Memory - Flash

Last updated 1/26/21

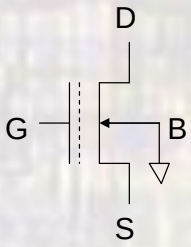
Memory - Flash

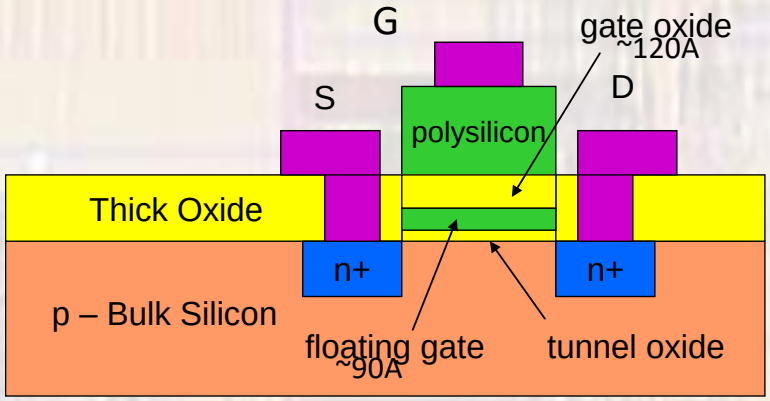
- Flash Memory – Flash, Nand Flash, Nor Flash
  - Key Attributes
    - Sequential vs. Random Access
    - Read only vs. Read/Write – limited write
    - Static vs. Dynamic
    - Volatile vs. non-Volatile
  - Key Measures
    - Density +
    - Speed
    - Power
    - Cost / bit +

Memory - Flash

- Flash Memory - basics
  - Memory cell (1 bit) is based on charge stored on a floating capacitor
    - The capacitor modifies the threshold voltage of a MOSFET
      - with negative charge stored – need higher gate voltage to turn on the MOSFET
    - Creates 2 possible threshold voltages

Different for NOR and NAND



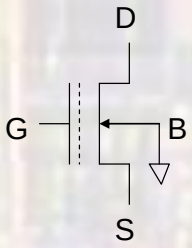


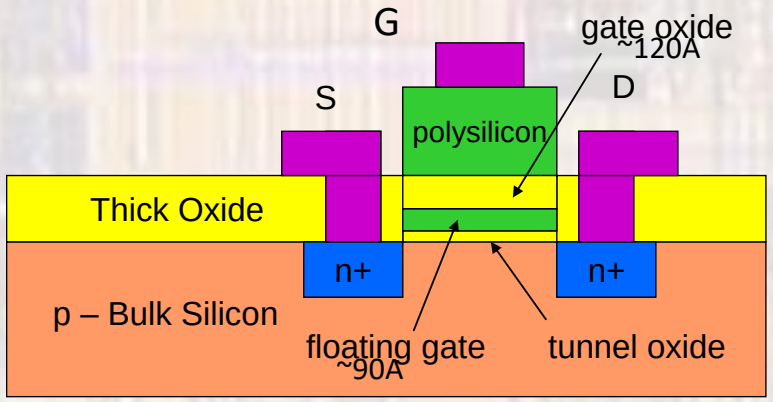
Memory - Flash

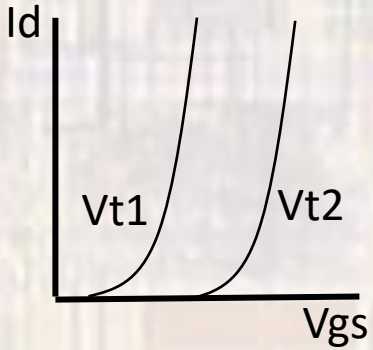
- Flash Memory – NOR
  - Creates 2 possible threshold voltages

    Vth $_{High}$ is required to turn on the MOSFET if charge is stored

    Vth $_{Low}$ is required to turn on the MOSFET if no charge is stored

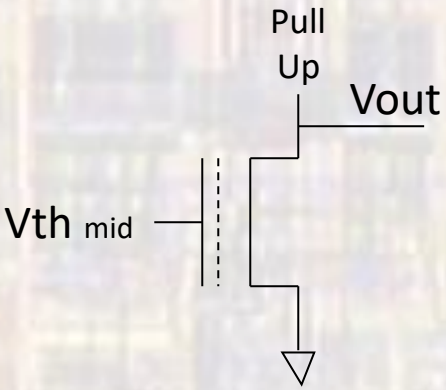






Memory - Flash

- Flash Memory - NOR
  - Cell read
    - Place a voltage on the gate midway between Vth $_{High}$ and Vth $_{Low}$
    - Use the circuit to determine if the MOSFET is on or off
    - Erased state – no charge stored = “1”
    - Programmed state – charge stored = “0”

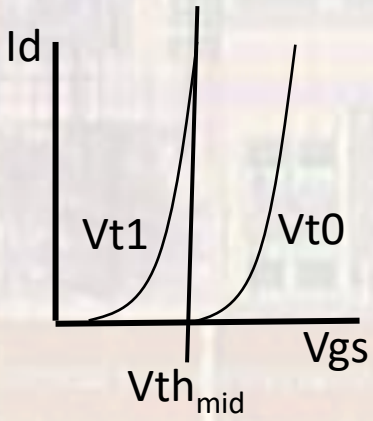


If charge stored on capacitor (programmed)

$Vth_{mid} < (Vth = Vth_{High}) \rightarrow$ Vout = high $\rightarrow$ “0”

If no charge stored on capacitor (erased)

$Vth_{mid} > (Vth = Vth_{Low}) \rightarrow$ Vout = low $\rightarrow$ “1”



Memory - Flash

- Flash Memory
  - Programming
    - All cells start out with no charge stored = “1”
    - Individual cells can be programmed to “0”
    - A block erase is required to change cells from “0” to “1”
    - Eg.

byte: 1011 1100 → 1000 1100

byte: 1011 1100 ~~→~~ 1111 1100

Memory - Flash

- Flash Memory

- NAND Flash
  - Page Write
  - Block Erase
  - More dense
  - Fast (required) sequential access
  - Used as file storage memory (Flash Drives)

- NOR Flash
  - Byte/word Write
  - Block Erase
  - Less dense
  - Fast random access
  - Used as program memory

Memory - Flash

- Flash Memory
  - Damage – wear out
    - The tunneling process damages the oxide layer
      - Some electrons get trapped in the oxide
      - Physical damage to the lattice
    - Limits the number of write/erase cycles
      - 10K – 1M cycles
    - Wear leveling
      - Remap the external addresses to new physical blocks on erases
      - Dynamic – do this as changes occur
      - Static – do this to little used blocks to make them available
        - Allows all blocks to approach their failure limit

Memory - Flash

- Flash Memory
  - Multi-Level Cell
    - Instead of just having 2 threshold voltages – allow for 4 or 8
    - 4 → 2 bit MLC, 8→ 3bit MLC
  - All aspects of the design get harder (programming, read, wear leveling, speed) → ECC
  - Error Correction Coding – ECC
    - Additional bits are used to detect and correct bit level errors in a word

Memory - Flash

- Other Technologies
  - Phase Change Memory – PRAM
  - Ferro-Magnetic Ram – FeRAM
  - Magneto-resistive Ram - MRAM