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Jay W. Dawson
Eric C. Honea
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The CID number appears on each page of the manuscript. The complete citation is used on the first page, and an abbreviated version on subsequent pages. Numbers in the index correspond to the last two digits of the six-digit CID number.

Contents

xii Conference Committee

xvii *Microfabrication by optical tweezers (Plenary Paper)* [7921 02]
R. Ghadiri, T. Weigel, C. Esen, A. Ostendorf, Ruhr-Univ. Bochum (Germany)

Post-deadline Session

xvii **High brightness spectral beam combining to 8.2 kW** [7914-115]
K. Ludewigt, M. Gowin, E. ten Have, M. Jung, Rheinmetall Waffe Munition GmbH (Germany);
C. Wirth, O. Schmidt, I. Tsybin, T. Schreiber, R. Eberhardt, Fraunhofer Institute for Applied
Optics and Precision Engineering (Germany); J. Ilmpert, Friedrich-Schiller Univ. (Germany);
A. Tünnermann, Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Optics and Precision Engineering
(Germany) and Friedrich-Schiller Univ. (Germany)

xxi **A 967W single mode all-fiber PM Yb PCF fiber amplifier** [7914-116]
D. L. Sipes, Jr., J. D. Tafoya, D. S. Schulz, Optical Engines, Inc. (United States); B. G. Ward,
C. G. Carlson, U. S. Air Force Academy (United States)

xxvii **Modal content reconstruction of fibers for high-power applications** [7914-117]
D. N. Schimpf, R. A. Barankov, Boston Univ. (United States); K. Jespersen, OFS Fitel Denmark
(Denmark); S. Ramachandran, Boston Univ. (United States)

xxxix **Power-scalable internal frequency doubling scheme for continuous-wave fiber lasers**
[7914-118]
R. Cieslak, W. A. Clarkson, Univ. of Southampton (United Kingdom)

xxxiii **Pump limited 203 W monolithic single frequency fiber amplifier: a two-tone approach (Best Student Paper Award)** [7914-119]
C. Zeringue, I. Dajani, C. Vergien, C. Robin, Air Force Research Lab. (United States)

SESSION 3 APPLICATIONS

7914 02 **A review of Thulium fiber laser ablation of kidney stones (Invited Paper)** [7914-01]
N. M. Fried, The Univ. of North Carolina at Charlotte (United States) and John Hopkins
Medical Institutions (United States); R. L. Blackmon, The Univ. of North Carolina at Charlotte
(United States); P. B. Irby, Carolinas Medical Ctr. (United States)

7914 04 **Material micromachining using bursts of high repetition rate picosecond pulses from a fiber laser source** [7914-03]
P. Deladurantaye, A. Cournoyer, M. Drolet, L. Desbiens, D. Lemieux, M. Briand, Y. Taillon, INO
(Canada)

7914 05 **Dynamic pulsing of a MOPA fiber laser for enhanced material processing** [7914-95]
S. T. Hendow, J. R. Salcedo, R. Romero, P. T. Guerreiro, Multiwave Photonics (Portugal)

SESSION 4 MITIGATING NONLINEAR EFFECTS I

- 7914 07 **1 kW cw Yb-fiber-amplifier with <0.5GHz linewidth and neardiffraction limited beam-quality, for coherent combining application** [7914-06]
D. Engin, W. Lu, M. Akbulut, B. McIntosh, H. Verdun, S. Gupta, Fibertek, Inc. (United States)
- 7914 08 **On the Raman threshold for passive large mode area fibers** [7914-07]
C. Jauregui, J. Limpert, Friedrich Schiller Univ. Jena (Germany); A. Tünnermann, Friedrich Schiller Univ. Jena (Germany) and Fraunhofer Institut für Angewandte Optik und Feinmechanik (Germany)
- 7914 09 **Suppression of stimulated Brillouin scattering in optical fibers through phase-modulation: a time dependent model** [7914-08]
C. M. Zeringue, I. Dajani, G. T. Moore, Air Force Research Lab. (United States)

SESSION 5 MITIGATING NONLINEAR EFFECTS II

- 7914 0A **A novel method of increasing the efficiency of 1064 nm two tone amplifiers through heating of the gain fiber** [7914-09]
L. J. Henry, T. M. Shay, Air Force Research Lab. (United States); D. Hult, TREX Enterprises Corp. (United States); K. Rowland, Jr., Boeing LTS Inc. (United States)
- 7914 0B **Experimental studies of segmented acoustically tailored photonic crystal fiber amplifier with 494 W single-frequency output** [7914-10]
C. Robin, I. Dajani, F. Chiragh, Air Force Research Lab. (United States)

SESSION 6 COMPONENTS

- 7914 0F **High-power, fused assemblies enabled by advances in fiber-processing technologies (Invited Paper)** [7914-14]
R. Wiley, B. Clark, 3SAE Technologies, Inc. (United States)
- 7914 0I **All-fiber single-mode PM thulium fiber lasers using femtosecond laser written fiber Bragg gratings** [7914-17]
C. C. C. Willis, J. D. Bradford, R. A. Sims, L. Shah, M. Richardson, CREOL, Univ. of Central Florida (United States); J. Thomas, R. G. Becker, C. Voigtländer, Friedrich Schiller Univ. Jena (Germany); A. Tünnermann, S. Nolte, Friedrich Schiller Univ. Jena (Germany) and Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Optics and Precision Engineering (Germany)

SESSION 7 MATERIAL PROPERTIES AND PHOTO-DARKENING

- 7914 0J **Reliability and photodarkening in 790nm-pumped 2 μ m fiber lasers (Invited Paper)** [7914-18]
A. Carter, B. Samson, J. Ding, Nufern (United States); G. Frith, Macquarie Univ. (Australia); K. Tankala, Nufern (United States)
- 7914 0K **Gamma-radiation-induced photodarkening in ytterbium-doped silica glasses (Invited Paper)** [7914-19]
T. Arai, K. Ichii, S. Tanigawa, M. Fujimaki, Fujikura Ltd. (Japan)

- 7914 0L **Distribution of photodarkening-induced loss in Yb-doped fiber amplifiers** [7914-20]
M. N. Zervas, SPI Lasers (United Kingdom) and Univ. of Southampton (United Kingdom);
F. Ghiringhelli, M. K. Durkin, I. Crowe, SPI Lasers (United Kingdom)

SESSION 8 EXTENDED WAVELENGTH SOURCES

- 7914 0M **Tm-doped silicate glass fibre lasers: the foundation technology for high-power mid-infrared light generation (Invited Paper)** [7914-21]
S. D. Jackson, The Univ. of Sydney (Australia)
- 7914 0O **Simultaneous excitation of selective multiple Raman Stokes wavelengths (green-yellow-red) using shaped multi-step pulses from an all-fiber MOPA system** [7914-23]
D. Lin, S. Alam, P. S. Teh, K. K. Chen, D. J. Richardson, Univ. of Southampton (United Kingdom)
- 7914 0P **All-fiber mid-IR supercontinuum source from 1.5 to 5 μm** [7914-24]
L. B. Shaw, R. R. Gattass, J. Sanghera, I. Aggarwal, U.S. Naval Research Lab. (United States)
- 7914 0Q **High-power all fiber picosecond sources from IR to UV** [7914-25]
S. Pierrot, J. Saby, B. Cocquelin, F. Salin, EOLITE Systems (France)
- 7914 0S **High-average power second harmonic generation of femtosecond fiber lasers** [7914-27]
S. Hädrich, J. Rothhardt, T. Eidam, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany) and
Helmholtz-Institute Jena (Germany); T. Gottschall, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany);
J. Limpert, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany) and Helmholtz-Institute Jena (Germany);
A. Tünnermann, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany) and Helmholtz-Institute Jena
(Germany) and Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Optics and Precision Engineering (Germany)

SESSION 9 PULSED SOURCES I

- 7914 0U **Polarized, 100 kW peak power, high brightness nanosecond lasers based on 3C optical fiber** [7914-29]
M. L. Stock, C.-H. Liu, A. Kuznetsov, G. Tudury, Arbor Photonics, Inc. (United States);
A. Galvanauskas, Univ. of Michigan (United States); T. Sosnowski, Arbor Photonics, Inc.
(United States)
- 7914 0V **Complete measurement of nanosecond laser pulses in time** [7914-38]
P. Bowlan, Swamp Optics, LLC (United States); R. Trebino, Georgia Institute of Technology
(United States)
- 7914 0W **Coherent combining of low-peak-power pulsed fiber amplifiers with 80-ns pulse duration** [7914-31]
P. Bourdon, K. Cadoret, L. Lombard, A. Azarian, G. Canat, B. Bennai, D. Goular, V. Jolivet,
ONERA (France); Y. Jaouën, Telecom ParisTech, CNRS (France); O. Vasseur, ONERA (France)

SESSION 10 PULSED SOURCES II

- 7914 0X **A monolithic thulium doped single mode fiber laser with 1.5ns pulsewidth and 8kW peak power** [7914-32]
J. Ding, B. Sampson, A. Carter, C. Wang, K. Tankala, Nufern (United States)

- 7914 0Y **Picosecond programmable laser sweeping over 50 mega-wavelengths per second** [7914-33]
Y. Kim, B. Burgoyne, Genia Photonics Inc. (Canada); N. Godbout, Ecole Polytechnique de Montréal (Canada); A. Villeneuve, Genia Photonics Inc. (Canada); G. Lamouche, S. Vergnole, National Research Council Canada (Canada)
- 7914 0Z **Ten watts actively mode-locked ytterbium doped fiber laser delivering 15 ps at 40 MHz** [7914-34]
P. Deslandes, Univ. Bordeaux 1, CNRS (France) and EOLITE Systems (France); D. Sangla, Univ. Bordeaux 1, CNRS (France); J. Saby, F. Salin, EOLITE Systems (France); E. Freysz, Univ. Bordeaux 1, CNRS (France)
- 7914 10 **High-energy Yb-doped fiber MOPA in the ns-kHz regime for large-scale laser facilities front-end** [7914-35]
L. Lago, CESTA (France) and Univ. des Sciences et Technologies de Lille, Lab. PhLAM, CNRS (France); A. Mussot, M. Douay, Univ. des Sciences et Technologies de Lille, Lab. PhLAM, CNRS (France); E. Hugonnot, CEASTA (France)

SESSION 11 PULSED AMPLIFIED SOURCES: JOINT SESSION WITH CONFERENCE 7912

- 7914 11 **All-fiber based amplification of 40 ps pulses from a gain-switched laser diode** [7914-36]
S. Kanzelmeyer, H. Sayinc, T. Theeg, M. Frede, J. Neumann, D. Kracht, Laser Zentrum Hannover e.V. (Germany)
- 7914 12 **Sub-10 picosecond pulses from a fiber-amplified and optically compressed passively Q-switched microchip laser** [7914-37]
A. Steinmetz, D. Nodop, A. Martin, J. Limpert, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); A. Tünnermann, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany) and Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Optics and Precision Engineering (Germany)

SESSION 12 HIGH-POWER SOURCES

- 7914 14 **Fibers and fiber-optic components for high-power fiber lasers (Invited Paper)** [7914-39]
H. Zimer, M. Kozak, A. Liem, F. Flohrer, F. Doerfel, P. Riedel, S. Linke, JT Optical Engine GmbH + Co. KG (Germany); R. Horley, F. Ghiringhelli, S. Desmoulins, M. Zervas, SPI Lasers (United Kingdom); J. Kirchhof, S. Unger, S. Jetschke, Institut für Photonische Technologien e.V. (Germany); T. Peschel, T. Schreiber, Fraunhofer-Institut für Angewandte Optik und Feinmechanik (Germany)
- 7914 15 **Advanced specialty fiber designs for fiber lasers (Invited Paper)** [7914-40]
L. Dong, Clemson Univ. (United States); H. A. McKay, B. K. Thomas, L. Fu, S. Suzuki, M. Ohta, A. Marcinkevicius, IMRA America, Inc. (United States)
- 7914 17 **Robust single-mode ytterbium-doped large pitch fiber emitting 294 W** [7914-42]
F. Jansen, F. Stutzki, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); T. Eidam, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany) and Helmholtz-Institut Jena (Germany); A. Steinmetz, C. Jauregui, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); J. Limpert, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany) and Helmholtz-Institut Jena (Germany); A. Tünnermann, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany) and Helmholtz-Institut Jena (Germany) and Fraunhofer IOF (Germany)

- 7914 18 **4-kW fiber laser for metal cutting and welding** [7914-43]
D. A. V. Kliner, K. Chong, J. Franke, T. Gordon, J. Gregg, W. Gries, H. Hu, JDSU (United States); H. Ishiguro, Amada Co., Ltd. (Japan); V. Issier, B. Kharlamov, A. Kliner, M. Kobayashi, K.-H. Liao, J. Lugo, J. Luu, D. Meng, J. J. Morehead, M. H. Muendel, L. E. Myers, K. Nguyen, JDSU (United States); H. Sako, Amada Co., Ltd. (Japan); K. Schneider, J. Segall, K. Shigeoka, R. Srinivasan, D. Tucker, D. Woll, D. L. Woods, H. Yu, C. Zhang, JDSU (United States)

SESSION 14 BEAM COMBINING I

- 7914 1D **Coherent combining of ultrashort fiber-amplified laser pulses** [7914-48]
E. Seise, A. Klenke, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany) and Helmholtz-Institute Jena (Germany); S. Breitzkopf, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); M. Plötner, Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Optics and Precision Engineering (Germany); J. Limpert, A. Tünnermann, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany) and Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Optics and Precision Engineering (Germany) and Helmholtz-Institute Jena (Germany)

SESSION 15 BEAM COMBINING II

- 7914 1F **High-power spectral beam combining of fiber lasers with ultra high-spectral density by thermal tuning of volume Bragg gratings** [7914-51]
D. Drachenberg, I. Divliansky, CREOL, Univ. of Central Florida (United States); V. Smirnov, OptiGrate Corp. (United States); G. Venus, L. Glebov, CREOL, Univ. of Central Florida (United States)
- 7914 1G **Global sensitivity analyses of coherent beam combining of fiber amplifier arrays by the use of numerical space filling designs** [7914-52]
A. Azarian, O. Vasseur, B. Bennai, L. Lombard, G. Canat, ONERA (France); V. Jolivet, ONERA, (France); Y. Jaouën, Telecom ParisTech, CNRS (France); P. Bourdon, ONERA (France)

SESSION 16 ULTRAFAST

- 7914 1H **Graphene mode locked ultrafast fiber lasers (Invited Paper)** [7914-53]
D. Y. Tang, H. Zhang, Nanyang Technological Univ. (Singapore); Q. L. Bao, K. P. Loh, National Univ. of Singapore (Singapore)
- 7914 1I **Power scaling of femtosecond enhancement cavities and high-power applications (Invited Paper)** [7914-54]
I. Pupeza, Max-Planck-Institut für Quantenoptik (Germany) and Ludwig-Maximilians-Univ. München (Germany); T. Eidam, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); J. Kaster, Max-Planck-Institut für Quantenoptik (Germany) and Ludwig-Maximilians-Univ. München (Germany); B. Bernhardt, Max-Planck-Institut für Quantenoptik (Germany); J. Rauschenberger, Max-Planck-Institut für Quantenoptik (Germany) and Ludwig-Maximilians-Univ. München (Germany); A. Ozawa, E. Fill, T. Udem, M. F. Kling, Max-Planck-Institut für Quantenoptik (Germany); J. Limpert, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); Z. A. Alahmed, A. M. Azzeer, King Saud Univ. (Saudi Arabia); A. Tünnermann, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); T. W. Hänsch, F. Krausz, Max-Planck-Institut für Quantenoptik (Germany) and Ludwig-Maximilians-Univ. München (Germany)

- 7914 1J **High-energy fibre CPA system based on a single stage rod type fiber amplifier in double pass configuration** [7914-55]
Y. Zaouter, F. Morin, C. Hoenninger, E. Mottay, Amplitude Systemes (France)
- 7914 1K **Passive mode-locking using multi-mode fiber** [7914-56]
E. Ding, Univ. of Washington (United States); S. Lefrançois, Cornell Univ. (United States); J. N. Kutz, Univ. of Washington (United States); F. W. Wise, Cornell Univ. (United States)
- 7914 1L **Generation and amplification of 350 fs, 2 μ m pulses in Tm: fiber** [7914-57]
R. A. Sims, P. Kadwani, L. Shah, M. Richardson, CREOL, The College of Optics and Photonics, Univ. of Central Florida (United States)
- 7914 1M **Non-adiabatic pulse compression using cascaded higher-order solitons** [7914-58]
J. N. Kutz, Univ. of Washington (United States); Q. Li, P. K. A. Wai, The Hong Kong Polytechnic Univ. (Hong Kong, China)

SESSION 17 FIBER DESIGNS I

- 7914 1N **Measuring the spatial distribution of rare-earth dopants in high-power optical fibers (Invited Paper)** [7914-59]
A. D. Yablon, Interfiber Analysis (United States)
- 7914 1O **High-power dissipative soliton laser using chirally-coupled core fiber** [7914-60]
S. Lefrançois, Cornell Univ. (United States); C. Liu, T. S. Sosnowski, Arbor Photonics, Inc. (United States); A. Galvanauskas, Univ. of Michigan (United States); F. W. Wise, Cornell Univ. (United States)
- 7914 1P **Hybrid large mode area photonic crystal fiber for distributed spectral filtering and single-mode operation** [7914-61]
F. Poli, E. Coscelli, Univ. of Parma (Italy); T. T. Alkeskjold, NKT Photonics A/S (Denmark); D. Passaro, A. Cucinotta, S. Selleri, Univ. of Parma (Italy); L. Leick, J. Broeng, NKT Photonics A/S (Denmark)
- 7914 1R **M²-characterization of beams emerging from LMA fibers by means of modal decomposition** [7914-63]
D. Flamm, C. Schulze, O. A. Schmidt, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); S. Schröter, Institute of Photonic Technology (Germany); M. Duparré, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany)

SESSION 18 FIBER DESIGNS II

- 7914 1S **Low-NA single-mode LMA photonic crystal fiber amplifier (Invited Paper)** [7914-64]
T. T. Alkeskjold, NKT Photonics A/S (Denmark); M. Laurila, Technical Univ. of Denmark (Denmark); L. Scolari, J. Broeng, NKT Photonics A/S (Denmark)
- 7914 1T **Effective absorption in cladding-pumped fibers** [7914-65]
M. N. Zervas, SPI Lasers (United Kingdom) and Univ. of Southampton (United Kingdom); A. Marshall, J. Kim, SPI Lasers (United Kingdom)

- 7914 1U **New developments in high power fiber lasers based on alternative materials** [7914-66]
A. Langner, M. Such, G. Schötz, Heraeus Quarzglas GmbH & Co. KG (Germany); S. Grimm, F. Just, M. Leich, C. Mühlig, J. Kobelke, A. Schwuchow, IPHT Jena (Germany); O. Mehl, O. Strauch, R. Niedrig, B. Wedel, HIGHYAG Lasertechnologie GmbH (Germany); G. Rehmann, V. Krause, Laserline GmbH (Germany)
- 7914 1V **Single-mode regime of 19-cell Yb-doped double-cladding photonic crystal fibers** [7914-67]
E. Coscelli, F. Poli, Univ. of Parma (Italy); T. T. Alkeskjold, NKT Photonics A/S (Denmark); D. Passaro, A. Cucinotta, S. Selleri, Univ. of Parma (Italy); L. Leick, J. Broeng, NKT Photonics A/S (Denmark)

POSTER SESSION

- 7914 1X **Er-fiber laser based reference frequency standard for ultra dense WDM networks** [7914-68]
M. Nikodem, K. Abramski, Wroclaw Univ. of Technology (Poland)
- 7914 1Y **Actively Q-switched ytterbium tapered fiber laser** [7914-69]
V. Filippov, J. Kerttula, Tampere Univ. of Technology (Finland); Y. Chamorovskii, K. Golant, Institute of Radio Engineering and Electronics (Russian Federation); O. G. Okhotnikov, Tampere Univ. of Technology (Finland)
- 7914 1Z **Characterization of modal coupling of Bragg gratings in large-mode-area fibers** [7914-70]
A. Iho, A. Tervonen, Aalto Univ. School of Science and Technology (Finland); K. Ylä-Jarkko, Corelase Oy (Finland); S. Tammela, Beneq Oy (Finland); S. Honkanen, Aalto Univ. School of Science and Technology (Finland)
- 7914 20 **Arbitrarily shaped bursts of picosecond pulses from a fiber laser source for high-throughput applications** [7914-71]
L. Desbiens, M. Drolet, V. Roy, M. M. Sisto, Y. Taillon, INO (Canada)
- 7914 22 **Group-velocity dispersion in multimode photonic crystal fibers measured using time-domain white-light interferometry** [7914-73]
P. Böswetter, T. Baselt, F. Ebert, F. Basan, P. Hartmann, West Saxon Univ. of Applied Sciences Zwickau (Germany)
- 7914 23 **Performance characterization of new erbium-doped fibers using MCVD nanoparticle doping process** [7914-74]
D. Boivin, A. Pastouret, E. Burov, C. Gonnet, O. Cavani, S. Lempereur, P. Sillard, Draka Comteq France (France)
- 7914 24 **High-power double-clad Er-doped fiber laser** [7914-75]
M. E. Likhachev, L. V. Kotov, M. M. Bubnov, O. I. Medvedkov, A. A. Sysolyatin, Fiber Optics Research Ctr. (Russian Federation); D. S. Lipatov, A. N. Guryanov, Institute of Chemistry of High-Purity Substances (Russian Federation)
- 7914 26 **A simple tunable and switchable dual-wavelength fiber laser at room temperature** [7914-77]
R. I. Álvarez Tamayo, Benemérita Univ. Autónoma de Puebla (Mexico); M. Durán Sánchez, Univ. Tecnológica de Puebla (Mexico); E. A. Kuzin, B. Ibarra Escamilla, Instituto Nacional de Astrofísica, Óptica y Electrónica (Mexico); O. Pottiez, Ctr. de Investigaciones en Óptica, A.C. (Mexico)

- 7914 27 **Guiding and birefringent properties of a hybrid PDMS/silica photonic crystal fiber** [7914-78]
C. Markos, Univ. of Patras (Greece) and National Hellenic Research Foundation (Greece);
K. Vlachos, Univ. of Patras (Greece); G. Kakarantzas, National Hellenic Research Foundation
(Greece)
- 7914 28 **Influence of non-linear index on coherent passive beam combining of fiber lasers** [7914-79]
A. P. Napartovich, N. N. Elkin, D. V. Vysotsky, Troitsk Institute for Innovation and Fusion
Research (Russian Federation)
- 7914 29 **Generation of 30 fs pulses at 670 nm using a frequency-doubled fiber laser system and a
photonic-crystal fiber with two zero-dispersion wavelengths** [7914-80]
R. Herda, T. Junggeburch, TOPTICA Photonics AG (Germany); K. P. Hansen, NKT Photonics
A/S (Denmark); P. Leisching, TOPTICA Photonics AG (Germany)
- 7914 2A **Measurement of photodarkening-induced refractive index change in ytterbium doped
fibers by modal interference** [7914-81]
C. Ye, J. J. Montiel i Ponsoda, A. Tervonen, S. Honkanen, Aalto Univ. School of Science and
Technology (Finland)
- 7914 2C **Second harmonic generation with continuous-wave fiber lasers in periodically poled
non-linear crystals** [7914-83]
M. Jacquemet, D. Harnois, A. Mugnier, D. Pureur, Quantel Group (France)
- 7914 2D **Spatial and spectral imaging of LMA photonic crystal fiber amplifiers** [7914-84]
M. Laurila, Technical Univ. of Denmark (Denmark); T. T. Alkeskjold, NKT Photonics A/S
(Denmark); J. Laegsgaard, Technical Univ. of Denmark (Denmark); J. Broeng, NKT Photonics
A/S (Denmark)
- 7914 2E **Measurement of local polarization for multi-mode photonic crystal fibers** [7914-85]
O. A. Schmidt, C. Schulze, D. Flamm, M. Duparré, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany)
- 7914 2G **Microstructured fiber with high-birefringence and low mode field non-circularity** [7914-87]
A. N. Denisov, A. E. Levchenko, S. L. Semjonov, E. M. Dianov, Fiber Optics Research Ctr.
(Russian Federation)
- 7914 2H **Modal analysis of beams emerging from a multi-core fiber using computer-generated
holograms** [7914-88]
C. Schulze, O. A. Schmidt, D. Flamm, M. Duparré, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany);
S. Schröter, Institute for Photonic Technologies (Germany)
- 7914 2I **Impact of modal interference on high-power fiber laser systems** [7914-89]
C. Jauregui, T. Eidam, J. Limpert, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); A. Tünnermann,
Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany) and Fraunhofer-Institut für Angewandte Optik und
Feinmechanik (United States)
- 7914 2J **Defining coiling adiabaticity** [7914-91]
S. O'Reilly, B. Sévigny, B. Gauvreau, ITF Labs./Avensys Tech (Canada)

- 7914 2L **All-fiber 7x1 signal combiner for incoherent laser beam combining** [7914-93]
D. Noordegraaf, NKT Photonics A/S (Denmark) and Technical Univ. of Denmark (Denmark); M. D. Maack, P. M. W. Skovgaard, J. Johansen, NKT Photonics A/S (Denmark); F. Becker, S. Belke, Rofin-Sinar Laser GmbH (Germany); M. Blomqvist, Optoskand AB (Sweden); J. Lægsgaard, Technical Univ. of Denmark (Denmark)
- 7914 2M **LMA fibers modal decomposition using image factor analysis** [7914-94]
J.-J. Max, B. Gauvreau, B. Sévigny, M. Faucher, ITF Labs./Avensys Tech (Canada)
- 7914 2N **Stimulated Raman scattering mitigation through amplified spontaneous emission simultaneous seeding on high power double-clad fiber pulse amplifiers** [7914-96]
M. Melo, J. M. Sousa, M. O. Berendt, Multiwave Photonics S.A. (Portugal)
- 7914 2P **Radiation effects on fiber amplifiers: design of radiation tolerant Yb/Er-based devices** [7914-98]
S. Girard, CEA (France); A. Laurent, ixFiber SAS (France); M. Vivona, ixFiber SAS (France) and Lab. Hubert Curien, CNRS, Univ. de Saint-Etienne (France); C. Marcandella, CEA (France); T. Robin, B. Cadier, ixFiber SAS (France); A. Boukenter, Y. Ouerdane, Lab. Hubert Curien, CNRS, Univ. de Saint-Etienne (France)
- 7914 2Q **Synchronized dual wavelength programmable laser with 75 nm wavelength difference tuning** [7914-99]
B. Buorgoyne, Y. Kim, A. Villeneuve, Genia Photonics Inc. (Canada)
- 7914 2S **High power femtosecond pulses amplified by an all-fiber system based on the model of self-similar amplification** [7914-101]
T. Yang, T. Wang, D. Yang, J. Wang, M. Sang, Tianjin Univ. (China) and Educational Ministry of China (China)
- 7914 2T **High-gain resonance Er:glass amplifier** [7914-102]
P. Wan, J. Liu, PolarOnyx, Inc. (United States)
- 7914 2U **Measurement techniques for the evaluation of photodarkening in fibers for high-power lasers** [7914-103]
M. Olivero, N. Boetti, A. Braglia, A. Neri, J. Lousteau, D. Milanese, G. Perrone, Politecnico di Torino (Italy)
- 7914 2V **Fabrication of pump combiners for high-power fiber lasers** [7914-104]
A. Braglia, M. Olivero, A. Neri, G. Perrone, Politecnico di Torino (Italy)
- 7914 2W **Thermal modeling of active fiber and splice points in high power fiber laser** [7914-105]
Z. Huang, T. Y. Ng, C. P. Seah, S. H. T. Lim, R. F. Wu, DSO National Labs. (Singapore)
- 7914 2Y **Nearly circular pump guides** [7914-107]
J. J. Morehead, M. H. Muendel, JDSU (United States)

- 7914 22 **Experimental study of phase locking of fiber collimators using internal beam-tail interference** [7914-108]
L. A. Beresnev, U.S. Army Research Lab. (United States); M. A. Vorontsov, T. Weyrauch, Univ. of Dayton (United States); G. Carhart, U.S. Army Research Lab. (United States); S. L. Lachinova, Univ. of Maryland, College Park (United States) and Optonicus (United States); J. Liu, U.S. Army Research Lab. (United States)
- 7914 30 **High-average power optical demodulation of a fiber amplified phase modulated single-frequency signal** [7914-109]
S. Rhein, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); O. Schmidt, Fraunhofer-Institut für Angewandte Optik und Feinmechanik (Germany); H. Zimer, JT Optical Engine GmbH + Co. KG (Germany); T. Schreiber, R. Eberhardt, Fraunhofer-Institut für Angewandte Optik und Feinmechanik (Germany); A. Tünnermann, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany) and Fraunhofer-Institut für Angewandte Optik und Feinmechanik (Germany)
- 7914 31 **Fused fiber pump and signal combiners for a 4-kW ytterbium fiber laser** [7914-110]
M. H. Muendel, R. Farrow, K. Liao, D. Woll, J. Luu, C. Zhang, J. J. Morehead, J. Segall, J. Gregg, K. Tai, B. Kharlamov, H. Yu, L. Myers, JDSU (United States)
- 7914 32 **Comparative numerical study of efficiency of energy deposition in femtosecond microfabrication with fundamental and second harmonics of Yb-doped fiber laser** [7914-111]
A. Dostovalov, S. Babin, Institute of Automation and Electrometry (Russian Federation); M. Baregheh, M. Dubov, V. Mezentsev, Aston Univ. (United Kingdom)
- 7914 33 **Effect of Rayleigh-scattering distributed feedback on multiwavelength Raman fiber laser generation** [7914-112]
A. E. El-Taher, P. Harper, Aston Univ. (United Kingdom); S. A. Babin, D. V. Churkin, E. V. Podivilov, Institute of Automation and Electrometry (Russian Federation); J. D. Ania-Castanon, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Spain); S. K. Turitsyn, Aston Univ. (United Kingdom)
- 7914 34 **On the theory of the modulation instability in optical fiber and laser amplifiers** [7914-113]
A. M. Rubenchik, Lawrence Livermore National Lab. (United States); S. K. Turitsyn, Aston Univ. (United Kingdom); M. P. Fedoruk, Institute of Computational Technologies (Russian Federation) and Novosibirsk State Univ. (Russian Federation)

Author Index

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- 4 Components
Jean-Philippe Fève, Directed Energy Solutions (United States)
- 5 Material Properties and Photo-Darkening
Yoonchan Jeong, Seoul National University (Korea, Republic of)
- 6 Extended Wavelength Sources
Dahv A. V. Kliner, JDSU (United States)
- 7 Pulsed Sources I
Robert G. Waarts, Consultant (United States)
- 8 Pulsed Sources II
William E. Torruellas, The Johns Hopkins University (United States)
- 9 Pulsed Amplified Sources: Joint Session with Conference 7912
Norman Hodgson, Coherent, Inc. (United States)
Dahv A. V. Kliner, JDSU (United States)
- 10 High-Power Sources
Denis V. Gapontsev, Consultant (Russian Federation)
- 11 Fiber Laser Markets
Jes Broeng, NKT Photonics A/S (Denmark)
- 12 Beam Combining I
Eric C. Honea, Lockheed Martin Aculight (United States)

- 13 Beam Combining II
David E. Zelmon, Air Force Research Laboratory (United States)
- 14 Ultrafast
Jay W. Dawson, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
(United States)
- 15 Fiber Designs I
Ji Wang, Corning Inc. (United States)
- 16 Fiber Designs II
John M. Ballato, Clemson University (United States)
- Post-Deadline Session
Eric C. Honea, Lockheed Martin Aculight (United States)

High brightness spectral beam combining to 8.2 kW

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Abstract: We report on the spectral beam combining of four narrow-linewidth fiber amplifier chains running at different wavelengths. The main amplifier stage consists of a large mode area photonic crystal fiber delivering more than 2 kW of optical power. The four output beams are geometrically (incoherent) combined using a polarization-independent dielectric reflective diffraction grating to an output power of 8.2 kW preserving the beam quality of the individual fiber amplifiers.

OCIS codes: (140.0140) Lasers and laser optics; (140.3510) Lasers and laser optics: Lasers, fiber

1. Introduction

Yb-doped fiber lasers at 1 μm wavelength have been established as a reliable power-scalable laser architecture in the past years. The power limit is usually set by damage, thermal issues or nonlinear optical effects. The generation of output powers above such limits of a single fiber is considered in current research activities. Coherent and incoherent combining schemes for multiple beams were demonstrated. A promising concept is the incoherent spectral beam combining (SBC) relaxing the requirements for phase control of the individual beams. Using volume Bragg gratings, 770 W have been obtained already with the drawback of being influenced by thermal drifts at high power levels [1, 2]. Output powers up to 2 kW based on fiber amplifiers and a polarization independent dielectric grating have been reported by our group most recently.

In this contribution we report on further power scaling by spectral beam combining. The four individual amplifiers have been scaled up to a power of >2 kW. With a combining efficiency of 99 % we obtained a power of ~ 8.2 kW. The main amplifier fibers support only a few modes resulting in a good beam quality and the beam combination setup preserves this beam quality.

2. Experimental

The experimental architecture is similar to the one published previously [3] and is shown in Fig. 1. The individual amplifiers are seeded by a fiber coupled wavelength tunable external cavity single-frequency diode laser (ECDL) delivering 20 mW. The emission wavelength are tuned to 1040 nm, 1048 nm, 1056 nm and 1064 nm, thus a separation of 8 nm. To enhance the SBS threshold a linewidth control is applied, which employs a modulation of the ECDL's driver current with a noise generator resulting in an increased seed-signal bandwidth of ~ 90 pm. The seed signal is amplified in the first amplification stage to a power of ~ 500 mW. This signal is launched into the second pre-amplifier stage using a 1.6 m long, polarization-maintaining photonic crystal fiber having a 40 μm signal core and a 200 μm pump core. An output power of ~ 20 W in a linearly polarized and diffraction-limited beam is obtained. The preamplifiers are protected against back reflections from the main amplification stage by optical isolators.

Figure 1: Schematic experimental setup for the spectral beam combining.

The main amplifier-stage consists of a ~ 12 m long ytterbium-doped photonic crystal fiber prepared for high power operation [4]. The active core of the fiber has a measured mode field diameter for the fundamental mode of ~ 33 μm . The pump core is defined by an air-cladding region and has a diameter of 500 μm and a numerical aperture of 0.55. The stage is pumped at 976 nm through one fiber facet in a counter propagating configuration by a fiber coupled diode laser. The grating, which is used as combining element, is a highly efficient reflective diffraction grating (binary grating, 960 lines/mm), optimized for both TE- and TM-polarization, hence, for non-polarized light. Thus, no polarization control of the main amplifier is required.

Figure 2(a): Combined spectrum, (b) Output characteristic after the grating.

Each amplifier is able to generate an output power of ~ 2.1 kW limited by the available pump power. However, the beam quality is decreased with increasing power due to spatial hole burning that enables the onset of higher order modes. The beam quality stays close to diffraction-limited of $M^2 < 1.5$ up to a power of 500 W but decreased to $M^2 \sim 4$ at 2 kW. The four beams have been geometrically overlapped in near and far field. The combined beams spectrum is shown in Fig. 2(a). The output characteristic after the combination is shown in Fig. 2(b). The combining efficiency is ~ 99 % measured by the power in the 0th diffraction order. Thus, a combined output power of 8.2 kW could be obtained. The measured beam quality at 7.2 kW was $M_x^2 = 4.3$ and $M_y^2 = 4.2$.

3. Summary and conclusion

We demonstrated the spectral beam combination of four narrow-linewidth photonic crystal fiber amplifiers. Each individual beam has a spectral width of ~ 90 pm at an output power of ~ 2.1 kW and a beam quality of $M^2 \sim 4$. The polarization independent grating allowed an efficiency of 99%. The combined beam has an average power of 8.2 kW (pump power limited) with a good beam quality. Investigations on further power scaling by adding additional

channels are under progress. Diffraction limited beam quality will be preserved by advanced fiber designs enforcing single mode operation even at higher output power.

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A 967 W Single Mode All-Fiber PM Yb PCF Fiber Amplifier

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ABSTRACT

We report on the development and performance of a monolithic, all-fiber, polarization maintaining (PM), Yb-doped photonic crystal fiber (PCF) type fiber amplifier. The key components of the amplifier are a novel multi fiber-coupled laser diode stack and a monolithic 6+1x1 fiber pump/signal multiplexer. The precisely aligned 2-D laser diode emitter array found in laser diode stacks is utilized by way of a simple in-line imaging process with no mirror reflections to process a 2-D array of 450 elements into 3 400/440 μ m 0.22NA pump delivery fibers. The amplifier in this work utilizes two laser diode stacks, one at 915 nm and the other at 976 nm for six total delivery fibers, three per stack, with an aggregate available pump power of 1.65 kW. The fiber combiner is an etched air taper design that transforms low numerical aperture (NA), large diameter pump radiation into a high NA, small diameter format for pump injection into an air-clad large mode area PCF, while maintaining a constant core size through the taper for efficient signal coupling and throughput. The fiber combiner has 6 400/440/0.22 core/clad/NA pump delivery fibers and a 20/440 PM step-index signal delivery fiber on the input side and a 40/500 PM Yb doped PCF on the output side. The etched air taper transforms the six 400/440 μ m 0.22 NA pump fibers to the 500 μ m 0.55 NA core of the PCF fiber with a measured pump combining efficiency of 92% with zero brightness drop. The combiner also operates as a stepwise mode converter via a 30 μ m intermediate core region in the combiner between the 20 μ m core of the input fiber and the 40 μ m fiber core of the PCF with a measured signal efficiency of 90% while maintaining polarization with a measured PER of 20 dB. A seed laser was formed using one of the 915 nm pump legs to end pump a PLMA 20/400 Yb-doped fiber laser which provided 80W of seed power at 1085nm. This seed signal was then fed through the fiber pump/signal combiner with the remaining 5 pump legs into the large Yb-doped PCF fiber. In this configuration a total power of 967 W was observed with a slope efficiency of over 75%. We report the signal coupling efficiency and power handling capability as well.

Keywords: Fiber Amplifier, Power Amplifier, Laser Diode Stack, Fiber Combiners, Photonic Crystal Fiber

1. INTRODUCTION

All-fiber high power fiber amplifiers are a critical component for defense and industrial applications because they provide rugged and reliable operation of a compact and relatively low cost coherent light source that can be combined as part of a distributed amplifier array or deployed in the gain section of an industrial fiber laser. Such power amplifiers are highly sought after because they offer the prospect of high levels of pump power integration in large mode area (LMA) PCF fibers, and add significantly to the ruggedness and reliability of the device by eliminating the losses and alignment problems inherent in free-space fiber amplifier architectures. A significant engineering challenge for such power amplifiers lies in the development of key pump and combiner components for monolithic integration. Current kW class fiber lasers achieving single mode outputs have been created by using LMA type fibers with multi-element laser diode pumps that are combined to provide pump powers of approximately 1 kW [1]. For powers above 1 kW, large free space coupled stacks have been successfully employed to end pump LMA step-index and PCF type fibers [2-3]. For multi-kW single mode fiber amplifiers, a LMA PCF has many advantages with the ability to fabricate a very low numerical aperture (NA) core and a large high NA pump cladding.

Steady progress in high power all-fiber amplifiers has been stymied somewhat due to the high cost and complexity of the pump lasers. These pumps whether created through the alignment and focusing of combined independent single elements, 1-D laser diode bars or 2-D laser diode stacks suffer from a high number of very intricately aligned optical micro elements at 0.1 μ m level alignment tolerances. To address this issue, we have developed a multi-fiber coupled laser diode stack which parallel processes over 450 individual laser diode emitting elements into three 400/440 μ m fibers.

Fused fiber combiners have been a critical component in current all-fiber lasers and amplifiers because of their

ability to efficiently combine both pump and signal light into active double clad fibers. Current fiber combiners [4-8] have coupling efficiencies of >95% for the pump and >85% for the signal. Although the performance of these combiners is very respectable, there are limitations that prevent this type of coupler from being used effectively in very high power (multi-kW) LMA PCF amplifiers and lasers. Foremost, in a typical combiner, a bundle containing a signal fiber surrounded by pump fibers is heated and stretched down to a waist that matches the diameter and NA of the active double clad fiber as shown in Fig. 1. Because the signal fiber is tapered down along with the pump fibers, the resulting small core diameter of the signal fiber can have a significant mismatch to the core of a LMA double clad fiber. The large mismatch of mode field diameters leads to unacceptably high loss especially for LMA PCFs.

Creating all-fiber PCF amplifiers has proven to be difficult, especially designs that can utilize large diameter pump fibers (400 μm or greater) that can be bundled into 6+1x1 configurations for very high power operation. To address this challenge, we have developed an all-fiber 6+1x1 pump/signal combiner for a LMA PCF that combines the output of six 400/440 μm , 0.22 NA pump fibers and a 25/440 μm PM signal fiber into a taper that preserves the diameter of the core while the multimode pump light is coupled into an active fiber with smaller diameter and high NA. With this improved design, it is possible to reduce signal losses to <0.5 dB, while maintaining 92% pump throughput.

In this paper, we will detail the construction and performance multi-fiber coupled diode laser stacks and the 6+1x1 pump/signal combiner and demonstrate the use of these components in the operation of an all-fiber, PM, single mode Yb PCF power to achieve an output power of 967 W in quasi-CW operation.

2. MULTI-FIBER COUPLED PUMPS

Efficient pump integration is perhaps the most critical task in creating compact and efficient all fiber multi kW amplifiers. The essential element is to create a pump integration system where high brightness fiber coupling is accomplished via combining a large number of individual emitters in as parallel a process as possible. The unique spatial emission properties of high power broad area laser diodes allow for the creation of Symmetric Brightness Units (SBU's) where a number of emitters are aligned in the direction of their near diffraction-limited fast axis emission planes, such that the combined brightness matches the slow axis brightness of a single or multiple emitters. Our approach takes advantage of the alignment precision inherent in a 2-D array of broad area emitters found in a laser diode stack. By creating the simplifying approach to subdivide the 2-D array into 3 SBU's for efficient fiber coupling, the number of required optical components is greatly reduced as is the optical loss of the system. For the amplifier, 2 multi-fiber coupled stacks were created, one operating at 915 nm and the other at 976 nm. These multi fiber pumps along with their aggregate fiber coupled power output are shown in figure 2.

Figure 2. Photograph of two 25-bar fiber coupled stacks with a graph showing a total coupled power of 1650 Watts

From the photograph in Fig. 2, the very compact nature of this technical approach is evident. Continued development is underway to improve fiber coupling efficiency and power handling capability. It is envisioned that through this approach a compact, lightweight, and low cost pump integration source of over 4kW in aggregate power will be possible.

3. 6x1+1 ETCHED AIR TAPER FIBER COMBINER

Much of the work completed in developing these devices have been described elsewhere [9]. A summary of the process steps involved in creating these combiners is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Processes for Creating an Etched Air Taper Combiner. CO₂ based laser bundle formation (upper right). Computer controlled etching process (upper left) Taper to PCF splicing (lower right)

To create an etched air taper combiner, a 6+1x1 bundle is created with the pumps and the signal fiber in the center by collapsing a glass capillary around the bundle such that there is no deformation to the pump or signal fibers. At the time this process was created, there were no commercially available fiber processing units to process bundles close to two mm in diameter. To overcome this, a bundling station was created using a CO₂ laser to provide the proper uniform heating for optimum bundle collapse. Next a uniform adiabatic taper is created by immersing a glass rod (with core) into an etchant solution and then using a computer driven process to remove the rod from the etchant solution. Finally the three components of the assembly are spliced together to create the bundle. For the amplifier pump combiner, 6 400/440 μm 0.22NA pump fibers were bundled with a 20/440 μm PM signal fiber. An etched air taper region was created from a

1.2mm outer diameter/30 μm core pulled fiber rod. The bundle/taper spliced assembly was then spliced to the 40/500 μm PM Yb-doped PCF gain fiber. The PCF was air-clad with a 0.55 NA for the inner pump cladding. Pump transfer efficiency was measured to be 92% with no brightness drop while the signal transfer efficiency was measured to be over 90%. A single plane of polarization from input signal to gain fiber was maintained throughout the device. We measured a PER of 20dB through the combiner.

A key to high power operation of the combiners is the packaging. Even with losses on the order of 5%, 2kW operation requires in excess of 100W to be effectively dissipated from a very small physical space. For these combiners, a special high power dissipation package was designed and developed. A sample device was power tested in the laboratory of Prof. A Galvanaskas at the University of Michigan. The results of this testing is shown in Fig. 4. With 1.5 kW of launched pump power, we measured nearly 1400 W of combined pump power out of the combiner for a transmission efficiency of 92%. During the entire testing cycle, a thermal camera was used to observe the fiber combiner under high power operation. The air taper, taper to PCF splice and strain relief are clearly shown in Fig. 4. Since this device is being operated at zero brightness drop, the largest point of loss in the combiner is at the taper to PCF splice (about 5% to 6%). At this loss point, the PCF fiber is etched to create a scattering/mode stripping point to remove the non-coupled light. While the vast majority of this light is directed out of the fiber at this point, a small amount of the residual light is guided and captured at the strain relief point. At the strain relief point, the highest temperatures in the combiner were observed, approximately 104°C for 1.5 kW of input power. This temperature is well below the 260°C temperature limit of the high temperature silicone used to secure the fiber. Considering how well this combiner performed at the 1.5kW level, we estimate that the combiner in its current level of development is capable of 2kW pump combining.

Figure 4. (Left) Power testing of the etched air taper combiner demonstrating 92% pump combined efficiency with an input power of 1.5 kW. (Right) A thermal camera image of the combiner under high power operation.

4. POWER AMPLIFIER CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION

Due to the difficulty in obtaining 100 W fiber laser seed sources and in order to completely characterize the fiber amplifier, our own CW seed source was fabricated by taking one of the 200 W pump legs from the 915 nm fiber coupled stack and end pumping a 20 m length of 20/400 μm Yb-doped LMA fiber with a HR FBG on the input side and an 8% FBG output coupler. The seed source was first fabricated and characterized. Approximately 75 W of output power at 1085nm was achieved and available to use as a seed to the power amplifier stage. This seed source was then fed through the signal port of the combiner. The remaining 2 ports of the 915nm source and the 3 ports of the 976nm pump were spliced to 5 of the 6 ports on the combiner. The combined pump and signal was then spliced to the 40/500 μm PM Yb PCF fiber. At the output of the fiber amplifier, a power meter was placed a distance from the fiber with an aperture to

separate the signal from the unabsorbed pump. The schematic of this amplifier is shown in figure 5.

Figure 5. Schematic of the 976 W fiber MOPA showing the configuration of the multi-fiber coupled stacks and 6+1x1 pump-signal multiplexer.

Also shown in Fig. 5 is the input vs. output power graph for the fiber amplifier. In order to avoid fiber damaging self Q-switching, the 915 nm pump was turned on first, to initiate the seed laser and pump part of the power amplifier in a low gain configuration. With 915 nm pump turned on, an output of the power amplifier of 300 W was observed with an absorbed power slope efficiency of 83%. The addition of the 976 nm pump increased the power amplifier output to a maximum of 976 W with an absorbed power slope efficiency of approximately 75%. A visual inspection of the beam indicated that no other higher order modes were present.

Several improvements are envisioned for this amplifier. First, pumping with both sources at 976 nm would allow for a shorter fiber to be used and optimized for a common wavelength. Second improvements in fiber coupling efficiency for the pumps would allow for more pump power to be provided to the amplifier. Currently the seed source has the broad spectrum characteristic of fiber lasers. Utilizing narrow band seeds will require the use of more specialized PCF core designs than the one currently employed. Finally in the current set up none of the components are properly heat sunk so to avoid component overheating. As such, the system is run with a 10ms pump pulse at 10 Hz. Proper heat sinking will allow for true CW operation.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Successful operation of an all-fiber 967 W Yb-doped PM PCF fiber amplifier has been achieved through the development of 2 key amplifier components; namely, a multi-fiber coupled laser diode stack and a high power capable etched air taper 6+1x1 fiber pump/signal combiner. Not only have these two key components have they been successfully demonstrated and operated, the critical processes for assembling these components have been fully worked out allowing for the fabrication and production of multiple units. With continuing improvements, the goal of fielding near diffraction limited, highly linear power amplifiers operating near 3kW or higher in ultra compact, highly rugged and reliable enclosures will be realizable.

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Modal content reconstruction of fibers for high-power applications

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New fiber designs have been increasing the performance of high-power fiber lasers. To lower the impact of nonlinearities, large-mode areas are required, which leads to fiber designs supporting a few modes. In order to ensure an excellent beam-quality from these sources, a high premium is put on modal discrimination. Thus, it is essential to develop experimental methods that reveal the modal content and modal weights. One of the promising new methods is spatially and spectrally resolved (S^2) imaging, as it does not make any assumption on the properties of the fiber to be tested [1, 2]. However, the technique makes it difficult to analyze fibers in which the modes exhibit small relative group delays (e.g., in the case of large mode area fibers). Particularly, the spectral interference fringe spacing becomes non-specific as group-velocity dispersion plays a dominant role for a broad spectrum, which is required to record the spectral interference.

In this contribution, we demonstrate, for the first time to the best of our knowledge, a method that enables modal reconstruction at small intermodal delays even for spectral bandwidths smaller than that needed for measuring a single fringe of an interference spectrum. The novel technique is based on optical low-coherence interferometry (OLCI). In contrast to previous work [3, 4], we also account for the influence of group-velocity dispersion (GVD) on the modal weights and determine the correct multi-path interference (MPI) values in a few-mode fiber. This requires no knowledge about the optical properties of the fiber to be characterized. For a spectral bandwidth as small as 4 nm, we measure intermodal delays as short as 2.8 ps at mode-extinction values up to 18 dB. These values are specific to the fiber under test, but our technique is capable of measuring intermodal delays as short as the ultimate physical limit in form of the coherence time. This makes it highly attractive for the characterization of the next generation of high-performance fiber laser.

Fig. 1 (a) Schematic of the setup, which is based on a Mach-Zehnder interferometer (SLD: superluminescent diode, LPG: long period grating, HOM: high order mode) (b) Cross-correlation trace for the entire image (data is offset corrected) (bandpass filter is at $\lambda=780$ nm)

Fig. 2 (a) Fit of the model to the envelope of the experimental data, shown in Fig. 1 (b) for the first peak (corresponding to LP₀₁) and (b) for the second peak (LP₀₂)

A typical schematic of the experimental setup for OLCI measurements is shown in Fig. 1(a). The near-field at the output of the fiber is imaged onto a camera, and interfered with the collimated, expanded beam of the reference arm. The few-mode fiber under test is the final element of a module ($L=0.6$ m) consisting of a single-mode fiber, a turn around point long-period grating (TAP LPG), and the higher-order mode (HOM) fiber ($L=0.4$ m) [5]. The LPG yields a well-defined mode conversion efficiency from LP₀₁ core-mode to LP₀₂ core-mode. To detect the cross-correlation signal between the reference and the different modes, a computer-controlled translation stage has been built in the reference arm in order to scan across the modal delays for each individual mode in the signal arm. Figure 1(b) shows an example of the coherence trace (integrated over all pixels of the camera). The peaks in the trace correspond to the two different modes that have been excited in the HOM fiber. In general, the recorded signal contains a high-frequency contribution, as shown in Fig 1(b), the envelope of which contains all the information of interest.

We have developed an analytical model that accounts for the influence of dispersion on the cross-correlation data. Specifically, dispersion decreases the amplitude of the peaks in the cross-correlation signal. Fig 2 (a) and (b) show the result of the fitting of the model for the two peaks seen in Fig. 1(b). Since this fitting is based on the same spectrum, the difference in shape is solely due to the impact of dispersion. In this way, the group-delay dispersion values are found for every mode. By tilting the 4-nm bandpass filter, these parameters can be retrieved as a function of wavelength. Fig. 3(a) and (b) shows the dispersion and relative group-delay vs. wavelength, respectively. Using these parameters, the mode profiles are determined by fitting the analytical model at every pixel. In this way, the LP₀₁ and LP₀₂ mode have been retrieved, as shown in Fig. 4(a) and (b), respectively. Moreover, the relative (dispersion-corrected) weights of the modes can be obtained. To demonstrate the accuracy of the method, in Fig. 4(c), we show the MPI as a function of wavelength. These values match well with the mode conversion efficiencies independently measured by recording the LPG loss spectrum (the MPI is defined as $10 \log_{10}(\iint I_{LP01}(x,y) dx dy / \iint I_{LP02}(x,y) dx dy)$).

Fig. 3 (a) Group-delays of the two modes, and (b) Dispersion as a function of wavelength position of the bandpass

Fig. 4 (a) and (b) Retrieved modes at a wavelength of 780 nm; (c) Multi-path interference as a function of the spectral position of the tunable bandpass filter.

In conclusion, for the first time, to the best of our knowledge, the impact of dispersion on the modal weights of a few-mode fiber has been demonstrated. This has allowed us to accurately determine modal weights even in fibers whose modes have small relative group delays but distinct dispersive behavior. This makes it highly attractive for the characterization of fibers that are being developed for next-generation high-power fiber lasers.

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Power-scalable internal frequency doubling scheme for continuous-wave fiber lasers

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ABSTRACT

We describe a simple power-scalable concept for efficient second harmonic generation in a cladding-pumped continuous-wave fiber laser. Our approach makes use of an internal resonant enhancement cavity to increase the intracavity power and second harmonic conversion efficiency without the need for active cavity length control and stabilization. This technique has been applied to a cladding-pumped Yb-doped fiber laser yielding 15 W of linearly-polarized continuous-wave green output (at 540 nm) for 90 W of absorbed diode-pump power (at 975 nm). The internal conversion efficiency of the laser with respect to the fundamental power entering the enhancement cavity was >63%. The prospects for further improvement in performance with respect to conversion efficiency and output power will be discussed.

Keywords: fiber laser, ytterbium, continuous wave, visible laser, green laser, second harmonic generation

1. INTRODUCTION

High power laser sources emitting in the visible spectral region have a diverse range of applications in areas such as laser processing of materials, projection displays, medicine and sensing. For the continuous-wave (cw) operating regime the most popular approach for generating visible output is via intracavity second harmonic generation in a diode-pumped ‘bulk’ solid-state laser. This approach exploits the relatively low resonator losses and hence high intracavity powers that can be achieved in these lasers to yield high second harmonic conversion efficiency and output powers in multi ten-watt regime [1]. However, scaling to higher powers is rather more challenging due to the effects of heat generation in the laser medium which lead to degradation in beam quality and increased resonator loss. Fiber lasers benefit from a geometry that is relatively immune to the effects of heat generation in the core and hence offer a route to much higher power levels in the near-infrared wavelength regime via the use of cladding-pumped architectures [2], and hence offer the prospect of much higher power levels in the visible regime via nonlinear frequency conversion. Unfortunately, the technique of intracavity second harmonic generation is not well-suited to cladding-pumped fiber lasers, since they have rather high resonator losses. One solution to this problem is to employ the technique of external resonant cavity second harmonic generation. This approach has been successfully applied to cw fiber sources [3], but suffers from the drawback of added complexity since a single-frequency fiber master-oscillator power-amplifier is required and the master-oscillator and/or resonant cavity lengths must be actively stabilized to ensure that the resonance condition is maintained at all times.

In this paper we present an alternative scheme for efficient second harmonic generation in cladding-pumped continuous-wave fiber lasers. Our approach makes use of a simple fiber laser resonator containing an internal resonant enhancement cavity with a nonlinear crystal for second harmonic generation. The fiber laser automatically lases on axial modes which are simultaneously resonant in the enhancement cavity and main cavity. As a result, the intracavity power in the enhancement cavity is increased to many times the cw power that can be extracted from the fiber laser alone, leading to high second harmonic conversion efficiency. In contrast, to external resonant frequency doubling, this approach does not require a single-frequency fiber source and there is no need for active cavity length stabilization since the fiber laser can only lase on axial modes which are resonant in the enhancement cavity. We have applied this technique to a cladding-pumped ytterbium(Yb)-doped fiber laser to achieve efficient nonlinear frequency conversion of near-infrared (fundamental) output at ~1080 nm to the green output at ~540 nm.

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2. EXPERIMENTAL SET-UP AND RESULTS

The experimental configuration (shown in Fig. 1) comprised a double-clad fiber with a polarization-maintaining Yb-doped core in a simple standing-wave resonator. Feedback for lasing was provided by a diffraction grating at one end of the fiber, and by an external cavity containing a resonant enhancement cavity at the opposite end of the fiber. A simple four-mirror ‘bow-tie’ cavity design was employed for the enhancement cavity with a Brewster-angled LiB_3O_5 (LBO) crystal placed in an oven and cut for type I non-critical phase matching. Pump light was supplied by a fiber-coupled diode source at 975 nm and coupled into the end of the Yb-doped fiber adjacent to the diffraction grating. The diffraction grating was used to select the operating wavelength and narrow the emission spectrum to lie within the phase matching bandwidth for second harmonic generation.

Figure 1. Schematic of the experimental set-up

With this set-up, we obtained 15 W of CW second harmonic output (at 540 nm) in the forward direction (Fig. 1), corresponding to 19 W generated inside the LBO crystal, for 90 W of absorbed diode pump power (at 975 nm). The output power in the reverse direction was <100 mW. The internal conversion efficiency of the laser with respect to the fundamental power entering the enhancement cavity was >63%. The output was linearly-polarized with a beam propagation factor (M^2) <1.25. The laser was tunable over the range of 540-560 nm (for a 20 m long Yb-doped fiber) and over the range 520-550 nm (for a 10 m long fiber) by adjusting the grating angle and the oven temperature to maintain phase matching. The output power stability (rms noise over 100s) was measured to be <0.7%. These preliminary results were obtained with a non-optimal set-up due to limited availability of components. The prospects for further improvement in performance in terms of output power, conversion efficiency and range of operating wavelengths will be discussed.

Figure 2. Generated second harmonic power at 540 nm as a function of absorbed diode pump power at 975 nm

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Pump limited 203 W monolithic single frequency fiber amplifier: a two-tone approach

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ABSTRACT

We present high power results of a co-pumped monolithic polarization maintaining (PM) Yb-doped fiber amplifier seeded with a combination of broad and single-frequency laser signals. For the former, a tunable 1035-1045 nm source was used while the latter operated at 1065 nm. This two-tone concept was used in conjunction with externally applied or intrinsically formed thermal gradients to demonstrate at high power combined SBS suppression factors of up to 7 dB in a 7 meter long Nufern 25/400 fiber. Depending on the input parameters (seed powers and wavelength of broadband source) and the thermal gradient, the output power of the single-frequency signal ranged from 80 W to 203 W with slope efficiencies from 70-80%. The 203 W output with a nominal linewidth of 100 kHz was obtained through the application of an external thermal gradient and by seeding the broadband signal at 100 times the power of that of the single-frequency seed. To the best of our knowledge, the 203 W result is the highest reported in the literature for monolithic PM single frequency fiber amplifiers. Furthermore, measurements of the spectral content of the backward light as recorded on an optical spectrum analyzer and a photodiode indicated that we were operating below the SBS threshold. We estimate that, with sufficient pump power and optimized fiber length, approximately 300 W of single-frequency output can be obtained.

Keywords: Yb-doped fiber lasers, stimulated Brillouin scattering, nonlinear optics

Attachments:

Figure 1 Experimental set-up of monolithic two-tone fiber amplifier system. PD 1, PD 2, PD 3, and PD 4 are photodiodes. ISO 1 and ISO 2 are isolators. PM 1, PM 2, and PM 3 are power meters. The ASE filter is used to suppress noise introduced by the broadband laser in order to allow for seeding with highly skewed ratios.

Figure 2 Reflectivity vs. single frequency 1065nm signal output power for a PM monolithic amplifier in different thermal configurations : single tone all on cold spool, two-tone all on cold spool seeded with 1035 nm broadband light , and two-tone with 6 m on cold spool and 1 m left to cool in air under ambient conditions (thus utilizing quantum defect heating). Unlike the

single tone case, the thermal gradient developed through quantum defect heating develops at the output end of the fiber; thus allowing for further SBS suppression.

Figure 3 Single-frequency output power vs. launched 976 nm power. The broadband seed operated at ~ 1035 nm. Approximately 6 meters of the fiber were wrapped around a 12°C spool with approximately 1 meter wrapped around an 80°C spool. At maximum available pump power, the output was 203.5 W. At this power, the SBS was below threshold.