

NATIONAL RADIO ASTRONOMY OBSERVATORY

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SOME RESULTS ON THE VLA PERFORMANCE WITH LESS THAN 36 ELEMENTS

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This report summarizes the performance of the VLA for the following two cases:

- (i) Single observation performance of the VLA with 36, 33, 30 and 27 elements for three different configurations.
- (ii) Single observation performance of a 36-element VLA in the supplemented Wye configuration when one element is inoperative.

In the first study, three configurations have been tried: (a) The supplemented Wye in which the first three elements are located at one-third the unit spacing, (b) a configuration in which the first two elements are located at one-half the unit spacing and (c) a configuration with uniform spacing between all adjacent elements. Tables I, II, and III give the results for these three configurations for 36, 33, 30 and 27 elements. A comparison of the three configurations is made in Table IV for 36 and 27 elements. The following points are brought out clearly by these results.

- (i) The percentage of holes is not a good measure of the performance. Table IV shows that the percentage of holes goes down considerably for configurations (b) and (c) compared to (a). However, this does not necessarily lead to a reduction of sidelobes.
- (ii) The best configuration depends both upon the number of elements and the declination. It is clear that for sources north of the equator, supplemented Wye is the best configuration. But for sources at and below the equator, uniform spacing leads to a

better beam than the supplemented Wye configuration.

(iii) If -14db is taken as the upper limit for any side lobe within the field of view, then 33 elements are sufficient. The maximum sidelobes with 33 elements are within one db of the maximum sidelobes with 36 elements.

With the exception of the equator, the goal of an upper limit of -14db on sidelobes can be achieved even with 30 elements. When 30 elements are arranged in the supplemented Wye configuration, the maximum sidelobes at 30° and -15° declinations are -18.4 and -18.9 dbs respectively. However, at 0° declination, there is a -11.1 db sidelobe near the edge of the field of view. The RMS sidelobes are nowhere greater than -23db. The deficiency at 0° declination can be overcome by the use of complementary arrays technique. It appears, therefore, that a 30-element VLA will meet the -14db sidelobe limit with a single observation for sources everywhere except close to and on the equator where complementary arrays technique will have to be used.

The results of the second part of the study, viz., the effect of removing one element on the VLA performance, are summarized in Table V. Since the deterioration in performance depends upon the baselines lost, a complete study should consider the effect of removing each of the 36 elements, one at a time, at various declinations. However, due to the formidable magnitude of such a study, only a few sample elements have been chosen. Specifically, six cases have been considered which include the effect of removing an element close to the center of the Wye and an element far from the center for each of the three arms. In each case the basic configuration is the standard 36-element supplemented Wye with one arm rotated 5° east of the North-South line. Three source declinations, 30°, 0° and -15° have been considered. The element removed is designated by the arm and the number, for example, SW-11 means the 11th element from the center on the South-West arm.

It is clear from Table V that the sidelobe levels go up, in general, when an element is removed. However, nowhere is the increase in sidelobe level more than 2 dbs. In most cases the increase is less than 1db. Thus the performance does not deteriorate to an unacceptable level when one out of the 36 elements becomes inoperative.

TABLE I  
VLA PERFORMANCE FOR N = 36, 33, 30, 27

Model	N	Declination	Tracking Range	Holes (%)	Half-Power Beamwidth	Relative Gain	Maximum Sidelobe Level					RMS Sidelobe Level				
							Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5
CONFIGURATION A: SUPPLEMENTED WYE (FIRST THREE ELEMENTS AT 1/3 UNIT SPACING)																
3621A611	36	30°	$\pm 6.0^h$	6.08	10.0 x 10.4	419	-20.6	-21.6	-21.7	-22.1	-21.8	-26.2	-27.7	-28.5	-30.6	-31.3
3321A611	33	30°	$\pm 6.0^h$	8.91	10.0 x 10.4	379	-19.6	-20.7	-19.7	-22.2	-20.3	-25.1	-26.9	-27.7	-29.5	-30.5
3021A611	30	30°	$\pm 6.0^h$	12.35	10.0 x 10.4	339	-18.7	-20.3	-18.4	-18.9	-19.4	-24.7	-25.3	-27.1	-28.3	-29.6
2721A611	27	30°	$\pm 6.0^h$	17.52	10.0 x 10.5	304	-18.0	-19.1	-18.1	-17.4	-19.5	-23.4	-24.1	-26.1	-27.0	-28.7
3621A502	36	0°	$\pm 5.5^h$	18.61	9.6 x 11.4	395	-17.6	-19.8	-19.1	-14.2	-16.6	-25.7	-28.7	-30.4	-32.4	-34.5
3321A502	33	0°	$\pm 5.5^h$	22.08	9.4 x 11.7	355	-16.3	-19.2	-17.4	-17.3	-14.0	-24.5	-28.1	-29.3	-31.8	-33.6
3021A502	30	0°	$\pm 5.5^h$	28.09	9.3 x 12.3	314	-15.3	-16.2	-18.2	-14.3	-11.1	-23.4	-26.1	-28.3	-30.3	-32.4
2721A502	27	0°	$\pm 5.5^h$	37.23	9.3 x 13.0	272	-16.3	-16.0	-12.7	-15.0	-8.4	-22.3	-25.7	-26.2	-29.2	-31.1
3621A523	36	-15°	$\pm 5.3^h$	17.20	10.7 x 11.5	402	-20.0	-25.0	-20.8	-21.7	-21.7	-27.9	-31.5	-31.0	-32.3	-33.4
3321A523	33	-15°	$\pm 5.3^h$	20.52	10.8 x 11.6	362	-19.0	-23.6	-19.8	-22.6	-20.5	-27.5	-29.7	-29.8	-31.2	-32.3
3021A523	30	-15°	$\pm 5.3^h$	24.25	11.0 x 11.5	322	-18.9	-21.4	-19.0	-21.6	-18.9	-25.8	-28.7	-28.3	-30.2	-31.4
2721A523	27	-15°	$\pm 5.3^h$	29.02	11.2 x 11.5	291	-17.5	-19.3	-17.4	-19.4	-17.8	-24.4	-26.7	-27.6	-29.0	-30.3

TABLE II  
VLA PERFORMANCE FOR N = 36, 33, 30, 27

Model	N	Declination	Tracking Range	Holes (%)	Half-Power Beamwidth	Relative Gain	Maximum Sidelobe Level					RMS Sidelobe Level				
							Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5
<b>CONFIGURATION B: FIRST TWO ELEMENTS AT ONE-HALF THE UNIT SPACING</b>																
3621B611	36	30°	<u>+6.0</u> <sup>h</sup>	5.03	10.0 x 10.3	409	-18.7	-21.7	-19.4	-20.9	-21.2	-25.3	-27.0	-27.8	-29.6	-31.1
3321B611	33	30°	<u>+6.0</u> <sup>h</sup>	7.96	9.9 x 10.2	360	-16.8	-19.8	-17.6	-18.8	-22.0	-24.0	-26.3	-27.2	-28.3	-30.0
3021B611	30	30°	<u>+6.0</u> <sup>h</sup>	11.52	9.8 x 10.2	324	-16.4	-20.5	-17.1	-17.3	-20.0	-23.3	-25.4	-26.3	-27.4	-29.2
2721B611	27	30°	<u>+6.0</u> <sup>h</sup>	16.40	9.8 x 10.3	288	-15.7	-19.7	-15.8	-16.4	-19.1	-22.2	-24.4	-25.5	-26.6	-28.3
3621B502	36	0°	<u>+5.5</u> <sup>h</sup>	15.03	9.6 x 11.2	401	-21.7	-20.6	-20.7	-17.7	-18.0	-27.3	-29.8	-31.3	-33.4	-35.2
3321B502	33	0°	<u>+5.5</u> <sup>h</sup>	20.25	9.5 x 11.5	352	-18.2	-18.4	-18.1	-13.0	-15.2	-24.5	-27.4	-29.4	-30.9	-33.1
3021B502	30	0°	<u>+5.5</u> <sup>h</sup>	25.04	9.2 x 12.3	305	-17.4	-17.3	-16.1	-16.2	-11.7	-24.8	-26.9	-28.2	-30.2	-32.2
2721B502	27	0°	<u>+5.5</u> <sup>h</sup>	30.75	9.2 x 12.6	274	-15.3	-17.0	-16.8	-13.3	-9.6	-22.6	-25.0	-27.9	-29.0	-31.4
3621B523	36	-15°	<u>+5.3</u> <sup>h</sup>	15.50	10.6 x 11.8	404	-21.4	-24.6	-22.4	-21.8	-23.6	-28.7	-31.6	-32.0	-32.6	-33.9
3321B523	33	-15°	<u>+5.3</u> <sup>h</sup>	18.07	10.7 x 11.5	358	-20.7	-25.4	-20.0	-20.7	-21.1	-27.7	-31.2	-30.8	-31.8	-32.9
3021B523	30	-15°	<u>+5.3</u> <sup>h</sup>	21.68	10.9 x 11.4	318	-20.3	-23.4	-19.0	-21.8	-19.7	-27.7	-29.4	-29.4	-30.8	-31.9
2721B523	27	-15°	<u>+5.3</u> <sup>h</sup>	26.28	11.1 x 11.4	282	-18.2	-21.0	-17.6	-19.5	-17.7	-25.8	-27.8	-27.6	-29.3	-30.5

TABLE III  
VLA PERFORMANCE FOR N = 36, 33, 30, 27

Model	N	Declination	Tracking Range	Holes (%)	Half-Power Beamwidth	Relative Gain	Maximum Sidelobe Level					RMS Sidelobe Level				
							Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5
<b>CONFIGURATION U: UNIFORM SPACING</b>																
3621U611	36	30°	$\pm 6.0^h$	5.04	9.7 x 10.0	365	-14.6	-17.7	-15.9	-15.6	-19.7	-22.1	-27.1	-27.6	-28.6	-30.2
3321U611	33	30°	$\pm 6.0^h$	7.59	9.6 x 10.0	332	-14.1	-17.5	-14.9	-15.4	-19.5	-21.8	-26.9	-26.6	-28.1	-29.3
3021U611	30	30°	$\pm 6.0^h$	11.53	9.5 x 9.9	295	-13.7	-17.7	-14.2	-17.8	-18.7	-21.9	-26.2	-25.5	-27.4	-28.5
2721U611	27	30°	$\pm 6.0^h$	16.75	9.4 x 9.8	266	-13.5	-18.2	-12.8	-16.8	-17.2	-21.7	-25.5	-24.7	-26.6	-27.7
3621U502	36	0°	$\pm 5.5^h$	12.88	9.6 x 11.0	386	-19.5	-21.1	-19.3	-20.0	-19.7	-24.5	-26.9	-30.9	-32.8	-34.5
3321U502	33	0°	$\pm 5.5^h$	17.25	9.5 x 11.3	345	-18.3	-19.7	-18.2	-15.4	-15.5	-24.1	-27.1	-29.7	-31.5	-33.7
3021U502	30	0°	$\pm 5.5^h$	22.75	9.3 x 11.7	294	-18.2	-17.3	-17.6	-11.8	-14.2	-22.3	-25.7	-28.3	-30.1	-32.2
2721U502	27	0°	$\pm 5.5^h$	27.96	9.0 x 12.2	251	-15.1	-18.0	-15.5	-16.3	-10.2	-21.1	-26.2	-27.5	-29.7	-31.4
3621U523	36	-15°	$\pm 5.3^h$	13.78	10.6 x 11.6	387	-21.7	-26.0	-25.4	-22.1	-24.1	-29.2	-33.5	-33.7	-33.3	-34.3
3321U523	33	-15°	$\pm 5.3^h$	16.54	10.7 x 11.6	343	-21.3	-24.9	-21.6	-19.9	-22.4	-28.1	-30.7	-31.2	-31.7	-33.1
3021U523	30	-15°	$\pm 5.3^h$	19.45	10.8 x 11.3	302	-21.1	-24.5	-18.6	-18.8	-20.4	-27.5	-30.9	-29.7	-31.0	-32.2
2721U523	27	-15°	$\pm 5.3^h$	23.79	11.0 x 11.2	262	-19.7	-22.2	-17.5	-21.1	-18.1	-27.5	-28.3	-28.1	-29.6	-30.7

TABLE IV  
VLA PERFORMANCE FOR VARIOUS CONFIGURATIONS

A. Supplemented Wye				B. First Two Elements at Half Unit Spacing				U. Uniform Spacing								
Model	N	Declination	Tracking Range	Holes (%)	Half-Power Beamwidth	Relative Gain	Maximum Sidelobe Level					RMS Sidelobe Level				
							Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5
3621A611	36	30°	$\pm 6.0^h$	6.08	10.0 x 10.4	419	-20.6	-21.6	-21.7	-22.1	-21.8	-26.2	-27.7	-28.5	-30.6	-31.3
3621B611	36	30°	$\pm 6.0^h$	5.03	10.0 x 10.3	409	-18.7	-21.7	-19.4	-20.9	-21.2	-25.3	-27.0	-27.8	-29.6	-31.3
3621U611	36	30°	$\pm 6.0^h$	5.04	9.7 x 10.0	365	-14.6	-17.7	-15.9	-15.6	-19.7	-22.1	-27.1	-27.6	-28.6	-31.1
3621A502	36	0°	$\pm 5.5^h$	18.61	9.6 x 11.4	395	-17.6	-19.8	-19.1	-14.2	-16.6	-25.7	-28.7	-30.4	-32.4	-34.5
3621B502	36	0°	$\pm 5.5^h$	15.03	9.6 x 11.2	401	-21.7	-20.6	-20.7	-17.7	-18.0	-27.3	-29.8	-31.3	-33.4	-35.2
3621U502	36	0°	$\pm 5.5^h$	12.88	9.6 x 11.0	386	-19.5	-21.1	-19.3	-20.0	-19.7	-24.5	-26.9	-30.9	-32.8	-34.5
3621A523	36	-15°	$\pm 5.3^h$	17.20	10.7 x 11.5	402	-20.0	-25.0	-20.8	-21.7	-21.7	-27.9	-31.5	-31.0	-32.3	-33.4
3621B523	36	-15°	$\pm 5.3^h$	15.50	10.6 x 11.8	404	-21.4	-24.6	-22.4	-21.8	-23.6	-28.7	-31.6	-32.0	-32.6	-33.9
3621U523	36	-15°	$\pm 5.3^h$	13.78	10.6 x 11.6	387	-19.5	-21.1	-25.4	-22.1	-24.1	-29.2	-33.5	-33.7	-33.3	-34.3
2721A611	27	30°	$\pm 6.0^h$	17.52	10.0 x 10.5	304	-18.0	-19.1	-18.1	-17.4	-19.5	-23.4	-24.1	-26.1	-27.0	-28.7
2721B611	27	30°	$\pm 6.0^h$	16.40	9.8 x 10.3	288	-15.7	-19.7	-15.8	-16.4	-19.1	-22.2	-24.4	-25.5	-26.6	-28.3
2721U611	27	30°	$\pm 6.0^h$	16.75	9.4 x 9.8	266	-13.5	-18.2	-12.8	-16.8	-17.2	-21.7	-25.5	-24.7	-26.6	-27.7
2721A502	27	0°	$\pm 5.5^h$	37.23	9.3 x 13.0	272	-16.3	-16.0	-12.7	-15.0	-8.4	-22.3	-25.7	-26.2	-29.2	-31.1
2721B502	27	0°	$\pm 5.5^h$	30.75	9.2 x 12.6	274	-15.3	-17.0	-16.8	-13.3	-9.6	-22.6	-25.0	-27.9	-29.0	-31.4
2721U502	27	0°	$\pm 5.5^h$	27.96	9.0 x 12.2	251	-15.1	-18.0	-15.5	-16.3	-10.2	-21.1	-26.2	-27.5	-29.7	-31.4
2721A523	27	-15°	$\pm 5.3^h$	29.02	11.2 x 11.5	291	-17.5	-19.3	-17.4	-19.4	-17.8	-24.4	-26.7	-27.6	-29.0	-30.3
2721B523	27	-15°	$\pm 5.3^h$	26.28	11.1 x 11.4	282	-18.2	-21.0	-17.6	-19.5	-17.7	-25.8	-27.8	-27.6	-29.3	-30.5
2721U523	27	-15°	$\pm 5.3^h$	23.79	11.0 x 11.2	262	-19.7	-22.2	-17.5	-21.1	-18.1	-27.5	-28.3	-28.1	-29.6	-30.7

TABLE V

## Effect of Removing One Element from a 36-Element VLA

Model	Element Removed	Declination	Tracking Range	Holes (%)	Half-Power Beamwidth	Relative Gain	Maximum Sidelobe Level					RMS Sidelobe Level				
							Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5
3621A611	None	30°	±6.0	6.08	10.0 x 10.4	419	-20.6	-21.6	-21.7	-22.1	-21.8	-26.2	-27.7	-28.5	-30.6	-31.3
3521C611	N-3	30°	±6.0	6.59	10.0 x 10.3	399	-20.0	-21.0	-20.9	-21.8	-20.8	-25.5	-27.1	-27.8	-29.8	-30.8
36216112	N-12	30°	±6.0	6.78	10.1 x 10.4	417	-20.6	-21.5	-21.7	-22.1	-21.7	-26.2	-27.7	-28.5	-30.5	-31.3
36216115	SE-3	30°	±6.0	6.46	10.0 x 10.4	403	-20.8	-20.9	-21.2	-21.9	-21.5	-26.5	-27.4	-28.4	-30.2	-31.0
3521D611	SE-11	30°	±6.0	7.17	10.0 x 10.4	411	-20.3	-21.4	-21.2	-22.0	-21.5	-26.1	-27.7	-28.4	-30.4	-31.2
36216127	SW-3	30°	±6.0	6.63	10.0 x 10.3	406	-19.8	-20.6	-21.2	-22.9	-21.3	-24.3	-26.2	-28.2	-29.9	-30.8
36216135	SW-11	30°	±6.0	7.23	9.9 x 10.4	411	-20.9	-21.7	-21.6	-21.8	-21.6	-26.1	-27.7	-28.4	-30.4	-31.1
3621A502	None	0°	±5.5	18.61	9.6 x 11.4	395	-17.6	-19.8	-19.1	-14.2	-16.6	-25.7	-28.7	-30.4	-32.4	-34.5
3521C502	N-3	0°	±5.5	19.78	9.6 x 11.5	381	-17.2	-18.0	-18.9	-14.8	-16.6	-24.9	-28.4	-30.2	-32.0	-34.2
36215012	N-12	0°	±5.5	20.67	9.8 x 11.4	391	-18.1	-19.7	-19.1	-14.1	-16.1	-25.7	-28.6	-30.3	-32.3	-34.4
36215015	SE-3	0°	±5.5	19.20	9.6 x 11.4	376	-17.8	-20.1	-19.1	-14.4	-16.6	-25.6	-28.3	-30.1	-31.7	-33.9
3521D502	SE-11	0°	±5.5	21.47	9.5 x 11.7	385	-17.4	-18.8	-17.6	-13.9	-16.2	-25.5	-28.4	-30.0	-32.1	-34.2
36215027	SW-3	0°	±5.5	19.13	9.6 x 11.4	379	-17.6	-19.2	-18.7	-14.2	-16.0	-25.5	-28.0	-30.1	-31.7	-33.8
36215035	SW-11	0°	±5.5	22.29	9.3 x 11.8	388	-16.1	-20.0	-17.3	-14.0	-14.7	-24.5	-29.0	-29.8	-31.9	-34.0
3621A523	None	-15°	±5.3	17.20	10.7 x 11.3	427	-20.3	-24.9	-21.0	-21.8	-21.8	-28.0	-31.5	-31.1	-32.4	-33.5
3521C523	N-3	-15°	±5.3	17.63	10.7 x 11.5	386	-19.9	-24.6	-20.6	-21.4	-21.7	-27.8	-31.2	-30.8	-32.1	-33.2
36215212	N-12	-15°	±5.3	21.60	10.6 x 10.1	392	-18.6	-24.7	-20.4	-21.5	-21.6	-27.3	-30.9	-30.7	-32.1	-33.0
36215215	SE-3	-15°	±5.3	17.37	10.7 x 11.5	383	-19.6	-25.0	-20.7	-22.1	-21.4	-27.8	-30.9	-30.6	-32.0	-33.1
3521D523	SE-11	-15°	±5.3	20.02	10.7 x 11.7	392	-18.1	-23.1	-20.0	-20.7	-22.2	-27.3	-30.1	-30.3	-31.7	-32.9
36215227	SW-3	-15°	±5.3	17.54	10.7 x 11.5	390	-19.7	-24.8	-20.0	-20.8	-21.6	-27.7	-30.4	-30.4	-32.1	-33.2
36215235	SW-11	-15°	±5.3	18.81	10.8 x 11.2	388	-19.1	-23.6	-20.8	-20.9	-21.5	-27.4	-30.7	-30.6	-31.8	-32.8