Signal Integrity Issues in High-Speed Wireline Links: Analysis and Integrated System Solutions

Thesis by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

California Institute of Technology

Pasadena, California

2005

(Defended July 25, 2005)
To

Yadollah Analui and Ashraf Kamali

for their unconditional love.
Acknowledgements

This is perhaps my most favorite part of this thesis. The acknowledgement section is usually the last section that is written but is often the first section that is read! I enjoy reading the acknowledgments section because it is a short documentary that takes you behind the scenes. It is real. You feel the extreme joy and satisfaction of the author for his achievement, flowing from his words. You witness his passion of sharing his feeling with everyone. A passion that is making him scream loudly in the silence of the library where I am reading his thesis: THANK YOU to all that made it happen! And the voice fades away but the satisfaction of learning, the bliss of friendship, and the pleasure of accomplishment all remain for him in his personal treasure.

Here are the people to whom I want to express my deepest gratitude for making it happen and for what they have contributed to my treasure. I am extremely grateful for the dedication of their big brains and even bigger hearts to my work and my life.

For technical contributions to this work:

First and foremost, I am truly indebted to Prof. Ali Hajimiri. He granted me the privilege to work in his research group at Caltech and guided me through all the ups and downs of my Ph.D. with his special enthusiasm like that of a young coach who is full of energy and knows the game very well. What he taught me goes well beyond his detailed technical feedback about the research work in this dissertation. From him, I learned to be a responsible engineer and a critical scientist as well as learned to write succinctly! I am also grateful for all his advice and help in the transition process to my next career. In short, I am proud to be his student and wish that my five years at Caltech are only the beginning of a life-long relationship with him.
I was lucky to overlap three years with Jim Buckwalter in Ali’s group. Jim’s excitement and energy for doing research was always a motivation for me. He was my collaborator in the data-dependent jitter work. I thank him for the technical discussions and his various contributions to that work. Dr. Alexander Rylyakov was my mentor during my several visits to the IBM T. J. Watson Research Center. I thank him for his tireless supervision in the eye-opening monitor work and contributions to all the stages of the design, layout, and testing with his extreme patience and insightful comments. Finally, I am very grateful to Prof. Hossein Hashemi for his own thrilling way of criticizing my research work. We had several discussions in the office, at lunch, in the gym, at Echo Mountain while hiking, and even at home when cooking! His solid reasoning always made me think twice and, admittedly, he was often right!

I am grateful to Profs. David Rutledge and Shuki Bruck for their kind and helpful advice during my research work at Caltech and while transitioning to my next career. Dave is a true academician and has created a research lab truly devoted to the advancement of microwave engineering. I benefited a lot from interacting with his group and using his lab facilities. Prof. Bruck initiated a collaborative project with Caltech’s High-Speed Integrated Circuit Group (Hajimiri’s group) that I enjoyed being a part of. I also thank Prof. Bruck for his encouragement and for transferring his passion and positive attitude to me in all of our conversations.

I acknowledge Profs. David Rutledge, Shuki Bruck, Sandy Weinreb, and Bob McEliece for dedicating their time to be on my oral candidacy committee and for providing their technical comments about the progress of my research work. I also acknowledge Profs. David Rutledge, Shuki Bruck, Sandy Weinreb, and Yu-Chong Tai for kindly accepting to serve on my Ph.D. defense committee and reading this thesis.

Many friends and colleagues have contributed to this work through their technical feedback, reading my paper manuscripts, helping with layout and measurements, and CAD technical support. I thank them all. Particularly, I am indebted to Abbas Komijani,
Arun Natarajan, Prof. Donhee Ham, Dr. Ichiro Aoki, Prof. Hui Wu, Dr. Scott Kee, Sam Mandegaran, Amir Faraji Dana, Dr. Masoud Sharif, Ali Vakili, Niklas Wade Falk, Ann Shen, Dr. Saleem Mukhtar, Maryam Ow rang, Dr. Lawrence Cheuang, Dr. Jose Tierno, Dr. Thomas Zwick, Dr. Sergey Rylov, Dr. Mounir Meghelli, Dr. Daniel Friedman, Dr. Sudhir Gowda, Dr. Michael Beakes, Dr. Jeremy Schaub, Dr. David Sanderson, Naveed Near-Ansari, Dr. Jean-Olivier Plouchart, Dr. Noah Zamdmer, Dr. Yue Tan, and numerous others.

For financial support of this work:

I appreciate the financial assistance of the sponsors of my research, particularly the Lee Center for Advanced Networking at Caltech and the National Science Foundation (NSF). I acknowledge Drs. Mehmet Soyuer, Modest Oprysko, and Dan Friedman for facilitating my visit to the IBM T. J. Watson Research Center, Yorktown Heights, NY, as an intern. My visit to IBM resulted in the eye-opening monitor work, which was one of the most exciting parts of my research. In addition, I gained a lot of experience and found many friends at IBM.

I thank IBM Microelectronics and Jazz Semiconductor for fabricating my hardware prototypes. In particular, I am grateful to Dr. Marco Racanelli, Dr. Arjun Karroy, and Dr. Scott Stetson from Jazz Semiconductor for their consistent support. I acknowledge Analog Devices and especially Dr. Larry DeVito for the outstanding student designer award in my third year. Finally, I thank Agilent for providing some of the test equipment pieces for my measurements.

For making my Caltech years memorable:

My Caltech years were really fun! I am grateful for the luxury of interacting with many unique individuals who made the happy story of my life at Caltech. I sincerely thank them all. Particularly, I thank Donhee, my office-mate, who spent a lot of time showing me around LA and teaching, with his gifted excitement, a lot about classical music. I hope we get together once in a while to have “soltani.” I thank Sam, my other office-mate,
whose quest for knowing more has strengthened my sense of curiosity. He has taught me numerous scientific facts that I would otherwise pass by without even noticing. He was also the first person to scientifically introduce me to the theory of evolution, one of the most profound theories of all time, in my opinion. I thank Abbas, with whom I started the five-year journey at Caltech, for his always unique perspective and insightful comments that made me wonder “why didn’t I think as simply as that?” I also thank him for his happy, energetic heart that often made him break the unwritten rules of being an adult and reminded me of the first few pages of my all-time favorite book, “The Little Prince.” I thank Ehsan, Arash Y., Matthieu, Jeremy, Fati, Nikoo, Maryam, Maziar-Lisa, Arun, Jim Bucky, Amir S., Farshad, Baharak, Roberto, Xiang, Xiaofeng, Yujin, Taka, Dai, Chris, Shervin, Alireza, Michella, Carol, Michelle, Heather Jackson, Linda, Veronica, Parandeh, Jim Endrizzi, Tess, Dale, Prof. McGill, Tara, Erni, Chandler’s pizza staff, Ampex, Nodal, and Mr. and Mrs. Bentley for being a part of my life at Caltech. Finally, I want to express my deep gratitude to Lisa Cowan and Prof. Shuki Bruck. Conversations with them were always exceptionally delightful and charming, and I am very thankful to them for that.

For their influential role in my life:

Everyone has his own list of folks whose influences on his life are hard to express in words. It is also hard, if not impossible, to pay them back for what they contributed to his life. However, they are usually the ones who don’t expect to be paid back. Here is my list:

Ali H., for being a great advisor and friend and for teaching me fairness and balance. Mehrdad Sharif-Bakhtiar, for teaching me electronics and living by principles. Hossein, for teaching me to ask questions, for teaching me to listen to my honest self more often, for increasing my confidence, for introducing me to the fun side of sport, and for being a true brother. Amir-Helia as a single entity, for bringing Maryam to my life and for being the little prince and princess around whom I feel I am the adult kid I always want to be. In their presence, I can sit for hours, stare at their smiles, and take pleasure. Daei Mehdi, for his advice that typically covers all the aspects of all the issues with any probability larger
than zero. Maman Maria, the coolest mother-in-law ever, for her regular calls from her office to see how I am doing and for having a heart that enjoys every moment of her life; after all she is my wife’s mom! Bita, Behrad, and Behdad, for their love and support while being thousands of miles away. Maryam, my angel, my other half, my lovely wife, for giving me courage, for being full of surprises, for making our life a wonderland, and for tolerating me when I said: “Honey! I am a little busy this weekend” for many weekends. I believe she shares my extreme thankfulness for all who have made our life a dream-come-true. Finally, my mom and dad, for supporting me unconditionally. Since high school, I have concentrated all my efforts on making them proud, and I believe this has led me to all my successes. I humbly bow to them and dedicate this thesis to them as a little sign of appreciation for all their sacrifices.
Abstract

This work focuses on the basic signal integrity issues of high-speed wireline links. It bridges the gap between optimum system design and circuit design for such links by: (1) understanding the effects of the system parameters on the bit error rate (BER), (2) introducing circuit architectures for the realization of systems that minimize the BER, and (3) demonstrating integrated circuit prototypes that verify the solutions.

First, we develop a theory that analytically relates the data link BER to the system characteristics, e.g., the channel response, the pre-amplifier bandwidth, and the transmitter clock jitter. We generate the BER contours to find the optimum receiver bandwidth as well as the optimum sampling point and its associated timing margin. We also develop the theory of the data-dependent jitter (DDJ), which is a significant component of the timing jitter in high-speed links. We provide an analytical distribution function for the DDJ of an arbitrary linear time-invariant system and include the impact of the DDJ on the BER.

Second, we propose a bandwidth enhancement method for wideband amplifiers. This is useful for the realization of high-speed links in technologies that suffer from large parasitic components. The method leverages two-port broadband matching to enable amplifier stages to achieve their maximum gain-bandwidth product. We demonstrate a 10Gb/s CMOS 0.18μm amplifier with this technique that has 2.4 times the bandwidth improvement over a design that does not apply the technique.

Third, we develop an eye-opening monitor (EOM) that enables full integration of adaptive equalizers. The EOM evaluates the signal eye diagram quality and reports a quantitative measure, which is correlated to the signal integrity. We demonstrate a prototype in 0.13μm standard CMOS that operates up to 12.5Gb/s and has 68dB error dynamic range.
Finally, we introduce an instantaneous clockless demultiplexer for burst-mode communication applications. We propose a clockless finite state machine that recovers and demultiplexes the received burst of data instantaneously. The architecture consists of a combinational logic structure and a bit-period-delayed feedback loop. We demonstrate a 1:2 clockless demultiplexer based on this concept in SiGe BiCMOS technology that operates at 7.5Gb/s.
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