

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY



Doping and Characterisation of ZnO
Nanowires and Crystals

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in the

School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences
Faculty of Science

2015

Declaration of Authorship

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Abstract

ZnO is a wide bandgap semiconductor with a direct band gap of 3.37 eV and an exciton binding energy of 60 meV at room temperature. Due to their large band gap, high exciton binding energy and the ease of forming versatile low-dimensional nanostructures, ZnO nanowires have been widely studied for applications in optoelectronic devices. The lack of a reliable method for *p*-type doping and for controlling the *n*-type compensation limited to native defects in ZnO has hindered the development of ZnO-based devices. Group V elements, in particular nitrogen that has an ionic radius similar to that of oxygen, is widely believed to be a promising candidate for realising *p*-type doping in ZnO. In contrast, hydrogen, a common impurity in ZnO, can act as a shallow donor in ZnO. This project primarily aims to investigate the properties and behaviours of these two important impurities plus the native defects in both bulk and nanowire ZnO.

In this first part of the project, arrays of ZnO nanowires were fabricated using gold (Au) as catalyst. New insights into controlling nanowire merging phenomena were demonstrated in the growth of ZnO nanowires using monodispersed Au colloidal nanoparticles as catalysts. Both nanowire diameter and wire distribution density were found to be strongly dependent on the density of Au catalytic nanoparticles. Structural analysis and spectral cathodoluminescence imaging of the *c*-plane nanowire cross-sections revealed that thin isolated nanowires growing from the Au nanoparticles began to merge and coalesce with neighbouring nanowires to form larger nanowires when their separation is inferior to a certain threshold distance. The distribution of nanowire diameters and their green emission were found to be strongly dependent on the density of the Au nanoparticles. The merging phenomenon was attributed to electrostatic

interactions between polar nanowire tips during growth and well-described by a cantilever bending model.

The grown nanowires were subsequently doped with nitrogen by plasma annealing at 300°C. The chemical states of nitrogen dopants in ZnO nanowires and the optical properties of doped ZnO were studied by complementary chemical and optical techniques. It is found that nitrogen exists in multiple states: N_O , N_{Zn} and loosely bound N_2 molecule. The work establishes a direct link between a donor-acceptor pair (DAP) emission at 3.232 eV and the concentration of loosely bound N_2 . These results indicate that N_2 at Zn site is a potential candidate for producing a shallow acceptor state in N-doped ZnO.

Results are also reported on the electronic properties and kinetic behaviour of hydrogen dopants in bulk ZnO crystals. Hydrogen was found to be at the bond-centred site by forming O-H bonds after hydrogen plasma annealing. Hydrogen shallow donor and hydrogen bound to basal plane stacking faults (BSFs) are observed in the low-temperature high-resolution CL measurements of H-doped ZnO single crystals. Under the electron beam irradiation, hydrogen donors bound to BSFs dissociate from these defect sites and migrate to the periphery of the electron interaction volume. The hydrogen donors are confirmed to be in the $H_{BC, //}$ configuration by means of XANES measurements.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. Cuong Ton-That and Prof. Matthew Phillips, for the continuous support, advice and guidance during my study at University of Technology Sydney. They have provided me with the most enjoyable learning experiences throughout my time in Australia.

My sincere thanks also go to Geoff McCredie for his help with the construction of the nanowire growth system, Mark Berkahn for XRD measurements, Herbert Yuan and Katie McBean for daily technical support. I would also like to extend my thanks and appreciation to my fellow students Meng Huang, Mark Lockrey, Sumin Choi and Olivier Lee for assistance with cathodoluminescence characterisation and plasma processing.

I acknowledge the contributions of the UTS research team, led by Dr. Cuong Ton-That, that conducted measurements on ZnO samples at the Australian Synchrotron. This synchrotron work was assisted by beam line scientists, Bruce Cowie, Anton Tadich and Lars Thomsen.

Additionally, I would like to acknowledge the financial support from the UTS International Research Scholarship (IRS)-China Scholarship Council (CSC) PhD scholarships program.

Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my family. None of this would have been possible without the patience and understanding of my family.

List of Publications and Presentations

Journal papers

L. Zhu, C. Ton-That, and M. R. Phillips, Nitrogen incorporation in ZnO nanowires using N₂O dopant gas. *Mater. Lett.* **99**, 42-45 (2013).

L. Zhu, M. R. Phillips, and C. Ton-That, Coalescence of ZnO nanowires grown from monodispersed Au nanoparticles. *CrystEngComm* **17**, 4987 (2015).

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S. Khachadorian, R. Gillen, C. Ton-That, L. Zhu, J. Maultzsch, M. R. Phillips, and A. Hoffmann, Revealing the origin of high-energy Raman local mode in nitrogen doped ZnO nanowires. *Phys. Status Solidi-Rapid Res. Lett.*, Accepted. In Press. DOI: 10.1002/pssr.201510405.

Oral Presentations at International Conferences

L. Zhu, M. Lockrey, C. Ton-That, and M. R. Phillips, Growth and optical properties of N-doped ZnO nanowires. APMC-10, ICONN 2012 & ACMM-22, Perth, February (2012).

L. Zhu, C. Ton-That, and M. R. Phillips, Au effect on the growth and optical properties of ZnO nanowires. AMAS XII – The Twelfth Biennial Symposium, Sydney, February (2013).

C. Ton-That, L. Zhu, M. R. Phillips, A. Tadich, L. Thomsen and B. Cowie.,
Nanocharacterisation of nitrogen dopants in ZnO nanowires. ACMM23 and
ICONN2014, Adelaide, February (2014).

Poster Presentations at Conferences and Workshops

L. Zhu, C. Ton-That, and M. R. Phillips, Nitrogen doping in ZnO nanowires using
N₂O dopant gas. ACMM23 and ICONN2014, Adelaide, February (2014).

L. Zhu, C. Ton-That, and M. R. Phillips, Nanocharacterisation of N-doped ZnO
nanowires. ANN Early Career Workshop, Sydney, July (2014) (The 2nd poster
award).

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AB	anti-bonding
A ⁰ X	neutral acceptor bound exciton
BC	bound-centre
BSF	basal plane stacking fault
CCD	charge coupled device
CL	cathodoluminescence
CVD	chemical vapour deposition
DAP	donor-acceptor pair
D ⁰ X	neutral donor bound exciton
ESR	electron spin resonance
FX	free exciton
LO	longitudinal optical
MOCVD	metal-organic chemical vapour deposition
NBE	near-band-edge
rf	radio frequency
SEM	scanning electron microscope
VLS	vapour-liquid-solid
VPT	vapour-phase-transport
VS	vapour-solid
XANES	X-ray absorption near-edge structure
XPS	X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy
XRD	X-ray diffraction
WZ	wurtzite
ZB	zinc blende