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Flossing DNA in a Dual Nanopore Device

Xu Liu,[†] Philip Zimny,[†] Yuning Zhang,[‡] Ankit Rana,[†] Roland Nagel,[†] Walter

Reisner,^{*,‡} and William B. Dunbar^{*,†}

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†Ontera Inc., Santa Cruz, CA 95060, USA

[‡]Department of Physics, McGill University Montreal, QC H3A 2T8, Canada

E-mail: reisner@physics.mcgill.ca; bill@ontera.bio

Abstract

Solid-state nanopores are a single-molecule technique that can provide access to 3 biomolecular information that is otherwise masked by ensemble averaging. A promis-4 ing application uses pores and barcoding chemistries to map molecular motifs along 5 single DNA molecules. Despite recent research breakthroughs, however, it remains 6 challenging to overcome molecular noise to fully exploit single molecule data. Here we 7 present an active control technique termed "flossing" that uses a dual nanopore device 8 to trap a protein-tagged DNA molecule and perform up to 100's of back-and-forth elec-9 trical scans of the molecule in a few seconds. The protein motifs bound to 48 kb λ DNA 10 are used as detectable features for active triggering of the bidirectional control. Molec-11 ular noise is suppressed by averaging the multi-scan data to produce averaged inter-tag 12 distance estimates that are comparable to their known values. Since nanopore feature-13 mapping applications require DNA linearization when passing through the pore, a key 14 advantage of flossing is that trans-pore linearization is increased to >98% by the second 15 scan, compared to 35% for single nanopore passage of the same set of molecules. In 16 concert with barcoding methods, the dual-pore flossing technique could enable genome 17 mapping and structural variation applications, or mapping loci of epigenetic relevance. 18

¹⁹ Keywords

²⁰ nanopore, DNA sensing, active control, single molecule, genome mapping

21 Introduction

A solid-state nanopore refers to a nanoscale hole formed in a solid-state membrane¹ or at the tip of a glass pipette.² A voltage-clamp amplifier supplies a voltage that is concentrated across the pore to electrically measure the trans-pore ionic current. When the voltage captures a single DNA and drives it through the pore, the passing DNA produces a transient blockade in the current that contains information about the molecule's chemical, conformational and topological state. Nanopore sensing offers a simple and high-throughput electrical read-out³ with an instrument that can have a small foot-print at low cost.⁴

Recent research has showcased the potential of nanopores to detect molecular features 29 along a DNA carrier strand, including proteins such as anti-DNA antibodies⁵ and strep-30 tavadin,^{6,7} single-stranded versus double stranded regions of a molecule,⁸ DNA-hairpins^{9,10} 31 and apatamers.^{11,12} Potential applications range from digital information storage,^{9,10} mul-32 tiplexed sensing,^{9,11} and genomic and/or functional genomic applications including genome 33 mapping¹³ and epigenetics.^{14,15} Solid-state pores in particular can target a more diverse 34 analyte pool than protein pores¹⁶ (e.g. dsDNA, proteins, protein-DNA complexes, nucleo-35 somes¹⁷) and thereby give access to a broad range of single-molecule applications. 36

A key challenge in performing multi-locus sensing of motifs along DNA is the inherent sensitivity of single-molecule systems to noise. Unwanted conformations/topologies and molecular fluctuations (both equilibrium and non-equilibrium in nature) create systematic and random distortions in the electrical signal pattern of motifs resolved by the sensor. For example, closely spaced features along DNA cannot always be resolved in a given single molecule read even with state-of-the-art measurements performed with 5 nm diameter nanopores, ¹⁰ requiring multiple independent reads from identical copies of different molecules to confi-

dently resolve the features. In addition, the stochastic nature of the translocation process 44 gives rise to broad distributions^{18,19} in tag spacings measured across a molecular ensemble;⁷ 45 these broad distributions necessitate averaging over additional molecules to obtain precise 46 spacing estimates. A related challenge is providing independent genomic distance calibra-47 tion along individual single-molecule reads, so that sensor output can be linked to sequence 48 position without a priori knowledge of the distance between motifs. While optics can pro-49 vide high-resolution spatiotemporal data,^{20,21} nanopores can only infer spatial information 50 implicitly from temporal data. In order for nanopore technology to achieve its full potential, 51 it is essential that single-molecule reads have sufficient quality (e.g., contain sufficiently low 52 systematic and random errors), so that the requirement for further ensemble-level averaging 53 over different molecules is minimized or eliminated. The technology can then be applied to 54 the complex, heterogeneous samples reflective of applications where every molecule may have 55 a different number of bound motifs possessing a distinct spatial distribution. Nanochannel 56 technology, for example, harnesses the physics of nanofluidic polymer confinement to both 57 linearize DNA and suppress molecular fluctuations in barcoded molecules, giving rise to 58 powerful genome-scale applications in the area of DNA optical mapping.^{22,23} 59

Here we show that highly accurate spatial information that is correlative with motif 60 binding can be obtained from a *single* labeled carrier dsDNA strand via repeated back-and-61 forth scanning of the molecule trapped in a nanopore device. Using a new active control 62 technique termed "flossing," we are able to perform up to 100's of scans of a given trapped 63 molecule within a few seconds. Flossing is showcased here using a model system consisting 64 of a 48.5 kbp double-stranded λ -DNA with a set of chemically incorporated sequence-specific 65 protein tags. Our approach complements existing carrier-strand DNA nanopore technology 66 by enhancing the quality of information that can be extracted from a single trapped molecule. 67 By taking a large number of statistically equivalent scans, we reduce stochastic fluctuations 68 through scan averaging, and show mean tag spacing estimates that are comparable to known 69 inter-tag distances, even while tolerating missed tag(s) within a subset of scans. 70

While prior work leveraged control logic for automated re-capture and sensing of molecules 71 with single nanopores,^{24,25} our approach is distinctive in a few ways. First, our device em-72 ploys a dual-pore architecture.^{26–28} By having the dual pores sufficiently close, our prior 73 work shows the DNA can be captured simultaneously by both pores and exist in a 'tug-of-74 war' state where competing electrophoretic voltage forces are applied at the pores.²⁸ During 75 tug-of-war, the molecule's orientation and identity are maintained, the molecule speed is 76 regulated to facilitate tag sensing, and the likelihood of the molecule finding a linearized 77 conformation through the pore is increased to 70% compared to 30% with single pore data. 78 An advantage of flossing is that linearization through the pore is further increased to >98%79 by the second scan, which in turn increases the throughput of nanopore feature-mapping 80 applications. 81

Another distinct feature of the presented approach is that the active controller cyclically 82 modulates the voltage at one pore by a real-time feedback on the sensing current of the 83 other pore. Specifically, during control, the cyclical application of unbalanced competing 84 voltage forces are used to drive the molecule's motion in one direction and then, after real-85 time detection of a set number of tags, in the reverse direction, thereby embodying the 86 concept of DNA "flossing." Previously, the original concept of flossing DNA in a nanopore 87 was envisioned with single protein pores, and only by creating stoppers at the end of the DNA 88 to prevent escape.²⁹ This approach facilitated interesting research^{30,31} but did not provide 89 a means of speed control or of mineable data generation during the molecule's motion in 90 either direction. Coupling the DNA to a stage has produced both speed control and mineable 91 data generation during the molecule's motion through a solid-state pore, but at the price 92 of complex instrumentation, higher sensing noise and lower throughput.³² In the presented 93 flossing control method, an interrogated DNA molecule can be ejected from the pores and a 94 new DNA captured with the same throughput and ease of any single-nanopore based assay, 95 with no tethering of the molecule required. 96

₉₇ Results and Discussion

⁹⁸ The DNA Flossing Concept

Figure 1 introduces the general flossing concept, showing pictorially and with actual recorded data the cyclical bidirectional scans of a co-captured molecule in a dual nanopore device. Our dual nanopore device was fabricated as previously described,³³ with voltages V_1 and V_2 that can be independently applied at pore 1 and 2, respectively. Two currents (I₁ and I₂) can also be independently measured at the pores. The tagged reagent features monovalent streptavidin (MS) proteins bound along the DNA.

Figure 1a illustrates each step in a multi-scan cycle. Since the motion control is bidirectional, we define a single transit with fixed direction as a "scan" and two sequential scans of reversed polarity as a "cycle." By convention, we define the left pore as pore 1 and the right pore as pore 2. During the multi-scan control logic sequence, V_2 across pore 2 is kept constant while V_1 is modulated in step-wise fashion. The signal I_2 is monitored in real-time for tag-related events as a logic trigger for V_1 changes, as described next.

The flossing control logic begins by initially co-capturing a tagged DNA in both pores to 111 reach the tug-of-war state. Once co-capture occurs, a lower voltage is applied across pore 1 112 than pore 2 $(V_1 < V_2)$ to direct the molecule motion towards pore 2 (left-to-right, or "L-to-113 R"). While monitoring I_2 , the control logic readjusts the voltage at pore 1 so that $V_1 > V_2$ 114 after a set number N of tags were detected translocating through pore 2. The readjustment 115 directs the molecule motion back towards pore 1 (R-to-L). After detecting the same set 116 number N of tags translocating through pore 2, the logic resets $V_1 < V_2$ to initiate another 117 L-to-R scan, and thus a new cycle begins. Figure 1b shows a recorded example of the first 118 two cycles and the final cycle of the I_2 signal for which the tag number setting was N = 2. 119 In this example, the multi-scan cycle begins with the molecule moving L-to-R for the first 120 9 ms and continues until 172 ms when the DNA escapes just after a V₁ modulation (escape 121 modes are discussed below and in detail in the SI). Details on the set of dual-pore chips 122

and voltage settings used in this paper are provided in Tables S1-S2. Having described the general flossing concept, we next present the method in greater detail and results obtained using the method.

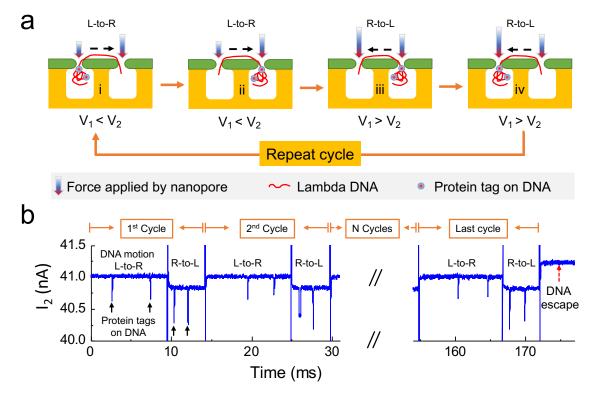


Figure 1: Flossing DNA with competing voltage forces in a dual pore device. a After DNA co-capture, the DNA molecule will be threaded from left-to-right (L-to-R) using a voltage $V_1 < V_2$, with V_1 and V_2 the voltages across pore 1 (left) and pore 2 (right), respectively. A single transit of DNA motion during this fixed polarity period is called a "scan." After automated detection of a predefined number of tags, the direction of DNA motion is reversed with a voltage $V_1 > V_2$ triggered to move the molecule from right-toleft (R-to-L), giving rise to a second scan. The process is repeated in cyclical fashion until the molecule randomly exits the co-capture state. **b** A recorded multi-scan current trace I_2 from pore 2, using logic for which the predefined tag detection number is 2, after which the controller triggers the change in direction. The signal from 30-150 ms is truncated for visualization.

¹²⁶ Initializing Tug-of-War and Identifying Scanning Voltages

¹²⁷ The control logic that automates the flossing process shown in Figure 1 is described here in ¹²⁸ detail. The flossing method first uses active control to automate initializing co-capture and

tug-of-war on a single molecule. The control logic was run in real-time (MHz clock rate) on 129 a Field Programmable Gate Array (FPGA). We modified our previously designed tug-of-war 130 control process 28 to permit loading reagent in the common fluidic chamber above the two 131 nanopores and to screen out short-fragments (SI Section 2, Fig. S1). Once co-capture is 132 achieved the competing voltage forces at V_1 and V_2 lead to a tug-of-war and reduce the 133 DNA speed during sensing. The mean durations of all co-captured events are computed at 134 each of a set of different V_1 values while keeping V_2 constant, showing a bell curve with the 135 peak revealing the force-balancing voltages that maximize co-capture duration. Figure S1c 136 shows an example device with peak mean duration of $110 \,\mathrm{ms}$ with V_1 and V_2 both set to 137 500 mV. This data is generated with bare DNA that has no tags. 138

While capturing a molecule in dual pore tug-of-war introduces speed and conformational control, bare double-stranded DNA offers no detectable features with which to monitor the molecule's motion. To enable *in-situ* feature monitoring, we developed MS-tagged DNA as a model reagent, with up to 7 sites tagged on the DNA (SI Section 3, Fig. S2). The tag features are used to make inferences on the speed and direction of each scan, which enables identifying the scanning voltages as described next.

The scanning voltages are found after the force-balancing voltages that maximize co-145 capture duration have been identified for a given chip. Specifically, the scanning voltage 146 values for V_1 are chosen above and below it's force balancing value in order to promote un-147 perturbed DNA motion toward pore 1 and pore 2, respectively, while keeping V_2 at it's force 148 balancing value. The V_1 scanning values are chosen heuristically, using the following guid-149 ance. A working scan speed should enable robust sensing of tag blockades at the recording 150 bandwidth (i.e., not too fast), while ensuring sufficiently high Peclet numbers so that translo-151 cation time distributions are well-defined (i.e., not too slow). That is, broad translocation 152 time distributions increase the probability of fluctuations, which can undermine the inter-153 tag time-to-distance mapping objectives described in a later section. In practice, achieving 154 a not-too-fast and not-too-slow scan speed is achievable for a broad range of scanning V₁ 155

voltages. For the data in this paper, that range is as low as 150 and as high as 500 mV away from the force-balancing voltage (Table S2). Figure S2 shows an example tug-of-war experiment with MS-tagged DNA at a working scan speed, for which $V_1 = 200 \text{ mV}$ and V_2 = 500 mV, with a typical current traces for I₁ and I₂ from one representative event (Fig. S2c). There are three downward spikes in both I₁ and I₂, indicating three resolvable tags along the DNA. The $V_1 = 200 \text{ mV}$ value that promotes L-to-R motion is 300 mV below the force-balancing value (500 mV).

¹⁶³ Representative Flossing Event with Protein-Tagged DNA

Once the scanning voltage values are identified, the full flossing multi-scan logic can be 164 applied. The full details of the FPGA-implemented logic are provided in supplementary 165 materials (SI Section 4, Figure S3). The output of the logic is conveyed here by representative 166 flossing data (Figure 2). Figure 2a shows the full signal trace of I_1 , V_1 , I_2 and V_2 from a 167 typical flossing event. We kept $V_2 = 300 \,\mathrm{mV}$ unchanged within the event. We set $V_1 =$ 168 $100\,\mathrm{mV}$ for L-to-R movement and $\mathrm{V_1}\,=\,850\,\mathrm{mV}$ for R-to-L movement. Note that the $\mathrm{I_2}$ 169 baseline varies when V_1 is adjusted even though V_2 is constant. This effect is caused by 170 cross talk between pore 1 and pore 2 that was previously characterized in Liu $et \ al.^{28}$ The 171 detectability of tags relative to the DNA baseline in I_2 is still robust, despite the baseline 172 change. As detailed in the previous section, we chose sufficiently large voltage differentials 173 between V_1 and V_2 to promote controlled motion in each direction during sensing. 174

Figure 2b,c give a magnified view of the signal for the first cycle that comprises the 175 1st and 2nd scans, and the last cycle comprising the 81st and 82nd scans. By convention, 177 since the multi-scan logic starts in the L-to-R direction, the odd scans correspond to L-to-R 178 movement and the even scans R-to-L movement. The event in Figure 2a includes 41 cycles 179 and 82 scans total, all in less than 0.66 sec. As depicted in Figure 1, the FPGA logic was 180 designed to switch V_1 once two tags were detected within I₂. The FPGA detects a tag when 181 I₂ falls at least 70 pA below the untagged DNA baseline for at least 0.012 ms (based on the

distribution in Figure S2f). The data in Figure 2 shows two tags, A and B, in both I_1 and 182 I_2 when the molecule moved L-to-R from 9 to 19 ms. Following a 1.5 ms-delay after tag B 183 was detected, the FPGA set $V_1 = 850 \text{ mV}$, driving the molecule to move R-to-L from 19 to 184 25 ms. The same tags, B and A, were detected in both I₁ and I₂ in reverse order. The same 185 logic continued until the FPGA failed to detect tag B in the last cycle (Figure 2c), which 186 was caused by the tag appearing too close to the voltage change for the FPGA to detect it. 187 The total flossing time and distribution of the number of scans per event are shown in 188 Figure 2d for a total of 309 flossing events in an experiment, including the 82 scan event in 189 Figure 2a. Total flossing time increases with more scans, while all events terminated in less 190 than a few seconds, even for the largest scan count of 157 for this data. While individual 191 scans last 5-10 ms (Figures 1b and 2b-c), the total time data shows a significant increase 192 (up to 100X more) in time spent interrogating each molecule by using the flossing method. 193

From the probability plot in Figure 2d, 37% of the events had less than 5 scans, and events with higher scan count are less likely. We examined the probability P(n) of seeing a specific total number of scans n, where the probability of any intermediate scan has correct detection probability p and missed detection probability (1-p). An event with n total scans indicates the system successfully catches the initial (n-1) scans but fails to catch the nth scan. Thus its probability P(n) is

$$P(n) = p^{n-1}(1-p).$$
 (1)

Fitting the data to equation (1) results in p = 0.89 for this specific data set (Figure 2d). To determine why the molecule exits co-capture, we studied the last cycles and found four common cases: missing a tag in the *n*th scan (Figure S4a); a false positive spike detected in the (n - 1)st scan (Figure S4b); a false negative spike in the *n*th scan (Figure S4c); and the molecule exits the pore during the FPGA delay state (Figure S4d). A discussion on how to increase the total number of scans per event can be found in SI section 5. Naturally,

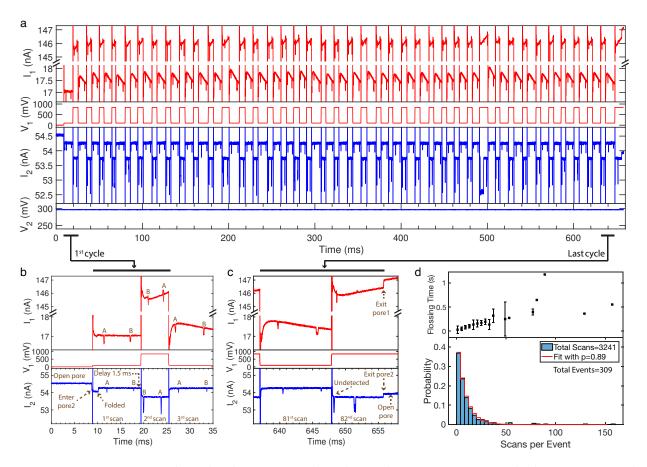


Figure 2: Representative dual current signals and scan count statistics generated during a flossing experiment with MS-tagged DNA. a Full signal traces for I₁, V₁, I₂ and V₂ are shown for a representative multi-scan flossing event. The vertical-axis break in the I₁ signal permits vertical-scale zooming on the low and high ranges during the lower and higher V₁ values. **b** Zoom in of the 1st cycle where two-tag logic shows resolvable tags A and B in both signals. **c** Zoom-in of the 41st and last cycle, showing the end of co-capture due to an undetected tag. **d** The total flossing time (mean \pm standard deviation) and probability distribution versus scan counts across all co-captured events for the device used (bin width = 4). The red line on the probability data is the fitted model equation (1), with p = 0.89 the probability of correctly detecting two tags in each scan. The chip used had a pore-to-pore distance of 0.61 μ m, 27 nm pore 1 diameter, and 25 nm pore 2 diameter (Chip C, Table S1).

changing the voltage settings will affect event duration between tags, which in turn will affect
 tag detection probabilities.

A dependence of tag amplitude on scan direction is observed in Figure 2a-c, with MS tags showing relatively shallower and faster spikes when passing through the pore with the higher voltage of the two. Seeing a faster and shallower tag event at higher voltage is consistent with single pore results, and is in part an artifact of the low-pass filter (10 kHz bandwidth) ²⁰⁶ preventing the tag events from hitting full depth (i.e., the faster the event, the shallower).

A multi-scan experiment using a three tag triggering setting was also performed (Figure 207 S5). It is harder to get a higher scan count using three tag triggering than with two. In part, 208 this arises because fewer molecules (<20%) show three or more tags (Figure S2e), which 209 is a limitation of our current reagent preparation methods. Also, even when the system 210 co-captures one molecule with three tags in both pores, the probability of correct detection 211 of all three tags is lower (Figure S5c), and failing to detect any one of the tags moves the 212 molecule to a new region, thereby lowering the scan count for the originally scanned three tag 213 region. To generate more data with higher scan counts, we therefore focused the experiments 214 on two-tag triggering in this initial presentation. 215

²¹⁶ Flossing Increases the Fraction of DNA with Mappable Data

Nanopore feature-mapping applications require DNA linearization when passing through the 217 sensing pore. As such, we explored the fraction of DNA that can be linearized by the flossing 218 technique, where linearization refers to the removal of DNA folds that are initially in the 219 pore when co-capture is initialized. By example, the molecule in Figure 2a-c was partially 220 folded at around 10 ms in the 1st cycle (Figure 2b), which was eliminated in the 2nd cycle 221 and thereafter, demonstrating the tendency of tug-of-war control to induce and maintain 222 DNA linearization. We examined the probability of complete linearization over the scanning 223 cycle through pore 2 as a function of scan number to see if the trend in Figure 2a-c was 224 representative of the population. Indeed, Figure 3 shows that the probability of linearization 225 is increased to 98% by the second scan. In the data, a folded event is identified if the current 226 blockage is larger than 1.5 times the unfolded blockage amount, and lasts more than 180 μ s. 227 Figure 3a,b show representative single pore and multi-scan events with observable folding 228 examples. 229

We propose a qualitative mechanism of the progression of unfolding during flossing in Figure 3c. Going L-to-R, motion and the field force at pore 2 are aligned, which promotes

folds eventually moving through pore 2 and into channel 2. Subsequently, R-to-L motion pulls 232 only the region of DNA that is under tension via Tug-of-War back through pore 2, despite 233 the counter field force at pore 2, while folds not under Tug-of-War tension experience only 234 the field force and thus remain in channel 2 and away from pore 2. Figure 3d shows the ratio 235 of unfolded events for the progression of translocation types that each of the 309 events went 236 through. Thus the statistics in each column are from exactly the same group of molecules, 237 and are the same data as Figure 2. The 35% unfolded probability through the initial single 238 pore capture (pore 1 in our device) is consistent with other single pore studies.^{1,9,33} Following 239 co-capture, 66% of 1st scans are unfolded, which is consistent with tug-of-war data without 240 flossing.²⁸ By the 2nd scan, only 6 molecules out of 309 (2%) remain folded, and only 5 241 remain folded by their last scan. Thus the flossing process effectively linearizes the DNA 242 molecules through the nanopore sensors at high probability. 243

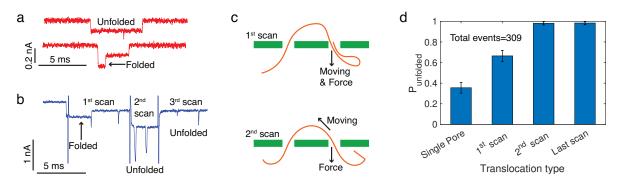


Figure 3: Flossing increases linearization of DNA in dual pore device. a Typical I₁ traces of single pore events, including both unfolded folded examples. Only single pore events that resulted in eventual co-capture were included in subsequent probability calculations (pre-i step events in Figure S1). b Typical I₂ trace of a multi-scan event in which scan 1 shows folding and subsequent scans do not. c Illustration of a mechanism by which the folded part (initially only in I₂) gets removed by the 2nd scan when the molecule moves R-to-L, as described in the text. d The probability $P (\pm 95\%$ error bar) is the fraction of events that are unfolded, for the different translocation types. A total of 309 events experienced all four types in sequential order.

²⁴⁴ Tag Data Analysis: A Single Scan View

The multi-scan data set (constituting L-to-R and R-to-L scans for each pore) contains rich 245 information regarding the underlying tag binding profile and translocation physics. Each 246 individual scan taken from the two pores provides a snapshot of the translocation process 247 for the portion of DNA being scanned. There are two ways to assess the translocation 248 velocity from the tag. The first approach is to quantify the speed of a tag as moves through 249 a single-pore ('dwell time estimation'), which is based on dividing the tag blockade duration 250 (width-at-half-maximum) into the membrane thickness (35 nm). The second approach is 251 unique to dual nanopore technology, and is to assess tag speed as it moves from the first 252 pore (Entry) to the second pore (Exit). This entry-to-exit time is in reference to the time 253 the tag resides in the common chamber above both pores, and is also referred to as the 254 pore-to-pore time. In pore-to-pore speed estimation, the pore-to-pore time is divided into 255 the measured distance between the pores for each chip (Table S1). By definition, the pore-256 to-pore approach utilizes correlation between the two current signals I_1 and I_2 , since the 257 time starts when the tag leaves the Entry pore and ends with the tag enters the Exit pore. 258 We note that, at the voltages applied, DNA in the common reservoir is expected to be fully 259 stretched between the pores²⁸ (0.34 nm/bp). 260

Figure 4 shows an example of an adjacent pair of scans in a multi-scan event, and demon-261 strates how inter-tag separation distances can be estimated from each scan. For the L-to-R 262 scan (Figure 4a,c), tag A then tag B move through pore 1, and about 1 ms later they move 263 through pore 2. The signal pattern reveals that tags A and B are spatially closer than the 264 distance between the pores (0.64 μ m, chip E, Table S1). The FPGA is monitoring I₂ for 265 two tags during the control logic. During the waiting period after detecting A and B in I_2 , 266 a third tag C passes through pore 1. Visually, it is also clear from the pore-to-pore transit 267 times of A and B that tags B and C are roughly two times farther apart than the distance 268 between the pores. Upon changing V_1 to promote motion in the reverse direction R-to-L 269 (Figure 4b,d), the first observable tag in I_1 is C passing back through pore 1. Again, the 270

²⁷¹ logic detects A and B in I_2 , and this time both tags pass through pore 1 before the logic ²⁷² triggers the V_1 to promote L-to-R motion. Seeing three tags within I_1 was a result of three ²⁷³ physical tag separations that are close enough to accommodate 3-tag pore 1 transit within ²⁷⁴ the 2-tag pore 2 detection time window of I_2 , as implemented on the FPGA. More common ²⁷⁵ was to see two tags reliably in both pores, as detailed in the next section.

For an L-to-R scan, a tag blockade in I_2 corresponds to a tag exiting the common reservoir, 276 making pore 2 the Exit in L-to-R, whereas moving R-to-L means a tag in I_2 is entering the 277 common reservoir. While I_2 shows two tags, the third tag present in I_1 for both scan directions 278 yields an opportunity to quantify two tag-pair separation distances. For the signals shown, 270 the number of tags between the pores are plotted, and the tag speeds based on dwell-time 280 and pore-to-pore speeds are also plotted. These speed values versus time provides a glimpse 281 into how the molecule is moving during co-capture tug-of-war, along with the illustrations 282 added for visualization (Figure 4a,b). The pore-to-pore speed is modestly faster for an R-283 to-L direction (0.8 vs. 0.6 μ m/ms), which is consistent with a larger voltage differential for 284 R-to-L motion (V₁ = 600 mV, V₂ = 400 mV) than for L-to-R motion (V₁ = 250 mV, V₂ = 285 400 mV). 286

We estimate tag-to-tag separation distances (Figure 4c,d bottom) by multiplying the 287 mean pore-to-pore speed within a scan by the tag-to-tag times recorded within that scan, 288 and adding the membrane thickness. Membrane thickness is added to account for the added 289 spatial separation that is equivalent to either tag passing the length of a pore, since tag-to-290 tag times are computed from the rising edge of a detected tag blockade to the falling edge 291 of the next detected tag blockade. The tag-to-tag distance estimates are shown for both 292 the L-to-R scan and the R-to-L scan. The results suggest that each separation prediction 293 will vary across the two different scan directions. Tag-pair separation distance predictions 294 will also vary due to differences between the tag pore-to-pore speed and the true speed 295 profile during the tag-to-tag time for a given pore. That is, the assumption that the speed 296 between the tags is constant and equal to the pore-to-pore speed is not exactly correct. It 297

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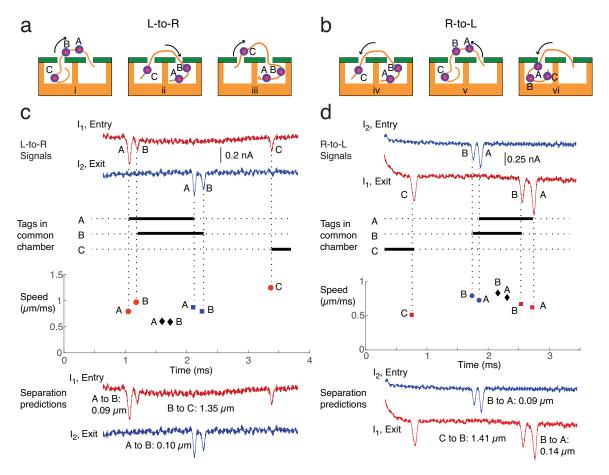


Figure 4: Estimating inter-tag separation distances from dual current signals generated during a multi-scan experiment. The a L-to-R and b R-to-L illustrations help visualize the relative tag locations that are revealed by the scan signals. The c L-to-R and d R-to-L signals were from adjacent scans of a co-captured molecule that was scanned for 48 cycles. In L-to-R, pore 1 is the Entry pore for a tag while pore 2 is the Exit pore. In R-to-L, pore 2 is the Entry pore for a tag while pore 1 is the Exit pore. Entry and Exit are thus relative to the direction of motion of a tag as it passes from pore to pore. The signals and inferred number of tags in the common chamber between the pores versus time are plotted. Illustration (ai) visualizes the period when A and B are in the common chamber, while (aii) visualizes the period after B exits but before C enters the common chamber, etc. The Speed plots shows the computed tag speeds at the Entry and Exit pores, based on tag duration divided into membrane thickness, and tag pore-to-pore speeds computed as the known distance between the pores divided by the pore-to-pore time. Inter-tag separation distance predictions are computed by multiplying the mean pore-to-pore speed within a scan by the time between detected tag pairs, and adding the membrane thickness as a correction (main text). The voltages were set to $V_1 = 250 \text{ mV}$ for L-to-R and 600 mV for R-to-L, with $V_2 = 400 \,\mathrm{mV}$ held constant (Chip E, Table S1). The FPGA monitored I_2 for N = 2 tags (exit signal L-to-R, entry signal R-to-L), though 3 tags were visible in I_1 in both directions.

likely that this assumption is better when the tag-to-tag times are shorter than the pore-topore times, which is the case for tags A and B but not tags B and C in Figure 4. In any case, if the assumption that the DNA is traveling at the constant pore-to-pore speed is true on average, we would expect the average of many re-scans to predict accurate separation distances between any two sequential tags. We next compute the average of multiple scan predictions and test how well the predictions line up with the known separations from the model tagged-DNA reagent.

³⁰⁵ Combining Scans to Improve Tag-to-Tag Distance Predictions

We examined the error-reduction performance of averaging the distances obtained from in-306 dividual scans within a multi-scan event. Five different multi-scan events with at least 30 307 cycles are reported in Table 1. For each event, the averaged distance estimates are shown for 308 each scan direction, and using pore 2 estimates alone as well as merging the pore 1 and pore 309 2 estimates. The table reports the number of cycles, which is equal to the number of scans 310 in each direction, and the number of tag-pairs that contributed to each separation distance 311 estimate. In all cases, there are fewer distance estimates than scans. For example, for event 312 (v) that had 65 scans in each direction, and for the R-to-L direction, 57 scans produced 313 detectable tag pairs in I_2 while 62 tag pairs were detected in I_1 for a total of 119 separation 314 estimates. The attrition is because the probability of a missing a tag within any one scan 315 increases with cycle count, as described by equation (1). 316

We can assess the correspondence between the averaged separation distances in Table 1 and the known inter-tag separations that are possible from the position map (Figure S6). Known distances are computed using the conversion 0.34 nm/bp, which assumes the DNA in the common reservoir is fully stretched between the pores. For event (i), only the R-to-L scan directions were combined and reported for event (i), since the L-to-R data showed significant variation in the pore-to-pore speed (described in SI Section 11). Note that the two scans shown in Figure 4 are from event (i), which pathologically generated two tag-pair estimates ³²⁴ in pore 1 current for the reason described in that figure. If we assume tag 6 is absent for the ³²⁵ molecule and that tags 4, 5 and 7 are present, the adjacent tag-pair separations for event (i) ³²⁶ have their closest match among all possible adjacent tag-pair permutations that are possible ³²⁷ according to the position map. Specifically, the map shows 0.1 and 1.5 μ m adjacent distance ³²⁸ between tags 4-5 and 5-7. It is reasonable to assume that a tag (i.e., tag 6) is absent, as ³²⁹ discussed previously (Figure S2e).

Events (ii-v) in Table 1 show very consistent results across both scan directions, and 330 between both pores when comparing Pore 2 results with Combined results. For these events, 331 only a single separation distance estimate was produced, which is most common for control 332 logic that uses N = 2 tag detection in I₂ to trigger direction switching. In terms of compar-333 ing averaged separation distances and the known inter-tag separations, events (ii) and (iii) 334 correspond most closely to 1.5 μ m and 1.3 μ m distances between 5-7 and 6-7, respectively, 335 with the 1.5 μ m value possible if the tag 6 position is assumed vacant for the molecule of 336 event (ii). And events (iv) and (v) correspond most closely to 0.3 μ m and 0.2 μ m distances 337 between 4-6 and 5-6, respectively, with the 0.3 μm value possible if the tag 5 position is 338 assumed vacant for the molecule of event (iv). 339

Consistent with the thesis of this work, the correspondence between distance estimates 340 and map-possible permutations is generally not as clean for the individual scans (e.g., Fig. 4) 341 as it is for the averaged scans, and is impossible for scans where tags are missed (represen-342 tative examples are shown in Figs. S11, S13 and S14). This demonstrates the value of error 343 reduction by averaging across a multi-scan data set generated for each molecule. Additional 344 data on the velocity profiles for events (i-v) in Table 1 and data for four additional multi-scan 345 events are reported in Table S3. The error on each separation estimate is obtained as the 346 error on the mean over the group of estimates, with significant reduction of error achieved 347 through averaging. 348

The data in Table 1 show the power of the flossing approach when the events have tag-to-tag times in I_2 that are unambiguously attributable to the same physical set of tags

Event ^{a)}	Number of cycles	Scan direction	Pore 2 tag-to-tag separations $[\mu m]^{b}$	Combined tag-to-tag separations $[\mu m]^{b}$
(i) ^{c)}	48	R-to-L	a. 0.10 ± 0.005 (32)	a. 0.12 ± 0.006 (56)
			b. — (0)	b. 1.4 ± 0.031 (21)
(ii)	30	L-to-R	$1.5 \pm 0.12 \ (28)$	$1.5 \pm 0.12 \ (48)$
		R-to-L	$1.5 \pm 0.026 \ (15)$	1.5 ± 0.017 (38)
(iii)	70	L-to-R	$1.3 \pm 0.045 \ (68)$	$1.3 \pm 0.034 \ (116)$
		R-to-L	$1.4 \pm 0.017 \; (32)$	$1.3\pm 0.011~(96)$
(iv)	31	L-to-R	$0.31 \pm 0.022 \ (9)$	0.31 ± 0.022 (9)
		R-to-L	$0.3 \pm 0.005 \ (28)$	$0.31 \pm 0.004 \ (55)$
(v)	65	L-to-R	0.2 ± 0.008 (18)	0.2 ± 0.009 (20)
		R-to-L	0.21 ± 0.003 (57)	0.21 ± 0.002 (119)

 Table 1: Summary of separation statistics from five multi-scan events

^{a)} Events (i-iiii) and (iv)-(v) are from chips E and F (Table S1), respectively.

^{b)} Mean \pm standard deviation of the mean (number of samples).

^{c)} Three tags were detected to produce two adjacent separations, listed as (a) and (b). L-to-R results had larger errors due to larger pore-to-pore speed fluctuation (coefficient of variation is 83%, Table S3), and so were excluded.

(representative scans with both I_1 and I_2 signals are provided in Figures S7-S14). In other data, however, when a tag is missed in I_2 within a scan, the two-tag scanning logic will eject the molecule or subsequently shift to a new physical tag pairing on the same molecule, which creates a register-shift in the tag-to-tag time data. An example of this is event (vi) in Table S3 with the register-shift scan signals shown in Fig. S11. While this complexity can be visually observed in the data and accommodated manually, we next sought to develop an alternative approach that could detect and automate analysis for such register shifts.

The alternative method presented next is based on aligning the signal in the time domain based on tag blockade proximity, with the aim of automating the binning of tag-pair times, particularly where there is greater ambiguity in assigning such times across scans. Our own prior work has shown that time-based signal alignment of nanopore data can increase the value of multiple nanopore reads in the context of sequencing through homopolymer regions.³⁴ The time-based signal alignment strategy is described below, as applied to two multi-scan events shown in Figure 5. The first in Figure 5a provides an example where tag-pair matching from scan to scan is not ambiguous, while Figure 5b provides an example where tag-pair matching from scan to scan is ambiguous due to the aforementioned registershifting effect (Figure 5a,c events are events (vii),(vi) in Table S3, respectively).

In the time-bases signal alignment method, the temporal position of each tag relative to 368 the starting time of each scan is first computed. To facilitate alignment, the method must 369 tolerate potentially large differences in tag event shape, and so the tag analysis procedure 370 was modified and based on fitting a model function to each peak based on the convolution of 371 a box with a Gaussian function (SI Section 10). This model can characterize tag blockades 372 that are both broad/rectangular in character or narrow/Gaussian-like (see Figure S15 for 373 examples of fitted scans). The extracted tag positions in time are plotted versus scan number, 374 in Figure 5b.e. The scan to scan signals show a relative translational offset, arising from the 375 fact that different portions of the molecule are observed in each scan. There is also stochastic 376 variation in molecular motion, arising from Brownian fluctuations. These effects complicate 377 correct association of tags across multiple scans, that is ensuring that the tags observed in a 378 given scan correspond to tags at the same sequence position in adjacent scans for the same 379 scan direction. 380

In order to align scans in a systematic way, the algorithm automatically groups tags 381 and removes the translational offset across the scans. Figures 5c,f show examples of aligned 382 events and SI section 10 provides a detailed description of the approach. Essentially, the 383 algorithm works by assuming that at least two tags are shared between two successive scans. 384 In order to identify one of the shared or "common" tags, the algorithm brings each potential 385 tag pair in the two scans into alignment by shifting one scan relative to the other. Note 386 that only translational offsets are applied, i.e., there is no overall dilation of the time-scale. 387 For each one of these possible test alignments, the algorithm computes a measure of align-388 ment error based on the summed squared difference between distinct tag pairs in the test 389 alignment. The algorithm identifies the pairing that yields minimum error as true common 390

tags and implements the translational shift that brings this pair into alignment. Note that 391 this approach yields both the translational offset between the scans and a correspondence 392 table of shared tags between the scans. Working iteratively across all scans in a set the 393 tags observed across the scan can be grouped together and translational offsets removed. 394 The tag group with the largest set of scans is defined to be the origin tag and each scan is 395 shifted so this origin is set to zero. This algorithm outputs a final barcode, or set of averaged 396 relative tag positions, for each set of single molecule scans. The final barcode estimates for 397 the two multi-scan events considered are shown in Figure 5c, f, showing values that are very 398 close to those reported using the method of combining distances presented above (see events 390 (vii),(vi) in Table S3). The error on a tag position in the barcode is obtained as the error 400 on the mean over the group of scans associated with the tag, with significant reduction of 401 error achieved through averaging of positional information over multiple scans. 402

The outputted barcodes are in units of time. In order to calibrate the scans to units 403 of distance, we first use an aggregate translocation velocity corresponding to the scan set. 404 The aggregate translocation velocity is computed as the mean of a subset of the pore-to-405 pore speeds measured within a multi-scan event, using only those speeds for which the scan 406 displayed a conserved number of tags in both pores. The barcodes are then calibrated in 407 units of distance by multiplying by the mean pore-to-pore velocity. The reported error on 408 the final calibrated tag positions incorporates the error on the velocity and the error in 409 separation via standard propagation. The set of possible tag separations extracted from 410 these barcodes shows good reproducibility between the pores (Fig. 5g) and correspondence 411 with the expected separations from the λ -DNA tag map (Fig. 5h). Note that the sharpness 412 of the plateaus indicate the precision achieved through averaging of multiple scans. In 413 particular, when we sort the extracted tag separations by size, we find that the data shows 414 distinct plateaus that correspond to the expected separations in the map. Separations that 415 fall off the expected spacings could arise from non-specific binding (e.g., tags attached at 416 random nicks present non-specifically in λ -DNA), or offsets caused by imperfections in the 417

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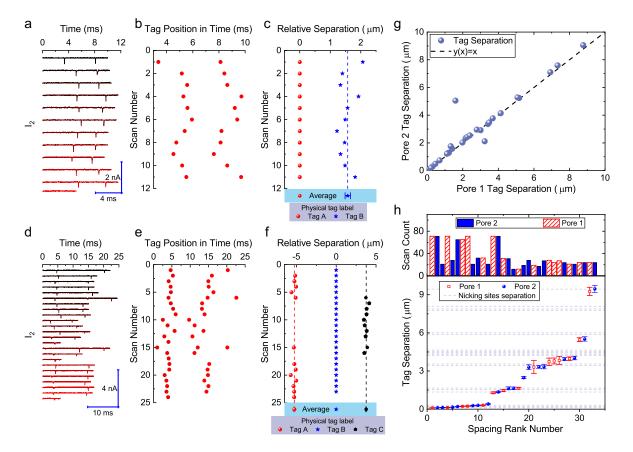


Figure 5: Tag position rescaling and tag spacing distribution using time-based signal alignment. a Raw L-to-R scans from pore 2 for a multi-scan event with control logic triggered to probe two tagged sites. The time-axis is plotted relative to the beginning of each scan. b Temporal positions for each tag obtained from a. c Aligned relative tag separations from **b** with resultant average separation distances between denoted tags A-B. **d** Raw L-to-R scans from pore 2 for a multi-scan event with control logic triggered to probe two tagged sites, but produced data covering three tagged sites due to an intermediate missed tag at scans 6 and 15 (offline analysis detects all 3 tags even where online control does not). e Temporal positions for each tag obtained from d. f Aligned relative tag separations from e with resultant average separation distances between denoted tags A-B and B-C. g Averaged separation distances between tags obtained from pore 2 versus pore 1. The linear correlation of the data indicates strong measurement reproducibility between the pores. h Calibrated tag separations arranged in ascending order using pore 1 and pore 2 estimates, with tag relative separation plotted versus separation ranking by size (spacing rank number). The plateaus are close to the expected permutations of tag-pair separations that are possible for the model MS-tagged λ -DNA reagent (horizontal lines, Figure S6). Tag separations with at least 10 scans were included, with the histogram above shows the scan count per data point. **a-f** data are from chip A and **g-h** data are from chips A, E and F (Table S1).

tag blockage analysis algorithm. Figure 5g,h shows data from the L-to-R portion of 33 separate multi-scan estimates with an average velocity of $v = 0.56 \pm 0.04 \,\mu\text{m/ms}$ and a ⁴²⁰ minimum of 10 scans per tag pair. We also plotted the scan count aligned with each data of
⁴²¹ the 33 estimates, with higher scan counts reducing the variance of each data point.

The data in Figures 4 and 5h show that the closest spacing available with the model 422 reagent (300 bp or 100 nm) is well resolved. In single-pore work, sub-4 nm diameter membrane-423 based pores that hug PNA-based motifs (15 bp footprint) have demonstrated 100 bp inter-tag 424 distance resolution,³⁵ while pipette-based pores have resolved at low as 200 bp.⁶ We did not 425 explore the lower limit of inter-tag distance resolution here, but observe that since our peaks 426 are well resolved for the 300 bp separation (e.g., visible space between tags in Figure 4 427 traces), and since slower passage and higher bandwidth are knobs that can be turned in our 428 setup, we anticipate a lower limit below 300 bp should be achievable. It should be possible 420 to resolve tags that are spaced modestly farther apart than the membrane thickness, in prin-430 ciple (~ 105 bp for the current chips). This can be examined in future work with different 431 model reagents. 432

433 Conclusion

We have developed an approach that first traps and linearizes an individual, long DNA 434 molecule in a dual nanopore device, and then provides multi-read coverage data using auto-435 mated "flossing" control logic that moves the molecule back-and-forth during dual nanopore 436 current sensing. From the point-of-view of dual pore technology development, our rescanning 437 approach overcomes a key challenge: while maximally long trapping-times can be achieved 438 by balancing the competing forces at each pore, sub-diffusive dynamics will persist as speed 439 is reduced,²⁸ undermining mapping-based approaches that rely on a correspondence between 440 the time at which tags are detected and their physical position along a DNA. In our approach 441 sub-diffusive dynamics are avoided during bidirectional scanning of the molecule by using 442 speeds that permit reliable tag detection while being high enough to avoid broad translo-443 cation time distributions. By enhancing the quality of information that can be extracted 444

from a given DNA carrier strand, we feel this is a step towards addressing a key challenge 445 in single-molecule technology: genome-scaling. Genome scaling is the potential to move 446 beyond experiments with short DNA constructs and tackle complex, heterogeneous samples 447 containing fragments in the mega-base size drawn from Gbp scale genomes. For genome 448 scaling to be feasible, single-molecule reads must have sufficient quality (e.g. contain suf-449 ficiently low systematic and random errors) to enable alignment to reference genomes and 450 construct contigs from overlapping reads drawn from a shared genomic region. This is the 451 only way to identify long range structural variations that are masked by short read methods 452 (i.e., via NGS), and in some cases masked even by long-read sequencing.³⁶ Future work will 453 include developing a new model reagent with improved tagging efficiency, and optimizing 454 the multi-scanning logic for increased scan number. We also plan to apply the approach to 455 longer molecules with more complex tagging patterns, possibly using repetitive scanning at 456 targeted regions to gradually explore the barcode structure. In the applied context of epige-457 netics, our technique can combine sequence-specific label mapping, using the same chemistry 458 here or other nanopore-compatible schemes that have a low spatial footprint per label, ^{13,37} 459 with methylation-specific label detection.¹⁴ This would help meet the need for technologies 460 that perform long-range methylation analysis.³⁸ 461

462 Experimental Section

⁴⁶³ Preparation of mono-streptavidin tagged λ DNA reagent

⁴⁶⁴ 5 μ g of commercially prepared λ DNA (New England Biolabs) was incubated with 0.025 U of ⁴⁶⁵ Nt.BbvC1 in a final volume of 100 μ l of 1 X CutSmart buffer (New England Biolabs) to in-⁴⁶⁶ troduce sequence specific nicks in λ DNA. The nicking reaction was incubated at 37°C for 30 ⁴⁶⁷ minutes. The nicking endonuclease Nt.BbvC1 has the recognition sequence, 5'- CC \downarrow TCAGC ⁴⁶⁸ -3' and there are 7 Nt.BbvC1 sites in λ DNA. Nick translation was initiated by the addition ⁴⁶⁹ of 5 μ l of 250 μ M biotin-11-dUTP (ThermoFisher Scientific) and 1.5 U of E.coli DNA poly⁴⁷⁰ merase (New England Biolabs) and incubated for a further 20 minutes at 37°C. The reaction ⁴⁷¹ was quenched by the addition of 3 μ l of 0.5M EDTA. Unincorporated biotin-11-dUTP was re-⁴⁷² moved by Sephadex G-75 spin column filtration. To create mono-streptavidin tagged λ DNA ⁴⁷³ complex, mono-streptavidin was added to the G-75 purified biotin labeled DNA to a final ⁴⁷⁴ concentration of 50 nM and incubated at room temperature for 5 minutes to allow the biotin ⁴⁷⁵ - mono-streptavidin interaction to saturate. The mono-streptavidin tagged λ DNA complex ⁴⁷⁶ was then used directly in nanopore experiments.

477 Fabrication process of the two pore chip

We described the fabrication protocol in our previous work.³³ Briefly, we prepared the micro-478 channel on glass substrate and SiN membrane on Si substrate separately. The all-insulate 479 architecture minimized the system capacitance. Thus the noise performance is optimized. 480 We initially dry-etch two "V" shape, 1.5 μ m-deep micro-channel on the glass in a 8 mm 481 \times 8 mm die, with the tip of the "V" 0.4 μ m away from each other. Considering we can 482 not grow SiN membranes on glass, we then deposit 400 nm-thick LPCVD SiN, 100 nm-thick 483 PECVD SiO2, and 30 nm-thick LPCVD SiN on Si substrate. To transfer the 3-layers film 484 stack to glass substrate from the Si substrate, we anodic-bonded the two substrates, with 485 the micro-channel on glass facing the 3-layers film stack on Si. To remove the Si substrate, 486 we first dry-etched away the 430 nm SiN on the backside of Si. Then we etched away the 487 Si substrate using hot KOH, revealing the 3-layers films stack on the glass. The 3-layers 488 films stack provides mechanical support to cover the micro-channel on glass, while it is too 489 thick for nanopore sensing. So we had to open a window in the center for nanopore. To 490 achieve that, we dry-etched a 10 $\mu m \ge 10 \mu m$ window in the center through the 400 nm-thick 491 SiN mask into the 100 nm-thick SiO2 buffer layer. Then we etched away the leftover 100 492 nm-thick SiO2 layer using hydrofluoric acid, revealing the single 35 nm-thick SiN membrane 493 layer. At last, we drilled two nanopores through the membrane using Focused Ion Beam at 494 the tip of the two "V" shaped channels. 495

⁴⁹⁶ Nanopore experiments

We performed all the nanopore experiments at 2 M LiCl, 10 mM Tris, 1 mM EDTA, pH=8.8 497 buffer. The two pore chip was assembled in home-made micro-fluidic chunk, which guide the 498 buffer to channel 1, channel 2, and the center common chamber. Ag/ AgCl electrodes were 499 inserted to the buffer to apply voltage and measure current. The current and voltage signal 500 was collected by Molecular Device Multi-Clamp 700B, and was digitized by Axon Digidata 501 1550. The signal is sampled at 250 kHz and filtered at 10 kHz. The tag-sensing and voltage 502 control module was built on National Instruments Field Programmable Gate Array (FPGA) 503 PCIe-7851R and control logic was developed and run on the FPGA through LabView. 504

505 Data analysis

All data processing was performed using custom code written in Matlab (2018, MathWorks). 506 The start and end of each scan and event are extracted from the FPGA state signal (SI) for 507 offline analysis. During real-time tag detection on the FPGA, the presence of tag is detected 508 in the control logic if any sample falls 70 pA below the baseline and lasted at least 12 μ s. 509 During off-line analysis, for the analysis reported in Figure 4 and Table 1, tag blockade 510 quantification during each scan is performed as follows: the open pore baseline standard 511 deviation is calculated using 500 μ s of event-free samples (σ); the DNA co-capture baseline 512 $I_{\rm DNA}$ is determined using the mean of 100 tag blockade-free samples; a tag blockade candidate 513 is detected where at least one sample falls below $I_{\text{DNA}} - 6\sigma$, i.e., sufficiently below the DNA 514 co-capture baseline; a tag blockade is quantitated where the blockade candidate has samples 515 that return within 1σ below I_{DNA} , and the tag duration is computed as the full width at half 516 minimum (FWHM), where the half minimum is halfway between the lowest sample below 517 the DNA baseline and the DNA baseline. The alternative tag profile characterization via 518 least-squares fitting that was utilized for the alignment strategy data in Figure 5 is described 519 in SI section 12. Tag-to-tag times are computed from rising edge to falling edges using the 520 FWHM time transition (edge) points, and pore-to-pore times use the rising edge of the tag 521

blockade at the entry pore, to the falling edge of the corresponding tag blockade at the 522 exit pore. Pore-to-pore times were computed by assigning entry tags to have one matching 523 exit tag, utilizing the first exit tag not previously assigned and within a time limit of 10 524 ms. Cases where missed tags in analysis produced incorrectly assigned pore-to-pore times 525 occurred $\sim 9\%$ of the time (see tag-pair and pore-to-pore time counts in Table S3), and were 526 manually trimmed. Pore-to-pore times were utilized to compute pore-to-pore speed on a per 527 scan basis (Figure 4, Table 1, Table S3) or in the aggregate with the alignment strategy data 528 (Figure 5) as described in the main text and SI section 12. Compensation of transient decay 529 in I_1 following step changes in V_1 is described in SI section 12. 530

⁵³¹ Supporting Information

⁵³² Supporting Information is available from the Wiley Online Library or from the author.

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538 Competing Financial Interests Statement

The authors declare competing financial interests: X.L., P.Z., A.R., R.N., and W.B.D. are employees of Ontera, Inc., which has exclusively licensed the dual pore device patent from the University of California, Santa Cruz, for commercialization purposes. bioRxiv preprint doi: https://doi.org/10.1101/778217; this version posted September 23, 2019. The copyright holder for this preprint (which was not certified by peer review) is the author/funder. All rights reserved. No reuse allowed without permission.

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