

System Dynamics '90

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Volume 1: Abbas – Henderson

System Dynamics '90

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Conference chair

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Preface

In the summer of 1983, a number of scholars gathered at Pine Manor College in Chestnut Hill to discuss current developments in the field of System Dynamics. At that meeting, they voted to create the System Dynamics Society. Seven years later, we return to the same site with a society well in place. The Society has produced six volumes of its journal, the *System Dynamics Review*, and annual research conferences have traveled literally around the world—Brussels, Keystone Colorado, Oslo, Shanghai, San Diego, Stuttgart, and now back to Chestnut Hill.

This conference gives us a chance to reflect on the many advances in the field over the past seven years. A perusal of the subject categories contained in these 1990 Proceedings give an indication of some of the dramatic changes that have taken place, as well as some of the continuing themes:

The subject areas of the 1990 International System Dynamics Conference

Analysis	Modeling process
Corporate strategy	Negotiation
Corporate structure	Nonlinear dynamics
Decision Making	Organizational learning
Defense & computer information systems	Project management
Energy	Public development
Environment	Public health
Group decision support	Public management
Learning	Simulation games
Learning environments	Simulation methods
Macro economics	Social services
Micro economics	Sociological studies
	State of the field

Consider just four areas: simulation methods, nonlinear dynamics, simulation games, and learning. In 1983, Barry Richmond was writing about enlarging the system dynamics paradigm by creating graduate curricula in enterprise engineering. STELLA was not yet even a gleam in his eye. Richard Day gave us our first conference glimpse of complex nonlinear dynamics, but Erik Mosekilde was writing then about deterministic consequences of stochastic phenomena. Yet to come was his path breaking work on deterministic chaos that led to the special issue of the *System Dynamics Review* and to the Forrester prize he shared on that topic with Javier Aracil. Dennis Meadows had not yet surfaced his interest in simulation games as powerful learning environments. An no paper in the 1983 conference was even using the terms "learning environment" or "systems thinking."

In contrast, more than 20 percent of the presentations at this 1990 conference focus on learning, in either the school or organizational setting. While the field has always focused on modeling to make a difference in the ways people think, there is now a broader conception of what that might mean. Furthermore, there is widespread recognition that modeling to make a difference is a social enterprise that calls for skills and knowledge outside the field of computer simulation. Our literature is widening its scope and its sources, as these papers amply illustrate.

The papers in these Proceedings are arranged alphabetically by first author. Two indices are provided at the back of Volume 3—an author index locating papers of all authors, and a subject index identifying the first author and title of works falling in the subject categories listed above. Plenary sessions can be found as bold headings in the subject index.

All events such as these require the combined efforts of many persons. Dick Nathan and Frank Mauro of the Rockefeller Institute provided their continuing support for a project that had begun before they even arrived. Maria Tudico has excelled in handling the thousands of details

that fall upon the Conference Manager. Without her time and effort, this conference simply could not have been. Michael Cooper skillfully assembled the proceedings and met all of the deadlines even when we didn't. Nan Carroll and Liz Praetorius created the administrative system necessary to support this whole affair. Eric Wuestman, Ik Jae Chung, and Sauwekon Ratanawijitrasan provided valuable assistance with conference site logistics.

A large and active conference committee served as the reviewing committee for papers and abstracts and participated fully in the intellectual design of the conference. We especially extend our thanks to Robert Eberlein and Michael Radzicki (Publicity), Nathan Forrester (Conference Events), Janet Gould-Kreutzer (Master Teachers Seminar) Alan Graham (Vendor Displays), and Julie Pugh (Local Arrangements). In addition, valuable insight and help was provided by Jay Forrester, Jack Pugh, Nan Lux, and Peter Gardiner.

David F. Andersen
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John D. Sterman

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A Road Provision Model Using System Dynamics

by

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ABSTRACT

One of the most difficult tasks facing highway administrators is how to efficiently manage the allocation of road funds. In this paper a comprehensible, easy-to-use, highway management tool is presented. This tool takes the form of a computer simulation model which is intended to assist managers of a network of highways to make better decisions concerning the allocation of scarce funds. It mainly simulates the effects of different investment strategies and maintenance options on the road network. This is done by tracing the life-cycle costs of the major activities of providing and maintaining the road system, and by considering the effects that these activities have on the state and performance of the road network.

1. INTRODUCTION

The continued development of the road network is looked upon as a necessity that contributes to the prosperity and wellbeing of a country. Construction, maintenance and upgrading of roads constitute a large portion of the transport budget in many countries, yet the growing conflict between the requirements of the road network and the available financial resources is one of the most serious problems that highway authorities have to deal with. There is a need for simplified planning techniques that are capable of testing alternative strategies for investing in the road network system.

This financial stringency requires the development of road management systems to provide support for highway decision-makers so that they can make more rational, informed decisions. These decisions should be targeted towards achieving a better management and control of the road network system.

Road management systems can be described as computerised, analytic tools that consider the whole life-costing of alternative strategies for the road network. These tools enable the testing of alternative management and planning programmes for the highway sector.

2. PURPOSE AND APPROACH

The main purpose of this study is to construct a dynamic, simulation model that describes the structural, feedback interactions of the road network system. The model is meant to analyse the impacts of proposed changes in the funding levels, as well as in the structure of the priorities involved in the allocation of road funds.

The System Dynamics methodology, (Forrester 1968), is used in this study as the modelling framework within which the road management model is developed.

The model simulates the effects of different road investment strategies. This is done by tracing the life-cycle costs of the activities which are necessary to develop and maintain the road system, and establishing the impacts that these activities have on the condition and performance of the road network. The main objectives of the model are as listed below.

- (1) To model the process involved in the allocation of road funds. This allocation process is meant to satisfy, (in a relative sense), the financial requirements of the changing physical condition of the road network. The two main constraints that are considered in this process of allocation include: the level of available funds and the priorities for allocating road funds to the main activities of the road network.
- (2) To provide better insight and understanding of the dynamic, feedback nature of the road system.
- (3) To act as an experimental management tool for assessing the short- and long-term consequences of different road strategies on the physical development of the road system. A road strategy involves the determination of; road funding levels, priorities for allocating road funds and time intervention criteria for performing maintenance activities.
- (4) To assist in management and control of the road system.
- (5) To provide a set of performance indicators that describe the state of the road system at any point in its lifetime.

3. MODEL DESCRIPTION

The road provision model consists of two main parts, as shown in Figure 1. The first, is the user interface module, the second is the System Dynamics road provision module, see (Abbas 1990).

In this section, the System Dynamics conceptual model is introduced. The feedback interaction between demand and supply of the road network system is explicitly considered. The main assumptions and some of the important variables of the model are explained. Causal diagrams are considered to be an advanced and comprehensible step of the System Dynamics modelling procedure. This paper presents the fundamental, causal mechanisms underlying the structure of the System Dynamics road provision model.

3.1 Managing the Process of Allocation of Road Funds

Each time interval of the simulation, road funds are allocated among five road system activities. Referring to Figure 2 the main activities of the road provision model include:

- (1) road administration activity;
- (2) routine road maintenance activity;
- (3) road construction activity;
- (4) road rehabilitation-reconstruction, i.e. restoration activity; and
- (5) periodic road maintenance activity.

This investment allocation process is performed in a dynamic fashion so as to be relatively consistent with the competing priorities and the changing demands of the road network system. The priorities for the allocation of

road funds are set by the modeller to be in accordance with the most commonly practised management of road funds in developing regions. The priorities are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Priorities for Allocation of Road Funds

The Road Network Funds	Priority
Road Administration Funds	1
Routine Road Maintenance Funds	2
Road Construction Funds (***)	3
Road Rehabilitation-Reconstruction Funds (***)	3
Periodic Road Maintenance Funds	5

(***) Both construction and restoration of roads have the same priority regarding the allocation of road funds. This assumption is based on the fact that both construction and restoration of roads will eventually lead to kilometres of roads starting new life cycles. Absolute allocation is determined using allocation factors. These factors are computed according to the financial demand of the road construction activity versus that of the road restoration activity.

The stated structure, describing the priorities, considered in the allocation of road funds may be varied to test the effects on road network performance of alternative priorities for the allocation of road funds.

3.2 Main Assumptions and Definitions of the Model

In this section of the paper, the reader is advised to refer to the causal diagrams describing the structure of the model and presented throughout Figures 2 to 9. This section is meant to explain the main implicit assumptions and definitions of the System Dynamics road provision model.

- Total Permitted Road Kilometres, (refer to Figure 5), is a parameter that explicitly caters for the constraint of land use planning, taking into account the following constants:
 - maximum land area of the region;
 - maximum allowed ratio of road area to land area; and
 - average road width.

The constants are exogenously specified by the model user. On the other hand, it is to be noted that another System Dynamics model is

currently under development which is expected to explicitly model the dynamics of demand for road construction.

- Recent field surveys, supplemented by the judgement of engineers of the World Bank, suggest it is possible to distribute a country's roads among three classes of condition: good, fair, and poor. A road in good condition requires only routine maintenance to remain that way. A road in fair condition needs resurfacing, i.e. periodic maintenance. A road in poor condition has deteriorated to the point that it requires either partial or full reconstruction, i.e. restoration. (Harral 1988)
- Good To Fair Road Kilometres Rate, (refer to Figures 7 & 8), is the rate that dynamically determines the number of kilometres of roads degrading from good to fair condition, over the incremental time intervals of the simulation. Periodic road maintenance of a road is considered necessary once the road condition degrades from good to fair. It is vital to perform the periodic maintenance on time. Periodic maintenance certainly betters the existing condition of a road and prolongs its life-cycle. There are different views pertaining to the exact extent of this betterment, but discussion of these views is outside the scope of this paper.
- Fair To Poor Road Kilometres Rate, (refer to Figures 6 & 8), is the rate that dynamically determines the number of kilometres of roads degrading from fair to poor condition, over the incremental time intervals of the simulation. Restoration of a road is considered necessary once the road condition falls from fair to poor. Once restored, the road kilometres restart a new life-cycle.
- Good-Fair Condition Road Kilometres: Level, (refer to Figures 4 & 8), represents the accumulation of road kilometres, which are in a good or fair condition, over time, and hence requiring annual routine maintenance.
- To avoid double counting in the maintenance activities, Periodic Road Maintenance Rate is subtracted from the Routine Road Maintenance Rate. This avoids performing routine maintenance to road kilometres, which are already expected to be periodically maintained, (refer to Figure 4).
- Evaluation of different road strategies is mainly carried out by comparing the output of the model which is mainly in the form of performance indicators, against the user criteria. Some of the main road performance indicators produced by the model are listed below.
 - (1) Number of Kilometres of roads in:
 - (a) good condition;
 - (b) fair condition; and
 - (c) poor condition.
 - (2) Efficiency and deficiency indices of:
 - (a) administration of roads;
 - (b) construction of roads;
 - (c) routine maintenance of roads;

- (d) restoration of roads; and
 - (e) periodic maintenance of roads.
- (3) Expenditure and levels of:
- (a) constructed roads;
 - (b) administered roads;
 - (c) routinely maintained roads;
 - (d) restored roads; and
 - (e) periodically maintained roads.

3.3 Main Input Values by the Model User

The user interface module can be described as a computerised, friendly dialogue, designed mainly to instigate creativity in constructing alternative scenarios for the road network, and also to work as a medium to facilitate the specification of the model exogenous parameters by the user. The following presents the main input parameters of the model and describes the options available to represent these parameters, through using the user interface module.

- Initial unit cost of:
 - (1) Yearly Road Administration Cost Per Kilometre.
 - (2) Routine Road Maintenance Cost Per Kilometre.
 - (3) Periodic Road Maintenance Cost Per Kilometre.
 - (4) Road Construction Cost Per Kilometre.
 - (5) Road Rehabilitation-Reconstruction Cost Per Kilometre. (Refer to Figure 10)
- Inflation/deflation rates of the previously stated unit costs. (Refer to Figure 10)
- The user can choose from among several forms that are available for inputting road funds. Road Funds can be generated using any of the following options:
 - (1) Empirical function (linear or nonlinear).
 - (2) Deterministic function.
 - (3) Random Stochastic function (stochasticity assumed to be of the Gaussian type, and randomness is based on the pseudo randomisation process).
 - (4) Combination of any of the above i.e. at a time specified by the user, the function of the road funds changes from one form to another. The available combinations include:
 - (a) Empirical function with Deterministic function.
 - (b) Empirical function with Stochastic function.
 - (c) Deterministic function with Stochastic function.
- The life cycle of a road progresses through time from an initial state of being in good condition, passing through a state of fair condition and terminating at a state of poor condition, where the road is almost unusable, due to radical structure failure, i.e. high surface roughness values. The maintenance specifications of the model matches particular