The University of Oklahoma Nielsen Hall SRT

Operator's Manual

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Abstract

The University of Oklahoma's Small Radio Telescope (3m) was sponsored by Dr. John Tobin as an outreach and educational tool for the Norman Community. The use of the telescope helps to aid in expanding one's knowledge of radio astronomy, engineering principles, and proper research methods. The kit was implemented off of MIT Haystack's SRT, fabricated through RF Ham Design, constructed by a team of students and professors[1], and the code was provided by MIT Haystack under the MIT Public License.

Information specifically regarding the MIT Haystack Observatory can be found at `http://www.haystack.mit.edu/edu/undergrad/srt/index.html`

Additional Information

The website[2] for this file contains:

- A link to the downloadable PDF and LaTeX code.

- The SRT source code.

- Useful scripts for observing and parsing the data

Acknowledgements

- Hardware design, development of software, and instructions: (`www.haystack.mit.edu/edu/undergrad/srt/`)

- Fabrication of the SRT parts: (`https://www.rfhamdesign.com`)

- Parse code and instructions: (`https://github.com/BenningtonCS/Telescope-2014/wiki`)

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[1] Prof: John Tobin; Grad students: Paul Canton, Hyunseop Choi, Nickalas Reynolds, Rajeeb Sharma, G-PSI; Undergrad Students: Jacob Gill, Lisa Patel, and Brian Stephensen; Staff: Barry Bergeron, Andy Feldt, Debi Schoenberger, John Snellings, Adrienne Wade, and Joel Young

[2] `https://github.com/OUsrt/srtn.git`

Contents

Chapter 1

Condensed Procedures

This list of procedures is extremely condensed and it is expected you are fairly experienced with operating the telescope before using these. If you are unsure of something, ask.

Parameters
1) Edit CALMODE in srt.cat file
2) CALMODE 0 - used for yfactor solving. Point t cold sky, cal, place absorber, get tsys and tcal
3) CALMODE 2 - only does bandpass correction, okay if no absorber or tree
4) CALMODE 3 - if stow looks at absorber like trees.
4) Verify target frequency and radial velocity
5) If velocity is >50km/s, use radvel.py to adjust the frequency if needed.
5) **Keep frequency in range 1410-1470MHz unless you have cleared it with Tobin**.
Higher frequencies have a different instruction set and improper use can fry the receiver.

Pointing
1) Slew to very bright source (sun)
2) Use npoints to correct and input offset

Simple Cal (with absorber)
1) Slew to cold sky
2) hit cal on calmode 20
3) place absorber
4) should have flat bandpass

Simple Cal (without absorber)
1) Stow
2) hit cal on calmode 2
4) should have flat bandpass

Source
1) Reopen srtn (if you modified the frequency)
2) Slew to target and record
3) Hit the beamsw (Only for certain faint faint signals)
4) Wait for at least ∼45 iterations (counter in bottom spectrum window)
5) re-hit beamsw to turn it off/ hit record to stop recording
6) This target is finished

End of Observation
1) Always stow at end of the observation
2) Exit the SRTN program, do **NOT** turn off the computer
3) Turn off the Controller, Receiver, and Tuner
4) Move data files to appropriate directories

Chapter 2

Overview

The capabilities of the SRT are as follow:

- Frequency Adjustments from 1420MHz

- Spectral Line Gathering

- Continuum

- Drift Scans

- Point Maps

Aperture	3.0 meters
Frequency Range	$1420 - 1470$ MHz
Pointing Accuracy	0.2 Degree
Beam Width[1]	4.92 Degrees
wind speed	120 km/h

Chapter 3

SRT Server Computer

First know that the server computer, the SRTN software, and all of the following commands are assuming you are on a Linux OS. The SRTN software and the VNC software are available for other OS architectures but are not covered in the scope of this Manual. You will also have to download and install the VNC software[1].

Understand that access to the telescope is a privilege that is administered by Dr. Tobin[2] and any abuse of the system will result in that access being revoked.

The Nielsen Hall SRT is controlled through a network locked, local server. This server does not follow the standard authentication protocol followed by the University nor the department. In order to gain access to the telescope. You will have to populate and send your ssh public keys to Dr. Tobin. Follow these commands to do this:

```
1  # First verify you have ssh keys generated, or generate them
2  ~$ ls ~/.ssh/
3  # There should be a file named id_rsa.pub. If there is not a directory or not this file then use this
        command
4  ~$ ssh−keygen
5  # specify the path to download, typically in /home/username/.ssh/
6  # type in a password to use to unlock the file.
7  ~$ cp ~/.ssh/id_rsa.pub ~/id_rsa_NAME.pub # copy the file to your home directory with your name
```

Now email this file to Dr. Tobin and wait until he confirms that he has added your public key to the server computer. Once you have access you can now login to the telescope computer. Please understand how the SRTN software works **before** controlling the telescope. It is also suggested to have a senior member of the group assist in the first run. To login to the computer use these commands:

```
1  ~$ vncviewer −Shared −ViewOnly −via jjtobin@reber.nhn.ou.edu reber:1 # Viewing the telescope
2  ~$ vncviewer −Shared −via jjtobin@reber.nhn.ou.edu reber:1 # Controlling the telescope
```

Since you are just starting out, use the command with the `-ViewOnly` flag just to see what the server looks like.

You will be prompted for a VNC server password which is `SRT1420MHz` .

To walk you through the commands: VNC is the program used that uses ssh protocol to provide a graphical interface between two computers, `vncviewer` is the command to view an existing VNC server on a host computer, `-Shared` allows multiple users to access the server at once, `-ViewOnly` does not send keyboard or mouse controls to the hosting server, `-via` specifies to route to the domain and specific server, `jjtobin@reber.ou.edu` is the domain under which the server presides, `reber:1` designates the computer and server window. There are probably a few VNC servers operating on the server computer at one time and can be listed with `vncserver -list` . However, unless you are not the one that created those windows, please do not close them as they might be in use.

"With power comes great responsibility"– Uncle Ben

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[1] https://tigervnc.org
[2] jjtobin@ou.edu

Chapter 4

SRT Software

Do not change the code of the SRT software on the SRT controller computer until you have thoroughly tested the code and passed it by the senior antenna operator.

4.1 Commands

For extended help on any commands, within the terminal window, you can type man [COMMAND] e.g. man tar and it will display the internal manual for the given command, tar in this case.

```
1  cd # changes directory to home directory ~/ or if given input e.g.
2  cd ~/Downloads/ # will move to Downloads directory in home
3  ls # will list all of the files in the current director
4  mv /path/file1 /path/file2 # will move file1 to file2
5  mkdir srt # makes a new directory called srt, flag -p will copy directory structure
6  tar # (un)compression algorithm, x is uncompress, z is gunzip format, v is verbose, f specifies file
```

4.2 GitHub

4.2.1 Quick Command Breakdown

This is meant for just a quick overview of GitHub commands. Please understand the commands before using them.

```
1  new repository
2  ->git init :: initialize local repository inside the repository
3  ->git status :: list git files in current directory, tracked and untracked
4  ->git log :: shows a log of all new commits
5
6  new file
7  ->git add $1 :: $1 is name of file, adds the file to the staging environment. Think like indexing
8  ->git commit -m $1 :: $1 is the comment for the commit. Should be related to the commit.
9
10 new branches
11 ->git checkout -b $1 :: $1 is new branch name. Branching allows working on other projects without
        affecting master
12 ->git branch :: lists known branches and * tells which branch you are in
13 ->git checkout branch :: moves you to the branch defined
14
15 online
16 ->git remote add(rm) origin $1 :: $1 is website name. add will add $1 to the origin variable while rm
        will remove the variable
17 ->git push -u origin branch :: pushes the local branch repo to the origin branch repo
18 ->git revert $1 :: $1 is the hash code number. Command is used to revert the branch
19 ->git pull origin branch :: pulls the changes in the branch to your local. Prefer to use fetch and
        merge
20 ->git fetch origin :: remotely stages origin to merge locally
21 ->git merge origin/branch :: remotely merges the branch from origin to your current branch
22 ->git request-pull v1.0 origin master :: initiate a pull request upstream from your master branch to
        their master branch
```

4.2.2 Proper Usage

To properly use GitHub in collaboration with other colleagues please follow this guide.

To implement changes to the repository, you will have to make an account and request access online. Once this is finished, you will not have to check the website again. If you do not already have a directory you wish to use to contribute, make a directory now. You can use a pre-existing directory. Once in this directory, run the command `git init` to initialize the current directory.

To pull changes from the website, you first have to set the variable `origin` using command `git remote add origin $1` and input the name of the repository[1]. Then use `git fetch origin` to remotely pull the most updated, official code from the GitHub page. You then merge the most up to date version into your local master with `git merge origin/master`.

You can then create local branches to work and merge projects using `git checkout -b $1` to create the branch and `git checkout $1` to move to a branch. The command `git branch` will tell you the list of current branches within the initialize directory you are in. Make the changes you wish to make and then issue the index command `git add $1`. This prepares the file for the commit stage. Once you are satisfied with all of the indexed files, commit the changes using `git commit -m "$1"` where $1 in this case is a short comment on what this change is.

Once committed push the changes to the online repository with `git push -u origin branch`. If an error comes up regarding unable to push, probably one of two things happened: incorrect spelling of command/branch or someone else has since updated the branch. Like I said, you will be unable to push changes to the GitHub master branch so push changes to another branch and initiate a pull request.

4.3   Setup

First download the source code for the SRT either by downloading directly from the GitHub[2] or by using the command on line 3.

```
1  ~$ mkdir −p ~/srt/scripts/
2  ~$ cd ~/srt/
3  ~/srt$ git clone https://github.com/OUsrt/srtn.git # can ignore this line if you directly downloaded
4  ~/srt$ cp −r ./srtn/software/srtnver5_reber ./
5  ~/srt$ cd srt_ver5
6  ~/srt/srt_ver5$ ls
```

You should now be in the SRT main code directory and the contents should be on your screen. The code should be able to run immediately or recompiled as necessary.

4.4   Compiling

If there are issues with the C compiler not able to locate certain libraries, try searching for solutions to that problem or send me an email[3]. There should be a file called srtnmake within the directory. This is the main compiler file that will gather the other C files and compile them in the correct order. When you make changes to the other files within the directory (other than the srt.cat file) you will have to recompile the program so it can implement the changes.

```
1  ~/srt/srt_ver5$ ./srtnmake
```

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[1] In this case, the repository is `https://github.com/OUsrt/srtn.git`
[2] `https://github.com/OUsrt/srtn.git`
[3] `nickreynolds@ou.edu`

You will probably get a lot of warnings, this is fine and normal errors can look like this:

```
main.c: In function 'main':
main.c:62:12: warning: variable 'secstart' set but not used [-Wunused-but-set-variable]
main.c:60:12: warning: variable 'ii' set but not used [-Wunused-but-set-variable]
main.c:59:14: warning: variable 'color' set but not used [-Wunused-but-set-variable]
main.c: In function 'gauss':
main.c:555:16: warning: variable 'j' set but not used [-Wunused-but-set-variable]
vspectra_four.c: In function 'vspectra':
vspectra_four.c:33:28: warning: variable 'min' set but not used [-Wunused-but-set-variable]
vspectra_four.c:33:12: warning: variable 'avsig' set but not used [-Wunused-but-set-variable]
vspectra_four.c:31:43: warning: variable 'r' set but not used [-Wunused-but-set-variable]
disp.c: In function 'clearpaint':
disp.c:440:18: warning: variable 'update_rect' set but not used [-Wunused-but-set-variable]
outfile.c: In function 'outfile':
outfile.c:16:16: warning: variable 'n' set but not used [-Wunused-but-set-variable]
sport.c: In function 'rot2':
sport.c:402:25: warning: variable 'i' set but not used [-Wunused-but-set-variable]
sport.c:402:17: warning: variable 'status' set but not used [-Wunused-but-set-variable]
sport.c:408:15: warning: ignoring return value of 'system', declared with attribute warn_unused_result
        [-Wunused-result]
cal.c: In function 'cal':
cal.c:18:24: warning: variable 'ixe' set but not used [-Wunused-but-set-variable]
srthelp.c: In function 'display_help':
srthelp.c:39:14: warning: variable 'color' set but not used [-Wunused-but-set-variable]
srthelp.c: In function 'load_help':
srthelp.c:254:10: warning: ignoring return value of 'fgets', declared with attribute
        warn_unused_result [-Wunused-result]
srthelp.c:258:14: warning: ignoring return value of 'fgets', declared with attribute
        warn_unused_result [-Wunused-result]
velspec.c: In function 'velspec':
velspec.c:19:14: warning: variable 'color' set but not used [-Wunused-but-set-variable]
velspec.c: In function 'vplot':
velspec.c:162:15: warning: variable 'jmax' set but not used [-Wunused-but-set-variable]
librtlsdr.c: In function 'rtlsdr_open':
librtlsdr.c:1267:13: warning: variable 'rt' set but not used [-Wunused-but-set-variable]
tuner_r820t.c: In function 'R828_RfGainMode':
tuner_r820t.c:2859:11: warning: variable 'LnaGain' set but not used [-Wunused-but-set-variable]
tuner_r820t.c:2858:11: warning: variable 'MixerGain' set but not used [-Wunused-but-set-variable]
```

Now, within the same directory should be a file called `srtn`. This is the file that will run the GUI window for the telescope. To run it, simply type

```
~/srt/srt_ver5$ ./srtn
```

and a GUI window should pop up that looks like this:

If you do not have both the receiver dongle and the telescope controller plugged into the computer, the program will fail to initialize. In order to get around this, for testing purposes, go into the `srt.cat` file and edit the lines from

```
*SIMULATE ANTENNA --> SIMULATE ANTENNA
*SIMULATE RECEIVER --> SIMULATE RECEIVER
```

This will allow you to open the program and test certain commands before committing commands to the telescope untested.

4.5 Files

Help on the various C code files in the source directory.

60-mcc.rules: udev rules that allows PCI, HID devices, and libusb to work with non-root users

acml.h: allows calling ACML routines via their C or FORTRAN interfaces

amdfft.c: fast-fourier transform adaptation software

calc.c: calibration code

cat.c: parses the srt.cat file

cmd.txt: the default file for the commands you want srtn to use

cmdfl.c: the code to interpret and execute cmd.txt

d1cons.h: declares values used in code

d1glob.h: globally declared variables for the code

d1proto.h: also declares variables for code

d1typ.h: declares a new struct

disp.c: code for the GUI

doindent2: code for parsing whitespace

fftw2.c: fast-fourier transform

fftw3.c: fast-fourier transform

four.c: Handling the different coordinates to angles conversion

geom.c: for parsing the spherical geometries

hproto.h: help menu functions

librtlsdr.c: self consistent library for the dongle

main.c: the main C file for calling and compile the code

map.c: Deals with the GUI map controls and drawing.

outfile.c: writes the data to a file

PCI-DAS4020-12.1.21.tgz: library for PCI boards

PCI-DAS4020.h: functions for the PCI boards

plot.c: plotting the spectra in the GUI

README: basic readme file

rtk-sdr.rules: udev rules to allow external rtl-sdr devices to work with non-root users

rtl-sdr_export.h: packing the librtlsdr

rtlsdr-i2c.h: declaring variables from librtlsdr

sport.c: controls the antenna movement

srt.cat: the main config file

srt.hlp: the help file in the gui

srthelp.c: displays the Help menu in the GUI and compiles the srt.hlp file

srtn: the program

srtnmake: used to compile the program

time.c: important for keeping track of timing

tuner_r820t.c: the driver for the tuner

tuner_r820t.h: declare variables for the tuner

velspec.c: plots the spectrum in the gui

vspectra.c: inputs the data from the dongle

vspectra_fftw.c: handles the data from the dongle

vspectra_four.c: handles the data from the dongle

vspectra_pci.c: also inputs data compatible with PCI boards

vspectra_pci_fftw.c: handles the data from the dongle, compatible with PCI boards

4.6   Command Files

Adapted from Bennington[4]

It is suggested to use input command files as this will add speed the entry of SRT commands as well as reduce command entry mistakes. By default the srtn software provides the syntax for setting up a cmd file if you mouse over the Rcmdfl button in the srtn software. The command file is ASCII formatted and can: accept instruction lines (active lines), blank lines (ignored), comment lines (begins with *, ignored), and comment sections (begins with /, ignored).

Instruction line: Must start with a time mark (either UT or LST) or a colon.

> For Example:
> > 2005:148:00:00:00 (yyyy:ddd:hh:mm:ss (UT))
> > 23:00:00 06:50:00 ra/dec
> > LST:06:00:00 (LST:hh:mm:ss)
> > :120 azel 120 30 (sss azel position)

Rules:
: cmd /execute the command and proceed to the next line
:120 cmd /execute the command and wait 120 seconds, taking data, before proceeding to the next line in the schedule
:120 /wait 120 seconds, taking data, before proceeding to the next line. This is a convenient way of increasing the radiometer integration to more than one scan.

*Note: There is NO space allowed between the colon and a time "wait" command

LST:06:00:00 /wait until LST 06:00:00, taking data, before proceeding to the next line
2005:148:00:00:00 /wait until UT= yyyy:ddd:hh:mm:ss, before proceeding to the next line

Example Set: Command the SRT to take 1420.4 MHz hydrogen spectra in 5 degree spacing along a section of the galactic equator. The user must start data recording, unstow the telescope, calibrate the receiver, set the observing frequency center and frequency scan and then repeat the spectral line observations for ten points along the equator. Note: Allow a space between the colon and the command.

: record rotation.rad /(Start data recording of file rotation.rad)
: galactic 206 20 /(unstow and move to calibration position)
: freq 1419 /(Off-hydrogen calibration frequency)
: calibrate
: freq 1420.4 4 /(Set center frequency mode 4)
: galactic 205 0 /(Move to first data point)
: galactic 210 0 /(Next point)
: galactic 215 0
: galactic 220 0
: galactic 225 0
: freq 1419 /(Off-hydrogen calibration frequency)
: galactic 225 20 /(Calibration point)
: calibrate
: freq 1420.4 4 /(Set center frequency mode 4)
: galactic 230 0 /(Move to sixth data point)
: galactic 235 0 /(Next point)
: galactic 240 0
: galactic 245 0
: galactic 250 0
: roff /(End data recording)

If this input command file were named galactic.cmd, the user could initiate this observation by clicking in the command text box: galactic.cmd The SRT will read each line in turn and report the current line read as green text in the message board area. If, for example, the start time was 1400 Universal Time on March 15, 2002; and no output file name was entered, the default OUTPUT file would automatically be written and labeled 0214814.rad. Where the file label is: "yyddhh.rad"

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[4]https://github.com/BenningtonCS/Telescope-2014/wiki

4.7 Example Procedure

Adapted from Bennington[5].
Calibrate the telescope:

First thing you will have to do before any observing will be to calibrate the telescope.

Your intended source will determine the calibration procedure and the subsequent method of observing. Some sources have to use "beamsw" others cannot use this method.

For observing the Milk Way HI and for doing the sun radio profile do not use "beamsw" as this will corrupt your spectra. To observe the HI you will have to adjust the frequency. To observe the sun the beam width of the SRT will have to be adjusted to offset further than the 5 degrees currently set. This can be done in the srt.cat file

Beam switching is used for faint sources like Cas A, Cygnus A, the Moon. M33 and Andromeda can use the beam switching method but it is currently untested if this will yield good results.

Generally you will not have to adjust the frequency unless doing continuum measures (1413MHz is clean of RFI) or source is near another bright radio source

For observing Cas A, you're going to need to perform the "advanced" calibration procedure.

Make sure that your center frequency is set to something that is OFF THE H1 LINE, 1415.00 MHz works well. Your center frequency must be off the H1 line because Cas A lies pretty much right in the galactic plane, so any H1 emissions would muddy up the Cas A signal.

Refer to the calibration page for details on how to carry out the advanced calibration.

Take note of your new Tsys and you're ready to observe!

Observing Cas A:

Once the telescope is calibrated, slew over to Cas A.

Hit record.

Hit the "beamsw" button on the top bar of buttons in SRTN. This will start the beamswitching procedure, which takes the telescope on and off Cas A by a beamwidth on either side. This technique is used to tease out faint signals.

Wait till at least 40-45 beamswitches pass. If this is your only source then observe for as long as possible. There is a counter in the average spectrum (bottom spectrum) window for you to keep track of.

Hit "beamsw" again to turn the beamswitching off.

Hit record again to stop recording.

Stow the telescope and close SRTN (unless of course you aren't done looking at stuff!).

This method is of course not the template to use for all sources and the methodologies will depend on current conditions, type of source, strength of source, etc.

It is also suggested to leave enough time to take multiple measurements sets for each source.

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[5]`https://github.com/BenningtonCS/Telescope-2014/wiki`

Chapter 5

Data Reduction

5.1 Parsing the Data Files

Adapted from Bennington[1].

Parsing and Plotting the Spectra.

- Copy the data from the server computer to your personal computer to run the reduction sequence.

- The command `scp /file/to/move/ /destination/` will help.

- Make sure you acquire the parsing code[2] in order the parse the data.

- The metadata parser is called meta_parse.py. The meta_parse script lists columns of data in the order: Date, obsn, az, el, center freq, Tsys, Tant, vlsr, galactic latitude, galactic longitude, source, fstart, fstop, spacing, bw, fbw, nfreq, nsam, npoint, integ, sigma, bsw.

- The spectrum parser is called spectrum_parse.py. The spectrum_parse script lists each frequency in the spectrum in the first column, and then the power values associated with each frequency in each subsequent columns

- The rotation curve parser is called rot_curve_spec_parse.py. The rot_curve_spec_parse script usage is the same as the previous two programs. The printing of the data is a little different, however. The first column prints the frequency channels present in the spectrum like the other parser, but then prints the velocities associated with the red/blueshift of the frequencies away from the 1420.406 MHz center frequency in the second column. The next column is the average spectrum for glon 0, then glon 10, then glon 20, and so on until glon 90. It averages all spectra taken at a single point in the galactic plane to produce an average spectrum for that point.

- Another parser is called hi_spec_parse.py. It prints the column numbers of the last spectrum taken before the telescope moved to the next point. The velocities associated with frequencies red/blueshifted from the center freq. of 1420.406 MHz are also calculated.

- To run the files, use `~$ python meta_parse.py test_data.rad -o meta_output.txt`. You might have to specify a different python version. These should work with python2.7, it is untested for python3+.

- Once you have your spectra parsed out and written to a new file, you can start to plot them all.

- First, open up the original output file you made. This is sort of tedious but you're going to need to look at the spectra (large blocks of numbers) to see which ones if any pop out at you. Generally if the numbers that make up a certain spectra are larger than the numbers of the other spectra, those are the ones you're looking for.

- Alternatively, look for the spectra that were taken at the Az/El of the source. You'll be able to tell because the spectra will always come back to a certain central Az/El and then go off to one side azimuthally.

- Count how many spectra into the file your spectrum of choice is - this number plus 1 is going to be the column number of your spectrum in the parsed file. Hold on to this number -- you will need it when plotting.

- Now that you've picked out the spectra you want to plot (it is a good idea to plot off-source spectra for comparison), you can actually plot the spectra..

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[1]`https://github.com/BenningtonCS/Telescope-2014/wiki`
[2]`https://github.com/OUsrt/srtn.git`

5.2   Gnuplot

Adapted from Bennington[3].

Understanding, Interpreting, and changing the units of your plots into something useful.

- So the y-axis in your plot will have units of Kelvins. The numbers in the spectrum correspond to the power level measured at a given frequency, and these numbers are given in Kelvins.

- We want to convert Kelvins to Janskys with $kT_a = \frac{S_\nu \times A_{dish}}{2}$, T_a is Antenna temperature. S_{nu} is spectra flux at a certain frequency. A_{dish}, k is Boltzmann's constant. The value you get at this point will be in J/s/m^2/Hz, and 1 Jansky $= 1 \times 10^{26}$, so you'll need to multiply the value you just got by 1×10^{26}, and then you'll have your spectral flux density in Janskys. Now you can compare to established continuous spectra.

5.3   Formulas

$$\text{Diameter}=3 \text{ m}$$
$$\text{Frequency}=1.420401 \text{ GHz}$$
$$\text{Speed of Light}=0.299792458 \text{ giga-m/s}$$
$$\lambda=\frac{c}{\nu}$$
$$\text{Beam Width}=\frac{70 \times \lambda}{\text{Diameter}} \text{ degrees} \tag{5.1}$$

#Solving for tsys

1) Follow the Simple Cal procedure

2) Move to blank sky patch and record

3) Average ∼5 power measurements (from terminal). This is P_cold

5) Remove absorber and average 5 power measurements. This is P_hot

6) T_cold ∼3k ...... T_hot is average ambient temperature or thermometer measurement of absorber

7) Run python script tsys.py to find tsys

$$\tag{5.2}$$

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[3]https://github.com/BenningtonCS/Telescope-2014/wiki