



**THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND**  
A U S T R A L I A

**School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science**

**PROJECT PROPOSAL**  
**Embedded Passive Radar Detection**

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Commenced: 17/02/2024 - S1 2024

Mode of study: Full-time - Internal

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# 1 Introduction

This proposal introduces the theory, motivations and planned process for the creation of an embedded passive radar detection system.

## 1.1 Topic and Relevance

Passive radar detection technology is a class of radar detection whereby the radar system and by extension the radar receiver does not emit any radiation. Instead, it uses existing electromagnetic signals in the environment, such as television or radio broadcasts, to detect and track objects. Passive radar can be bistatic, whereby the transmitter and receiver are separate, or multistatic, where there are multiple receivers. The technology has been around since the early 20th century, but has only recently become feasible due to advances in digital signal processing and computing [3].

The technology has a number of advantages over traditional radar systems. It is covert, as it does not emit any radiation, and is therefore difficult to detect and directly jam, leading to a concentrated interest from defence circles [6]. It is also relatively cheap, as it does not require a dedicated transmitter and hence has less energy consumption. Conversely, it has a number of disadvantages, such as a lower signal-to-noise ratio, and a requirement for a relatively large amount of computational power to process the received signals [3].

Bistatic passive radar detection has a wide range of applications centered around situational awareness, including air traffic control, border security, and environmental monitoring. Embedding the passive radar technology is a relatively new field buoyed by recent and increasing developments in computational power on Internet of Things (IoT) devices [7]. This project aims to reinforce and build on existing technology by creating a low-cost, modular, small-scale embedded passive radar detection system. Moreover, this project will also explore the possibility of scaling up this bistatic setup to a multistatic system, and the potential advantages and disadvantages of such.

More specifically, the project will focus on streamlining the signal processing and computational requirements of both the line of sight signal and the reflected target signal onto a singular embedded setup, without PC hardware. This will be achieved by using a combination of existing embedded IoT hardware, and through using existing DSP (digital signal processing) and radar filtering algorithms. Initially, the illuminator of opportunity selected is the DAB+ (digital audio broadcasting) signal, and the target signal will be aerial vehicles - most likely in the form of civilian passenger jets. Noting that a range of other terrestrial illuminator signals can be utilised, often tailored to specifically required use cases [2].

## 1.2 Goals

The primary goals of the project include the following, provided in order of logical progression;

- Implement and investigate passive radar detection algorithms on high end computer architecture (PC) connected to SDR hardware and antenna for line of sight and target signal processing.
- Scaling down the passive radar detection system and associated algorithms to run on embedded IoT hardware, and investigate the computational and signal processing requirements, including the possible design of custom hardware such as peripheral functionality

and printed circuit boards. A central feature of this specific goal is its ideally low cost nature.

- Verify functionality of low cost embedded passive radar detection system in a controlled environment against higher power computing results, and investigate the potential for scaling up to a multistatic system.
- Design and develop suitable housing for embedded project implementation with ideal features such as modularity, portability and potential scalability.

## 2 Background and Literature Review

### 2.1 Literature Review

The below subsections reflect the necessary research considerations for the project, and will be used to inform the project plan and optimize the implementation.

#### 2.1.1 Passive Radar Fundamentals

The key and unique feature of passive radar is its utilisation of existing illuminators of opportunity, such as television or radio broadcasts, to detect and track objects. The technology has been around since the early 20th century, with modern interest accelerated due to the use of passive radar systems on UHF TV signals and VHF FM radio transmission systems in the 1980's [4]. Equivalent terms used to describe passive radar include passive coherent location (PCL), and passive covert radar (PCR), parasitic radar, piggyback radar. Specifically, *bistatic* radar refers to the distributed design of the transmitter and receiver, as opposed to classic *monostatic* radar. As reflected by Figure 1 below, the turning parabola of monostatic radar is able to receive both range and bearing of the signal echo, whereas passive bistatic radar measures time delay of the echos from the target, allowing doppler shift from the relative speed of the target to be measured.

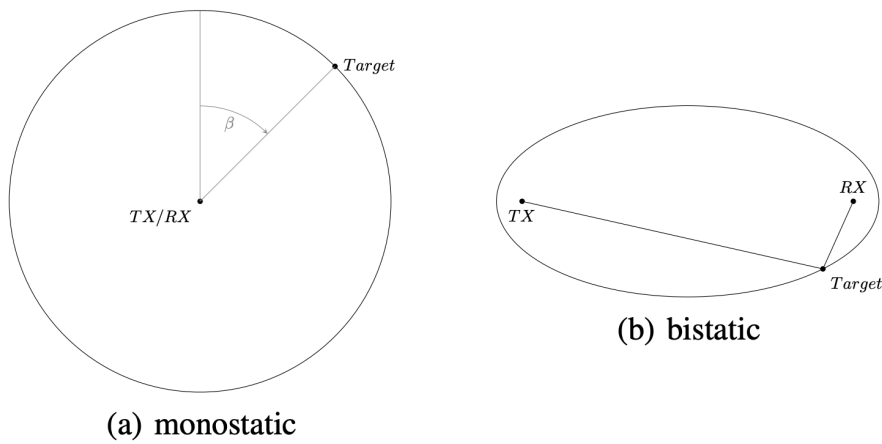


Figure 1: Monostatic (a) and bistatic (b) radar topologies [7]

The geometry of passive bistatic radar can be further explored and equations can be mapped accordingly, with the distance between the transmitter and receiver  $R$  being determined by known quantities such as the baseline as reflected below in Figure 2.

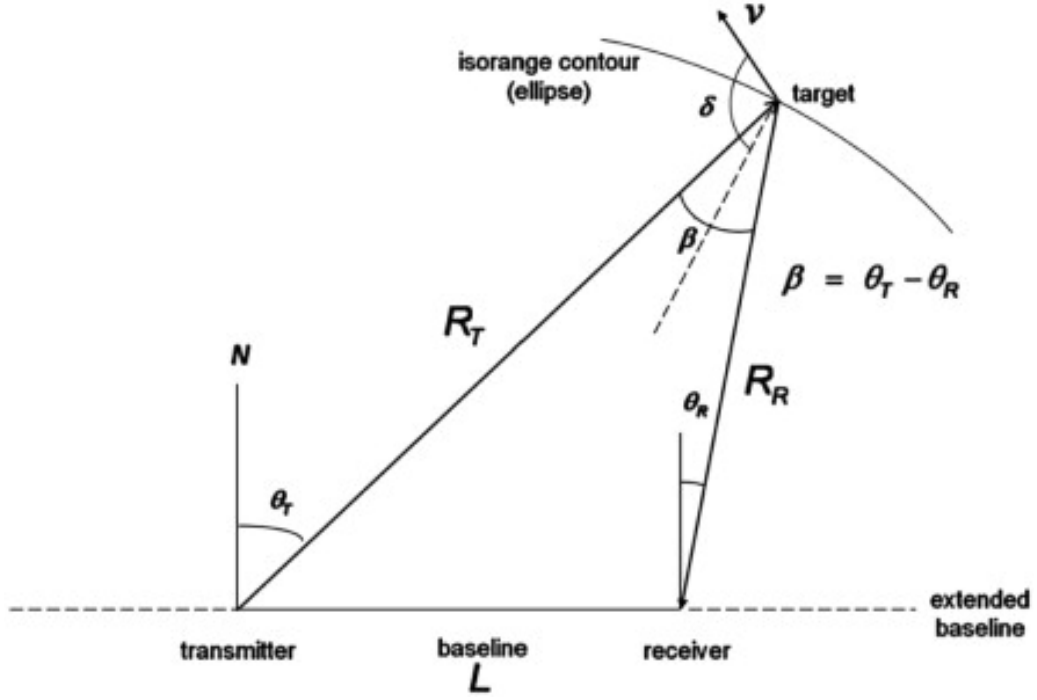


Figure 2: Bistatic radar geometry [4]

The bistatic range  $R_R$  is given by:

$$R_R = \frac{(R_T + R_R)^2 - L^2}{2(R_T + R_R + L \sin \theta_R)} \quad (1)$$

The Doppler shift  $f_D$  is given by the rate of change of the bistatic range sum:

$$f_D = \frac{1}{\lambda} \frac{d}{dt}(R_T + R_R) \rightarrow f_D = \frac{2v}{\lambda} \cos \delta \cos\left(\frac{\beta}{2}\right) \quad (2)$$

In the case of this project, both the TX (illuminator of opportunity) and the RX (embedded passive detection system) will be static, and the target will be moving, simplifying the mathematical calculations as much as possible, resulting in the cos version of equation 2 above. The Doppler shift will be used to determine the speed of the target as well as its relative directional motion, and the range will be used to determine the distance of the target from the receiver.

Another important feature of bistatic passive radar systems is its performance which can be equated through the bistatic radar equation, which is equivalently derived as the monostatic radar equation [4].

$$\frac{P_r}{P_n} = \frac{P_t G_t}{4\pi R_T^2} \cdot \sigma_B \cdot \frac{1}{4\pi R_R^2} \cdot \frac{G_r \lambda^2}{4\pi} \cdot \frac{1}{kT_0 BF} \quad (3)$$

Where:

- $P_r$  is the received target echo power.
- $P_n$  is the receiver noise power.
- $P_t$  is the transmit power.
- $G_t$  is the transmit antenna gain.
- $R_T$  is the transmitter-to-target range.
- $\sigma_B$  is the target bistatic radar cross section.
- $R_R$  is the target-to-receiver range.

- $G_r$  is the receive antenna gain.
- $\lambda$  is the signal wavelength.
- $k$  is Boltzmann's constant ( $1.38 \times 10^{-23}$  JK<sup>-1</sup>).
- $T_0$  is the noise reference temperature.
- $B$  is the receiver effective bandwidth.
- $F$  is the receiver effective noise figure.

The denominator of the bistatic radar equation includes the term  $\frac{1}{R_T^2 R_R^2}$ . This term implies that with omnidirectional antenna patterns, the contours of constant signal-to-noise ratio (SNR) are described by the equation  $R_T R_R = \text{constant}$ , which represents Ovals of Cassini. In the case of directional antennas, these contours are altered. Moreover, the signal-to-noise ratio is minimized when the target is equidistant from the transmitter and receiver ( $R_T = R_R$ ), and maximized when the target is closer to either the transmitter or receiver [4].

Ideally this project would process just the target signal, however, that is an unrealistic expectation due to the presence of clutter. Clutter refers to unwanted signal that emanates from objects in the natural environment such as buildings, trees and ground [8]. This process of target signal clutter suppression and its impact on range doppler mapping will be discussed later in the literature review.

### 2.1.2 Illuminators of Opportunity

The illuminator of opportunity is the signal that is used to illuminate the target, and is the primary source of the signal that is received by the passive radar system. The illuminator of opportunity can be any signal that is transmitted through the air, such as television or radio broadcasts, and can be tailored to the specific requirements of the passive radar system. Griffiths and Baker outline the three key parameters when selecting an illuminator [3]:

1. The **Power Density** at the target: It refers to the strength of the signal (in Watts per square meter) that reaches the target area from the illuminator. Higher power density can improve detection performance due to a stronger return signal.
2. The **Nature of the Waveform**: This includes the waveform's properties, such as bandwidth and modulation, which can affect the radar's resolution and ability to distinguish between targets and clutter.
3. The **Coverage**: The spatial area over which the illuminator's signal is spread. Adequate coverage is essential to ensure the target is within the illuminator's effective range.

Illuminator signals are not limited to terrestrial signals, and can also include signals from satellites, and can be tailored to the specific requirements of the passive radar system. The illuminator of opportunity selected for this project is the DAB+ signal, and the target signal will be aerial vehicles - most likely in the form of civilian passenger jets. The DAB+ signal was selected due to its high power density, and its relatively high bandwidth, which can be used to improve the radar's resolution and ability to distinguish between targets and clutter. Moreover, the geographical proximity of a DAB+ transmitter at Mt Cootha to the University of Queensland, St Lucia campus, makes it an ideal choice for the project.

### DIRECT SIGNAL INTERFERENCE???

Typical characteristics of Australian DAB+ signals include frequency of just over 200MHz, bandwidth of approximately 1.5MHz, and a minimal output power of 10kW effective radiated power (ERP), consequently covering a large area [1]. These digital signals employ a modulation

scheme called COFDM (coded orthogonal frequency division multiplexing), which is a form of multi-carrier modulation that is robust against multipath interference [3]. COFDM works by dividing the signal into multiple, simultaneous streams which are orthogonal to each other, modulated at a different frequency, maximising robust signal propagation. This is particularly useful in the context of passive radar, as it allows for the target and reference signal to be received by the passive radar system even if it has been reflected off multiple surfaces, such as buildings or trees.

All of the above features result in DAB signals being conducive for ambiguity function performance (analyzed in further detail below). This can mainly be attributed to the relatively wide bandwidth of DAB enabling good resolution, constant DAB envelope stemming from COFDM protocol, and the multipath resistance [5].

### **2.1.3 Range Doppler Mapping**

Range doppler mapping is a technique used to determine the distance and relative velocity of targets by analyzing the frequency shift (Doppler shift) and time delay of the received signals after they bounce off the targets

### **2.1.4 Radio Hardware**

### **2.1.5 IoT Architecture**

### **2.1.6 Signal Processing and Algorithms**

## **2.2 Pilot Studies**

Discuss silentium defence Maverick-M silent radar, IoT example, drone embedded example. SILENT SENTRY, DTSO

## **3 Project Plan**

### **3.1 Aim of Project**

### **3.2 Milestones**

### **3.3 Timeline**

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