CSC8360

Wireless Networking

Faculty of Sciences

Study Book

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Module 1

Introduction

Module contents

Objectives

- Gain a broad understanding of wireless communication.
- Gain an understanding of how to succeed in the course.

1.1 Wireless Communication

Australian Communications Authority (ACA) Elctromagnetic fields were discovered approximately 200 years ago, by Danish physicist Hans Christian Orsted, electromagnetic waves by Michael Faraday, in England. It took around another 100 years for the effect of transmission of electromagnetic waves to be harnessed for communication.

From almost this time on it has been highly important in military operations, in industry, and as a means for supporting human communication over distances for political, commercial, and social reasons. Australian Communications Authority (ACA) As a means for communicating between military units, especially during war, wireless communication has proved so useful that it has been often used even when its use risks revealing vital information to the enemies involved in the same conflict.

1.1.1 Waves

Australian Communications Authority (ACA)

All wireless communication makes use of electromagnetic *waves*, which can be described as oscillations of a magnetic and electrical field which can (and does) exists in free space (and even in space which is occupied by certain physical objects.

Waves of magnetic and electrical fields, just like sound waves or water waves, frequently appear to take the form of a steady oscillation at a certain frequency. In fact, it can be shown mathematically that all signals (taking the form of a voltage, for example, varying over time) can be decomposed into different oscillatory components, each component with a different *frequency*.

When wireless transmission was first used for communication, 100 years ago, the frequencies used were relatively low – below one million cycles per second. As our understanding of electromagnetic waves and the technology for their transmision and reception has improved, higher and higher frequencies have been used. Some of the frequencies currently used are shown in Table 1.1. A diagram listing the names of some of the frequency bands currently in use is shown in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.1 shows the complete RF spectrum allocation chart specified by the Australian Communications Authority (ACA). More information regarding regulations for RF frequency allocations in Australia can be found at: `http://acma.gov.au`.

1.2 Succeeding in this course

This course can best be described as practical-based. The assignments, which comprise a major part of the assessment cover all the major topics of the course. These assignments can be successfully achieved by any student who completes all the practical work. There are practicals every week, which

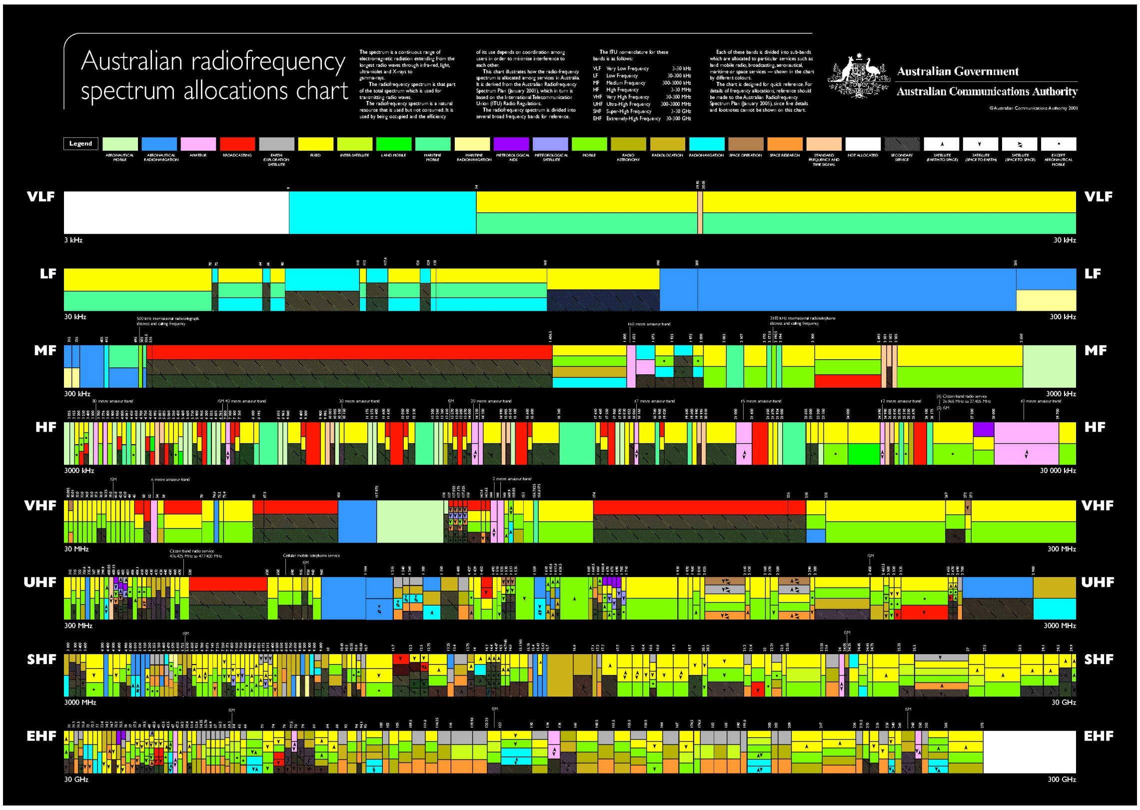

Figure 1.1: RF Frequency Allocation Chart, from http://aca.gov.au

Voice band:	300-3,400 Hz
Broadcast AM radio:	540-1,710 kHz
LF cordless telephone:	43-50 MHz
Broadcast VHF TV:	54-216 MHz (Channels 2-13)
Broadcast FM radio:	88-108 MHz
Broadcast UHF TV:	470-800 MHz
Analog mobile telephone:	824-894 MHz
Digital mobile telephone:	1,710-1,880 MHz

Table 1.1: Important frequency bands used in communication systems

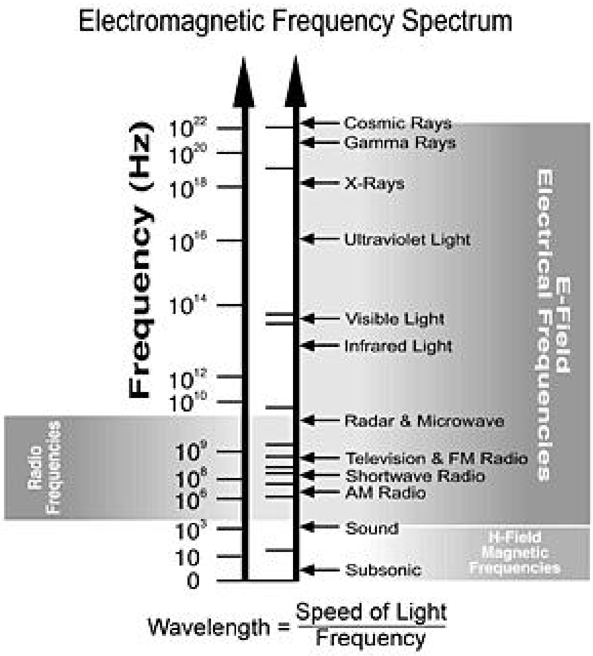

Figure 1.2: The Electromagnetic Frequency Spectrum (from http://www.glenair.com)

directly guide the students in how to complete the assignments. If students do all the practicals, they will be able to successfully complete, and gain a passing result in the assignments, and this will enable them to succeed in the course.

Module 2

History of Wireless Networking

Module contents

Objectives

- Gain an understanding and appreciation of the history and evolution of wireless communication.
- Develop insight into the sort of developments likely to take place in wireless communication in the next few years.

2.1 Wireless Chronology

A brief chronology for the discovery and development of electromagnetism and wireless communication is shown in Figure 2.1.

Year	Discovery / Development
1804	Joseph Fourier discovers that all signals can be decomposed into frequencies
1820	Danish physicist Hans Christian Orsted discovers electromagnetic fields
1831	British scientist Michael Faraday discovers electromagnetic induction
1864	Scottish mathematician and physicist James Clerk Maxwell discovers the partial differential equations for electromagnetic waves (which is later discovered to be the general form of light)
1888	Hertz produces, transmits, and receives electromagnetic waves
1895	Marconi transmits and receives a coded message at a distance of 1.75 miles
1899	Marconi sends the first international wireless message from England to France
1923	The decibel (1/10th of a bel, after A. G. Bell, inventor of the telephone) used to express loss (of power)
1924	The mobile telephone invented by Bell Telephone and introduced to NYC police
1932	The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) formed
1948	Branttain, Bardeen and Shockley build the junction transistor
1948	Claude Shannon develops the theoretical foundations of digital communications
1974	The beginning of TCP/IP
1978	AT&T Bell Labs test a mobile telephone system based on cells
1985	The FCC allows unlicensed use of the ISM band (enabling wifi)
1990	WWW developed
1997	First 802.11 standard for wifi released by IEEE

Table 2.1: Wireless Chronology (Microwave Journal (microwavejournal.com)

2.2 Mobile Telephony

As mentioned in the chronology, above, mobile phones were first used in 1924. However, it was not till much later, around 1978, that they became widespread.

Wireless signals lose strength approximately according to the inverse square law, which means that the loss (in power) over a certain distance is a factor of 4 greater if that distance is doubled. More generally, if the distance is increased by the factor a, the loss will be greater by the factor $\frac{1}{a^2}$.

This might seem a disadvantage, but in fact it is probably mostly beneficial, because it means that the signals of our neighours, and fellow citizens, cause very little interference, with our communication, so long as they take place a little way off.

As a consequence, it makes sense to subdivide the region where wireless communication is taking place into *cells*. The frequencies in use in one cell can then be re-used in a cell that is not too close

2.3 The Modern Era of Wireless Communication

For the moment it seems to reasonable to call the history of wireless since the introduction of the Internet *modern*.

In 1985, the idea that some wireless spectrum can be *unlicensed* was introduced.

The only regulation is that no transmitter should use more than about 10 milliamps.

This allowed for the wifi standards: 802.11a, b, ...

2.3.1 Shared spectrum

The natural measure of capacity, of any transmission medium, is transmission speed, typically measured in bits per second (bits/s). To enable us to discuss transmission speed in a natural, intuitive manner, we also use mega-bits per second (Mbits/s), giga-bits per second (gb/s) and so on. Note that although it would also make sense to use bytes per second, this is not common practice, and therefore should generally be avoided.

The natural measure of *size* of a wireless medium, on the other hand, is the width of the range of frequencies that it makes use of, in cycles per second. Thus, if a wireless technology uses frequencies from 20 million cycles per second (20 MHz) to 100 million cycles per second (100 MHz), we say it has a *bandwidth* of 80 MHz.

It is also common to use the term *bandwidth* to refer to the transmission capacity of a medium. This is not strictly correct, and because the term already has a clear and precise meaning, it is potentially confusing. However, the use of “bandwidth” reveals that there was a widespread perception for a long time that the “natural” transmission capacity of a wireless medium is approximately the same as its bandwidth in the strict sense of the width of the range of frequencies it uses.

Amazingly, the precise relationship between transmission capacity and bandwidth was derived in 1948, before the explosion in use of wireless communication. The formula developed by Hartley and Shannon gives the maximum data rate in the presence of noise, as follows:

$$C \leq B \log_2(1 + S/N)$$

where C is the channel capacity (transmission speed in bits/s), B is the bandwidth, and S/N is the signal-to-noise ratio (SNR), which is the ratio of the power levels of the signal and the noise.

At the same time when spectrum for wireless communication was "liberated" by this de-regulation, the mathematical and technical breakthroughs for making optimal use of this spectrum were developed.

According to the formula of Shannon and Hartley, the maximum possible bit-rate through a wireless medium is not limited to the bandwidth, in cycles per second, but can be much higher. It depends, crucially, on the signal to noise ratio (SNR).

When the transmitter and receiver of a wireless signal are close together, the signal to noise ratio will be higher and hence so will be the transmission capacity. This means that as the density of users of wireless spectrum goes up, and the demand for spectrum increases, we can achieve higher and higher efficiency in its use by decreasing the average distance between transmitters and receivers. To some extent this will occur naturally, as the number of base stations or wireless access points which gather the communication from end users increases.

2.4 Where Wireless is Heading

Some general trends in wireless communication can be observed.

Higher and higher frequencies are coming into regular use. These higher frequencies have some disadvantages, such as being more easily blocked by obstacles, or atmospheric conditions. Also, because the wavelength of higher frequency signals is smaller than 1cm, and in some cases just a few millimetres, aerial designs need to be more complex in order to receive an adequate strength signal. However, a major advantage of higher frequencies is that as we move up the spectrum, the *quantity* of bandwidth becomes dramatically larger.

Module 3

WiFi and 802.11 Regulations, Standards, Organizations

Module contents

Objectives

- Know all the major standards organisations relevant to Wireless communication, and their role in its regulation and development
- Understand, in outline, the meaning and significance of the key standards for wireless LANs.
- Understand, at a high level, how wireless communication works.

3.1 The Standards Organizations

In the past, and still today, some *standards* form as a result of development of a product or service by a single company that subsequently becomes agreed, by the relevant industry, as the preferred way to package that service. Such standards, which do not necessarily stay the same over time, can pass from private to public ownership, or even become adopted as a standard by one of the existing srandards organisations.

Another, increasingly common process, is that, once the need for a service or product has been identified, a committee, or group of specialists, is formed within one of the major standards organisations, which then develops a standard for that service, or product.

The most significant organisation in regard to standards in general is the *International Standards Organisation* (ISO). Most nations also have national standards organisations which are affliated with the ISO. For example, Australia has *Standards Australian* [1].

Although these standards organisations are very important and do create standards relevant to communication, the specific standards organisations which have primarily guided each specific technology is somewhat different.

In telecommunications in general, the primary organization has, and continues to be the ITU (see §3.1.3). Many historical standards in mobile telephony have been developed by the ITU. However, one of the most significant steps in standardisation of mobile wireless was the development of the GSM standard [2], which was undertaken primariy by the European Telcommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) (See §3.1.6). For example, the original standard for SIM cards was developed as part of this standard.

3.1.1 Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE)

3.1.2 Internet Engineering Task Force (Internet Standards)

3.1.3 The International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

3.1.4 The International Standards Organization (ISO)

3.1.5 The 3rd-generation Partnership Project (3GPP)

3.1.6 European Telcommunications Standards Institute (ETSI)

3.2 The Wifi Standard

3.2.1 What is not regulated

3.2.2 What is regulated

3.2.3 The technical details

3.2.4 Evolution of the 802.11 standard

3.3 Other Standards Relevant to Wifi

Module 4

RF Fundamentals

Module contents

Objectives

To develop a sound, practical understanding of:

- radio frequency behaviour (propagation characteristics, frequency band selection and range);
- the variation in the relationship between power and distance for different frequencies;
- impact of Interference (sources of noise and interference);
- antenna systems (type selection);
- channel bandwidth (vs frequency bands);
- the Shannon-Hartley law
- system gain;
- reflection and refraction of wireless signals;
- multipath propagation and how OFDM overcomes it.

4.1 Wireless Signal Characteristics

4.1.1 Power vs distance

The power of an electromagnetic signal reduces over distance because, as the signal propagates through space, the energy it carries is spread over a larger area. This is illustrated in Figure 4.1.

From the principle illustrated in Figure 4.1, we can conclude, more precisely, that the power of a signal decreases in proportion to the square of the distance between the sender and the receiver:

$$P_d = \frac{1}{d^2} P_1, \tag{4.1}$$

in which P_d denotes the power of the signal received at distance d from the transmitter.

This assumes that the signal is not absorbed by the medium; for example, if the space between the sending antenna and the receiving antenna is completely empty – a vacuum – we can expect the inverse square law to be exact. But if the space has some contents, e.g. air, glass, water, mist, clouds, rain, etc, then there will be some absorption of energy in the intervening space and the inverse square law will not hold exactly.

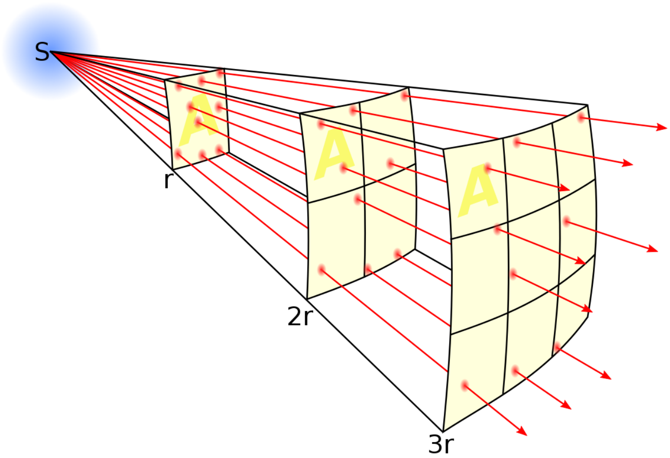

Figure 4.1: The inverse square law (By Borb, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3816716)

4.1.2 Power vs Frequency

The atmosphere is not completely transparent for light. Some frequencies are absorbed more than others. The absorption of a proportion of the light passing through a medium, such as the atmosphere, which is not completely transparent, introduces additional loss which is also proportional to a power of the distance between the transmitter and the receiver. If the medium is completely transparent, the additional gain (although it is actually a loss, we refer to it as a gain less than 1 to simplify its numerical expression) due to the medium will be d^0, where d is the distance. If the media does introduce loss, this gain will be d^{-a} for some $a > 0$.

[David, here we need to introduce a figure which shows the loss, as this power of d, at different frequencies, due to oxygen, etc.

This would also be a good place to introduce a discussion of the spectrum used in Star Link, as an example of the sort of compromise which can be adopted, when a frequency has loss, but we can work with it.]

For best communication, we naturally prefer to use frequencies of light which have as little loss as possible. However, because modern communication technology is highly efficient, and there is so much commercial pressure to use the available spectrum (frequencies) for communication, we do not simply avoid using frequencies with higher loss, but instead we make use of the best methods of modulation, filtering and receiver designs so that we can make use of all frequencies by adapting to their characteristics.

4.1.3 Noise and interference

4.2 Antenna Design and Choice

Antenna design is tricky to explain, and to do. Fortunately, most of us do not need to *design* antennas, but merely to choose the appropriate one from a small range of alternatives, in a certain situation. Nevertheless, there some simple principles which we can easily learn that make it a lot easier to make these choices correctly.

4.2.1 Dipole Antennas

4.2.2 Frequency dependence

4.2.3 Reciprocity

4.3 The Shannon-Hartley law

Supposing a communication channel is not noise free, but has noise with power level N, the error rate of the received signal will be non-zero. The formula of Hartley and Shannon takes this into account, and gives the maximum data rate in the presence of noise, as:

$$C \leq B \log_2(1 + S/N).$$

where C is the channel capacity, in bits/s, B is the bandwidth, in Hz, and S/N is the signal-to-noise ratio (SNR), which is the ratio of the power levels of the signal and the noise, at the receiver.

Example 4.1: The Shannon capacity of a channel

As an example consider we have a radio channel with bandwidth 10 MHz. Say the received signal level is 2 mW, and the noise level is 0.04 mW. What is the Shannon Capacity of the channel?

$$\text{SNR} = S/N = 2mW/0.04mW = 50.$$

$$C = 10 \times 10^6 \times \log_2(1 + \text{SNR}) = 10^7 \times 5.67 = 56.7\text{Mbit/sec}.$$

Note that this capacity value is higher than the Nyquist bandwidth of the channel. To achieve this high value of capacity it is necessary to use more than 2 voltage levels to represent bits ($M > 2$), this was rarely done in practice in the past, however, with the introduction of OFDM it has become more common to use modulation techniques like QPSK (Quadrature Phase Shift Keying) in which more than two symbols are transmitted per time slot, and hence it becomes possible to exceed the Nyquist rate.

The Shannon Capacity formula also provides a general idea of how much noise we can tolerate on a channel. Suppose we have a radio bandwidth of 30 MHz, as for example in the 802.11b channel, and we want to transmit data at 11 Mbit/sec. Then,

$$\begin{aligned} \text{SNR} &= 2(C/B) - 1 \\ \text{SNR} &= 2(11 * 10^6/30 * 10^6) - 1 \\ \text{SNR} &= 1.28 - 1 = 0.28 \end{aligned}$$

This corresponds to a signal *loss* of 5.38 dB, which indicates that the signal power can actually be *less than* the channel noise level.

Exercise 4.1: Using Shannon's capacity formula

Consider we have a channel with bandwidth 125 MHz. Suppose the received signal level is 5 mW, and the noise level is 1.2 mW. What is the Shannon capacity of the channel?

4.4 System Gain

4.4.1 Free space loss

4.4.2 Antenna gain

4.4.3 Feeder loss

4.4.4 Transmitter power

4.4.5 Receiver sensitivity

4.5 Reflection and Refraction

4.5.1 Multipath Propagation

4.5.2 Orthogonal Frequency Division Multiplexing

Module 5

Wireless LANs

Module contents

Objectives

To develop

-
-
-
-

5.1 Wireless Signal Characteristics

Module 6

Mesh, infrastructure mode, bridges, and other wireless modes

Module contents

Objectives

To develop

-
-
-
-

6.1 Wireless Signal Characteristics

Module 7

Wireless Security

Module 8

Wireless LAN design

Module 9

Wireless LAN troubleshooting

Module 10

Cellular and Fixed Wireless Networks

Module 11

Emerging Trends and ACS Code of Ethics

Bibliography

[1] Standards Australia. Standards australia, 2022. https://www.standards.org.au/.

[2] Wikipedia. Gsm, 2022. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GSM.