Antennas & Propagation

CSG 250

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Introduction

- An antenna is an electrical conductor or system of conductors
  - Transmission - radiates electromagnetic energy into space
  - Reception - collects electromagnetic energy from space
- In two-way communication, the same antenna can be used for transmission and reception

Radiation Patterns

- Radiation pattern
  - Graphical representation of radiation properties of an antenna
  - Depicted as two-dimensional cross section
- Beam width (or half-power beam width)
  - Measure of directivity of antenna
  - Angle within which power radiated is at least half of that in most preferred direction
- Reception pattern
  - Receiving antenna's equivalent to radiation pattern
- Omnidirectional vs. directional antenna

Types of Antennas

- Isotropic antenna (idealized)
  - Radiates power equally in all directions
- Dipole antennas
  - Half-wave dipole antenna (or Hertz antenna)
  - Quarter-wave vertical antenna (or Marconi antenna)
- Parabolic Reflective Antenna
  - Used for terrestrial microwave and satellite applications
  - Larger the diameter, the more tightly directional is the beam

Antenna Gain

- Antenna gain
  - Power output, in a particular direction, compared to that produced in any direction by a perfect omnidirectional antenna (isotropic antenna)
- Expressed in terms of effective area
  - Related to physical size and shape of antenna

Antenna Gain

- Relationship between antenna gain and effective area

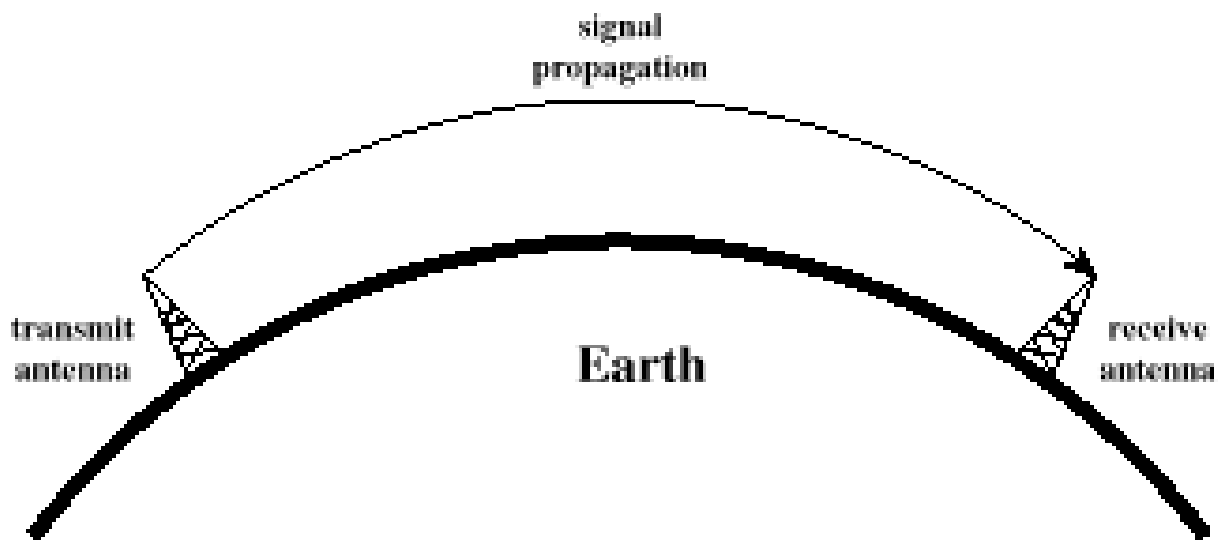
$$G = \frac{4\pi A_e}{\lambda^2} = \frac{4\pi f^2 A_e}{c^2}$$

- G = antenna gain
- A_e = effective area
- f = carrier frequency
- c = speed of light ($\approx 3 \times 10^8$ m/s)
- λ = carrier wavelength

Propagation Modes

- Ground-wave propagation
- Sky-wave propagation
- Line-of-sight propagation

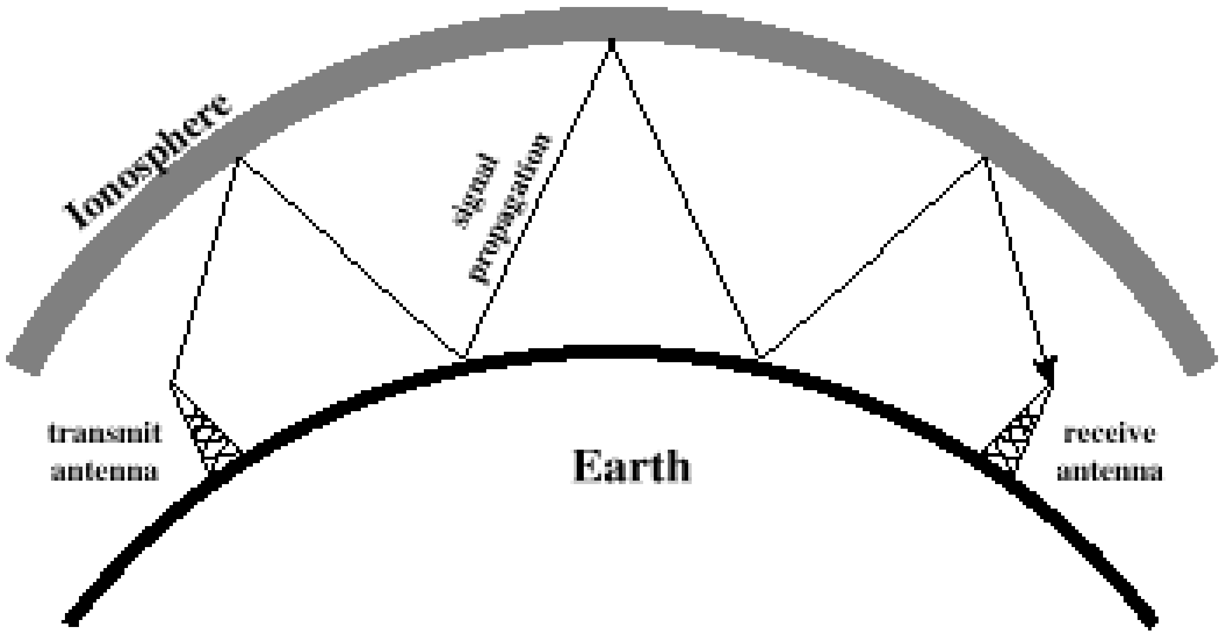
Ground Wave Propagation



Ground Wave Propagation

- Follows contour of the earth
- Can Propagate considerable distances
- Frequencies up to 2 MHz
- Example
  - AM radio

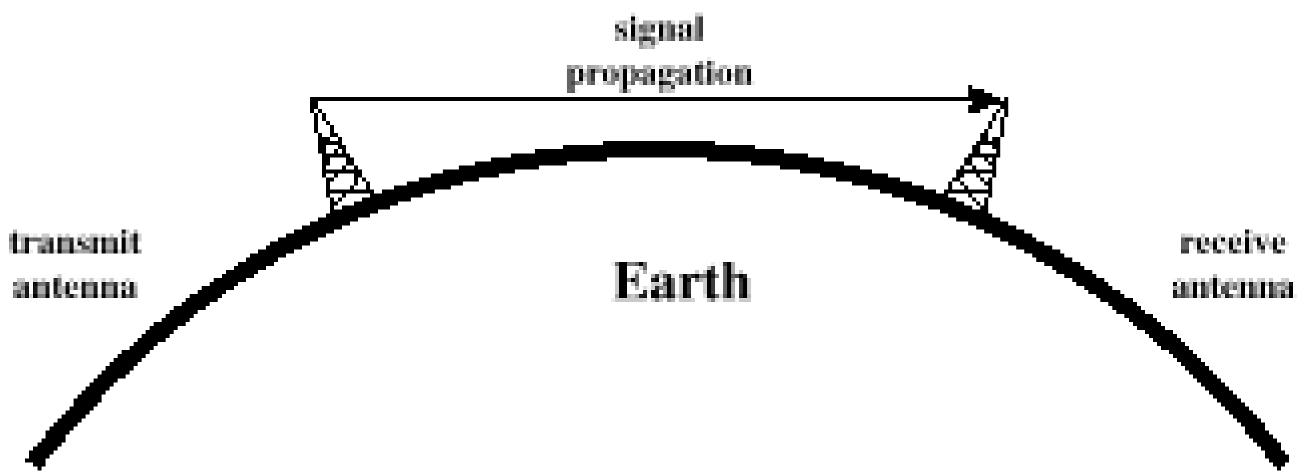
Sky Wave Propagation



Sky Wave Propagation

- Signal reflected from ionized layer of atmosphere back down to earth
- Signal can travel a number of hops, back and forth between ionosphere and earth's surface
- Reflection effect caused by refraction
- Examples
  - Amateur radio
  - CB radio
  - International broadcasts

Line-of-Sight Propagation



Line-of-Sight Propagation

- Above 30 MHz neither ground nor sky wave propagation operates
- Transmitting and receiving antennas must be within line of sight
  - Satellite communication – signal above 30 MHz not reflected by ionosphere
  - Ground communication – antennas within *effective* line of site due to refraction
- Refraction – bending of microwaves by the atmosphere
  - Velocity of electromagnetic wave is a function of the density of the medium
  - When wave changes medium, speed changes
  - Wave bends at the boundary between mediums

Line-of-Sight Equations

- Optical line of sight

$$d = 3.57\sqrt{h}$$

- Effective, or radio, line of sight

$$d = 3.57\sqrt{\mathrm{K}h}$$

  - *d* = distance between antenna and horizon (km)
  - *h* = antenna height (m)
  - K = adjustment factor to account for refraction, rule of thumb K = 4/3

Line-of-Sight Equations

- Maximum distance between two antennas for LOS propagation:

$$3.57\left(\sqrt{\mathrm{K}h_1} + \sqrt{\mathrm{K}h_2}\right)$$

  - h_1 = height of antenna one
  - h_2 = height of antenna two

LOS Wireless Transmission Impairments

- Attenuation
  - Free space loss
- Distortion
- Dispersion
- Noise
- Other effects:
  - Atmospheric absorption
  - Multipath
  - Refraction

Attenuation

- Strength of signal falls off with distance over transmission medium
- Attenuation factors for unguided media:
  - Received signal must have sufficient strength so that circuitry in the receiver can interpret the signal
  - Signal must maintain a level sufficiently higher than noise to be received without error
  - Attenuation is greater at higher frequencies, causing distortion

Free Space Loss

- Free space loss, ideal isotropic antenna

$$\frac{P_t}{P_r} = \frac{(4\pi d)^2}{\lambda^2} = \frac{(4\pi f d)^2}{c^2}$$

- P_t = signal power at transmitting antenna
- P_r = signal power at receiving antenna
- λ = carrier wavelength
- d = propagation distance between antennas
- c = speed of light ($\approx 3 \times 10^8$ m/s)

where d and λ are in the same units (e.g., meters)

Free Space Loss

- Free space loss equation can be recast:

$$L_{dB} = 10\log\frac{P_t}{P_r} = 20\log\left(\frac{4\pi d}{\lambda}\right)$$

$$= -20\log(\lambda) + 20\log(d) + 21.98\text{ dB}$$

$$= 20\log\left(\frac{4\pi f d}{c}\right) = 20\log(f) + 20\log(d) - 147.56\text{ dB}$$

Free Space Loss

- Free space loss accounting for gain of antennas

$$\frac{P_t}{P_r} = \frac{(4\pi)^2 (d)^2}{G_r G_t \lambda^2} = \frac{(\lambda d)^2}{A_r A_t} = \frac{(cd)^2}{f^2 A_r A_t}$$

- G_t = gain of transmitting antenna
- G_r = gain of receiving antenna
- A_t = effective area of transmitting antenna
- A_r = effective area of receiving antenna

- In the above formula, the powers correspond to that of the input signal at the transmitter and output at the receiver, respectively

Free Space Loss

- Free space loss accounting for gain of other antennas can be recast as

$$L_{dB} = 20\log(\lambda) + 20\log(d) - 10\log(A_t A_r)$$

$$= -20\log(f) + 20\log(d) - 10\log(A_t A_r) + 169.54\text{dB}$$

Path Loss Exponents

- The free space path loss model is idealized

$$\frac{P_t}{P_r} = Ad^{\alpha}$$

- Here the exponent α depends on the transmission environment
  - Urban vs suburban, medium-city vs large-city, obstructed vs unobstructed, indoors vs outdoors
  - Generally between 2 and 4
  - Obtained empirically

Distortion

- Signals at higher frequencies attenuate more than that at lower frequencies
- Shape of a signal comprising of components in a frequency band is distorted
- To recover the original signal shape, attenuation is equalized by amplifying higher frequencies more than lower ones

Dispersion

- Electromagnetic energy spreads in space as it propagates
- Consequently, bursts sent in rapid succession tend to merge as they propagate
- For guided media such as optical fiber, fundamentally limits the product RxL, where R is the rate and L is the usable length of the fiber
- Term generally refers to how a signal spreads over space and time

Categories of Noise

- Thermal Noise
- Intermodulation noise
- Crosstalk
- Impulse Noise

Thermal Noise

- Thermal noise due to agitation of electrons
- Present in all electronic devices and transmission media
- Cannot be eliminated
- Function of temperature
- Particularly significant for satellite communication

Thermal Noise

- Amount of thermal noise to be found in a bandwidth of 1Hz in any device or conductor is:

$$N_0 = \mathrm{k}T\ (\mathrm{W/Hz})$$

  - N_0 = noise power density in watts per 1 Hz of bandwidth
  - k = Boltzmann's constant = 1.3803×10^{-23} J/K
  - T = temperature, in kelvins (absolute temperature)

Thermal Noise

- Noise is assumed to be independent of frequency
- Thermal noise present in a bandwidth of *B* Hertz (in watts):

$$N = \mathrm{k}TB$$

or, in decibel-watts

$$N = 10\log \mathrm{k} + 10\log T + 10\log B$$

$$= -228.6\,\mathrm{dBW} + 10\log T + 10\log B$$

Other Kinds of Noise

- Intermodulation noise – occurs if signals with different frequencies share the same medium
  - Interference caused by a signal produced at a frequency that is the sum or difference of original frequencies
- Crosstalk – unwanted coupling between signal paths
- Impulse noise – irregular pulses or noise spikes
  - Short duration and of relatively high amplitude
  - Caused by external electromagnetic disturbances, or faults and flaws in the communications system
  - Primary source of error for digital data transmission

Expression E_b/N_0

- Ratio of signal energy per bit to noise power density per Hertz

$$\frac{E_b}{N_0} = \frac{S/R}{N_0} = \frac{S}{\mathrm{k}TR}$$

- The bit error rate for digital data is a function of E_b/N_0
  - Given a value for E_b/N_0 to achieve a desired error rate, parameters of this formula can be selected
  - As bit rate R increases, transmitted signal power must increase to maintain required E_b/N_0

Other Impairments

- Atmospheric absorption – water vapor and oxygen contribute to attenuation
- Multipath – obstacles reflect signals so that multiple copies with varying delays are received
- Refraction – bending of radio waves as they propagate through the atmosphere

Fading

- Variation over time or distance of received signal power caused by changes in the transmission medium or path(s)
- In a fixed environment:
  - Changes in atmospheric conditions
- In a mobile environment:
  - Multipath propagation

Multipath Propagation

- Reflection - occurs when signal encounters a surface that is large relative to the wavelength of the signal
- Diffraction - occurs at the edge of an impenetrable body that is large compared to wavelength of radio wave
- Scattering – occurs when incoming signal hits an object whose size is in the order of the wavelength of the signal or less

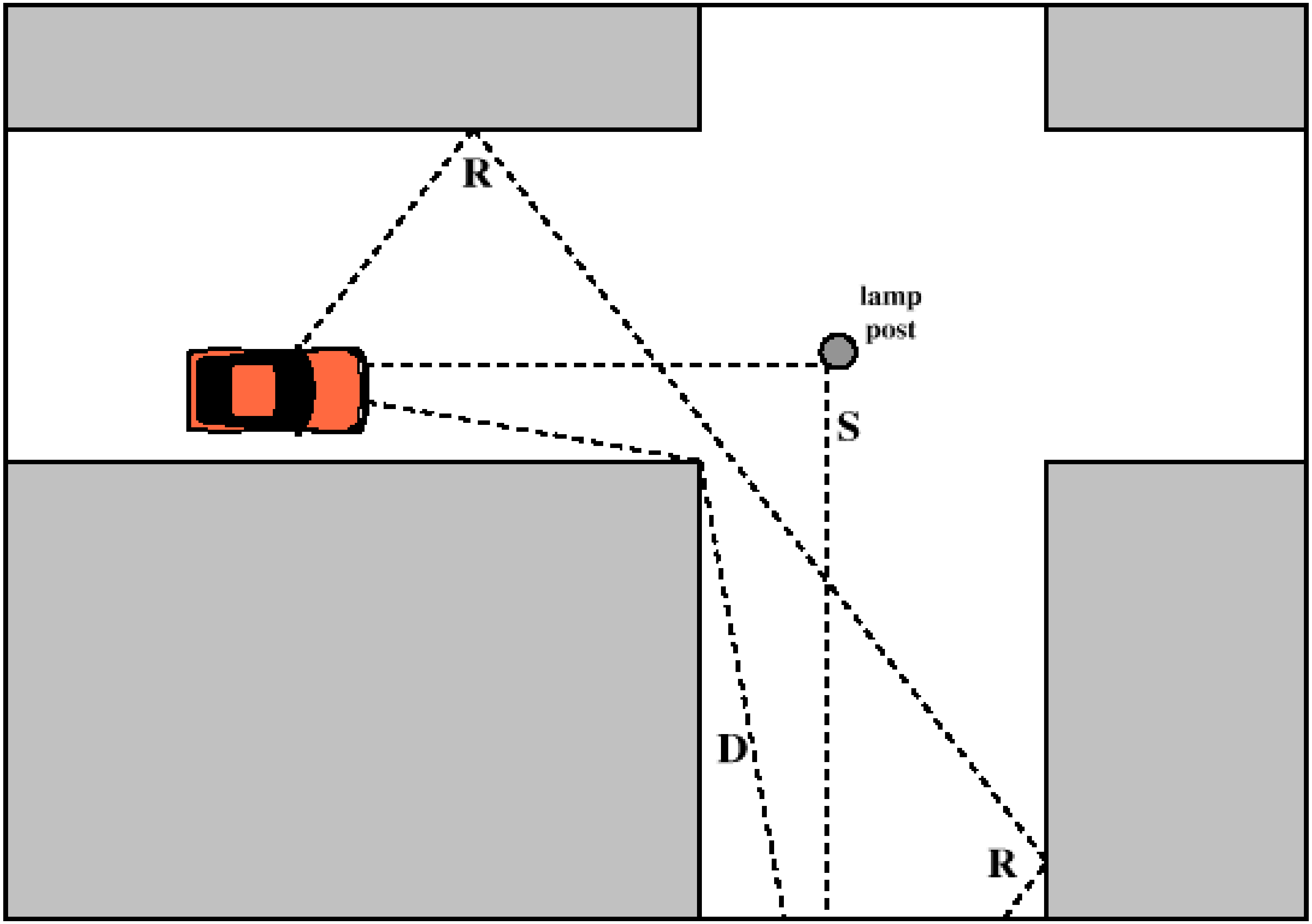


Figure 5.10 Sketch of Three Important Propagation Mechanisms: Reflection (R), Scattering (S), Diffraction (D) [ANDE95]

Effects of Multipath Propagation

- Multiple copies of a signal may arrive at different phases
  - If phases add destructively, the signal level relative to noise declines, making detection more difficult
- Intersymbol interference (ISI)
  - One or more delayed copies of a pulse may arrive at the same time as the primary pulse for a subsequent bit

Types of Fading

- Fast fading
  - Changes in signal strength in a short time period
- Slow fading
  - Changes in signal strength in a short time period
- Flat fading
  - Fluctuations proportionally equal over all frequency components
- Selective fading
  - Different fluctuations for different frequencies
- Rayleigh fading
  - Multiple indirect paths, but no dominant path such as LOS path
  - Worst-case scenario
- Rician fading
  - Multiple paths, but LOS path dominant
  - Parametrized by K, ratio of power on dominant path to that on other paths

Error Compensation Mechanisms

- Forward error correction
- Adaptive equalization
- Diversity techniques

Forward Error Correction

- Transmitter adds error-correcting code to data block
  - Code is a function of the data bits
- Receiver calculates error-correcting code from incoming data bits
  - If calculated code matches incoming code, no error occurred
  - If error-correcting codes don’t match, receiver attempts to determine bits in error and correct

Adaptive Equalization

- Can be applied to transmissions that carry analog or digital information
  - Analog voice or video
  - Digital data, digitized voice or video
- Used to combat intersymbol interference
- Involves gathering dispersed symbol energy back into its original time interval
- Techniques
  - Lumped analog circuits
  - Sophisticated digital signal processing algorithms

Diversity Techniques

- Space diversity:
  - Use multiple nearby antennas and combine received signals to obtain the desired signal
  - Use collocated multiple directional antennas
- Frequency diversity:
  - Spreading out signal over a larger frequency bandwidth
  - Spread spectrum
- Time diversity:
  - Noise often occurs in bursts
  - Spreading the data out over time spreads the errors and hence allows FEC techniques to work well
  - TDM
  - Interleaving