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Low frequency noise fiber delay stabilized laser with reduced sensitivity to acceleration

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Lasers with sub-hertz line-width and fractional frequency instability around 1×10^{-15} for 0.1 s to 10 s averaging time are currently realized by locking onto an ultra-stable Fabry-Perot cavity using the Pound-Drever-Hall method. This powerful method requires tight alignment of free space optical components, precise polarization adjustment and spatial mode matching. To circumvent these issues, we use an all-fiber Michelson interferometer with a long fiber spool as a frequency reference and a heterodyne detection technique with a fibered acousto optical modulator (AOM)¹. At low Fourier frequencies, the frequency noise of our system is mainly limited by mechanical vibrations, an issue that has already been explored in the field of optoelectronic oscillators.^{2,3,4}

After extensive study of the spools with Finite Element Modeling (FEM), we realize and test a novel spool design (Fig. 1) which is optimized for low vibration sensitivity along all spatial directions and insensitive to the way it is held. We measure a sensitivity of about $10^{-11}/\text{ms}^{-2}$ in all direction for the complete oscillator of 2 km fiber length, limited by the out of spool elements (AOM, coupler, Faraday mirrors). The composed interferometers spool of two symmetrically mounted shows a sensitivity of about $5\text{-}8 \times 10^{-12}/\text{ms}^{-2}$. At the conference we will also show frequency noise measurements and the prototype of a simplified oscillator aiming to realize a robust and cost effective very low noise agile laser with acceleration sensitivity below $3 \times 10^{-11}/\text{ms}^{-2}$ in all spatial directions.

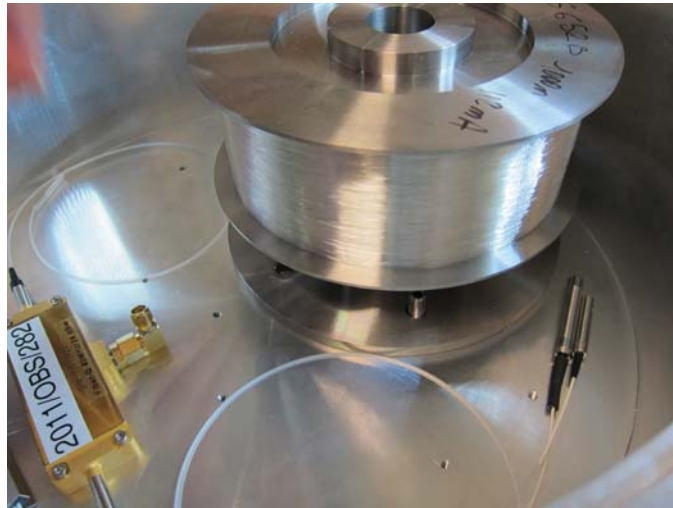


Fig. 1: Low vibration sensitivity spool set up

¹ H. Jiang et al, "An agile laser with ultra-low frequency noise and high sweep linearity", Opt. Exp., vol.18, pp.3284-3297, 2010.

² S.Huang, M.Tu, S.Yao, and L.Maleki. "A turn-key optoelectronic oscillator with low acceleration sensitivity". Proc. of the IEEE IFCS, pp. 269-279, 2000.

³ J.Taylor et al., "Vibration-induced pm noise measurements of a rigid optical fiber spool", Proc. of the IEEE IFCS, pp. 808-810, 2008.

⁴ C.W. Nelson, A. Hati, D.A. Howe, "Common-Arm Counterpropagating Interferometer for Measurement of Vibration-Induced Noise in Fibers," Photonics Technology Letters, IEEE, vol.23, no.21, pp.1633-1635, 2011