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10 **AN EFFICIENT METHOD FOR OBTAINING USABLE PARTS FROM A
PARTIALLY GOOD MEMORY INTEGRATED CIRCUIT**

15 This invention relates to the manufacture and test of semiconductor integrated
circuits. The invention is particularly concerned with those types of integrated
circuits that incorporate multiple functionally identical elements such as memory bits
in a memory device. The invention is further applicable to memory modules that
incorporate memory devices manufactured in accordance with the invention. It is also
applicable to integrated circuits that integrate numerous functional elements on a
20 single device in which a subset of the functional elements constitute a viable product.

25 As the device geometries of integrated circuits continue to decrease with
improvements in manufacturing processes, greater numbers of circuits can be arrayed
on a single integrated circuit die. There is also an increased probability that at least
some of these circuits will be defective in some way. It has become standard practice
in the design of Dynamic Random Access Memory (DRAM) devices to provide
redundant memory elements that can be used to replace defective memory elements
and thereby increase device yields. Redundant elements can only be used to repair
certain types of defects by replacing a row, a column or a subarray of an array of
30 devices. Depending on the particular defect repaired, the device may exhibit
undesirable characteristics such as increased standby current, speed degradation,
reduction in operating temperature range, or reduction in supply voltage range as a

result of the defect being present on the die. Certain other types of defects cannot be repaired effectively through redundancy techniques alone. Defects such as power to ground shorts in a portion of the array can prevent the device from operating even to the extent required to locate the defect in a test environment. Memory devices with
5 limited known defects have been sold as "partials," "audio RAMs" or "off spec devices" provided that the defects do not prohibitively degrade the performance of the functional portions of the memory. The value of a partially functional device decreases dramatically as the performance of the device deviates from that of the standard fully functional device. The desire to make use of devices with limited
10 defects, and the problems associated with the performance of these devices due to the defects are well known in the industry.

One embodiment of the invention discloses an integrated circuit memory device which has multiple subarray partitions which can be independently electrically
15 isolated from the remaining circuitry on the integrated circuit. Each of the subarrays of the integrated circuit can be independently tested to verify functionality. The increased testability of these devices provides for greater ease of isolating and solving manufacturing problems. Should a subarray of the integrated circuit be found to be inoperable, it is electrically isolated from the remaining circuitry so that it cannot
20 interfere with the normal operation of the device. Defects such as power to ground shorts in a subarray which would have previously been catastrophic are electrically isolated allowing the remaining functional subarrays to be utilized either as a repaired device or as a memory device of lesser capacity. Integrated circuit repair which includes isolation of inoperative elements eliminates the current draw and other
25 performance degradations that have previously been associated with integrated circuits that repair defects through the incorporation of redundant elements alone. Further, the manufacturing costs associated with the production of a new device of greater integration are recuperated sooner by utilizing partially good devices which would otherwise be discarded. For example, a 256 megabit DRAM with eight
30 subarray partitions could have a number of defective bits that would prevent repair of

the device through conventional redundancy techniques. In observance of the teachings of this invention, die on a wafer with defective subarrays are isolated from functional subarrays, and memory devices of lower capacity are recovered for sale as 32, 64, 128 megabit or other capacities.

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These lower capacity memory devices are useful in the production of memory modules specifically designed to make use of these devices. For example, a 4 megabit by 36 SIMM module which might otherwise be designed with two 4 megabit by 18 DRAMs of the 64 megabit DRAM generation, are designed with three DRAMs where one or more of the DRAMs is manufactured in accordance with the present invention such as three each 4 megabit by 12 DRAMs. In this case each of the three DRAMs is of the 64 megabit generation, but each has only 46 megabits of functional memory cells. Memory devices of the type described in this specification can also be used in multichip modules, single-in-line packages, on motherboards, etc. It should be noted that this technique is not limited to memory devices such as DRAM, static random access memory (SRAM) and read only memory (ROM, PROM, EPROM, EEPROM, FLASH, etc.). For example, a 64 pin programmable logic array could take advantage of the disclosed invention to allow partial good die to be sold as 28, 32 or 48 pin logic devices by isolating defective circuitry on the die. As another example, microprocessors typically have certain portions of the die that utilize an array of elements such as RAM or ROM as well as a number of integrated discrete functional units. Microprocessors repaired in accordance with the teachings of this invention can be sold as microprocessors with less on board RAM or ROM, or as microprocessors with fewer integrated features. A further example is of an application specific integrated circuit (ASIC) with multiple circuits that perform independent functions such as an arithmetic unit, a timer, a memory controller, etc. It is possible to isolate defective circuits and obtain functional devices that have a subset of the possible features of a fully functional device. Isolation of defective circuits may be accomplished through the use of laser fuses, electrical fuses, other nonvolatile data storage elements, or the programming of control signals. Electrical fuses include

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circuits which are normally conductive and are programmably opened, and circuits which are normally open and are programmably closed such as antifuses.

One advantage of this invention is that it provides an integrated circuit that can
5 be tested and repaired despite the presence of what would previously have been catastrophic defects. Another advantage of this invention is that it provides an integrated circuit that does not exhibit undesirable electrical characteristics due to the presence of defective elements. An additional advantage of the invention is an increase in the yield of integrated circuit devices since more types of device defects
10 can be repaired. Still another advantage of the invention is that it provides an integrated circuit of decreased size by eliminating the requirement to include large arrays of redundant elements to achieve acceptable manufacturing yields of saleable devices.

15 The features of the invention as well as further objects and advantages will be best understood by reference to the appended claims, detailed description of particular embodiments and accompanying drawings where:

FIG. 1 is an electrical schematic diagram of a memory device in accordance
20 with one embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 2 is an electrical schematic diagram of a memory device in accordance with another embodiment of the invention;

25 FIG. 3 is an electrical schematic diagram of an integrated circuit according to still another embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 4 is an electrical schematic diagram of the power isolation devices of
FIGS. 1 through 3.

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FIG. 5 is an electrical schematic diagram of an alternate embodiment of the power isolation devices of FIGS. 1 through 3.

FIG. 6 is an electrical schematic diagram of a memory module in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 7 is an electrical schematic diagram of an initialization circuit in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

10 In accordance with one aspect of the invention, a Dynamic Random Access Memory (DRAM) is produced. The DRAM memory array is partitioned into multiple subarrays each of which has primary power and control signals which can be electrically isolated from other circuitry on the DRAM. Additionally, the DRAM has test circuitry which is used to individually enable and disable each of the memory
15 subarrays as needed to identify defective subarrays. The DRAM also has programmable elements which allow for the electrical isolation of defective subarrays to be permanent at least with respect to the end user of the DRAM. After the DRAM is manufactured, it is tested to verify functionality. If the device is nonfunctional, individual memory subarrays, or groups of subarrays may be electrically isolated from
20 the remaining DRAM circuitry. Upon further test, it may be discovered that one or more memory subarrays are defective, and that these defects result in the overall nonfunctionality of the DRAM. The DRAM is then programmed to isolate the known defective subarrays and their associated circuitry. The DRAM data path is also programmed in accordance with the desired device organization. Other minor
25 array defects may be repaired through the use of redundant memory elements. The resulting DRAM will be one of several possible memory capacities dependent upon the granularity of the subarray divisions, and the number of defective subarrays. The configuration of the DRAM may be altered in accordance with the number of defective subarrays, and the ultimate intended use of the DRAM. For example, in a
30 256 megabit DRAM with eight input/output data lines (32 megabits x 8) and eight

subarrays, an input/output may be dropped for each defective subarray. The remaining functional subarrays are internally routed to the appropriate input/output circuits on the DRAM to provide for a DRAM with an equivalent number of data words of lessor bits per word, such as a 32 megabit x 5, 6 or 7 DRAM. Alternately, 5 row or column addresses can be eliminated to provide DRAMs with a lessor number of data words of full data width such as a 4, 8 or 16 megabit x 8 DRAM.

FIG. 1 is a schematic representation of a 256 megabit DRAM designed in accordance with the present invention. The DRAM has eight memory subarrays 10 which are selectively coupled to global signals VCC 50, DVC2 52, GND 60 and VCCP 62. DVC2 is a voltage source having a potential of approximately one half of VCC, and is often used to bias capacitor plates of the storage cells. VCCP is a voltage source greater than one threshold voltage above VCC, and is often used as a source for the word line drivers. Coupling is accomplished via eight isolation circuits 70, 15 one for each subarray 10. The control circuit 110 in addition to generating standard DRAM timing, interface and control signals, generate eight test and eight repair signals 122 and 124. One each of the test and repair signals are combined in each one of eight OR gates 126 to generate a "DISABLE*" active low isolation control 128 for each of the isolation circuits 70 which correspond to the subarrays 10. It may be 20 desirable to include circuitry that monitors current draw of the device and on power up of the device isolates all subarrays in the event that excessive current is drawn by the device. Then in a test mode, the subarrays are individually enabled in order to determine which are defective. Another option is to include a test pad on the device which during test could be used to input a signal that forces all subarrays to be 25 isolated, and allows individual subarrays to be enabled through the use of test signals.

Methods of controlling DRAMs and generating test mode signals from DRAM device ADDRESS 132, DATA 134 and CONTROL 136 signals are well known in the art. The generation of REPAIR signals 124 may be accomplished with the use of

laser fuses, electrically programmable fuses or data stored in a nonvolatile memory location such as a FLASH memory register.

Methods of generating appropriate repair signals according to these methods
5 can be accomplished by persons skilled in the art with the aid of the present
description. Individual subarrays of 10 can be isolated during test or repair, and eight
each of local signals 150, 152, 160 and 162 which correspond to a local source of
VCC, DVC2, GND and VCCP for each subarray 10 when isolated from the global
source signals 50 through 62 are coupled to the integrated circuit substrate potential
10 170. The subarrays of the DRAM can be isolated for test or repair purposes either
before or after the integrated circuit is packaged depending on the method of
generating the repair signals. If the repair signals are generated through the use of
laser fuses, it may not be possible to isolate subarrays after the integrated circuit is
packaged. If a combination of laser fuses and other techniques such as electrical fuses
15 are used, then repair through isolation may be accomplished either before or after
packaging, or both in the event that further device defects become apparent during
testing of a repaired packaged device. The schematic diagram of FIG. 1 represents a
DRAM where each subarray corresponds to a single input/output data line of the
DATA bus 134. This architecture lends itself to repair through isolation of a subarray
and elimination of an input/output data line. For each defective subarray an
20 input/output data line is dropped, and the remaining input/output data lines are
mapped to the functional subarrays. Typically, the data lines will be dropped in order
of most significant to least significant for each defective subarray. For example, if the
subarray that would otherwise be associated with the sixth of eight input/output data
lines is isolated due to defects, the eighth data line would be dropped, the sixth data
25 line multiplexed to the seventh subarray, and the seventh data line multiplexed to the
eighth subarray. Alternately, the sixth data line could simply be multiplexed to the
eighth subarray. This allows for a consistent device pin out for all devices of a given
data width regardless of which subarrays were isolated.

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The data map circuit 180 consists of input/output data path multiplexers which are under the control of the "DISABLE*" signals 128 and reroute the data input/output lines to the appropriate subarrays 10. Methods of multiplexing data lines are well known in the art and are not specifically described in this specification.

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FIG. 2 is a schematic representation of a 64 megabit DRAM which is also designed in accordance with the present invention. The DRAM has eight memory subarrays 10 which are selectively coupled to global signals VCC 50, DVC2 52, GND 60 and VCCP 62. Coupling is accomplished via eight isolation circuits 70, one for each subarray 10. The control circuit 110, in addition to generating standard DRAM timing, interface and control functions, generates eight test signals 122, eight laser fuse repair signals 124 and eight electrical fuse repair signals 124. One each of the test and repair signals are combined in each one of eight logic gates 126 to generate a "DISABLE*" active low isolation control 128 for each of the isolation circuits 70 which correspond to the subarrays 10. A three input OR gate is shown to represent the logic function 126; however, numerous other methods of logically combining digital signals are known in the art. The DRAM of FIG. 2 represents a DRAM where each subarray is tied to multiple input/output data lines of the DATA bus 134. This architecture lends itself to repair through isolation of a subarray and elimination of an address line. When a defective subarray is located, half of the subarrays will be electrically isolated from the global signals 50 through 62, and one address line will be disabled in the address decoder 182. In this particular design the most significant row address is disabled. This provides a 32 megabit DRAM of the same data width as the fully functional 64 megabit DRAM. This is a simplified embodiment of the invention which is applicable to current DRAM designs with a minimum of redesign. Devices of memory capacity other than 32 megabits could be obtained through the use of additional address decode modifications and the isolation of fewer or more memory subarrays. For example, if only a single subarray is defective out of eight possible subarrays on a 64 megabit DRAM, it is possible to design the DRAM so that it can be configured as a 56 megabit DRAM. The address range corresponding to the defective

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subarray is remapped if necessary so that it becomes the highest address range. In this case, all address lines would be used, but the upper 8 megabits of address space would not be recognized as a valid address for that device, or would be remapped to a functional area of the device. Masking an 8 megabit address range could be
5 accomplished either through programming of the address decoder or through an address decode/mask function external to the DRAM.

Referring now to FIG. 3, an integrated circuit is described with multiple functional elements 12, 20, 30 and 40 which may or may not be functionally identical.
10 VCC 50, and GND 60 connections are provided to the functional elements through isolation devices 70, 80, 90 and 100. The test, control and interface circuit 110 provides control and data signals to and from the functional elements via signal bus 120. After manufacture, the device is placed in a test mode. Methods of placing a device in a test mode are well known in the art and are not specifically described
15 herein. A test mode is provided to electrically isolate one, some or all of the functional elements 12 through 40 from global supply signals VCC 50 and GND 60 via control signals from 110 over signal bus 120. The capability of individually isolating each of the functional elements 12 through 40 allows ease of test of the control and interface circuits 110, as well as test of each of the functional elements 12
20 through 40 without interference from possible defective elements of 12 through 40. Circuits that are found defective are repaired if possible through the use of redundant elements. The redundant elements if present may be located either within the functional blocks 12 through 40, or elsewhere on the device. After test and repair, any remaining defective functional elements can be programmably isolated from the
25 global supply signals. The device can then be sold in accordance with the functions that are available. Additional signals such as other supply sources, reference signals or control signals may be isolated in addition to global supply signals VCC and GND. Control signals in particular may be isolated by simply isolating the supply signals to the control signal drivers. Further, it may be desirable to couple the local isolated

nodes to a reference potential such as the substrate potential when these local nodes are isolated from the global supply, reference or control signals.

FIG. 4 shows one embodiment of a single isolation circuit of the type that may be used to accomplish the isolation function of elements 70 through 100 shown in figures 1, 2 and 3. One such circuit is required for each signal to be isolated from a functional element such as elements 12 through 40 of FIG. 3. In FIG. 4, the global signal 410 is decoupled from the local signal 420 by the presence of a logic low level on the disable signal node 430 which causes the transistor 440 to become nonconductive between nodes 410 and 420. Additionally, when the disable node 430 is at a logic low level, inverter 450 causes transistor 460 to conduct between a reference potential 470 and the local node 420. The device size of transistor 440 will be dependent upon the amount of current it will be required to pass when it is conducting and the local node is supplying current to a functioning circuit element. Thus, each such device 440 may have a different device size dependent upon the characteristics of the particular global node 410, and local node 420. It should also be noted that the logic levels associated with the disable signal 430 must be sufficient to allow the desired potential of the global node to pass through the transistor 440 when the local node is not to be isolated from the global node. In the case of an n channel transistor, the minimum high level of the disable signal will typically be one threshold voltage above the level of the global signal to be passed.

FIG. 5 shows another embodiment of a single isolation circuit of the type that may be used to accomplish the isolation function of elements 70 through 100 shown in figures 1, 2 and 3. One such circuit is required for each signal to be isolated from a functional element such as elements 12 through 40 of FIG. 3. In FIG. 5, the global signal 510 is decoupled from the local signal 520 by the presence of a logic high level on the disable signal node 530 which causes the transistor 540 to become nonconductive between nodes 510 and 520. Additionally, when the disable node 530 is at a logic high level, transistor 560 will conduct between the device substrate

potential 570 and the local node 520. By tying the isolated local nodes to the substrate potential, any current paths between the local node and the substrate, such as may have been caused by a manufacturing defect, will not draw current. In the case of a p channel isolation transistor 540, care must be taken when the global node to be passed is a logic low. In this case the disable signal logic levels should be chosen such that the low level of the disable signal is a threshold voltage level below the level of the global signal to be passed.

Typically a combination of isolation circuits such as those shown in FIGs. 4 and 5 will be used. For example, a p channel isolation device may be desirable for passing VCC, while an n channel isolation device may be preferable for passing GND. In these cases, the disable signal may have ordinary logic swings of VCC to GND. If the global signal is allowed to vary between VCC and GND during operation of the part, then the use of both n channel and p channel isolation devices in parallel is desirable with opposite polarities of the disable signal driving the device gates.

FIG. 6 shows an example of a memory module designed in accordance with the teachings of the present invention. In this case the memory module is a 4 megaword by 36 bit single in line memory module (SIMM) 610. The SIMM is made up of six DRAMs 620 of the sixteen megabit DRAM generation organized as 4Meg x 4's, and one DRAM 630 of the sixty-four megabit generation organized as 4Meg x 12. The 4Meg x 12 DRAM contains one or two defective 4Meg x 2 arrays of memory elements that are electrically isolated from the remaining circuitry on the dram 630. In the event that the DRAM 630 has only a single defective 4Meg x 2 array, but a device organization of 4Meg x 12 is desired for use in a particular memory module, it may be desirable to terminate unused data input/output lines on the memory module in addition to isolating the defective array. Additionally, it may be determined that it is preferable to isolate a second 4Meg x 2 array on the memory device even though it is fully functional in order to provide a lower power 4Meg x 12 device. Twenty-four

of the data input/output pins on connector 640 are connected to the sixteen megabit DRAMs 620. The remaining twelve data lines are connected to DRAM 630. This SIMM module has numerous advantages over a SIMM module of conventional design using nine 4Mx4 DRAMs. Advantages include reduced power consumption, increased reliability and manufacturing yield due to fewer components, and increased revenue through the use and sale of what may have otherwise been a nonfunctional sixty-four megabit DRAM. The 4Meg x 36 SIMM module described is merely a representation of the numerous possible organizations and types of memory modules that can be designed in accordance with the present invention by persons skilled in the art.

FIG. 7 shows an initialization circuit which when used as part of the present invention allows for automatically isolating defective circuit elements that draw excessive current when an integrated circuit is powered up. By automatically isolating circuit elements that draw excessive current, the device can be repaired before it is damaged. A power detection circuit 710 is used to generate a power-on signal 720 when global supply signal 730 reaches a desired potential. Comparator 740 is used to compare the potential of global supply 730 with local supply 750. Local supply 750 will be of approximately the same potential as global supply 730 when the isolation device 760 couples 730 to 750 as long as the circuit element 770 is not drawing excessive current. If circuit element 770 does draw excessive current, the resistivity of the isolation device 760 will cause a potential drop in the local supply 750, and the comparator 740 will output a high level on signal 780. Power-on signal 720 is gated with signal 780 in logic gate 790 so that the comparison is only enabled after power has been on long enough for the local supply potential to reach a valid level. If signals 800 and 810 are both inactive high, then signal 820 from logic gate 790 will pass through gates 830 and 840 and cause isolation signal 850 to be low which will cause the isolation device 760 to decouple the global supply from the local supply. Isolation signal 800 can be used to force signal 850 low regardless of the output of the comparator as long as signal 810 is high. Signal 800 may be generated

from a test mode, or from a programmable source to isolate circuit element 770 for repair or test purposes. Test signal 810 may be used to force the isolation device 760 to couple the global supply to the local supply regardless of the active high disable signal 860. Signal 810 is useful in testing the device to determine the cause of excessive current draw. In an alternate embodiment, multiple isolation elements may be used for isolation device 760. On power up of the chip, a more resistive isolation device is enabled to pass a supply voltage 730 to the circuit 770. If the voltage drop across the resistive device is within a predetermined allowable range, then a second lower resistance isolation device is additionally enabled to pass the supply voltage 730 to circuit 770. This method provides a more sensitive measurement of the current draw of circuit 770. If the voltage drop across the resistive element is above an acceptable level, then the low resistance device is not enabled, and the resistive device can optionally be disabled. If the resistive device does not pass enough current to a defective circuit 770, it is not necessary to disable it, or even to design it such that it can be disabled. In this case a simple resistor is adequate.

Although the present invention has been described with reference to particular embodiments, other versions are possible and will be apparent to individuals skilled in the art. The invention therefore, is not limited to the specific features and elements shown. It is intended that the scope of the invention be defined by the appended claims and in accordance with the doctrine of equivalents.

**CLAIMS:**

1. An integrated circuit device comprising:

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(a) multiple circuit elements;

10 (b) coupling devices for allowing a current to flow from a global supply node to said circuit elements; and

15 (c) programming means for said coupling devices to electrically decouple the global supply node from at least one of said circuit elements.

2. The integrated circuit of Claim 1, additionally comprising:

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(a) a local supply node for each of said circuit elements, said coupling devices being between the global supply node and said local supply node; and

25 (b) a local coupling device for coupling said local supply node to a reference potential in response to said programming means decoupling said local supply node from the global supply node.

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3. The integrated circuit of Claim 1, additionally comprising a test means for individually decoupling said circuit elements from the global supply node during a test node.

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4. The integrated circuit of Claim 1, wherein said programming means comprises a laser fuse.

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5. The integrated circuit of Claim 1, wherein said circuit elements are arrays of memory elements.

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6. The integrated circuit of Claim 1, wherein said coupling means comprises a transistor between the global supply node and one of said circuit elements such that when said transistor is actuated, current is allowed to pass between the global supply node and said circuit element through said transistor.

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7. The integrated circuit of Claim 1, wherein said programming means comprises a nonvolatile data storage element.

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8. The integrated circuit of Claim 7, wherein said nonvolatile data storage element is an electrically programmable fuse.

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9. A semiconductor integrated circuit memory device, comprising:

(a) multiple subarrays of memory elements;

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(b) isolation devices for electrically isolating at least one of said subarrays from a supply potential;

5 (c) test circuits for temporarily isolating at least one of said subarrays from the supply potential during a test procedure; and

(d) programming circuitry for actuating at least one of said isolation devices to electrically isolate at least one of said subarrays from the supply potential.

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10. The memory device of Claim 9, further comprising circuitry for remapping one of said subarrays to a selected data pin of the memory device.

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11. The memory device of Claim 9, further comprising circuitry for disabling an address range of the memory device which corresponds to one of said subarrays.

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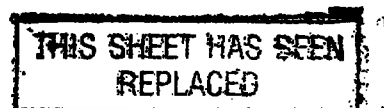
12. The memory device of Claim 9, further comprising circuitry for remapping an address range which corresponds to one of said subarrays such that it corresponds to another of said subarrays.

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13. The memory device of Claim 9, further comprising a device for electrically isolating a control signal from a defective one of said subarrays such that defects in the defective subarray will not affect the control signal.

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14. A method of producing a memory device, comprising:



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- (a) manufacturing a memory die with multiple arrays of memory elements;
 - (b) testing the memory die; and
 - (c) isolating an array of memory elements from a supply potential node on the memory die.

10 15. The method of Claim 14, further comprising:

packaging the memory die, wherein said isolating step occurs after said packaging step.

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16. A memory module comprising:

a memory device comprising programming means for electrically isolating defective memory elements from functional circuitry on said memory device.

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17. The memory module of Claim 16, wherein said programming means comprises means for disabling a data path corresponding to an array of memory elements on said memory device.

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18. The memory module of Claim 16, wherein said programming means comprises means for disabling a range of address locations corresponding to an array of memory elements on said memory device.

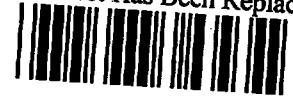
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19. The memory module of Claim 16, wherein said programming means comprises means to remap a group of memory elements connected to a data pin, such that it is connected to another data pin.

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20. The memory module of Claim 16, further comprising a means to remap a group of memory elements to an alternate address range.

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21. The memory module of Claim 16, further comprising a means to mask a range of address locations corresponding to a group of defective memory elements.

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22. The memory module of Claim 16, wherein said memory device further comprises functional memory elements and defective memory elements where said defective memory elements have been electrically isolated from said functional memory elements.

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23. The memory module of Claim 22, wherein the memory device has been programmed to disable a data path corresponding to said defective memory elements.

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24. The memory module of Claim 22, wherein the memory device has been programmed to disable an address range corresponding to said defective memory elements.

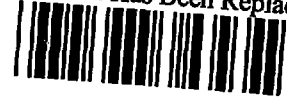
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25. A Single In Line Memory Module comprising:

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a memory device which comprises a defective array of memory elements, a supply node and a programmable device which is programmed to electrically isolate the defective array from the supply node of said memory device.

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26. An initialization circuit for an integrated circuit device comprising multiple circuit elements and isolation means between one of the circuit elements and a potential supply node, the initialization circuit comprising:

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(a) a current sensing means to detect a flow of excessive current through the isolation means;

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(b) a power detection means to detect the presence of a voltage potential on the potential supply node on the integrated circuit and to output a power up signal; and

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(c) isolation control means capable of actuating the isolation means in response to said current sensing means detecting the flow of excessive current after said power detection means outputs the power up signal.

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27. The initialization circuit of Claim 26, wherein said current sensing means comprises a voltage comparator that compares voltages on two nodes to detect excessive loading on one of the nodes.

28. The initialization circuit of Claim 26, further comprising:

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a power up isolation disable means which prevents actuation of the isolation means by said isolation control means.

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