

Numerical forecast systems for geophysical fluids and climate

Numerical forecast systems

Weather forecast



Mercator Ocean



African flood forecasting system



E. Blayo (UGA and Inria)

Numerical forecast systems



IPCC AR5 report

Numerical forecast systems



Coastal engineering



Risk management



Floods

The beginnings of weather forecasting



Lewis F. Richardson (1881-1953)



Computation grid

Richardson's forecast factory (1922)

A myriad computers are at work upon the weather of the part of the map where each sits, but each computer attends only to one equation or part of an equation. The work of each region is coordinated by an official of higher rank. Numerous little "night signs" display the instantaneous values so that neighbouring computers can read them. Each number is thus displayed in three adjacent zones so as to maintain communication to the North and South on the map.



The forecast factory

From the floor of the pit a tall pillar rises to half the height of the hall. It carries a large pulpit on its top. In this sits the man in charge of the whole theatre; he is surrounded by several assistants and messengers. One of his duties is to maintain a uniform speed of progress in all parts of the globe. In this respect he is like the conductor of an orchestra in which the instruments are slide-rules and calculating machines.

A short history of numerical forecast systems

Numerical forecast systems have been developed progressively for all disciplines related to geophysical fluids.



Step 1 : translate reality into equations



Step 1 - Modeling : translate reality into equations

- Main physical laws : conservation of mass, energy, water...
- Boundary conditions : exchange fluxes (heat, mass...)
- Some specific aspects : boundary layers, micro-physics...

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$$\begin{split} &\frac{\partial u}{\partial t} + \mathbf{U}.\nabla u - fv + \frac{1}{\rho_0}\frac{\partial p}{\partial x} - \mathcal{F}(u) = 0 & \frac{\partial T}{\partial t} + \mathbf{U}.\nabla T - \mathcal{D}_T(T) = 0 \\ &\frac{\partial v}{\partial t} + \mathbf{U}.\nabla v + fu + \frac{1}{\rho_0}\frac{\partial p}{\partial y} - \mathcal{F}(v) = 0 & \frac{\partial S}{\partial t} + \mathbf{U}.\nabla S - \mathcal{D}_S(S) = 0 \\ &\frac{\partial p}{\partial z} = -\rho g & \rho = \rho(T, S, p) \\ &\text{div } \mathbf{U} = 0 & + \text{conditions aux limites} \end{split}$$

From infinite to finite dimension



Approximate representation of :

- the domain : mesh Météo-France : 1,3 km, a few seconds Mercator-Ocean : 1/36° (2-3 km), a few mns
- the equations : numerical schemes



And a lot of calculation

This results in a (large) system of equations, the solution of which allows to compute the system state at the next time step, starting from the present one. ($\simeq 10^6 - 10^9$ unknowns)



Supercomputer Jean Zay — IDRIS, Orsay — 90 000 cores, 28 Pflops peak

At this stage : a numerical model that is useful to understand the behavior of geophysical systems...



meso-scale eddy activity in mid-latitude ocean

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Holland (1978) : evidence for intense meso-scale eddy activity in mid-latitude ocean



1/4° global ocean simulation (sea surface elevation) At this stage : a numerical model that is useful to understand the behavior of geophysical systems...



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1/4° global ocean simulation (sea surface elevation)

...but is unable to produce forecasts. To provide a forecast, one needs to know the present state of the system.

Chaos, butterfly effect...

Atmosphere and ocean are chaotic systems : small perturbations may lead to large deviations.



Edward Lorenz (1917-2008)

$$\frac{dx}{dt} = \alpha(y - x)$$
$$\frac{dy}{dt} = \beta x - y - xz$$
$$\frac{dz}{dt} = -\gamma z + xy$$





https://www.chaos-math.org

LIRIMA online Franco-African seminar, March 2021

Chaos, butterfly effect...

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Edward Lorenz (1917 - 2008)

Does the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil set off a tornado in Texas? (139th meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1972) Apparent chaos, but an underlying order... www.chaos-math.org

To foresee the future, you have to know the present

 A wide variety of observations : in situ / satellite, quantitative / qualitative...





To foresee the future, you have to know the present

- A wide variety of observations : in situ / satellite, quantitative / qualitative...
- Earth observation from space has initiated a revolution in geophysical numerical forecast systems



sea surface temperature



satellite observations



of satellite obs in Arpege

To foresee the future, you have to know the present

 Use all available information to reconstruct the current state of the system



past and present observations







statistics

→ Data assimilation

Step 2 : data assimilation

You all already experienced data assimilation



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You all already experienced data assimilation



 Mathematical techniques that combine different sources of information in an optimal way : optimal control, stochastic filtering...

$$\min_{\boldsymbol{u}} \int_0^T \|\boldsymbol{y}^{obs}(t) - \mathcal{H}(\boldsymbol{x}(\boldsymbol{u},t))\| dt \quad ; \quad \max p(\boldsymbol{x}(t) | \boldsymbol{x}(t-1), \boldsymbol{y}^{obs}(t))$$

From space rockets to weather forecast...



Lev Pontryagin (1908-1988)



Rudolf Kalman (1930-2016)



Jacques-Louis Lions (1928-2001)







NASA, 1961

... and from weather forecast to multiple applications





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- a numerical model
- a method to initialize it and/or tune its parameters
- \longrightarrow We can therefore make forecasts

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 \rightarrow Are they reliable?

Step 3 : quantifying uncertainty

- There are still uncertainties all over the place
- Nothing can be done against chaos
 - \longrightarrow provide probabilistic forecasts





A simple concept : ensemble methods



A simple concept : ensemble methods





Source : Palmer, 2006

Building a numerical forecast system

- A very multidisciplinary work. Progress is being made at all levels, by all actors.
- Many playgrounds for applied mathematicians and computer scientists

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mathematical modelingnumerical analysisimage processingmathematical analysisnumerical methodsuncertainty quantificationdynamical systemsoptimizationHPC

. . .

 \rightarrow a few examples

. . .

Modeling diffusion of oceanic tracers

Goal improve the long-term representation of water masses (T,S)

- Real ocean isopycnal mixing >> diapycnal mixing
- Numerical models
 Δ or Δ² in z or σ coordinates
- → Development of an adaptive diffusion tensor





Marchesiello et al., 2009; Lemarié et al., 2012.

Parameter estimation for ice caps modeling

Motivation large uncertainties on the topography of the bedrock and the basal friction



Improving coupling algorithms



 Uncertainties on the path of the cyclone and its intensity are reduced by 30%-40%. (Lemarié et al, 2014)

> Current experiments in the IPSL climate model (Marti et al, 2020)



Assimilation of (sequences of) images

Huge amount of images, containing significant information



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Huge amount of images, containing significant information



• Which relation between a photograph and a numerical model?



curvelets decomposition

dynamical systems

optimal transport



optimal field with obstacles



chlorophyll and Lyapunov exponents

A massive use of supercomputers

 Increasing the resolution is often one of the key points for improving the quality of the model results (small scale activity + scale interactions).



ORCA model – 1/12° resolution



A massive use of supercomputers

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- Data assimilation : × one or two orders of magnitude
- Quantification of uncertainty : × several orders of magnitude

Numerical systems for ocean/atmosphere/climate simulations generally require huge computational resources \rightarrow HPC issues