

Multi-Resolution Data Integration Using Mobile Agents in Distributed Sensor Networks

Hairong Qi, *Member, IEEE*, S. Sitharama Iyengar, *Fellow, IEEE*,

Krishnendu Chakrabarty, *Senior Member, IEEE*

Abstract

We describe the use of the mobile agent paradigm to design an improved infrastructure for data integration in distributed sensor network (DSN). We use the acronym MADSN to denote the proposed mobile-agent-based DSN. Instead of moving data to processing elements for data integration, as is typical of a client/server paradigm, MADSN moves the processing code to the data locations. This saves network bandwidth and provides an effective means for overcoming network latency, since large data transfers are avoided. Our major contributions are the use of mobile agent in DSN for distributed data integration and the evaluation of performance between DSN and MADSN approaches. We develop an enhanced multi-resolution integration (MRI) algorithm where multi-resolution analysis is applied at local node before accumulating the overlap function by mobile agent. Compared to the MRI implementation in DSN, the enhanced integration algorithm saves up to 90% of the data transfer time. We develop objective functions to evaluation the performance between DSN and MADSN approaches. For a given set of network parameters, we analyze the conditions under which MADSN performs better than DSN and determine the condition under which MADSN reaches its optimum performance level.

H. Qi is with the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of Tennessee, 319 Ferris Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996-2100. E-mail: hqi@utk.edu

S. S. Iyengar is with the Department of Computer Science, 298 Coates Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803. E-mail: iyengar@bit.csc.lsu.edu

K. Chakrabarty is with the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Duke University, 130 Hudson Hall, Box 90291, Durham, NC 27708, E-mail: krish@ee.duke.edu

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Keywords

Mobile agent, Distributed sensor network, Multi-resolution data integration

I. INTRODUCTION

Distributed sensor networks (DSNs) have recently emerged as an important research area [1], [2], [3], [4], [5]. This development has been spurred by advances in sensor technology and computer networking. Even though it is economically feasible to implement DSNs, there are several technical challenges that must be overcome before DSNs can be used for today's increasingly complex information gathering tasks. These tasks, such as battlefield surveillance, remote sensing, global awareness, etc., are usually time-critical, cover a large geographical area, and require reliable delivery of accurate information for their completion.

Wesson et al [5] were among the first to propose the design of DSNs. Since then, several efficient DSN architectures have been presented in the literature, including the hierarchical and committee organization [5], the flat tree network [2], [4], the deBruijn based network [1], and the multi-agent fusion network [3]. While improving the performance of DSNs in different aspects, all these approaches use a common network computing model: the client/server model, which supports many distributed systems, such as remote procedure calling (RPC) [6], common object request broker architecture (CORBA) [7], [8], etc. In client/server model, the client (individual sensor) sends data to the server (processing element) where data processing tasks are carried out. However, the client/server model is not appropriate for data integration in DSNs. First, the data integration at the server requires data transfer from local sensor nodes. When the size of data file is large and the number of sensor node is big, the network traffic can be extremely heavy, resulting in poor performance of the system. Second, suppose connection-oriented service is used (e.g. ftp application uses TCP protocol), the client/server

model requires the network connection to be alive and healthy the entire time a data transfer is taking place. If the connection goes down, both the client and the server have to wait until the connection is recovered to finish the data transfer and do further analysis, which will affect the system performance as well. Third, the client/server-based DSN cannot respond to the load changing in real time. When more sensors are deployed, it cannot perform load balancing without changing the structure of the network.

Recent advances in sensor technology allow better, cheaper, and smaller sensors to be used in both military and civilian applications, especially when the environment is harsh, unreliable, or even adversarial. A large number of sensors are usually deployed in order to achieve quality through quantity. On the other hand, sensors typically communicate through wireless networks where the network bandwidth is much lower than for wired communication. These issues bring new challenges to the design of DSNs: First, data volumes being integrated are much larger; Second, the communication bandwidth for wireless network is much lower; Third, the environment is more unreliable, causing unreliable network connection, noisy background, and increasing the likelihood of input data to be in faulty.

In this paper, we design an improved DSN architecture using mobile agents — we refer to this as mobile-agent-based DSN (MADSN). In traditional DSNs, data are collected by individual sensors, and then transmitted to a higher-level processing element which performs sensor fusion. During this process, large amounts of data are moved around the network, as is the typical scenario in the client/server paradigm. MADSN adopts a new computation paradigm: data stay at the local site, while the integration process (code) is moved to the data sites. By transmitting the computation engine instead of data, MADSN offers the following important benefits:

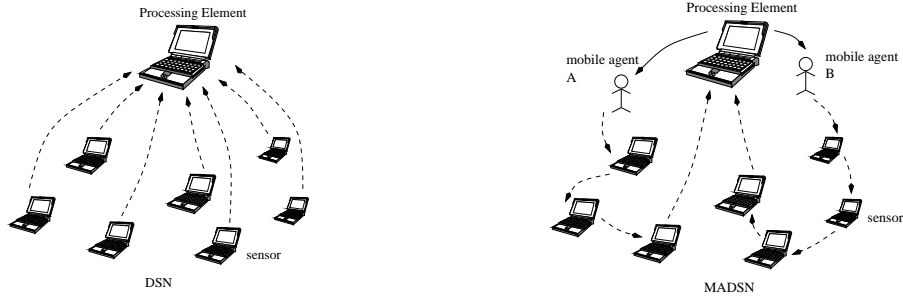
- Network bandwidth requirement is reduced. Instead of passing large amounts of raw data over the network through several round trips, only the agent with small size is sent. This is especially important for real-time applications and where the communication is through low-bandwidth wireless connections.
- Better network scalability. The performance of the network is not affected when the number of sensor is increased. Agent architectures that support adaptive network load balancing could do much of a redesign automatically [9].
- Extensibility. Mobile agents can be programmed to carry task-adaptive fusion processes which extends the capability of the system.
- Stability. Mobile agents can be sent when the network connection is alive and return results when the connection is re-established. Therefore, the performance of MADSN is not much affected by the reliability of the network.

Figure 1 provides a comparison between DSN and MADSN from both feature and architectural points of view.

The organization of this paper is as follows: Section II discusses the definition of mobile agents and application examples that benefit from using mobile agents. It also defines the two problems studied in the design of MADSN. Section III first reviews the multi-resolution data integration algorithm implemented in traditional DSN, then describes its implementation using mobile agents. A case study is provided. Section IV compares the performance of DSN and MADSN. For a given set of parameters, it derives the condition under which MADSN performs better than DSN, also the condition under which MADSN reaches its optimum performance level. Section V presents the conclusions.

Features	DSN	MADSN
Element moving on the network	Data	Computation
Bandwidth consumption	High	Low
Scalable?	No	Yes
Extensible?	No	Yes
Affected by network reliability?	Yes	No
Fault-tolerable?	Yes	Yes

(a)



(b)

Fig. 1. Comparison between DSN and MADSN. (a) feature (b) architecture

II. BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

This section reviews the basic DSN architecture and the key characteristics of mobile agents. The problems studied in this paper are formally defined at the end of the section.

A general DSN (Fig. 2) consists of a set of *sensor nodes*, a set of *processing elements* (PEs), and a *communication network* interconnecting the various PEs [1]. One or more sensors is associated with one PE. One sensor can report to more than one PE. A PE and its associated sensors are referred to as a *cluster*. Data are transferred from sensors to their associated PE(s) where the data integration takes place. PEs can also coordinate with each other to achieve a better estimation of the environment and report to higher level PEs. Notice that

only the lowest-level PEs are connected to the sensor nodes. Higher-level PEs only connect to lower-level PEs, but not the sensor nodes. In the context of this paper, we assume that the sensor field is a two-dimensional surface, and the sensor nodes are fixed.

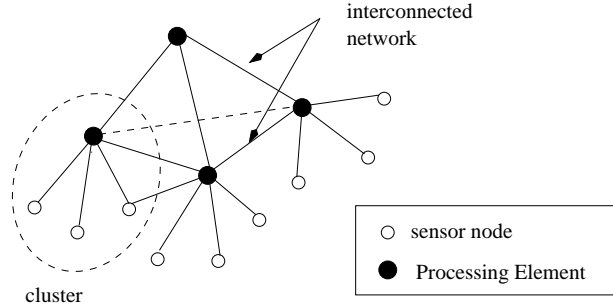


Fig. 2. The architecture of a general DSN.

A. Mobile Agents

Generally speaking, mobile agent is a special kind of software which can execute autonomously. Once dispatched, it can migrate from node to node performing data processing autonomously, while software can typically only execute when being called upon by other routines. Franklin and Graesser provided a formal definition of agent in [10]:

Definition 1: An **autonomous agent** is a system situated within a part of an environment that senses that environment and acts on it, over time, in pursuit of its own agenda and so as to effect what it senses in the future.

A good example to describe the difference between an agent and an ordinary computer program is also given in [10]: A payroll program in a real world environment is not an agent because its output would not normally affect what it senses later. A payroll program also fails the “over time” test of temporal continuity. It runs once and then goes into a coma, waiting to be called again. A mobile agent is an agent with the ability to migrate. Note that Java “applets” as used by web browsers are not mobile agents because they do not satisfy

the autonomous and migration criteria. Java applets only run on the local machine once being requested and downloaded.

Lange listed seven good reasons to use mobile agents [11], including reducing network load, overcoming network latency, robust and fault-tolerant performance, etc. Although the role of mobile agents in distributed computing is still being debated mainly because of the security concern [12], [13], several applications have shown clear evidence of benefiting from the use of mobile agents. For example, mobile agents are used in networked electronic trading [14] where they are dispatched by the buyer to the various suppliers to negotiate orders and deliveries, and then return to the buyer with their best deals for approval. Instead of having the buyer contact the suppliers, the mobile agents behave like representatives, interacting with other representatives on the buyer's behalf, and alert the buyer when something happens in the network that is important to the buyer. Another successful example of using mobile agents is distributed information retrieval and information dissemination [15], [16], [17], [18]. Agents are dispatched to heterogeneous and geographically distributed databases to retrieve information and return the query results to the end-users. Mobile agents are also used to realize network awareness [19] and global awareness [20]. Network-robust applications are of great interest in military situations today. Mobile agents are used to be aware of and reactive to the continuously changing network conditions to guarantee successful performance of the application tasks.

In this paper, we use mobile agent in distributed sensor networks to perform multi-resolution data integration. Problems to be studied are defined in the following section.

B. Problem Statement

We define the mobile agent as an entity of five attributes: identification, itinerary, data, method, and interface. These attributes are defined as follows:

- Identification: is in the format of 2-tuple (i, j) , where i indicates the identification number of its dispatcher and j the serial number assigned by its dispatcher. Each mobile agent can be uniquely identified by its identification. We use $MA_{i,j}$ to indicate different mobile agents.
- Itinerary: includes information about migration route assigned by processing element before dispatched.
- Data: agent's private data buffer which mainly carries integration results.
- Method: the implementation of algorithms. In MADSN, the key method is the multi-resolution data integration algorithm.
- Interface: provides interface functions for agent and processing element to communicate with each other, and for processing element to access agent's private data buffer.

Let PE_i represent a certain processing element that is in charge of the surveillance of a certain area. Let $\{MA_{i,1}, \dots, MA_{i,m}\}$ represent a group of m mobile agents dispatched by PE_i . Without loss of generality, we assume that each $MA_{i,j}$ ($j = 1, \dots, m$) visits the same number of sensor nodes, denoted by n . The problems studied in this paper are formally defined as follows:

Data integration problem: At each sensor site, what kind of data processing should be conducted and what integration results should be carried with the mobile agent?

Optimum performance problem: How to balance the value of m and n , such that the performance of MADSN is superior to DSN?

Figure 3 outlines the life cycle of a mobile agent $MA_{i,j}$ and its relationship with its dispatcher PE_i . Details are explained in following sections.

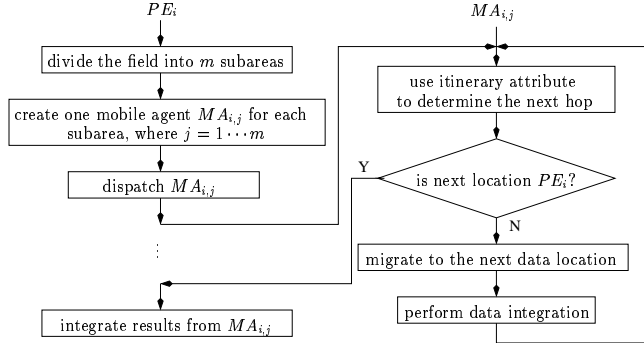


Fig. 3. Flowchart for agent creation, dispatch, and migration with single processing element.

III. MULTI-RESOLUTION INTEGRATION ALGORITHM

As mentioned in Sec. I, MADSN must respond to the challenges of a larger amount of sensor nodes and higher probability of faulty sensor readouts due to both environmental noise and physical damage. More sensor nodes can increase the computation load, while more faulty sensors can cause the integration results to be more unreliable. Algorithms are therefore sought which should not be significantly affected by network scaling, and yet provide better performance and higher fault tolerance. This section first reviews the original multi-resolution integration (MRI) algorithm proposed for DSNs [21]. Enhancements to the basic MRI algorithm are then described in order to take advantage of mobile agents to achieve better network scalability and fault tolerance. The enhancements involve a multi-resolution analysis of individual sensor readout to generate a simple function (the overlap function) at the sensor site, followed by an integration of the simple functions at the processing element. Compared to the MRI implementation in DSNs, where the integration of individual sensor readout (carried out at the processing element) is followed by the multi-resolution analysis of

the integrated simple function, the mobile agent implementation of MRI algorithm reduces the data transfer time by as much as 90%.

A. Original MRI Algorithm in DSNs

The original MRI algorithm was proposed by Prasad, Iyengar and Rao in 1994 [21]. The idea essentially consists of constructing a simple function (the overlap function) from the outputs of the sensors in a cluster and resolving this function at various successively finer scales of resolution to isolate the region over which the correct sensors lie. Each sensor in a cluster measures the same parameters. It is possible that some of them are faulty. Hence it is desirable to make use of this redundancy of the readings in the cluster to obtain a correct estimate of the parameters being observed. Before detailed discussion, we first review several relevant definitions.

Definition 2: An **abstract sensor** is defined as a sensor that reads a physical parameter and gives out an abstract interval estimate which is a bounded and connected subset of the real number of a certain dimension. We classify abstract sensors into two categories: **correct sensors** and **faulty sensors**.

Definition 3: A **correct sensor** is an abstract sensor whose interval estimate contains the actual value of the parameter being measured. Otherwise, it is a **faulty sensor**.

Definition 4: A faulty sensor is **tamely faulty** if it overlaps with a correct sensor, and is **wildly faulty** if it does not overlap with any correct sensors.

Definition 5: Let sensors S_1, \dots, S_N feed into a processor P . Let the abstract interval estimate of S_j be I_j ($1 \leq j \leq N$), the closed interval $[a_j, b_j]$ with end points a_j and b_j . The

characteristic function χ_j of the j th sensor S_j is defined as follows:

$$\chi_j(x) = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if } a_j \leq x \leq b_j \\ 0, & \text{if } x > b_j \text{ or } x < a_j \end{cases}$$

Definition 6: Let $\Omega(x) = \sum_{j=1}^N \chi_j(x)$ be the “overlap function” of the N abstract sensors. For each $x \in R$ (R is the set of the real number of 1-dimension), $\Omega(x)$ gives the number of sensor intervals in which x lies; that is, the number of intervals overlapping at x .

Definition 7: Crest is a region in the overlap function with the highest peak and the widest spread.

Figure 4 illustrates the overlap function for a set of 7 sensors calculated from their characteristic functions. We can observe several key characteristics from the profile which is common to all overlap functions:

- Tamefully faulty sensors cluster around correct sensors and create high and wide (maximal) peaks in the profile of $\Omega(x)$.
- Wildly faulty sensors on the other hand do not overlap with correct sensors, and therefore contribute to smaller and narrower peaks.

Therefore, the actual value of the parameter being measured lies within regions over which the maximal peaks of $\Omega(x)$ occur with the widest spread.

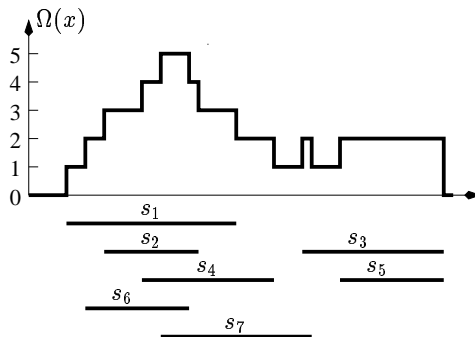


Fig. 4. The overlap function for a set of 7 sensors.

A.1 Multi-Resolution Analysis of the Overlap Function

Multi-resolution analysis provides a hierarchical framework for interpreting the overlap function. It is natural and more efficient to first analyze details at a coarse resolution and then increase the resolution for only the region of interest.

Given a sequence of increasing resolutions $(2^{-c}, 2^{-c+1}, \dots, 2^0)$, where c is a positive integer, we define the difference of function $f(x)$ at resolution 2^{-c+1} and resolution 2^{-c} as the details of $f(x)$ at resolution 2^{-c+1} . The algorithm is described as follows:

Algorithm 1: Multi-resolution analysis of the overlap function in DSN.

Data $\Omega(x)$, 2^k , $(-c \leq k \leq 0)$, assuming the coarsest resolution is 2^{-c} , the highest

: resolution is 2^0 , $[A, B]$ is the interval of the overlap function $\Omega(x)$

Result the final crest $[\gamma_l, \gamma_h]$ under resolution 2^k , where γ_l and γ_h are the lower and

: higher bounds of the crest respectively

$t = -c$;

while $t \leq k$ **do**

 resolve $\Omega(x)$ at resolution 2^t by sampling it over the interval $[A, B]$ at points $n2^{-t}$,

 ($\lfloor A/2^{-t} \rfloor \leq n \leq \lfloor B/2^{-t} \rfloor$), to obtain $\Omega_t(x)$;

 select the highest peaks from $\Omega_t(x)$;

 choose from these peaks the one with the widest spread $[A_t, B_t]$, which is a crest;

$\Omega(x) = \Omega_t([A_t, B_t])$;

$A = A_t, B = B_t$;

$t = t + 1$;

end

$\gamma_l = A, \gamma_h = B$;

This procedure results in the isolation of those regions over which the overlap function

$\Omega(x)$ has a maximum value, corresponding to high degree of overlapping of individual sensor readouts. The algorithm is optimal, since the overall time required is $O(n \log n)$, which is the time required to maintain $\Omega(x)$. This algorithm is also robust, satisfies the Lipschitz condition [22], which ensures that minor changes in the input intervals cause only minor changes in the integrated result. Figure 5 illustrates the multi-resolution analysis procedure.

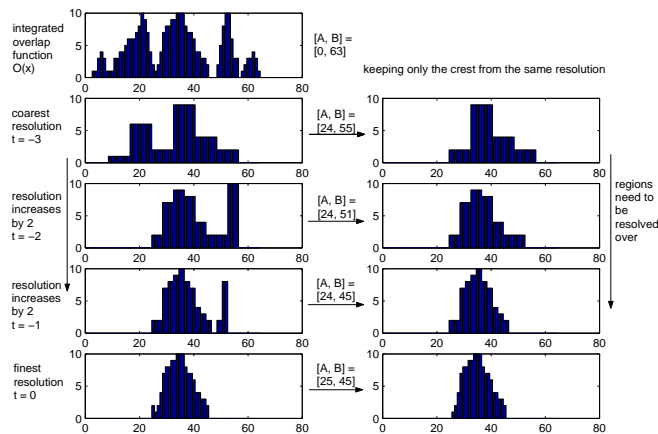


Fig. 5. An overlap function $\Omega(x)$ and its appearance at different resolutions (The shaded region indicates the region needs to be resolved over).

B. MRI Implementation Using Mobile Agents

In a distributed sensor network (DSN), all readouts from the sensor nodes are sent to their corresponding processing elements, where the overlap function at the *finest* resolution is first generated, and the multi-resolution analysis procedure is then applied to find the crest at the *desired* resolution.

In a mobile-agent-based DSN (MADSN), the mobile agents migrate among the sensor nodes and collect readouts. Therefore, $MA_{i,j}$ always carries a *partially* integrated overlap function which is accumulated into a final version at PE_i after all the mobile agents return. During this process, if MADSN applies the multi-resolution analysis method in the same

way as DSN does, that is, letting $MA_{i,j}$ carry the partially integrated overlap function in its finest resolution and then use multi-resolution analysis (MRA) to find the crest at desired resolution at PE_i , the advantages of mobile agents will be nullified because of heavy data migration.

We enhance the basic multi-resolution integration (MRI) algorithm for MADSNs and present a more efficient implementation. The key concept underlying the enhanced algorithm is that MRI is applied *before* accumulating the overlap function. A 1-D array, $\omega_{i,j}$, can serve as an appropriate data structure to represent the partially-integrated overlap function carried by $MA_{i,j}$. If the size of $\omega_{i,j}$ is s_{2^0} at resolution 2^0 , then at resolution 2^k (2^{-k} times coarser than 2^0), the size of $\omega_{i,j}$ is $s_{2^0}/2^{-k}$, that is, 2^{-k} times less than s_{2^0} . The following algorithms describe the procedure in detail.

Let PE_i be the processing element of interest, m the number of mobile agents dispatched, $MA_{i,j}$ the mobile agent dispatched by PE_i ($1 \leq j \leq m$), and $[A_i, B_i]$ the interval that covers readouts from all the sensors migrated by $MA_{i,j}$. Algorithm 2 creates the 1-D array $\omega_{i,j}$ based on the desired resolution. Algorithm 3 accumulates the sensor readouts to $\omega_{i,j}$ and forms the partially integrated overlap function at the desired resolution. Algorithm 4 integrates the partial overlap functions from all $MA_{i,j}$ dispatched by PE_i . The final integration is carried out at the processing element. A case study is provided for better illustration.

Algorithm 2: Modified MRI algorithm for MADSN - before $MA_{i,j}$ leaves PE_i

Data integration interval $[A_i, B_i]$, highest resolution 2^0 , desired resolution 2^k ($-c \leq$

$:$ $k \leq 0$)

Result array $\omega_{i,j}$ to hold partially-integrated overlap function

$:$

$s = \frac{B_i - A_i + 1}{2^{-k}};$

initialize $\omega_{i,j}$ as a zero vector with s elements;

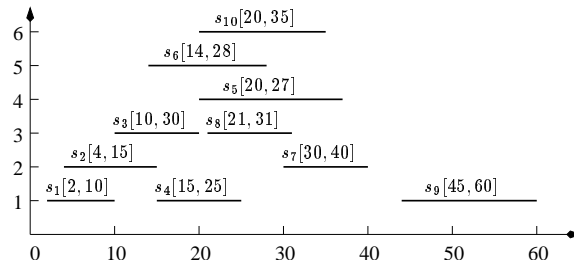


Fig. 6. Readouts from 10 sensor nodes at time t .

Algorithm 3: Modified MRI algorithm for MADSN - $MA_{i,j}$ at sensor node

Data $\omega_{i,j}$, 2^k , readout interval from the abstract sensor $[a, b]$ (a bounded connected

: set of real numbers)

Result $\omega_{i,j}$

:

find the smallest multiple of 2^{-k} , d_{min} , such that $d_{min} \geq a$;

find the largest multiple of 2^{-k} , d_{max} , such that $d_{max} \leq b$;

if $d_{min} \leq d_{max}$ **then**

 increase elements $\omega_{i,j}[\frac{d_{min}}{2^{-k}} : \frac{d_{max}}{2^{-k}}]$ by 1, ($\frac{d_{min}}{2^{-k}}$ and $\frac{d_{max}}{2^{-k}}$ are indices of the array)

end

B.1 Case Study

In this section, we present a case study to illustrate the MADSN-based MRI algorithm. Suppose PE_i has 10 sensor nodes (s_1, \dots, s_{10}) , migrated by $m = 2$ mobile agents with $MA_{i,1}$ covering s_1 to s_5 , and $MA_{i,2}$ covering s_6 to s_{10} . The readouts of sensors at time t are listed in Fig. 6. The integration interval $[A_i, B_i]$ is $[0, 63]$. The overlap function at its highest resolution then has 64 elements.

If the desired resolution is 2^{-3} (or eight times coarser than the finest resolution), according to Algorithm 2, an array $\omega_{i,j}$ with $8 = 64/8$ elements will be created and initialized by each mobile agent. Tables I and II list the step-by-step execution result for each agent according

Algorithm 4: Modified MRI algorithm for MADSN - $MA_{i,j}$ back to PE_i

Data $\omega_{i,j}$, 2^k , m (total number of agents dispatched by PE_i), integration interval

: $[A_i, B_i]$

Result final crest $[\gamma_l, \gamma_h]$ at resolution 2^k

:

create a zero vector ψ_i with $(B_i - A_i + 1)$ elements;

$j = 2$;

while $j \leq m$ **do**

accumulate $\omega_{i,j}$ to $\omega_{i,1}$;

$j = j + 1$;

end

$index = 0$;

while $index < \frac{B_i - A_i + 1}{2^{-k}}$ **do**

$\psi_i[index : index + 2^{-k} - 1] = \omega_{i,1}[index/2^{-k}]$;

$index = index + 2^{-k}$;

end

select the highest peak of ψ_i . If there are more than one peak with the same height,

then all the peaks should be selected;

choose from these peaks the one with the widest spread $[\gamma_l, \gamma_h]$, which is a crest;

to Algorithm 3.

According to Algorithm 4, $\omega_{i,1}$ and $\omega_{i,2}$ are summed up to generate $[0, 2, 3, 5, 2, 1, 1, 1]$,

which is then extended to ψ_i as:

$$\underbrace{[0, \dots, 0]}_8, \underbrace{[2, \dots, 2]}_8, \underbrace{[3, \dots, 3]}_8, \dots, \underbrace{[1, \dots, 1]}_8, \underbrace{[1, \dots, 1]}_8$$

Compared to the results from DSN as shown in Fig. 7, they are exactly the same. If we define the unit data transfer time as the time spent for one $MA_{i,j}$ migrating from one node

$s_j[a, b]$	d_{min}	d_{max}	$\frac{d_{min}}{2^{-k}}$	$\frac{d_{max}}{2^{-k}}$	$\omega_{i,1}$
$s_1[2, 10]$	8	8	1	1	[0, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0]
$s_2[4, 15]$	8	8	1	1	[0, 2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0]
$s_3[10, 20]$	16	16	2	2	[0, 2, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0]
$s_4[15, 25]$	16	24	2	3	[0, 2, 2, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0]
$s_5[20, 27]$	24	24	3	3	[0, 2, 2, 2, 0, 0, 0, 0]

TABLE I

TRACING THE CHANGE OF $\omega_{i,1}$ GENERATED BY $MA_{i,1}$.

$s_j[a, b]$	d_{min}	d_{max}	$\frac{d_{min}}{2^{-k}}$	$\frac{d_{max}}{2^{-k}}$	$\omega_{i,2}$
$s_6[14, 28]$	16	24	2	3	[0, 0, 1, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0]
$s_7[30, 40]$	32	40	4	5	[0, 0, 1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 0]
$s_8[21, 31]$	24	24	3	3	[0, 0, 1, 2, 1, 1, 0, 0]
$s_9[45, 60]$	48	56	6	7	[0, 0, 1, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1]
$s_{10}[20, 35]$	24	32	3	4	[0, 0, 1, 3, 2, 1, 1, 1]

TABLE II

TRACING THE CHANGE OF $\omega_{i,2}$ GENERATED BY $MA_{i,2}$.

to another, carrying a one-element array, then MADSN spends $8 \times 5 + 8 \times 2 = 56$ units of time (assuming $MA_{i,1}$ and $MA_{i,2}$ are executed in parallel when migrating from node to node or from PE_i to node which costs 8×5 units of time, and in serial when returning to PE_i which costs 8×2 units of time), while DSN spends $64 \times 10 = 640$ units of time. Hence, MADSN offers a save of up to 91.25% of data transfer time in this case. Here, we assume the size of mobile agent is very small and thus can be ignored. Notice that in this case study, the performance gain is actually due to the parallel fusion carried out by mobile agents.

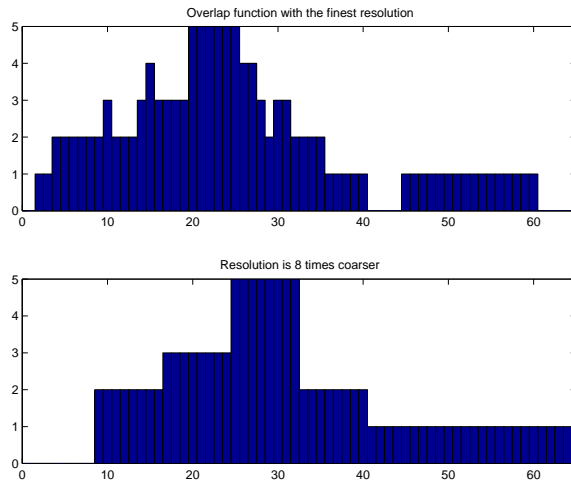


Fig. 7. The overlap function at its finest resolution and the version with 8 times coarser resolution obtained by modified MRI using mobile agent implementation.

IV. PERFORMANCE COMPARISON BETWEEN DSN AND MADSN

The case study from Sec. III-B.1 shows that while obtaining the same integration results, MADSN saves 91.25% of data transfer time compared to DSN. However, this does not necessarily mean that MADSN is always better than DSN since MADSN also introduces overhead, such as the extra time spent for agent creation and dispatch. On the other hand, DSN needs to transfer data files to PE_i which also causes overhead due to file accesses. In this section, we analyze the relative performances of DSN and MADSN, and determine conditions under which an MADSN is more efficient than a DSN. These conditions are determined by a set of parameters, including the network transfer rate v_n , the data processing rate v_d , the data file size s_f , the mobile agent data buffer size s_a , overhead of agent o_a , overhead of file access o_f , the number of sensor nodes p , and the balance between the number of agents m and the number of sensor nodes n that each agent migrates (Notice that $p = m \times n$). Equations (1) and (2) are two formulas estimating the execution time for MADSN (t_{madsn}) and DSN (t_{dsn}). In both equations, the three components calculate the data transfer time,

the overhead, and the data processing/integration time respectively.

$$t_{madsn} = \frac{(m+n)s_a}{v_n} + mo_a + \frac{(m+n-1)s_a}{v_d} \quad (1)$$

$$t_{dsn} = \frac{mns_f}{v_n} + mno_f + \frac{(mn-1)s_f}{v_d} \quad (2)$$

We use m as the variable. Assume k and j are positive scalars, and $s_f = ks_a$, $o_f = jo_a$, $v'_n = 1/v_n$, $v'_d = 1/v_d$, in order to ensure that $t_{madsn} \leq t_{dsn}$, Eq. (3) must be satisfied, that is, m must be chosen within a certain interval.

$$\alpha m^2 - \beta m + \gamma \leq 0 \quad (3)$$

where $\alpha = s_a v'_n + o_a + s_a v'_d$, $\beta = s_a v'_d - k s_a v'_d + k p s_a v'_n + k p s_a v'_d + j p o_a$, $\gamma = p s_a v'_n + p s_a v'_d$.

In the following sections, we evaluate the performance variation of MADS_N with respect to relationships between m and j , m and v'_n , and m and p . m is the number of nodes migrated by each mobile agent. j is the overhead ratio between DSN and MADS_N. v'_n is the reciprocal of network transfer rate. p is the total number of sensor nodes. These parameters play a more important role than others.

A. Performance Evaluation: m vs. j

Suppose the size of agent is 1KB, the overhead of agent is 0.5s (including agent creation time), the network transfer rate is 100Kbps, data processing rate is 100Mbps, the number of sensor nodes is 1000, and the data size is 10KB. Figure 8 is a profile of the maximum value of m satisfying Eq. 3 when changing the overhead ratio between MADS_N and DSN.

We then fix j at 0.25, that is, the overhead of file access is one fourth of the overhead of mobile agent, where the corresponding maximum m satisfying Eq. 3 is 441. By changing m

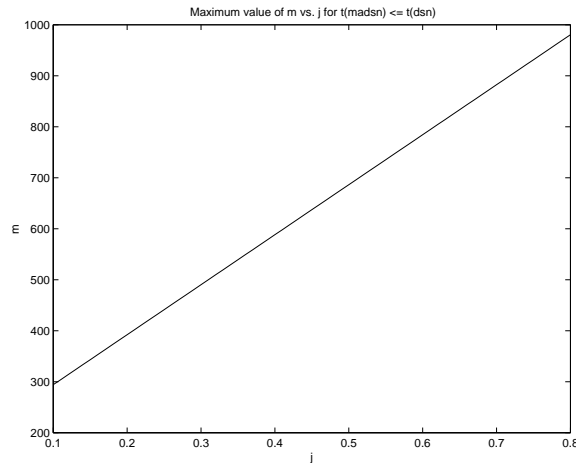


Fig. 8. Performance evaluation between DSN and MADS: m vs. j .

from 1 to 441, we generate the performance curves for MADS and DSN using the execution time: t_{madsn} and t_{dsn} .

Figure 9 (a) shows the variation of t_{dsn} with respect to the number of mobile agents m . It is a straight line since t_{dsn} is independent of the number of mobile agents and the total number of sensor nodes is a constant. Figure 9 (b) illustrates the variation of t_{madsn} with respect to m . The execution time t_{madsn} reaches its minimum when m is 4. Note that even though in the range of $m \in [1, 441]$, t_{madsn} is always less than t_{dsn} , after a decreasing segment at the very beginning, and reaching a minimum when $m = 4$, t_{madsn} starts to increase. This is because of the overhead from mobile agent: the more agents used, the heavier the overhead, the longer execution time needed; on the other hand, the less the agents, the lighter the overhead, but the longer the migration time. In order to investigate this further, we define the relative difference rate between t_{dsn} and t_{madsn} as $\frac{t_{dsn}-t_{madsn}}{t_{dsn}}$. Figure 9 (c) shows that the relative difference rate is maximum when m is chosen to be 4.

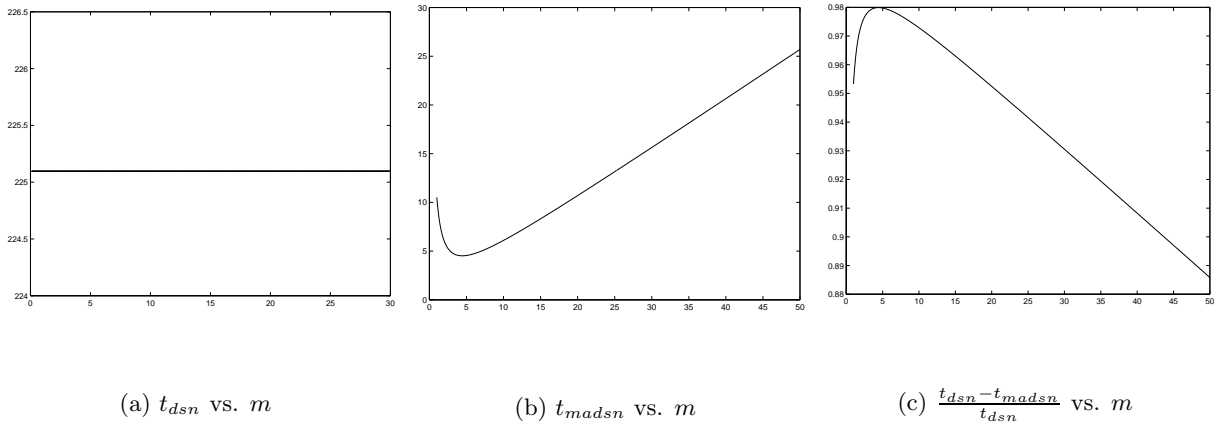


Fig. 9. Execution time for DSN and MADS with respect to m with $p = 1000$, $v_n = 100\text{Kbps}$, and $j = 0.25$.

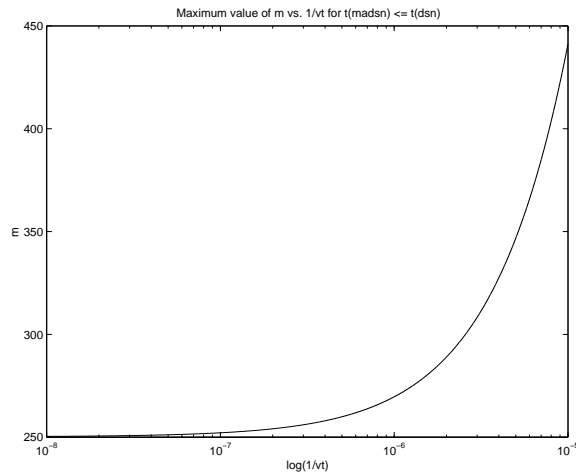


Fig. 10. Performance evaluation between DSN and MADS: m vs. $1/v_n$.

B. Performance Evaluation: m vs. v'_n

In this set of experiments, we fix j at 0.25, but vary the network transfer rate from 100Kbps to 100Mbps. Figure 10 shows the variation of m with respect to $\log(1/v_n)$.

We then fix $1/v_n$ at 5×10^{-5} , that is, the network transfer rate is 500Kbps, where the corresponding maximum m satisfying Eq. 3 is 269. We again generate the performance curves (Fig. 11) for MADS and DSN using the execution time, t_{madsn} and t_{dsn} , with respect to m . Notice that we generate three similar profiles as those in Fig. 9, except that the optimal m

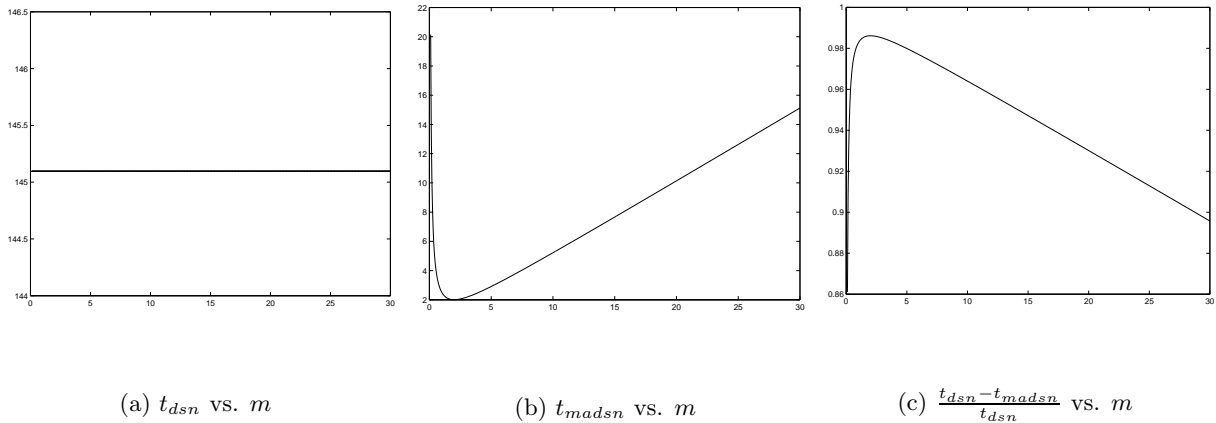


Fig. 11. Execution time for DSN and MADS with respect to m with $j = 0.25$, $p = 1000$, and $v_n = 500\text{Kbps}$.

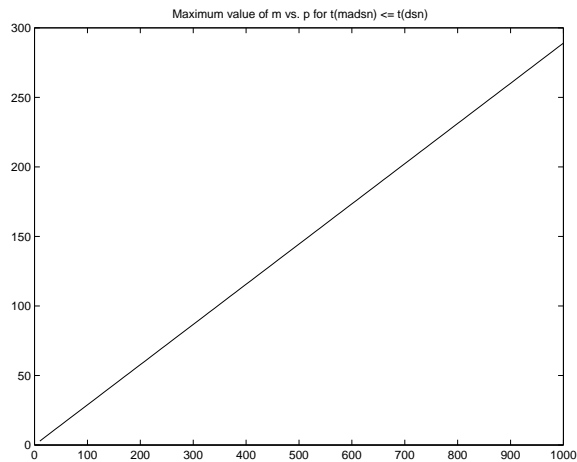


Fig. 12. Performance evaluation between DSN and MADS: m vs. p .

is close to 3 instead of 4 since the network transfer rate has been increased from 100Kbps to 1Mbps.

C. Performance Evaluation: m vs. p

In this set of experiments, we first keep v_n at 500Kbps, and change p (the total number of sensor nodes) from 10 to 1000. The variation of m with respect to p is shown in Fig. 12.

We then fix p at 3000, where the corresponding maximum m satisfying Eq. 3 is 867. We

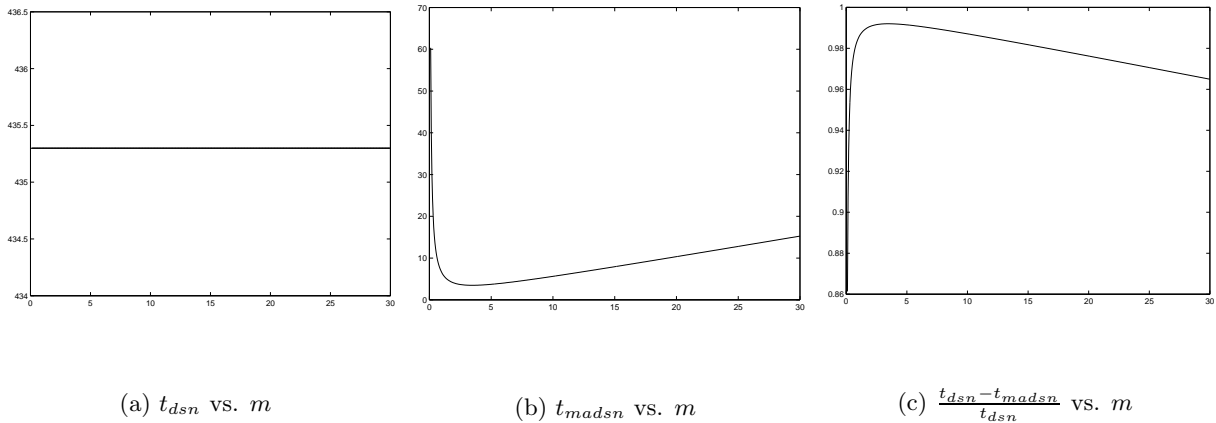


Fig. 13. Execution time for DSN and MADS with respect to m with $j = 0.25$, $v_n = 500\text{Kbps}$, and $p = 3000$.

generate the performance curves for MADS and DSN using the execution time, t_{madsn} and t_{dsn} , with respect to m . Again, we generate three similar profiles (Fig. 13) as those in Fig. 9, except that the optimal m is close to 4 since the number of sensor nodes has been increased three times.

Table III summarizes some typical parameter values and the corresponding performance. From the last row of Table III, we can see that based on the parameter value we choose, when MADS reaches its optimum performance, it can save more than 98% of execution time than DSN which mainly contributes from the less data transfer time spent.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This paper describes the use of the mobile agent paradigm to design an improved infrastructure for data integration in distributed sensor network (DSN). We use the acronym MADS to denote the proposed mobile-agent-based DSN. Compared to the traditional client/server paradigm used in DSN, where data are moved from the client to the processing center, MADS moves the processing code to the data locations. This saves network

Parameters	m vs. j	m vs. v'_n	m vs. p
size of agent (s_a)	1K	1K	1K
ratio ($k = \frac{s_f}{s_a}$)	10	10	10
data processing rate (v_n)	100Mbps	100Mbps	100Mbps
overhead of agent (o_a)	0.5s	0.5s	0.5s
ratio ($j = \frac{o_f}{o_a}$)	0.25	0.25	0.25
network transfer rate (v_n)	100Kbps	500 Kbps	500Kbps
total number of sensor nodes (p)	1000	1000	3000
optimal number of agents (m)	4	3	4
execution time in DSN (t_{dsn})	225.1s	145.2s	435.3s
execution time in MADSN (t_{madsn})	4.5s	2s	3.5s
execution time saved ($\frac{t_{dsn}-t_{madsn}}{t_{dsn}} \times 100\%$)	98%	98.6%	99.2%

TABLE III

SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE COMPARISON BETWEEN DSN AND MADSN.

bandwidth and provides an effective means for overcoming network latency, since large data transfers are avoided. We studied two important problems related to MADSN design: the distributed data integration problem, and the optimum performance problem.

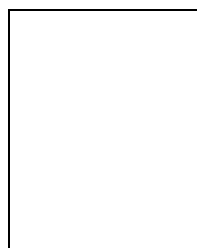
We show that by applying multi-resolution analysis at each sensor node instead of processing element, MADSN saves up to 90% of data transfer time. However, MADSN is not always better than DSN, since the involvement of mobile agents also adds overhead. We analyze the conditions under which MADSN performs better than DSN and the conditions under which MADSN achieves its optimum performance. The conditions are determined by a set of parameters, and the most important ones include the network transfer rate, the overhead

ratio between DSN and MADSN, and the total number of sensor nodes. The evaluation shows that when MADSN reaches its optimum performance, it can save more than 98% of execution time (mainly contributed from the less data transfer time spent). We conclude that mobile agent paradigm is a promising approach for distributed computing, especially when the amount of data transfer is very huge which is the typical case in distributed sensor networks.

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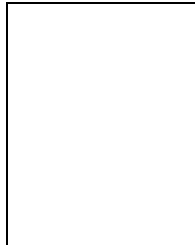
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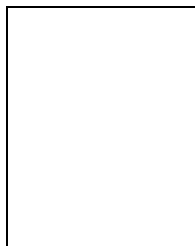
Hairong Qi (Student Member 1997, Member 1999) received her Ph.D. degree in Computer Engineering from North Carolina State University in 1999, B.S. and M.S. degrees in Computer Science from Northern JiaoTong University, Beijing, in 1992 and 1995 respectively. She is now Assistant Professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Dr. Qi is a member of IEEE and Sigma Xi. She has served as a

guest editor of Journal of the Franklin Institute. She is sponsored by DARPA and U.S. Army Medical Research and

Materiel Command. Her current research interests are distributed data fusion in wireless sensor networks, distributed data mining, omni-directional sensor technology, and medical imaging.



S. Sitharama Iyengar is a Professor and Chairman of the Computer Science Department at Louisiana State University (LSU) and has been the Director of the LSU Robotics Research Laboratory since its inception in 1986. He has co-authored four books and over 250 research publications in the areas of distributed sensor networks, high performance parallel and distributed algorithms, data structures for image processing and pattern recognition, and autonomous navigation. Dr. Iyengar has served as principal investigator on research projects supported by ONR, NASA, the NSF Laser Program, JPL, the Department of the Navy NORDA, DOE, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, the ARO, the Louisiana Board of Regents LEQSF, and Apple Computer, Inc. He was a visiting professor at the JPL and Oak Ridge National Laboratory. He has been a guest editor of IEEE Trans. Knowledge Data Eng., IEEE Trans. Syst., Man, Cybern., IEEE Trans. Software Eng., IEEE Computer Mag., J. of Theoretical Computer Science, J. of Computer and Electrical Engineering, and J. of the Franklin Institute. He is an IEEE Fellow (awarded for contributions to data structures and algorithms for image processing and robotics) and an IEEE Distinguished Visitor. He is a recipient of the IEEE Technical Achievement Award for contributions in image processing and sensor fusion, the LSU Distinguished Research Master Award, the LSU H. M. Cotton Award for Faculty Excellence, and the LSU Distinguished Faculty Award for Excellence in Research.



Krishnendu Chakrabarty (Student Member 1992, Member 1996, Senior Member 2000) received the B. Tech. degree from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, in 1990, and the M.S.E. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, in 1992 and 1995, respectively, all in Computer Science and Engineering. He is now Assistant Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Duke University. Dr. Chakrabarty is a recipient of the National Science Foundation Early Faculty (CAREER) award, the Office of Naval Research Young Investigator award and the Mercator Professor award from Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Germany. His current research projects (supported by NSF, DARPA, ONR, and industrial sponsors) are in system-on-a-chip design and test, embedded real-time operating systems, distributed sensor networks, and architectural optimization of microelectrofluidic systems. He has published over 70 papers in archival journals and refereed conference proceedings, and he holds a US patent in built-in self-test. He is a member of ACM and ACM SIGDA, and a member of Sigma Xi. He serves as Vice Chair of Technical Activities in IEEE's Test Technology Technical Council, and is a member of the program committees of several IEEE/ACM conferences and workshops.

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