

COMMON SENSE APPROACH TO THERMAL IMAGING

Gerald C. Holst

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COVER: Mid-wave infrared image of the Great Pyramid of Cheops and the Sphinx. Scene temperatures are represented by pseudo-colors. The sky is cold and appears black. The sun is overhead so that the top of the Sphinx and the ground behind the Sphinx are hot. They appear white. Intermediate temperatures are represented by yellows and reds (By courtesy of Stan Laband).

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This book is dedicated to

Mom and Dad

They provide continual guidance

PREFACE

Objects are characterized by a variety of physical parameters such as size, shape, and weight. However, the most frequently measured physical property is temperature. Heat is a byproduct of all work whether it is from electrical, mechanical, or chemical activity. We generate, contain, and transfer heat to run our industries and make our everyday lives comfortable. Unexpected temperature variations may indicate design flaws, poor workmanship, or damaged components. A temperature variation can also be used to recognize an intruder, locate a buried object, or to identify geological events.

Thermal imaging systems are used by the military to detect, recognize, and identify enemy personnel, equipment, and buildings. Police patrol border crossings and use thermal imaging systems for search and rescue. The systems are particularly useful for evaluating the condition of power lines, transformers, circuit breakers, and motors. Simply put, they can be used to evaluate the “health” of any electrical or mechanical component.

Several texts that describe the applications of thermal imaging systems are:

Nondestructive Evaluation of Materials by Infrared Thermography, X.P.V. Maldague, Springer-Verlag, New York (1992).

Applications of Thermal Imaging, S. G. Burney, T. L. Williams, and C.H.N. Jones, Adam Hilger, Philadelphia, PA (1988).

Practical Applications on Infrared Thermal Sensing and Imaging Equipment, second edition, H. Kaplan, SPIE Press Vol. TT34, Bellingham WA (1999).

SPIE has assembled two compendiums:

Selected SPIE papers on Thermal Sensing and Imaging 1980-1999, SPIE CD-ROM, Volume 7, J. Snell and D. Burleigh, eds. (1999).

Selected Papers on Temperature Sensing: Optical Methods, R.D. Lucier, ed., SPIE Milestone Series Vol. MS 1164, Bellingham WA (1995).

The first compendium is a collection of papers from the proceedings of the SPIE conference *Thermosense*. Since this is an important contribution to the literature, Appendix C of this book contains the Table of Contents of the CD-ROM. The second contains reprints of articles that appeared in professional journals.

This book differs from those texts by clearly describing the phenomenology of heat transfer and providing numerous thermograms to support the concepts. It also covers a diverse set of applications. This book is divided into two parts. The first part (Chapters 1-9) provides the physics background that is necessary to interpret thermo-

grams. The second part (Chapters 10-20) discusses various applications. Except for Chapter 19, *Nondestructive Testing*, minimal math is used in the second part. Heat transfer during nondestructive testing is a complex phenomenon and therefore requires more math. The researcher and scientist will read the first part in detail whereas the thermographer performing inspections will concentrate on the second part.

Heat transfer (Chapter 2), radiation theory (Chapter 3), and emissivity (Chapter 4) form the backbone of all thermal imaging system applications. The atmosphere (Chapter 5) may attenuate the received signal. This becomes an issue over long path lengths - typical of military applications. Camera design, performance parameters, and camera selection are contained in Chapters 6 through 8. It is can not be understated that each camera has specific design features and unique performance parameters. As a result, it is somewhat of a challenge to find a system that is *best* for a specific application. Interpretation of thermograms requires training (Chapter 9). This training must include the material provided in Chapters 2 through 5.

Part 2 begins with an introduction to applications (Chapter 10). Chapter 11 discusses the influence of the environment of target signatures. With this knowledge, it is possible to perform quantitative temperature measurements. For some tests, qualitative results are adequate. These include building envelope inspections (Chapter 13), roof inspections (Chapter 14), and the location of buried objects (Chapter 17). Electrical and mechanical inspections often require quantitative results (Chapters 15 and 16). Here, the temperature of a component is compared to a standard or guideline. If the temperature is too high, then the component must be repaired or replaced. Although surveillance refers to the observation of a person, this definition is extended to include the detection, recognition, and identification of both people and objects (Chapter 18). It includes search and rescue, endangered species monitoring, border patrol, law enforcement, and military applications. Nondestructive testing (Chapter 19) can locate disbonding, delamination, and corrosion. These are of prime concern of our aging commercial aircraft. Chapter 20 briefly discusses applications in six different industries. Chapter 21 lists the steps necessary for a successful test or inspection.

The physics is described by three equations. The first is the “easy” approach to describe the phenomenology. For example, the output of a detector is given by

$$V_{DETECTOR} = kR_D M$$

where R_D is the detector’s responsivity, M is the radiation from the target, and k is a constant. The effect of R_D and M on $V_{DETECTOR}$ is described and supported by numerous examples. Then the concept of wavelength, λ , is introduced with the second equation. The radiant intensity also depends upon the target’s temperature, T . The sum of all the outputs at the various wavelengths must be added together.

This is represented by an integral (third equation):

$$V_{CAMERA} = \int_{\lambda_1}^{\lambda_2} V_{DETECTOR}(\lambda) d\lambda .$$

Long-wave infrared (LWIR) and mid-wave infrared (MWIR) systems have different wavelength intervals $[\lambda_1, \lambda_2]$. The reader who is less interested in the math complexities will use the first equation. But he will fully understand the phenomenology. If detailed calculations are necessary, the reader will use the third equation. This last equation provides the guidance in selecting an appropriate camera for a specific application (i.e., MWIR or LWIR camera).

By using both simple and complex math, this book is intended for all that work with thermal imaging systems. This includes the researcher, system designer, test engineer, salesman, and end user. Since civilian and military applications are discussed, this book is useful to both communities.

The scientific community and many industries around the world use the metric system and it is used in this book. However, some industries in the U.S. and other countries still use English units. The conversion from miles per hour (mph) to meters per second (m/s) and degrees Fahrenheit (°F) to degrees Celsius (°C) are straightforward. While the reader can easily make the conversion, it takes time and it interrupts reading comprehension. Therefore, the English equivalent is always provided parenthetically.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all my coworkers and students who have contributed to the ideas in this book. They are too many to mention by name. I especially thank all those who read draft copies of the manuscript: Mary Lee Cassetta, consultant; Arnold Daniels, Optics-1; Dennis Hewins, Academy of Infrared Thermography; A. J. Holst, American Credit; Chris Johnston, IRcameras.com; Ron Newport, Academy of Infrared Thermography; Harold Orlando, Northrup Grumman; Jim Porter, Raytheon Systems; Dr. Austin Richards, Indigo; Elliot Rittenberg, EFR Associates; John Snell, Snell Infrared; and Gary Weil, EnTech Engineering. Although these reviewers provided valuable comments, the accuracy of the text is solely my responsibility. Douglas F. Marks provided the graphics and manuscript layout.

The thermograms were obtained from a number of sources. However, some images have been so widely distributed that the original owner is not known to many. If I missed a credit or gave credit to the wrong person, I apologize. Every attempt has been made to authenticate the owners. I hope that you find the title accurate: That this book **IS** the common sense approach to thermal imaging.

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Heat	3
1.2. Temperature measuring devices	4
1.2.1. Contact devices	5
1.2.2. Non-contact devices	7
1.3. Temperature scales	9
1.4. The electromagnetic spectrum	11
1.5. Brief history of thermography	15
1.6. System development	16
1.7. Applications overview	18
1.8. Units	19
1.9. References	20
2. HEAT	21
2.1. Heat capacity and specific heat capacity	23
2.2. Phase change	24
2.3. Heat transfer	27
2.3.1. Conduction	27
2.3.2. Convection	32
2.3.3. Radiation	34
2.4. Heat sources	35
2.4.1. Sun	35
2.4.2. Combustion	36
2.4.3. Chemical reaction	38
2.4.4. Nuclear power plant	38
2.4.5. Energy conversion	39
2.4.6. Mass transport	45
2.4.7. Man-made	45
2.5. Useful conversions and constants	46
2.6. References	47
3. DETECTION OF RADIATION	48
3.1. Stefan-Boltzmann law	48
3.1.1. General response	49
3.1.2. The background	49
3.2. Planck's blackbody law	52
3.2.1. General response	56
3.2.2. The background	58

4. EMISSIVITY	60
4.1. Conservation of energy	60
4.2. Target emissivity	61
4.3. Surface conditions	63
4.4. Environmental effects	63
4.5. Geometric factors	65
4.6. Spectral dependence	68
4.7. References	73
5. ATMOSPHERIC TRANSMITTANCE	74
5.1. Extinction	75
5.2. Path length dependence	76
5.3. Atmospheric constituents	79
5.3.1. Water vapor	80
5.3.2. Aerosols	81
5.4. Path radiance	83
5.5. Modeling the atmosphere	84
5.6. Back-of-the-envelope modeling	85
5.6.1. "Average" weather conditions	86
5.6.2. Range predictions	87
5.7. References	89
6. CAMERA DESIGN	90
6.1. Camera output	92
6.2. System designs	93
6.2.1. Military systems	93
6.2.2. Civilian systems	94
6.3. Optics	94
6.4. Scanners	95
6.5. Detectors and coolers	97
6.5.1. Detector operation	97
6.5.2. Specific detectors	99
6.5.3. Detector responsivity	100
6.5.4. Fixed pattern noise	102
6.5.5. AC coupling	102
6.5.6. Fill factor	103
6.6. Digitization	104
6.7. Image processing	105
6.8. Reconstruction	107
6.9. Monitors	108
6.10. MWIR versus LWIR	108
6.11. References	109

7. PERFORMANCE PARAMETERS	110
7.1. Spatial frequency	113
7.2. Sensitivity (NEDT).....	114
7.2.1. NEDT measurement	114
7.2.2. NEDT theory	114
7.3. Spatial resolution	117
7.3.1. Airy disk	117
7.3.2. Instantaneous-field-of-view	118
7.3.3. Pixel-angular-subtense.....	119
7.3.4. Slit response function	119
7.3.5. Measuring IFOV	121
7.3.6. Nyquist frequency	122
7.3.7. Optical zoom/electronic magnification	123
7.4. Observer response	125
7.5. MRT and MDT	127
7.6. References	129
8. CAMERA SELECTION	130
8.1. Environment	132
8.1.1. Harsh environment	132
8.1.2. Ambient temperature	133
8.1.3. Viewing geometry	133
8.2. Camera	139
8.2.1. Physical attributes	139
8.2.2. Dynamic range.....	139
8.2.3. Frame rate	143
8.2.4. Image processing	144
8.2.5. Calibration	145
8.3. Storage and output	145
8.4. Other issues	146
8.5. References	146
9. OBSERVER TRAINING	147
9.1. Certification	148
9.2. Military users	149
9.3. MRT observers	149
9.4. References	150
10. INTRODUCTION TO APPLICATIONS	151
10.1. Condition monitoring	153
10.2. Process control/quality control	155

11. TARGET SIGNATURES	157
11.1. Thermal anomaly identification	157
11.2. The environment	159
11.3. Passive targets	163
11.3.1. Solar heating	163
11.3.2. Clouds	168
11.3.3. Wind	168
11.3.4. Rain and snow	169
11.3.5. The scanning window	169
11.3.6. Outdoor considerations	172
11.4. Emissivity variations	173
11.5. Active targets	176
11.5.1. Vehicles	177
11.5.2. Small targets	178
11.5.3. Estimate of the scanning window	178
11.6. Limited access components	181
11.7. References	182
12. TEMPERATURE MEASUREMENTS	183
12.1. Apparent temperature	183
12.2. Temperature calibration	185
12.3. Emissivity	187
12.3.1. Emissivity correction	187
12.3.2. Angle of incidence	188
12.3.3. Emissivity uncertainty	190
12.3.4. Increasing the emissivity	194
12.4. Measurement of T	196
12.5. Atmospheric correction	197
12.6. Dual band measurements	197
12.7. Signal averaging	198
12.8. References	199
13. BUILDING ENVELOPE INSPECTION	200
13.1. Building science	201
13.1.1. Historic buildings	201
13.1.2. 1880 to 1940 construction	203
13.1.3. 1940 to 1960 construction	203
13.1.4. 1960 to 1990 construction	204
13.1.5. Modern construction	204
13.1.6. Windows	204
13.2. Heat transfer	206

13.2.1. Conductivity	207
13.2.2. Evaporation	209
13.2.3. Mass transport	210
13.3. Building inspection	212
13.4. References	212
14. ROOF INSPECTION	213
14.1. Roof construction	215
14.2. Temperature differential	216
14.2.1. Solar loading	216
14.2.2. Clouds	219
14.2.3. Wind	220
14.2.4. Surface moisture	220
14.2.5. High relative humidity	220
14.2.6. Phase change	221
14.2.7. Reflections	221
14.2.8. Interior effects	221
14.3. Inspections	222
14.4. References	224
15. POWER DISTRIBUTION	225
15.1. Resistance	226
15.2. Temperature	230
15.2.1. Radiation	231
15.2.2. Conduction	232
15.2.3. Convection	233
15.3. Power distribution inspection	235
15.4. References	238
16. ELECTRICAL/MECHANICAL INSPECTION	239
16.1. Baseline thermogram	240
16.2. Electrical connections	240
16.3. Motors: electrical components	243
16.4. Motors: mechanical components	244
16.5. Machinery	246
16.6. Emissivity	250
16.7. Temperature guidelines	251
16.7.1. Electrical circuits	251
16.7.2. Mechanical systems	254
16.8. References	255

17. BURIED OBJECTS	256
17.1. Heat transfer	257
17.2. Environment	260
17.3. Underground objects	260
17.3.1. Hot fluids	260
17.3.2. Voids	264
17.4. References	264
18. SURVEILLANCE	265
18.1. Surveillance applications	266
18.1.1. Law enforcement	267
18.1.2. Search and rescue	270
18.1.3. Air/space surveillance	270
18.1.4. Animal monitoring	273
18.1.5. Military	274
18.2. Minimum resolvable temperature (MRT)	276
18.2.1. Perceived signal-to-noise ratio	276
18.2.2. Three-dimensional noise model	278
18.2.3. Two-dimensional MRT	280
18.3. Range predictions	281
18.3.1. Target ΔT	282
18.3.2. Johnson criteria	283
18.3.3. Discrimination	283
18.3.4. Target transfer probability function	284
18.3.5. Range prediction methodology	286
18.4. References	290
19. NONDESTRUCTIVE TESTING	291
19.1. Applications	293
19.2. Heat transfer	295
19.2.1. Flash pulse (impulse or Dirac pulse)	296
19.2.2. Step and square pulse irradiation	298
19.2.3. Modulated irradiation	300
19.3. Test methodology	301
19.3.1. Heat injection methods	302
19.3.2. Data analysis	305
19.3.3. Temperature/time guidelines	307
19.4. References	309
20. PROCESS/QUALITY CONTROL	310
20.1. Automotive	311
20.2. Petrochemical	311

20.3. Die castings and molding	313
20.4. Printed circuit boards	313
20.5. Metals	315
20.5.1. Aluminum	316
20.5.2. Steel	317
20.6. Paper industry	317
20.7. References	318
21. INSPECTION PROCEDURES	319
21.1. Preliminary work	320
21.1.1. Who	320
21.1.2. What	321
21.1.3. When	321
21.1.4. Where	322
21.1.5. Why	322
21.1.6. How	322
21.2. Safety	323
21.3. Standards and guidelines	323
21.4. Test procedure	324
21.4.1. Test plan	324
21.4.2. Good engineering practices	327
21.5. Exit conference	328
21.6. Final report	328
21.7. References	330
APPENDIX A: TEMPERATURE CONVERSION	331
APPENDIX B: EMISSIVITY	336
APPENDIX C: THERMAL SENSING AND IMAGING 1980-1999	343
INDEX	370