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Phys. Rev. Lett. 107, 030506 — Published 15 July 2011
DOI: 10.1103/PhysRevLett.107.030506
Charge-State Conditional Operation of a Spin Qubit

I. van Weperen,1,2 B. D. Armstrong,1 E. A. Laird,1 J. Medford,1 C. M. Marcus,1 M. P. Hanson,3 and A. C. Gossard3

1Department of Physics, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138, USA
2Kavli Institute of Nanoscience, Delft University of Technology, 2600 GA Delft, The Netherlands
3Materials Department, University of California, Santa Barbara, California 93106, USA

We report coherent operation of a singlet-triplet qubit controlled by the spatial arrangement of two confined electrons in an adjacent double quantum dot that is electrostatically coupled to the qubit. This four-dot system is the specific device geometry needed for two-qubit operations of a two-electron spin qubit. We extract the strength of the capacitive coupling between qubit and adjacent double quantum dot and show that the present geometry allows fast conditional gate operation, opening pathways toward implementation of a universal set of gates for singlet-triplet spin qubits.

Advances in control of single electrons in quantum dots [1] have led to the prospect of using electron spin as a quantum bit (qubit) in quantum computation [2]. One formulation of the qubit uses singlet |S⟩ = 1√2(|↑↓⟩ − |↓↑⟩) and triplet |T0⟩ = 1√2(|↑↓⟩ + |↓↑⟩) states [3] of two electrons in a double quantum dot (double QD, DQD) (Fig. 1(a)). Most requirements for quantum computing [4] with this qubit have been met [5–8], including all electrical full single-qubit control [9]. Rotation about the z-axis of the Bloch sphere (Fig. 1(a)) is governed by the exchange interaction between two spins, which can be controlled electrostatically near degeneracies of the charge arrangement of the two electrons. Rotation about the x-axis is mediated by gradients of the Zeeman field, produced either by nuclear gradients [9] or by permanent magnets [10].

The electrostatic interaction between DQDs was identified theoretically to lead to a two-qubit interaction sufficient for universal quantum computation [11]. In this scheme, the control (C) DQD is configured to allow its spin configuration (S or T0) to determine its charge state via Pauli blockade [12] of the charge transition from the singly occupied (1,1) to the doubly occupied (0,2) or (2,0) configuration, where (N1, N2) are the absolute electron occupancies of the left and right QD. That is, rapid relaxation into the symmetric orbital ground state of (0,2) occurs only for the spin-antisymmetric singlet (S) state, while the spin-symmetric triplet (T0) remains trapped in the (1,1) charge configuration. The resulting charge state of the control DQD in turn influences the rate of coherent state evolution in the target (T) DQD through the dependence of the exchange interaction on electrostatic tuning. The two-qubit operation is thus mediated by the charge configuration of the control DQD (Fig. 1(b)).

While electrostatically coupled proximal electron pairs constitute the main candidate for two-qubit operations for the singlet-triplet qubits, this system has not been realized or assessed experimentally to date. The present study realizes the relevant four-dot system and provides key parameters of the capacitive interaction. We further demonstrate controlled coherent operation of one DQD, operating as a singlet-triplet qubit, using the two-electron charge configuration of the other DQD. We find that the repositioning of a single electron in the fixed two-electron system is sufficient to control the evolution of a phase gate. We stress, however, that the performance of this two qubit logic gate remains a future challenge.

A pair of DQDs were defined with Ti/Au depletion gates on a GaAs/Al0.3Ga0.7As heterostructure with 2DEG 110 nm below the surface (Fig. 2(a)). 2DEG mobility was 2 × 10^5 cm² V⁻¹ s⁻¹ with electron density 2×10⁻¹⁵ m⁻². Electron temperature was ∼ 150 mK. The S = 1 triplet states were separated using an external magnetic field Bext = 0.1 T applied in the plane of the 2DEG.

Electron configurations in both DQDs were controlled by tuning the voltages applied to the plunger depletion gates Vc(T) and Vl(T), and were measured with proximal quantum point contact (QPC) sensors [14, 15]. The control (target) DQD was tuned to the (1,1)C→(0,2)C ((1,1)T→(2,0)T) charge transition (Figs. 2(b) and 2(c)) where Pauli blockade was observed for both DQDs in both transport and charge sensing [16]. Voltage detuning axes εC and εT were defined along the (1,1)C→(0,2)C and (1,1)T→(2,0)T charge transitions of the control and target DQDs, as shown in Figs. 2b and 2c [17].

The strength of the capacitive interaction between DQDs defines a coupling strength, E0cap, given by the differential cross capacitance energy E((0,2)C(2,0)T) −

![FIG. 1: (Color online). (a) Bloch sphere representation of the singlet-triplet qubit, which is formed by the singlet S and m_s = 0 triplet T_0 electron spin states of two singly occupied quantum dots. (b) Electrostatic interaction between proximal double quantum dots (DQDs) alters the rate of coherent evolution in one DQD depending on the charge configuration of the other DQD.](image-url)
charge state of the control DQD changes from (1,1) to (0,2), the detuning axis of the target qubit shifts from $\epsilon_T$, with exchange energy $J(\epsilon_T)$, to $\epsilon_T - \epsilon_{cpl}$, with reduced exchange energy $J(\epsilon_T - \epsilon_{cpl})$, as shown in Fig. 3(a). The difference in exchange energy $J(\epsilon_T) - J(\epsilon_T - \epsilon_{cpl})$ defines the detuning-dependent coupling strength $E_{cpl}(\epsilon_T)$ (Fig. 3(b), which we describe, following Taylor et al. [11, 18] with the hybrid state $|S\rangle = \cos \theta |S\rangle + \sin \theta |S(2,0)\rangle$ on the lower branch of the anticrossing, where $\theta = \arctan(2\hbar(e - \sqrt{4\hbar^2 + e^2})^{-1}$ is the angle parameterizing the admixture, with $\kappa \sim 6 \mu eV$ (discussed below). With the control in (0,2) and the target at $\theta_T$, the detuning-dependent coupling strength is given by $E_{cpl}^0 \sin^2 \theta_T$ [11]. When the target DQD is fully within (2,0) (i.e., large positive $\epsilon_T$), the shift by $\epsilon_{cpl}$ results in an increase in the energy of the target state by the maximal coupling energy, $E_{cpl}^0$.

To demonstrate charge-state conditional evolution, the target qubit must be manipulated before and after its interaction with the control qubit using a series of voltage pulses (Fig. 4(a)) applied to the plunger gates [5]. A Texasronix AWG 520 was used for fast gate control, allowing $\sim 1$ ns pulse rise times. A singlet $S(2,0)$ was prepared in the (2,0)$_T$ charge state, after which it was adiabatically loaded into the superposition $\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(|S\rangle + |T_0\rangle)$ in (1,1)$_T$ (Fig. 4(b)). Detuning was pulsed to a negative value $\epsilon_T^L$ where the singlet and $T_0$ triplet level were separated by an energy $J(\epsilon_T^L)$. Precession with frequency $\hbar^{-1}J(\epsilon_T^L)$ occurred for an interaction time $\tau_I$. Following adiabatic unloading, spin-dependent tunneling into (2,0) was used

$E((0,2)c(1,1)_T) - E((1,1)c(2,0)_T) - E((1,1)c(1,1)_T)$, with $E((N_L, N_R)c, (N_L, N_R)_T)$ the energy of the system with charge configuration $(N_L, N_R)_c$ in the control DQD and $(N_L, N_R)_T$ in the target DQD. When the control DQD was tuned to the (0,2)$_c$ charge state, the (1,1)$_T$ - (2,0)$_T$ charge transition of the target DQD shifted to a more positive detuning by an amount $\epsilon_{cpl}$ (Fig. 2(d)). This shift in detuning reflects an increased energy of the (0,2)$_C$ state resulting from capacitive coupling between DQDs. The detuning voltage shift of 0.63 mV, when converted to energy based on finite-bias transport measurements, gives $E_{cpl}^0 = 23 \pm 3 \mu eV$.

Coherent manipulation of the target qubit makes use of the dependence of the exchange energy $J$, the difference in energy between the singlet and triplet level, on detuning $\epsilon_T$ along the (1,1)$_T$ - (2,0)$_T$ axis. When the

![FIG. 2: (Color online). (a) Micrograph of a device similar to the one measured. Gate voltages $V^{L}_C$ and $V^{R}_C$ ($V^{L}_T$ and $V^{R}_T$) control the charge state of the target (control) double quantum dot (DQD). Quantum point contacts (QPCs) with conductances $g_T$ and $g_C$ sense charge states of target and control DQDs. The DQDs are capacitively coupled by an electrostatic interaction $E_{cpl}$, (b) ((c)) QPC conductance measured as a function of gate voltages $V^{R}_C$ and $V^{L}_C$ of the charge configuration $(N_L, N_R)$. Conductance levels $g_T$ and $g_C$ at $\epsilon_T$ and $\epsilon_C$ for target and control DQD are indicated. (d) Voltage detuning $\epsilon_T$ of the target DQD as a function of the voltage detuning, $\epsilon_C$, of the control DQD. The shift of the target detuning axis $\epsilon_{cpl}$ that occurs when the occupancy of the control DQD changes is indicated on the left axis. The right axis shows the corresponding energy shift $E_{cpl}^0$. The difference in conductance of the (1,1)$_T$ and (2,0)$_T$ occupancy between b and d is due to a difference in operating point of the quantum point contact.](image)

![FIG. 3: (Color online). (a) Energy diagram near the (1,1)$_T$ - (2,0)$_T$ transition of the target double quantum dot (DQD). Energy levels of the hybrid singlet state as a function of target detuning $\epsilon_T$ for (1,1)$_C$ (blue) and (0,2)$_C$ (red) occupation of the control DQD. Detuning of the target qubit at which separation of the electrons in separate quantum dots $\epsilon_T^L$ and singlet preparation $\epsilon_T^M$ take place during coherent manipulation are indicated. The yellow area indicates detuning range considered in b. (b) Singlet-triplet energy splittings and corresponding target qubit precession frequency $\tau_I$ for control double quantum dot occupation (1,1)$_C$ (blue) and (0,2)$_C$ (red). Difference in exchange energies, $E_{cpl}(\epsilon_T)$ (black) determine the duration for conditional operation. Exchange energies obtained from fits to the data of Fig. 5, coupling energy from the model in Ref. [11].](image)
to determine the singlet component of the qubit $P_T^{S}$ from an average measurement of QPC conductance over many repeated cycles. With the control DQD in (0,2)$_C$ the precession frequency was reduced to $h^{-1} J (e_T^f - e_{cpl})$, while no such reduction was observed when the control was in (1,1)$_C$.

The oscillation of singlet probability with interaction time $\tau_I$ in Fig. 4(c) demonstrates coherent precession of the target qubit. The target precessed more slowly when the occupancy of the control DQD was (0,2)$_C$ (detuning $\epsilon_C = 2.5$ mV) than with control DQD occupancy (1,1)$_C$ ($\epsilon_C = -2.5$ mV) (Fig. 4(e)). Precession frequency $f_T$ as a function of $\epsilon_C$ (Figs. 4(c) and (d)) shows that the decrease occurs near $\epsilon_C = 0$ mV, where the charge state of the control DQD changed from (1,1)$_C$ ($\epsilon_C < 0$) to (0,2)$_C$ ($\epsilon_C > 0$). Away from $\epsilon_C = 0$ mV no noticeable change in frequency was observed, ruling out direct effects of the gate voltages $V_L^C$ and $V_R^C$ on the precession rate, which would presumably instead appear as a continuous change in precession frequency along $\epsilon_C$. The coupling precession, the difference in precession rate $h^{-1} E_{cpl}(e_T^f)$ between both control DQD configurations, constitutes a qubit operation conditional on the charge configuration of the two electrons in the control DQD. Target coherence times were longer for control in (0,2)$_C$ compared to (1,1)$_C$, consistent with gate-noise-induced dephasing with roughly constant quality factor [5]. No significant increase in decoherence at the target charge transition between (0,2) and (1,1) is observed.

Figure 5(b) demonstrates a conditional phase flip in $\sim 30$ ns. After that time, the initial target state $\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} |(S) + |T_0\rangle\rangle$ has evolved through $3\pi$ to $\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} |(S) - |T_0\rangle\rangle$ with control in (0,2)$_C$. With the control in (1,1)$_C$, the target evolved through $4\pi$ to its initial state. Figure 5(b) shows the precession frequency $f_T$ increasing with increasing target detuning, reflecting an increase of $S(2,0)$ component in the hybrid singlet state with detuning. A fit to the measured $E_{cpl}(e_T^f)$ with the theoretical $\sin^2 \theta_T$-relation of coupling frequency to detuning was made. The coupling strength, $E_{cpl}^0$, used in this fit was found from an independent measurement of the shift in detuning voltage needed to match the precession frequency of the target when the control DQD was in (0,2)$_C$ to the precession frequency with the control in (1,1)$_C$. A detuning shift of $-0.32$ mV corresponds to a coupling energy $E_{cpl}^0$ of 11 $\mu$eV [19]. Excellent agreement between the data and model for the detuning-dependent precession frequency is found, using a value of tunnel coupling $\kappa = 5.6 \pm 0.3$ $\mu$eV in the target DQD as a single fit parameter.

The fastest measured time scale for conditional precession, $\tau_{\pi}^{\text{cond}} \sim \pi h (E_{cpl}(e_T)),^{-1}$, defined as the time for a phase lag of $\pi$ to accumulate during the coherent evolution of the target qubit with control DQD charge configuration (0,2) compared to the evolution with (1,1) control DQD occupancy, is 20-30 ns (Fig. 5b, right axis), corresponding to $E_{cpl}(e_T) \sim 0.01 E_{cpl}^0$. This value can be used to infer the speed of a two-qubit singlet-triplet gate, where the spin state of the control qubit with $\theta_C$ influences the spin evolution of the target qubit. In this situation the coupling strength is given by $E_{cpl}^0 \sin^2 \theta_T \sin^2 \theta_C$, giving a timescale for the controlled phase two-qubit gate of $\tau_{\pi}^{\text{cont}} \sim \pi h (E_{cpl}(e_T, \epsilon_C)),^{-1}$. If both control and target qubits were operated in the range of detunings used here, this characteristic time would be $\sim 100$ times longer.
than the conditional precession time we measure, giving $\sim 3\mu$s. On the other hand, operating the target and control near zero detuning, with $E_C^p \sim 20 \mu$eV (for the present device geometry), yields a more favorable value, $\tau_{\text{coupl}} \sim 0.4$ ns. Comparison with multi-echo coherence times of order 100 $\mu$s [7, 8] for individual singlet-triplet qubits suggests that the coupling strength obtained with the current device geometry, operated at small detunings, should be adequate for two-qubit gate operations. A larger coupling strength is however preferable to achieve high fidelity two-qubit operations, as working at small singlet components (i.e., at more negative detuning) is expected to yield smaller dephasing errors [11]. Device geometries that further enhance capacitive coupling are under development currently.

We thank T. Christian for valuable discussion and carrying out preliminary studies. This work was supported by the Intelligence Advance Research Projects Agency (IARPA) Multi-Qubit Coherent Operations (MQCO) Program, the Defence Advance Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Quantum Entanglement Science and Engineering Technologies (QuEST) Program, and the National Science Foundation (NSF) through the Materials World Network (MWN) and the Harvard Nanoscale Science and Engineering (NSEC). Devices were fabricated at Harvard University at the Center for Nanoscale Systems (CNS), part of the NSF National Nanofabrication Infrastructure Network (NNIN).

FIG. 5: (Color online). (a) Singlet probability of the target qubit $P^S_T$ as a function of interaction time $\tau_I$. After 30 ns (indicated with the dashed line) a $4\pi$ rotation of the target qubit has been performed when the control double quantum dot is in the $(1,1)_C$ charge state (blue dots and fit to the data), while a $3\pi$ rotation is performed when the control double quantum dot is in the $(0,2)_C$ charge state (red triangles and fit to the data). This corresponds to a phase flip of the target qubit conditional on the occupancy of the control double dot. (b) Precession frequency $f_T$ as a function of target qubit detuning $\epsilon_T$ with the control double quantum dot in the $(1,1)_C$ (blue circles, detuning $\epsilon_C = -8.1$ mV) and $(0,2)_C$ (red triangles, detuning $\epsilon_C = 5.4$ mV) charge state. Coupling frequency is the difference frequency between both data sets. Black curve is a fit to the coupling frequency data with the tunnel coupling as only free parameter. The two data points in the box correspond to the oscillations in a. The right axis shows the interaction time required for a phase flip.

[17] Conversion of voltage detuning $\epsilon$ to energy detuning $E$ is performed by multiplication of $\epsilon$ with electron charge $e$ and a lever arm. This lever arm is obtained in finite-bias transport measurements from the size of bias triangles in plunger gate voltage space.
[19] The change of coupling strength between the measurement of Fig. 1d and that of Fig. 5 is likely due to a slow drift in the quantum dot system, resulting in a change in position of the quantum dots and in their mutual coupling.