Effects of space weather on the Earth's ionosphere

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Contents

- Brief introduction on radiowave propagation in the ionosphere
- Examples of space weather effects waves in the MHz range
 - The case of signal attenuation: D-layer absorption
 - The case of signal loss: Dilute ionosphere
- Examples of space weather effects waves in GHz range
 - Brief intro to Global Navigation Satellite Systems
 - The case of signal diffraction: Ionospheric scintillation
 - The case of signal dispersion: Ionospheric delay
- Examples of ionospheric products in space weather services
- Summary

Factors controlling ionospheric electron density & Ionospheric impact on radio waves



Ionospheric impacts Radio waves:

- Refraction
- Dispersion (velocity depends on frequency)
- Diffraction in wave fronts
 -> scintillation
- Scattering (coherent and incoherent)
- Polarization changes
- Attenuation

More about refraction

- Characterized with refraction index n, depends
 - On the frequency (f) of the radio wave, $\omega = 2\pi f$
 - On background conditions
- Is linked with the group and phase velocity of the wave
 - Phase velocity $v_p = \lambda f = \omega/k \& v_p = c/n(\omega)$
 - Group velocity $v_g = d\omega/dk = c/(n(\omega) + \omega \frac{dn(\omega)}{d\omega})$



The High-Latitude Ionosphere and its effects on Radio Propagation

Robert D. Hunsucker and John K. Hargreaves

Refraction index in ionized media: Appleton-Hartree equation

$$n^{2} = 1 - \frac{X}{1 + jZ} - \frac{Y_{T}^{2}}{2(1 - X - jZ)} + \frac{Y_{T}^{2}}{4(1 - X - jZ)^{2}} + \frac{Y_{L}^{2}}{Y_{L}^{2}} + \frac{Y_{L}^{2}}{j} = \sqrt{-1}$$

Plasma frequency

$$\omega_N = [Ne^2/\varepsilon_0 m_e]^{1/2}, \qquad X = \omega_N^2/\omega^2, \qquad Y_L = Y \cos \theta$$

Gyrofrequency

 $\omega_B = Be/m_e$,

$$Y = \omega_{\rm B}/\omega$$
,

 $Z = \nu/\omega$.

$$Y_{\rm T} = Y \sin \theta,$$

N= electron density e= electron charge m_e =electron mass ε_0 = vacuum permittivity B=magnetic field ω =2 π f, f=wave frequency v= electron collision rate with other particles θ = angle between B and wave propagation direction Appleton-Hartree equation: no collisions, no B-field



$$n^{2} = 1 - \mathbf{X} = 1 - \omega_{N}^{2} / \omega^{2}$$
$$= 1 - Ne^{2} / (\varepsilon_{0} m_{e} \omega^{2}).$$

 $v_p = \omega/k = c/n(\omega)$ (phase velocity) $v_g = d\omega/dk = cn(\omega)$ (group velocity) Appleton-Hartree equation: B-field parallel to wave propogation, but no collisions

$$n^{2} = 1 - \frac{X}{1 - jZ} - \frac{X_{T}^{2}}{2(1 - X - jZ)} \pm \left(\frac{X_{T}^{4}}{4(1 - X - jZ)^{2}} + Y_{L}^{2}\right)^{1/2}$$

$$n^{2} = 1 - X/(1 \pm Y_{L})$$
$$= 1 - \omega_{N}^{2} / [\omega(\omega \pm \omega_{L})]$$

Splitting to ordinary and extraordinary polarizations

 $n(\omega)$ is real \rightarrow no attenuation

$$\omega_L = \omega_B$$

Appleton-Hartree equation: Collisions but no B-field



Examples of space weather effects

Impacts on radio waves in MHz range

The case of attenuation: D-layer absorption





Drawing: FMI & STCE for PECASUS

D-layer absorption: causes and consequences

Causes:

- Solar bursts of X-rays: Attenuation in the dayside ionosphere
- Solar bursts of energetic protons (SEP): Attenuation in the polar caps
- Energetic electron precipitation driven by magnetospheric processes (substorms, waveparticle interactions): Attenuation at auroral oval latitudes

Impacted technologies

- Over the horizon communication using High Frequencies (3-30 MHz)
- HF radars
- Systems utilizing the ground-ionosphere waveguide

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- (Bottom) Zhang et al., Nature communications 2022

Solar energetic protons



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Particle precipitation impacts in the ionosphere

Solar Energetic Protons (>10 MeV):

- Secondary particle showers in atmosphere (SEP>100 MeV)
- D-layer absorption (SEP~10-100 MeV)
- Stratospheric ozone destruction, climate impact

• Electrons (3-20 keV):

- Auroras
- Enhanced ionospheric conductances and currents

• Electrons (30-1000 keV):

- D-layer absorption
- Stratospheric ozone destruction, climate impact

With energetic particle precipitation D-layer electron Usually the electron content density enhances, but due in the nightside D-layer is so to collisions with neutrals Dlow that radio waves do not layer absorps the waves. notice it. F2 Lave F Layer F1 Laver E Layer E Layer D Laver V/UHF MF I F Davtime Night Ionospheric reflection (under normal condition)

> Original image Copyright: By Muttley CC-BY-3.0 via Wikimedia Commons

12

How attenuation by SEP is monitored: D-RAP tool

D-RAP tool:

- Inputs
 - solar X-rays (geostat orbit)
 - fluxes energetic protons (> 1 MeV) (geostat)
 - Kp index (geomagnetic activity, ground)
- Output:
 - Dayside D-layer absorption, "Short wave fadeout" (duration of some hours)
 - Polar Cap absorption (duration of days)
- Based on empirical formulas.
 - Reference: Sauer and Wilkinson, Space Weather, 2008, <u>https://doi.org/10.1029/2008SW0003</u> <u>99</u>
 - Statistics for radiowaves at 30 MHz.
 Other frequencies achieved by scaling.

 $A_d = 0.155(J(E > Ec(InvLat))^{1/2})$

 $A_n = 0.020(J(E > Ec(InvLat))^{1/2})$



Figure: NOAA/UKMO

- A_n and A_d absorption during night and day
- *J*(*E*>*Ec*) = energy flux of protons with energies above Ec
- *InvLat= Latitude above which protons can reach ionosphere*

A similar approach under development for energetic electrons

Old satellite-riometer comparison studies from 1960s:

A=4×10⁻³×(F(40))^{1/2} day time (A in dB) A=2×10⁻³×(F(40))^{1/2} night time





Figure 5. Median modeled flux >30 keV according to equation (8) (*MLT*-dependent model), as a function of *L* and *Ap* for eight *MLT* zones. *MLT* = magnetic local time.

Total electron flux for energies >E: $F(E)=F(F_{30}(MLT,L, Ap), k(MLT,L, Ap), E)$, where F30 = F(30)

Van de Kamp et al., 2014, https://doi.org/10.1029/2017JD028253

Riometer: A research instrument measuring cosmic noise absorption

- Passive receiver listening radiowaves (20-50 MHz) from stellar sources
- Background curve determined using quiet times
- Output: Deviations (in dB) from the background curves



Figure 5.2: Modeled and observed cosmic noise absorption (CNA) at Island Lake during a solar proton event starting at 02:25 UT on 21 April 2002. Observed CNA is shown in blue, DRAP with the cutoff model by *Dmitriev et al.* (2010) is shown in orange, DRAP with the cutoff model by *Nesse Tyssøy and Stadsnes* (2015) is shown in yellow, CNA calculated from WACCM-D is shown in a purple solid line, and nonlinearity corrected from WACCM-D is shown with a purple dashed line.



Figures: E. Heino, PhD thesis RF Shamans Ltd HAARP

The case of HF signal loss: Dilute ionosphere





Drawing: FMI & STCE for PECASUS

Geomagnetic storm aftermath: plasma disappearing from the ionosphere

- Geomagnetic storm → Joule Heating in the high-lat ionosphere → thermospheric upwelling → change in the chemical composition at ionospheric F2 altitudes → enhanced recombination → electron density drops down
- Appearing during the main and recovery phases of a geomagnetic storm
- Pressure gradients → depression propagates from high to mid-latitudes. Propagation stronger during summer time.
- Causes drop in the Maximum Usable Frequency in HF communication.
- Impact stronger in the local time morning than afternoon. Duration 1-2 days



Figure: L. Perrone and D. Sabbagh, INGV

Ionosonde: A research instrument measuring altitude profile of ionospheric electron density

- A very traditional measurement concept since 1920's (Breit & Tuve 1925)
- Transmitter and receiver typically in same location -> vertical sounding
- Transmitting pulses with increasing frequencies in HF range (~0.5-25 MHz)
- Receiving signals with varying delays → estimate of the reflection altitude (propagation speed of light assumed)
- Assumption: the wave reflects back at the altitude where is frequency is equal to the critical plasma frequency

$$\omega_N = [Ne^2/\varepsilon_0 m_e]^{1/2}$$

Slide: based on slide by Johannes Norberg (FMI)



lonosonde



Slide: Johannes Norberg (FMI)

Examples of space weather effects

Impacts on radio waves in GHz range

Brief Intro: Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS)



GPS Signal composed of:

- Carrier waves with two frequencies:
 - L1 1575.42 MHz & L2 1227.60 MHz
- Pseudo-Random noise: information about signal travel time
- Navigation data: satellite location, clock bias, etc.



Analogy in 2D: A ship listening acoustic signals from two lighthouses. If signal is received with 20 s delay the pseudorange estimate (ρ) is 340 m/s*20 s=6.8 km

Source: ESA navipedia



GNSS basic observables & combinations

Basic observables:

 Pseudorange: Estimate of distance by Rp=c(t_r-t_s), t_r= the time of signal reception & t_s=the time of signal transmission

$$R_{_P} =
ho + c(dt_r - dt^s) + T + lpha_f STEC + K_{P,r} - K_{P}{}^s + \mathcal{M}_P + arepsilon_p$$

- Carrier phase: Estimate of distance by the phase of carrier. Included ambiguity by N*λ, where λ is the carrier wavelength and N is an unknown integer.
- **Doppler shift:** Doppler shift in carrier. Estimated by the relative velocity between receiver and transmitter

$$P_L =
ho + c(dt_r - dt^s) + T - lpha_f STEC + k_{L,r} - k_L{}^s + \lambda_L \, N_L + \lambda_L \, w + m_L + \epsilon_L \, .$$

$$lpha_f=rac{40.3}{f^2}10^{16}$$
 m/TECU

STEC = Total electron content along signal path [TECU]; TECU = $10^{16}/m^3$

Ionosphere-free combination:

$$\Phi_{_{LC}} = rac{f_1^2 \; \Phi_{_{L1}} - f_2^2 \; \Phi_{_{L2}}}{f_1^2 - f_2^2} \quad ; \quad R_{_{PC}} = rac{f_1^2 \; R_{_{P1}} - f_2^2 \; R_{_{P2}}}{f_1^2 - f_2^2}$$

Source: ESA navipedia



Geometry-free combination:

 $\Phi_{\rm LI} = \Phi_{\rm L1} - \Phi_{\rm L2} ~~;~~ R_{\rm PI} = R_{\rm P2} - R_{\rm P1}$

GNSS measurements

Satellite clock offset (up to hundreds of km)

Relativistic clock correction <13 m

Satellite instrumental delays ~m

Geometric range ~20 000 km

Ionospheric delay 2-50 m

Tropospheric delay 2-20 m

Receiver clock offset <300 km

Receiver instrumental delay ~m

Slide: Johannes Norberg (EMI)

EN O ATT





GNSS measurements

Satellite clock offset (up to hundreds of km)

Relativistic clock correction <13 m

Satellite instrumental delays ~m

Geometric range ~20 000 km

Depends on the signal frequency

FMI

Ionospheric delay 2-50 m

Tropospheric delay 2-20 m

Receiver clock offset <300 km

Receiver instrumental delay ~m

Slide: Johannes Norberg (FMI)

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EGNOS improves GPS over Europe



The case of GNSS signal diffraction: lonospheric scintillation





Drawing: FMI & STCE for PECASUS

Small structures (some hundreds of m) in the ionospheric electron density cause relative phase shifts in the GNSS signal wave front

Animation: Bath University

A solar burst of X-rays and EUV on Sep 9 2017 caused Disturbances in the ionosphere \rightarrow Performance of Galileo augmentin system dropped down for one hour.



Red= Nominal support for Galileo Other colors= Decreased support for Galileo Figure: Berdermann et al. (2018), ESA

GNSS receivers monitoring small scale ionospheric structures

- Monitoring of small scale ionospheric structures and consequent scintillation can be done with specific scintillation receivers with high sampling rates (50 Hz).
- High resolution (50 Hz) receivers are used to derive parameters that characterize the the strength of scintillation in amplitude (S4) and in phase (σ_{ϕ}).
- Standard resolution receivers (1 Hz) are used to derive Rate of TEC and Rate of TEC index (ROTI) which also characterize rapid variations in the ionosphere

S4 (dimensionless): Standard deviation of L1 carrier S/N computed typically determined with 1 min resolution

 $\sigma_{\varphi}(rad)$: Standard deviation of detrended L1 carrier phase typically determined with 1 min resolution

ROTI (TECU/min): Standard deviation of rate of TEC typically determined with 1 or 5 min resolution

Figure (right): A TEC map by the IMPC service maintained by DLR showing also the network of GNSS standard receivers that can be used to derive ROTI



Figure (up): The scintillation receiver stations used in the PECASUS service (Kauristie et al., 2021)



An example: Space weather storm on Feb 26-27, 2023

Two solar flares on Feb 24 and Feb 25→ Impact by two combined Coronal Mass ejections → Geomagnetic storm during Feb 26-Feb 28→ Disturbed ionosphere



Impact in accurate positioning around noon on Feb 27: Finland



The case of GNSS dispersion : lonospheric delay





Drawing: FMI & STCE for PECASUS

GNSS as a system supporting Space Weather monitoring

- The geometry free phase combination of L1 and L2 signals can be used to derive Total Electron Content along the signal path from the satellite to the ground-based receiver.
- Slant TEC (STEC) is TEC along the path
- Vertical TEC (VTEC) is STEC converted to TEC along a vertical path with a geometric conversion factor
- Ionospheric Piercing Point (IPP) is the point where the signal crosses the ionosphere at ~350 km altitude



Figure: Johannes Norberg, FMI

Ionospheric Tomography based on radio waves reflecting and passing through the ionosphere



Slide: Johannes Norberg (FMI)

Statistical inversion -> 3D ionospheric imaging

Little information on the vertical structure \rightarrow Additional regularizing information is needed \rightarrow ionosondes' support used



Slide: Johannes Norberg (FMI)

Examples of services impacted by problems in accurate positioning

- In Norway, sheep are let out freely to graze in open fields every summer.
- Since the sheep tend to wander in small herds over large geographical distances, it can be a demanding task for the farmer to keep track of his own animals.
- Findmy produces electronic bells with satellite tracking for livestock on pasture. With this electronic bell the owner of the livestock has a full overview of where the livestock are at all times.
- Opportunity for space weather services: Collecting sheep back to shelters before cold winter should be arranged during calm space weather conditions

find°my



- Autonomous runway sweepers operated at the Oslo Airport Gardemoen
- Tests conducted in winter 2022/2023
- Test campaign during the night March 23-24, 2023 had to be interrupted due to problems in RTK positioning
- Checking NMA ROTI service revealed that ionospheric disturbances were the cause for the problems in RTK positioning
- Lesson learned: Forecasts of space weather situation will be used when selecting runway and taxiway sweeping approaches (automated/manual) in full scale operations



Ionospheric storm products in space weather services

Examples collected on May 12, 2024 after a sequence of

several X-class solar flares

Zoom 6 Hour 1 Day 3 Day 7 Day



Space Weather Prediction Center (SWPC), USA:

Currently quiet, but enhanced probabilities for problems in HF communication foreseen both in dayside and high-lat ionospheres





Forecast for the coming days





National Institute of Communication and Information Technology (NICT), Japan:

Decreases in ionospheric electron density starting on the evening of May 10.



Rate of TEC index - 1 min update

2024-05-10T01:24:00

Ionospheric Monitoring and **Prediction Center** (IMPC by DLR), **ESA SWESNET:**

ROTI values enhanced after the X5 flare on May 11 (01:23 UTC)

25°N

0.00

20°W

0.25

10%

0.50



20°E

1.25

10°E

1.00 ROTI [TECU/min]

0.75

30°E

1.50

40°E

1.75

2.00









Summary

- Ionosphere impacts the propagation of radiowaves
 - Refraction with dispersion
 - Diffraction
 - Attenuation
 - Drops in Maximum Usable Frequency
- Critical parameters characterizing the impact
 - Frequency of the radio waves
 - Ionospheric electron density (controlled by interactions with magnetosphere and thermosphere)
 - Magnetic field & electron collisions with other particles
- Vulnerable systems
 - Applications based on ionospheric radio wave reflections in frequencies 30-300 MHz
 - Applications based on accurate positioning by Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS)
- Dual role of GNSS
 - Impacted by ionospheric scintillation
 - Offers an opportunity to monitor ionospheric electron density by TEC maps and tomography
- Impacts can last from 0.5 hr to several days and are mostly difficult to forecast

Backup slides

More about the Appleton-Hartree equation

- Impact of ions can be neglected unless frequencies < 1kHz (ion gyrofrequency) are addressed
- Cold plasma approximation: v_p of signal >> plasma thermal speed = $\sqrt{2kBT/m}$
- No strong gradients in B (background magnetic field), i.e. no big changes in distance of signal wavelength $\lambda = 2\pi/k$
- Derived independently also by German radio physicist Lassen (1927)

The Maxwell equations:

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{D} = \rho_f, \tag{3.6}$$

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{B} = 0, \tag{3.7}$$

$$\nabla \times \mathbf{E} = -\frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t},\tag{3.8}$$

$$\nabla \times \mathbf{B} = \mu_0 \mathbf{j} + \frac{1}{c^2} \frac{\partial \mathbf{E}}{\partial t}.$$
(3.9)

In linear media, the fields ${\bf E}$ and ${\bf B}$ are related to ${\bf D}$ and ${\bf H}$ by the constitutive relations



Accounting for the anisotropic properties of plasma

Excerpts from Fontell Diploma Thesis (2018)

Fluid description of plasma; continuity and momentum equations:

particle species α :

$$\frac{\partial N_{\alpha}}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (N_{\alpha} \mathbf{u}_{\alpha}) = 0, \qquad (3.1) \qquad \text{For electrons:}$$

$$N_{\alpha}m_{\alpha}\frac{\partial \mathbf{u}_{\alpha}}{\partial t} + N_{\alpha}m_{\alpha}\mathbf{u}_{\alpha} \cdot \nabla \mathbf{u}_{\alpha} - N_{\alpha}q_{\alpha} \left(\mathbf{E} + \mathbf{u}_{\alpha} \times \mathbf{B}\right) + \nabla \cdot P_{\alpha}$$

$$= \left[m_{\alpha}\int \mathbf{v} \left(\frac{\partial f_{\alpha}}{\partial t}\right)_{c}d^{3}\mathbf{v}.\right]$$
(3.2) $\mathbf{j} = \mathbf{j}_{e} = -eN_{e}\mathbf{u}_{e}.$
Solving the inverse of the matrix in eqn. (3.24) gives Ohm's law
$$\mathbf{j} = \boldsymbol{\sigma} \cdot \mathbf{E},$$
where $\boldsymbol{\sigma}$ is the sought conductivity tensor
$$\boldsymbol{\sigma} = i\omega\varepsilon_{0}\frac{X}{U^{2} - Y^{2}}\begin{bmatrix}U & -iY & 0\\ iY & U & 0\\ 0 & 0 & \frac{U^{2} - Y^{2}}{U}\end{bmatrix}.$$

Excerpts from Fontell Diploma Thesis (2018)

3.7

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{D} = \rho_f, \qquad (3.6)$$
$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{B} = 0, \qquad (3.7)$$
$$\nabla \times \mathbf{E} = -\frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t}, \qquad (3.8)$$

$$\nabla \times \mathbf{B} = \mu_0 \mathbf{j} + \frac{1}{c^2} \frac{\partial \mathbf{E}}{\partial t}.$$
(3.9)

In linear media, the fields \mathbf{E} and \mathbf{B} are related to \mathbf{D} and \mathbf{H} by the constitutive relations

$$\mathbf{D} = \varepsilon_0 \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}_r \cdot \mathbf{E}, \qquad (3.10)$$
$$\mathbf{B} = \mu_0 \boldsymbol{\mu}_r \cdot \mathbf{H} \approx \mu_0 \mathbf{H}. \qquad (3.11)$$

 ${\bf E}$ and perturbations in ${\bf B}$ and ${\bf N}_{\rm e}$ are assumed to be of the form:

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t} \to -i\omega,$$
 (3.15)

$$\nabla \cdot \to i \mathbf{k} \cdot, \tag{3.16}$$

$$\nabla \times \to i\mathbf{k} \times \tag{3.17}$$

 $g(\mathbf{r},t) \propto e^{i(\mathbf{k}\cdot\mathbf{r}-\omega t)}$

Goal: Derive an equation from which E can be solved



In linear media, the fields ${\bf E}$ and ${\bf B}$ are related to ${\bf D}$ and ${\bf H}$ by the constitutive relations

$$\mathbf{D} = \varepsilon_0 \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}_r \cdot \mathbf{E}, \qquad (3.10)$$
$$\mathbf{B} = \mu_0 \boldsymbol{\mu}_r \cdot \mathbf{H} \approx \mu_0 \mathbf{H}. \qquad (3.11)$$



Now, finally the refraction index is introduced to the formulation: $\mathbf{k} = \frac{\mathbf{n}\omega}{c}$

Solution for **E** can be found only if det(M)=0 **Equation** for n whose solution is the Appleton-Hartree eq.

Excerpts from Fontell Diploma Thesis (2018)