

Measuring the Timing of the Photoelectric Effect

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The generation of single isolated attosecond pulses in the extreme ultraviolet (XUV) together with fully synchronized few-cycle infrared (IR) laser pulses allowed to trace electronic processes on the attosecond timescale. A pump/probe technique, “attosecond streaking” [1], was used to investigate electron dynamics on surfaces and layered systems with unprecedented resolution. Photoelectrons generated by laser based attosecond extreme ultraviolet pulses (XUV), are exposed to a dressing electric field from well synchronized laser pulses. The energy shift experienced by the photoelectrons by the dressing field is dependent on the delay between the XUV pulse and the dressing field and makes it possible to measure the respective delay in photoemission between electrons of different type (core electrons vs. conduction band electrons). The information gained in such experiments on tungsten [2] triggered many theoretical activities leading to different explanations on the physical reason of the delay. Attosecond streaking experiments have been performed on different solids [3,4], layered structures and liquids, resulting in different delays – also depending on the excitation photon energy. These measurements lead to a stepwise increase of the understanding of different physical effects contributing to the timing of photoemission. In this presentation, an overview on the different physical contributions to attosecond time delays in photoemission will be given. The “absolute” time delay, i.e. the delay between the instant of ionization and the emission of a photoelectron will be discussed and new measurements will be presented.

References

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