Vehicle Feature Complexity Matrix Modeling and Management in SysML

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OVERVIEW

• Goals and Objectives
• Importance of the Vehicle Feature Code Matrix (VFCM)
• Contents of the VFCM
• Disadvantages of the current VFCM Format
• Concept design
• SysML Approach to the VFCM Modeling
• Applying Systems Thinking to the VFCM Design
• Next Steps and Further Research Opportunities
• Conclusions
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

• Present a different approach to creating, maintaining and managing the VFCM

• Develop a “Proof of Concept” using the SysML Modeling approach

• Discuss the advantages of the “Model-based” approach

• Discuss further steps
IMPORTANCE OF THE VFCM

• Primary official source of direction for a Vehicle Program

• Documents all the complexity of options that is able to be built (engineered)

• Documents what is going to be built for specific markets or market groupings

• Defines the timing points, Vehicle Series, Standard and Optional content, Plants, Markets, etc.

• Delivers the required codes for Marketing, Finance, Engineering, etc.
The VFCM
• is a very active document
• collects and communicates feature deployment information with Engineering and Marketing
• is updated constantly during the Product Development process
• has a significant impact to the PD process
CONTENTS OF VFCM

• The current VFCM is a static document published in PDF or MS Excel Format

• Common main tabs of the VFCM consist of but are not limited to the following:
  • Summary
  • Market List
  • Legal and Mandatory Engineering Features by Market
  • Availability and Deployment of the Power packs by Market
  • Features and Options
  • Deployed Features by Market
  • Packages
  • Navigational Data, etc.
DISADVANTAGES OF THE CURRENT VFCM FORMAT

• The VFCM is a static document
  • Requires manual rework to maintain document up-to-date
  • Manual updates cascade
  • Verification of the correct update of all the derivative documentation

• Various tabs contain overlapping information

• Size of the document may become > 100 pages
  • Difficulty of finding data
  • Understanding the directions
  • Difficulty in performing error-proving

NOTE: KEY POTENTIAL ISSUE: the VFCM is 100% manually authored, generated and managed
CONCEPT DESIGN

We will consider the VFCM to be the “Product”

“The systems engineering processes begin very simply with the identification of a need for a new or improved system” (R. Ian Faulconbridge, 2003)
Identified Current and Potential Stakeholders

- VFCM Authors
- Program Teams
- Marketing Team
- Purchasing Team
- Finance Team
- Dealers
IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDER REQUIREMENTS

**Needs**
- A better manageable document
- Hands-on information
- Minimum user errors

**Goals**
- Provide a "Proof of Concept"

**Objectives**
- Use SysML to create a parametric model of the VFCM
- Use SysML to create error-states and show the way to prevent errors
- Use SysML to create custom reports
- Use SysML to create a Cost Roll-Up
IDENTIFY CONSTRAINTS

*Project Constraints*
- Unavailability of the source raw data
- Working with highly confidential information

*External Constraints*
- The VFCM Output Data Compatibility as an input into other systems
IDENTIFY EXTERNAL INTERFACES

“Interface control consists of establishing common understanding of interfaces for all project participants.”
(Weiss, 2013)

- Interfaces with stakeholders:
  - Engineering
  - Marketing
  - Finance
  - Management
  - Dealership

- Interfaces with boundary systems
  - PD Process
  - Part release system
  - Complete vehicle design
  - Market database
  - Finance Cost database
SysML MODELING GENERAL OVERVIEW

• Model-based approach so Systems Engineering proposes to create an “integrated, coherent, and consistent System Model, created by using a systems model tool” (Delligatti, 2013)

• Traditional document VFCM text can be represented as model elements with a set of relationships between them.

• SysML is a “modeling language” that can be understood as a graphical language

• The model has the purpose of facilitate visualization and communication of a system’s design among stakeholders.

• The system modeling tool used in this project was Magic Draw by NoMagic
APPLYING SYSTEMS THINKING TO VFCM

Consideration: The VFCM is a very complex system with a multiplicity of elements and complex relations between them.

Crawley’s approach to Systems Thinking suggests the development of a system model which can be structured and done in an ordered manner, following the next four stages:

• Identify the System
• Identify the Entities
• Identify the Relationships Among Entities
• Analyze Emergence

Input Data Used: “Features & Options” Template
IDENTIFY THE SYSTEM

Main Use Case: Feature Deployment Direction

- Include
  - Vehicle Design
  - VFCM change management
  - Feature compatibility analysis

- Extend
  - Feature Deployment Change
  - Vehicle Cost Analysis
### IDENTIFY THE SYSTEM

Selected section of the VFMC to develop the “Proof of Concept” model: Features & Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature List</th>
<th>USA Single Cab Base</th>
<th>USA Double Cab Luxury</th>
<th>…</th>
<th>South America Single Cab Base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section: Suspension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tire 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tire 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section: Powertrain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engine 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engine 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The base entities in the VFCM are **Features** which are identified with a Feature Code.

Each Feature can be understood as a Model Block.

Each code has a series of relationships with other codes and this group of relations communicates the feature deployment direction.

The mount of relationships between feature codes is very high which makes the system really complex and hard to be shown in a simple matrix or table.
IDENTIFY THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG ENTITIES

Part Properties

- Model Part Properties convey ownership
- Model diagram representation can replace complex and repetitive text relation descriptions
- Part Properties to represent Packages and VFCM “Contains” / “Includes”.
- In the model the Owner is truly connected with its parts.
Optionality

This is type of relationship connecting the Vehicle Variant with the Feature Blocks

- **Standard** – Always present
- **Optional** – Optional can be or not be present depending on customer selection
- **Legal** – Obligatory by legal requirements usually associated with specific markets legislation
- **Mandatory** – Obligatory based on a strong market need or an engineering performance reason
Feature Constraints

Features in VFCM can have constraints that specify the way in which the features are connected.

Traditional VFCM represents constraints with text:

- **Requires**: One feature/block needs other in order to be deployed
- **Excludes**: Certain feature/block is not deployed when other is present

**NOTE**: In the SysML Model those are represented as Dependency Relations.
Feature Constraints

Traditional VFCM represent constraints with text and logic connectors:

- **Compatibility**: Feature available depending on deployment of other features.

**NOTE**: This is represented with the Part Properties and Dependency Relations.
ANALYZE EMERGENCE

Crawley: “The essential aspect of a system is that some new functions emerge”

Analysis of Emergence in the Model according to Elegant Systems characteristics (Griffin, 2010)

• Meet Function
  • Every block is unique, all its properties reside in the containment tree
  • Model diagrams are representations of the block.
  • Capability of block analysis to find all the other elements connected to it, and assess impact of VFCM changes

• Robustness
  • Changes are automatically updated in all the model
  • Minimization of errors and inconsistency
  • Ability to create custom error proof tools using “Custom Properties”
Analysis of the Model according Elegant Systems characteristics

• Efficiency
  • Changes are done in one model with low effort
  • Multiple & customizable diagrams to show the information to improve communication to users
  • Easier to visualize information and make decisions
  • Compatibility with MS Excel allows to import/export large amounts of data

• Minimization of unintended behavior
  • Avoids inconsistency and contradictions in feature deployment
  • Manages Complexity of the VFCM, and can customize scope of the analysis
MODEL FUNCTIONALITY EXAMPLES

• Feature Change Analysis
  • Block Specifications
  • “Used By” Function
  • “Display Related Elements” function
• Generic Tables
Artificial Cost Information was added to the blocks

Cost Roll-up macro Execution Result
USAGE POSSIBILITIES

• Vehicle Systems Architecture
• Electrical Systems Topology
• Electrical System Error-States Analysis
• Costing Models
• Weight Calculation Models
NEXT STEPS

• Widen the scope of the model to add specific model analysis tools to engineering teams like Powertrain or Electrical Systems

• Research among diverse OEMs formats and compile a database of necessary inputs to the model

• Define more accurate requirements and perform Requirement Model Analysis

• Research and develop new output tables and reports to satisfy the needs of the stakeholders
CONCLUSIONS

The VFCM model can:

• Improve the consistency of the information

• Reduce the amount of time and resources to maintain and update the VFCM

• Provide a greater capability to display information in more customizable way and make timely and more informed decisions

• Increase the efficiency, robustness and minimize the undesired behaviors present in the current VFCM

• Be expanded to different functional areas of the Product Development
CONCLUSIONS

The MagicDraw proved to:

• Be very capable and robust to manage big and complex networks of highly interconnected blocks

• Have a capability to be extrapolated to a larger scale to VFCM models in real life automotive vehicle programs

• Be highly customizable

SysML Approach creates a very Elegant Solution which is game-changer for the Automotive Industry
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BACKUP
Feature Change Analysis. Block Specifications
Feature Change Analysis. “Used By” Function
Feature Change Analysis. “Display Related Elements” function 1 level
Feature Change Analysis. “Display Related Elements” function 3-level
### Generic Table. Part Properties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Element Type: Block, Part Property</th>
<th>...</th>
<th>Scope (optional): Drag elements from the M...</th>
<th>Filter:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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