Standardization of a Volumetric Displacement Measurement for Two-Body Abrasion Scratch Test Data Analysis

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May 2010
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Acknowledgments

This research was supported by a NASA Graduate Student Researchers Program (GSRP) grant (NNX07AR55H) provided by the Dust Management Project, under the Exploration Technology Development Program. Matlab assistance was provided by Kevin Higdon, Ph.D. Candidate (UCB) and Bradley W. Cheetham, Ph.D. Student (UCB). SEM work was conducted by Prof. Sayed M. Khalil (Sohag University, Egypt) at the Nanomaterials Characterization Facility, UCB. Test equipment and support were provided by NASA Glenn Research Center. Additional support was provided by BioServe Space Technologies (UCB) and the Achievement Rewards for College Scientists (ARCS) Foundation, Inc.

This report is a formal draft or working paper, intended to solicit comments and ideas from a technical peer group.

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Abstract

A limitation has been identified in the existing test standards used for making controlled, two-body abrasion scratch measurements based solely on the width of the resultant score on the surface of the material. A new, more robust method is proposed for analyzing a surface scratch that takes into account the full three-dimensional profile of the displaced material. To accomplish this, a set of four volume displacement metrics are systematically defined by normalizing the overall surface profile to statistically denote the area of relevance, termed the “Zone of Interaction” (ZOI). From this baseline, depth of the trough and height of the ploughed material are factored into the overall deformation assessment. Proof of concept data were collected and analyzed to demonstrate the performance of this proposed methodology. This technique takes advantage of advanced imaging capabilities that now allow resolution of the scratched surface to be quantified in greater detail than was previously achievable. A quantified understanding of fundamental particle-material interaction is critical to anticipating how well components can withstand prolonged use in highly abrasive environments, specifically for our intended applications on the surface of the Moon and other planets or asteroids, as well as in similarly demanding, harsh terrestrial settings.

Introduction and Background

When reviewing existing data analysis techniques for conducting two-body abrasive scratch tests, it was found that the ASTM International (ASTM) Standard, G 171 (Ref. 1), specified a generic metric based only on an observed scratch width as a way to compare abraded materials (see Fig. 1). A limitation to this method was identified in that the scratch width is based on optical surface measurements, manually defined by approximating the boundaries, but does not consider the three-dimensional (3D) volume of material that was displaced. With large, potentially irregular deformations occurring on softer materials, it becomes unclear where to systematically determine the scratch width (Ref. 2). This issue arose when scratch tests were conducted using custom indenter tips that did not leave traditional uniform wear scars. Specifically, as indicated in Figure 1, surface scratches on different samples may look the same from a top view resulting in an identical scratch width measurement, but may vary in actual penetration depth and/or ploughing deformation. Therefore, two different scratch profiles would be measured as having identical abrasion properties, although they differ significantly. Another limitation was encountered when considering the use of a variety of scratch tips for different test needs, since the ASTM G 171 Standard is only intended to be directly applicable for spherical diamond tips.

The goal of this study was to define and evaluate more robust standardized data analysis metrics for abrasion testing capable of distinguishing volumetric impacts to the material. With these refined measurements, a wider variety of testing needs can be addressed with greater resolution while using the most appropriate abrasive tip and test material combination for the intended application.
Our motivation for improving the existing two-body abrasion metrics stemmed from related lunar surface exploration research being conducted within the Dust Management Project (DMP) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). During the Apollo era, astronauts exploring the Moon experienced numerous material wear issues that were attributed to the fine-grained lunar dust (Ref. 3). The Moon’s near-vacuum environment and the constant bombardment of micrometeorites allow lunar dust particles to retain their irregular shape, consequently making them especially abrasive (Refs. 4 and 5). The fine particles in this context are typically characterized by their different sizes, ranging from <1 to 50 µm (Refs. 6 and 7). Although specific definitions between groups vary, on average, researchers refer to particles with diameters less than 20 µm as “dust” (Refs. 8 and 9).

One goal of the research being conducted within the DMP is to develop recommendations and standard testing protocols for evaluating the impact of lunar dust abrasion on proposed surface system materials and operations. Both two-body and three-body abrasion modes are currently being investigated for future NASA testing of lunar equipment in a more relevant environment using abrasives that parallel lunar regolith. Lunar regolith occupies the upper several meters (in some cases potentially to 15 to 20 m) of the Moon and consists of unconsolidated rocks, pebbles, and dust over lunar bedrock (Ref. 10). Two-body abrasion was selected for these initial studies because it thoroughly characterizes the fundamental interaction of a defined single particle asperity abrading a material with known properties. To more accurately represent the anticipated dust abrasion that will occur on the lunar surface, custom tips were developed for scratch testing using terrestrially-obtained minerals similar to the lunar mineralogy (Ref. 4) and the tests were conducted on typical spacecraft materials. Our observations of the results led to a series of recommended standardization metrics, described in the following section.

**Experimental Materials and Methods**

The core of this two-body abrasion research was conducted using a CSEM (now CSM Instruments, Neuchatel, Switzerland) Revetest automatic scratch tester with ASTM G 171 used as a guideline for determining the number of tests to be conducted (specified as three scratches, each with three width measurements). By using a standard test approach and changing the output methodology, new metrics could strengthen the shortcomings of the ASTM G 171 Standard. Calibration scratches (shown in Fig. 2) were first made to record the scratch speed. Since the tester was moved from NASA Glenn Research Center (GRC) to the University of Colorado in Boulder (UCB) and back, three calibration runs were conducted. Table 1 summarizes all of the scratch tests performed (except calibrations) with their respective test location. Unless indicated, three scratches were conducted for each normal load and three surface profiles were taken for each scratch. Aluminum (Al) 6061-T6 and stainless steel 304, which are
Figure 2.—Diamond 200 µm radius tip mounted on Revetest automatic scratch tester abrading Al 6061-T6 as specified by ASTM G 171.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Scratch tip (radius)</th>
<th>Abraded material</th>
<th>Applied normal load (N)</th>
<th># Scratches</th>
<th># Profiles</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Baseline data</td>
<td>Diamond (200 µm)</td>
<td>Al 6061-T6</td>
<td>5, 10, 15, 20, 40, 60</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>GRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Proof of Concept</td>
<td>Anorthosite</td>
<td>Al 6061-T6</td>
<td>5, 10, 15, 20, 40, 60</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>GRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Full data set</td>
<td>Ruby spinel</td>
<td>Al 6061-T6</td>
<td>5, 10, 15, 20, 40, 60</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>UCB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Baseline data</td>
<td>Diamond (200 µm)</td>
<td>Al 6061-T6</td>
<td>5, 10, 15, 20, 40, 60</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>UCB</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Alternative geometry</td>
<td>Diamond (109 µm)</td>
<td>Al 6061-T6</td>
<td>5, 10, 15, 20, 40, 60</td>
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<td>81</td>
<td>UCB</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nonmetal data set</td>
<td>Diamond (200 µm)</td>
<td>Polycarbonate +TiO2 coating</td>
<td>5, 10, 20, 30, 40</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>GRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Full data set</td>
<td>Diamond (200 µm)</td>
<td>Stainless Steel 304</td>
<td>5, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 100, 120, 140, 160, 180</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>GRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Full data set</td>
<td>Diamond (109 µm)</td>
<td>Stainless Steel 304</td>
<td>5, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 100, 120, 140, 160, 180</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>GRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Proof of concept</td>
<td>Olivine</td>
<td>Al 6061-T6</td>
<td>5, 10, 20, 30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>GRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Proof of concept</td>
<td>Enstatite</td>
<td>Al 6061-T6</td>
<td>5, 10, 15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>GRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Speed testing</td>
<td>Diamond (200 µm)</td>
<td>Al 6061-T6</td>
<td>40 (5 speeds)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>GRC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 273 823

1 scratch only
2 scratches only
2 extra scans - Begin and End
2 extra scans - Polish versus Unpolished
2 extra scans - Tip indent x2, 1st 30 N scratch 1 scan only
common spacecraft structure materials, were used as the abraded material. Each sample was polished with a 1 µm alumina powder and water on a polishing wheel to remove minor surface imperfections and even out any material thickness differences. The polycarbonate with titanium dioxide (TiO₂) coating is typically used for spacesuit helmet visors and is considered a critical material to characterize. Crystal pedigree and orientation for the custom mineral tips are not reported in this paper. Diamond tips used in these scratch tests are described by their radius dimension (200 and 109 µm both with a 120° apex tip angle).

For nonmetallic materials, hardness is affected by relative humidity (Ref. 11). Westbrook and Jorgensen showed that micro-hardness was lowered by absorbed water, but confined to a region not more than 3 µm from the free surface. In addition, hardness can change with depth of penetration from the surface (Ref. 12), which is a function of material density or active loading from the abrading material. Since scratching depth can be estimated as being 1/10th of a particle’s diameter, a particle with a diameter larger than 30 µm would scratch below the absorbed-water region of a nonmetallic material. In the lunar regolith, 10 to 20 percent of the particles are finer than 20 µm. Simulant particles less than 6 µm in diameter will likely have lower hardness throughout than lunar counterparts. Simulant particles lying between these dimensions will have an unaccounted for hardness (Refs. 5 and 7). Multiple scratches from dust can penetrate surface coatings and treatments, while larger particles could penetrate a coating in a single scratch.

Ambient temperature and relative humidity were recorded for all tests. In some cases, samples were kept in a low humidity chamber until tested. Since most of the materials investigated were metals, however, the effect of humidity is not included in this analysis of surface wear. Observations from the nonmetallic specimen scratch volumes were similar to the metal specimens, but the key aim of this analysis was to analyze the final deformation state of the material surface, not to fully evaluate the interaction mode.

The resultant profiles of each scratch were digitized using Veeco Instruments Inc.’s NT-1000 optical interferometer and WYKO Vision32 software for NT-2000. The platform was leveled before each measurement with a bubble indicator. For consistency, all profiles were measured at 5.2x magnification, which results in a 3D array measuring 1.2 mm in the x-direction consisting of 736 pixels, 0.91 mm in the y-direction with 480 pixels, and surface heights for all points in the z-direction.

A Fowler 320 Rockwell hardness tester (Model TH320) was used to measure the aluminum and stainless steel hardness on the Rockwell Hardness B scale, HRB, in order to verify our results against standard data. For the custom tips mentioned in Table 1 (dataset 2, 3, 9, and 10), the minerals were potted in epoxy and held by a steel fitting that could be placed into the scratch tester. The tips were photographed before and after testing to assess mass loss and related geometry alteration. More friable minerals were tested until destruction.

To generate consistent data in abrasion testing, systematic quantification of metrics relating to area or volume measurements can be defined that avoid limitations associated with making measurements based on a two-dimensional (2D) scratch width alone. Applications using modern profilometry can also be incorporated to better resolve potential operator inconsistencies that can occur when visually determining the boundary conditions. The Veeco profiles result in 480 cross-sections being calculated for each profile. For each test combination, three profiles were generated for each of three scratches, totaling 4,320 cross-sections. This increase in measurement resolution capability compared to visual inspection allows more reliable data to be generated, hence, enabling more accurate measurements to be recorded. It should be noted that transparent materials require a dye coating for the surface to be visualized by the Veeco profilometer.

Representative case studies from two-body abrasion tests conducted during this study are used to help explain and rationalize the definition of the proposed new metrics. To address inconsistencies observed between multiple scratches on a given material sample, fundamental differences have been subcategorized into variability of the material specimen, the abrasive tip, and the surface profiler. Each of the following parameters needs to be included in the analysis in order to systematically collect abrasion data.
Material Specimen Surface Variations

To define a normalized baseline against which a scratch can be measured, several potential surface discrepancies must be addressed. First, all surfaces are inherently rough at some level and this topographical variability and its effect on the resultant scratch profile need to be taken into account. In addition, any roll, pitch or yaw offsets of the scratch must be corrected before visualization. These issues are discussed in terms of defining a baseline surface, termed the “Zeroline”, by describing an ideal scratch, identifying specimen tilt, and averaging surface roughness, as follows.

Zeroline Definition

A key issue encountered while analyzing a full 3D profile was defining reproducible boundaries to ensure that the width measurements abided by the ASTM G 171 Standard. For several profiles taken early during the investigation, the occurrence of irregular scratch scars with multiple peaks and valleys led to inconsistent scratch width measurements being made. To standardize this metric, the concept of defining a “Zeroline” (ZL) was introduced (Ref. 9). This topographical ZL was defined by determining the average surface roughness ($R_a$) of an undisturbed profile of the material and noting where this projected surface level intersected the final scratch trough or valley (see Fig. 3). In some cross-sections, the peaks displaced to the sides appear larger than the area removed because the material is simultaneously being pushed forward and up by the scratch tip as the trough is being formed, making it difficult to define the edges of the actual scratch. The silhouette in Figure 3 also illustrates the potential for obtaining a false width from using the peak-to-peak distance alone.

Ideal Scratch Definition

To create a geometric standard for all material specimens, an “ideal scratch” was defined as being when the material removed exactly matches the cross-sectional area of the scratch tip as shown in Figure 4, leaving behind no plastically-deformed ridges and ignoring any elastic recovery. Potential compression of the impacted area around the scratch, however, was not considered for this analysis, but could be further assessed using a form of x-ray crystallography.

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Figure 3.—Side view of typical scratch profile cross-section with location of Zeroline indicated.

Figure 4.—Side view of ideal scratch and perfect surface Zeroline.
Tilted Material Identification

Any off-horizontal tilt of the mounted material specimen also needs to be considered. As depicted in Figure 5, the material may have an imperfection in the roll or pitch axes causing the specimen to be tilted while undergoing a surface scan. This would cause the data to have false height values that must be adjusted for proper analysis.

Surface Roughness of Material

Inherent surface roughness must be taken into account to characterize local deviations from the mean at the point of measurement, as illustrated in Figure 6. This parameter is important for determining the average Zeroline that is used to define the boundaries of where the scratch zone begins and ends. It also will be used to quantify how the average surface topography has changed after being abraded.

Abrasive Variations

As the motivation behind this research is to characterize how the irregular shapes of lunar dust interact with materials, using a spherical diamond tip to make the scratches is not necessarily the most representative approach. This concern also exists for other test applications similarly requiring non-traditional abrasives. Although data can be analyzed using a theoretical scratch volume, scratch tips are rarely perfect and in some cases a slight defect can lead to drastically different results. Figure 7 is an example case of two different sized diamond tips, radii of 200 and 109 µm described in Table 1 (dataset 7 and 8), scratching stainless steel 304 with a normal force of 100 N. The larger 200 µm tip scratched a wider area as expected and, using the ASTM G 171 Standard, the estimated widths of the scratches are scalable to the tip dimensions.

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Figure 5.—Side view of tilted material may lead to incorrect measurements.

Figure 6.—Side view of surface roughness of material.
Per the ASTM G 171 Standard, as noted earlier, this width measurement would be the primary metric used to classify the amount of abrasive wear. Looking more closely at the 3D cross sections of these scratches shown in Figure 8 however, it becomes apparent that the volume removed is not linearly scalable to the width due to geometrical defects in the scratch tips (Note: the vertical scales are different in the figure). This non-detectable difference exemplifies one concern of using width measurement alone to characterize the scratch. In addition, even defining the boundaries for measuring the width is complicated by the irregularities of the ploughed peaks in the absence of using the Zeroline determination.

**Surface Profilometer Variations**

Since different laboratories will use various instruments for surface profiling, potential sources of equipment error that might be encountered during testing must also be considered. The first major normalization that needed to be made was defining an offset height. The Veeco scans used the abraded area as part of the calculation for the location of an average surface height. Large valleys or peaks, like those in Figure 3, would skew the data so an offset height was calculated to shift the data to the proper zero (Zeroline) along the surface using data from outside of the scratch zone. Each profile needed to be normalized to properly determine net volume removal and displacement (Refs. 8 and 9).
A second error source exists if the scratch material is not correctly aligned on the surface profiler. Any rotation in the yaw direction (see Fig. 9) will cause incorrect measurements to be made when analyzing the data if the technique assumes that the profiles were properly aligned and simply scans horizontally across the profile in the image to make the measurement. Care must be taken to avoid the potential for this misalignment or incorporate the use of profilometry software to correct its occurrence.

**Standardization Theory**

The standardization of metrics to measure two-body abrasion should be robust enough to handle the majority of material interactions anticipated and should be thoroughly systematic in approach. This can be accomplished using modern scanning technology to define a “Zone of Interaction” on the abraded material within defined boundaries. Since the intended application of this research is to investigate abrasive wear on lunar equipment, the damage caused to the abrading material, lunar dust, is inconsequential. If the dust fragments break into smaller pieces however, this might present a concern for astronaut safety (e.g., through inhalation), clogging of equipment and/or secondary abrasion. Analysis of the scratch tip before and after testing may be warranted to address these concerns as applicable.

To define a set of boundary conditions for the ZOI, surface roughness ($R_s$) is used to provide a standardized indicator of transition zones along the Zeroline (ZL). The ZOI transition occurs when the surface height from the ZL is plus or minus a pre-determined multiplier times the $R_s$. This boundary and multiplier is represented in Figure 10 as $\pm 3 \times R_s$, a value that was selected to define six-sigma total deviation from the baseline surface within a 99.9997 percent confidence interval. This multiplier can be adjusted to obtain more or less statistical accuracy, as desired. The standard surface roughness parameters that need to be systematically defined for abrasion studies are summarized in Table 2.
**TABLE 2.**—SURFACE ROUGHNESS PARAMETERS (REF. 13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Formula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$R_a$</td>
<td>Surface roughness</td>
<td>$R_a = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R_q$</td>
<td>Root-mean squared roughness</td>
<td>$R_q = \left(\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} (Z_i - Z)^2\right)^{1/2}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R_p$</td>
<td>Maximum depth of penetration</td>
<td>a.k.a. max through or valley depth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R_r$</td>
<td>Maximum displaced height</td>
<td>a.k.a. max plough or peak height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R_z$</td>
<td>Average ten greatest peak-to-valley separations</td>
<td>$R_z = \frac{1}{n} \left[ (H_1 + H_2 + L_1)(L_1 + L_2 + L_n) \right]$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where, $n = 10$, $H_n$ highest points, $L_n$ lowest points

Four standard metrics are formulated by calculating the total volume removed below the ZL and material displaced (ploughed) above the ZL in the ZOI as seen in Figure 10. These metrics were designed to systematically describe an abraded surface and account for major differences that can occur from the scratch process that may not be discernable by measuring the width of the scratch alone. This can be systematically achieved using the following steps to characterize the 3D profile:

1. Determine scratch length
2. Determine offset height from ZL
3. Determine tilt within sample (roll and pitch)
4. Normalize data to proper ZL and for tilt removal (if needed)
5. Determine surface roughness parameters from un-abraded section of specimen
6. Perform cross-section analysis across scratch (Veeco scan has up to 480 profiles)
   a. Start/end points of ZOI = ZOI\_length
   b. Sum of negative/positive areas in ZOI using interpolation
   c. Calculate roughness parameters inside of the ZOI
7. Calculate average of ZOI across all cross-sections = ZOI\_average
8. Sum ZOI negative/positive areas separately and calculate corresponding volumes
9. Calculate average roughness parameters inside of the ZOI
10. METRIC A1: Negative Volume Displaced/ZOI\_Average/scratch length [µm]
    a. This value should be left as a negative value
11. METRIC A2: Positive Volume Displaced/ZOI\_Average/scratch length [µm]
12. METRIC A3: Net Displaced Metric = METRIC A1 + METRIC A2 [µm]
13. METRIC A4: Absolute Displaced Metric = $|$METRIC A1$| + |$METRIC A2$|$ [µm]
14. METRIC SET B: Change in roughness parameters [%] in Table 2.

The initial and final roughness parameters of the surface undergoing abrasion testing are important to determine because an abraded surface (i.e., increased roughness) can cause damage to other interacting materials. For example, if a stainless steel cuff ring for connecting a spacesuit arm to the glove became scuffed from dust abrasion, it could rub on other parts of the suit and cause damage to the outer fabric layers even without further dust interaction. The initial and final surface conditions should therefore be recorded. In this research, a clean area void of wear was included in every scan on the left hand side of the scratched surface. An approximate distance of 0.20 to 0.25 mm from the left hand side of the specimen in every profile scan of the 1.2 mm profile was included to represent the initial surface conditions and to be outside of the ZOI boundary. To decrease the potential for overlap with the ZOI that occurs with wider scratch profiles, a smaller factor of 15 percent of the entire specimen cross-section is...
used to calculate the initial conditions as seen in Figure 10. A 15 percent minimum would be a desired
distance from the left edge of the specimen scan for calculating the undisturbed conditions in a total
profile using Veeco because it can be used for adjusting the data to a proper ZL and removing any tilt
from a computational standpoint. Alternatively, a pre-scratch scan of the material surface could be
conducted to measure the initial roughness parameters.

The final roughness parameters are measured within the ZOI to calculate the change in all six key
values (METRIC SET B). These parameters indicate the change that the material has undergone during
abrasion. In a subsequent paper we will use these metrics to construct a table that ranks materials from
best to worst with recommended limits.

Results and Discussion

To investigate a range of potential values using the proposed abrasion metrics, four scratch profiles
were analyzed from the diamond 200 µm radius tip on stainless steel 304 (Table 1, dataset 7) for profiles
obtained from 10, 100 (two profiles from the same scratch), and 180 N normal loads. Two scratch profiles
from the diamond 200 µm tip on Al 6061-T6 (Table 1, dataset 4) for 10 and 100 N loads were also
analyzed. The values obtained were measured using a newly developed Matlab code. The Rₐ multiplier
was intuitively set at ten times for this discussion, knowing that three times may be more appropriate as
the code is refined. The estimated ASTM G 171 width values were calculated using an older version of
the code. This width takes the distance internal to the scratch slopes intersecting the ZL. Table 3 is a
summary of data obtained from analyzing the case study profiles.

As seen in the trial cases summarized in Table 3, the ZOI width is approximately double that of the
scratch width estimated per ASTM G 171 (rows one and two). This means that half of the interaction
zone is not being accounted for using the current scratch standard and a significant part of material
interaction area is being neglected. G 171 does not define a ZOI to calculate any metrics, which will be a
recommended amendment per this study to allow a more complete analysis of abrasive wear. Defining the
ZOI as a function of the scratched surface takes into account the full area of the deformed material rather
than just using the scratch width, which is currently the basis for the ASTM G 171 metric. Having this
additional 3D volumetric characterization can be used to distinguish differences in scratch depth and/or
shape that a simple 2D width measurement alone would not detect.

Metric A3 complements A4 in describing both material removal and the magnitude of the
deformation associated with the wear volume. These sample data suggest that an increasing trend in
Metric A4 is correlated with load; however, Metric A3 may be related to a cut-to-plough ratio, although
an extensive data set will have to be evaluated to definitively establish this relationship.

It was found that changes in surface roughness are very sensitive to the initial conditions. For
example, a variation in Rₐ from 0.3 to 0.6 µm would lead to a doubling of the percentage change (ΔRₐ).
All of the “change in roughness” parameters are excellent indicators of how a surface has been altered
and can reveal important design information regarding the potential for secondary abrasion, as was noted
above. It may be better to express all of the surface roughness parameters as initial, final and change in
measurement rather than just as a percentage change. This can be advantageous for parameters like Rₐ
and Rₚ, because the maximum penetration and height deformation can then be related to requirements for
surface coatings and material thickness.

The two profiles taken from the stainless steel 304 at 100 N are along the same scratch but in two
different locations. The data are relatively close in value and this demonstrates the consistency of the
measurements derived in the code and of the scratch. This preliminary data, shown in Table 3, can be
used to show that the Al 6061-T6 scratch had a more concentrated and smaller ZOI (ZOI width) than the
stainless steel 304, but the amount of ploughing (A1) was five times greater and the peaks formed in
deformation were twice as high (A2). The resultant material removal was noticeably greater (A3) and the
material displacement was three times larger (A4). There was a deeper penetration into the Al 6061-T6
(ΔRᵥ), but the peaks on the stainless steel 304 were larger (ΔRₚ). Because of the independent material
changes, the overall changes in peak-to-valley (ΔRₜ) and top ten peak-to-valley separation values were
similar between metals ($\Delta R_z$). The root-mean squared roughness ($\Delta R_q$) was twice the value for steel versus aluminum, but the implications of this particular metric are not as obvious. Further analysis will be conducted with all of the scratch profiles recorded to reduce the variability that exists from looking at only 3 profiles.

### TABLE 3.—CASE STUDY DATA OF NEW METRICS ON SIX PROFILES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Normal Load (N)</th>
<th>Stainless Steel 304</th>
<th>Al 6061-T6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100 (1)</td>
<td>100 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZOI</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>±172</td>
<td>±121</td>
<td>±121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scratch width</td>
<td>μm</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>±2</td>
<td>±2</td>
<td>±2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>μm</td>
<td>-2.59</td>
<td>-11.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>±0.6</td>
<td>±1.2</td>
<td>±1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>μm</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>11.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>±0.6</td>
<td>±2.7</td>
<td>±4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>μm</td>
<td>-1.99</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>±0.4</td>
<td>±3.5</td>
<td>±4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>μm</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>22.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>±1.1</td>
<td>±2.3</td>
<td>±4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R_a$</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>4,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R_q$</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>3,676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R_v$</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R_p$</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>4,149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R_z$</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>1,354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R_t$</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>1,308</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$Calculated from an older version of MATLAB code that locates the scratch width as the ZL intercept with scratch slopes.
Conclusions

Carrying out appropriate abrasion testing is viewed as a critical step in selecting materials for use in the design of future lunar surface exploration equipment. Before any test can be conducted, however, a quantifiable, reproducible and robust set of metrics needs to be defined to allow direct comparison of material wear results. Limitations were identified in existing two-body abrasion test standard measurements that are currently based solely on an estimated width of the resultant material deformation, as summarized in Table 4. This paper proposes a new method for systematically analyzing a controlled surface scratch, taking into account the full 3D volumetric profile of the displaced material and other measurement correction factors. Standardized material displacement metrics are obtained by normalizing the overall surface profile using a defined “Zone of Interaction” and noting specified changes in standard surface roughness parameters. Proof-of-concept data was collected and analyzed to demonstrate the power of the methodology presented herein and it’s superiority over the existing ASTM method G 171. This technique overcomes previous analysis limitations by taking advantage of advanced imaging capabilities that now allow resolution of the scratched surface to be quantified in greater detail. A sensitivity study is being conducted to evaluate the influence of the $R_a$ multiplier value used in defining the boundary conditions of the ZOI and will be discussed in a subsequent paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4.—SUMMARY OF IMPROVEMENTS TO CURRENT SCRATCH STANDARD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current standard (ASTM G 171 properties)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual measurements by optical investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scratch width is key variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination of width boundary conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond tip stylus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Characterization of two-body abrasion analysis and the understanding of fundamental particle-material interactions will both provide critical insight into anticipating how components will wear during use on the lunar surface, other planets or asteroids, as well as in similarly abrasive environments on Earth. By defining a systematic approach for evaluating a single scratch, analytical models can be developed to extend this application to broader scratch scenarios. This study, aimed at enabling lunar exploration, ultimately offers a means to refine test standards for use industry-wide.

References


A limitation has been identified in the existing test standards used for making controlled, two-body abrasion scratch measurements based solely on the width of the resultant score on the surface of the material. A new, more robust method is proposed for analyzing a surface scratch that takes into account the full three-dimensional profile of the displaced material. To accomplish this, a set of four volume displacement metrics are systematically defined by normalizing the overall surface profile to statistically denote the area of relevance, termed the “Zone of Interaction” (ZOI). From this baseline, depth of the trough and height of the ploughed material are factored into the overall deformation assessment. Proof of concept data were collected and analyzed to demonstrate the performance of this proposed methodology. This technique takes advantage of advanced imaging capabilities that now allow resolution of the scratched surface to be quantified in greater detail than was previously achievable. A quantified understanding of fundamental particle-material interaction is critical to anticipating how well components can withstand prolonged use in highly abrasive environments, specifically for our intended applications on the surface of the Moon and other planets or asteroids, as well as in similarly demanding, harsh terrestrial settings.