Single-Target Real-Time Passive WiFi Tracking

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Abstract—Device-free human tracking is an essential ingredient for ubiquitous wireless sensing. Recent passive WiFi tracking systems face the challenges of inaccurate separation of dynamic human components and time-consuming estimation of multi-dimensional signal parameters. In this work, we present a scheme named WiFi Doppler Frequency Shift (WiDFS), which can achieve single-target real-time passive tracking using channel state information (CSI) collected from commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) WiFi devices. We consider the typical system setup including a transmitter with a single antenna and a receiver with three antennas; while our scheme can be readily extended to another setup. To remove the impact of transceiver asynchronization, we first apply CSI cross-correlation between each RX antenna pair. We then combine them to estimate a Doppler frequency shift (DFS) in a short-time window. After that, we leverage the DFS estimate to separate dynamic human components from CSI self-correlation terms of each antenna, thereby separately calculating angle-of-arrival (AoA) and human reflection distance for tracking. In addition, a hardware calibration algorithm is presented to refine the spacing between RX antennas and eliminate the hardware-related phase differences between them. A prototype demonstrates that WiDFS can achieve real-time tracking with a median position error of 72.32 cm in multipath-rich environments.

Index Terms—WiFi, Tracking, CSI, Doppler Frequency Shift, Hardware Calibration.

1 Introduction

Passive WiFi tracking is a promising technique that uses WiFi signals to locate people without needing any other sensors or wearable devices. Compared to other wireless signal-based solutions like radio frequency identification (RFID) [1], [2], [3], [4], [5] and millimetre wave (mmWave) radar [6], [7], [8], [9], WiFi infrastructures are almost ubiquitous at public work places and homes, thereby avoiding the need of deploying dedicated wireless tracking infrastructure and devices. Wireless sensing techniques are free from light conditions and even perform well in non-line-of-sight (NLOS) scenarios where a target is blocked [10], [11].

Passive WiFi tracking has gained much attention from academic and industrial communities over the past years. Recent works [12], [13], [14], [15] exploit a stable and feature-rich signal parameter for positioning, i.e., channel state information (CSI), which can be extracted from a commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) WiFi network interface controller (NIC) (e.g., Intel 5300 [16] and Atheros QCA9558 [17]). Such CSI-based localization solutions could achieve finer decimeter-level localization accuracies. To the best of our knowledge, however, most existing approaches with fine tracking accuracy are hard to directly adopt in practical applications due to the following reasons. First, huge computation in each position estimation may jeopardize the system’s real-time performance [18]. Second, estimation errors in many Doppler-based continuous tracking solutions [19] may accumulate over time, resulting in trajectory drift. Third, deep learning-based solutions [20], [21] require a huge amount of labeled CSI data in specified scenarios for training. Since different environments have different multipath interference, the trained network may not be universal.

There are also three major challenges in passive WiFi tracking, which have not been well addressed in the literature. These challenges are detailed below.

1) WiFi transceiver clock asynchronization [13], [17], [22], [23] results in time-varying asynchronization of interest. Many existing works [24], [25], [26] exploit cross-correlation between CSIs of pairwise antennas to address the asynchronous signal processing problem. However, this operation introduces a side product, i.e., the conjugate terms of the dynamic cross-correlation terms of interest. In this case, DFS ambiguity is created, meaning that the DFS to be estimated can be the true value or its negative value. A common solution to suppressing the ambiguity is adding a constant to the reference signal and subtracting another one to the rest signals before the cross-correlation [22], [24]. However, this does not always work, especially in multipath-rich scenarios.

2) Separating the dynamic human components is challenging. An existing common method [19] aims to directly separate the dynamic human component from cross-correlation terms by adding a factor to the CSI amplitudes of the reference antenna and subtracting another factor from the CSI amplitudes of other antennas. However, this power adjustment solution cannot completely eliminate the impact of the side product in dynamic component separation. Furthermore, these dynamic components may not always be reliable for position indication. For example, human body is not a perfect reflector and may not reflect signals to a receiver antenna array at some sampling time.

3) The difference in WiFi hardware, including WiFi NIC, RX antennas, and RX antenna cables, introduces different phase shifts on each RX antenna, which significantly impact human tracking accuracy. An existing method [27] conducts WiFi hardware calibration using a SMA splitter. However, an unknown π-radians phase ambiguity will be...
induced. Also, since the RX antenna array is customized, the measured antenna spacing inevitably deviates from the actual value. Removing the $\pi$-radians phase ambiguity and estimating the true RX antenna spacing are challenging.

In this paper, we propose a WiFi single-target passive tracking scheme, called WiFi Doppler Frequency Shift (WiDFS), which enables to overcome the above three challenges and can be run in real time at a medium class mini PC. Currently, a standard COTS NIC supports up to three antennas. WiDFS tracks a moving person using a COTS WiFi transceiver with one TX antenna and three RX antennas. Using three-RX-antenna is essential as we need to use their CSIs to estimate the angle-of-arrival (AoA) of incoming signals, and to remove transceiver clock asynchronization and accurately estimate the DFS caused by human movement. Once the DFS estimate is obtained, we then leverage it to separate dynamic human components. WiDFS can then track the person by estimating the AoA in the direction of human reflection and the length of the reflection path from the transmitter to the person and then the receiver. Our main contributions are as follows.

1) We propose a DFS estimation algorithm based on cross-correlation between each RX antenna pair. Compared to existing solutions, WiDFS can eliminate the impact of the side product that is mixed with the dynamic cross-correlation term of interest. WiDFS leverages the static cross-correlation term which is usually abandoned in previous works. This term can be easily obtained by averaging over a CSI sampling window. WiDFS then conducts a straightforward transformation to resolve the DFS ambiguity caused by the side product. Since three RX antennas are separated by less than half a wavelength, it is reasonable to assume that the DFS of each antenna is almost the same. Thus, WiDFS builds a CSI observation matrix to estimate an accurate DFS using a subspace-based MUSIC algorithm in each short-time sampling window.

2) We design a lightweight algorithm that uses the estimated DFS to separate the dynamic human components, which is more robust and accurate than the power adjustment and reference antenna solutions, especially in actual multipath-rich scenarios. In this work, we focus on each antenna’s instantaneous power of channel frequency response (CFR) based on self-correlation. The CFR power is also free from the impact of transceiver clock asynchronization. WiDFS first relies on the estimated DFS to refine the CFR power in a CSI sampling window. Then it uses a simple yet effective solution to reconstruct dynamic human components by formulating a linear least-squares problem. We further propose a windowed algorithm that can deal with the problem that RX antennas cannot capture human reflections or can only capture minor reflections. WiDFS combines CSI data from multiple sampling windows for localization parameter estimation. It relies on the estimated DFS to achieve unsupervised motion sensing, which can detect the absence and presence of a moving person.

3) We present a WiFi hardware calibration solution to estimate the hardware-dependent phase shifts and antenna spacing between any two antennas, without any specialized devices. WiDFS collects CSIs by deploying a TX antenna on each side of an RX antenna array and then uses a standard phase-distance model for calibration.

A prototype of WiDFS is implemented using a transmitter with a single TX antenna and a receiver with three RX antennas forming a linear uniform antenna array. WiDFS is programmed using Python. The experiments demonstrate that WiDFS achieves median and 90th percentile position errors of 72.31 cm and 170.8 cm, respectively. Such a localization accuracy exceeds a state-of-the-art technique Widar2.0 [25] by about 36 cm and 70 cm. More importantly, WiDFS costs a mean running time of 0.076 s on a mini PC (online) and 0.024 s on a MacBook Pro (offline) to output each position estimate when collecting about 0.1 second CSI data, leading to real-time tracking in practical applications.

2 CSI MODELING IN DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENTS

This section describes our CSI model in a dynamic environment where a person is moving in a typical room. The CSI provides information on the environment as changes of signal propagation environment cause variations of CSI over time. The CSI can be accessed on certain COTS WiFi NICs using 802.11n or Atheros CSI tools [16], [17]. Such a NIC typically supports up to three Tx and Rx antennas. Fig. 1 shows a typical WiFi-based sensing scenario. In this setup with Intel NIC 5300, we use a Tx with a single antenna and a receiver with three RX antennas forming a uniform linear antenna array (ULA). The 3-antenna ULA offers Angle-of-Arrival (AoA) estimation capability for a limited number of multipath signals.

2.1 General CSI model in COTS WiFi systems

The CSI characterizes the channel frequency response (CFR) of a wireless signal propagating from a transmitter to a receiver. In the IEEE 802.11n standard, a channel has a 20 MHz bandwidth with 30 subcarriers. Then the CSI matrix in our scheme contains the number of $1 \times 3 \times 30$ complex channel coefficients at each sampling time. In COTS WiFi systems, the actual CSI measurements always suffer from the additional noise caused by NIC processing imperfection and WiFi hardware diversity.

1) WiFi NIC Processing Imperfection. The original CSI may contain time-varying terms associated with imperfect signal processing in NIC, such as residual time and frequency synchronization offsets due to transmitter-receiver clock asynchronism, a power control uncertainty error and an I-Q imbalance error [13]. These errors produce the same impact on all RX antennas. Let $H_{jk}$ denote the CFR associated with such imperfections at the $j$-th subcarrier.
We assume the AoA spacing due to the sampling frequency related CFR includes external WiFi antennas, antenna cables, SMA connectors as well as NIC itself. Their impacts on receiving signals at each subcarrier keep unchanged over time. However, manufacturing imperfection may cause different phase shifts on each RX antenna. According to [27], their variations over subcarriers can be ignored, so the WiFi hardware-related CFR \( H^b_i \) at the \( i \)-th RX antenna (\( i = 1, 2, 3 \)) can be represented as

\[
H^b_i = \rho^b_i e^{-j\phi^b_i}, \tag{2}
\]

where \( \rho^b_i \) and \( \phi^b_i \) are the WiFi hardware-related attenuation and phase shift at the \( i \)-th RX antenna.

Accounting for the two multiplicative interference terms in (1) and (2), a general CSI model [28, 29] at the \( i \)-th RX antenna, the \( j \)-th subcarrier and the \( k \)-th CSI sample is represented as

\[
\text{CSI}_{i,j,k} = H^e_{j,k} H^b_i \sum_{l=1}^{L} H_{i,j,k,l][l]}, \tag{3}
\]

where

\[
H_{i,j,k,l}[l] = \rho_{i,j,k}[l] e^{-j2\pi \frac{f_{c}^{D} l}{f_{c}} + \frac{f_{D}^{i,j,k}[l]}{f_{c}} \Delta t + (i-1)\Delta d \sin \theta_{k}[l][l]}, \tag{4}
\]

Some variables in Eq. (4) are described as follows: \( f_j \) is the \( j \)-th subcarrier frequency, \( f_c \) is the center frequency, \( c \) is the speed of light, \( \Delta t \) is the sampling time interval, \( \Delta d \) is the RX antenna spacing no more than half a wavelength. For the \( l \)-th multipath, \( \rho_{i,j,k}[l] \) and \( d_{k}[l] \) are the signal propagation attenuation and length, \( f_{D}^{i,j,k}[l] \) is the DFS which is introduced to the carrier frequency at the \( i \)-th RX antenna due to object movement \( (v_{i,j,k}[l] = c \frac{f_{D}^{i,j,k}[l]}{f_{c}} \) is called the radial speed), \( \theta_{k}[l] \) is the AoA that is the direction from which a reflection is received by the ULA.

According to [28], we define a short-time sampling window which is typically a few milliseconds when tracked objects move at velocities up to several meters per second. In WiDFS, the length of the time window is set to about 0.1 seconds during which \( N_p = 100 \) CSI packets are collected due to the sampling frequency \( f_s \) of 1 KHz. In this window, we can assume that the gain \( \rho_{k}^{agc} \), attenuation \( \rho_{j,k}[l] \), DFS \( f_{D}^{i,j,k}[l] \) in Eq. (4) all remain almost unchanged, then we denote \( \rho_{k} = \rho_{k}^{agc} \), \( \rho_{i,j,k} = \rho_{i,j} \) and \( f_{D}^{i,j,k}[l] = f_{D}^{i,j}[l] \), respectively. In addition, we assume the AoA spacing \( \Delta \theta^X \) between two successive CSI samples, i.e., \( \Delta \theta^X = \theta_{k+1}[l] - \theta_{k}[l] \), keeps unchanged in the window. In the following, we will rely on these assumptions to revise the above general CSI model.

### 2.2 Our CSI model for single-target passive tracking

Here we extend the general CSI model and introduce ours for single-target passive tracking in a dynamic environment in a short-time window.

When a transmitter emits WiFi signals to space, the receiver receives two categories of signals. One is the direct signal that travels along the direct path from the transmitter to the receiver. Another is the reflected signals that bounce off different objects like the floor, wall, furniture, and the tracked person. Furthermore, we divide these signals into static and dynamic signals: (1) the former includes a direct signal that propagates from the transmitter to the receiver, and the signals that reflect off surrounding static objects to the receiver; (2) the latter contains the reflected signals that directly reflect off the human body to the receiver, and those that firstly bounce off the human body to other surrounding objects and then travel back to the receiver. Let \( H^S_{i,j} \) be the CFR corresponding to the static signals between the TX antenna and the \( i \)-th RX antenna at the \( j \)-th subcarrier, called static component. Specially, we assume the signal strength of the direct path between the TX and RX antennas is much higher than other static multipath signals. Let \( H^X_{i,j,k} \) be the CFR corresponding to the reflected signals off the moving person \( X \), called dynamic human component. Thus, we rewrite the CSI model in Eq. (3) to formulate the problem of single-target passive tracking as

\[
\text{CSI}_{i,j,k} = H^e_{j,k} H^b_i \left( H^S_{i,j} + H^X_{i,j,k} \right), \tag{5}
\]

where

\[
\begin{align*}
H^S_{i,j} &= \rho^S_{i,j} e^{-j2\pi \frac{f_{D}^{i,j}[l]}{f_{c}} \Delta t + (i-1)\Delta d \sin \theta_{k}[l][l]} + N^S_{i,j}, \\
H^X_{i,j,k} &= \rho^X_{i,j,k} e^{-j2\pi \frac{f_{D}^{i,j,k}[l]}{f_{c}} \Delta t + (i-1)\Delta d \sin \theta_{k}[l][l]} + N^X_{i,j,k}.
\end{align*} \tag{6}
\]

In the above, \( \rho^S_{i,j} \) and \( \rho^X_{i,j,k} \) are the propagation attenuations of the direct and reflected path; \( d^S \) is the distance of the direct path between the transmitter and the \( i \)-th RX antenna, which can be manually measured in advance; \( d^X \) is the distance of the reflected path where the transmit signal is reflected from the tracked person \( X \) to the \( i \)-th RX antenna at the \( k \)-th sampling point (for simplicity, we call it human reflection distance); \( N^S_{i,j} \) and \( N^X_{i,j,k} \) are the noise terms caused by other minor multipath reflections.

In a short-time window as defined above, the human reflection distance \( d^S_{i,k} \) can be represented as

\[
d^X_{i,k} \approx d^X_{i,1} + c \frac{f_{D}^{i,j,k}}{f_{c}} (k-1) \Delta t, \tag{7}
\]

where \( d^X_{i,1} \) is the human reflection distance at the initial position in the window. Further, the distance \( d^X_{i,k}, i \in \{2,3\} \), can be rewritten using an initial AoA \( \theta^X_{i,k} \),

\[
\begin{align*}
d^X_{i,k} &\approx d^X_{i,1} + (i-1)\Delta d \sin \theta^X_{i,k} \\
&\approx d^X_{i,1} + c \frac{f_{D}^{i,j,k}}{f_{c}} (k-1) \Delta t + (i-1)\Delta d \sin \left[ \theta^X_{i,k} + (k-1)\Delta \theta^X \right]. \tag{8}
\end{align*}
\]
In indoor environments, since the person does not move too fast, $\Delta \theta^X$ would be very small in the time interval of about 0.001 seconds. Then the derivative of $\sin \theta^X$ is

$$\lim_{\Delta \theta^X \to 0} \frac{\sin [\hat{\theta}^X_k + (k-1) \Delta \theta^X] - \sin \hat{\theta}^X_k}{(k-1) \Delta \theta^X} = \cos \hat{\theta}^X_k.$$  \hspace{1cm} (9)

Then Eq. (8) can be approximately rewritten as

$$d_{i,k}^X \approx d_{i,1}^X + (i - 1) \Delta d \sin \theta^X + \left[ -c \frac{f^D}{f_e} + (i - 1) f^s \Delta d \Delta \theta^X \cos \theta^X \right] (k - 1) \Delta t$$

$$= d_{i,1}^X + (i - 1) \Delta d \sin \theta^X_k + c \left( f^D + f^A \right) (k - 1) \Delta t,$$

where $f^A = (i - 1) \frac{f^s_k}{f_e} \Delta d \Delta \theta^X \cos \theta^X$ is called the AoA frequency shift (AFS). Here we note that the DFS at the $i$-th RX antenna ($i = 2, 3$) is $f^D = f^D_1 \approx f^D_2$. We can see that the DFS has a slight difference among different RX antennas, which is generally ignored in previous works. When a person moves at a low speed, the impact of $f^A$ is small and thereby we can ignore its impact. In Section 9, we will verify the impact of human motion speed on tracking accuracy. In the rest of this work, we denote $f^D = f^D_1 \approx f^D_2 \approx f^D_3$. And we use $\theta^X$ and $d^X$ to denote the AoA and human reflection distance for simplicity.

In this case, the dynamic human component $H_{i,j,k}^X$ can be revised based on the three key signal parameters (DFS $f^D$, AoA $\theta^X$ and human reflection distance $d^X$), and we have

$$H_{i,j,k}^X = \rho_{i,j} \frac{e}{2\pi} \left[ d^X e + c \frac{f^D}{f_e} (k-1) \Delta t + (i-1) \Delta d \sin \theta^X \right] + n_{i,j,k}^X.$$  \hspace{1cm} (11)

### 2.3 Challenges

Our CSI model reveals that, to be able to track a single moving object, we need to estimate $\{f^D, \theta^X, d^X\}$ in the presence of multiple static multipath signals, the time-varying phase shifts $\varphi^D_{i,k}$ and $\varphi^A_{i,k}$ in $H_{i,j,k}^X$, and the WiFi hardware-dependent phase shift $\varphi_i$. Specifically, the time-varying phase shifts are major hurdles for jointly exploiting CSIs across time in tracking, and they will also cause ambiguity in parameter estimation if not being removed. The large number of multipath will cause inefficiency in parameter estimation, particularly in AoA estimation given the limited number of Rx antennas. These issues cause that conventional localization and tracking algorithms cannot be directly applied. To achieve fine-grained passive tracking, we firstly need to minimize the impact of transceiver asynchrony, which is a critical and challenging problem in WiFi tracking; we can then separate the dynamic human component $H_{i,j,k}^X$ from the CSI measurements and then estimate, ideally, only the parameters associated with the single dynamic path reflected from the object. In the following, we aim to achieve this goal by proposing a novel scheme.

### 3 System Overview

This work presents a scheme WiDFS that enables single-target real-time passive tracking using COTS WiFi devices. In WiDFS, a COTS Intel 5300 WiFi NIC that supports up to three antennas is used in a transmitter and receiver for CSI collection. The transmitter has one TX antenna while the receiver connects to a linear array consisting of three RX antennas. Such a three-antenna deployment is necessary due to the design of our algorithm in addressing the impact of transceiver asynchronization, as well as for estimating AoA. WiDFS firstly applies CSI cross-correlation between each pair of RX antennas to remove the time-varying phase shifts in CSIs. Then WiDFS obtains an unambiguous DFS estimate from the calculated cross-correlation terms in a short-time window. After that, WiDFS adopts CSI self-correlation of...
each RX antenna to acquire each antenna’s CFR power and then separates the dynamic human component using a simple yet effective DFS-based separation algorithm. When WiDFS detects the presence of a moving person, it enables to estimate the AoA of the tracked person relative to the RX array and the human reflection distance from the person to the TX and RX antennas. Finally, WiDFS combines the estimated signal parameters to achieve real-time tracking. The workflow of WiDFS is illustrated in Fig. 2. The processing in the main modules is summarized below and will be detailed later.

1) Doppler Frequency Shift Estimation. WiDFS firstly adopts cross-correlation between CSIs of any two antennas to remove time-varying phase shifts. The corresponding cross-correlation terms are $CSI_{12}$, $CSI_{23}$, and $CSI_{31}$, respectively. In a short-time window containing 100 CSI samples (about 0.1 s due to the sampling frequency of 1 kHz), WiDFS cleans high-frequency noise via Savitzky-Golay and lowpass filters. The DFS estimator outputs an unambiguous DFS estimate based on these filtered CSI cross-correlation terms. This part is described in detail in Section 4.

2) Dynamic Human Component Separation. In this part, WiDFS adopts self-correlation to calculate the CFR power of each antenna and obtain $CSI_{11}$, $CSI_{22}$ and $CSI_{33}$, respectively. After cleaning the CFR power terms via a low-pass/bandpass filter, WiDFS combines the refined dynamic CFR powers with the estimated DFS to separate the dynamic human component. The details will be provided in Section 5.

3) Moving Person Detection and Tracking. Since a human body does not act as a perfect reflector, the RX array may just capture a few signal reflections. In this part, WiDFS combines the estimated dynamic human components over multiple CSI sampling windows. A DFS-based motion detector is designed to determine the absence and presence of a moving person. When the human movement is present, WiDFS separately performs AoA and distance estimation and then uses a Kalman filter to refine each parameter. Finally, the localizer uses optimized parameters to locate the person being tracked. Section 5 will present the details.

4) WiFi Hardware Diversity Calibration. In addition, we propose a one-time WiFi hardware calibration algorithm in Section 6 to calibrate and compensate for the difference in hardware-related phase shifts between RX antennas. At the same time, the algorithm can also calibrate the actual spacing between two adjacent RX antennas, which may be a little different from our manually measured value in our

4 Estimating Doppler Frequency Shift

To achieve passive human tracking, three key signal parameters, i.e., DFS $f^D$, AoA $\theta^X$, and human reflection distance $d^X$, will be estimated based on our CSI model. This section mainly introduces how to apply CSI cross-correlation to estimate the DFS $f^D$ in each sampling window.

4.1 Random phase shift removal via cross-correlation

Recall that $CSI_{i,j,k}$ is the reported CSI by a COTS WiFi system at $i$-th antenna, $j$-th subcarrier and $k$-th CSI sampling time. The time-varying phase shifts $\phi^X_{j,k}$ and $\phi^F_{j,k}$ in CSI across packets are unknown. To remove them, WiDFS adopts CSI cross-correlation between RX antennas by multiplying a CSI for a RX antenna (e.g., $CSI_{1,j,k}$) by the conjugate of a CSI for another antenna (e.g., $CSI_{2,j,k}$) at the same subcarrier. Different to previous works [22], [24], we do not apply the approach of adding and subtracting constants. Although this approach aims to suppress the imaging components in the cross-correlation output, it is not always effective and can introduce more interfering terms.

Here let us take Antenna 1 and Antenna 2 for example. The CSI cross-correlation between them is

$$CSI_{1,j,k}CSI_{2,j,k} = \langle H^r_{j,k}H^h_{i,j,k} \rangle = \left( H^S_{1,j} + H^X_{1,j,k} \right) \left( T^X_{1,j} + T^h_{2,j,k} \right) + \left( H^S_{2,j} + H^X_{2,j,k} \right) \left( T^S_{2,j} + T^h_{2,j,k} \right)$$

where the function $\langle \rangle$ denotes the operator of computing the amplitude and $H^h_{j,k} = \rho^{\text{grav}}$. Likewise, we also obtain the cross-correlation terms, i.e., $CSI_{2,j,k}CSI_{3,j,k}$ and $CSI_{3,j,k}CSI_{1,j,k}$, from other RX antenna pairs.

After the cross-correlation operation, we can see that the phase shifts $\phi^F_{j,k}$ and $\phi^X_{j,k}$ in $H^h_{j,k}$ are eliminated. Recall that a short-time sampling window of about 0.1 s is defined. WiDFS collects 3 RX antennas $\times$ 30 subcarriers $\times$ $N_p$ CSI samples in this window, where $N_p = 100$. Then all CSI cross-correlation terms between each pair of RX antennas free from the impact of time-varying phase shifts are

$$CSI_{12} = \{CSI_{1,j,1}CSI_{2,j,1}..., CSI_{1,j,N_p}CSI_{2,j,N_p}\}$$
$$CSI_{23} = \{CSI_{2,j,1}CSI_{3,j,1}..., CSI_{2,j,N_p}CSI_{3,j,N_p}\}$$
$$CSI_{31} = \{CSI_{3,j,1}CSI_{1,j,1}..., CSI_{3,j,N_p}CSI_{1,j,N_p}\}$$

(13)

4.2 High-frequency noise removal

We then input the CSI cross-correlation terms $CSI_{12}$, $CSI_{23}$ and $CSI_{31}$ into a Savitzky-Golay (SG) smoothing filter followed by a lowpass filter, which aims to remove high-frequency noise from these terms.

According to [24], the high-frequency noise comes from WiFi NICs and varies much faster than the dynamic human component of interest. In the SG filter, the polynomial order and frame length are set to 3 and 5, respectively. And we assume the maximum motion speed is 3.5 m/s in indoor scenarios, so the passband of the lowpass filter is set to $f_{pass} = \frac{3.5}{2\pi} \approx 60$ Hz, where the center carrier frequency is $f_c = 5.32$ GHz in our WiFi system. Here let $CSI_{12}'$, $CSI_{23}'$ and $CSI_{31}'$ be the filtered cross-correlation terms.

4.3 Doppler frequency shift estimation

In the following, we use the filtered cross-correlation terms to estimate a DFS $f^D$ in a short-time sampling window.

Static and Dynamic Cross-correlation Term Separation. The static component $H^h_{j,k}$ is a constant in the window and its power is much higher than that of the dynamic human component $H^X_{j,k}$, so the static cross-correlation term...
CSI sample is obtained by subtracting the mean value, dynamic cross-correlation term (denoted as mean value of the cross-correlation terms. The remaining unknown term effective in multipath-rich scenarios. In this work, WiDFS method seems to be signal-dependent and is not always actual one or its negative. This phenomenon is called the since the amplitude of $H_{i,j}^X$ may be far larger than that of $H_{i,j}^S$ we ignore the product term $H_{i,j}^X H_{i,j}^S$ in Eq. 14. DFS Estimation using Subspace-based Method. From Eq. 14 we can see that the dynamic cross-correlation term of interest (e.g., $H_{i,j}^X H_{i,j}^S$) is mixed with a side product (e.g., $H_{i,j}^X H_{i,j}^S$), so the estimated DFS $f^D$ would be an actual one or its negative. This phenomenon is called the DFS ambiguity. To tackle this issue, many existing works [19, 25, 26] adjust the CSI amplitude of each antenna by adding or subtracting a real value. However, this intuitive method seems to be signal-dependent and is not always effective in multipath-rich scenarios. In this work, WiDFS achieves unambiguous DFS estimation as follows:

First, we divide the equations in Eq. 14 to remove the unknown term $\|H_{i,j}^X\|^2 H_{i,j}^S H_{i,j}^X$,

$$H_{i,j}^X H_{i,j}^S = \frac{V_{12,j,k}}{U_{12,j}}.$$  \hspace{1cm} (16)

Likewise, we can obtain

$$H_{i,j}^X H_{i,j}^S = \frac{V_{23,j,k}}{U_{23,j}}.$$  \hspace{1cm} (17a)

$$H_{i,j}^X H_{i,j}^S = \frac{V_{31,j,k}}{U_{31,j}}.$$  \hspace{1cm} (17b)

By subtracting Eq. 17a from the conjugate of Eq. 17b and subtracting Eq. 17b from the conjugate of Eq. 16 we have

$$\frac{H_{i,j}^X}{H_{i,j}^S} = \frac{V_{31,j,k}}{U_{31,j}} - \frac{V_{23,j,k}}{U_{23,j}} = \Delta W_{12,j,k}.$$  \hspace{1cm} (18)

$$\frac{H_{i,j}^X}{H_{i,j}^S} = \frac{V_{12,j,k}}{U_{12,j}} - \frac{V_{31,j,k}}{U_{31,j}} = \Delta W_{23,j,k}.$$  \hspace{1cm} (19)

In free space without multipath interference, we can apply far-field and narrowband assumptions to obtain

$$\frac{H_{i,j}^X}{H_{i,j}^S} \approx \frac{H_{i,j}^X}{H_{i,j}^S} \approx \frac{H_{i,j}^X}{H_{i,j}^S}.$$  \hspace{1cm} (20)

Unfortunately, there exist multiple signal propagation paths in an actual environment. However, for the following two reasons, we can assume that $\Gamma_{j,k}$ keeps unchanged, i.e., $\Gamma_{j,k} = \Gamma_{j,k}$. (1) $H_{i,j}^S$ is static environment-related and remains unchanged, then $H_{i,j}^S/H_{i,j}^S$ and $H_{i,j}^S/H_{i,j}^S$ are approximately constant. (2) Recall that we ignore the change in the amplitude of $H_{i,j}^X$ in the window. The values of $H_{i,j}^X/H_{i,j}^X$ and $H_{i,j}^X/H_{i,j}^X$ also do not vary over time. Thus, $\Delta W_{j,k}$ can be rewritten as

$$\Delta W_{j,k} \approx \frac{\Gamma_{j,k}}{H_{i,j}^S} \approx \frac{\rho^2 X_{2} e^{-j2\pi d_2/k \lambda d_2 + \Delta t} + [X_{2}^2]}{H_{i,j}^S}.$$  \hspace{1cm} (22)

The Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) is commonly used to identify signal frequencies. However, given the small sample size (i.e., 100 CSI samples), FFT may not provide enough high estimation accuracy. Instead, WiDFS uses root multiple signal classification (Root-MUSIC) algorithm [30] to estimate $f^D$. It outputs frequency estimates along with the corresponding signal power estimates. As shown in Fig. 3, we build an observation matrix using $\Delta W_{j,k}$ in Eq. 22.
at all subcarriers. Each column represents a separate observation. The number of snapshots is 30. To determine the subspace dimension, we calculate the maximum eigenvalue $\epsilon_2\lambda_{\text{max}}$ of the correlation matrix and then find the number of eigenvalues above an empirical threshold $0.6\epsilon_2\lambda_{\text{max}}$. Finally, we select a frequency estimate associated with the maximum signal power as an optimal one. Fig. 4 shows the measured DFSs when a person walks four times along an elliptical trajectory. The results are consistent with human movement, and the smoothed results clearly reveal the DFS variation.

5 Separating Dynamic Human Component

This section uses the estimated DFS and CSI self-correlation to build the complex-valued dynamic human components.

5.1 Random phase shift removal via self-correlation

First of all, the time-varying phase shifts $\varphi_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}}$ and $\varphi_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}}$ in $H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}}$ and $H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}}$ are removed by applying a self-correlation operation in WiDFS, that is, we multiply $\text{CSI}_{i,j,k}$ by its complex conjugate $\overline{\text{CSI}}_{i,j,k}$ and obtain $\|\text{CSI}_{i,j,k}\|^2$. The product is also called the CFR power, which is

$$
\|\text{CSI}_{i,j,k}\|^2 = \left( H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right) \left( H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} + H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right) \left( \overline{H}_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right) \left( \overline{H}_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} + \overline{H}_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right)
= \left\| H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right\|^2 + \left\| H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right\|^2,
$$

$$
\left\| H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right\|^2 \left\| H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right\|^2 + \left\| H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right\|^2 \left\| H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right\|^2.
$$

Dynamic Power Term

In the pre-defined sampling window with 100 CSI samples, the calculated self-correlation terms at each RX antenna ($i = 1, 2, 3$) and subcarrier ($j = 1, 2, ..., 30$) are denoted as $\text{CSI}_{i,j} = \{\|\text{CSI}_{i,j,1}\|^2, ..., \|\text{CSI}_{i,j,N_p}\|^2\}$.

5.2 Dynamic power separation and refinement

Next, WiDFS uses the calculated $\text{CSI}_{11}$, $\text{CSI}_{12}$ and $\text{CSI}_{13}$ to separate dynamic power terms in the window and then refines them using the estimated DFS $f^D$.

Separation of Static and Dynamic Power Terms. We follow the same operation in Eq. 15 to calculate the static and dynamic power terms (denoted as $u_{i,j}$ and $v_{i,j,k}$, respectively)

$$
\begin{align*}
\left\| H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right\|^2 &= u_{i,j} \\
\left\| H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right\|^2 &= 2 \left\| H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right\|^2 \left\| H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right\|^2 \left\| H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right\|^2 \approx v_{i,j,k},
\end{align*}
$$

where

$$
\begin{align*}
u_{i,j} &= \frac{1}{N_p} \sum_{k=1}^{N_p} \|\text{CSI}_{i,j,k}\|^2. \\
v_{i,j,k} &= \|\text{CSI}_{i,j,k}\|^2 - u_{i,j}
\end{align*}
$$

The term $\left\| H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right\|^2$ can be ignored since it is much smaller than other terms.

Filtering of Dynamic Power Terms of Interest. Since the dynamic power terms $v_{i,j,k}$ of interest may be around the estimated DFS $f^D$, we refine $v_{i,j,k}$ using a lowpass filter with the passband frequency of $|f^D| + \Delta f$, where the empirical frequency $\Delta f$ is set to 10 Hz in our scheme. And if $|f^D| > 15$ Hz, we further apply a highpass filter with the passband frequency of $|f^D| - \Delta f$. The refined dynamic power terms at each RX antenna and subcarrier in the window are denoted as $v'_{i,j,k} = \{v'_{i,j,1}, ..., v'_{i,j,N_p}\}$. For single-object tracking, it is reasonable to assume that there is only a dominant human reflection in each $v'_{i,j,k}$.

5.3 Dynamic human component reconstruction

Here WiDFS depends on the filtered $v'_{i,j}$ and the estimated DFS $f^D$ to reconstruct the complex-valued dynamic human component at each RX antenna and subcarrier.

Static-Dynamic Associated Component Estimation. At first, we remove the unknown term $\left\| H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right\|$ by

$$
\begin{align*}
v'_{i,j,k} &= \frac{2}{H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}}} \left\| \sin \left( \overline{H}_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right) + \left\| H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right\|^2 \right\|
\end{align*}
$$

According to our CSI model described in Section 2.3, let $\varphi_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} = 2\pi f^D (k-1) \Delta t$ be the phase shift of the i-th antenna at the j-th subcarrier, then the above equation can be rewritten as

$$
\begin{align*}
\frac{v'_{i,j,k}}{u_{i,j}} &= \frac{2}{H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}}} \cos \left( \angle \overline{H}_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} - \varphi_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right) - 2\pi f^D (k-1) \Delta t \\
&= \sin \left( \overline{H}_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right) + \left\| H_{i,j,k}^{\text{DFS}} \right\|^2.
\end{align*}
$$

where

$$
\varphi_{i,j}^{\text{DFS}} = 2\pi f^D (k-1) \Delta t + \varphi_{i,j}^{\text{DFS}}.
$$

Given $N_p = 100$ CSI samples at a RX antenna and subcarrier in the window, we write Eq. 27 in a matrix form,

$$
\begin{pmatrix}
\cos (2\pi f^D \Delta t) & \sin (2\pi f^D \Delta t) \\
\cos (2\pi f^D (N_p - 1) \Delta t) & \sin (2\pi f^D (N_p - 1) \Delta t)
\end{pmatrix}
\begin{pmatrix}
x_{i,j} \\
y_{i,j}
\end{pmatrix}
= \begin{pmatrix}
u_{i,j} \\
w_{i,j}
\end{pmatrix}
$$

A least-squares method is applied to easily solve $x_{i,j}$ and $y_{i,j}$, so the static-dynamic associated component $Z_{i,j}^{S,X}$ at the i-th antenna and the j-th subcarrier in the window is

$$
Z_{i,j}^{S,X} = u_{i,j} e^{\frac{2\pi f^D}{2\pi f^D}} e^{\frac{2\pi f^D (N_p - 1) \Delta t}} = u_{i,j} e^{\frac{2\pi f^D (N_p - 1) \Delta t}}.
$$

where $w_{i,j}$ denotes the weight derived from the sum of squared residuals. When the residual is minimum, we normalize the weight to be maximum (or vice versa).

Dynamic Human Component Separation. Further, let $\Delta f_{12}$ and $\Delta f_{31}$ be the phase differences caused by WiFi hardware diversity, which can be pre-estimated using our proposed approach to be detailed in Section 7,

$$
\begin{align*}
\Delta f_{12} &= \angle \left( H_{1,2}^{\text{DFS}} H_{1,2}^{\text{DFS}} \right) \\
\Delta f_{23} &= \angle \left( H_{2,3}^{\text{DFS}} H_{2,3}^{\text{DFS}} \right) \\
\Delta f_{31} &= \angle \left( H_{3,1}^{\text{DFS}} H_{3,1}^{\text{DFS}} \right)
\end{align*}
$$


Fig. 5: Signal reflections off human body. Recall from Eq. (19) that $\Delta W_{j,k}$ represents the dynamic component caused by human motion. Since human body has a complex surface, the transmit signals may not always be reflected to RX antennas.

We combine them with the calculated static cross-correlation terms $U_{12,j}$ and $U_{31,j}$ in Section 4 to conduct a transformation on $Z_{2,j}$ and $Z_{3,j}$:

$$\begin{align*}
    &w_{2,j}e^{i\pi j \delta s_{2,j}} = Z_{2,j} + \Delta H_{1,j} + \Delta P_{2,j}, \\
    &w_{3,j}e^{i\pi j \delta s_{3,j}} = Z_{3,j} + \Delta H_{3,j} + \Delta P_{3,j},
\end{align*}$$

where $\Delta U_{12,j} - \Delta \varphi_{12} = \Delta H_{1,j} + \Delta P_{2,j}$. Thus, the dynamic human components $Z_{1,j}$, $Z_{2,j}$, and $Z_{3,j}$ at the $j$-th subcarrier in the window are reconstructed as:

$$
\begin{align*}
    Z_{1,j}^X &= \frac{Z_{1,j}^S}{\eta_j} = w_{1,j}e^{-i\pi j \delta s_{1,j}}, \\
    Z_{2,j}^X &= \frac{Z_{2,j}^S}{\eta_j} = w_{2,j}e^{-i\pi j \delta s_{2,j} + \Delta \varphi_{12}}, \\
    Z_{3,j}^X &= \frac{Z_{3,j}^S}{\eta_j} = w_{3,j}e^{-i\pi j \delta s_{3,j} + \Delta \varphi_{31}},
\end{align*}
$$

where $\eta_j = e^{-i\pi j \delta s_{1,j}}$, and $d_{3,j}^X$ is expressed as $d_X$ for simplicity. Since the distance $d_{3,j}$ between the transmitter and Antenna 1 can be measured in advance, we can get the approximation $\Delta P_{1,j}^S \approx \text{mod}(2\pi \frac{\delta s_{1,j}}{\epsilon}, 2\pi)$.

6 Detecting and Tracking Moving Person

This section describes how to leverage the estimated DFS $f^D$ to detect the presence of a moving person and introduces how to track a moving person using the calculated dynamic human components $Z_{i,j}$ over multiple sampling windows.

6.1 Capture of Human body reflection

When the transmitter sends WiFi signals to space, the RX antenna array may not capture all reflection signals off human since signal propagation is complicated by reflections from the human body surface. To intuitively illustrate this phenomenon, we plot the phase change of $\Delta W_{j,k}$ in Eq. (19) at 30 subcarriers in Fig. 5. We collect 6 seconds of CSI data in a dynamic scenario that a person moves at a speed of about 1 m/s away from the receiver. It shows the phase variation cannot match our expectation in some sampling time due to the fact that some reflections may be invisible to the receiver.

To achieve robust passive human tracking, we combine the human reflections over multiple CSI sampling sub-windows $W$ (as shown in Fig. 6), where each sub-window has $N_p = 100$ CSI samples as described before. And the window $W$ consisting of $M$ sub-windows is called the joint window. The two adjacent joint windows overlap with $(M-1)$ sub-windows. The average computation time should be less than 0.1 s to enable real-time tracking.

6.2 Dynamic environment sensing

WiDFDS performs passive human tracking only when a moving person is present. It uses the estimated $f^D$ and $\Delta W_{j,k}$
that if $P$ in the region, $P$ maintains in a low level. However, when a person moves

![Fig. 7: Detecting the absence or presence of human motion in Eq. 19 in Section 4 to determine the absence or presence of a moving person in the region of interest by](image)

$$P = \frac{1}{30 \times MN} \sum_{i=1}^{M} \sum_{j=1}^{N_p} \sum_{k=1}^{N_p} e^{J \Delta W_{j,k}^l[l]} e^{J 2\pi f^D[l](k-1)\Delta t},$$

where $\Delta W_{j,k}^l[l]$ and $f^D[l]$ represent the corresponding estimates in the $l$-th sub-window. The range of $P$ is within $(0, 1)$. In a static scenario, the extracted $\Delta W_{j,k}^l$ is a noise term, so $P$ maintains in a low level. However, when a person moves in the region, $P$ will be close to 1. Our judging criteria is that if $P$ is lower (or higher) than a pre-defined threshold, it indicates the absence (or presence) of a moving person.

In Fig. 7, we use an example to show the result of dynamic environment sensing. A person moves randomly and then sits on a chair for a while. The volunteer repeats the two motions. We find that the sensing function could effectively indicate the human motion status via a threshold. In Section 9.4, a comprehensive experiment will be conducted to determine this threshold in different scenarios.

### 6.3 Localization parameter estimation

WiDFS performs tracking using two fundamental parameters. One is the AoA $\theta^X$, the direction that the human reflections are received from at the RX antenna array. Another is the reflection distance $d^X$ of a transmitted signal being reflected by the tracked person to an RX antenna. To guarantee our system’s real-time performance, we separately calculate the two parameters.

#### 6.3.1 AoA

Based on the calculated dynamic human component $Z_{i,j}^X$, the AoA $\theta^X$ in a joint window is estimated by

$$\theta^X \in [-90^{\circ}, 90^{\circ}] \quad \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{M} \sum_{j=1}^{30} \sum_{k=1}^{N_p} Z_{i,j}^X[l]}{e^{J 2\pi (i-1)\Delta d \sin \theta^X}}.$$ (36)

Due to the $2\pi$ phase ambiguity, the searching range of AoA should be within $[-90^{\circ}, 90^{\circ}]$. In this way, the tracked person is required to move on one side of the receive antenna array. The angular searching spacing is set as $1^{\circ}$ in WiDFS.

#### 6.3.2 Human reflection distance

The human reflection distance $d^X$ in a joint window is calculated by

$$\operatorname{argmax}_{d^X \in [d^X_{\min}, d^X_{\max}]} \sum_{i=1}^{M} \sum_{j=1}^{30} \sum_{k=1}^{N_p} Z_{i,j}^X[l] e^{J 2\pi \frac{d^X}{f_c} \Delta t}.$$ (37)

where

$$\begin{align*}
Z^D[l] &= e^{-J 2\pi \frac{d^X}{f_c} N \Delta t}, & l < \epsilon \\
Z^D[l] &= 1, & l = \epsilon .
\end{align*}$$ (38)

Here $\epsilon = \frac{M+1}{2}$ and $M$ is an odd number. The minimum distance $d^X_{\min}$ is equal to the length $d^S$ of the direct path between the TX and RX antennas since the human reflection distance is larger than $d^S$. The maximum distance $d^X_{\max}$ is 20 m, which is sufficiently large for indoor scenarios. The distance searching spacing is set as 5 cm in WiDFS.

### 6.4 Localization parameter refinement

Since the estimated $\theta^X$ and $d^X$ may be relatively noisy, we refine them using Kalman smoothers.

Let $\theta^X [L]$ and $d^X [L]$ be the current AoA and human reflection distance in the $L$-th joint window after outlier rejection. The corresponding Kalman model is built as follows,

$$\begin{align*}
\sin \left( \theta^X [L+1] \right) &= \sin \left( \theta^X [L] \right) \\
d^X [L+1] &= d^X [L] + \frac{f^D [L]}{f_c} N_p ,
\end{align*}$$ (39)

where $f^D [L]$ is the median of $\{f^D [1], f^D [2], ..., f^D [M]\}$ in the $L$-th joint window. In the AoA Kalman smoother, the noise covariance of the sine of AoA is set to 0.2. In the distance Kalman smoother, the noise covariance of the reflection distance and DFS are set as 20 cm and 5 Hz, respectively. Fig. 8 and Fig. 9 show the estimated AoA and human reflection distance without and with Kalman smoothing.

### 6.5 Human localization

So far, the two core localization parameters, i.e., human reflection distance $d^X$ and AoA $\theta^X$, have been calculated. The person position in a 2D coordinate system can then be estimated using these estimated parameters.

As shown in Fig. 10, let $d^X \rightarrow TX$ and $d^X \rightarrow RX$ be the distance of the tracked person to the transmitter and receiver, respectively, where $d^X = d^X \rightarrow TX + d^X \rightarrow RX$. And let $\theta^S$ be the AoA of the transmitter relative to the RX antenna array, i.e., $\Delta d \sin \theta^S \approx d_2^S - d_1^S \approx d_3^S - d_2^S$. Since the phase differences caused by WiFi hardware diversity are pre-estimated, the AoA $\theta^S$ is obtained by

$$\theta^S \in [-90^{\circ}, 90^{\circ}] \quad \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{M} \sum_{j=1}^{30} \left( Z_{12}^S[l] + Z_{23}^S[l] \right) e^{-J \Delta d \sin \theta^S}}{e^{J 2\pi (i-1)\Delta d \sin \theta^S}}.$$ (40)

where

$$\begin{align*}
Z_{12}^S[l] &= e^{J \left( \angle U_{12} + l \Delta \phi_{12} \right)} \\
Z_{23}^S[l] &= e^{J \left( \angle U_{23} + l \Delta \phi_{23} \right)},
\end{align*}$$ (41)
In [27], a method was proposed to calibrate the phase difference between antennas caused by manufacturing imperfections. However, the calibrated results are always wrapped by an unknown \( \pi \)-radians ambiguity, meaning that the estimated phase difference is the actual value or the actual value plus \( \pi \) radians. Also, this method cannot calibrate the hardware-related phase difference \( \Delta \phi_{12} \).

Once \( \Delta d_{12} \) is determined, we substitute it into Eq. 44 to estimate hardware-related phase difference \( \Delta \phi_{12} \):

\[
\Delta \phi_{12} = \Delta d_{12} / \lambda
\]

Similarly, the distance \( \Delta d_{23} \) and phase difference \( \Delta \phi_{23} \) can also be measured based on the above process.

**8 IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION**

**Implementation:** (1) **Hardware.** We implement WiDFS using two computers separately equipped with an Intel 5300 NIC, shown in Fig. 12. One is served as a transmitter and has one WiFi antenna, while another is a receiver that has three external antennas to form a linear uniform antenna array. These antennas are all omnidirectional and have 2 dBi gain. (2) **Software.** The operating system of each laptop is Ubuntu 14.04 LTS with 3.16.0-32-generic Linux kernel version. They are configured in the monitor mode via Linux 802.11n CSI Tool [26, 31, 32]. The CSI sampling rate is 1 KHz. The center frequency is 5.32 GHz. WiDFS is programmed by Python 3.8 and implemented on a Mini PC with Intel(R) Core CPU i5-7300U 2.6 GHz×4 and 3.8G memory. We adopt csiread package [1] to parse CSI data in real time.

**Wi-Fi Hardware Diversity Calibration.** The manually measured antenna spacing in the RX antenna array is 2.8 cm. However, our hardware calibration algorithm outputs that the spacing between Antenna 1 and Antenna 2 is 2.618 cm while the spacing between Antenna 2 and Antenna 3 is 2.391 cm. It also shows the hardware-related phase difference between Antenna 1 and Antenna 2 is 5.956 radians while that between Antenna 2 and Antenna 3 is 1.418 radians.

**Default Configuration.** The transmitter and receiver are placed at the same height, and their separation distance is 235 cm. The AoA of the transmitter relative to the receiver is about \(-70^\circ\). A CSI sampling window contains 9 CSI sampling sub-windows. The operating system of each laptop is Ubuntu 14.04 LTS with 3.16.0-32-generic Linux kernel version. They are configured in the monitor mode via Linux 802.11n CSI Tool [26, 31, 32]. The CSI sampling rate is 1 KHz. The center frequency is 5.32 GHz. WiDFS is programmed by Python 3.8 and implemented on a Mini PC with Intel(R) Core CPU i5-7300U 2.6 GHz×4 and 3.8G memory. We adopt csiread package [1] to parse CSI data in real time.

**Evaluation.** We evaluate WiDFS in a multipath-rich office environment with various types of strong reflectors such as tables, chairs, metal lockers, computers, large-size

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1. https://github.com/citysu/csiread
Tracking coordinate system

boxes to block RX antennas, shown in Fig. 12c, so there is no
Fig. 16a) in different office regions under different multipath
In each experiment, we ask a person to walk along with
and mmWave are synchronized using 1-D data interpolation
tracked target’s position. The localization results of WiFi
capture the density center of refined cloud data as the
some noisy points. We then adopt a Gaussian mixture to
data and use DBSCAN clustering algorithm to eliminate
mmWave tracking as follows. We firstly obtain point cloud

2. http://tns.thss.tsinghua.edu.cn/wifiradar/Widar2.0Project.zip
3. https://github.com/ibaiGorordo/AWR1642-Read-Data-Python-MMWA
VE-SDK-2

Baseline. We compare WiDFS to a state-of-the-art un-
supervised method Widar2.0 [25] with its implementation
software downloaded from the website. The baseline has
the same system setup as ours. It also works with three
parameters, i.e., DFS, AoA, and human reflection distance.
The Widar2.0 software does not support real-time imple-
mentation, and hence its results are obtained offline. For
fairness, we substitute hardware calibration parameters into
Widar2.0 and use its algorithm in Matlab to track a person.

Ground Truth. We use a TI IWR1642 mmWave radar
to measure the person’s trajectory as ground truth. Such
a radar could achieve centimeter-level tracking accuracy.
It is placed beside the WiFi RX antenna array. We modify the project2 in Python to perform single-target real-time
mmWave tracking as follows. We firstly obtain point cloud
data and use DBSCAN clustering algorithm to eliminate
some noisy points. We then adopt a Gaussian mixture to
capture the density center of refined cloud data as the
tracked target’s position. The localization results of WiFi
and mmWave are synchronized using 1-D data interpolation
based on their real-world sampling timestamps.

9 RESULTS

9.1 Comparison to state-of-the-art

We start by comparing WiDFS’s performance to Widar2.0.
Fig. 13 shows the CDF of the tracking error of WiDFS
and Widar 2.0 after hardware diversity calibration. It shows
that Widar2.0 achieves a median tracking error of 108.4 cm
and a 90th percentile error of 240.6 cm. Comparatively, the
median and 90th percentile error of WiDFS are reduced to
72.31 cm and 170.8 cm, respectively, which could achieve
about 36 cm and 70 cm improvement over Widar2.0. It is
further noted that Widar2.0 performs backward smoothing
by using posterior localization estimates to inversely refine
the previous, which could result in large processing delay.

To demonstrate the significance of WiFi hardware di-
versity calibration, we plot the results of WiDFS without
conducting calibration for comparison. In this case, a med-
ian accuracy of 112.9 cm and a 90th percentile error of
212.4 cm are achieved. The tracking error is significantly
higher than that after applying calibration. Fig. 14, Fig. 15
and Fig. 16 show three cases of the trajectories estimated by
WiDFS. Most localization results could match the ground-
truth trajectory. It can be observed when the tracking target
turns around (at peak positions in these figures), some
estimated reflection distances exhibits larger errors than
other cases. This may mainly be attributed to that part of
human reflections are not be reflected to RX antennas.

9.2 Passive tracking accuracy in LOS and NLOS

Next, Fig. 17 plots the CDF of the tracking error along the x-
and y-axis dimensions in LOS and NLOS cases. The median
errors along x- and y-axis are less than about 32 cm and
61 cm while the 90th percentile errors along x- and y-axis
are less than about 98 cm and 151 cm. Obviously, the x-axis
has a lower error than the y-axis, which is likely attributed
to that three RX antennas form a linear array along the x-
axis. In addition, the tracking performance in NLOS settings
is very close to the LOS case. In our scenario, WiFi signals
may penetrate the cardboard boxes. Ideally, as long as the
receiver could capture reliable human body reflections in
NLOS cases, we believe that WiDFS enables performing
accurate tracking since an obstacle (e.g., wall) may introduce
a same phase shift on each subcarrier [33], [34].

We also conduct experiments to test WiDFS in NLOS
scenarios where a person moves behind a glass and par-
tition wall. Fig. 18 shows the change in CSI amplitudes

Fig. 13: CDF of tracking accuracy of WiDFS and Widar2.0

displays, concrete ceiling, and tempered glass/hollow walls.
In each experiment, we ask a person to walk along with
three types of trajectories (shown in Fig. 16a) and Fig. 16b) in different office regions under different multipath
interference. For a NLOS experiment, we use cardboard
boxes to block RX antennas, shown in Fig. 12c) so there is no
LOS path from the person and transmitter to the receiver.

Baseline. We compare WiDFS to a state-of-the-art un-
supervised method Widar2.0 [25] with its implementation
software downloaded from the website. The baseline has
the same system setup as ours. It also works with three
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by using posterior localization estimates to inversely refine
the previous, which could result in large processing delay.

To demonstrate the significance of WiFi hardware di-
versity calibration, we plot the results of WiDFS without
conducting calibration for comparison. In this case, a med-
ian accuracy of 112.9 cm and a 90th percentile error of
212.4 cm are achieved. The tracking error is significantly
higher than that after applying calibration. Fig. 14, Fig. 15
and Fig. 16 show three cases of the trajectories estimated by
WiDFS. Most localization results could match the ground-
truth trajectory. It can be observed when the tracking target
turns around (at peak positions in these figures), some
estimated reflection distances exhibits larger errors than
other cases. This may mainly be attributed to that part of
human reflections are not be reflected to RX antennas.

9.2 Passive tracking accuracy in LOS and NLOS

Next, Fig. 17 plots the CDF of the tracking error along the x-
and y-axis dimensions in LOS and NLOS cases. The median
errors along x- and y-axis are less than about 32 cm and
61 cm while the 90th percentile errors along x- and y-axis
are less than about 98 cm and 151 cm. Obviously, the x-axis
has a lower error than the y-axis, which is likely attributed
to that three RX antennas form a linear array along the x-
axis. In addition, the tracking performance in NLOS settings
is very close to the LOS case. In our scenario, WiFi signals
may penetrate the cardboard boxes. Ideally, as long as the
receiver could capture reliable human body reflections in
NLOS cases, we believe that WiDFS enables performing
accurate tracking since an obstacle (e.g., wall) may introduce
a same phase shift on each subcarrier [33], [34].

We also conduct experiments to test WiDFS in NLOS
scenarios where a person moves behind a glass and par-
tition wall. Fig. 18 shows the change in CSI amplitudes
The following will evaluate WiDFS’s tracking accuracy as a function of different system parameters: transmitter–receiver distance, motion speed, and joint window size.

9.3 Accuracy vs. different parameters

The amplitudes change with human movement in the LOS region, while they almost keep constant in NLOS. This means the receiver may not capture human reflections due to higher signal attenuation through the wall.

9.4 Realtime performance

WiDFS outputs a position estimate when receiving $100 \times 30 \times 3$ CSI samples from 3 antennas and 30 subcarriers. The sampling interval is about 0.1 s. Any computation delay larger than this upper bound may affect WiDFS’s real-time performance. Table 1 shows that the mean running time of WiDFS (in Python) is 0.076 s on a Mini PC. We also run WiDFS on a MacBook Pro with Intel Core i7 2.6 GHz ×6. The csiread package is used to offline parse CSI data. The running time is reduced to 0.024 s. Also, we program WiDFS using Matlab. We parse raw CSI data to a .MAT file and then exploit it to perform WiDFS and Widar2.0. The computation time of WiDFS on MacBook Pro is 0.016 s, which is about 10 times faster than Widar2.0. This reduction benefits from the

![Fig. 14: A case of ellipse path tracking](image)

![Fig. 15: A case of line path tracking](image)

![Fig. 16: A case of rectangle path tracking](image)

Table 1: Running time of WiDFS and Widar2.0

| Algorithm | Language | Platform          | Mean   | Std  |
|-----------|----------|-------------------|--------|------|
| WiDFS     | Python   | Mini PC           | 0.076 s| 0.018 s|
| WiDFS     | Python   | MacBook Pro 2019  | 0.024 s| 0.002 s|
| WiDFS     | Matlab   | MacBook Pro 2019  | 0.016 s| 0.002 s|
| Widar2.0  | Matlab   | MacBook Pro 2019  | 0.136 s| 0.021 s|
In this experiment, in each case, a person moves along the trajectory while the TX antenna is fixed. We only change the position of the TX antenna to 400 cm at a spacing of 100 cm. The RX antenna array will automatically perform our tracking algorithm. Moving a person. In the presence of human motion, WiDFS can detect human motion and estimate positions and directions. We can see that the motion confidence levels are 0.3094, 0.2998, 0.2928, and 0.2983, respectively.

In Section 9.1, they could better match the ground truth. However, WiDFS needs more CSI samples for initialization to form the three-dimensional localization parameters. The delay in each estimation will be increased to about 3s, but it will not accumulate over time.

9.5 Motion Threshold Selection

This experiment aims to verify our motion detection method. At first, we ask each of the volunteers to separately stand still, sit still, and lie still. And we also keep the office empty for testing. Their human motion threshold is fixed. We only change the position of the TX antenna to 400 cm at a spacing of 100 cm. The RX antenna array will automatically perform our tracking algorithm.

9.5.1 Impact of transmitter-to-receiver distance

We vary the transmitter-to-receiver distance from 100 cm to 400 cm at a spacing of 100 cm. The TX antenna array is fixed. We only change the position of the TX antenna in this experiment. In each case, a person moves along the same trajectory. Fig. 20 shows the minimum tracking error occurs at a distance of 200 cm. This shows that there exist a tradeoff between the separation distance and tracking accuracy. When the transmitter-to-receiver separation distance is enlarged, the geometry of the tracked person relative to the transmitter and receiver is good, which means that the sensitivity to the distance measurement error will accordingly decrease. However, if the separation distance is too large, our assumption that there exists one dominant direct signal between the transmitter and receiver may become violated. Surrounding objects produce static multipath signals that we cannot neglect. In contrast, when the transmitter and receiver are placed too closely, the strength of the direct signal between them would overwhelm dynamic multipath.

9.5.2 Impact of motion speed

Fig. 21 shows the median tracking error when a person moves along the same trajectory at different speeds, i.e., Slow walking (about 0.5 m/s), Normal walking (1 m/s), and Jogging (1.5 m/s). The median error increases gradually with the higher velocity. Recall from our algorithm that we ignore the difference in DFS among different TX antennas in a CSI sampling window. However, the difference will increase at a higher movement speed. Our future solution is to extend WiDFS to detect the presence of a moving person.
of a target moving very quickly and estimate the AFS. In this way, the DFS for each RX antenna would be separately estimated, thereby achieving more accurate tracking.

9.5.3 Impact of joint window size
We next vary the size of a joint window from 5 to 39 CSI sampling sub-windows. Fig. 22 shows that the tracking error gradually decreases as the number of sub-windows increases. Such a result is expected since RX antennas may not capture enough reliable human reflections in some sub-windows, and it is challenging for WiDFS to dilute the impact of the inaccurate dynamic components in a smaller joint window size. This problem can be mitigated by utilizing a larger joint window size. Fig. 23 shows three trajectories used in Section 9.1 for evaluation when a joint window contains 31 sub-windows. It shows that these trajectories are all refined and can better match the ground truth. However, a 3 s delay is introduced for each estimate under the joint window with 31 sub-windows. Note that since the mean estimation time is less than a sampling sub-window time, the delay will not be accumulated over time.

10 Related Work
This section reviews various techniques of WiFi-based tracking and sensing, including signal model-based active tracking, signal model-based passive tracking, and deep learning-based passive tracking. The signal model-based solutions are designed by purely analyzing CSI models, while the deep learning-based approaches generally require the use of pre-collected training data. The difference between active and passive systems is that the active tracking requires a target carrying a WiFi device while the passive tracking is free from this limitation and achieved only based on human body reflections. Compared to previous works, WiDFS is the first unsupervised real-time WiFi tracking system that leverages novel DFS estimation and dynamic component separation techniques to enable passive tracking.

10.1 Signal model-based active WiFi tracking
The topic of WiFi localization has attracted much attention in past years. Typically, ArrayTrack [27] constructs a specialized MIMO-based WiFi receiver platform to estimate AoA from a transmitter’s incoming signal, which could pinpoint the transmitter at decimeter-level accuracy. However, its localization error is highly dependent on the number of receivers and the relative geometry of the receivers to the transmitter. SpotFi [22] is also an AoA-based solution using COTS WiFi NICs. It estimates AoA and ToF of a transmitter’s signal arriving at a three-antenna receiver via smoothed MUSCI algorithm. However, this ToF is not an actual value distorted by unknown time and frequency shifts between the transmitter and receiver. Chronos [33] is a ToF-based localization solution via COTS devices, which achieves decimeter-level localization only using a receiver equipped with multiple RX antennas. It works by combining multiple frequency bands of 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz to compute the ToF between the transmitter to each antenna of the receiver. In practice, however, it is challenging to span multiple frequency bands for COTS NICs. WiCapture [56] is designed based on COTS WiFi devices. It estimates AoA and complex attenuation of each signal propagation path and then combines them to calculate the relative displacement of a transmitter. It just estimates a transmitter’s relative trajectory rather than absolute positions. Navid et al. [13] proposes a series of pre-processing methods to eliminate random phase shifts due to transceiver clock asynchronization. Then a MUSIC algorithm is applied to obtain ToF estimates and thereby achieve decimeter-level localization. Our work focuses on passive WiFi tracking and leverages ‘bad’ multipath interference to track a moving target’s trajectory.

10.2 Signal model-based passive WiFi tracking
The device-free sensing is a promising technique since tracked targets do not require carrying any sensors. LiFS [37] formulates the relationship between CSIs and a target location based on a signal power fading model. Then it can rely on the change in CSI amplitude to determine the absence or presence of a person in the first Fresnel zone and locate the target. However, this work requires deploying a large number of receivers in advance (11 receiver PCs are used). MaTrack [38] is an AoA-based solution which uses 2D MUSIC algorithm to estimate absolute AoAs and relative ToFs of static and dynamic paths. However, multiple receivers are required to be deployed apart around a surveillance region and the localization accuracy is subject to the precision of random phase shift removal. Rui Zhou et al. [39] construct a CSI fingerprint database by modeling the relationship between CSI fingerprints and target locations. When a set of new CSI samples comes, this method performs localization by finding the most similar sample from the fingerprint database. However, constructing such a fingerprint database is a time-consuming task. Widar [40] and IndoTrack [19] are DFS-based solutions. They both adopt a reference antenna approach to coarsely separate each antenna’s dynamic component from cross-correlation terms. However, the tracking error will accumulate over time. Widar2.0 [25], mD-Track [18], and WiPolar [15] are joint parameter estimation solutions by simultaneously estimating signal attenuation, AoA, ToF, and DFS from CSIs. Widar2.0 could completely mitigate random phase shifts by CSI cross correlation between RX antennas. However, its separated dynamic component is not accurate enough. The localization accuracy of mD-Track and WiPolar is determined by the accuracy of random phase shift measurement. Moreover, the three solutions require huge computations in each estimation and cannot achieve real-time tracking. Our proposed WiDFS scheme only uses a COTS transmitter (with 1 TX antenna) and receiver (with 3 RX antennas). It completely removes the impact of random phase shifts via cross correlation. A novel DFS estimation algorithm is developed to obtain unambiguous DFSs. On this basis, WiDFS separately estimates the AoA and reflection distance to achieve low-cost and real-time passive tracking.

10.2.1 Deep Learning-based WiFi tracking
Recently, many applications have been designed with the help of deep learning technique to achieve fine-grained localization/tracking. FreeTrack [41] is a deep neural network (DNN)-based tracking system by feeding into CSI amplitude fingerprints. To reduce the impact of environment change, FreeTrack needs to fine-tune the pre-trained
DLoc [2] designs a novel DL-based framework by treating WiFi localization as an image translation problem. It transforms CSI data into an image and labels training data with a customized robotic mapping platform. FiDo [14] could significantly reduce the number of training data in new scenarios. Even at the same position, different people may induce different CSI data. FiDo adopts a domain-adaptive solution and can pinpoint different persons only using few labelled CSI data. Compared to these data-driven systems that are sensitive to the changes in deployment environment and transceiver position, WiDFS is an unsupervised system and can still achieve high-precision passive tracking.

11 Conclusion

This paper introduces a device-free WiFi tracking system that can track a moving person in real time at sub-meter position accuracy. The key design is a novel DFS algorithm that enables measuring an unambiguous DFS when CSI cross-correlation is exploited to mitigate the impact of transceiver asynchronization. And novel algorithms of dynamic human component separation and localization parameter estimation are proposed to achieve high-precision and real-time tracking. Our system prototype runs in a practical multipath-rich scenario without requiring any environment-specific training. Some video clips demonstrating real-time tracking results are available from our website[1].

One of the important future works is to extend our method to achieve multi-person tracking. To fulfil this task, three TX antennas can be utilized to build a multiple-input-multiple-output (MIMO) system. The AoA resolution of the MIMO WiFi system with 3 TX antennas and 3 RX antennas may be achieved to be equivalent to that of a single-input-multiple-output (SIMO) system (i.e., our WiDFS) with 9 RX antennas. Therefore, the MIMO setup would be a promising way to improve the accuracy in multi-person tracking.

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