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Single carbon-nanotube photonics and optoelectronics¹

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Single-walled carbon nanotubes have unique optical properties as a result of their one-dimensional structure. Not only do they exhibit strong polarization for both absorption and emission, large exciton binding energies allow for room-temperature excitonic luminescence. Furthermore, their emission is in the telecom-wavelengths and they can be directly synthesized on silicon substrates, providing new opportunities for nanoscale photonics and optoelectronics. Here we discuss the use of individual single-walled carbon nanotubes for generation, manipulation, and detection of light on a chip. Their emission properties can be controlled by coupling to silicon photonic structures such as photonic crystal microcavities [1] and microdisk resonators [2]. Simultaneous photoluminescence and photocurrent measurements show that excitons can dissociate spontaneously [3], enabling photodetection at low bias voltages despite the large binding energies. More recently, we have found that alternating gate-voltages can generate optical pulse trains from individual nanotubes [4]. Ultimately, these results may be combined to achieve further control over photons at the nanoscale.

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