

Lab 3: MEMS Accelerometer, Timer and Interrupts

ECSE 426 – Microprocessor Systems



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Group 4 : Sidney Ng 260507001

Meng Yin Tao 260480207

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# 1. Abstract

# 2. Problem Statement

The goal of this experiment is to create a system that detects the orientation of the STM32F4 discovery board. The rotation of the board around its axes is detected using the built-in accelerometer. However, the accelerometer cannot determine the yaw (rotation around the board’s z-axis) since it does not result in a change in acceleration. Only the roll (rotation around the board’s x-axis) and pitch (rotation around the board’s y-axis) can be found using the accelerometer. When the accelerometer’s raw data becomes available, the processor will calibrate it using a pre-built calibration matrix and filter it using a Kalman filter whose parameters are experimentally defined. In order to make sense of the data, it needs to be converted into an angle in degrees. This conversion is done using the arctan function available in the math library. Once the angle is available, it can be compared against the user input. The user is prompt to enter a target angle for both the roll and the pitch using a 4x4 external keypad. As the user tilts the board, an animated indication on the 7-segment display will help the user directing the board toward the target angle. Once the user is within five degree of the target roll angle, the 7-segment display will show the current angle captured by the accelerometer. This measured angle is expected to be within four degrees of accuracy compared to the actual angle.

# 3. Theory and Hypothesis

## 3.1. Accelerometer

### 3.1.1. Orientation

--- Relationship between 3 axis and 3 angles (one of them cannot be detected)

One of the objectives of the lab was to display the tilt angles of the board using the accelerometer on the board. Since we only measure the tilt angles, the only acceleration force applied to the board is the gravitational force on the board. At sea level, the force should be 1g. Using only the accelerometer, we are able to calculate the pitch and the roll angles. The pitch angle is the angle between the X axis of the board and the horizontal plane, and is a rotation around the Y axis of the board, as seen in Figure 1. When pitch is 0°, the X axis of the board is on the same plane as the horizontal plane as in Figure 1. When pitch is 90°, the X axis of the board is perpendicular to the horizontal plane. The equation for the pitch is given by:

(1)

The roll angle is the angle between the Y axis of the board and the horizontal plane, and is a rotation around the X axis of the board, as seen in Figure 1. When roll is 0°, the Y axis is in the same plane as the horizontal plane. When roll is 90°, the Y axis is perpendicular to the horizontal plane. The equation for the roll is given by:

(2)

The yaw angle cannot be computed with just the accelerometer sensor. The pitch and the roll equations depend on the change in acceleration in the Z direction, gravity, while the other axis remains constant. However, since there is no change in the force of gravity on the board while rotating around the Z axis, the yaw cannot be determined without using other sensors.

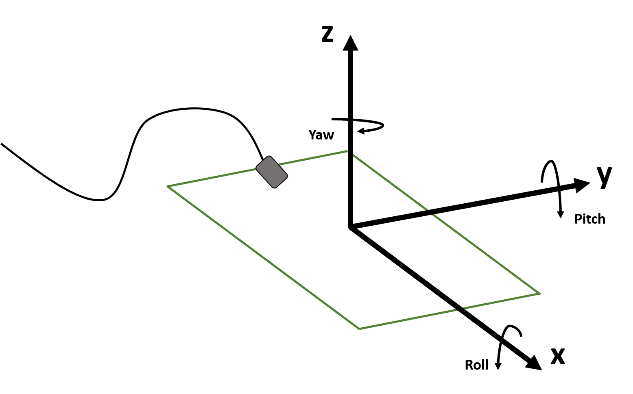


Figure 1: Board Axes and Tilt

### 3.1.2. Acceleration

--- How the angle is quantified

## 3.2. Data Calibration and Filtering

--- When data ready (signaled by an interrupt flag), perform calibration

### 3.2.1. Data Normalization and Calibration

During the process of manufacturing the board, the MEMS accelerometer is not perfectly soldered to the board with its axes aligned. As a result, any acquired data must be normalized before using the data. The equation converting the raw data to the normalized acceleration is expressed as:

(1)

The [Am] matrix represents the misalignment between the accelerometer axes and the device’s axes, ASCirepresents the sensitivity (scaling) and AOSi is the zero-g level offset. Equation (1) is equivalent to:

(2)

(3)

The matrix X in equation (3) is equivalent to matrix [ACCij] in equation (2). The matrix X is the normalization vector multiplied to the raw data vector w in equation (2) to obtain the normalized data in matrix Y in equation (3).

Since the soldering of the sensor is different on every board, the normalization values (ACCij) must be calibrated. To acquire these values, the least square method is used to solve equation (3) for the matrix X:

(4)

For the values of matrices w and Y, the raw data values and corresponding normalized values are used from the positions Xup, Xdown, Y­up, Ydown, Z­up, Zdown. Z­up is when the board is facing up in the horizontal plane as in Figure 1. Y­up is when the Y axis of the board is where the Z axis is in Figure 1. Xup is when the X axis of the board is where the Z axis is in Figure 1. The down counterparts are when the axes are in the opposite direction of the Z axis in Figure 1. The Y matrix is equal to:

(5)

The first row of the matrix corresponds to Zup, the second to Zdown, the third to Yup, the fourth to Ydown, the fifth to Xup, and the sixth to Xdown. The first column holds X values, the second Y values, and the third holds Z values. The w matrix follows the same format of the Y matrix. However, it has an additional fourth column of 1’s.

--- 6 positions expected (not normalized?) acceleration (0 0 1, 0 0 -1, 0 1 0, 0 -1 0, 1 0 0, -1 0 0)

--- Calibration operation (need equation)

### 3.2.2. Data Filtering

--- Kalman filter (what’s the purpose of filtering?)

### 3.2.3. Data Interpretation

--- Normalize acceleration

--- Convert from acceleration to angle in radian (need equation)

--- Alternative way of getting the angle (lookup table)

## 3.3. External Keypad

### 3.3.1. Circuit Layout

The keypad used for this experiment is composed of four columns and four rows. The pin associated to each of the columns and rows where experimentally found using a multimeter. Each pin on the keypad is connected to a column or a row. When a key is pressed, a connection is made between a column and a row. Therefore, we expected each pin to be disconnected when no key is pressed, and two pins to be shorted together when a key is pressed. Using a multimeter, we found the pair of pins associated to the pressing of each key. The results are illustrated in Figure 2. The first four pins were connected to the columns from left to right respectively. The last four pins were connected to the rows from up to down respectively.

### 3.3.2. Data Acquisition

Figure 2: Keypad Layout

In order to know which pin is pressed, a scanning mechanism can be used. The first step is to find the row on which a pressed key located by setting the column pins high and watching the row pins. When no key is pressed, all row pins will remain unaffected. To achieve better result and avoid undefined states, the row pins can be pulled down. Once a key is pressed, a connection will be made between its corresponding row and column. By watching the change in voltage on the row pins, one can find the row corresponding to the pressed key. Figure 2 shows this step, where the column pins (pin 1 to 4) are set high (green) and when any key in the first row is pressed, pin 5 is set high (turn green). For pin 6, if its value toggled from low to high, a button is pressed on the second row. Similarly, the other rows can be determined in the same manner. The second step is to determine the column on which the key is located by setting the row pins high and watching the column similarly to the first step. Since the coordinates and the keys are mapped one to one, by knowing the row and column, the pressed key can be resolved. This methodology is only valid under the assumption that a single key is pressed at any time. If more than one key is pressed, the result will depend on the order in which rows and columns are scanned.

### 3.3.3. Handling Key Bouncing

The frequency at which the pins are scanned will affect the values read. If the scanning rate is much higher than the speed a user can input, the same input will be captured multiple times. To handle such situation, we can simply ignore consecutive identical inputs. However, an issue arises when user willingly inputs two identical values consecutively. To resolve that issue, a NO\_INPUT signal can be introduced to catch the time when the key is released. The duration of the NO\_INPUT must be defined to handle key bouncing, where the connection opens up without the user releasing the key. A NO\_INPUT signal is considered as valid only after is has been observed for long enough.

## 3.4. External 7-Segment Display

### 3.4.1. Circuit Layout

The 7-segment display used for this experiment is composed of four digits, colon symbol after the second digit and degree symbol after the third digit. Each digit is composed of seven segments and a decimal point. The signal lines for the segments and the decimal point are shared between the digits. In order to control which digit should be updated, a select line is used for each of them. Similarly, there is a select line for the colon and the degree symbol. The colon symbol was not used in this experiment, therefore will be omitted from now on. As shown in Figure 3, the pins from the display cannot be directly connected to the board. For the segment pins, a resistor must be inserted to reduce the voltage at the input. The select pins must be controlled through the mean of a transistor. The transistor acts as a switch, when turned on, the select pin is connected to ground. To keep the Figure 3 concise, only one resistor and one transistor are shown.

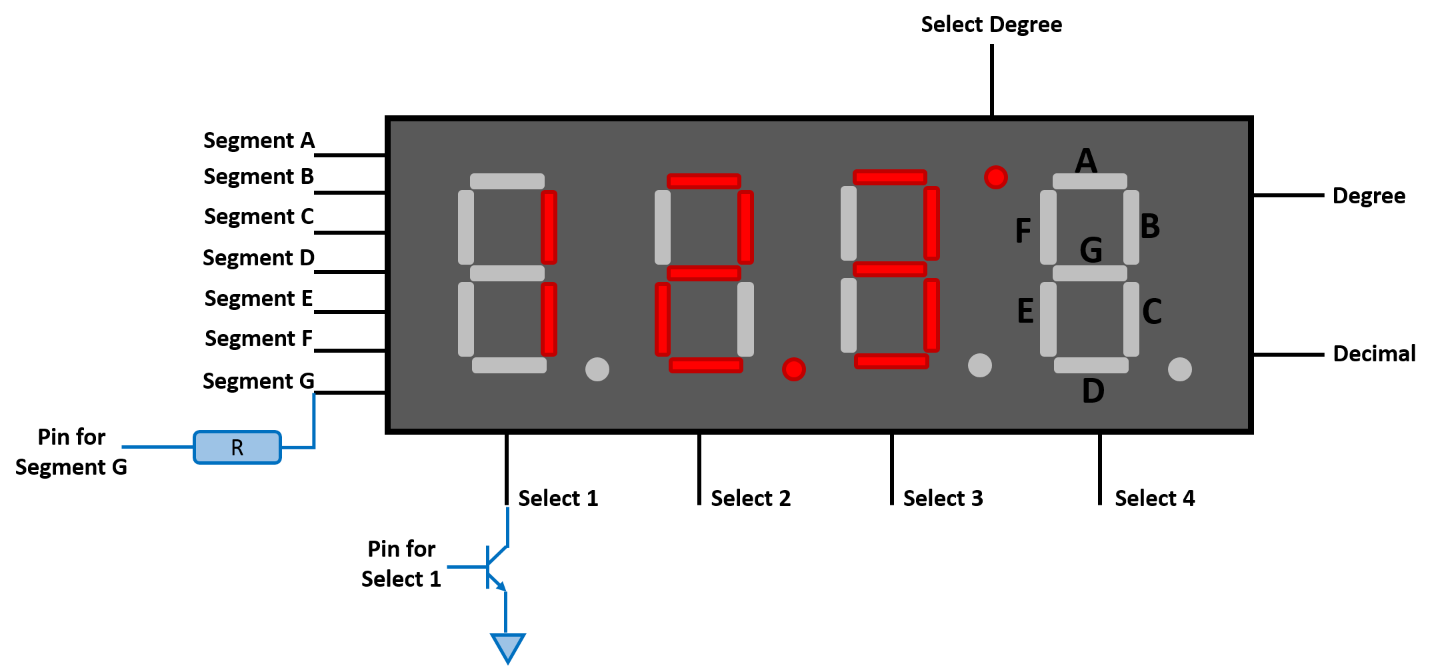


Figure 3: 7-Segment Display Layout

### 3.4.2. Data Display

As mentioned earlier, only one digit can be displayed at a time. To achieve the effect of all digits being turned on, the digits need to be refreshed quickly so the user will not see the flickering effect. To display values on a given digit, the corresponding select pin must be grounded by turning the transistor on. Once the digit is selected, the segments can be turned on to display the desired pattern. The segments must be held on for a given time period before releasing it and moving on to the next digit. If this time period is too short, the light will be faint. On the other hand, if this period is too long, there might not be enough time to refresh the digits before the flickering effect becomes noticeable. The timing of the 7-segment display can be determined experimentally with various frequencies.

## 3.5. Timing

### 3.5.1. Timing Based on Sample Rate

--- Interrupt when sample is ready

### 3.5.2. Timing Based on Hardware Timer

As mentioned in the External 7-Segment Display section, timing is important when displaying the digits. The segments must be kept on long enough to be visible without flickering. A hardware timer can be used for this purpose. The STM32F4 Discovery board is equipped with several timers operating at different maximum frequencies. Timer 3 (TIM3) used in this experiment has a bus frequency of 42 MHz. A prescaler is used to divide the frequency in to a counter frequency according to Eq.

(Eq. )

When the timer uses a count up counter, the counter value is incremented at each prescaler period up to a maximum. When the counter has reached the maximum value, it is reset to zero and an interrupt flag is raised. The frequency of the flag is found using Eq.

(Eq. )

The waveforms of the different signals are shown in Figure 4.

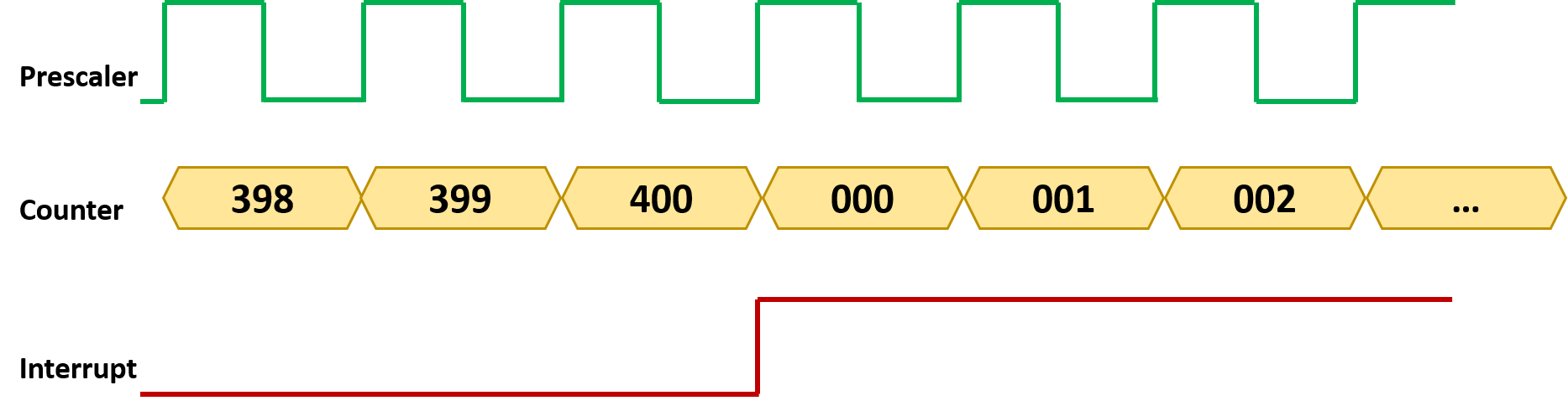


Figure 4: Timer Waveform

# 4. Implementation

The implementation of the system used the STM32F4 Discovery board, an external keypad and an external 7-segment display. The sections are presented in the order of which functions are called.

## 4.1. Component Configuration and Initialization

### 4.1.1. GPIO Configuration

The first step in this program is to configure and initialize the different GPIO ports. The on board accelerometer communicates through pin PE0. This pin is therefore set to take input. The 7-segment display is an external device, it must use free ports. These ports are selected and set as output ports. The on board LEDs communicate through ports PD12, PD13, PD14 and PD15. These ports are also set to be output ports. The keypad used to take user input also uses the free GPIO pins, however they cannot be configured and initialized here, because they change back and forth between an input and an output port. They will be configured based on their use.

### 4.1.2. Accelerometer Configuration, Accelerometer Interrupt and Interrupt Handler

--- Pin and channel

--- Frequency of the interrupt

### 4.1.3. Timer Configuration, Timer Interrupt and Interrupt Handler

A hardware timer is used to manage the timing at which the 7-segment display is updated. TIM3 is configured to use a prescaler of 1000 and count up to 400. According to Eq., this results in an interrupt frequency of 105Hz. These values were experimentally determined to avoid flickering effect while having reasonable intensity coming from the segments. The interrupt handle was designed to update to variables, the interrupt flag and the interrupt count. The interrupt flag determines when a digit on the 7-segment display should be updated. The interrupt count defines which digit to update. At every interrupt only one digit is updated; therefore, it takes four interrupts (three for the digits and one for degree symbol) to fully update the display.

## 4.2. Collect User Input

### 4.2.1. Initialize Keypad

As explained in the theory section, the keypad pins are used as both input and output. For this reason, they are configured on the go. After initializing the pins, the column pins are configured to be output pins and are set high whereas the row pins are configured to be input pins and are pulled down. The configuration is reversed for every read. Digits were constantly read and repeated values were omitted. The key bouncing problem is handled by ignoring sudden changes. For example, if NO\_INPUT signal was detect for the first time, it might be due to key bouncing. Only after NO\_INPUT signal was detected five consecutive times, the program can safely assume that the user has released the key and the missing signal was not due to a hardware bouncing.

### 4.2.2. Return User Input

For this experiment, users are expected to enter a value followed by the ENTER key. Since there were no key dedicated for this purpose, we used the pound key. When the ENTER key is pressed the result is scaled and returned to the processor. The scaling is necessary because the user have the liberty of entering one, two or three digits. The first digit entered is considered to be the most significant digit (the hundreds), while the third digit entered is considered to be the least significant digit (the ones). When user only enters one digit, it must be scaled to the ones and fill the other to digits with zero. Similarly, when user only enters two digits, they must be scaled to the tens and the ones.

### 4.2.3. Improvement on Keypad

Although the current implementation is functional and meet the requirements, some improvements could be added for the future. First, when the keypad function is called it only exits when ENTER is pressed. It is fine for the current implementation because the processor does not have other tasks to perform in the meantime and can wait after the keypad. To make the program more efficient, the execution should return to the main process and check the keypad status periodically. Second, the current implementation does not allow user to erase their inputs. The program must start over is the user has entered an erroneous value. A key could be dedicated to act like a BACKSPACE key.

## 4.3. Tilt Angle Calculation

The process of calculating the tilt angle involved sampling the accelerometer data, normalizing the data, filtering the normalized values, then performing the calculations.

### 4.3.1 Data Sampling

As per the requirements, the accelerometer sampled values at a frequency of 100Hz. To avoid continually polling the accelerometer for data, we only acquired data when an interrupt was generated when the accelerometer indicated it had data ready. Since the accelerometer is not hardwired to the processor, we used EXTI (External Interrupt) to generate the interrupt and NVIC (Nested Vector Interrupt Controller) to channel the interrupt.

To detect the interrupt, we used a global variable as a flag. In the interrupt handler, the flag is set. In our main loop, if the flag is set, then we proceed to reset the flag and read the new data values. Then the data is processed.

--- Signal processor when data is ready

### 4.3.2. Data Processing

Processing the data requires three steps. The first step is to normalize the data using the normalization matrix. The matrix values are stored in the tilt\_detection.h header file as an array of 12 elements. In order to perform matrix operations on the data, the array is stored within an arm\_matrix\_instance from the CMSIS DSP API. When normalizing the data is stored as a 1x4 matrix and multiplied with the normalization vector as in equation (x). The normalization parameters we used are given in Table 1. After normalizing, the output is passed to the Kalman filter.

Table 1: Normalization Matrix

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| -0.001007704542329 | -0.000023576795574 | -0.000020500331472 |
| -0.000005549672267 | -0.001001988618073 | -0.000000555682904 |
| 0.000001981760320 | -0.000006760475090 | 0.000964570821189 |
| -0.520517014244453 | 0.477262260417352 | -0.440876330953729 |

--- Show calibration data in **Appendix A**

--- Kalman parameters, show Matlab simulation results in **Appendix B**

The second step is to filter the data. We used the Kalman filter taken directly from lab 2. We determined the parameters experimentally as described in section 5.2. For this application, we required the use of three different instances of a Kalman filter state, one for each of the accelerometer values. Using only one Kalman filter would have resulted in incorrect final calculations. Each individual input would have advanced the iteration when all three accelerometer values should be in the same iteration for different states. The filtered values are then passed to tilt angle calculation.

The final step is to perform the calculation. The pitch angle we determined by using equation (x) and the roll angle we determined by using equation (y). However, the result of these values only range from -90 to 90. As a result, we included calculations to determine the quadrant of the angle given the sign of the z acceleration and the sign of the calculated degree.

### 4.3.3. Data Comparison

---

## 4.4. Result Display

### 4.4.1. Visual Feedback

--- Animation to direct user to move in the right direction

### 4.4.2. Display Current Angle

--- Only displaying the beta angle

## 4.5 Continuous Process

--- Continuous process until user presses reset

# 5. Testing and Observation

## 5.1. Accelerometer Calibration

To calibrate our sensor, we performed offline calibration as described in section 3.2. First we collected samples of raw accelerometer values at the six positions as described in section 3.2. Then we averaged the acceleration values and formed the w matrix in accordance with its format as described in section 3.2. Then in Matlab, we solved for equation (4). Taking the output values, we then hardcoded them to an array. The normalization measured the tilt angles within 4 degrees of accuracy.

--- Within 4 degree accuracy

--- Low accuracy, therefore could use lookup table instead

--- Using complex math functions on floating points --- more power hungry

--- Using lookup table --- less accurate --- more memory needed --- less power

## 5.2. Kalman Filter

The Kalman filter initial state parameters we chose were q = 0.025, r = 5, x = k = p = 0. x is the estimated value, and since each acceleration value will be in the range of 0 to 1, we set x to 0. To get the other values of the parameters, we plotted a comparison of filtered values with the raw data with varying parameter values. We held r constant at 5 and increased q from 0.0025 to 2500 as seen in Figures 4 to 11. Just by comparing visually, as the value of q rose, the signal became noisier. The optimal value we found at q = 0.025 and r = 5 (Figure 5). The figures show the comparison for only the X values, but the filters for the Y and Z values gave the same result.

--- Choice of constants

# 6. Conclusion

# Reference

# Appendix A – Calibration Data

Figure 5: Kalman Filter q = 0.0025, r = 5

Figure 6: Kalman Filter q = 0.025, r = 5

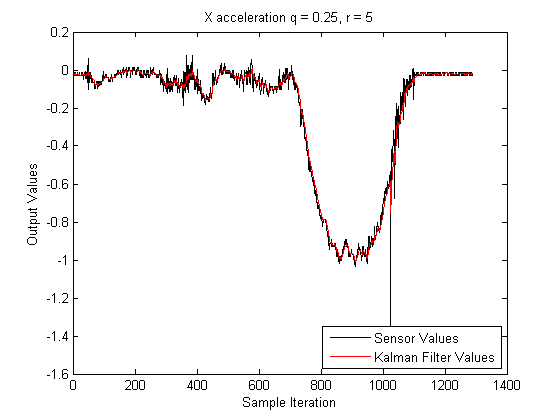


Figure 7: Kalman Filter q = 0.25, r = 5

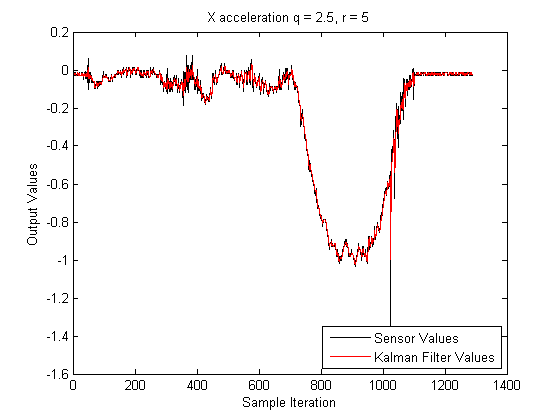


Figure 8: Kalman Filter q = 2.5 r = 5

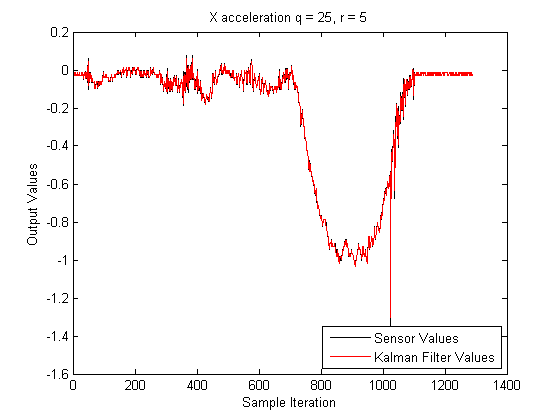


Figure 9: Kalman Filter q = 25, r = 5

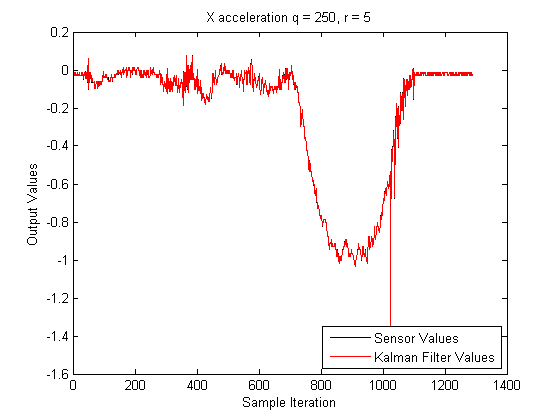


Figure 10: Kalman Filter q = 250, r = 5

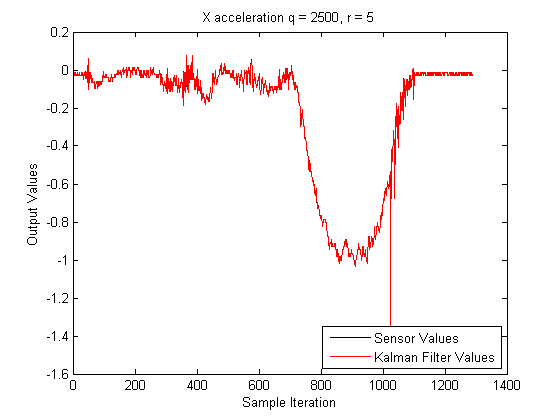


Figure 11: Kalman Filter q = 2500 r = 5