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AUTHOR'S INDEX

	Session	Page		Session	Page
Adams, J. M.	IV-D	360	Geddes, L. E.	I-B	51
Argarwal, R. C.	VI-B	538	Gill, D. H.	V-C	430
Allison, H. J.	III-A	162	Gloyna, E.	IV-B	291
	N-D	346	Golian, G. Z.	II-B	114
Anderson, W. L.	II-B	112	Green, D. M.	II-B	124
	II-B	114	Gribble, R. F.	V-C	450
	II-B	116	Hammer, J.	II-B	116
	II-B	118	Hammond, J. L.	II-D	140
Baker, L. E.	I-B	51	Hampton, R. L. T.	IV-A	248
Bargainer, J. D.	II-B	114	Harman, T. L.	I-B	36
Bartels, M. W.	V-A	396	Hayre, H. S.	I-C	89
Becker, E. B.	V-C	453	Hazlett, W. S.	V-A	402
Becker, S.	III-B	179	Houston, J. A.	IV-D	346
Bengston, R.	V-C	427	Hughen, J. H.	III-C	208
Bennett, J. E.	VI-A	515	Hughes, W. L.	III-A	162
Bhandari, V. K.	III-D	222	Hughes, W. L.	Eve. Sess.	370
Bhar, T. N.	VI-C	569	Hwang, U. P.	VI-D	599
Bilger, H. R.	VI-C	561	Inigo, R. M.	IV-D	354
Birney, R. E.	V-D	472	Jancarik, J.	V-C	427
Bottorff, W. W.	IV-A	278	Johnson, D. E.	V-B	409
Bourland, J. D.	V-D	476	Johnson, J. R.	V-B	409
Brooks, R. E.	VI-B	520	Katter, O. E., Jr.	V-A	378
Burns, V.	V-D	476	Katucki, R.	III-B	178
Burrus, C. S.	VI-B	529	Kauss, W.	III-A	166
	BI-B	538	Keathley, W. C.	III-B	174
Busigny, R.	IV-C	335	Keskar, P. Y.	V-B	421
Butler, C. M.	III-C	200	Krishen, K.	I-C	81
Cain, C. P.	I-V	53	Kroll, C. L.	I-C	76
Cantrell, G.	V-D	476	Kwon, S. Y.	IV-C	320
Cates, S. L.	III-A	172	Lago, G. V.	V-B	421
Chadwick, R. S.	V-A	378	Lawrenson, P. J.	VI-D	580
Chan, W. L.	I-A	8	Leininger, G. G.	I-A	8
Chen, C. F.	I-A	6	Leonard, L. R.	IV-B	295
Cheng, E.	IV-A	272	Levinson, D.	II-B	106
Cherry, L. B.	III-A	154	Liebfried, T. F.	I-B	36
Choe, H. K.	III-C	190	Lile, D. L.	VI-C	556
Cline, R. W.	IV-C	312	Linder, J. S.	VI-C	556
Cohn, D. L.	IV-D	341		VI-C	569
	V-E	479	Linton, T. D.	I-A	1
Colclaser, R. A.	V-D	460		II-D	150
Collins, R.	III-B	175		III-D	228
Coulter, T. W.	V-D	476	Litzler, W. S.	V-E	482
Craig, J. P.	III-A	166	Lively, W. M.	I-B	29
Cubley, H. D.	III-C	218	Lucas, M.S.P.	II-B	120
Cunningham, D. R.	IV-A	238	Lucky, G. W.	V-D	463
	IV-C	327	Ma, C. H.	III-C	183
Dalby, J. C.	V-A	402	Malik, O. P.	I-A	12
Dawes, W. H.	II-B	120	Marshak, A. H.	VI-C	544
Decker, P. G.	II-B	106		VI-C	577
Delatore, J. P.	V-A	396	Medley, S. S.	V-C	427
Deschenes, P. A.	IV-C	335	Melsa, J. L.	IV-A	278
Dougal, A. A.	VI-A	505		IV-D	341
Doviak, R. J.	I-C	69		V-E	479
Drummond, W. E.	V-C	427	Meyer, R. A.	VI-B	529
Edge, B. L.	IV-D	350	Miller, D. S.	II-D	604
Everett, R. L.	II-B	112	Minuskin, H.	I-B	40
	II-B	114	Mosman, T. M.	VI-C	556
	II-B	116	Mukhopadhyay, B. K.	I-A	12
	II-B	118	Netravali, A. N.	I-B	36
Farris, D. R.	IV-D	341	Nicolet, M. A.	VI-C	561
Fisher, J. D.	VI-B	536	Nielsen, P.	V-C	427
Fluchel, R. B.	IV-A	238	O'Brien, J. F.	IV-D	350
Forster, L.	II-B	112	O'Dowd, W. M.	II-D	140
Friedrich, O. M., Jr.	VI-A	505	Ott, G. E.	V-E	489
Fyke, F. E.	III-C	200	Pang, C. C.	III-C	183
Garcia, C. A.	I-B	46	Park, B. K.	III-C	180
Geddes, L. A.	V-D	476	Parks, T. W.	VI-B	536

AUTHOR'S INDEX

Session	Page
I-C	57
V-B	417
VI-C	544
V-C	427
IV-D	360
II-B	124
III-B	176
IV-A	243
V-B	413
III-A	162
V-E	487
IV-B	299
Eve. Sess.	369
I-C	73
I-C	89
VI-D	589
V-A	371
I-C	76
V-C	453
V-C	453
V-D	476
I-A	1
II-D	150
III-D	228
IV-A	262
V-D	476
VI-D	580
VI-B	520
II-B	116
II-B	106
III-A	166
I-B	53
IV-C	320
IV-A	262
III-D	222
I-C	76
VI-D	599
IV-C	305
IV-A	255
I-C	69
I-C	71
VI-A	498
III-C	190
IV-C	327
II-B	118
VI-B	536
IV-C	335
I-C	73
IV-A	287

Pecille, J. A.
 Peikari, B.
 Perritt, R. Q.
 Phillips, P.
 Pooch, U. W.
 Prabhachar, J. C.
 Pruitt, J.
 Pyle, R. H.
 Rajput, Y. V.
 Ramakumar, R.
 Rao, V. M.
 Rhoten, R. P.
 Rhodes, A. F.
 Rich, J. A.
 Richard, R. R.
 Rountree, R. C.
 Rouse, D. M.
 Rouse, J. W., Jr.
 Rowberg, R. E.
 Rylander, H. G.
 Sadler, C.
 Sanders, C. W., Jr.

 Sanyal, P.
 Sartor, T.
 Schenk, K. F.
 Schiring, E. E.
 Schneider, W. P.
 Schooley, L. C.
 Selin, K. I.
 Sewell, V. L.
 Shehadeh, N. M.
 Shen, C. N.
 Shreve, E. L.
 Sibley, T. G.
 Simons, R. E.
 Simpson, R. S.
 Sims, C. S.
 Sirmans, D.

 Slater, G. L.
 Smith, C. E.
 Smith, G. H.
 Southard, C. J.
 Stalmach, D.
 Stéphenne, H.
 Stiles, W. H.
 Stineman, R. W.

	Session	Page
Stockton, A.	I-B	21
Stone, J. L.	VI-C	556
	VI-C	569
Suarez, F. S.	I-C	57
Sutton, H. J.	III-A	154
Szygenda, S. A.	I-D	97
	V-A	388
Tacker, E. C.	I-A	1
	II-D	150
Tandon, J. L.	VI-C	561
Tchon, W. E.	VI-C	549
Thomas, F. J.	VI-A	501
Thompson, E. W.	V-A	388
Thompson, J.	V-C	438
Thompson, W. E.	IV-A	272
Tou, F.	IV-C	305
Townes, J. R.	IV-A	289
Troelstra, A.	I-B	46
Trost, T. F.	I-C	57
Turner, C. H.	I-C	73
Umashanker, K. R.	I-C	61
Villeret, M.	IV-C	335
Waite, W. P.	I-C	73
Walker, L. N.	V-E	489
Weagant, R.	III-B	177
Weisgerber, F. E.	IV-D	350
Welch, A. J.	I-B	53
Welch, R. D.	V-A	396
Welch, T. A.	I-D	97
	V-D	472
Welford, N. T.	V-D	469
Wells, C. H.	V-D	466
	V-D	469
Wells, W. R.	VI-A	498
Wheeler, L. A.	I-A	4
Wilson, E. A.	VI-C	549
Wilton, D. R.	I-C	61
Winsor, C. A.	VI-A	501
Womack, B. F.	III-D	230
	V-E	487
Woodson, H. H.	V-C	453
Wong, T. Y.	III-D	233
	V-E	489
Yates, R. E.	I-A	6
Zavisca, E.	III-D	233
Zelby, L. W.	IV-B	302
	Eve. Sess.	368
Zeimer, R. E.	IV-C	327

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SESSION I-A: MODERN CONTROL THEORY AND APPLICATIONS

Decentralized Stochastic Control of Large-Scale Systems via Constrained Controllers	1
<i>Charles W. Sanders, Jr., Edgar C. Tacker, and Thomas D. Linton</i>	
Comparison of Two Optimal Terminal Control Algorithms	4
<i>Lawrence A. Wheeler</i>	
State Space Interpretation of Error Constants	6
<i>C. F. Chen and R. E. Yates</i>	
Solution of Coupled and Singular Perturbation Methods Using Duality Theory	8
<i>G. G. Leininger and W. L. Chan</i>	
Nonlinear Power System Optimization Under Unbalanced Fault Conditions	12
<i>B. K. Mukhopadhyay and O. P. Malik</i>	

SESSION I-B: MATHEMATICAL MODELING AND COMPUTER TECHNIQUES APPLIED TO BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

A Minicomputer Parameter Identification Algorithm for Biomedical Applications	21
<i>Andrew Stockton</i>	
Computer Methods for Medical Differential Diagnosis	29
<i>William Lively</i>	
Numerical Computation of the External Potential Field of the Isolated Active Purkinje Strand in a Volume Conductor	36
<i>T. L. Harman, T. F. Leibfried, J. W. Clark and A. N. Netravali</i>	
System Simulation of Nerve Response to Stimuli	40
<i>Harold Minuskin</i>	
Some Engineering Aspects of Clinical Electroretinography	46
<i>A. Troelstra</i>	
Impedance Changes Associated with a Conducting Medium at Various Intrathoracic Sites	51
<i>LaNelle E. Geddes and Lee E. Baker</i>	
Potential Measurements in the Retinas of Live Rabbits	53
<i>C. P. Cain, V. L. Sewell, A. J. Welch</i>	

SESSION I-C: WAVE PROPAGATION

Stratosphere-Ionosphere Coupling Over the Southwestern U.S. During the 1971-1972 Winter Season	57
<i>T. F. Trost, F. S. Suarez and J. Pecille</i>	
Use of the Singularity Expansion Method in Electromagnetic Transient Scattering Problems	61
<i>K. R. Umashankar and D. R. Wilton</i>	
Doppler Radar Measurements and Observations of Precipitation Velocity Fields	69
<i>R. J. Doviak and D. Sirmans</i>	
Real-Time Estimates of Mean Velocity by Averaging Quantized Phase Displacements of Doppler Radar Echoes	71
<i>Dale Sirmans</i>	
Broad Spectrum Reflectivity of Surfaces with Varying Permittivity and Roughness	73
<i>W. H. Stiles, W. P. Waite, C. H. Turner and J. A. Rich</i>	
On the Measuring of Soil Moisture by Microwave Radiometric Techniques	76
<i>C. L. Kroll, T. G. Sibley and J. W. Rouse, Jr.</i>	
The Composite Scattering Model for Radar Sea Return	81
<i>K. Krishen</i>	
Remote Sensing Technology—The 24-Channel Multispectral Scanner	89
<i>H. S. Hayre and Richard R. Richard</i>	

SESSION I-D: INVITED PANEL—EDUCATION IN THE COMPUTER FIELD

Computer Engineering at the University of Texas-Austin	97
<i>S. A. Szygenda and T. A. Welch</i>	

SESSION II-B: BIOMEDICAL SYSTEMS AND INSTRUMENTATION

A Communications System for Health Care Delivery on Indian Reservations in Arizona	106
<i>L. C. Schooley and D. Levinson</i>	
A Photo-Optical System for Recording Biomedical Signals	112
<i>L. Forster, R. L. Everett, and W. L. Anderson</i>	
A Digital Control System for Optical Analog Biomedical Data Reduction	114
<i>G. Z. Golian, R. L. Everett, J. D. Bargainer and W. L. Anderson</i>	

A Photo-Optical Electroencephalographic Evoked Response Averager	116
<i>J. Hammer, R. L. Everett, W. P. Schneider and W. L. Anderson</i>	
An Electroencephalographic Wave Recognizing System	118
<i>R. L. Everett, J. Southard and W. L. Anderson</i>	
A Case Study of the Design and Fabrication of a Thick Film ECG Telemetry Transmitter	120
<i>W. H. Dawes and M. S. P. Lucas</i>	
Diagnostic X-Ray Image Contrast Enhancement	124
<i>D. M. Green and J. C. Prabhakar</i>	
SESSION II-D: HYBRID COMPUTATION FOR STOCHASTIC SYSTEMS	
Invited—Sponsored by Analog/Hybrid Computer Educational Society	
Ultra-Fast Minicomputation with a Simple Microprogrammed Block-Diagram Language	130
<i>G. A. Korn</i>	
Hybrid and Interactive Graphic Computer Methods Applied to the Optimal Discrete Nonlinear Filter	604
<i>Donald S. Miller</i>	
An Algorithm for the Efficient Solution of Fokker-Planck Partial Differential Equations	140
<i>W. O'Dowd and J. L. Hammond</i>	
Computational Algorithms for the Optimal Control of Stochastic Systems	150
<i>E. C. Tacker, T. D. Linton and C. W. Sanders, Jr.</i>	
SESSION III-A: ELECTRIC MACHINE DYNAMICS AND CONTROL	
Stable Operating Limits of Large Generators	154
<i>H. J. Sutton, and L. B. Cherry</i>	
Variable Speed Drive Applications of Field Modulated Frequency Down Converters	162
<i>R. Ramakumar, H. J. Allison and W. L. Hughes</i>	
Operating Characteristics of a Two-Stator Induction Machine	166
<i>J. P. Craig, K. Selin, and W. Kauss</i>	
A Practical Application of S.C.R. Implementation in a Strong Magnetic, Highly Corrosive Environment	172
<i>Stanley L. Cates</i>	
SESSION III-B: SKYLAB EXPERIMENT SYSTEMS	
Invited Session—Sponsored by NASA-L. B. Johnson Spacecraft Center	
Apollo Telescope Mount	174
<i>William C. Keathley</i>	
Earth Resources Experiments Package	
S190 Multiband Camera by <i>R. Collins (ITEK)</i>	175
S191 Infrared Scanning Radiometer by <i>J. Pruitt (BEC)</i>	176
S192 Multispectral Scanner by <i>R. Weagant (HRC)</i>	177
S193 R. F. Radiometer/Scatterometer/Altimeter by <i>R. Katucki (GE)</i>	178
S194 L-Band Radiometer by <i>S. Becker (AIL)</i>	179
SESSION III-C: ANTENNAS AND MICROWAVE SYSTEMS	
On the Formulation of the Dipole Problem When the Ground Plane is Rough	180
<i>B. K. Park</i>	
Current Distribution of a Dipole Antenna of Revolution in Dissipative Media	183
<i>C. C. Pang and C. H. Ma</i>	
Log-Periodic Dipole Arrays—A Numerical Analysis	190
<i>H. K. Choe and C. E. Smith</i>	
General Theoretical Analysis of Impedance Loaded Rectangular Loop Antennas	200
<i>F. E. Fyke and Chalmers M. Butler</i>	
On the Angular Resolution of a Search Radar with a Mechanically Rotated Antenna	208
<i>James H. Hughen</i>	
The Apollo 17 Surface Electrical Properties Experiment Antenna Performance	218
<i>H. Dean Cubley</i>	
SESSION III-D: MODERN CONTROL THEORY AND APPLICATIONS	
Linear and Nonlinear Filtering Techniques for Estimating the State of Reentry Vehicles from Optical Tracking Data	222
<i>Edward L. Shreve and Vinod K. Bhandari</i>	

Multilevel Control Algorithms for Dynamical Systems	228
<i>Thomas D. Linton, Edgar C. Tacker and Charles W. Sanders, Jr.</i>	
Some Aspects of Numerical Integration	230
<i>B. F. Womack and V. M. Rao</i>	
Active Filter Design of a PID Controller	233
<i>T. Y. Wong and E. Zavisca</i>	
SESSION IV-A: ESTIMATION	
A Projection Model for Bayesian Estimation of Distribution Functions	238
<i>D. R. Cunningham and R. B. Fluchel</i>	
Frequency Acquisition Via a Nonlinear Estimator	243
<i>R. H. Pyle</i>	
Unsupervised Learning of the Optimal Linear Signal Estimator in the Presence of Unknown Multiplicative, Additive and Message Generating Noise	248
<i>R. L. T. Hampton</i>	
Linear Estimation in Discrete Random Parameter Systems	255
<i>C. S. Sims</i>	
Rapid Estimation and Detection of Impulse Inputs Under Continuity Constraints for Space Vehicles	262
<i>P. Sanyal and C. N. Shen</i>	
Optimality of Sampling Rates for a Class of Estimation Problems	272
<i>W. E. Thompson and Enrique Cheng</i>	
An Estimation Technique for Evaluating the Progress of Sales of a New Product	278
<i>W. W. Bottorff and J. L. Melsa</i>	
Correcting for Nonlinearity and Improving the Conditioning of a Kalman Filter	287
<i>R. W. Stineman</i>	
Unsupervised Probability Density Estimation by Normal Mixtures	289
<i>James R. Townes</i>	
SESSION IV-B: TECHNOLOGICAL EFFECTS ON SOCIETY	
Invited Papers and Panel	
Technology and Its Environmental Impact	291
<i>Ernest Gloyne</i>	
Technology Assessment—A Process for Technological Improvement	295
<i>R. Leon Leonard</i>	
Taxation of Energy—A Possible National Policy	299
<i>Ronald P. Rhoten</i>	
Efficiency: Can We Afford It?	302
<i>Leon W. Zelby</i>	
SESSION IV-C: COMMUNICATION THEORY	
Optimum Signaling Scheme for Continuous Phase Binary Frequency- Shift Keying	305
<i>Fan Tou and Richard S. Simpson</i>	
Pseudo Random Modulation—An Effective Means of Enhancing PSK Signal Transmission in a Diffuse Multipath Environment	312
<i>Robert W. Cline</i>	
Effect of Bandlimiting on the Noncoherent Detection of Amplitude-Shift Keying (ASK) Signals	320
<i>N. M. Shehadeh and S. Y. Kwon</i>	
Reduction of Intersymbol Interference Due to Specular Multipath	327
<i>D. R. Cunningham, G. H. Smith and R. E. Ziemer</i>	
Companding in Delta Modulation	335
<i>H. Stéphenne, R. Busigny, P. A. Deschênes and M. Villeret</i>	
SESSION IV-D: ANALOG/HYBRID COMPUTATION IN EDUCATION	
Invited—Sponsored by Analog/Hybrid Computer Educational Society	
A Telephone Modem for a Hybrid Computer	341
<i>James L. Melsa, David L. Cohn and Donald R. Farris</i>	
Analog Computation in Secondary Education	346
<i>J. A. Houston and H. J. Allison</i>	

Hybrid Computer Simulation of Buoy Dynamics and Stream Transport	350
<i>Billy L. Edge, Frank E. Weisgerber and Joseph F. O'Brien</i>	
Estimator and Controller Design for Speed Control of a D.C. Motor.....	354
<i>Rafael M. Iñigo</i>	
A General Purpose Microprogrammable Emulator	360
<i>James M. Adams and Udo W. Pooch</i>	

EVENING SESSION: ENGINEERING, AN OCCUPATION OR PROFESSION?

Invited Panel

Abstracts:

Allen F. Rhodes, Vice President, ACF Industries, New York, N.Y.	369
William L. Hughes, School of Electrical Engineering, Oklahoma State University	370

SESSION V-A: COMPUTER SYSTEM: RELIABILITY, MAINTAINABILITY, AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Reliability and Maintainability

Sequence Coding, A Memory Coding Technique to Check Operations Associated with Program Memory Sequencing	371
<i>David M. Rouse</i>	

Recovery of a Large Computer System.....	378
<i>R. S. Chadwick and O. E. Katter, Jr.,</i>	

Specification and Generation of Different Fault Classes for Digital Simulation	388
<i>E. W. Thompson and S. A. Szygenda</i>	

B. Communications

Introduction and Impact of Toll Operator Service Automation in Southwestern Bell	396
<i>M. W. Bartels, R. D. Welch and J. P. Delatore</i>	

Automated Handling of Hotel/Motel Long Distance Messages on Traffic Service Position Systems (TSPS)	402
<i>J. C. Dalby and W. S. Hazlett</i>	

SESSION V-B: CIRCUIT THEORY

Some Classes of Functions Used in Circuit Theory.....	409
<i>David E. Johnson and Johnny R. Johnson</i>	

Minimum Realization of Type I Biquadratic Functions	413
<i>Y. V. Rajput</i>	

Design of Nonlinear Resistive Networks with Prescribed Input-Output Behavior.....	417
<i>Behrouz Peikari</i>	

Approximation of Signals by Real Exponentials	421
<i>P. Y. Keskar and G. V. Lago</i>	

SESSION V-C: FUSION ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

Invited

The Texas Tokamak	427
<i>R. Bengtson, W. E. Drummond, J. Jancarik, S. S. Medley, P. Nielsen and P. Phillips</i>	

Lasers for Fusion	430
<i>D. H. Gill</i>	

Optical Measurements in Fusion Research.....	438
<i>J. E. Thompson</i>	

0.9 GW System for Feedback Control of Scyllac MHD Instability	450
<i>R. F. Gribble</i>	

Characteristics of a Homopolar Machine as a Power Supply for Large Pulsed Magnetic Fields for Fusion Experiments	453
<i>E. B. Becker, R. Rowberg, H. G. Rylander and H. H. Woodson</i>	

SESSION V-D: EDUCATION

Recent Advances in Solid State Instructional Laboratories.....	460
<i>Roy A. Colclaser</i>	

Introducing High School Students to Programmable Calculators	463
<i>G. W. Lucky</i>	

Design Considerations in Development of Minicomputer-Based Computer Aided Instructional Hardware Systems.....	466
<i>C. H. Wells</i>	

Interfacing a Random Access Slide Projector and a Keyboard to a Minicomputer for Computer-Aided Instruction	469
<i>N. T. Welford and C. H. Wells</i>	
A Problem Generation Approach to Computer-Aided Instruction in Switching Theory	472
<i>R. E. Birney and T. A. Welch</i>	
The Transcribed Demonstration	476
<i>Joe Bourland, V. Burns, C. Sadler, T. Sartor, G. Cantrell, T. W. Coulter and L. A. Geddes</i>	
SESSION V-E: ANALOG/HYBRID COMPUTER APPLICATIONS	
Hybrid Computer Use in Graduate and Undergraduate Education	479
<i>James L. Melsa and David L. Cohn</i>	
An Associative Parallel Processor Testbed	482
<i>Wilfred S. Litzler</i>	
Solution of Nonlinear Two Point Boundary Value Problems	487
<i>B. F. Womack and V. M. Rao</i>	
Hybrid Simulation of Power Systems	489
<i>Granville Ott</i>	
SESSION VI-A: AEROSPACE AND ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS	
Optimal Pursuit—Evasive Conflicts with Guidance Systems Containing Time Delays	498
<i>W. R. Wells and G. L. Slater</i>	
TVAC—A Television Area Correlator Tracking System	501
<i>C. A. Winsor and F. J. Thomas</i>	
Optical Data Storage and Data Processing, and Holography in Aerospace and Electronic Instrumentation	505
<i>O. M. Friedrich, Jr. and A. A. Dougal</i>	
Landmark Navigation and Topographical Mapping	515
<i>J. E. Bennett</i>	
SESSION VI-B: DIGITAL FILTERS	
Word Length Problems in the On-Board Computer Implementation of Digital Flight Control Systems	520
<i>E. E. Schiring and R. E. Brooks</i>	
Certain Properties of Periodically Time-Varying Digital Filters	529
<i>R. A. Meyer and C. S. Burrus</i>	
Optimal Chebyshev Magnitude Approximation for Non Recursive Digital Filters	536
<i>J. D. Fisher, T. W. Parks and D. Stalmach</i>	
Fast Digital Convolution Using Fermat Transforms	538
<i>R. C. Agarwal and C. S. Burrus</i>	
SESSION VI-C: ELECTRON DEVICES	
The Effect of the Electric Field on the Diffusion Process in Semiconductors	544
<i>Alan H. Marshak and Ronald Q. Perritt</i>	
Calculation of Transfer Potentials in Charge Coupled Devices with Arbitrary Voltage and Charge Boundary Conditions Using the Finite Element Method	549
<i>E. A. Wilson and W. E. Tchon</i>	
Ion Implantation Fabrication of Step-Recovery Diodes	556
<i>J. L. Stone, J. S. Linder, T. M. Mosman and D. L. Lile</i>	
Excess Noise Spectral Analysis of Boron-Implanted Layers in Silicon	561
<i>J. L. Tandon, H. R. Bilger, and M. A. Nicolet</i>	
Electrical and Optical Properties of Bi Ion Activated CdS Thin Films	569
<i>T. N. Bhar, J. S. Linder and J. L. Stone</i>	
A Modified Flux Equation for Semiconductors	577
<i>Alan H. Marshak</i>	
SESSION VI-D: OPTIMIZATION	
A Comparison of the Complex Method of Optimization with the Penalty Function Approach Using Zangwill's Method for Constrained Optimization Problems	580
<i>K. F. Schenk and P. J. Lawrenson</i>	
An Optimization Technique Utilizing the Deflected Gradient Algorithm for Dynamic Testing of Electro-Mechanical Equipment	589
<i>R. C. Rountree</i>	
Optimum Thermal Design of Electronic Packages Cooled by Free Air Convection	599
<i>U. P. Hwang and R. E. Simons</i>	

by

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Summary

This paper considers the decentralized control of large-scale stochastic systems. Specifically, each controller is allowed partial observations of the local subsystem state and complete observations of the interactions to the local subsystem; both observations taking place over noisy channels. Structural constraints are imposed on each controller and it is shown that the optimum parameters can be expressed in terms of the solution to a nonlinear two point boundary value problem.

I. Introduction

For a large-scale system the implementation of a controller derived by a straightforward application of existing stochastic control theory often requires a prohibitive amount of data handling and computational capability. The planning phase of implementation may require the solution of Riccati equations involving large matrices, while the on-line phase may involve the management of very large information flows. For example, the straightforward application of existing theory to the problem of controlling a string of high speed vehicles results in a control signal for each vehicle which depends on the state of each of the other vehicles in the string¹. Thus, as the number of vehicles in the string increases the amount of on-line data handling increases significantly.

Much of the research to date in large scale system control has been oriented toward the resolution of problems that occur in the planning phase. For example the concept of ϵ -coupling^{2,3} arose out of the desire to decouple the computations involved in solving the Riccati equations which result from the application of existing theory. Using the ϵ -coupling approach it is possible to approximate the solution to the Riccati equation by a sequence of solutions to decoupled equations of lower dimensionality. However, the problem of managing the on-line information flow remains. It is this aspect of large-scale systems control that is of interest in this paper.

The concept of decentralization⁴ provides a technique for alleviating the on-line data handling requirements associated with the centralized controller. In the terminology introduced by Mesarovic⁵, one form of decentralized controller structure can be visualized as consisting of a local controller or infimal unit M_i for each subsystem together with a supremal unit which coordinates the operations of the infimals. In this paper we are interested in the case where all of the coordination takes place in the planning phase. Chong and Athans⁶ have considered a somewhat similar problem but have not related the results to the detailed structure of the system.

In the next section the system model and problem formulation will be given. This is followed by a discussion of the controller structural constraints. It is then shown that the optimum parameters can be found in terms of the solution to a two-point boundary value problem.

II. System Model and Problem Formulation

Consider a system, S , composed of a collection $\{S_i: i=1,2,\dots,N\}$ of N interacting dynamical subsystems. We assume that the partitioning of S into the subsystems S_i is either given or that a "natural" partition exists. On the given time interval $[t_0, T]$ each subsystem is described by the following model

$$\dot{x}_i = A_i x_i + B_i m_i + L_{ii} u_i + w_i \quad (1-a)$$

$$y_i = H_i z_i + \eta_i \quad (1-b)$$

$$z_i' = [x_i' \ u_i']' \quad (1-c)$$

$$u_i = L_i x = \sum_{j=1, j \neq i}^N L_{ij} x_j \quad (1-d)$$

wherein for each $t \in [t_0, T]$ and each i

1. $x_i(t)$ is the state of S_i
2. $m_i(t)$ is the control input to S_i derived from the local control unit, M_i ,
3. $u_i(t)$ is the interaction input to S_i derived from the other subsystems,
4. w_i is the local plant disturbance to S_i ,
5. y_i is the output of S_i , and
6. η_i is the observation noise.

The initial state, $x_i(t_0)$, is assumed to be a gaussian random vector with mean \bar{x}_i^0 and covariance Σ_i^0 and the noise processes w_i and η_i are assumed to be zero mean white gaussian processes with covariance W_i and N_i respectively. For $i=1,2,\dots,N$ and $t \in [t_0, T]$,

$P_i \triangleq \{A_i, B_i, \{L_{ij}: i=1,2,\dots,N\}, H_i, \bar{x}_i^0, \Sigma_i^0, W_i, N_i\}$ is the set of parameters describing local subsystem S_i and

$Y_i(t) \triangleq \{(y_i(\tau), \tau): \tau \in [t_0, T]\}$ is the on-line data available from S_i up to time t .

Letting $x' = [x_1' x_2' \dots x_N']'$ and $m' = [m_1' m_2' \dots m_N']'$ be, respectively, the composite state and control vectors, the stochastic control problem for the composite system (the overall problem) is to find a control law, M^* , such that $m^*(t) = M^*(Y(t))$ minimizes the cost functional

$$J = E\{x'(T)Fx(T) + \int_{t_0}^T x'(t)Qx(t) + m'(t)Rm(t)dt\} \quad (2)$$

where E denotes mathematical expectation. In (2) $Y(t)$ denotes the information available to the controller up to time t , and F, Q, R are given matrices with F and Q positive semi-definite and R positive definite.

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III. Controller Structure

In the absence of any constraints on the permissible information flow, the above problem has a well-known solution (see e.g. (7), p.414). That is, if $Y(t) =$

$\bigcup_{i=1}^N (P_i U Y_i(t))$ then the optimal controller can be realized by

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{m}^*(t) &= -P(t)\hat{x}(t) \\ \dot{\hat{x}}(t) &= A\hat{x}(t) + Bm^*(t) + K(t)[y(t) - H\hat{x}(t)] \\ \hat{x}(t_0) &= \bar{x}^0 \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

in which the optimal gain matrices, P and K , may be computed prior to t_0 by solving the appropriate Riccati equations and A, B, H are formed from the corresponding subsystem matrices in an obvious manner.

In a large number of cases there are, of course, overriding technical and economical considerations which preclude the use of such a completely centralized controller. In order to accurately reflect the nature of control system design in a large scale system, one must incorporate constraints on the information flow structure. A basic and natural constraint that we place on the controller is that it should consist of a collection $\{M_i: i=1,2,\dots,N\}$ of control units in which the information set available to each M_i is $I_i(t) = P_i U Y_i(t)$. That is, each control unit, M_i , is allowed the local on-line data from S_i as well as the parameters describing S_i .

Motivated by the results obtained for the case of a linear system with gaussian disturbances and quadratic cost functional, we impose the further constraint that each M_i have the structure

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{\hat{x}}_i &= E_i \hat{x}_i + C_i m_i + G_i y_i \\ m_i &= D_i \hat{x}_i \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

Here E_i is constrained to be an $n_i \times n_i$ matrix and the signal \hat{x}_i is regarded as an estimate of x_i . The rationale for choosing such a structure should be evident. In the absence of interactions and with local cost functionals defined appropriately the optimal unconstrained controller has the form given in (4).

Parameter Optimization

Under the above structural constraints the overall design problem becomes one of choosing $\{G_i, D_i, E_i, C_i, \hat{x}_i(t_0): i=1,2,\dots,N\}$ to minimize the cost given by (2) subject to the system constraints (1).

A natural requirement to impose on each controller is that for $i=1,2,\dots,N$ $\hat{x}_i(t)$ be an unbiased estimate of $x_i(t)$ for every control and interaction input to S_i . Thus, we require that

$$E\{x_i(t) - \hat{x}_i(t) | Y_i(t)\} = 0 \quad \forall m_i, u_i \quad (4)$$

It is straightforward to show that a sufficient condition for obtaining unbiased estimates is to choose

+ As pointed out by Aoki⁸ it may be useful to allow on-line communication between the local controllers and thus increase the information set available to each M_i . However, in this paper we do not allow the exchange of information between local control units.

$$E_i = A_i - G_{i1} H_{i1}$$

$$C_i = B_i \quad (5)$$

$$G_{i2} = L_{i1}$$

and $\hat{x}_i(t_0) = \bar{x}_i^0$, where $G_i = [G_{i1} \ G_{i2}]$.

Thus, subject to the constraint of unbiased estimates, the overall design problem reduces to the determination of $\{G_{i1}, D_i: i=1,2,\dots,N\}$.

To determine necessary conditions for the optimal parameters, combine the system and controller dynamics to write

$$\begin{bmatrix} \dot{\hat{x}} \\ \dot{m} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} A_{11} & A_{12} \\ A_{21} & A_{22} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \hat{x} \\ m \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} -W \\ -G \end{bmatrix} \quad (6)$$

or

$$\dot{v} = \hat{A} v + \hat{W} \quad (6')$$

where $G = \text{diag}\{G_i: i=1,2,\dots,N\}$

Defining $V(t) = E\{v(t)v'(t)\}$, and using the fact that the noise processes are white* one obtains**

$$\dot{V}(t) = \hat{A} V + \hat{V} \hat{A}' + \hat{W} \quad (7)$$

where $\hat{W} = \begin{bmatrix} -W & 0 \\ 0 & GNG' \end{bmatrix}$, $\hat{A} = \begin{bmatrix} A_{11} & A_{12} \\ A_{21} & A_{22} \end{bmatrix}$.

Using the fact that if Ψ is an $n \times n$ matrix and v is an n -vector then $E\{v' \Psi v\} = \text{trace}\{\Psi E(vv')\}$, one can write the cost functional (2) in the form

$$J = \text{trace}\{\hat{F}V(t_0) + \int_{t_0}^T \hat{Q}(t) V(t) dt\} \quad (8)$$

where

$$\hat{F} = \begin{bmatrix} -F & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \quad \hat{Q}(t) = \begin{bmatrix} Q & 0 \\ 0 & D'RD \end{bmatrix}$$

and $D = \text{diag}\{D_i: i=1,2,\dots,N\}$.

Equations (7) and (8) can be viewed as a reformulation of the original optimization problem as a deterministic parameter optimization in which it is desired to minimize (8) subject to (7). Utilizing the matrix minimum principle¹⁰ the necessary conditions for optimality can be written as

$$\dot{V} = \hat{A} V + \hat{V} \hat{A}' + \hat{W} \quad (9-a)$$

$$\dot{P} = -\hat{Q} - \hat{A}' P - P \hat{A} \quad P(T) = \hat{F} \quad (9-b)$$

$$\frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial D_i} = 0 \quad i=1,2,\dots,N \quad (9-c)$$

$$\frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial G_{i1}} = 0 \quad i=1,2,\dots,N \quad (9-d)$$

where

$$\Psi = \text{tr}\{\hat{Q}V + (\hat{A}V + \hat{V}\hat{A}' + \hat{W})P'\} \quad (9-e)$$

* We also assume that the individual noise processes are mutually independent.

** $\bar{N} = \text{diag}\{N_i: i=1,2,\dots,N\}$.

Equations (9-a) - (9-d) represent a two point boundary value problem which must be solved in order to determine the optimal parameters. The relations (9-c), (9-d) and (9-e) can be used to write the optimal $D_i, G_i, i=1,2,\dots,N$ in terms of the solution to this boundary value problem. The interested reader is referred to where a more detailed presentation of these results is given.

IV. Conclusions

A decentralized controller in which coordination takes place only in the planning phase of implementation has been considered. The particular form of the controller was chosen with a view toward satisfying certain natural constraints on the information flow structure which reflect the large-scale nature of the system to be controlled. The optimal parameter values were then shown to be expressible in terms of the solution to a nonlinear two point boundary value problem.

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COMPARISON OF TWO OPTIMAL TERMINAL CONTROL ALGORITHMS

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Summary

There are a wide variety of optimal control algorithms available today. They vary in their generality and computational efficiency. This paper presents a comparison of a "general" technique and a "special purpose" technique. The results show the computational advantages of using a method which is specially designed for the type of optimization problem being solved.

Comparison of the Algorithms

The purpose of this paper is to present an example of the huge computational advantages which can be realized by using special purpose control algorithms instead of general purpose control algorithms. The two techniques which will be compared are an optimal terminal control algorithm developed by Nahi and Wheeler¹ (hereafter called the special purpose algorithm) and a control algorithm based on one of Wolfe's quadratic programming techniques² (hereafter called the general purpose algorithm). Both algorithms involve transforming the original terminal control problem stated in terms of differential or difference equations into a quadratic programming problem. If the initial formulation is in terms of differential equations, the first step is to approximate the differential equations with difference equations. This approximation can be made arbitrarily good by using a very small sampling interval. Since the size of the resulting quadratic programming problem is inversely proportional to the sampling interval, the choice of a sampling interval which yields both a set of difference equations which are a "reasonable" approximation of the original differential equations and a "reasonably" sized quadratic programming problem is important. The relationship between the number of sampling intervals and computation time will be illustrated for both algorithms in the example. The solution to the quadratic programming problem will give the optimum values of the discrete control sequence.

Multiple amplitude-bounded controls and time-varying system coefficients can be handled by both techniques. The differences between the methods will be summarized below.

The special purpose algorithm is based on the control theory result that in a problem with n state variables, an optimal control sequence can always be found with no more than n of the magnitudes of the control sequence at less than the corresponding maximum allowable values. This result is used to enable the technique to avoid manipulating any matrices of dimension greater than $n \times n$.

The general purpose algorithm must solve a quadratic program which includes a basis matrix whose dimensions are a function of the product of the number of state and control variables and the number of sampling intervals. For example in a problem with three state variables, two control variables, and ten sampling intervals, the linear constraint matrix would have fifty rows and therefore a 50×50 basis

matrix. The special purpose algorithm would only involve a 3×3 matrix since there are three state variables; however, it is very important to note that the general purpose algorithm is much more powerful than the special purpose algorithm. For example, it will handle state variable constraints and summation (approximation to integral) type cost functions.³

Example

To establish the relative performance of the two algorithms the following example problem was run using both techniques. The operating time was fixed and a series of runs were made using different sampling intervals to illustrate the relationship between sampling interval length and computation time.

Problem Statement

$$\min_u (4-x_1(T))^2 + x_2(T)^2 + x_3(T)^2$$

subject to the constraints

$$\dot{x} = Ax + Bu$$

where

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -7 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & -5 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$x(0) = [0 \quad 0 \quad 0]'$$

$$T = 6 \text{ seconds}$$

This example problem was solved using sampling intervals of 2, 1.2, .75, .6, and .4 seconds with each of the techniques discussed above. The algorithms were implemented in FORTRAN IV on a CDC 6600 computer. The required central processor time versus the number of sampling intervals for each algorithm is shown in figure one. The special purpose algorithm is seen to be more efficient than the general purpose algorithm as the number of sampling intervals increases.

The optimum value of the cost function for a terminal control problem will be zero if the desired terminal state lies in the reachable set¹ and greater than zero if it lies outside the reachable set. With all other factors held constant including the system operation time, the size of the reachable set is a monotone increasing function of the number of sampling intervals. For this example the desired terminal state is an element of the reachable set for all of the sampling intervals which were used; therefore, the optimum cost function value for each case is zero. The special purpose algorithm requires a finite number of steps to develop the optimum control sequence which yields the optimum value of the cost function so that the optimum value of the cost function is always achieved. The general purpose algorithm is a gradient technique, therefore in general it does not achieve the optimum value of the cost function in a finite number of steps. In the example calculations the general purpose algorithm was executed until the cost

function had become equal to .0001.

Conclusions

The special purpose algorithm was shown to be considerably more effective than the general purpose algorithm. The fact that the special purpose algorithm did not manipulate progressively larger matrices as the number of sampling intervals increased led to dramatic computational savings.

The principal conclusion which should be drawn from this result is that special purpose algorithms which exploit the properties of the type of problem being solved can be much more efficient than general purpose algorithms. The user must make a trade-off between the effort involved in developing a special purpose algorithm and the added computational cost of using a general purpose algorithm. Clearly if a problem is to be solved only a few times a general purpose algorithm should be used. On the other hand if the problem is to be solved in real-time a special purpose algorithm will probably be required.

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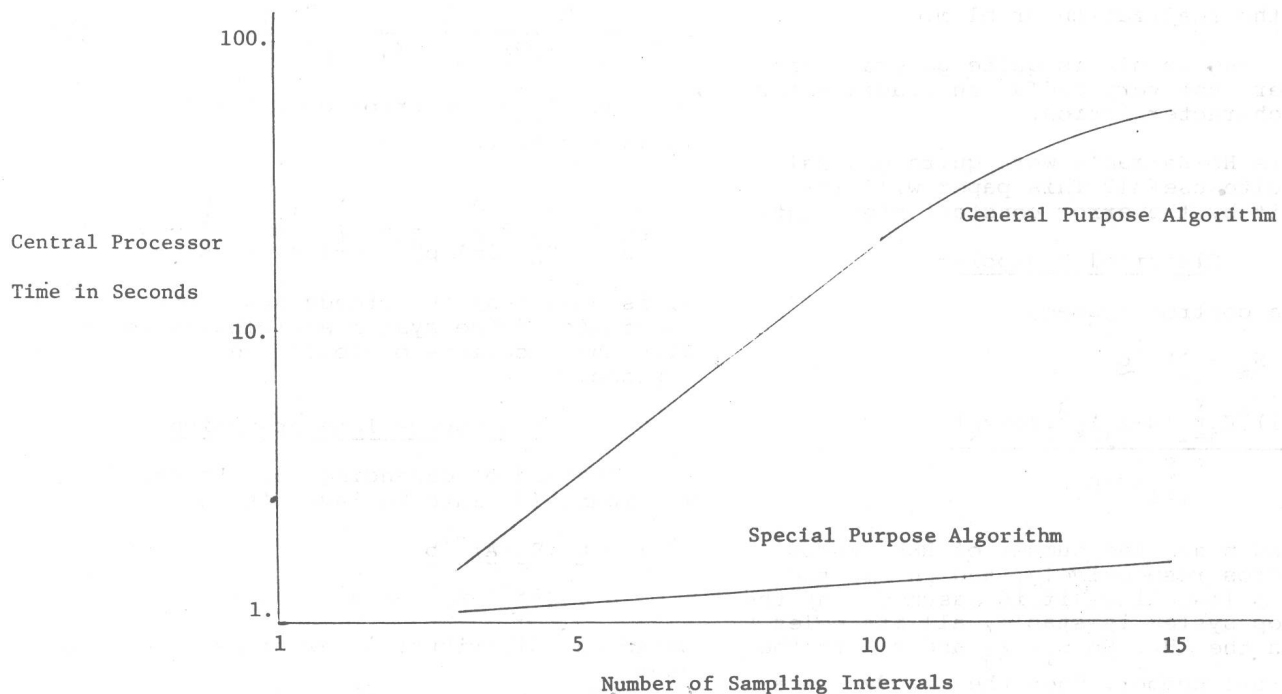


Figure 1

STATE SPACE INTERPRETATION OF ERROR CONSTANTS

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Introduction

For a given linear system

$$\dot{\underline{x}} = \underline{A}\underline{x} + \underline{b}u \quad (1)$$

$$y = \underline{c}^T \underline{x} \quad (2)$$

the input-output transfer function is

$$T(s) = \underline{c}^T (\underline{S}\underline{I} - \underline{A})^{-1} \underline{b} \quad (3)$$

Ho and Kalman performed the Laurent expansion of $T(s)$

$$T(s) = \underline{c}^T (\underline{S}\underline{I} - \underline{A})^{-1} \underline{b} = \sum_{i=1}^{\infty} \frac{J_i}{s^i} \quad (4)$$

where

$$J_i = \underline{c}^T \underline{A}^{i-1} \underline{b} \quad (5)$$

are known as Markov parameters. Then they organized Hankel's matrix \underline{H} be defined by

$$\underline{H} = \begin{bmatrix} J_1 & J_2 & J_3 & \dots & J_q \\ J_2 & J_3 & \dots & \dots & \\ J_3 & \dots & \dots & \dots & \\ \vdots & & & & \\ J_p & & & & J_{p+q-1} \end{bmatrix} \quad (6)$$

to solve the realization problem.

While the result is quite general, it is, however, not very useful in practice for transfer-characterization.

Why is Ho-Kalman's work quite general but not quite useful? This paper will interpret it by the error constant viewpoint.

Classical Viewpoint

For a control system,

$$\begin{aligned} T(s) &= \underline{c}^T (\underline{S}\underline{I} - \underline{A})^{-1} \underline{b} \\ &= \frac{(-1)^{\ell} K_{j=1}^{\ell} (s-z_j)_{k=1}^h (s+z_k)}{\prod_{i=1}^n (s+p_i)} \end{aligned} \quad (7)$$

where ℓ and h are the number of RHP zeros and LHP zeros respectively, and n is the number of poles. Since it is assumed that the closed loop system is stable, all its poles must be in the LHP. So p_i , z_j and z_k are the positive real number. Then the steady state error constants are defined in terms of the

successive coefficients in a Maclaurin expansion of $T(s)$.

$$T(s) = \frac{K_p}{1+K_p} - \frac{1}{K_v} s - \frac{1}{K_a} s^2 - \dots \quad (8)$$

and these error constants can be calculated as follows.

(a) position error constant K_p

$$K_p = \frac{(-1)^{\ell} K_{i=1}^{\ell} (-z_j)_{k=1}^h (z_k)}{\prod_{i=1}^n (p_i) - (-1)^{\ell} K_{j=1}^{\ell} (-z_j)_{k=1}^h (z_k)} \quad (9)$$

so, if

$$K = \frac{\prod_{i=1}^n (p_i)}{\prod_{j=1}^{\ell} (z_j) \prod_{k=1}^h (z_k)} \quad (10)$$

in (9), then $K_p = \infty$ and $T(0) = 1$, which implies that steady position error is zero.

(b) velocity error constant K_v

If $K = \infty$, i.e., $T(0) = 1$, then

$$\frac{1}{K_v} = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{p_i} + \sum_{j=1}^{\ell} \frac{1}{z_j} - \sum_{k=1}^h \frac{1}{z_k} \quad (11)$$

(c) acceleration error constant K_a

If $T(0) = 1$, then

$$-\frac{2}{K_a} = \frac{1}{K_v^2} + \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{p_i^2} - \sum_{j=1}^{\ell} \frac{1}{z_j^2} - \sum_{k=1}^h \frac{1}{z_k^2} \quad (12)$$

It is seen that the steady state error constants of the system are closely related with the locations of poles and zeros in the s-plane.

State-space Interpretation

Instead of expanding into Laurent series, we expand (3) into Maclaurin's series:

$$\begin{aligned} T(s) &= \underline{c}^T (\underline{S}\underline{I} - \underline{A})^{-1} \underline{b} \\ &= \underline{c}^T (-\underline{A}^{-1} - \underline{S}\underline{A}^{-2} - \underline{S}^2 \underline{A}^{-3} - \dots) \underline{b} \end{aligned}$$

Using the distribution law of matrices, we have

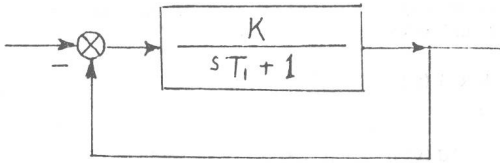
$$T(s) = \underline{c}^T (-\underline{A}^{-1}) \underline{b} + \underline{c}^T (-\underline{S}\underline{A}^{-2}) \underline{b} + \underline{c}^T (-\underline{S}^2 \underline{A}^{-3}) \underline{b} + \dots \quad (13)$$

Equating (13) and (8), we obtain the following equalities:

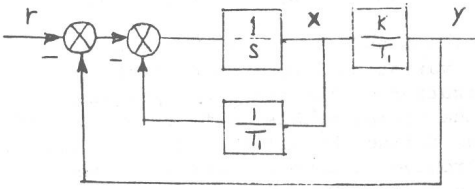
$$\begin{aligned} \frac{K_p}{1+K_p} &= C^T(-A^{-1})b \\ -\frac{1}{K_v} &= C^T(-A^{-2})b \\ -\frac{1}{K_a} &= C^T(-A^{-3})b \end{aligned} \quad (14)$$

Equations shown in (14) are the state-space interpretation of error constants.

Consider the following illustrative example:



It can be rewritten into a state diagram as shown in Fig. 2.



The state equation description is

$$\dot{x} = -\left(\frac{1}{T_1} + \frac{K}{T_1}\right)x + r \quad (15)$$

$$y = \frac{K}{T_1}x \quad (16)$$

we have

$$\underline{A} = -\frac{K+1}{T_1}, \quad \underline{b} = 1, \quad \underline{C}^T = \frac{K}{T_1} \quad (17)$$

Substituting (17) into (14) yields

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{K_p}{1+K_p} &= \underline{C}^T(-\underline{A}^{-1})\underline{b} \\ &= \frac{K}{T_1} \left(-\frac{T_1}{-(1+K)}\right) 1 \\ &= \frac{K}{1+K} \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{Therefore } K_p = K \quad (18)$$

Similarly, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{K_v} &= C^T(A^{-2})B \\ &= \frac{SKT_1}{(1+K)^2} \end{aligned}$$

and therefore

$$K_v = \frac{(1+K)^2}{ST_1} \quad (19)$$

And the acceleration error constant is obtained as follows

$$\frac{1}{K_a} = \frac{-T_1^2 K}{(1+K)^3}$$

Therefore

$$K_a = -\frac{(1+K)^3}{T_1^2 K} \quad (20)$$

Conclusion

A state space interpretation of error constants has been given. Either position, velocity or acceleration error constants in the classical sense can be evaluated from the state space parameters A, B, and C directly. The approach sheds new light on performance analysis and reveals more physical meaning in realization than Ho - Kalman's original approach.

Acknowledgment

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