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Technote: Syndeia Simulink Capabilities

Part 2 - SysML → Simulink Executable Model

Introduction	1
Generate specific blocks from the Simulink block library	
Execute Simulink model generated from SysML using a script	
Compare Simulink models with their SysML sources	
Summary	
About the Author	

Introduction

A crucial thread in enabling model-based systems engineering (MBSE) for next-generation, complex systems is to analyze system architecture by means of simulations and verify requirements continuously during design and development phases. The general steps in this iterative simulation-based design approach are as follows:

- (1) Define system architecture (design model)
- (2) Create a simulation model
- (3) Run the simulation model
- (4) Verify requirements using simulation results
- (5) Refine system architecture and repeat

However, this process often becomes challenging because: (1) system architecture is often defined by system engineers and designers who are not simulation experts and may not have the necessary skills to define and execute simulation models, (2) the communication between system architects and simulation experts is often document-based and hence laborious and error-prone.

Syndeia, our platform for MBE/MBSE, addresses these challenges by providing capabilities to (1) generate simulation models from design models using model transformations, (2) maintain a connection between elements in the design model and simulation model, (3) provide services to compare and synchronize design and simulation models bi-directionally as they evolve concurrently, and (4) reverse engineer design models from simulation models for organizations transitioning to MBSE. This

installment continues our series of technical notes where we exemplify the detailed use cases in this approach, with SysML for representing system design and Simulink for representing simulation models

In this series we highlight various capabilities of Syndeia for using Simulink with SysML to coordinate the simulation-based design process of a system. Over these three initial installments, we have begun to outline scenarios for using Syndeia 2.0 to generate, connect, and compare Simulink and SysML models. Part 1 showed how SysML block and activity structures can be used to generate Simulink model reference structures, including both atomic and multi-signal ports. Part 2 will describe how to generate Simulink models from SysML with specific blocks in the Simulink library that are then executed using a MATLAB script. In Part 3 the reverse will be demonstrated; using Simulink model and block structures to generate SysML block and activity structures. In all three use cases, we also use the connections created during the generation process to compare and identify changes made on either the SysML side or Simulink side.

In this second installment of the series, we will explore the use case where an expert in both SysML and Simulink can create models in SysML which can be directly translated to Simulink and immediately executed using a script. Meanwhile, persistent connections between SysML elements and Simulink models will have been created by Syndeia, as in the first installment, so that later on as changes are made to either side, we will compare across those connections to show what changes have been made and whether the ports and interfaces remain in sync.

Generate specific blocks from the Simulink block library

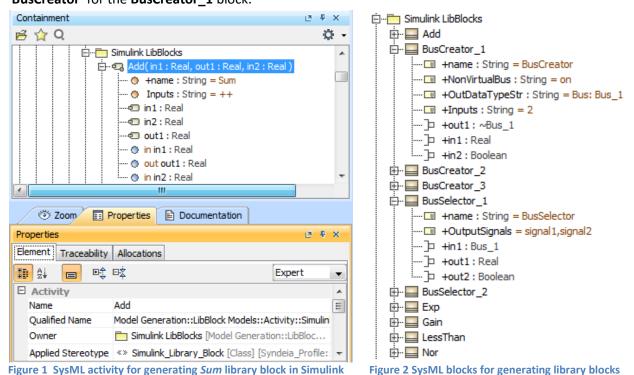
The initial goal of this scenario is to create source models in SysML, which directly translate to Simulink models and are then executed with a script. This section will detail how an expert in both SysML and Simulink can create the SysML source model and generate the corresponding Simulink model, with script-based execution of that model following in the next section.

Creating SysML elements that correspond to Simulink library blocks

First, libraries of SysML activities (example in Figure 1) or blocks (examples in Figure 2) can be created to represent various blocks from the Simulink library, with properties configured to set their various relevant parameters¹. We apply the **Simulink_Library_Block** stereotype from the **Syndeia** profile to each of these blocks or activities to indicate that these should *not* be created as model reference blocks (as shown in the first installment of this series), but that a specific block from the Simulink block library should be generated with any specified parameter settings. This stereotype can be seen in the **Applied Stereotype** property at the bottom of Figure 1. The correct number of input and output ports/nodes should be created in SysML corresponding to the number of inports and outports of the block in Simulink, so that the block can be properly connected to other blocks. All Simulink defaults will apply to these blocks, so activities or blocks with any parameters that need to be set differently should

¹ Block-specific parameters: http://www.mathworks.com/help/simulink/slref/block-specific-parameters.html
Parameters common to all blocks: http://www.mathworks.com/help/simulink/slref/common-block-parameters.html

have properties of the activity, or value properties of the block, of type **String**, with the default value of the SysML property equal to the value needed to programmatically set that parameter, i.e. for the **Add** activity below, the parameter **'Inputs'** was created with default value **'++'** to indicate that there are two inputs that should be added together. If parameters are set that affect the number of inports and/or outports, we must make sure that this matches the number of input and output ports/nodes. Since each instance of a Simulink block can be customized and changed like this, we may have multiple activities/blocks that correspond to the same basic Simulink block. Because of this, the name of the activity/block will *not* be used for the Simulink model. Instead a property called **"name"** of type **String** should be added for every element with the **Simulink_Library_Block** stereotype applied, and the default value of that property should be *exactly* the name of the Simulink library block type (as shown in parentheses in the list of block-specific parameters¹), i.e. **name = 'Sum'** for the **Add** activity or **name = 'BusCreator'** for the **BusCreator 1** block.



Using Simulink library blocks specific to signal bus models

The **BusCreator** and **BusSelector** blocks pictured in Figure 2 above are a special case of library block, used only in the case where buses are being used (as in scenario 2 of the first installment). The **BusSelector** block extracts signals *from* a bus, and the **BusCreator** block forms multiple signals *into* a bus, often for the purpose of using individual signals with other blocks that don't take buses as inputs, such as the activity model shown below in Figure 3, in which the first signal is selected from **Bus_1**, passed through a **Sin** block, and then recombined into **Bus_1** again. Different blocks must be created to handle different buses, as the block parameters will indicate the signals and/or bus to be created or selected from. These parameters *must* match with the bus types being used. For the **BusSelector_1** block in Figure 2, the **'OutputSignals'** parameter is set to **'signal1, signal2'**, which matches the signals in

Bus_1, the bus definition element that types **in1** port. For **the BusCreator_1** block, multiple parameters are set that define the bus properties – **'Inputs' = '2'** gives the number of signals being used to create the bus, **'Bus: Bus_1'** indicates that **Bus_1** is the name of the bus to be created, and the **'NonVirtualBus'** setting indicates how Simulink will see and use the resulting bus in simulations. Note that the input and output ports of these blocks have the correct types so that the IBD created from them can be correct and consistent, but as far as Simulink is concerned, the *parameters* are what is used to define the block.

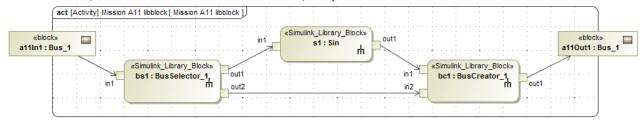


Figure 3 Activity model using the Simulink Library Block stereotype for bus-related blocks and a trigonometry block

Generating the executable Simulink model with native library blocks

As with the skeletal model in the first installment, the top-level activity/block is dragged in the Syndeia dashboard from SysML Model to a folder in a local file system repository to generate Simulink models (SysML activity structure \rightarrow Simulink shown in Figure 4, SysML block structure \rightarrow Simulink shown in Figure 5). Model reference blocks are shown with white boxes as before (i.e. ma11: Mission_A11_libblock), but this time we can see that the Simulink library blocks described above have been generated and displayed as black boxes to signify that we can't expand the structure any further down. The reason that the s1: Trigonometry block in Simulink corresponds to the s1: Sin call behavior action in SysML is that the name property of the Sin activity was set to 'Trigonometry' and then another property, Operator = 'sin', set the trigonometric relationship to be used in Simulink.

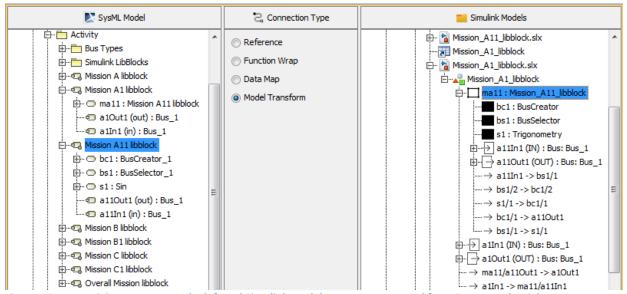


Figure 4 SysML activity structure on the left and Simulink model structure generated from SysML on the right

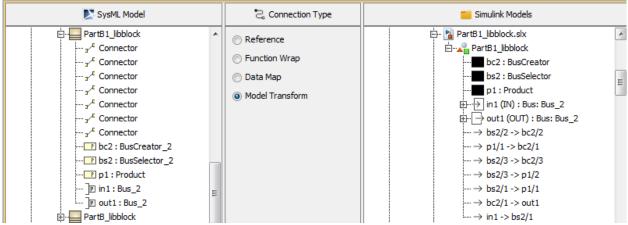


Figure 5 SysML internal block structure on the left and Simulink model structure generated from SysML on the right

As shown in the first installment, we may open the newly-generated Simulink models from Syndeia to view and rearrange them in the native MATLAB environment as shown in the figures below.

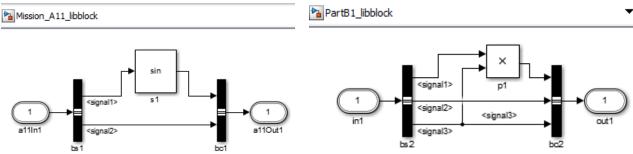


Figure 6 Mission_A11_libblock.slx (file from Figure 4)

Figure 7 PartB1_libblock.slx (file from Figure 5)

To see the same parameters that were set using properties in SysML, simply double-click that block, like the **s1** block above, whose **Function** parameter is shown in Figure 8 set to **'sin'**, and where the drop-down menu here gives the other types of trigonometric functions that could be represented by the same block just by changing this parameter.

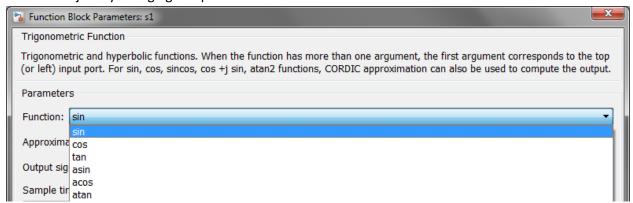
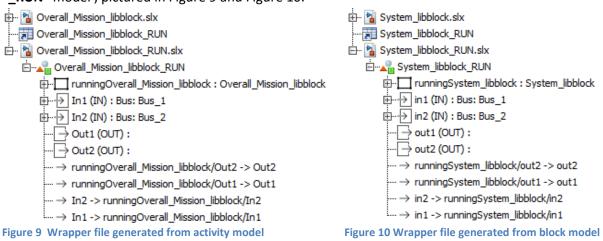


Figure 8 Setting trigonometry block parameter "Function" using the Simulink user interface

Execute Simulink model generated from SysML using a script

Next, we show how to use a MATLAB script to execute the models generated in the section above. When Syndeia generates an entire model structure, it uses inports and outports at each level, so that they can be used modularly, where a model at any given level may be used as a model reference block in a higher level model, or run as a standalone model. However, inports and outports have some limitations in MATLAB as far as how some signals may be passed into and out of the top-level model, so Syndeia has also been designed to generate a wrapper model with "_RUN" appended to the top-level model's name, and with FromWorkspace and ToWorkspace blocks connected to the original top-level model's inports and outports, respectively, as this model is used as a model reference block in the "RUN" model, pictured in Figure 9 and Figure 10.



Seen in Simulink, the wrapper models look like this:

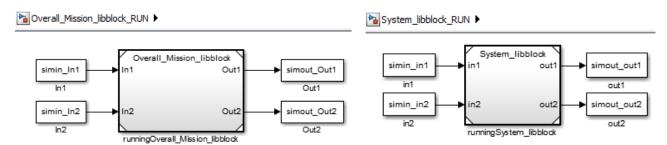


Figure 11 Overall_Mission_libblock_RUN.slx (file from Figure 9)

Figure 12 System libblock RUN.slx (file from Figure 10)

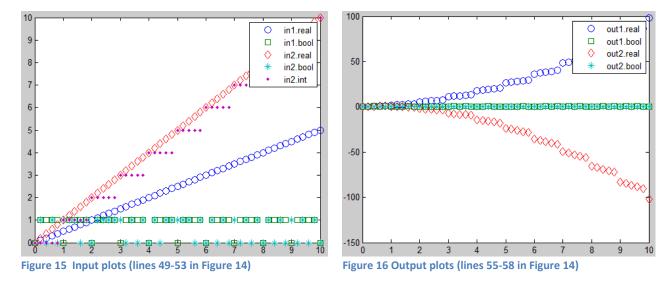
Using this wrapper model for inputs and outputs, we can write a script (i.e. **Run.m**) to set up inputs, run this set of models, and generate plots of inputs and outputs. First, we set the variables for the inputs and load them into the workspace, which is shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13 Excerpt from Run.m where input signals are set up and loaded into the MATLAB workspace

Next in the script, we set the solver and maximum step size to be used for each model that was used as a model reference block, including the top-level model shown at line 30 in Figure 14. In order to set parameters, each model must be loaded first (line 29). We also set continuous sample times for inputs to the top-level model (lines 34 and 35) and set any other parameters that need to be set; in this case we change the settings of our *less-than* block so that the two inputs can be different data types, and we also set it to have a continuous sample time (line 38). Then we load the **.mat** file that contains bus definitions (line 40) and run a simulation of the model (line 41) using the inputs that have previously been loaded into the workspace. From the collective output, we extract the various individual outputs (lines 44-46) and plot the inputs and outputs separately (lines 49-58).

```
29 -
       load system('System libblock')
30 -
       set_param('System_libblock','Solver','VariableStepDiscrete','MaxStep','.2')
31
32
       % explicitly set the sample times to continuous
33 -
       load system('System libblock RUN')
34 -
       set param('System libblock RUN/in1', 'SampleTime', '0')
35 -
       set param('System libblock RUN/in2', 'SampleTime', '0')
36
37
       % set parameters for the less-than block with different input port types
       set_param('PartC1_libblock/lt1','InputSameDT','off','SampleTime','[0 0]')
38 -
39
40 -
       load System libblock.mat
41 -
       [out] = sim('System_libblock_RUN','Solver','VariableStepDiscrete','MaxStep','.2');
42
       % run the system, returning all outputs in [out] object and setting solver parameters to avoid warnings
43
44 -
       tout = out.get('tout');
45 -
       simout out1 = out.get('simout out1');
46 -
       simout out2 = out.get('simout out2');
47
       % extract the outputs for plotting
48
49 -
50 -
       plot(simin in1.signal1.Time, simin in1.signal1.Data, 'o', simin in1.signal2.Time, simin in1.signal2.Data, 's',...
51
           simin in2.signal1.Time, simin in2.signal1.Data, 'd', simin in2.signal2.Time, simin in2.signal2.Data, '*',...
           simin_in2.signal3.Time,simin_in2.signal3.Data,'.','MarkerSize',8);
53 -
       legend('in1.real','in1.bool','in2.real','in2.bool','in2.int');
54
55 -
56 -
       plot(tout, simout out1.signal1.Data, 'o', tout, simout out1.signal2.Data, 's',...
           tout, simout out2.signal1.Data, 'd', tout, simout out2.signal2.Data, '*', 'MarkerSize', 8);
57
58 -
       legend('out1.real','out1.bool','out2.real','out2.bool');
```

Figure 14 Excerpt from Run.m setting model and block parameters, running the simulation, and creating relevant plots



The plots in Figure 15 and Figure 16 show first the inputs generated in the script pictured above and next the outputs generated by running these inputs through the Simulink model.

Compare Simulink models with their SysML sources

Finally, as we did in the first installment, we will utilize the persisted connections to compare the Simulink models and SysML blocks/activities. First, we will compare some connections before changing anything to show what happens when the models are in sync. The Comparison Result shown in Figure 17 verifies in this case that all elements are in sync as they were just created. The different numbers, names, and types of each set of actions, parameter nodes, and object flows (for activities) or properties, flow ports, and connectors (for blocks) are shown below the main connection heading, and the comment column gives further details on the status of each SysML and/or Simulink element.

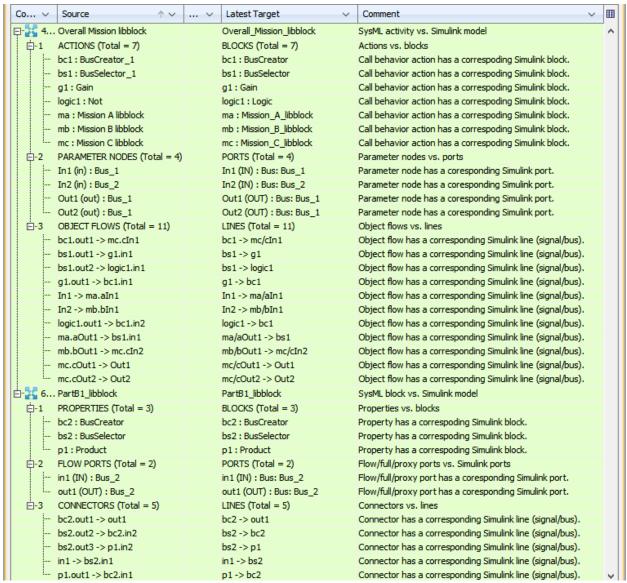


Figure 17 Compare SysML and Simulink after generating executable Simulink models from SysML activity & block structures

Next we will make changes on either side and use the Syndeia compare capabilities to show the differences across each connection. Syndeia is able to catch changes made on one side or the other, or changes made to both sides simultaneously, including:

SysML side changes

- Addition/removal of part properties in a block OR call behavior actions in an activity
- Changing name/type of part properties in a block OR call behavior actions in an activity
- o Changing name of block used as part property OR activity used as call behavior action
- o Addition/removal of flow ports in a block OR activity parameter nodes in an activity
- o Changing name/type of ports in a block OR activity parameter nodes in an activity
- o Addition/removal of connectors in a block OR object flows in an activity
- o Rewiring of connectors in a block OR object flows in an activity

• Syndeia side changes

- Addition/removal of model reference blocks
- Changing name/type of model reference blocks
- Addition/removal of inports and outports
- Changing name/type of inports and outports
- o Changing elements of bus objects typing inports and outports
- Addition/removal of lines (block connections)
- Rewiring of lines

In this note, we will show only a representative subset of these changes on both the SysML and Simulink side to simulate concurrent modeling efforts. For **Overall Mission libblock** we add a new activity **mb2**: **Mission B libblock** to the SysML activity structure (Figure 18), and concurrently delete a library block **logic1** in Simulink (Figure 19). We also rewire the object flows in SysML to the appropriate pins on the actions, and connect the lines/connectors in Simulink to close the gap. For **PartB1_libblock** we delete the **p1** part property and all connectors between **bs2** and **bc2** in SysML (Figure 20), while concurrently in Simulink we add a new Simulink library block **logic2** and rewire the lines to connect it between the second ports of **bs1** and **bc2** (Figure 21).

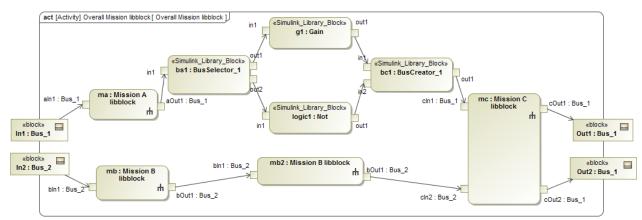


Figure 18 Added new call behavior action mb2: Misison B libblock & rewired object flows between pins on mb→mb2→mc

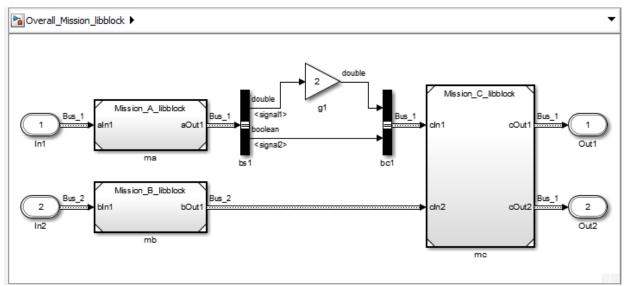


Figure 19 Deleted Simulink library block logic1 (NOT) and rewired boolean line <signal2> directly between bs1 → bc1

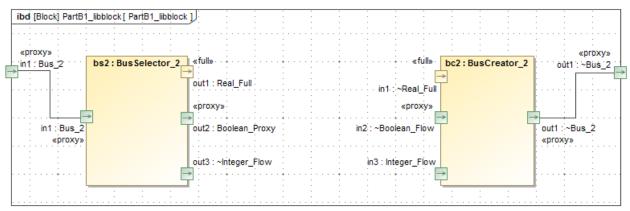


Figure 20 Deleted part property p1 and all connectors between bs2 → bc2

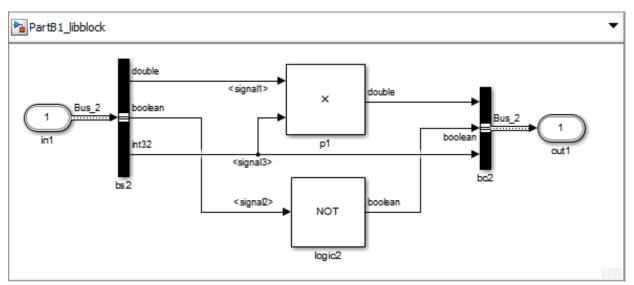


Figure 21 Added new Simulink library block logic2 (NOT) and rewired line for boolean line <signal2> from bs2 → logic2 → bc2

Then, we compare again (results shown in Figure 22). We can see that new queries have been made to both the SysML and Simulink models as changes were detected, and we can see exactly where the two models are out of sync, and which side may need to be updated, if any. Again, these are only a representative sample of the many types of changes which can be made to either side and caught by Syndeia compare.

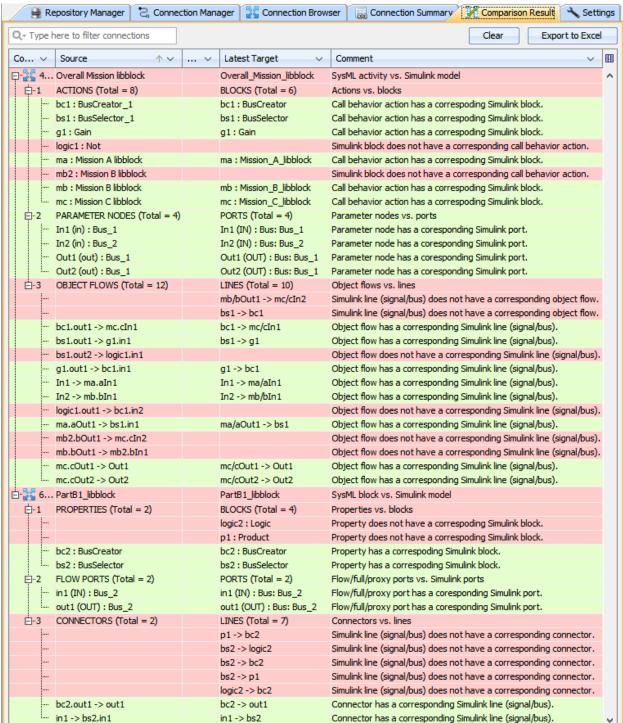


Figure 22 Compare SysML and Simulink after making changes shown in Figures 18-21

Summary

The intent of this second note in our series has been to illustrate the possibilities for using a SysML model to generate an executable Simulink model with native Simulink library blocks using Syndeia, so that the resulting model is ready to be executed in the MATLAB/Simulink environment using an appropriate script. As in the previous installment, we showed that Syndeia also preserves and version manages connections between Simulink models and SysML blocks or activities, which can then be used to compare and catch changes that have been made to either side.

To explore the use case where SysML block and activity structures are used to generate a skeletal structure of Simulink models either as an internal block structure with part properties, or an activity structure with call behavior actions, see the previous Part 1. The following Part 3 will continue exploring the Syndeia Simulink interface for the reverse case of generating SysML activity and block structures from a Simulink model reference structure. Further use cases are in the works for Syndeia 3.0, so stay tuned for Part 4 and beyond!

If you are interested in trying Syndeia, follow the instructions here to get a free 30-day evaluation license and download instructions: http://intercax.com/products/syndeia/download/

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