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- (57) **ABSTRACT**

A system that includes a graphical user interface (GUI) connected to an input/output device of a computer system and one or more test instruments producing a set of electrical signals. The system also includes a probe card that has a multiple probe needles used for measuring electronic characteristics of each of the devices on a semiconductor wafer. Each device has cells. Each cell has a set of bond pads. The system also has a matrix switch and an interface conduit electrically connecting the one or more test instruments, the computer, the probe card, and the matrix switch together. The semiconductor wafer is moved so that the probe needles measure the electrical characteristics of each cell for each device selected for testing.

- ## Publication Classification

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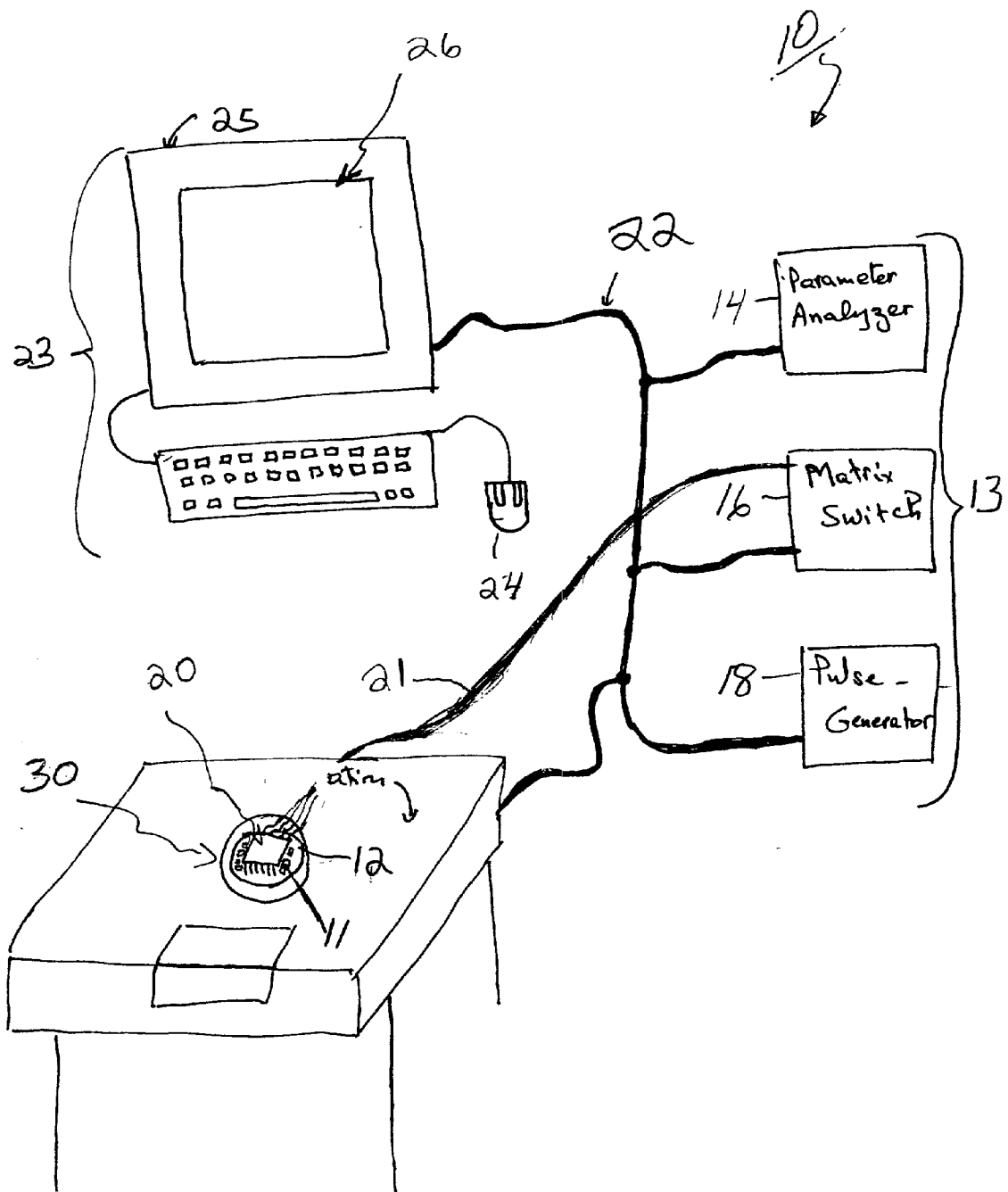


Fig 1

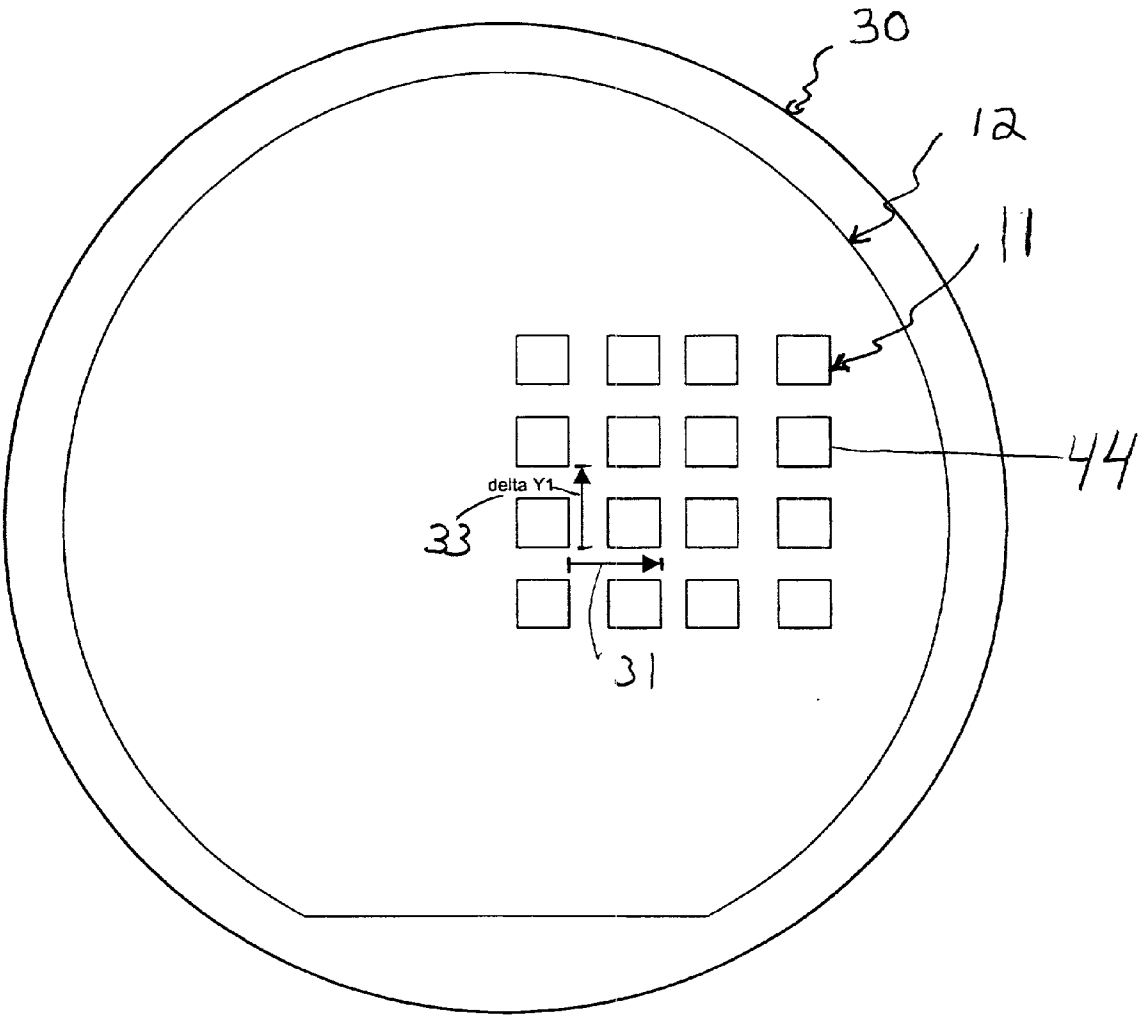


Fig 2

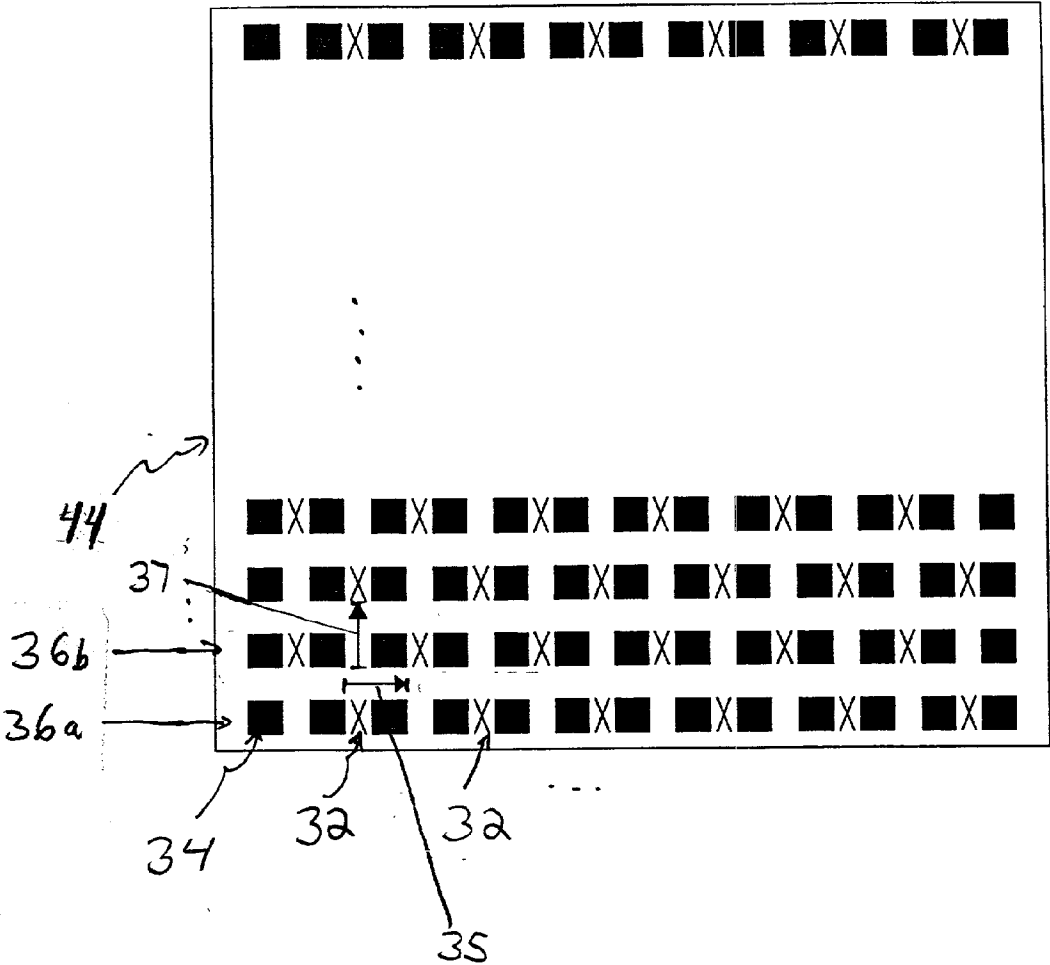


Fig 3

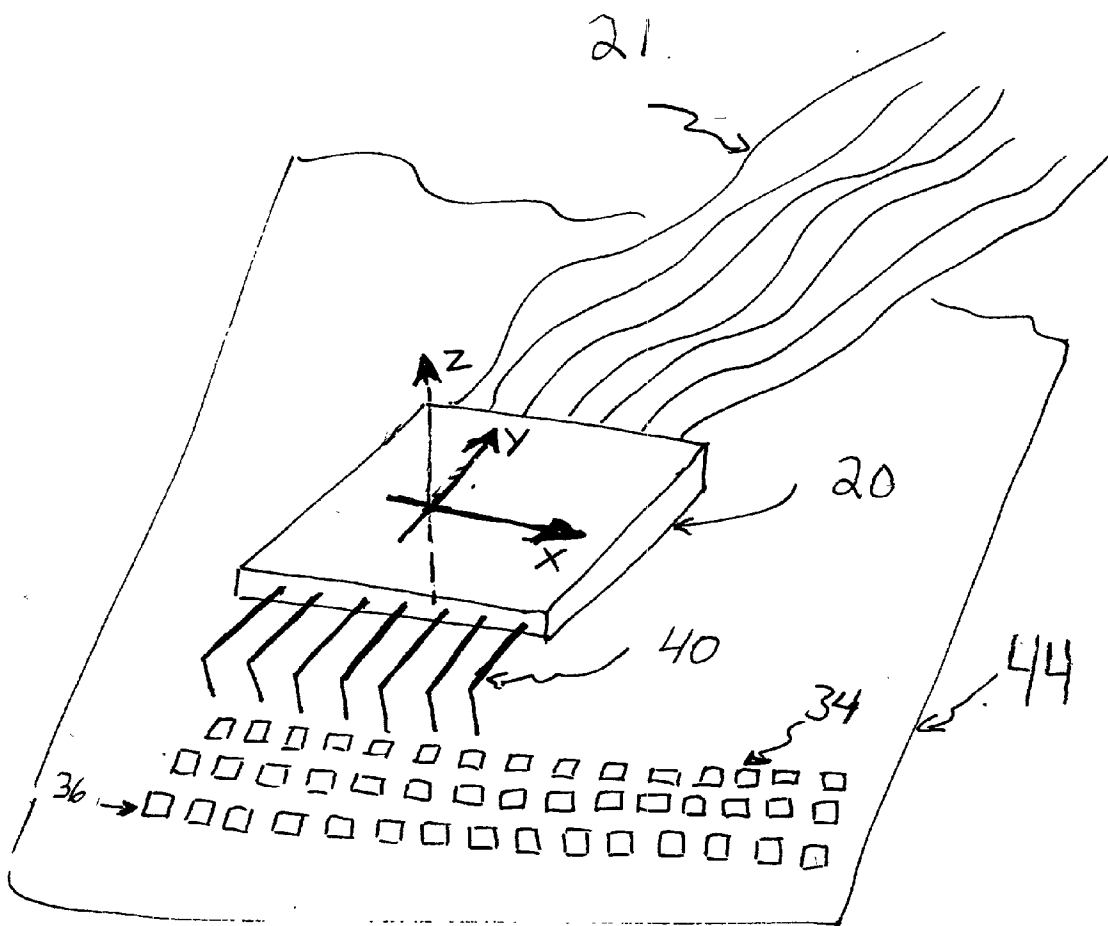
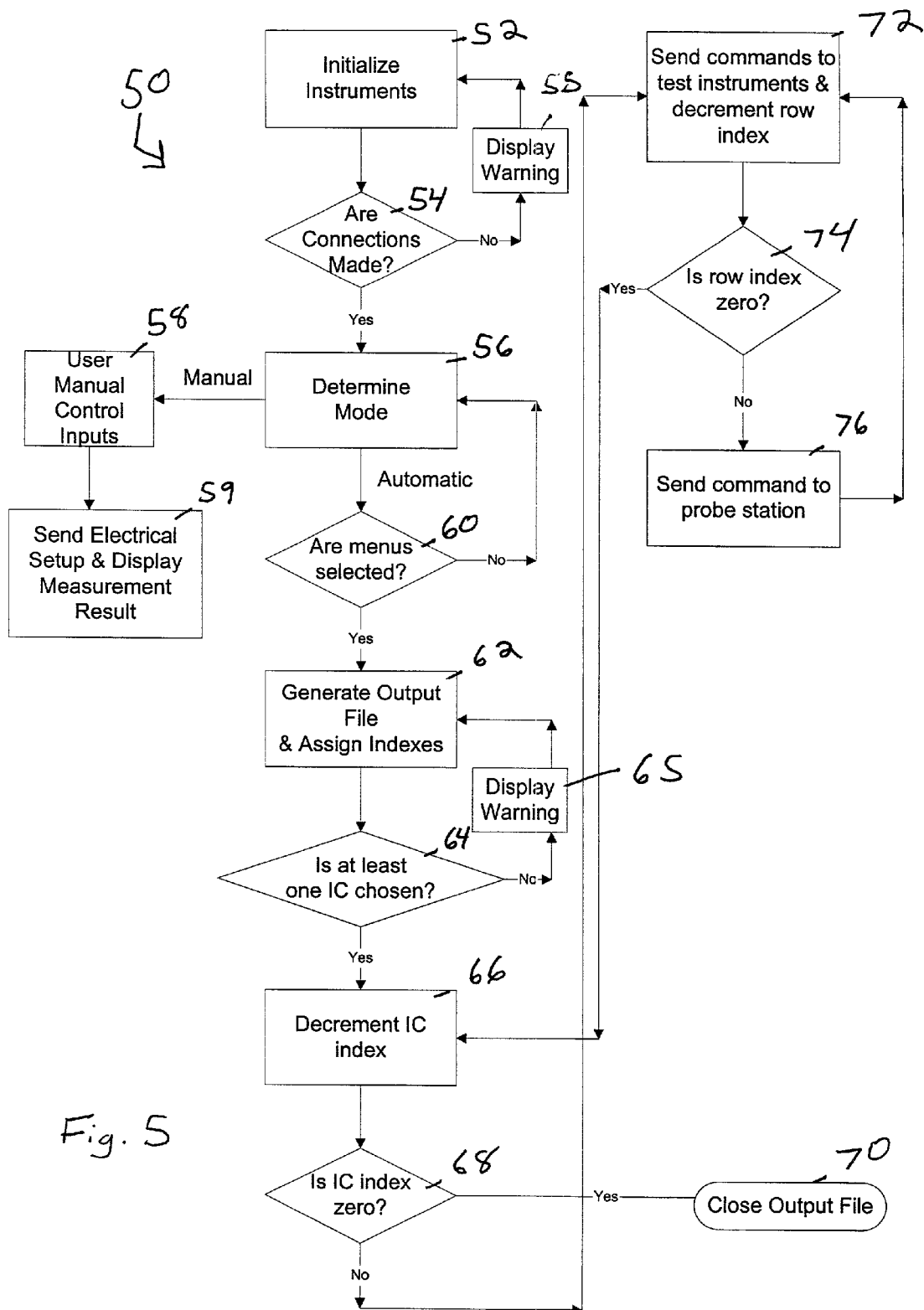
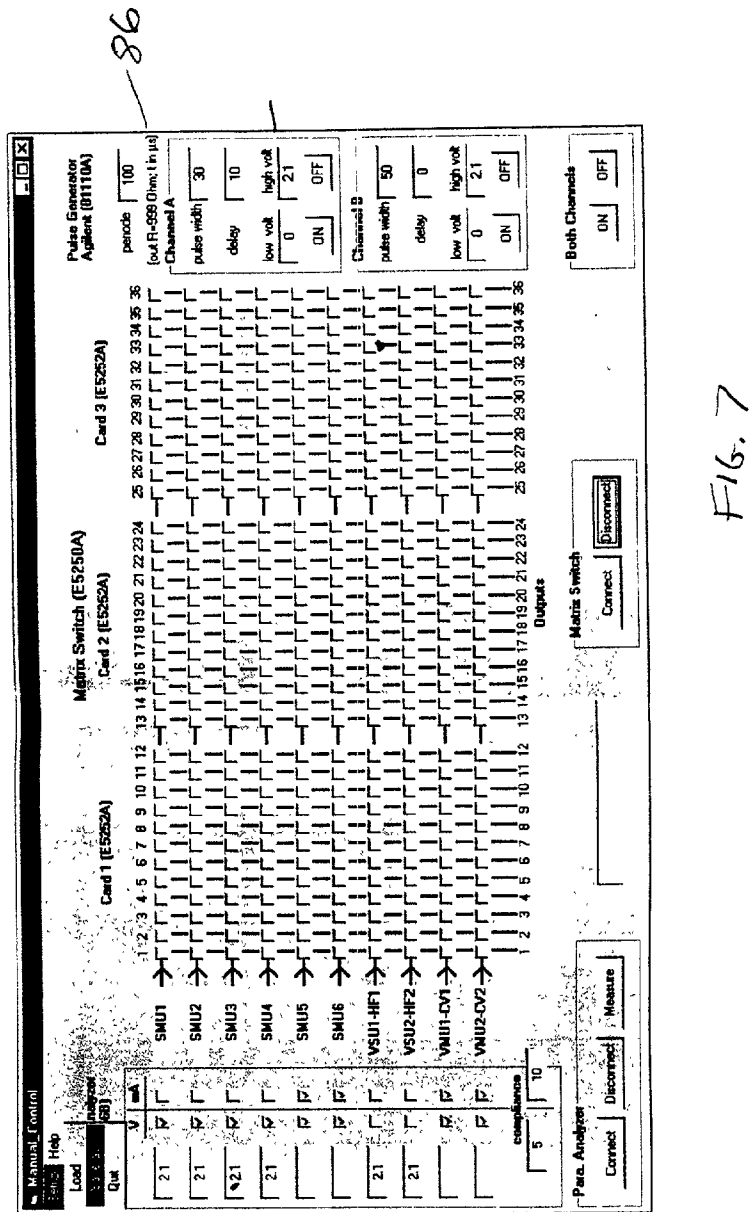
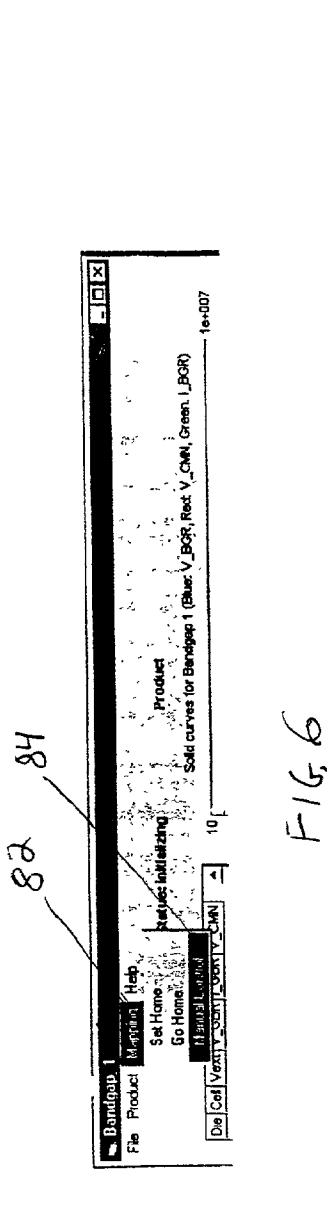


Fig 4





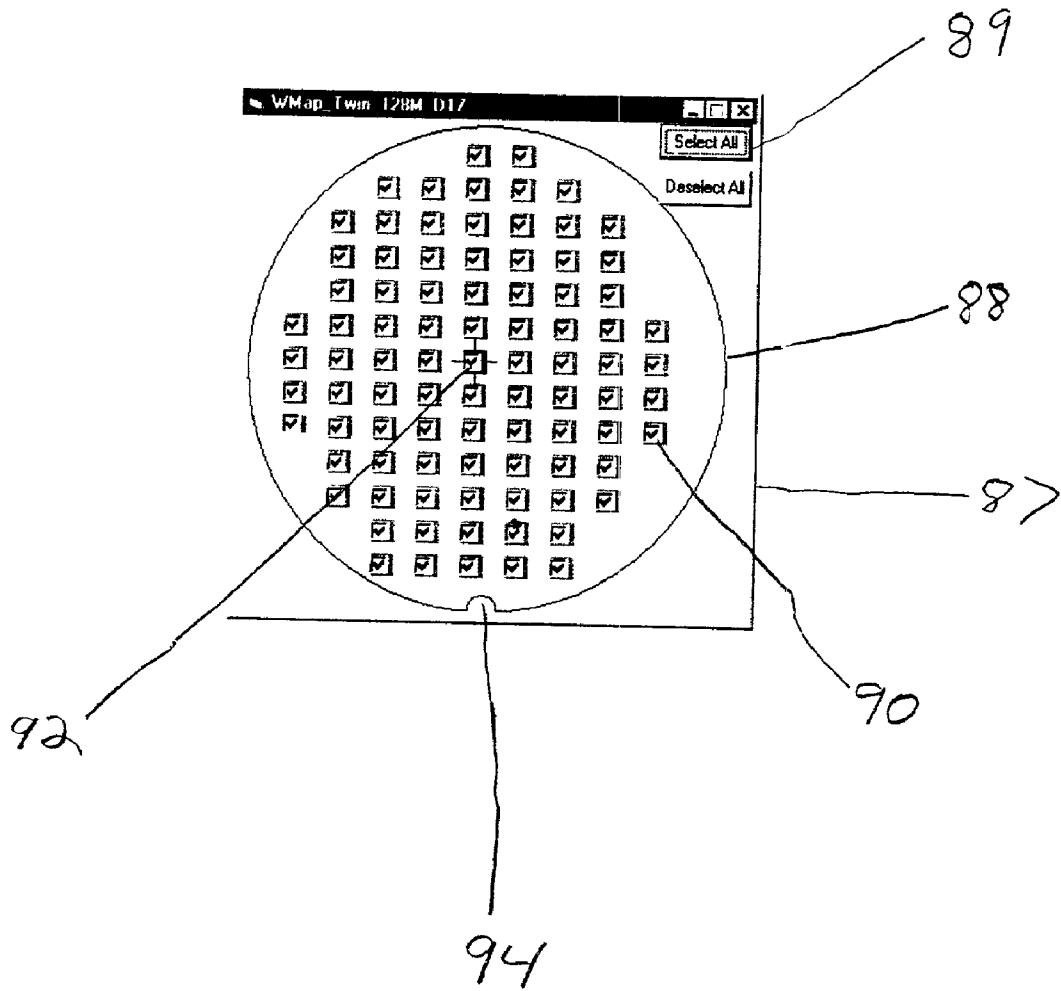


FIG 8.

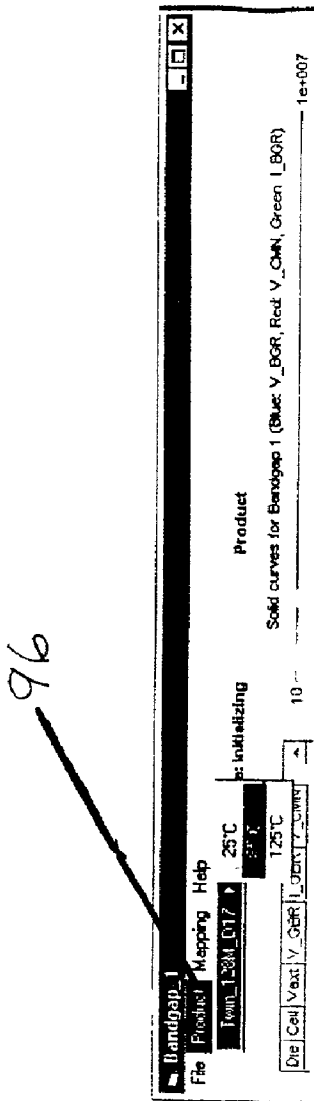


FIG 9A

82 98

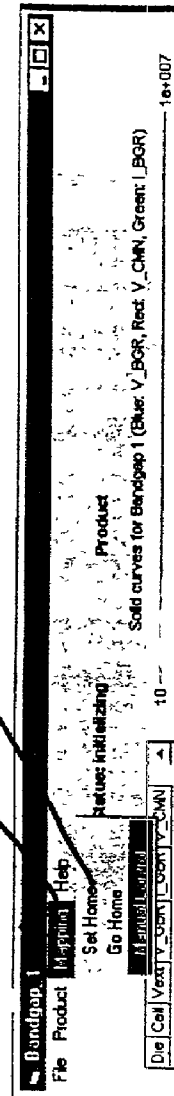
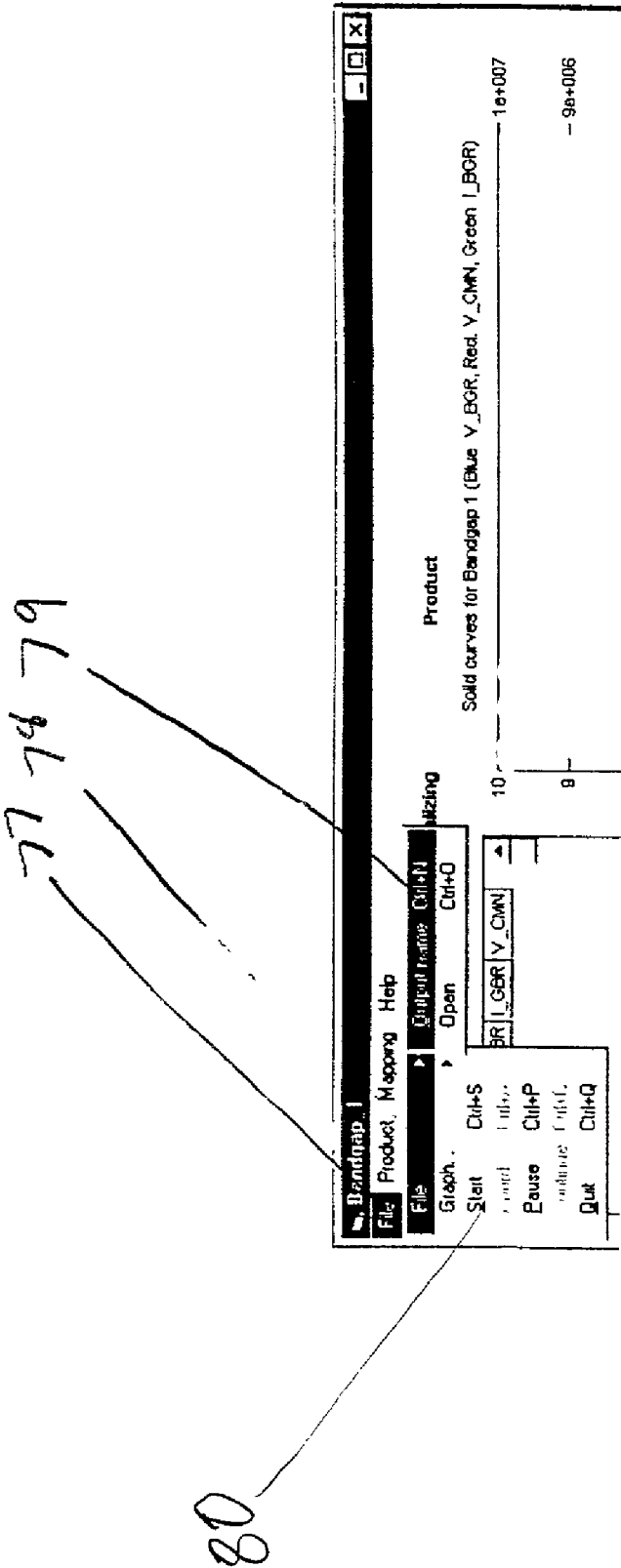
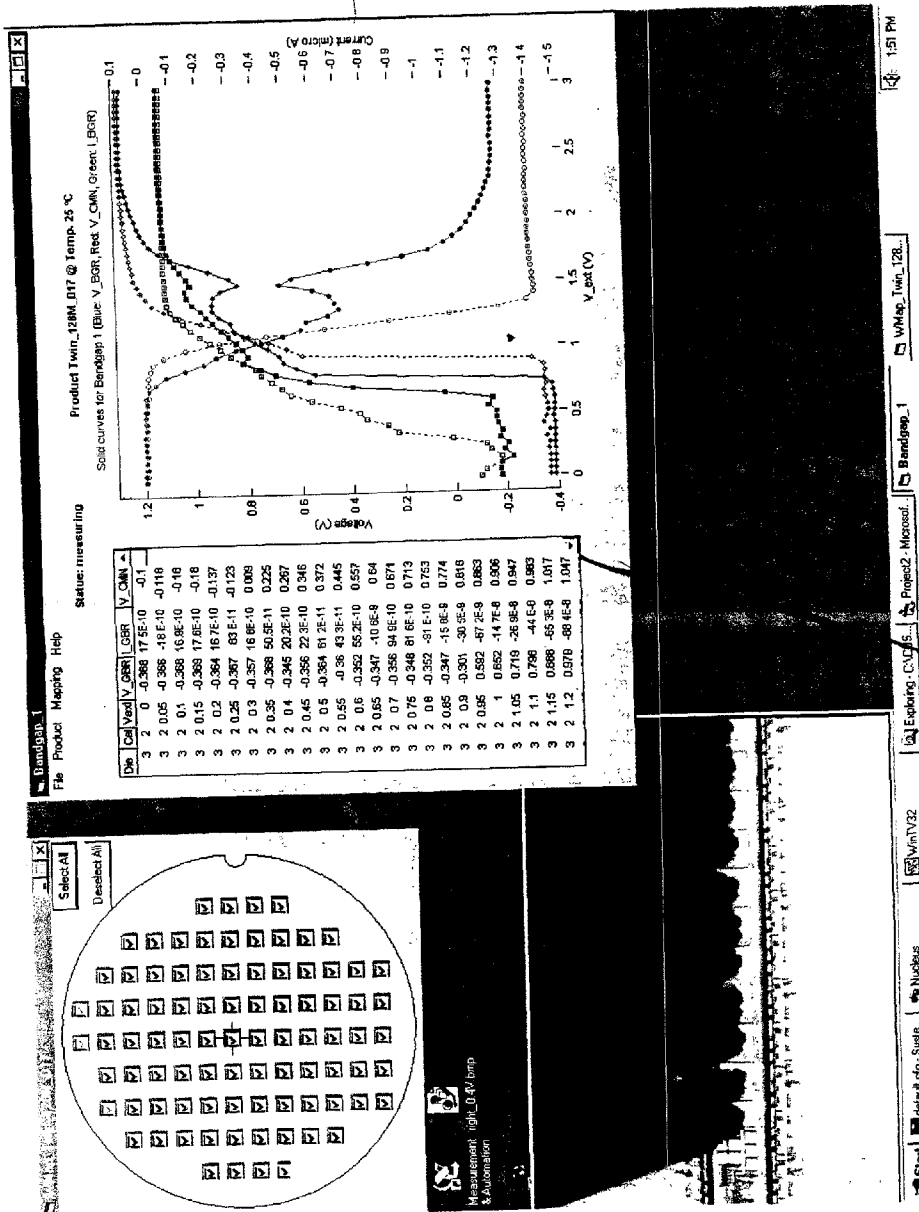


FIG 9B



F16-10



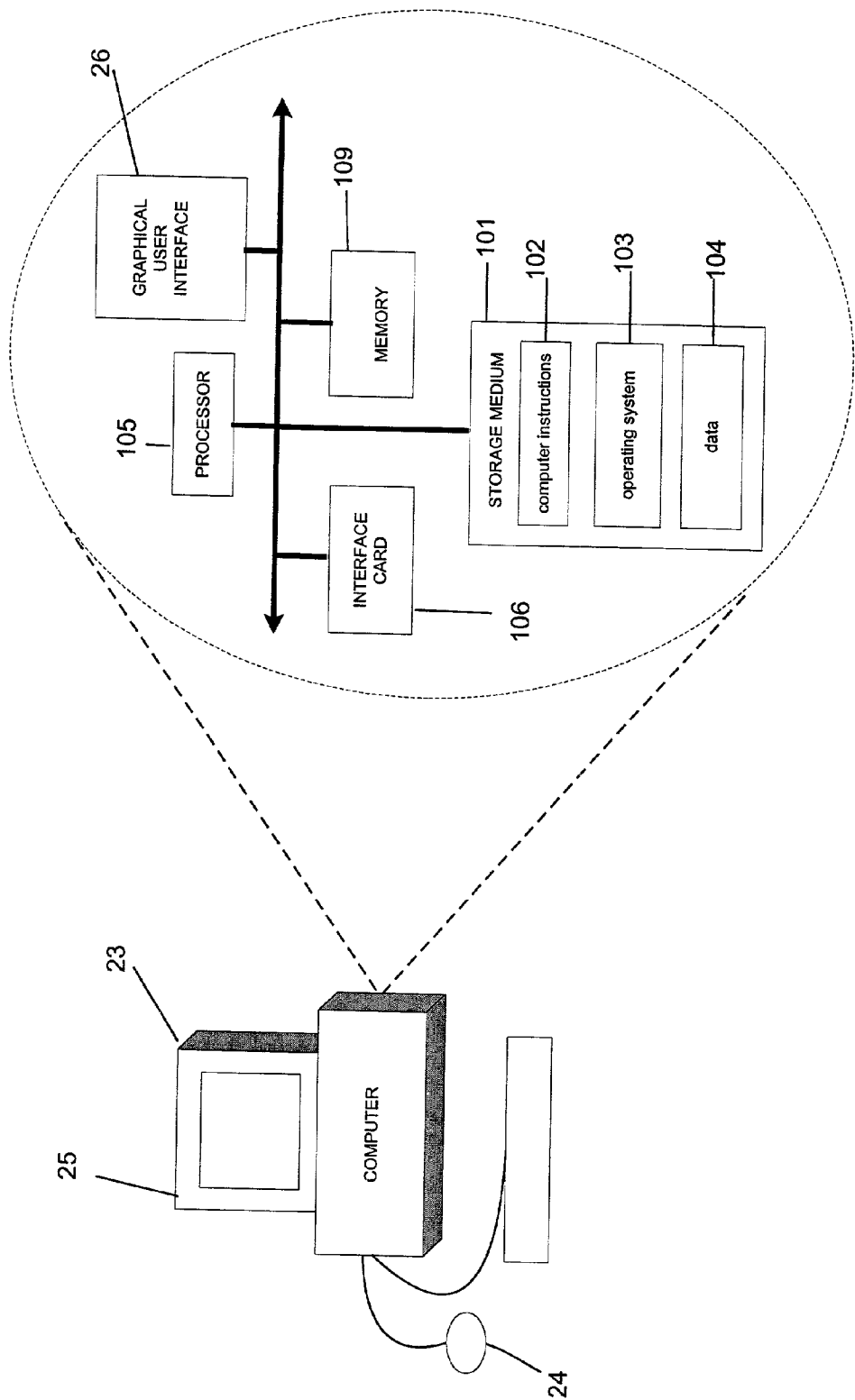


FIG. 12

GRAPHICAL USER INTERFACE FOR TESTING INTEGRATED CIRCUITS

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] This invention relates to a graphical user interface for testing integrated circuits.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Some semiconductor manufacturing processes test integrated circuits (ICs) while the ICs are still a part of a semiconductor wafer. This is commonly referred to as semiconductor wafer level testing (WLT). Typically, WLT involves placing a semiconductor wafer in a vacuum chuck. A probe card that has probe needles is placed in contact with a set of bond pads on each of the ICs. The probes are used to transmit electrical signals to the ICs from a set of test instruments and to receive the corresponding electrical response.

SUMMARY

[0003] In one aspect of the invention, system includes a graphical user interface (GUI) connected to an input/output device of a computer system and one or more test instruments producing a set of electrical signals. The system also includes a probe card that has multiple probe needles used for measuring the electronic characteristics of each of the devices on a semiconductor wafer. Each device has cells. Each cell has a set of bond pads. The system also has a matrix switch and an interface conduit electrically connecting the one or more test instruments, the computer, the probe card, and the matrix switch together. The semiconductor wafer is moved so that the probe needles measure the electrical characteristics of each cell within each device selected for testing.

[0004] Other embodiments may include one or more of the following features. The user can select a test configuration by interfacing the matrix switch through the GUI. The user can also select either an automatic test mode or a manual test mode. The automatic test mode includes selecting which devices on the semiconductor wafer to test. The manual test mode includes the user setting the electrical signals of the test instruments through the GUI. The probe card transmits a set of electrical signals from each test instrument through the probe needles to each set of bond pads and generates a test result for each device that is displayed graphically on the display. The test instruments include a pulse generator and a parametric analyzer. Testing can include measuring a silicon band gap voltage. Testing can also include measuring for a capacitance.

[0005] In another aspect of the invention, a method includes selecting a test configuration using the GUI and measuring a set of electrical characteristics of each device selected for testing. Each device has cells and each cell has a set of bond pads. The semiconductor wafer is moved so that the probe needles measure the electrical characteristics of each cell within each device selected for testing.

[0006] Other embodiments may include one or more of the following features. The method can include sending a signal to activate a set of test instruments. In addition, the method may include determining if the test instruments are electrically connected. Other features can include designating if

testing is an automatic test mode or a manual test mode where the automatic test mode includes selecting devices on a semiconductor wafer for testing and the manual test mode includes the user setting the electrical signals of the test instruments through the GUI. The method can also include generating an output file for all devices tested and/or graphing the data in the output file on a display. The test instruments can include a pulse generator and a parametric analyzer. Testing can include measuring a silicon band gap voltage. Testing can also include measuring for a capacitance.

[0007] In still another aspect of the invention, an apparatus includes a memory that stores executable instructions and a processor. The processor executes instructions to select a test configuration using the GUI, and measure a set of electrical characteristics of each device selected for testing. Each device has cells and each cell has a set of bond pads. The semiconductor wafer is moved so that the probe needles measure the electrical characteristics of each cell within each device selected for testing.

[0008] Other embodiments may include one or more of the following features. The apparatus includes instructions that cause the machine to send a signal to activate a set of test instruments. The apparatus also includes instructions that cause the machine to determine if the set of test instruments are electrically connected. The instructions cause the machine to designate if testing is an automatic test mode or a manual test mode. The automatic test mode includes selecting devices on a semiconductor wafer for testing. The manual test mode includes the user setting the electrical signals of the test instruments through the GUI. The instructions that cause the machine to generate an output file for all devices tested and to graph data in the output file on a display. The testing includes testing a silicon band gap voltage. The testing includes a measuring a capacitance.

[0009] In a still another aspect an article includes a machine-readable medium that stores executable instructions for testing devices on a semiconductor wafer. The instructions causing a machine to select a test configuration using the GUI, and to measure a set of electrical characteristics of each device selected for testing. Each device has cells and each cell has bond pads. The semiconductor wafer is moved so that the probe needles measure the electrical characteristics of each cell for each device selected for testing.

[0010] Other embodiments may include one or more of the following features. The article includes instructions that cause the machine to send a signal to activate a plurality of test instruments. The article also includes instructions that cause the machine to determine if the plurality of test instruments are electrically connected. The instructions cause the machine to designate if testing is an automatic test mode or a manual test mode. The automatic test mode includes selecting devices on a semiconductor wafer for testing. The manual test mode includes the user setting the electrical signals of the test instruments through the GUI. The instructions cause the machine to generate an output file for all devices tested and to graph data in the output file on a display. The test instruments include a pulse generator and a parametric analyzer. The testing includes measuring a silicon band gap voltage. The testing also includes measuring a capacitance.

[0011] Each of the aspects above have the following advantages. The method allows for the automated testing of different cells on the IC without damage to the IC or the rest of the semiconductor wafer from the probe needles. By automating the testing process with the IC, testing is done faster and components within the ICs are also tested.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- [0012] FIG. 1 is a functional diagram of a test system.
- [0013] FIG. 2 is a top view of a semiconductor wafer showing a matrix of integrated circuits (IC).
- [0014] FIG. 3 is a top view of the IC with a matrix of cells.
- [0015] FIG. 4 is angle view of a probe card on the IC.
- [0016] FIG. 5 is flow diagram for a process for testing ICs.
- [0017] FIG. 6 is a screenshot of a toolbar.
- [0018] FIG. 7 is a screenshot of a manual control user interface.
- [0019] FIG. 8 is a screenshot showing a virtual semiconductor wafer map interface.
- [0020] FIG. 9A is a screenshot of the toolbar showing a set of submenus a Product menu.
- [0021] FIG. 9B is a screenshot of a toolbar showing the menus under a Mapping menu.
- [0022] FIG. 10 is a screen shot of a toolbar showing an Output Name submenu.
- [0023] FIG. 11 is a screenshot of the virtual semiconductor wafer map and the GUI for silicon band gap measurement.
- [0024] FIG. 12 is a block diagram of a computer system on which the process of FIG. 5 may be implemented.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0025] Referring to FIG. 1, a test system 10 for measuring the electrical characteristics of a matrix of integrated circuit (IC) 11 on a semiconductor wafer 12 includes, for example, a set of instruments 13, which include a parametric analyzer 14, a matrix switch 16, and a pulse generator 18. Parametric analyzer 14 performs a parametric analysis in which all design variables, except one, are held constant. As an independent or "free" variable is systematically altered, a user evaluates the changes to the test using some kind of measure of merit. Matrix switch 16 provides a switch to channel the input signals received in test system 10 and routes the signals to various output ports that are ultimately connected to the matrix of ICs 11. Pulse generator 18 provides pulsed signals to test system 10.

[0026] Test system 10 also includes a probe card 20 that is connected to matrix switch 16 by electrical coaxial 21. Via the interface cable 22, a computer 23 with a mouse 24, a monitor 25 and a graphical user interface (GUI) 26, controls a probe station 28 having a vacuum chuck 30 that holds semiconductor wafer 12, and the set of instruments 13. Probe card 20 is fixed with screws to probe station 28. More specifically, a user (not shown), utilizing GUI 26 controls the movements of chuck 30 and moves semiconductor wafer 12 along probe card 20 to collect electrical data from the matrix of ICs 11.

[0027] Referring to FIG. 2, each semiconductor wafer 12 includes the matrix of ICs 11. The matrix of ICs 11 are spaced apart by a distance or multiples of the distance, delta X131 and a second distance or multiples of the second distance, delta Y133.

[0028] Referring to FIG. 3, each IC 44 includes cells 32 in rows 36a and 36b. Cells 32 are subcomponents of IC 44, which are electrical structures such as capacitors, memory cells, etc. Each of the cells 32 has two bond pads 34, each electrically connected to cell 32. Bond pads 34 are spaced apart by a distance, delta X235, and a second distance, delta Y237.

[0029] Referring to FIG. 4, during electrical measurements, probe card 20 with probe needles 40 is placed in contact with bond pads 34 so that one probe needle is in contact with one pad 34. Electrical signals received from test instruments 13 are sent to probe card 20 to each IC 44 via bond pads 34. After probe card 20 tests one set of pads in IC 44, computer 23 sends commands to probe station 28 to move chuck 30 holding semiconductor wafer 12 in a negative z-direction so that semiconductor wafer 12 and the matrix of ICs 11 move down and away from probe needles 40. In addition, computer 23 sends commands to probe station 28 to move chuck 30 in the x-y plane. Computer 23 then moves chuck 30 in an upward or a positive z-direction so that probe needles 40 are in contact with a new set of bond pads 34 so that new electrical measurements may be taken.

[0030] Referring to FIG. 5, a process 50 to test the matrix of ICs 11 using GUI 26 is shown. GUI 26 allows the user (not shown) to provide inputs to test system 10 through menu driven commands. These user inputs allow test system 10 to record electrical measurements of each IC 44 and to present the data graphically to the user using GUI 26.

[0031] Process 50 initializes (52) test instruments 13 by sending a signal from computer 23 through interface cable 22 to each of the instruments. Process 50 checks (54) test instruments 13 to ensure each are properly connected to interface cable 22. If a bad connection exists, a warning message is displayed (55) on monitor 25 informing the user of the lack of proper connections and process 50 reinitializes (52) the test instruments.

[0032] If the connections are good, process 50 reads (56) the user's inputs to determine if the test will be in a manual mode or an automatic mode. If the user makes no inputs, process 50 defaults to the automatic mode.

[0033] Referring to FIGS. 6 and 7, in the manual mode, process 50 receives (58) user manual control inputs. The user manually places probe needles 40 in contact with bond pads 34. The user selects a toolbar command by moving the mouse cursor and clicking-on a "Mapping" menu 82 and then selecting "manual control" 84 from the "Mapping" menu in turn brings up a manual control user interface 86. In manual control user interface 86, the user can configure test instruments 13 by controlling the parameters of each of the instruments including, for example, voltage and current characteristics and the timing characteristics associated with each. Process 50 sends (59) the electrical set-up to the test instruments 13 and displays (59) the measured results on GUI 26.

[0034] Referring to FIG. 8, in the automatic mode, the user has an option of selecting which ICs 44 may be tested

by selecting the specific ICs with mouse **24** on a virtual semiconductor wafer map **88** of semiconductor wafer **12**. Virtual semiconductor wafer map **88** depicts the positions of the matrix of ICs **11**. The user may select the entire matrix of ICs **11** by clicking mouse **24** on a "Select All" button **89** or the user may put the mouse on individual squares **90** representing each of the individual ICs **44** and clicking the desired squares thus selecting the corresponding IC. Virtual semiconductor wafer map **88** leaves a check mark on each square selected for testing. An orientation notch **94** in virtual map **88** corresponds to a notch normally found on semiconductor wafers. A center square **92** is highlighted in a bright color (e.g., red) to orientate the user as to the center of the virtual semiconductor wafer map **88**.

[0035] Referring to FIGS. **9A** and **9B**, in the automatic mode, the limited user inputs includes inputting information in a "Product" menu **96** and a "Set Home" submenu **98** under "Mapping" menu **82**. For example, in "Product" menu **96**, the user selects which type of IC **44** is tested and at what temperature the test will be performed. By selecting "Product" menu **96**, the process uses a predefined set of delta **X131**, delta **Y133**, delta **X235** and delta **Y237** values for a product selected and the temperature selected. The product represents different configurations of IC **44**. Since each product is designed differently, these delta distances will be different. More importantly, due to the thermal expansion and contraction of the ICs **44** during heat changes, these delta distances are different by the temperature selected even for the same product. In the automatic mode, the user must also select "Set Home" submenu **98**. By selecting "Set Home" submenu **98**, the user confirms that probe card **20** is positioned on semiconductor wafer **12** and on a first row **36a** of the center IC **44** of semiconductor wafer **12**. The user can use center square **92** and notch **94** to visually verify this.

[0036] Referring to FIG. **10**, the user can also give a name to an output file by selecting a "File" menu **77**, selecting "File" submenu **78** and selecting "Output Name" submenu **79**. When a "Start" submenu **80** is selected by a mouse command to commence testing, process **50** determines (60) if "Product" menu **96** and "Set Home" submenu **98** received user input. If not, a prompt window indicates to the user that action needs to be taken by the user to correct the situation.

[0037] Process **50** generates (62) the output file so that the measured data collected may be stored on computer **23** and assigns (62) an IC index to the number of ICs **44** selected for test. In addition, a row index is assigned indicating the number of rows **36** to be tested. Process **50** checks (64) to determine that at least one IC is chosen for test. If at least one IC is not chosen, process **50** displays (65) a prompt window warning the user to take action.

[0038] Process **50** decrements (66) the IC index by one. Process **50** checks (68) to see if there are any additional ICs **44** to test by checking to see if the IC index is zero. If the IC index is zero, process **50** saves (70) the last measurement data in the file output file and closes the output file.

[0039] If additional ICs **44** still need to be tested on semiconductor wafer **12**, process **50** sends (72) commands to test instruments **13** with assigned parameters. The distance of IC **44** from the center square **92** is calculated using delta **X131** and delta **Y133** values and relaying the data to probe station **28** following chuck **30** separation. The row index is decremented by one. Process **50** checks (74) and

determines if there are any additional rows **36** available. If not, process **50** decrements (66) IC index by one to reflect the number of ICs left to test. If additional rows **36** have not been tested (i.e., row index is not equal to zero), process **50** sends (76) commands to probe station **28** for chuck **30** to separate from probe card **20** (i.e., probe card moves in a negative z-direction). Process **50** sends (76) commands to probe station **20** to move a distance delta **X235** and a second distance delta **Y237** as appropriate to move probe needles **40** to a new row of pads **34**. Process **50** also sends (76) commands to enable test instruments **13**. For example, process **50** triggers the pulse generator to get a package of 1,000 pulses at 1 MHz. Different test measurements can require different actions from test instruments **13**. For example, in testing capacitance, after a series of charging and discharging of the parasitic capacitances in a cell **32**, process **50** sends a command to the parametric analyzer **14** to retrieve and record the currents. The capacitance value is determined from the inputs and saved in the output file. After test instruments **13** send and receive electrical data, process **50** decrements (66) the row index. In this embodiment, the number of probe needles **40** is equal to the number of pads **34** in row **36** so that there is no need for chuck **30** to move a delta **X235** value within row **36**.

[0040] Referring, to FIG. **11**, the user is able to observe the testing process for each test performed as the data is collected. For example, the user can view virtual semiconductor wafer map **87** while observing the curves on a graphical display **100**. As each IC **44** is tested GUI **26** shades in each square **90** of virtual semiconductor wafer display **87**. In addition, the user can read the data from a table **99** to determine which cell **32** in which IC **44** is being measured. When the test is completely performed, the user has the capability to load the data saved in a file for display in table **99** and in graph **100** while also viewing virtual map **87**. A set of graphs are sequentially displayed one after another with a three to five second delay to allow the user to print or save the displayed graph in a graph format file, or to allow the user to freeze graph **100** by clicking on F10 keyboard key.

[0041] In this embodiment, parametric analyzer **14** is a Hewlett-Packard HP-4156B, matrix switch **16** is an Agilent E5250A, Pulse generator **18** is an Agilent 81110A, and probe station **28** is a Cascade Microtech, Inc, Summit 300 mm. Other test instruments that perform similar functions may also be used. Interface cable **22** is a shielded General Purpose Interface Bus (GPIB) cable manufactured by National Instruments.

[0042] FIG. **12** shows a computer **23** for testing the matrix of ICs **11** using process **50**. Computer **23** includes a storage medium **101** (e.g., hard disk), a processor **105**, and interface card **106**, a memory **109**, and GUI **26** for testing the matrix of ICs **11** and the corresponding cells **32** in FIGS. **2** and **3**. Storage medium **101** stores operating system **103**, data **104**, and computer instructions **102** which are executed by processor **105** out of memory **109** to perform process **50**. Interface card **106** ensures the communication between computer **23** and the set of instruments **13** and probe station **28** via GPIB cable **22**. In this embodiment, interface card **106** is a peripheral component interconnect (PCI)-GPIB card manufactured by National Instruments.

[0043] In this embodiment, the software program is written in Microsoft Visual Basic 6.0. Process **50** is not limited

to use with the hardware and software of **FIG. 12** it may find applicability in any computing or processing environment and with any type of machine that is capable of running a computer program. Process **50** may be implemented in hardware, software, or a combination of the two. Process **50** may be implemented in computer programs executed on programmable computers/machines that each include a processor, a storage medium/article readable by the processor (including volatile and non-volatile memory and/or storage elements), at least one input device, and one or more output devices. Program code may be applied to data entered using an input device to perform process **50** and to generate output information.

[0044] Each such program may be implemented in a high level procedural or objected-oriented programming language to communicate with a computer system. However, the programs can be implemented in assembly or machine language. The language may be a compiled or an interpreted language. Each computer program may be stored on a storage medium (article) or device (e.g., CD-ROM, hard disk, or magnetic diskette) that is readable by a general or special purpose programmable computer for configuring and operating the computer when the storage medium or device is read by the computer to perform process **50**. Process **50** may also be implemented as a machine-readable storage medium, configured with a computer program, where upon execution, instructions in the computer program cause the computer to operate in accordance with process **50**.

[0045] The invention is not limited to the specific embodiments described herein. For example, the invention can be used to move any probe card along any surface. Other I/O interfaces can be used instead of mouse **24** (e.g., a keyboard, trackball, input tablet, joystick). The invention is also not limited to testing ICs on semiconductor wafers, but on ICs detached from the semiconductor wafer. The invention is not limited to the specific processing order of **FIG. 5**. Rather, the blocks of **FIG. 5** may be re-ordered, as necessary, to achieve the results set forth above.

[0046] Other embodiments not described here are also within the scope of the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A system, comprising:

a graphical user interface (GUI) connected to an input/output device of a computer system;

one or more test instruments producing a set of electrical signals;

a probe card having a plurality of probe needles used for measuring electronic characteristics of each of a plurality of devices on a semiconductor wafer, each device having a plurality of cells, each cell having a set of bond pads;

a matrix switch; and

an interface conduit electrically connecting the one or more test instruments, the computer, the probe card, and the matrix switch together, the semiconductor wafer moving so that the probe needles measure the electrical characteristics of each cell for each device selected for testing.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein a user selects a test configuration by interfacing the matrix switch through the GUI.

3. The system of claim 2 wherein the user selects either an automatic test mode or a manual test mode of the semiconductor wafer, the automatic test modes allows the user to select devices for testing.

4. The system of claim 3 wherein the manual test mode includes the user setting the electrical signals of the test instruments through the GUI.

5. The system of claim 4 wherein the probe card transmits a set of electrical signals from each test instrument through the probe needles to each set of bond pads and generating a test result for each device that is displayed graphically on the display.

6. The system of claim 5 wherein the test instruments include:

a pulse generator; and

a parametric analyzer.

7. The system of claim 1 wherein the testing includes measuring a silicon band gap voltage.

8. The system of claim 1 wherein the testing includes measuring a capacitance.

9. A method, comprising:

selecting a test configuration through a graphical user interface (GUI) connected to an input/output (I/O) device of a computer; and

measuring a set of electrical characteristics of each of a plurality of devices on a semiconductor wafer selected for testing, the probe card having a plurality of probe needles, each device having a plurality of cells, each cell having a set of bond pads, the semiconductor wafer moving so that the probe needles measure the electrical characteristics of each cell for each device selected for testing.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising sending a signal to activate a plurality of test instruments.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising determining if the plurality of test instruments are electrically connected.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising designating if testing is an automatic test mode or a manual test mode, the automatic test mode includes selecting devices on a semiconductor wafer for testing, the manual test mode includes the user setting the electrical signals of the test instruments through the GUI.

13. The method of claim 12, generating an output file for all devices tested.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising graphing data in the output file on a display.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the plurality of test instruments include:

a pulse generator; and

a parametric analyzer.

16. The method of claim 1 wherein the testing includes measuring a silicon band gap voltage.

17. The method of claim 1 wherein the testing includes measuring a capacitance.

18. An apparatus for testing devices on a semiconductor wafer using a graphical interface (GUI) comprising:

a memory that stores executable instructions; and

a processor that executes the instructions to:

select a test configuration using the GUI; and

measure a set of electrical characteristics of each device selected for testing, the probe card having a plurality of probe needles, each device having a plurality of cells, each cell having a set of bond pads, the semiconductor wafer moving so that the probe needles measure the electrical characteristics of each cell for each device selected for testing.

19. The apparatus of claim 18, further comprising instructions that cause the machine to send a signal to activate a plurality of test instruments.

20. The apparatus of claim 19, further comprising instructions that cause the machine to determine if the plurality of test instruments are electrically connected.

21. The apparatus of claim 20, further comprising instructions that cause the machine to designate if testing is an automatic test mode or a manual test mode, the automatic test includes selecting devices on a semiconductor wafer for testing, the manual test mode includes the user setting the electrical signals of the test instruments through the GUI.

22. The apparatus of claim 21, further comprising instructions that cause the machine to:

generate data in an output file for all devices tested; and

graph data in the output file on a display.

23. The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the testing includes measuring a silicon band gap voltage.

24. The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the testing includes measuring a capacitance.

25. An article comprising a machine-readable medium that stores executable instructions for testing devices on a semiconductor wafer, the instructions causing a machine to:

select a test configuration using a graphical user interface (GUI); and

measure a set of electrical characteristics of each device selected for testing, the probe card having a plurality of probe needles, each device having a plurality of cells, each cell having a set of bond pads, the semiconductor wafer moving so that the probe needles measure the electrical characteristics of each cell for each device selected for testing.

26. The article of claim 25, further comprising instructions that cause the machine to send a signal to activate a plurality of test instruments.

27. The article of claim 26, further comprising instructions that cause the machine to determine if the plurality of test instruments are electrically connected.

28. The article of claim 27, further comprising instructions that cause the machine to designate if testing is an automatic test mode or a manual test mode, the automatic test mode includes selecting devices on a semiconductor wafer for testing, the manual test mode includes the user setting the electrical signals of the test instruments through the GUI.

29. The article of claim 28, further comprising instructions that cause the machine to:

generate data in an output file for all devices tested; and

graph data in the output file on a display.

30. The article of claim 29 wherein the plurality of test instruments include:

a pulse generator; and

a parametric analyzer.

31. The article of claim 25 wherein the testing includes measuring a silicon band gap voltage.

32. The article of claim 25 wherein the testing includes measuring a capacitance.

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