

U.S. Naval Observatory VLBI Analysis Center

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Abstract

This report summarizes the activities of the VLBI Analysis Center at the United States Naval Observatory for calendar year 2006. Over the course of the year, Analysis Center personnel analyzed biweekly diurnal experiments with designations IVS-R1 and IVS-R4 for use in-house and continued timely submission of IVS-R4 databases for distribution to the IVS. During the 2006 calendar year, the USNO Analysis Center produced three periodic global Terrestrial Reference Frame (TRF) solutions with designations usn2006a, usn2006b, and usn2006c. Earth orientation parameters based on these solutions, updated by the diurnal (IVS-R1 and IVS-R4) experiments, were submitted to the IVS. A significant milestone was the conversion of all USNO database to CALC 10 and the transition to global solutions based on these databases.

Other activities in the 2006 calendar year included the continued generation of files in the SINEX format based on new 24-hr experiments and submission to the IVS. With regards to the Celestial Reference Frame (CRF), Analysis Center personnel continued a program designed to increase the sky density of ICRF sources especially in the southern hemisphere. Activities included scheduling, analyzing and submitting databases for IVS-CRF experiments and the production of global CRF solutions designated crf2006a, crf2006b, and crf2006c. This report also describes activities planned for the 2007 calendar year.

1. Introduction

The USNO VLBI Analysis Center is supported and operated by the United States Naval Observatory (USNO) in Washington, DC. The primary services provided by the Analysis Center are the analysis of diurnal experiments, the production of periodic global Terrestrial Reference Frame (TRF) and Celestial Reference Frame (CRF) solutions, and the submission to the IVS of intensive (EOP-I) and session-based (EOP-S) Earth orientation parameters based on USNO global TRF solutions. Analysis Center personnel maintain the necessary software required to continue these services to the IVS including periodic updates of the GSFC CALC/SOLVE software package. In addition to operational VLBI analysis, USNO personnel engage in research aimed at developing the next generation ICRF. Information on USNO VLBI analysis activities may be obtained at:

<http://rorf.usno.navy.mil/vlbi/>.

2. Current Analysis Center Activities

2.1. Experiment Analysis and Database Submission

During the 2006 calendar year, personnel at the USNO VLBI Analysis Center continued processing of diurnal (IVS-R1 and IVS-R4) experiments for use in internal USNO global TRF and CRF solutions. USNO is also responsible for the timely analysis of the IVS-R4, and the resulting databases are submitted within 24 hours of correlation for dissemination by the IVS. In addition, Analysis Center personnel continue to be responsible for the analysis and database submission for the periodic IVS-CRF experiments. The primary goal of these experiments is the densification of ICRF sources in the southern hemisphere. In 2006, USNO scheduled and analyzed 19 CRF experiments including IVS-CRF37 through IVS-CRF42, CRF-S8, and IVS-CRDS25 through IVS-CRDS33. The analyzed databases were submitted to the IVS. In the 2006 calendar year, Analysis

Center personnel also continued analyzing IVS intensive experiments for use in a USNO EOP-I time series.

2.2. Global TRF Solutions, EOP and SINEX Submission

USNO VLBI Analysis Center personnel continued to produce periodic global EOP/TRF solutions (usn2006a, usn2006b and usn2006c) over the course of the 2006 calendar year. A significant milestone was achieved with the conversion of all USNO databases and the transition to global solutions based on the CALC 10 software. This occurred in June 2006 beginning with the usn2006b/crf2006b solutions. All USNO global EOP/TRF solutions including the most recent solution may be found at:

<http://rorf.usno.navy.mil/solutions/>.

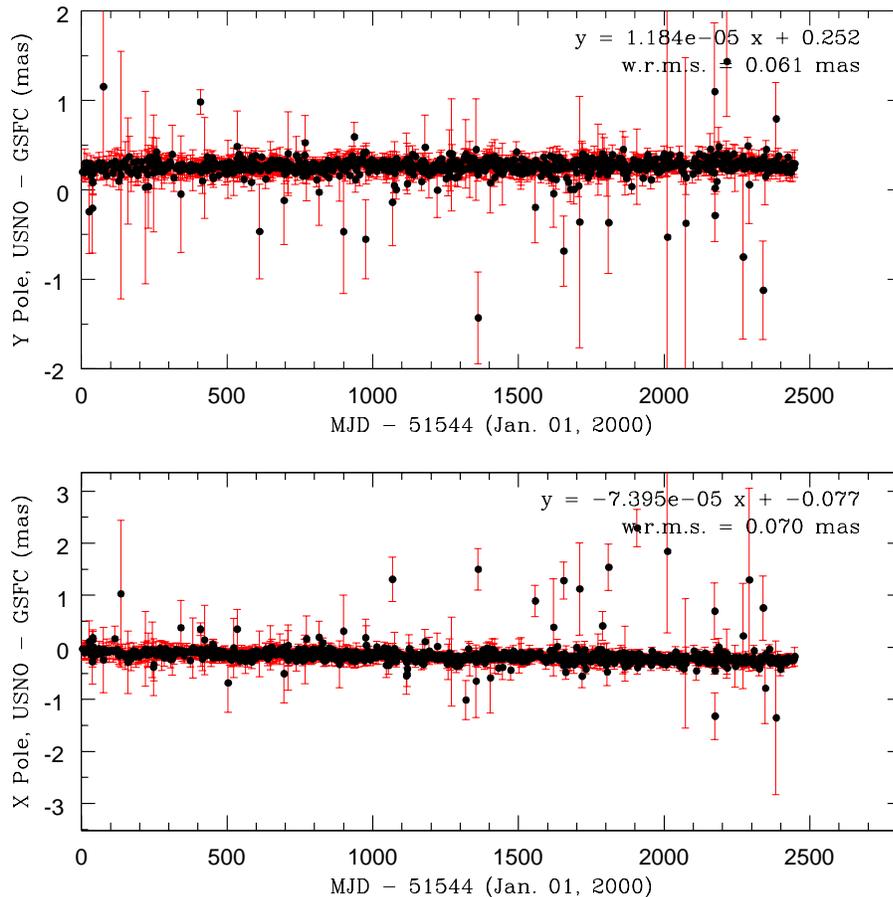


Figure 1. Differences between pole positions estimated from the usn2006c TRF solution and the IERS-C04 time series from January 2000 through October 2006. A weighted least squares linear fit to the data and the weighted RMS are shown in the upper right corner of each plot.

Session-based Earth orientation parameters derived from these TRF solutions were compared to those derived from GSFC periodic TRF solutions and with the IERS-C04 time series prior to submission to the IVS. Figure 1 shows an example of the comparison information available at the web site mentioned above. In this figure, differences in pole position estimates derived from the usn2006c solution and the IERS-C04 time series are plotted.

Analysis Center personnel continued to produce an EOP-S series based on the global TRF solutions and continuously updated by new data from the IVS-R1/R4 experiments since the most recent global solution. This updated EOP-S series is submitted to the IVS twice weekly within 24 hours of experiment correlation and is included in the IERS Bulletin A. Analysis Center personnel also continued to produce suitable SINEX format files based on new 24-hr experiments and the resulting files submitted to the IVS.

In addition to EOP-S and SINEX series, USNO Analysis Center personnel continued to produce and submit to the IVS an EOP-I series based on the IVS intensive experiments.

2.3. Celestial Reference Frame

During the 2006 calendar year, Analysis Center personnel continued work on the production of global CRF solutions for dissemination by the IVS including crf2006a, crf2006b, and crf 2006c. These solutions are routinely compared to the current ICRF and are available through the previously mentioned web site: <http://rorf.usno.navy.mil/solutions/>. Figure 2 shows the more than 2000 sources available in the geodetic/astrometric database. Analysis center personnel are currently exploring the benefits of adding the sources from the VLBA Calibrator Survey (VCS) many of which were observed in only one experiment and are shown as asterisks in Figure 2.

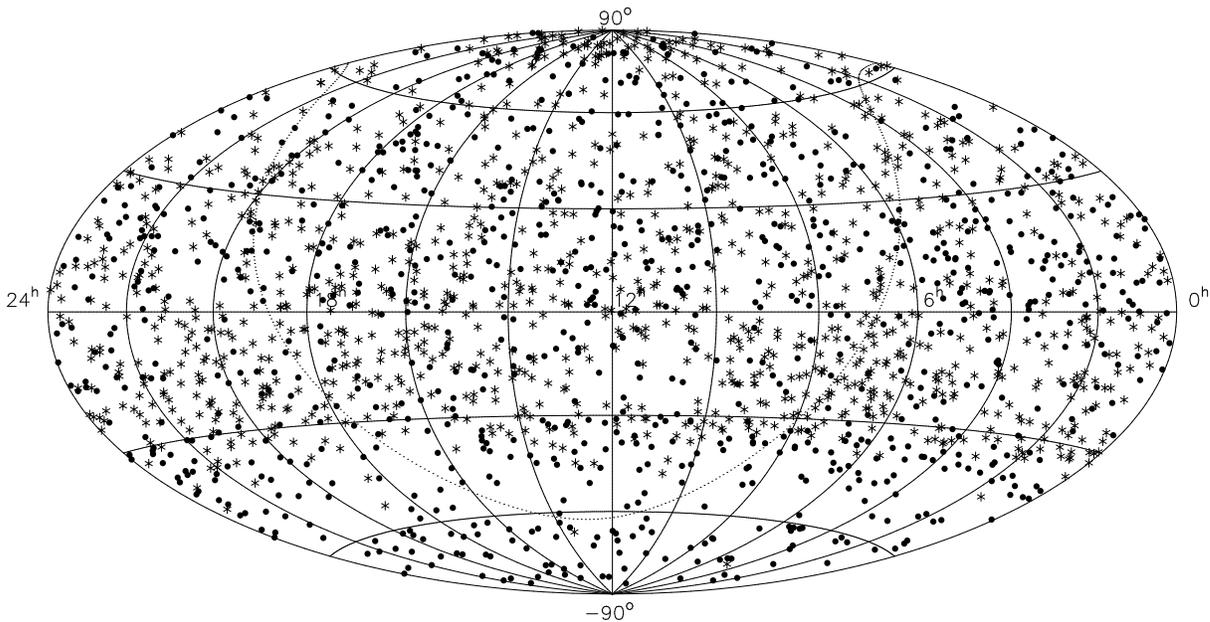


Figure 2. The 2000+ sources in the geodetic/astrometric database with the inclusion of the VLBA Calibrator Survey (VCS). The asterisks represent those sources observed in only one experiment and are mostly VCS sources.

During 2006, Analysis Center personnel also continued research into the densification of the ICRF in the southern hemisphere through IVS-CRF and ATNF/USNO observations was continued in 2006. Astrometric positions of 34 southern hemisphere extragalactic sources south of $\delta = 20^\circ$ were published by Fey, et al. (2006, AJ, 132, 1944). These positions have average formal uncertainties of 0.23 mas in $\alpha \cos \delta$ and 0.35 mas in δ .

3. Staff

The staff of the VLBI Analysis Center is drawn from individuals who work at the USNO. The staff and their responsibilities are:

Name	Responsibilities
David A. Boboltz	Periodic global TRF solutions and comparisons, Sinex generation and submission, web page administration, VLBI data analysis.
Alan L. Fey	Periodic global CRF solutions and comparisons, CRF densification research, web page administration, VLBI data analysis.
David M. Hall	VLBI data analysis and database submission, IVS EOP-S and EOP-I submission.
Kerry A. Kingham	Correlator interface, VLBI data analysis

4. Future Activities

For the upcoming year January 2006–December 2007, USNO VLBI Analysis Center personnel plan to accomplish the following activities:

- Continue the processing of biweekly IVS-R1/R4 experiments for use in internal TRF and CRF global solutions and continue submission of IVS-R4 databases for dissemination by the IVS.
- Continue the production of periodic global TRF solutions and the submission of EOP-S estimates to the IVS updated by the IVS-R1/R4 experiments.
- Submit a series of SINEX format files retroactive to 1979 based on all available USNO (CALC 10) databases.
- Continue the analysis of intensive experiments and submission of EOP-I estimates to the IVS.
- Continue the scheduling, analysis and database submission for all IVS-CRF experiments.
- Continue ATNF/USNO astrometric observations and research regarding the densification of the ICRF in the southern hemisphere.
- Continue the production of periodic global CRF solutions.
- Begin research into the development of the second realization of the ICRF (ICRF-2).