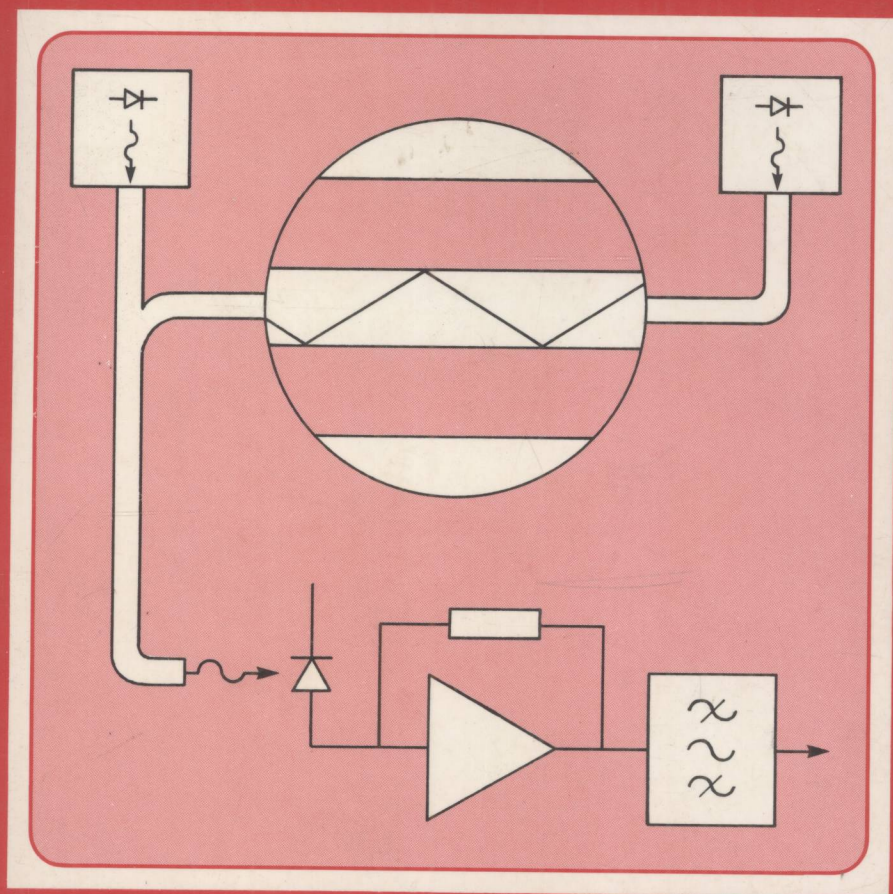


# OPTICAL COMMUNICATIONS



**M. J. N. SIBLEY**

**MACMILLAN NEW ELECTRONICS**  
INTRODUCTIONS TO ADVANCED TOPICS

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# Optical Communications

M. J. N. Sibley

*Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering  
The Polytechnic of Huddersfield*

Macmillan New Electronics  
Introductions to Advanced Topics



E9160241



MACMILLAN

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First published 1990

Published by  
MACMILLAN EDUCATION LTD  
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 2XS  
and London  
Companies and representatives  
throughout the world

Printed in Hong Kong

Typeset by TecSet Ltd, Wallington, Surrey.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
Sibley, M. J. N.

Optical communications.

1. Optical communication systems

I. Title

621.38'0414

ISBN 0-333-47512-7

ISBN 0-333-47513-5 pbk

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## Series Editor's Foreword

The rapid development of electronics and its engineering applications ensures that new topics are always competing for a place in university and polytechnic courses. But it is often difficult for lecturers to find suitable books for recommendation to students, particularly when a topic is covered by a short lecture module, or as an 'option'.

*Macmillan New Electronics* offers introductions to advanced topics. The level is generally that of second and subsequent years of undergraduate courses in electronic and electrical engineering, computer science and physics. Some of the authors will paint with a broad brush; others will concentrate on a narrower topic, and cover it in greater detail. But in all cases the titles in the Series will provide a sound basis for further reading of the specialist literature, and an up-to-date appreciation of practical applications and likely trends.

The level, scope and approach of the Series should also appeal to practising engineers and scientists encountering an area of electronics for the first time, or needing a rapid and authoritative update.

Paul A. Lynn

# Preface

Since the mid 1970s, the field of optical communications has advanced considerably. Optical fibre attenuations have been reduced from over 1000 dB/km to below 0.5 dB/km, and light sources are now available that can launch several milli-watts of power into a fibre. Optical links are now to be found in short-haul industrial routes, as well as in long-haul telecommunications routes. In order to design and maintain these links, it is important to understand the operation of the individual system components, and it is my hope that this book will provide the relevant information.

I have tried to aim the level of this text so that it is suitable for students on the final year of undergraduate courses in Electrical and Electronic Engineering, and Physics, as well as for practising engineers requiring a knowledge of optical communications. The text should also serve as an introduction for students studying the topic at a higher level. The work presented here assumes that the reader is familiar with Maxwell's equations, and certain aspects of communications theory. Such information can be readily found in relevant textbooks.

The information presented has come from a wide variety of sources — many of which appear in the Bibliography at the end of the book. In order to keep the list of references down to manageable proportions, I have only selected certain key papers and books. In order to obtain further information, the interested reader should examine the references that these works themselves give. Most of the journals the papers appear in will be available from any well-equipped library; otherwise they can be obtained through an inter-library loan service. Because of the length of this book, the information obtained from these sources has been heavily condensed. In view of this, I regret any errors or omissions that may have arisen, and hope that they will not detract from this text.

I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Mr K. Fullard of the Joint European Torus project at Culham, England, for supplying the information about the optical LAN that appears in chapter 7. I also wish to thank the publisher, Mr M. J. Stewart of Macmillan Education for his guidance, and the Series Editor, Dr Paul A. Lynn, for his valuable comments on the text. During the compilation of this text, many of my colleagues at the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, The Polytechnic of Huddersfield were party to several interesting discussions. In particular, I

wish to acknowledge the help of Dr R. T. Unwin, who read the draft manuscript, offered constructive criticism, and showed a great deal of patience throughout the preparation of this book.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their continued support and encouragement.



# List of Symbols

$\alpha$	attenuation constant/absorption coefficient
$\alpha_e$	electron ionisation coefficient
$\alpha_h$	hole ionisation coefficient
$a_x, a_y$	unit vectors
$A_0$	total preamplifier voltage gain
$A(\omega)$	total voltage gain of receiver system
$\beta$	phase constant
$B$	bit-rate in digital or bandwidth in analogue systems
$B_{eq}$	noise equivalent bandwidth
$c$	velocity of light in a vacuum ( $3 \times 10^8 \text{ m s}^{-1}$ )
$C_\pi$	base emitter capacitance
$C_c$	collector base capacitance
$C_d$	total diode capacitance
$C_f$	feedback resistance parasitic capacitance
$C_{gd}$	gate drain capacitance
$C_{gs}$	gate source capacitance
$C_{in}$	input capacitance of following amplifier
$C_j$	junction capacitance
$C_s$	stray input capacitance
$C_T$	total receiver input capacitance
$\delta_n$	refractive index change
$\delta E_c$	conduction band step
$\delta E_v$	valence band step
$\epsilon_0$	permittivity of free-space ( $8.854 \times 10^{-12} \text{ F/m}$ )
$\epsilon_r$	relative permittivity
$D_{mat}$	material dispersion coefficient
$D_{wg}$	waveguide dispersion coefficient
$E_g$	band-gap difference
$F(M)$	excess noise factor
$\gamma$	propagation coefficient
$g$	gain per unit length
$g_m$	transconductance
$h$	Planck's constant ( $6.624 \times 10^{-34} \text{ J s}$ )
$h_t(t)$	pre-detection filter impulse response
$h_{out}(t)$	output pulse shape

$h_p(t)$	input pulse shape
$H_{eq}(\omega)$	equalising network transfer function
$H_f(\omega)$	pre-detection filter transfer function
$H_{out}(\omega)$	Fourier transform (FT) of output pulse
$H_p(\omega)$	FT of received pulse
$H_T(\omega)$	normalised transimpedance
$\langle i_n^2 \rangle_0$	mean square (m.s.) noise current for logic 0 signal
$\langle i_n^2 \rangle_1$	m.s. noise current for logic 1 signal
$\langle i_n^2 \rangle_c$	m.s. equivalent input noise current of preamplifier
$\langle i_n^2 \rangle_{DB}$	m.s. photodiode bulk leakage noise current
$\langle i_n^2 \rangle_{DS}$	m.s. photodiode surface leakage noise current
$\langle i_n^2 \rangle_{pd}$	m.s. photodiode noise current
$\langle i_n^2 \rangle_Q$	quantum noise
$\langle i_n^2 \rangle_T$	total signal-independent m.s. noise current
$\langle i_s^2 \rangle$	m.s. photodiode signal current
$i_s(t)$	photodiode signal current
$I_2, I_3$	bandwidth type integrals
$I_b$	base current
$I_c$	collector current
$I_d$	total dark current
$I_{diode}$	total diode current
$I_g$	gate leakage current
$I_m$	multiplied diode current
$I_{max}$	maximum signal diode current
$I_{min}$	minimum signal diode current
$I_s$	signal-dependent, unmultiplied photodiode current
$\langle I_s \rangle$	average signal current
$\langle I_s \rangle_0$	average signal current for a logic 0
$\langle I_s \rangle_1$	average signal current for a logic 1
$I_{th}$	threshold current
$I_{DB}$	photodiode bulk leakage
$I_{DS}$	photodiode surface leakage current
$ISI$	inter-symbol interference
$J$	current density
$J_{th}$	threshold current density
$k$	Boltzmann's constant ( $1.38 \times 10^{-23}$ J/K)
$\lambda$	wavelength
$L_n$	diffusion length in p-type
$m$	modulation depth
$M$	multiplication factor
$M_{opt}$	optimum avalanche gain

$\eta$	quantum efficiency
$n$	refractive index
$\langle n^2 \rangle_T$	total m.s. output noise voltage
$\mu_0$	permeability of free-space ( $4\pi \times 10^{-7}$ H/m)
$\mu_r$	relative permeability
$N$	mode number (integer)
$N_D$	donor atom doping level
$N_g$	group refractive index
$N_{\max}$	maximum number of modes
$NA$	numerical aperture
$P$	average received power
$P_e$	total probability of error
$q$	electron charge ( $1.6 \times 10^{-19}$ C)
$r_\pi$	base emitter resistance
$r_{bb'}$	base-spreading resistance
$r_e$	reflection coefficient
$R_1, R_2$	reflectivity in resonator
$R_b$	photodiode load resistor
$R_f$	feedback resistor
$R_{in}$	preamplifier input resistance
$R_j$	photodiode shunt resistance
$R_L$	load resistor
$R_0$	photodiode responsivity
$R_s$	photodiode series resistance
$R_T$	low frequency transimpedance
$\sigma$	r.m.s. width of Gaussian distribution (line-width, etc.)
$\sigma_{\text{mat}}$	material dispersion per unit length
$\sigma_{\text{mod}}$	modal dispersion per unit length
$\sigma_{\text{off}}$	r.m.s. output noise voltage for logic 0
$\sigma_{\text{on}}$	r.m.s. output noise voltage for logic 1
$\sigma_{\text{wg}}$	waveguide dispersion per unit length
$S$	surface recombination velocity
$\mathbf{S}$	instantaneous power flow (Poynting vector)
$S_{\text{av}}$	average power flow
$S_E$	series noise generator ( $V^2/\text{Hz}$ )
$S_{\text{eq}}(f)$	equivalent input noise current spectral density ( $A^2/\text{Hz}$ )
$S_I$	shunt noise generator ( $A^2/\text{Hz}$ )
$S/N$	signal-to-noise ratio
$\tau$	time constant
$\tau_{\text{nr}}$	non-radiative recombination time
$\tau_r$	radiative recombination time
$t_e$	transmission coefficient
$T$	absolute temperature (Kelvin)
$v_g$	group velocity

$v_{\max}$	maximum output signal voltage
$v_{\min}$	minimum output signal voltage
$v_p$	phase velocity
$V$	normalised frequency in a waveguide
$V_{\text{br}}$	reverse breakdown voltage
$V_s$	output signal voltage
$V_T$	threshold voltage
$y$	normalised frequency variable
$Z$	impedance of dielectric to TEM waves
$Z_0$	impedance of free space
$Z_0(s)$	open loop transimpedance
$Z_c(s)$	closed loop transimpedance
$Z_f(s)$	feedback network transimpedance
$Z_{\text{in}}$	total input impedance
$Z_T(\omega)$	transimpedance

# Contents

<i>Series Editor's Foreword</i>	viii
<i>Preface</i>	ix
<i>List of Symbols</i>	xi
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Historical background	1
1.2 The optical communications link	4
<b>2 Optical Fibre</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 Propagation of light in a dielectric	8
2.1.1 The wave equation	9
2.1.2 Propagation parameters	10
2.1.3 Material dispersion and group velocity	13
2.2 Propagation in a planar dielectric waveguide	17
2.2.1 Reflection and refraction at boundaries	17
2.2.2 Propagation modes	22
2.2.3 Modal dispersion	26
2.2.4 Waveguide dispersion	27
2.2.5 Numerical aperture	28
2.3 Propagation in optical fibres	29
2.3.1 Step-index multimode fibre	29
2.3.2 Step-index single-mode fibre	32
2.3.3 Graded-index fibres	33
2.4 Calculation of fibre bandwidth	35
2.5 Attenuation in optical fibres	36
2.5.1 Impurity absorption	37
2.5.2 Rayleigh scattering	38
2.5.3 Material absorption	39
2.5.4 Electron absorption	39
2.6 Fibre materials and fabrication methods	39
2.6.1 Materials	39
2.6.2 Modified chemical vapour deposition (MCVD)	40
2.6.3 Fibre drawing from a preform	40
2.6.4 Fibre drawing from a double crucible	42

2.7	Connectors and couplers	43
2.7.1	Optical fibre connectors	43
2.7.2	Optical fibre couplers	45
<b>3</b>	<b>Optical Transmitters</b>	<b>47</b>
3.1	Light emission in semiconductors	47
3.2	Heterojunction semiconductor light sources	50
3.3	Light emitting diodes (LEDs)	52
3.3.1	Surface emitting LEDs	53
3.3.2	Edge emitting LEDs (ELEDs)	53
3.3.3	Spectral characteristics	54
3.3.4	Modulation capabilities and conversion efficiency	55
3.3.5	LED drive circuits	56
3.4	Semiconductor laser diodes (SLDs)	57
3.4.1	SLD characteristics	59
3.4.2	SLD structures	63
3.4.3	SLD drive circuits	65
3.4.4	Packaging and reliability	66
<b>4</b>	<b>Photodiodes</b>	<b>68</b>
4.1	Photoconduction in semiconductors	70
4.1.1	Photon absorption in intrinsic material	70
4.1.2	Photon absorption in reverse-biased p-n diodes	71
4.2	PIN photodiodes	74
4.2.1	Structure	75
4.2.2	Depletion layer depth and punch-through voltage	75
4.2.3	Speed limitations	76
4.2.4	Photodiode circuit model	77
4.3	Long-wavelength PIN photodiodes	78
4.4	Avalanche photodiodes (APDs)	79
4.4.1	APD structures	79
4.4.2	Current multiplication	81
4.4.3	Speed of response	82
4.5	Photodiode noise	83
4.5.1	PIN photodiode noise	84
4.5.2	APD noise	86
<b>5</b>	<b>Introduction to Receiver Design</b>	<b>88</b>
5.1	Fundamentals of noise performance	89
5.2	Digital receiver noise	90
5.2.1	Raised cosine spectrum pulses	92
5.2.2	Determination of $I_2$ and $I_3$	94
5.2.3	Statistical decision theory	96
5.2.4	Photodiode noise	101

5.2.5 Timing extraction	103
5.3 Analogue receiver noise	106
5.4 Comparison of APD and PIN receivers	108
5.5 Measurement and prediction of receiver sensitivity	111
5.5.1 Measurement of receiver sensitivity	111
5.5.2 Prediction of receiver sensitivity	111
<b>6 Preamplifier Design</b>	<b>114</b>
6.1 High input impedance preamplifiers	115
6.1.1 Frequency response	116
6.1.2 Noise analysis	118
6.1.3 Dynamic range	119
6.1.4 Design example	119
6.2 Transimpedance preamplifiers	120
6.2.1 Frequency response	122
6.2.2 Noise analysis	123
6.2.3 Dynamic range	125
6.2.4 Design example	125
6.3 Common-collector front-end, transimpedance designs	126
6.3.1 Frequency response	126
6.3.2 Noise analysis	128
6.3.3 Design example	128
<b>7 Current Systems and Future Trends</b>	<b>130</b>
7.1 System design	130
7.2 Current systems	133
7.3 Future trends	135
7.3.1 Fluoride-based optical fibres	135
7.3.2 Advanced lasers	136
7.3.3 Integrated optics	138
7.3.4 Coherent detection systems	139
7.3.5 Optical broadcasting	143
<i>Bibliography and References</i>	145
<i>Index</i>	148

# 1 Introduction

Although the subject of this book is optical communications, the field encompasses many different aspects of electronic engineering: electromagnetic theory, semiconductor physics, communications theory, signal processing, and electronic design. In a book of this length, we could not hope to cover every one of these different fields in detail. Instead, we will deal with some aspects in-depth, and cover others by more general discussion. Before we start our studies, let us see how modern-day optical communications came about.

## 1.1 Historical background

The use of light as a means of communication is not a new idea; many civilisations used sunlight reflected off mirrors to send messages, and communication between warships at sea was achieved using Aldis lamps. Unfortunately, these early systems operated at very low data-rates, and failed to exploit the very large bandwidth of optical communications links.

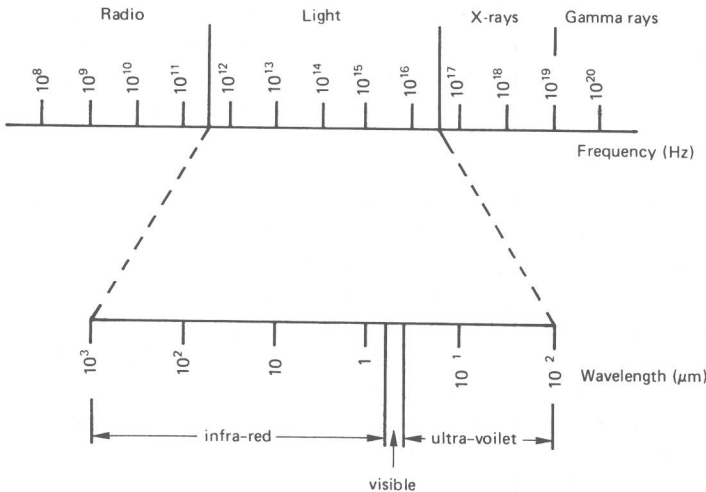


Figure 1.1 The electromagnetic spectrum



A glance at the electromagnetic spectrum shown in figure 1.1 reveals that visible light extends from 0.4 to 0.7  $\mu\text{m}$  which converts to a bandwidth of 320 THz (1 THz =  $10^{12}$  Hz). Even if only 1 per cent of this capability were available, it would still allow for 80 billion, 4 kHz voice channels! (If we could transmit these channels by radio, they would occupy the whole of the spectrum from d.c. right up to the far infra-red. As well as not allowing for any radio or television broadcasts, the propagation characteristics of the transmission scheme would vary tremendously.) The early optical systems used incandescent white light sources, the output of which was interrupted by a hand-operated shutter. Apart from the obvious disadvantage of a low transmission speed, a white light source transmits all the visible, and some invisible, wavelengths at once. If we draw a parallel with radio systems, this is equivalent to a radio transmitter broadcasting a single programme over the whole of the radio spectrum — very inefficient! Clearly, the optical equivalent of an oscillator was needed before light-wave communications could develop.

A breakthrough occurred in 1960, with the invention of the ruby laser by T. H. Maimon [1], working at Hughes Laboratories, USA. For the first time, an intense, coherent light source operating at just one wavelength was made available. It was this development that started a flurry of research activity into optical communications.

Early experiments were carried out with line-of-sight links; however, it soon became apparent that some form of optical waveguide was required. This was because too many things can interfere with light-wave propagation in the atmosphere: fog, rain, clouds, and even the occasional flock of pigeons.

Hollow metallic waveguides were initially considered but, because of their impracticality, they were soon ruled out. By 1963, bundles of several hundred glass fibres were already being used for small-scale illumination. However, these early fibres had very high attenuations ( $>1000$  dB/km) and so their use as a transmission medium for optical communications was not considered.

It was in 1966 that C. K. Kao and G. A. Hockman [2] (working at the Standard Telecommunications Laboratories, UK) postulated the use of glass fibres as optical communications waveguides. Because of the high attenuation of the glass, the idea was initially treated with some scepticism; in order to compete with existing co-axial cable transmission lines, the glass fibre attenuation had to be reduced to less than 20 dB/km. However, Kao and Hockman studied the loss mechanisms and, in 1970, workers at the Corning glass works, USA, produced a fibre with the required attenuation. This development led to the first laboratory demonstrations of optical communications with glass fibre, in the early 1970s. A study of the spectral response of glass fibres showed the presence of low-loss transmission windows at 850 nm, 1.3  $\mu\text{m}$ , and 1.55  $\mu\text{m}$ . Although the early optical links