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### AUGMENTED BURST-ERROR CORRECTION FOR UNICON

LASER MEMORY

NASA TM X- 62,442

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16. Abstract

This paper describes a proposed augmented single-burst-error correction system for data stored in the UNICON Laser Memory. In the proposed system, a long Fire Code with code length n > 16,768 bits is used as an outer code to augment an existing inner shorter Fire Code for burst error corrections. The inner Fire Code is a (80,64) code shortened from the (630,614) code, and it is used to correct a single-burst-error on a perword basis with burst length  $b \leq 6$ . The outer code, with  $b \leq 12$ , would be used to correct a single-burst-error on a per-page basis, where a page consists of 512 32-bit words. In the proposed system, the encoding and error detection processes would be implemented by hardware. A minicomputer, currently used as a UNICON memory management processor, would be used on a time-der ading basis for error correction. Based upon existing error statistics, this combination of an inner code and an outer code would enable the UNICON system to obtain a very low error rate in spite of flaws affecting the recorded data. The approach of the long Fire Code described here is also applicable to other mass memory systems (such as rotating disks) where single-burst-error correction can be obtained at very low redundancy.

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# AUGMENTED BURST-ERROR CORRECTION FOR UNICON LASER MEMORY

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#### SUMMARY

This paper describes a proposed augmented single-burst-error correction system for data stored in the UNICON Laser Memory. In the proposed system, a long Fire Code with code length n > 16,768 bits is used as an outer code to augment an existing inner shorter Fire Code for burst-error corrections. The inner Fire Code is a (80,64) code shortened from the (630,614) code, and it is used to correct a singleburst error on a per-word basis with burst length  $b \leq 6$ . The outer code, with  $b \leq 12$ , would be used to correct a single-burst error on a per-page basis, where a page consists of 512 32-bit words. In the proposed system, the encoding and error detection processes would be implemented by hardware. A minicomputer, currently used as a UNICON memory management processor, would be used on a time-demanding basis for error correction. Eased upon existing error statistics, this combination of an inner code and an outer code would enable the UNICON system to obtain a very low error rate in spite of flaws affecting the recorded data. The approach of the long Fire Code described here is also applicable to other mass memory systems (such as rotating disks) where single-burst-error correction can be obtained at very low redundancy.

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#### INTRODUCTION

The UNICON laser memory, or UNICON, is a digital memory manufactured by Precision Instrument to. for the ILLIAC-IV computer as part of the mass I/O storage. The UNICON as an on-line storage capacity of about  $10^{12}$  bits. In such a high-density data storage system, contamination and other defects can easily obliterate a group of data bits. In order to operate successfully in spit of this problem in the UNICON, an elaborate error-correction system is used.

Error statistics obtained on the operation and checkout of the UNICON indicate that the desired net error rate of one bad word of data per 2 x  $10^{11}$  bits read might be met if two Fire Codes were used for single-burst-error correction. These two Fire Codes would be arranged as a system consisting of an inner code and an outer code. The inner code would be a short (80,64) Fire Code used to correct an error burst of length b  $\leq$  6 on a per-word basis. The outer code would be a long (16803,16768) Fire Code used to correct an error burst of length b  $\leq$  12 on a per-page basis. It should be noted that this system of an inner code and an outer code would not function in the same sense as the concepts of concatenated codes (ref. 1). Furthermore, the Reed-Solomon code from GF(2<sup>m</sup>) successfully used in the IBM Photo-Digital memory (ref. 2) is not feasible for the UNICON because of the long codeword length of n=16803.

The inner (80,64) Fire Code currently in use is implemented all in hardware by shift registers and error correction is done on-line as data are read off the strip. The (16803,16768) cuter Fire Code would

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be decoded in a manner suggested by Chien (ref. 3). A similar scheme for burst error correction with  $b \leq 11$  was implemented successfully in the IBM model 3830 controller for the Model 3330 disk. The problem of effectively implementing the (16803,16768) outer code has been solved by a number of innovations and in a hybrid manner. Most important is the use of hardware for encoding, while using a minicomputer on a timedemanding basis for error correction. The minicomputer performs a calculation to find the burst error location i by applying two wellknown theorems from Number Theory: the Euclidean algorithm for division and the Chinese remainder theorem for simultaneous congruences, sometimes thought to be me, by of academic interest only to Number Theorists.

#### CODING REQUIREMENT FOR UNICON

The basic storage element of the UNICON is a metal coated plastic strip about 4.75 x 31 in. The recording density across the strip is 11805 tracks over 3.8 in., or about 3000 tracks per in. Each track can store up to eight records of data, with each record containing 16,768 data bits plus other record identification bits. The method for recording data on the strip is to use the laser to either burn a hole for a 1-bit, or not to burn a hole for a 0-bit.

Data entering and leaving the UNICON are handled by a UNICON Controller (ref. 4). The Controller has two interfaces: a central memory (CM) interface for data, and a minicomputer interface for control. The minicomputer (a PDP-11) functions as the UNICON memory management processor (UMP). The UMP obtains its control programs

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through its own virtual hardware interface into the CM. By means of this virtual address space, UMP can address up to 4096 pages in CM. Data transfer to the UNICON is always one page of data at a time from CM, where a page of data consists of 512WX32B, which is 16,384 bits. For each page of data, the controller attaches 16WX16B of header information and 8WX16B of checksum parity bits to form a data record of 16,768 bits. The checksum is simply a single-parity check with check symbols from  $GF(2^{128})$ .

The basic word length in the UNICON is 64 bits. As previously mentioned, the UNICON currently has a built-in (80,64) Fire Code which is used to correct a single-burst error with burst length  $b \leq 6$  in a per-word-basis. Because of optic imperfections and other mechanical flaws, data read back from the strip always contain errors. When the UNICON is properly aligned, most errors are correctable by the (80,64) Fire Code. Preliminary observations on the error statistic indicate that the probability of getting an error not correctable by this Fire Code is about one for every 10<sup>11</sup> bits of data transferred, which is about one error per strip. The observed uncorrectable errors, for those that are understood and the cause can be explained, are typically singleburst errors with b  $\leq$  11. Thus if a long Fire Code with b  $\leq$  12 is used to augment the existing (80,64) Fire Code to correct a single-bursterror on a per-page basis, then it is possible that the error rate can be reduced to a very low level. The long Fire Code chosen is a (16803,16758) code. In this arrangement, the (16803,16768) code is called the outer code, while the (80,64) code is called the inner code.

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#### DESCRIPTION OF THE FIRE CODE

An error burst of length b is defined as a vector whose non-zero components are confined to b consecutive bit positions, the first and last of which are non-zero. It is known that cyclic codes for singleburst-error correction can be systematically constructed (refs. 5 and 6). These codes are rather efficient and they can be implemented with feedback shift registers. An important class of these codes is known as the Fire Codes (ref. 7). In the discussion which follows, let

n = length of codeword in bits.

k = number of message bits in a codeword.

n-k = number of redundant bits in a codeword.

b = maximum length of single error burst which can be corrected, in bits.

m(x) = message word.

v(x) = transmitted codeword.

E(x) = error burst.

R(x) = v(x) + E(x) = received codeword.

It is clear that for a given k and b, the objective is to construct an (n,k) code with as small a redundancy n-k as possible.

It is also known from the Reiger bound (ref. 8) that the number of parity check bits of a b-burst-error correcting code is

$$n-k \ge 2b$$
 (1)

This is an upper bound, and codes which meet the Reiger bound are said to be optimal. The ratio

$$Z = \frac{2b}{n-k}$$
(2)

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is a measure of the burst-correcting efficiency of the code. An optimal code has Z=1. The fire code at best has

$$Z = \frac{2b}{3b-1} \cong \frac{2}{3}$$
(3)

which is not very optimal with respect to the Reiger bound.

The Fire Code is a linear cyclic code which can be systematically constructed for correcting a single burst of error in a codeword of n bits. The constructed codeword is in systematic form; that is, the n-k parity check bits are simply concatenated after the message bits. A Fire Code with code symbols from GF(2) which is capable of correcting any burst of length b or less and of simultaneously detecting any burst of length  $d \ge b$  is best described by its generator polynomial

$$g(x) = p(x) (x^{c} + 1)$$
 (4)

where

p(x) = an irreducible polynomial of degree m whose roots have order e; that is, the period of p(x) is e. c ≥ b + d - 1 d ≥ b m ≥ b (c,e) = 1, that is, c and e are relatively prime.
For pure error correction purpose, the best choice is to set m=b and d=b. This results in a Fire Code with the following parameters: n = LCM (e,c) = ec n-k = c + m = 3b - 1

k = ec - (3b - 1)

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Another version of the Fire Code which is the ha'f-length version, has the following code paraments:

n = 
$$\left(\frac{c}{2}\right)$$
 e, where c is an even integer.  
n-k = 3b - 2  
k =  $\left(\frac{c}{2}\right)$  e -  $(3b - 2)$ 

In the conventional decoder implemented by shift registers, decoding the Fire Code requires two n shifts, n shifts for parity checking and another n shifts for error correction. As the first n shifts attributed to parity checking are concurrent with the reading r ration, no time delay occurs in this operation. The second n shifts needed to locate the error burst and correct it is a time delay due to error correction. If n is very large, like 16768 bits, then this long time delay may be intolerable in real life operation. However, if there exists within easy reach some power for general computation, resided either within the host computer or within the controller of the storage system, then the second n shifts can be reduced to the minimum of (e+c-2) plus computation time.

#### THE (80,64) FIRE CODE AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

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The generator polynomial for the (80,64) Fire Code is

$$g(x) = (x^{6} + x + 1) (x^{10} + 1)$$
(5)

In this case,  $p(x) = (x^6 + x + 1)$  is primitive so the order of its roots is

 $e = 2^6 - 1 = 63$ 

(6)

The code parameters for this code are as follows:

(63,10) = 1, that is, 63 and 10 are relatively prime.  $n = ec = 63 \times 10 = 630$  n-k = c + m = 10 + 6 = 16 k = 630 - 16 - 614 m = 6 so that b = 6 c = 10 = b + d - 1 = 6 + d - 1 so that d = 5

Note that the condition  $d \ge b$  is not met. This means that this code probably will not be able to correct all possible single-burst errors of length  $b \le 6$ .

From the above calculations, the code generated by g(x) in equation (5) is a (630,614) code. Since the word length of the UNICON is 64 bits, the code must be shortened to a (80,64) code by making the (614 - 64) = 550 most significant bits of the message equal to zero and omitting them. This process will not affect the encoding and parity checking calculation since leading zeros will not affect them. It does, however, affect the error correction procedure since the unaltered procedure would require 550 shifts corresponding to the 550 omitted zeros before reading the actual received codeword out of the buffer. Instead of making the buffer wait for 550 shifts, the standard procedure is to premultiply the decoding shift register by  $x^{550}$ modulo g(x).

The parity-check calculation, as it stands, is the residue of  $x^{16}$  R(x) modulo g(x). An additional automatic multiplication by

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 $x^{550}$  is desired; that is, the residue  $x^{566}$  is desired. With the help of a program written in basic, the remainder r(x) after dividing  $x^{566}$  by g(x) is found to be

 $\mathbf{r}(\mathbf{x}) = (\mathbf{x}^{13} + \mathbf{x}^{12} + \mathbf{x}^{11} + \mathbf{x}^6 + \mathbf{x}^3 + \mathbf{x}^2 + \mathbf{x})$ 

This basic program is shown in figure 1. The encoding shift register is shown in figure 2, and the decoding shift register is shown in figure 3.

THE (16803,16768) FIRE CODE AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

The objective of this code is to have k = 16768 and b = 12. The procedure to find a Fire Code that meets this requirement is as follows:

1. Let m = d = b = 12 and c = 2b - 1 = 23so that c + m = 23 + 12 = 35

2. 
$$g(x) = p(x) (x^{23} + 1)$$

3.  $e = \frac{n}{c} = \frac{k + (n-k)}{c} = \frac{16803}{23} = 513+$ Thus p(x) has degree m = 12, and a period  $e \ge 514$  is desired. With some looking, the trinomial  $(X^{12} + X^5 + 1)$  is not primitive but has a period e = 819 is acceptable. Thus  $g(x) = (X^{12} + X^5 + 1)(X^{23} + 1).$ 

Now that g(x) is found, the code parameters are:

 $n = ec = 819 \times 23 = 18837$ n-k = c + m = 23 + 12 = 35k = (18837 - 35) = 18802

The result is a (13837,18802) code, and this code can be shortened to (16803,16768) by omitting 2034 leading zeros.

The error correction part of the decoding requires n = 16803shifts, which is too long a time delay for practical application. However, there exists a high-speed decoder for this code suggested by Chien (ref. 3). This high-speed decoder consists of two feedback shift registers, one based on the factor  $(X^{C}+1)$  and the other based on the factor p(x). The two registers are run in synchronism for parity checking and error detection. A general diagram of this decoder is shown in figure 4. In this decoder, the syndrome is presented by the remainder of  $(X^{C}+1)$  and p(x), and the error pattern is identified when it has the same representation in both registers. The operation of this decoder is as follows:

- Shift both registers n times to enter the received codeword R(x).
- If R(x) has no error, the syndrome in both registers is zero.
- 3. If the syndrome is not zero, shift only the (X<sup>C</sup>+1) register until its (b-1) high-order bit positions equal to zero. The error pattern is contained in the b low-order bit positions. The maximum number of shifts is (c-1). Freeze this register.
- 4. Next shift the p(x) register until its contain is matched with the error pattern in the  $(X^{C}+1)$  register. The maximum number of shifts is (e-1). If a correctable error occurs, this match condition will occur, otherwise an uncorrectable error is detected.

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From the above description, it is noted that the maximum decoding time is equal to the minimum of (e+c-2), as compared to n for the conventional decoder.

Suppose a correctable burst of length  $\leq$  b at location i,  $o \leq i < n$ , has occurred, then the error can be written as

$$E(x) = x^{1} B(x)$$
(8)

The remainders calculated in the registers are

$$S_{p}(x) = x^{1} B(x) \qquad \text{modulo } p(x) \qquad (9a)$$
  

$$S_{r}(x) = x^{1} B(x) \qquad \text{modulo } (x^{c}+1) \qquad (9b)$$

It is noted that the syndrome  $S_c(x)$  is capable of determining the burst pattern and its location up to a multiple of c. Therefore, by shifting the syndrome  $S_c(x)$  in its register and testing for zero at the (b-1) high-order bit positions, the error pattern and its location i can be determined quickly up to multiple of c. That is,

$$\equiv$$
 r modulo c (10a)

where  $o \leq r_c < c$ . Now that the error pattern is determined, the p(x) register can be shifted until a match is obtained. This gives

$$i \equiv r_{p}$$
 modulo e (10b)

If i can be solved in equation (10), then the decoding is complete. The problem in equation (10) is a classical problem of simultaneous congruence in Number Theory. If e and c are relatively prime, then the Chinese Remainder Theorem can be used to solve for i.

The Chinese Remainder Theorem simply states that "Numbers which satisfy the simultaneous congruence  $i \equiv a_1$ (mod  $\mu_1$ ),...,  $i \equiv a_j \pmod{\mu_j}$ exist if the  $\mu_j$  are relatively

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prime in pairs, and such numbers constitute a single number

class modulo  $\prod_{k=1}^{j} \mu_{k}$ ."

Now to solve for i. According to the Euclidean division algorithm,

if (e,c) = 1, there exists intergers  $A_c$  and  $A_p$  such that

$$A_c e + A_p c = 1$$
 modulo (n = ec) (11)

Multiply both sides by i, the result is

 $i = (A_c e) i + (A_p c) i \mod n$  (12)

From the shift registers, note that

 $i = q_c c + r_c$  for  $(x^c + 1)$  register (13a)

$$i = q_p e + r_p$$
 for  $p(x)$  register (13b)

By substituting equation (13) into equation (12), the result is

$$i = (A_c e) r_c + (A_p c) r_p \mod n$$
 (14)

Since

$$A_c q_c e c \equiv 0 \mod n$$
 (15a)

$$A_{p} q_{p} e c \equiv 0 \mod n$$
 (15b)

The key equation is equation (14). The computation of  $A_c$  and  $A_p$  can be done easily off line by the UMP with the numbers  $A_c e$  and  $A_p c$ stored in its memory. Once the error-pattern-match condition is found in the decoder,  $r_c$  and  $r_p$  are available and the UMP can compute i by equation (14). Once i is solved, UMP will fetch the appropriate words from CM and perform the error correction with the error pattern stored in the p(x) register.

It is not convenient to describe the detailed implementation of the (16803,16768) Fire Code since its code length is too long, 16803 bits. However, in order to illustrate the principle of this high-speed decoding

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scheme, a shorter (35,27) Fire Code with  $b \leq 3$  shortened to a (24,16) code is fully illustrated in the Appendix.

#### CONCLUSION

This paper has presented an augmented scheme for single-burst-error correction for the UNICON laser memory. The augmentation is the addition of an outer code, a (16803,16768) Fire Code, to correct for a single error burst with length  $b \leq 12$  on a per-page basis. This (16803,16768) Fire Code is an addition to the existing (80,64) Fire Code which has already been implemented in the UNICON to correct a single error burst with length b ≤ 6 in a per-word-basis. Based upon observed error statistics, this augmented scheme would reduce the error rate to about one error per 2 x  $10^{11}$  bits of data transfer, which is about one error per two strips read. The (16803,16768) code would be implemented by a hybrid method using a high-speed hardware decoder for syndrome calculation and a minicomputer for error location computation and error correction. For the case where the periods of the two polynomial factors of g(x) are relatively prime, a simple application of the Chinese Remainder Theorem would determine the burst location.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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#### APPENDIX

The purpose of this appendix is to illustrate the principle of the high-speed decoder by implementing a (24,16) Fire Code shortened from the (35,27) code. The generator polynomial for this code is:

$$g(x) = (x^3 + x + 1) (x^5 + 1)$$

where  $p(x) = (x^3 + x = 1)$  is primitive and hence its order e = 7. The parameters of the code are:

$$m = b = 3 , \quad d = b = 3$$

$$c = 2b - 1 = 5$$

$$n = ec = 7 \times 5 = 35$$

$$- k = c + m = 3b - 1 = 8$$

$$k = n - (n-k) = 27$$

The computation of  $A_c e$  and  $A_p c$  are as follows:

$$A_{c} e + A_{p} c = 1 \mod 35$$

$$7A_{c} + 5A_{p} = 1 \mod 35$$

$$A_{c} = 3 \text{ and } A_{p} = 3$$

Thus

n

$$i = (21 r_c + 15 r_p) \mod 35$$

Lets shorten the (35,27) code to a (24,16) code by making the leading 11 message bits equal to zero. Encoding is not affected. However, decoding must account for the missing 11 leading zeros. Any multiple of C = 5 shifts of the  $(x^{C} + 1)$  register has no effect. Any multiple of e = 7 shifts of the p (x) register has no effect. For the  $(x^{C} + 1)$  register,

 $(3 + 11) - (5 \times 2) = 4$  shifts

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meaning input data should be connected to the input of the 5th stage of the  $(x^{c} + 1)$  register. For the p(x) register,

 $(3 + 11) - (7 \times 2) = 0$  shifts

meaning input data should be connected to the input of the first stage of the shift register. The decoder is shown in figure A-1.

For a message m(x) of

0 123 456 789 10 11 12 13 14 15

m(x) = 1 011 000 101 1 0 1 0 0 1

the encoded V(x) is

				m ()	()					-	n-k		
1	011	000	101	1	0	1	0	0	1	11	011	101	
0	123	456	789	10	11	12	13	14	15	01	234	567	

In these examples, bit-0 is the MSB and it is sent first. To illustrate the principle of error correction, lets introduce two error patterns as follows:

Error Pattern No. 1

Error Pattern No. 2

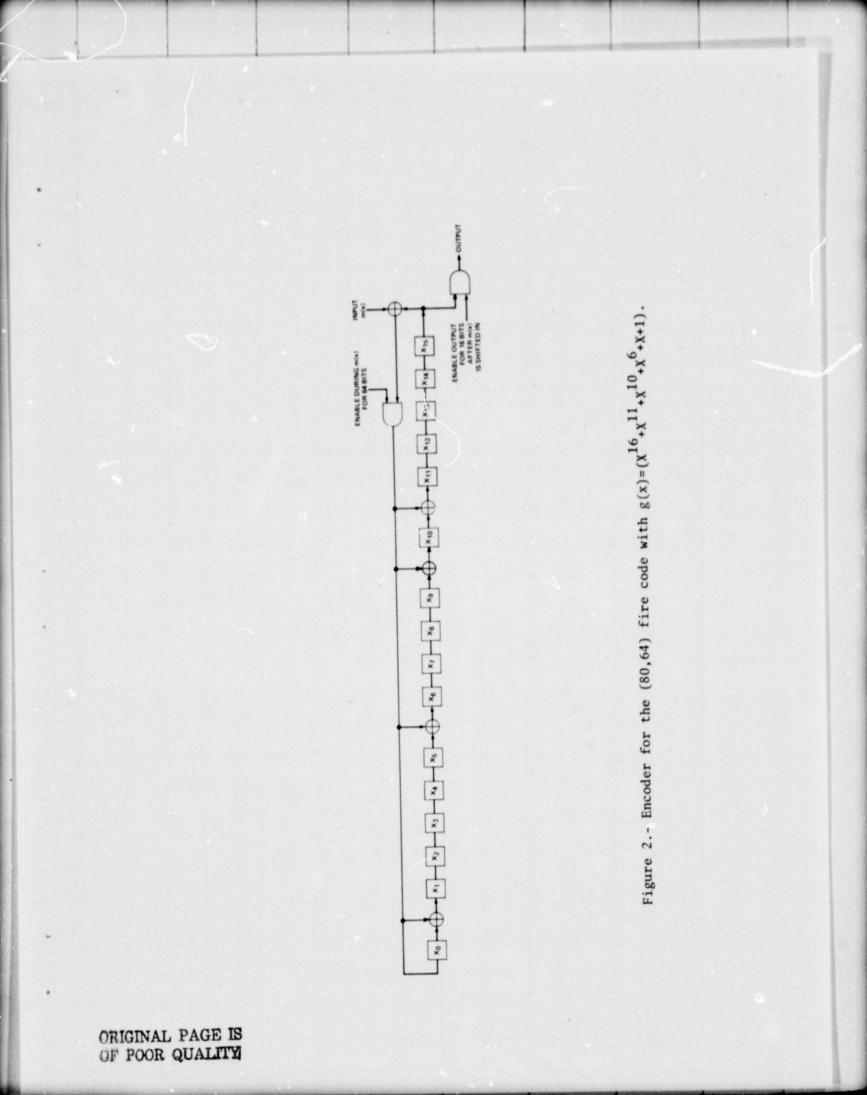
The corrections for these two error patterns are shown in figures A-2 and A-3, respectively.

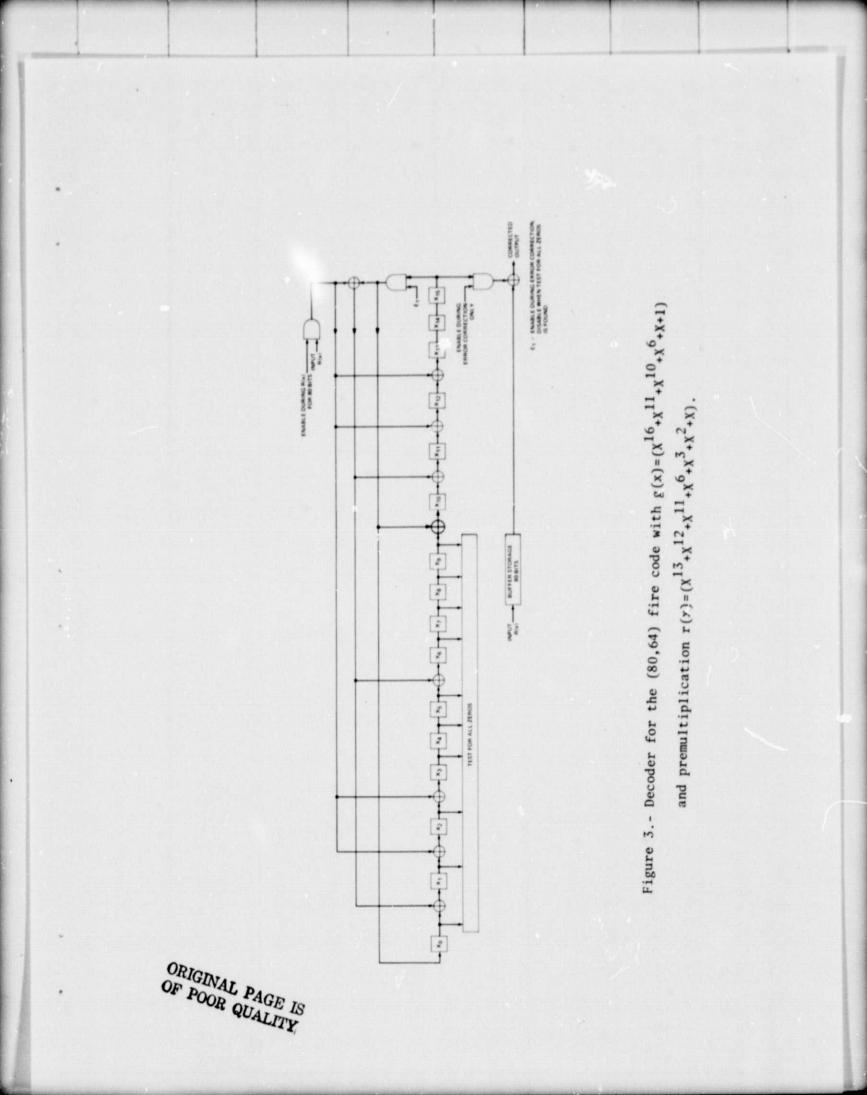
03001	REMTHIS PROGRAM COMPUTES X(EXPN) MOD G(X) BY LINEAR SHIFT
63685	REMREGISTER SEQUENCES.
03010	REMINITIALIZATION
03020	PRINT "N";
03030	INPUT N
03040	LET I=1
P3045	DIM X(50)
63050	FOR J=0 TO 16
03051	x(J)=0
03052	NEXT J
03060	REMSHIFT RIGHT SUBT.
03065	x(16)=x(15)
03066	x(15)=x(14)
03067	x(14)=x(13)
03068	x(13) * x(12)
03069	x(12)*x(11)
03080	IF X(16)=X(10) GOTO 83
03081	x(11)=1
03082	GOTO 90
63083	X(11)=0
03090	IF X(16)=X(9) GOTO 93
03091	X(10)=1
03092	GOTO 100
63693	x(10)=0
03100	x(9)=x(8)
03110	x(8)=x(7)
2 3120	X(7)=X(6)
03130	IF X(16)=X(5) GOTO 133
03131	x(6)=1
03132	GOTO 140
03133	x(6)=ť
03140	X(5)=X(4)
03150	x(4) = x(3)
03160	x(3)=x(2)
03170	x(?)=x(1)
03180	IF X(16)=X(0) GOTO 183
03181	x(1)=1
03182	GOTO 190
03183	X(1)=0 IF X(16)=I GOTO 193 PRECEDING PAGE BLANK NOT FILMED
03190	
03191	x(0)=1
03192	GOTO 210
P3193	x(0)=0
03200	REMEND OF SHIFT RIGHT SUBT.
03205	LET X(16)=0
03210	LET I=P
03220	LET N=N=1
03230	IF N>=0 GOTO 65
03240	PRINT "X(0), X(1),, X(15)"
03241	
03242	
Ø3250	PRINT
03260	GOTO 20
63999	END

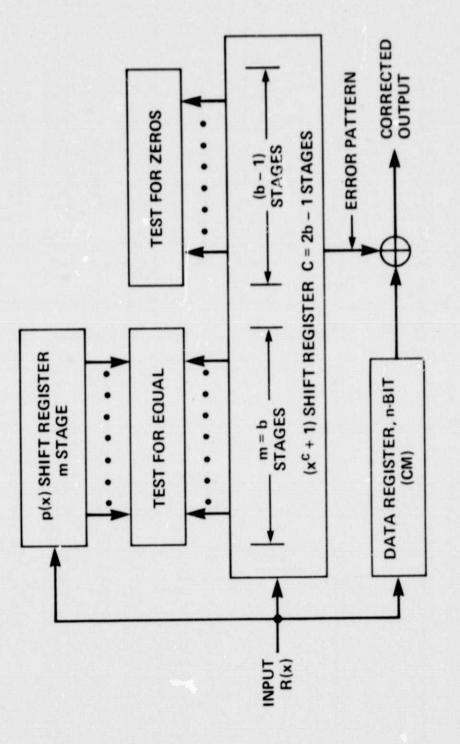
Figure 1.- A basic program to calculate  $x^{566}$  modulo

 $g(x)=x^{16}+x^{11}+x^{10}+x^{6}+x+1$ .

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,

Figure 4.- High-speed decoder for the fire code.

