Run II Computing and Software Plan for the DØ Experiment

DØ Run II Computing Planning Board

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Abstract

The DØ plan for developing its computing systems for Run II, including both hardware and software components, is described in this document. This plan ranges from operation of the DØ detector itself through the processing of its data to the production of physics results. The plan includes organization, schedule, staffing, and budget requirements to achieve a set of milestones culminating in operational systems in July 1999.

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1 Overview

The DØ experiment, like all large HEP detectors, will utilize an extensive suite of customized software running on a complex array of computer systems to perform the tasks of data acquisition, event reconstruction, data storage and retrieval, and physics analysis. Limitations in computing technology and its affordability, at various stages in this process, inevitably constrain the final return from the experiment. The goal in developing the computing and software system is to alleviate these constraints as much as possible, by targeting cost effective resources and maintaining sufficient flexibility to address revisions in requirements and to exploit advances in technology. An effort will be made in this document to indicate where such constraints exist and what choices were made to address them. In addition to hardware constraints, software limitations can be equally important and an effort will be made to indicate how the technical options selected offer an appropriate compromise among the competing demands of reliability, performance, flexibility, and the practicality of meeting required deadlines for a functioning system.

1.1 The Computing Problem

The primary functions which the DØ Computing and Software systems must perform are:

1. The configuration of the data acquistion system and control of the operation of the detector.
2. The selection of interesting events by the software (Level 3) trigger.
3. The recording of events.
4. The monitoring of the detector, accelerator information, and event data.
5. The calibration of the detector.
6. The Monte Carlo simulation of physics processes and detector responses for the purpose of understanding acceptances and resolutions.
7. The reconstruction of events. This is accomplished by processing the raw data through a CPU-intensive reconstruction program, running on a large farm of processors (provided, as in Run I, by the Computing Division). The ability to have the reconstruction process approximately keep up with the acquisition of events is an important ingredient in the ability of the experiment both to monitor its data and to produce timely physics results. The size of the processor farm and the efficiency of the program itself are of paramount importance in determining throughput, but also important are the following requirements:
   (a) The program must be reasonably platform- and operating-system-independent, to allow for maximum flexibility in farm hardware purchases.
   (b) The program and associated release procedures must be designed for robust execution, effective error recovery, and ease of verification.
   (c) The program must be capable of a reasonably effective reconstruction pass at the beginning of serious data-taking, in order to avoid falling behind the real-time collection of data and to avoid the need to waste resources by reprocessing of large portions of data.

8. The selection/identification of data of interest in the output of the reconstruction; so called data *mining*. Since the volume of data emerging from the reconstruction farm will be very large, the efficiency of access to these data will determine to a considerable extent whether a particular physics analysis can be completed in a reasonable time frame. The problem is complicated by the wide variety of access requirements for different classes of physics. For example, while many physics analyses can be conducted using a modest subset of the full data available for each reconstructed event, the events used in B-physics and W mass analyses will need virtually all of the available information for the events used in those analyses. QCD analyses, on the other hand, can use an even smaller subset of the data for each individual event, but will need very large numbers of events. These diverse requirements coupled with performance and cost considerations which dictate that the data volumes read during analysis be minimized and that multiple copies of data not be stored on expensive storage media, will require innovative data organization and access strategies.

9. Physics analysis, based on *mined* data. Once the data have been identified and organized for access, there remain the systems for the actual physics analyses. There are many issues to be considered here and the final direction to take need not be completely specified as early as the run-time system decisions. Some of the points for consideration are:

   (a) Central vs. distributed systems for analysis
   (b) Size and form of non-Fermilab hardware contributions
   (c) Systems that allow effective analysis participation from remote institutions
   (d) Effective version control, documentation, and verification of (non-production) analysis software
   (e) New software tools in the tradition of PAW/MINUIT/etc.

In order to accomplish the above primary functions the DØ Computing and Software system must perform a number of corollary functions which include:

1. Software development support

2. Population of various databases with information regarding the detector, the data and the data processing, and provision of tools to access that information efficiently

3. Facilitation of internal and external communication.

1.2 Scale of Quantitative Requirements

Performance requirements for the computing system in Run II, derived from expected collider luminosity and duty factor, estimated detector and software performance, and physics goals are approximately an order of magnitude greater than those for Run I.

1. Raw data will be recorded at the rate of approximately 150 TeraBytes (TB) per year resulting in total data accumulations of up to 400 TB per year. Access patterns for these data are expected to require that $\approx$ 5 TB of it must reside on disk and $\approx$ 80 TB in robotic storage, with the remainder sufficiently rarely accessed to permit shelf tape storage. The form and organization of the premium forms of storage, as will be discussed later, substantially impact the price/performance.

2. Compute intensive production operations including reconstruction and Monte Carlo will require approximately 70,000 MIPS of installed compute power. I/O intensive and interactive computing of the the data mining and physics analysis type will require 50,000 MIPS of installed compute power. The I/O requirement and the need to effectively utilize physicists' time will lead to different optimizations for various of these CPU requirements.

3. Bandwidth requirements for compute intensive production operations are modest while those associated with data mining and physics analysis will require aggregate disk access rate capabilities of 250 MB/sec. The robotic tape storage system must be capable of supporting aggregate access rates of 25MB/sec.

4. The technical effort required to develop the computing system described in this document is one of the most critical and scarce resources. One might have expected that existence of a Run I would imply that the bulk of the software for Run II would already exist. However, of the three major detector subsystems in Run I, one will disappear completely and a second will undergo major modification. The disappearing one is replaced by a system with very different software requirements (tracking in a magnetic field versus straight-line tracking; finding secondary vertices). So, much of the DØ reconstruction system must be replaced. With the evolution of the detector into one with a central magnetic field, the basis for particle identification and detector calibration changes, implying that the analysis programs and calibration procedures will also change significantly. Externally driven changes in hardware platforms, operating systems, languages, and foundation utilities further dictated a fundamental rewrite of the DØ computing system. It is estimated that this will require 180 FTE-years of software effort through the first year of operation.

1.3 Strategic Considerations

Much has changed with regard to computing and software since the original DØ proposal was accepted in 1983. The PC revolution and the associated explosion of software technologies are recent examples of these changes. It is no longer true that High Energy Physics (HEP) is one of the few non-defense-related consumers of sophisticated computer and software technology. However, it is still true, in the words of one of the computer professionals who have recently taught C++ and Object-Oriented Design courses at Fermilab, that "Your domain is not typical." Early in 1995 DØ began to lay out its plan for transition from the established HEP modes of computing to modern mainstream techniques. Given the limited resources of a single experiment, this transition will benefit greatly from cooperation and coordination with the Computing Division and CDF, and significant progress has been made in the last year in establishing joint efforts among these three parties in several areas of Run II planning.

A review of the DØ Run I computing experience allows one to extract useful lessons which are applicable to Run II. DØ's Run I computing systems were based, at the beginning of the run, on several distributed clusters running the VMS operating system: the online cluster (DØ), the fileserver cluster (D0FS), and the analysis clusters (FNALD0/D0SFT/D0TNG). However, the production farms ran UNIX, so that all production software had to be verified and maintained on two flavors of UNIX as well as VMS. The experiment-specific offline software was written completely in Fortran (Fortran 77, augmented by the most widely-supported subset of VAX Fortran extensions), while the run-time system included programs in Pascal, Fortran, and C. Vendor-supplied compilers for each supported platform were used. The functions of memory management within programs and of data portability across platforms were supplied by the CERN product ZEBRA. The calibration databases were implemented in DBL3 (a free product, loosely supported by the L3 experiment). Production information and hardware specifications were recorded using the DEC relational database RdB. Production file management was handled by FATMEN, a CERN-supported free database product. Event display graphics programs used a commercial product DI3000, which later had to be emulated using X11 calls by a DØ collaborator owing to the non-availability of DI3000 by the end of the run; online display graphics typically used Motif calls.

Listed below in descending order of importance are problems and bottlenecks encountered with the Run I system.

1. Platform portability and program verification required a long (and ever-increasing) time for each release, eventually posing a significant deterrent to making major changes and upgrades to the reconstruction.

2. Access to the μDST's (a subset of event information which was kept on the fileserver disks for the entire data set) was limited by network hardware and software problems. Nevertheless, it remained the primary mode of data access and worked sufficiently well for the needs of most analyses.

3. Access to the full event information (stored on 8 mm tapes) was slow, difficult, and painful, delaying many analyses and limiting plans for others.

4. Since several types of database were used, most not commercially supported, support for the databases consumed a great deal of effort, and still did not totally meet the demand for increased functionality.

The basic issue associated with the first problem described above reduced to the inability to test pieces of the program independently and guarantee that they would then function together as a system. The primary reason for this was the coupling among different sections of the program introduced by the lack of any notion of modularity or data encapsulation which could be easily implemented in Fortran. The net effect of this problem was to drive upward the time required to make a working release including changes to many areas of the program at once. The appropriate fix is to use a modern programming language *and to design explicitly for separate testability of the code packages.*

The second and third problems are addressed by a redesign of the computing model to have the analysis jobs running on a central multi-processor system with direct access to a large disk set and to highly reliable robotic mass storage, reducing the need to move data across the network. Whether this model works adequately will depend on its total capacity compared to total demand, and in turn this will depend on available funds compared to data set size.

The fourth problem is probably best solved by standardizing on one or, at most, two commercial database products. The cost and licensing structure for such products means that a common choice should be made across DØ , CDF and the Computer Division.

In devising a DØ plan specifically intended to avoid the above problems a number of strategic guidelines, listed below, were generally applied.

1. Use modern mainstream technology for both hardware and software whenever possible.

2. Internally develop components of the computing system only when no acceptable freeware or commercial options exist.

3. When development projects are required, attempt to share the technical effort – with CDF and the Computing Division; with other HEP and NP projects; with the computing community in general.

4. Design systems which are highly modular and layered to ease testing and debugging and to facilitate the introduction of improved components and new technology.

5. Design system components to established standards – public standards when possible, project standards otherwise.

6. In addition to price/performance, the reliability and maintainability of a component should be seriously considered in evaluating it for inclusion in the computing system.

7. Design systems which minimize the movement of data.

As already discussed briefly, the scale of the software development effort for Run II is quite comparable to that of Run I. In Run II, the system will again include multiple platforms (at least three currently supported flavors of UNIX, and very likely some version of the NT operating system as well, by the end of Run II). It will once again be necessary to deal with new detector subsystems, and therefore with rapidly changing software as new algorithms are implemented. An important priority in the Run II design must be to obtain better performance in the areas of maintainability, portability, and verification. While the number of physicists in the DØ collaboration is a factor of 2-3 larger today than it was when the software system for Run I was being developed, there are two reasons why this does not reflect itself in an ability to apply significantly more technical effort to the problem. First, interesting data sets from Run I are absorbing a significant fraction of the attention of many of the more software oriented collaborators. Second, the time available for the development of the Run II software, three years, is approximately one half the time taken in developing the software for Run I. Since the amount of available technical effort is a limiting resource, perhaps the most limiting resource, it is critically important that it be used most effectively. Recent developments in software technology are explicitly directed toward increasing the efficiency of technical effort in producing high quality software, so DØ has undertaken an investigation of such new technologies.

In particular, since the issuance of DØ Note 2537 in April 1995 (*DØ Analysis Computing Recommendations for Run II*), DØ has been actively pursuing the use of object-oriented design and languages for its Run II reconstruction system. A great deal has been learned from these investigations and from various prototyping activities. The conclusions to date are the following:

1. Object-oriented design technology is clearly directed at solving exactly the problem faced by DØ of putting together a large system from pieces which are separately testable and easily maintainable by a large team of programmers. OOAD is not, however, a panacea. Its use certainly does not *guarantee* these features; it does, however, supply the tools to achieve them. In particular, the OOAD design tools now available, such as RationalRose, GraphicalDesigner, and PC development environments, offer far better ability to keep a program model up-to-date and to make changes to either code or model that propagate from one to the other. If nothing else, this provides an automated documentation tool far superior to what DØ has had available in the past. It should be possible to get far more out of the design process than just good documentation, however. With training and experience, it should be possible to critique these designs to see whether they meet the requirements of modular testability, before writing a line of code.

2. The training referred to in the previous paragraph is an essential component of moving to this new technology. There is little time and a great deal to learn. Formal training in OOAD and C++ provides a much-needed jump start to those seriously involved in the reconstruction effort right now. DØ has sent almost 40 people who will definitely be involved in our Run II software through one or more of the Fermilab-sponsored courses in

OOAD and C++. (It has also trained another 25 or so students and postdocs who may or may not remain on DØ.)

3. The major pain in Run I computing and software came when being forced to change major system components, either hardware or software. Some components were simply too interwoven to come out, as for example the ZEBRA system. The lessons learned there have suggested that the basic philosophy for Run II should be to try very hard to put together *all* components of the system in such a way that replacement is never very hard. This suggests that a mixture of functions such as the ZEBRA system contains, for example, should not be allowed. The memory management function should be handled by the language itself (implying a modern language like C++ or Fortran 90), while the mechanism for persistent storage across platforms should be something less integral to the program, which can be replaced. The current plan is to use the DSPACK system for persistent storage, but NOT for memory management. The interface to DSPACK is being explicitly written to facilitate changing to another persistent storage mechanism (e.g. an object-oriented database) later if so desired.

4. The decision to utilize C++ places DØ on the modern side of the dividing line between the experiments for whom the end is in sight (the fixed target and LEP II experiments) and those which expect to begin in or continue into the 21st century (LHC experiments, BABAR). While this decision clearly involves more up front work, and more risk, it also gives far more options in the medium term future to utilize both commercial software and the LHC software as it comes online. It is far more consistent with the basic Run II philosophy enunciated in the previous paragraph.

1.4 The Run II Computing and Software Organization

The formal organization to manage Run II computing and software was put in place in March 1996. The co-leaders of the organization are Bruce Gibbard and Wyatt Merritt. The organization is divided into four groups, each with two co-leaders. The co-leaders of those groups, along with Gibbard and Merritt, form the Computing Planning Board which meets biweekly and is expected to oversee progress in general, to insure communication between the four groups, and to resolve issues that cross group lines of responsibility. The four groups and their charges are:

- Software Tools Group (Herb Greenlee, Harrison Prosper). This group is responsible for the software development environment (e.g. compiler and CASE tool choices), for software tools required in the system (e.g., databases and GUIs), for graphics displays for the experiment, for the generic framework program(s), and for the object persistency mechanism.

- Online Computing and Software Group (Stu Fuess, Bruce Gibbard). This group is responsible for the online computing system, which will handle the data acquisition, control and monitoring of the experiment, and the Level 3 trigger framework software.

- Algorithms Group (Serban Protopopescu, John Womersley). This group is responsible for designing and coding the algorithms for the reconstruction program and the Level 3 trigger, and for the simulation programs that model the detector.

- Production and Data Access Group (Drew Baden, Mike Diesburg). This group is responsible for planning and operation of the reconstruction farm, and for the design, procurement, and maintenance of the systems with which we access and analyze the reconstructed data.

2 The Software Development Environment

The Run II organization has one group, the Software Tools Group led by Herb Greenlee and Harrison Prosper, devoted to providing and maintaining the software infrastructure needed for the development and run-time environments for our online and offline code. This group also provides those applications which are specific to our domain, but require mainly computer science rather than physics knowledge to implement — graphics displays, databases, and configuration management procedures are the primary examples of such applications. The system used for object persistency and cross-platform data transport is also the responsibility of this group.

Following the philosophy enunciated in Sec. 1.3 above, we have tried to use free or commercial products for these tasks whenever possible, and to use general standards and to design in the possibility of replacement for any component without excessive pain. The Software Tools Working Group (led by Qizhong Li), its several subgroups, and in some cases joint working groups with Computing Division and CDF participation have been the agents for making recommendations about the products we should use, maintain, or develop. This recommendations phase is nearly ended, and we are moving into the phase of implementing support and development for the chosen products.

2.1 Languages, Libraries and Standards

During the latter half of 1995, the DØ Languages and Data Structures committee met to study issues related to choice of programming languages, design methodology, and data persistency mechanism. The recommendations of this committee [1] are still guiding current DØ run 2 software efforts.

One basic recommendation of the Language and Data Structure committee was a qualified endorsement of object oriented analysis and design (OOAD) techniques in general and the C++ programming language in particular for most run 2 software development efforts. The committee also recommended that DØ support bilanguage software development using C++ and Fortran-90, with Fortran being limited to major numerical and algorithmic software components (if justified) and legacy code. In the time since the committee made its recommendation, the transition from Fortran to C++ and OOAD has acquired greater impetus, because of the focus on design issues for the new system and the better design tools available in the C++/OOAD world. Areas of active software development are now mostly focusing on OOAD and C++. As yet, there has been no bilanguage software development in DØ, but preliminary investigation of the technical issues and design compromises that would be involved indicates that a mixed reconstruction system is definitely not a desirable option.

The transition from Fortran to C++ is also being supported by the laboratory through the joint C++ working group, with membership drawn from CDF, DØ, and the Fermilab Computing Division [2]. The activities of this group include the following:

- Development of a set of requirements and standards for the evaluation of C++ compilers and debuggers.
- Development of a suite of test programs for evaluating compliance of compilers with newer features of the draft ANSI C++ standard.
- Evaluation of existing C++ compilers.
- Recommended language feature usage and coding style guidlines.

The C++ working group has published a set of interim C++ compiler and language feature usage recommendations [3]. The recommendation with the most impact on DØ is the choice of compiler, which is gnu C++ (g++) for the platforms common in DØ (sgi and ibm), rather than the vendor supplied compilers. As yet, none of the currently available compilers for the platforms in wide use at DØ, including g++, support the full draft ANSI standard, and this decision needs to be subjected to periodic review as the various compilers mature.

C++ software development will require a set of class libraries to replace the functionality that had formerly been supplied by the CERNLIB subroutine libraries. At present there is no agreed on set of class libraries that is suitable for multiplatform software development beyond the STL class library, which is included in the draft ANSI standard. To address this need, the Fermilab Computing Division has agreed to sponsor another joint working group, the "Fermi Physics Class Library Task Force," [4] with members from CDF, DØ, the Fermilab Computing Division and the Fermilab Accelerator Division. This group has been charged with the actual development of a physics class library for laboratory-wide use. The group held a workshop on Jan. 13-14, 1997, to define initial specifications and priorities for the FPCL, and working assignments in accordance with those priorities have been handed out. This group is expected to keep in close touch, and share effort where possible, with related HEP enterprises such as CLHEP and LHC++.

2.2 Object Persistency Mechanism

It has been recognized for some time that DØ will have to replace the Fortran based, CERN supplied ZEBRA data management system. The greater part of the efforts of the DØ Language and Data Structure committee were spent studying this question. The committee produced a recommendation [1] that is still being followed in current development efforts. The basic recommendation of the committee was that DØ adopt DSPACK, a data handling package developed by the NA49 experiment at CERN, as the ZEBRA replacement.

The committee pointed out that DSPACK should be used in a different way than ZEBRA has been used by DØ in Run I. ZEBRA actually provides two functionalities: Memory management and platform independent data I/O. The committee recommendation, and the current plan, is to separate these two functionalities, with the former being supplied primarily by the language (although DSPACK does have its own built in memory management capability). Because of its use for memory management, ZEBRA became so thoroughly embedded in DØ software in Run I that changing later to a different system was out of the question. The current plan calls for having no naked DSPACK calls in user written software.

After the Language and Data Structure report was issued, a working group was formed to continue to develop a data persistency mechanism based on DSPACK. The DSPACK group is currently actively engaged in the design and implementation of a C++ persistent object interface. The design of the C++ interface for persistent classes is at an advanced stage [6]. The C++ interface is loosely based on the ODMG standard C++ programming interface for object oriented databases [5]. The ODMG standard defines a standard object model for all persistent objects, which specifies which data types and classes can be composed into persistent classes, and how they can be composed. The object model proposed by the DSPACK group [6] follows the ODMG object model closely, but with different names for the ODMG specified classes, to avoid possible conflicts with other ODMG compliant object databases. The ODMG standard also specifies a standard I/O interface. The current design does not follow the ODMG I/O interface, but has its own interface based on a more event-oriented I/O model.

The features of the persistent class design are as follows:

- Object definition language for specifying persistent classes that can be preprocessed into source and header files.

- Base class for all persistent classes.

- Smart pointer and relationship classes to allow transparent physical partitioning of events.

- Template collection classes.

- Event oriented I/O interface for sequential and random access I/O.

- Support for the possibility of multiple I/O mechanisms (besides just DSPACK).

In this model, DSPACK is used only for its ability to "flatten" complex data structures into something that can be written and read. It is forseen that we may want to use some other I/O mechanism besides DSPACK, if not for event data, then certainly for calibration data. One likely possibility is the use of a true object-oriented database for calibration data and other typical database usages.

2.3 Framework Builder

The software framework provides a common environment for physicists writing data analysis software modules. The common environment makes it easier for physicists to both write and reuse code. DØ used a framework in Run I to great effect; the physicist was given a standard set of software packages that performed jet corrections or electron finding that could be plugged into the framework along with the physicist's private analysis module.

The Run II framework will perform the same function. The same framework, with modifications, will be used in the following environments:

- *Physics Analysis:* Good debugging tools and a user interface are required to help the physicist here, as well as being able to run in a batch interface.

- *Calibration:* Special types of event records contain calibration data and must often be handled in a special way.

- *Online Monitoring:* Keep track in real time of how the detector is performing by, for example, looking for dead or hot channels or by attempting to reconstruct W bosons.

- *Reconstruction:* Full event reconstruction often takes place in a farm environment, fully controlled by script systems.

- *Level 3 Trigger:* The online software trigger must be fast and efficient.

If possible, we would like to meet these requirements with a common framework, at least to the extent that code implementing physics algorithms can be moved from one environment to another. It should be possible, for example, to develop a new software trigger tool offline, and move it into the online environment rather having to rewrite it. However, the requirements for the various environments are sufficiently different that it may not be possible to completely unify them all (the Level 3 trigger, for example).