Antenna Measurements: Fundamentals and Advanced Techniques

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Antenna Measurements: Contents

- Overview of antenna parameters
- Field regions and classification of antenna ranges
- Far-field ranges
- Compact ranges
- Near-field techniques
- Gain and efficiency measurements
- Measurement uncertainty
- Antenna diagnostics
- ESoA course at DTU



Introduction

Why do they do antenna measurements?

- Computation techniques deal with models not real-life antennas
- Some parameters are too difficult to be computed or simply cannot be computed
- Validation of computation models
- In many applications, it is required that the antenna is certified by measurements:
 - satellite and airborn antennas
 - military applications
 - reference antennas



Antenna Parameters

- Antennas can be characterized by 10+ parameters:
 - Directivity, gain, beamwidth, sidelobe level, VSWR, polarization, coverage,...
- Most of these can be derived from just few:
 - Complex radiation pattern (amplitude and phase) in 2-, 4-planes or full-sphere
 - <u>Gain (or efficiency)</u>
 - Impedance (or scattering parameters)
- There are also some application-dependent parameters:
 - Effective isotropic radiated power, surface current distribution, antenna noise temperature, maximum available capacity, specific absorption rate, etc.

IEEE Standard Test Procedures for Antennas



IEEE Std 149[™]-19795 (Revision of IEEE Std 149-1965)

149[™] IEEE Standard Test Procedures for Antennas

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Antenna Standards Committee



The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc. 3 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016-5997, USA

19 December 1979

Print: SH7682 PDF: SS7682

IEEE Std 149-1979

Definition of test procedures for (mainly) far-field measurements

Near-field and compact range measurements are just mentioned

An update of this standard is being planned

IEEE Standard Test Procedures for Antennas

IEEE

IEEE STANDARDS ASSOCIATION

IEEE Recommended Practice for Near-Field Antenna Measurements

IEEE Antennas and Propagation Society

Sponsored by the Antenna Standards Committee

IEEE 3 Park Avenue New York, NY 10016-5997 USA

5 December 2012

IEEE Std 1720™-2012

IEEE Std 1720-2012

Recommended practice for near-field measurements

Theory of 3 near-field techniques is described, including probes, uncertainty analysis, and some special topics



- <u>Reactive zone</u>: portion of the region surrounding the Antenna Under Test (AUT), where the reactive fields predominate
- <u>Near-field zone</u>: intermediate region, where the radiation fields predominate, but the angular field distribution depends on the distance from the AUT
- <u>Far-field zone</u>: that region where the angular field distribution does not depend on the distance from the AUT

Classification of Measurement Ranges

- ➢ Radiation pattern, directivity, gain, etc. − are the <u>far-field parameters</u>
- Test conditions imply that the field radiated by AUT should closely approximate "plane wave" when probed at the far-field distance
- Alternatively, "plane wave" illumination of AUT is required in receiving mode
- > The measurement ranges can be classified by the far-field condition:
 - <u>Far-field ranges</u> (free-space, reflection, compact range)
 - <u>Near-field ranges</u> (planar, cylindrical, spherical) + tranformation to the far field
- There are also exceptions, e.g. reverberation chamber allows measurement of many useful antenna and communication system parameters in a closed metal box

Far-Field Ranges – Outdoor: Elevated Range



- The source and AUT are elevated by H_t and H_r above the terrain
- Directive source antennas with low sidelobes are used to minimize ground reflections
- Water-proof absorbers and resistive fences are used to reduce ground reflections
- Special signal processing is used to extract the desired signal
- Use of short pulses to isolate the desired signal
- Disadvantages: external interference, influence of environment, etc.



- *The height of the source* is adjusted to make use of reflected wave in constructive interference
- The ground plane should be flat and its reflectivity should not depend on weather conditions
- The source antenna pattern should be low-directive
- This configuration is useful in UHF and VHF bands, where the reflections cannot be avoided
- Disadvantages: external interference, influence of environment, frequency dependence, etc.



- *The orientation of the source* is adjusted to minimize the reflected wave
- The source pattern should have low sidelobes or nulls outside the main lobe
- The source pattern should be frequency independent
- Water-proof absorbers and resistive fences can also be used to reduce ground reflections
- Disadvantages: external interference, influence of environment, frequency dependence, etc.

Antenna Measurements

Example: Far-field distance and FF range power budget

Our AUT is a usual commercial reflector for satellite TV reception: diameter is 80 cm, operation frequency is 12 GHz

<u>FF distance for this antenna $(2D^2/\lambda) \approx 50 \text{ m}$ </u>

- ➤ Transmitter power for a FF test range (12 GHz):
- the source antenna has gain of 20 dBi,
- a typical AUT will be a 30 dBi antenna,
- the receiver has sensitivity of -100 dBm,
- the distance between the towers is 600 m
- the desired dynamic range is $\geq 60 \text{ dB}$

Signal generator power level (using $P_r = P_t \cdot G_t \cdot G_r (\lambda/4\pi R)^2) \rightarrow +20 \text{ dBm} = 100 \text{ mW}$





Anechoic Chambers

Shielded room covered inside by absorbing material to simulate free-space conditions



Advantages:

- All weather operation
- Control of environment (temperature, humidity, cleanliness)
- Security
- Free from interference

Disadvantages:

• Limited dimensions, typically < 10 m

Microwave Absorbers I



- Material of various size and shape to absorb microwave energy
- Typically made of foam filled with carbon powder

Basic types are:

- ▶ Pyramidal absorbers: $h > 2.5\lambda$, $\rho < -45$ dB
- Convoluted absorbers for mm-waves
- ► Flat laminate absorbers: $\rho \le -20 \text{ dB}$, $h > \lambda/4$
- Walkway absorbers
- High-power absorbers
- > Resonant thin resistive films (h ~ 0.1λ)
- ➢ Ferrite tiles, typically for 20...200 MHz

Microwave Absorbers II

Muximoni Reflections at Normal Incidence											
MODEL NUMBER	80 MHz	120 MHz	200 MHz	300 MHz	500 MHz	L-BAND 1-2 GHz	S-BAND 2- GHz	C-BAND -8 GHz	X-BAND 8-12 GHz	KU-BAND 12-18 GHz	K-BAND 18-0GHz
EHP-3PCL (8 cm)								-30 dB	-40 dB	-45dB	-45 dB
EHP-5PCL (12 cm)							-30dB	-40 dB	-45 dB	-50 dB	-50 dB
EHP-8PCL (20 cm)						-30 dB	-40 dB	-45 dB	-50 dB	-50 dB	-50 dB
EHP-12 PCL (30 cm)						-35 dB	-40 dB	-45 dB	-50 dB	-50 dB	-50 dB
EHP-18 PCL (45 cm)					-30 dB	-40 dB	-45dB	-50 dB	-50 dB	-50 dB	-50 dB
EHP-24PCL (60 cm)			-20 dB	-30 dB	-35 dB	-40 dB	-50dB	-50 dB	-50 dB	-50 dB	-50 dB
EHP-36 PCL (90 cm)	-11 dB	-13 dB	-25 dB	-30 dB	-40 dB	-45dB	-50dB	-50 dB	-50 dB	-50 dB	-50 dB
EHP-48 PCL (120 cm)	-15 dB	-20 dB	-30 dB	-35 dB	-40 dB	-45 dB	-50dB	-50 dB	-50 dB	-50 dB	-50 dB

Maximum Reflections at Normal Incidence







Frequency (GHz)

— Antenna Measurements

5.7 cm

2.25 In

Types of Anechoic Chambers



(a) Rectangular chamber



(b) Tapered chamber

Rectangular anechoic chamber

- Specular reflection points are covered with the best (largest) absorbers
- Maximum incidence angle $\theta < 50^{\circ}$

Tapered anechoic chamber

- Reflections from the side walls interfere constructively in the test zone
- Source position is adjusted at each frequency
- Used mainly at lower frequencues (UHF), where absorbers performance decreases

Compact Ranges – Indoor Far-Field for Large AUT





 Condition of plane-wave illumination is fulfilled at short distance

Advantages

- Indoor: controlled, secure environment
- Direct far-field pattern measurements
- Wide bandwidth, typically 3...40 GHz

Disadvantages

- High cost because of large reflectors and expensive feeds
- Test zone quality has limitations

Antenna Measurements

Types of Compact Ranges



Single parabolic reflector CR

Dual paraboliccylinder CR





Dual offset Cassegrain CR

> Single plane collimating range

Antenna Measurements



Quiet Zone

Quiet zone: volume, where the AUT is located, in which the illuminating field amplitude and phase differs from those of a plane wave by less than a pre-established amount



Taper: amplitude variation in the quiet zone border induced by the feed pattern and path lengths to the reflector surface. Typical specs are from -0.5 dB to -1dB

Ripple: field variations produced by edge reflector diffractions and reflections from the room walls. Typical specs are ± 0.5 dB in amplitude and $\pm 10^{\circ}$ in phase

Edge Diffraction



(a) Front view of a serrated-edge CATR reflector.



KNIFE EOGE

ROLLED EDGE

- Serrated edge tapers the amplitude of the reflected field near the edge
- Reflector size is increased
 by about 30%, which
 increases the cost
- Rolled edge gradually redirect the reflected energy away from the quiet zone
- Reflector size is increased by 10-20%
- Wall absorbers must be better (larger)



(b) Side view of a rolled-edge CATR reflector.

Hologram Compact Range



Applied at frequencies 100..600 GHz

Amplitude hologram: etched thin metallic layer of a dielectric film

It modulates the spherical wave so that a plane wave is created on the other side

Advantages:

Rather easy and cheap to make

Quiet zone of 1..2 m are possible

Disadvantages:

Narrow frequency range

One polarization

Near-Field Measurement Techniques



Near-Field Measurements at DTU



Measurement of telemetry antenna on 1/2.5 scale model of DFS-Kopernikus satellite in 1984



Measurement of antenna patterns on the MIRAS space radiometer for ESA's SMOS mission in 2006

NF techniques: general problem



Assume we have ideal probes that measure the electric and magnetic field tangential to an arbitrary surface S enclosing the test antenna

The far field is then given by vector Kirckhoff integral of the equivalent electric and magnetic currents

It can be derived in terms of tangential electric or magnetic field alone: expression with dyadic Green's function $\overline{\bar{G}}$

However, $\overline{\overline{G}}$ is impractical to find, unless the surface S supports orthogonal vector wave functions

Three coordinate systems offer mechanically convenient scanning possibilities: planar, cylindrical, and spherical

A.D. Yaghjian, "An overview of near-field antenna measurements", *IEEE Trans. Antennas Propagat.*, vol. 34, no. 1, 1986, pp. 30-45.



Scanning Geometries II Probe plane-polar Test Antenna Plane-Polar Data Grid Rotator Arm Probe \overline{m} plane-bi-polar 1 ł 1 Test Antenna **Bi-Polar** Data Grid Rotator Antenna Measurements

Domain Transformation I



Domain Transformation II

The Plane Wave Expansion: E is a divergence-free electromagnetic field

$$\mathbf{T}_{s}(k_{x},k_{y}) = \int_{-\infty-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{-\infty-\infty}^{\infty} \mathbf{E}_{a}(x,y,0)e^{-i(k_{x}x+k_{y}y)}dxdy \qquad \mathbf{E}(\mathbf{r}) = \frac{1}{4\pi^{2}}\int_{-\infty-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{-\infty-\infty}^{\infty} \mathbf{T}(k_{x},k_{y})e^{i(k_{x}x+k_{y}y+\sqrt{k^{2}-k_{x}^{2}-k_{y}^{2}})}dk_{x}dk_{y}$$



We choose the known expansion functions

We determine the unknown expansion coefficients from measurements/samples of the signal or field according to some sampling criterion

We determine the **far field** from the found expansion coefficients

Probe Correction



The signal measured by the probe w_{probe} is not equal to the electric field E

Different probes give different measured signals

 $w_{dipole} \neq w_{horn} \neq w_{patch}$

To determine the electric field we need to compensate for the influence of the probe – hence we need to know the characteristics of the probe

Planar Near-Field Antenna Measurement



Step 2: Calculation of the spectrum







Near-Field vs. Far-Field

Near-Field Techniques

- Measurement indoors
 - controlled environment, shielding, security
 - small size facility compared to AUT size
- Transformation is necessary
 - amplitude and phase are required
 - essentially more data are required
 - probe characterization is required
 - precise alignment is required
 - long measurement time
 - field is calculated everywhere
 - diagnostics is possible
- Highest accuracy is achievable

Far-Field Techniques

- Measurement outdoors
 - reflections, RF interference, weather
- Measurement indoors
 - controlled environment, shielding, security
 - AUT size limitation $(2D^2/\lambda)$
 - quality of the plane wave (CR)
- Far-field is measured directly
 - only necessary data are measured
 - short measurement time
- Moderate accuracy is achievable

Gain Measurement: Definitions

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No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form, in an electronic retrieval system or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. **2.107 directivity (of an antenna) (in a given direction).** The ratio of the radiation intensity in a given direction from the antenna to the radiation intensity averaged over all directions.

$$D = \frac{r^2 \operatorname{Re} \left\{ \frac{1}{2} \boldsymbol{E} \cdot \boldsymbol{H}^* \right\}}{P_{rad} / 4\pi}$$

2.165 gain (in a given direction). The ratio of the radiation intensity, in a given direction, to the radiation intensity that would be obtained if the power accepted by the antenna were radiated isotropically.

$$G = \frac{r^2 \operatorname{Re}\left\{\frac{1}{2}\boldsymbol{E} \cdot \boldsymbol{H}^*\right\}}{P_{acc} / 4\pi}$$

2.321 realized gain. The gain of an antenna reduced by the losses due to the mismatch of the antenna input impedance to a specified impedance.

$$G_R = G\left(1 - \left|\Gamma_{in}\right|^2\right)$$

Three-Antenna Technique

Friis transmission formula

$$P_{RX} = P_{TX}G_{A1}G_{A2}\left(\frac{\lambda}{4\pi R}\right)^2 M_{A1}M_{A2}$$













Three equations with three(*) unknowns

$$G_{A1}G_{A2} = \frac{P_{A2}}{P_{TX}} \left(\frac{4\pi R}{\lambda}\right)^2 \frac{1}{M_{A1}M_{A2}}$$

$$G_{A1}G_{A3} = \frac{P_{A3}}{P_{TX}} \left(\frac{4\pi R}{\lambda}\right)^2 \frac{1}{M_{A1}M_{A3}}$$

$$G_{A2}G_{A3} = \frac{P_{A3}}{P_{TX}} \left(\frac{4\pi R}{\lambda}\right)^2 \frac{1}{M_{A2}M_{A3}}$$

 M_x is impedance mismatch correction

Solution

$$G_{A1} = \sqrt{\frac{G_{A1}G_{A2} \cdot G_{A1}G_{A3}}{G_{A2}G_{A3}}}$$

- P_{TX} must be stable and known (*)
- *R* must be far-field distance

Gain-Transfer (Gain Substitution) Technique



$$|E_{AUT}|^{2} \propto G_{AUT} P_{acc,AUT}$$

$$E_{AUT}$$

$$|E_{SGH}|^{2} \propto G_{SGH} P_{acc,SGH}$$

$$E_{SGH}$$

$$G_{AUT} = G_{SGH} \frac{|E_{AUT}|^{2}}{|E_{SGH}|^{2}} \frac{P_{acc,SGH}}{P_{acc,AUT}}$$

For near-field antenna measurements this procedure becomes somewhat more complicated...

... but in any case we need to know $G_{\rm SGH}$

Gain-Transfer Technique – Near-Field Measurement

1. Formula with signals

$$G_{AUT} = G_{SGH} \frac{\left|E_{AUT}\right|^2}{\left|E_{SGH}\right|^2} \frac{P_{acc,SGH}}{P_{acc,AUT}} = G_{SGH} \frac{\left|E_{AUT}\right|^2}{\left|E_{SGH}\right|^2} \frac{M_{SGH}}{M_{AUT}}$$

 E_{AUT} , E_{SGH} are obtained from measured near-field signals through NF-FF transformation

2. Formula with total power

In the case of spherical near-field measurement

$$\eta_{AUT} = \eta_{SGH} \frac{P_{AUT}^{rad}}{P_{SGH}^{rad}} \frac{M_{SGH}}{M_{AUT}}$$

$$G_{AUT} = D_{AUT} \eta_{AUT}$$

 η_{AUT} is AUT radiation efficiency

$$P^{rad} = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{smn} \left| Q_{smn}^{(3)} \right|^2$$

Gain determination procedure

- Full-sphere measurement of AUT
- Full-sphere measurement of SGH
- Measurement of Γ_{AUT} and Γ_{SGH}
- Calculation of G_{AUT} or η_{AUT}

Gain Standards

Standard Gain Horns





Standard Dipoles





Measurement Uncertainty

Typical inaccuracies and errors

Pattern, Directivity

- Mechanical: pointing, axes intersection, probe orientation
- Electrical: noise, drift, non-linearity, leakage
- Probe-related: polarization, channel balance, pattern knowledge
- Stray signals: wall/terrain scattering, multiple reflections, interference
- Acquisition: scan area truncation, sampling point offset
- Processing: NF-FF transformation, filtering, interpolation

Gain, Efficiency

- AUT directivity
- SGH gain or efficiency
- Total radiated power (AUT, SGH)
- Mismatch correction (AUT, SGH)
- Amplitude drift
- Cable variations
- Scattering effects

Influence of each item is evaluated either by experiments or by simulations and *standard uncertainty* is estimated. *Combined standard uncertainty* is calculated as root sum square (RSS) of all standard uncertainties. *Expanded uncertainty* is calculated applying an *expansion factor* for the corresponding *confidence level*.

"Guide to the Expression of Uncertainty in Measurement", Intern. Organization for Standardization, Geneva, Switzerland, 1995.

Application Dependent Aspects

- Measurement of small antennas
 - Omni-directional pattern, influence of feed cable, integrated generator/receiver
 - Reverberation chamber measurements, Wheeler cup method
- Measurement of mm-wave antennas
 - Very large antennas, amplitude and phase instability
 - Phase drift compensation, phase-less measurements, holographic compact range
- Measurement of antennas located at/on user
 - Influence of user: absorption and scattering, instability
 - Specific Absorption Rate (SAR), Effective Isotropic Radiated Power (EIRP), etc.
- Measurement of antennas on satellites, aircrafts, ships, cars, etc.
 - Scattering from closely located and very big conductive body
 - Truncated measurements, measurements on scaled models
- Measurement of MIMO systems and smart antennas
 - New parameters: diversity gain, available capacity, total isotropic sensitivity, etc.
 - New techniques are required and being developed

Antenna Diagnostics I

Identification of the unwanted mechanical and/or electrical errors in an antenna which modify the antenna performance









Feed network problems







Antenna Diagnostics II



Advanced Spherical Near-Field Antenna Measurements







ESoA course held every second year around end-of-June at DTU Advanced theory in few lectures Practical exercises including Mechanical alignment Probe calibration NF antenna measurement S-parameters measurements Antenna diagnostics Data processing and presentation



Literature

The following literature is suggested for reading:

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