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HORN ANTENNAS WITH UNIFORM POWER PATTERNS AROUND THEIR AXES

by

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Memorandum No. ERL-M164
23 May 1966

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Summary  It is shown that a linearly polarized horn which has the same power pattern in all planes through the axis can be made from a synthetic material for which the boundary conditions on $\mathcal{E}$ and $\mathcal{H}$ are the same. An arbitrarily close approximation to this requirement can be realised by using a grooved circular horn.

INTRODUCTION

For many purposes one needs a horn antenna having equal $E$ and $H$ plane patterns. Here we shall be concerned with the more general problem of making the power patterns equal in all planes.

* The research reported herein was supported in part by the National Science Foundation under Grant GK-676.
through the axis. The efficient-illumination of a parabolic antenna is one application for this kind of antenna and the accompanying paper by H. C. Minnett and B. M. Thomas describes the development of this approach. Another important application occurs in connection with polarization measurements in radio astronomy. Polarization is measured by measuring the powers $\langle E_x E_x^T \rangle$ and $\langle E_y E_y^T \rangle$ and the correlation factor $\langle E_x E_y^T \rangle$, or in some equivalent way. In the case of a paraboloidal radio telescope, the complex signals $E_x$ and $E_y$ represent two orthogonal components received at the focus.

Suppose the $x$ and $y$ axes are chosen as the $E$ and $H$ planes of the focal feed horn, so that the horn measures $E_x$. The measurement of $E_y$ requires that the feed horn effectively or actually be turned through $90^\circ$. Now consider the cross section of the antenna beam on the celestial sphere. Ideally we would like it to be circular, but if the $E$ and $H$ patterns of the horn are not equal it is clear that the beam will not have this circular symmetry. Consequently, when the horn is turned through $90^\circ$ to measure $E_y$, the telescope sees a different area of the sky. For example in an extreme case it might happen that a randomly polarized source was picked up when the horn was oriented to measure $E_x$ but not when it was oriented to measure $E_y$. The "measured polarization" of the randomly polarized source would then be $100\%$ linear in the $E_x$ direction. It will be seen from this example that precise uniformity of the power pattern around the axis is
essential in polarization measurements of the celestial source
distribution.

Thus if $E_{\theta}$ and $E_{\phi}$ represent the field transmitted by the horn,
$\theta$ and $\phi$ being the usual spherical coordinates for colatitude and
longitude, we want to make $|E_{\theta}|^2 + |E_{\phi}|^2$ independent of $\phi$. Starting
from this requirement it will be shown that the walls of the horn have
to be such that the boundary conditions on $E_{\theta}$ are the same as those
on $H_{\phi}$. This condition can be synthesised in practice over a limited
band by using a circular waveguide and horn with a ridged surface, as
described in the accompanying paper by Minnett and Thomas. To see
how polarization measurements would be made with such a horn suppose
we measure $E_{x}$ by placing an electric dipole parallel to the $x$ axis in
the waveguide. We can measure $E_{y}$ by replacing the electric dipole
with a magnetic dipole also along the $x$ axis. Since the entire structure
affects $E$ and $H$ in the same way it is clear that $E_{\theta}$ in the first measure-
ment is equal to $H_{\phi}$ in the second. The power patterns in the two
measurements are therefore equal, and so we have a true measure of
polarization.

THEORY

At the outset it is clear that if we want the power pattern to be
independent of $\phi$, we need an antenna which is also independent of
$\phi$: in other words a circular waveguide and circular horn at the focus
of a circular parabolid. In practice the cross section of the wave-

guide is chosen to cut off all except the modes which vary as exp(±jφ).

Therefore the field radiated by the horn can be expressed as

\[ E = a \exp(jφ) + b \exp(-jφ) \]  

(1)

where \( a \) and \( b \) depend on \( θ \) but are independent of \( φ \). The linearly

polarized modes in the waveguide are represented by the functions

cos \( φ \) and sin \( φ \): they consist of equal amounts of the exp(±jφ) modes.

Thus the linearly polarized patterns of the circular horn are repre-

sented by Eq. (1) when \( a \) and \( b \) represent equal powers. The condition

for this is

\[ a \cdot a^x = |a|^2 = |b|^2 = b \cdot b^x \]  

(2)

We see from (1) that \( a \) and \( b \) represent the electric fields for

the exp(±jφ) modes. Because the structure is independent of \( φ \) it is

reasonably clear that, apart from a constant, \( a \) and \( b \) will be the

same functions of \( θ \) except that the phase of \( b_φ \) relative to \( b_θ \) will

differ from that for \( a \) by 180° i.e.

\[ \frac{a_φ}{a_θ} = -\frac{b_φ}{b_θ} \]  

(3)
This can be derived rigorously by expressing $a$ and $b$ as general combinations of TE and TM fields. Thus the TE part of $a \exp j\phi$ is expressed in terms of a scalar $f(\theta) \exp j\phi$ and that of $b \exp(-j\phi)$ by $C f(\theta) \exp(-j\phi)$, $C$ being constant. The standard formulas then show that (3) applies to the TE parts. Similarly for the TM parts. So (3) holds in the general case.

Combining (2) and (3) we see that

$$|a_\theta|^2 = |b_\theta|^2 \quad (4)$$

or

$$a_\theta = b_\theta \exp j\psi'.$$

On referring to the definition (1) of $a$ and $b$ we see that the position of the plane $\phi = 0$ can be chosen to make $\psi' = 0$. Thus

$$a_\theta = b_\theta \quad \text{and} \quad a_\phi = -b_\phi \quad (5)$$

Substitution in (1) gives

$$E_\theta = a_\theta \cos \phi \quad (6)$$

$$E_\phi = j a_\phi \sin \phi \quad (7)$$

These, then, are the general formulas for the linearly polarized case with $a_\theta$ and $a_\phi$ independent of $\phi$. 

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We now put in the requirement that the power pattern be independent of $\phi$: $|E_\theta|^2 + |E_\phi|^2$ must be independent of $\phi$. Substitution from (6) and (7) shows that this requires

$$|a_\theta|^2 = |a_\phi|^2.$$  \hspace{1cm} (8)

In words: - for the $\exp j\phi$ excitation, $E_\theta$ and $E_\phi$ must have the same magnitude for all $\theta$.

Now $a_\theta$ represents a certain state of elliptical polarization.

From (8) we have

$$a_\theta = a_\phi \exp j\psi.$$

It will be found that this means the polarization ellipse is inclined at $45^\circ$ to the $\theta \phi$ directions or, in case $\psi = 90^\circ$, the polarization is circular. It will also be found that the polarization on axis $\theta = 0$ is circular in any case, as is well-known for the $\exp j\phi$ excitation. It seems reasonably clear that the first case, that of elliptical polarization inclined at $45^\circ$ to the coordinate directions, can be ruled out as impractical. Actually it could be generated by structures like the "sheath helix" i.e., cylindrical structures which are independent of $\phi$ but have anisotropically transparent walls. But such structures are not useful as feeds for parabolic antennas and a more general consideration of the focussing problem does indeed rule out the elliptically
polarized case. Therefore the far field of the horn must be circularly polarized everywhere when excited in the \( \exp(j\phi) \) mode.

The properties of such fields have already been worked out: they are basic to the theory of frequency independent antennas.\(^1\) They are such that the field vectors \( \mathbf{E} \) and \( \mathbf{H} \) are, apart from a constant, the same everywhere, in the near field as well as at infinity.

Specifically

\[
\mathbf{E} = \pm j Z_0 \mathbf{H}
\]

(9)

with \( Z_0 \) the intrinsic impedance of space (377 ohms approximately).

Any solution of Maxwell's equations can be expressed as a combination of the two types. The elementary source for such fields is the combination of an electric and a magnetic dipole aligned in the same direction at the same point with moments related by the factor \( j Z_0 \). Any field of type (9) can be expressed in terms of a single scalar function \( f \) by the formula

\[
\pm j Z_0 \mathbf{H} = \mathbf{E} = \nabla \left( \frac{\partial f}{\partial z} \right) + k^2 \hat{z} f \pm k \nabla \times \hat{z} f
\]

(10)

with

\[
k^2 = \omega^2 \mu \epsilon = \left( \frac{2\pi}{\lambda} \right)^2 \quad \text{and} \quad Z_0^2 = \frac{\mu}{\epsilon}
\]

(11)

\( \hat{z} \) = unit vector in fixed direction.

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The first two terms can be interpreted as the electric dipole component and the last as the magnetic dipole component.

We see from (9) that such fields are supported by any structure which has the same effect on \( E \) as on \( H \). An ordinary metal surface does not have this effect: it forces the normal component of \( H \) to zero but the normal component of \( E \) is then maximum. Thus a synthetic surface is needed. Consider a grooved metal surface in the \( z \times x \) plane, the width of the grooves being equal to the width of the metal ridge between them. When the width of the groove, denoted by \( a \), is infinitesimal compared to the wavelength \( \lambda \), the field within the groove must have \( E \) perpendicular to the sides of the groove. In other words, if the grooves are parallel to the \( z \) axis, \( E_x \) is the only component of \( E \), and it is independent of \( x \). Consequently \( H_y \) and \( H_z \) are the only components of \( H \) in the groove and they depend only on \( y \) and \( z \). If the variation with \( z \) is as \( e^{ikz \cos \psi''} \) where \( \psi \) is a fixed parameter, the variation with \( y \) is as \( e^{\pm jky \sin \psi''} \). It follows that if the depth of groove, \( d \), fits \( 4d \sin \psi'' = \lambda \), \( H_z = 0 \) at the top of the groove. Also \( E_z = 0 \) at the edge of the groove, so as \( a \to 0 \), \( E_z \) and \( H_z \) vanish at the surface formed by the edges of the sheets which form the sides of the grooves. Thus the effect of this surface on \( E \) is the same as on \( H \) for all incident fields with the same \( \psi'' \), i.e. the same variation along the grooves. This applies to a circular waveguide with the grooves cut
perpendicular to the axis for all waveguide modes with a common $e^{j\theta}$ variation, but not if the grooves are parallel to the axis. The formula for $d$ in this case is, however, different. It is expressed in terms of Bessel functions $J_1$ and $N_1$: -

\[ J_1 \left( k \left[ b - d \right] \right) N_1(kb) = N_1 \left( k \left[ b - d \right] \right) J_1(kb) \quad (12) \]

where $b$ is the radius of the bottom of the grooves. Thus a circular waveguide and horn fabricated of such a synthetic material will support the kind of field required to give a power pattern independent of $\theta$ with linear polarization.

The tests described by Minnett and Thomas indicate excellent performance from such a model but a considerable amount of work remains to be done to determine the bandwidth and effect of groove width.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the help of CSIRO Division of Radio Physics, Australia and particularly the cordial cooperation with H. C. Minnett and B. M. Thomas.