Data & Computer Communications

MSCEG 425

Lecture 2

Data and Signals

Fall 2007

0. Overview

In this lecture we will cover the following topics:

3. Data and signals

Note

To be transmitted, data must be transformed to electromagnetic signals.

3.1 ANALOG AND DIGITAL

Data can be analog or digital. The term analog data refers to information that is continuous; digital data refers to information that has discrete states. Analog data take on continuous values. Digital data take on discrete values.

Topics discussed in this section:

Analog and Digital Data
Analog and Digital Signals
Periodic and Nonperiodic Signals

Note

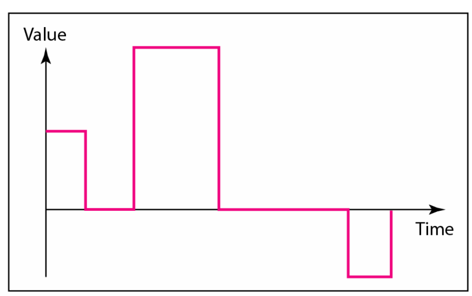
Data can be analog or digital.
Analog data are continuous and take continuous values.
Digital data have discrete states and take discrete values.

Note

Signals can be analog or digital.
Analog signals can have an infinite number of values in a range; digital signals can have only a limited number of values.

Comparison of analog & digital signals

a. Analog signal



b. Digital signal

Periodic and Aperiodic signals

- Both analog and digital signals can take one of two forms
  - **Periodic**: completes a pattern within a measurable time frame called a **period** and repeats that pattern over subsequent identical periods
  - **Aperiodic**:signal changes without exhibiting a pattern or cycle that repeats over time

Note

In data communications, we commonly use periodic analog signals and nonperiodic digital signals.

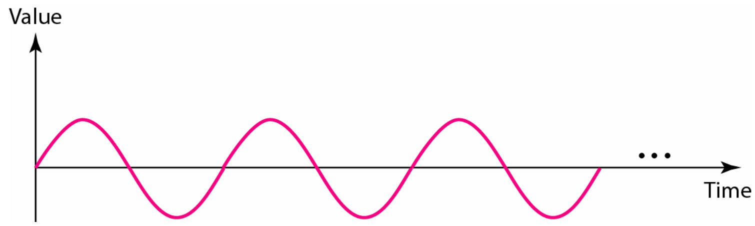
3.2 PERIODIC ANALOG SIGNALS

Periodic analog signals can be classified as simple or composite. A simple periodic analog signal, a sine wave, cannot be decomposed into simpler signals. A composite periodic analog signal is composed of multiple sine waves.

Topics discussed in this section:

Sine Wave
Wavelength
Time and Frequency Domain
Composite Signals
Bandwidth

A sine wave



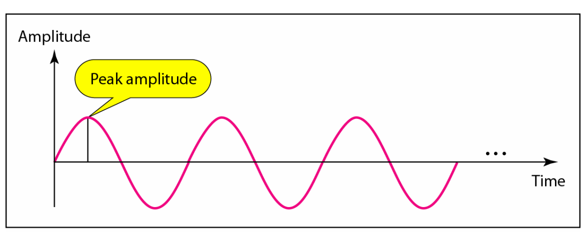
We can mathematically describe the sine wave as

$$s(t) = A \sin(2\pi f t + \varphi)$$

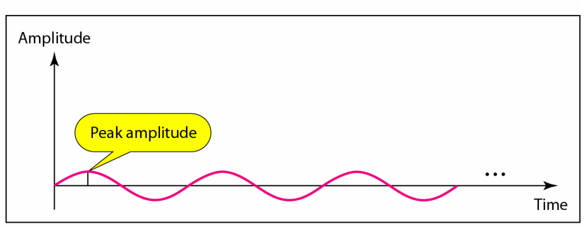
where, s is the instantaneous amplitude
A is the peak amplitude
f is the frequency
φ is the phase
t is the time
π is a constant (~3.14159)

Two signals

Same phase and frequency, but different amplitudes



a. A signal with high peak amplitude



b. A signal with low peak amplitude

Period and frequency

Period refers to the amount of time, in seconds, a signal needs to complete 1 cycle.

- Denoted by T, measured in seconds.

Frequency refers to the number of periods in one second

- Denoted by f, measured in Hertz (Hz)

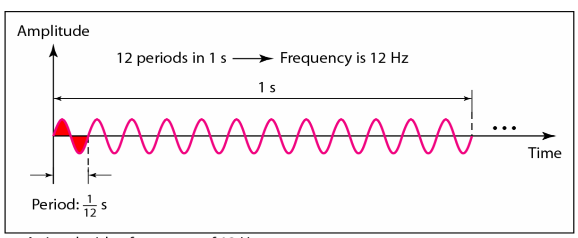
Note

Frequency and period are the inverse of each other.

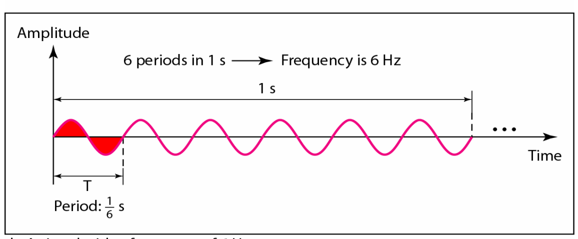
$$f = \frac{1}{T} \qquad \text{and} \qquad T = \frac{1}{f}$$

Two signals

Same amplitude and phase, but different frequencies



a. A signal with a frequency of 12 Hz



b. A signal with a frequency of 6 Hz

Units of period and frequency

Unit	*Equivalent*	*Unit*	*Equivalent*
Seconds (s)	1 s	Hertz (Hz)	1 Hz
Milliseconds (ms)	10^{-3} s	Kilohertz (kHz)	10^{3} Hz
Microseconds (μs)	10^{-6} s	Megahertz (MHz)	10^{6} Hz
Nanoseconds (ns)	10^{-9} s	Gigahertz (GHz)	10^{9} Hz
Picoseconds (ps)	10^{-12} s	Terahertz (THz)	10^{12} Hz

Example

The power we use at home has a frequency of 50 Hz. The period of this sine wave can be determined as follows:

$$\boldsymbol{T} = \frac{1}{f} = \frac{1}{50} = 0.02 \text{ s} = 20 \times 10^{-3} = 20 \text{ ms}$$

Example

The period of a signal is 100 ms. What is its frequency in kilohertz?

Solution

First we change 100 ms to seconds, and then we calculate the frequency from the period (1 Hz = 10^{-3} kHz).

$$100 \text{ ms} = 100 \times 10^{-3} \text{ s} = 10^{-1} \text{ s}$$

$$f = \frac{1}{T} = \frac{1}{10^{-1}} \text{ Hz} = 10 \text{ Hz} = 10 \times 10^{-3} \text{ kHz} = 10^{-2} \text{ kHz}$$

More about frequency

Note

Frequency is the rate of change with respect to time.

Change in a short span of time means high frequency.

Change over a long span of time means low frequency.

Two extremes

Note

If a signal does not change at all, its frequency is zero. If a signal changes instantaneously, its frequency is infinite.

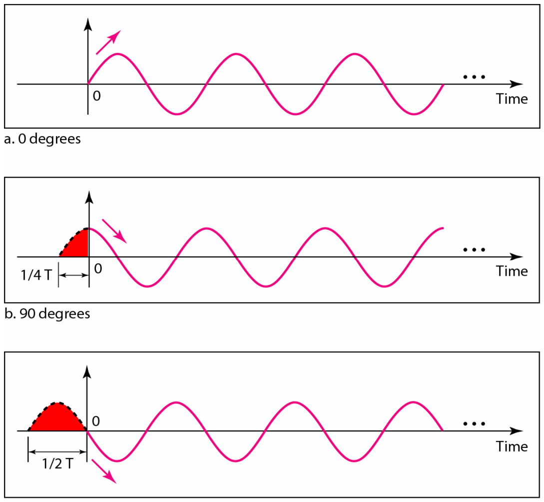
Phase

Note

Phase describes the position of the waveform relative to time 0.

Three sine waves

Same amplitude and frequency, but different phases



a. 0 degrees

b. 90 degrees

c. 180 degrees

Example

A sine wave is offset 1/6 cycle with respect to time 0. What is its phase in degrees and radians?

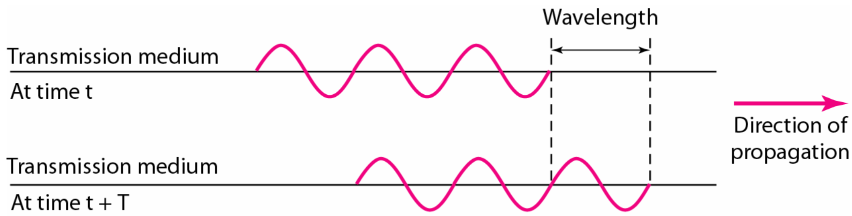
Solution

We know that 1 complete cycle is 360°.
Therefore, 1/6 cycle is

$$\frac{1}{6} \times 360 = 60° = 60 \times \frac{2\pi}{360} \text{ rad} = \frac{\pi}{3} \text{ rad} = 1.046 \text{ rad}$$

Wavelength and period

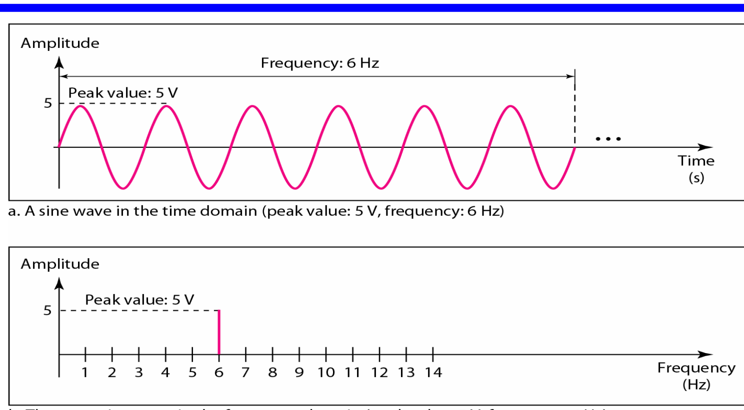
• Wavelength is another characteristic of a signal traveling through a transmission medium.
• The wavelength depends on both the frequency and the medium.
• The wavelength is the distance a signal can travel in one period.



$$\lambda = c/f$$

where, λ is the wavelength
c is the speed of light (~3×10^8 m/s)
f is the frequency

Time-domain and frequency-domain plots of a sine wave



a. A sine wave in the time domain (peak value: 5 V, frequency: 6 Hz)

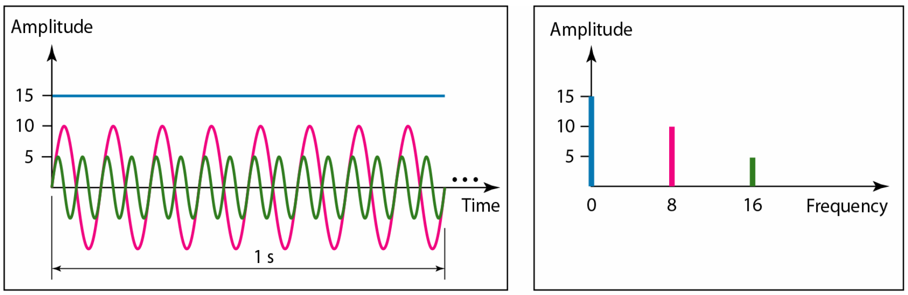
b. The same sine wave in the frequency domain (peak value: 5 V, frequency: 6 Hz)

Note

A complete sine wave in the time domain can be represented by one single spike in the frequency domain.

Example

The frequency domain is more compact and useful when we are dealing with more than one sine wave. For example, the following figure shows three sine waves, each with different amplitude and frequency. All can be represented by three spikes in the frequency domain.



a. Time-domain representation of three sine waves with frequencies 0, 8, and 16

b. Frequency-domain representation of the same three signals

Composite signals

Note

A single-frequency sine wave is not useful in data communications;
we need to send a composite signal, a signal made of many simple sine waves.

In other words, we can write a composite signal as

$$s(t) = A_1 \sin(2\pi f_1 t + \varphi_1) + A_2 \sin(2\pi f_2 t + \varphi_2) + A_3 \sin(2\pi f_3 t + \varphi_3) + \ldots$$

Limited bandwidth

- Any communications channel or transmission medium has a defined bandwidth, which specifies the band of sinusoidal frequency components that can be transmitted through the channel.
- We can use a mathematical technique called **Fourier analysis** to show that any **periodic** signal is made up of an infinite series of sinusoidal frequency components.
  - The period of the signal determines the fundamental frequency component
  - The other components have frequencies which are integer multiples of the fundamental frequency, known as the harmonics of the fundamental

Fourier analysis

Note

According to Fourier analysis, any composite signal is a combination of simple sine waves with different frequencies, amplitudes, and phases.

In other words, we can write a composite signal as

$$s(t) = A_1 \, sin(2\pi f_1 t + \varphi_1) + A_2 \, sin(2\pi f_2 t + \varphi_2) + A_3 \, sin(2\pi f_3 t + \varphi_3) + \ldots$$

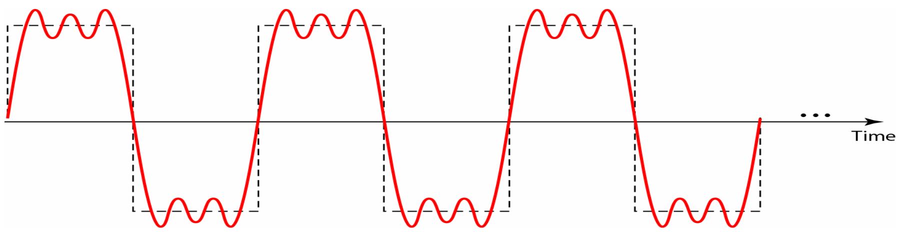
Signal decomposition

Note

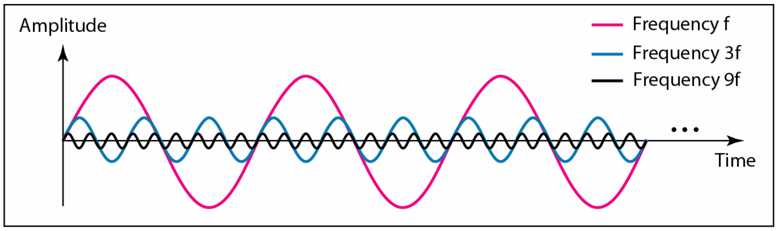
If the composite signal is periodic, the decomposition gives a series of signals with discrete frequencies; if the composite signal is nonperiodic, the decomposition gives a combination of sine waves with continuous frequencies.

Example

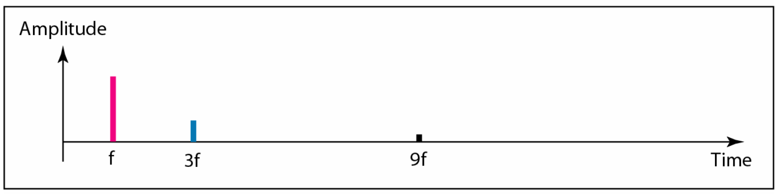
The figure shows a periodic composite signal with frequency f. This type of signal is not typical of those found in data communications. We can consider it to be three alarm systems, each with a different frequency. The analysis of this signal can give us a good understanding of how to decompose signals.



Decomposition of a composite periodic signal in the time and frequency domains



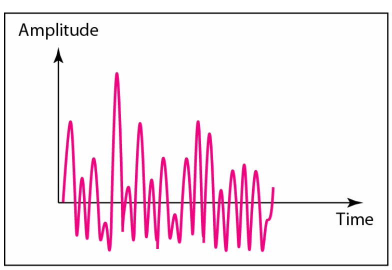
a. Time-domain decomposition of a composite signal



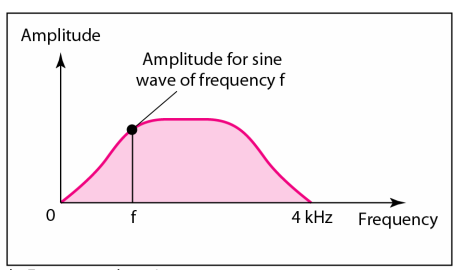
b. Frequency-domain decomposition of the composite signal

Example

The figure shows a nonperiodic composite signal. It can be the signal created by a microphone or a telephone set when a word or two is pronounced. In this case, the composite signal cannot be periodic, because that implies that we are repeating the same word or words with exactly the same tone.



a. Time domain



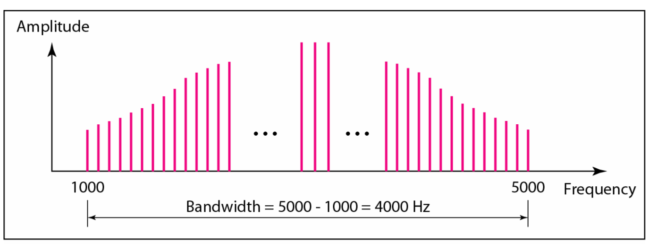
b. Frequency domain

Bandwidth

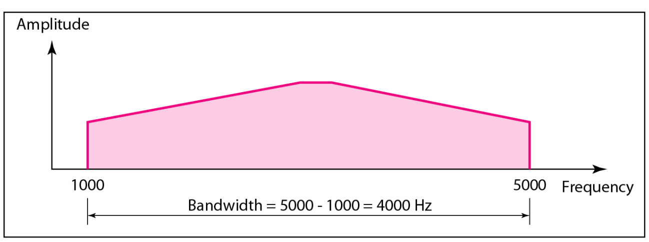
Note

The bandwidth of a composite signal is the difference between the highest and the lowest frequencies contained in that signal.

The bandwidth of periodic and nonperiodic composite signals



a. Bandwidth of a periodic signal



b. Bandwidth of a nonperiodic signal

Example

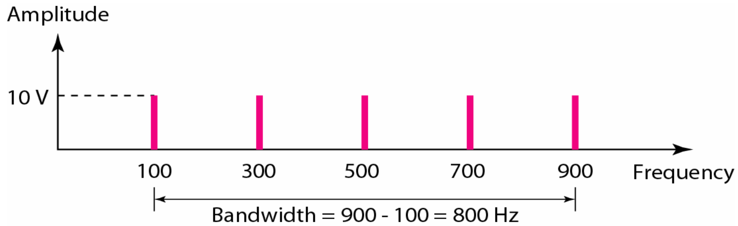
If a periodic signal is decomposed into five sine waves with frequencies of 100, 300, 500, 700, and 900 Hz, what is its bandwidth? Draw the spectrum, assuming all components have a maximum amplitude of 10 V.

Solution

Let f_h be the highest frequency, f_l the lowest frequency, and **B** the bandwidth. Then

$$\boxed{B = f_h - f_l = 900 - 100 = 800 \text{ Hz}}$$

The spectrum has only five spikes, at 100, 300, 500, 700, and 900 Hz



Example

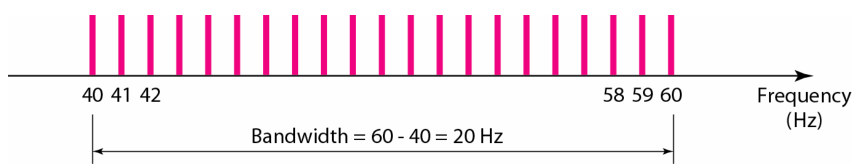
A periodic signal has a bandwidth of 20 Hz. The highest frequency is 60 Hz. What is the lowest frequency? Draw the spectrum if the signal contains all integer frequencies of the same amplitude.

Solution

Let f_h be the highest frequency, f_l the lowest frequency, and **B** the bandwidth. Then

$$\boxed{B = f_h - f_l \Rightarrow 20 = 60 - f_l \Rightarrow f_l = 60 - 20 = 40 \text{ Hz}}$$

The spectrum contains all integer frequencies. We show this by a series of spikes as shown below

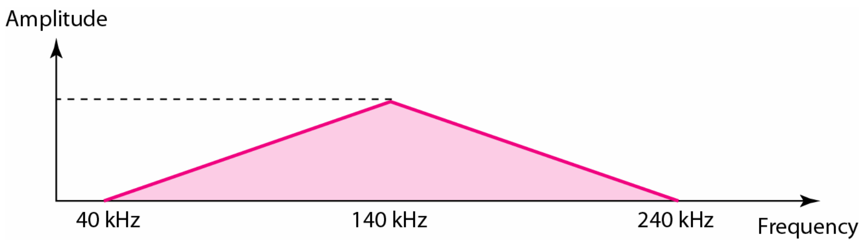


Example

A nonperiodic composite signal has a bandwidth of 200 kHz, with a middle frequency of 140 kHz and peak amplitude of 20 V. The two extreme frequencies have an amplitude of 0. Draw the frequency domain of the signal.

Solution

The lowest frequency must be at 40 kHz and the highest at 240 kHz. Figure below shows the frequency domain and the bandwidth.



Example

Another example of a nonperiodic composite signal is the signal received by an old-fashioned analog black-and-white TV.

A TV screen is made up of pixels. If we assume a resolution of 640 × 480, we have 307,200 pixels per screen.

If we scan the screen 30 times per second, this is 307,200 × 30 = 9,216,000 pixels per second.

The worst-case scenario is alternating black and white pixels. We can send 2 pixels per cycle.

Therefore, we need 9,216,000 / 2 = 4,608,000 cycles per second, or Hz. The bandwidth needed is 4.608 MHz.

3.3 DIGITAL SIGNALS

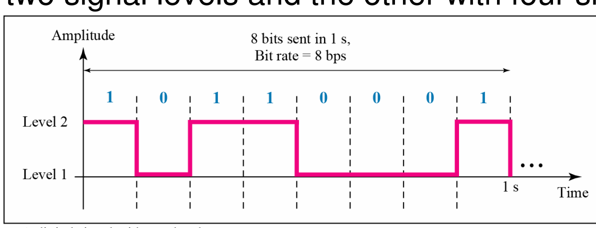
In addition to being represented by an analog signal, information can also be represented by a digital signal. For example, a 1 can be encoded as a positive voltage and a 0 as zero voltage. A digital signal can have more than two levels. In this case, we can send more than 1 bit for each level.

Topics discussed in this section:

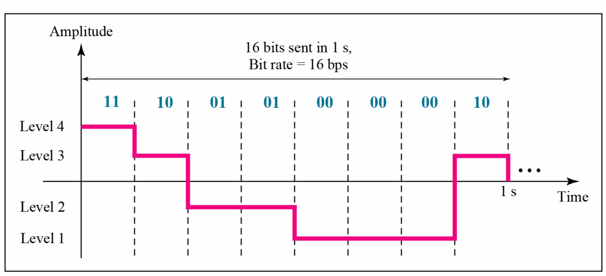
Bit Rate
Bit Length
Digital Signal as a Composite Analog Signal
Examples of applications

Two digital signals:

one with two signal levels and the other with four signal levels



a. A digital signal with two levels



b. A digital signal with four levels

Example: signal levels vs bits

A digital signal has eight levels. How many bits are needed per level?

Solution

We calculate the number of bits from the formula $\log_2 n$

$$\boxed{\text{Number of bits per level} = \log_2 8 = 3}$$

Each signal level is represented by 3 bits.

Example: signal levels vs bits

A digital signal has nine levels. How many bits are needed per level?

Solution

We calculate the number of bits by using the formula **log2n,** i.e. $\log_2 9=3.17$

So each signal level is represented by 3.17 bits. However, this answer is not realistic. The number of bits sent per level needs to be an **integer as well as a power of 2**. For this example, 4 bits can represent one level.

Bit rate and bit interval

- Most digital signals are aperiodic, so the period or frequency are not appropriate.
- *Bit interval* (instead of period) and *bit rate* (instead of frequency) are used to describe digital signals.
- **Bit interval** is the time required to send one signle bit
- **Bit rate** is the number of bit intervals per second
  - —Usually expressed as bits per second (bps)

Example: bit rate for text

Assume we need to download text documents at the rate of 100 pages per minute. What is the required bit rate of the channel?

Solution

A page is an average of 24 lines with 80 characters in each line. If we assume that one character requires 8 bits, the bit rate is

$$\boxed{100 \times 24 \times 80 \times 8 = 1{,}636{,}000 \text{ bps} = 1.636 \text{ Mbps}}$$

Example: bit rate for audio

A digitized voice channel, is made by digitizing a 4-kHz bandwidth analog voice signal. We need to sample the signal at twice the highest frequency (two samples per hertz). We assume that each sample requires 8 bits. What is the required bit rate?

Solution

The bit rate can be calculated as

$$\boxed{2 \times 4000 \times 8 = 64{,}000 \text{ bps} = 64 \text{ kbps}}$$

Example: bit rate for video

What is the bit rate for high-definition TV (HDTV)?

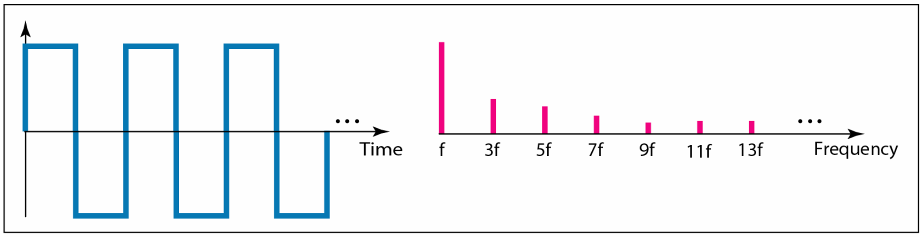
Solution

HDTV uses digital signals to broadcast high quality video signals. The HDTV screen is normally a ratio of 16 : 9. There are 1920 by 1080 pixels per screen, and the screen is renewed 30 times per second. Twenty-four bits represents one color pixel.

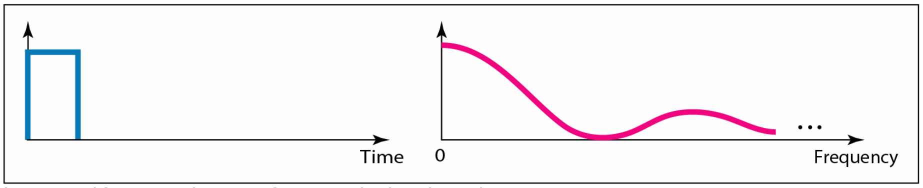
$$\boxed{1920 \times 1080 \times 30 \times 24 = 1{,}492{,}992{,}000 \text{ or } 1.5 \text{ Gbps}}$$

The TV stations reduce this rate to 20 to 40 Mbps through compression.

The time and frequency domains of periodic and nonperiodic digital signals

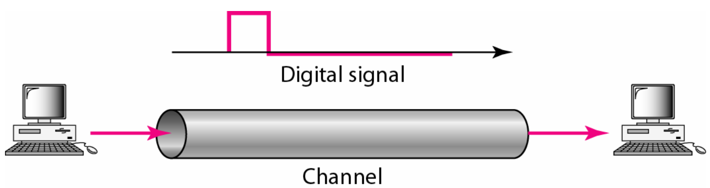


a. Time and frequency domains of periodic digital signal



b. Time and frequency domains of nonperiodic digital signal

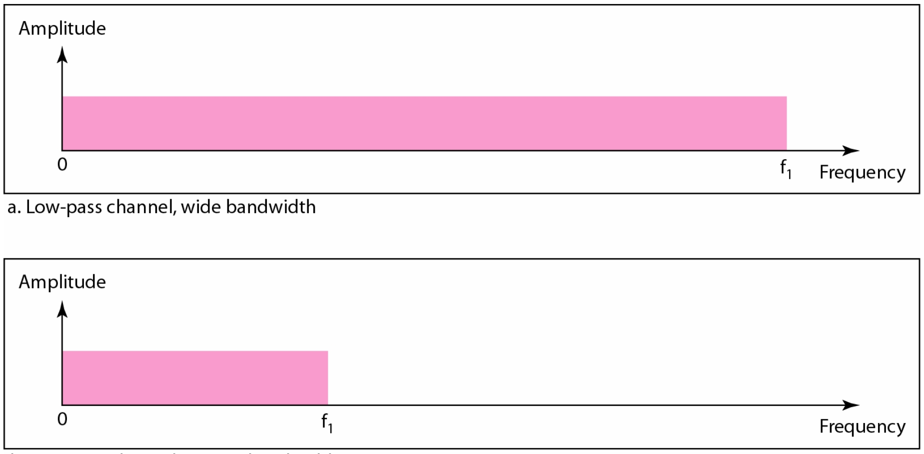
Baseband transmission



Note

A digital signal is a composite analog signal with an infinite bandwidth.

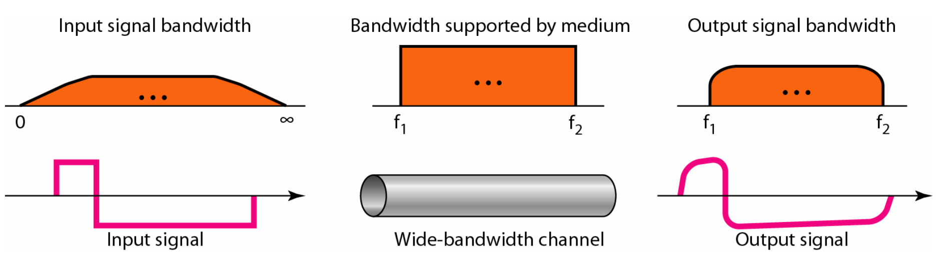
Bandwidths of two low-pass channels



a. Low-pass channel, wide bandwidth

b. Low-pass channel, narrow bandwidth

Baseband transmission using a dedicated medium



Note

Baseband transmission of a digital signal that preserves the shape of the digital signal is possible only if we have a low-pass channel with an infinite or very wide bandwidth.

Example

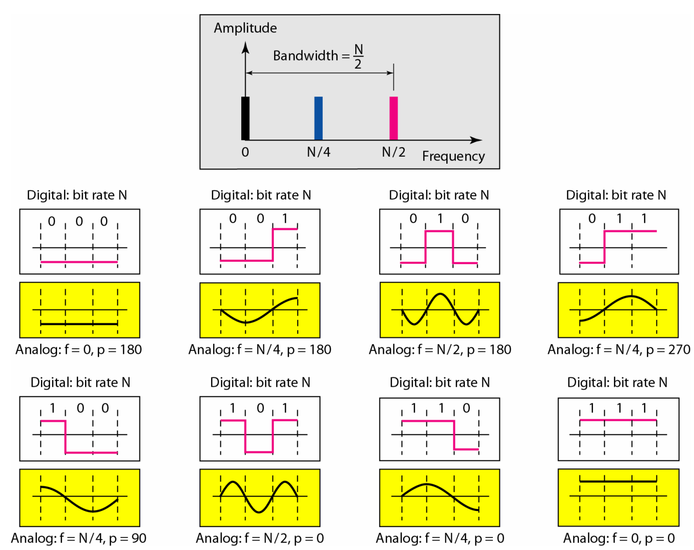
An example of a dedicated channel where the entire bandwidth of the medium is used as one single channel is a LAN.

Almost every wired LAN today uses a dedicated channel for two stations communicating with each other.

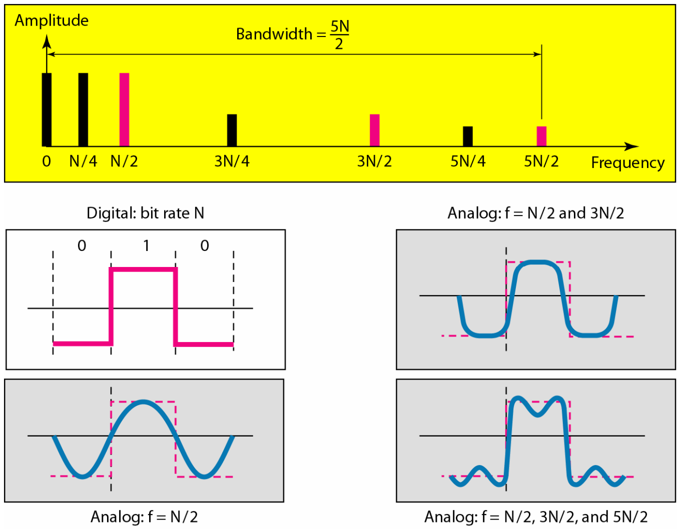
In a bus topology LAN with multipoint connections, only two stations can communicate with each other at each moment in time (timesharing); the other stations need to refrain from sending data.

In a star topology LAN, the entire channel between each station and the hub is used for communication between these two entities. We study LANs in a later lecture.

Rough approximation of a digital signal using the first harmonic for worst case



Simulating a digital signal with first three harmonics



Note

In baseband transmission, the required bandwidth is proportional to the bit rate; if we need to send bits faster, we need more bandwidth.

Bandwidth requirements

Bit Rate	Harmonic 1	Harmonics 1, 3	Harmonics 1, 3, 5
$n = 1$ kbps	$B = 500$ Hz	$B = 1.5$ kHz	$B = 2.5$ kHz
$n = 10$ kbps	$B = 5$ kHz	$B = 15$ kHz	$B = 25$ kHz
$n = 100$ kbps	$B = 50$ kHz	$B = 150$ kHz	$B = 250$ kHz

Example

What is the required bandwidth of a low-pass channel if we need to send 1 Mbps by using baseband transmission?

Solution

The answer depends on the accuracy desired.

a. The minimum bandwidth, is B = bit rate/2, or 500 kHz.

b. A better solution is to use the first and the third harmonics with $B = 3 \times 500$ kHz $= 1.5$ MHz.

c. Still a better solution is to use the first, third, and fifth harmonics with $B = 5 \times 500$ kHz $= 2.5$ MHz.

Example

We have a low-pass channel with bandwidth 100 kHz. What is the maximum bit rate of this channel?

Solution

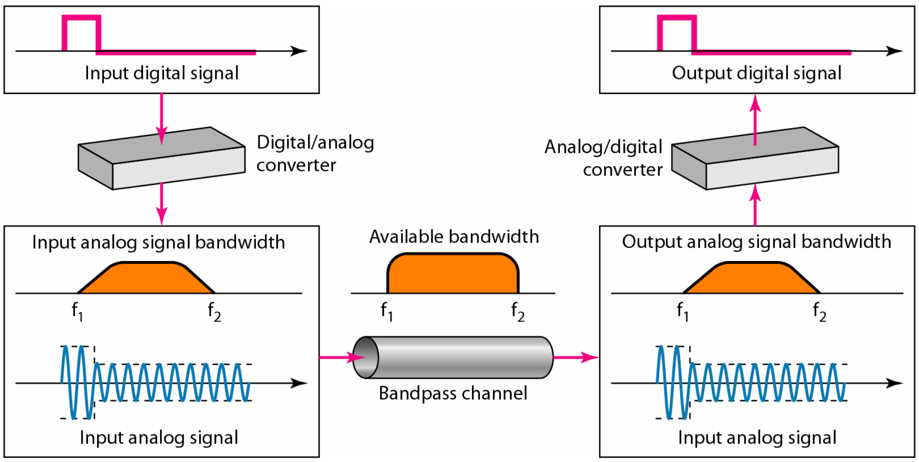
The maximum bit rate can be achieved if we use the first harmonic. The bit rate is 2 times the available bandwidth, or 200 kbps.

Bandwidth of a bandpass channel

Note

If the available channel is a bandpass channel, we cannot send the digital signal directly to the channel; we need to convert the digital signal to an analog signal before transmission.

Modulation of a digital signal for transmission on a bandpass channel



Example

An example of broadband transmission using modulation is the sending of computer data through a telephone subscriber line, the line connecting a resident to the central telephone office.

These lines are designed to carry voice with a limited bandwidth. The channel is considered a bandpass channel.

We convert the digital signal from the computer to an analog signal, and send the analog signal.

We can install two converters to change the digital signal to analog and vice versa at the receiving end. The converter, in this case, is called a **modem** which we discuss in detail in following lectures.

Example

A second example is the digital cellular telephone. For better reception, digital cellular phones convert the analog voice signal to a digital signal.
Although the bandwidth allocated to a company providing digital cellular phone service is very wide, we still cannot send the digital signal without conversion. The reason is that we only have a bandpass channel available between caller and callee. We need to convert the digitized voice to a composite analog signal before sending.

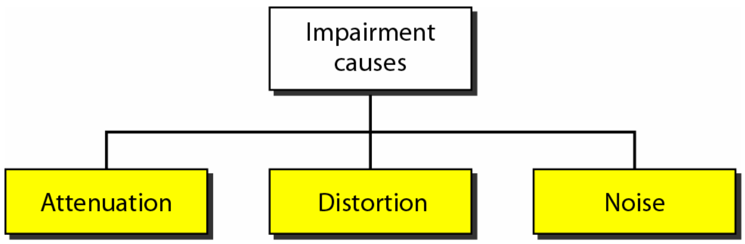
3.4 TRANSMISSION IMPAIRMENT

Signals travel through transmission media, which are not perfect. The imperfection causes signal impairment. This means that the signal at the beginning of the medium is not the same as the signal at the end of the medium. What is sent is not what is received. Three causes of impairment are attenuation, distortion, and noise.

Topics discussed in this section:

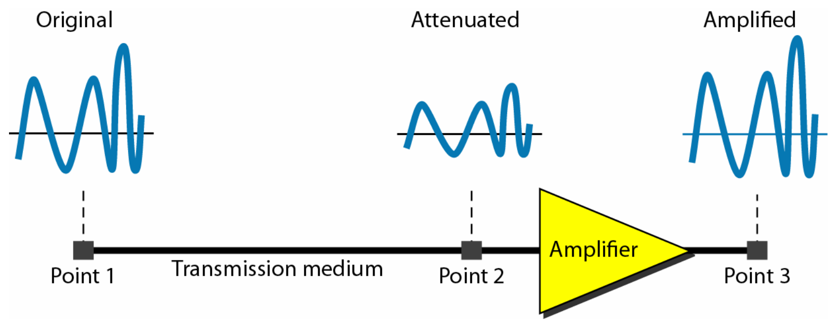
Attenuation
Distortion
Noise

Causes of impairment



Attenuation

Attenuation means loss of energy.
When a signal travels through a medium, it looses some of its energy so that it can overcome the resistance of the medium.
To compensate for this loss, amplifiers are used to amplify the signal.



Decibel

- To show that a signal has lost or gained strength, we use the concept of the decibel (dB).
- The decibel measures the relative strengths of two signals or a signal at two different points.
- The decibel is negative if a signal is attenuated and positive if a signal is amplified.

$$\mathbf{dB = 10 \log_{10}(P_2/P_1)}$$

where P_1 and P_2 are the powers of a signal at points 1 and 2, respectively

Example

Suppose a signal travels through a transmission medium and its power is reduced to one-half. This means that P_2 is $(1/2)P_1$. In this case, the attenuation (loss of power) can be calculated as

$$10 \log_{10} \frac{P_2}{P_1} = 10 \log_{10} \frac{0.5 P_1}{P_1} = 10 \log_{10} 0.5 = 10(-0.3) = -3 \text{ dB}$$

A loss of 3 dB (–3 dB) is equivalent to losing one-half the power.

Example

A signal travels through an amplifier, and its power is increased 10 times. This means that $P_2 = 10P_1$. In this case, the amplification (gain of power) can be calculated as

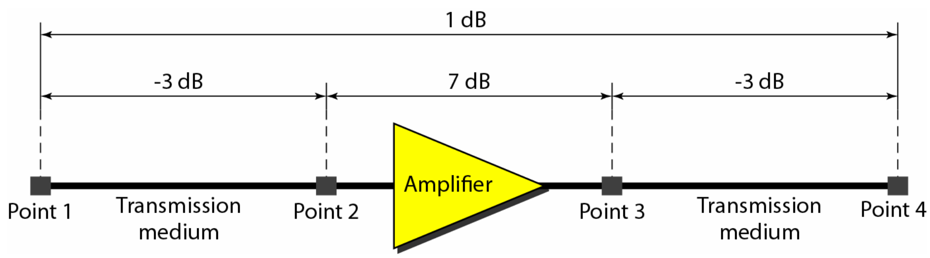
$$\boxed{10 \log_{10} \frac{P_2}{P_1} = 10 \log_{10} \frac{10P_1}{P_1}}$$

$$\boxed{= 10 \log_{10} 10 = 10(1) = 10 \text{ dB}}$$

Example

One reason that engineers use the decibel to measure the changes in the strength of a signal is that decibel numbers can be added (or subtracted) when we are measuring several points (cascading) instead of just two. In the figure below, a signal travels from point 1 to point 4. In this case, the decibel value can be calculated as

$$\boxed{\text{dB} = -3 + 7 - 3 = +1}$$



Example

Sometimes the decibel is used to measure signal power in milliwatts. In this case, it is referred to as **dB_m** and is calculated as **$dB_m = 10 \log10 P_m$**
where P_m is the power in milliwatts.

Calculate the power of a signal with –30 dB_m

Solution
We can calculate the power in the signal as

$$\mathrm{dB_m} = 10 \log_{10} P_m = -30$$
$$\log_{10} P_m = -3 \qquad P_m = 10^{-3}\ \mathrm{mW}$$

Example

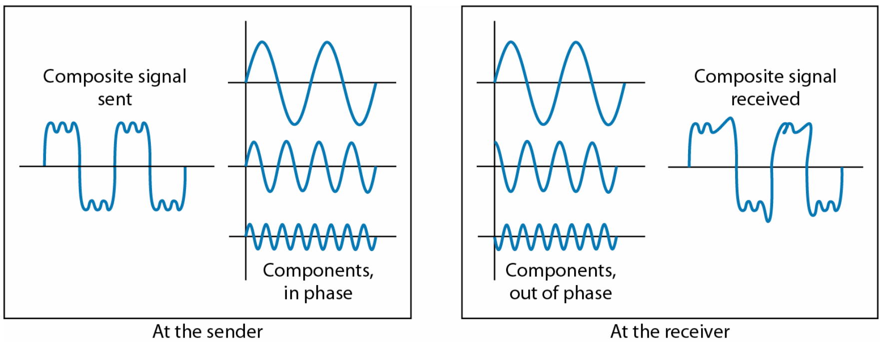
The loss in a cable is usually defined in decibels per kilometer (dB/km). If the signal at the beginning of a cable with –0.3 dB/km has a power of 2 mW, what is the power of the signal at 5 km?

Solution
The loss in the cable in decibels is 5 × (–0.3) = –1.5 dB. We can calculate the power as

$$\mathrm{dB} = 10 \log_{10} \frac{P_2}{P_1} = -1.5$$
$$\frac{P_2}{P_1} = 10^{-0.15} = 0.71$$
$$P_2 = 0.71 P_1 = 0.7 \times 2 = 1.4\ \mathrm{mW}$$

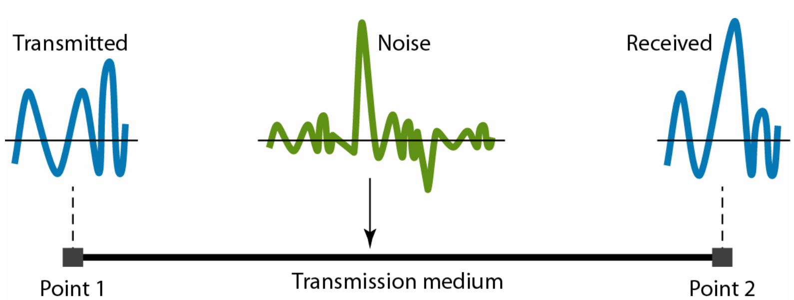
Distortion

• Distortion means that the signal changes its form or shape.
• Distortion occurs in a composite signal made of different frequencies.
• Each signal component has its own propagation speed through a medium and therefore its own delay in arriving at the final destination.



Noise

Several types of noise such as thermal noise, induced noise, crosstalk and impulse noise may corrupt the signal.



Signal-to-Noise ratio (SNR)

- SNR is the statistical ratio of power of the signal to the power of the noise
- In decibels it can be expressed as follows:

$$SNR_{dB} = 10 \log_{10} SNR$$

Example

The power of a signal is 10 mW and the power of the noise is 1 μW; what are the values of SNR and SNR_{dB} ?

Solution

The values of SNR and SNR_{dB} can be calculated as follows:

$$SNR = \frac{10{,}000\ \mu W}{1\ mW} = 10{,}000$$

$$SNR_{dB} = 10 \log_{10} 10{,}000 = 10 \log_{10} 10^4 = 40$$

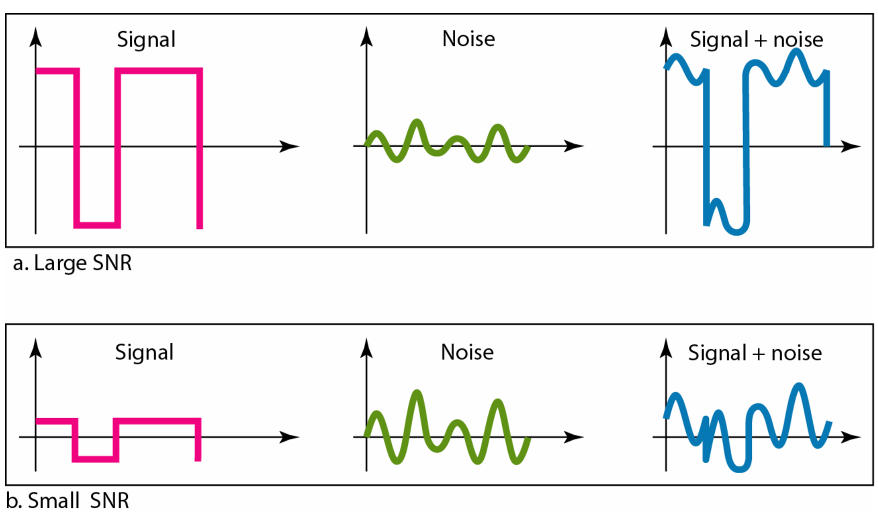
Example

The values of SNR and SNR_{dB} for a noiseless channel are

$$SNR = \frac{\text{signal power}}{0} = \infty$$
$$SNR_{dB} = 10 \log_{10} \infty = \infty$$

We can never achieve this ratio in real life; it is an ideal ratio.

Two cases of SNR: a high SNR & a low SNR



3.5 DATA RATE LIMITS

A very important consideration in data communications is how fast we can send data, in bits per second, over a channel. Data rate depends on three factors:

1. The bandwidth available
2. The level of the signals we use
3. The quality of the channel (the level of noise)

Topics discussed in this section:

Noiseless Channel: Nyquist Bit Rate
Noisy Channel: Shannon Capacity
Using Both Limits

Noiseless channel: Nyquist bit rate

- For a noiseless channel, the **Nyquist bit rate** formula defines the theoretical maximum bit rate

$$\boxed{C = 2\,B \log_2 L}$$

where, C is the channel capacity or bit rate in bps
B is the bandwidth in Hz
L is the number of signal levels used to represent data

Example

Consider a noiseless channel with a bandwidth of 3000 Hz transmitting a signal with two signal levels (binary signal). The maximum bit rate can be calculated as

$$\boxed{\text{BitRate} = 2 \times 3000 \times \log_2 2 = 6000 \text{ bps}}$$

Consider the same noiseless channel transmitting a signal with four signal levels (for each level, we send 2 bits). The maximum bit rate can be calculated as

$$\boxed{\text{BitRate} = 2 \times 3000 \times \log_2 4 = 12{,}000 \text{ bps}}$$

Example

We need to send 265 kbps over a noiseless channel with a bandwidth of 20 kHz. How many signal levels do we need?

Solution

We can use the Nyquist formula as shown:

$$265{,}000 = 2 \times 20{,}000 \times \log_2 L$$
$$\log_2 L = 6.625 \qquad L = 2^{6.625} = 98.7 \text{ levels}$$

Since this result is not a power of 2, we need to either increase the number of levels or reduce the bit rate. If we have 128 levels, the bit rate is 280 kbps. If we have 64 levels, the bit rate is 240 kbps.

Noisy channel: Shannon capacity

- In reality, we cannot have a noiseless channel; the channel is always noisy.
- In this case, the **Shannon capacity formula** is used to determine the theoretical highest data rate for a noisy channel:

$$\mathbf{C = B \log_2 (1+SNR)}$$

where,	C	is the capacity of the channel in bps
	B	is the bandwidth in Hz
	SNR	is the signal-to-noise ratio

Example

Consider an extremely noisy channel in which the value of the signal-to-noise ratio is almost zero. In other words, the noise is so strong that the signal is faint. For this channel the capacity C is calculated as

$$C = B \log_2 (1 + \text{SNR}) = B \log_2 (1 + 0) = B \log_2 1 = B \times 0 = 0$$

This means that the capacity of this channel is zero regardless of the bandwidth. In other words, we cannot receive any data through this channel.

Example

We can calculate the theoretical highest bit rate of a regular telephone line. A telephone line normally has a bandwidth of 3000. The signal-to-noise ratio is usually 3162. For this channel the capacity is calculated as

$$\boxed{\begin{aligned} C &= B \log_2 (1 + \text{SNR}) = 3000 \log_2 (1 + 3162) = 3000 \log_2 3163 \\ &= 3000 \times 11.62 = 34{,}860 \text{ bps} \end{aligned}}$$

This means that the highest bit rate for a telephone line is 34.860 kbps. If we want to send data faster than this, we can either increase the bandwidth of the line or improve the signal-to-noise ratio.

Example

The signal-to-noise ratio is often given in decibels. Assume that SNR_{dB} = 36 and the channel bandwidth is 2 MHz.
The theoretical channel capacity can be calculated as

$$\boxed{\begin{gathered} \text{SNR}_{\text{dB}} = 10 \log_{10} \text{SNR} \rightarrow \text{SNR} = 10^{\text{SNR}_{\text{dB}}/10} \rightarrow \text{SNR} = 10^{3.6} = 3981 \\ C = B \log_2 (1 + \text{SNR}) = 2 \times 10^6 \times \log_2 3982 = 24 \text{ Mbps} \end{gathered}}$$

Example

For practical purposes, when the SNR is very high, we can assume that SNR + 1 is almost the same as SNR. In these cases, the theoretical channel capacity can be simplified to

$$C = B \times \frac{\mathrm{SNR_{dB}}}{3}$$

For example, we can calculate the theoretical capacity of the previous example as

$$C = 2\ \mathrm{MHz} \times \frac{36}{3} = 24\ \mathrm{Mbps}$$

Example

We have a channel with a 1-MHz bandwidth. The SNR for this channel is 63. What are the appropriate bit rate and signal level?

Solution

First, we use the Shannon formula to find the upper limit.

$$C = B \log_2 (1 + \mathrm{SNR}) = 10^6 \log_2 (1 + 63) = 10^6 \log_2 64 = 6\ \mathrm{Mbps}$$

The Shannon formula gives us 6 Mbps, the upper limit. For better performance we choose something lower, 4 Mbps, for example. Then we use the Nyquist formula to find the number of signal levels.

$$4\ \mathrm{Mbps} = 2 \times 1\ \mathrm{MHz} \times \log_2 L \quad \Rightarrow \quad L = 4$$

Note

The Shannon capacity gives us the upper limit; the Nyquist formula tells us how many signal levels we need.

3.6 PERFORMANCE

One important issue in networking is the performance of the network—how good is it? We discuss quality of service, an overall measurement of network performance, in greater detail in Chapter 24. In this section, we introduce terms that we need for future chapters.

Topics discussed in this section:

Bandwidth
Throughput
Latency (Delay)
Bandwidth-Delay Product

Bandwidth

Note

In networking, we use the term bandwidth in two contexts.

- **The first, bandwidth in hertz, refers to the range of frequencies in a composite signal or the range of frequencies that a channel can pass.**
- **The second, bandwidth in bits per second, refers to the speed of bit transmission in a channel or link.**

Example

The bandwidth of a subscriber line is 4 kHz for voice or data. The bandwidth of this line for data transmission can be up to 56,000 bps using a sophisticated modem to change the digital signal to analog.

If the telephone company improves the quality of the line and increases the bandwidth to 8 kHz, we can send 112,000 bps by using the same technology.

Throughput

- The **throughput** is the measurement of how fast data can pass through a network in one second.
- Throughput is calculated as follows:

Throughput = frames per second x bits per frame

Example

A network with bandwidth of 10 Mbps can pass only an average of 12,000 frames per minute with each frame carrying an average of 10,000 bits. What is the throughput of this network?

Solution

We can calculate the throughput as

$$\text{Throughput} = \frac{12{,}000 \times 10{,}000}{60} = 2 \text{ Mbps}$$

The throughput is almost one-fifth of the bandwidth in this case.

Propagation time and transmission time

- **Propagation time** measures the time required for a signal (or a bit) to travel from one point of the transmission medium to another.
- Propagation time is calculated as follows:

Propagation time [s] = Distance [m] / Propagation speed [m/s]

- **Transmission time** measures the time required for a signal to be transmitted from the sending device to the medium.
- Transmission time is calculated as follows:

Transmission time [s] = Data [bits] / Bandwidth [bps]

Example

What is the propagation time if the distance between the two points is 12,000 km? Assume the propagation speed to be 2.4×10^8 m/s in cable.

Solution

We can calculate the propagation time as

$$\text{Propagation time} = \frac{12{,}000 \times 1000}{2.4 \times 10^8} = 50 \text{ ms}$$

The example shows that a bit can go over the Atlantic Ocean in only 50 ms if there is a direct cable between the source and the destination.

Example

What are the propagation time and the transmission time for a 2.5kbyte message (an e-mail) if the bandwidth of the network is 1 Gbps? Assume that the distance between the sender and the receiver is 12,000 km and that light travels at 2.4×10^8 m/s.

Solution

We can calculate the propagation and transmission time as follows:

$$\text{Propagation time} = \frac{12{,}000 \times 1000}{2.4 \times 10^8} = 50 \text{ ms}$$

$$\text{Transmission time} = \frac{2500 \times 8}{10^9} = 0.020 \text{ ms}$$

Note that in this case, because the message is short and the bandwidth is high, the dominant factor is the propagation time, not the transmission time. The transmission time can be ignored.

Example

What are the propagation time and the transmission time for a 5-Mbyte message (an image) if the bandwidth of the network is 1 Mbps? Assume that the distance between the sender and the receiver is 12,000 km and that light travels at 2.4×10^8 m/s.

Solution

We can calculate the propagation and transmission times as shown on the next slide.

$$\text{Propagation time} = \frac{12{,}000 \times 1000}{2.4 \times 10^8} = 50 \text{ ms}$$

$$\text{Transmission time} = \frac{5{,}000{,}000 \times 8}{10^6} = 40 \text{ s}$$

Note that in this case, because the message is very long and the bandwidth is not very high, the dominant factor is the transmission time, not the propagation time. The propagation time can be ignored.

3.7 SUMMARY (part 3)

- Data must be transformed into electromagnetic signals prior to transmission across a network.
- Data and signals can be either analog or digital.
- A signal is periodic if it consists of a continuously repeating pattern.
- Each sine wave can be characterized by its amplitude, frequency, and phase.
- Frequency and period are inverses of each other.
- A time-domain graph plots amplitude as a function of time.
- A frequency-domain graph plots each sine wave's peak amplitude against its frequency.
- By using Fourier analysis, any composite signal can be represented as a combination of simple sine waves.
- The spectrum of a signal consists of the sine waves that make up the signal.
- The bandwidth of a signal is the range of frequencies the signal occupies. Bandwidth is determined by finding the difference between the highest and lowest frequency components.
- Bit rate (number of bits per second) and bit interval (duration of 1 bit) are terms used to describe digital signals.
- A digital signal is a composite signal with an infinite bandwidth.
- Bit rate and bandwidth are proportional to each other.
- The Nyquist formula determines the theoretical data rate for a noiseless channel.
- The Shannon capacity determines the theoretical maximum data rate for a noisy channel.
- Attenuation, distortion, and noise can impair a signal.
- Attenuation is the loss of a signal's energy due to the resistance of the medium.
- The decibel measures the relative strength of two signals or a signal at two different points.
- Distortion is the alteration of a signal due to the differing propagation speeds of each of the frequencies that make up a signal.
- Noise is the external energy that corrupts a signal.
- We can evaluate transmission media by throughput, propagation speed, and propagation time.
- The wavelength of a frequency is defined as the propagation speed divided by the frequency.

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