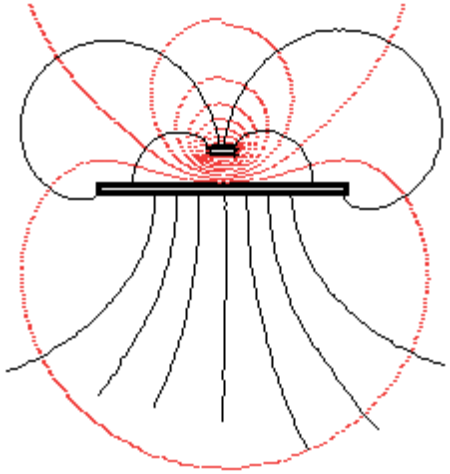
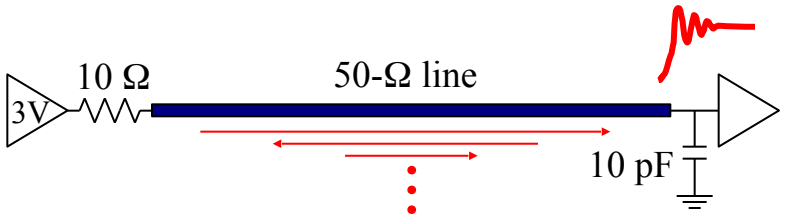
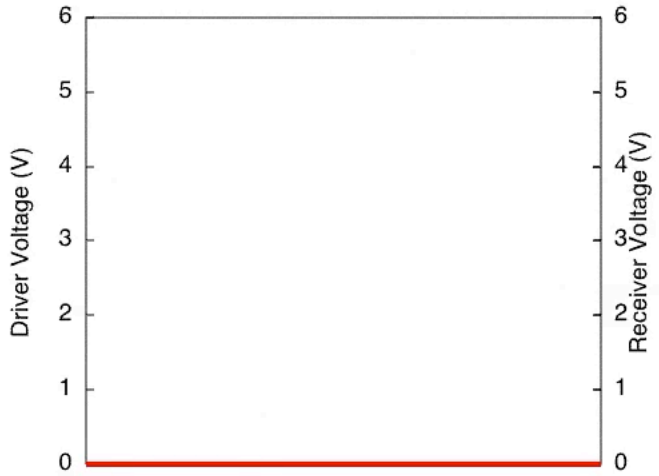
Common Misconceptions about Inductance & Current Return Path







Dr. Cheung-Wei Lam
Apple Distinguished Engineer
IEEE EMC Respected Speaker
lam@alum.mit.edu

Outline

- What are they?

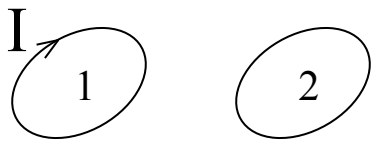
  L = Inductance

  I® = Current Return Path

- Why do we care?
- Common Misconceptions
- How do we control them?
- Summary

L: What is it?

- Various kinds: ***loop***, ***mutual***, external, internal, kinetic, self, ***partial***, self partial, mutual partial, partial mutual, …
- Definition of inductance for closed loops:



$$L_1 = \frac{\Psi_1}{I_1} \qquad M_{21} = \frac{\Psi_{21}}{I_1}$$

- External, internal, kinetic
- Self, ***partial***, self partial, mutual partial, partial mutual

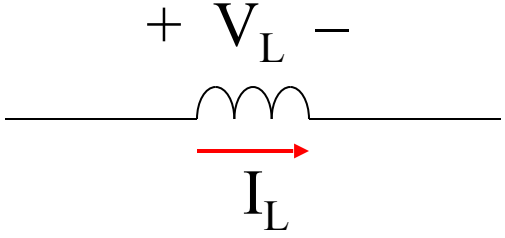
L: Recommended References

- Book:
  - **Clayton Paul, "Introduction to Electromagnetic Compatibility"**
- Paper:
  - **Al Ruehli, "Inductance Calculations in a Complex Integrated Circuit Environment," IBM Journal of R&D, September 1972.**
- Articles:
  - **Bruce Archambeault, "Decoupling Capacitor Connection Inductance," IEEE EMCS Newsletter, Spring 2009**
  - **Bruce Archambeault, "Part II: Resistive vs. Inductive Return Current Paths," IEEE EMCS Newsletter, Fall 2008**

L: Why do we care?

- Affects signal quality, crosstalk, EMI.
- Voltage Drop/Fluctuation

$$V_L = L\frac{dI_L}{dt}$$

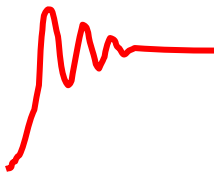


- Crosstalk & EMI

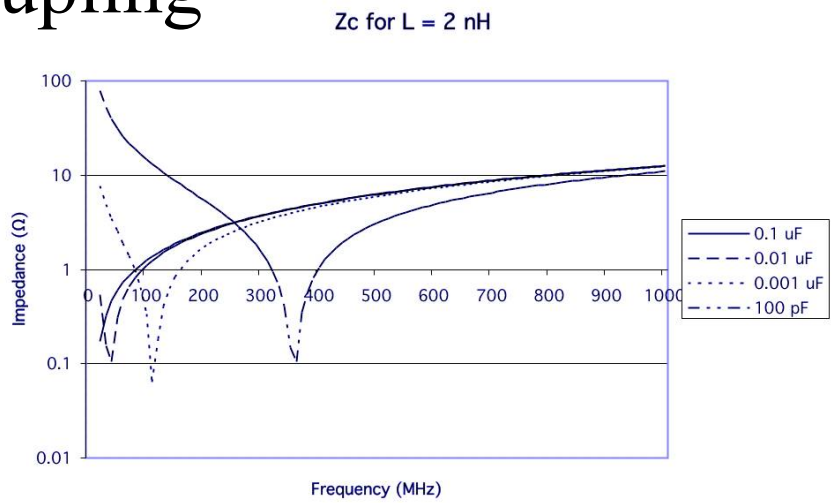
$$V_2 = M_{21}\frac{dI_1}{dt} \qquad M_{21} = L_{21}$$

L: Why do we care?

- Transmission Line Discontinuity & LC resonance
  → Signal Ringing

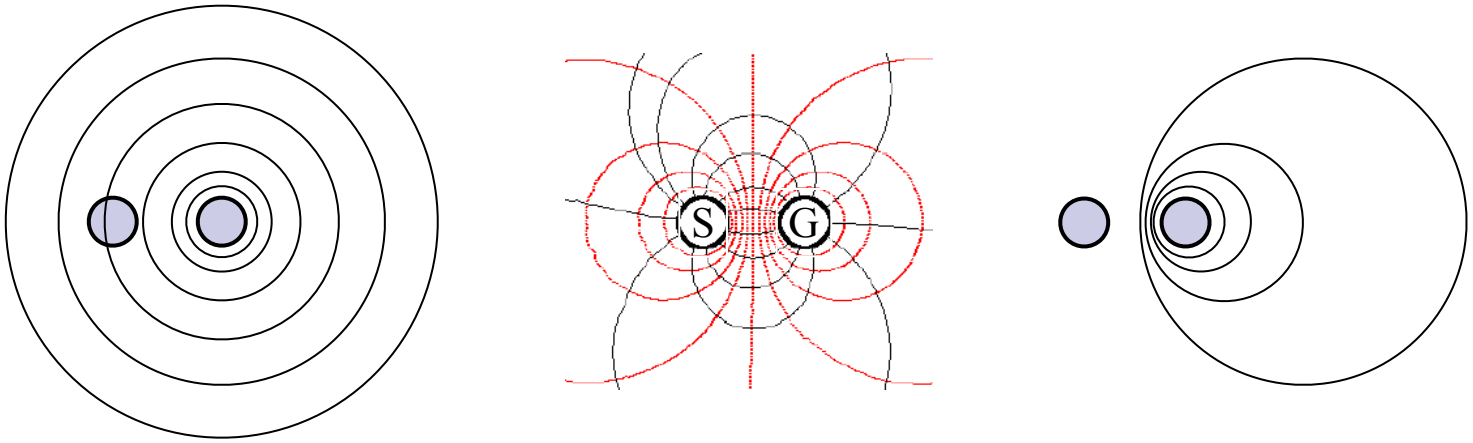


- Filtering & Decoupling
  - $\mathbf{Z_c(f)}$
  - $f_o = \frac{1}{2\pi\sqrt{LC}}$



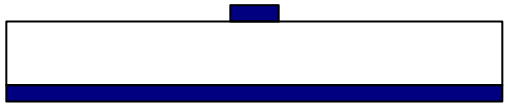
L: Common Misconceptions

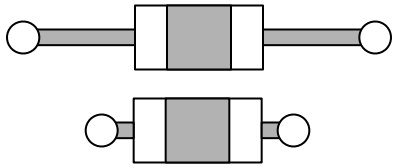
- Mistake loop L as sum of self inductances (L_{self})??
- Overlook the importance of return proximity??



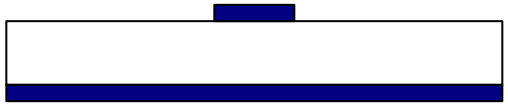
L: Mounting Inductance

- Reduce length.

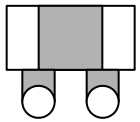




- Increase width.



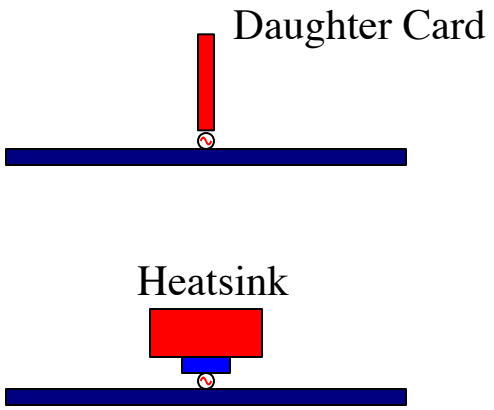
- Think return proximity! (closer plane/vias, via-in-pads)

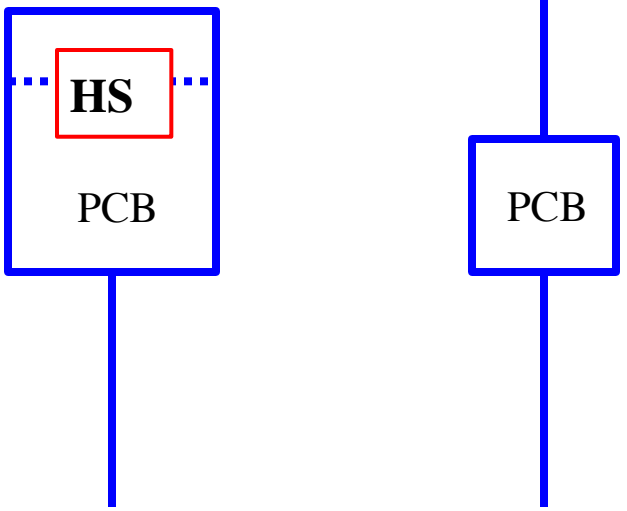


- Think loop inductance!!

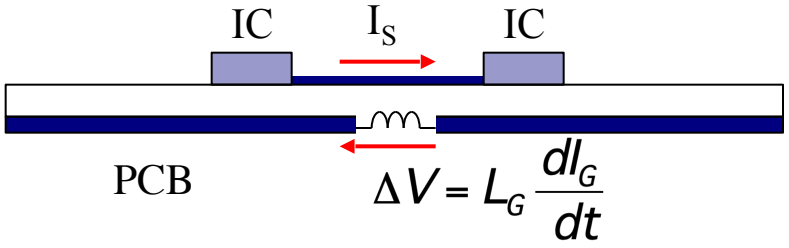
L: Common Misconceptions

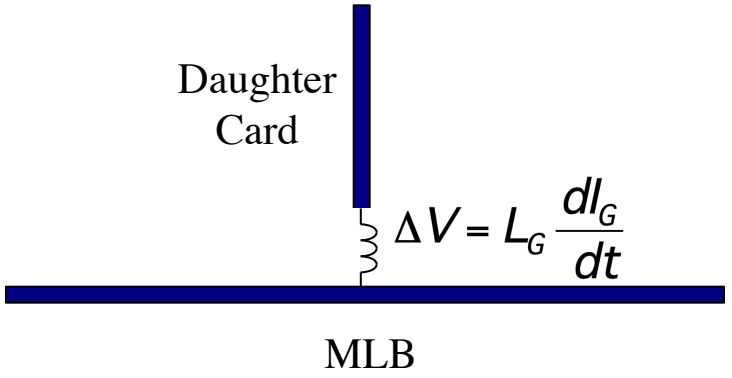
- Ground Bounce ∝ Self Inductance (L_{Self})??
  - **Ground Bounce is a main source of CM radiation!**
  - **$V_G = I_S Z_G = I_S (R_G + j\omega L_G)$**

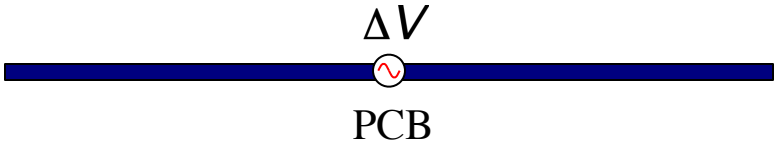


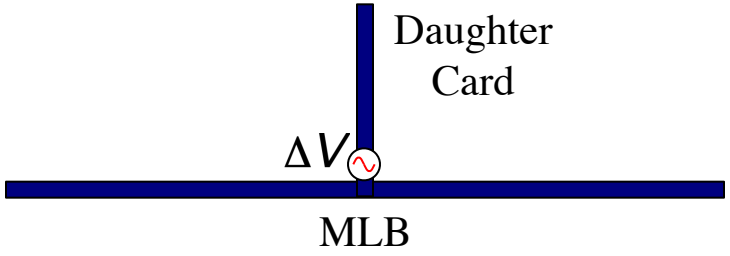


L: $\Delta V = L_G \, dI_G/dt$

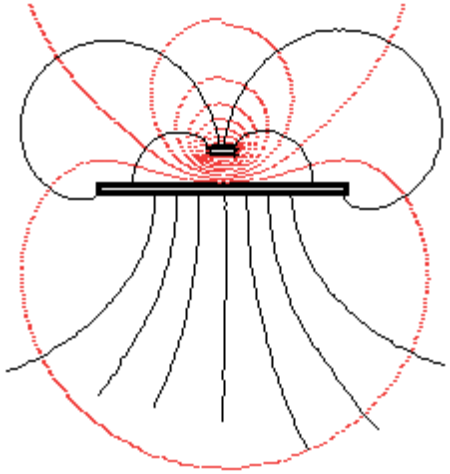


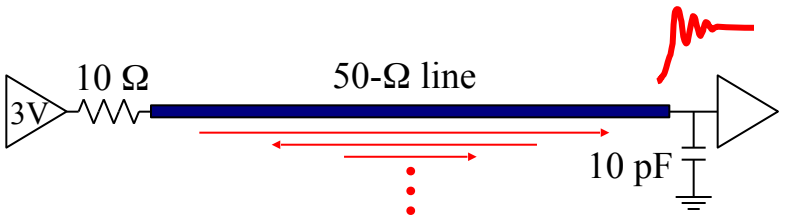


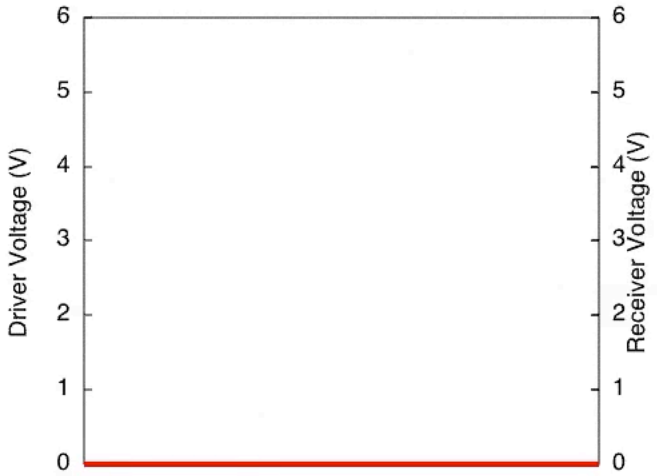




L: Transmission Line Inductance

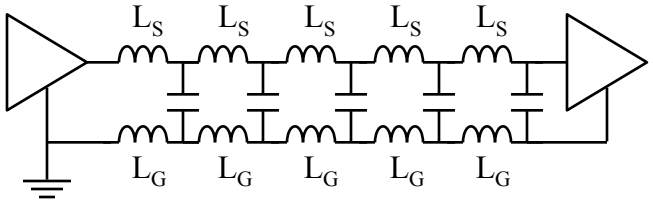






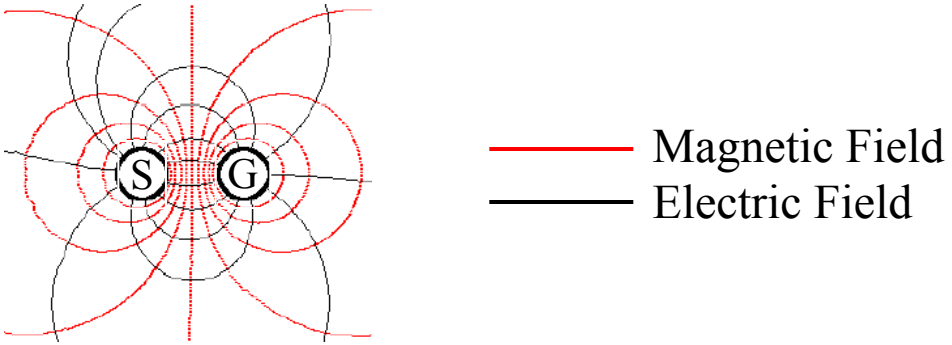
L: Ground Inductance

- Transmission Line: $L_T = L_S + L_G$



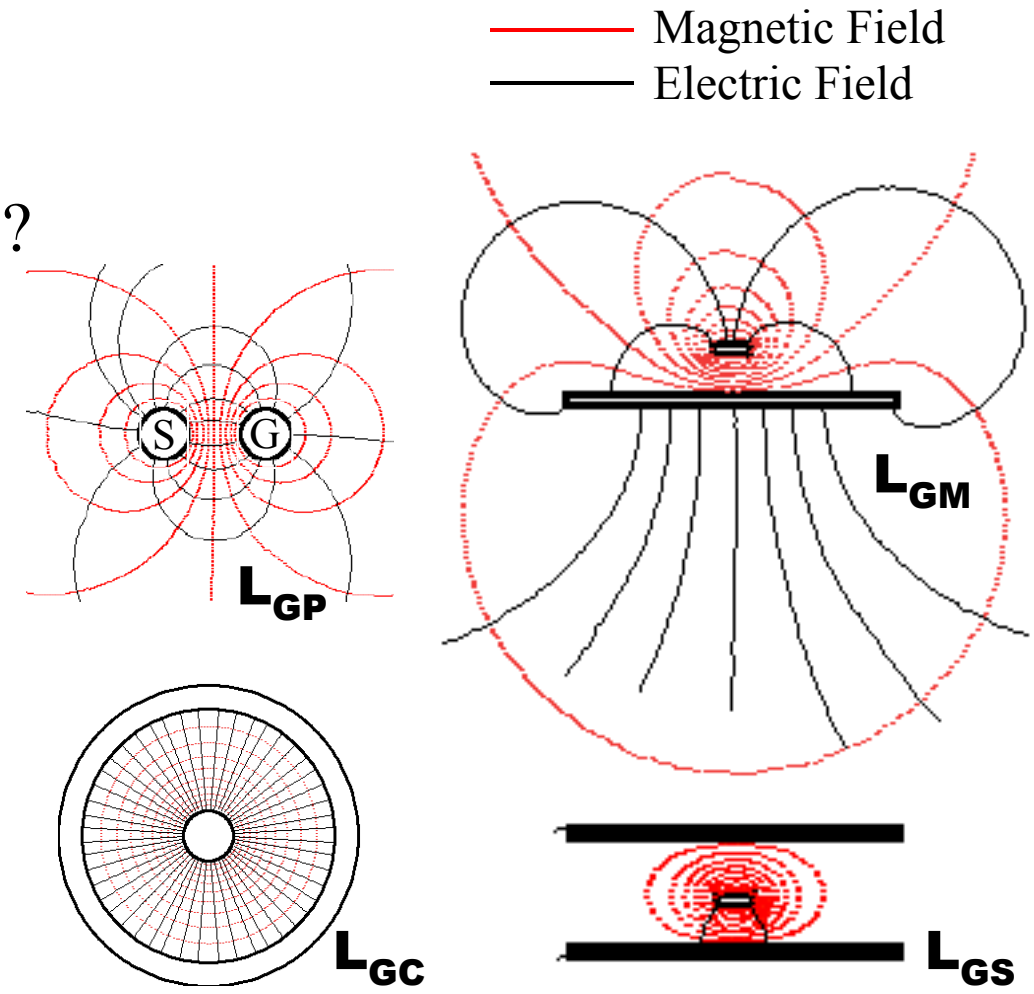
- Ψ_G = magnetic flux around ground conductor

$$L_G = \frac{\Psi_G}{I_G}$$



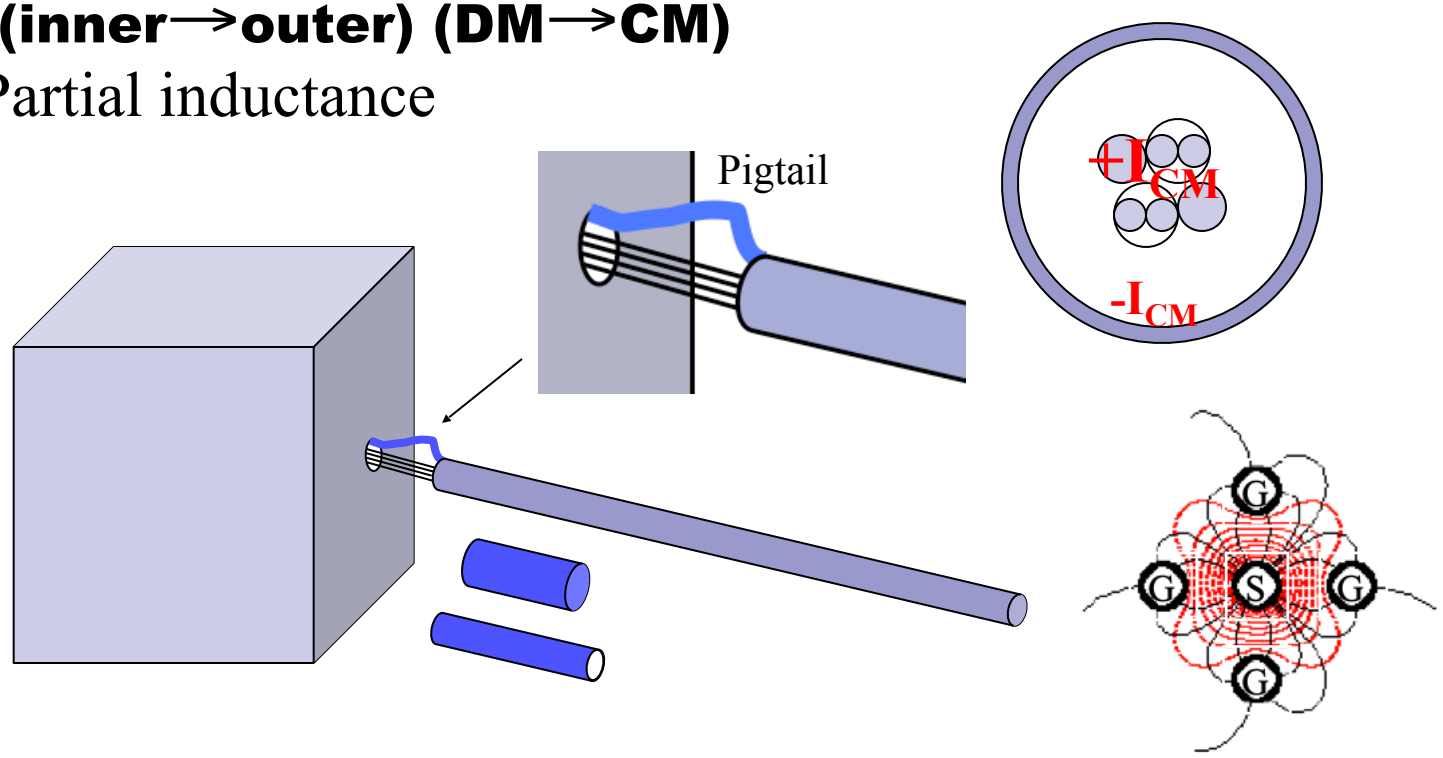
L: L_G = ?

- L_G = self inductance??
  - **$L_G = M_G$ (DM→CM)**
    - Partial inductance
  - **Pairs (S, P, V, W)**
    - $L_{GP} = L_T/2$
  - **Microstrip**
    - $L_{GM} \ll L_T$
  - **Stripline**
    - $L_{GS} \ll L_{GM}$
  - **Coaxial**
    - $L_{GC} \approx 0$



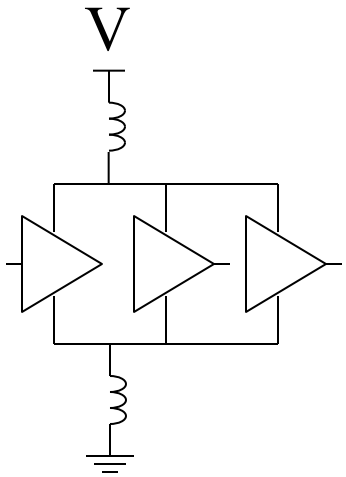
L: Common Misconceptions

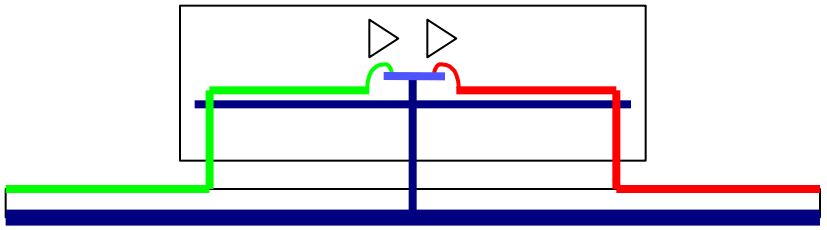
- Pigtail termination is bad because of its L_{Self}??
  - **M_P (inner→outer) (DM→CM)**
    - Partial inductance



M: Common Misconceptions

- Ground Bounce & Package Coupling $\propto L_{Self}$ (L_P) of Pin??





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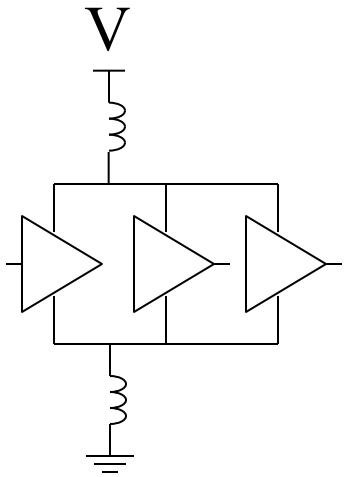

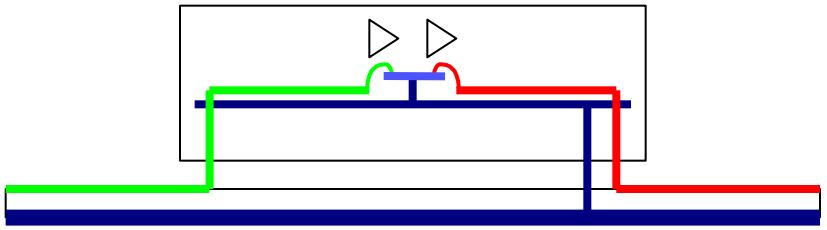

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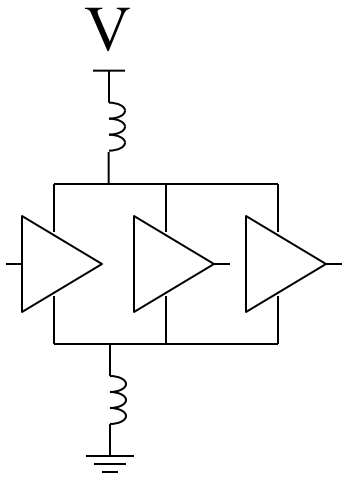
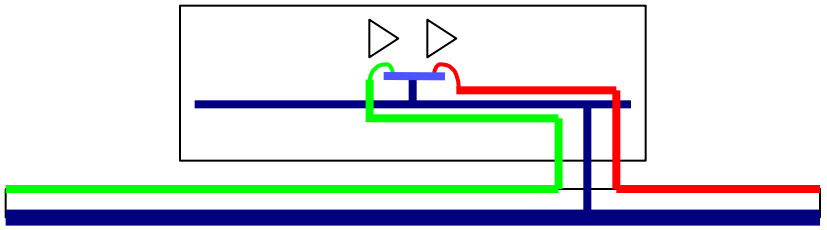
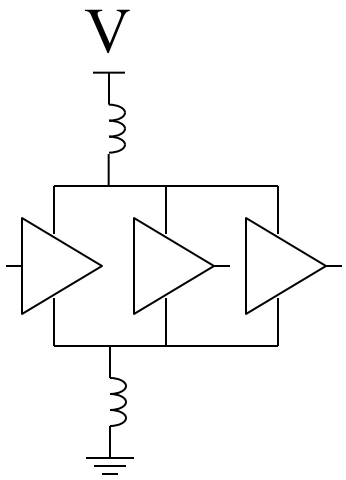
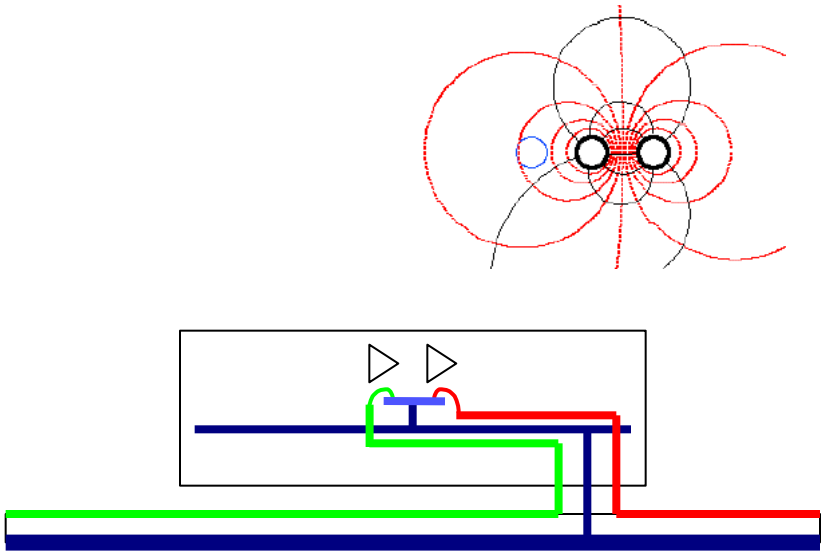




M: Common Misconceptions

- Ground Bounce & Package Coupling $\propto L_{Self}$ (L_P) of Pin??
  - **Think loop-to-loop mutual inductance!**





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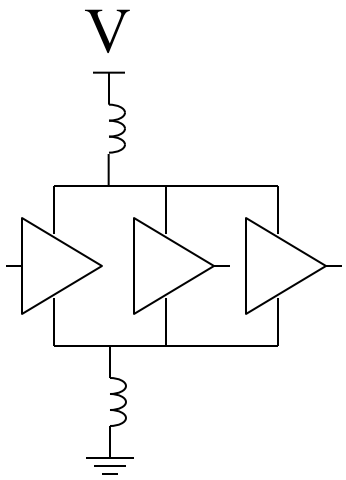
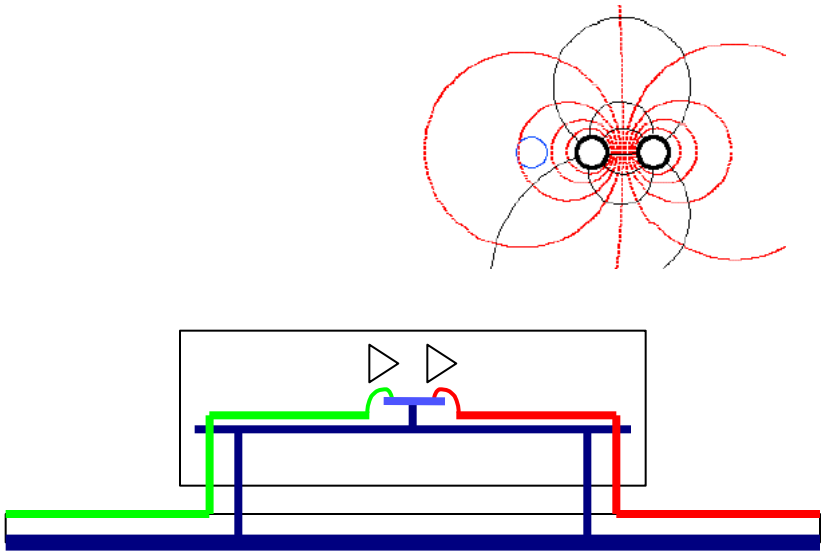
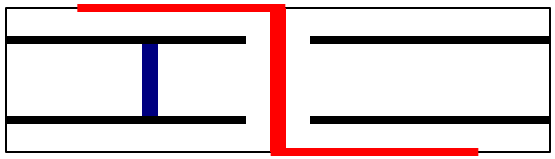
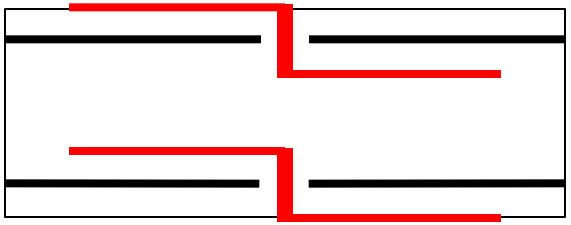




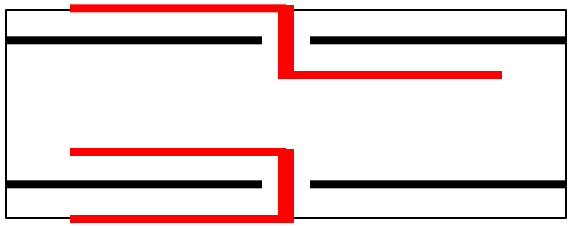
L: Common Misconceptions

- Via Inductance = L_{Self}??
  - **Think loop inductance!**



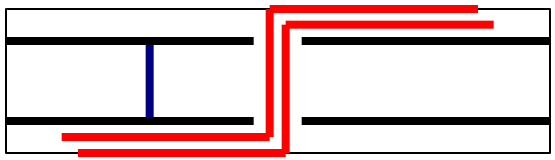


- Overlook the dependence on current distribution??
  - **Current distribution affects inductance!**

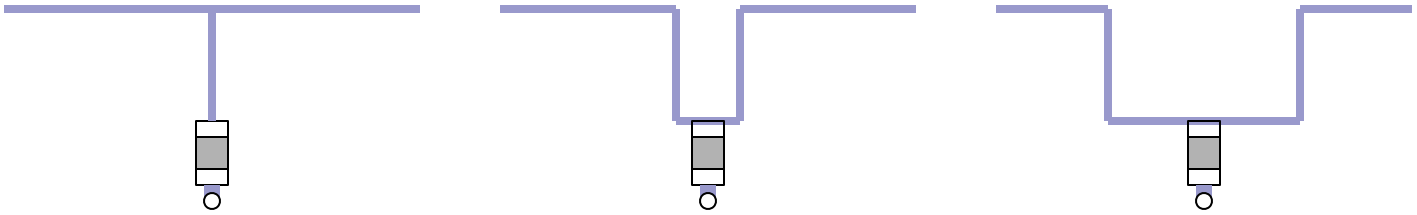


M: Common Misconceptions

- Overlook the importance of return proximity??
  - **Think separation.**
  - **Think return proximity!**

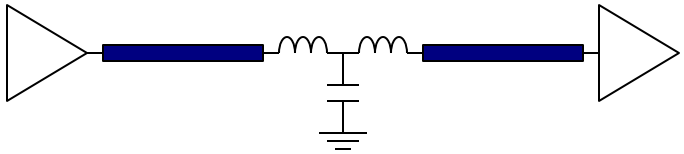


- L_{Self} degrades capacitor performance??
  - **Think mutual inductance!**

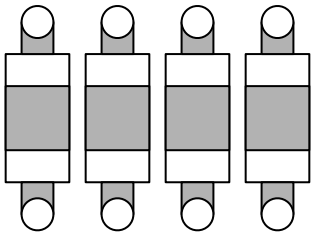


L: Common Misconceptions

- Smaller is always better??
  - **Excess capacitance causes reflections!**

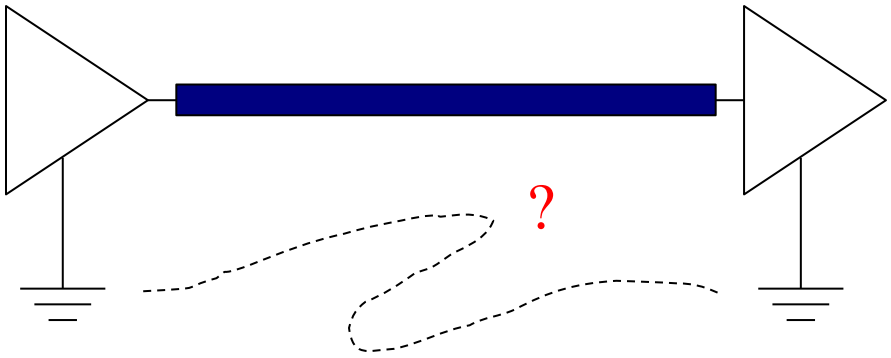


- Inductance parallels down like resistors??
  - **Don't forget M!**
  - **Spread out decoupling capacitors!**
  - **Alternate power/ground pins!**



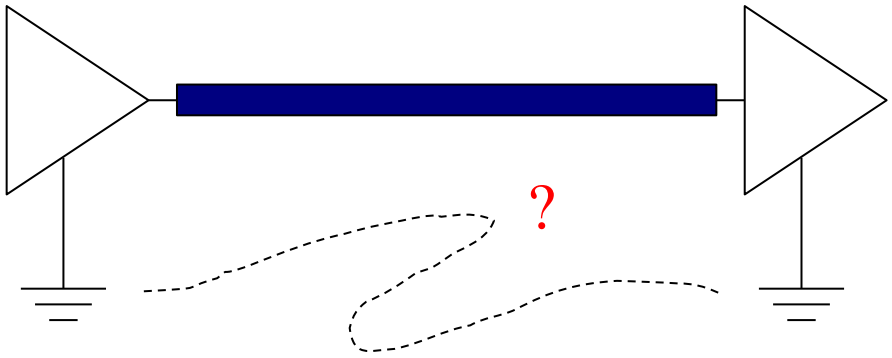
- Overlook mounting inductance vs. component inductance??
  - **Don't spend on expensive low-L filters unless layout has already been optimized.**

I®: What is it?



I®: Common Misconceptions

- Signal ground is a current source/sink??



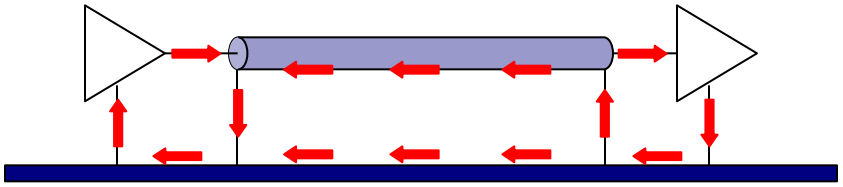
- Ground plane is a zero-impedance equipotential surface??
  - $V_G = I_G Z_G = I_G(R_G + j\omega L_G) \neq 0$

I®: Why do we care?

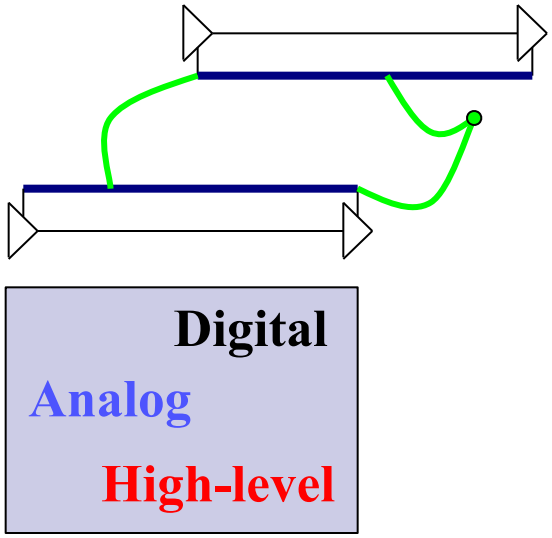
- Increases current loop area A
  - **EMI** ↑
- Increases loop inductance L
  - **Signal Quality** ↓
  - **EMI** ↑
- Increases mutual inductance M
  - **Crosstalk** ↑
  - **EMI** ↑
- Increases ground (return) inductance L_G or M_G
  - **EMI** ↑

I®: Common Misconceptions

- Current takes the least resistance path??
  - **$Z_G = R_G + j\omega L_G$**
  - **Think R at f ≤ kHz.**
  - **Think L at f ≥ MHz!**

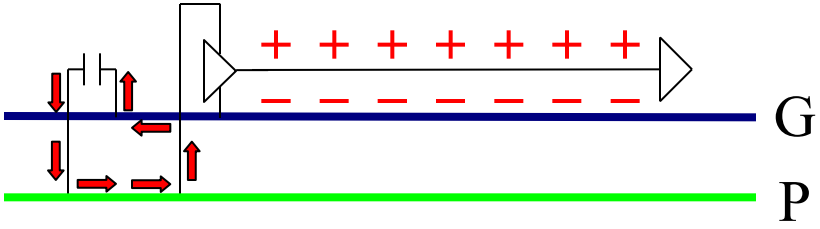


- Current returns along intended paths??
  - **IR drop → common-Z coupling.**
  - **Current spreads out at f ≤ kHz.**
  - **Single-point grounding used for:**
    - Low-level analog subsystems,
    - High-level noisy subsystems, e.g. motor drivers.

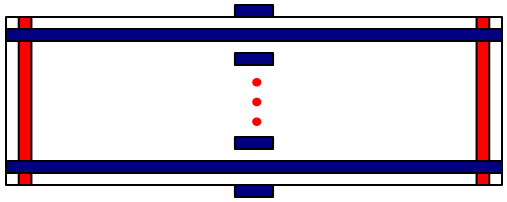


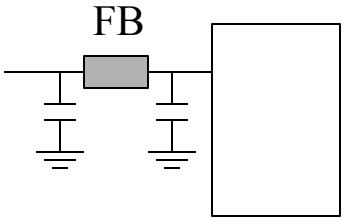
I®: Common Misconceptions

- Current returns through ground but not power??



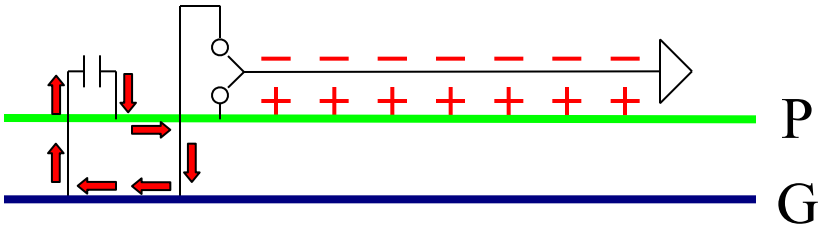
- Ground and power planes are interchangeable??
  - **Ground is connected to chassis, but not power.**
  - **Power isolation breaks the symmetry.**



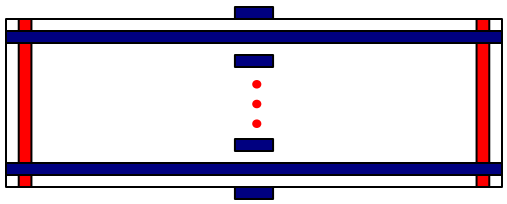


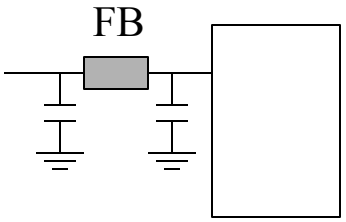
I®: Common Misconceptions

- Current returns through ground but not power??



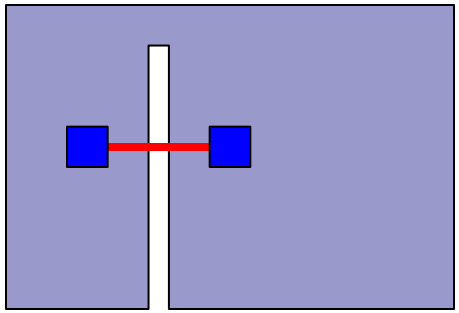
- Ground and power planes are interchangeable??
  - **Ground is connected to chassis, but not power.**
  - **Power isolation breaks the symmetry.**

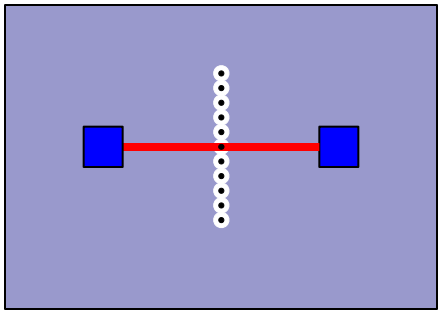




I®: Common Misconceptions

- Overlook horizontal return path??

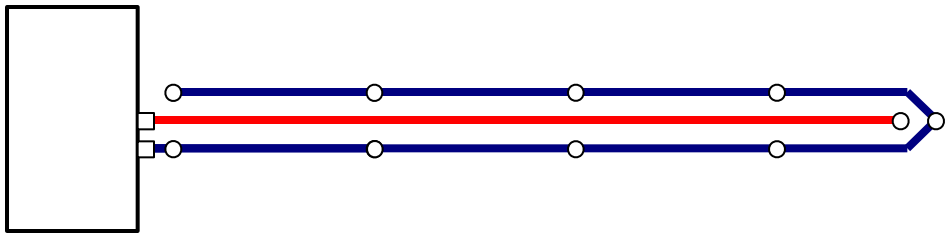




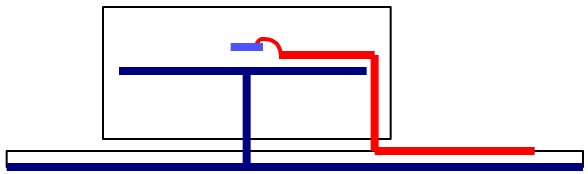
- Traces crossing plane cuts
  - **Avoid ground plane cuts.**
  - **Route around plane cuts.**
  - **Use stitching capacitors.**
- Overlapping via antipads
  - **Stagger vias.**
  - **Space vias apart.**

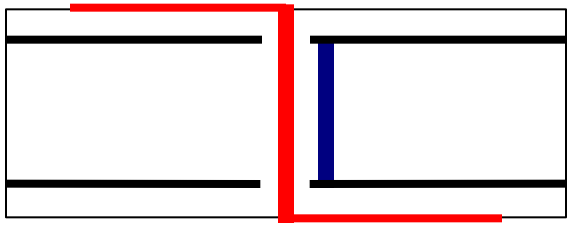
I®: Common Misconceptions

- Overlook vertical return path??
  - **Trace to Plane**



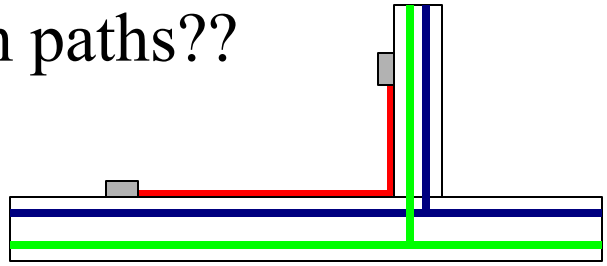
  - **Plane to Plane**



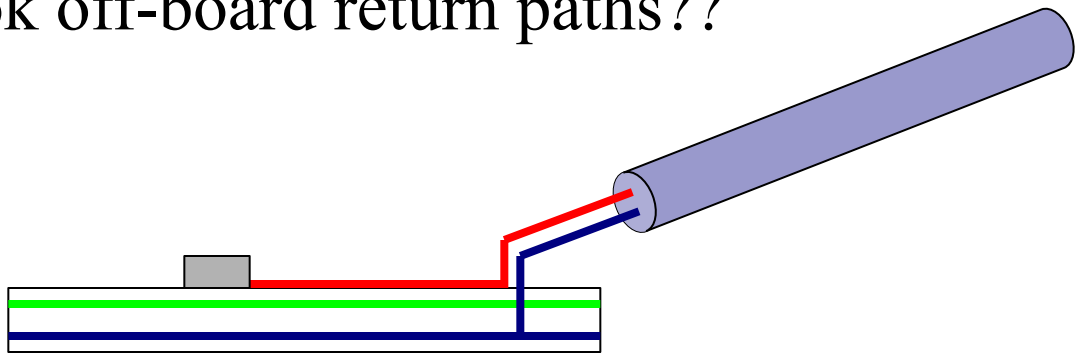


I®: Common Misconceptions

- Overlook cross-board return paths??
  - **Avoid discontinuity.**
  - **Provide capacitors.**

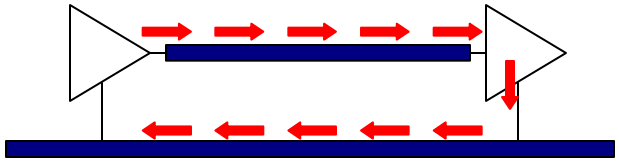


- Overlook off-board return paths??

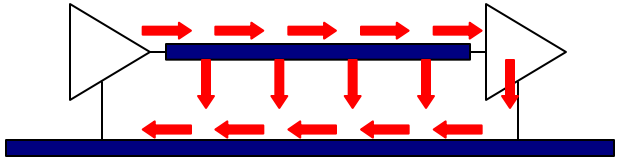


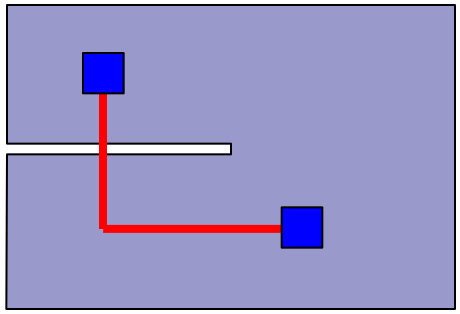
I®: Common Misconceptions

- Current flows in loops.
  - **Think of signal path and return path separately??**

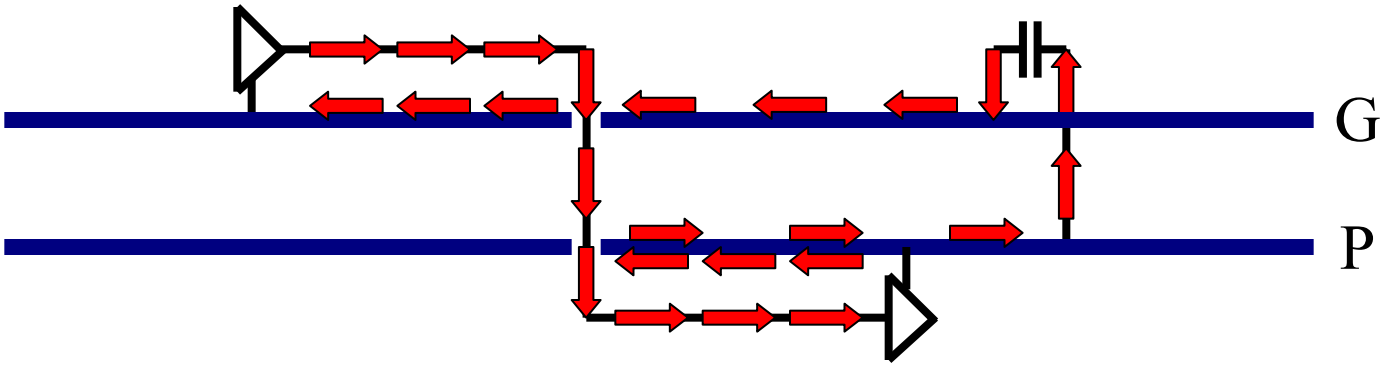


  - **Current flows in loops, but not this way.**
  - **Current flows in pairs!**
    - Signal and return go hand-in-hand.



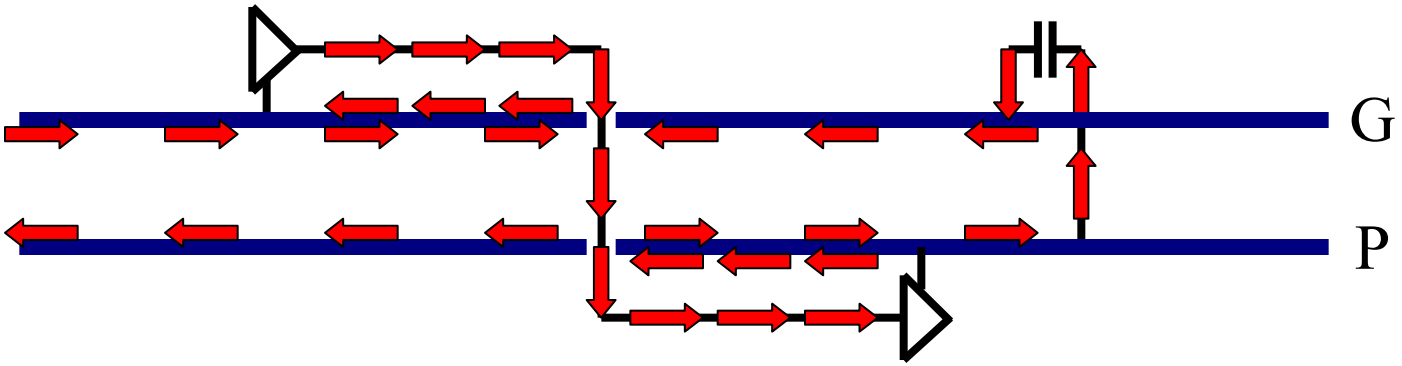


I®: Current Return Path??



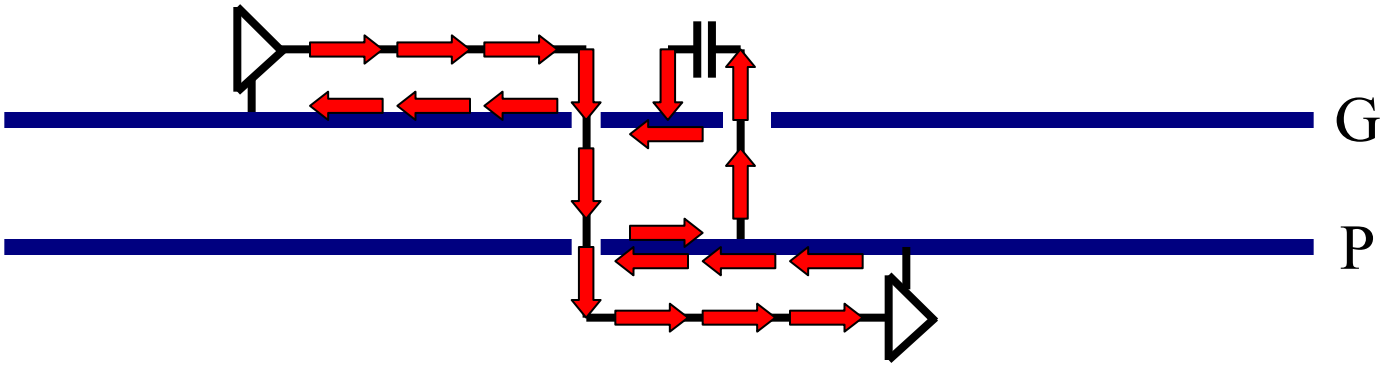
I®: Exercise

- Trace out the current return path.



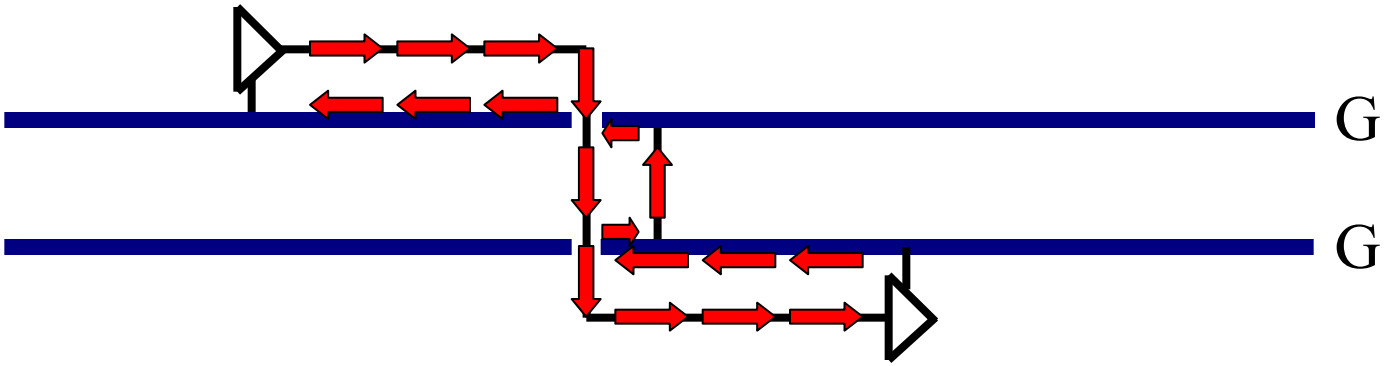
I®: Exercise

- Trace out the current return path.



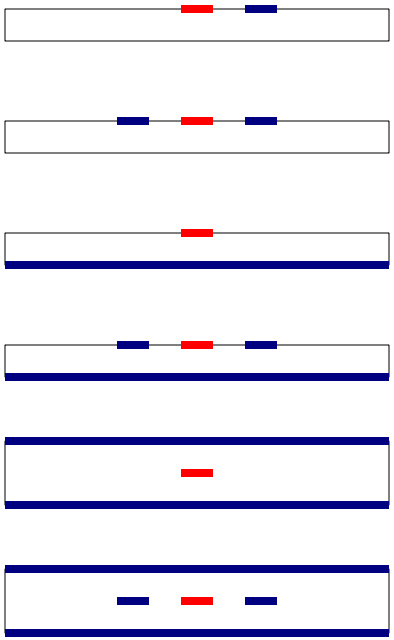
I®: Exercise

- Trace out the current return path.



L: How do we control them?

- L → Signal Ringing
  - **Small loop (adjacent return, short, wide)**
- M_{21} → Crosstalk (Inductive Coupling)
  - **Separation, return proximity, twisting, shielding**
- L_G (M_G) → Ground Bounce → EMI_{CM}
  - **Coaxial, stripline, microstrip**
  - **Small H, large W, away from edge, guard traces**
- L_C → Decoupling
  - **Small loop (zero/short wide traces, adjacent vias)**
  - **Use multiple capacitors and spread them out**
- M_C → Filtering
  - **Minimize M (eliminate stub, via-in-pad, short wide trace)**



I®: How do we control them?

- At kHz: $R_G \gg j\omega L_G$
  - **Low-level analog or high-level noisy subsystems**
    - Single-point grounding prevents common-Z coupling.
- At MHz/GHz: $R_G \ll j\omega L_G$
  - **Horizontal return**
    - Use ground planes/grids instead of ground traces.
    - Avoid traces crossing plane cuts.
  - **Vertical return**
    - Provide adjacent return pins for noisy or susceptible pins.
    - Provide adjacent vias, stitching capacitors as return bridges.
    - Provide sufficient vias for guard traces.

Summary

- L & I® affects signal quality, crosstalk and EMI.
- Inductance (L)
  - **Forget self inductance.**
  - **Think loop, mutual, and partial inductance!**
  - **Think return proximity!**
- Current Return Path (I®)
  - **Low f: Current spreads out as $R_G \gg j\omega L_G$.**
  - **High f: Trace out I® to identify discontinuities.**