

# SELECTED TOPICS IN ADVANCED ELECTRONICS

Edited by  
Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb



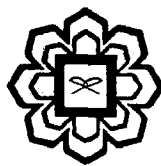
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SELECTED TOPICS IN  
**ADVANCED ELECTRONICS**

**CONTENTS**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Chapter 1 .....   | 1  |
| WIRELESS CONNECTIVITY OF PC PERIPHERALS USING ULTRAWIDE BAND (UWB) PULSES |    |
| Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb and Ahmed Ramzi Mohammed                          |    |
| Chapter 2 .....   | 11 |
| VOLTAGE CONTROLLED OSCILLATOR FOR STANDARD GSM USING MEMS                 |    |
| <b>Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb</b>  |    |
| Chapter 3 .....   | 23 |
| MEMS SURFACE ACOUSTIC WAVES OSCILLATOR                                    |    |
| <b>Jamilah Karim, Anis Nurashikin Nordin and AHM Zahirul Alam</b>         |    |
| Chapter 4 .....   | 37 |
| USING MEMS IN CLASS D AMPLIFIERS FOR STANDARD GSM CARRIER                 |    |
| <b>Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb</b>  |    |
| Chapter 5 .....   | 52 |
| MEMS CAPACITIVE ULTRASONIC TRANSDUCERS                                    |    |
| <b>Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb</b>  |    |
| Chapter 6 .....   | 57 |
| DESIGN OF MEMS CANTILEVER ENERGY HARVESTER                                |    |
| <b>Anis Nurashikin Nordin and Aliza Aini Md Ralib</b>                     |    |
| Chapter 7.....  | 67 |
| THEORY OF QUANTUM CRYPTOGRAPHY  |    |
| <b>Ali Sallami and Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb</b>                            |    |
| Chapter 8.....  | 77 |
| QUANTUM KEY DISTRIBUTION PROTOCOLS  |    |
| <b>Ali Sallami and Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb</b>                            |    |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Chapter 9.....  | 84  |
| FPGA CONTROL OF QUANTUM CHANNEL SECURITY  |     |
| <b>Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb and Mohammed Munther A. Majeed</b>                         |     |
| Chapter 10.....   | 97  |
| THE DECOY STATE METHOD IN QUANTUM KEY DISTRIBUTION                                    |     |
| <b>Ali Sallami, Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb and Mohamad Ridza Wahiddin</b>                |     |
| Chapter 11.....   | 120 |
| EAVESDROPPING ATTACKS ON QKD CHANNELS   |     |
| <b>Ali Sallami and Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb</b>  |     |
| Chapter 12.....   | 126 |
| SECURITY PERFORMANCE OF QKD   |     |
| <b>Sellami Ali and Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb</b>  |     |
| Chapter 13.....   | 132 |
| THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF A DOUBLE STAGES ERBIUM DOPED FIBER AMPLIFIER                  |     |
| <b>Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb and M. A. Mohammed</b>                                     |     |
| Chapter 14.....   | 142 |
| THEORY OF ERBIUM DOPED FIBER LASERS (EDFLS) AND ERBIUM DOPED FIBER AMPLIFIERS (EDFAS) |     |
| <b>Sallami Ali and Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb</b>  |     |
| Chapter 15 .....  | 175 |
| ERBIUM DOPED FIBER LASERS WITH DOUBLE TUNABLE BANDPASS FILTER                         |     |
| <b>Ali Sallami, Khalid Al-Khateeb and Bouzid Billoui</b>                              |     |
| Chapter 16.....   | 181 |
| ERBIUM DOPED FIBER AMPLIFIER WITH A QUADRUPLE PASS                                    |     |
| <b>Sellami Ali, Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb and Bouzid Billoui</b>                        |     |
| Chapter 17.....   | 189 |
| TRANSPARENT ELECTRODES FOR OPTOELECTRONIC DISPLAYS                                    |     |
| <b>Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb</b>  |     |
| Chapter 18.....   | 201 |
| EPITAXIAL GROWTH OF THIN ZnS FILMS  |     |
| <b>Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb</b>  |     |
| Chapter 19.....   | 211 |
| MODERN ELEECTRONIC DISPLAY SYSTEMS  |     |
| <b>Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb and Moaaz Elhag Ali</b>                                    |     |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Chapter 20.....   | 230 |
| AVALANCHE PHOTO DIODES AS SINGLE PHOTON DETECTORS                               |     |
| <b>Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb</b>  |     |
| Chapter 21.....   | 243 |
| COOLING TECHNIQUES FOR SINGLE PHOTON AVALANCHE DIODE                            |     |
| <b>Nurul Fadzlin Hasbullah, Nurul Izzati Samsuddin and Salmiah Ahmad</b>        |     |
| Chapter 22.....   | 256 |
| SUPERVISORY CONTROL AND DATA AQUISITION SYSTEM (SCADA)<br>USING MICROCONTROLLER |     |
| <b>Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb and Mohamad Azman Shah</b>                           |     |
| Chapter 23.....   | 268 |
| ELECTRONIC REMOTE MONITORING OF INDUSTRIAL SYSTEMS                              |     |
| <b>Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb</b>  |     |
| Chapter 24.....   | 276 |
| MEDICAL CARE SYSTEM FOR REMOTE MONITORING OF FOETAL<br>ECG                      |     |
| <b>Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb and Mohammed I. Ibrahimy</b>                         |     |
| Chapter 25.....   | 287 |
| INTELLIGENT AUTO TRACKING IN 3D SPACE BY IMAGE<br>PROCESSING                    |     |
| <b>Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb and Othman O. Khalifa</b>                            |     |
| Chapter 26.....   | 300 |
| CIRCUIT DESIGN FOR RADIO FREQUENCY IDENTIFICATION<br>DEVICES (RFID)             |     |
| <b>Aisyah Jaafar, Nurul Syuhadah Izwar Arfani and Othman O. Khalifa</b>         |     |
| Chapter 27.....   | 309 |
| DYNAMIC TRAFFIC LIGHT SEQUENCE ALGORITHM USING RFID                             |     |
| <b>Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb, Jaiz A.Y. Johari and Wajdi F. Al-Khateeb</b>        |     |
| Chapter 28.....   | 326 |
| ADVANCED RFID SECURITY FRAMEWORK FOR DYNAMIC TRAFFIC<br>MANAGEMENT              |     |
| <b>Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb, Jaiz A. Y. Johari</b>                               |     |
| Chapter 29.....   | 337 |
| MODELING CMOS WAFER PRODUCTION LINE USING PROMODEL<br>SOFTWARE                  |     |
| <b>Khalid A. S. Al-Khateeb and Khairul Hakim B. Zainiddin</b>                   |     |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Chapter 30.....  | 348 |
| ASIC DESIGN FLOW   |     |
| <b>Sreedharan Baskara Dass, Aisha_Hassan A. Hashim and Loay Faisal</b> |     |
| <br>   |     |
| Chapter 31.....  | 355 |
| ELECTRONIC DESIGN AUTOMATION TOOLS                                     |     |
| <b>Sreedharan Baskara Dass, Aisha_Hassan A. Hashim and Loay Faisal</b> |     |
| <br>   |     |
| Chapter 32.....  | 365 |
| CIRCUIT DESIGN OF A CLOCK DATA RECOVERY                                |     |
| <b>Z. M. Ashari and Anis N. Nordin</b>                                 |     |
| <br>   |     |
| Chapter 33.....  | 376 |
| EFFECTS OF NEUTRON IRRADIATION ON VARIOUS ELECTRONIC DEVICES           |     |
| <b>Nuurul Iffah Che Omar and Nurul Fadzlin Hasbullah</b>               |     |
| <br>   |     |
| Chapter 34.....  | 384 |
| NEUTRON SOURCE AND NEUTRON SHIELDING                                   |     |
| <b>Nuurul Iffah Che Omar and Nurul Fadzlin Hasbullah</b>               |     |
| <br>   |     |
| Chapter 35.....  | 390 |
| QUANTUM DOTS AS A SOLUTION TO RADIATION HARDNESS                       |     |
| <b>Nuurul Iffah Che Omar and Nurul Fadzlin Hasbullah</b>               |     |

## CHAPTER 34

### NEUTRON SOURCE AND NEUTRON SHIELDING

By

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#### Synopsis

Exposure to neutron radiation may change the doping profile of a diode [1]. This chapter will include information on sources of neutron radiation and its interaction with matter. Neutron sources contained certain percentage of gamma rays that requires to be filtered out to only obtain neutron component from the neutron source or reactor. Neutron source such as  $^{252}\text{Cf}$  can generate fluences up to  $10^{13}$  n/cm<sup>2</sup> and a reactor is needed to achieve higher neutron fluences [2]. Several filtering techniques are also discussed.

#### 1. Sources of Neutron Radiation

Neutron was first discovered in 1932 by Chadwick [3]. Neutron radiation is a non-ionizing radiation where it does not ionize atoms in the same way charged particles such as protons and electrons because neutrons have no charge. However, Neutron irradiation causes indirect ionisation to occur as high energy particles collide with the atomic structure removing or adding an electron to an atom. Neutrons are mainly produced by reaction with alpha particles or photon, spontaneous and induced nuclear fission. Spontaneous fission is a quantum mechanical process which involves the penetration of a potential barrier. The height of the barrier and fission rate is very sensitive to atomic number,  $Z$  and atomic mass,  $A$ . The fission rates are different for different  $Z$ - $A$  isotopes. Odd-even isotopes have fission rates typically  $10^3$  lower than the rate for even-even isotopes. Examples of even-even isotopes with high spontaneous fission yields are  $^{238}\text{U}$ ,  $^{240}\text{Pu}$ ,  $^{244}\text{Cm}$  and  $^{252}\text{Cf}$  [4].  $^{252}\text{Cf}$  isotope is the most commonly used neutron source as it is portable and suitable for laboratory work. The overall characteristics of  $^{252}\text{Cf}$  are shown in the table below.