

thermoflu.therm Thermal system elements

1 Systems in which heat flow is of interest are called thermal systems. For instance, heat generated by an engine or a server farm flows through several bodies via the three modes of heat transfer: conduction, convection, and radiation. This is, of course, a dynamic process.

thermal systems

**conduction
convection
radiation**

2 A detailed model would require a spatial continuum. However, we are often concerned with, say, the maximum temperature an engine will reach for different speeds or the maximum density of a server farm while avoiding overheating. Or, more precisely, how a given heat generation affects the temperature response of system components.

3 As with electrical, mechanical, and fluid systems, we can describe thermal systems as consisting of discrete lumped-parameter elements. The dynamic models that can be developed from considering these elements are often precisely the right granularity for system-level design.

4 We now introduce a few lumped-parameter elements for modeling thermal systems. Let a heat flow rate q (SI units W) and temperature T (SI units K or C) be input to a port in a thermal element. There are three structural differences between thermal systems and the other types we've considered. We are confronted with the first, here, when we consider that heat power is typically not considered to be the product of two variables; rather, the heat flow rate q is already power:

**heat flow rate
temperature**

first difference

$$\mathcal{P}(t) = q(t). \quad (1)$$

A thermal element has two distinct locations between which its temperature drop is defined. We call a reference temperature ground.

**ground
heat**

5 The heat energy H of a system with initial

heat $H(0)$ is

$$H(t) = \int_0^t \mathcal{P}(\tau) d\tau + H(0). \quad (2)$$

6 We now consider an element that can store energy, called an energy storage element; an element that resists power flow; and two elements that can supply power from outside a system, called source elements. The second difference is that there is only one type of energy storage element in the thermal domain.

energy storage element

source elements
second difference

Thermal capacitors

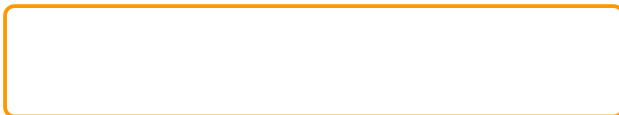
7 When heat is stored in an object, it stores potential energy via its temperature T . This is analogous to how an electronic capacitor stores its energy via its voltage. For this reason, we call such thermal elements thermal capacitors.

thermal capacitors

8 A linear thermal capacitor with thermal capacitance C (SI units J/K), temperature T , and heat H has the constitutive equation

$$H = CT. \quad (3)$$

Once again, time-differentiating the constitutive equation gives us the elemental equation:



9 The thermal capacitance C is an extensive property—that is, it depends on the amount of its substance. This is opposed to the specific heat capacity c (units J/K/kg), an intensive property: one that is independent of the amount of its substance. These quantities are related for an object of mass m by the equation

extensive property

specific heat capacity
intensive property

$$C = mc. \quad (4)$$

Thermal resistors

10 Thermal resistors are defined as elements

thermal resistors

for which the heat flowrate q through the element is a monotonic function of the temperature drop T across it. Linear thermal resistors have constitutive equation (and, it turns out, elemental equation)

$$q = \frac{1}{R}T \quad (5)$$

where R is called the thermal resistance.

11 Thermal resistors do not dissipate energy from the system, which is the third difference between thermal and other energy domains we've considered. After all, the other "resistive" elements all dissipate energy to heat. Rather than dissipate energy, they simply impede its flow.

12 All three modes of heat transfer are modeled by thermal resistors, but only two of them are well-approximated as linear for a significant range of temperature.

conduction Heat conduction is the transfer of heat through an object's microscopic particle interaction.¹ It is characterized by a thermal resistance

$$R = \frac{L}{\rho A}, \quad (6)$$

where L is the length of the object in the direction of heat transfer, A is the transverse cross-sectional area, and ρ is the material's thermal conductivity (SI units $W/K/m$).²

convection Heat convection is the transfer of heat via fluid advection: the bulk motion of a fluid. It is characterized by a thermal resistance

$$R = \frac{1}{hA}, \quad (7)$$

where h is the convection heat transfer coefficient (SI units $W/m^2/K$) and A is the area of fluid-object contact (SI units m^2).

linear thermal resistors

thermal resistance

third difference

1. We use the term "object" loosely, here, to mean a grouping of continuous matter in any phase.

thermal conductivity

2. Thermal resistance can also be defined as an intensive property ρ^{-1} , the reciprocal of the thermal conductivity. Due to our lumped-parameter perspective, we choose the extensive definition.

fluid advection

convection heat transfer coefficient

The convection heat transfer coefficient h is highly and nonlinearly dependent on the velocity of the fluid. Furthermore, the geometry of the objects and the fluid composition affect h .

radiation Radiative heat transfer is electromagnetic radiation emitted from one body and absorbed by another. For T_1 the absolute temperature of a “hot” body, T_2 the absolute temperature of a “cold” body, ε the effective emissivity/absorptivity,³ and A the area of the exposed surfaces, the heat transfer is characterized by

$$q = \varepsilon \sigma A (T_1^4 - T_2^4), \quad (8)$$

where σ is the Stefan-Boltzmann constant

$$\sigma = 5.67 \cdot 10^{-8} \frac{\text{W}}{\text{m}^2 \text{K}^4}. \quad (9)$$

Clearly, this heat transfer is highly nonlinear. Linearization of this heat transfer is problematic because the temperature difference T between the bodies does not appear in the expression. For many system models, radiative heat transfer is assumed negligible. We must be cautious with this assumption, however, especially when high operating temperatures are anticipated.

Heat flow rate and temperature sources

13 Thermal sources include many physical processes—almost everything generates heat!

14 An ideal heat flow rate source is an element that provides arbitrary heat flow rate Q_s to a system, independent of the temperature across it, which depends on the system.

15 An ideal temperature source is an element that provides arbitrary temperature T_s to a system, independent of the heat flow rate through it, which depends on the system.

effective emissivity/absorptivity

3. The parameter ε is taken to be the combined “gray body” emissivity/absorptivity. Consult a heat transfer text for details.

Stefan–Boltzmann constant

ideal heat flow rate source

ideal temperature source

Generalized element and variable types

16 In keeping with the definitions of Chapter intro, temperature T is an across-variable and heat flow rate q is a through-variable.

across-variable
through-variable

17 Consequently, the thermal capacitor is considered an A-type energy storage element. A thermal resistor is considered to be a D-type energy dissipative element, although it does not actually dissipate energy. It does, however, resist its flow and relates its across- and through-variables algebraically, both signature characteristics of D-type elements.

A-type
D-type

18 Temperature sources are, then, across-variable sources and heat flow rate sources are through-variable sources.

Example thermoflu.therm-1

Careless Carlton left a large pot of water boiling on the stove. Worse, a cast-iron pan is bumped so that it is in solid contact with the pot and his glass fish tank, which was carelessly left next to the stove, as shown in Fig. therm.1. Draw a linear graph of the sad situation to determine what considerations determine if Careless Carlton's fish goes from winner to dinner.

re: thermal system graph

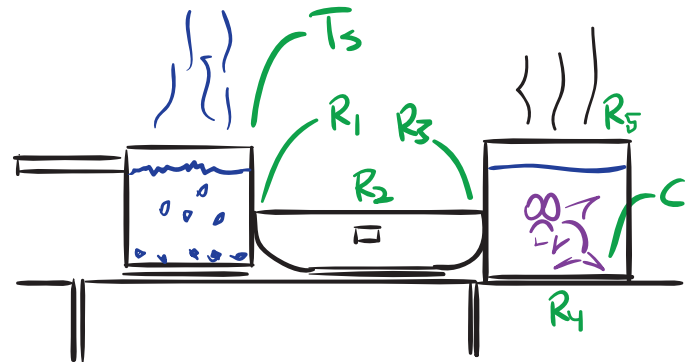


Figure therm.1: Careless Carlton's fish's sad situation.