
Interleaved ADCs Through the Ages

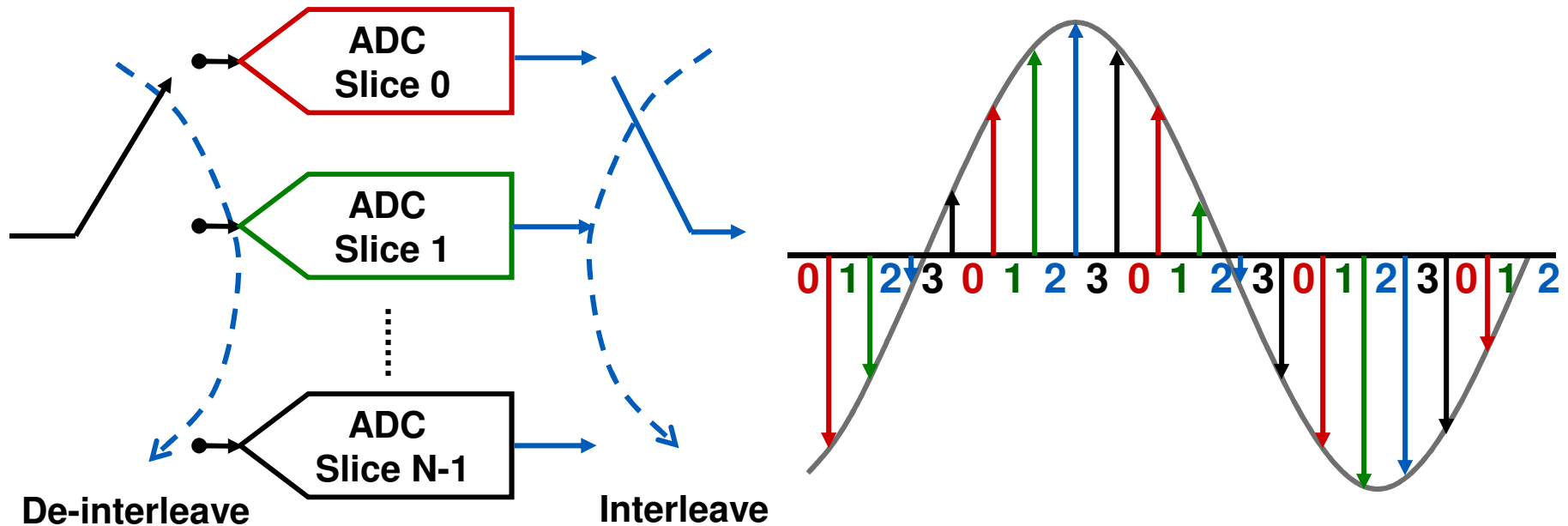
Ken Poulton
Keysight Laboratories

Topics

- What is Time Interleaving
- History of Time Interleaving
- ADCs for Oscilloscopes (and Other Instruments)
- Frequency Interleaving
- Issues in Interleaved ADCs and Some Solutions

But not really in that order...

Time Interleaving Idea



- Unit (slice) ADC speed is limited by comparator and amplifier speed
- Interleave multiple ADC slices to increase total sampling rate

Reasons for Time Interleaving

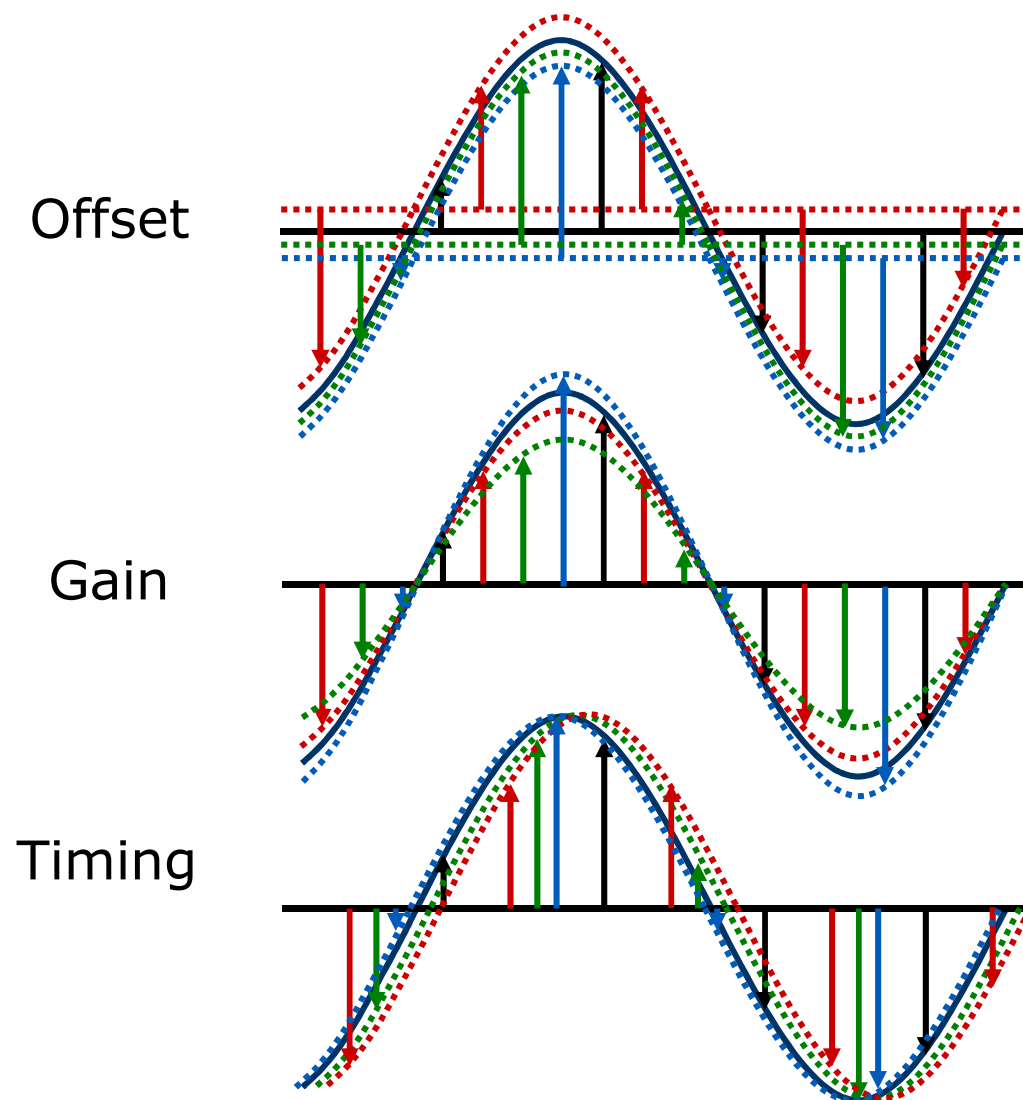
- Speed
 - Sample rate multiplied by N_{slices}
 - Nyquist BW multiplied by N_{slices}
- Power Efficiency
 - The ADC slice can operate at its most *efficient* sample rate
- Process choice
 - Can use a slower process for a given total sample rate

Issues with Time Interleaving

- Analog Bandwidth goes *down*
 - Many slices connected to the analog input
- Interleaving errors due to slice-to-slice mismatch
- Complexity
 - N times as much ADC hardware
 - Additional clock generation, much of it critical
 - Additional circuits to improve the BW and interleaving errors

Types of Interleaving Errors

Due to Slice-to-Slice Mismatch



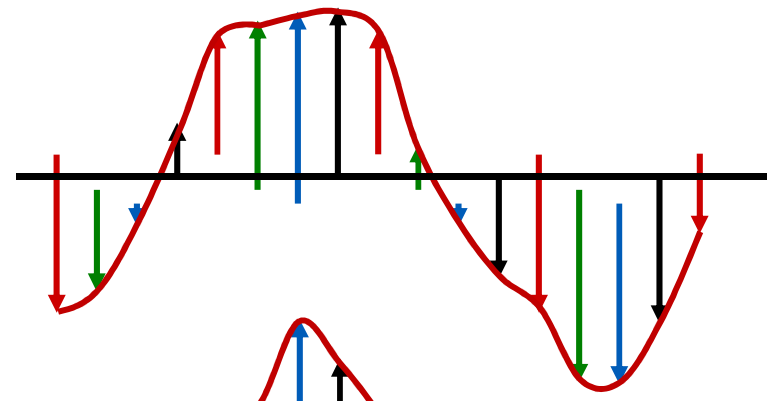
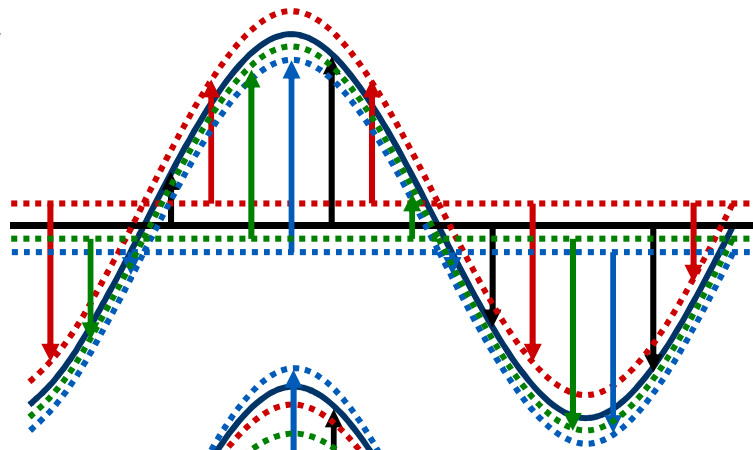
Results of Interleaving Errors

Error Type
(and size for
8 bits)

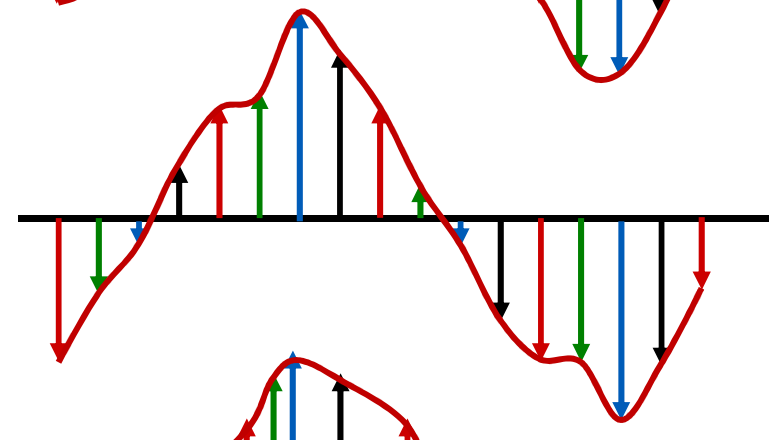
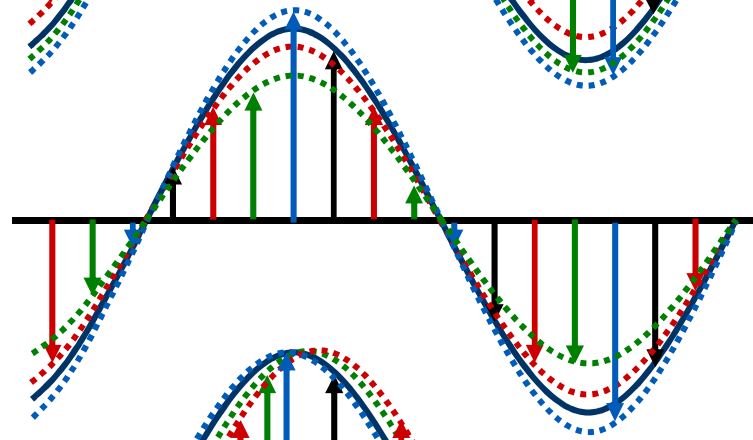
Slice Waveforms

Reconstructed Waveform

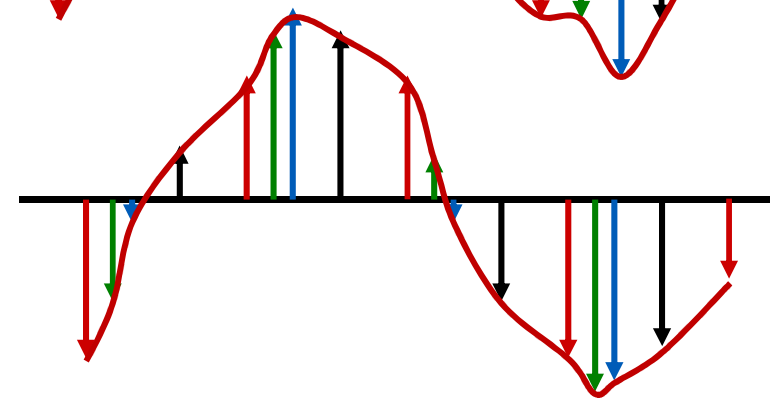
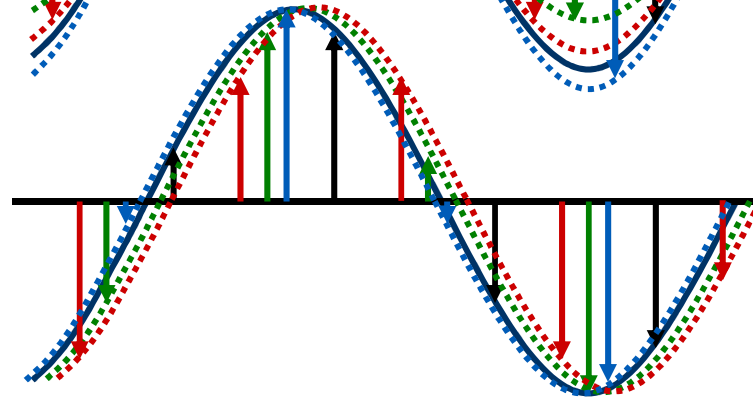
Offset
 $< 0.3\%$



Gain
 $< 0.3\%$

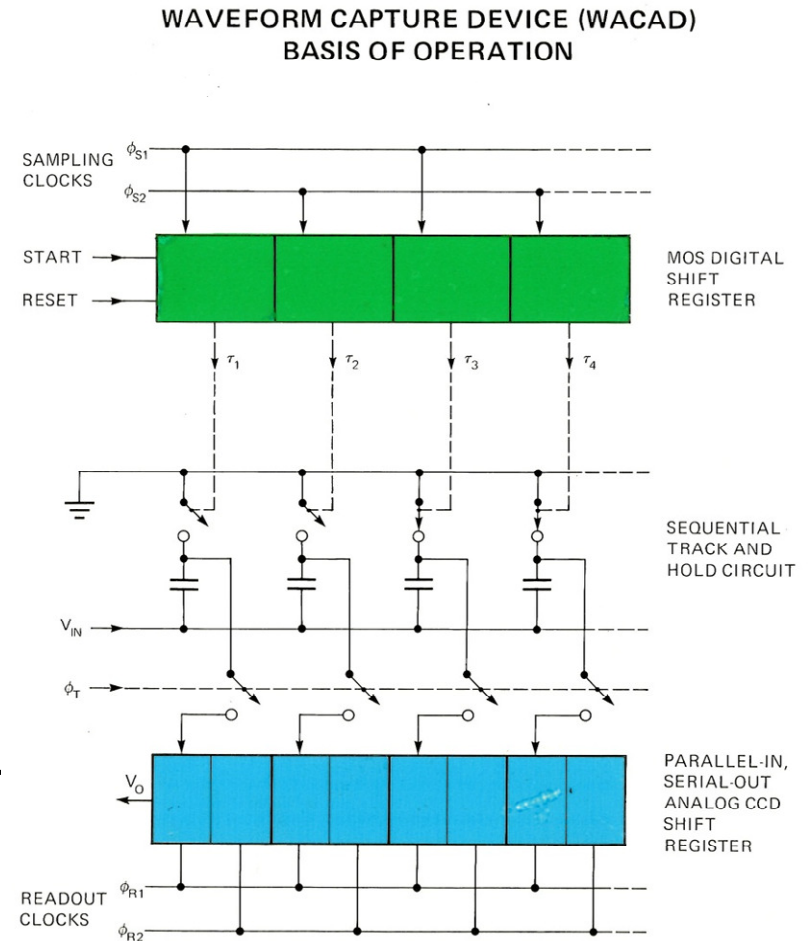


Timing
 $< 0.5 \text{ ps}$
for $F_{in} = 1 \text{ GHz}$



1980: First Interleaving - Analog Storage

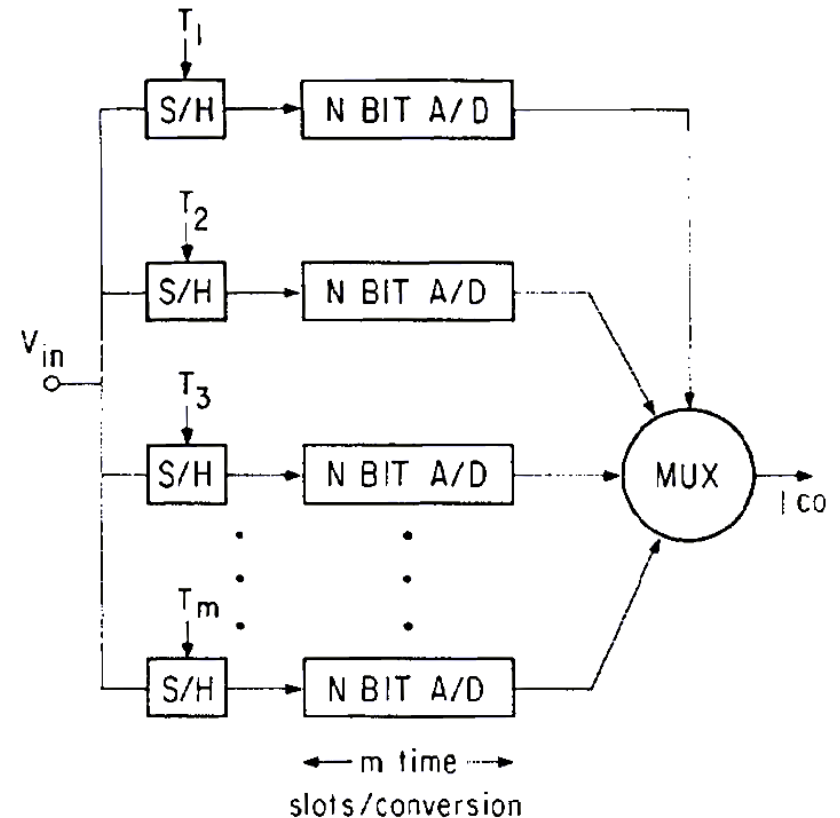
- First known publication on time interleaving (but not an ADC)
- Slice:
 - 200 parallel charge samplers triggered at 40 ns intervals
 - CCD shift register shifts out the analog samples slowly
- Off-chip ADC
- Four slices interleaved for 100 MSa/s total
- Correction for interleaving errors and CCD charge transfer effects
 - Captured waveform recycling
- 6 effective bits up to 30 MHz



"A 100 MS/s Waveform Digitizer with Comprehensive Error Correction", John Corcoran, Tom Hornak, 1980

1980: First Interleaved ADC

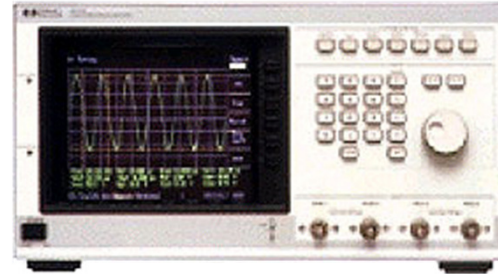
- ❑ Slice: 7-stage SAR pipeline at 0.625 MSa/s
- ❑ Four-way interleaved for 2.5 MSa/s
- ❑ Implemented in 10 μm CMOS
- ❑ 6.2 effective bits at 100 kHz in
- ❑ Identified and analyzed effects of offset, gain and timing mismatches



"Time interleaved converter arrays", Black, W., Jr. ; Hodges, D., ISSCC 1980 and JSSC 1980

1987: The First Interleaved ADC Product

□ HP 54111D
Digital
Oscilloscope



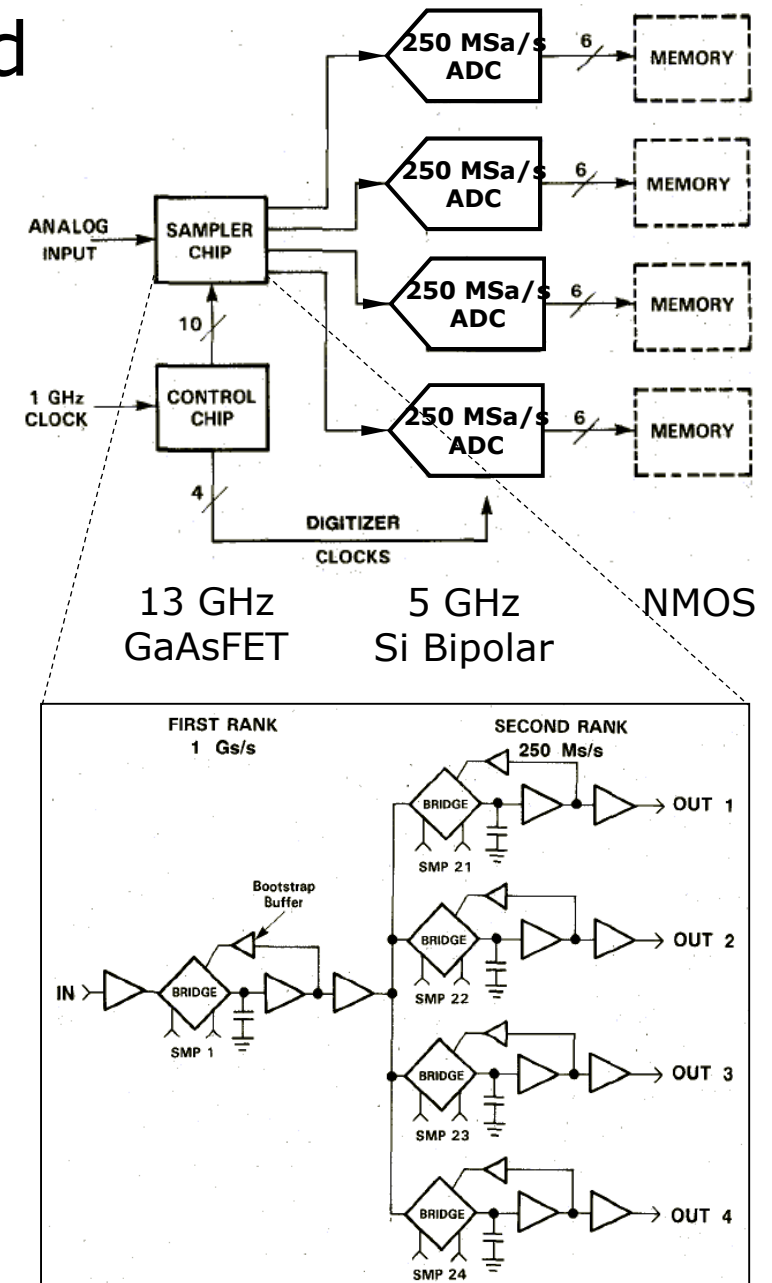
□ Approach

- 6-bit bipolar ADC at 250 MSa/s
- 4-way interleaving
- 2-rank GaAs T/H chip
- Custom NMOS memory chip
- Mix technologies for speed vs complexity

□ Mismatch control

- Offset and gain alignment DACs
- Single front-end sampler avoided timing calibration

"A 1 GHz 6-bit ADC System", Ken Poulton, John J. Corcoran, Thomas Hornak, IEEE Journal of Solid State Circuits, Dec 1987



Gaining Resolution From Interleaving

Limitations of 6-bit ADC resolution

- 6-bit LSB steps visible on the display
- Better DC resolution desired

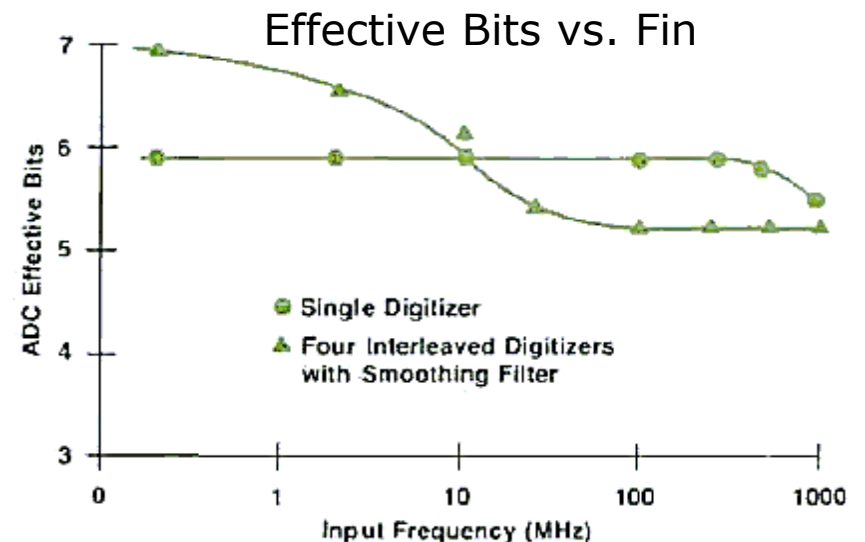
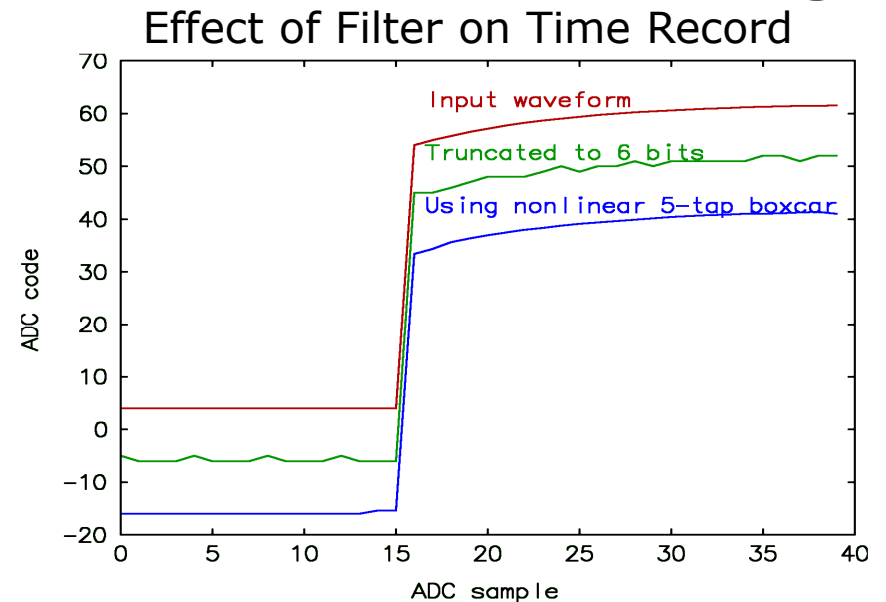
Solution:

1. Offset the 4 ADCs by $\frac{1}{4}$ LSB each
2. Apply a nonlinear boxcar filter:
 - Compute linear 5-tap boxcar
 - Limit the change to 0.5 LSB from the original value

Issues:

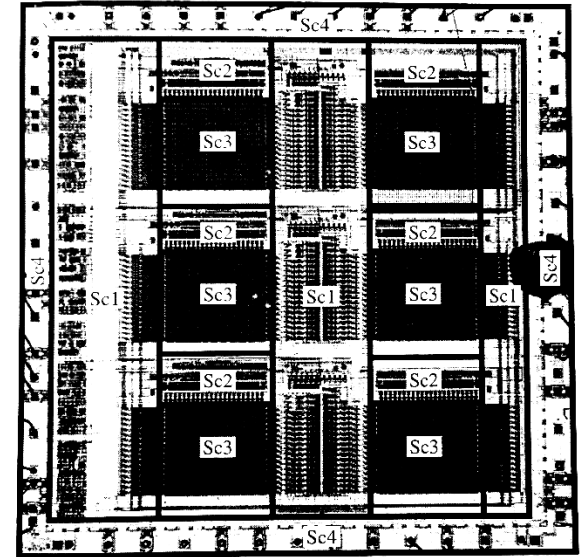
- “preshoot” on steps, quenching of fast near-LSB signals

Not needed in 8-bit scopes

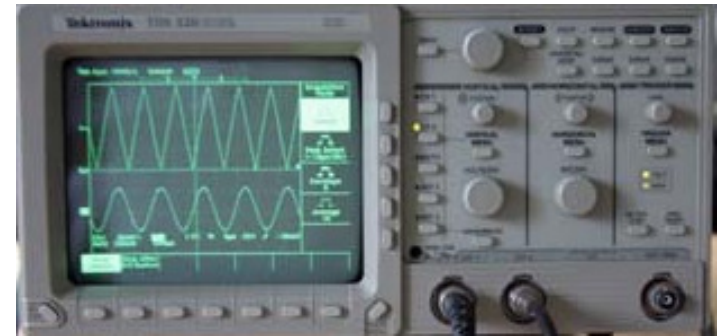


Analog Storage Products

- Analog storage chip
 - 33 interleaved samplers
 - 60.6 MHz clock -> 2 GSa/s
 - 22 storage caps per sampler
 - 2178 samples
- Readout to external ADC ~ 10 MSa/s

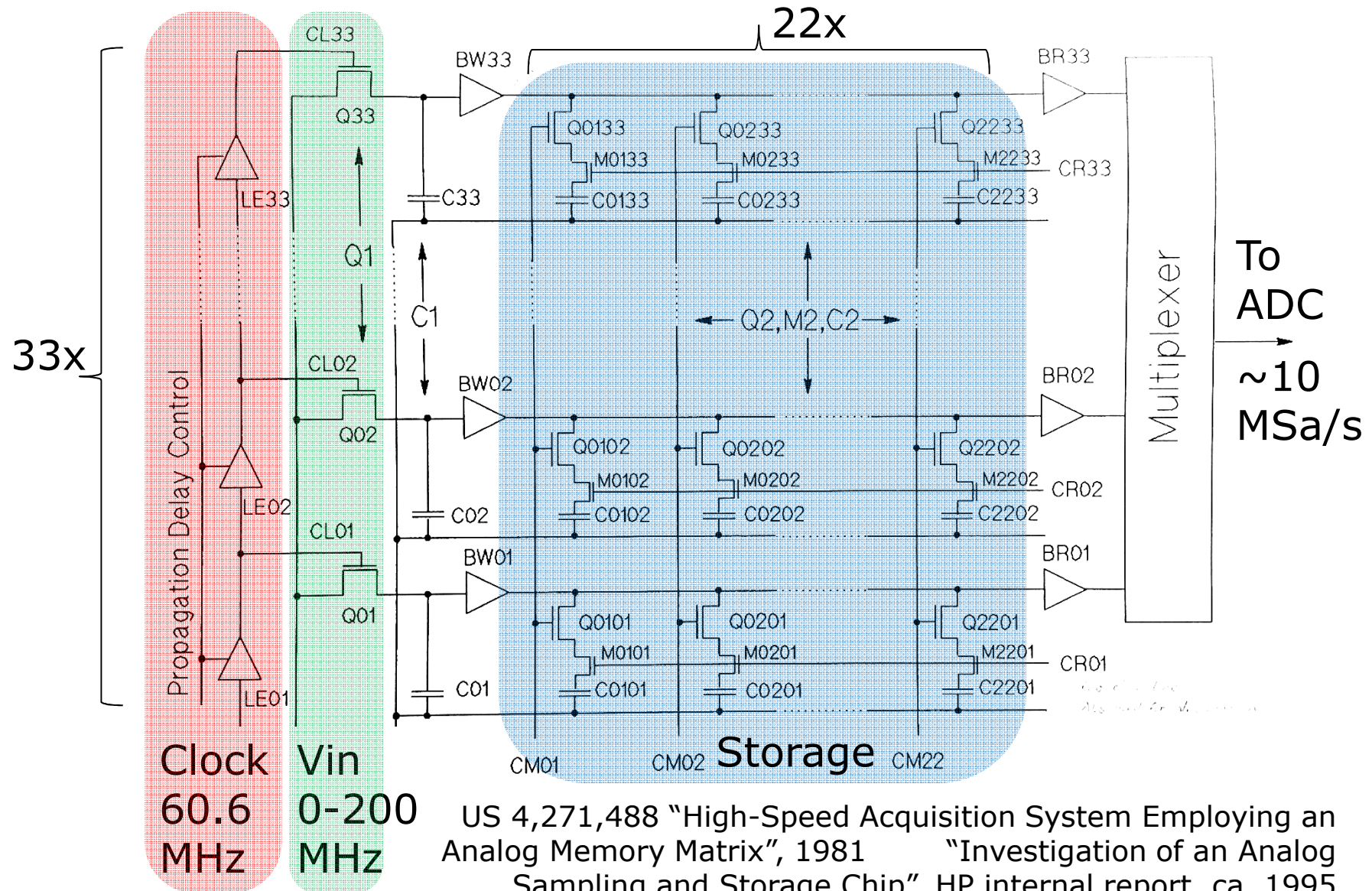


- ~ 1991 : Tektronix TDS 350 Scope
 - 200 MHz BW = high end
 - 1 GSa/s, 2 channels
 - 180 ps pp timing errors
=> ~ 4 eff bits at 200 MHz



- Today: handhelds apparently still use analog storage
 - 200 MHz BW = low end
 - 1.25 GSa/s
 - 10,000 samples

Analog Storage Chip Schematic

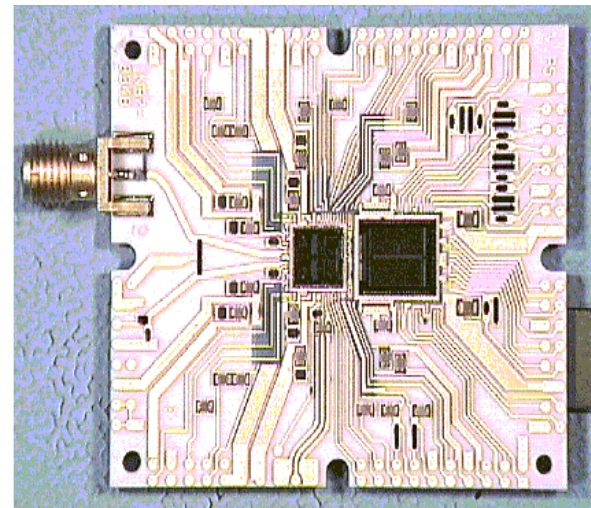


Interleaved ADCs in the 90s

- Mostly for Scopes
- Bipolar ADC
 - High Speed
 - Threshold Accuracy
- Low transistor count
 - Yield
 - High power per transistor
- High slice sample rate
 - Time-interleaving of 2-8 unit ADCs
- Front-end T/H topologies:
 - Diode Bridge
 - Switched Emitter Follower
 - Sample + Filter
- High Power
- Custom Packaging

E.g.: 1997 4 GSa/s Module

- 4 GSa/s, 7-bit bipolar ADC
Folding + Interpolating
- 2-way interleaving on chip -> 4 GSa/s
4-way interleaving on PCB -> 8 GSa/s
- Custom CMOS Memory
- Thick-film package, 13 W, expensive



Timing Calibration Methods

- S. Takeuchi, et al (Sony/Tektronix) used sawtooth waveforms
 - Hard to make accurate at high frequencies
 - "Analog-to-digital conversion method and apparatus", US 4345241, Aug 1982
- H. Katusmata (Sony/Tek) used pulse waveforms at a beat frequency where each slice sampled the same voltage on the waveform
 - Only uses the zero crossing information, needs precise control of the cal frequency.
 - H. Katsumata, et al, "Method and apparatus for calibrating an analog-to-digital conversion apparatus", US 4736189, Apr 1988
- John Corcoran (HP) used the two-rank T/H architecture to avoid timing calibration
 - Requires a full-rate sampler that adds power, noise, distortion
- Y.C. Jenq (Tektronix) used a DFT-based method
 - Uses DFT of the waveforms. Needs precise control of the cal frequency.
 - "Interleaved digitizer array with calibrated sample timing", US4763105, Jul 1987
- John Corcoran (HP) devised a way of measuring timing and amplitude errors based on per-slice best-fit analysis.
 - Allows a non-frequency-locked cal source for low-cost instrument self-cal.
 - "Timing and amplitude error estimation for time-interleaved analog-to-digital converters", US 5294926, 15 Mar 1994

Some Scope ADCs in the 90s

- HP in 1991
 - 500 MSa/s per slice, 1 GSa/s per chip, 13-GHz silicon BJT, folding ADC
 - 4, 8-way interleaved to up 4 GSa/s
Rush & Byrne, "A 4GHz 8b Data Acquisition System", ISSCC 1991
- HP in 1994
 - 4 GSa/s, 6 bits, 50-GHz GaAs HBT, folding ADC
 - Did not go into a product
Poulton, et al, "A 6-bit, 4 GSa/s ADC Fabricated in a GaAs HBT Process", 1994 GaAs IC Symposium
- HP in 1997
 - 2 GSa/s per slice, 4 GSa/s per chip, 7 bits, 25-GHz silicon BJT, folding and interpolating
 - 2, 4-way interleaved to 8 GSa/s
Poulton, et al, "An 8-GSa/s 8-bit ADC System", VLSI Symposium, 1997
- Other scope manufacturers
 - developed bipolar ADCs, but did not publish
 - followed the fast-slice, low-interleaving paradigm

Calibration and Correction Choices

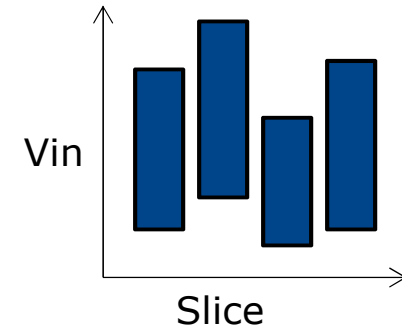
- Corrections = analog and digital circuits that improve the accuracy
 - E.g., Voltage adjust DACs, delay DACs, DSP
- Calibrations = the processes that set the correction parameters

- To Cal or Not To Cal
 - Accurate by Design (no calibration and correction)
 - Full matching and linearity requirements must met by design
 - Calibration and Correction
 - + Can relax analog performance requirements
 - + Analog circuits can be limited only by SNR, not matching
 - Smaller, lower power circuits
 - Added power for correction circuits
 - Added complexity for corrections and for calibrations

Analog vs. Digital Corrections

As fabricated:

Usable analog range of each slice is different

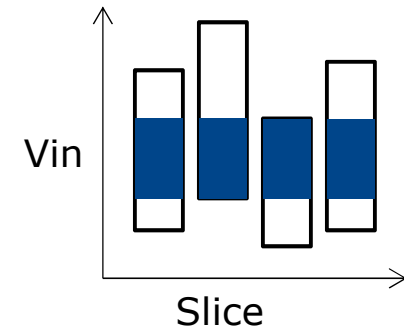


Digital correction:

Use only the voltage range that overlaps in all slices.

+ Calibration is digital and simple

-- SNR and resolution degraded

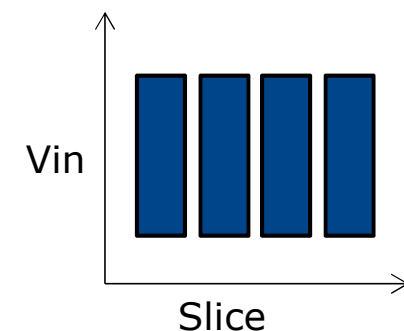


Analog correction:

DACs adjust the offset and gain of all slices to match

+ Preserves slice ADC resolution and SNR

-- More analog circuits to design



Correction Circuits

- Offset and gain corrections are simple in digital: just an adder and a multiplier per slice.
- Timing corrections in digital circuits require a delay filter
 - Bandwidth limited (e.g., 80% of Nyquist)
 - Significant complexity and power
- Timing corrections in analog require variable delays
 - Power can be high, proportional to delay/jitter
- Either analog or digital *or both* can be used
- More digital has been used in recent years

Calibration Choices

□ On-chip vs off-chip calibration (parameter computation)

- Off Chip:
 - + lower chip cost
 - + lower design risk
- On Chip
 - + Simpler for the ADC user

□ Foreground calibration vs. Background calibration

- Foreground (offline)
 - + Independent of the input signal
 - ADC user needs to provide cal signals
 - Dead time during calibration
- Background (online)
 - + Can be simpler for ADC user
 - More complex chip
 - Often places requirements on the input signal characteristics

"A 10-b 120-Msample/s Time-Interleaved Analog-to-Digital Converter With Digital Background Calibration", Shafiq Jamal, et al, JSSC, Dec 2002, pp1618-1627

IC Process Trends in the 90's

- Consolidation of fabs
 - In 1990, lots of captive IC fabs (e.g., 10 fabs in HP)
 - Late 1990's: \$1B fab cost squeezed out many players
 - Rise of commercial foundries with leading-edge CMOS
- Bipolar and BiCMOS
 - Increasingly a niche technology, focused on performance
 - Investment driven by specific market trends
 - ~1990: CPUs, ~2000: RF, ~2010: 25+ Gb/s comms & uW
 - Investment fades as CMOS gets fast enough for a given application
 - => Less predictable progress in bipolar
- CMOS
 - Following Moore's Law
 - Lower wafer costs
 - Higher integration can reduce system costs
 - More predictable progress in performance

Could We Use CMOS for Scope ADCs?

□ “Don’t be stupid”

- CMOS ADCs (ca 1995) were 25x slower than bipolar
- CMOS transistors are 10 times less accurate than bipolars

□ “But...”

- CMOS chips are cheap and transistors are virtually free
- Could integrate with DSP and memory
- Might be lower power

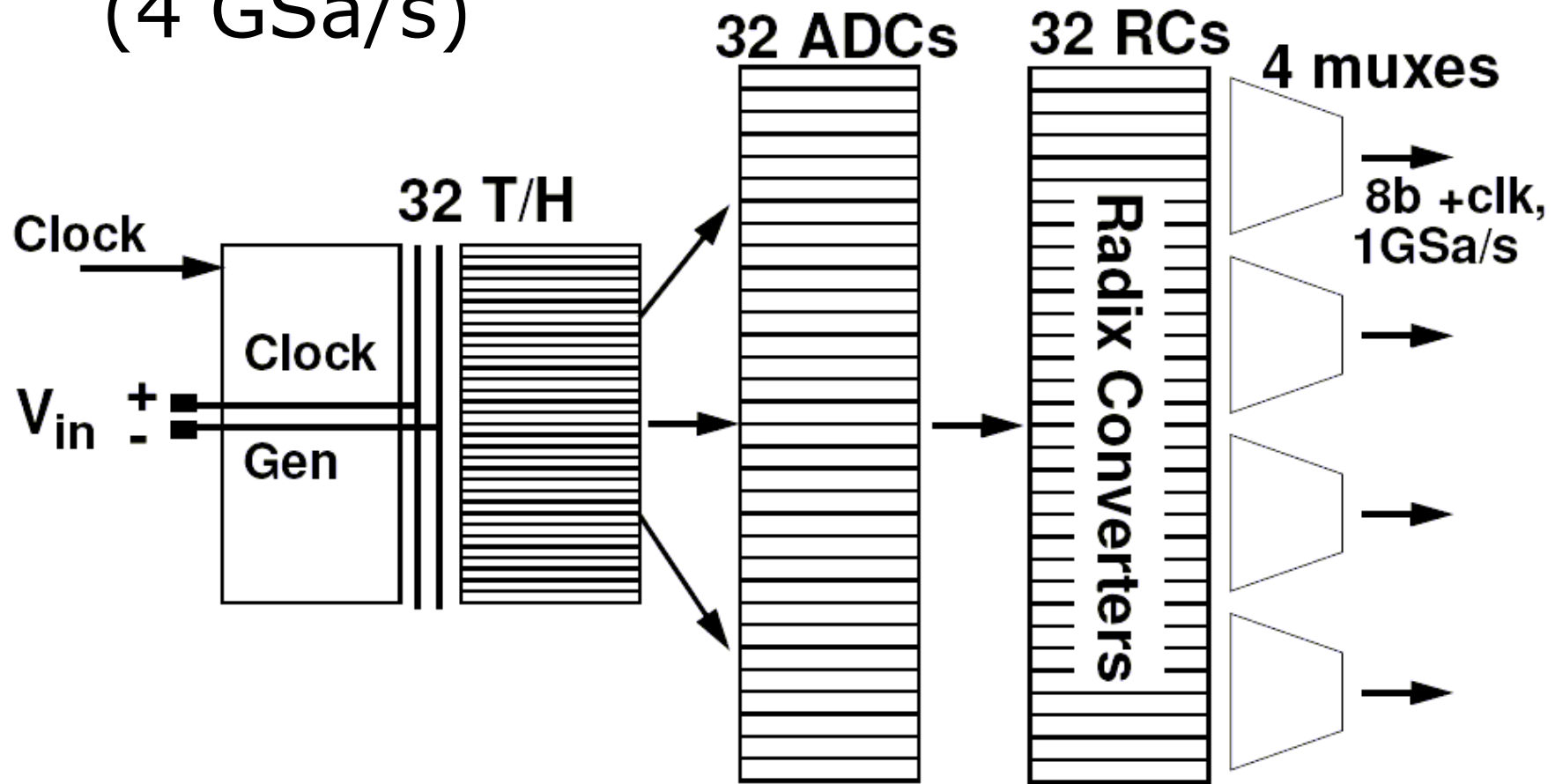
"If we don't do [ADCs] in CMOS, someone else will."
-- Dave Robertson, ADI, ISSCC ca 1995

Architecture: Massive Interleaving of Low-Power ADCs

- Focus on the strengths of CMOS: low power and high integration
- Start with a power-efficient CMOS ADC slice
- Time-interleave like crazy to get the required sample rate
- Fix up analog accuracy through calibration

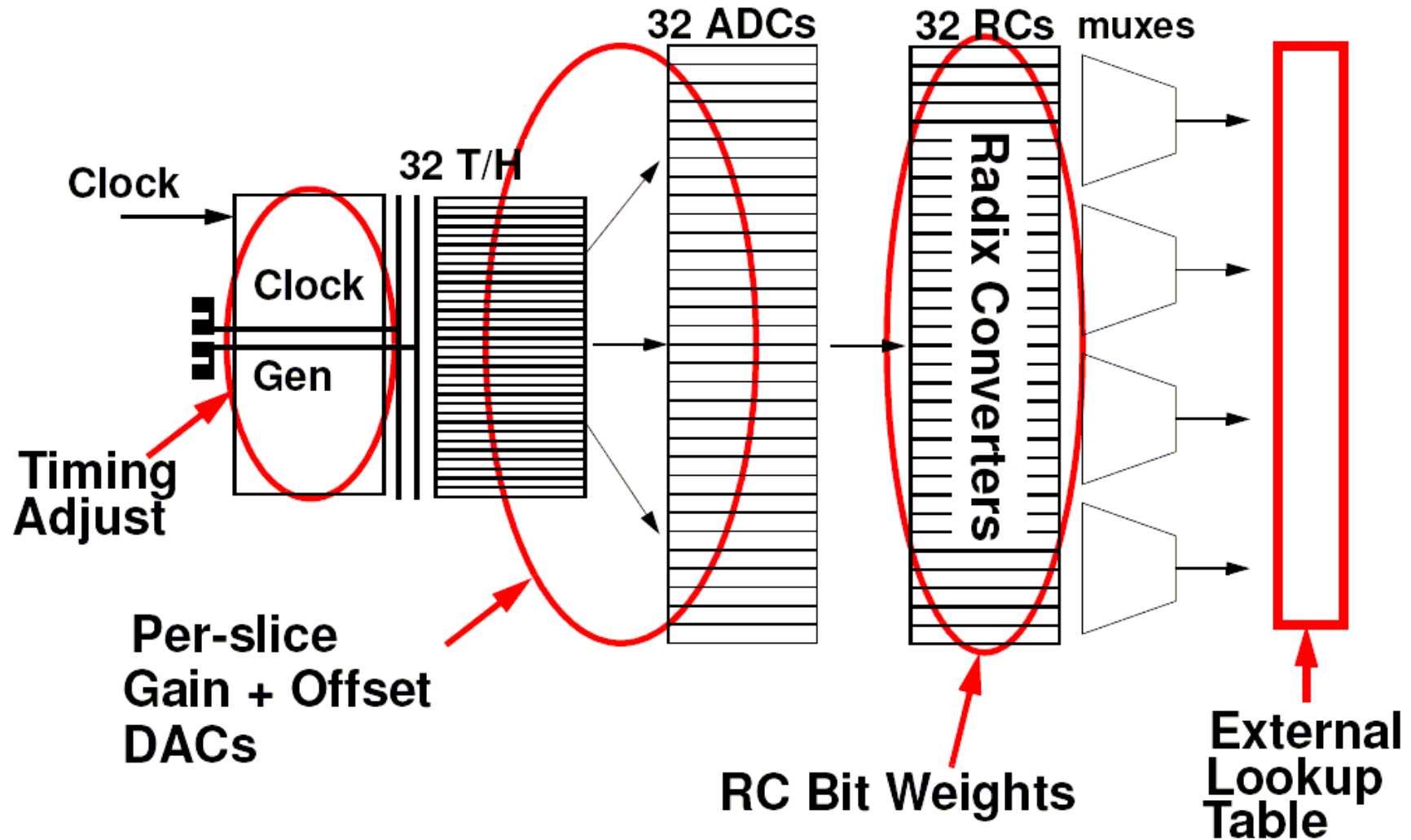
- Challenges:
 - Track/Hold : Bandwidth, Signal distribution
 - Clock generation
 - ADC: Trading Sample Rate, Power, area, # of slices
 - Many Places for Mismatch

2002: CMOS ADC Chip Architecture (4 GSa/s)



- 32 time-interleaved pipeline ADCs at 125 MSa/s
- Net sample rate is 4 GSa/s

What Is Calibrated?



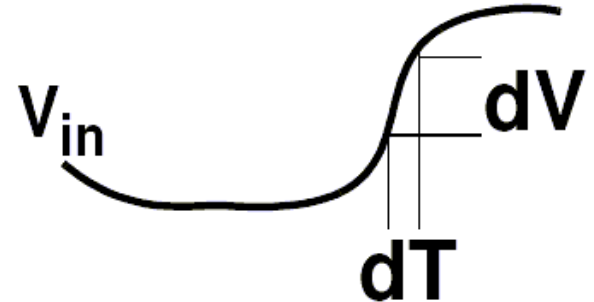
- Foreground (offline) Calibration with DC and Pulse sources

Advantages of a Calibration Approach

- Device mismatch tolerance increased
 - In this case, from $\sim 0.25\%$ to $\sim 10\%$ mismatch
 - Can design for SNR rather than mismatch
 - Smaller transistors
 - Lower power
- Second-order effects can be covered by the same calibrations
 - Smaller device mismatch effects (e.g., layout-related ΔW)
 - Delay and gain mismatches due to layout asymmetries
- Adjust DACs need not be tightly matched, merely have enough resolution

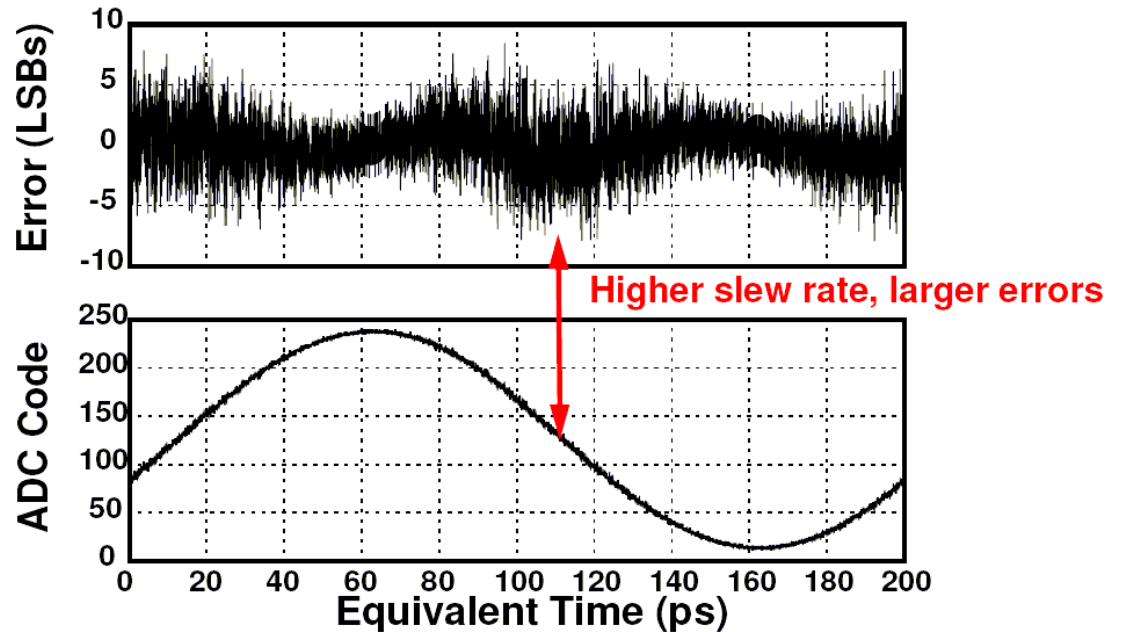
Timing Errors

- Fast input signal converts a sample timing error (dT) to an apparent voltage error (dV).



Rule of Thumb:

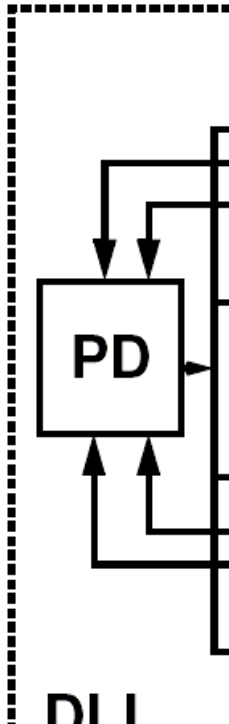
1 ps rms @ 1 GHz F_{in}
--> 7 effective bits

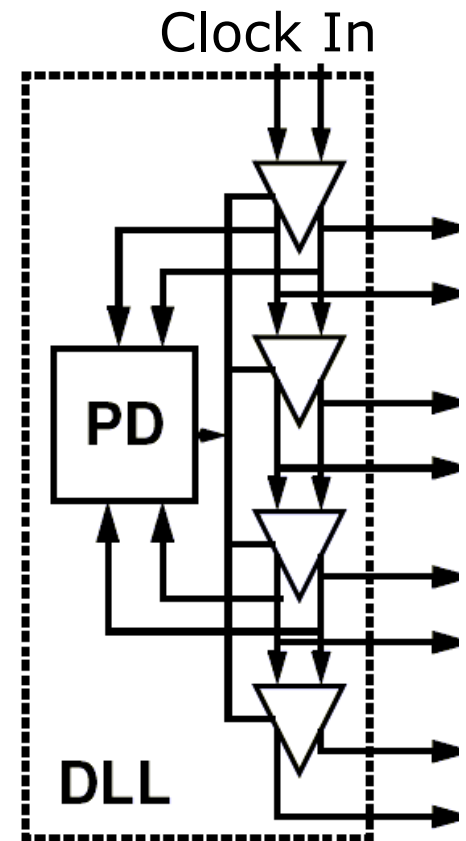


Clocks for Front-End Samplers

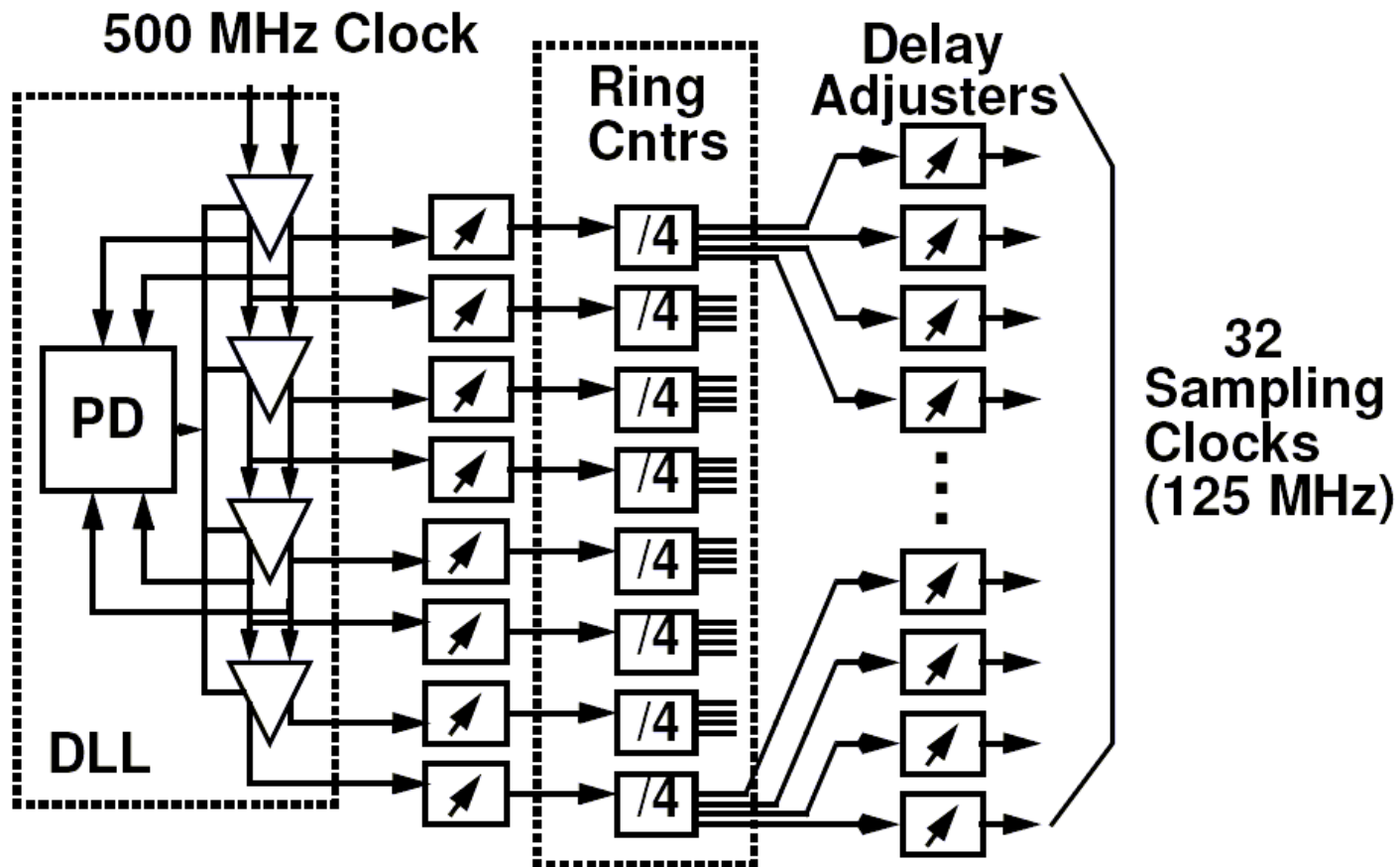
- Single Front-end Sampler
 - **One** low-jitter clock (30-1000 fs rms jitter, dep. on application)
 - N reduced-accuracy clocks (1-10 ps rms jitter and alignment)
 - Second rank requires fairly accurate clocks due to analog settling effects
- Interleaved front-end samplers
 - **N** Full-accuracy clocks
 - 30-1000 fs rms jitter ***and alignment***

Using Lower Input Clock Frequencies

- Full-rate clock
 - Used by earlier bipolar designs
 - Just divide the input clock down to get the slice clocks
 - Low jitter, modest calibration
 - High-frequency clock sources are expensive
 - Low-rate clock
 - $F_{\text{clock}} \ll F_s$ (e.g., 500 MHz $\ll$ 4 GSa/s)
 - Saves power
 - Full rate just infeasible for some CMOS ADCs
 - N parallel samplers requires N full-accuracy clocks
 - DLL for N clocks, constant jitter spec
 - N/2 stages
 - Stage power scales as N to maintain jitter
 - $\Rightarrow$ DLL power scales as N^2
- 



Hybrid Clock Generator

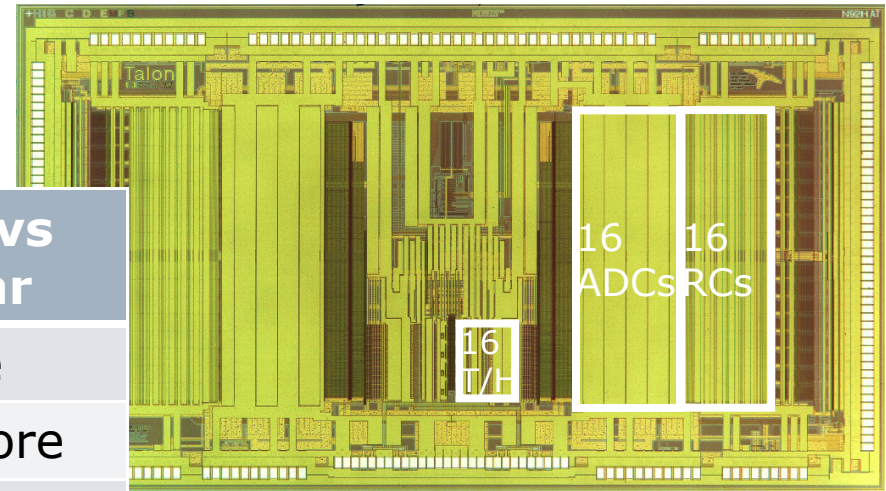


- 4 GSa/s, ~ 1 ps thermal jitter in 0.35 μ m CMOS
- Timing errors: before cal 10 ps rms, after cal 0.8 ps rms

US 6,956,423 "Interleaved clock signal generator having serial delay and ring counter architecture", Oct 2005, Robert Neff

4-GSa/s 8-bit ADC Results

	CMOS ADC	CMOS vs bipolar
Sample Rate	4 GSa/s	same
Resolution	8 bits	1 bit more
SNDR	7.0 effbits	0.5 bit more
BW	1 GHz	50%
Interleave	32-way	16x more
Transistors	300K	100x
Area	28 mm ²	~75%
Power	4.6 W	1/3
Cost		1/5



0.35-um CMOS
7.1 mm x 4.0 mm
300,000 FETs
4.6 W

"A 4-GSample/s 8b ADC in 0.35-um CMOS", Ken Poulton, Robert Neff, Art Muto, Wei Liu, Andy Burstein, Mehrdad Heshami, ISSCC, pp 166-167, Feb 2002

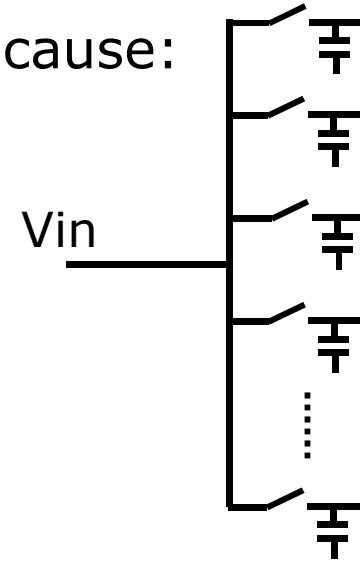
Issue: Coping With Wide Inputs

□ Many parallel samplers connected to V_{in} cause:

- High capacitance, e.g., 2 pF
- Physical distribution challenges
 - Binary tree has matched lengths, but much more C

□ Approaches:

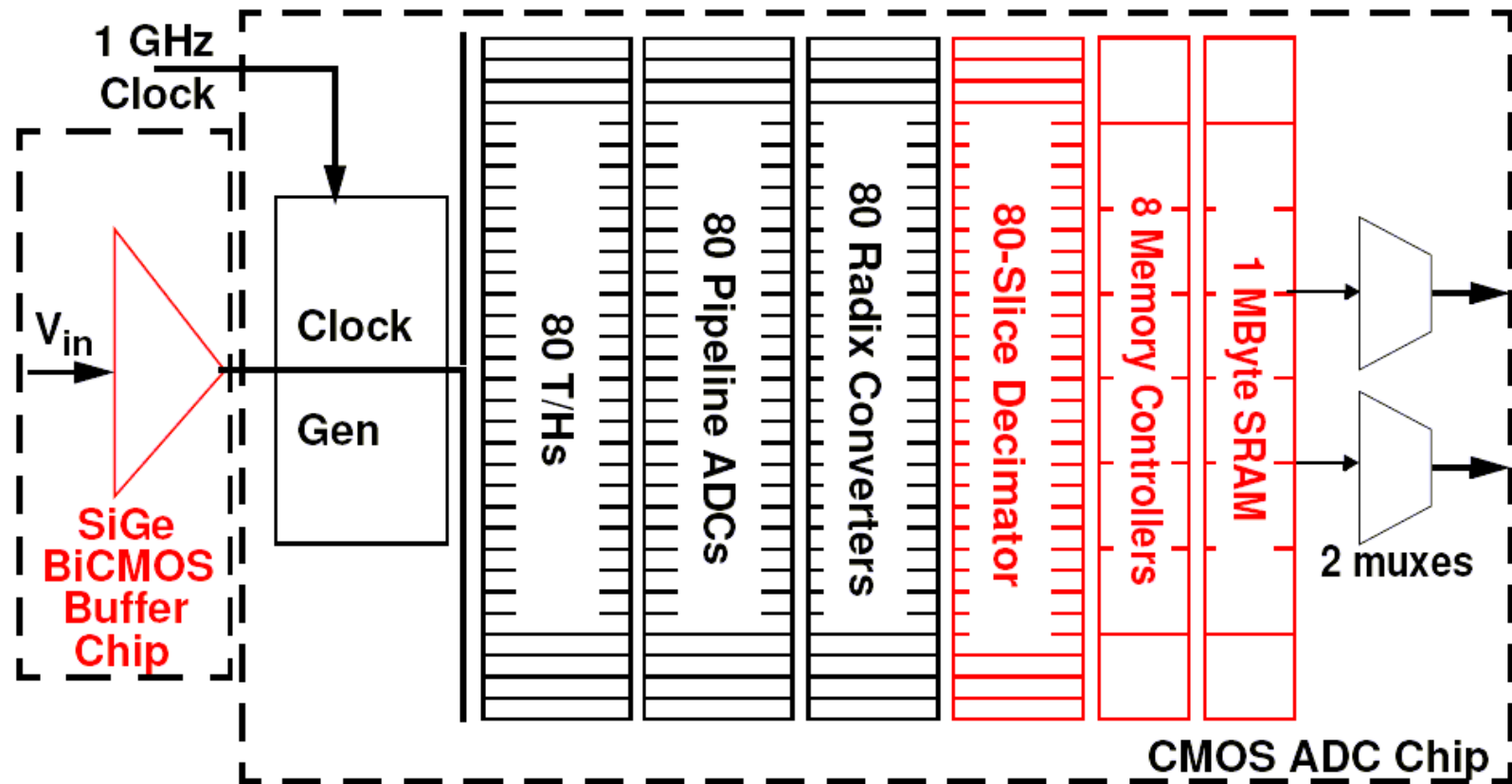
- Lower the source impedance
 - e.g., 25 ohms R_{in}
 - Add a buffer amplifier
- Reduce the sampler count connected to V_{in}
 - Each sampler feeds multiple ADC slices
 - Each sampler feeds multiple second-rank samplers



Issue: The Digital Firehose

- Current gigasample ADCs spew out 4 to 500 Gb/s
 - I/O power can be as much as ADC power
- Separate Receiver Chip
 - FPGAs with 50+ SerDes can cost \$1000's apiece
 - Custom data capture chips cost millions for design
 - Much lower power and per-chip cost
- On-chip storage
 - Can reduce system cost and power
 - Limited memory size
 - Reduces the range of products possible
 - Slower readout leads to ~90+% deadtime
- On-chip DSP
 - Can reduce the data rate by 2-10x for applications such as datacomm

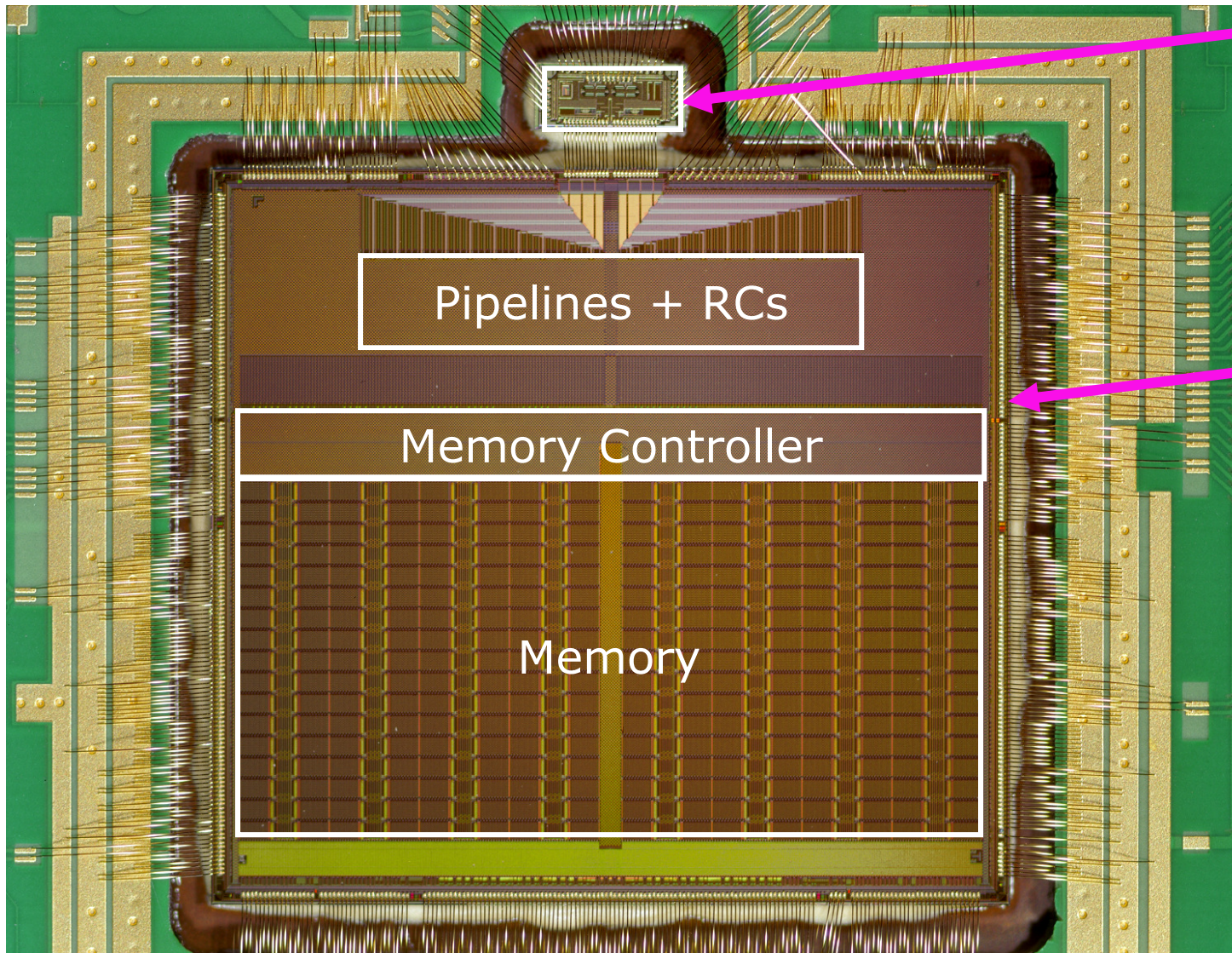
2003: 20-GSa/s 8-bit ADC, 0.18 μ m CMOS



- 2x faster process, 5x higher sample rate, 6x higher BW
- 80 ADC slices, larger C_{in} --> SiGe input buffer chip
- 160 Gb/s data rate --> 1 MB on-chip sample memory

"A 20 GS/s 8 b ADC with a 1 MB memory in 0.18- μ m CMOS", Poulton, Neff, Setterberg, Wuppermann, Kopley, Jewett, Pernillo, Tan, Montijo, ISSCC, pp 318-319, Feb 2003

20 GSa/s ADC Module



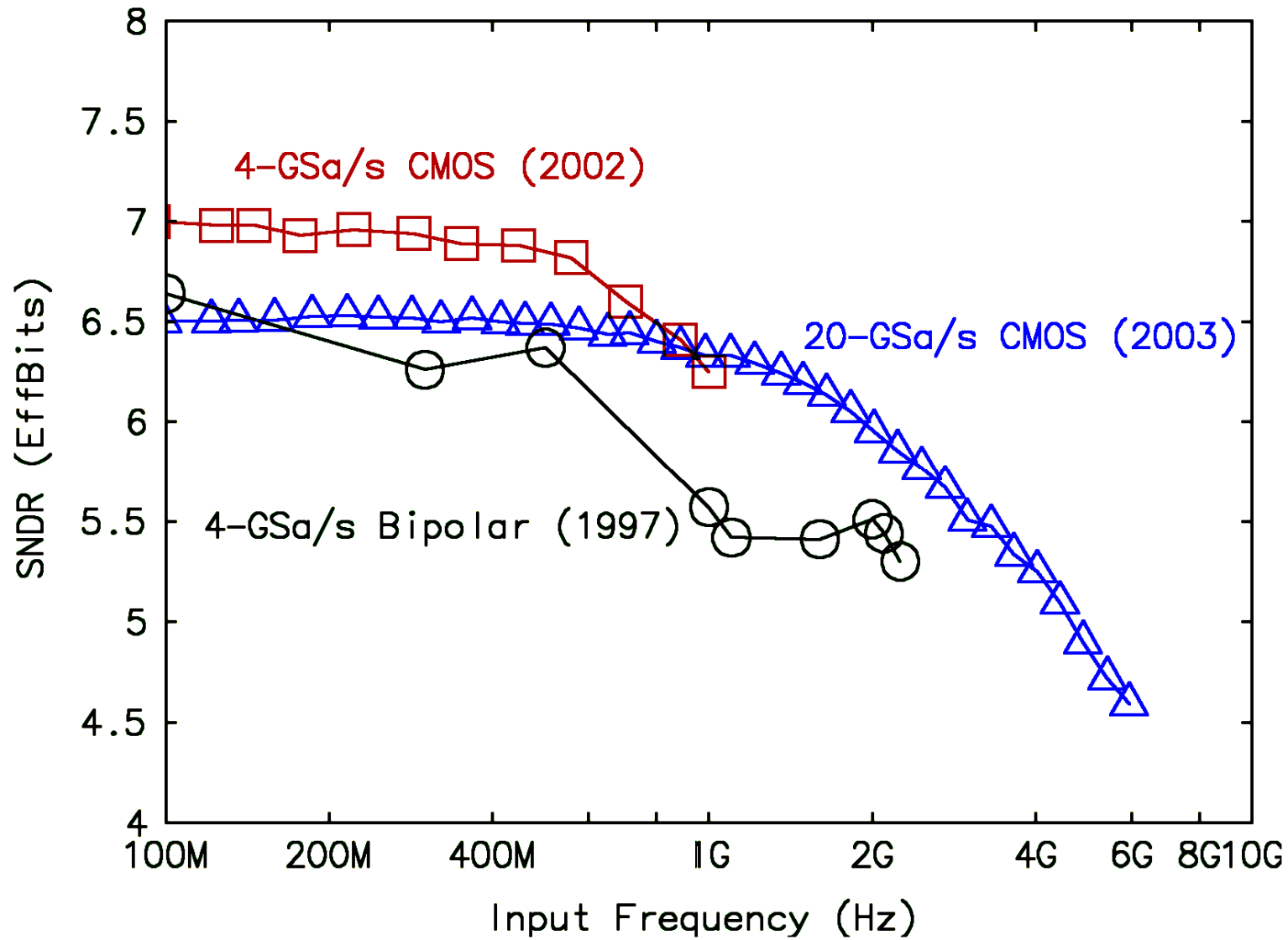
Buffer:
40 GHz SiGe
1 x 2 mm
1000
transistors
1 W

ADC:
0.18-um
CMOS
14 x 14 mm
50M
transistors
9 W

Package:
438-ball BGA
35 x 35 mm

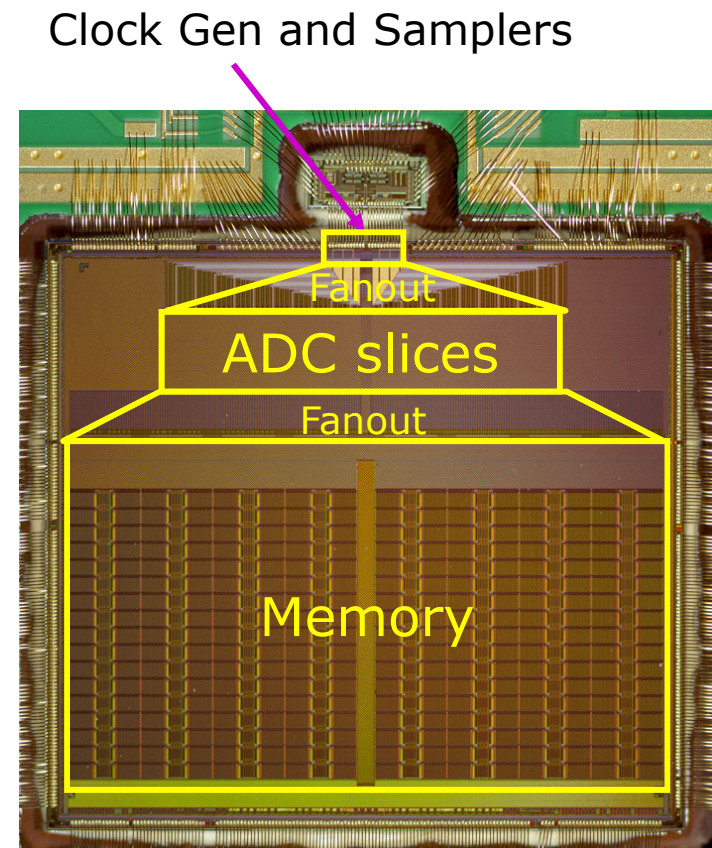
Performance of Bipolar and CMOS ADCs

Effective Bits vs. f_{in}



Issue: Clock and Signal Distribution

- ❑ Multiple samplers requires distributing clocks
- ❑ Tradeoff between dense samplers and larger size of the ADC slices
- ❑ Both clock and analog signal distribution can take a lot of area and power
- ❑ Example: 80-slice ADC:
 - samplers: 1.9 mm wide
 - ADCs: 9 mm
 - Memory 13 mm



Other Issues for Massive Interleaving

- Frequency-dependent mismatch
 - Small BW mismatches can be mostly corrected as timing mismatches
 - Larger BW or rolloff shape mismatches won't work this way
 - Electromagnetic modeling of Vin distribution network
 - Digital time-varying filter can provide correction **
- Kickback into analog input
 - When a T/H reconnects to the input, kickback (from previous sample) is injected into the input network
 - Can cause an "echo" from $\sim N$ samples earlier
 - Can create a high-slew disturbance while another T/H is sampling
- Crosstalk among slices
 - Power supplies and shared bias lines
 - Clock networks
 - Analog sample fanouts

** "A Polynomial-Based Time-Varying Filter Structure for the Compensation of Frequency-Response Mismatch Errors in Time-Interleaved ADCs", Johansson, IEEE Sig Processing, 2009

Time Interleaving for High Dynamic Range

- Application area: RF receivers
- Key Specs for instruments

	<i>Scopes</i>	<i>RF Instruments</i>
SFDR	40-50 dB	60-80 dB
SNR	~7 bits	~10 bits
BER**	1/year	1/year

** BER = Bit Error Rate = Metastable Error Rate

- Instruments require very low rates, e.g., 10^{-17}
 - Due to peak detect mode
- Communications channels can allow rates as high as 10^{-8}
 - Use of DSP and error correction

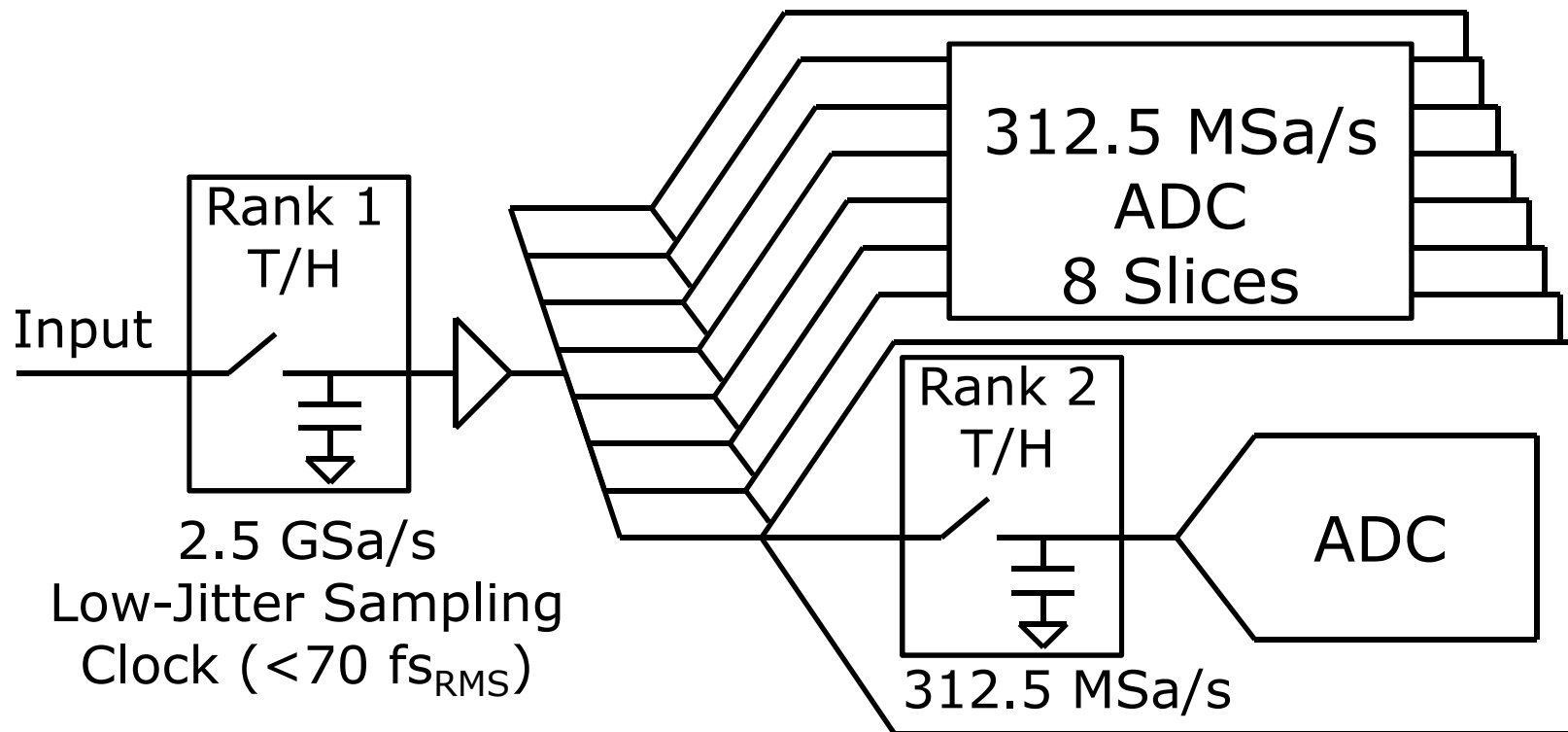
A 14-bit 2.5-GSa/s 8-Way-Interleaved ADC

Goals and resulting design decisions

- 10^{-17} Metastable error rate
 - Interleaved
 - Low slice sample rate (312.5 MSa/s), 8 slices
- 80 dB SFDR
 - Single full-rate first sampler to suppress timing mismatch
 - Background calibration for gain and offset mismatch
 - Digital Dynamic Linearity Corrector (DLC)
- 60 dB SNR
 - Background calibration for pipeline inter-stage gain parameters
- No assumptions about input signal
 - Background cal injects its own dither signals

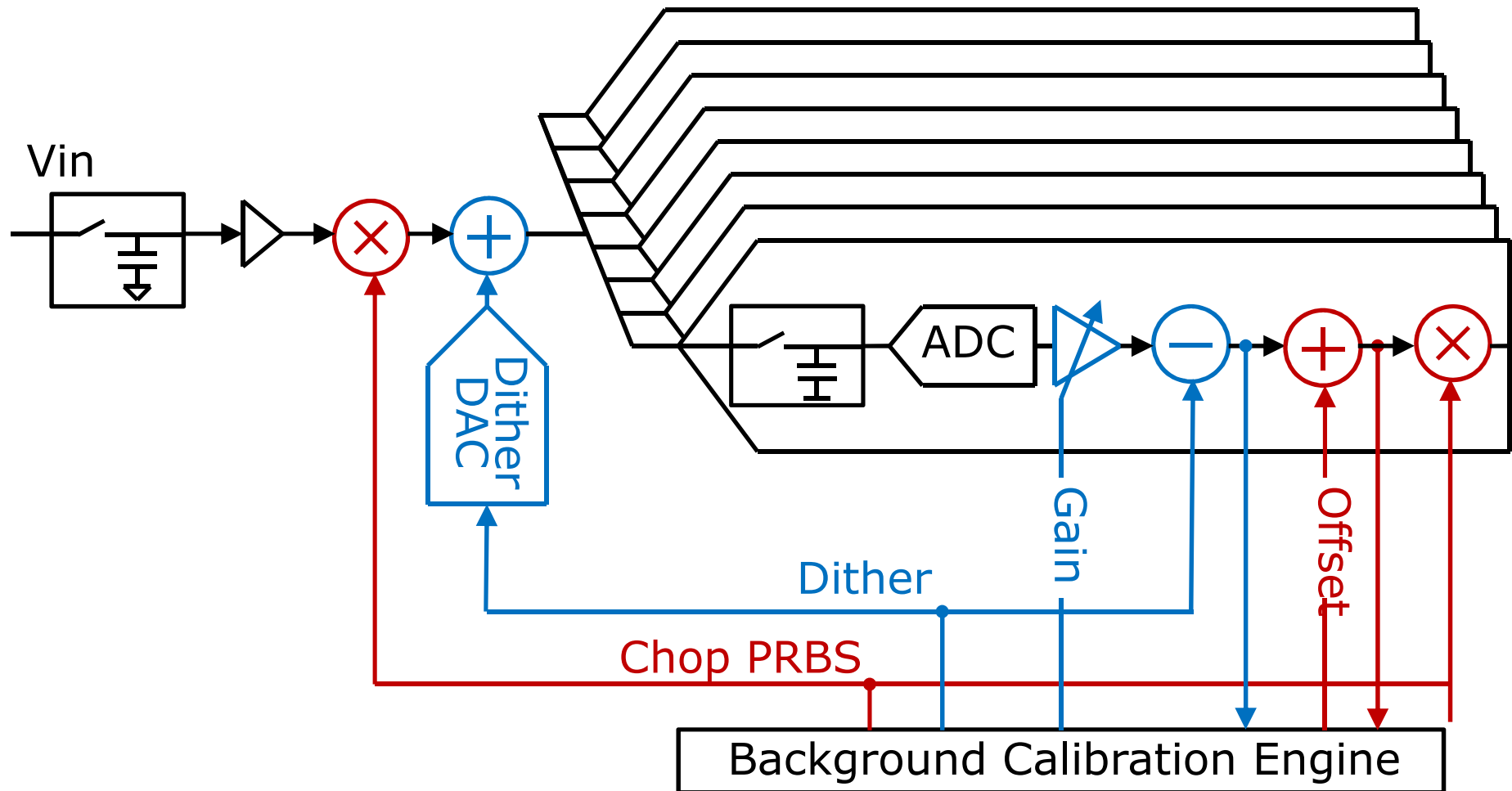
"A 14b 2.5GS/s 8-Way-Interleaved Pipelined ADC with Background Calibration and Digital Dynamic Linearity Correction", Setterberg, et al, ISSCC 2013

Minimize Sampling Time Errors with a 2-rank Track and Hold



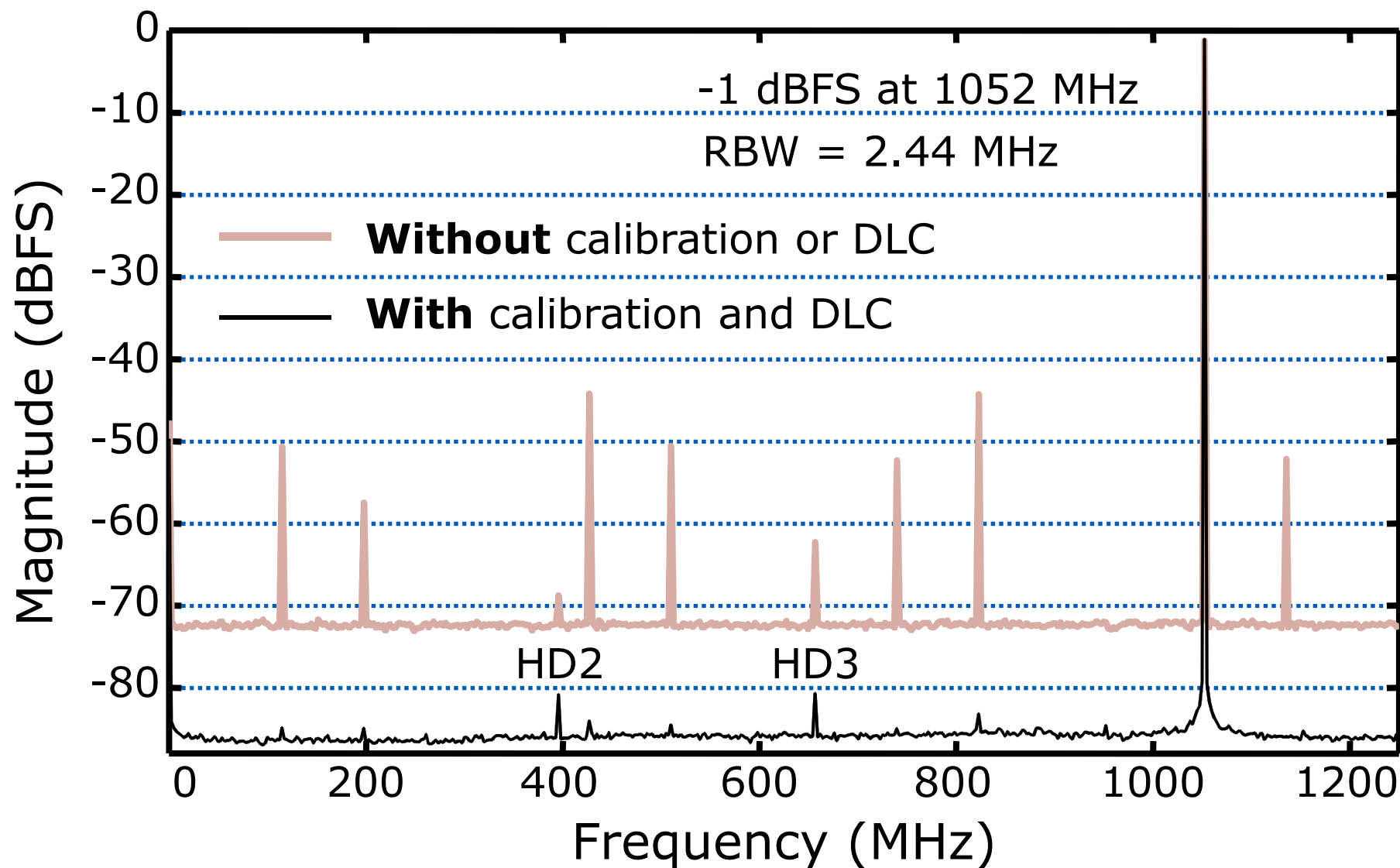
- Sample timing defined by first T/H

Slice-to-Slice **Gain** & **Offset** Alignment

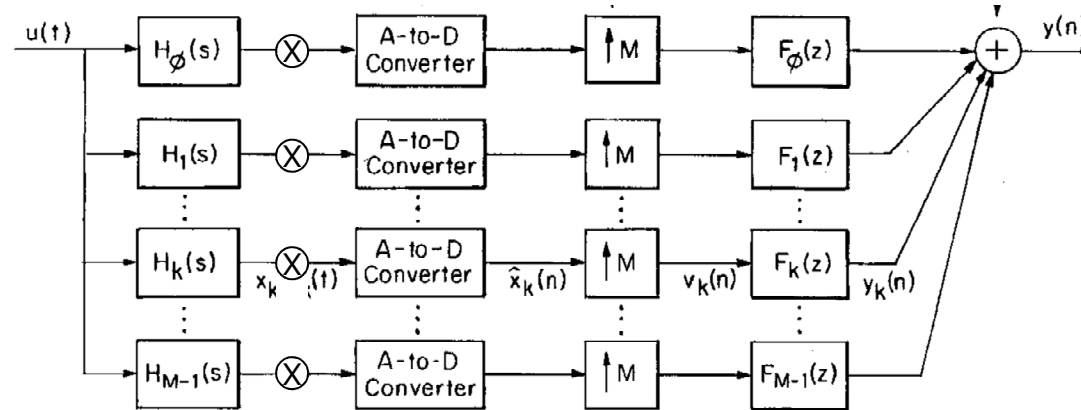


- Injected dither provides an absolute gain reference
- Chopping allows offset calibration
- Both are independent of the input signal

Power Spectrum



Frequency Interleaving (Early 90's)



Oct. 22, 1996
Sheet 2 of 7

– Basic Idea

- Use filters to separate input into one frequency band per channel
- Mix each channel down to baseband
- Perform A/D Conversion and combine channels

– Pros and cons vs. time interleaving

- + Reduced jitter sensitivity for ADC clocks
- + Some ADC noise and distortion can be filtered out after the ADC
- Filters and mixers don't integrate well
- Tricky to align band edges, especially in phase

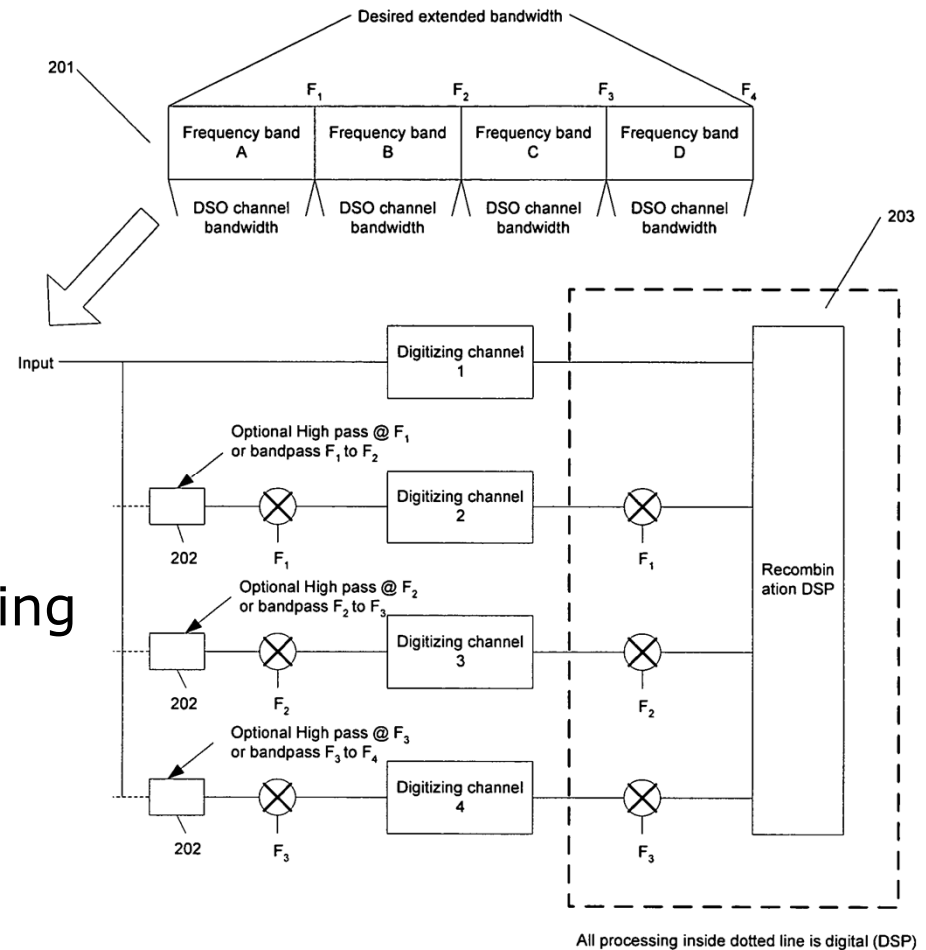
"High speed A/D Conversion using QMF banks", A Petraglia, S.K. Mitra, ISSCC 1990

"System for converting a signal between continuous-time and discrete-time", US 5568142, Velazquez, Nguyen, Broadstone, Oct 1994

First Frequency Interleaving Product

LeCroy SDA 11000 2005

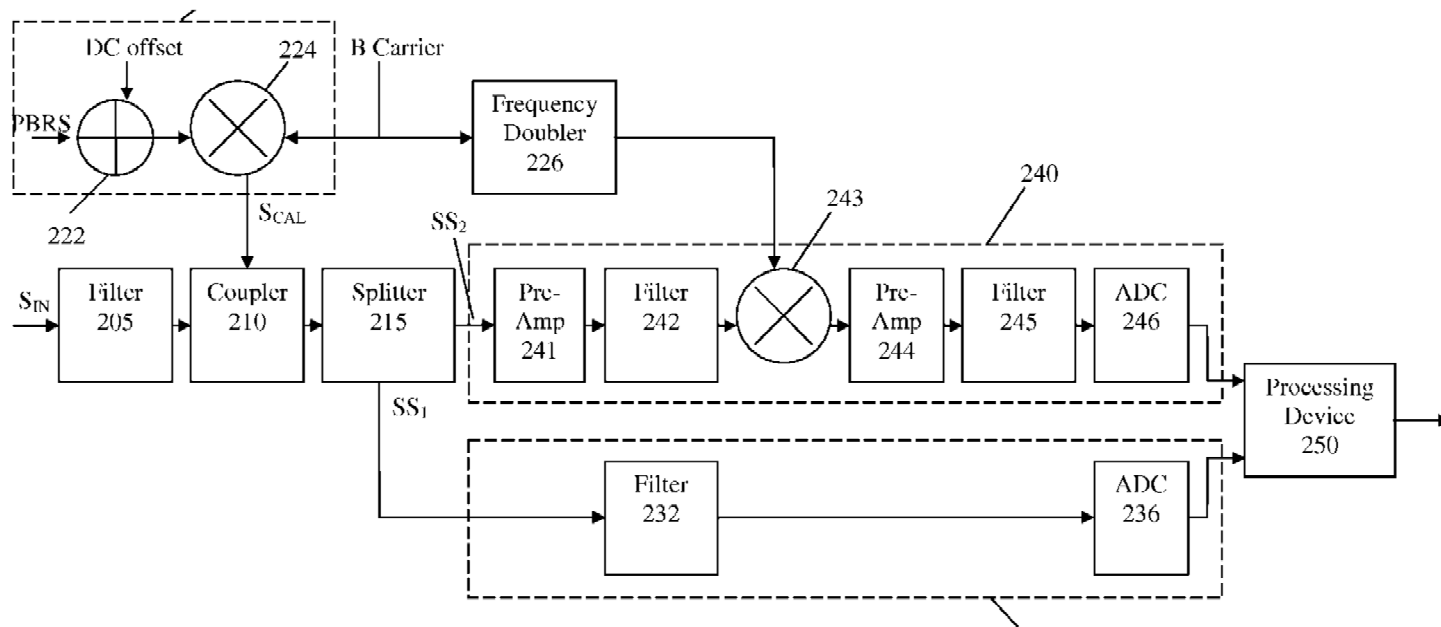
- Two 6-GHz slices
- 2-way frequency interleaving
- 11 GHz, 40 GSa/s



"High bandwidth real-time oscilloscope", US 7058548, Peter J. Pupalaikis, David C. Graef, June 2006

Cal Methods for Frequency Interleaving

- LeCroy describes using phase-locked tone(s) in crossover region
 - foreground cal
- Keysight describes using a PRBS comb in the crossover region
 - allows background cal



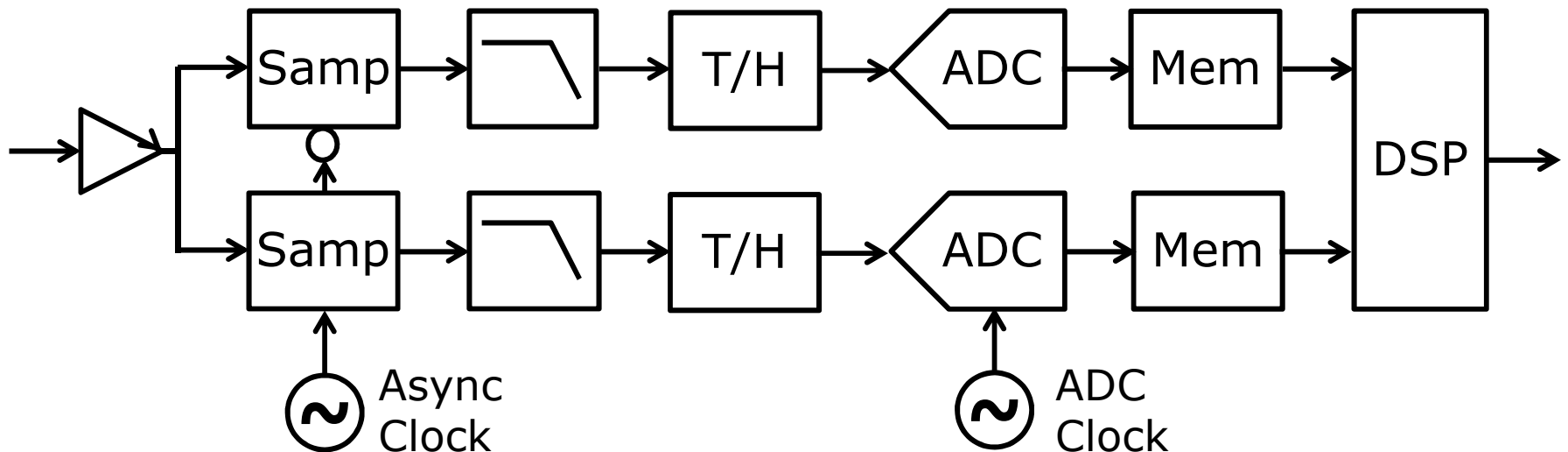
"Method of crossover region phase correction when summing signals in multiple frequency bands", US 7711510, Pupalaikis, et al, May 2010

"Calibrating reconstructed signal using multi-tone calibration signal", US 8849602, Ken Nishimura, Ken Rush, Oct 2014

High End Products

- Keysight 63 GHz BW 2-way freq int Shipped in 2012
- LeCroy 100 GHz BW 3-way freq int 2015?
- Tek 70 GHz BW 2-way ATI 2015?

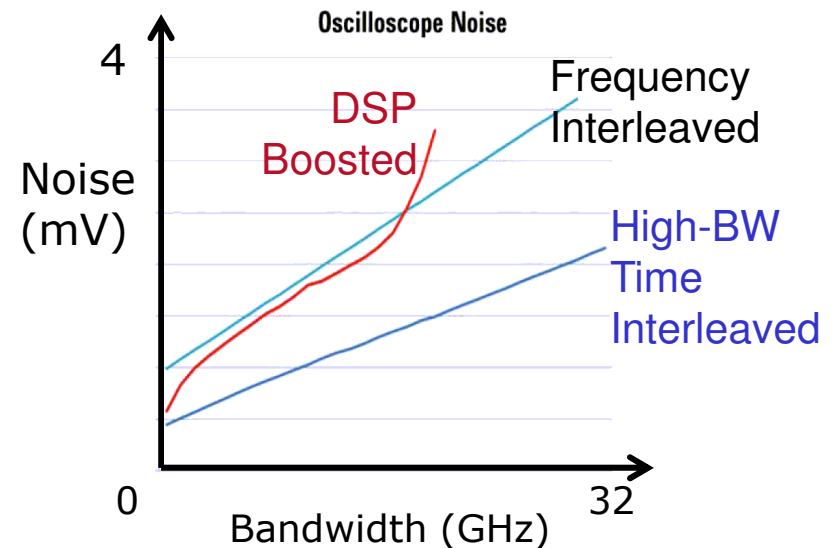
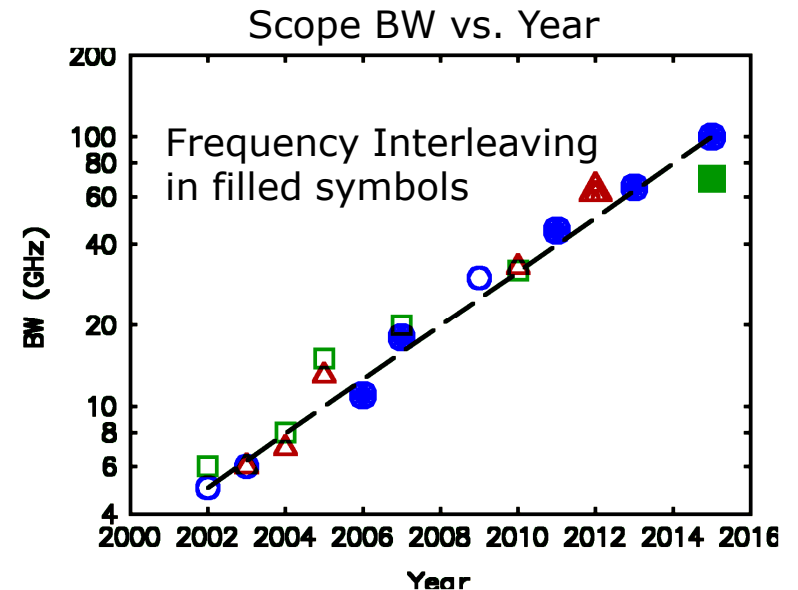
- Tek Asynchronous Time Interleaving (ATI):
 - Upper-half frequencies are aliased into two baseband channels with two phases of an asynchronous clock.



"Techniques for Extending Real-Time Oscilloscope Bandwidth", tek.com, 2013

Frequency Interleaving in Scopes

- Scope BW bandwidth has been doubling every 2.8 years
 - Frequency interleaving hasn't changed that
- Cost of high-end scopes near \$10K/GHz/2-channels for 10 years
 - Due to small volumes, increasing scope complexity and increasing chip NRE
- In 30 GHz oscilloscopes, the time-interleaved scope had substantially lower noise than the frequency-interleaved scope.
 - Comparative data not available for the 60+ GHz scopes yet



Overhead Factors for Interleaved ADCs

□ Power:

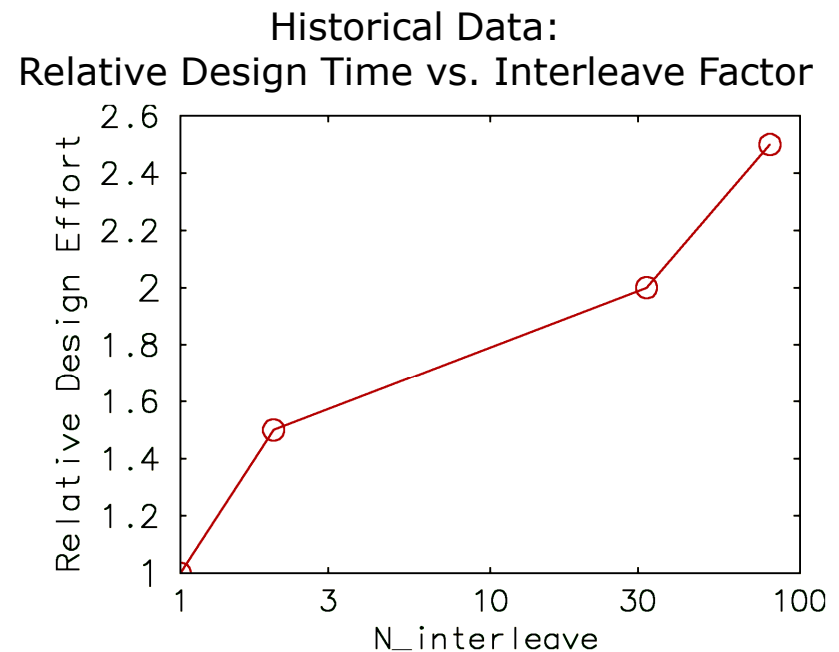
- Power in ADC slices can be a fraction of total ADC power

■ Example: 32-way, 4-GSa/s ADC

□ 32 ADC slices	1.6 W	38%
□ Samplers + clocks	0.9 W	21%
□ Multiplexors and outputs	1.7 W	41%
□ Total	4.2 W	

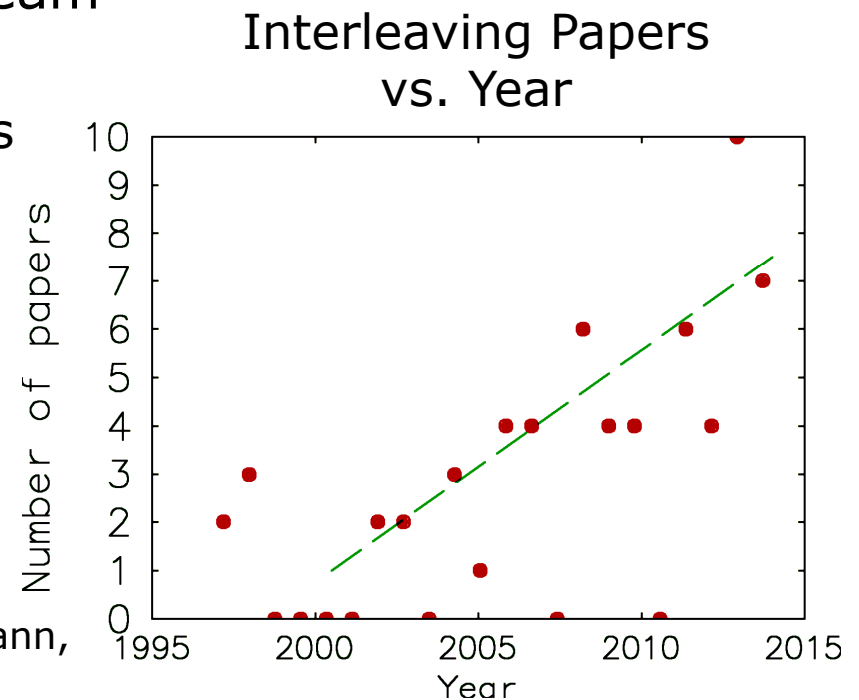
□ Design Overhead:

- More optimization variables
- More circuits that interact
- More clocks
- V_{IN} and clock distribution
- Data collection and multiplexing
- Calibration
- Optional: Memory and/or DSP



Interleaved ADC Trends

- Much more power-efficient core slices
 - Power-Efficiency FOM has dropped by $\sim 10\times$ since 2002
 - Use of interleaving has propelled SARs to prominence
- More background cal
 - Making the transition from academia to industry
- Interleaving has become mainstream
 - Lots of papers at ISSCC
 - Massive interleaving for 12+ Gb/s wireline link products
 - Becoming “just another ADC topology”



“ADC Performance Survey 1997-2014”, B. Murmann,
web.stanford.edu/~murmman/adcsurvey.html

The Future for Interleaved ADCs

- When will all ADCs be interleaved?
Never!
 - Design complexity
 - Overhead for power and design time
- The Skyrocketing Price of Moore's Law
 - Interleaving decouples process choice from sample rate requirements

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- John Corcoran
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 - Robert Neff
 - ~50 other past and present members of HP/Agilent/Keysight who designed the chips described here
-
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(END)

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