

INTRODUCTION TO QUANTUM TECHNOLOGIES AND APPLICATIONS

(QUALITATIVE TREATMENT)

PREPARED BY
DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

SYLLABUS

Unit 1

Introduction to Quantum Theory and Technologies

The transition from classical to quantum physics. Fundamental principles explained conceptually: Superposition, Entanglement, Uncertainty Principle, Wave-particle duality. Classical vs Quantum mechanics – theoretical comparison. Quantum states and measurement: nature of observation. Overview of quantum systems: electrons, photons, atoms. The concept of quantization: discrete energy levels. Why quantum: Strategic, scientific, and technological significance. A snapshot of quantum technologies: Computing, Communication, and Sensing. National and global quantum missions: India's Quantum Mission, EU, USA, China

1.1. Introduction

The course "Introduction to Quantum Theory and Technologies" offers a comprehensive foundation in one of the most exciting and transformative areas of modern science. With the rapid emergence of quantum computing, communication, and sensing, understanding the principles of quantum mechanics is no longer limited to theoretical physicists—it has become essential for engineers, computer scientists, and technology professionals.

This course is designed to introduce students to the fundamental concepts of quantum theory while showing how these ideas are being applied in cutting-edge quantum technologies. It begins with the basics of quantum mechanics, covering wave-particle duality, the uncertainty principle, quantum states, operators, and the Schrödinger equation, laying the groundwork for understanding how nature behaves at microscopic scales. The course then transitions into quantum computing, where students learn about qubits, quantum gates, quantum circuits, and algorithms such as Grover's and Shor's that outperform classical solutions. Students are

introduced to quantum sensing and metrology, where quantum systems enable ultra-sensitive

measurements vital to healthcare, navigation, and defence applications. The final unit discusses

real-world industrial applications of quantum technologies, highlighting how companies like IBM, Google, and Microsoft are deploying quantum systems to solve complex problems. It also opens doors to emerging careers in quantum science by equipping students with interdisciplinary skills across physics, math, and programming. By studying this course, learners gain a solid understanding of the theory behind Quantum Technologies & Applications and the practical knowledge needed to engage with this frontier field. As quantum technology continues to evolve, those equipped with this knowledge will be at the forefront of innovation in industries ranging from computing and cybersecurity to materials science and precision medicine.

1.1.1. Transition from Classical Physics to Quantum Mechanics

At the end of the 19th century, classical physics was seen as nearly complete. Newtonian mechanics explained planetary motion, Maxwell's equations described electromagnetism,

thermodynamics clarified heat and work, and classical optics enabled scientific tools like microscopes and telescopes. Chemistry had a basic periodic table, but the atomic structure and electron behaviour in reactions were not understood.

The transition from classical physics to quantum mechanics marks one of the most profound paradigm shifts in scientific history. Classical physics, which dominated for over two centuries, was grounded in the belief that all natural phenomena could be described by deterministic laws. Concepts such as Newton's laws of motion, thermodynamic principles, and Maxwell's equations provided a complete and elegant framework for understanding the physical world.

Rutherford's experiments revealed atoms had dense, positively charged nuclei with orbiting electrons, raising the question of why electrons didn't collapse into the nucleus—something classical physics couldn't explain due to predicted energy loss. This and other unexplained phenomena, such as blackbody radiation, the photoelectric effect, and hydrogen spectral lines, molecular spectroscopy exposed the limitations of classical models.

However, as experiments grew more precise at the atomic and subatomic scales, cracks began to appear in this classical edifice. Phenomena like blackbody radiation defied classical predictions, as models such as the Rayleigh-Jeans law led to absurd results like the ultraviolet catastrophe—where infinite energy emission at short wavelengths was expected. Similarly, the photoelectric effect revealed that light could behave like discrete packets of energy, or photons, as Einstein proposed—challenging the continuous wave view held by classical optics.

These challenges led to the development of quantum mechanics in the early 20th century, with major contributions from scientists like Planck, Einstein, Bohr, Schrödinger, and others. Before exploring the key quantum experiments, it introduces the classical wave model of light, which dominated thinking before quantum theory.

The stability of atoms posed another riddle. According to classical electromagnetism, orbiting electrons should continuously emit radiation and spiral into the nucleus, yet atoms remained stable. Moreover, when hydrogen gas was excited, it emitted light in distinct spectral lines rather than a continuous spectrum—something classical theory couldn't explain. These inconsistencies pointed to the need for a new theoretical framework. Enter quantum mechanics: a theory based not on certainty, but probability, where particles like electrons exhibit both wave-like and particle-like properties. Max Planck introduced the idea that energy is quantized, emitted in discrete amounts called quanta. This concept became the seed for a revolution. Niels Bohr refined atomic models using quantized orbits to explain hydrogen spectra. Louis de Broglie suggested

that matter had wave properties, while Werner Heisenberg introduced the uncertainty principle redefining how we measure physical systems. Schrödinger's wave equation offered a new mathematical tool to describe electron behaviour in atoms.

Quantum mechanics did not just revise physics—it redefined our understanding of reality itself. Unlike classical physics, where outcomes were predictable, quantum theory embraced uncertainty and probability. Observables like position and momentum could no longer be known simultaneously with arbitrary precision. The deterministic worldview gave way to a statistical one, yet this new approach proved incredibly accurate and predictive. Quantum theory provided the foundation for semiconductors, lasers, nuclear energy, and much more. It also laid the groundwork for modern quantum technologies—such as quantum computing, quantum cryptography, and quantum sensing—which are now driving a new technological revolution. The journey from classical to quantum physics reminds us that scientific knowledge evolves, often through radical shifts, as we probe deeper into the fundamental nature of the universe.

1.1.1 Description of Light as an Electromagnetic Wave

As mentioned above, the description of electromagnetic radiation in terms of Maxwell's equations was published in the early 1860s. The solution of these differential equations described light as a transverse wave of electric and magnetic fields. In the absence of charge and current, such a wave, propagating in vacuum in the positive z-direction, can be described by the following equations:

$$\vec{E} = E_0 \sin(\vec{k} \times \vec{z} - \omega t) = E_0 \sin(2\pi z/\lambda - 2\pi v t) \quad (1.1)$$

$$\vec{B} = B_0 \sin(\vec{k} \times \vec{z} - \omega t) = B_0 \sin(2\pi z/\lambda - 2\pi v t) \quad (1.2)$$

where the electric field and the magnetic field are perpendicular to each other, as shown in Figure 1.1, and oscillate in phase at the angular frequency

$$\omega = 2\pi v \quad (1.3)$$

where v is the frequency of the oscillation, measured in units of $\text{s}^{-1} = \text{Hz}$. In Eqs. (1.1) and (1.2), \vec{k} is the wave vector (or momentum vector) of the electromagnetic wave, defined by Eq. (1.4):

$$k = |\vec{k}| = 2\pi/\lambda \quad (1.4)$$

Here, λ is the wavelength of the radiation, measured in units of length, and is defined by the distance between two consecutive peaks (or troughs) of the electric or magnetic fields. Vector quantities, such as the electric and magnetic fields, are indicated by an arrow over the symbol or

by bold typeface. Since light is a wave, it exhibits properties such as constructive and destructive interference. Thus, when light impinges on a narrow slit, it shows a diffraction pattern similar to that of a plain water wave that falls on a barrier with a narrow aperture. These wave properties of light were well known, and therefore, light was considered to exhibit wave properties only, as predicted by Maxwell's equation.

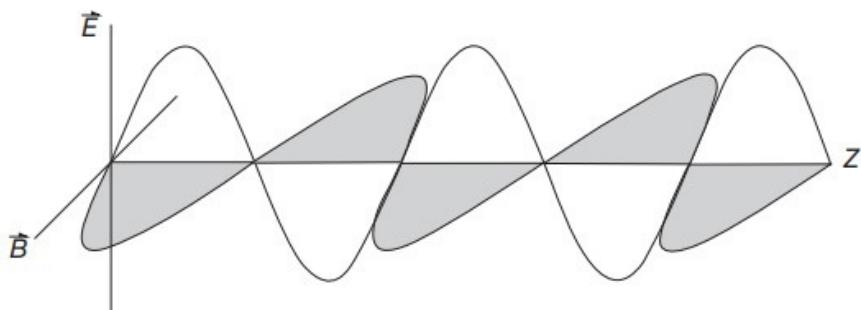


Figure 1.1 Description of the propagation of a linearly polarized electromagnetic wave as oscillation of electric (\vec{E}) and magnetic (\vec{B}) fields.

In general, any wave motion can be characterized by its wavelength λ , its frequency ν , and its propagation speed. For light in vacuum, this propagation speed is the velocity of light c ($c = 2.998 \times 10^8 \text{ m/s}$). In the context of the discussion in the interaction of light with matter will be described as the force exerted by the electric field on the charged particles, atoms, and molecules. This interaction causes a translation of charge. This description leads to the concept of the "electric transition moment," which will be used as the basic quantity to describe the likelihood (that is, the intensity) of spectral transition. In other forms of optical spectroscopy (the magnetic transition moment must be considered as well). This interaction leads to a coupled translation and rotation of charge, which imparts a helical motion of charge. This helical motion is the hallmark

of optical activity, since, by definition, a helix can be left- or right-handed. Thus, light as an electromagnetic wave serves as a bridge between classical theory and the quantum view. While Maxwell's equations beautifully describe the propagation and wave

behaviour of light, they fall short when explaining phenomena that involve quantized energy

exchange, such as the photoelectric effect or atomic emission spectra. These limitations led to

From the viewpoint of a spectroscopist, electromagnetic radiation is produced by the development of quantum theory. However, even in the quantum age, the atoms or molecules undergoing transitions between well-defined stationary states.

This view obviously remains foundational for understanding a wide range of light-matter interactions, especially in spectroscopy, communications, and optical engineering.

does not include the creation of radio waves or other long-wave phenomena, for example, in standard antennas in radio technology, but describes ultraviolet, visible, and infrared radiation, which are the main subjects of this book. The atomic line spectra that are employed in analytical chemistry, for example, in a hollow cathode lamp used in atomic absorption spectroscopy, are due to transitions between electronic energy states of gaseous metal atoms. The light created by the hot filament in a standard light bulb is another example of light emitted by (metal) atoms. However, here, one needs to deal with a broad distribution of highly excited atoms, and the description of this so-called blackbody radiation was one of the first steps in understanding the quantization of light. Any material at a temperature T will radiate electromagnetic radiation according to the blackbody equations. The term "blackbody" refers to an idealized emitter of electromagnetic radiation with intensity $I(\lambda, T)$ or radiation density $\rho(\nu, T)$ as a function of wavelength and temperature. At the beginning of the twentieth century,

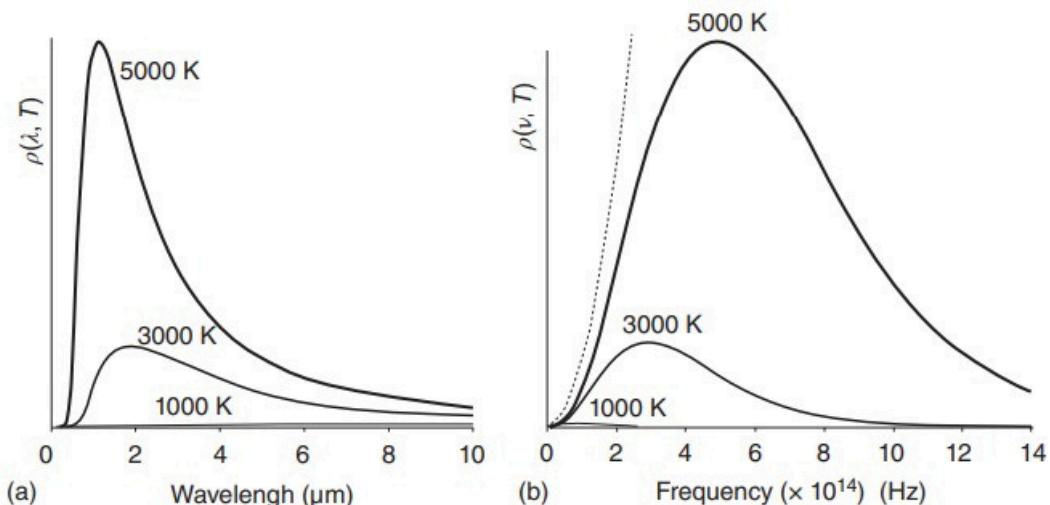


Figure 1.2 (a) Plot of the intensity I radiated by a blackbody source as a function of wavelength and temperature. (b) Plot of the radiation density of a blackbody source as a function of frequency and temperature. The dashed line represents this radiation density according to Eq. (1.5).

it was not possible to describe the experimentally obtained blackbody emission profile by classical physical models. This profile was shown in Figure 1.1 for several temperatures between 1000 and 5000 K as a function of wavelength. M. Planck attempted to reproduce the observed emission profile using classical theory, based on atomic dipole oscillators (nuclei and electrons) in motion. These efforts revealed that the radiation density ρ emitted by a classical blackbody into a frequency band $d\nu$ as function of ν and T would be given by Eq. (1.5):

$$\rho(T, \nu) = \frac{8\pi k T \nu^2}{c^3} \quad (1.5)$$

where the Boltzmann constant $k = 1.381 \times 10^{-23} \text{ J/K}$. This result indicated that the total energy radiated by a blackbody according to this "classical" model would increase with νT as shown by

the dashed curve in Figure 1.1b. If this equation were correct, any temperature of a material above absolute zero would be impossible, since any material above 0 K would emit radiation according to Eq. (1.5), and the total energy emitted would be unrestricted and approach infinity. Particularly, toward higher frequency, more and more radiation would be emitted, and the blackbody would cool instantaneously to 0 K . Thus, any temperature above 0 K would be impossible. This is, of course, in contradiction with experimental results and was addressed by M. Planck (1901) who solved this conundrum by introducing the term $1/(e^{h\nu/kT} - 1)$ into the blackbody equation, where h is Planck's constant:

$$\rho(T, \nu) = \frac{8\pi h\nu^2}{c^3} \frac{1}{\left(e^{\frac{h\nu}{kT}} - 1\right)} \approx \frac{8\pi h\nu^2}{c^3} e^{-\frac{h\nu}{kT}} \quad \text{for } \frac{h\nu}{kT} \gg 1 \quad (1.6)$$

The shape of the modified blackbody emission profile given by Eq. (1.6) is in agreement with experimental results. The new term introduced by Planck is basically an exponential decay function, which forces the overall response profile to approach zero at high frequency. The numerator of the exponential expression contains the quantity $h\nu$, where h is Planck's constant ($h = 6.626 \times 10^{-34}\text{ Js}$). This numerator implies that light exists as "quanta" of light, or light particles (photons) with energy $E_{\text{photon}} = h\nu$ (1.7)

This, in itself, was a revolutionary thought since the wave properties of light had been established more than two centuries earlier and had been described in the late 1800s by Maxwell's equations in terms of electric and magnetic field contributions. Here arose for the first time the realization that two different descriptions of light, in terms of waves and particles, were appropriate depending on what questions were asked. A similar "particle-wave duality" was later postulated and confirmed for matter as well. Thus, the work by Planck very early in the twentieth century is truly the birth of the ideas resulting in the formulation of quantum mechanics.

1.1.1 The Photoelectric Effect

In 1905, Einstein reported experimental results that further demonstrated the energy quantization of light. In the photoelectric experiment, light of variable color (frequency) illuminated a photocathode contained in an evacuated tube. An anode in the same tube was connected externally to the cathode through a current meter and a source of electric potential (such as a battery). Since the cathode and anode were separated by vacuum, no current was observed, unless light with a frequency above a threshold frequency was illuminating the photocathode. Einstein correctly concluded that light particles, or photons, with a frequency above this threshold value

had sufficient kinetic energy to knock out electrons from the metal atoms of the photocathode. These “photoelectrons” left the metal surface with a kinetic energy given by

$$E_{\text{kin}}(\text{photoelectron}) = E_{\text{photon}} - \phi = h\nu - \phi \quad (1.9)$$

where ϕ is the work function, or the energy required to remove an electron from metal atoms. This energy basically is the atoms' ionization energy multiplied by Avogadro's number. Furthermore, Einstein reported that the photocurrent produced by the irradiation of the photocathode was proportional to the intensity of light, or the number of photons, but that increasing the intensity of light that had a frequency below the threshold did not produce any photocurrent. This provided further proof of Eq. (1.4). This experiment further demonstrated that light has particle character with the kinetic energy of the photons given by Eq. (1.9), which led to the concept of wave-particle duality of light. Later, de Broglie theorized that the momentum $p = h/\lambda$ (1.10)

Equation (1.10) is known as the de Broglie equation. The wave-particle duality was later confirmed to be true for moving masses as well by the electron diffraction experiment of Davisson and Germer . In this experiment, a beam of electrons was diffracted by an atom lattice and produced a distinct interference pattern that suggested that the moving electrons exhibited wave properties. The particle-wave duality of both photons and moving matter can be summarized as follows. For photons, the wave properties are manifested by diffraction experiments and summarized by Maxwell's equation. As for all wave propagation, the velocity of light, c , is related to wavelength λ and frequency ν by

$$c = \lambda\nu = \nu/\tilde{\nu} \quad (1.11)$$

with $c = 2.998 \times 10^8 \text{ m/s}$ and λ expressed in nm and ν expressed in $\text{Hz} = \text{s}^{-1}$. The quantity $\tilde{\nu}$ is referred to as the wavenumber of radiation (in units of m^{-1} or cm^{-1}) that indicates how many wave cycles occur per unit length:

$$\tilde{\nu} = 1/\lambda \quad (1.12)$$

The (kinetic) energy of a photon is given by

$$E = h\nu = hc/\lambda = \hbar\omega \quad (1.13)$$

with $\hbar = h/2\pi$ and ω , the angular frequency, defined before as $\omega = 2\pi\nu$.

From the classical definition of the momentum of matter and light, respectively,

$$p = mv \text{ or } p = mc \quad (1.14)$$

it follows that the photon mass is given by

$$m_{\text{photon}} = p/c = h/(c\lambda) \quad (1.15)$$

Notice that a photon can only move at the velocity of light and the photon mass can only be defined at the velocity c . Therefore, a photon has zero rest mass, m . Particles of matter, on the other hand, have a nonzero rest mass, commonly referred to as their mass. This mass, however, is a function of velocity v and should be referred to as mv , which is given by

$$m_v = \frac{m_0}{\sqrt{1 - \left(\frac{v^2}{c^2}\right)}} \quad (1.16)$$

Equation (1.16) demonstrates that the mass of any matter particle will reach infinity when accelerated to the velocity of light. Their kinetic energy at velocity v (far from the velocity of light) is given by the classical expression

$$E_{\text{kin}} = \frac{1}{2}mv^2 = p^2/2m \quad (1.17)$$

The discussion of the last paragraphs demonstrates that at the beginning of the twentieth century, experimental evidence was amassed that pointed to the necessity to redefine some aspects of classical physics. The next of these experiments that led to the formulation of quantum mechanics was the observation of “spectral lines” in the absorption and emission spectra of the hydrogen atom.

1.1.4 Hydrogen Atom Absorption and Emission Spectra

Between the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century, several researchers discovered that hydrogen atoms, produced in gas discharge lamps, emit light at discrete colors, rather than as a broad continuum of light as observed for a blackbody (Figure 1.1a). These emissions occur in the ultraviolet, visible, and near-infrared spectral regions, and a portion of such an emission spectrum is shown schematically in Figure 1.1. These observations predate the efforts discussed in the previous two sections and therefore may be considered the most influential in the development of the connection between spectroscopy and quantum mechanics.

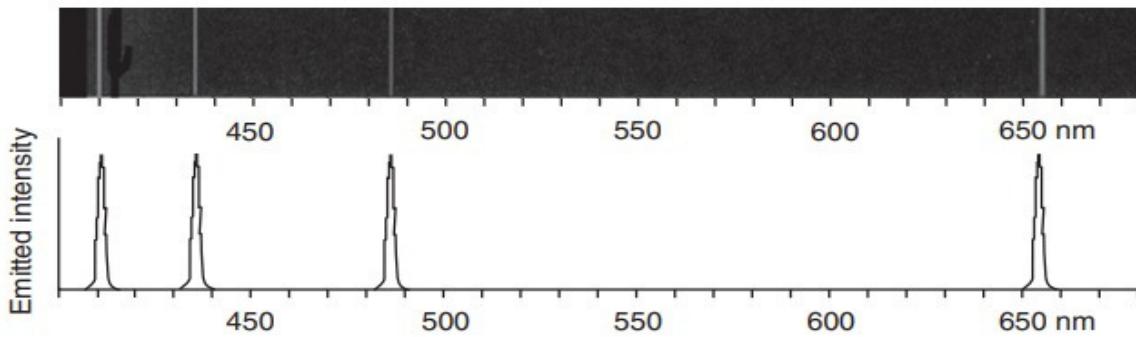


Figure 1.3 Portion of the hydrogen atom emission in the visible spectral range, represented as a “line spectrum” and schematically as an emission spectrum.

These experiments demonstrated that the H atom can exist in certain “energy states” or “stationary states.” These states can undergo a process that is referred to as a “transition.” When the atom undergoes such a transition from a higher or more excited state to a lower or less excited state, the energy difference between the states is emitted as a photon with an energy corresponding to the energy difference between the states:

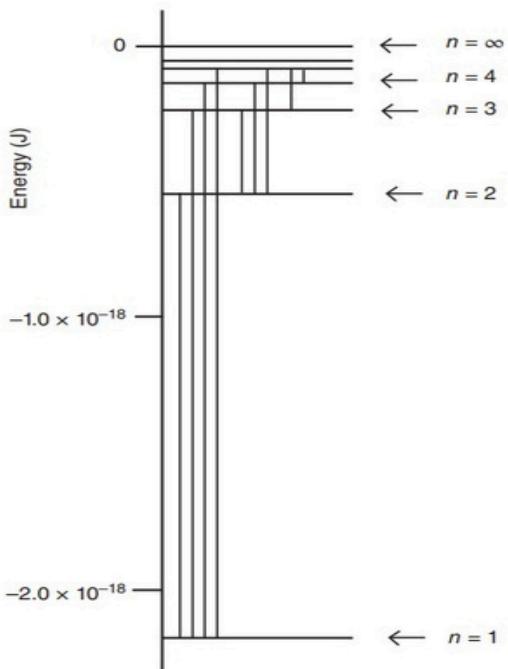
$$\Delta E_{\text{molecule}} = E_f - E_i = E_{\text{photon}} = h\nu = hc/\lambda \quad (1.18)$$

where the subscript f and i denote, respectively, the final and initial (energy) state of the atom (or molecule). Such a process is referred to as a “emission” of a photon. Similarly, an absorption process is one in which the atom undergoes a transition from a lower to a higher energy state, the energy difference being provided by a photon that is annihilated in the process. Absorption and emission processes are collectively referred to as “transitions” between stationary states and are directly related to the annihilation and creation, respectively, of a photon. The wavelengths or energies from the hydrogen emission or absorption experiments were fit by an empirical equation

$E(n) = -R_y/n^2$ (1.19)
 known as the Rydberg equation, which gave the energy “states” of the hydrogen atom as

In this equation, n is an integer (or “quantum” number, and Ry is the Rydberg constant, ($R_y = 1.179 \times 10^{-18} \text{ J}$). This equation implies that the energy of the hydrogen atom cannot assume arbitrary energy values, but only “quantized” levels, $E(n)$. This observation led to the ideas of electrons in stationary planetary orbits around the nucleus, which – however – was in contradiction with existing knowledge of electrodynamics, as discussed in the beginning of this chapter. The energy level diagram described by Eq. (1.19) is depicted in Figure 1.4. Here, the sign convention is as follows. For $n = \infty$, the energy of interaction between nucleus

Figure 1.4 Energy level diagram of the hydrogen atom. Transitions between the energy levels are indicated by vertical lines.



and electron is zero, since the electron is no longer associated with the nucleus. The lowest energy state is given by $n = 1$, which corresponds to the H atom in its ground state that has a negative energy of 1.179×10^{-18} J. Equation (1.19) provided a background framework to explain the hydrogen atom emission spectrum. According to Eq. (1.19), the energy of a photon, or the energy difference of the atomic energy levels, between any two states n_f and n_i can be written as

$$E_{\text{photon}} = \Delta E_{\text{atom}} = E_f - E_i = -R_y \left[\frac{1}{n_f^2} - \frac{1}{n_i^2} \right] \quad (1.20)$$

At this point, an example may be appropriate to demonstrate how this empirically derived equation predicts the energy, wavelength, and wavenumber of light emitted by hydrogen atoms. This example also introduces a common problem, namely, that of units. Although there is an international agreement about what units (the system international, or SI units) are to be used to describe spectral transitions, the problem is that few people are using them. All efforts will be made to use SI units, or at least give the conversion to other units. The sign conventions used here are similar to those in thermodynamics where a process with a final energy state lower than that of the initial state is called an “exothermic” process, where heat or energy is lost. The energy

is lost as a photon and is called an emission transition. When describing an absorption process,

the energy difference of the atom is negative, $\Delta E_{\text{atom}} > 0$, that is, the atom has gained energy

(“endothermic” process in thermodynamics). Following the procedure outlined¹² in Example 1.1

would lead to a negative wavelength of the photon, which of course is physically

1.1.0 Molecular Spectroscopy

Molecular spectroscopy is a branch of science in which the interactions of electromagnetic radiation and molecules are studied, where the molecules exist in quantized stationary energy states similar to those discussed in the previous section. However, these energy states may or may not be due to transitions of electrons into different energy levels, but due to vibrational.

Table 1.1 Photon energies and spectroscopic ranges^a.

	ν_{photon}	λ_{photon}	$E_{\text{photon}} [\text{J}]$	$E_{\text{photon}} [\text{kJ/mol}]$	$E_{\text{photon}} [\text{m}^{-1}]$	Transition
Radio	750 MHz	0.4 m	5×10^{-25}	3×10^{-4}	2.5	NMR ^b
Microwave	3 GHz	10 cm	2×10^{-24}	0.001	10	EPR ^b
Microwave	30 GHz	1 cm	2×10^{-23}	0.012	100	Rotational
Infrared	3×10^{13} Hz	10 μm	2×10^{-20}	12	10^5	Vibrational
UV/visible	10^{15}	300 nm	6×10^{-19}	360	3×10^6	Electronic
X-ray	10^{18}	0.3 nm	6×10^{-16}	3.6×10^5	3×10^9	X-ray absorption

rotational, or spin energy levels. Thus, molecular spectroscopy often is classified by the wavelength ranges of the electromagnetic radiation (for example, microwave or infrared spectroscopies) or changes in energy levels of the molecular systems. This is summarized in Table 1.1, and the conversion of wavelengths and energies were discussed in Eqs. (1.11)–(1.15) and are summarized in Appendix 1. In this table, NMR and EPR stand for nuclear magnetic and electron paramagnetic resonance spectroscopy, respectively. In both these spectroscopic techniques, the transition energy of a proton or electron spin depends on the applied magnetic field strength. All techniques listed in this table can be described by absorption processes although other descriptions, such as bulk magnetization in NMR, are possible as well. As seen

in Table 1.1, the photon energies are between 10^{-11} and 10^{-10} J/photon or about 10^{-4} – 10^{-5}

kJ/(mol photons). Considering that a bond energy of a typical chemical (single) bond is about

$\Delta E_{\text{mol}} = E_f - E_i = E_{\text{photon}} = hc/\lambda$ it shows that ultraviolet photons have sufficient energy to break chemical bonds. However, interactions between light and matter occur even when the light's wavelength is different from the specific wavelength that would be required to cause a transition. This is a classification of spectroscopy, which is more general than that given by the wavelength range alone, would be a resonance effect. Many of the effects described and discussed in this book are observed as resonance interactions where the incident light, indeed, possesses the exact energy of the molecular transition in question. IR and UV/vis absorption spectroscopy, microwave

spectroscopy, and NMR are examples of such resonance interactions. The off-resonance interactions between electromagnetic radiation and matter give rise to well-known phenomena such as the refractive index of dielectric materials. These interactions arise since force is exerted by the electromagnetic radiation on the charged particles of matter even at off-resonance frequencies. This force causes an increase in the amplitude of the motion of these particles. When the frequency of light reaches the transition energy between two states, an effect known as anomalous dispersion of the refractive index takes place.

This anomalous dispersion of the refractive index always accompanies an absorption process. This phenomenon makes it possible to observe the interaction of light either in an absorption or as a dispersion measurement, since the two effects are related to each other by a mathematical relation known as the Kramers–Kronig relation. This aspect will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. The normal (nonresonant) Raman effect is a phenomenon that also is best described in terms of off-resonance models, since Raman scattering can be excited by wavelengths that are not being absorbed by molecules. A discussion of nonresonant effects ties together many well-known aspects of classical optics and spectroscopy.

1.2 Fundamental Principles

1.2.1 Superposition

Superposition is a fundamental concept in quantum mechanics, describing the condition in which a quantum system can exist in multiple states or configurations simultaneously. Classical bits can exist in two possible states, typically labelled as “0” and “1”. In contrast, because a qubit is a quantum mechanical system, it can exist in the “0” state, the “1” state, or any state that is a linear combination of 0 and 1. Mathematically, superposition is a linear combination of “0” and “1” and can be written as:

$$|\psi\rangle = \alpha|0\rangle + \beta|1\rangle$$

where $|\psi\rangle$ is the state of the qubit, $|0\rangle$ and $|1\rangle$ are the basis states (or the computational basis states), and α and β are complex numbers called probability amplitudes. The probability amplitudes determine the probability of measuring the qubit in either state when a measurement is made.

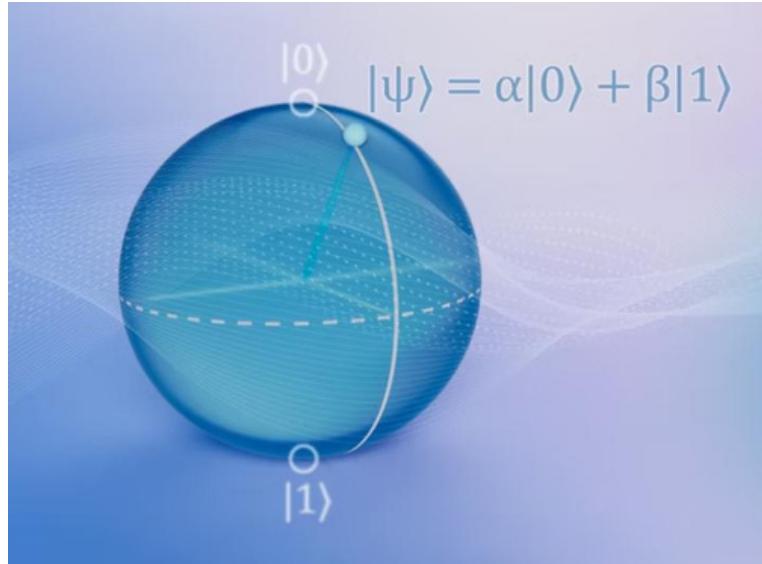


Fig 1. 5: Qubits

Importantly, the state of superposition can be maintained only while a quantum system is unobserved. Once measured, the wavefunction of a quantum system in a state of superposition ‘collapses’ into one of the basis states.

For a concrete example of how this might work if superposition could exist in the everyday world, imagine that a coin that is flipped and lands on a table. In classical mechanics—and in the everyday world as we know it—the coin ends up in a state of either heads or tails. In a quantum mechanical system, the coin could be both heads and tails at the same time, but only until someone or something observes it or measures it. In this analogy, once observed, the coin would take on the state of either heads or tails.

Superposition is a fundamental attribute of quantum computing systems. One of its benefits is that it allows for the possibility of quantum parallelism.

Besides the classical bit, which can only be in one of two possible states, or, classical computers can perform only one computation at a time, e.g., “if the bit is a 1 do this, if not do that, next do this, etc.” In contrast, because a qubit can be in a superposition of 0 and 1, the quantum computer can perform multiple computations in parallel by processing all possible states of the qubits at once.

Superposition is central to quantum computing, offering a level of power and parallelism that classical computers cannot match. With classical bits, each bit can represent only a single value at a time, limiting operations to sequential logic. But with qubits in superposition, a quantum computer can evaluate many possible combinations of input simultaneously. This effect is known as quantum parallelism. For example, a system of just 3 qubits can represent 8 states at once (2^3), allowing it to process all those configurations in a single operation.

Despite its strangeness, superposition is not magic; it's a natural, observable aspect of the microscopic world. Technologies like quantum sensors, quantum simulators, and quantum cryptography also leverage this principle. As researchers continue to refine hardware and error correction techniques, harnessing superposition will remain key to unlocking the full promise of quantum technologies in the years ahead.

1.2.2 Entanglement

Entanglement is a fundamental concept of quantum mechanics that describes a non-classical correlation, or shared quantum state, between two or more quantum systems (or quantum particles) even if they are separated by a large distance. This phenomenon is also known as quantum non-locality, and it is one of the key features of quantum mechanics that distinguishes it from classical mechanics. Quantum systems are described by a mathematical object called a wavefunction, which contains information about the possible outcomes of measurements that can be performed on the systems. When two or more quantum systems are entangled, their wavefunction cannot be expressed as a product of individual wavefunctions for each system.

Instead, the systems are described by a single wavefunction that captures the correlation between

them. The fact that entangled systems are described by a single wavefunction means that any actions or measurements made on one of the systems affect the state of the other systems.

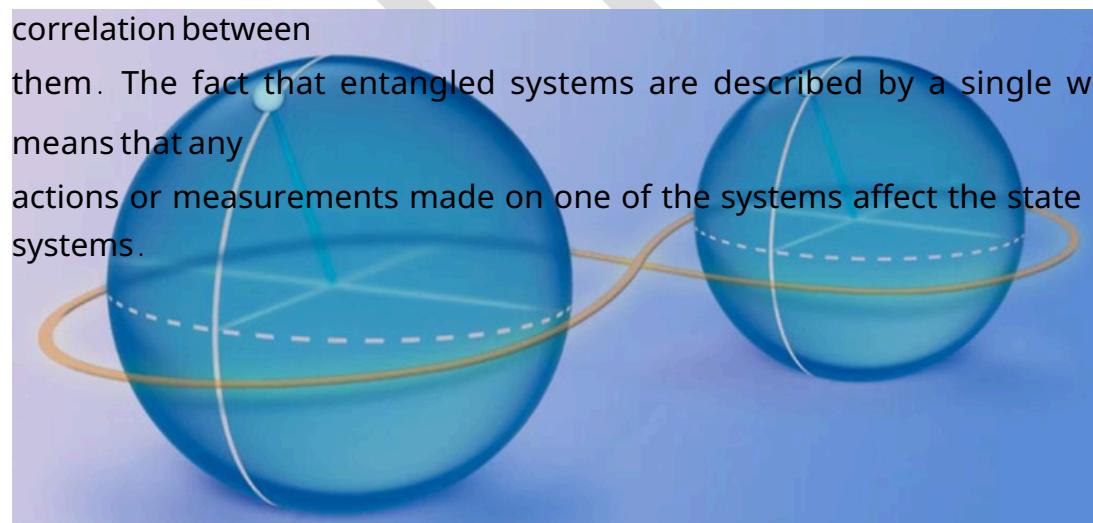


Fig 1.2: Entanglement

In quantum computing, entanglement is used to enable quantum parallelism, which is the ability of quantum computers to perform multiple calculations simultaneously. Entanglement allows quantum computers to manipulate many qubits in a single operation, instead of manipulating each qubit individually, as in classical computing. For example, consider two qubits that are

initially prepared in an entangled state. If a measurement is made on one of the qubits, and it is found to be in the state $|+\rangle$, then the state of the other qubit immediately collapses to the state $|+\rangle$ as well. Similarly, if the first qubit is measured to be in the state $|-\rangle$, then the state of the second qubit collapses to the state $|-\rangle$ as well.

In quantum computing, entanglement is a powerful enabler of quantum parallelism and coordination. While classical computers manipulate individual bits, quantum algorithms take advantage of entangled qubits to operate on a vast number of states simultaneously, allowing for exponentially more complex computations. Entanglement also plays a vital role in quantum teleportation, which does not transmit matter but instead transfers a quantum state from one location to another using pre-shared entangled qubits and classical communication.

Entanglement enables quantum computers to implement various protocols and algorithms that are not possible with classical systems. For example, it is used in quantum teleportation, which allows for the transfer of quantum states between two distant systems. Entanglement is also a key resource for quantum error correction, which is necessary to protect quantum information from decoherence and other errors. By creating and manipulating entangled states, quantum computers can detect and correct errors in a way that is not possible for classical computers.

Entanglement is also essential in quantum cryptography, particularly in protocols like Quantum Key Distribution (QKD), where the security of the communication is guaranteed by the laws of quantum physics rather than mathematical assumptions. If an eavesdropper tries to intercept the entangled signal, the disturbance would be immediately evident to the legitimate users.

Another key use of entanglement is in quantum error correction. Quantum information is fragile and susceptible to noise and decoherence. By entangling qubits cleverly, quantum error correction schemes can detect and recover from errors without disturbing the original information—something impossible in classical computing. Entangled states serve as the building blocks for logical qubits, which are more stable and can be used for extended computations.

Overall, quantum entanglement redefines the limits of communication, computation, and information theory. It challenges our classical intuitions and offers a new paradigm where non-local correlations become tools for advanced technologies. As research progresses, entanglement will continue to be the backbone of innovations in secure communication, high-speed computation, and precision measurement in the quantum era.

1.1.1 Uncertainty Principle

The Uncertainty Principle, also known as Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, is a fundamental concept in quantum mechanics. It states that:

It is impossible to simultaneously know both the exact position and the exact momentum of a particle.

$$\Rightarrow \Delta p \cdot \Delta x \geq \frac{h}{4\pi}$$

$$\Rightarrow m \Delta v \cdot \Delta x \geq \frac{h}{4\pi}$$

Where, Δp = uncertainty in momentum

Δx = uncertainty in position

m = mass of particle

h = Planck's constant

The Uncertainty Principle also applies to other pairs of observables, such as energy and time, and has deep implications for the behaviour of particles in confined systems, like electrons in atoms. It helps explain phenomena like zero-point energy, where particles have motion even at absolute zero temperature, and quantum tunneling, where particles appear to pass through energy barriers.

In quantum computing, the Uncertainty Principle defines limits on how precisely quantum states can be manipulated or measured. It is also crucial in quantum cryptography, helping to ensure that any eavesdropping attempt on a quantum communication channel can be detected, since measurement disturbs the system.

Ultimately, the Uncertainty Principle reshaped our understanding of the universe by replacing the classical idea of determinism with a probabilistic framework. It teaches us that the act of measurement in quantum mechanics is not passive—it fundamentally changes what we observe. This uncertainty is not a weakness but a feature of the quantum world, revealing its inherently probabilistic and non-deterministic nature.

1.1.1 Wave-particle duality

Wave-particle duality is a fundamental concept in quantum mechanics which reveals that all quantum objects, including light and matter, exhibit both wave-like and particle-like properties. This idea emerged from a series of experiments and theoretical developments in the early 20th century. Light, which was classically understood as a wave due to its ability to interfere and diffract, was shown by Einstein in 1905 to also behave like a stream of particles called photons when explaining the photoelectric effect—where light knocks electrons out of a metal surface. This demonstrated that light has a particle nature as well. Inspired by this, Louis de Broglie in

1924 proposed that matter, such as electrons, should also exhibit wave-like behavior.

He

introduced the concept of the matter wave, assigning a wavelength to any particle based on its momentum using the relation,

This duality was dramatically confirmed by experiments such as the electron double-slit experiment. When electrons pass through two slits, they produce an interference pattern typical of waves—even when fired one at a time. However, each electron is detected as a single point-like impact on the screen, showing its particle nature. The interference pattern only emerges after many electrons have passed through, revealing the underlying wave-like behavior. This paradoxical result means that quantum objects cannot be fully described as just particles or just waves. Instead, their behaviour depends on how they are measured. Wave-particle duality challenges our classical intuition and suggests that quantum entities exist in a superposition of possibilities, governed by a probability wave, until a measurement collapses this wave into a definite outcome.

This strange duality means that quantum particles do not behave strictly as particles or waves, but as a blend of both, determined by the measurement setup. If you measure their position, they appear particle-like; if you observe their path indirectly, they exhibit wave-like interference. This dual nature defies classical expectations and forces us to adopt a probabilistic interpretation of nature.

In quantum theory, particles are described by wavefunctions, which represent the probability of finding a particle in a certain state. Only when a measurement is made does this wavefunction “collapse” to a single, definite value. Thus, the wave-particle duality reveals that quantum entities exist in a superposition of possibilities until observed.

This concept not only underpins the foundations of quantum physics but also drives the functioning of quantum technologies like electron microscopes, quantum computers, and even lasers. Ultimately, wave-particle duality challenges our intuitive notions of reality and shows that at a fundamental level, nature behaves in ways that are deeply counterintuitive, yet experimentally proven.

1.1 Classical vs Quantum mechanics – theoretical comparison

~~Classical mechanics and quantum mechanics~~ are two frameworks for understanding physical phenomena. Classical mechanics, formulated primarily by Newton, governs the motion of macroscopic objects like planets, cars, and projectiles. Quantum mechanics, developed in the early 20th century, is essential for accurately describing the behavior of microscopic particles such as electrons, atoms, and photons. The two theories differ fundamentally in their assumptions, mathematical formalisms, and interpretations of nature.

In classical mechanics, objects have definite positions and velocities at all times. The state of a system can be precisely predicted using Newton's laws, and the evolution of that system is deterministic: given initial conditions, the future behavior is uniquely determined. On the other hand, quantum mechanics introduces inherent indeterminacy. A particle does not have a definite position or momentum until it is measured. Instead, it is described by a wavefunction, which encodes a probability distribution over all possible outcomes. The act of measurement collapses this wavefunction, resulting in a specific observed value.

Classical mechanics relies on continuous variables and smooth trajectories in phase space. In contrast, quantum mechanics uses discrete quantized energy levels and operates within a probabilistic framework, governed by operators on Hilbert space and the Schrödinger equation. While classical systems obey the principle of determinism and locality, quantum systems exhibit phenomena like superposition, entanglement, and non-locality, which have no classical analog.

Moreover, classical mechanics is intuitive and aligns with everyday experiences, whereas quantum mechanics often defies intuition, requiring abstract mathematical tools and accepting that some aspects of nature are fundamentally unknowable. Despite their differences, classical mechanics is actually a limiting case of quantum mechanics—it emerges naturally when dealing with large systems or high energies where quantum effects become negligible. Thus, quantum mechanics is more fundamental and universal, with classical mechanics being an effective approximation in the macroscopic world.

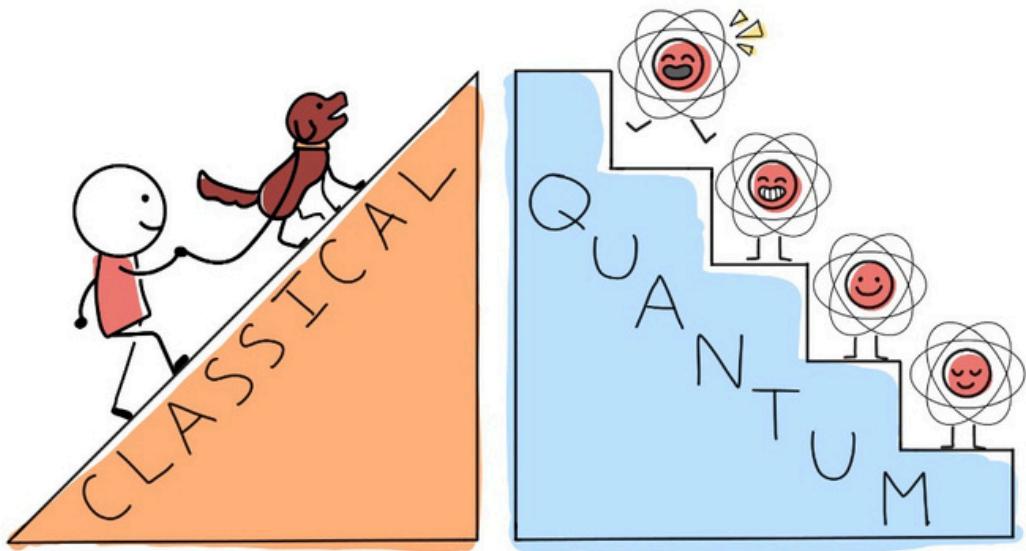


Fig 1.1 : Classical vs Quantum mechanics

Classical mechanics treats motion and energy as continuous, and systems evolve along smooth trajectories in space and time. Quantum mechanics, however, reveals that energy is quantized—only specific, discrete energy levels are allowed. It also uses complex mathematical tools like operators, matrices, and Hilbert spaces, along with the Schrödinger equation, to describe the evolution of systems.

Another major difference is that classical physics adheres to local realism, assuming that objects are only influenced by their immediate surroundings. Quantum systems defy this through entanglement and non-local interactions, where particles can exhibit strong correlations even across large distances. Additionally, quantum mechanics introduces superposition, where particles exist in multiple states simultaneously, a concept with no classical counterpart.

Though quantum theory may seem abstract and counterintuitive, it is more fundamental—classical mechanics turns out to be a special case of quantum mechanics, valid only when dealing with large objects or systems where quantum effects are negligible. Thus, while classical physics provides accurate predictions in everyday scenarios, it fails at microscopic scales, where only quantum mechanics can accurately describe the behavior of matter and energy.

In essence, quantum mechanics reshaped our understanding of reality, replacing certainty with probability, and introducing a new framework for describing the strange and fascinating world that lies beneath our everyday experiences.

1.4 Quantum States and Measurement: Nature of Observation

In quantum mechanics, a quantum state represents the complete information about a system and is typically described by a wavefunction. The wavefunction provides the probability of finding the system in various configurations. Unlike classical systems, quantum systems can exist in a superposition of multiple states simultaneously, meaning a particle can be in many possible states until a measurement is made. The measurement process in quantum mechanics is fundamentally different from classical observation—it is not passive. Instead, observing a quantum system collapses the wavefunction to a single definite state, chosen probabilistically according to the squared magnitude of the wavefunction. This collapse is instantaneous and unpredictable, highlighting the probabilistic nature of quantum systems and the active role of the observer in defining the outcome. The peculiar nature of measurement leads to non-intuitive phenomena such as the phenomenon of wavefunction collapse. This phenomenon shows that the act of measurement is not simply revealing a pre-existing value but is in fact defining the outcome. The system's state is not determined by the spectrum of possibilities, and all other possibilities vanish upon observation. This nature of quantum measurement even goes to the depths of non-intuitive effects such as quantum entanglement, where two or more particles share a linked state. If one entangled particle is measured, the state of its partner is instantly determined, no matter the distance between them—a phenomenon that baffled even Einstein, who referred to it as "spooky action at a distance."

Furthermore, this interaction between observer and system implies that objective reality, as understood in classical terms, does not always exist independently of observation. Instead, the observer plays an essential role in shaping the physical outcome. This shift from a deterministic to a probabilistic and observer-dependent framework is what marks one of the most fundamental departures of quantum mechanics from classical physics. The study of quantum states and their measurement continues to influence modern fields such as quantum computing, quantum cryptography, and quantum teleportation, where the principles of wavefunction manipulation and collapse are harnessed to perform computations and transmit information in revolutionary ways.

1.4.1 Overview of Quantum Systems: Electrons, Photons, Atoms

Quantum systems consist of microscopic entities such as electrons, photons,

all exhibit wave-particle duality and are governed by the laws of quantum mechanics. Electrons, though traditionally thought of as point particles, also behave like waves. This wave nature is responsible for phenomena like electron diffraction and atomic orbitals. Photons are the quantum particles of light; they have no rest mass and always move at the speed of light, displaying both energy quantization (in packets called quanta) and wave-like behavior such as interference.

Atoms are more complex quantum systems made of electrons orbiting a nucleus. In quantum mechanics, these electrons occupy discrete energy levels or orbitals, and transitions between levels involve absorption or emission of photons with specific energies. All these systems demonstrate uniquely quantum effects such as superposition, entanglement, and tunneling—none of which can be explained using classical physics. These systems form the foundation of modern technologies such as lasers, semiconductors, quantum dots, and quantum computers.

Electrons, despite being considered point-like particles in classical physics, reveal a wave-like character at small scales, a fact made evident by experiments such as electron diffraction. Their dual nature allows them to form standing wave patterns around atomic nuclei, known as orbitals, which determine the structure of atoms and molecules.

Photons, on the other hand, are massless quantum particles of electromagnetic radiation. They always travel at the speed of light and carry energy proportional to their frequency, as described by $E = hv$. Their wave-particle duality manifests in phenomena like interference and the photoelectric effect. Photons can also become entangled, making them important in quantum communication and cryptography. Meanwhile, atoms are composite systems made of nuclei surrounded by electrons. In a quantum view, electrons do not orbit in classical trajectories but instead occupy quantized energy states, transitioning between them by absorbing or emitting photons of discrete energy.

Each of these systems—electrons, photons, and atoms—exhibit hallmark quantum behavior, including superposition (being in multiple states at once), entanglement (non-local correlations between particles), and quantum tunneling (the ability to cross classically forbidden barriers). These phenomena cannot be explained using classical physics and require the probabilistic, wave-based framework of quantum theory. Understanding these quantum systems is critical because they are the foundation of modern quantum-enabled technologies. Innovations such as semiconductors, quantum sensors, lasers, MRI machines, LEDs, and quantum computers all rely on manipulating the quantum properties of these particles. As our ability to control these systems

improves, their role in computation, communication, and sensing will only grow more significant in the future of science and technology

1.0 The Concept of Quantization

Quantization lies at the heart of quantum mechanics, fundamentally changing our understanding of nature. Unlike classical physics—where properties such as energy or momentum can vary continuously—quantum mechanics shows that many physical quantities are restricted to discrete values. This concept was introduced to resolve the inconsistencies observed in classical models, such as the blackbody radiation problem and the photoelectric effect, where the observed results could not be explained without assuming that energy comes in discrete packets called quanta. Max Planck and Albert Einstein were among the pioneers who proposed that light and energy

must be quantized to align with experimental data, setting the stage for a new theory of matter and energy.

Quantization is a core principle of quantum mechanics that states certain physical quantities,

like energy, angular momentum, and charge, can only take on discrete values, rather than any value within a continuous range. This idea is radically different from classical physics, where

such quantities can vary smoothly. The earliest evidence for quantization came from the blackbody radiation problem and the photoelectric effect, which were explained by assuming

that energy is emitted or absorbed in discrete units called quanta. In atoms, electrons can only exist in specific quantized energy levels, and transitions between these levels result in the

emission or absorption of photons with fixed frequencies. Quantization is also seen in systems like the harmonic oscillator, where energy levels are separated by fixed intervals. This discrete

nature of quantum systems is mathematically expressed using operators with eigenvalues corresponding to observable quantities. Quantization is what gives rise to atomic spectra, the

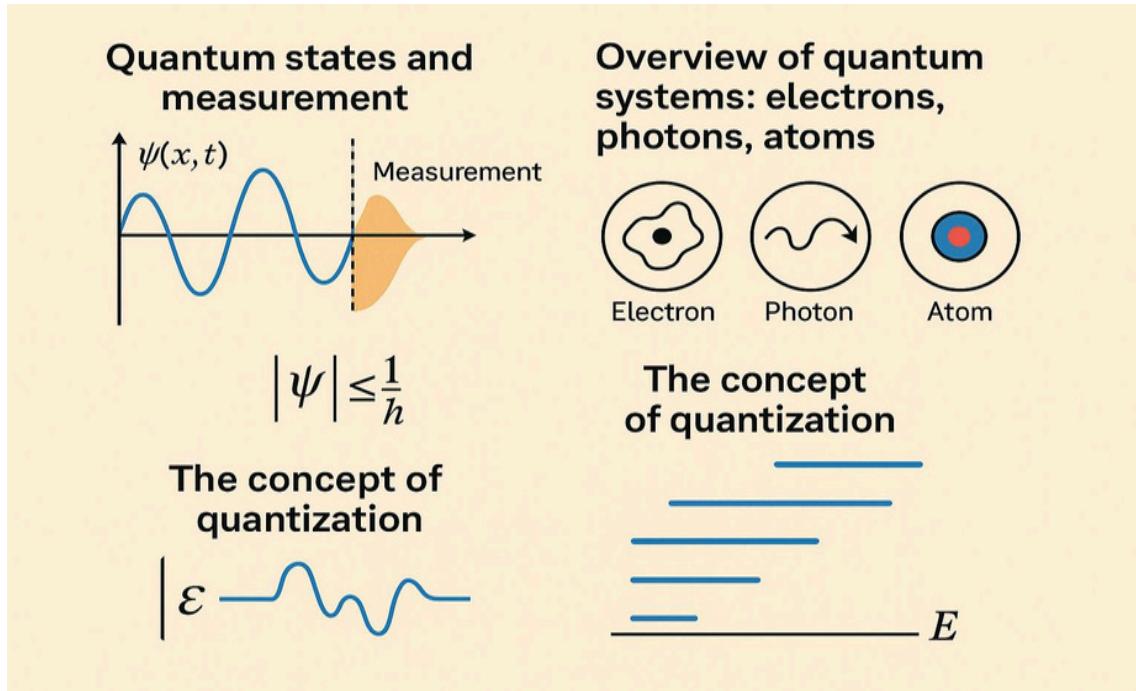


Fig 1.1: The Concept of Quantization

In atomic systems, quantization becomes especially evident. Electrons in atoms cannot occupy arbitrary energy levels; instead, they are found only in certain allowed states. When an electron transitions between these levels, it absorbs or emits a photon with a specific frequency, giving rise to the spectral lines seen in emission and absorption spectra. This phenomenon is responsible for the stability of atoms and the unique identity of elements. Similar principles apply to rotational and vibrational states of molecules, which are also quantized and form the basis of various spectroscopic techniques.

Quantization is not limited to energy. Angular momentum, spin, and even electric charge can also be quantized, leading to surprising consequences in both microscopic systems and macroscopic quantum phenomena like superconductivity and quantum Hall effects. The mathematics of quantization involves solving operator equations, where only certain values (called eigenvalues) correspond to physical observables. This discrete nature of reality is not just a mathematical curiosity—it underpins the structure and behavior of matter at the most fundamental level.

Understanding why quantum mechanics is essential goes beyond explaining atomic structure—it is about embracing a radically different view of reality. Classical physics fails to explain phenomena like entanglement, superposition, and tunneling, all of which are routinely observed in quantum systems. Quantum mechanics accounts for these behaviors through a probabilistic and non-deterministic framework, where the act of measurement plays a crucial role in determining outcomes.

Moreover, quantum theory is not just a theoretical success; it has practical, transformative applications. Technologies such as semiconductors, lasers, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), LEDs, and atomic clocks are direct outcomes of quantum principles. Even more revolutionary are the emerging fields of quantum computing, quantum cryptography, and quantum sensing, which promise to outperform classical technologies in speed, security, and sensitivity.

In essence, quantum mechanics is not just a scientific necessity—it is a technological enabler. It reshapes our understanding of the universe and opens new frontiers in computing, communication, and materials science. Studying quantum concepts is therefore not only vital for physicists, but also for engineers, computer scientists, and innovators of the future.

1.1 Why Quantum

Quantum mechanics is not just a theoretical breakthrough in physics—it marks a radical shift in how we understand and interact with the universe at the most fundamental level. Traditional classical theories fail to explain the behavior of microscopic particles like electrons, photons, and atoms. Quantum theory fills this gap by accurately describing the probabilistic and non-deterministic nature of such particles. Its predictions have been experimentally verified with extraordinary precision, making it a cornerstone of modern physics. More importantly, quantum mechanics forms the foundation for transformative advancements in technology, computing, and security, answering both scientific curiosity and real-world challenges.

The strategic value of quantum technologies is increasingly recognized by governments and industries worldwide. Quantum computing, for instance, has the potential to break classical encryption methods, posing both risks and opportunities for national security. Similarly, quantum communication promises ultra-secure information transfer using Quantum Key Distribution (QKD), which is theoretically unbreakable. Nations are investing heavily in quantum research to ensure leadership in this frontier domain, as it offers a significant edge in defence, surveillance, intelligence, and cybersecurity. As a result, mastery of quantum technologies is becoming a

Governments worldwide are ramping up funding, launching national missions, and forming alliances to stay competitive in this field. The ability to control and implement quantum systems will influence power dynamics globally—shaping military capabilities, intelligence operations,

and secure digital infrastructure. As a result, expertise in quantum science is fast becoming a determinant of geopolitical and economic strength.

1.1.2 **Scientific Significance** Quantum mechanics stands as one of the most profound scientific achievements of the 20th

century, dramatically expanding our understanding of the physical world. Scientifically, quantum

mechanics has revolutionized our understanding of nature. It explains phenomena that classical

physics cannot, such as superconductivity, quantum tunneling, and the behavior of particles in

extreme conditions. Quantum theory has also laid the groundwork for fields like quantum

chemistry, condensed matter physics, and particle physics. It enables the modeling of complex

Quantum theory allows scientists to model atomic and subatomic systems with remarkable systems with high accuracy, leading to discoveries in materials science, precision, leading to the discovery of new materials and deeper insights into the behavior of matter, energy, and

fundamental physics. Beyond practical uses, quantum mechanics continues to challenge our

1.1.3 **Technological Significance**

philosophical notions of reality, causality, and measurement, making it a profoundly Quantum technologies are poised to bring transformative changes to the rich area of

technological landscape. Quantum technologies are set to redefine the future of ongoing scientific inquiry, computation, communication, sensing, and imaging. Quantum computers can solve

certain classes of problems exponentially faster than classical computers, with potential applications in drug discovery, optimization, machine learning, climate

modelling, and logistics optimization. Quantum sensors can measure time, magnetic fields, and gravitational forces with unprecedented precision, useful in GPS systems,

medical diagnostics, and geological surveys. Meanwhile, quantum cryptography offers solutions

for secure digital infrastructure. These innovations are not distant dreams—they are already in

early stages of development, and their practical impact is beginning to emerge, setting the stage

for the next technological revolution.

In communication, quantum encryption could underpin a new era of ultra-secure digital

infrastructure. These applications, once theoretical, are now transitioning into real-world pilots

and commercial prototypes—marking the beginning of a new age where quantum mechanics

1. v A Snapshot of Quantum Technologies: Computing, Communication, and Sensing

Quantum technologies are at the forefront of a technological revolution, harnessing the unique and counterintuitive principles of quantum mechanics—such as superposition, entanglement, and quantization—to build revolutionary tools that far surpass the capabilities of their classical counterparts. These technologies are being developed across three primary domains: quantum computing, quantum communication, and quantum sensing, each offering transformative potential for science, industry, and society everyday life.

Quantum Computing is perhaps the most well-known application of quantum mechanics. Unlike classical computers that process information in binary bits (0 or 1), quantum computers use quantum bits or qubits, which can exist in superpositions of 0 and 1. This allows quantum computers to perform many calculations in parallel, enabling them to solve certain problems—like factoring large numbers, simulating molecular behavior, or optimizing complex systems—exponentially faster than classical machines. Although still in early stages, companies and research institutions are racing to achieve "quantum advantage," where a quantum computer outperforms the best classical supercomputers on useful tasks.

Quantum Communication focuses on the secure transmission of information using quantum phenomena. The most notable technique is Quantum Key Distribution (QKD), which allows two parties to share a cryptographic key with security guaranteed by the laws of physics. If an eavesdropper tries to intercept the key, the quantum state is disturbed, alerting the communicating parties. Quantum communication can also involve quantum teleportation, where the state of a particle is transferred instantaneously over a distance, using entanglement. As global digital infrastructure becomes increasingly vulnerable, quantum communication promises unprecedented levels of security for sensitive data.

Quantum Sensing exploits the extreme sensitivity of quantum systems to environmental changes, enabling measurements with unprecedented precision. Quantum sensors can detect minute variations in gravitational fields, magnetic fields, acceleration, and time. Applications range from medical diagnostics (e.g., highly sensitive brain scans using quantum magnetometers), to underground exploration, to navigation systems that do not rely on GPS. Atomic clocks—among the most accurate devices ever built—are based on quantum transitions and are crucial for global positioning and timekeeping systems.

Together, these quantum technologies are not isolated innovations—they are part of a rapidly evolving ecosystem that is expected to reshape the technological landscape in the coming decades.

As these technologies mature, they will not remain isolated solutions but will become deeply integrated into a wide range of applications. Quantum computing could redefine how we solve scientific and industrial problems. Quantum communication may establish new standards of digital security. Quantum sensing is set to improve how we measure, observe, and navigate the world. Together, these advances signal a shift toward a new era of quantum-enhanced innovation that will shape the future of multiple sectors including finance, defense, transportation, health, and information technology.

1.1 National and Global Quantum Missions

As quantum technologies emerge as a critical area of innovation and national interest, several countries have launched ambitious quantum missions to secure strategic and technological leadership. These initiatives aim to develop quantum computing, communication, and sensing capabilities through coordinated investments in research, infrastructure, and talent development. India, along with major global powers like the USA, China, and the European Union, is actively building its presence in the quantum landscape.

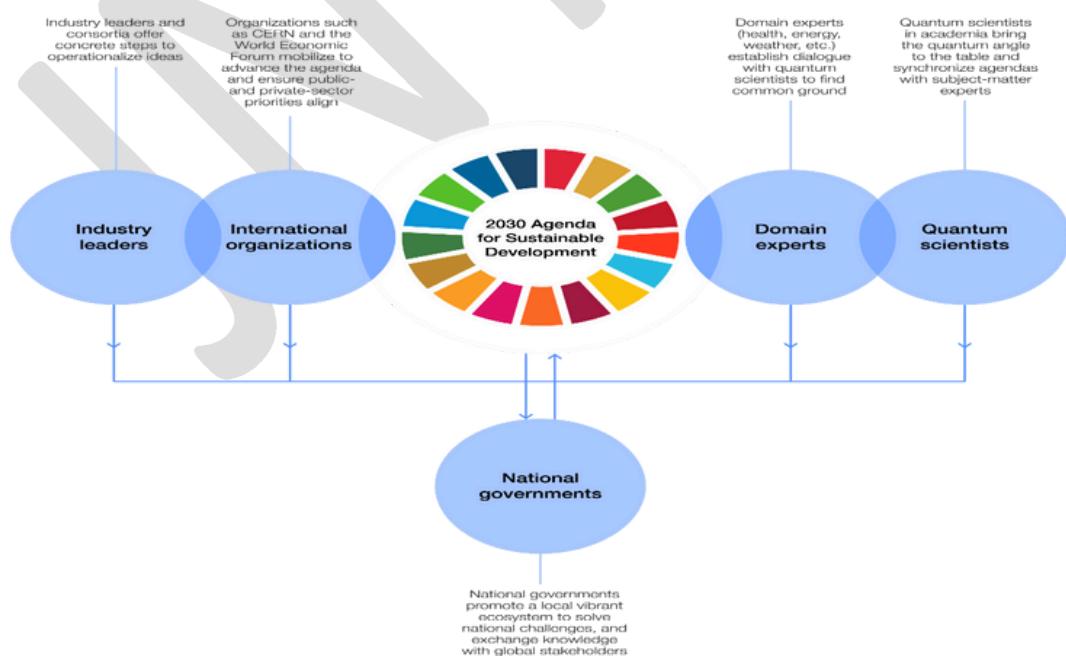


Fig 1.1 : Global commitment to accelerate quantum for society solutions

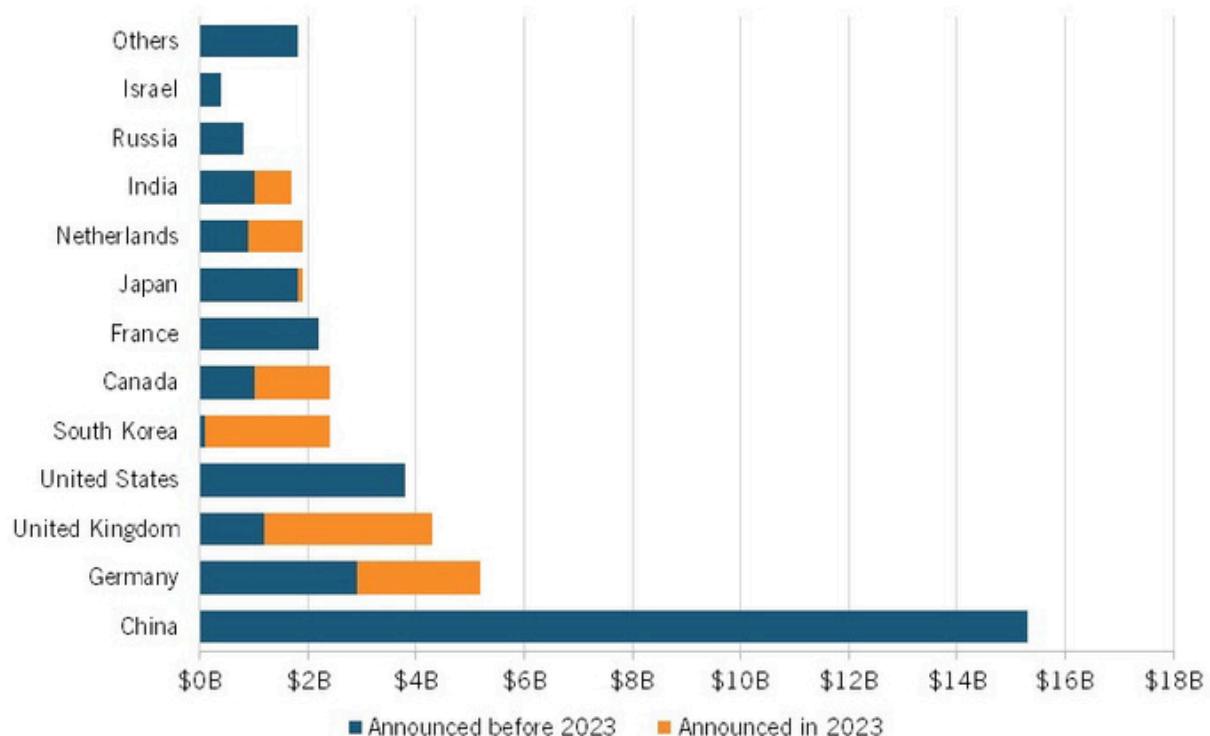


Fig 1.1.1: Announced government investments in quantum research and commercialization around the world

China leads in quantum communications, lags behind in computing (where the United States excels), and matches the United States in sensing, excelling in market-ready tech, while the United States dominates high-impact areas.

1.8.1 India's National Quantum Mission (NQM)

~~India launches its National Quantum Mission~~

~~approximately \$1 billion over eight years~~ The mission seeks to position India among the top quantum nations by developing indigenous capabilities in quantum computing, quantum communication, quantum sensing, and quantum materials. It aims to establish four Thematic Hubs (T-Hubs) in leading academic and research institutions focusing on foundational technologies. The NQM also plans to build intermediate-scale quantum computers (with 50-100 qubits), develop quantum key distribution networks, and promote workforce training and international collaborations. The mission aligns with India's larger vision of self-reliance in strategic technologies and aims to boost national security, telecommunications, and advanced research.



Fig 1.11: India Approves National Quantum Mission

1.8.1 European Union (EU) Quantum Flagship

The **EU Quantum Flagship** initiative launched in 2018 to unify Europe's fragmented quantum research landscape. It supports hundreds of research institutions, startups, and industries across member states. The program focuses on four main areas: quantum communication, quantum simulation, quantum computing, and quantum metrology. The EU also promotes infrastructure projects like the European Quantum Communication Infrastructure (EuroQCI), which aims to establish a secure pan-European quantum communication network. This mission reflects Europe's intent to compete globally while fostering innovation, industrial adoption, and academic excellence in quantum science.



Fig 1.12 European Union (EU) Quantum Technologies

1.8.1 United States: National Quantum Initiative Act

The ~~United States~~ quantum strategy with the National Quantum Initiative Act passed in 2018. This act coordinates efforts across government agencies, including the Department of Energy (DOE), National Science Foundation (NSF), and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), with significant funding and collaboration with private sector leaders like IBM, Google, and Microsoft. The National Quantum Coordination Office oversees these efforts, focusing on quantum research, technology transfer, education, and the creation of quantum research centers. The U.S. aims to maintain its technological leadership, secure supply chains, and harness quantum advantages for national security, scientific progress, and economic growth.



Fig 1.12: USA must dominate quantum technology

1.8.2 China: Quantum Strategic Advantage

~~China~~ emerged as a global leader in quantum technology through sustained state-led investment and rapid deployment. It has achieved several milestones, including launching the world's first quantum communication satellite (Micius) and demonstrating satellite-based quantum key distribution over thousands of kilometers. China also leads in building a nationwide quantum communication backbone network, connecting major cities through ultra-secure fiber links. The Chinese government has reportedly invested billions of dollars in quantum R&D, and projects like the National Laboratory for Quantum Information Science in Hefei aim to consolidate China's dominance in this space. China views quantum technologies as essential to future economic and military competitiveness.

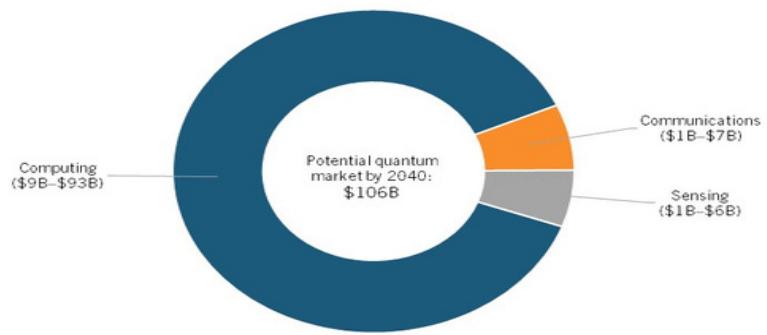


Fig 1.14: How Innovative Is China in Quantum?

These missions reflect a global “quantum race”, where nations recognize that quantum supremacy could redefine cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, defense, and economic structures. International collaboration, balanced with strategic competition, will shape the trajectory of quantum innovation in the coming decades, with each nation seeking to leverage quantum breakthroughs for economic growth, defense strength, and scientific prestige.

Reference : https://tifac.org.in/images/nmqta/concept_note12.01.19.pdf

SYLLABUS

Unit 1

Theoretical Structure of Quantum Information Systems

What is a qubits: Conceptual understanding using spin and polarization. Comparison: classical bits vs quantum bits. Quantum systems: trapped ions, superconducting circuits, photons (non-engineering view). Quantum coherence and decoherence – intuitive explanation. Theoretical concepts: Hilbert spaces, quantum states, operators – only interpreted in abstract. The role of entanglement and non-locality in systems. Quantum information vs classical information: principles and differences. Philosophical implications: randomness, determinism, and observer role

1.1 Introduction

Quantum Information Systems represent a transformative approach to computation and communication, fundamentally leveraging the principles of quantum mechanics to process and transmit information. At the heart of these systems lies quantum theory, which introduces novel concepts such as superposition, entanglement, and quantum measurement, radically differing from classical information theory.

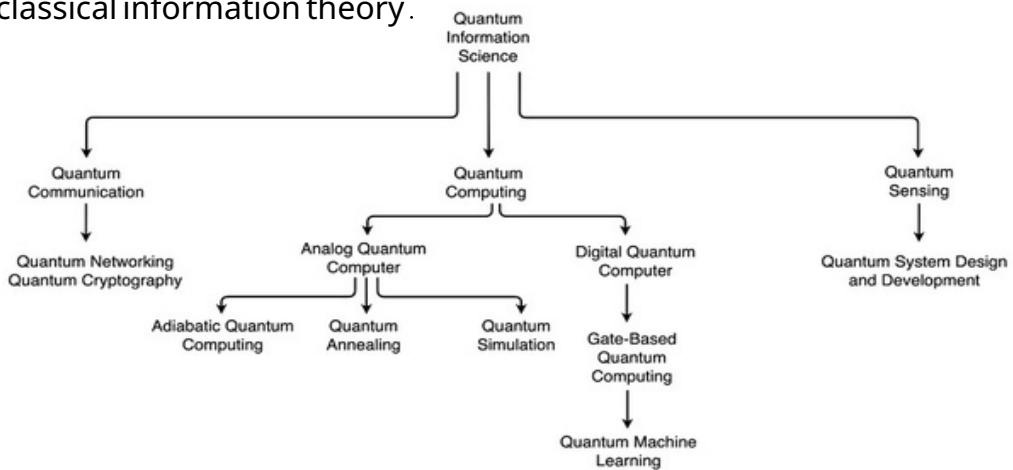


Figure 1.1: Quantum Information Systems

In contrast to classical bits that exist in a definite state of 0 or 1, quantum bits or qubits can exist in a superposition of both states simultaneously. This characteristic allows quantum systems to perform parallel computations, offering exponential speedups for certain classes of problems. The theoretical foundation of Quantum Information Systems is built upon:

- 1. **Quantum Mechanics:** Core principles such as wavefunction, unitary evolution, and measurement theory form the basis for information processing in quantum systems.
- 2. **Qubits and Quantum Gates:** Analogous to classical logic gates, quantum gates manipulate qubits using unitary operations, enabling the construction of quantum circuits.
- 3. **Quantum Entanglement:** A uniquely quantum phenomenon where the states of two or more qubits become interdependent, regardless of spatial separation, enabling powerful communication and computation protocols.
- 4. **Quantum Algorithms and Complexity:** Algorithms such as Shor's for factoring and Grover's for search illustrate the advantages of quantum computation over classical approaches.

- Quantum Error Correction: Due to the fragile nature of qubits, robust error correction techniques are essential for practical and scalable quantum computing.
- Quantum Communication: Protocols like quantum teleportation and quantum key distribution exploit entanglement and superposition to enable secure information transfer.

The study of these theoretical structures not only lays the groundwork for quantum computing and quantum cryptography but also contributes to the understanding of information itself in a fundamentally new light.

1.1. What is a qubit?

A qubit, or quantum bit, is the fundamental unit of information in a quantum computer. Unlike a classical bit, which can be either 0 or 1, a qubit can exist in a superposition of both states simultaneously, represented as $|0\rangle$, $|1\rangle$, or any complex linear combination $\alpha|0\rangle + \beta|1\rangle$,

where α and β are complex probability amplitudes. This superposition allows quantum

systems to process vast amounts of information in parallel, enabling certain computations to

be executed exponentially faster than their classical counterparts. Qubits can also exhibit

entanglement, a uniquely quantum phenomenon where the state of one qubit is dependent on

the state of another, regardless of the distance between them.

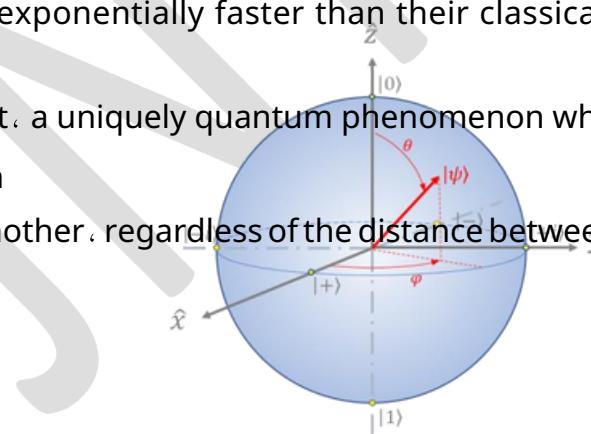


Fig 1.1: Quantum Qubit

This allows for highly correlated systems that are essential for quantum logic operations. Another key property is quantum interference, which enables quantum algorithms to amplify correct computational paths while canceling out incorrect ones. Qubits are extremely delicate and susceptible to noise, so maintaining coherence—the time over which a qubit retains its quantum state—is a major challenge. Various physical systems can be used to realize qubits, including superconducting circuits (used by IBM and Google), trapped ions (IonQ), photons

(PsiQuantum), quantum dots, and NV centers in diamond. Each technology comes with trade-offs in terms of gate speed, error rates, scalability, and environmental requirements. A qubit must be initializable, controllable via quantum gates, measurable, and able to participate in entangling operations. Typically, multiple physical qubits are needed to form a logical qubit that is protected by quantum error correction codes, due to the inherent instability of quantum states. These logical qubits serve as the robust foundation for large-scale, fault-tolerant quantum computation. Qubit manipulation is performed using finely

tuned pulses of microwave, optical, or radio-frequency energy, depending on the implementation. The Bloch sphere is often used to visually represent a qubit's state, where

the poles correspond to $|+\rangle$ and $|-\rangle$, and any point on the sphere's surface represents a

superposition. Reading a qubit's state involves a measurement, which collapses the qubit into

one of the basis states (\cdot or \circ) probabilistically, determined by $|\alpha|^2$ and $|\beta|^2$. This collapse is

irreversible, and thus, quantum information must be processed carefully before measurement.

Qubits are the heart of all quantum algorithms, including Shor's factoring algorithm and

Grover's search algorithm.

The power of a quantum computer scales not linearly but exponentially with the number of

A qubit (quantum bit) is the fundamental unit of quantum information, conceptually richer than a classical bit because it can exist in a superposition of the states—typically labeled $|0\rangle$ and $|1\rangle$. To develop a deeper conceptual understanding of quantum computing, we must first understand the engineering challenges of quantum computing. Current quantum systems range from a few to several prominent physical systems: spin and polarization. These systems provide hundred qubits, but building a fault-tolerant quantum computer will require intuitive analogies that help explain the unusual properties of qubits.

means a qubit can be described by a linear combination of the basis states $|0\rangle$ and $|1\rangle$ where a and b are complex numbers such that $|a|^2 + |b|^2 = 1$. One physical realization of a qubit is the spin of a spin- $\frac{1}{2}$ particle, such as an electron, and demand sophisticated hardware, control electronics, cryogenics, and

In this model, the state $|+\rangle$ corresponds to spin-up and $|-\rangle$ corresponds to spin-down along chosen axis, usually the z-axis. However, due to the principles of quantum mechanics, the spin vector can point in any direction on the Bloch sphere, a unit sphere used to represent all possible pure states of a single qubit. The north and south poles represent the classical states $|+\rangle$ and $|-\rangle$, while every other point on the sphere represents a superposition of those states. A qubit can also be realized using the polarization states of a single photon.

In this model, horizontal polarization ($|H\rangle$) can represent $|+\rangle$ and vertical polarization ($|V\rangle$) can represent $|-\rangle$. A photon, like the electron, can exist in a superposition such as diagonal polarization ($|D\rangle$), which is an equal superposition of $|H\rangle$ and $|V\rangle$. Circular polarizations represent other types of superposition states involving a phase difference. These models demonstrate that a qubit is fundamentally a two-level quantum system, where measurement collapses the state into either $|+\rangle$ or $|-\rangle$ with probabilities determined by $|\alpha|^2$ and $|\beta|^2$.

Quantum mechanics does not allow simultaneous knowledge of certain properties, hence measurement changes the system irreversibly.

In the spin model, qubit states can be manipulated using magnetic or electric fields to rotate the spin vector on the Bloch sphere. In the photonic model, wave plates or other optical elements change the polarization state. These manipulations correspond to quantum gates such as the Pauli-X (bit-flip), Y, Z, Hadamard, and phase gates. The power of a qubit arises not only from superposition but also from entanglement, where two or more qubits share correlations that cannot be explained classically. This allows for nonlocal interactions used in quantum communication and computation.

In both spin and polarization models, the quantum state is described by a vector in a complex Hilbert space, with global phase ignored and only relative phase between components being physically meaningful. The coherence of a qubit refers to its ability to maintain superposition over time without environmental disturbance. Decoherence is a major challenge in practical quantum computing, as noise and interaction with surroundings can rapidly degrade quantum information.

Spin qubits are typically operated in cryogenic environments using silicon or superconducting materials, while photonic qubits are usually manipulated at room temperature using precise optical equipment. Each qubit platform has trade-offs in terms of coherence time, gate fidelity, connectivity, and scalability. The choice of using spin or polarization depends on the application and experimental capabilities.

Conceptually, both models illustrate the essential features of qubits: quantum superposition, probabilistic measurement, unitary evolution, and the possibility of entanglement. The Bloch sphere remains a universal visual tool to understand qubit dynamics regardless of

implementation. Whether encoded in spin or polarization, a qubit is not merely a probabilistic bit—it is a dynamic, coherent, and entangled entity governed by the laws of quantum mechanics. Mastery of these foundational models is essential for advancing quantum computation and quantum information science.

Qubits as Spin-1/2 Particles

Consider an electron, which has an intrinsic angular momentum called spin. A spin-1/2 particle like an electron can be oriented in two fundamental states: spin-up ($| \uparrow \rangle$) and spin-down ($| \downarrow \rangle$), often mapped to $| \cdot \rangle$ and $| \circ \rangle$ respectively. But unlike a classical magnet that is up or down, the electron's spin can also point in any quantum superposition of these two directions. Mathematically, this is written as:

$$|\Psi\rangle = \alpha| \uparrow \rangle + \beta| \downarrow \rangle,$$

where α and β are complex numbers such that $|\alpha|^2 + |\beta|^2 = 1$.

This means the electron isn't just pointing up or down—it's in both states simultaneously until measured. If you try to observe the spin, the quantum state collapses to either $| \uparrow \rangle$ or $| \downarrow \rangle$ probabilistically.

Visualization: The Bloch Sphere

The state of a qubit can be visualized on the Bloch sphere, a 3D unit sphere where:

- North pole = $| \cdot \rangle$ = spin-up
- South pole = $| \circ \rangle$ = spin-down
- Any point on the surface = superposition state

Spin qubits can "rotate" around this sphere under the influence of external magnetic or electric fields, corresponding to quantum gates in computation. This visualization helps show that quantum information is not binary but geometrically continuous.

Qubits as Polarized Photons

Another intuitive system uses photons—particles of light—which can have

different polarization states. A photon can be:

• Horizontally polarized ($| H \rangle = | \cdot \rangle$)

• Vertically polarized ($| V \rangle = | \circ \rangle$)

But photons can also exist in any superposition of these polarizations:

• For example, diagonal polarization ($| D \rangle = (| H \rangle + | V \rangle)/\sqrt{2}$)

• Or circular polarization = $(| H \rangle \pm i| V \rangle)/\sqrt{2}$

Again, before measurement, the photon's polarization exists in a blended quantum state.

Measurement forces the polarization into one basis (horizontal or vertical), collapsing the superposition.

These models show how quantum systems store information in probability amplitudes, not fixed binary values. In both spin and polarization, the orientation of a quantum state represents complex, continuous data. This allows qubits to participate in phenomena like

- Entanglement – correlation across distance
- Interference – cancelling and amplifying quantum paths

Together, these principles make qubits profoundly different from classical bits and give quantum computers their potential to solve certain problems exponentially faster than classical machines.

In essence, whether it's the spin of an electron or the polarization of a photon, a qubit encodes information in a directional quantum state that exists in a high-dimensional complex space—subject to the rules of quantum mechanics rather than classical determinism. This is the core conceptual leap required to understand how qubits power quantum computing.

1.2. Comparison: classical bits vs quantum bits

A classical bit is the basic unit of information in traditional computing systems and can exist in one of two definite states: 0 or 1 . These states are deterministic and mutually exclusive: a bit is always either in state 0 or in state 1 at any given time. Classical bits are implemented physically using systems like voltage levels in transistors, where high voltage may represent 1 and low voltage represents 0 . All classical logic operations, such as AND, OR, and NOT, operate on these binary states according to Boolean algebra. In contrast, a quantum bit or qubit is the fundamental unit of information in quantum computing, and it exhibits fundamentally different behaviour due

to quantum mechanical principles.

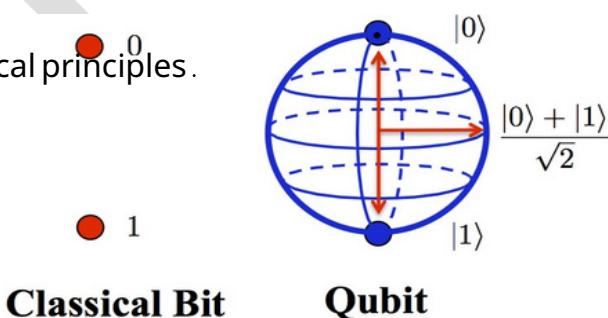


Fig 1.2: Classical Bit Vs Qubit

A qubit can exist in a superposition of the basis states $|0\rangle$ and $|1\rangle$, meaning it can represent both 0 and 1 simultaneously until it is measured. This is represented mathematically as $|\Psi\rangle = \alpha|0\rangle + \beta|1\rangle$, where α and β are complex probability amplitudes. When a qubit is measured, it collapses to either $|0\rangle$ or $|1\rangle$ with probabilities $|\alpha|^2$ and $|\beta|^2$, respectively. Unlike classical bits, qubits can

also be entangled with one another, such that the state of one qubit is correlated with the state of another no matter how far apart they are, a feature with no classical analog. While classical bits require logic gates like AND and XOR for computation, quantum bits require quantum gates like the Hadamard, Pauli, and CNOT gates, which operate through unitary transformations and preserve quantum coherence.

Classical systems are built from large numbers of interconnected bits processed by deterministic logic circuits, while quantum systems use small numbers of qubits arranged in quantum circuits with interference and entanglement used to perform computations. Classical information is copied, erased, and transmitted freely, but quantum information cannot be cloned due to the no-cloning theorem, and measurement irreversibly disturbs the qubit state.

A classical computer's power scales linearly with the number of bits, while a quantum computer's information space scales exponentially with the number of qubits due to superposition. Physically, classical bits are robust and implemented using macroscopic devices like transistors, whereas qubits are delicate and realized using microscopic systems like electron spin, trapped ions, superconducting circuits, or photon polarization. Qubits require isolation from the environment and error correction schemes to preserve quantum coherence, while classical bits operate reliably under standard thermal and electrical conditions. In terms of logic, classical computation is governed by Boolean algebra, while quantum computation is governed by linear algebra over complex vector spaces.

Classical algorithms run in deterministic or probabilistic modes, while quantum algorithms

leverage amplitude amplification, entanglement, and interference to outperform classical

counterparts in specific problems. Finally, while classical bits provide the backbone of all modern

computing, the qubit is the cornerstone of quantum computing and offers fundamentally new ways of processing and encoding information that exploit the full range of quantum mechanics. Three of the most widely explored platforms are trapped ions, superconducting circuits, and photons. Each system represents a different way to harness quantum phenomena, and each comes with its own advantages and challenges.

1.1.1. Trapped ions

Trapped ion systems use individual atoms—usually of elements like ytterbium or calcium—as qubits. These atoms are ionized, meaning one or more electrons are removed, giving the atom an electric charge. Once ionized, they are held in place using electromagnetic fields inside a vacuum chamber. These “traps” keep the ions suspended in space and isolated from external interference. The qubit states are stored in the internal energy levels of the ion, similar to how an atom’s electrons can jump between different energy shells. A laser can be used to switch the ion between these levels, allowing scientists to prepare, manipulate, and measure the quantum state of the ion.

For example, a laser tuned to a specific frequency can make the ion absorb energy and jump to

an excited state ($|1\rangle$), or emit energy and fall to a ground state ($|0\rangle$). By carefully adjusting the

laser, the ion can also be placed in a superposition of both states.

Entanglement between ions is achieved by linking their motion in the trap—when one ion moves

slightly due to laser action, it affects others. This interaction is used to create quantum gates

Superconducting qubits are built using tiny electrical circuits made from materials between pairs of ions, allowing for quantum computations. Trapped ion systems are that exhibit superconductivity—they conduct electricity without resistance when cooled to extremely low temperatures (close to absolute zero). The circuits are high precision and long coherence times, meaning qubits remain stable for relatively long

atoms. The two basic states of the qubit ($|0\rangle$ and $|1\rangle$) correspond to different current durations, which is crucial for reliable calculations.

flows or voltage configurations in the circuit. These states are not continuous like in

classical electronics, but quantized, meaning the circuit can only exist in specific energy states. Superconducting circuits often use a special component called a Josephson junction, which allows quantum behavior such as tunneling and superposition in the circuit. Quantum gates in this system are performed using microwave pulses, which change the state of the qubit by interacting with it at resonant frequencies. Superconducting qubits are fast—they

can perform operations in nanoseconds—but are more susceptible to noise and decoherence,

which can disturb the fragile quantum states.

Despite these challenges, superconducting circuits are the basis of many large-scale quantum

processors today, such as those built by IBM and Google, because they are scalable using

established microfabrication techniques from classical computing.

1.4.1. Photons (non-engineering view)

Photonic quantum computing uses individual particles of light—photons—as qubits. Photons are especially attractive because they travel at the speed of light, are resistant to decoherence, and can be easily transmitted through optical fibers, making them ideal for quantum communication as well as computing. In photonic systems, qubit states can be represented using properties like polarization (horizontal = $|0\rangle$, vertical = $|1\rangle$), path (which of two possible routes the photon takes), or time-bin (early or late arrival). Superposition is naturally built-in: a photon can exist in a combination of both horizontal and vertical polarization, or take multiple paths simultaneously. Photonic quantum gates are achieved using optical devices like beam splitters, wave plates, phase shifters, and interferometers, which manipulate the photon's path and polarization. Entanglement is produced using special nonlinear crystals that emit entangled photon pairs via a process called spontaneous parametric down-conversion.

Photons are non-interacting, which makes them stable but also makes multi-qubit gates

challenging. Unlike ions and superconducting qubits, which can be held and directly interacted

with, photons must be carefully synchronized and routed using highly precise optical setups.

System	Qubit Representation	Strengths for quantum computing	Challenges
Photonic communication	Quantum key distribution (qkd)	Strong security, fast, and measurement-based quantum computing	Secure communication, complex
Trapped ions	Energy levels of atoms	Long coherence, high fidelity	Complex operation, sensitive to vacuum setups
Superconducting Circuits	Quantized current/voltage	Fast gates, scalable hardware	Sensitive to noise, short coherence times
Photons	Polarization, path, time-bin	High stability, ideal for communication	Difficult multi-qubit operations

Each quantum system embodies a unique way to realize the abstract concept of a qubit using the laws of quantum physics. While they differ in implementation, they all serve the same goal: to harness quantum superposition and entanglement to perform computations far beyond the reach of classical machines.

1.0. Quantum coherence and decoherence – intuitive explanation

Quantum coherence is the property that allows a quantum system—like a qubit—to exist in a superposition of multiple states at once and retain the phase relationships between them. It is what makes quantum computing fundamentally different from classical computing. Imagine a qubit like a wave, not a particle. In superposition, the wave has components corresponding to $|0\rangle$ and $|1\rangle$. These components interfere with each other—constructively or destructively—based on their phase, which is like the position of the wave's crest. This interference is critical to the power of quantum algorithms, which manipulate these wave-like states to amplify the right answers and cancel out the wrong ones.

For example, think of a swinging pendulum: if no one touches it, it swings back and forth smoothly. That smooth, predictable motion is like coherence. If someone suddenly bumps into the pendulum or if the air gets turbulent, the swinging motion becomes erratic or stops entirely. This disruption is analogous to decoherence.

Quantum decoherence is what happens when a quantum system interacts with its environment, even in the smallest way. The system “leaks” its quantum information into the environment, losing its delicate phase relationships. The qubit is no longer a precise superposition of $|0\rangle$ and $|1\rangle$, but instead behaves more like a random classical bit. Mathematically, decoherence turns a pure quantum state (described by a wavefunction) into a mixed state (described by a probability distribution). It’s as if the quantum wave gets “blurred” by the noise from the outside world.

An intuitive example is a laser beam (coherent light) versus a flashlight (incoherent light). A laser beam has all its light waves in perfect phase—clean, directed, and strong. Shine it on a surface and you’ll see sharp interference patterns.

A flashlight, on the other hand, emits waves that are out of phase with each other—randomly scattered, and blurred. The transition from a laser to a flashlight is like a qubit going from a coherent superposition to a decohered classical mixture.

Coherence time is the amount of time a qubit remains in this delicate superposition before decoherence sets in. Preserving coherence is essential for reliable quantum computation. That’s why quantum processors are kept in ultra-cold environments, shielded from vibration, radiation, and electromagnetic noise. The longer a system can stay coherent, the more complex calculations it can perform.

In short, coherence is what enables quantum magic—superposition, interference, and entanglement. Decoherence is what destroys it, collapsing the quantum world back into classical reality. Managing this balance is one of the central engineering challenges in building a practical quantum computer.

1.1. Theoretical concepts: Hilbert spaces, quantum states, operators – only interpreted in abstract.

1.1.1. Hilbert Spaces: The Abstract Arena of Quantum Mechanics

A Hilbert space is an abstract vector space equipped with an inner product, forming the foundational mathematical setting for quantum theory. It is not a space we can visualize geometrically like the familiar 3D world, but instead a complete, normed, complex space in which quantum states reside and evolve. Each quantum system is associated with its own Hilbert space, whose dimensionality corresponds to the degrees of freedom in that system. Vectors in this space represent possible states of the system, and combinations of them—called superpositions—are also valid states. The notion of length (norm) and angle (inner product) allows for a geometric understanding of probabilities and interference in quantum mechanics.

Hilbert spaces enable us to speak rigorously about orthogonality (mutually exclusive outcomes),

normalization (probabilistic completeness), and basis (representation of any state).

Every observable quantity in quantum mechanics, like position, momentum, or spin, is described

by an operator acting on this space. Measurement corresponds to projecting a state vector onto

an eigenbasis of such an operator, and the inner product gives the amplitude (and square gives

~~The probability of a specific state in a Hilbert space~~ like classical spaces where a point defines a ~~definition~~:

~~At the quantum level, space is not this discrete and physical space that matters, but the abstractness of the Hilbert space.~~

~~Abstractness of the Hilbert space~~ like in \mathbb{C}^n , \mathbb{R}^n for example.

Hilbert space removes us from physical intuitions and instead gives a rigorous, consistent and

flexible framework for understanding all quantum phenomena. In essence, Hilbert

space is the $|\psi\rangle$ $|\psi\rangle = \sqrt{\langle\psi|\psi\rangle}$

abstract arena where the play of quantum mechanics unfolds—containing all possible states $|\psi\rangle$ $|\phi\rangle$ $\langle\psi|\phi\rangle = 0$ $\Rightarrow |\psi\rangle$ $|\phi\rangle$

states. Every state (evolutions) and outcomes (measurements) combination of an orthonormal

$$|\psi\rangle = \sum_i c_i |i\rangle$$

Tensor Product (Composite Systems):

$$HAB = HA \otimes HB \quad \text{and} \quad \mathcal{H} \otimes \mathcal{H} = \mathcal{H} \otimes A \otimes B$$

1.1.2. Quantum States: Vectors of Possibility

Quantum states are the central carriers of information in quantum mechanics. They are not physical objects, nor do they describe definite classical properties, but instead encapsulate all possible outcomes and their probabilities for a given system. Abstractly, a quantum state is a vector in a Hilbert space, denoted by a ket $|\psi\rangle$. This vector contains the full informational content about the system's condition. A key difference from classical systems is that quantum states can exist in superpositions, meaning a system can be in multiple configurations simultaneously until measured. The length (or norm) of the state vector is always 1, reflecting the certainty that the system exists somewhere within its configuration space. A quantum state can't be directly observed—only outcomes of interactions (measurements) with it can. The probability of a measurement yielding a particular result is determined by the squared magnitude of the projection of the state onto that result's basis vector. Quantum states can be pure (described by a single vector) or mixed (statistical ensembles of pure states), and systems

composed of multiple parts may exhibit entanglement, where the global state cannot be factored

into individual subsystem states. This represents non-classical correlations unique to quantum

theory. A state's evolution over time is continuous and unitary, governed by the Pure State:

Schrödinger

A normalized vector $|\psi\rangle \in \mathcal{H}$ in \mathcal{H} , such that: equation. The concept of state is therefore both algebraic and probabilistic: it is a construct that

Superposition:

evolves mathematically but reveals itself stochastically. It encodes both the dynamic potential

$$|\psi\rangle = \alpha |0\rangle + \beta |1\rangle, \alpha, \beta \in \mathbb{C}, |\alpha|^2 + |\beta|^2 = 1$$

and the measurement-based reality of the quantum world.

Measurement Probability:

Mathematical Representation of Quantum States

Given observable with eigenstates $|i\rangle$ in \mathcal{H} ,

$$P(i) = |\langle i | \psi \rangle|^2, P(i) = |\langle i | \psi \rangle|^2$$

Mixed State (Density Matrix):

$$\rho = \sum_i p_i |\psi_i\rangle \langle \psi_i|, \text{Tr}(\rho) = 1$$

Entanglement Example:

$$|\Phi_+\rangle = \frac{1}{2}(|\uparrow\uparrow\rangle + |\downarrow\downarrow\rangle)$$

$$|\Phi_+\rangle = \frac{1}{2}\sqrt{2}(|\uparrow\downarrow\rangle + |\downarrow\uparrow\rangle)$$

1.6.3. Operators: Abstract Machines Acting on Quantum States

Operators in quantum theory are the abstract mechanisms by which we interact with, transform, and extract meaning from quantum states. An operator acts on a vector in Hilbert space and returns another vector in the same space, modifying it in some prescribed way. These are not just symbolic manipulations, but fundamental descriptors of physical quantities and processes. Each observable—such as energy, spin, or position—is associated with a Hermitian operator, whose eigenvalues correspond to possible outcomes of a measurement, and whose eigenvectors represent the states that produce those outcomes with certainty. Operators enable the definition

of measurement, evolution, symmetry, and more.

The central evolution operator in quantum mechanics is the Hamiltonian, which generates time

evolution through the Schrödinger equation. Unitary operators describe reversible evolution,

preserving probabilities. Measurement collapses a quantum state to one of the eigenstates of the

operator corresponding to the measured quantity. Operators can be added, composed, or

commuted—though commutativity is not guaranteed and plays a central role in phenomena like

the uncertainty principle. In this sense, operators encode both the algebraic structure of quantum

mechanics and its physical interpretability. They act as abstract machines that probe,

Hermitian Operator (Observables):

evolve and

$O^\dagger = O$, $\langle \psi | O^\dagger | \psi \rangle \in \mathbb{R}$, $O^\dagger = O$ dagger, quad angle psi

define the limits of what can be known or predicted about a quantum system. Their power lies in

Eigenvalue Equation:

both transforming states and revealing the symmetries and conservation laws of

$O|\alpha\rangle = a|\alpha\rangle$, $\hat{O}|\alpha\rangle = a|\alpha\rangle$

the quantum

Measurement Postulate:

world.

Probability of outcome a :

Mathematical Formalism of Operators Linear Operator $O = \hat{O}$:

$$P(a) = |\langle a | \psi \rangle|^2$$

Time Evolution (Hamiltonian H):

$$i\hbar\frac{d}{dt}|\psi(t)\rangle = H|\psi(t)\rangle$$

$$i\hbar\frac{d}{dt}|\psi(t)\rangle = \frac{1}{\hbar}|\psi(t)\rangle$$

Commutator and Uncertainty:

$$[A, B] = A B - B A \Rightarrow \Delta A \Delta B \geq 1/2 |\langle \hat{A} \hat{B} \rangle - \langle \hat{A} \rangle \langle \hat{B} \rangle|$$
$$\Rightarrow \Delta A \Delta B \geq \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\langle \hat{A}^2 \rangle - \langle \hat{A} \rangle^2} \sqrt{\langle \hat{B}^2 \rangle - \langle \hat{B} \rangle^2}$$

v. The role of entanglement and non-locality in systems. Entanglement is a uniquely quantum mechanical phenomenon in which the states of two or more subsystems become inextricably linked, such that the state of each individual part cannot be described independently of the others. When a system is entangled, the total state exists in a tensor product Hilbert space, yet cannot be written as a product of the states of its components. This leads to non-classical correlations, which defy explanation by any theory based on local hidden variables.

Entangled states display non-locality, meaning that measurement on one part of the system

instantaneously affects the state of the other, regardless of the spatial separation between them.

Importantly, this does not allow for faster-than-light communication, preserving consistency with

relativity, but it reveals that quantum mechanics violates local realism, a principle central to

classical physics. The consequences of entanglement and non-locality are profound, forming the

foundation of quantum teleportation, quantum cryptography, and the exponential speedup in quantum computing algorithms.

Bell's Theorem and the subsequent experimental violations of Bell inequalities demonstrate that

no classical interpretation, relying solely on local hidden variables, can reproduce the statistical

predictions of quantum mechanics. Entanglement is not just a curiosity—it is considered a

Mathematical Description of Entanglement

resource in quantum information theory. It enables tasks like superdense coding, where two

A bipartite state is separable if it can be written as:

classical bits can be transmitted using only one quantum bit if shared entanglement

$$|\Psi\rangle_{AB} = |\Phi\rangle_A \otimes |\chi\rangle_B \quad \langle \Psi |_{AB} = \langle \Phi |_A \otimes \langle \chi |_B$$

exists. It also

plays a critical role in quantum error correction and maintaining coherence across distributed

quantum systems.

The phenomenon challenges our classical notions of separability and locality, replacing them

A state is entangled if it cannot be written as a tensor product:

$$|\Psi\rangle_{AB} \neq |\phi\rangle_A \otimes |\chi\rangle_B$$

Example: Bell State

$$|\Phi_+\rangle = (|00\rangle + |11\rangle)/\sqrt{2}$$

This state is maximally entangled — neither qubit has an individual state.

Bell's Inequality and Non-Locality

Bell Inequality (CHSH form):

Classical correlations obey the inequality:

$$|E(a, b) + E(a', b) + E(a, b') - E(a', b')| \leq 2$$

Quantum mechanics can violate this bound, achieving up to $\sqrt{2}$, indicating non-local behavior.

Applications of Entanglement

- Quantum Teleportation: Transmitting an unknown quantum state using entanglement and classical communication.
- Quantum Key Distribution (QKD): Ensures security via entangled photons (e.g., BBM12 protocol).
- Quantum Computing: Entanglement enables exponential state space and non-classical gates (e.g., Toffoli, CZ).

1.8. Quantum information vs classical information: principles and differences. Quantum information differs fundamentally from classical information, not only in its storage and transmission but in the very principles that govern it. Classical information is based on bits— binary digits taking values 0 or 1—processed by deterministic or probabilistic operations following Boolean logic. In contrast, quantum information is encoded in qubits, which can exist in superpositions of 0 and 1 simultaneously. This allows a quantum system to hold exponentially more information than a classical system of the same size. While classical bits are copied, erased, and transmitted with clarity, qubits cannot be cloned due to the no-cloning theorem, and any attempt to observe them disturbs their state. Classical information is fundamentally local—processing one bit does not affect another unless explicitly coupled. In contrast, quantum information can be non-local, with entanglement enabling correlations between distant particles that have no classical analog. Measurement is another critical difference: classical measurement reveals the pre-existing value of a bit, while quantum measurement probabilistically collapses a state, changing the information itself.

Furthermore, classical information theory relies on Shannon entropy to describe uncertainty while quantum information theory uses von Neumann entropy to describe mixed states. Quantum algorithms (e.g., Shor's and Grover's) leverage quantum superposition and interference to solve problems intractable for classical machines. In communication, quantum information allows for secure key distribution protocols that are impossible classically. Thus, while both frameworks are grounded in information theory, quantum information introduces a radically different set of rules—defined by linear algebra, unitarity, and the geometry of Hilbert space—which expand the boundaries of what is computationally and communicatively possible.

Table 1.1: Classical vs Quantum Bit

Feature	Classical Bit	Quantum Bit (Qubit)
State Copying	0 or 1	Forbidden (No-cloning theorem)
Measurement	Allowed	Probabilistic; collapses the state
Entanglement	Reveals true state	Fundamental and useful 2^n amplitudes
Information Capacity	Not possible	(for n qubits) Unitary operators and quantum circuits
Processing Model	1 bit	
	Boolean logic gates	

Key Principles and Equations

Superposition of Quantum Information

A single qubit holds a superposed state:

$$|\psi\rangle = \alpha|0\rangle + \beta|1\rangle, |\alpha|^2 + |\beta|^2 = 1 \quad |\psi\rangle = \alpha|0\rangle + \beta|1\rangle$$

No-Cloning Theorem

There is no unitary operator U such that:

$$U(|\psi\rangle \otimes |0\rangle) = |\psi\rangle \otimes |\psi\rangle \quad \forall |\psi\rangle \quad U(|\psi\rangle \otimes |0\rangle) = |\psi\rangle$$

Entropy Measures

Shannon Entropy (Classical):

$$H(X) = -\sum_i p_i \log p_i$$

von Neumann Entropy (Quantum):

$$S(\rho) = -\text{Tr}(\rho \log \rho)$$

Applications of Quantum Information

- Quantum Cryptography: Secure communication via quantum key distribution (QKD)
- Quantum Algorithms: Efficient factoring (Shor), database search (Grover)

- Quantum Teleportation: Transfer of quantum state information using entanglement

1.1. Philosophical implications: randomness, determinism, and observer role

1.1.1. Quantum Randomness: A New Kind of Indeterminacy

Quantum mechanics introduces a kind of randomness that is fundamentally distinct from the randomness encountered in classical statistical systems. In classical physics, randomness often reflects incomplete knowledge about the precise state of a system; for example, when flipping a coin, the randomness of the outcome derives from ignorance of the exact initial conditions, air resistance, and spin. However, in quantum theory, even when the system is completely described by a pure state (such as a wavefunction or a state vector in a Hilbert space), the outcome of a measurement is probabilistic in a way that cannot be traced to hidden variables under standard interpretations. This intrinsic unpredictability is formalized through the Born rule, which states that the probability of measuring a particular outcome corresponds to the squared magnitude of the projection of the state onto the measurement basis. This suggests that the physical world, at a

fundamental level, is governed not by deterministic trajectories but by a statistical structure that

emerges naturally from the theory's postulates.

The randomness is not due to experimental limitations or human ignorance—it is built into the

nature of quantum phenomena. Moreover, the no-go theorems like Bell's and Kochen-Specker's

show that no local hidden-variable theory can reproduce all predictions of quantum mechanics.

Randomness, then, is not a temporary artifact of measurement disturbance but a

1.1.2. Determinism in Quantum Theory: Modified, Not Destroyed

constitutive

Quantum theory is often portrayed as the death of determinism, but this claim is feature of reality. This reframes our philosophical understanding of causality, imprecise and depends heavily on what aspect of the theory one considers. At its truth, and the core, quantum mechanics retains a highly deterministic structure in the time structure of laws of nature, rejecting the classical idea of an unfolding deterministic evolution of closed systems. The state of a quantum system evolves smoothly and deterministically according to the Schrödinger equation, a linear partial differential equation that describes the unitary dynamics of the wavefunction. In this sense, given a state at one time, its future (and past) states can be precisely calculated. The symmetry of one that is inherently probabilistic, yet ordered through mathematical coherence and given a state at one time, its future (and past) states can be precisely calculated. The indeterminism arises not from the dynamics but from the process of measurement, which

introduces discontinuous, probabilistic collapse—known as wavefunction reduction—where the system seemingly jumps from a superposition to a definite outcome in accordance with a set of probabilities.

Philosophically, this raises the measurement problem: when and how does a definite outcome emerge from a deterministic process? Interpretations vary widely—some, like the Many-Worlds Interpretation, preserve determinism by positing that all possible outcomes occur in parallel, while others, like spontaneous collapse theories, inject genuine stochastic events into the evolution. What is clear, however, is that quantum theory separates two domains: the evolution of potentialities and the realization of facts. Determinism in quantum mechanics, then, is conditional and layered—it governs the mathematical structure of quantum amplitudes but not the empirical results of measurements, which remain governed by fundamental randomness. This redefines determinism from a metaphysical absolute to a conditional, model-dependent principle whose scope and limits are shaped by context, interpretation, and experimental boundary conditions.

1.1.1. The Role of the Observer: Participation in Reality

Among the most profound and debated features of quantum mechanics is the role of the observer in defining the reality of a system. Unlike classical mechanics, where measurement is an act of passive revelation, quantum measurement appears to be an active process that alters the system being observed. According to the standard Copenhagen interpretation, prior to measurement a quantum system exists in a superposition of all possible outcomes, and it is only upon observation that the system “collapses” into one definite state.

The formalism makes no distinction between observers—it is the interaction between a system and a measurement apparatus (often assumed macroscopic) that enacts collapse—but the philosophical implications are striking. It raises the possibility that reality is not objectively defined independently of measurement, and this leads to interpretations wherein the observer becomes an essential part of the physical formalism. Some physicists and philosophers have proposed that consciousness itself might play a special role in wavefunction collapse, though this remains speculative and controversial.

Wigner’s friend and the extended measurement chain further complicate matters, illustrating paradoxes where different observers disagree about the state of a system. Interpretations such as Quantum Bayesianism (QBism) and Relational Quantum Mechanics embrace the idea that quantum states do not reflect objective properties but the beliefs or relations held by observers. These views challenge the notion of a universal, observer-independent reality and suggest that knowledge, measurement, and physical existence may be inextricably linked. Whether or not

consciousness is special, quantum mechanics forces us to reexamine the relationship between the knower and the known, replacing classical detachment with entanglement of observer and system.

INTUA

SYLLABUS

Unit 4

Building a Quantum Computer – Theoretical Challenges and Requirements

What is required to build a quantum computer (conceptual overview). Fragility of quantum systems: decoherence, noise, and control. Conditions for a functional quantum system: Isolation, Error management, Scalability, Stability. Theoretical barriers: Why maintaining entanglement is difficult. Error correction as a theoretical necessity. Quantum hardware platforms (brief conceptual comparison). Superconducting circuits, Trapped ions, Photonics. Vision vs reality: what's working and what remains elusive. The role of quantum software in managing theoretical complexities

1.1 Introduction

Quantum computing represents a revolutionary paradigm shift in the field of computation, promising exponential speed-ups for specific classes of problems that are infeasible for classical computers. The given figure 1.1 shows the blueprint for a Practical Quantum Computer. However, building a functional and scalable quantum computer remains a profound scientific and engineering challenge. This challenge is rooted not only in technological constraints but also in deep theoretical issues that must be addressed to harness the full power of quantum mechanics.

At the heart of a quantum computer lies the qubit — a quantum bit capable of existing in a superposition of states. While this property enables parallelism and quantum interference, it also introduces extreme sensitivity to environmental noise and errors. Maintaining quantum coherence and achieving fault-tolerant computation are among the primary theoretical obstacles.

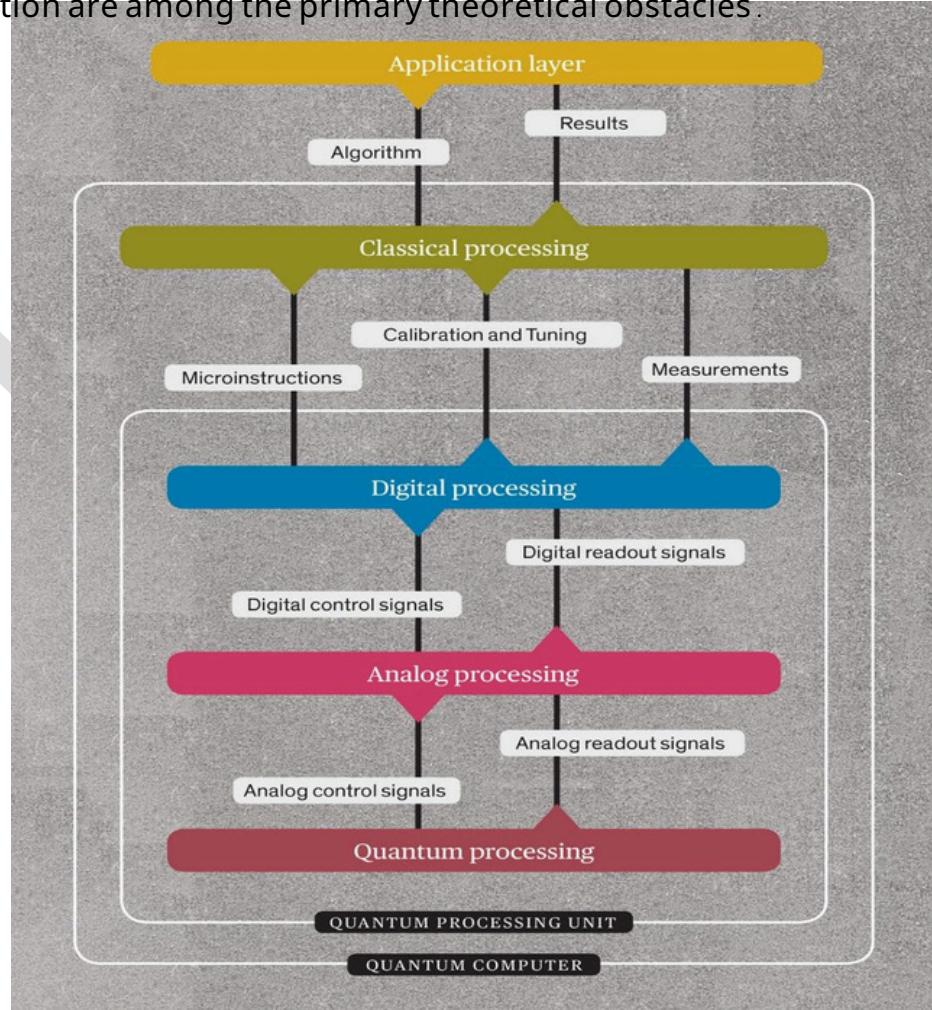


Fig 1.1: Blueprint for a Practical Quantum Computer

Theoretical challenges in building a quantum computer include:

- ❖ **Quantum Decoherence and Error Correction:** Qubits are highly susceptible to decoherence due to interactions with their environment. Designing error-correcting codes that preserve quantum information without direct measurement is a critical requirement.
- ❖ **Qubit Scalability and Connectivity:** Developing scalable architectures that support a large number of qubits, along with efficient inter-qubit connectivity, is essential for executing complex quantum algorithms.
- ❖ **Quantum Gate Fidelity:** High-precision control of quantum gates and operations is necessary to ensure reliable computation. Theoretical models must support the design of gates that meet fault-tolerance thresholds.
- ❖ **Measurement and Readout:** Extracting information from quantum states without disturbing them significantly poses both theoretical and practical difficulties.
- ❖ **Universal Quantum Computation:** Establishing the minimum set of gates and operations necessary for universal computation is a key theoretical concern in quantum computer design.
- ❖ **Physical Implementation Models:** Each physical platform — including superconducting qubits, trapped ions, topological qubits, and photonic systems — has its own theoretical framework and constraints, which must be rigorously analyzed and optimized.

This topic integrates quantum mechanics, computer science, and information theory to explore the foundational principles required to construct a working quantum computer. Addressing these theoretical challenges is vital to transforming quantum computing from a scientific curiosity into a practical and transformative technology.

↳ What is required to build a quantum computer (conceptual overview):

Building a quantum computer is not just about assembling hardware—it's about engineering a system that can faithfully implement the laws of quantum mechanics while overcoming significant physical, technical, and theoretical barriers. Unlike classical computers, which manipulate binary bits using transistors and electrical circuits, quantum computers manipulate

qubits—quantum bits that rely on phenomena like superposition, entanglement, and interference. To make this possible, several core requirements must be met, often referred to as the DiVincenzo Criteria, proposed by quantum physicist David DiVincenzo.

To build a quantum computer, one must design and integrate a highly complex system that leverages quantum mechanical phenomena to process information. Unlike classical computers that use binary bits (0 or 1), quantum computers use quantum bits or qubits, which can exist in multiple states simultaneously due to superposition and entanglement. Below is a detailed conceptual overview of what is required to build a quantum computer.

1.1.1. Qubits: The Fundamental Building Block

A quantum computer begins with qubits, which are the quantum analogs of classical bits. Qubits can exist in a superposition of 0 and 1 and can be entangled with other qubits, enabling powerful computational capabilities. Types of physical implementations of qubits:

- Superconducting circuits (e.g., IBM, Google)
- Trapped ions (e.g., IonQ, Honeywell)
- Photons (optical qubits)
- Topological qubits (still theoretical)
- Quantum dots or spin-based qubits

1.1.2. Initialization and Control

Qubits must be initialized to a known state (typically $|0\rangle$) before computation begins. Reliable control over qubits using external signals (microwaves, lasers, or magnetic fields) is essential to manipulate their quantum states for logic operations. Key requirements:

- Precise quantum gate operations (single-qubit and two-qubit gates)
- Low noise and minimal external interference
- High-speed control and synchronization mechanisms

1.1.3. Quantum Gates and Circuits

Quantum logic gates operate on qubits and are the building blocks of quantum circuits. Common quantum gates include:

- Pauli gates (X, Y, Z)
- Hadamard gate (H)

- Phase gates (S, T)
- Controlled-NOT (CNOT) gate

To perform algorithms, these gates are combined into quantum circuits following the rules of unitary evolution governed by quantum mechanics.

7.1.4. Quantum Coherence and Decoherence Management

Coherence refers to the ability of a quantum system to maintain its quantum state over time.

Decoherence is the loss of this property due to environmental noise and interactions.

Challenges:

- Qubits must have long coherence times.
- Isolation from the environment is crucial.
- Use of cryogenics (e.g., dilution refrigerators) to reduce thermal noise in some systems.

7.1.5. Quantum Error Correction

Because quantum systems are fragile and prone to errors, error correction is vital for practical quantum computing. Quantum error-correcting codes (QECCs) protect information without measuring it directly. Common approaches:

- Shor code
- Surface codes
- Concatenated codes

Requirements:

- Redundant encoding of logical qubits into multiple physical qubits
- Frequent error syndrome measurement
- Fault-tolerant implementation of gates

7.1.6. Scalability

A universal quantum computer must scale to hundreds or thousands of qubits. This involves:

- Modular design of qubit systems
- Inter-qubit connectivity (nearest-neighbor or all-to-all coupling)
- Integration with control electronics and hardware

¶.1.7. Readout and Measurement

At the end of a quantum computation, the final quantum state must be measured to obtain classical output. Measurement needs:

- High-fidelity and fast measurement techniques
- Minimal disturbance to unmeasured qubits (in mid-circuit measurement scenarios)
- Repeated measurements for probabilistic outputs

¶.1.8. Quantum Software and Algorithms

Quantum algorithms exploit the unique features of quantum mechanics to solve problems more efficiently than classical algorithms.

Examples:

- Shor's algorithm for factoring
- Grover's algorithm for search
- Quantum simulations for chemistry and materials science

A high-level software stack is required for:

- Programming (using languages like Qiskit, Cirq, or Qiskit Terra)
- Compilation into low-level quantum gates
- Error-aware execution and scheduling

¶.1.9. Quantum Hardware Infrastructure

To physically implement the above components, extensive infrastructure is needed:

- Cryogenic systems (especially for superconducting qubits)
- Vacuum systems (for ion trap qubits)
- Lasers, microwave generators, and optical systems
- High-speed electronics and classical co-processors
- Shielding from electromagnetic interference

¶.1.10. Integration and Control Architecture

An orchestrated control system must:

- Coordinate qubit initialization, gate operations, and measurements
- Handle timing synchronization and feedback
- Interface classical and quantum components in hybrid architectures

1.1.11. Validation and Verification

Because of the probabilistic nature of quantum computation, verifying correctness is non-trivial. Techniques include:

- Tomography (quantum state /process)
- Benchmarking (randomized or cross-entropy)
- Classical simulation of small quantum systems for comparison

1.1.12. Quantum Networking (for future scaling)

In distributed quantum computing or quantum internet settings, entanglement between qubits across different machines will be necessary. This requires:

- Quantum repeaters
- Entanglement swapping and purification protocols
- Quantum communication interfaces (quantum teleportation)

To build a quantum computer, we must combine:

A physical platform to store and process qubits, Tools for initializing, controlling, and measuring them, Methods for preserving quantum states long enough to compute, and robust systems for error correction and fault tolerance

It's a deeply interdisciplinary effort, involving physics, electrical engineering, computer science, and materials science. Only by integrating all these elements can we move from small test systems to powerful, large-scale quantum computers capable of solving the world's hardest problems.

1. Scalable Physical System with Qubits

The most basic requirement is a physical system that can represent qubits. These qubits can be realized using trapped ions, superconducting circuits, quantum dots, photons, or atoms. The system must be scalable, meaning that we can increase the number of qubits without losing control or coherence. Scalability is crucial because real-world problems often require hundreds to millions of qubits, and managing their states becomes exponentially more complex.

2. Initialization of Qubits to a Known State

Before computation begins, all qubits must be reliably initialized to a known reference state, typically $|+\rangle$. This is similar to resetting classical memory before use. In quantum systems,

initialization can be challenging due to thermal noise and environmental interactions, so the system must be cooled or isolated to ensure clean starting states.

γ. Long Coherence Time

Coherence refers to the ability of qubits to maintain their quantum state over time. The longer a qubit remains coherent, the more complex computations it can perform. Unfortunately, quantum states are extremely fragile and prone to decoherence—loss of quantum behavior due to interaction with the environment. Building systems with long coherence times requires shielding, cooling, and highly stable hardware components.

ξ. Universal Set of Quantum Gates

A quantum computer must be able to apply a universal set of quantum logic gates to manipulate qubits. These gates are the building blocks of quantum circuits, just like AND/OR/NOT gates in classical circuits. Essential gates include single-qubit gates (like the Hadamard and Pauli-X) and multi-qubit gates (like the CNOT gate) that enable entanglement. Together, they must be able to perform any quantum computation.

ο. Qubit-Specific Measurement

After quantum computation, the result must be read out by measuring the qubits. This measurement collapses the qubits into classical 0 or 1 values. It is vital that each qubit can be measured individually, reliably, and without disturbing others. High-fidelity measurement is essential for accurate output.

τ. Quantum Error Correction

Due to the fragile nature of quantum states, errors are inevitable. However, unlike classical errors, quantum errors involve not just flipping bits but also changing phases. Quantum error correction (QEC) techniques are essential to protect against decoherence and operational errors. Implementing QEC requires encoding logical qubits into groups of physical qubits and detecting/correcting errors without collapsing the quantum state.

υ. Control and Interconnects

Quantum computers require ~~discrete control systems~~ control systems with microwaves, lasers, or magnetic fields. The architecture must include high-speed control electronics and low-noise communication channels between qubits. As systems grow in size, creating efficient interconnects and control networks becomes even more challenging.

٨. Fault-Tolerance and Scalability

A practical quantum computer must be fault-tolerant, meaning it can perform long computations even when some components fail or introduce errors. This involves building redundancy into both the physical qubits and control logic. It also means the architecture should scale from small labs to commercial-grade machines without degradation in performance or reliability.

٩. ٩. Fragility of quantum systems:

Quantum systems, the foundation of quantum computing and quantum information science, are governed by the principles of quantum mechanics—namely superposition, entanglement, and coherence. These properties enable quantum computers to process information in powerful new ways. However, quantum systems are inherently fragile, meaning they are highly sensitive to external disturbances, environmental interactions, and imperfections in control. ~~The fragility~~ of quantum systems is one of the most critical challenges in realizing practical quantum computing. Tiny interactions with the environment can destroy the delicate quantum states—an effect known as decoherence. Moreover, even small inaccuracies in quantum gate operations or fluctuations in temperature or electromagnetic fields can introduce errors. Because quantum information cannot be cloned (as per the no-cloning theorem), standard redundancy and error-handling techniques from classical computing do not apply directly.

This fragility necessitates stringent control over qubit environments, high-fidelity operations, and the development of sophisticated quantum error correction strategies. Understanding and mitigating the fragility of quantum systems is central to building stable, scalable, and fault-tolerant quantum technologies.

٩. ٩. ١ Decoherence

Decoherence is one of the most fundamental and problematic challenges in quantum computing. It refers to the process by which a quantum system loses its quantum mechanical properties—particularly superposition and entanglement—due to interactions with the surrounding environment. In theory, a qubit can exist in a coherent superposition of both $|0\rangle$ and $|1\rangle$, allowing quantum computers to perform complex parallel calculations. However, in practice, qubits are never completely isolated. They interact with stray electromagnetic fields, nearby particles, thermal energy, and even cosmic radiation. These tiny interactions disturb the quantum state,

forcing it to “collapse” into a definite classical state, destroying the computation. Unlike classical bits, which are stable under most conditions, qubits are fragile and highly sensitive. The timeframe during which a qubit retains its coherence is known as the coherence time, and this is often very short—ranging from microseconds to milliseconds depending on the hardware. The shorter the coherence time, the fewer quantum operations (gates) can be performed reliably. Extending coherence time is one of the central goals of quantum hardware design, and it requires extreme isolation techniques, cryogenic temperatures, and highly pure materials. Until decoherence is significantly minimized or managed with effective quantum error correction, building large-scale, reliable quantum computers will remain a formidable task. Decoherence is the process by which a quantum system loses its quantum behavior and begins to behave classically due to interactions with its environment.

For example, if a qubit in superposition $|+\rangle + |-\rangle$ interacts with a photon, it may end up in either $|+\rangle$ or $|-\rangle$, destroying the computation. Mathematically, decoherence is modeled as the decay of off-diagonal terms in the system’s density matrix. Common types of decoherence:

Dephasing (loss of relative phase between $|+\rangle$ and $|-\rangle$)

Amplitude damping (loss of energy from excited to ground state)

Decoherence Time (T_2): The characteristic time over which a qubit remains coherent. Longer T_2 times are desirable for computation.

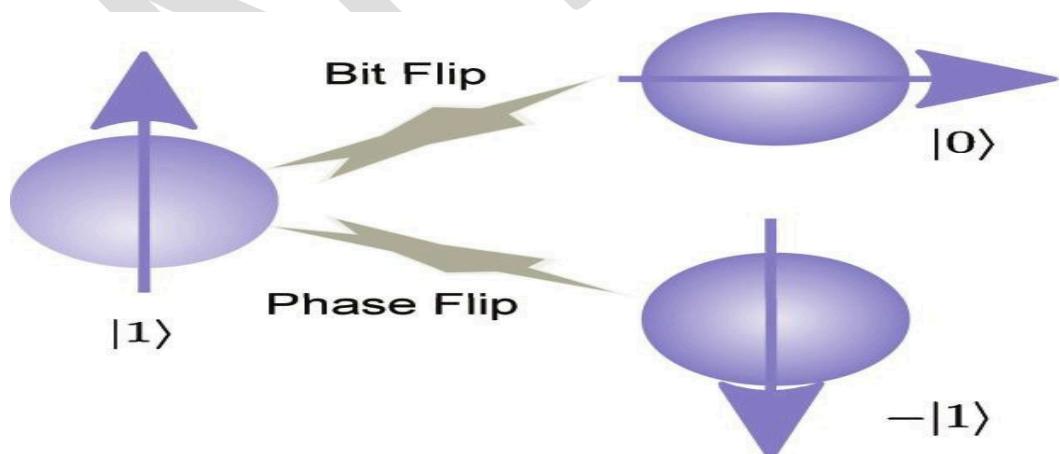


Fig 1.1.1: Quantum decoherence as characterized by bit-flips and phase-flips

1.1.1 Quantum Noise: The Enemy of Accuracy

Closely related to decoherence is the concept of quantum noise, which refers to unwanted and random variations in a quantum system that introduce errors during computations. In classical systems, noise often manifests as minor fluctuations in voltage or current, which can be filtered

or tolerated due to the digital nature of classical bits. But quantum systems, operating at the level of probability amplitudes, are far more susceptible. Noise can arise from imperfections in the material, inconsistencies in control pulses, or environmental vibrations and electromagnetic interference. In a quantum processor, even tiny noise levels can cause bit-flip errors (where $|0\rangle$ becomes $|1\rangle$ or vice versa) or phase-flip errors (which affect the relative phase between $|0\rangle$ and $|1\rangle$). These errors accumulate rapidly and can destroy the accuracy of a computation.

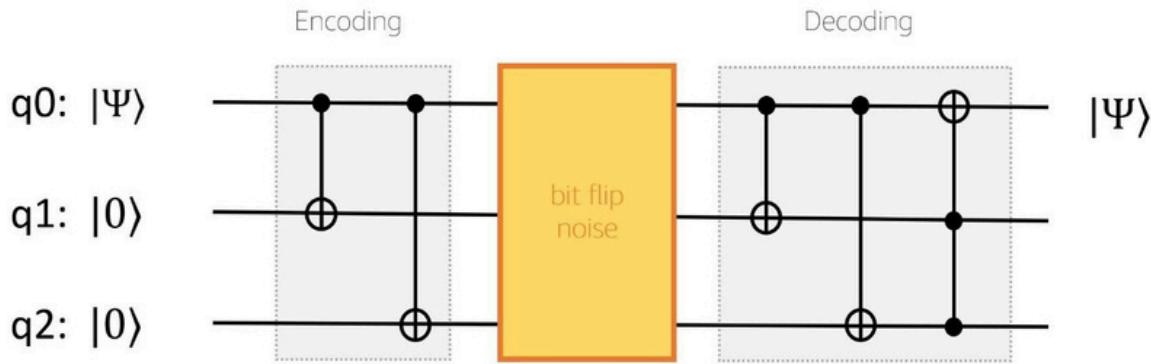


Fig. 7: Noise in Quantum Computing

What makes quantum noise particularly challenging is that it is often difficult to detect and correct due to the no-cloning theorem, which prevents copying of an unknown quantum state. Moreover, every physical implementation of a quantum computer—be it superconducting qubits, trapped ions, or photonic systems—has its own unique noise characteristics. Understanding, modeling, and mitigating noise is essential for increasing fidelity in quantum gates and improving overall system reliability. Advanced error correction codes like the surface code aim to counteract noise, but they require a large number of physical qubits to protect just a few logical qubits, further emphasizing how deeply quantum noise constrains system design.

Noise refers to any unwanted disturbance that affects the state of a quantum system.

Types of quantum noise include:

a) Thermal Noise:

Caused by fluctuations in temperature.

Can cause qubits to flip randomly (bit-flip errors) or change phase (phase-flip errors).

b) Gate Noise:

Arises from imprecise control over quantum gates.

Imperfect calibration leads to small but accumulating errors during gate operations.

c) Measurement Noise:

Occurs when reading out the quantum state.

Detectors may misidentify the qubit state due to limitations in resolution or interference.

d) Crosstalk:

When operations on one qubit unintentionally affect another nearby qubit.

Noise models are often described using quantum channels such as:

- Bit-flip channel
- Phase-flip channel
- Depolarizing channel

Quantum systems are highly susceptible to noise due to their continuous, analog nature and the lack of built-in error correction as in classical digital systems.

4.4.4 Control: The Precision Engineering of Quantum Gates

Operating a quantum computer demands extraordinary precision in control systems, far beyond what is typically required for classical machines. Qubits are manipulated using finely tuned electromagnetic pulses—such as microwave signals in superconducting qubits or laser beams in trapped ions—to perform quantum gate operations. These gates must rotate the quantum state precisely on the Bloch sphere, which geometrically represents the state of a qubit. Even the slightest error in timing, amplitude, or phase of these control pulses can result in the qubit deviating from the intended path, leading to computational errors. In classical systems, slight inaccuracies may go unnoticed due to their binary nature; however, quantum systems demand continuous, analog precision, where even a minor fluctuation can ruin a quantum operation. Additionally, as the number of qubits increases, the complexity of their interactions also rises.

Control systems must not only address individual qubits but also coordinate entanglement operations between multiple qubits—often requiring synchronization at the nanosecond scale. Any crosstalk, unintended coupling, or thermal noise in control lines can introduce correlated errors. Developing scalable and accurate quantum control hardware—such as low-noise signal generators, error-resilient pulse sequences, and high-speed electronics—is one of the most active areas in quantum engineering. Without ultra-precise control, even a perfect theoretical algorithm cannot be reliably executed on real hardware.

Controlling quantum systems with high precision is extremely difficult and crucial for reliable computation.

Control challenges

include: a) Precision

Requirements:

- Quantum gates must operate at near-perfect fidelity.
- Even tiny inaccuracies can cause errors that propagate throughout a quantum circuit.

b) Timing and Synchronization:

- Operations must be perfectly timed to avoid decoherence or errors.
- Delays or jitter can desynchronize qubits and destroy quantum correlations.

c) Isolation vs. Accessibility:

- Qubits must be isolated from environmental noise but accessible for operations and measurements.
- This duality is difficult to achieve and maintain.

d) Scalability:

- As the number of qubits increases, maintaining uniform control and minimizing cross-qubit interference becomes exponentially more difficult.

↳ Conditions for a functional quantum system:

To build a functional quantum system—especially for quantum computing—a number of stringent conditions must be met. These are often summarized as the DiVincenzo Criteria, proposed by physicist David DiVincenzo, which outline the fundamental requirements for a practical quantum computer. Here's a comprehensive breakdown of the key conditions for a functional quantum system:

1. Well-defined Qubits

A quantum system must have clearly defined two-level quantum states that act as qubits (quantum bits). These states (e.g., $|0\rangle$ and $|1\rangle$) must be distinguishable and controllable.

Examples: Spin states of an electron, energy levels of an ion, superconducting loops.

2. Initialization of Qubits

The system must be able to reliably prepare all qubits in a known initial state, typically $|0\rangle$.

Initialization is crucial for consistent quantum algorithm execution.

3. Long Coherence Time

Qubits must maintain their quantum state (coherence) long enough to perform computations.

Coherence time (T_2) must be significantly longer than the time it takes to perform quantum gate operations.

High coherence ensures the integrity of superposition and entanglement.

4. Universal Set of Quantum Gates

The system must support a set of quantum gates that can perform arbitrary operations on qubits.

This usually includes:

- Single-qubit gates (e.g., Hadamard, Pauli-X)
- At least one entangling two-qubit gate (e.g., CNOT)

Together, these gates must form a universal set, enabling the construction of any quantum algorithm.

◦. Qubit-Specific Measurement Capability

It must be possible to measure the state of individual qubits without disturbing others.

Measurement should yield reliable classical outcomes corresponding to quantum basis states.

γ. Scalable Architecture

The system must allow for the integration of many qubits (tens to thousands or more) without excessive overhead or noise.

Scalability involves both hardware and control systems, requiring modularity and fault-tolerance.

ν. Qubit Interconnectivity

Qubits must be able to interact with specific others (not necessarily all), enabling entanglement and two-qubit gates.

Efficient connectivity is essential for implementing quantum algorithms and error correction.

λ. Error Correction and Fault Tolerance

The system must support quantum error correction to counteract decoherence and noise.

Error correction requires additional qubits (logical qubits encoded in many physical ones) and complex operations.

ϟ. Reproducible and Controllable Quantum Dynamics

All quantum operations (initialization, gates, measurements) must be precisely reproducible and controllable.

Gate fidelities must be extremely high (typically >99.9% for fault-tolerant thresholds).

ϟ. Interface for Input and Output

The system should be able to take classical inputs, execute quantum instructions, and return classical outputs after quantum measurements.

This involves control electronics, classical computers, and user interfaces.

γ. γ. 1 Isolation: Shielding Qubits from the World

Isolation is one of the most fundamental prerequisites for a functional quantum system. Qubits must be completely isolated from environmental disturbances in order to maintain their fragile quantum states. Even the tiniest interaction with the outside world—such as stray electromagnetic waves, temperature fluctuations, air molecules, or mechanical vibrations—can cause the qubit to lose coherence, the key property that enables quantum superposition and entanglement. This process, known as decoherence, is the primary threat to accurate quantum computation. To combat this, quantum systems are built in highly controlled environments: ultra-high vacuum

chambers, cryogenic systems operating near absolute zero, and magnetically shielded rooms. For

example, superconducting qubits are kept at millikelvin temperatures using dilution refrigerators

to eliminate thermal energy, while trapped-ion systems are held in electromagnetic fields within

vacuum chambers to prevent collisions. Without such extreme isolation, qubits

with external noise and collapse into classical states, making quantum computation unreliable or impossible.

1.1.1 Error Management: Handling the Fragility of Quantum Information

Error management in quantum systems is significantly more complex than in classical systems due to the nature of quantum information. In classical computing, errors like bit-flips can often be corrected using redundancy and parity checks. In contrast, quantum errors involve more than just flipping bits—they include phase errors, amplitude damping, and crosstalk, all of which must be detected and corrected without measuring or collapsing the quantum state. This is where Quantum Error Correction (QEC) comes into play. QEC encodes a single logical qubit across multiple physical qubits, allowing the system to detect and correct errors by measuring ancillary qubits without directly disturbing the encoded quantum information. One

popular method is the surface code, which provides robustness against local errors and is scalable

for large systems. However, implementing error correction requires a large overhead to protect

a single logical qubit, dozens to hundreds of physical qubits may be needed. The goal of error

Scalability is the bridge between experimental quantum computers and useful management is to reach the fault-tolerant threshold, where the rate of error industry-grade quantum machines. Current quantum computers can control a few dozen to a few hundred qubits, but solving real-world problems—like breaking RSA the rate of error occurrence, allowing quantum algorithms to run reliably for encryption or simulating complex molecules—may require thousands to millions of extended periods.

qubits. To scale quantum systems to this level, the entire architecture must be designed to support modular, repeatable, and interconnected qubit arrays. This means the hardware, control electronics, error correction protocols, and communication

interfaces must be extensible without exponential increases in complexity or cost.

One of the

challenges in scaling is that as the number of qubits grows, so does the cross-talk between them,

making control more difficult. Moreover, physical space, cooling infrastructure, and signal

routing become bottlenecks. Technologies like quantum interconnects, quantum buses, and

distributed quantum computing (where multiple quantum processors are networked) are being

explored to overcome these limitations. A scalable quantum system must not only add more qubits, but also maintain their fidelity, coherence, and manageability as

7.2.2 Stability: Ensuring Long-Term Reliability and Repeatability

Stability is the foundation upon which quantum computing must rest if it is to become commercially viable and widely adopted. A functional quantum system must not just perform one accurate computation—it must consistently deliver high-fidelity results across repeated operations, over extended time periods, and under varying physical conditions. This requires both physical stability of the hardware and logical stability of the quantum operations. Physical stability involves minimizing thermal drift, vibrations, and electromagnetic fluctuations, all of which can disturb the qubit environment.

Logical stability, on the other hand, demands that quantum gates behave predictably and reproducibly with minimal error, despite operating in a probabilistic framework.

Stabilizing a quantum system also includes managing long-term degradation of materials, maintaining calibration of control systems, and implementing feedback loops to self-correct errors or drifts.

Without stability, quantum systems cannot scale up, remain useful, or be trusted to run ~~Theoretical~~ barriers

algorithms—making it a non-negotiable requirement in the roadmap toward fault-tolerant large challenges, but also profound theoretical barriers that stem from the fundamental nature of quantum mechanics.

7.2.3 Why Maintaining Entanglement Is Difficult

Entanglement is a cornerstone of quantum computing—allowing qubits to be deeply correlated in ways that classical bits can never be. However, maintaining entanglement between qubits is one of the most fragile and technically demanding aspects of building a quantum computer. Entangled states are highly sensitive to external disturbances, such as temperature fluctuations, magnetic fields, or even atomic vibrations. Any slight interaction with the environment can cause decoherence, breaking the delicate correlations and rendering the entangled state useless. Moreover, the more qubits you entangle, the harder it becomes to keep them stable over time and across physical distance. Entanglement also requires precise synchronization between qubits, often involving laser pulses, microwave signals, or magnetic fields that must be coordinated to near perfection. This precision becomes increasingly difficult to maintain in large systems, leading to a loss of fidelity in quantum operations. From a theoretical standpoint, entanglement must persist long enough to be used in computation, communication, or measurement, which places a massive burden on system design.

shielding, error correction, and control mechanisms. Without reliably maintaining entanglement, the foundation of quantum computing collapses.

4.4.1 Error Correction as a Theoretical Necessity

Unlike classical systems where error rates are minimal and redundancy can be added with simple checks, quantum systems suffer frequent and subtle errors that cannot be addressed through traditional means. Qubits can experience not only bit-flip errors but also phase-flip and combination errors, due to the probabilistic nature of quantum mechanics. Compounding the issue is the no-cloning theorem, which states that unknown quantum states cannot be copied—so we cannot simply replicate data to safeguard it. As a result, quantum error correction (QEC) is not a luxury—it is a theoretical necessity.

QEC codes such as the Shor code, Steane code, and surface codes work by encoding a logical qubit into multiple physical qubits in a way that errors can be detected and corrected indirectly, without collapsing the quantum state. However, implementing QEC comes with massive overhead—sometimes requiring dozens or hundreds of physical qubits for a single logical qubit. This introduces significant complexity and resource demands, pushing the limits of hardware and control systems. From a theoretical standpoint, fault-tolerant quantum computing—where computations can proceed indefinitely despite the presence of noise and imperfections—is only achievable through robust and scalable error correction, making it a foundational element of any future quantum architecture.

4.4.2 Quantum Hardware Platforms (Brief Conceptual Comparison)

There is no single way to build a quantum computer, and several hardware platforms have emerged, each with distinct theoretical advantages and practical limitations. The three most prominent approaches are superconducting circuits, trapped ions, and photonic systems. Superconducting qubits, used by companies like Google and IBM, are built on electrical circuits that operate at extremely low temperatures to eliminate resistance. They offer fast gate speeds and are compatible with existing semiconductor technologies, but suffer from short coherence times and significant control complexity. Trapped ions, used by IonQ and Honeywell, involve storing individual atoms in electromagnetic fields and manipulating them with lasers.

These systems have long coherence times and extremely high fidelity, but gate operations are slower and the system is harder to scale due to the complexity of ion control. Photonic systems, being explored by Xanadu and PsiQuantum, use particles of light (photons) as qubits. They are naturally robust to environmental noise and excellent for quantum communication, but face challenges in generating and interacting photons on demand. Each platform has theoretical implications regarding scalability, coherence, speed, and connectivity, and ongoing research continues to refine which approach—or combination—will lead to practical, universal quantum computing.

¶.¶.¶ Superconducting Circuits

Superconducting circuits are perhaps the most commercially mature quantum hardware platform to date. They use tiny loops of superconducting materials cooled to near absolute zero, where they exhibit zero electrical resistance and allow quantum effects like superposition and entanglement to emerge. Qubits in this system are known as transmons, and they are manipulated using microwave pulses. These systems are attractive because they are relatively fast, can be fabricated using existing chip-making technologies, and are easily integrated with classical electronics. However, they have short coherence times (typically microseconds), meaning operations must

be performed quickly before the qubits lose their quantum behavior. Furthermore, maintaining

the cryogenic environment requires complex and costly infrastructure. Superconducting systems

are also susceptible to crosstalk and noise, which increases with the number of qubits. Despite

these challenges, they remain a leading contender in the race toward scalable quantum

processors, especially due to the rapid improvements being made in error

correction. Gate operations are highly accurate, and entanglement between ions is relatively

straightforward to create. However, trapped ion systems are slower in operation—gates can take microseconds to milliseconds—and become increasingly hard to control as the number of ions increases. The complexity of laser control

systems and the physical footprint of the apparatus make large-scale deployment challenging. Still, the high fidelity and predictable behavior make them a favorite for small- to medium-scale fault-tolerant quantum systems.

¶.¶.¶ Photonics

Photonic quantum computing uses light particles (photons) as qubits, which makes them uniquely suited for quantum communication and networking. Photons are naturally immune to many environmental disturbances that affect matter-based qubits, giving them an inherent robustness to noise and decoherence. Quantum information is typically encoded in properties like polarization, phase, or path of the photons.

Because photons travel at the speed of light, photonic systems promise extremely fast communication, making them ideal for building the quantum internet. However, photonic quantum computing also faces significant challenges. Generating single photons on demand, routing them precisely through optical circuits, and making them interact to perform logic gates require highly advanced technologies. Unlike ions or superconducting qubits, photons do not naturally interact, so nonlinear optical components or measurement-based schemes are needed to perform two-qubit gates. Despite these hurdles, advances in integrated photonics and optical chips are making photonic quantum systems increasingly viable. Their ability to operate at room temperature and interface with fiber-optic networks gives them a distinct edge for scalable communication-focused quantum applications.

4.0 Vision vs. Reality

4.0.1 What's Working and What Remains Elusive

The vision of quantum computing promises breakthroughs in areas like cryptography, material science, machine learning, optimization, and secure communication. In theory, quantum computers can solve problems that are intractable for classical machines, such as factoring large integers in polynomial time (via Shor's algorithm) or searching unstructured databases in square-root time (via Grover's algorithm). The ultimate vision is the development of universal, fault-tolerant, scalable quantum computers capable of transforming entire industries—achieving so-called quantum advantage or even quantum supremacy in practical tasks. However, the reality today is far more constrained. Although there has been significant progress—most notably Google's demonstration of quantum supremacy in 2019 (where their quantum processor completed a task in minutes that would take a classical supercomputer days)—these achievements are still largely academic or proof-of-concept in nature. Current quantum devices are known as Noisy Intermediate-Scale Quantum (NISQ) systems. They typically consist of tens to a few hundred qubits, are error-prone, and lack the fault-tolerance required for large-scale applications. Problems like decoherence, error rates, limited qubit connectivity, and short coherence times still limit their utility. Furthermore, most real-world problems require high-fidelity qubits in the thousands, if not millions—something today's hardware is far from achieving. Scalability, reliability, and robust error correction remain elusive. Additionally, while quantum algorithms theoretically outperform classical ones, they often require thousands of perfect gate operations—currently impossible on today's hardware. Therefore, although the foundational concepts have been validated, practical, industry-relevant quantum applications are still largely out of reach. The field is progressing fast, but the gap between visionary expectations and current technological maturity is still substantial.

4.0.2 The Role of Quantum Software in Managing Theoretical Complexities

While hardware development is essential, quantum software plays an equally critical role in bridging the gap between theoretical quantum algorithms and practical implementation. Quantum

software addresses the inherent complexities of quantum computation—such as encoding algorithms into hardware-specific instructions, managing noise, optimizing gate sequences, and handling quantum-classical hybrid models. These complexities arise from the very nature of quantum information: it is non-intuitive, probabilistic, and fragile, requiring entirely new programming paradigms.

Quantum software platforms like Qiskit (IBM), Cirq (Google), Ocean (D-Wave), and PennyLane (Xanadu) allow researchers and developers to write and simulate quantum algorithms in high-level programming languages. These frameworks handle low-level tasks like gate decomposition, qubit mapping, and error mitigation, making quantum computing more accessible. They also support hybrid quantum-classical algorithms like the Variational Quantum Eigensolver (VQE) and Quantum Approximate Optimization Algorithm (QAOA), which are particularly suitable for NISQ-era devices.

Moreover, quantum software plays a vital role in quantum error correction—designing codes that detect and correct errors while preserving entanglement and superposition. It also assists in compilation and transpilation, converting abstract algorithms into hardware-specific instructions that account for connectivity constraints, coherence times, and gate fidelity. As quantum systems scale up, software will be central to orchestrating parallel qubit operations, managing quantum resources, and ensuring system stability.

In essence, quantum software is not just a support tool—it is a core enabler of quantum computation, helping manage the complexities that come from both the theory and the limitations of physical systems. It transforms quantum computers from abstract theoretical models into usable, programmable machines and will continue to play a pivotal role as the technology matures.

SYLLABUS

Unit ε

Quantum Communication and Computing - Theoretical Perspective

Quantum vs Classical Information, Basics of Quantum Communication, Quantum Key Distribution (QKD), Role of Entanglement in Communication, The Idea of the Quantum Internet - Secure Global Networking, Introduction to Quantum Computing, Quantum Parallelism (Many States at Once), Classical vs Quantum Gates, Challenges: Decoherence and Error Correction, Real-World Importance and Future Potential

2. Introduction

Quantum communication and computing represent a revolutionary shift in how information is processed, transmitted, and secured, based on the fundamental principles of quantum mechanics. Unlike classical systems that rely on bits as the smallest unit of information (taking values 0 or 1), quantum systems use quantum bits or qubits, which can exist in superpositions of states and exhibit entanglement—phenomena with no classical counterpart.

The theoretical foundations of quantum communication and computing provide the framework to understand, design, and analyse the behaviour and capabilities of quantum systems. These principles form the backbone for developing quantum algorithms, secure communication protocols, and scalable quantum architectures.

In quantum communication, the theoretical perspective focuses on how quantum entanglement and no-cloning principles enable fundamentally secure methods of transmitting information, such as Quantum Key Distribution (QKD). It also explores the limits of information transfer and the impact of noise and decoherence on communication fidelity.

In quantum computing, the theoretical viewpoint addresses how quantum mechanics can be harnessed to perform computations that are intractable for classical systems. It includes the study of quantum gates, quantum circuits, algorithm complexity, and error correction models, as well as the mathematical underpinnings of quantum logic and measurement.

This theoretical lens is essential to understand both the potential and limitations of quantum technologies, guiding researchers in overcoming key challenges such as decoherence, scalability, fault-tolerance, and algorithmic development.

3. Quantum vs Classical Information

Classical information refers to the type of information we deal with in everyday computing—where data is encoded using binary digits, or bits, which can be in one of two states: 0 or 1. All classical computations, from browsing the internet to storing videos, are ultimately performed by manipulating these bits using logic gates. Classical information theory, introduced by Claude Shannon, measures the amount of information using bits and is constrained by deterministic rules. These systems can be copied, measured without disturbance, and transmitted reliably over classical channels like fiber optics or radio waves.

Quantum information, on the other hand, operates in a radically different framework based on the principles of quantum mechanics. It uses qubits (quantum bits), which can exist not only in the states 0 or 1 , but also in a superposition of both. This means a qubit can represent multiple values at once, allowing quantum computers to perform complex computations more efficiently than classical systems in specific tasks.

Furthermore, qubits exhibit entanglement, a phenomenon where the state of one qubit is dependent on the state of another, no matter how far apart they are. This creates powerful correlations that classical bits cannot replicate. However, quantum information is fragile—it cannot be cloned (due to the no-cloning theorem), is altered upon measurement, and is highly susceptible to noise and decoherence.

In this, classical information is stable, scalable, and well-understood, forming the backbone of today's digital world. Quantum information offers a leap in computational power and encryption capabilities, but remains in a developmental stage due to the inherent challenges in controlling and maintaining quantum states. Both forms of information are crucial, but quantum information opens doors to solving problems that are unsolvable or intractable using classical approaches.

2.1.1. Representation of Information

- **Classical**: Information is represented using bits, which take values of either 0 or 1 . All classical systems and digital devices operate using binary states and logic gates like AND, OR, and NOT.
- **Quantum**: Information is represented using qubits, which can be in state 0 , 1 , or a superposition of both. A qubit's state is described by a complex probability amplitude, allowing parallelism in computations.

2.1.2. Superposition and Parallelism

- **Classical**: A bit can only be in one state at a time—either 0 or 1 . Computation must evaluate each possibility sequentially (unless using parallel processors).
- **Quantum**: Due to superposition, qubits can represent multiple states simultaneously. A quantum computer with n qubits can theoretically represent 2^n states at once, offering exponential computational power for specific problems.

2.1.3. Entanglement

- **Classical**: Bits operate independently. The state of one bit does not affect another unless explicitly connected via logic operations.

- Quantum: Qubits can become entangled, meaning the state of one qubit directly affects the state of another, even over long distances. This allows for powerful correlations used in quantum algorithms and quantum teleportation.

1.1.4. Measurement and Observation

- Classical: Measuring a classical bit simply reveals its value (0 or 1), and the bit remains unchanged by the observation. Quantum: Measuring a qubit collapses its superposition to a single classical state (0 or 1), altering its original state. This makes observation destructive and requires careful design of quantum algorithms.

1.1.5. Information Copying and Cloning

- Classical: Bits can be freely copied without altering the original data. Data backup, replication, and transmission are straightforward. Quantum: The no-cloning theorem states that it is impossible to make an exact copy of an arbitrary unknown quantum state. This protects data in quantum cryptography but complicates quantum communication and computation.

1.1.6. Error Correction and Stability

- Classical: Error correction is mature and well-developed using redundancy, parity bits, and error-correcting codes. Quantum: Qubits are fragile and prone to decoherence (loss of quantum behavior due to environmental noise). Quantum error correction is an active area of research and requires complex strategies like surface codes.

1.1.7. Computational Power

- Classical: Classical computers excel at general-purpose tasks and are extremely efficient for most everyday computing needs. Quantum: Quantum computers outperform classical ones in specific tasks like factoring large numbers (Shor's algorithm), searching unsorted data (Grover's algorithm), and simulating quantum systems. However, they are not universally superior and are currently limited by hardware constraints.

4.1.8. Communication and Security

- Classical: Classical communication channels are vulnerable to eavesdropping but are protected using encryption schemes based on mathematical hardness assumptions.
- Quantum: Quantum communication enables quantum key distribution (QKD), which ensures secure communication that is provably resistant to interception due to the laws of

4.1.9. Physical Implementation

- Classical: Bits are implemented using voltage levels in transistors. Devices are stable, mass-producible, and energy-efficient.
- Quantum: Qubits are realized using various physical systems—superconducting circuits, trapped ions, photons, or spins. Each has trade-offs in terms of scalability, coherence, time, and ease of control.

4.1.10. Development and Maturity

- Classical: Classical computing is a mature field with decades of progress, large-scale infrastructure, and global adoption.
- Quantum: Quantum computing is still emerging, with progress accelerating in both academia and industry. While small-scale quantum systems exist, building fault-tolerant, scalable machines is a major challenge.

4.2 Basics of Quantum Communication

Quantum communication is a cutting-edge field that leverages the principles of quantum mechanics to transmit information securely and efficiently. Unlike classical communication, which uses electrical signals or light pulses to represent bits (0s and 1s), quantum communication uses qubits, often encoded in photons. These qubits can exist in superposition states, enabling the encoding of more complex information. The core advantage of quantum communication lies in its inherent security—thanks to principles like the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, any attempt to measure or intercept a quantum state

inevitably disturbs it, making eavesdropping detectable. Quantum communication is particularly

useful for applications such as secure transmission of sensitive information, quantum internet,

and distributed quantum computing. However, long-distance transmission is still a challenge due

to photon loss in optical fibers and the fragility of quantum states, which is why technologies like

quantum repeaters are under development.

- **Definition:** Quantum communication is the process of transferring information using quantum states such as qubits, often carried by photons.
- **Security:** Inherent security arises because quantum states cannot be measured or cloned without altering them (Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle and No-Cloning Theorem).
- **Medium:** Photons are typically used for quantum communication because they travel at the speed of light and are less prone to environmental noise.
- **Applications:** Includes secure data transmission, quantum internet, satellite communication, and distributed quantum computing.
- **Challenges:** Quantum signals degrade over long distances due to photon loss and decoherence. Solutions like quantum repeaters are under research.

3.2. Quantum Key Distribution (QKD)

Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) is one of the most practical and successful applications of quantum communication. It allows two parties (commonly called Alice and Bob) to generate a shared secret key over an insecure channel in such a way that any eavesdropper (Eve) attempting to intercept the communication will inevitably be detected. The most famous QKD protocol is BB84, introduced by Charles Bennett and Gilles Brassard in 1984. In QKD, quantum bits are transmitted using properties such as polarization of photons. Because measuring a quantum state disturbs it, any unauthorized observation changes the state of the qubits, thus alerting the legitimate users. After transmission, Alice and Bob compare a subset of

their bits to detect any discrepancies. If the error rate is below a threshold, the key is considered

secure. QKD is unconditionally secure in theory, relying not on computational hardness but on

Quantum Transmission – Qubits are sent via a quantum channel.

the laws of quantum physics. It is already being used in sectors like banking, defense, and

Measurement and Sifting – Receiver measures qubits and compares part of the data.

Error Checking – Public comparison detects eavesdropping.

government communication in some countries.

Key Extraction – A shared secret key is derived using only verified bits.

Steps in QKD :

3.3. Role of Entanglement in Communication

Entanglement is one of the most intriguing and powerful phenomena in quantum mechanics, and it plays a critical role in quantum communication. When two qubits are entangled, their states are

deeply correlated, such that the measurement of one instantly determines the state of the other regardless of the distance between them. This non-local correlation enables protocols like Quantum Teleportation, where the state of a qubit can be transferred from one location to another without physically moving the particle. Entanglement is also a fundamental resource in device-independent QKD, where the security of the communication does not rely on trusting the quantum devices themselves.

Additionally, entanglement swapping allows the linking of distant nodes in a quantum network serving as the backbone of the quantum internet. Despite its promise, maintaining entanglement over long distances is challenging due to decoherence and noise, which is why creating stable, long-lasting entangled pairs is a major focus of current research.

4.5. The Idea of the Quantum Internet – Secure Global Networking

The Quantum Internet is a revolutionary concept that aims to extend the principles of quantum communication across a global network, enabling fundamentally secure and powerful communication channels. Unlike the classical internet, which transmits information in binary form using electrical or optical signals, the quantum internet would transmit qubits—information encoded in quantum states like the spin of an electron or the polarization of a photon. One of its most powerful features is quantum entanglement, which allows instantaneous correlations between distant qubits, enabling advanced functions such as quantum teleportation and device-independent quantum key distribution (QKD).

The most compelling advantage of a quantum internet is unbreakable security. Since any attempt

to eavesdrop on quantum communication disturbs the quantum states being transmitted, such

intrusion can be immediately detected. This makes it ideal for sensitive communications in

defense, finance, diplomacy, and personal privacy. A fully functional quantum internet could

also connect quantum computers across the globe, creating a distributed quantum computing

network with immense collective processing power.

Building the quantum internet, however, is extremely challenging. Quantum signals degrade over

distance, and classical repeaters used in today's internet cannot be used for qubits due to the no-

cloning theorem. As a result, researchers are developing quantum repeaters based on

entanglement swapping and quantum memory, which can extend the range of

take decades to be fully realized, the quantum internet represents a paradigm shift in the way humanity communicates and processes information—merging the laws of physics with global networking to create a new digital frontier.

1.1.1. What Is the Quantum Internet?

- A proposed global network that uses quantum communication protocols to transmit qubits instead of classical bits.
- It connects quantum devices (like sensors, computers, and communication nodes) using principles of quantum mechanics—mainly entanglement and superposition.

1.1.2. Core Technologies

- **Qubits:** Basic units of quantum information (photons, ions, electrons).
- **Quantum Entanglement:** Allows distant qubits to be correlated in a way that classical systems can't replicate.
- **Quantum Teleportation:** Transfers quantum states across the network using entangled particles.
- **Quantum Repeaters:** Special nodes that extend communication distances by performing entanglement swapping and storing qubit states in quantum memory.

1.1.3. Unbreakable Security

- **Quantum Key Distribution (QKD):** Enables users to exchange encryption keys securely.
- Eavesdropping alters the quantum state, making intrusion detectable.
- Prevents cyber-attacks like man-in-the-middle or signal interception that are common on the classical internet.

1.1.4. Applications of the Quantum Internet

- **Secure Communication:** Military, government, and corporate data can be transmitted without risk of decryption.
- **Quantum Cloud Computing:** Remote users access quantum computing resources via entangled connections.
- **Quantum Sensor Networks:** Synchronizing ultra-precise quantum sensors over large distances for environmental monitoring or space exploration.
- **Tamper-Proof Voting & Financial Transactions:** Trustless systems using quantum protocols to ensure integrity.

4.5. Global Developments and Initiatives

- China's Micius Satellite: Demonstrated QKD between ground stations 1,200 km apart via satellite.
- EU's Quantum Flagship Program: Investing heavily in quantum network research.
- U.S. Quantum Internet Blueprint: A federal strategy to build a national quantum communication backbone.

4.6. Challenges to Realization

- Quantum Signal Loss: Photons lose energy and coherence over long distances in fiber optics.
- No-Cloning Theorem: Quantum data cannot be copied, so traditional amplifiers/repeaters don't work.
- Scalability: Developing stable, affordable, and room-temperature quantum devices for large-scale deployment.
- Standardization: Lack of unified protocols and architecture across global research and industries.

4.7. The Future Vision

- A fully secure, tamper-proof internet with global reach.
- The merging of classical networks and quantum backbones, creating hybrid communication systems.
- Connecting quantum computers, quantum sensors, and quantum users around the world to form the foundation of a new digital age.

5. Introduction to Quantum Computing

Quantum computing is a revolutionary paradigm that harnesses the strange and powerful principles of quantum mechanics to process information in fundamentally new ways. Unlike classical computers, which use bits (0s and 1s) as the basic unit of data, quantum computers use qubits—quantum bits that can exist in a superposition of both 0 and 1 at the same time. This property allows quantum computers to perform many calculations in parallel. Furthermore, qubits can be entangled, meaning the state of one qubit is linked to the state of another, no matter the distance. These features enable quantum computers to solve certain problems much faster than classical computers.

For example, quantum algorithms like Shor's algorithm can factor large numbers exponentially faster than the best-known classical algorithms—posing a challenge to existing encryption systems. Though the technology is still in early stages, quantum computing holds promise in fields such as cryptography, optimization, drug discovery, artificial intelligence, and materials science. However, building reliable quantum computers is challenging due to issues like decoherence, error rates, and the need for extremely low temperatures.

4.4. Quantum Parallelism (Many States at Once)

One of the most powerful concepts in quantum computing is quantum parallelism, which refers to a quantum system's ability to evaluate multiple input states simultaneously. This is possible because of superposition, where a qubit can exist in a combination of both $|0\rangle$ and $|1\rangle$ states at once. When multiple qubits are in superposition, the system represents a vast number of combinations at the same time. For example, a 3 -qubit system in superposition can represent all 2^3 possible combinations of bits at once. This parallelism allows quantum algorithms to explore a large solution space in a fraction of the time it would take a classical computer. However, the real power of quantum parallelism lies not just in evaluating many states simultaneously, but in using interference and entanglement to amplify correct answers and cancel out incorrect ones. This principle is crucial in quantum algorithms like Grover's search algorithm, which finds an item in an unsorted database in \sqrt{N} steps instead of N steps. It's important to note that we can't directly read out all the parallel

states—measurement collapses the system, so the trick lies in carefully designing algorithms to

extract useful outcomes from the superposition.

4.5. Classical vs Quantum Gates

In classical computing, logic gates are simple devices that perform operations on one or more bits, such as AND, OR, and NOT gates. These gates are deterministic and irreversible in many cases—once a bit is processed, its previous state may be lost. Classical gates manipulate bits using electrical circuits and are limited to binary state changes. In contrast, quantum gates operate on qubits and follow the rules of unitary transformations, which are linear and reversible operations. Common quantum gates include the Hadamard gate (which puts a qubit into superposition), the Pauli-X gate (quantum equivalent of NOT), and the CNOT gate (a two-qubit gate used in entanglement). Unlike classical gates, quantum gates can perform operations that involve rotating states on the Bloch sphere, enabling complex manipulations of quantum states. Also, quantum gates must be

reversible, which means the input can always be retrieved from the output. This is essential because information loss would violate quantum mechanics. Quantum circuits are composed of sequences of such gates, and their combined behavior enables quantum algorithms that can outperform classical counterparts in specific tasks.

Feature	Classical Gates	Quantum Gates
Operate On	Bits (0 or 1)	Qubits (superpositions)
Examples	AND, OR, NOT, NAND	Hadamard, Pauli-X, CNOT, T-gate
Reversibility	Often irreversible	Always reversible (unitary operations)
State	Binary states	Complex vectors on the Bloch sphere
Representation		
Information Preservation	Not always preserved	Always preserved (no information loss)
Entanglement Capability	Not possible	Possible with multi-qubit gates
Parallelism	No (sequential processing)	Yes (superposition + interference)

- Hadamard Gate (H): Creates superposition.
- Pauli-X Gate: Equivalent to classical NOT.
- CNOT Gate: Conditional operation that can entangle qubits.
- Quantum Circuits: Built by combining quantum gates, analogous to classical circuits but exponentially more powerful for certain tasks.

4. v. Challenges: Decoherence and Error Correction

One of the most critical challenges in quantum computing is decoherence, which refers to the loss of quantum information due to the interaction of a qubit with its surrounding environment. Qubits are extremely delicate—they must be isolated from vibrations, temperature fluctuations, electromagnetic interference, and even cosmic rays. When a qubit decoheres, it loses its superposition and entanglement, rendering the information unusable. This fragility limits the time available for computation and increases the error rate, making large-scale quantum computing extremely difficult. In addition to decoherence, quantum operations themselves are prone to

errors, both from imperfect gate operations and readout inaccuracies.

To address this, researchers are developing advanced quantum error correction (QEC)

techniques. Unlike classical error correction, which uses simple redundancy, quantum error

correction must protect quantum information without directly measuring or copying it—because

doing so collapses the quantum state. This is achieved using entangled logical qubits made from multiple physical qubits. Popular codes like the Shor Code and Surface Code are designed to detect and correct bit-flip and phase-flip errors without destroying the information. However, implementing QEC requires many more physical qubits per logical qubit, often hundreds or thousands, dramatically increasing the system size and complexity. Overcoming decoherence and developing scalable, fault-tolerant error correction are essential for making practical, reliable quantum computers a reality.

4.4.1. Challenge: Decoherence

Definition: Decoherence is the loss of quantum coherence when a qubit interacts with its environment.

Causes: Environmental noise, temperature fluctuations, magnetic fields, radiation, material imperfections.

Effect: Qubits lose their quantum behavior (superposition and entanglement), leading to errors.

Impact: Limits computation time and makes quantum results unreliable if not corrected.

4.4.2. Challenge: Quantum Error Correction (QEC)

Problem: Quantum states cannot be copied (no-cloning theorem), so classical error correction methods don't work.

Solution: Use redundant encoding of quantum information in logical qubits built from multiple physical qubits.

Popular Methods:

- Shor Code – Encodes 1 logical qubit into 4 physical qubits.
- Surface Code – Highly fault-tolerant, scalable architecture requiring fewer operations.

Complexity: Requires enormous overhead—hundreds or thousands of physical qubits for one logical qubit.

Goal: Achieve fault-tolerant quantum computing that can operate reliably even with noise and hardware imperfections.

4.5. Real-World Importance and Future Potential

Quantum computing is not just a theoretical marvel—it holds the potential to transform industry and redefine computing as we know it. In pharmaceuticals, it could revolutionize drug discovery by simulating molecular interactions at a level no classical computer can match, reducing years of R&D into weeks. In finance, quantum algorithms can optimize portfolios, assess risks in real-time, and detect fraud faster and more accurately. Logistics and supply chain systems could be

optimized on a global scale, saving billions through efficient resource allocation. Quantum-enhanced AI and machine learning models could identify patterns and make predictions with far greater speed and precision than current models allow.

Moreover, quantum communication can enable secure data transfer through quantum key distribution, making eavesdropping impossible and redefining cybersecurity. In the energy sector, quantum simulations could lead to breakthroughs in battery technology and materials for clean energy. Climate modelling and natural disaster prediction could become more accurate by processing vast datasets through quantum simulations. Long-term, the quantum internet could securely connect quantum computers worldwide, allowing for distributed quantum computing. Despite the hurdles, the future of quantum computing is bright. Governments, tech giants, and startups alike are investing billions to make it a reality.

The technology is still in its infancy, but its disruptive potential is undeniable. Just as classical computing gave birth to the internet, social media, and AI, quantum computing could be the cornerstone of the next technological revolution, solving problems that today are beyond the reach of even our most powerful supercomputers.

1.1.1 Real-World Importance

Healthcare: Molecular modeling for drug discovery, protein folding, personalized medicine.

Finance: Portfolio optimization, market simulation, fraud detection, real-time decision making.

Logistics: Route optimization, supply chain modeling, dynamic scheduling.

Cybersecurity: Quantum-safe encryption and secure communication using quantum key distribution (QKD).

AI and ML: Speeding up training of models, improving pattern recognition, enhancing data analysis.

1.1.2 Future Potential

Quantum Internet: Enables secure, high-speed global quantum communication and networking.

Materials Science: Simulating new materials for superconductors, batteries, solar cells.

Climate Science: Enhances simulation models for weather, climate, and environmental changes.

National Security: Protecting critical infrastructure with quantum encryption, predicting and countering threats.

Economic Growth: Opens new industries, job roles, and research domains with high innovation potential.

SYLLABUS

Unit 6

Applications, Use Cases, and the Quantum Future

Real-world application domains:

Healthcare (drug discovery), Material science, Logistics and optimization, Quantum sensing and precision timing, Industrial case studies: IBM, Google, Microsoft, PsiQuantum, Ethical, societal, and policy considerations, Challenges to adoption: cost, skills, standardization, Emerging careers in quantum: roles, skillsets, and preparation pathways, Educational and research landscape – India's opportunity in the global quantum race

Applications, Use Cases, and the Quantum Future

◦◦◦ Introduction

Quantum computing is poised to revolutionize numerous fields by solving problems that are practically impossible for classical computers. In medicine, it can simulate molecular interactions at an atomic level, enabling the discovery of new drugs and personalized treatments. In finance, quantum algorithms may drastically improve risk analysis, portfolio optimization, and fraud detection by processing vast datasets in real time. In logistics and supply chain management, companies like DHL and Volkswagen are already exploring quantum algorithms to optimize delivery routes and reduce operational costs. Cybersecurity, too, is expected to transform, as quantum computers may break current encryption methods,

prompting the development of quantum-safe cryptography.

In artificial intelligence, quantum computing can enhance machine learning models, enabling

faster training and better pattern recognition for applications like autonomous driving or

language translation. Climate modelling is another significant use case, where quantum

simulations can offer better predictions for global warming and natural disasters. Material

science can benefit as well, with the discovery of new materials for batteries,

superconductors,

◦◦◦ Real-world application domains or solar panels.

Quantum technologies are increasingly moving from theory to real-world. Moreover, quantum computing can simulate quantum systems themselves, aiding application. These technologies exploit principles of quantum mechanics—such as the superposition, entanglement, and quantum tunneling—to perform tasks that development of better quantum devices. As we look into the future, a quantum-classical systems struggle with or cannot do at all.

could bring disruptive innovation, but it will also require entirely new programming models,

infrastructure, and ethical considerations to harness its full potential responsibly.



Fig 0.1 Application of Quantum Computing

Here are some real-world applications of quantum technologies, categorized by field:

0.1.1 Healthcare

Drug Discovery

Drug discovery is one of the most promising real-world applications of quantum technologies. The process of discovering new drugs involves simulating complex molecules and chemical reactions—tasks that are extremely difficult and time-consuming for classical computers. Quantum computers offer a revolutionary approach.



Fig. 0.1: The Potential Role of Quantum Computing in Biomedicine and Healthcare

Quantum computing has the potential to transform drug discovery by simulating complex molecular structures and chemical reactions interactions with unprecedented accuracy. Classical computers struggle with these complex calculations due to the enormous number of possible configurations in large molecules. Companies like IBM, Google, and D-Wave, as well as biotech firms like Biogen and Roche, are exploring this for faster drug development. Quantum systems, however, can process these combinations more efficiently by leveraging quantum superposition and entanglement. This can significantly reduce the time and cost of discovering new drugs. Pharmaceutical companies are exploring quantum algorithms to identify promising compounds and predict how they bind to target proteins. Personalized medicine also stands to gain, as quantum simulations can model individual genetic variations. This leads to customized treatments that are more effective with fewer side effects. Additionally, quantum computing can aid in optimizing clinical trials by selecting ideal patient groups and predicting outcomes. In the future, quantum-enhanced drug discovery could accelerate responses to pandemics and rare diseases alike.

Why Quantum Computing for Drug Discovery?

i. Molecular Simulation

Molecules follow the laws of quantum mechanics. Quantum computers can naturally model these behaviors:

- Simulate interactions between atoms and molecules.
- Predict molecular properties and binding affinities.
- Understand reaction mechanisms at the quantum level.

ii. Speed and Accuracy

Traditional supercomputers use approximations for quantum behavior, which limits accuracy. Quantum computers can perform these simulations exponentially faster and more accurately, leading to:

- Faster screening of drug candidates.
- Better prediction of side effects and efficacy.

iii. Reduction in Cost & Time

Traditional drug development takes 10–15 years and billions of dollars. Quantum-enabled simulations could significantly shorten R&D cycles.

Current Applications & Progress

1. Protein Folding & Target Interaction

Quantum computers help simulate how proteins fold and how drugs bind to them.

Understanding folding is critical for targeting diseases like Alzheimer's, cancer, and viral infections.

2. Chemical Reaction Simulation

Modeling how a candidate drug behaves in the human body.

Example: BASF and Zapata Computing work on reaction pathway predictions.

Table 5.1 Companies and Research Labs Involved

Organization	Contribution
IBM Quantum	Simulated small molecules like LiH and BeH ₂ . Collaborating with biotech firms.
Google Quantum AI	Simulated basic molecules using Sycamore quantum processor.
D-Wave	Exploring quantum annealing for molecule optimization
AstraZeneca	Collaborating with Quantinuum and Cambridge Quantum for drug design.
Roche & Boehringer Ingelheim	Partnering with quantum startups to simulate complex molecules
ProteinQure	Uses quantum computers for protein-drug interactions and optimization

5.1.1 Material Science

Quantum technologies are transforming material science by enabling scientists to discover and design new materials with unprecedented accuracy and speed.

Quantum computers and

quantum simulations help model complex atomic interactions that are too difficult for classical computers to handle.

Why Use Quantum Technologies in Material Sciences?

1. Quantum systems obey quantum rules

Traditional materials modeling often relies on approximations. Quantum computers simulate matter at the quantum level—electrons, bonds, energy states—without such approximation.

2. Designing from the atom up

- Quantum technologies allow researchers to:
- Discover new superconductors.
- Design stronger, lighter alloys.
- Engineer better batteries, semiconductors, and catalysts.

Quantum computing enables the accurate simulation of material behavior at the atomic level, which is difficult for traditional systems to achieve. This opens the door to discovering new materials with tailored properties for use in industries such as energy, electronics, and aerospace. For instance, researchers could design more efficient superconductors, lighter and stronger metals, or advanced polymers for biodegradable packaging. Quantum simulations allow scientists to test and tweak atomic structures before they are physically created, saving time and resources.

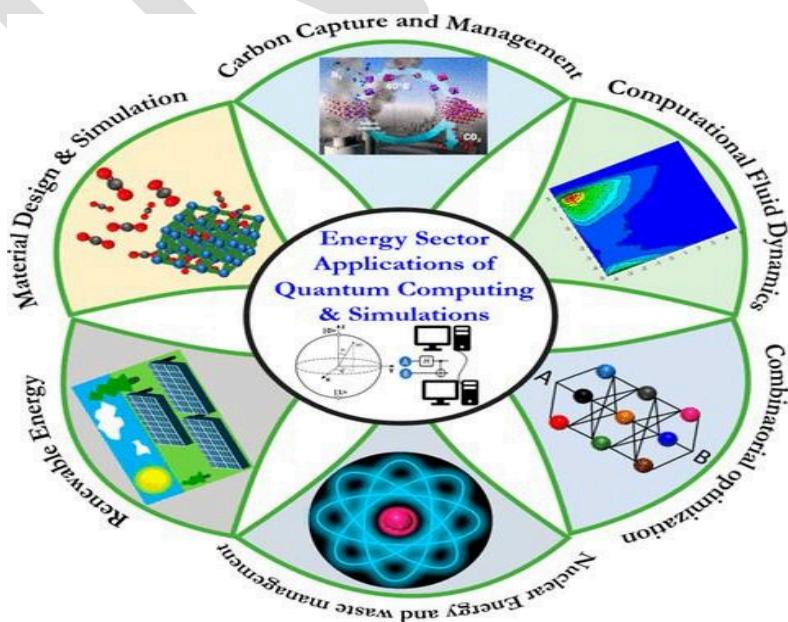


Fig 10.2: Quantum Computing and Simulations for Energy Applications

The development of better batteries—like solid-state or lithium-air types—can also be accelerated through quantum methods. Solar panel efficiency could be significantly improved by finding materials that better convert sunlight into electricity. High-performance computing already assists in these areas, but quantum systems bring the necessary scale and precision. The ability to model quantum effects directly makes quantum computing an ideal tool for material science. It may soon lead to breakthroughs in sustainability, electronics, and manufacturing. For example, Volkswagen is using quantum computing to simulate battery materials.

5.1.2 Logistics and optimization

Quantum computing is set to revolutionize logistics and optimization problems that are computationally intensive for classical systems. These include route optimization, supply chain management, inventory forecasting, and delivery scheduling. Quantum algorithms like the Quantum Approximate Optimization Algorithm (QAOA) are being explored to solve such combinatorial problems more efficiently.

- Conventional computing is used to sync with operating models that need to continuously compute and recalculate optimal routes of traffic management, fleet activities, airport regulation, cargo and distribution, and that could seriously affect applications
- Some of these tasks are more complex for a classic computer but can perform quite efficiently with quantum computers
- Two common approaches to solve these issues are – Quantum Annealing and Universal Quantum
- Add text here

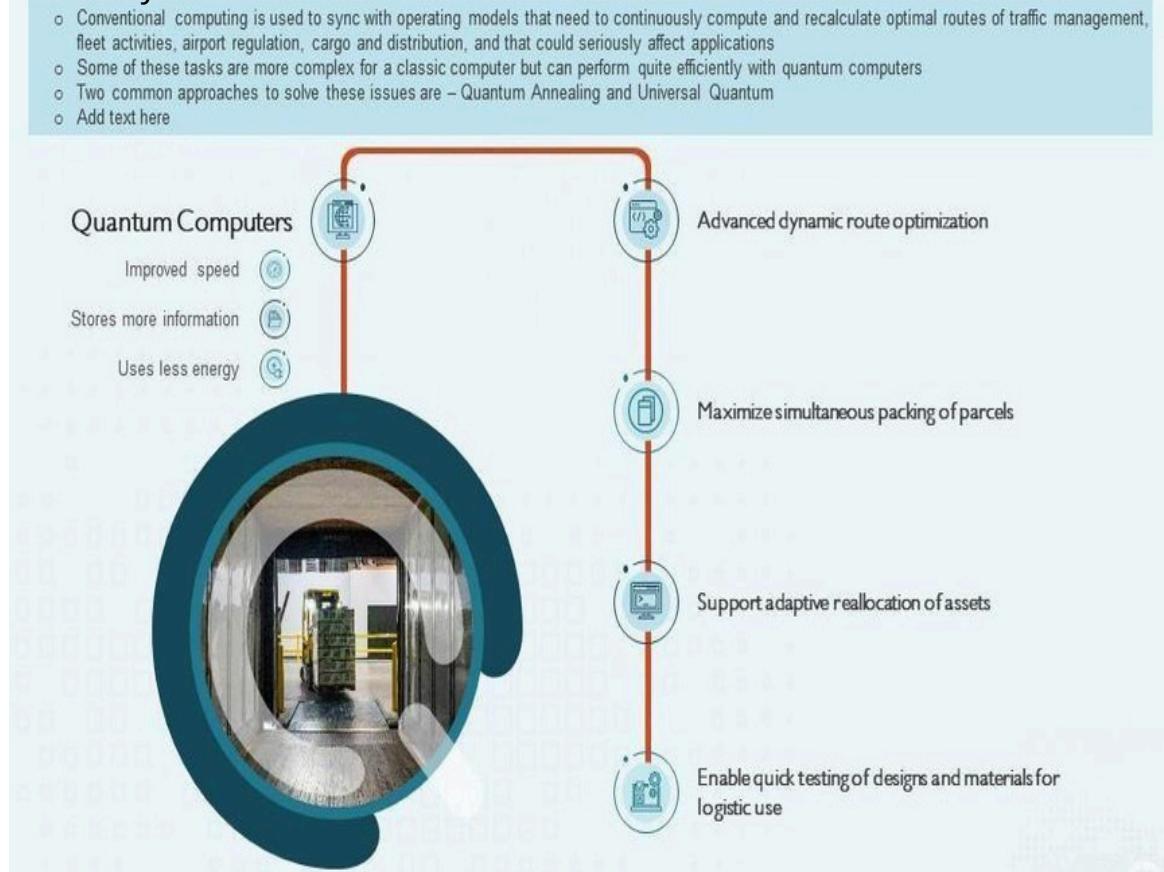


Fig 5.2: Quantum Computing Applications In Logistics And Supply Chain

Companies like DHL and FedEx are investigating quantum solutions to reduce delivery times and costs, especially under variable constraints like traffic and weather. In manufacturing, quantum systems can optimize production line workflows and resource allocation. Airlines could use quantum methods to improve aircraft scheduling and crew assignments. As logistics grow more complex with global trade, the ability to find near-optimal solutions rapidly becomes a competitive advantage. Classical computers reach limitations quickly with these NP-hard problems, whereas quantum systems scale better. In the near future, logistics powered by quantum computing could redefine speed and precision in global commerce.

5.1.4 Quantum sensing and precision timing

Quantum sensors harness the unique properties of quantum systems—such as superposition, entanglement, and quantum tunneling—to detect and measure physical quantities with extreme precision. Unlike classical sensors, which are limited by thermal noise and other environmental interferences, quantum sensors exploit the sensitivity of quantum states to detect incredibly subtle changes in environmental parameters. These include magnetic fields, gravitational anomalies, electric fields, acceleration, and rotation. As a result, quantum sensing is opening up new frontiers in areas that demand ultra-high sensitivity and accuracy. For example, quantum sensors can detect minute changes in magnetic and gravitational fields, enabling earlier earthquake detection or underground resource mapping. In healthcare, they may allow for more accurate brain scans or non-invasive diagnostics. Precision timing, powered by quantum clocks, ensures ultra-accurate synchronization, essential for global positioning systems (GPS), financial trading networks, and secure communications. This technology promises breakthroughs in fields that require extremely sensitive instruments, such as medical imaging, geological surveying, and navigation. These quantum clocks are far more stable and precise than current atomic clocks. Defense and aerospace sectors are also interested in quantum sensors for inertial navigation systems that don't rely on GPS. One of the most promising applications of quantum sensing is in geophysical and geological surveying. For instance, quantum gravimeters can detect underground voids, mineral deposits, and water sources by sensing tiny variations in gravitational fields. This has significant implications for oil and gas exploration, mining, archaeology, and even tunnel detection for military use. Similarly, quantum magnetometers can detect minute changes in magnetic fields, which can be used to monitor volcanic activity or predict seismic disturbances—enabling early earthquake warning systems that could save lives.

In the medical field, quantum sensors are expected to revolutionize diagnostic techniques. Technologies such as quantum-enhanced magnetoencephalography (MEG) and magnetocardiography (MCG) could allow for highly detailed and non-invasive monitoring of brain and heart activity. These tools offer improved resolution compared to conventional imaging systems and can help detect abnormalities at much earlier stages, contributing to early diagnosis and treatment of neurological or cardiac disorders.

Another critical domain is precision timing, where quantum clocks—often based on optical transitions in atoms like strontium or ytterbium—offer accuracy several orders of magnitude higher than traditional atomic clocks. These clocks are capable of maintaining time so precisely that they would lose less than a second over the age of the universe. This level of precision is essential for a wide range of applications: GPS and satellite navigation, which require synchronized clocks to triangulate location; high-frequency financial trading, where nanosecond timing accuracy can determine the success of transactions; and quantum-secure communication networks, which rely on exact timing to distribute quantum keys securely.

In defense and aerospace, quantum sensors play a pivotal role in developing inertial navigation systems that do not depend on GPS signals. These systems can guide submarines, aircraft, or spacecraft accurately, even when satellite signals are jammed or unavailable. As geopolitical and space-based threats grow, the ability to operate independently of GPS is becoming a strategic necessity.

As quantum sensor technologies mature and become more compact and energy-efficient, they are likely to be integrated into consumer-grade electronics. Future smartphones, wearables, and health devices could incorporate quantum-enhanced sensors for more accurate fitness tracking, health diagnostics, and even environmental monitoring. Such capabilities would quietly yet significantly change how individuals interact with and understand the world around them.

As the technology matures, everyday devices like smartphones and wearables may include quantum-enhanced sensors for better tracking and diagnostics. The impact of quantum sensing could quietly but profoundly reshape how we measure and perceive the world.

In this, quantum sensing and precision timing stand to redefine the limits of measurement and detection across multiple sectors. Their impact, though often behind the scenes, will be foundational in enabling next-generation technologies in science, security, health, navigation, and communication. As these tools move from the lab to real-world deployment, they will play a critical role in building a more precise, responsive, and interconnected future.

5.1 Industrial case studies:

5.1.1 IBM

IBM has been one of the earliest and most active players in the quantum computing industry. Its flagship platform, IBM Quantum, provides cloud-based access to quantum processors, allowing researchers, students, and developers to experiment with quantum algorithms. IBM introduced the Qiskit open-source framework to encourage quantum programming and research collaboration.

Their IBM Quantum System One, the world's first integrated quantum system for commercial

use, has been deployed in multiple locations globally. IBM's roadmap is transparent and

ambitious—they aim to scale quantum hardware from hundreds to thousands of qubits using

error-corrected quantum processors. IBM is also making progress in quantum error correction, recently demonstrating the use of quantum LDPC (Low-Density Parity-Check) codes, which are essential for building reliable, large-scale quantum systems. Their 2022 milestone—the 433-qubit "Osprey" processor—showcases their hardware scalability. By 2025, IBM plans to release Condor, a processor with over 1,000 qubits, further pushing the envelope. IBM is pioneering modular quantum computing, where smaller quantum chips are interconnected to function as a larger system. This approach mirrors classical multi-core processing and is crucial for scalability. In parallel, IBM continues to enhance Qiskit Runtime, an execution environment that optimizes quantum circuit performance through advanced compilation and error mitigation. IBM also publishes a transparent quantum roadmap, updated annually, which guides developers, educators, and researchers globally. Their presence in quantum education is unmatched, offering resources like Quantum Composer, hands-on labs, and hackathons through the IBM

Quantum Network. Collaborations with organizations such as CERN and MIT underline their

leadership in open science. IBM's dual commitment to technological progress and community

development positions it as a central pillar in the global quantum ecosystem.

Notably, IBM is collaborating with industries such as healthcare, finance, and chemicals to

apply quantum computing to real-world challenges, including molecule simulation, portfolio

optimization, and materials discovery. They have also partnered with governments and

5.2.2 Google

Google captured global attention in 2019 when it claimed quantum supremacy—demonstrating that its 53-qubit processor “Sycamore” could perform a specific computation in 200 seconds that would take the best classical supercomputer thousands of years. While the practical value of the task was debated, the experiment marked a significant milestone in quantum hardware progress.

Google’s quantum research division is focused on building a fault-tolerant quantum computer with 1 million physical qubits. They are exploring use cases in AI, optimization, and quantum chemistry. Google is also investing heavily in error correction techniques to make large-scale quantum computing viable.

Google is also a quantum AI hybrid model, where classical and quantum systems work in tandem to accelerate tasks like data clustering, pattern recognition, and neural network training. Their Quantum AI Campus in Santa Barbara is home to cutting-edge labs where innovations in cryogenics, qubit calibration, and quantum firmware are rapidly advancing. Google’s team has made important strides in quantum error suppression through techniques like zero-noise extrapolation and quantum benchmarking. Their recent work on surface codes and logical qubits shows measurable progress toward fault tolerance.

Their bold long-term vision includes integrating quantum computing with classical systems and cloud infrastructure. As a tech leader, Google’s work is influencing academic and industrial agendas worldwide, accelerating innovation and competition in the quantum space.

Beyond hardware, Google actively contributes to the open-source quantum community through Cirq and TensorFlow Quantum, allowing AI researchers to explore quantum-enhanced machine learning models. Google’s Quantum Computing Service aims to eventually offer practical applications through Google Cloud, bringing enterprise-level quantum access into mainstream business. Their partnerships with institutions like UC Berkeley and ETH Zurich are advancing research in quantum simulation and condensed matter physics. With a strong emphasis on long-term scalability, Google’s approach balances scientific rigor with practical engineering. Its bold goal—achieving a commercial-grade, error-corrected quantum computer this decade—drives much of the industry’s pace.

5.2.3 Microsoft

Microsoft is approaching quantum computing from a full-stack perspective. Unlike IBM and Google, Microsoft is working on topological qubits, a type of qubit expected to be more stable and less error-prone than traditional ones. While topological qubits are still in early stages,

Microsoft is simultaneously providing tools and platforms through Azure Quantum, a cloud-based ecosystem that offers access to quantum hardware and simulators from multiple vendors.

Azure Quantum's integration with Microsoft's cloud ecosystem gives users access to quantum solutions alongside tools like Azure AI and Azure HPC—bridging classical and quantum workflows. Microsoft's Quantum Innovator Series and technical documentation have been influential in educating enterprises on how to prepare for the quantum era. They are also focusing on quantum-resilient cryptography, developing protocols that can withstand both classical and quantum attacks. By building an abstraction layer across diverse hardware, Microsoft is enabling developers to write once and deploy across platforms, accelerating application prototyping. Their end-to-end approach reflects a deep commitment to usability, scalability, and enterprise adoption.

Their Quantum Development Kit (QDK) includes Q#, a programming language designed specifically for quantum algorithms. By focusing on integration and developer accessibility, Microsoft's contribution lies not only in quantum research but also in making quantum technologies available and practical for developers and organizations across various sectors. Microsoft is also deeply invested in quantum error correction, actively exploring Majorana fermions—exotic particles believed to make topological qubits naturally error-resistant. Their StationQ lab, headquartered at UC Santa Barbara, focuses on this ambitious path, which, if successful, could leap ahead of current noisy qubit approaches. Microsoft has also established partnerships with academic institutions and quantum startups to develop hybrid quantum-classical algorithms tailored for early business use cases. They emphasize the importance of resource estimation tools, allowing developers to assess what kind of quantum system is required to run a given algorithm.

5. 2. 2. PsiQuantum

PsiQuantum takes a unique and bold approach to quantum computing by building a photonic quantum computer using conventional semiconductor fabrication techniques. Their goal is to build a fault-tolerant, million-qubit quantum computer using photons as qubits instead of superconducting circuits. PsiQuantum's photonic approach benefits from the low decoherence of photons, which can travel long distances without interacting with their environment—a major advantage over fragile superconducting qubits. Their system uses linear optical elements, such as beam splitters and phase shifters, along with single-photon sources and detectors, which can be manufactured using standard CMOS fabrication techniques. This

positions PsiQuantum to benefit from existing semiconductor supply chains and reduce hardware costs in the long run.

They are also investing in cryogenic electronics and quantum-classical control systems that can scale with photonic architectures. PsiQuantum has filed numerous patents related to fault tolerant architecture design, photon routing, and quantum error correction, highlighting the depth of their IP strategy. The firm collaborates with government agencies like DARPA and national laboratories, and is exploring applications in energy optimization, quantum networking, and climate modeling. Though still in stealth for some aspects of their technology, PsiQuantum aims to build a utility-scale quantum computer that could run meaningful applications with full error correction. Their combination of high ambition, deep physics, and scalable engineering could allow them to emerge as a disruptive force in the global quantum race.

This design choice aims to solve scalability and error correction challenges from the ground up. Unlike other quantum startups, PsiQuantum emphasizes working with existing silicon foundries to leverage mature infrastructure and reduce manufacturing risk. Although their systems are not yet publicly available, the company has received significant investment and is partnering with industry leaders and government bodies to advance its technology. If successful, PsiQuantum could leapfrog traditional architectures by introducing a scalable and manufacturable approach to quantum hardware.

5.4 Ethical, societal, and policy considerations

As quantum computing moves from theoretical promise to technological reality, it raises profound ethical, societal, and policy questions that demand proactive attention. One of the foremost concerns is the potential to break existing encryption standards. Quantum algorithms like Shor's algorithm could render RSA and ECC encryption obsolete, risking exposure of sensitive data, national security secrets, and private communications. This necessitates the urgent development and global adoption of post-quantum cryptography to future-proof digital systems. Societal inequality is another major issue. If quantum computing remains accessible only to wealthy corporations or powerful governments, it could widen the digital divide and reinforce

global disparities. Open-source tools, educational programs, and public-sector funding are essential to democratize access and ensure that quantum benefits are shared across societies. Job displacement and workforce transformation will also follow. While quantum technology creates new opportunities, it may disrupt industries by automating tasks or shifting

required skillsets. Preparing a new generation of quantum-literate professionals will require major reforms in education, including curriculum updates and reskilling initiatives for existing workers.

Bias and fairness in quantum-enhanced AI systems pose risks as well. If data and algorithms are biased at the classical level, quantum acceleration could magnify these biases at scale. Ensuring transparency, explainability, and ethical use of quantum algorithms becomes crucial especially in high-stakes fields like finance, healthcare, and criminal justice.

From a policy perspective, governments must develop frameworks for international cooperation, cybersecurity, export controls, and intellectual property related to quantum technologies. Just as nuclear technology required treaties and safeguards, quantum computing calls for regulatory foresight to prevent misuse and promote peaceful innovation.

Ultimately, responsible quantum development must balance scientific ambition with human values. A collaborative approach—uniting governments, academia, industry, and civil society—is key to ensuring that quantum advancements uplift humanity without compromising security, privacy, or equality.

5. Challenges to adoption: cost, skills, standardization

The road to mainstream adoption of quantum computing is filled with significant challenges, the most immediate being cost. Building and maintaining quantum systems—especially those based on superconducting qubits—requires not only sophisticated technology but also environments cooled to near absolute zero, typically using expensive dilution refrigerators. The infrastructure needed to support such systems involves complex shielding from electromagnetic interference, ultra-stable power sources, and precise control equipment. These requirements drive up capital and operational expenses, making it nearly impossible for small startups, educational institutions, or developing countries to participate meaningfully in quantum

research and development. As of now, only a handful of tech giants and government-backed

research labs possess the resources needed to invest in such large-scale quantum initiatives.

Beyond cost, the shortage of skilled professionals in the quantum ecosystem is a pressing

concern. Quantum computing is a multidisciplinary domain that spans quantum mechanics,

advanced mathematics, classical and quantum algorithms, and computer

100

engineering. However, academic programs offering dedicated training in quantum information science are still limited.

absorbed into elite roles within top-tier tech companies or academic institutions, further limiting broad-based industry access.

The skills gap also hampers innovation. Without a sufficiently large and well-trained workforce, progress in algorithm design, hardware testing, and software integration slows considerably. This shortage extends to educators and trainers as well, meaning that scaling up learning programs is itself a challenge. Governments and educational institutions have started investing in quantum literacy initiatives, but progress is slow compared to the pace of technological advancement.

Quantum computing demands a rare combination of knowledge in quantum physics, mathematics, computer science, and engineering. As a result, the number of trained professionals capable of designing, building, and programming quantum systems is critically low.

Another formidable barrier is the lack of standardization across the quantum computing ecosystem. In classical computing, universal programming languages (like C, Java, or Python), standardized chip architectures (like x86 or ARM), and defined protocols for data exchange have created an ecosystem where hardware and software can evolve rapidly and cooperatively. In contrast, the quantum world remains fragmented. Each hardware vendor—whether working on superconducting qubits, trapped ions, photonic systems, or topological qubits—uses unique control systems, programming environments, and error correction methods. As a result, software written for one platform is rarely portable to another, making collaboration and system integration difficult.

The absence of standardization also means there is no shared benchmarking system to measure progress objectively across platforms. This makes it harder for organizations to make informed decisions about which quantum technologies to invest in, and for researchers to compare results and replicate studies. Without agreed-upon protocols, it's also difficult to ensure compatibility between different layers of the quantum computing stack—from hardware to middleware to application software.

Until these core challenges—cost, workforce skills, and system standardization—are addressed, quantum computing will continue to remain largely in the domain of research and experimentation. For the technology to achieve widespread adoption and commercial viability, there must be concerted efforts by governments, academia, and industry to democratize access, invest in education, and agree on shared frameworks and protocols. Only then can the true transformative potential of quantum computing be fully realized across sectors such as healthcare, finance, energy, logistics, and beyond.

5. Emerging careers in quantum: roles, skillsets, and preparation pathways

The rise of quantum computing is generating an exciting array of new career opportunities, blending physics with computer science, mathematics, and engineering. As quantum technologies move closer to practical application, the demand for skilled professionals is growing rapidly. Among the most prominent emerging roles is the Quantum Software Developer, responsible for writing algorithms tailored to quantum computers using special frameworks such as IBM's

Qiskit, Google's Cirq, Xanadu's PennyLane, or Microsoft's Q#.

These developers work on creating quantum programs for applications in cryptography, optimization, chemistry, and machine learning. Another critical role is that of the Quantum Hardware Engineer, who designs, tests, and maintains the delicate physical systems—such as superconducting circuits, ion traps, or photonic chips—that serve as the backbone of quantum computation. These engineers must understand cryogenics, quantum control systems, and the physics of qubit interactions. Their work ensures the reliable operation of quantum processors under extreme environmental conditions.

Quantum Researchers and Quantum Algorithm Scientists play a foundational role in pushing the frontiers of the field. They focus on developing more stable and error-resistant qubits, inventing novel quantum algorithms, and improving quantum error correction and fault tolerance mechanisms. Many of these professionals work in academia or research labs but are increasingly being recruited into private-sector R&D roles.

In parallel, Quantum Information Scientists work on the theoretical aspects of how quantum systems process, transmit, and secure information. Their insights underpin advances in areas like quantum cryptography, quantum communications, and entanglement-based networks. Meanwhile, the industry is seeing the emergence of roles such as Quantum Systems Integrators, who bridge the gap between hardware, software, and applications—ensuring that quantum components work together efficiently across the tech stack.

With the growing intersection of business and quantum, companies are also hiring Quantum Product Managers, who guide the development and delivery of quantum solutions aligned with customer needs and market trends. Similarly, Quantum Cybersecurity Analysts are becoming vital in preparing organizations for a post-quantum world by analyzing encryption vulnerabilities and implementing quantum-safe cryptographic protocols.

The required skillsets for these careers are diverse but generally include a strong foundation in quantum mechanics, linear algebra, probability theory, and classical programming languages like Python or C++. Knowledge of quantum programming platforms, familiarity

with quantum gates and circuits, and experience with simulation tools are increasingly expected. In hardware-related roles, additional expertise in electrical engineering, nanofabrication, cryogenics, or optics may be essential.

To prepare for a career in quantum technologies, students and professionals can pursue formal degrees in physics, computer science, mathematics, or electrical engineering. Many universities now offer specialized quantum computing master's programs, interdisciplinary

~~PhD students have been taking~~ flexible learning paths.

numerous online platforms—including edX, Coursera, QuTech Academy, and MITx—offer quantum computing courses. Additionally, companies like IBM, Microsoft, and Google provide free tools and resources for self-learning and experimentation.

Hands-on training is increasingly vital. Platforms such as IBM Quantum Experience, Azure Quantum, and Amazon Braket allow users to access real quantum hardware and simulators. Industry certifications, hackathons, internships, and quantum developer bootcamps are also emerging as effective ways to gain practical exposure and build credibility in the field.

As quantum technology evolves, so too will the career landscape. Interdisciplinary collaboration—combining physics, engineering, AI, and cybersecurity—will be essential.

Lifelong learning and adaptability will remain key traits for anyone aiming to build and sustain a successful career in the quantum workforce of the future.

5.1 Educational and research landscape – India's opportunity in the global quantum race

India is uniquely positioned to play a pivotal role in the global quantum revolution, thanks to its vast pool of scientific talent, growing technology infrastructure, and increased policy-level attention to emerging technologies. Recognizing the transformative potential of quantum computing, The Indian government launched the National Mission on Quantum Technologies & Applications (NM-QTA) with a significant outlay of ₹8,000 crores (around \$1 billion USD). Premier institutes like IISc Bangalore, IIT Bombay, Delhi, Madras, and Kharagpur, and Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) are at the forefront of academic research in quantum physics and quantum computing. These institutions are engaged in pioneering work on quantum algorithms, quantum key distribution (QKD), quantum error correction, quantum optics, and quantum materials. In parallel, specialized quantum research labs are being established in collaboration with government agencies such as DRDO, ISRO, and DST, further expanding India's R&D footprint.

Educational initiatives are also gathering momentum. Universities are beginning to offer elective and degree programs in quantum information science, and efforts are underway to integrate quantum modules into engineering and physics curricula at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The Quantum Computer Simulator Toolkit (QSim), launched by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), is an important step toward democratizing quantum education. QSim allows students and researchers to develop and test quantum algorithms on simulated environments without needing access to real quantum hardware.

Despite this promising start, India must address several systemic challenges to fully harness its potential. A major bottleneck is the shortage of trained faculty and researchers who specialize in quantum science. Additionally, infrastructure gaps—such as the lack of high-fidelity quantum hardware, advanced fabrication labs, and dedicated quantum computing centers—impede rapid progress. There is also a pressing need to foster deeper industry-academic collaborations, which remain limited compared to global counterparts.

To bridge these gaps, public-private partnerships (PPP) must be scaled up. Tech companies like TCS, Infosys, and HCL are beginning to explore quantum computing applications and can play a vital role in commercializing academic research. India should also focus on international collaborations with leading quantum research hubs in the US, EU, Canada, and Japan to gain access to expertise, platforms, and funding. Encouraging student participation through quantum hackathons, fellowships, and global internships will further energize the ecosystem.

With its robust IT and software industry, deep mathematical and scientific base, and strong policy direction, India has the potential not only to catch up with global quantum leaders but also to lead in select areas such as quantum software development, theoretical quantum research, quantum cryptography, and simulation technologies. For this vision to materialize, a long-term commitment to curriculum reform, faculty development, infrastructure investment, and ecosystem collaboration is essential.

If India leverages these strengths strategically, it can transform from a follower to a global innovator in quantum technologies—contributing significantly to secure communications, next generation computing, precision medicine, and national defence.