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B. R. Wienke · T. R. O'Leary

# Understanding Modern Dive Computers and Operation

Protocols, Models,  
Tests, Data, Risk  
and Applications



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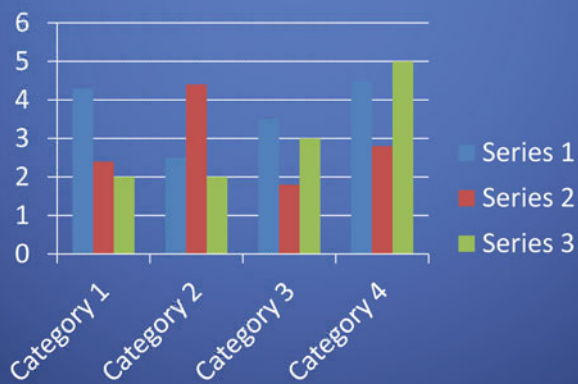
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# UNDERSTANDING MODERN DIVE COMPUTERS AND OPERATION

## Protocols, Models, Tests, Data, Risk and Applications

by B.R. Wienke and T.R. O'Leary



# Cover Abstract

This short brief details dive computers, operation, protocols, models, data, tests, risk, and coupled applications. Basic diving principles are detailed with practical computer implementations. Topics are related to diving protocols and operational procedures. Tests and correlations of computer models with data are underscored. The exposition also links phase mechanics to decompression theory with equations used in computer syntheses. Happily today, we are looking at both dissolved gases and bubbles in our staging regimens and not just dissolved gas protocols. Onward through the fog. As research expands, dive computers are quick to incorporate new diving technology and science. References are both extensive and pertinent to topical developments and history. Applications focus upon and mimic dive computer operations within model implementations for added understanding. Intended audience are the computer scientist, doctor, researcher, engineer, physical and life sciences professional, chamber technician, explorer, commercial diver, diving instructor, and technical and recreational divers with a need for a concise yet thorough treatise on dive computers and applications.

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# Preface

This brief focuses on dive computers, operation, protocols, models, data, tests, risk, and associated applications in working detail. Basic diving principles are framed as incorporated and implemented in dive computers. Topics are keyed to diving protocols and operational procedures. Tests and correlations of models with data are underscored. The exposition also links phase mechanics to decompression theory with equations used in computer synthesis. References are both extensive and pertinent to topical development and history. Applications focus upon and mimic dive computer operations and model implementations for added understanding. A recap with questions and answers posed to the Authors completes the brief. The intended audience are the computer scientist, doctor, researcher, engineer, physical and life sciences professional, chamber technician, explorer, commercial diver, diving instructor, and technical and recreational divers with a need for a concise yet thorough treatise on dive computers and applications.

Theory and dive computer application are, at times, more an art form than exact science. Some believe deterministic modeling is only fortuitous. Technological advance, elucidation of competing mechanisms, and resolution of model issues over the past 100 years have not been rapid. Model implementations tend to be ad hoc, tied to data fits and difficult to quantify on just first principles. Almost any description of decompression processes in tissue and blood can be disputed and possibly turned around on itself. The fact that decompression sickness occurs in metabolic and perfused matter makes it difficult to design and analyze experiments outside living matter. Yet, for application to safe diving, we need models, tests, data, and correlations to build tables and dive computers. And, regardless of biological complexity, certain coarse grain biophysics principles, some neglected in the past, are making a substantial change in diver-staging regimens, decompression theory, and coupled data analysis. Happily today, we are looking at both dissolved gases and bubbles in staging regimens and not just dissolved gas approaches of Haldane. As research expands, dive computers will be quick to reflect new diving technology and science. And that means enhanced safety.

Happy and safe diving always.

# Acknowledgments

Thanks to our friends and colleagues at LANL, NAUI, C&C Dive Team Operations, DAN, Commercial Diving Industry, recreational and technical training agencies, computer manufacturers worldwide, and many collaborators at universities, national laboratories, DOE, DOD, USAF, USCG, and USN. Special thanks to my beautiful and talented wife, Luzanne Coburn, for artwork, photography, and finishing.

# Author Sketches

## **Bruce Wienke**

Bruce Wienke is a program manager in the Weapons Technology/Simulation Office at LANL. He received a BS in physics and mathematics (Northern Michigan), MS in nuclear physics (Marquette) and a PhD in particle physics (Northwestern). He has authored 250+ articles in peer-reviewed journals, media outlets, trade magazines, and workshop proceedings and has published 12 books on diving science, biophysics, and decompression theory. He heads up the C& C Dive Team vested with worldwide underwater search, assessment, and disablement of nuclear, chemical, and biological WMDs. He is a fellow of the APS, technical committee member of the ANS, and member of the UHMS and serves as a consultant to the EPA, DHS, ADA, US military, and dive industry. Bruce is an editor/reviewer for CBM, PR, TTSP, NSE, and JQSRT, and CEO of Southwest Enterprises Consulting. He is the developer of the Reduced Gradient Bubble Model (RGBM) implemented in decompression meters, tables, and dive software worldwide. Bruce has dived all over the world on OC and RB systems in military, scientific, exploration, testing, and training activities. He is a NAUI Tec/Rec instructor trainer and course director. Interests include USSA masters ski racing, USTA seniors tennis, golf, and windsurfing. Bruce is a certified ski instructor (PSIA) and racing coach (USSCA). He has won masters national titles in SL, GS, SG, and DH and quarterbacked the Northern Michigan Wildcats to a NCAA II Title in the Hickory Bowl.

## **Tim O'Leary**

Tim O'Leary heads up NAUI Technical Diving Operations having developed and co-authored training manuals, support material, tech dive tables, monographs and related media along with tech course standards. He is a practicing commercial diver and CEO of American Diving & Marine Salvage on the Texas Gulf Coast. Tim received a BS in zoology (Texas A&M) and a DMT and CHT from Jo Ellen Smith Medical Center at the Baromedical Research Institute. He was a commercial diving and hyperbaric chamber instructor at the Ocean Corporation. Tim is a member of the UHMS, SNAME, and NADMT. He is an admiral in the Texas Navy, a USCG 100 Ton Vessel Master, and a consultant to Texas Parks & Wildlife, Canadian

Corporation, Rimkus Group, and Offshore Oil Industry. His diving experience is global on OC and RB systems in commercial, exploration, training, and testing activities. He is a NAUI Tec/Rec instructor trainer, course director, and workshop director. Other interests include skiing, deep wreck diving, and dive travel. Tim and NAUI Dive Team are credited with the discovery and exploration of the USS Perry in approximately 250 *fsw* off Anguar and diving it for a week on RBs.

# Units and Fundamental Constants

Note so-called diving units are employed herein, that is, standard SI units for depth and pressure are not used. Instead, pressures and depths are both measured in feet-of-seawater (*fsw*) or meters-of-seawater (*msw*). The conversion is standard,

$$10 \text{ msw} = 33.28 \text{ fsw} = 1 \text{ atm}$$

Specific densities,  $\eta$  (dimensionless) in pressure relationships, are normalized to sea water density with freshwater-specific density equal to 0.975.

Breathing mixtures, such as nitrox (nitrogen and oxygen), heliox (helium and oxygen), and trimix (helium, nitrogen and oxygen), carry standardized notation. If the fraction of oxygen is greater than 21%, the mixture is termed enriched. Enriched nitrox mixtures are denoted EANx; enriched heliox mixtures are denoted EAHx. For other mixtures of nitrox and heliox, the convention is to name them with inert gas percentage first and then oxygen percentage, such as 85/15 nitrox or 85/15 heliox. For trimix, notation is shortened to list the oxygen percentage first and then only the helium percentage, such as 15/45 trimix, meaning 15% oxygen, 45% helium, and 40% nitrogen. Or TMX 15/45 is used. Air is sometimes noted EAN21 or 79/21 nitrox even though not enriched.

## Unit Conversion Table

### Time

$$1 \text{ sec} = 10^3 \text{ msec} = 10^6 \text{ } \mu\text{sec} = 10^9 \text{ nsec}$$
$$1 \text{ megahertz} = 10^6 \text{ hertz} = 10^6 \text{ sec}^{-1}$$

### Length

$$1 \text{ m} = 3.28 \text{ ft} = 1.09 \text{ yd} = 39.37 \text{ in}$$
$$1 \text{ } \mu\text{m} = 10^4 \text{ angstrom} = 10^3 \text{ nm} = 10^{-6} \text{ m}$$
$$1 \text{ km} = 0.62 \text{ mile}$$
$$1 \text{ fathom} = 6 \text{ ft}$$
$$1 \text{ nautical mile} = 6,080 \text{ ft} = 1.15 \text{ mile} = 1.85 \text{ km}$$
$$1 \text{ light year} = 9.46 \times 10^{12} \text{ km} = 5.88 \times 10^{12} \text{ mile}$$

$$1 \text{ parsec} = 3.086 \times 10^{16} \text{ m} = 3.262 \text{ light year}$$

#### Speed

$$1 \text{ km/hr} = 27.77 \text{ cm/sec}$$

$$1 \text{ mile/hr} = 5280 \text{ ft/sec}$$

$$1 \text{ knot} = 1.15 \text{ mi/hr} = 51.48 \text{ cm/sec}$$

#### Volume

$$1 \text{ cm}^3 = 0.06 \text{ in}^3$$

$$1 \text{ m}^3 = 35.32 \text{ ft}^3 = 1.31 \text{ yd}^3$$

$$1 \text{ l} = 10^3 \text{ cm}^3 = .04 \text{ ft}^3 = 1.05 \text{ qt}$$

#### Mass, Density, and Viscosity

$$1 \text{ kg} = 32.27 \text{ oz} = 2.20 \text{ lb}$$

$$1 \text{ g/cm}^3 = 0.57 \text{ oz/in}^3$$

$$1 \text{ kg/m}^3 = 0.06 \text{ lb/ft}^3$$

$$1 \text{ dyne sec/cm}^2 = 1 \text{ poise} = 0.10 \text{ pascal sec} = 0.01 \text{ poiseuille}$$

#### Force and Pressure

$$1 \text{ newton} = 10^5 \text{ dyne} = 0.22 \text{ lb}$$

$$1 \text{ g/cm}^2 = 0.23 \text{ oz/in}^2$$

$$1 \text{ kg/m}^2 = 0.20 \text{ lb/ft}^2$$

$$1 \text{ atm} = 32.56 \text{ fsw} = 10 \text{ msw} = 1.03 \text{ kg/cm}^2 = 14.69 \text{ lbs/in}^2$$

#### Energy and Power

$$1 \text{ cal} = 4.19 \text{ joule} = 3.96 \times 10^{-3} \text{ btu} = 3.09 \text{ ft lb}$$

$$1 \text{ joule} = 10^7 \text{ ergs} = 0.74 \text{ ft lb}$$

$$1 \text{ keV} = 10^3 \text{ eV} = 1.60 \times 10^{-16} \text{ joule}$$

$$1 \text{ amu} = 931.1 \text{ MeV}$$

$$1 \text{ watt} = 3.41 \text{ btu/hr} = 1.34 \times 10^{-3} \text{ hp}$$

#### Electricity and Magnetism

$$1 \text{ coul} = 2.99 \times 10^9 \text{ esu}$$

$$1 \text{ amp} = 1 \text{ coul/sec} = 1 \text{ volt/ohm}$$

$$1 \text{ volt} = 1 \text{ newton coul m} = 1 \text{ joule/coul}$$

$$1 \text{ gauss} = 10^{-4} \text{ weber/m}^2 = 10^{-4} \text{ newton/amp m}$$

$$1 \text{ f} = 1 \text{ coul/volt}$$

Fundamental constants are listed next.

#### Fundamental Constants

$$g_0 = 9.80 \text{ m/sec}^2 \text{ (Sea Level Acceleration Of Gravity)}$$

$$G_0 = 6.67 \times 10^{-11} \text{ newton m}^2/\text{kg}^2 \text{ (Gravitational Constant)}$$

$$M_0 = 5.98 \times 10^{24} \text{ kg (Mass of the Earth)}$$

$$\Gamma_0 = 1.98 \text{ cal/min cm}^2 \text{ (Solar Constant)}$$

$$c = 2.998 \times 10^8 \text{ m/sec (Speed of Light)}$$

$$h = 6.625 \times 10^{-34} \text{ joule sec (Planck Constant)}$$

$$R = 8.317 \text{ joule/gmole } ^\circ\text{K (Universal Gas Constant)}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
k &= 1.38 \times 10^{-23} \text{ joule/gmole } ^\circ K \text{ (Boltzmann Constant)} \\
N_0 &= 6.025 \times 10^{23} \text{ atoms/gmole (Avogadro Number)} \\
m_0 &= 9.108 \times 10^{-31} \text{ kg (Electron Mass)} \\
e_0 &= 1.609 \times 10^{-19} \text{ coulomb (Electron Charge)} \\
r_0 &= 0.528 \text{ angstrom (First Bohr Orbit)} \\
\epsilon_0 &= (4\pi)^{-1} \times 1.11 \times 10^{-10} \text{ f/m (Vacuum Permittivity)} \\
\mu_0 &= 4\pi \times 10^{-7} \text{ h/m (Vacuum Permeability)} \\
\kappa_0 &= (4\pi\epsilon_0)^{-1} = 8.91 \times 10^9 \text{ m/f (Coulomb Constant)} \\
\alpha_0 &= \mu_0/4\pi = 1 \times 10^{-7} \text{ h/m (Ampere Constant)} \\
\sigma_0 &= 5.67 \times 10^{-8} \text{ watt/m}^2 \text{ K}^4 \text{ (Stefan - Boltzmann Constant)}
\end{aligned}$$

Metrology is the science of measurement and broadly construed encompasses the bulk of experimental science. In the more restricted sense, metrology refers to maintenance and dissemination of a consistent set of units, support for enforcement of equity in trade by weights, and measure laws and process control for manufacturing.

A measurement is a series of manipulations of physical objects or systems according to experimental protocols producing a number. The objects or systems involved are test objects, measuring devices, or computational operations. The objects and devices exist in and are influenced by some environment. The number relates to the some unique feature of the object, such as the magnitude, or the intensity, or the weight or time duration. The number is acquired to form the basis of decisions effecting some human feature or goal depending on the test object.

In order to solidify metrics for useful decision, metrology requires that any number obtained is functionally identical whenever and wherever the measurement process is performed. Such a universally reproducible measurement is called a *proper measurement* and leads to describing *proper quantities*. The equivalences above relate *proper quantities* to the fundamental constants following and permit closure of physical laws. Unit conversion follows via the chain rule, where the unit identities in the table define equivalence ratios that work like simple arithmetic fractions. Units cancel just like numbers. For instance, from the first table,

$$10 \text{ l} = \frac{10^3 \text{ cm}^3}{1 \text{ l}} \times 10 \text{ l} = 10^4 \text{ cm}^3$$