Application of spherical Slepian functions to aeromagnetic data and in crustal field modelling

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Models of the crustal magnetic field are typically represented using spherical harmonic coefficients. Rather than spherical harmonics, spherical Slepian functions (hereafter just Slepian functions) can be employed to produce a locally and also globally orthogonal basis in which to optimally represent the data in a region up to a given degree. The region can have any arbitrary shape and size [Ref 1].

In this poster we show some of the possible applications of Slepian functions to aeromagnetic data studies:

- optimally separate a crustal field model into its oceanic and continental regions in order to investigate the spectral content (Figures 1 and 2)
- compactly describe regional spherical harmonics in a sparse manner (Figure 3)
- reconstruct a smooth function from a series of input data points (Figure 4)

Spatial and spectral decomposition

Slepian functions can be tailored to be either band- or space-limited, allowing a trade-off between spectral and spatial concentration in the region and leakage beyond. It is only necessary to solve for N Slepian coefficients to optimally concentrate the energy of the Slepian functions into the region of interest. N = (L+1)/2R, where L is the so-called Shannon Number, R is the maximum spherical harmonic degree and R is the area of the region of interest in the full sphere.

We optimally separate the spherical harmonic coefficients of a crustal field model, MF7 [2], into its oceanic and continental regions in order to investigate the spectral content of each part [3]. The spectral power of each region is examined over degrees L = 16-133 (Figure 1). We compare the resulting oceanic spectrum to a forward Vertically Magnetised model [4] to check the decomposition is reasonable (Figure 2).

Similar analyses can be applied to smaller regions (e.g. aeromagnetic surveys).

Approximation of a regional model

It is possible to use Slepian functions to describe spatially-limited areas in an efficient manner. The upfront cost comes from computing the basis functions (only once).

Figure 3 shows how to compactly represent the magnetic field for an area of Africa.

Reconstruction using sparse data

Slepian functions can be used to reconstruct a smooth function from a limited set of data. Figure 4 shows how the radial magnetic field can be reconstructed from a sparsely sampled set of data. The misfit decreases with increasing numbers of input data.

Discussion

Slepian functions can be effectively used in aeromagnetic applications for storage and analysis of data sets. Like spherical harmonic modelling, Slepian functions retain the long wavelength parts of the signal. Hence, they do not work quite so well on restricted bandwidths.

References

Figure 1: Decomposition of the MF7 crustal field model. Left panels show the radial component of the field over degree L = 16 - 133: (a) input; (b) continental region; (c) oceanic region. The boundary between the continental and oceanic crust is outlined in green and includes submarine continental shelves. Right panels show the spectral decompositions: (a) unweighted spectra; (b) area-weighted spectra. Note there is some ‘leakage’ between the regions, as the trade-off can never be perfect.

Figure 2: Comparison of the MF7 area weighted oceanic spectrum (red line) to the VIM models of Masterton et al. (2013) up to degree L = 120. For the VIM model, the blue line is the remnant magnetisation of the ocean crust, grey line is the induced magnetisation and the green line shows the total magnetisation strength per degree. The models match reasonably well considering they are computed from completely different datasets.

Figure 3: Global and local representations of the lithospheric magnetic field in the spherical-harmonic and Slepian bases. Negative positive in indicates coefficients multiplying sin^2 m (omega), where a is longitude.

(a) Approximation of the same anomaly using the N = 130 best-localized of the 5329 Slepian functions concentrated in the region. Of the 130 coefficients only 42 exceed the “1/1000” threshold, as shown in (f), which has a truncated axes. The approximation in the region of interest is beyond reproach and the representation by the Slepian, compared to the spherical harmonics, expansion is truly sparse. Hence, large datasets can be represented very compactly using Slepian.

Figure 4: Efficient reconstruction of sparsely sampled data, illustrated using a bandlimited model of the crustal field from the NGDC-720 model [6] over degree L = 17-72. The input data are shown in (a). The function is randomly sampled within the circular region of interest (radius 15°) with N points, as displayed as in (b). Reconstruction is achieved by generating Slepian eigenfunctions for the region and solving for a set of Slepian coefficients from the sampled data using Singular Value Decomposition. The Slepian eigenfunctions are multiplied by the solution coefficients and summed to form the reconstruction in (c). The difference between the input data and the reconstruction is shown in (d). The rms metric is the root mean square of the pixel values within the region. This example shows the method works well close to or over a large anomaly (Bangui). A similar experiment with spherical harmonic functions would generate a very large number of coefficients (i.e. like in Figure 3).