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The Feasibility of Low-Cost, Dual-Polarized, Phase-Tilt Antenna Arrays for Dense Radar Networks

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Abstract

This document address the feasibility of low-cost, dual-polarized, X-band phased array antennas for use in dense radar networks for weather surveillance. The "phase-tilt" architecture under investigation combines one-dimensional, electronic beam steering with mechanical actuation (tilting) to achieve a low-cost design capable of rapid, two-dimensional

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beam positioning without the use of a large scanning pedestal. This architecture is less complex and costly than a full, two-dimensional "phase-phase" array. In addition to meeting requirements for cost, it has the potential to meet requirements for off-axis polarization performance and other key requirements. A prototype antenna already has been designed, fabricated and tested. It defines a new state-of-the-art for remote sensing of weather using small radars. The prototype antenna also serves as a test bed and proof of concept for exploring a potential future network comprised of many antennas arranged in a dense network. This dissertation reviews the current state-of-the-art (in weather radars, dense radar networks, dual-polarized radars, and phased arrays); presents the design, implementation, testing, and validation experiments of the prototype array; and establishes performance requirements for this technology for deployment in future networks of small weather radars.

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