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**WINDOW: A COMPUTER PROGRAM FOR PLANNING
ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATIONS**

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16. Abstract A FORTRAN computer program called "WINDOW" has been written to simplify the planning of astronomical observations of a number of objects in a limited time. The program lists the azimuths at 15 minute intervals of up to 20 objects while they are in a given range of elevation angles - the window - and gives the elevation angle of each object at its time of transit. This work was motivated by the need to use observing time efficiently on flights of NASA-Ames' Lear Jet and C-141 observatories; WINDOW permits the investigator to prepare preliminary flight plans. However, the program is suited to planning ground-based observations as well. The program and a sample flight plan are described.			
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WINDOW: A COMPUTER PROGRAM FOR PLANNING
ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATIONS

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Abstract

A FORTRAN computer program called "WINDOW" has been written to simplify the planning of astronomical observations of a number of objects in a limited time. The program lists the azimuths at 15 minute intervals of up to 20 objects while they are in a given range of elevation angles—the window—and gives the elevation angle of each object at its time of transit. This work was motivated by the need to use observing time efficiently on flights of NASA-Ames' Lear Jet and C-141 observatories; WINDOW permits the investigator to prepare preliminary flight plans. However, the program is suited to planning ground-based observations as well. The program and a sample flight plan are described.

Planning astronomical observations from the Lear Jet and C-141 observatories operated by NASA-Ames is complicated by the following considerations: (1) the telescopes operate in a restricted range of elevation angles or window: 14° - 28° for the Lear Jet, 35° - 75° for the C-141; (2) the flights are of limited duration: $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours for the Lear Jet, $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours for the C-141; (3) the telescopes can view only from the left sides of the aircraft, so that typically only half the flying time can be spent observing sources in a particular area of the sky; (4) the aircraft are moving about 500 miles per hour (air speed). To maximize observing time on a given flight, it is desirable to observe calibration objects and/or other objects when the aircraft is flying to or returning from the path required for observing the objects of primary interest. We developed program WINDOW to simplify (a) selection of feasible objects from a list of candidates, and (b) generation of a preliminary flight plan for use by the navigators.

The program computes and lists the azimuths at 15 minute intervals of up to 20 objects while they are in the window, and gives the elevation angle of each object at its time of transit. The entire calculation is done assuming fixed longitude and latitude for the observatory, so that no correction is made for motion of the aircraft. Since the aircraft heading for our airborne observations is approximately equal to the azimuth of the object plus ninety degrees, southerly objects (observed with the aircraft flying West) will require less heading change than indicated by the program, while northerly objects will require more heading change than indicated.

Typically the program is run for the list of candidate objects using longitude and latitude corresponding to the nominal position of the aircraft during the flight, which often is simply the position of the airfield where the plane is based (37.5° N. latitude 122° W. longitude for Moffett Field).

Trajectories of objects shown to be compatible for observation on a given flight are then used to generate a preliminary flight plan. This can be done by the navigators or the investigator. Aircraft trajectories corresponding to the suitable candidate objects are plotted on a map, as shown in Figure 1. Some trial and error is usually involved before the preliminary flight plan is satisfactory; care must be taken to avoid warning areas and international borders.

The detailed flight plan is made starting with the preliminary plan by the navigators. With little practice an investigator can use WINDOW to generate a preliminary plan which will be very close to the navigator's final plan. Successful flight plans with up to 12 observed objects in a $7\frac{1}{2}$ hour flight have been made following this procedure. For ground-based work, the output of program WINDOW is suitable for planning multiple object observations with no further effort.

WINDOW is written in FORTRAN for use on the Ames CDC-7600; copies of the program are available on request from the authors. A version of the program used at NASA-Ames by the navigators runs on their HP 2100 computer.

The beginning of the FORTRAN program contains comment cards describing the use of the program, and a sample of input parameters. A copy of the beginning of the program, and its output corresponding to the flight plan of Figure 1 completes this report.

We are grateful to C. Swift for the coordinate transformation program and to J. Kroupa for the map showing the warning areas in the Western United States.

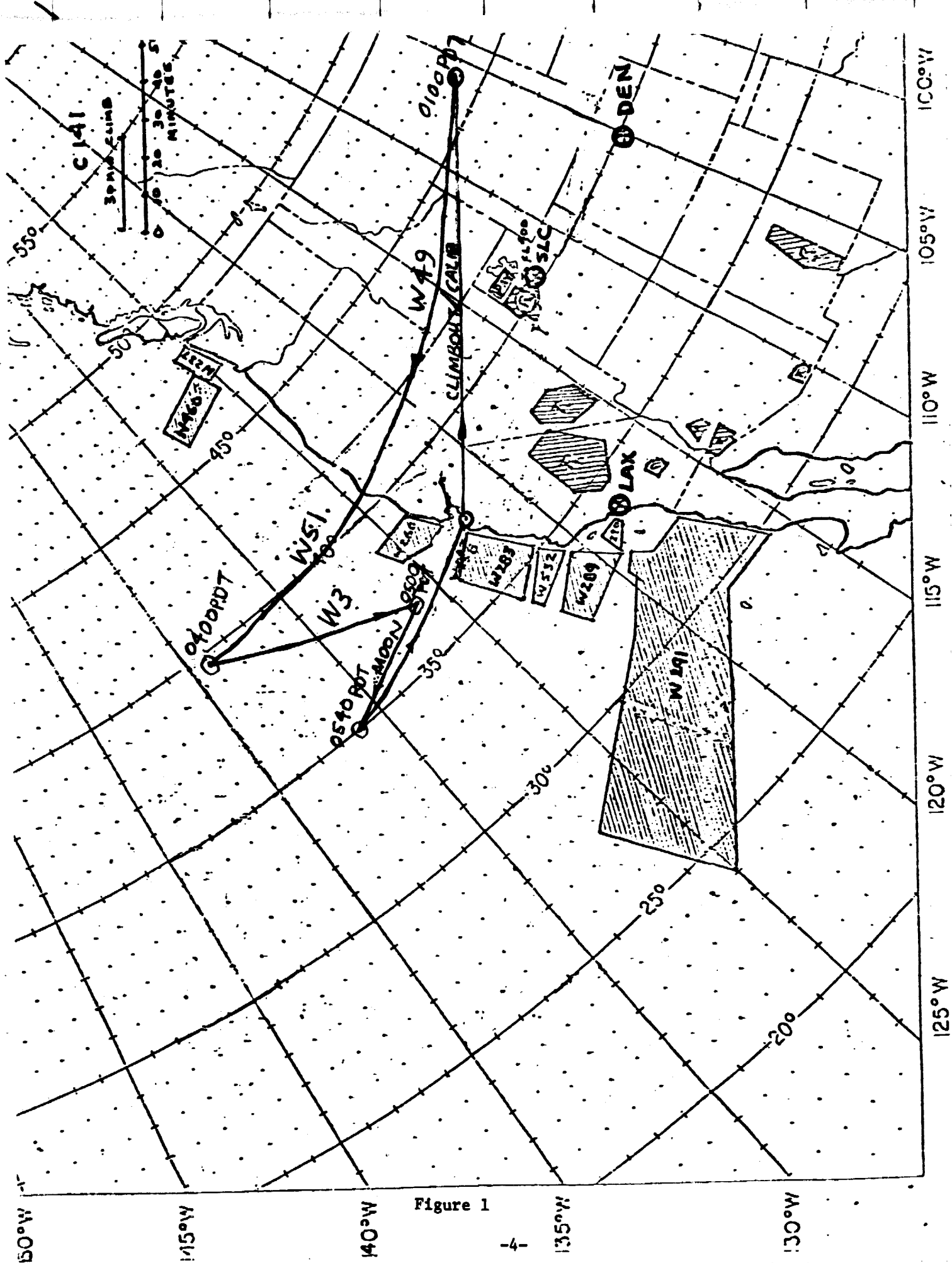


Figure 1

PROGRAM WITH (I PUT, OUTPUT, TAPE5=INPUT, TAPE6=OUTPUT)

C
 C A PROGRAM TO FACILITATE PLANNING ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATIONS OF UP TO 20 OBJECTS
 C *** INPUT *** FOR ALL CARDS COLUMNS 71 - 80 CAN BE USED FOR IDENTIFYING LABEL
 C SOUTH DECLINATIONS AND LATITUDES AND EAST LONGITUDES MUST BE
 C NEGATIVE ENTRIES THROUGHOUT
 C THE MAXIMUM DURATION FOR AN OBSERVATION IS 14 DAYS
 C 1. START OF OBSERVATION CARD (DAY, MONTH, YEAR, HOUR) LOCAL TIME
 C 2. END OF OBSERVATION CARD (DAY, MONTH, YEAR, HOUR) LOCAL TIME
 C BY THE FOLLOWING FORMAT 12,43,12,3X,F10.2
 C 3. LATITUDE & LONGITUDE OF PLACE OF OBSERVATION (DEG, MIN, SEC)
 C BY THE FOLLOWING FORMAT 6F10.2
 C 4. DIF IN HRS BETWEEN GREENWICH & OBSERVERS STANDARD MERIDIAN
 C BY THE FOLLOWING FORMAT F10.2
 C 5. UPPER AND LOWER WINDOW ELEVATION ANGLES (DEGREES)
 C BY THE FOLLOWING FORMAT 2F10.2
 C 6. NUMBER OF OBJECTS (N)
 C BY THE FOLLOWING FORMAT F10.2
 C 7. OBJECT CARDS (UP TO 20 DIFFERENT OBJECTS)
 C COLUMNS 1 - 10 AN ALPHAMERIC LABEL FOLLOWED BY THE RIGHT
 C ASCENSION (HOURS, MINUTES, SECONDS) AND THE DECLINATION
 C (DEGREES, MINUTES, SECONDS)
 C BY THE FOLLOWING FORMAT A10,6F10.2
 C IF THE SUN IS DESIRED AS AN OBJECT SIMPLY LABEL A CARD AS "SUN"
 C THE PROGRAM WILL THEN CALCULATE THE POSITION OF THE SUN (ACCURATE TO
 C WITHIN 10 SEC (150 ARCSEC) THROUGH 2000)
 C IF THE MOON IS DESIRED AS AN OBJECT, TWO OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE
 C 1. IF ONLY ONE CARD IS READ IN, THE MOON WILL BE TREATED AS A STATIONARY
 C OBJECT AND NO CORRECTION FOR POSITION ON THE EARTH WILL BE MADE
 C 2. TO UPDATE THE MOON'S POSITION AS A FUNCTION OF TIME AND CORRECT FOR THE
 C OBSERVATION POSITION ON THE EARTH, 3 OR MORE INPUT CARDS MUST BE USED.
 C THE FIRST CARD MUST GIVE THE POSITION OF THE MOON FOR 0 HR U.T. THE DATE
 C OF THE BEGINNING OF THE OBSERVATION. SUBSEQUENT CARDS MUST GIVE THE
 C POSITION OF THE MOON FOR 0 HR U.T. ON SUBSEQUENT DATES. THE LAST CARD
 C MUST GIVE THE POSITION OF THE MOON FOR 0 HR U.T. ON THE DAY FOLLOWING
 C THE DATE OF THE END OF THE OBSERVATION. FOR THIS OPTION THE LABEL MUST
 C BE "MOON"

C*** FOR CLARITY A SAMPLE SET OF INPUT CARDS IS GIVEN NEXT*****

C15JUN76	18.						START OBS
C18JUN76	10.						END OBS
C37.	25.	0.	122.	3.	0.		NASA-AMES
C7.							DIF IN HR
C35.	75.						WINDOW

							# SOURCES
C9.							
CSUN							
CMOON	20.	7.	37.	-15.	-1.	-18.	15 JUN 76
CMOON	21.	0.	12.	-11.	-39.	-21.	16 JUN 76
CMOON	21.	49.	54.	-7.	-50.	-11.	17 JUN 76
CMOON	22.	37.	22.	-3.	-46.	-42.	18 JUN 76
CMOON	23.	23.	19.	0.	20.	33.	19 JUN 76
CJUPITER	3.	8.	18.	14.	36.	30.	16 JUN 76
C#51	19.	21.	22.	14.	25.	10.	
C#49	19.	7.	50.	9.	1.	12.	
CNGC7538	23.	11.	24.	61.	14.	0.	
C#3	2.	21.	50.	61.	52.	54.	
CR21	20.	37.	14.	42.	9.	20.	
CM17	18.	17.	33.	-16.	-12.	-15.	

WINDOW OUTPUT

START OBSERVATION 15 JUN 76 AT 1800 HOURS LOCAL TIME
 END OBSERVATION 14 JUN 76 AT 1000 HOURS LOCAL TIME

OBSERVER LATITUDE = 37. DEGREES 25. MINUTES 0. SECONDS
 OBSERVER LONGITUDE = 122. DEGREES 3. MINUTES 0. SECONDS

DIF IN HRS GREENWICH & OBSERVERS STANDARD MERIDIANS 7.

WINDOW LOWER ANGLE = 35. DEGREES, UPPER ANGLE = 75. DEGREES

GREENWICH SIDERIAL TIME & POSITION OF SUN FOR 0 HR U.T. 15 JUN 76
 GREENWICH SIDERIAL TIME = 17. HOURS 33. MINUTES 36. SECONDS
 POSITION OF SUN R.A.S 5. HRS 11. MIN 58. SEC DEC. = 23. DEG 18. MIN 19. SEC

NUMBER OF OBJECTS (MAX=20) = 9

OBJECT	H.A. (HRS)	MIN	SEC	DEC. (DEG)	MIN	SEC
1 SUN	5	33.	58.	23.	18.	19.
2 MOON	20	7.	37.	-15.	-1.	-18.
2 MOON	21	0.	12.	-11.	-39.	-21.
2 MOON	21	49.	54.	-7.	-50.	-11.
2 MOON	22	37.	22.	-5.	-46.	-42.
2 MOON	23	23.	19.	0.	20.	33.
3 JUPITER	3	8.	18.	16.	36.	30.
4 451	19	21.	22.	14.	25.	10.
5 449	19	7.	50.	9.	1.	12.
6 NGC753A	23	11.	24.	61.	14.	0.
7 *3	2	21.	50.	61.	52.	54.
8 DR21	20	37.	14.	42.	9.	20.
9 M17	18	17.	55.	-16.	-12.	-15.

4

S	T	D	E	R	I	A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
O	R	J	E	C	T	O	A	R	H	J	F	E	J	H	R	J	H	R	J	H	R	J	H	R	J	H	R
O	R	J	E	C	T	O	A	R	H	J	F	E	J	H	R	J	H	R	J	H	R	J	H	R	J	H	R

15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76	15 JUN 76		
1730D																							
1745P																							
1A00N																							
1A15N																							
1A30D																							
1A45D																							
1000D																							
1015D																							
1030D																							
1045D																							
2000D																							
2015D																							
-SUNSET-																							
2030M																							
2045M																							
2100M																							
2114M																							
2129M																							
2144M																							
2159M																							
2213M																							
2229M																							
2244M																							
2259M																							
14N																							
29N																							
44N																							
59N																							
114N																							
129N																							
144N																							
159N																							
214M																							
220M																							
241M																							
259M																							
313M																							
328M																							
341M																							
354M																							

21	169	224	32	35	413M
	173	229	30	35	420M
	17A	233	2A	36	441M
	427	24	2A	36	450M
	186	241	21	36	513M
22	191	248	19	36	520M
	196	251	20A	36	503M
	200	254	281	36	550M
23	205	257	A	36	6130
	209	260	2	35	6200
	213		6AT	34	6430
			355	33	6500
			351	32	7130
0			347	30	7200
			343	2A	7430
			340	26	7500
			337	24	8130
1			334	21	8200
			332	1A	8430
			330	14	8500
	86		32A	10	9120
2	91		327	6	9270
			324	6AT	9420
	96		325	359	9570
	99		320	350	10120
3102	105		320	350	10270
108	112		320	347	10420
4117	122		320	343	10570
128	136		320	340	11120
5196	157		320	337	11270
			325	335	11420
			325	332	11570
			325	331	12120
			320	320	12270
			324	324	12420
			324	324	12570
6	209		324	324	13120
220	220		325	325	13270
22A	22A		325	325	13420
7236	241		325	325	13970
241	246		325	325	14120
246	251		325	325	14270
251			325	325	14420
			325	325	14570
			326	326	15120

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19	16A	177	37	66	193	225A
	167	627	37	67		200A
	185	191	37			255A
	108	100	34			310A
20	203	206	36			325A
	211	212	35			330A
	218	218	33	AST		353A
	224	224	33			400A
21	230	220	30			424A
	235	233	28			437A
	240	248	24			454A
	248	241	23			500A
22	284	285	19	281		524A
	251	248	14	293		530A
	250	281	13	292		534A
23	257		14	292		600A
	260		15	292		624A
			14	292		630A
			15	293		654A
			12	294		700A
			10	294		720A
			10	295		730A
			10	296		750A
			10	297		800A
			10	298		824A
			10	299		830A
			10	301		840A
			10			860A
			10			820A
			10			830A
			10			853A
			10			1000A
			10			1031A
			10			1034A
			10			1043A
			10			1100A
			10			1123A
			10			1140A
			10			1153A
			10			1200A
			10			1223A
			10			1240A
			10			1253A
			10			1300A
			10			1323A
			10			1330A

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