

INTRODUCTION TO CONTROLLED-SOURCE ELECTROMAGNETIC METHODS

This volume describes how controlled-source electromagnetic methods are used to determine the electrical conductivity and hydrocarbon content of the upper few kilometres of the earth, on land and at sea. The authors show how the signal-to-noise ratio of the measured data may be maximised via suitable choice of acquisition and processing parameters and selection of subsequent data analysis procedures. Complete impulse responses for every electric and magnetic source and receiver configuration are derived, providing a guide to the expected response for real data. One-, two- and three-dimensional modelling and inversion procedures for recovery of earth conductivity are presented, emphasising the importance of updating model parameters using complementary geophysical data and rock physics relations. Requiring no specialist prior knowledge of electromagnetic theory, and providing a step-by-step guide through the necessary mathematics, this book provides an accessible introduction for advanced students, researchers and industry practitioners in exploration geoscience and petroleum engineering.

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INTRODUCTION TO CONTROLLED-SOURCE ELECTROMAGNETIC METHODS

Detecting Subsurface Fluids

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Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Notation and Conventions</i>	xi
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Ohm’s Law and Resistivity	1
1.2 Resistivity of Rocks	2
1.3 Resistivity Anisotropy	3
1.4 Effect of Hydrocarbons on Resistivity: Archie’s Law	3
1.5 Example Well Logs: P-Wave Velocity and Resistivity	5
1.6 Controlled-Source Electromagnetic Surveys	7
1.7 Seismic and Electromagnetic Propagation	8
1.8 One-Dimensional Example of a Buried Resistive Layer	11
1.9 One-dimensional Example of a Buried More-Conducting Layer	13
1.10 Extraction of Resistivities from CSEM Data: The Problem of Inversion	15
1.11 Outline of the Book	16
2 Sources, Receivers, Acquisition Configurations and Source Time Functions	18
2.1 The Current Dipole Source	18
2.2 Receivers	20
2.3 Source–Receiver Configurations	22
2.4 The Air Wave Problem	27
2.5 Sources of EM Noise	28
2.6 Source Time Functions	30
3 Fourier Analysis and Linear Filters	34
3.1 Temporal and Spatial Fourier Transformation	34
3.2 Example of a Plane Wave	36

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
	3.3 Resolution and Bandwidth	36
	3.4 Similarity Theorem	38
	3.5 Impulse Function (δ)	38
	3.6 The Sifting Property	39
	3.7 Parseval's Theorem and the Energy in a Signal	41
	3.8 Convolution and the Convolution Theorem	43
	3.9 Linear Filters and Impulse Response	44
	3.10 Earth as a Linear Filter	47
	3.11 Cross-Correlation, Autocorrelation and Time-Reverse	49
	3.12 Derivative Theorem	50
	3.13 Wavefield Transformation	51
	3.14 Sampling and Aliasing	52
	3.15 Sampling Theorem	53
	3.16 Discrete Fourier Transform (DFT)	55
	3.17 Filtering of Sampled Signals: Discrete Convolution	58
	3.18 Frequency Domain Deconvolution	59
	3.19 The Wiener Filter	60
	3.20 Time Domain Deconvolution	63
	3.21 Laplace Transform	63
4	Electromagnetic Fields in a Horizontally Layered VTI Medium	65
	4.1 Basic Equations	66
	4.2 The Electromagnetic Field for a Source in a VTI Whole Space	77
	4.3 The Electromagnetic Field of a Source in a VTI Half-Space	86
	4.4 The Electromagnetic Field for Marine CSEM	97
	4.5 The Electromagnetic Field for Land CSEM	105
5	Numerical Examples	107
	5.1 The Electric Field in a VTI Whole Space	108
	5.2 The Electric Field in a Homogeneous Half-Space	113
	5.3 The Electric Field in a Marine CSEM Setting	121
	5.4 The Electric Field in a Land CSEM Setting	149
6	Source Control	168
	6.1 The Convolutional Model in CSEM	169
	6.2 Pseudo-Random Binary Sequence	170
	6.3 Convolution and Deconvolution with a PRBS	172
	6.4 Effect of Noise and Deconvolution Gain	173
	6.5 Heaviside Function, or Step Function	177
	6.6 Square Wave Function	183
	6.7 Special Periodic Functions	184

	<i>Contents</i>	vii
7	Deep Water CSEM	189
7.1	Introduction	189
7.2	Attenuation of Electromagnetic Signals in Sea Water	190
7.3	Acoustic Positioning	191
7.4	Deep-Towed Current Dipole Source	192
7.5	Ocean-Bottom Receiver Node	194
7.6	In-line and Broadside Responses	194
7.7	Receiver Orientation	196
7.8	Acquisition Geometries	198
7.9	Source–Receiver Synchronisation and Data Processing	198
7.10	Amplitude <i>versus</i> Offset Example	199
8	Land CSEM with a Transient Source Signal	202
8.1	Introduction	202
8.2	Acquisition of 2D and 3D CSEM Data	203
8.3	Deconvolution and Removal of the Air Wave	205
8.4	Isotropic Half-Space Response	207
8.5	Signal-to-Noise Ratio of MTEM Data	211
8.6	Attenuation of Cultural Noise	212
8.7	CSEM Survey Over an Underground Gas Storage Site in France	216
8.8	Apparent Resistivities from Time to Peak of Impulse Response	218
8.9	Resistivities from Step Responses	218
9	Shallow Water CSEM with a Transient Source Signal	221
9.1	2D Data Acquisition with an OBC	221
9.2	Examples of OBC Data	223
9.3	Removal of Spatially Correlated Noise	223
9.4	Time-Lapse Marine OBC Data Repeatability	227
9.5	Towed-Streamer Marine CSEM Data	229
10	Forward and Inverse Modelling of CSEM Data	235
10.1	Forward Modelling	237
10.2	Inverse Modelling	241
11	Recovery of Resistivities from CSEM Data	244
11.1	Effect of Offset	244
11.2	Attenuation and Model Parameterisation	245
11.3	Resistivities from Seismic Velocities	246
11.4	Example from North Sea Harding Field	250
11.5	Test of Methodology Using Real CSEM Data	251
11.6	Implications for Electromagnetic Survey Planning	253
11.7	Example Inversion of Deep Water 3D CSEM Data	253

viii	<i>Contents</i>	
12	Efficient CSEM	258
12.1	General Considerations	259
12.2	Land	260
12.3	Shallow Water Marine	262
12.4	Deep Water Marine	263
12.5	Source Time Function	263
12.6	Conclusions	264
<i>Appendix A</i>	The Electric Field in a VTI Whole Space	265
<i>Appendix B</i>	The Electromagnetic Field in a VTI Layered Medium	268
<i>Appendix C</i>	Green’s Functions and Their Derivatives	284
<i>Appendix D</i>	The Final Value Theorem	289
	<i>References</i>	291
	<i>Index</i>	299
	<i>Colour plate section found between pages 176 and 177</i>	

Preface

The aim of this book is to make the benefits of controlled-source electromagnetic (CSEM) methods more widely appreciated by geoscientists and engineers, and to provide an approach that has sound theoretical foundations and a clear description of the practical aspects of CSEM data acquisition, processing and interpretation.

CSEM methods are used to explore for contrasts in subsurface electrical conductivity and are especially useful to search for subsurface fluids, including resistive hydrocarbons and conductive saline water. For example, CSEM methods have the potential to detect hydrocarbons before drilling. Since three out of four exploration wells contain no hydrocarbons, it may pay to carry out CSEM exploration before drilling to increase the likelihood of finding oil or gas. Saline water at depths of 2–4 km is usually hot enough to provide heat for buildings. In many countries, heating consumes more energy than transport and electricity generation combined. CSEM has the potential to find the geothermal resources that can reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

Theoretical work on the concept of CSEM methods and the use of loops and antennas for exploration dates back to the 1950s. Onshore techniques were developed commercially and by the academic community. Offshore techniques were developed initially by academics. By 1991, Misac N. Nabighian was able to bring all this work together in the two-volume book *Electromagnetic Methods in Applied Geophysics*, published by the Society of Exploration Geophysics. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, CSEM became a tool for de-risking exploration drilling for deep-water prospects. Compared with seismic exploration, however, CSEM is still in its infancy and is still expensive per data point. There is clearly room for development.

It is now well understood in seismic exploration that broad bandwidth data are essential for good imaging of subsurface structures, whether the data are processed in the time domain or the frequency domain. A key concept is the idea of an impulsive source and the resulting impulse response of the earth. This concept is

equally applicable to CSEM and is at the heart of our description of the method. For the source time function, CSEM has a big advantage over seismic exploration methods: it is very easy to reverse the polarity of current flow and create source time functions that have desirable properties. Furthermore, the source time function is easily measured and recovery of the resulting impulse responses from the measured data by deconvolution is straightforward. The impulse responses may be processed in the time domain or the frequency domain to determine subsurface resistivities.

There are some similarities with seismic exploration, but there are major differences. The most important difference is, of course, the physics. Seismic data obey the wave equation; electromagnetic (EM) data in conducting media such as fluid-filled rocks obey the diffusion equation. Seismologists often use ray theory to describe what happens to the waves – how they reflect, refract and diffract. Unfortunately, ray theory does not apply to diffusive data. Seismologists are accustomed to lining up seismic arrivals that have the same shape and estimating seismic velocities as a result – the velocities are determined from the data themselves. Such techniques cannot be used to estimate resistivities from EM data, because the shape of the wave changes as it propagates. Instead, the resistivities are normally estimated from the data by inversion, which is a kind of modelling. For a seismologist this can be frustrating. This book is written partially for seismologists who would like an easy way ‘in’ to understanding electromagnetics.

The book is written for students, researchers and practitioners. Much of the material has been presented as courses for undergraduate and graduate geophysics students at the University of Edinburgh and at Delft University of Technology. The mathematical background required is partial differential equations, vector algebra, Fourier transforms and Laplace transforms.

We have had discussions with many friends and colleagues, and thank in particular, Bruce Hobbs, Paul Stoffa, David Wright, David Taylor, Dieter Werthmüller and our students for all their help and comments. We thank Cambridge University Press for agreeing to publish the book. Susan Francis has been especially kind, helpful, encouraging and patient.

Anton thanks his lovely wife Kate for constant support.

Notation and Conventions

Symbols

Symbol	Description	SI units
a	tortuosity factor in Archie’s law	–
A	area	m^2
\mathbf{B}	vector magnetic induction	V s m^{-2}
c	propagation velocity	$\text{m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$
c_w	speed of sound in water	$\text{m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$
$c_0 = 299,792,458$	electromagnetic wave propagation velocity	$\text{m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$
\mathbf{D}	electric flux density	C m^{-2}
∇	del, or nabla, vector operator	m^{-1}
\mathbf{E}	vector electric field intensity	$\text{V}\cdot\text{m}^{-1}$
ε	electrical permittivity	$\text{C}^2\cdot\text{N}^{-1}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}$
$\varepsilon_0 \approx 8.85 \times 10^{-12}$	electrical permittivity of free space	$\text{C}^2\cdot\text{N}^{-1}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}$
δ	skin depth	m
$\delta(t)$	impulse function	s^{-1}
Δx_s	distance between source electrodes	m
Δx_r	distance between receiver electrodes	m
f	frequency	Hz
F	formation factor	–
G	Green’s function (units depend on problem)	–
$\gamma = \sqrt{\xi\sigma}$	horizontal wavenumber	m^{-1}
$\gamma_v = \sqrt{\xi\sigma_v}$	vertical wavenumber	m^{-1}
$\Gamma = \sqrt{\kappa^2 + \gamma^2}$	vertical wavenumber	m^{-1}
$\Gamma_v = \sqrt{\lambda^2\kappa^2 + \gamma^2}$	vertical wavenumber	m^{-1}
h_j	thickness of j th layer (Chapter 1)	m
\mathbf{H}	vector magnetic field intensity	A m^{-1}

xii	<i>Notation and Conventions</i>	
I	electric current	A
\mathbf{I}^m	magnetic source current dipole moment	V m
\mathbf{I}^e	electric source current dipole moment	A m
I_n	modified Bessel function of first kind and order n	—
i, j, k, l	indices	—
\mathbf{J}	volume density of induced current vector	A m ⁻²
\mathbf{J}^e	volume density of external electric current	A m ⁻²
\mathbf{J}^m	volume density of external magnetic current	V m ⁻²
J_n	ordinary Bessel function of first kind and order n	—
$k = \omega/c$	wavenumber	m ⁻¹
k_x, k_y, k_z	wavenumber components	m ⁻¹
K	bulk modulus	Pa
K_n	modified Bessel function of second kind and order n	—
$\kappa = \sqrt{k_x^2 + k_y^2}$	horizontal wavenumber	m ⁻¹
l	length	m
L	length	m
$\lambda = \sqrt{\sigma/\sigma_v}$	coefficient of anisotropy	—
m	cementation factor in Archie's law	—
μ	magnetic permeability	H·m ⁻¹
$\mu_0 = 4\pi \times 10^{-7}$	magnetic permeability of free space	H·m ⁻¹
n	saturation exponent in Archie's law	—
p	pressure	Pa
$\Pi(t)$	rectangle function	—
ϕ	porosity	—
q	fluid monopole source time function	Pa·m
r	distance	m
R	electrical resistance	Ω
R_h	electrical resistance in horizontal direction	Ω
R_v	electrical resistance in vertical direction	Ω
ρ	electrical resistivity	Ω·m
ρ_0	electrical resistivity of a rock saturated with salt water	Ω·m
ρ_t	resistivity of a rock	Ω·m
ρ_w	electrical resistivity of salt water	Ω·m
ϱ	density	kg·m ⁻³
ϱ_f	volume density of free charge	C m ⁻³

Notation and Conventions		xiii
$s = -i\omega$	Laplace variable	Hz
S_{hc}	hydrocarbon saturation	—
S_w	water saturation	—
σ	electrical conductivity, horizontal conductivity	$\text{S}\cdot\text{m}^{-1}$
σ_v	vertical conductivity	$\text{S}\cdot\text{m}^{-1}$
t	time	s
T	period	s
T_g	duration of impulse response	s
T_s	duration of source time function	s
V	voltage	V
$\omega = 2\pi f$	angular frequency	rad s^{-1}
\mathcal{V}	volume	m^3
x, y, z	Cartesian coordinates	m
z_s	source depth	m
$\zeta = s\mu_0$	zeta	$\text{H}\cdot\text{m}^{-1}\text{s}^{-1}$

Cartesian Coordinates

We use a right-handed Cartesian coordinate system with the z -axis positive downwards and the air–earth interface at $z = 0$, as shown in Figure 1.

Special Functions

The **ordinary Bessel function of the first kind** and order n is defined as

$$J_n(\xi) = \frac{i^{-n}}{\pi} \int_{\psi=0}^{\pi} \exp[-i\xi \cos(\psi)] \cos(n\psi) d\psi.$$

(1)

The **modified Bessel functions of the first and second kinds** and order n are given by

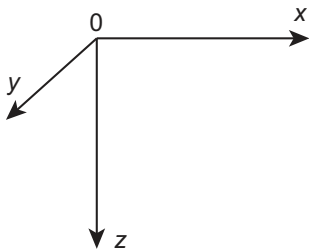


Figure 1 Cartesian coordinates.

$$I_n(\xi) = \frac{1}{\pi} \int_{\psi=0}^{\pi} \exp[\xi \cos(\psi)] \cos(n\psi) d\psi, \quad (2)$$

$$K_n(\xi) = \int_{\psi=0}^{\infty} \exp[-\xi \cosh(\psi)] \cosh(n\psi) d\psi. \quad (3)$$

The **error function** is defined as

$$\operatorname{erf}(x) = \frac{2}{\sqrt{\pi}} \int_{u=0}^x \exp(-u^2) du. \quad (4)$$

The **complementary error function** is defined as

$$\operatorname{erfc}(x) = 1 - \operatorname{erf}(x) = \frac{2}{\sqrt{\pi}} \int_x^{\infty} \exp(-u^2) du. \quad (5)$$

The **gamma function** is defined for all complex numbers except the non-positive integers. For complex numbers with a positive real part, it is defined via a convergent improper integral:

$$\Gamma(z) = \int_0^{\infty} x^{z-1} e^{-x} dx. \quad (6)$$

The **Heaviside function**, also known as the **Step function**, is defined as

$$H(t) = \begin{cases} 0, & t < 0 \\ \frac{1}{2}, & t = 0. \\ 1, & t > 0 \end{cases} \quad (7)$$

An **impulse**, also known as the **Dirac delta function**, is an infinitely strong pulse of unit area that can be defined as the two conditions:

$$\delta(t) = 0, t \neq 0; \quad (8)$$

$$\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \delta(t) dt = 1.$$

The **rectangle function** is defined as

$$\Pi(t) = \begin{cases} 0, & |t| > \frac{1}{2} \\ \frac{1}{2}, & |t| = \frac{1}{2}. \\ 1, & |t| < \frac{1}{2} \end{cases} \quad (9)$$

The **normalised sinc function** is defined as

$$\operatorname{sinc}(f) = \frac{\sin(\pi f)}{\pi f}. \quad (10)$$

Transforms

A wavefield may be described as a function $a(x, y, z, t)$ that varies with both position (x, y, z) and time (t) . We define the **temporal Fourier transform** as

$$\hat{a}(x, y, z, \omega) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} a(x, y, z, t) e^{i\omega t} dt, \quad (11)$$

with inverse

$$a(x, y, z, t) = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \hat{a}(x, y, z, \omega) e^{-i\omega t} d\omega. \quad (12)$$

The **double spatial Fourier transform** of the space–frequency domain function $\hat{a}(x, y, z, \omega)$ is defined as

$$\tilde{a}(k_x, k_y, z, \omega) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \hat{a}(x, y, z, \omega) e^{-i(k_x x + k_y y)} dx dy, \quad (13)$$

with inverse

$$\hat{a}(x, y, z, \omega) = \frac{1}{4\pi^2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \tilde{a}(k_x, k_y, z, \omega) e^{i(k_x x + k_y y)} dk_x dk_y, \quad (14)$$

where k_x and k_y are the *horizontal wavenumbers* and the tilde \sim indicates the further change of domain. Here we have chosen the negative sign for the exponential for transformation from space to wavenumber and therefore the positive sign for the inverse transform.

The forward temporal and spatial Fourier transforms can be combined to give the **forward triple Fourier transform**

$$\tilde{a}(k_x, k_y, z, \omega) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} a(x, y, z, t) e^{i(\omega t - k_x x - k_y y)} dx dy dt. \quad (15)$$

Similarly, the inverse transforms 12 and 14 can be combined to give the **inverse triple Fourier transform**

$$a(x, y, z, t) = \frac{1}{8\pi^3} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \tilde{a}(k_x, k_y, z, \omega) e^{-i(\omega t - k_x x - k_y y)} dk_x dk_y d\omega. \quad (16)$$

The **two-sided time-Laplace transform** of $a(x, y, z, t)$ is defined as

$$\hat{a}(x, y, z, s) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} a(x, y, z, t) e^{-st} dt, \quad (17)$$

and is the same as the temporal Fourier transform for the substitution $s = -i\omega$, where s is complex. When the real part of s is zero, it becomes identical with the Fourier transform. If $a(x, y, z, t) = 0$ for $t < 0$, only half the integral is required.

The **one-sided time-Laplace transform** is defined as

$$\hat{a}(x, y, z, s) = \int_{0^+}^{\infty} a(x, y, z, t) e^{-st} dt. \tag{18}$$

Because s is complex, the inverse transform is a contour integration in the complex plane

$$a(x, y, z, t) H(t) = \frac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{c-i\infty}^{c+i\infty} \hat{a}(x, y, z, s) e^{st} ds, \tag{19}$$

where c is a positive constant.

The **time-Laplace and three-dimensional spatial Fourier transform** of $a(x, y, z, t)$ is

$$\check{a}(k_x, k_y, k_z, s) = \int_0^{\infty} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} a(x, y, z, t) e^{-st} e^{-i[k_x x + k_y y + k_z z]} dx dy dz dt. \tag{20}$$