PLASMA PROCESSING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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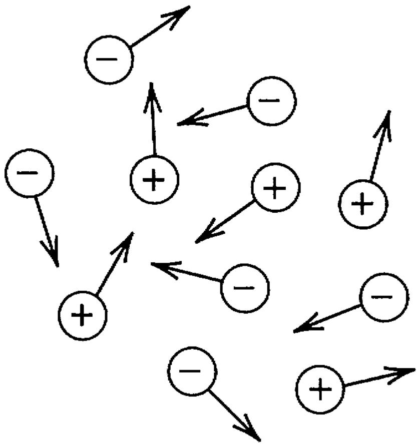
OUTLINE

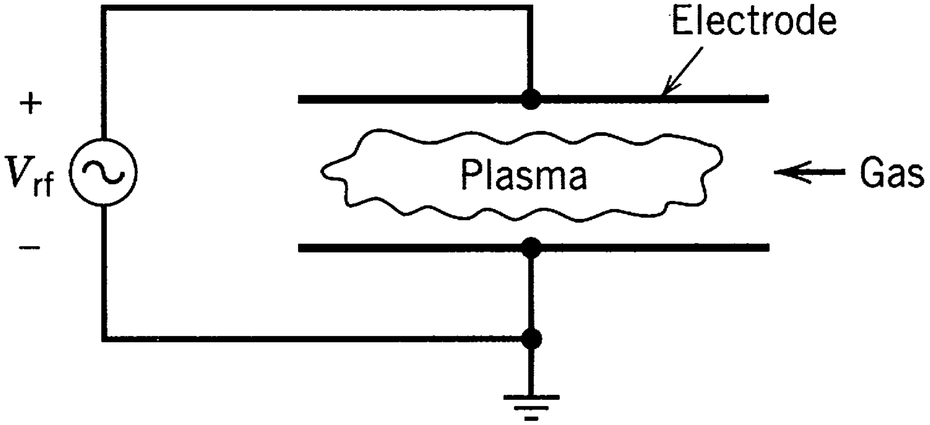
- Introduction to plasmas and discharges
- The microelectronics revolution
- Plasma etching for microelectronics fabrication
- Dual frequency capacitive discharges for microelectronics etching

INTRODUCTION TO
PLASMAS AND DISCHARGES

PLASMAS AND DISCHARGES

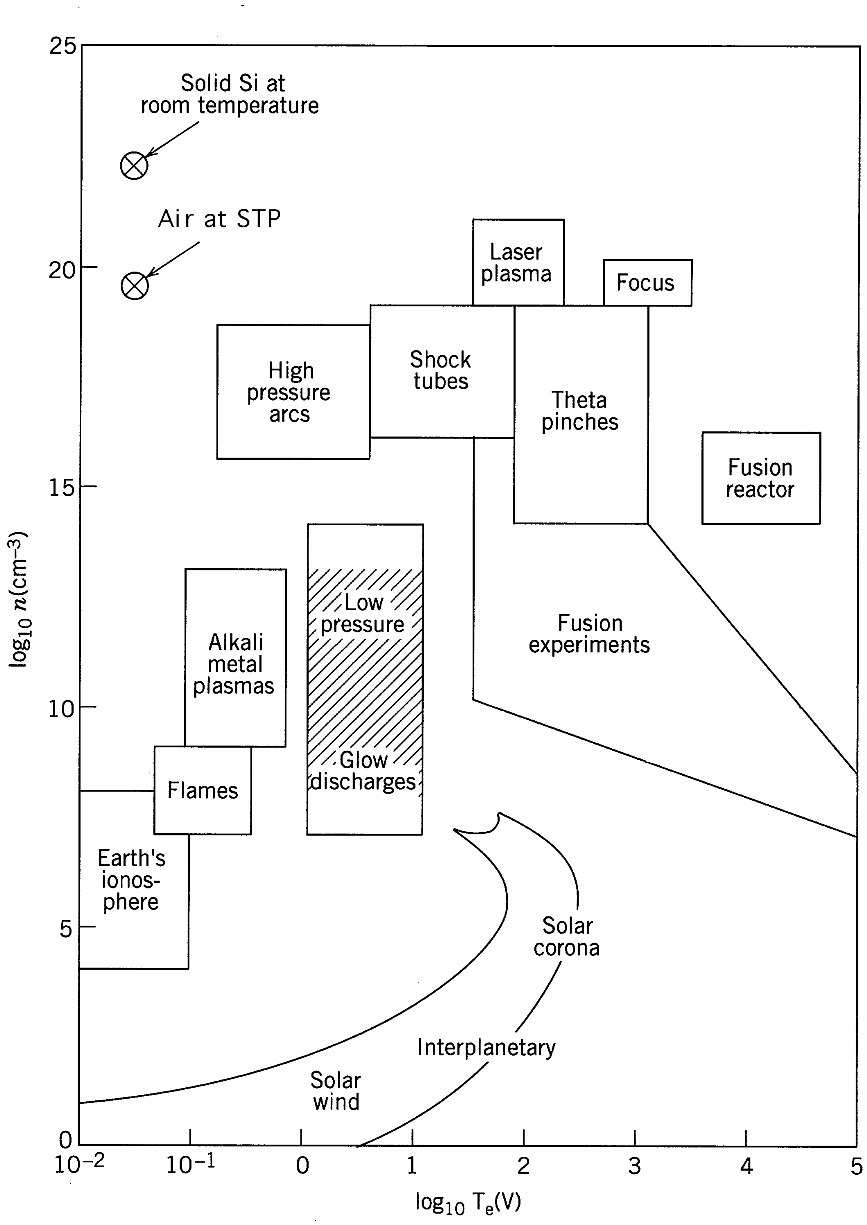
- Plasmas:
  A collection of freely moving charged particles which is, on the average, electrically neutral
- Discharges:
  Driven by voltage or current sources
  Neutral particles are important
  There are boundaries at which surface losses are important
  The electrons are much hotter than the ions



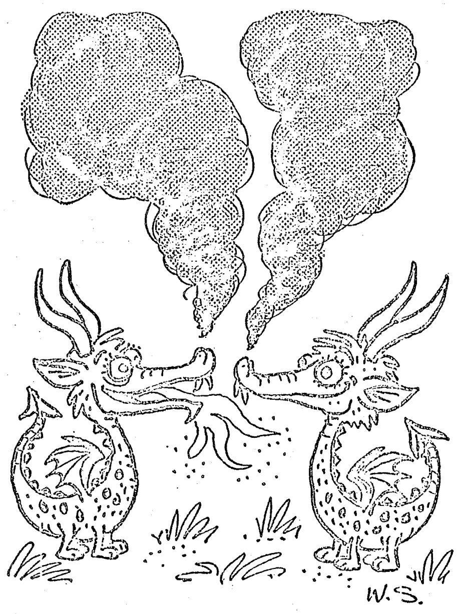


- Device sizes ∼ 30 cm – 1 m
- Driving frequencies: DC to rf (13.56 MHz) to microwaves (2.45 GHz)

PLASMA DENSITY VERSUS TEMPERATURE



HIGH TEMPERATURE PLASMAS — FUSION



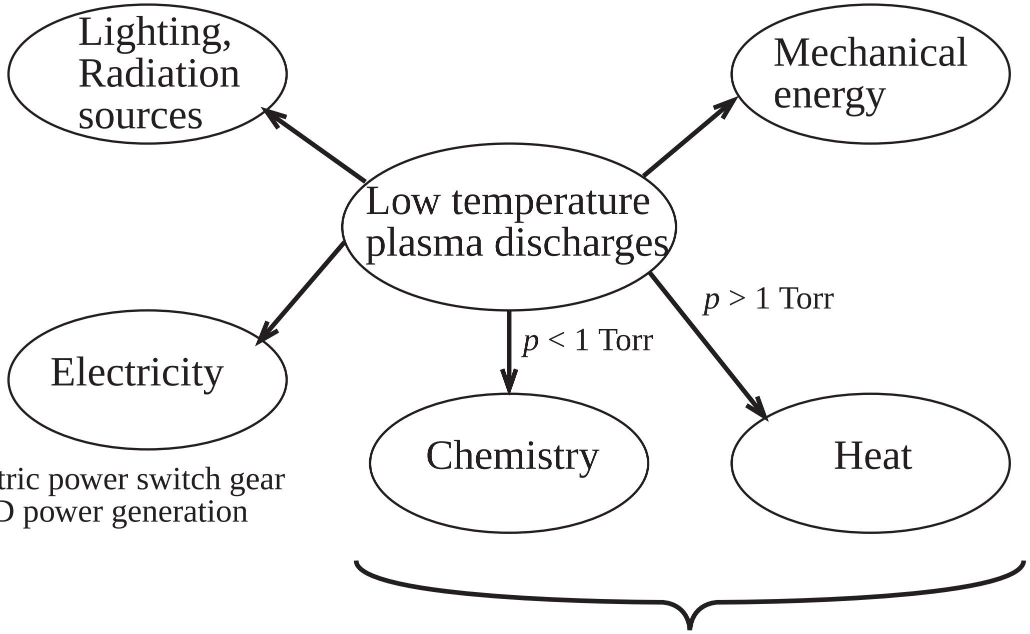
DAILY MAIL – 23RD AUGUST, 1969.

"I'm thinking of switching from fission to fusion!"

"Fission is not nature's normal way of releasing nuclear energy... a few decades hence, [when controlled fusion is achieved], energy may be free — just like the unmetered air." The famous engineer and mathematician John Von Neuman wrote these words in 1954, while he was a member of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission.

The main issue is economic feasibility

LOW TEMPERATURE INDUSTRIAL DISCHARGES



Plasma displays
Gas lasers
Fluorescent lamps
Arc lighting
Electron and ion beam sources

Plasma thrusters

Lighting, Radiation sources

Mechanical energy

Low temperature plasma discharges

$p > 1$ Torr

$p < 1$ Torr

Electricity

Chemistry

Heat

Electric power switch gear
MHD power generation

Plasma-assisted materials processing

Microelectronics etching, deposition, oxidation, implantation, passivation
Liquid crystal display and solar cell depositions
Aerospace and automotive ceramic and metal coatings, films, paints
Metallurgical melting, refining, welding, cutting, hardening
Ceramics synthesis, ultrapure powders, nanopowders
Food packaging permeability barriers
Textile adhesion treatments
Medical materials bio-compatibility treatments, sterilization, cleaning
Architectural and automotive glass coatings

THE MICROELECTRONICS REVOLUTION

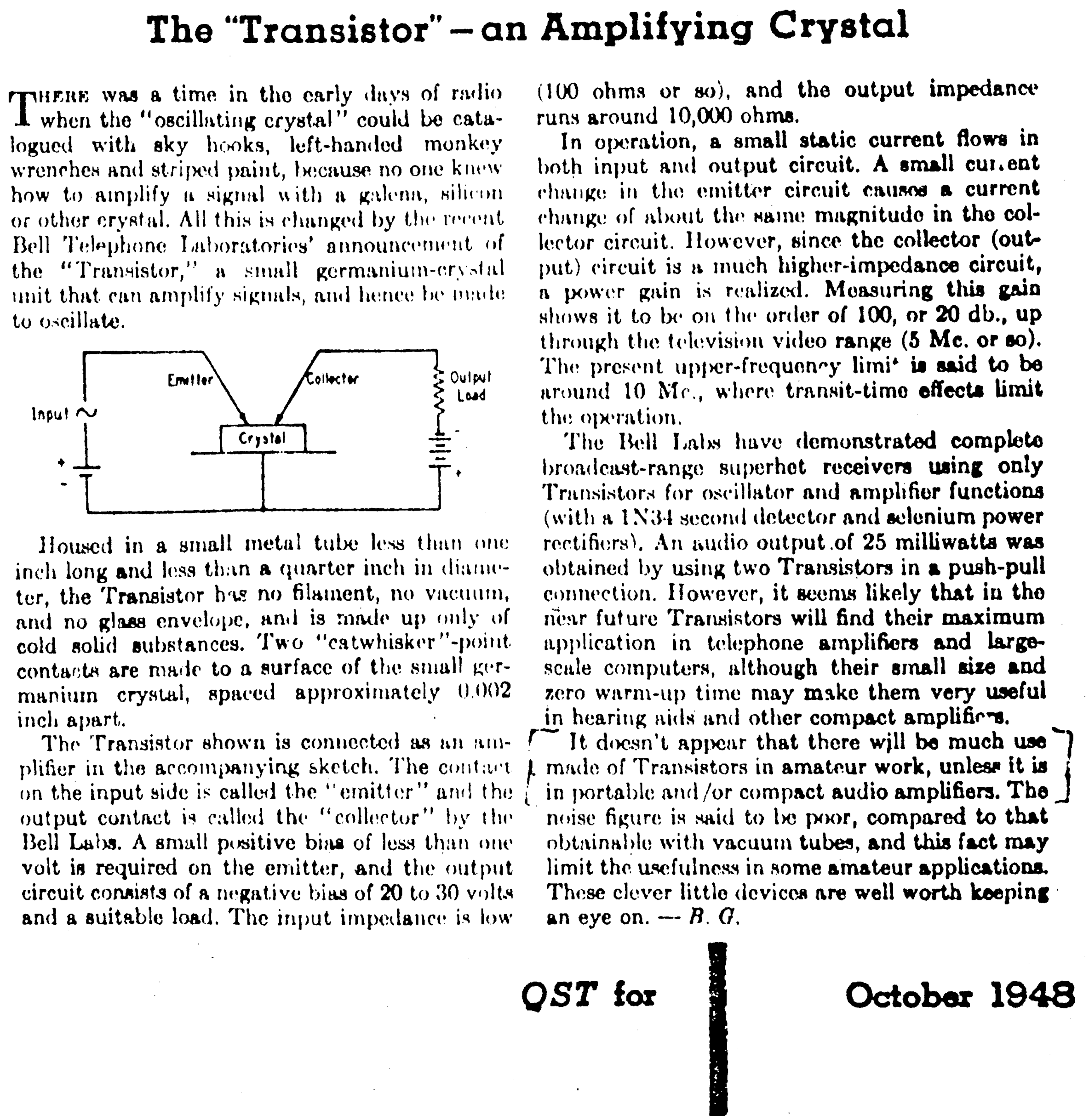
THE MICROELECTRONICS REVOLUTION

- Transistors/chip doubling every $1\frac{1}{2}$–2 years since 1959
- 500,000-fold decrease in cost for the same performance
- In 20 years one computer as powerful as all those in Silicon Valley today

EQUIVALENT AUTOMOTIVE ADVANCE

- 4 million km/hr
- 1 million km/liter
- Never break down
- Throw away rather than pay parking fees
- 3 cm long × 1 cm wide
- Crash 3× a day

THE INVENTION OF THE TRANSISTOR



The "Transistor"—an Amplifying Crystal

There was a time in the early days of radio when the "oscillating crystal" could be catalogued with sky hooks, left-handed monkey wrenches and striped paint, because no one knew how to amplify a signal with a galena, silicon or other crystal. All this is changed by the recent Bell Telephone Laboratories' announcement of the "Transistor," a small germanium-crystal unit that can amplify signals, and hence be made to oscillate.

Housed in a small metal tube less than one inch long and less than a quarter inch in diameter, the Transistor has no filament, no vacuum, and no glass envelope, and is made up only of cold solid substances. Two "catwhisker"-point contacts are made to a surface of the small germanium crystal, spaced approximately 0.002 inch apart.

The Transistor shown is connected as an amplifier in the accompanying sketch. The contact on the input side is called the "emitter" and the output contact is called the "collector" by the Bell Labs. A small positive bias of less than one volt is required on the emitter, and the output circuit consists of a negative bias of 20 to 30 volts and a suitable load. The input impedance is low (100 ohms or so), and the output impedance runs around 10,000 ohms.

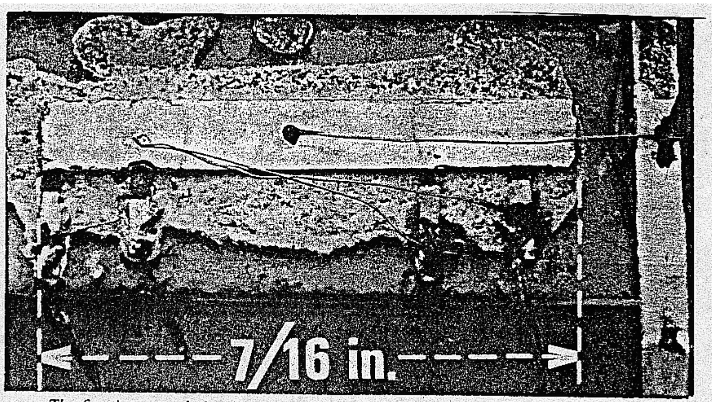
In operation, a small static current flows in both input and output circuit. A small current change in the emitter circuit causes a current change of about the same magnitude in the collector circuit. However, since the collector (output) circuit is a much higher-impedance circuit, a power gain is realized. Measuring this gain shows it to be on the order of 100, or 20 db., up through the television video range (5 Mc. or so). The present upper-frequency limit is said to be around 10 Mc., where transit-time effects limit the operation.

The Bell Labs have demonstrated complete broadcast-range superhet receivers using only Transistors for oscillator and amplifier functions (with a 1N34 second detector and selenium power rectifiers). An audio output of 25 milliwatts was obtained by using two Transistors in a push-pull connection. However, it seems likely that in the near future Transistors will find their maximum application in telephone amplifiers and large-scale computers, although their small size and zero warm-up time may make them very useful in hearing aids and other compact amplifiers.

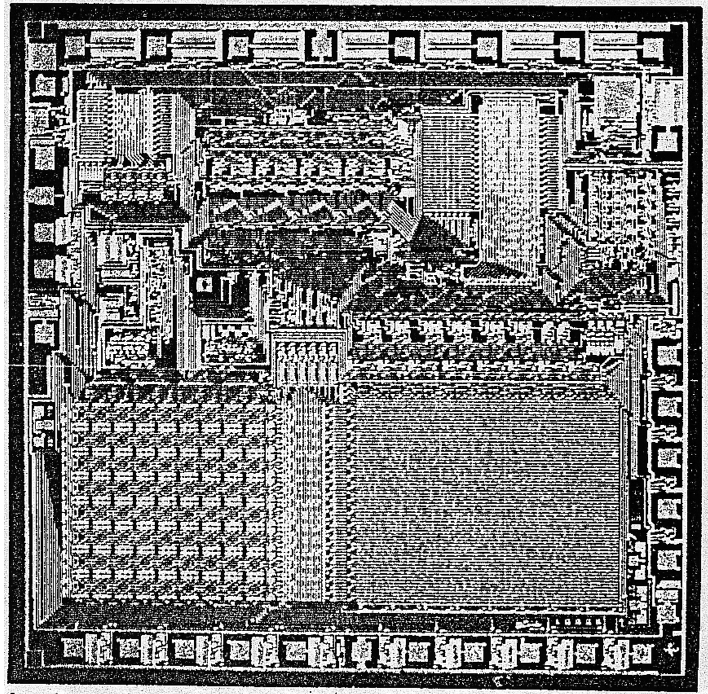
It doesn't appear that there will be much use made of Transistors in amateur work, unless it is in portable and/or compact audio amplifiers. The noise figure is said to be poor, compared to that obtainable with vacuum tubes, and this fact may limit the usefulness in some amateur applications. These clever little devices are well worth keeping an eye on. — *B. G.*

QST for October 1948

FIRST INTEGRATED CIRCUIT AND MICROPROCESSOR



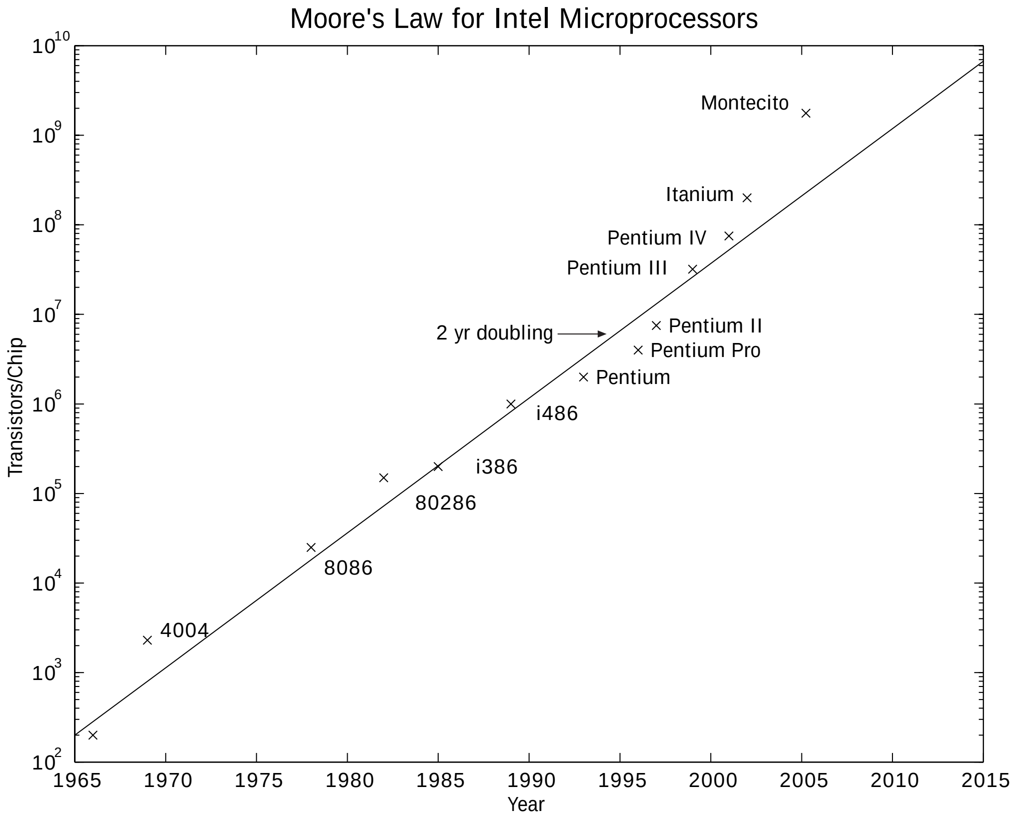
The first integrated circuit was made in 1958 by Jack Kilby of Texas Instruments.



Less than two decades later, engineers put a complete microcomputer on a chip. [Source: Texas Instruments, Inc.]

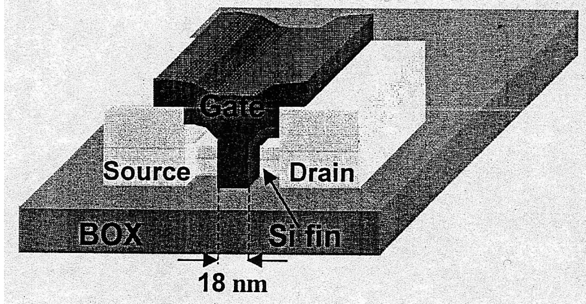
MOORE'S LAW

- "Transistors/chip double every 18 months" — Gordon Moore (1965) (Transistor size shrinking; chip size growing)
- Now a self-fulfilling prophecy

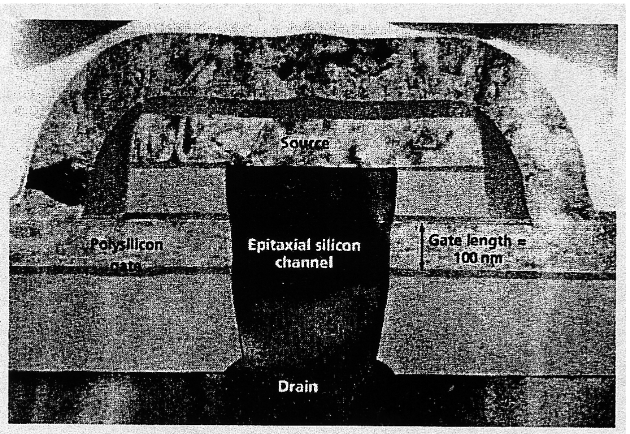


- "No exponential is forever…but we can delay 'forever"' (Gordon Moore, 2003)

DOUBLE/TRI GATE TRANSISTORS



FinFET (UC Berkeley)

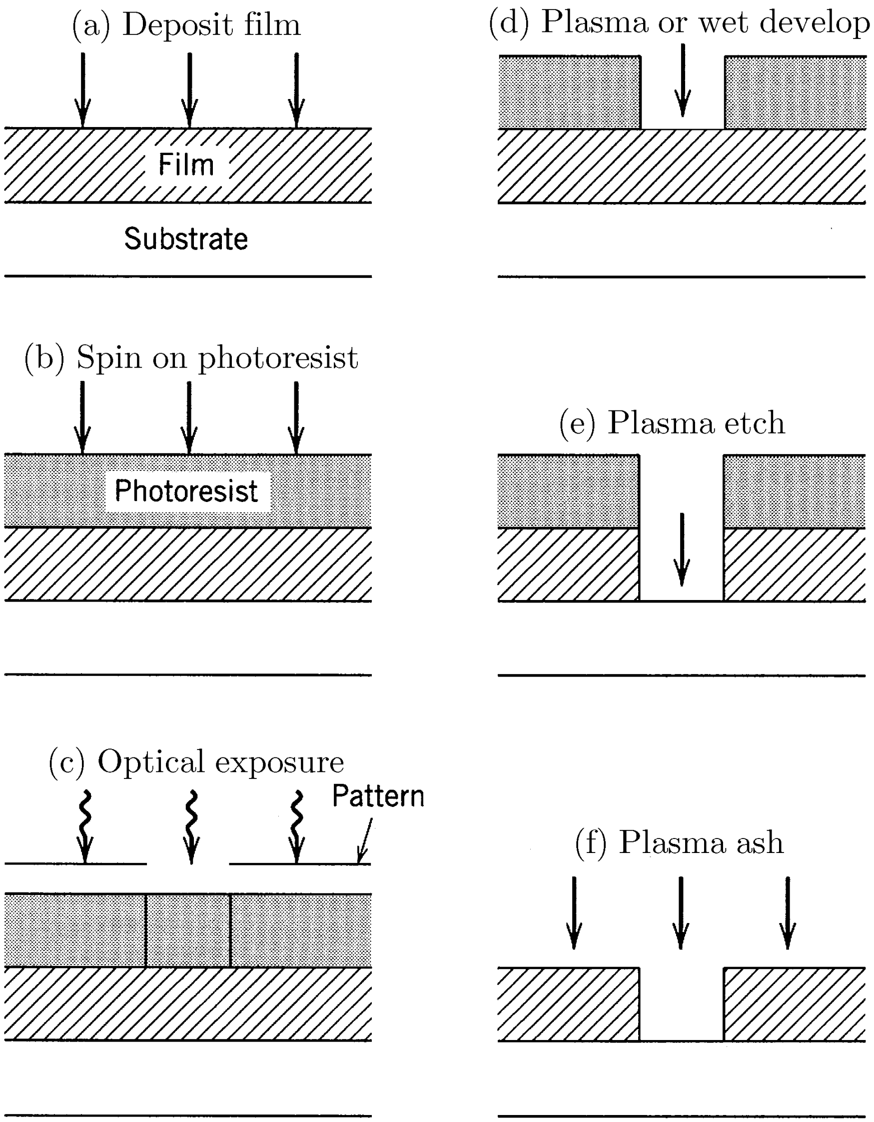


Vertical Transistor (Lucent)

- Both structures can be built with current ic fabrication techniques
- CMOS can be scaled another 20 years!
- State of the art (2004):
  - In manufacture:
    50 nm (200 atoms) gate length
    1.5 nm (5 atoms) gate oxide thickness
  - Smallest fabricated CMOS transistor (FinFET, UC Berkeley):
    12 nm (48 atoms) gate length
  - Limiting gate length from simulations (desktop ic):
    4 nm (16 atoms) gate length

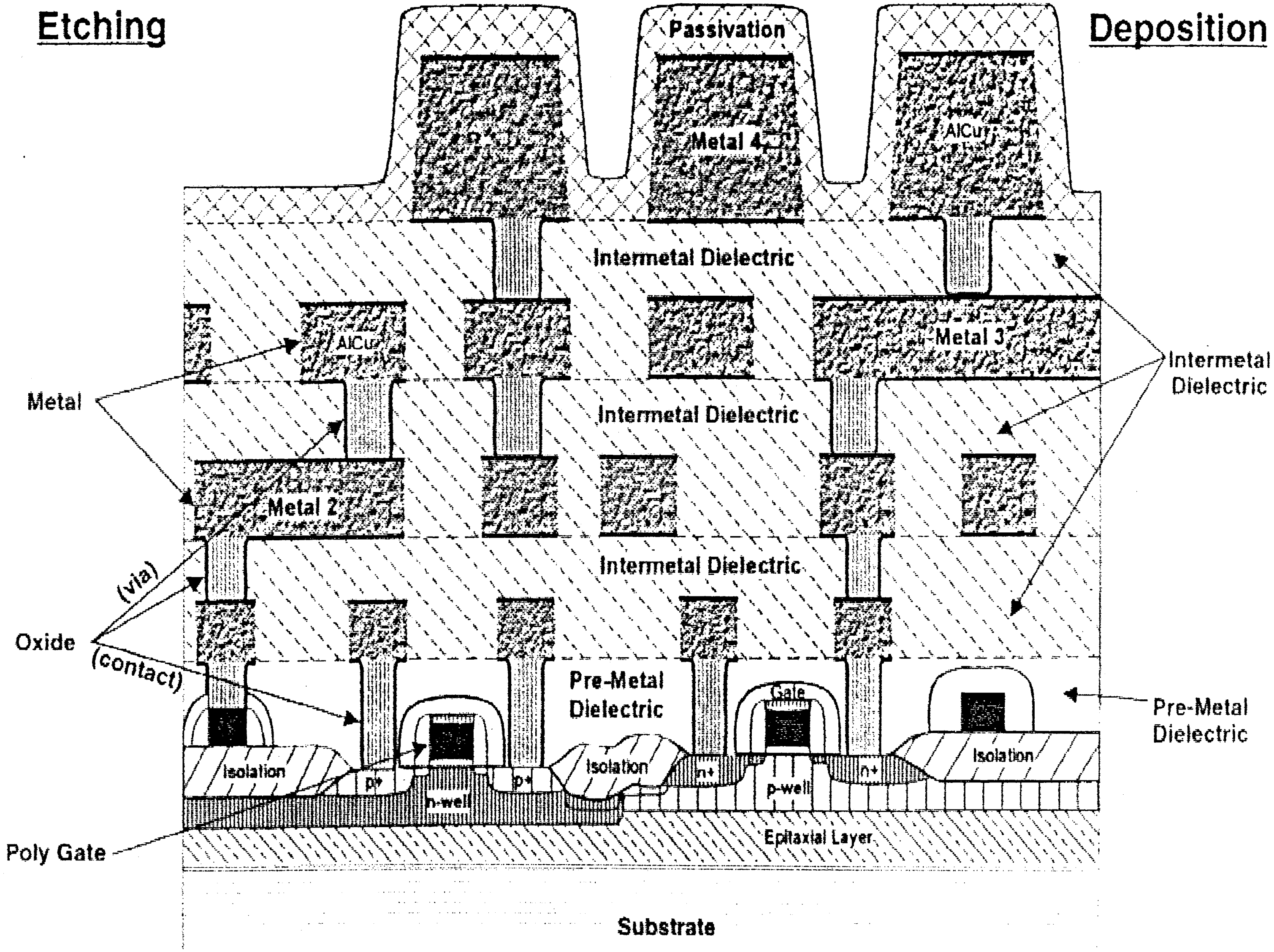
PLASMA ETCHING
FOR MICROELECTRONICS FABRICATION

INTEGRATED CIRCUIT FABRICATION AND PLASMA PROCESSING

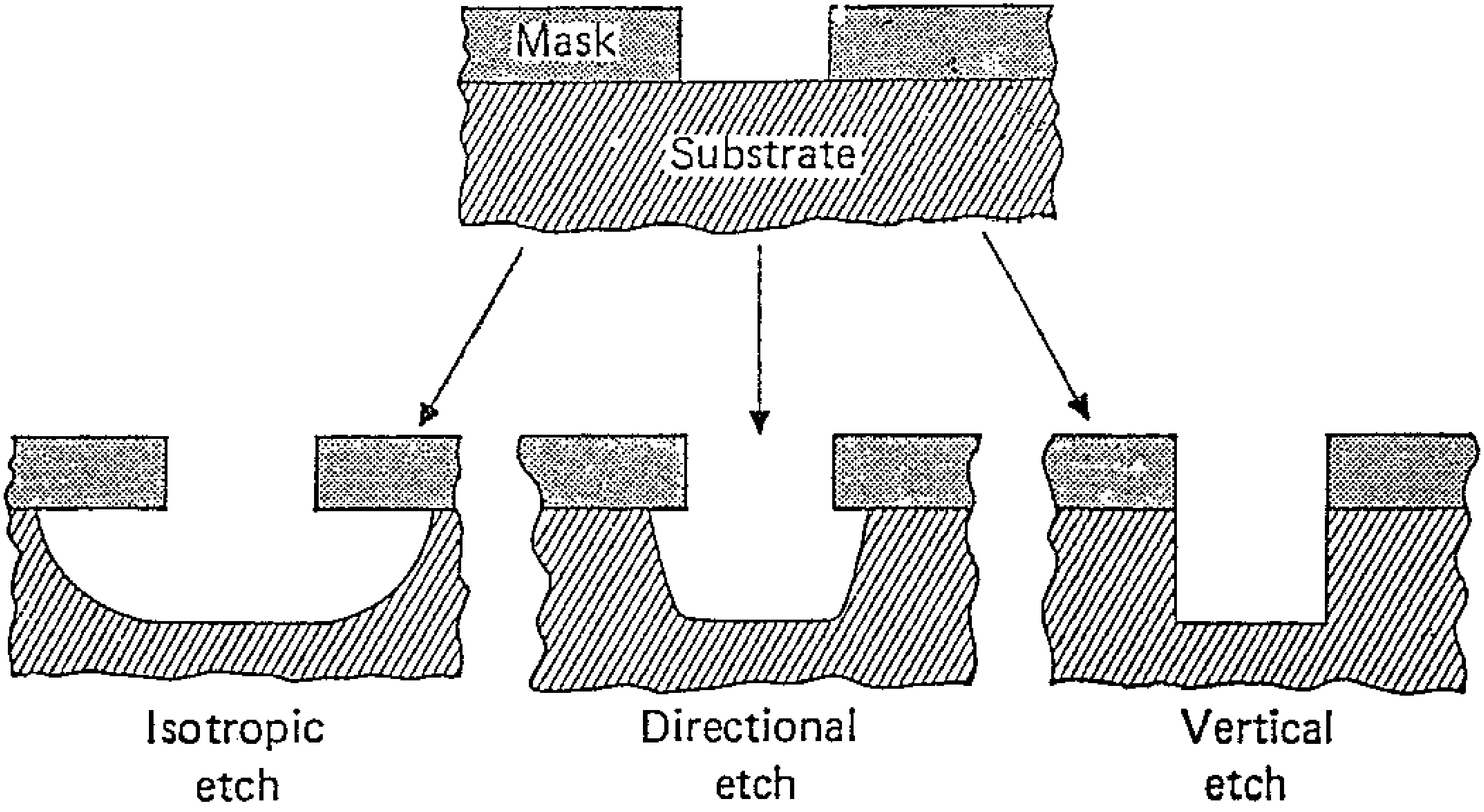


INTEGRATED CIRCUIT CROSS SECTION

- There are up to 10 layers, mostly interconnects (metal + dielectric)



ANISOTROPIC ETCHING



Wet Etching

Ion Enhanced Plasma Etching

ANISOTROPIC PLASMA ETCHING

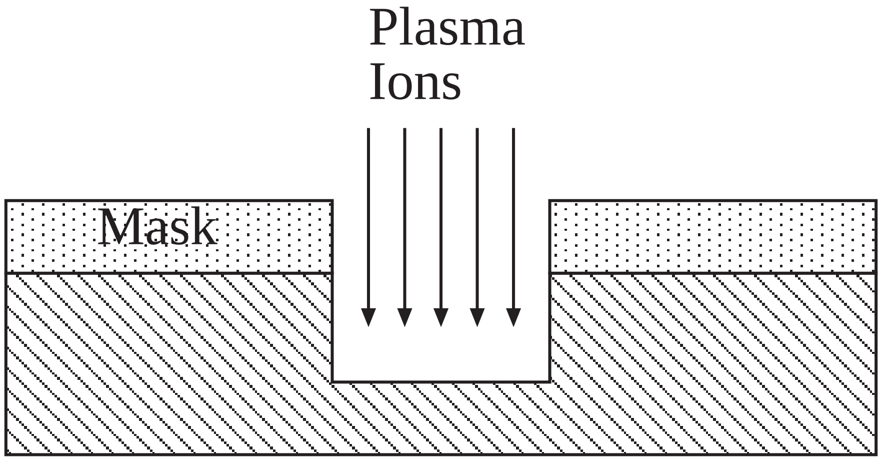
1. Start with inert molecular gas CF_4
2. Make discharge to create reactive species:

$$CF_4 \longrightarrow CF_3 + F$$

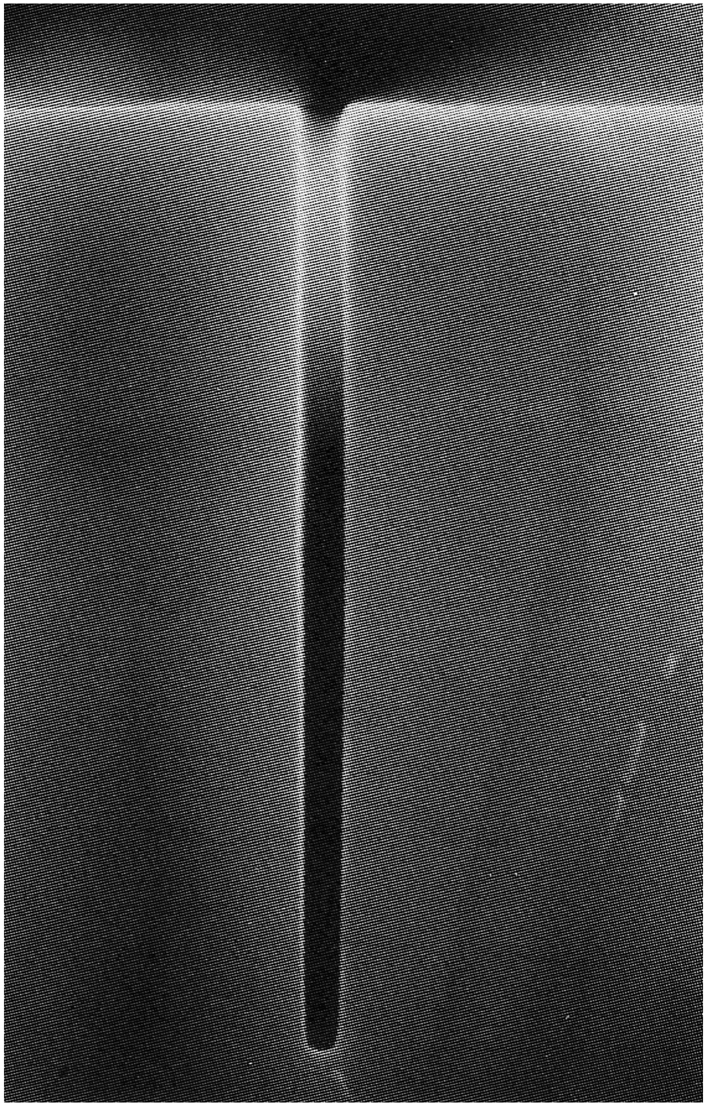
3. Species reacts with material, yielding volatile product:

$$Si + 4F \longrightarrow SiF_4 \uparrow$$

4. Pump away product
5. CF_4 does not react with Si; SiF_4 is volatile
6. Source of anisotropy:
   Energetic ions bombard trench bottom, but not sidewalls:
   (a) Increase etching reaction rate at trench bottom
   (b) Clear passivating films from trench bottom



EXTRAORDINARY PLASMA ETCHING CAPABILITIES

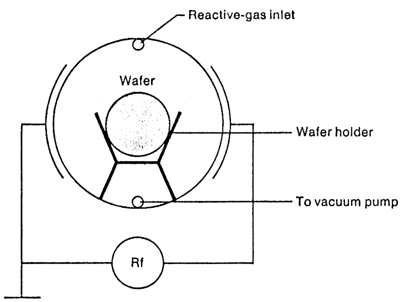


Trench etch (0.2 μm wide by 4 μm deep) in single crystal silicon

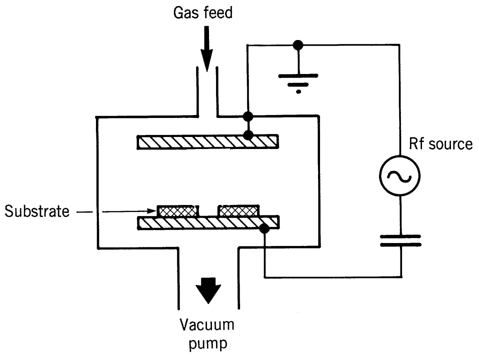
DUAL FREQUENCY CAPACITIVE DISCHARGES FOR MICROELECTRONICS ETCHING

EVOLUTION OF ETCHING DISCHARGES

FIRST GENERATION

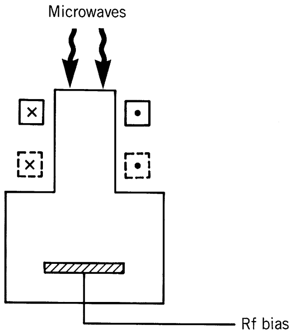


Barrel etcher
(Isotropic etch)

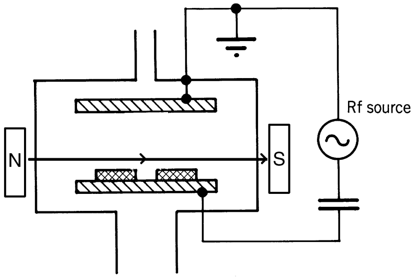


Capacitive
(Anisotropic etch)

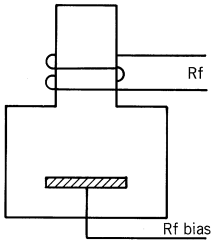
SECOND GENERATION



ECR



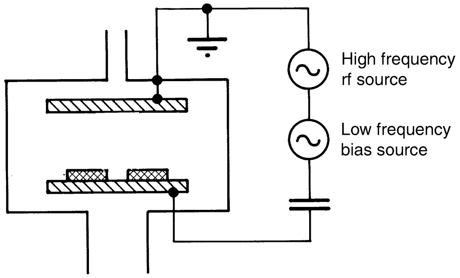
Magnetically enhanced
capacitive discharge



Inductive

THIRD GENERATION

?



Dual frequency
capacitive discharge

?

WHY DUAL FREQUENCY CAPACITIVE DISCHARGE?

- Motivation for capacitive discharge
    - Low cost
    - Robust uniformity over large area
    - Control of dissociation (fluorine)

- Motivation for dual frequency
    - Independent control of ion flux and ion energy

High frequency voltage controls ion flux
Low frequency controls ion energy

- A critical application for dielectric etch

TYPICAL OPERATING CONDITIONS

- $R \sim 15$–30 cm, $L \sim 1$–3 cm
- $p \sim 30$–300 mTorr, $C_4F_8/O_2/Ar$ feedstock
- High frequency $f_h \sim 27.1$–160 MHz, $V_h \sim 200$–500 V
- Low frequency $f_l \sim 2$–13.56 MHz, $V_l \sim 500$–1500 V
- Absorbed powers $P_h,\ P_l \sim 500$–3000 W

INDEPENDENT CONTROL

- Condition for independent control of ion flux and energy

$$\frac{\omega_h^2}{\omega_l^2} \gg \frac{V_l}{V_h} \gg 1$$

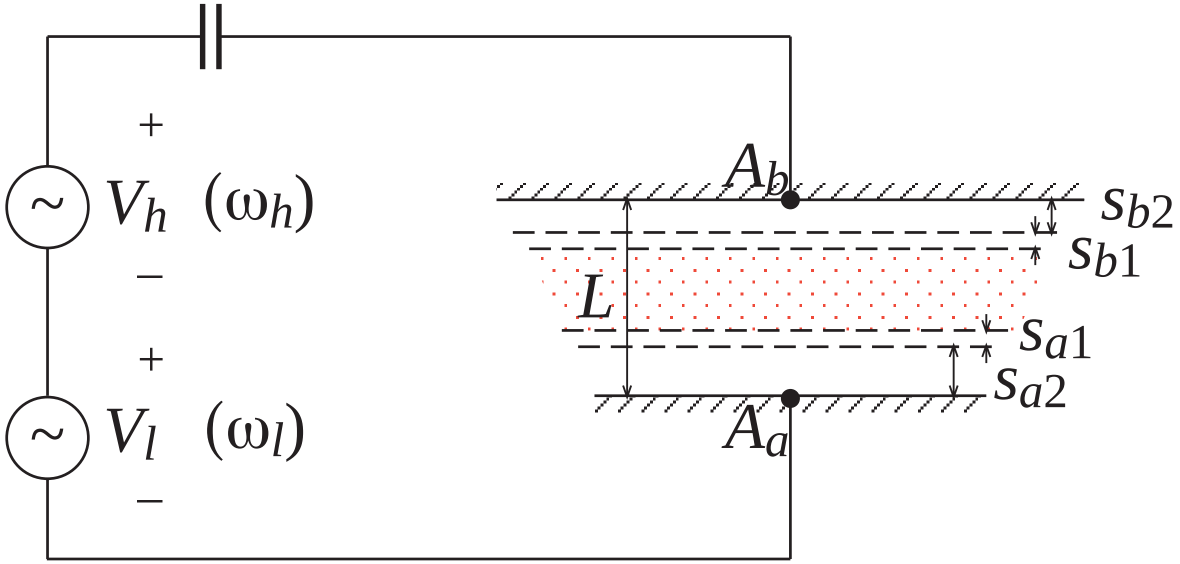
(M.A. Lieberman, J. Kim, J.P. Booth, J.M. Rax and M.M. Turner, SEMICON Korea Etching Symposium, p. 23, 2003)

- Effective frequency concept to describe transition

(H.C. Kim, J.K. Lee, and J.W. Shon, *Phys. Plasmas* **10**, 4545, 2003)

GLOBAL MODEL OF DISCHARGE

- Asymmetric diode (plate areas A_a and A_b)



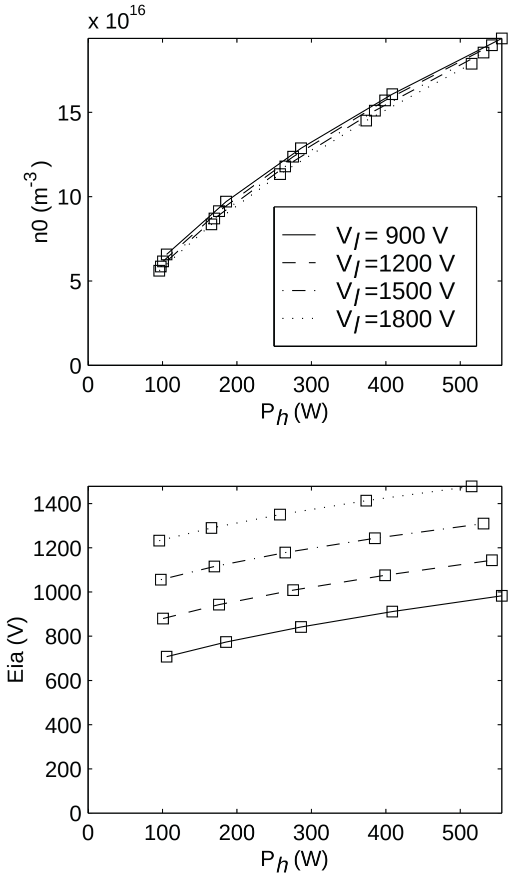
- Low frequency Child law sheaths
- High frequency homogeneous sheaths
- Ion particle balance, and electron and ion power balance
- All high and low frequency heating terms

M.A. Lieberman, J. Kim, J.P. Booth, J.M. Rax and M.M. Turner, SEMICON Korea Etching Symposium, p. 23 (2003)

RESULTS FOR 27.1/2 AND 60/2 MHz

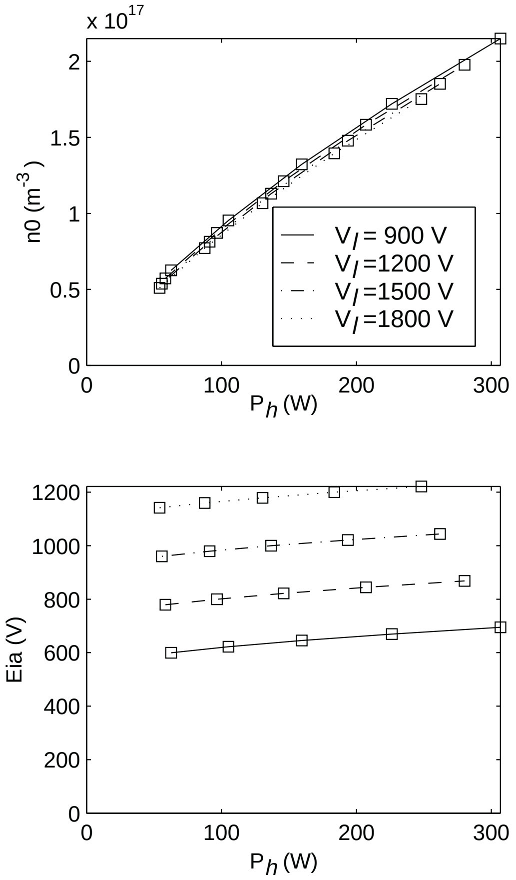
- $A_a = 544\ \text{cm}^2$, $A_b = 707\ \text{cm}^2$, $L = 1.6\ \text{cm}$, $p = 190$ mTorr argon

$f_h = 27.1$ MHz



The high/low frequency decoupling is good but not perfect

$f_h = 60$ MHz



The high/low frequency decoupling is better but not perfect

ELECTROMAGNETIC EFFECTS FOR HIGH FREQUENCY

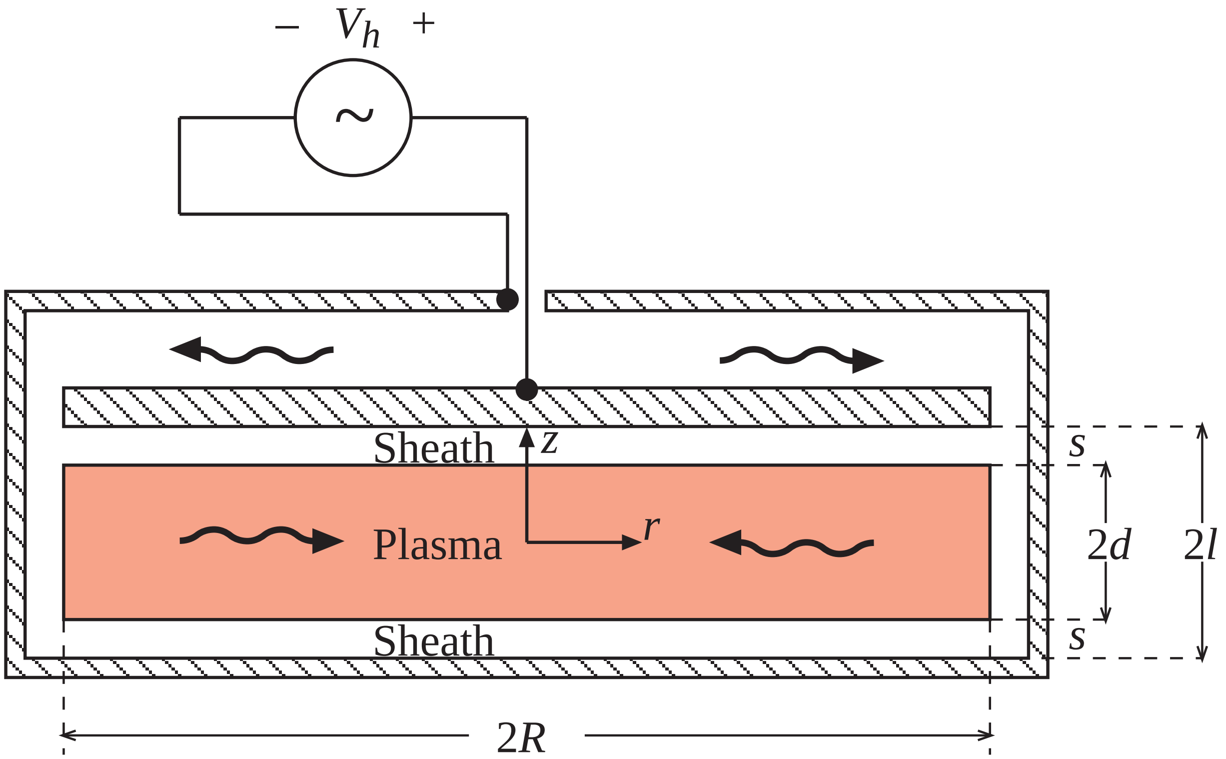
- High frequency and large area ⇒ $\boxed{\text{standing wave effects}}$
- High frequency ⇒ high density ⇒ $\boxed{\text{skin effects}}$
- Previous studies of capacitive discharges mostly based on electrostatics, not full set of Maxwell equations

$$\Longrightarrow \text{no standing wave or skin effects}$$

(M.A. Lieberman, J.P. Booth, P. Chabert, J.M. Rax, and M.M. Turner, *Plasma Sources Sci. Technol.* **11**, 283 2002)

CYLINDRICAL CAPACITIVE DISCHARGE

Consider only the high frequency source



Fields cannot pass through metal plates

(1) V_s excites radially outward wave in top vacuum gap
(2) Outward wave excites radially inward wave in plasma

BASIC PHYSICS

- Plasma is (weakly) lossy dielectric slab

$$\kappa_p = 1 - \frac{\omega_p^2}{\omega(\omega - j\nu_m)}$$

where

$\omega_p = (e^2 n_e/\epsilon_0 m)^{1/2}$ = plasma frequency

ν_m = electron-neutral collision frequency

- TM modes with $H_\phi \sim \mathrm{e}^{j\omega t}$
- Maxwell's equations

$$\frac{\partial H_\phi}{\partial z} = -j\omega\epsilon_0\kappa_p E_r \qquad \text{(inductive field)}$$

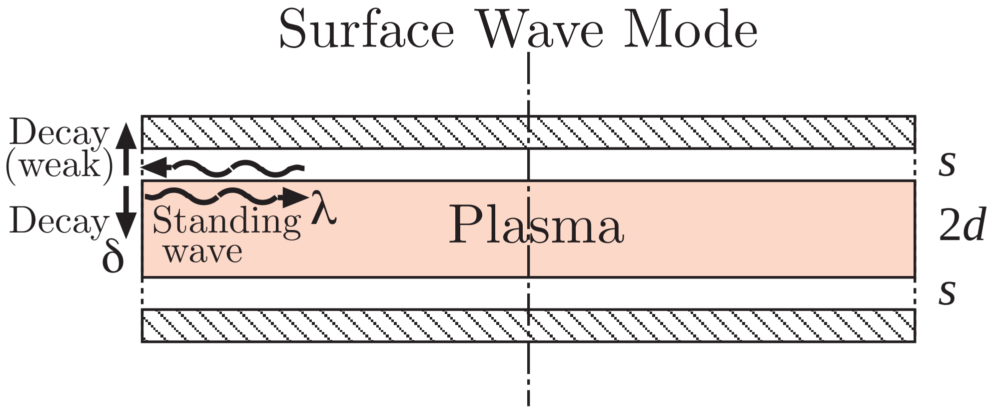
$$\frac{1}{r}\frac{\partial(rH_\phi)}{\partial r} = j\omega\epsilon_0\kappa_p E_z \qquad \text{(capacitive field)}$$

$$\frac{\partial E_r}{\partial z} - \frac{\partial E_z}{\partial r} = -j\omega\mu_0 H_\phi$$

- Choose uniform density n_e and sheath width s (arbitrary choice!)
- Solve with appropriate boundary conditions

SURFACE WAVE MODE

- Power enters the plasma via a *surface wave mode:*



- Radial wavelength for surface wave (low density limit):

$$\boxed{\lambda \approx \frac{\lambda_0}{\sqrt{1 + d/s}} \sim \frac{\lambda_0}{3}}$$

with $\lambda_0 = c/f$ the free space wavelength

- Axial skin depth for surface wave:

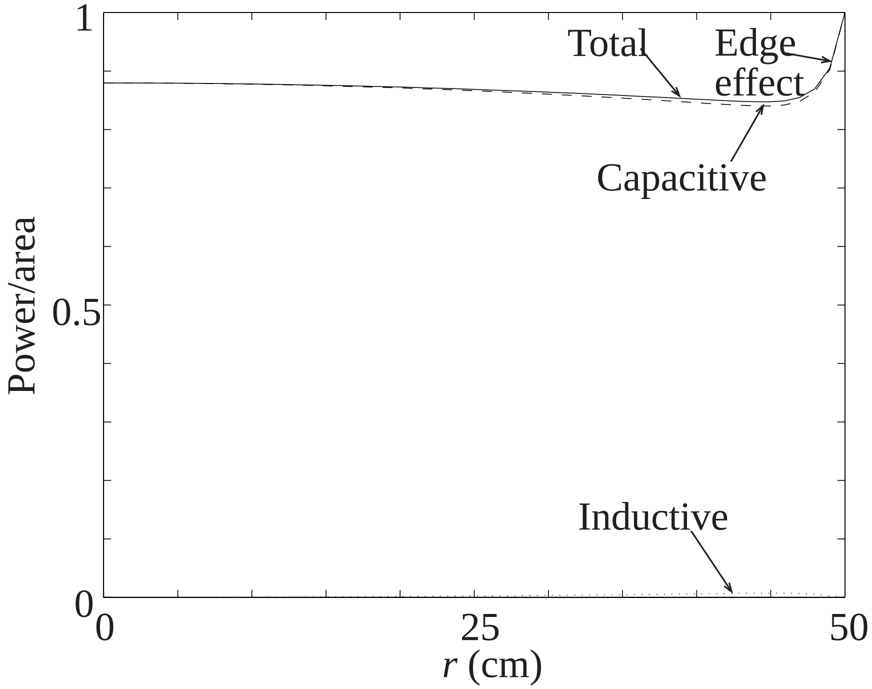
$$\boxed{\delta \sim \frac{c}{\omega_p}}$$

- There are also *evanescent modes* leading to edge effects near $r = R$

POWER DEPOSITION VERSUS RADIUS AT 13.56 MHz

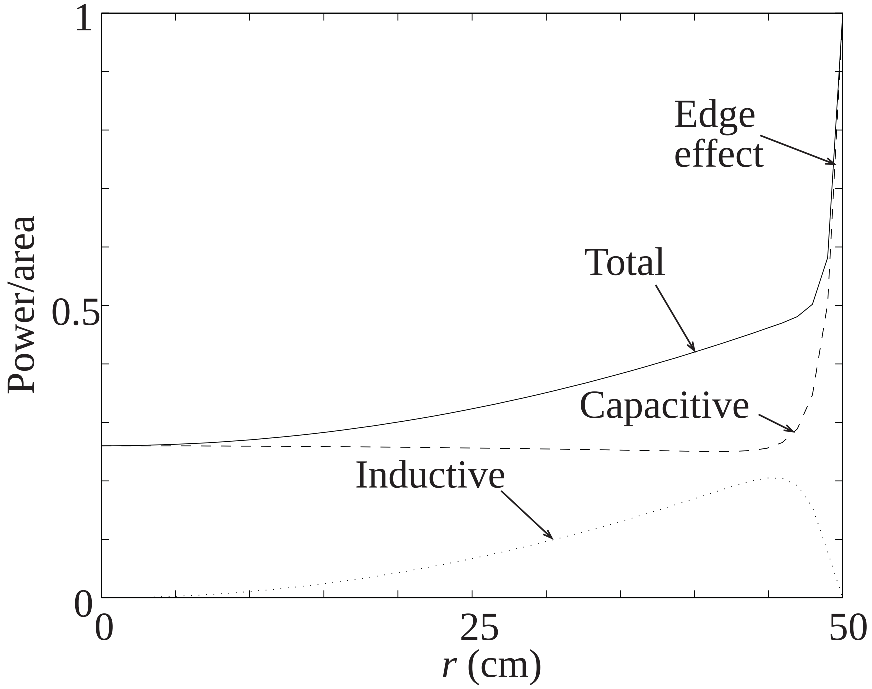
- $R = 50$ cm, $d = 2$ cm, $s = 0.4$ cm ($\lambda \approx 9$–10 m)
- P_{cap} (dash), P_{ind} (dot) and P_{tot} (solid) as a function of r

$n_e = 10^9\ \text{cm}^{-3}$
$\delta = 16.7$ cm



Small standing wave and skin effects

$n_e = 10^{10}\ \text{cm}^{-3}$
$\delta = 5.3$ cm

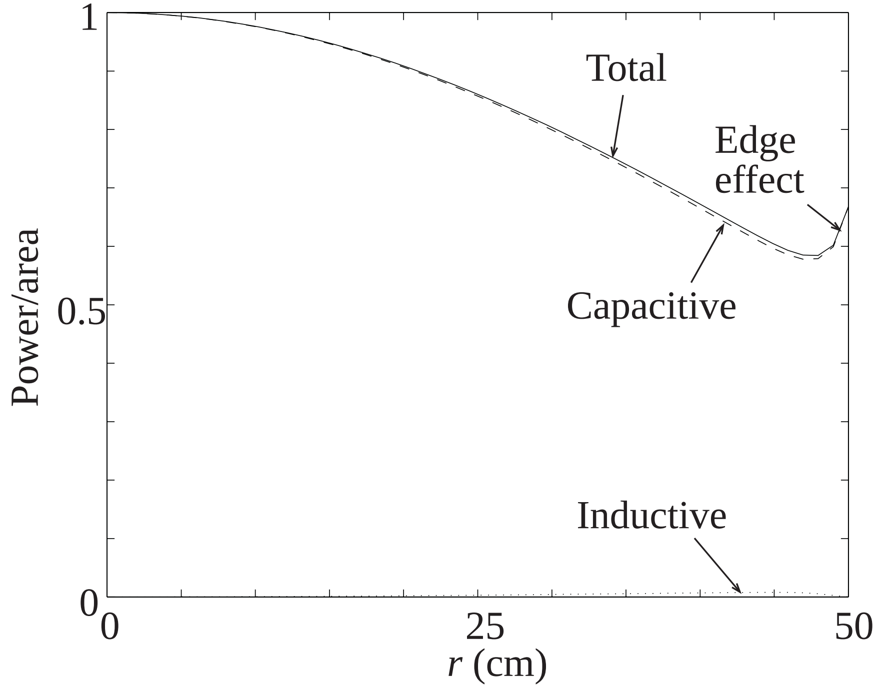


Large skin effect

POWER DEPOSITION VERSUS RADIUS AT 40.7 MHz

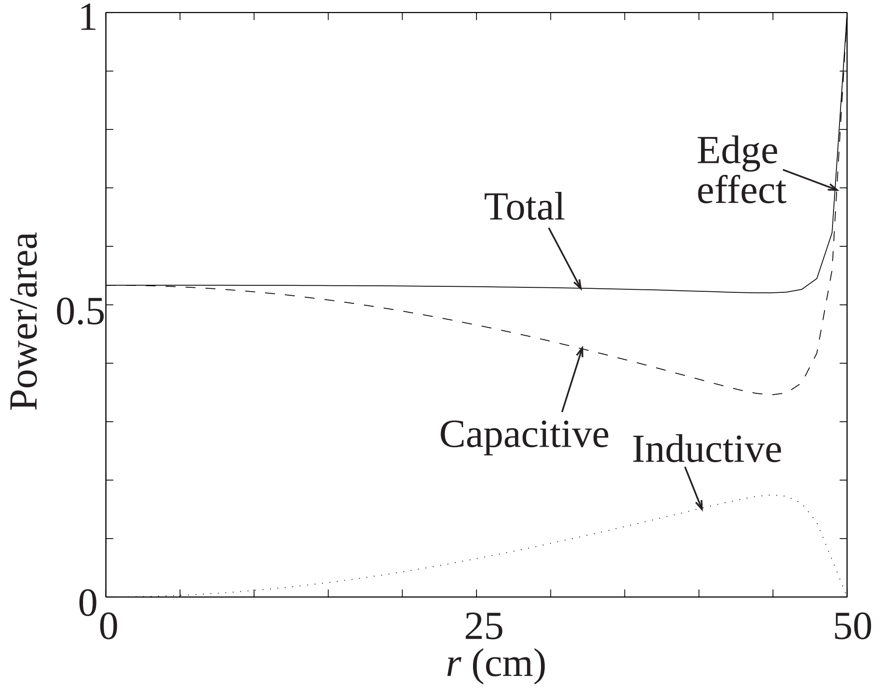
- $R = 50$ cm, $d = 2$ cm, $s = 0.4$ cm ($\lambda \approx 3$ m)
- $P_{\rm cap}$ (dash), $P_{\rm ind}$ (dot) and $P_{\rm tot}$ (solid) as a function of r

$n_e = 10^9$ cm^{-3}
$\delta = 15.9$ cm



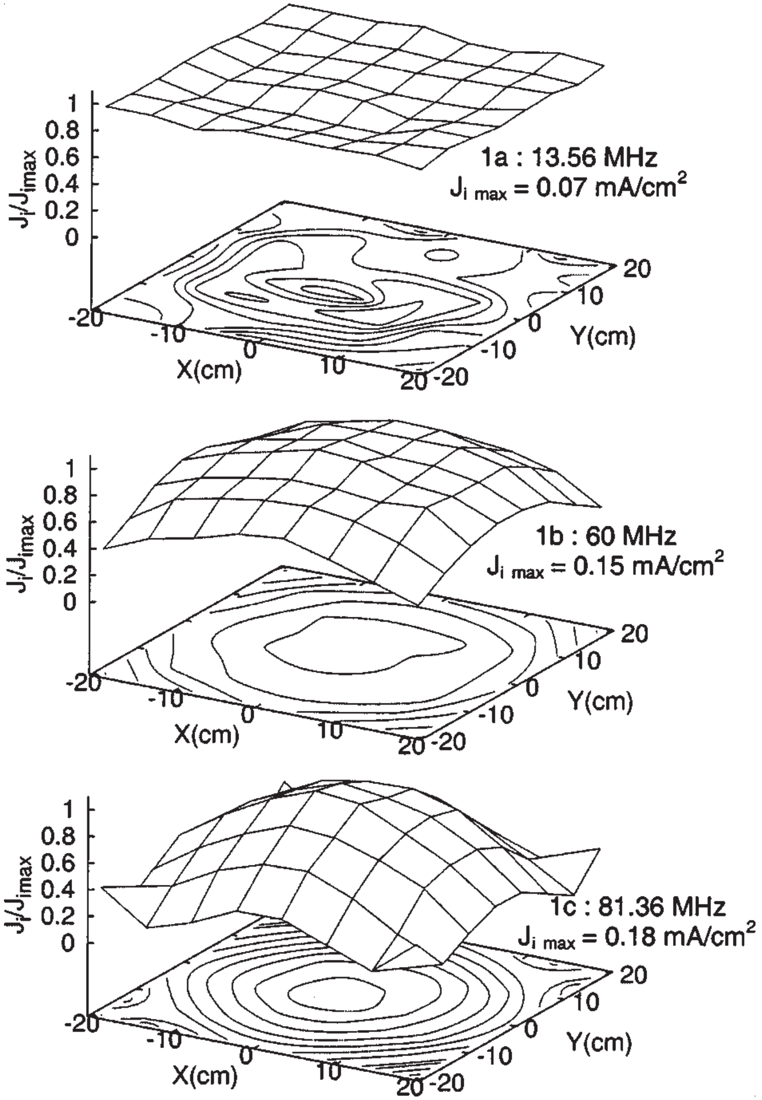
Large standing wave effect

$n_e = 7{\times}10^9$ cm^{-3}
$\delta = 6.3$ cm



Standing wave and skin effects cancel

EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS FOR STANDING WAVES



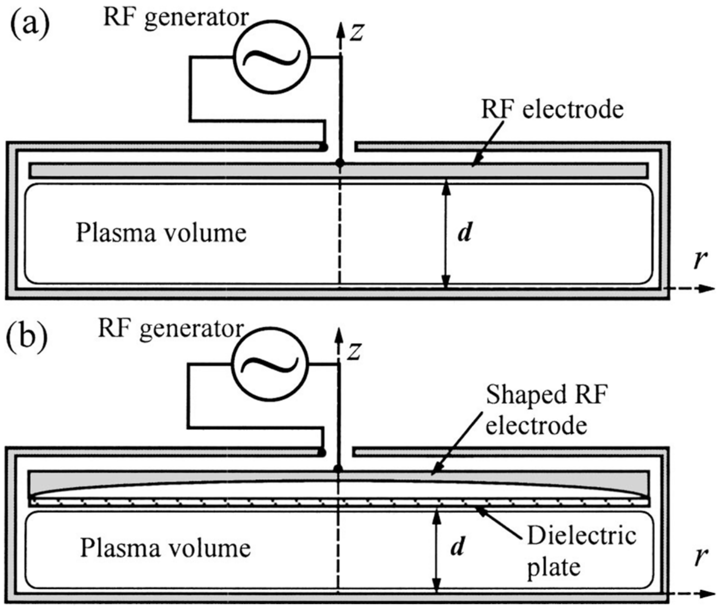
20×20 cm discharge
$p = 150$ mTorr
50 W rf power

The standing wave effect is seen at 60 MHz and is more pronounced at 81.36 MHz

(A. Perret, P. Chabert, J-P Booth, J. Jolly, J. Guillon and Ph. Auvray, *Appl. Phys. Lett.* **83**, 243, 2003)

SUPPRESSION OF STANDING WAVE EFFECTS

- Shaped electrode (and diel plate) eliminate standing wave effects



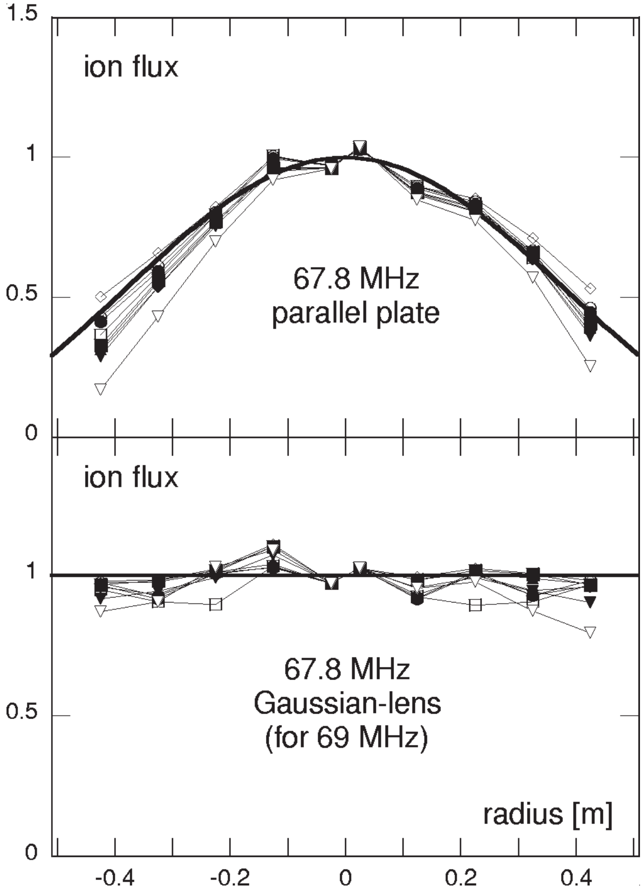
- Increased overall thickness in center compared to edge keeps voltage across discharge section constant
- The electrode shape is a Gaussian, independent of the plasma properties

L. Sansonnens and J. Schmitt, *Appl. Phys. Lett.* **82**, 182, 2003

P. Chabert, J.-L. Raimbault, J.-M. Rax, and A. Perret, *Phys. Plasmas* **11**, 4081, 2004

EXPERIMENTAL CONFIRMATION

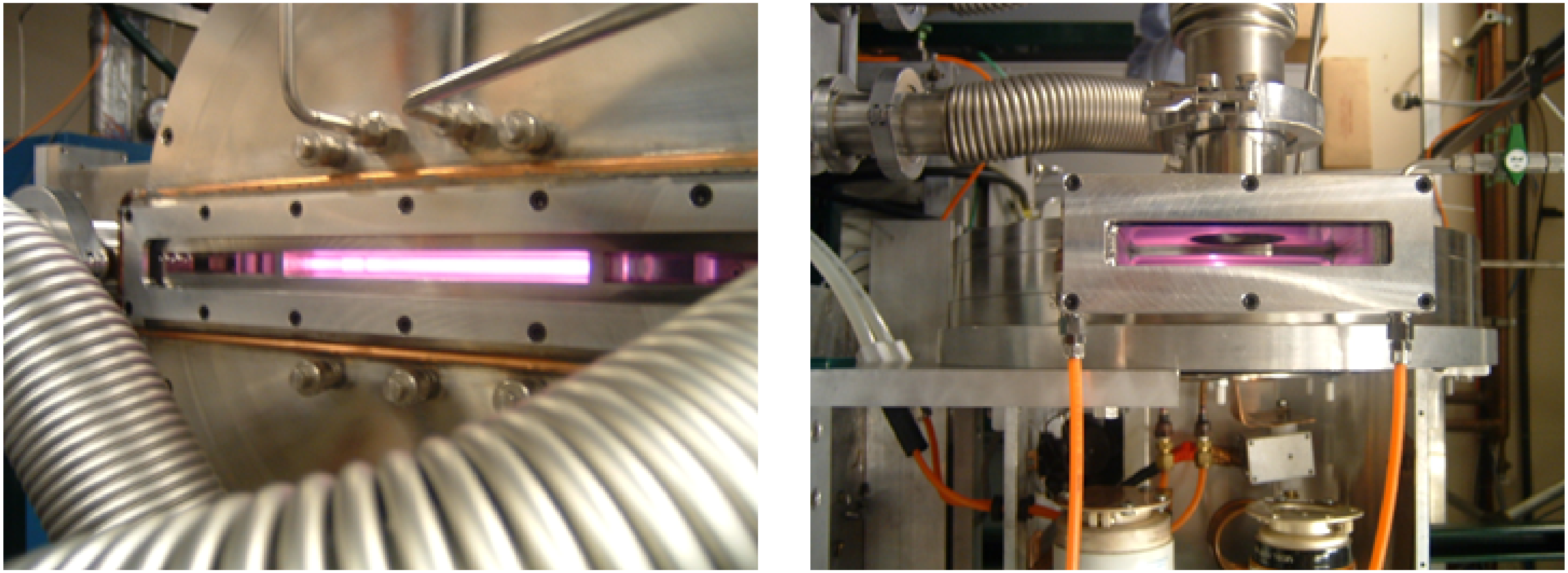
- 5–250 mTorr argon, 50–300 W



H. Schmitt et al, *J. Appl. Phys.* **95**, 4559 (2004)

EXPERIMENT AT BERKELEY

- 100 mTorr argon, 27.3 MHz, 220 W



CONCLUSIONS

- Plasma processing has a bright future in the 21st century
- Microelectronics fabrication drives the development of plasma processing
- Moore's law continues! CMOS can be scaled down to nano-sizes — 4nm–12nm gate lengths!
- Dual frequency capacitive discharges are used for next-generation etching
- Global (volume-averaged) discharge models yield the conditions for decoupling high and low frequencies
- Electromagnetic theory yields the standing wave and skin effects