Near-unity quantum efficiency of broadband black silicon photodiodes with an induced junction

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Ideal photodiodes can detect all incoming photons independently of the wavelength, angle or intensity of the incident light. Present-day photodiodes notably suffer from optical losses and generated charge carriers are often lost via recombination. Here, we demonstrate a device with an **external quantum efficiency above 96% over the wavelength range 250–950 nm**. Instead of a conventional p–n junction, we use negatively charged alumina to form an inversion layer that generates a collecting junction extending to a depth of 30 µm in n-type silicon with bulk resistivity larger than 10 k Ω cm. We enhance the collection efficiency further by nanostructuring the photodiode surface, which results in higher effective charge density and increased charge-carrier concentration in the inversion layer. Additionally, nanostructuring and efficient surface passivation allow for a reliable device response with incident angles up to 70°. We expect the considered device to improve data quality, reduce the area of photodiodes as well as decrease the cost per pixel.

Author: Dr JUNTUNEN, Mikko (Helsinki Institute of Physics)
Presenter: Dr JUNTUNEN, Mikko (Helsinki Institute of Physics)
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