

Quantum Technology in Space

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Presented at NASA HQ July 2025



• 7 PhD Students, Two Postdocs

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- 30+ Published Papers (2 IEEE Best Paper awards)
- 2 Patents
- 1 Australian Research Council Linkage Grant \$1m
- Collaboration with NASA Goddard (Mark Clampin, Peter Brereton, Holly Leopardi)
- New Quantum Satellite Prototype \$2m (Northrop Grumman Australia – UNSW – Australian Government, Department of Defence)



The Quantum Internet

- 1. Why a Quantum Internet? Where are we at?
- 2. Technical background for quantum information
- 3. Why is quantum communication Earth to space hard?
- 4. Some new ideas that may help
- 5. Securing quantum information (including sensing data)
- 6. Quantum Internet- what is next ?
- 7. Sensing with the Quantum Internet.....

.....Beating the standard quantum limit (SQL->HL)

Quantum Internet- Where are We?

Quantum leaps

China's Micius satellite, launched in August 2016, has now validated across a record 1200 kilometers the "spooky action" that Albert Einstein abhorred (1). The team is planning other quantum tricks (2–4).



Where are we?

- One large (500kg) deployed system (2017)
 –one 23kg satellite (2025)
- Many others planned (e.g. Eagle-1))



Article Microsatellite-based real-time quantum key distribution

https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-025-08739-z Received: 29 July 2024 Accepted: 4 February 2025 Published online: 19 March 2025 Check for updates

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What is to be done?

- Rates, DI-QKD, Networking, CV
- Synchronisation (& secured), and
- QKD's BIG problem

Quantum Communications

Quantized Electromagnetic Field (This is all you ever need to knowto 99% level)

Quantwiki.org



Source free

$$\nabla \times \mathbf{E} + \frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t} = 0$$

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{E} = 0$$

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{E} = 0$$

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{E} = 0$$

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{B} = 0$$

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{E} = 0$$

$$\nabla \cdot$$

wattsupwiththat.com

 $ert \psi
angle = lpha ert 0
angle + eta ert 1
angle \ ert lpha ert^2 + ert eta ert^2 = 1$

1

Classical and Quantum Comms with Lasers

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Quantum Sensing:

Definition of a mode from Maxwell's equations

A **mode** is a normalized solution of the following equations:

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E field in cavity with conducting walls



E field decomposed into modes,
$$f_m$$

$$E^{(+)}(\vec{r},t) = \sum_m \epsilon_m f_m(\vec{r},t)$$

$$E^{(\vec{r},t) = E^{(+)}(\vec{r},t) + E^{(-)}(\vec{r},t)}$$

$$E^{(-)}(\vec{r},t) \equiv (E^{(+)}(\vec{r},t))^*$$



 $\epsilon_m = \sqrt{\frac{\hbar\omega_m}{2\epsilon_0 V}}$

$$\vec{r} = (x, y, z)$$

Christopher, Gerry, and Peter Knight. *Introductory Quantum Optics*. Cambridge University Press, 2005, http://aapt.scitation.org/doi/10.1119/1.2110623.

Building the Quantum Internet is Hard!

Global quantum Internet needs both <u>downlink (Earth-to-satellite)</u> and <u>uplink (i.e., Earth-to-satellite)</u> channels.

- Downlink channels are predominately used: dominated by
- diffraction loss (pseudo-fixed).
 - just increase receiver aperture size...

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- Uplink channels are sometimes preferred to downlink
- channels when considering
 - 1) limitation of resources (e.g., entanglement) at satellite and
 - 2) 2) flexibility of ground-station systems.





Uplink Beam: Realization 1



Uplink Beam: Realization 2



Uplink Beam: Realization 3



diffraction-loss dominated (wang et al)

Rx aperture gets almost nothing!

Classical-Quantum Signalling via Stokes Parameters

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Best Paper Award, IEEE Globecom 2024, Cape Town, S. Africa.

Anjali Dhiman, et al (ARC Linkage)





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Classically Enhanced CV-MDI-QKD, Dhiman, et al (2025)

Spatial Diversity in the Uplink

Wang et al (2025) DOI 10.1109/TCOMM.2025.3573448

Diversity: send and/or receive same symbols over separate (physically or virtually) subchannels.

- Requirement: subchannels are (at least partially) independent.
- Effect: probability of deep fades reduced (by properly combining subchannel signals).

Spatial diversity: employing multiple transmitters and/or receivers.

- <u>Wireless Communications</u>: exploits *multipath propagation*.
- Optical Communications: creates channel independence via physical separation of subchannels.
 - Readily achieved by **separating transmitting telescopes** by a reasonable distance.
 - Atmospheric coherence length of near-ground local atmosphere (i.e., several kilometers up into an uplink channel) is on the order of <u>centimeters</u>!

Practical setting to introduce diversity

• *M* transmitting ground stations

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- Single receiving satellite with *M* receiving apertures
- One ground station tracks one receiving aperture
 - $\rightarrow M$ independent random subchannels
- No channel information @ Tx
 - \rightarrow all ground stations send the same quantum state
- Channel loss information @ Rx
 - → optimal combining @ satellite





Defeating Rayleigh's Curse with Quantum Measurements



Entanglement Based Quantum Key Distribution System

• **EPS Source (Satellite)** – Distribute entangled photons among two ground stations on earth.

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Charlie (Satellite) **Entangled Photon Source** The photons travel through a **lossy** channel. NEW: **Quantum Synchronisation** Post-Quantum +QKD Alice (Ground station) **Lossy Channel** and Bob (Ground Alice (Ground Station) **Bob** (Ground Station) station) receive the photons and perform the BS HWP measurements in PBS SPD different polarization basis and detect the photons using **single** photon detectors.

> Figure. Entanglement-based satellite quantum communication system. HWP: Halfwave plate; PBS: Polarizing beam splitter; SPD: Single-photon detector; BS: Beam splitter.

Experimental Setup for BBM92 Protocol

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EPS: Entangled photon source; M: Mirror; HWP: Half-wave plate; PBS: Polarizing beam splitter; FC: Fiber coupler; SMF: Single-mode fiber; PC: Polarization correction optics which is a combination of a quarter-wave plate - half-wave plate - quarter-wave plate; BS: Beam splitter; L: Lens; MMF: Multi-mode fiber; SPCM: Single-photon counting module; QM: Quantum machine (post-processing unit).

A Source for the Quantum Internet?

• A beacon laser is used for the coarse alignment for Alice and Bob's setup.

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• The EPS source generates two entangled photons polarized in H and V. The entangled state is given by the expression,

$$|\psi\rangle = \frac{|H\rangle_s |V\rangle_i + |V\rangle_s |H\rangle_i}{\sqrt{2}}$$

- Alice and Bob perform the measurement in different polarization bases and detect the photons using single photon detectors at both ends.
- The photons are correlated in time, and only those photons will contribute to the key which are received at the same time towards both ends.
- Alice and Bob then filter the basis and perform the post-processing, which includes error estimation, reconciliation, and privacy amplification.

• Photon Time-tagging and filtering

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- A dedicated device monitoring all the 8 channels records the exact time (i.e. time tags) in ns when each detector sees a photon.
- Keep the time tags only if the time difference between the Alice's and Bob's detections is less than 1 nanosecond.
- This removes random noise from background light.



• Bit Mapping, Sifting and QBER Estimation

- Generate raw key bits based on BB84 polarisation encoding
- Raw key bits are kept only when Alice and Bob used the same measurement basis.
- Alice shares some bits with Bob to estimate how many errors occurred in the transmission.



• Reconciliation on authenticated channels

- Reconciliation based on special LDPC codes optimised for DV-QKD.
- Authentication: Information theoretic Wegman Carter Message
 Authentication Codes with fixed pre-shared keys and logarithmic size
 QKD keys.



• Privacy Amplification

- Generate QKD secret keys based on asymptotic security analysis
- QKD keys are saved in a key pool for authentication and message encryption/decryption.



QKD+PQC Communications

• Hybrid Encryption-Decryption

- Double encryption and decryption of communication message performed in this architecture.
 - First, OTP encryption with QKD keys
 - The output is encrypted again with AES256, which is considered post-quantum secure.
- In case of running out of QKD keys, post-quantum security is ensured with AES.



QKD+PQC Architecture

• Hybrid Encryption-Decryption



• K_q is the shared QKD keys.

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- K_a is pre-shared keys
- *M* is message and enc_M is encrypted message.
- *AES256_Enc* is 256-bit AES encryption algorithm and *AES256_DEC* is corresponding decryption algorithm.
- |.| represents the length of element `.`

- Information Theoretic security (post-quantum security) in worst case.
- Non-similar QKD and PQC keys are allowed.
- Compossible security analysis in not needed.

Emulating Earth-Satellite Channels

Key Equation:

The free-space channel loss, including beam diffraction, optical losses in the telescopes, and pointing loss, is given by:

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$$A_{fs} = 10 \log_{10} \left(\frac{L^2 \lambda^2}{D_T^2 D_R^2 T_T T_R (1 - P_l)} \right)$$

Where:

•L= Link distance

• λ = Operating wavelength

• D_{T_1} D_R = Transmitter and receiver telescope diameters

• T_T , T_R = Transmission efficiency of telescopes

• P_l = Pointing loss



Fig. Plot of link distance L as a function of transmitter (D_{T_1}) and receiver (D_{R_2}) telescope diameters for fixed link loss of 10.3 dB, $\lambda = 800$ nm, $P_l = 0.2$, and $T_T = T_R = 0.8$.

Experimental Results

• Live **QBER** (**Q**) is plotted with time.

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• QKD **key rate** in bits per pulse, **r** is calculated using eq.,

$$\mathbf{r} = 1 - h(Q) - leak_{EC}$$

where,

$$h(x) = -(1 - x)\log(1 - x) - x\log(x)$$

 $leak_{EC}$ - is the information leakage



Source power (mW)	Visibility	QBER	Secure key rate (kbps)	
2.5	0.960 ± 0.009	0.016 ± 0.005	1.6	
3.5	0.873 ± 0.019	0.063 ± 0.009	0.7	
4.5	0.742 ± 0.013	0.136 ± 0.008	Nil	

Table: The experimental values for visibility, QBER, and secure key rate (kbps) at different optical powers of the EPS.

When is the Quantum Internet?



Many issues outstanding on standardisation of "quantum internet protocols" such as packet formats



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Many steps outstanding on the route to the quantum internet

FIGURE 6. The Evolution of the GQI. Shown here is the estimated timeline to the full-blown GQI. The labels in red indicate the near term (current to 5 years) technical outcomes and applications. The green bubble indicates the importance of quantum memory in shaping the future Internet. The ultimate goal is shown in gold (10–20 years). The "Quantum Internet [Version 1]" simply refers to technology already implemented by the Micius quantum-en-abled satellite.

Recent UNSW Quantum Sensing Projects (Gosalia et al)



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Quadrature-squeezed state for satellite-based clock synchronization doi: 10.1109/LATINCOM56090.2022.10000428



Quadrature-entangled state for satellite-based clock synchronization doi: 10.1109/GLOBECOM54140.2023.10437698



Balanced homodyne detection for sub-Rayleigh positioning of satellites doi: 10.1088/1555-6611/ad1750







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UNS



Fundamental Physics

A. Belenchia, M. Carlesso, Ö. Bayraktar et al.



Physics Reports 951 (2022) 1-70

Bell's inequalities violations (BIV) at scale and with general relativity

NASA's Deep Space Quantum Link (DSQL), which will employ the Lunar Orbital Platform-Gateway – a space station orbiting the moon – to establish a quantum link with ground stations which will allow testing BIV

M. Mohageg, D. Strekalov, S. Dolinar, M. Shaw, N. Yu, Deep Space Quantum Link, vol. 2063, 2018, p. 3039.



Quantum Sensing Techniques

Birth correlation of entangled photons (DV)

Entanglement measurement outcomes (DV)

Derivative (higher HG) mode projections (DV and CV)

Quantum frequency combs (CV and DV)

But recall scaling issues and equal resource issues, Equal energy -> Quantum Cramer Rao Bounds

(Don't always discount classical)

At FFI 10⁻²¹ at sub-femtosecond synchronization

- The Einstein equivalence principle.
- The nature of fundamental physical constants.
- Dark sector physics (dark matter and dark energy).
- The possible quantum aspects of curved space-time.
- [Enhanced Engineering (PNT etc), not listed]



Defeating Rayleigh's Curse with Quantum Measurements





Optimal Sensing Detection - Modified Homodyne



Replace local oscillator with derivative of "HG Modes"



Ronakraj K. Gosalia, Ryan Aguinaldo, Jonathan Green, Holly Leopardi, Peter Brereton, Robert Malaney: APL Photon. **9**, 100903 (2024); doi: 10.1063/5.0220546

http://old.rqc.ru/

Application 1 – astronomy



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Tsang, Mankei, et al. "Quantum Theory of Superresolution for Two Incoherent Or 031033, doi:10.1103/PhysRevX.6.031033.



ew X, vol. 6, no. 3, Aug. 2016, p.

Application 2 – clock synchronization

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1.





Gosalia, Ronakraj K., et al. "Classical and Quantum Frequency Combs for Satellite-Based Clock Synchronization." APL *Photonics*, vol. 9, no. 10, AIP Publishing, LLC, Oct. 2024, p. 100903, doi:10.1063/5.0220546.

Frequency Combs



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FIG. 7. Spontaneous parametric downconversion (SPDC) process is a $\chi^{(2)}$ nonlinear process that can be used to convert a classical frequency comb (e.g., mode-locked laser, MLL) into a quantum frequency comb that exhibits quadraturesqueezing properties. The implementation of SPDC shown above is degenerate whereby the signal and idler have exactly half the energy (in turn center frequency) as the pump. As an example, we show the phase space diagram of the classical and quantum frequency comb with X-quadrature-squeezing. Evidently, the quantum frequency comb has reduced variance in the X quadrature and would correspondingly yield a more precise measurement than the classical frequency comb.

$$\sigma_{\Delta t, \text{TM}} \propto \frac{\exp(-r)}{\sqrt{n((1/T_0)^2 + v_0^2)}} \rightarrow \frac{1}{n\sqrt{(1/T_0)^2 + v_0^2}}$$

Classical and quantum frequency combs for satellite-based clock synchronization Ronakraj K. Gosalia, Ryan Aguinaldo, Jonathan Green, Holly Leopardi, Peter Brereton and Robert Malaney: APL Photon. **9**, 100903 (2024); doi: 10.1063/5.0220546



Optical frequency comb-based clock synchronization

State-of-the-art clock synchronization over freespace by Caldwell et al., 2023. **Timing deviation:** 300 fs after 1 second measurement time

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$$\begin{aligned} \tau_{A} & \tau \\ &= \tau_{B \to A} + \tau_{local,A} & \tau \\ &+ \tau/2 & = \tau_{A} - \tau_{B} \\ &- \left(\tau_{local,A} - \tau_{local,B}\right) \\ &\approx \tau_{A} - \tau_{B} \\ &- \tau/2 \end{aligned}$$



Signal generation stage: from optical frequency comb to electronic signal

State of the art

TABLE III. Recent field experiments using MLL-based classical frequency combs over optical fiber and terrestrial links and their reported performance metrics. The general trend across the recent free-space experiments has been toward longer link range, shorter integration time (τ), and an MDEV below 10⁻¹⁸ (in turn, lower TDEV).

Author	Year	Protocol	Link type	Nodes	Path (km)	MDEV	Integration time, τ (s)	TDEV (s)
Predehl <i>et al</i> . ¹³⁸	2012	OFT	Fiber	11	920	10^{-18}	10 ³	6×10^{-16}
Droste et al. ¹³⁹	2013	OFT	Fiber	2	1840	4×10^{-19}	10^{2}	2×10^{-17}
Bercy et al. ¹⁴⁰	2014	OFT	Fiber	2	100	5×10^{-21}	10^{3}	3×10^{-18}
Giorgetta et al.12	2013	O-TWTFT	Free-space	2	2	10^{-18}	10^{3}	6×10^{-16}
Deschenes et al. ¹³	2016	O-TWTFT	Free-space	2	4	5×10^{-19}	10^{4}	3×10^{-15}
Sinclair <i>et al</i> . ¹⁴³	2018	O-TWTFT	Free-space	2	4	10^{-17}	1	7×10^{-18}
Sinclair <i>et al</i> . ¹⁴⁵	2019	O-TWTFT	Free-space	2	4	10^{-18}	10^{2}	6×10^{-17}
Bodine <i>et al</i> . ¹⁴⁵	2020	O-TWTFT	Free-space	3	14	10^{-18}	10^{2}	6×10^{-17}
Ellis <i>et al</i> . ¹⁴	2021	O-TWTFT	Free-space	3	28	10^{-18}	2×10^2	1×10^{-16}
Shen <i>et al.</i> ²⁸	2022	O-TWTFT	Free-space	2	113	4×10^{-19}	10^{4}	2×10^{-15}
Caldwell <i>et al.</i> ¹⁷	2023	O-TWTFT	Free-space	2	300	5×10^{-18}	1×10^3	3×10^{-16}

In a laboratory experiment, Wang *et al.*²¹ successfully conducted temporal mode decomposition to achieve $\sigma_{\Delta t,\text{TM}}$ as per Eq. (18) with a 1.5 dB quadrature-squeezed quantum frequency comb. The setup consisted of a Ti:sapphire-based MLL that generated (ultra-short) 130 fs duration pulses with $v_0 = 0.25$ THz and $f_r = 75$ MHz. The remote classical frequency comb was produced using the same MLL source. The 1.5 dB of quadrature-squeezing was achieved using an SPOPO setup, ^{130,151,151} which successfully reduced the $\sigma_{\Delta t}$ from 8.9×10^{-23} to 7.5×10^{-23} s These laboratory

Gosalia et al research findings

Published in IEEE Latincom 2022

Can quadrature-squeezing be used on low-Earth-orbit satellites to synchronize clocks beyond the standard quantum limit?

Beyond the Standard Quantum Limit in the Synchronization of Low-Earth-Orbit Satellites Ronakraj Gosalia*, Robert Malaney*, Ryan Aguinaldo¹, Jonathan Green¹ and Mark Clampin¹

* School of Electrical Engineering and Telecommunications, University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW 2052, Australia. [†] Northrop Grumman Corporation, San Diego, CA 92128, USA. [‡] NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, MD 20771, USA.



Published in IEEE Globecom 2023

Published in IOP Laser Physics

Can quadrature-entangled light provide any advantage over quadraturesqueezed light for clock synchronization in practice?

LEO Clock Synchronization with Entangled Light

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Ronakraj Gosalia^{*}, Robert Malaney^{*}, Ryan Aguinaldo[†], Jonathan Green[†] and Peter Brereton[‡] ^{*}University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW 2052, Australia. [†] Northrop Grumman Corporation, San Diego, CA 92128, USA. [‡] NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, MD 20771, USA.



Can a 'simple' balanced homodyne detection setup be used to achieve superresolution localization of satellites in low-Earth-orbit?

Quantum super-resolution with balanced homodyne detection in low-earth-orbit

Ronakraj K Gosalia^{1,*}⁽⁰⁾, Robert Malaney¹⁽⁰⁾, Ryan Aguinaldo²⁽⁰⁾ and Jonathan Green

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