

Implementation of Nonlinear Control Laws for an Optical Delay Line¹

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Abstract - This paper discusses the implementation of a globally stable nonlinear controller algorithm for the Real-time Interferometer Control System Testbed (RICST) brassboard optical delay line (ODL) developed for the Interferometry Technology Program at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. The control methodology essentially employs loop shaping to implement linear control laws, while utilizing nonlinear elements as means of ameliorating the effects of actuator saturation in its coarse, main, and vernier stages. The linear controllers were implemented as high-order digital filters and were designed using Bode integral techniques to determine the loop shape. The nonlinear techniques encompass the areas of exact linearization, anti-windup control, nonlinear rate limiting, and modal control. Details of the design procedure are given as well as data from the actual mechanism.

Keywords: Nonlinear control, coarse-vernier control, optical delay line, interferometer

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1. INTRODUCTION

An optical interferometer is a device that creates an interference pattern from the light from small, spatially distributed collecting apertures in order to synthesize an image having the resolution of a single large aperture telescope with a diameter equal to the separation distance of the two smaller telescopes. In so doing, it is able to perform various astrometric measurements. The mechanism, which ensures that the light pathlengths from the two sources are adjusted properly in order to produce an interference pattern is the optical delay line.

The brassboard ODL pictured in Figure 1 was designed to take a 3 cm diameter collimated beam of visible starlight and coaxial metrology beams and pass them on to a beam combiner. Light enters the bottom aperture and exits the top

(or vice-versa). The ODL is composed of three actuation stages to accommodate the large dynamic range requirement (1 m stroke with <5 nm stability). The coarse stage is a DC brushless motor with drive electronics that induce the motor to behave as a stepper motor. This motor moves a band that pulls a trolley on preloaded bearings at speeds up to 10 mm/sec. The main stage is a voice coil that actuates the main mirror, which is connected to the trolley by flexures. Finally, vernier stage is provided by a reactivated piezoelectric translator (PZT) mechanism beneath a 1.2 cm secondary mirror and operates over a range of 30 microns.

The control architecture may be viewed as a series of coarse-vernier loop structures. The fine control is done by the PZT. The function of the voice coil is to de-saturate the PZT for commanded strokes larger than the saturation level of the PZT. The same coarse-vernier functionality exists between the voice coil and the motor stage.

The control system performance index is the root mean square error in the delay line pathlength. The principal design objective is to keep the root mean square error below five nanometers. Since disturbances typical for the ODL effect the pathlength error inversely proportional to the square of the frequency, it is necessary to design the control laws to reject these disturbances in proportion to their expected magnitude in the frequency domain.

In addition to the principal design objective, the following characteristics are required or highly desirable:

- system robustness with regard to both parametric uncertainties and unmodeled nonlinear dynamics,
- good output responses to commands of different shapes and amplitudes,
- good transient responses to large amplitude vanishing disturbances that are neither excessively large in amplitude or in duration, and
- Large disturbance/command triggering threshold of these nonlinear phenomena, in order that these nonlinear phenomena happen infrequently.

One important feature of the Real-time Interferometer Control System Testbed (RICST) optical delay line is that for all of its stages Coulomb friction plays a minimal role in the dynamics of the system. As a result, the system behaves

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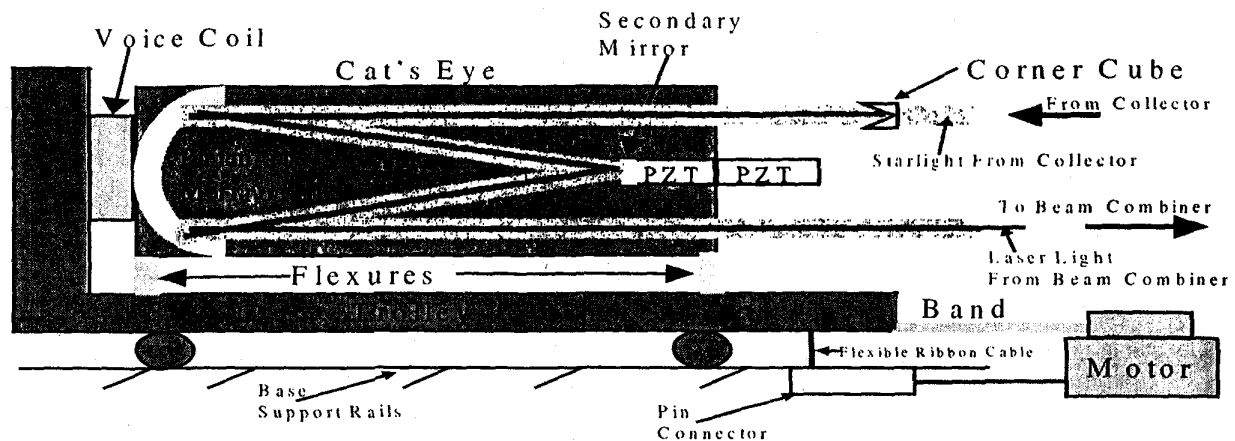


Figure 1 Optical Delay Line Diagram

very linearly for displacements of the actuators within its actuation range. This fact permits the following design philosophy:

1. Implement the basic design of the control algorithm as a linear compensator. Use a Bode-integral approach to the controller design to yield a high-order controller providing robust stability especially to non-linear phenomena which have their effects above the bandwidth of the controller [1].
2. Use nonlinear dynamic compensation to ensure that the loops remain stable even for transients or commands that saturate the actuators, since actuator saturation is the dominant nonlinear component of the plant [6,8].
3. Validate the control algorithm using a detailed simulation of the system.

2. LINEAR FEEDBACK COMPENSATOR DESIGN

The main challenge in the design and implementation of the RICST optical delay line controller has been the design of the coarse-vernier loop for the PZT and the voice coil systems. The linear design approach extends the work of Lurie, et al. [9]. The modeling of the physical plant, that is, the systems actuated by the PZT, Voice Coil, and Motor is based on the work of Grogan et al. [3]. Details of the mechanical, electronic, and software design may be found in [2], [4], and [5] respectively. To aid the discussion of the linear compensator design, a block diagram of the control design with the nonlinear elements removed is depicted in Figure 2 and is described in detail below.

- The PZT plant is modeled as the following dynamic systems connected in series:
 - A second order mechanical system with the underdamped resonance at 3800 Hz

- An LC circuit with time constant of 0.28 ms, which is associated with its drive electronics,
- A zero-order hold with sample rate of 5000 Hz,
- A pure time delay of 0.1 ms associated with computing the control laws and outputting the results.
- PZT open loop bandwidth is 325 Hz wide, with a Bode step response, with the slope -10 dB/octave at frequencies 10 to 650 Hz, rolling off at lower frequencies, as depicted in Figure 3. This provides 30 degrees of phase margin below 650 Hz and 10 dB of gain margin above 650 Hz, as shown in Figure 4. The phase margin of 30 degrees was maintained for open-loop amplitudes between 0 and -10 dB to ensure, among other things, good robustness to nonlinear effects such as current limiting in the high voltage PZT driver or the hysteresis of the PZT stack.
- The voice coil plant is modeled as the following dynamic systems connected in series:
 - A second order mechanical system with the underdamped resonance at 3.8 Hz
 - An LC circuit with time constant of 0.35 ms, which is associated with its drive electronics,
 - A zero-order hold with sample rate of 2500 Hz,
 - A pure time delay of 0.1 ms associated with computing and outputting the control laws.
- The voice coil loop is designed to operate in parallel with the PZT loop. To ensure that the total transfer function of these parallel loops remain minimum phase, the phase difference between the loops is less than 180 degrees. (This is a sufficient condition for minimum phase of a filter comprised of two minimum phase filters connected in parallel [7]). The voice coil loop is designed such that the gain of the voice coil loop is greater than the gain of the PZT loop below 55 Hz, and is depicted in Figure 5.

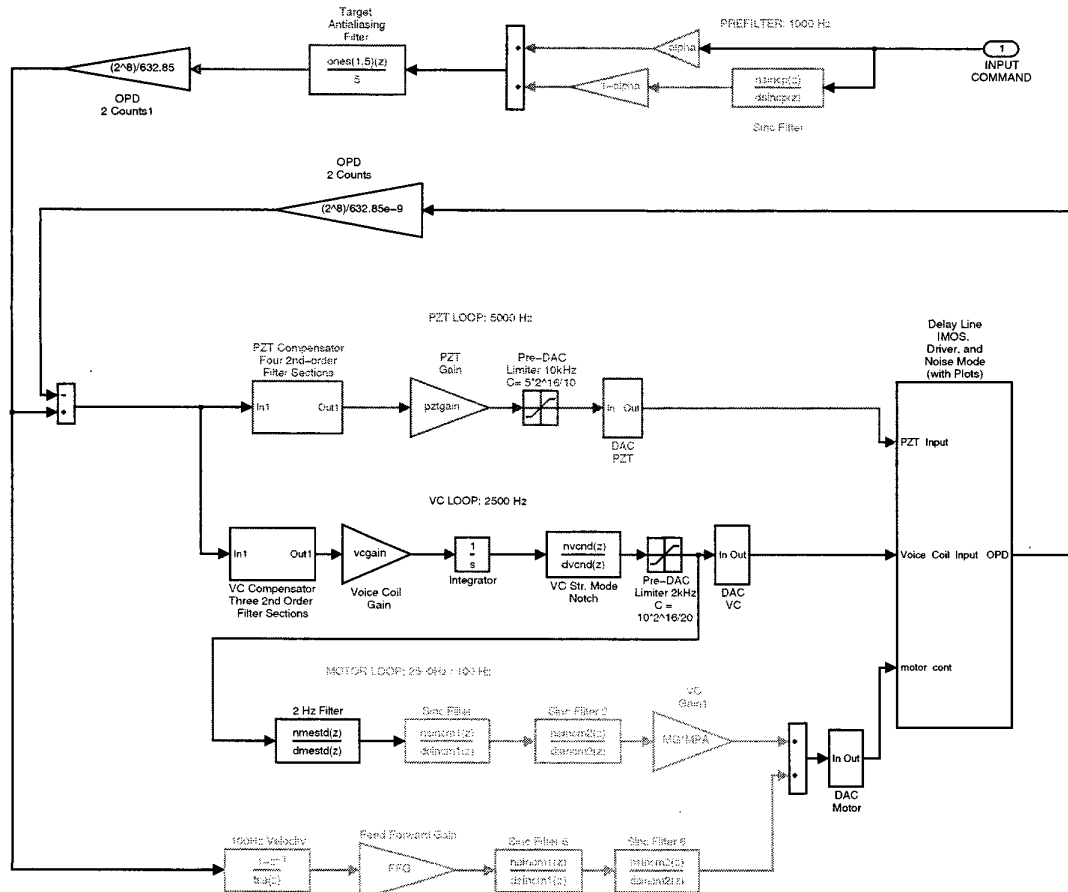


Figure 2 Controller Block Diagram with only Linear Elements Shown.

- The motor plant is modeled simply as a velocity-drive motor, i.e., the transfer function from command to position is simply a single integrator times a constant.
- The motor loop is designed to zero the voice-coil offset. It estimates the voice-coil offset using low-pass and sinc (moving average) filters in series, and then uses a proportional gain constant to scale the offset for the feedback command. The motor loop also incorporates a feedforward command pass that estimates the desired velocity from the input command and feeds this forward to the motor command. The feedforward pass also includes sinc filters so as not to excite the 3.8 Hz mode of the cat's eye structure.
- To minimize the effect of command disturbance amplification of those frequencies near the bandwidth of the controller, a command prefilter is added to the input pass. This design uses a sinc (moving average) filter whose first notch is tuned to the open-loop crossover frequency of the feedback loop. The depth of the notch is adjusted by varying the relative weighting of the filtered pass to a unity pass in a parallel structure. To minimize size of the sinc filter, the sinc filter is operated at 1000 Hz instead of 5000 Hz. A separate

anti-aliasing filter is added to smooth the output of the 1000 Hz filter.

The PZT and voice coil controllers were designed by iterative methods as high order continuous time filters. Once the proper loop shape was attained the continuous time controllers were factored into second order filter sections and converted to second-order discrete-time filters by a continuous to discrete transformation with prewarping about the dominant frequency of the second-order section. The resultant PZT and voice coil compensators comprised four second order sections each.

3. NONLINEAR DYNAMIC COMPENSATION

To meet the secondary design objective of good transient response to large amplitude disturbances, the linear loops described above are augmented with nonlinear dynamic compensation. This design objective is in fact quite important, because these types of transients are often encountered during system initialization. Furthermore, robustness to large actuator saturating transients allows for modal or switching control, where different controllers are swapped in and out depending on the magnitude of the

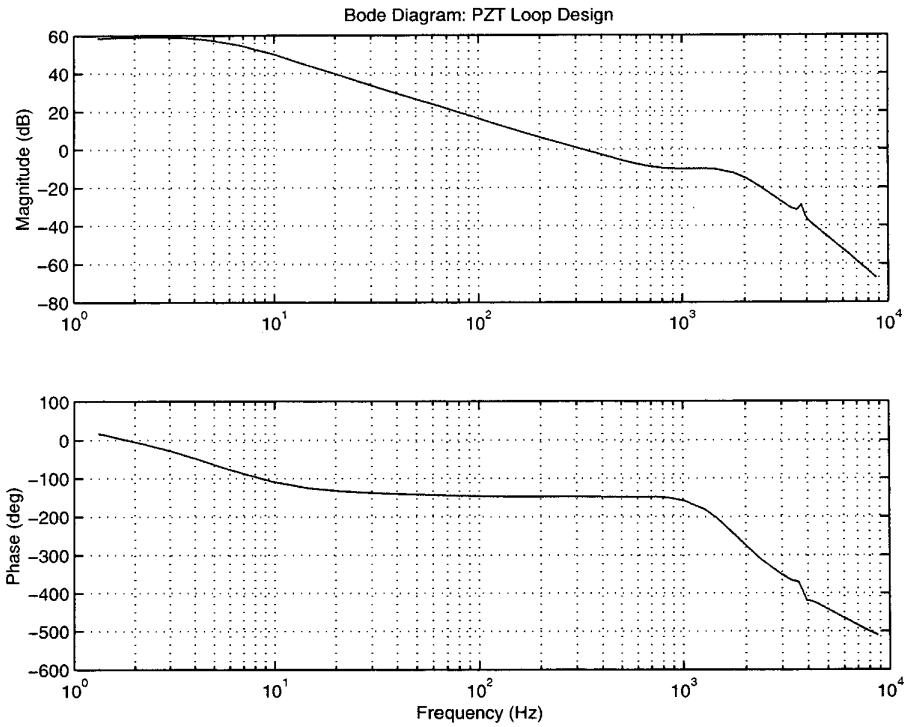


Figure 3 Bode plot of the PZT open loop transfer function

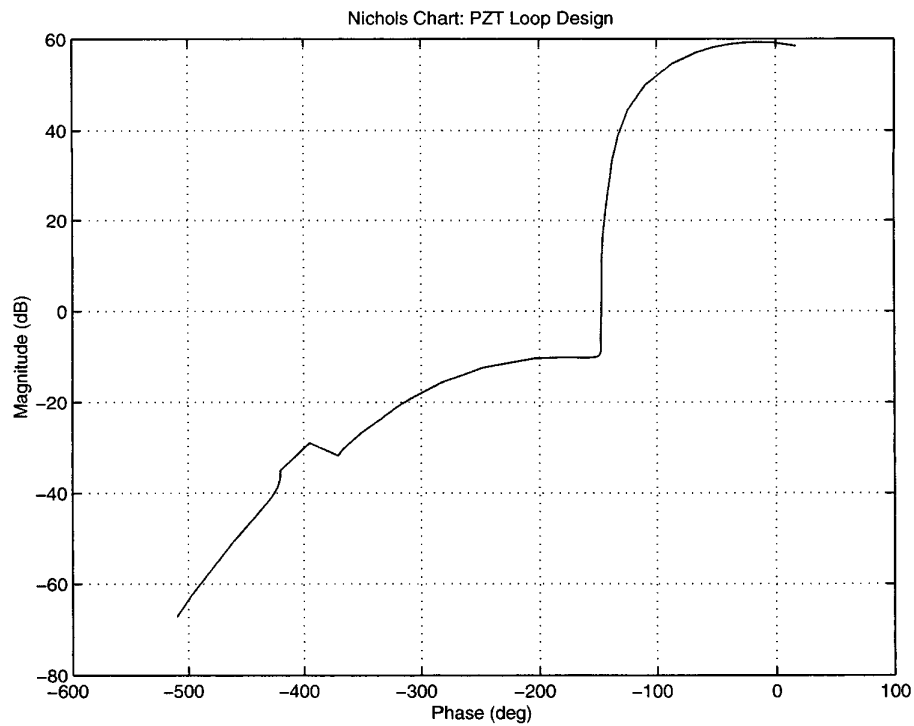


Figure 4 Nichols Chart of the PZT open loop transfer function

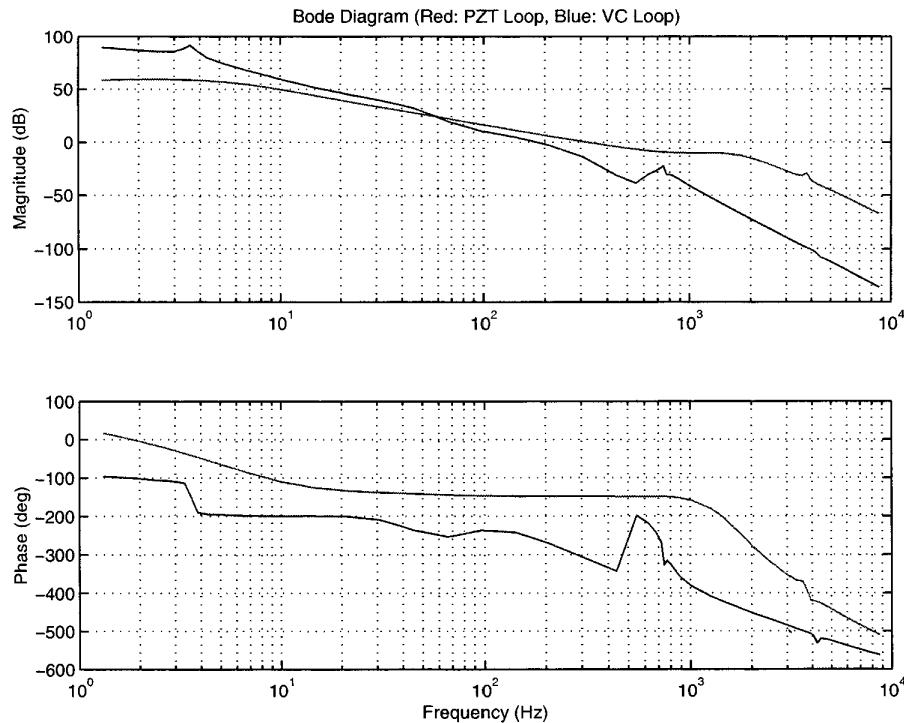


Figure 5 Bode plot of the voice coil and PZT open loop transfer functions

derivative of the input command or of the control error. For the RICST optical delay line controller, the nonlinear dynamic compensation may be grouped into four categories: exact linearization, anti-windup control, non-linear rate limiting control, and modal switching control.

Hierarchically, the first instance of nonlinear dynamic compensation addresses the saturation in the PZT actuator. This saturation is due to the digital to analog converter, which allows, via a high voltage PZT driver, a range of only 100 volts on the PZT actuator. Since the voice coil loop alone is unstable and must be stabilized by the PZT, any transient which forces the PZT into saturation can possibly destabilize the whole loop unrecoverably. The fact is attested to both in simulations and in practice.

The solution to this problem is to create an additional loop about the PZT plant, which in effect removes the saturation nonlinearity. This is accomplished by first placing a dead-zone in parallel with the saturation due to the digital to analog converter, as shown in Figure 6. Note that if the width of the dead zone exactly equals the nonsaturating range of the saturator, then the sum of signals b and c is the signal a . If a digital filter (PZT pseudo-plant) is then designed such that it has the same transfer function as the PZT plant, the sum of signals f and g are equivalent to the signal a passing through a linear plant without the saturation nonlinearity. This linearization prevents the voice coil loop from going unstable because the input to the voice coil is not

the actual OPD error, but the OPD error “linearized” by the PZT pseudo-plant. It should be noted that the term “exact linearization” may in fact be misleading: it has been shown in simulation that this linearization is quite robust with regard to mismatches between the dead zone and the saturator, and between the PZT plant and PZT pseudo-plant.

The next instance of nonlinear dynamic compensation addresses the saturation of the voice coil actuator. Again, this saturation is due to the digital to analog converter in the voice coil path. The main problem in this case is wind up of the voice coil compensator’s integrator state due to limited actuation of the voice coil. This windup produces poor transient behavior to large disturbances. This problem is eliminated by separating the integrator state from the compensator and replacing the integrator by a limited integrator. Simulations indicate that a factor of three separation between the maximum amplitude of the limited integrator and the rails of the saturator is sufficient for stability; however, a factor of 10 was maintained in the implemented hardware. This is depicted in Figure 7.

The third instance of nonlinear dynamic compensation deals with the fact that the rates in the motor stage should be limited to a maximum value. Rate saturation is a phenomenon that appears most often when the delay line motor is commanded to slew rapidly between two positions. The controller uses a switching type controller to command these large slews. The controller switching is decided by

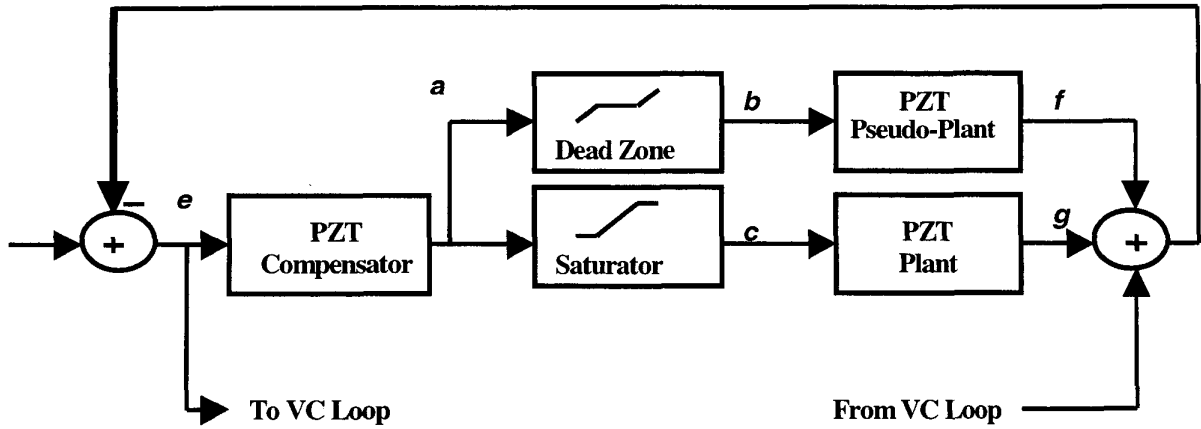


Figure 6 Exact Linearization of the PZT plant

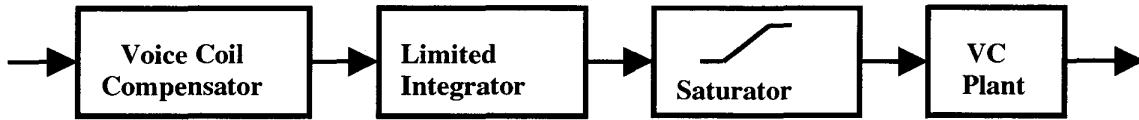


Figure 7 Antiwindup control for the Voice Coil loop

measuring the controller error. When the controller error reaches the slewing threshold, the error inputs to the voice coil and PZT paths are set to zero, and the motor velocity command V_{mc} is given by (1), where x_{stop} is the stopping

constant velocity to a stop in a smooth fashion.

A block diagram of the control design with the nonlinear elements included is depicted in Figure 8.

$$V_{mc} = \begin{cases} -\operatorname{sgn}(e) \left(\frac{V_{\max} + V_{\min}}{2} - \frac{V_{\max} - V_{\min}}{2} \cos\left(\frac{\pi |e|}{x_{stop}}\right) \right); & |e| < x_{stop} \\ -\operatorname{sgn}(e) V_{\max}; & |e| > x_{stop} \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

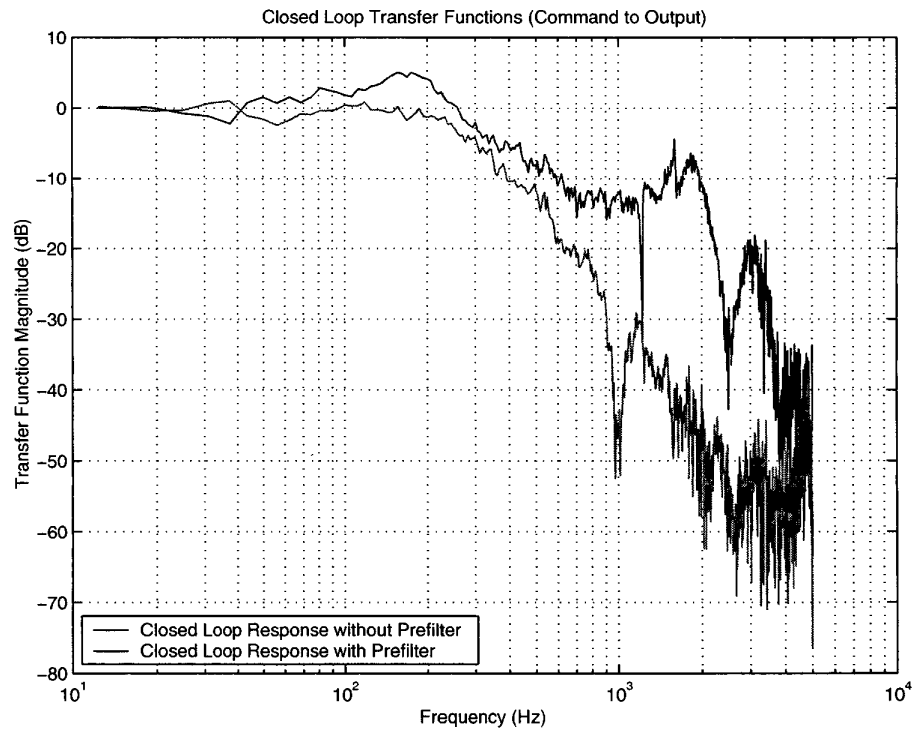
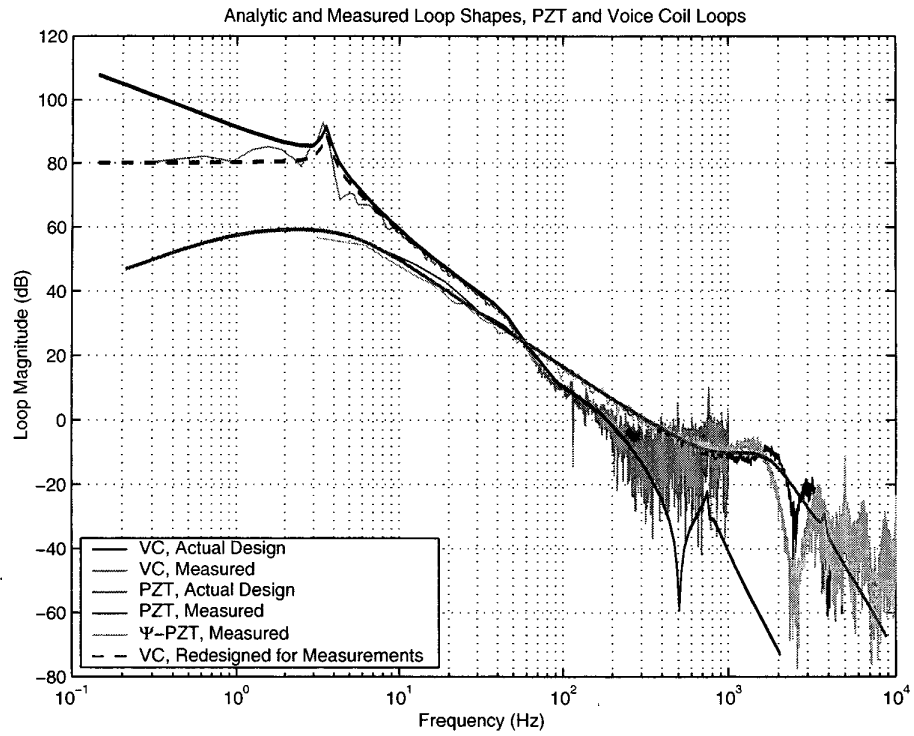
distance, e is the controller error, V_{\max} is the maximum desired carriage velocity and V_{\min} is the minimum desired carriage velocity.

Once this controller moves the delay line to a position where the PZT and voice coil can track the input command, that is, when the controller error is less than a tracking threshold, the nonlinear compensation is no longer active and the motor controller reverts to a linear controller. The tracking and slewing thresholds are set with a hysteresis of approximately a factor of 10 for stability, about 100 μm for the tracking threshold, and 1 mm for the slewing threshold.

The nonlinear motor slewing controller uses a sinusoidal velocity profile V_{mc} because it introduces little to no jerk into the delay line. In fact, when the V_{\min} is zero, the solution of the differential equation arising from the control law may be written in closed form. This may be seen by noting that $\dot{x} = -V_{\max} \sin^2 x$; $x(0) \in [0, \pi/2]$ has as its solution $x(t) = V_{\max} \cot t$. The velocity profiles produced by the control motor control law behaves similarly to the closed-form solution and does indeed allow for the transition from a

4. ALGORITHM VALIDATION

The validation of the RICST optical delay line controller comprised two methods: frequency and time domain. Frequency domain methods were used to measure the open-loop transfer function of the PZT and voice coil loops. These were then compared with the designed loops. Also, the closed loop transfer function of the PZT and voice coil loops operating in parallel was measured. These measurements were taken using a SiglabTM virtual network analyzer (VNA). To measure the open-loop transfer functions of the PZT, persistent excitation provided by the VNA was applied to the inputs to the PZT controllers (point e in Figure 6). The optical pathlength variation was measured by the VNA and the transfer function was computed. The input signals were kept small enough that the PZT plant did not go into saturation. Also, while the measurements were taken, the signal path through the voice coil was disabled by switching off the power to the voice coil amplifier. A similar measurement was taken, but this time the signal path was routed not through the PZT plant,



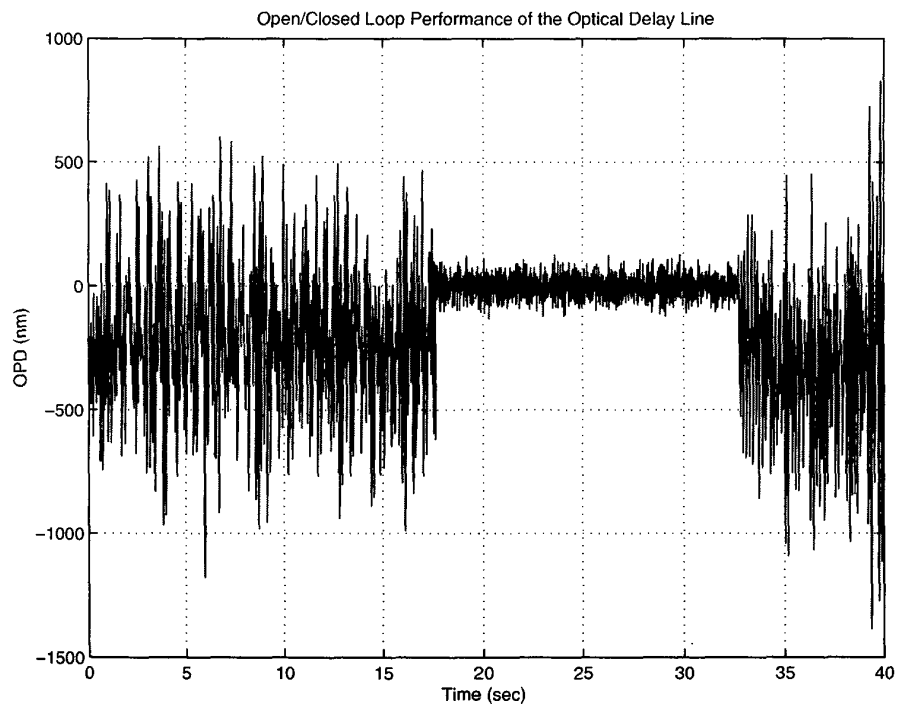


Figure 11 Time History Open/Closed Loop Performance

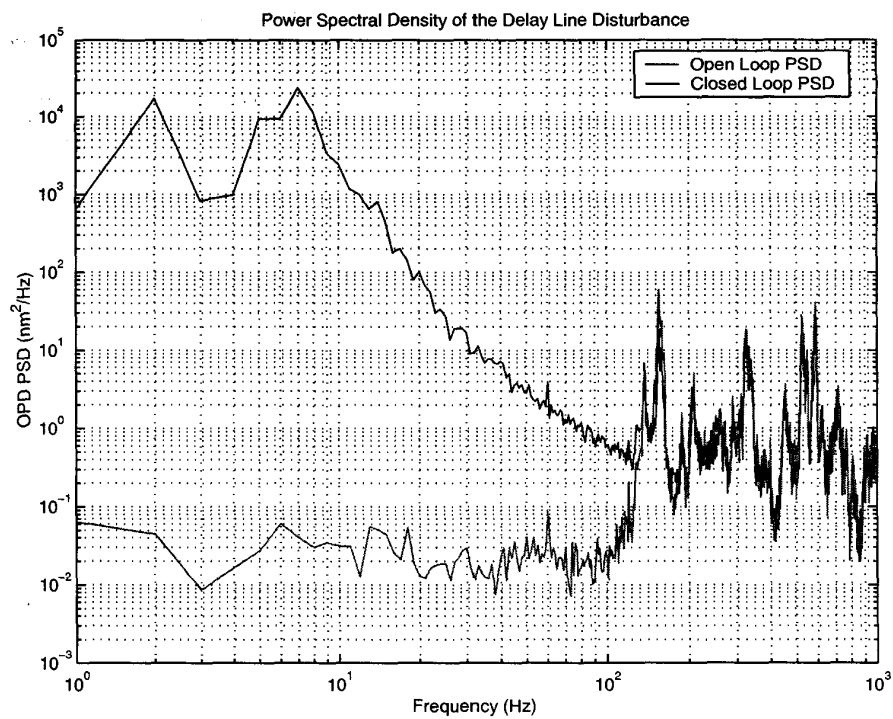


Figure 12 Open/Closed Loop Disturbance PSD

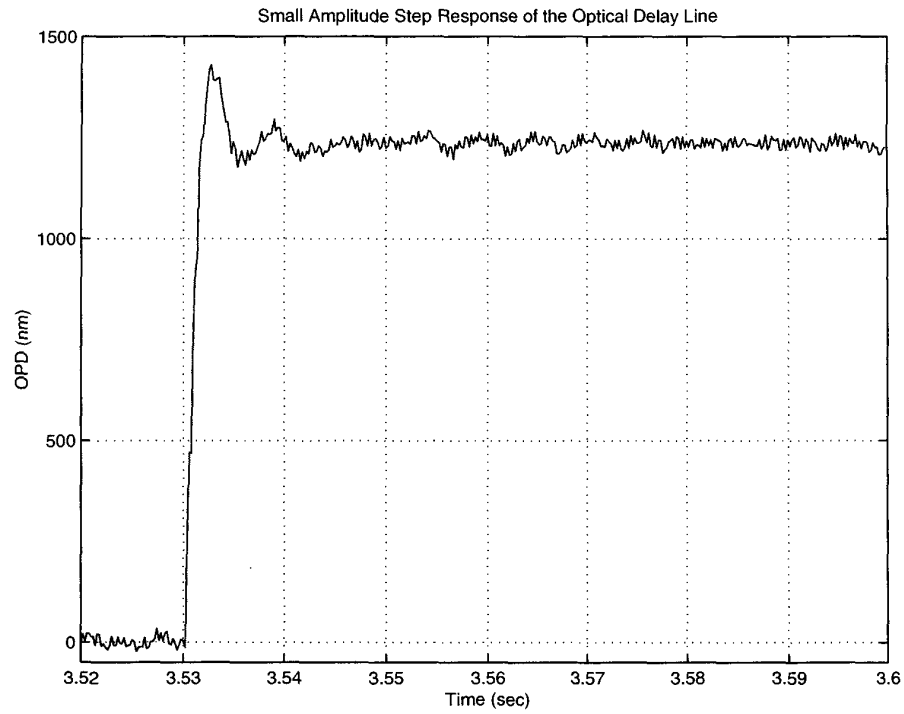


Figure 13 Step Response

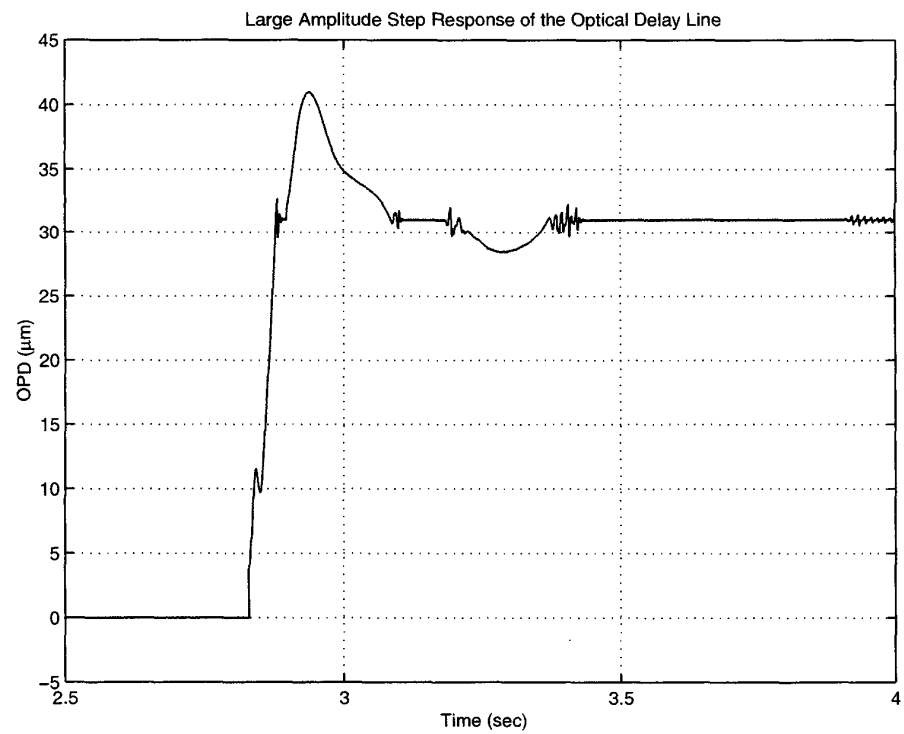


Figure 14 Large Amplitude Step Response

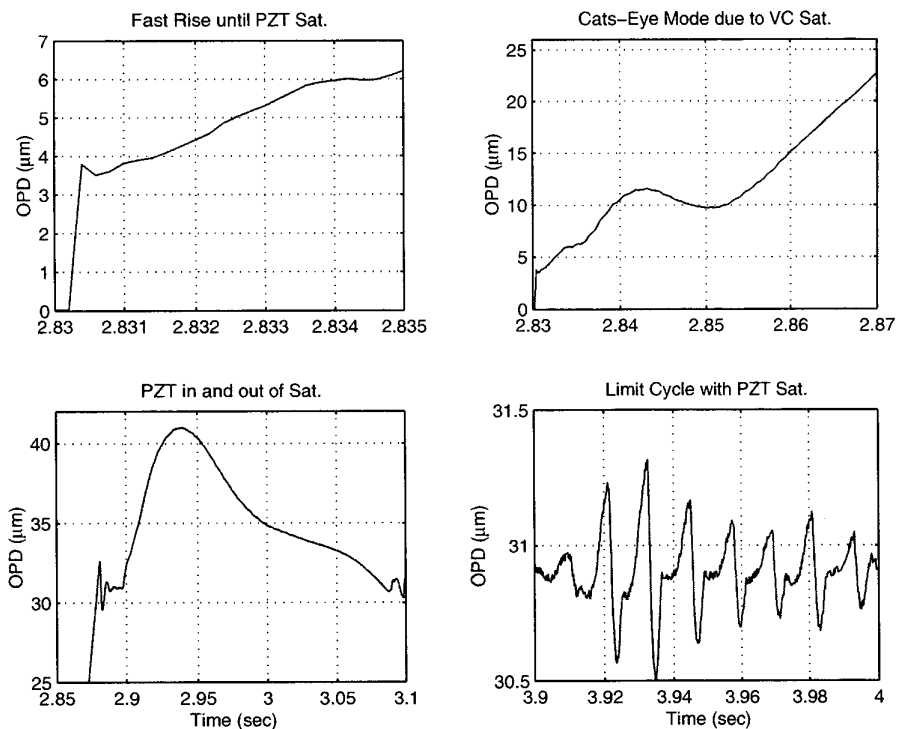


Figure 15 Large Amplitude Step Response (Detail)

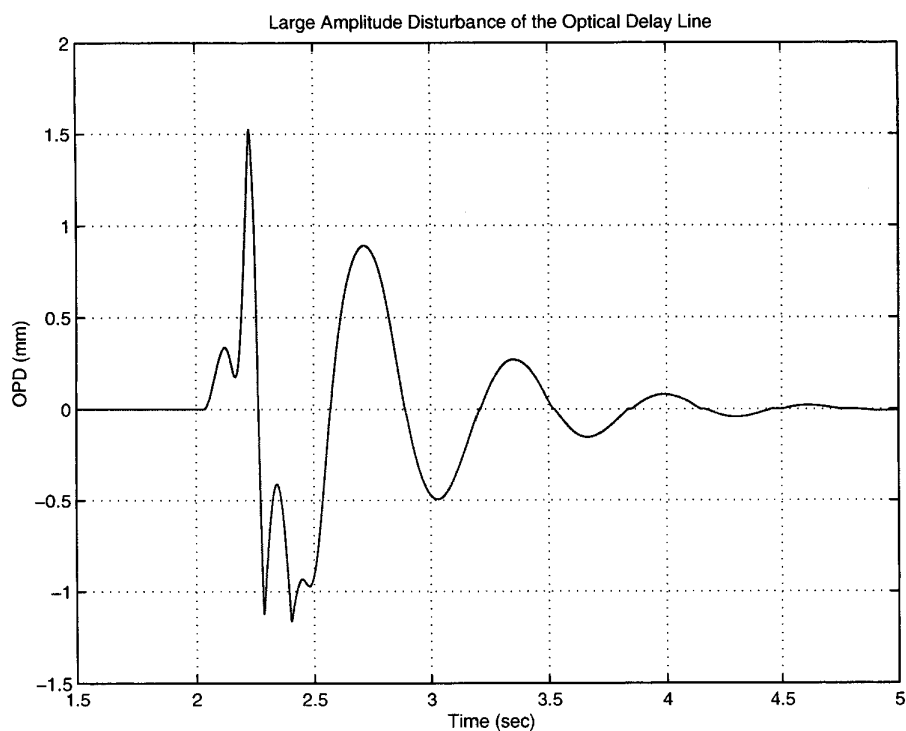


Figure 16 Large Disturbance Response

large step amplitude change in the delay line command (about 31,000 nm of OPD). The step response is markedly different, but nonetheless stable. For such a large step, the controller goes into five separate regimes:

1. PZT and voice coil active,
2. PZT saturated and voice coil active and slewing,
3. PZT and voice coil saturated,
4. Voice coil saturated and PZT active,
5. PZT saturated and voice coil in limit cycle.

The behavior of the optical delay line is different in all of these regimes, and is depicted in detail in Figure 15. In the upper left-hand plot, the transition from the linear regime to nonlinear regime is noted. At first the OPD rate is quite fast, but as soon as the PZT saturates, the OPD rate is reduced. In the upper right-hand plot, both the PZT and the voice coil actuators are in saturation. As a result, the structural mode of the cat's eye is excited, but not damped by the controller, which causes the sinusoidal dip in the plot. In the lower left-hand plot, the voice coil actuator is still in saturation, but the sign of the error flips as the OPD moves past the commanded OPD. The PZT then goes out of saturation and tries to stabilize the plant at about 2.88 seconds on the plot. At about 2.9 seconds, the overshoot of the OPD is too large for the PZT and it goes back into saturation. This same phenomenon is repeated at about 3.1-3.2 seconds and after 3.4 seconds on the plot (see Figure 14). In the lower right-hand plot, the PZT is in saturation and the voice coil is active and in a limit cycle with characteristic frequency of 85 Hz. The dynamics of the limit cycle was analyzed in detail in [9]. In computer simulations, the limit cycle was induced by eliminating the PZT plant, but retaining the PZT pseudo-plant. This produced a similar limit cycle with approximately the same characteristic frequency.

Finally, Figure 16 shows the global stability characteristic of this implementation of the RICST optical delay line controller. The delay line is in tracking mode and is manually moved. The amplitude of the disturbance is 1.5 mm, which is five orders of magnitude above the steady state tracking error. The dominant mode of the disturbance is the mechanical resonance of the cat's eye. This mode is quickly damped and the delay line returns to tracking mode. For disturbances as large as this, the modal switching of the delay line control is exercised, and shown to exhibit good stability properties.

5. CONCLUSION

The control system for the RICST optical delay line is a complex algorithm which enables it to track an OPD command with small error while being able to maintain stability over the entire operating range of the instrument. The design philosophy has embraced two areas of controller design which are not commonly used in practice. The first is the use of Bode integral laws to formulate the loop shape.

Since the loop shape is determined by these integrals and not by limiting the order of the controller *a priori*, the controller that achieves this loop shape is necessarily of high order. The validation of the loop shapes by simulation and measurement indicates that such a high-order controller may be used without numerical or computational difficulties.

The second design philosophy was the liberal use of nonlinear controllers. This is especially important for this application which has by necessity a coarse-vernier feedback architecture. This has increased the performance of the optical delay line with regard to these important aspects:

- It provides stability over all possible operating ranges,
- It provides smooth transients to disturbances overloading the vernier actuator,
- It provides good transient response to commands, with negligible overshoot and small rise- and settling-times,
- It allows simplifying the commander by commanding only the destination point, *i.e.*, using a step-function command and not a time-profiled command.

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