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Development of a PC-Based
Eight-Channel WIM System

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Development of a PC-Based Eight-Channel WIM System

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Executive Summary

Weigh-in-Motion (WIM) data provides vital information for pavement design and maintenance, traffic monitoring and management, and transportation planning. The purpose of this research was to improve the present piezoelectric WIM technologies with an improved system design and signal processing algorithms. Present WIM systems are available as proprietary systems, which means the internal system design and algorithms are highly guarded. This makes it difficult to compare and improve the underlying design and technology. Therefore, the second objective of this research was to develop a WIM system based on an open architecture, utilizing a standard PC and other off-the-shelf components, and to publish the details of the design to promote future improvements. The research team was able to successfully develop a prototype WIM system and this report presents the details.

During the prototype development, the research team learned that developing a WIM system using a truck with known weight is not only labor intensive and tedious but also gives an inaccurate weight reference. WIM systems translate static weights from the load of moving vehicles, which inherently includes environmental factors, such as winds, the effect of vehicle suspension system, pavement roughness and slope, in addition to the static weight. Therefore, computational parameters of the WIM system can be tuned to incorrect weight references, even if the exact static weight is known. To address this fundamental problem, this research introduces a hardware-in-the-loop (HIL) WIM simulator, designed as a complete WIM development environment. The HIL WIM simulator takes the basic traffic information expressed in vehicle classes, speed, and volume, and produces ideal analog axle and loop signals using a multi-channel digital-to-analog converter and software algorithms. It can also generate axle signals for special type of vehicles if the basic vehicle parameters such as axle weights, axle distances, and the footprint lengths are fed as input. In essence, the HIL simulator creates ideal WIM sensor signals of moving vehicles with known axle loads and axle separation distances. This means that WIM developers can utilize the HIL simulated axle signals to develop measurement algorithms or verify the accuracy of the measurements without driving a single vehicle by using the virtually created WIM sensor environment. More important, the HIL simulator can produce erroneous signal conditions for testing the error detection capabilities of a WIM system. The main advantage of using a WIM HIL simulator for developing a WIM system is that the developers may conduct an unlimited number of tests without actually driving a single vehicle through the WIM sensors, thereby significantly reducing the development time and cost. The proposed HIL simulator is a new concept and provides an elegant solution to the unavailability of an ideal axle signal.

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background on Weigh-in-Motion (WIM) Systems

Data on weights carried by vehicles is used as a primary input to a number of state highway agency's important tasks. For example, traffic loading is a primary factor in determining the depth of pavement sections [1-3]. It is also used as a primary determinant in the selection of pavement maintenance treatments. In addition, the new pavement design guide currently distributed as NCHRP 1-37A requires location-specific load spectra in which the conventional ESAL (Equivalent Single Axle Load) is no longer used [4,5]. Truck classification and weight information are also the key components in studies that determine the relative cost responsibility of different road users [6]. Freight industries use the classification weight information to estimate goods movements, freight demands, and route planning. The total tonnage moved on roads is also used to estimate the value of freight traveling on the roadway system and is a major input to calculations for determining the costs of congestion and benefits to be gained from new construction and operating strategies.

A linear increase in load magnitude is known to be approximately fourth power exponential increase in the acceleration of road wear [7]. Consequently, increased load means shorter pavement life and more frequent maintenance and rehabilitative work. As early as 1918, highway officials concluded that heavy trucks were critical to the design of highways. Today, it is well known and accepted that heavy trucks cause the majority of damage to highways. Truck weight regulations are firmly in place to protect pavements and bridges from the effects of heavy loads, to ensure the safety of all motorists, and to maintain manageable traffic operations [7].

Traffic weight data is collected through Weigh-In-Motion (WIM) systems, and it is essential to collect accurate, high quality data [3]. Many approaches have been proposed to increase the accuracy of WIM systems [30-35] with two schools of approach. The first is to increase the accuracy of the WIM system through proper on-site calibrations of the installed WIM systems [31-35]. The second approach is to increase the accuracy through better signal processing algorithms and system designs [8, 30]. This research mainly follows the later approach and introduces a new calibration technique based on a hardware-in-the-loop (HIL) simulator, which does not require field evaluation of a known truck. Accurate WIM calibration is often difficult to achieve due to vehicle dynamics. Vehicle dynamics represent the dynamic forces that are applied due to pavement roughness, wave loading effects caused by the suspension system of vehicles, wind loads, etc., all of which are difficult to measure. This means that even if the weight of the calibration truck is known, there is no guarantee that the same load is applied with each pass over the sensors during calibration. Moreover, the accuracy of static truck scales is limited; in particular, portable scales often produce errors. Consequently, maintaining a WIM system through regular calibrations is expensive in terms of labor and possibly not reliable. It was often reported by maintenance engineers that some WIM stations begin to report incorrect weights the day after calibration. In this case, the known

weight of the truck might have been incorrect, or vehicle dynamics may have affected the load on the sensor during calibration.

What has been found from the current research is that correct installation and proper signal conditioning is more important than calibration [8]. That is, no amount of calibration would be able to fix the problem of installation or signal deviations. Therefore, this research focuses on developing a calibration-free weight computation algorithm and treatments of signal anomalies and system error conditions through intelligent algorithms. This research also presents a HIL approach that creates realistic analog WIM signals for testing and verification of WIM systems. This is a new approach and provides an efficient development platform for designing accurate and reliable WIM systems. Also, ideal WIM signals generated by the HIL simulator facilitate a new, efficient way of calibrating existing systems without driving an actual truck of known weight.

A common problem with present WIM systems is that WIM vendors do not provide any capability of analyzing the raw analog WIM signals. Therefore, it has been very difficult for maintenance engineers to determine how much the sensor readings can be trusted (i.e., correct or problematic) since the only available outputs are the final converted weight and axle data. In this research work, a dual mode system was developed, which is capable of displaying and analyzing the raw analog signals while the other mode generates real-time WIM measurements.

Presently, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) is installing all new WIM systems, using piezoelectric quartz (Kistler Type 9195) technologies after retiring the bending plates and single load cell systems from highways. This trend is not only occurring in Minnesota but also in other states in the US. In order to advance the present piezoelectric WIM technology and system functionalities, Mn/DOT awarded the University of Minnesota Duluth a project to develop an open WIM system utilizing off-the-shelf components. This report presents the results of the completed project.

1.2 Related Work

Significantly less research work has been done in WIM technologies in comparison to other types of traffic sensing technologies, such as inductive loop detectors. Recently, this trend has gradually changed due to the availability of lower cost piezoelectric WIM sensors. Unlike traditional single load-cell installations, which require a large excavation (at a high cost), piezoelectric sensors require only small cutouts in the pavement. In addition, maintenance costs are much less since mechanical parts are not directly involved. However, there are some concerns with piezoelectric sensors. The first is the sensor's sensitive to heat and the consequential effects on the accuracy of measurements. Secondly, it is difficult to isolate the vertical forces from the moving vehicles to measure the true weight of the vehicle. These two concerns were addressed with the introduction of quartz piezoelectric sensors developed by Kistler [9] that include a vertical force isolation design.

A study has been done on the development of a two channel (single lane) WIM signal diagnostic system [8]. This system collects and analyzes raw data from the WIM site and produces a report: however, the system can handle only two channels of data at a time. In the system developed in this research and the project associated with it, the system runs on two operation modes: a signal analysis and a data collection mode. In the

signal analysis mode, the raw analog signals of eight WIM channels are simultaneously analyzed, and analysis results are reported. The report includes faulty channel conditions, and signal health states. This information indicates data quality so that any relevant maintenance can be activated. In the data collection mode, the system has a real-time weight translation and recording capability so that it can serve as a WIM data acquisition system for up to eight channels (four lanes).

Weigh-in-Motion (WIM) systems have been developed commercially by several US and international companies. Among them one of the well known is International Road Dynamics, Inc (IRD) based in Saskatchewan, Canada. Most of the Minnesota WIM stations are equipped with the IRD system. Other manufacturers are Peek Systems and ECM. Both systems work on the basis of a calibration constant, in contrast to the calibration-free approach developed in this research.

There are several other classes of WIM sensors that have been developed for use and are currently available in the U.S. and abroad. Bending plate WIM systems utilize plates with strain gauges bonded to the underside. As a vehicle passes over the bending plate, the system records the strain measured by the strain gauge and calculates the dynamic load [10]. The static load is estimated using the measured dynamic load and calibration parameters. Another type of WIM system available uses load cells. A load cell WIM system utilizes a single load cell with two scales that weigh the right and left side of axle loads simultaneously. The scale mechanism incorporates patented load transfer torque tubes which effectively transfer all loading on the weighing surface to the centrally mounted load cell [12]. As a vehicle passes over the load cell, the system records the weights measured by each scale and sums them to obtain the axle load. A relatively new WIM sensor is fiber-optic sensor which consists of a pneumatic tube filled with an incompressible fluid, a diaphragm designed to convert pressure into displacement, and an optical displacement sensor [13]. Although new, fiber-optic sensors offer interesting properties. They are not responsive to electromagnetic interference, such as lightning; they can withstand harsh environments; and they have low power requirements [14]. The accuracy of Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) under highway speeds has not been established for fiber optic sensors.

Most published work on WIM focuses on statistically analyzing the axle loads and GVW records collected by WIM systems. For example, a study has been done in traffic analysis, especially truck traffic where the WIM data collected from different WIM stations was used to determine flow volume and load growth from 1991 to early 2001 [15]. Other types of work include investigation of axle load spectra for different axle groups and truck types at various locations and time periods.

Hardware-in-loop (HIL) simulation has been used by many large manufacturing companies for more than decade [16]. Recently, HIL simulation was applied to evaluate traffic signal controllers. In this case, realistic traffic flow was simulated using a microscopic simulator from which loop signals are generated as simulated vehicles pass over the sensor [17-19]. The simulated detector actuations are processed by an actual off-line traffic controller it was from real detector actuations. Research work on HIL application to traffic controllers can be found in [36-39].

CHAPTER 2 - PIEZOELECTRIC SENSORS

Piezoelectric sensors have been widely used as WIM sensors. This chapter reviews the working principles and the design used in WIM sensors.

2.1 Basic Principles of Piezoelectric Sensors

Piezoelectric sensors have proven to be a versatile tool for measurement of various processes. “Piezo” is a Greek word for pressure. The piezoelectric effect was discovered in the 1880's by P. and J. Curie [20]. The piezoelectric effect occurs when energy is converted from the mechanical to electrical form or vice versa. When a piezoelectric material is compressed or deformed, an electric charge is produced. This charge is proportional to the stress (or force) that is applied to the sensor, thus allowing the sensor to be used for weigh-in-motion applications [21]. Piezoelectric microphones serve as another good example of this phenomenon. Microphones turn an acoustical pressure into a voltage. For certain crystals, when an electrical charge is applied to a polarized crystal, the crystal undergoes a mechanical deformation that in turn, creates an acoustical pressure. An example of this type of application are piezoelectric speakers [22].

Electrets are samples of dipolar solids that can preserve their polarization for a long time even after the polarizing field is removed. Figure 1 shows a diagram of the internal structure of electrets. In general, the alignment of the internal electric dipoles would result in a charge that would be observable on the surface of the solid. In practice, this small charge is quickly dissipated by free charges from the surrounding atmosphere that are attracted by the surface charges.

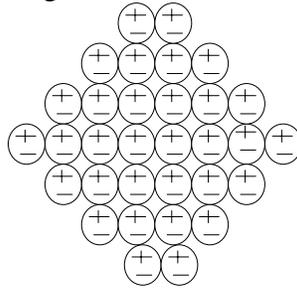


Figure 1: Internal structure of an electret

Electrets may be used for generating an electric field without external voltage sources. Permanent polarization, as in the case of electrets, is also observed in certain crystals. In these structures, each cell of the crystal has an electric dipole, and the cells are oriented such that the electric dipoles are aligned. Again, this results in excess surface charge which attracts free charges from the surrounding atmosphere making the crystal electrically neutral. If a sufficient force is applied to the piezoelectric crystal, a deformation will take place. This deformation disrupts the orientation of the electrical dipoles and creates a situation in which the charge is not completely neutralized. This results in a temporary excess of surface charges, which subsequently is manifested as a voltage developed across the crystal.

In order to utilize this physical principle and allow a sensor to measure force, the surface charge on the crystal must be measured. Figure 2 shows a common method of using a piezoelectric crystal as a force sensor. Two metal plates are used to sandwich the crystal, which creates a capacitor. As mentioned previously, external forces cause a deformation of the crystal, which in turn results in a charge that is a function of the applied force. In its operating range, a larger force will generate a larger surface charge.

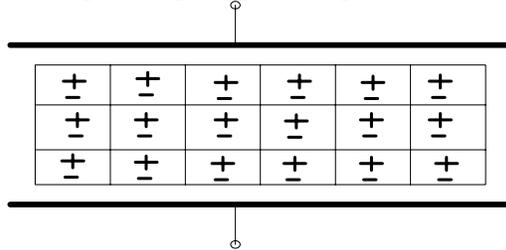


Figure 2: A sensors based on the piezoelectric effect

The voltage which results from the charge is expressed as,

$$V = \frac{Q_f}{C} \quad (1)$$

where, Q_f is the charge resulting from a force f and C is the capacitance of the device. Since mechanical stress can be turned into electrical charges, piezoelectric crystals act as a strain or force transducer. Alternatively, if a voltage is applied to the plates of the system described above, the resultant electric field would cause the internal electric dipoles to re-align, which would cause a deformation of the material. Piezoelectric strains are very small and the corresponding electric fields are very large. In quartz, a field of 1000 V/Cm produces a strain on the order of 10^{-7} [20].

2.2 Piezoelectric WIM Sensor

The Kistler™ type 9195 piezoelectric quartz Lineas (shown in Figure 3) have been most widely accepted by US transportation departments [9]. The typical lengths are either one meter or three-quarter meters, so a standard 12 foot highway lane requires four sensors (the sensors can be combined to cover the full width of a single lane).

The quartz sensor consists of an extruded metal frame (aluminum alloy) that supports multiple pre-loaded quartz disks. The quartz elements are wired together and arranged such that a uniform output is produced regardless of where the force is applied along the length of the sensor. The sensor is isolated from side forces by a special elastic material. The sensor is installed perpendicular to the traffic flow by cutting a slot in the pavement and using a special epoxy / grout to hold the sensor in place. These are typically installed flush with the surface on either existing or new asphalt or concrete pavement surfaces [23].

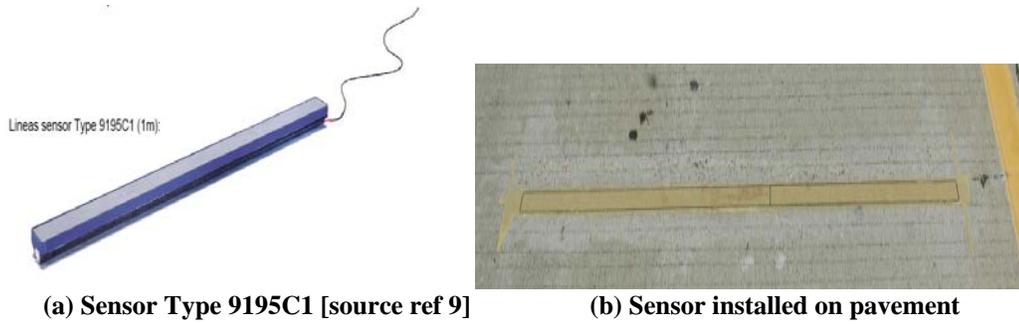


Figure 3: Kistler linesas Sensor

The Linesas sensor utilizes quartz crystal force sensing technology. With the piezoelectric quartz measuring elements in the sensor, the output of the piezoelectric sensor is an electric charge (Q_f) that is proportional to the applied vertical force (F_z).

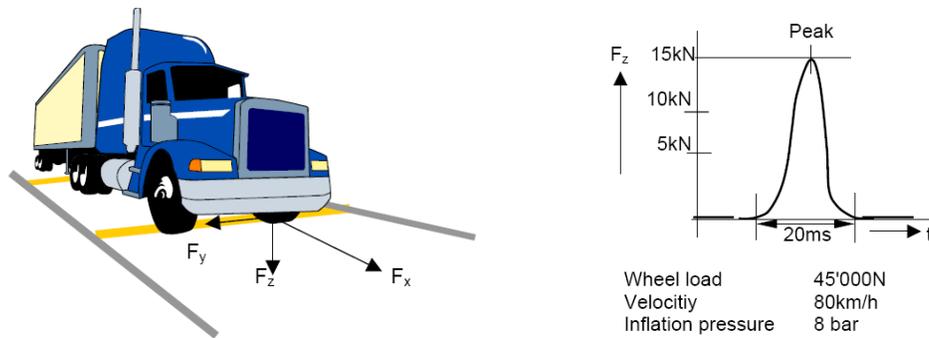


Figure 4: Vehicle passing over WIM sensor and the corresponding axle signal waveform [source ref 9]

As a tire passes over the linesas sensor, it generates horizontal, vertical and lateral forces between the tire and sensor (Figure 4). Due to the special sensor design, only vertical forces (F_z) are measured. Lateral and horizontal forces (F_x and F_y) between the road and sensor are decoupled by a special elastic material around the sensor [9].

The Kistler Linesas sensors are used for medium and high-speed WIM and/or vehicle classification applications. The accuracy of a WIM site often depends on the pavement characteristics due to the pavement/vehicle interaction and the resulting dynamic impact forces. Road geometry is another factor that affects WIM accuracy. For greater accuracy, it is strongly recommended that 50m before and 25m after the WIM-site have a longitudinal slope of $< 2\%$, a transverse slope of $< 3\%$, and a radius of curvature $> 1000\text{m}$ (i.e., a straight flat road is preferred).

CHAPTER 3 - WIM SYSTEM DESIGN

3.1 WIM Sensor Setup

WIM devices are specifically designed to capture and record gross axle loads of moving vehicles. WIM systems record instantaneous dynamic axle loads and spacing, the number of axles, the speed of the vehicle, the lane and direction of travel, vehicle classification, and a timestamp for each vehicle record. The accuracy is primarily dependent upon the vehicle dynamics and the inherent variance of the technology used within the WIM system. Vehicle dynamics include the forces generated by the suspension system, tire characteristics, aerodynamic lift, etc. The variances in WIM system include sensor accuracy, different computational algorithms, and system noise.

Piezoelectric WIM systems comprise piezoelectric force sensors embedded inside the pavement and a signal processing computer in a roadside cabinet. A typical setup is shown in Figure 5. This is a single lane application that includes two rows of piezoelectric sensors and two loop detectors. Presently, all of Minnesota WIM stations follow this setup. Variations exist, such as placing a single loop detector between the two rows of piezoelectric sensors. Speed is an important parameter for computing weight, which is the main reason that the sensors are installed as two rows of parallel lines.

The inductive loop detectors are augmented to trigger the processing of axle signals. More specifically, the upstream loop detector detects the entry of a vehicle into the detection zone, and the downstream loop detector detects the exit of the vehicle. A typical dimension of loop wires follows a standard six feet by six feet. The WIM sensors cover the entire width of the lane and are mounted flush with the pavement surface.

The system developed in this research contains eight channels and is capable of capturing four lanes simultaneously in real time. Eight loops (upstream and downstream at each lane) and 32 WIM sensor inputs are fed into the WIM system.

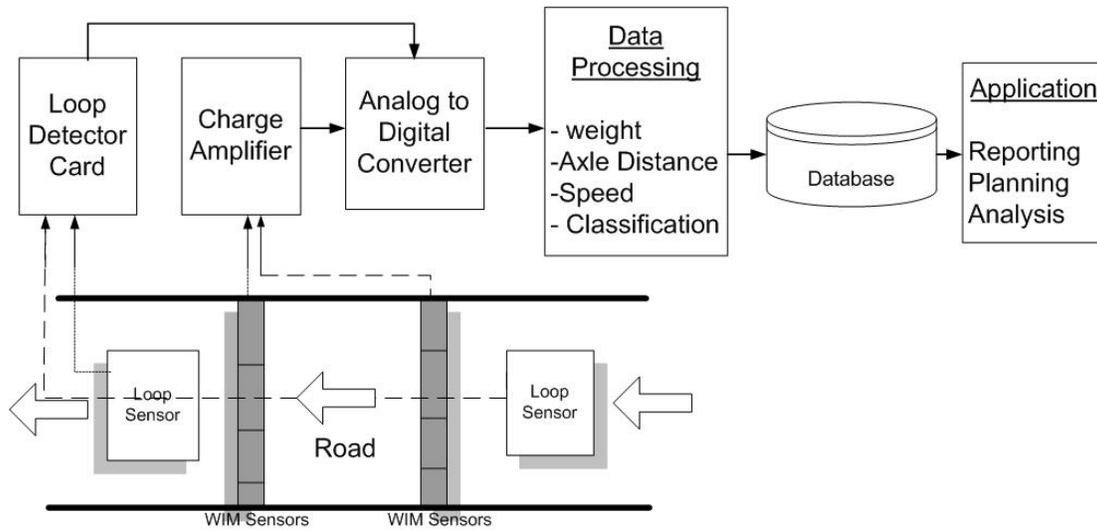


Figure 5: Overall WIM system block diagram

3.2 Overall System Architecture

The overall system block diagram is shown in Figure 5. As a vehicle's tire passes over the piezoelectric sensors, the force of the vehicle load is applied to the sensors. As a result, the sensors produce electric charges proportional to the load. In the case of Kistler 9195 sensors, the single row typically produces 1.8 Pico Coulomb per Newton [9]. The level of charge produced per Newton is referred to as sensitivity and is measured at the factory and clearly labeled on each sensor. A charge amplifier converts and amplifies the electrical charges generated by the sensor to analog voltages in the range of ± 5 volts. The nominal voltage range is positive, but the values can be negative depending on the bias conditions.

The Kistler 5038 charge amplifier (a short name "amp" is also frequently used among electrical engineers) uses +15 to +30 volts DC as its power supply and internally regulates the voltage to produce ± 7 volts. The total consumption of current is less than 25mA. The regulated voltages are used as the power inputs of the internal operational (or op) amplifiers. For this WIM system, a single +24V, 1A switching power supply is used to power all four charge amplifiers.

Two 3M Canoga C924 cards were used in the developed system for the loop detectors but other detector cards could also be used. Each C924 detector card can process up to four loops. Since this system requires eight loops, two detector cards are necessary. The same 24V DC power supply, which supplies power to the charge amplifiers, is used to power the C924 cards. This card supplies inputs/outputs through a 22/44 edge connector at the back that are connected to loop inputs and call outputs. Each call output in C924 indicates presence of a vehicle in a form of open collector output. The A/D (analog-to-digital) inputs require ± 5 voltage range; a 5V regulator was used to generate a 5 volt, which is then connected to a 4.7K pull-up resistor on the open collector call outputs. The actuation outputs of the loop detectors are connected to A/D converter inputs for fast and accurate detection.

In the next stage, the voltages from the WIM amplifier and loop detectors are converted to digital signals using A/D converters. The A/D board used in this project was a PCI-DAS6013 and was produced by the Measurement Computing Corp. This board supports 16 single-ended channels or 8 differential channels with a 16-bit resolution in each sample with the collective sampling rate of 200K samples per second. For this project, the board was configured as a 16-channel single-ended mode. Sampling rate of each channel was set to 4,096 samples per second for a high accuracy (other systems typically use 1K samples per second). One of the interesting functions of this board is that the calibration can be done without external reference inputs. Calibration of channels is simply done by clicking one button using the software supplied by the manufacturer.

Finally, the A/D converter is attached to a PC that processes the digital signals to produce axle loads and separation distances. According to the axle loads and separation distances, the system reports the vehicle type. The system is designed to collect data for a long period of time, i.e., until the hard disk space is filled. Two files are created daily by the WIM system. One contains the vehicle records collected throughout the day while the other summarizes the error conditions encountered on that day. The file containing error information is very helpful for troubleshooting the system. Error information also reflects the data quality during that period, since the data is highly influenced by the hardware error conditions.

3.3 WIM Signal Analysis

The purpose of WIM signal processing is to convert the voltage outputs of the charge amplifier signals to axle load and axle spacing data for each vehicle. Since axle spacing determination is simple and done based on peak signal voltages of the upstream and downstream piezoelectric sensors, the focus of this section is on axle load computation.

There are two principles that must be considered in the axle load signal processing. The first is the tire footprint. The length of the footprint, controlled by the diameter, inflation pressure, and load on the tire, is always wider than the width of the piezoelectric sensor (5cm). Consequently, the peak of the signal does not represent the whole wheel load but rather a portion of the total load. Figure 6 illustrates the relation between the load and the length of footprint of a passenger car under different tire inflation pressures (source Ref [9]). Note that lower inflation pressures generate a larger footprint length with a lower peak signal. Since any combinations of contact length are possible, no assumption can be made for the length of tire footprints. However, an important relationship between tire footprint and force is that the area under the curve is constant as long as the same load is applied.

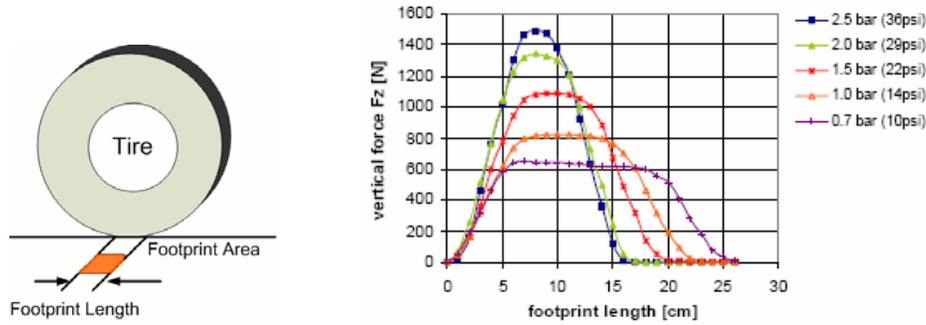


Figure 6: Footprint lengths under varying tire inflation pressure (source ref. [9])

A second aspect of the axle load signal is the effect of speed. Figure 7 shows an example of axle signals under different speeds. Note that the area under the axle signal is approximately inversely proportional to the speed [9]. Although this assumption is generally accepted in WIM system designs, this relationship only holds while no additional external forces, such as winds, are influencing the sensor load.

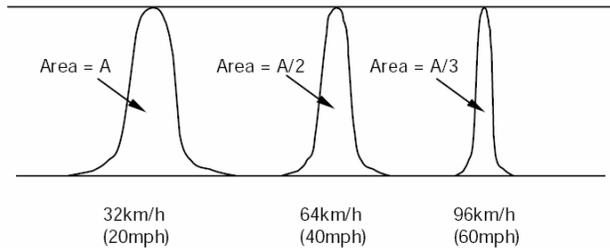


Figure 7: Axle signals on different speeds (source ref. [8])

The signal diagram shown in Figure 8 is used to illustrate the axle load computation methods using the digitized WIM signal. The load signal is detected when the signal amplitude exceeds a preset threshold from the idle level. Once the presence of axle load signal is detected, the signal between $[t_1 - \Delta t, t_2 + \Delta t]$ is used for weight computation, where Δt is a constant proportional to the threshold. It should be mentioned that the signal idle level does not remain constant as it is an output of a charge amplifier. The output of the charge amplifier should be thought of as two signals: the idle signal changing slowly over time and the wheel load signal changing rapidly above the idle level. Therefore, the idle level, $b(t)$, is determined by separating the slowly changing signal from the overall signal.

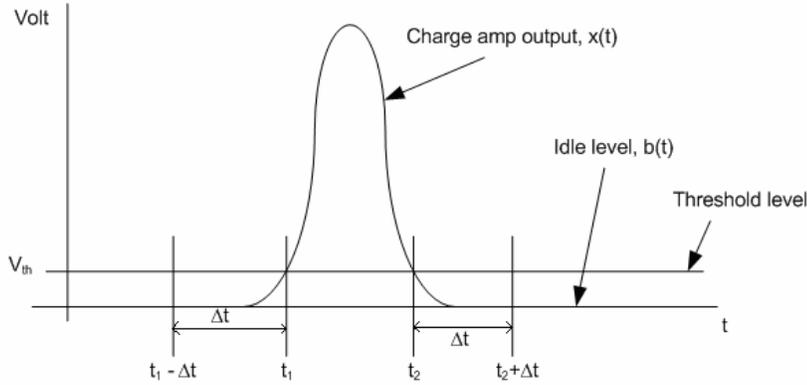


Figure 8: Charge amplifier output signal of single axle or wheel load

There are three methods of axle load computation available for WIM systems. Each is described below.

Method 1: Peak voltage

This approach is used in some commercial products and is very straight forward. The axle load is simply computed using the peak voltage of the signal by,

$$w = \alpha * peak_signal_voltage(x_i) \tag{2}$$

where $peak_signal_voltage(x_i)$ is the peak voltage value of the digitized signal $x(t)$ and α is a calibration factor which must be determined using a known axle load [8].

This method is based on the relationship between axle load and speed. This is illustrated in Figure 7 where the peak voltage generated by the same vehicle does not change for different speeds. However, this assumption is incorrect since the peak will change if tire inflation pressure is not constant, as illustrated in Figure 6. Using the simplified method, the accuracy is compromised in favor of simplicity. One advantage of this method is that a speed measurement is not required. Thus, this method could be used in applications where accuracy of weight is not important, such as traffic volume counting and/or classification.

Method 2: Area under the signal

This axle load computation method was originally recommended by Kistler and has been used in many commercial products [9]. This method computes the axle loads using the area under the signal curve and the speed of the vehicle traveling. The weight is calculated using,

$$W = \frac{\alpha \cdot S}{L} \int_{t_1 - \Delta t}^{t_2 + \Delta t} (x(t) - b(t)) dt \tag{3}$$

where, L is the sensor width, S is the speed of the vehicle, $x(t)$ is the load signal, and $b(t)$ is the slow-varying idle level. Equivalently, it is written in digital form as,

$$W = \frac{\alpha \cdot S}{L} \sum_i (x_i - b_i) \quad (4)$$

Notice from Eqs (3) and (4) that accurate measurements of weight are directly proportional to the measurement of speed. Thus, an accurate speed measurement is essential for this method, which is the reason why two rows of sensors are used. This method requires calibration, like the Peak voltage method, to determine α .

Method 3: Re-sampling of area (proposed method)

This method was originally conceived by Dr. Taek Kwon and was used in this research [8, 30]. A close observation reveals that the area under the signal curve is not a true axle load representation but a convolution of load with respect to the sensor width [8]. Suppose that the load is a rectangular block with the same width as the tire footprint and the same weight as the axle load. The sensor is mounted flush with the measurement surface. Sliding the rectangular block over the sensor should have the same effect as a moving vehicle. As the block slowly moves, the load on the sensor is clearly overlapping for the duration of the sensor width. Consequently, the area under the signal is not an exact weight of the block unless the sensor width is nearly equal to zero. This method is as an improved version of Method-2.

First, a measurement period must be determined using the width of the sensor and the speed of the vehicle as,

$$T_L = L / S \quad (5)$$

The measurement points are then determined as,

$$[t_1 - \Delta t + T_L, t_1 - \Delta t + 2T_L, \dots, t_1 - \Delta t + NT_L]$$

where,

$$N = \frac{(t_2 - t_1) + 2\Delta t}{T_L} \quad (6)$$

Second, imagine that the block is vertically split into N slices with the block width equal to the sensor width. Each slice is then one-by-one measured independently by precisely aligning to the sensor. Each slice denotes the measurement period since it needs to be measured only once, as shown in Figure 9. The weight of each slice then becomes reflected in the previous sample within the measurement period. If the measurement for the j th slice is denoted x_j (volt), it can be written as,

$$x_j = \gamma \cdot G \cdot w_j \quad (7)$$

where, γ is the sensitivity of the piezoelectric signal (pC/N), G is the gain of the charge amplifier (V/pC), and w_j is the j th slice weight (N). The total weight of the block is simply a summation of the individual slices as shown in Eq. (8).

$$W = \frac{1}{\gamma \cdot G} \sum_{j=1}^N (x_j - b_j) \quad (8)$$

Notice from Eq. (8) that this method does not require a calibration factor α , but rather it uses the factory measured sensitivity, γ .

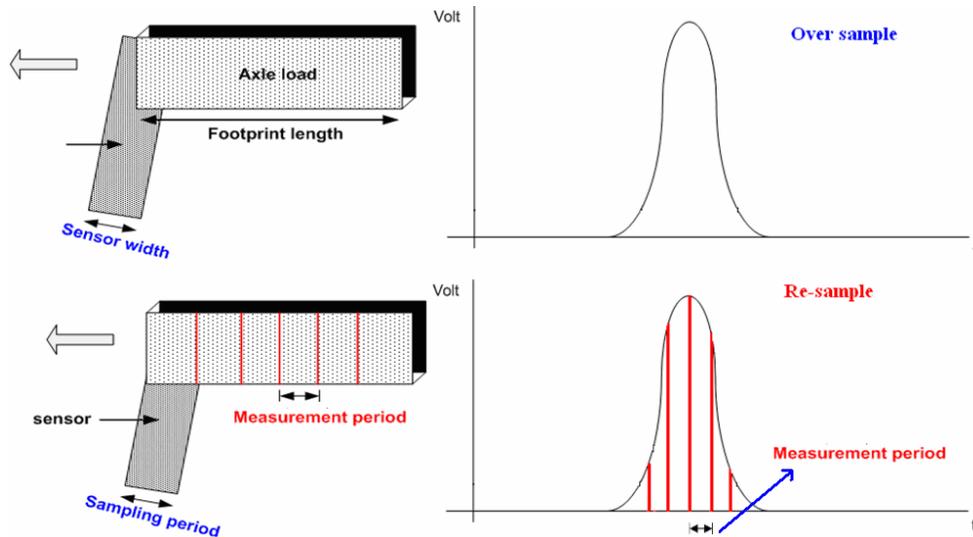


Figure 9: Area under signal (Method-2) Vs Re-sampling of area (Method-3)

It should be clarified that the sampling period of the A/D converter is different from the measurement period in Eq. (5). The sampling rate of the A/D converter should be determined based on the required accuracy of speed measurements. A reasonable accuracy of speed measurements in WIM applications is less than one mph error with an 80 mph speed. Speed measurement accuracy is obtained using the following two relationships.

$$Number_of_samples = \frac{Sensor_separation_distance}{Speed} * (SamplingRate) \quad (9)$$

$$Speed_accuracy_measurement = \frac{Speed}{Number_of_sample} \quad (10)$$

For sensor rows separated by 12 feet, the speed accuracy error for 4,096 samples per second is 0.19mph using the Eqs. (9) and (10). Although a higher sampling rate produces higher accuracy, it also increases the computation time. Since the WIM system used in this research must process 16 channels in real time, sampling rate of 4,096 was used as a compromise between the processing time and accuracy.

3.4 Vehicle and Axle Signal Detection

Detection of a vehicle signal is an important part of WIM software. Proper detection of the beginning and end of the vehicle signal leads to more accurate weight computation. The detection algorithms are described in this section.

3.4.1 Vehicle Presence Detection

When the upstream loop switches to an ON state, it indicates that a vehicle has entered the detection zone, which triggers the software to immediately begin storing the WIM signal data. The signal data is stored until the downstream loop indicates the departure of the vehicle from the detection zone. If the upstream loop fails, the software looks for the trigger signal from the axle signals. When the axle signal is above the idle level, the software recognizes the presence of a vehicle and the data storing process is initiated.

In the case of a downstream loop failure after a successful detection of the upstream loop, one half of the upstream ON time is used to estimate the vehicle exit. If the speed changes dramatically while passing from upstream to downstream, the software might not properly detect the corresponding axle signal. However, when both loop signals are present, dramatic speed changes do not affect the end point detection. If both loops fail, the beginning and the end of the vehicle is determined purely from the axle signal itself, which may lead to an incorrect output.

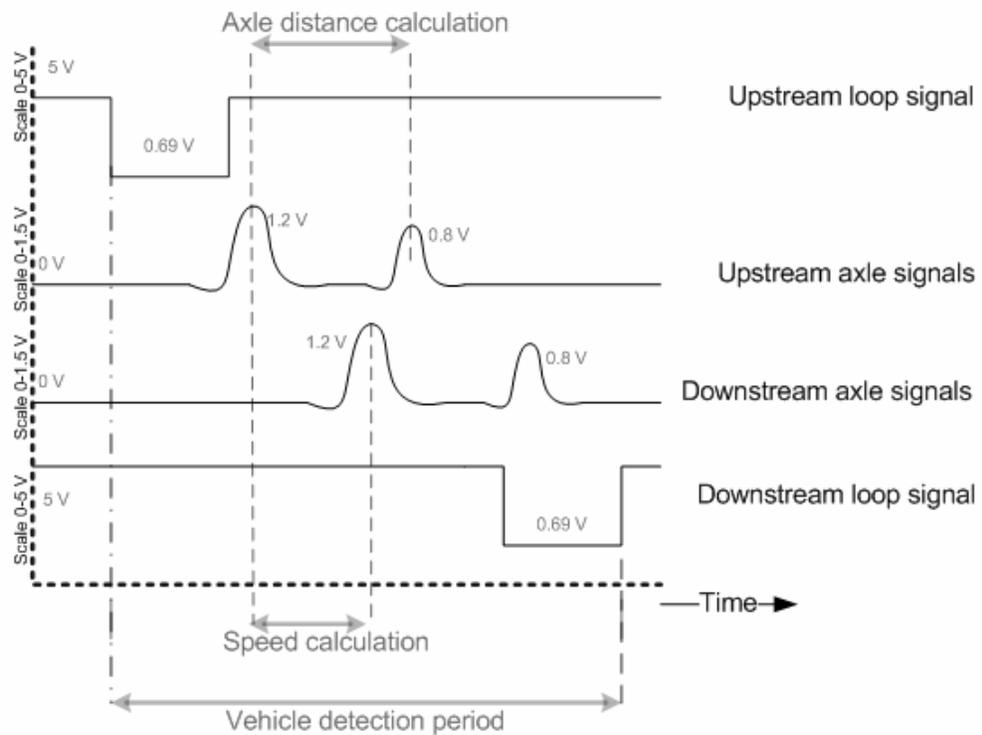


Figure 10: Vehicle detection period

The signal conditions upon the detection of a two axle vehicle are shown in Figure 10. Each sensor signal is plotted on a separate vertical axis ranging from 0 to 5 V to visually identify the signal shape. The vehicle detection period (time) is entirely dependent on its speed and total length.

3.4.2 Axle Detection

While the loop signals are used to detect the length of a vehicle, the piezoelectric sensor signals are used to detect the axles. A nominal axle signal is a positive voltage, and the idle level (no load on the sensor) is near zero volts. However, the idle level often varies over time, which requires an adaptive procedure to keep track of the slowly varying idle level. The adaptive idle level is determined using an average of recent signals when the loop signals indicate that no vehicle is present. The signal is flagged as a potential axle signal if the level is 0.1 V (threshold volt) higher than the idle level. The threshold 0.1 volt was determined through experimentation and corresponds to about 150 pounds of load change. Finally, the algorithm checks the signal length. If the length of the flagged signal is less than 70% of a typical footprint of passenger cars, it is considered as a noise and is discarded.

If both upstream and downstream axle sensors fail to detect an axle, an error message is generated (“Zero axles detected”). If an axle is detected, the segmented axle data is stored for further processing. The ending of the axle signal is determined by measuring the time from the initial detection to the time of peak voltage and doubling the difference. This method is a solution to a long trail problem [30] that arises when the piezoelectric sensor does not recover in time. The final axle load is established by averaging the computed axle loads from the upstream and downstream sensors. If the number of axles counted by the upstream and downstream sensors do not match, the lower axle count is recorded and the extra is discarded (considered as noise).

3.5 Vehicle Speed, Axle Distances and Weight Computation

3.5.1 Speed Computation

Vehicle speed is determined using the known sensor strip spacing and the travel time between the strips. The peak voltage time of each axle in the upstream sensors is subtracted from the corresponding downstream peaks and then averaged. The speed is computed using

$$S = \frac{D_{sensor} * SamplingRate}{\Delta_{peaks}}$$

(11)

where,

S = speed (meters/second)

D_{sensor} = the distance between upstream and downstream WIM sensors (meters)

$SamplingRate$ = sampling rate of the A/D conversion

Δ_{peaks} = the number of sample periods between the matching upstream and downstream peaks.

3.5.2 Axle Distance Computation

The axle distance is computed using the calculated vehicle speed and the travel time between the consecutive axles. The formula used is shown in Eq. (12).

$$D_{axle} = \frac{S}{\Delta_{axle-axle}} \quad (12)$$

where,

D_{axle} = axle to axle spacing (meters)

S = speed (meters/second)

$\Delta_{axle-axle}$ = the number of sampling periods between the peaks of two consecutive axle signals.

3.5.3 Weight Computation

The weight is computed from the summation of re-sampled voltage signals, ($\sum_i v_i$). Each voltage is the difference between the actual voltage and the idle level. The final computation formula is given in Eq. (13).

$$Axle_weight = \sum_i v_i * \frac{60,000}{9.8 * 5 * \gamma} (kg) \quad (13)$$

9.8 = gravitational constant 9.8 m/sec^2 to convert from Newton to kilogram

5 = maximum charge amplifier output

60,000 = maximum charge output, 60,000 pC.

γ = sensor sensitivity in pico-coulombs per Newton

The axle load may be converted to pounds (lb) or Kilo-pounds (Kips) according to the needs. The gross vehicle weight is simply a summation of all axle weights.

3.5.4 Vehicle Classification

Vehicle classification is established according to Mn/DOT's classification scheme. Classification is done based on individual axle load, axle spacing, and the gross vehicle weight.

An example is shown in Table 1 that demonstrates the conditions for a Class 7 vehicle. The approach implemented in this project is based on the Mn/DOT's scheme, which differs slightly from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) classification scheme.

Table 1: Mn/DOT classification scheme (source ref. [24])

Classification: 7						
Number of axles: 6						
SPACING						
Min.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Max.	32767	178	2767	178	178	
AXLE WEIGHTS						
Min.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Max.	32767	32767	32767	32767	32767	32767
GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT						
Min.	0					
Max.	100000					

CHAPTER 4 - WIM HARDWARE-IN-LOOP SYSTEM

4.1 Introduction

Hardware-in-loop (HIL) is a hardware/software hybrid simulator that has been extensively used in the development stage of complex real time systems. The main purpose of a HIL simulator is to provide effective development platforms for testing real time systems. This simulation produces reliable increase in the complexity during system development by testing and verifying the functionalities under variable complex conditions. Instead of testing a system in a real uncontrollable environment, the HIL produces an environment with hardware signals generated through software that can be recreated.

As a result of replacing the complete system with computers running software simulations, the size, complexity and cost of the development phase is greatly reduced while the flexibility and the rate of generating test scenarios are increased. Since the system cannot distinguish between the signals sent by physical components and the simulated signals, HIL provides a verification platform not only for the software but also for the hardware.

In many manufacturing companies, the systems that are being developed are initially verified with a mathematical model and then verified with software simulation. The design engineer runs simulations of the new components in conjunction with models of the rest of the existing components to study the behavior of the overall system and to optimize the algorithms and routines before building prototypes [25, 26]. HIL systems are also commonly used for fault tolerance (shorted or open signals, etc) and reliability (or endurance) tests of new components. Additionally, HIL simulators are used by companies designing new vehicles, parts of airplanes and rockets [16]. Also, it has been used in the development of automotive anti-lock braking systems. From the simple to complex design, HIL simulations have been widely used as development platforms.

4.2 WIM Hardware-in-Loop

Two general purpose PCs are used to set up a HIL WIM development environment, as shown in Figure 11. For this setup the WIM system is developed using a general PC platform that is equipped with a multi-channel analog-to-digital-converter (ADC). However, other platforms of WIM systems can also be used. The charge amplifiers must be disconnected from the ADC before the WIM system is connected to the HIL simulator. In Figure 11, the left side of the machine is the HIL WIM simulator and is equipped with a multi-channel digital-to-analog-converter (DAC). The channels of DAC are physically connected to the ADC channels of the WIM system through a connection panel also shown in Figure 11.

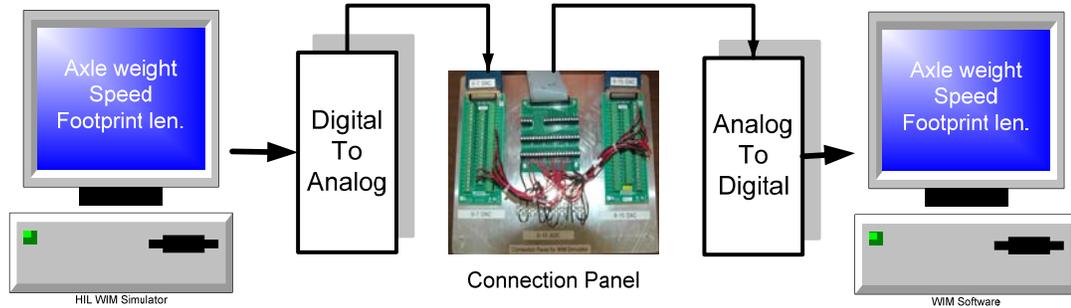


Figure 11: Logical connection diagram of completed loop of a WIM HIL simulator and a WIM system under test

The developed WIM HIL generates axle signals based on user input. The parameters needed for construction of WIM signals are speed, footprint length of tire, axle spacing and weights, and total vehicle length.

As each simulated axle passes over the sensor at a certain speed, the WIM system receives an axle signal, as shown in Figure 12. Since loop detectors are a part of a WIM system and used for vehicle presence detection, the WIM HIL simulator also creates loop signals based on the total vehicle length. The WIM HIL simulator software essentially works in reverse to the WIM software. In the WIM software, the axle weight, axle distance, and speed are computed from axle signals. In the WIM HIL simulator software, the simulated vehicle signals are created from axle weight, footprint length, and speed of the vehicle. In other words, the WIM HIL simulator acts as a virtual road where traffic flow and vehicle information are controlled by software.

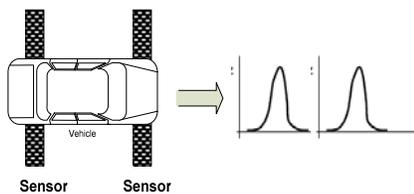


Figure 12: Axle signal generate by vehicle

4.3 Construction of WIM Signal

Generation of precise WIM sensor signals is important for the evaluating the accuracy of a WIM system. The signal construction algorithms are described in this section.

4.3.1 Axle Signal

In order to create an axle signal, consideration must be given to how an axle signal is generated by the piezoelectric sensors when a tire footprint of a vehicle passes over the sensor strips. Initially, the tire contacts a small portion of the sensor strip and gradually advances over the whole sensor width as the vehicle moves forward. Eventually, the vehicle moves away from the sensor strip and the contact area becomes zero. While the footprint is on the sensor, the load on the footprint causes the sensor to

generate electric charges. Figure 13 illustrates progressive footprint positions of a moving vehicle.

The sensor signal level (electric charge) is approximately proportional to the load on the sensor. Conceptually, this signal generation mechanism is essentially equivalent to a convolution between the true weight profile (i.e. distribution of weight loads) on the footprint and a rectangular pulse with the pulse width equivalent to the sensor width.

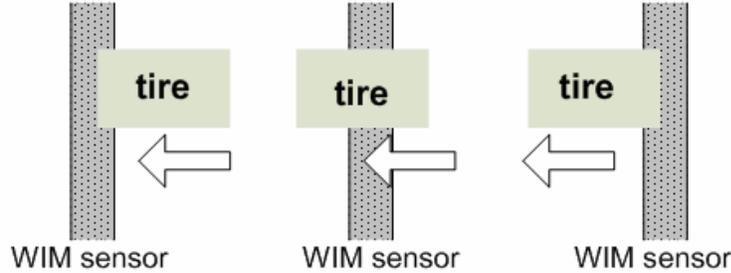


Figure 13: Progressive tire footprint positions when a vehicle is moving

In this research, the weight distribution on the tire footprint is modeled as a uniform distribution. Since the tire footprints are the only area that touches the road surface and the inflation air inside the tire interacts to evenly distribute the load, it is reasonable to assume that weight loads are uniform on the footprint. In reality, the edges should have slightly lower loads than the center.

As a starting point of constructing the axle signal, the peak of the axle weight profile is computed from an actual axle load (or user supplied axle load). Since the signal generated by the piezoelectric WIM strip is a one dimensional signal as a function of time, the peak force received by the sensor is determined by the ratio between the footprint length of tire and the sensor width, as shown in Eq. (14).

$$Peak_sensor_force(N) = \frac{Axle_load(N)}{Footprint_length} * Sensor_width \quad (14)$$

It was assumed that the footprint length is longer than the sensor width, which is the case for all commercially available piezoelectric WIM sensors. If the footprint length is longer than the width of the sensor, the peak sensor load is simply equal to the axle load. It is also assumed that all loads are measured in Newton.

Next, the peak sensor load must be converted to an equivalent voltage. It is known that the load actuated on the sensor produces an electric charge signal that is converted to a voltage through a charge amplifier. Let this converted voltage be called *Peak_sensor_voltage*, then its computation can be done using Eq. (15).

$$Peak_sensor_voltage(mV) = Peak_sensor_load(N) * Voltage_sensitivity(\frac{mV}{N}) \quad (15)$$

In Eq. (15), *voltage_sensitivity* represents the voltage conversion rate of force by the charge amplifier. The sensitivity for the Kistler sensor and amplifier is shown in Eq. (16).

$$Voltage_sensitivity(mV/N) = \frac{1.75(pC/N) * 5,000(mV)}{60,000(pC)} = 0.1458(mV/N) \quad (16)$$

Using Eq. (16) a weight profile in terms of voltage could be constructed. If the sensor width is near zero and the weight distribution on the footprint is uniform, a rectangular voltage signal can be constructed with its area under the curve directly representing the gross axle weight. In reality the sensor width is not near zero, so the signal length is longer and the load must be computed according to the sensor width, footprint length, and the speed of the vehicle.

4.3.2 Axle Signal Length

The footprint length and speed of the vehicle are needed to compute the axle signal length. Since the signal is generated digitally, the signal length is equal to the number of digital sequences and determined by the sampling rate of ADC. The signal length is computed based on the time required to pass through the footprint length and the sampling rate, i.e.,

$$Axle_signal_length = \frac{Footprint_length}{Speed} * SamplingRate \quad (17)$$

The width of a typical Kistler WIM sensor is 5 cm (the type used in this research). The sensor width in terms of number of sampling periods (the signal domain equivalent width) varies with the vehicle speed and the sampling rate and is computed as shown in Eq. (18).

$$Peak_voltage_weight_profile = \frac{Sensor_width}{Speed} * SamplingRate \quad (18)$$

It is reasonable to assume that the weight is evenly distributed at each sample point of the sensor width. The voltage at each sample point, which is referred to as *Peak_voltage_weight_profile*, can be calculated using:

$$Peak_voltage_weight_profile = \frac{Peak_sensor_voltage}{Sensor_signal_length} \quad (19)$$

Based on the calculated *Axle_signal_length* and the *Peak_voltage_weight_profile*, a digital sequence representing the axle weight profile is constructed, (i.e., a sequence number with height equal to the *Peak_voltage_weight_profile* and the sequence length equal to the *Axle_signal_length*). Similarly, the sensor signal sequence is constructed as a sequence number with the height equal to one and the length equal to the

Sensor_signal_length. Finally, the digital sequence representing the axle signal output of the charge amplifier is generated by convolving the sensor signal and the axle weight profile, i.e.,

$$\text{Convolved_axle_signal} = \text{Axle_weight_profile} \Theta \text{Sensor_signal} \quad (20)$$

where Θ denotes a convolution operator. A numerical example is given below.

Example: Construction of an axle signal

The mathematical computation example for constructing an axle signal is provided below. This example is based on the front axle of a real vehicle from an actual WIM station. The parameters are speed 70 mph, axle weight 1,200 pounds, footprint length 45cm, and voltage sensitivity 0.1458mV/N.

$$\text{Speed} = 70\text{mph} = 3,129.28\text{cm/sec}$$

$$\text{Weight} = 1200\text{lb} = 5,337.86\text{N}$$

$$\text{Footprint_Length} = 45\text{cm}$$

$$\text{Voltage_sensitivity} = 0.1358\text{mV/N}$$

$$\text{Peak_sensor_force} = \frac{5,337.86\text{N}}{45\text{cm}} * 5\text{cm} = 593.09621\text{N}$$

$$\text{Peak_sensor_voltage} = 593.09621(\text{N}) * 0.1458(\text{mV}/\text{N}) = 0.0864\text{V}$$

$$\text{Axle_signal_length} = \frac{45\text{cm}}{3,129.28\text{cm/sec}} * 4,096\text{Samples/sec} = 58.90 \approx 59$$

$$\text{Sensor_signal_length} = \frac{45\text{cm}}{3,129.28\text{cm/sec}} * 4,096\text{Samples/sec} = 6.544 \approx 7$$

$$\text{Peak_voltage_weight_profile} = \frac{0.086}{6.544} = 0.0132$$

$$\text{Total_signal_length_after_convolution}$$

$$= \text{Axle_signal_length} + \text{Sensor_signal_length}$$

$$= 58.90 + 6.544 \approx 65$$

The final axle signal for a 1,200 pound load is constructed by convolving the signal length of 59 samples with the corresponding sensor length seven samples. The completed digital signal sequence is shown in Table 2. This sequence is sent to a DAC to generate the actual voltage signals. Similarly, the rest of axle load signals can be constructed. The sequence of this voltage signal is equivalent to a signal generated by an actual vehicle with the same weight, speed, and footprint parameters.

Table 2: Convolved signal sequence (digitized axle signal)

Seq No.	Convolved Signal sequence (V)						
1	0.013213	21	0.09249	41	0.09249	61	0.066064
2	0.026426	22	0.09249	42	0.09249	62	0.052851
3	0.039639	23	0.09249	43	0.09249	63	0.039639
4	0.052851	24	0.09249	44	0.09249	64	0.026426
5	0.066064	25	0.09249	45	0.09249	65	0.013213
6	0.079277	26	0.09249	46	0.09249		
7	0.09249	27	0.09249	47	0.09249		
8	0.09249	28	0.09249	48	0.09249		
9	0.09249	29	0.09249	49	0.09249		
10	0.09249	30	0.09249	50	0.09249		
11	0.09249	31	0.09249	51	0.09249		
12	0.09249	32	0.09249	52	0.09249		
13	0.09249	33	0.09249	53	0.09249		
14	0.09249	34	0.09249	54	0.09249		
15	0.09249	35	0.09249	55	0.09249		
16	0.09249	36	0.09249	56	0.09249		
17	0.09249	37	0.09249	57	0.09249		
18	0.09249	38	0.09249	58	0.09249		
19	0.09249	39	0.09249	59	0.09249		
20	0.09249	40	0.09249	60	0.079277		

In Table 2, the bold numbers represent the samples used for the load computation based on the re-sampling method [8] with re-sampling taken at every seven samples (i.e., $Sensor_signal_length=7$). The total of the re-sampled sequence is $\sum Vi = 0.77955$, and thus it is translated into 1,200.0069 lb of total axle load, which was the actual axle weight.

WIM systems are designed to estimate static load (weight at zero speed) from the measurement of dynamic load. The difference between the static and dynamic loads is referred to as dynamic load error and is define as:

$$Dynamic_load_error = \frac{|W_d - W_s|}{W_s} * 100\% \quad (21)$$

where

$Dynamic_load_error$: Axle load difference between static and dynamic measurements

W_d : Axle load or gross weight measured by WIM system

W_s : Axle load or gross weight measured by static scale/ simulator input load

In a real WIM measurement environment, the dynamic load error can be as high as 15% as many factors affect the load applied to the sensors, such as wind, road slope,

vehicle suspension spring effects, etc. To examine how the HIL axle load computation model affects the dynamic load error, additional computations were performed at different speeds. The same input parameters as the previous example were used. The results are shown in Table 3. Note that the dynamic load error tends to increase with the speed but stays below 1 %. The primary cause of this dynamic load error in the computational model is due to the rounding of the decimal values to the nearest whole number in the digitization process. More specifically, in the above example, *Sensor_signal_length* was calculated to be 6.544 but was rounded to 7 to generate a digitized sequence.

This rounding effect is carried further into the convolution process yet the error stays below 1%. This rounding error cannot be avoided since the DAC cannot accept values between two consecutive digital samples. However, it should be emphasized that the dynamic load error in the axle simulation does not affect the accuracy of real WIM systems when the simulated signals are used for calibration or accuracy checks. For example, if a vehicle with a speed of 80mph and a 1,200lb axle load is tested (80mph row of Table 3), the WIM output should be compared against 1,208.735 lbs since that is the actual axle load signal generated by the HIL simulator. That is, if the output of a WIM system under evaluation reported 1,208.735 lbs when an 80mph speed and 1,200 lbs signal was sent, the system should be considered as 100% accurate. This indicates that the HIL generated signals can be confidently used for accuracy measurements of a WIM system or can be used for calibration without driving a known vehicle over the sensor.

Table 3: Axle loads at different speeds of the proposed computational model

Speed (mph)	Axle load (lb)	Sum of voltage Samples $\sum V_i$ (V)	Computed load (lb)	Error (%)
40	1,200	0.78019	1,200.992	0.082
60	1,200	0.78144	1,202.916	0.16
80	1,200	0.78522	1,208.735	0.7279

4.3.3 Comparison between Simulated and Real WIM Signal

To verify the simulated axle waveforms, a real WIM signal waveform from the Mn/DOT's WIM site on Highway 61 is compared with a HIL simulator generated waveform. The vehicle image for this example was captured by the field video camera and is shown in Figure 14. The WIM system detected that it was a Class-2 vehicle with 1200lb front axle and 700 lb rear axle. The speed was 70mph. Figure 15 is a partial screen capture of the WIM system showing the actual data recorded. The axle signals generated by this vehicle are shown in Figure 16.



Figure 14: Class-2 vehicle over WIM sensor

Lane	Time	Axle #	Speed(mph)	Axle Dis(feet)	Veh Len(feet)	Axle Weight(Kips)	GVW (Kips)	Veh Class
1	15:33 43	2	70	9.4	9.4	1.2+0.7	1.9	Class 2

Figure 15: Computed vehicle parameters by WIM system (screen capture)

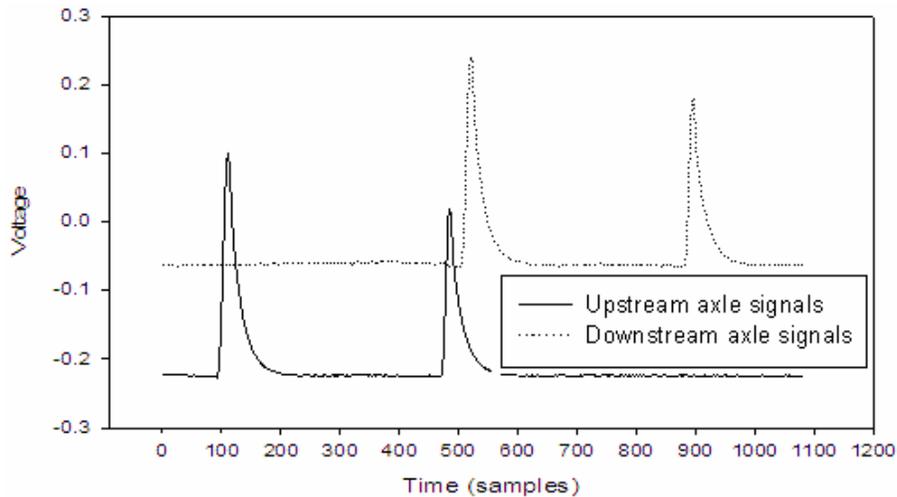


Figure 16: Example Class 2 axle signals generated by the TH61 WIM sensor

A close look at the axle signals is shown in Figure 17. The signal geometry depends upon the signal condition or piezoelectric recovery effect. The long tail of the signal is not the true weight effect but rather due to the piezoelectric recovery error. In the signal processing, this error is mitigated by using the signal area only up to the peak and by doubling that area [8].

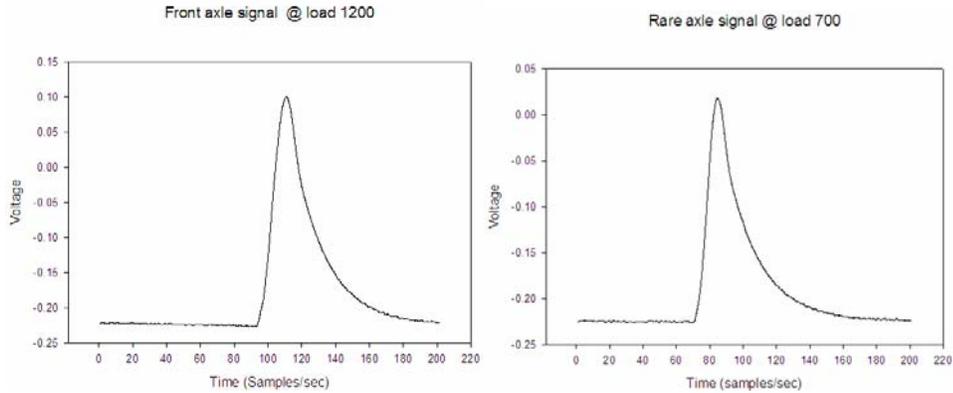


Figure 17: Front and rear axle signals produced by class-2 vehicle

For HIL simulation, the WIM parameters of the vehicle obtained from the WIM system (shown in Figures 14-17) are used to construct an identical vehicle signal. Figures 18 and 19 show the WIM signal generated according to the principles presented in Sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2. The inputs to the WIM signal simulator are the front axle weight of 1.2 Kips, the rear axle weight of 0.7 Kips, vehicle speed of 70 mph, and the axle spacing of 9.4 feet. From the original WIM signal, the tire footprint length was computed to be 45 cm.

The generated vehicle signal from the HIL simulator was fed into the WIM system and the result is shown in Figure 20. Notice that the WIM system detects a Class 2 vehicle with a 1200lb front axle weight and a 700 lb rear axle traveling at a speed of 70 mph, which is identical to the original vehicle data. The signal length of the simulated waveform was an almost exact match to the original (the difference was less than 1%). The correct detection of weight verifies that the area under the waveform of the simulated signal matches the area of the real signal; the objective of simulation.

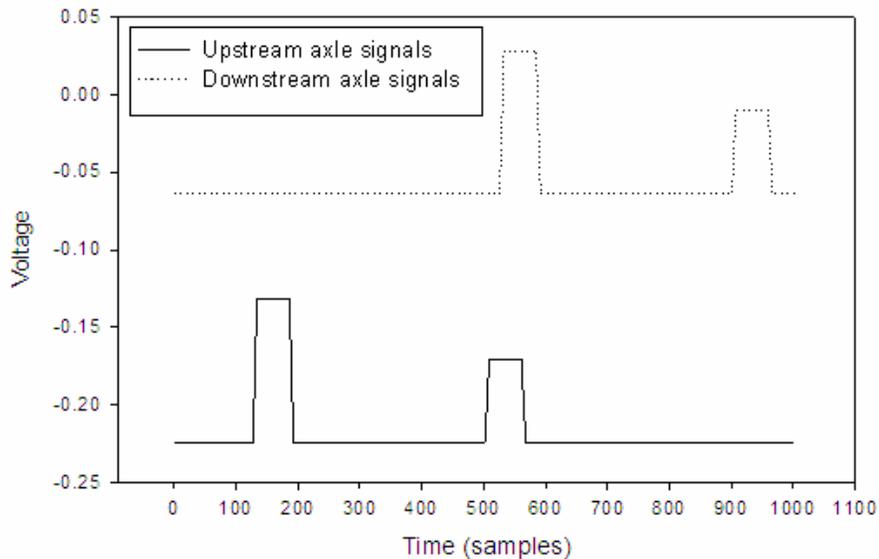


Figure 18: Class-2 axle signals generated by HIL simulator

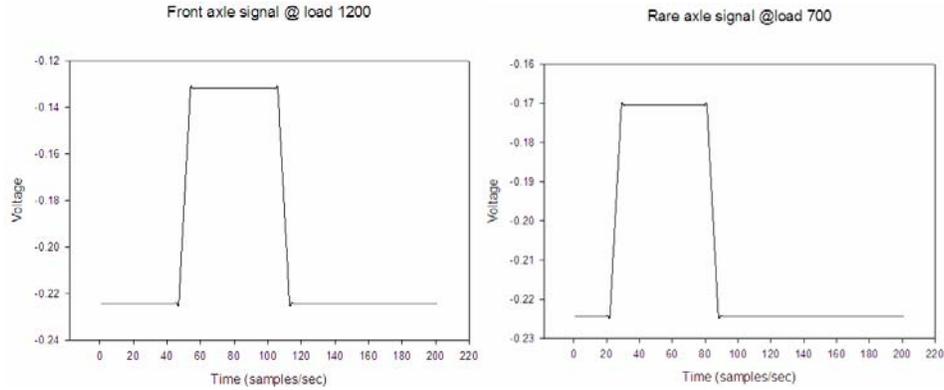


Figure 19: Class-2 axle signals generated by WIM HIL simulator

Lane	Time	Axle #	Speed(mph)	Axle Dis(feet)	Veh Len(feet)	Axle Weight(Kips)	GVW (Kips)	Veh Class
4	11:51 42	2	62	20.0	20.0	8.0+15.0	23.0	Class 5
3	11:51 42	2	70	9.4	9.4	1.2+0.7	1.9	Class 2
2	11:51 42	2	62	20.0	20.0	8.0+15.0	23.0	Class 5
1	11:51 42	2	70	9.4	9.4	1.2+0.7	1.9	Class 2

Figure 20: Generated Vehicle parameter of the class-2 vehicle (screen capture)

The main difference between the constructed axle waveform and the real signal is the shape of waveforms. The constructed axle waveform has a trapezoidal shape while the real signal has a Gaussian shape. This difference is due to the assumption in the weight profile model in the simulator that the weight is evenly distributed on the footprint. The real weight distribution is not easy to measure but it appears to have a Gaussian shape. On the other hand, it should be emphasized that the shape of the signal curve in a WIM system is not important as the calculation is based on the area under the curve. A small error exists but it is due to digital to analog conversion from the HIL simulator and analog to digital conversion in the WIM measurement system and cannot be avoided.

4.4 Construction of Loop Signal

As described in Section 3.1, piezoelectric sensors are installed in conjunction with loop detectors, and thus loop signals must be one of the WIM HIL outputs. In the configuration shown in Figure 5, the upstream loop is used as a trigger signal for the start of the axle signal computation. The downstream loop is used as a mark for the end of a single vehicle WIM signal. In addition, the loops could be used for measuring the overall vehicle length and speed. However, the accuracy is limited by the low scan rate of signals used in loop detectors.

The signals obtained from the loop detectors are sampled at the same rate as the piezoelectric signals to reduce the timing problem. The output voltage of the loop detector in the absence of a vehicle is 5V and it drops to 0.69V when a vehicle is present. The length of the loop signal is calculated using vehicle speed and length and the physical dimension of the loop. It is shown in Eq. (22).

$$Loop_signal_length = \frac{Total_vehicle_length}{Speed} * SamplingRate \quad (22)$$

The signal distance between the upstream and downstream loop is computed using the separation distance between the two loops, i.e.,

$$Loop_signal_separation = \frac{Loop_sensor_separation}{Speed} * SamplingRate \quad (23)$$

Figure 21(a) shows a loop signal constructed through the above method and Figure 21 (b) shows the real loop signal collected from the WIM site. Note that there is a slight voltage drop from 5V in the captured signal. This is due to a pull-up resistor in the loop signal output circuit. The peak voltage difference does not affect the outcome of vehicle presence detection since a threshold is used.

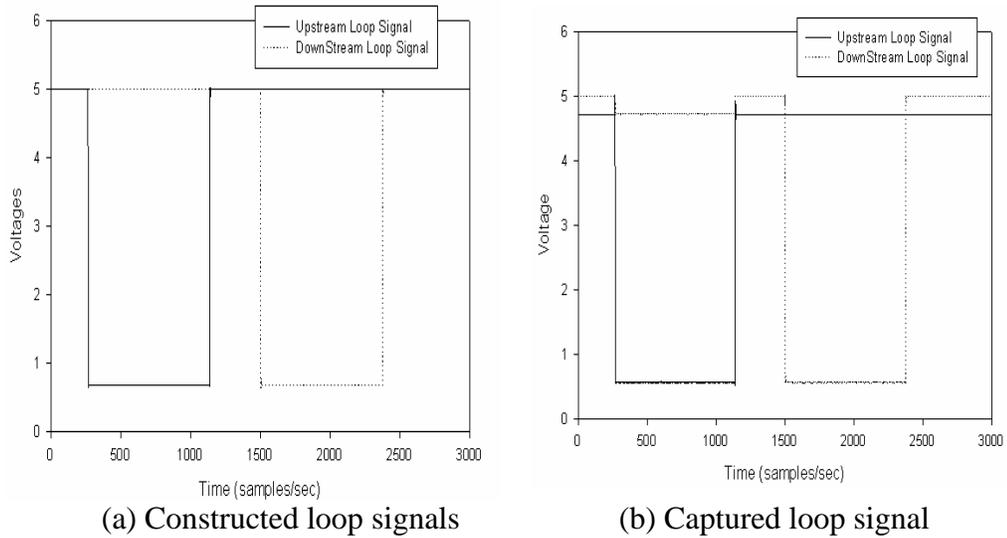


Figure 21: Loop signal comparison

4.5 Simulation of Failure Conditions

By taking advantage of software controlled output signals in HIL simulations, many realistic failure signal conditions can be constructed and fed into the test WIM system. If the WIM system was designed correctly, it should recognize the failure conditions. Frequent failure conditions encountered by WIM systems in the field include locked (stuck-on zero or one) piezoelectric signal, absence of loop signals, idle level fluctuation, high noise level, and/or a combination of these conditions.

The significance of the HIL WIM simulator is that the failure conditions can be recreated and used repeatedly for testing the system an unlimited number of times. For any real-time system, it is extremely important to test and debug the design errors before the system is installed in the field. This vital process is addressed by the HIL simulator.

Several failure conditions encountered during the development of the eight-

channel WIM system are discussed. When piezoelectric sensors fail, the signal was typically a clean DC dropping to -5V but in few cases it remained at 0V. Such DC signals are interpreted as absence of loop signals (or events). Absence of upstream loop events causes loss of axle data because the system is never triggered. In the case of downstream loop failure, the WIM system fails to recognize the correct end of a vehicle signal. Another common type of error observed was human error. The eight-channel WIM system consists of a total of 40 wires: 32 piezoelectric sensor wires and 8 loop wires that are connected to the WIM system box. A common error was connecting the sensor wires in the wrong position, specifically, swapping of upstream and downstream lines. Additional signal failures encountered frequently was caused by a contact problem between the WIM system and the sensor cables. For a single lane, eight BNC connectors are combined into two BNC connectors through H and T BNC summing connectors. Often H- or T-BNC summing connectors use mechanical break-away sockets and caused electric contact loss from one or more sensor lines. The challenge to engineers is to design the WIM system in a way that failure conditions are immediately detected and reported via an error message.

Upon detection of an undesired condition, the raw analog signal was recorded. If an undesired condition was missed the raw data was not recorded, the observed conditions were documented in a note. In the lab, each failure condition was first created as an independent module, and then numerous combinations of the failure conditions were processed through the HIL WIM simulator control module. The WIM system was repeatedly tested and debugged until the WIM software correctly detected the failure conditions and a proper action was taken.

CHAPTER 5 – WIM SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT BASED-ON PC

5.1 System Components and Site Description

The purpose of this project was to develop technology for an eight-channel WIM system that uses a standard PC and off-the-shelf components and can be easily built. If successful, Mn/DOT could produce future systems in-house and/or the end result could set a new standard for WIM vendors. This experimental system was named UM8-PCI, where the number 8 signifies availability of 8 channels and PCI (Peripheral Component Interconnect) denotes the use of a PCI bus. The main difference between the UM8-PCI WIM system and the existing commercial systems is that signal processing and analysis capabilities are directly integrated into the system using a graphical user interface (GUI). This allows diagnostics of the system at the analog signal level by graphically analyzing the signal. The system produces real-time plots of live signals while continuously processing the regular WIM computation functions. During development, it was found that poor sensor signals are the major cause of frequent and critical errors in WIM systems and they are hard to detect and correct from the WIM data. This new system design allows quick spotting of such conditions through a graphical user interface and daily summary of error conditions. This approach provides a means of data quality control at the root of the causes (i.e., the signal level).

The software has been written and tested at Mn/DOT's Highway 61 WIM site (MP 16.4), northeast of Duluth. The site diagram is shown in Figure 22. This diagram is referred throughout for identification of each WIM component. Subsections in this chapter describe the UM8-PCI WIM system.

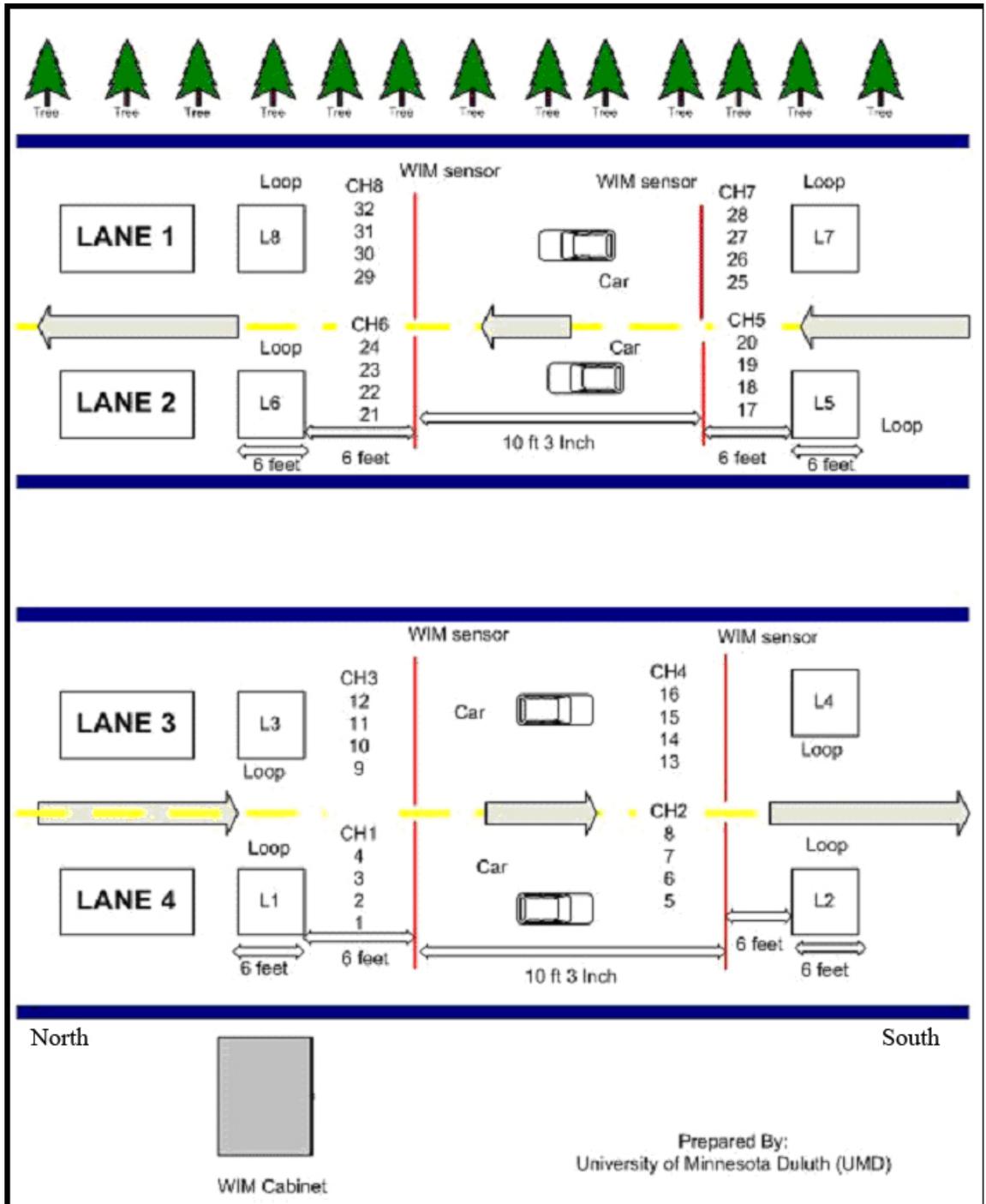


Figure 22: Site diagram (Highway 61, MP16.4, Duluth, MN)

5.1.1 WIM Sensors and Loop Detectors

One group of inputs to the UM8-PCI WIM system are signals from Piezoelectric Lineas Sensors. The sensors are embedded in the pavement and produce a charge signal that is proportional to the deformation induced by the axle loads on the pavement. Figure 23 shows this sensor.



Figure 23: Kistler Lineas Sensor 9195C1

The Highway 61 site is outfitted with Lineas sensors in all four lanes with two sensor arrays (one for upstream and the other for downstream) in each lane. Each sensor array consists of four Kistler Lineas sensors (two 9195C1 and two 9195C2) to fully cover the width of a single lane (12 feet).

In addition to Lineas sensors, each lane is also equipped with two inductive loop sensors, one for upstream and the other for downstream. The positions and identifications of the WIM and Loop sensors at the Highway 61 site are shown in Figure 22.

5.1.2 Analog Signal Interface Box

The analog signal interface box contains charge amplifiers, loop detector cards, power supply units, I/O circuit boards, and an ADC (analog-to-digital converter) board. The ADC board is connected to a PC through a PCI bus from which the digitized raw sensor data is transferred to the computer memory. This digitized data is converted to axle weight data using a WIM signal processing algorithm. Since the system has eight WIM channels, it supports up to four lanes, providing two channels per lane. The picture of this box is shown in Figure 24.



Figure 24: Analog signal interface box

5.1.3 PC and Software

A Pentium-D PC was provided by Mn/DOT for this project, but it was replaced with a more reliable fan-less industrial thin PC. The software was developed using VB.NET 2003, Framework 1.1. The role of the software is to acquire the digitized raw signals and calculate all required parameters of WIM data. In addition, it utilizes loop signals to determine the boundary of vehicles in the WIM signal. The WIM signals are plotted on a graphical user interface in real-time while simultaneously computing and storing the required WIM data. The software is capable of generating speed, axle spacings, gross axle weight, gross vehicle weight (GVW), vehicle classification, and error notification in real-time. In addition, the user can save the raw signal data to analyze the signal quality or to review the sensor activities in the future. The industrial fan-less ITX PC is shown in Figure 25.

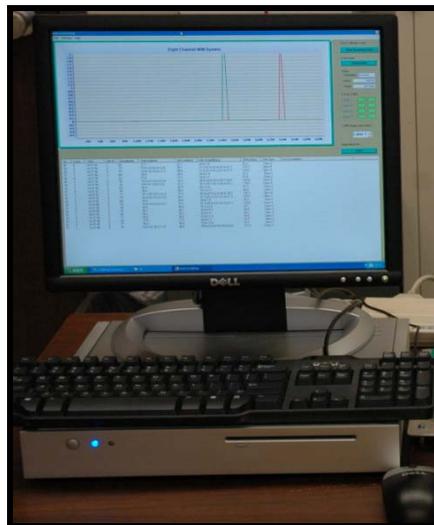


Figure 25: Fan-less ITX PC and Software

5.2 Hardware Description

5.2.1 Charge Amplifiers

The UM8-PCI WIM system is equipped with four Kistler charge amplifiers (Type 5038A2Y43), each of which takes two piezoelectric sensor inputs. Inputs from Lineas WIM sensors (BNC coaxial) are fed into the charge amplifiers to amplify the electric charges produced by the piezoelectric sensors and convert them into voltage signals. The charge amplifier converts the charge to analog voltages in the range of ± 5 volts. The nominal voltage ranges is positive, but the values can be negative depending on the sensor line conditions. The schematic of the charge amplifier connections is shown in Figure 26.

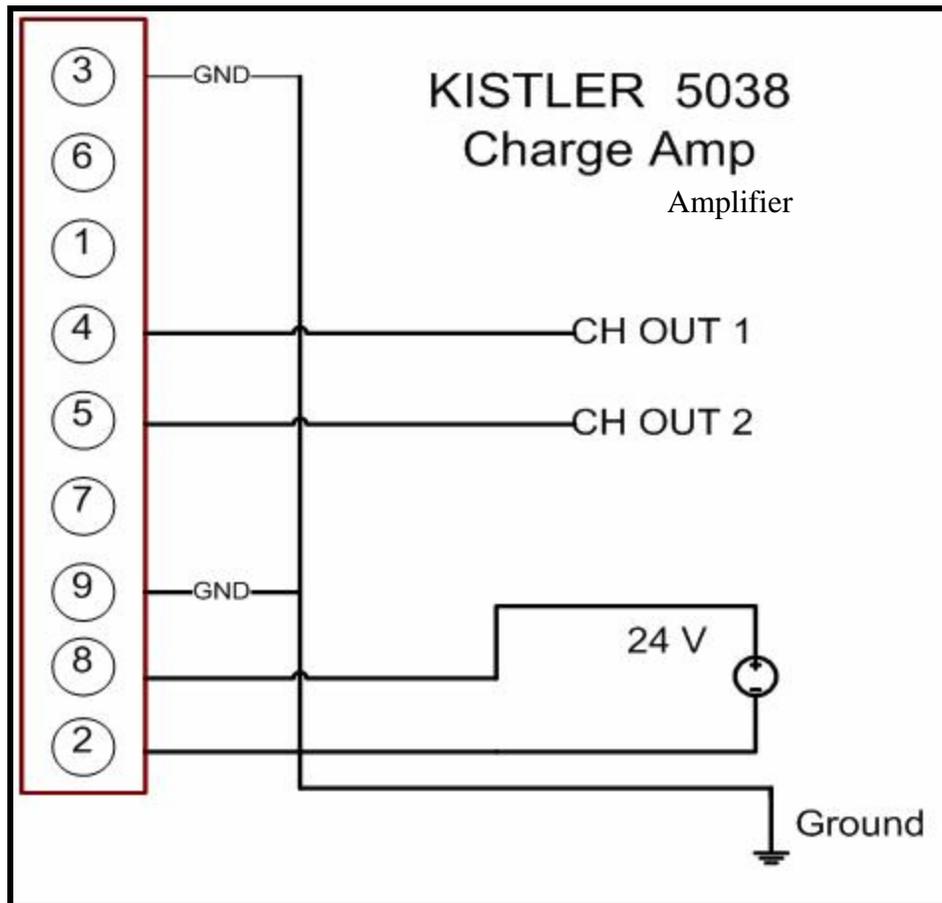


Figure 26: Kistler charge amplifier connections

The 5038 charge amplifier takes in +15 to +30 volts in DC for the power supply and internally regulates the voltage to produce ± 7 volts. The total consumption of power is less than 25mA. The regulated voltages are used as the power inputs to the internal op

amps of the charge amplifier circuit. For the UM8-PCI system, a single +24V, 1A switching power supply was used to power all four charge amplifiers. The charge amplifier outputs are obtained from the internal screw terminal connections as shown in Figure 26. Pins 4 and 5 correspond to channel 1 and 2 outputs, respectively. These two outputs are connected to the inputs of the ADC card described in the next section.

5.2.2 Analog-to-Digital Converter (ADC) Board

The ADC board used in this project was PCI-DAS6013 produced by the Measurement Computing Corp. This board supports 16 single-ended channels or 8 differential channels with a 16-bit resolution in each sample. Its collective sampling rate is 200K samples per seconds. It was configured as a 16- channel single-ended mode board for the UM8-PCI system. The sampling rate of each channel was set to 4,096 samples per second for higher accuracy. This sampling rate was determined based on the speed measurement accuracy of 0.14 MPH at 70 MPH. One of the interesting functions of this board is the calibration capability without external reference inputs. Calibration is simply done using the supplied software. The picture of the ADC board is shown in Figure 27. A schematic diagram of the board pin outs is shown in Figure 28.

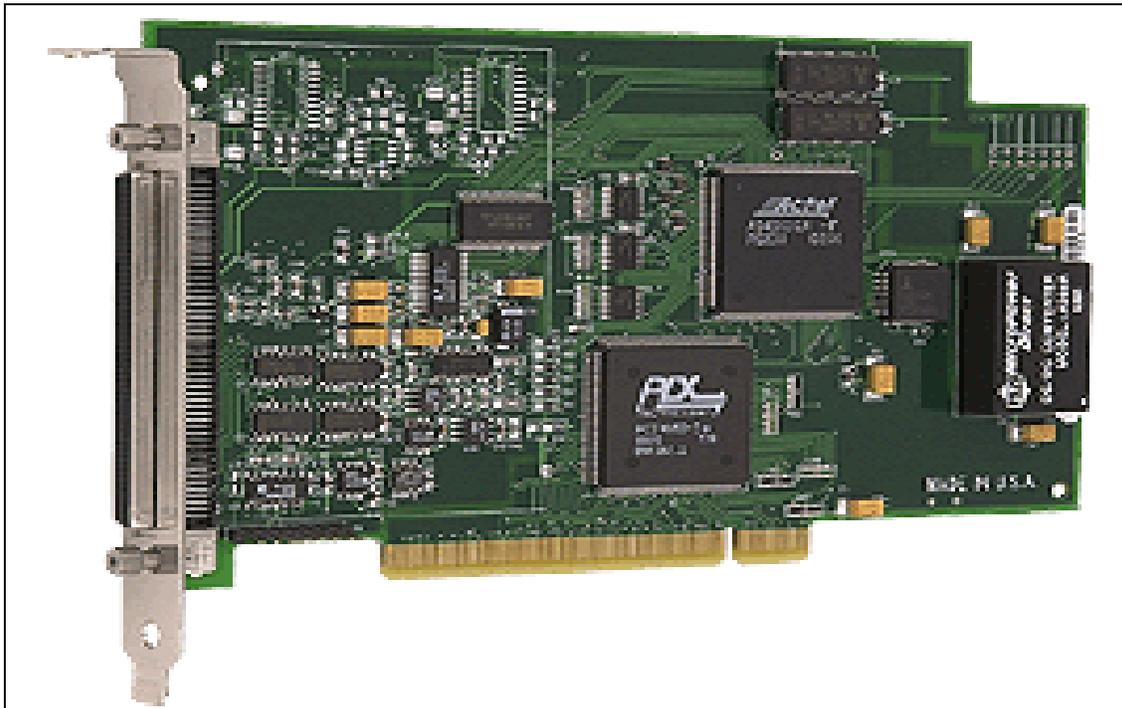


Figure 27: PCI-DAS6013 Board (taken from the manual)

Signal Name	Pin	Pin	Signal Name
GND	100	50	GND
CTR2 OUT	99	49	AUXIN5 / A/D PACER GATE
CTR2 GATE	98	48	AUXIN4 / D/A START TRIGGER
CTR2 CLK	97	47	AUXIN3 / D/A UPDATE
GND	96	46	AUXIN2 / A/D STOP TRIGGER
CTR1 OUT	95	45	AUXIN1 / A/D START TRIGGER
CTR1 GATE	94	44	n/c
CTR1 CLK	93	43	AUXIN0 / A/D CONVERT
DIO7	92	42	AUXOUT2 / SCANCLK
DIO6	91	41	AUXOUT1 / A/D PACER OUT
DIO5	90	40	AUXOUT0 / D/A PACER OUT
DIO4	89	39	PC +5 V
DIO3	88	38	D/A OUT1*
DIO2	87	37	D/A GND*
DIO1	86	36	D/A OUT 0*
DIO0	85	35	AISENSE
n/c	84	34	n/c
n/c	83	33	n/c
n/c	82	32	n/c
n/c	81	31	n/c
n/c	80	30	n/c
n/c	79	29	n/c
n/c	78	28	n/c
n/c	77	27	n/c
n/c	76	26	n/c
n/c	75	25	n/c
n/c	74	24	n/c
n/c	73	23	n/c
n/c	72	22	n/c
n/c	71	21	n/c
n/c	70	20	n/c
n/c	69	19	n/c
n/c	68	18	LLGND
n/c	67	17	CH15 IN
n/c	66	16	CH7 IN
n/c	65	15	CH14 IN
n/c	64	14	CH6 IN
n/c	63	13	CH13 IN
n/c	62	12	CH5 IN
n/c	61	11	CH12 IN
n/c	60	10	CH4 IN
n/c	59	9	CH11 IN
n/c	58	8	CH3 IN
n/c	57	7	CH10 IN
n/c	56	6	CH2 IN
n/c	55	5	CH9 IN
n/c	54	4	CH1 IN
n/c	53	3	CH8 IN
n/c	52	2	CH0 IN
n/c	51	1	LLGND

PCI slot ↓

Figure 28: Pin outs of the PCI DAS 6013, Single-ended mode (from datasheet)

The ADC inputs are labeled as “CH# IN” in the Figure 28 schematic. Channels 0 to 7 are used as WIM inputs, which are the outputs of the Kistler 5038 charge amplifiers. The connection of the ADC channels to the WIM sensors is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: ADC Channel Connections to WIM Sensor Signals

ADC channel number	WIM sensors
CH0	Lane 1, upstream
CH1	Lane 1, downstream
CH2	Lane 2, upstream
CH3	Lane 2, downstream
CH4	Lane 3, upstream
CH5	Lane 3, downstream
CH6	Lane 4, upstream
CH7	Lane 4, downstream

5.2.3 Loop Detector

The UM8-PCI system requires eight loop detectors and two 3M Canoga C924 detector cards were utilized. The same 24V DC power supply used for the charge amplifiers is used to power the C924 cards. This card supplies inputs/outputs through a 22/44 edge connector at the back that are connected to loop inputs and call outputs. The call outputs of the loop detectors are connected to the ADC inputs for fast and accurate detection. The ADC channel allocations for loop call outputs are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: ADC Channel Connections to Loop Call Outputs

ADC channel number	WIM sensors
CH8	Lane 1, upstream
CH9	Lane 1, downstream
CH10	Lane 2, upstream
CH11	Lane 2, downstream
CH12	Lane 3, upstream
CH13	Lane 3, downstream
CH14	Lane 4, upstream
CH15	Lane 4, downstream

The call outputs of loop cards are provided as open-collector outputs from the C924. Since the ADC inputs require a ± 5 voltage range, a 5V regulator was included and connected to a 4.7K pull-up resistor that produces the open collector call outputs. The circuit diagram of loop detector connections is shown in Figure 29.

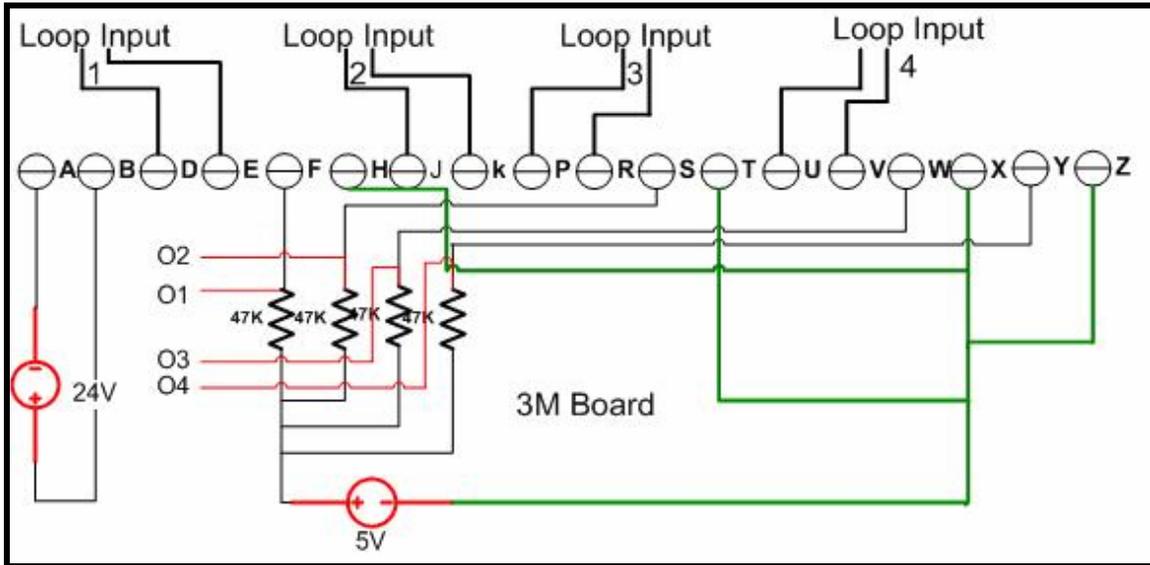


Figure 29: C924 card connections

In Figure 29, “Loop Input 1”, “Loop Input2”, etc correspond to the pair of wires coming from the loops installed in the pavement. The O1, O2, O3, and O4 are the call output signals for loops 1-4 connected to the ADC channels as specified in Table 5. The lane numbers correspond to the site diagram shown in Figure 22. Table 6 summarizes the edge card pin assignments of the C824 card (WHAT IS THIS CARD?). This table should be used for the Figure 29 connections. The finalized internal components and connections of the WIM signal interface box is shown in Figure 30.

Table 6: C924 Card Edge-Connector Assignments

Pin	Function
A	Common of +VDC (0 VDC)
B	+VDC (+10.8 VDC to 38 VDC)
D	Channel 1 Loop Input A
E	Channel 1 Loop Input B
F	Channel 1 Switch/Call Output (C)
H	Channel 1 Switch/Call Output (E)
J	Channel 2 Loop Input A
K	Channel 2 Loop Input B
P	Channel 3 Loop Input A
R	Channel 3 Loop Input B
S	Channel 3 Switch/Call Output (C)
T	Channel 3 Switch/Call Output (E)
U	Channel 4 Loop Input A
V	Channel 4 Loop Input B
W	Channel 2 Switch/Call Output (C)
X	Channel 2 Switch/Call Output (E)
Y	Channel 4 Switch/Call Output (C)
Z	Channel 4 Switch/Call Output (E)

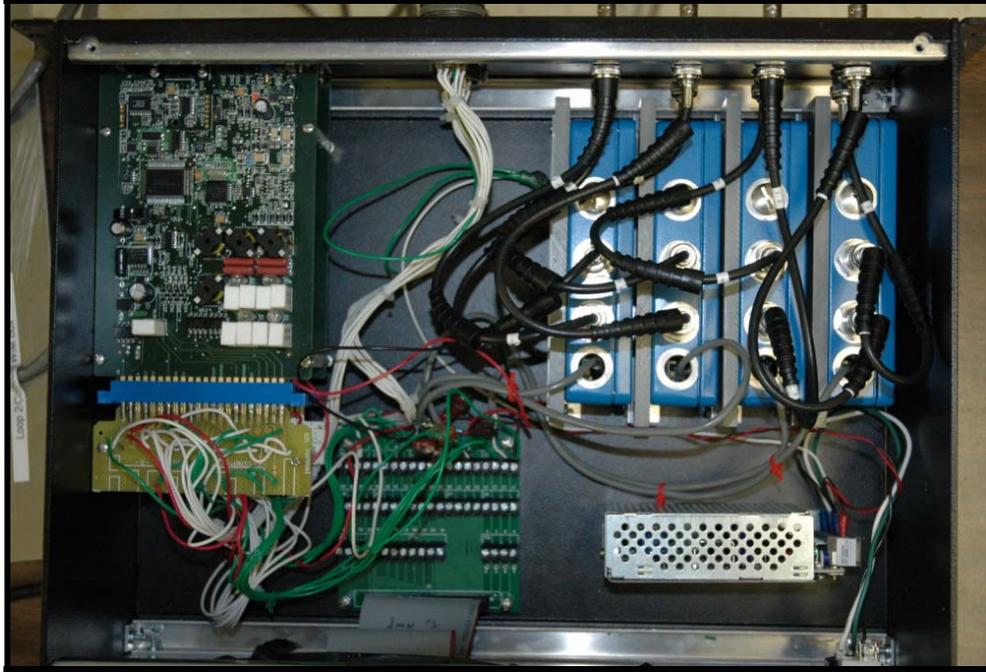


Figure 30: Internal components and connections of the WIM signal interface box

5.2.4 BNC Splice Box

It was found that existing T-connectors of BNC cables created frequent contact problems. This led to critical errors during axle weight computations, such as missing or partial weights. In order to correct the problems and create reliable BNC connections, a splice box was designed and constructed. At the Highway 61 site, a total of 32 BNC connectors come from the Kistler Lines sensors that must be spliced from two or four lines into one. In order to facilitate the original IRD connections, a toggle switch is connected to combine either two or four BNC inputs connected in the same column. Figures 31 and 32 illustrate the top view and side view of the BNC splice box.

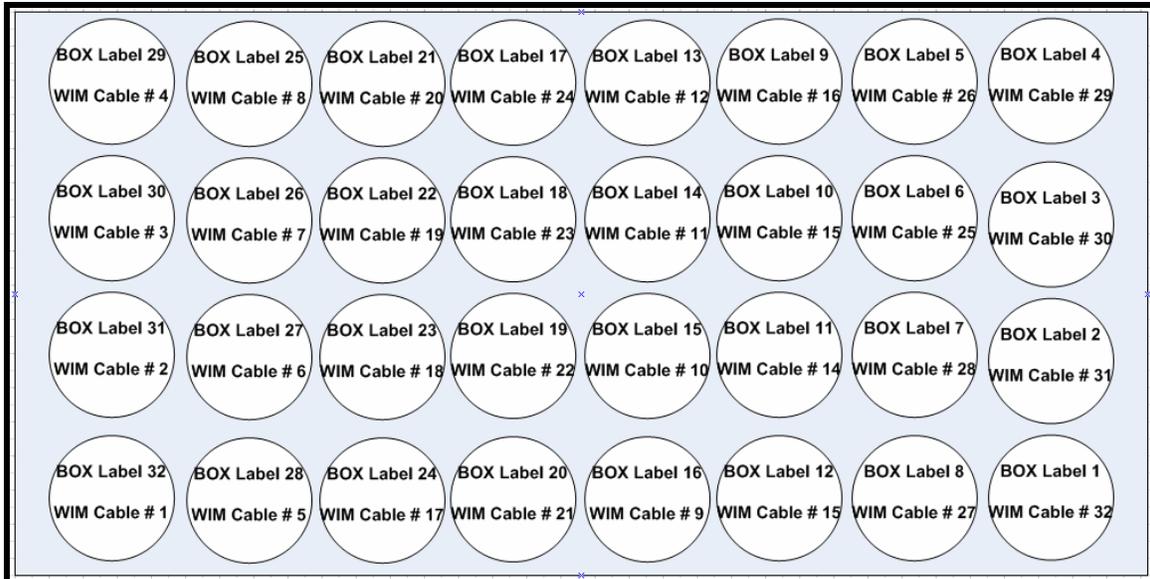


Figure 31: BNC Splice Box Top View

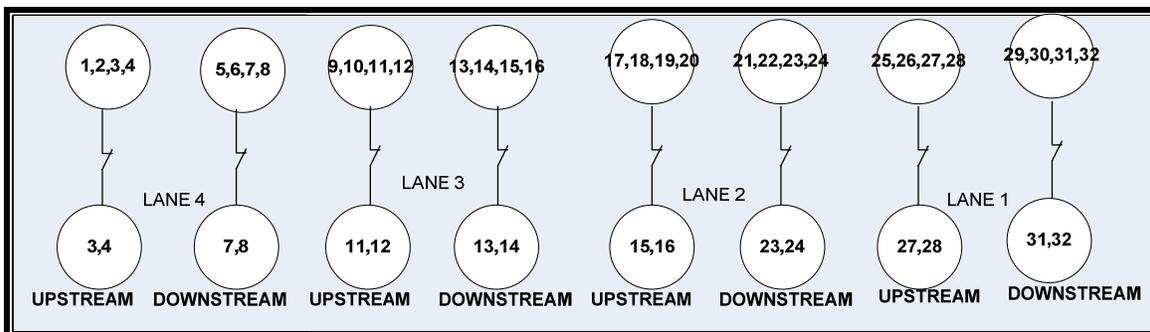


Figure 32: BNC Splice Box Front View

The complexity of this arrangement is due to the discrepancy between the IRD system and the UM8-PCI system. The IRD system contains twelve BNC inputs as opposed to eight BNC inputs: however, the toggle switch enabled compatibility between the two systems. The numbering scheme in the IRD panel and the original BNC wire numbers correspond to the panel numbers and are specified in Figures 31 and 32.

As mentioned above, the top (part) of splice box has the BNC inputs from the piezoelectric sensors corresponding to the lane while front has the BNC outputs that must be connected to the inputs of the ADC. The switch is present in front part of the BNC splice box and has a lock for safety. This switch can be locked or unlocked by turning the head a half cycle. Figure 33 shows the UM8-PCI BNC splice box and Figure 34 illustrates the IRD panel and its cable numbering scheme.



Figure 33: BNC Splice Box



Figure 34: IRD panel and cable numbering scheme

In the BNC box, the “On” (up) position of the switch connects the four BNC inputs in the same column on the top side to the upper BNC on the side panel of the BNC box. When the switch is in the “Off” (down) position, the first and second BNC inputs in the corresponding column are connected to the upper BNC on the side panel, and the third and fourth BNC inputs are connected in the corresponding column on the lower BNC side panel. The detailed connections to the Lineas wire numbers and the numbers in the splice box are shown in Tables 7 and 8. To use the IRD system, switches 1,2,7,8 should be at the down (off) position while switches 3,4,5,6 should be at the up (on) position. While using the UM8-PCI system all switches should be at up positions.

Table 7: WIM sensor Number corresponding BNC box Number

Table: WIM Sensor Cable Number Corresponding Customize BNC Box

Cable	Box														
32	1	26	5	16	9	12	13	24	17	20	21	8	25	4	29
31	2	25	6	15	10	11	14	23	18	19	22	7	26	3	30
30	3	28	7	14	11	10	15	22	19	18	23	6	27	2	31
29	4	27	8	13	12	9	16	21	20	17	24	5	28	1	32

Where:
Cable: WIM Sensor Cable Number (LABEL- Red Color)
Box: WIM is BNC Customize Box (BOX Number – Black Color)

Table 8: Original WIM cable number corresponding BNC box number

Cable #	IRD #	Cable #	IRD #	Cable #	IRD #	Cable #	IRD #	Cable #	IRD #	Cable #	IRD #	Cable #	IRD #	Cable #	IRD #
32 31	4	26 25	2	16 15 14 13	8	12 11 10 9	7	24 23 22 21	6	20 19 18 17	5	8 7	12	4 3	10
30 29	3	28 27	1									6 5	11	2 1	9

Note:

IRD #: IRD System (LABEL- Red Color)
 Cable #: WIM Input Cable Number (LABEL- Red Color)

5.2.5 Surge Arrester

A surge arrester is used to protect the WIM system from any undesired or unwanted voltage fluctuations. High voltage fluctuations can damage the system without warning. A spark occurs whenever surge voltages exceed the electric strength of the system’s insulation. Discharge by a surge arrester limits the surge voltage and reduces the interference energy within a short period of time. As the arc with its high current handling capability is ignited, a further rise in surge voltage is prevented due to its low internal voltage. Gas-filled arresters utilize this natural principle of limiting surge voltages. The general connection diagram for a surge arrester is shown in Figure 35.

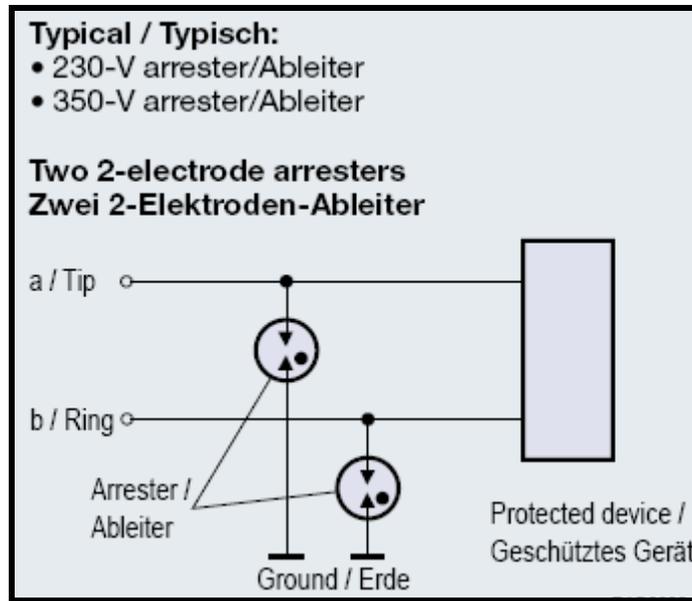


Figure 35: Schematic diagram of surge arrester connection

5.2.6 Loop Splice Panel

In the old loop connections, the coaxial cables of the loop wires were connected through Din-Rail mounted terminal blocks (cage clamp type). One problem experienced with that type of connector was that the contact problems inside the clamp could not be visually identified. To eliminate this issue, visually verifiable connectors were designed using barrier terminal blocks. The fork type splice ends provided more reliable contacts. In addition, surge arresters were added to protect against events such as lightning. The part chosen was a 2pin 230V Gas-tube surge arrester (Digikey Part No: 495-1471-ND). The modified splice panel for loop wires coming from the pavement is shown in Figure 36.

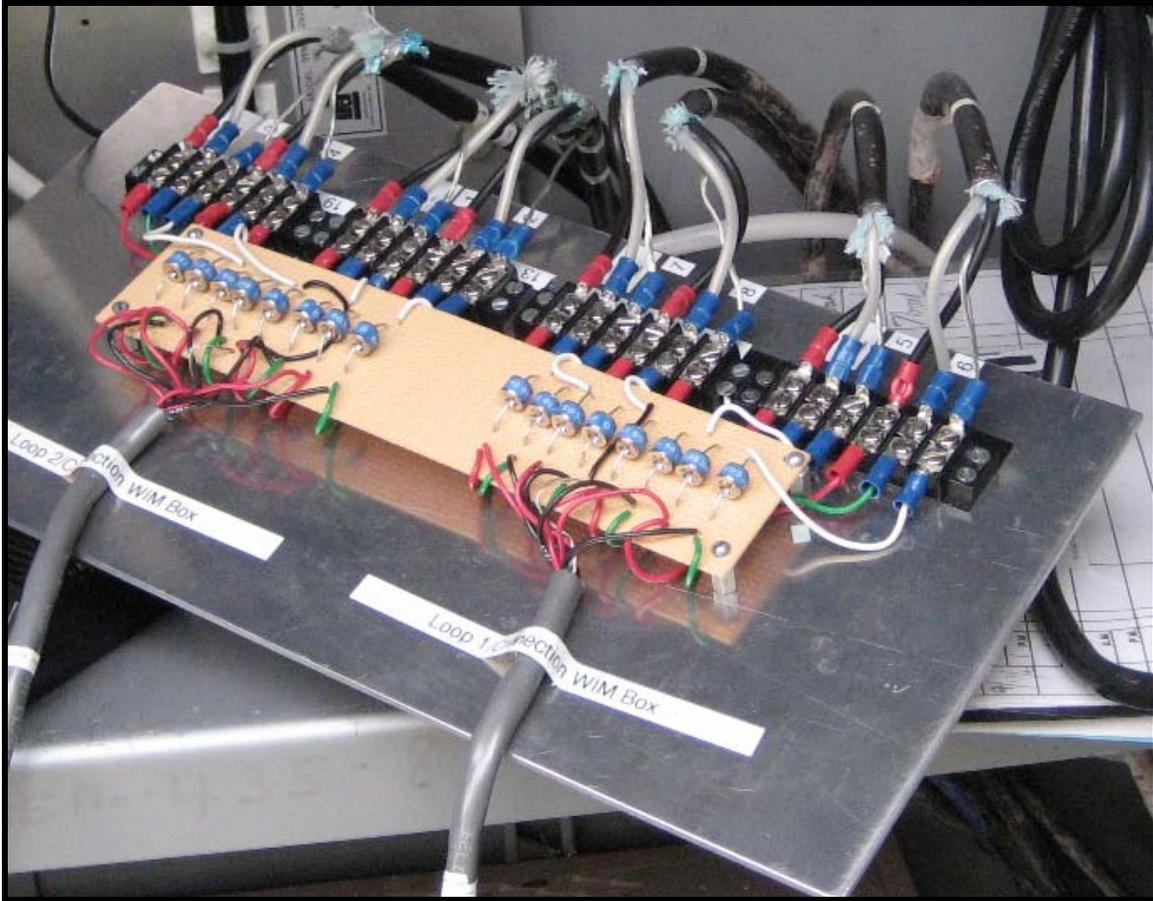


Figure 36: Loop wire splice panel

The loop cables at the Highway 61 site are numbered from 1 to 8. Each cable consists of three contacts, two loop wire ends, and one ground. Since each lane has two loops, six contacts per lane are spliced to the panel with clearly marked lane numbers. The detailed connections from the loop wires to the splice panel are shown in Figure 37. Installation to the existing panel is shown in Figure 38.

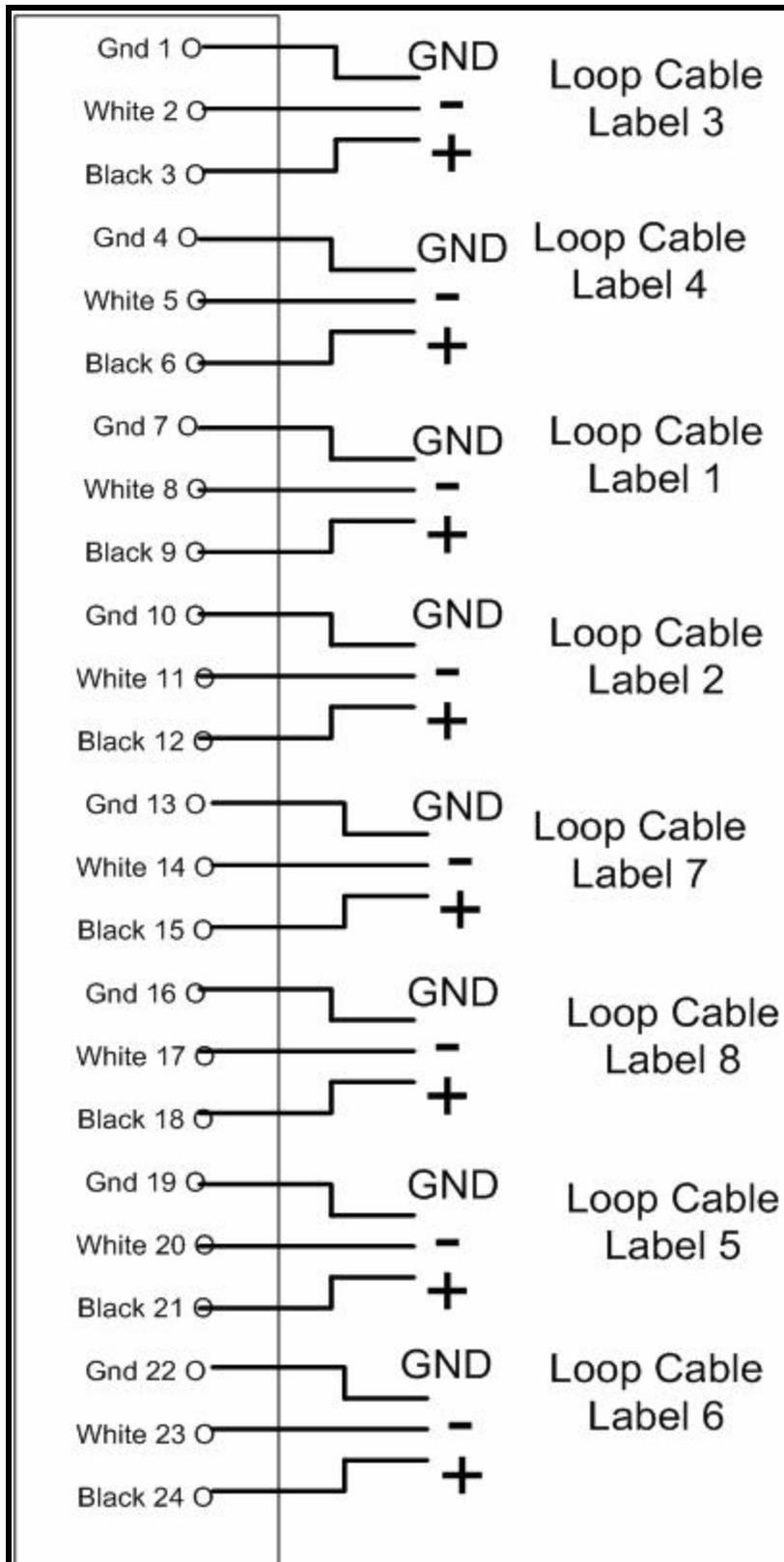


Figure 37: Loop connections and numbering

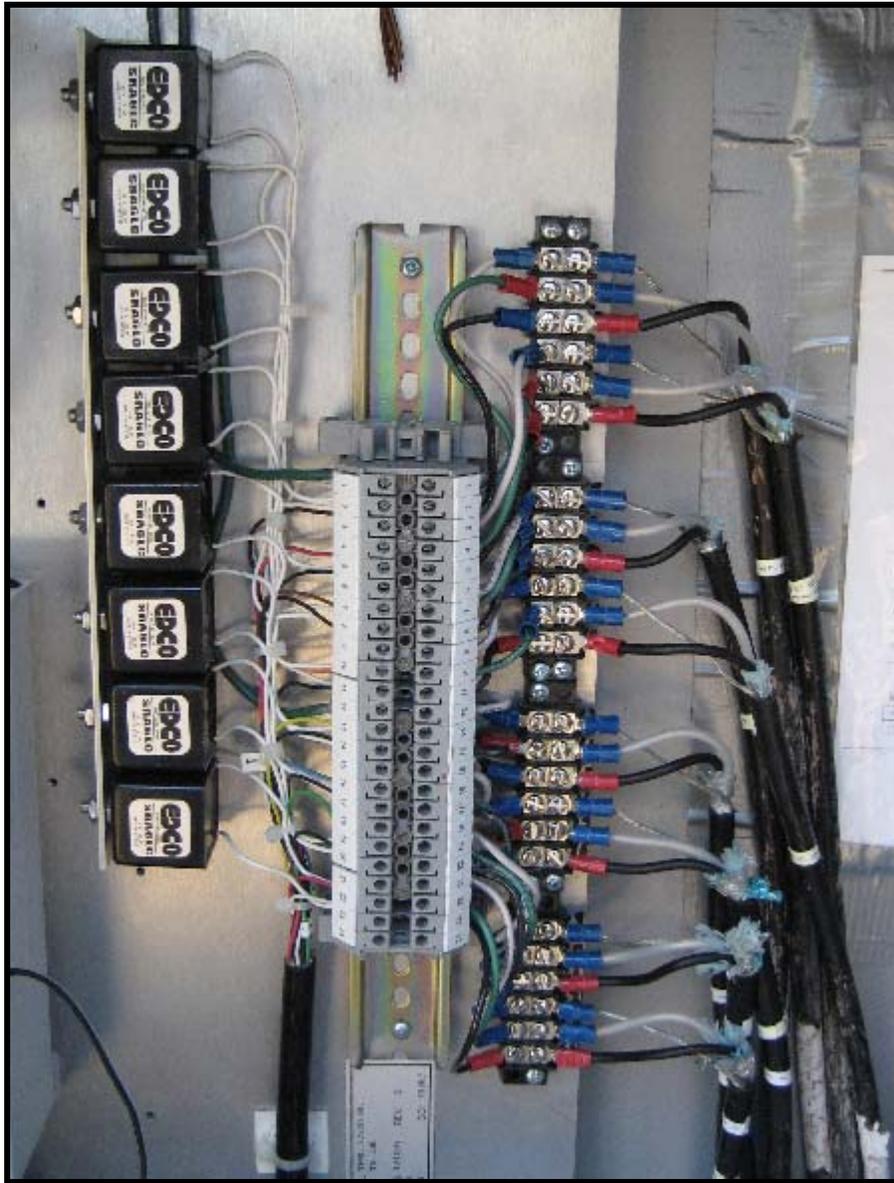


Figure 38: Loop connections

5.2.7 WIM Signal Interface Box Cable Connections

The BNC connections of the Lineas sensor cables to the WIM signal interface box are shown in the Figure 39. Each column corresponds to each lane, while the top and bottom rows correspond to upstream and downstream sensors, respectively. The loop detector shows the status of the loop using LED panel lights, as shown in Figure 40. For each loop, one green and one red LED light is used for system status identification. When

a vehicle is detected, the green LED turns ON and remains ON while the vehicle is present on the loop. If the red light cycles between ON and OFF, a faulty condition exists on the corresponding loop. When both lights are OFF, the loop is active but idle. The details of red LED light diagnostic codes are available in the C924 manual.

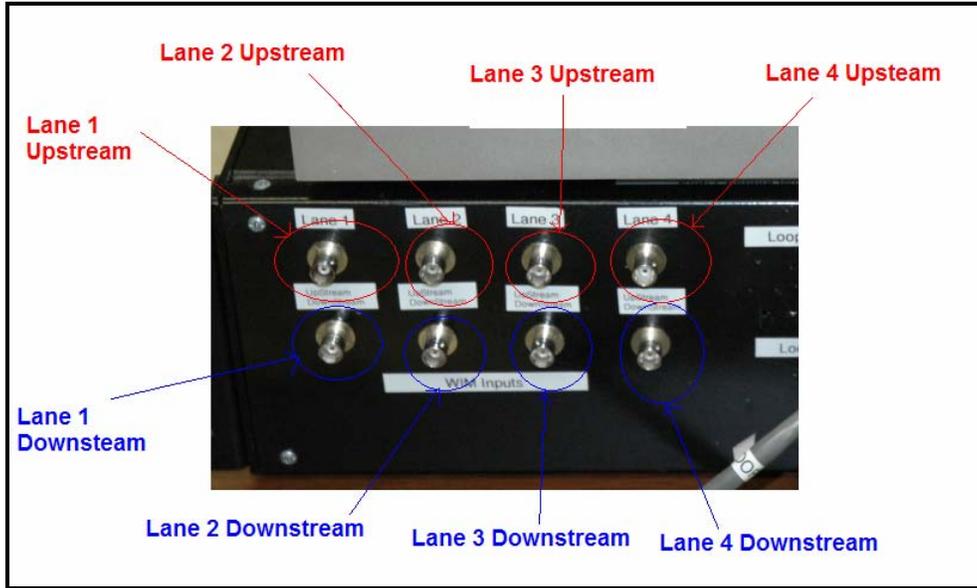


Figure 39: WIM cable connection to system

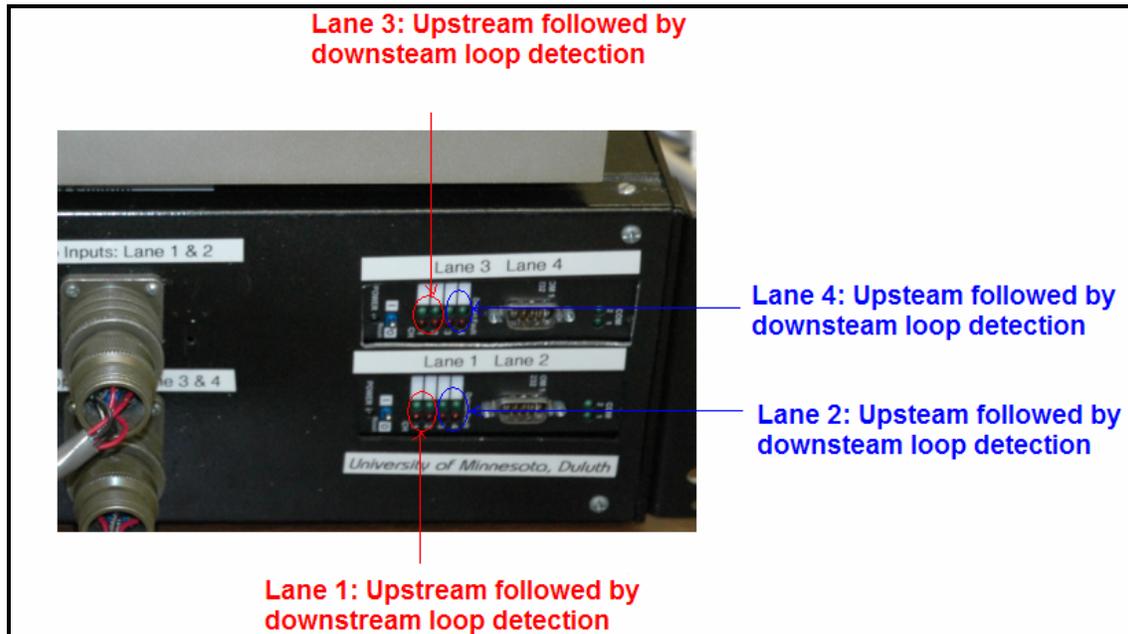


Figure 40: Loop card light indicator

The ribbon cable from the UM8-PCI is connected to the ADC adapter on the back of the PC (shown in Figure 41).



Figure 41: Connecting cable and back PC connection

5.3 Software

5.3.1 Overview

The development tool used for this project was VB.NET 2003 and Teechart Pro ActiveX (for signal plotting). VB.NET was used as it provides full object oriented programming and sophisticated graphical user interfaces.

The digitized data is collected from the 16 channels of ADC: the WIM data from the first eight channels and the loop data from the remaining channels. Since the sampling rate is 4,096 samples per seconds, a total of 65,536 samples of 16-bit data is produced every second. In each frame (one second), the process looks for vehicle presence from the loop signals. If a vehicle is detected, the vehicle speed, axle spacing and weight, and the total gross weight are computed. In order to provide sensor signal quality, the signals are plotted as each frame of data is acquired from the ADC board.

The software is capable of computing the vehicle weight in the absence of one of the two loop signals (upstream or downstream). The software requires three seconds to update the loop information, and it will automatically adjust and start computing the required WIM parameters after failure of the upstream loop. The accuracy might be decreased slightly (less than 10 percent) but, if both WIM signals are present, the accuracy decrease is negligible. In the case of a downstream loop failure, the software waits up to three seconds to scan the loop signal, and then processes the WIM signal without the downstream loop. The accuracy will not be affected in the case of an absent downstream loop, but, in some cases, the software may fail to identify the end point of the vehicle.

In the above cases (one of the loop failures), an error message will be generated by the software identifying the upstream, downstream, or end of vehicle detection problem. If the loop cables are connected in an incorrect order, the software will detect it and report a corresponding error message. It should be noted that the system will not work if both the upstream and downstream loops fail. However, if the raw data is recorded, the software could be made to compute the parameters without the loop information. In the absence of both WIM signals, no output can be generated. This is due to inability to compute the vehicle weights without WIM signals. If both the upstream and downstream WIM signals are present, the required parameters are computed by averaging the weight computed from each.

The software provides the status of loops using color coded squares. The square becomes green when a vehicle is detected, no color if no loop activity is detected, and red if a failure condition is detected.

5.3.2 Computation Flow and Implementation

The WIM computation algorithm is complex and summarized using a large flowchart shown Figures 42-44 on the subsequent pages.

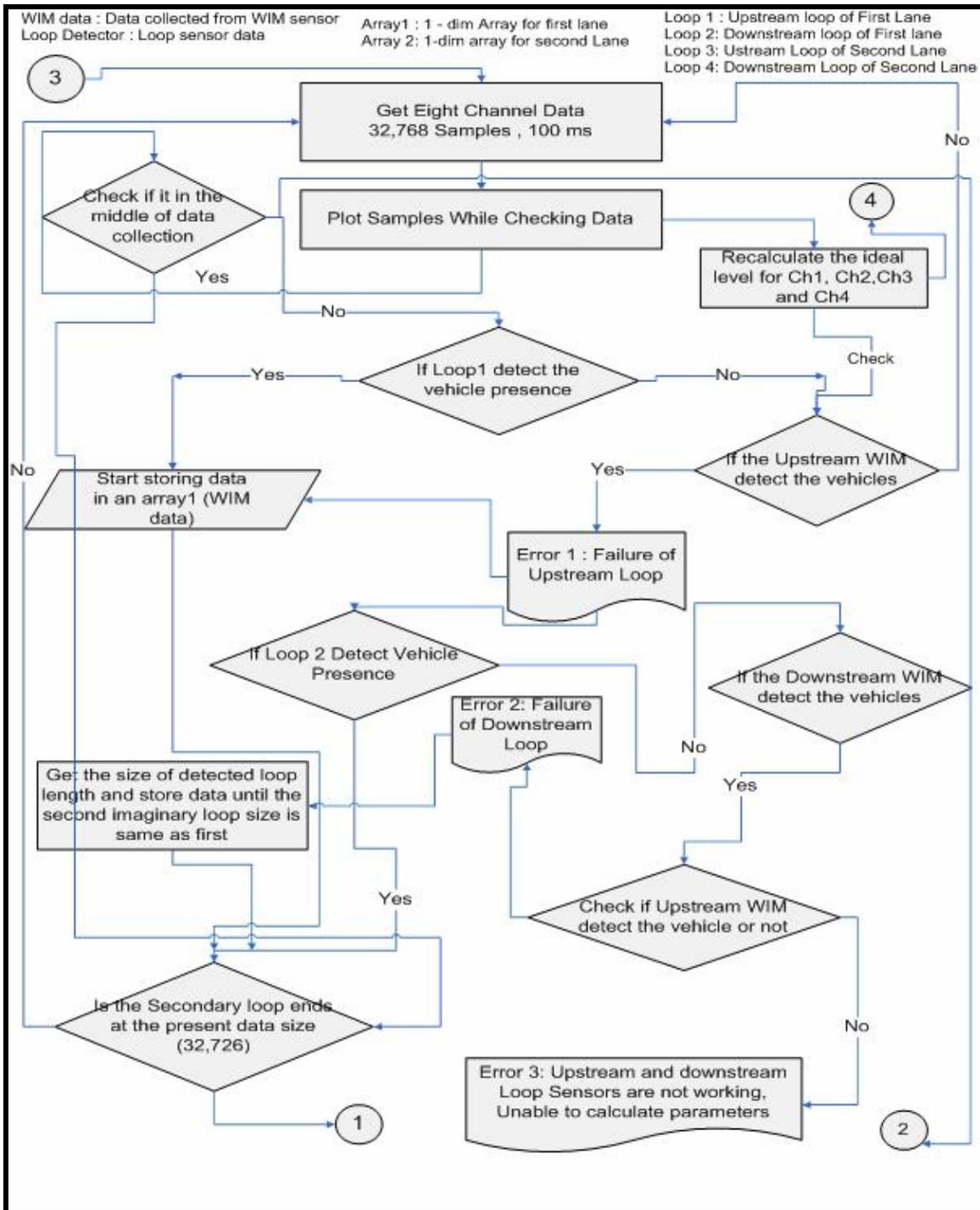


Figure 42: WIM computation flowchart: 1 of 3

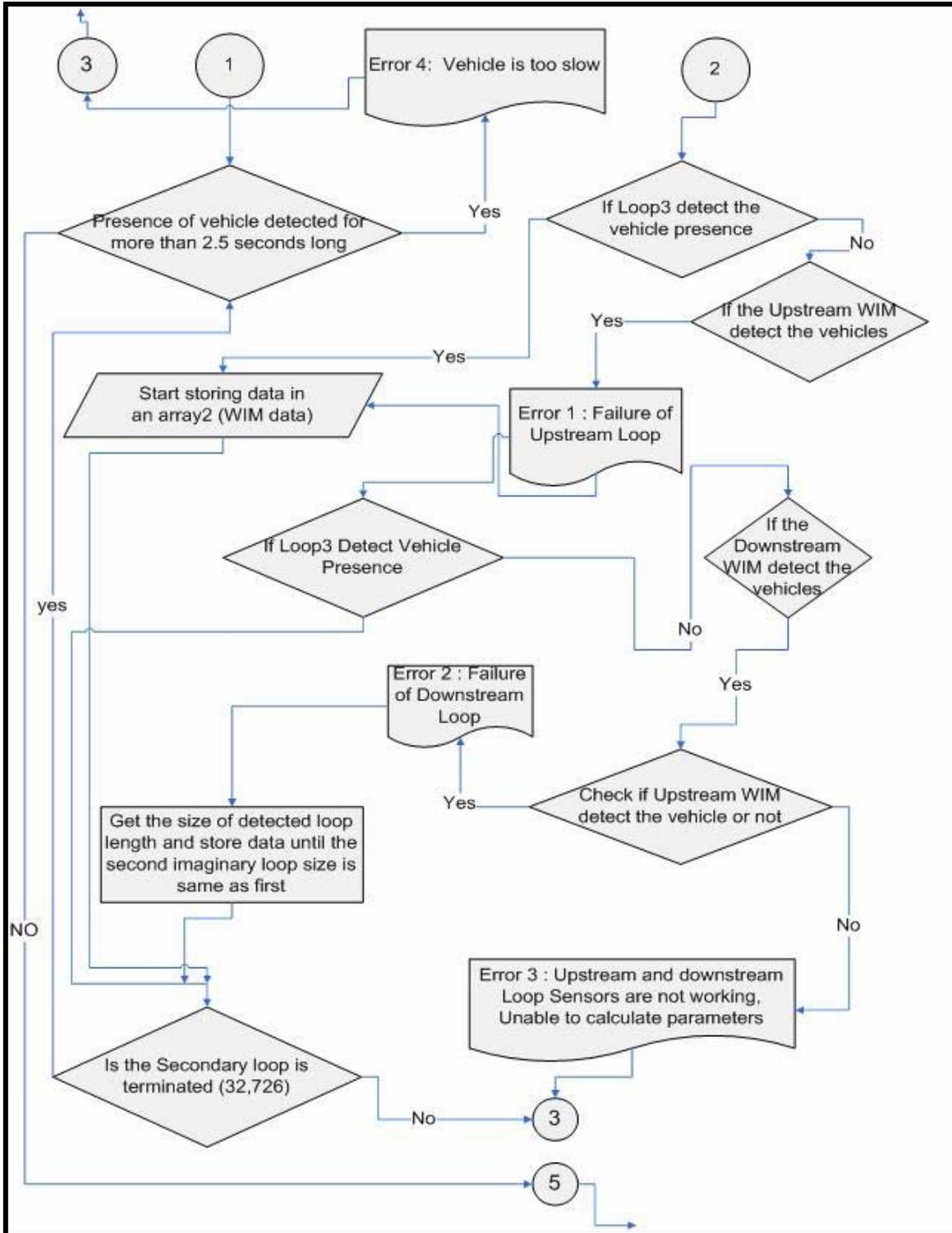


Figure 43: WIM computation flowchart: 2 of 3

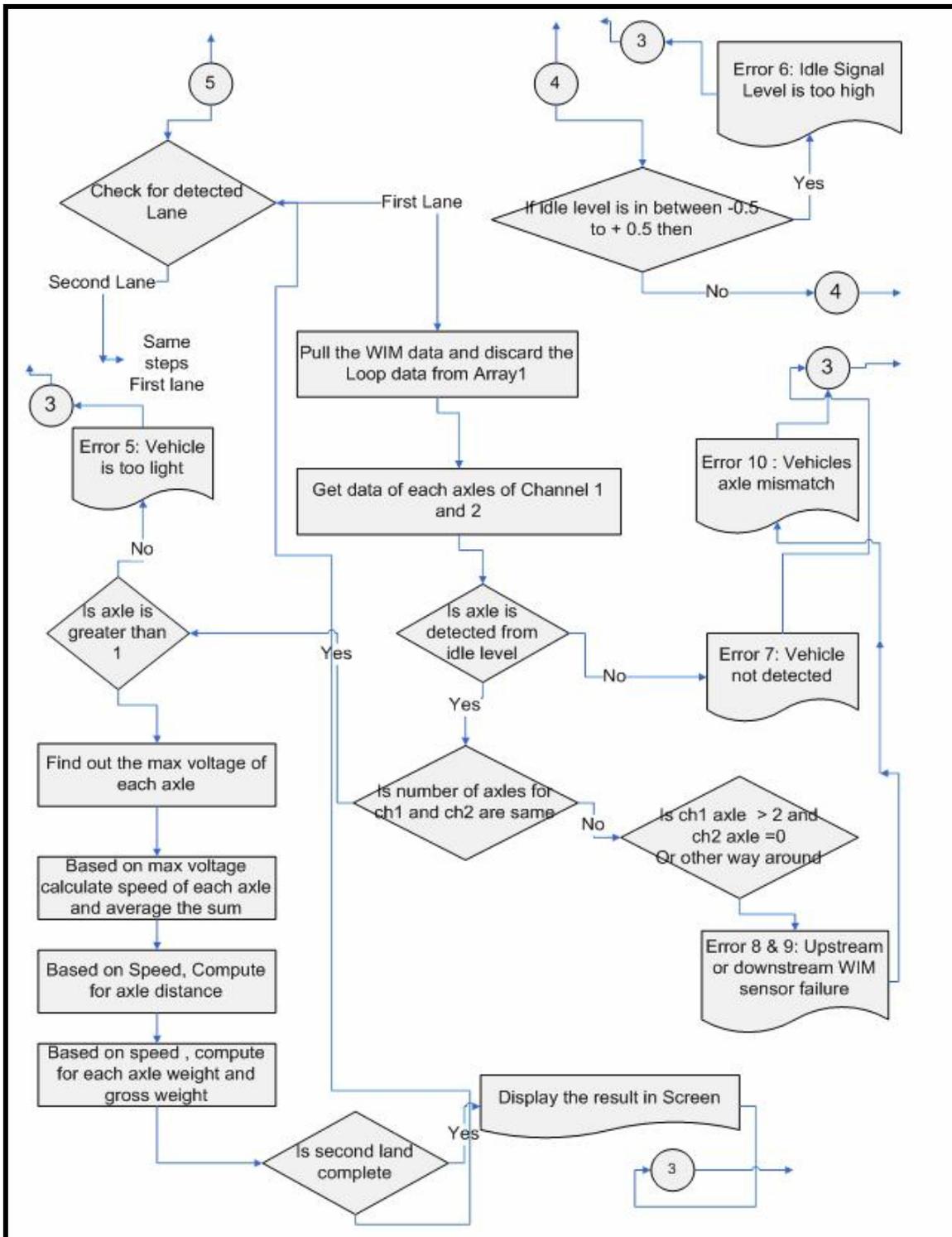


Figure 44: WIM computation flowchart: 3 of 3

5.3.3 Error Codes

An error code is generated as the WIM system encounters error conditions during the signal processing and computations. Each condition is encoded with a three-digit error code. The thirteen conditions are described below.

Err 101. Upstream Loop Failure

The “upstream loop failure” message is generated if the system does not detect the upstream loop signal. When the loop is working correctly and no vehicle is present, the loop signal stays at a constant voltage, 5V. When the loop card detects a vehicle, the signal level drops to about 0.62V. But when the system finds the voltage level at 0.62V for more than three seconds without any presence of vehicle detected from the axle signal, the system identifies a loop failure. The WIM computation is based on the assumption that a vehicle moves on the sensor at a constant speed. If a vehicle takes more than three seconds to pass the sensor, the constant speed assumption cannot be met. In most cases, it is likely the loop is in a stuck-on failure state. Consequently, loop signals longer than three seconds are considered as failures. Under this condition, red color appears on the corresponding square in the loop calls of the display. This error can often be easily corrected by making a firm connection on the loop splice panel and resetting the loop card.

Err 102. Downstream Loop Failure

The downstream loop failure message is generated if the system cannot detect the downstream loop signal. This problem may be corrected using the aforementioned remedy in the upstream loop failure case.

Err 103. Upstream and Downstream Loop Failure

The upstream and downstream loop failure message is generated if the system cannot detect both the upstream and the downstream loop signals. This generally occurs when both loops have bad contacts to the splice panel.

Err 104. Loop in Wrong Order

This message is generated if the upstream and downstream loop connections are swapped. It can also occur if a vehicle passes the site in the wrong direction. For instance, during a lane closure on a four-lane segment or simply when a vehicle passes another at the WIM site on a two-lane road. It should be pointed out that if the loop is swapped with one in another lane, only failure of upstream or downstream message is generated.

Err 105. High/Low Idle Level

This message is generated if the idle level of the upstream or downstream axle sensors is not close to zero. When the idle signal level increases or decreases significantly, particularly more than $\pm 1V$ from zero, the load computation accuracy is affected. This problem could be due to a charge amplifier that needs time to stabilize after an initial system reboot.

Err 106. Maximum number of Axles Detected

According to Mn/DOT specifications, the maximum number of axles a vehicle can have is 15. This error message is generated if this threshold is exceeded.

Err 107. Zero Axle Detected

When a loop detector detects the presence of a vehicle but the axle sensors do not respond accordingly, this message is generated. It could be an indication of failure of both upstream and downstream WIM sensors. If the signal levels are too low in reference to the idle level or if the vehicle is too light, this message could also be generated. If this error appears, the connections of WIM cables should be checked and the power of the UM8-PCI should be re-circulated (do not reset the computer).

Err 108. Unequal Axle Count

This message is generated if the axles counted by upstream axle signal differs from the axles counted by the downstream sensors. Noise is a possible cause of this error. This problem is usually transient, but if it is continuously reported, there may be a problem with one of axle sensors or cables.

Err 109. Zero Axles Found by Upstream WIM

This error message is generated when no axle signal is found from the upstream WIM sensor signal after the loop detector senses the presence of a vehicle. This condition is a critical error as the vehicle speed cannot be computed using one WIM strip. It should be noted that failure of one WIM cable in a strip could lead to a failure of the entire strip. Removing the failed WIM sensor from the summed BNC (WIM strip?) can be temporarily fix this problem, but a full inspection is necessary to get a correct reading.

Err 110. Axle Sensor in Wrong Order

This error message is generated when the software detects that the downstream axle signal occurred earlier than the upstream axle signal. This error is caused by swapped connections of upstream and downstream WIM sensors in the same lane. It could also indicate that a vehicle traveled in the opposite direction the typical setup. It should also be noted that if the WIM sensors were swapped with another lane, only failure of the upstream or downstream WIM sensor (Err 104 or Err 105) would be generated.

Err 111. Axle Spacing is Too Short

This message is generated if the computed axle spacing is less than one foot. It is rare, but could happen as a result of noise and could lead to an incorrect axle load computation.

Err 112. Zero Axle Found by Downstream WIM

This message is generated if no axle signal is found from the downstream WIM signals after the loop detectors senses the presence of a vehicle.

Err 113. Vehicle too Slow

This message is generated if a loop detects the presence of a vehicle more than three continuous seconds. This error message also appears at the first time of failure of any loop. When this error message appears, the system discards the data collected and no weight output is reported.

5.3.4 ESALs

Equivalent Single Axle Loads, or ESALs, indicate the relative damage to a pavement structure compared to a standard axle. The accepted standard is an 80 kN (18,000 lb) single axle load with dual tires. The ESAL concept was developed at the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) Road Test that was conducted from 1958-1961 in Ottawa, Illinois. Two similar equations (one each for flexible and rigid pavements) exist and were used for calculation in the UM8-PCI system.

For ESAL calculation, axles are classified into three axle groups where different multiplication factors are applied for each group. Axle group means two or more axles where an individual axle is spaced less than 8 feet and 1 inch from any other axle, as measured from the centers of the axles. The axle groups are (1) steering and single axle group, (2) tandem axle group, and (3) tridem axle group.

Single axle group: An assembly of two or more wheels whose centers are in one transverse vertical plane not less than 8 feet and 1 inch from another axle, and extending across the full width of the vehicle.

Tandem axle group: Two or more consecutive axles more than 40 inches (3.4 feet) but not more than 96 inches apart (8 feet). Note that if three axles were within that distance, it would be considered a tandem axle for the purpose of Interstate weight limits [40].

Tridem axle group: Tridem axle group means a group of three axles that are attached to a vehicle with a connecting mechanism, with each separate axle located less than 8 feet and 1 inch from the other axles [40].

5.3.5 Calculation of ESALs

Implemented mathematical formula to calculate the ESAL follows the simplified California model [40] and is given by:

$$ESAL = n * \left(\frac{axle_group_load(KN)}{n * 80(KN)} \right)^{4.2} \quad (24)$$

where, n is 1 for steering and single axle group, 2 for tandem axle group, 3 for tridem axle group; $axle_group_load(LN)$ is the load summation of axle or axles which are less than 8 feet 1 inch apart. Note that Eq. (24) does not include structural capacity (SN or PCC thickness), and terminal serviceability (pt), which are part of the AASHTO methods. One of the criticisms for the AASHTO ESAL method is that the load spectra information is buried (lost) in the ESAL and cannot be restored. Therefore, Eq. (24) was developed based on average across all pavement types, all distress mechanisms, and ride quality [40].

The AASHTO design procedures indicate the effect of traffic loads on pavement condition. The effect of a single axle on flexible or rigid pavement increases approximately a fourth power function of the axle load, commonly referred to as the fourth power law. For example, a 36,000 lb single axle load is only twice as large as an 18,000 lb axle load, but it causes 17 times more loss in pavement life. The ESAL concept indicates this damage factor.

In Eq. (24), the axle group load refers to those axles that are less than 8 feet apart. The summation of all axle loads is considered as a group axle load. The axle group load is calculated in kilonewtons in Eq. (24). Steering and single axles with large loads are more detrimental to pavement life when compared to 2 for tandem axle group or 3 for tridem axle group with the same load.

The calculation of ESALs in the WIM software is based on the above principle. For example, consider the five-axle semi truck shown in Figure 45. There is one single axle group (first axle of truck), followed by a tandem axle group (2nd and 3rd axle from the front) and two single axle groups (4th and 5th).

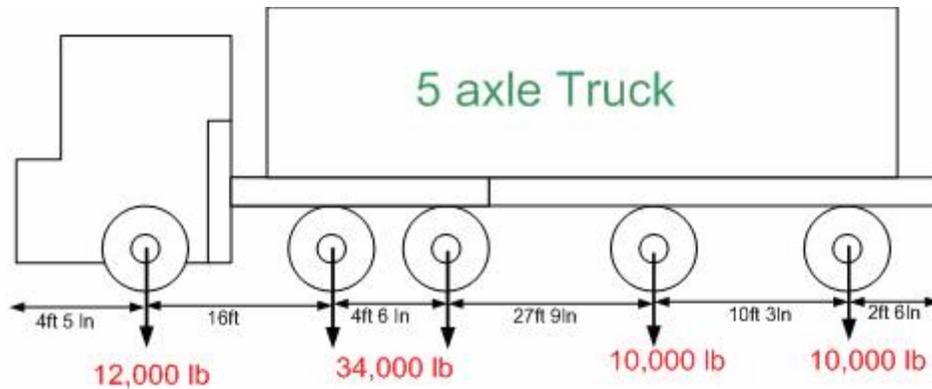


Figure 45: Five-axle truck used for ESAL computation example

The 1st axle (from front) of the example truck is a single axle group, and its load is 12,000lb. ESAL for this axle is computed by,

$$ESAL_{1^{st} \text{ axle}} = 1 * \left(\frac{12 * 4.448KN}{1 * 80KN} \right)^{4.2} = 0.182$$

where the multiplication factor of 4.448 exists to convert from pounds to Newtons.

The second and third axles each weigh 17,000 lb but are less than 8 ft 1 in apart (4ft 6in), so they are considered as single axle of weight 34,000lb and belong to a tandem axle group. Thus, the ESALs for 2nd and 3rd axles is one value and is computed using the tandem axle group value, 2, i.e.,

$$ESAL_{2^{nd} \ \& \ 3^{rd} \ \text{axle}} = 2 * \left(\frac{34 * 4.448}{2 * 80KN} \right)^{4.2} = 1.578 \text{ for a flexible pavement with}$$

SN = 5, pt = 2.5, this is 1.09 (for a 34,000 tandem)

The forth axle has a load of 10,000 lb and is apart 27ft 9inch from the third axle and 10ft 3inch from the 5th axle. So this axle is considered as a single axle group, and its ESAL is computed as,

$$ESAL_{4^{th} \ \text{axle}} = 1 * \left(\frac{10 * 4.448}{1 * 80KN} \right)^{4.2} = 0.08497$$

Similarly, fifth axle has a load of 10,000lb and is apart 10ft 3 inch from the forth axle. So it is considered as single axle group, and its ESAL is computed as,

$$ESAL_{5^{th} \ \text{axle}} = 1 * \left(\frac{10 * 4.448}{1 * 80KN} \right)^{4.2} = 0.08497$$

The final ESAL for the truck is then computed by adding all of the ESALs computed for each axle groups. That is

$$ESAL = 0.182 + 1.578 + 0.08497 + 0.08497 = 1.9298$$

It should be noted that this ESAL result is different from the AASHTO table computation. More specifically, ESAL for a SN = 5, pt = 2.5 with a 12,000 single, two 10,000 singles, and a 34,000 tandem, AASHTO table produces 1.455.

Since ESALs can be recomputed from the vehicle records of WIM data, they are only shown on the system screen but not stored as a part of the final WIM data.

5.3.6 Vehicle Classifications

Vehicle classification is established according to the classification specification provided by Mn/DOT. Mn/DOT's classification algorithm is specified based on axle weight, axle spacing, and gross vehicle weight. The software classifies each vehicle record using Mn/DOT's supplied text file.

To illustrate the Mn/DOT classification algorithm specification, a sample screen shown is in Figure 46. The first and second rows specify the class and the number of axles, respectively. In the example, the definition is for Class 7 with 6 axles. Following "SPACING" are the applicable range of axle spacings, expressed in cm (centimeter). The example has five columns under the SPACING section since the vehicle has 6 axles.

After the "AXLE WEIGHTS" row, the subsequent two rows define the weight range of each axle. Similarly to the axle spacing, the first row specifies the minimum and the second specifies the maximum, expressed in pounds. Under the "GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT" heading the GVW is defined using a minimum and maximum. In the example, GVW is specified between 0 and 100,000 pounds. It should be noted that the numerical values are specified without commas.

The classification format provided by Mn/DOT is slightly different from the classification specified by the FHWA. The FHWA classification shown in Figure 47 is more visually identifiable. It is based on the number and spacing of axles but does not include a weight parameter.

Text file format:

Classification: 7

Number of axles: 6

SPACING

Min.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Max	32767.0	178.0	3	2767.0	178.0	178.0

AXLE WEIGHTS

Min.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Max.	32767	32767	32767	32767	32767	32767

GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT

Min.	0
Max.	100000

Figure 46: Classification Format provided by Mn/DOT

FHWA VEHICLE CLASSIFICATION

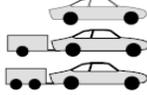
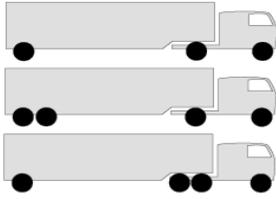
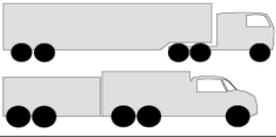
CLASS GROUP		DESCRIPTION	NO. OF AXLES
1		MOTORCYCLES	2
2		ALL CARS CARS W/ 1-AXLE TRAILER CARS W/ 2-AXLE TRAILER	2 3 4
3		PICK-UPS & VANS 1 & 2 AXLE TRAILERS	2, 3, & 4
4		BUSES	2 & 3
5		2-AXLE, SINGLE UNIT	2
6		3-AXLE, SINGLE UNIT	3
7		4-AXLE, SINGLE UNIT	4
HEAVY TRUCKS		2-AXLE, TRACTOR, 1-AXLE TRAILER (2&1)	3
		2-AXLE, TRACTOR, 2-AXLE TRAILER (2&2)	4
		3-AXLE, TRACTOR, 1-AXLE TRAILER (3&1)	4
		3-AXLE, TRACTOR, 2-AXLE TRAILER (3&2)	5
		3-AXLE, TRUCK W/ 2-AXLE TRAILER	5
		TRACTOR W/ SINGLE TRAILER	6 & 7
	5-AXLE MULTI-TRAILER	5	
	6-AXLE MULTI-TRAILER	6	
13	ANY 7 OR MORE AXLE		7 or more
14	NOT USED		
15	UNKNOWN VEHICLE TYPE		

Figure 47: FHWA Vehicle Classification

5.4 Graphical User Interface and Operations

5.4.1 Main Window

The graphical user interface of the UM8-PCI WIM system is shown in Figure 48. The design philosophy of the user interface was minimalism and ease of operation. The buttons and display windows are described in the following sections.

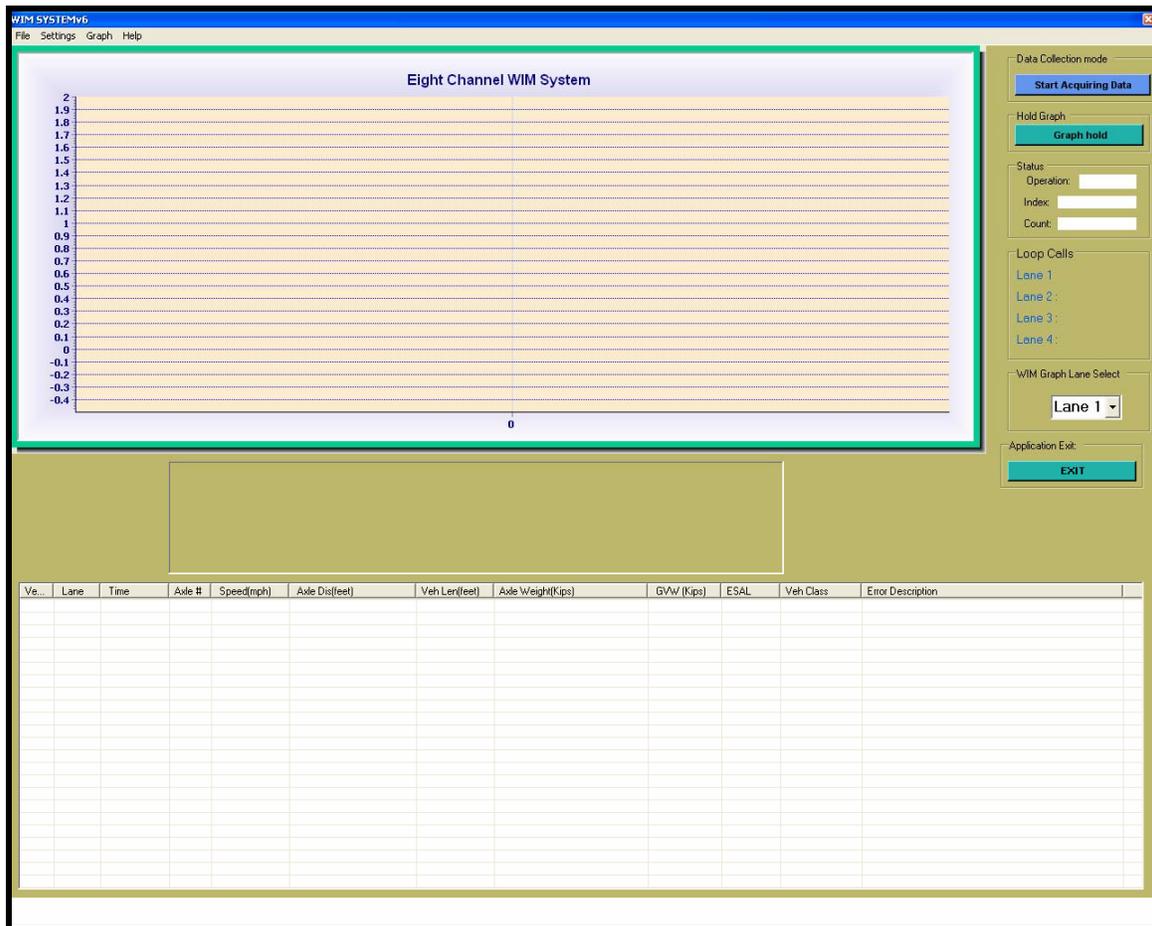


Figure 48: GUI View

Start/Stop Button

In Figure 48, it is located at right hand top of the screen with the label “**Start Acquiring Data**” and is used to start or stop the program. When the computer is powered on or restarted, the program starts automatically and the label of the button is changed to “**Stop Acquiring Data.**” Once the program starts acquiring data, it begins to plot real-

time WIM signals and translates the analog signals into WIM data. Figure 49 shows the two states of the Start/Stop button.

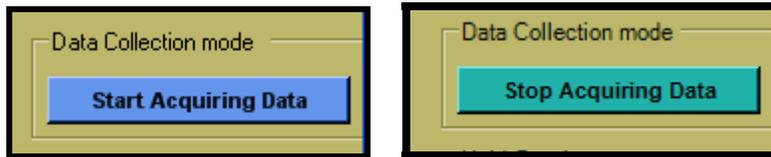


Figure 49: Start/Stop Button

Graph hold (release) Button

The “Graph hold” button is used any time the user wishes to hold and see the current graph in the plot window. It is commonly used when the user wishes to carefully inspect the signals, such as the signal level, structure of the signal, noise levels, etc. This is a toggle button and when the “Graph hold” button is pressed, the button is changed to a “Release graph hold” button (Figure 50). The user should press the “Release graph hold” button to set the display to the regular mode of real-time signal plots.

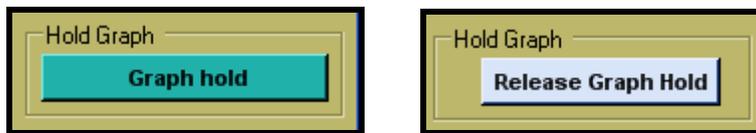


Figure 50: Graph hold/release button

Status

Status shows the current status of the data acquisition process (Figure 51). This is not actually needed or useful for general users. However, it can indicate that the system is not running if the index and the count values are not increasing. In that case the user should press the “**Start Acquiring Data**” button to start processing the data again.

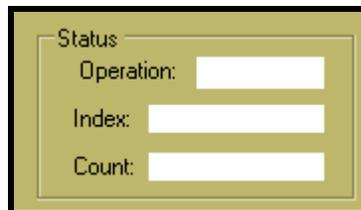


Figure 51: Status display

View Lane

Plotting of real-time axle signals is done one lane at a time, and the lane can be selected using the drop down combo box shown in Figure 52. If the user would like to view the signal condition of another lane, the user can simply select the desired lane at

any time. The UM8-PCI system is designed for eight channels, so the combo box has choices of Lane 1, Lane 2, Lane 3 and Lane 4..

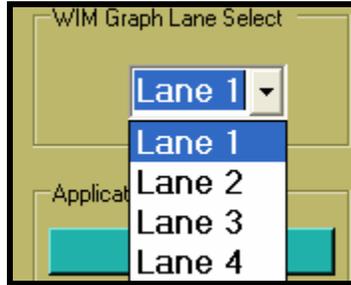


Figure 52: View lane

Loop Calls

The loop activity can be viewed in the loop calls section, which is located at the middle right side of the main window. As mentioned earlier, each lane consists of two loops, so the first row of the loop calls represents upstream and downstream loop activity of the first lane. Similarly, loop activity for lanes 2, 3 and 4 are displayed. The color code is summarized in Table 9.

Table 9: Loop call color representation

Loop Activity	Color Representation
No Vehicle Presence	No Color
Presence of Vehicle	Blinking Green Color
Loop Failure	Continuous Green Color

When there is no activity in the loop sensor, nothing is displayed in the corresponding loop calls section. It is also possible to verify the loop call LED lights by inspecting the front panel loop section of the UM8-PCI. For instance, if green light blinks in WM8-PCI system, the user will notice a similar blink in loop calls section of the software after a one second delay).

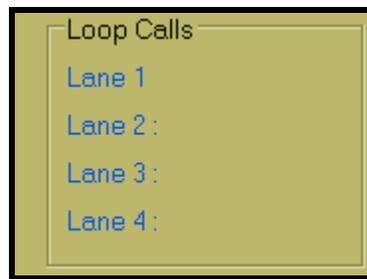


Figure 53: Loop calls

Plot Window

In the plot window, the user can observe the WIM activity of one chosen lane at a time. The software draws box plots of the upstream (red in color) and downstream signal (green in color) condition of the WIM sensors. The horizontal axis represents data for one second (sampling rate @ 4096 samples/sec) or the signal fluctuation at a one second interval. The vertical axis represents the voltage level of the signal and can be adjusted accordingly up to the maximum of +/- 5V, as shown in Figure 54.

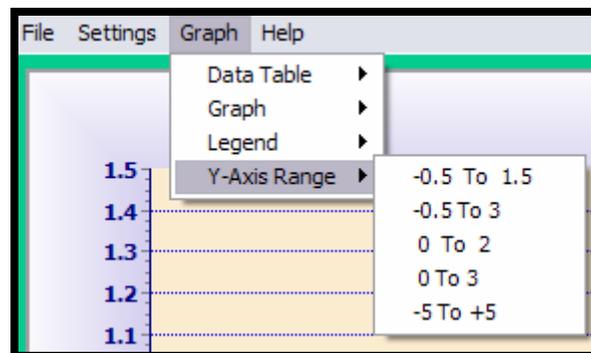
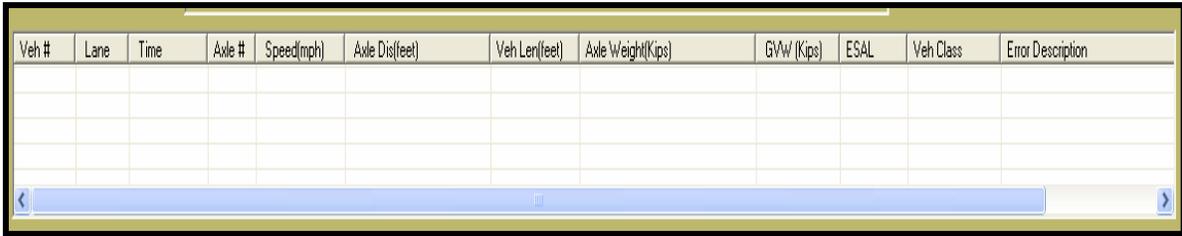


Figure 54: Y-Axis Range

WIM Outputs

The computed parameters are displayed in the table located below the plot window (see Figure 55). The table includes parameter headings in the first row, which are described in Table 10. Each column is elastic, which means the user can place the cursor at the boundary of the column at the top row and can drag to adjust the width of the column.



Veh #	Lane	Time	Axle #	Speed(mph)	Axle Dis(feet)	Veh Len(feet)	Axle Weight(Kips)	GVW (Kips)	ESAL	Veh Class	Error Description

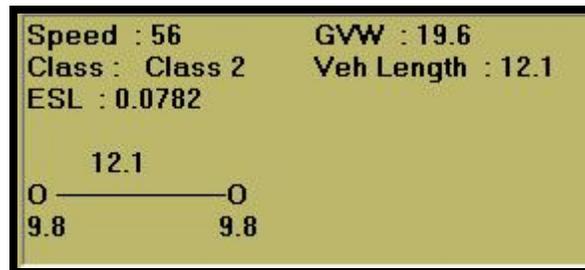
Figure 55: Output table

Table 10: WIM Output Parameters

Table Column	Description
Veh. #	Count of vehicles from the start time. It is reset to 1 at 12:00AM (midnight).
Lane	Lane number (1, 2, 3, or 4)
Time	Time stamp when vehicle passed through the site (hr:min:sec)
Axle #	Number of axles on the vehicle
Speed (mph)	Speed of the vehicle
Axle Spacing. (feet)	Axle spacing. The axles are separated using “+” signs.
Vehicle Length (feet)	<p>Example: If a vehicle has 3 axles, it has two axle spacings and will look like: $10 + 12$ which indicates that the distance between first and second axle is 10 feet and second to third is 12 feet The total of axle distances. In the above example, this will be 22. For the actual vehicle length, the distance front bumper to first axle and rear bumper to last axle must be added (by the user?)</p>
Axle Weight (Kips)	<p>Axle weights in kips (kilo-pounds). The axle weights are separated using “+” signs.</p> <p>Example: If a vehicle has three axles and each weighs 1.5 kips, then the display parameter will look as follows: $1.5 + 1.5 + 1.5$</p>
ESAL	Equivalent Single Axle Loads of the vehicle
GVW (Kips)	<p>Gross vehicle weight is the total weight of the vehicle load in kips. It is the sum of axle weights. In the above example, GVW is 4.5 kips</p>
Veh Class	Vehicle classification (Class 1 – 15) is displayed in this column.
Error Description	Shows the error code along with a description

Graphical Display

The vehicle information is shown in the data table as well as in a graphical display format (Figure 56). The parameters displayed graphically in text format are speed (mph), GWV (kips), ESALs, vehicle class, and total spacing between the first and last axle (feet). Each axle weight and axle spacing is shown graphically: an “O” represents axle, the number below “O” represents axle weight in kips, and the number between two “O’s” represents the axle spacing.



Ve...	Lane	Time	Axle #	Speed(mph)	Axle Dis(feet)	Veh Len(feet)	Axle Weight(Kips)	GWV (Kips)	ESAL	Veh Class	Error Description
5	4	13:31 07	2	64	20.4	20.4	7.8+14.7	22.5	0.4315	Class 5	
4	3	13:31 07	2	56	12.4	12.4	9.8+9.8	19.5	0.0777	Class 2	
3	2	13:31 07	2	62	19.9	19.9	7.6+14.2	21.8	0.3758	Class 5	
2	1	13:31 07	2	56	12.1	12.1	9.8+9.8	19.6	0.0782	Class 2	

Figure 56: Graphical display of vehicles

5.4.2 Menu Bar

The Menu Bar is used to view or change various system configuration parameters. Menus are located at the top left of the main window (Figure 57). It is easy to follow with self explanatory descriptions.

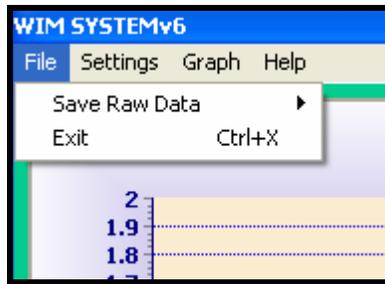


Figure 57: Menu options

File Menu

Save Raw Data

Each second, data collected are saved in a binary (.bin) format and appended to the same file until the “Stop Save” option is selected. Data can be stored continuously and is only limited by the hard disk capacity of the system. The software allows a user to save data continuously up to 300 minutes at which point the data saving automatically stops. When “Start Save” is selected, a user sees a new line (shown in Figure 58) that indicates the status of recording with the time limit. When the “Start Save” option is chosen, a new folder is created with a name based on the current year, month, and day. A data file is created in the folder and is named according to the time the recording started. The size of each data file is limited to 25MB for the convenience of future analysis.



Figure 58: Indication that recording process is active

The purpose of the RAW data collection mode is for users to evaluate the signal at a later time. A separate program allows users to monitor the noise level, signal quality details, and many aspects of the RAW analog signal.

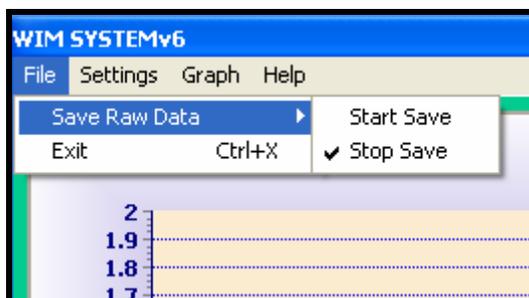


Figure 59: Save raw data

Exit

User can exit from the main software by clicking on the Exit option. It is recommended that before exiting the main software, user should make sure that the real time data acquisition is not running, this means that the “Stop Acquiring Data” button should be pressed before exiting.

5.4.3 Settings Menu

The second column of the menu is settings, items contain in the Setting menu is shown in Figure 60.

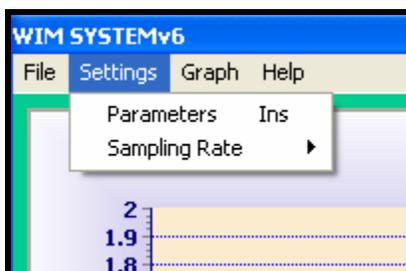


Figure 60: Setting options

Parameters

This is the first item in the “Settings” menu. This option is used to set the WIM sensor and installation parameters used for computation. The fixed parameters include WIM sensor spacings and sensitivities, axle overweight values, threshold values and more (Figure 61).

Users can set or change the WIM sensor spacing settings, loop detector spacing settings, and sensitivity of each WIM sensor. After changing the parameters, the user should press the “Save Changes” button followed by the “Exit” button. The change is effective immediately in computations without restarting the software. Clicking the “Load Default Values” button will restore the default settings. Each parameter is further described in Table 11.

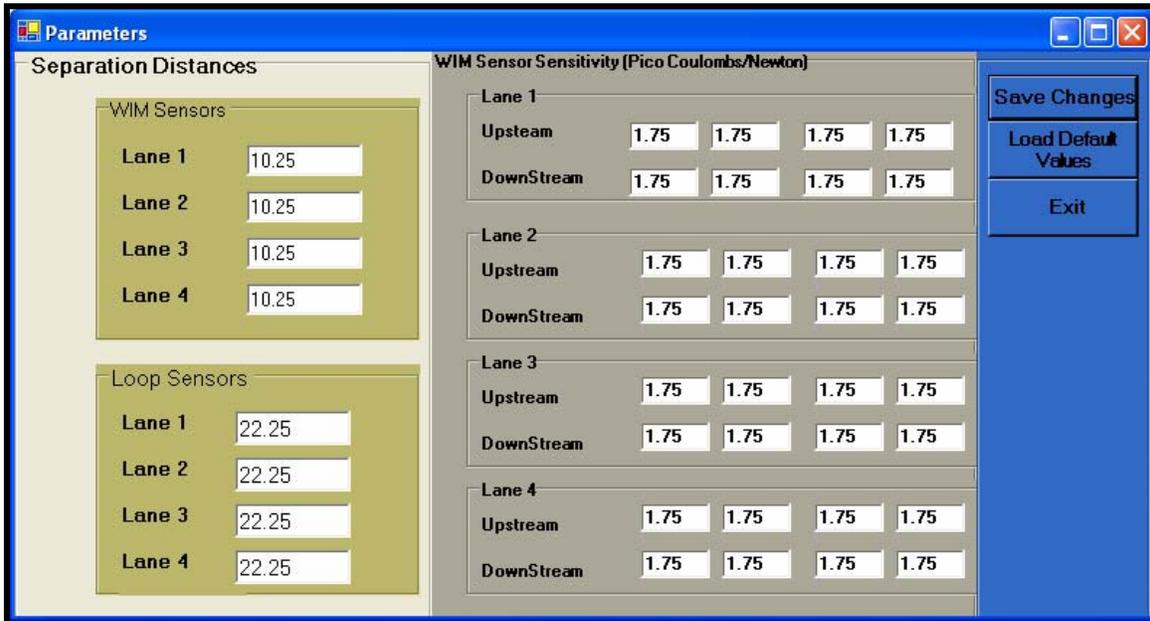


Figure 61: Parameter options

Table 11: Parameters Settings

Title	Description
WIM Sensor Sensitivity	Corresponds lane and each sensor sensitivity (positive value), as each lane is equipped with four WIM sensors.
WIM Sensor Spacing	Distance between the beginning of the upstream WIM sensor to the beginning of the downstream WIM sensor. The value should be in feet and each lane can be configured with a separate sensor spacing value
Loop Sensor Spacing	The distance between two consecutive loops.

A typical KISTLER Sensor is shown in Figure 62, where KISTLER Type, Model, S/N and Sensitivity PC/N are shown. Typically sensitivity is shown as a negative value, but when the sensitivity values are entered in the “Parameter” window, the user should ignore the negative sign and enter only the numbers.



Figure 62: 9195 sensors with sensitivity measure

Sampling Rate

The default sampling rate is 4,096 samples per second (Figure 63). It is recommended to use the default for all cases. The 3,000 samples/sec option should only be used if the controlling PC is not up to today's speed standards.

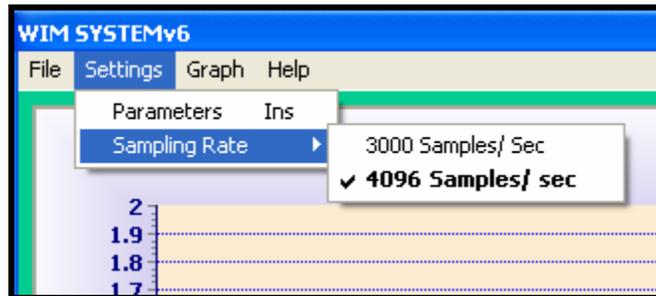


Figure 63: Sampling options

Graph Menu

The third column of the Menu is "Graph."; all of the graph related functions are included under this menu.

Data Table

Under the "Data Table" item, the user has an option to hide or display the data table (i.e. Figure 64). This option may be used if the user wants to see only the signal plots.

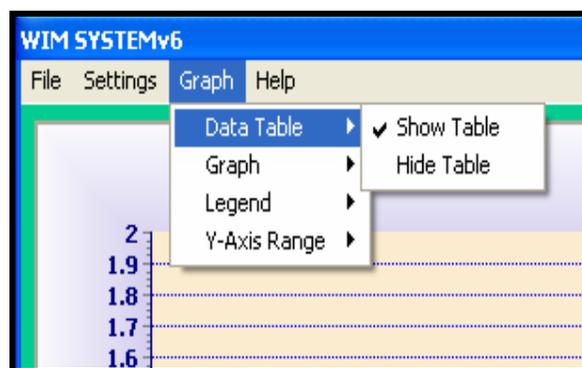


Figure 64: Data table

Graph

Under the “Graph” option, the user can hide or show the graph window.

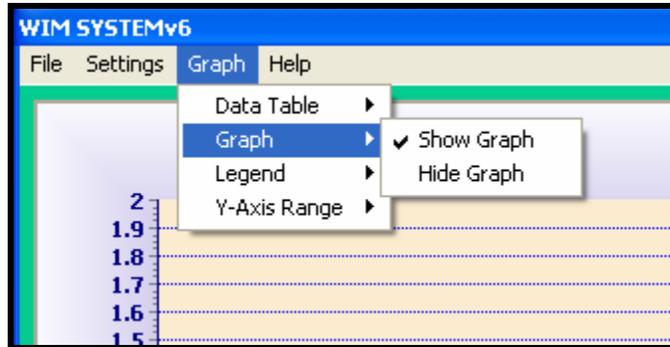


Figure 65: Graph table

Legend

When the “Show Legend” option is selected, the legends of the plot area lines are displayed (Figure 66). The user can select this option to view only the upstream signal, downstream signal, or both.

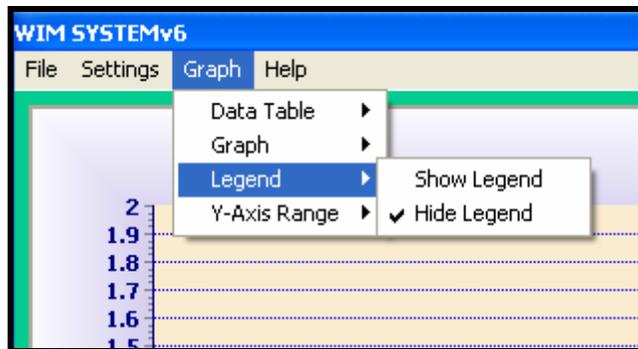


Figure 66: Legend options

Y-Axis Range

The user may adjust the range of y-axis using this option. The maximum viewable range is from -5 V to +5 volts. Other choices are shown in Figure 67.

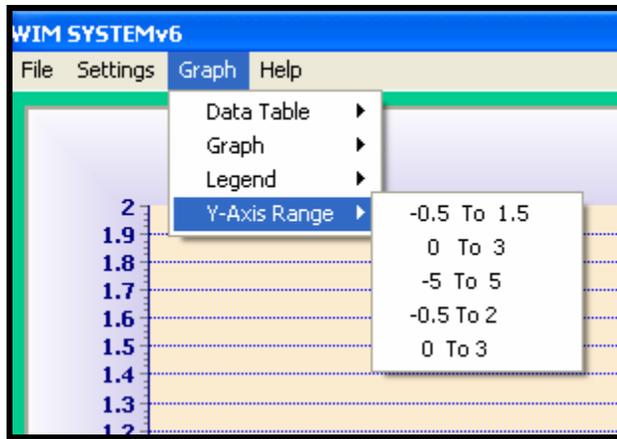


Figure 67: Y-Axis range

Help Menu

At this time, the help option only shows the developer's name and the development date.

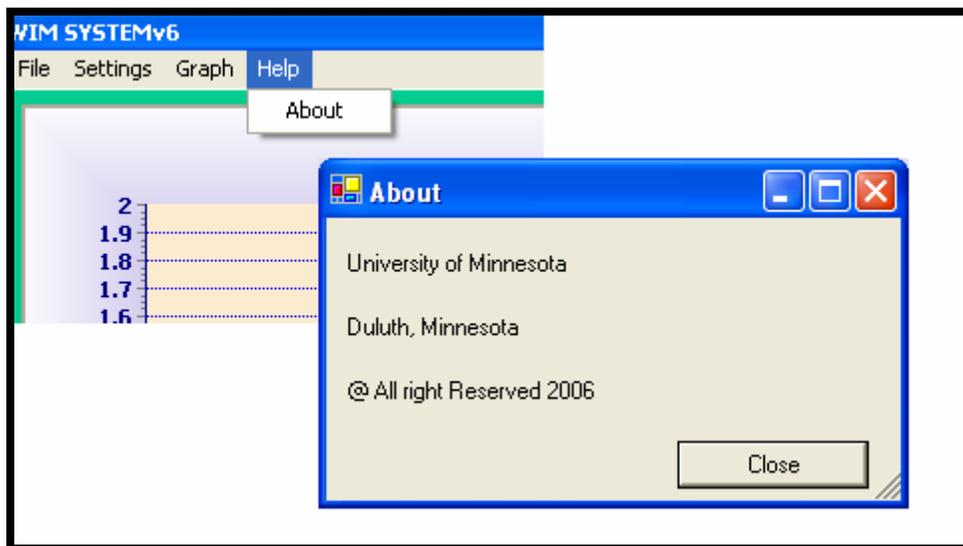


Figure 68: Developer's name and developed date

5.5 Data Downloading / remote desktop view

Two files are created by the WIM system each day. One contains the vehicle records collected while the other summarizes the error conditions that occurred during that day. A new file is created at 12:00 AM in a new folder, where the folder name is the current year followed by month and day (YYMMDD).

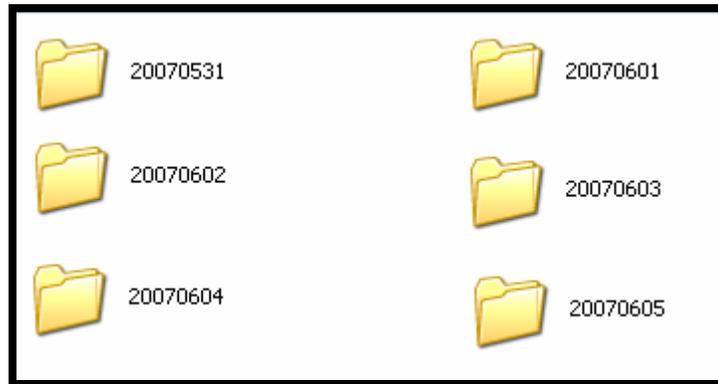
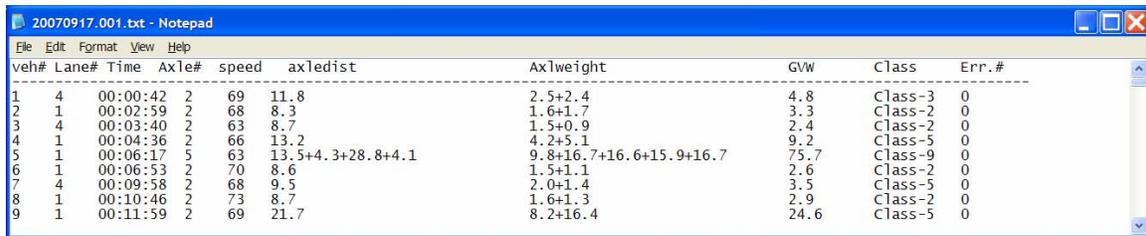


Figure 69: Daily created new folder (folder name based on date)

The vehicle record file is in an ASCII format (*.txt) and contains vehicle index, time stamp, number of axles, each axle spacing, each axle weight, the gross vehicle weight, the vehicle classification, and any associated error codes. An example vehicle record file and an error file are shown in Figures 70 and 71.



veh#	Lane#	Time	Axle#	speed	axledist	Axlweight	GVW	Class	Err.#
1	4	00:00:42	2	69	11.8	2.5+2.4	4.8	Class-3	0
2	1	00:02:59	2	68	8.3	1.6+1.7	3.3	Class-2	0
3	4	00:03:40	2	63	8.7	1.5+0.9	2.4	Class-2	0
4	1	00:04:36	2	66	13.2	4.2+5.1	9.2	Class-5	0
5	1	00:06:17	5	63	13.5+4.3+28.8+4.1	9.8+16.7+16.6+15.9+16.7	75.7	Class-9	0
6	1	00:06:53	2	70	8.6	1.5+1.1	2.6	Class-2	0
7	4	00:09:58	2	68	9.5	2.0+1.4	3.5	Class-5	0
8	1	00:10:46	2	73	8.7	1.6+1.3	2.9	Class-2	0
9	1	00:11:59	2	69	21.7	8.2+16.4	24.6	Class-5	0

Figure 70: Data file format

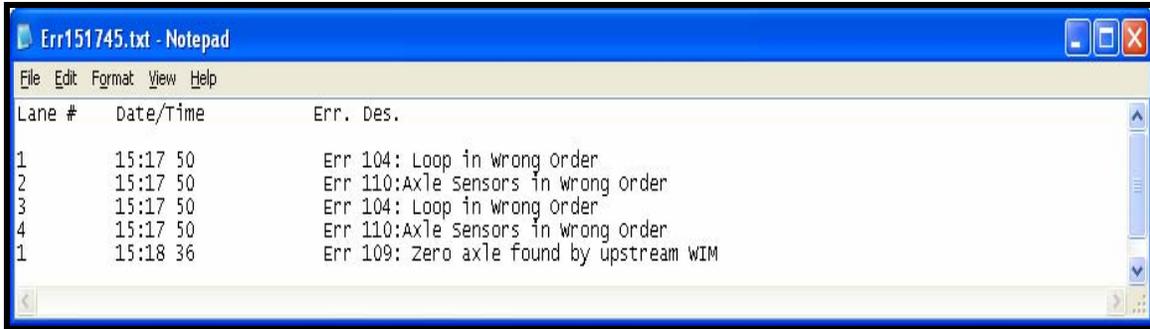


Figure 71: Error file format

For remote data downloading and remote desktop access, two different software packages are used. Both software packages are in the public domain and have been widely used. For the remote desktop view, Real-VNC Viewer (Free edition 4.1.1) is used. This software is installed in the remote computer as a server VNC.

Since the remote server is built based on a standard TCP/IP stack, connections from a client can be made using a variety of means. For example, dial-up, Ethernet, wireless, etc., as long as those services are available. Presently, the server (remote WIM site computer) is equipped with a phone line and a modem providing a remote dial-up connection. A standard Windows dial-up connection wizard is used for the connection (Figure 72). After Real-VNC server is installed on the remote PC, the incoming connection options should be enabled on that PC.

A step by step process in graphical view for creating incoming connection is provided. After opening the “Network connection” from the Control Panel, click on the “create a new connection” tab on the left top portion of the wizard as shown in Figure 72.

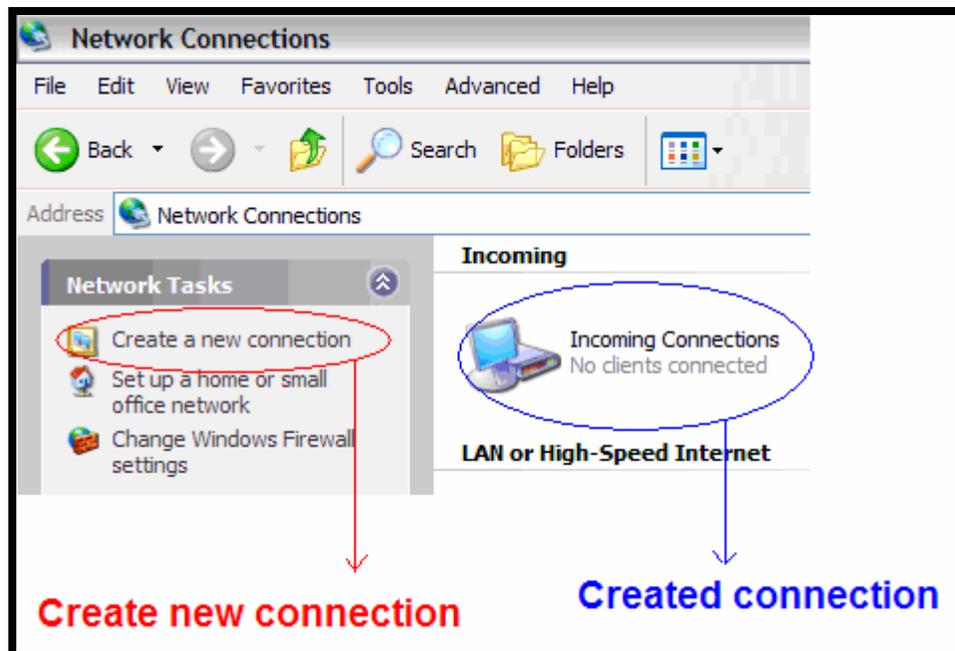


Figure 72: Setup “Incoming Connections”



(a)



(b)

Figure 73: New connection wizard (a) and (b)

The user needs to follow up the connection wizard to create a new connection, where the highlighted button serves as the next step. As shown in Figure 73, the “Next” button is highlighted.

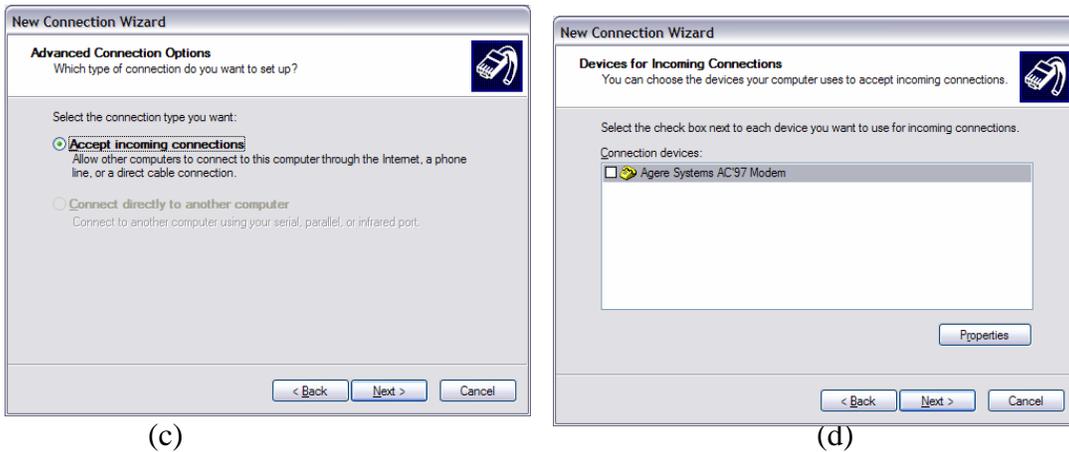


Figure 74: New connection wizard, (c) and (d)

Figure 74 (d) shows the current modem installed on the computer. The user needs to place a check mark on the space provided before the modem name or select the modem before proceeding to the next step.



Figure 75: New connection wizard, (e) and (f)

Figure 75 (e,f) shows the authentication wizard, from which a new user can be created or permission to the existing user can be set. Only those selected users are able to operate the WIM system remotely.

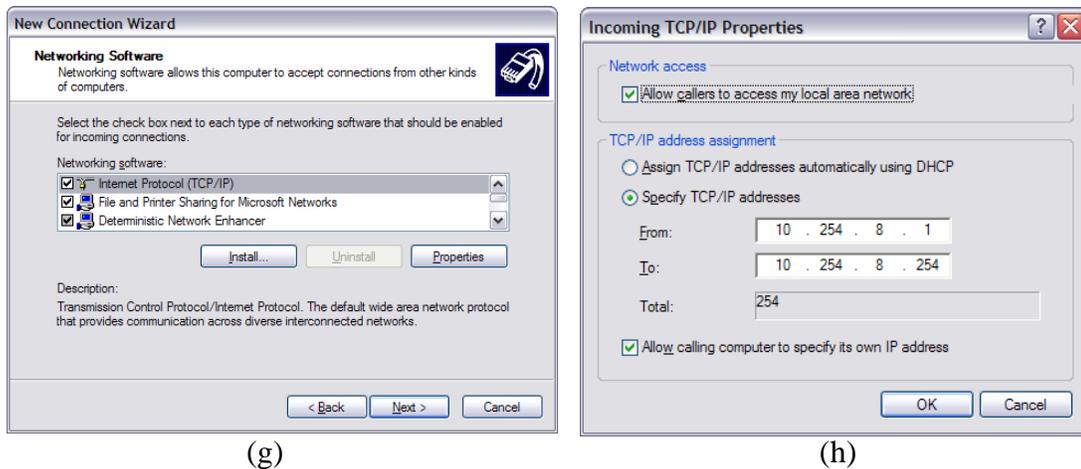


Figure 76: New connection wizard, (g) and (h)

Figure 77 shows the options from which the user can select an IP range. It is always safer to provide the IP address manually rather than DHCP (what is DHCP?). Basically in this wizard, IP range denotes that number of users who can log on to a remote computer simultaneously. For instance, if the IP range in total is 4 then only 4 people can log on to the remote computer at one time.



Figure 77: New connection wizard, last step

The authentication method used on the server side allows only authenticated users to have a access. At the UMD lab, a 33.3kbps modem was tested for viewing the remote desktop and was provided satisfactory results. However, a 56kbps modem is recommended for field implementation as better remote desktop resolution should be possible.



Figure 78: Dialup connection wizard

After a dial-up connection is made to the server, the user may run the Real-VNC Viewer to start accessing the remote desktop of the WIM system (Figure 79). The VNC allows control of the remote computer as if the user was actually on a local desktop. Once a VNC viewer is connected, the user has a full access to all of the WIM software functions, such as viewing the current vehicle signals, starting/stopping the WIM software, setting/changing parameters, etc. The VNC also allows access to nearly all of the PC functions. For example, the user could configure the modem and add more users (client user), etc. If necessary, the user could even restart the site computer.

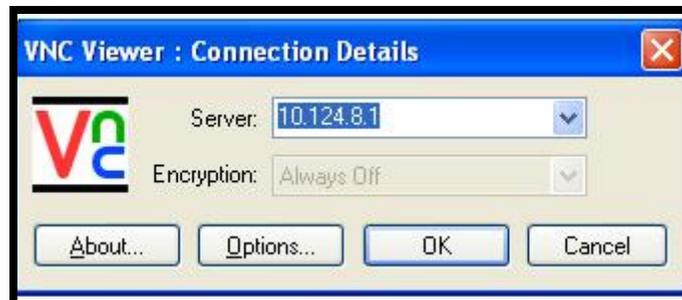


Figure 79: Connection to the Real-VNC Viewer

The IP-address is automatically assigned to the connecting computer after authentication is approved from the remote WIM computer. Any FTP program can be

used for downloading the WIM data files. The site computer acts as an FTP server to any client computer.

5.6 Final WIM System

Development of the WIM system proposed was successfully completed. The final system is shown in Figure 80. The system consists of a fan-less PC, a standard LCD monitor, a keyboard with trackball, a modem, an analog signal interface box (charge amplifier and loop detector), and a splice panel for loop wires. The software runs as an application program and is loaded from a hard disk.

The PC provided is a SolidLogic Pentium M GA-L01 Fanless Mini-ITX System. It has multimedia Pentium-M main-board and a Pentium-M processor. It has dual PCI expansion slots and a slim-line slot-loading CDRW/DVD drive. This system occupies a small space and is specially designed for small form factor applications, such as a field cabinet implementation. The PC specification is summarized in Table 12.

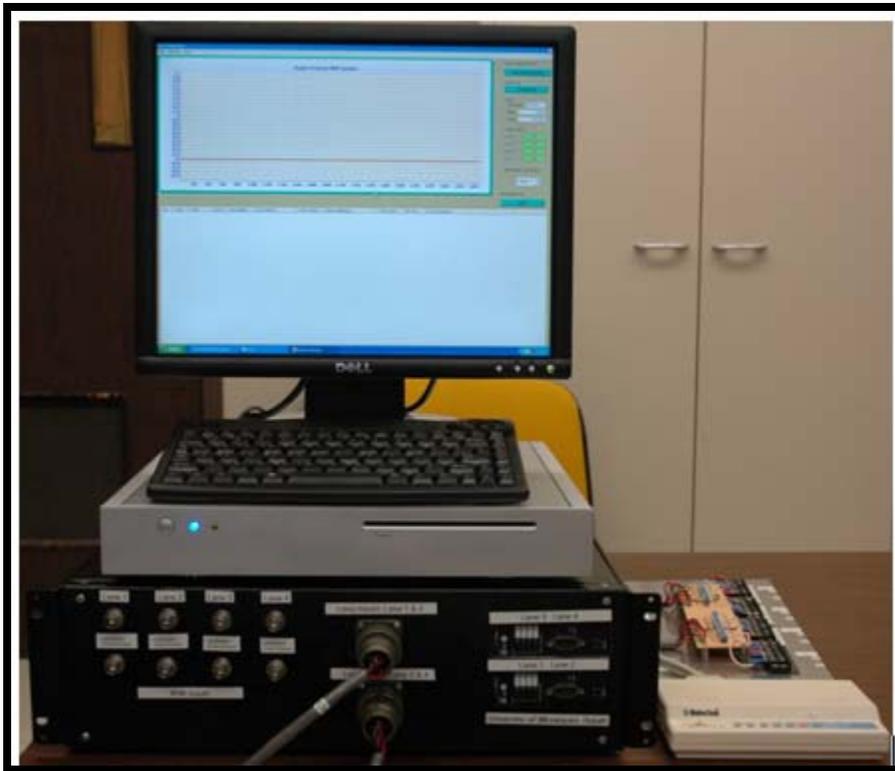


Figure 80: Completed WIM system with a PC and modem

Table 12: PC Specifications

Parts	Specifications
Main board	Multimedia Pentium M main-board with Intel 855GME and ICH4 chipset
Memory	1GB of memory
Processor	Pentium M processor (1.60 GHz)
Hard Disk Drive	150 GB
Dimensions (w x h x d)	370 mm x 50 mm x 310 mm 14.6" x 2.1" x 12.1"

The PC is installed with a Windows-XP Professional Edition with Service Pack 2. Microsoft Visual Studio .NET 2003 and Teechart Pro Activex 7 (developed by Steema Software). The Teechart Pro Activex must be installed to successfully run the WIM system software. In addition, a Real-VNC server must be installed and set to server mode for remote access and downloading.

5.7 System Field Demo

On November 11th, 2006 the research team (Taek Kwon, PI, and Bibhu Aryal, RA) installed the prototype of UM8-PCI WIM system at the TH-61 WIM site and successfully demonstrated the working of hardware and software. For this demo, George Cepress (Technical Liaison), Mark Novak and Bill Martinson (all from Mn/DOT TDA) came from the Twin Cities and observed the demonstration. The field demo was accomplished using live traffic on TH-61 to demonstrate its real time operations. The system showed successful detection of vehicles, computation of WIM data, reporting of error conditions, and vehicle classifications, all in real-time. No correctional suggestions were made from the Mn/DOT visiting team and approved the system as it was. Figure 81 shows the pictures taken during the November 11th site visit and demonstration.



Figure 81: Site visit and demo

On June 7th, 2007, the WIM research team invited the Mn/DOT team and Alan Rindels (Administrative Liaison) to demonstration remote data downloading and remote desktop access through a dial-up connection. The system successfully connected to the remote computer (site computer) and showed a full access to the visual interface of the WIM system software. The participants were able to see the real time computation of WIM parameters, the axle signals, and various other features of the software. In the demonstration, the research team downloaded the WIM data while browsing the desktop system.

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSIONS

Traffic load data, collected through WIM systems, is a primary input to pavement design and maintenance and accurate data is essential. The purpose of this research was to improve the current piezoelectric WIM technologies through an improved system design and better signal processing algorithms to increase measurement accuracies and while lowering the cost of WIM systems. This research demonstrated that high quality WIM systems can be built using a common desktop PC and off-the-shelf components.

The main innovation introduced in this research was the new HIL WIM simulator that can generate analog axle signals through software control. Generally development of a new WIM system or calibration of an existing WIM system requires repeated driving of trucks with known weights to verify the algorithm and measurement accuracies. This traditional approach is expensive in terms of both time and resources, but the fundamental problem lies in inherent errors associated with the discrepancies between static and moving weights. First, a known weight of a heavy truck has an inherent error, mainly due to static scale and manual measurement errors. Second, the weight of moving vehicles is affected by environmental effects, such as winds, the road slope, spring effect of the suspension system, and pavement roughness. Thus, a direct conversion of moving weight into static weight includes effects that could produce an error. The proposed HIL WIM simulator solves these difficulties using software generated ideal axle signals of known weights, which effectively eliminates the environmental and dynamic effects. The flexibility of the software also allows generation of signal anomalies for testing erroneous or faulty conditions.

To verify the proposed signal generation and weight computation theory, various experiments were conducted and verified. Based on the experimental results and the theory presented, the research team is confident to conclude that the HIL simulator-based WIM development environment significantly reduces the development time and cost. Additionally, a more accurate and reliable system is produced at a low cost. Moreover, the ideal axle signals generated by the HIL WIM simulator can be used for calibration of WIM systems without measuring a truck of known weight, which eliminate the high costs and issues associated with WIM system calibrations.

The simulation-based WIM software development techniques implemented in this research yielded satisfactory results. One area of improvement for future study is in the electric form of the axle signals. The developed WIM HIL simulator generates analog voltage signals (WIM axle signal) that are transmitted to the ADC of a WIM system. The WIM system software receives the voltage signals and computes the axle load parameters. If the analog voltage signals are converted to electric charge signals, the test signals can be directly fed into the charge amplifier inputs of the WIM system, providing uniform reference axle signals regardless of differences in ADC or charge amplifier type. This modification would allow calibration of a WIM system without opening the system enclosure.

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