Introduction to Thin Film Transistors

S. D. Brotherton

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Physics and Technology of TFTs

S. D. Brotherton
TFT Consultant
Forest Row, E Sussex
UK

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Preface

Thin film transistors, TFTs, are now fundamental electronic components in virtually all consumer and professional display products, from smart phones to large diagonal, flat panel TVs. The commercial application of TFTs has been driven by the use of hydrogenated amorphous silicon, a-Si:H, which is the workhorse of the industry. However, a greater range of TFT materials, such as polycrystalline silicon, amorphous oxide semiconductors and organic semiconductors, are now commanding interest, and this book has been written as an accessible introduction to the field. Whilst there are a number excellent books aimed at the specialist working with these individual materials, this book was conceived to meet the needs of a less specialist audience. The book was written for a target audience including undergraduate and postgraduate students taking display-related courses, postgraduate and new researchers to the field, engineers supplying equipment to the flat panel display industry, researchers in one specialist TFT field looking for an overview of another and technical managers within the FPD industry.

Whilst some familiarity with the background physics of semiconductor device operation has been assumed, the book is intended to be self-contained, with introductory chapters covering the device physics concepts needed to follow the later chapters on the TFTs themselves. These introductory chapters deal with band bending effects at semiconductor surfaces, electron-hole pair generation and recombination and the operation of classical MOSFET devices. A further chapter covers the operation of active matrix displays.

This book has grown principally out of a series of lectures on TFT technologies given to an Italian research consortium, and which incorporated material from specialist lectures on active matrix displays and TFTs presented in Masters courses at Southampton and Dundee Universities.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the contribution made by the referees with their insightful and helpful comments, and these have undoubtedly improved the book. In addition, colleagues and other contacts within the research community have generously responded to my requests for background information and access to published material. These have included Dr. G. Fortunato (CNR-IMM, Rome),

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Biographical Information

Dr. Stan D. Brotherton started his research career at the GEC Hirst Research Laboratory, England, before taking a post-doctoral Research Fellowship at Southampton University in 1971. From there he moved to the Philips Research Laboratory, Redhill, England, where he was a Senior Principal Scientist, and he now works as an independent TFT Consultant.

He has led a wide range of research projects investigating semiconductor devices, and related materials issues, particularly the influence of deep level defects on the performance of Si devices. The devices studied have included MOSFETs and CCDs, power devices, and IR imaging devices. His most recent field of activity was thin film transistors, within which he initiated the Philips research programme on poly-Si TFTs. Activity within this field has continued with consultancy contracts from a number of international organisations.

He has published ~ 120 papers on the physics and technology of silicon devices, and in 1989 was awarded a DSc by London University for published work on deep level defects in silicon. Amongst the later publications, ~ 65 have been on poly-Si TFTs. He also contributed a chapter on this topic to the Springer Handbook of Visual Display Technology, and was a member of the Editorial Board for that book. He has presented numerous invited and contributed papers at major international conferences, and has been a contributor of specialist TFT lectures on the DisplayMasters course at Dundee University.