

# Semiconductor Sensors

## *Patent Landscape*

August 2018

## Introduction

A semiconductor sensor is a device that uses a semiconductor, usually silicon or germanium, to detect traversing charged particles or the absorption of photons. Several thin wafers of the semiconductor material are layered together to form these sensors. In the field of particle physics, these sensors are usually known as silicon detectors. When their sensitive structures are based on a single diode, they are called semiconductor diode detectors. When they contain many diodes with different functions, the more general term semiconductor detector is used. <sup>[1]</sup>

Semiconductor sensors are known for their higher detection efficiency, better spectrometric resolution, enhanced accuracy and low cost. There are different types of semiconductor sensors for determining gas pressure, temperature, voltage and radiation. The important application areas for semiconductor sensors include medical, automotive and aerospace. They have acquired an added importance in recent times due to the emergence of various applications under the umbrella of the “Internet of Things” (IoT).

The patents studied in this report cover semiconductor sensors and their applications. We analyzed a total of 25,667 currently active published patent applications for the study, of which 16,587 are granted. Unless otherwise stated, the report displays numbers for published patent applications. The analytics are presented in the various charts and tables that follow. These include the following,

- Published Applications – Summary
- Published Applications – Growth
- Top Patent Holders
- Top Patent Holders - Analysis
- Top Patent Holders – Portfolio Similarity
- Published Applications – By Jurisdiction
- Top CPC Codes
- Top Patent Holders – Portfolio Growth
- Top Patent Holders – Assets by Jurisdiction
- Top Jurisdictions – Growth
- Top CPC Codes – Growth
- Top Patent Holders – Patent Quality
- Key Technologies - Analysis
- Application Areas – Top Patent Holders
- Taxonomy
- Taxonomy (Tabular)

## Insights

- The published patent applications in semiconductor sensors have shown a steady upward trend.
- The US leads as the jurisdiction with the largest number of published patent applications. The combined published patents in China-Japan-Taiwan-Korea account for around half of all the published applications in this area.
- Most of the leading patent holders have followed the policy of filing in the U.S. in addition to their home countries, indicating the importance of the U.S. market.
- Among the top patent holders - the portfolios of Sony, Samsung and TSMC have shown the most significant growth in recent years in the 2015-2017 period.

## References

1. [Semiconductor detector](#) (Wikitrionics)
2. [Semiconductor detector](#) (Wikipedia)
3. [Semiconductor sensors](#) [PDF] (Hall.G)

## Published Applications - Summary

TOTAL DOCUMENTS COUNT (Applications)  
**25,667**

### PUBLICATION TYPES



● Applications ● Grants

Peak Year of Activity  
**2017 (3,190)**

Top Active Jurisdiction  
**US (9,009)**

### IP TYPES



● Invention ● Model

Top Patent Holder **SONY (1,011)**

No of technologies **339**

Top Rated  
**US8773336B2 (5)**

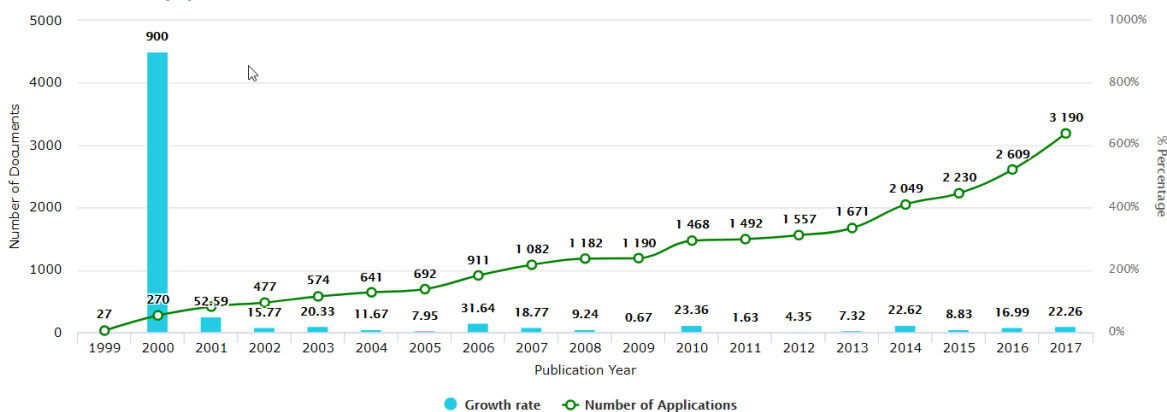
Top Cited  
**US7453065B2 (2,782)**

### PATENT BY STAR RATING

**2.17**



## Published Applications - Growth



## Published Applications - Top 20 Patent Holders

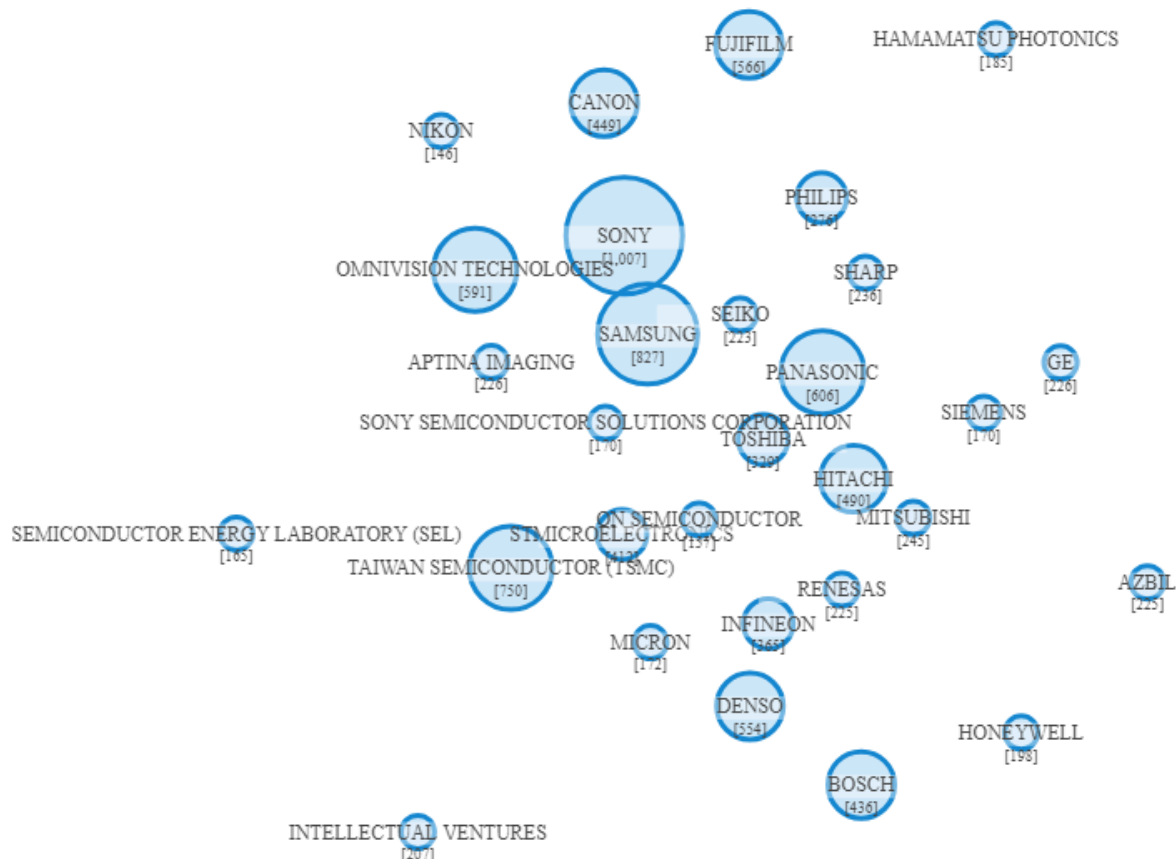
Ultimate Patent Holder	# Applications	Ultimate Patent Holder	# Applications
SONY	1,011	STMICROELECTRONICS	412
SAMSUNG	836	INFINEON	368
TAIWAN SEMICONDUCTOR (TSMC)	750	TOSHIBA	336
PANASONIC	712	PHILIPS	284
OMNIVISION TECHNOLOGIES	594	SHARP	273
FUJIFILM	584	SIEMENS	260
DENSO	556	MITSUBISHI	247
HITACHI	497	APTINA IMAGING	226
CANON	451	GE	226
BOSCH	436	AZBIL	225

## Top Patent Holders - Analysis

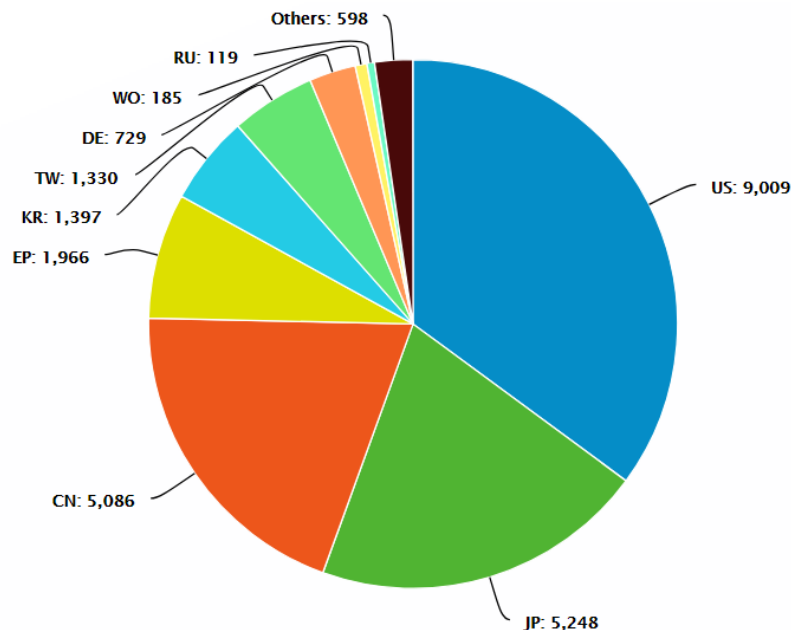
Patent Holders	Applications	Grants	Technologies	Sub Technologies	Geographies
SONY	558	436	electric elements - semiconductor devices (987), pictorial communication (778), optical elements (103), coders & decoders (37), photography - camera (31)	multiple semiconductor or solid state devices components formed on a common substrate (967), hardware or software aspects of tv signals (754), semiconductor devices sensitive to infra-red, light, electromagnetic or corpuscular radiation, converting radiation into electrical energy (213), connecting/disconnecting semiconductor bodies (189), manufacturing or treatment of ics and semiconductor devices (180)	JP (468), US (239), CN (127), KR (67), TW (48)
SAMSUNG	289	532	electric elements - semiconductor devices (758), pictorial communication (335), optical elements (47), digital data processing (32), measurement by radio waves (32)	multiple semiconductor or solid state devices components formed on a common substrate (673), hardware or software aspects of tv signals (319), semiconductor devices sensitive to infra-red, light, electromagnetic or corpuscular radiation, converting radiation into electrical energy (237), connecting/disconnecting semiconductor bodies (169), manufacturing or treatment of ics and semiconductor devices (142)	US (350), KR (273), CN (74), JP (73), EP (29)
TAIWAN SEMICONDUCTOR (TSMC)	150	600	electric elements - semiconductor devices (735), pictorial communication (65), mems manufacturing (60), mems devices (55), greentech - reduction & transmission of greenhouse gases (27)	multiple semiconductor or solid state devices components formed on a common substrate (666), manufacturing or treatment of ics and semiconductor devices (281), semiconductor devices sensitive to infra-red, light, electromagnetic or corpuscular radiation, converting radiation into electrical energy (222), connecting/disconnecting semiconductor bodies (189), details of semiconductor devices (130)	US (397), CN (158), TW (110), KR (54), JP (16)
PANASONIC	432	164	electric elements - semiconductor devices (518), pictorial communication (194), measurement - speed (190), measurement - pressure (122), mems devices (53)	multiple semiconductor or solid state devices components formed on a common substrate (246), multistep manufacturing process for rectifiers, oscillators, capacitors and resistors (212), measuring acceleration, deceleration, shock (189), hardware or software aspects of tv signals (176), measuring fluid pressure by electric or magnetic pressure-sensitive elements (118)	JP (460), US (64), EP (36), CN (23), TW (9)
OMNIVISION TECHNOLOGIES	124	450	electric elements - semiconductor devices (574), pictorial communication (223), optical elements (35), photography - camera (16), digital data processing (10)	multiple semiconductor or solid state devices components formed on a common substrate (570), hardware or software aspects of tv signals (218), semiconductor devices sensitive to infra-red, light, electromagnetic or corpuscular radiation, converting radiation into electrical energy (129), connecting/disconnecting semiconductor bodies (78), manufacturing or treatment of ics and semiconductor devices (68)	US (182), CN (165), TW (139), EP (73), JP (15)

## Topic Map – Top Patent Holders – Portfolio Similarity

- The bubble size corresponds to the total number of patent applications held.
- The bubble proximity corresponds to the similarity of each of the company portfolios in terms of technologies covered.



## Published Applications - By Jurisdiction

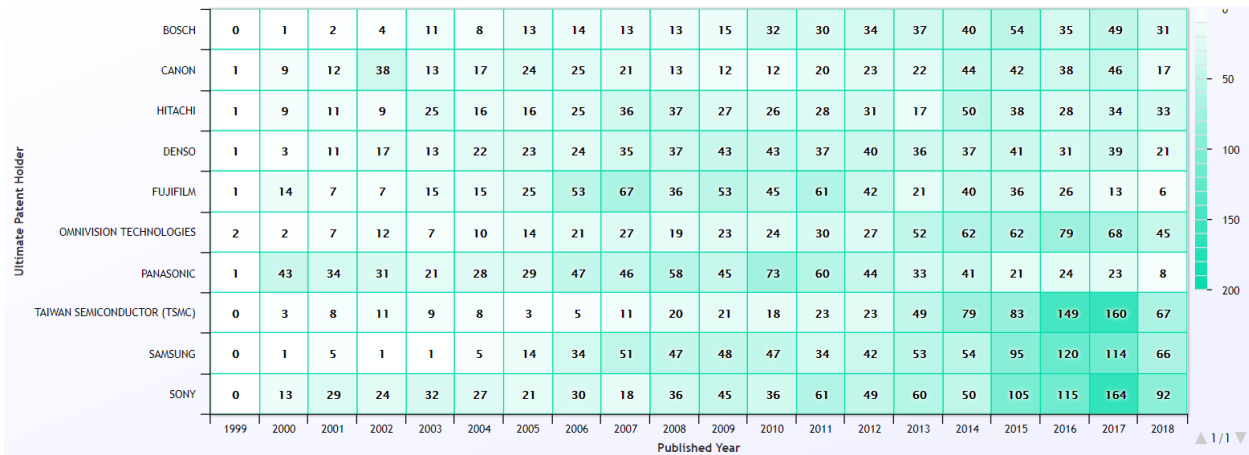


## Published Applications - Top 20 CPC Codes

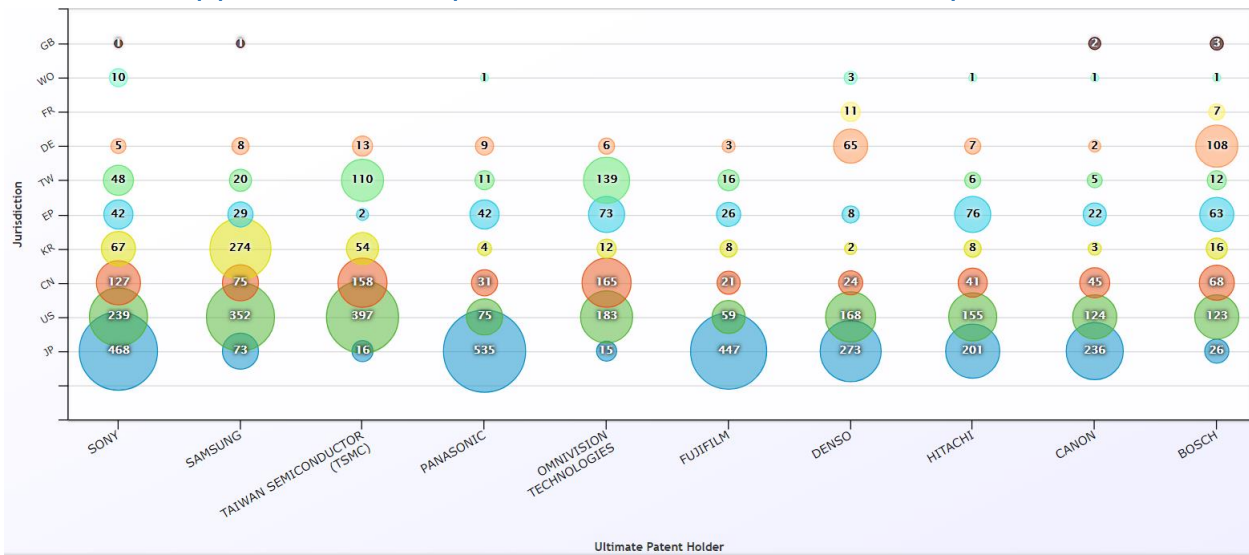
Class Code	Description	# Applications
<b>H01L 27/14</b>	Multiple semiconductor or solid state devices components formed on a common substrate >> including semiconductor components sensitive to infra-red radiation, light, electromagnetic radiation of shorter wavelength, or corpuscular radiation and specially adapted either for the conversion of the energy of such radiation into electrical energy or for the control of electrical energy by such radiation	7,763
<b>H01L 2224/01</b>	Connecting/disconnecting semiconductor bodies >> Means for bonding being attached to, or being formed on, the surface to be connected, e.g. chip-to-package, die-attach, "first-level" interconnects; Manufacturing methods related thereto	4,965
<b>H04N 5/30</b>	Hardware or software aspects of TV signals >> Transforming light or analogous information into electric information	2,627
<b>H01L 2924/10</b>	Connecting/disconnecting semiconductor bodies >> Details of semiconductor or other solid state devices to be connected	2,447
<b>H01L 2924/15</b>	Connecting/disconnecting semiconductor bodies >> Details of package parts other than the semiconductor or other solid state devices to be connected	2,390
<b>H01L 2224/73</b>	Connecting/disconnecting semiconductor bodies >> Means for bonding being of different types provided for in two or more of groups	2,139

<b>Class Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b># Applications</b>
<b>H01L 2924/0001</b>	Connecting/disconnecting semiconductor bodies >> Technical content checked by a classifier	1,750
<b>H01L 24/01</b>	Connecting/disconnecting semiconductor bodies >> Means for bonding being attached to, or being formed on, the surface to be connected, e.g. chip-to-package, die-attach, "first-level" interconnects; Manufacturing methods related thereto	1,627
<b>G01T 1/16</b>	Measuring and detecting X-radiation, gamma, corpuscular, cosmic, or neutron radiation >> Measuring radiation intensity	1,552
<b>H01L 31/02</b>	Semiconductor devices sensitive to infra-red, light, electromagnetic or corpuscular radiation, converting radiation into electrical energy >> Details	1,397
<b>G01L 9/0041</b>	Measuring fluid pressure by electric or magnetic pressure-sensitive elements >> Transmitting or indicating the displacement of flexible diaphragms	1,212
<b>H01L 2924/01</b>	Connecting/disconnecting semiconductor bodies >> Chemical elements	1,087
<b>G01P 15/02</b>	Measuring acceleration, deceleration, shock >> by making use of inertia forces ; using solid seismic masses	1,040
<b>H01L 2224/80</b>	Connecting/disconnecting semiconductor bodies >> Methods for connecting semiconductor or other solid state bodies using means for bonding being attached to, or being formed on, the surface to be connected	1,038
<b>H01L 21/02</b>	Manufacturing or treatment of ICs and semiconductor devices >> Manufacture or treatment of semiconductor devices or of parts thereof	994
<b>H04N 5/222</b>	Hardware or software aspects of TV signals >> Studio circuitry; Studio devices; Studio equipment ; ; Cameras comprising an electronic image sensor, e.g. digital cameras, video cameras, TV cameras, video cameras, camcorders, webcams, camera modules for embedding in other devices, e.g. mobile phones, computers or vehicles	977
<b>H01L 31/08</b>	Semiconductor devices sensitive to infra-red, light, electromagnetic or corpuscular radiation, converting radiation into electrical energy >> in which radiation controls flow of current through the device, e.g. photoresistors	956
<b>B81B 2201/02</b>	Specific applications of micro-electromechanical systems >> Sensors	942
<b>H01L 2924/30</b>	Connecting/disconnecting semiconductor bodies >> Technical effects	929
<b>B81C 1/00015</b>	Manufacture or treatment of micro-structures on or in substrate >> for manufacturing microsystems	903

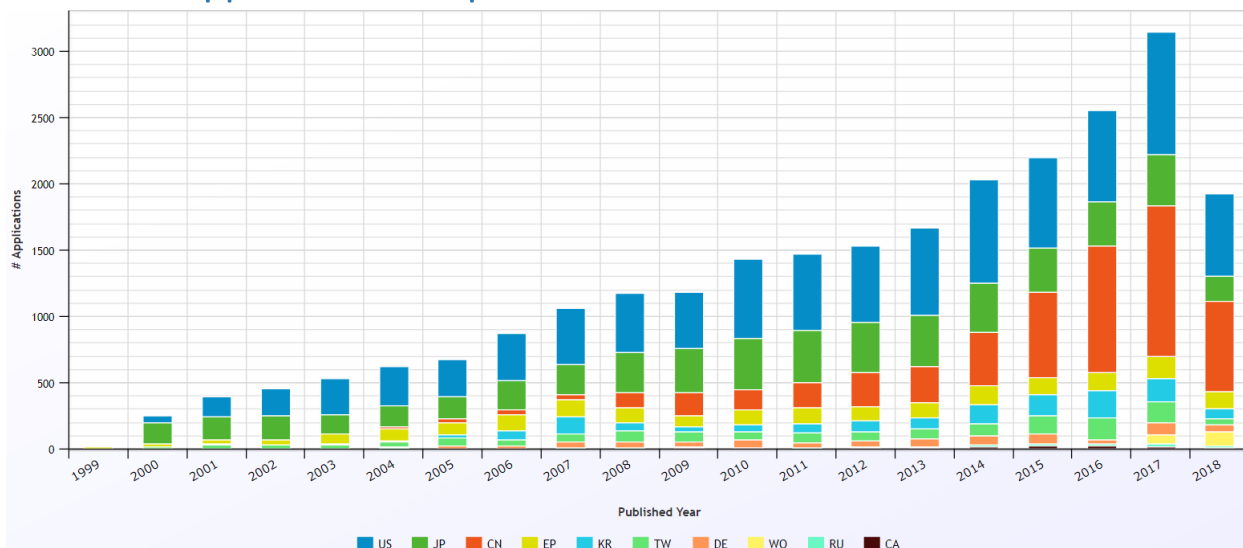
### Published Applications – Top 10 Patent Holders – Portfolio Growth



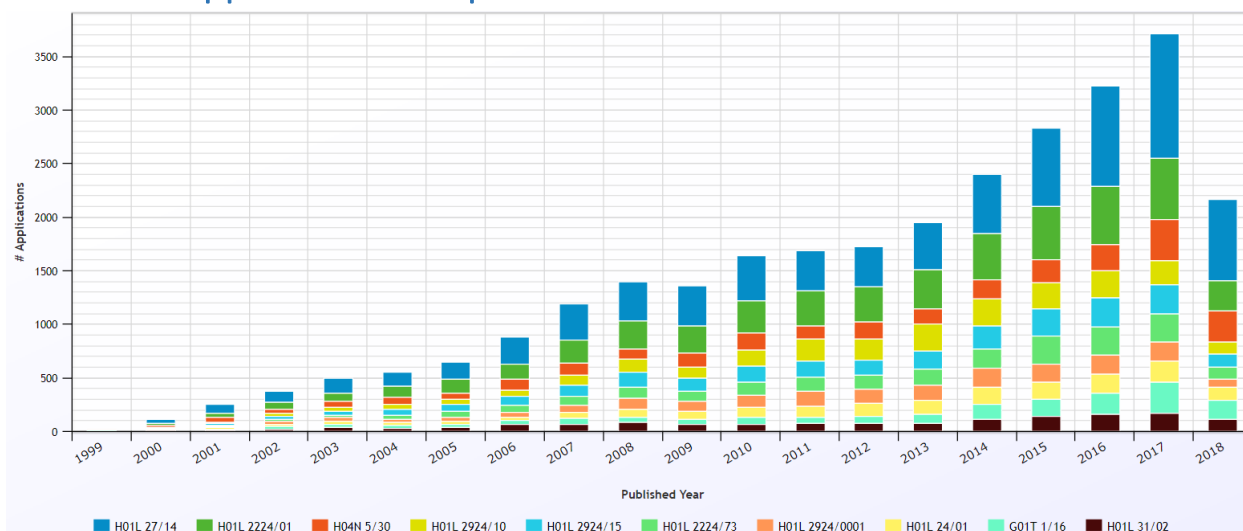
### Published Applications – Top 10 Patent Holders – Assets by Jurisdiction



### Published Applications – Top 10 Jurisdictions - Growth

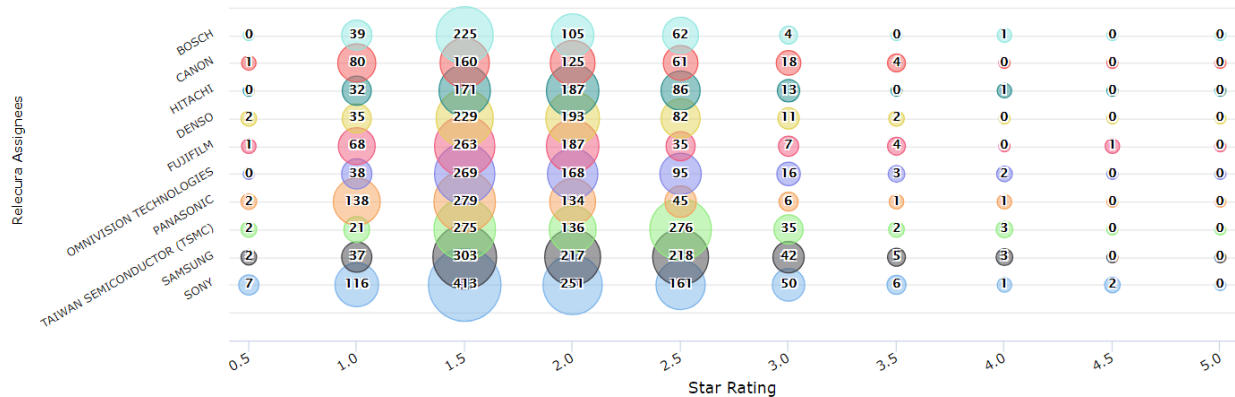


### Published Applications – Top 10 CPC Codes – Growth





## Patent Quality – Top 10 Patent Holders (Relecura Star Rating on a scale of 5)



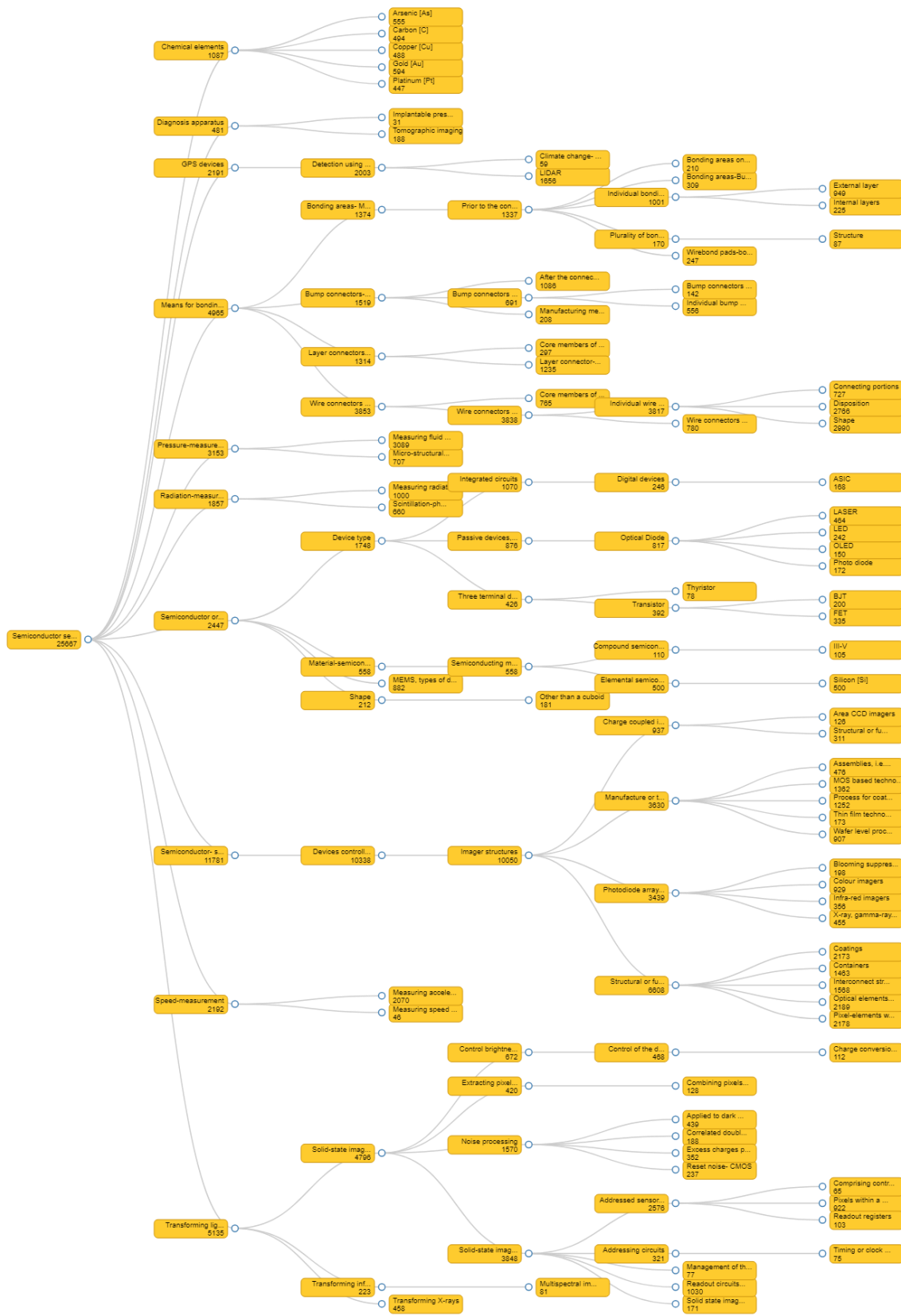
## Key Technologies - Analysis

Technologies	Applications	Grants	Patent Holders	Sub Technologies	Geographies
electric elements - semiconductor devices	6118	11488	SONY (987) , SAMSUNG (758) , TAIWAN SEMICONDUCTOR (TSMC) (735) , OMNIVISION TECHNOLOGIES (574) , PANASONIC (518)	multiple semiconductor or solid state devices components formed on a common substrate (12289) , connecting/disconnecting semiconductor bodies (5988) , hardware or software aspects of tv signals (5040) , semiconductor devices sensitive to infra-red, light, electromagnetic or corpuscular radiation, converting radiation into electrical energy (4575) , manufacturing or treatment of ics and semiconductor devices (4058)	US (6045) , JP (4265) , CN (2981) , EP (1265) , TW (1252)
pictorial communication	2239	3651	SONY (778) , FUJIFILM (351) , SAMSUNG (335) , CANON (310) , OMNIVISION TECHNOLOGIES (224)	hardware or software aspects of tv signals (5588) , multiple semiconductor or solid state devices components formed on a common substrate (5221) , semiconductor devices sensitive to infra-red, light, electromagnetic or corpuscular radiation, converting radiation into electrical energy (1402) , connecting/disconnecting semiconductor bodies (775) , colour tv details (702)	JP (2055) , US (1976) , CN (659) , EP (381) , KR (338)
measurement - pressure	1123	1981	DENSO (272) , BOSCH (162) , AZBIL (139) , PANASONIC (122) , INFINEON (109)	measuring fluid pressure by electric or magnetic pressure-sensitive elements (2758) , details, accessories, apparatus for measuring pressure of fluent medium (1169) , multistep manufacturing process for rectifiers, oscillators, capacitors and resistors (949) , connecting/disconnecting semiconductor bodies (559) , measuring force or stress (525)	US (842) , CN (774) , JP (772) , EP (290) , DE (178)
measurement - radiation	1098	1857	PHILIPS (204) , GE (188) , HITACHI (181) , FUJIFILM (133) , SIEMENS (124)	measuring and detecting x-radiation, gamma, corpuscular, cosmic, or neutron radiation (2991) , multiple semiconductor or solid state devices components formed on a common substrate (807) , semiconductor devices sensitive to infra-red, light, electromagnetic or corpuscular radiation, converting radiation into electrical energy (723) , radiation diagnosis apparatus (650) , hardware or software aspects of tv signals (447)	US (896) , JP (729) , CN (474) , EP (433) , KR (114)
measurement by radio waves	958	1184	AZBIL (84) , BOSCH (56) , HAMAMATSU PHOTONICS (42) , CONTINENTAL (41) , AUDI (40)	detecting the presence, distance or velocity of object using reflection or reradiation of em waves (1575) , details of the systems using reflection or reradiation of waves (1348) , detecting the presence, distance or velocity of object using reflection or reradiation of radio waves (415) , measuring distances in line of sight and optical rangefinders (267) , measurements using optics between ir and uv (245)	CN (771) , US (547) , JP (251) , EP (235) , DE (130)

## Application Areas – Top Patent Holders

Areas	# Applications	Top patent holders (# Applications)
<b>Medical</b>	1562	PHILIPS (134) GE (123) SIEMENS (103) HITACHI (74) TOSHIBA (54)
<b>Automotive</b>	926	BOSCH (53) PORSCHE (42) CONTINENTAL (34) DENSO (34) HITACHI (20)
<b>Aerospace</b>	266	CONTINENTAL (8) IMAGE INSIGHT INC (8) BOEING (7) HONEYWELL (5) ZHEJIANG UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY (5)
<b>Robots</b>	122	BASF (7) TRINAMIX GMBH (7) NDSU RES FOUNDATION (4) BENEWAKE (BEIJING) PHOTONIC TECH CO LTD (3) CONTINENTAL (3)
<b>Military &amp; Defense</b>	106	IMAGE INSIGHT INC (7) LOCKHEED MARTIN (6) ZHEJIANG UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY (5) AIRBUS (3) BOEING (3)

Taxonomy – showing published applications in each category



## Taxonomy (Tabular-1)

SEMICONDUCTOR SENSORS	Chemical elements	Arsenic [As]					
		Carbon [C]					
		Copper [Cu]					
		Gold [Au]					
		Platinum [Pt]					
	Diagnosis apparatus	Implantable pressure measuring sensor					
		Tomographic imaging					
	GPS devices	Detection using reflection or reradiation of EM waves		Climate change- LIDAR system			
				LIDAR			
	Means for bonding - chip-to-package, die-attach	Bonding areas- Manufacturing methods	Prior to the connecting process - structure, shape, material or disposition of bonding areas	Bonding areas on chip-scale packages			
				Bonding areas-Bump connectors			
				Individual bonding area	External layer		
				Plurality of bonding areas	Internal layers		
				Wirebond pads-bonding areas	Structure		
		Bump connectors-manufacturing methods	After the connecting process, structure, shape, material or disposition of the bump connectors				
				Bump connectors prior to the connecting process - structure, shape, material or disposition of the	Bump connectors formed on an encapsulation of the semiconductor or solid-state body		
		Layer connectors - manufacturing methods	Manufacturing methods	Core members of the layer connector			
				Layer connector-Disposition			
				Core members of the connector			
		Wire connectors - manufacturing methods	Wire connectors after the connecting process - structure, shape, material or disposition	Individual wire connector	Connecting portions		
					Disposition		
	Shape						
		Wire connectors Disposition					
Pressure-measurement	Measuring fluid pressure by electric or magnetic pressure-sensitive elements						
	Micro-structural systems						
Radiation-measuring and detecting	Measuring radiation intensity with semiconductor detectors						
	Scintillation-photodiode combination						
Semiconductor or other solid state devices to be connected	Device type	Integrated circuits	Digital devices	ASIC			
		Passive devices, e.g. 2 terminal devices	Optical Diode	LASER			
				LED			
		Three terminal devices	Thyristor	OLED			
	Photo diode						
	MEMS, types of devices	Semiconducting materials	Transistor	BJT			
				FET			
	Material-semiconductor or solid state bodies	Semiconducting materials	Compound semiconductors	III-V			
Elemental semiconductors, i.e. Group IV			Silicon [Si]				
Shape	Other than a cuboid						

## Taxonomy (Tabular-2)

SEMICONDUCTOR SENSORS	Semiconductor-sensitive to infra-red radiation & short wavelength	Devices controlled by radiation	Imager structures	Charge coupled imagers	Area CCD imagers Structural or functional details thereof	
				Manufacture or treatment	Assemblies, i.e. hybrid integration	
					MOS based technologies	
					Process for coatings or optical elements	
					Thin film technologies, e.g. amorphous, poly, micro- or nanocrystalline silicon	
				Photodiode arrays; MOS imagers	Wafer level processing	
					Blooming suppression	
					Colour imagers	
					Infra-red imagers	
				Structural or functional details thereof	X-ray, gamma-ray or corpuscular radiation imagers	
Coatings						
Containers						
Interconnect structures						
Optical elements or arrangements associated with the device						
Pixel-elements with integrated switching, control, storage or amplification elements						
Speed-measurement	Measuring acceleration, deceleration, shock					
	Measuring speed by using gyroscopic effect					
Transforming light or analogous information into electric information	Solid-state image sensors		Control brightness or motion in the scene	Control of the dynamic range	Charge conversion ratio	
			Extracting pixel data from an image sensor	Combining pixels - Solid-state image sensors		
			Noise processing	Applied to dark current		
				Correlated double or triple sampling		
				Excess charges produced by the exposure		
				Reset noise-CMOS		
			Solid-state image sensors architecture & circuits	Addressed sensors, e.g. MOS or CMOS sensors		Comprising control or output lines sharing a plurality of functions, e.g. output or driving or reset or power lines
				Addressing circuits		Pixels within a sensor matrix, e.g. memories
				Management of the power supply		Readout registers
				Readout circuits-A/D converters		Timing or clock signal generating circuits
Solid state image sensors-display pixels						
Transforming X-rays						
Transforming infra-red radiation	Multispectral imaging-infrared region					

## Contact Us

Do get in touch with us with your specific needs related to intelligence and decision support on all matters related to technology and its business impact. We will figure the best way to address your needs with an appropriate combination of our technology and reports. We offer a range of tailored solutions and flexible engagement models.



[info@relecura.com](mailto:info@relecura.com)



+1 510 675 0222



[www.twitter.com/relecura](https://www.twitter.com/relecura)



[www.linkedin.com/company/relecura](https://www.linkedin.com/company/relecura)

## About Relecura

**Relecura** is a full-stack cognitive cloud platform that provides custom intelligence and reports on patent portfolios, technologies and companies. It does this by capturing and organizing the knowledge from various document repositories (patents, scientific literature) and subject matter experts in a flexible and collaborative manner, into a knowledge-base.

**Relecura** offers IP analytics tools and a custom enterprise platform to corporations, law firms, IP services firms, R&D organizations and academic institutions. The enterprise platform integrates the discovery and analysis of public documents with internal company documents. Relecura also has an API to help create custom tools for IP and business intelligence. For more details visit [www.relecura.com](http://www.relecura.com).

## Disclaimer

This document is provided for information purposes only and the contents hereof are subject to change without notice. This document, including the information and analysis and any opinion or recommendation, is neither legal advice nor intended for investment purposes. This document is not warranted to be error-free, nor subject to any other warranties or conditions, whether expressed orally or implied in law, including implied warranties and conditions of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. Relecura Inc. specifically disclaims any liability with respect to this document and no contractual obligations are formed either directly or indirectly by this document.