

## Optical Antennas

This consistent and systematic review of recent advances in optical antenna theory and practice brings together leading experts in the fields of electrical engineering, nano-optics and nano-photonics, physical chemistry, and nanofabrication.

Fundamental concepts and functionalities relevant to optical antennas are explained, together with key principles for optical antenna modeling, design and characterization. Recognizing the tremendous potential of this technology, practical applications are also outlined.

Presenting a clear translation of the concepts of radio antenna design, near-field optics and field-enhanced spectroscopy into optical antennas, this interdisciplinary book is an indispensable resource for researchers and graduate students in engineering, optics and photonics, physics, and chemistry.

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“A thorough introduction into the field of optical nanoantennas, and a wide-ranging survey of the current state of the art in this exciting field of photonics nanotechnology.”

STEFAN MAIER, Imperial College London

“This book provides a comprehensive and up-to-date overview of optical antennas, a subject of fundamental scientific and technological importance, written by the key players in the field. It will no doubt become an indispensable reference for all students, researchers, and engineers concerned with optics and photonics at the nanoscale.”

THOMAS W. EBBESEN, University of Strasbourg

“Optical antennas were long regarded as a downscale from the familiar designs of radio physics; however, recently it was found that smaller scales and higher frequencies bring an exciting new physics and many novel effects and opportunities. The study of optical antennas and nanoantennas is the new emerging field of photonics, and this book presents the first systematic and comprehensive summary of the reviews written by the pioneers and top-class experts in the field of optical antennas. The book makes fascinating reading, addressing many grand challenges of the cutting-edge research for creating smaller and more efficient photonic structures and devices.”

YURI KIVSHAR, Australian National University

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*To Pietro, Matteo, Marta and Suzanne*

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Contents

	<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> xv
	<i>List of contributors</i>	xviii
	<i>Notation</i>	xxii
<b>Part I</b>	<b>FUNDAMENTALS</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>From near-field optics to optical antennas</b>	<b>3</b>
	<i>D. Pohl</i>	
	1.1 The near-field	3
	1.2 Energies and photons	4
	1.3 Foundations of near-field optical microscopy	5
	1.4 Scanning near-field optical microscopy	5
	1.5 Problems of near-field optical microscopy	7
	1.6 From near-field optical microscopy to optical antennas	8
	1.7 Optical antennas	8
	1.8 Conclusions and outlook	10
<b>2</b>	<b>Optical antenna theory, design and applications</b>	<b>11</b>
	<i>A. Alù and N. Engheta</i>	
	2.1 Introduction	11
	2.2 Nanoantennas and optical nanocircuits	12
	2.2.1 Optical nanocircuit theory	13
	2.2.2 Nanoantennas as optical lumped elements	14
	2.2.3 Other quantities of interest for optical antenna operation	17
	2.3 Loading, tuning and matching optical antennas	18
	2.3.1 Loading, impedance matching and optical wireless links	18
	2.3.2 Optimizing bandwidth and sensitivity with nanoloads	21
	2.3.3 Optical nonlinearities as variable nanoloads	24
	2.4 Conclusions and outlook	25
<b>3</b>	<b>Impedance of a nanoantenna</b>	<b>26</b>
	<i>F. Marquier and J.-J. Greffet</i>	
	3.1 Introduction	26
	3.2 Impedance of a nanoantenna	27

viii	<b>Contents</b>	
	3.2.1 Definition	27
	3.2.2 A vacuum	28
	3.2.3 A microcavity	30
	3.2.4 A dipolar nanoantenna	31
	3.2.5 Comparison of a microcavity and a nanoantenna	32
	3.2.6 Ohmic and radiative losses	33
	3.3 Impedance of a quantum emitter	34
	3.3.1 A two-level system	34
	3.3.2 Impedance and multiple scattering	36
	3.4 Applications	37
	3.4.1 Weak coupling and strong coupling	37
	3.4.2 Conjugate impedance matching condition	41
	3.4.3 Maximum absorption by a metallic nanoparticle	42
	3.4.4 Fluorescence enhancement by metallic nanoparticles	43
	3.5 Conclusions	45
4	<b>Where high-frequency engineering advances optics. Active nanoparticles as nanoantennas</b>	46
	<i>R. W. Ziolkowski, S. Arslanagić and J. Geng</i>	
	4.1 Introduction	46
	4.2 Coated nanoparticles as active nanoantennas	50
	4.2.1 Configuration	50
	4.2.2 Theory	51
	4.2.3 Coated-nanoparticle materials and gain models	52
	4.3 Results and discussion	53
	4.3.1 Far-field results	54
	4.3.2 Near-field results	54
	4.3.3 Influence of the dipole location	56
	4.3.4 Additional effects – transparency	58
	4.3.5 Additional coated-nanoparticle cases	59
	4.4 Open coated nanocylinders as active nanoantennas	60
	4.4.1 Nanoparticle model	60
	4.4.2 Results and discussion	61
	4.5 Conclusions	63
5	<b>Optical antennas for field-enhanced spectroscopy</b>	64
	<i>J. Aizpurua and R. Esteban</i>	
	5.1 Introduction	64
	5.1.1 Field enhancement	64
	5.1.2 Spectral response	65
	5.1.3 Shape	67
	5.1.4 Basic ingredients to increase the field	69
	5.2 Surface-enhanced Raman scattering	73
	5.3 Surface-enhanced infrared absorption	75

	Contents	ix
5.4	Metal-enhanced fluorescence	76
5.5	Quantum effects in nanoantennas	79
<b>6</b>	<b>Directionality, polarization and enhancement by optical antennas</b>	<b>81</b>
	<i>N. F. van Hulst, T. H. Taminiau and A. G. Curto</i>	
6.1	Introduction	81
6.1.1	Optical antennas	81
6.1.2	Interaction with single emitters	84
6.1.3	Resonant coupling of antenna and emitter	87
6.2	Local excitation by optical antennas	89
6.2.1	Single emitters as near-field probes	89
6.2.2	The monopole antenna case	89
6.3	Emission control by optical antennas	93
6.3.1	Polarization of single molecule emission	93
6.3.2	Directionality of single molecule emission	96
6.4	Conclusions and outlook	99
<b>7</b>	<b>Antennas, quantum optics and near-field microscopy</b>	<b>100</b>
	<i>V. Sandoghdar, M. Agio, X.-W. Chen, S. Götzinger and K.-G. Lee</i>	
7.1	Introduction	100
7.2	Microcavities	103
7.3	Antennas	104
7.3.1	Small antennas	105
7.3.2	Planar antennas	107
7.4	Modification of the spontaneous emission rate	107
7.4.1	Planar antennas	107
7.4.2	Microcavities	108
7.4.3	Plasmonic nanoantennas	109
7.4.4	Metallo-dielectric hybrid antennas	111
7.5	Generation of single photons and directional emission	113
7.5.1	Microcavities	113
7.5.2	Plasmonic nanoantennas	113
7.5.3	Planar antennas	114
7.6	Antennas immersed in vacuum fluctuations: Casimir and van der Waals interactions	116
7.7	Scanning near-field optical microscopy	118
7.8	Outlook	120
<b>8</b>	<b>Nonlinear optical antennas</b>	<b>122</b>
	<i>H. Harutyunyan, G. Volpe and L. Novotny</i>	
8.1	Introduction	122
8.2	Design fundamentals	123
8.2.1	Origin of optical nonlinearities in nanoantennas	123
8.2.2	Nonlinear susceptibilities of optical materials	126

x	<b>Contents</b>	
8.3	Nonlinearities in single nanoparticles	127
8.3.1	Nanoscale and macroscale nonlinear phenomena	127
8.3.2	Symmetry considerations on the nanoscale	128
8.3.3	Nonlinear polarization in nanoparticles	128
8.4	Nonlinearities in coupled antennas and arrays	129
8.4.1	Enhancement of metal nonlinearities	130
8.4.2	Enhancement of nonlinearities in surrounding media	131
8.4.3	TPL nonlinear microscopy of coupled particles	132
8.5	Conclusions and outlook	133
<b>9</b>	<b>Coherent control of nano-optical excitations</b>	<b>135</b>
	<i>W. Pfeiffer, M. Aeschlimann and T. Brixner</i>	
9.1	Introduction	135
9.2	Local-field control principles	138
9.2.1	Fundamental quantities	139
9.2.2	Spectral enhancement	140
9.2.3	Local polarization-mode interference	142
9.2.4	Local pulse compression	143
9.2.5	Optimal control	144
9.2.6	Analytic optimal control rules	146
9.2.7	Time reversal	148
9.2.8	Spatially shaped excitation fields	149
9.3	Local-field control examples	150
9.3.1	Spatial excitation control	150
9.3.2	Spatiotemporal excitation control	152
9.3.3	Propagation control	153
9.4	Applications	154
9.4.1	Space–time-resolved spectroscopy	154
9.4.2	Coherent two-dimensional nanoscopy	155
9.4.3	Unconventional excitations	155
9.5	Conclusions and outlook	156
<b>Part II</b>	<b>MODELING, DESIGN AND CHARACTERIZATION</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Computational electrodynamics for optical antennas</b>	<b>159</b>
	<i>O. J. F. Martin</i>	
10.1	Introduction	159
10.2	The numerical solution of Maxwell equations	160
10.2.1	Finite-difference time-domain method	161
10.2.2	Finite-differences method	162
10.2.3	Finite-elements method	163
10.2.4	Volume integral-equation method	165
10.2.5	Boundary-element method	166

	Contents	xi
10.3	Validity checks	168
10.4	Modeling realistic optical antennas	169
10.5	Tuning the antenna properties	171
10.6	Conclusions and outlook	174
<b>11</b>	<b>First-principles simulations of near-field effects</b>	<b>175</b>
	<i>J. L. Payton, S. M. Morton and L. Jensen</i>	
11.1	Introduction	175
11.2	Quantum effects on the near-field	177
11.3	Plasmon–exciton hybridization	181
11.4	Near-field effects on spectroscopy	187
	11.4.1 Surface-enhanced Raman scattering	188
	11.4.2 Surface-enhanced fluorescence	191
11.5	Near-field effects on molecular photochemistry	192
	11.5.1 Early examples of photochemistry	193
	11.5.2 Photochemical enhancement mechanism	193
11.6	Conclusions and outlook	196
<b>12</b>	<b>Field distribution near optical antennas at the subnanometer scale</b>	<b>197</b>
	<i>C. Pecharrromán</i>	
12.1	Introduction	197
12.2	Theoretical background	199
12.3	Results	203
	12.3.1 Sphere dimers	203
	12.3.2 Nano-rods	207
	12.3.3 Cylinders	209
12.4	Enhancement and localization versus distance in particle dimers	211
12.5	Conclusions	213
<b>13</b>	<b>Fabrication and optical characterization of nanoantennas</b>	<b>215</b>
	<i>J. Prangsma, P. Biagioni and B. Hecht</i>	
13.1	Introduction	215
13.2	Fabrication of single-crystalline antennas	216
	13.2.1 Role of the dielectric function	217
	13.2.2 Effects of geometry and multicrystallinity	219
	13.2.3 Fabrication issues	220
	13.2.4 Single-crystalline nanostructures	221
13.3	Optical characterization of nanoantennas	223
	13.3.1 Far-field scattering	223
	13.3.2 Determining the near-field intensity enhancement	224
	13.3.3 Emission directivity and coupling to quantum emitters	230
13.4	Conclusions and outlook	232

<b>14</b>	<b>Probing and imaging of optical antennas with PEEM</b>	<b>234</b>
	<i>P. Melchior, D. Bayer and M. Aeschlimann</i>	
14.1	Introduction	234
14.2	Photoemission electron microscopy	236
14.2.1	Instrumental setup	236
14.2.2	The photoemission process	238
14.3	Near-field investigation of nanostructured surfaces	240
14.3.1	Local near-field mapping	240
14.3.2	Imaging of surface plasmon polaritons	244
14.3.3	Observing and controlling the near-field distribution	244
14.3.4	Nonlinearities on structured surfaces	247
14.4	Time-resolved two-photon photoemission	248
14.4.1	Phase-averaged time-resolved PEEM	250
14.4.2	Phase-resolved PEEM	252
14.5	Other potential applications	253
14.5.1	Attosecond nanoplasmonic field microscope	253
14.5.2	Magneto-plasmonics	253
14.6	Conclusions and outlook	254
<b>15</b>	<b>Fabrication, characterization and applications of optical antenna arrays</b>	<b>256</b>
	<i>D. Dregely, J. Dorfmueller, M. Hentschel and H. Giessen</i>	
15.1	Introduction	256
15.2	Theory of antenna arrays	257
15.2.1	The array factor	257
15.2.2	Two-dimensional planar arrays and phased arrays	259
15.2.3	Directionality enhancement	260
15.3	Differences between RF and optical antenna arrays	261
15.3.1	Effective antenna length	261
15.3.2	Differences in antenna emission patterns	262
15.3.3	Antenna losses	262
15.4	The optical Yagi–Uda antenna – linear array of plasmonic dipoles	262
15.4.1	Fabrication and characterization of transmitting optical Yagi–Uda antennas	264
15.4.2	Design of receiving optical Yagi–Uda antennas	264
15.4.3	Characterization of receiving optical Yagi–Uda antenna	265
15.5	Two-dimensional arrays of optical antennas	268
15.5.1	Characterization of planar optical antenna arrays	268
15.5.2	Fabricating three-dimensional nanoantennas	270
15.5.3	Optical properties	271
15.5.4	Experimental characterization	272
15.6	Applications of optical antenna arrays	274
15.6.1	Phased arrays for optical wavelengths	275
15.6.2	Optical antenna links	276

	Contents	xiii
<b>16</b>	<b>Novel fabrication methods for optical antennas</b>	277
	<i>W. Zhou, J. Y. Suh and T. W. Odom</i>	
16.1	Introduction	277
16.2	Conventional methods to create nanoantennas	279
16.3	Soft nanolithography	280
16.3.1	Master	281
16.3.2	Elastomeric mask	281
16.3.3	Nanopatterned template	281
16.3.4	Optical antenna arrays	282
16.4	Strongly coupled nanoparticle arrays	283
16.5	Metal–insulator–metal nanocavity arrays	285
16.6	Three-dimensional bowtie antenna arrays	289
16.7	Conclusions and outlook	293
<b>17</b>	<b>Plasmonic properties of colloidal clusters: towards new metamaterials and optical circuits</b>	294
	<i>J. A. Fan and F. Capasso</i>	
17.1	Introduction	294
17.2	Self-assembled magnetic clusters	295
17.3	Plasmonic Fano-like resonances	303
17.4	DNA cluster assembly	311
17.5	Conclusions and outlook	316
<b>Part III</b>	<b>APPLICATIONS</b>	319
<b>18</b>	<b>Optical antennas for information technology and energy harvesting</b>	321
	<i>M. L. Brongersma</i>	
18.1	Introduction	321
18.2	Coupling plasmonic antennas to semiconductors	322
18.3	Plasmonic antennas for information technology and energy harvesting	332
18.4	Operation of semiconductor-based optical antennas	334
18.5	Semiconductor antennas for information technology and energy harvesting	336
18.6	Conclusions and outlook	338
<b>19</b>	<b>Nanoantennas for refractive-index sensing</b>	340
	<i>T. Shegai, M. Svedendahl, S. Chen, A. Dahlin and M. Käll</i>	
19.1	Introduction	340
19.2	An overview of plasmonic sensing	342
19.2.1	Bulk sensitivity	342
19.2.2	Molecular sensing	347
19.3	Recent trends in plasmonic sensing	351
19.3.1	Fano resonances	351

xiv	<b>Contents</b>	
	19.3.2 Alternative sensing schemes	353
	19.3.3 Sensing with nanoholes	354
	19.3.4 Plasmonic sensing for materials science	354
	19.4 Conclusions and outlook	355
<b>20</b>	<b>Nanoimaging with optical antennas</b>	<b>356</b>
	<i>P. Verma and Y. Saito</i>	
	20.1 Introduction	356
	20.2 The diffraction limit and spatial resolution	357
	20.3 Evanescent waves and metals	358
	20.3.1 Excitation of surface plasmon-polaritons with light	359
	20.3.2 Optical antennas	359
	20.4 Tip-enhanced Raman spectroscopy	360
	20.4.1 Spatial resolution in TERS	362
	20.4.2 Imaging intrinsic properties through TERS	363
	20.5 Further improvement in imaging through optical antennas	364
	20.5.1 Combining optical antennas with mechanical effects	364
	20.6 Optical antennas as nanolenses	366
	20.7 Conclusions and outlook	367
<b>21</b>	<b>Aperture optical antennas</b>	<b>369</b>
	<i>J. Wenger</i>	
	21.1 Introduction	369
	21.2 Enhanced light–matter interaction on nanoaperture antennas	370
	21.2.1 Single apertures	370
	21.2.2 Single apertures surrounded by surface corrugations	372
	21.2.3 Aperture arrays	374
	21.3 Biophotonic applications of nanoaperture antennas	376
	21.3.1 Enhanced fluorescence detection and analysis	376
	21.3.2 Molecular sensing and spectroscopy with aperture arrays	380
	21.4 Nanophotonic applications of nanoaperture antennas	383
	21.4.1 Photodetectors and filters	383
	21.4.2 Nanosources	383
	21.5 Conclusions	385
	<i>References</i>	387
	<i>Index</i>	446

## Preface

Recent years have witnessed a tremendous progress in nanofabrication, as well as in the theoretical and experimental understanding of light–matter interaction at the nanoscale. The field of nano-optics has thrived during these times and one of the most exciting related advances in this area has been the concept, design and application of *optical antennas*, or *nanoantennas*. Starting within the onset of field-enhanced spectroscopy and near-field optics, the concept has rapidly evolved into a sophisticated tool to enhance and direct spontaneous emission from quantum light sources, boost light–matter interaction and optical nonlinearities at the nanoscale, as well as implement realistic optical communication links. The amount of research activity on optical antennas has grown very rapidly in the last few years, and currently spans a broad range of areas, including optics, physics, chemistry, electrical engineering, biology and medicine, to cite a few. The rapid progress and inherent multidisciplinary nature of nanoantennas have produced a situation in which the involved research communities do not necessarily speak the same language. If electrical engineers have an established formalism based on circuit and radiation concepts developed over decades of antenna engineering and design, in optics, physics or chemistry many of the same phenomena are described in very different terms. It is exactly this interdisciplinarity, however, that may lead to groundbreaking findings and applications in a variety of fields of modern science.

It is generally accepted that nanoantennas may take great advantage from decades of radio-frequency antenna research, as many of the problems currently faced in optics have been approached and solved in the twentieth century by the giants of radio-frequency antennas, including G. Marconi, S.A. Schelkunoff, R.W.P. King and E. Hallén. Indeed, translating some of these concepts to optics has been shown to be very beneficial, but it is not a trivial task, due to the different nature of many of the involved phenomena. For example, the existence of surface-plasmon-polaritons at the interface between real metals and insulators gives rise to peculiar resonant phenomena not available at radio-frequencies. In addition, the quantum nature of light and matter becomes significantly important when dealing with nanoscale features and optical fields.

The following chapters have been written by leading experts in each subfield of the area. Each contribution has been carefully selected and edited to shape a complete book structured in a coherent manner, with the goal of guiding the

reader through the different languages and diverse approaches in design, fabrication, characterization and applications of optical antennas. Our aim has been not only to provide a consistent and well-organized survey of recent advances in the field, but also to help set a common playground for exciting future work in the area.

The book is divided into three parts and twenty-one chapters, covering fundamental and applied aspects of optical antennas. The first part outlines the central features and functionalities of optical antennas, using concepts and techniques from nano-optics, electrical engineering and physical chemistry. It aims at showing how an interdisciplinary approach is essential to capture the full potential of the optical antenna concept and it attempts to lay down a common language that may help the interaction among scientists and engineers working on different aspects of this topic. The book opens with an overview on the genesis of optical antennas, emphasizing their origin from near-field optical microscopy. The following two chapters aim at translating familiar radio-frequency concepts for antenna analysis and design to nano-optics. Concepts like antenna impedance, matching and radiation are revisited in the framework of optical antennas. Analogies and differences between the two fields are highlighted and the radio-frequency formalism is expanded to model the coupling between quantum emitters and optical antennas. Chapter 4 also connects engineering and optics approaches analyzing how nanoparticles with gain may operate analogously to conventional antenna elements. The next two chapters are dedicated to topics familiar to field-enhanced spectroscopy and describe them using the antenna concept. The peculiar field enhancement near optical antennas and the corresponding design rules for improving a variety of spectroscopic signals are discussed in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 is focused on the modification of fluorescence by optical antennas, acting on the excitation and emission channels and providing control over polarization and directionality. Chapters 7 and 8 expand the antenna concept toward quantum and nonlinear optics, emphasizing some unique features. For example, the possibility of enhancing the radiative decay rate of a quantum emitter by orders of magnitude across a broad spectral range or of obtaining an efficient nonlinear response without the need for phase matching. Finally, the last chapter of this first part addresses dynamical aspects in optical antennas, paying particular attention to the coherent control of nano-optical fields and its implications for spectroscopy.

The second part of the book is focused on modeling, design and characterization. Here the goal is to present a detailed survey of the state-of-the-art and of the challenges associated with the investigation of optical antennas. The first three chapters are focused on theoretical and numerical approaches to model nanostructures and their interaction with light. Chapter 10 is centered on computational electrodynamics for nano-optics, presenting advantages and pitfalls of various numerical methods. Chapter 11 deals with first-principle simulations of near-field effects, providing a deeper understanding of light–matter interaction at the nanoscale and of the relevance of quantum processes in this context.

In Chapter 12, the analysis of optical antennas is presented in the electrostatic approximation. This facilitates the analysis of the antenna properties and it may also provide interesting insights that are difficult to capture with full electrodynamic models. The next chapters discuss the challenges and available solutions for the fabrication and characterization of nanoantennas. Chapter 13 reviews how the microscopic structure of nanofabricated antennas may affect their optical properties, together with the most common optical techniques for their characterization. Chapter 14 introduces photoelectron emission microscopy (PEEM) as an essential tool to map and control the optical near-field with nanometer spatial resolution. Chapter 15 is fully dedicated to the study of optical antenna arrays and the possibility of controlling directionality and radiation pattern of the emitted light. Chapter 16 focuses on novel fabrication methods for optical antennas, with an emphasis on soft lithography. Finally, Chapter 17 is centered on nanoparticle clusters, which may exhibit exotic optical properties and may be fabricated using unconventional methods, like DNA-based assembly.

The book is concluded with four chapters on applications, spanning optical communications and energy harvesting, to sensing, imaging and biophotonics. This list is by no means exhaustive of the relevant applications of optical antennas at the moment, but it aims at providing a flavor of the breadth of exciting opportunities that nanoantennas may provide across a broad range of areas. Chapter 18 discusses how optical antennas may be deployed in a variety of semiconductor technologies for the next generation of optoelectronic devices and solar cells. Chapter 19 focuses on the use of optical antennas as refractive-index optical sensors. Imaging applications of optical antennas are presented in Chapter 20, ranging from the recent developments in scanning-probe nanoscopy to the concept of a nanolens. The final chapter describes aperture antennas and their use in bio and nanophotonics.

*Optical Antennas* represents an attempt at presenting a thorough and complete overview of an emerging and evolving field. We hope that the book will help towards crystallizing current achievements and future trends in the area, and bringing closer together the different approaches and disciplines involved. We wish the book to become a fundamental resource, not only for experienced researchers in the areas of nano-optics, but also to the curious scientists, postdocs and graduate students who want to get closer to this exciting field of research.

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# Notation

AFM	atomic force microscopy (microscope)
Al, Ag, Au, ...	aluminum, silver, gold, ... (chemical elements)
DDA	discrete dipole approximation
EBL	electron beam lithography
EHD	electric Hertzian dipole
FDTD	finite-difference time-domain
FIB	focused ion beam
FWHM	full width at half maximum
IR	infrared
LDOS	local density of states
LSPR	localized surface plasmon–polariton resonance
NA	numerical aperture
NP	nanoparticle
PEEM	photoemission electron microscopy (microscope)
QD	quantum dot
RF	radio frequency
SEF	surface-enhanced fluorescence
SEIRA	surface-enhanced infrared absorption
SEM	scanning electron microscopy (microscope)
SERRS	surface-enhanced resonance Raman scattering
SERS	surface-enhanced Raman scattering
SHG	second harmonic generation
SNOM	scanning near-field optical microscopy (microscope)
SPP	surface plasmon–polariton
SPR	surface plasmon–polariton resonance
TDDFT	time-dependent density functional theory
TE	transverse electric
TEM	transmission electron microscopy (microscope)
TERS	tip-enhanced Raman scattering
TLS	two-level system
TM	transverse magnetic
TPL	two-photon photoluminescence
UV	ultraviolet
~	<i>asymptotically</i> equal (in scaling sense)

$\approx$	<i>approximately</i> equal (in numerical value)
1D	one-dimensional (one dimension)
2D	two-dimensional (two dimensions)
2PPE	two-photon photoemission
3D	three-dimensional (three dimensions)