Deep UV micro-LED arrays for optical communications

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ULTRA PARALLEL VISIBLE LIGHT COMMUNICATIONS

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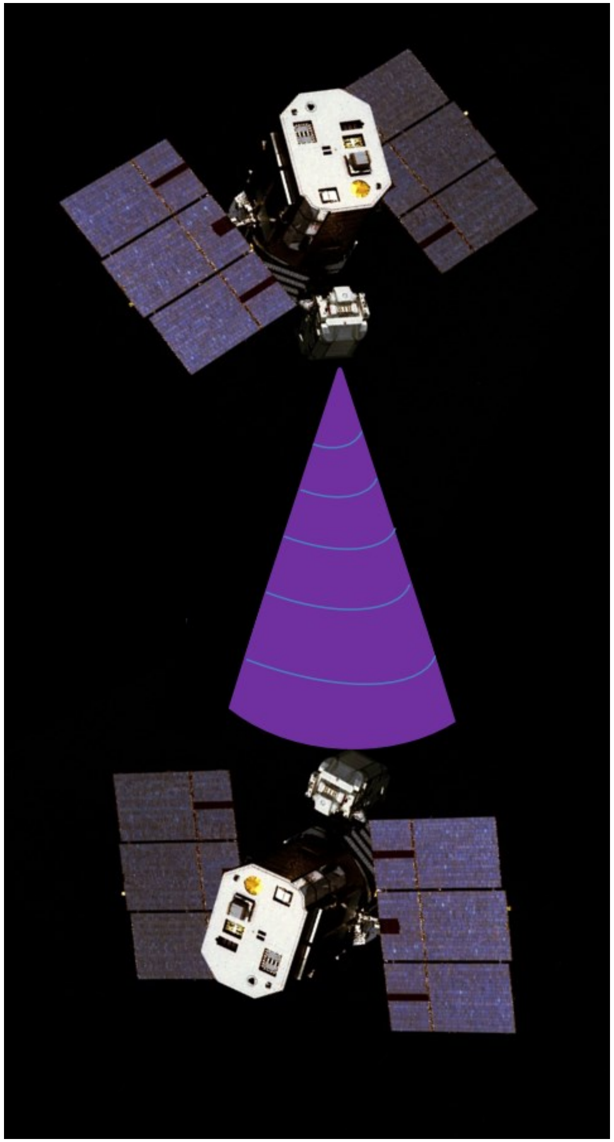
- GaN-based μLED array
- Design, fabrication and performance of the UV-C μLED array
- Free-space optical communication based on the UV-C μLED array
- Summary and future work

Optical communication based on UV band

UV band based optical communication system

- **Advantages**
  - ➢ Ultraviolet radiation absorbed by the ozone layer in Earth's stratosphere[1]
    - o High-security communication link in the upper atmosphere
    - o Data transmission with low solar background noise for outdoor communication
  - ➢ Strongly scattering in the air caused by abundant molecules and aerosols
    - o Non-line-of-sight short-range optical communication
- **Disadvantages**
  - ➢ Quite low data transmission rate compared with visible light communication
    - o Low modulation speed of conventional deep UV light source

Need to develop new deep UV light sources with high data transmission performance



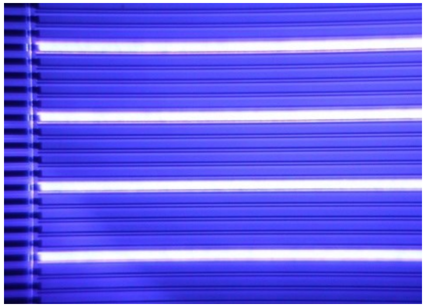
[1]*Zhengyuan, Xu., Ultraviolet Communications. Topics in Optical Communications, 2008.*

GaN-based µLED array

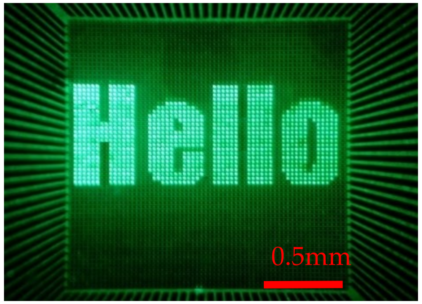
GaN-based micro-LED (µLED) array with element size less than 100 µm

- **Advantages**
  - ➢ Higher operation current & power densities
  - ➢ Excellent thermal properties
    - o Heat dissipation through high surface-to-volume ratio
  - ➢ Higher modulation bandwidth over 600 MHz[1]
    - o Small resistance-capacitance constant
    - o High operation current density leading to the short carrier lifetime

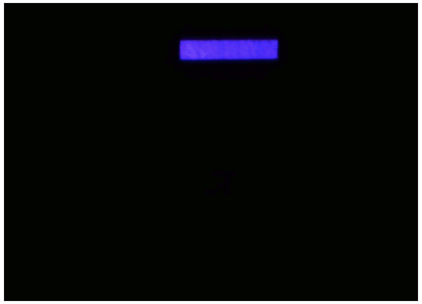
- **Excellent performance for visible light communications[2]:**
  - ➢ Over 7 Gb/s OFDM visible light communication achieved by using a single µLED



Micro-stripes



Matrix-addressable



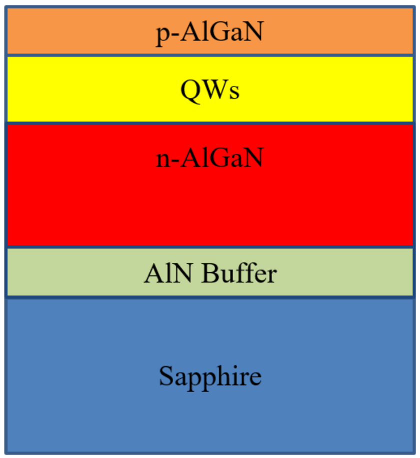
Individually-addressable via CMOS driver arrays

[1] ***Islim, M.S., et al., Towards 10 Gb/s OFDM-based visible light communication using a GaN violet micro-LED. Photonics Research, 2017.***

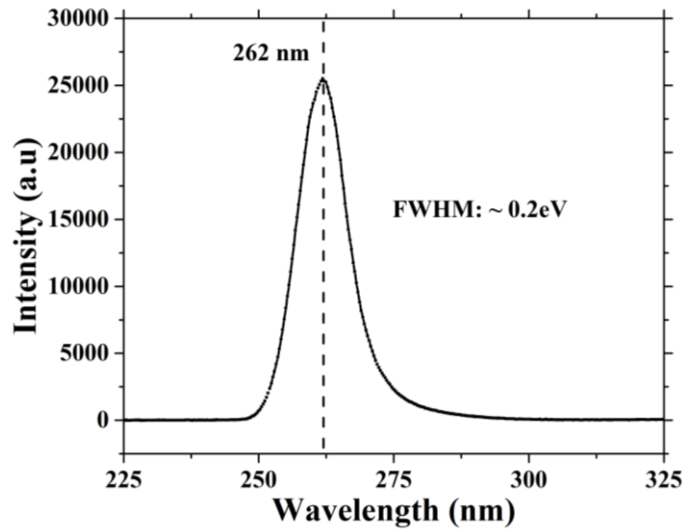
[2] ***S. Rajbhandari et al., "A review of gallium nitride LEDs for multi-gigabit-per-second visible light data communications", Semicond. Sci. Technol., 32, 023001 (2017).***

Design, fabrication and performance of the UV-C µLED array

GaN based UV-C LED wafer

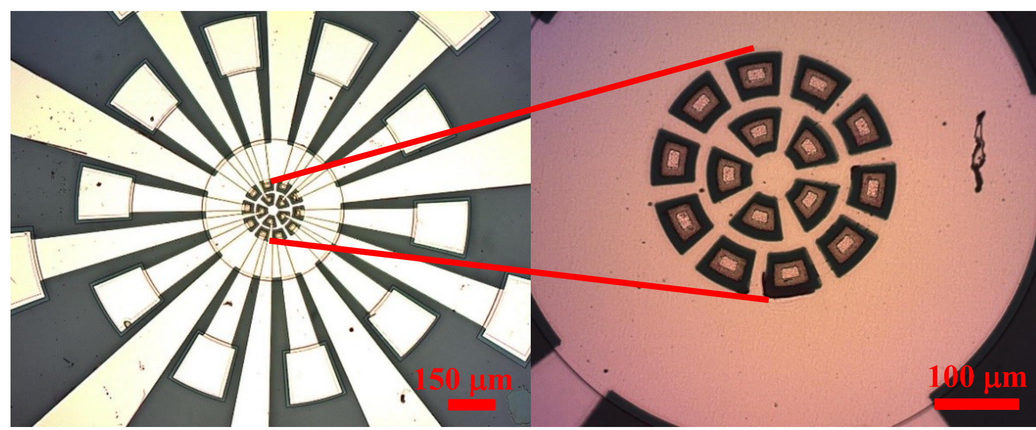


Typical deep UV LED wafer structure[1]



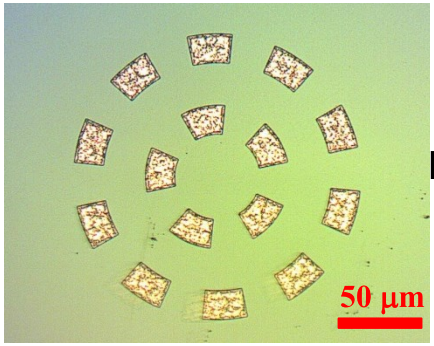
Design of 15-segment array

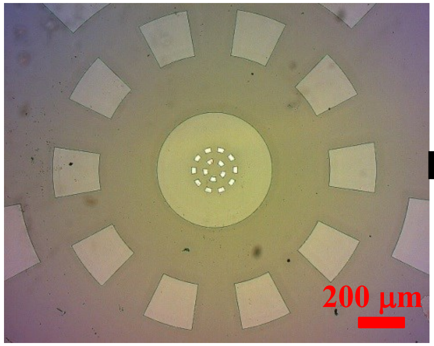
- Flip-chip configuration
- Emission area of each pixel is roughly equal to a circular pixel with a diameter of 26 µm

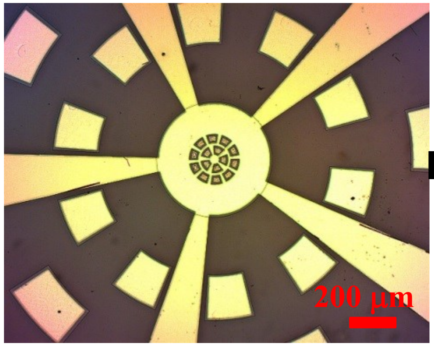


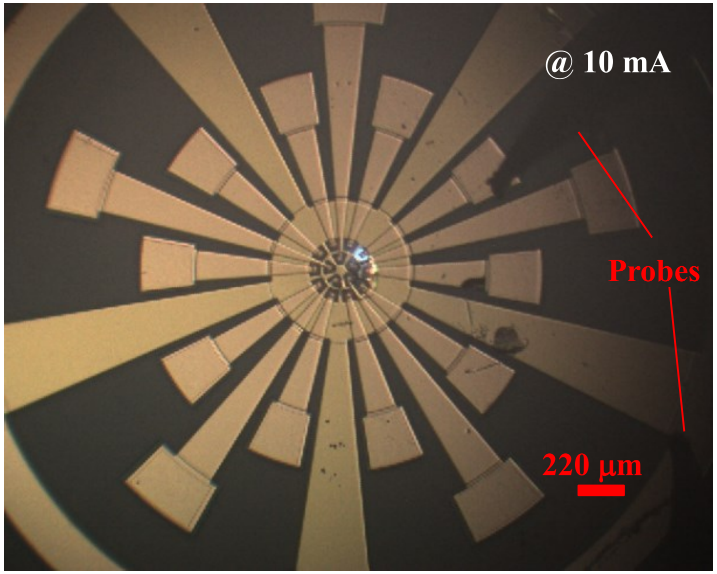
[1] *Zetian, Mi., et al., III-Nitride Semiconductor Optoelectronics. Elsevier Science & Technology, 2017.*

Design, fabrication and performance of the UV-C μLED array





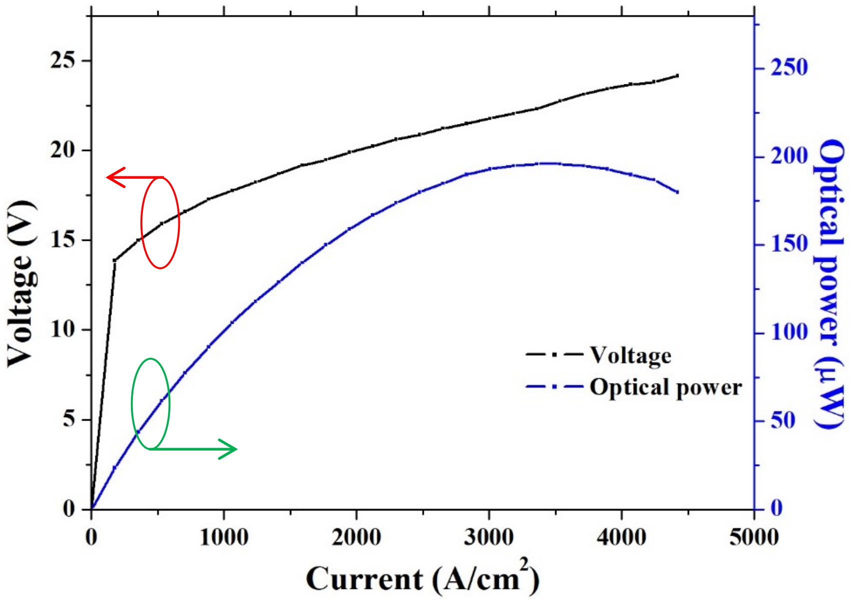




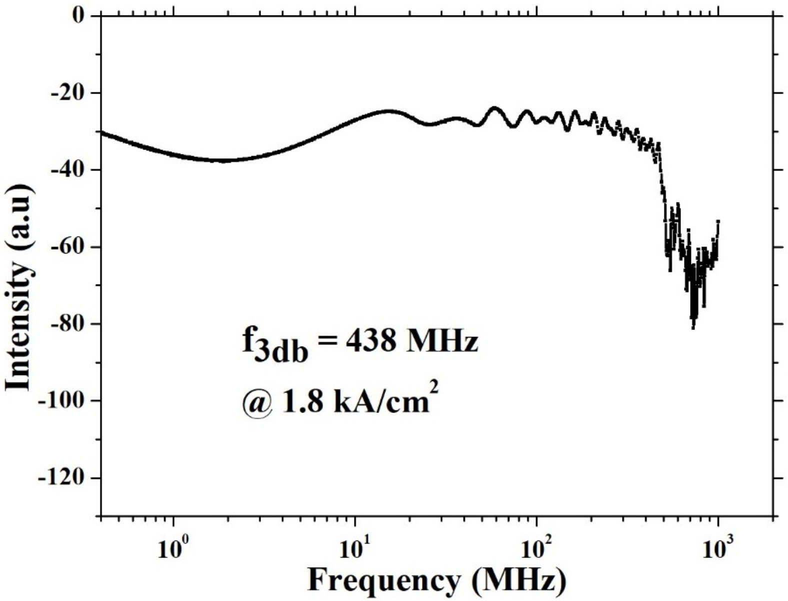
- Pd as p-type contact and reflecting mirror
- Ti/Au as metal track and n-type contact
- Two ICP etching steps to further reduce the capacitance of μLED array

Design, fabrication and performance of the UV-C μLED array

Electrical and optical performance



Electrical to electrical bandwidth



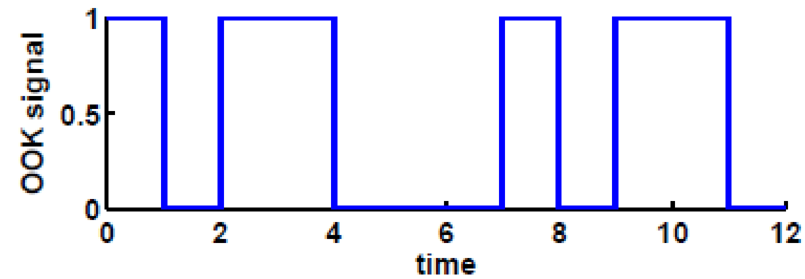
- **Over 3.4 kA/cm² DC operation current density for a single μLED element (20 mA)**
- **Over 34 W/cm² optical power density for a single μLED element (196 μW)**
- **Over 400 MHz electrical to electrical modulation bandwidth for a single μLED element at 1.8 kA/cm²**
- **Bandwidth performance is limited by the APD detector used**

Free-space optical communication based on the UV-C μLED array

Modulation scheme used for optical communication demonstration

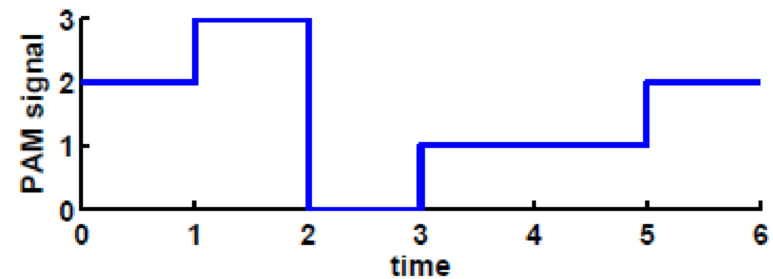
Transmitting binary bit sequences (eg. 101100010110…),
usually combined into multi-bit *symbols*

On-Off Keying



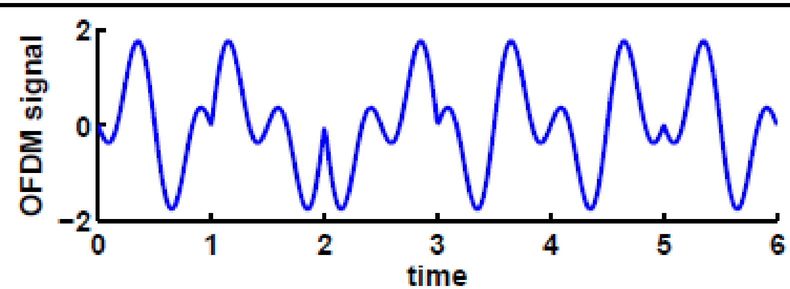
Pulse Amplitude Modulation, 2^n levels

PAM



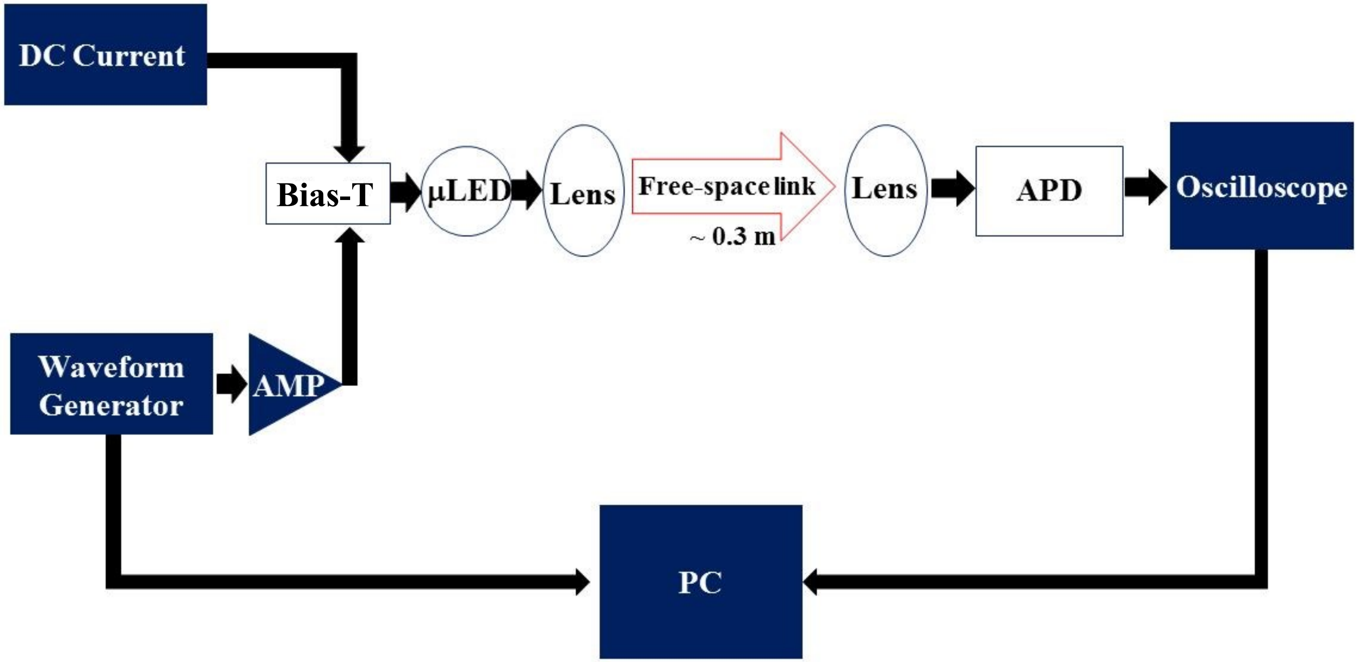
Orthogonal Frequency Division Multiplexing

OFDM



Free-space optical communication based on the UV-C µLED array

Experiment set-up for optical communication



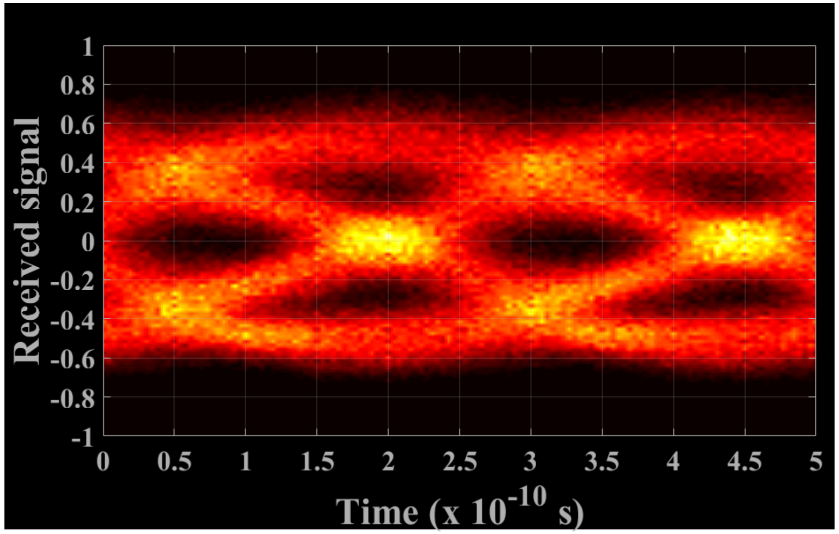
- Waveform Generator: Keysight 81180B
- AMP: ZHL-6A-S+
- Bias-T: SHF BT45-D
- APD detector: APD430A(/M)
- Oscilloscope: MS 07104B

- DC bias of OOK: 8 mA
- DC bias of PAM-4 and OFDM: 10 mA
- Peak to peak voltage of OOK: 2V
- Peak to peak voltage of PAM-4 and OFDM: 7.11 V
- 400 MHz bandwidth used in OOK
- 500 MHz bandwidth used in PAM-4 and OFDM

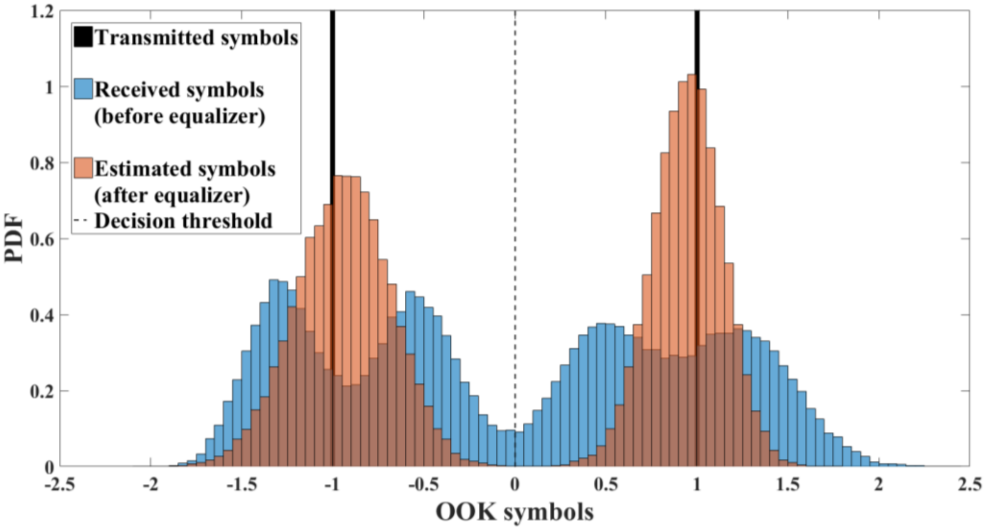
Free-space optical communication based on the UV-C μLED array

OOK @ 800 Mbps

Eye diagram



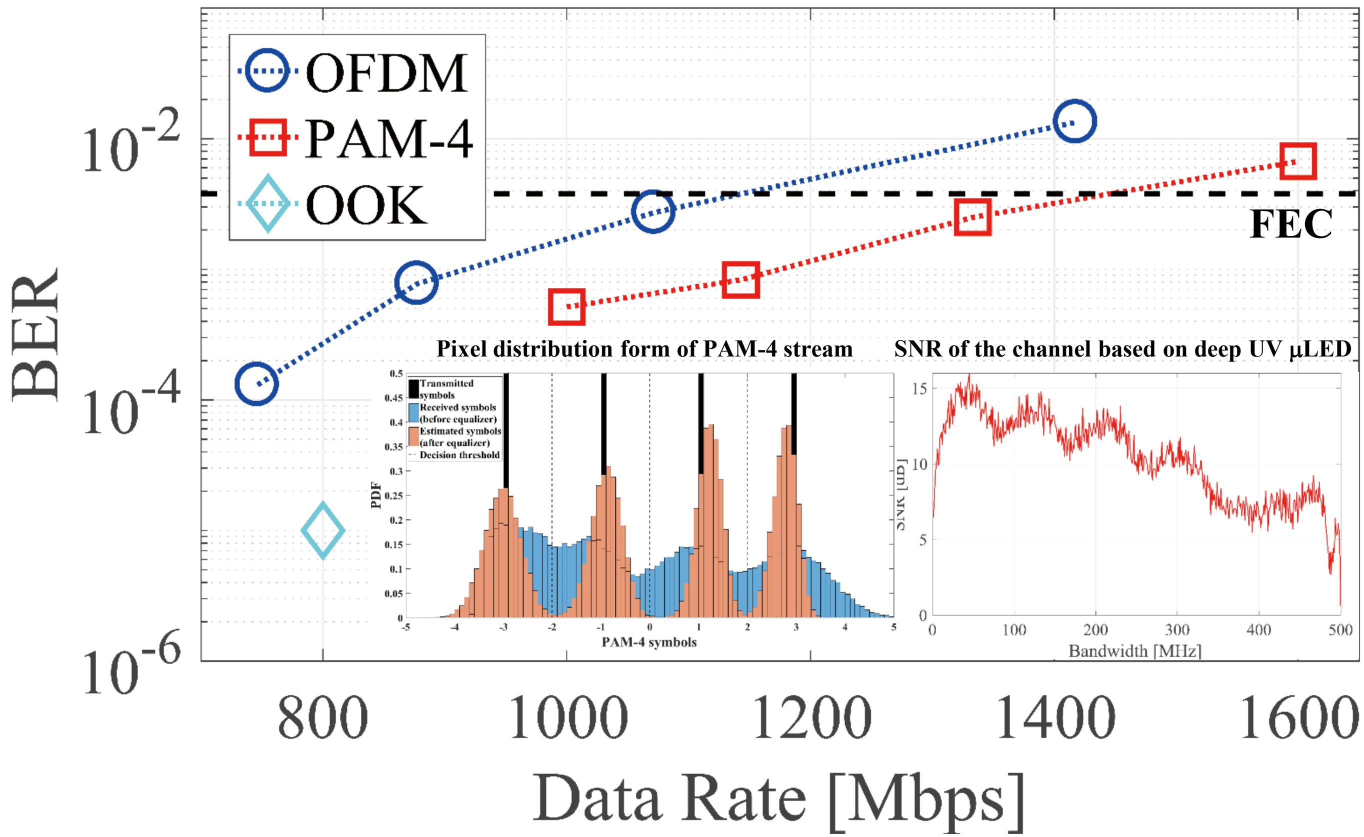
Pixel distribution form



- Source of distortion: the additive noise, attenuation in the channel, and inter-symbol interference
- Adaptive equalizer: based on recursive least squares updating algorithm is used to mitigate the distortion
- 800 Mbps data rate is achieved at minimum BER using OOK modulation scheme

Free-space optical communication based on the UV-C μLED array

Data rate of OOK, PAM-4 and OFDM modulation schemes



- 1.1 Gbps data rate is achieved at the forward error correction level using OFDM
- 1.4 Gbps data rate is achieved at the forward error correction level using PAM-4
- The data transmission performance of the UV μLED element is limited by the APD detector

Summary and future work

- ❖ The data rate achieved is more than 10 times higher than previously published work
- ❖ Longer data transmission distance when using a single UV-C LED element as a light source

- ➤ Measured μLED element in this work without heatsink
  - ○ New design to improve the optical power
  - ○ Apply high bandwidth photodetector

Comparison of UV communication system [1]

Light source	Modulation Scheme	Photo Detector	Transmission Power	Channel Length	Data Rate
265 nm mercury-xenon lamp	PPM	PMT	25W	1.6 km	1.2 Mbps
253 nm mercury-argon lamp	PPM	PMT	5W	0.5 km	10 kbps
253 nm low pressure mercury lamp	FSK	PMT	-----	6 m	1.2 kbps
265 nm LED arrays	OOK/PPM	PMT	43 mW	10 m	2.4 kbps
294 nm LED	OFDM	APD	190 μW	8 cm	71 Mbps
262 nm μLED	PAM-4/OFDM	APD	196 μW	30 cm	>1 Gbps

- **PPM:** pulse-position modulation
- **PMT:** photomultiplier tube
- **FSK:** Frequency-shift keying

[1] *Xiaobin, Sun., et al., 71-Mbit/s ultraviolet-B LED communication link based on 8-QAM-OFDM modulation. Optical express, 2017.*

Acknowledgements

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