INFLUENCE OF POLYMERS ON THE PARAMETERS OF ISM-BAND ANTENNAS

Novak D., Voznyuk K., Rozhenko O.

Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design, Kyiv, Mala Shyianovska str., 2, 01011

The Industrial, Scientific, and Medical (ISM) radio bands are a crucial part of the wireless communication spectrum, enabling a wide range of applications, including Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, and various wireless sensor networks. As the demand for high-performance and cost-effective antennas operating in these bands continues to grow, researchers have turned their attention to the potential of polymer-based materials in antenna design and manufacturing.

Polymers offer several advantages over traditional antenna materials, such as metals and ceramics. They are lightweight, flexible, and can be easily molded into complex shapes, making them well-suited for conformal and wearable antenna applications. Additionally, polymers can be tailored to achieve specific dielectric properties, allowing for the optimization of antenna performance parameters. One of the key parameters influenced by the choice of polymer material is the dielectric constant. The dielectric constant, or relative permittivity, affects the wavelength and propagation velocity of electromagnetic waves within the antenna structure. By carefully selecting polymers with appropriate dielectric constants, antenna designers can optimize the size, resonant frequency, and bandwidth of the antenna.

Another critical parameter impacted by polymer materials is the loss tangent, which quantifies the dissipation of electromagnetic energy within the material. Polymers with low loss tangents are desirable for antenna applications, as they minimize signal attenuation and improve radiation efficiency.

Moreover, the mechanical properties of polymers, such as flexibility and stretchability, play a crucial role in the development of conformal and wearable antennas. These antennas can conform to curved surfaces or deform with the movement of the wearer, enabling seamless integration into various platforms and ensuring reliable wireless connectivity.

Various polymer materials for ISM-band antenna (Fig. 1) design, including polydimethylsiloxane (PDMS), polyethylene terephthalate (PET), and acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS) have been investigated. Each polymer exhibits unique dielectric and mechanical properties, offering trade-offs in terms of antenna performance, flexibility, and cost.

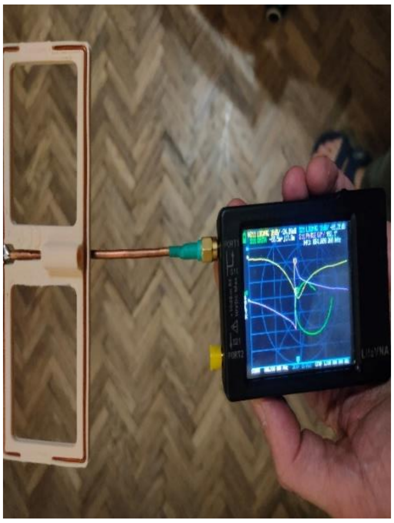

Figure 1 – 3D printed ISM-band antenna

To fully harness the potential of polymer-based antennas, advanced fabrication techniques, such as 3D printing and inkjet printing, have been employed. These additive manufacturing methods enable the precise control of material deposition and the creation of intricate antenna geometries, facilitating the exploration of novel designs and optimized performance.

As wireless technologies continue to evolve and the demand for compact, efficient, and conformal antennas grows, the role of polymers in antenna design will become increasingly vital. By leveraging the unique properties of materials and combining them with advanced fabrication techniques, researchers aim to unlock new frontiers in antenna engineering, enabling seamless connectivity and pushing the boundaries of wireless communication.

References

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