



Bulk and Thin Film Electrical Contact, RF Heating, and Field Enhancement

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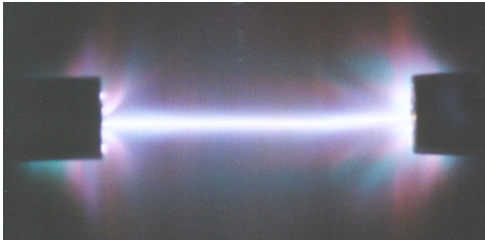
Dedication

Professor C. C. Lin

Introduction

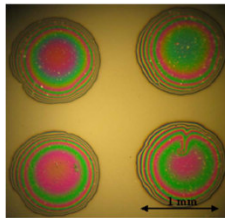
- Electrical contact is important to

Wire-array Z pinches



Z-pinch @ UM, Sandia

Metal-insulator-vacuum junctions



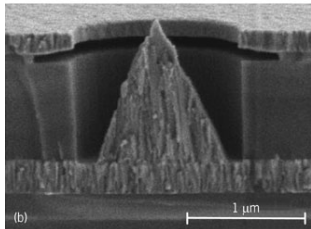
Metal-oxide-junction cathodes @ UM

High power microwave (HPM) sources



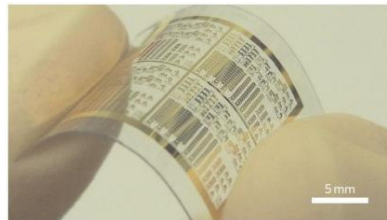
UM/ L-3-Titan relativistic magnetron

Field emitters



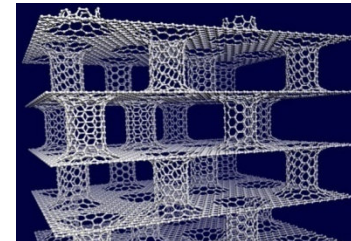
<http://accessscience.com>

Thin film devices & integrated circuits



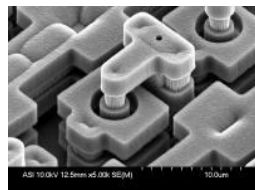
Sun et al, Nature Nanotechnol. 6, 156 (2011)

Carbon nanotubes based cathodes and interconnects



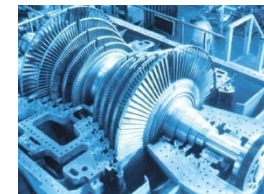
CREDIT: SPIE

Micro-electromechanical System (MEMS)



<http://www.memx.com/products.htm>

Tribology



<http://machinedesign.com>

Introduction



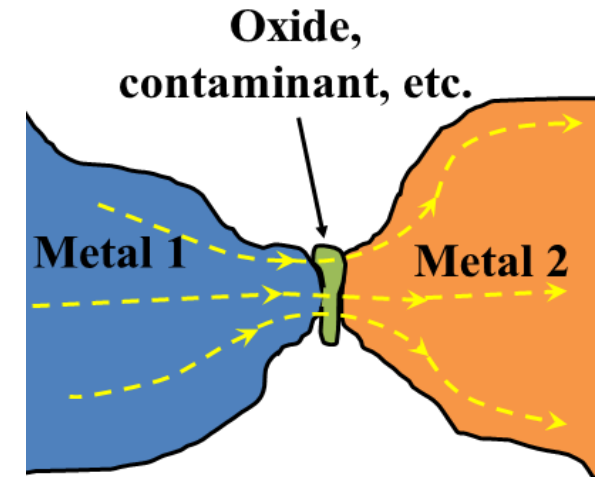
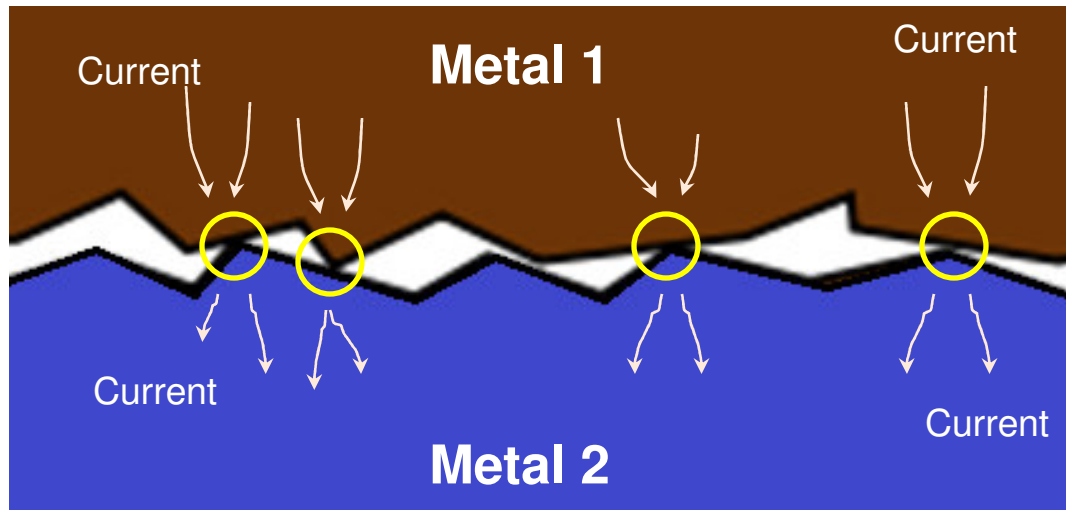
Electrical contact is important to

- Wire-array Z pinches
- Metal-insulator-vacuum junctions
- High power microwave (HPM) sources
- Field emitters
- Thin film devices and integrated circuits
- Carbon nanotubes based cathodes and interconnects
- Tribology
- Contact problems account for 40 percent of all failures in electrical-electronic systems



Effects of Surface Roughness (I):

Contact Resistance

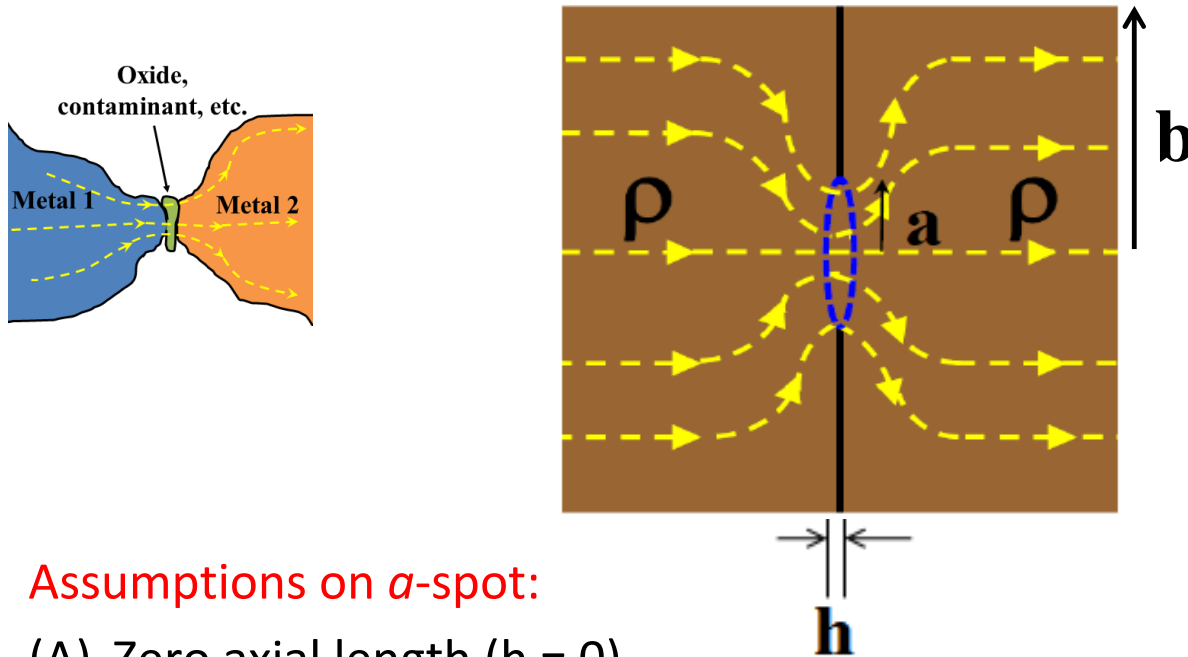


○ : True points of contact => High contact resistance

- Current flows only through the true points of contact => High contact resistance
- Contact resistance is highly random, affected by surface roughness, pressure, hardness, **residing oxides and contaminates**, etc.



Holm's a -spot Theory of Electrical Contact



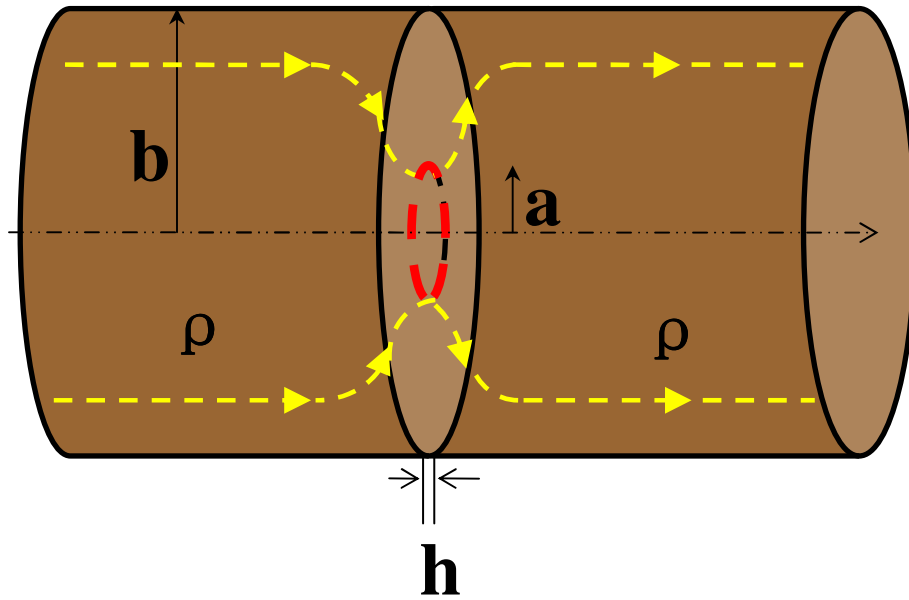
Assumptions on a -spot:

- (A) Zero axial length ($h = 0$)
- (B) Infinite transverse dimension ($b \rightarrow \infty$)
- (C) Same materials (no contaminants)

$$R_c = \frac{\rho}{2a}$$

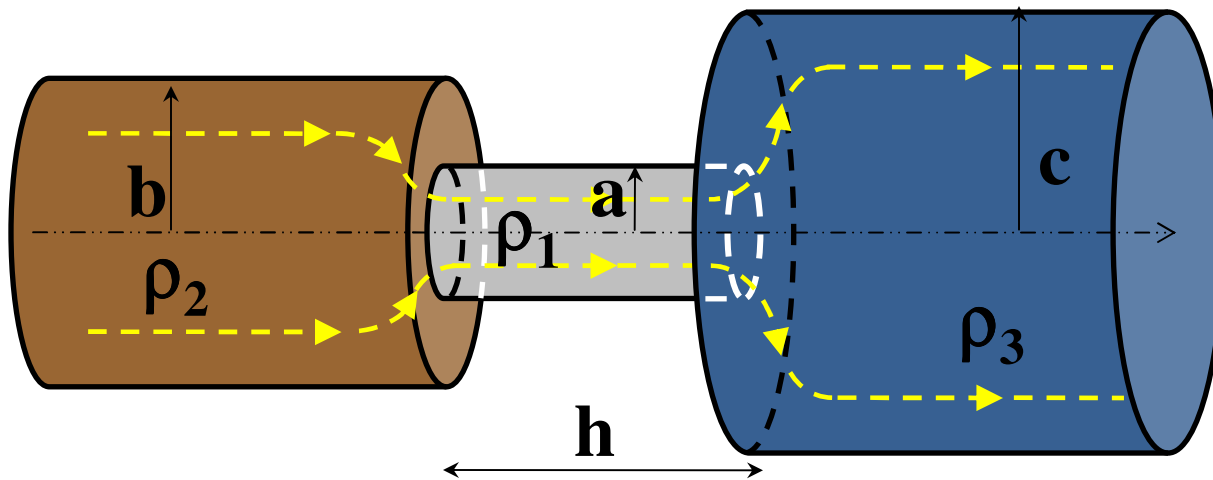
R. Holm, *Electrical Contacts* (Springer-Verlag, ed.4, 1967)





Holm's *a*-spot model

$$h = 0$$



Our model

$$h > 0,$$

$$a \neq b \neq c,$$

$$\rho_1 \neq \rho_2 \neq \rho_3$$



Total Resistance of Composite Channel

Cylindrical:

$$R = \underbrace{\frac{\rho_2 L_2}{\pi b^2}}_{\text{Bulk}} + \underbrace{\frac{\rho_2}{4a} \bar{R}_c \left(\frac{b}{a}, \frac{\rho_1}{\rho_2} \right)}_{\text{Interface}} + \underbrace{\frac{\rho_1 \times 2h}{\pi a^2}}_{\text{Bulk}} + \underbrace{\frac{\rho_3}{4a} \bar{R}_c \left(\frac{c}{a}, \frac{\rho_1}{\rho_3} \right)}_{\text{Interface}} + \underbrace{\frac{\rho_3 L_3}{\pi c^2}}_{\text{Bulk}}$$

Cartesian:

$$R = \underbrace{\frac{\rho_2 L_2}{2b \times W}}_{\text{Bulk}} + \underbrace{\frac{\rho_2}{4\pi W} \bar{R}_c \left(\frac{b}{a}, \frac{\rho_1}{\rho_2} \right)}_{\text{Interface}} + \underbrace{\frac{\rho_1 \times 2h}{2a \times W}}_{\text{Bulk}} + \underbrace{\frac{\rho_3}{4\pi W} \bar{R}_c \left(\frac{c}{a}, \frac{\rho_1}{\rho_3} \right)}_{\text{Interface}} + \underbrace{\frac{\rho_3 L_3}{2c \times W}}_{\text{Bulk}}$$

P. Zhang and Y. Y. Lau, J. Appl. Phys. **108**, 044914 (2010)

Interface Resistance with Dissimilar Materials

A. Cylindrical semi-infinite channel

$$\bar{R}_c \left(\frac{b}{a}, \frac{\rho_1}{\rho_2} \right) \cong \bar{R}_{c0} \left(\frac{b}{a} \right) \Big|_{Timsit} + \frac{\Delta}{2} \times \left(\frac{2\rho_1}{\rho_1 + \rho_2} \right) \times g \left(\frac{b}{a} \right)$$

$$\bar{R}_{c0} \left(\frac{b}{a} \right) \Big|_{Timsit} = 1 - 1.41581(a/b) + 0.06322(a/b)^2 \\ + 0.15261(a/b)^3 + 0.19998(a/b)^4,$$

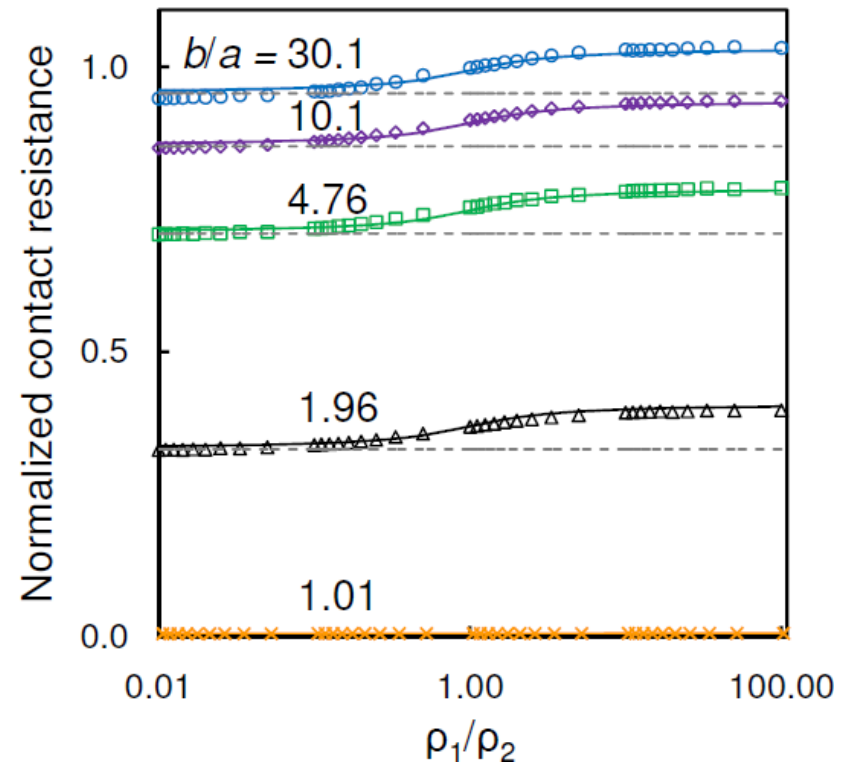
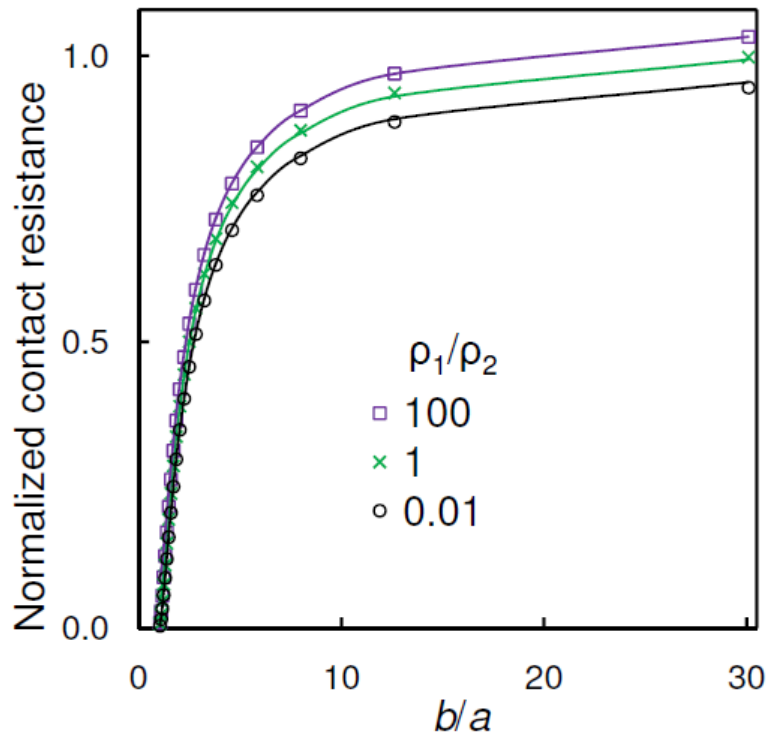
$$g(b/a) = 1 - 0.3243(a/b)^2 - 0.6124(a/b)^4 \\ - 1.3594(a/b)^6 + 1.2961(a/b)^8$$

$$\Delta = 32/3\pi^2 - 1 = 0.08076$$

P. Zhang and Y. Y. Lau, *J. Appl. Phys.* **108**, 044914 (2010)



Interface Resistance in Cylindrical Semi-Infinite Channel

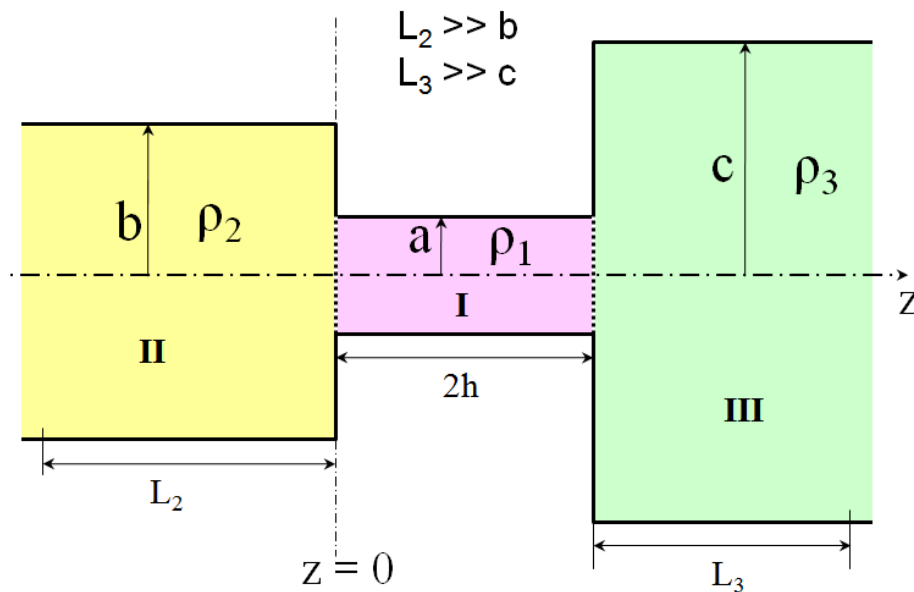


Symbols: Exact theory; Solid lines: Scaling law

Test of Scaling Laws

Test A. $h \gg a$

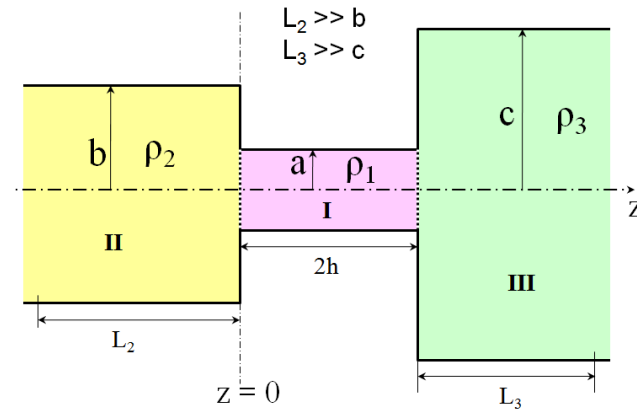
- Electrostatic fringe field at one interface has an exponentially small influence on the other interface
- Both interface resistance the same as in the semi-infinite channel



Test B. $h \rightarrow 0$

- $h = 0, \rho_2 = \rho_3$ and $b = c \Rightarrow$ **a -spot**

1. Cylindrical $\bar{R}_{c0}(b/a)|_{Timsit}$
2. Cartesian $\bar{R}_{c0}(b/a)|_{LTZ}$

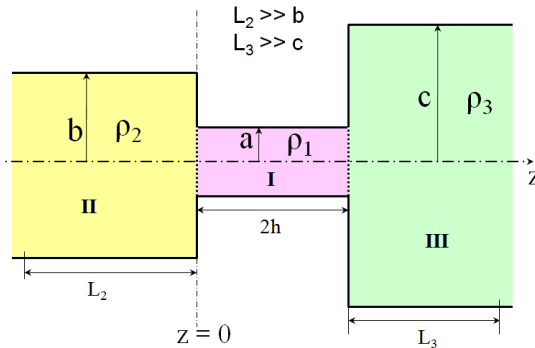


- $\rho_1 \rightarrow 0$, Region I is perfectly conducting, contact resistance at each interface equivalent to **$1/2$ of the symmetrical a -spot**
- $b/a \rightarrow \infty, c/a \rightarrow \infty$, but $\rho_2 \neq \rho_3$, the cylindrical scaling laws differs by at most 8% from $(\rho_2 + \rho_3)/4a$

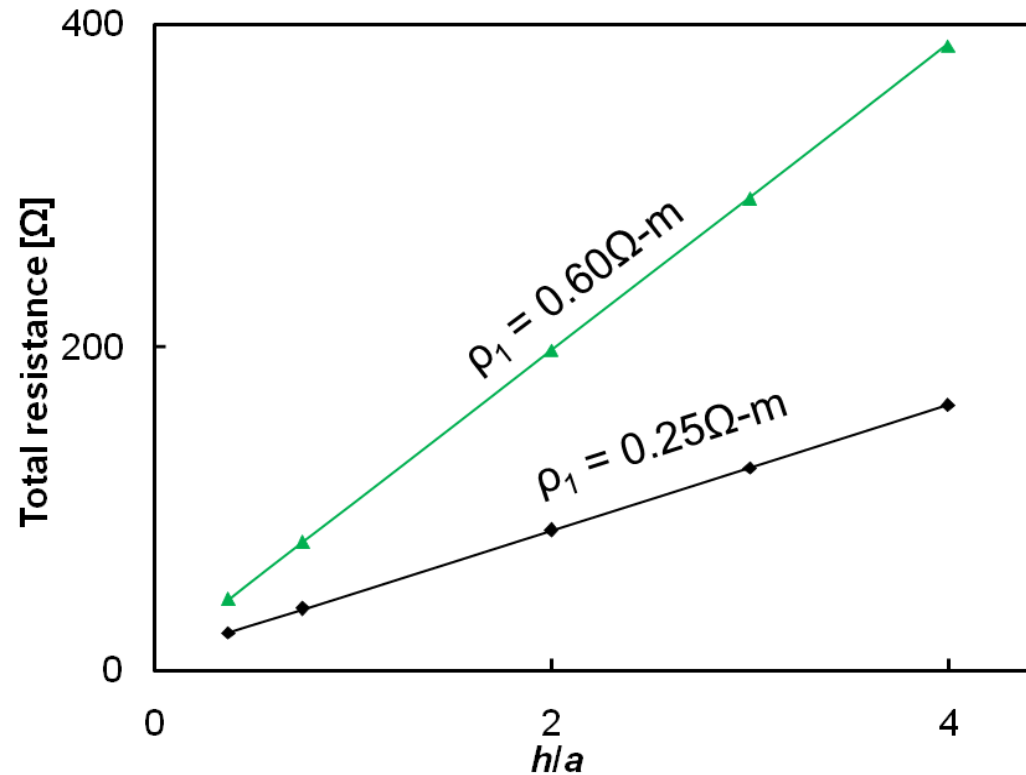
Error in $\bar{R}_c \leq 10\%$ in worst scenario



Test C. Comparison of 3D Maxwell code



$\rho_2 = 0.038 \Omega \text{ m},$
 $\rho_3 = 0.001 \Omega \text{ m},$
 $a = 4 \text{ mm},$
 $b = 8 \text{ mm},$
 $c = 10 \text{ mm},$
 $L_2 = L_3,$
 $2h$ from 1.5 to 16 mm,
 $L_2 + 2h + L_3 = 80 \text{ mm},$
 Excitation voltage = 10V



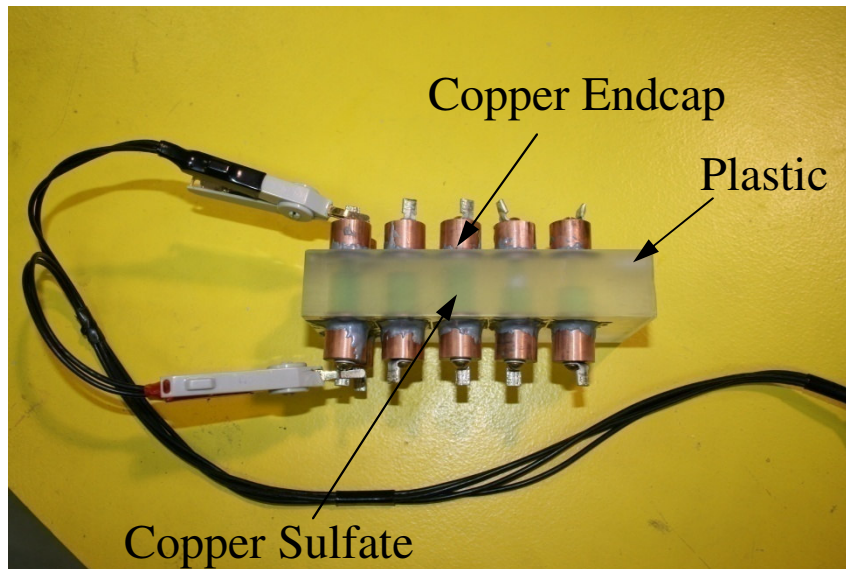
Symbols: Maxwell 3D
 Solid lines: Scaling law



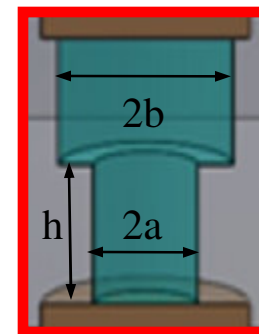
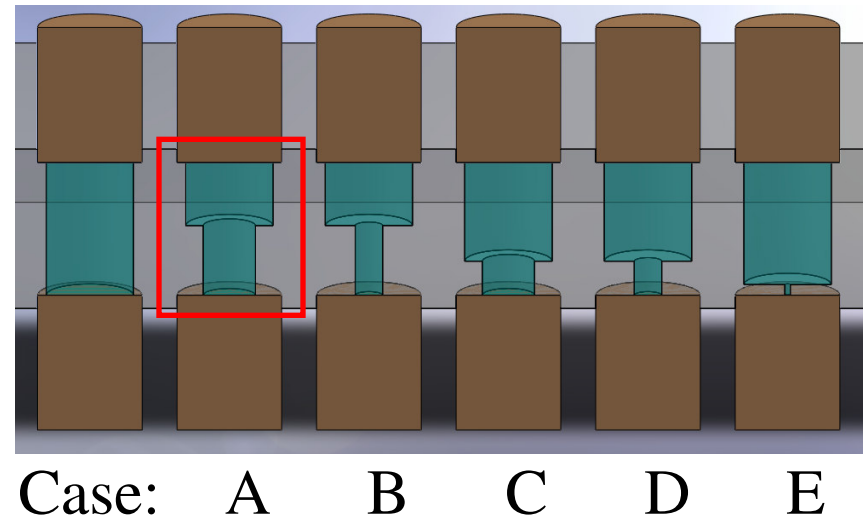
Validation: Experiment

$(\rho_1 = \rho_2 = \rho_3, b = c)$

Experimental Configuration



Cross Sectional View

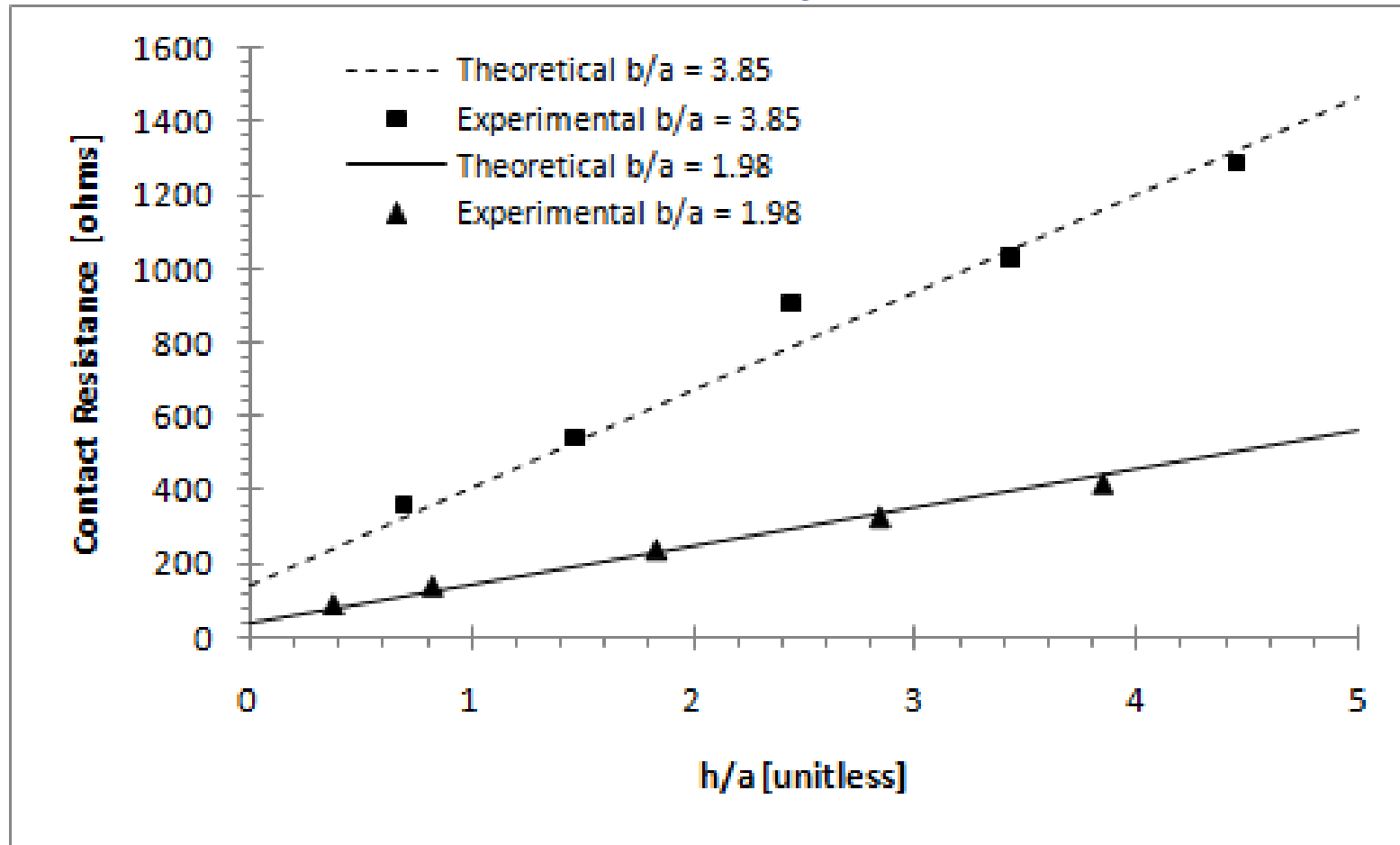


Theoretical contact resistance geometry was mimicked by machining holes of varying diameter in a piece of plastic and filling it with copper sulfate.



Experimental Validation

$(\rho_1 = \rho_2 = \rho_3, b = c)$



*M. R. Gomez et al., Appl. Phys. Lett. **95**, 072103 (2009)



Summary of Bulk Contact

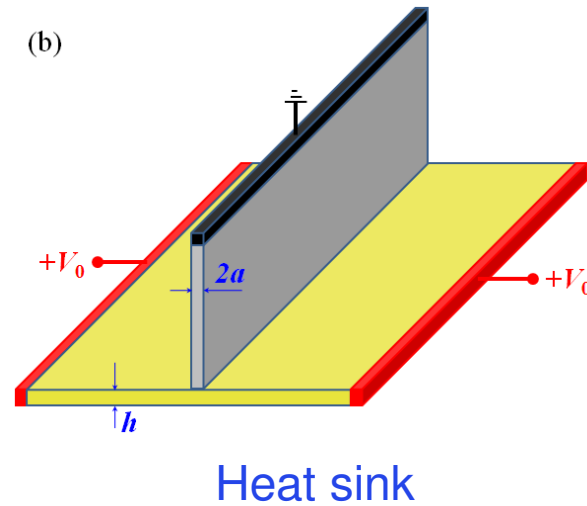
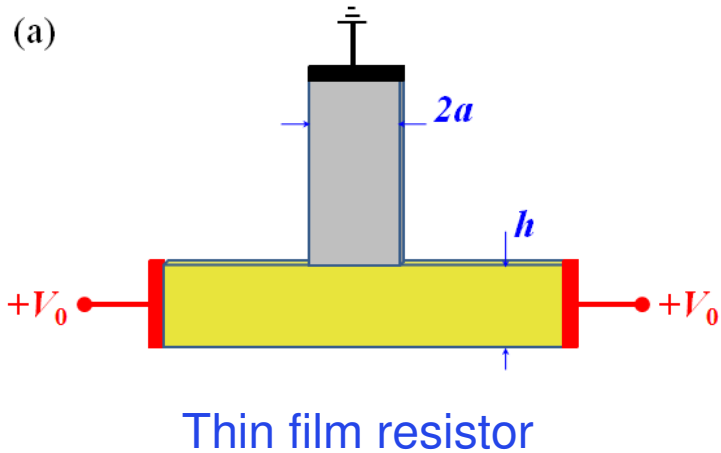
- We vastly generalized Holm's classical a -spot theory (1967) of contact resistance to higher dimensions, with dissimilar materials.
- Simple scaling laws for contact resistance, with dissimilar materials and aspect ratios are constructed. They have been validated in various limits, in simulations, and in experiments.
- If the contaminant at contact is highly resistive, its bulk resistance dominates over the interface resistance; the interface resistance depends mainly on resistivity of main current channels and is insensitive to that of the contact region.
- Great uncertainty in numerical code or experiments, if there is large contrast between ρ_1 , ρ_2 , and ρ_3 , or between h , a , b , c , L_2 , and L_3 .

Contact Resistance

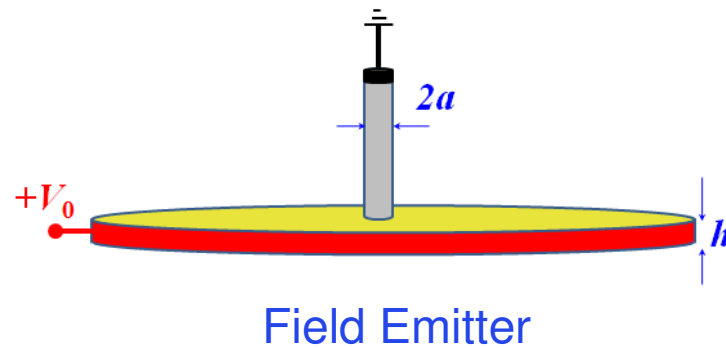
Thin-Film Geometry

Thin Film Contact Model

Cartesian



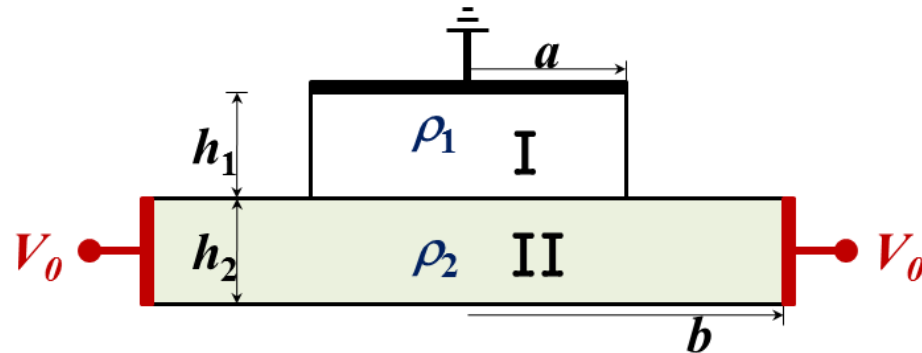
Cylindrical



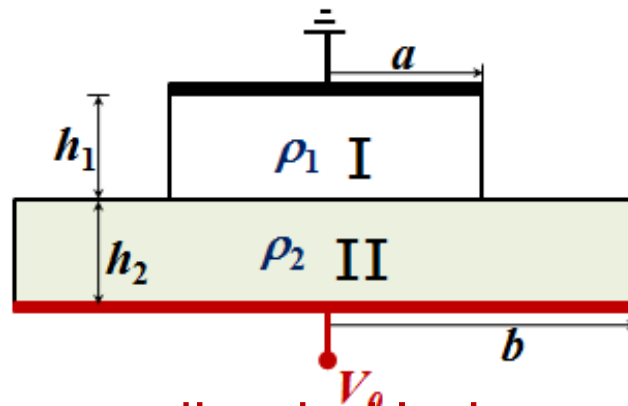
Thin Film Contact Model

Cartesian and Cylindrical

Horizontal Type [1]



Vertical Type [2]

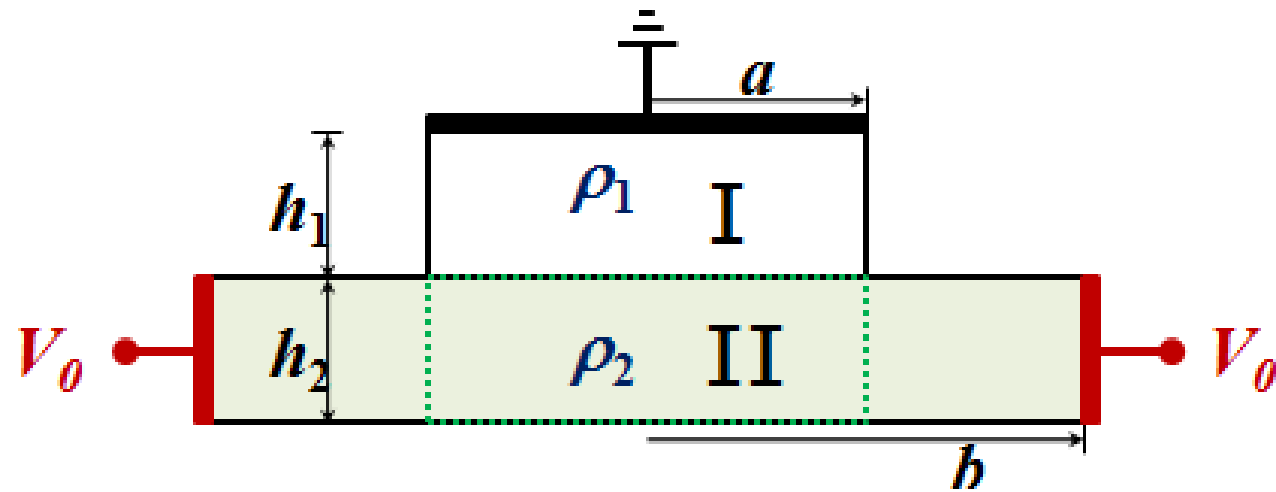


Results: severe current crowding in Horizontal type;
Much less severe current crowding in Vertical type.

[1] Peng Zhang, D. Hung, Y. Y. Lau, J. Phys. D: Appl. Phys., 46, 065502 (2013);
Corrigendum, ibid, 46, 209501 (2013).

[2] Peng Zhang and Y. Y. Lau, IEEE J. Electron Devices Soc., in the press (2013).

Thin Film Contact Model: Horizontal Type



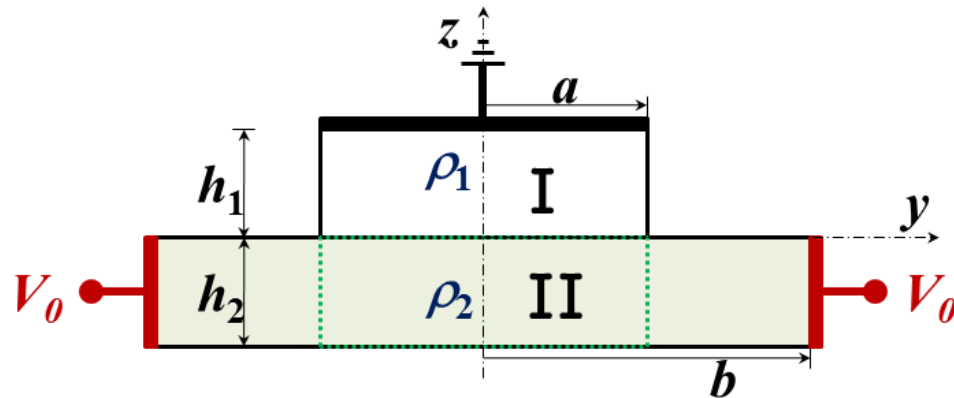
Cartesian

$$R = \underbrace{\frac{\rho_1 h_1}{2a \times W}}_{R_I} + \underbrace{\frac{\rho_2}{4\pi W} \bar{R}_c \left(\frac{a}{b}, \frac{a}{h_2}, \frac{h_1}{a}, \frac{\rho_1}{\rho_2} \right)}_{\text{Contact resistance } R_c} + \underbrace{\frac{\rho_2 (b-a)}{2h_2 \times W}}_{R_{II}}$$

Cylindrical

$$R = \underbrace{\frac{\rho_1 h_1}{\pi a^2}}_{R_I} + \underbrace{\frac{\rho_2}{4a} \bar{R}_c \left(\frac{a}{b}, \frac{a}{h_2}, \frac{h_1}{a}, \frac{\rho_1}{\rho_2} \right)}_{\text{Contact resistance } R_c} + \underbrace{\frac{\rho_2}{2\pi h_2} \ln \left(\frac{b}{a} \right)}_{R_{II}}$$

Cartesian Thin Film Contact



Boundary conditions

$$\Phi_+ = \Phi_-, \quad z = 0, |y| \in (0, a)$$

$$\frac{1}{\rho_1} \frac{\partial \Phi_+}{\partial z} = \frac{1}{\rho_2} \frac{\partial \Phi_-}{\partial z}, \quad z = 0, |y| \in (0, a)$$

$$\frac{\partial \Phi_-}{\partial z} = 0, \quad z = 0, |y| \in (a, b)$$

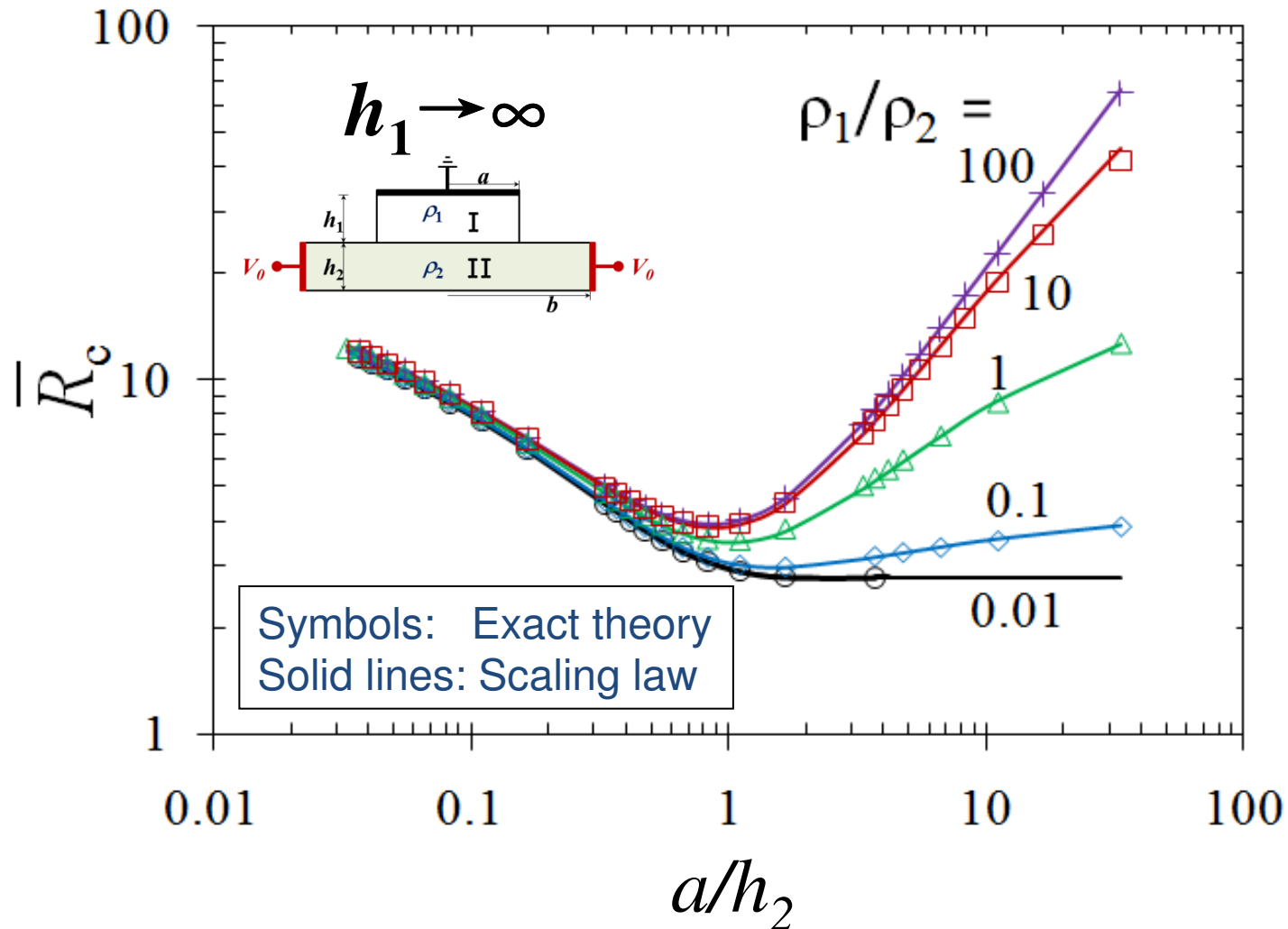
Laplace's equation

$$\Phi_+(y, z) = A_0(z - h_1) + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} A_n \cos\left(\frac{n\pi y}{a}\right) \times \sinh\left(n\pi \frac{z - h_1}{a}\right), \quad 0 < z < h_1, |y| \in (0, a),$$

$$\Phi_-(y, z) = V_0 + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} B_n \cos\left(\frac{(n - 1/2)\pi y}{b}\right) \times \frac{\cosh\left((n - \frac{1}{2})\pi \frac{z + h_2}{b}\right)}{\sinh\left((n - \frac{1}{2})\pi \frac{h_2}{b}\right)}, \quad -h_2 < z < 0, |y| \in (0, b).$$

➡ Potential profile and contact resistance

Cartesian Thin Film Contact



Zhang, Lau, Gilgenbach, *Appl. Phys. Lett.* **97**, 204103 (2010);
J. Appl. Phys. **109**, 124910 (2011).

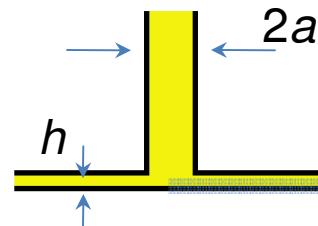
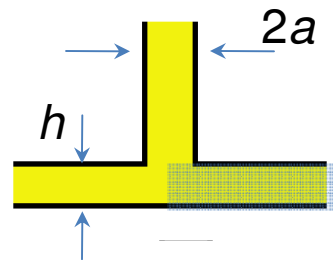
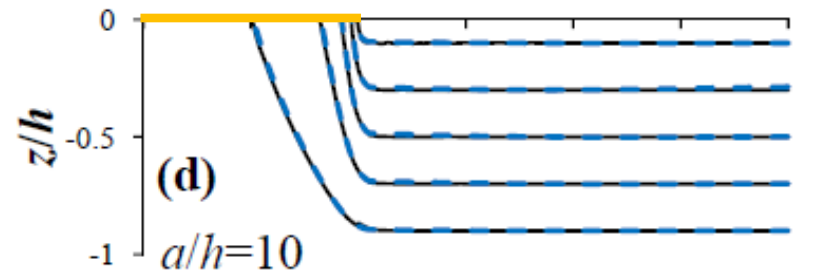
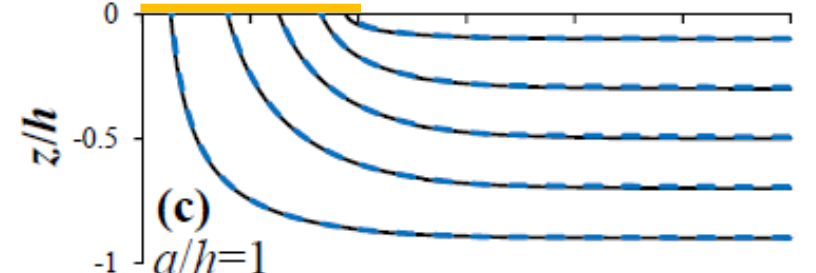
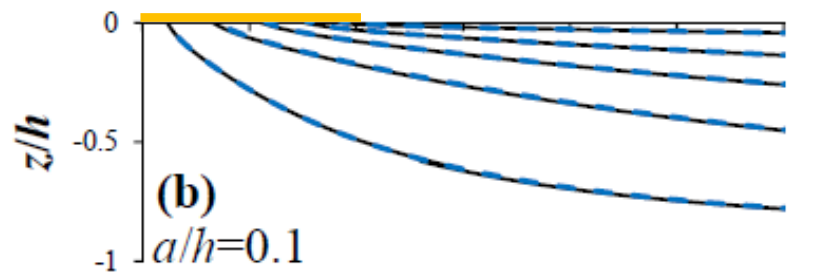
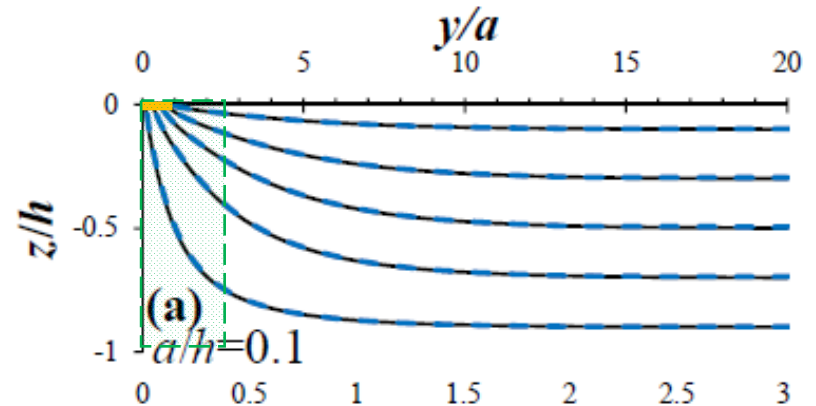
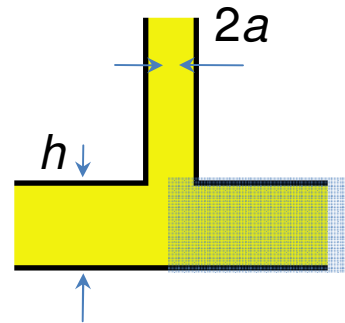
Cartesian Thin Film Contact – Field Lines

$$\rho_1/\rho_2 = 1$$

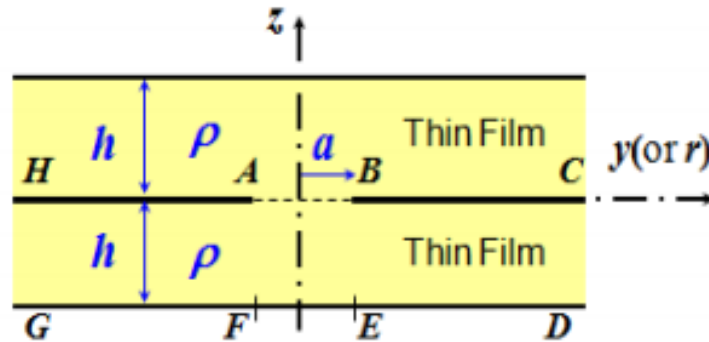
Dashed lines:
Conformal Mapping

Solid lines:
Series Expansion

Crowding of field lines
gives rise to contact
resistance

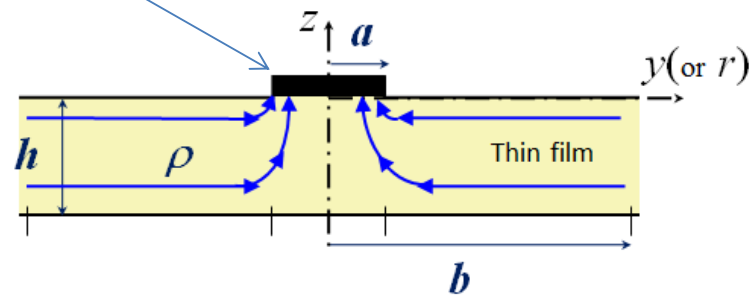


Application to Thin-film Contact – MEMS



Same as Metal-Metal Contact, by Symmetry ($h_1 = 0$)

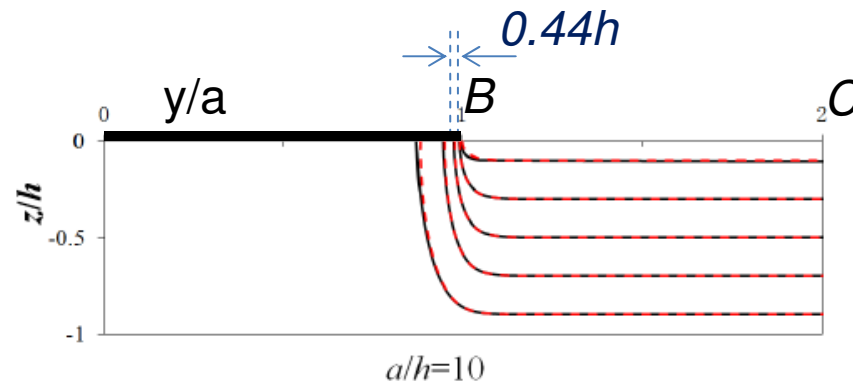
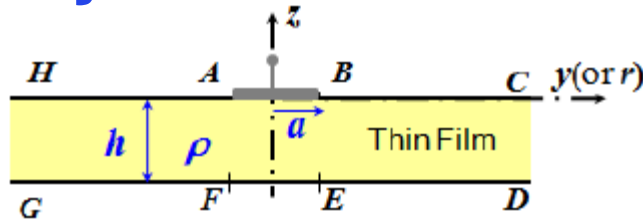
Contact resistivity $r_c = 0$



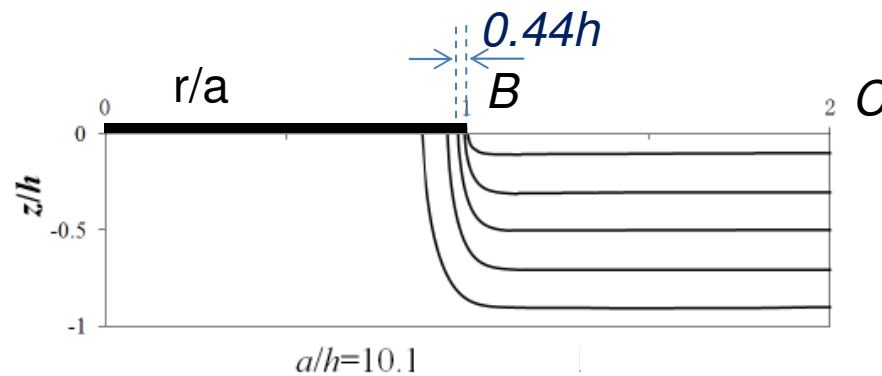
Peng Zhang, Y. Y. Lau, and R. S. Timsit, "On the spreading resistance of thin-film contacts", IEEE Trans. Electron Devices **59**, 1936 (2012).

Identical Field Line Patterns for Both Cartesian and Cylindrical Thin Film Contacts

As $h \rightarrow 0$,



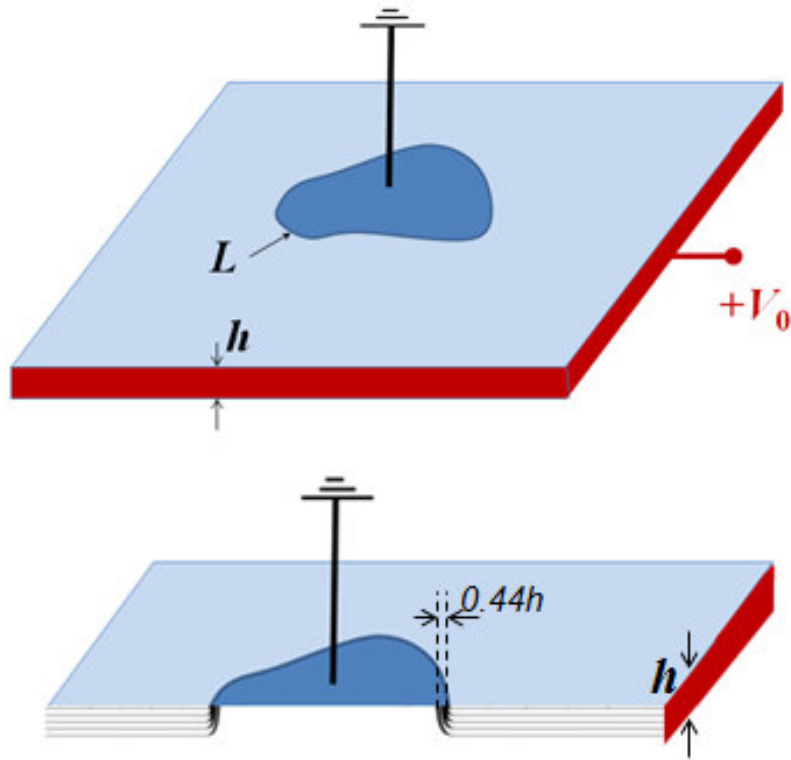
Cartesian



Cylindrical

Note: Enhanced heating at Edge "B" (& "A").

Contact Resistance in an Electrode of Arbitrary Shape*



$$R_s = \left(\frac{\rho}{L} \right) \frac{2 \ln 2}{\pi}, \quad h \rightarrow 0$$

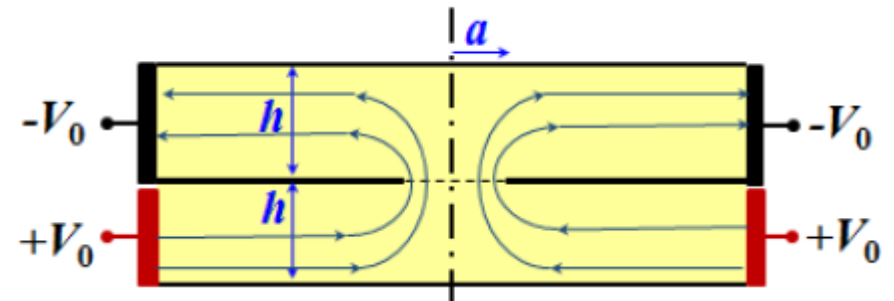
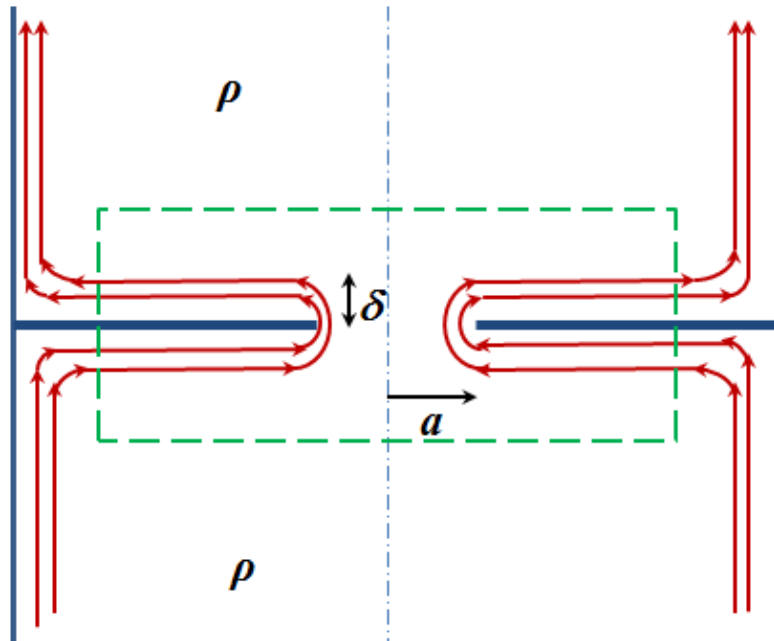
L : circumference of electrode

Current transfer length
 $L_T \sim 0.44h$

Note: Intense local heating on electrode rim. This formula reduces to those for a-spot in circular and Cartesian geometry.

Peng Zhang, Y. Y. Lau, and R. S. Timsit, "On the spreading resistance of thin-film contacts", IEEE Trans. Electron Devices **59**, 1936 (2012).

Relation of high frequency AC bulk contact and DC thin - film contact



AC Case (Bulk Contact)

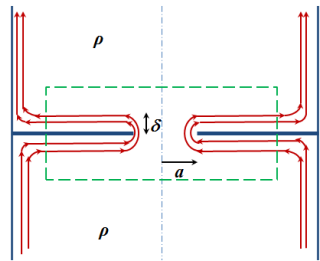
Lavers and Timsit, *IEEE Trans. Compon. Packag. Technol.*, **25**, 446–452, 2002.

DC Case (Thin Film)

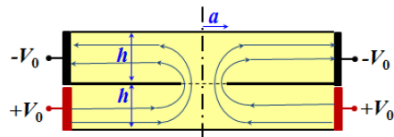
P. Zhang, Y. Y. Lau, and R. S. Timsit, *IEEE Trans. Electron Devices* **59**, 1936 (2012).

Rule: Identify skin depth (δ) with thin-film thickness (h).

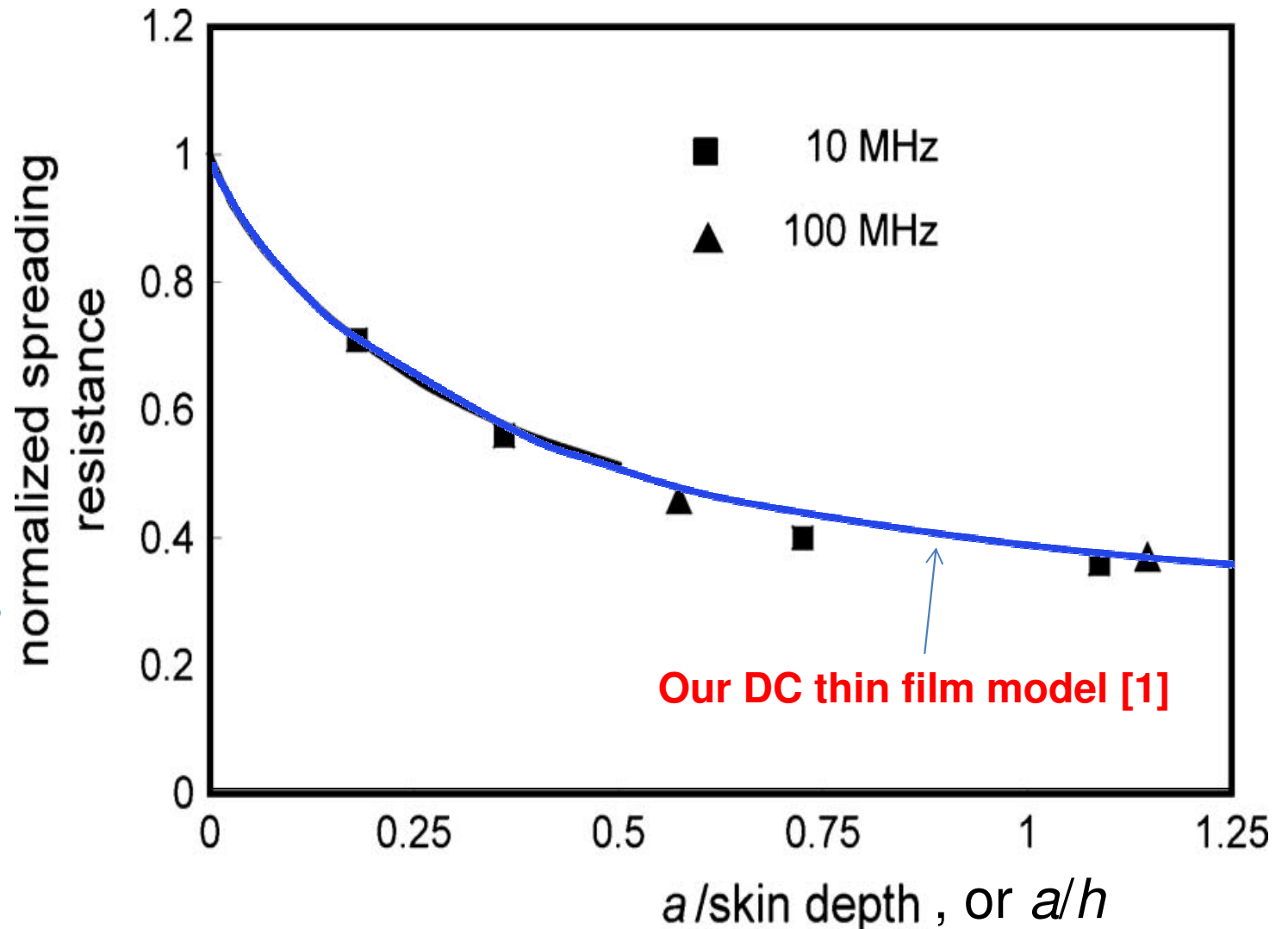
AC bulk constriction resistance for frequencies ranging from dc to 1 GHz*



AC case



Our DC model



*Lavers and Timsit, *IEEE Trans. Compon. Packag. Technol.*, 25, 446–452, 2002.

[1]Peng Zhang, Y. Y. Lau, and R. S. Timsit, *IEEE Trans. Electron Devices* **59**, 1936 (2012)



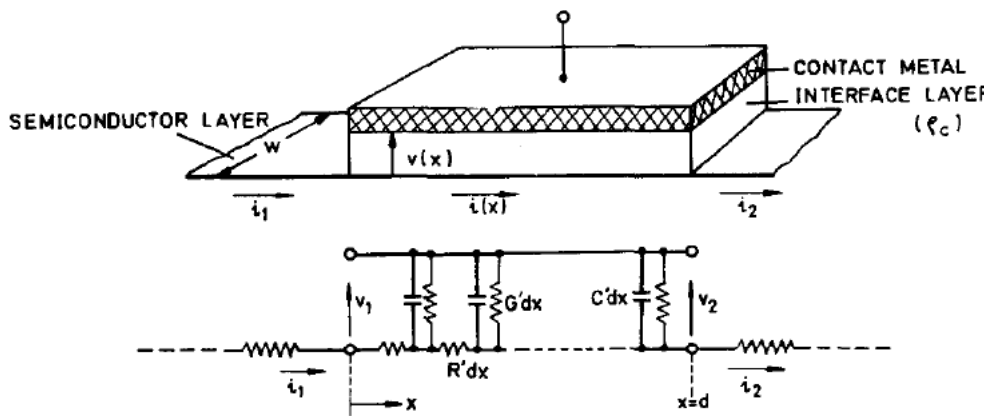
DC thin film resistance formula is applicable
to AC bulk contact resistance from low to
high frequency!!



General 3-terminal Thin Film Devices

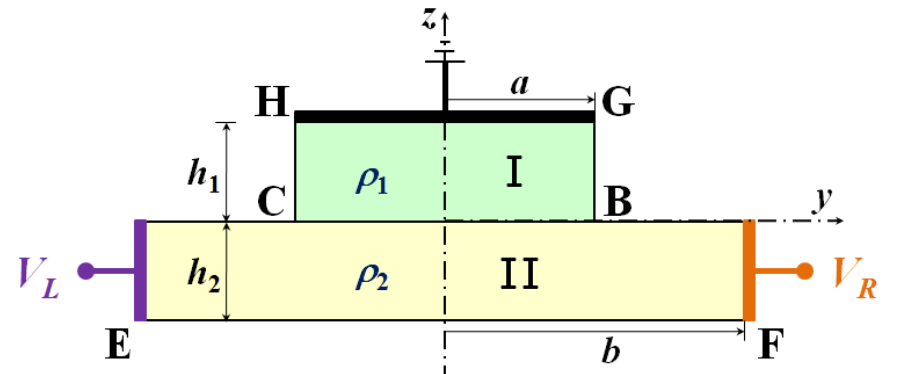
(Arbitrary voltages on all 3 terminals)

(a)



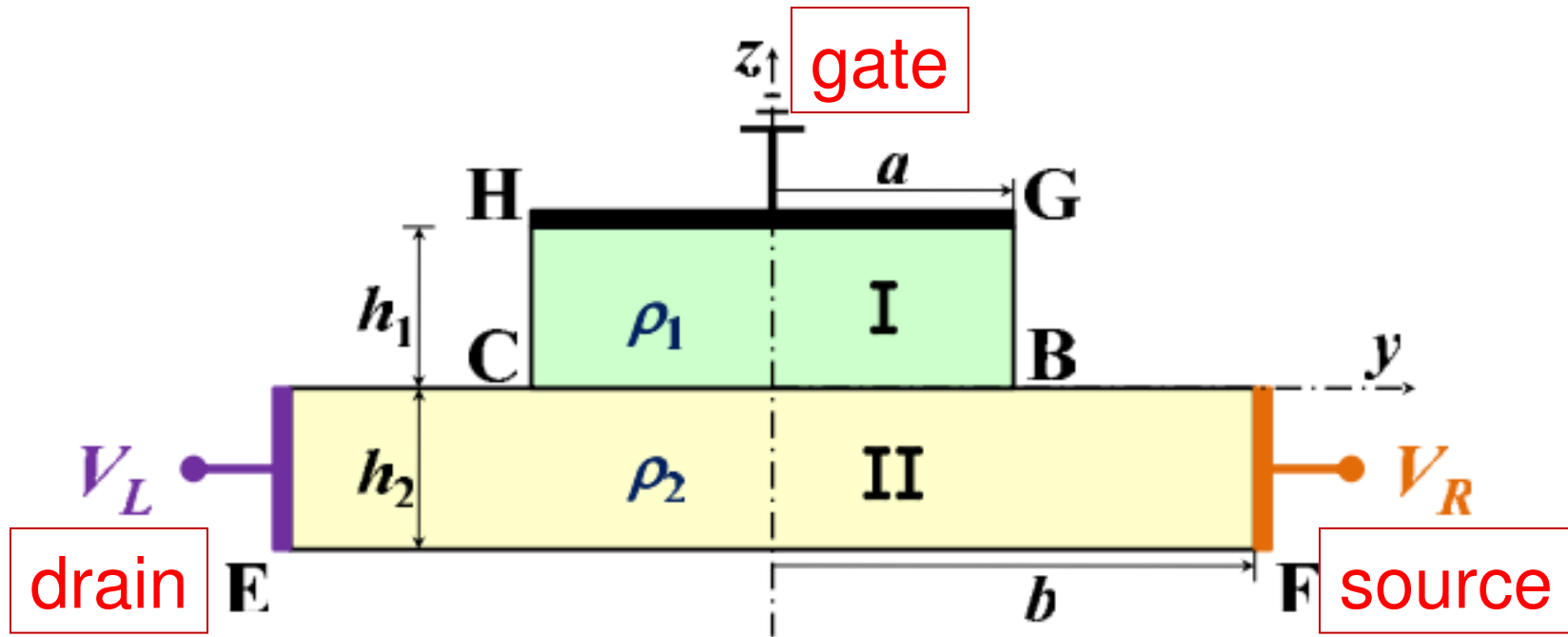
Transmission Line Model

(b)



Generalization

General 3-terminal Thin Film Contact [1]



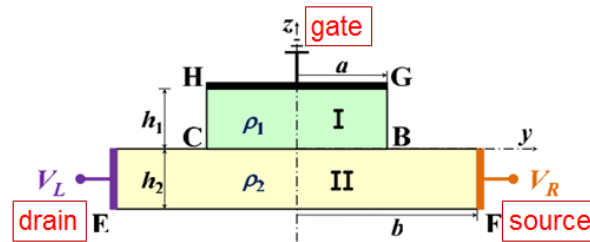
Cartesian

$$V_L \neq V_R$$

Top terminal (HG) grounded.
Arbitrary $h_1, h_2, \rho_1, \rho_2, a, b, V_R, V_L$.

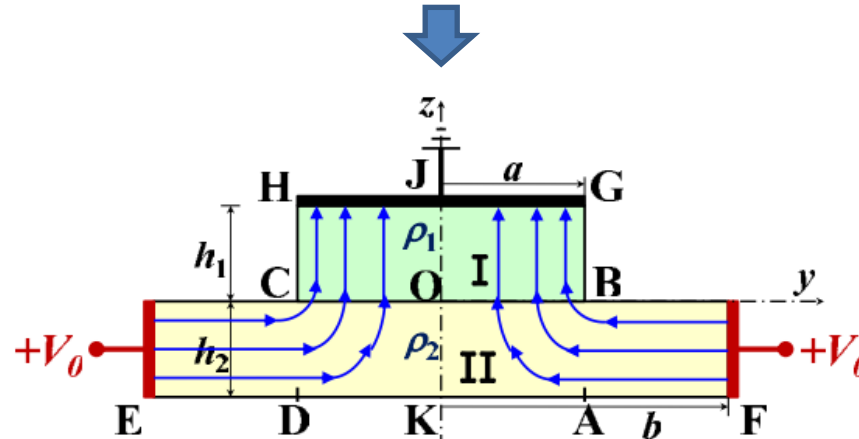
[1] Peng Zhang, D. Hung, Y. Y. Lau, J. Phys. D: Appl. Phys., 46, 065502 (2013),
Corrigendum, ibid, 46, 209501 (2013).

Decomposition into
Even and Odd
Solutions



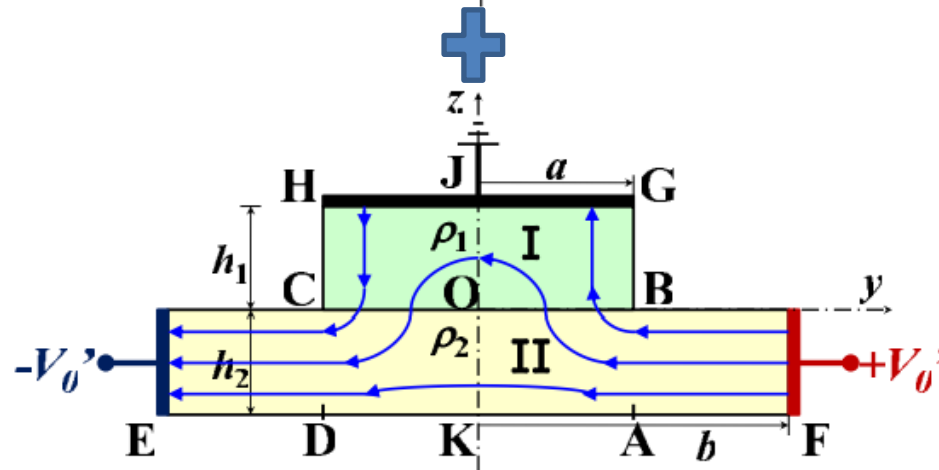
Even solution

$$V_0 = (V_L + V_R) / 2$$



Odd solution

$$V_0' = (V_R - V_L) / 2$$

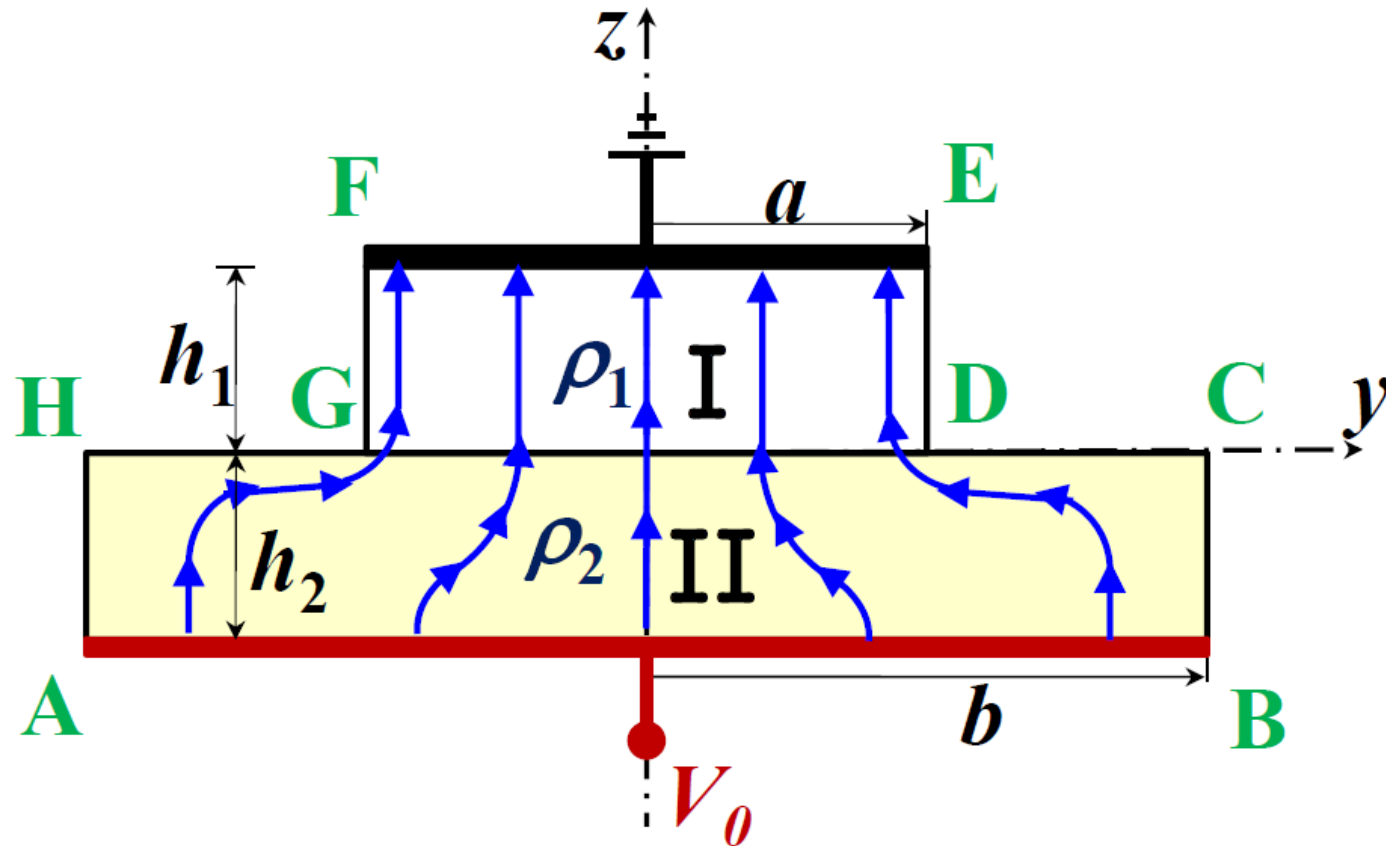


Even solution accounts for **all** current transport to the **gate (HG)**.

Odd solution gives **only** current transport to the **drain (E)**.

=> **Most intense heating** on edge **(B)** of the “**source**” side.

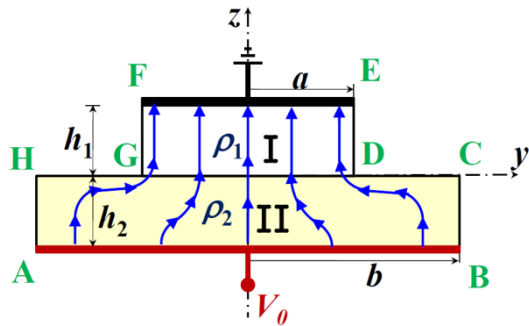
Vertical Type of Thin Film Contact*



* Peng Zhang and Y. Y. Lau, IEEE J. Electron Devices Soc., in the press (2013).

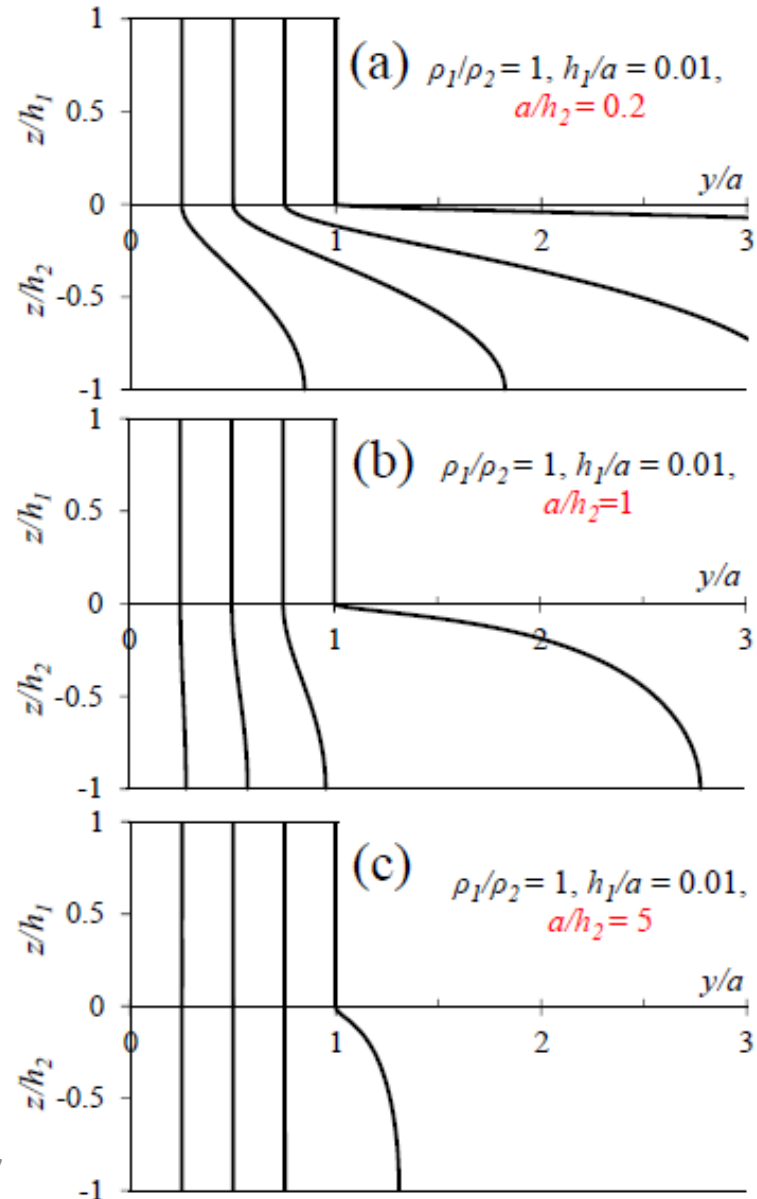
General Thin Film Contact: Vertical Type

Cartesian



If h_2 decreases:

Almost uniform current flow in Region I, implying very little enhanced edge heating



Summary of Thin Film Contact

- Accurate scaling laws are synthesized over a large range of resistivity ratio and aspect ratio, for both horizontal and vertical contacts, including 3-terminal devices.
- Horizontal contacts suffer intense edge heating on the “source side” of thin-film. There is little enhanced edge heating in vertical contacts.
- Thin film contact model is extended to an a -spot of arbitrary geometry.
- The DC thin film contact model turns out to be applicable to the bulk contact resistance, from DC to high frequency (!)
- A new transfer length, due to fringing field, is identified and compared to the transmission line model.
- Issues on experimental measurements are being explored.

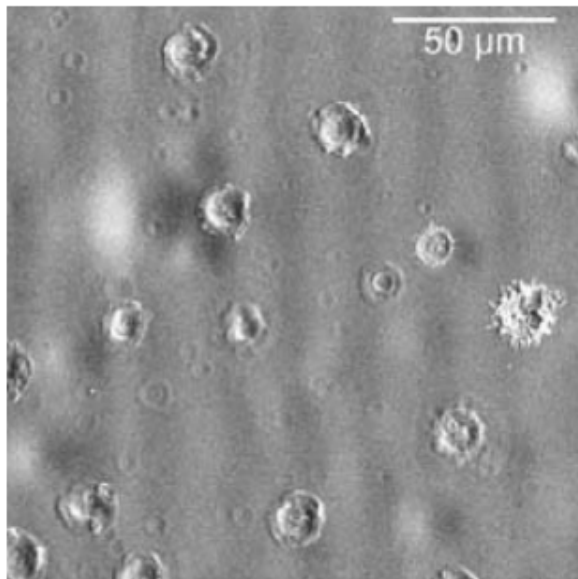


Effects of Surface Roughness (II):

Enhanced RF Losses and Field Enhancements

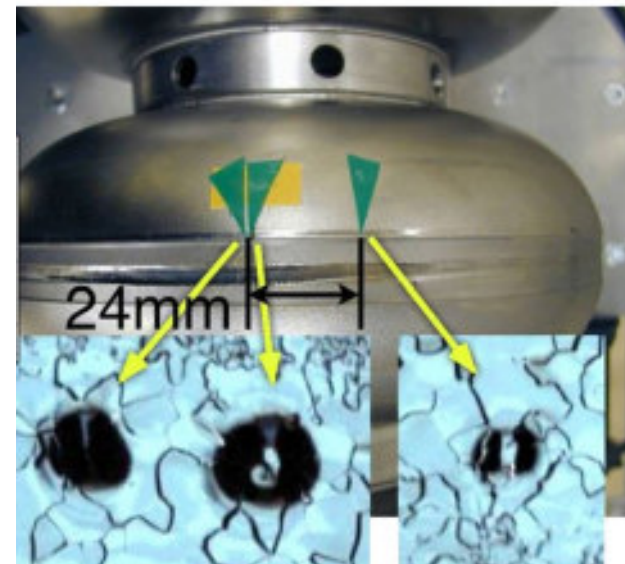
Introduction

- Surface roughness increases RF absorption, causes E-field enhancement (triggers breakdown) and B-field enhancement (quenching of superconducting cavities)



Splashes on the metallic surface

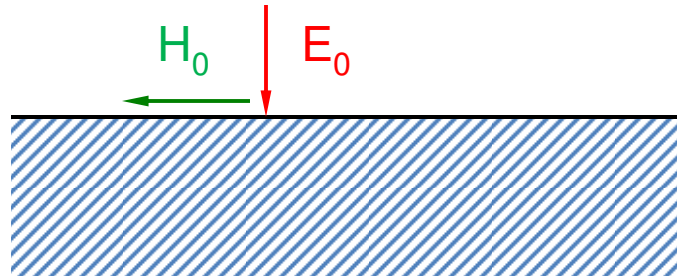
S. E. Harvey et al.,
Report No. SLAC-PUB-10197, 2003



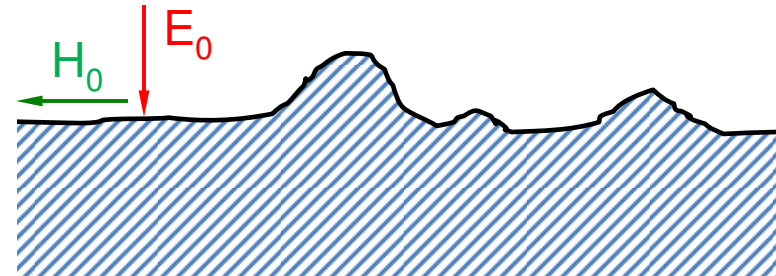
Hot spots found in superconductor cavities

Yoshihisa Iwashita,
Phys. Rev. ST Accel. Beams 11, 093501 (2008)

Rough Surface



Pristine Surface



Rough Surface

(1) Cause enhanced heating

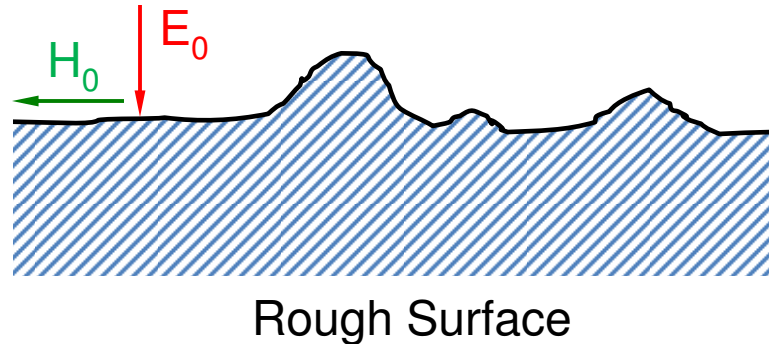
(2) Cause local field enhancement

E_{rf} \Longrightarrow Field Emission \Longrightarrow Breakdown

H_{rf} \Longrightarrow Quenching of Superconductor Cavity



Enhanced Heating on a Rough Surface



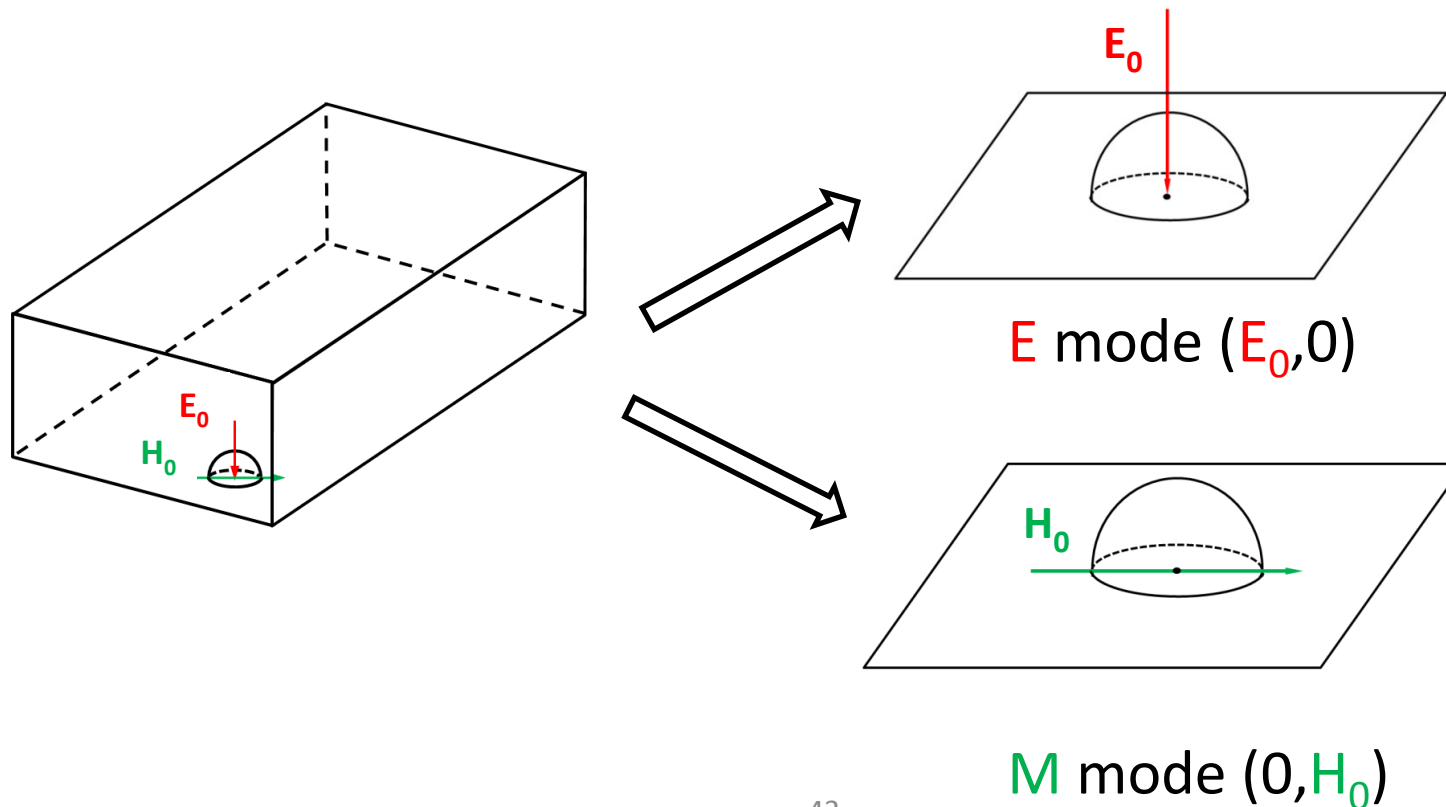
Questions: Enhanced heating by E or by H ?
Parametric dependence (λ , σ , a , etc.)?

Model: Consider a small hemispherical protrusion of radius $a \ll \lambda$, with arbitrary ϵ, μ, σ , and arbitrary E_0 and H_0 (in the absence of protrusion).

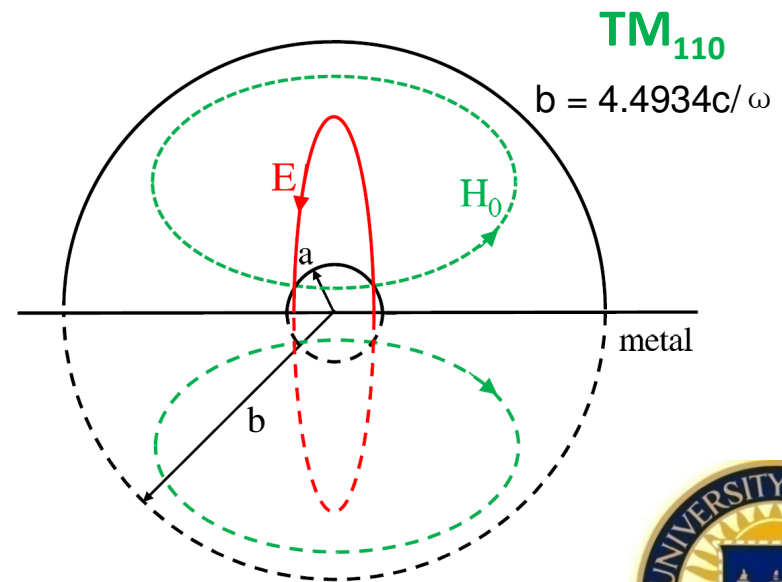
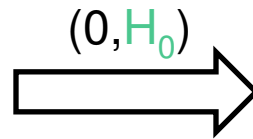
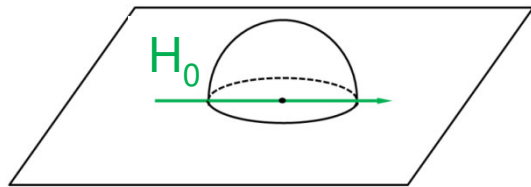
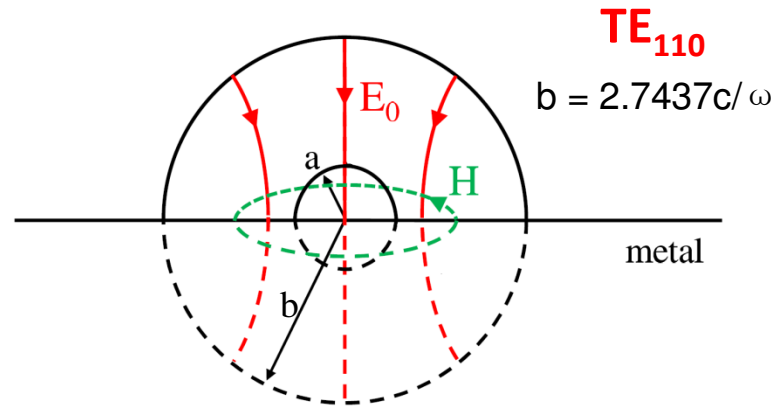
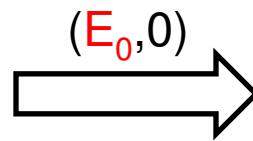
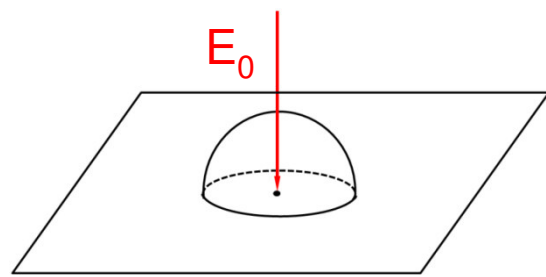


Hemispherical protrusion on the surface
($a \ll \lambda_{\text{exterior}}$). Note: \mathbf{E}_0 and \mathbf{H}_0 are arbitrary.

$$(\mathbf{E}_0, \mathbf{H}_0) = \underbrace{(\mathbf{E}_0, 0)}_{\text{E mode}} + \underbrace{(0, \mathbf{H}_0)}_{\text{M mode}}$$



Hemispherical protrusion on the surface



The irregular geometry “hemispherical protrusion on a surface” transformed into an equivalent, but highly symmetrical problem “spherical particulate in a spherical cavity”



Hemispherical protrusion on the surface

(A) Perturbation on Eigenvalue gives power dissipated by particulate

$$2\omega_i = \frac{P_d}{U}$$

(B) Perturbation on Eigenfunction gives RF field enhancements

Note: (a) $(\epsilon_r, \sigma, \mu)$ of protrusion may be arbitrary.

(b) Perturbed TE_{110} & TM_{110} mode calculated exactly, consistent with full set of Maxwell equations.

P. Zhang, Y. Y. Lau, R. M. Gilgenbach, J. Appl. Phys. 105, 114908 (2009).



RF electric field heating (TE mode)

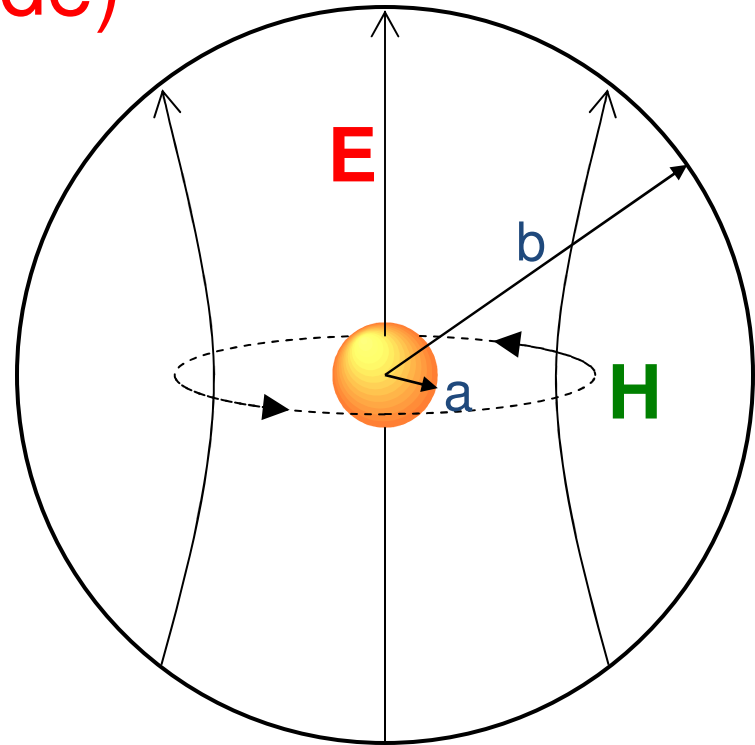
- Dispersion relation for the **TE₁₁₀** mode:

$$\frac{J'(\xi_1)}{J(\xi_1)} = \frac{\sqrt{\mu_2/\epsilon_2} M'(\xi_2)}{\sqrt{\mu_1/\epsilon_1} M(\xi_2)}$$

- For $a \ll b \sim \lambda$ (the only assumption):

$$\frac{\gamma_E}{\omega_E} = \frac{Y'(\eta_E)}{\eta_E J''(\eta_E)} \frac{J(\xi_{2E})}{Y(\xi_{2E})} \left[\frac{Y'(\xi_{2E})}{\xi_{2E} Y(\xi_{2E})} - \frac{J'(\xi_{2E})}{\xi_{2E} J(\xi_{2E})} \right] \text{Im} \left(\frac{1}{Z_E} \right)$$

$$\gamma \Rightarrow Q_{46} \Rightarrow \alpha_E$$



RF magnetic field heating (TM mode)

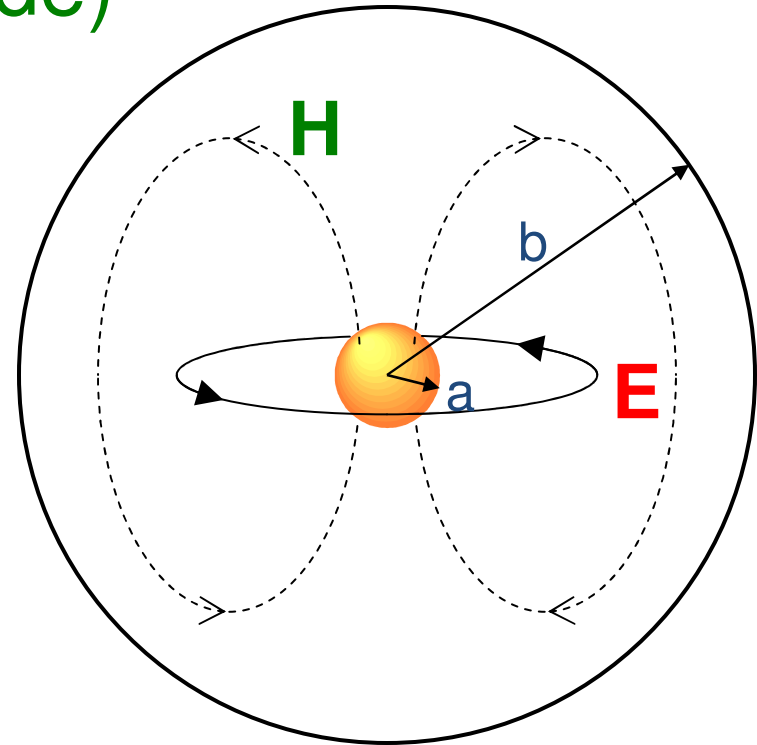
- Dispersion relation for the **TM₁₁₀** mode:

$$\frac{J'(\xi_1)}{J(\xi_1)} = \frac{\sqrt{\mu_1/\epsilon_1} N'(\xi_2)}{\sqrt{\mu_2/\epsilon_2} N(\xi_2)}$$

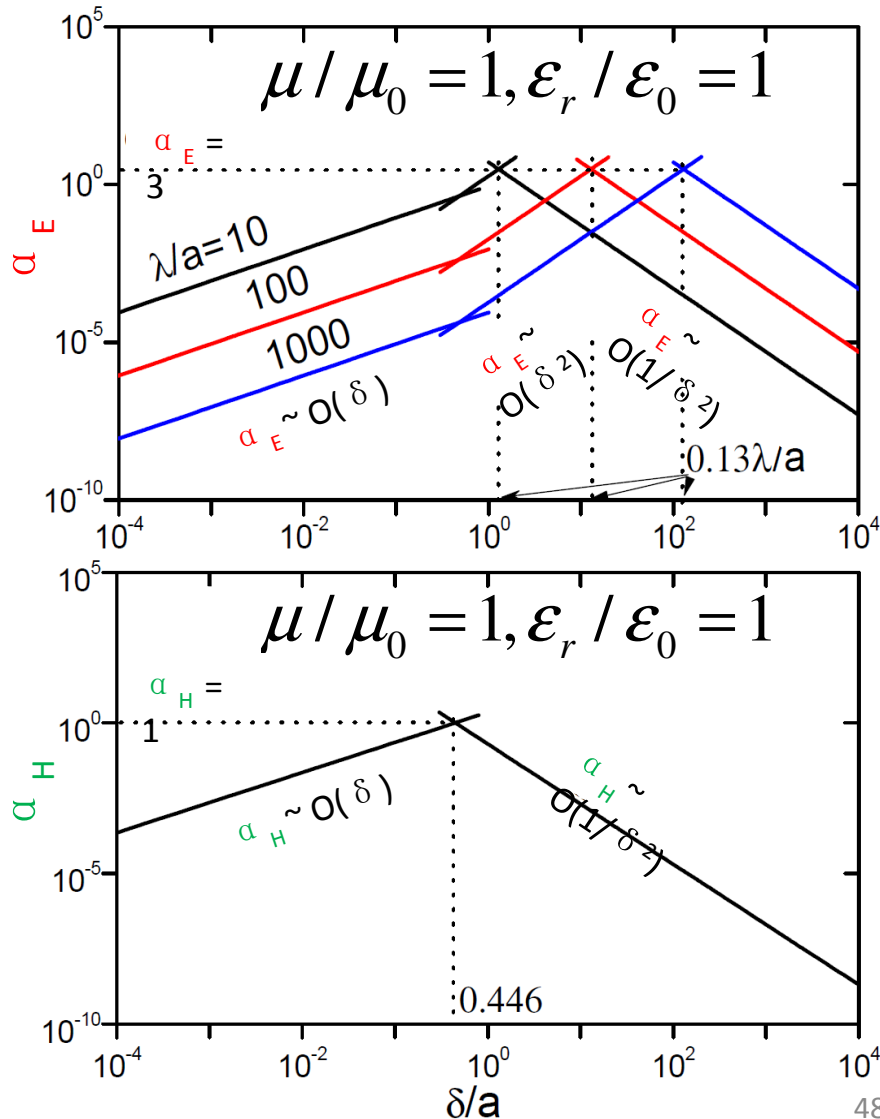
- For $a \ll b \sim \lambda$ (the only assumption):

$$\frac{\gamma_M}{\omega_M} = \frac{y(\eta_M)}{\eta_M j'(\eta_M) Y'(\xi_{2M})} \left[\frac{Y(\xi_{2M})}{\xi_{2M} Y'(\xi_{2M})} - \frac{J(\xi_{2M})}{\xi_{2M} J'(\xi_{2M})} \right] \text{Im} \left(\frac{1}{Z_M} \right)$$

$$\gamma \Rightarrow Q \Rightarrow \alpha_H$$



RF Power absorption due to small hemispherical protrusion on the surface



$$P_E = \alpha_E \omega \left(\frac{1}{2} \epsilon_0 E_0^2 \right) V$$

α_E : Electrical polarizability

$$V = \frac{2\pi}{3} a^3 = \text{Volume of protrusion}$$

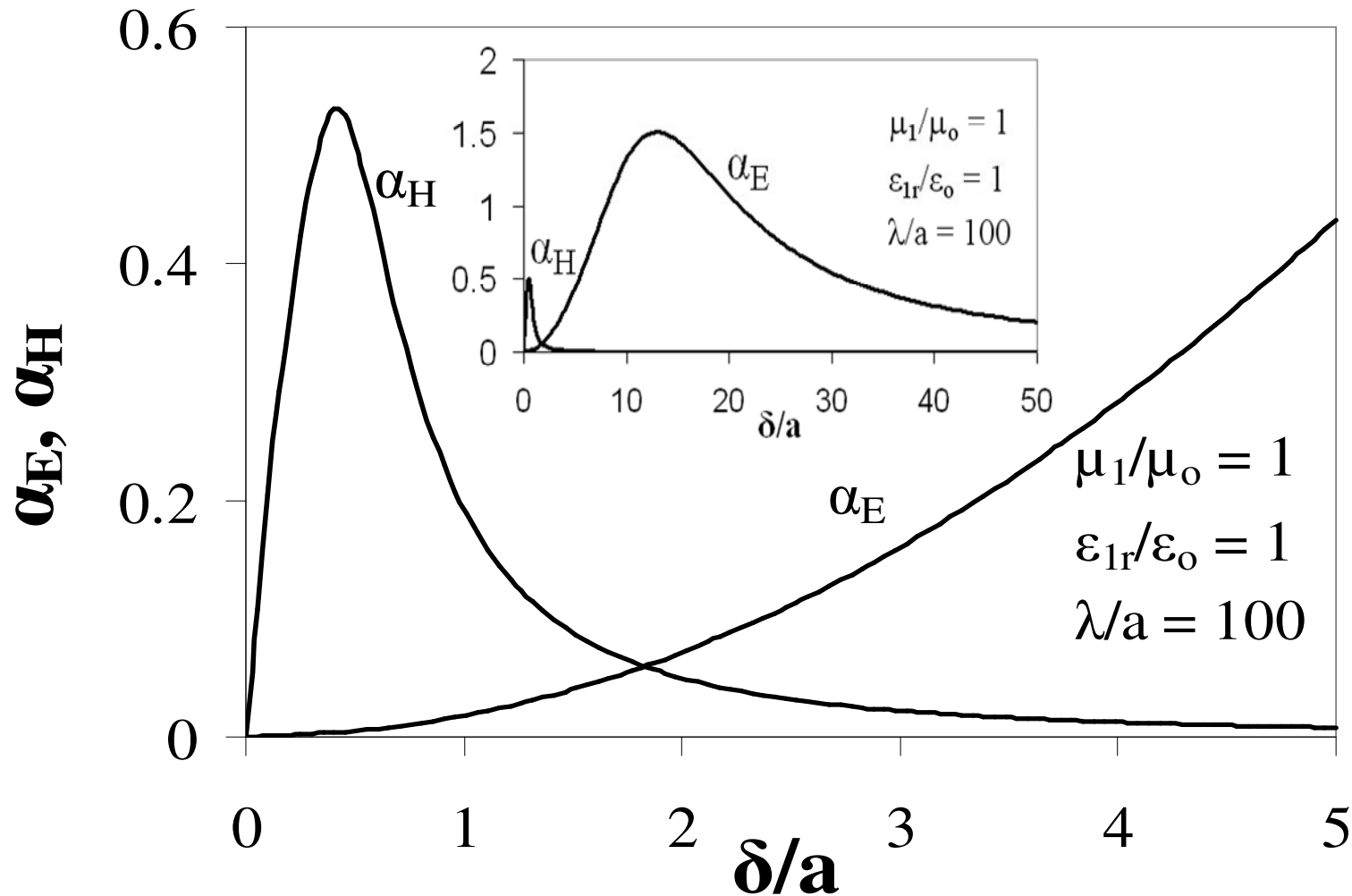
$$P_M = \alpha_H \omega \left(\frac{1}{2} \mu_0 H_0^2 \right) V$$

α_H : Magnetic polarizability

$$\delta = \sqrt{2/\omega\mu\sigma} = \text{skin depth}$$



Comparison of RF electric and magnetic field heating



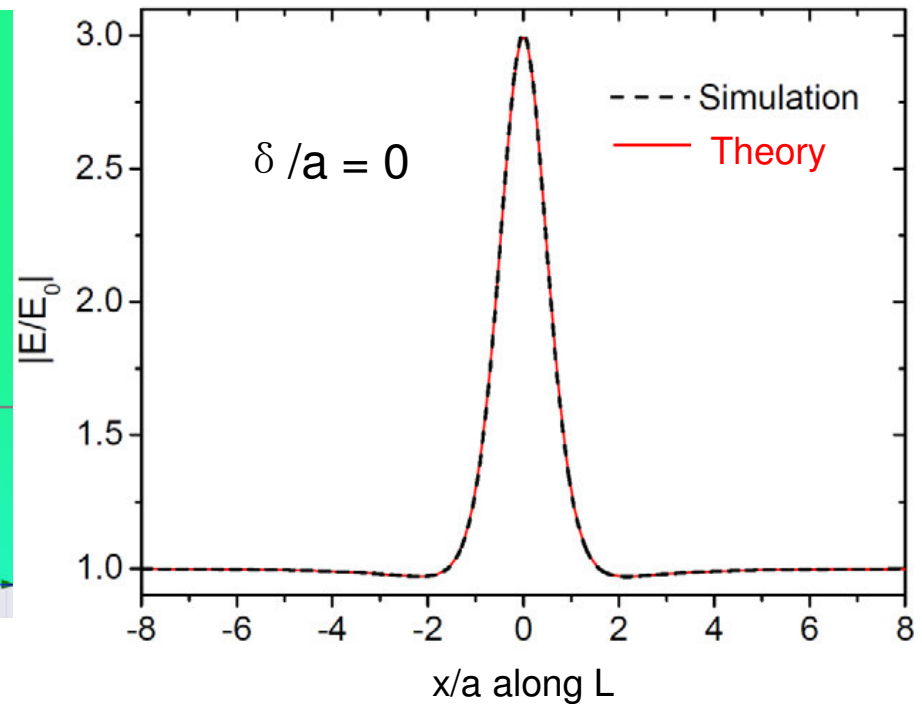
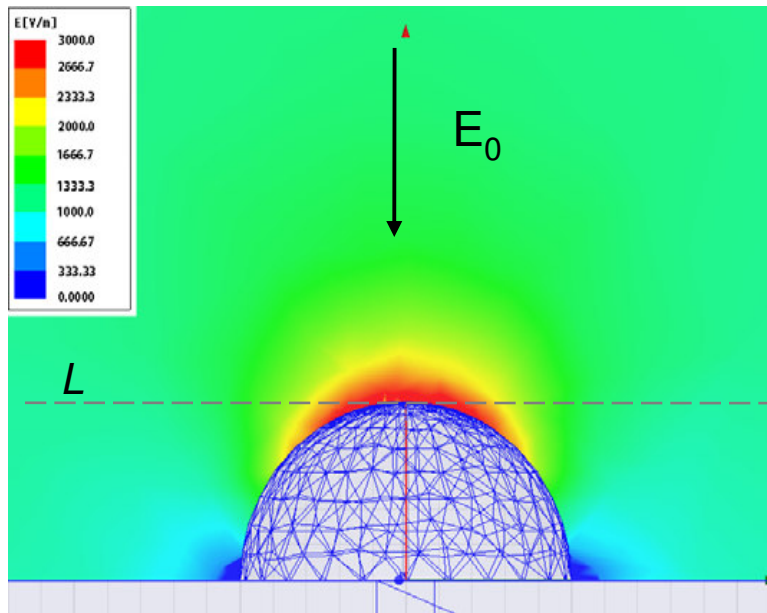
Heating by **H** greatly exceeds heating by **E** whenever $\delta \ll a$.
H generates an inductive **E**, which heats conductor ohmically.

A (non-magnetic) metallic protrusion dissipates a lot more magnetic RF energy than the electric RF energy if $\delta \ll a$.

Macroscopically, collections of such lossy particulates may effectively contribute to an **Imaginary Part of μ** , even though these particulates are **NON-magnetic**.



Electric field enhancement due to hemispherical protrusion on the surface

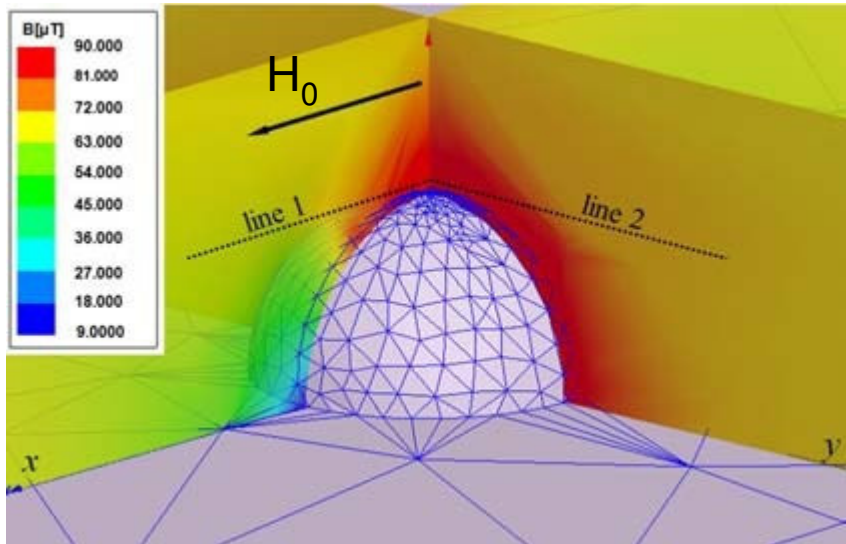


SIMULATION = MAXWELL 3D

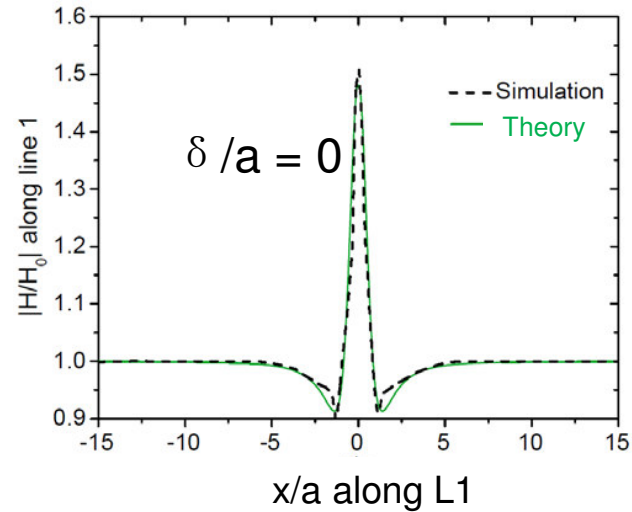
THEORY = Perturbation of Eigenfunction by Particulate



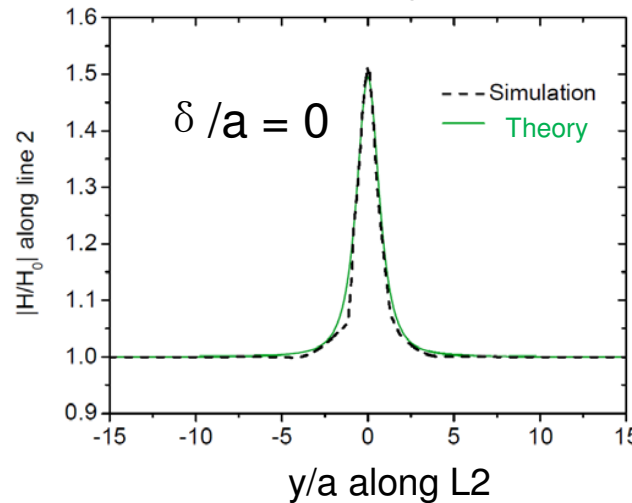
Magnetic field enhancement due to hemispherical protrusion on the surface



SIMULATION = MAXWELL 3D
 THEORY = Perturbation of
 Eigenfunction
 by Particulate



Line 1



Line 2



Conclusions

- The RF absorption by a small hemispherical protrusion is accurately calculated for arbitrary values of $(\epsilon_r, \sigma, \mu)$.
- A (non-magnetic) metallic protrusion dissipates a lot more magnetic RF energy than the electric RF energy if $\delta \ll a$.
- RF electric and magnetic field enhancements have been calculated from the perturbed eigenfunctions.
- Since α_E and α_H are computed for all $\omega, \sigma, \epsilon, \mu$, the enhanced surface resistance may readily be assessed, once the distribution and composition of the surface roughness is postulated.
- Essentially calculated the scattered radiation of an arbitrary incident wave by a protrusion.
- Unsolved: close-by bumps, a dimple, origin of the *HFSS scaling*, and *Microwave Handbook scaling*.

Ref: Zhang, Lau, Gilgenbach, J. Appl. Phys. 105, 114908 (2009)





Potential Future Works

- Frequency response and RF heating at contacts (a very difficult problem to analyze – huge contrasts in length scales such as resistive skin depths, sharp corners, film thickness; $a \sim \lambda$ regime)
- For bulk contacts, perform statistics on asperity geometries and resistivities using the newly derived analytic scaling laws (application specific)
- Evaluate ohmic heating at thin-film and bulk contacts based on the newly calculated current flow profile (watch out for temperature dependence of electrical resistivity, thermal conductivity, dimensions, and heat loss mechanisms)
- Comparison with measurements of contact resistance (very challenging if there is a huge contrast in dimensions or in resistivity in the contacting members, and if geometry is irregular in experiments)

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