

A GENERAL PURPOSE TOOL FOR INTERACTIVE SIMULATIONS

Frank Scarpino
Air Force Avionics
Laboratory

Joe Clema
General Dynamics
Fort Worth

ABSTRACT

A framework and methodology from which a set of forty-seven Fortran subprograms (the SCENARIO) have been developed may be used for the setup of any modularly developed Fortran simulation. The SCENARIO provides a natural and convenient interface between the human and the computer. The principles, requirements, programming, implementation, and use are described. The full system runs on a DECSYSTEM-10 computer located in the Air Force Avionics Laboratory at Dayton, Ohio. A scaled-down version of the system is in operation on a CDC 6600 in the General Dynamics Division at Fort Worth, Texas.

INTRODUCTION

"The future growth of the computer industry and the acceptance of computer methods will depend largely on the successful establishment of effective man-machine communications."

James Martin, 1973

In the design, development, and implementation of large-scale, complex computer simulations, the man-machine interface has often been relegated by default to clumsy I/O methods, such as cards and the restrictive formats of cards.

It is generally possible to develop powerful man-machine timesharing interfaces on modern medium and large-scale computers. Displays, editing facilities, diagnostic messages, library capabilities, and file manipulations must be provided in these interfaces. The I/O man-machine interface need not be all things to all users for all time but should provide those capabilities common to most users and should provide facilities for the easy addition

of capabilities for the individual user.

Some people feel little progress will be made in significantly increasing the tools and techniques for "upgrading of the quality of software production" (Ref. 2) during the next few years; however, improvement of the man-machine interface not only increases the usability of the simulation software but increases the capacity for developing, integrating, debugging, modifying, and maintaining the system. Certain features to be described also improve the testing, reliability, and generality of the man-machine interface. The interactive system should significantly speed the development of a new set of application models.

The software has been written for a DECSYSTEM-10 in Fortran Extended. The application software is composed of airplane models, flight control system, sensors, environment models, and support software. These application models provide a real-time (or non-real-time) Avionic Simulation (AVSIM) for the United States Air Force so that Air Force engineers can synthesize, integrate, test, and evaluate total avionic systems. The SCENARIO software enables the user to choose the desired models; for instance, he might choose models that simulate an A-7 or the new F-16 Lightweight Fighter. Models of varying fidelity exist. Thus, if an engineer is interested in studying the Doppler radar model, he might choose the detailed Doppler model and a simple airframe and flight control system. An engineer interested in the attack radar could choose a simple Doppler model or no Doppler model at all. The engineer, in less than two minutes clock time, can inter-

*This work was supported by the Air Force Avionics Laboratory, Wright-Patterson AFB, under Contract F33615-73-C-1208.

actively establish his configuration for a simulator run. The software used in a real-time simulation (emulation of the actual time during which a physical process occurs in the real world) in this application is composed of several assembly language routines. All software, including the Assembly language routines, should be easily portable to other large-scale and medium-scale machines with less than six man-months work needed to implement the total system on a different computer. The non-real-time software could be converted in one to two man-months.

The setup software has been named the SCENARIO (see Figure 1), and it has the properties described in Table 1. The SCENARIO is composed of a main body and a PRESCENARIO in which use is made of a DEC-10 "Command Stream". This command stream is not essential to the user in setting up a run but should be easily implemented on most third-generation systems. The PRESCENARIO portion of the setup permits the user to define the particular application models to be run. This stage will be defined in more detail in the following topics. The only severe limitation is that the application models must, as would be expected, share their own set of COMMON Blocks with the SCENARIO COMMON Blocks. Any duplication of variable names contained in COMMON must be eliminated when the SCENARIO is applied to a new set of application models.

REQUIREMENTS

"Increasingly in the next decade, man must become the prime focus of system design."

James Martin, 1973

With the advent of conversational computing available on large-scale digital hardware, many advantages of running simulations in an interactive environment may be enjoyed by the user. The interface between the human and his program may be divided into four stages: (1) setup, (2) verification, (3) dynamic execution, and (4) post-run analysis. A general-purpose system would provide interactive capabilities for each of these stages while providing versatility, flexibility, and efficiency. Many considerations, evaluations, and trade-offs are necessary in the development of suitable software that per-

forms the necessary user functions. Reference 3 in the Bibliography provides a detailed discussion of the considerations and requirements used for the development of interactive simulations. Those applicable to the SCENARIO are defined in Figure 2.

Emphasis has been placed on human factors and usability by Air Force engineers. In the design, development, and implementation stages, the following requirements were constantly followed: (1) operator inputs should be minimal and concise; (2) software should be modular, structured, and well documented; (3) software should be amenable to growth; (4) the system should provide rapid response to operator inputs; (5) the system should be fool-proof. While the first four items are relatively easy to quantify, item five involves anticipation of every conceivable error a user might make. If ample time and testing are allowed, item five may be satisfied for most situations (Ref. 12).

TABLE 1 SCENARIO MODEL FEATURES

- KEY PROGRAM FOR SIMULATOR SETUP AND INITIALIZATION
- oo REAL-TIME OR NON-REAL-TIME OPERATION
- oo DEFAULTS FOR ALL MODES, PARAMETERS, VARIABLES, AND OPTIONS
- oo NO OPERATOR INPUTS REQUIRED (OTHER THAN "RUN") UNLESS OPERATOR DESIRES TO MODIFY DEFAULTS: EXAMPLE OPTIONS
 - ooo DAIS "STIMULATION", SELF-CONTAINED
 - ooo REAL-TIME, NON-REAL-TIME
 - ooo MAN-IN-LOOP, NO MAN-IN-LOOP
 - ooo AIRFRAME (F-16, A-7), SIMPLE, COMPLEX
 - ooo SENSOR MODES
 - ooo TARGETS
 - ooo DATA ACQUISITION ANALYSIS OPTIONS
- oo ASSISTANCE OF OPERATOR DURING SETUP IF REQUIRED
 - ooo TUTOR MODE PROVIDES DETAILED PROMPTING MESSAGES FOR A NEW OPERATOR
 - ooo PROVISION OF PROMPTING INFORMATION ONLY WHEN EXPERIENCED OPERATOR REQUESTS IT
 1. SIMULATOR CONFIGURATION AND MODEL DESCRIPTIONS
 2. PARAMETER-MODE-OPTION DESCRIPTION AND VALUE
 3. ECHO-RECORD ON DISK OPERATOR INPUTS
 4. EXAMPLES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF COMMANDS
 - ooo AUTOMATIC DISPLAY OF ERRORS AND PROVISION OF INFORMATIVE DIAGNOSTICS

IMPLEMENTATION

"The default technique can ordinarily be expected to reduce input errors based on the simple idea that what you don't do you can't do wrong."

Tom Gilb and Gerald Weinberg,
1976

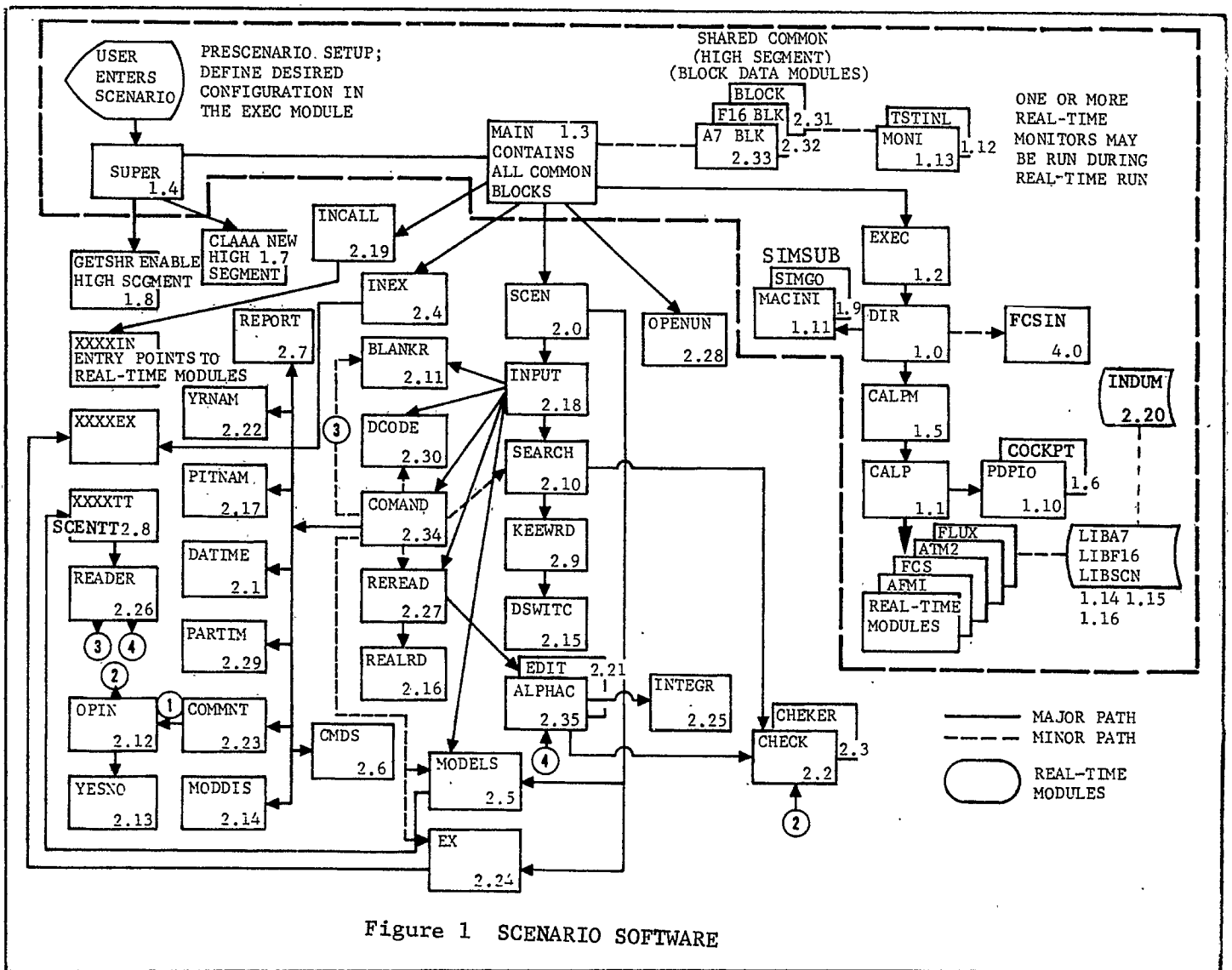


Figure 1 SCENARIO SOFTWARE

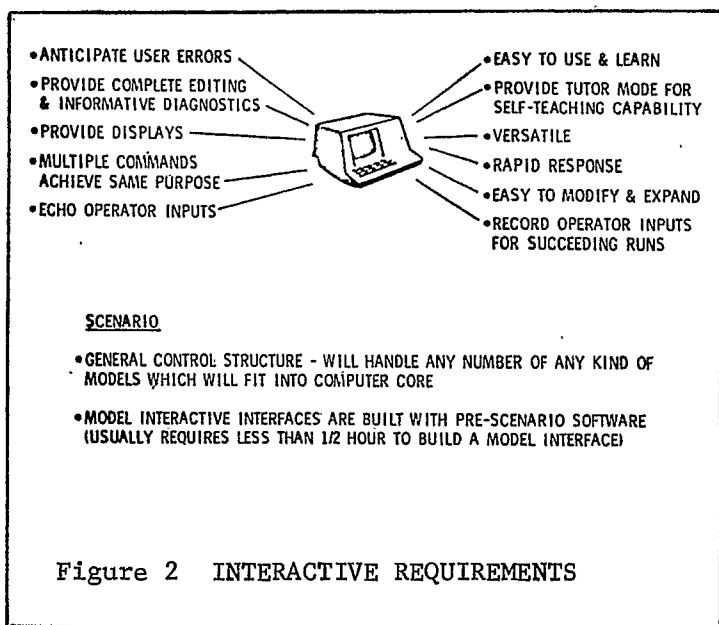


Figure 2 INTERACTIVE REQUIREMENTS

Considered of primary importance during the design of the setup software was the desire to humanize the man-machine interface. Thus, the human should have to perform as little I/O as possible, and all inputs should be edited. Informative diagnostics should be provided when errors are detected, and displays and prompting messages should guide the user rapidly through a setup. Defaults are furnished for all parameters, modes, and variables to accomplish the limited-input requirement. In addition, defaults diminish the number of user errors.

Default values are provided by use of BLOCK DATA or through initialization procedures in which ENTRY POINTS are used in each application model (see Figure 3 and Ref. 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9). Each application model contains two other ENTRY POINTS in addition to the initialization ENTRY POINTS. These three code segments interface with the

SCENARIO and provide the man-machine interaction. These segments, portrayed in Figure 3 are described as (1) "IN", (2) "TT", and (3) "EX" routines, which are labels for the (1) initialization segment, (2) teletype (CRT) man-machine interface segment, and (3) execution segment. These three segments are automatically built for each model through the use of the PRESCENARIO module. After a user establishes those parameters (usually 20 or 30 parameters) in an application model that contains parameters he desires to be able to change through the SCENARIO, approximately 15 minutes in the time-sharing mode will be taken to build the interface by use of the PRESCENARIO. Prompting messages enable the new user to develop easily his interface with the software.

The initialization ("IN") segment initializes any local or global variables specified by the user when he built his SCENARIO interface. The man-machine interface ("TT") segment provides the editing, error checks, diagnostics, and displays which describe commands, parameters, modes, variables, range, and bounds of those items that the user may change interactively. Finally, "EX" routines execute any parameters dependent upon operator inputs during the simulator setup. All calls to these ENTRY POINTS are performed by the SCENARIO modules, and their execution is invisible to the user.

As seen in Figure 1, the SCENARIO structure is highly modular. This structure facilitated development, integration, debugging, and maintenance. Approximately 14K 36-bit words more than the real-time application models are required to run the SCENARIO, as implemented at AFAL. The core varies as a function of the number of models and the number of parameters that may be modified. Most of the SCENARIO code is rolled out of core through use of overlays during application model execution.

The SCENARIO editing features enable the user to enter his inputs in any Fortran mode. If the variable IRNADC is to be initialized to the value 7, the user may input 7, 7.0, 7.DO, + .7E+1 as they are equivalent SCENARIO inputs. The format of the inputs is not a problem for the user as he does not need to worry whether a parameter is INTEGER, REAL, DOUBLE PRECISION, etc. The SCENARIO software handles any required conversion.

"Although computer technology has evolved rapidly over the past 30 years, human/computer interfaces are still inefficient, clumsy, and generally quite unusable by the non-computer expert."

Harld Sackman, 1970

In the development and use of the application models, it is desirable to have control software that provides flexibility and ease of use. Three key modules in this control group are (1) the EXEC, (2) the DIRECTOR, and (3) CALIPER (see Figure 1). The EXEC is a Fortran subroutine that enables the user to specify easily the application models he desires to run, and the rate groups he desires to run in (see Fig. 4).

EXECUTIVE (EXEC)

The real-time application models may be specified to run in any one of seven rate groups called A group through G group. The user needs to do three things in developing the configuration he desires to run: (1) specify the applications models in a Fortran EXTERNAL type of statement; (2) name the models in the proper position in the CALL DIR statement; and (3) specify the number of models in each of the seven rate groups.

Assume the following models are to be run: A group (64 times/sec) consisting of FD16, TARG, CCVFC, RADAR models; B group (32 times/sec): COUP, FCSIS, PROJT, ANALY, FCS16 models; C group (16 times/sec): AIRIG, BOMB, ADC models; D group (8 times/sec): ATMO model; E group (4 times/sec): GRAV model; F group (2 times/sec): no models; G group (1 time/sec): GUST model. Then, Figure 5 is an example of the EXEC statements that would be placed in the subroutine to create this desired configuration.

The models named in the CALL DIR statement are automatically loaded from system libraries and linked. The Air Force maintains two airplane libraries at the Air Force Avionics Laboratory and is able to set up an A-7 or an F-16 run dependent on the application models specified in the CALL to the DIRECTOR.

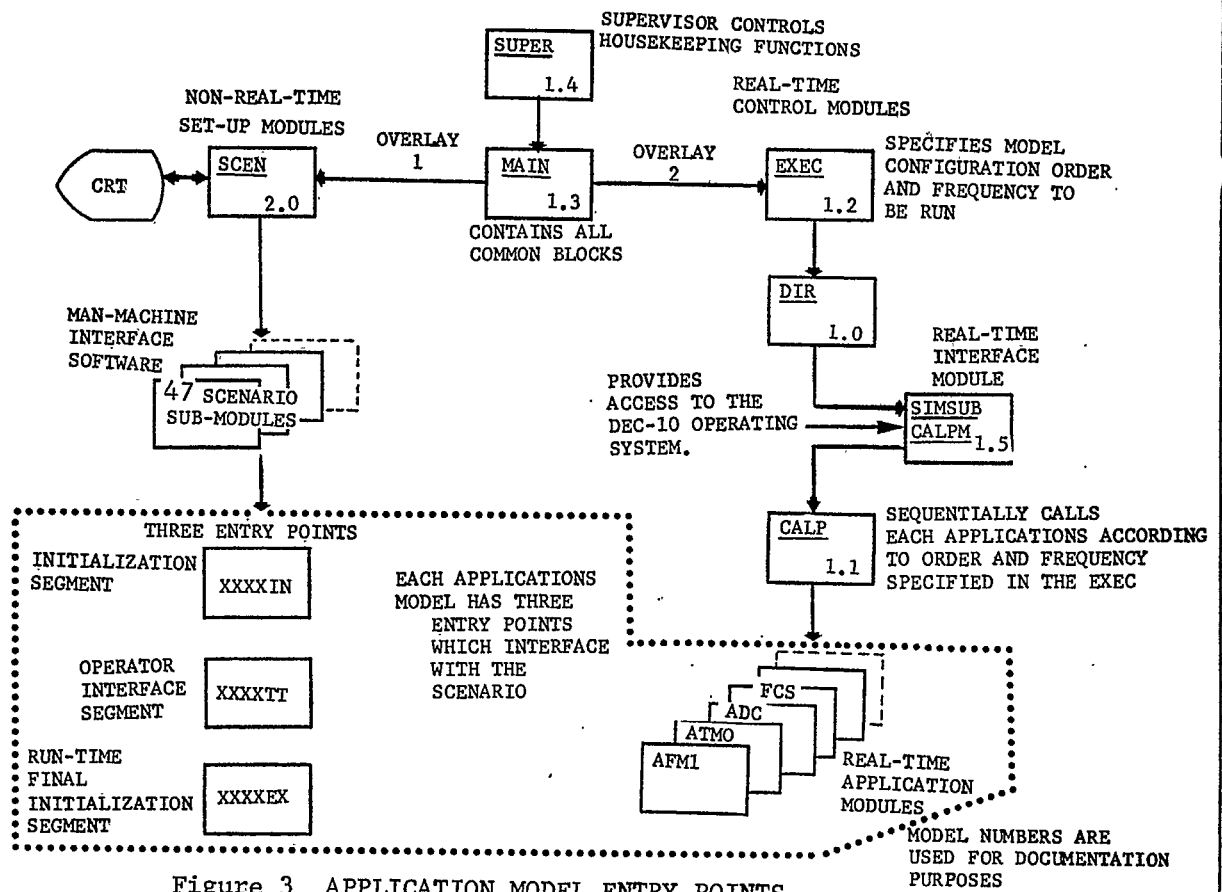


Figure 3 APPLICATION MODEL ENTRY POINTS

GROUP	ITERATION RATE	SAMPLE MODELS TO BE RUN	FRAME TIME																
			1	2	3	4	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	61	62	63	64
A	64/FRAME	FD16, TARG, CCVFC, RADAR																	
B	32/FRAME	COUP, FCSIS, PROJT, ANALY, FCS16																	
C	16/FRAME	AIRIG, BOMB ADC																	
D	8/FRAME	ATMO																	
E	4/FRAME	GRAV																	
F	2/FRAME	---	SAMPLE FRAME TIMES		64/FRAME ITERATION RATE		TIME PER CYCLE												
			1.0SEC	64/SEC	15.625 MILLESECONDS														
			1.28SEC	50/SEC	20.00 MILLESECONDS														
			1.60SEC	40/SEC	25.00 MILLESECONDS														
G	1/FRAME	GUST	2.56SEC	25/SEC	40.00 MILLESECONDS														

Figure 4 TIME SLICE SEQUENTIAL SCHEDULER

```

SUBROUTINE EXEC
:
:
EXTERNAL RADAR, ANALY, BOMB, GUST, FCS16,
1  ADC, FD16, GRAV, ATMOS, TARG, COUP,
2  CCVFC, AIRTG, FCSIS, PROJT
:
:
C  THE FOLLOWING PARAMETERS ARE THE NUMBER
C  OF MODELS IN EACH RATE GROUP.
NA = 4
NB = 5
NC = 3
ND = 1
NE = 1
NF = 0
NG = 1
:
:
CALL DIR (FD16, TARG, CCVFC, RADAR, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, A10,
1  COUP, FCSIS, PROJT, ANALY, FCS16, B6, B7, B8, B9, B10,
2  AIRTG, BOMB, ADC, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8, C9, C10,
3  ATMO, D2, D3, D4, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D10,
4  GRAV, E2, E3, E4, E5, E6, E7, E8, E9, E10,
5  FL, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9, F10,
6  GUST, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, G7, G8, G9, G10)

```

Figure 5 SAMPLE EXEC STATEMENTS

DIRECTOR (DIR)

The DIRECTOR provides software that monitors the execution of the application model. Subroutine DIR interfaces with the operator, the EXEC, the SCENARIO, subroutine CALP, and the DECSYSTEM real-time operating system. The DIRECTOR passes the application names to CALP and provides the operator with the capability of putting the simulator in (1) hold, (2) reset, or (3) execution.

The operator desires to be able to perform various functions during each of the stages of a simulator run. Figure 6 summarizes these functions for each phase, including the real-time execution stage controlled by the DIRECTOR.

CALIPER (CALP)

Subroutine CALP provides the software that sequentially calls the application models. The Fortran EXTERNAL statement provides the facility for configuring a simulator run in the EXEC and, then, passes the application models' names through the DIRECTOR to CALIPER. CALIPER calls the models on the basis of their specified frequency (see Fig. 4). The frame time (major cycle) (Ref. 14, 16) is a parameter that may be modified through the SCENARIO before run-time. If the operator specifies a frame size of one, the fastest rate

group (the A group) will execute 64 times/sec, the B group 32 times/sec, and so forth to the slowest rate group (the G group), which would execute once per second. If the operator had specified a frame of two seconds for the major cycle, the A group would in reality be executing 32 times/sec, etc. When the frame is set at 1.28, the A group executes 50 times/sec, the B group at 25 times/sec, and so on.

The CALIPER routine with variable frame size provides flexibility for both real-time and non-real-time runs. In most real-world applications, all models do not need to execute at the same frequency. By use of the control system that has been described, it is possible to execute models at various frequencies and to emulate the real-world requirements of the models.

AVSIM COMMANDS

Operator commands provide many higher level program capabilities (see Ref. 14, 15, 16 for a detailed description). In Table 2 and Figure 7 are described the commands available during setup. Several of the more useful commands will be described under this topic. Operator displays are available by means of the HELP command, which produces a description of all AVSIM commands and how they are used. In addition to this display, there is the MODELS command, which causes descriptions of all models that the user has configured in his run to be listed. Another display available through the LIST command produces a description of all models and all parameters available to the user through the SCENARIO so that they can be changed. All parameters may be displayed by typing the name of the model. A single parameter is described when the user types the model name and the parameter name. The model name must be typed along with the parameter name to facilitate the addition of new models, which may contain local variable names that are the same as existing parameter names. A simple modification enables naming the desired parameter to be described with the restriction that the variables to be employed in the SCENARIO setup not have multiple meanings.

For example, assume a model named TARGET is to be added to the AVSIM Library. The COMMON Blocks are modified to correspond to the AVSIM COMMON Blocks. The PRESCENARIO software is used in building the three ENTRY points "IN", "TT", and "EX". The RADAR model is then added to the AVSIM Library. The command RADAR would then produce a list

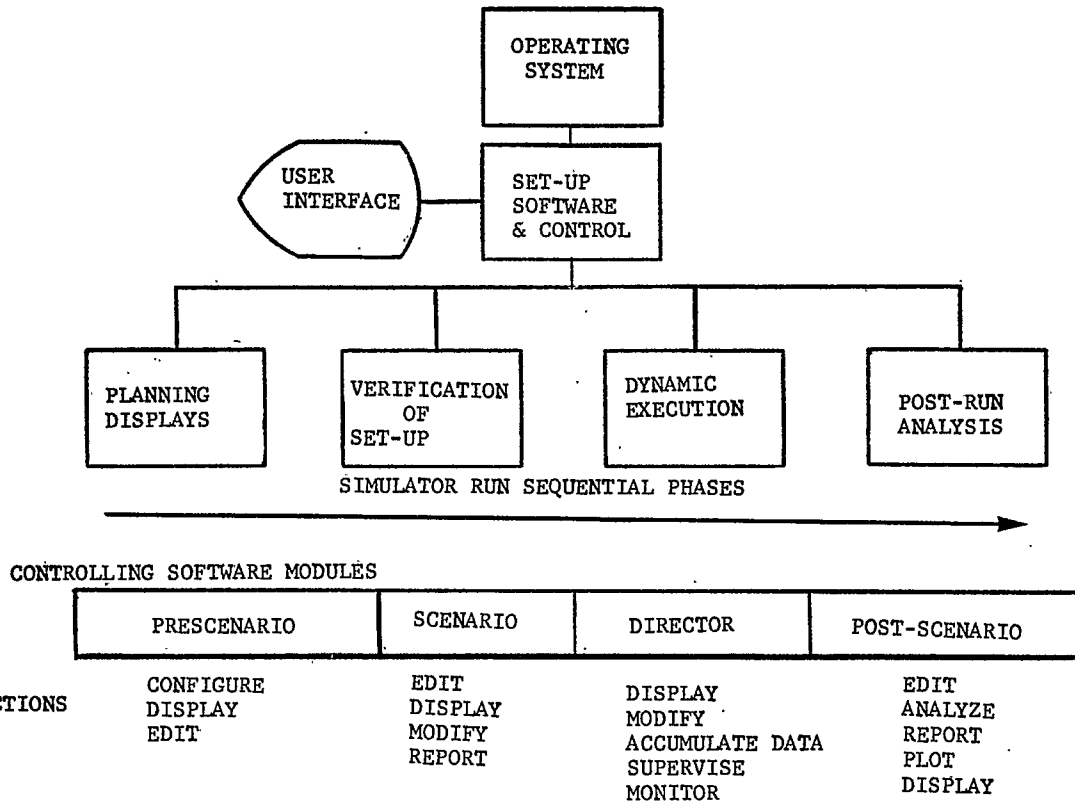


Figure 6 FOUR STAGES OF SIMULATOR USAGE

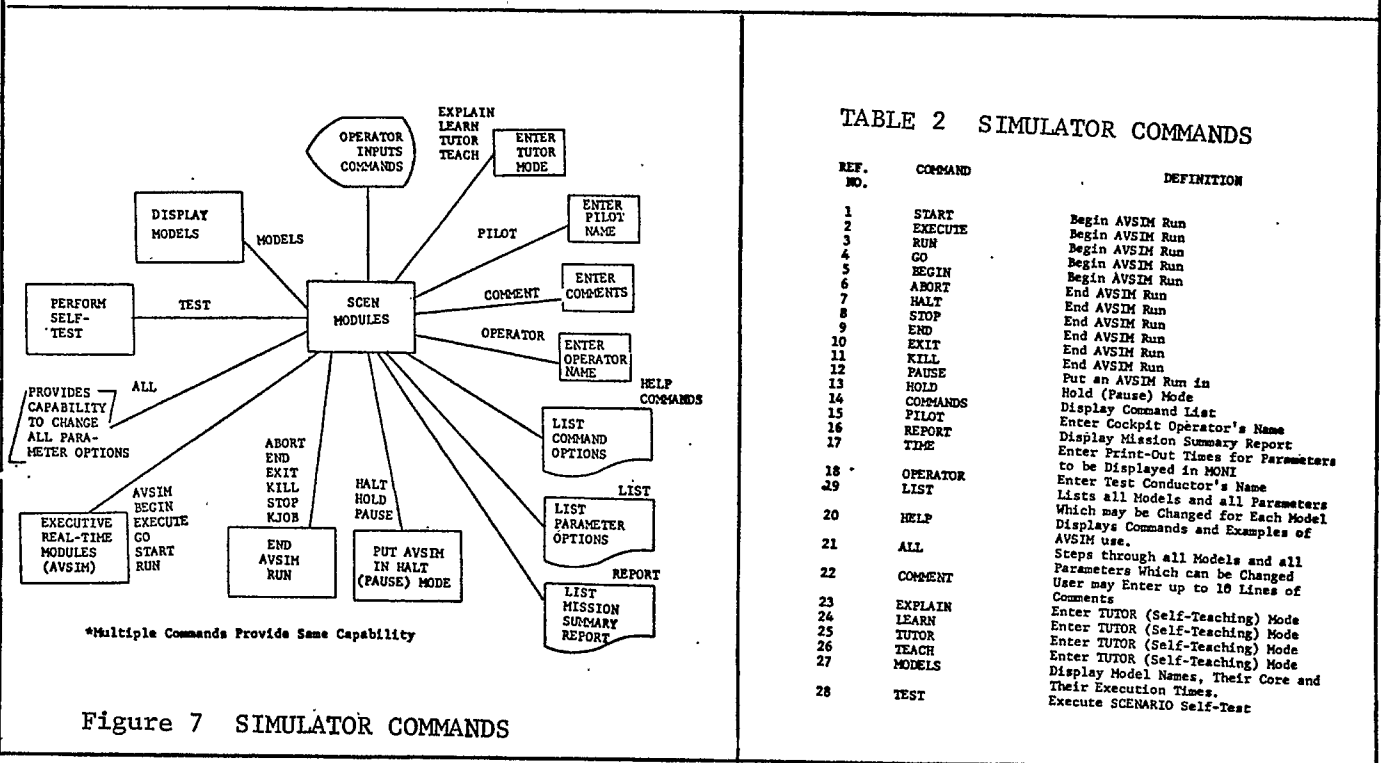


Figure 7 SIMULATOR COMMANDS

MODEL NUMBER <u>12</u>		MODEL NAME <u>RADAR</u>		FORTRAN NAME <u>RADAR</u>	
<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>KEYWORD</u>	<u>RANGE</u>	<u>VALUE</u>	<u>UNITS</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION/COMMENTS</u>
1	ASRCE	1 - 2	1		ANTENNA POINTING SOURCE SELECTION VARIABLE 1=TARGET; 2=SENSOR
2	IATMA	0 - 1	0		ATMOSPHERIC EFFECTS 0=NO EFFECTS; 1=EFFECTS
3	MODEL	1 - 4	1		RADAR MODE 1=A/G SEARCH 2=A/G RANGING 3=A/G LEVEL BOMBING/FIXTAKING 4=A/A
4	NOISE	0 - 1	0		NOISE SWITCH 0=NOISE; 1=NO NOISE
5	NWEAAA	1 -3	1		WEATHER EFFECTS 1=NO EFFECTS; 2=RAIN; 3=RAIN AND CLOUDS
6	IARSR	1,2,3,4	1	FEET	RANGE SCALE 1=30380; 2=50000; 3=5000; 4=10000

Figure 8 OUTPUT FROM RADAR COMMAND

of information about this model and a description of all parameters the user can modify at setup, as the user specified during his PRESCENARIO construction (see Fig. 8).

The command RADAR/ASRCE will produce the following output:

```
ASRCE RANGE 1-2; ANTENNA POINTING
SOURCE SELECTION VARIABLE
CURRENT VALUE IS 1.
```

To enter a new value for the parameter ASRCE, the user must type the following command:

```
RADAR/ASRCE/2.
```

In addition to these displays, there is a Summary Report, which is automatically printed at run time. The Summary Report contains a list of all critical information in the setup and a record of the values of SCENARIO parameters and information about each model.

Any two characters or more are all that are necessary to input the higher level commands. The commands BE, BEG, and BEGIN initiate an AVSIM run. Multiple commands can be used for the same purpose. EXECUTE, START, GO, and RUN perform the same function as BEGIN.

Fortran logical unit numbers are handled through the use of parameters defined before execution or during run time (see Fig. 9 and Table 3). By the use of one parameter for all CRT operator inputs and a second parameter for all CRT operator outputs, different logical devices may be assigned for simulator inputs and outputs. Two capabilities are immediately provided: (1) the operator is capable of initiating a run from multiple input devices (tape, disk, cards, CRT) and of sending outputs to multiple output devices (tape, disk, CRT); (2) operator inputs may be echoed to the CRT and recorded on tape or disk for later use. Thus, even though a large number of parameters are to be modified in a large number of runs, the default values on the Master File need not be changed. The operator records his inputs on a disk file

TABLE 3 SIMULATOR I/O FILES

UNIT NO.	FORT VAR NAME	FILE NAME	DESCRIPTION	COMMENTS
1	NCRT	AVSIM.DAT	INPUT UNIT FOR TAPE/DISK INPUT	
2	NCRT	AVSIM.SAM	INPUT FILE FOR SETTING UP MONI PRINTOUT TIMES	
3	NPNT	AVSIM.LPT	OUTPUT FILE FOR LINE PRINTER	
4	NDISKI	AVSIM.REC	OUTPUT FILE FOR RECORDING OPERATOR INPUTS (NDKSWT MUST BE ON)	
5	NCRT		TELETYPE INPUTS	
6	NCRTT		TELETYPE OUTPUTS	
9	NCRT	TESTER.TST	AVSIM SELF-TEST INPUT FILE	
10	NCRTT	AVSIM.TST	OUTPUT SELF-TEST FILE	
11	LOG	AVSIM.LOG	RECORDS DATA DURING REAL-TIME RUN(NOT YET IMPLEMENTED)	

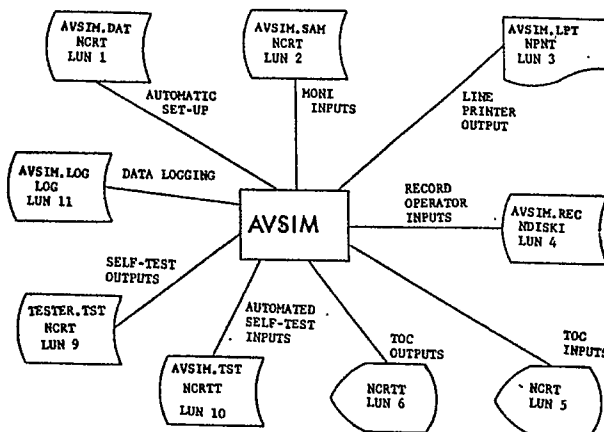


Figure 9 SIMULATOR I/O FILES

named AVSIM.REC (Fig. 9).

When the simulator is next run, the operator initiates the run with the input values from this disk file. After this initiation from the disk, inputs are again read from the CRT; thus, the operator still has the option of modifying any or all SCENARIO parameters before the simulator run. Files (Fig. 9) are provided for automated self-test, line printer output, parameters to be operator-monitored during the real-time run, and a file for real-time data logging.

SUMMARY

"To a certain extent, our problems in furthering man-machine communications arise from our impatience, rather than basic technological weaknesses."

Charles T. Meadow, 1970

In the rush to implement a major system, the emphasis has generally been placed on the application with little consideration given to human factors when the interface between the man and his program is implemented. In large, complex simulations, there exist many instances when human intervention is desirable, as described earlier. Particularly at setup time, there are many displays, options, and parameters, which a

user will desire to control. If he is an experienced user of the system, he does not want to be forced into cycling through all the options, etc. The user desires only enough prompting information to change those options necessary to setup and execute his run. The SCENARIO is a set of software control modules that have such a structure. It provides a high degree of effective cooperation between the man and his application models by displaying only enough dialogue for the user to initiate any desired modifications. The user inputs commands to which the SCENARIO responds. The structure is expandable and easily adaptable to individual needs.

No matter how well a system performs an application, it will be little used if it is difficult to setup. Systems of the future will be designed from the outside to the inside; the user will be considered first and effective man-machine dialogue will become a major consideration as important as the application itself.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Sackman, Harold, Man-Computer Problem Solving, Anerbach Publishers, Inc., New York, 1970
2. McClure, Robert M., "Software the Next Five Years", Computers The Next 5 Years, Comp Con 76, San Francisco, Calif., IEEE Catalog No. 76CH1069-4 (CR), 1976.
3. Sohnle, R. C., J. Tartor, and J. R. Sampson, "Requirements for Interactive Simulation Systems", Simulation, May 1973, pp. 145-152.
4. Gilb, Tom and Gerald Weinberg, "Humanizing Data Entry by Default", Datamation, August, 1976, pp. 73-76.
5. Summers, W. P., J. K. Clema, R. K. Engel, R. D. Teichgraber, J. A. Durham, and F. Hubans, "AVSIM - A Real-Time Avionic System Simulation", Proceedings of American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Digital Avionics Systems, Boston, Mass., April 1975.
6. Allen, B. and Joe Clema, "Total Avionic Real-Time Simulation", Proceedings of the 1974 Summer Computer Simulation Conference, Houston, Texas, 1974, pp. 411-417.
7. Allen, B. and Joe Clema, "Total Avionic Real-Time System Simulation", Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Simulation Symposium in Tampa, Florida, March 1975, Record of Proceedings, Vol. 5.
8. Allen, B. and Joe Clema, "Simulator Hardware/Software Diagnostics", Automatic Support Systems Symposium for Advanced Maintainability, New York, 1975.
9. Allen, B. and Joe Clema, "The AVSAIL Simulator Complex", Ninth Annual Simulation Symposium, Tampa, Florida, March, 1976, Record of Proceedings, Vol. 6.
10. Allen, B. and Joe Clema, "Independent Verification/Validation Support Software", IEEE 1976 National Aerospace and Electronics Conference, NAECON 1976, pp. 276-281.
11. Martin, James, Design of Man-Computer Dialogues, Prentice-Hall Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1973, p. 3.
12. Wasserman, Anthony I., "The Design of 'Idiot-Proof' Interactive Programs", Proceedings of the National Computer Conference, New York, 1973, pp. M34-M38.
13. Sackman, Harold, "Some Exploratory Experience with Easy Computer Systems", Proceedings of the National Computer Conference, New York, 1973, pp. M30-M33.
14. Computer Programmer's Manual for Software for Avionic System Simulation and Dynamic Validation, General/Dynamics/Fort Worth, FZM-6227, 15 July 1976.
15. Computer User's Manual for Software for Avionic Simulation and Dynamic Validation, General Dynamics/Fort Worth, FZM-6228, 15 July 1976.
16. Software for Avionic System Simulation and Dynamic Validation Final Technical Report, General Dynamics/Fort Worth, FZM-6453, 15 November 1975.
17. Hilborn, Ray, "A Control System for FORTRAN Simulation Programming", Simulation, May 1973, pp. 172-175.
18. Meadow, Charles T. Man-Machine Communication, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1970