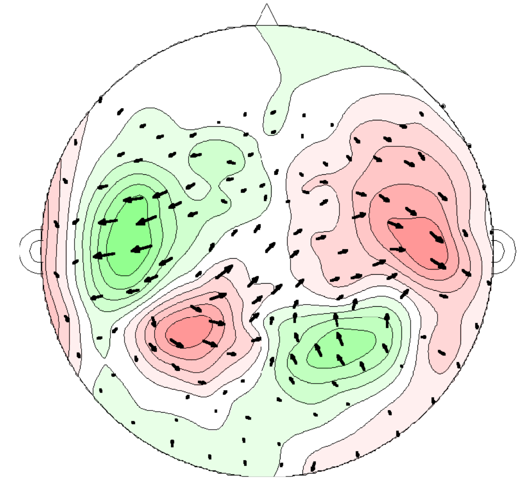
Neural Computation at the Femtotesla Scale: Visualizing Computations Inside the Human Brain

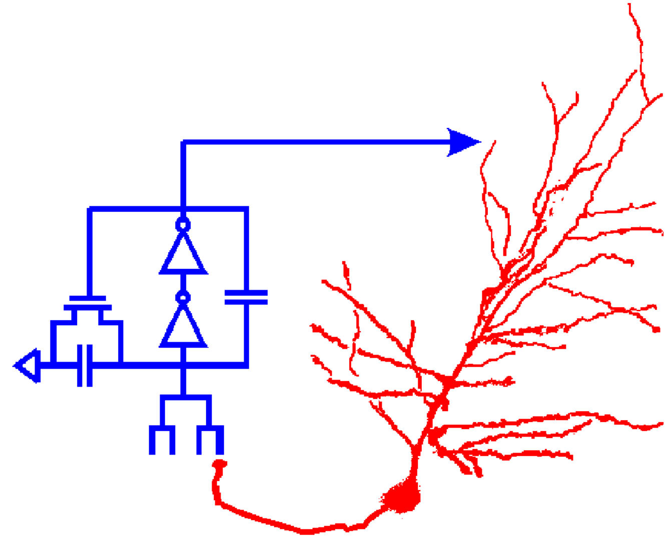


Jonathan Z. Simon

Electrical & Computer Engineering Colloquium

April 6, 2007

Computational Sensorimotor Systems Laboratory



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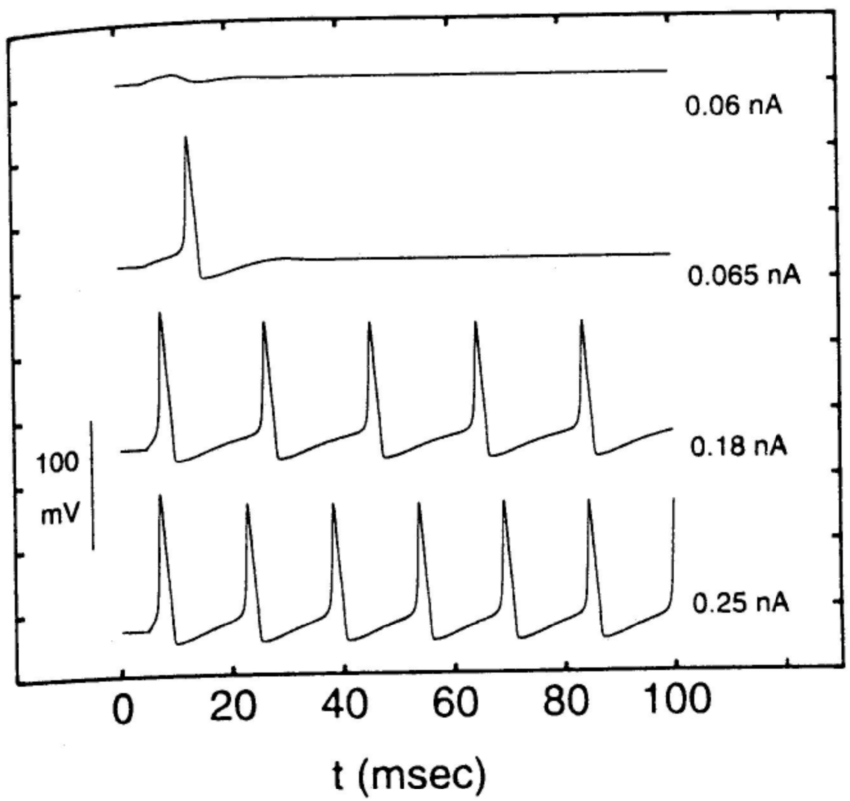
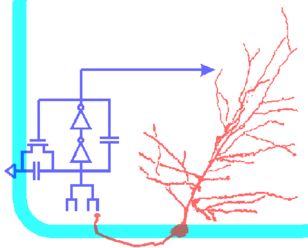
Outline

- The Brain and How It Works
- The Auditory System
- Magnetoencephalography (MEG)
- MEG in the Frequency Domain
- Using MEG to investigate Neural Coding

Universal Neural Code

- Neural signals = spikes in voltage
- Spikes are "all-or-none"
  - Digital in amplitude
  - Analog in time
- Neural Input ≈ current





Primary Neural Current

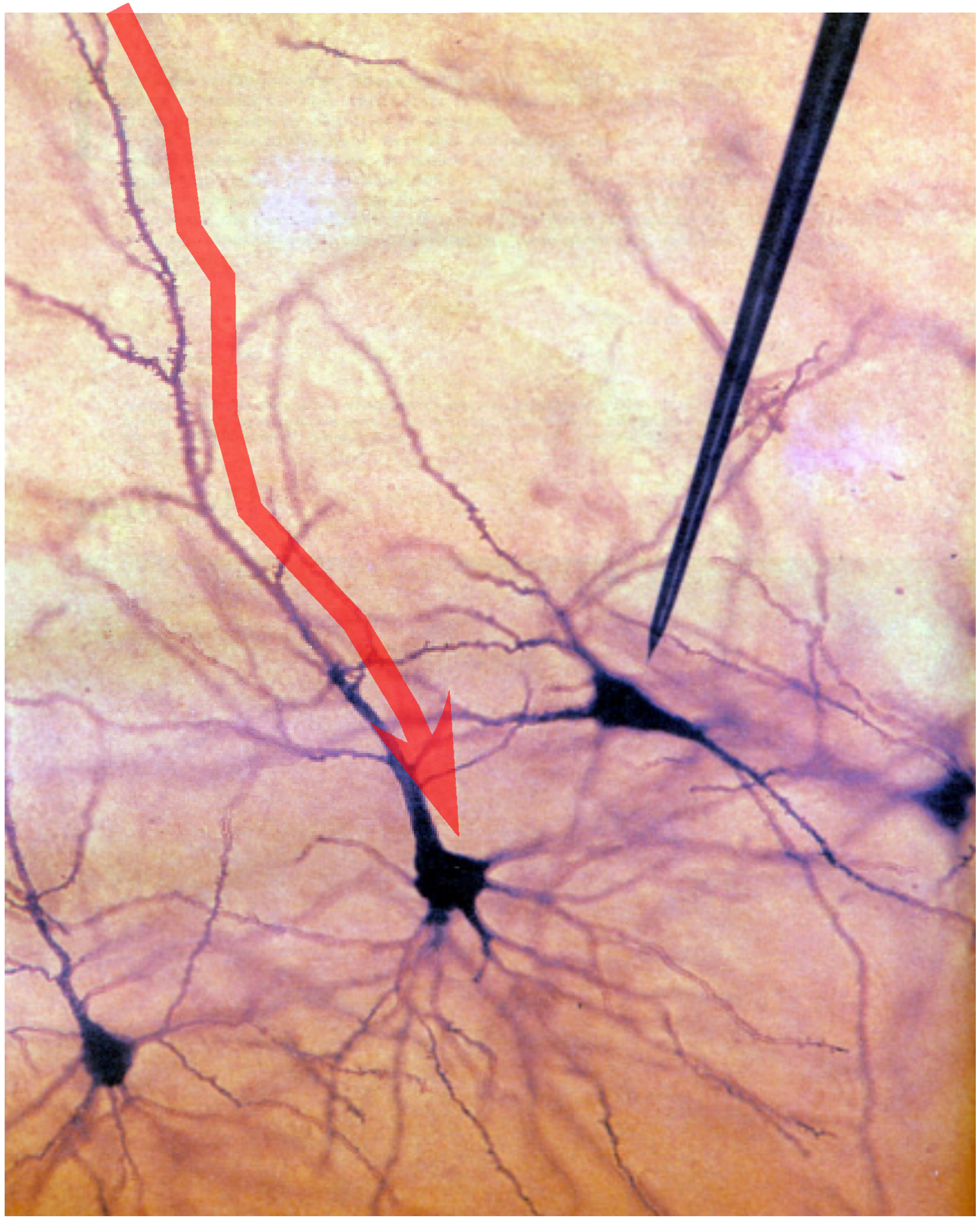
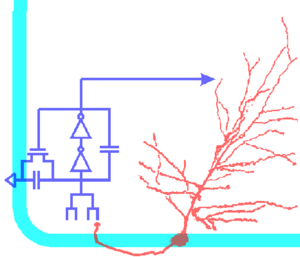


Photo by Fritz Goro



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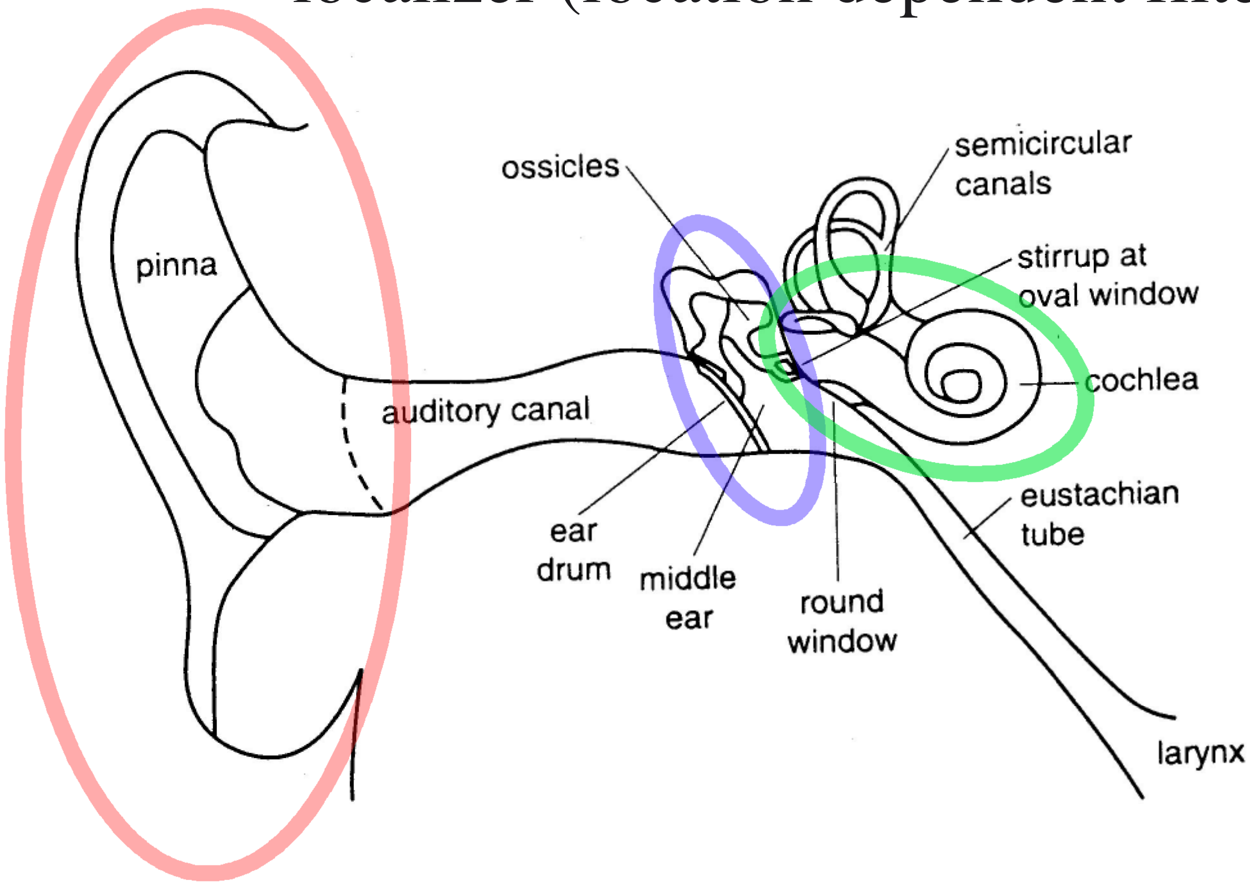
What Is Hearing?

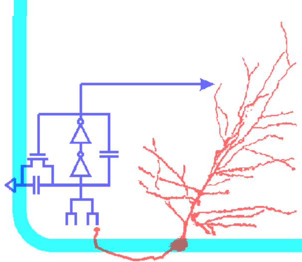
Outer Ear (pinna) useful but not essential
- collector
- localizer (location dependent filtering)



Inner ear (cochlea)
- essential
  - neural "transducer"
  - turns *acoustic* signals into spikes = *auditory* signals

Only features conveyed as neural signals perceived
- e.g. masked sounds not conveyed neurally

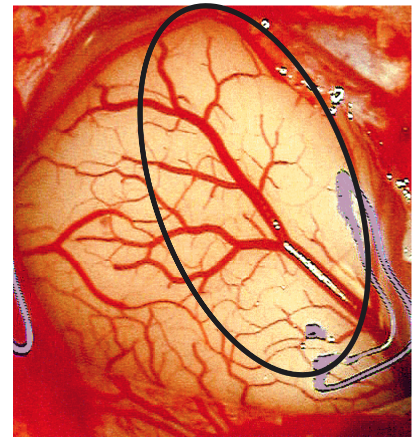
Middle Ear useful but not essential
- impedance matching = minimized reflection



The Auditory Pathway (oversimplified)

Parallel and serial neural processing in multiple stages

Auditory Cortex



ferret

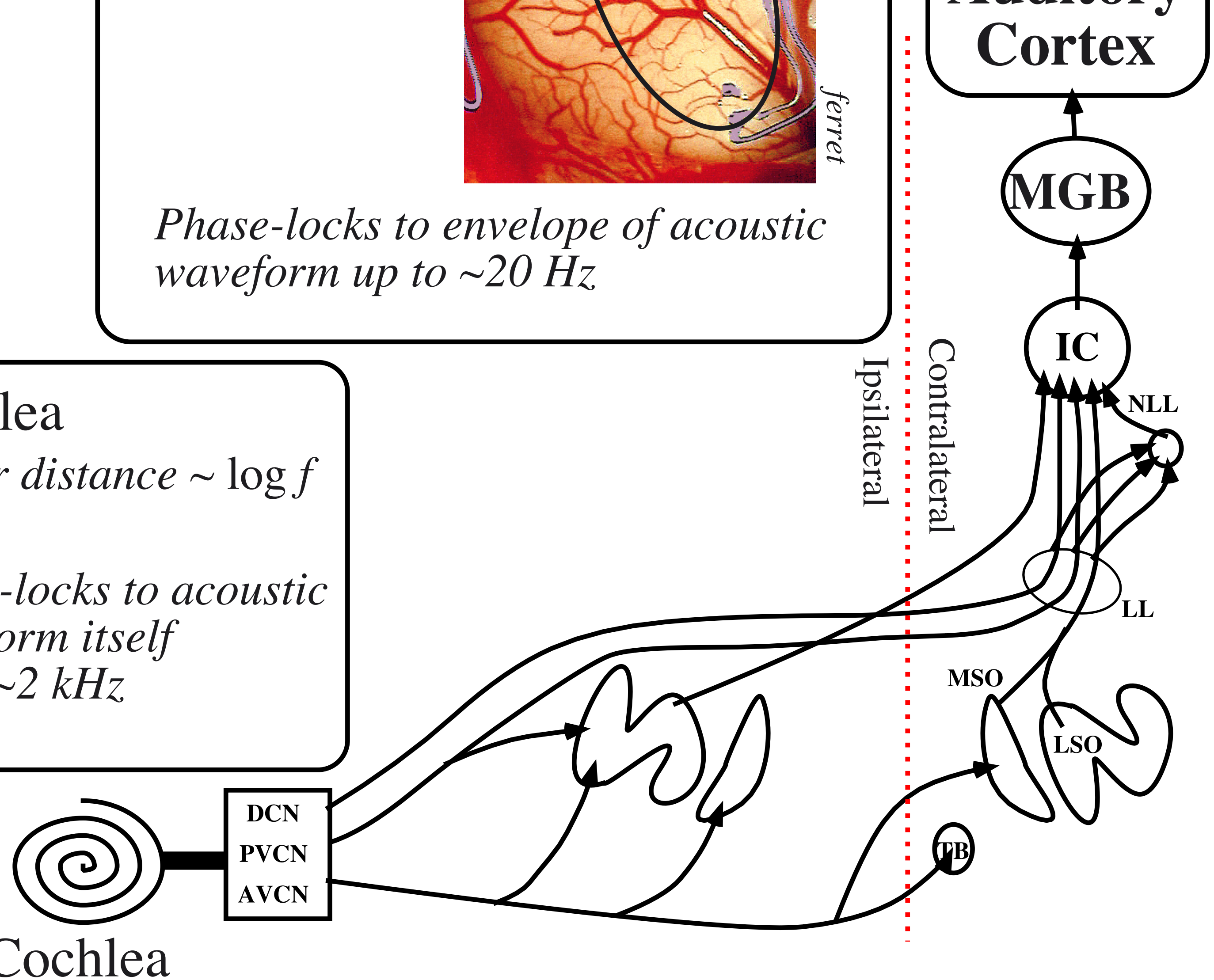
Phase-locks to envelope of acoustic waveform up to ~20 Hz

human

Cochlea

Linear distance ~ log *f*

Phase-locks to acoustic waveform itself up to ~2 kHz



What Is the Auditory Neural Code?

- **Neural code is essentially unknown** for almost all auditory features
  - Especially in auditory cortex
  - Much progress in coding near periphery, especially coding of sound location
- **Most important auditory features are acoustically non-trivial**
  - e.g. speech, speaker ID, emotional content, pitch, timbre, sound location, and many, many others

What Can We Hear?

Table 1.6. Approximate ranges of hearing

Species	Low	High (kHz)
Human	20 Hz	20
Chimpanzee	100 Hz	20
Rhesus monkey	75 Hz	25
Squirrel monkey	75 Hz	25
Cat	30 Hz	50
Dog	50 Hz	46
Chinchilla	75 Hz	20
Rat	1 kHz	60
Mouse	1 kHz	100
Guinea pig	150 Hz	50
Rabbit	300 Hz	45
Bats	3 kHz	120
Dolphin (*Tursiops*)	1 kHz	130
Galago	250 Hz	45
Tupaia	250 Hz	45
Sparrow	250 Hz	12
Pigeon	200 Hz	10
Turtle	20 Hz	1
Frog	100 Hz	3
Goldfish	100 Hz	2
Ostariophysi	50 Hz	7
Other teleosts	50 Hz	1

Data taken from Fay 1988

Human: 20 Hz to 20 kHz

Cat: 30 Hz to 50 kHz

Mouse: 1 kHz to 100 kHz

Bat: 3 kHz to 120 kHz

What Can We Hear?

- **Spectro-Temporal Features of Any Sound**

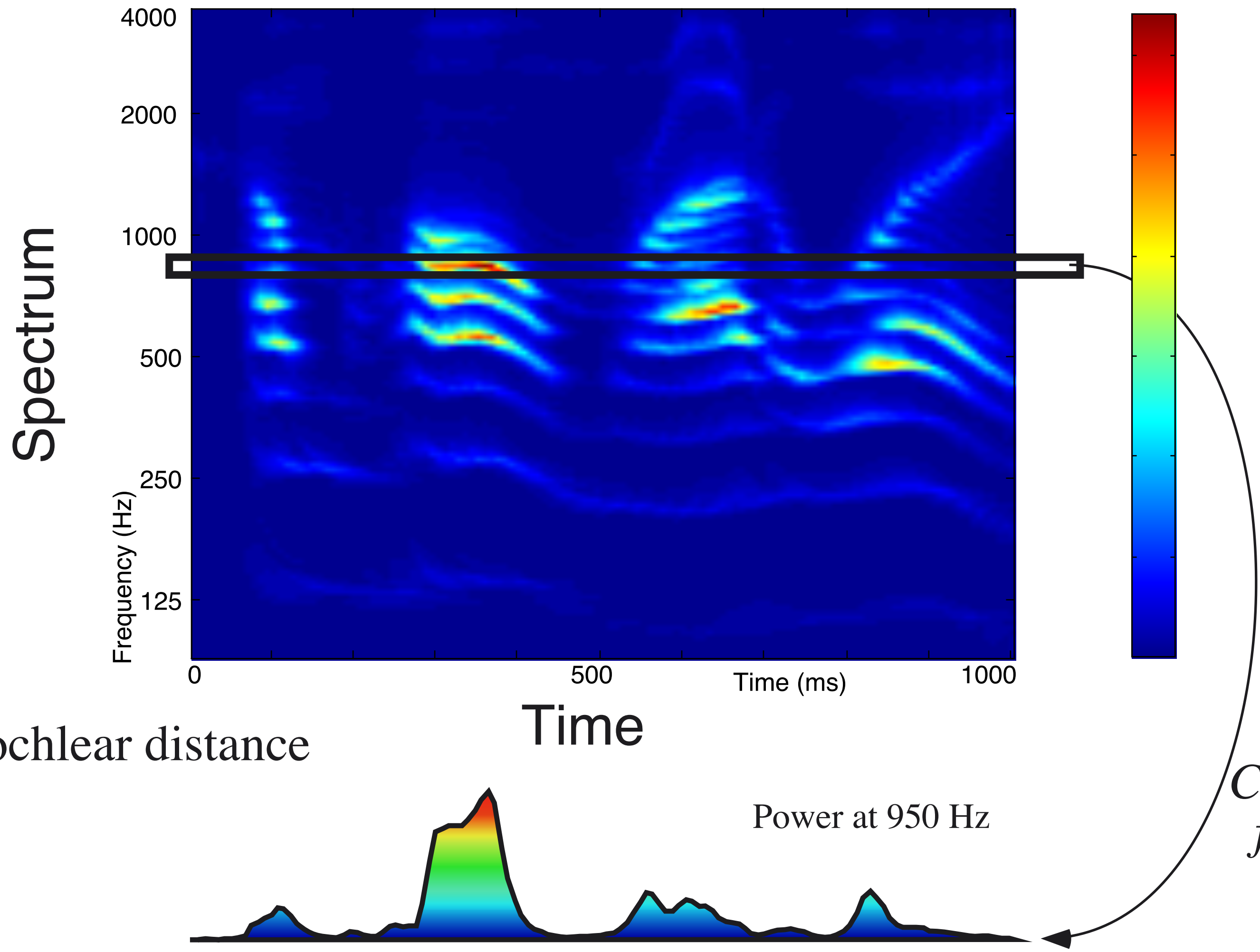
  Spectral content of sound as a function of time.

  Which spectral frequency bands have enhanced power?

  Which spectral frequency bands have diminished power?

  How do these change as a function of time?

"Come home right away."



log f ~ linear cochlear distance

Characterization from frequency cross-section is very limited

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Magnetoencephalography (MEG)

- Non-invasive, Passive, Silent Neural Recordings
- Simultaneous Whole-Head Recording (~200 sensors)
- Sensitivity

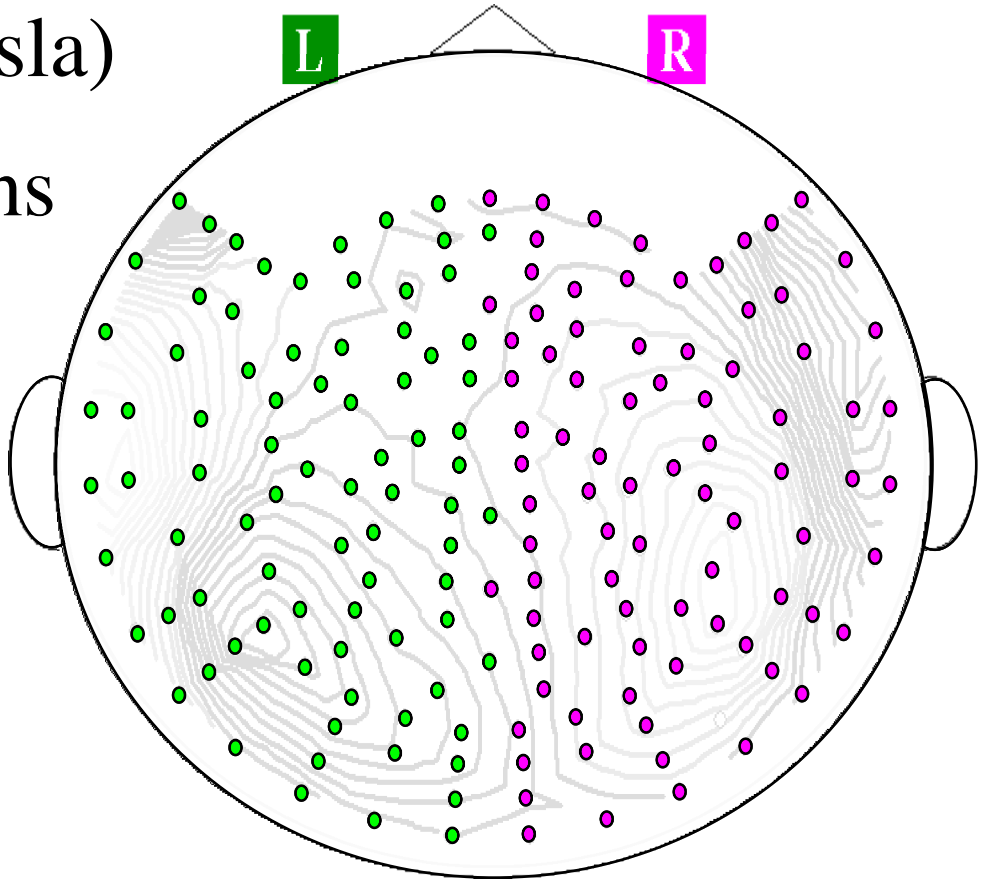
    high: ~100 fT (10^{-13} Tesla)

    low: ~10^4 – ~10^6 neurons

- Temporal Resolution: ~1 ms
- Spatial Resolution

    coarse: ~1 cm

    ambiguous

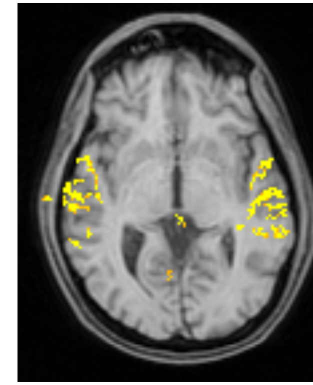


Functional Imaging

Non-invasive recording from human brain (Functional brain imaging)

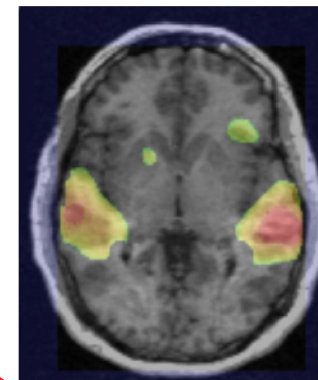
Hemodynamic techniques

Functional magnetic resonance imaging
fMRI



Excellent *spatial resolution*
(~ 1-2 mm)
Poor temporal resolution
(~ 1 s)

Positron emission tomography
PET

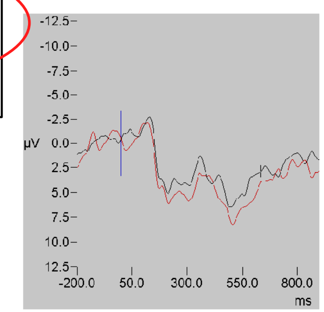


PET, EEG require across-subject averaging

fMRI and MEG can capture effects in single subjects

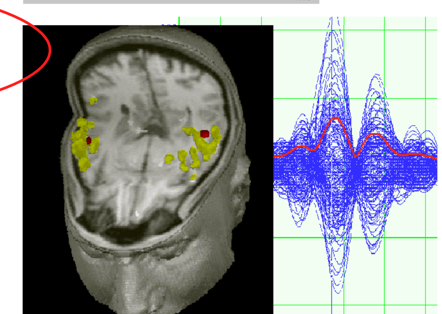
Electromagnetic techniques

Electroencephalography
EEG



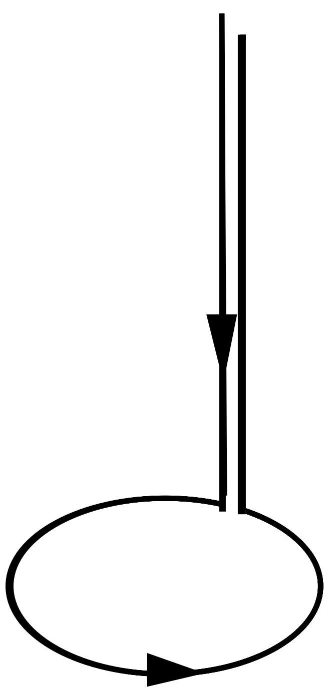
Poor spatial resolution
(~ 1 cm)
Excellent *temporal resolution*
(~ 1 ms)

Magnetoencephalography
MEG



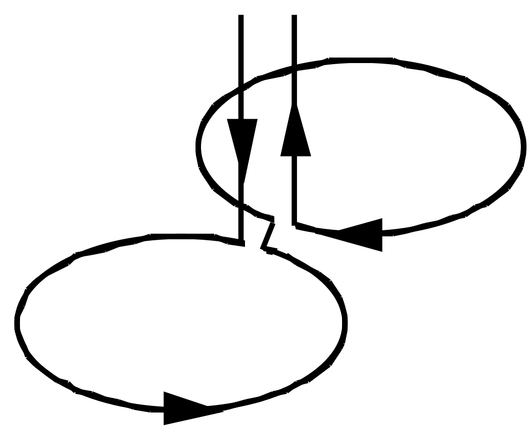
MEG SQUIDs

SQUID Magnetometer

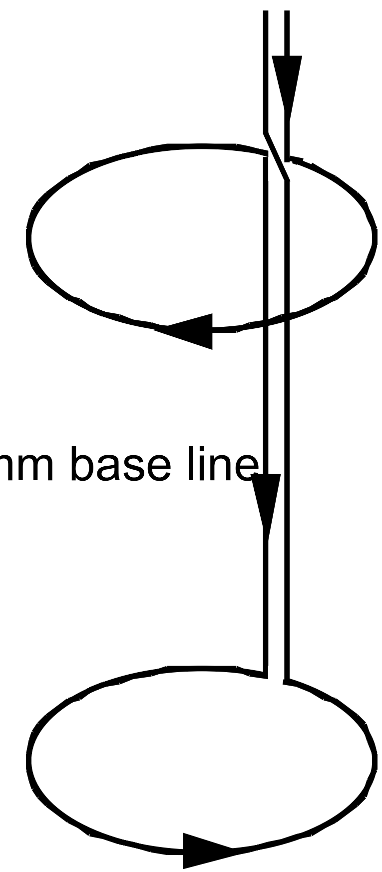


SQUID Gradiometer

Noise reduction from Differential measurement

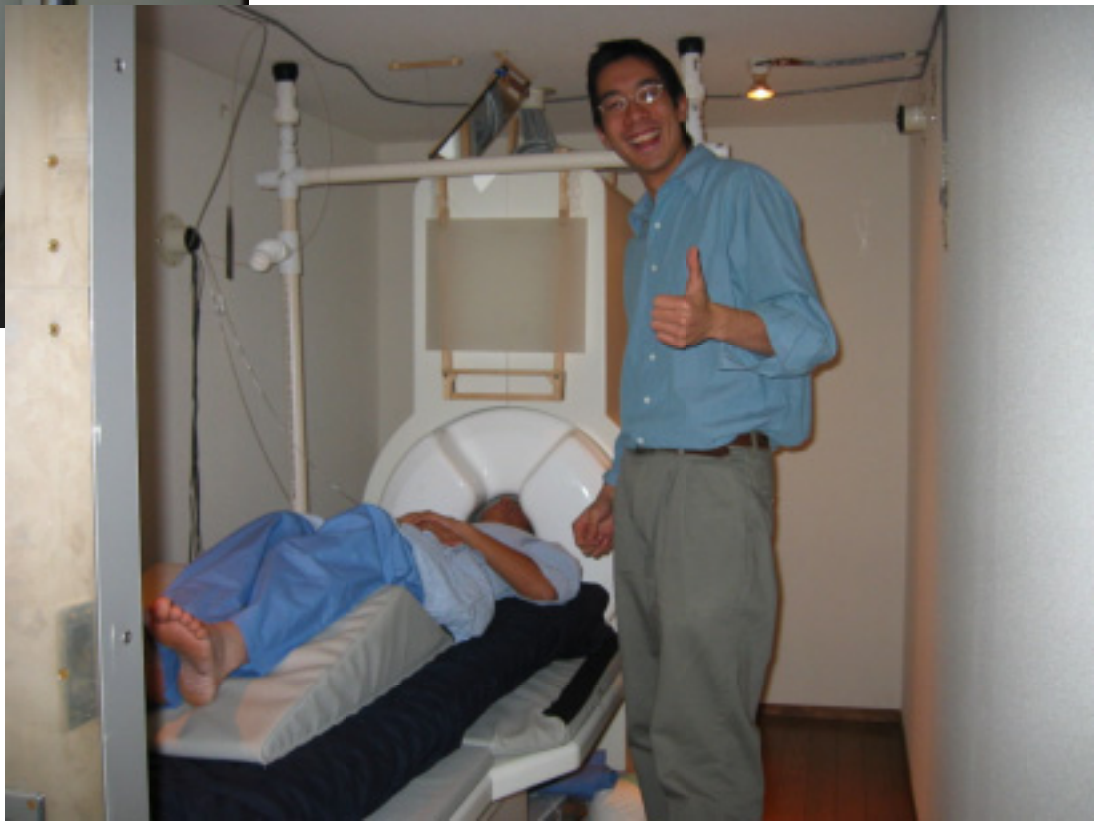


Planar type



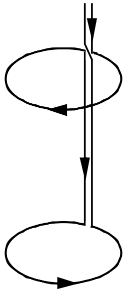
Axial type

MEG Snapshots



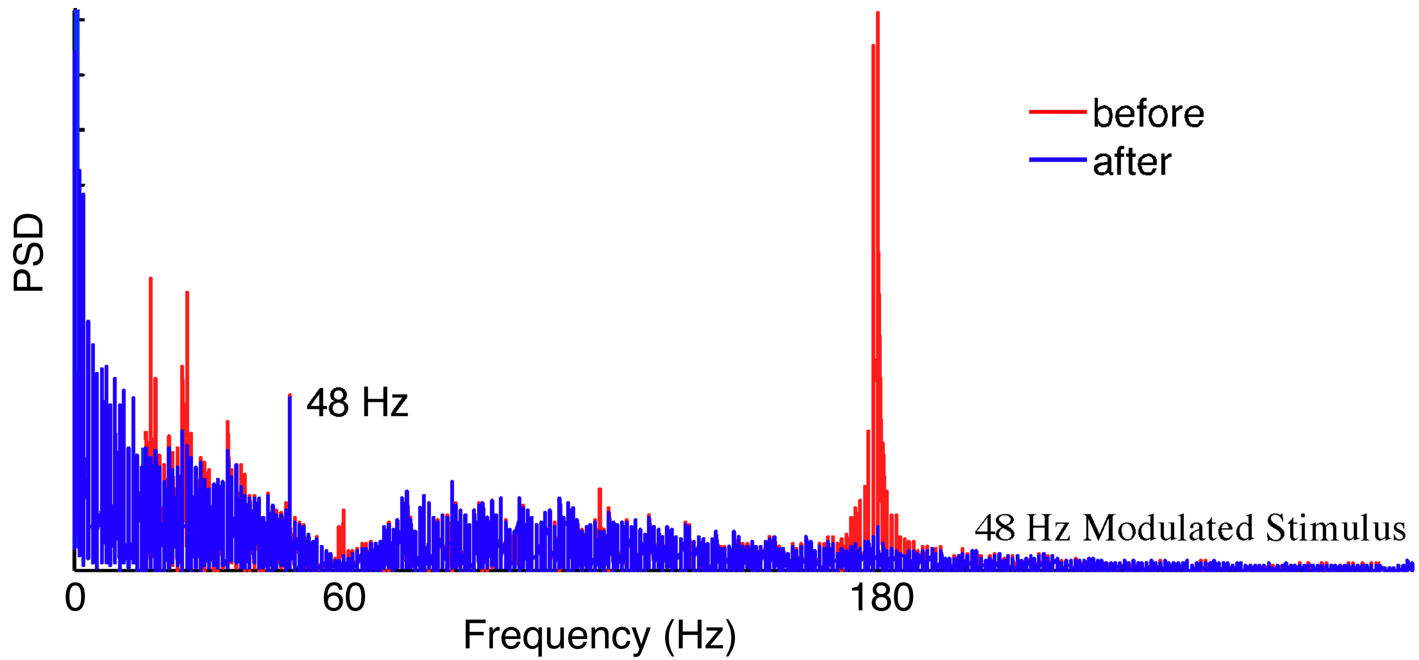
Noise Reduction in Hardware

+



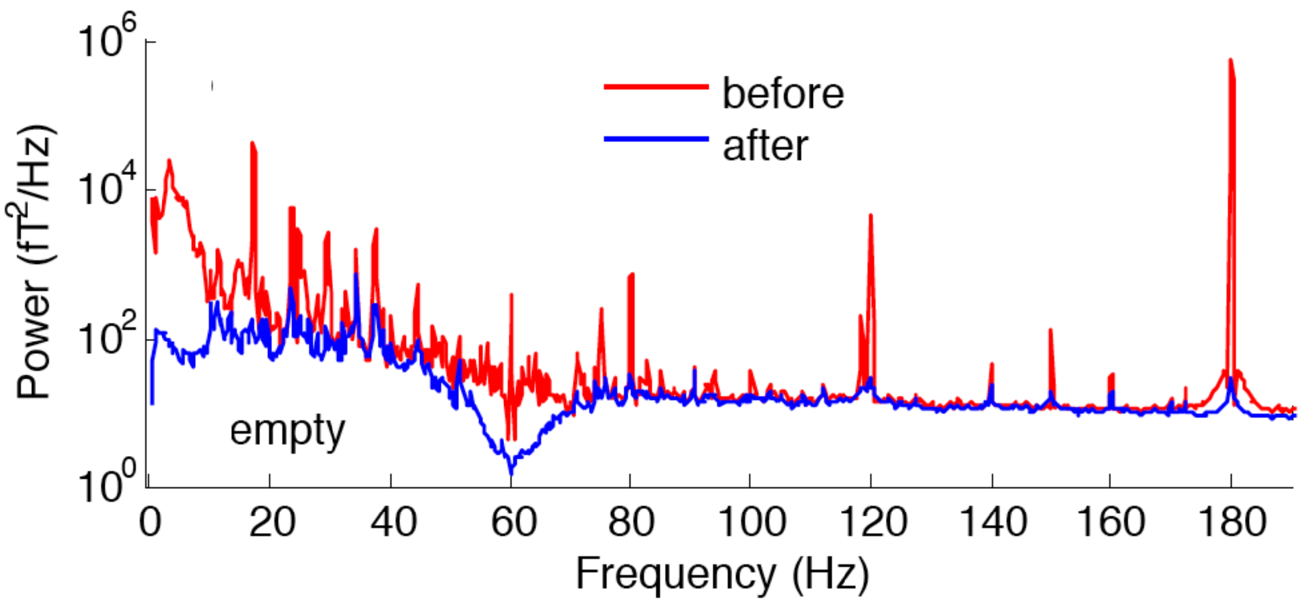
Noise Reduction in Software

Cleaned with Fast-LMS
+ 3 Reference channels



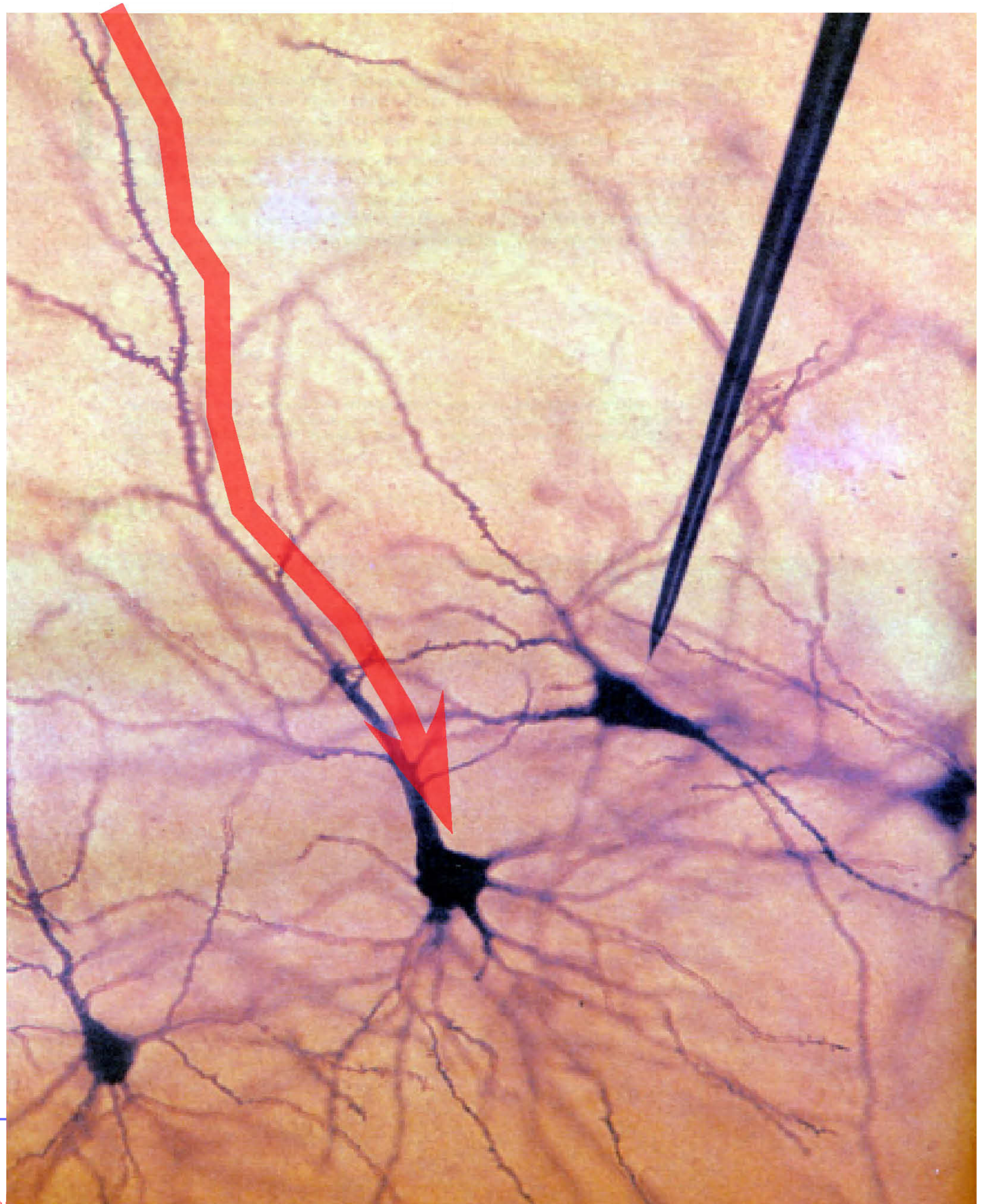
Ahmar and Simon, Neural Engineering 2005

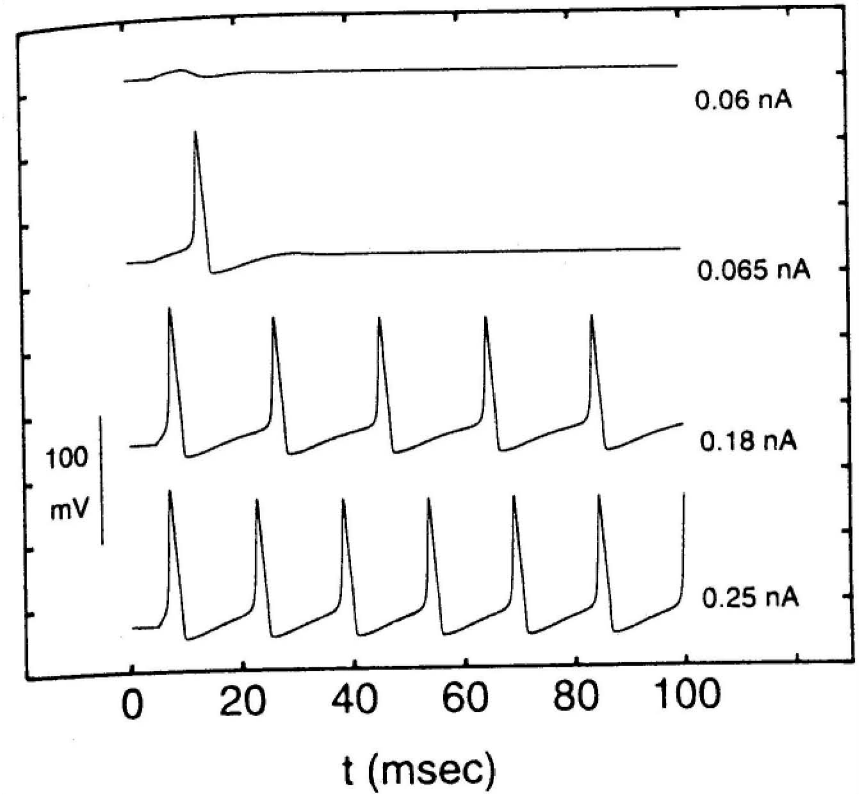
Cleaned with TSPCA
+ 3 Reference channels

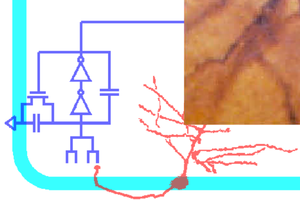


de Cheveigné, Le Roux, and Simon, ICASSP 2007.

Neural Activity = Neural Current

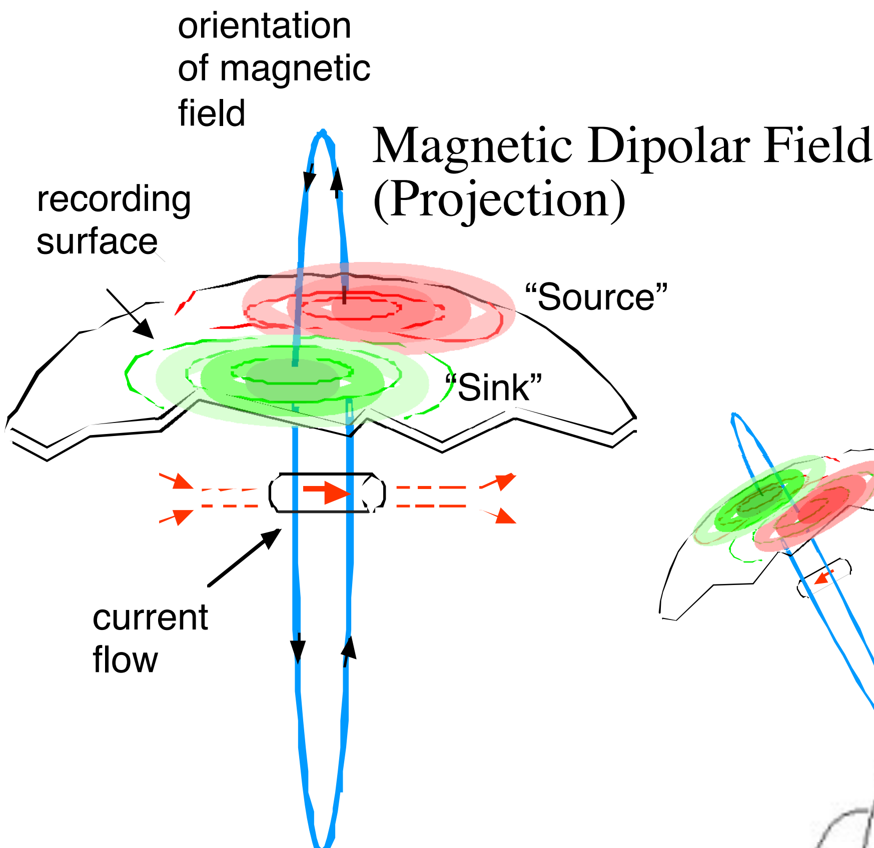


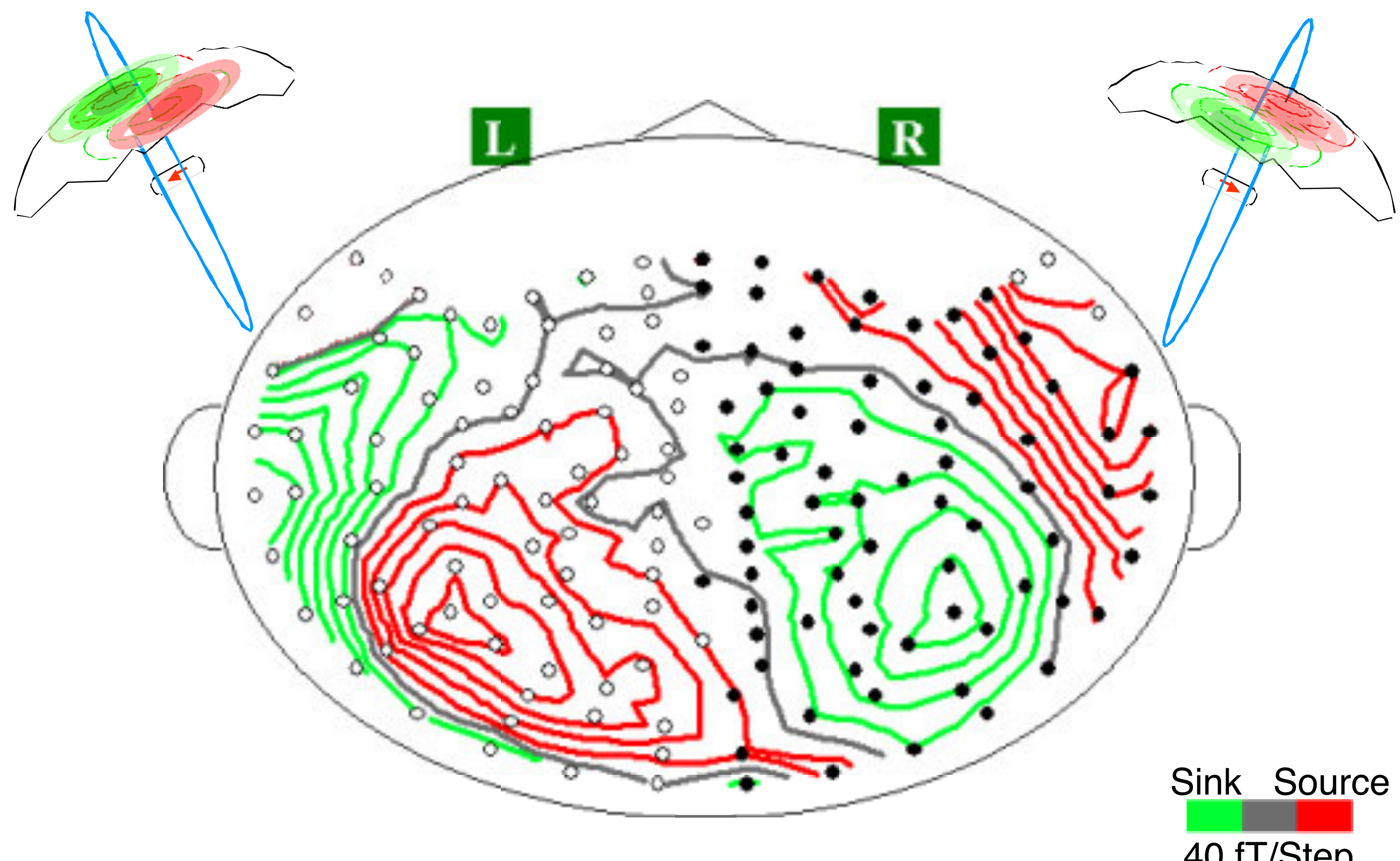




MEG Measures Neural Currents

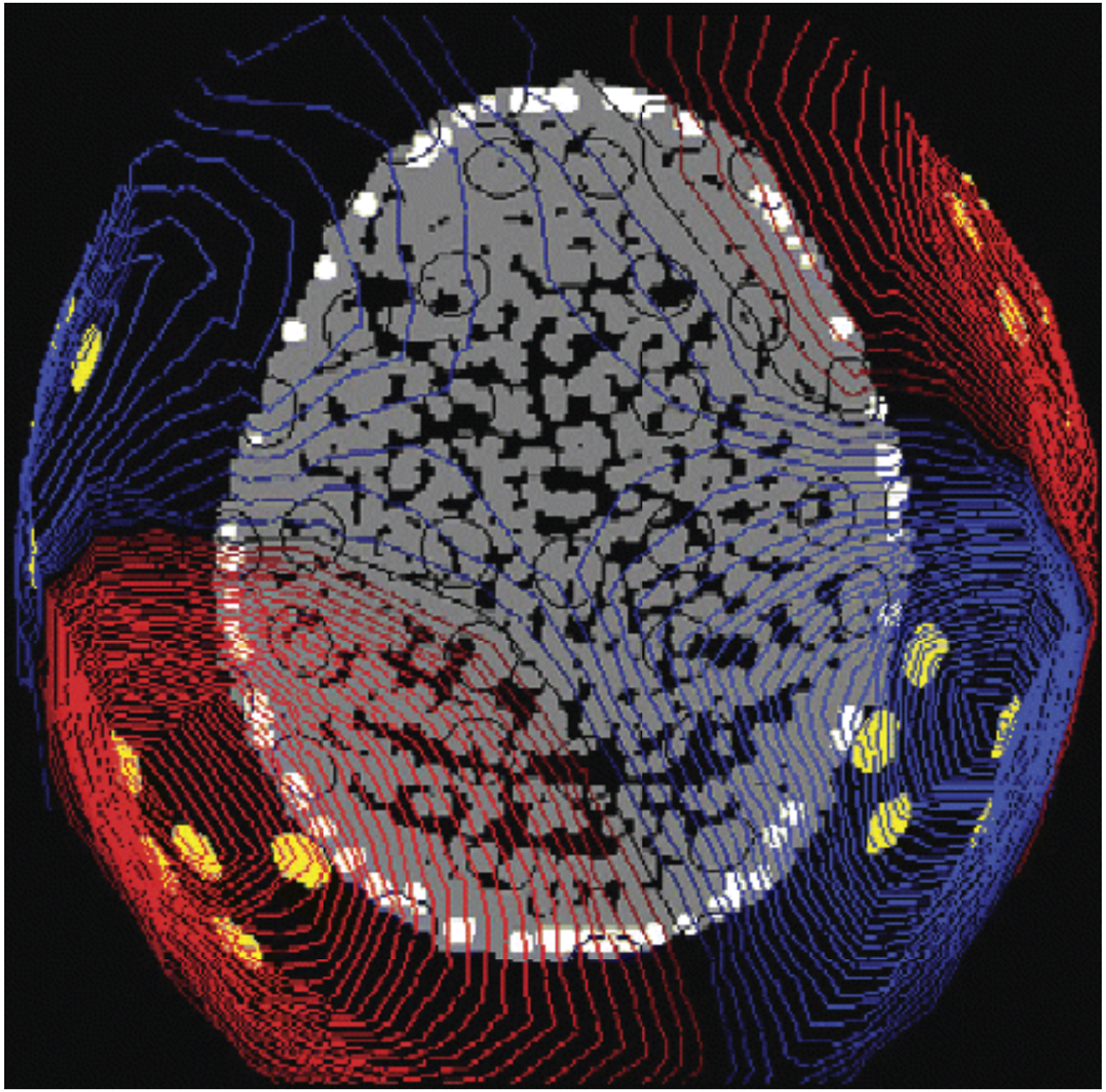
- Direct electrophysiological measurement
  - not hemodynamic
  - real-time
- No unique solution for distributed source





MEG Response

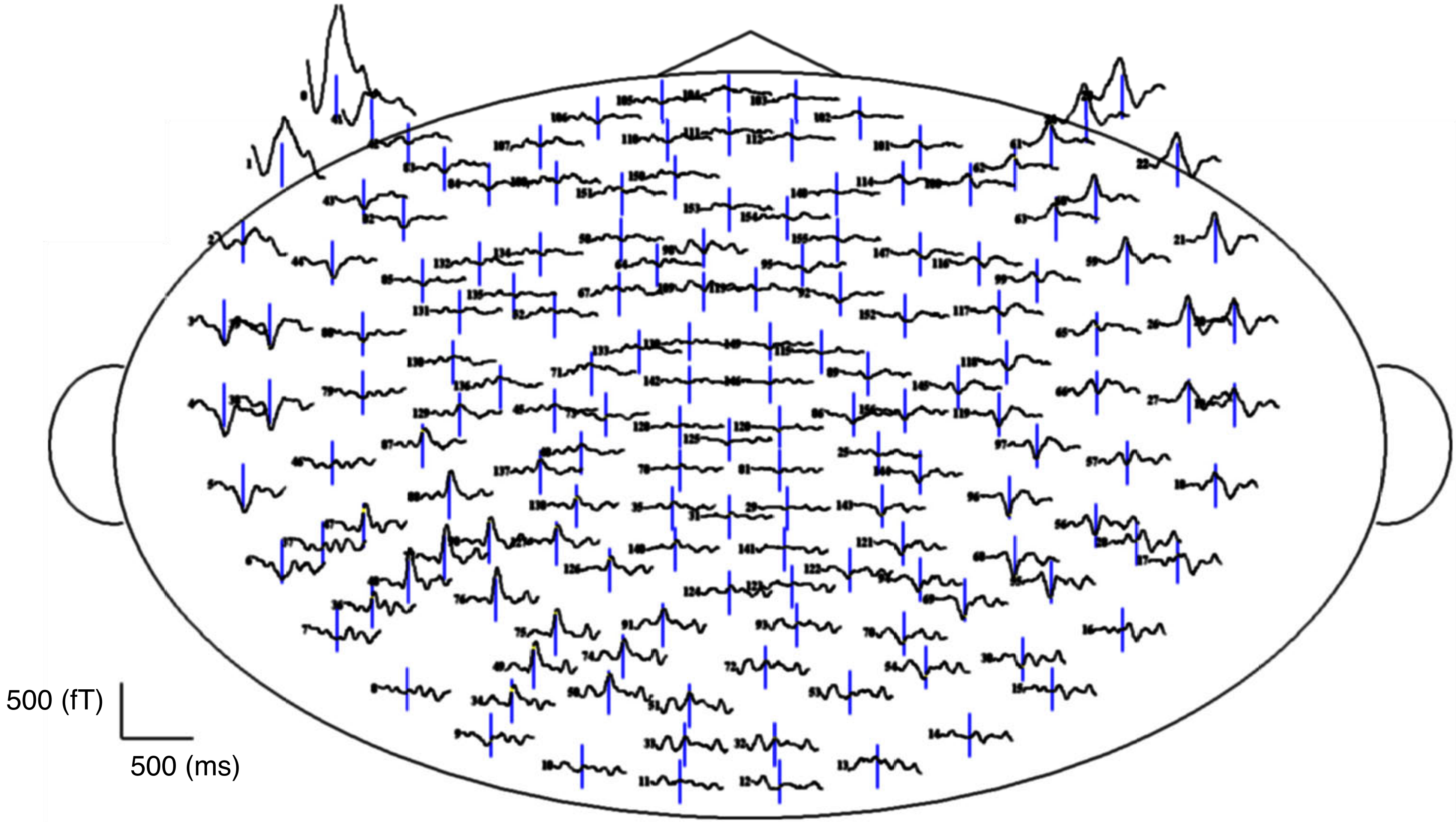
3-D Isofield Contour Map



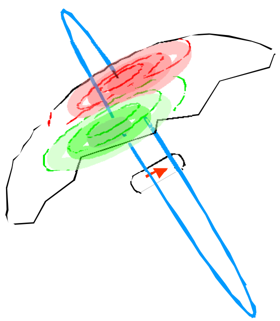
Chait, Poeppel and Simon,
Cerebral Cortex 2006

MEG Response

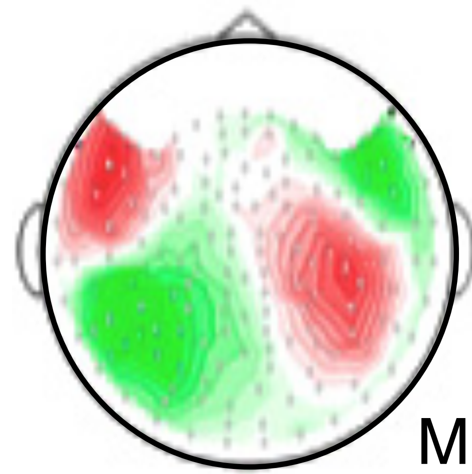
Spatial Map of Time Series



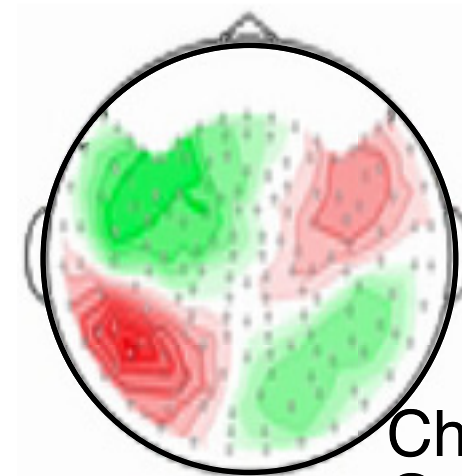
Spatial Auditory MEG Responses



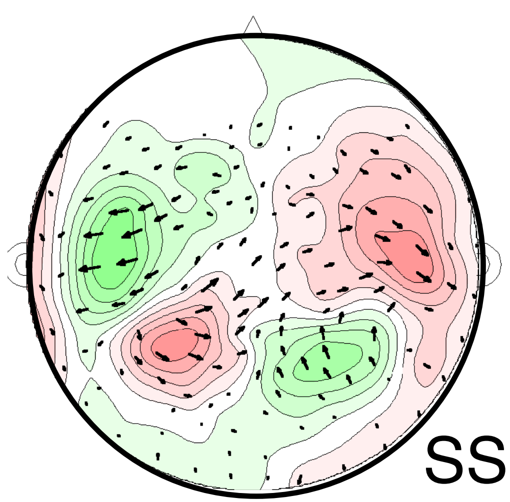
Auditory Responses
Robust
Strongly Lateralized



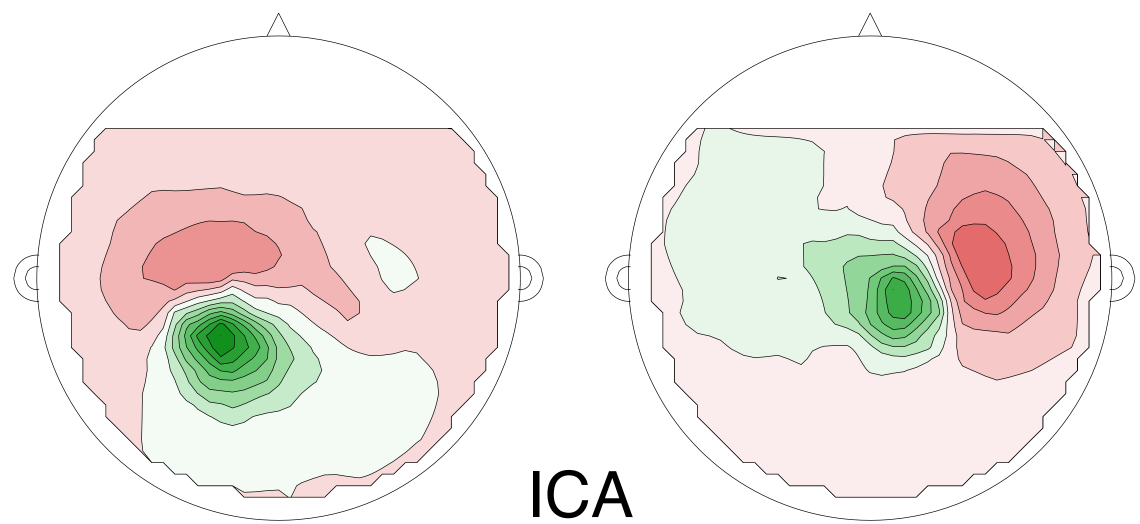
M50



Change Onset



SSR



ICA

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An Alternative to Time: Frequency

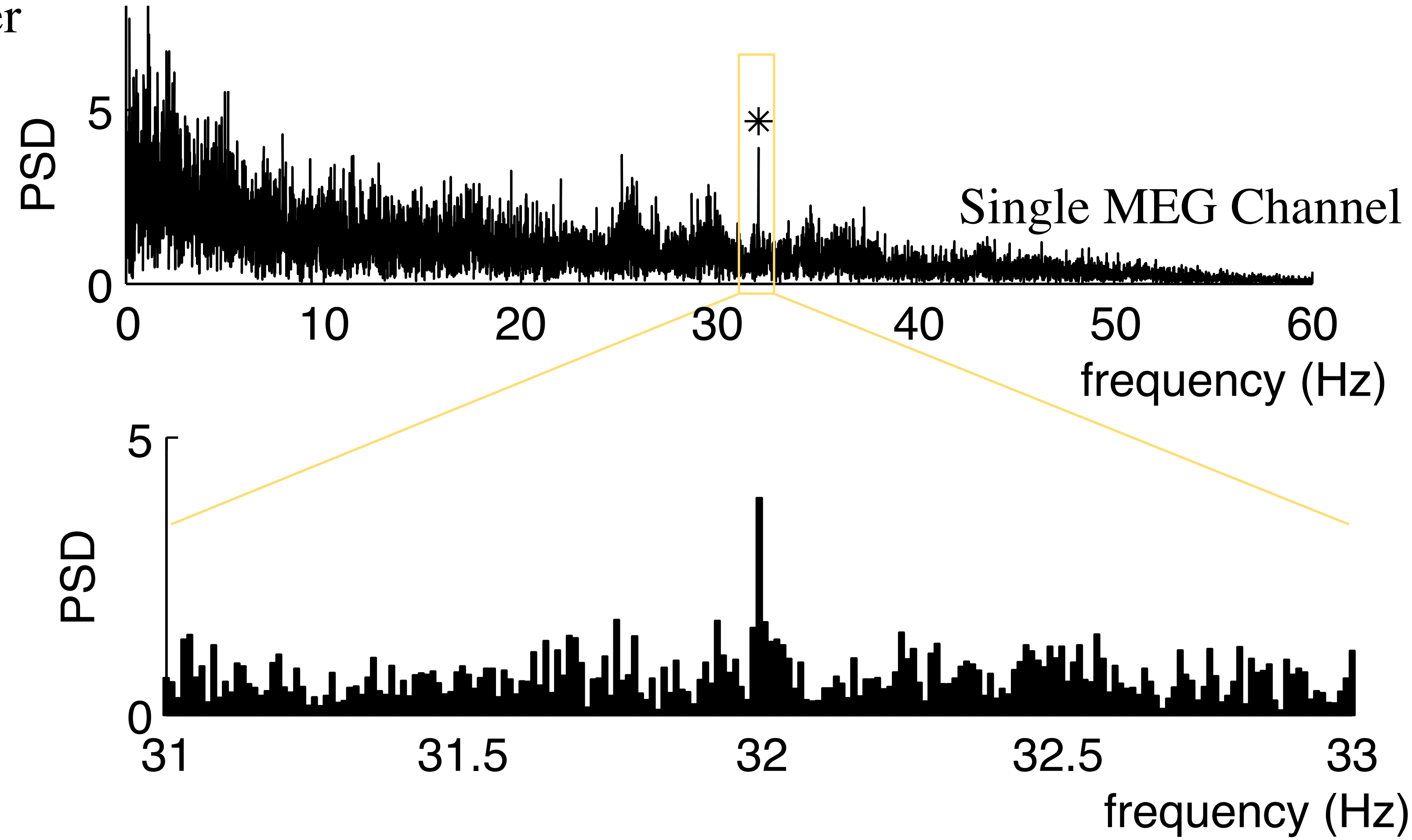
- Use Stimuli localized in Frequency rather than time
- Examine Response at Same Frequency
- Stimulus Modulated at Single Frequency

  → ***Steady State Response*** (SSR)

- Measure ***Frequency Response/Transfer Function***

Frequency Response

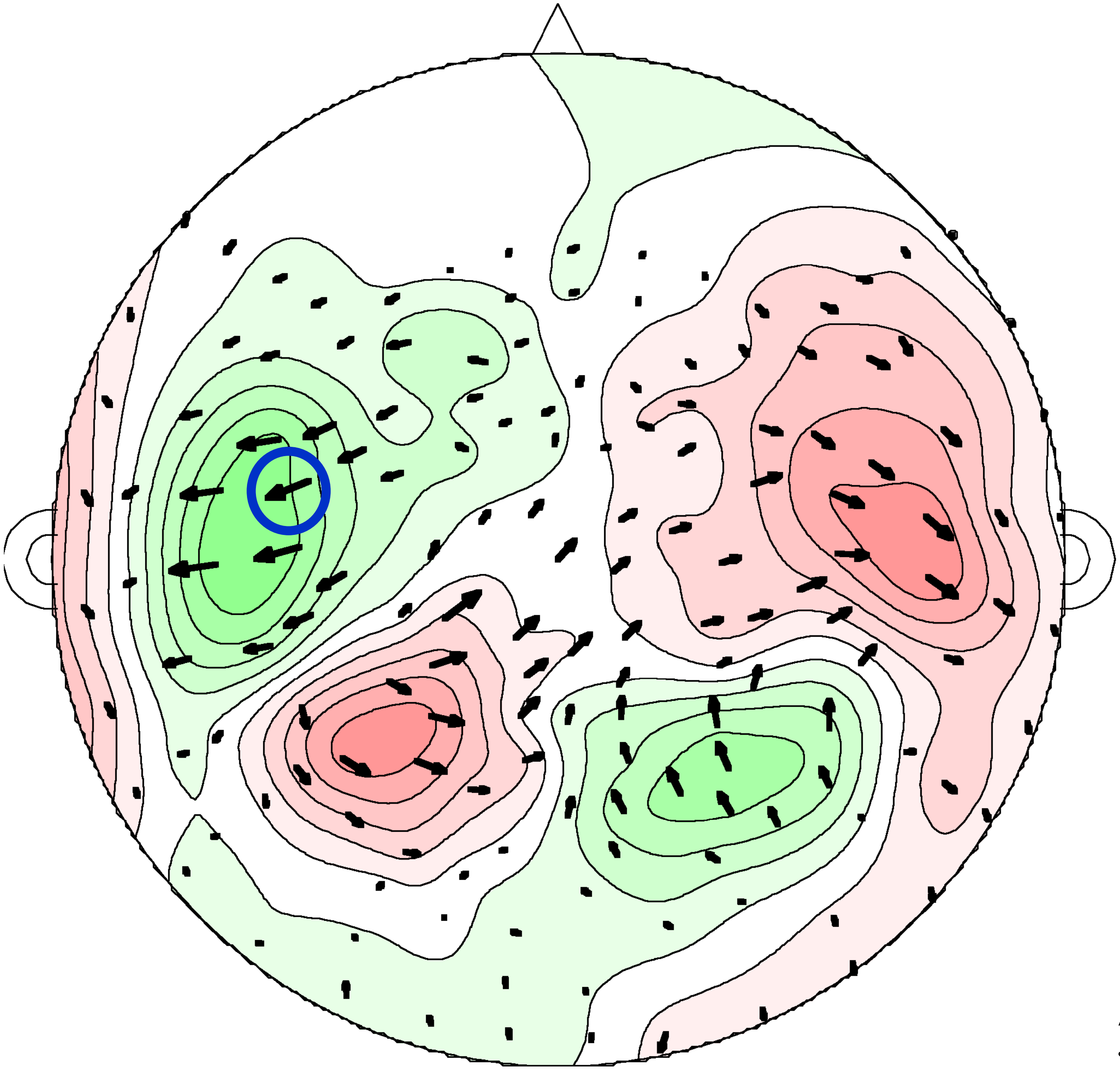
32 Hz Modulation
400 Hz tone carrier
100 trials @ 1 s
(concatenated)



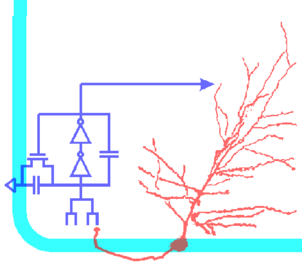
Precise Phase-Locking: 0.01 Hz
Little trial-to-trial jitter

Amplitude + Phase...

Whole Head Steady State Response



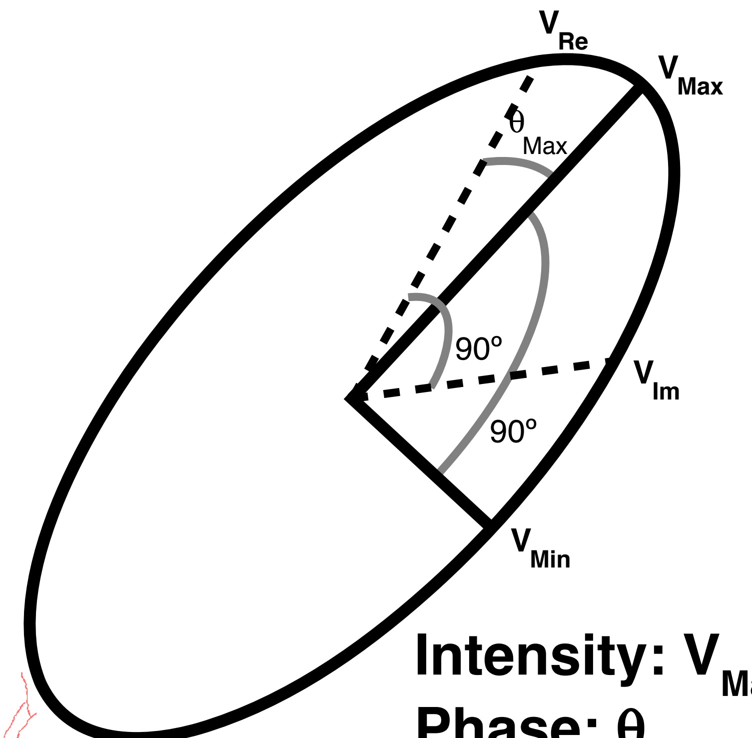
32 Hz

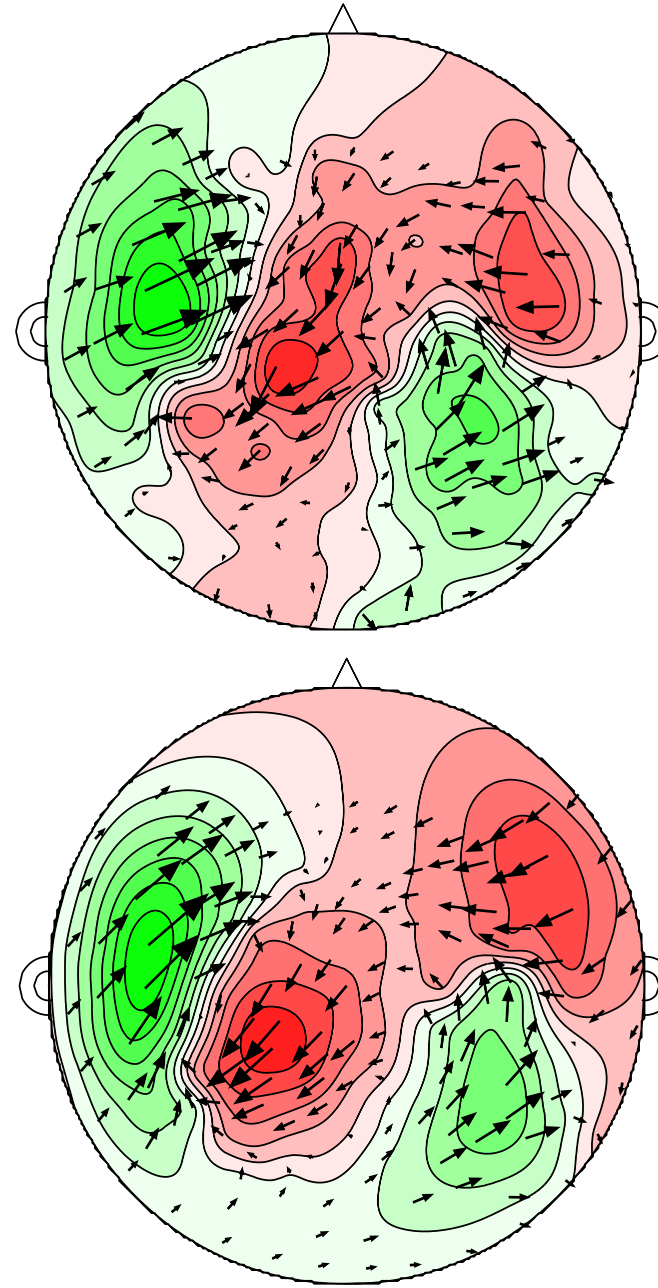


Complex Neural Current Sources

$$\vec{V} = \vec{V}_{Re} + j\,\vec{V}_{Im}$$

$$\vec{V}(\theta) = \vec{V}_{Re}\cos(\theta) + \vec{V}_{Im}\sin(\theta)$$





Intensity: V_{Max}

Phase: θ_{Max}

Sharpness: $\eta = V_{Min}/V_{Max}$

Simon and Wang,
J. Neurosci. Methods 2005

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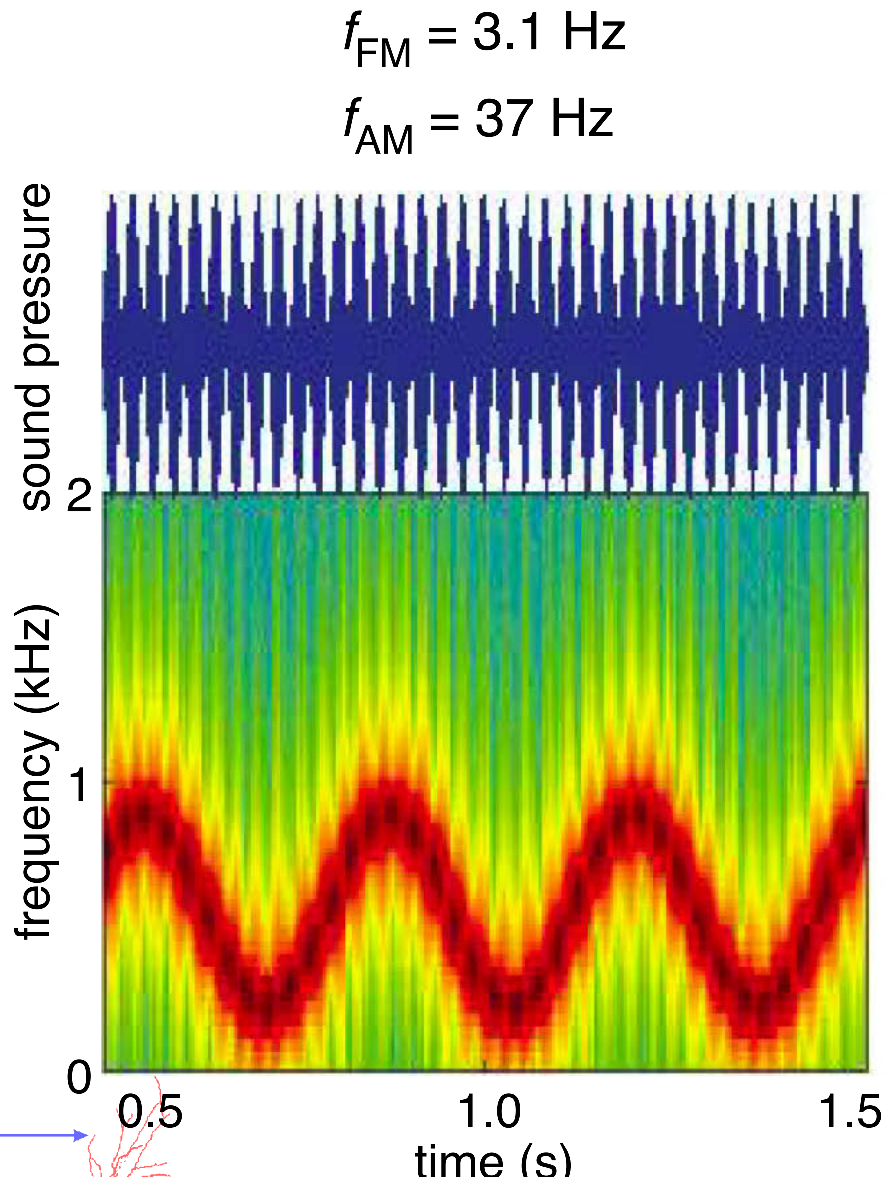
Modulation Encoding

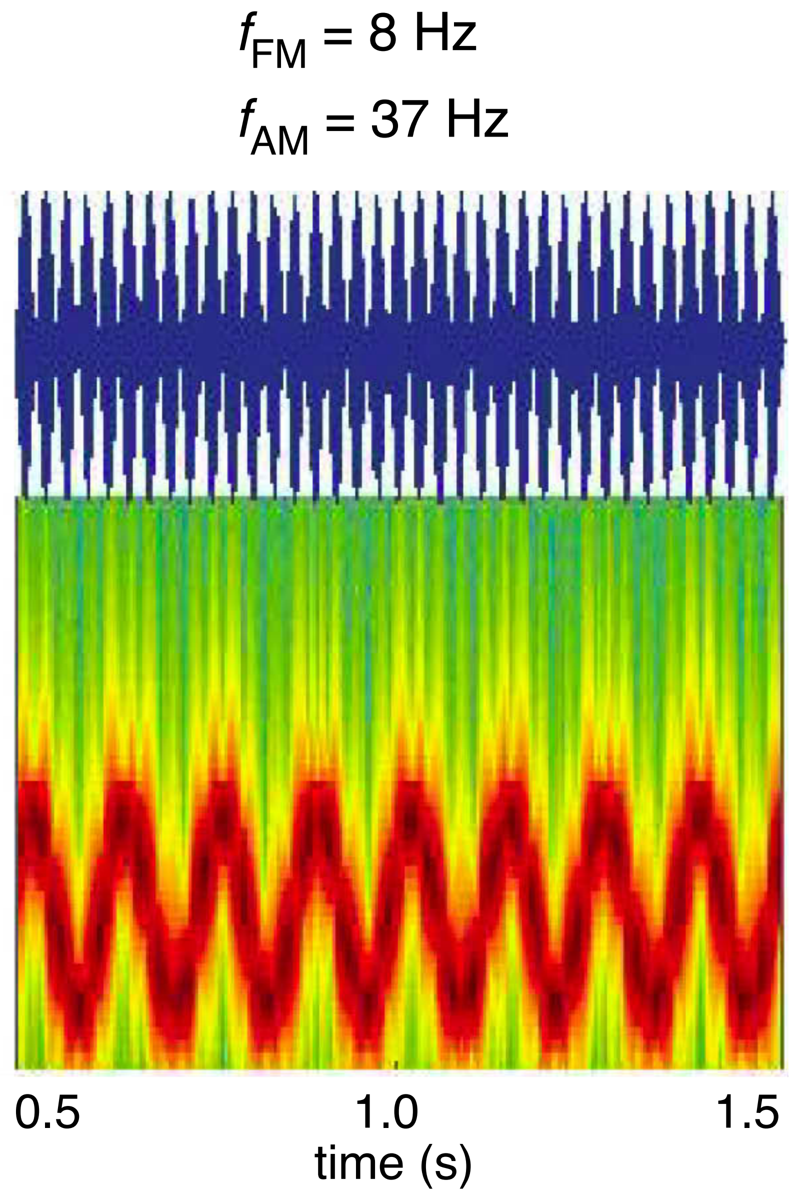
- Simple Modulations → Simple Cortical Encoding
  - *Amplitude Modulation* coding often used for *slower* modulations
  - *Rate* coding (invisible to MEG) often used for *faster* modulations

- Applies to general modulations: AM, FM, other

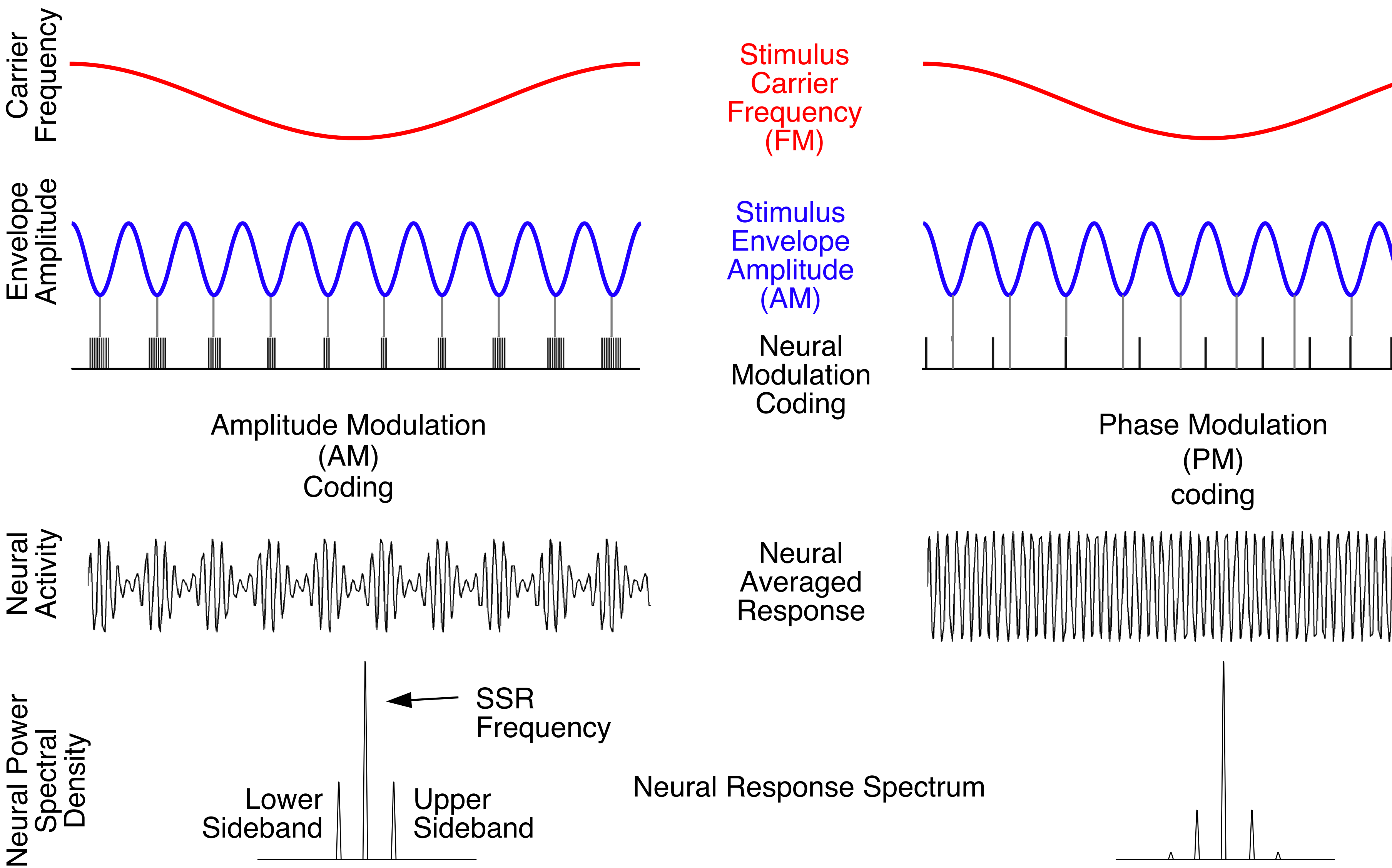
- Amplitude Modulation coding is easily detectable in Fourier/Spectral domain
  - Spectral Peak at Modulation Frequency

Sample Dual Modulation Stimuli





Neural Modulation Models



c.f. Patel & Balaban (2004)

$$\alpha = (\varphi_{upper} - \varphi_{SSR}) - (\varphi_{SSR} - \varphi_{lower})$$

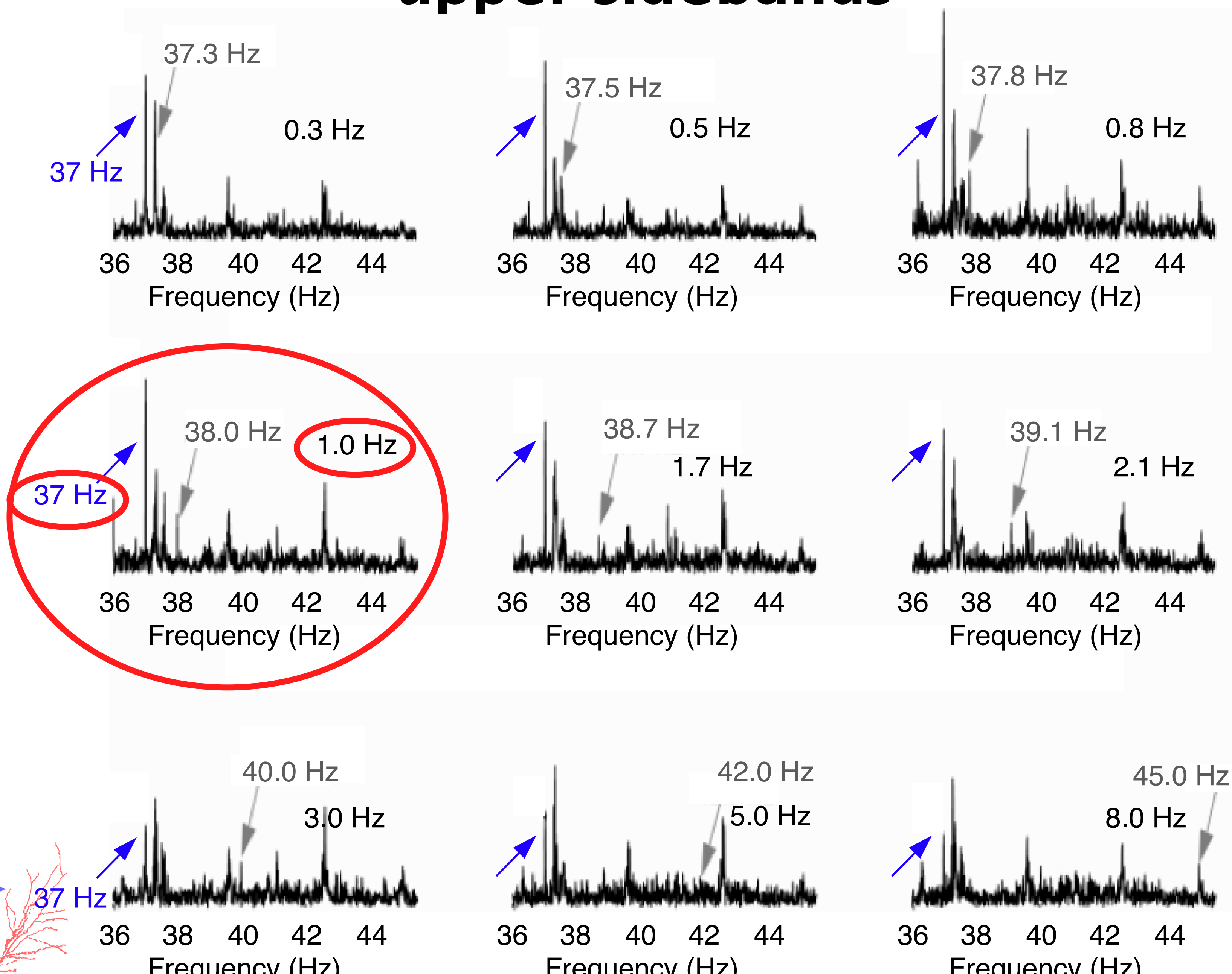
$\alpha_{AM} = 0$ or 2π

Neural Response Phase Encoding Parameter

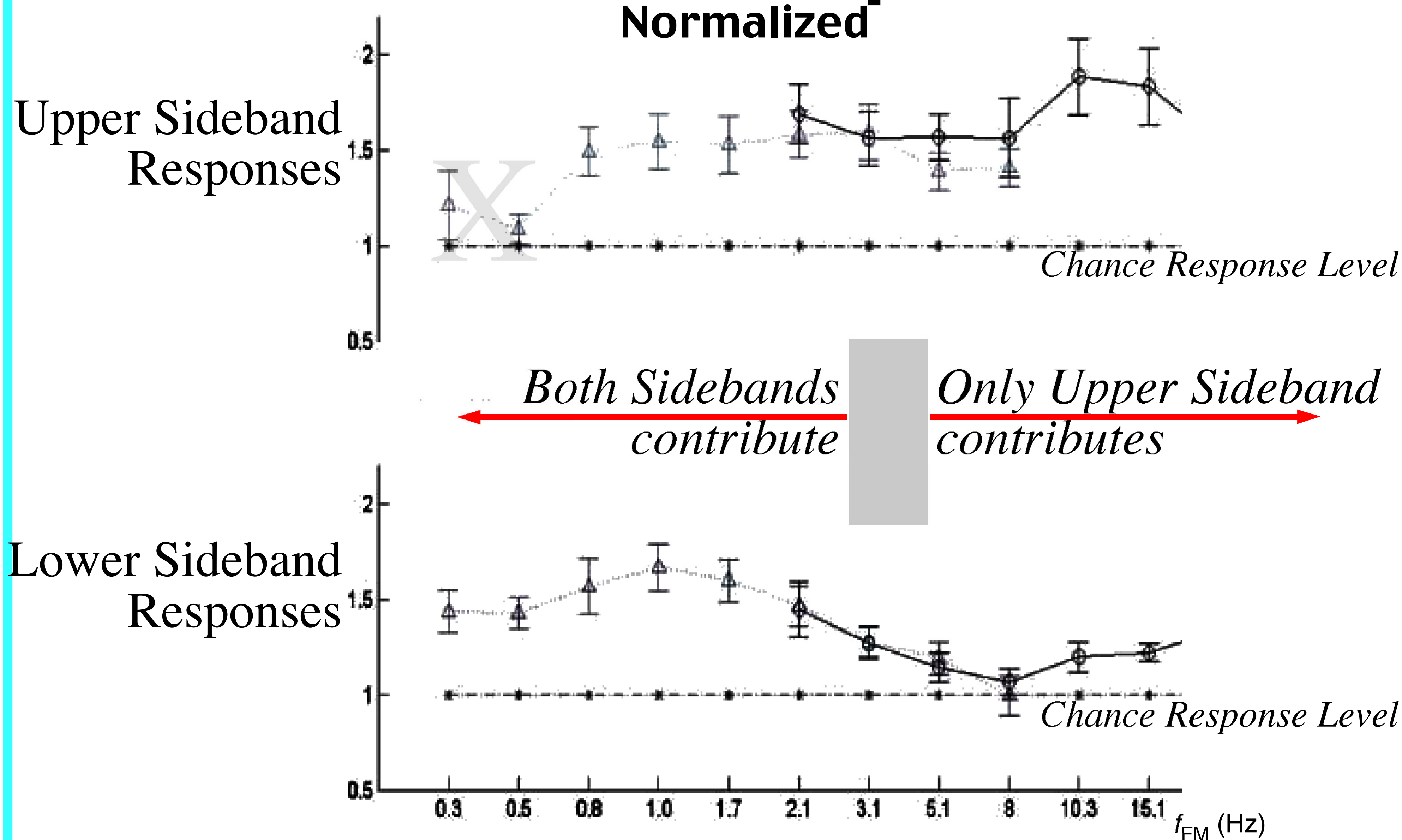
$\alpha_{PM} = \pi$

Spectral Sideband Responses

upper sidebands



Sideband Responses

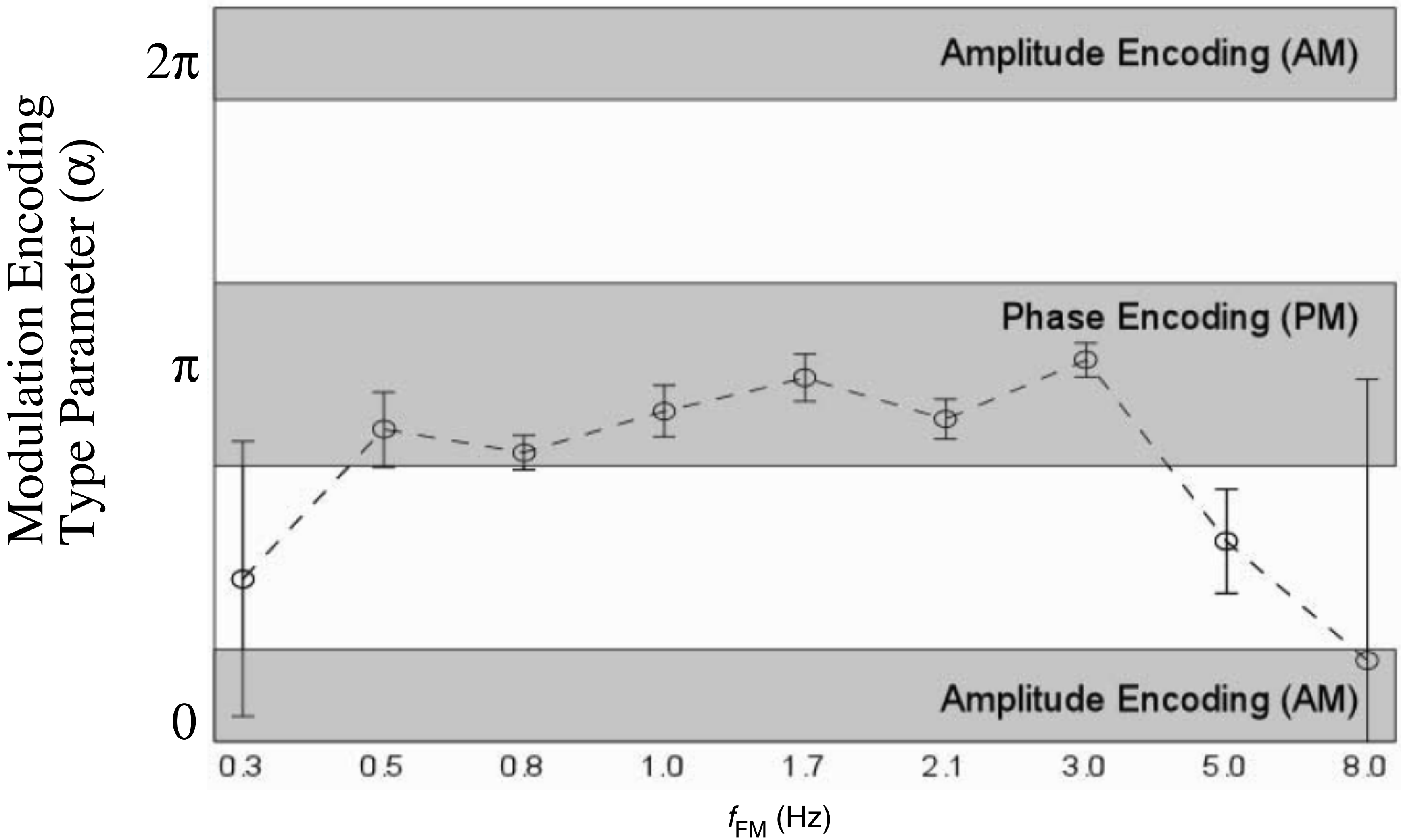


Modulation Encoding, with coding transition at f_{FM} ~ 5 Hz

Luo, Wang, Poeppel and Simon (in revision)

Computational Sensorimotor Systems Laboratory

Modulation Encoding Type



Phase Modulation Encoding below f_{FM} ~ 5 Hz

Luo, Wang, Poeppel and Simon
J. Neurophysiol. 2006

Summary

- Magnetoencephalography (MEG)
  - Directly generated by neural currents
  - Excellent time/frequency resolution
  - Spatial Localizability an open question
- Combined AM/FM modulations are encoded in Auditory Cortex
  - Phase Modulation seen at lowest FM rates
  - Modulation Encoding changes at higher rates
- Single Sideband Modulation unexpected
  - Speculate: Single Modulation Encoding type?
  - Or: Two populations of AM and PM encoding neurons whose phase happens to cancel in lower sideband?

Thank You