Exhibit 2006

HRW
Series in
Electrical and
Computer Engineering

CONTROL SYSTEMS

Naresh K. Sinha
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

HOLT, RINEHART AND WINSTON

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To the memory of my father.

Acquisitions Editor: Deborah Moore
Production Manager: Paul Nardi
Project Editor: Lila M. Gardner
Designer: Andrea Da Rif
Illustrations: Scientific Illustrators

Address correspondence to:
383 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sinha, N. K. (Naresh Kumar)
Control systems.

Includes index.
1. Automatic control. 2. Control theory. I. Title.
TJ213.S47444 1986 629.8 85-24796
ISBN 0-03-069357-8

Printed in the United States of America
Published simultaneously in Canada
6 7 8 9 038 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

CBS COLLEGE PUBLISHING
Holt, Rinehart and Winston
The Dryden Press
Saunders College Publishing

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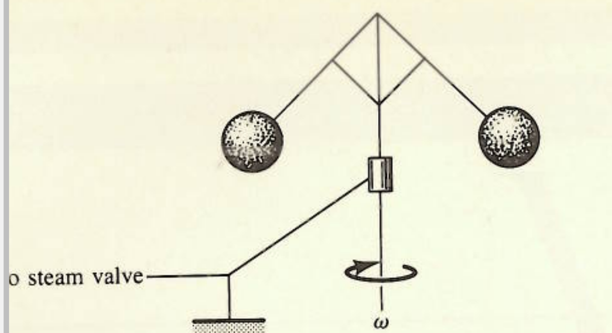
Introduction

The subject of control systems is of great inportance to all engineers. The objective is to free human beings from boring repetitive chores that can be done easily and more economically by automatic control devices. The recent developments in the large-scale integration of semiconductor devices and the resulting availability of inexpensive microprocessors has made it practical to use computers as integral parts of control systems, making them cheaper as well as more sophisticated.

Historically, the first automatic control device used in the industry was the Watt fly-ball governor, invented in 1767 by James Watt, who was also the inventor of the steam engine. The object of this device was to keep the speed of the engine nearly constant by regulating the supply of steam to the engine. A schematic diagram is shown in Fig. 1.1. The two fly balls in the governor rotate about a vertical axis at a speed proportional to the speed of the engine. Due to the centrifugal force acting on them, they tend to move out. This movement controls the supply of steam to the engine through a mechanical linkage to the steam flow valve in such a manner that the steam supply is reduced when the speed is high and increased when the speed is low.



IGURE 1.1. The Watt fly-ball governor.

t was found that by a proper design of the governor the speed pt within narrow limits of a specified value. It was also observed :ried to increase the sensitivity of the governor by increasing the etween the engine shaft and the governor, it tended to "hunt" or ›ut the desired setting. It was about 100 years later that a complete al analysis was made by James Clerk Maxwell (more well known :ibutions to electromagnetic field theory).

Much later it was realized that all automatic control systems worked :iple of feedback. By a coincidence, about the same time the theory amplifiers had been developed by electrical engineers who had :ned with transmitting telephone signals over long distances. In one may mention the Nyquist theory of stability developed about at impetus to the theory of automatic control came during World en servomechanisms were utilized for the control of anti-aircraft World War II many peacetime applications followed. Some of these :opilot" for aircraft, automatic control of machine tools, automatic :hemical processes, and automatic regulation of voltage at electric ts. Although originally the theory was based on frequency response e transform methods, in the 1960s the impact of the digital com- › the development of time-domain theory using state variables. This lly useful as more sophisticated multivariable control systems were for more complex processes. As computers have become cheaper :ompact, they have been utilized as components of more advanced tems.

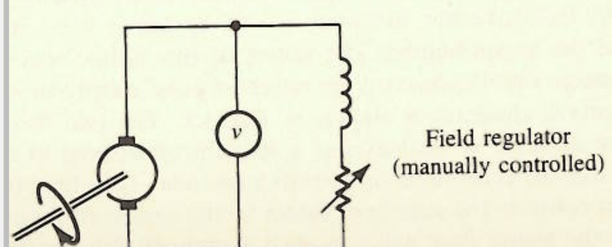


FIGURE 1.2. A voltage control system.

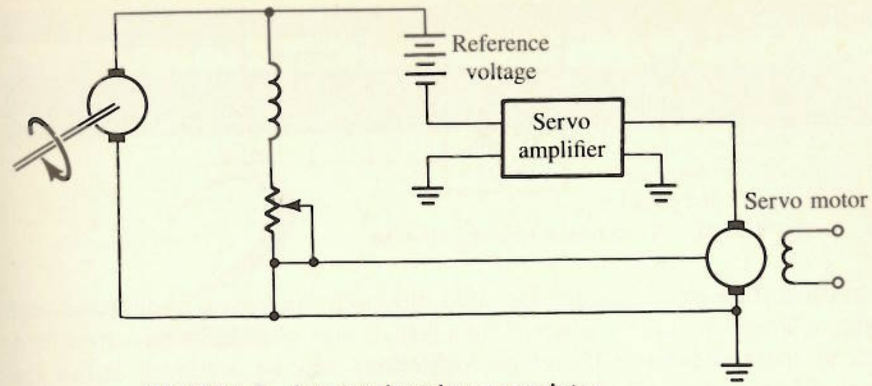


FIGURE 1.3. Automatic voltage regulator.

Let us consider some simple examples of control systems. Figure 1.2 shows the scheme for controlling the voltage at an electric power station in the 1940s. A human operator was required to watch a voltmeter connected to the busbars and adjust the field rheostat in order to keep the voltage close to the specified value. A scheme for automatic voltage regulation is shown in Fig. 1.3 and shows that it works by comparing the actual value of the voltage with the desired value. The difference or "error" is applied to a servomotor, after suitable amplification. This servomotor drives a shaft coupled to the field rheostat to alter the resistance in the field winding in such a manner that the error is reduced. Hence, it may be said that "feedback" is utilized to obtain automatic control. As a matter of fact, all automatic control systems use feed-back and can be represented by the block diagram shown in Fig. 1.4. It can be seen that the controlled output is fed back and compared with the reference input. The difference, called the "error," is then utilized to drive the system in such a manner that the output approaches the desired value (i.e., the reference input).

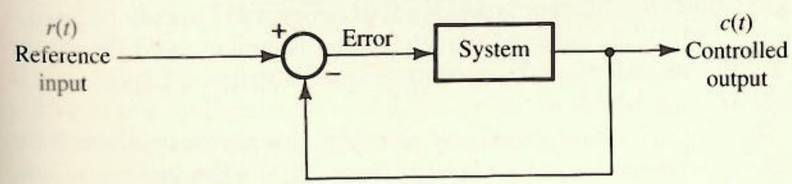


FIGURE 1.4. Block diagram of automatic control system.

Another example is the home heating system. A thermostat senses the temperature and if it is lower than a set value, the furnace is turned on. The furnace is turned off when the temperature exceeds another set value. The block diagram is shown in Fig. 1.5. Although it is similar to Figs. 1.3 and 1.4, it may be noted that this is an on/off-type control system, whereas the voltage regulator is a continuous-type system.

It was noticed at the very outset that if one tried to improve the accuracy of a control system by increasing the loop gain, it led to instability,

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