Physical Structure of CMOS Integrated Circuits

Dae Hyun Kim

EECS
Washington State University
References

  – Chapter 3
Goal

• Understand the physical structure of CMOS integrated circuits (ICs)
Logical vs. Physical

- Logical structure

- Physical structure

Integrated Circuit Layers

• Semiconductor
  – Transistors (active elements)

• Conductor
  – Metal (interconnect)
    • Wire
    • Via

• Insulator
  – Separators
Integrated Circuit Layers

- Silicon substrate, insulator, and two wires (3D view)

- Side view
  - Metal 1 layer
  - Insulator

- Top view
Integrated Circuit Layers

- Two metal layers separated by insulator (side view)

- Top view
Integrated Circuit Layers

Interconnects

22 nm Process

14 nm Process

80 nm minimum pitch

52 nm (0.65x) minimum pitch

52 nm Interconnect Pitch Provides Better-than-normal Interconnect Scaling

Embargo until 8-11-14, 9 am PDT
Integrated Circuit Layers

• Signal transfer speed is affected by the interconnect resistance and capacitance.
  – Resistance ↑ => Signal delay ↑
  – Capacitance ↑ => Signal delay ↑
Integrated Circuit Layers

• Resistance

\[ R = \rho \frac{l}{A} = \frac{\rho \cdot l}{t \cdot w} = R_s \cdot \frac{l}{w} \]

- \( R_s \): sheet resistance (constant)
- \( \rho \): resistivity \((\frac{1}{\sigma}, \sigma \): conductivity\)
  - Material property (constant)
  - Unit: \( \Omega \cdot m \)
- \( t \): thickness (constant)
- \( w \): width (variable)
- \( l \): length (variable)

• Example

\[ \rho: 17.1n\Omega \cdot m, \ t: 0.13\mu m, \ w: 65nm, \ l: 1000\mu m \]

\[ R = (17.1 \cdot 10^{-9} \Omega \cdot m) \cdot \frac{1000 \cdot 10^{-6}m}{(0.13 \cdot 10^{-6}m)(65 \cdot 10^{-9}m)} = 2023\Omega \]
Integrated Circuit Layers

- Capacitance
  \[ C = \varepsilon \frac{t \cdot l}{s} \]
  - \( \varepsilon \): permittivity
    - Material property (constant)
    - Unit: F/m
  - \( s \): distance between two conductors

- Example
  - \( \varepsilon \): 1.8 \( \times \) 10\(^{-11} \) F/m, \( t \): 0.13 \( \mu \)m, \( s \): 65 nm, \( l \): 1000 \( \mu \)m
  \[ C = (1.8 \cdot 10^{-11} F/m) \cdot \frac{(0.13 \cdot 10^{-6} m) \cdot (1000 \cdot 10^{-6} m)}{65 \cdot 10^{-9} m} = 3.6 \cdot 10^{-14} F = 36 fF \]
MOSFETs – Physical Shape

• What a MOSFET looks like at the physical level
  – $L$: Channel length
  – $W$: Channel width
  – $\frac{W}{L}$: Aspect ratio
MOSFETs – Device Physics

• Atomic density of a silicon crystal
  – $N_{Si} \approx 5 \times 10^{22}$

• Intrinsic carrier density
  – # free electrons (due to thermal excitations)
  – $n_i \approx 1.45 \times 10^{10}/cm^3$ (at room temperature)

• Mass action law when no current flows in pure silicon
  – $n = p = n_i$
  – $np = n_i^2$
  • $n$: # free electrons
  • $p$: # free holes
MOSFETs – Device Physics

• Doping
  – Add impurity atoms (dopants) to enhance # electrons or # holes.
  – n-type material: if more electrons are added (donors).
    • $N_d$: # donors ($10^{16} \sim 10^{19} / cm^3$)
    • # free electrons (majority carriers): $n_n \approx N_d / cm^3$
    • # holes (minority carriers): $p_n \approx \frac{n_i^2}{N_d} / cm^3$
    • $n_n \gg p_n$
  – p-type material: if more holes are added (acceptors).
    • $N_a$: # acceptors ($10^{14} \sim 10^{19} / cm^3$)
    • # holes (majority carriers): $p_p \approx N_a / cm^3$
    • # free electrons (minority carriers): $n_p \approx \frac{n_i^2}{N_a} / cm^3$
    • $p_p \gg n_p$
MOSFETs – Device Physics

- **Conductivity**
  \[ \sigma = q(\mu_n \cdot n + \mu_p \cdot p) \]
  - \( q \): The charge of an electron \((-1.602 \cdot 10^{-19})\)
  - \( \mu_n \): Electron mobility \((1360cm^2/V \cdot s)\)
  - \( \mu_p \): Hole mobility \((480cm^2/V \cdot s)\)

- **Intrinsic silicon**
  - \( \sigma \approx 4.27 \cdot 10^{-6} \)
  - \( \rho \approx 2.34 \cdot 10^5 \)

- **Quartz glass (insulator)**
  - \( \rho \approx 10^{12} \)

- **Mobility**
  - \( \mu_n > \mu_p \)

- **Impurity scattering**
  - Adding a large number of impurity atoms reduces the mobility.
PN Junction

- **pn junction**
- **Forward current** $I > 0$
- **Reverse blocking** $I = 0$
MOSFETs

nFET

n+: heavily doped with donors

pFET

p+: heavily doped with acceptors

* Contacts are used to connect source/drain/gate to metal 1.
MOSFETs – Device Physics

- $t_{ox}$: oxide thickness
  - Typically a few nm
- Gate material
  - Polysilicon (called poly)
  - Metal
- Oxide capacitance (Gate(M) – Insulator(O) – Semiconductor(S))
  - $C_G = c_{ox} \cdot A_G$
    - $c_{ox} = \frac{\varepsilon_{ox}}{t_{ox}}$: unit gate capacitance
    - $\varepsilon_{ox} \approx 3.9\varepsilon_0 = 3.9 \cdot 8.854 \cdot 10^{-12} F/m$
    - $A_G$: gate area ($= L \cdot W$)
  - Example
    - $t_{ox} = 8nm, L = 45nm, W = 70nm$
      - $C_G \approx 0.013 fF$
MOSFETs – Device Physics (nFET)

- **Current**
  - **Channel charge:** \( Q_c = -C_G \left( V_G - V_{Tn} \right) \)
    - No charge forms until \( V_G \) reaches \( V_{Tn} \).
  - **Current flowing the channel:** \( I = \frac{|Q_c|}{\tau_t} \)
    - \( \tau_t = \frac{L}{v} \): channel transit time (the average time needed for an electron to move from S to D).
    - \( v = \mu_n \cdot E = \mu_n \cdot \frac{V_{DS}}{L} \)
    - \[ I \approx \mu_n \cdot c_{ox} \cdot \left( \frac{W}{L} \right) \cdot \left( V_G - V_{Tn} \right) \cdot V_{DS} \]
MOSFETs – Device Physics (nFET)

• Current through the channel

\[ I \approx \mu_n \cdot c_{ox} \cdot \left(\frac{W}{L}\right) \cdot (V_G - V_{Tn}) \cdot V_{DS} = \beta_n \cdot (V_G - V_{Tn}) \cdot V_{DS} \]

- \( \beta_n = \mu_n \cdot c_{ox} \cdot \left(\frac{W}{L}\right) \): device transconductance
- \( \mu_n, c_{ox}, V_{Tn} \): constants
- \( L, W \): variables (designers can decide)
- \( V_G, V_{DS} \): variables (but either 0 or \( V_{DD} \))

• Channel resistance

\[ R_n = \frac{V_{DS}}{I} = \frac{1}{\beta_n \cdot (V_G - V_{Tn})} \]
MOSFETs – Device Physics (pFET)

• Current
  – Channel charge: \( Q_c = C_G (V_G - |V_{Tp}|) \)
    • No charge forms until \( V_G \) reaches \( V_{DD} - |V_{Tp}| \).
  – Current flowing the channel: \( I = \frac{|Q_c|}{\tau_t} \)
    • \( \tau_t = \frac{L}{v} \): channel transit time (the average time needed for an electron to move from D to S).
    • \( v = \mu_p \cdot E = \mu_p \cdot \frac{V_{SD}}{L} \)

\[ I \approx \mu_p \cdot c_{ox} \cdot \left( \frac{W}{L} \right) \cdot (V_G - |V_{Tp}|) \cdot V_{SD} \]
MOSFETs – Device Physics

- Current through the channel
  \[ I \approx \mu_p \cdot c_{ox} \cdot \left( \frac{W}{L} \right) \cdot \left( V_G - |V_{Tp}| \right) \cdot V_{SD} = \beta_p \cdot \left( V_G - |V_{Tp}| \right) \cdot V_{SD} \]
  
  - \( \beta_p = \mu_p \cdot c_{ox} \cdot \left( \frac{W}{L} \right) \): device transconductance
  
  - \( \mu_p, c_{ox}, V_{Tp} \): constants
  
  - \( L, W \): variables (designers can decide)
  
  - \( V_G, V_{SD} \): variables (but either 0 or \( V_{DD} \))

- Channel resistance
  \[ R_p = \frac{V_{SD}}{I} = \frac{1}{\beta_p \cdot (V_G - |V_{Tp}|)} \]
  
  - \( V_G < V_{DD} - |V_{Tp}| \)
  
  Channel resistance
MOSFETs – Device Physics

• Charging the gate requires current flows.
  - \( i = C_G \frac{dV_G}{dt} \)
  - The transistor itself has a signal delay.
  - If \( C_G \) is large, the delay goes up.

• Energy
  - \( E = \int P \, dt = \int (V \cdot I) \, dt = \int (V \cdot C \frac{dV}{dt}) \, dt = \frac{1}{2} CV^2 \)
  - \( E = \frac{1}{2} C_G V_{DD}^2 \)
  - Driving a transistor consumes energy (power dissipation).