



U.S. AIR FORCE



USSF

AFRL

Nanocomputing, Neuromorphic Computing and Quantum Information Science Technologies at the AFRL Information Directorate

Dr. Michael Hayduk

Deputy Director, Information Directorate

August 2021

- Introduction to AFRL Information Directorate
- Nanocomputing
- Neuromorphic Computing
- Quantum Information Science (QIS)
- Summary

- AFRL Team:
 - Dr. Qing Wu
 - Dr. Joe VanNostrand
 - Dr. Kathy-Anne Soderberg
 - Ms Laura Wessing
 - Dr. Michael Fanto
 - Dr. Matthew LaHaye
 - Dr. Paul Alsing



MISSION:

To explore, prototype, and demonstrate high-impact, game changing technologies that enable the Air Force and Nation to maintain its superior technical advantage.

VISION:

To lead the Air Force and Nation in command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence (C4I) and cyber science, technology, research and development.

ROME = C4I&Cyber



Rome

65 Acre Campus
30 Laboratories & Facilities
882,000 sq ft floor space

Newport

Primary mission: To evaluate antenna performance on full scale aircraft and make recommendations for improvement.

Stockbridge

Used for development of and real world experimentation with advanced radio frequency (RF)/optical communications, networking and information technologies, cyber techniques and effects, including small unmanned aircraft systems.

Current Von Neumann computing architectures are inefficient and do not scale

Foundational advances in computing architectures

- Quantum
- Neuromorphic
- Nanoelectronic
- Machine Learning
- Artificial Intelligence



| Agility + Innovation + Partnerships |

An agile and transformative ecosystem at AFRL/RI, connecting global technology leaders to collaborate and solve complex Air Force computing challenges.

Linking researchers from government, industry, and academia, to share the best and brightest people, ideas, and facilities.

Discovery lab outside the fence for high risk, high impact problem solving

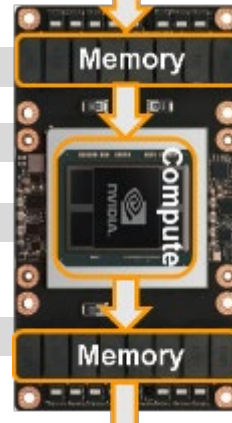
- Open campus facility within walking distance of AFRL campus
- Hard and soft lab space
- Collaboration space
- Event space
- One facility for outreach
- Co-located partners, offices, labs, event center
- Basic research hub for C4I and Cyber

S-UAS Testing | Quantum Facilities | Neuromorphic Computing Facilities

Brain-Inspired, Extremely Low SWaP, Intelligent Computing For Deploying Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning Capabilities

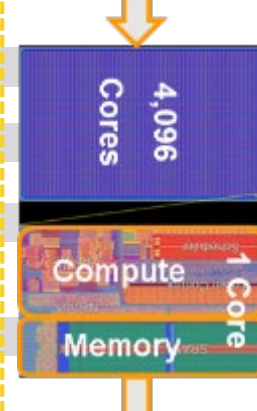
Von Neumann Computer

- **Good for precision**
- **Operates at very high speeds (> GHz)**
- Synchronous (high idle power)
- Noise-free high-precision, sometimes fragile
- Binary encoding (energy-hungry)
- Very limited connectivity (1:10)
- **Separated memory-computation (memory bottleneck, high I/O power)**
- Dense and modular processing
- **Needs explicit programming for function**



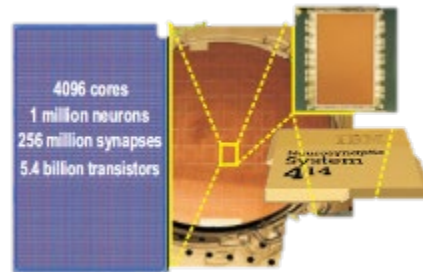
Neuromorphic Computer

- **Good for learning and inference**
- **Operates at low speeds (10-100Hz)**
- Asynchronous (low idle power)
- Noisy low-precision, yet reliable
- Spike encoding (energy-efficient)
- Very large connectivity (1:10,000)
- **Unified memory-computation (no memory bottleneck, low I/O power)**
- Sparse and distributed processing
- **Learning from data and environment**



Neuromorphic Processor Brain-Inspired Architectures

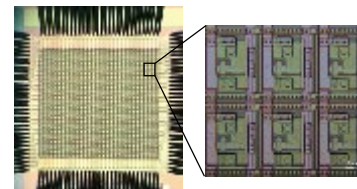
Unconventional computer hardware inspired by the architecture and working mechanisms of human brain.



IBM's TrueNorth Processor

Nano Electronics & Optics Novel Materials, Devices & Circuits

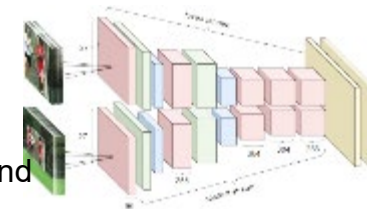
Electrical or optical devices with at least one dimension sized from 10^{-9} to 10^{-7} meters (1~100 nm).



An Array of Memristor Devices As Artificial Neurons & Synapses

Machine Learning Models & Algorithms

A type of artificial intelligence that learns from data and executes cognitive functions.



A Deep Convolutional Neural Network



A brief history of electronic computing



60 years

Transistor

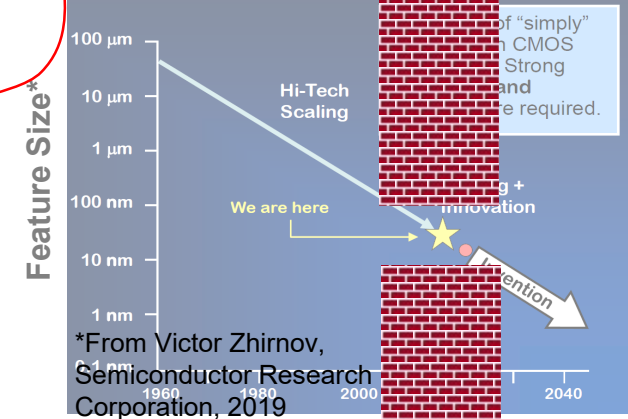
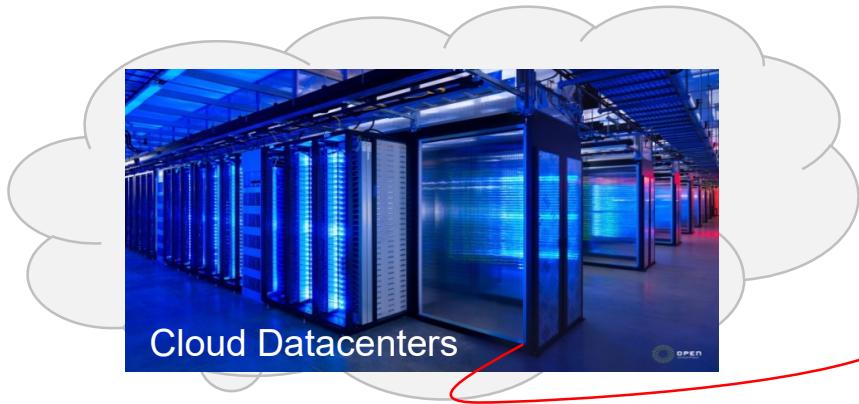
IC

μProcessor

GPU

Cloud-based AI

- Uncertain future of scaling
- Defect intolerant
- von Neumann bottleneck
- Software-limited



All this technology, but path to biologically competitive intelligence isn't clear!



50 years

Classical (von Neumann) Architectures

CPU GPGPU Many-Core 3D Integration



40 years

Field Programmable Gate Array (FPGA)

Digital System-on-a-Chip Analog-Hybrid

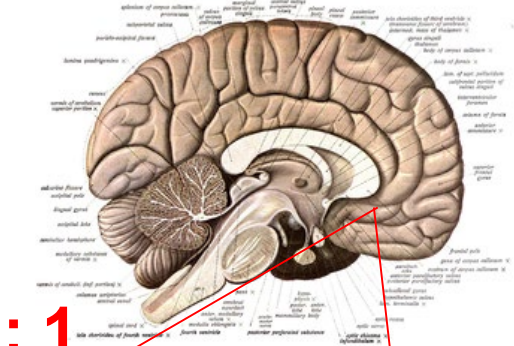
A new pathway to efficient AI HW

- Need:** new devices and architectures

- to overcome limitations of Von-Neumann computing in AI
- while maintaining a low size, weight, and power (SWaP) envelope



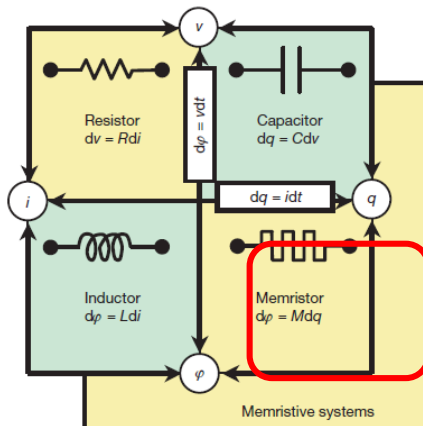
vs.



~ 10⁴ : 1
SWaP ratio

- Memristor = “resistor with memory”**

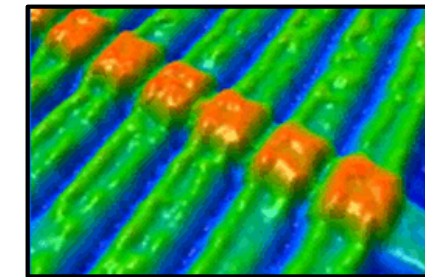
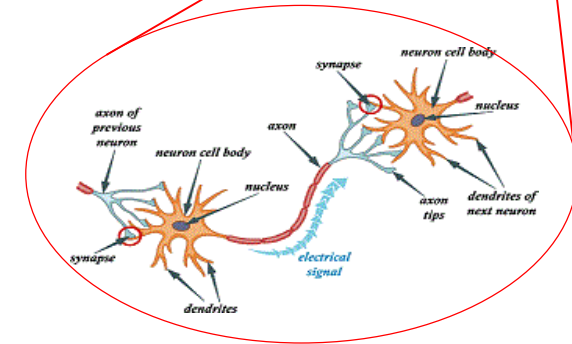
- Key attribute: hysteresis in I-V curve (resistance switching)
- Volatile or nonvolatile
- Analog resistance states
- Existence postulated in 1971, confirmed in 2008



Strukov et al, Nature v. 453

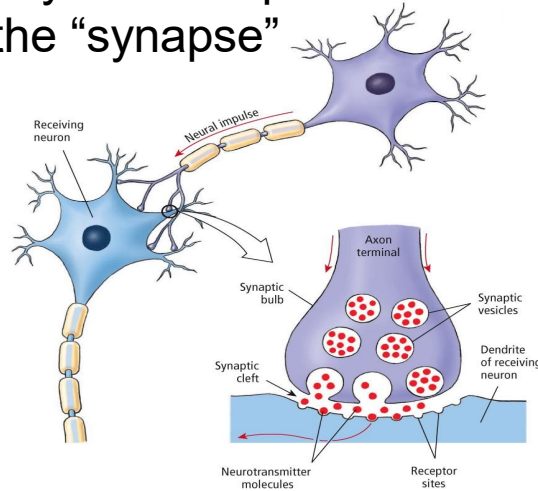
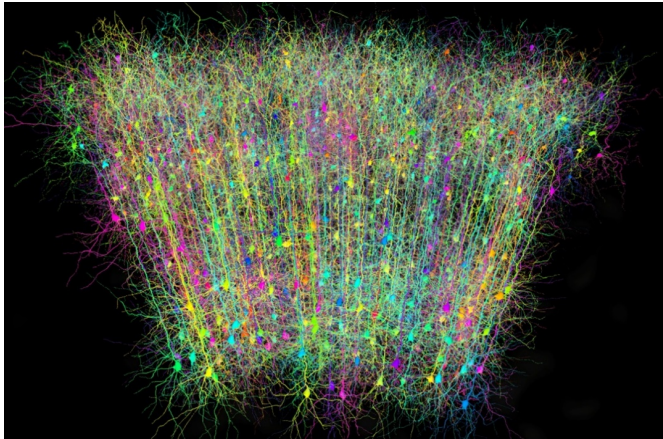
- Structure**

- 2-terminal MIM (x-bar)
- Large variety of memristive films
- Substrate-independent / stackable



The brain is massively parallel and highly connected, enabled by $\sim 10^{11}$ neurons that have $> 10^{15}$ connections

Perhaps the most crucial component for memory and computation in the brain is the “synapse”



<http://www.biochemden.com/neurotransmitters-neuropeptides/>

A potential solution is to use dynamic nano-electronic devices such as **memristors**.

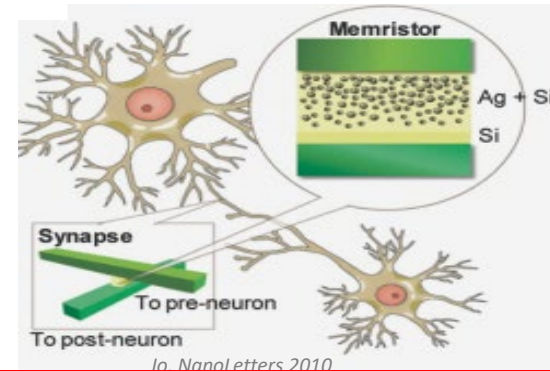
Biology:

- Not logical “1” or “0”
- Changes dynamically (learning)
- Occurs physically (ionic motion)

To implement in CMOS (TN, Loihi etc.):

- 1 synapse requires > 50 transistors and multiple passive elements
- 1 neuron $\approx 10^6$ transistors

“Biological” intelligence using CMOS elements is **SWaP-prohibitive**.

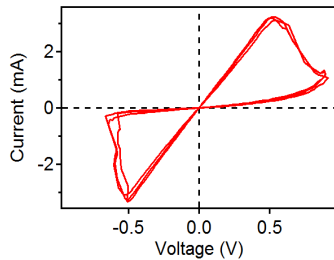


1 synapse = 1 memristor,

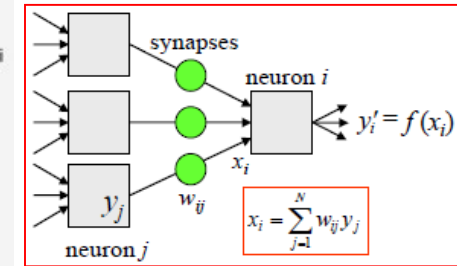
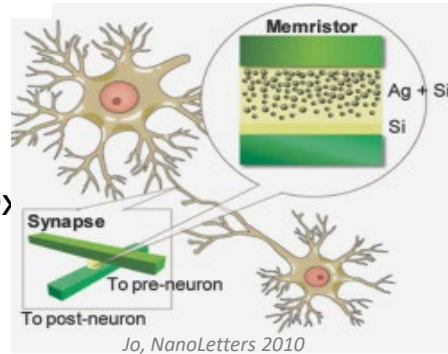
1 neuron = 2 memristors

Value-Proposition of NeuroPipe: SWaP-efficient nanoelectronic AI HW

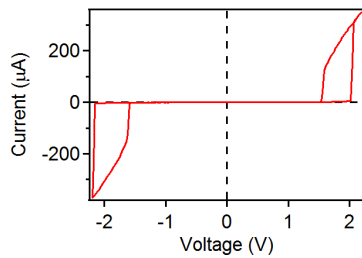
Synapses – non-volatile analog type



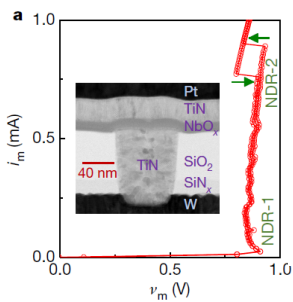
- Memory with plasticity
- “RRAM” - HfO₂, TiOx, TaO_x
- Often filamentary



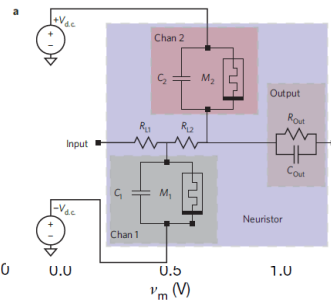
Soma/Axon – volatile, threshold type



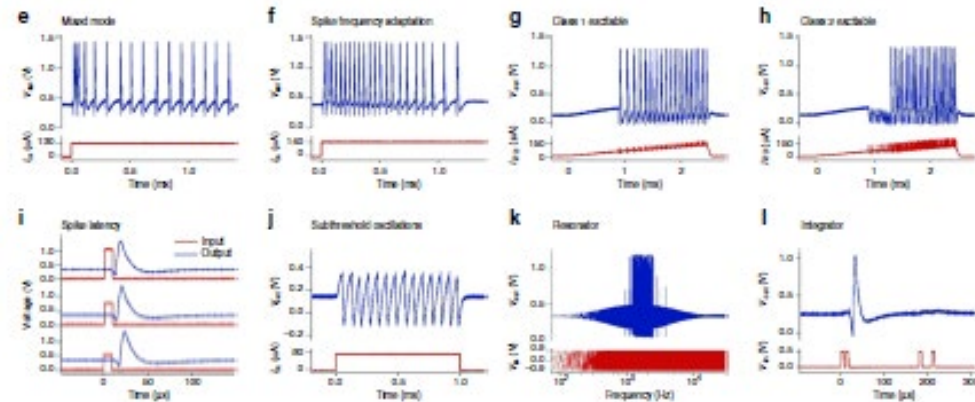
- NbO₂, VO₂
- Undergoes S-type Negative Differential Resistance (NDR), via Mott transition



Kumar et al, *Nature* 548, 2017

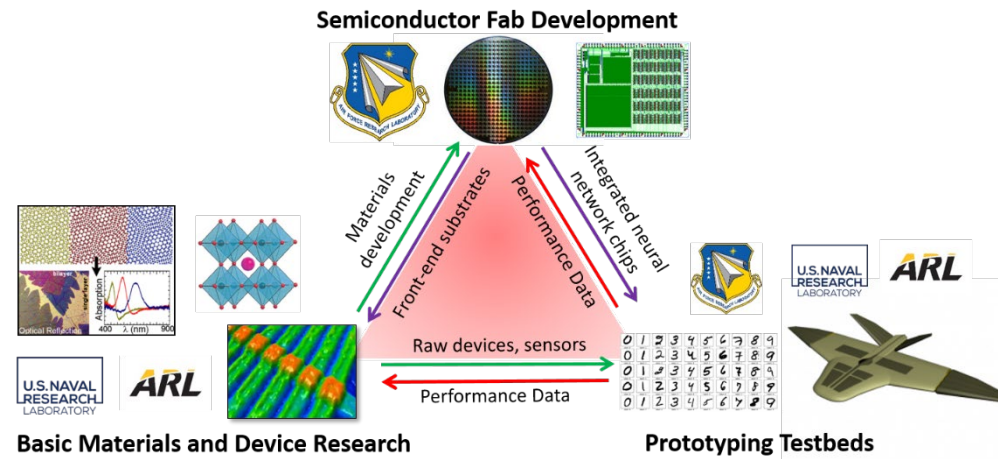


Pickett et al, *Nature Materials* vol. 12, 2012



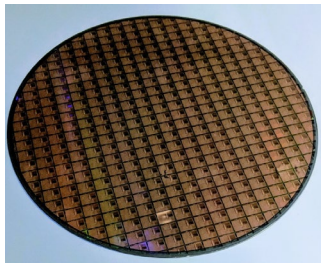
W. Yi et al, *Nature Communications* (2018)

NEUROPIPE: A COMBINED DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE FOR NOVEL NEUROMORPHIC HARDWARE

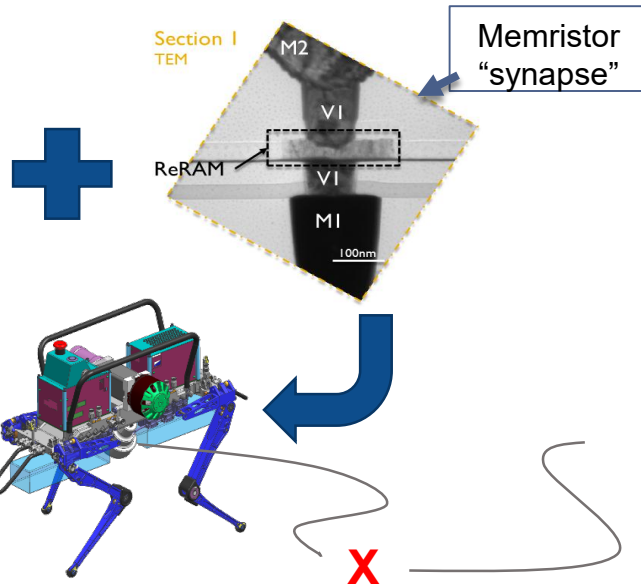


NeuroPipe: A Combined Development Pipeline for Novel Neuromorphic Hardware

Purpose: NeuroPipe will advance DoD capabilities in nanoelectronic materials, devices, architectures and software for critical military applications in autonomy, on-board sensor processing, and cognitive decisions systems. In stages, we will integrate Memristors and other nonvolatile devices, as key elements for advancing next generation neuromorphic processors, into a CMOS foundry.



SoA CMOS



Products:

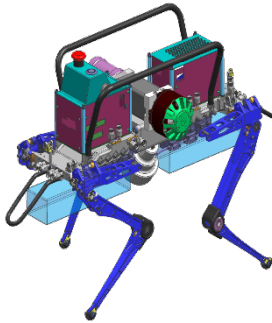
- Prototype neuromorphic devices, circuits and chips utilizing emerging US based nanoelectronics and nanophotonics fabrication facilities
- Demonstration of new non-von Neumann neuromorphic architecture with ultra-low SWaP
- Software

Payoff: New DoD talent and critical infrastructure for future development of neuromorphic computing hardware with...

- On-chip dynamic learning (ie, learning *after* training)
- Reduced training times with smaller data sets
- >100X reduction in consumed energy for processing
- Untethered autonomous capabilities such as 3D navigation, target classification, C2
- Shortened time to warfighter

*American AI Initiative (US, 2019), New Generation Plan (China, 2017),
 “Whoever becomes the leader in this sphere will become the ruler of the world,” Russian President Vladimir Putin

DoD Need: high-performance AI HW with low SWaP



- **Example:** quadruped throw-bot “Butch” (NRL LASR)
 - For navigation in unstructured outdoor environments
 - Ideally would like to have **on-chip learning** with limited training primitives
 - Needs to operate **independent of the Cloud**
 - **SWAP-constrained** platform; GPUs are too expensive power-wise
 - Additional capabilities (real-time sensor data processing etc.) add to the computational burden

Memristor-based neuromorphic chips promise to help make Butch and friends smarter, but **where do we get them?**

Problem: AI chips for DoD platforms represent a small market for semiconductor manufacturers

- Commercially available neuromorphic chips such as True North (IBM), Loihi (Intel) etc. are based on Si CMOS-based technology.
- The industry is happy with the Si-based tech they have (for now).
- The huge investment needed to develop novel memristor-based computing chips will come only when the market incentivizes it. (TAM > 1B widgets)
- **DoD platforms: highly specialized, boutique market (~10k widgets?)**
 → **Not commercially available. (...opportunity!)**



Q: We have all these nice materials, but why can't Butch use them?

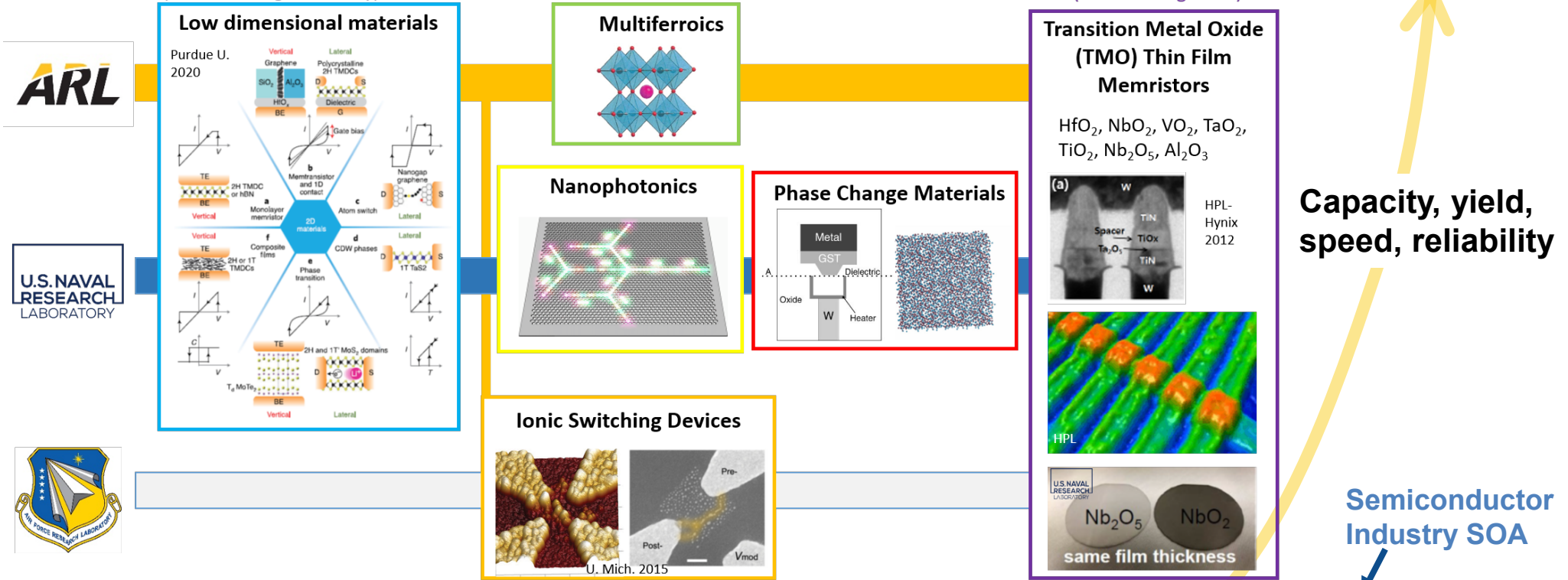
A: Today, most of these aren't in the fab!

Max integration level of most novel materials

Degree of fab compatibility (technological readiness) →

(Post-fab integration only)

(Full fab integration)



Capacity, yield, speed, reliability

Semiconductor Industry SOA

Post-Packaging Integration (PCB board)

Pros: Bridges diverse materials systems

- Flexible process and design
- Fast prototyping

Cons:

- High latencies, low density and yield
- kHz – MHz operation

Back-End Integration (μm CD, 2" coupons)

Pros: Close integration with CMOS

- Retains some benefits of semicon tech
- Relatively flexible process and design

Cons:

- Diminished throughput and yield
- MHz operation

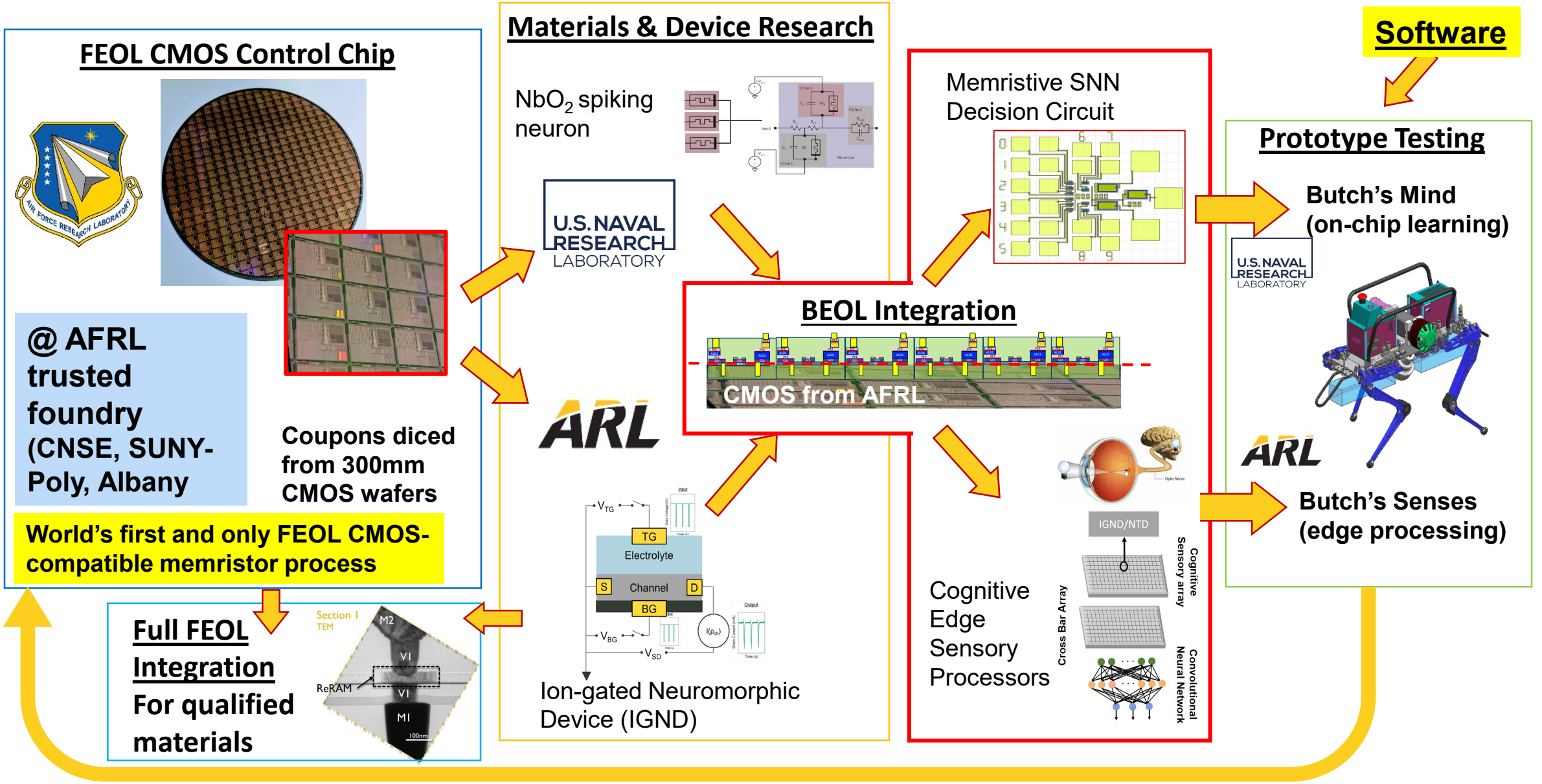
Full Fab Integration (< 65nm CD, 12" wafers)

Pros: Closest integration with CMOS

- Capacity and yield of semicon tech
- GHz operation

Cons:

- Limited to fab-compatible materials
- Long and inflexible process



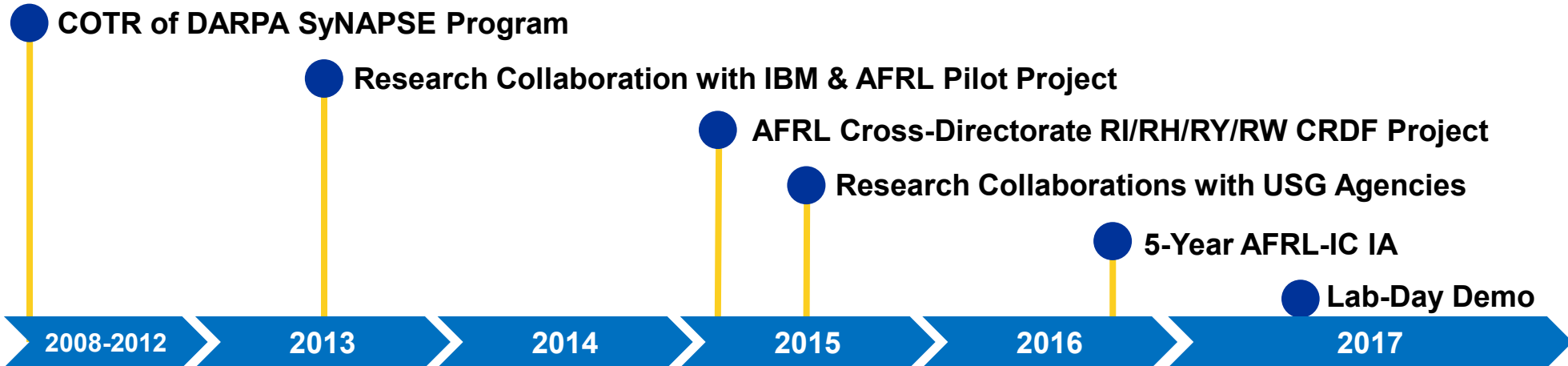
- DoD path to dominance in neuromorphic computing requires timely ARAP investment and IP management of enabling nonvolatile device technologies, in novel neuromorphic architectures, fabricated in a US based CMOS manufacturing environment.
- Tri-Service labs will leverage previous, foundational DoD investments (>\$100M) in neuromorphic devices, circuits and architectures as a map for NeuroPipe technologies.
 - The key determinant of success for the proposed ARAP is the development of capabilities to rapidly and flexibly design and manufacture novel neuromorphic hardware that is *beyond the established semiconductor technology framework*.
- A streamlined “Lab-to-Fab-to-Field” development pipeline will be created to apply to critical military applications in autonomy, on-board sensor processing and cognitive decisions systems.
- The NeuroPipe ARAP guarantees that DoD will have the necessary in-house expertise to counter adversarial advances in neuromorphic technologies, and have capabilities for rapid low volume production to shorten the time to the warfighter.

Exploiting emerging nanoelectronics and photonics to *win* the “AI arms Race”



Short Term Focuses

AFRL TrueNorth Research Main Events



SyNAPSE (12/2014)
AFRL/RI Pilot



NS1e (08/2015)
AFRL Cross-TD Project



NS1e-16 (12/2015)
AFRL Cross-TD Project

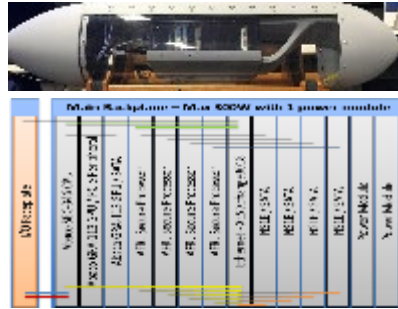


NS16e-4 (est. 6/2018)
AFRL-USG Collaboration

First Hardware Acquisitions and Applications Development Among ALL USG Agencies!

Near-Term
Embedded HPC & Deep Learning Applications

“Agile Condor” eHPC Pod



Multi-Target Recognition With Machine Learning

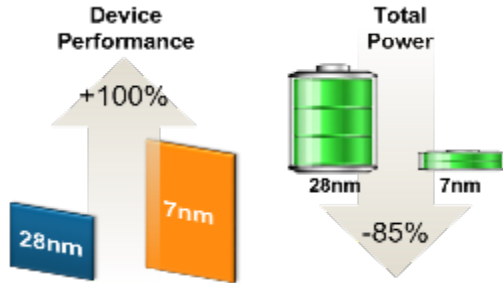


TrueNorth × 16 vs A Mobile GPU

- 10X Power Reduction
- 20X Throughput Increase
- Same Accuracy

Mid-Term
Next-Gen Digital Neurosynaptic Processor

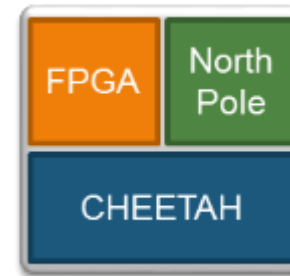
7nm Trusted Manufacturing



100X Function Density

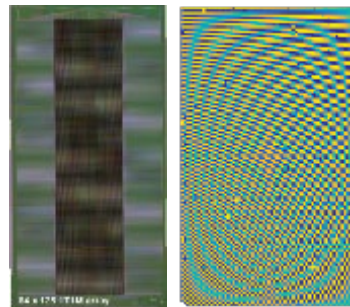


Trusted Reusable IP & Software

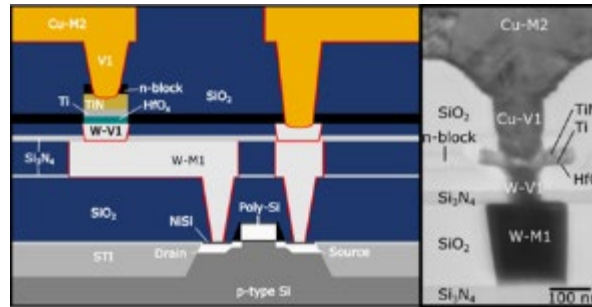


Far-Term
Nano-Technology Enabled Neuromorphic Systems

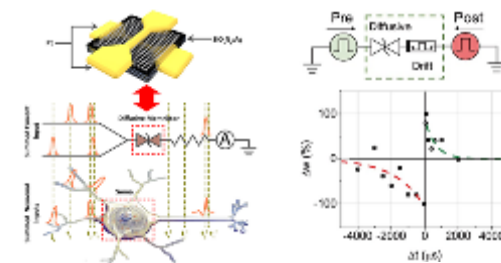
Memristor Devices & Array



Memristor-CMOS Integration



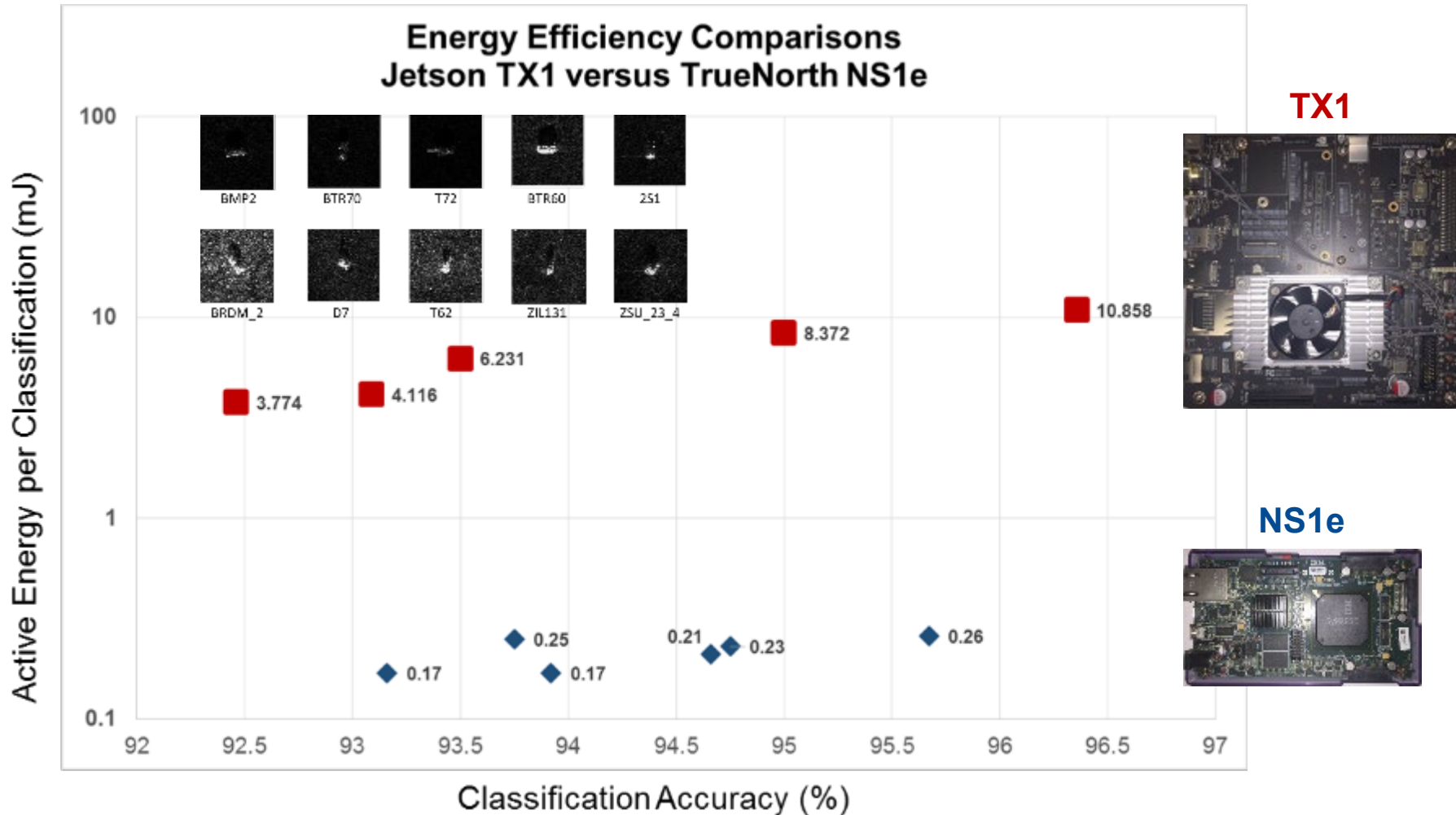
Biologically Plausible Architectures

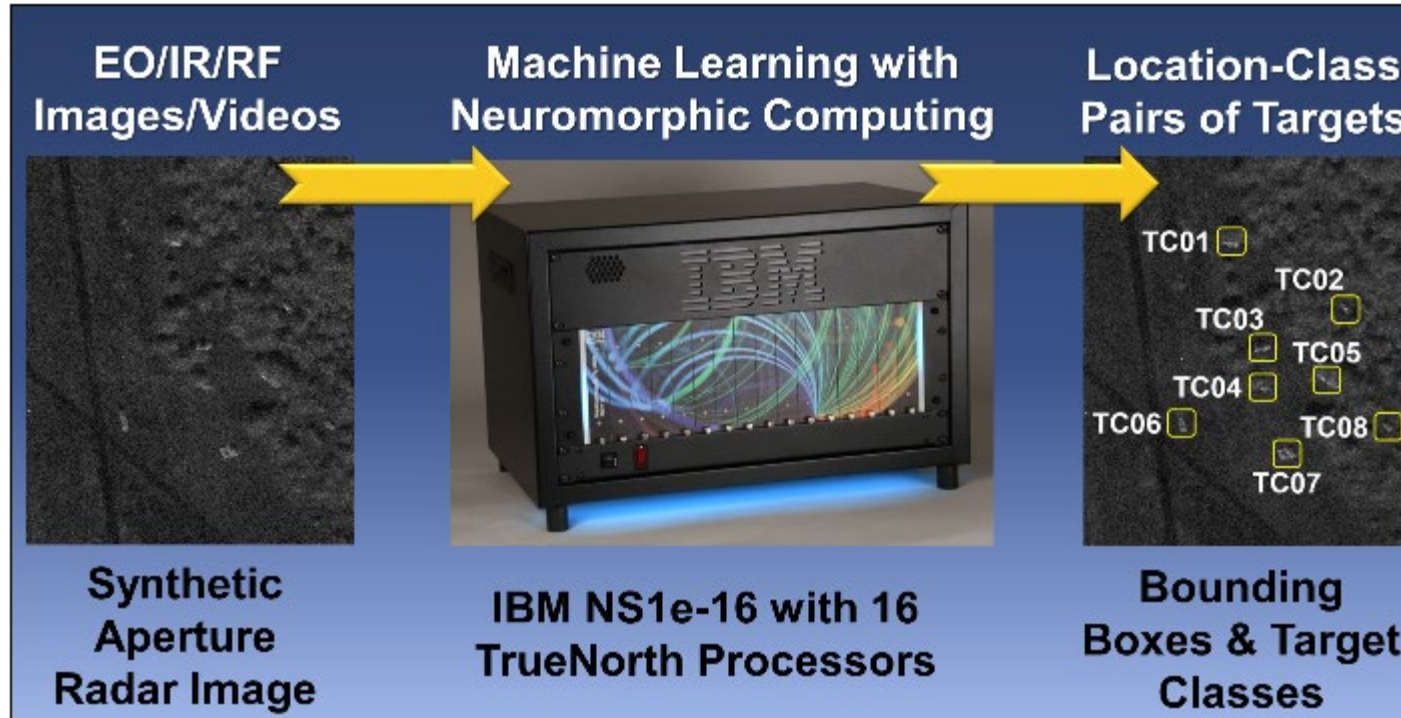


Memristor Based Artificial Neuron and Synapse

10-Class Public Dataset

$$E_A = t \cdot (P_{total} - P_{idle}) \quad Acc = 1.0 - \mathbf{SUM}[label(i) - prediction(i)]/N$$





TrueNorth Processor × 16

NVidia Mobile GPU

Power	5 Watts	50 Watts
Throughput	16,000 images per sec	700 images per sec
Accuracy on chips	98%	98%
Accuracy on full-frame	90%	90%

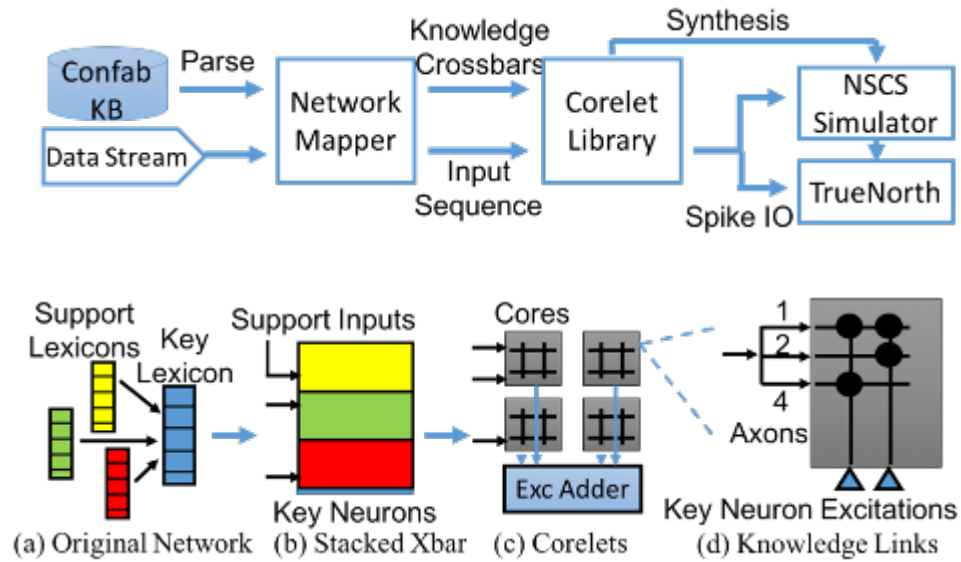


Table 4.1: Network complexity impacts of constraint

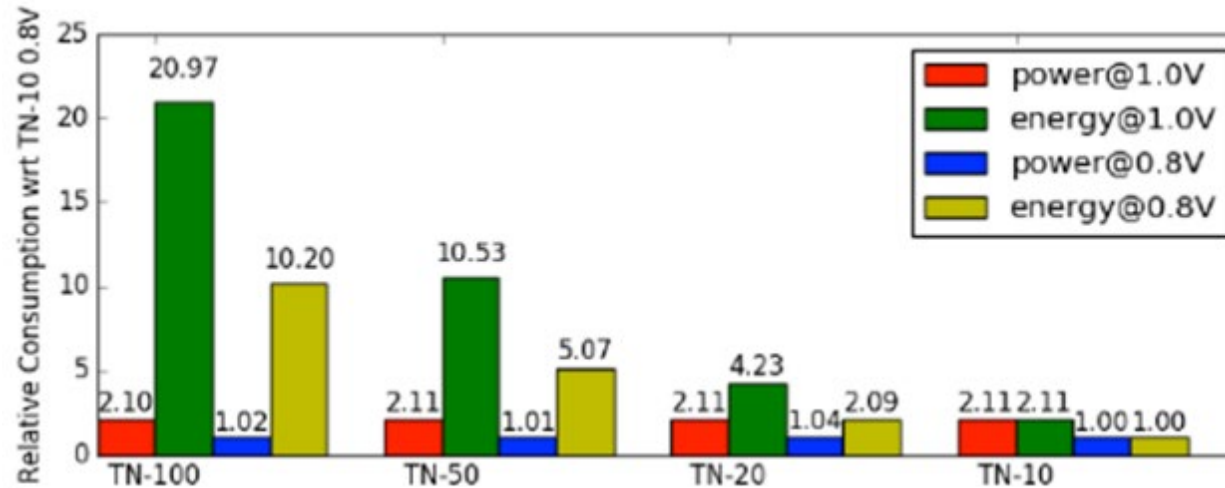
Networks	Synapses	Cores for Key Lex	Total Cores
Original	3373K	5232	6116
Constraint	1322K	2169	2918
Reduction	60.8%	58.5%	52.3%

Table 4.2: Detection Qualities of Comparison Models

Methods	SOM	RNN	Reference	TN-100	TN-10
AUROC	0.879	0.898	0.933	0.943	0.914

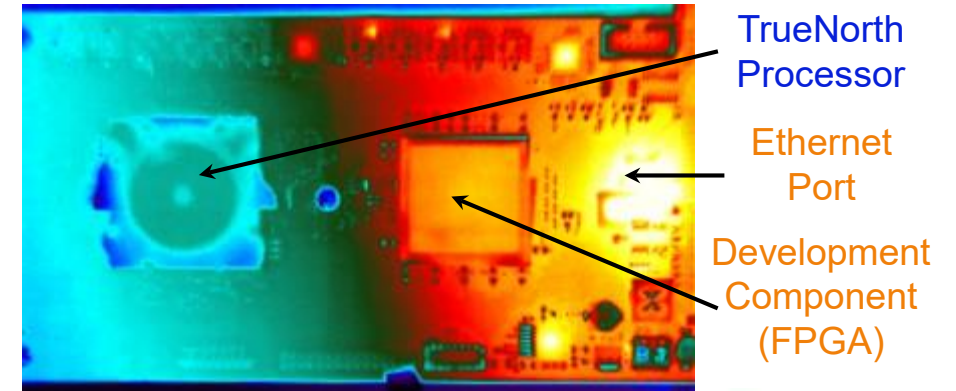
Table 4.3: Power and Performance of Different Platforms

Devices	Time	Power	Energy/Sample
Xeon W5580	25.7ms	68.0W	1747.6mJ
Tesla K20	0.270ms	102.4W	27.6mJ
Jetson TK1	13.48ms	2.5W	33.7mJ
TN-10 1.0V	20ms	104.1mW	2.1mJ
TN-10 0.8V	20ms	49.22mW	0.98mJ

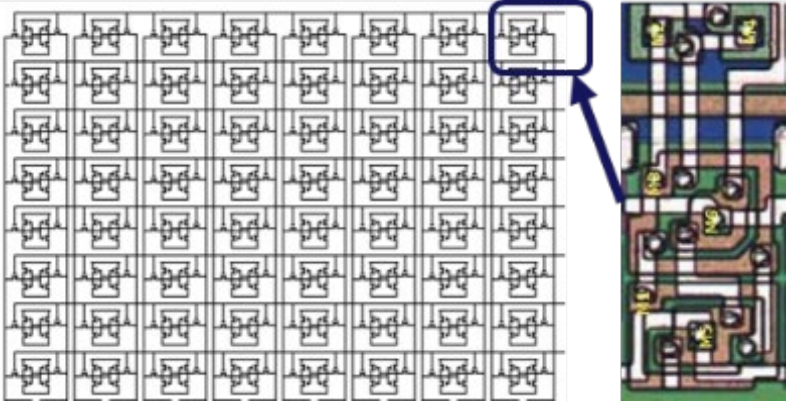
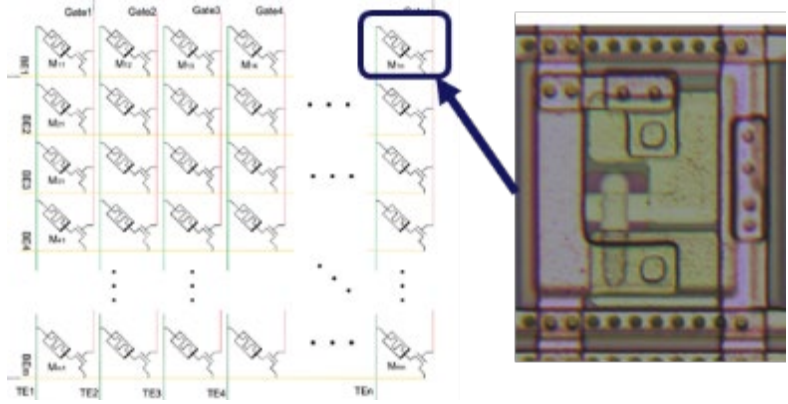
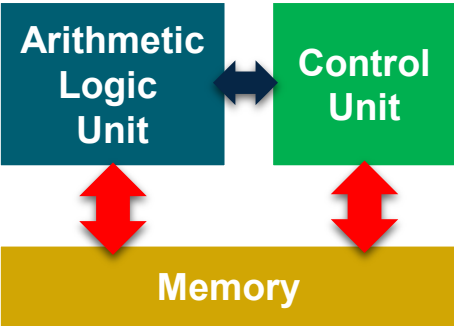
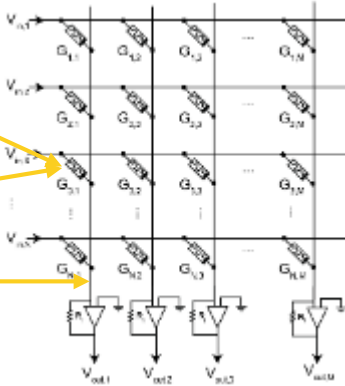


- TrueNorth is a first-generation research and experimental processor
 - Input bandwidth limitation on data dimensionality and size
 - High area cost from experimental redundant circuits
 - Not optimized for operational environments (temperature, radiation)
 - Power overhead from developmental system components
 - Fixed-scale design not allowing customization and optimization
- We must leap forward
 - Keep innovating as our mission, not dwelling on supporting a research chip
 - DoD needs a more optimized, more versatile, trusted machine learning microelectronics solution

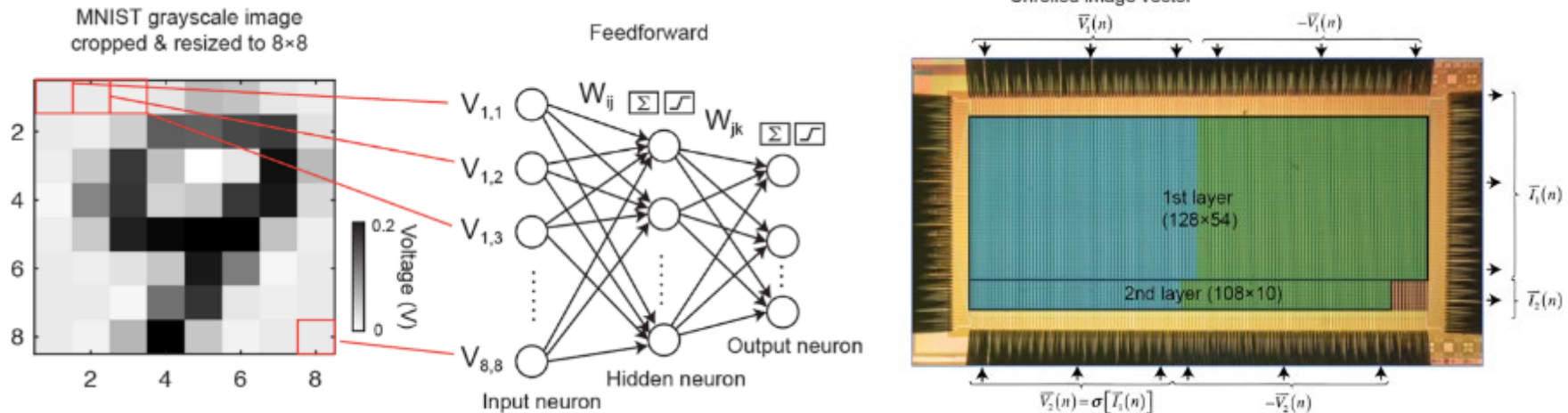
Thermal Image Showing Power Overhead on the NS1e Board





	Digital CMOS	Memristor
Size Weight Cost	 <p>6 transistor area = 1 bit</p>	 <p>1 transistor area = 6 bits</p>
Power = V^2 / R	Typical R: 10^3 Ohms	Typical R: $10^3 \sim 10^6$ Ohms
Comp. Arch.	 <p>Compute-Out-Memory (Von Neumann)</p>	 <p>Input: Voltage (V) Memory: Memristance (R) Compute: $I = V / R$ Output: Current (I) Compute-In-Memory</p>

In-hardware learning & inferencing: 2-layer neural network (UMASS)



Inferencing Compute	Google TPU	Memristor-based (array-only)
Energy Efficiency (fJ/OP)	470	19

Multi-layer neural network inferencing (Duke-UMASS)

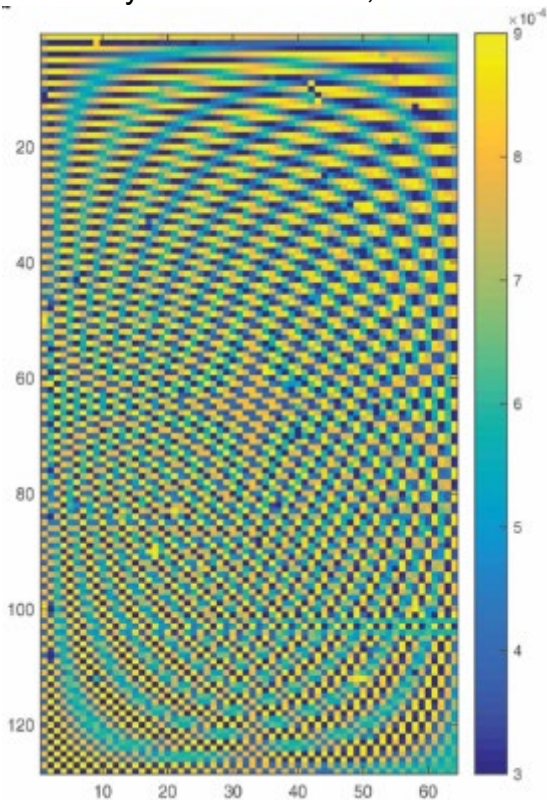
Inferencing Compute	TrueNorth (28 nm)	Memristor (UMASS array) -CMOS (Duke 130nm chip)	Memristor (10X memristance) -CMOS (10X speed)
Memristor Resistance Range		700Ω – 70KΩ	7KΩ – 700KΩ
Power (mW)	5.115	37.6	16.2
Speed (ns per image)	2,000	100	10
Energy Efficiency (nJ per image)	10.23	3.76	0.162
Classification Accuracy	~97%	~97%	~97%

Recent Research Outcomes

Matrix-Vector Multiplication, Signal Processing

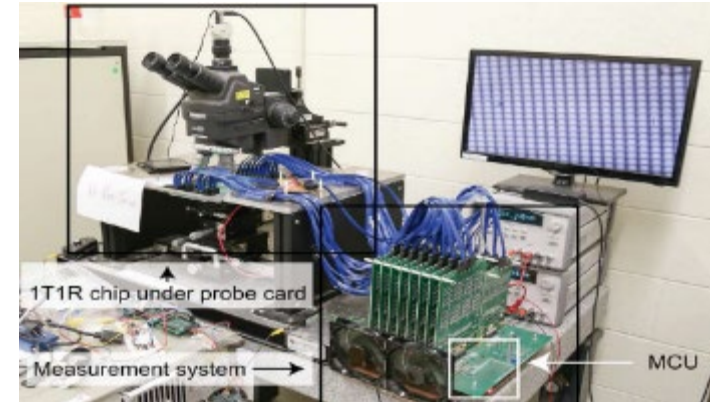
128×64 6-bit (64-level) 1T1R Array

- The largest analog valued array to date (limited by the measurement capability)
- The most accurate analog array ($\sigma \sim 0.5\%$)
- The most analog levels obtained (>64, 6-bit)
- 99.8% yield: 3 stuck ON, 15 stuck OFF

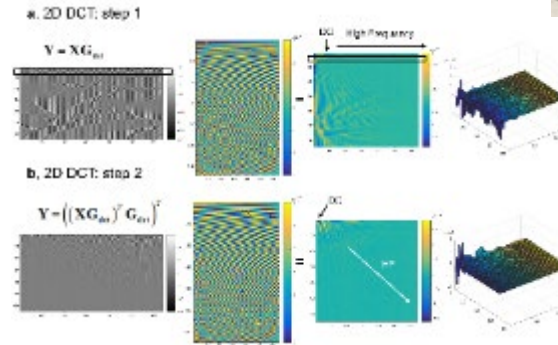


Nature Materials 16, 101 (2017)

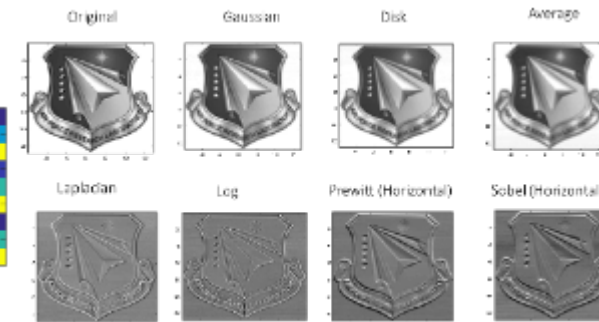
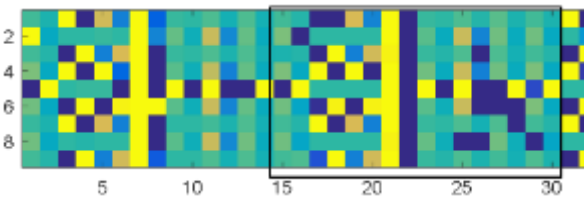
Memristor crossbar computing experimental setups at UMASS



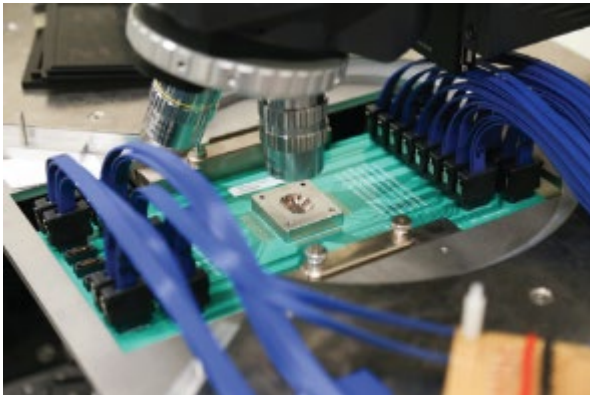
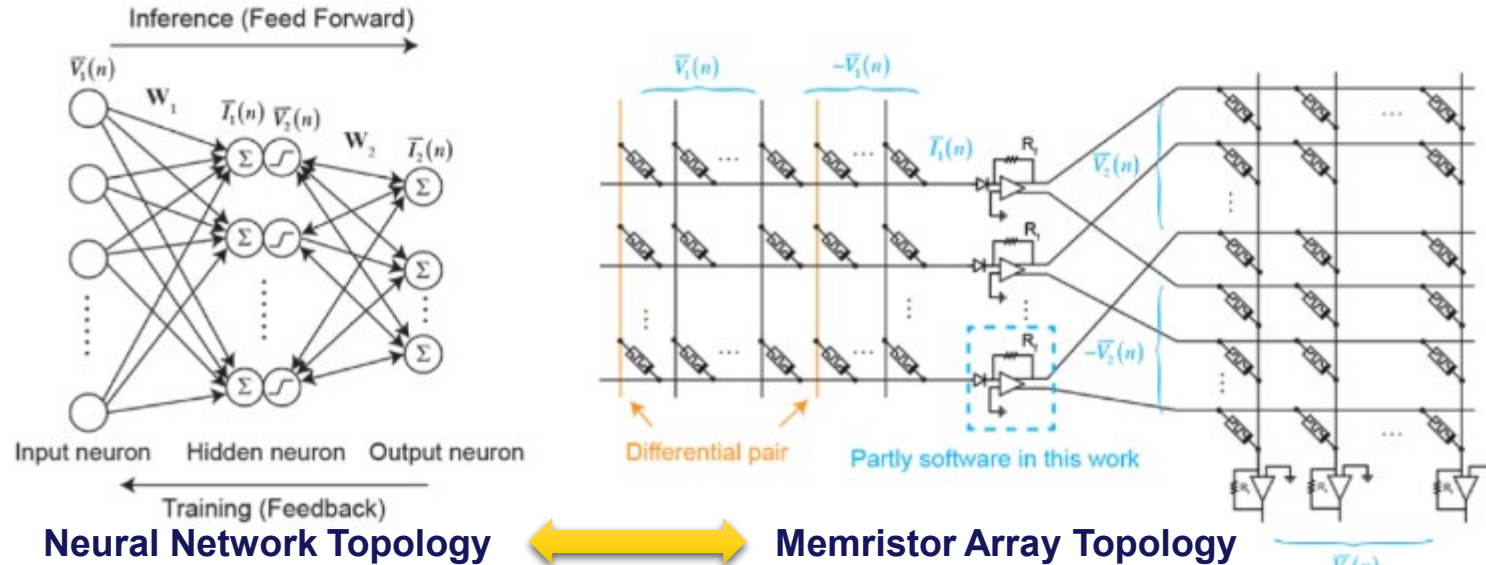
Experimental results: 2D DCT



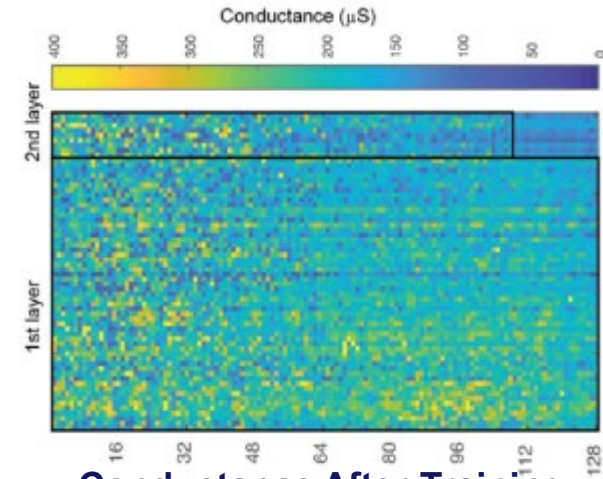
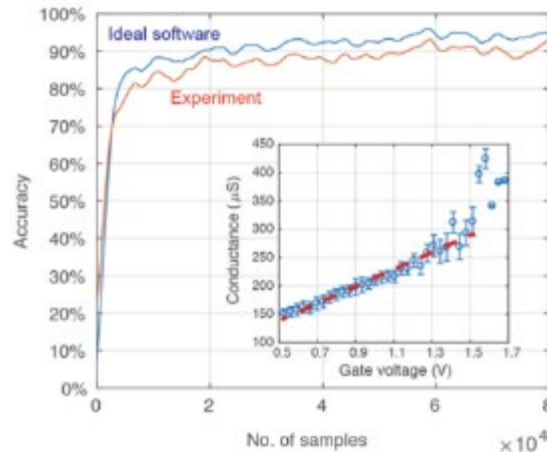
Experimental results: 3×3 kernel convolution



In-Hardware Neural Network Learning & Inferencing



Memristor Array On Probe Card

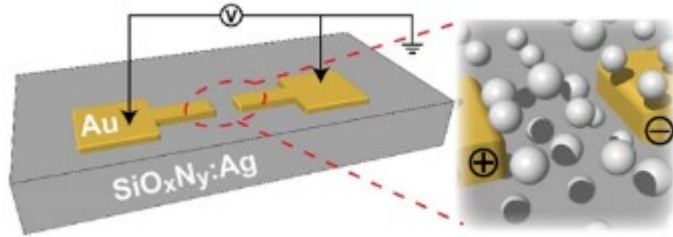


Science, submitted (2017)

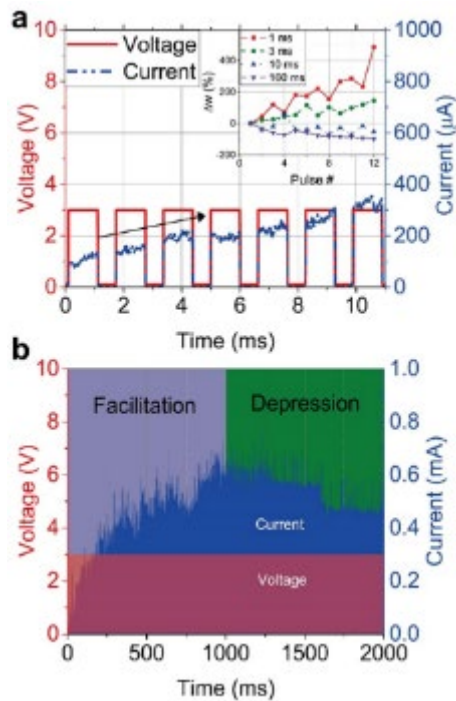
Recent Research Outcomes

Artificial Synapse

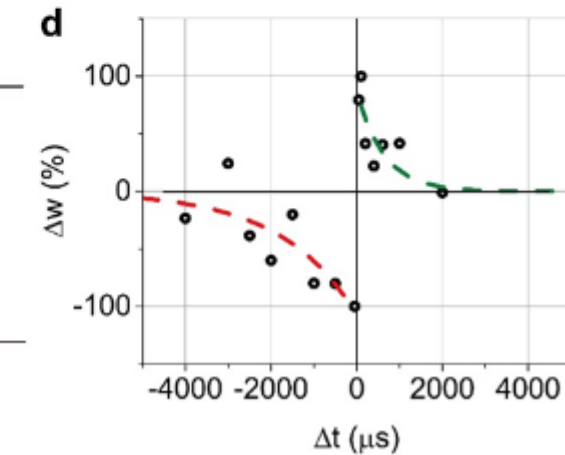
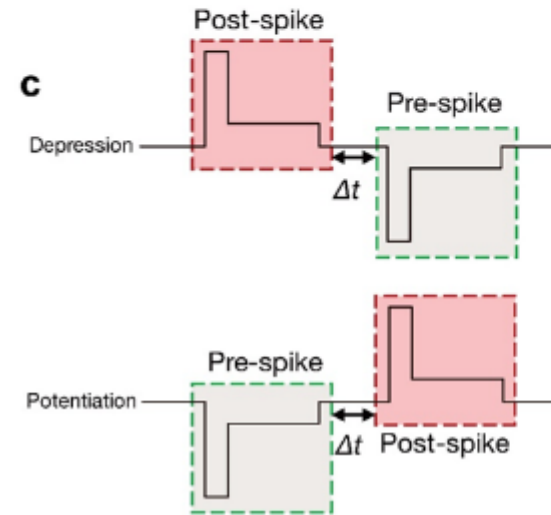
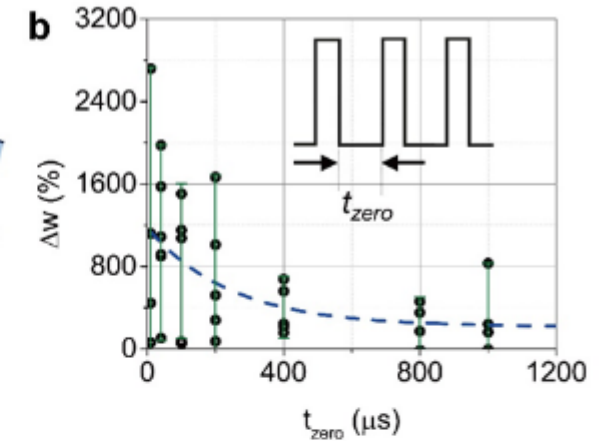
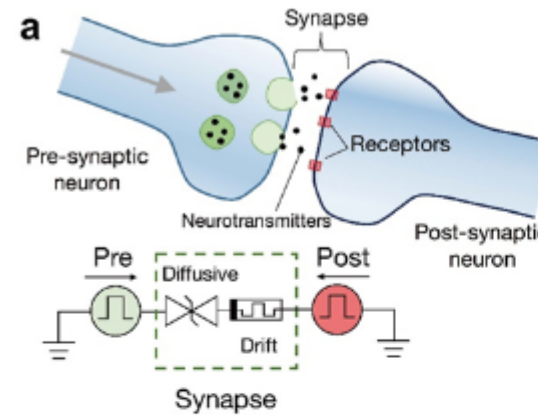
SiO_xN_y:Ag Diffusive Memristor



Short-Term Plasticity

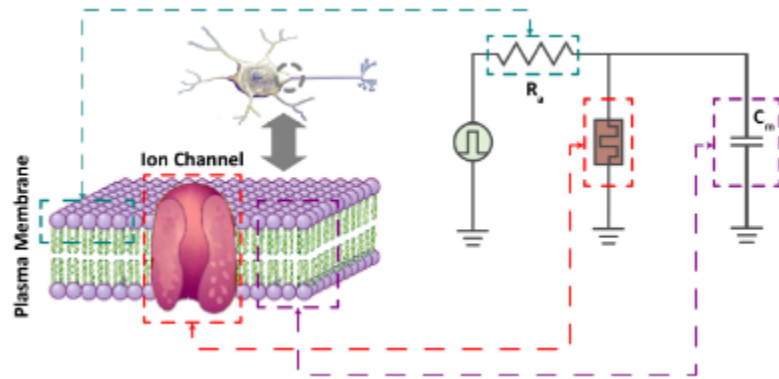


Long-Term Plasticity & STDP Learning

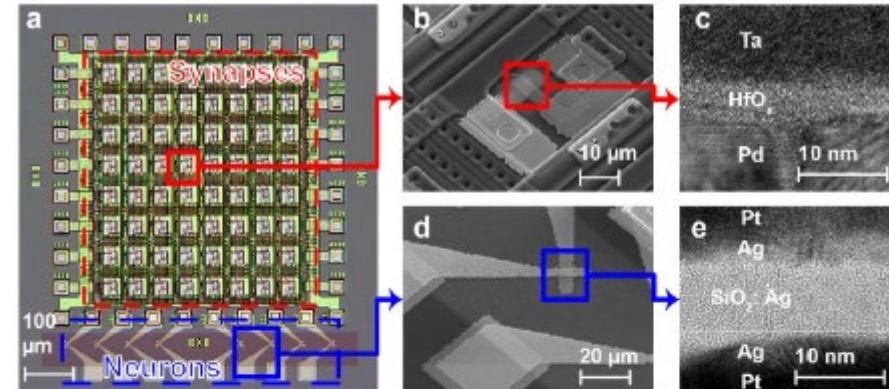


Nature Materials 16, 101 (2017)

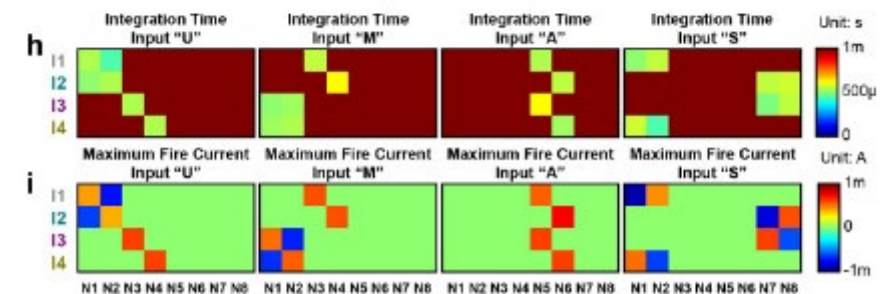
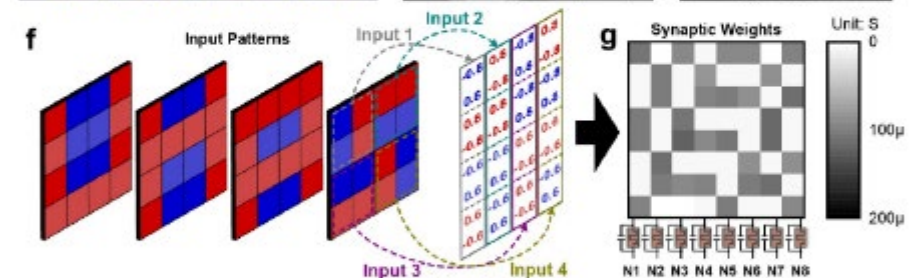
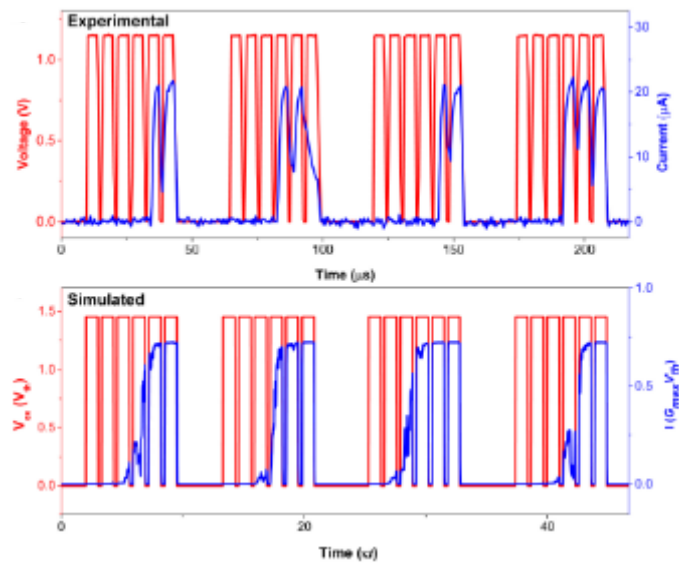
Biological Neuron vs Memristor Neuron



8x8 Memristor Array with 8 Memristor Neurons



Integrate-and-Fire Function with Memristor Neuron

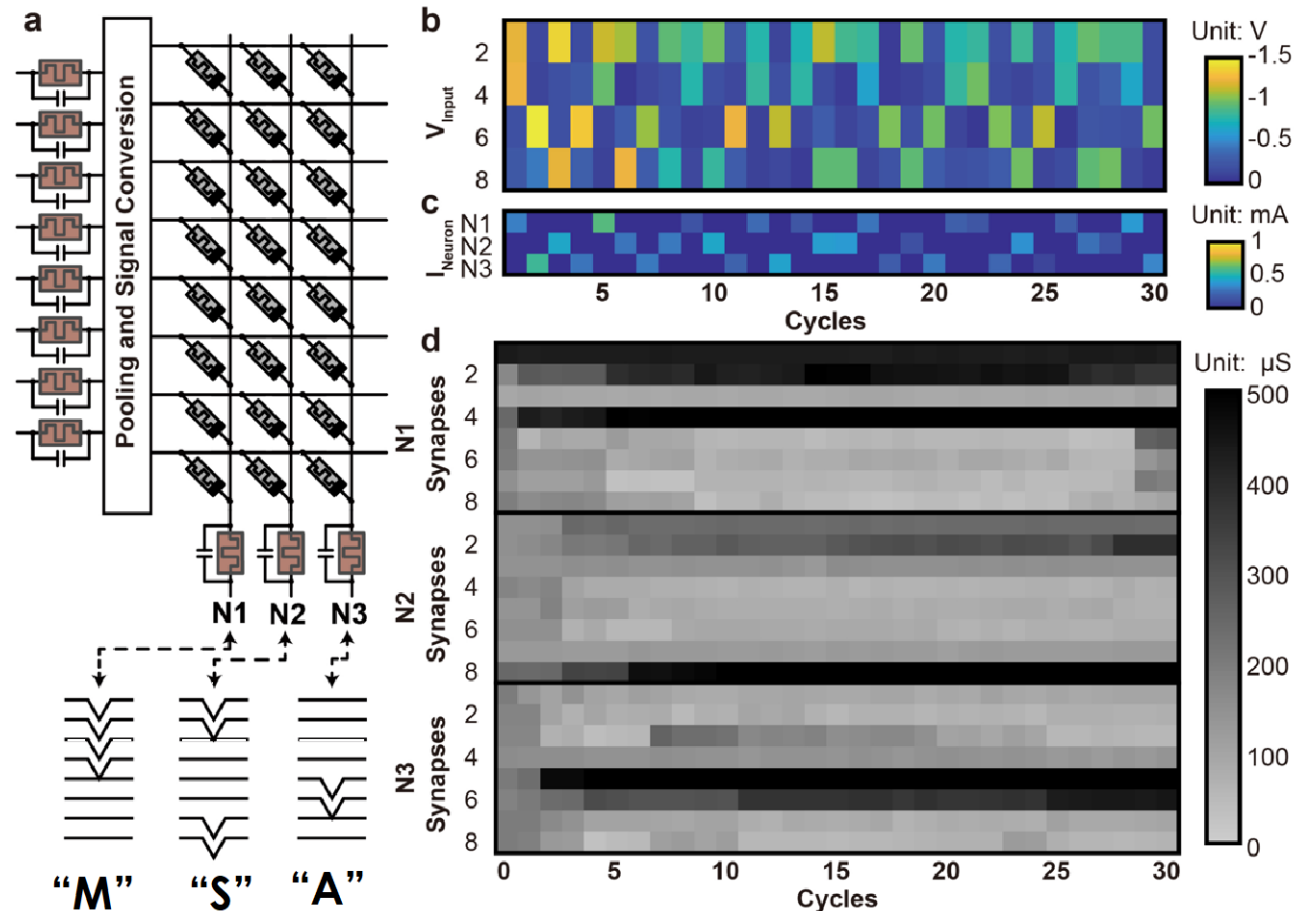


Pattern Recognition of 'U', 'M', 'A' and 'S'

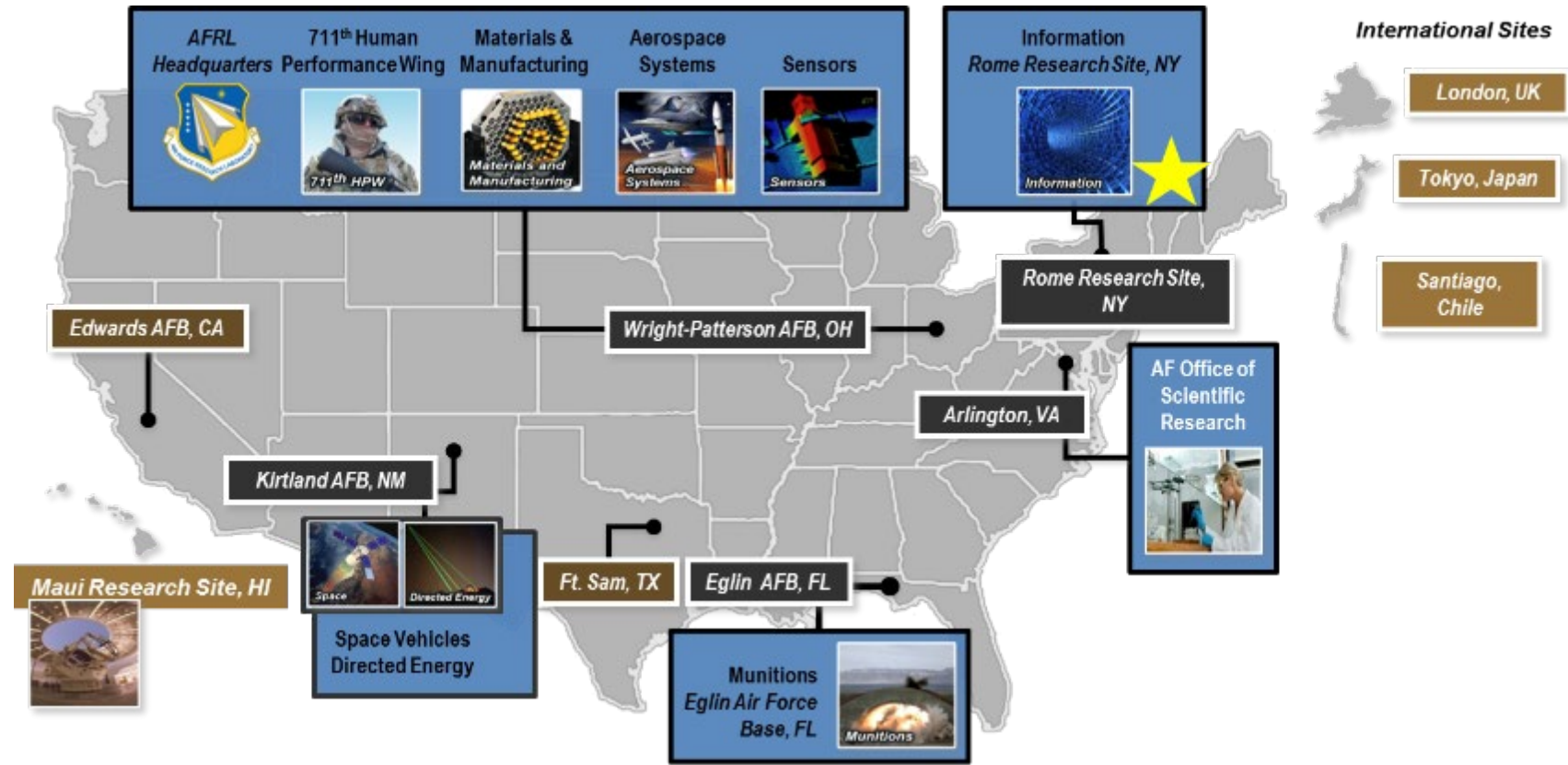
Nature Nanotechnology, under revision (2017)

Recent Research Outcomes

Unsupervised Learning In All-Memristive NN



Wang et al., *Nature Electronics* 1,137-145 (2018).



RD: Satellite-based Quantum Communication and Networking and Optical Channels (Gruneisen; NM)

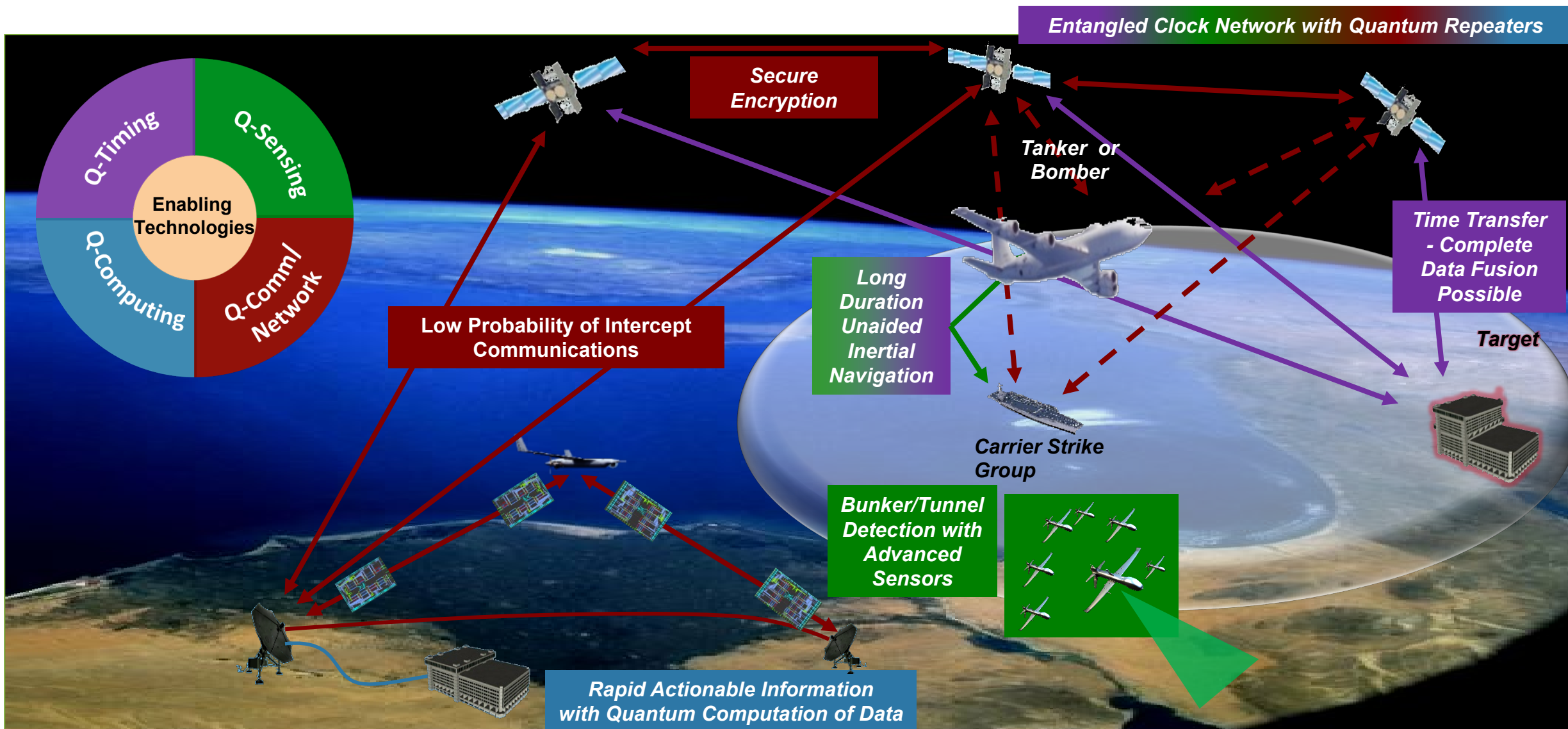
RI: Quantum Computing, Communication, and Networking (Alsing, Fanto, Soderberg, Tabakov, Hucul, Lahaye; NY)

RV: Position, Navigation, Timing (Lott, Metcalf, Squires, Olson, Elgin; NM)

RX: Solid-State Quantum Defects, Materials, and Supply Chain (Bedford, Bissell, Dass, Eyink, Reed, Slocum; OH)

RY: Quantum emitters, Device fabrication (Hendrickson, Usechak; OH)

AFOSR: 6.1 Basic Research funding in QIS (Metcalf; DC)

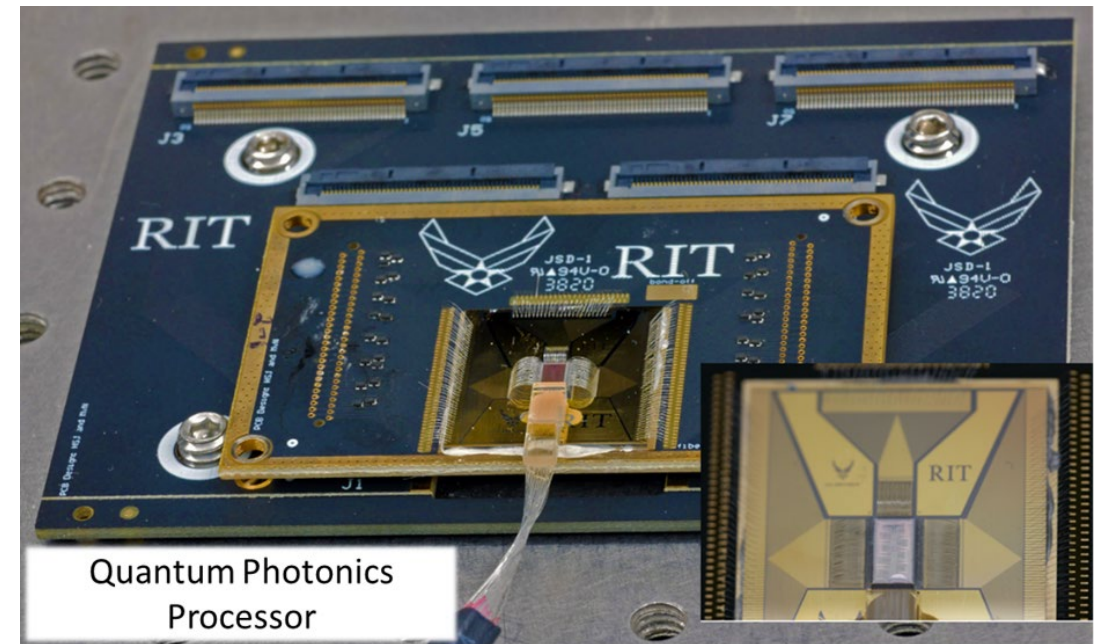
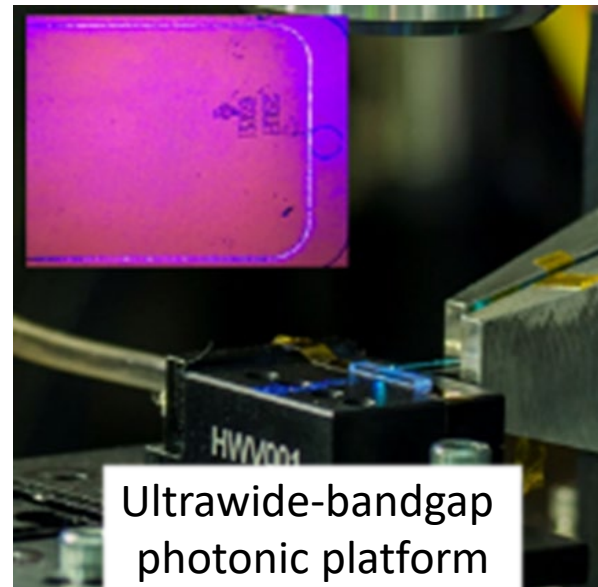
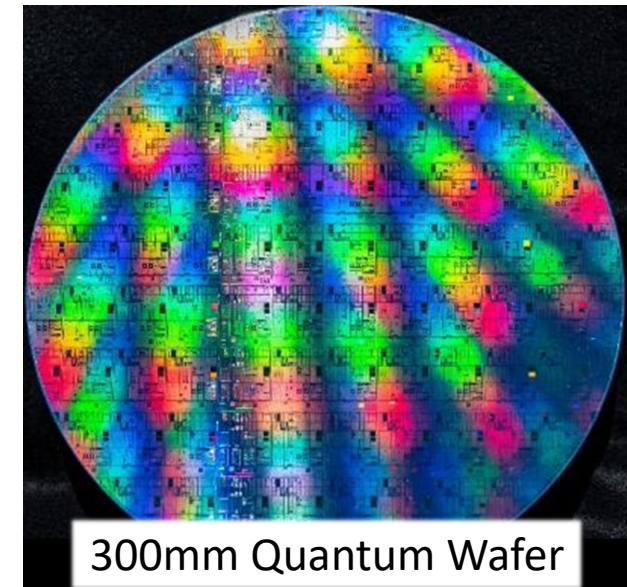
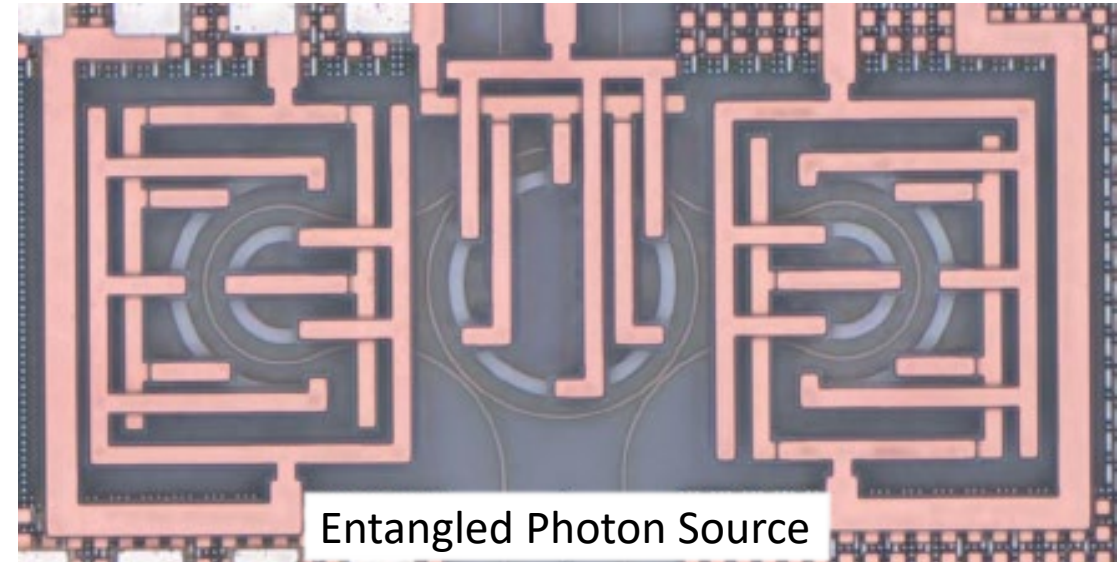




Motivation: Integrated photonics provides a scalable and stable platform for the implementation of photon-based qubits.

Advantages:

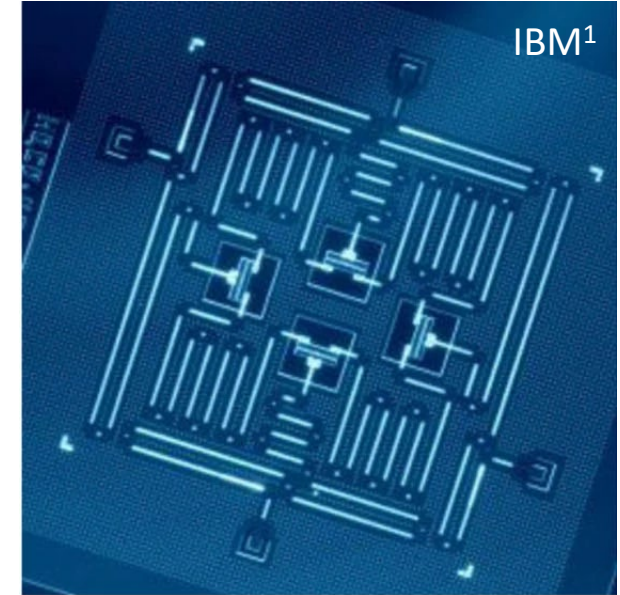
- The only long distance carrier of quantum information
- Robust against decoherence
- Operate at room temperature
- Ideal for fast processing circuits
- One of the main mediating qubits for transduction



Motivation: Superconducting qubits are macroscopic quantum circuits and a leading *matter-based* quantum processing platform

Advantages:

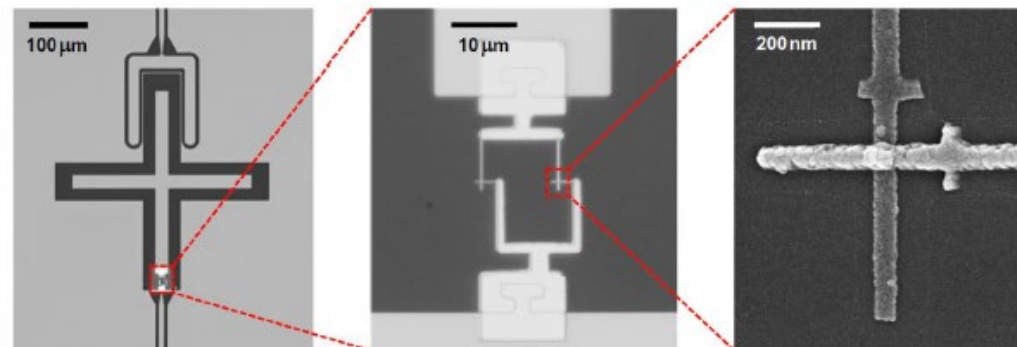
- *Artificial atoms* manufactured w/ semiconductor fabrication
- Dynamical properties can be precisely engineered
- Operate in the microwave regime
- Control & measurement electronics can be tightly integrated
- Enable rapid quantum logic & deterministic entangling operations



IBM¹

Superconducting processor w/integrated 'transmon' qubits & quantum buses

Components of a Superconducting 'Transmon' Qubit²



Control/Meas. Electrodes

Flux Tuning Loop

Josephson Junction

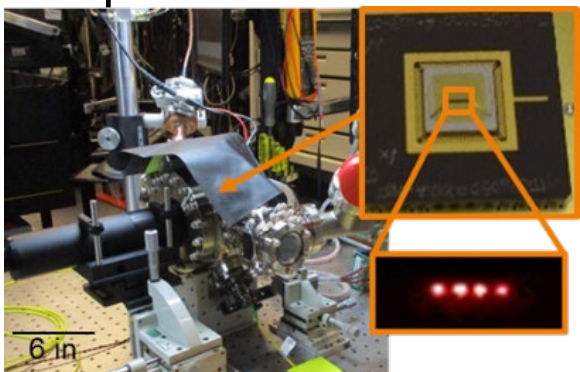
References: (1) J. Gambetta et al. [arXiv:1510.04375](https://arxiv.org/abs/1510.04375)
 (2) T. Roth et al. [arXiv:2106.11352](https://arxiv.org/abs/2106.11352)



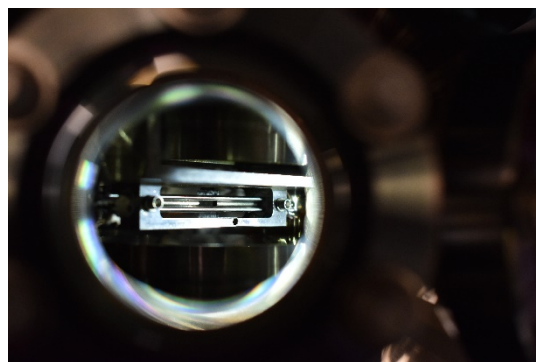
Motivation: Trapped ions provide long-lived memory and quantum information processing capabilities. Exploring use of ytterbium-171 for memory and barium-133 for heterogeneous interfaces.

Advantages:

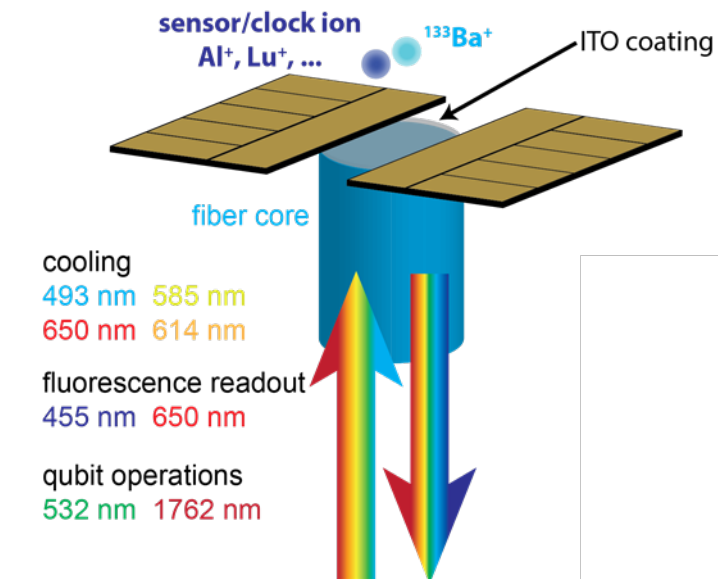
- Provide long-lived memory
- Nature provides identical qubits
- Leading qubit technology for quantum computing – advances can be leveraged towards networking applications
- Allows remote (inter-node) and local (intra-node) entangling operations



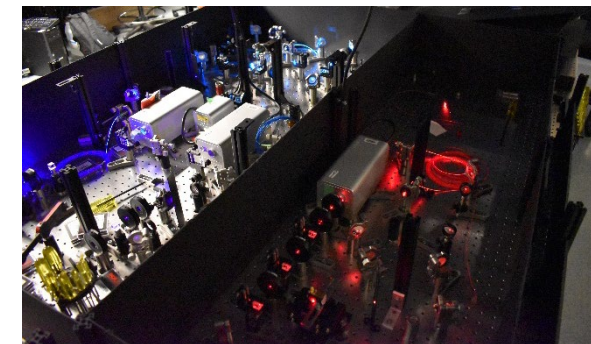
Yb⁺ memory-based network nodes with four trapped ion qubits.
THE AIR FORCE RESEARCH LABORATORY



Vacuum chamber for preliminary Ba⁺-133 experiments and qubit interface explorations



Exploring compact trapped ion architectures towards interfacing with other qubit technologies



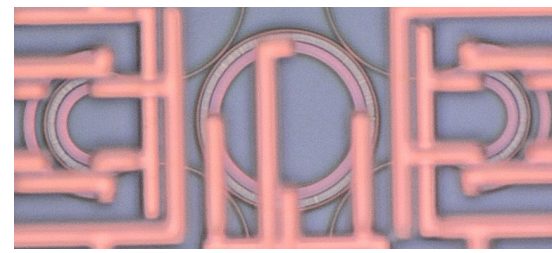
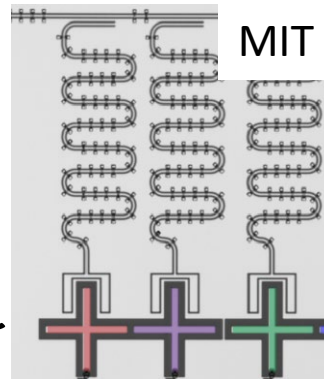
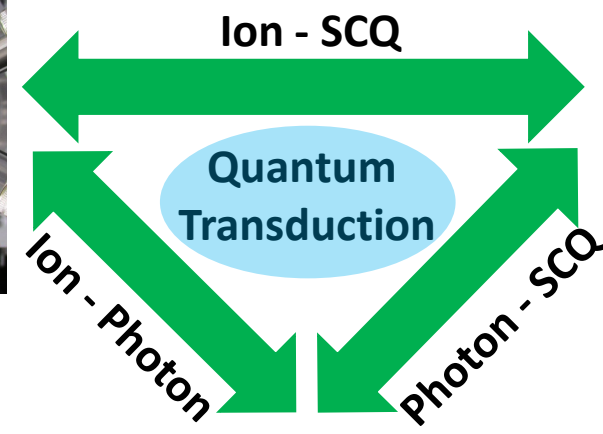
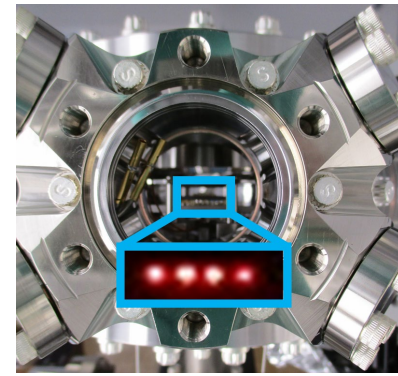
Laser systems to manipulate Ba⁺-133 trapped ions.





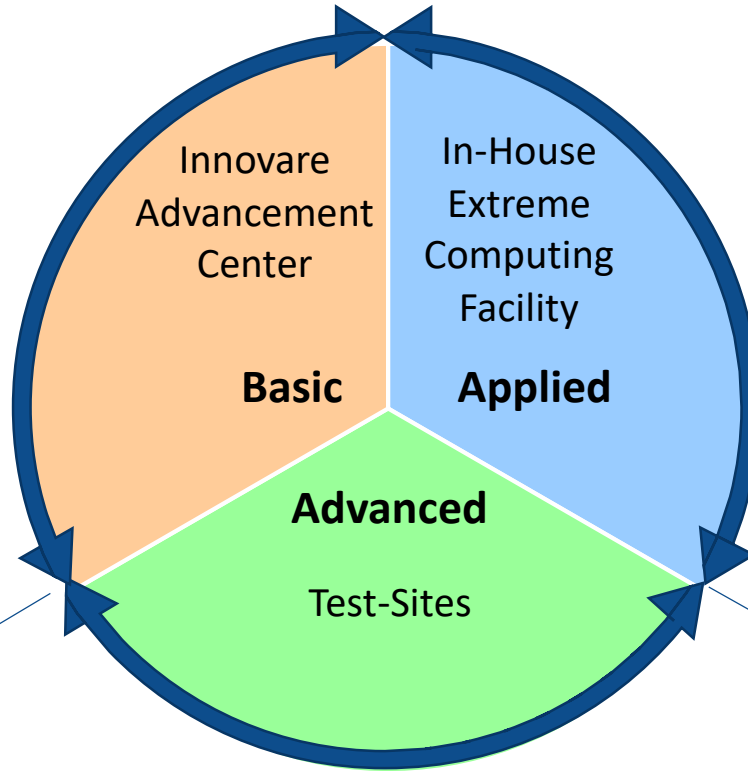
Developing hybrid interfaces to integrate multiple qubit technologies

- End-network application will inform quantum network architecture and qubit technologies
 - Requirement is to seamlessly interface widely different qubit technologies
 - Quantum transduction allows fully quantum transmission across network - maintain the fundamental security provided by quantum physics
- Scalable ultrawide-bandgap integrated monolithic foundry compatible platform for qubit integration
- Visible wavelength trapped ions for interfacing with integrated photonics
- Superconducting metamaterials for efficient mode conversion





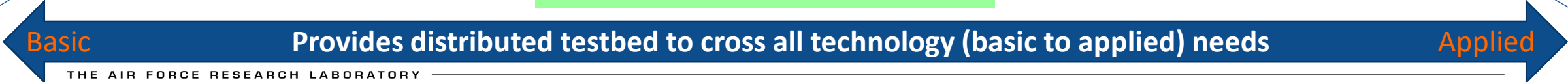
Basic research focusing on heterogeneous interfaces and preliminary network connections and protocols



Applied research focusing on heterogeneous network integration and advanced networking and quantum algorithm protocols

Assessment factor:
• Strategic Alignment & S&T Need

Advanced test site demonstrations. Can support ground-ground and ground-air links. Can be host clocks, sensors, distributed computing elements.





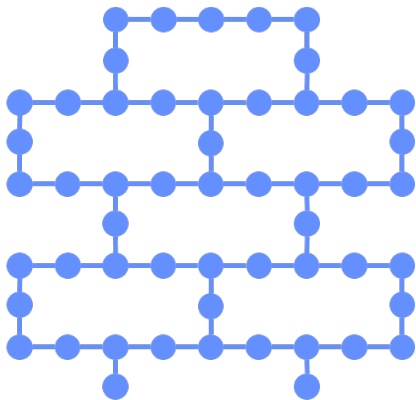
Motivation: Create a knowledgeable DoD research community developing quantum algorithms to efficiently solve AF relevant mission critical problems.

Understanding the devices:

- Implementation: Learning machine specific programming to manipulate the quantum bits
- Characterization: Study of noise models on qubits to determine algorithm feasibility on current hardware
- Exploration: Unlocking what unique AF problems can be fit to the hardware with a potential quantum advantage

AFRL-IBM HUB PARTNERSHIP:

Provides AFRL and its collaborators with access to commercial quantum systems to explore practical applications relevant to the Air Force.



ibmq_rochester 53 qubit connectivity graph

Recent Publications:

Fundamentals In Quantum Algorithms: A Tutorial Series Using Qiskit Continued

Daniel Koch^{1*}, Saahil Patel¹, Laura Wessing¹, Paul M. Alsing¹
¹*Air Force Research Lab, Information Directorate, Rome, NY*

Demonstrating NISQ Era Challenges in Algorithm Design on IBM's 20 Qubit Quantum Computer

Daniel Koch¹, Brett Martin², Saahil Patel¹, Laura Wessing¹, Paul M. Alsing¹
¹*Air Force Research Lab, Information Directorate, Rome, NY and*
²*Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Co*

Gate-Based Circuit Designs For Quantum Adder Inspired Quantum Random Walks on Superconducting Qubits

Daniel Koch^{1*}, Michael Samodurov², Andrew Projansky³, Paul M. Alsing¹
¹*Air Force Research Lab, Information Directorate, Rome, NY*
²*Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY*
³*Hamilton College, Clinton, NY*

- AFRL has high interest in Non-Von Neuman architectures for low SWaP applications
 - Nanocomputing
 - Neuromorphic Computing
- QIS technology development for quantum networks and quantum algorithms