



Picosecond timing in High Energy Physics

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Organization for Micro-Electronics desiGn and Applications

OMEGA microelectronics Laboratory



- National Micro-electronics design center to address readout ASICs needed for instrumentation in Particle Physics.
- 12 CNRS staff engineers, highly specialized in low noise, rad-hard, high speed mixed-signal readout ASICs
- Location at Ecole Polytechnique provides strong links with teaching and industrial partners in Advanced Technologies
- Technology transfer with WEEROC startup







Electronics in HEP experiments



• A lot of electronics in the experiments...which impacts the detectors' performance



Need for timing

- Time resolution <50ps required by many experiments/applications keeping low power, large dynamic range
- PET/ Time of Flight measurements
 - SiPMs, lots of light
 - Time resolution <100ps

« 5D Calorimetry » CMS HGCAL

- Si PIN diodes : no gain.
- Timing ability ~50ps (for > 10 mips desirable)
- Pileup rejuection : MIP timing detectors (ATLAS & CMS)
 - LGAD sensors : Time performance ~30 ps : To reject Time Pile up events => better particle identification
- TOF detectors/ PID (SiPM)
 - MCPs, SiPMs... Few photoelectrons.
 - Time performance ~30 ps







Single photon sensors & timing information



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• Photomultipliers, silicon photomultipliers

















TOF-PET imaging

[G. Terragni et al. IEEE/NSS-MIC conf Tampa 2024]

TOF-PET

Fundamental requirements

To obtain as many counts as possible:

High sensitivity

To characterize them as accurate as possible:

- High spatial resolution
- High timing resolution
- High energy resolution



Long scintillator maximize sensitivity But Parallax effect degrades the spatial resolution

Segmentation improves spatial resolution And Recovering resolution is possible if the depth of interaction (DOI) of the gamma rays is measured

Improve event localization along the line of response (LOR) And Improve signal-to-noise ratio (SNR)



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Giulia Terragni - TU Wien and CERN

29th October 2024 - NSS-MIC - JS-02-05

Time walk and time jitter

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Jitter: the noise is summed to the signal, causing amplitude variations















Mostly due to electronic noise





Jitter due to electronics noise:

• also presented as j = tr / (S/N)

Timing optimization : common view

- dV/dt prop to BW, N prop to $\sqrt{BW} =>$ jitter prop to $1/\sqrt{BW}$
- \Rightarrow « the faster the amplifier the better the jitter ? »
- \Rightarrow « High speed preamps need to be low impedance (50 Ω or less) »









Signal : detector current



- <u>PN diode</u> w =200µm
- Very short rise time : tr~10ps
- Relatively long «drift time» : td~2ns

- <u>LGAD sensor</u> w =50µm
- rise time : tr~500ps
- Decay time» : td~700ps

- <u>SiPM detector (10pe-)</u>
- very short rise time : tr~10 ps
- Short duration : td~100ps),



Sensor people : "the beautiful risetime of the detector is spoilt by the electronics"

Detector impedance and input voltage

- 1 GHz, Cd=few tens of pF, input signal width <1ns
- Cd>1 pF, Zs@1GHz dominated by Cd
- Rise time: tr= td when td<< $R_S C_d$ and tr= $R_S C_d$ when td>> $R_S C_d$













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Examples of pulse shapes

- SiPM pulse : Q=160 fC, Cd=100 pF, L=0-10 nH, R_{PA}=5-50 Ω
- Sensitivity to parasitic inductance
- Choice of R_{PA} : decay time, stability
- Small R_{PA} not necessarily the fastest
- Convolve with current shape... (here delta)





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Jitter optimization

• Jitter is given by [details in backup] :

$$\sigma_t^{J} = \frac{N}{dV/dt} = \frac{e_n}{\sqrt{2t_{10-90_PA}}} \frac{C_d \sqrt{t_{10-90_PA}^2 + t_d^2}}{Q_{in}} = \frac{e_n C_d}{Q_{in}} \sqrt{\frac{t_{10-90_PA}^2 + t_d^2}{2t_{10-90_PA}}}$$

• Optimum value: $t_{10-90 PA} = t_d$ (current duration)

σ_t^{J}	=	$e_n C_d$	$\sqrt{t_d}$
		Q_{in}	

Cd: detector capacitance t $_{10_{10_{PA}}: rise time of the PA$ t_d= drift time of the detector e _n preamp noise density



1,5 1,4

- Gives ps/fC as scales with 1/Qin
- Electronics noise e_n given by the input transistor transconductance g_m :

$$e_n = \sqrt{\frac{2kT}{g_m}} \approx \frac{2kT}{\sqrt{qI_D}}$$

• Expectation : 10 ps for Q=10fC @ C_d =2 pF e_n =2 nV/ \sqrt{Hz} t_d =0.5 ns



jitter and noise as a function of preamp risetime

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itter

FATLAS HGTD : new MIP timing detector in ATLAS at CERN





WATLAS HGTD : Low Gain Avalanche Diodes





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ATLAS HGTD Electronics – TWEPP Bergen – 20 September 2022 5



ALTIROC2:

First full size chip with 15×15 channels – 2×2 cm² To demonstrate the functionality/performance of the ASIC (time resolution + luminosity counting) alone and bumpbonded onto a sensor

But NOT to be fully radiation hard (against SEE)

ALTIROC3:

Last full chip prototype before pre-production Same as Altiroc2 but fully triplicated



aboratoire de Physiqu



ALTIROC1 : voltage and TZ preamps, test pulse

« voltage » PA (VPA) ٠

- Rf = 12k/25k
- G0 ~ 26 dB
- Less parallel noise
- Transimpedance PA (TZ) •
 - Rf = 4k (+opt Cf)
 - G0 ~ 50 dB
 - Shorter occupancy
 - Better ToT
- **Test-pulse** •
 - optimistic

 - Slower rise-time (matche to LGAD pulse)

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ALTIROC2 : pixel analog front-end



ALTIROC pixel integrates :

- A voltage (VPA) or trans-impedance (TZ) 1 GHz preamplifier followed by a high-speed discriminator:
 - Time walk correction made with a Time over Threshold (TOT) architecture
 - Main challenge = small jitter (low noise/capacitance) down to 4 fC
 - $Q_{MIP}/Cd \sim 1 \text{ mV}$

\Rightarrow Analog FE performance crucial

$$\sigma_{jitter} = \frac{N}{dV/dt} = \frac{e_n C_d}{Q_{in}} \sqrt{t_d}$$

 C_d : sensor cap (~4 pF) t_d : LGAD drift time, 600 ps Q_{in} : MIP charge (10 fC at start, 4 fC at end) e_n : noise spectral density of input trans.

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- Two TDCs (Time to Digital Converter) to provide Time of Arrival (TOA) + Time Over Threshold (TOT) measurement
 - TOA TDC: bin of 20 ps (7 bits), range of 2.5 ns, to be centered on the bunch crossing
 - TOT TDC: bin of 120 ps (8 bits), range of 20 ns

ALTIROC2 : pixel digital back-end





• Hit buffer: SRAM 1536 x 19 bit

- Circular buffer to store timing data for each bunch-crossing, until a L1 trigger arrives
- Data = TOT and TOA bits, only in case of hit to save power ; with zero suppress.
- Depth of about 38 µs
- Trigger Hit Selector:
 - Each received trigger associated to a trigger tag
 - If data stored in Hit buffer related to received trigger, TOA/TOT data + trig tag stored into Matched Hit Buffer
- Matched Hit Buffer: 32 positions FIFO
 - Control Unit: looks for data related to a trigger event when requested by the End Of Column
 - Matched flag handled through a priority OR chain. Pixel at the top of the column with highest priority
 - Synchronous readout at 40 MHz
- Luminosity process unit
 - checks if hits are within 2 programmable windows
- I2C configuration registers

L0/L1



Testbench for ALTIROC2



- Setup = ASIC board (ASIC alone or bump bonded onto sensor) + interface board + FPGA board
- Front-end calibration : charge injection (0 up to 50 fC) using ASIC internal calibration pulser, controlled by the FPGA, synchronous to 40 MHz clock, ASIC alone: Cd=3,5 pF can be set by SC to mimic sensor capacitor
- **TOA/TOT TDC calibration :** ASIC periphery generates a trigger with tunable width and delay thanks to the phase shifted 640 MHz clock from the PLL + Random Phase Generator for DNL



Comparing measured time-of-arrival jitter with simulation





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Jitter depends on the charge, but also on the discriminator thres.



Threshold trade-off to maximise pulse slope (dV/dt), thus minimize jitter.

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Is the internal detector capacitance equivalent to an LGAD's ?



Pulse reconstruction of a voltage preamplifier, between ASIC alone and ASIC + sensor :

Showing same amplitude & falling edge decay time \rightarrow the internal LGAD-like capacitance corresponds to 3.5 pF. Showing slightly slowly rising time \rightarrow partially explains worst jitter with sensor.

What is the minimum detectable charge ? (Median at 50%)





Fighting against digital activity

(exaggerated)





 \Rightarrow Signal amplitude seen by the discriminator reduces : "hidden" inside the noise ripple !



Digital noise injected on the preamplifier ground gets amplified only when the impedance between the detector capacitance and the non-inverting preamplifier input is not zero : when the sensor is connected !



Optimal HV impedance is very different for 5x5 and 15x15 sensor ()mega

- HV resistance :
 - varied from 0 to 1kOhm
 - Effect on gnd_pa noise amplification
 - Goes from 20 to 1
 - ~1 for R>100 Ohm
 - Current return ensured by the 224 spectator channels
 - Was not the case with smaller sensor

HV parasitic inductance :

- Effect of 10 nH in HV
- 1 channel, 25 channels, 225 channels
- = Altiroc0/Altiroc1/Altiroc2

Altiroc2 doesn't suffer from HV parasitic inductance !







Correcting time-of-arrival timewalk with time-over-threshold

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ASIC+HPK LGAD biased at -80V (B16) All TZ ON



- Time-walk = convolution of the preamplifier rise time (300 ps) with LGAD rise time (600 ps)
- Skew between bottom and top of the column pixel : due to clock tree distribution



Offline time-walk correction using TOT

Testbeam measurements (pions)







ASIC alone (B7) Pixels ON : Col 7 (VPA) or 8 (TZ)





TID : 220 Mrad Dose rate : 3 Mrad/h Temperature : 22°C

All DC values and TDC bin remain constant along irradiation.

Main challenges: technical difficulties

- Large chip (2 x 2 cm2) powered on one side only => sensitivity to IR drops
- Very delicate floorplan to be done to guarantee the analog performance
 - Ultra Low impedance for the ground of the preamp crucial
 - Several power domains:
 - Specific power lines for each analog/mixed block: vdd_pa/gnd_pa, vdd_disc/gnd_disc, vdd_toa/gnd_toa, vdd_tot/gnd_tot
 - For Altiroc3: Vdd_toa, vdd_tot, gnd_toa, gnd_tot per column and then distribution of powers/grounds to each pixel with same R to avoid LSB dependency with activity
 - Specific power lines for digital blocks: vddd/gndd, vddd1/gndd1, vddd2/gndd2







Main challenges: organizational difficulties

- Organization: Design done by engineers spread in 6 labs ~ 7.5 FTE
 - SOS, Trello and Mattermost: to ensure quick/"easy" communication but some drawbacks too
- Analog 30 % of the chip
 - Analog performance and Floorplan crucial to guarantee analog performance at system level
 - 2.5 FTE: Omega (1.8 FTE), Clermont (0.7 FTE), SLAC (< 0.1 FTE for TDC), SMU (< 0.1 FTE for Phase shifter)
- Digital 70 % of the chip
 - Clock Domain Crossing, timings, SEE robustness
 - 5 FTE: Clermont (2.2 FTE) , Chips (2 FTE) , IFAE (0.8 FTE)
- Assembly done Full Digital on Top + UVM verification
 - Top level assembled with INNOVUS
 - Verilog models and lib files to be done for all analog/mixed blocks
 - Analog periphery treated as a macro block

\Rightarrow Difficulties:

- Design driven by digital while analog floor plan crucial for the performance
- UVM manpower: mainly at CERN, difficult to recruit UVM engineers at IN2P3
- Any modification, even very minor ones, in the analog or digital part implies that the implementation (layout) of the full chip must be redone + verifications to be redone from the beginning (regressions)





Introducing LIROC : SiPM read-out for Lidar





Collaborative design between Weeroc & Omega laboratory that have received Funding from ATTRACT EU H2020 Research & Innovation Program





LIROC performance

- LIDAR readout : short double pulse separation
 - 64 channels high speed PA + discri
 - Trigger on 1/3 photoelectron
 - Pole-zero cancellation for 3 ns double pulse separation
 - CLPS discriminator output : couples to picoTDC
 - 3 mW/ch CMOS 130nm





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LIROC : double pulse separation





LIROC Single Photon Time Resolutions (SPTR)









Back to PET

[T. Saleem et al. 2023 JINST **18** P10005]











DUT ASIC board







- Timing detectors ramping up !
 - Require highly integrated R/O electronics : System On Chip
 - Low power, low noise, high speed...
 - Timing capability down to a few tens of ps
 - Lots of system issues : ck distribution, digital noise, stray inductance...
- Timing performance dominated by sensor characteristics
 - Capacitance, duration, MIP charge
 - Theory predicts :
 - Electronics affects only $g_m \sim Id/2U_T$

$$\sigma_t^{J} = \frac{e_n C_d}{Q_{in}} \sqrt{t_d}$$

• Joint optimization sensor + readout electronics





High speed amplifiers

- Response to very short pulse
- Broadband
 - Zin=Rs (50 Ohm)
 - Vin = Q/Cin
 - $V_{OUT} = -G_m R_F \frac{Q_{IN}}{C_d}$
- Transimpedance
 - Zin ~ Zf/G ~ 1/gm

$$- \mathbf{V}_{\mathbf{OUT}} = \frac{\frac{1}{G_{\mathbf{m}}} - \mathbf{R}_{\mathbf{F}}}{1 + j\omega \frac{C_{\mathbf{d}}}{G_{\mathbf{m}}}} \mathbf{I}_{\mathbf{IN}} \approx -\mathbf{G}_{\mathbf{m}} \mathbf{R}_{\mathbf{F}} \frac{\mathbf{Q}_{\mathbf{IN}}}{\mathbf{C}_{\mathbf{d}}}$$

 $I_{in} \underbrace{V_{in}}_{=} \underbrace{Z_{s}}_{=} \underbrace{V_{in}}_{=} \underbrace{V_{out}}_{=} V_{out}$



- Same response at High Frequency
- For highest speed : go to broadband. Faster, less stability issues





High speed amplifiers

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• Optimum value: $t_{10-90 PA} = t_d$ (current duration)

$$\sigma_t^{J} = \frac{e_n C_d}{Q_{in}} \sqrt{t_d}$$

- Cd: detector capacitance t $_{10_{10_{PA}}}$: rise time of the PA t_d = drift time of the detector e __n preamp noise density
- Gives ps/fC as scales with 1/Qin
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Si pixels 55x55 μm²

Timepix4 : Si pixels with timing [X. Llopart et al. CERN]

- CMOS 65nm
- 230 k pixels
- ~7 cm² area
- 4-side buttable
- 195 ps TDC bins —
- Min threshold ~500 e-_

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Timepix4 : time resolution





Timespot : Si pixels with timing



L. Piccolo et al. (INFN) https://indico.cern.ch/event/1019078/contributions/4443945/attachments/2277822/3938469/lorenzo_piccolo_TWEPP2021.pdf



Timespot1 ASIC layout



Timespot0 ASIC (summer 2019) $1.4 \text{ mm} \times 1.4 \text{ mm}$



Timespot1 ASIC (summer 2021) $2.6 \text{ mm} \times 2.3 \text{ mm} 32 \times 32$ pixels



Measured 3D Silicon Sensor performance¹².

- Designed in 28 nm CMOS technology.
- \bullet Timespot0 ASIC \rightarrow
 - Independent blocks test chip, not connectable to the sensor.
 - Resolution $\sim 100 \, {\rm ps.}$
- The 3D Silicon Sensor has been proven to be a lot more performing than expected $\rightarrow \sim$ 20 ps.
- \bullet Timespot1 ASIC \rightarrow
 - 1024 channel matrix, bump-bondable to the sensor.
 - **Resolution Goal** \rightarrow **better than 50 ps** (LHCb-U2 specs).

²D. Brundu et al., Accurate modeling of 3D-trench silicon sensor with enhanced timing performance and comparison with beam measurements. arXiv:2106.08191v1 [physics.ins-det], in press on JINST (2021). C. de La Taille IEEE short course 2 2023.



¹L. Anderlini et al., Intrinsic time resolution of 3D-trench silicon pixels for charged particle detection. Journal of Instrumentation, 15, P09029, 2020.

Performance of V1

- Jitter : 43 ps rms
 - 2 fC injected = 1 MIP
 - Already good…
 - But expected 30 ps !

Analog FE Tests



Analog Front-End Schematic





V_{Bc} Scan Signal Reconstruction of 10 Amplifiers for a 2 fC input signal

Example of 10-channel Threshold-Scan Signal Reconstruction



Example of 10-channel jitter VS input charge trend



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NFN

- The signal is injected with the next reference clock rising-edge → time-0 measurment.
- Discriminator Baseline and Threshold set via 2 independent voltages.
- Output \rightarrow Discriminator-only \rightarrow CSA signal must be reconstructed.

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Si readout : HGCROC

- CMS HGCAL readout ~1 cm² Si pads (50 pF)
 - 72 channels calorimeter/timing readout
 - Also a SiPM variant





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HGCROC3 performance

















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