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IVHS

Intelligent Vehicle-Highway Systems

Review of Traffic Simulations for Intelligent Vehicle-Highway System Evaluation

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IVHS Technical Report-90-10

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Introduction

This report compares and evaluates eight traffic simulation models for their potential application for designing intelligent vehicle-highway systems (IVHS) implementations. The evaluation focuses on those models that are relatively well known and/or that have particular characteristics that may be useful for IVHS applications. The models are:

| Name | General Use |
|------------------------|---|
| <i>TRANSYT</i> | Optimization of signalized network |
| <i>NETSIM</i> | Microscopic (vehicle level) simulation of traffic operations used to evaluate sophisticated signal control and transportation systems management improvements |
| <i>FREQ8PE</i> | Freeway corridor simulation with ramp metering optimization |
| <i>CORFLO (FREFLO)</i> | Freeway corridor simulation that is part of the FREFLO package of models |
| <i>NETFLO</i> | Simulation of urban arterials used to evaluate traffic control and geometric improvements |
| <i>CONTRAM</i> | Simulation of signalized urban arterials used to design traffic management schemes |
| <i>SATURN</i> | Simulation of signalized urban arterials used to design traffic management schemes |
| <i>INTEGRATION</i> | Simulation of integrated freeway corridor and signalized arterial network used to evaluate traffic control and in-vehicle guidance strategies |

The review is based on descriptions of the models from technical reports and the published literature. The comparison did not involve testing of the models or review of the program code.

Of all the models reviewed the INTEGRATION simulation model appears to be the most suitable for evaluating the impacts of advanced driver information system (ADIS) and advanced traffic management systems (ATMS). The model was designed specifically for these purposes and incorporates both traffic flow and traffic assignment capabilities. It is also one of the few models that integrates both freeway and arterial simulation in a single package. The primary limitations of the model are (1) it does not account for platoon behavior in the signalized network, (2) it does not route or assign the vehicles on the basis of predicted traffic flows, (3) it is relatively computationally intensive, and (4) it is still in the early application stage of development.

Table 1. Overview of Traffic Simulation Packages

| Characteristics | TRANSYT-7F | TRAF-NETSIM | FREQ8PE | CORFLO (FREFLO) | CORFLO (NETFLO) | CONTRAM | SATURN | INTEGRATION |
|---|--|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| Network scope | Urban arterial | Urban arterial | Directional freeway | Freeway | Urban arterial | Urban arterial | Urban arterial | Freeway corridor and arterial networks |
| Level of detail | macroscopic | microscopic | macroscopic | macroscopic | macroscopic | quasi-microscopic (mesoscopic) vehicles in packets | quasi-microscopic (mesoscopic) Cyclic flow profile | microscopic |
| Package structure | atomic | atomic | molecular | atomic | molecular | atomic | atomic | atomic |
| Model type(s) | optimization of signalized network | simulation of traffic operations | Freeway corridor simulation, ramp metering optimization. | simulation | Three arterial simulations with different levels of detail: 1. Individual vehicles 2. Platoons 3. Major arterial aggregate time lags | optimization of signalized network, simulation of assigned traffic in the network, no signal coordination | signalized network operation, optimizes traffic signals, simulation of assigned traffic in network, both isolated and coordinated control | Simulation of dynamic integrated freeway/traffic signal network |
| Traffic behavior | deterministic | stochastic, time-varying | deterministic | deterministic, traffic varying over time | 1. stochastic, event-based 2. deterministic 3. deterministic | deterministic | deterministic | stochastic |
| Traffic flow algorithms | Platoon dispersion (i.e., minimize stops and delays for system); Represents the traffic stream in terms of movement-specific statistical histograms. | Deterministic car following logic. | Merging, weaving and speed-volume in accordance with HCM; compressible fluid theory for queuing | This aggregate variable model of freeway traffic uses a fluid-flow analogy to traffic operations. An equilibrium speed-density relationship is incorporated into a dynamic speed equation. The model consists of a set of conservation equations for vehicles. Flow is represented by flow past boundaries, density, and space-mean-speed in section. | Different traffic flow algorithms are used in each of the three models: 1. Microscopic (NETSIM-like) event-based movement without car following. 2. Platoons use movement-specific histograms (TRANSYT) 3. Webster's vehicle delay. All link-segment-specific values of volume are time-dependent. | Three types of links: signal controlled, give-way, and uncontrolled. Specify lengths, free-running times, saturation flow, and turning movements. Demands as O-D flow rates. Capacity restrained equilibrium. | Traffic flow is represented as a cyclic flow profile as in TRANSYT. Junction delays are estimated on the basis of 4 profiles which represent the upstream inflow pattern, the platoon dispersion downstream arrival pattern, the pattern during which vehicles are allowed movement, and the pattern leaving the intersection. The model accounts for delays caused by opposing flows, platoons, signal phases, and lane capacities. | Link flow characteristics are represented by inflow rate, outflow rate, and vehicle concentration. Travel times are based on the level of saturation. When undersaturated uniform delay is a function of traffic volume. When oversaturated queueing effects are factored in. Dynamic signal timing and ramp metering can be included. Platoon dispersion is not included in model. |
| Traffic assignment algorithms | no | no | Divergence of ramp queue | Interfaces with TRAFIC equilibrium assignment model | Interfaces with TRAFIC equilibrium assignment model (Nguyen, 1974). | Equilibrium assignment; capacity-restrained equilibrium model. Assignment of all vehicles without explicitly considering "current" time slice. | Equilibrium assignment; succession of all-or-nothing assignments (Dow & Van Vliet, 1979) Intersection simulation finds delays for: zero flow, current flow, capacity. Iteration between assignment and simulation. | Equilibrium assignment; all-or-nothing. Dial-like, assignment. See Dial (1971). Individual vehicles are assigned to updated shortest path at intersections. |
| Incidents and diversion | no | no | yes | yes | Three different models: 1. As blockage, diversion policy 2. As blockage 3. No diversion | no | no | Effective reduction in the number of lanes for specified duration. This can be introduced during the simulation. |
| Traffic signals and signal optimization | Time scan optimization "hill climbing." Hill climbing is accomplished by varying offsets and splits in steps and calculating the resulting effects. | no | no | no | no | Cycle length, phasing, split are represented. Signal coordination is allowed. Lost time, stage duration, cycle times, stage duration are specified. Traffic signal timings are optimized. | Cycle length, phasing, split are represented. Signal coordination is allowed. Traffic signal timings are optimized. | Signals control the departure privileges on any link. Signal timing routine is internal to the model or dynamic timing can be introduced through SCOOT. Traffic signal timings are optimized. |
| Queueing | no | yes | yes | no | Three different models: 1. Queue discharge distrib. 2. Queue histogram. 3. No queue effects | Dynamic growth and decay of queues within time slice. Also queue spillback. | Dynamic growth and decay of queues within time slice. Two types of queuing: (1) transient queues, and (2) permanent queues. No queue spillback. | Queue works backward from the first vehicle adding prevailing saturation flow headway. Also queue spillback. |
| Ramp metering | no | no | Linear programming for ramp metering, time scan | yes | no | Ramp metering rate is not simulated. | Ramp metering rate is not simulated. | Traffic signal with appropriate metering rate |

Table 2. History and Support for Traffic Simulation Packages

| Characteristics | TRANSYT-7F (original) | TRAF-NETSIM UTCS-1, TRANS, DYNET | FREQ8PE (original) | CORFLO (FREFLO) | CORFLO (NETFLO) | CONTRAM (original) | SATURN (original) | INTEGRATION (original) |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| Model origins | | | | MACK | 1. SDC, TRANS, NETSIM, SCOT-Q 2. TRANSYT, SIGOP-II 3. WEBSTER | | | |
| Original year | 1967 | 1969 (DYNET) | 1970 | 1971 | 1980 | 1978 | 1978 | 1986 |
| Developers | TRRL, Robertson | KLD, Lieberman, Wicks, Bruggeman, Worral | May, Blankenhorn, et al. | KLD, Nguyen, James, Lieberman, Andrews; also Payne & Associates (FREFLO) | KLD, Nguyen, James, Lieberman, Andrews | Leonard, Tough, Baguley | Bolland, Willumsen, Hall, Van Vliet | Van Aerde, Yagar |
| Current developer | TRRL & FHWA | FHWA | ITS | FHWA (KLD) | FHWA (KLD) | TRRL | Institute for Transport Studies at Leeds | MTO, Queens University |
| Selected publica- tions | Skabardonis, et al. (1988), Al-Deek, et al. (1988) | Lieberman (1969), | Blankenhorn & May (1972), Al-Deek, et al. (1988) | Payne (1972), Payne, et al. (1973), Lieberman, et al. (1980), JFT Assoc. (1989) | Lieberman, et al. (1980), | Leonard, Tough, & Baguley (1978); Tough (1978) | Bolland, Van Vliet & Willumsen (1978); Hall, Van Vliet, & Willumsen (1980) | Van Aerde (1985) Van Aerde & Yagar (1988), Rakha, et al. (1989), Van Aerde, Voss, et al. (89), Van Aerde & Rakha (1989) |
| Distribution | McTrans, PC Trans | FHWA (TRAF) | ITS | FHWA (TRAF) | FHWA (TRAF) | TRRL | Institute for Transport Studies at Leeds | MTO |
| User Guide | Wallace, et al. (1988) | Yedlin, et al. (1988) | Imada & May (1985) | Yedlin, et al. (1988) | Yedlin, et al. (1988) | Leonard & Gower (1982) | Van Vliet & Hall (1987) | Van Aerde & Voss (1988) |
| Support | McTrans | FHWA | ITS | FHWA for Beta test | FHWA for Beta test | TRRL under license | not known | MTO for Beta tests |
| Microcomputer | yes | yes | yes | Under development | Under development | yes | yes | yes |

Table 3. Description of Simulation Functions

| Characteristics | TRANSYT-7F | TRAF-NETSIM | FREQ8PE | COREFO (PREFLO) | COREFO (NETFLO) | CONTRAM | SATURN | INTEGRATION |
|-----------------------------|--|--|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| Primary purpose | Develop signal timing plans for arterials and grid networks. The objective is to minimize stops and delays for the system as a whole rather than maximizing the arterial bandwidth. | Evaluation of alternative urban intersection, arterial, or arterial network control strategies, with particular emphasis on sophisticated signal control and TSM improvements. | Evaluate priority lanes (PL) or priority entry (PE) strategies on directional freeways | Evaluate the effect of adding freeway lanes, using fixed-time ramp metering strategies, and the effects of incidents. Traffic assignment makes it useful for planning. It is used with NETFLO for corridor analysis. | Evaluate traffic control strategies and geometric improvements on surface streets. It is useful as a planning tool with its traffic assignment component. It is used with COREFO for corridor analysis. | To evaluate network of signalized junctions. It was developed to design traffic management schemes in urban areas. | To evaluate network of signalized junctions. It was developed to design traffic management schemes in urban areas. | Evaluate traffic control strategies and in-vehicle guidance strategies on integrated freeway/traffic signal networks. It may also be useful as the basis for a real-time route guidance system. |
| Use and application | Optimize signal timing, control intersections, bottlenecks, and impacts of major TSM strategies. | TSM (signal installation and timing, changes in intersection control, real-time surveillance and control systems, left-turn restrictions, reversible lanes), impacts. Also bus lanes, geometric design (road widening, remove parking), etc. | Estimate operating conditions (e.g., speeds), fuel consumption, vehicle emissions on corridor during period; Estimate impacts of various traffic strategies (lane closures, ramp closures, ramp metering, entry, HOV, surveillance and control, etc.), traffic reassignment (diversion) strategies | Three models: 1. Install signals at intersections, pre-timed signals, left-turn restrictions, bus service, reversible lanes. 2. Pre-timed signals, left-turn restrictions, bus service, reversible lanes. | Signalized network operations: Standard measures of network performance. It is also possible to analyze 2-D total trip times and delays for traffic as a function of green times at junctions. It combines simulation with assignment. | Signalized network operations: Standard measures of network performance. It is also possible to analyze 2-D total trip times and delays for traffic as a function of green times at junctions. It combines simulation with assignment. | Estimate operating conditions (e.g., trip times, delays, etc.); Estimate the impacts of various traffic control and signalization strategies (e.g., signal timing, signal optimization, ramp metering); Estimate the impact of incidents; Estimate the impact of route guidance. | |
| How does it operate? | A platoon dispersion model is used in conjunction with a "hill climbing" optimization model. | Interval-scanning simulation moves each vehicle each second according to car-following logic and in response to traffic controls. Position on the network, relation to other vehicles, and kinematic properties are determined for each vehicle. | (1) The simulation sub-model is a macroscopic deterministic model that predicts traffic performance as a function of freeway design and demand O-D patterns. (2) The optimization sub-model has a linear programming formulation designed to determine the entry control strategies (metering rates and priority cut-off level) that maximizes the passengers' objective function. | Represents traffic in terms of aggregate measures associated with sections of freeway, each several hundred feet to a mile. The aggregate measures used are flow rate, density, and space-mean-speed within a section. The formulation is based on a fluid-flow analogy. An equilibrium velocity relationship is incorporated into a dynamic speed equation. Vehicle type is distinguished. | Three separate models for three levels of detail: 1. Vehicle: Event-based simulation of individual vehicles. Vehicles jump ahead at events. No car following. 2. Platoon: Link-specific statistical flow histograms. 3. Arterial: Uses Webster's formula to calculate vehicle delay on arterials. | Model is based on a two-phase process (1) simulation of delays at intersection, and (2) assignment to determine routes taken. The simulation model determines junction delays using cyclic profiles as in TRANSYT. A power curve is fitted to estimate travel times for any volume. Times are then used in the assignment. Flows are estimated through all-or-nothing assignment. | Routing-based model simulates individual vehicles with self-assignment capabilities. Vehicles enter origin nodes as scheduled departure time. Vehicle then selects link based on minimum path tree. Vehicles are stacked and retained on link for link's travel time then moved to next link on path. Considers inflow, outflow, and concentration, but not platoon dispersion. | |
| Data requirements | Link length, number of lanes, capacities, traffic volumes, fractions of volume from each upstream link, signal control characteristics. | Link length, number of lanes, capacities, ramp locations, design speeds, truck percentages, ramp O-D matrix, existing traffic on alternatives | Link lengths, number of lanes, capacities, ramp locations, free-flow speeds, truck percentages, zonal O-D matrix or turning percentages for each link and time slice. | Link lengths, number of lanes, capacities, free-flow speeds, intersection control, zonal O-D matrix or turning percentages, and entry volumes for each link and time slice. | Network data: link lengths, free times, saturation flow, link types, and turning movements. Time varying flow demands: Zonal O-D matrix. Signal control: lost time, cycle times, stage duration. | Network data including node coordinates, link lengths, number of lanes, traffic signals, signal phase, signal timing, and link descriptor. Zonal O-D flow rates are provided as a trip matrix. | Node coordinates, link lengths, number of lanes, saturation flow per lane, saturation flow reduction coefficient, traffic signals, signal phase number, link descriptor, zonal O-D flow rates, signal timing, incident location, routing or traffic. | |
| Output | (1) Traffic performance summary tables: degree of saturation, travel times, delays, stops, queue lengths, fuel consumption. (2) Signal timing tables (phase and interval offset). (3) Calibration data | Traffic performance summary tables: travel, delay, stops, speeds, queues, link occupancies, degree of saturation, cycle failures, fuel consumption, vehicle emissions. | (1) Performance summaries of MOEs on freeway and alternative route by link and time slice. (2) Optional outputs include contour diagrams of speeds, densities, queue lengths, fuel consumption, emissions, noise. | Performance summaries of MOEs on arterial street system by link and time slice, including: speeds, flows, densities, queues, delays, fuel consumption, vehicle emissions, etc. | Link flows, queues and turning movements, % saturation and blocking back, journey time and distance, fuel consumption, average point-to-point O-D speeds, vehicle route information, and summary file for input to UFPASC. | Performance summaries of MOEs on signalized arterial street system by link and for the total system including: average travel time, total trip time, travel delay, speed, saturation, flow, V/C ratio. | Performance summaries of MOEs on integrated freeway/traffic signal network by link and for the total system including: average travel time, total trip time, travel delay, speed, saturation, flow, V/C ratio. | |

Table 4. Evaluation of Simulations for IVHS Applications

| Characteristics | TRANSYT-7F | TRAF-NETSIM | FREQ&E | CORFLO (FREFFLO) | CORFLO (NETFLO) | CONTRAM | SATURN | INTEGRATION | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| General problems | (1) Does not explicitly optimize cycle length or phase sequence. (2) Assumes that traffic enters the network as a constant uniform rate. (3) Volume and proportion of traffic are not modeled. (4) Traffic dispersion is assumed to be uniform (i.e., fixed routes). (5) Emphasizes offset (delay from one signal to another) | (1) Computer requirements. (2) Limited output. (3) Extensive data requirements. (4) Freeways cannot be modeled. (5) No signal optimization. (6) No routing. | (1) Diversion not seen as assignment. (2) Only one alternative route can be modeled. (4) Assumes constant O-D demand. | (1) No queue considerations. (2) Large data requirements. | (1) Freeways not reliable. (2) Simplified representation of traffic signals. (3) Need to store all vehicle packet routes. | (1) Lacks freeway routines. (2) Queue reduction factor is not an adequate approximation of queueing effects. (3) No queue spillback. (4) Cyclic flow profiles are incompatible with freeway traffic flow dynamics. | (1) Traffic assignment is not anticipatory so simulation cannot be used to optimize route guidance. (2) Macroscopic simulation is not used for routing of individual vehicles. | (1) No platoon dispersion. (2) | |
| Problems for evaluation of route guidance | (1) Freeway facilities cannot be modeled. (2) Prevent vehicle trajectories through the network are not possible. (3) No treatment of incidents or temporal events. | (1) Macroscopic simulations treat traffic flow as a fluid. They simulate vehicles in groups (platoons) and increase (e.g., delay) collectively. This makes it impossible to isolate the "smart" drivers from the "dumb" drivers. (2) No traffic assignment. | (1) Time varying demand cannot be modeled. (2) Limited traffic actuated signal analysis. (3) Customized network is not modeled. (4) When combined with NETFLO it simulates surface and freeway traffic as a composite model. (6) Accepts revised input data at any time. (7) Extensive application. | (1) Macroscopic simulations treat traffic flow as a fluid. They simulate vehicles in groups (platoons) and increase (e.g., delay) collectively. This makes it impossible to isolate the "smart" drivers from the "dumb" drivers. (2) Traffic assignment is not appropriate for assessing time-dependent strategies because it is based on simple travel time-volume analysis. (3) Traffic assignment is not anticipatory so simulation cannot be used to optimize route guidance. | (1) Model detail can be tailored for the application. (2) Provides detailed signal and traffic flow routines. (3) Simulation with FREFFLO is able to simulate freeway traffic as a composite model. | (1) Traffic assignment is not anticipatory so simulation cannot be used to optimize route guidance. (2) Macroscopic simulation is not used for routing of individual vehicles. | (1) Traffic assignment is not anticipatory so simulation cannot be used to optimize route guidance. (2) Macroscopic simulation is not used for routing of individual vehicles. | (1) Traffic assignment is not anticipatory so simulation cannot be used to optimize route guidance. (2) Macroscopic simulation is not used for routing of individual vehicles. | (1) Traffic assignment is not anticipatory so simulation cannot be used to optimize route guidance. (2) Macroscopic simulation is not used for routing of individual vehicles. |
| Advantages | (1) Dynamically controlled real-time traffic control. (2) Traffic actuated signals, traffic detection, surveillance, parking | (1) Dynamically controlled real-time traffic control. (2) Traffic actuated signals, traffic detection, surveillance, parking | (1) Based to use. (2) Optimization of ramp metering, priority lanes. (3) Linear programming optimization, priority entry. | (1) Time varying demand cannot be modeled. (2) Limited traffic actuated signal analysis. (3) Customized network is not modeled. (4) When combined with NETFLO it simulates surface and freeway traffic as a composite model. (6) Accepts revised input data at any time. (7) Extensive application. | (1) Model detail can be tailored for the application. (2) Provides detailed signal and traffic flow routines. (3) Simulation with FREFFLO is able to simulate freeway traffic as a composite model. | (1) Superior dynamic traffic assignment technique that considers multifunctional networks while maintaining high performance and time. (2) Detailed modeling of traffic signals with coordination and optimization capabilities. (3) Synthetic O-D generation. (4) Widely used. | (1) Provides a very detailed analysis of the traffic, signal portion of network - traffic signals are modeled with operation and other signal capabilities. (2) Has the ability to perform assignment in a network consisting of traffic signals. (3) Considers the platoon arrival of vehicles arrivals and synchronization. (4) Synthetic O-D generation. (5) Extensively used. | (1) Provides a very detailed analysis of the traffic, signal portion of network - traffic signals are modeled with operation and other signal capabilities. (2) Has the ability to perform assignment in a network consisting of traffic signals. (3) Considers the platoon arrival of vehicles arrivals and synchronization. (4) Synthetic O-D generation. (5) Extensively used. | (1) Integrates freeway and urban arterial network in a single model. (2) Provides option of integrating signal operation and other signal capabilities. (3) Assigns traffic dynamically with consideration given to queues. (4) Provides option of using externally generated signal optimization. (5) Macroscopic simulation model enables separation of receiving route guidance and unique dynamic traffic assignment. (7) Based on time-varying travel demand. (8) Synthetic O-D generation. |

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