Front Matter: Volume 8874
Contents

vii Conference Committee
ix Introduction

SESSION 1 PROPAGATION AND MODELING I

8874 02 Deep turbulence propagation of a Gaussian-beam wave in anisotropic non-Kolmogorov turbulence (Invited Paper) [8874-1]
L. C. Andrews, R. L. Phillips, R. Crabbs, T. Leclerc, CREOL, The College of Optics and Photonics, Univ. of Central Florida (United States)

8874 05 Wave optics simulation for beams with spatially varying coherence properties [8874-4]
X. Xiao, D. G. Voelz, New Mexico State Univ. (United States)

8874 06 Measurement system for analyzing the spectral radiation pattern of light sources for FSO systems [8874-5]
P. Pezzei, N. Stiebler, T. Plank, Technische Univ. Graz (Austria); J. Poliak, Brno Univ. of Technology (Czech Republic); E. Leitgeb, M. Löschnigg, Technische Univ. Graz (Austria)

SESSION 2 MODELING II AND UV SYSTEMS

8874 08 Retrieval of structure functions of air temperature and refractive index from large eddy simulations of the atmospheric boundary layer [8874-6]
C. Wilson, The Univ. of Oklahoma (United States); A. M. J. van Eijk, TNO (Netherlands) and LUNAM, CNRS, Univ. Ecole Centrale de Nantes (France); E. Fedorovich, The Univ. of Oklahoma (United States)

8874 09 GPS synchronized UV communication system performance based on USRP [8874-7]
L. Liao, G. Chen, Univ. of California, Riverside (United States); B. M. Sadler, U.S. Army Research Lab. (United States); Z. Li, Univ. of California, Riverside (United States)

SESSION 3 ATMOSPHERIC EFFECTS AND POINTING

8874 0C Pointing, acquisition, and tracking considerations for mobile directional wireless communications systems [8874-10]
J. Rzasa, Univ. of Maryland, College Park (United States); M. C. Ertem, Univ. Research Foundation (United States); C. C. Davis, Univ. of Maryland, College Park (United States)

8874 0D An innovative modulating retro-reflector for free-space optical communication [8874-11]
E. Rosenkrantz, S. Arnon, Ben-Gurion Univ. of the Negev (Israel)
SESSION 4 CHARACTERIZATION OF TURBULENCE

D. T. Wayne, C. N. Reinhardt, K. McBryde, G. Cauble, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (United States)

Modified plenoptic camera for phase and amplitude wavefront sensing [8874-16]
C. Wu, C. C. Davis, Univ. of Maryland, College Park (United States)

Multifractality and the effect of turbulence on the chaotic dynamics of a HeNe laser [8874-17]
D. Gulich, L. Zunino, Ctr. de Investigaciones Ópticas (Argentina) and Univ. Nacional de La Plata (Argentina); D. Pérez, Pontificia Univ. Católica de Valparaíso (Chile); M. Garavaglia, Ctr. de Investigaciones Ópticas (Argentina) and Univ. Nacional de La Plata (Argentina)

SESSION 5 PROPAGATION STUDIES IN WATER AND THE ATMOSPHERE

Affordable underwater wireless optical communication using LEDs (Invited Paper) [8874-18]
V. Pilipenko, S. Arnon, Ben-Gurion Univ. of the Negev (Israel)

New technologies in underwater optical acquisition and tracking providing new possibilities for laser communication [8874-19]
M. Tausendfreund, Cassidian Optronics GmbH (Germany)

Recovery of LED diode optical spectrum [8874-20]
J. Vilasek, J. Latal, P. Siska, J. Skapa, M. Papes, V. Vasinek, Technical Univ. of Ostrava (Czech Republic)

Measurements and modeling of resolved laser radiometry in the maritime environment [8874-21]
J. S. deGrassie, I. Bendall, J. Cole, G. Cauble, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (United States)
SESSION 6  IMAGING AND BEAM PROPAGATION

8874 0O  Using speckle imaging techniques as a starting point for MFBD scene reconstruction from long horizontal-path, turbulence-degraded imagery (Invited Paper) [8874-23]
J. P. Bos, G. Archer, M. C. Roggemann, Michigan Technological Univ. (United States)

8874 0P  Simulating video through turbulence [8874-24]
K. McBayde, K. Gibson, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (United States)

8874 0Q  The feasibility of vision systems to form free-space optical links [8874-25]
M. Eslami, C.-H. Chen, J. Rzasa, S. D. Milner, C. C. Davis, Univ. of Maryland, College Park (United States)

8874 0S  Detection of non-standard atmospheric effects in FSO systems [8874-27]
O. Wilfert, J. Poliak, P. Bariik, Brno Univ. of Technology (Czech Republic); J. L. Arce-Diego, F. Fanjul-Vélez, I. Salas-García, N. Ortega Quijano, Univ. de Cantabria (Spain)

SESSION 7  TURBULENCE MODELING

8874 0T  Improved Sparse Spectrum model for the turbulent phase (Invited Paper) [8874-28]
M. Charnotskii, Zel Technologies, LLC (United States) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (United States)

8874 0U  Geometrical Monte Carlo simulation of atmospheric turbulence [8874-29]
D. Yuksel, H. Yuksel, Bogaziçi Üniv. (Turkey)

8874 0V  Geometrical optics analysis of atmospheric turbulence [8874-30]
C. Wu, C. C. Davis, Univ. of Maryland, College Park (United States)

8874 0W  Geometrical modeling of optical phase difference for analyzing atmospheric turbulence [8874-31]
D. Yuksel, H. Yuksel, Bogaziçi Üniv. (Turkey)

SESSION 8  CODING AND NETWORKING

8874 0X  Predicting network instabilities in mobile directional wireless networks [8874-32]
D. M. Coleman, S. D. Milner, C. C. Davis, Univ. of Maryland, College Park (United States)

8874 0Y  Precoder design for indoor visible light communications with multiple RGB LEDs [8874-33]
Q. Gao, T. Lang, F. Bo, G. Chen, Y. Hua, Univ. of California, Riverside (United States)

POSTER SESSION

8874 10  Propagation and split of the filamentation of femtosecond pulses in air by multiphase screen method [8874-22]
J. Zu, Q. Huang, X. Zhou, P. Zou, Y. Zheng, T. Yu, Shanghai Institute of Optics and Fine Mechanics (China); Y. Wang, Y. Gao, Heilongjiang Univ. (China)
Space qualified photon counting detector package [8874-35]
J. Blazej, I. Prochazka, Czech Technical Univ. in Prague (Czech Republic); J. Kodet, Czech Technical Univ. in Prague (Czech Republic) and Technische Univ. München (Germany)

Prototyping FM data demodulation in free-space optical communication systems using discrete wavelet transformation [8874-36]
L. Tran, E. El-Araby, N. Namazi, The Catholic Univ. of America (United States)

Phase-space distribution of optical field intensity of laser beam propagation through atmospheric turbulence [8874-37]
W. Lu, J. Sun, D. Xu, X. Ma, B. Li, L. Liu, Shanghai Institute of Optics and Fine Mechanics (China)

The effect of the light size and telecommunication rate on homodyne detection efficiency in the satellite-to-ground laser communication [8874-38]
X. Ma, J. Sun, Y. Zhi, W. Lu, Q. Xu, L. Liu, Shanghai Institute of Optics and Fine Mechanics (China)

Measurement and modeling of the effects of atmospheric turbulence on coherent laser propagation characteristics and FSO system performance [8874-39]
J. Zhou, W. Lu, J. Sun, L. Liu, Shanghai Institute of Optics and Fine Mechanics (China)

Author Index
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Session Chairs

1 Propagation and Modeling I
Christopher C. Davis, University of Maryland, College Park (United States)
Alexander M. J. van Eijk, TNO Defence, Security and Safety (Netherlands)

2 Modeling II and UV Systems
Heba Yuksel, Bogaziçi University (Turkey)
3 Atmospheric Effects and Pointing
Stephen M. Hammel, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (United States)

4 Characterization of Turbulence
Jeremy P. Bos, Michigan Technological University (United States)
Colin Reinhardt, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (United States)

5 Propagation Studies in Water and the Atmosphere
Mikhail I. Charnotskii, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (United States)
Olga Korotkova, University of Miami (United States)

6 Imaging and Beam Propagation
Shlomi Arnon, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (Israel)
Etai Rosenkrantz, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (Israel)
Christopher C. Davis, University of Maryland, College Park (United States)

7 Turbulence Modeling
Stephen M. Hammel, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (United States)

8 Coding and Networking
Christopher C. Davis, University of Maryland, College Park (United States)
Alexander M. J. van Eijk, TNO Defence, Security and Safety (Netherlands)
Introduction

This volume contains the papers submitted and accepted as full manuscripts following presentation at the second Conference on Laser Communication and Propagation through the Atmosphere and Oceans II. This new conference is the second in a series that combined previous conferences on Atmospheric Optics: Turbulence and Propagation, and Free-Space and Atmospheric Laser Communications. Free space optical (FSO) communication is now a mature field, but many exciting fundamental and technological challenges remain to improve its performance in a range of scenarios. The data rates provided by FSO links continue to increase in both long and short range applications. There continues to be great interest in simulations and experiments that characterize the optical properties of the turbulent atmosphere, including in seriously obscured conditions.

There is a need to simulate the effects of turbulence on imaging through the atmosphere. Because of anisoplanatism effects, the image-distorting effects of turbulent atmospheres vary over small angular changes, and adequate simulations become computationally expensive. Speckle imaging techniques can be used to improve the quality of images affected by atmospheric turbulence. Very long range terrestrial links through the atmosphere can experience severe scintillation caused by atmospheric turbulence, which presents significant challenges in beam pointing and leads to deep fades. Turbulence can even be used to induce interesting chaotic dynamics effects that can be analyzed by fractal techniques.

Pointing, acquisition, and tracking of narrow beams, whether FSO or RF remains an important issue. Forward error correction, interleaving, and packet-level correction codes can also improve the performance of FSO links. Clever transceiver implementations and the right modulation schemes show promise for improved link performance. Non-line-of-sight links using solar blind UV radiation scattered from transmitter to receiver open interesting communication scenarios.

FSO communication links are now being designed for different specialized scenarios. There is increased interest in the use of light emitting diodes for indoor communications, particularly for downloading of data, and in clever schemes like MIMO for improving their performance. Underwater optical communications can provide networking of sensors for monitoring water quality and the effects of climate change, as well as for short range data transfer. The use of directional radiofrequency communications as an alternative to FSO can improve link and network availability, and opens up interesting opportunities for network modeling. The interesting issues described above are addressed in papers published in this volume. A number of papers describe new characterization techniques for atmospheric transmission and measurement of the spectral characteristics of LED sources. At a fundamental level, several papers address modeling of the effects
of the atmosphere on propagating beam waves, using both wave optic and geometrical optic approaches, where atmospheric properties can be measured, and correlated with theoretical models describing phenomena such as obscuration, beam wander, scintillation and image motion.

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