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April 1995
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FEMTOSECOND X-RAYS FROM 90° THOMSON SCATTERING*

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Submitted to the 1995 Particle Accelerator Conference and International Conference on High Energy Accelerators, Dallas, Texas, May 1 - 5, 1995

* This work was supported by the Director, Office of Energy Research, Office of Basic Energy Sciences, Materials Sciences Division, of the U. S. Department of Energy, under Contract No. DE-AC03-76SF00098.
We report on progress on the femtosecond X-ray pulse generation experiment. The experiment involves a relativistic electron beam (50 MeV) with an rms bunch length of 10 ps containing 1 -2 nC of charge, and a ultrashort pulse (50 - 200 fs), high power (< 4 TW) 0.8 µm laser beam from a Ti:Al2O3 laser system. Both beams are focused down to about a 50 µm waist size and intersect at 90°. The laser field acts as an electromagnetic undulator-for the relativistic electron beam generating radiation upshifted by 2γ² and a pulse length given by the transit time of the laser beam across the electron beam. For a 50 MeV electron beam we expect 10⁵ photons at 0.4 Å (25% bandwidth) in a cone angle of 6 - 10 mrad in about a 200 fs pulse.

I. INTRODUCTION

Scattering of femtosecond laser pulses off a low energy relativistic electron beam at 90° offers the possibility to generate ultrashort X-ray pulses. Experiments are under way in the Beam Test Facility of the Center for Beam Physics at LBL to demonstrate the generation and detection of such pulses. The laser field acts as an electromagnetic undulator generating upshifted radiation and, in this geometry, the x-ray pulse length is determined by the overlapped interaction length in time of the laser beam and the electron beam [1].

We have previously reported on the design of this experiment which involves a relativistic electron beam and a high intensity short pulse laser [2]. The generic set-up is shown in Fig. 1. We next describe the details of the linac, laser system and experimental set-up, followed by up-to-date results of the experiment.

Table 1: Electron beam parameters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Energy</td>
<td>50 MeV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charge</td>
<td>1-2 nC/bunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunch Length (σ_p)</td>
<td>10-15 ps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emittance rms (unnorm)</td>
<td>0.35 mm-mrad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># bunches/macropulse</td>
<td>1 - 10 (max 100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@ 125 MHz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macropulse rep. rate</td>
<td>1 - 10 Hz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Ti:Al2O3 laser system parameters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wavelength</td>
<td>0.8 µm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy/pulse</td>
<td>125 mJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulse length</td>
<td>50 - 200 fs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition rate</td>
<td>10 Hz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing jitter with e-beam</td>
<td>2 ps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: A generic lay-out of the 90° x-ray generation experiment. The laser beam is upshifted by 2γ² and propagates in the direction of the electron beam.
B. X-ray source parameters

We next determine the properties of the scattered radiation. Theoretical details of the X-ray source have been previously published [1, 2]. The frequency of the upshifted radiation can easily be calculated from energy and momentum conservation:

\[ \omega = \frac{2\gamma^2 \omega_0}{1 + \frac{K^2}{2 \gamma^2 \theta^2}} \]  

(2)

where the Compton shift has been neglected. Here \( \gamma \) is the Lorentz factor, \( K \) the wiggler strength, \( \theta \) the angle of observation and \( \omega_0 \) the incident laser frequency. The wiggler strength is given by

\[ K = \frac{2.56 \sqrt{W / \text{cm}^2} \lambda [\mu \text{m}]}{c \text{[cm/s]}} \]  

(3)

where \( W \) is the incident laser intensity and \( \lambda \) the laser wavelength. From Eqn. (3) it is clear that wavelength tuning can be achieved by reducing the laser spot size at the interaction point to obtain wiggler strengths on the order of 1. Since the x-ray yield depends on the laser energy no photon flux reduction is expected. In addition, harmonic generation is expected to become important at such large wiggler strengths [5].

For our experimental parameters, the expected x-ray pulse width, bandwidth and total flux are calculated using the expressions given by Kim et al. [1] and are listed in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wavelength (( \lambda ))</th>
<th>0.4</th>
<th>Pulse length (fs)</th>
<th>200</th>
<th># photons (25 % bandwidth)</th>
<th>( 1 \times 10^5 )</th>
<th>Full angle cone (mrad)</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Bandwidth (%)</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 3: x-ray source parameters.

The main contributions to the bandwidth are from the finite electron beam emittance and limited number of wiggler periods seen by the electrons. The finite emittance effect causes a washing out of the angularly correlated wavelength distribution typical for a single electron radiation pattern. Neglecting the finite wiggler period effect, the actual source bandwidth is obtained by taking the convolution of the single electron radiation pattern with a Gaussian distribution for the angles that the electrons make with respect to the laser beam. For a beam emittance of 0.35 mm-mrad and a spot size of 50 \( \mu \)m, the electron beam divergence is 6 mrad which leads to an intrinsic bandwidth on the order of 20 - 25 %.

III. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

Although to-date we have not observed upshifted photons yet, we next describe in detail the main milestones that have been achieved.

A. Electron Beam Focusing to less than 100 \( \mu \)m.

The electron beam has been focused down to a spot size of less than 100 \( \mu \)m using a telescope consisting of two quadrupole triplets. The large bore (6") of the final magnet allows for small f-number focusing and reduces Bremsstrahlung production by beam halo scraping against the beam pipe. The electron beam profile at the interaction point has been measured using OTR and is shown in Fig. 2. The pointing stability was found to be better than 50 \( \mu \)m. A 60° H-magnet separates the particle and photon beams after the interaction point.

![Figure 2: Image of the electron beam spot at the interaction point obtained from OTR. The measured spot size \( \sigma \) is less than 100 \( \mu \)m, limited by the spatial resolution of the imaging system (1 pixel equals 104 \( \mu \)m).](image)

B. Electron and Laser Beam Synchronization

To ensure proper synchronization between the laser and the electron beam, a feedback system has been implemented to continually adjust the laser oscillator cavity frequency. The laser oscillator operates at 125 MHz (1/4 of the 500 MHz linac frequency). A 500 MHz signal synchronous with the laser oscillator is extracted from a photodiode signal using a 500 MHz bandpass filter. An error signal, which drives a piezo-controlled mirror mount, is then obtained by mixing this 500 MHz signal with the 500 MHz linac reference signal.

Using a streak camera with picosecond time resolution we have verified that locking of the laser oscillator to the electron beam was achieved with timing jitter performance of about 2 ps (Fig. 3).
orders of magnitude below the expected signal level.

levels need to be kept below a single photon per pulse for pulse length and polarization.

detector is capable of detecting single photons, background levels need to be kept below a single photon per pulse to avoid pile-up.

For initial pulse length measurements the transit time will be lengthened by changing the horizontal focusing strength of the quadrupoles, allowing the use of a diamond photodiode as well as an X-ray streak camera. A coincidence technique between the X-ray pulse and an optical pulse in a gas jet is being developed to measure shorter pulse durations [6]. In the absence of the laser, photo electrons will be produced in a Kr gas jet by x-rays with energy about 500 eV higher than the K-shell energy of Kr-gas (14.3 keV). If the laser pulse arrives simultaneously with the x-ray pulse, the x-ray photo electrons will acquire an additional drift velocity component whose magnitude and direction depends on the phase and amplitude of the laser field at which the photo electron is born and the relative polarization of the laser with respect to the x-rays. The temporal overlap between the two pulses will therefore determine the emitted x-ray photo electron spectrum.

IV. SUMMARY

A status report has been given of the orthogonal Thomson scattering experiment at the BTF. Based on simple scaling laws we have calculated that about $10^5$ x-ray photons with an energy of 30 keV will be produced for our current experimental parameters. Both the electron beam line and the laser system have been completed. The electron beam has been focused to a spot size less than 100 μm. The 25 ps (FWHM) electron and 100 fs (FWHM) laser pulses have been synchronized to a jitter level of about 2 ps. We have started looking at x-ray generation using a phosphor screen imaged onto a slow scan CCD camera as well as a Ge-detector. Although background levels are low enough for the imaging diagnostic, further reduction is required for successful operation of the Ge-detector.

V. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors wish to thank the ALS personnel for their help in the construction and operation of the Beam Test Facility, in particular Dennis Calais and Terry Byrne. We would also like to thank Leon Archambault for his engineering and technical support and Harvey Gould, Ali Belkacem and Norm Madden for their help with the Ge-detector.

VIII. REFERENCES