

SEMINAR

IN PHYSICS

Mechanical Analog Computing in Academic Settings
During the 20th Century

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Friday, February 22 · 3:30-4:25 · Ross 0220
Pizza☺!

Calculating has always been fundamental in learning physics and other technical disciplines. Doing calculations by hand with pencil and paper takes a very long time. Until the advent of the electronic calculator in the 1970's, most student calculating was done with sticks of wood or plastic in the form of "slide rules".

This presentation will look at the mathematics behind slide rules (logarithms) and how they were used for simple calculations. Slide rules were even developed to do specialized multiple complex calculations. They came in a variety of shapes and forms, several of which will be demonstrated.

By the end of this presentation, students should be able to do simple calculations using a slide rule ~ and understand why there is a large yellow board in Room 0220!