Weighing spacetime along the line of sight using times of arrival of electromagnetic signals



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Idea

Times of arrival of electromagnetic signals (TOA's) - one of most important observables in relativity

- signal method in special relativity
- Shapiro delays provide a GR test [Shapiro 1964; Shapiro et al 1968]
- frequency shift due to gravity [Pound-Rebka 1959]
- measurement of the Hubble parameter using time delays between multiple images in strongly lensing systems [Refsdahl 1964; H0LiCOW 2016]
- pulsar timing
 - binary pulsars (and double pulsar) proof of existence of GW [Hulse, Taylor 1974]
 - provide GR tests (quadrupole formula for GW, relativistic orbit deformation, Shapiro delay...)
 - pulsar timing arrays low frequency GW [Sazhin 1978; Detweiler 1979; Hellings, Downs 1983...]
- clock-based gravitational compasses curvature measurements using an ensemble of clocks and frequency comparisons [Neumann et al 2020; Puetzfeld et al 2016; Puetzfeld et al 2018]

Idea

TOA variations between slightly displaced points in two distant regions of spacetime

Possible to combine them into a measurement of curvature along the null geodesic connecting the region

Algebra rather complicated, but geometric interpretation is quite nice

Idea based on interesting geometric relations between the curvature and TOA's

May have interesting implications for the theory of light propagation in curved spacetime

• based on papers:

MK, J. Miśkiewicz, J. Serbenta, "Weighing the spacetime along the line of sight using times of arrival of electromagnetic signals", Phys. Rev. D **104**, 024026 (2021)

M. Grasso, MK, J. Serbenta, *"Geometric optics in general relativity using bilocal operators"*, Phys. Rev. D **99**, 064038 (2019)











Time of arrival variations, dependence on spatial positions

Linear order in position variations



Time of arrival variations, dependence on spatial positions

Linear + quadratic order



Quadratic term = finite distance effects + curvature imprint



 $X^{\mu'}_{{\mathscr O}}$

0



 $T_{(\mathcal{O},\mathcal{E})}(M \times M) \cong T_{\mathcal{O}}M \oplus T_{\mathcal{E}}M$

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7

sgn h = (4,4)

Globally it is **not** an immersed sub-manifold of dim=7, but...

Globally it is **not** an immersed sub-manifold of dim=7, but...

...locally it is (far from caustics)

 $\mathbf{L} \to c \cdot \mathbf{L}, \quad \mathbf{U}^{\perp} \to c \cdot \mathbf{U}^{\perp}$

Proof: via Synge's world function formalism [Synge 1968], [Teyssandier, Le Poncin-Lafitte, Linet 2008]...

Resolvent of the first order geodesic deviation equation

$$\mathbf{W} = \begin{pmatrix} W_{XX}^{\mu} & W_{XL}^{\mu} \\ W_{LX}^{\rho} & W_{LL}^{\rho} \\ \end{pmatrix}$$

[Grasso, MK, Serbenta 2019] [Uzun 2020], [Fleury 2014]...

$$\frac{d}{d\lambda} \mathbf{W} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & \delta^{\alpha}{}_{\beta} \\ R^{\gamma}{}_{\mu\nu\epsilon}(\lambda) \, l^{\mu} \, l^{\nu} & 0 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{W}(\lambda)$$

 $\mathbf{W}(\mathcal{O}) = \mathbf{I}_8$

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Symmetric 2-tensor on $T_{(\mathcal{O},\mathcal{E})}(M \times M)$

$$\mathbf{U} = \begin{pmatrix} U_{\mathcal{O}\mathcal{O}} & U_{\mathcal{O}\mathcal{C}} \\ U_{\mathcal{C}\mathcal{O}} & U_{\mathcal{C}\mathcal{C}} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} -g_{\mathcal{O}} W_{XL}^{-1} W_{XX} & g_{\mathcal{O}} W_{XL}^{-1} \\ g_{\mathcal{C}} \left(W_{LL} W_{XL}^{-1} W_{XX} - W_{LX} \right) & -g_{\mathcal{C}} W_{LL} W_{XL}^{-1} \end{pmatrix}$$

 $\mathbf{U}(\mathbf{X},\mathbf{Y})=\mathbf{U}(\mathbf{Y},\mathbf{X})$

Extrinsic curvature of LSC:

 $U^{\perp} = U \, \Big|_{L^{\perp}}$ (restriction to the tangent space to LSC)

Synge's world function

Introduced by Synge in 1960

bi-scalar

 $\sigma\colon M\times M\supset \mathscr{U}\to \mathbf{R}$

$$\sigma(x, x') = \frac{\lambda_2 - \lambda_1}{2} \int_{\lambda_1}^{\lambda_2} g_{\mu\nu} \dot{\gamma}^{\mu}(\lambda) \dot{\gamma}^{\nu}(\lambda) d\lambda$$

Properties:

$$\sigma_{,\nu} \equiv \frac{\partial \sigma}{\partial x^{\nu}} = (\lambda_2 - \lambda_1) \, \dot{\gamma}^{\mu}(\lambda_2) \, g_{\mu\nu}$$

$$\sigma_{,\nu'} \equiv \frac{\partial \sigma}{\partial x^{\nu'}} = -(\lambda_2 - \lambda_1) \, \dot{\gamma}^{\mu'}(\lambda_1) \, g_{\mu'\nu'}(\lambda_1) \, g_{\mu'\nu'}(\lambda_2) \,$$

 $\sigma > 0$ γ spacelike

- $\sigma = 0$ iff γ null
- $\sigma < 0$ γ timelike

Synge's world function

 $\mathbf{X} = \begin{pmatrix} \delta x_{\mathcal{O}}^{\mu'} \\ \delta x_{\mathscr{C}}^{\mu} \end{pmatrix}$

Locally LSC can be identified with the zero level set of σ [Teyssandier, Leponcin-Lafitte]

$$LSC = \left\{ (x, x') \in M \times M \,|\, \sigma(x, x') = 0 \right\}$$

Taylor expansion in coordinates locally flat at ${\rm \Theta}$ and ${\rm \mathcal{E}}$

$$\begin{aligned} \sigma(x_{\mathscr{C}} + \delta x_{\mathscr{C}}, x_{\mathscr{O}} + \delta x_{\mathscr{O}}) &= \sigma_{,\mu'} \, \delta x_{\mathscr{O}}^{\mu'} + \sigma_{,\mu} \, \delta x_{\mathscr{C}}^{\mu} \\ &+ \frac{1}{2} \sigma_{;\mu\nu} \, \delta x_{\mathscr{C}}^{\mu} \, \delta x_{\mathscr{C}}^{\nu} + \frac{1}{2} \sigma_{;\mu'\nu'} \, \delta x_{\mathscr{O}}^{\mu'} \, \delta x_{\mathscr{O}}^{\nu'} + \sigma_{;\mu\nu'} \, \delta x_{\mathscr{C}}^{\mu} \, \delta x_{\mathscr{O}}^{\nu'} \\ &+ O(\delta x^3) \end{aligned}$$

Also a locally flat coordinate system on $M \times M$ near $(\mathcal{E}, \mathcal{O})$

LSC condition can be rewritten

 $\mathbf{L}(\mathbf{X}) + \frac{1}{2}\mathbf{U}(\mathbf{X}, \mathbf{X}) = 0$

$$\mathbf{L} = \begin{pmatrix} l_{\mathcal{O}\mu'} & -l_{\mathcal{E}\mu} \end{pmatrix} \qquad \mathbf{U} = -\frac{1}{\lambda_{\mathcal{E}} - \lambda_{\mathcal{O}}} \begin{pmatrix} \sigma_{;\mu'\nu'} & \sigma_{;\mu\nu'} \\ \sigma_{;\mu'\nu} & \sigma_{;\mu\nu} \end{pmatrix}$$

Synge's world function

Relation between ${f U}$ and the spacetime curvature:

 ${\boldsymbol U}$ gives relation between endpoints variations and tangent vector variations

$$\begin{pmatrix} \Delta l_{\mathcal{O}\mu'} \\ -\Delta l_{\mathcal{E}\nu} \end{pmatrix} = \mathbf{U} \begin{pmatrix} \delta x_{\mathcal{O}}^{\mu'} \\ \delta x_{\mathcal{E}}^{\nu} \end{pmatrix}$$

on the other hand, the geodesic deviation equation relates initial data variations at ${\cal O}$ to variations at ${\cal E}$

$$\begin{pmatrix} \delta x_{\mathscr{C}}^{\mu} \\ \Delta l_{\mathscr{C}}^{\nu} \end{pmatrix} = \mathbf{W} \begin{pmatrix} \delta x_{\mathscr{O}}^{\mu'} \\ \Delta l_{\mathscr{O}}^{\nu'} \end{pmatrix} \qquad \qquad \frac{d}{d\lambda} \mathbf{W} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & \delta^{\alpha}{}_{\beta} \\ R^{\gamma}{}_{\mu\nu\epsilon}(\lambda) \, l^{\mu} \, l^{\nu} & 0 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{W}(\lambda)$$

 $\mathbf{W}(\mathcal{O}) = \mathbf{I}_8$

after a bit of algebra:

$$\mathbf{U} = \begin{pmatrix} -g_{\mathcal{O}} W_{XL}^{-1} W_{XX} & g_{\mathcal{O}} W_{XL}^{-1} \\ g_{\mathcal{C}} \left(W_{LL} W_{XL}^{-1} W_{XX} - W_{LX} \right) & -g_{\mathcal{C}} W_{LL} W_{XL}^{-1} \end{pmatrix}$$

Relation partially known [Dixon 1970, Vines 2015...]

Introduce orthonormal tetrads at ${\cal O}$ and ${\cal E}$

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Locally flat coordinate systems near ${\rm (O}$ and ${\rm (\mathcal{E})}$

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 $\mathbf{X}^{\mathbf{0}} \equiv \mathbf{X}^{\mathbf{0}} \left(\mathbf{X}^{\mathbf{1}}, \dots, \mathbf{X}^{\mathbf{7}} \right)$

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Inverse problem

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Assume we have a sample of TOA's (= pairs of points) Can we reconstruct L and U¹? $\mathbf{X}_{k} = \begin{pmatrix} x_{em,k}^{\mu} \\ x_{em,k}^{\mu} \end{pmatrix} \quad \textbf{known}$




 $L_i, Q_{ij} < \text{solved for}$



 $L_i, Q_{ij} < \text{ solved for }$



Finding a unique quadric through a set of points

Possible if the sampling done right

solved for

 L_i, Q_{ii}



 $L_i, Q_{ij} < solved for$

Possible if the sampling done right

Determining the shape of the LSC from variations of TOA's

Curvature measurement

Flat spacetime

Curved spacetime





diagonalising basis

Curvature measurement

Flat spacetime

Curved spacetime









Curvature measurement

Flat spacetime

Curved spacetime







Curvature causes a change of shape of LSC

Need to detect the imprint of curvature in the extrinsic curvature

Problem: we have no control over the orthonormal tetrads systems at ${\it O}$ and ${\it \mathcal{E}}$

Look for 2-sided Lorentz invariants







- Independent of the states of motion
- Vanish in a flat spacetime
- For short distances given by an integral of the stress-energy tensor



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Distance measures in astrometry Grasso, Korzyński, Serbenta 2019

Angular diameter distance (area distance)
[Perlick 2004]





• Luminosity distance

$$D_{lum} = \left(\frac{I}{4\pi F}\right)^{1/2}$$

$$D_{lum} \equiv D_{lum}(u^{\mu}_{\mathcal{O}}, u^{\mu}_{\mathcal{C}}, R^{\mu}_{\ \alpha\beta\nu})$$

Etherington's reciprocity relation [Etherington 1933]

$$D_{lum} = (1+z)^2 D_{ang}$$



baseline-averaged parallax distance:

$$D_{par} = \left| \det \Pi^{A}{}_{B} \right|^{-1/2} = \left(\frac{A_{\mathcal{O}}}{\Omega} \right)^{1/2}$$

$$D_{par} \equiv D_{par}(u^{\mu}_{\mathcal{O}}, R^{\alpha}_{\ \mu\nu\beta})$$

$$\mu = 1 - \sigma \frac{D_{ang}^2}{D_{par}^2} = 1 - \sigma \frac{D_{lum}^2}{D_{par}^2} (1 + z)^{-4}$$

 $\sigma = \pm 1$ (almost always +1)

 $\mu \equiv \mu(R^{\mu}_{\ \alpha\beta\nu})$

- Measurable as the relative difference between distance measurements to a single object (very small effect though)
- Independent of the states of motion
- Vanishes in a flat spacetime
- For short distances given by an integral of the stress-energy tensor



Probing curvature

Probing curvature

- u^{μ}_{O} Lorentz-invariant expressions, work for any pair of oriented, orthonormal tetrads lacksquare \bigcirc $\mu = 1 - \frac{Q_{00\,i'j'}Q_{00\,k'l'}\,\epsilon_0^{i'k'}\,\epsilon_0^{j'l'}}{Q_{00\,k'l'}Q_{00\,k'l'}\,\epsilon_0^{i'k'}\,\epsilon_0^{jl}}$ $\epsilon_{\mathcal{O}\,i'j'} = \frac{l_{\mathcal{O}}^{k'}}{l_{\mathcal{O}}^{0'}} \,\epsilon_{i'j'k'}$ e_3^{μ} $\mathcal{U}_{\mathscr{C}}^{\mu}$ e_1^{μ} $\epsilon_{\mathscr{E}\,ij} = \frac{l_{\mathscr{E}}^k}{l_{\mathscr{F}}^0} \, \varepsilon_{ijk}$ $\nu = 1 - \frac{Q_{\mathcal{E}\mathcal{E}\,ij} Q_{\mathcal{E}\mathcal{E}\,kl} \epsilon_{\mathcal{E}}^{ik} \epsilon_{\mathcal{E}}^{jl}}{Q_{\mathcal{O}\mathcal{E}\,i'i} Q_{\mathcal{O}\mathcal{E}\,k'l} \epsilon_{\mathcal{O}}^{i'k} \epsilon_{\mathcal{E}}^{jl}}$ f_3^{μ} 8 f_2^{μ} $\mu \equiv \mu \left(\mathbf{U}^{\perp}, \mathbf{L}, (u_{\mathcal{O}}, e_i), (u_{\mathcal{E}}, f_i) \right)$
 - $\boldsymbol{\nu} \equiv \boldsymbol{\nu} \left(\mathbf{U}^{\perp}, \mathbf{L}, (\boldsymbol{u}_{\mathcal{O}}, \boldsymbol{e}_{i}), (\boldsymbol{u}_{\mathcal{E}}, f_{i}) \right)$

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Small curvature limit

Expansion in powers of curvature

$$\mu = \frac{8\pi G}{c^4} \int_{\lambda_0}^{\lambda_{\mathscr{C}}} T_{\mu\nu} l^{\mu} l^{\mu} \left(\lambda_{\mathscr{C}} - \lambda\right) d\lambda + O(\mathsf{Riemann}^2)$$
$$\nu = \frac{8\pi G}{c^4} \int_{\lambda_0}^{\lambda_{\mathscr{C}}} T_{\mu\nu} l^{\mu} l^{\mu} \left(\lambda - \lambda_0\right) d\lambda + O(\mathsf{Riemann}^2)$$

No $C^{\mu}_{\ \nu\alpha\beta}, \Lambda$

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Pressureless dust, weak gravity

$$\mu = \frac{8\pi G}{c^2} \int_0^D \rho(r)(D-r) dr$$
$$\nu = \frac{8\pi G}{c^2} \int_0^D \rho(r) r dr$$

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Pressureless dust, weak gravity

Average mass density and COM position of mass distribution along the LOS

$$\mu = \frac{8\pi G}{c^2} \int_0^D \rho(r)(D-r) dr$$
$$\nu = \frac{8\pi G}{c^2} \int_0^D \rho(r) r dr$$

$$\langle \rho \rangle \equiv D^{-1} \int_0^D \rho(r) \, dr = \frac{c^2(\mu + \nu)}{8\pi G D^2}$$

$$r_{CM} \equiv \frac{\int_0^D \rho(r) \, r \, dr}{\int_0^D \rho(r) \, dr} = \frac{D \, \nu}{\mu + \nu}$$

Measurement protocol

Proof of concept

13 clocks in both ensembles



(with respect to any pair of locally flat, orthonormal coordinates near (O) and (E))

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Proof of concept



(with respect to any pair of locally flat, orthonormal coordinates near (O) and (E))

all emitters send 3 signals at

$$t_{\mathcal{E}} = -\frac{L}{c}, 0, \frac{L}{c}$$

We can derive exact expressions

 $\mathbf{L}_{\mathbf{i}} \equiv \mathbf{L}_{\mathbf{i}}(\mathbf{X}_{(k)}^{\mathbf{0}})$ $\mathbf{Q}_{\mathbf{k}\mathbf{l}} \equiv \mathbf{Q}_{\mathbf{k}\mathbf{l}}(\mathbf{X}_{(k)}^{\mathbf{0}})$

 $\mu \equiv \mu \left(\mathbf{Q_{ij}}, \mathbf{L_j} \right)$ $\nu \equiv \nu \left(\mathbf{Q_{ij}}, \mathbf{L_j} \right)$

Assumptions:

 $L\ll D\ll \mathcal{R}$



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Dimensionless variables:

$$\mathbf{X} = L \cdot \widetilde{\mathbf{X}}$$
$$\lambda = D \cdot \widetilde{\lambda}$$
$$\mathbf{L} = \widetilde{\mathbf{L}}$$
$$R^{\mu}_{\ \nu\rho\sigma} = \mathscr{R}^{-2} \cdot \widetilde{R}^{\mu}_{\ \nu\rho\sigma}$$

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$$0 = \widetilde{\mathbf{L}}(\widetilde{\mathbf{X}}) + \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{L}{D}\right) \widetilde{\mathbf{U}}_{flat}(\widetilde{\mathbf{X}}, \widetilde{\mathbf{X}}) + \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{L}{D}\right) \left(\frac{D}{\mathscr{R}}\right)^2 \widetilde{\mathbf{U}}_{curv}(\widetilde{\mathbf{X}}, \widetilde{\mathbf{X}})$$

Constant mass density ρ



Constant mass density ρ

$$\mathcal{R}^{-2} = \frac{8\pi G\rho}{c^2}$$





$$\mathscr{R}^{-2} = \frac{8\pi G\rho}{c^2}$$



$$M_{tot} = \pi L^2 D \rho$$
 $<$ mass enclosed in the connecting cylinder



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$$\delta \mathbf{X}_{curv}^{\mathbf{0}} \approx \frac{1}{c} \cdot \frac{GM_{tot}}{c^2}$$





Small effect usually:

Jupiter mass M_J corresponds to 10 ns, Solar mass M_{\odot} to 10 μ s

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Applications: binary pulsar timing, direct curvature measurements etc.





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Locally flat coordinate systems near ${\rm (O}$ and ${\rm (d)}$

points in *M* near \mathfrak{O} and $\mathcal{E} \longleftrightarrow$ tangent vectors at $T_{\mathfrak{O}}M$, $T_{\mathcal{E}}M$





Locally flat coordinate systems near ${}^{\scriptsize (\! O\!)}$ and ${}^{\scriptsize (\! C\!)}$

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 $X^{0}\equiv X^{0}\left(X^{1},...,X^{7}\right)$



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In an aligned orthonormal tetrad



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In an aligned orthonormal tetrad

$$\mu = 1 - \frac{\det U_{\mathcal{OOA'B'}}}{\det U_{\mathcal{OCA'B}}}$$

$$\nu = 1 - \frac{\det U_{\mathscr{CCAB}}}{\det U_{\mathscr{CCAB}}}$$



$$\mu \equiv \mu \left(\mathbf{U}^{\perp}, \mathbf{L} \right) \qquad \nu \equiv \nu \left(\mathbf{U}^{\perp}, \mathbf{L} \right)$$

In an aligned orthonormal tetrad

$$\mu = 1 - \frac{\det U_{\mathcal{OOA'B'}}}{\det U_{\mathcal{OCA'B'}}}$$

$$\nu = 1 - \frac{\det U_{\mathscr{CCAB}}}{\det U_{\mathscr{CCAB}}}$$

Independent of the choice of $u^{\mu}_{O}, u^{\mu}_{\mathcal{C}}$

and rotations of the transverse vectors

