Email: Richard.E.Cofield@jpl.nasa.gov

Principal Author Biography:
Mr. Cofield received the B.S. from the California Institute of Technology in 1974, and the M.S. from the University of Southern California in 1982, both in electrical engineering. In 1978 he joined the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, California, to design, analyze and calibrate antenna and optical systems for space-borne radar and sub-millimeter-wave Earth-observing instruments.

Correspondence for Secondary Authors:
Thomas Cwik
Jet Propulsion Laboratory
4800 Oak Grove Drive, MS 169-315
Pasadena, CA 91109-8099, USA
Tel.: (818) 354-4386, Fax (818) 393-3134
email: Thomas.A.Cwik@jpl.nasa.gov

Nasrat Raouf
Jet Propulsion Laboratory
4800 Oak Grove Drive, MS 306-392
Pasadena, CA 91109-8099, USA
Tel.: (818) 354-0085, Fax (818) 393-9471
email: Nasrat.A.Raouf@jpl.nasa.gov

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Title:
A TORIC OFFSET THREE-REFLECTOR ANTENNA FOR THE ADVANCED MICROWAVE LIMB SOUNDER

Principal Author:
Richard Cofield

Secondary Authors:
Thomas Cwik
Jet Propulsion Laboratory

Nasrat Raouf
Jet Propulsion Laboratory

Abstract:
The Advanced Microwave Limb Sounder is a space-borne heterodyne radiometer which will measure pressure, temperature, geopotential height and atmospheric constituents from thermal emission at frequencies from 120 to 640 GHz. Its predecessors, one launched in 1991 on the Upper Atmosphere Research Satellite and another scheduled for 2003 launch, used pencil-beam antennas sized to resolve at about one vertical scale height. However, for current atmospheric models one should trade horizontal resolution for better coverage than typical orbit spacing provides. A new antenna concept combines the wide scan range of the parabolic torus with unblocked offset Cassegrain optics. The resulting system is diffraction-limited in the vertical plane but highly astigmatic in the horizontal, giving beamwidths of 0.13x2.5 degrees. Symmetry about the nadir axis ensures that this Beam Aspect Ratio (BAR) is invariant over +/-33 degrees of azimuth scan. The antenna may feed either an array of MMIC receivers or a single low noise receiver whose FOV is swept over the reflector system by a small scanning mirror. This paper describes 3 stages of antenna design and analysis: A paraxial-optics design chooses conic profiles given orbit geometry and vertical resolution requirements, then develops the surfaces by rotation about an axis parallel to nadir, matching axisymmetric feeds to the desired BAR. We verify the design and generate alignment and thermal deformation tolerances using spot diagrams and scalar diffraction fields from a commercial ray-trace program. Finally, a physical optics analysis permits fine tuning of reflector outlines and contours based on surface current distributions.

Principal Author Affiliation:
Jet Propulsion Laboratory
Jet Propulsion Laboratory
4800 Oak Grove Drive, MS 183-701
Pasadena, California 91109-8099
USA
Phone: (818) 354-2501
Fax: (818) 393-5065