Excel Spreadsheet in Mechanical Engineering Technology Education

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Abstract:

In the last three decades Excel Spreadsheet has become a very popular and effective computational tool for performing engineering calculations. It is a great challenge on educators to apply this tool towards improving our engineering teaching and to provide high quality, learning-center education. Using spreadsheets provide a unique learning experience on the relationship between the component of an equation—an understanding that is essential in engineering analysis. However, the traditional teaching method and manual computation of equations and modelling do not always prove to be effective. Excel Spreadsheet has been successfully been used to promote conceptual change in mechanical system design and analysis. In Excel Spreadsheet Student can perform alternative design and analysis. Student can better understand and interpret the solution using fundamental theoretical and numerical concepts. In this paper, the author is going to introduce his experience how to teach the courses in mechanical engineering technology at RIT using Excel spreadsheets. The case study in engineering mechanics, vibration, machine design, and others will be discussed in this paper.

The case study in this paper is listing below.

Case Study 1. Strength of Materials for Beam (Shaft) Design and Analysis

Case Study 2. Strength of Materials for Combined Stress in unsymmetrical Bending

Case Study 3. Strength of Materials for Combined Stress in column with eccentric load.

Case Study 4. Strength of Materials for Combined Stress in I Beam to find the bending stresses in flange and web of I beam

Case Study 5. Damping Vibration analytical solution

Case Study 6. Gear Box kinematic and shaft design in machine design Case Study

Case Study 7. Numerical Integration for Forced Vibration with Damping in Spring-Mass System.

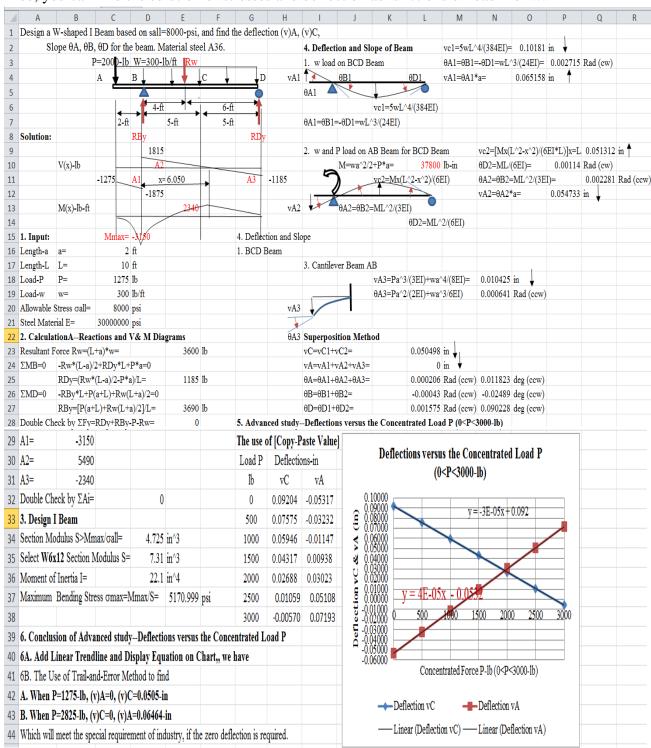
Case Study 8. Numerical Differentiation for linkage analysis in Dynamics of Machinery.

Case Study 9. Jet Engine Thermodynamic analysis

Case Study 10. Long-hand-calculation of Stiffness Matrix for two dimensional triangular three-node-element in CAE study.

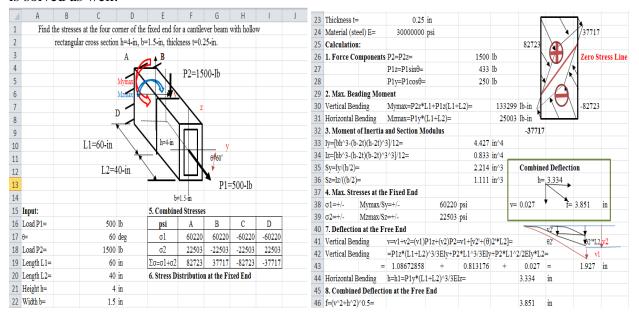
Case Study 1. Strength of Materials for Beam (Shaft) Design and Analysis

First, create an Input in excel. Which will drive all your calculation and create alternative design and solution by change the input data only. For example, if the value of concentrated force P or uniformly distributed load w change, the alternative solution can be found immediately in excel. Also, you can find the solution of stresses and deflection as functions of load P or w.



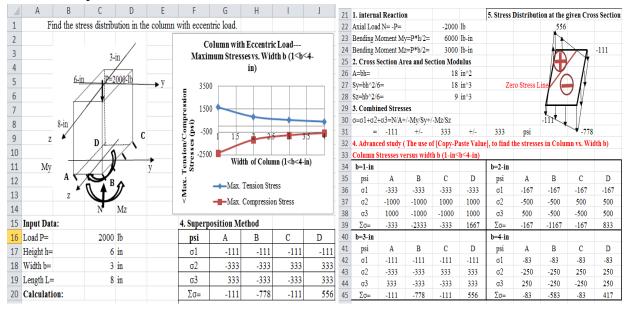
Case Study 2. Strength of Materials for unsymmetrical Bending.

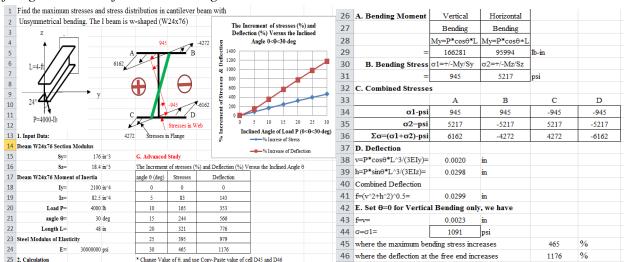
Which is the combination of vertical and horizontal bending. With superposition method, the stresses and deflection could be solved. The stress distribution at the fixed end provide the dangerous stresses for the beam. The combined deflection due to horizontal and vertical bending is solved as well.



Case Study 3. Strength of column with eccentric load.

Where the stresses of two direction bending and axial compression are calculated separately, and then combined together. The summation of stresses provide the actual stress distribution for column with eccentric load. With the power of Excel, we find the solution of stresses as the function of column width b, which is changed from 1 to 4-in.Both tabular solution and chart form solution are provided.

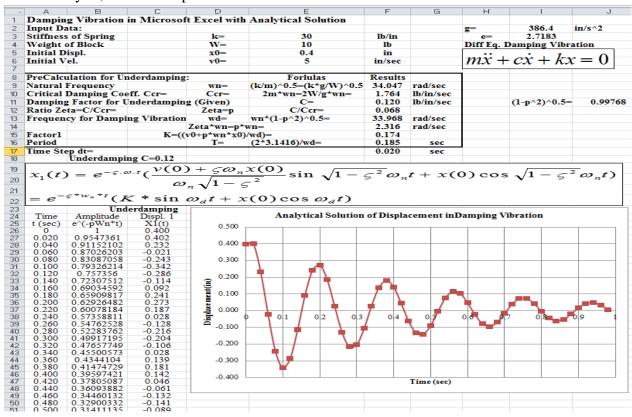




Case Study 4. Strength of Materials for Combined Stress in I Beam to find the bending stresses in flange and web of I beam at dangerous cross section.

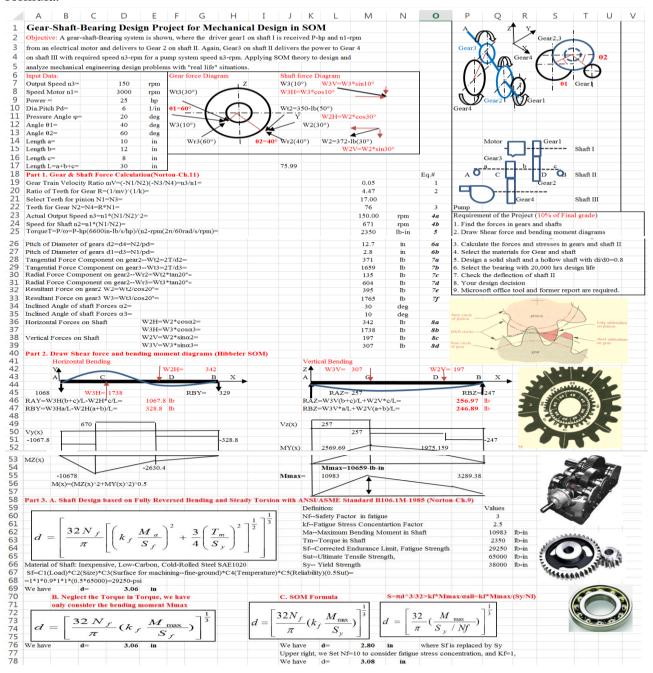
Case Study 5. Damping Vibration analytical solution.

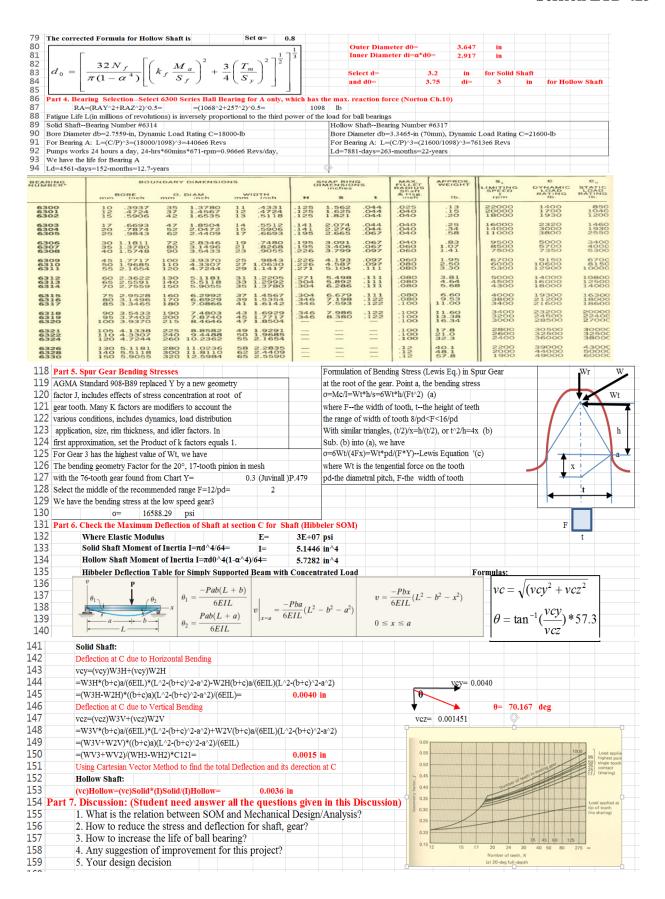
By solving differential equation of damping vibration, the general solution of underdamping vibration of a spring-block system could be found. In Excel, the analytical solution could be solved in both tabular and chart form. By changing the value of damping factor C, the deduction of vibration amplitude as a function of time could be solved and to meet the requirement of industry. In this analysis, the time step 0.02-sec is selected.



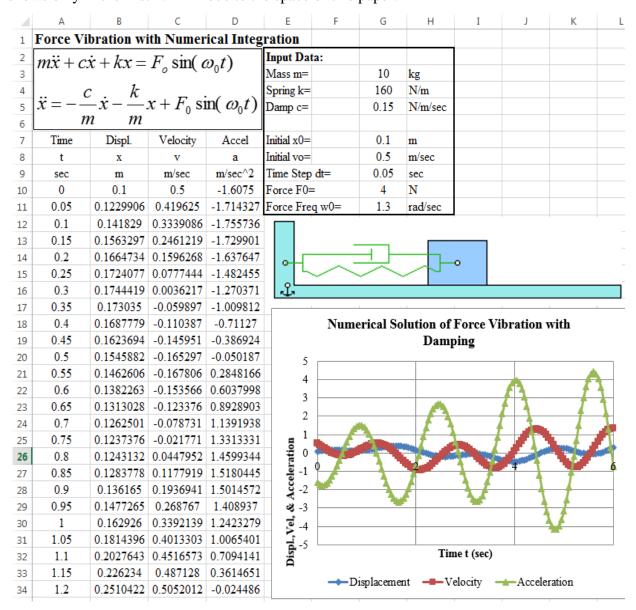
Case Study 6. Gear Box kinematic and shaft design in machine design

Which involved 1. The kinematic design of gear box, 2. The three dimensional forces and stresses analysis of the shaft in gear box based on Formulas of American Society of mechanical engineers (ASME) and American National Standard Institute (ANSI). Based on reversed bending and steady torsion for both solid and hollow shaft. 3. The ball bearing selection to find the life of ball bearing Ld. 4. The spur gear design and analysis based on bending stress from AGMA Standard 908-B89 formula.

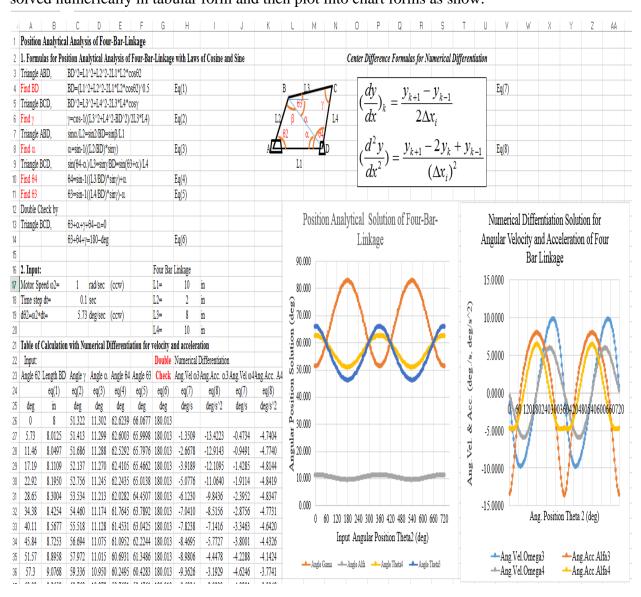




Case Study 7. Numerical Integration for Forced Vibration with Damping in Spring-Mass System. Driven by Input Data sheet with different input mass m, spring stiffness k, damping coefficient c, intial displacement x0 and initial velocity v0, external force magnitude F0, frequency w0, and the time step dt for numerical integration, the solution of forced vibration with damping can be solved in a few second for different system. Where the first equation is the differential equation of forced vibration with damping, the second equation is the solution for acceleration at the given time. Then, the velocity and displacement of system could be solved numerically. The use smaller time step will have better numerical solution of the system. The accuracy and convergence of the solution should be considered. In this example, time step dt=0.05-sec. The chart solution shows the displacement, velocity and acceleration solutions in the first 6 min. But the tabular solution shows only in the first 1.2 min due to the space of this paper.

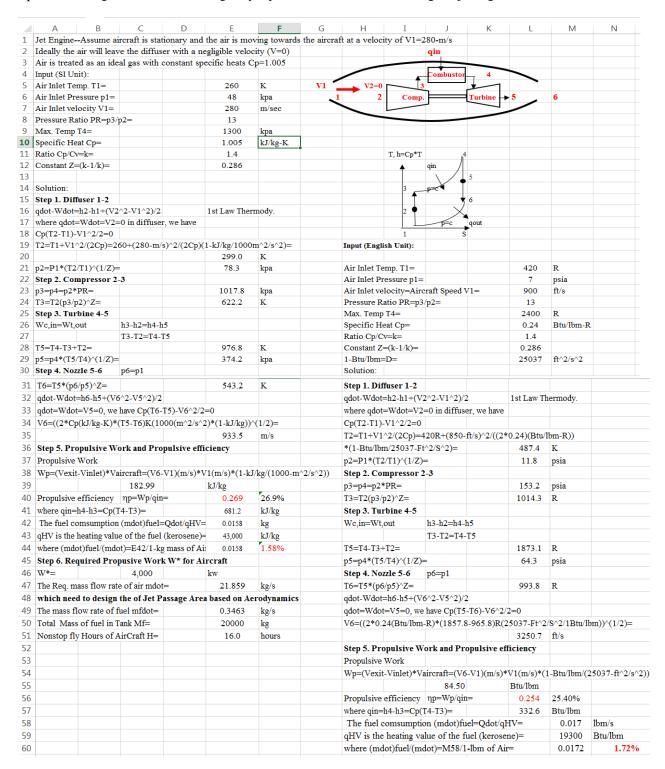


Case Study 8. Numerical Differentiation for linkage analysis in Dynamics of Machinery
In general, the displacement of a given linkage could be found analytically, where a four bar linkage is illustrated below for the mathematical formulas in the first six equations. Link 2 is driven by a constant motor, by selecting time steps, with the input angle of link 2, the angular displacement of Link 3, and 4 can be solved. Then, using center difference formulas equations 7 and 8 for numerical differentiation, the velocity and acceleration of output link 3 and 4 can be solved numerically in tabular form and then plot into chart forms as show.



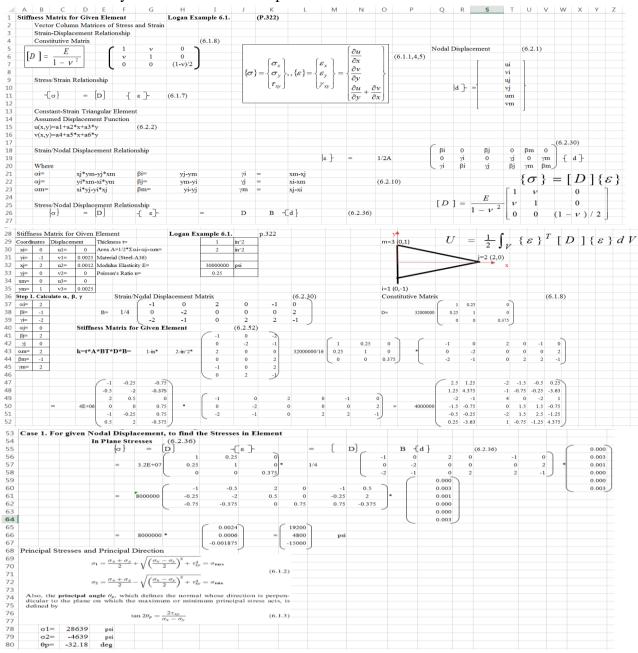
Case Study 9. Jet Engine Thermodynamic analysis.

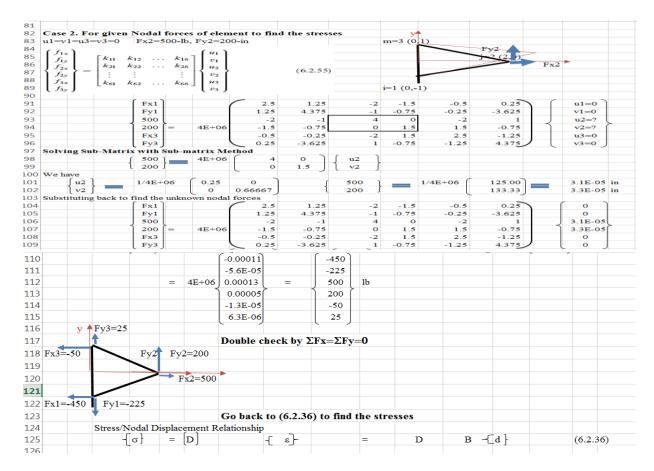
Jet engine thermodynamic analysis in both SI and English units is processed in Excel--Assume aircraft is stationary and the air is moving towards the aircraft at a velocity of V1=280-m/s. Ideally, the air will leave the diffuser with a negligible velocity (V=0). Air is treated as an ideal gas with constant specific heats Cp=1.005-kJ/kg-K. Student can change any input to find the alternative design in jet engine of aircraft.



Case Study 10. Long-hand-calculation of Stiffness Matrix for two dimensional triangular three-node-element in CAE study.

There are three topics are show in this spreadsheet. 1. With matrix analysis tool in Excel, the calculation of stiffness matrix for a two dimensional triangular three-node-element is created. 2. For given nodal displacement of the element, to find the stresses in the element. 3. For given nodal forces of the element to find the stresses in the element. Which provides the basic formulation of finite element analysis in two dimensional problems.





Conclusion:

Excel spreadsheet in Microsoft Office allows the integration of computer based projects with traditional mechanical engineering topics. Student is enjoying their spreadsheet learning environment and will bring hundreds spreadsheet calculators to deal with their future engineering design and analysis problems. The easy learning Excel spreadsheets allows our student to get the alternative solution of their interested problems by simply changing the inputs in their Excel calculator. Where the most desirable solution for a given problem could be found by considering the given environment and to improve the design quality. With Excel spreadsheet background, MET student get better understanding and great confidence to deal with their future professional challenge.

Short Bio of author:

Ti-Lin Liu is an associate professor in the Manufacturing and Mechanical Engineering Technology Department at Rochester Institute of Technology. He has been teaching at RIT since 1987. Previously he was the Chair Professor of the Mechanics Department at Shanghai University of Technology. His areas of interest include finite element analysis, computer simulation with working model and Matlab/Simulink, numerical analysis, solid mechanics, heat transfer and system dynamics/vibration. He has been the recipient of teaching awards in China and was the sole recipient of the 2001 Annual Grant Reward from MSC Software Corporation, San Mateo, CA. Research interests include: Finite element analysis, computer simulation with working model and Matlab/Simulink.