

RICA - Radio Imaging Combination Analyzer

MILES LUCAS^{1,2}

¹*Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa*

²*National Radio Astronomy Observatory, Socorro, New Mexico*

ABSTRACT

1. INTRODUCTION

In radio synthesis imaging a common problem arising from interferometry is the lack of zero-spacing data. Without this data, images lack total power information. Single dish radio telescopes retain this total power information but lack the angular resolution capabilities of radio interferometers. To solve this problem, astronomers combine the interferometry data with the total power data. This report seeks to characterize the effectiveness of different combination methods.

There are four methods of combination that were tested. The first is CASA¹'s *feather* task. This takes the total power image and gets the Fourier components of the total power image. These components are then added to the interferometer data. The addition is weighted such that the total power components have all of the weight near the zero-spacing and taper off so that at around a third of the max UV distance the interferometer has all the weighting. This smooth combination helps to avoid weird artifacting from either component of the combination.

The next method is using the total power image as the starting model in CASA's *tclean* task. In the Cotton-Schwab CLEAN algorithm (CSCLEAN), each major-cycle begins with a blank model image and constructs an image on it by using minor-cycle iterations. By using a starting model, this model is no longer blank, but is passed as a parameter. By using the total power image as the starting model, we can hope to retain the total power information through the CLEAN algorithm.

¹ <https://casa.nrao.edu>

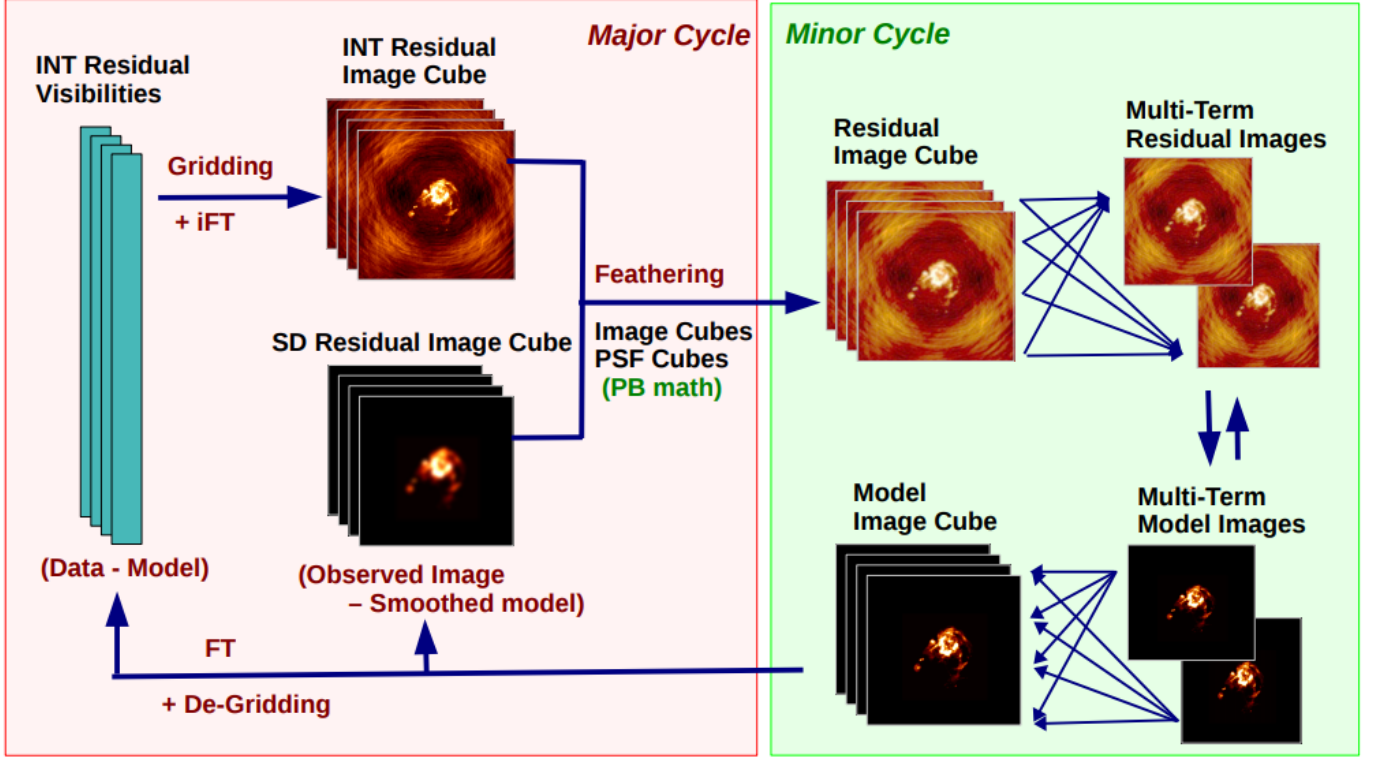


Figure 1. A flow chart describing the joint-deconvolution approach to combining interferometer and single dish data. Diagram from U.Rau & N.Naik 2018 (in prep).

Another modification to the Cotton-Schwab cycle in order to combine images is by doing a modified joint deconvolution. In each major Cotton-Schwab cycle, the constructed model is feathered with the total power image before deconvolving. The total power image is also deconvolved and then the residuals are subtracted to get a model residual and a total power residual. These residuals are then degrided and transformed to finish the major cycle. See Figure 1.

The last method of combination we use is *tp2vis*², which takes the total power image and spoofs a measurement set. The way *tp2vis* accomplishes this is by taking Fourier data from the total power image and sparsely sampling the Fourier data at close spacings (see Koda et al. 2011). This data can be concatenated with the interferometer data and deconvolved in *tclean*. This should help fill the close-spacing gap created by the interferometer data and subsequently help increase total power information.

² <https://github.com/tp2vis/distribute>

Figure 2. The models used for testing combination methods.

2. METHODS

In order to evaluate the different combination methods, a metric needed to be created and tested on a suite of models. The metrics used were CLEAN residuals, fidelity images, and a ratio of the power spectrum densities (PSD). The exigence for using PSDs is that the zero-spacing power is readily visible for every image. By using these ratios, the closer the ratio is to 1.0 at short spacings (when compared to the true model), the more accurate the combination. In addition, when compared with the total power image, it shows how much effective weight is given to the total power image in the combination. The ratio used is given as

$$\text{ratio} = \frac{\text{pow}_{test} \text{BA}_{ref}}{\text{pow}_{ref} \text{BA}_{test}} \quad (1)$$

where *pow* is the power from the PSD, *BA* is the beam area, *ref* refers to the reference image (model or SD), and *test* refers to whichever image is being tested.

Each combination was compared to both the true model and the single dish, total power image. Many models were tested with various extra parameters. Three models were generated from component lists. One has 4 point sources, one has a single Gaussian source, and one has a mixture of 4 point sources, one very broad Gaussian, and one off-center, stronger Gaussian. There were also various models based off real structure, including M51 (based off an H- α image), Orion, RXJ1347, and a protoplanetary disk (PPD) simulation. [Figure 2](#) shows all of the models. It is important to note that these models have been regridded onto a common coordinate system that is not representative of the true astronomical targets. This was in effort to simplify the simulation process for creating measurement sets.

The code base for testing the effectiveness is hosted publicly for anyone to use³. In the source code there are many scripts and methods to facilitate simulating, combining, and comparing. Every model

³ <https://gitlab.com/mileslucas/rica>

is described in *src/_models.py* with a dictionary defining the simulation and *tclean* parameters. The pipeline for testing these models was as follows:

1. Simulate measurement set (MS) based on VLA configurations
2. Simulate single dish image by convolving model with Gaussian
3. Image the MS
4. Do the combinations (feather, startmodel, joint deconvolution, and tp2vis)
5. For each combination, do a comparison with the true model (convolved with the primary beam) and the single dish image

and is codified in *src/pipeline.py*.

In order to run a new model to test comparison methods, there are two general methods. If there exists a true model, simply add an entry to the models dictionary defining the simulation and clean parameters. It is also important to edit *src/simulate.py* to accomodate the new model. Follow the existing code base for guidance. It is also important to create a copy of the model and regrid it to the common coordinate system (use an existing model to snag the coordinate system). The model can then be ran through the pipeline along with any other models using *src/pipeline.py*.

If there is no true model, it is still useful to test and compare against the total power image, alone. In this case, using a cleaned image, a measurement set, and a total power image with the *src/combine.py* script will produce all of the combinations. These can then be compared using *src/compare.py*. It is possible to edit *src/pipeline.py* to accomodate special models, see how the PPD model is handled in the pipeline.

3. RESULTS

4. CONCLUSION

This work was funded by the National Science Foundation in partnership with the National Radio Astronomy Observatory and Associated Universities Incorporated. Thank you to Dr. Kumar Golap and Dr. Takahiro Tsutsumi for their guidance and assistance.

REFERENCES

Koda, J., Sawada, T., Wright, M. C. H., et al.
2011, ApJS, 193, 19,
doi: [10.1088/0067-0049/193/1/19](https://doi.org/10.1088/0067-0049/193/1/19)