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Problem C: Calculation of P_{merr} for FlexCAN

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Introduction

The occurrence of certain incidents in the normal operation of in-vehicle networks, such as bit errors caused by electromagnetic interference (EMI), produces a special form of network partitioning (i.e., a node is temporarily isolated from the rest of the network). Recovering from these situations takes some time, leading to an increase of the message latency (also called response time). This may induce failures of expected hard real-time properties or services of the network. Timeliness of applications may be compromised and may lead to application failures. Thus, methods to analyze the impact of such faults are important.

Several approaches have been proposed to analyze the impact of externally induced faults. The approach proposed in the CANELY architecture [], where this type of network partitioning is called *network inaccessibility*, requires:

- I1 - Study the accessibility constraints, ensuring that the number of inaccessibility periods and their duration have a bound.*
- I2 - Show that such a bound is suitably low for service requirements.*
- I3 - Accommodate the effects of inaccessibility events in the timeliness model and in protocol operation, at all the relevant levels of the system.*

We classify the CANELY approach as a bottom-up approach because it starts at the protocol level (using CAN). In this study, we propose a top-down analysis approach starting at the application and regressing to lower levels of the application and details of the communication system. Nevertheless there are common issues in both approaches. The characterization of network partitioning including techniques to overcome them is crucial in simplex networks and cannot be ignored in networks with node and channel redundancy. Indeed, network partitioning affecting individual network replicas would lower their fault coverage in the time domain.

In (Broster at al., 2004), a numerical method to evaluate the impact transient random errors (e.g., EMI) on the real-time delivery capability of CAN and TTCAN has been developed. This method has proven particularly useful to evaluate error recovery mechanisms inherent in some protocols such as CAN. The method can be also applied to TDMA-based networks (e.g., TTP/C and FlexRay). Preliminary evaluations in [] has shown that because of the error recovery inherent in CAN, its performance against transient random errors is much better than equivalent time-triggered protocols (e.g., TTCAN) that lack explicit error recovery mechanisms.

The FlexCAN communication architecture is both time-triggered and event triggered and its performance under transient random errors can be also analyzed using

this method. In this section, we use the numerical evaluation method of [] to make a detailed study of message latency in the FlexCAN communication architecture under transient random errors. Such studies are important because they are the basis for application oriented safety calculations.

Problem formulation

Given the FlexCAN communication architecture, find the probability of failure delivery of message m_i , P_{merr} defined as the probability that the maximum message latency R_i corresponding to message m_i is greater than the sub-cycle interval T_{sc} , (i.e., $R_i > T_{sc}$).

The solution to this problem depends on three elements: the communication protocol, the structure of the time-triggered communication cycle, and the error model assumed for the external random disturbances. Details of the communication protocol (e.g., the frame structure, the data rate, etc.) are needed to numerically evaluate R_i . However the probability of failure delivery of a message is particularly sensitive to the error recovery policy or mechanism inherent in the protocol. CAN uses the feature of automatic message re-transmission as the error recovery policy; whenever any error is detected, the protocol will automatically retransmit the message in error. The structure of the communication cycle is important because it imposes a time reference, not only for the calculation of R_i but also for the application, with important simplifications and improved accuracy. Finally, it should be intuitive obvious that the error model used for the external disturbances is important because it will dictate precisely how R_i is affected by errors and the impact of errors in the probability of failure delivery of a message.

Evaluating P_{merr} is one important step in the overall safety evaluation of communication architectures against transient random disturbances. Other steps involve the nature and duration of the external disturbance and the detailed characteristics of the application in question (e.g., steer-by-wire).

Fault Model

The error model is used to characterize external disturbances of abnormal potentially dangerous environments rather than background noise typically found in normal operating environments. The bit error rates in normal operating environments are rather low and the CAN protocol is excellent in dealing with them. The undetected error rate for CAN is [],

$$\text{Prob. \{undetected error rate, normal environments\}} < 4.7 \times 10^{-11}$$

For this reason, most studies consider that the probability of undetected errors in CAN is zero. An example of an abnormal potentially dangerous environment is an section of road crossed by an vehicle near powerful radio frequency transmitters or high voltage lines emitting unusual levels of electromagnetic interference. Several models have been suggested for the probabilistic characterization of these error source ranging from constant [Wilwert, EFTA2005], to Poisson [Broster-Rod, Navet], to generalized distributions [Simonot, FET2005]. Following references [], in this study we also assume the external disturbances follow a random Poisson model that states that the probability of having n errors in a time interval t is given by the following Poisson probability law,

$$p(n,t) = \text{Prob}\{n \text{ errors in an interval } t\}$$

$$= e^{-\lambda t} \frac{(\lambda t)^n}{n!}$$

Where λ is the error rate.

The FlexCAN Communication Model

The FlexCAN architecture has been developed to support safety oriented applications with features to help meet safety integrity requirements. It is based on a time-triggered communication cycle that is composed of a number of sub-cycles of equal or different length. All messages are scheduled on a sub-cycle basis and for each sub-cycle, messages access the bus according to the CAN protocol. Thus, the error recovery policy of FlexCAN is the same as that of CAN (i.e., it automatically retransmit frames in error) with one simplifying assumption, any message not transmitted at the end of their transmission sub-cycle are flushed from the system (i.e., removed from the CAN transmit buffer). The main reason for this is to respect the schedule of the remaining messages and thus to achieve time-domain composability. An advantage of this policy is that messages from one sub-cycle do not interfere with messages in any-other subcycle. It is important to note that for FlexCAN applications, the number of messages per sub-cycle typically range from 2 to 6 [Padova Lift Truck]

The FlexCAN protocol also has node and channel replication features to deal with permanent failures as well as a bus guardian to deal with babbling idiot failures but these are not detailed here.

Summary of CAN message latency calculations

Assume a CAN network with a data rate of R bits/sec, a one bit propagation delay $\tau_b = 1/R$, with a certain number of messages m_1, m_2, \dots to be transmitted. Each message m_i in a multi-rate system is characterized by a tuple $(C_i, T_i, D_i, J_i, P_i)$ where:

- C_i is the time to transmit the message of size b bytes and including overhead bits,
- T_i is the transmission period,
- D_i is the relative deadline defining the maximum time interval tolerated between the transmission request and the reception of the frame at all nodes,
- J_i is the queueing jitter
- P_i is the CAN message identifier (ID) defining its priority

The so-called Tindell Equations [] involve a procedure for calculating the worst case message latency (also called message response time) R_i , defined as the time interval from when a transmitter node enqueues a message for transmission until such message is successfully read by any receiver node. The procedure summarized below is for the general case in which a message m_i is subjected to external noise interferences and undergoes K errors before it is eventually transmitted successfully.

Intuitively, the worst case message response time (R_i) is equal to the queueing jitter (J_i) plus the transmission time of the message (C_i) plus the interference caused by three sources: lower priority messages that may be pending at the time message m_i is submitted for transmission (B_i), higher priority messages that must be transmitted before m_i , (I_i), and periods of network inaccessibility due to errors (E_i). Thus,

$$R_i = J_i + t_i$$

$$t_i = B_i + C_i + I_i(t_i) + E_i(t_i)$$

Where,

$$C_i = (44 + 8b + \left\lfloor \frac{34 + 8b - 1}{4} \right\rfloor) \tau_b$$

$$B_i = \max_{\forall k \in lp(i)} (C_k) + S$$

$$I_i(t) = \sum_{\forall j \in hp(i)} \left\lceil \frac{t - C_i + J_j + \tau_b}{T_j} \right\rceil (C_j + S)$$

$$E_i(t_i) = K M_i$$

$$M_i = E + \max_{\forall j \in hep(j)} C_j$$

It is difficult to know ahead of time the interference due to lower priority messages thus it is set to the worst case which is the maximum of all messages with equal or lower priority than m_i plus S (the inter-frame space in a CAN frame) as given by Eq. (). In a multi-rate system, such as the one considered, we need to calculate the number of higher priority messages that must be transmitted before m_i , and this includes an estimation of the multiple times the same message will be sent. This estimation is the term in square brackets in Eq. (), thus the interference due to higher priority messages is simply the sum of the estimated values a message is sent times the total time taken by each message ($C_i + S$). Finally, the interference due to K errors is simply K times the extra time involved in sending a message in error which is estimated as the maximum length of an error frame (E) plus the maximum value of all messages of higher or equal priority than m_i . For additional details the reader is referred to [1].

Equation () must be solved iteratively by forming a recurrence relation with $t_i^0 = C_i$ which terminates when $t_i^{n+1} = t_i^n$ or fails when $t_i^{n+1} > D_i - J_i$, and $D_i \leq T_i$. If there is a solution $R_i \forall i$ and $R_i \leq D_i$ then the analysis guarantees that all messages will always meet their deadlines, provided that there are no faults.

Difficulties with Tindell Equations:

1. For application engineers, the equations are not straightforward to evaluate as the formula for t_i is in closed-form and must be solved iteratively as outlined above.
2. The formulas assume that one has accurate estimations of the queuing jitter J_i which is difficult to have in a system that is not time-triggered.
3. The numerical values for R_i are not accurate because there is uncertainty in the value of B_i (i.e., it is not known in advance all the messages in the set $lp(i)$, thus the approximation of Eq. ()).

Evaluating Message Latencies in the FlexCAN Architecture

As noted, there are a number of difficulties and inaccuracies in the evaluation of Tindell equations for CAN. The main sources of these difficulties and inaccuracies are:

1. Widely varying message transmission periods T_i in the message set.
2. Lack of a time reference to base the calculations

The first difficulty stems from usage of CAN in early applications where a CAN network was the only network in the system and thus had to support all messages with widely varying message transmission periods. In fact, the application used in [Broster] has 6 messages with the smallest and largest period of 2 and 240 msec respectively, a factor of 120. With such widely differing factors in the transmission periods, the term in brackets in Eq. () is needed. The reason for having equation in closed form is also due to this difficulty. Current and future systems have several communication networks each serving an application type (e.g., entertainment, dash-board, powertrain, steer-by-wire, etc.). These networks are typically configured as a backbone network and several sub-networks each dedicated to one or few functional units of a vehicle. Messages in the sub-networks do not have widely varying message transmission periods, in fact, factors of 4 to 8 are sufficient. The second difficulty stems from the event triggered nature of the CAN protocol that does not use the notion of global time. Because of this, there is uncertainty in the assumptions of values for the queueing jitter and the interference due to lower priority messages.

FlexCAN overcomes these previous two limitations (and others which are not discussed here) by defining a sub-network for messages with closely related transmission periods and also defining a time-triggered time reference made of communication cycles divided into a number of sub-cycles. Just as is the case with other TT architectures, FlexCAN requires an off-line global message schedule to be configured. Furthermore, all messages scheduled in a sub-cycle are submitted for transmission at exactly the same time (at the beginning of the sub-cycle). For example, the following Table shows a communication cycle with four sub-cycles where the rate (reciprocal of communication period) of message m1 and m2 are 4 and 2 times respectively the rate of the remaining messages.

Table. . Example of FlexCAN message scheduling supporting multi-rates.

<i>Sub-cycle</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>II</i>	<i>III</i>	<i>IV</i>
<i>messages</i>	m1, m5, m6	m1, m2, m3	m1, m4	m1, m2, m7

The above described features greatly simplifies the equations for calculating message latencies in the FlexCAN architecture. To begin with, message latency calculations are done on a sub-cycle basis for all sub-cycles. For each sub-cycle, the messages are re-labeled as m1, m2, etc. with m1 the highest priority message, m2 the next highest priority message, and so on. Because all messages are submitted for transmission at exactly the same time, the jitter $J_i = 0$ and $B_i = S$. Thus $R_i = t_i$, resulting in the following simplifications,

$$R_i = S + C_i + I_i + E_i$$

$$C_i = (44 + 8b + \left\lfloor \frac{34 + 8b - 1}{4} \right\rfloor) \tau_b$$

$$I_i = \sum_{\forall j \in hp(i)} (C_j + S)$$

$$E_i = K (E + \max_{\forall j \in hep(j)} C_j)$$

Table , shows the results of WCRT calculations for CAN and FlexCAN, using the same set of messages as that in [] for a data rate R of 250 Kbps and assuming no errors (i.e., $K = 0$). It can be noticed that the bound of the FlexCAN calculations are much more tighter than that for the case of CAN.

Table . Comparison of worst case response time (WCRT) results for CAN and FlexCAN for a typical set of 6 messages of varying lengths, $R = 250$ Kbps.

Priority	Length $C_i, (\mu s)$	Period $T_i, (\mu s)$	Deadline $Di, (\mu s)$	WCRT R_i CAN	WCRT R_i FlexCAN
1	288	2000	2000	828	299
2	328	4000	4000	1168	638
3	328	4000	4000	1508	977
4	528	8000	8000	2048	1516
5	248	12000	12000	2608	1775
6	528	240000	240000	2320	2314

Calculating message response times in FlexCAN has the following advantages:

1. The calculations are more accurate since they are done on a sub-cycle basis relative to a time-triggered communication cycle with each sub-cycle being independent from the next (i.e., all messages are sent in their respective sub-cycles)
2. The calculations are easy to evaluate as the equations are not in closed-form and furthermore both $I_i(t_i)$ and $E_i(t_i)$ do not depend on t_i .
3. The formulae assume that the jitter J_i is zero which is enforced by the FlexCAN message schedule.
4. The formulae are accurate because the term $B_m = S$, (i.e., there is no uncertainty regarding B_m).
5. The multi-rate case is taken into account ahead of time by the FlexCAN message global schedule thus the various periods T_1, T_2, \dots do not appear explicitly in the equations.

In summary, note the following properties of FlexCAN,

1. It is a TT system with communication cycles and sub-cycles.
2. It is a sub-network where messages do not have widely varying transmission periods T_i .
3. An off-line global message schedule takes care of the multi-rate case.
4. Message latency calculations are done per sub-cycle

5. All messages scheduled in a sub-cycle are submitted for transmission at exactly the same time (at the beginning of the sub-cycle).
6. All messages in a sub-cycle have the same deadlines $D_i = T_{sc}$.

Solution of the Problem

Going back to the problem of finding the probability of failure delivery of message m_i , $P_{merr} = \text{Prob.}(R_i > T_{sc})$, we start by using the notation $p(R_{i/K})$ to represent the upper bound on the probability that a frame is affected by exactly K faults and hence may arrive no later than $R_{i/K}$, that is,

$$p(R_{i/K}) = \text{Prob} \{ R_{i/K} < T_{sc} \}$$

Broster et. al. [1] have provided a solution for finding P_{merr} which is slightly modified here for the case of FlexCAN, where $D_i = T_{sc}$, and the periods T_i are all the same in the sub-cycle in question¹.

$$\begin{aligned} P_{merr} &= \text{Prob} \{ R_{i/K} > T_{sc} \} \\ &= 1 - \sum_{\forall K / R_{i/K} < D_i} p(R_{i/K}) \end{aligned}$$

Where $p(R_{i/n})$ is computed recursively as follows,

$$p(R_{i/n}) = p(n, R_{i/n}) - \sum_{j=0}^{n-1} p(R_{i/j}) p(n-j, R_{i/n} - R_{i/j})$$

Numerical Results

Table . Worst case response time (WCRT) for a FlexCAN schedule with $T_{sc} = 2.5$ msec, a set of 6 messages of varying lengths, $R = 1$ Mbps, and $K = 0$.

Priority (i)	Length b , (Bytes)	Deadline D_i , (μs)	$R_{i/K}$ (μs , $K = 0$)
1	2	2500	83
2	3	2500	176
3	3	2500	269
4	8	2500	412
5	1	2500	485
6	8	2500	628

The results of the FlexCAN probabilistic analysis for $R = 1$ Mbps with $\lambda = 30$ faults/second appears in Figure A as a cumulative probability distribution. The graph shows the probabilities of each message exceeding a given response time. Fig. B shows the probabilities as a function of message priorities with the message response time as a parameter. Figures C and D are likewise but for a data rate R of 250 Kbps.

¹ The deadlines and transmission periods correspond to messages already scheduled on a sub-cycle. They may be different to the deadlines and transmission periods of the entire set of messages. It should be noted that a multi-rate case has already taken into account by the scheduling process.

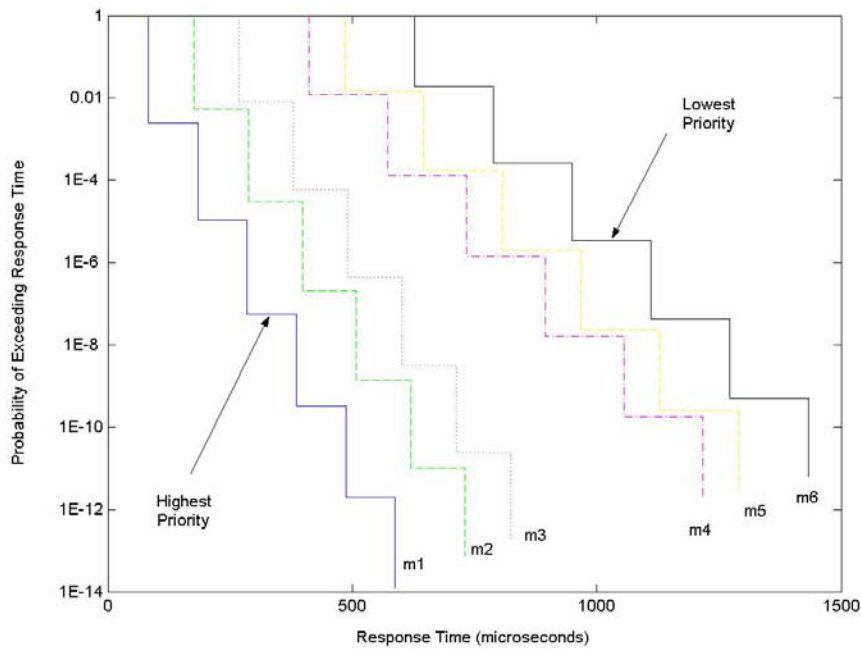


Figure A. Worst case probability of exceeding a response time for six messages arranged in priority order ($R = 1$ Mbps).

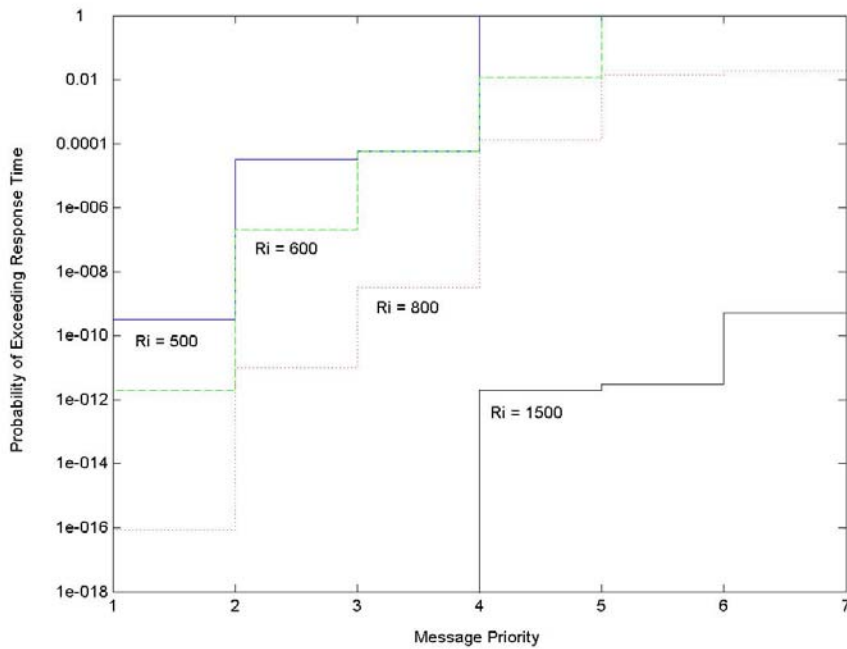


Figure B. Worst case probability of exceeding a response time as a function of message priority. Priority 1 is the highest priority ($R = 1$ Mbps).

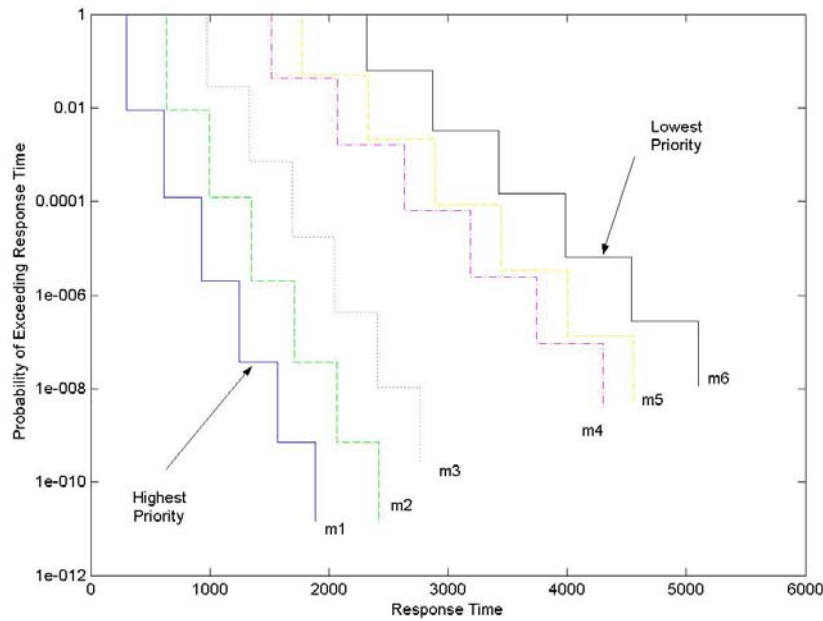


Figure C. Worst case probability of exceeding a response time for six messages arranged in priority order ($R = 250$ Kbps).

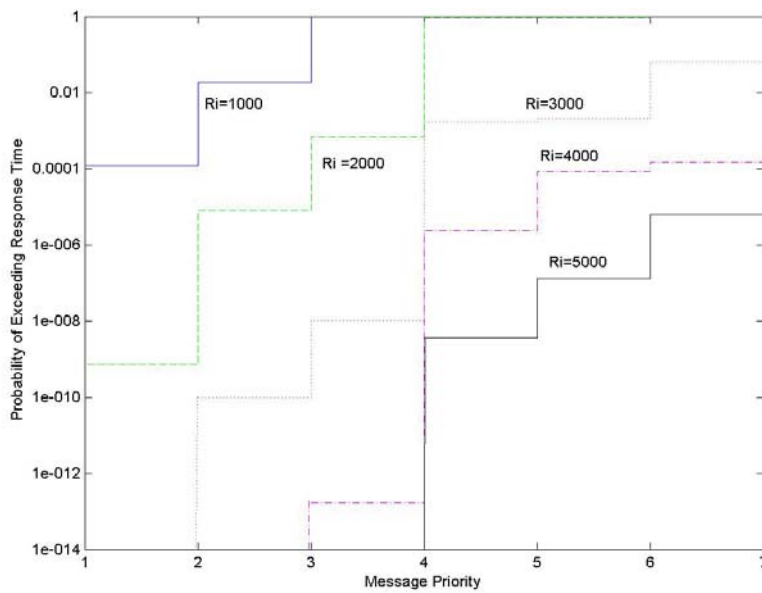


Figure D. Worst case probability of exceeding a response time as a function of message priority. Priority 1 is the highest priority ($R = 250$ Kbps).

Further FlexCAN Properties

1. Successful transmission of message m_i implies successful transmission of messages m_k , where $k < i$.
2. The worst case response time $R_k < R_i$, for $k < i$.
3. $R_{k/K} < R_{i/K}$, for $k < i$, $\forall K$
4. For a fixed response time R , $p(R_{k/n}) < p(R_{i/j})$, for $k < i$, such that $R_{k/n} = R_{i/j} = R$, $\forall n, j$.
5. For a fixed probability level P , $R_{k/n} > R_{i/j}$, for $k < i$, such that $p(R_{k/n}) = p(R_{i/j}) = P$, $\forall n, j$.

Conclusions

- Message latency calculations for FlexCAN are much simpler than those for CAN.
- Several graphs were generated that are useful for sizing, dimensioning, and configuring FlexCAN networks for specific applications.
- Just like CAN, FlexCAN outperforms TT-CAN and TDMA networks for transient random failures.
- FlexCAN retains most of the error recovery properties of CAN at the expense of a smaller bandwidth utilization.