

## COMPUTATIONAL MODELING IN SUPPORT OF NATIONAL IGNITION FACILITY OPERATIONS

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### Abstract

Numerical simulation of the National Ignition Facility (NIF) laser performance and automated control of laser setup process are crucial to the project's success. These functions will be performed by two closely coupled computer codes: the virtual beamline (VBL) and the laser operations performance model (LPOM).

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Success on many of the NIF laser's missions depends on obtaining precisely specified energy waveforms from each of the 192 beams over a wide variety of pulse lengths and temporal shapes. The LPOM automates inter-beam power balance, provides parameter checking for equipment protection and diagnostic setup, and supplies post-shot data analysis and archiving services. The LPOM relies on a NIF VBL physics model for fundamental modeling of individual beamline performance.

### 2 NIF VIRTUAL BEAMLIN

VBL is a natural consolidation and development of a number of previously distinct laser simulation efforts at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL). The PROP92 [1] extraction and propagation code has been the mainstay of design, verification, and component selection for the NIF laser system. The joint LLNL/Commissariat a L'Energie Atomique pumping code AMP [2] has recently been extended to model thermal deposition throughout the laser cavity. Thermal/mechanical/optical response calculations translate this heating into optical aberrations that can be applied either deterministically or stochastically to influence beam intensity statistics and focusability. The optical aberration effects of gas-path turbulence are modeled, and extension to the rest of the laser transport system has begun. Optical imperfections in the many components comprising each NIF beamline also influence beam propagation. The VBL includes these effects either as measured metrology data or as power spectral density-based simulated phase screens. The NIF adaptive optic system is critical for controlling farfield beam characteristics. Simulation played a

major role in design and design-certification of this system, and this model is included in the VBL. Understanding of optical damage has progressed from early notions of threshold damage fluence through heuristic memory function treatment of pulse-shape effects [3], to today's emerging picture of stochastically distributed damage initiators coupled with thresholded exponential growth [4] of existing damage spots. This model will be included and updated as understanding develops. Conversion of optical energy from 1053-nm to 351-nm wavelength is required for NIF's scientific mission. Since the efficiency of this conversion is a major factor in NIF energetics, considerable effort has been focused on understanding and modeling this process [5]. The conversion model will be integrated into the VBL in support of the LPOM's laser-setup mission.

All facets of the VBL model are under intense development. One particular advance deals with the facility for deriving the low-power temporal shape required to generate a specified high-power output shape. For speed, the algorithm in PROP92 was based on a single-ray, energetics-only calculation. A new approach was recently implemented that uses multiple rays and an improved iterative algorithm to achieve a more accurate solution while still holding the computation time to roughly 10% of that needed for the diffractive "forward" calculation. The new method improves the solution of the input pulse solver by roughly an order of magnitude.

### 3 LPOM

The LPOM will be one of the NIF Integrated Computer Control System (ICCS) high-level software supervisors. The primary role of the LPOM is to automate the setup of the 192 individual NIF laser beams. Figure 1 illustrates LPOM's interaction with the laser system. LPOM will maintain a current model that includes the optical paths, configurations, and frequency conversion characteristics for each beam, as well as a database of diagnostic measurements, laser energy, and power at various locations along the beamline.



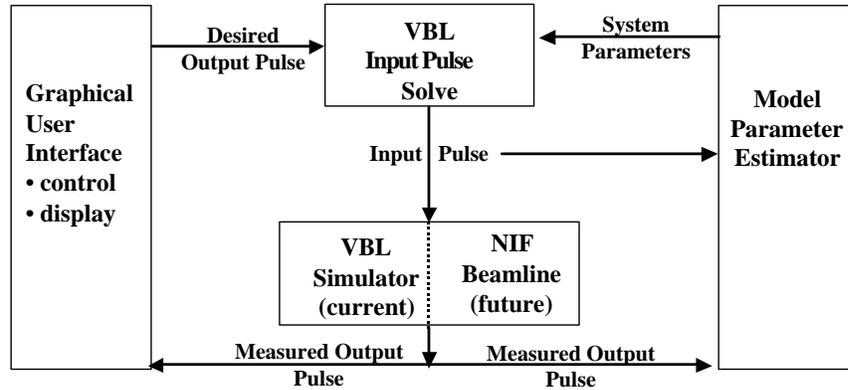


Figure 2: Conceptual design of the LPOM shot setup emulator system. The model parameter estimator consists of VMCON, using a simplified C++ laser model.

shot. A parameter optimizer uses simulated input and output laser diagnostic data (including realistic amounts of systematic and stochastic noise) to estimate a set of gains and losses that best matches the simulated data. This set of parameters, along with the Input Pulse Solver, is used to generate the input pulse shapes and energies required for subsequent shots. The emulator package is diagrammed in Figure 2.

A nonlinear parameter optimization package determines the amplifier gains and optical losses of the laser as a best fit to archived diagnostic data. The parameter adjustment scheme is required to accurately track variations in the system, without introducing appreciable uncertainties in the laser output. A series of tests are under way to determine the most reliable operation strategy. In the immediate future, the emulator will be extended to include the entire laser system and then to include multiple laser beamlines.

## 5 SUMMARY

The LPOM will be an integral part of the NIF laser's supervisory control software, providing setup, equipment protection, analysis, and archiving services. It will rely on the VBL for physics modeling of the beamline performance and damage risk.

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