

Fujitsu develops traffic simulator with greater scope



Fujitsu Laboratories has developed a wide-area traffic simulation system that allows the reproduction of traffic flows involving tens of thousands of vehicles.

“The new simulator makes it possible to verify in advance the effectiveness of a variety of traffic policies designed to improve traffic flow,” the Japanese research laboratory, part of the Fujitsu group, said in a press release.

The software also offers a virtual driving experience, which can give users an actual driver’s perspective on the impact of specific traffic policies.

Fujitsu said the simulator will help efforts to improve the flow of traffic and reduce road congestion. The software can assess the effectiveness of a wide range of new traffic tools such as information systems that transfer real-time data to vehicles, electronic toll collection systems, advanced notification of signal information and changed road pricing.

The sheer volume of data affecting traffic at any given time provides a major challenge to scientists and planners. “Existing traffic simulators have been unable to perform these calculations in real time, making the implementation of a virtual driving experience difficult,” Fujitsu said.

The company’s new software platform manages to perform the calculations by splitting up the roads

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into multiple areas and calculating each of these areas in parallel. The software generates an image of the driver's field of vision 60 times a second.

The software has been tested in Tokyo, where a new traffic-flow project provides speed recommendations to drivers to let them hit green traffic lights. Researchers learned that the system's effectiveness depended on how the speed recommendations were conveyed to drivers. As a result, the method of notification was improved and the system worked better, Fujitsu said.

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