

1994 IEEE Nonlinear Optics:

Materials, Fundamentals, and Applications

July 25-29, 1994

Hilton Waikoloa Village
Waikoloa, Hawaii



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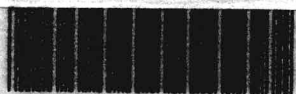
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Table of Contents

MONDAY, JULY 25, 1994

MA	NONLINEAR ORGANIC MATERIALS	
MA1	EO Polymer Materials and Devices: from Research to Reality	3
MA2	Bulk-Type Phase-Matched SHG Devices of Poled Polymers	6
MA3	Optical-Loss Reduction and Phase-Matched Second-Harmonic Generation in a Four-Layered Polymeric Waveguide	9
MA4	Large Third-Order Nonlinearities for the Excited States of Diphenylhexatriene and Quaterphenyl Measured Through Time Resolved Degenerate Four-Wave Mixing	12
MA5	Observation of Parametric Light Scattering	15
MA6	Molecular Design of NLO Active π -Conjugated Compounds	18
MA7	Third-Order Nonlinearities of Dye Molecules and Conjugated Polymers	21
MB	NOVEL NLO EFFECTS	
MB1	Nonlinearities of Atoms Trapped in Optical Lattices	24
MB3	A New Twist on Light: Applications of the Optical Vortex Soliton	27
MB4	Chaos, Period-Doubling and Reverse Bifurcations in an Optically Injected Semiconductor Laser	30
MC	NONLINEAR FREQUENCY CONVERSION	
MC1	Quasi-Phasematched Optical Frequency Conversion in LiNbO_3 Waveguides	33
MC2	Second-Order Cascaded Nonlinearity in Lithium Niobate Channel Waveguides	36
MC3	Application of Injection-Locked High Power Diode Laser Arrays as Pump Source for Efficient Green or Blue Nd:YAB Lasers and cw KTP Optical Parametric Oscillators	39
MC5	Single-Mode Optical Parametric Oscillator System of BBO and KNbO_3 , Tunable from the Visible ($0.42\mu\text{m}$) to the infrared ($4\mu\text{m}$)	42
MC6	Second-Harmonic Controlled All-Optical Modulation by Cascading	45
MC7	Intracavity and Wtracavity Sum-Frequency Generation Between Pump and Signal Waves of an Optical Parametrics Oscillator	48
MP	POSTER SESSION I	
MP1	Besselfunction Modes, Symmetry Breaking and Phase Transitions in Diffractive Optical Pattern Formation Processes	51
MP2	The Vector Soliton Associated with Polarization Modulational Instability in the Normal Dispersion Regime	54
MP3	Stable Four-Dimensional Solitons in Graded-Index Materials with Kerr Nonlinearity	57
MP4	Self-Organization of the Photorefractive Scattering in KNbO_3 in a Hexagonal Spot Array	60
MP5	Polarization Patterns in a Passive Ring-Cavity	63
MP6	Pattern Dynamics in Large Aspect Ratio Lasers	66
MP7	Numerical Simulations of Composite Grating Dynamics in Photorefractive Crystals	69
MP8	Controlling Unstable Periodic Orbits in a Nonlinear Optical System: The Ikeda Map	72
MP9	Spontaneous Pattern Formation in an Absorptive System	75
MP10	Time-Resolved DFWM Spectroscopy of Fullerene in Toluene and Glass	77
MP11	Sensitive Detection of Biomolecular Chirality by Nonlinear Optical Activity	80
MP13	Giant Static Dipole Moment and Polarizability in Highly Oriented J-Aggregates	83
MP14	Polymeric Guest-Host System for Nonlinear Optical Fibre	86
MP15	Thermally Induced Stress Relaxation of Silicon Dioxide on Vicinal $\text{Si}(111)$ Studied with Surface Nonlinear-Optical Techniques	89
MP16	Dynamics of Polariton Solitons in Semiconductors: Formation, Propagation, and Interaction	92
MP17	Fabrication of Highly Perfect Single Crystals and Nonlinear Optical Properties of Organic Material, 3-Methyl-4-Methoxy-4'-Nitrostilbene (MMONS)	94

MP18	Mutually-Pumped Phase Conjugation in Photorefractive Crystals with Partially Coherent Beams	96
MP19	Nonlinear Optical Properties and Holographic Recording Performance of Methyl Orange Doped Polymer Films	99
MP20	Nonlinear Optical Properties of Conjugated Oligomers: A Simple Model for Length Dependence and Conformation	102
MP21	Investigation of the Nonlinear Optical Properties of Quantum Confined InP Deposited in Porous Glass	105
MP22	Solitons in Multicore Nonlinear Waveguide Arrays	108
MP23	Third Order Optical Non-Linearity of Poly (P-Phenylenevinylene) at 800nm	111
MP24	Two-Photon Absorption in π -conjugated Polymers Due to Biexcitonic States	114
MP25	Third-Order Susceptibility of New Macrocyclic Conjugated Systems	116
MP26	Nonlinear Raman Processes in Polydiacetylenes	118
MP27	Ultrafast Nonlinear Processes in One-Dimensional J-Aggregates	121
MP28	Quadratically Enhanced Second Harmonic Generation from Interleaved Langmuir-Blodgett Multilayers	124
MP29	Nonlinear Optical Properties and Poling Dynamics of a Side-Chain Polyimide/Disperse-Red Dye Film: <i>In Situ</i> Optical Second-Harmonic Generation Study	126
MP30	Nonlinear Optical Studies of the Molecular Structure in $\text{CH}_3\text{OH}/\text{H}_2\text{O}$ and $\text{CH}_3\text{CN}/\text{H}_2\text{O}$ Binary Liquid Mixtures	129
Papers	not available	132
MB2	Quantum Teleportation and Quantum Computation	
MC4	Total Internal Reflection Resonators for Nonlinear Optics	
MP12	Monolayer Surface Freezing of Normal Alkanes Studied by Sum-Frequency Generation	

TUESDAY, JULY 26, 1994

TUA	QUANTUM WELLS & SEMICONDUCTORS	
TUA1	Piezoelectric Optical Nonlinearities in Strained [111] InGaAs-GaAs Multiple Quantum Well p-i-n Structures	135
TUA2	A Novel Optical Nonlinearity in a Semiconductor Gain Medium and Its Applications to Wavelength Filtering	138
TUA3	Four-Wave Mixing in Semiconductor Traveling-wave Amplifiers for Efficient, Broadband, Wavelength Conversions up to 65 nm	141
TUA4	Dynamics of Instantaneous Frequency and Amplitude of Coherent Wave Mixing in Quantum Confined Semiconductor Structures	144
TUA5	Implementation of Second-Order Nonlinearities in Semiconductor Waveguides	148
TUA6	Resonant Surface Second-Harmonic Generation on Cu(111) by a Surface State to Image-Potential State Transition	151
TUA7	Linear and Nonlinear Optical Properties of Fractional-Layer-Superlattice Quantum Wires	154
TUA8	Quasi-Phase Matched Second-Harmonic Generation from Asymmetric Coupled Quantum Wells	157
TUB	ULTRAFAST SPECTROSCOPY	
TUB2	Femtosecond Nonlinear Spectroscopy of Semiconductor Quantum Dots: Effect of Two-Electronic-Hole-Pair Interaction	160
TUB3	Femtosecond Pulse Compression and Adiabatic Following in Semiconductor Amplifiers	163
TUB4	Effects of Carrier Relaxation on Excitonic Nonlinear Absorption in GaAs Quantum Wells	166
TUB5	Femtosecond Resonant Second Harmonic Generation (SHG) in Potassium Vapor	169
TUB6	Dephasing-Induced Nonlinear Vibrational Spectroscopy	172
TUC	ULTRASHORT PULSE SOURCES AND HIGH INTENSITY PHENOMENA	
TUC3	Nonlinear Contributions in Intracavity Dispersion Measurements	175
TUC4	Recent Developments in the Measurements of the Intensity and Phase of Ultrashort Pulses Using Frequency-Resolved Optical Gating	178
TUC5	Ultrahigh Nonlinear Harmonics in Gases	181

MP18	Mutually-Pumped Phase Conjugation in Photorefractive Crystals with Partially Coherent Beams	96
MP19	Nonlinear Optical Properties and Holographic Recording Performance of Methyl Orange Doped Polymer Films	99
MP20	Nonlinear Optical Properties of Conjugated Oligomers: A Simple Model for Length Dependence and Conformation	102
MP21	Investigation of the Nonlinear Optical Properties of Quantum Confined InP Deposited in Porous Glass	105
MP22	Solitons in Multicore Nonlinear Waveguide Arrays	108
MP23	Third Order Optical Non-Linearity of Poly (P-Phenylenevinylene) at 800nm	111
MP24	Two-Photon Absorption in π -conjugated Polymers Due to Biexcitonic States	114
MP25	Third-Order Susceptibility of New Macrocyclic Conjugated Systems	116
MP26	Nonlinear Raman Processes in Polydiacetylenes	118
MP27	Ultrafast Nonlinear Processes in One-Dimensional J-Aggregates	121
MP28	Quadratically Enhanced Second Harmonic Generation from Interleaved Langmuir-Blodgett Multilayers	124
MP29	Nonlinear Optical Properties and Poling Dynamics of a Side-Chain Polyimide/Disperse-Red Dye Film: <i>In Situ</i> Optical Second-Harmonic Generation Study	126
MP30	Nonlinear Optical Studies of the Molecular Structure in $\text{CH}_3\text{OH}/\text{H}_2\text{O}$ and $\text{CH}_3\text{CN}/\text{H}_2\text{O}$ Binary Liquid Mixtures	129
Papers	not available	132
MB2	Quantum Teleportation and Quantum Computation	
MC4	Total Internal Reflection Resonators for Nonlinear Optics	
MP12	Monolayer Surface Freezing of Normal Alkanes Studied by Sum-Frequency Generation	

TUESDAY, JULY 26, 1994

TUA	QUANTUM WELLS & SEMICONDUCTORS	
TUA1	Piezoelectric Optical Nonlinearities in Strained [111] InGaAs-GaAs Multiple Quantum Well p-i-n Structures	135
TUA2	A Novel Optical Nonlinearity in a Semiconductor Gain Medium and Its Applications to Wavelength Filtering	138
TUA3	Four-Wave Mixing in Semiconductor Traveling-wave Amplifiers for Efficient, Broadband, Wavelength Conversions up to 65 nm	141
TUA4	Dynamics of Instantaneous Frequency and Amplitude of Coherent Wave Mixing in Quantum Confined Semiconductor Structures	144
TUA5	Implementation of Second-Order Nonlinearities in Semiconductor Waveguides	148
TUA6	Resonant Surface Second-Harmonic Generation on Cu(111) by a Surface State to Image-Potential State Transition	151
TUA7	Linear and Nonlinear Optical Properties of Fractional-Layer-Superlattice Quantum Wires	154
TUA8	Quasi-Phase Matched Second-Harmonic Generation from Asymmetric Coupled Quantum Wells	157
TUB	ULTRAFAST SPECTROSCOPY	
TUB2	Femtosecond Nonlinear Spectroscopy of Semiconductor Quantum Dots: Effect of Two-Electronic-Hole-Pair Interaction	160
TUB3	Femtosecond Pulse Compression and Adiabatic Following in Semiconductor Amplifiers	163
TUB4	Effects of Carrier Relaxation on Excitonic Nonlinear Absorption in GaAs Quantum Wells	166
TUB5	Femtosecond Resonant Second Harmonic Generation (SHG) in Potassium Vapor	169
TUB6	Dephasing-Induced Nonlinear Vibrational Spectroscopy	172
TUC	ULTRASHORT PULSE SOURCES AND HIGH INTENSITY PHENOMENA	
TUC3	Nonlinear Contributions in Intracavity Dispersion Measurements	175
TUC4	Recent Developments in the Measurements of the Intensity and Phase of Ultrashort Pulses Using Frequency-Resolved Optical Gating	178
TUC5	Ultrahigh Nonlinear Harmonics in Gases	181

TUP	POSTER SESSION II	
TUP1	Effect of Self-Diffraction on Erasure Dynamics During Readout at Different Wavelengths and Geometries in Photorefractive Materials	183
TUP2	The Application of Nonlinear Optics in Ocular Biophysics	185
TUP3	A Two-Tone Approach for Prolonged Readout of Multiplexed Photorefractive Holograms	188
TUP4	Improved Second Order Nonlinear Optical Polymers by Covalent Attached - Comparison of Four Different Thermally Stable Systems	191
TUP6	Excited-State $\chi^{(3)}$ Enhancement for a <i>p</i> -Oligophenylene Derivative	194
TUP7	Light-Induced Absorption in Photorefractive Strontium-Barium Niobate	197
TUP8	Thermal Enhancement of Diffraction Efficiency in Cerium Doped Strontium Barium Niobate	200
TUP9	Transient Two-Wave Mixing of Photorefractive $\text{Bi}_{12}\text{SiO}_{20}$ Crystal With a Square A.C. Electric Field	203
TUP10	Spatial Subharmonics in Photorefractive Materials	206
TUP11	Effects of Photorefractive Phase Conjugate Feedback on Semiconductor Laser Linewidth	209
TUP12	Envelope Narrowing from Photorefractive Phase Conjugate Feedback to a Semiconductor Laser	212
TUP13	Transverse Dynamics of Photorefractive Oscillators and Class-A Lasers	215
TUP14	Electronic Nonlinear Optical Behaviour of a Grating Coupled Polymer (4BCMUP) Waveguide	218
TUP15	A New Class of Strongly Photorefractive Materials	221
TUP16	Crosstalk Control for Multiplex Holography	224
TUP17	Theory of Ultrafast Nonlinear Refraction in Zinc-Blende Semiconductors	227
TUP18	Theory of Anisotropy of Two-Photon Absorption in Zinc-Blende Semiconductors	230
TUP19	Theory of the Terahertz Radiation via excitation of the Semiconductor Structures Above the Absorption Edge	233
TUP20	Observation of Intensity-Dependent Excitonic Emissions Linewidth Broadening in Periodic Asymmetric Coupled Three Narrow Quantum Wells	236
TUP21	Control of Photocurrent Directionality via Interference of Single and Two Photon Absorption in a Semiconductor	239
TUP22	Enhancement of the Near-Bandgap Nonlinearity Using Intersubband Absorption in Quantum Wells and Dots	242
TUP23	Optical Bistability of Nonlinear Waves in Multilayer Nonlinear Waveguides	245
TUP24	Observation of Fluorescence in the THz Frequency Region From Semi-Insulating bulk GaAs Excited by Ultrashort Pulses	248
TUP25	Optical Nonlinearities at the Bandedge of Amorphous Selenium Clusters	251
TUP26	Ultrafast Nonlinear Optical Effect in $\text{CuInS}_{2-x}\text{Se}_{x(1-x)}$ -Doped Glasses	253
TUP27	A New Effect of Nonlinear Absorption and Description Using Semiclassical Theory	255
TUP28	Generation of Bistable Luminescence Radiation by Thin CdS Films: Experiment and Theory	258
Papers	not available	261
TUB1	Nonlocal Nonlinear Spectroscopy Tracking of Short Polaritons Pulses in Crystals	
TUB7	Strong Optical Nonlinearity and Fast Exciton Dynamics in Porous Silicon	
TUC1	Ultrashort-Pulse Fiber Ring Lasers	
TUC2	An All-Solid-State Ultrafast Laser Technology	
TUC6	High Field Phenomena in Non Linear Optics	
TUP5	Covalently Bound Noncentrosymmetric Polymer Superlattices for $\chi^{(2)}$ -NLO Applications	

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 1994

WA	PHOTOREFRACTIVE APPLICATIONS	
WA1	Nondestructive Testing Using Nonlinear Optically Based Smart-Pixels Processors	265
WA2	Application of Phase Conjugation Elements in Optical Signal Processing Networks	267
WA3	Adaptive RF Notch Filtering Using Nonlinear Optics	269
WA4	Fidelity-Threshold and Critical Slowing Down in Photorefractive Double Phase Conjugate Mirrors	272
WA5	High Gain Nondegenerate Two-Wave Mixing in Cr:YAlO_3	275
WB	PHOTOREFRACTIVE MATERIALS AND SOLITONS	
WB1	Photorefractive Properties of Rhodium-Doped Barium Titanate	278
WB2	Optical and Electron Paramagnetic Resonance Investigation of the Role of Vanadium in Photorefractive CdTe:V	281

WB3	Grating Response Time of Photorefractive $\text{KNbO}_3\text{:Rb}^+$	284
WB4	Photorefractive Spatial Solitons - Theory and Experiments	287
WB5	Nonlinear Rotation of 3D Dark Spatial Solitons in a Gaussian Laser Beam	290
WB6	Optically Induced <u>Dynamic</u> Polarization Gratings for Tunable, Quasi-Phase Matched Second Harmonic Generation	293
WB7	Interrogation of the Lattice Vibrations of Liquids with Femtosecond Raman-Induced Kerr Effect Spectroscopy	296
WC	NONLINEAR OPTICAL EFFECTS IN FIBERS	
WC2	Squeezing in Optical Fibers	299
WC3	Optical Fiber Nonlinear Effects in Lightwave Communication Systems	302
WC4	Liquid Crystal Fibers for Enhanced Nonlinear Optical Processes	303
WC5	Ultrafast and Efficient Optical Kerr Effects in Chalcogenide Glass Fibers and the Application in All-Optical Switching	306
WP	POSTER SESSION III	
WP1	Exactly Solvable Model of Surface Second Harmonic Generation	309
WP2	Extended Parametric Gain Using Twin Core Fiber	312
WP3	Dynamic Pulse Evolution in Self-starting Passively Mode-locked Ti:sapphire/DDI Lasers	315
WP4	Second Harmonic Generation at Conductor Surfaces with Continuous Profiles	318
WP5	Efficient Resonant Surface-Emitting Second-Harmonic Generators and Optical Power Limiters Based on Multilayers or Asymmetric Quantum Wells	321
WP6	High-Efficiency Frequency Conversion by Phase Cascading of Nonlinear Optical Elements	324
WP7	Antiphase Dynamics in Intracavity Second Harmonic Generation	327
WP8	Tunable Mid-Infrared Optical Parametric Oscillator	330
WP9	Frequency Conversion by Four-wave Mixing in Single-mode Fibers	332
WP10	Raman-Assisted UV Generation in KTP Frequency Doublers	335
WP11	Cross-Modulation Distortion in Subcarrier Multiplexed Optical Systems	338
WP12	Wavelength Domains in Bulk Kerr Media	341
WP13	Kerr Lens Effects on Transverse Mode Stability and Active Versus Passive Modelocking in Solid State Lasers	344
WP14	Enhanced Fiber Squeezing via Local-Oscillator Pulse Compression	347
WP15	Semiclassical vs. Quantum Behavior in Fourth-Order Interference	350
WP16	Multiphoton Photochemistry and Resonant Laser Ignition of Reactive Gases	353
WP17	Nd:YALO -Amplifier with 125 Watts Average Output Power and High Beam Quality Via SBS Phase Conjugation	356
WP18	Demonstration of Accumulated Photon Echoes by Using Synchrotron Radiation	358
WP19	Characteristics of Self-Pumped Phase Conjugate in a Gain Medium	361
WP20	SBS Threshold Reduction Using Feedback	364
WP21	UV Laser Source for Remote Spectroscopy by Multiple Nonlinear Conversion of a Nd:YAG Laser	367
WP22	Beam Combination in Raman Amplifiers	370
WP23	How Quickly Self-Raman Effects and Third-Order Dispersion Destroy Squeezing	373
WP24	Low Power Visible-Near Infrared ($0.4\mu\text{m} - 5\mu\text{m}$) Self-Starting Phase Conjugation with Liquid Crystal	376
WP25	Dual-Wavelength-Pumped Raman Conversion of Broad Band Lasers	379
WP26	Brillouin Induced Mutually Pumped Phase Conjugation in Reflection Geometry	382
WP27	Effects of Stimulated Raman Scattering on Kerr Switching Profiles in a Nonlinear Fiber Loop Mirror	385
WP28	Fast Polarization Self-Modulation in a Vertical-Cavity Surface-Emitting Laser	388
WP29	Efficient Frequency Conversion of cw Mode Locked Tunable ps Pulses in the Visible and Near Infrared Spectral Region	391
WP30	Coherent Phonon-Polaritons as a Probe of Anharmonic Lattice Vibrations	394
WP31	Propagation and Switching of Ultra-Short Pulses in Nonlinear Fiber Couplers	397
WP32	Femtosecond Pulse Splitting, Supercontinuum Generation and Conical Emission in Normally Dispersive Media	400
WP33	Generation of Subpicosecond Infrared Laser Pulses Produced by Optical Switching from Low Temperature Grown Gallium Arsenide	403

Papers not available	406
WA6 High Efficiency, Self-Pumped Phase Conjugation in Cerium-Doped Barium Titanate Crystals	
WC1 Making the Most of Fiber Nonlinearity: Soliton Transmission Using Sliding-Frequency Guiding Filters	

THURSDAY, JULY 28, 1994

THA APPLICATIONS OF NONLINEAR OPTICS	
THA3 A Solid-State Three-Dimensional Upconversion Display	409
THA4 A Versatile All-Optical Modulator Based on Nonlinear Mach-Zehnder Interferometers	412
THA6 Compensation for Distortions and Depolarization of a Multi-Mode Fiber Using a Brillouin Phase-Conjugate Mirror	415
THA7 A Single-Longitudinal Mode Holographic Solid-State Laser Oscillator	418
THB HOLOGRAPHIC OPTICAL STORAGE	
THB1 Hologram Restoration and Enhancement in Photorefractive Media	421
THB2 Compact Volume Holographic Memory System with Rapid Acoustooptic Addressing	424
THB3 Recall of Linear Combinations of Stored Data Pages Using Phase Code Multiplexing in Volume Holography	427
THB4 Optical Self-Enhancement of Photorefractive Holograms	430
THB5 A New Method for Holographic Data Storage in Photopolymer Films	433
THB6 Cross-Talk Noise and Storage Density in Holographic Memory	436
Papers not available	439
THA1 Frequency Doubled Nd:Yag Laser for General Surgery: From the Research Lab to Commercial Product	
THA2 Up-conversion Lasers	
THA5 Threshold Reduction Techniques for SBS Phase Conjugation	

FRIDAY, JULY 29, 1994

FA FUNDAMENTAL QUANTUM PROCESSES IN NLO	
FA1 Are Time-and Frequency-Domain Nonlinear Spectroscopies Related by a Fourier Transform?	443
FA2 Quantum Optics of Dielectric Media	446
FA3 Realistic Measurement of Phase	448
FA4 Controlling Quantum Fluctuations by Electromagnetic Field Induced Coherences	451
FA6 A New Era for Spontaneous Emission: The Single-Mode Light-Emitting-Diode	453
FB NONLINEAR OPTICAL MATERIALS - INORGANICS	
FB1 Frequency-Agile Materials for Visible and Near IR Frequency Conversion	456
FB2 Nonlinear Optical Properties of Thin Film Composite Materials	459
FB3 Boromalate Salts: A New Family of Solution-Grown Crystals for Nonlinear Optical Applications for the UV	462
FB4 Electric Field Measurements Associated with Second Harmonic Generation in Thin Film Waveguides	465
Papers not available:	468
FA5 Emission Processes in Microcavities	
FB5 Developing New UV NLO Crystals Using Molecular Engineering Approach	

Author Index	469
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MONDAY, JULY 25

- MA: Nonlinear Organic Materials**
- MB: Novel NLO Effects**
- MC: Nonlinear Frequency Conversion**
- MP: Poster Session I**

EO POLYMER MATERIALS AND DEVICES: FROM RESEARCH TO REALITY

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Polymer nonlinear optical materials offer new opportunities in integrated optics¹. The large electronic hyperpolarizabilities in certain conjugated organic molecules lead to materials with large, ultrafast optical susceptibilities. In particular, electro-optic (EO) poled polymer materials exhibit low dispersion and low dielectric constants. EO polymer materials have been modulated to 40 GHz² and exhibit few fundamental limits for ultrafast modulation and switching. Polymeric integrated optic materials also offer great fabrication flexibility. The materials are spin-coatable into high quality, multilayer films, and can be patterned, metallized, and poled. Channel waveguides and integrated optic circuits can be defined by the poling process itself³, by photochemistry of the EO polymer^{4,5}, or by a variety of well understood micro-machining techniques. To date, EO polymer materials have been used to fabricate high-speed Mach-Zehnder modulators⁶, directional couplers⁷, Fabry-Perot etalons⁸, and even multitap devices⁹. Recent developments in EO polyimide materials^{10,11} show it is possible to achieve sufficient thermal stability of the aligned state to meet both manufacturing and end-use requirements¹² for such devices. The demonstrated performance of EO polymer materials and devices is now beginning to approach that of inorganic materials, as displayed in Figure 1.

The ultimate advantages of EO polymers, however, may extend far beyond the duplication of inorganic devices. Multilayer structures of EO polymers can be fabricated in large area formats (6-8 inch wafers) with high device packing densities. Furthermore, EO polymer devices can be fabricated directly on electronic substrates and assembled with ICs to create a hybrid optoelectronic package. Finally, the substrate itself can serve as a bench for assembly and integration in a manner similar to standard Si waferboard¹³.

FIGURE-OF-MERIT	GaAs	Ti-Lithium Niobate	EO Polymers
EO coefficient r (pm/V)	1.5	31	30
Dielectric constant ϵ	12	28	3.5
Refractive index n	3.5	2.2	1.6
$n^3 r$ (pm/V)	64	330	123
$n^3 r/\epsilon$ (pm/V)	5.4	12	35
Loss (dB/cm @ $\lambda=1.3 \mu\text{m}$)	2	0.2	0.5
Space-BW product (GHz-cm)	>100	10	>100
Voltage-length product (V-cm)	5	5	10

Figure 1. Comparison of different technologies for integrated optic devices

Planar polymer waveguide technologies have the ultimate potential to gain widespread use in essentially every electronic and fiber-optic system application. Passive components will find use as splitters, couplers, multiplexors, and parallel array connectors in trunk, local loop, wide-area,

and local-area networks. Electro-optic polymer devices have the broadest potential. Applications include external modulation of lasers, fast network configuration switches, optical network units in Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH), modulator arrays for data networks, filters, couplers, multiplexors, digital-analog and analog-digital converters, and pulse-shapers. The market potential for planar polymer waveguides is very large due to low wafer processing costs and potential to achieve low-cost single-mode fiber-attach and packaging. This means polymers may compete well with other technologies in conventional optoelectronic applications.

Polymer technologies offer new, unique opportunities in electronic systems applications that are not available with other technologies. With polymers, high levels of integration have been demonstrated by using multiple levels of waveguides¹⁴ as well as in-plane and out-of-plane mirrors¹⁵. The potential for low-cost manufacturing, packaging, and assembly arises from the capability to perform hybrid integration of single-mode components using lithographically-defined registration techniques. This could lead to advanced products such as processor multichip modules with high-bandwidth interfaces between CPU and second-level cache, optical mesh routers for massively parallel computers, and 8-12 bit, high-speed A-D's. EO polymers are unique in offering this level of product potential.

Cost, reliability, performance, and availability are the main drivers for obtaining and sustaining long-term interest in polymers by systems users. Polymer reliability is seen by customers as a major issue, particularly for EO poled polymers. Reliability needs to be proved with extensive test data of the packaged components, following the well-known standards for telecom and electronic components, in general. It is important to note that laser diodes have achieved success in the market, despite their propensity for drift, low-yields, limited lifetime, and failure. The market has accepted "correction" methods for laser diode performance, such as thermo-electric coolers, drift compensation circuitry, and elaborate packaging because the total cost of a laser transmitter has been reduced to acceptable levels in many cases. Similar techniques could be applied to polymer devices but will increase their cost and may reduce their reliability.

Major outstanding issues in EO polymer devices include the reduction of DC drift, reduction of loss, and enhancement of thermal stability. To date, all of these issues have been resolved in EO polymer devices, although perhaps not all at the same time. However, the fundamental reasons for drift or poling decay are sufficiently understood to provide enthusiasts and skeptics alike with optimism for the achievement of commercial specifications for the technology.

What about competing technologies? For passive technologies, glass is the main competitor. LiNbO₃ and GaAs waveguides, and direct laser modulation provide competition for electro-optic polymers. Underlying all of this is the inertia of electronic systems designers to change their solutions from wires to fiber-based systems: Whenever possible, electronic solutions will be thoroughly examined and selected, if economically feasible and practical. However, high-end communication in all markets is moving toward utilization of the bandwidth offered by optical fiber, and thus the growth of markets for all optoelectronic devices is inevitable. EO polymers will likely share the market with their inorganic counterparts.

With further development, electro-optic polymers have the potential to far-outdistance inorganic materials in figures-of-merit, and, in fact, already do in some key properties, such as length-bandwidth products. Polymers are not likely to ever exhibit insertion loss as low as glass for passive devices. However, intrinsic performance of polymers, measured against other materials, is not sufficient for judging the potential of the technology. Overall production costs, balanced against performance, will determine the utilization of polymer waveguide technologies.

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Bulk-Type Phase-Matched SHG Devices of Poled Polymers

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Introduction:

Polymeric second-order nonlinear optical (NLO) materials have been studied extensively in recent years for applications in communication and optical signal processing¹⁻². Most of the earlier works were concerned with the synthesis and the general properties such as nonlinear optical coefficients and temporal stability. Only a few studies have been reported on phase matched second harmonic generation (SHG)³. In fact, phase matching is the first important condition to achieve high conversion efficiency of SHG. It has been proposed that the mode dispersion of fundamental and second-harmonic waves was used to achieve phase matching, in which very precise control of film thickness was required. This is not easy for poled polymer films generally obtained by spin-coating. To avoid this difficulty, the use of Cerenkov radiation and non-collinear light path have been proposed. But in all these methods the obtainable SHG conversion efficiency was limited by the small overlap integrals for different modes. In order to maximize the overlap integral, the quasi-phase matching (QPM)⁴ methods by altering $\chi^{(2)}$ signal or periodic poling have been proposed. But again the precise control of periodicity should be needed, which is also very difficult. Here we describe, for the first time, bulk phase matched second harmonic generation in poled and drawn polymers, polyurea (PU) by using birefringence. The calculated type-I phase-matching characteristics of a drawn PU was confirmed by experiment.

Experiment and results:

1. Sample preparation

The schematic synthesis of polyurea (PU) is shown in Fig. 1.

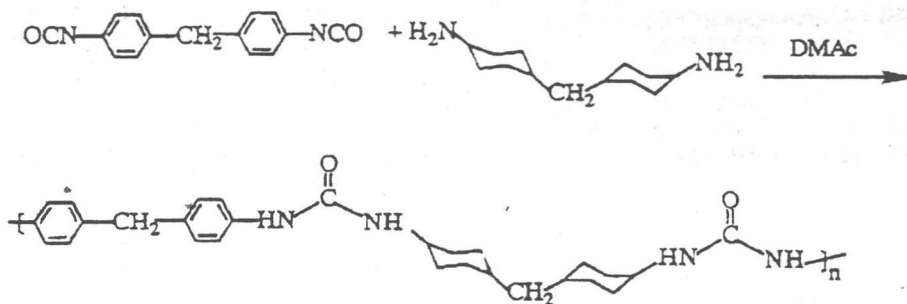


Figure 1. Schematic synthesis of polyurea

2. Polymer geometry and refractive indices

The geometry of polymer and the dispersion of refractive indices vs wavelenth of U1 polymer with draw ratio of 1.4 were shown in Fig.2, and Fig. 3, respectively.

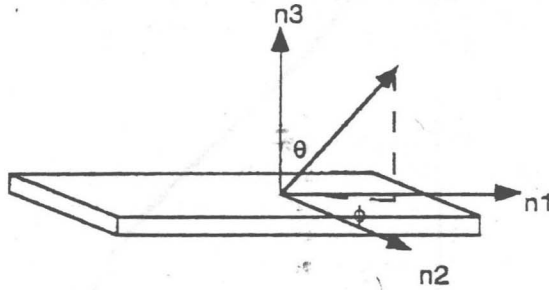


Fig. 2. Geometry of polymer film samples

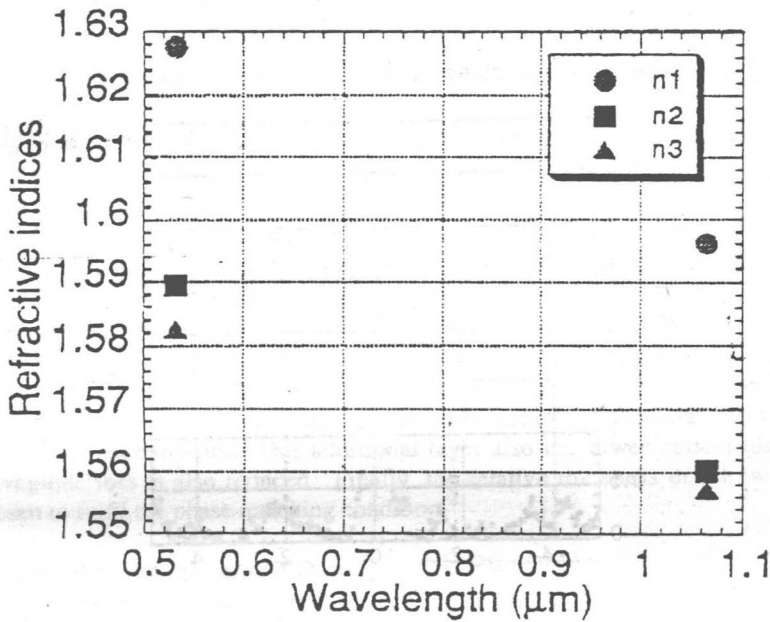


Fig. 3. Refractive indices of poled polymer with draw ratio of 1.4

3.Phase matching experiment

Using the refractive indices of polymer with draw ratio of 1.4, the type I phase matching characteristics has been calculated, the θ and ϕ curve was shown in Fig.4. Cutting a film with $\theta = 90^\circ$ and $\phi = 52.6^\circ$, the phase matched SHG has been observed in experiment by using a Nd:YAG laser with 1064 nm fundamental wavelength, the results were shown in Fig.5.