Wireless Erasure Networks

As RF technology advances and wireless devices become more and more ubiquitous, there has been a growing interest in the study of wireless networks. However, due to the physical vagaries of the wireless medium (fading, path-loss, delay-spread, interference, mobility, etc.), as well as the unsolved nature of even the most basic multi-user information theory problems, a general theory for communication over wireless networks--apart from very special asymptotic results--is still well beyond reach.

In this talk, we propose a very simple model called the "wireless erasure network" where links are possibly correlated erasure channels. Such models may be appropriate for systems where communication is packet-based and where some form of error correction is used to detect packet erasures. This network model allows one to obtain exact capacity results--independent of the network topology--for certain communication problems, such as those with single source and multiple destinations all requiring the same information. We will study the role of feedback in such networks, as well as connections to areas such as network coding and rateless codes. Finally, we argue that such network models may also be appropriate for distributed estimation and control over wireless networks and obtain a few preliminary results in this regard.

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