



Distributed Interactive Simulation (DIS) 101: The Basics

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Learning Objectives

The learner will be able to...

- Identify what standards are used by distributed simulations for military use.
- Identify what types of communication protocols are used for various networks.
- Identify what aspects need to be standardized, and what aspects can be customized, to support diverse simulations with differing models and goals.
- Identify how DIS techniques for dead reckoning (DR), visual smoothing and distributed collision detection can reduce network traffic.
- Learn prospects for new capabilities expected in Compressed DIS and DISv8.

Topics

- What is distributed simulation? Scaling from isolated networks to the Web.
- Military modeling & simulation, distributed simulation standards, interoperability
- Underlying TCP/IP network requirements common to all distributed simulations
- DIS: goals, design principles, basic structure, Entity State PDUs explained
- DIS: distributed identification of all participants, Entity Types and Entity IDs
- DIS: tracks and Coordinate Systems, real time clocks, packet PDUS, code APIs
- DIS: collisions, shooting, Dead Reckoning, Smoothing, visual synchronization
- DIS and Open-DIS: DIS standard development, ongoing implementation efforts
- Resources and References for further activity, including latest software builds

Distributed Simulation Terms

- *A distributed simulation* runs on multiple cooperating hosts on the network.
- *State information* describes the position, orientation, and other information about an entity at a point in time.
- *Live, Virtual, Constructive* (LVC) simulation involves different hosts doing different aspects of simulation in one cooperative system.
 - **Live:** Real people, real systems
 - **Virtual:** Real people, simulated systems (human in loop)
 - **Constructive:** simulated people, simulated systems (AI controlled)

Live, Virtual, Constructive (LVC) Example

- Automatic Identification System (AIS) is a standard for transmitting the current position of commercial ships in the real world; ships have a transmitter and receiver on board and send information in a standard format. This is a **live** component (real system, real people).
- Ship simulators portray a simulated virtual view of navigation from the perspective of a ship's bridge, perhaps in a "cave" environment with wall-sized screens. This is a **virtual** component (real people, simulated system).
- We can also inject simulated, computer-generated ships controlled by AI into the simulation. This is a **constructive** component (simulated system controlled by simulated people).
- As **LVC** connects M+S with C2 for warfighters, ever-greater synergies emerge.

Live, Virtual, Constructive (LVC) Example, Illustrated

Virtual: bridge simulator



Live: AIS feed



Single
Shared LVC
Environment

Participants may be
local or distributed

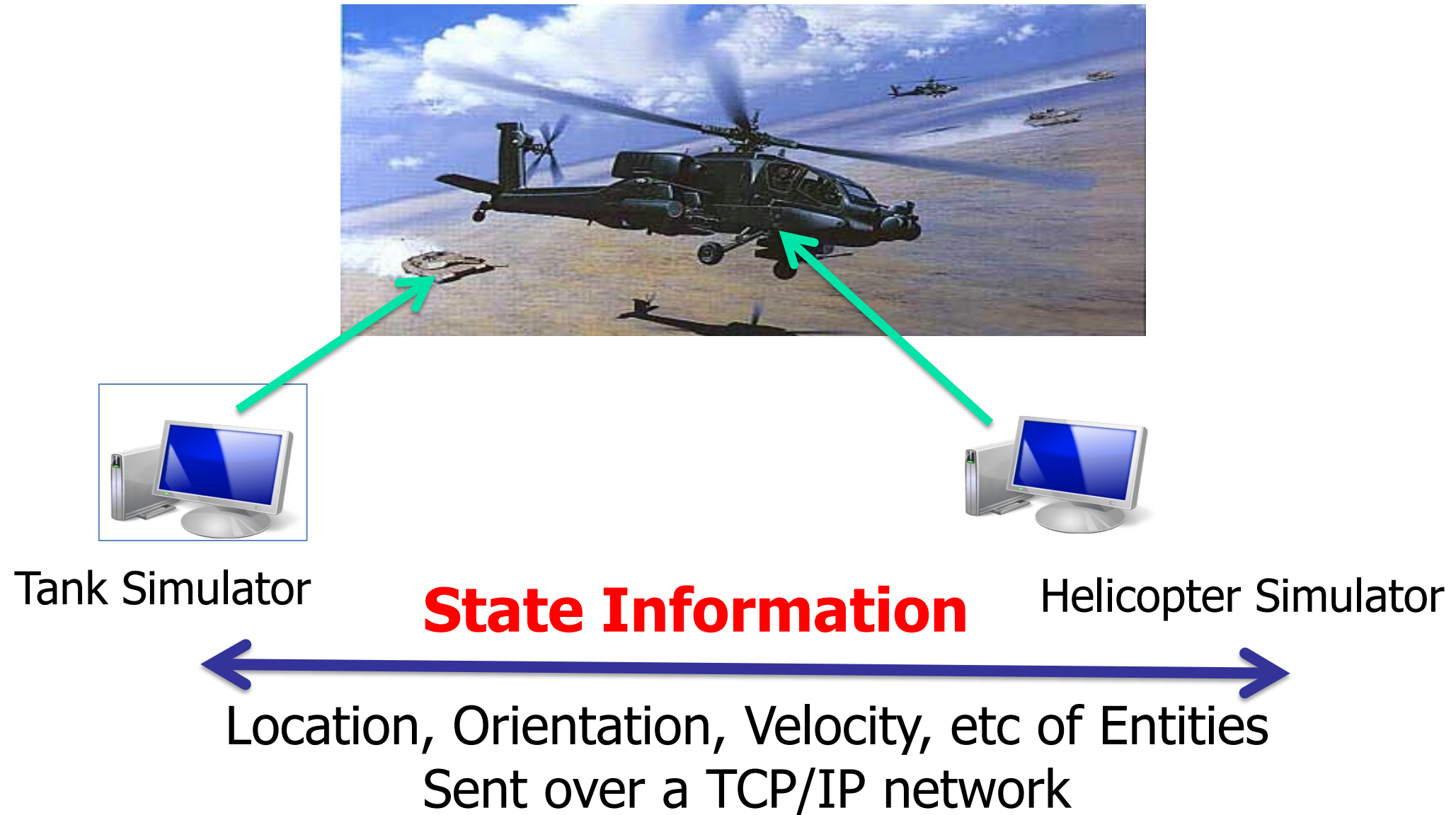


Constructive: computer-
generated ship traffic,
controlled by AI agents

What Do We Want to Do?

- DIS has been running and evolving since early 1990s, remains widely used in many applications.
- People who want to learn about Distributed Interactive Simulation (DIS) usually are in the “virtual” or “constructive” domains, though it can also be used in the live domain.
 - They want to simulate ships, tanks or other entities in 3D world, controlled by humans or AI.
- We need to exchange *state information* between hosts on the network about entities in the world.
 - To view someone else in the simulation, we need to know their position, orientation, and other state information, and this information needs to be sent to us by them.
- Typically entities are controlled by different hosts that are connected via a network. The state information is usually exchanged over the TCP/IP protocol.

State Information in Distributed Simulations



What's So Hard About That?

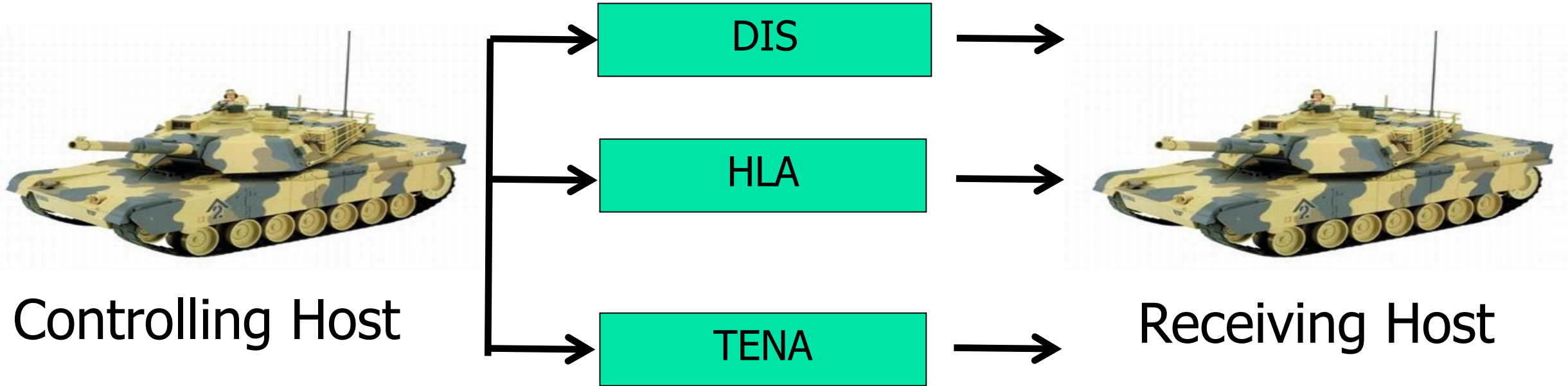
- The format of state update messages needs to be *exactly* specified.
 - What coordinate system should you use? You need one that works well for ground and air systems, and can handle curvature of the earth issues.
 - Text or binary format messages?
 - The order in which the fields appear?
- Network issues: what happens if a message is dropped?
- Scalability issues: how can we get a reasonable number of entities to participate?
- Latency: can we keep the message delay reasonable?
- Do all participants have a consistent, coherent operational picture?

Distributed Simulation Standards

- There are many ways to exchange the state information, but we want a *standard* way so we can interoperate with simulations from many vendors rather than being locked in to one. We don't want to use only one vendor's proprietary method, for which we will pay dearly.
- In the case of defense modeling and simulation, the “big three” are
 - **TENA: Test and Training Enabling Architecture**
 - **HLA: High Level Architecture**
- \
- TENA and HLA include many semantic concepts borrowed from DIS. Understanding DIS has carry-over benefits when working with other standards.

State Information Exchange Standards

The controlling host sends the state information update via one of the standards to other hosts



State Information Updates

- Used on ranges; often the “L” in Live-Virtual-Constructive simulations.
- Designed for real time and embedded systems, real sensor systems, etc.
- In effect it is thinly disguised CORBA distributed objects with multiple new features to help it work in a simulation environment.
- Can gateway it to other standards, such as DIS or HLA.
- See <http://tena-sda.org>



High Level Architecture (HLA)

- HLA is very general and intended to cover most defense modeling domains including training, analysis, and engineering in addition to virtual worlds.
- Participants communicate via an agreed-upon *Federation Object Model* (FOM) and an API associated with a *Run-Time Infrastructure* (RTI).
- Specification is maintained by SISO (<http://sisostds.org>), is IEEE standard 1516 and has implementations by
 - MAK (<http://www.mak.com>),
 - Pitch (<http://www.pitch.se>),
 - Portico (older version) (<http://porticoproject.org>) and others.
- <http://www.pitch.se/hlatutorial> is a good introduction to HLA.

Distributed Interactive Simulation (DIS)

- DIS was the first standard to tackle these problems in a systematic way.
- Originated in the SIMNET project in the 80's. DARPA supported converting the SIMNET research into a standard; SISO developed the standard and took it to IEEE for formal approval.
- Anyone can get standard from IEEE, implement it, and participate in simulation.
- Development of standard continues; updated DIS standard version 7 is the latest approved version. SISO maintains DIS, presents it to IEEE for approval.
- Substantial commercial support, open source implementations, many home grown implementations of portions of the standard.

- What does DIS support?
 - A standardized way to exchange messages about entities in a shared distributed virtual world
 - Common semantics for coordinate systems and other information, such as how to describe and specify entities
 - Common practices to ensure interoperability among simulations

Networking: the Protocol Stack

- DIS defines the format of the messages, but doesn't specify how to get the messages from one host to another. Almost always this is done via TCP/IP network protocol.
- Knowing network basics helps you be a better simulation designer/user!

DIS
software
libraries



Message passing
between hosts:
TCP/IP protocol,
implemented by
each host machine's
operating system

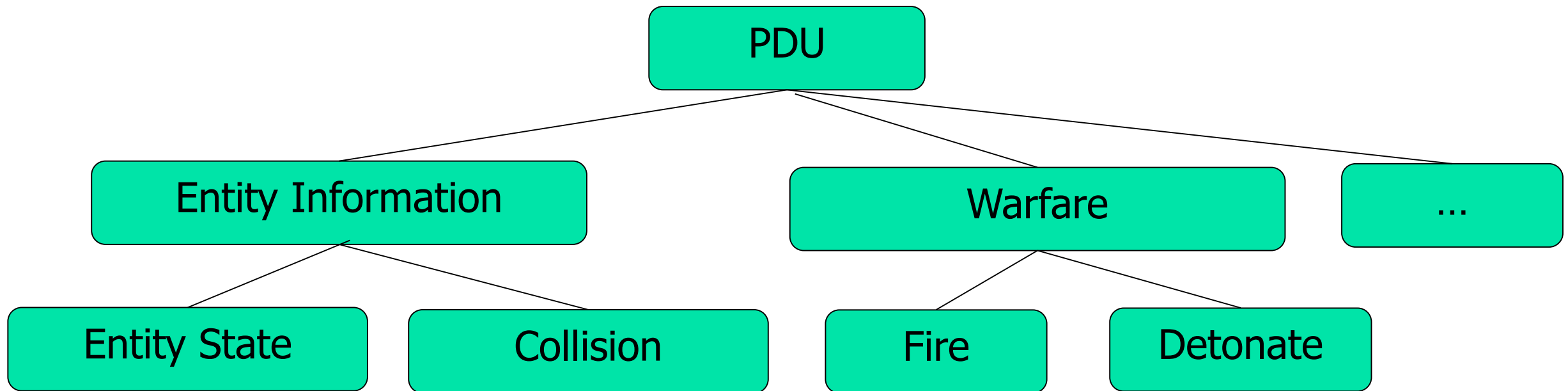
TCP/IP and UDP

- TCP sockets have higher latency, higher *jitter* (variation in latency), and doesn't scale to large numbers of hosts as well.
- UDP sockets have lower latency, lower jitter, scales to large numbers of participants better, but are unreliable.
- DIS typically uses UDP.
- Hold on—UDP is *unreliable*? What's up with that?
 - Individual UDP messages may be dropped by the network; there's no guarantee that each UDP message will be delivered. This tradeoff achieves lower latency and jitter, which in turn brings better scalability.
 - Not as big a deal as it might seem. If we get position updates from entity every 1/30th of a second, does it matter if we drop one? Better information is coming along shortly, so why resend dropped messages?

DIS Messages

- We know **what** we want to do: send a message that tells another host what the state of an entity is.
- We know **how** we do this: send the message via TCP/IP, typically in a UDP message over broadcast or multicast.
- What is **actual format** of the messages? This is specified by the DIS standard.
 - There are dozens of possible messages to send, relating to everything from logistics to electronic warfare to radio communications.
 - Each message type is called a “Protocol Data Unit” (PDU).

DIS Messages



Several dozen different message types (called Protocol Data Units, or PDUs) to describe entity movement, collisions, combat, radio communications, logistics, and many more. The Entity State PDU is the most widely used.

PDU Families are Diverse



PDU Families

- Entity information/interaction
 - Warfare
 - Logistics
 - Simulation Management
 - Distributed Emission Regeneration
 - Radio Communications
 - Entity Management
 - Minefield
 - Synthetic Environment
 - Simulation Management with Reliability
 - Live Entity
 - Non-Real Time protocol
 - Information Operations
- Color Key
 - 1995
 - 1998
 - 201X

Credit: from SISO slideset
[IEEE 1278 Distributed Interactive Simulation \(DIS\)](#)

by Mark McCall and Bob Murray, 26 May 2010.

Now all stably defined.

Many people have used and extended DIS Protocol so you can likely find what your system needs to do.

DIS Messages: Entity State PDU

- We use ESPDU when want to inform other hosts of the position of an entity we control—the most common PDU



Entity sends ESPDU with

- Unique ID
- Position (xyz) in standard coordinate system
- Orientation
- What type of vehicle it is
- More....

Site, Application, Entity ID: a Unique Identifier

- *Before* telling entities “hey you there, do that” we need a way to differentiate between entities.
- The entity ID is a unique identifier for each simulation object in the world. In DIS this is accomplished via a triplet of three numbers: *Site*, *Application*, and *Entity* ID numbers.
- This triplet of three numbers taken together must be unique for each entity.



DIS: Entity IDs

- Example: before the simulation starts we agree, simulation-wide, on the following arbitrary numbers. Here are simple possibilities:

Site	Number
China Lake	42
Norfolk	17
Orlando	23

Application	Number
YoYoDyne M1A2 Simulator	112
ACME UCAV Simulator	417
WARSIM (or maybe VBS4)	512

Entity IDs



Tank Simulator

EID: (42, 112, 18)

EID: (42, 112, 19)

YoYoDyne simulator (112) at China Lake (42) controls two distinct tanks, 18 and 19



Helicopter

EID: (17, 417, 18)

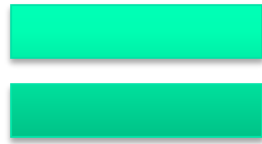
ACME (417) simulator at Norfolk (17) controls a Helicopter (entity 18)



- We may need some other information. What if we want to draw this entity? We need to know what kind of entity this is—a tank, a helicopter, a ship?
- This is done via a field called the *Entity Type*, which in turn depends on a SISO document called the “Enumeration and Bit Encoded Values” (EBV).
- The EBV document is a long listing of standardized record values that lets us identify military hardware.

Entity Type

{
 Kind: 1 (entity)
 Domain: 1 (Land)
 Country: 225 (US)
 Category: 1 (Tank)
 Subcategory: 1 (M1)
 Specific: 6 (M1A2)
}



Whenever a DIS message has an entity type record with the above settings we know it's referring to an M1A2 tank. What the numbers are doesn't matter, as long as *all* participants agree on what they mean. SISO maintains the master list of arbitrary numbers, called the EBV document.

Entity Type From EBV Document

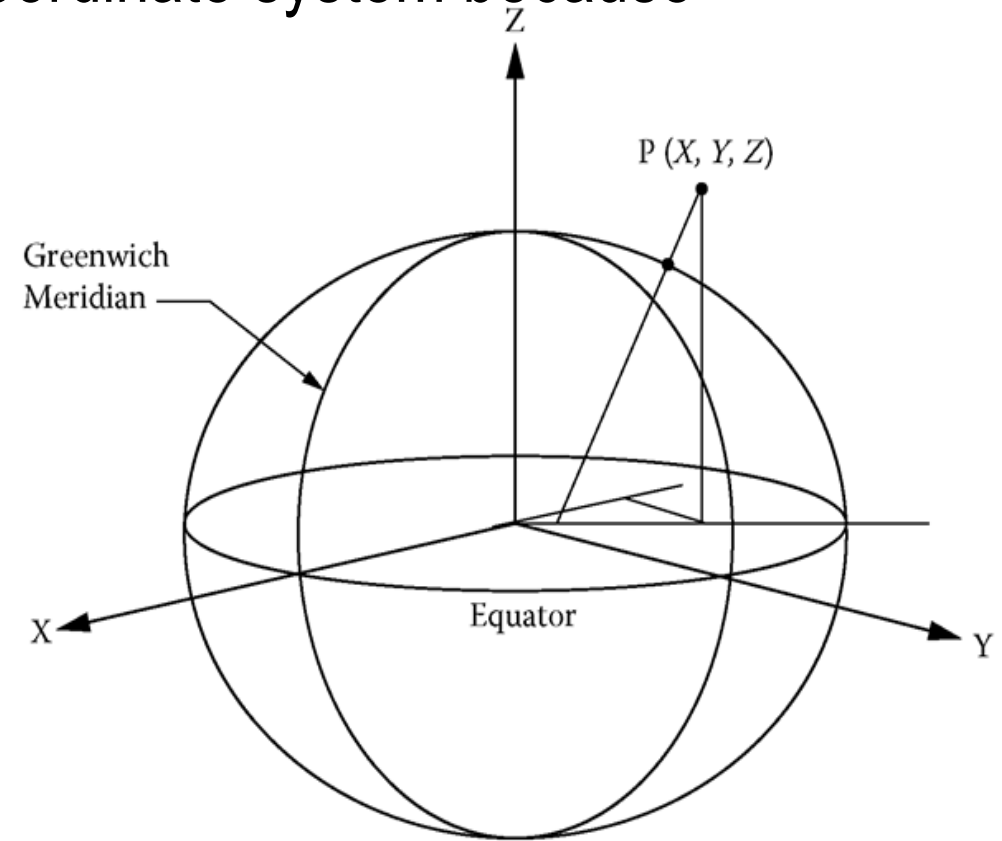
<u>Kind</u>	<u>Domain</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Cat</u>	<u>Scat</u>	<u>Specific</u>
1	1	225			
				11	M125 81-mm mortar carrier
				1	M125A1
				2	M125A2
				12	Cadillac Gage V-600 Armored Car
				13	Cadillac Gage LAV Assault Gun LAV-105
				15	LAV-105
				16	Chrysler MAC-1 armored car
				17	Cadillac Gage Commando Scout
				18	Cadillac Gage Commando V-300
				1	V-300 w/ TOW
				2	V-300 w/ 81-mm mortar
				3	V-300 ambulance

Entity Type

- The EBV document has gone through many versions as new hardware has been added. An important checkpoint for consistency: all participants in the simulation *should* agree on the current version of EBV document being used.
- In reality this can sometimes be hard; some simulations have not been updated to reflect new EBV documents, and sometimes those implementing a simulation simply make up numbers, and *no* simulation implements all entities in the EBV.
- You may need a gateway such as Joint Simulation Bus (JBUS) to act as a “shim” connection between simulations and change entity type values to match what is expected. The gateway can rewrite the entity type values in the PDUs to force them to match expectations.
- The EBV enumerations are also often used in HLA RPR-FOM and in TENA.

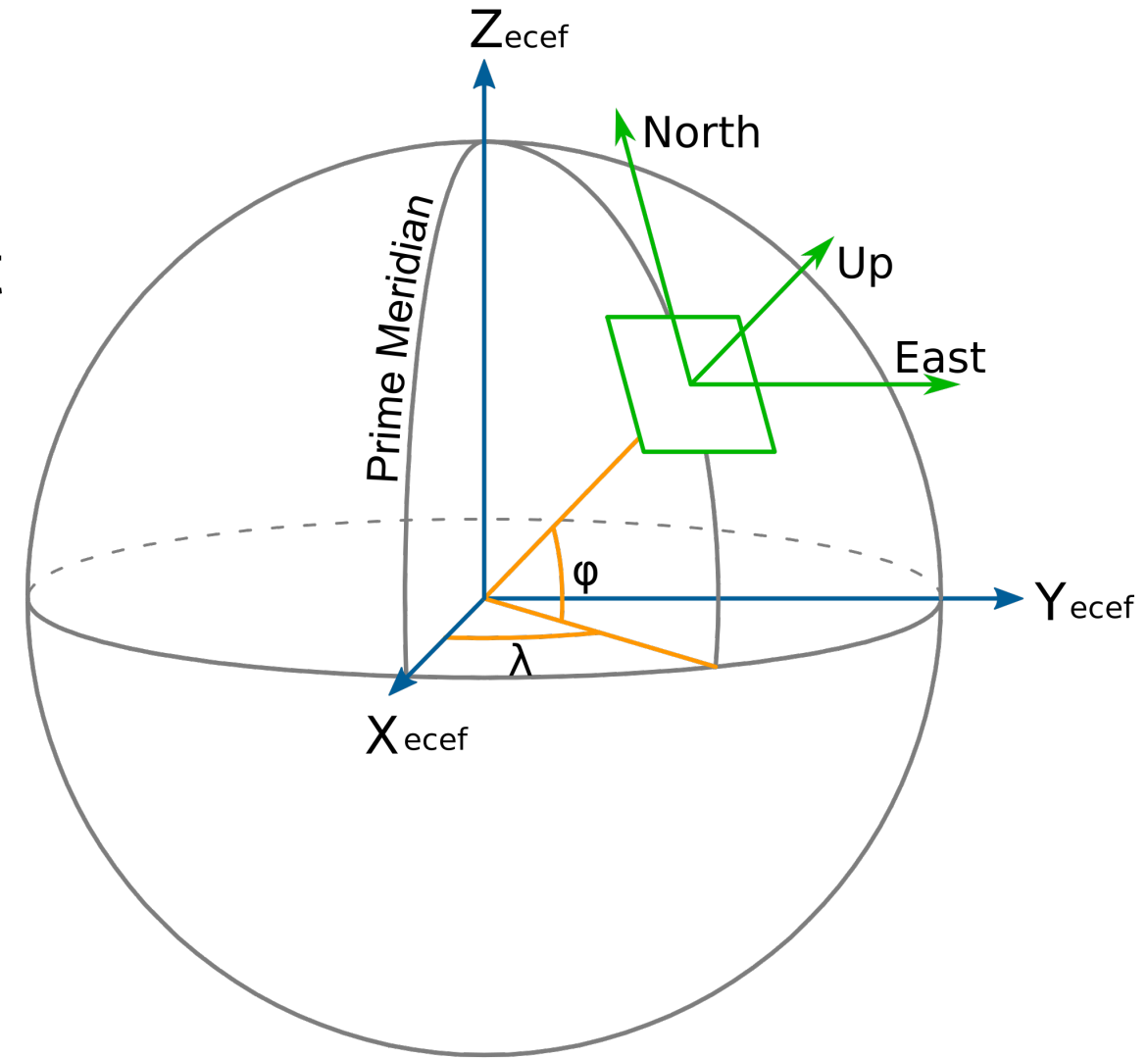
Entity State PDU: Position

- What does it mean if we say an entity is at (x, y, z) ? This has no meaning without a coordinate system. We need to agree on one, and where the origin is.
- DIS chose to use a Cartesian, geocentric coordinate system because
It's easy to convert from that to other coordinate systems, such as geodetic (latitude, longitude, altitude) or military Systems such as MGRS.



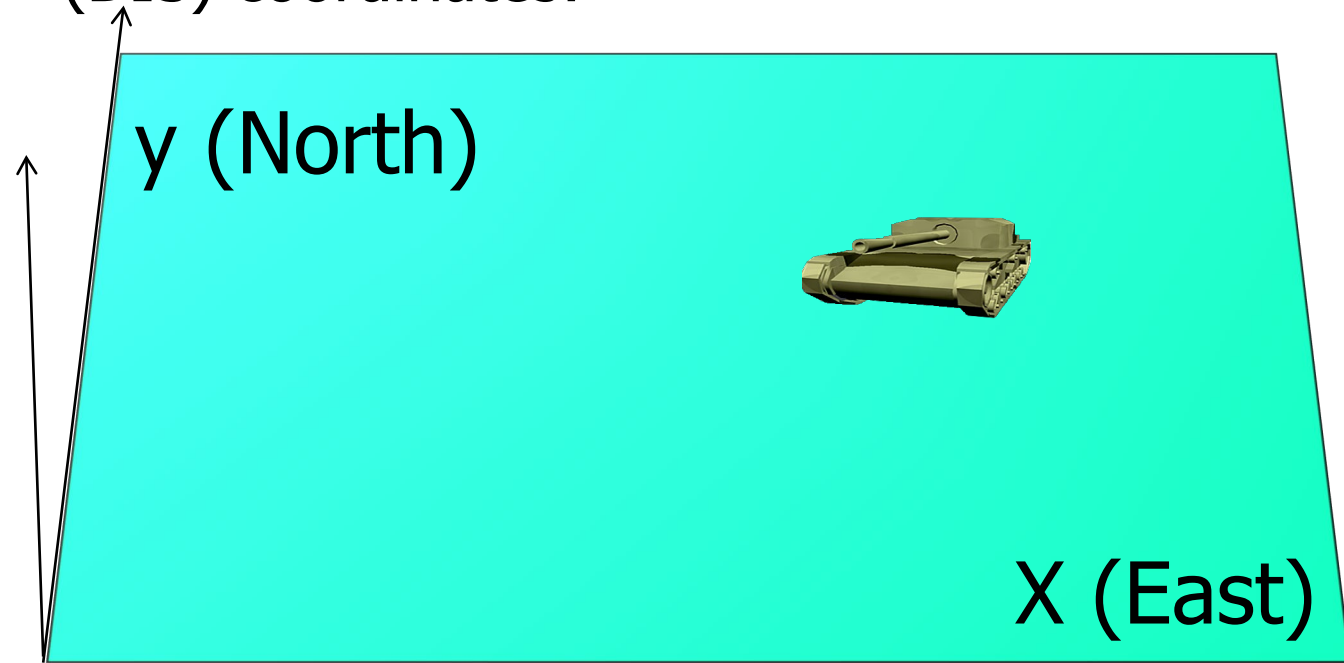
DIS: Coordinate Systems

- Very often simulations set up a local, flat-plane coordinate system at a point tangent to a point on the earth's surface, using that for local physics movement.
- When ESPDU is actually sent, local coordinates are changed back to the global coordinate system. The SEDRIS SRM package can do all the math.
- Nobody will ever agree on one single way for local coordinate system axes to point identically for all simulations. YMMV !



Coordinate Systems

A local Cartesian coordinate system origin is set at {lat, lon, alt}. The simulation does all calculations and movement in this coordinate system, because it's convenient. Before sending entity information out in a DIS ESPDU, convert from local to geocentric (DIS) coordinates:



Local coordinate system origin
At lat 43.21, lon 78.12, alt 120m, WGS 84

Entity position can be expressed in:

Local: (10, 10, 4)

Geodetic: 43.21001 N, 78.12012W, 124

UTM: Zone 44N, 266061E, 4788172N, 124M

DIS: 958506.1, 455637.2, 4344627.4

We have enough information to convert from one coordinate system to another, if local coordinate system origin known.

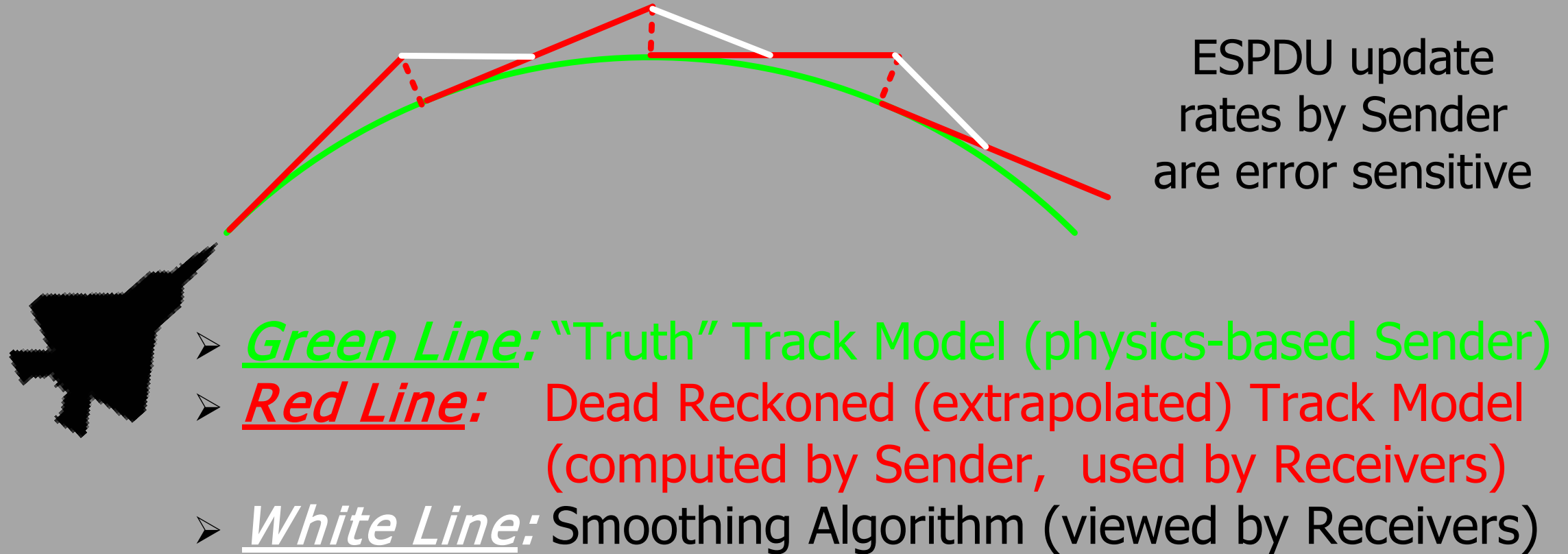
DIS: Dead Reckoning (DR) Algorithms

- If we're running a visual simulation, how often do we need to send ESPDUs?
- If running at frame rate, maybe about every $1/30^{\text{th}}$ of a second.
 - If we have 500 entities in a simulation, this works out to 15,000 UDP messages per second. If you're doing other computation on host, this will tax your CPU and network.
- Do we *really* need to send that fast? If we know how fast and in what direction an entity is moving, we can “dead reckon” in between receiving each ESPDU and then interpolate position to draw our entity there.
 - Sure, we're lying to the user. Got a problem with that? If our DR is wrong, we just correct our position stealthily when we get better info on the next packet. The user won't know the difference, probably.
 - Due to latency all simulation participants are a little out of sync anyway.

DIS: keeping it real, with less throughput required

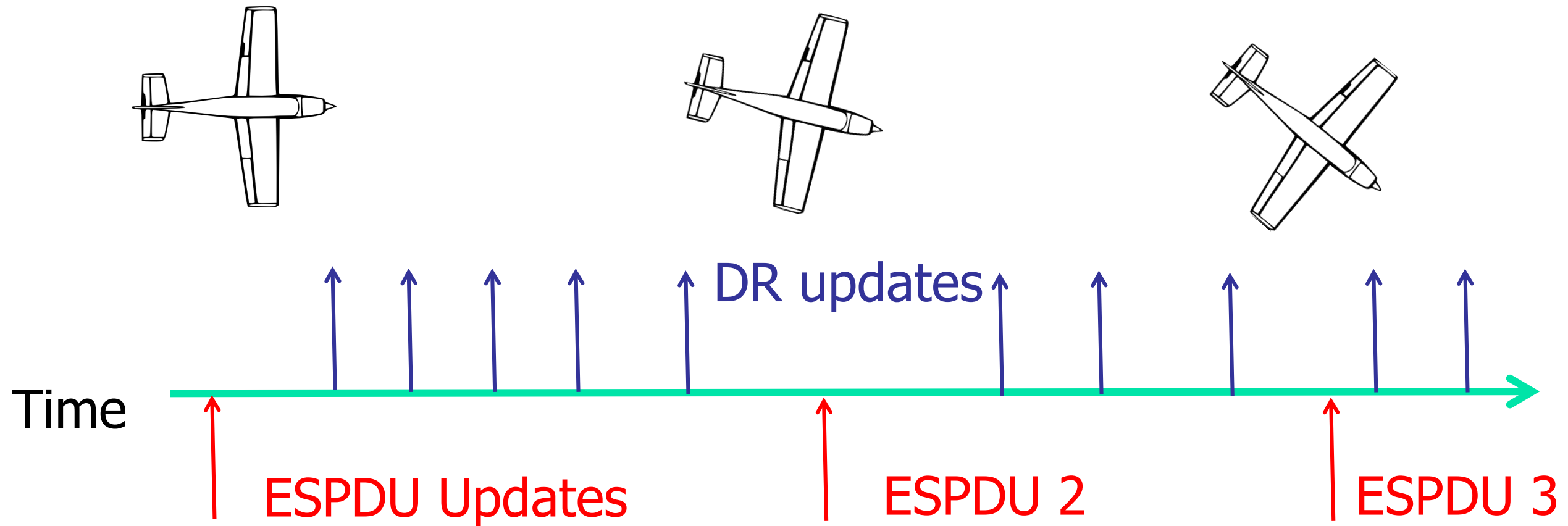
- Dead Reckoning (DR) algorithms use projected trajectory information (such as linear or rotational velocities and accelerations) to compute how often network updates need to be sent. Helpful for quiet and intensely active intervals.
- Visual smoothing techniques hide when packets are dropped or arrive late. Entity display smoothly interpolates to the correct location and direction, avoiding distracting jumps that do not correctly represent behavior anyway.
- Having each individual entity honorably compute whether collisions occurred takes advantage of highest fidelity information with least computation, avoiding expensive time delays and greater inaccuracies of server-based adjudications.

Dead Reckoning (DR) Example: Shared Track Fidelity



DR algorithms can include linear, rotational velocities/accelerations

DIS: Timing and Dead Reckoning between ESPDU Updates



Aircraft position & orientation updated by dead reckoning updates between ESPDU messages

DIS: Dead Reckoning Algorithms and Updates

- Which velocity-acceleration DR algorithm is best? (... wait for it...)
- It depends! In some situations we might want to include acceleration or angular velocity, but not in others. Typically the information available varies. ESPDU senders specify what DR algorithm to use.
- The sender can also perform its own internal DR to determine what each recipient is seeing. If sender sees that clients are probably wrong in their guess about where the entity is, based on accumulated error, sender can issue another ESPDU sooner with better state information.

DIS Dead Reckoning (DR) Smoothing, Synchronization

- Dead Reckoning (DR) is projection of entity location based on last received timestamp, position and vector-based velocities/accelerations.
 - Enables recipients to more accurately estimate entity state in-between PDU updates.
 - Enables senders to more accurately estimate when to send more-frequent updates.
- Smoothing is a recipient-presentation technique for handling dropped packets.
 - Avoid sudden jerky jumps in motion, instead interpolate from prior estimate to new state.
 - No need to improperly distract user with corrective actions when recovery is satisfactory.
- Synchronization among multiple players is a blend of capabilities.
 - Networking monitoring and management, simulation management, logging, etc.
 - Measurable metric: is a “fair fight” taking place among distributed participants?
 - Sometimes called “*Triangle of Death*: **faster – better – cheaper, pick any two**”

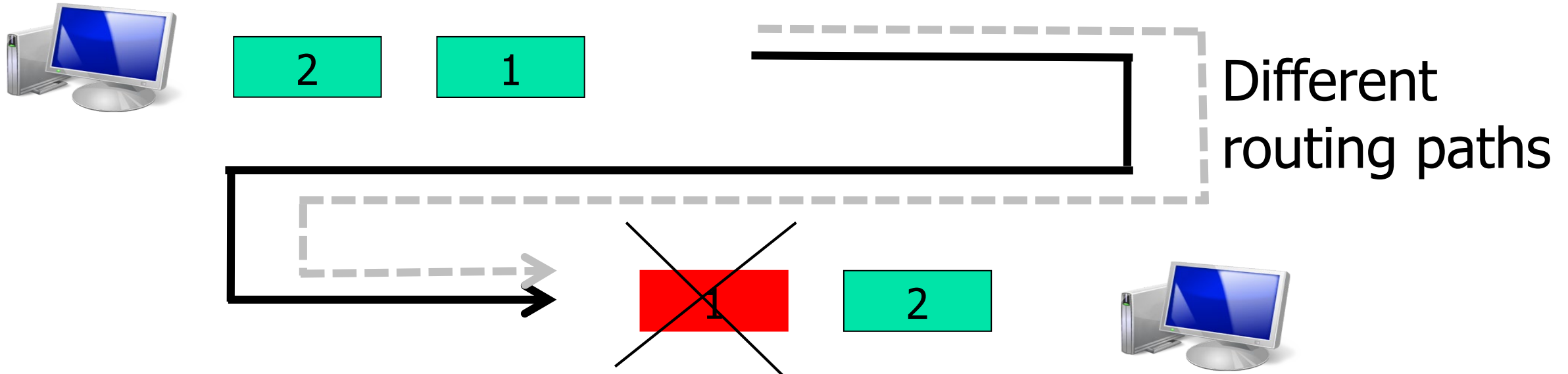
DIS: Learning About the World and Heartbeat

- If we run a DIS simulation, how do we learn about all other entities in the world?
 - One design possibility is to use a master server. Instead, the designers chose for DIS to be peer-to-peer; there is no central server, and hosts talk to one another directly.
- In DIS essentially all we have to do is listen for ESPDUs. New-entity ESPDUs contain what we need to know: entity type, location, velocity, orientation. This is simple and avoids a single point of failure, making configuration easier.
 - There are also Simulation Management PDUs for announcing arrival, removal, etc.
- To make this work, every entity must periodically send a time-stamped ESPDU even if its state hasn't changed. This is called a *heartbeat*. Usually entities must send an ESPDU at least once every five seconds.

DIS: Timestamp

- One of the oddities of UDP is that UDP packets may be *duplicated* during TCP/IP routing; we send a single packet, but two might arrive nevertheless.
- UDP packets may also arrive *out of order*. We send packets in order A, B, C, but they arrive in order C, A, B
 - This creates problems for position updates! How to handle?
- DIS includes a *timestamp* field to detect these kinds of problems:
 - The field typically represents time since the top of the hour (as common practice).
 - If the next packet we receive has a timestamp before the last packet we processed, then we can discard it; it's old information that has been obviated by new data.
 - Time coordination between hosts is useful but not required.

DIS: Timestamp



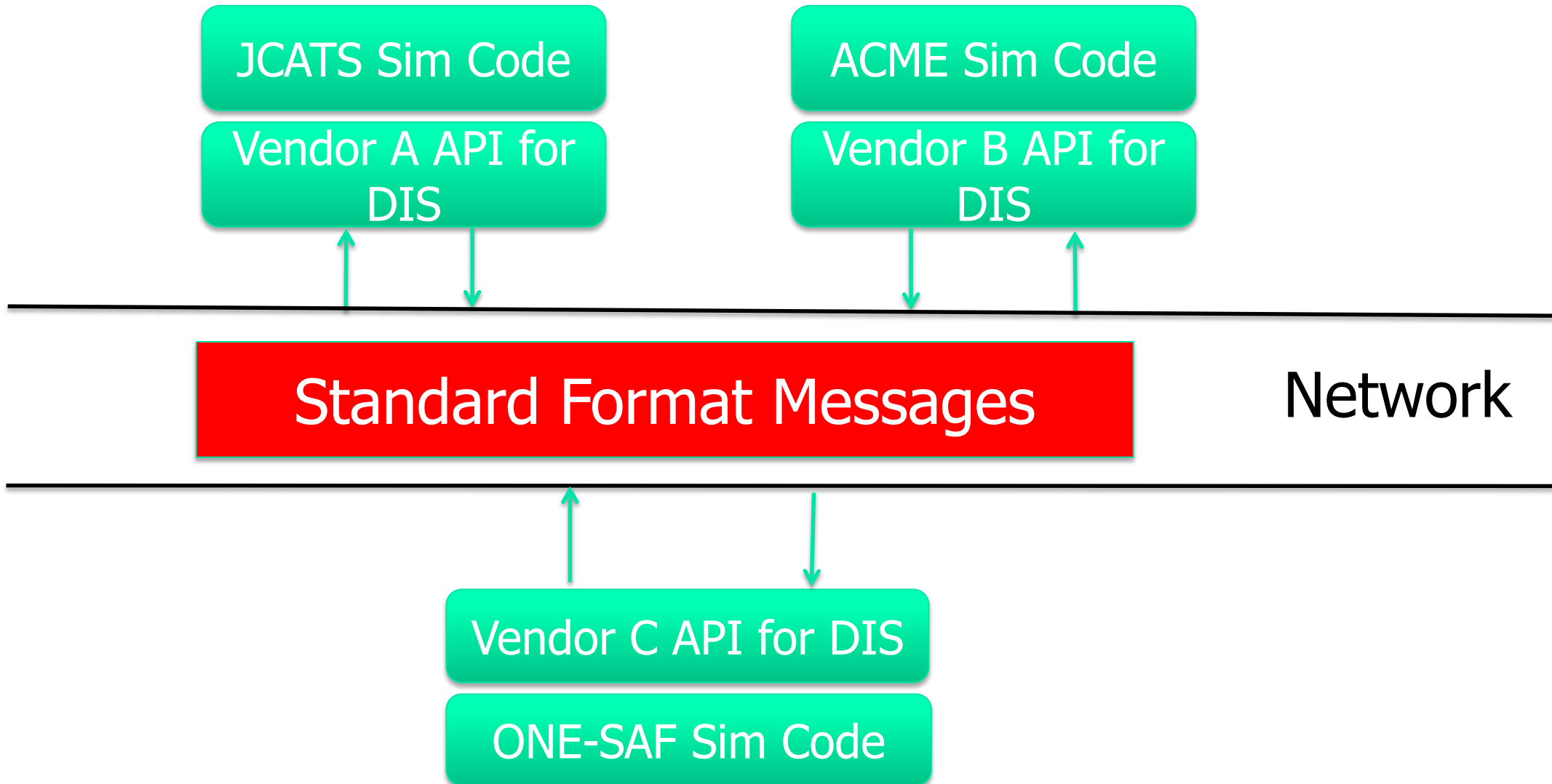
Host A sends 1 and then 2. Host B receives 2, and then 1. We should discard 1, because we know it's older than 2, due to its older timestamp.

- So far we've looked at an ESPDU, which contains
 - Entity ID
 - Entity Type
 - Position, orientation, velocity, etc.
 - Specifies a DR algorithm for the receiver to use
 - Timestamp
- We've also seen that we need to agree upon a coordinate system, and agree on the enumerations that describe things like entity type.

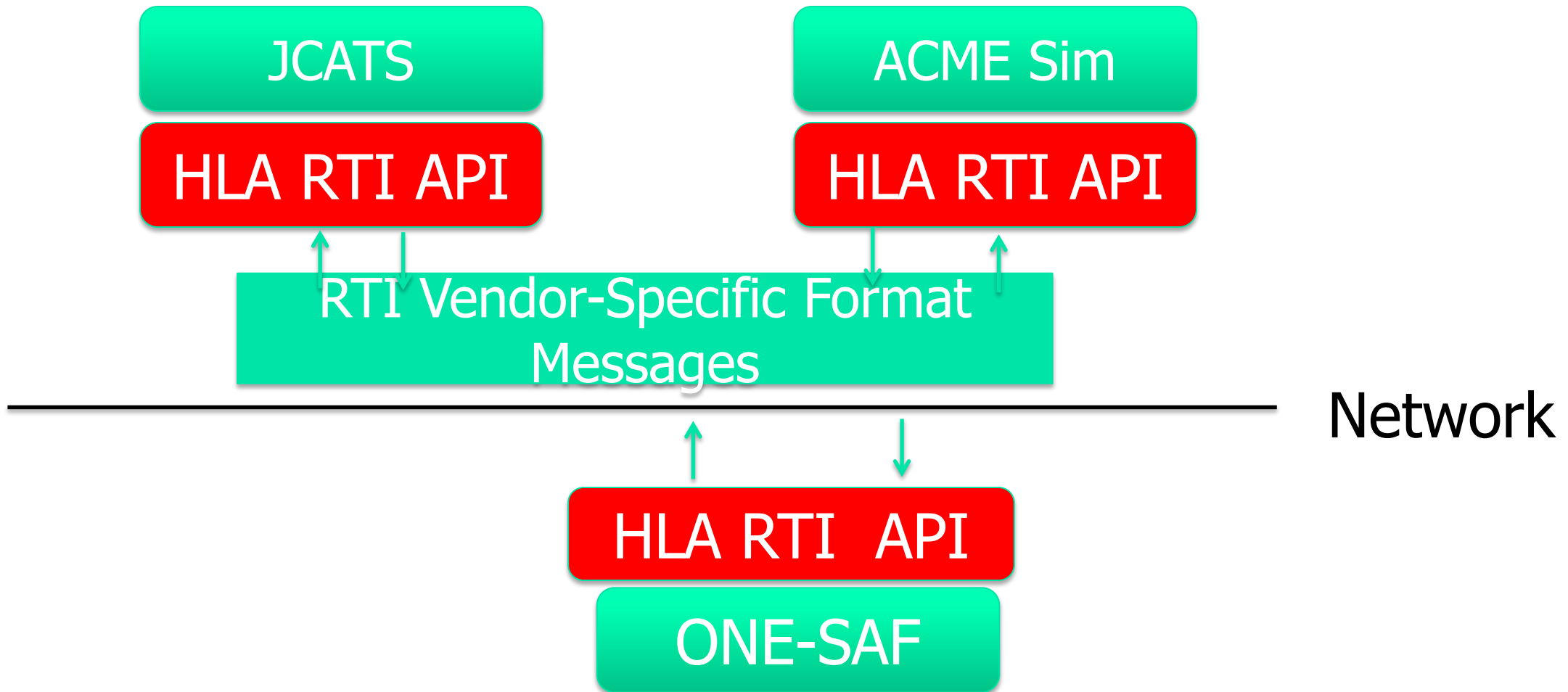
DIS: no approved Application Programming Interface (API) per se

- DIS doesn't have an API. This seems strange to people coming from HLA or TENA, but reflects common practice in networking protocols.
 - The standardized part is the format of the messages on the wire. The standard is silent about how to programs can create or receive those messages.
 - Different DIS vendors have different APIs, *but all produce the same format messages*. This is in contrast to HLA, which has a standard API, but is *silent about the format of messages on the wire*. As a result, different HLA RTI vendors usually use different message formats for exchanging information.
 - TENA standardizes the API, and there is a single approved implementation of the RTI equivalent; this sidesteps the wire standard problem because there is only one approved equivalent of the RTI.

DIS: Message Format Standardized



HLA: API Standardized



While the API is standard, implementations of HLA RTI API from different vendors are allowed to produce messages in different formats.

DIS: Application Programming Interfaces (APIs)

- The implications of this are that while HLA has a standardized API, RTIs from different vendors can't typically talk directly to each other. This makes changing vendors easy, but makes getting RTIs from different vendors talking to each other hard--you need to use a gateway. Caveat emptor, let buyer beware...
- DIS in contrast makes changing vendors hard (since it involves changing the API your simulation code uses) but talking between vendors easy (since all the messages on the wire are in the same format)
 - The lack of an API can help when using a variety programming languages, such as Objective-C, C#, Python, and JavaScript. Since there's no official API, just make one up that fits your application's programming language. As long as they produce standard messages on the wire, the API creating packets doesn't affect anyone else.

DIS: Protocol Data Unit (PDU) Formats

- Remember, all this information is being sent in binary format in (typically) a UDP packet.
- The *exact* format that an ESPDU must have on the wire is specified in the DIS standard. This includes byte order.
- For example, the EntityID field starts 12 bytes into the ESPDU message, is in the order (site, application, entity), and each field entry is 16 bits long, in network byte order, and unsigned.

DIS: ESPDU Format

Table 134—Entity State PDU

Field size (bits)	Entity State PDU fields	
96	PDU Header	Protocol Version—8-bit enumeration
		Exercise ID—8-bit unsigned integer
		PDU Type—8-bit enumeration = 1
		Protocol Family—8-bit enumeration = 1
		Timestamp—32-bit unsigned integer
		Length—16-bit unsigned integer
		PDU Status—8-bit record
		Padding—8 bits unused
48	Entity ID	Site Number—16-bit unsigned integer
		Application Number—16-bit unsigned integer
		Entity Number—16-bit unsigned integer

DIS: Looking at ESPDUs

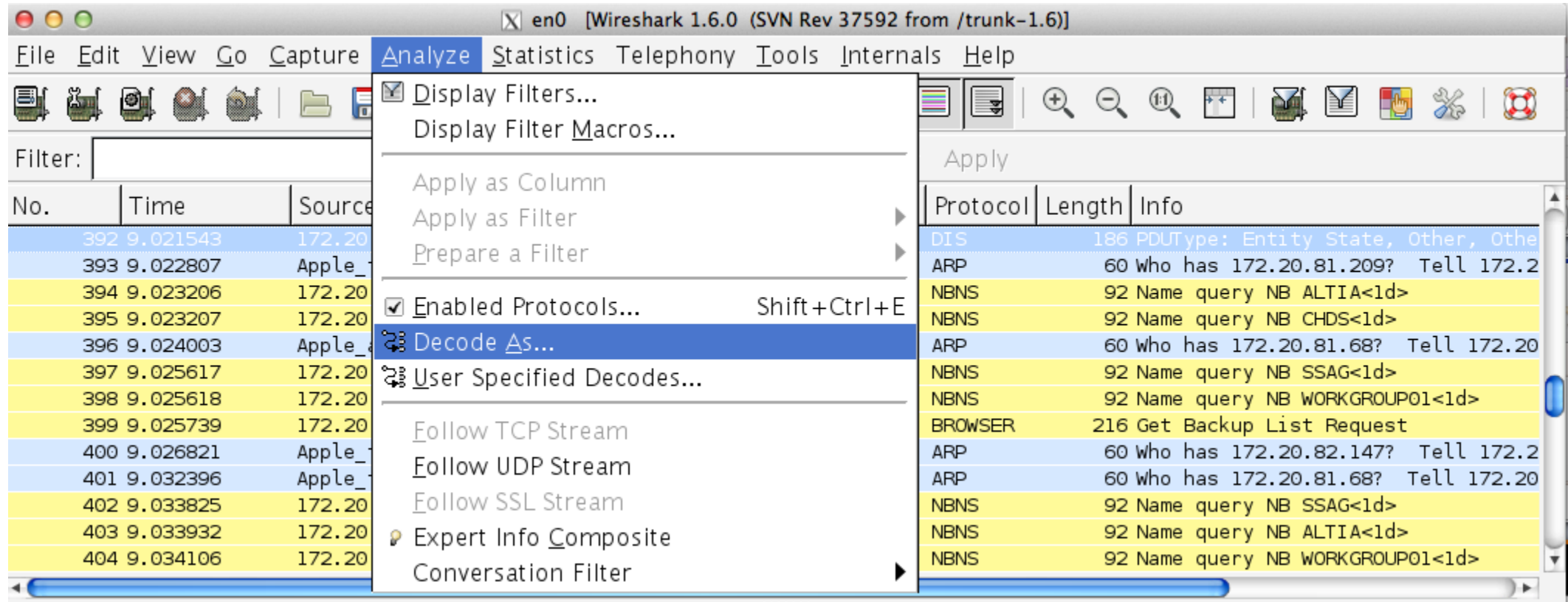
- What do ESPDUs look like? We can examine them on the network with a free tool called Wireshark, which can decode DIS packets
 - <http://www.wireshark.org>
- Remember, it's the format of the messages on the wire that count. The DIS standard specifies the exact format of binary messages, and any tool that produces or consumes those messages is fine with DIS. *How* you create them (or consume them) is none of DIS's business.

Wireshark: Capture Packets

The image shows the Wireshark 1.6.0 interface. The 'Capture' menu is open, displaying options: Interfaces..., Options..., Start (Ctrl+E), Stop (Ctrl+E), Restart (Ctrl+R), and Capture Filters... The packet list shows five captured packets. The first two are PIMv2 'Hello' messages. The next three are ARP requests for various IP addresses.

No.	Time	Destination	Protocol	Length	Info
121	2.613981	4.0.0.13	PIMv2	68	Hello
122	2.614227	4.0.0.13	PIMv2	68	Hello
123	2.614477	Broadcast	ARP	60	Who has 172.20.81.33? Tell 172.20
124	2.655632	Broadcast	ARP	60	Gratuitous ARP for 192.168.30.32 (
125	2.692191	Broadcast	ARP	60	Who has 172.20.80.107? Tell 172.2

Wireshark: Decode Packets as DIS



Wireshark 1.6.0 (SVN Rev 37592 from /trunk-1.6)

File Edit View Go Capture Analyze Statistics Telephony Tools Internals Help

Filter: []

No. Time Source

No.	Time	Source
392	9.021543	172.20
393	9.022807	Apple_
394	9.023206	172.20
395	9.023207	172.20
396	9.024003	Apple_
397	9.025617	172.20
398	9.025618	172.20
399	9.025739	172.20
400	9.026821	Apple_
401	9.032396	Apple_
402	9.033825	172.20
403	9.033932	172.20
404	9.034106	172.20

Display Filters...
Display Filter Macros...
Apply as Column
Apply as Filter
Prepare a Filter
☒ Enabled Protocols... Shift+Ctrl+E
Decode As...
User Specified Decodes...
Follow TCP Stream
Follow UDP Stream
Follow SSL Stream
Expert Info Composite
Conversation Filter

Apply

Protocol	Length	Info
DIS	186	PDType: Entity State, Other, Othe
ARP	60	who has 172.20.81.209? Tell 172.2
NBNS	92	Name query NB ALTIA<1d>
NBNS	92	Name query NB CHDS<1d>
ARP	60	who has 172.20.81.68? Tell 172.20
NBNS	92	Name query NB SSAG<1d>
NBNS	92	Name query NB WORKGROUP01<1d>
BROWSER	216	Get Backup List Request
ARP	60	who has 172.20.82.147? Tell 172.2
ARP	60	who has 172.20.81.68? Tell 172.20
NBNS	92	Name query NB SSAG<1d>
NBNS	92	Name query NB ALTIA<1d>
NBNS	92	Name query NB WORKGROUP01<1d>

Wireshark: Examine DIS Packets

No.	Source	Destination	Protocol	Length	Info
16977	172.20.82.149	239.1.2.3	DIS	186	PDUType: Entity State, Other, Other
170717	172.20.82.149	239.1.2.3	DIS	186	PDUType: Entity State, Other, Other
185460	172.20.82.149	239.1.2.3	DIS	202	PDUType: Set Data
185607	172.20.82.149	239.1.2.3	DIS	202	PDUType: Set Data
195413	172.20.82.149	239.1.2.3	DIS	186	PDUType: Entity State, Other, Other
199077	172.20.82.149	239.1.2.3	DIS	202	PDUType: Set Data
209038	172.20.80.3	239.255.255.250	IGMP	60	V2 Membership Query / Join group 23
216681	172.20.82.149	239.255.255.250	SSDP	175	M-SEARCH * HTTP/1.1

Frame 546: 186 bytes on wire (1488 bits), 186 bytes captured (1488 bits)
 Ethernet II, Src: Apple_a9:5c:13 (70:cd:60:a9:5c:13), Dst: IPv4mcast_01:02:03 (01:00:5e:01:02:03)
 Internet Protocol Version 4, Src: 172.20.82.149 (172.20.82.149), Dst: 239.1.2.3 (239.1.2.3)
 User Datagram Protocol, Src Port: 62040 (62040), Dst Port: 62040 (62040)
 Distributed Interactive Simulation

- Header
 - Entity State PDU
 - Entity ID
 - Entity ID Site: 17
 - Entity ID Application: 127
 - Entity ID Entity: 8
 - Force ID = 0
 - Number of Articulation Parameters: 0
 - Entity Type
 - Alternative Entity Type
 - Entity Linear Velocity
 - Entity Location
 - X = 1000.000000
 - Y = 0.000000
 - Z = 1000.000000
 - Entity Orientation
 - Entity Appearance
 - Dead Reckoning Parameters (40 bytes)
 - Entity Marking (12 bytes)
 - Capabilities = 0

➤ Format

- We know what information we want to send: entity type, entity ID, position, orientation, etc.
 - We know what coordinate system we want to use.
 - We know where to find arbitrary, agreed-upon enumeration identifier values—the EBV document.
 - We know some PDU types: entity state PDU, etc.
- How do we get the information into the format we want on the wire?
- This is where DIS implementations come in.

DIS: Implementations

- Where can you get a DIS implementation?
 - Write your own (cough cough)
 - Buy one. There are several commercial implementations and many have excellent support.
 - Use an open source version—"free as in free puppy" (... but also includes freedom to fix)
 - Open-DIS (<https://github.com/open-dis> - formerly <http://open-dis.sourceforge.net>)
 - [Java](#) updated to full coverage of DIS7, planning work on C-DIS and DIS8
 - Planning to regenerate Python, JavaScript/JSON, C++, C#, Objective-C, in 2021
 - KDIS (<http://sourceforge.net/projects/kdis>) C++ (active)
 - Aquarius (<http://sourceforge.net/projects/aquariusdispdu>) C++ ([retired](#))
 - JDIS (<http://sourceforge.net/projects/jdis>) Java (inactive)

DIS: Sending PDU Packets

- Remember, DIS has no official API. Every implementation is different. This example will use the Open-DIS API codebase. Implementation available at <https://github.com/open-dis>
- Source code now at <https://gitlab.nps.edu/Savage/NetworkedGraphicsMV3500>
- Examples may contain supporting libraries for additional independent things .
- All code is BSD open-source license; nonviral, use any way you see fit.

DIS: Send ESPDUs in Java

```
public void sendEspdus()  
{  
    try  
    {  
        EntityStatePdu espdu = new EntityStatePdu();  
  
        // Set the entity ID, the unique identifier for an entity in the world  
        espdu.getEntityID().setSite(CHINA_LAKE);  
        espdu.getEntityID().setApplication(NPS);  
        espdu.getEntityID().setSite(1);  
  
        // Set this up as a Russian BMP-1  
        EntityType type = espdu.getEntityType();  
        type.setEntityKind((short)1); // vehicle  
        type.setDomain((short)1); // land  
        type.setCountry(222); // Commie russians  
        type.setCategory((short)2); // AFV  
        type.setSubcategory((short)1); // BMP  
        type.setSpec((short)1); // basic BMP  
  
        // Set position  
        espdu.getEntityLocation().setX(1000.0);  
        espdu.getEntityLocation().setY(2000.0);  
        espdu.getEntityLocation().setZ(3000.0);  
  
        for(int idx = 0; idx < 100; idx++)  
        {  
            byte data[] = espdu.marshalWithDisAbsoluteTimestamp();  
            DatagramPacket packet = new DatagramPacket(data, data.length, destinationAddress, port );  
            socket.send(packet);  
            Thread.sleep(1000);  
        }  
    }  
    catch(Exception e)  
    {  
        System.out.println(e);  
    }  
}
```

Can use HTML5 Browser geolocation and Javascript to send DIS from a web page

```
// Set location. We get an object with properties x, y, and z back
// from conversion.
var disCoordinates = conversion.getXYZfromLatLonAltDegrees(latLonAlt);
espdu.entityLocation.x = disCoordinates.x;
espdu.entityLocation.y = disCoordinates.y;
espdu.entityLocation.z = disCoordinates.z;

espdu.marking.setMarking("Browser");

var dataBuffer = new ArrayBuffer(1000); // typically 144 bytes, make it big
var outputStream = new dis.OutputStream(dataBuffer);
espdu.encodeToBinaryDIS(outputStream);

// Trim to fit
var trimmedData = dataBuffer.slice(0, outputStream.currentPosition);
websocket.send(trimmedData);
```

DIS: Receive PDUs in Java

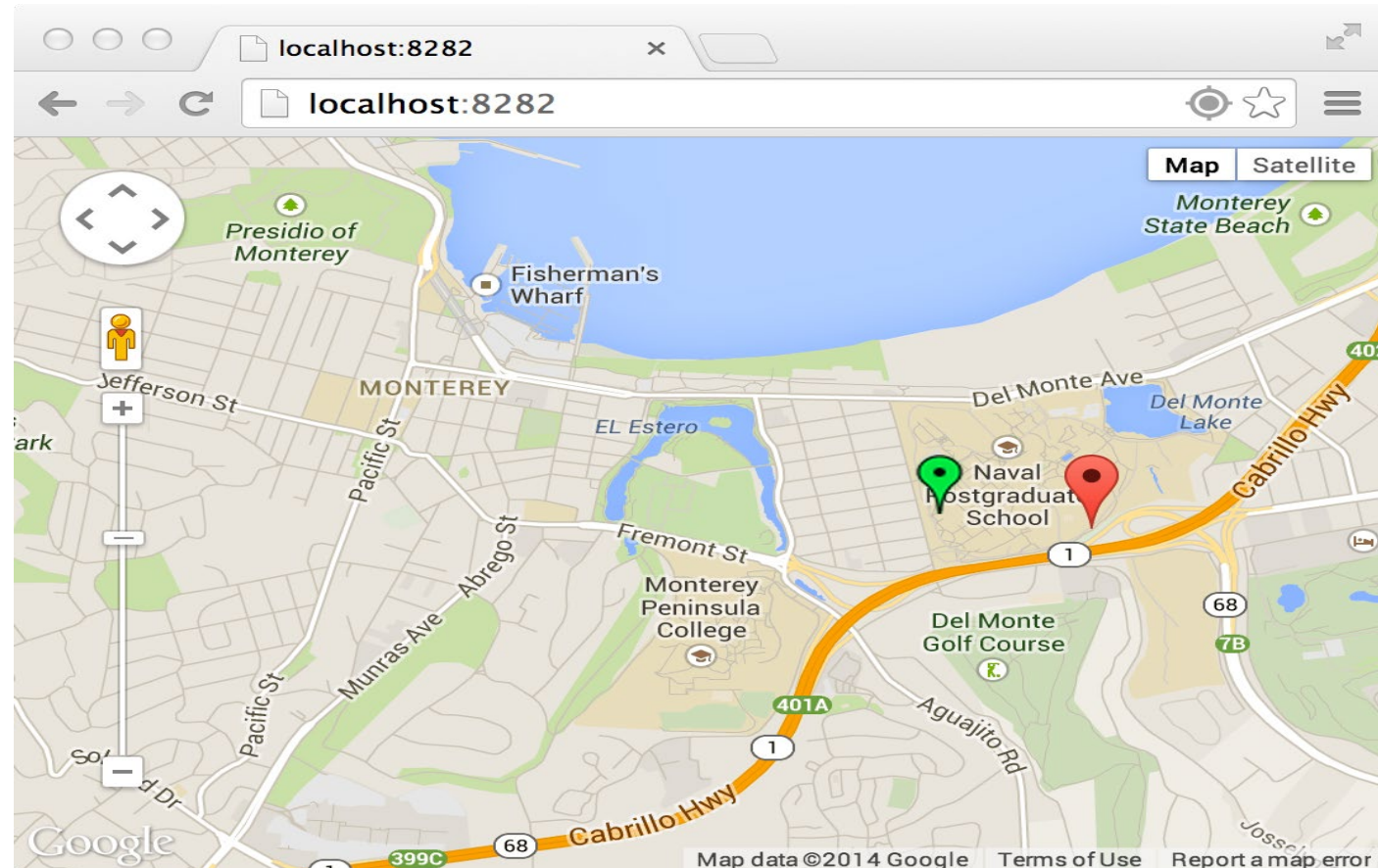
```
public void receivePdus()  
{  
    try  
    {  
        PduFactory pduFactory = new PduFactory();  
        while(true)  
        {  
            byte[] buffer = new byte[1500];  
            DatagramPacket packet = new DatagramPacket(buffer, buffer.length);  
            socket.receive(packet);  
            Pdu aPdu = pduFactory.createPdu(packet.getData());  
            int pduType = aPdu.getPduType();  
            switch(pduType)  
            {  
                case 0:  
                    System.out.println("Unrecognized PDU type");  
                    break;  
                case 1:  
                    System.out.println("Got Entity State Pdu");  
                    break;  
                case 2:  
                    System.out.println("Got Fire PDU");  
                    break;  
                default:  
                    System.out.println("got some type of PDU");  
                    break;  
            }  
        }  
    }  
}
```

DIS Sending and Receiving PDUs

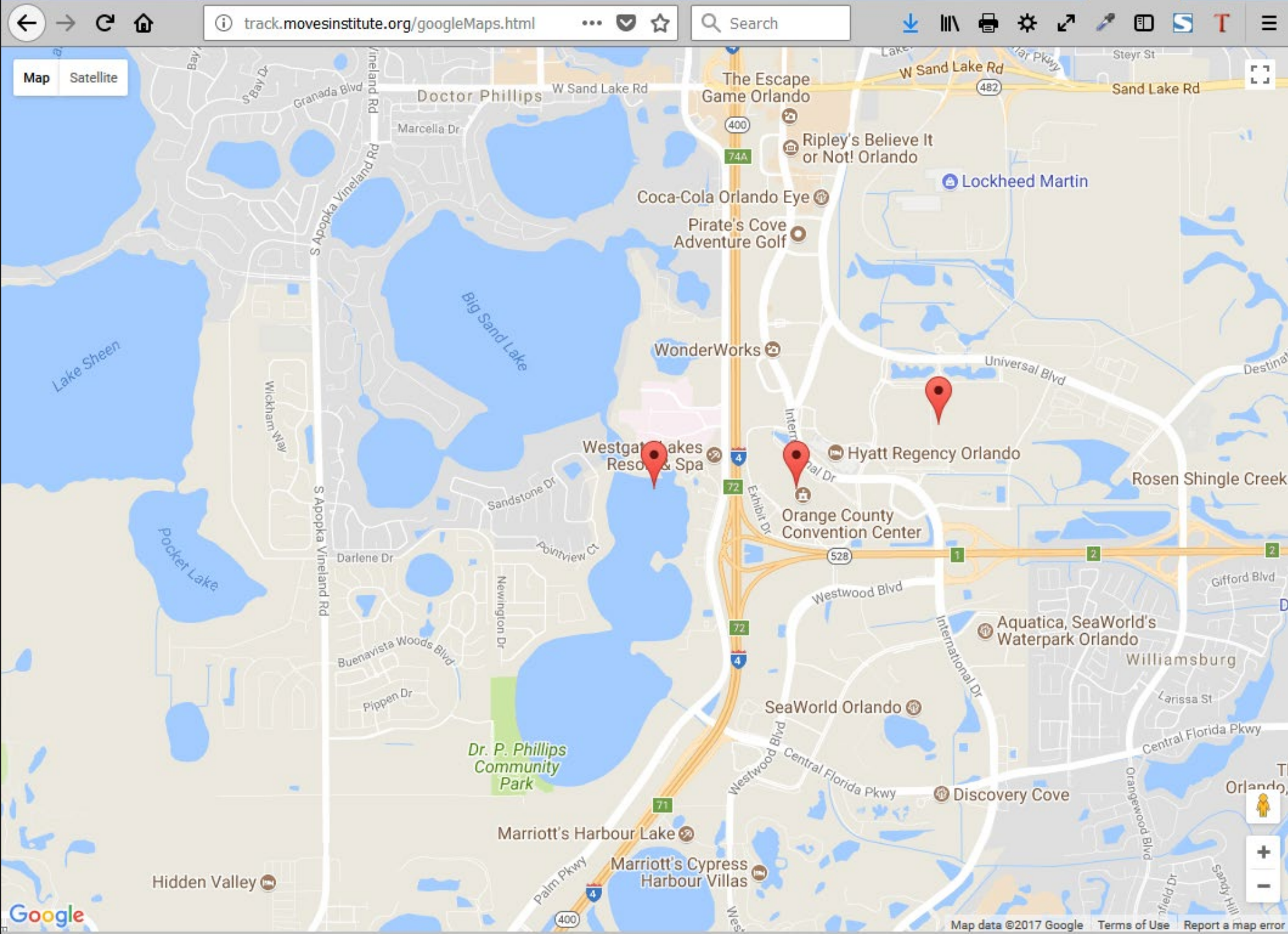
- There are similar idioms for other languages such as C++, Objective-C (iOS/macOS), JavaScript, Python, C# (Windows phone, Unity 3D)
 - But only implemented in earlier versions of OpenDIS library
 - Updates await interested folks who want to repeat our successes in Java, applying them to their language of choice
- Note that this requires that you do a bit of socket programming, which TENA and HLA hide from you. Socket programming isn't *that* bad...

Visualizing DIS Data via Online Map using DISWebGateway

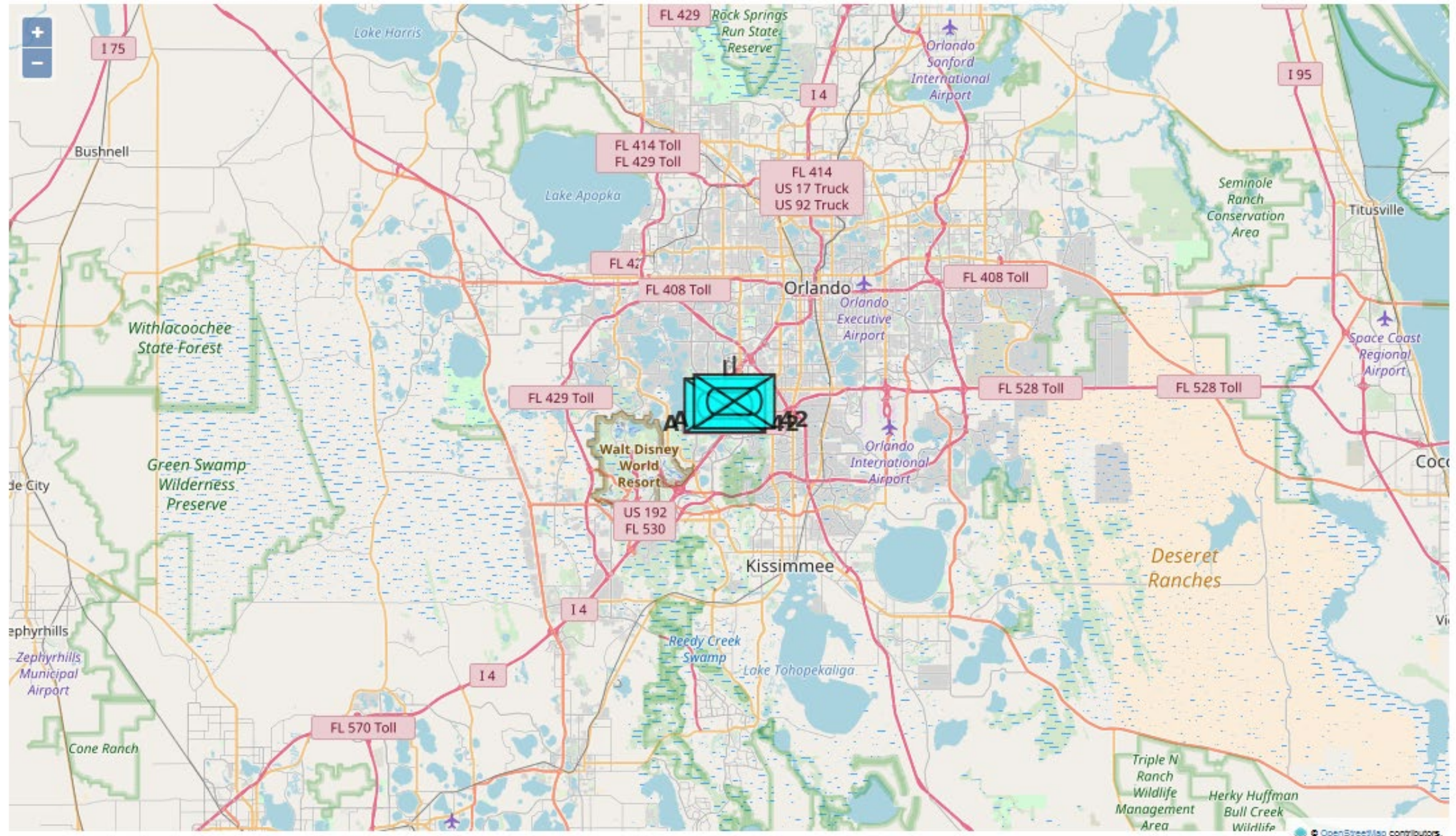
- DISWebGateway running at
- <http://track.movesinstitute.org>
- Java sender & receiver for DIS
- Can receive native DIS from existing DIS applications
- Web-based map that shows DIS entity locations



*Code refurbishment
in progress...*



Open Street Map/Open Layers 3 implementation of binary DIS to the web browser



Constructive Simulation DIS Entity

This web page sends Entity State PDUs with the values below. Fill out the form, and click "Submit." The page will send ESDPUs with those values to the web server over a websocket, and the server will transmit them on the local network.

The Javascript in the web page will send the ESPDUs with the frequency indicated (in milliseconds).

Entity Type Information; Russian T-72 by Default

Kind: 1
Domain: 1
Country: 222
Category: 1
Subcategory: 2
Specific: 1
Extra: 1

Entity ID site and application

Site: 48
Application: 23

Location

Latitude (Decimal degrees): 28.425
Longitude: -81.47
Altitude (meters): 10
28.425

Marking Marking: MyEntity

Send Frequency

Send Frequency (ms): 5000
Start Sending PDUs

*Code refurbishment
in progress...*

DIS: Shoot at Something

- We've been sending ESPDU messages back and forth, but there are dozens of other sorts of messages. What if we want to shoot at someone? What does this involve?
- We can use a Fire PDU, which contains
 - The entity ID of the shooter
 - The entity ID of the target (if known)
 - The type of munition being fired, fuse, quantity, etc. This is very similar to the entity type
 - Enough information to compute the path of the munition (if desired)

DIS: Shoot at Something, then...

- The Detonation PDU usually follows a Fire PDU. It contains
 - Location of detonation, shooter entity ID, target entity ID
 - Fuse, munition type, and so on
- When a Detonation PDU is received simulations assess and report damage to their own entities, not to others.
 - This means simulations are on the “honor system” for determining their own damage; thus James T. Kirk can beat the unwinnable Kobayashi Maru scenario.
 - Here is a harsh adjective to describe cheating in distributed scenarios: **boring**.
 - For military simulations we are much more interested in strengths, vulnerabilities and possibilities that may occur in the real world. Thus cheating is also critically unhelpful.
 - Trusted participants using trusted software suites also reduces the risk of cheating.

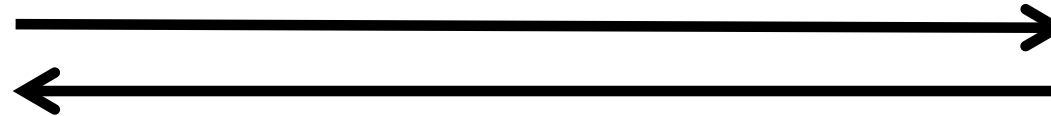
DIS Shooting



Fire! I'm entity (17, 23, 42), shooting at entity (123, 7, 12) with a HEAT round from (x, y, z)



Explosion! There's an detonation of a HEAT round at (x', y', z').



All entities now assess the damage to themselves by the Detonation at (x', y', z')

DIS: Arbitrary Data

- You can also exchange arbitrary data between DIS simulation participants with the DataQuery and Data PDUs.
 - Participant sends a DataQuery PDU addressed to another participant
 - That participant responds with a Data PDU
- The data itself is sent as “fixed variable datums” or “variable data datums”. Therefore it’s up to you to specify the exact format of these

DIS: Other messages

- There are many other messages that can be used in DIS
 - Electronic warfare
 - Logistics
 - Directed energy weapons
 - Voice/Intercom
 - Collisions
 - Simulation management
 - Data exchange
- It's a big topic! Many different “conversations” can occur among entities.
- But the basics are constant: a standard format for exchanging state information, and each has well-defined semantics for consistent usage and interoperability.

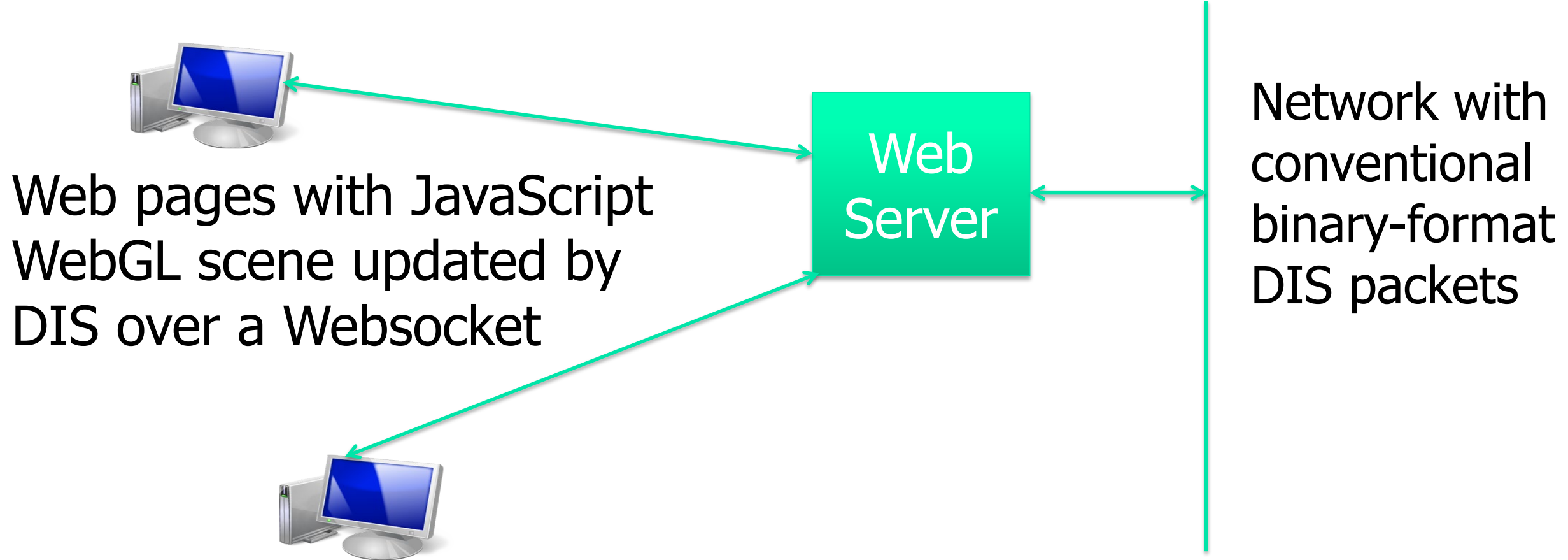
DIS and Other Standards: HLA, TENA

- How can DIS interoperate with HLA or TENA?
- HLA Real-time Platform Reference Federation Object Model (RPR-FOM)
 - Intentionally matches DIS, same entity types, same entity IDs and coordinate system, etc.
 - HLA object model mapping makes transition from DIS to HLA easy and consistent
 - Several gateways to translate between DIS and RPR-FOM. JBUS, AMIE, others
 - Guidance, Rationale and Interoperability Modalities (GRIM) for RPR-FOM standard provides further rules and usage information.
 - <https://www.sisostds.org/productspublications/standards/sisostandards.aspx>
- TENA has generalized gateway functionality that can map TENA events to DIS and vice versa. It generally uses the same coordinate system, entity types, etc.

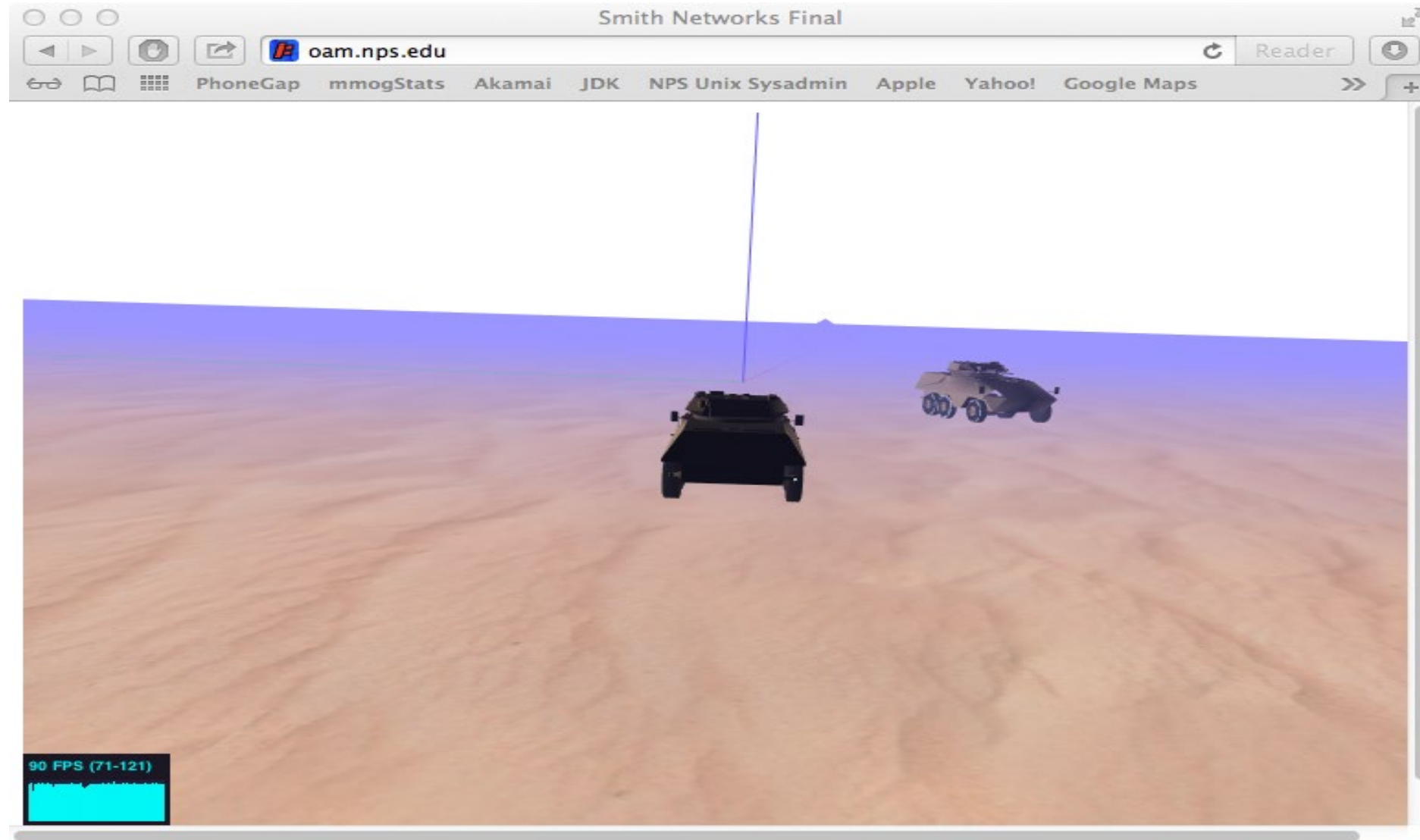
DIS Research Topic: DIS in the Web Page

- Websockets are a standard from IETF and W3C. The idea is to provide a direct JavaScript-based TCP socket into a web page without having to use AJAX polling techniques. Widespread browser support.
- JavaScript is a widely used language for dynamic web content.
 - WebGL is JavaScript binding for OpenGL which allows us to use accelerated 3D graphics inside the web page.
 - WebGL can be the substrate for higher level graphics standards such as Extensible 3D Graphics Standard (X3D). (X3D4 has added full glTF capabilities.)
- Put all three together and you can implement a networked virtual environment (NVE) in a web page.

DIS Research Topic: 3D in the Web Page



DIS Research Topic: 3D in the Web Page



Applied Research and Development using WebLVC

- Excellent combinations of WebGL/X3D, WebSockets, and fast JavaScript in the web browser have emerged in recent years.
 - Open-DIS library can send DIS PDUs directly into a web browser.
- SISO WebLVC Product Development Group (PDG)
 - <https://www.sisostds.org/StandardsActivities/DevelopmentGroups/WebLVCPDG.aspx>
- One of many examples: Virtual World Framework
 - <http://virtualworldframework.com> and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtual_world_framework
- Active research topic... but no wide-scale “Ready Player One” arenas for DIS, yet

DIS Tutorial Summary

- DIS applications exchange **state** information among distributed set of players.
- Defines stable **syntax** and **semantics** for a series of binary-formatted messages, with each packet's bytes, data representation and functionality exactly defined.
- Different software APIs can implement the same “over the wire” data standard.
- Applications focused on large-scale, high-fidelity, virtual / constructive simulations.
- Common concepts: entity types, entity IDs, heartbeats, coordinate systems.

Resources and References

- SISO: <http://sisostds.org>
- SISO DIS / RPR FOM Protocol Support Group:
<https://www.sisostds.org/StandardsActivities/SupportGroups.aspx>
- Open-DIS: <https://github.com/open-dis> and <https://github.com/open-dis/open-dis7-java>
- SEDRIS SRM: <http://sedris.org>
- Kdis: <http://kdis.sourceforge.net>
- Wireshark: <http://wireshark.org>
- X3D Graphics: <http://www.web3d.org/x3d/what-x3d> and <http://x3dgraphics.com/slidesets>
- WebGL: <http://www.khronos.org/webgl>
- WebLVC: <https://www.sisostds.org/StandardsActivities/DevelopmentGroups.aspx>
- WebSockets: <http://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc6455> , <http://www.w3.org/TR/websockets>

This tutorial and additional examples can be found at
<https://gitlab.nps.edu/Savage/NetworkedGraphicsMV3500>

TODO: lots of work in progress!

Much work is ongoing in DIS at NPS, and partnered open-source efforts are welcome.

- Improved Java enumerations (over 22,000 values) regularly autogenerated,
- Improved OpenDIS7 library, full coverage of all 72 PDUs, growing set of examples,
- Thesis work to support unit testing of simulations via DIS streams and LVC connectivity including Extensible 3D Graphics (X3D) Standard now available,
- Planned work in Compressed DIS (C-DIS) encoding and DIS version 8 standards.
- XML Schema for DIS-XML, possibly DIS Ontology for Semantic Web.
- Considering use of Data Format Description Language (DFDL) parsing/unparsing.
- Considering creation of an OpenDIS-OpenC2SIM bridge for packet passing.

We look forward to steady tutorial, workshop and library improvements each year.

Thesis of Interest: Live Virtual Constructive (LVC) Replay

- Tobias Brennenstuhl, REPEATABLE UNIT TESTING OF DISTRIBUTED INTERACTIVE SIMULATION (DIS) PROTOCOL BEHAVIOR STREAMS USING WEB STANDARDS, Masters Thesis, June 2020. ([online](#)) ([video](#))

Autogenerate X3D Code:

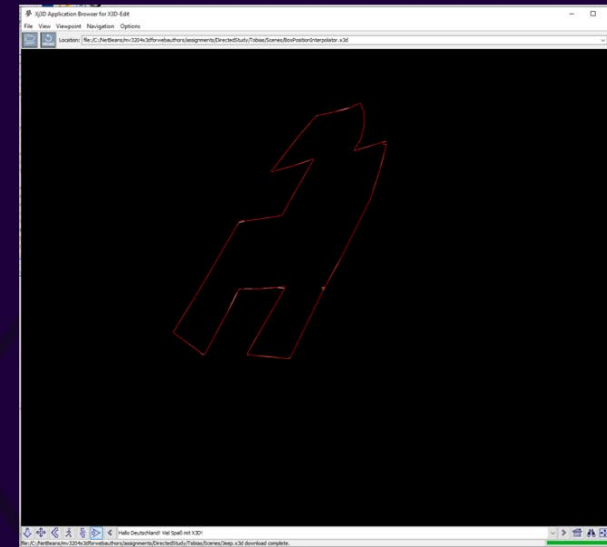
- Generating PositionInterpolator and OrientationInterpolator from DIS Stream



VR Forces

DIS Converter

DIS stream



Xj3D

Learning Objectives

The learner will be able to...

- Identify what standards are used by distributed simulations for military use.
- Identify what types of communication protocols are used for various networks.
- Identify what aspects need to be standardized, and what aspects can be customized, to support diverse simulations with differing models and goals.
- Identify how DIS techniques for dead reckoning (DR), visual smoothing and distributed collision detection can reduce network traffic.
- Learn prospects for new capabilities expected in Compressed DIS and DISv8.