

LiDAR Technologies and Systems

LIDAR Technologies and Systems

Paul McManamon

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Preface

About six years ago, I co-taught a semester-long course in LiDAR technology with Dr. Ed Watson at the LiDAR and Optical Communications Institute (LOCI) of the University of Dayton. At the time, there was a book that covered part of what I wanted to teach, but it did not cover all of the areas I thought should go into the course. There were a couple of other books that had interesting LiDAR-related material, but no book that covered all of the topics that I thought were needed. Since then, I have done a number of week-long, or almost-week-long, courses. One of those I co-taught with Gary Kamerman, and a number of them with Ed Watson. Shortly after teaching that 2012 semester-long course, I started writing the *Field Guide to LiDAR*, which was published by SPIE Press in 2015. I thought a shorter book would be easier to write than a longer one. I was wrong. The Field Guide came out great, but its format with one topic per page made it a challenging type of book to write. Also, when I finished writing the Field Guide, I still did not have a really good *text* book on LiDAR technology and systems. Thus, the decision to write this book grew out of the need for a good teaching reference for a longer course on LiDAR. The Field Guide is great as a quick reference, with all the equations in one place and each topic concisely presented, but it does not provide enough background or detail to be a text book. This book presents an in-depth coverage of LiDAR technology and systems, and the Field Guide serves as a reminder of the essential points and equations once you already understand the technology.

I learned a lot writing the *Field Guide to LiDAR*, and then writing this book. When I considered all of the topics that should be covered in this book, there were some I knew really well, and some I knew less well. The neat thing I found about writing a book like this is that, before I could effectively explain a particular concept, I needed to clearly understand the concept. To this end, the comparison paper I recently wrote¹ with Ed Watson, Andrew Huntington, Dale Fried, Paul Banks, and Jeffrey D. Beck taught me a lot about receivers. I have included sections from that paper in this book. The paper on the history of laser radar in the U.S.² that I wrote with Milt Huffacker and Gary Kammerman, and the more recent paper³ “Laser radar: historical perspective—from the East to the West,” which I wrote with Vasly Molebny, Ove Steinvall, T. Kobayashi, and W. Chen, both provide a good summary of the history of LiDAR. Chairing the 2014 United States National

Academy of Sciences study on laser radar⁴ helped me learn more. Of course, decades of experience monitoring LiDAR development for the Air Force taught me a lot as well.

Once I started working on this book, I had two students take a self-study course with me in LiDAR. Both students read early versions of the manuscript and developed possible problems to include at the end of each chapters. Dr. Abtin Ataei was the first student to do this, and Andrew Reinhardt was the second. A special thanks goes to Abtin Ataei for doing a final check on the Problems and Solutions. For the last chapter on LiDAR applications, I felt I did not know the 3D mapping area as well as I should. Dr. Mohan Vaidynathan, my former post-doctorate, works for Harris Corporation (now merged with L3 Technologies) on one of the commercial 3D mappers and volunteered to make an input. Admittedly, he is an advocate of the Geiger-mode version of 3D mapping, as he should be, given where he works, but I knew that. He and his colleagues provided significant input. To balance things out, I did request information from Teledyne Optech and RIEGL as well.

MIT/Lincoln Lab has a nice library of 3D LiDAR images. I would like to thank them for providing one of those images for the book cover.

Finally, I thank Dara Burrows, Senior Editor at SPIE Press, whose tireless work editing this book has made it happen.

This has been an educational experience, and I am pleased with the way the book has turned out. I hope you enjoy it, and I hope many people can use it to learn more about LiDAR technology and systems. I enjoyed writing it, and as I mentioned, learned a lot in certain areas. Perhaps, once in a while it happens that an author learns almost as much by writing a book as a reader learns by reading that book!

Paul McManamon

May 2019

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