detect the positions of tiles on the surface.

This paper begins with a description of our approach for localization and design goals. In Section 2, we introduce Two-Dimensional Signal Transmission technology and overview the proposed localization method. In addition, we show our design goals of the localization ability in the section. In Section 3, we report about the fabrication of the prototype model of an electric field sensor array and the results of fundamental experiments. Finally, we summarize this paper and discuss about future works.

2. POSITIONING SYSTEM OVERVIEW

2.1 System Overview

The basic idea of the proposed node localization method is inspired by a pen-positioning system by Anoto [9]. Anoto's digital pen identifies its own position on a special paper by capturing the fine pattern printed on it with an optical device. The printed pattern at each location is unique so that the pen can identify its location. On the other hand, in our framework, the location detector identifies its own position on the 2DST sheet by capturing the conductor pattern on it with an electric field sensor.

The 2DST sheet has three layers. Two conductive layer sandwich a dielectric layer (Fig. 2(a)). Microwaves can propagate in the dielectric layer two-dimensionally. The top conductive layer has the meshed structure. When microwaves propagate in the dielectric layer, the meshed pattern generates the evanescent waves immediately above the top conductive layer. Sensor nodes placed on the 2DST sheet can communicate with each other and acquire electricity by interaction between the 2DST sheet and the special surface connectors (Fig. 2(b)). The two-dimensional amplitude distributions of the evanescent waves depend on the meshed conductive pattern. If the local meshed pattern is unique to each location on the 2DST surface, the amplitude distributions of the evanescent waves also express the location information. Therefore, we can achieve the localization through the measurement of the electromagnetic field pattern above the 2DST sheet.

One of the features of our method is self localization. This means our method needs no external devices like cameras. With only an electric field sensor attached to a node and a small modification to the existing 2DST sheet, the nodes can easily obtain precise position to an accuracy of 1 mm. In addition, thin obstacles like a piece of paper can be placed between the 2DST sheet and the sensor nodes.

2.2 Design Goals

In the development of the localization method, we set the following design goals for the practical use in sensor networks or ubiquitous computing.

- Unique location identification on the 2DST sheet larger than 10 m square.
- Millimeter precision of position sensing.
- The size of the location detector is about 10 cm square or smaller.

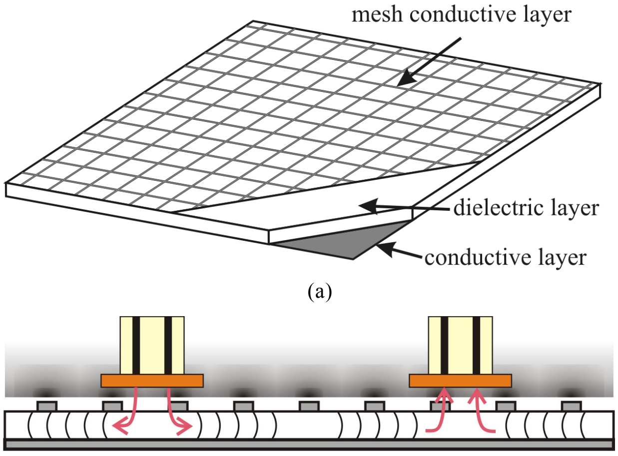


Fig. 2 (a) The structure of the 2DST sheet and (b) the principle of the signal and electricity transmission.

2.3 Previous works

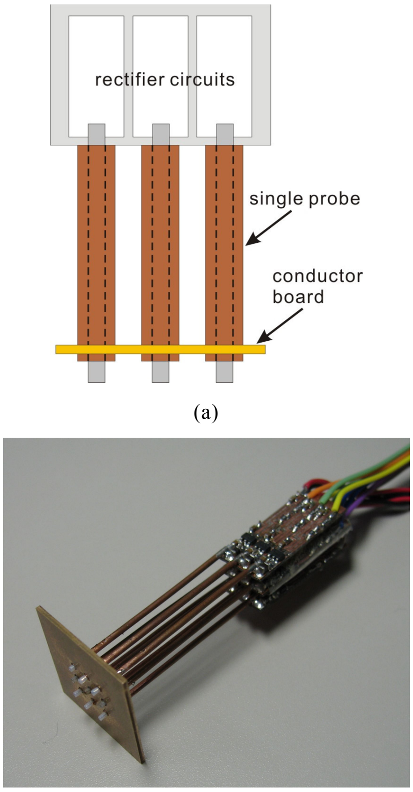
In our previous studies, we proposed both a special markers on the 2DST sheet and their detector. We showed that the two patterns can be identified by scanning with a single probe. Details including marker design, probe configuration and experimental results are given in Appendix.

3. ELECTRIC SENSOR ARRAY

In this paper, we show an electric field sensor array which can detect 2D pattern of the electric field above the 2DST sheet. In order to achieve our design goals described in 2.2, a distance between each single sensor of the array must be less than 2.47 mm, including consideration the rotation on the sheet.

Our prototype is shown in Fig. 3. We arranged 9 single probes in a 3×3 matrix. The distance between each probe is 3.5 mm. Each probe has a rectifier circuit so that the array outputs of DC voltage correspond to the amplitude of detected electric field. We attached a conductive board at the probes' tip. It works to attenuate electromagnetic interference and undesired interaction among the probes.

We conducted an experiment using the prototype array. We used the same setup used in our previous studies (shown in Fig. C-2 in Appendix). We recorded each sensor output measured on the same line shown in Fig. 4 (a). Figure 4(b) shows the result. Although each output shows different range, we found that calibration of the outputs is possible. We could set a threshold to discriminate the marked blocks from the plain blocks (Fig. 4 (c)).



(a)

(b)

Fig. 3 (a) diagram of an electric field sensor array and (b) the 3×3 array prototype

6. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we reported the design and prototype of the electric field sensor array for node localization on the 2DST sheet. We introduced our localization method and design goals. Then we described the design and experiments of the electric field sensor array based on our previous studies. From the result, we confirm that our prototype can detect 2D electric field patterns.

Development of higher resolution electric sensor array is left as a future work. The required resolution of the array is smaller than 2.47 mm. Our current achievement is 3.5 mm of interval between each single probe. Downsizing of the interval depends on the size of the rectifier circuit. We are currently developing a smaller circuit.

Acknowledgements

A part of experiments in this paper was conducted with Youhei Miura (the University of Tokyo). Dr. Youiti Kado and Dr. Zhang Bing, NICT, motivated this research and provided useful suggestions. This work was partly supported by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, and a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan.

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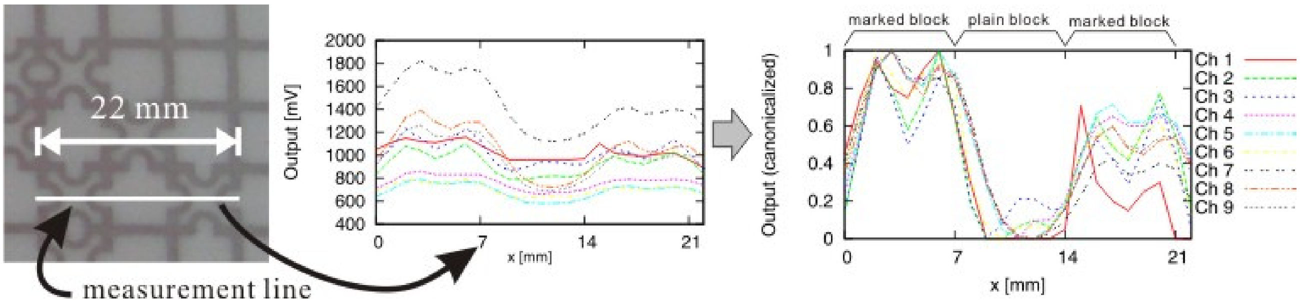

(a) (b) (c)

Fig. 4 The result of the experiment using the prototype of the sensor array. The measurement line shown in (a) is 22 mm^2. On the line, we measured the vertical electric field 1 mm above the 2DST sheet surface with a 1 mm interval. (b) shows the outputs of each sensor. (c) shows the canonicalized outputs.

Appendix

A. POSITION INFORMATION ENCODING

As described in Section 2, we use the conductor pattern of the top conductive layer of the 2DST sheet as the location marker. In order to encode the position on the 2DST sheet, the pattern of the mesh is designed as follows.

The top conductive layer of the 2DST sheet has a meshed structure as shown in Fig. 2(a). In our position encoding scheme, one block of the grid represents one bit of information by changing its shape. We call the modified block a "marked block," and the non-modified block a "plain block." We make a "Unit" which is constructed with 5×5 blocks as shown in Fig. A-1. One Unit represents its X-Y coordinate value on the 2DST sheet. There are 8 reserved blocks consisting of 6 marked blocks and 2 plain blocks in each Unit. The reserved blocks represent the boundary and the orientation of a Unit. The other 17 blocks correspond to the bit pattern of the binary X-Y coordinate value respectively. For separating neighbor Units, double width lines containing only plain blocks are used. We call this area a "Boundary zone." It is easy to detect and identify the Boundary zone because the reserved blocks prevent any Unit from having double-width-plain-block lines in the Unit.

We calculate how large area the proposed 2DST sheet can cover. A Unit has 17 bits information. Therefore we can arrange 2^9 Units laterally and 2^8 lengthways. If we assume a d = 7 mm pitch mesh sheet as used in [1], one Unit occupies the area of 49 × 49 mm^2, including the Boundary zone. Hence, the maximum area covered with the sheet is about 25 × 12.5 m^2. This is sufficiently large for our purpose of localization for room scale networks.

In addition, we evaluated the minimal size of the detector that always covers at least one whole Unit. From the simulations, we concluded that a 11 × 11 cm^2 detector can cover one whole Unit everywhere on the sheet regardless of the orientation. The detector size is almost enough small for our design goals.

Once the detector finds a whole Unit, it can detect its own precise position and orientation from the alignment of blocks as well as identifying the code. The accuracy of detected position depends on the spatial resolution of the detector. Sub-mesh precision is possible by a high-resolution detector.

B. PHYSICAL DETECTION

B.1 Measurement Principle

In our localization scheme, we detect the position information encoded on the 2DST sheet with the electromagnetic field measurement. The electromagnetic field above the 2DST sheet surface is written in forms as

$$f(x,z) = A\exp(-jkx)\left(\sum_{n=-\infty}^{\infty} B_n(z)\exp\left(j\frac{2\pi n}{d}x\right)\right)$$

$$= AC_0\exp(-jkx)\exp(-k_1 z)$$

$$+ A\exp(-jkx)\sum_{n\neq 0} C_n\exp\left(j\frac{2\pi n}{d}x\right)\exp\left(-\frac{2\pi n}{d}|z|\right) \quad (1)$$

along the surface, where $d << 2\pi/k$, the electromagnetic waves run along x direction, and k is the wavenumber of the two dimensional electromagnetic wave. The difference of conductor shape between the plain and the marked blocks corresponds to the difference of C_n ($n \neq 0$).

First, we examined that which component of the electromagnetic field is favorable to detect the difference between the marked and the plain blocks. The simulation and experimental results suggested that the vertical component of the electric field E_z is suitable for the measurand. E_z is the only component whose amplitude pattern is insensitive to the direction of the signal wave propagating in the 2DST sheet. Additionally, E_z provides clear difference in $C_{\pm 1}$, while the magnetic field was found to have small energy in $C_{\pm 1}$. That is, E_z amplitude pattern contains a larger low-spatial-frequency component than the magnetic field has. This means that we can read E_z pattern with a lower resolution detector. This feature is preferable for our purpose in terms of the simplicity of the sensor.

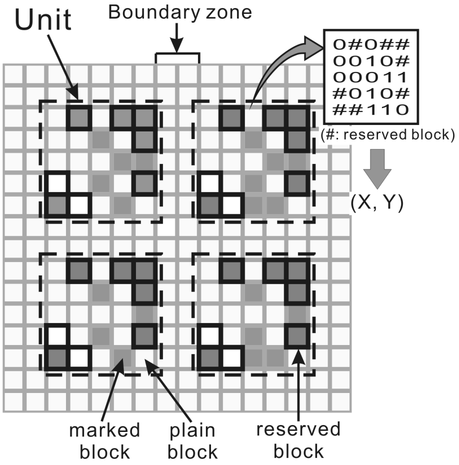

Fig. A-1 The position encoding scheme on the 2DST sheet.

B.2 Design of the Marked Block

Based on the discussion in B.1, we designed the shape of a marked block through electromagnetic field simulations. We use the MW-STUDIO software (AET Japan Inc.) for the analyses.

The achieved design is shown in Fig. B-1. We express a marked block by curving the grid line. We show the result of the simulation conducted by using the model in Fig. B-1. The details of the analysis model are follows. As to the dielectric layer, the relative permittivity ε_r was 1.5 and the thickness was 2.0 mm. At the bottom of the dielectric layer, perfect conductive boundary condition was used, instead of modeling the physical conductive layer. The top conductive mesh layer was a d = 7 mm pitch mesh with 1 mm width conductor. 2.4 GHz electromagnetic waves were applied from the one side of the 2DST sheet model. We assumed no reflection occurs at the edge of the sheet.