Compact Attitude Determination and Control System for Small Satellites

Nicholas A. Dallmann, Clifford M. Fortgang, Michael A. G. Gacusan, John P. Martinez, Michael C. Proicou, Daniel N. Seitz, Paul S. Stein, Adam Warniment

ndallmann@lanl.gov

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LANL Agile Space Background

- Goal to realize orders of magnitude lower total cost of ownership
  - Regular incorporation of new technologies and improvements to manufacturing
  - Lower development costs (COTS parts, flexible part qualification, common software)
  - Lower launch costs by making satellite small and light weight (high volume efficiency)
  - Lower operational costs through simplicity and automation (tactically controlled)
  - Tailor the risk to the tolerance of the customer, the budget, and the mission

- To date, LANL CubeSats and supporting ground stations have been developed together as systems
  - Designed for specific, operationally relevant, missions
  - Keeping it simple and low cost have been strong drivers

- All development has been done at LANL by its multidisciplinary Agile Space Team
LANL CubeSat Projects

- **Perseus Pathfinder:**
  - Launched 4 satellites Dec 2010
  - Passive attitude control with permanent magnets and hysteresis rods

- **Prometheus Bock 1:**
  - Launched 8 satellites Nov 2013
  - Successfully demonstrated active attitude control with many lessons learned

- **Prometheus Block 2:**
  - Expecting to launch 10 satellites Summer 2016
  - ADCS design improvements
Hosting Payloads a Driver for Improved ADCS

- Prometheus Block 2 will support payload hosting:
  - Flexible digital / power interface connector
  - Bolt holes
- Prometheus is a 1.5U satellite
- A 1.5U payload volume can be bolted on
- Prometheus will provide
  - Power and power control
  - Communications to/from the ground
  - Pointing
- Hosting connector doubles as a test connector
On Orbit Operations and Development

- Prometheus is a configured, not scripted system
  - Total cost of ownership, including operations, is a major design driver
  - The satellite is commanded with a list of target locations (for example the ground station at LANL)
  - The satellite propagates its location, the location of the targets, and the access to the Sun on board
  - The satellite automatically determines its orientation and performs the necessary maneuvers

- ADCS is developed and tested on orbit
  - Does not rely solely on ground verification of the software
  - The system is designed so the power and communications systems will function in any orientation
  - The ADCS is completely reprogrammable on orbit (code upload is handled automatically by the ground station)
  - During Block 1, a fully automated capability of uplinking a new configuration, automatically performing an attitude control test, and then downlinking the log files for ground processing.
Inside the Prometheus Block 1 Satellite

- Analog Receiver & Antenna Assembly
- High Band SDR
- Low Band SDR
- Attitude Control Module
- Command Module
- Power Assembly
Block 1 Attitude Determination and Control (ADCS)

- Fully reprogrammable on orbit
- Sensors:
  - Sun vector
  - Magnetic field vector
  - 3-axis Gyro
- Actuators:
  - Momentum wheels
  - Low torque magnetic torquer coil
Block 2 ADCS

- Improving from lessons learned on Block 1
  - Replacing single coil with 3 orthogonal torque rods
  - Increasing wheel momentum storage
  - Adding star field sensor (SFS)
  - Adding GPS receiver
Block 1 Attitude Sensors

- Block 1 relies on magnetometer and a combination of a SVS and gyro to provide attitude knowledge

- Sun Vector Sensor (SVS)
  - Successfully demonstrated on Block 1
  - Adding an automated calibration to each unit for Block 2

- Magnetometer
  - Successfully demonstrated on Block 1
  - Re-using on Block 2 with no changes

- Gyro
  - Successfully demonstrated on Block 1
  - Zero rate bias and sensitivity versus temperature will be calibrated for Block 2
Star Field Sensor (SFS)

- Block 2 will maintain Block 1 sensors with the addition of an SFS
- Improve accuracy of overall attitude knowledge, especially in eclipse
  - Attitude determination of SFS <0.5°
Momentum Wheels

- 4 kinematically redundant wheels in a pyramid configuration
  - Wheels can be stopped and started for power savings
  - A single wheel failure is tolerable
  - Torque distribution null-space exploited to prevent unnecessary wheel excursions

- Block 1 Momentum Wheels:
  - Conservative design in volume and robustness to launch loads
  - Momentum storage somewhat undersized (complicating the control algorithms)
  - Design not easily scaled to support wheels with higher inertia

- Block 2 Momentum Wheels:
  - Momentum storage has been increased
  - New design is more scalable to support future, larger, platforms
Momentum Wheels Simulations

- 180° Rotation Maneuver with a non-zero initial vehicle angular velocity
- Block 1 wheel assembly completes maneuver but with little margin on wheel angular velocity limits (50 to 380 rps)
- Block 2 completes maneuver easily and can utilize more of the motor torque to complete it 5x quicker
Magnetic Torquers

- Momentum management is performed with magnetic torquers
  - Dissipate angular momentum imparted to the SV during deployment and/or differential drag

- **Block 1: Single torque coil**
  - Limited torque due to lack of ferrous material
    - Momentum dumping would take significant time and energy
    - Risk to project should large momentum dump be required
  - Single axis limits momentum dumping about that axis

- **Block 2: Three orthogonal torque rods**
  - New design includes ferrous material enabling significantly greater torque for a given power
  - Better momentum dumping possible with three axis rods
  - A trade study was performed between two common methods of torque rod control
Magnetic Torque Rod Simulation

- B-dot controllers have been compared
- Bang-Bang
  - Residual angular velocity about the Earth’s magnetic field vector remains
  - Not energy efficient
- Proportional
  - Significantly lower energy consumption
  - Cancels much more of the total angular velocity
  - Only slightly more complicated to implement
- Both algorithms benefit from being run multiple times with off periods, reducing momentum in stages

Comparing Torque Rod Algorithms

[Graph showing comparison of Bang-Bang, 2-Stage, and Proportional algorithms]
Satellite Navigation Library

- **New capability and a new paradigm**
  - Single software library for all system navigation needs
  - Library can be compiled for all processors within the system (both in space and on the ground)
  - Developed at LANL for Prometheus (GOTS) available/extensible for other missions

- **Library:**
  - Orbit propagation (Block 1) and determination (Block 2)
  - Reference vector (Sun & mag field) modeling and star field catalogs
  - Attitude determination and control (targeting)
  - Near-optimal eigenaxis rotation
  - Ground station (Doppler correction, antenna pointing)

- Physics/Mission simulation
On-Orbit Large Orientation Change Example Test

- ADCS is turned on at time 0 min in plots to the right
- This is a high control loop gain test demonstrating functionality while highlighting areas of improvement moving from Block 1 to Block 2
  - At about 1 min, wheel #2 hits speed limit and torque is redistributed
  - Wheels 1 & 3 are at the high end of their velocity range and cannot supply all of the desired torque
  - The maneuver becomes non-optimal for about 1 min
- Between ~6 and ~14 min, vehicle holds solar panels normal to Sun
  - Only varying a few degrees
  - Note -Z (Sun facing) Sun sensor has high current
- At ~14 min, SV automatically begins a maneuver to a new orientation