

Beyond Quantum Computers: Quantum Sensing as the Next Practical Revolution in Engineering Physics

Nyylaah Krishnaraju^{1*}, P. Naveen Babu²

^{1*}Hauppauge High School, Hauppauge, New York 11788, USA. email:

²Independent Researcher, Tindivanam, Tamil Nadu 604001, India.

*Corresponding Author E-mail: nyyaaahkrish@gmail.com

Abstract:

Although closely linked with quantum computing, quantum sensing is one of the earliest practical and engineering relevant applications of quantum science. Quantum sensors take advantage of quantum phenomena like superposition, entanglement, coherence, and tunneling to make measurements much more precise than classical sensors. The goal of this review is to give a broad perspective on the basic concepts, technological platforms, engineering applications, challenges at present, and future possibilities of quantum sensing. The atomic clock, quantum magnetometer, nitrogen vacancy diamond sensor, cold atom gravimeter, superconducting quantum sensor and photonic quantum sensing system are all discussed as major sensing platforms. It also looks at the potential of these technologies as applied to a variety of other applications such as biomedical imaging, clean energy systems, navigation and positioning, environmental monitoring, materials science and space exploration. There is special focus on the emerging role of quantum sensing in engineering physics and its applicability for solving practical technological problems with the new level of sensitivity, accuracy and stability. Recent breakthroughs, miniaturization approaches, integration into artificial intelligence systems, and scalability, noise reduction, cost and commercialization issues are also discussed. Quantum sensing is a contemporary and innovative field of study, given the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology celebrated in 2025 by UNESCO. In summary, quantum sensing could prove a viable link between the fundamental study of quantum physics and the future development of engineering systems, further bringing quantum technologies from the laboratory to the real world.

Keywords: Quantum sensing; engineering physics; quantum sensors; nitrogen-vacancy centers; atomic clocks; quantum magnetometers; quantum technology; clean energy; biomedical sensing; quantum metrology.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background: From Quantum Theory to Quantum Technology

The beginnings of quantum physics were its theory of atoms and subatomic particles. Its principles were laid out by scientists such as Max Planck and Albert Einstein. It eventually developed into practical products like lasers, semiconductors, MRI systems, and atomic clocks, all of which are based on the principles of quantum physics ^[1].

There is a “second quantum revolution” in the world today. The first was about comprehending quantum effects, and the second was about controlling and engineering them. This has enabled the development of quantum computing, quantum communication and quantum sensing ^[2].

Of these, quantum sensing is particularly relevant because of its engineering relevance today. It provides very accurate time, magnetic field, gravity, temperature, and motion measurement, which help in medicine, navigation, defence, environment and research ^[3].

This has been followed by growing global interest in quantum science, as 2025 was designated the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology by the United Nations and UNESCO, to spread education, innovation and collaboration ^[4].

1.2. Why Look Beyond Quantum Computers?

The quantum technology is closely associated with quantum computers, where qubits, superposition and entanglement are employed. But there are problems such as decoherence, noise, error correction and scaling of large scale quantum computers ^[5].

For this reason, quantum sensing is considered a more plausible first application. Quantum sensors are able to detect and measure physical phenomena such as time, magnetic field, gravity, temperature and motion with high precision ^[6].

While quantum computers are still far from realization, quantum sensors are much closer, being simpler to construct and more stable than the quantum computers, and using fewer qubits. Medical, navigation and research applications already exist for technologies such as atomic clocks and quantum magnetometers ^[7].

Therefore, “Beyond Quantum Computers” is an indication that quantum sensing could be the first relevant, practical application of quantum technology.

1.3. What Is Quantum Sensing?

Quantum sensing is the measurement of physical quantities with extreme sensitivity and precision, exploiting the quantum features of spins, electrons, photons or superconducting circuits. It takes advantage of the quantum effects to sense very slight environmental changes.

The most common types of quantum sensors are those for measuring magnetic fields, electric fields, time, gravity, acceleration, rotation, temperature, pressure, and biological signals [8].

They are useful in science, defense, navigation, medicine, and engineering, and in environmental monitoring. For instance, small variations in the brain and heart can be measured with quantum magnetometers and atomic clocks enhance the accuracy of GPS. The effects of entanglement, interference, squeezing, and spin are used in quantum sensing to exceed the capabilities of classical sensors to enhance accuracy, sensitivity and efficiency of the sensing applications [9].

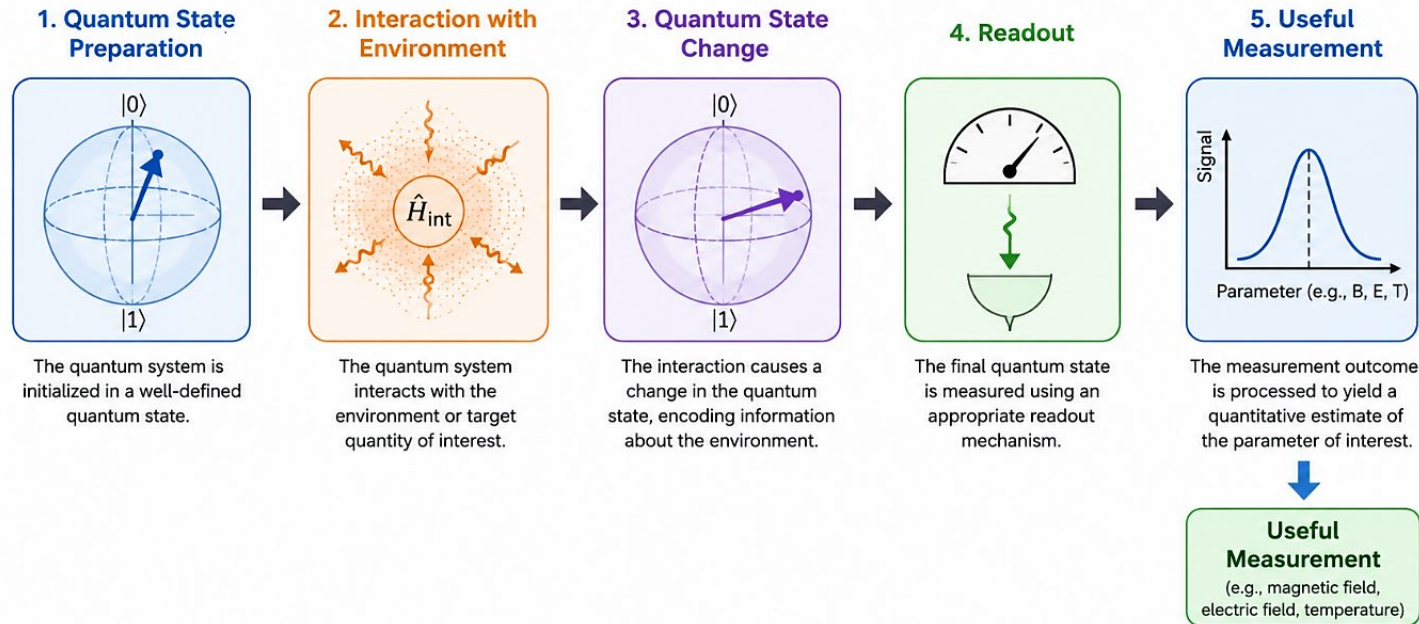


Figure 1: Conceptual Diagram of Quantum Sensing

1.4. Aim and Scope of the Review

This review provides the principles, platforms, applications, engineering relevance, challenges, and future directions of quantum sensing. It emphasizes the practical near-term application of quantum physics to quantum sensing, rather than large-scale quantum computers. Atomic clocks, quantum magnetometers, NV-diamond sensors, and cold-atom gravimeters are among the key technologies, as well as their engineering applications, are discussed. Limitations, commercialization issues, and future opportunities are also discussed in the review. It is suitable for students and early researchers in the field of engineering physics.

1.5. Novelty of the Review

This is distinct from the standard reviews in which the emphasis has been on quantum computing, but rather on quantum sensing and why it is so important. Relates quantum physics principles to engineering applications and enables students to grasp its real world applications [10]. This review points out applications in healthcare, navigation, energy, environment, communications and precision measure. It is written from the student's point of view, and

connects quantum theory with engineering applications, with a focus on technologies rather than on computation. ^[11].

2. Basic Quantum Concepts Needed to Understand Quantum Sensing

2.1. Superposition

A quantum system can be in many states simultaneously until it's measured. This makes quantum sensors very sensitive to magnetic fields, gravity, temperature and electric field changes, among other environmental factors. Even small perturbations can cause a change in the quantum state and allow accurate measurements ^[12].

2.2. Quantum Coherence

Coherence is the property of a quantum system to have persistent phase relationship over time. A correct sensing is crucial as it enables to hold quantum information for the duration of the measurement. The sensor performance and sensor accuracy decreases due to environmental disturbances, which cause the decoherence ^[13].

2.3. Quantum Entanglement

Entanglement is a phenomenon that involves two particles being linked in such a way that the state of one depends on the state of another, regardless of the distance between them. For sensing, it can enhance the measurement accuracy over the classical limit. But, in practical sensors, coherence and interference play a more important role than entanglement, because of the environmental noise that makes it difficult to maintain entanglement ^[14].

2.4. Quantum Interference

Constructive and destructive interference of quantum waves is called quantum interference. Small changes in either gravity, acceleration, or rotation would affect interference patterns in atom interferometers and gravimeters. This transformation allows for very accurate determination of environmental changes ^[15].

2.5. Spin as a Quantum Sensor

Spin is a quantum property which is highly sensitive to magnetic and electric fields. It's the smallest magnetic compass and it's applied in NV-diamond sensors and quantum magnetometers. The spin-based system can be very sensitive and has high accuracy in detecting very weak signals ^[16].

2.6. Quantum Noise and Measurement Limits

Thermal fluctuations, electronic interference and shot noise all introduce noise into all measurements. These limits are reduced with coherence, superposition and squeezed states with

quantum sensors. Their ability to recognize very weak signals or very small environmental changes is the most powerful where classical sensors are ineffective [17].

Table 1: Quantum Principle and Its Sensing Role

Quantum Principle	Simple Meaning	Sensing Relevance	References
Superposition	Multiple possible states existing simultaneously	Detects extremely small changes in physical quantities	[12]
Coherence	Stable and predictable quantum phase relationship	Improves measurement precision and stability	[13]
Entanglement	Linked quantum states that influence each other	May enhance sensitivity beyond classical limits	[14]
Interference	Wave-like combination of quantum states	Used in gravimeters and atom interferometers	[15]
Spin	Quantum magnetic property of particles	Used in magnetometers and magnetic field sensing	[16]

3. Working Principle of a Quantum Sensor

3.1. General Sensor Architecture

The principle of operation of a quantum sensor is to put a quantum system into a controlled state, let it interact with the physical quantity (magnetic field, gravity, temperature, acceleration) being measured, and then measure the state of the quantum system. This change is detected by techniques such as fluorescence, laser detection, electrical changes or frequency shifts. The final data is analyzed in order to obtain meaningful physical data [18].

3.2. What Makes Quantum Sensors Different from Classical Sensors?

Macroscopic changes are detected by classical sensors, which can be resistance, voltage, pressure, or motion. However, unlike traditional sensors, quantum sensors detect changes in quantum properties such as spin states, energy levels, coherence and interference. Quantum systems are highly responsive, so they can precisely detect very weak signals [19].

Unlike classical sensors, quantum sensors can be more sensitive, provide greater resolution, have greater stability, and drift less. They are not always the best available however as practical considerations such as cost, size, durability, and usability in the real world, also play a role, the effectiveness of these should vary accordingly [20]

3.3. Performance Parameters of Quantum Sensors

Some of the important parameters are sensitivity, resolution, accuracy, and precision. Stability means reliability in the long term, dynamic range is the range of signals that can be measured. The response time is the time required to detect changes and the noise floor is the minimum detectable signal ^[21].

Field deployability is also a consideration, which includes portability, power consumption and environmental robustness. These are engineering parameters that allow the comparison of quantum sensors with the conventional classical ones ^[22].

4. Major Quantum Sensing Platforms

4.1. Atomic Clocks

Atomic clocks are quantum sensors, whose time is measured by stable atomic energy transitions. They use quantum frequencies which are much more stable than mechanical and quartz clocks, making them the most accurate time-keeping devices available ^[23].

They play a crucial role in GPS systems, communication networks, internet synchronization, power grids, finance, and space missions. OACs offer greater precision than the cesium-based clocks, but are more complicated. They are a combination of engineering disciplines: quantum physics, lasers, vacuum technology, electronics and control technology ^[24].

4.2. Optically Pumped Magnetometers (OPMs)

Laser-polarized atoms are employed in the detection of very weak magnetic fields by OPMs. Precise measurement is possible with changes of atomic spins due to external magnetic fields.

They are commonly employed in brain imaging (MEG), biomedical sensing, and neuroscience studies. Unlike SQUID sensors, OPMs are not cryogenically cooled so they are more compact and wearable. Still, they have to deal with issues like noise control, shielding and clinical validation ^[25].

4.3. Nitrogen-Vacancy (NV) Centers in Diamond

NV centers are atomic scale defects in diamond that are very sensitive quantum sensors. They can be switched between different spin states using microwaves, and their spin state is read by using light.

These are employed for nanoscale magnetic field, temperature, and pressure sensing, for biological imaging and materials characterization. They play a particular role in biomedical and nanoscale engineering applications ^[26].

4.4. Cold-Atom Gravimeters and Atom Interferometers

These sensors are based on ultracold atoms as quantum waves. Interference of matter waves enables extremely high precision of gravity, acceleration and motion measurement.

Examples of uses are underground mapping, mineral exploration, earthquake monitoring, navigation without GPS, and environmental studies. They have significance in geophysics, civil engineering and defense systems [27].

4.5. Superconducting Quantum Sensors

These sensors work at very low temperatures where materials exhibit quantum effects of superconductivity. Some examples are SQUIDs, transition-edge sensors, and photon detectors.

They are employed in astronomy, particle physics, medical imaging, quantum computing readout and weak magnetic field detection. Advanced versions are created for scientific and industrial applications by institutions such as NIST [28].

4.6. Quantum Photonic Sensors

They are based on the detection of very weak optical signals by single photons, squeezed light, and quantum correlations. They have applications in quantum LiDAR, low light imaging, secure communication, environmental sensing, biomedical imaging. They are known for their ability to sense things optically from a distance without making much noise [29].

4.7. Quantum-Enhanced Fiber Optic Sensors

These are enhanced fibre optic sensors, with quantum light states added for increased sensitivity.

They are used in structural health monitoring, oil and gas pipelines, power grids, earthquake detection, and in large-scale infrastructure. They are particularly useful for long-distance sensing networks [30].

4.8. Quantum Diamond Microscopes

These diamond NV microscopes are designed to probe the very small magnetic and electrical signals at high spatial resolution.

They can be employed in semiconductor inspection, battery studies, solar cell analysis, and biological imaging. They are important tools for materials science and nanoengineering [31].

Table 2: Major Quantum Sensor Platforms

Sensor type	Quantum system	Measures	Major applications	References
Atomic clock	Atoms/ions	Time/frequency	GPS, grids, communication	[23]
OPM	Atomic vapor	Magnetic fields	Brain imaging	[25]

NV-diamond sensor	Diamond defect spin	Magnetic field, temperature,	Biology, materials	[26]
Cold-atom gravimeter	Cold atoms	Gravity/acceleration	Geology, navigation	[27]
SQUID	Superconducting loop	Magnetic fields	Medicine, physics	[28]
Quantum	LiDAR Photons	Distance/objects/gases	Remote sensing	[30]

5. Applications of Quantum Sensing in Engineering Physics

5.1. Biomedical and Healthcare Applications

The Quantum sensor is a sensor that can detect very small, very faint biological signals with very high sensitivity. These are emerging as significant in medical imaging, diagnostics, neuroscience, and precision healthcare as they can detect and measure very small magnetic fields, temperature variations, and molecular interactions that cannot be observed with conventional sensors [32].

5.1.1. Brain Imaging

Optically pumped magnetometers (OPMs) are capable of detecting the extremely small magnetic field that the brain generates as a result of neuronal activity. The OPM based devices can be smaller, wearable and placed in close proximity to the scalp, unlike traditional superconducting systems. Such systems can be used to enhance the diagnosis of neurological disease and aid research in the field of brain computer interface [33].

5.1.2. Cellular and Molecular Sensing

Diamond nanoscale magnetic sensors and nanoscale temperature sensors and interaction sensors for molecules within living cells. Because they provide very sensitive and non-invasive measurements [34], they are useful for single-cell studies, biomolecular detection, cancer research and drug development.

5.1.3. Future Medical Diagnostics

Quantum sensors could potentially help with early disease detection, biomarker sensing, non-invasive imaging and precision medicine. Their elevated sensitivity might be beneficial for early detection of diseases and for personalized medicine. Applications discussed in Nature Reviews Physics include brain imaging through to spectroscopy of individual cells [35].

5.2. Clean Energy and Sustainability Applications

The applications of quantum sensing in clean energy and sustainable engineering are promising due to its ability to provide precise monitoring, fault detection, and environmental analysis. The technologies can enhance efficiency, reliability and safety of renewable energy systems, smart infrastructure and energy storage devices. Quantum sensors can identify very small physical fluctuations, which could enable engineers to better cut down on energy losses and optimize the use of resources, and could aid future sustainable technologies ^[36].

5.2.1. Solar Cell Characterization

Another exciting application of quantum sensors is to detect defects and charge transport dynamics in PV materials to enhance their performance. Methods using quantum magnetometry and optical sensing can be used to locate electron-hole recombination, material defects, and local electrical variations that result in loss of efficiency. These measurements are used to improve solar cell efficiency and to develop more reliable renewable energy systems ^[37].

5.2.2. Battery Health Monitoring

In electric vehicles and energy storage applications, quantum magnetometers and other magnetometers could allow for more sophisticated monitoring of batteries. These sensors can measure very small magnetic field variations produced by currents in the battery, which can be used to investigate battery degradation, overheating, internal damage, and charging behavior. This kind of monitoring can enhance battery security, lifespan and, in general, energy efficiency ^[38].

5.2.3. Power Grid Synchronization

Smart grid, microgrid, and other applications depend on extremely accurate timing references provided by atomic clocks. More accurate synchronization ensures stable electricity distribution, better grid component communication and reduced risk of power failures. One of the most significant applications of quantum timing systems is in renewable energy networks with numerous distributed energy sources, requiring precise coordination between them ^[39].

5.2.4. Carbon Capture and Storage Monitoring

These new sensors could enable surveillance of subsurface carbon capture and storage facilities: quantum gravimeters, quantum LiDAR, and quantum-enhanced fiber sensors. A sensitive gravimetric measurement is able to detect small variations in the density of rock underground which results from CO₂ injection. In addition, quantum sensing can be applied to determine gas leakage pathways, to check the stability of reservoirs and to enhance environmental safety in carbon capture and storage schemes ^[40].

5.2.5. Wind and Geothermal Resource Mapping

The use of quantum gravimetry and LiDAR enhance the process of site selection for renewable energy. Gravimetry assists in determining the subsurface features for geothermal exploration and LiDAR can be used to map terrain and atmospheric conditions for wind farm planning. They work together to improve the precision of resource estimates and facilitate smooth renewable energy initiatives.

Recent studies indicate that various quantum sensing applications can be utilized in smart grid, EV-to-Grid, PV analysis, carbon capture monitoring, infrastructure inspection, and renewable resource discovery for future clean energy systems ^[41].

5.3. Navigation, Positioning, and Timing

GPS/GNSS based systems are suffering from some constraints such as jamming, spoofing or the inability to reach it in space, underwater or indoors. GPS-free navigation: Quantum sensors measure motion, rotation, gravity and time with high precision.

A quantum accelerometer, gyroscope, and 'atom interferometer' are essential for precise inertial navigation of aircraft, submarines, robot cars and space-probing probes. The ultra-precision timekeeping of atomic and optical clocks is used in satellite-based navigation, communication networks and power grids to enhance reliability and security ^[42].

5.4. Environmental and Earth Monitoring

Quantum sensors are able to measure changes in the environment and geology that are very small. The variations, due to earthquakes, volcanic activity, ground water motion and subsurface changes, can be detected by quantum gravimeters and atom interferometers ^[43].

They also are used for climate monitoring, pollution detection, groundwater mapping, and mineral exploration. For environmental protection and monitoring of disaster, quantum photonic and spectroscopic sensors are useful for the detection of trace gases, such as CO₂ and CH₄ ^[44].

5.5. Materials Science and Nanotechnology

Quantum sensing will allow for the study of materials at micro and nano scales in an ultra-precise manner. Applications are semiconductors, superconductors, magnetic materials, nanostructures and 2D materials like graphene.

They are very sensitive to the changes in magnetic, thermal and electrical properties, which can be used to research defects, charge transport and heat behavior. Nanoscale imaging of magnetic fields and temperature is achieved with NV-diamonds, which aids advances in nanotechnology, semiconductor engineering ^[45].

5.6. Space Science and Fundamental Physics

High precision measurements are enabled in extreme scientific environments using quantum sensors. They can be applied in gravity research, space exploration, and fundamental physics research.

They can be used for dark matter detection, cosmic microwave background studies, space based atomic clocks and planetary mapping. National Institute of Standards and Technology report that quantum sensors are used in space, the South Pole, in nuclear laboratories and in particle accelerators for very accurate measurements ^[46].

They are slated to be very critical in deep space navigation, planetary exploration, and high physics experiments.

5.7. Everyday Technology Connections

Advanced, quantum sensing, is anticipated to have a major impact on daily life, via enhanced measurement and detection systems.

Applications can be: improved navigation systems, safer autonomous vehicles, smarter power grids, improved medical imaging, enhanced climate monitoring, stronger communication networks, improved airport security, and more efficient solar and battery technologies ^[47].

In summary, quantum sensing is making the shift from research to concrete engineering applications in various fields.

6. Quantum Sensing Versus Quantum Computing

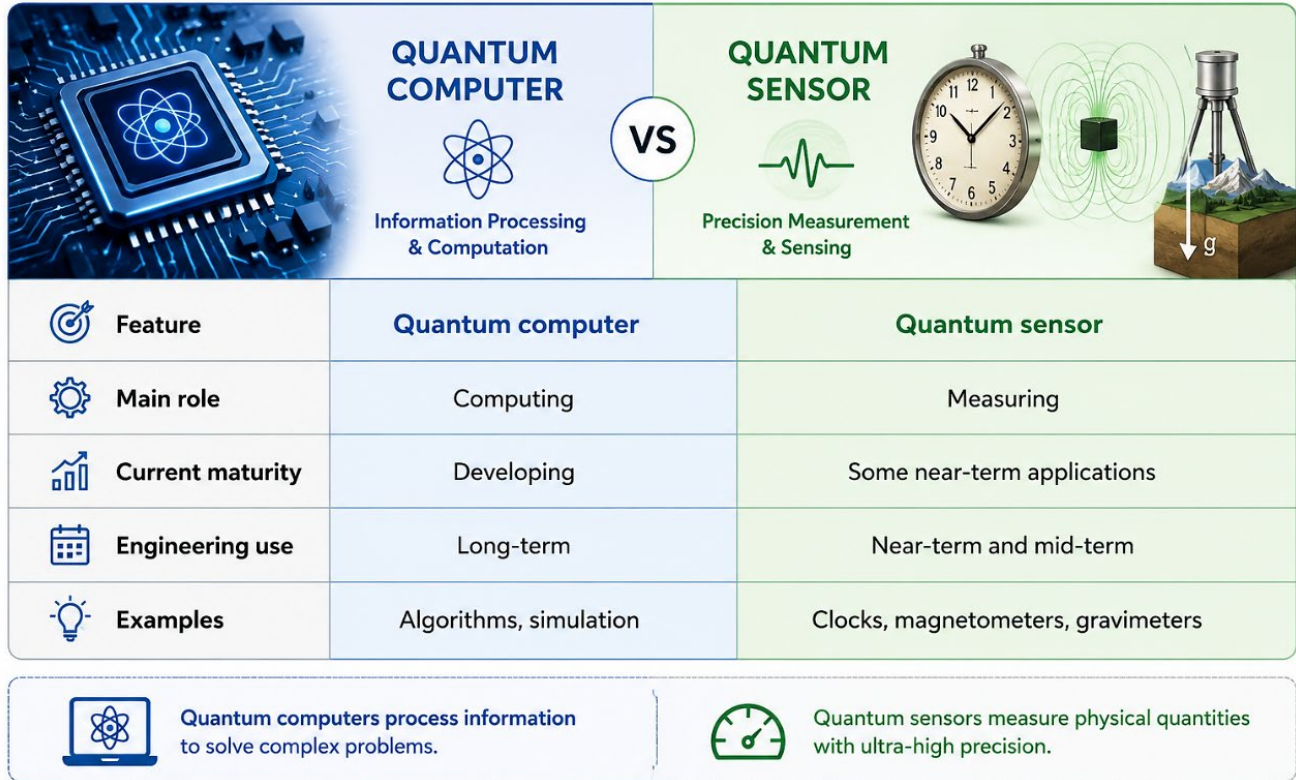


Figure 2: Quantum Sensors Compared with Quantum Computers

6.1. Difference in Purpose

Quantum technologies have various functions. By contrast, quantum computing addresses complex computational problems by manipulating qubits, and quantum sensing is the science of measuring physical properties and measuring them extremely accurately like magnetic field strength, gravity, temperature, motion and time. Quantum communication can be used to send information securely via quantum encryption.

It is important to note that quantum sensing is not a computing paradigm but a paradigm that can improve measurement capabilities beyond classical levels ^[48].

6.2. Difference in Technical Difficulty

The building of quantum computers is very complex and costly because the coherence time of the qubits and the ability to correct errors must be great, as well as the number of qubits to be used.

Usually, quantum sensors involve fewer quantum systems and are tailored to the quantum measurement. They are relatively easy to develop and better for practical implementation in real-world applications ^[49].

6.3. Difference in Near-Term Impact

Although most uses are still in the experimental stage, quantum computing has great potential in cryptography, simulations, and material discoveries, etc. in the long term.

Near-term applications of quantum sensing include atomic clocks, magnetometers, gravimeters, navigation systems, biomedical imaging and energy monitoring. Many of these are moving from research to practical applications, making quantum sensing more impactful in the here and now [50].

6.4. Why Engineering Physics Students Should Care

The core areas of engineering physics that are involved in quantum sensing are quantum mechanics, optics, photonics, electronics, materials science, signal processing, instrumentation, control systems, nanotechnology, and data analysis.

It is interdisciplinary in nature, offering advanced research opportunities and applications in industrial technology, healthcare, energy systems, aerospace and next generation scientific instrumentation, and has relevance to engineering physics students [51].

7. Engineering Design of Quantum Sensors

7.1. Hardware Components

Specialized hardware is needed to generate and detect quantum states called quantum sensors. Key elements are lasers, microwaves, photodetectors, vacuum and cryogenic systems, diamond chips, atomic vapor cells, magnetic shielding, optical fiber, and control electronics. Each sensing platform has its own engineering design for each application [52].

7.2. Signal Readout and Data Processing

The signal from the quantum sensor needs to be converted into meaningful data with appropriate readout and processing techniques. Various methods have been developed such as the fluorescence readout, frequency shift detection, interference measurements, photon counting, and electrical readout. These features include noise filtering, calibration, digital signal processing and AI-assisted analysis, which enhance accuracy and reliability [53].

7.3. Miniaturization and Chip-Scale Integration

Miniaturization is an engineering challenge for many of the quantum sensors, as they are still large laboratory based systems. Recent advances are on-chip atomic clocks, integrated photonics, hand-held magnetometers, diamond sensor chips, integration of MEMS, and low-power electronics. Such advances are aimed at bringing quantum sensors to the next level portable, readily available, and applicable to real-world applications [54].

7.4. Calibration and Standardization

Medical, navigation and energy systems with quantum sensors need to be carefully calibrated and validated. Repeatability, classical sensors, environmental testing, field testing and regulatory

approval are all important considerations. Standardization ensures reliability and facilitates deployment in practice ^[55].

8. Advantages of Quantum Sensing

8.1. Ultra-High Sensitivity

Compared to classical sensors, quantum sensors are able to measure very faint signals. They can feel very small magnetic fields, very small changes in temperature, and very small changes in gravity. Quantum magnetometers can be used to sense weak magnetic fields from the human brain, for instance ^[56].

8.2. High Spatial Resolution

For some quantum sensors (particularly NV-diamond sensors), measurements can be taken at nanoscale or microscale. This enables very detailed investigations of cells, molecules and even complex materials. Biology, nanotechnology and materials science are applications that make use of such high resolution ^[57].

8.3. Better Stability and Precision

Quantum sensors are based on the fundamental quantum properties, and are therefore highly stable and precise. The most prominent example is atomic clocks, where atomic transitions provide the stable natural references. This allows for the timing, sync, navigation and communication to become accurate ^[58].

8.4. Non-Invasive Measurement

There are numerous applications where non-invasive or minimally invasive measurements are desirable, such as in medicine, where the act of probing the body is harmful and discomforting to the patient. In medicine, it can enable more effective imaging and monitoring without the use of harmful radiation. Quantum sensors can be used to non-destructively monitor or evaluate structures or detect changes in structures in engineering and environmental monitoring ^[59].

8.5. New Measurements Not Easily Possible with Classical Sensors

The best part about quantum sensing is its ability to detect signals that couldn't be measured with classical technology before. This creates new opportunities for medical diagnostics, underground exploration, space research and fundamental physics research ^[60].

9. Current Challenges and Limitations

9.1. Decoherence and Environmental Noise

The quantum states are very sensitive and can be easily disturbed by changes in the environment, like temperature changes, vibration, electromagnetic interference, defects in the material, etc. These perturbations lead to decoherence, which decreases the sensitivity and accuracy of

quantum sensors. Hence, careful isolation and environmental control of many systems is needed [61].

9.2. Cost and Complexity

Advanced components like lasers, precise optics, specialized materials or cryogenic cooling systems are needed to build many quantum sensors, which can be costly. Besides, operation and calibration typically require a skilled person to perform, which can increase the complexity and cost of the entire system [62].

9.3. Miniaturization Challenges

Most of the quantum sensing systems remain as large lab devices, and practical applications demand compact, portable and low power sensors. The small and efficient development of quantum sensors for use in hospitals, vehicles, satellites, and industrial systems is still a great challenge for engineering [63].

9.4. Field Deployment Problems

Although quantum sensors work very well in the laboratory, there are a variety of difficulties in the real world, including vibration, dust, humidity, temperature fluctuation, movement, and electromagnetic noise. In the field these conditions can decrease reliability and long-term stability [64].

9.5. Data Interpretation and False Signals

However, quantum sensors are extremely sensitive and may pick up unwanted background signals and environmental noise. Advanced signal processing, filtering, and careful data interpretation must be performed to prevent false measurements and to increase the accuracy [65].

9.6. Comparison with Cheaper Classical Sensors

Cheaper classical sensors are compared to the new sensors. Classical sensors must be used whenever possible until quantum sensors can offer significant benefits. In many applications classical devices are accurate enough and have been cheaper. So quantum sensing needs to show improved sensitivity, precision, stability, and/or special measurement capability to justify these increased level of cost and complexity [66].

9.7. Workforce and Education Gap

To facilitate the development of quantum sensing, researchers need to be qualified in quantum physics, electronics, optics, programming, and data science. It gives rise to the increasing demand for interdisciplinary education and special training programmes in engineering physics for the future industry of quantum technologies [67].

Table 4: Challenges and Possible Solutions

Challenge	Why it matters	Possible solution	References
Decoherence	Reduces signal quality	Better shielding/materials	[61]
High cost	Limits adoption	Miniaturization	[62]
Large size	Hard for field use	Chip-scale integration	[63]
Noise	Causes false signals	Signal processing	[65]
Lack of standards	Reduces trust	Calibration protocols	[67]

10. Future Directions

10.1. Portable and Wearable Quantum Sensors

Future quantum sensors will be smaller, more portable, and even wearable, and will allow for real-time monitoring away from laboratories. These are wearable brain sensors for continuous monitoring, handheld diagnostic devices for early diagnosis of disease, and compact environmental sensors for field measurements. This miniaturization will enable quantum sensing in various application areas, including health, defense, and environment, to become more accessible [68].

10.2. Quantum Sensors in Smart Cities

Quantum sensors can be used in smart cities to enhance urban systems with great precision and efficiency. They can enhance traffic management, underground mapping of utilities, smart power grid stability, pollution tracking, structural safety in buildings, water distribution systems and secure communication networks. Accurate real-time data can be used to improve urban efficiency, safety, and sustainability with these applications [69].

10.3. Quantum Sensors for Renewable Energy Systems

Quantum sensing is likely to be widely used to maximize the efficiency of renewable energy sources, including solar farms, wind farms, and battery storage units. They can be used to keep an eye on the efficiency of energy use, identify faults in electric vehicles, optimize hydrogen energy systems, aid carbon capture technologies, and optimize the performance of smart grids. This will have a significant impact on a cleaner and more reliable energy infrastructure [70].

10.4. AI-Integrated Quantum Sensing

Artificial intelligence will most likely be key to dealing with the complex data from quantum sensors. AI methods can be used to filter noise, pattern recognition, fault detection in the system, predictive maintenance, and medical signals interpretation. It can also help to improve the performance of sensors, making quantum sensing systems more intelligent and adaptive [71].

10.5. Networked Quantum Sensors

In the future, several quantum sensors could be integrated into a large-scale network for improved performance. These networks could enhance climate monitoring, earthquake detection, secure sensing networks, global navigation and distributed scientific measurements. In the past it has been shown that a long-distance sensor connection could strongly enhance measurement accuracy and the robustness of the system ^[72].

10.6. Quantum Sensing Education for the Next Generation

By teaching quantum sensing at an early stage, students will be ready for new roles in the cutting-edge science and engineering world. Some of these future career paths are quantum engineering, photonics, biomedical sensing, renewable energy technology, navigation systems, and space research. A trained workforce for next generation quantum technologies will be created with early education in this domain ^[73].

12. Discussion

12.1. Why Quantum Sensing May Be the Practical Face of Quantum Physics

One of the most realistic paths for the application of quantum physics to help humanity is quantum sensing. It is more likely to be used in the real world than a quantum computer, as it is based on measuring, not on complex calculations. Quantum principles are already used in many applications such as medical imaging, navigation, and geophysics to gain performance improvement. This shows that quantum sensing is a good promising first link between quantum science and engineering applications in the real world ^[74].

12.2. Engineering Physics as a Bridge Discipline

The engineering physics approach bridges the gap between theory and practical device design, thus it is well suited for quantum sensing. Physics provides an explanation of quantum principles, engineering constructs useful systems. Electronics for signal detection, Materials science for Quantum platforms, Data science for the results interpretation. Such multi-field collaboration is crucial to develop quantum sensing from the lab into functioning technologies ^[75].

12.3. Balanced View: Promise Without Hype

Although powerful, quantum sensing cannot substitute classical sensors. It is best suited for very high sensitivity, stability or nanoscale resolution. It comes in handy when weak or hidden signals are present, where classical devices can't pick up. But, this is expensive and complex, and in many cases, classical sensors are still used. It is a supplementary technology, rather than a complete solution, in total ^[76].

13. Conclusion

One of the most promising applications of quantum technology is quantum sensing. Although quantum computing is a long way off, the field of quantum sensing is already advancing to

practical use. It could revolutionize applications in medicine, energy systems, navigation, environmental monitoring, engineering, and more, by turning fragile quantum effects into extremely precise measurements.

Quantum sensing offers a practical and intuitive way to introduce students to quantum technology. It links basic physics to devices, applications and problems in the real world, and to the world of exciting careers, so it is an important subject for emerging scientific and technical needs.

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