



Cluster observations of broadband electromagnetic waves in and around a reconnection region in the Earth's magnetotail current sheet

P. Petkaki (1), M. P. Freeman (1), and A.P. Walsh, (2)

(1) Physical Sciences Division, British Antarctic Survey, Cambridge, CB3 0ET, UK,
(ppe@bas.ac.uk) (2) Mullard Space Science Laboratory, Holmbury St. Mary, Dorking, Surrey
RH5 6NT, UK

We present an analysis of the electric and magnetic wave spectra on kinetic scales during several crossings of a reconnecting current sheet. The spectra were measured from 1 Hz or less up to 4096 Hz by the EFW, FGM and STAFF instruments onboard the Cluster spacecraft between 3 and 4 UT on 11 October 2001. During the event plasma flows of order of the local Alfvén speed reversed from tailward to earthward, suggesting that a reconnection site moved over the spacecraft. We ordered the observed electric and magnetic field wave spectrum by the position within the current sheet using the magnitude of the magnetic field. We found that the electric and magnetic wave power decreased considerably at all frequencies towards the center of the current sheet. The electric energy density decreases 5 orders of magnitude from the edge of the current sheet to the center and the magnetic energy density peaks within the current sheet and is decreased by 2.5 orders of magnitude at the center. Within the current sheet, the electric and magnetic wave spectra were dominantly broadband electromagnetic noise (i.e., power law spectra with exponents -1.4 and -2.4, respectively) throughout the frequency range 0.1 - 1000 Hz, spanning from MHD to almost the electron plasma frequency. We argue that the wave activity is likely to be whistler wave turbulence and discuss the implications of these results for reconnection from wave-particle interactions.