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Research Report 1320

**DESIGN GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA FOR
USER/OPERATOR TRANSACTIONS WITH
BATTLEFIELD AUTOMATED SYSTEMS**

**VOLUME I:
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Robert N. Parrish, Jesse L. Gates, and Sarah J. Munger
SYNECTICS CORPORATION

HUMAN FACTORS TECHNICAL AREA



U. S. Army

Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences

February 1981

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Item 20 (Cont'd)

- I. Executive Summary (this report)
- II. Technical Report (TR 536)
- III. In-Depth Analyses of Individual Systems.
 - A. Tactical Fire Direction System, (TACFIRE) (RP 81-26)
 - B. Tactical Computer Terminal, (TCT) (RP 81-27)
 - C. Admin/Log Automated Systems, (RP 81-28)
 - D. Intelligence Information Subsystem, (IISS) (RP 81-29)
- IV. Provisional Guidelines and Criteria (TR 537)
- V. Background Literature (TR 538)

Volume I presents a succinct review of activities and products of the project's first phase. Volume II contains a technical discussion of the project's objectives, methodologies, results, conclusions, and implications for the design of user/operator transactions with battlefield automated systems. Volume III documents analyses of four unique battlefield automated systems selected to represent different stages of system development and different Army functional areas. Volume IV presents provisional guidelines and criteria for the design of transactions. Volume V provides a brief review of selected literature related to guidelines and criteria.

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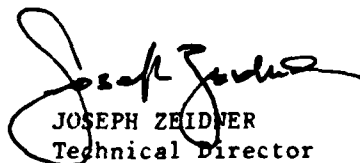
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FOREWORD

The Human Factors Technical Area of the Army Research Institute (ARI) is concerned with helping users and operators cope with the ever increasing complexity of the battlefield automated systems by which they acquire, transmit, process, disseminate, and utilize information. Increased system complexity increases demands imposed on the human interacting with the machine. ARI's efforts in this area focus on human performance problems related to interactions with command and control centers, and on issues of system design and development. Research is addressed to such areas as user-oriented systems, software development, information management, staff operations and procedures, decision support, and systems integration and utilization.

An area of special concern in user-oriented systems is the improvement of the user-machine interface. Lacking consistent design principles, current practice results in a fragmented and unsystematic approach to system design, especially where the user/operator-system interaction is concerned. Despite numerous design efforts and the development of extensive system user information over several decades, this information remains widely scattered and relatively undocumented except as it exists within and reflects a particular system. The current effort is dedicated to the development of a comprehensive set of Human Factors guidelines and evaluation criteria for the design of user/operator transactions with battlefield automated systems. These guidelines and criteria are intended to assist proponents and managers of battlefield automated systems at each phase of system development to select the design features and operating procedures of the human-computer interface which best match the requirements and capabilities of anticipated users/operators.

Research in the area of user-oriented systems is conducted as an in-house effort augmented through contracts with uniquely qualified organizations. The present effort was conducted in collaboration with personnel from Synectics Corporation under contract MDA903-80-C-0094. The effort is responsive to requirements of Army Project 2Q263744A793, Human Performance Effectiveness and Simulation, and to special requirements of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Combat Developments Activity (CACDA), Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.


JOSEPH ZEIDNER
Technical Director

DESIGN GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA FOR USER/OPERATOR TRANSACTIONS WITH BATTLE-FIELD AUTOMATED SYSTEMS VOLUME I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SUMMARY

Requirement:

To develop a comprehensive set of human factors guidelines and criteria for the design of user/operator transactions in battlefield automated systems for use by human factors specialists and system proponents, managers, and developers.

Procedure:

To meet the requirement stated above, a three phase research program was initiated. Phase I is devoted to defining human factors requirements for battlefield automated systems and developing preliminary guidelines and criteria. In Phase II, the technical data base will be developed further and a prototype handbook of guidelines and criteria will be prepared. Phase III will test, evaluate, and refine the handbook, and complete any remaining R&D items.

This document is one of a series reporting activities and products of Phase I. A preliminary analysis was conducted of a broad range of battlefield automated systems to provide an initial baseline of human factors requirements. This baseline data base was then validated and expanded through intensive analyses of four systems selected to represent different Army functional areas and different stages of the system life cycle. The resulting data base served as the foundation for the development of preliminary guidelines and criteria.

Findings:

Data obtained for the data base of human factors requirements amply demonstrated the need for guidelines and criteria. Few design differences appeared so serious individually as to threaten mission effectiveness. Nonetheless, various combinations of such deficiencies could significantly degrade system performance if the user/operator confronted them simultaneously or in rapid succession. Opinions offered by members of the development community who have reviewed the preliminary guidelines and criteria suggest they will be useful in the design and evaluation of the human-computer interface in battlefield automated systems.

Utilization of Findings:

Findings from the analysis of individual systems may be useful to proponents in specifying user/operator requirements for future system evolution. In this project, the findings were incorporated in a data base on human factors requirements which provided the "real world" foundation for development of the provisional guidelines and criteria presented in volume IV of this report. The provisional guidelines and criteria will be utilized as the basis for development of the prototype handbook.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Information is a precious commodity on the battlefield, and commanders have always wished for better and faster ways to obtain it. Modern technology has responded to this need with a wide array of data-gathering devices and methods. Increasingly, the problem is to manage the resulting flood of data, and to convert the data to usable information and intelligence. Currently, more than 60 computer-based information systems are in production, development, or concept definition for deployment at corps and subordinate echelons. As shown in Figure 1, those automated systems eventually will support most of the Army's battlefield functional areas.

ARMY BATTLEFIELD AUTOMATED SYSTEM CATEGORIZATION										
System Life Cycle Status \ Battlefield Functional Area	ADMIN	LOG	INTEL	EW	FA	ADA	ENG	COMMO	MVR	AG
CATEGORY I CONCEPT DEFINITION	TAMMIS DISPERS		ASAS TEP AGTELUS TACIES		AASS MLRS FDS	ADWS SHORAD C		PACKET RADIO JT10S TYQ 16"	MVR CNTL*** ATHS	
		CSS CONTROL*** CSJ REPLACEMENT OLDED								
CATEGORY II VALIDATION DEVELOPMENT		SAWS SAAS SPBS	SOTAS TTACIES	QUICK FIX TACJAM CAS ECM	RPV TADARS	DAR PATRIOT CSS ECS		TSQ 111*** TYC 39 TTC 39 TTC 42'	NBDS PLRS GPS TCS TCT	
CATEGORY III APPROVED PRODUCTION/INSTALLATION		CJUS CSJ DAS J DS4 SAILS DLOGS MROW DSU/CSU MLS	MAGIC QUICKLOOK II TRAIL BLAZER GUARDRAIL V SLAR ITEP		BCS TPD 36 TPD 37 PADS TACFIRE MPOG	TSQ 73 HCC1PCP DS1				
	SIDPERS									

* USMC Development
 ** USAF Development
 *** No approved LOA exists

Figure 1. Army Battlefield Automated Systems, Categorized by Status in the System Life Cycle and by Battlefield Functional Area, as of 14 May 1980.

PROBLEM

The proliferation of battlefield automated systems, however, carries with it potential problems. As it turns out, battlefield automation, rather than reducing the human skills required for computer technology, as originally expected, actually imposes demands for even greater skill levels. With the Army's pool of skilled manpower decreasing, we can anticipate a time when insufficient personnel will be available to staff the increasing numbers of complex battlefield automated systems being introduced (Figure 2). In addition,

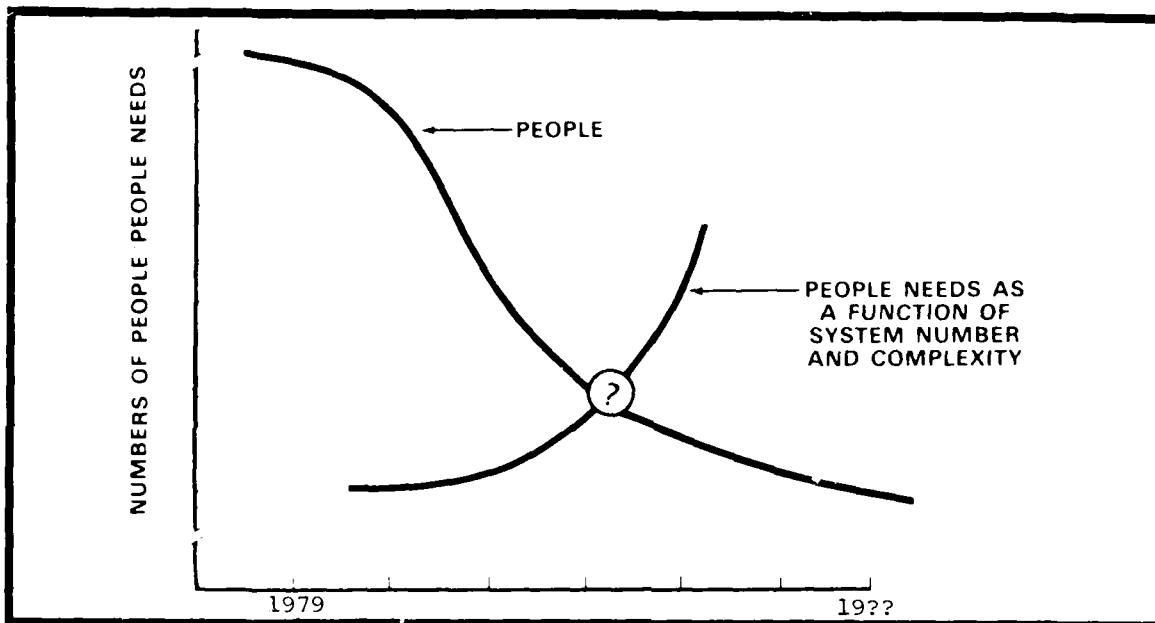


Figure 2. Is There a Point Where we may have More Systems in the Acquisition Cycle Than we have People Available to Staff and Maintain Them?

these systems are not designed with sufficient consideration for the user/operator. Therefore, while a system might be well designed technically, from the user's/operator's perspective it may be less than optimal. Further, existing and projected systems have been developed without coordination among proponents and developers. As a result, each battlefield automated system presents a new learning experience for the user/operator, with little knowledge gained from one system carried over to the next. This skill/demand mismatch imposes unnecessary burdens on personnel and necessitates extra training that could be

avoided by proper system design. As with its well-known and highly prized counterpart in physical and electrical components, behavioral interoperability addresses compatibility issues. Users/operators transfer from one system to another during their careers. More importantly, users of one system frequently must interact with users of other systems. Behavioral interoperability is concerned with designs for systems that permit users/operators to transfer easily from one system to another, and that permit user/operators of different systems to interact conveniently.

That successful system functioning depends on full and fair consideration of user/operator characteristics during development has long been recognized. Nevertheless, virtually nothing has been done to develop a human factors technology to aid efforts to take those characteristics into account.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to fill the need for human factors technology by developing a comprehensive set of guidelines and criteria for user/operator transactions with battlefield automated systems. These efforts will provide to the system design team the tools necessary to capitalize on human capabilities and to compensate for human limitations, thereby enhancing human performance and facilitating coordination among proponents and developers.

The intent of this first phase in the three-phase project was to analyze battlefield automated systems, gathering information to provide a baseline of human factors requirements for user/operator transactions. Another purpose, equally important, was to develop a preliminary set of guidelines and criteria based upon the baseline of information obtained from the analyses of systems.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In order to fulfill these purposes, an initial survey of all battlefield automated systems was undertaken. The survey began with a review of the Battlefield Automated Management Plan (BAMP) and the Army Battlefield Interface Concept (ABIC). Since neither program provided suitable data on human/computer interaction, it became necessary to devise special data collection

instruments for conducting system surveys.

The Transaction Feature Analysis (Table 1) and the Transaction Compatibility Analysis (Table 2) techniques were developed to meet this need. The former technique facilitates rigorous and systematic examination of individual design features within a system that affect user/operator transactions. The latter procedure helps to compare design features across systems, or across components such as workstations within a system. The two techniques, which became the first products of this project, were used to examine both Army systems and relevant systems from other services (Table 3).

Table 1.
Overview of the Transaction Feature Analysis Technique

TRANSACTION FEATURE IDENTIFICATION	TRANSACTIONAL IMPLICATIONS
DESCRIPTION	IMPACT ON SYSTEM FUNCTIONS
AMPLIFICATION	<i>Quality of Function Performance</i>
<i>Attribute of Design Feature</i>	<i>Timeliness of Function Performance</i>
<i>Type of Transaction Affected</i>	CONSEQUENCES
BEHAVIORAL IMPLICATIONS:	IMPACT ON SYSTEM MISSION
IMPACT ON USER	<i>Quality of System Products</i>
<i>Burdens</i>	<i>Efficiency of Production</i>
<i>User Do's And Don'ts</i>	RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION
<i>Error Probability</i>	IMPROVEMENTS IN DESIGN
	<i>Change Design Features</i>
	<i>Eliminate Design Features</i>
	<i>Add Design Features</i>

Table 2.
Overview of the Transaction Compatibility Analysis

SPECIFY TRANSACTION TYPE: Interaction of Interest ✓ Input ✓ Interface ✓ Network ✓ Process ✓ Derivative ✓ Product	RECTIFY DATA: Facilitate Comparisons Between Items ✓ Lists ✓ Matrices
IDENTIFY DESIGN FEATURES: Relevant Attributes of System Elements ✓ Control Methods ✓ Presentation Formats ✓ Data Entry and Handling Procedures ✓ Message Composition Methods ✓ Data Retrieval Procedures ✓ Glossaries ✓ Error Handling Techniques	IDENTIFY DIFFERENCES ✓ Between Features ✓ Within Features ✓ Combinations
	DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS ✓ Common Design Features ✓ Standard Task Modules

Table 3.
Systems Surveyed with Transaction
Feature Analysis Technique

TACFIRE	IISS
TOS ²	BCS
TCT	MAGIS (USMC)
DS4 AUTO RUN BOOK	SDA (USMC)
DLDED	ISIS (RAND)
PHOENIX AUTO RUN BOOK	DAS3
BETA	

In order to acquire greater detail in the human factors analysis of the user-computer interface, four specific battlefield automated systems were selected for in-depth examination: TACFIRE, TCS, IISS, and DLEED. For each of the systems investigated, a separate report has been prepared for readers whose particular interest may focus on one system or another. Documentation has also been prepared on relevant ARI research literature dealing with human factors guidelines and criteria.

RESULTS

The results of both the survey and the detailed analyses clearly indicated that battlefield automated systems exhibit a wide range of differences related to user/operator transactions. While these systems share many common design features which perform the same functions, those features vary widely from one system to the next. Figure 3 illustrates some of the inconsistencies in general design features that were observed in various systems. As an example, many systems employ the same keyboard; however, as Figure 4 indicates, different systems incorporate different keyboard configurations. Lack of uniformity shows up even within a given system. Figure 5 illustrates different keyboard configurations used on two TACFIRE terminals. On one, the alphanumeric keys are arranged in alphabetical order with non-alphabetic keys on the bottom row; and the other terminal employs a modified office typewriter keyboard. In addition, those terminals exhibit radical discrepancies in their numeric keypads, with one keypad designed as a "desk top calculator" and the other arranged in the touch telephone format.

System differences are by no means confined to hardware considerations. Figure 6 shows that variations in menu display configurations are as great as those in hardware configuration. In addition, menu selection methods differ greatly among Army systems, as well as menu formats and the ways in which menus are utilized.

Inconsistencies among systems became even more apparent when examining specific transaction features in greater detail. Different transaction methods are used by different systems to accomplish the same function. For instance, in using control methods to instruct the computer what functions to perform and in what order, combinations of methods frequently are incorporated. The most

GENERAL DESIGN FEATURES	SYSTEMS				
	TACFIRE	TCS	i ² g ²	MAHIS	ISIS
COMMAND TYPE	o Hardware o Preformatted message	o Menus o Preformatted messages o Hardware	o Menus o Command language o Hardware	o Menus o Command language o Hardware	o Command language
COMMAND ENTRY METHOD	o Function keys o Message entries	o Keyboard o Function keys o Message entries	o Light pen o Function keys o Keyboard	o Function keys o Keyboard	o Keyboard
AVAILABILITY OF HELPS/ USER AIDS	o None	o 2 levels of support	o HELP from GIM menu o Some displays have Integral HELPS	o Tutorial messages	
SHOWBOX FILES	o No	o Staff working files	o Yes	o Yes	o Yes
TYPE OF SYSTEM	ARTY C ²	C ²	Intel	Intel	File Handling
APPLICATION ENVIRONMENT	Division & below	Case	Theater	Division	
INTENDED USERS	Higher-level artillery specialists	CDR, G2 & G3 staff officers	CDR, G2 Intel analysts	CDR, G2, Intel analysts	
INTENDED OPERATORS	Lower-level artillery specialists	G2 & G3 staff Enlisted personnel	Intel analysts	Intel analysts	o Some
USER-DEFINED COMMANDS	o None	o None	o Report formats built in GIM-11 o Macro language	o None	o Some
USER-DEFINED INPUT CODES	o None	o None	o Report formats built in GIM-11 o Macro language	o None	

Figure 3. Differences Among General Design Features of Selected Battlefield Automated Systems.

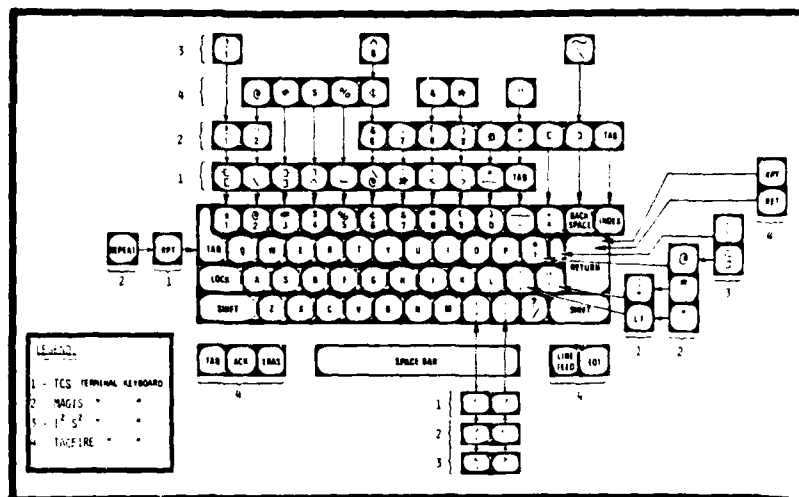


Figure 4. The Standard Office Keyboard Configuration and Variations Found in Selected Battlefield Automated Systems.

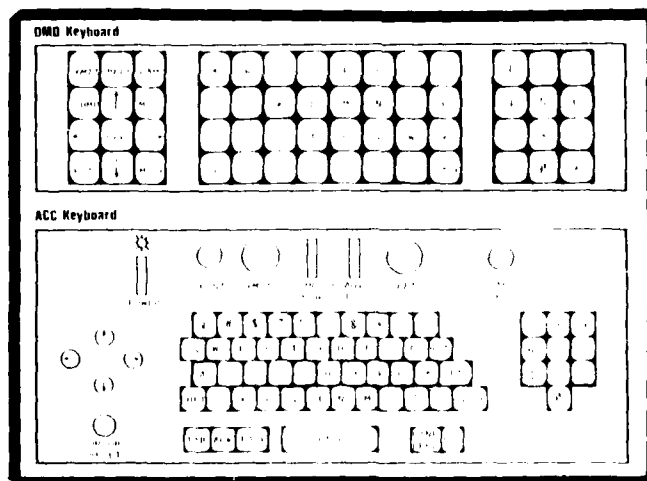


Figure 5. Two Keyboard Configurations Used in TACFIRE.

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CLASSIFICATION		FOR TRAINING ONLY			
		GIM MENU			
ALL DATA BASES:	ANALYSIS:	INPUT:			
GIM LANGUAGE	EUNITS	UNITS	UNITS	UNITS	UNITS
HTHGGD	AUTIF	LAIRF	LAIRF	LAIRF	LAIRF
REPORTW	ARFLOF	ACTF	ARFLOF	ACTF	ARFLOF
ROT	PERSNF	PPTGT	PERSNF	PPTGT	PERSNF
MISCELLANEOUS:	RTIF	RWY	RTIF	RWY	RTIF
NEXT ACTIVITY	INSTF	INSTF	INSTF	INSTF	INSTF
EXTRACT PILOT DATA					
ANALYSIS, INPUT AND MISCELLANEOUS COLUMNS FOR USE WITH TACCB DATABASE ONLY!					

DATA ENTRY FORMAT MENU SELECTION	
1.	SYSTEM INITIALIZATION
2.	CHANNEL INITIALIZATION
3.	LOCAL USER INITIALIZATION
4.	LINK INITIALIZATION
5.	SUBSCRIBER INITIALIZATION
6.	COMMUNICATION ERROR THRESHOLDS
7.	INITIALIZATION AUTHORIZATION
8.	ANTI-JAM MATRIX
SELECT ()	

Figure 6. Menu Display Configurations in Three Army Battlefield Automated Systems.

unique hybrid method observed was the format selection matrix on the TACFIRE ACC SPA (Figure 7). The two matrices, as they stand alone are satisfactory; they are organized by message type and logically constructed. However, of the 47 codes common to both, 28 are presented in different locations on the two matrices. Any user who becomes familiar with one menu could easily become confused when assigned to use the other.

Errors in selecting message formats could be significant, perhaps unacceptably high, particularly when the user/operator is under stress. Inherent problems in the SPA message format matrices can be resolved, however, with redesign of the message format selection matrices by placing all codes common to division and battalion in the same location (Figure 8).

DIVISION								BATTALION							
SYS FCM	SYS INIT		SPRT MAP	AFU UPDATE	NNFP COMFP	ATI TRY	ATI COR	SYS FCM	SYS INIT	AFU UPDATE	AFU AMOL	NNFP COMFP	ATI COR	FM INTM	FM REAF
SYS PDS	SYS MISC		SPRT DPM	AFU AMOUPD	NNFP INST	ATI COMB	ATI AZR	SYS PDS	SYS MISC	AFU BANDUP	SPRT MAP	NNFP INST	ATI AZR	FM NUKE	FM SUBS
SYS PCLO	SYS MDS		SPRT GEOM	AFU AMOL	NNFP RESFU	ATI SPLIT	ATI TGR	SYS PCLO	SYS MDS	AFU ASR	SPRT DPM	NNFP RESFU	ATI SHR	FM FUSEL	FM OF
SYS SBT	SYS RD	MET CM	SPRT ZNE	AFU ASR	NNFP FPTU	ATI QUERY	ATI SHR	SYS SBT	SYS RD	AFU MASK	SPRT GEOM	NNFP FPTU	ATI MFR	FM INCLUDE	FM MOD
SYS LGSB	SYS CED	MET CFL	SPRT AIRCOR	AFU BUILD	NNFP FPA	ATI SRI	FM REAF	SYS LGSB	SYS CED	AFU MW	SPRT ZNE	NNFP FPA	ATI QUERY		FM ATTACK
SYS CONSEC	SYS NORM	MET CM	SPRT DISPL	AFU LAUNCH	NNFP NUSCD	ATI PREFP	FM FICAP	SYS CONSEC	SYS NORM	AFU BUILD	SPRT AIRCOR	NNFP EXECFP	ATI SRI	MET CM	FM OBCCO
SYS ADDR	SURV DIR	MET COMD	SPRT COMD	AFU COMD	NNFP COMD	ATI CMD	FM COMD	SYS ADDR	SYS FSO	AFU COMD	SPRT COMD	NNFP COMD		MET COMD	FM COMD
SYS DIR	FSE DIR	MET DIR	SPRT DIR	AFU DIR	NNFP DIR	ATI DIR	FM DIR	SYS DIR	SURV DIR	AFU DIR	SPRT DIR	NNFP DIR	ATI DIR	MET DIR	FM DIR

Figure 7. TACFIRE SPA Message Format Selection Matrices for Division and Battalion Computers.

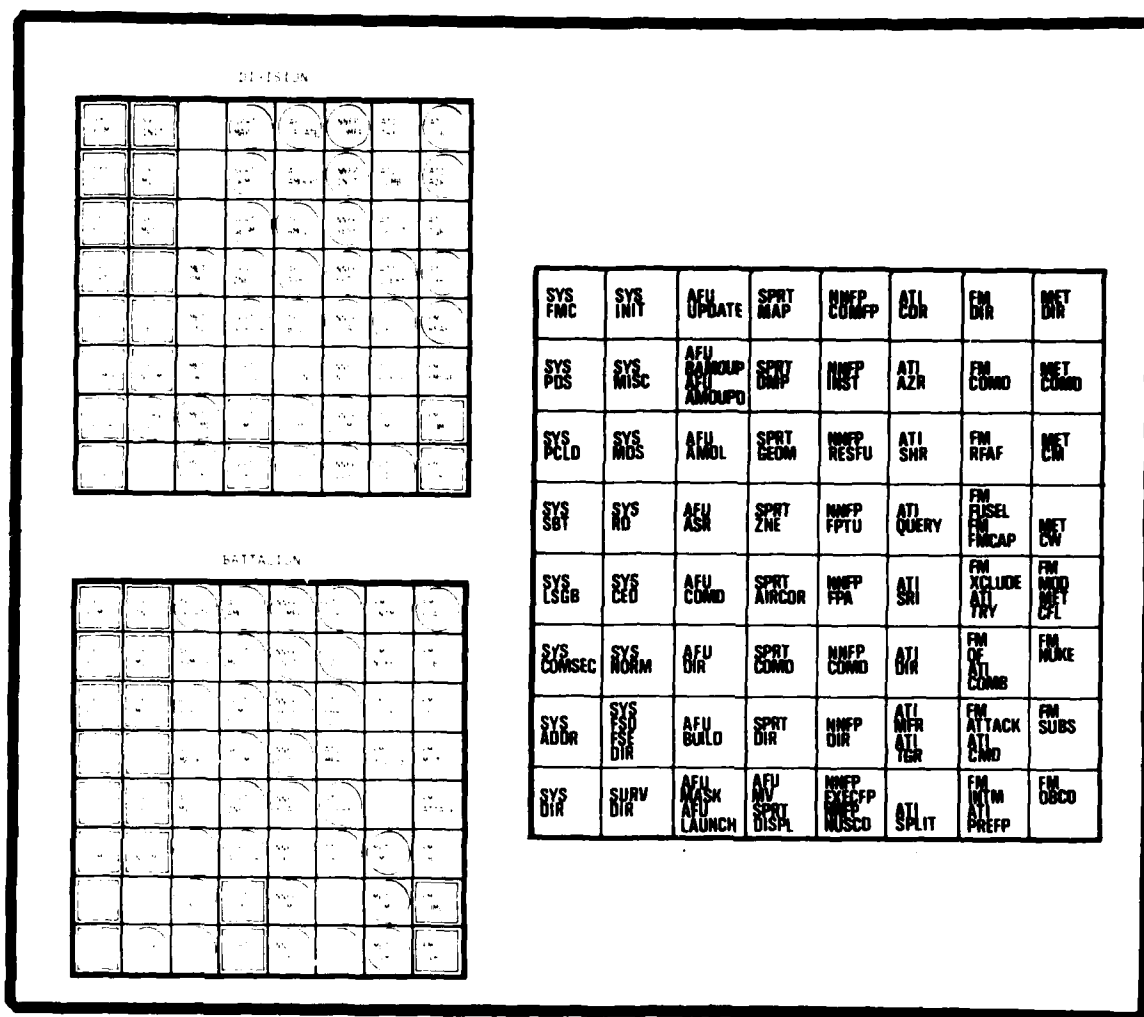


Figure 8. Redesign of TACFIRE Division and Battalion Message Format Matrix Structures.

CONCLUSION

Differences such as those described above are pervasive in Army systems; in general, battlefield automated systems are characterized by transaction design features that are incompatible with human capabilities and limitations. While individual design deficiencies, considered individually, may not be paralyzing to the user/operator, the effects of such inconsistencies are cumulative. When the user is faced with multiple design deficiencies, often occurring simultaneously, human performance is impaired. When users/operators cannot function optimally, neither can the system.

Results from the analyses of battlefield automated systems provided the foundation for the development of guidelines and criteria. The format for these detailed guidelines is shown in Table 4. Recommendations for implementation of desirable design features are presented in summary matrices such as that illustrated in Table 5.

Table 4.
Design Guideline Format

G. CROSS INDEXING

- 2.1 FIXED ALPHANUMERIC DISPLAYS
 - 2.2 VARIABLE-LENGTH ALPHANUMERIC DISPLAYS
 - 2.3 GRAPHIC DISPLAYS
 - 3.0 DATA ENTRY ASSISTANCE
 - 3.4 EDITORS
 - 7.4 ERROR CORRECTION TECHNIQUES
 - 7.7 ERROR DETECTION TECHNIQUES
-

Table 5.

Example of a Matrix Summarizing Guidelines for Use
of Highlighting According to the Highlighting Application

HIGHLIGHTING METHOD	HIGHLIGHTING APPLICATION								
	UNUSUAL VALUES	INFORMATION CHANGED	INFORMATION TO BE CHANGED	HIGH-PRIORITY MESSAGES/CODES	ALARMS	SPECIAL AREAS OF DISPLAY	COMMAND/DATA ENTRY ERRORS	WARNINGS OF CONSEQUENCES	INDICATE SEARCH TARGETS
BRIGHTNESS CONTROL	1*	1*	1*	1*	2	1*	1*	1*	1*
CHARACTER SIZE CONTROL	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	2
ALL UPPER CASE	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	3
REVERSE DISPLAY	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	1
UNDERLINING	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	3
DIFFERENT FONT	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	3
COLOR CONTROL	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
BLINKING, PULSATING	3	3	3	2	1*	3	3	3	2
BOXING	3	3	3	1	3	1	2	1	2
ARROWING	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	2
SYMBOLIC TAGGING	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	2
ALPHANUMERIC TAGGING	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
POSITION DISPLACEMENT	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	2

* Recommended as 1st choice for standardization purposes

The design guidelines will support system proponents and developers in selecting design features which best match the requirements and capabilities of anticipated users/operators. Thus, the skill-demand mismatch that currently imposes excessive performance requirements on users/operators will be reduced, thereby reducing the training burden that accompanies so many contemporary systems. An additional benefit of this user-oriented design will be an increase in behavioral interoperability, as that concept was described earlier.

It is not the purpose of this project to trivialize user-system interaction in battlefield automated systems, but one fact must be recognized. The users of these systems are supposed to work in a functional area; they are not supposed to be computer operators. The design of the system should allow the user to focus on developing greater skills in their career fields, rather than

peripheral system operation skills. Furthermore, that design should allow the user to concentrate on the generation of system products, not on how to make the system work.

We need to stop talking about user requirements, as though they were somehow different from system requirements. Users are components of systems. A tank doesn't fight without a crew; neither does a Cobra. And battlefield automated systems don't function without users and operators. User requirements are system requirements. If we don't build systems to meet all their requirements--human as well as hardware, software and product--then those systems will fail. And if they do fail, then we will have paid the greatest of all system life cycle costs: the cost of building battlefield automated system that cannot do the job.

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