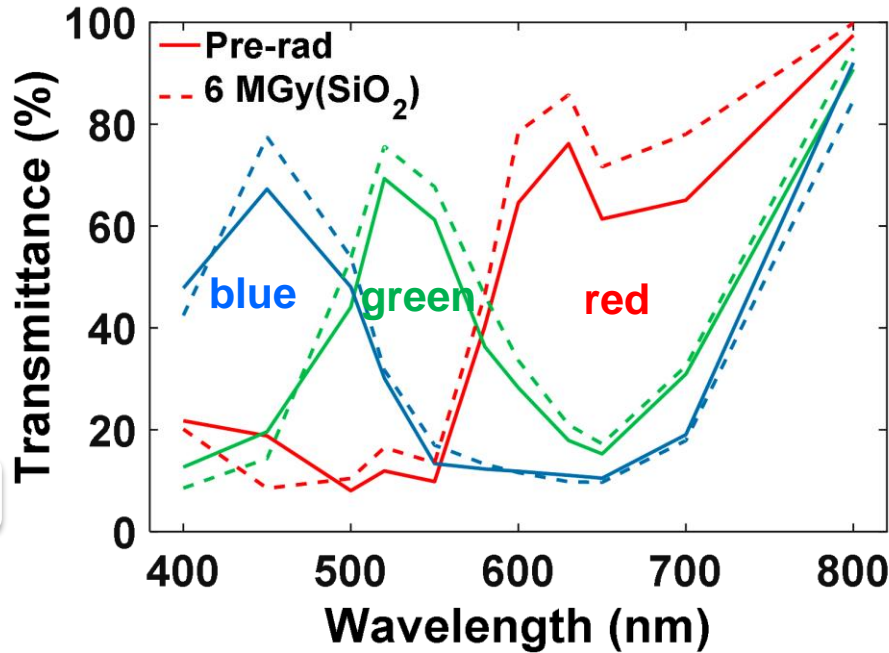


Unirradiated

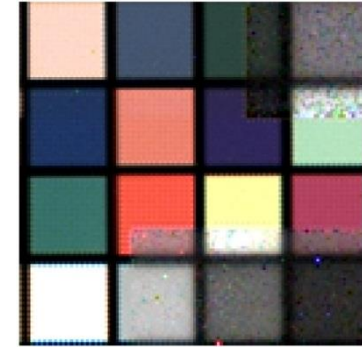
6 MGy(SiO₂) / 600 Mrad ²⁵

Color Filter Array: Radiation Hardness Evaluation

Color images captured by the manufactured CMOS image sensor:



Unirradiated



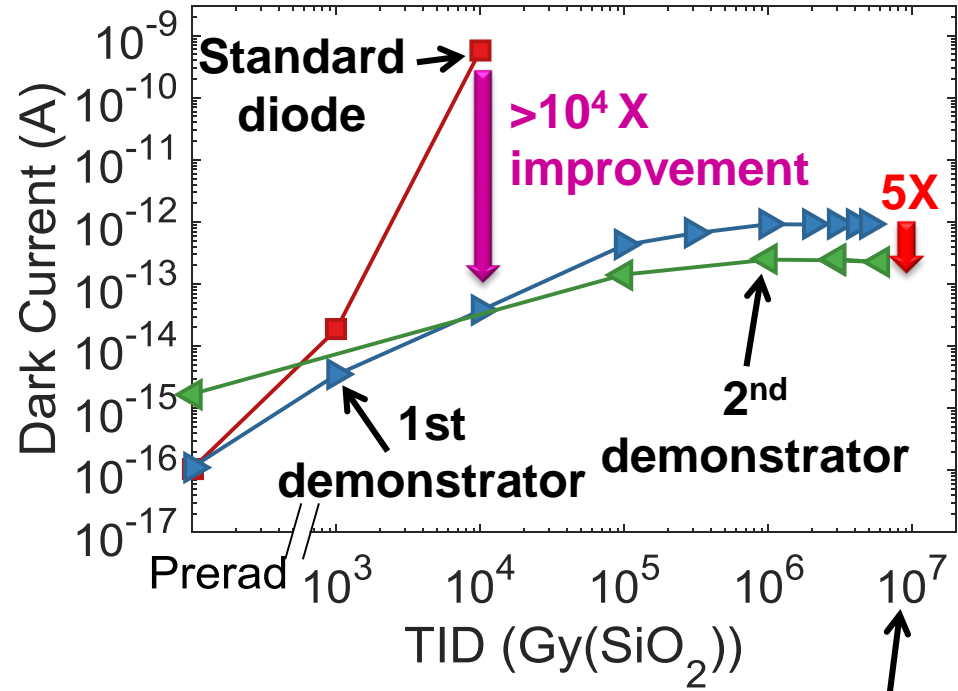
6 MGy(SiO₂)

- **No significant color filter degradation**

Main Radiation Effects: Dark Current Increase

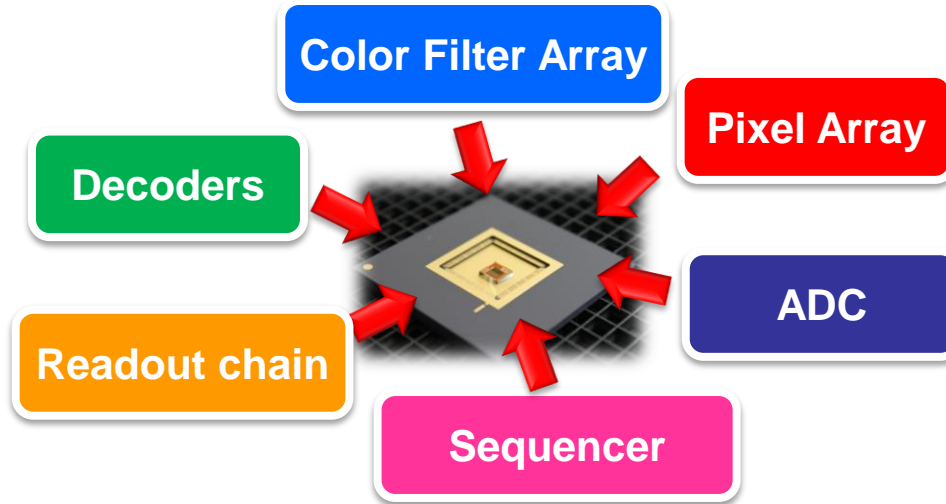
22°C

- Standard PD: 10^7 X dark current rise @10kGy (1Mrad)
 - no longer functional at higher radiation dose
- Rad-Hard diodes **functional @ 6 MGy/600 Mrad**
- Factor of 5 improvement between the first and second demonstrator (5X dark current reduction)



1 Grad

ITER Remote Handling Demonstrator

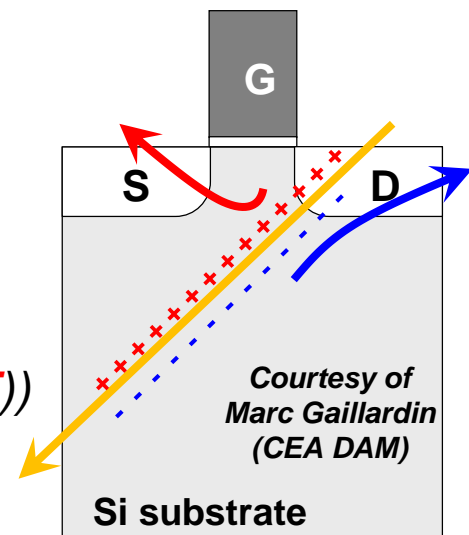


- Multi M Gy Rad-Hard Color Digital Camera-on-a-chip **appears feasible**
- First results are promising but development shall continue:
 - **Integrate all the functions** in a single Rad-Hard HD sensor

Single Event Effects (SEE)

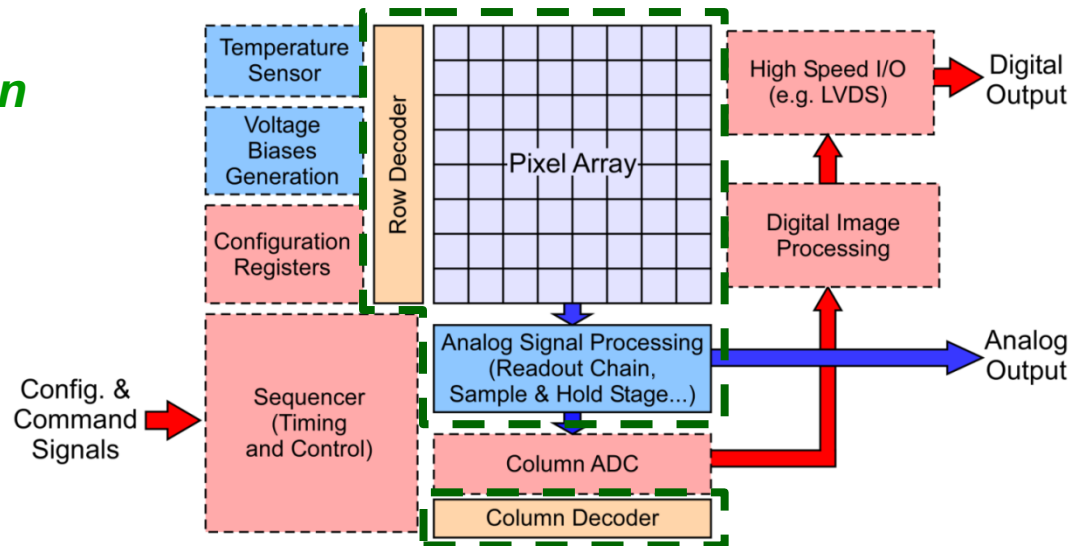
Single Event Effects in CIS: Basics

- **Single Event Effect (SEE)** = perturbation/degradation caused by a single energetic particle
- **Main mechanism:**
 - Generation of a high density of e^-/h^+ pairs along the particle track
 - Leading to:
 - *Transient perturbation (Single Event Transient (SET))*
 - *Permanent change of a digital value (Single Event Upset (SEU))*
 - *Triggering of a parasitic thyristor (Single Event Latchup)*
 - *...and many other possible parasitic effects!*



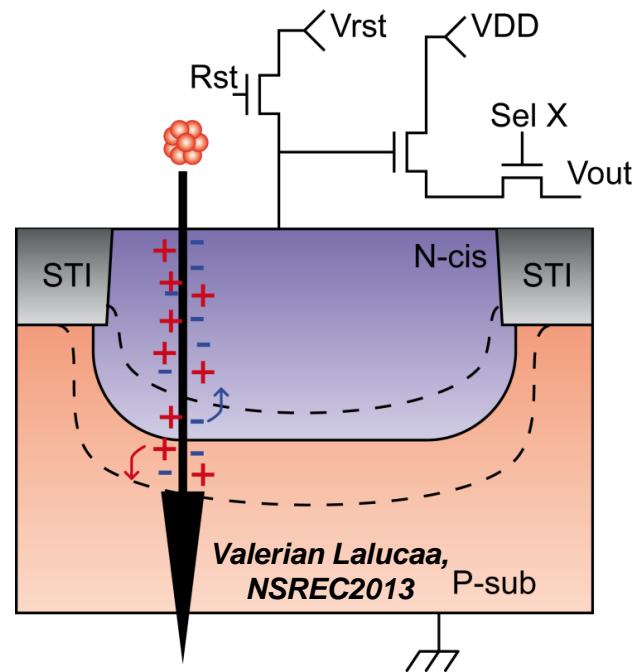
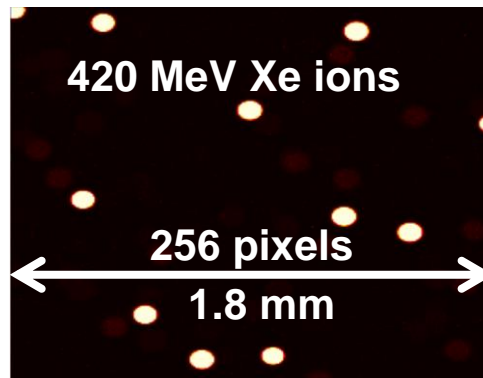
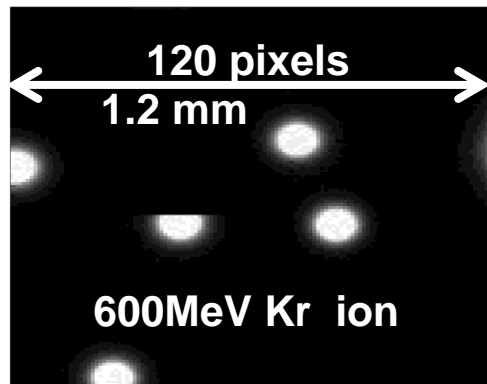
Single Event Effects in CIS: Basics

- What kind of SEE CIS are sensitive to?
 - **In theory: all kind**, as any CMOS Mixed-Signal Integrated Circuit
- For this presentation, focus only on SEEs
 - That are specific to CIS, i.e. SEEs in:
 - *Pixel arrays*
 - *Analog readout chain*
 - *Decoders*
 - Other optional integrated functions are not discussed here



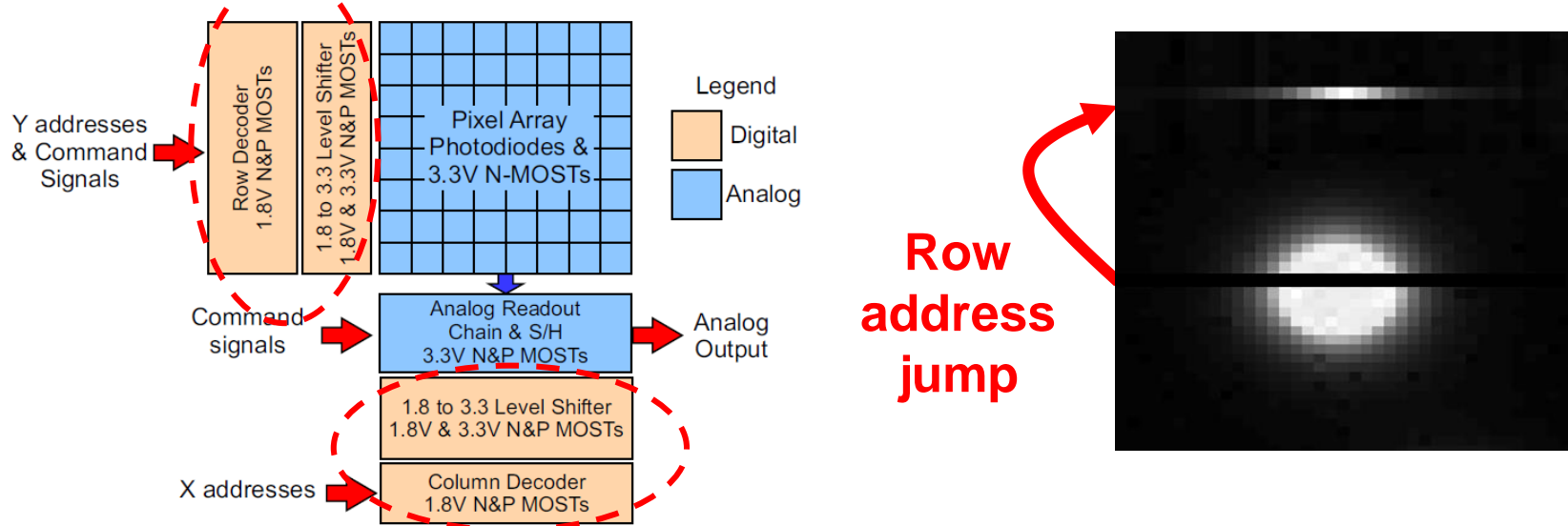
Single Event Effects in CIS: pixel array

- For basic pixel architecture (3T/4T):
 - No SEL (no in-pixel PMOSFET)
 - No SEU (no in-pixel memory)
 - **Only Single Event Transient (SET)**
- SET: the ion induced charge is **collected by the photodiodes** leading to a parasitic signal :
 - Spreading over several pixels
 - Lasting a single frame



Single Event Effects in CIS: SET in decoders

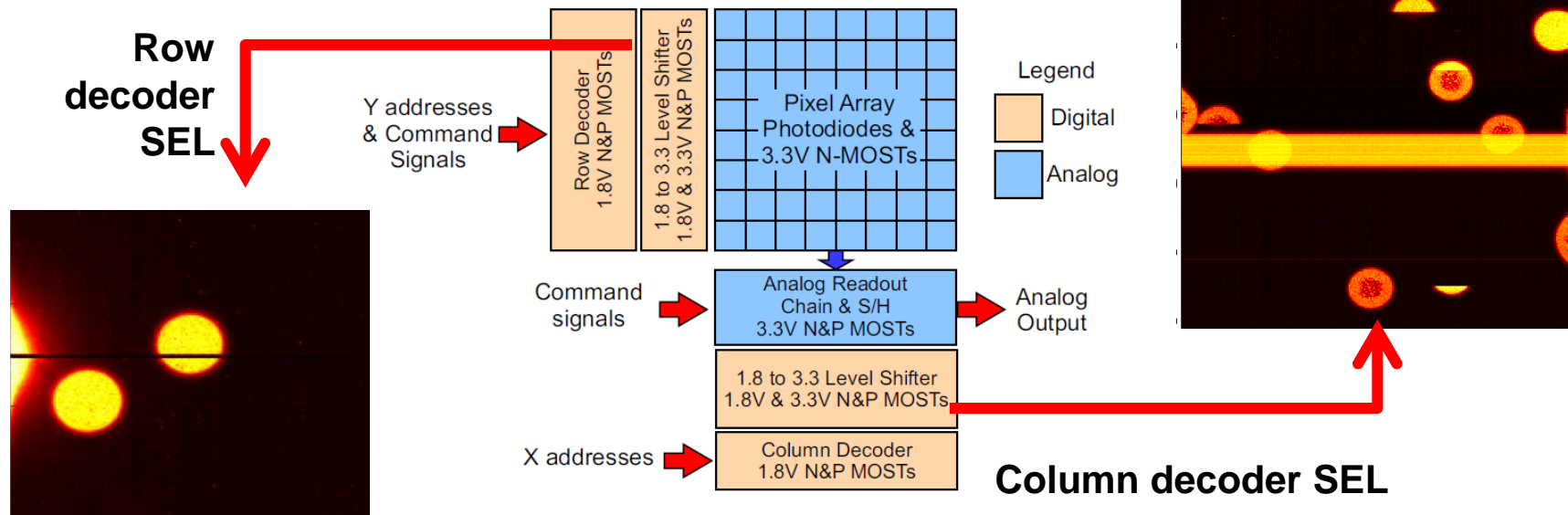
- If an ion strike the decoders **during readout**, a transient artefact can appear on the readout image



- Usually not an issue:
 - Low occurrence probability (compared to pixel SET)
 - Transient effect that disappears on the next frame

Single Event Effects in CIS: SEL in decoders

- Latchup can also occur in decoders leading to permanent artefact
 - CIS are often immune to such SEL thanks to thin epitaxial layer
 - Generally disappears after powering OFF and ON the sensor (no permanent damage)



Single Event Effects in CIS: a summary

- In CIS required integrated functions :
 - The **main SEE** are **Single Event Transients** (SET) in **pixel array**
 - Other effects are **generally not an issue**:
 - *SET in decoders or readout chain are infrequent and only corrupt one pixel or one row of a single frame*
 - *CIS are generally immune to SEL and if not:*
 - *Can be powered OFF to recover (if non-destructive)*
 - *Can be hardened-by-design*
 - **SEE in additional integrated functions** (e.g. SEU in on-chip sequencers) **can be an issue**
 - *Requires a specific analysis of each additional CMOS function*
 - **Not a problem for basic CIS** without such functions

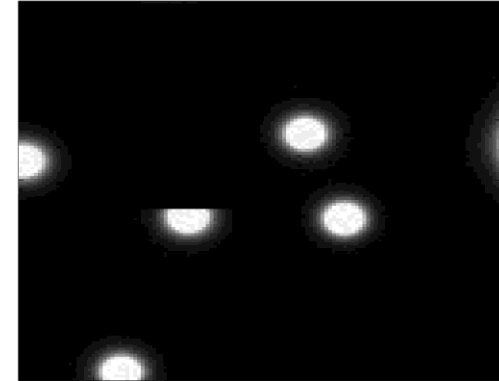
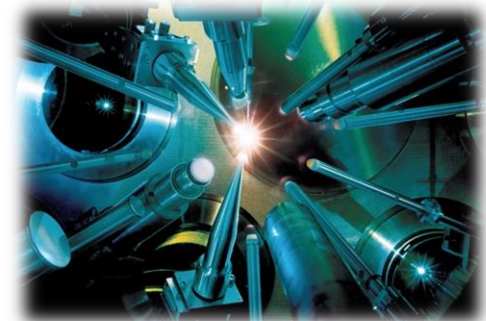
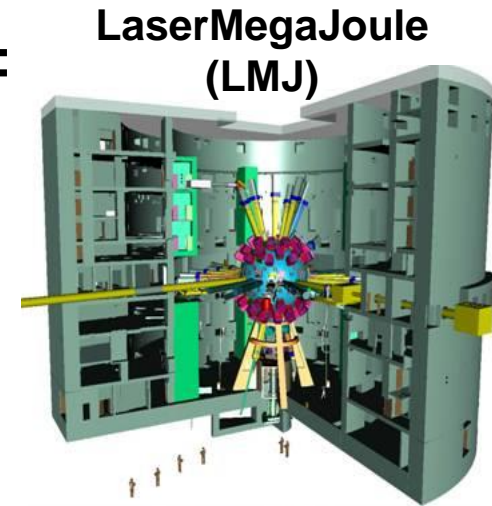


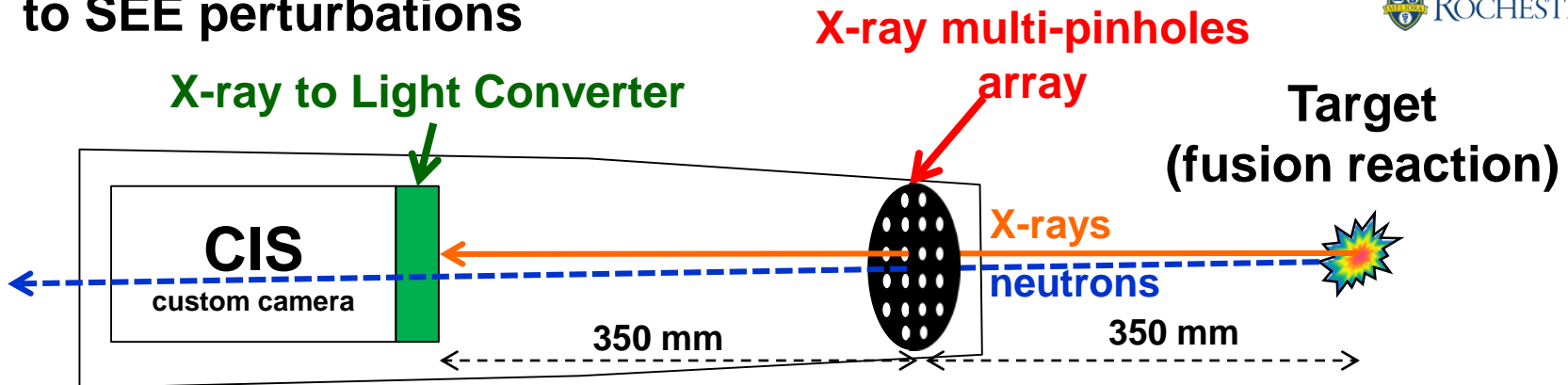
Illustration: MegaJoule (MJ) Class Inertial Confinement Fusion (ICF) Plasma Diagnostic

- Plasma diagnostics in MJ class ICF facilities radiation environment during each laser shot:
 - 14 MeV neutrons
 - Expected fluence: 10^{12} n.cm⁻²
 - Estimated flux $> 10^{18}$ n.cm⁻².s⁻¹
- Existing Plasma Diagnostics cannot withstand these conditions
- A X-ray Plasma Diagnostic demonstrator has been developed (with CEA DAM and UJM) to demonstrate the potential of CIS for this application



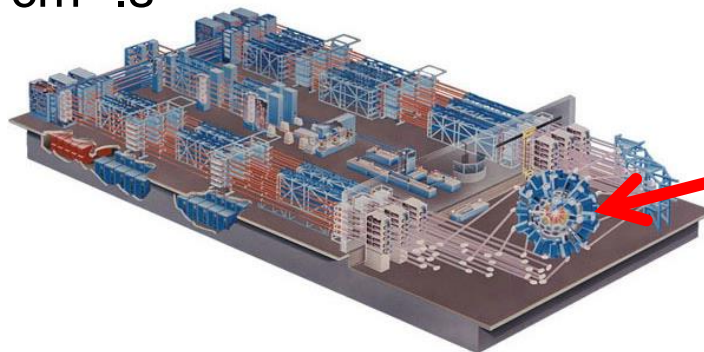
ICF X-ray Plasma Diagnostic principle

- At LLE OMEGA facility: 60 laser beams (40kJ) focus on a 1 mm target during 1 ps leading to a fusion reaction
- The X-ray signal emitted by the fusion plasma is imaged through:
 - A Multi-pinholes array thanks to an X-ray-to-light converter deposited on top of the CIS
- An intense neutron pulse is also generated leading to SEE perturbations



ICF X-ray Plasma Diagnostic principle

- Several experiments performed since 2010 at the Laboratory for Laser Energetics of Univ. Rochester, NY
- To approach MegaJoule class ICF experiment conditions, the diagnostic demonstrator is inserted directly inside the target chamber
 - **As close as possible to the target** (35 cm)
 - Maximum neutron flux reached at CIS level \approx a few $10^{18} \text{ cm}^{-2} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$

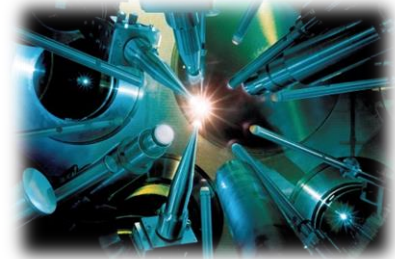


ICF X-ray Plasma Diagnostic

Demonstrator: Hardening Approach

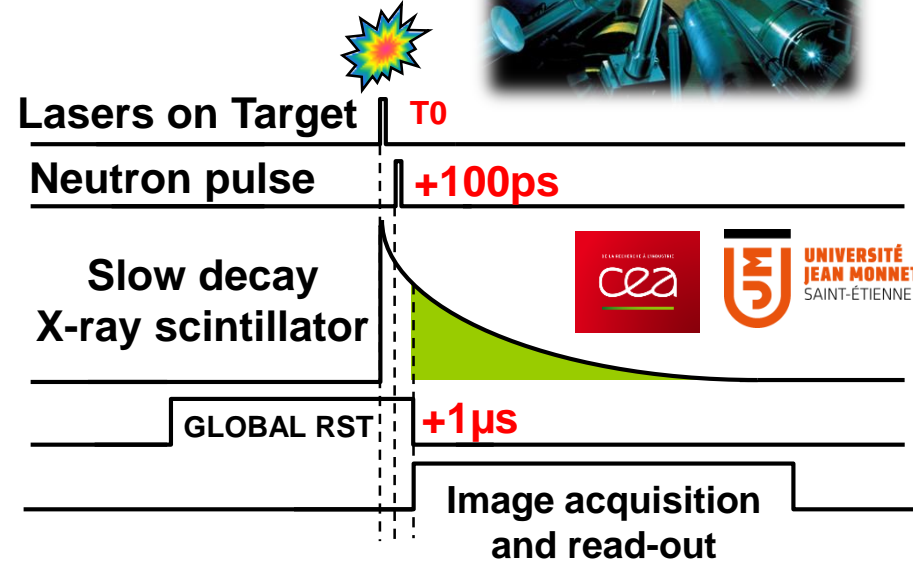
● Hardening at the sensor level:

- Selection of a **simple and robust CIS architecture** with only the required on-chip functions **to reduce SEE sensitivity**
- No real use of RHBD technique for this application



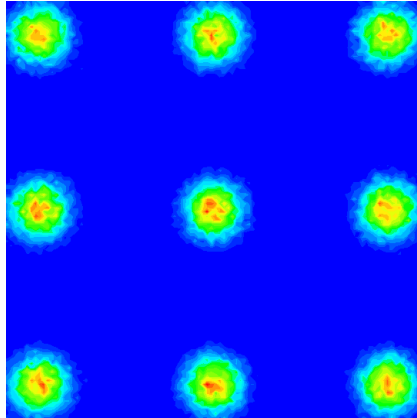
● System level hardening:

- Delay the acquisition of the X-ray plasma image to avoid the neutron pulse perturbation
- Use of a slow Radiation-to-Light Converter
- **Dump all the parasitic charge** with a global reset feature
- Only perform **critical operations** (ADC, data transmission) **after the neutron pulse**

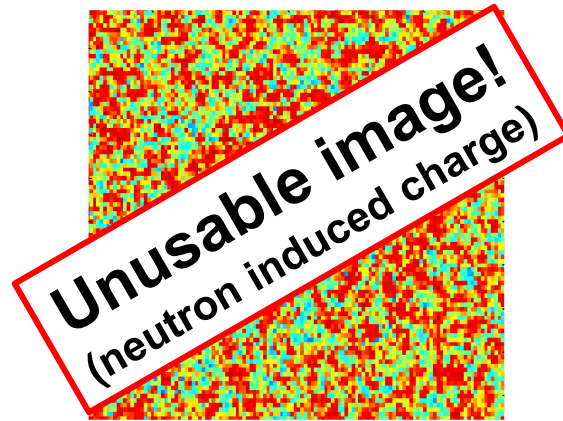


ICF X-ray Plasma Diagnostic Demonstrator: Results

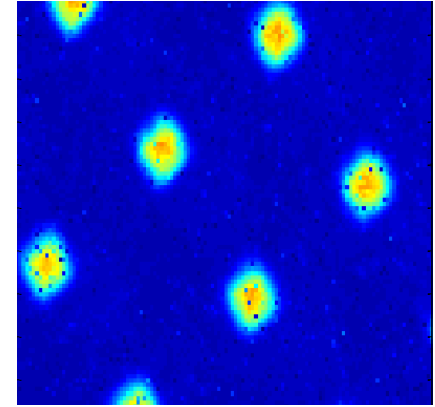
Expected result
(simulation)



Without “global
reset” mode



With “global
reset” mode

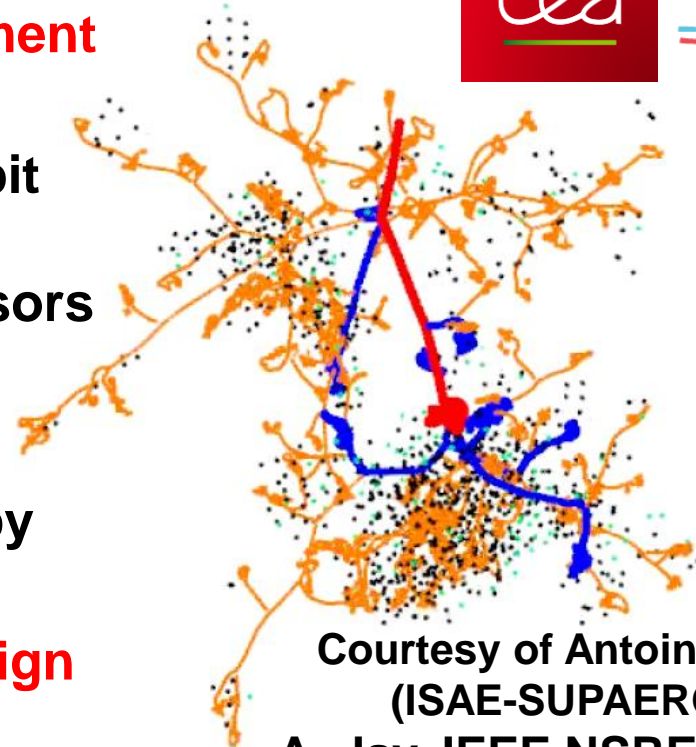


- No SEE, no functionality loss:
 - full camera design **robust to several $10^{18} \text{ cm}^{-2} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$**
- **GR mode efficiently removes** the neutron induce **parasitic signal**
- Ability of CIS based camera to capture an image at such a high neutron flux demonstrated

Displacement Damage (DD) effects

Displacement Damage (DD) Effects on CIS

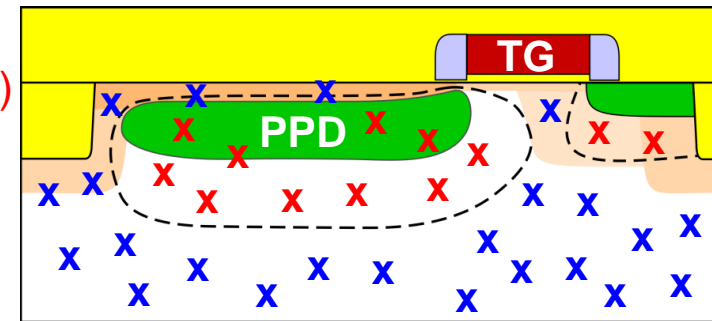
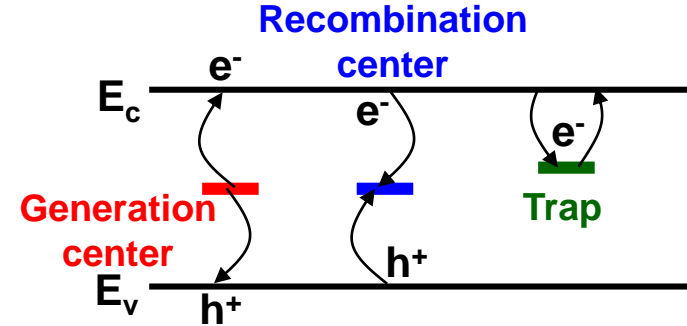
- DD = result of non-ionizing interactions leading to **displacement of silicon atoms**
- Contrary to TID, DD effects exhibit an **almost universal behavior** in silicon based detectors and sensors
- ➔ DD effects **can be anticipated** accurately in most CIS
- DD effects can be “modulated” by design optimization...
- ...but **not really mitigated by design**



Courtesy of Antoine JAY
(ISAE-SUPAERO)
A. Jay, IEEE NSREC 2016

Displacement Damage Effects on CIS: Basics

- DD effects lead to the creation of SRH centers
 - Can act as **generation/recombination** centers or as charge trap
- **Main effects** originating from the **photodiodes**:
 - **Dark current increase** (defect **x** in depletion region)
 - Possible quantum efficiency reduction due to recombination centers **x** (usually not observed)
- **Not considered**:
 - Charge trapping : **no proven effect** in CIS
 - Type inversion* : not likely in CIS for typical fluences ($<10^{14}$ n/cm²)



x SRH generation centers
x SRH recombination centers

Displacement Damage Induced Dark Current Increase

- Outline
- CIS overview
- Rad. Effects
- TID
- SEE
- DD

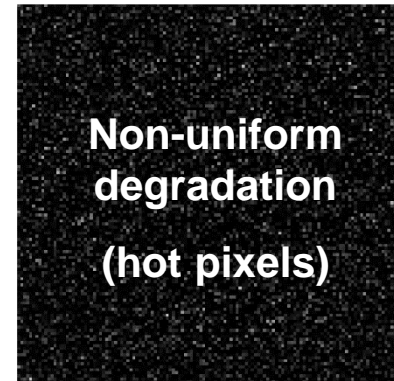
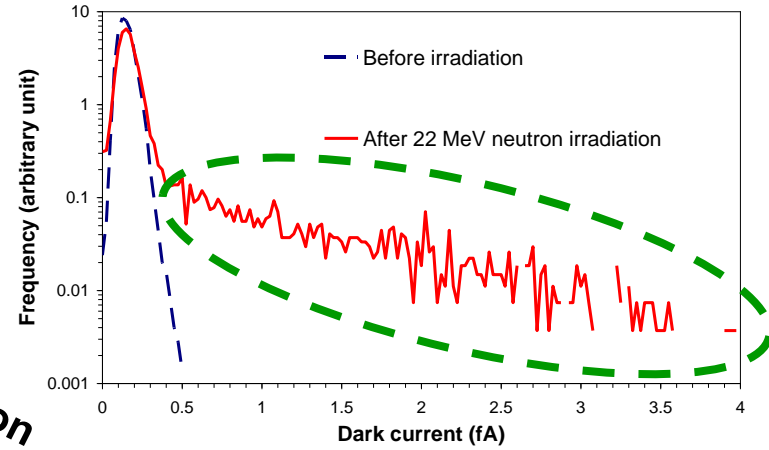
Dark frame
no irradiation



Neutron irradiation
(DD effects only)

Uniform
gray level
increase

^{60}Co γ -ray irradiation
(TID effects only)



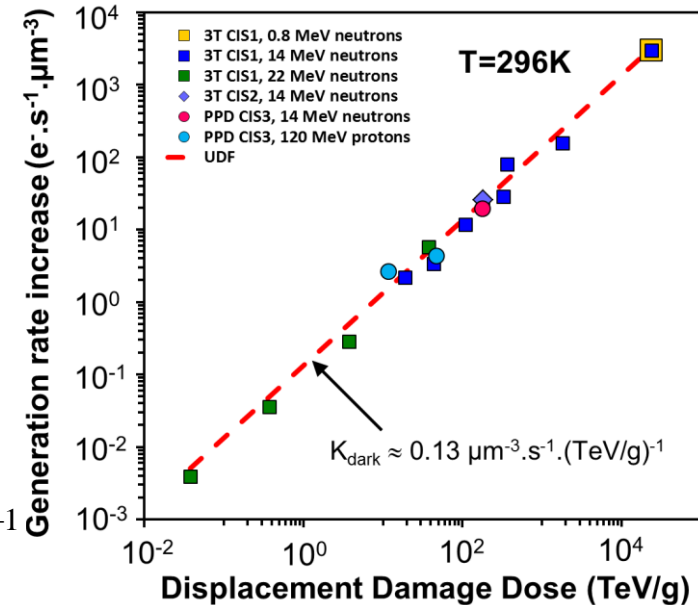
Displacement Damage Effects on CIS: Universal Damage Factor

- Srour et al. 2000* Universal Damage Factor applied to CIS

$$\Delta I_{obs} = q \cdot K \cdot V_{dep} \cdot D_{dd}$$

Damage Factor (points to K)
Displacement Damage Dose (points to D_{dd})
Mean dark current increase (points to ΔI_{obs})
Depletion volume (points to V_{dep})

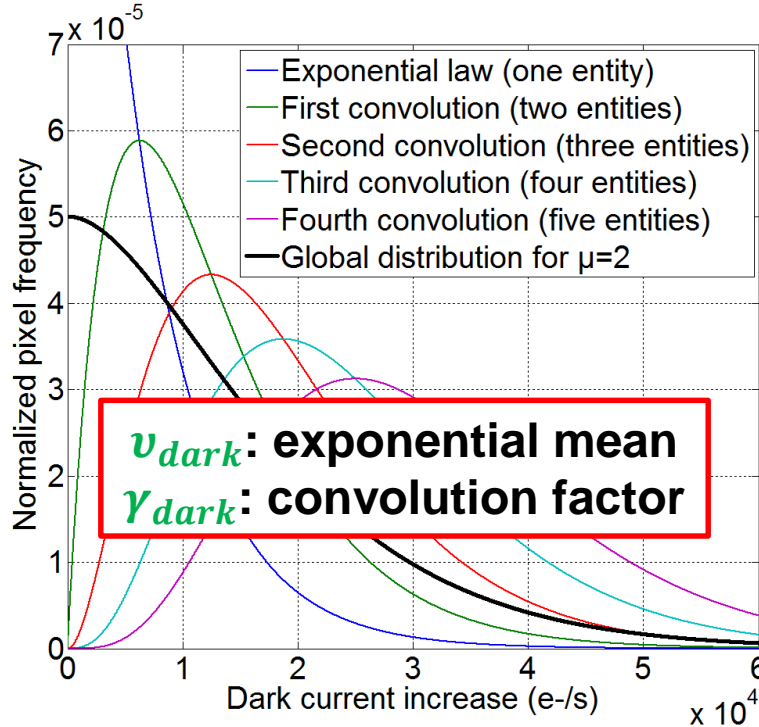
- No fitting parameter
- At 23°C: $K = 1.4 \pm 0.5 \text{ cm}^{-3} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot (\text{MeV/g})^{-1}$
- Verified on CIS from many foundries up to 10^{13} n/cm^2



C. Virmontois et al.,
IEEE TNS Aug. 2012

*J.R. Srour and D. H. Lo, IEEE TNS, Dec. 2000.

Displacement Damage Effects on CIS: Empirical Prediction Model*



- **Exponential** dark current **Probability Density Function (PDF)** for low doses and small volumes (**one dark current source per pixel**):

$$f_{v_{dark}}(x) = \frac{1}{v_{dark}} \exp\left(-\frac{x}{v_{dark}}\right)$$

- **Convolution** of the PDF at higher doses and larger volumes (**superimposition of several dark current sources per pixel**):

$$f_{\Delta I_{obs}}(x) = Poisson(k = 1, \mu) \times f_{v_{dark}}(x) + Poisson(k = 2, \mu) \times f_{v_{dark}}(x) * f_{v_{dark}}(x) + \dots$$

- $\mu = \gamma_{dark} \times V_{dep} \times DDD$ is the **convolution parameter** and represents the **mean number of sources per pixel**

*Virmondois et al., IEEE TNS, Aug. 2012

*Belloir et al., Optics Express, Feb. 2016

Displacement Damage Effects on CIS: Empirical Prediction Model

- In the same way as the Universal Damage Factor, the two parameters of this empirical model ν_{dark} and γ_{dark} :
 - Appear to be constant for neutron/protons/ions of a few MeV to 500 MeV
- In practice, this empirical model can be used to anticipate the absolute DD induced dark current distribution
 - Without any parameter adjustment
- Parameter values

Average dark current per source

$$\nu_{dark} \approx 5000 \text{ e-/s @ } 23^{\circ}\text{C}$$

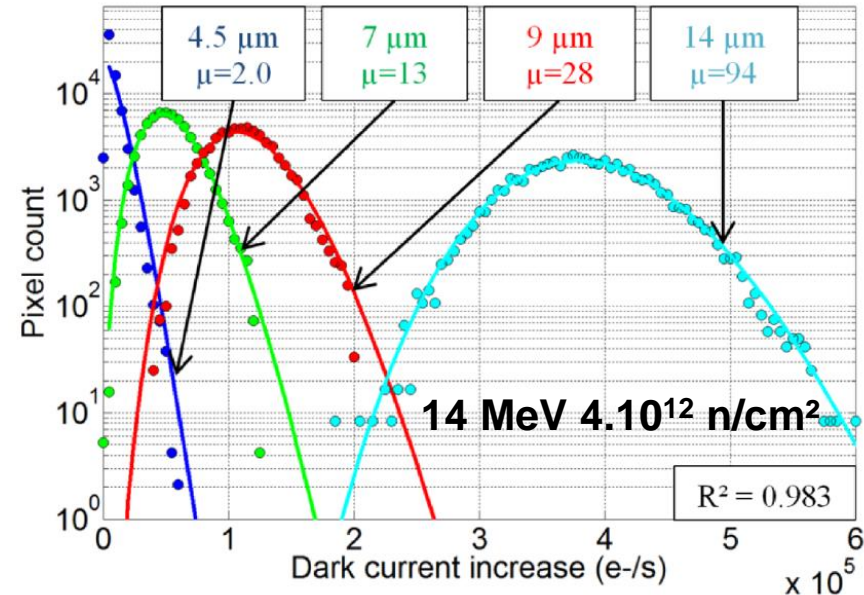
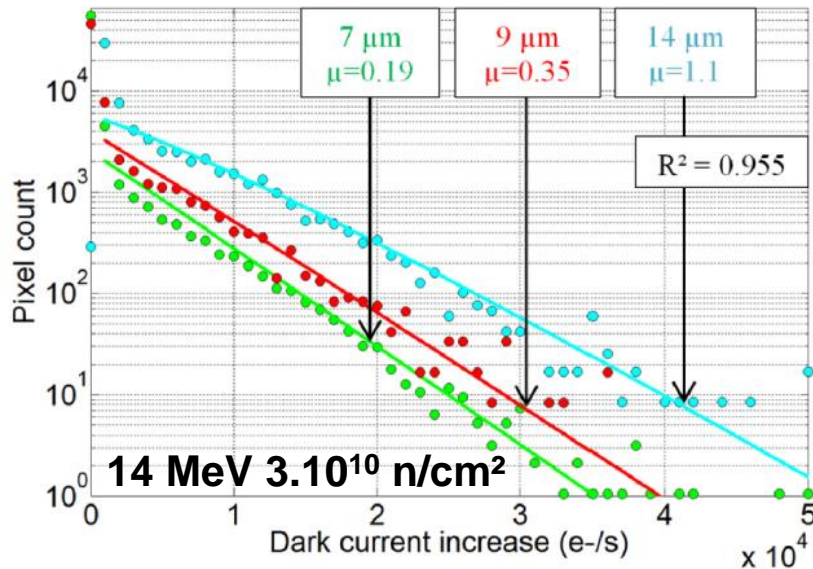
$$\gamma_{dark} \approx \frac{1}{50,000} \mu\text{m}^{-3} (\text{TeV/g})^{-1}$$



1 source per pixel for a dose of 500 TeV/g in a $100 \mu\text{m}^3$ depleted volume

Displacement Damage Effects on CIS: Empirical Prediction Model

- Typical results of the prediction model:
 - 4 CIS with 4 different pixel pitches (4.5 / 7 / 9 and 14 μm)
 - At low ($3 \cdot 10^{10}$) and high ($4 \cdot 10^{12}$) fluence



*Belloir et al., Optics Express, Feb. 2016

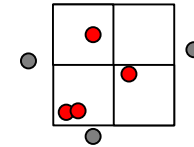
Displacement Damage (DD) Effects on CIS:

A summary

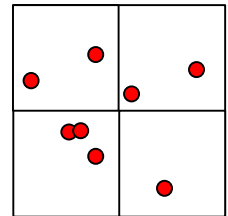
- Main DD effects in CIS up to 10^{13} - 10^{14} n/cm²:

Dark Current Increase

- DD induced Dark Current increase **can be anticipated** by using:
 - Srour Universal Damage Factor for the mean value
 - The presented empirical model for the full distribution
- These models can be used **to optimize the design** to modulate the effects (**no real mitigation possible by design**):
 - Small depletion volume → lower mean dark current, larger non-uniformities
 - Large depletion volume → higher mean dark current but less non-uniformity



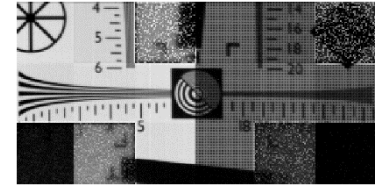
System level mitigation: cooling!



Talk Summary

- **MGy-Grad Total Ionizing Dose effects on CIS**

- Large dark current increase and MOSFET voltage shifts
- All these effects **can be** partially **mitigated by design**
 - Use of *ELT* and *conventional photodiode* recommended



➔ Radiation hardened CIS can provide useful images after several MGy

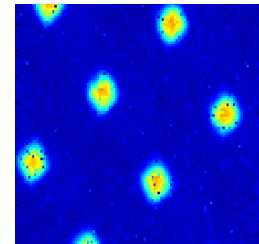
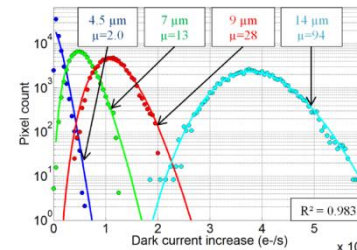
- **High flux Single Event Effects (SEE) in CIS :**

- Main issue: **transient** deposited **parasitic charge (SET)**
- **Other SEEs can be avoided** by sensor or system design

➔ CIS based camera can stand neutron flux up to 10^{18} n.cm⁻².s⁻¹

- **High fluence displacement damage effects in CIS**

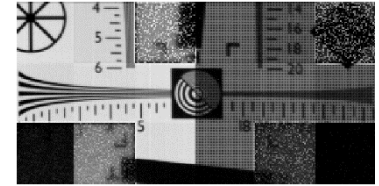
- Main effect : **dark current increase**
- **Can be predicted** up to 10^{14} n/cm² and mitigated at system level (e.g. cooling)



Talk Summary

- **MGy-Grad Total Ionizing Dose effects on CIS**

- Large dark current increase and MOSFET voltage shifts
- All these effects **can be** partially **mitigated by design**
 - Use of **EL**



Radiation ha

- **High flux Single**

- Main issue: t
- Other SEEs

In a nutshell:

- The main issues (TID/SEE/DD) **come from the photodiode**
- **CIS are a good choice for harsh radiation environments!**

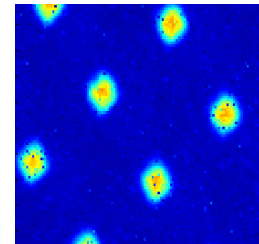
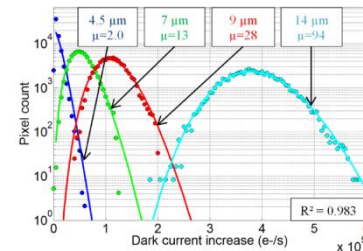
after several MGy



CIS based camera can stand neutron flux up to 10^{18} n.cm⁻².s⁻¹

- **High fluence displacement damage effects in CIS**

- Main effect : **dark current increase**
- **Can be predicted** up to 10^{14} n/cm² and mitigated at system level (e.g. cooling)



contact: vincent.goiffon@isae.fr

Thank you!

*want to know
more?*
↘

**V. Goiffon, “Radiation Effects on CMOS Active Pixel Image Sensors,” in
Ionizing Radiation Effects in Electronics: From Memories to Imagers
(CRC Press, 2015), ch. 11, pp. 295–332.**

