

Minutes of Meeting LOFAR Software

Date:	2008-07-23
Next meeting:	2008-07-30 9:15-10:15
	Paviljoen West room
Present:	
Andre Gunst	Yes
Ronald Nijboer	Yes
Ruud Overeem	Yes
John Romein	Yes
Michael Wise	Yes

cc: Arnold Meijster, Rob van Nieuwpoort, Arthur Coolen, Jurjen Sluman, Pieter Donker, Chris Broekema, Martin Gels, Joris v. Zwieten, Marcel Loose, Adriaan Renting, Ger van Diepen, Max Avruch, Michiel v. Haarlem, Jan Reitsma, Ger de Bruyn, Arno Schoenmaker, Hanno Holties, Corina Vogt, Jan Noordam, Joe Masters, Lars Bähren, Dion Kant, Johan Hamaker, Maaijke Mevius

Remarks previous minutes

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Announcements

- The SNN subsidy will be extended to the end of the year.
- Joe Masters has applied for a PHD position and will leave the LOFAR project
- The ground work in Exloo is started.
- The solar physics project will hire another developer.

Action item overview

ID	Date submitted	Description	Owner	Planned date	Status
49	20080116	Simultaneous data storage of TBB and in OLAP to validate inverse poly phase filter bank of Kalpana. [Update] After some detective work, Lars has found the raw data for these observations. Joe has converted both datasets into the appropriate data formats for Kalpana to use. We still need a more robust procedure to request and track observations.	Michael/Andre	20080204	Closed
62	20080603	Design/decision stand alone mode of E-LOFAR stations. The idea is to reconfigure the switch by a SNMP script when we are going from an observation using all stations to an observation excluding the EU stations. The script changes the routing in de switch for security reasons. The machines of the international partners can be connected to the LCU via VNC access. The VNC server will be brought down if we are going to non-stand alone	Andre	20080611	Open

		mode.			
63	20080611	Discussion with RedHat about LCU licenses for all LOFAR stations.	Ruud	20080730	Open
65	20080611	Define validation tests for the imager which can be executed by for example Casey.	Ronald	20080618	Open
66	20080723	Make "Towards 20 Stations" development plan	Andre	20080730	Open
67	20070723	Should the station beamformer data reader written by Joe also support 4 bit and 8 bit data?	Michael	20080730	Open

Last: 67

Progress

Stations (André):

Achieved since last meeting:

- The 16 bit to 4 bit option to exchange bits for beams is possible. Eric will start the detailed implementation and verification in November 2008.
- Station calibration: see MAC/SAS section

Problems / current activities:

- Dips: Michiel Brentjens can currently predict the dips and the cause appears to be in the BeamServer software. The problem has not been solved yet.
- Long distance delay tracking observations have been done. James Anderson will look for fringes.

Next actions:

- Start with LOFAR20

OLAP (John):

Achieved since last meeting:

- The correlator works with dummy data, except only one RSP board can be handled by the IO node. Currently no real station data is available.
- IO node to compute node protocol works for normal cases (FIFOs are not cleared yet in between runs).
- Currently station data with 4 bits or 8 bits are supported as well by running different executables.
- The station – CEP interface is extended for the 4 bit mode.

Problems / current activities:

- John has worked on the ZOID for the BG/P which is now defined as FCNP (Fast Collective Network Protocol).
- Online bandpass correction showed an error of 5% which is too much.

- Rob is busy implementing the TAB mode, especially for the superstation. The issue of how to best handle data drop-outs is still being explored.
- Robustness for failing disks is not included yet (Arnold Meijsters).

Next actions:

- Start with LOFAR20

Offline pipeline (Ronald):

Achieved since last meeting:

- HBA dipole model is implemented in BBS
- Ronald made Ger's imager work on two nodes and discovered a few bugs (coordinate problem, different uvw sign definition). Furthermore the imager is not full stokes and facets are not supported yet. This will be communicated to the Australians.

Problems / current activities:

- Pandey will commission the Global Solver.
- Treatment of parameters in BBS and mapping of parameters to grid needs to speed up.
- Ronald is continuing with the strategy document and has identified four different approaches.
- Maaijke will implement SPAM in BBS (needs fitting on non-UV data). Is still busy testing if you have to do peeling or making simultaneous solutions.
- Pandey will test the HBA dipole beam model in BBS

Next actions:

- Start with LOFAR20

SAS + MAC + SHM (Ruud):

Achieved since last meeting:

- Navigator 2.0 for Step 5 works (everything of Navigator 1.0 works also for Navigator 2.0).
- The software is compatible with the latest version of PVSS.
- Station calibration functionality is almost done. A problem is the current performance. It takes 7 seconds to calibrate one subband. When the calibration is functionally correct an optimization effort is required.

Problems / current activities:

- Interfacing with SHM and PVSS.

- The information of the MCU should be connected to the database too.
- As it stands now: real significant different observations on BG/P has as a consequence that the RSP Driver must be restarted with another configuration file. This is the case if the station data must be send to different IOs of the BG/P from observation to observation.
- Metadata flow work is ongoing. Arno is busy with a mechanism to distribute the static meta data from SAS to the stations. It would be great if that can be finished as well in Step 5.
- Test programs for the RSPs should be started by the LCU. This is necessary for the assembly company which is building the subrack.
- Extra status registers which are implemented in the FPGAs are not driven yet by the LCU.
- The RCU is currently able to drive the power supply of the HBA independent of the modem (which is desirable from an EMC perspective). The remainder left is that the LCU can also drive this bit.

Next actions:

- Start with LOFAR20

User Software (Michael):

Achieved since last meeting:

- Joe fixed a few bugs in the DAL library.

Problems / current activities:

- Near field imager work is ongoing.
- Lars is also continuing to support Martin's efforts with CMAKE.
- Joe is also working on the draft of the beam-formed data ICD.
- Members of the Magnetism KSP are exploring using the VisIVO package to visualize RM synthesis cubes.
- Alexander started with a radio image mosaicing script for casacore.

Next actions:

- Start with LOFAR20

Holidays

John: From ~26 August 3 weeks and structural one day off from ~26 August onwards.

Ronald: 25 August to 12 September

Software integration

Achieved since last meeting:

- Martin, Marcel and Lars are busy to compile LOFAR code with cmake.

Problems / current activities:

- A request of Michiel Brentjes was to keep a clean trunk. John suggests to tag the production release.
- Marcel is busy with streamlining the build environment
- Compile a list of anticipated data products and calibration or metadata files associated with each of the pipelines.
- LOFAR development software needs to be build in Kubuntu (Michael has volunteered)

Next actions:

- Define the length of Step 4.
- Step 2+: A test program will be initiated to verify the functioning of the LOFAR software in a more structured way. In OLAP it is possible to store the raw station data and feed this into the pipeline later on. This makes it possible to define a standard data set, which can be applied to the pipeline as soon as major software changes have been taken place.

Scaling up work for 20 stations

After Step 5, one full week will be used to update the documentation of the software.

After Step 5, we will aim to LOFAR-20 and hence we start from Step 1 again.

Current list of tasks to do and when:

Stations:

- For the stations the split HBA field boards must be produced and tested in the field. Step 2.
- Bit for beam exchange mode in firmware, LCU. Step 3.
- The firmware for the HBA field split must be written. Step 2.
- Additions in the LCU software for the HBA field split are required. Step 2.
- One central clock should be implemented in the super station. Step 2.
- HBA calibration should be in place. Phase 2.
- Definition of test suite to be run by the LCU. Step 1.
- ARP in the TBB. Step 1.
- RSP boards suitable to send data when message of LCU is. Step 1.
- Conversion to ITRF coordinates. Step 1.
- Change that RSP boards only send data if the LCU says so each e.g. 10 seconds. Step 1.

- Station HBA calibration. Functional: Step 2. Operational: Step 3. Optimized: Step 3+.
- Station LBA calibration optimization. Step 1.

OLAP:

- The network surrounding BG/L should be modified in order to split BG/L in four independent partitions. Will be done after the BG/L decision. Step 5.
- Possibly optimizations in the IO nodes to cope with multiple RSP data streams on one BG/P IO node. Step 2.
- Making the storage section fault-tolerant and more efficient by using multiple compute cores. Step 5.
- Tied-array beamforming definition will be done in Step 5 and implementation in Step 1 for super stations.
- Multiple TABs: Step 3+
- Snapshot imaging support (changing beams in time). Step 2.
- Multiple observations or one observation with multiple beams which change as a function of time. Step 3+
- Conversion to ITRF coordinates. Step 1.
- Script on central machine to check station broadcasts (Chris). Step 1.

Offline:

- Station model. Step 1.
- Beam validation. Step 2.
- Implementation station beam. Step 3.
- Ionospheric approach for 20 km distance between stations
- Multi-beam processing for clock calibration. Step 1.
- Will be detailed in the offline meeting.
- Conversion to ITRF coordinates. Step 1.
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SAS/MAC:

- Updating to Navigator 2.0 to enhanced functionalities in Step 1.
- Station test scripts for station acceptance. Step 1.
- Making screens for the 20 station configuration. Step 2
- Proof reaction times and trigger performance measurements. Step 1.
- Ring splitter control. Step 2.
- Scheduler. Step 3++.
- Switch MAC addresses flexible. Step 2, 3.
- Reconfigure international switches for stand alone mode (starting SNMP script). Step 3.
- Hardware monitor and software monitor for central machines. For BG/P it is necessary to check if it is still up.
- MAC uses feedback from SHM. Step 1.
- Conversion to ITRF coordinates (BeamServer modifications). Step 1.

- Coordinates centrally available. Step 1.
- Wish list: horizon vector in the stations, beamtracking suitable for the solar system. Step 3+.
- Temperature control. Step 1.
- Control to enable switching between 4 bit, 8 bit or 16 bit station data. Step 3.
- LCU trigger code integrated and connected to MAC/SAS. Step 1.
- TBB dumps under control of MAC/SAS. Step 2.
- TBB data writer under control of MAC/SAS. Step 2.
- Station calibration and trigger information metadata available. Step 3+.
- MAC/SAS screens for known pulsar mode. Step 2.
- Control of off-line processing. Step 3++.

USG:

- TBB data writer capable of accessing databases to retrieve metadata. Step 1.
- CR tools ready to read and process TBB HDF5 files.
- Skymapper ready to make images from TBB HDF5 files.
- Version of beamformed data writer which can accept BF data stream either from BG/P or from stations directly.
- BF data writer capable of accessing databases to retrieve metadata information.
- Native support in DAL for PRESTO/SIGPROC formats.
- Updates to PRESTO to use DAL HDF5 BF data natively.

Decisions

ID	Date submitted	Decision
02	20061220	Every Step will start with a Kick-off meeting, in which the complete software team participates.
03	20061220	The project team starts immediately with the preparations of the next CDR in order to preserve progress of the CS1 realization
04	20070116	This meeting will take place every week on Tuesday 11:00. The existing software team meeting with all developers will stop to exist.
05	20070130	Step 1 will be changed to 16 subbands instead of 32 subbands.
06	20070130	Step 2 will contain a multiple node BBS. 6 μ Stations/Station will be postponed. Instead of this, 32 subbands measurements will be realized.
07	20070206	Step 1 will support 160 MHz observations. The other steps will support 200 MHz as well.
08	20070424	Step 2 will support 16 subbands @ 200MHz and 24 MHz at 160 MHz
09	20070424	During the rest of step two, OLAP will only support observations during the weekend.
10	20070522	The number of subbands per Measurement Set is set to 6 or 8 default.
11	20070522	Scheduler activities will be preferably activated in Q4 2007.
12	20070522	Procure, three Local Control Units to accommodate 12 microstations in CS010 in a quick way.
13	20070529	Integrate version numbers in all software.
14	20070529	Distinguish the software between a production version and an engineering version (partly now already the case).
15	20070605	All developed software under CVS will be transferred to Subversion. The main reason for this is that Subversion supports the integration of version numbers in the

		executables. In this way you can always retrieve which software is used for a certain build. First the impact of the transfer will be investigated by Marcel.
16	20070619	Marcel Loose will be the librarian of the LOFAR software. The available time for this will be shared with his BBS work.
17	20070710	The known pulsar survey mode will be the next mode to support (not in its full extent but partly on-line and off-line).
18	20070710	The temporarily off-line part of the known pulsar mode pipeline will not be under control of SAS/MAC. This will be put under control of SAS/MAC as soon as that software is available in the on-line part of the system.
19	20070814	Joe Masters makes the routine to read in the TBB data.
20	20071002	Fault tolerance of the system (mainly OLAP) is put at the top of the priority list after closing the SAS-MAC and CEP integration.
21	20071123	Kubuntu 7.10 desktop 64 bit OS is chosen for all machines except the BG/L and MAC/SAS machines
22	20071123	Station calibration work is smeared out over Step 4 and Step 5.
23	20071123	Global bandpass shape is moved to Step 5 because of its low priority.
24	20071211	Multiple beams per observation will be implemented instead of multiple observations (this is consistent with the plan).
25	20071211	Step 3 will be closed next Thursday. Any open items will be finished in Step 4.
26	20080130	Multiple beams are defined as multiple directions with the same set of antennas. Hence, only the angle, subbands and beamlets can be modified per beam.
27	20080206	Step 4 and Step 5 for MAC/SAS will be changed. The control of the offline pipeline will be postponed because the offline subsystems are not fixed yet. Currently the definition and design of the metadata flows will be set as goal for Step 4 and the implementation of the metadata flow will be the end goal of Step 5. Hence, after Step 5 (part of) the metadata is included in the Measurement Set.
28	20080213	Currently a single subband and single beam is stored in a Measurement Set. As soon as we are ready for mosaicing this probably should be changed in the future.
29	20080220	For storing the raw station beams the sanitizing operations like input buffer will be included in the online part. For this OLAP has to give operational support or instructions to the observers how to start up manually such observations. Since, this is an between solution this will not be automated via SAS/MAC.
30	20080227	Weekly build environment will be updated and automated.
31	20080227	After Step 5 the software documentation will be updated and obsolete packages will be removed.
32	20080423	Basically two Low Band modes will be supported initially: a LBL and LBH mode. The connection between antennas and RCUs have to be chosen such that those to modes make sense.
33	20080528	The position of all individual dipoles will be made available centrally in the database.
34	20080603	The data format of the positions will be delivered in ETRS coordinates by the roll out team. However, the data format of the positions will be stored in ITRF format in the LOFAR databases. Hence, all software and configuration files dealing with coordinates must be made compatible with the ITRF dataformat. Hans van de Marel is responsible to convert the ETRS coordinates to ITRF coordinates for the LOFAR system.

Last: 34

Table round

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