



# Xyce: an open source SPICE engine

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MOS-AK Workshop  
Berkeley, CA  
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# Outline

Xyce intro

Xyce requirements

Xyce design

- Object-oriented (C++ mostly)

- Spice-compatible

- But different than SPICE!

- Parallel implementation

- Analysis types (DC, Tran, AC, HB, MPDE, UQ)

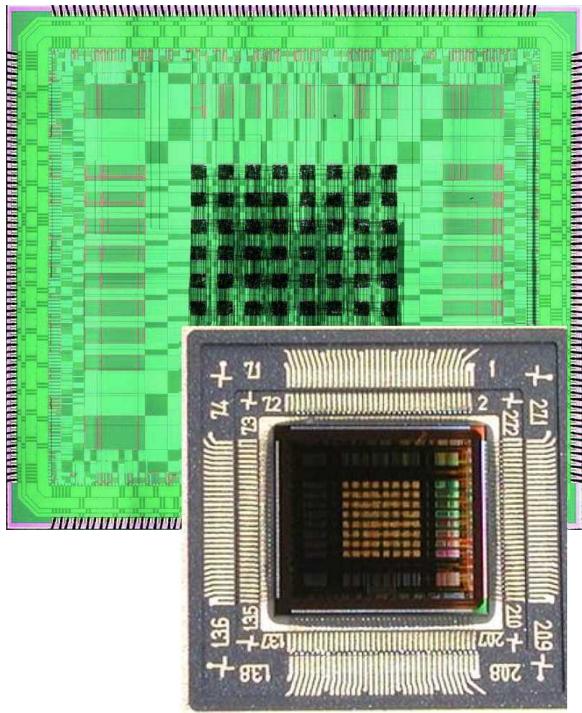
- Open-Source ([as of v6.0](#))

ADMS model compiler

ModSpec-Xyce

Xyce supports most SPICE models (BSIM, EKV, etc)

- Xyce: Massively Parallel circuit simulator:
  - Distributed Memory Parallel (MPI-based)
  - Unique solver algorithms
  - SPICE-Compatible
  - Industry standard models (BSIM, PSP, EKV, VBIC, etc)
- Analysis types
  - DC, TRAN, AC
  - Harmonic Balance (HB)
  - Multi-time PDE (MPDE)
  - Model order reduction (MOR)
  - Direct and Adjoint sensitivity analysis
  - Uncertainty quantification (UQ) via Dakota.
- Sandia-specific models
  - Prompt Photocurrent
  - Prompt Neutron
  - Thermal
- Other, non-traditional models
  - Neuron/synapse
  - Reaction network
  - TCAD (PDE-based)
- Xyce Release 6.2
  - Open Source!
  - GPL v3 license



<http://xyce.sandia.gov>

Next release (v6.1) ~April 2014

Eric Keiter, Sandia National Laboratories  
2014 NEEDS Workshop, Berkeley, CA

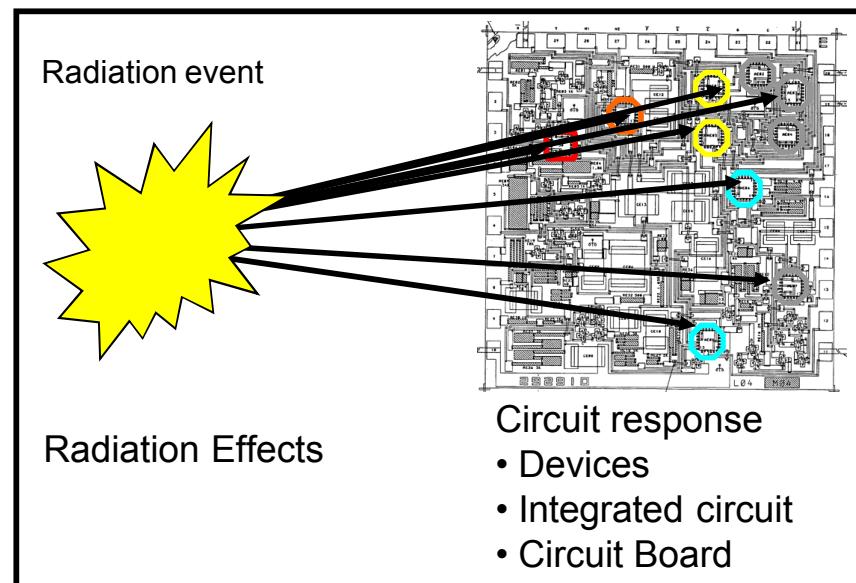
# Project Motivation: Why Xyce?



- Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), 1993
- Advanced Simulation & Computing (ASC), 1995
- Qualification Alternatives to SPR (QASPR), 2005
  - Offset lack of NW testing
  - Help qualify NW systems



- Unique Requirements → Differentiating capabilities
  - Unique models: Radiation Effects
  - High fidelity: SPICE-level or higher
  - Large capacity: Massively-parallel
  - IP: Sandia owns it



# Why Open Source?

- **First open source release, v6.0**
- **November 5, 2013.**
- **GPL license v3.0**
- **Source and binary downloads available**
- **[xyce.sandia.gov](http://xyce.sandia.gov)**
- **Next release (v6.1) ~April 2014.**
- **Foster external collaboration**
- **Feedback from wider community**
- **Taxpayer funded, so encouraged to open source.**



## About Xyce

Xyce is an open source, SPICE-compatible, high-performance analog circuit simulator, capable of solving extremely large circuit problems by supporting large-scale parallel computing platforms. It also supports serial execution on all common desktop platforms and small-scale parallel runs on Unix-like systems. In addition to analog electronic simulation, Xyce has also been used to investigate more general network systems, such as neural networks and power grids. [Read more about Xyce](#).

# Open Source Releases

Release every 6 months.

Xyce v6.0 (first open source) October, 2013

Xyce v6.1 April 2014

- Parallel HB, MPDE and AC analysis.
- BSIM-CMG model
- New digital models
- Dynamically linkable devices (beta implementation)

Xyce v6.2 October, 2014

- Calculation of transient direct sensitivities.
- Support for lead current calculation and output for Harmonic Balance (HB) analysis.
- Improved interpolation for both the Trapezoid and Gear time integrators.
- Improved results output (.PRINT) capabilities.
- New models for a lumped transmission line and a digital latch.
- Fixes for nearly 60 bugs and enhancement requests.

Xyce v 6.3 ~April/May 2015

# Near term new features

Some of these will be in 6.3, some 6.4.

## Xyce v6.3 ~April/May 2015

- Multi-tone HB (unlimited # of tones)
- Small-signal noise analysis
- Auto-detection/application of MOR to linear subcircuits
- BSIM6 model
- MEXTRAM model

## Xyce v6.4 ~October/November 2016

- Adjoint transient parameter sensitivities
- New direct linear solver (BASKER)
  - serial version
  - threaded version

# Hybrid-Hybrid solver result: 19x Speedup for Challenging IC



Necessary for efficient simulation of a CMOS logic circuit:

1.6M total devices, ~2M unknowns

Xyce w/ KLU solver takes ~ **2 weeks**, w/ ShyLU solver takes ~ **1 day**

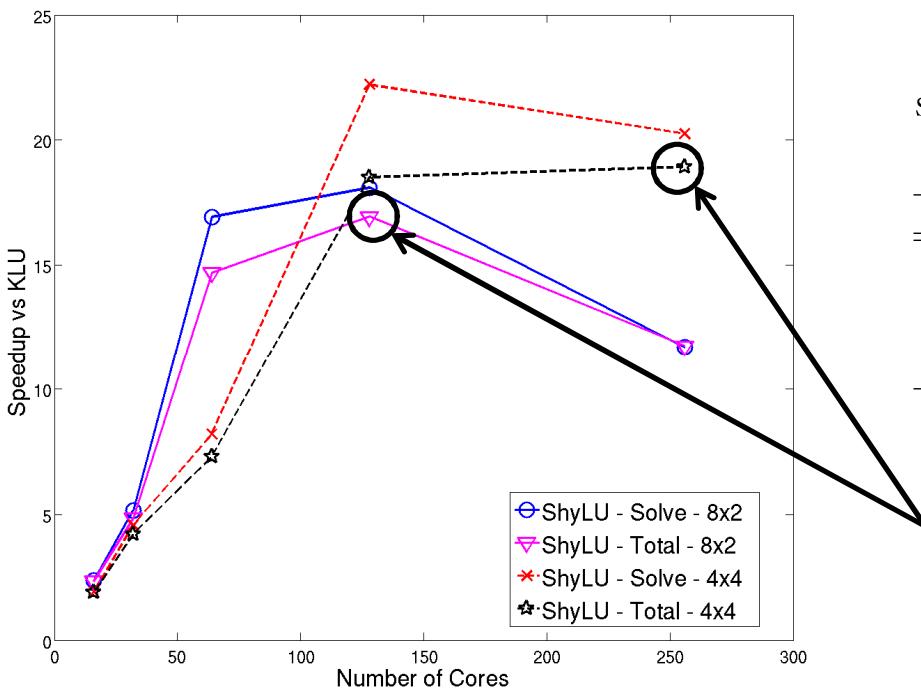


TABLE III  
COMPARISON OF TOTAL LINEAR SOLVE TIME (SEC.) OF VARIOUS SPARSE DIRECT SOLVERS FOR OUR TEST CIRCUITS; (-) INDICATES SIMULATION FAILED TO COMPLETE.

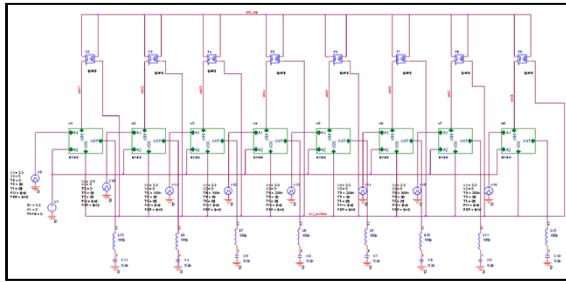
	ckt1	ckt2	ckt3	ckt4	ckt5
KLU	<b>80.8</b>	162.2	9381.3	7060.8	14222.7
PARDISO (16)	128.6	<b>105.3</b>	<b>715.0</b>	<b>6690.5</b>	-
SuperLU	-	10294.1	-	-	72176.8
SuperLU_Dist (16)	-	-	-	-	-

Strong scaling of Xyce's simulation time and ShyLU linear solve time for different configurations of MPI Tasks X Threads per node.

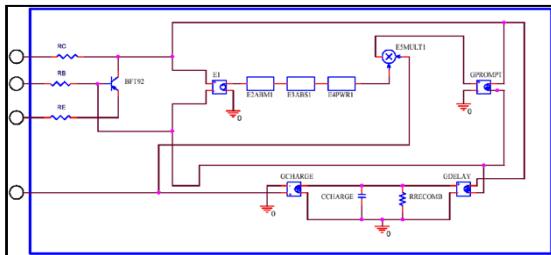
*A Hybrid Approach for Parallel Transistor-Level Full-Chip Circuit Simulation, H. K. Thornquist, S. Rajamanickam, VECPAR 2014*

# Transforming Design Capabilities

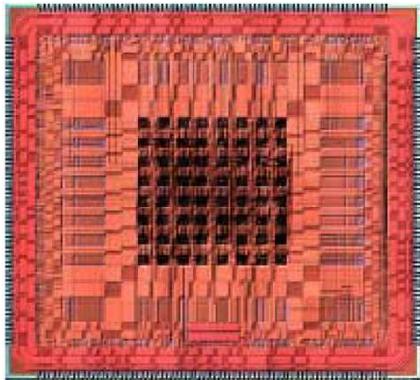
then ~ 2001  
 PSpice circuit model:  
 ~300 devices



rad. model:  
 empirical/behavioral

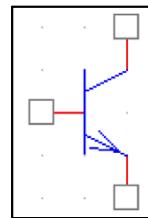
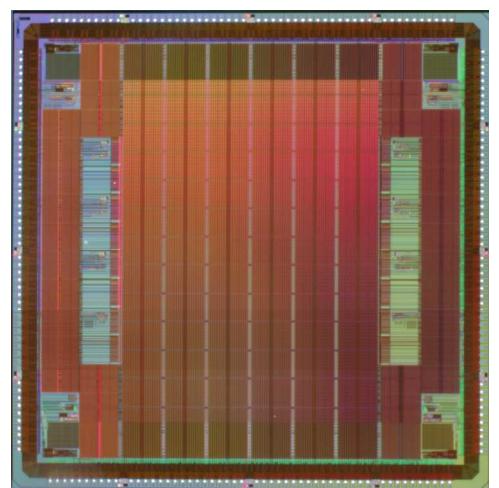


2006  
 Xyce circuit model:  
 300K+ devices



rad. model:  
 physics-based/built-in

201  
 Xyce circuit model:  
 40M+ devices



# Xyce Requirements

Xyce started in 1999. Requirements/goals:

- SPICE-compatible
- Massively parallel
- Include special Sandia-specific physics models
- Useful to both sophisticated and unsophisticated users
- Object-oriented, modular (C++)
- Extensible, lots of developers

Another way to put it:

“Be the same as SPICE, but also be much better”

*“I never want to see the “Time step too small” error again”* –  
Ken Marx, Sandia Electrical Analyst

# Why not use SPICE?

SPICE: the original open-source simulator

- de-facto standard

To be useful: modular, well-structured, flexible

- separated numerics, algorithms, models, I/O
- simple, clean interfaces
- short, easy to read, easy to modify

*i.e., not SPICE!*



# excerpt from dioload.c (SPICE3)

```

#define SENSDEBUG
  printf("vd = %.7e \n",vd);
#endif /* SENSDEBUG */
  goto next1;
}
if(ckt->CKTmode & MODEINITSMSIG) {
  vd= *(ckt->CKTstate0 + here->DIOvoltage);
} else if (ckt->CKTmode & MODEINITTRAN) {
  vd= *(ckt->CKTstate1 + here->DIOvoltage);
} else if ( (ckt->CKTmode & MODEINITJCT) &&
(ckt->CKTmode & MODETRANOP)
  && (ckt->CKTmode & MODEUIC) ) {
  vd=here->DIOinitCond;
} else if ( (ckt->CKTmode & MODEINITJCT) && here->DIOoff)
{
  vd=0;
} else if ( ckt->CKTmode & MODEINITJCT) {
  vd=here->DIOtVcrit;
} else if ( ckt->CKTmode & MODEINITFIX && here->DIOoff) {
  vd=0;
} else {
#ifndef PREDICTOR
  if (ckt->CKTmode & MODEINITPRED) {

```

Sensitivity analysis

AC analysis code

Transient analysis related code

code

# Why Modularity is Necessary

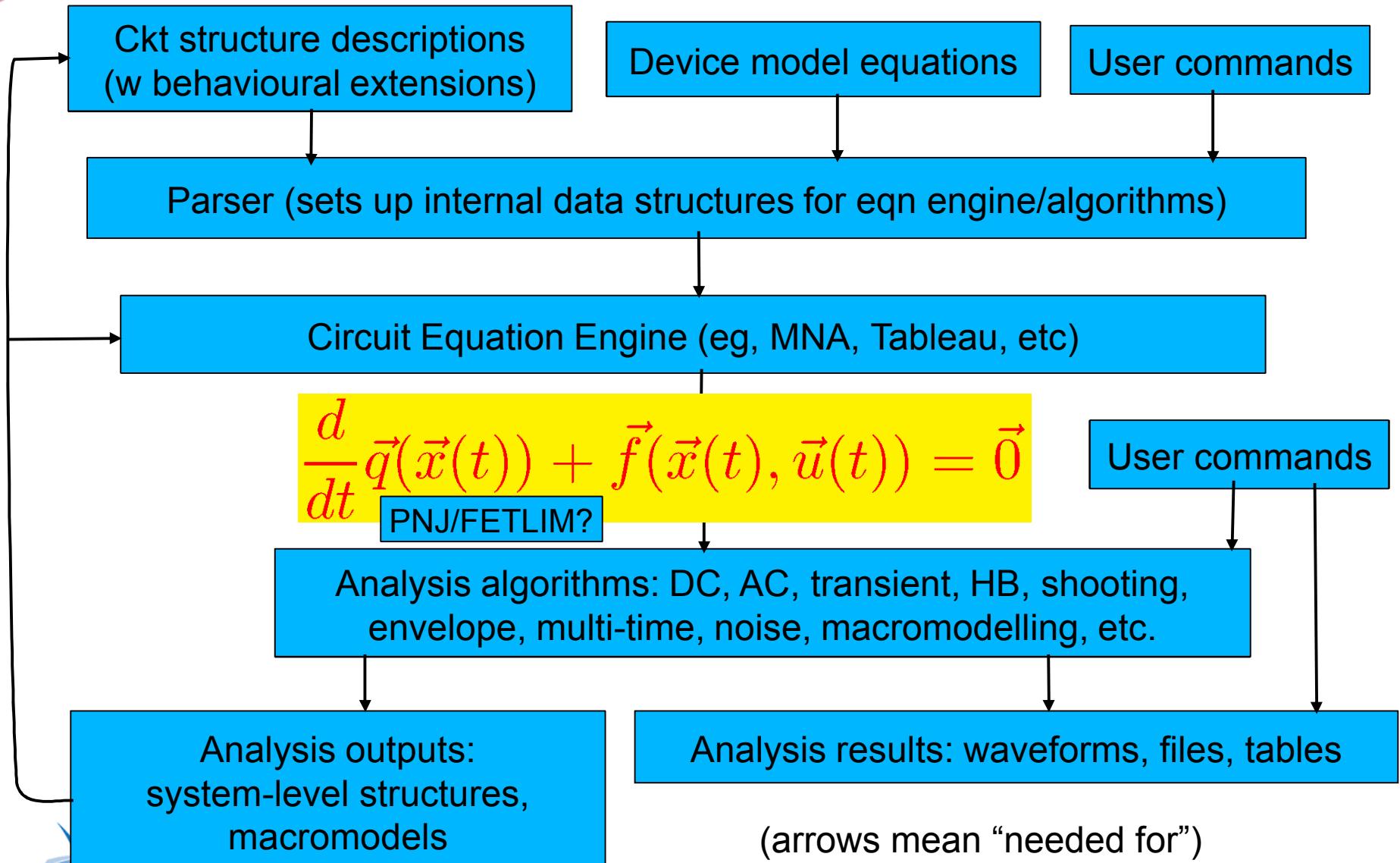
## Key to managing complexity

- limits what each developer needs to know about the system
  - the “API” encapsulates rest of the simulator
- Eg, to implement BSIM6.4, you don't need to know all about:
  - trapezoidal, Gear, etc. algorithms
  - shooting, harmonic balance, sensitivity, ...
  - Newton-Raphson, homotopy, ...

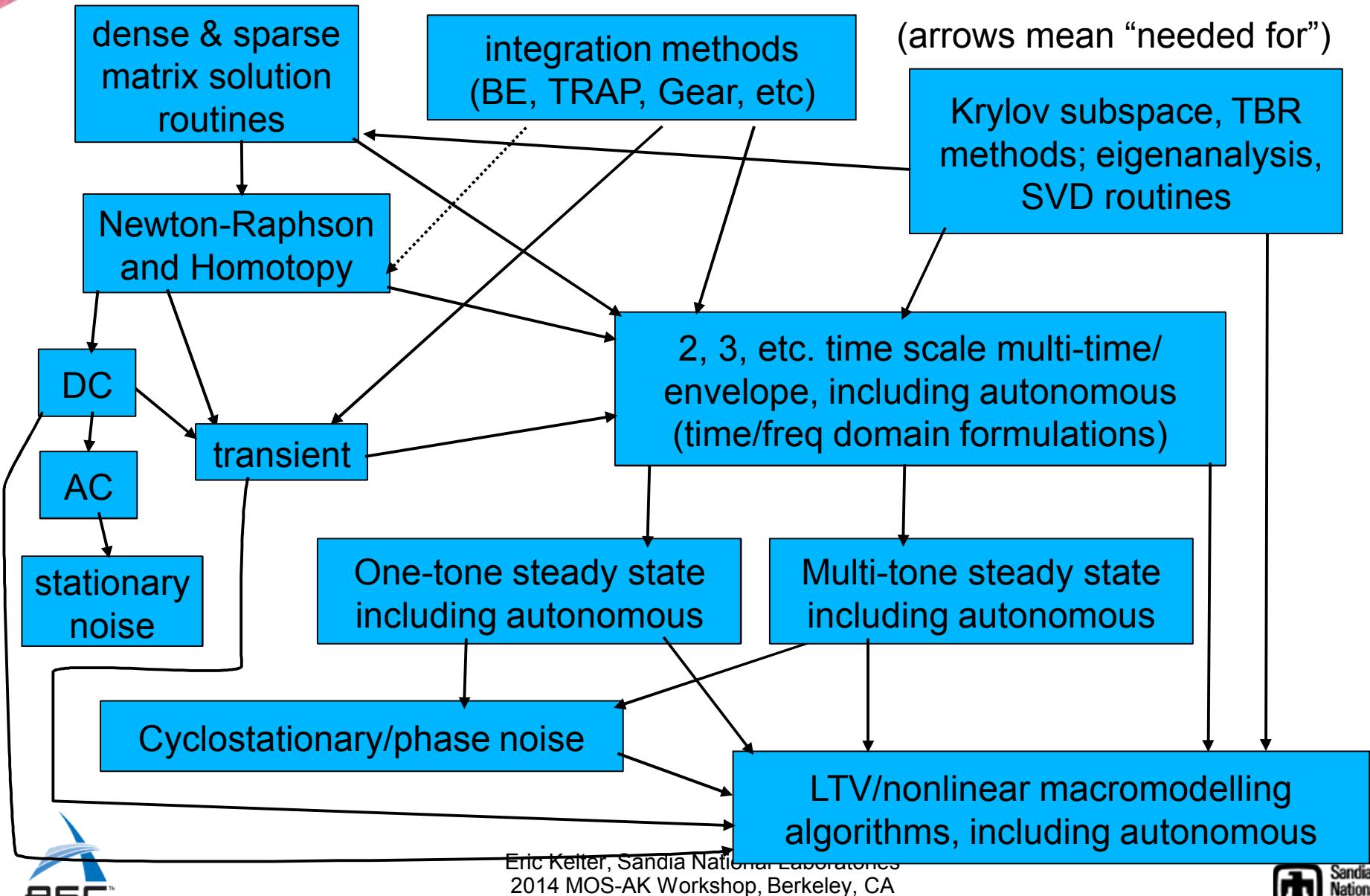
Errors and mistakes reduced



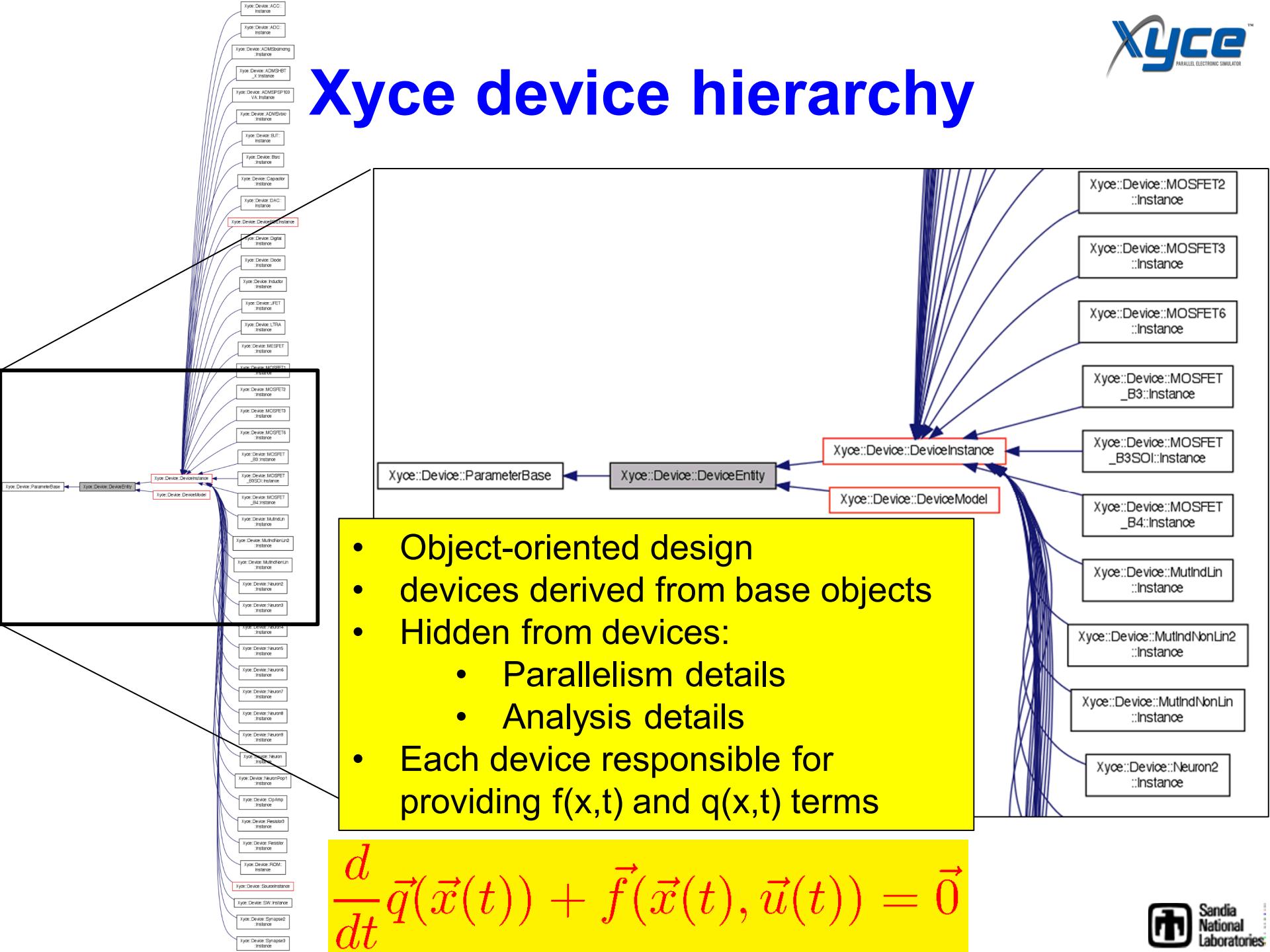
# Modular Organization: The Big Picture



# Analysis Algorithms: Structure



# Xyce device hierarchy



$$\frac{d}{dt} \vec{q}(\vec{x}(t)) + \vec{f}(\vec{x}(t), \vec{u}(t)) = \vec{0}$$

# Xyce Analysis classes

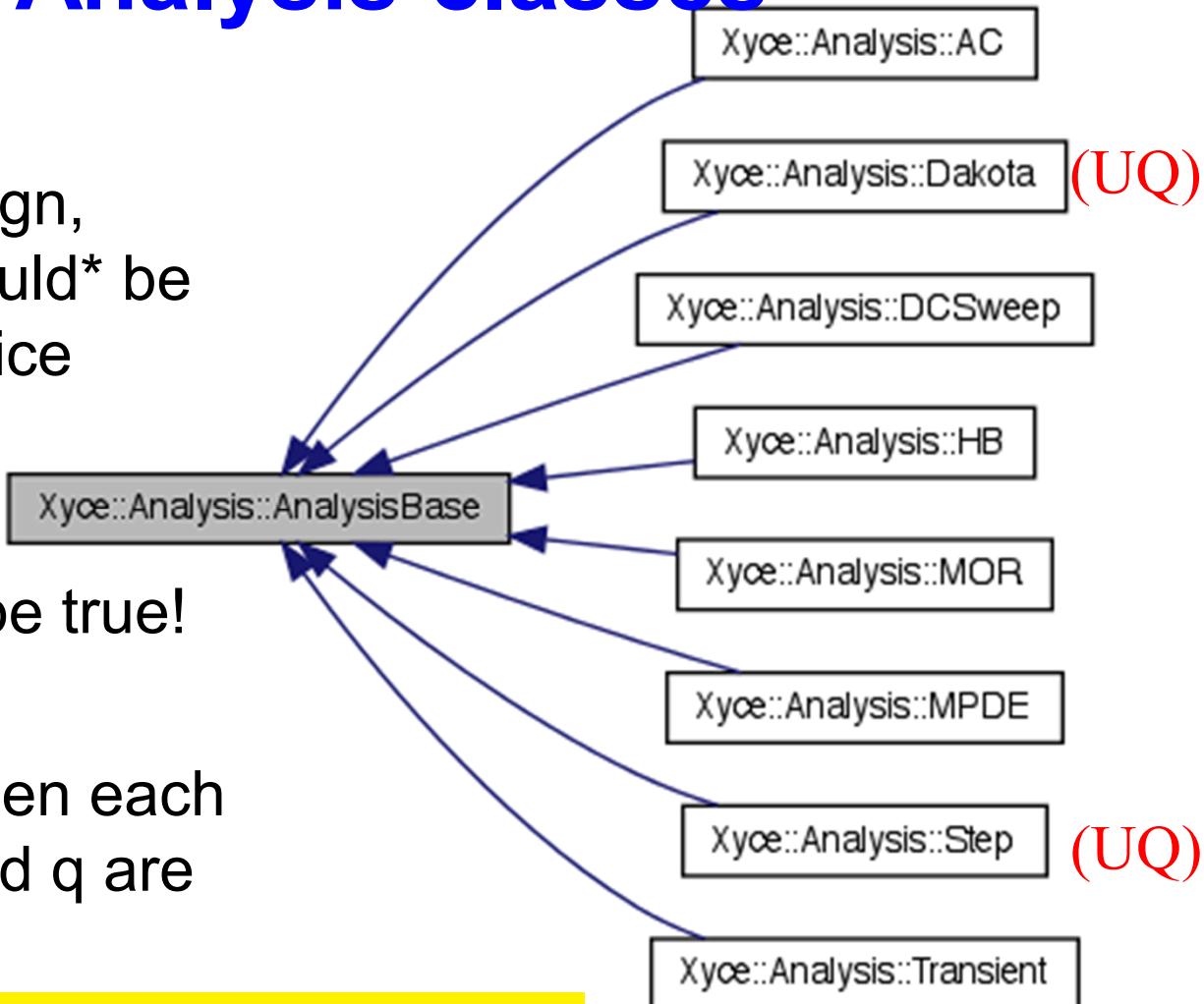
With proper code design,  
analysis types **\*should\*** be  
independent of device  
models

Reverse should also be true!

Main difference between each  
of these is how  $f$  and  $q$  are  
handled.

$$\frac{d}{dt} \vec{q}(\vec{x}(t)) + \vec{f}(\vec{x}(t), \vec{u}(t)) = \vec{0}$$

Eric Keiter, Sandia National Laboratories  
2014 MOS-AK Workshop, Berkeley, CA



# Harmonic Balance

- Expands state variables as a Fourier series; solves for the Fourier coefficients
  - Inensitive to widely spaced spectral components
  - Excellent for dealing with complex high-frequency passive (linear) components
  - Directly captures the large-signal quasi-periodic steady-state
- Standard set of circuit equations:

$$\text{Circuit DAE: } g(x(t)) + \frac{d}{dt} q(x(t)) = u(t)$$

Approximate solution with Fourier expansion:

$$x(t) = \sum_{h=-M}^{M} X_h \exp(j\omega_h t)$$


Frequency domain equation:

$$G(X) + \Omega Q(X) = U$$

- Block linear system:
  - N=original system size
  - M=number of Fourier terms
  - Total size = N\*M

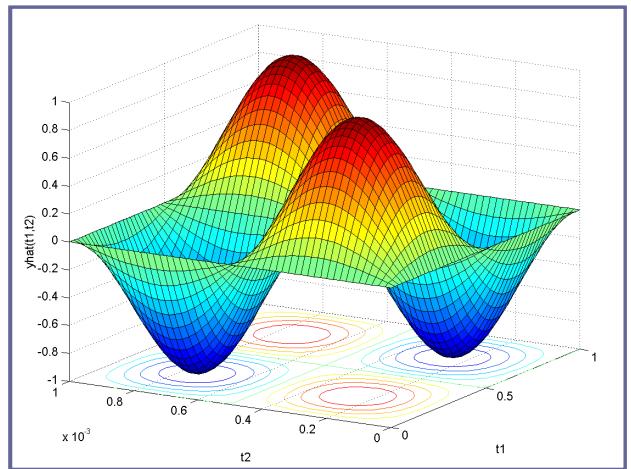
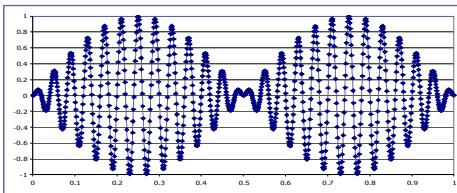
- New for Xyce v6.1: Parallel HB
- New for Xyce v6.3:
  - Multi-tone HB
  - Unlimited number of tones
  - Various stability enhancements

# MPDE Analysis

- Multi-time PDE (MPDE)
- Useful for problems with widely differing time scales
  - Slow envelope
  - Fast periodic
- Original DAE transformed into a PDE-like problem, where fast timescale solved all at once:

Original DAE  $\frac{d}{dt}q(x, t) + f(x, t) = b(t)$

MPDE  $\frac{\partial}{\partial t_1}q(x, t_1, t_2) + \frac{\partial}{\partial t_2}q(x, t_1, t_2) + f(x, t_1, t_2) = b(t)$



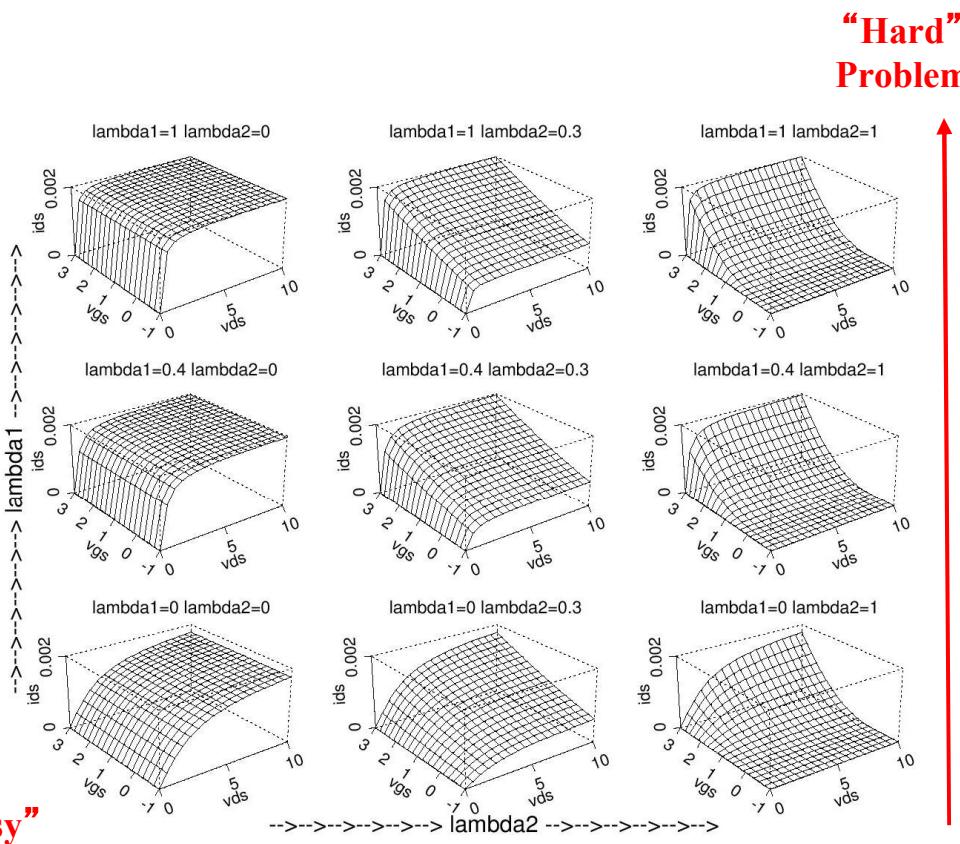
$$x(t) = \sin(2\pi t) \sin(2\pi 10^9 t)$$

$$\hat{x}(t_1, t_2) = \sin(2\pi t_1) \sin(2\pi 10^9 t_2)$$

$$x(t) = \hat{x}(t, t)$$

# DCOP Non-linear solution techniques

- DCOP solution can be difficult
  - No initial guess!
- Some circuits have multiple DC solns.
- Need to find stable solution.
- DCOP is initial condition to most analysis methods:
  - TRAN, AC, HB, etc
- Homotopy:
  - Relax stiffness
  - continuation params
  - Obtain solution via continuation
- Common examples (Xyce & SPICE)
  - Voltage source stepping
  - GMIN stepping
- Less common (Xyce):
  - Pseudo-transient
  - MOSFET homotopy (see right)



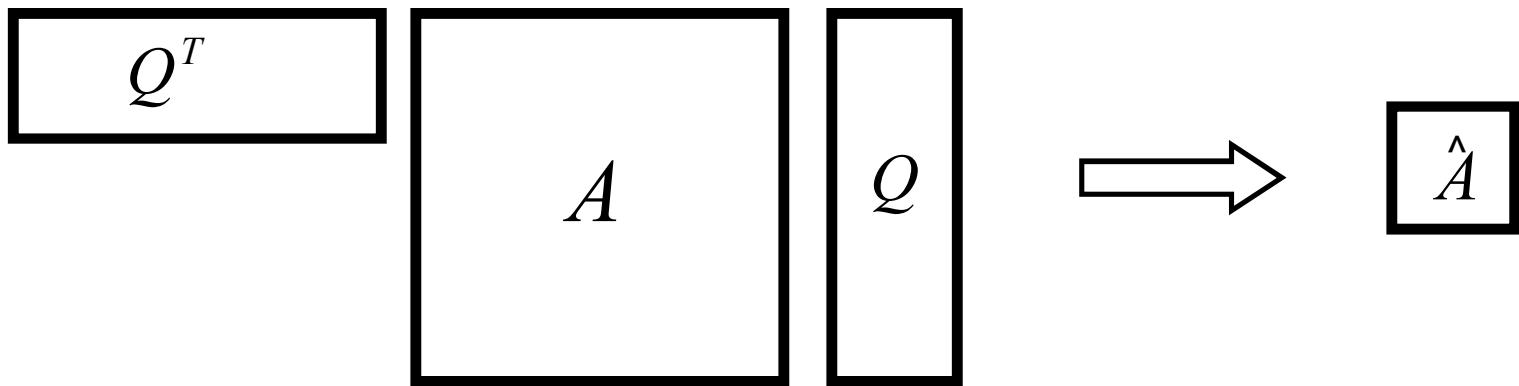
**“Easy”  
Problem**

## MOSFET continuation example

\* Figure 12 from, Jaijeet Roychowdhury and Robert Melville, “Delivering Global DC Convergence for Large Mixed-Signal Circuits via Homotopy/Continuation Methods” IEEE Trans. CAD of ICAS, vol 25, no 1, 2006.

# Model Order Reduction(MOR)

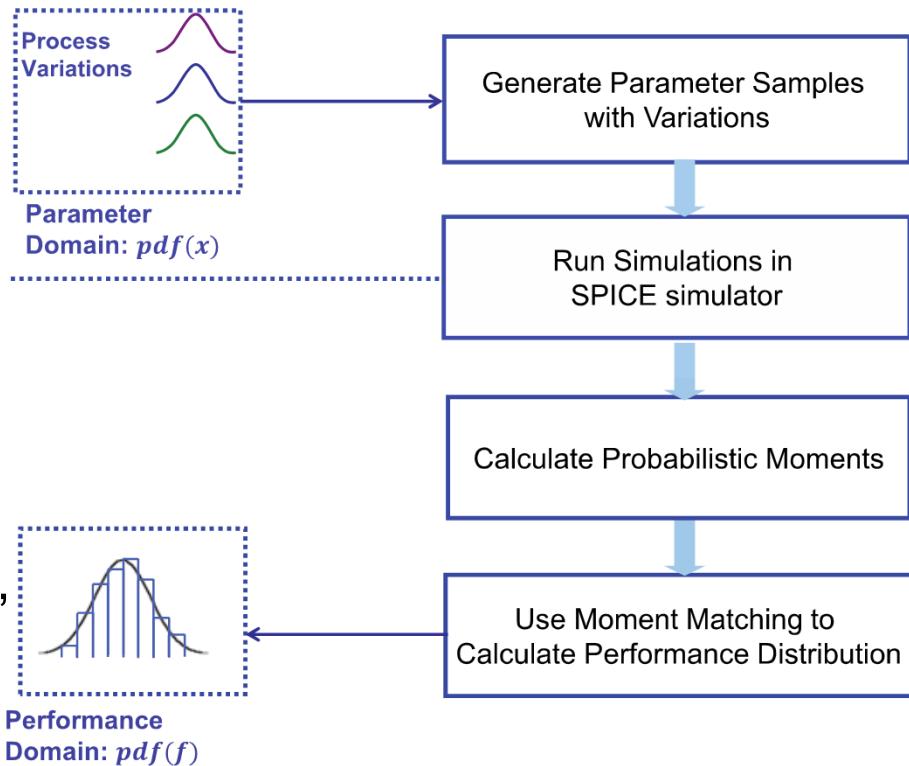
- Model reduction: in a rigorous manner, generate a system of the same form, but smaller dimension, with input-output behavior approximately the same.
- Very important for large linear networks, such as post-layout parasitics.
- Several projection methods are implemented in Xyce.
- Projection squashes matrices to smaller size



- Several MOR methods for linear systems implemented in Xyce
- New auto-detection code being implemented to automatically detect and reduce large linear subcircuits. (should be in Xyce v6.3)

# Uncertainty Quantification (UQ)

- Xyce has a number of capabilities to support uncertainty quantification (UQ)
- Mostly these come via the DAKOTA framework.
- General idea: given uncertainty on parameter inputs, how to estimate that on circuit outputs.
- Most simulators support “brute force” approaches based on sampling.
- Many much more sophisticated methods exist, including stochastic collocation methods, etc.





# Transient Direct Sensitivities



- New in Xyce v6.2
- Solves for  $dO/dp$ , where O=objective function, p=parameter.
- Can be applied to \*any\* device model parameter.
- In general, direct form solves

$$\frac{dO}{dp} = \frac{dO}{dx} \left[ \left( \frac{dF}{dx} \right)^{-1} \frac{dF}{dp} \right] + \frac{dO}{dp}$$

- For transient, the linear system being solved is specific to the integration method. For backward Euler, this gives:

$$\left[ \frac{1}{h} \frac{dq}{dx} + \frac{dj}{dx} \right] \frac{dx}{dp}_{n+1} = -\frac{1}{h} \left[ \frac{dq}{dp}_{n+1} - \frac{dq}{dp}_n \right] - \frac{dj}{dp} + \frac{db}{dp} + \frac{1}{h} \left[ \frac{dq}{dx} \right] \frac{dx}{dp}_n$$

- The  $dq/dp$ ,  $dj/dp$  and  $db/dp$  terms come from compact device models.
- Xyce will compute these automatically; method depends on device implementation
  - Hand-coded derivatives in simple devices (resistors, etc)
  - Automatic-differentiation in devices that have been instrumented for it
  - Finite difference derivatives if neither are available.
- ADMS Back end currently doesn't instrument for AD parameter derivatives, but this is planned for this year.

# Transient Direct Sensitivities

Example circuit.

Simple diode, driven by sinewave source.

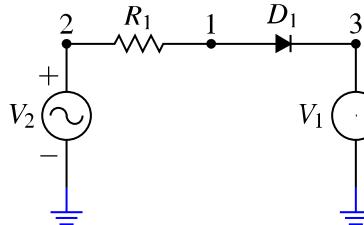


Figure 4.9. Transient Diode Circuit

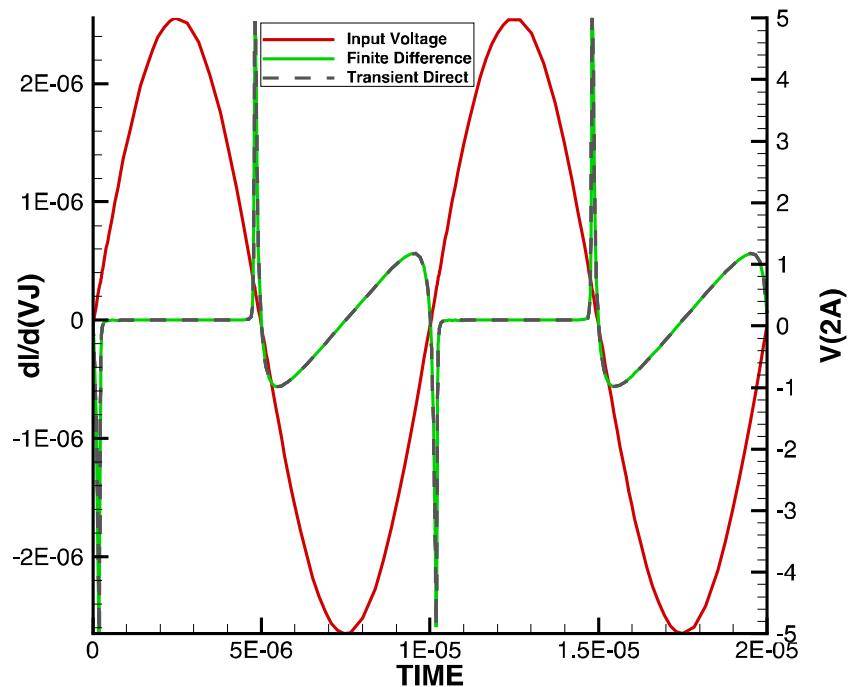
```
transient diode circuit sensitivity calculation
R 1 2 0.0001
V2 2 0.0 SIN(0 5 100K)
V1 3 0.0

D2 1 3 DZR
.MODEL DZR D( level=2 IS = 1E-14 RS = 10.8 N = 1 TT = 0
+ CJO = 1P VJ = 1 M = .5 EG = 1.11
+ XTI = 3 KF = 0 AF = 1 FC = .5
+ BV = 7.255 IBV = .001 tbv1 = 0.00013 tbv2 = -5e-8 )

.SENS objfunc={I(V1)}
+ param=DZR:VJ,DZR:CJO,DZR:EG,DZR:XTI,DZR:M,DZR:IS,DZR:RS,DZR:N

.options SENSITIVITY adjoint=0 direct=1

.options timeint method=gear
.TRAN 0 2e-5
.print TRAN format=tecplot v(2) I(V1)
.print SENS format=tecplot v(2)
.options device temp=25
.END
```



# What about adjoints?

Xyce supports adjoint parameter sensitivities for steady-state (DCOP)

$$\frac{dO}{dp} = \left[ \frac{dO}{dx} \left( \frac{dF}{dx} \right)^{-1} \right] \frac{dF}{dp} + \frac{dO}{dp}$$

$$\left[ \frac{dO}{dx} \left( \frac{dF}{dx} \right)^{-1} \right] = \left( \frac{dj}{dx} \right)^{-T} \frac{dO}{dx} \quad \longrightarrow \quad \left( \frac{dj}{dx} \right)^T \frac{dO}{dF} = \frac{dO}{dx}$$

$$\frac{dO}{dp} = \frac{dO}{dF} \cdot \left( \frac{dj}{dp} - \frac{db}{dp} \right)$$

Transient adjoints are planned for this year.

# ADMS-Xyce

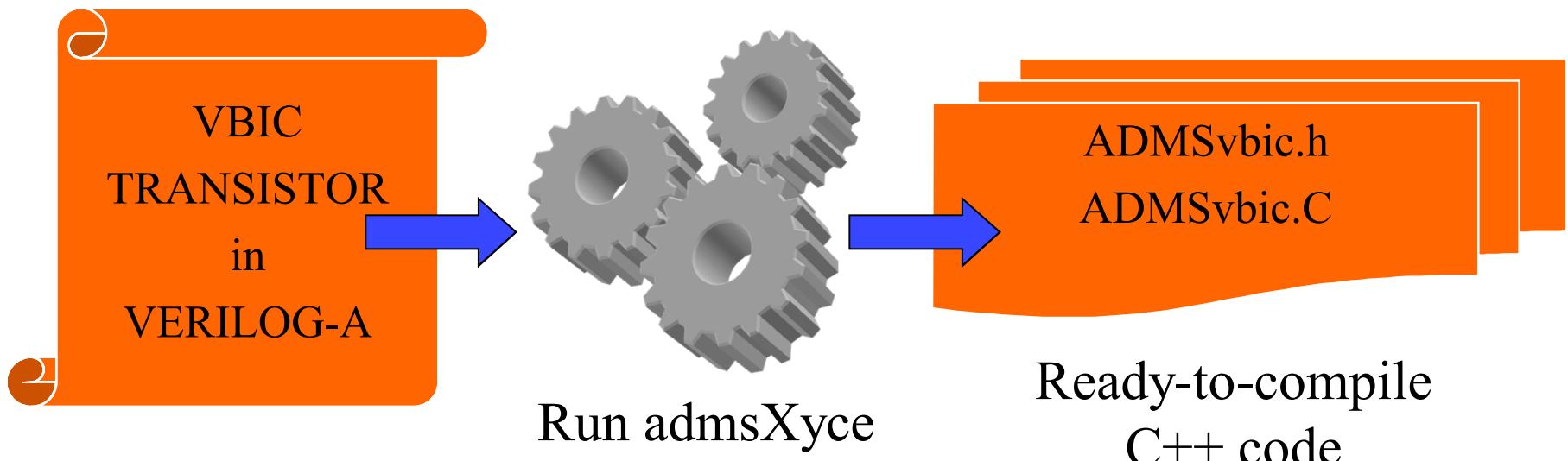
Verilog-A interface, via ADMS model compiler

- VBIC, Mextram, EKV, HiCUM, etc.

Verilog-A: industry standard format for new models

ADMS translates Verilog-A to compilable C/C++ code;

API automatically handles data structures, matrices, tedious details.



# ADMS-Xyce

ADMS-converted models in Xyce:

- VBIC (the first model we did)
- EKV (can't distribute thanks to NDA, so it's not in Xyce open-source)
- PSP (version 103)
- BSIM-CMG 107 (only one of the many variants)
- FBH HBT\_X version 2.1
- FBH HBT\_X version 2.3
  
- BSIM6 (development branch)
- MEXTRAM (pending)
- MVS Silicon virtual source model

# ADMS-Xyce

What is unique about Xyce's use of ADMS?

- Sacado AD library: By using Sacado, we are able to do away with an enormous amount of "admst" code for computing derivatives (compare with ng-spice's or qucs ADMS back-ends). It is difficult to overstate how much back-end work this saves.
- Have added "\$limit" support (simple mod to ADMS required to let "\$limit" be recognized as a legal function, but otherwise all the work is in the back-end)
- Had to add some "attributes" for parameters and modules to provide certain metadata (descriptions, units, "model" vs. "instance", level number, whether it's a Q, M, Y device, etc.).

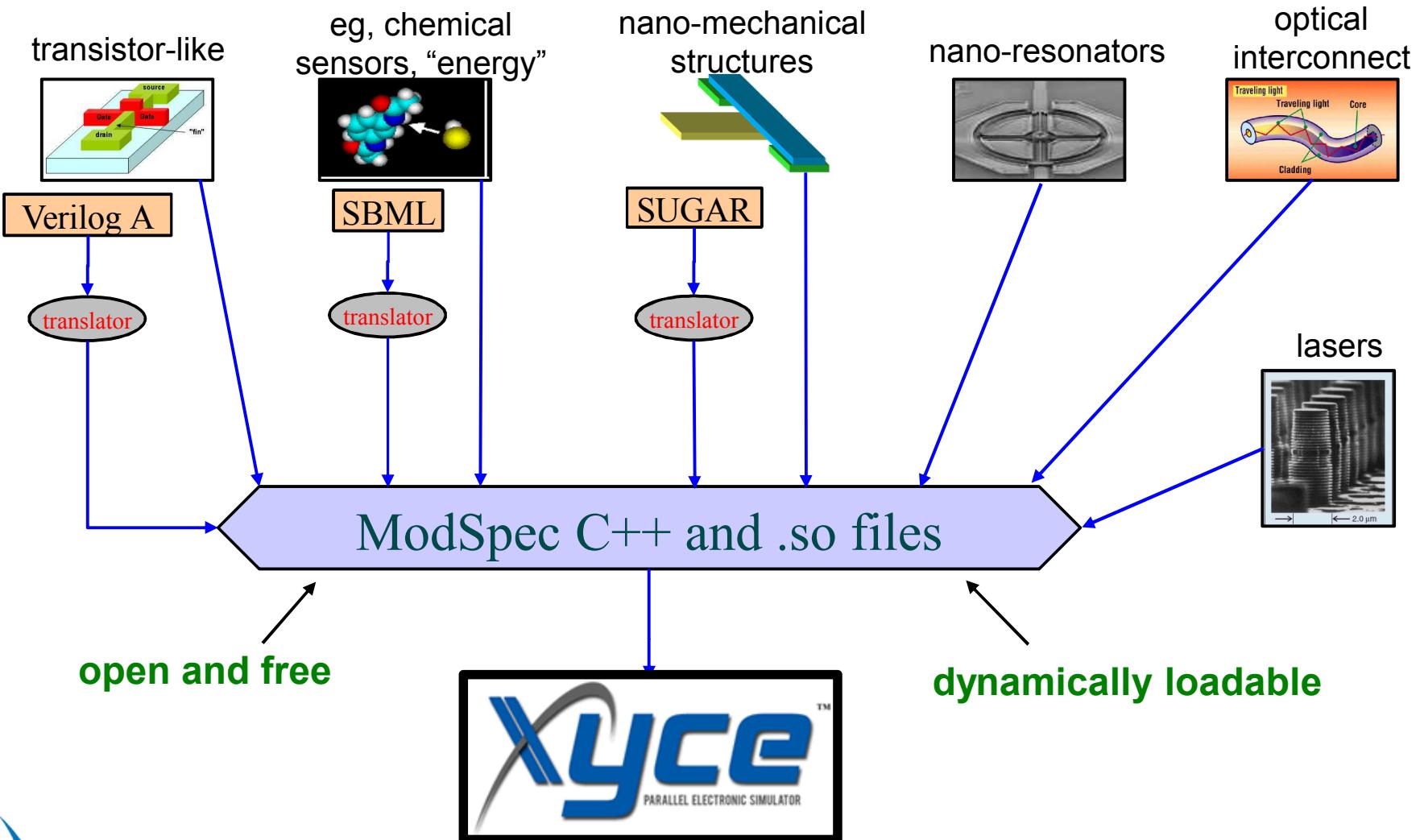
# ADMS Challenges

- ADMS back-ends are written in ADMST, a sort of XSLT superset.
- Xyce's linear system differs from SPICE so generating code for voltage limiting (\$limit) is not as simple as generating a function call.
- ADMS has NO support for current branches. It generates datastructures representing the Jacobian resulting when all variables are nodal voltages, but you must do all the work yourself if you throw a branch current in the mix.
- Node collapse: since this has to happen at the time the device is instantiated (rather than the time its equations are evaluated), it is necessary to generate (separately from the rest of the evaluation) the parts of code needed to compute all the variables required to determine whether or not to collapse.
- Need to extend ADMS back-end to produce parameter sensitivities with Sacado.
- Dynamic linking: this has been done, but is still immature.

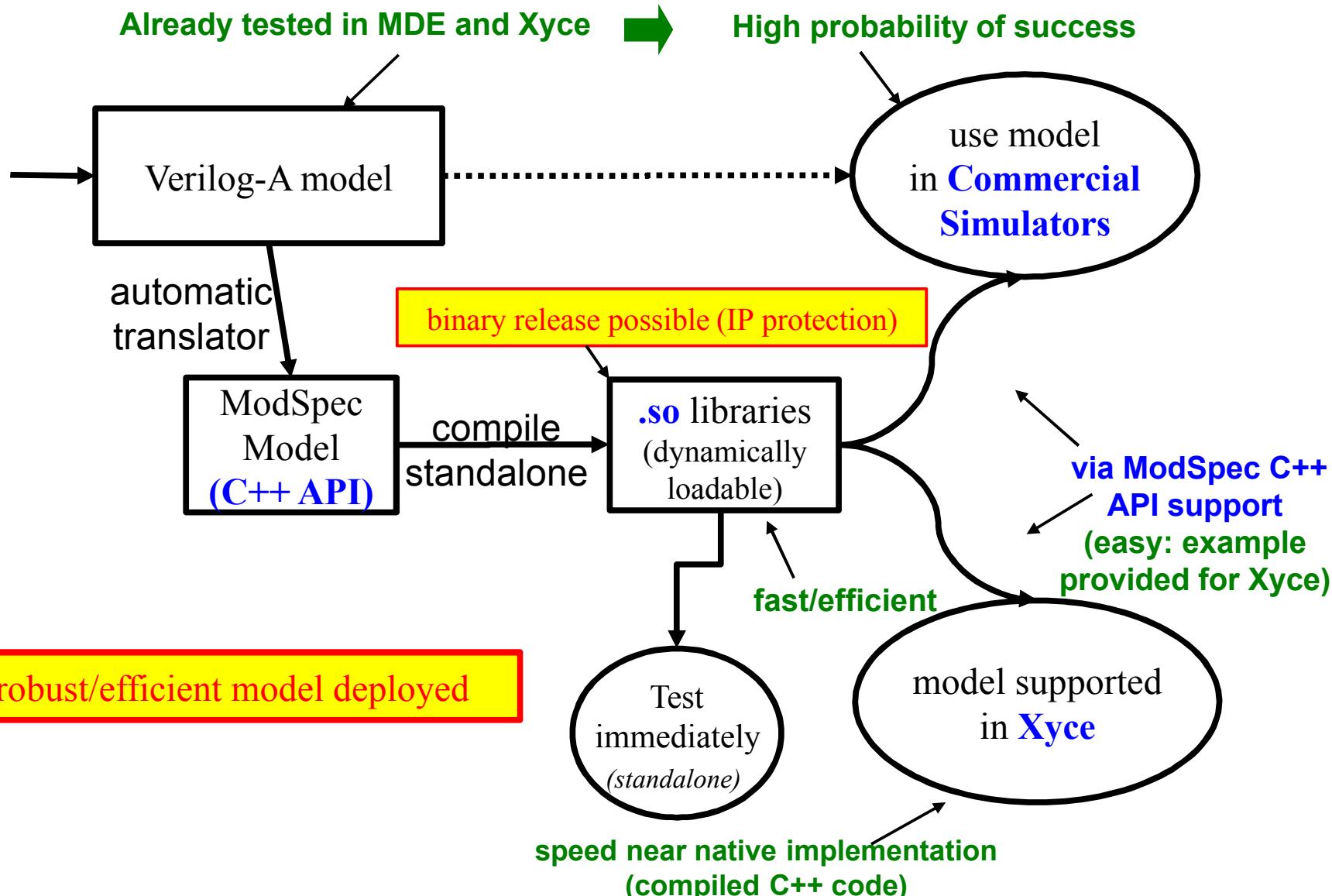
# ADMS Challenges

- not well suited for multi-physics domains
  - even for electrical domain, doesn't support structures like internal current unknowns
- no longer open-source
  - ADMS's website: “*Noovela Consulting offers - at interesting rate - support to implement your compact models into spice simulators*”
  - future support uncertain
- written in XSLT
  - difficult to work with or maintain
  - e.g. took 6-7 years by Tom Russo (working off and on on it) even with ADMS already existing

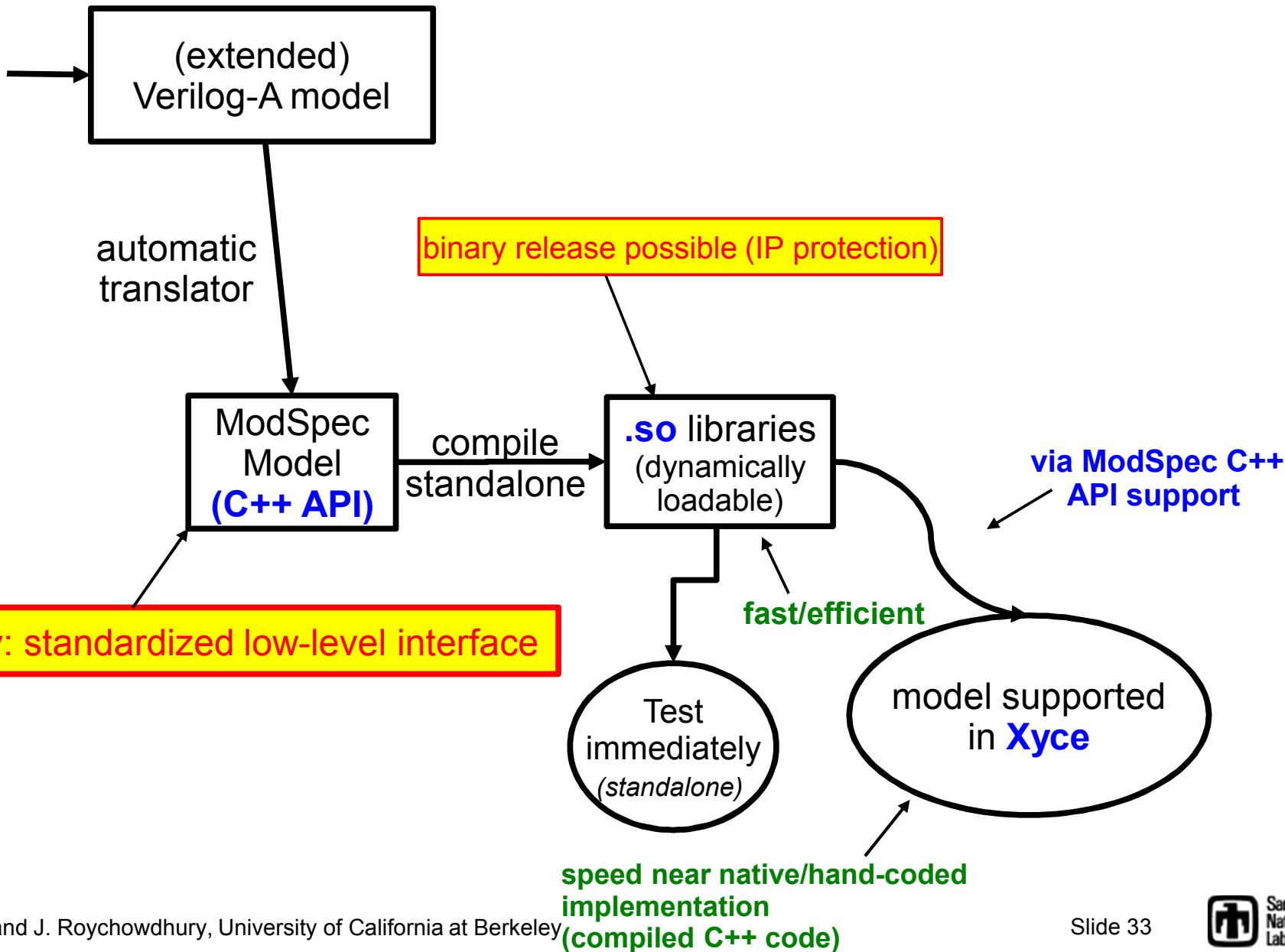
# Multi-physics support in Xyce through ModSpec



# Model Development: Verilog-A → ModSpec → Xyce



# Using ModSpec in Xyce



# Xyce Summary

- Mature code; under development for 14 years
  - Large regression test suite
  - Regular, formal code releases
- Under active development
- Open source GPL v3.
- Modular object-oriented design
  - DAE form:  $\frac{d}{dt}q(x, t) + f(x, t) = b(t)$
  - Quick, independent development of models and algorithms
- Model support
  - Legacy spice models
  - Non-electrical: neuron, reaction networks
  - CMC models
  - ADMS integration
  - Mod-Spec integration

# Acknowledgements

Xyce team



[xyce.sandia.gov](http://xyce.sandia.gov)

- Scott Hutchinson
- Tom Russo
- Heidi Thornquist
- Jason Verley
- Rich Schiek
- Ting Mei
- Dave Baur
- Sivasankaran Rajamanickam

Trilinos team

[trilinos.sandia.gov](http://trilinos.sandia.gov)



Dakota team

[dakota.sandia.gov](http://dakota.sandia.gov)



# Thanks!

# Publications / Presentations

## Publications

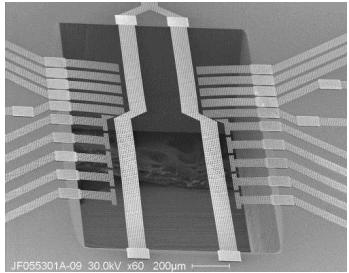
- *"A Hybrid Approach for Parallel Transistor-Level Full-Chip Circuit Simulation"*, VECPAR 2014
- *"Electrical Modeling and Simulation for Stockpile Stewardship"*, ACM XRDS, 2013
- *"ShyLU: A Hybrid-Hybrid Solver for Multicore Platforms"*, IPDPS 2012
- *"Parallel Transistor-Level Circuit Simulation"*, Simulation and Verification of Electronic and Biological Systems, Springer, 2011
- *"A Parallel Preconditioning Strategy for Efficient Transistor-Level Circuit Simulation"*, ICCAD 2009

## Presentations

- *"Sparse Matrix Techniques for Next-Generation Parallel Transistor-Level Circuit Simulation"*  
*Heidi K. Thornquist, Parallel Matrix Algorithms and Applications 2012*
- *"Partitioning for Hybrid Solvers: ShyLU and HIPS"*  
*Erik G. Boman, Siva Rajamanickam, and Jeremie Gaidamour, Copper Mtn. 2012*
- *"Efficient Preconditioners for Large-Scale Parallel Circuit Simulation"*  
*Heidi K. Thornquist, SIAM Computational Science & Engineering 2011*
- *"Advances in Parallel Transistor-Level Circuit Simulation"*  
*Heidi K. Thornquist, Scientific Computing in Electrical Engineering 2010*
- *"Large Scale Parallel Circuit Simulation"*  
*Heidi Thornquist and Eric Keiter, Circuit and Multi-Domain Simulation Workshop, ICCAD 2009*

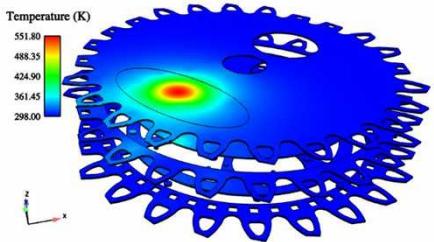


# SNL has six core technical capabilities

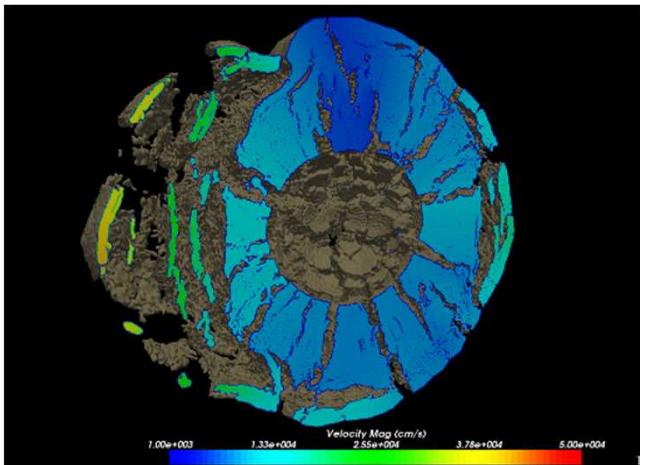


Microelectronics  
and Photonics

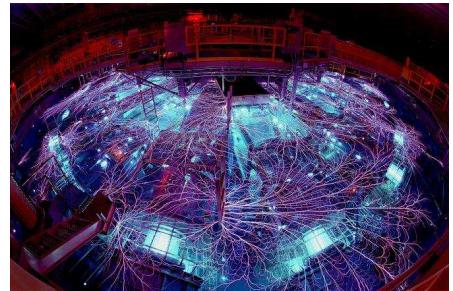
Bare Si; d-grain-0.5um



Engineering Sciences

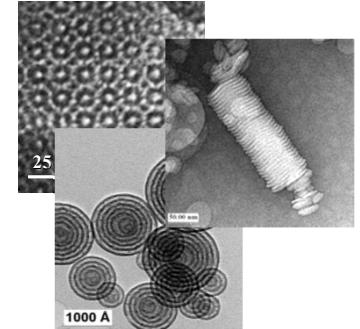


## Computational & Informational Sciences

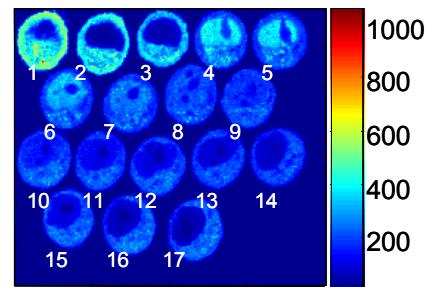


### Pulsed Power

Eric Keiter, Sandia National Laboratories  
2014 NEEDS Workshop, Berkeley, CA



Materials Science &  
Technology



Bioscience

# CIS has a rich history in the development and maturation of high performance computing hardware and software technology



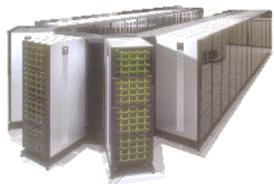
CM-2



nCUBE-2



iPSC-860



Paragon



ASCI Red



Cplant



Red Storm



Gordon Bell Prize

 R&D 100  
 Parallel Software

 Patent  
 Meshing

 R&D 100  
 Dense Solvers

Gordon Bell Prize

 R&D 100  
 Allocator

Karp Challenge

Gordon Bell Prize

 R&D 100  
 Signal Processing

 SC96 Gold Medal  
 Networking

 Mannheim  
 SuParCup

Xyce

 Patent  
 Parallel Software

 R&D 100  
 Meshing

 World Record  
 281 GFlops

 R&D 100  
 Aztec

 Patent  
 Data Mining

 R&D 100  
 3D-Touch

 World Record  
 143 GFlops

 Patent  
 Paving

 R&D 100  
 Salvo

 Fernbach  
 Award

 Patent  
 Decomposition
