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Quantum Physics in the Age of Quantum Computing

Shaik Salma Begum[1], A. Nagarjuna[2], A.V.N. Ashok Kumar[3], K.V.S.N. Raju[4]*, D.V.S.S Varma[5]
[1]*Department of Physics, Krishna University, Machilipatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India.*
[2]*Associate Professor, Department of Physics, Sasi Institute of Technology & Engineering, Tadepalligudem, West Godavari, Andhra Pradesh, India.*
[3]*Department of Physics, University College of Engineering, JNTU, Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh, India.*
[4*]*Department of Physics, Adikavi Nannaya University, TPG Campus, Andhra Pradesh, India.*
[5]*Department of Computer Science & Engineering, Srinivasa Institute of Engineering & Technology, Cheyyeru (V), Amalapuram, Andhra Pradesh, India.*

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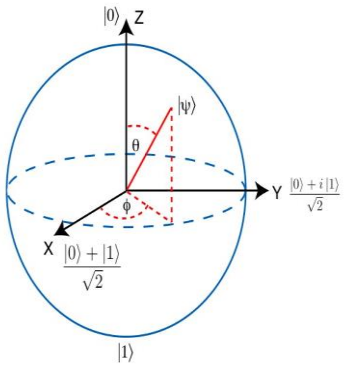
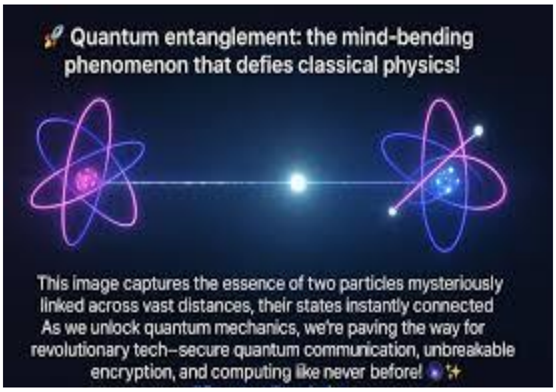
Abstract: *Quantum computing has transformed the practice of quantum physics from a primarily theoretical and experimental discipline into a field with direct computational and technological impact. This review synthesizes key developments at the intersection of quantum physics and quantum computation, outlining foundational principles, hardware platforms, algorithmic advances, and the reciprocal influence between quantum information science and our understanding of physical systems. We discuss emergent applications—ranging from quantum simulation of many-body systems and chemistry to quantum-enhanced metrology—while assessing major challenges such as noise, scaling, and error correction. The review concludes with an outlook on how further integration of physical insight and computational innovation could shape the next decade of research.*

Key Words: *superposition, entanglement, algorithms, Quantum Computation, QEC codes.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Quantum physics provides the conceptual framework that underlies quantum computing: the same principles that govern microscopic particles—superposition, entanglement, and measurement—are harnessed as computational resources[1]. Over the last two decades, theoretical milestones and experimental progress have bridged the gap between abstract quantum information theory and physical devices capable of executing small-to-medium scale quantum algorithms. This synthesis has created a feedback loop: quantum information concepts clarify foundational questions in physics, while physical realizations raise new theoretical and engineering challenges. This review summarizes these developments, aiming to orient physicists and interdisciplinary researchers entering the field[2].



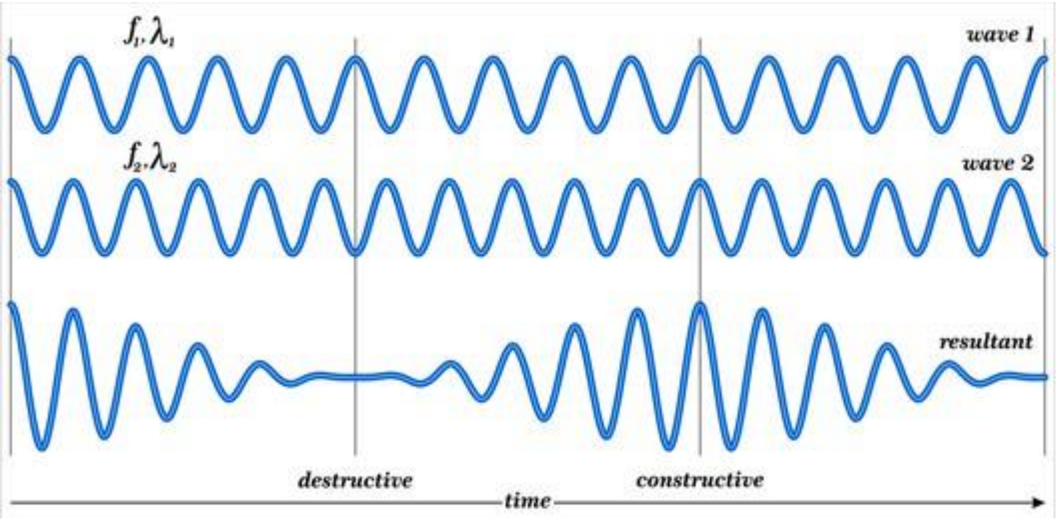

Quantum entanglement: the mind-bending phenomenon that defies classical physics!

This image captures the essence of two particles mysteriously linked across vast distances, their states instantly connected As we unlock quantum mechanics, we're paving the way for revolutionary tech–secure quantum communication, unbreakable encryption, and computing like never before!

II. FOUNDATIONS: QUANTUM STATES, OPERATIONS, AND RESOURCES

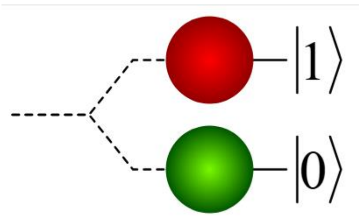
At its core, quantum computing represents information with quantum states (typically qubits) that live in a complex Hilbert space. Unlike classical bits, qubits occupy superpositions of basis states and can exhibit entanglement, a nonclassical correlation that enables phenomena with no classical analogue[3].

Quantum operations include unitary evolutions (reversible dynamics governed by Hamiltonians), projective measurements (collapsing states to classical outcomes), and open-system dynamics described by quantum channels. Resource theories—formal frameworks that quantify useful properties such as entanglement, coherence, and magic—play a vital role in connecting abstract information-processing capabilities to physically preparable states[4].

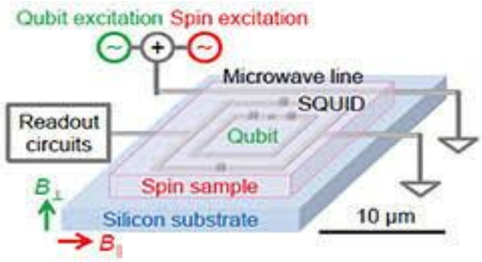


III.HARDWARE PLATFORMS: TRANSLATING THEORY INTO PHYSICS

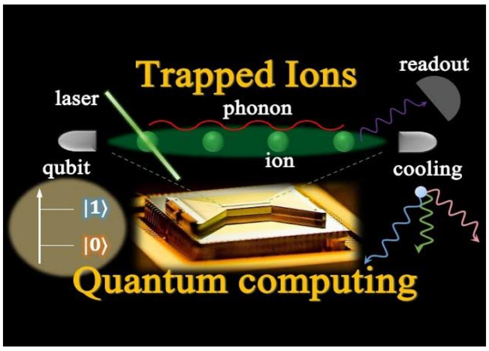
A diversity of physical platforms now competes to realize scalable qubits. Each platform embodies trade-offs among coherence time, gate fidelity, connectivity, and integrability.



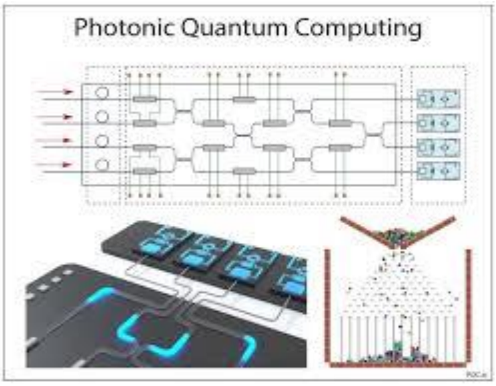
Superconducting circuits: Charge- and flux-based Josephson-junction qubits have enabled fast gate times and strong control via microwave electronics. They are currently among the most mature platforms for constructing multi-qubit devices and have led the push toward noisy intermediate-scale quantum (NISQ) processors[5].



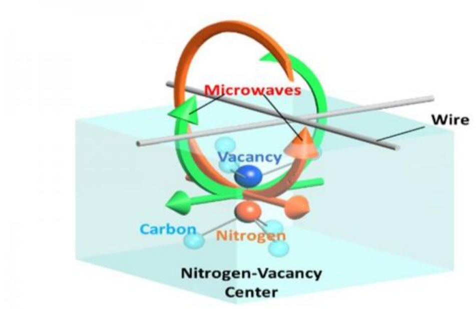
Trapped ions: Leveraging long-lived internal states of atomic ions and high-fidelity laser-driven gates, ion traps provide excellent coherence and gate fidelities. Their relatively slower gate speeds are balanced by naturally all-to-all coupling mediated by vibrational modes.



Photonic systems: Photons are ideal carriers for quantum information across long distances and for room-temperature operations. Photonic approaches include linear-optical quantum computing and integrated photonics with on-chip sources and detectors[6].



Spin qubits and NV centers: Electron and nuclear spins in semiconductors and diamond offer long coherence times and potential for dense integration; coupling to photonic interfaces is an active research area. Neutral atoms and Rydberg arrays: Optical tweezers that position neutral atoms and exploit Rydberg blockade interactions have recently shown rapid progress toward highly connected, reconfigurable qubit arrays. A prominent engineering theme across platforms is hybridization: combining strengths of different systems (e.g., superconducting processors with photonic interconnects) to build modular, scalable architectures[7].



IV.ALGORITHMS AND COMPLEXITY: WHAT QUANTUM COMPUTERS CAN DO

Quantum algorithms exploit interference and entanglement to accelerate or qualitatively alter computations. Landmark results include:

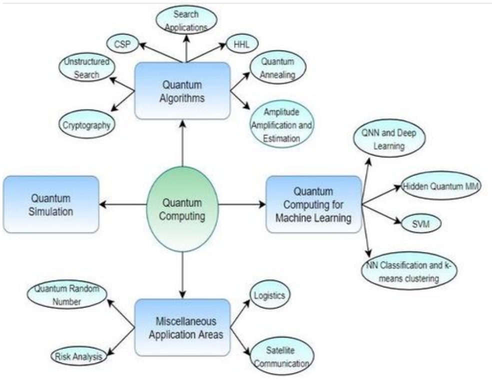
Shor’s algorithm for integer factoring demonstrates exponential speedup for a problem with cryptographic significance.

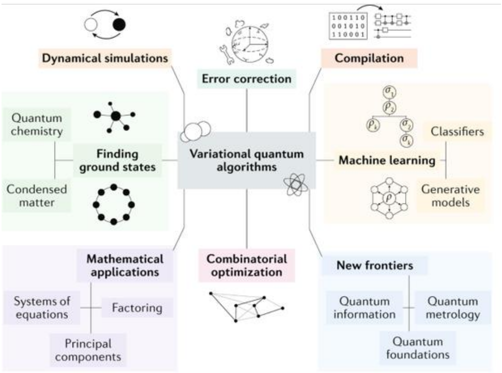
Grover’s algorithm offers a quadratic speedup for unstructured search tasks, illustrating an important yet modest advantage in many practical settings.

Quantum simulation algorithms: Simulating quantum dynamics efficiently is a native application for quantum computers; methods range from Trotterization to more advanced Hamiltonian simulation and variational quantum algorithms that target ground states and time evolution of many-body systems[8].

Variational quantum algorithms (VQAs): Hybrid quantum-classical algorithms (e.g., the Variational Quantum Eigensolver and Quantum Approximate Optimization Algorithm) are tailored for NISQ hardware; they use a parameterized quantum circuit as an ansatz with classical optimization of parameters.

Quantum complexity theory frames these capabilities: BQP (bounded-error quantum polynomial time) characterizes decision problems efficiently solvable by a quantum computer, and comparisons with classical classes (e.g., P, NP, and BPP) remain central theoretical questions.





V.APPLICATIONS: FROM SIMULATION TO SENSING

Quantum computing's most immediate and potentially transformative applications are:

Quantum chemistry and materials: Accurate simulation of molecular electronic structure and material properties—prohibitively costly for classical methods—can be addressed by quantum algorithms that compute ground-state energies, reaction pathways, and excited-state dynamics[9].

Many-body physics: Quantum simulators can probe strongly correlated phases, quantum phase transitions, and dynamics (thermalization, localization) across regimes difficult for classical simulation.

Optimization and machine learning: Quantum heuristics and quantum-inspired classical algorithms aim to speed up optimization and enhance machine learning; practical advantage remains an active research question[10].

Quantum metrology and sensing: Using entangled or squeezed states, quantum sensors achieve precision beyond classical limits for applications in timekeeping, magnetometry, and gravitational sensing.

Cryptography: Shor's algorithm motivates the development of post-quantum cryptography; simultaneously, quantum key distribution provides information-theoretically secure communication under certain assumptions.

VI.CHALLENGES: NOISE, SCALING, AND VERIFICATION

The path toward large-scale, fault-tolerant quantum computing faces major obstacles:

Decoherence and noise: Qubit states are fragile; interactions with uncontrolled environmental degrees of freedom produce errors that accumulate with circuit depth.

Quantum error correction (QEC): QEC codes (surface codes, concatenated codes, bosonic codes) enable protection against noise but require significant overhead in qubit count and control complexity. Demonstrating QEC with logical qubits outperforming physical qubits remains a milestone[11].

Scalability and engineering: Integrating control electronics, cryogenics, interconnectivity, and classical feedback for millions of physical qubits is an enormous engineering challenge.

Verification and benchmarking: As systems scale, certifying that a quantum device performs the intended computation becomes hard; randomized benchmarking, cross-entropy benchmarking, and interactive verification protocols are active areas of development.

VII.THEORETICAL FEEDBACK INTO PHYSICS

Quantum information science is not merely an application domain for physics; it reshapes foundational questions. Concepts such as entanglement entropy and quantum complexity have illuminated topics in condensed matter physics (e.g., topological order, tensor networks) and quantum gravity[12](e.g., holography and the role of entanglement in spacetime emergence). These cross-disciplinary insights suggest that computational perspectives can yield new physical theories and experimental probes.

VIII.OUTLOOK AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The coming decade will likely see deepening interplay between hardware advances, error mitigation/correction strategies, and algorithmic innovation. Promising directions include:

Development of modular and networked quantum architectures that combine different hardware strengths [13].
Improved error-corrected logical qubits through both hardware improvements and new QEC primitives.
Enhanced quantum-classical hybrid algorithms that provide near-term value in chemistry and materials science.

Continued cross-pollination with physics: using quantum devices to test many-body physics, novel phases, and possibly aspects of high-energy physics.

The field's trajectory depends on both incremental engineering progress and conceptual breakthroughs; maintaining close collaboration between physicists, computer scientists, and engineers will be essential.

IX.CONCLUSION

Quantum computing has converted abstract quantum mechanics into an actionable computational paradigm. While significant challenges remain—chiefly noise, scaling, and verification—the synergy between quantum information theory and experimental quantum physics promises transformative scientific and technological outcomes. This review has outlined the landscape of core principles, hardware approaches, algorithmic milestones, and open challenges, emphasizing the bidirectional influence of quantum computation and foundational physics.

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