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SST: Integrated Fluorocarbon Microsensor System Using Catalytic Modification

M. Clayton Wheeler
Principal Investigator; University of Maine, Orono

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**Final Report for Period:** 09/2008 - 08/2009  
**Submitted on:** 07/20/2010  
**Principal Investigator:** Wheeler, M. C.  
**Organization:** University of Maine  
**Award ID:** 0428341  

**Submitted By:**  
Wheeler, M. - Principal Investigator  

**Title:**  
SST: Integrated Fluorocarbon Microsensor System Using Catalytic Modification  

### Project Participants

#### Senior Personnel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Worked for more than 160 Hours</th>
<th>Contribution to Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheeler, M. Clayton</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Wheeler was principle investigator and supervised students working on microhotplate sensor fabrication, materials deposition, sensor testing, and sensor applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ressom, Habtom</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Ressom transferred to Georgetown University prior to receiving this award. He participated in weekly group meetings via video conference as a technical advisor rather than a Co-PI. Primary responsibilities for supervising students conducting data analysis were transferred to Segee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pereira da Cunha, Mauricio</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Pereira da Cunha directed overall project, along with Wheeler, and supervised students working on surface acoustic wave sensor fabrication, testing and applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segee, Bruce</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Segee participated as a Co-PI responsible for data analysis since Ressom transferred to Georgetown University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nittel, Silvia</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Nittel co-supervised a graduate student working on geospatial integration of sensor systems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Post-doc

**Graduate Student**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Worked for more than 160 Hours</th>
<th>Contribution to Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shirke, Amol</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Supervised by Wheeler and supported by this grant. Studied desorption kinetics on sensor materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark, Aaron</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Supervised by Wheeler and supported by NSF/GK-12.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Studied chemical vapor deposition of sensor materials on microhotplates and correlated decomposition of analytes to temperature programmed sensing results.

Name: More, Daesha  
**Worked for more than 160 Hours:** Yes  
**Contribution to Project:**  
Supervised by Wheeler and supported by this grant.  
Developed clean room and micromachining processes to make microhotplate sensor chips. Documented by M.S. thesis including documentary video.

Name: Meulendyk, Bennett  
**Worked for more than 160 Hours:** Yes  
**Contribution to Project:**  
Supervised by Pereira da Cunha and co-supported by NSF/IGERT.  
Fabricated surface acoustic wave sensors and characterized sensitivity for HF gas detection.

Name: Winchenbach, Samuel  
**Worked for more than 160 Hours:** Yes  
**Contribution to Project:**  
Supervised by Segee and supported by this grant.  
Developed new technique for analyzing simulated temperature programmed sensing data based on surface reaction kinetics.

Name: Jin, Guang  
**Worked for more than 160 Hours:** Yes  
**Contribution to Project:**  
Supervised by Nittel and supported by this grant.  
Developed gas delivery and sensor control hardware/software. Studying analysis of data from distributed sensor networks.

**Undergraduate Student**

Name: DeAngelis, John  
**Worked for more than 160 Hours:** Yes  
**Contribution to Project:**  
Supervised by Wheeler on unsupported undergraduate honors thesis.  
Topic: Finite element modeling of thermal characteristics of microhotplate sensors.

Name: Seekins, Tyler  
**Worked for more than 160 Hours:** Yes  
**Contribution to Project:**  
Tyler worked with John Hessler to construct a system for chemical vapor deposition of materials on microhotplate sensors.

Name: Hessler, John  
**Worked for more than 160 Hours:** Yes  
**Contribution to Project:**  
John was supervised by Wheeler and worked with Tyler Seekins to construct a system for chemical vapor deposition of materials on microhotplate sensors.

Name: Whitney, Raymond  
**Worked for more than 160 Hours:** Yes  
**Contribution to Project:**  
Student designed photolithography masks for surface acoustic wave and microhotplate devices. Also assisted with clean room fabrication.

**Technician, Programmer**

**Other Participant**
Research Experience for Undergraduates

Name: Haluska, David

Worked for more than 160 Hours: Yes

Contribution to Project:
Supervised by Wheeler and supported by this grant.

Years of schooling completed: Junior
Home Institution: Same as Research Site
Home Institution if Other:
Home Institution Highest Degree Granted (in fields supported by NSF): Doctoral Degree
Fiscal year(s) REU Participant supported: 2005
REU Funding: REU supplement

Name: White, John

Worked for more than 160 Hours: Yes

Contribution to Project:
Supervised by Wheeler and supported by this grant.
Topic: X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy of sensor materials.

Years of schooling completed: Sophomore
Home Institution: Other than Research Site
Home Institution if Other: McGill University
Home Institution Highest Degree Granted (in fields supported by NSF): Doctoral Degree
Fiscal year(s) REU Participant supported: 2006
REU Funding: REU supplement

Name: Beote, Brendon

Worked for more than 160 Hours: Yes

Contribution to Project:
Developed and applied method for chemical vapor deposition of tungsten oxide and platinum films on microhotplate sensor platforms. Supported by this grant and participated in UMaine's Sensors REU program.

Years of schooling completed: Junior
Home Institution: Same as Research Site
Home Institution if Other:
Home Institution Highest Degree Granted (in fields supported by NSF): Doctoral Degree
Fiscal year(s) REU Participant supported: 2009
REU Funding: REU supplement

Organizational Partners

NIST/Process Measurements Division
NIST fabricated several microhotplate sensors that we used to measure analyte adsorption kinetics.

Other Collaborators or Contacts

Steve Semancik, NIST Process Measurements Division
Richard Cavicchi, NIST Process Measurements Division

Activities and Findings

Research and Education Activities:
Developed microhotplates.
Developed surface acoustic wave HF gas sensor.
Created a computer model for predicting sensor response as a function of analyte reaction kinetics.
Fabricated LabView automated gas delivery, sensor control and data acquisition system.
Created video documentary of clean room processes for microhotplate sensor fabrication.
Developed isothermal desorption model and measured desorption kinetics of sub-femtomolar quantities of benzoic acid on a tin-oxide microhotplate sensor. Presented these results at 2007 Physical Electronics Conference.
Modified isothermal desorption model using Monte Carlo simulation to describe desorption kinetics of 2-Propanol on oxidized TiO2 sensor.
One Master's and one Ph.D. thesis completed, one Ph.D. defense expected May 2010.

Findings:
- New methodology for analysis of temperature programmed sensing data.
- New sensor for detecting decomposition products of fluorine-containing analytes.
- New understanding of molecular interactions with sensor materials.
- Documentation of Maine's Laboratory for Surface Science and Technology's microhotplate fabrications processes.
- Improved understanding of chemical mechanism for Surface Acoustic Wave hydrogen fluoride sensor.
- New application of microhotplates for calorimetric measurements of surface catalytic reaction rates.

Training and Development:
One participant was an NSF:GK12 fellow who taught and disseminated research results to an area high school.
One participant was an NSF:IGERT fellow who integrated his research experience in a team of sensor network engineers.
Three participants were NSF/REU fellows.
Two video documentaries were created.

Outreach Activities:
See GK-12 discussion in previous section.
NSF/REU interacted with area teachers in weekly NSF/RET presentations.

Journal Publications


Shirke, AG; Cavicchi, RE; Semancik, S; Jackson, RH; Frederick, BG; Wheeler, MC, "Femtomolar isothermal desorption using microhotplate sensors", JOURNAL OF VACUUM SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY A, p. 514, vol. 25, (2007). Published, 10.1116/1.272085

Wheeler, MC; Cavicchi, RE; Semancik, S, "Tin oxide microsensor arrays as probes for the oscillatory CO oxidation reaction on supported platinum", JOURNAL OF PHYSICAL CHEMISTRY C, p. 3328, vol. 111, (2007). Published, 10.1021/jp067173


Books or Other One-time Publications

A. Clark, M. Pereira da Cunha, B. Segee, and M. C. Wheeler, "Correlation Of Microhotplate Metal Oxide Sensor Response To Catalytic Fluorocarbon Decomposition Activity", (2007). Conference Proceeding, Published
Bibliography: 2007 AIChE Annual Meeting Conference Proceedings on CD

Bibliography: 2007 AIChE Annual Meeting Conference Proceedings on CD

Bibliography: Workshop Mobile Location-Aware Sensor Networks, in conjunction with MDM

Bibliography: Proceedings of ACM Conference Advances in Geographic Information Systems

Bibliography: Proceedings of The 19th IASTED International Conference on Parallel and Distributed Computing and Systems PDCS

Bibliography: AIChE Annual Meeting Conference Proceedings on CD, New York, NY

Bibliography: University of Maine Ph.D. Dissertation SIE2009-001

Bibliography: University of Maine Thesis CHE2007-004

Bibliography: 2009 IEEE Ultrasonics Symposium Proceedings

Bibliography: University of Maine Ph.D. Dissertation

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**Web/Internet Site**

**Other Specific Products**

**Product Type:**
Audio or video products

**Product Description:**
Two videos were produce for clean room fabrication techniques. One for surface acoustic wave devices and one for microhotplate devices.

**Sharing Information:**
This video is used to train new students in the clean room.

**Contributions**

**Contributions within Discipline:**
The goal of this project was to investigate the feasibility of a sensor system to detect and identify the composition and concentration of fluorinated volatile organic compounds (VOCs). The targeted system should be small, robust, compatible with metal oxide semiconductor
(MOS) technology, cheap, if produced in large scale, and have the potential to be versatile in terms of low power consumption, detection of other gases, and integration in a portable system. The fluorinated VOC sensor system studied in this project has three major elements that could be integrated into a microreactor flow cell: a temperature-programmable microhotplate array/reactor system which serves as the basic sensor platform; an acoustic wave sensor, which was hypothesized to detect material removal (instead of deposition) to verify and quantify the presence of fluorine; and an intelligent method, ‘support vector machines,’ to analyze the complex and high dimensional data furnished by the sensor system. In addition, this project was designed to provide a multidisciplinary graduate education environment which involved chemical, electrical engineering, advanced data processing. Integration with existing IGERT and GK-12 programs further broadened graduate experiences and also extended educational benefits to high school students and teachers.

The specific research and education outcomes proposed were:

**Microhotplate reactor/sensor array**
- Develop fabrication methods and characterize arrays
- Develop CVD sensor material deposition methods for metal oxides and supported transition metals
- Test sensitivity to fluorocarbons and compare to interferents such as CO
- Relate sensitivity of fluorocarbon sensor to activity for catalytic decomposition of the analyte to form HF which could be detected by the acoustic wave sensor

**Acoustic Wave Sensors**
- Model, design, and fabricate quartz based surface acoustic wave (SAW) sensor that responds to HF by substrate material removal
- Characterize material removal mechanism and optimize sensitivity
- Investigate different quartz orientations and influence of metallic film on sensor performance.

**Data analysis using support vector machines**
- Develop SVM methods for predicting microhotplate sensor response to fluorocarbons and interferents
- Integrate microhotplate sensor array, acoustic wave sensor, and data analysis

**Broader Impacts**
- Educate graduate students in chemical sensor science and engineering
- Disseminate results via publications and conferences
- Provide research opportunities for underrepresented groups [one female (More)]
- Provide research opportunities for undergraduate students and high school teachers
- Provisional Patent Application, Serial #61-315,068 (Surface Acoustic Wave Resonator With an Open Circuit Grating for use in a High Temperature Environment)

The outcomes of this project successfully addressed the goals related to individual components of the sensor system. In addition, the interactions among our multidisciplinary team resulted in the investigation of new topics meaningful to the targeted research such as distributed sensor networks, novel wireless sensor control, and acoustic wave modeling for heavy electrodes. Some of the originally proposed research targets are still on going efforts, such as optimization of materials for sensing/decomposing fluorinated VOCs, integration of system components, potential for commercial applications, publications and dissemination, student thesis writing, provisional patent processing with envisioned commercial application by a University of Maine spin-off company.

The infrastructure and techniques developed through this project have also enabled new research in related sensor applications and materials development. For instance, the multidisciplinary team at the University of Maine has applied the microhotplates developed under this project as calorimeters with nanojoule sensitivity (50 nJ/K) to measure reaction rates on catalytic materials, and also applied acoustic wave modeling developed under this project to high temperature sensor application.

The above-mentioned accomplishments are detailed below, and the cited references have been provided as supplementary information in an attached PDF file.

Methods for fabricating microhotplate sensor arrays were developed in UMaine's new clean room facility [More 2007, http://www.library.umaine.edu/theses/pdf/MoreD2007.pdf]. The sensors have heating and cooling time constants of less than one millisecond and can be operated at temperatures up to 500°C. Selective deposition of sensor materials was accomplished using chemical vapor deposition systems developed as part of this project. Sensors were tested for sensitivity to a range of gas analytes, and methods for differentiating between analytes were explored [Clark 2007]. It was shown that a rapid pulsed temperature programming method, combined with a principle component analysis based on competing surface reaction rates could be used to distinguish between gas analytes such as fluorine-containing compounds and alcohol interferents [Wheeler 2008].
Two new methods for extracting data from microhotplate based sensors were investigated. The first method involved rapidly heating and cooling the sensing film and observing the film conductance at a nominal temperature. Kinetic reaction constants were derived by fitting an exponential curve to the resulting film conductance [Winchenbach 2007]. The second method treated the microhotplate based sensor as a semiconductor. Initial tests showed that the conductance of the sensing film was dependent on the voltage bias of both the heater and film sense voltages. Hence it is not simply temperature that affects film properties, and it suggests an entirely new design space for microhotplates.

It was determined that the processing power necessary to control a microhotplate is relatively low and can be achieved with an embedded microcontroller. This approach has the advantage of maintaining a tighter control of timing between temperature changes and film resistivity. A further advantage is the ability to create a small and potentially battery powered sensor. On the other hand, calculating reaction constants with an exponential curve fitting and processing the results with artificial neural networks requires vastly more processing power than an embedded processor can provide. A distributed system combines the most desirable properties of each processing environment and utilizes wireless communication between a portable sensing unit and a fixed processing unit.

Platinum electrode surface acoustic wave (SAW) resonators on multiple quartz orientations were developed for HF sensing for process monitoring applications and as a decomposition product of fluorine-containing compounds, when combined with microhotplate arrays [Meulendyk 2010]. Platinum electrodes are utilized because of their resilience to HF and their favorable catalyzing properties in the decomposition of fluorine containing compounds. However, platinum electrodes on quartz substrates required modeling and characterization to allow the design of improved HF SAW resonator sensors.

A scalar network model was used to optimize the SAW transducer and reflector geometries using the combined finite element method and boundary element method (FEM/BEM) extracted parameters. FEM/BEM was also used to calculate the mass sensitivities of a 193 MHz resonator on ST-X quartz and a 305 MHz resonator on ST-90?X quartz, which were determined to be 58x10^9 Hz-cm^2/g and 225x10^9 Hz-cm^2/g, respectively.

Scalar potential theory was used to investigate the SAW guiding phenomenon in grating structures composed of platinum electrodes. This technique revealed that acoustic energy leaks from the active area of a Pt-electrode resonator to the busbars of a short circuit grating. Based on the outcomes of this study, the resonator structure was redesigned to use open circuit gratings, thus avoiding the energy leakage to the busbars. The new devices have half of the original losses and the quality factor increased by 56%. In addition, scalar potential theory was used to filter out spurious transverse waveguide modes that interfere with the resonator response. Fabrication of the SAW resonators required the development of processes for substrate cleaning, photolithography, metal deposition, and metal liftoff that are unique to the equipment and materials available in the clean room facilities at the University of Maine. These procedures are documented in writing and as a video to instruct future clean room users in efficient microfabrication techniques.

Testing the SAW sensors in the presence of HF and other analytes requires the use of a gas delivery system, control software, temperature-controlled oven, gas test cell, and device packaging, all of which were custom designed and automated. The platinum-electrode SAW resonators on ST-X and ST-90?X quartz were exposed to 1-18 ppm HF, and exhibited signal-to-noise ratios from 2 to 4 and 5 to 12, respectively. Additionally, the ST-90?X resonator exhibited signal-to-noise ratios less than 2 for many potential interferents, including fluorinated compounds. Based on experimental observations, this work determined, for the first time, that the formation of a condensed liquid layer on the SiO2 substrate is the dominant effect in detecting the presence of HF, rather than SiO2 removal. This observation was also corroborated by theory.

This project developed efficient algorithms for data collection and event processing with regard to continuous chemical phenomena such as toxic clouds [Jin 2008 ACM Proceedings]. In particular, the work focused on estimation of such phenomena and on detecting and tracking the boundary of toxic clouds.

In sensor networks, sensor motes have to work in a cooperative way to estimate underlying phenomena. To estimate the spatial properties of underlying phenomena, the local processing of aggregation queries is important. For continuous phenomena, also known as spatial fields, additional estimation methods are required to process the sensor readings in order to generate the estimation results. Estimation methods, however, are computationally intensive, even when computed in a centralized setting. Processing the additional estimation methods faces more difficulties in the energy and bandwidth constrained environment of sensor networks. In [Jin 2008 IEEE], Guang Jin and Dr. Nittel introduced the SWOP (Spatial Window query Over Phenomena) approach, which breaks the entangled link between estimation results and sensor readings, and conserves the network resources by compressing the data extracted from a sensor network. The SWOP processes spatial window queries on a continuous phenomena based on Gaussian kernel estimation. The key of the approach is using Hermite series to approximate the Gaussian kernel function; as a result, the number of messages transmitted in the networks could be relaxed by logarithmic operation. Hence, a large amount of network resources can be saved, while the network still returns comparable estimation results with neglectable errors.
The group tested SWOP in different settings. SWOP archives the compression by grouping the sensors into sub clusters. Therefore, the clustering algorithm plays an important role in SWOP, the more dense clusters are found, the higher the compressing rate can be achieved. HEED was chosen as the clustering algorithm for SWOP since HEED is more appropriate for mobile settings. HEED, on the other hand, can only return a 'randomized' clustering layout. Therefore, we measure the mean, min and max data size as illustrated. Compared with centralized solutions, SWOP requires significantly less data extracted from sensor networks. To get the same quality of estimation results as the original phenomenon, the ordinary distributed solution needs much more data to represent the estimation result. For a small data set, SWOP only requires as half as data required by centralized solution. SWOP, however, is designed for a larger sensor networks. For those cases, SWOP can compress the data up to 1/4 as required by centralized solution, and thus, save communication cost significantly.

Contributions to Other Disciplines:
The multidisciplinary approach of this project impacts a number of disciplines:
Chemistry and chemical engineering
Electrical engineering
Computer engineering
Spatial engineering
Material science

Contributions to Human Resource Development:
This work impacted undergraduate and area high school education through involvement of REU and GK-12 students. The IGERT student obtained a certificate in sensor technology independent of his Ph.D. degree requirements.

Contributions to Resources for Research and Education:

Contributions Beyond Science and Engineering:

Conference Proceedings


Categories for which nothing is reported:
Any Web/Internet Site
Contributions: To Any Resources for Research and Education
Contributions: To Any Beyond Science and Engineering
Correlation of Reactivity to Sensor Selectivity for Fluorocarbon Detection using Microhotplate Arrays

Aaron Clark¹, Mauricio Pereira da Cunha²,³, Bruce Segee², and M. Clayton Wheeler¹

¹Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering, University of Maine
²Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of Maine
³Laboratory for Surface Science and Technology, University of Maine

A hybrid microsensor system consisting of an array of microhotplate reactors/sensors and a complimentary surface acoustic wave (SAW) sensor is being developed for selective detection of fluorocarbon compounds using tetrafluoroethane (R134A) as a model compound. The microhotplate sensors simultaneously detect and decompose the analyte while the SAW depends on exposure to the hydrolysis products of the R134A for its sensing mechanism. This paper focuses on comparing the microhotplate sensing and catalytic reaction mechanisms.

The microhotplate devices, shown in Fig. 1, were fabricated in the clean room at the University of Maine's Micro Instruments and Systems Laboratory and each consists of a suspended sandwich of multiple SiO₂/SiN layers that separate two platinum circuit element layers: 1) an embedded serpentine heater and 2) surface electrical contacts. Since microhotplates are thermally isolated from the substrate by silicon micromachining, they can be heated and cooled over a range of more than 400 °C at rates of over 10⁶ °C per second. Semiconducting SnO₂ and catalytically active platinum are selectively deposited on the microhotplates using chemical vapor deposition with precursors tin tetrabutoxide and platinum acetylacetonate. Measuring the electrical response of the material over a range of operating temperatures is a way to improve the selectivity of metal oxide sensors that is commonly referred to as temperature programmed sensing (TPS).

In TPS the reaction kinetics control the surface concentrations of species such as oxygen and hydroxyl. These surface concentrations significantly affect the electrical conductivity of the sensing film. The rates depend on the sensor material as well as the temperature. The sensor sensitivity and selectivity of SnO₂ (with and without Pt catalyst doping) are correlated to the decomposition rate of R134A measured using a microreactor catalyst characterization system.
Correlation of Reactivity to Sensor Selectivity for Fluorocarbon Detection using Microhotplate Arrays

Aaron Clark
Advisor: M. Clayton Wheeler
Chemical & Biological Engineering
Fluorocarbon Sensor

- Tetrafluoroethane (R-134a) as a model compound
- Sensing techniques
  - Microsensors/microreactors being developed as one element of a hybrid sensor platform
  - Temperature programmed sensing (TPS) for analyte identification (selectivity)
- Understanding TPS
  - TPS spectra depend on unique surface reactions
  - Correlating reaction rates to sensor response using bulk catalysts
    - Temperature programming
    - Gas chromatography
    - Mass spectrometry

[Diagram of SAW device and Microsensor array]
Microhotplate Gas Sensors

- Electrical contacts: Sensing film resistance measurement
- Heater: Temperature control and measurement (resistance change)
- Micromachined: Thermally isolated
  - Rapid heating and cooling

![Microhotplate Gas Sensors](image)

- 400 °C
- 90 °C
- ~4.5 volts
- ~1 volt
- \( \tau = 0.9 \text{ ms} \)
- \( \tau = 1.0 \text{ ms} \)
Microsensor Fabrication

UMaine’s Laboratory for Surface Science and Technology

375 nm
Materials Deposition: Spin Coating vs. CVD

**Sol Spin Coating**
- Sb-doped SnO$_2$
- 15% aq. Solution
- 2000 rpm
- All four devices coated with the same material

**Chemical Vapor Deposition**
- **Adsorbed precursor decomposes on hot surface to form metal-oxide**
- **Precursor-saturated Argon stream** (100 sccm)
- **Heated Substrate (200-600 °C)**

**Precursors (1:5 - 1:20)**
- Tin butoxide (SnO$_2$)
- Titanium isopropoxide (TiO$_2$)
- Platinum acetylacetonate (Pt)

**Reactors Pressure**
- 0.6 – 20 torr
Metal-Oxide Sensing Materials

- Electrical conductivity is affected by adsorbates
- Sensing performance depends on:
  - Film composition (selectivity and sensitivity)
  - Film micro-structure (sensitivity)
- Reaction mechanisms can also be modified by using surface-dispersed catalysts
  - Example: Pt increases the sensitivity of SnO$_2$ to CO
Sensor Test System

• Automated
• 4 test gases (methanol)
• Zero or humid air
• Up to 2000 sccm
• Space time < 1 sec
Isothermal Sensor Response: Methanol vs. R-134a

- 200°C
- 5 minute exposures
  - R-134a & methanol
  - 5, 25, 75, 150 ppm
- 5 minutes dry air
- Constant total flow rate (120 sccm)
**Improving Selectivity: Temperature Programmed Sensing**

**“Simple” Kinetic Mechanism:**

CO Oxidation

\[
\frac{d\theta_{CO}}{dt} = \Gamma_{CO} S (1 - \theta_{CO}) - k_r \theta_{CO} \theta_O - k_{des,CO} \theta_{CO}
\]

\[
\frac{d\theta_O}{dt} = 2\Gamma_{O_2} S (1 - \theta_{CO} - \theta_O)^2 - k_r \theta_{CO} \theta_O - k_{des,O_2} \theta_O^2
\]

- Temperature ramp 20-450 °C
- Baseline conductance measurement
- Non-linear programming can even differentiate between ethanol and methanol

Sensor Temperature Effect: R-134a

- 5 minute exposures
  - 5, 25, 75, 150 ppm
- 5 minute dry air
- Constant total flow rate (120 sccm)
TPS: Method

- Linear (stepped) temperature ramp
- 750 millisecond step times
- Conductance measurement
  - First 250 milliseconds
- Cycles 5 minutes in air
- Cycles 5 minutes in test gas

![Temperature Program](image)

![Temperature Program Response Cycles](image)
TPS: Methanol

- Characteristic information
- Sensors should be sensitive at methanol concentrations less than 5 ppm
TPS: R-134a

- Less sensitive than methanol
- Poisoning at high concentrations?
Packed Bed Reactor Studies

Decomposition in air
- Oxidation (above ~200 °C)
  \[ \text{CFH}_2\text{CF}_3 + \text{O}_2 \rightarrow \text{CF}_3\text{COOH} + \text{HF} \]
- Hydrolysis
  \[ \text{CFH}_2\text{CF}_3 + \text{O}_2 + 2\text{H}_2\text{O} \rightarrow 2\text{CO}_2 + 4\text{HF} \]
Summary

• Fabricated microhotplate sensors
• Deposited materials by CVD and spin-coating
• Evaluated compatibility of SnO$_2$-Sb for R-134a sensing
• Developing TPS for selective identification
• Studying chemical reactivity and deactivation mechanisms
Acknowledgements

- **NSF Sensors Small Team**
  - Chemical and Biological Engineering
    - Clayton Wheeler
    - Daesha More
  - Electrical Engineering
    - Mauricio Pereira da Cunha
    - Bennett Meulendyk
  - Computer Engineering
    - Bruce Segee
    - Sam Winchenbach
  - Spatial Engineering
    - Silvia Nittel
    - Guang Jin

- Grant # NSF CTS-0428341
- GK-12 Grant # NSF 0538457
Hybrid Sensor System for Fluorocarbon Detection

M. C. Wheeler¹, D. More¹, A. Clark¹, M. Pereira da Cunha²,³, B. Meulendyk², B. Segee², S. Winchenbach²

¹University of Maine Chemical and Biological Engineering, 5737 Jenness Hall, Orono, ME, 04469, USA
²University of Maine Electrical and Computer Engineering
³University of Maine Laboratory for Surface Science and Technology

Abstract

This paper presents results of a hybrid microsensor system consisting of an array of microhotplate reactors/sensors and an integrated surface acoustic wave (SAW) sensor for detection of fluorocarbon compounds. The microhotplate sensors are designed to simultaneously decompose and detect the analyte while the SAW sensors respond to hydrogen fluoride (HF), a hydrolysis product of the analytes. Temperature programmed reaction data from the microhotplate sensor array and frequency response of the SAW are combined to provide both sensitivity and selectivity to the target fluorocarbon. Sensor fabrication, sensor performance, and sensing mechanisms are reported and discussed.

I. Introduction

Metal Oxide Semiconductor (MOS) sensors are commonly used to quantify concentrations of gases with known composition because they have high sensitivity, however, they are not selective. We are developing a hybrid sensor system to provide both sensitivity and selectivity to fluorinated hydrocarbons using tetra-fluoroethane (R134A) as a model compound. A microarray of MOS sensor/reactors is used to detect the analyte while simultaneously decomposing it to produce HF which can be detected by a surface acoustic wave (SAW) resonator.

SAW resonators have been extensively investigated for a variety of sensing applications but usually require a selective layer to make the device responsive to a specific analyte. The quartz-based SAW resonators used in this work render the use of a selective layer unnecessary, since HF reacts directly with the substrate, forming H₂O and SiF₄ [1, 2]. Previous work has revealed that the formation of a condensed liquid layer on the surface of the SAW resonator is the dominant effect in detecting the presence of HF [3].

II. Experimental

A. Microhotplate Arrays

The MOS sensors are silicon-based microhotplates modeled after the NIST platform [4] but are fabricated using simplified processing steps in UMaine’s Laboratory for Surface Science and Technology clean room. Chips with both 4- and 10-element microhotplate arrays were fabricated beginning with commercially-obtained 4 in., SiNₓ-coated Si wafers. Each individually addressable microhotplate consists of a serpentine Pt heater, a layer of insulating SiNₓ, and Pt electrical contacts on the surface. The chips were surface micromachined using tetramethylammoniumhydroxide and packaged in 40-pin ceramic packages. The devices can be heated to ~500°C and cooled to room temperature with time constants ≤ 1.0 ms. Catalyzed metal oxide materials, such as Pt-TiO₂ and Pt-SnO₂, were deposited using chemical vapor deposition (CVD) as well as spin-on methods. Fig. 1 shows a 4-element array fabricated at UMaine.

B. Surface Acoustic Wave HF Sensor

Two-port pure shear horizontal (SH) SAW resonators on ST-cut quartz (0°, 132.75°, 90°) were fabricated using platinum thin film electrodes deposited in the UMaine clean room facilities. Fig. 2 shows two SAW resonators inside a low volume test cell (~ 1 ml) used in gas delivery experiments. The resonators are mounted on a printed circuit board (PCB) and bonded to 50Ω RF feed-throughs, which connect to the SMA pins via microstrip transmission lines on the opposite side of the PCB.

Figure 1. 4-Element microhotplate array.
C. Sensor Test System

An automated gas delivery system is used to dilute up to four analyte mixtures with either dry or humid zero air and deliver them to a test cell at total flow rates of 20 to 2,000 sccm. The test cell in Fig. 2 is designed to allow the microhotplate array to be positioned in close proximity (<1 mm) opposite the SAW. The flow characteristics of the cell were measured experimentally, and it was determined to behave as a well-mixed system. Flow rates and concentrations were found to be at steady-state within 10 to 500 ms after switching gases because of the low volumes in the switching valves and test cell. The cell was enclosed in a custom, clam-shell oven to maintain the ambient temperature within ±0.08°C at temperatures ranging from 25 to 50°C. The oven is used to separate the thermal response from chemical response at this stage of the work.

A data acquisition computer is used to control the gas delivery, vary the temperature of the microhotplates, measure the resistance of the MOS films, and collect SAW response data from a network analyzer. Microhotplate resistance data can be collected at frequencies greater than 1 kHz making rapid temperature programming possible.

III. Results and Discussion

A. R134A Detection and Decomposition

Experiments have been conducted to compare the sensitivity of the resistance of CVD-prepared SnO2 and Sb-doped nanoparticle SnO2 films to both R134A and methanol at concentrations ranging from 5 to 150 ppm and temperatures from 25 to 450°C. Both materials have a higher relative sensitivity to methanol than R134A, while SnO2 prepared via CVD using tin butoxide as the precursor was more sensitive than the nanoparticle tin oxide. At the highest concentrations, the sensitivity to R134A decreases after just a few minutes of exposure. To explore the R134A sensing and decomposition mechanisms, bulk MOS materials are currently being used in a microreactor coupled to a gas chromatograph mass spectrometer. These experiments are critical to understanding the interactions between the combined response of the hybrid sensor system.

B. HF Detection by SAW

During gas phase HF exposure to the SH SAW resonator, the dominant sensing mechanism reflects the detection of a condensed liquid layer on the SiO2 surface. At HF concentrations ranging from 1 ppm to 18 ppm, the resonator responds to the changing state of the condensed liquid layer with clear frequency shifts within minutes of exposure. Permanent frequency shifts in the SAW response are observed due to the etching of SiO2 after the evaporation of the liquid layer when HF is removed from the test gas for longer than 2 hours. As indicated in Fig. 3, these permanent shifts are about 75% smaller than the frequency shifts due to the presence of the condensed liquid layer for each HF exposure.

Acknowledgment

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References

Hybrid Sensor System for Fluorocarbon Detection

**Problem Description**

- Fluorinated volatile organic compounds are a class of compounds that represent a threat to human health through environmental pollution or chemical attacks.
- Integration of a microhotplate sensor array, surface acoustic wave (SAW) devices, and neural networks target the selective identification of this class of compounds in low concentrations.

**Microhotplate**

- Micromachined silicon device
- Low thermal mass, fast temperature response
- Metal oxide sensing materials deposited via chemical vapor deposition

Sensor array – detects analyte concentrations less than 1 ppm
Reactor array – decomposes analytes

**SAW Sensor**

- SAW resonators, operating in a narrow frequency band, are sensitive to surface perturbations
- HF reacts directly with SiO₂, making quartz-based SAW resonators well suited for HF sensing

The formation of a condensed liquid layer was identified as the dominant HF sensing mechanism for two-port SAW resonators.

**Fluorocarbons+Air+H₂O**

HF & other products

**Data Processing**

Hybrid sensor combination improves sensitivity and selectivity for fluorinated hydrocarbons. Microhotplate array allows detection and quantitation. SAW enables confirmation of fluorine functionality.

**Results**

**Microhotplate**

- Tetrafluoroethane (R-134A) on SnO₂

**SAW Sensor**

- HF concentration affects rate of frequency change
- Primary rate – formation of liquid layer
- Secondary rate – diffusion limited liquid layer growth and substrate etching

**Data Processing**

- T-Jump method
- Plot of relaxation rate parameters identifies species and quantitates concentrations

**Conclusions**

- Integrated hybrid sensor system
- Microhotplates act as both sensors and reactors for SAW
- New SAW sensing mechanism identified
- SAW detects HF as low as 1 ppm
- Relatively simple sensor control compatible with portable instruments
- Novel data analysis

**References**

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Demonstrating a Novel Approach to the Control of Microhotplate Sensors Utilizing a Distributed Computing Approach and Numeric Modeling

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Abstract

Microhotplates are sensor platforms that allow for rapid, controlled changes in temperature. Since reaction rates of chemical interactions depend on temperature one can obtain more information about chemical species present by varying the hotplate temperature and monitoring the electrical characteristics of a film applied to the hotplate. A mathematical model was created that simulates the chemical reaction in a metal oxide film in the presence of oxygen as a function of temperature. This model suggested a novel approach to controlling a microhotplate, namely, to use the temperature at which a resistance is reached rather than a resistance for a fixed set of temperatures. A sensing system was developed that demonstrated the viability of this approach in making a low cost, hand-held, portable instrument.

Introduction

A common thin film gas sensor has a semiconducting metal oxide film that interacts with gases of interest. Gas concentrations in the surrounding environment can be inferred by monitoring the electrical properties of the film. A significant drawback to this type of sensor is a lack of selectivity, i.e., different gases (possibly in different concentrations) can cause the same electrical properties to be exhibited. A technique referred to as temperature programmed sensing (TPS) takes advantage of reaction kinetics that control the surface concentrations of species, such as oxygen, thus significantly affecting the electrical conductivity of sensing film. Since surface reaction rates change with temperature, it is possible to obtain analyte-specific, multidimensional responses from a given film by varying its temperature [1,2]. We have developed a simple kinetic model to simulate sensor response, and by recognizing fundamental characteristics of the response, have developed a novel simulation and computing algorithm to reduce the dimensionality of TPS data. This demonstrates the importance of understanding the fundamental mechanisms underlying processes when implementing data analysis techniques.

A conventional approach to sensing is to choose a temperature \textit{a priori} at which the sensitivity of the film to a target concentration of a given gas is maximized. This allows a very simple temperature control scheme, but does not address the issue of selectivity. Microhotplates are sensor platforms with very low thermal mass that allow for rapid temperature control ($10^6 \, {^\circ}C/s$). Therefore, high-resolution TPS spectra spanning a range on the order of 500$^\circ$C can be collected many times per minute, thus, obtaining much more
information about the gas environment.

When one looks at the underlying chemical principles that drive the metal oxide thin film gas sensor, significant insight can be obtained. Fundamentally, within the metal oxide film, contiguous grains exist, forming a conducting path across the film. As the grains interact with the ambient environment at elevated temperatures oxidation and/or reduction reactions occur that change the surface oxidation state of the film. For an n-type semiconductor such as SnO₂, the electrical resistance decreases with increasing temperature due to thermal excitation of intrinsic charge carries. The resistance increases when the film is highly oxidized because of a depletion of electron charge carriers near the surface of the film. Conversely, if oxygen is removed from the surface by reaction with reducing species, the electrical conductivity of the film increases [3]. The oxidation of the film occurs via temperature-dependent reaction processes, and there are techniques to separate the reaction temperature effects from the intrinsic temperature effects. One option is to subtract the conductance response of the film in the absence of the analyte. Alternatively, the rapid thermal characteristics of microhotplates make it possible to measure the resistance of a film at a constant temperature even during a temperature program. The microhotplate can be repeatedly cooled/heated in a few milliseconds for resistance measurements at an intermediate temperature after allowing time for equilibrium surface concentrations to be established at the programmed temperatures [1]. Therefore, we can learn how to better operate the sensor and analyze sensor data by understanding the fundamental characteristics of surface-mediated reactions.

Reaction Kinetics

A computer model, based on Langmuir-Hinshelwood surface reactions (Equations 1-3) was developed for a general reducing reaction involving analyte “A”, with gas concentration (flux), activation energies (Eₐ), sticking probabilities, and temperature as variables. The model resembles what one might postulate for catalytic CO oxidation on platinum [4]. It includes: (1) irreversible, dissociative adsorption of oxygen, (2) reversible adsorption of the analyte, and (3) reaction between the analyte and oxygen with rapid desorption of the product. We will use this model to describe reactions in a general sense even though it doesn't explicitly include intermediate reaction steps or dissociative adsorption of the analyte.

\[
O_{2} \rightarrow 2O_{ads} \quad \text{Eq. 1}
\]
\[
A \leftrightarrow A_{ads} \quad \text{Eq. 2}
\]
\[
O_{ads} + A_{ads} \rightarrow AO \quad \text{Eq. 3}
\]

Based on the reactions in Eq. 1-3, the material balances describing the surface coverage of \(O_{ads}\) and \(A_{ads}\) are

\[
d \theta O/ dt = P_{O_{2}} H_{O_{2}} (1 - \theta O - \theta A)^2 - k_1 \theta O \theta A \quad \text{Eq. 4}
\]
\[
d \theta A/ dt = P_{A} H_{A} (1 - \theta O - \theta A) - k_1 \theta O \theta A - k_2 \theta A \quad \text{Eq. 5}
\]

where \(\theta\) is the fractional surface coverage of species i, \(P_i\) is the partial pressure, \(H_i\) is a term that includes the sticking probability of species i and converts partial pressure to monolayers per second. The rate constants, \(k_1\) and \(k_2\) are assumed to follow the Arrhenius form.
\[ k_i = v_i e^{-\frac{E_{A,i}}{RT}} \]  

Eq. 6

where \( v_i \) is usually assumed to be on the order of \( 10^{13} \text{ s}^{-1} \) for first order processes but literature values range between \( 10^{10} \) and \( 10^{20} \text{ s}^{-1} \). Second order pre-exponential factors are usually much smaller. The value used for the surface reaction activation energy, \( E_{A,1} \), was 15 kcal/mol and was chosen to make the predictions consistent with temperature and pressure behavior commonly observed in CO sensing which are sensitivity in the ppm range at temperatures ranging from 150-400 °C. The values used for \( E_{A,2} \) are consistent with recent measurements of benzoic acid desorption from a tin-oxide microhotplate (23 kcal/mol) [5]. The value of \( E_{A,2} \) was varied to simulate the difference in adsorption energy for two different analytes (e.g., propane and hexane) so that we could test the sensitivity of our analysis technique. The steady state fractional oxygen coverage determined from Eqs. 4 and 5 is plotted versus temperature for partial pressures ranging from 5 to 100 ppm and for \( E_{A,2} = 25 \text{ kcal/mol} \) in Fig. 1 and \( E_{A,2} = 30 \text{ kcal/mol} \) in Fig. 2.

![Figure 1: “S” Curves for \( E_a=25 \text{ kcal/mol} \). 5 to 100 ppm in 5 ppm increments](image-url)
Several significant observations were made upon the examination of the curves in Figures 1 and 2. Notably, at low temperature, the oxygen coverage of the film is low, regardless of the type or concentration of target gas present. Conversely, at high temperature, the oxygen coverage is high, independent of the type or concentration of gas present. Hence, even in the presence of gases, it is possible to establish two baselines for a microhotplate film, a lower resistance, (at low temperature) that corresponds to low oxygen coverage, and a high resistance, (at high temperature) corresponding to high oxygen coverage. It is of key importance that these endpoints can be established, even in the presence of target gases of unknown concentrations. A further observation is that the curves in the family are "S" shaped and change from low resistance to high resistance as temperature increases. Although the curves are "S" shaped, the temperature range where the resistance transitions from the low value to the high value is relatively small and is strongly a function of gas species and concentration.

**A Novel Approach**

The shape and characteristics of the curves make it possible to define an entirely new methodology for quantifying the response of a sensing film. Instead of having a response be the resistance of the film at a given temperature (or the resistances at a set of temperatures), the response is the TEMPERATURE at which the resistance is centered between the upper and lower saturation values. This temperature is strongly a function of gas concentration. Furthermore, the rate of change of the resistance in the vicinity of this temperature is also a function of the activation energy. Hence it is possible with a microhotplate to obtain readings from a film regardless of baseline resistance (or even in baseline resistance changes), to

---

**Figure 2: "S" Curves for $E_A = 30$ kcal/mol. 5 to 100 ppm in 5 ppm increments**
obtain multiple dimensions of data (in our case two, but this could easily be extended), and to obtain a broader dynamic range than is possible with a fixed temperature system.

**Simulated System**

A computer on a chip is often referred to as a microcontroller. These devices provide the ability to control and monitor an electrical system using a high level programming language, such as C. Although the processing power remains far below that of a desktop PC, it is sufficient to control the temperature of a microhotplate and monitor the resistance of the metal oxide film. Microcontrollers have the added benefits of being small in size, and of consuming far less power than a traditional PC. This allows for a hand-held, battery powered, mobile sensing instrument. Although microcontrollers have a number of advantages, including small size and low power, their processing power and user interface abilities are limited in comparison to desktop computers. Processing systems that can classify and quantify the gas species present, using artificial neural networks and other soft computing techniques require more processing power than is provided by a typical microcontroller.

We have created a system that combines the benefits of a low power, portable, hand-held, low cost device with the sophistication and computational power of a desktop computer.

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 3: Simulated Sensor Platform*

Figure 3, above, shows the simulated system. This system has demonstrated the viability of a "midpoint temperature" method of data analysis. The system consists of three parts. One part simulates the microhotplate itself. Through a set of user selectable inputs, a target gas and concentration is determined. This device acts as a microhotplate with a metal oxide film in the sense that a microhotplate controller commands it to go to a temperature and it responds with a resistance value (with added noise). The controller follows a calibration sequence where it samples the resistance at a low temperature, samples at a high temperature, and from those two resistances, calculates the midpoint resistance value. It then performs a binary search to find the temperature at which this resistance is achieved. Once the resistance is found, the slope of resistance with temperature is estimated by varying the temperature 10°C above and below the midpoint temperature and calculating the change in resistance. The temperature and slope values are communicated wirelessly to a PC using either a Bluetooth serial connection (100m range) or a serial-to-USB converter and processed using nearest neighbor classification functionality from the Neural Network Toolbox in Matlab.
A photograph of the working prototype sensor platform is shown above in Figure 4.

Figure 5: 1000 Samples of Simulated Data, With Added Noise, Showing the Decision Boundary

The PC is used to classify and quantify the sample received from the simulated sensor. Figure 5, above, shows 1000 data points, with random noise added by the sensor. Green points indicate a correct classification, while the pink points indicate an incorrect classification. Having the sensor controller average multiple readings it is possible to reduce the noise.
Figure 6: Noisy Data Averaged on the Sensor Controller

Figure 6, above, shows the results of averaging multiple readings together. The PC can now classify and quantify the sensor data using nearest neighbor classification.

Conclusion

Chemical reaction models can give insight into methods for control and analysis of sensor data. In particular, the models indicate that calculating the derivative of the sensor response with respect to temperature might be a reasonable way to increase the dimensionality of TPS data based on reaction kinetics.

A novel approach has been found that works well even in the presence of random noise, allowing the accurate classification and quantification of two similar gases (activation energies differing by approximately 15%) in the range from 5 to 100 ppm. This system represents a novel, demonstrated, method by which microhotplates can be used in a portable, hand-held, battery powered device. Furthermore, the effects of baseline drift, film aging, and noise (often of significant concern in sensor systems) can be addressed in a simple and effective manner. Moving the operating temperature to the region of maximum sensitivity can increase dynamic range of the film. Sophisticated processing techniques, archival storage, networking, user interface, and alarming can be accomplished with the processing power of a desktop PC, without requiring the instrument to be tethered to the PC.
References


Demonstrating a Novel Approach to the Control of Microhotplate Sensors Utilizing a Distributed Computing Approach and Numeric Modeling

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Reactions

\[
O_2 \rightarrow 2O_{ads}
\]

\[
A \leftrightarrow A_{ads}
\]

\[
O_{ads} + A_{ads} \rightarrow AO
\]

Surface Site Balances

\[
d\theta_O/dt = P_O H_O (1 - \theta_O - \theta_A)^2 - k_1 \theta_A \theta_A
\]

\[
d\theta_A/dt = P_A H_A (1 - \theta_O - \theta_A) - k_1 \theta_A \theta_A - k_2 \theta_A
\]

\[
k_i = v_i e^{-E_i/RT}
\]

- The model suggests an alternative to TPS.
- Sensor response is assumed to be proportional to steady-state coverage.
- The S-shaped curve transition from low oxygen coverage in a temperature range determined by gas type and concentration.
- The shape of the transition contains information related to composition and concentration of species present.
- Dynamic Temperature Programming Sensing (DTPS) activity seeks the temperature at which the oxygen coverage is between the minimum (low temperature) and maximum (high temperature).
- The measurement is the temperature at which a response is achieved rather than the responses at a fixed (or fixed set of) temperature(s).

Temperature Programmed Sensing (TPS) is a method of gathering data at multiple temperatures from a single device to extract reaction kinetics information. The dynamics of chemical reactions change with temperature. Microhotplates are platforms that can change temperature rapidly. Multidimensional data from TPS can be analyzed with Artificial Neural Networks (ANN).

User Selectable Species and Concentration

Simulated Microhotplate Sensor

Microcontroller based hotplate Interrogator and communication system

Wireless Communication Link

Computer running Matlab

Simulated Microhotplate Sensor Platform with User Selectable Gas Type and Concentration, Sensor Interrogator and USB Communication Board

The midpoint temperature and derivative of each S-curve is the ideal solution.

The predictable, well-calibrated sensor output is used to control the temperature and concentration of species present.

Reaction kinetics are strongly influenced by temperature. Microhotplates have the ability to change temperature rapidly.

The ability to change temperature allows for accurate determination of sensor performance.

We look for a temperature at a given response.

Our method is a self-collimated, removing unwanted characteristics such as baseline drift.

Using a low powered microcontroller a prototype based on the model was constructed.

Distributed computing implemented over a wireless link was used to provide the necessary processing power.

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Abstract—Hydrogen fluoride (HF) is a hazardous compound used in a variety of industrial processes and is a decomposition product of many environmentally harmful fluorinated volatile organic compounds. Surface acoustic wave (SAW) resonators on quartz substrates are suited for HF sensing because the analyte reacts directly with the sensor substrate, producing H₂O and the volatile compound, SF₆. This work shows evidence that during gas phase HF exposure to a generalized SAW (GSAW) resonator and a pure shear horizontal SAW (SH-SAW) resonator, the dominant sensing mechanism is the detection of a condensed liquid layer on the substrate surface, rather than simply material removal via SF₆ desorption. The GSAW and pure SH-SAW resonators, fabricated on ST-X and ST-90° quartz, respectively, have been simultaneously exposed to HF in a low-volume (1.3 cm³) test cell. An automated gas delivery system developed under this project varied HF concentrations from 1-18 ppm. Both resonators are sensitive to the formation of a condensed liquid layer, but the frequency shift of the pure SH-SAW resonator, due to this effect, is up to 4.6 times greater than that of the GSAW device for the HF concentrations investigated. The measured sensor frequency response to potential interferents, such as R-134a (C₂H₂F₄), isopropanol (C₃H₈O), propane (C₃H₈), acetone (C₃H₆O), and carbon monoxide (CO), is below the device’s limit of detection, while its response to HF is as high as 7.5 times its limit of detection.

Index Terms—hydrogen fluoride sensor, generalized and pure shear horizontal SAW, HF sensing on quartz.

I. INTRODUCTION

Hydrogen fluoride (HF) is used in the production of most fluorine containing compounds, including: refrigerants, herbicides, pharmaceuticals, high-octane gasoline, aluminum, plastics, electrical components, and fluorescent light bulbs, as well as in metal coatings, stainless steel pickling, semiconductor fabrication, and quartz purification. Acute exposure to concentrations of HF exceeding 30 ppm is immediately dangerous to human life, while chronic exposure to concentrations as low as 3 ppm may significantly affect human bones and organs [1], [2], [3]. In addition to HF process monitoring, many environmental contaminants and chemical warfare agents containing fluorine can be selectively detected via HF decomposition products [4] using hybrid sensor systems.

Commercial HF sensor systems that employ electrochemical cells are typically sensitive to concentrations in the range 0.1-20.0 ppm, but suffer poor selectivity since compounds such as HCl, SO₂, HNO₂, and H₂SO₄ produce sensor responses comparable to that of HF [5], [6], [7]. Other technologies utilized in commercial HF sensors include LED reflectance detectors [8], ion mobility spectrometry (IMS) [9], and tunable diode laser absorption spectroscopy (TDLAS) [10]. While these technologies can selectively identify HF, the LED reflectance detector requires over 10 minutes to detect a potentially deadly leak of 30 ppm [8]; IMS is not capable of reliably quantifying HF concentrations [9]; and TDLAS requires line of sight detection [10].

The need to improve upon commercial devices, namely to enhance the selectivity and sensitivity of HF sensors, reduce the response time and increase the dynamic range, led to further recent research efforts. Heated alkali diodes have demonstrated a sensitivity to HF concentrations as low as 0.01 ppm, although they cannot discriminate between halogenated compounds [11]. Metal-insulator-semiconductor (MIS) devices, while selective, were not able to detect HF concentrations below 6 ppm [12]. Microcantilever MEMS devices with sputter deposited SiO₂ layers were shown to be sensitive to the etching of the layer by HF concentrations as low as 0.26 ppm. However, a 7% change in the stoichiometry of the SiO₂ layer can result in a 130% change in the deflection of the microcantilever, for the same HF concentration [13]. Porous silicon (PSi) interferometry is another technique, which measures changes in Fabry-Perot interference fringes as HF etches a PSi thin film, was shown to possess a detection limit of 30 ppm and a response time of 10 minutes [14]. Material etching was also reported as the HF sensing mechanism of a surface acoustic wave (SAW) resonator on a quartz substrate, Euler angles [0°, 126°, 90°], with gold electrodes [15]. When measured differentially with respect to a reference device, a frequency shift of 0.13 Hz/s was characteristic of exposure to HF at 1 ppm. The addition of a silica-based sensing layer, deposited atop the resonator, increased the response to 0.83 Hz/s.

This paper reports on two-port platinum electrode SAW
resonator HF sensors, fabricated on both ST-90° Euler angles [0°, 132.75°, 90°] and ST-X Euler angles [0°, 132.75°, 0°]. The measured results show that the device response to HF is caused primarily by the formation of a condensed liquid layer on the substrate surface, rather than material removal. Both the ST-90° and the ST-X sensors exhibit clear frequency response shifts when exposed to HF concentrations in the range of 1 to 18 ppm. In particular, the ST-90° SAW sensor responds to 1 ppm HF with a frequency shift of 0.1 ppm/min (0.5 Hz/s), without the use of a sensing layer or reference device. Additionally, the measured ST-90° SAW sensor frequency variation to potential interferents such as R-134a (C2H5F2), isopropanol (C3H7O), propane (C3H8), acetone (C3H6O), carbon monoxide (CO), was below the device’s limit of detection.

The quartz-based HF SAW sensor is expected to have high long-term stability since the detection of HF does not rely on selective or sensitive films, which may degrade or change properties over time. The manufacture of SAW sensors is also highly reproducible, since the technology employs regular semiconductor fabrication techniques. The sensor response to HF may be affected by changes in environmental conditions, such as variations in temperature and humidity. In this work, these variables were controlled and thus their effects on the sensor response were minimized.

Section II of this paper discusses background information regarding the interaction of water with the quartz substrate, the nature of the reaction between HF and quartz, as well as a comparison of the SAW modes propagating on ST-X and ST-90° oriented quartz and their sensitivity to H2O adsorption and substrate etching. Section III presents the resonator design and fabrication details, in addition to introducing the gas test cell and automated gas delivery system. Section IV contains experimental results and the respective analysis. Section V concludes the paper.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Interaction of Water with SiO2

The interaction of water with quartz (SiO2) substrates is significant because H2O is both a catalyst for, and a product of, the reaction between HF and SiO2. At atmospheric pressure and at temperatures below 150 °C, an SiO2 surface is fully hydroxylated [16], [17]. This dissociative adsorption of water on SiO2 surfaces is energetically favorable, as indicated by low surface energy densities, 0.32 < γ < 0.43 J m⁻², compared to the pure surface, 1.92 < γ < 2.77 J m⁻². Furthermore, hydroxylation of the SiO2 surface is preferred over molecular adsorption as indicated by the large hydration energies of the former (-227.1 < ΔH < -465.4 kJ mol⁻¹), compared to the later (-75.8 < ΔH < -230.2 kJ mol⁻¹) [16].

Once the SiO2 surface is fully hydroxylated, molecular water adsorbs to the OH groups. The adsorption energy of molecular water, which decreases from -90 kJ mol⁻¹ to -50 kJ mol⁻¹ as coverage increases from 0 to 0.3 monolayers, is due to two effects: hydrogen bonding and a partial SiO⋯H2O ionic interaction. As coverage increases to 0.3 monolayers and above, the SiO⋯H2O interaction weakens and the adsorption energy is dominated by the hydrogen bond strength, which is constant at -50 kJ mol⁻¹ [18], [19]. Because the adsorption energy is greater than the heat of liquefaction of water (-44 kJ mol⁻¹), the surface is considered hydrophilic [16]. For coverage above 0.3 monolayers, multilayer condensation occurs in addition to continued growth of the first monolayer via adsorption [18].

Additionally, for coverage less than 0.2 monolayers, the measured sticking coefficient for molecular water on a fully hydroxylated SiO2 surface is an exponential function of coverage that asymptotically approaches unity at 0.2 monolayers. For coverage above 0.2 monolayers, the measured H2O sticking coefficient is unity for both a fully hydroxylated surface as well as for subsequent monolayers of adsorbed H2O.

It has also been reported that a fully hydroxylated SiO2 surface can retain adsorbed molecular water at temperatures up to 200 °C, due to the increased adsorption energy of H2O at low coverage. Dehydroxylation begins at 200 °C and is nearly complete at 1100 °C [17], [18], [19], [20], [21].

B. HF Vapor Phase Reaction with SiO2

The reaction of HF with SiO2 has two significant effects: H2O generation and substrate material removal [22], [23]. Residual H2O, scavenged from the hydrophilic SiO2 surface, acts as a catalyst by ionizing HF, as described by [24],

\[2HF + H_2O \rightarrow H_3O^+ + HF_2^- .\]  

(1)

The products of Eq. 1 then react with the SiO2 substrate, as described by [23],

\[SiO_2 + 2H_3O^+ + 2HF_2^- \rightarrow SiF_4 + 4H_2O.\]  

(2)

The resulting additional H2O in Eq. 2 enhances the ionization rate of HF, subsequently increasing the reaction rate with SiO2. This positive feedback mechanism results in the rapid formation of a condensed liquid layer on the SiO2 surface [23], [24]. Once sufficient H2O is generated, the reaction progresses as described by [22], [23], [25], [26],

\[SiO_2 + 3H_2O^+ + 3HF_2^- \rightarrow H_2SiF_6 + 5H_2O,\]  

(3)

producing fluorsilicic acid, much of which remains condensed in the liquid layer. However, some fluorsilicic acid dissociates according to [23],

\[H_2SiF_6 \rightarrow 2HF + SiF_4,\]  

(4)

where the resulting SiF4 desorbs from the surface. The liquid layer grows until it becomes sufficiently thick, causing the reaction to become HF2 diffusion limited, as the ionized HF must then transport through the liquid layer to react with SiO2.
The liquid layer attains equilibrium when the rate of desorbing SiF$_4$ and H$_2$O balances the rate of HF$_2$ transport to the SiO$_2$ surface [22]. Increasing the concentration of HF gas in the ambient will increase the rate of transport of HF$_2$ through the liquid layer, increasing the reaction rate and thus the thickness of the condensed layer until a new equilibrium is reached. Decreasing the HF concentration will cause the liquid layer to decrease, as H$_2$O evaporates more quickly than can be generated by the reaction. Temperature affects the rate of H$_2$O evaporation and thus the equilibrium of the condensed layer. It has been shown that the reaction of HF with SiO$_2$ is maximized when the temperature is within the range 20-35°C, falling off quickly at temperatures greater than 40°C [22].

C. GSAW and Pure SH-SAW Modes

The two-port SAW resonators used in this work were fabricated with platinum (Pt) electrodes on ST-X quartz and ST-90° quartz. The ST-X orientation supports a generalized SAW (GSAW), which has particle displacement components in all three directions, parallel and normal to the sagittal plane. The ST-90° orientation supports a pure shear horizontal SAW (SH-SAW), which only has a particle displacement component normal to the sagittal plane.

For sensor applications, an attractive feature of the GSAW along ST-X quartz is its 0 ppm/°C temperature coefficient of frequency (TCF) near 20°C when aluminum electrodes are used. It was experimentally determined in this work that for Pt electrodes, the zero TCF value is reduced by approximately 50°C, resulting in a TCF ranging from -4.8 ppm/°C to -6.3 ppm/°C, for temperatures in the range of 20°C to 35°C. The TCF for the pure SH-SAW, using Pt electrodes was experimentally determined to range from 33.3 ppm/°C to 35.1 ppm/°C for temperatures in the range of 20°C to 35°C. Since the GSAW and the pure SH-SAW device responses are affected by temperature variations, as well as the reaction of HF with SiO$_2$, an oxygen, described in Section III, was employed in this work to reduce the effect of temperature on the measurements.

Another attractive feature for high sensitivity SAW sensors is the degree of wave confinement near the surface of the substrate. One measure of this is penetration depth, which is defined as the depth inside the substrate which contains 99% of the wave energy. A lower penetration depth corresponds to a greater confinement of energy near the substrate surface and thus, a more sensitive acoustic mode [27]. The calculated GSAW penetration depth on ST-X quartz is 2.2λ, for Pt electrodes with a mark-to-space ratio of 1:1 and H/λ = 0.63%, where H is metal thickness and λ is the SAW wavelength. The calculated pure SH-SAW penetration depth on ST-90° quartz is 0.89λ, for the same electrode material and structure. It is interesting to note that the penetration depth for Pt electrodes on ST-X is 2.5 times greater than that for ST-90°, suggesting that the pure SH-SAW should be more sensitive to surface changes than the GSAW on ST-X quartz.

D. SAW Sensitivity to Material Removal and Mass Loading

As described by Eq. 2 and Eq. 3, the reaction of HF with SiO$_2$ has two effects: liquid generation and substrate material removal. It has been reported in the literature that material removal of less than 100 nm has a negligible effect on the frequency response of GSAW resonators on quartz [0°, 126°, 0°] and pure SH-SAW resonators on quartz [0°, 126°, 90°] [28]. In the current work, etch depths in ST-cut quartz, resulting from SiF$_4$ desorption, as indicated by Eq. 2 and Eq. 3, were smaller than 10 nm, which was the limit of the profilometer used, and no step could be detected. Due to the reasons listed above, material removal does not significantly affect the frequency response of the resonators in this work.

The sensitivity of a propagating SAW to mass loading, can be investigated using the perturbation analysis developed by Auld [29]. The analysis considers the mechanical surface perturbation on a propagating acoustic wave due to a thin (h < 0.01λ, where h is the perturbing film thickness), uniform, lossless, isotropic film overlay. When the perturbing layer is liquid phase H$_2$O, the shear modulus can be considered zero, and mass sensitivity can be expresses as:

$$S_m = \frac{1}{f_0} \cdot \frac{\Delta f}{\Delta m} \approx \frac{1}{V_0} \cdot \frac{\Delta V}{\Delta m} = \frac{V_0}{4} \cdot \left[ \frac{v_x^2}{P} + \frac{v_y^2}{P} + \frac{v_z^2}{P} \right],$$

where Δm is the mass change per unit area; Δf = (f-f$_0$), f$_0$ and f are the unperturbed and perturbed device frequencies, respectively; ΔV = (V-V$_0$), V$_0$ and V are the unperturbed and perturbed SAW velocities, respectively; and $|v_i|/P^{1/2}$ is the normalized particle velocity, where $i=(x, y, z)$, $v_i$ are the right-handed Cartesian components of the mechanical particle velocities, and P is the power flow per unit width along the propagation direction. In this work, x is oriented in the direction of propagation, y is oriented normal to the sagittal plane, and z is oriented normal and outward to the substrate surface.

It has been shown by Grate and Klusty that the mass sensitivity of an ST-X quartz resonator, determined experimentally using Langmuir-Blodgett films with h/λ around 0.3%, agrees well (within 4%) with the value from perturbation theory, calculated using Eq. 5 [30]. Table I includes the values for V$_0$, $|v_i|/P^{1/2}$, and S$_m$ on ST-X quartz, calculated using FEM/BEM [31], considering a Pt λ/8 grating with a mark-to-space ratio of 1:1 and H/λ=0.63%. The mass sensitivity, for this geometry on ST-X quartz, expressed as a function of frequency, is $S_m = -0.167 \times 10^{-6} \text{m}^2 \text{kg}^{-1} \text{Hz}^{-1}$.

Rearranging Eq. 5, the normalized frequency shift is given by:

$$\frac{\Delta f}{f_0} = S_m \cdot \Delta m,$$

and Δm can be further expressed by:
\[ \Delta m = \frac{1}{S} M \cdot \Delta N, \]  

where \( M \) is the atomic mass of \( \text{H}_2\text{O} \), \( \Delta N \) is the number of adsorbed molecules, \( S \) is the surface area which they cover, and \( N_A \) is Avogadro’s constant. Assuming that perturbation theory can be applied to monolayer \( \text{H}_2\text{O} \) adsorption, where \( h/\lambda \) is on the order of 0.001%, and considering that one monolayer of tightly packed \( \text{H}_2\text{O} \) molecules contains \( 0.48 \times 10^{15} \) species/cm², the resulting expected frequency sensitivity is -4.6 ppm/monolayer, as depicted in Fig. 1.

### III. Experimental Procedure

#### A. GSAW and Pure SH-SAW Resonator Fabrication and Gas Test Cell

The two-port GSAW and pure SH-SAW resonators used in this work were fabricated in the clean room facilities at the University of Maine’s Laboratory for Surface Science and Technology (LASST). Both resonators use interdigital transducers (IDTs) with a periodicity of 16 \( \mu \)m (\( \lambda = 16 \mu \)m), a nominal mark-to-space ratio of 1:1, and an acoustical aperture of 0.8 mm. The IDTs consist of 40 finger pairs per IDT, and 500 electrodes per short-circuited grating. A zirconium adhesion layer was used with the platinum electrodes; the total bimetal thickness (\( H \)) is 100 nm. The GSAW resonator operates at a center frequency of 194.3 MHz, whereas the pure SH-SAW resonator operates at a center frequency of 293.9 MHz. This difference in center frequencies is due to the differing phase velocities of the GSAW (\( v_{\text{GSAW}} \approx 3108 \text{ m/s} \)) and pure SH-SAW (\( v_{\text{SH-SAW}} \approx 4703 \text{ m/s} \)) modes for the same device geometry.

Fig. 2 shows both the GSAW and pure SH-SAW resonators mounted on a printed circuit board (PCB) inside a low-volume (1.3 cm³) gas test cell. The resonators are bonded to 50 \( \Omega \) RF feed-throughs, which attach to SMA connectors via microstrip transmission lines on the opposite side of the PCB. Two RF switches connect the resonators to an Agilent 8753D network analyzer (Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara, CA, USA), allowing for the alternating measurement of both devices under identical test conditions.

#### B. Gas Delivery System

The GSAW and pure SH-SAW resonators were exposed to a variety of environmental test conditions using an automated gas delivery system, depicted in Fig. 3. Mass flow controllers and a bank of actuated valves were used to regulate the delivery of gases at flow rates in the range 40-2000 scm. In this work, experiments were conducted at flow rates of 100 scm and 1500 scm, resulting in residence times in the test cell of 0.77 s and 0.05 s, respectively. Dry air was supplied by a Parker Balston 64-01 membrane air dryer and HPZA-3500 zero air generator (Parker Hannifin, Cleveland, OH, USA). A distilled water vapor liquid equilibrium (VLE) cell produced humid air concentrations up to 6200 ppm. Bottled, anhydrous HF, in a nitrogen carrier gas, was supplied by Matheson Tri-Gas (Matheson Tri-Gas, Inc., Montgomeryville, PA, USA). Other gases, used as potential interferents, were R-134a (\( \text{C}_2\text{H}_2\text{F}_4 \)), isopropanol (\( \text{C}_3\text{H}_6\text{O} \)), propane (\( \text{C}_3\text{H}_8 \)), acetone (\( \text{C}_4\text{H}_6\text{O} \)), and carbon monoxide (CO). Specific gas concentrations, utilized for each experiment in this work, are detailed in the following section.

To reduce the effects of temperature variation on the sensor response, a custom low-temperature oven was constructed. The oven maintains 35.0 ± 0.08 °C, using a resistive air heater operated by a proportional controller with thermistor feedback. A length of coiled tubing and the test cell are placed within the oven to ensure both the resonators and the test gases are at the desired temperature.

To further reduce the effect of temperature on the resonator frequency responses, the experimentally determined TCFs were utilized to correct for minor frequency shifts due to small temperature variations (< ±0.08 °C) recorded in the test cell during experiments.

### IV. Results and Discussion

#### A. Device Response to Water Vapor

As discussed in Section II, liquid condensation significantly affects the frequency responses of the GSAW and pure SH-SAW resonators. To determine the effect of \( \text{H}_2\text{O} \) condensation, independent of the chemical reaction between HF and \( \text{SiO}_2 \), the GSAW and pure SH-SAW resonators were simultaneously exposed to 100 sccm of air with humidity levels ranging from 0 to 5775 ppm.

The resonators were initially exposed to 1500 sccm dry air at 35 °C for over six hours to drive off \( \text{H}_2\text{O} \) from the substrate surfaces. Following this, the flow rate was reduced to 100 sccm and the humidity was increased by 825 ppm every 60 minutes, for seven hours. The results of this experiment are depicted in Fig. 4.

With the initial application of 825 ppm humid air, the normalized frequency shift of the pure SH-SAW resonator is 11.9 ppm. For each subsequent 825 ppm increase in humidity thereafter, the normalized frequency shift changes by less than 5.1 ppm. The GSAW resonator is less responsive with an initial normalized frequency shift of 2.8 ppm and shifts of less than 0.75 ppm thereafter. Both resonators reached their steady state frequencies less than 1.5 minutes after each change in humidity.

The concentration of humid air was then reduced to 0 ppm and the GSAW and pure SH-SAW resonators recovered to frequency values 1.5 ppm and 4 ppm less than their initial responses, prior to humid air exposure. This indicates that at the test conditions (100 sccm dry air at 35 °C), residual \( \text{H}_2\text{O} \) remains bound to the \( \text{SiO}_2 \) substrate surface after humidity is removed from the system.

A semi-infinite water layer on a substrate surface causes the rapid attenuation of a GSAW, due to compressional wave radiation into the liquid. However, throughout this experiment and the following experiments in this work, the reported \( \text{H}_2\text{O} \) monolayers are on the order of \( h/\lambda = 0.001\% \), rather than bulk water. The presence of \( \text{H}_2\text{O} \) monolayers resulted in minimal
additional measured losses up to only 0.1 dB, for both the GSAW and pure SH-SAW resonators.

The total normalized frequency shift of the GSAW resonator, when exposed to 5775 ppm humid air, was -5.4 ppm. From Fig. 1, this corresponds to an average H$_2$O coverage of 1.16 monolayers. Considering this value of H$_2$O coverage, an experimentally determined mass sensitivity can be calculated for the pure SH-SAW resonator using Eqs. 6 and 7. It is appropriate to note that several of the perturbation theory approximations, such as the uniform, isotropic layer with non-zero shear modulus may not be entirely applicable to the H$_2$O monolayers. With that consideration in mind, if 1.16 monolayers of H$_2$O load both the GSAW and pure SH-SAW resonators when exposed to 5775 ppm of humid air, the mass sensitivity that corresponds to a normalized frequency shift of -34 ppm for the pure SH-SAW resonator, is $S_m = -0.695 \cdot 10^{-6}$ m$^2$ kg$^{-1}$ Hz$^{-1}$. Thus, the experimentally determined mass sensitivity of the pure SH-SAW resonator is 4.16 times greater than that of the GSAW resonator. The higher experimental SH-SAW sensitivity can be partially credited to its lower penetration depth (0.89 $\mu$m) when compared to the GSAW (2.2 $\mu$m).

B. Exposure to Varying Concentrations of HF in Dry Air

The frequency response of the GSAW and pure SH-SAW devices to varying concentrations of HF in dry air is depicted in Fig. 5. After acquiring a baseline measurement of 0 ppm HF at 1500 sccm, the resonators were consecutively exposed to 6, 0, 12, 0, 18, and 0 ppm HF, in 120 minute intervals. The flow rate during HF exposure was reduced to 100 sccm to increase the residence time of HF in the test cell. The flow rate during recovery was increased to 1500 sccm to enhance the desorption rate of the H$_2$O monolayers from the substrate surface. Two rates of frequency change are observed after each HF gas exposure and are summarized in Table II. The larger, primary rate, results from the rapid growth of the liquid layer during the initiation stage of the reaction. The smaller, secondary rate, occurs when the reaction becomes HF$_2$-diffusion limited. Both the initiation rate and the diffusion limited rate increase as the HF concentration is increased.

The standard deviations, $\sigma_0$, of the normalized frequency responses of the GSAW and pure SH-SAW resonators in the absence of HF are 0.14 ppm and 0.4 ppm, respectively. Therefore, the limit of detection, defined as $L_D = 3 \cdot \sigma_0$, corresponds to a normalized frequency shift 0.42 ppm for the GSAW and 1.2 ppm for the pure SH-SAW. For an applied HF concentration of 6 ppm, the total normalized frequency shift was $4 \cdot L_D$ for the GSAW and $7.5 \cdot L_D$ for the pure SH-SAW resonators.

Upon removing HF from the test gas and increasing the flow rate of dry air, liquid generation ceased and the liquid monolayers desorbed, resulting in a recovery of the resonator responses. In particular, following exposure to 6 ppm and 12 ppm HF, the GSAW and pure SH-SAW resonator responses shown in Fig. 5 recovered to frequencies that were 0.5 ppm and 2 ppm higher than their baselines, respectively. This result is attributable to incomplete desorption of H$_2$O on the substrate surface at the start of the experiment and the variability of the desorption rate at high flow rates.

Following exposure to 18 ppm HF, the resonator responses in Fig. 5 did not overshoot the baselines during the 120 minute recovery period. This may be attributable to incomplete desorption of the increased amount of H$_2$O, created as a result of the increased HF concentration, for the allowed recovery time.

The frequency responses of the GSAW and pure SH-SAW resonators to 1 ppm HF are depicted in Fig. 6 and included in Table II. At this concentration, the GSAW and pure SH-SAW resonators exhibit responses of $2 \cdot L_D$ and $3.3 \cdot L_D$, respectively. These results indicate that the GSAW device is approaching the lower limit of its dynamic range for HF concentrations of 1 ppm, while the pure SH-SAW resonator reveals the capability of measuring concentrations under 1 ppm.

C. Exposure to Varying concentrations of HF in Humid Air

Fig. 7 depicts the results of an experiment conducted to verify the effects of increasing and decreasing concentrations of HF on the condensed liquid layer on the pure SH-SAW resonator. Specifically, the device was initially exposed to stagnant air, followed by a humid carrier gas (5775 ppm humid air at 100 sccm). At 180 minutes, 18 ppm HF was added to the system. A constant flow rate of 100 sccm was maintained by reducing the humid air concentration to 3310 ppm. The dip observed at 180 minutes is due to the reduction in humid air. At 182 minutes, the effect of H$_2$O evaporation dominates the response, causing a 5 ppm positive frequency shift. Meanwhile, HF continues to ionize in the H$_2$O layer and diffuse to the SiO$_2$ surface where it reacts. At 195 minutes, the rate of new H$_2$O generation exceeds the rate of evaporation, the condensed layer begins to grow again, causing the resonator frequency to decrease at a rate of 0.069 ppm/min. This secondary rate is nearly three times greater than when dry air was used as the carrier gas (Fig. 5).

The reaction of HF with SiO$_2$ is dependent on the ionization of HF in H$_2$O, as described by Eq. 1 through Eq. 3. When the carrier gas is dry air, the only source of H$_2$O is what can be initially scavenged from the SiO$_2$ surface, supplemented by the H$_2$O generated as a product of the reaction itself. However, when the carrier gas is humid air, an abundance of H$_2$O is available at the SiO$_2$ surface to ionize the HF, resulting in an increased rate of reaction.

At 300 minutes, the HF concentration is reduced to 12 ppm and since the flow rate was maintained at 100 sccm, the concentration of humid air is increased to 3580 ppm. The increase in humid air concentration causes H$_2$O to quickly condense on the substrate surface, resulting in a 1 ppm step frequency decrease at 300 minutes. The decrease in HF concentration causes the reaction rate with SiO$_2$ to slow,
resulting in a slight reduction in the slope of the frequency response. At 420 minutes, the HF concentration is reduced to 6 ppm and the humid air is correspondingly increased to 3850 ppm. The reduction in HF, causes the slope of the frequency response to be positive, indicating that more H₂O is now evaporating from the condensed layer than can be supplied by the reaction of HF with SiO₂. At 475 minutes a steady state is reached when the amount of evaporating H₂O equals that being generated by the reaction. At 540 minutes the HF is reduced to 1 ppm and humid air is increased to 4080 ppm. Again, more H₂O evaporates from the liquid layer than can be supplied by the reaction and a steady state is reached at 625 minutes. When HF is removed from the system at 660 minutes, the concentration of humid air is returned to 4125 ppm, and the condensed liquid layer slowly approaches a steady-state thickness, as indicated by the flattening frequency response. The 3 ppm offset in normalized frequency observed at 740 minutes is credited to differences in the total amount of adsorbed H₂O between the beginning (around 150 minutes) and the end of the experiment. Comparing Figs. 5, 6, and 7, it is interesting to note that independent of the initial amount of adsorbed H₂O on the SiO₂ substrate, the amount of H₂O generated by the reaction with HF is constant when the reaction is at a steady state. In particular, the total normalized frequency shift resulting from exposure to 6 ppm HF in dry air (Fig. 5), measured from the baseline at 30 minutes to the equilibrium value at 60 minutes, is 9 ppm. When 4125 ppm humid air is added to the carrier gas, the total normalized frequency shift resulting from exposure to 6 ppm HF (Fig. 7), measured from the baseline at 180 minutes to the equilibrium value at 475 minutes, is also 9 ppm. Similarly, for 1 ppm HF in carrier gases of both dry and humid air, the normalized frequency shifts are both 4 ppm (Fig. 6, from 30 minutes to 150 minutes; Fig. 7, from 180 minutes to 625 minutes). This indicates that the addition of HF to the system results in the same change in adsorbed H₂O and is independent of the initial amount of H₂O on the surface.

D. Exposure to Potential Interferents

Fig. 8 shows the variation in the frequency response of the pure SH-SAW resonator when exposed to 18 ppm of R-134a (C₂H₂F₄), isopropanol (C₃H₈O), propane (C₃H₈), acetone (C₃H₆O), carbon monoxide (CO), and HF, in dry air. The resonator response to the potential interferents was less than its limit of detection while its response to HF was up to 7.5±2.5 ppm. These results indicate that quartz-based SAW resonators are well suited for the detection of low concentrations of HF in air.

V. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper the effects of 1-18 ppm HF exposure on both GSAW and pure SH-SAW quartz resonators have been examined. Experiments verified that the formation of a condensed liquid layer on the SiO₂ substrate is the dominant effect in detecting the presence of HF, rather than SiO₂ removal. For the HF concentrations used in this work, the frequency response of the pure SH-SAW resonator was up to 4.6 times greater than the GSAW resonator. The pure SH-SAW device also exhibited the capability of measuring HF concentrations below 1 ppm. Additionally, the resonator response to potential interferents was less than its limit of detection while its response to HF was up to 7.5±2.5 ppm. These results indicate that quartz-based SAW resonators are well suited for the detection of low concentrations of HF in air.

REFERENCES

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Mauricio Pereira da Cunha (S’88–M’95–SM’02), born in Brazil in 1963, received the Bachelor’s degree, 1985, and the Master’s with Honors in electrical engineering, 1989, from the Escola Politécnica, Universidade de São Paulo. Master’s thesis title is “Design and Implementation of a 70 MHz SAW Convolver.” He received the Ph.D. degree, Dean’s Honor List, from McGill University, Montreal, PQ, Canada, in electrical engineering in 1994. Ph.D. thesis title is “SAW Propagation and Device Modeling on Arbitrarily Oriented Substrates”.

Mauricio has worked with the Microwave Devices R&D Group at NEC (Nippon Electric Co.), Brazil, Laboratório de Microeletrônica, Escola Politécnica, Department of Electrical Engineering, Universidade de São Paulo, McGill University, Montreal, PQ, Canada, and SAWTEK Inc., Orlando, FL. He passed a sabbatical year at University of Central Florida, Consortium for Applied Acoustoelectronic Technology (CAAT), Orlando, FL, where he worked in cooperation with Piezotechnology Inc. on the characterization of new piezoelectric materials, namely langasite, langanite, and langasite, and with bulk and surface acoustic wave devices. Mauricio was a Professor in the Department of Electronic Engineering, Universidade de São Paulo until he joined the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of Maine in 2001, where he presently holds the position of Associate Professor.

Dr. Pereira da Cunha is a member of the IEEE, Sigma Xi, and of the Brazilian Microwave Society (SBMO). He was elected to serve on the SBMO Administrative Committee from 1996 to 1999. He is a reviewer and an associate editor for the IEEE UFFC TRANSACTIONS, and he has been a member of the IEEE International Ultrasonics Symposium Technical Program Committee since 1997. He has served on the UFFC-Society Administrative Committee from 2002–2004, served as Technical Program Committee Chair for the IEEE 2007 Ultrasonics Symposium, New York, NY, and is presently the Vice-Chair for Ultrasonics. He has more than 140 journal, conference, and presentations in the area of microwave acoustic propagation, acoustic wave material properties, bulk and surface acoustic wave modeling and devices, and sensors.
TABLE I. THEORETICAL VALUES CALCULATED VIA FEM/BEM FOR GSAW RESONATORS ON ST-X QUARTZ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$v_g$ (m/s)</th>
<th>$vi/p^{1/2} x 10^4$ (m/s)/(W/m)$^{1/2}$</th>
<th>$S_w y 10^4$ (m$^2$ kg$^{-1}$ Hz$^{-1}$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3080</td>
<td>3.21 0.43 4.90 -0.167</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calculated for a half-metalized, $\lambda/8$, Pt grating with $H/i=0.63\%$.

Fig. 1. Theoretical normalized frequency shift of GSAW resonator to monolayers of adsorbed H$_2$O. GSAW operating frequency: 194.3 MHz.

Fig. 2. GSAW and pure SH-SAW resonators mounted inside the gas test cell.

Fig. 3. Representation of the gas delivery system.

Fig. 4. Normalized frequency shift of the GSAW (dashed line, open circles) and pure SH-SAW (solid line, solid circles) resonators to increasing concentrations of humid air at 100 sccm and 35 °C. GSAW operating frequency: 194.3 MHz. SH-SAW operating frequency: 293.9 MHz.

Fig. 5. Normalized frequency shift of the GSAW (top curve) and pure SH-SAW (bottom curve) resonators to HF concentrations of 6 ppm (A), 12 ppm (B), and 18 ppm (C) in 100 sccm dry air at 35°C. At O, the concentration of HF was 0 ppm and the flow rate of dry air was 1500 sccm to enhance the desorption rate of the condensed H$_2$O monolayers. GSAW operating frequency: 194.3 MHz. Pure SH-SAW operating frequency: 293.9 MHz.
TABLE II. PURE SH-SAW AND GS-AW RESONATOR RESPONSES TO VARYING CONCENTRATIONS OF HF IN 100 SCCM DRY AIR AT 35°C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HF conc.</th>
<th>Pure SH-SAW</th>
<th>GS-AW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary rate (ppm/min)</td>
<td>Secondary rate (ppm/min)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 ppm</td>
<td>-0.091</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 ppm</td>
<td>-0.341</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 ppm</td>
<td>-0.741</td>
<td>-0.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 ppm</td>
<td>-1.326</td>
<td>-0.024</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 6. Normalized frequency shift of the GS-AW (top curve) and pure SH-SAW (bottom curve) resonators to an HF concentration of 1 ppm (D) in 100 sccm dry air at 35°C. At O, the concentration of HF was 0 ppm and the flow rate of dry air was 1500 sccm. GS-AW operating frequency: 194.3 MHz. Pure SH-SAW operating frequency: 293.9 MHz.

Fig. 7. Normalized frequency shift of the pure SH-SAW resonator to varying concentrations of HF and humid air at 35°C. A: 0 ppm HF, 4125 ppm humid air, 100 sccm; B: 18 ppm HF, 3510 ppm humid air, 100 sccm; C: 12 ppm HF, 3580 ppm humid air, 100 sccm; D: 6 ppm HF, 3850 ppm humid air, 100 sccm; E: 1 ppm HF, 4080 ppm humid air, 100 sccm; F: 0 ppm HF, 4125 ppm humid air, 100 sccm. Pure SH-SAW operating frequency: 293.9 MHz.

Fig. 8. Normalized frequency shift of SH-SAW resonator to 18 ppm of A: tetrafluoroethane, B: isopropanol, C: propane, D: acetone, E: carbon monoxide, and F: HF, in 100 sccm dry air at 35°C. The experiment was conducted in two parts because the gas delivery system is restricted to four simultaneous gases. SH-SAW operating frequency: 293.9 MHz.
Tracking deformable 2D objects in wireless sensor networks

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ABSTRACT

Geosensor networks are deployed to detect, monitor and track continuous environmental phenomena such as toxic clouds or oil spills in the ocean. In this paper, we abstract such continuous phenomena as 2D objects and only consider their boundary using wireless sensor networks to monitor them over time. In order to maximize energy-efficient monitoring of the phenomena, we present an in-network algorithm based on the concept of deformable curves to incrementally track spatiotemporal changes of the object. We show that the in-network incremental boundary tracking approach based on deformable curves collects sufficient information efficiently to track the overall spatiotemporal properties about a 2D object. By simulations, we demonstrate the energy-efficiency of our approach.

Categories and Subject Descriptors
H.2.8 [Database Management]: Database Applications—Spatial databases and GIS; H.2.4 [Database Management]: Systems—Distributed databases

General Terms
Algorithms, Management, Performance

Keywords
Wireless Sensor Networks, Spatial Queries, Deformable Object Tracking

1. INTRODUCTION

Continuous environmental phenomena such as toxic clouds or oil spills in the ocean can be represented by their boundary, i.e. as 2D objects with spatiotemporal properties, since the boundary is often the interesting property with regard to tracking location, spreading or disappearance. Taking the example of wildfires, in October 2007, several wild fires burnt at the same time in Southern California. The Witch Fire, the largest wild fire, started in Witch Creek Canyon near Santa Ysabel and spread quickly to Ramona, Rancho Bernardo, Poway and Escondido. By the end of October, the Witch Fire was fully contained. In this paper, we present an efficient in-network algorithm to track the boundary of an object such as the Witch Fire over time and space by treating its boundary as a deformable curve, and based on the collaboration between neighboring nodes on identifying incremental changes of the deformable curve.

A way to identity the initial 2D boundary is to compare the neighboring sensed values of the sensor nodes in the network, and use user defined thresholds to detect the occurrence of an object such as a fire or toxic cloud [7]. The individual point boundary reports need to be connected as closed curves in Wireless Sensor Networks (WSN) [10, 5, 9], and provide snap shots of the 2D objects.

Once the boundary is detected and connected as a closed curve, we are interested in tracking the change of the boundary with minimal number of messages and energy consumption. In our approach we treat the boundary as a deformable curve; thus, the object keeps its identity, but changes its geometry incrementally over time and space. We propose an in-network algorithm, in which sensor nodes have local knowledge about the curve and collaborate with neighboring nodes to monitor the deforming of the curve over time. Our simulation results show that our tracking algorithm requires a small amount of communication cost to maintain the structure of the deformable curve. Different types of aggregated information about the deformable curve can be computed by in-network aggregation algorithms [6] with a minimal amount of communication cost. We also illustrate that the aggregated information can provide qualitative spatiotemporal properties of 2D objects such as shrinking and expanding.

2. PREVIOUS WORK

In this paper, we model space to be observed as a 2D space, \( \mathbb{R}^2 \). \( s_i \) is used to identify a sensor node and also its spatial location. We define the immediate neighboring nodes of sensor node, \( s_i \), as a node set, 

\[
N(s_i) : \{ s_j | s_j AND s_i \text{ can directly communicate} \},
\]

and \( s_j \in N(s_i) \).

For the contributions of this paper, we build on previous work with regard to the SNAKE model [2]. We also assume...
that distributed sensor nodes can locally detect points of the object boundary, and can connect them to form the initial closed curve \[ V^t \] of a deformable curve. \[ V^t \] indicates the curve at time \( t \), and consists of \( n \) vertices, \( v_1^t, v_2^t, \ldots, v_n^t \), linked by straight lines. \( V^t \) indicates the initial boundary. By tracking individual vertices of \( V^t \), sensor nodes are able to track the object’s boundary spatiotemporally without knowing the detailed global geometric information about the curve. \( V^t \) is defined as follows.

\[
\begin{align*}
  v_i^t &= (x_i^t, y_i^t), \\
  v_{n+1}^t &= v_1^t, \\
  v_i^t &= v_i^t. 
\end{align*}
\]

The vertices are 2D points as shown by Equation 2a. \( V^t \) is a closed curve, as indicated by Equation 2b and Equation 2c.

\( V^t \) should well represent the 2D object’s boundary at time \( t \). The vertices on a deformable curve change their locations over time to adapt the curve structure to the current boundary’s location and shape. According to the SNAKE model, the appropriate placement of \( V^t \) at time \( t \) needs to minimize the quantity, \( E \), as defined by,

\[
E = \alpha E_{ten} + \beta E_{cur} + \gamma E_{ext}. \tag{3}
\]

\( E_{ten} \) in Equation 3 is the first order continuity constraint, which keeps the vertices to be evenly distributed along the boundary. \( E_{cur} \) in Equation 3 is the second order continuity constraint, and indicates \( V^t \)'s curvature. \( E_{ext} \) is used to control the curve’s smoothness. \( E_{ext} \) is known as the external force or edge strength, which keeps the curve close to the 2D object’s boundary. \( \alpha, \beta, \gamma \) represent weights of each force model, and describe the importance of different forces to the final shape and location of \( V^t \).

3. REVISED SNAKE MODEL

The external and internal forces of the SNAKE model “move” vertices (and consequently the edges connecting them) on a deformable curve to track the 2D object, and capture the boundary changes. To implement our boundary tracking algorithm for WSN, we only allow the vertices, \( v_i^t \), to move onto the locations of sensor nodes. We call a sensor node, \( s_i \), a vertex node at time \( t \), if a vertex \( v_i^t \) exists at the location of \( s_i \) (i.e. \( v_i^t = s_i \)). We define the set of neighboring nodes, which can communicate directly with \( s_i \) and detect parts of the object boundary, \( NB(s_i, t) \), as,

\[
NB(s_i, t) = \{ s_j | s_j \in N(s_i) AND B(s_j, t) = 1 \}. \tag{4}
\]

The work on external force models is the most active research area with regard to the SNAKE model in the field of image processing. However, many of those models cannot be efficiently implemented in the resource-constrained WSN. Inspired by the balloon model [1], we defined our external force model as,

\[
E_{ext}(s_i, t) = \begin{cases} 
  NB(s_i, t), & \text{if } NB(s_i, t) \neq \emptyset; \\
  \{ s_j | s_j \in N(s_i) AND s_j \text{ is inside the curve} \}, & \text{if } NB(s_i, t) = \emptyset AND s_i \text{ detects object}; \\
  \{ s_j | s_j \in N(s_i) AND s_j \text{ is not inside the curve} \}, & \text{if } NB(s_i, t) = \emptyset AND s_i \text{ detects non-object.} 
\end{cases} \tag{5}
\]

To compute external force model as defined by Equation 5, sensor nodes only exchange messages among immediate neighboring nodes. The proposed external force model creates candidate locations for vertices to move onto. The candidate locations have the same weight with regard to the external force. To calculate the weight among candidate locations, we revise Equation 3 as,

\[
E = \alpha E_{ten} + \beta E_{cur}. \tag{3'}
\]

Based on Equation 3’, a vertex moves to the location with the minimal weight among the candidate locations provided by our external force model.

We use a light-weight \( E_{ten} \) model which only requires exchanging messages locally as suggested by Perrin et al. [8],

\[
E_{ten} = Var \left[ |v_i^t - v_{i-1}^t|, |v_i^t - v_{i+1}^t| \right]. \tag{6}
\]

For a candidate location, \( v_i^{t+1} \) of \( v_i^t \), \( Var() \) measures the variance of the lengths of two connected edges, \( |v_i^{t+1} - v_{i-1}^t| \) and \( |v_i^{t+1} - v_{i+1}^t| \). Equation 6 constrains the vertices to be evenly distributed along the curve. To compute \( E_{ten} \) defined by Equation 6, a vertex node only needs its immediate neighboring vertices’ locations on the deformable curve.

The new curvature force is defined as,

\[
E_{cur} = Var \left[ \pi, \angle v_i^{t+1}v_i^{t+1}v_{i-1}^t \right]. \tag{7}
\]

As indicated by Equation 7, our curvature model is biased towards straight lines, through which the smoothness of deformable curves can be maintained. The locations of the immediate neighboring vertices on the deformable curve is sufficient for a vertex node to compute \( E_{cur} \) as defined by Equation 7.

The parameter \( D_{split} \) controls the number of vertices when the curve deforms.

\[
\begin{align*}
  |v_i^{t+1} - v_i^t| &\leq D_{split}, \quad \text{No change;} \\
  |v_i^{t+1} - v_i^t| &> D_{split}, \quad \text{Add a vertex between } v_i^t \text{ and } v_{i+1}^t. \tag{8}
\end{align*}
\]

In order to dynamically add or remove vertices, a vertex node can compare the distance to its immediate neighboring vertices with \( D_{split} \).

Based on the proposed external and internal force models, sensor nodes exchange messages only among neighboring nodes to update the latest forces and adapt the shape and location of deformable curve. For example, to maintain \( E_{ten} \) and \( E_{cur} \), a vertex node needs the locations of its immediate two neighboring vertices. By updating the external and internal forces and maintaining the deformable
curve structure, the real-time tracking of 2D objects can be implemented resource-efficiently.

4. EXTRACTING 2D OBJECT’S SPATIAL PROPERTIES

Based on the locations of the vertices on a deformable curve and the vertex movement, we extract aggregated information to represent the overall spatial and spatiotemporal changes of the 2D object. Due to the space limitations, we only list a few types of aggregated information as follows.

\[ A' = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^{n} (x'_i y'_{i+1} - x'_{i+1} y'_i) \]  

(9)

As indicated by Equation 9, the area value of a closed curve is represented by an aggregated result. A vertex node prepares its local partial results based on its location and its immediate neighboring vertex on the deformable curve. Similar to computing \( S(U,M) \) in TAG [6], the area about the current curve can be aggregated through the in-network aggregation information processing.

\[ C^t = (x_C^t, y_C^t), \]  

(10a)

\[ x_C^t = \frac{1}{6A^t} \sum_{i=1}^{n} [(x'_i + x'_{i+1})(x'_i y'_{i+1} - x'_{i+1} y'_i)] , \]  

(10b)

\[ y_C^t = \frac{1}{6A^t} \sum_{i=1}^{n} [(y'_i + y'_{i+1})(x'_i y'_{i+1} - x'_{i+1} y'_i)] . \]  

(10c)

The centroid of a 2D object is also called the center of mass or the center of gravity. We treat the centroid of a 2D object as a 2D point, as indicated by Equation 10a. Based on the in-network aggregation to compute the area of a 2D object, the location of a centroid can be aggregated similarly in-network, as indicated by Equation 10b and 10c.

\[ \frac{C^t C^{t+1}}{C^t C^{t+1}} \]  

(11)

Based on the updates about the centroid’s location, users can understand an object’s overall location changes in space. Equation 11 describes the trajectory of the 2D object between time \( t \) and \( t+1 \). Based on Equation 11, we can support spatiotemporal queries about the object’s movement and direction. For example, “how fast is the 2D object moving?” and “is the 2D object moving north?”

\[ \angle C^t p^t C^{t+1} \]  

(12)

We can also use the centroid to present the rotation information. The rotation information is defined by the centroid’s change relative to a given point, \( p \). Based on Equation 12, we can answer spatiotemporal queries about the object’s rotation for the given point \( p \), such as “is the 2D object moving anticlockwise with regard to the point \( p \)?”

The aggregated information is usually processed using a tree structure [6]. A sensor node prepares a local partial result and aggregates the result with the partial results from its children nodes. A partial result is kept in a constant message size and sent to the parent node. Compared with reporting boundary points and linked curves, processing the aggregated information can greatly reduce the communication requirements. Based on the aggregated information, the user can be informed in real-time about the overall spatiotemporal properties about 2D objects. In this way, a WSN can provide abstract spatial and spatiotemporal properties of 2D objects without reporting the detailed geometric information about the objects, and save energy.

5. EXPERIMENTAL EVALUATION

We implemented the distributed deformable curve tracking algorithms in TinyOS [4], and used CLDP [3] as the routing protocol. We run our codes in TOSSIM [4], and set the simulated environment as follows. The network has a grid layout and 169 sensor nodes were distributed evenly in a \( 100 \times 100 \) 2D space at the interval of 8. The root node was located at (2, 2), and connected to a base station. The wireless radio range was 10, which allowed a sensor node to directly communicate with up to four neighbors within the range. To control the curve tracking quality, \( D_{split} \) was set to 18. The weights \( \alpha \) and \( \beta \) were equal to 1. Sensor nodes collected sensor readings based on two video clips. Each video clip contained one object. The initial shapes of both objects were a solid circle with \( radius = 25 \). The initial curves were both an inscribed regular octagon of the circle. Object 1 started with the center \( (35, 35) \), and moved \( x+4, y+4 \) in each frame while keeping its area constant. Object 2 started with center \( (50, 50) \), and enlarged \( radius+4 \) in each frame while keeping the center unchanged. A video frame was updated to TOSSIM in every 700 seconds. Sensor nodes were woken up in every 350 seconds to collect updated sensor readings, detect objects and boundaries, and deform the tracking curves. A sensor node took a sensor reading at the corresponding pixel value in the concurrent video frame based on the node’s location. Table 1 summarizes the parameter settings in our experiments.

![Figure 2: Communication cost](image)

We compared the communication cost of tracking deformable curves against the cost of reporting boundary points. Figure 2 illustrates the average communication costs from the tests. To track both objects, reporting the points around the object boundary is the most expensive among different types of communication cost. Reporting linked vertices required less resources than the point boundary reports did, since some boundary points on a straight line can be suppressed. If we
consider the communication to maintenance the deformable curves, the total communication cost of tracking deformable curves was still a little smaller than the cost of reporting boundary points. Tracking deformable curves enables extracting abstract spatiotemporal properties of objects. We performed tests based on the aggregated information. As shown in Figure 2, processing aggregated information consumed much less communication resources than reporting boundary points or linked vertices required.

Due to the space limitations, we only present our experimental results with regard to the area and centroid changes of 2D objects. Figure 3 shows the centroid's movement based on the aggregated information from the tests. In the experimental data set, Object 1 moved from southwest to northeast, while Object 2 kept its centroid at the center of the 100 × 100 space. Based on the aggregated information, the user can understand the moving patterns of two objects. Object 1 moved, while Object 2 roughly remained still as explained by Figure 3(a) and Figure 3(b). The paths in Figure 3 were not very smooth because of the relatively low monitoring resolution.

Figure 3: Centroid moving paths

Figure 4 shows the area changes based on the aggregated information from the tests. A user can see that the area of Object 1 remained constant while the area of Object 2 expanded. Due to the relatively low monitoring resolution, the area changes were not smooth, as shown in Figure 4. By combining Figure 3 and Figure 4, a user can find more complex spatiotemporal properties about the Object 1 and 2.

6. CONCLUSION

We developed a distributed algorithm of tracking 2D objects in WSN based on the SNAKE model. The proposed tracking algorithm maintains the deformable curve by exchanging messages around nearby sensor nodes. Our simulation results show that the communication cost of our tracking algorithm is reduced and scales linearly with the number of vertices on the curve. Based on the in-network tracking of deformable curves, we show that the aggregated information provides qualitative information about spatial and spatiotemporal properties of 2D objects. Our experimental results demonstrate that the wireless communication can be reduced by providing the aggregated information about deformable curves.

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7. REFERENCES

Towards Spatial Window Queries Over Continuous Phenomena in Sensor Networks

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Abstract

Recent research on sensor networks has focused on efficient processing of declarative SQL queries over sensor nodes. Users are often interested in querying an underlying continuous phenomenon, such as a toxic plume, while only discrete readings of sensor nodes are available. Therefore, additional information estimation methods are necessary to process the sensor readings to generate the required query results. Most estimation methods are computationally intensive, even when computed in a traditional centralized setting. Furthermore, energy and communication constraints of sensor networks challenge the efficient application of established estimation methods in sensor networks. In this paper, we present an approach using Gaussian Kernel estimation to process spatial window queries over continuous phenomena in sensor networks. The key contribution of our approach is using a small number of Hermite coefficients to approximate the Gaussian Kernel function for sub-clustered sensor nodes. As a result, our algorithm reduces the size of messages transmitted in the network by logarithmic order, thus, saving resources while still providing high quality query results.

Index Terms—Wireless sensor networks, spatial databases, distributed databases, query processing.

I. Introduction

Today, micro-scale sensing in combination with tiny computing and communication devices forming sensor networks enable us to measure physical environmental phenomena in a level of detail that we were not able to observe and measure before.

A. Problem Definition

Sensor networks continuously collect information about the physical environment. Due to their massively parallel, distributed, failure-prone and energy-constrained nature, sensor networks are tedious to program. The database community takes the standpoint that viewing a sensor network as a distributed database system, which accepts and processes declarative SQL queries, significantly simplifies the programming and deployment task of sensor networks. Approaches such as TinyDB [1], [2] and Cougar [3], [4] are the first implementations of such small-scale and distributed DBMSs. Environmental monitoring is usually interested in spatially continuous phenomena, such as microclimates around redwood trees [5] or within vineyards [6]. Spatial window queries are important for users to understand the underlying phenomena, while only sensor readings at discrete and limited node locations are available. Although many available techniques are able to estimate a continuous phenomenon based on point samples, the current research challenge is finding a resource-efficient adaption of those methods for the resource constrained environment of sensor networks.

B. Our Contribution

In this paper, we present SWOP (Spatial Window Query Over Phenomena), an efficient algorithm to support in-network spatial window query processing based on Gaussian Kernel estimation. In general, SWOP first groups sensor nodes into sub-clusters according to node locations. Next, SWOP transforms Gaussian weighted readings into a Hermite series for each cluster representing the detailed information about local sensor nodes to minimize the communication cost. In this way, a large set of node readings can be represented by only a small number of Hermite coefficient terms, while the communication cost for node IDs and individual sensor readings is reduced. Therefore, the total amount of data transmitted inside the network is reduced by logarithmic order, and the computation cost on individual nodes is kept constant. A centralized computer or a microserver deployed in the network with more powerful resources evaluates the transformed, minimized data set to generate the final spatial window query result. Due to the fast convergence speed of
Hermite expansion, the difference between results of SWOP and the traditional centralized Gaussian Kernel estimation is minimal. The experimental results confirm our expectation and demonstrate the high performance of SWOP for different data sets.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: The preliminaries of SWOP are formulated in Section II. Section III reviews several estimation techniques, and Section IV proposes the theoretical foundation of SWOP. We describe the algorithms of SWOP and analyze its computation and communication cost in Section V. The experimental results are illustrated in Section VI. In Section VII, we explore the related work. We conclude and describe the future work in Section VIII.

II. Preliminary

A. Basic Concepts

In this section, we first formalize several relevant concepts for querying continuous phenomena using sensor networks.

Definition 1: A spatial continuous phenomenon is a spatial scalar field that represents the variation of a scalar property over a geographical space. Examples of the scalar properties are temperature, wind-speed, or the concentration of a gas pollutant in the air. Formally, given a geographical space \( S \) and a class of scalar values \( V \), a spatial continuous phenomenon is a function \( F \) whose domain is \( S \) and codomain is \( V \). [7]

Definition 2: A monitored region, \( R \), is a subarea of the geographical space and is observed by a particular sensor network. Although the physical world is a 3D Euclidean space, in this paper we mainly assume a 2D Euclidean space.

Definition 3: For each point \( p \) in \( R \) the phenomenon value is represented by \( Y(p) \). Additionally, we use \( s_i \) to identify an individual sensor node and its spatial location. \( Y(s_i) \) is defined as the sensor reading and phenomenon value at the sensor node \( s_i \). For an estimation result for any point \( p \) in \( R \), we use \( \hat{Y}(p) \).

B. Modeling Sensor Networks And Spatial Window Queries Over Phenomena

A sensor database system is a “mediator” between users and the underlying phenomena, as shown by Figure 1. Most of the current research work focuses on in-network processing of temporal queries. Local processing of temporal queries at individual nodes benefits from the minimized communication cost among neighboring nodes.

Spatial queries can be roughly categorized into two groups based on the spatial predicates in the declarative SQL. One type is point query, which return values for particular points in space. Here, the query result can be a sensor reading at a well-defined sensor node location, or an estimation result for a point in-between sensor nodes based on neighboring sensor readings. Another type of spatial queries is spatial region query, which return values for a continuous spatial region. \( R \). Different from point queries at well-defined node locations, point queries in-between sensor nodes and spatial range queries require additional estimation techniques. For example, Voronoi diagram and TIN (Triangulated Irregular Network) based approaches were used to support spatial aggregation queries [10]. Processing estimation techniques, however, requires additional resources from networks.

An important class of sensor network applications is the observation of spatially continuous phenomena such as micro-climates or the distribution of gas pollutants. In this case, simple aggregated statistical information is not sufficient. Here, a special type of spatial region queries becomes relevant, i.e. spatial window queries which return the phenomenon’s continuous distribution within a well-defined boundary of the monitored region \( R \), e.g. “SELECT p.temperatureField FROM Phenomenon p WHERE p.location WITHIN region R”. On the contrary to spatial aggregation queries, a spatial window query returns values at arbitrary points in \( R \) as shown by Figure 1 and presents the result in a digital format, such as a digital image in a user-defined resolution. The number of points in the result is usually more than the number of sensor nodes within the spatial window predicate. Additional estimation techniques are necessary to “fill” the blank points in-between sensor nodes.

In traditional settings, spatial window queries were processed in a centralized setting based on all raw readings, while constrained sensor networks favor in-network processing of estimation techniques to minimize the data communication cost among nodes.

III. Answering Spatial Window Queries Using Estimation Techniques

Before applying estimation techniques in sensor networks, we need to answer several questions, such as “how to represent a spatial window query result” and “how to process additional estimation techniques in the network”.

Fig. 1. A model of sensor networks
A. Voronoi Diagram

Voronoi diagrams provide a simple approximation model, where the monitored region, \( R \), is partitioned into a set of \( \text{“Voronoi cells”} \) based on the locations of sensor nodes. The phenomenon in a cell is presented by the sensor reading at the cell center. For example, a spatial aggregation query result can be represented as a weighted summary of sensor readings according to the sizes of Voronoi cells [10]. To answer a spatial window query, a sensor network needs to find the Voronoi diagram intersected with the query predicate as a set of edges. Suppose \( n (n > 3) \) sensor nodes involved, the upper bound of the number of edges is \( 3n - 6 \), and the lower bound is \( n - 1 \) [11]. A distributed algorithm can find the Voronoi edges, but requires additional resources from the network [10]. Similar neighboring sensor readings can be merged [12], but such compression ideas are also applicable to raw sensor readings. Based on the Voronoi diagram, we can generate a TIN [10] as a 3D terrain about the underlying phenomenon. TINs are useful to generate contour maps about the phenomena, but consume similar resources as Voronoi diagrams do. Overall, using Voronoi diagram based approaches needs an expensive algorithm to find and represent the Voronoi cells, and the estimation results are rather coarse.

B. Spatial Regression

Spatial regression attempts to represent the underlying phenomenon as a function. The solution of regression can be represented as \( \hat{Y}(q) = \sum_{i=1}^{k} [w_i \cdot f_i(q)] \), where the estimated value for any point in \( R \) is a weighted summary of predefined basis functions, \( f()s \). In a 2D polynomial regression [13], similar to a 1D polynomial temporal regression [8], \( f()s \) are polynomial functions of \( x \) and \( y \) coordinates. For instance, an underlying phenomenon can be represented by a quadratic polynomial function, \( \hat{Y}(q) = w_0 + w_1 \cdot x_q + w_2 \cdot y_q + w_3 \cdot x_q^2 + w_4 \cdot y_q^2 + w_5 \cdot x_q y_q \) if \( x_q \) and \( y_q \) represent the \( x \) and \( y \) coordinates of point \( q \). Another form of spatial regression is known as Kernel regression, where the basis functions are a set of kernel functions, \( k()s \) [14]. Each kernel function has a unique kernel center in space, and is typically a predefined non-increasing function of the Euclidian distance between the center and the input point. Given \( k \) basis functions \( f()s \) and \( n \) sensor readings, to minimize the MSE (Mean Squared Error), the weights for basis functions are computed by, \( W = (\sum_{i=1}^{n} (F(s_i)^T F(s_i)))^{-1} \sum_{i=1}^{n} (F(s_i)^T Y(s_i)) \), where \( W \) and \( F() \) are the vector format of \( w \) and \( f() \), i.e. \( W = [w_1, w_2, \ldots, w_k]^T \), and \( F(s_i) = [f_1(s_i), f_2(s_i), \ldots, f_k(s_i)] \).

To represent the estimation result, a sensor network only needs to return the estimated weights ( \( W \) ) which require minimal resources from a sensor network compared with transmitting raw sensor readings. One way to find the estimated \( W \) is to aggregate the two matrixes, \( \sum_{i=1}^{n} (F(s_i)^T F(s_i)) \), and \( \frac{n}{k} (F^T Y(s_i)) \) within the network, and compute \( W \) outside. For a more heterogeneous spatial phenomenon, more basis functions are required to increase the estimation quality. However, the cost on networks increases exponentially when applying more basis functions, since each node needs \((k^2 + k) \cdot k_i \) data to aggregate for \( k \) basis functions if \( k_i \) represents the data requirement for one element in the matrix. Choosing special forms of kernels, such as Block kernel or Cone kernel [14], in a kernel regression may relax the data requirement for individual nodes, but the quality of estimation result is deteriorated due to the discontinuity of the kernel functions. Another possible solution is using the distributed matrix inversion operations [14], [15] by exchanging local aggregated matrices among neighboring nodes. This solution is still expensive with regard to the communication cost, since distribution matrix inversion algorithms require more than one iteration of exchanging local information to achieve a satisfactory error tolerance. Although the weights, \( W \), require minimal resources, the communication cost to find the solution of \( W \) deteriorates the performance of constrained sensor networks. If a network is monitoring a dynamic phenomenon at a frequent temporal rate, the distributed matrix inversion operations face more difficulties.

For sensor database systems, efficient processing of spatial window queries requires the relaxation of the cost of in-network estimation processing and the in-network representation of the query result. The two requirements are often intertwined. For example, a spatial regression uses minimal resources to represent the weights, \( W \), but requires iterations of communication to find the solution of \( W \). We need to find an estimation model to minimize both requirements and still maintain the high quality of spatial window query results.

IV. Theoretical Foundation of SWOP

A. Kernel Estimation

SWOP is based on another well-known estimation model, Kernel estimation. Different from Kernel regression [14], Kernel estimation is a non-parametric estimation and can be stated as “total amount of observed values per unit area”. Kernel estimation is also a special spatial moving-average method, so the estimation result is robust against noise. For a point \( q \) in monitoring region \( R \), Kernel estimation estimates the phenomenon value at that point as,

\[
\hat{Y}(q) = \frac{1}{\tau^2} \sum_{i=1}^{n} Y(s_i) K \left( \frac{|s_i - q|}{\tau} \right), \quad \text{where } s, q \in R. \tag{1}
\]

In Equation 1, \( Y(s_i) \) represents a reading for the sensor node \( s_i \), \( \hat{Y}(q) \) is the estimation result for the point \( q \), and \(|s_i - q|\) presents the Euclidian distance between the point \( q \) and the sensor node \( s_i \).

In a simple distributed algorithm [16], [2], [13], every sensor node evaluates its neighboring points in \( R \). In a routing
where Δ function as, utilizes the Hermite expansion to represent the exponential of communication. Appropriate transform which minimizes the data requirement is very favorable to SWOP, since the truncated series can series terms to accelerate the evaluating speed. This feature transforms use an infinite series to accelerate the evaluating speed. Both fast transforms use an infinite series to approximate, Gaussian kernel. Gaussian Kernel estimation has a wide range of applications, such as financial analysis and image processing, and estimates the phenomenon value at the point q as, $\hat{Y}(q) = \frac{1}{2\pi} \sum_{i=1}^{\infty} Y(s_i)e^{-|s_i-q|^2/\tau^2}$, where $s, q \in \mathbb{R}$. (2)

To break the entangled links between estimation points and sensor nodes, SWOP has to transform the Gaussian kernel. Two fast transforms are available, the FGT (Fast Gaussian Transform) and the IFGT (Improved Fast Gaussian Transform). Both fast transforms use an infinite series to approximate the Gaussian kernel and truncate insignificant series terms to accelerate the evaluating speed. This feature is very favorable to SWOP, since the truncated series can use a small size of data to represent detailed information about all raw readings. To achieve more efficient processing in constrained sensor networks, SWOP needs to choose an appropriate transform which minimizes the data requirement of communication.

Let’s first explain two transforms in the 1D space. The FGT utilizes the Hermite expansion to represent the exponential function as, $e^{-|s_i-q|^2/\tau^2} = \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{j!} \left( \frac{\Delta s_i}{\tau} \right)^j h_j \left( \frac{\Delta q}{\tau} \right)$, (3) where $\Delta s_i = s_i - s_s$, $\Delta q = q - s_s$ and the Hermite functions $h_j(x)$ are defined by $h_j(x) = (-1)^j \frac{d^j}{dx^j} \left( e^{-x^2} \right)$. The FGT needs to group sensor nodes into sub-clusters. Here, $s_s$ is the cluster center which satisfies $|s_i - s_s|/\tau < 1$, so the Hermite coefficients converge to zero and the Gaussian kernel can be safely approximated by the first $p$ terms, $\hat{Y}(q) \approx \frac{1}{\tau^2} \sum_{j=0}^{p} A_j(s) h_j \left( \frac{\Delta q}{\tau} \right)$, (4) where the Hermite coefficients $A_j(s)$ are defined as $A_j(s) = \frac{1}{j!} \sum_{i=1}^{n} Y(s_i) \left( \frac{\Delta s_i}{\tau} \right)^j$. (5)

The IFGT (Improved Fast Gaussian transform) factorizes the Gaussian kernel as $e^{-|s_i-q|^2/\tau^2} = e^{-\Delta s^2 / \tau^2} e^{-\Delta q^2 / \tau^2} e^{-2\Delta s\Delta q / \tau^2}$, (6) and uses Taylor expansion to approximate, $e^{-2\Delta s\Delta q / \tau^2} = \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} \frac{2^j}{j!} \left( \frac{\Delta s_i}{\tau} \right)^j \left( \frac{\Delta q}{\tau} \right)^j$. (7) In IFGT, Equation 2 is approximated as $\hat{Y}(q) \approx \frac{1}{\tau^2} \sum_{j=0}^{p} C_j(s) e^{-\Delta s^2 / \tau^2} \left( \frac{\Delta q}{\tau} \right)^j$, (8) where the Taylor coefficients $C_j(s)$ are defined as $C_j(s) = \frac{2^j}{j!} \sum_{i=1}^{n} Y(s_i) e^{-\Delta s^2 / \tau^2} \left( \frac{\Delta q}{\tau} \right)^j$. (8)

Here, the cluster center satisfies $2|\Delta s_i||\Delta q| / \tau^2 < 1$, so the Taylor coefficients converge to zero and terms after the first $p$ terms can be safely truncated.

To safely truncate the series, both FGT and IFGT group the sensor nodes into sub-clusters with a radius smaller than the required bandwidth. For each cluster, the Hermite coefficients, Equation 5, and the Taylor coefficients, Equation 8, can represent the detailed sensor locations and readings, therefore are the only data needed from the network. SWOP needs to choose a transform which requires a smaller number of expansion terms for the same quality criteria. If we assume $\rho_s = |s_i - s_s| / \tau$ is the normalized cluster radius, and $p_p = |q - s_s| / \tau$ is the normalized distance between query points and cluster centers, the Hermite expansion requires $\rho_s < 1$ while the Taylor expansion requires $2 \rho_s \rho_p < 1$. The Taylor expansion also requires $\rho_p > 1$, or the estimation result ignores some important readings outside the range [18]. Thus, the Taylor expansion requires smaller cluster radiiuses than the Hermite expansion does. The IFGT also introduces an exponential term, $2^j$, to the expansion, and therefore decrease the converge speed of the expansion. In other words, even for the same cluster size, the Hermite expansion converges faster to zero than the Taylor expansion does, which can also be proven by the error bound of FGT [20] and IFGT [18]. Thus, SWOP chooses the Hermite expansion to transform raw sensor readings because of the faster convergence speed of Hermite series and the relaxed cluster size.
According to the inequality for Hermite functions by Szász of insignificant series terms with values close enough to 0.

Equation 4. Both transforms benefit from the elimination reconsider the both transforms as indicated by Equation 4 to achieve smaller errors for the fast transform. Now, let's terms along each dimension. The communication channel requirement grows exponentially for more Hermite coefficient the Gaussian function as the normal FGT does, the data real applications. In other words, if we choose to transform

FGT in high dimensional space [18]. Therefore, it is stated that the IFGT outperforms the

6 [19]. Therefore, it is stated that the IFGT outperforms the traditional FGT, since for the same data requirement, SWOP returns better estimation results than the traditional FGT does.

B. Data Reduction in High Dimensional Space

Differentiating different dimensions is important when a phenomenon is not isotropic, i.e. the phenomenon is directionally different, so the Kernel estimation model performs better when nodes are unevenly distributed. The normalized model estimates the phenomenon value at the point \( q \) as the estimation value by Equation 1 divided by total kernel weights,

\[
\hat{Y}(q) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} Y(x_i) e^{-|s_i - q|/\tau^2}}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} e^{-|s_i - q|/\tau^2}}, \text{ where } s,q \in \mathbb{R}. \tag{9}
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In Equation 9, \( \tau^{-2} \) in the denominator and the numerator is cancelled. Based on the normalized model, the estimation result of SWOP is robust against the uneven distribution of sensor nodes, e.g. lossy readings.

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D. Description of SWOP Algorithm

Algorithm 1 outlines the clustering algorithm we have developed in [26] for SWOP. When the network starts up, all sensor nodes are cluster heads. Each cluster head uses to_announce(), a HEED like algorithm, to make cluster head announcements. After receiving the cluster head announcements, a cluster head can decide to merge its cluster to another cluster. All non-head member nodes can detect the changes by the notification from their cluster head nodes. Small clusters merge into larger clusters until merging any two neighboring clusters will cause the cluster radius larger than the required cluster size. In a static sensor network, we can apply a centralized, more optimal and more expensive clustering procedure, while the distributed clustering algorithm, such as Algorithm 1 is appropriate for a mobile sensor network.

After identifying the cluster center and the number of nodes in the cluster, distributed sensor nodes can aggregate the Hermite coefficients as indicated by Equation 5. Whether convert the raw readings into Hermite coefficients depends on the number of nodes in every cluster, which will be discussed in Section V-F. Algorithm 2 illustrates the routine of preparing the Hermite coefficients in sensor networks. For a mobile sensor network, Hermite coefficients for both denominator and numerator in Equation 9 should be prepared, if the number of nodes in cluster is large enough. The function aggregate_Hermite_coefficient() takes the local sensor’s location and reading to prepare Hermite coefficients for required polynomial order according to Equation 5. If a cluster contains a small number of nodes, the raw data including sensor readings and locations are returned to the central computer as shown by Algorithm 2. The numerator coefficients contain both nodes’ locations and sensor readings, while the denominator coefficients consist of only nodes’ location information. In a static network, we only need the numerator coefficients since the nodes’ location information can be cached. We can also utilize a centralized clustering algorithm for static networks to create better clustering pattern and save more energy caused by Algorithm 1. As shown by Algorithm 2, SWOP can be treated as a set of multi-aggregation queries over non-overlapping clusters, which can be efficiently processed by the method provided by [27].

After receiving a spatial window query, a central computer first invokes the necessary sensor nodes and disseminates initial messages into the network as shown by Algorithm 3. After receiving all Hermite coefficients and uncompressed data from all clusters, the central computer needs to reconstruct the weighted readings based on Equation 3 from the partial expansion and sum them with uncompressed readings. After the central computer estimates all points within the spatial window region based on a user-defined resolution, a visual image is returned. SWOP can easily be extended for a stream-based spatial window processing, which just requires a stream feed of the Hermite coefficients from the distributed sensor nodes.

E. Analysis of SWOP

1) Computation Cost: The computation cost of the central computer is related to the number of points m for a user-defined resolution, the number of clusters k and the chosen
Algorithm 2 Routine of preparing Hermite coefficients

Require: The Hermite coefficient polynomial order, $n$
Ensure: Aggregation of Hermite coefficients from the network
1: $msg = receive\_msg()$
2: if from_same_cluster($msg$) then
3:   if my_cluster_number_of_members() $> \text{tolerance}$ then
4:     numerator\_coefficients = aggregate\_Hermite\_coefficient($msg$, my\_location, 1, n)
5:     denominator\_coefficients = aggregate\_Hermite\_coefficient($msg$, my\_location, my\_reading, n)
6:   end if
7:   numerator\_coefficients, denominator\_coefficients, cluster\_center
8: end if
9: return pack_message(numerator\_coefficients, denominator\_coefficients, cluster\_center)
10: end if

Algorithm 3 Routine of preparing final spatial window results at the central base

Require: Specifications for required query window, Kernel bandwidth, cluster radius and Hermite coefficient polynomial order.
Ensure: Sending query specifications into the network, and generating the spatial window query results
1: $init\_msg = get\_query(\text{specifications})$
2: send_to_sensors($init\_msg$)
3: $(\text{Hermite\_coefficients, cluster\_centers}) = receive\_from\_network()$
4: for point $\in$ query window do
5:   generate\_estimation\_result(point, Hermite\_coefficients, cluster\_centers)
6: end for
7: return(estimate\_result)

The computation complexity can be formulated as $O(m + k \times (p+1) !)$. The chosen polynomial order $p - 1$ and the number of clusters $k$ are much smaller than the number of invoked sensor nodes $n$ for an acceptable error tolerance. The computation cost for a central computer can be relaxed as $O(m)$ which is linearly relative to the user-defined resolution for a spatial window query. Further computation acceleration can be achieved by differentiating the Hermite series around the estimation points as shown by [19]. In this paper, we ignore it because the computation is done by a central computer or a microserver, and the computation cost has no effect on the network.

The computation cost of a sensor node is dominated by the clustering procedure, since aggregating Hermite coefficients requires a constant cost as shown by Equation 5 and Algorithm 2. In a mobile sensor network, SWOP chooses a distributed clustering algorithm which has to consume resources from the network. If SWOP uses a HEED-based clustering algorithm and the required cluster radius is smaller than the communication range, SWOP requires $O(1)$ resources from the network, which has been proven by [24]. If the cluster radius is larger than the communication range and only merge operations among small clusters are allowed [26], in the worst case where all nodes need to be merged into a single cluster, the complexity of the merge operation can be approximated as $O(\log(n))$ for $n$ nodes [28]. Thus, the total computation complexity of a sensor node is $O(\log(n))$ in the worst case and $O(1)$ in general cases for a mobile network. For a static sensor network, the clustering procedure can be predetermined by the central computer, so the computation complexity can be further relaxed.

2) Communication Cost: The size of the total data extracted from the network of SWOP is determined by the number of clusters, $c$, and the chosen polynomial order, $p - 1$. For each cluster, $k_p + 2^{p+1}k_i$ bits are needed for the Hermite coefficients, where $k_p$ is the required bit-length to represent a point for the cluster center $s$, and $k_i$ is the required bit-length to represent a term of the Hermite series. Whereas $l(k_p + k_i)$ bits are needed for the raw data if $l$ sensor nodes are in the cluster.

The total communication cost within the network depends on particular communication protocols and the network topology. For a mobile environment, clustering protocols are preferable and typically the non-head nodes and their cluster-heads have a direct communication link. Assuming the worst topology, in which all cluster-head nodes form a line structure, receive and relay messages one by one, SWOP requires $0.5(1 + c)(k_p + 2^{p+1}k_i)$ data for the total communication between cluster head nodes within the network. If $h$ represents the number of cluster heads before a particular cluster head on the path to the central base, the cluster head receives $(c - h - 1)(k_p + 2^{p+1}k_i)$ and send $(c - h)(k_p + 2^{p+1}k_i)$ to the next hop. In the best case, in which every cluster head can directly send its messages to the cluster base, the total communication cost within the network is $c(k_p + 2^{p+1}k_i)$.

For a static environment using routing tree based protocols, SWOP is a set of multi-aggregation queries over non-overlapped spatial clusters. The in-network query processing can be optimized by the algorithm provided by [27], [29], and SWOP is categorized as a min query in [27]. Further cost evaluation of communication can be found in [27], [29].
F. Discussion of SWOP

Most processing techniques only focus on the properties of the sensor readings or estimation results. SWOP, however, addresses the spatial properties of the sensor nodes. The compression gain of SWOP results from the spatial clustering. Based on above discussion, we can define the number of nodes in cluster to achieve the compression gain. In a large cluster with more than \( k_p + 2^{(\alpha+1)}k_i \) sensor nodes, the raw readings can be reduced to the first \( p - 1 \) order Hermite coefficients in a 2D space. Since SWOP focuses on the spatial properties of the sensor nodes, the available compression techniques can also be applied on SWOP's transformed data among different clusters in the multi-hop transmission. Due to normalized Kernel estimation's robustness against noisy and lossy samples, SWOP performs well in the noisy and lossy environment of sensor networks. Furthermore, we do not limit SWOP to static sensor networks. The denominator in Equation 9 only presents the spatial properties of invoked sensor nodes. In a static sensor network, the spatial properties of sensor nodes are typically cached by the central computer, so more than half of the communication can be saved by excluding the denominator in normalized Kernel estimation from the in-network communication. A centralized clustering can also find better clustering patterns and therefore help SWOP to accomplish even a higher data compression rate.

By significantly compressing the 2D or 3D spatial readings in SWOP, we can treat the transformed data as a special snapshot in 1D temporal space. Therefore, any 1D temporal processing method, such as [8], [9], is applicable to the transformed SWOP data. The temporal processing of SWOP is another important issue; we do not discuss it in this paper due to the space limitation.

Overall, the computation complexity of SWOP with regard to distributed sensor nodes is constant and communication messages are minimized. SWOP is practical for both static and mobile sensor networks.

VI. Experimental Evaluation

SWOP is a set of multi-aggregation queries over non-overlapped spatial clusters in routing-tree based sensor networks. We assume SWOP to be running in a more challenging environment, mobile sensor networks; here, we use a x-y coordinate (128bits) to identify sensor nodes, choose the HEED-based clustering procedure, and assume the node communication range is bigger than the required cluster radius (i.e. a direct communication link between a non-head member and its cluster head). We implemented SWOP in Java and ran it over different data sets. In our simulations, the behavior of sensor networks is simulated by treating each sensor node as a thread running independently and communicating with each other by exchanging messages. The data sets consist of two real data sets from the CalCOFI survey off the coast of Southern California [30] and from a snapshot from an experiment in the Intel Lab [31], and two synthetic data sets. Without losing any generalization, we normalized the sensor readings to [0, 1]. Finding an optimal bandwidth has been researched well for Kernel estimation [32], and the fast optimization algorithm [33] for Gaussian kernel bandwidth is also available. Therefore, we only tested SWOP under pre-chosen bandwidths. The fixed bandwidth is useful to test two synthetic data sets, since we compare the SWOP estimation results with alternative estimation techniques by their processing costs based on the estimation quality. Since related work [14], [13], [10] only compare their approaches with respect to centralized solutions, it is difficult to cross-evaluate them. In our experiments, we compare SWOP with alternative approaches based on “real” underlying phenomena, i.e. two synthetic data sets.

A. Coefficient ordering strategy and error evaluation

Spatial window queries access the distribution of underlying phenomena for a given region. An efficient in-network query processing targets to minimize the difference between results of the traditional centralized techniques and itself. The following tests are based on the average MSE from multiple runs. We first compared MSEs between the results of SWOP and centralized Kernel estimation as shown by Table I on based on different truncating strategies. Table I confirms that by ordering the polynomial order of Hermite coefficients, SWOP achieves high quality results while relaxing the data requirement compared with taking the \( p^2 \) product by FGT. Aggregating more Hermite coefficients with higher polynomial-order decreases the difference between results of SWOP and the centralized Kernel estimation. Since the maximal MSE between results of SWOP and the centralized Kernel estimation results based on zero-order Hermite coefficients are around \( 10^{-7} \), we performed other quality experiments based on the zero-order Hermite coefficients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data set</th>
<th>Kernel</th>
<th>SWOP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic #1</td>
<td>4.6E-03</td>
<td>7.16E-03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic #2</td>
<td>3.23E-02</td>
<td>4.40E-02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the first two real data sets only provide us point samples of a realistic underlying phenomenon, the two synthetic data allow us to compare the estimated results with “real” values as shown by Table II. Based on our choice for the first synthetic data set, the mean squared errors between the SWOP result and the “real” phenomenon are around \( 10^{-3} \). The SWOP result of #1 set is reliable for many practical purposes. We fixed the bandwidth for the second synthetic data to test SWOP against alternative approaches, although the MSE on the second synthetic data indicates an over-smoothed result. In practice, the method introduced by [33] can help...
TABLE I. Cost and quality based on different truncating strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>p terms</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MSE on the salinity data based on different truncating strategies</td>
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<td>p-order</td>
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<td>p-order</td>
<td>p-order</td>
<td>p-order</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p terms</td>
<td>1.03E-04</td>
<td>5.41E-04</td>
<td>2.01E-06</td>
<td>1.06E-05</td>
<td>1.03E-04</td>
<td>7.88E-07</td>
<td>1.01E-04</td>
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<td>1.01E-04</td>
<td>1.01E-04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSE on the synthetic data #1 based on different truncating strategies</td>
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<td>p-order</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p terms</td>
<td>3.90E-04</td>
<td>2.31E-04</td>
<td>4.78E-06</td>
<td>1.67E-06</td>
<td>9.08E-06</td>
<td>5.06E-06</td>
<td>3.42E-07</td>
<td>1.21E-07</td>
<td>7.88E-07</td>
<td>7.88E-07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSE on the synthetic data #2 based on different truncating strategies</td>
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<td>p-order</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p terms</td>
<td>2.58E-03</td>
<td>1.37E-03</td>
<td>2.42E-05</td>
<td>1.29E-05</td>
<td>1.13E-06</td>
<td>4.12E-07</td>
<td>3.70E-08</td>
<td>4.12E-07</td>
<td>3.70E-08</td>
<td>4.12E-07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Estimation Results

To demonstrate the estimation result using SWOP, we run SWOP multiple times for every data set, and the estimation results with the highest compression rates were chosen for display.

The first data set has 372 measurements of salinity density off the coast of Southern California in the CalCOFI survey [30], based on which a 30 × 30 estimation map with τ = 0.2 is generated. Figure 3(b) shows the estimation result based on the traditional centralized Kernel estimation while the result using SWOP with 0 order coefficients and the result based on the Voronoi diagram are shown in Figure 3(c) and Figure 3(a) respectively. In this example, the x-coordinate is the distance from the coast, y indicates the depth of the sample, and a lighter point in Figure 3 indicates the saltier water.

The second set of estimation results based on a smaller data set from the Intel Lab is illustrated by Figure 4. In this data set, 48 point samples of the temperature were taken from a snapshot during an experiment in the Intel Lab [31]. A 30 × 30 map is estimated. The results based on the Voronoi diagram, the centralized Kernel estimation with τ = 11 and SWOP with 0 order coefficients are shown by Figure 4(a), Figure 4(b) and Figure 4(c) respectively, where a darker point indicates the colder temperature.

Both real data sets only provide point samples, but the validation compared to the real underlying phenomena is not possible. Therefore, we use two synthetic data sets to test the effectiveness of SWOP. Two 401 × 401 continuous gray scale pictures were synthetically generated as shown in Figure 5(a) and Figure 6(a). These two data sets can be interpreted as two different distributions of a “real phenomenon”. For example, we can assume two gas leakages in the upper-left and lower-right corner of Figure 5(a). We set τ = 80 to test the performance of SWOP based on 21 × 21 point samples taken from the underlying “phenomenon” at the interval of 20 pixels. Figure 5(b) and Figure 6(b) illustrate the results of centralized Kernel estimation. Figure 5(c) and Figure 6(c) show the SWOP estimation results with 0 order coefficients for the two synthetic data sets. For the fixed bandwidth, both centralized Kernel estimation and SWOP return a truthful estimation result on the synthetic data #1. For the second data set, the two small “gas leakages” are obscured, which indicates an over-smoothed result, and the result of SWOP based on the zero order Hermite coefficients is somewhat distorted compared with the centralized Kernel estimation result. Here, we just set the bandwidth fixed on purpose to compare the SWOP estimation results with other alternative estimation results based on their estimation qualities.

The estimation results based on Voronoi diagram show the layout and readings of sensor nodes directly, but the results are coarse compared with the results based on Kernel estimation. Furthermore, the cost of Voronoi diagram based approaches limits their application in constrained sensor networks. Whereas, even compared with the “real” phenomena, the results of SWOP still directly illustrate the real phenomenon distributions.

C. Cost Evaluation

TABLE III. Required data size for each cluster (in bit)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data set</th>
<th># of clusters</th>
<th>Raw data</th>
<th>SWOP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salinity</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3478.39</td>
<td>253.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intel-lab</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>1093.12</td>
<td>249.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic #1</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>3572.66</td>
<td>251.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic #2</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>3730.04</td>
<td>252.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In our tests, we use one double (64 bits) to present a sensor reading and two doubles (128 bits) to present a sensor node identity, i.e. its location. We recorded the average number of clusters and the average size of raw data and SWOP data for each cluster based on zero order Hermite coefficients from...
multiple independent tests on each data set, as shown by Table III. The clustering algorithm plays an important role in SWOP for the compression gain. After being clustered, a non-head node requires 192 bits to send its reading and ID to the cluster head. The message size for each cluster head to present its cluster members depends on the chosen order of Hermite coefficient. For the zero-order, each cluster head needs 256 bits to represent its member nodes for both the numerator and denominator in Equation 9. Since small clusters just send their raw readings, the average message size
is a little smaller than 256 bits as show by Table III. Compared with transmitting raw data for each cluster, SWOP saves 94% messages. The total communication cost of a network depends on different communication protocols and network layouts, and it is difficult to simulate SWOP for all cases. Users can find relevant evaluation results about it from [27], [29].

D. Comparison With Alternative Approaches

TABLE IV. Evaluation on wavelets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficient threshold</th>
<th>Data size</th>
<th>MSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intel-Lab data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>449.71</td>
<td>9.53E-04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>391.79</td>
<td>1.71E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>661.98</td>
<td>1.23E-03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>649.04</td>
<td>2.63E-03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>310.82</td>
<td>8.53E-03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>317.28</td>
<td>2.49E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>323.61</td>
<td>8.66E-03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>329.81</td>
<td>2.92E-02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Salinity data          |      |
| 0.2                   | 2896.26  | 0   |
| 0.4                   | 1967.57  | 9.63E-04 |
| 0.6                   | 1919.22  | 1.11E-02 |
| 0.10                  | 1529.13  | 1.93E-03 |
| 0.2                   | 1534.45  | 7.43E-03 |
| 0.3                   | 651.84   | 1.97E-03 |
| 0.4                   | 687.52   | 7.43E-03 |
| 0.3                    | 619.79   | 6.43E-03 |
| 0.4                    | 594.22   | 1.33E-02 |

1) Wavelet And Delta Compression: Any compression algorithm can be applied in clustering protocols to compress raw sensor readings for each cluster. We implemented Haar wavelets and allow cluster heads to transform raw readings and node IDs into wavelets. Table IV illustrates the experiment results on the two real data sets for different wavelet coefficient settings. An advantage of wavelets is that they can present data in different scales and compress lossless data based on which we can apply any analytical models. As shown in Table IV, Haar wavelets can compress lossless data in about 60% size of the raw data for each cluster. In our experiments, we only compared the centralised Kernel estimation results based on wavelet data with the Kernel estimation results on original data. By eliminating small wavelet coefficients, we can achieve higher compression rates, but degrade the estimated results. However, to achieve a similar quality of SWOP, wavelet-based methods require a larger data size than that SWOP does. More tests on the synthetic data sets and Delta-compression show similar results to wavelets, therefore we exclude the detailed comparison about them due to space limitations. By evaluating wavelets, Delta-compression and SWOP, we conclude that SWOP requires a smaller size of data but still returns high quality estimation results.

2) Spatial Regression: Since we fixed the bandwidth for both synthetic data sets, we compare SWOP with different 2D spatial regression methods on the synthetic data sets based on different estimation qualities. We did our tests to evaluate the estimation results against the “real” phenomena and the cost of processing alternative approaches in the network.

TABLE V. Evaluation on 2D polynomial regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polynomial Order</th>
<th>MSE</th>
<th># of f(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic data #1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.5E-02</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2E-02</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.8E-03</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.5E-03</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Synthetic data #2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polynomial Order</th>
<th>MSE</th>
<th># of f(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.2E-02</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.0E-02</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.9E-02</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.6E-02</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We run different 2D spatial regression methods in a traditional centralized setting on all raw data. The results based on different orders of polynomial regressions is shown by Table V. With higher orders of polynomial equations, the estimated results get better. To achieve a similar quality of SWOP with the current bandwidth setting, a 2D spatial polynomial regression requires 10 or more basis functions for both synthetic data sets. For Kernel regression, we test different numbers of kernels based on different kernel functions separated at fixed intervals with different bandwidths. Table VI illustrates the minimal MSE based on different numbers of kernels and different kernel functions. Table VI also shows the chosen bandwidth and kernel-center interval for the different kernel functions to return the best estimation results based on different numbers of kernels. To achieve a similar quality of SWOP, the Kernel regression requires 9 or more kernels. Figure 7 and Figure 8 show the estimation results based on the cubic polynomial, and the best estimation results based on 9 cone kernels and 9 Gaussian kernels for synthetic data #1 and #2 respectively.

Generally, both regression estimation methods require 9 or more basis functions to achieve a similar or better quality of SWOP. To return the final estimation results, we need at least $(81 + 9 \cdot k)$ data from the network. Applying several types of kernel functions decreases the size of data exchanged among neighboring nodes, but the estimation results are not very smooth due to the discontinuity of the kernel functions (e.g. the estimation results based on cone kernels Figure 7(b)). On average, for both synthetic data, SWOP returns around 23-44% of SWOP data from the network for a similar quality compared with the traditional centralized setting on all raw data. The results based on different numbers of kernels are shown in Table VI. With higher orders of polynomial equations, the estimated results get better. To achieve a similar quality of SWOP, the Kernel regression requires 9 or more kernels. Figure 7 and Figure 8 show the estimation results based on the cubic polynomial, and the best estimation results based on 9 cone kernels and 9 Gaussian kernels for synthetic data #1 and #2 respectively.
window size $401 \times 401$, a compact clustering pattern should contain less than 9 clusters; whereas the distributed clustering algorithms do not return an ideal clustering pattern. SWOP can achieve a higher compression gain by applying more sophisticated clustering methods.

Regression estimation methods focus on minimizing global errors, while SWOP and non-parametric estimation methods focus on revealing local variations. If we compare the estimation results of SWOP and regression estimation methods to the “real” underlying phenomena, the local change is better preserved by SWOP than by regression estimation methods for the similar global quality, MSE. For example, in Figure 8(a), one of the small peaks has totally disappeared.

VII. Related Work

As a basis for many protocols and a key element for sensor data processing, sensor node clustering algorithms are important in the field of sensor networks. LEACH [25] and HEED [24] are two of the most efficient algorithms available. LEACH first introduced a probability selection to choose the cluster head. Each node in LEACH can be the cluster head, and the probability of being a cluster head is predefined. Nodes rotate the roles of being a non-head member or a cluster head to save energy. HEED [24] improves the selection procedure by using other metrics, such as the remaining energy, to determine a dynamic probability. HEED has several additional advantages over LEACH, such as supporting multi-hop clustering.

Due to the constrained environment of sensor networks, sensor DBMSs favor aggregation queries. TAG [1] provides such a framework for this type of queries. TAG uses a tree structure to connect sensor nodes. Each node aggregates the partial results from its descendants, so the communication cost can be minimized and the messages are often kept constant. Trigoni et al. provide an optimization strategy for multiple aggregation queries in sensor networks [27], [29]. They categorized different types of aggregation queries and provided different optimization strategies to reform the communication topology.

As a result of the built-in spatial properties, sensor readings naturally support spatial queries. Simple aggregation queries [1], [2], however, often fail to generate correct answers for spatial aggregation queries if the nodes are not evenly distributed. Current approaches applied basic spatial interpolation methods, e.g. Voronoi diagram and TIN [10], to estimate the aggregation results. Kernel regression method has also been utilized to support spatio-temporal queries in sensor networks [14]. To find the weights for predefined kernel functions in the network, however, a sensor network requires iterations of communication [14], which deteriorates the network performance. In [13], a 2D polynomial regression was used to control the contour map quality.

In-network compression techniques are also important to sensor networks to reduce the in-network resource consumption. In [34], wavelet based compression has been introduced, where a sensor network can do pairwise comparison between sensor readings to generate discrete wavelets and reduce in-network transmitted data.

VIII. Conclusion And Future Work

In this paper, we presented a novel in-network estimation technique of spatial window queries, SWOP, designed for answering queries over continuous phenomena based on the Kernel estimation method. SWOP breaks the entangled links between estimation points and sensor nodes by utilizing Hermite expansion. In SWOP, a small number of Hermite coefficients represents all information about the invoked sensor nodes including their locations and readings. Hence, SWOP minimizes the size of data and relaxes the computation complexity, compared with a centralized solution and an ordinary distributed solution. Our simulation of SWOP tested the data sets of real phenomena, and synthetic data. The result of the simulation shows that SWOP competes well with other approaches by relaxing the resource consumptions and still providing high quality query results. We will combine the temporal and spatial aspects together for the future version of SWOP, which is not covered in this paper.

Acknowledgements: This research was funded under NSF grants NSF 0448183 and 0428341.

References

Fig. 7. Alternative estimations on the synthetic data #1

(a) Polynomial  (b) Cone Kernel  (c) Gaussian Kernel

Fig. 8. Alternative estimations on the synthetic data #2

(a) Polynomial  (b) Cone Kernel  (c) Gaussian Kernel


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