

# QUANTUM COMPUTING – A GENTLE INTRODUCTION

by Eleanor Rieffel and Wolfgang Polak

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Quick Notes by Aaron Vontell, MIT EECS

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## 1 Single-Qubit Quantum Systems

### 1.1 Single Quantum Bits

DEFINITION 1. A **basis** is a set of vectors for which every element in our space  $V$  can be written *uniquely* as a linear combination of these vectors.

In quantum mechanics, bases are usually required to be orthonormal. Additionally, we define the *standard basis* to be  $\{|0\rangle, |1\rangle\}$ .

A *ket*  $|v\rangle = a|0\rangle + b|1\rangle$  may be written as  $\begin{pmatrix} a \\ b \end{pmatrix}$ , while a *bra*  $\langle v|$  can be written as  $\begin{pmatrix} a & b \end{pmatrix}$ .

When we wish to measure a qubit, we mean that we want to measure the qubit with respect to a given basis.

### 1.2 The State Space of a Single Qubit System

DEFINITION 2. The **state space** of a classical or quantum physical system is the set of all possible states of the system, i.e. the set of possible qubit values. Do not be fooled by states that are written differently, but are actually the same state!

DEFINITION 3. The **global phase** is the multiple by which two vectors represent the same quantum state, and has no physical meaning, where  $|v\rangle = c|v'\rangle$  for some  $c = e^{i\phi}$ .

DEFINITION 4. The **relative phase** of a single qubit system  $a|0\rangle + b|1\rangle$  is a measure of the angle between the two complex numbers  $a$  and  $b$  in the complex plane. Same magnitude but different relative phase  $\bar{}$  different states.

These states may be visualized in two ways, using either the **Extended Complex Plane**, or with the **Bloch Sphere**. See the *bloch\_sphere.png* image in the images folder for an example. Also note that all quantum states can be represented by a wave function, or a solution to the Schrödinger Wave Equation.

## Important single-qubit states

$$|+\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(|0\rangle + |1\rangle)$$

$$|-\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(|0\rangle - |1\rangle)$$

$$|i\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(|0\rangle + i|1\rangle)$$

$$|-i\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(|0\rangle - i|1\rangle)$$

### 1.3 Chapter Exercises

**Problem 1** Given a polaroid A with polarization  $|v_A\rangle = |\rightarrow\rangle$ , B with polarization  $|v_B\rangle = \cos\theta|\rightarrow\rangle + \sin\theta|\uparrow\rangle$ , and C with polarization  $|v_C\rangle = |\uparrow\rangle$ , the percentage of photons that make it through  $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow$  can be found in the following way. Choosing  $\{|\rightarrow\rangle, |\uparrow\rangle\}$  as our basis, we start with  $\frac{1}{2}$  in state  $|\rightarrow\rangle$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  in state  $|\uparrow\rangle$ , since we are given that the photons are emitted with random polarization. Since the polarization of polaroid A is  $|\rightarrow\rangle$ , we have that  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the photons pass through, and are all now in the state  $|\rightarrow\rangle$ . Coming upon polaroid B, we have that the polaroid allows  $\cos^2$  percent of the photons to pass through that are in state  $|\rightarrow\rangle$ , and  $\sin^2$  percent of the photons that are in state  $|\uparrow\rangle$  to pass through (which we can ignore since none are in this state before hitting B). This means that  $\frac{1}{2}\cos^2$  percent of the original photons make it through B, all of which are now in state  $|v\rangle$ . Finally, polaroid C lets 100% of the photons through that are in state  $|\uparrow\rangle$ . Since  $\sin^2$  percent of the photons that came through B are in the state  $|\uparrow\rangle$ , C allows  $\sin^2$  percent of the  $\frac{1}{2}\cos^2$  that came through B to pass through. This gives us our final result, that  $\frac{1}{2}\cos^2\sin^2$  of the original protons hit the screen after C.