# Coherent, Mechanical Control of a Single Electronic Spin

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<th>Citation</th>
<th>Hong, Sungkun, Michael S. Grinolds, Patrick Maletinsky, Ronald L. Walsworth, Mikhail D. Lukin, and Amir Yacoby. 2012. Coherent, Mechanical Control of a Single Electronic Spin. Nano Letters 12, no. 8: 3920–3924.</th>
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<td>Published Version</td>
<td>doi:10.1021/nl300775c</td>
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The magnetic coupling between spins and mechanical resonators has been recently investigated for imaging the locations of spins via magnetic resonance force microscopy\cite{12, 13}, as well as for sensing nanomechanical resonator motion\cite{15}. A scarcely explored resource in such coupled spin-resonator systems is the coherence of a driven resonators motion, and here, we demonstrate that this motion can be used to fully control the quantum state of an individual electron spin. We employ an electronic spin associated with an NV center in diamond as the target spin due to the efficient optical initialization and readout of the NV spin \cite{16}, as well as its long coherence time\cite{17}. A single NV center is prepared near a bulk diamond surface (at a nominal depth of 10 nm, see Methods), and its spin-state is read out optically through spin-dependent fluorescence\cite{16}. The mechanical resonator is a quartz tuning fork, with a micro-fabricated quartz tip attached at the end of one of its prongs. The tuning fork operates in a transverse oscillation mode with a resonant frequency of 41.53 kHz and oscillation amplitude that can be controllably varied up to 250 nm (see Fig. 1 and Methods). Magnetic coupling between the NV spin and the tuning fork resonator is provided by a 25 nm CoFe magnetic film evaporated onto the apex of the quartz tip (see Methods). Consequently, the transverse mechanical motion of the tip generates an oscillatory magnetic field at the spins location, which modulates the Zeeman splitting between the NVs energy levels (Fig. 1b, c). To achieve coherent control of the target NV spin using the resonators mechanical motion, we synchronize spin manipulation protocols to the driven oscillation of the mechanical resonator (Fig. 1d). With this synchronization, the relative timing between applied radiofrequency (RF) pulses and the resonator motion is fixed, allowing for the resonator’s motion to coherently and deterministically influence the NV spin state.

The pronounced coupling between the resonators mechanical motion and the NV spin is measured with optically detected electron spin resonance (ESR). The ESR of the target NV center is acquired by sweeping the frequency of an applied RF field through the NV spins magnetic dipole transition and collecting the resulting NVs spin-state-dependent fluorescence, with lower (higher) fluorescence when RF field is on (off) resonance with the NV spin transition\cite{16}. As the oscillation amplitude of the tuning fork increases, we observe a broadening in the ESR spectrum (Fig. 2a), resulting from the larger magnetic field modulation associated with the greater range of motion of the resonators magnetic tip. As the driving amplitude of the resonator is further increased, the ESR lineshape becomes bimodal, which reveals the distribution of dwell-times of the magnetic tip as a function of its position during the oscillatory motion, with the two peaks representing the turning points of the oscillation trajectory. To deconvolve this time-averaged spectral broadening in the coupled dynamics of the NV spin and resonator, we perform stroboscopic ESR measurements synchronized to the resonators motion (Fig. 2b), which reveal the magnetic tips position as a function of time via the tip-induced Zeeman shift of the NVs ESR resonance frequency. Figure 2b shows two example stroboscopic ESR spectra with shifted resonance frequencies consistent with the magnetic tips position in its oscillatory cycle. The observed remaining broadening of the ESR linewidth (full width at half maximum) is within 20% of the value we find for an undriven magnetic tip.
(6.62 ± 0.49 MHz). Such measurements are acquired with an acquisition time (1 μs) much shorter than the resonators oscillation period (24.1 μs), which enables stroboscopic readout of the NV spins resonance frequency for a well defined position of the magnetic tip. The near-restoration of the zero-tip-motion ESR linewidth at arbitrary tip position confirms that the resonator motion is coherent with the spin addressing protocols.

This synchronization of the resonators motion with respect to the external optical/RF control can be used for coherent control of both the population and phase of the target spin states. Population control (Fig. 3) is achieved via an adiabatic fast passage [19]. The oscillation of the magnetic field induced by the magnetic tip motion modulates the NV ESR frequency. By fixing the applied RF frequency (ωRF) to the center of this frequency modulation range, the target spins population is adiabatically inverted each time the resonator-induced magnetic field brings the NV ESR frequency onto resonance with ωRF. This spin population inversion occurs twice for each period of the resonator oscillation (here 24.1 μs), resulting in periodic population inversion (i.e., spin flips). Note that such adiabatic population inversion can have a higher fidelity than conventional RF π-pulses, since it is robust against inhomogeneous variation in ESR frequency. It is especially useful for flipping ensembles of spins, where differing local environments for individual spins can otherwise limit control fidelity.
such resonator-induced spin phase accumulations, controlled by the amplitude of the resonators oscillation. In these demonstrations of coherent, mechanical control of a single NV spin, the rate of spin manipulation is set by the 41.53 kHz resonance frequency of the quartz tuning fork. However, nano-mechanical resonators can have resonance frequencies ranging up to nearly 1 GHz [20, 21], which would allow rapid control of target spins. For example, a resonator with 1 MHz frequency could perform more than 1000 coherent spin manipulations within the demonstrated NV spin coherence time of a few milliseconds [17].

With the demonstrated population and phase control, we have achieved coherent, mechanical control over the state of a single electron spin. This coherent mechanical spin-control technique enables new applications in sensitive, nanoscale metrology. In particular, electronic spins in NV centers have been recently identified as excellent magnetic field sensors because of their long coherence time and efficient optical readout [9–11], even under ambient conditions. Previous work [10, 11] showed that optimal magnetic field sensitivity is achieved when the target field is modulated with a period comparable to the NVs spin coherence time (AC magnetometry). However, such AC magnetometry cannot be applied a priori to targets with static magnetizations. Our coherent mechanical spin-control scheme provides a solution as the motion of the tip transforms a spatially varying, static magnetic field of a magnetic sample into a time-varying magnetic field at the position of the NV center. We demonstrate such mechanical-resonator-enabled AC magnetometry by performing scanning, nanoscale magnetic field imaging of our magnetized tip (Fig. 4c,d). At first, we acquire a DC magnetic image [9, 18] by scanning the magnetic tip laterally near a single NV center, where the external RF frequency is fixed on resonance with NV ESR frequency in the absence of the tip, and the fluorescence change due to Zeeman shifts is monitored (Fig. 4c). In this mode, the change in signal directly reflects the change in the local magnetic field at the position of NV. Consequently, a resonance band with decreased fluorescence is formed where the magnetic field associated with the tip brings NV ESR frequency on resonance with the external RF frequency. From this measurement, we extract a DC magnetic field sensitivity of 45 μT/√Hz. Next, we perform resonator-motion-enabled AC magnetometry (Fig. 4d), where the same optical/RF-pulse sequence is used as for the phase-control experiment described above, while the driven motion of the magnetic tip is synchronized to the NV addressing protocols with fixed tip oscillation amplitude of 20 nm. We calculate our NV spins AC magnetic field sensitivity to be 0.92 μT/√Hz, which constitutes a factor of 50 improvement over our DC experiment. In contrast to the DC magnetic image (Fig. 4e), additional structures in the form of multiple interference fringes in the resonance region are revealed. In this configuration, the NV
A particularly appealing application of our motion-enabled AC magnetometry could be sensitive imaging of rapidly varying, but weak magnetic features, such as antiferromagnetically ordered systems. Our magnetic imaging technique optimizes magnetic field sensitivity through AC Magnetometry and should thereby be capable of detecting the magnetic moment of a single Bohr magneton within few seconds of data acquisition it therefore provides the sensitivity required to detect antiferromagnetic order with close to lattice-site resolution. While in our demonstration of motion-enabled AC magnetometry, the NV spin-sensor is located in a fixed bulk diamond sample, our scheme can be readily applied to studying arbitrary samples in a scanning geometry, if the NV spin-sensor is located on the tip of a scannable diamond structure such as a diamond nanopillar [22]. An additional application of our coherent mechanical spin-control technique is motion sensing for nanoscale mechanical resonators. Such detection of motion, while routinely performed for microscale mechanical resonators using optical interferometry, remains challenging for nanoscale objects. Our mechanical spin-control scheme employs a single, atomically localized NV spin, thereby allowing nanoscale displacement and motion sensing. In principle, our demonstrated phase control scheme can be used to measure the amplitude and the phase of the motion of a resonator of interest. Using the measured magnetic tip field gradient of 18.4 μT/μm combined with the NVs AC field sensitivity, the oscillator amplitude sensitivity in our setup is estimated to be 49.8 pm/√Hz, which is already comparable to the sensitivity (≈ 10 pm/√Hz) achieved by optical interferometry of sub-micron sized resonators [23]. Similarly, the same scheme can be applied to measure the phase of the resonators oscillatory motion, with an estimated sensitivity of 5.1 mrad/√Hz at an oscillation amplitude of 10 nm.

The demonstrated sensitivity for metrology applications can be further optimized through a variety of experimentally demonstrated improvements. Such schemes of improvements include extending NVs spin coherence time [9, 24]and enhancing photon collection efficiency [22, 25, 26]. Our displacement sensing scheme can also be improved by engineering higher magnetic field gradients. For example, by using state-of-the-art magnetic tips with a field gradient of 1 mT/μm [13], an NV spin with $T_2$ of few ms, and enhanced photon collection efficiencies, the displacement amplitude sensitivity of 22.8 fm/√Hz could potentially be achieved. Finally, we note that the techniques demonstrated here could be integrated with related methods for scanning-field-gradient spin MRI [18] and super-resolution optical imaging and...
coherent manipulation of proximal spins [27], with an ultimate goal of combined magnetic field sensitivity and spatial resolution to achieve real-time atomic-scale mapping of individual electron and nuclear spins in physical and biological systems of interest.

We gratefully acknowledge G. Balasubramanian and P. R. Hemmer for fruitful technical discussions, as well as B. Hausmann and M. Loncar for instruction in the fabrication of NV center containing nanostructures. We acknowledge financial support from NIST and DARPA. S. H. acknowledges support from the Kwanjeong Scholarship Foundation for fellowship funding. M. S. G. is supported through fellowships from the Department of Defense (NDSEG program) and the NSF. P. M. acknowledges support from the Swiss National Science Foundation. This work was carried out in part at the Center for Nanoscale Systems (CNS), a member of the National Nanotechnology Infrastructure Network (NNIN), which is supported by the National Science Foundation under NSF award no. ECS-0336765. CNS is part of Harvard University.

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NV center samples:

Individual NV centers are fabricated by first implanting $^{15}$N ions [28] (6 keV) into ultrapure diamond (Element Six, electronic grade, < 5 ppb nitrogen), resulting in a layer of implanted nitrogen atoms nominally 10 nm below diamonds surface [29]. The nitrogen atoms pair with nearby vacancies to form NV centers during an annealing process performed in vacuum at 750 °C. Our im-
plantation and annealing parameters yield an NV density corresponding to one center every 50-100 nanometers. To isolate single NV centers, we use electron beam lithography to define an etch mask (Dow Corning, XR-1541) consisting of an array of spots whose sizes are matched to contain, on average, one NV center per spot. A reactive-ion etch [30] is then performed to remove exposed diamond surfaces, resulting in an array of diamond cylinders, each containing roughly one NV.

Quartz tuning fork:

In our experiment, a commercially available quartz tuning fork resonator (DIGI-KEY, X801-ND) is used. Its resonance frequency and quality factor are 41.53 kHz, and 1400, respectively. The excitation of the tuning fork is performed by mechanically dithering the tuning fork using a piezoelectric actuator. Additionally, the response of the tuning fork is read out electrically through piezoelectric detection.

Magnetic tips:

Magnetic tips are created by evaporating a magnetic layer onto quartz tips of roughly 80 nm in diameter, which are fabricated using a commercial laser-pulling system (Sutter Instrument Co., P-2000). We use a thermal evaporator to deposit a 25 nm layer of cobalt-iron on the side of the pulled quartz tip, followed by additional deposition of a 5 nm chrome layer, which serves as a protective capping layer.