**COMP3516: Data Analytics for IoT** 

#### Lecture 5.2: WiFi Sensing

#### Chenshu Wu Department of Computer Science

2025 Spring





### Contents

- Channel State Information
- Multipath Effect
  - Reflection Model
  - Scattering Model
- Geometrical Approaches
- Statistical Approaches
  - Speed Estimation
  - Motion Detection
  - Breathing Rate Estimation
- More Applications

# WiFi Sensing

 "The next big wireless movement" – By Ray Liu, IEEE President, Founder & CEO of Origin AI



**ORIGIN**<sup>™</sup>

#### Multipath Everywhere!

Notion Detection

Sleep Monitoring

Fall Detection

Gait Recognition

Gesture Control

Wellbeing Monitoring
 Activity Monitoring

C Location Tracking

> Many More...

WiFi Sensing interprets the multipath disruptions for sensing. No Cameras, No Wearables, No Sensors

Wireless

Contactless

Sensorless

T

### Contents

- Channel State Information
- Multipath Effect
  - Reflection Model
  - Scattering Model
- Geometrical Approaches
- Statistical Approaches
  - Speed Estimation
  - Motion Detection
  - Breathing Rate Estimation
- More Applications

## Review: What is CSI?

A data perspective w/ zero SP background & zero memory about previous lectures

- $\mathbf{H}(\mathbf{t}) = [H(t, f_1), H(t, f_2), \cdots, H(t, f_N)]$ 
  - Complex number:  $H(t, f_i) = a_i + jb_i$

• Amplitude: 
$$|H(t, f_i)| = \sqrt{a_i^2 + b_i^2} \quad \leftarrow \text{ abs ()}$$

• Phase: 
$$\phi_i = \tan^{-1} \frac{b_i}{a_i}$$
  $\leftarrow$  phase(

- Time series of  $\boldsymbol{H}(t)$ 

Time Series of CSI

 $\begin{bmatrix} H(1, f_1) & \cdots & H(M, f_1) \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ H(1, f_N) & \cdots & H(M, f_N) \end{bmatrix}$ 

Time Series of CSI Amplitude $|H(1, f_1)|$  $\cdots$  $|H(M, f_1)|$  $\vdots$  $\ddots$  $\vdots$  $|H(1, f_N)|$  $\cdots$  $|H(M, f_N)|$ 





### **Geometric Parameters**

- Time of Flight (ToF)
  - Range
- Time Difference of Arrival (TDoA)
- Angle of Arrival (AoA)
- Doppler Frequency Shift (DFS)
  - Velocity



• Resolve the above parameters of (major) multipath signals



## **CSI** Dynamics



Understanding and modeling of wifi signal based human activity recognition, MobiCom 2015



# **CSI** Dynamics

 $H(t,f) = \sum_{l \in \Omega} a_l(t) \exp(-j2\pi f \tau_l(t))$ 

$$H(f,t) = H_S(f,t) + H_D(f,t)$$

Static components

Dynamic components

 $H_D(f,t)$  has approximately zero mean  $\rightarrow$  Therefore, H(f,t) has approximately zero mean by removing the static part  $H_S(f,t)$ .





## CSI Dynamics to DFS

#### Doppler Frequency Shifts

• Caused by (reflection) path length changes

• 
$$f_D(t) = -\frac{1}{\lambda} \frac{d}{dt} d(t) = -f \frac{d}{dt} \tau(t)$$

Path Length Change Rate (PLCR)

Ideal CSI:

$$H(f,t) = H_S(f,t) + \sum_{l \in \Omega_D} \alpha_l(t) e^{j2\pi f_{-\infty}^t f_{D_l}(u)du}$$

Measured CSI:

$$\widehat{H}(f,t) = H(f,t)e^{-j2\pi(\Delta_t f + \Delta_f t)}$$





### CSI to DFS

 CSI at frequency (subcarrier) f, at time t with K propagation paths

$$H(f,t) = \sum_{k=1}^{K} \stackrel{\downarrow}{\alpha_{k}}(t) e^{j\frac{2\pi f\tau_{k}(t)}{4}} \text{ propagation delay of path k at time t}$$
phase of path k

• In case of motions

 $H(f, t) = H_{static}(f) + \sum_{k \in K_{dynamic}} \alpha_k(t) e^{j2\pi \int_{-\infty}^t f_{D_k}(u) du}$  Integral of frequency over time  $\propto$  phase CSI of static paths CSI of dynamic paths



## CSI to DFS: Example

CSI of dynamic paths (spectrogram)

#### **Spectrogram generation by STFT**

• Short-time Fourier transform







• Issue I: Phase Errors

Ideal CSI: 
$$H(f,t) = H_S(f,t) + \sum_{l \in \Omega_D} \alpha_l(t) e^{j2\pi \int_{-\infty}^t f_{D_l}(u) du}$$

Measured CSI:  $\hat{H}(f,t) = H(f,t)e^{-j2\pi(\Delta_t f + \Delta_f t)}$ 



Inferring Motion Direction using Commodity Wi-Fi for Interactive Exergames, ACM CHI 2017



- Issue I: Phase Errors
- Solution I (Discard phase): Use CSI power only
  - $\left|\widehat{H}(f,t)\right|^2 = |H(f,t)|^2$
  - Eliminates the impact of phase errors
  - But also loses the sign of DFS
- Solution II (Phase cleaning): Linear phase fitting
  - Ideally, the phase offsets are linear across subcarriers
- Solution III (Phase cleaning): Antenna difference
  - Different antennas share the same CFO, CTO (but not initial offset)
  - Conjugate multiplication of CSI on multiple antennas
  - Needs at least two antennas; initial offset needs manual calibration

You are facing the Mona Lisa: Spot localization using PHY layer information, ACM MobiSys'12 Inferring motion direction using commodity wi-fi for interactive exergames, ACM CHI'17

#### Issue II: Partial Speed

- DFS from CSI does not reveal complete speed
- Even with accurate phase and thus accurate DFS, the speed depends on the location and moving direction



Widar: Decimeter-Level Passive Tracking via Velocity Monitoring with Commodity Wi-Fi, ACM MobiHoc 2017



- Issue II: Partial Speed
- Solution
  - Fuse information from multiple links
  - Joint parameter estimation (AoA, ToF, DFS, etc)



Widar2.0: Passive Human Tracking with a Single Wi-Fi Link, ACM MobiSys 2018



#### We need a better model

• To overcome these fundamental and practical problems.





### Contents

- Multipath Effect
  - Reflection Model
  - Scattering Model
- Geometrical Approaches
- Statistical Approaches
  - Speed Estimation
  - Motion Detection
  - Breathing Rate Estimation
- More Applications



## Scattering Model



Wu, C., Zhang, F., Hu, Y., & Liu, K. R.. GaitWay: Monitoring and Recognizing Gait Speed Through the Walls. IEEE TMC 2020.

Zhang, F., Chen, C., Wang, B., & Liu, K. R.. WiSpeed: A statistical electromagnetic approach for device-free indoor speed estimation. IEEE IOTJ, 2018.



# Statistical EM Approach

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KON



## Statistical EM Approach

- From  $\vec{E}_i(t, f)$  to CSI:
- In practice,  $\vec{E}_{Rx}(t, f)$  is a vector and cannot be measured by WiFi directly.
- Instead, the power of  $\vec{E}_{Rx}(t, f)$  is measured:

**Power of CSI:** 
$$G(t,f) \triangleq |H(t,f)|^2 = \|\vec{E}_{Rx}(t,f)\|^2 + \varepsilon(t,f)$$
  
**ACF of**  $G(t,f)$ :  $\rho_G(\tau,f) \approx C(f) \Big( E_d^2(f) \rho_{E_{ix}}^2(\tau,f) + E_s^2(f) \rho_{E_{ix}}(\tau,f) \Big)$ 

#### The model allows:

- Speed Estimation
- Motion Detection
- Breathing Rate Estimation





### Review: What is ACF?

- Correlation of a signal (the same variables) with a delayed/lagged copy of itself
- We only consider a discrete time series  $x[t], t = 1, \dots T$ , the ACF is

$$r[k] = \frac{\sum_{t=k+1}^{T} (x[t] - \bar{x})(x[t-k] - \bar{x})}{\sum_{t=1}^{T} (x[t] - \bar{x})^2}$$



## Review: What is ACF?

- Value range [-1, 1]



#### Passive Speed Estimation ----



## Speed Estimation with WiFi

• Estimate speed from patterns of  $\rho_H(\tau, f)$ 

$$\rho_H(\tau, f) = \frac{\sum_{i \in \Omega_d} \sigma_{F_i}^2(f) + \sigma^2(f)\delta(\tau)}{\sum_{i \in \Omega_d} \sigma_{F_i}^2(f) + \sigma^2(f)} \frac{J_0(kv\tau)}{\mathbf{0}^{\text{th}-\text{order Bessel function of the first kind}}$$



## Speed Estimation with WiFi

• Estimate speed from patterns of  $\rho_H(\tau, f)$ 

$$\rho_H(\tau, f) = \frac{\sum_{i \in \Omega_d} \sigma_{F_i}^2(f) + \sigma^2(f)\delta(\tau)}{\sum_{i \in \Omega_d} \sigma_{F_i}^2(f) + \sigma^2(f)} \frac{J_0(kv\tau)}{\mathbf{0}^{\text{th}-\text{order Bessel function of the first kincle}}$$







## Speed Estimation with WiFi

Comparison with Doppler-based methods



# Advantages of statistical approaches:

- Works in NLOS
- Location and orientation independent
- Complete speed (thus more accurate)



## **Application: Fall Detection**

#### Second leading cause

of accidental deaths worldwide highest among adults over 60

#### 646,000 deaths per year 80%+ in low/middle income areas

#### **37.3M severe falls per year** Adults 65+ suffer the most

#### Fall detection is difficult!

Cameras are privacy-intrusive Wearables are inaccurate and unfavorable UWB Radars have limited coverage Existing WiFi methods need training

#### Low detection rate



Hu, Y., Zhang, F., Wu, C., Wang, B., & Liu, K. R.. A WiFi-Based Passive Fall Detection System. IEEE ICASSP 2020.



# Fall Detection by Speed

#### Falls have distinct speed/acceleration patterns



香港大學 THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG





#### **Pattern Matching**

Time series of speed & acceleration

## Evaluation

香港大學 THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

#### **Offline Results**

Activities	Features	Amount	Methods	Features	Devices	Detection	False alarm
Fall	LOS	518	WiFall	Variance	3Tx/3Rx	87%	18%
	NLOS	328	RF-Fall	Spectrum	1Tx/2Rx	91%	11%
Non-Fall	LOS	344	FallDeFi	Spectrum	2Tx/2Rx	95%/82%	15%/22%
	NLOS	470	DeFall	Speed	1Tx/1Rx	96.0%	1.5%

#### **Real-time**



# Application: Gait Recognition

#### Gait as a Vital Sign

- Gait speed is termed as the sixth vital sign<sup>[1]</sup>
- Indicative and predictive for general health and functional status



5 SURPRISING WAYS YOUR WALKING SPEED REFLECTS YOUR HEALTH



[1] Stacy Fritz and Michelle Lusardi. 2009. White Paper: Walking Speed: the Sixth Vital Sign. Journal of Geriatric Physical Therapy 32, 2(2009), 2.

#### Gait as a Biometric Marker

- Walking is a complex function coordinating every body system
- Difficult to impersonate others' walking patterns





Wu, C., Zhang, F., Hu, Y., & Liu, K. R., GaitWay: Monitoring and Recognizing Gait Speed Through the Walls. IEEE TMC 2020.



## GaitWay: Gait Speed Recognition



HE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KON





#### Extract physically explainable and environmentally independent features

symmetry, smoothness, variability, periodicity, etc.

#### Whole-Home Motion Detection





Mission Impossible? I (1996) → ← IV (2011)





#### Whole-Home Motion Sensing

• Recall ACF of G(t, f):

$$\rho_G(\tau,f) = \frac{E_d^2(f)}{E_d^2(f) + \sigma^2(f)} \rho_\mu(\tau,f) + \frac{\sigma^2(f)}{E_d^2 + \sigma^2(f)} \delta(\tau)$$

If motion

$$\lim_{\tau \to 0} \rho_G(\tau, f) = \lim_{\tau \to 0} \frac{E_d^2(f)}{E_d^2(f) + \sigma^2(f)} \rho_\mu(\tau, f) > 0$$

- If no motion  $\lim_{\tau \to 0} \rho_G(\tau, f) = 0$ 

**Motion Statistic:** 

$$\widehat{\phi}(f) \triangleq \hat{\rho}_G \left(\tau = \frac{1}{F_s}, f\right)$$

Photo courtesy: Origin Wireless



Zhang, F., Wu, C., Wang, B., Lai, H. Q., Han, Y., & Liu, K. R.. WiDetect: Robust Motion Detection with a Statistical Electromagnetic Model. ACM IMWUT 2019



### **Statistical Motion Detection**

• When motion presents ( $\mathcal{H}_1$  hypothesis):

$$\lim_{\tau \to 0} \rho_G(\tau, f) = \lim_{\tau \to 0} \frac{E_d^2(f)}{E_d^2(f) + \sigma^2(f)} \rho_\mu(\tau, f) > 0$$

• When no motion presents ( $\mathcal{H}_0$  hypothesis):

$$\lim_{\tau \to 0} \rho_G(\tau, f) = 0$$

• Define *motion statistic* on subcarrier *f* as:

$$\hat{\phi}(f) \triangleq \hat{\rho}_G \left(\tau = \frac{1}{F_s}, f\right)$$



### **Statistical Motion Detection**



## Experiments





3x3 MIMO WiFi, 5.8GHz channel, 30-180Hz rate

- 1) Office: parameter study
- 2) Single **house**: coverage and PIR comparison
- 3) 1B1B **apartment**: 1-month deployment

Methods	Claimed FN	Claimed FP	Calibration
RASID	4.7%	3.8%	Yes
PILOT	10.0%	10.0%	Yes
E-Eyes	10.0%	1.0%	Yes
Omni-PHD	8.0%	7.0%	Yes
DeMan	5.9%	1.5%	Yes
CARM	2.0%	1.4 per hour	Yes
SIED	6.4%	2.0%	Yes
FreeSense	1.4%	0.5%	Yes
WiDetect	0.3%	0.0%	NO

## Experiments: Long-term & Coverage







#### Real-World Case Study Activity of Daily Living Monitoring



# Sleep Monitoring

·····

Sleep is vital Mentally & physically

10% suffer from chronic insomnia 1/3 of Americans short of sleep

#### **SMARS**

Sleep Monitoring via Ambient Radio Signals



Polysomnography(PSG) \$1300/night, too invasive





Photo courtesy: Origin Wireless

**Breathing + Motion** 

Zhang, F., Wu, C., Wang, B., Wu, M., Bugos, D., Zhang, H., & Liu, K. R. Smars: sleep monitoring via ambient radio signals. IEEE TMC 2019.



# **Breathing Signal**

- Measurement of Breathing Signal Using CSI
- Breathing is periodic

$$|H(t,f)|^2 = g(f)b(t - \Delta t_f)$$
  
channel gain breathing signal

$$\hat{\rho}_{G}(\tau, f) \approx k(f) \rho_{b}(\tau) + n(\tau, f),$$
  
ACF of  $b(t)$   
where  $k(f) \triangleq \frac{g^{2}(f)}{g^{2}(f) + \sigma^{2}(f)}$ , and  $n(\tau, f) \sim \mathcal{N}(0, \frac{1}{N}), \forall f, \forall \tau$ 



Photo courtesy: The Big Bang Theory





# Boosting Weak Breathing Signals

- Maximize Breathing Signal by Maximal Ratio Combining (MRC)
- Frequency diversity: frequency-selective fading



# Boosting Weak Breathing Signals

#### Breathing Signal Maximization Using MRC



# Diversity

- Frequency diversity
- Space diversity
- Time diversity



Wang, Beibei, et al. "The promise of radio analytics: A future paradigm of wireless positioning, tracking, and sensing." IEEE Signal Processing Magazine 35.3 (2018): 59-80.

## Instantaneous Breathing Estimation

• Features for Breathing Estimation



.

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

 Example of Breathing Estimation



# Motion & Breathing for Sleep Staging

#### Sleep/Wake Classification

- Motion ratio: the percentage of time when the motion is detected;
- Breathing ratio: the percentage of time when breathing signal is detected.

#### REM/NREM Classification

- Breathing rate variability: the variance of breathing estimates;
- Breathing rate deviation: the deviation of breathing estimates from average.



#### Wake/Sleep Classification



Rapid Eye Movement (REM)/Non-REM Staging

## Sleep Monitoring Results





## A Unified Framework

- All based on ACF
  - motion, speed, breathing
- A unified pipeline
  - A time series of CSI
  - Consider a specific window and calculate the ACF
  - Slide the window and continue to calculate the ACF
  - Find
    - The value of the first sample for motion
    - The first peak in the ACF for breathing or speed



### **CSI** Tools

- Intel 5300 NIC CSI Tool (2012, the first one)
  - Intel WiFi Wireless Link 5300 802.11n
  - 30 subcarriers
- Atheros CSI Tool (2015)
  - Qualcomm Atheros series
- Nexmon (2017)
  - Broadcom Wi-Fi Chips, can support measurement on phones!
- PicoScenes (2019)
  - 802.11ac/ax
  - Qualcomm Atheros AR9300 (QCA9300), Intel Wireless Link 5300 (IWL5300), Intel AX200 and Intel AX210.
- ESP32 CSI Tool
  - The only one commercially supported



# Even holds with sound signals!

- Do the same/similar properties hold for acoustics?
  - WiFi: Electromagnetic waves
  - Sound: Mechanical waves
- Sound Diffusion Model in Room Acoustics



Y. Zhang, W. Hou, Z. Yang, C. Wu, VeCare: Statistical Acoustic Sensing for Automotive In-Cabin Monitoring, NSDI'23

# Statistical Acoustic Sensing (SAS)

#### ACF of CSI resembles 0<sup>th</sup>-order Bessel function of its first kind.

A function of speed *v*, independent of moving directions and locations.

Acoustic Channel State Information (CSI)

$$H(f,t) = \sum_{i \in R_D} H_i(f,t) + \sum_{j \in R_S} H_j(f,t) + N(f,t)$$

Autocorrelation Function (ACF) of CSI

$$\rho(f,\tau) = \frac{\sum_{i \in R_D} 2\pi \sigma_i^2(f) + \sigma_N^2(f)\delta(\tau)}{\sum_{i \in R_D} 2\pi \sigma_i^2(f) + \sigma_N^2(f)} J_0(kv\tau)$$
$$\triangleq g(f)J_0(kv\tau), \ \tau \neq 0$$



- Motion:  $g(f) = \lim_{\tau \to 0} \rho(f, \tau) = \tilde{\rho} (f, \tau = 1/F_s)$ The value of the first sample in ACF

Breath:  $f_{breath} = 60/\tau_b$ Find the delay of the first peak in ACF

Speed: 
$$v = \frac{x_0}{k\tau_s} = \frac{x_0}{2\pi\tau_s}$$

Find the delay of the first peak in ACF

# Statistical Acoustic Sensing (SAS)





### VeCare: In-Cabin AI with SAS

VeCare: A early attempt for Child Presence Detection using commodity in-car audio devices

#### **Child Presence Detection**

Detect unattended children left in a car to avoid heatstroke deaths

#### **Child Vehicular Heatstroke Deaths**

**39 (one every 9 days) deaths per year, 1000+ children have died since 1990 in US \*** \*Data source: KidsAndCars.org



Y. Zhang, W. Hou, Z. Yang, C. Wu, VeCare: Statistical Acoustic Sensing for Automotive In-Cabin Monitoring, NSDI'23



#### VeCare: In-Cabin AI with SAS

(a)



#### **VeCare: SAS for Child Presence Detection**

#### CPD with no blind spot!



Y. Zhang, W. Hou, Z. Yang, C. Wu, VeCare: Statistical Acoustic Sensing for Automotive In-Cabin Monitoring, NSDI'23



#### **Respiration Monitoring**









## Quiz



#### • What is (most likely) going on given the following ACF of CSI?





## Questions

- What windows should we use for calculation?
- How to determine whether it is breathing or speed?
- How much computation is needed?





### More Questions

#### • Why not FFT?

• FFT is a (more) common tool for finding frequency/periodicity.

- Why not Deep Learning?
  - DL is now a popular tool for finding X.
  - $\rightarrow$   $\rightarrow$  Lecture on Deep Wireless Sensing
- Limitations of (current) WiFi sensing?





### Contents

- Multipath Effect
  - Reflection Model
  - Scattering Model
- Geometrical Approaches
- Statistical Approaches
  - Speed Estimation
  - Motion Detection
  - Breathing Rate Estimation
- More Applications



#### Person Re-ID



XModal-ID: Through-Wall Person Identification from Candidate Video Footage Using WiFi, MobiCom'19



# WiFi Imaging and Pose





[MobiCom 2020] Towards 3D Human Pose Construction Using WiFi



# WiFi Imaging



Figure 11: Through-wall reading: Wiffract enabling WiFi to image and read the letters of the word "BELIEVE" behind the wall of Area 3. The dashed lines represent the ground-truth while the solid lines represent our image.

#### Garden fence



#### Microwave oven





Figure 5: Sample experimental setup: 6 antennas of two laptops serve as receivers while a WiFi card of one laptop is used for transmission. A vertical structure carrying the RX antennas is mounted on a ground robot to synthesize an RX grid in the x-z plane, on which we measure WiFi CSI power measurements from three TX antennas (of one WiFi card) simultaneously.

Wiffract: A New Foundation for RF Imaging via Edge Tracing, MobiCom'22



# WiFi Imaging and Pose



Holography of Wi-fi Radiation, Physical Review Letters, 2017 Wiffract: A New Foundation for RF Imaging via Edge Tracing, MobiCom'22 DensePose From WiFi, arXiv:2301.00250v1 image based DensePose





WiFi based DensePose

## WiFi does more, but not everything

"





People might be a little freaked out now, in the sense that
internet service providers might locate what people are
doing at home but, no, we are still not there. The only
thing that this paper shows is that, in a very constrained
setting... [with] three receivers of Wi-Fi signal, there is
enough signal there for the fine-grained detection of
human body parts," said Fernando De la Torre, Carnegie
Mellon University Researcher.





# Sensing in 5G/6G

- Massive MIMO is standard
  - Many antennas!!
- Large bandwidths
  - e.g., 400MHz
- ISAC waveform design
  - Radar mode + comm mode





### Multipath: Foes or Friends?





#### #WiFiCanDoMore

#### • Reading material

 C. Wu, B. Wang, O. C. Au and K. J. R. Liu, "Wi-Fi Can Do More: Toward Ubiquitous Wireless Sensing," in *IEEE Communications Standards Magazine*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 42-49, June 2022, doi: 10.1109/MCOMSTD.0001.2100111.



## Questions?

• Thank you!

