

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE DESIGN AND EXECUTION OF A FEDERATION FOR JOINT EXPERIMENTATION

Anita A. Zabek

The MITRE Corporation
 1820 Dolley Madison Boulevard
 McLean, VA 22102, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT

The Trailblazer project was created to examine the application of a federation of simulations to joint experimentation. This paper reviews the lessons learned as the Federation Execution and Development Process was applied to the establishment of a federation in support of experimentation.

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to describe an application, the Trailblazer federation, of the High Level Architecture (HLA) in the domain of joint experimentation. The paper is organized by the steps of the Federation Development and Execution Process (FEDEP). (DMSO 1998) The FEDEP is a systems engineering process for the development of federations of simulations using the HLA and was used as the roadmap for development of the Trailblazer Federation. Lessons learned are presented for each step of the FEDEP, and a summary presents overall observations on the usefulness of the FEDEP and the HLA in the joint experimentation domain.

1.1 Background

The Trailblazer effort has its origins in 1998 in the congressionally funded, DDR&E-sponsored Joint Warfighting Program. The DDR&E objective was to examine how changes in doctrine, organization, and technology can enhance our ability to achieve and maintain information superiority in a hostile environment. DDR&E envisioned that the Joint Warfighting Program would design and conduct a series of experiments to examine these issues, and tasked the Defense Modeling and Simulation Office (DMSO) to provide technical support to those experiments involving modeling and simulation.

In an effort to better understand the requirements of modeling and simulation for experimentation, DMSO implemented the following strategy:

- use the High Level Architecture to take advantage of existing simulation capabilities, and
- prepare a prototype federation (Trailblazer) in support of experimentation to gain relevant experience.

1.2 The Federation Development and Execution Process

The FEDEP is a five step process and is presented in a simplified form in Figure 1.

Define Federation Objectives	Develop Federation Conceptual Model	Design and Develop Federation	Integrate and Test Federation	Execute Federation and Analyze Results
Identify Sponsor Needs	Develop Scenario	Design Federation	Plan Execution	Execute Federation
Develop Objectives	Perform Conceptual Analysis	Develop Federation	Integrate Federation	Analyze Results
	Develop Federation Requirements		Test Federation	Prepare Feedback

Figure 1: FEDEP

2 DEFINE FEDERATION OBJECTIVES

Step 1 of the FEDEP is *Define Federation Objectives*. The FEDEP describes this step as: “The federation sponsor and federation development team define and agree on a set of objectives, and document what must be accomplished to achieve those objectives”. (DMSO 1998)

For Trailblazer, the objectives included those laid out by DMSO, the objectives of the specific experiment,

and the unique requirements of the experimentation domain.

2.1 DMSO Objectives and Guidance

The objectives of DMSO were to explore the use of HLA federations in the experimentation domain and to capture the lessons learned, both to improve the technology and to help future applications in the domain.

DMSO provided the following specific guidance to the federation systems engineer:

- Use the High Level Architecture
- Distribute development at federate home sites
- Conduct integration and execution at single site in DC area
- Operate at a classified, but no higher than collateral SECRET, level
- Complete development within fixed budget and schedule (<5 months)
- Consider closed loop, faster-than real time simulations

2.2 Experiment Definition and Objectives

For purposes of this prototype effort, an experiment was adopted from a Joint Staff experiment plan (Joint Staff (J-6) 1997). The experiment hypothesis is that a proposed 2010 architecture for conducting a joint suppression of enemy air defenses mission is more effective than the baseline 2010 architecture. The proposed architecture introduced new technologies, doctrine, and command and control relationships.

The objective of the experiment, as described in the Joint Staff plan, is to prove or disprove the hypothesis. Two types of measures of effectiveness are identified. The first is the percent of surface to air missile (SAM) batteries identified, engaged, and destroyed. The second is the time from SAM emission to weapon commit and time from weapon commit to weapon on target

Discussions with the Joint Staff analysts identified an objective to explore the sensitivity of the experimental outcomes to variations in threat operating policy. Three variations were identified:

1. Maximum attrition policy (long emission time and short hiding time);
2. Maximum survival policy (short emission time and long hiding time); and
3. Balanced policy.

2.3 Unique Requirements of Experimentation

There are four requirements that are unique to the domain of experimentation. These are:

1. **Validity.** Individual selected federates must be credible, and federation implementation must maintain that credibility.
2. **Repeatability.** Execution of the federation with the same inputs should lead to same outputs
3. **Extractability of Results.** The analyst must be able to collect and correlate data about critical events that occur across federates
4. **Speed.** Requirements for multiple excursions, multiple runs per excursion and limited time imply faster-than-real-time simulation rates.

2.4 Lessons Learned

Because, by definition, an experiment is designed to investigate new things, the experiment designers must specify the proposed changes to technology, organizations, or doctrine and expected outcomes. Furthermore, all excursions must be defined

The experiment designer must also specify the measures of effectiveness that will be used to measure the outcome of experiments because these measures will drive the level of fidelity that must be present in the federation.

Finally, these requirements will evolve as the federation is developed. The very process of eliciting this information from the experiment designer may enable evolution of the experiment design.

3 DEVELOP CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Step 2 of the FEDEP is *Develop Conceptual Model*. The FEDEP describes this step as: “A representation of the real world domain of interest is developed, and described in terms of a set of required objects and interactions”. (DMSO 1998)

3.1 The Trailblazer Conceptual Model

The Trailblazer conceptual model first identifies the key events in the experiment. These are depicted in Figure 2.

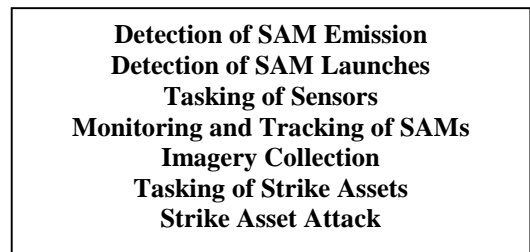


Figure 2: Key Events

The conceptual model further identifies the objects and activities that comprise each event. Additionally, the experiment designer was interviewed to identify the key factors associated with each activity that would affect experiment outcomes. Objects, activities, and factors are shown for a single event, “Tasking of Strike Assets”, in Figure 3.

<p>Event: <i>Tasking of Strike Assets</i></p> <p>Objects: Joint Air Operations Center Air Assets Ground Assets Naval Assets</p> <p>Activity: JAOC tasks strike asset</p> <p>Factors: Rules of employment Geography Aircraft speed Weapon range Asset vulnerability Asset availability</p>

Figure 3: Objects, Activities, and Factors for the “Tasking of Strike Assets” Event

After the specific federates were selected (Step 3 of the FEDEP) the conceptual model was further expanded to include the algorithms that model the key events and the critical parameters used in those algorithms.

The Trailblazer conceptual model also includes detailed process models that described the behavioral rules and command and control relationships.

Finally, the Trailblazer conceptual model defines the scenario for the experiment including geographic region, specific order of battle, Operations Orders (OPORDs) and initial locations.

3.2 Lessons Learned

The approach described above had several benefits. First, identification of the key events allowed the federation designers to focus detailed conceptual modeling and, later, federate selection, on those key elements. Similarly, asking the experiment designer, who was an expert in the operational domain, to identify the critical factors also helped the designers to scope the problem. And finally, documentation of this information greatly enhanced communication between the experiment designer and federation designer.

Because there are no standard field or technical manuals that the federation designer can consult for specification of future or hypothetical systems and forces, the experiment designer must be able to provide these descriptions. In fact, depending on their representations, the simulations may require more detailed descriptions than the experiment designer has defined to date.

A final lesson learned is that it is important to document the changes in the conceptual model from the base case to the alternative and from excursion to excursion.

4 DESIGN AND DEVELOP FEDERATION

Step 3 of the FEDEP is *Design and Develop Federation*. The FEDEP describes this step as: “Federation participants are determined (if not previously identified), and a FOM is developed to explicitly document information exchange requirements and responsibilities”. (DMSO 1998)

For Trailblazer, this involved eight sub-steps:

- Federate survey
- Federate selection and functional allocation
- Federation policies
- Federation functional design
- Data collection strategy
- FOM design
- Time management design
- Database development

4.1 Federate Survey

First, the federates were selected. The key criterion was to select federates that would represent the conceptual model, with a focus on the ability of the federate to model the key events and to account for those critical factors identified by the experiment designer.

Service-sponsored simulations were favored both to engender buy-in and to ensure that the basic representations of supporting events were credible. For example, launching of an aircraft can be considered a supporting event in the Trailblazer conceptual model. If an Air Force-sponsored simulation were to provide that representation, the user of the federation would have confidence that the representation is adequate. Other criteria are depicted in Figure 4.

Operational Criteria	Technical Criteria	Logistical Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to support the conceptual model • Ability to support MOEs and MOPs • Credibility • Changeable unit and system behaviors • Explicit representations of command and control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of objects the federate can represent • Duration of run supported by the federate • Previous interfaces to other simulations including human and hardware in the loop • HLA compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenario availability • Ability to run closed loop and faster than real time • Portability • Ability to distribute • Ability to operate at collateral SECRET security level • Availability of developer

Figure 4: Federate Selection Criteria

4.2 Federate Selection and Functional Allocation

Three simulations were selected as the core federates: the Extended Air Defense Simulation (EADSIM), Eagle, and the Naval Simulation System (NSS). A federation management tool (FMT) was used for monitor and control of the federation. The federation is depicted in Figure 5.

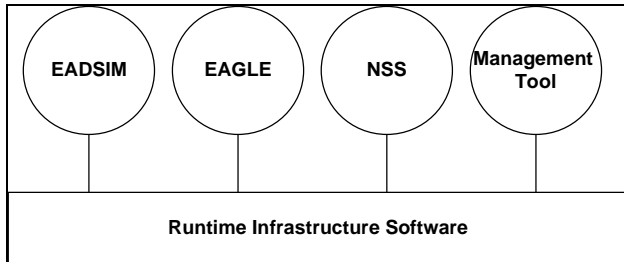


Figure 5: Trailblazer Federation

Once the federates were selected the Trailblazer team was formed. The Trailblazer team consists of the following government and contractor members:

- DMSO and The MITRE Corporation (Washington) as lead and systems engineer;
- USA Training and Doctrine Command Analysis Center (TRAC) and SAIC for Eagle;
- USAF Electronic Systems Command (ESC), Teledyne Brown Engineering, and The MITRE Corporation (Bedford) for EADSIM; and
- USN SPAWAR / Metron for NSS.

Functionality described in the conceptual model was allocated to the federates based on what service owns a particular system in the real world, the fidelity of the individual federate representations, and federation performance considerations. The functional allocation is:

- Eagle:
 - Red ground clutter
 - Red tactical SAMs
 - Corps Tactical Operations Center (CTOC)
 - ATACMS (artillery system)
- EADSIM
 - Red strategic SAMs
 - Air Force strike a/c
 - JSTARS (MTI and SAR platform)
 - AWACS (Command and Control and Early Warning aircraft)
 - Joint Air Operations Center (JAOC)
- NSS
 - Aggregate ELINT

- Infrared launch detection
- Naval strike a/c

4.3 Federation Policies

The federation policies are the agreements reached between the federation team above and beyond the specific data exchange defined in the Federation Object Model (FOM). Examples of federation policies for Trailblazer are shown in Figure 6.

- **HLA specification**
 - **Version 1.3**
- **Time management**
 - **All federates (except FMT) constrained and regulated**
- **Units of measure**
- **Modeling policies**
 - **Who computes attrition (killer or victim)?**
 - **Who computes comm delays (sender or receiver)?**

Figure 6: Trailblazer Federation Policies

4.4 Federation Functional Design

Federate developers documented, and designed as required, their representation of allocated events, objects, activities, and factors defined in the conceptual model.

The federate developers documented the key algorithms in pseudo-code. The algorithms were then reviewed by both the experiment designers for suitability to the experiment, and by other federate developers for cross-federation consistency and to tune data exchange requirements.

4.5 Data Collection Strategy

There were three options for collecting data in the Trailblazer federation: 1) put data in the federation object model and collect data with a logger federate, 2) have federates log data locally, or 3) use a combined strategy. The second option, local logging, was selected.

A data collection plan was developed. For each measure of effectiveness identified by the experiment designer, the plan specified the following:

- Textual description, explanation, implications, and assumptions
- Algorithms required for reduction
- Description of each variable in the algorithm
- Logging responsibility and format for each variable

The plan also specified file naming conventions.

A manual data correlation and reduction approach was decided upon, both because the scope of the prototype was small and because of budget and schedule constraints.

4.6 Federation Object Model Design

A strawman federation object model (FOM) was developed by the systems engineer based on the conceptual model and the allocation of functionality to the federates. The FOM was refined iteratively to meet the federate data exchange requirements.

Because a local logging approach was selected for data collection, the FOM only includes data exchanged by two or more federates in FOM. As a result, not all objects and interactions in conceptual model are in FOM.

4.7 Time Management Design

Time management was approached from a federation perspective to ensure temporal consistency. First, a unit of time appropriate for both the experiment and federates was selected; Trailblazer simulated a three hour scenario using a one second time unit

Next an evaluation was made to determine the frequency that subscribing federates need updates on reflected objects. In the case of federates that have selectable update rates, the lowest frequency consistent with all subscriber's requirements was selected.

Finally, the federate lookahead values were made as large as possible to increase parallel federate computation without sacrificing validity.

4.8 Database Development

Databases were developed for each federate that included specific objects, numbers, and locations based on the scenario, object scripts based on experiment OPORDs, and parameterized object behaviors and physical characteristics based on the conceptual model.

Key features of the databases were matched such as roads and threat laydowns.

4.9 Lessons Learned

For experimentation, federates must have explicit and flexible representations of systems, humans, and C2 organizations. Flexibility can be enhanced by interfaces to other simulations, systems, or federates.

Selected federates may require software and/or database changes to accomplish the experiment. While this can be true in any domain, it is particularly likely for joint experimentation because no existing simulation is likely to represent future or hypothetical systems or doctrine.

The federate algorithms must produce the data required to compute measures of effectiveness. It is

important for the experiment designer to review these key algorithms to ensure they are appropriate for the experiment and also to ensure that the experiment designer understands how the data he provides will be used in the algorithms.

Development of a federation time management policy should be an explicit part of federation design and should consider both performance and functionality.

Finally, implementation of a scenario in a federation may be the longest lead time item of the entire FEDEP.

5 FEDERATION INTEGRATION AND TEST

Step 4 of the FEDEP is *Federation Integration and Test*. The FEDEP describes this step as: "All necessary federation implementation activities are performed, and testing is conducted". (DMSO 1998)

For Trailblazer, this step included facility planning and setup, federate testing, integration testing, and compliance testing.

5.1 Facility Planning and Setup

The first activity was identification of a facility for integration and execution. Next, federate facility requirements were identified, including requirements for computer makes and models, memory, disk, OS and version, language(s), and compilers. Next all hardware and software was installed, including the HLA software and tools: runtime infrastructure software (RTI), object model development tool (OMDT), federation execution planner's workbook (FEPW) editor.

As a last step in setting up the facility, the FEDEP security overlay was consulted and facility security requirements and procedures were reviewed.

5.2 Federate and Integration Testing

Prior to bringing all federates together for an integration event, each federate was individually checked to ensure it could perform basic HLA tasks such as join, resign, and time management.

Next, a series of integration events were scheduled with code/re-code time between them. Integration testing was incremental. The first event focused on join, synchronize, object declaration management, and resign.

The next event added time evolution, and a subset of the object publications, reflections, and interactions. New objects and interactions were brought in on an predetermined schedule.

Integration was also end-to-end; it included experiment data collection and reduction. User review of each excursion was an integral part of testing

Testing aids included the conceptual model, functional design, the data collection plan, the FOM, the FEPW and a test plan derived from the above.

5.3 Compliance Testing

The Trailblazer federate developers chose to test as individual federates in the Trailblazer federation. This allowed compliance testing to piggyback on scheduled integration events, and also, by allowing each federate to be stimulated by the rest of the federation, removed the requirement for federate test harnesses.

Because the only existing Trailblazer federation databases were classified, compliance testing occurred in the secure Trailblazer laboratory.

Testing was relatively quick: four federates were tested in the span of three mornings.

5.4 Lessons Learned

It is prudent to conduct individual federate testing for each federate prior to integration testing regardless of previous experience with HLA.

Standard operating procedures for executions, such as output file archival and initialization procedures, should be developed and tested as part of integration testing.

It is also important to coordinate federate development plans to facilitate incremental integration testing.

6 FEDERATION EXECUTION

Step 5 of the FEDEP is *Federation Execution*. The FEDEP describes this step as: “The federation is executed, outputs analyzed, and feedback provided to the federation sponsor”. (DMSO 1998)

6.1 Run Execution, Data Collection and Reduction

An analysis plan was developed that specified the number of executions required for the base case and the alternative and for each experiment excursion. These executions were performed, the data was collected, and reduced manually using an electronic spreadsheet tool.

6.2 Lessons Learned

The boundary between testing and analysis of execution runs can be fuzzy; testing is not complete until all data is incorporated, all cases are executed, all measures of effectiveness are generated, and the results from each case are analyzed. As a result, analysis should be performed in near-real time and it is preferable to maintain team composition from testing to execution.

Interpretation of the results can be facilitated by good documentation of key algorithms and data and also by

participation of the experiment designer and the federate scenario experts.

Trailblazer used a data collection approach that relied on local logging by each federate, but the extra testing required for custom logging, as well as the data correlation issues that arise from multiple log files, caused too many potential points of failure. Future versions of the federation will use FOM-based data collection.

Also, while data reduction was performed manually, it is evident that automated data reduction is needed for large data sets.

7 SUMMARY

7.1 HLA and the FEDEP

In summary, the FEDEP provides a useful framework for federation solutions. The FEDEP should not be interpreted as a linear process, however; FEDEP activities may be sequential, cyclic, or concurrent. Use of the FEDEP should be tailored to meet specific federation application.

From a technical perspective, building a federation is not difficult. The existing HLA software, tools and technical support (Help Desk, Object Model Template tools, Object Model Library, Object Model Data Dictionary System, FEPW Editor, FMT) are helpful. Additional tools are available for federation verification and data collection.

The most challenging aspect of federation development is interpretation of requirements and translation of those requirements into a good design. The HLA has made the technical aspects faster, simpler, and easier so that the focus can be on this fundamental aspect of the problem.

7.2 Lessons Learned for Experimentation

The HLA provides the common architecture, tools, and processes to meet new requirements for joint experimentation in a fast and cost-effective manner.

Several steps can be taken to further speed development time:

- Select simulations that are HLA-compliant
- Ensure user participation throughout the FEDEP
- Provide secure access to classified networks for transfer of documents and conduct of meetings

The longest lead-time activity may be implementation of the scenario in the simulations.

The Trailblazer federation itself has potential as a “persistent” federation that can be augmented, sub-setted, or modified to meet other experimentation requirements.

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

ANITA ADAMS ZABEK is a Program Area Manager in the Information Systems and Technology Division at The MITRE Corporation. She is the task leader for the Trailblazer (now Pegasus) Project for DMSO. She is also lead for DMSO Cadre support to the Air Force Distributed Mission Training Program. She has previously supported the JSIMS Program Office and was the task leader for MITRE systems engineering support for the ALSP-based Joint Training Confederation. She was project leader for Corps Battle Simulation ALSP integration at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and has been an Operations Research analyst at the Institute For Defense Analyses. Ms. Zabek has a B.S. and an M.E. in Systems Engineering from the University of Virginia.