

Noise and dust emission from mining activities: a software for measurement management and analysis of suitable reduction techniques

Original

Noise and dust emission from mining activities: a software for measurement management and analysis of suitable reduction techniques / Cigna, Caterina; Lovera, E; Patrucco, Mario. - (2005), pp. 1652-1665. (Intervento presentato al convegno MPES 2005 - Int. Cong. Mine Planning and Equipment Selection tenutosi a Banff (Alberta)(CANADA) nel 31 ottobre - 1 novembre).

Availability:

This version is available at: 11583/1416604 since:

Publisher:

Published

DOI:

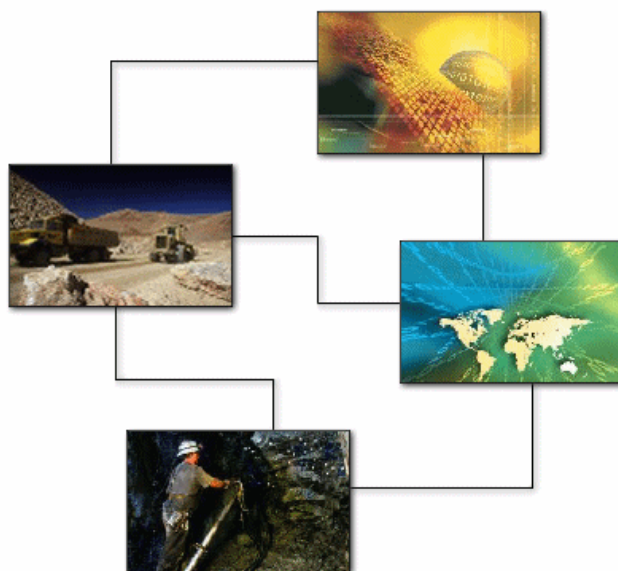
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(Article begins on next page)

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FOURTEENTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON
MINE PLANNING AND EQUIPMENT SELECTION (MPES 2005) AND THE
FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COMPUTER APPLICATIONS IN
THE MINERALS INDUSTRIES (CAMI 2005)



MINE PLANNING AND EQUIPMENT SELECTION AND COMPUTER APPLICATIONS IN THE MINERALS INDUSTRIES

HELD JOINTLY IN
BANFF, ALBERTA, CANADA
OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 3, 2005

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MINE PLANNING AND EQUIPMENT SELECTION AND COMPUTER APPLICATIONS IN THE MINERALS INDUSTRIES

Edited by

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International Journal of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Environment*

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CD ROM published by The Reading Matrix Inc, Irvine, CA USA
ISSN 1712-3208



IJSM

Foreword



Raj K. Singhal

The basic aim of this conference is to contribute to the development of high-tech methods and technologies for the various segments of the mining and processing industries. A wide range of high quality papers from North and South America, Europe, Australia, Africa and Asia have been attracted. Major topics to be covered at MPES 2005 and CAMI 2005 are: Coal Mining Technologies: Processing Equipment and Quality Control; Open Pit Mine Planning, Design, and Productivity Gains; Underground Mine Planning and Design; Drilling, Blasting and Excavation Engineering; Mining Equipment Selection, Automation and Information Technology; Mine Maintenance and Production Management; e-Maintenance, e-Diagnostics, and Prognostics; Road Headers, Tunneling and Other Excavation Equipment; Case Histories From Coal Mining, Industrial Minerals and Metalliferous Mining; Cost Effective Methods of Mine Reclamation, Mine Closure and Waste Disposal; Rock Mechanics and Geotechnical Applications; Advances in Mine Design, Mine Optimization and Reclamation Planning Technologies; Mine Equipment: Design, Selection, and Real-Time Health and Performance Monitoring; Mine and Machine Automation; GIS, GPS, Telecommunications, Artificial Intelligence, and Internet Application; Rock Mechanics and Geotechnical Applications: Underground and Surface Mine Stability, Groundwater, Tailings and Waste Disposal; Computer Simulation; Real-Time Mine Management Systems; and Computer Applications in Mining Education.

MPES 2005 and CAMI 2005 are supported by a number of organizations. To be noted are: Department of Mining, Metallurgical and Materials Engineering, Université Laval; Department of Mining and Mineral Process Engineering, University of British Columbia; Department of Mining, Metals and Materials, McGill University; Department of Energy and Geo-Environmental Engineering, The Pennsylvania State University; Laurentian University; Western Australian School of Mines, Curtin University of Technology, Australia; Department of Earth Resources and Mining Engineering, Kyushu University, Japan; Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Alberta; University of Alaska, Fairbanks; Henry Krumb School of Mines, Columbia University; Department of Earth Sciences, Simon Fraser University; International Journal of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Environment; Faculty of Geoengineering, Mining and Geology, Wrocław University of Technology; Atilim University, Ankara, Turkey; Rock Engineering, Helsinki University of Technology, Finland; Department of Mining and Nuclear Engineering, University of Missouri-Rolla; The National Technical University of Athens, Greece (NTUA); Dipartimento di Geingegneria e Tecnologie Ambientali, Università degli Studi di Cagliari, Italy; National Mining University of Ukraine, Dnipropetrovsk; CENTEK-International Training and Development Centre, Lulea University, Sweden; Faculty of Mining and Geology, VSB - Technical University, Ostrava, Czech Republic; and Hokkaido University, Mineral Resources Engineering Department, Japan.

The organization and success of such a symposium is due mainly to the tireless efforts of many individuals, authors included. All members of the Organizing Committee and conference chairpersons have contributed greatly. The support of our plenary session and invited speakers and co-chairs is gratefully acknowledged. My greatest appreciation goes to my daughter Dr. Meena Singhal who has worked tirelessly to ensure that proceedings appear on time and who has single-handedly developed the technical program. In addition, particular recognition is accorded to our sponsors, without whose support this conference might not have taken place, Margaret-Anne Stroh for managing administrative functions for CAMI/MPES, Merlene Sparks from Elk Valley Coal Corporation who compiled this CD and Walid Sabbagh of The Reading Matrix Inc. for technical support on the MPES and CAMI website.

This conference is designed to provide a forum for the presentation, discussion and debate of state-of-the-art and emerging technologies in the field of mining and computer applications in the minerals industries. Authors from over 15 countries with backgrounds in computer sciences, mining engineering, research, technology and management representing government, industry and academia concerned with mining and mineral production have contributed to these proceedings. The contents of this volume of proceedings will be of interest to engineers, scientists, consultants and government personnel who are responsible for dealing with the development and application of innovative technologies to the minerals industries. Papers on this CD are available in PDF format and are saved under the authors' last names (Adobe Acrobat is also provided).

LIST OF ARTICLES ON CD PROCEEDINGS

SPECTRAL ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES APPLIED TO BLASTING VIBRATION
GULSEV UYAR ALDAŞ

PREPARATION AND BURNING OF WATER-FUEL (WATER IN OIL TYPE) EMULSION IN
BOILERS OF HEAT GENERATING INSTALLATIONS
A.M. BALABYSHKO, V.G. MERZLYAKOV AND R.Y. PODERNI

MAXIMIZE PRODUCTION EFFICIENCY THROUGH DOWNTIME AND PRODUCTION
REPORTING SOLUTION
MICHAEL BROWN AND WARREN RIGELSFORD

DYNAMIC MODELING OF ARCHING EFFECTS IN SILLMAT SUPPORT STRUCTURES
EULER DE SOUZA & ALDRICH P.E. DIRIGE

MODERN TRENDS IN DRILL RIG NAVIGATION AND SYSTEM INTEGRATION CASES STUDIES
FROM BOLIDEN AND KEMI UNDERGROUND MINES
ROLF ELSRUD

SOLUTION OF DANGEROUS GASES LEAKAGE FROM THE UNDERGROUND WITH THE HELP
OF MODELING
JAN GOTTFRIED, HIDEKI SHIMADA, KIKUO MATSUI AND VLADIMÍR STRAKOŠ

DIAGNOSTIC MEASUREMENTS ON THE GREAT MACHINES CONDITIONS OF LIGNITE
SURFACE MINES
FRANTISEK HELEBRANT, JOSEF JURMAN, JIŘÍ FRIES

DEM SIMULATION OF COLLAPSE IN CUTTING OF SLOPES
YOUHEI KAWAMURA, KEN ITO, TATSUO SAKAKIBARA, MASAYUKI UJIHIRA, AND
NOBUHARU AOSHIMA

ACHIEVEMENTS IN INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION AND THEIR POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR
UNDERGROUND MINING
V. KONYUKH

MODELLING COUPLED SEDIMENTATION AND CONSOLIDATION WITH SECO SOFTWARE
SRBOLJUB MASALA

APPLICATION OF A MODEL BASED METHOD OF COMPUTER TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY
FLOTATION CONTROL
V. MOROZOV, V. AVDOKHIN, V. STOLYAROV, AND V. MITIN

CAN DAVID COMPETE WITH GOLIATH? – A QUESTION OF SHEARER LOADER CUTTING
METHODS
KARL NIENHAUS, ULRICH LANGE AND ARNE KRISTOFFER BAYER

LARGER SHOVELS – THE REALITY
LEE B. PATERSON AND ANDREW J. WILLIAMS

SELECTED ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS FOR DYNAMIC LOAD SUPPRESSION FOR BWE
WORKING ORGAN WHILE DIGGING
R.Y. PODERNI AND A. I. SHENDEROV

ON THE APPLICATION OF HEAT INTEGRATION IN OIL SANDS PROCESSING
AHMED I. A. SALAMA

EVALUATION OF THE TAILING DAM STABILITY
SOUZA JR., G. R.; SOARES L; FUJIMURA F. & HENNIES, W.T.

INTEGRATING REAL-TIME MINE HAUL ROAD MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT WITH MINE-
WIDE ASSET LOCATION AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS
R.J. THOMPSON, A.T. VISSER AND P.S. HEYNS

THE STABILITY OF FOOTWALL AND DUMPWALL IN OPEN CUT COAL MINES
TAKESHI UEDA, KIKUO MATSUI AND HIDEKI SHIMADA

STUDY ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE CREDIBILITY OF ROCKFALL SIMULATION -DIRECT
MEASUREMENT OF ACCELERATION APPLIED TO ROCKFALLS-
SATOSHI YAMACHIKA, YOUHEI KAWAMURA, MASUYUKI UJIHIRA AND NOBUHARU AOSHIMA

MODELLING OPEN PIT DYNAMICS USING MONTE CARLO SIMULATION
HOOMAN ASKARI-NASAB AND JOZEF SZYMANSKI

WASTE WATER TREATMENT IN QUARRIES OF TECHNICAL STONE
BEDEKOVIĆ G., SALOPEK B., AND SOBOTA I

THE USE OF QUARRY FINES FOR MORTAR: A PROPOSAL OF METHODOLOGICAL STUDIES
L.Z.D' AGOSTINO; L.SOARES; HENNIES, W.T. & FUJIMURA, F.

TRAINING FOR NEW UNDERGROUND ROCK BOLTERS USING VIRTUAL REALITY
V. DEZELIC, D.B. APEL, D.B. DENNEY, A.J. SCHNEIDER, M.G. HILGERS, R.L. GRAYSON

THE APPLICATION OF MULTI-DIMENSION SPATIAL-AND-TEMPORAL MODELS OF WEBGIS
FOR LAND RECLAMATION
IN MINING AREA
JIANZHONG FENG, ZHENQI HU, AND LINYAN BAI

EVALUATION OF STRESS-STRAINED STATE OF ROCK MASSIF WITH BOREHOLE MINING
TECHNOLOGY
A. M. GRIGORIEV, V. I. KOLESNIKOV, AND V. I. STRELCOV

SILVER GRANITE BLOCK MINING IN SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL
W.T. HENNIES, A. STELLIN JUNIOR, L. SOARES, F. FUJIMURA C.T. LAUAND, & G.R. MARTÍN
CORTÉS

STUDY OF IMPROVING THE ULTRASONIC MEASUREMENT SYSTEM TO DETECT
PENETRATION OF BOULDERS USING THE CEPSTRUM ANALYSIS
YOUHEI KAWAMURA, YU ITO, MAMORU TSURUSHIMA, NOBUHARU AOSHIMA, KOICHI
MIZUTANI, SENRO KURAOKA,
AND MASUYUKI UJIHIRA

GEOTECHNICAL PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY HARD ROCK TUNNEL BORING MACHINES
CHRISTOPHER LAUGHTON

OPERATING EXCELLENCE – THE KEY FOR IMPROVING CAPACITY IN CVRD MINES
IVAN M. MENEZES, RICARDO NORONHA, AND SÉRGIO V. MENEZES

GEOINFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES IN DESIGNING AND PLANNING AT OPEN CASTS
D.M. MUKANOV, B.ZH. BEKMURZAYEV

PLANNING OF SUSTAINABLE LAND REHABILITATION
CANDRA NUGRAHA, KIKUO MATSUI

PERFORMANCE MONITORING OF ELECTRIC SHOVELS DIGGING OIL SANDS
SIBABRATA PATNAYAK, DWAYNE D. TANNANT, IAN PARSONS AND VICTOR DEL VALLE

OPTIMIZATION OF BLOCKS CUTTING ON AT PART OF ORE FIELD
SARMANTAY M. RAKHIMBEKOV, SALTANAT Z.UISIMBAYEVA
KAZAKH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, KAZAKHSTAN

CONTROL OF SLAKING BEHAVIOR WHEN FLYASH CEMENT IS INJECTED INTO SLAKE-
PRONE ROCK
HIDEKI SHIMADA, KIKUO MATSUI, MASATOMO ICHINOSE, JAN GOTTFRIED, SHUICHI
FUJITA, IMAM A. SADISUN AND YASUHIRO YOSHIDA

AREA RECOVERY PROJECT OF DIMENSION STONE QUARRY CLOSURE
STELLIN JR., A.;HENNIES, W. T.;SOARES L.;FUJIMURA F.;STELLIN M. R. M.; & LAUAND V. H.

CYBER SECURITY IN MINING
DONOVAN TINDILL AND RICK KAUN

CONTROL OF WATER EROSION AND SEDIMENT IN OPEN CUT COAL MINES IN TROPICAL
AREAS
TAKESHI UEDA, CANDRA NUGRAHA, KIKUO MATSUI, HIDEKI SHIMADA, MASATOMO
ICHINOSE AND JAN GOTTFRIED

TWO SOFTWARE TO ASSIST MACHINE MAINTENANCE STUDIES
GREG YURIY AND NICK VAYENAS

DYNAMIC SIMULATION OF CABLE SHOVEL SPECIFIC ENERGY IN OIL SANDS EXCAVATION
K. AWUAH-OFFEI, S. FRIMPONG AND H. ASKARI-NASAB

SELECTION OF A MECHANICAL MINING SYSTEM FOR AN UNDERGROUND CHROMITE MINE
N. BILGIN, H. COPUR, C. BALCI, H. TUNCDEMIR, D. TUMAC, AND C. FERIDUNOGLU

BENEFITS OF HIGH ACCURACY GPS APPLICATIONS TO THE MINERALS INDUSTRY
P. DAILEY, A. SZWILSKI, AND R. BEGLEY

OPTIMIZATION OF SCHEMES AND PARAMETERS OF OPEN CAST'S FREIGHT TRAFFICS BY
MEANS OF GRAPHS AND IMITATIVE SIMULATION
U.A. DZHARLKAGANOV, D.G. BUKEIKHANOV, K.E. CHUPRIN

SCHEDULING OPEN PIT MINES WITH MICROSOFT® EXCEL.
RAYMOND G. T. GARNSEY

THE EFFECT OF CEMENT AND FINE PARTICLES ON YIELD STRESS OF PASTE BACKFILL
F. HASSANI , A. S. MOGHADDAM , AND S. M. RAZAVI

THE APPLICATION OF MULTI-DIMENSION SPATIAL-AND-TEMPORAL MODELS OF WEBGIS
FOR LAND RECLAMATION IN MINING AREA
JIANZHONG FENG, ZHENQI HU, AND LINYAN BAI

THE ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF MINE CLOSURE IN POLAND
J. KICKI, J.JAROSZ, A.DYCZKO, H. PASZCZA

INFLUENCE OF INTERMEDIATE PRINCIPAL STRESS ON ROCK MASS STABILITY
G. LI, S. VONGPAISAL, R. PAKALNIS AND T. BRADY
CLOSURE OF URANIUM MINES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC
BEDŘICH MICHÁLEK, ANTONÍN HÁJEK AND ARNOŠT GRMELA

A STUDY ON THE DETECTION OF MISFIRING CYLINDER OF THE DIESEL ENGINE IN
EXCAVATION MACHINERY USING IMPROVED ALM ANALYSIS
MAKOTO NAGAYAMA, YOUHEI KAWAMURA, MASUYUKI UJIHIRA, DAUREN F. AKHMETOV,
FUMITO ITO, NOBUHARU AOSHIMA

FUZZY RELATIONS AMONG MECHANICAL PROPERTIES OF ROCKS
C. A. OZTURK AND E. NASUF

ENERGY CHARACTERISTICS OF ROCKS UNDER DYNAMIC LOADING
VLADIMÍR PETROŠ AND PETR MICHALČÍK

THE USE OF SOLUBLE SILICATE IN WASTE TREATMENT, CEMENT AND CONSTRUCTION
MATERIALS /THE STATE OF THE ART
S.M. RAZAVI I F. HASSANI I, AND A. S. MOGHADDAM I

DEVELOPMENT OF A TIRE-REPLACEMENT HANDLER FOR LARGE SCALED DUMP TRUCKS
HIROSHI SHIMAUCHI AND MASUYUKI UJIHIRA

EVALUATION TECHNIQUES AND BLAST CONTROL
S. TANGCHAWAL

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GEOLOGICAL AND WORKING PARAMETERS IN HIGH
PRODUCTIVITY LONGWALLS IN UNDERGROUND COMPETITIVE COAL MINING OF VERY
THICK SEAMS
JAVIER TORAÑO, J.M. RIVAS, R.RODRIGUEZ, I.DIEGO, AND A.PELEGRY

ROCK PROPERTIES ASSESSING WHEN BOOM TUNNELLING MACHINES ARE TO BE USED
J. VASEK

TECHNOLOGICAL AND ECOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF COMPLEX USING OF MINERAL RAW
MATERIALS OF KAZAKHSTAN
ZHARMENOV A.A., MUZGINA V.S., TERLIK BAYEVA A.ZH.

DEMOLITION AND RUBBLE RECYCLING AS A NEW SOURCE OF BUILDING MATERIALS
BADINO V., BLENGINI G.A., ZAVAGLIA K.

AN APPLICATION OF REGRESSION MODEL FOR EVALUATION OF BLAST VIBRATION IN AN
OPENCAST COAL MINE - A CASE ANALYSIS
K.C. BRAHMA, B.K.PAL, AND C. DAS

THE ENGINEERING PERFORMANCE OF GLASS BASED BINDERS IN MINE BACKFILL
EULER DE SOUZA AND JAMIE F. ARCHIBALD

PLANNING OF WINNING OPERATIONS AT OPEN CASTS WITH DUE ACCOUNT
OF INDEXES OF ORE MINING AND PREPARATION
U.A. DZHARLKAGANOV AND D.G. BUKEIKHANOV

OPTIMUM ORIENTATION OF SIAHBISHE HYDRO-ELECTRIC PUMPING STORAGE POWER
CAVERN
A.GHAZVINIAN AND N.SHAFIEZADEH

CRAWLER SIMULATIONS - A CHALLENGE FOR THE MULTIBODY SIMULATION (MBS)
H. HAUT, M. DIETRICH AND K. NIENHAUS

USE OF SURFACE HEIGHT MEASUREMENTS FOR THE EVALUATION OF UNDERMINED
FIRM ROOF FAILURE
EVA JIRÁNKOVÁ, VLADIMÍR PETROŠ, KAREL KONESZ, PETR KUBICA

POSSIBILITIES FOR OPTIMIZATION OF RELIABILITY AND MAINTENANCE IN MINING
OPERATIONS BASED ON EXPERIENCE IN NUCLEAR INDUSTRY
DRAGAN KOMLJENOVIC, JACEK PARASZCZAK AND VLADISLAV KECOJEVIC

DEVELOPMENTS IN UNDERGROUND MINING
P. N. MARTENS, L. RATTMANN AND T. STRAETEN

COMPUTER APPLICATIONS IN MINING EDUCATION –CURRENT PRACTICES AT UBC
MARIO A. MORIN

SOCIAL LICENSE TO OPERATE MINES: ISSUES OF SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS AND PROCESS
JACQUELINE NELSEN AND MALCOLM SCOBLE

MINING BLOCK LIFE-TIME PREDICTION METHOD BY ROOF-TO-FLOOR CONVERGENCE
JYRI-RIVALDO PASTARUS

SYSTEM OF AUTOMATIC LOAD STABILIZATION OF MINING BELT-CONVEYORS
L. PEVZNER V. DMITRIEVA

ACCURACY OF LEAST-SQUARES MONTE CARLO IN VALUING MINERAL PROPERTIES
SABRY A. ABDEL SABOUR AND RICHARD POULIN

THE EFFECT OF BLASTED MUCK ON THE LOADER'S PRODUCTIVITY
S.P.SINGH AND R.NARENDRULA

CONTROLLING EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTION GOALS IN AN UNDERGROUND MINE
VICTOR O. TENORIO AND SUKUMAR BANDOPADHYAY

USE OF FEM, FUZZY LOGIC AND VIRTUAL REALITY IN THE UNDERGROUND ACTIVITIES.
APPLICATION TO THE LONGWALL MINING WORKS.
JAVIER TORAÑO, J.M. RIVAS, R.RODRIGUEZ, I.DIEGO, AND A.PELEGRY

COMPREHENSIVE MINE DATA INTEGRATION AND IMMERSIVE 3D DATA VISUALIZATION AT
GOLDCORP INC. RED LAKE MINE

WANG, J., HINTON, E., MICHAEL P., TWOMEY, T.

IMPROVEMENT OF DISK CUTTERS PERFORMANCE IN THE EXCAVATION OF SMALL
TUNNELS

A.BORTOLUSSI, R. CICCUCI, B. GROSSO, C. LODDO, S. PISTIS AND J. VAŠEK

ENERGY BALANCE OF THE AREA INFLUENCED BY BROWN COAL MINING IN THREE
PHASES

M. HAIS, M. PECHAROVÁ, I. SVOBODA

AN OEM SYSTEM APPROACH TO EXCAVATOR MONITORING

JACK RUPERT

TREATMENT OF WET NICKEL LATERITE ORE STOCKPILE EMBANKMENT FAILURE

IRWANDY ARIF, SLAMET PRABUDI, DAVID NOLAN, RIVADINO RIZA, HARRY ASMAR, KELLY
BINDLE, AGUS SUPERIADI

LANDSCAPE EVALUATION OF QUARRY USING VIRTUAL REALITY SIMULATION

TAKAHIKO HOKAZONO, NAOHIRO OTSUKA, YUTAKA SHIDA AND MITSUGU SAITO

WAYS OF INCREASING THE OUTPUT OF BUCKET CHAIN EXCAVATORS BY USING DIRECT
DRIVES

C. DREBENSTEDT AND S. PAESSLER

PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT IN THE DIAMOND INDUSTRY

S. WONG AND R. TONEGUZZI

INTEGRATED MINE ENGINEERING SOLUTION: IMPLEMENTATION OF CAMP AT RAGLAN,
FALCONBRIDGE LTD

BERNIE SMITH, BRUNO LEMELIN, THERY GINGRAS AND CLIFF DUSICK

DISTRIBUTED INTELLIGENCE AND INTEGRATED NETWORKING: COST EFFICIENT WAYS
TOWARDS MINE PROCESS OPTIMIZATION

CHRISTOPH MUELLER

OFF-ROAD TRUCK BODY OPTIMIZATION

M. D. KAIZER, N. BARBIERI, AND R. BARBIERI

THE CURRENT SITUATION OF IMPACT OF COAL MINE DEVELOPING ON ENVIRONMENT IN
CHINA AND GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL

LU YANG

THE APPLICATION OF MULTI-DIMENSION SPATIAL-AND-TEMPORAL MODELS OF WEBGIS
FOR LAND RECLAMATION

IN MINING AREA

JIANZHONG FENG, ZHENQI HU, AND LINYAN BAI

MONITOR OF HEAVY METAL POLLUTED SOIL BY HYPERSPECTRAL REMOTE SENSING

GAO YONGGUANG, HU ZHENQI, GAO AILIN, AND WANG JIAN

RISK ASSESSMENT OF REUSING MINE LAND AFTER MINE CLOSURE
YAN BAO, ZHENQI HU, JIANFENG WANG, XIA ZHAO

WATER CONTENT SENSITIVITY OF GPR DETECTING RECLAMATION SOIL
ZHENQI HU, XINGTONG CHEN, AND BAOZHEN CHEN

THE STUDY ABOUT THE OPTIMIZATION OF THE USE STRUCTURE OF RECLAIMED LAND IN
THE HILLS MINING AREA OF EASTERN CHINA
ZHAO SHU-QIN

STUDY ON THE THEORY AND METHODS ABOUT THE POLLUTION CHARGE ON THE WASTE
ROCK IN THE STRIP MINE
ZHAO FANG

ANALYSIS OF BLASTING TREMOR IMPACT ON ROADWAY STABILITY IN COAL MINING
YIXIN ZHAO AND YAODONG JIANG

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ANALYSIS OF SURFACE MINE SLOPES
DOUG STEAD, MING YAN, JOHN COGGAN AND ERIK EBERHARDT

FIELD MONITORING OF RECLAMATION TREATMENT SUCCESS IN THE HELENA NATIONAL
FOREST, MONTANA
R. L.MCNEARNY AND K. GAUER

COMDRAG – A DRAGLINE SIMULATOR FOR STRIP MINES
E. Y. BAAFI AND H. KERR

A LIFELONG LEARNING APPROACH TO TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IN MINING
MALCOLM SCOBLE

BENEFITS OF A DOWNTIME ACCOUNTING SYSTEM
CHRISTINE LESHER AND GREG BUNTING

ANALYSIS OF CUTTING RESISTANCES FOR BUCKET WHEEL EXCAVATORS IN HARD
CLAYS
C. DREBENSTEDT AND S. PAESSLER

INTEGRATION OF PRE-CONCENTRATION UNDERGROUND: REDUCING MINING COSTS
A.S. BAMBER, B. KLEIN, M. MORIN, M.J. SCOBLE

EVALUATION OF A RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT PROJECT USING REAL OPTION ANALYSIS
G. MOGI, F. CHEN AND T. ADACHI

EXPERIENCES WITH ONLINE CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR MINING
SIMON W. HOULDING

VALUING MINE 2 AT RAGLAN USING REAL OPTIONS: A LEAST-SQUARES MONTE CARLO
APPROACH
BRUNO LEMELIN, SABRY A. ABDEL SABOUR AND RICHARD POULIN

PREDICTION OF ROCK FRAGMENTATION IN OPEN PIT MINES, USING NEURAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

K. ORAEE AND B. ASI

WAYS OF MINE LOCOMOTIVE TRACTION MOTOR COMMUTATION IMPROVEMENT

B. IVANOV

EXPLOITATION PROJECT FOR ROSARIO BODY USING SUBLEVEL STOPING AND IN-MINERAL RAMP AT UCHUCCHACUA MINE

J.C.SOTOMAYOR, M.FARFAN AND C.FANO

PRODUCT SUPPORT ISSUES FOR MINING EQUIPMENT AND SYSTEMS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

UDAY KUMAR

RISK ANALYSIS OF TAILING DAMS COLLAPSE

A.BORTOLUSSI, B. GROSSO, P.P. MANCA

HAULAGE ALTERNATIVES IN A DOLOMITIC LIMESTONE QUARRY FOR AGGREGATES: A TECHNICAL-ECONOMICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMPARISON

M. CARDU , E. LOVERA , R. MANCINI AND M. PREVE

DEVELOPMENT OF SIMPLE PRODUCTION MODELING SOFTWARE FOR CONTINUOUS MINER PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

YOGINDER P. CHUGH, A. MOHARANA AND A. PATWARDHAN

A MODEL OF FAULT SHEAR RUPTURE VALIDATED USING MICRO-SEISMIC MEASUREMENTS

BATTISTA GROSSO, PIER PAOLO MANCA AND ROBERTO SARRITZU

SUBLEVEL STOPING AT A LARGE UNDERGROUND QUARRY: STUDIES FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PRODUCTION BLASTING

M. CARDU , R. FOLCHI , E. LOVERA R. MANICINI , L. ZAMMARIAN AND N. BERRETTA

ADVANCEMENT OF 2D AND 3D ELECTRICAL RESISTIVITY TECHNIQUES FOR UNDERGROUND APPLICATIONS IN A POTASH MINE

MICHAEL MAXWELL, JOHN UNRAU, ROB ESO, DOUG OLDENBURG, AND LIN-PIN SONG

EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH ON THE "GEO-TUBES" TECHNOLOGY

M. CARDU, O. DEL GRECO, M. PARRINELLO

LOADING AND HAULAGE IN QUARRIES: CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF EXCAVATOR-DUMPER SYSTEM

M. CARDU, E. LOVERA AND M. PATRUCCO

OPTIMIZING CONTINUOUS MINER COAL PRODUCTION SYSTEMS BASED ON PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTION COST

YOGINDER P. CHUGH, A. PATWARDHAN AND A. MOHARANA

SUBLEVEL STOPING AT A LARGE UNDERGROUND QUARRY: THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND EXPLOITATION DESIGN

R. MANCINI, M. CARDU, V. PIOVANO AND L. ZAMMARIAN

DEMOLITION AND RUBBLE RECYCLING AS NEW OPERATION FIELDS FOR MINING
TECHNOLOGIES AND MACHINERY
R. MANCINI, E. GARBARINO AND E. MICHELOTTI

NOISE AND DUST EMISSIONS FROM MINING ACTIVITIES: A SOFTWARE FOR A FIRST
APPROACH TO THE MEASUREMENT MANAGEMENT AND SELECTION OF SUITABLE
REDUCTION TECHNIQUES
C. CIGNA, E. LOVERA AND M. PATRUCCO

DESTINATION SCHEDULING WITH MIXED TRUCK FLEETS AT OCEANAGOLDS' MACRAES
MINE
PIETER DOELMAN AND ALUN PHILLIPS

WEB-BASED 3D GIS GEOLOGICAL DATABASE INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR BAIYUNEBO
IRON MINE
HAIFENG DUAN, YANHUI WANG

POSITIVE RESEARCH OF VALUE ASSESSMENT OF THE MINING RIGHT OF SOME GOLD
MINE IN SHANDONG OF CHINA
ZHANG ZHEN KAI

SIMULATION OF A CONTINUOUS LIGNITE EXCAVATION SYSTEM
T.N. MICHALAKOPOULOS S.E. ARVANITI, AND G.N. PANAGIOTOU

Noise and dust emissions from mining activities: a software for a first approach to the measurement management and selection of suitable reduction techniques

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The paper deals with a research work developed by the Department of Land, Environment and Geotechnologies at “Politecnico di Torino”, in cooperation with the IRER Research Center - Regione Lombardia. Its main target was to define and evaluate measurement, analysis and control criteria for the emission of chemical and physical pollutants from non-metal mining industries, with particular reference to noise and airborne particulates.

Any industrial activity needs to be carefully planned and managed, in order to reduce, for workers and neighbouring population, both risks and annoyance phenomena, and these issues are particularly relevant when high population density areas are concerned. But in a sustainable development approach it should be appropriate to go beyond the simple application of laws, often incomplete or not updated (especially referring to the mining sector), and to look for technical and procedural solutions – the so called “good practices” or “best available techniques” – with the final target of minimising the impact on the environment.

Direct assessment of real situations are, of course, essential to point out critical aspects and to derive viable solutions. A quite “simplified” monitoring system has then been proposed and tested, in order to get a first evaluation of the cross references among mining techniques and technologies, pollutant emissions and propagation data. A software-based database was developed to manage detailed info on the mining activities, and to store the measured emission data for any further management. One of the aims of the present work was also the development of a predictive system for noise and dust emission, able to provide a first approach - rough but acceptable - relationships between the different site activities and the pollutant levels.

The output may provide suggestion on the critical situations and possible reduction methods, both at the planning stages, in the mine layout and during the evolution of the mining activities.

Keywords: non-metal non-energy mining, noise and dust, control and reduction of emissions.

1. Foreword

Mining is often a matter of concern of local communities because of the potential impacts on environment and landscape. The exploitation of mineral resources, nevertheless, being an important local source of employment and economic wealth, is so far essential for the needs of our society; as a consequence, an effective balance between socio-economic development and environmental protection must be pursued.

In order to minimize health risks and annoyance problems for the local population, the mining activities must be very carefully planned and managed, especially where highly populated areas are concerned (eg. Lombardia region = 380 inhab/km²).

With regard to these issues, the approach of the most recent EU documents about the sustainability of extractive activities and the natural resources management point out as necessary actions both the “promotion of extraction and production methods to encourage ecoefficiency” and the “development and implementation of programmes of best practice” (Commission of the European Communities 2000 and 2003).

The research work here discussed deals with such a context, the target being the definition of criteria for the assessment of emissions from mining sites and the identification of control solutions and good practices, applicable to real situations, for the reduction of airborne particulate and noise emissions into the surrounding environment.

The main step of the research work consisted of on-site measurement campaigns, aimed to a direct data collection for the analysis of the cross references among mining techniques and technologies, pollutant emissions and propagation data, besides testing the applicability of a “simplified” monitoring system and evaluating the effective results of the adopted reduction techniques.

A series of mining sites, different in terms of exploitation technique and general layout, were identified after an in-depth statistical study of the situation in Lombardia Region, and the final selection was carried out in cooperation with the Regional Mining Bureau.

In order to get representative data, the selection considered the following topics, because of their influence on pollutant emissions and propagation:

- features of the material to be extracted (aggregates, natural stones, industrial minerals) and the mining technologies (explosives, mechanical, transports, etc...);
- features and topography of the sites (surface or underground, hillside or flat area quarry, distance from sensitive areas, etc...).

So far, the on-site measurement campaigns have been limited to open cast mines and quarries, selecting five sites representative of the main mining sectors and topographic layouts of the Region (figure 1). Besides, only extraction and first processing phases which take place within the mining site (e.g. crushing and screening) have been analysed. Field data were compared with the output of simplified prediction methods, in order to identify the critical and essential parameters that can be used to correctly simulate and forecast the behaviour of noise and airborne particulate in real situations.

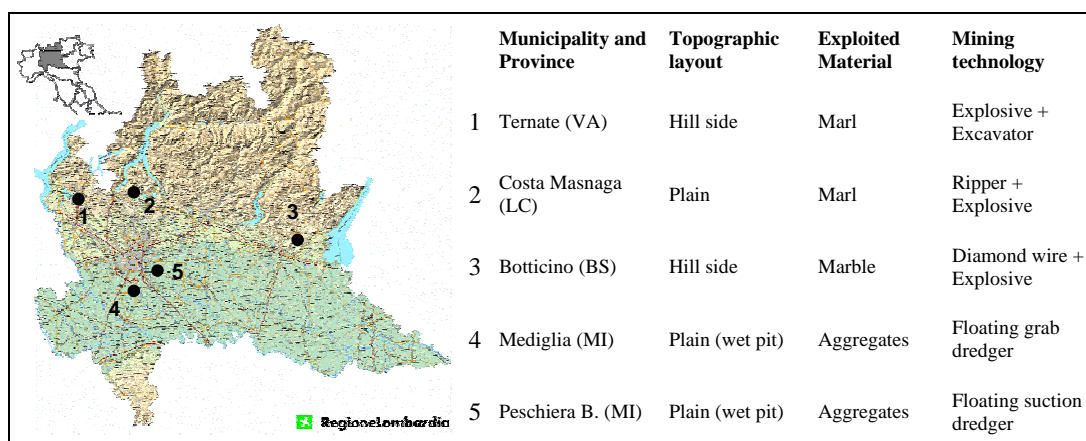


Figure 1. Localization of mining sites where measurement campaigns have been done.

As a final result, general criteria upon which evaluate the effectiveness of control measures and simple tools to assess the potential impact of new mining sites have been implemented in a data base, made available for the competent Regional Bureau.

2. On site measurement procedure

the data collection was organized to get detailed info on the selected mining activities, in order to create the first population of the regional database and, above all, to test the prediction software. In each site a detailed inventory of all the sources has been drawn up, collecting also all the available info and data from project documents and machinery manufacturers. In particular, noise emissions were measured along alignments (at least 3 per site), whose location is intended to cover the main propagation directions, from the “core” of the activity/source area toward the closest sensitive areas. Each alignment consisted in at least 3 integrating sound level meters, with simultaneous recording (for a short but representative time) of the noise emission on a suitable recording device (figure 2).

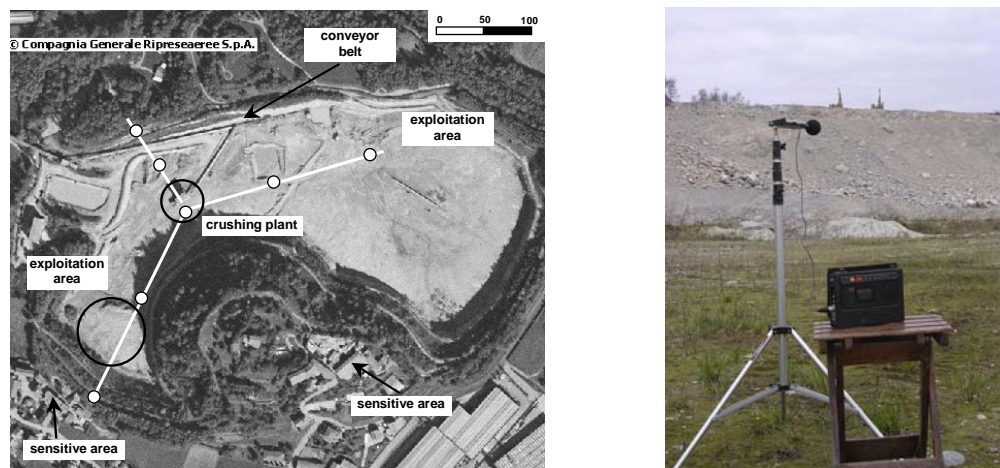


Figure 2. On the left, aerial photo of the site n°2 (marl mine); the alignment and the microphones locations used for the noise survey are reported. On the right, a recording station in the site n°1.

To test the repeatability of the procedure, the measurement campaigns were repeated in different situations - operating machinery and specific operations performed - showing a good stability of the measured noise levels.

Where dust emissions are concerned, the mass concentration of air dispersed particulate has been measured. battery operated active monitoring systems have been adopted (4-5 devices), simultaneously working for a period of at least 5 hours per day, located with the aim of intercepting the dust “plume” created by mining activity, considering also the position of potential sensitive areas.

Finally, it is important to underline that the aims of the on-site measures were the following:

- to test the feasibility and reliability of a procedure which can be performed in a relatively short time, at reasonable costs and without interferences with the regular mining activities;
- to get direct data of emission levels from different types of mining site, in order to populate the regional data base;
- to test the results of some predictive models;
- to directly assess the efficiency of some emission reduction practices.

3. The software for the management of the measurement results

In order to make available to the Regional Mining Bureau a tool for the management of measurement results, a software-based database has been purposely developed.

The database, designed with Visual Basic ®, is organised in numbered input-forms but without a fixed input order, so that the different files can be filled as the data get available (figure 3).

The requested info is grouped into homogeneous classes, to which correspond the different input sheets of the software (14 in total): sheets number 1 to 5 deal with general industrial data (industrial size, mining exploitation methods, work organization); sheets number 6-7 with adopted technologies, equipment, machinery and main fittings, with their technical characteristics in terms of emissions; sheets number 8-10 and 12-13 with pollution levels, both at workplaces and toward the surrounding areas (here are also collected, where available, the data from previous noise and dust measurement campaigns); sheets number 11 and 14 with pollutant sources identification and description, and the already adopted control measures.

The screenshot displays the 'Misure' software interface. On the left, a sidebar lists 14 input sheets, with '1 - Inquadramento generale' selected. The main area is titled 'Inquadramento generale' and contains several input fields and buttons. The 'Sito estrattivo' field is followed by radio buttons for 'Cava' and 'Miniera'. Below this are fields for 'Località', 'Comune', and 'Provincia'. A 'Competenza' section has radio buttons for 'Provinciale', 'Regionale', and 'Nazionale'. There are two sections for documentation: 'Documentazione cartografica con recettori sensibili' and 'Documentazione fotografica'. Each section has four 'Foto' fields, each with a 'cerca' (search) and 'vedi' (view) button. At the bottom of the sidebar, there are buttons for 'Leggi Sito', 'Nuovo Sito', 'Salva Sito', 'Tavola Sinottica Rumore', 'Interventi Riduzione Rumore', 'Dettaglio Riduzione Rumore', 'Interventi Riduzione Polveri', 'Dettaglio Riduzione Polveri', and 'Uscita'.

Figure 3. The input form number 1: text and graphical (pictures, CAD plans, etc...) data have to be inputted to give the general outline of the mining site.

Misure

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

1 - Inquadramento generale

2 - Rif. aziendali/inquadramento ammin.

3 - Inquadramento territoriale

4 - Tipologia di coltivazione

5 - Caratteristiche dimensionali e produzioni

6 - Parco macchine/attrezzature

7 - Consumi energetici

8 - Strumenti di misura del rumore

9 - Misure di rumore

10 - Zonizzazione (277/91)

11 - Interventi di riduzione rumore

12 - Strumenti di misura delle polveri

13 - Misure di polveri

14 - Interventi di riduzione polveri

Leggi Sito

Nuovo Sito

Salva Sito

Tavola Sinottica Rumore

Interventi Riduzione Rumore

Dettaglio Riduzione Rumore

Interventi Riduzione Polveri

Dettaglio Riduzione Polveri

Uscita

Misure di rumore

Data misura

Aggiungi Misura

Salva Misura

distanza di test (m)

Elaborazione

All. 1

All. 2

All. 3

All. 4

All. 5

All. 6

All. 7

All. 8

Allineamento

Punto di riferimento XYZ Gauss-Boaga

Punto di riferimento (descrizione)

Descrizione

Posizione XYZ Gauss-Boaga

Livello dB(A)

Inizio hh:mm

Durata s

Direz. vento

Velocità m/s

Press. hPa

Temp. °C

Umid. %

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

Tipologia di macchina

N*

Operazione

Tipologia di macchina

N*

Operazione

Figure 4. The data collection form for noise measurement campaigns.

The database results in a collection of upgradeable option sets, so that it is possible to insert new parameters and to carry out further analyses where required in the future. Due to the interaction between the different parameter sets during the data processing, and to avoid meaningless results, most of the data are inputted through pre-set lists and “check” buttons. In this way the data input can be performed even by relatively unskilled operators, since mistakes or incoherencies are automatically detected by the system. The data related to each on-site measurement are saved in different and independent files, linked to the file which describes the general features of the site, so that it is easy to share them among different users.

The software is not just a data storage, but it mainly consists in a simple predictive system for noise and dust emissions, able to provide a rough preliminary relationships

between the different site activities and the pollutant levels, and movement patterns around the site.

3.1 The simplified approach selected and the reasons for such a decision

The simplified approach is based on fundamental laws of applied acoustics and on experimental relationships which describe the dust diffusion at sites characterised by a simple layouts; relying on these simplification, the software allows the evaluation of active sources at a given distance from mining site.

All data concerning the measurement campaigns are inputted in a suitable form of the database (figure 4), with detailed info about measuring parameters, environmental conditions and active sources. The list of active machinery is requested together with the actual operation they were performing during each measurement.

As far as noise emissions are concerned, some of the experimental data show a decay similar to the one typical of free field propagation conditions [1]

$$SPL = SWP - 20 \cdot \log(r) - 11 \quad [1]$$

where:

SPL = Sound Pressure Level (dB); SWP = Sound Power Level of the source (dB); r = distance (m)

while in other situations the presence of secondary sources or the spatial distribution of the main sources themselves can make very difficult the definition of a precise decay pattern: a problem to be carefully taken into account when provisional models are used.

According to these premises, for a simplified prediction of the emissions, the obtained results are plotted comparing the experimental data with theoretical noise propagation patterns, and a rough estimation of sound levels at a different distance from the extraction site is given, based on best-fit curve obtained from experimental data (figure 5).

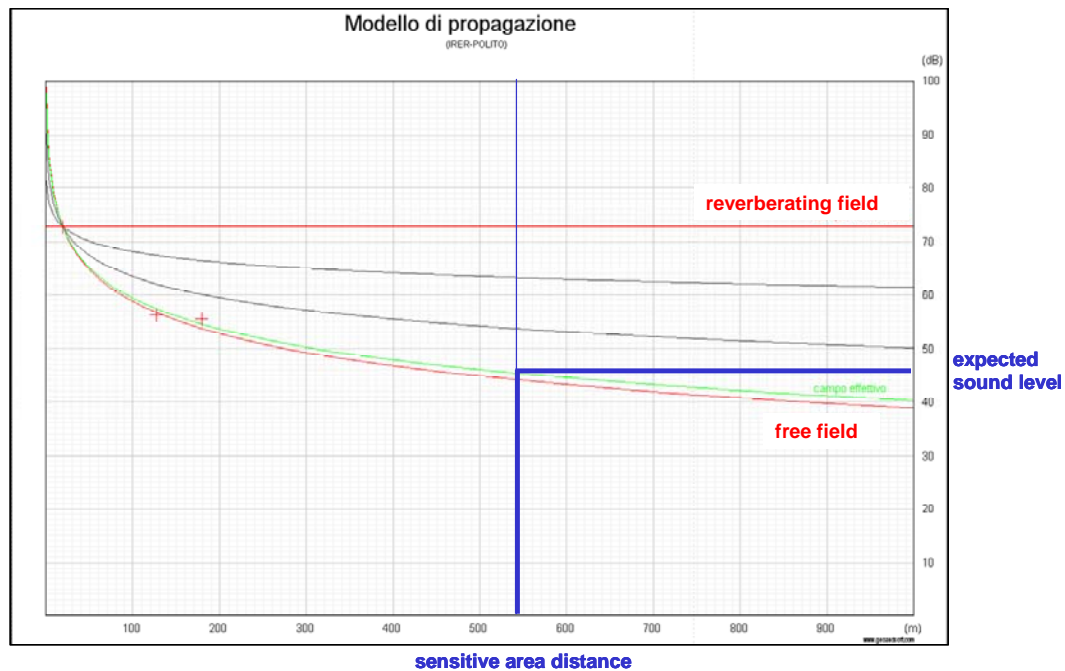


Figure 5. Example of data processing: estimation of the noise level at a specific distance.

Where the airborne particulate pollution is concerned, a Gaussian dispersion model, appropriately modified to recognise plume depletion through particulate fall-out depending on wind turbulence, is confirmed to well describe the dust diffusion at sites characterised by a simple topography and constant climatic factors.

A first prediction of the expectable dust concentration at different distances from the source, along the prevailing wind direction (wind speed must not exceed 0.5 m/s), can be obtained from the following experimental relationship (Occella 1970) [2]:

$$c = A \cdot r^{-B} \quad [2]$$

where: c = airborne dust concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$); r = distance from the source (m)

$A = 15000$; $B = 2.17$ according to Sutton;

$A = 3200$; $B = 1.50$ according to Pearson;

$A = 1000$; $B = 1$ according to Zurlo-Frigerio, this being the most conservative.

Once selected the curve that best fits to the locally collected data, the software provide an assessment of the expectable concentration at each given distance from the mining site (eg. data recorded at the site n. 1 well fit to the curve proposed by Sutton - figure 6).

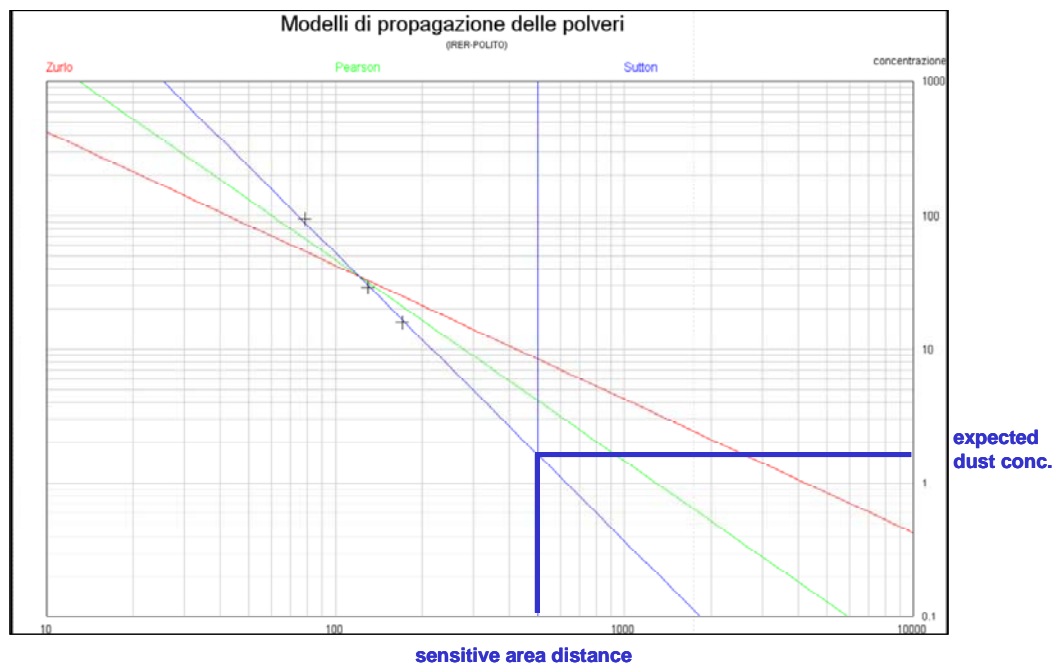


Figure 6. Example of data processing: estimation of the dust concentration at a specific distance.

In order to get effective environmental progresses of the mining sector, it is necessary to combine the identification of the most suitable technologies and mining methods with the adoption of effective control and reduction measures of pollutants.

Once roughly assessed the noise and dust propagation pattern in order to estimate the emissions level towards sensitive areas, another step is requested, that is the identification of best control practices, proper to the different real situation. The last phase of the research dealt with this issue, leading to the issuing of a “good practices” guideline on technical and organizational solutions aimed to the reduction of dust and noise emissions. A section of the software is dedicated to these aspects, in fact two input forms (organized in eight sub-forms) contain a series of possible control measures grouped as follows: design solutions; control measures on the pollutant source; control measures along the propagation path of the pollutant; organizational solutions and procedures (figure 7). For each reduction measure adopted, the user has to associate the obtained pollutant reduction (in terms of noise level or dust concentration at a given distance).

The screenshot displays a software window titled "Interventi di riduzione delle emissioni di rumore". It features four tabs: "Scelte progettuali" (selected), "Interv. tecnici alla fonte", "Interv. sulla propagazione", and "Interv. org. e proced.". The "Scelte progettuali" tab contains a table with four columns: "Descrizione", "Livello (dB) prima", "Livello (dB) dopo", and "Foto". There are seven rows of input fields, each preceded by a checkbox. The first six rows correspond to specific design solutions, and the seventh is labeled "Altro". Each row has "cerca" and "vedi" buttons next to the "Foto" column.

	Descrizione	Livello (dB) prima	Livello (dB) dopo	Foto
<input type="checkbox"/>	Selezione tecnologie a minore impatto			<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="cerca"/> <input type="button" value="vedi"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Configurazione cantiere e orientamento fronti			<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="cerca"/> <input type="button" value="vedi"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Collocazione piste, nastro trasportatore e simili			<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="cerca"/> <input type="button" value="vedi"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Collocazione impianti di trattamento			<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="cerca"/> <input type="button" value="vedi"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Collocazione cumuli di stoccaggio			<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="cerca"/> <input type="button" value="vedi"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ottimizzazione operazioni con esplosivo (orari, temporizzazione)			<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="cerca"/> <input type="button" value="vedi"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Altro <input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="cerca"/> <input type="button" value="vedi"/>

Figure 7. The input form dedicated to the “design solution” aimed at reducing noise emissions.

All stored data are grouped and analyzed according to the characteristics of the mining sites, and a number of tables are plotted, graphically showing the real efficiency of control measures as function of extraction site features and exploitation methods.

When completed with a larger number of input data from different extraction sites (and also from literature) the software will provide useful suggestion both at the planning stages, on the mine layout and technology selection, and during the evolution of the mining activities, on the critical situations and possible reduction methods.

It must be underlined that, of course, different methodologies are available nowadays to study pollutant emissions from industrial activities; in particular, for noise and dust emissions a number of complex provisional computer-based methods can be used to estimate the propagation of pollutants from a specific source.

It can be observed that in general, to give reliable results, these methods need a very detailed set of input data (about the source, its position, site topography, features of all surfaces along the path of propagation, etc...) in order to take into account all parameters involved in noise and airborne particulate behaviour; but being mining exploitation a continuously evolving activity - both sources and field can noticeably and quickly change – the high quality results achieved can result inefficient to describe the general situation.

Hence, given the experimental character of the measurement campaign, aimed to provide rough preliminary data, it has not been considered essential to carry out measures complying with all the prescriptions of the national laws about environmental noise and dust monitoring: obviously the same are mandatory in a following step, where detailed analysis of the situation is required.

4. Concluding remarks

Pollutant emission, dispersion patterns and impacts are difficult to predict due to the wide range of mining activities that may rise them, and often to the lack of reliable emission factors, together with the decisive influence of local climatic and topographic features.

The unavoidable uncertainties, due to the simplified approach described, can be overcome by the process of continuous updating of the proposed database, in order to link experimental measurement data with typical features of the site, used technologies, extracted material, etc... An advantage of the proposed method lay on the possibility of carrying out simple, repeatable and low cost measurement campaigns and analysis, in order to check the emissions trend during the time.

Reduction measures for chemical and physical pollutant from extractive sites must be included in the general management process of the activities, and effective results are easier to be achieved if all the critical aspects are considered since the planning stage and controlled along the “life cycle” of a mining site:

- assessment of existing baseline emission level, independently of the mining activity;
- identification and characterisation of mining emission sources; measurement or prediction of the emission levels expectable near the mine site and evaluation of the potential to affect human health and the environment;
- analysis of the local parameters that can affect (positively or negatively) the emission impact;
- identify and implement the most suitable mitigation measures and site design modifications;

- assess the achieved results through predictive models and verify them through a monitoring program.

The proposed database is intended to support both the Public Administration and private operators in their choices and decisions, because when it will be populated by a wider range of extraction site typologies and repeated measurement campaigns during the time, it can help to forecast emission levels in similar situations, and to point out the critical aspects that should be controlled. Moreover, a list of “good practices” and reduction measures, which can be adopted according to the different layout of the mining sites, is also provided, quoting an assessment of the mitigation that can be gained. A further step of the research should include the economical assessment of the reduction measures and of the expectable results, in order to supply an improved basis to sustainable policies.

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