Investigation on Quantum Computers

Zaher Mohammed Faruk

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1. Abstract

This project focuses on comparing and evaluating the capabilities of two leading quantum computing platforms: IBM Quantum, which uses superconducting qubits, and Xanadu’s photonic quantum systems, accessed through the Pennylane programming framework (a library in Python) [1]. The primary goal is to investigate their performance across a range of algorithms, focusing on factors such as computational efficiency, accuracy, and error rates.

The study emphasises the contrasting approaches of photonic and superconducting qubit technologies, analysing their effectiveness in terms of scalability, hardware robustness, and algorithmic precision [2]. Additionally, it examines how tools like Pennylane enable seamless programming and simulation, bridging the gap between theoretical quantum concepts and real-world implementation. Through a detailed comparison of outcomes, this work aims to shed light on the current state of quantum computing platforms and their future potential in advancing scientific and industrial applications [3].

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- Xanadu Quantum Technologies: We express our gratitude to Xanadu for granting access to their photonic quantum computing platform and for providing the powerful Pennylane framework. The flexibility and user-friendliness of Pennylane allowed us to efficiently program and simulate quantum systems, while its compatibility with various quantum backends proved invaluable in conducting comparative studies.

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, quantum computing—a field intersecting physics, computer science, mathematics, and engineering—has seen remarkable progress [4]. Diverse quantum technologies lie at the heart of this evolution, each presenting novel solutions to complex computational challenges that classical systems struggle to address. Superconducting qubits and photonic quantum computing stand out as two leading paradigms. IBM Quantum is at the forefront with superconducting qubits, while Xanadu leads in photonic quantum computing. These cutting-edge platforms are expanding the frontiers of computational capability and scalability [2], allowing researchers to delve into previously inaccessible quantum algorithms and applications.

IBM Quantum is notable for its durable superconducting qubit architecture, characterised by high coherence times, accurate gate operations, and an extensive suite of quantum programming tools provided through the Qiskit platform [5]. The IBM Quantum cloud provides access to a wide array of quantum processors, facilitating detailed testing of quantum circuits and enabling users to benchmark performance and investigate novel algorithms [6]. In contrast, Xanadu's photonic quantum systems, available through their Pennylane framework, offer a different approach by leveraging continuous-variable quantum computing [7]. This photonic platform is particularly well-suited for tasks like Gaussian Boson Sampling, which has notable applications in graph theory and machine learning [8].

Our research investigates and compares the performance of IBM Quantum and Xanadu’s photonic quantum systems through practical programming and execution of quantum algorithms. By utilizing Qiskit for IBM Quantum and Pennylane for Xanadu, we explore their respective strengths and limitations in terms of computational efficiency, scalability, and accuracy. This comparative study highlights the distinct hardware architectures, programming paradigms, and error-correction strategies of each system while assessing their practical applications in solving quantum problems.

This work also delves into the growing utility of software frameworks like Pennylane, which bridge theoretical quantum computing concepts with real-world implementations [9]. Pennylane supports hybrid quantum-classical workflows, enabling the smooth execution of quantum algorithms on both photonic and qubit-based systems, thus making it an essential tool for this research. Likewise, Qiskit’s advanced simulator and hardware interfaces provide rigorous testing of quantum programs before deploying them on physical qubits [10].

Ultimately, this study aims to shed light on the current capabilities of IBM Quantum and Xanadu systems, providing a detailed analysis of their respective advantages and challenges. By comparing their performance across a range of computational tasks, we aim to contribute to the broader understanding of quantum computing technologies, offering insights into their potential roles in scientific and industrial applications. This investigation underscores the importance of ongoing innovation and collaboration in advancing quantum computing toward practical, scalable solutions.

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