UNIVERSITATEA BABEŞ-BOLYAI CLUJ-NAPOCA

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Detecția și eliminarea distorsiunii din înregistrări audio de pe formate analoage

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BABEŞ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY CLUJ-NAPOCA

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SPECIALIZATION COMPUTER SCIENCE - ROMANIAN

DIPLOMA THESIS

Distortion detection and removal on audio recordings from analog formats

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Abstract

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Chapter 3

Basic digital signal processing

3.1. Digital audio signal representation

Sound is defined as an oscillation in pressure, stress, particle displacement, particle velocity, etc., propagated in a medium with internal forces (e.g., elastic or viscous), or the superposition of such propagated oscillation [1]. This oscillation can be represented as a continuous function that describes the variation in time of the medium’s pressure, allowing us to “see” sounds. (Fig. 3.1)

Sound is transmitted through gases and liquids as longitudinal waves, and through solids both as longitudinal and transverse waves. A transmitting medium is required, so sound cannot travel through vacuum. In a longitudinal wave, the direction of displacement is the same as the direction of propagation, while in a transverse wave, the direction of displacement is perpendicular to the direction of propagation [2]. To better understand the difference between the longitudinal and transversal waves, Fig. 3.1 depicts sound waves in air (longitudinal waves), while Fig. 3.2 presents transverse waves travelling through a metal wire.

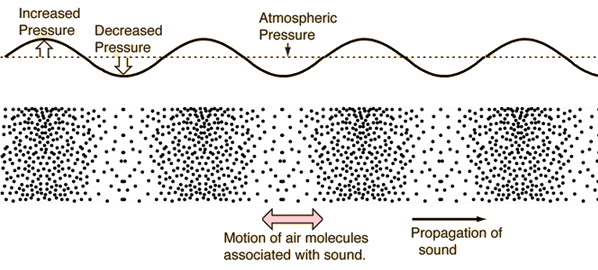
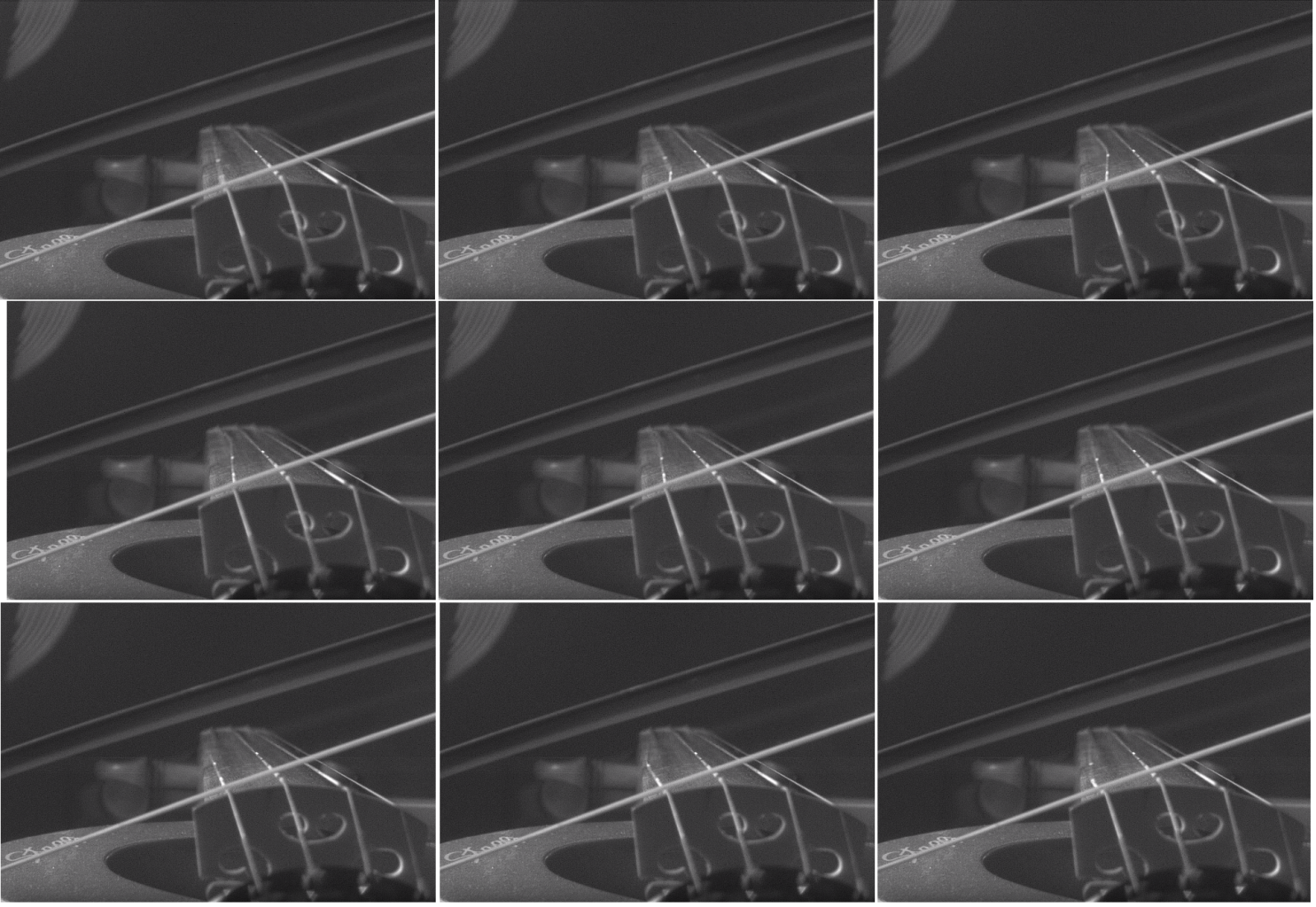


Fig. 3.1: Sound Waves in Air. A single-frequency sound wave traveling through air will cause a sinusoidal pressure variation in the air. The air motion which accompanies the passage of the sound wave will be back and forth in the direction of the propagation of the sound, a characteristic of longitudinal waves.[3]

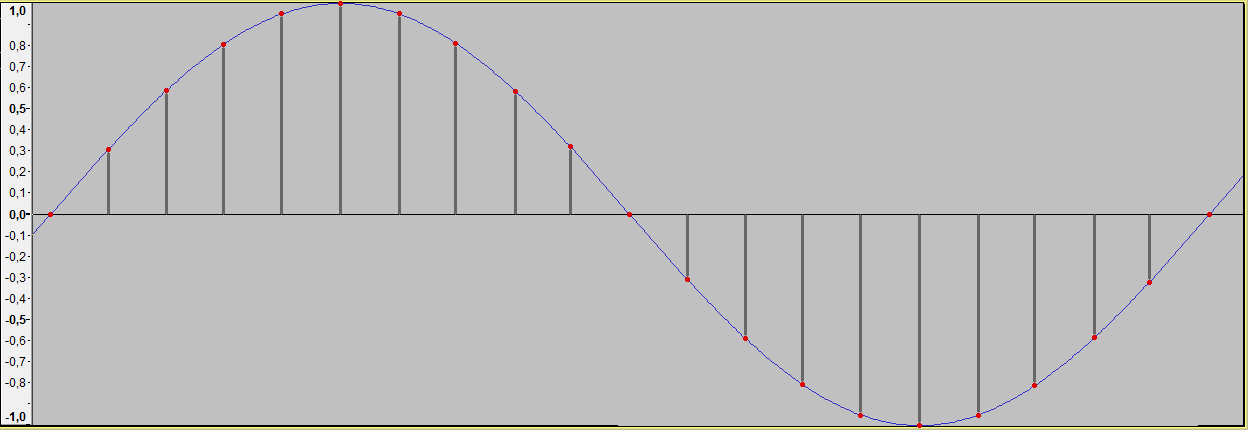
Fig. 3.2. Transverse waves seen in a bowed violin chord. [4]. The bow’s movement drags the chord, its displacements being transmitted as transverse waves moving along the chord with the speed of sound of the chord’s material.

Audio signals are representation of sound, typically as an electrical voltage (analog) or as discrete numerical values (digital). Conversion from the analog continuous-time signal to the digital discrete-time signal (also called sampling) is made usually with ADCs (Analog to Digital Converters), and with DACs(Digital to Analog Converters) from digital to analog. A **sample** isa signal’s value at a point in time**.** When converting from analog to digital, some of the information is lost because of factors like:

* 1. discretization – the resulted signal is no longer continuous (precisely defined in every point in time), but discrete: the intensity of the analog signal is recorded at fixed time points. The number of equidistant time points in a second is called **sample rate** (or sampling frequency)**.** The highest frequency that can be carried by the signal, called the **Nyquist frequency**, is given by the following formula:
  2. storage as finite numbers – as opposed to analog values, the precision of the digital values is finite, so only some of the significant digits can be stored.

By choosing an appropriate sample rate and sample encoding, the lost information can be small enough for it to be negligible.

After getting the sample values from the original analog signal, the samples are then stored as digital numbers in audio files. These sample values can be stored either as uncompressed files, like the WAV and AU formats, which we’ll be discussing about later, or as compressed files (to decrease file size). Compressed file formats can be lossy (the decompressed data is an approximation of the original), such as MP3, or lossless (compression preserves the exact original values ), such as FLAC. Audio files typically contain information about the sampling rate, number of channels and sample encoding (float/integers, signed/unsigned, bit-depth, companding and others).

Fig. 3.3. Conversion from continuous-time to discrete-time. Here, a sine wave is sampled 20 times for each cycle. Each sample is then stored as a 8-bit signed integer ( values in [ -128, 127 ] ). Table below (Table 3.1.1) shows the discretization errors raised at the conversion.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sample no. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Actual value | 0,00000 | 0,30902 | 0,58779 | 0,80902 | 0,95106 | 1,00000 | 0,95106 | 0,80902 | 0,58779 | 0,30902 | 0,00000 |
| Sampled value | 0,00000 | 0,30469 | 0,58594 | 0,80469 | 0,94531 | 0,99219 | 0,94531 | 0,80469 | 0,58594 | 0,30469 | 0,00000 |
| Error | 0,00% | 0,43% | 0,19% | 0,43% | 0,57% | 0,78% | 0,57% | 0,43% | 0,19% | 0,43% | 0,00% |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sample no. | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| Actual value | -0,30902 | -0,58779 | -0,80902 | -0,95106 | -1,00000 | -0,95106 | -0,80902 | -0,58779 | -0,30902 | 0,00000 |
| Sampled value | -0,31250 | -0,59375 | -0,81250 | -0,95313 | -1,00000 | -0,95313 | -0,81250 | -0,59375 | -0,31250 | 0,00000 |
| Error | 0,35% | 0,60% | 0,35% | 0,21% | 0,00% | 0,21% | 0,35% | 0,60% | 0,35% | 0,00% |

Table 3.1. Errors at conversion from analog to digital samples. The digital samples are stored as 8-bit signed integers, with values in [ -128, 127 ], rescaled here to [ -1,1 ) to show the error. Analog samples are in the range [ -1,1 ], where -1 is the smallest possible signal value, and 1 is the maximum. We can see the errors are pretty large for the chosen sample encoding.

3.2. Filters: Finite Impulse Response and Infinite Impulse Response

Signal filtering is one of the main applications of signal processing [[5], p.185]. Filters are used for many purposes, but, in audio signal processing, they are mostly used to achieve a desired frequency response, the most basic being low-pass (which only let low frequencies pass), high-pass (same for high frequencies), band-pass and band-stop filters. Low- and high-pass filters are widely used in speaker cabinets to separate the input signal to each of the drivers, depending on drivers’ frequency response. An example for use of band-pass filters is in radio communication, to isolate the required frequency band (representing a radio channel) from the others.

Depending on the considered audio signal, there are two types of filters: analog (electronic) and digital. Electronic filters can range from simple circuits, made just from simple passive components: resistors, inductors and capacitors, to complex ones, including along the usual passive components, active components: transistors, amplifiers, operational amplifiers and others.

The digital signal processing systems use samples of input signals, which constitute series of numbers. The result may be also series of numbers, to be used as output signals [[5], p. 239]. Each sample of the output signal is computed as a weighted sum of the previous few input and output samples. This weighted sum is also known as a convolution. There are two primary types of digital filters: FIR (Finite Impulse Response) and IIR (Infinite Impulse Response). The impulse response of a system is its output when presented with a brief input signal, called an impulse. Applying a filter to a signal will alter each frequency’s magnitude and phase according to the filter’s impulse response. It remains to design a filter, knowing the desired response, which we’ll discuss in the next section.

When using a FIR filter, each output sample is computed from the previous input samples and a fixed set of coefficients, the weights. The weights are associated to input samples based on each sample’s delay (how far it is from the most recent input sample). Input samples, ordered by delay, are stored in a so-called delay line. The resulted sample is calculated by a set of multiply-accumulate operations: each is input sample is multiplied with its weight, and summed to the output sample:

where:

• is the input signal,

• is the output signal,

• is the filter order and the number of taps. A “tap” is simply a coefficient/delay pair [6]; an th-order filter needs N previous input samples and has terms on the right-hand side,

• is the set of the coefficients; is the weight associated to the th input sample.

For an FIR filter, the filter coefficients are, by definition, the impulse response of the filter [6]. The impulse response is finite ( when the input samples become 0, the output will eventually become 0 ) because there is no feedback in the FIR. A lack of feedback guarantees that the impulse response will be finite [7].

The other class of digital filters is IIR filters which, unlike FIR filters, use feedback, i.e. samples already computed by the filter are used in the next iterations. Each output sample is computed from the previous input sample (feedforward), but also from the previous output samples (feedback). Like FIR filters, each sample has an associated weight, based on the sample’s delay, so there are needed two sets of coefficients: feedforward and feedback. The formula is as following:

In many digital signal processing applications, FIR filters are preferred over their IIR counterparts. The main advantages of the FIR filter designs over their IIR equivalents are the following [8]:

1. FIR filters with linear phase response (all frequencies are delayed by the same constant time amount) can easily be designed;
2. They are simple to implement (two nested loops, one for iterating the input samples, one for the coefficients);
3. FIR filters are always stable, i.e. given a bounded input signal, the output signal will also be bounded. If designed wrong, IIR filters can diverge.
4. They have desireable numeric properties. The use of finite-precision arithmetic in IIR filters can cause significant problems due to the use of feedback, but FIR filters can usually be implemented using fewer bits, and the designer has fewer practical problems to solve related to non-ideal arithmetic [7];
5. Excellent design methods are available for various kinds of FIR filters with arbitrary specification [8].

The main disadvantage of FIR filters is that they may require much more computational effort and memory than a comparable IIR counterpart.

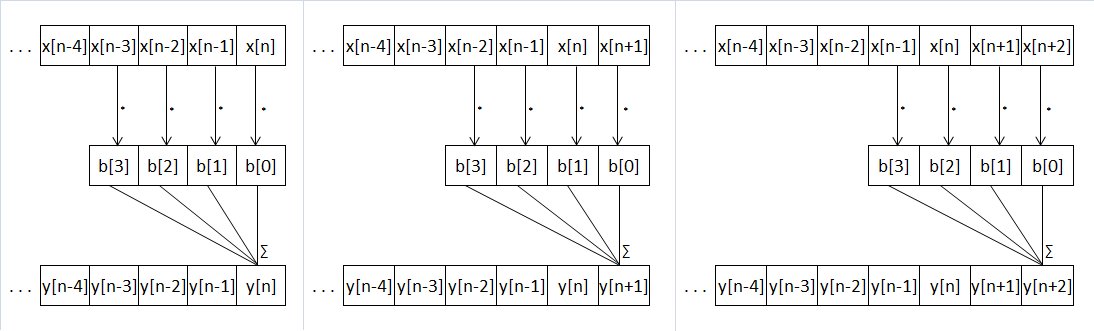
Figures 3.4 and 3.5 give an example as how an FIR filter and IIR filter work along the input data:

Fig. 3.4: Application of a digital FIR filter

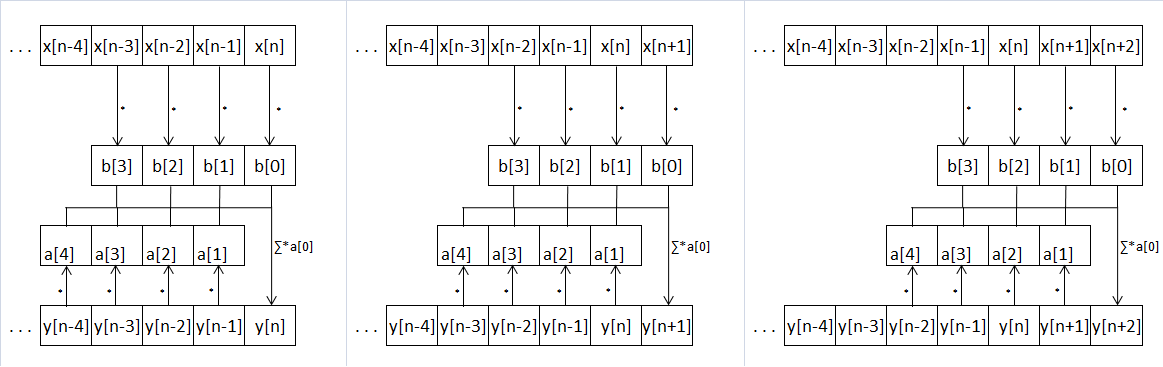


Fig. 3.5: Application of a digital IIR filter

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