Cu Seed Layers: Do It Right By Design (Why Repair?)

Uri Cohen, Ph.D., UC Consulting

4147 Dake Avenue Palo Alto, CA 94306

Tel/Fax: (650)494-0268

uricohen@pacbell.net

Seed Layers: What Do We Need?

- Excellent continuous sidewalls coverage, yet thin enough inside openings to avoid pinching-off or sealing the features
- Sufficient thickness on the field (at least 1,000Å), for adequate surface conduction, to minimize IR drop ("Terminal Effect")
- Excellent adhesion to the barrier
- High throughput deposition equipment
- Consistent and highly reliable process

Problems with Cu Seed Layers

EE TIMES

Telcos' future: automation up, staffing down

Next-gen processes stare into the void

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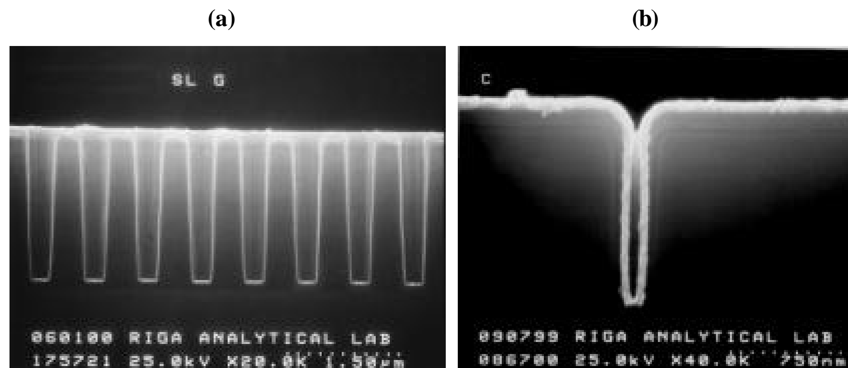
Problems With Cu Seed Layers

(a) **(b)**



Conventional Cu seed layers. (a) PVD seed layer; combined (Cu plus barrier): ~2,000Å on field and ≤100Å on lower sidewalls; vias: ~0.25µm wide; 1.90µm deep; AR ~ 7.6:1. (b) CVD seed layer; combined (Cu plus barrier): ~450Å on field and sidewalls; trenches: ~0.13µm wide; 1.4µm deep; AR ~ 10.8:1

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Problems with Cu Seed Layers

➢ **PVD Cu S.L. Þ Low Reliability/Yields**

» Dual Damascene features have nooks and crevices

» Line of sight PVD deposition results in inadequate sidewall (or step) coverage, leading to filling voids.

» Patchy, discontinued Cu S.L. exposes both barrier and Cu S.L. to electrolyte, resulting in accelerated corrosion of the Cu S.L. Interfacial S.L./Barrier stress also accelerates Cu S.L. corrosion.

» Microvoids coalesce (under thermal and electrical stresses) to larger voids, resulting in void pulls (cf. EE Times of August 26, 2002).

Problems with Cu Seed Layers (continued)

➢ **Conformal (CVD or Electroless) Cu S.L.**

» Too thick on sidewalls yet too thin on field

» Slow deposition results in low throughput

» Poor adhesion/nucleation on barrier layer

» Poor uniformity and rough deposited surface

» High impurities and resistivity levels

» Electroless requires additional equipment tool

Problems with Cu Seed Layers (continued)

- **Electroless "Repair" (on PVD) S.L.[7-10]**
  - Extremely hard to control process: Inconsistent initiation and deposition rate due to bath aging
  - Requires relatively thick (≥ 300-500Å) Cu on the sidewalls, thereby limited to ≥ 0.13μm features
  - Too thick on sidewalls yet too thin on the field
  - High level of impurities and resistivity of seed
  - Slow deposition results in low throughput
  - Requires additional equipment tool

Advantages of Conformal/Non-Conformal Multiple Cu Seed Layers[1-6, 11]

- Excellent, uniform bottom and sidewalls coverage
- High yields and reliability (cf. C. H. Lee et al.[5] and C. Block et al.[6])
- Adequate field thickness: 1,000-2,000Å
- High deposition throughput: ~ 60 WPH
  - Need only about 100-300Å of conformal (CVD or ALCVD) Cu, similar to CVD barrier. Overall deposition throughput similar to current PVD

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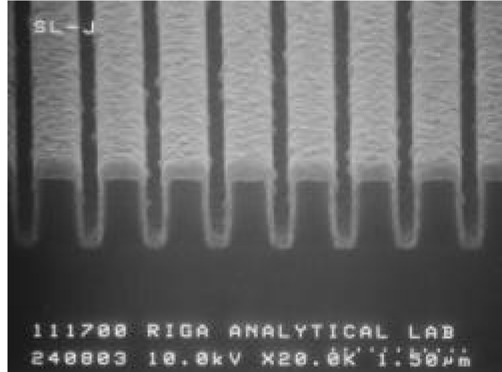
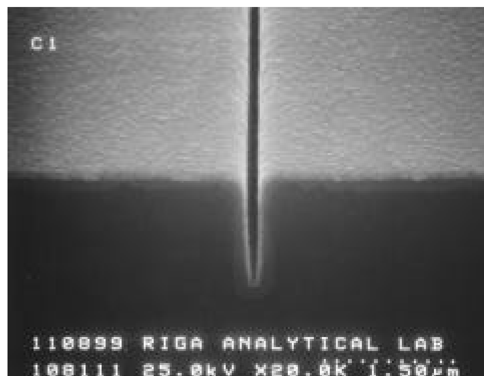
Multiple Seed Layers



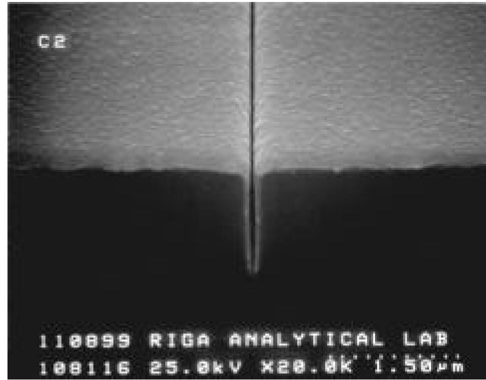
PVD/CVD seed layers: ~600Å (including barrier) on sidewalls and ~1,700Å on field. Trenches: ~0.23μm wide (bottom); 0.85μm deep; AR ~ 3.7:1; tilt =30°.

Multiple Seed Layers



PVD/CVD seed layers: ~450Å (including barrier) on sidewalls and ~1,000Å on field. Trenches: ~0.13μm wide (bottom); 1.4μm deep; AR ~ 10.8:1; tilt =30°.

Multiple Seed Layers



PVD/CVD seed layers: ~450Å (including barrier) on sidewalls and ~1,900Å on field. Trenches: 0.10µm wide (bottom); 1.4µm deep; AR = 14:1; tilt =30°.

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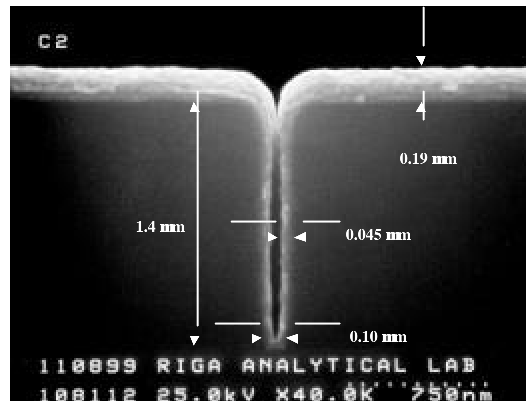
Multiple Seed Layers



PVD/CVD seed layers: ~450Å (including barrier) on sidewalls and ~1,900Å on field. Trenches: 0.10µm wide (bottom); 1.4µm deep; AR = 14:1; No tilt.

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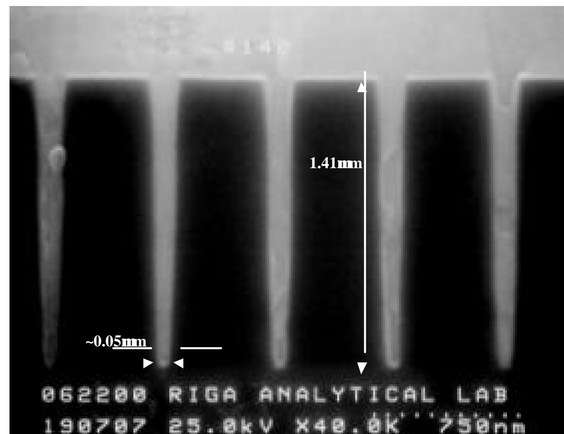
Future Seed/Barrier (What We Want?)

- Excellent, uniform bottom and sidewall coverage for features ≤ 0.10µm: by CVD or ALD (AL-CVD)
- Adequate field thickness: 1,000-2,000Å: by PVD
- Excellent adhesion to the barrier
- High yields and reliability
- High deposition throughput
- CVD/PVD or PVD/ALD Cu Seed can provide all of the above!
- Demand PVD/CVD or PVD/ALD Cu Seed tools!

Jets-ECD Cu-Filled Trenches



Lightly etched cross-section. Trenches: ~ 0.05µm wide (bottom); ~ 1.41µm deep; AR ~ 28:1.

Summary

- **Demonstrated:** Conformal/Non-Conformal Cu S.L. for ≤ 0.10µm features with excellent continuous step coverage and thick Cu S.L. on the field
- **Excellent:** CVD/PVD Cu S.L. for openings below 0.10µm (and AR ≥ 14:1):~ 40-50nm on sidewalls, and ~ 190nm on field.
- **litigation:** Semitool has sued Applied Materials, Novellus, and Ebara regarding "repair" seed layer[10]
- **UC Consulting**: One issued Cu Seed Layers Patent (6,136,707), two Allowed Applications, and four Pending Applications

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REFERENCES

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10. L. L. Chen, U.S. Patent No. 6,197,181 (03/06/2001).
11. P. Gopalraja et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,274,008 (08/14/01).
12. V. M. Dubin et al., U.S.Patent No. 6,432,821 (08/13/02).