Applications of Wireless Technology in Space

Dr. Ali Abedi,  
Professor of ECE,  
University of Maine

DeLisa Wilkerson,  
Branch Chief/ES36,  
NASA MSFC
Overview

I. Introduction to wireless technology (RF, Acoustic, Optical)
   • Wireless standards – Capabilities and limitations
   • Reliability of wireless networks – Definitions and basic parameters

II. Use case scenarios and environmental requirements
    • Space vehicles; Satellites and payloads; Surface explorations; Ground systems; Habitats

III. Application specific requirements
     • Engine health monitoring; Wireless power transmission; Radio Frequency (RF) Communications; Cognitive networks; Environmental monitoring and sensors; Habitat systems; Sensors and actuators

IV. Conclusions
     • Current interest areas; Potential technology areas for short and long term future implementations; technology road map.

V. How to get started? Some examples...
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Wireless standards — Capabilities and limitations

- WLAN: Wireless Local Area Network
- WPAN: Wireless Personal Area Network

* Bluetooth: Master/Slave
* ZigBee: Mesh

* References [2-8]
Reliability of Wireless Networks

- What is the definition of reliability?
  - End to end data throughput
  - Delay or latency
  - Bit Error Rate (BER) or Symbol Error Rate (SER) or Packet Error Rate (PER)
  - Packet loss or collision rate

- Example: QBSC’2007
  - AWGN (left)
  - Rayleigh fading (right)

- Example: Sensors’2013
  - One sensor (left), multiple (right)

* References [9-10]
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Space Vehicles

Space vehicles operate in extreme conditions with notable vibrations on their various sub-systems. Monitoring critical systems such as thermal and pressure systems, cryogenic fluid management, HVAC, ECLSS, Lighting Monitoring, Docking, and Rendezvous systems require specific considerations as follows*. Most of these systems are hard to reach and not accessible easily. The wireless system design need to accommodate operations in confined spaces and often closed metallic chambers or sometimes even inside fluid environments at cryogenic temperatures. A recent work at MSFC demonstrated proof of concept for wireless sensing inside a fuel tank*. Monitoring the engine and heat shield requires sensors that can operate in high temperature environments with harsh chemical vapors present.

**Challenges:**
- Wide range of temperature variations
- Vibration tolerance
- Accessibility in confined environments
- Signal propagation in metallic enclosures

**Benefits:**
- Acquiring more data from supporting structures and engine itself
- Reducing weight due to cable elimination
- Dynamic performance control with wireless sensing and actuation

*References [11-12]
Example: Test of WSN on board a Rocket

Funded by NASA MSGC and CSGC

2009, 2011, and 2013 Mojave, CA
Satellites and payloads operate in harsh environment and often require monitoring and protection against extreme temperature changes and radiation. Whether using radiation hardened hardware or adding internal heaters or coolers to keep the equipment in desirable environmental condition, it is necessary to monitor the internal temperatures and radiation doses at all times. Although, it may not make sense to replace a short few cm wire inside a small satellite with wireless, but for some applications were drilling a hole in the payload or satellite’s exterior body may lead to loss of heat and energy, short range magnetic coupling wireless solutions will become important. Other applications include monitoring external solar arrays for MMOD impact or damage evaluation as well as transferring power between two disjoint sections.

**Challenges:**
- Wide range of temperature and radiation variations
- Size and weight limitations
- Signal propagation in metallic enclosures
- Power constraints

**Benefits:**
- Wireless connection between two disjoint sections
- Reducing heat loss by avoiding drilling holes
- More efficient use of harvested power
Example: ISS Solar Array Impact Localization

Funded by JACOBS/JSC

- 3-axis Accelerometers
- IEEE 802.15.4 radios
- Wavelet based signal processing
Surface explorations

Autonomous exploration of planetary surfaces may require machine vision and robotics arms to recognize various object types and manipulate them, drill ground to collect soil samples, and navigate to return samples to base. All these applications can benefit from wireless sensors. For instance, Infrared sensors can be used alongside visible light cameras for object detection and classification and assisting the robotics arms to maneuver accurately. Humidity and temperature sensors can be used during ground drilling, while vibration sensors can monitor the drill operation. Navigation without GPS on planetary surfaces requires dedicated active wireless links with precise time of arrival measurements (e.g. one example is the Ultra wide band radios developed at JSC). Other techniques such as passive RFID tags and readers may also be used to find asset in known areas pre-marked with tags.

Challenges:

• Capability to operate and survive dust or radiation storm
• Mobile chemical and biological sensor units
• Long range reliable link back to base with navigation capabilities

Benefits:

• In situ testing of samples
• Navigation without need for GPS
• Dynamic control of robotic arms using wireless sensors and actuators

NASA’s SEV
Example: JSC’s UWB Tracking System

Resolution: 0.8762m (dynamic), 1.7660m (Static)

Ground testing often requires structural sensors such as strain gauges, accelerometers, and deflection sensors. Testing fuel tanks may require leak detection sensors, hydrogen or other gas sensors, humidity, and temperature sensors. Performance tests are conducted in controlled environment with thermal cycles that mimic space conditions. Therefore, all these instrumentation, although used on earth, need to be capable of operating in harsh environments. Wiring and cabling may be cumbersome, costly, or may be infeasible in some cases. Therefore, wireless sensing in ground system can open up lots of new opportunities to gather critical data.

**Challenges:**

- High precision in sampling and data transfer
- Interference management among large number of sensors sending data
- Working within limitations of test setup at specific distances

**Benefits:**

- Acquiring more data for structural analysis that is possible using wires
- Reducing cost of tests due to cable elimination
- Flexibility of test for adding more sensors later without redesigning the whole wiring plan
- Versatility in programming test beds for future tests
Examples: Slides 34-36

Structural test

SIL/DBOB
Autonomous monitoring of habitats, living conditions, and inventory tracking are the main use case scenarios that can benefit from wireless technology. RFID based inventory tracking methods for autonomous logistical management (ALM) is being developed at JSC and can tie into the habitat monitoring itself. Integrating sensors as load on RFID devices and reading the changes in the response in addition to ID numbers is a promising approach in this direction. Monitoring living conditions including physical (temperature, humidity, and radiation), chemical (air and water quality) and biological (mold and mildew or other airborne bacteria) are some critical applications that require wireless sensors. Another important aspect of monitoring habitat systems is evaluating cognitive changes of its inhabitants, i.e. crew health monitoring. Real time vital signs tracking and wireless sensors for sleep behavior monitoring are essential for ensuring mission success. For more info on habitat systems refer to section 3.6 in this report.

**Challenges:**

- Wide range of temperature and radiation variations
- Aggregation challenges in multi model sensor data with different sampling rates and precisions
- Signal propagation in metallic enclosures

**Benefits:**

- Acquiring more data from habitat structure
- Reducing weight due to cable elimination
- Flexibility of change in design and sensor location after the deployment
Example: Inflatable Space Habitat
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Application specific requirements*

- TA2.4: Engine health monitoring;
- TA3.3: Wireless power transmission;
- TA5.2: Radio Frequency (RF) Communications;
- TA5.5: Cognitive networks;
- TA6.4: Environmental monitoring and sensors;
- TA7.4: Habitat systems;
- TA10.4: Sensors and actuators

* NASA Technology Roadmap [1]

* References [13-16]

* References [17-18]

* References [19]
TA 5.2 and TA 5.5

NETWORK CODING

Lower Latency

Spectrum Efficiency

COGNITIVE NETWORKS

(a) Network Model

(b) Time Frame Model
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### Potential technology areas

- Dark shaded squares indicate closely related technical areas and application use cases.
- Lightly shaded cells indicate potential benefit from wireless technology broadly defined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use case</th>
<th>Technology area</th>
<th>TA2.4 Engine Health</th>
<th>TA3.3 Wireless Power</th>
<th>TA5.2 RF Comm</th>
<th>TA5.5 Cognitive Networks</th>
<th>TA6.4 Environmental Monitoring</th>
<th>TA7.4 Habitat Systems</th>
<th>TA10.4 Sensors &amp; Actuators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1. Space vehicles</td>
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<td>2.2. Satellites and payloads</td>
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<td>2.3. Surface explorations</td>
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<td>2.4. Ground systems</td>
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<td>2.5. Habitats</td>
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</table>
Roadmap for wireless technology development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where we are</th>
<th>Short term &lt;5 Yr</th>
<th>Long term, 5-10 Yr</th>
<th>Where we want to go</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Not space certified, rad tolerant or rad hard</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1. Space certified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Low reliability</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. High reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Limited# of networked nodes</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Large network sizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Not scalable</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Scalable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Not reconfigurable</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Reconfigurable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Battery dependent</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Battery free</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concluding Remarks:

- Wireless Technology has the potential to be used in space applications
- It offers unique capabilities that are not obtainable in wired systems
- The space application areas are varied and each have a unique set of requirements
- Rapid development in wireless industry can be used as stepping stone
Future technologies – 5G and beyond

• 1G (AMPS), 2G (GSM/CDMA), 3G (e.g. UMTS, HSPA and 1X-EV-DO), 4G (LTE, LTE-A), 5G (?)

• Massive MIMO
• RAN Transmission cm and mm Waves
• New Waveforms
• Shared Spectrum Access
• Advanced Inter-Node Coordination
• Simultaneous Transmission Reception
• Multi-RAT Integration & Management
• D2D Communications

• Efficient Small Data Transmission
• Wireless Backhaul/Access
• Integration
• Flexible Networks
• Flexible Mobility
• Context Aware Networking
• Information Centric Networking
• Moving Networks

RAN: Radio Access Networks
RAT: Radio Access Technology
D2D: Device to Device
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Some examples

1. Wireless power transfer
2. Structural tests data analysis
3. Wireless Deflection Sensor
4. DBOBs/SIL
Wireless Power Transfer (WPT)

Energy source → Energy → TRX → Data → RX

How about in a network?

Energy source/TRX → Energy → TRX → Data → TRX
What are the challenges?

- Interference
- Energy scheduling
- Data scheduling
- Energy beam forming
- Data beam forming
- Parallel or joint?
What is the best way to transfer energy wirelessly?

a) Send energy periodically, transmit data periodically

b) Send energy periodically, transmit data randomly

c) Send energy randomly, transmit data periodically

d) Send energy randomly, transmit data randomly
Transmit When Risk is Low (TWRL)

- Let us assume Transmit Energy = 1.1 * Received Energy Pulse
- Consider an Additive White Gaussian Noise (AWGN) channel model
- Transmit energy at every time slot for 10,000 pulses
- Transmit data whenever the AWGN channel condition is better than a pre-specified threshold
- Normalizing all equations, the critical threshold is ~1.6
- Run simulations and determine outage whenever the remaining battery charge is 0 or negative.
Threshold = 1.5

Outage = 10e-5
Threshold = 1.6

Outage = 10e-4
Threshold = 1.7  Outage = 90%
How about fading channels?

• Repeat this experiment for Rayleigh or Rician Fading channels

• How about the case that energy transfer is also stochastic?

• What if we add a reserve battery to be used when energy is low? How that can be designed to reduce outage to a desired level?

• What role will interference play in transmission scheduling?
Lessons learned:

- Metal plate under sensors → Add Insulator
- Strong WiFi interference → add shielding
- Sensor data anomaly → calibrate
- Interference among nodes → one at a time
- Issues with analog front end → new boards
Wireless Deflection Sensors

Power Transmitter

10-15 ft

Energy harvester

TX

LVDT

RX
DBOBs/SIL

- There are 23 DBOBs on each half cylinder at SIL
- Each RS422 connector has 8 ports with 10 MHz bandwidth
- Each one communicates with multiple devices analog/digital
- Signals range from 4mv to 40v DC
Acknowledgments

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Contact Info: ali.abedi@maine.edu

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