

Interlaboratory Study: Laser-assisted Atom Probe Tomography (APT) of a Phosphorous-Doped Silicon Specimen

Austin J. Akey¹ and David C. Bell^{1,2}

¹ Center for Nanoscale Systems, Harvard University, Cambridge MA, USA

² John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Harvard University, Cambridge MA, USA

Atom probe tomography (APT) is a powerful technique for the characterization of composition of materials and their three-dimensional structure down to the atomic-scale. As with any complex technique, the practice of APT is as important as the design of the instrument, and must be studied and standardized where necessary. Keeping in mind the ultimate goal of APT development, that of standards-less, absolute quantitative measurement of atomic-scale composition in three dimensions, we must as a field investigate and address a number of challenges: the large variety of materials systems and instrument configurations; the variations in sample preparation and the operating space of the instrument; and variations in reconstruction and analysis conditions.

A number of standards and standard-of-practice efforts have been made in recent years[1,2]; for this most recent effort, we chose to focus on a scientifically- and commercially-relevant semiconductor system, analyzed by laser-assisted APT, which would be used as a benchmark to compare the practice of APT at multiple different analysis facilities. To this end, an interlaboratory study of a straightforward, well-characterized Phosphorous-doped Silicon specimen has been performed, allowing us to determine the spread in measurements of a single well-characterized semiconductor sample analyzed by Atom Probe Tomography *as currently practiced* at world-class analysis facilities

Chemical Vapor Deposition (CVD)-grown epitaxial silicon doped with Phosphorous, deposited on a commercial silicon substrate, has been chosen as the base material for this study. Following characterization of the base sample by Secondary-Ion Mass Spectrometry (SIMS) and Transmission Electron Microscopy (TEM) for composition and morphology, respectively, pieces of the material have been sent to a number of APT-equipped facilities, including academic, commercial, and national laboratories. These facilities were asked to perform laser-assisted APT on the specimen, and provide raw data, details of sample preparation, and reconstructions and analyses, following their internal standard procedures. Datasets were then anonymized and collated for study.

Both raw data and the submitted analyses are compared, particularly with regard to absolute concentration and composition profile of the Phosphorous dopant. Sample preparation, instrument operating conditions, and reconstruction parameters are correlated with results. The spread in results is discussed, and possible causes of variation and areas of potential improvement in the general standard-of-practice highlighted. Following suitable, thorough anonymization, all data arising from this investigation will be archived and made available to the general APT community both as reference material and for metastudies in the future [3].

References:

- [1] Prosa, Ty J., *et al*, Proceedings of the SPIE **9173**, (2014), id. 917307 8 pp.
- [2] Prosa, Tu J., *et al*, Ultramicroscopy **132** (2013), p. 179.
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