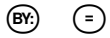
PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN EXPERIMENTAL COMPUTATIONAL SENSING

by

Phillip K. Poon



A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

COLLEGE OF OPTICAL SCIENCES

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2016

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

As members of the Dissertation Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by Phillip K. Poon titled Practical Considerations in Experimental Computational Sensing and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Date: 12 December 2016
Amit Ashok

Date: 12 December 2016
Rongguang Liang

Date: 12 December 2016
Michael E. Gehm

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

Date: 12 December 2016
Dissertation Director: Amit Ashok

STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

This dissertation has been submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for an advanced degree at the University of Arizona and is deposited in the University Library to be made available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

SIGNED: Phillip K. Poon

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Graduate school is an arduous and enlightening experience. It is not difficult by design but by nature it forces one into a state of mind which embraces the edge of knowledge and trek into the unknown. I was fortunate to have many guides who showed me the path, even when there were times when I wandered off to get my bearings. Along the way I encountered many people who not only helped me with the journey but bestowed kindness and friendship, asking for nothing in return.

My main guide along the journey was Professor Michael Gehm. I first met him when I took a graduate level Linear Algebra course which I found particularly challenging. I often went to his office hours asking for help and his ability to be patient and explain concepts from different perspectives is a gift few teachers have. As an advisor, I would like to thank him for all of the help and guidance he has given me over the years. His generosity for funding my graduate studies as well trips to conferences is appreciated. He believed in me more than I believed in myself. I consider him not only as a mentor but as a father figure. If I can become half the scientist that he is, I would consider that a successful career.

I especially want to thank Professor Esteban Vera, who I first met as a postdoctoral researcher in the Laboratory for Engineering Non-Traditional Sensors (LENS) and supervised me for the majority of my graduate studies. Much of the work and results in this disseration is due to his guidance. Even after he started his professorship in Chile, he was willing to review my data and suggest different methods of analysis. Professor Vera is directly responsible for much of my training as an experimentalist. I consider Professor Vera as an older brother who was always there to protect me from the pitfalls of the graduate school journey.

I also thank Doctor Dathon Golish. His approach to work and life was a calming effect in often stressful times. He made major contributions to the Adaptive Feature Specific Spectral Imaging-Classifier (AFSSI-C) and provided valuable feedback on various research projects and conference presentations.

Thank you Professor Mark Neifeld and Professor Amit Ashok for being my advisor and supervisor during my first year as a PhD student. They were the first to introduce me to many of the techniques and subjects related to computational sensing. They taught me fundamental concepts in optics, statistical signal processing and programming. Many of the results in this dissertation would not have been possible without their teachings.

I've also had many other supervisors along the way whose effort must also be acknowledged: My undergraduate advisor at San Diego State University, Professor Matthew Anderson. Doctor John Crane, who was my supervisor during my internship at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Professor Joseph Eberly and Professor Gary Wicks who were my advisors at the Institute of Optics.

I would like to formally express gratitude to a number of exceptional teachers throughout my life. Professor Tom Milster who taught Diffraction and Interference and allowed me to be a teaching assistant for that course. Professor Masud Mansuripur, whose course in Electromagnetic Waves was the most elegant and well taught version of the classical nature of light that I have ever had the pleasure to

experience. Professor Jeff Davis, who first ignited my passion for optics while I was an undergraduate physics student at San Diego State University.

I also want to thank several faculty members who committed time from their busy schedules to help with several milestones of my graduate school experience. Special thanks to Professor Julie Bentley, Doctor James Oliver, and Professor Richard Morris who wrote letters of recommendation for me. Appreciation goes to Professor Tom Milster, Professor Harrison Barrett, Professor Russell Chipman, and Professor John Greivenkamp who formed my oral comprehensive exam committee. Thank you to Professor Rongguang Liang who served on my doctoral dissertation committee.

I've had the good fortune to be exposed to amazing groupmates as part of the LENS. David Coccarelli invited our family to spend our first Thanksgiving in North Carolina with him and we had many discussions about college basketball and life. Matthew Dunlop-Gray designed and constructed the AFSSI-C which is the foundation for much the work in this disseration. Tariq Osman constructed the Static Computational Optical Undersampled Tracker (SCOUT) which is also a major part of this dissertation. Alyssa Jenkins whose combination of sense of humor and intelligence is unmatched. Thank you to Qian Gong, Kevin Kelly, Adriana DeRoos, David Landry, Xiaohan Li, and Dineshbabu Dinakarababu for your friendship. Finally, I consider Wei-Ren Ng as one of my best friends and as a brother. Our time in the LENS group was marked by many late nights spent working in the lab and office. He was generous in sharing his knowledge and gave me the advice that I often did not want to hear but was true.

I would like to thank several members of the Duke Imaging and Spectroscopy Program (DISP) laboratory for their friendship: Patrick Llull, Mehadi Hassan, and Evan Chen. Tsung Han Tsai was not only a colleague but his work on computational polarimetry and spectroscopy using an Liquid Crystal on Silicon (LCOS) Spatial Light Modulator (SLM) was the inspiration which directly lead my idea of using the same architecture for computational spectral unmixing.

Other graduate students, colleagues, and faculty must also be thanked, for at one time or another they all helped me: Basel Salahieh, Vicha Treeaporn, John Hughes, Steve Feller, Myungjun Lee, Sarmad H. Albanna, Professor Lars Furenlid, Doctor Joseph Dagher, Professor Daniel Marks, Professor Janick Roland-Thompson, Mary Pope, Mark Rodriguez, and Amanda Ferris.

Appreciation goes to the all the staff and faculty at the College of Optical Sciences at the University of Arizona. It is one of the most friendly and well run academic departments I have ever had the fortune to be a part of. I hope my career will reflect well upon the college.

Finally, I would like to thank my closest friends that I've met throughout the years. They often provided much needed respites during my journey—Christopher MacGahan, Ricky Gibson, Krista MacGahan, Kristi Behnke, Michael Gehl, Carlos Montances, Matthew Reaves, Vijay Parachuru, Eric Vasquez. Thank you for letting me into your lives and being part of mine.

Last but not least, to my family.

DEDICATION

For my wife. We moved from city to city. You stuck with me through the highs and lows. You cooked dinner for me when I came home from a long day. You did the chores so I could concentrate on research. You acted as both mother and father to our son while I wrote. You believed in me even when I did not. You sacrificed your dreams and goals so I could accomplish mine.

You're the real Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

Implementing computational optical sensors often comes with various issues that many traditional sensors may not encounter.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This chapter introduces the reader to the concept of isomorphic and computational sensing and provides the motivation for the need to address the practical issues in experimental computational sensing.

Isomorphic sensing is the concept that a sensor measurements resemble the signal of interest. Isomorhic sensing is often called traditional sensing. In isomorphic sensing the the analog hardware, ADC, and processing algorithms are all seperate components, see Figure 1.1. Computational sensing is the concept that a joint design of the sensor hardware, often though coding of the analog signal combined with task-specific algorithms can exceed the performance of an isomorphic sensor [1]. While isomorphic sensors can provide flexible sensing in multiple applications. A computational sensor's joint design, which considers both the architecture of the sensor, coding of the analog signal and often geared towards a specific task naturally lends to performance increases. Throughout this chapter and the rest of this dissertation we will provide many examples that highlight the differences between computational and isomorphic sensing.

Rather than a rigorous discussion, this chapter will discuss some of the major developments and concepts in the field of computational sensing on an intuitive level. This will familiarize the reader with important terminology and techniques common in the field of computational sensing. The projects presented in this dissertation are a natural evolution of these developments. A rigorous discussion of the concepts is given in chapter 2. This chapter will also discuss some of the challenges I and many other experimentalists and engineers have faced when developing computational sensing prototypes. Then this chapter will close with a brief look ahead to the rest of the dissertation.

1.1 Isomorphic Sensing

In Greek, the word isomorphic loosely translates to equal in form. Traditional sensors perform isomorphic sensing. In the context of this dissertation, an isomorphic sensor is any sensor which attempts to produce an output signal that resembles the

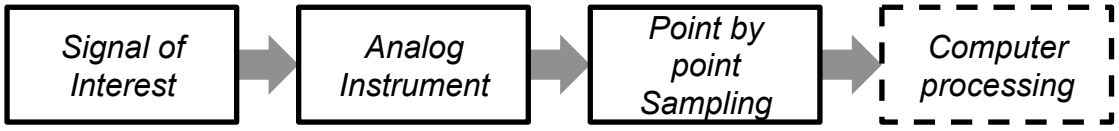

Figure 1.1: A systems view of a traditional sensing scheme. The signal-of-interest is incident upon the analog instrument. The analog instrument forms an isomorphism of the signal which is then periodically sampled point-by-point through an ADC device. Once the signal is in digital form, post-processing algorithms are often used to perform various tasks such as noise reduction, detection, and classification. Notice that the analog instrument, sampling scheme, and processing are all seperated.

signal-of-interest. In this paradigm, the analog instrument, sampling scheme, and post-processing algorithms are seperated.

We will discuss two important examples of isomorphic sensors: the photographic camera and the optical spectrometer (which I will just call a spectrometer from now on, even though there are many instruments called spectromers that not concerned with optical spectra). These two sensors have had major roles throughout the history of optics and in the physical sciences so it is natural that they have also been the main focus of computational sensing. Therefore it is important we first understand the isomorphic version of these sensors.

In the camera, the signal-of-interest is the object that is being photographed. This can be anything that is scattering or emitting light, a person, a tree or a distant group of stars. The analog instrument consists of the lens which is designed and fabricated to produce an image that is looks like the object at the focal-plane array (FPA). The more that the image resembles the object the better the optics. The FPA then samples and quantizes the image and produces a digital representation of the object, measurement data. The measurement data is often is post-processed to perform such tasks as noise removal or to locate the object.

There are two major components in the camera which determine how well it performs: the optics and the FPA. Ideally, the optics (the analog instrument in this case) will produce a point spread function (PSF) which is infinitely small in diameter. For example, in a task such as the detection of a star from several neighboring stars in the night sky, if the PSF is much larger than the center to center seperation of the two stars in the optical image, it will be quite difficult to detect. A careful reader will note that this is the same argument used by Lord Raleigh in proposing his

resolution criterion [2]. Even if the PSF is small enough, the FPA must sample at a fine enough pixel-to-pixel spacing, called the *pixel pitch*, to accurately reproduce the intensity variations at the scale which is pertinant to the task. Intuitively, this makes sense because if the image of both stars and the decreased intensity which signifies a certain amount of seperation between the two stars is imaged onto a single pixel, the one cannot ever hope to be able to accurately the detect the star without some other prior or side information. Shannon, Nyquist, Wittaker and others established the theory for determining what the pixel spacing must be in order to properly sample the analog signal without loosing any information [3, 4, 5].

In the spectrometer, the signal of interest is the spectrum of the object. The optics are designed to take the incoming light and seperate various wavelength components. The part of the spectrometer which is used to physically isolate the wavelengths is called a *spectrograph*. The result is a spectral intensity as a function of position at the FPA. The FPA and post-processing algorithms are used in the same manner as the photographic camera, which is to sample the optical spectrum creating digital version of it and to perform various tasks on the measurement data. To simplify our discussion, we will concentrate on the slit spectrometer, which spectrum at a single point on the object.

In the spectrometer, one of the important performance metrics is *spectral resolution* which we denote $\delta\lambda$. The spectral resolution is the smallest difference in wavelength the instrument can discern. As in the camera, the optical components plays a major role in determining the spectral resolution. Large spectral resolutions can degrade the spectrometers ability to discern important parts of the spectrum we are testing. Similarly with the camera, the FPA must have a pixel pitch which is small enough in order to correctly sample the variations in the spectrum.

In both the camera and spectrometer, at each exposure, the readout from the FPA produces a single number per pixel. The point-by-point sampling of the signal is one of both a strength of isomorphic sensing but is also a source of weakness.

The strength comes from the straightforward and intuitive architecture of the isomorphic sensor. Each subsystem: the optics, the FPA, and the post-processing can be designed and constructed seperately so long as they meet their individual specifications. As long as the Signal-To-Noise Ratio (SNR) is sufficient and the sampling rate is high enough we are garuenteed to recover the signal.

One of the weaknessess of the isomorphic approach however is the the ability to measure low SNR signals. Because the image is sampled in a completely parallel

fashion at each exposure, each pixel contributes a certain amount of noise (which is independent of the signal strength). If the noise dominates, the measurement fidelity decreases often forcing the operator to incease the exposure time. For weak signals the exposure time can become prohibitive and for temporally dynamic signals this may lead to a loss of resolution.

It would be easy to assume that with the recent revolution in machine learning and statistical signal processing combined with the dramatic increase in computing power that we could simply post-process poor measurments and obtain useful data. However, this isn't possible due to the an important theorem in information theory called the data processing inequality [6]. In layman's term it means "garbage in, garbage out".

Another weakness of isomorhic sensing is that the seperation of the analog instrument, the sampling scheme, and the data processing algorithms lead to increased Size, Weight and Power-Cost (SWAP-C). As we mentioned in the camera, the optics must be designed to produce a small PSF. For demanding applications, the optical design and fabrication can be the most expensive component of the sensor. While FPA prices in the visible have fallen recently, FPAs in certain parts of the electromagnetic spectrum can be quite expensive or non-existant [7].

In many cases, the signal is redundant and high resolution sampling becomes a waste of resources and data storage. A good example is in photography where often the post-processing takes digital image and applies a compression algorithm which looks for patterns in the signal and reduces the file size, discard much of the sample data [8].

The isomorphic sensor has served humanity well, however with all the weakness that have been discuss I will now begin to discuss some of major techniques that in computational sensing that can be used to address some or all of the issues that I just stated. The first issue is the SNR and how multiplexing can be used to dramatically reduce exposure times over isomorphic instruments.

1.2 Development of Multiplexing in Sensing

1.3 Dissertation Overview

CHAPTER 2

Formalism

This chapter introduces the reader to the more rigorous concepts and mathematical background that will required to fully understand the material presented in the later chapters of this dissertation.

A rigorous discussion of multiplexing and signal-to-noise ratio will be discussed, as well are various coding schemes used in various notable computational sensors as well as the ones in this disseration.

Since the AFSSI-C relies on a variation of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and a Bayesian algorithm for coding design we will discuss some of the fundamental of Bayesian probability and the Log-Likelihood Ratios.

2.1 Multiplexing

2.2 Principal Component Analysis

2.3 Bayesian Rules and Log-Likelihood Ratios

2.4 Compressive Sensing

2.4.1 The Nyquist-Shannon Sampling Theorem

The Nyquist-Shannon Sampling Theorem states one must sample a signal with a sampling rate that is at least twice the maximum frequency of the signal to prevent aliasing [3].

2.4.2 Sparsity, Incoherence, and the Restricted Isometry Property

2.4.3 Inversion

2.4.3.1 L0 and L1 Norm Minimization

2.4.3.2 LASSO and sparsity regularization

Acronyms

ADC analog-to-digital converter. 8, 11, 12

AFSSI-C Adaptive Feature Specific Spectral Imaging-Classifier. 4, 5, 15

DISP Duke Imaging and Spectroscopy Program. 5

FPA focal-plane array. 12–14

LCOS Liquid Crystal on Silicon. 5

LENS Laboratory for Engineering Non-Traditional Sensors. 4, 5

PSF point spread function. 12–14

SCOUT Static Computational Optical Undersampled Tracker. 5

SLM Spatial Light Modulator. 5

SNR Signal-To-Noise Ratio. 13, 14

SWAP-C Size, Weight and Power-Cost. 14

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