

Iterative Decoding

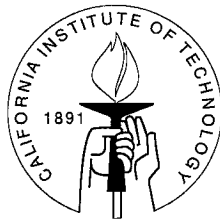
Thesis by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy



California Institute of Technology

Pasadena, California

1997

(Submitted March 7, 1997)

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Abstract

Though coding theory suggests long error correcting codes chosen at random perform close to the optimum, the problem of designing good codes has traditionally been attacked by developing codes with a lot of structure, which lends itself to feasible decoders. The challenge to find practical decoders for long random codes has not been seriously considered until the recent introduction of turbo codes in 1993. This methodology of multi-stage iterative decoding with exchange of soft information, applied to codes with pseudo-random structure, has provided a whole new approach to construct good codes and to decode them with low complexity. This thesis examines the theoretical ground as well as the design and implementation details of these iterative decoding techniques. The methodology is first applied to parallel concatenated unit-memory convolutional codes and generalized concatenated convolutional codes to demonstrate its power and the general design principle. We then show that, by representing these coding systems with appropriate Bayesian belief networks, all the *ad hoc* algorithms can be derived from a general statistical inference belief propagation algorithm. A class of new binary codes based on low-density generator matrices is proposed to eliminate the arbitrariness and unnecessary constraints in turbo coding we have recognized from this Bayesian network viewpoint. Contrary to the turbo decoding paradigm where sequential processing is accomplished by very powerful central units, the decoding algorithm for the new code is highly parallel and distributive. We also apply these codes to M -ary modulations using multilevel coding techniques to achieve higher spectral efficiency. In all cases, we have constructed systems with flexible error protection capability and performance within 1 dB of the channel capacity.

Acknowledgements

It is impossible to express in words of any length my gratefulness and appreciation to my advisor Professor Robert J. McEliece, who offered me an unparalleled opportunity to study at Caltech and spent numerous hours with me for my research. Working with him is a true privilege, and I have benefited tremendously from his knowledge of science, both in depth and broadness, and his enthusiasm of doing research. While being a constant source of valuable insights and advice, he has always allowed me high degree of freedom and independence to pursue my own research and study. It was, however, his unlimited encouragement, patience, and availability that kept me focused and made all the accomplishments in this thesis possible.

My special thanks go to Prof. Dariush Divsalar, who has been given me invaluable suggestions and comments on my research. I am also grateful to Prof. Andrea Goldsmith, Prof. Aron Kiely, Prof. P. P. Vaidyanathan, Prof. Marvin Simon, and Prof. Mani Chandy for their interest in my work, their helpful comments, and their precious time serving on my candidacy/defense examinations committees. I have also learned immensely from many state-of-the-art classes given by them.

I would like to thank my friends, especially James Tong and Masayuki Hattori, for their friendship and encouragement for me. Without them, life at Caltech would have been very difficult. I am grateful to my colleagues, Zhong Yu, Mohamed-Slim Alouini, Wei Lin, Gavin Horn, and Srinivas Aji for many fruitful discussions I had with them. I thank Lilian Porter, our secretary, for her professional help for my administrative obligations and for her care and kindness toward me. Robert Freeman, our system administrator, who devoted great amount of time to maintain the computers, has been an indispensable resource for my work.

Above all, I would like to express my greatest gratitude to my family: my mother Yumei, my brother Chung-Hong, my cousin Mulan, and my newly-wedded wife Kay. (I wish I could share this delightful moment with my father, who had passed months

before I came to Caltech.) They supported me in every aspect of my life and encouraged me every step of the way. They enriched both my life and my dreams.

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