# A computer simulation model of train operations in CTC territory 

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CENTRALIZED TRAFFIC CONTROL (CTC) is a system which controls the movement of trains. One train dispatcher, located at a central point, can manipulate the position of track switches and the indication of track signals through the use of a series of push buttons. It is the position of the track switches and the signal indications which govern the progress of the trains through the CTC system. A schematic of a section of single track with a siding and a section of double track is shown in Exhibit I. The CTC Simulation is a model of the train movements through a CTC system.

The design of the computer program commenced in 1961, and up to its latest application was still being fine-tuned. The simulation was programmed for an IBM 7080 computer in Autocoder language with one Fortran subroutine. The running time varies with the number of trains and the length of territory being
simulated. The computer running time to produce the attached output was approximately twenty minutes.

The input to this program is comprised of three types:

1. Track Profile Record-for a section of track up to one mile in length, this record contains the resistance due to grade and curvature (in lbs./ tons) in each direction and the track speed limit for freight and passenger trains in each direction,
2. Signal Block Record-contains the mileage of the signal at the beginning of the signal block, the length of the signal block, the mileage of spur tracks, and a code describing the type of the signal block,
3. Train Data Records-(a) contains the number of diesel locomotives, the dispatching priority code, the departure mileage and time, the arrival


A SIGNAL BLOCK is the section of track between two signals


Delay to TRAIN 1 if meet takes place at siding $A=15$ minutes
Delay to TRAIN 2 if meet takes place at siding $B=18$ minutes
Exhibit II
mileage, the gross weight of the train, the horsepower, and the schedule or standard running time of the train over the territory being simulated,
(b) contains the scheduled, or work stop, delay information, such as mileage and duration of the delay, any change in the consist of the train (adding or deleting cars and diesel locomotives), and whether the delay is clearing or non-clearing.

The inputs for the Track Profile and the Signal Block Records are obtained from Engineering drawings. The input for the Train Data Records is obtained from dispatcher train sheets, existing train schedules, and Transportation planning personnel.

Appendix I contains the generalized logic diagram of the simulation. After the Track Profile and Signal Block Records have been edited and stored in the computer memory, a reservoir of the first sixteen trains, in chronological order, is created. Throughout the simulation, this reservoir of trains is scanned, and the train with the lowest clock time is selected and progressed through the system to its next event or decision point. As the trains move through the system, the information describing each train is actually moved from signal block to signal block in the computer memory. The simulator treats each signal location as a decision or event point, where the relative position of each train can be evaluated in order to determine whether they should stop, proceed, slow down, or enter a siding.

If the selected train is originating, or returning from a clearing work stop, the simulator must decide whether
to allow the train to enter the system. In real life, a train dispatcher must scan the track in the vicinity of the train to determine if the track is clear before deciding whether to permit the train to enter the system. This is precisely what the simulator does. If the track is clear, the simulator places the train in the signal block and calculates the time it will take the train to move to the next signal location. This time is then added to the train clock time and the train returned to the reservoir. If the track is not clear, the train is not placed in the signal block. One minute is added to the train clock time before the train is returned to the reservoir.

When the selected train is one that has arrived at its terminating point, a statistical record is created for that train and the train is removed from the system. The signals for that signal block are reset to clear. A new train is then added to the reservoir.

When the selected train is one that has arrived at a scheduled or work stop delay point, the duration of the train's delay is added to the train clock time. A work stop may be of two types-clearing and non-clearing. A clearing work stop is one in which the train leaves the CTC system, whereas a non-clearing work stop is one in which the train remains in the CTC system. Therefore, if the train has a clearing work stop, the simulator removes the train from the CTC system, cancels all meets and passes for that train, resets to clear the signals for the signal block the train is in, and returns the train to the reservoir. If the train has a non-clearing work stop, the simulator returns the train to the reservoir.

Before moving a train to the end of a signal block, the


Exhibit III
simulator must first determine if the train terminates in this signal block or has a work stop in the signal block. If either of the above is the case, the time for the train to move to the terminating or work stop point from its present location is calculated. Otherwise, the time for the train to move to the next signal location from its present location is calculated. Appendix II is the logic diagram for the routine which calculates the train running time over a specified distance. The dynamic characteristics of the train are developed by the Newtonian force equation $F=M A$, where $F$, the net force available for acceleration, and $M$, the mass of the train, are known and $A$, the acceleration, is calculated. The net force is the algebraic sum of the forces acting on
the train, that is, the 'pulling' force or 'tractive effort' of the diesel locomotives minus the 'retarding' forces or the train resistance due to grade, curvature, flange and bearing friction, and still air resistance. The train is progressed in small increments of distance of between 100 and 260 feet until the train has travelled the required distance. The times for the train to move over all the small distance increments are summed and added to the train clock time. The train is then returned to the reservoir.
When the train has reached the end of a signal block, and hence, is about to enter the next signal block, the simulator must first evaluate the position of the train relative to other trains in the vicinity of this train. All




Exhibit IVb
the possible types of signal blocks are shown in Exhibit I and are described below:

1. 01-intermediate signal block,
2. 02-approach signal block to a siding or to double track,
3. 03-siding signal block,
4. 04-mainline signal block adjacent to a siding signal block,
5. 06-first signal block on double track.

If the train is about to move from one intermediate block (01) to another intermediate block (01), or from an approach block (02) to an intermediate block (01), or from the first block of double track (06) to an intermediate block on double track (01) the simulator checks to see if this next signal block is occupied by another train. If this next signal block is occupied by another train, the signal will be set to prevent the train from entering the next signal block. If the next signal block is unoccupied, the second next signal block ahead is checked. If it is occupied, the signal will be set to restrict the train to enter the signal block at a speed of $30 \mathrm{~m} . \mathrm{p} . \mathrm{h}$. If the second next signal block ahead is unoccupied, the signal will be clear, and the train can enter the signal block at speed limit.

If the train is about to move from an intermediate block (01) to an approach block (02), the simulator scans the track up to and including the first signal block ahead of the next siding. If another train going in the same direction is detected, the simulator determines whether this other train should be passed, and, if so, at which siding the pass should be executed. Signals and switches are set accordingly. Otherwise, the simulator scans the track up to the third siding ahead to detect if there is another train coming in the opposite direction. If so, the siding at which a meet must take place is determined, as well as which train will go into the siding. In determining at which siding meets will take place, the simulator always attempts to minimize the delay. However, the decision as to which siding will be used could be modified according to:

1. the location and duration of any work stops that either train may have,
2. the amount of delay time that either train has accumulated prior to this meet,
3. the relative priorities of the two trains.

Exhibit II is a hypothetical example of how the siding for a meet is chosen. If the two trains are of equal priority and neither has work stops nor has accumu-


Exhibit IVe
lated delay in excess of thirty minutes, then the meet would take place at siding $A$. However, if train 1 had accumulated more than thirty minutes delay, then the meet would take place at siding $B$.

If the train is about to move from an intermediate block (01) to the last block of double track (06), the simulator scans each signal block ahead up to the next siding. If a train is detected coming in the opposite direction, the signal at the end of the 06 signal block is set to prevent the train from entering the approach block (02). Otherwise, the train is given clear signals.

If the train is about to move from an approach block (02) into a siding block (03), the signal is set to reduce the train speed to $15 \mathrm{~m} . \mathrm{p} . \mathrm{h}$. If the train has a meet or a pass at this siding and if the other train is already at the siding, the meet or pass is cancelled.

If the train is about to move from an approach block (02) into a main line block adjacent to a siding block (04) and if the train does not have a meet or pass at this siding, the train is given a clear signal. Otherwise, the signal is set to restrict the train speed to $30 \mathrm{~m} . \mathrm{p} . \mathrm{h}$. If the other train is already at the siding, the meet or pass is cancelled.
If the train is about to move from an approach block (02) into the first block of double track (06), and has a meet set up in the (06) block, the meet is cancelled.

If the train is about to move from a siding block (03), or from the main line block adjacent to a siding block
(04), or from the last block of double track (06) into an approach block (02), the simulator checks whether the train has a meet or pass in this block. If so, and if the other train is not yet at the siding, or on the double track, the signal is set to prevent the train from entering the next block. Otherwise the meet or pass is cancelled. Then the simulator scans the track ahead up to the next siding. If a train is detected coming in the opposite direction, the signal is set to prevent the train from entering the next signal block. Otherwise, the train is given a clear signal.

The simulator has now evaluated the position of the train relative to other trains and has set the signal for the next signal block accordingly. If the signal indication is set to prevent the train from entering the next signal block, one minute is added to the train clock time and the train is returned to the reservoir without being moved into the next signal block. Otherwise, the time for the train to move into the next signal block is calculated and added to the train clock time. The train is then moved into the next signal block and returned to the reservoir. The simulator processes each train in the above manner until all trains have reached their terminating point.

The simulator produces three types of output:

1. a time-distance graph,
2. statistical reports,


Exhibit Va
3. reports listing and summarizing the intervals that each signal block is unoccupied.

Exhibits III, IV, and V are samples of these outputs.

On the time-distance graph, time is represented on the horizontal axis, and distance on the vertical axis. The sidings are represented as the horizontal lines on the graph. The trace of the train is indicated as it traverses the territory, showing the location of any work stops, meets and passes that the train had en route. A similar graph is produced by the CTC system, which makes the simulation graph easily understood by operating personnel in the evaluation of the simulation output.

The statistical reports are comprised of three tables.

The first (Exhibit IVa) tabulates the performance of each individual train in terms of its elapsed running time, which is compared to the standard or scheduled running time, the amount of delay due to work stops, meets, and passes, the number of conflicts (meets and passes), and the average speed. These results are then averaged to give general performance indicators for the simulation. The second table (Exhibit IVb) gives the same general information as the first table, but averaged for various classes of trains. This report is useful in determining the performance of each class of train. The third table (Exhibit IVc) summarizes the performance of each siding in terms of the delay due to work stops and conflicts, the number of conflicts at each siding, and the average delay per conflict. This report is very useful when evaluating alternative siding configurations.

The third type of output is the report listing and


Exhibit Vb
summarizing the intervals of time that each signal block is unoccupied. These reports are used to estimate the amount of track maintenance that could be performed with various train densities and schedules.

Initially, the simulation was used mainly to evaluate various siding configurations for proposed CTC installations. More recently, the simulation was used extensively to determine the effects of large increases in the density of trains through an existing CTC system, and what
effects capital improvements would have. The timedistance graph was very useful in helping operating personnel visualize the projected train operations up to ten years in the future.

In terms of future requirements for simulation models of this type, computer aided dispatching and dispatcher training simulation models are only two of the possibilities. In both these cases, visual display systems will play a key role.



Appendix II


