

# THERMAL DESIGN METHODOLOGY FOR ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper presents the thermal design methodology used to design a multi-processor enterprise server, the RP8400. The proposed methodology combines well-known analytical and experimental thermal design tools, including heat transfer correlations, Flow Network Modeling (FNM) and Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) techniques, and experimental measurements. The key benefit of this methodology is its emphasis on the use of varied design tools, each applied at its optimal point in the product design cycle. Thus, analysis time is greatly reduced, with acceptable sacrifice to accuracy and detail, during the earliest stages of design when the design concept is fluid, new ideas abound, and speed is paramount. Detailed analyses, providing a greater degree of accuracy, are performed in the latter stages of the development cycle when designs are firm, changes are fewer, and optimization/validation is the goal. In this manner, thermal risk is systematically reduced throughout the product design cycle. This paper begins with an overview of the thermal design methodology. Direct application of the methodology to the design of an enterprise server, the RP8400, is discussed. Numerical modeling and empirical results are presented and compared, followed by a discussion of methods for improving thermal design in future products.*

**KEY WORDS:** FNM, CFD, Thermal Design, Electronics Cooling, System Analysis

## NOMENCLATURE

CEC	core electronics complex chip
cfm	cubic feet per minute
CPU	central processing unit
DIMM	Dual In-Line Memory Module
EMI	electro-magnetic interference
HS	heatsink
IO	input output or IO chip
GB	gigabyte
lfm	linear feet per minute
MEM CON	memory controller chip
P	power (W)
PCB	printed circuit board

PDH	processor dependent hardware
Q	volumetric flowrate (cfm)
Spec	specification limit
VRM	voltage regulation module
X BAR	Cross Bar chip

## Greek symbols

$\Delta T$	temperature difference ( $^{\circ}C$ )
$\Theta$	thermal resistance ( $^{\circ}C/W$ )

## Subscripts

a	room ambient
bench	bench measurement
ch	case to heatsink
ha	heatsink to room ambient
j	junction
jc	junction to case
max	maximum
sys	system

## INTRODUCTION

The ultimate goal of system thermal design is not the prediction of component temperatures, but rather the reduction of thermally associated risk to the product [1]. This risk, inherent to today's power-packed electronic systems, is manifested by compromised designs that do not meet projected schedules due to unforeseen thermal and/or reliability issues. Thermal design, therefore, is the process by which engineers use temperature and airflow predictions to uncover potential risk areas and develop feasible solutions as early as possible in the product design cycle. Ultimately, the goal of this effort is to provide optimal designs that meet or exceed projected schedules and component requirements.

Many tools exist to assist thermal design engineers during this process, including heat transfer correlations, Flow Network Modeling (FNM), Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD), and experimental measurement techniques. The key to efficient and comprehensive thermal design is not, necessarily, the choice of the "best" tool for design, but rather the optimized integration of available tools.

This paper presents the thermal design methodology used to design the RP8400 enterprise server. Possessing a maximum power per area rating of over 800 W/ft<sup>2</sup>, the RP8400 required careful thermal analyses in order to meet its aggressive project schedule. Relying upon the methodology presented herein, the thermal designer was able to systematically reduce risk throughout the product design cycle, culminating in a design that met the project schedule while requiring no changes to component thermal solutions, air movers, or layout.

### METHODOLOGY SUMMARY

Biber & Belady [2] first introduced a thermal design methodology that later evolved into the “Enhanced Product Design Cycle” [3] as discussed in this paper. According to this method, the development cycle is comprised of three distinct phases: Concept Development, Detailed Design, and Hardware Test. During each phase, the most applicable and expedient thermal design tools are used, as proposed in Figure 1. Thus, the methodology promotes a “fluid” process in which the predictions of tools used in the first phase are compared with subsequent predictions as the design enters the next phase and new tools are adopted.

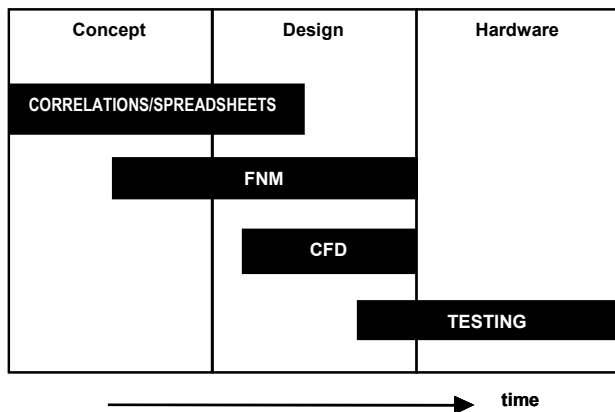


Fig. 1 Enhanced Product Development Cycle [3]

#### Concept Development

The Concept Development Phase is the initial stage in the product design cycle. At the start of this phase, the product concept is in its infancy. This phase is characterized by rapidly changing product layouts and requirements as representatives from all disciplines meet to discuss requirements and to develop new ideas. Here, the goal of the thermal designer is to thoroughly, yet rapidly, analyze scenarios and offer design suggestions for improvement in real time. This phase concludes in a single product layout that meets or exceeds the all requirements. At the conclusion of this phase, the thermal designer has:

- (1) completed a mechanical layout (board through product level) able to support the power dissipation of the unit
- (2) completed air-mover selection (size, number, location, and orientation)
- (3) sized and placed critical component heat sinks, insuring that adequate volume is available
- (4) estimated the air temperature rises through all exhaust paths of the product

- (5) identified areas of thermal risk, proposing design requirements necessary to mitigate these risks

**Concept Development Phase Thermal Tools.** Based upon their ease of use, quick solve times, and limited required input data (usually geometry and fluid data only), the common tools used in this phase are generalized correlations for heat transfer and fluid flow, spreadsheets (such as heatsink design optimizers), and Flow Network Modeling (FNM) techniques. Details of FNM techniques can be found in [3], [4], and [5].

FNM techniques are easy to master, although an adequate knowledge of 2D flow paths within the system must be known or estimated upfront. FNM cannot resolve 3D flow paths-advanced techniques or additional modeling may be required if these exist. Empirical sub-system flow resistance data is not required, although flow-bench data of available sub-systems can be used if available. At a minimum, vendor air-mover data is required. For software based solvers, run times are extremely short- on the order of seconds.

#### Detailed Design

Once a single layout has been agreed upon, detailed design work begins in earnest. The thermal designer must now focus on identified areas of thermal risk within the product. Here, thermal analyses become more detailed (and time consuming), while results become more refined. Experimental measurement and construction of mockups of system critical areas may be required for input into models, or to gain information concerning areas of the product that are difficult to model. The ultimate goal of the thermal designer is to dig deeply into critical areas and offer design suggestions in order to facilitate an optimal product design that meets or exceeds the project schedule

**Detailed Design Phase Thermal Tools.** Tools commonly used in the electronics industry for detailed thermal design are Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) and Finite Element Analysis (FEA) solvers. Typically, these types of analyses require longer setup / solve times and more detailed input data. Three dimensional (3D) modeling or simplification of existing 3D Computer Aided Design (CAD) models may be required. User experience is required for the most accurate results. Furthermore, based upon system size and complexity, empirical sub-system flow resistance data may be required as described in [6] and [7]. This data can be gathered through flow- bench testing of fans, heat sinks and subsystems as they become available. CFD solvers marketed for the electronics industry, such as IcePak [8] and FLOTHERM [9], incorporate the ability to perform heat transfer calculations in addition to fluid flow solutions. FEA analyses may be required to solve for component, interconnect, or board temperatures once global airflow rates or heat transfer coefficients are calculated.

#### Hardware Test

Once product prototypes are available, the Hardware Test phase begins. The goal of the thermal designer here is to experimentally measure critical components and areas of risk within the product in order to verify the design. At this point,

there should be no surprises. Additionally, measurements are compared to estimates in order to “calibrate” or fine tune earlier models (calibrated models can be used in future studies). These comparisons are used to determine the accuracy of initial predictions and to help the designer develop “thermal intuition”.

Hardware Test Phase Thermal Tools. While the most common tool for temperature measurement most certainly is the thermocouple, additional tools such as thermistors, RTDs, thermochromic liquid crystals, thermopiles, and infrared imaging techniques, are also available. Detailed information concerning their use is found in [10].

Air velocity measurement is also valuable during this phase. Classis hot wire anemometers provide the most precise measurements (they can measure speed and direction), but can be fragile, difficult to calibrate, and expensive. Newer “rugged” hot wire probes are available from Cambridge Accusense Inc. These probes, packaged in an easy –to-attach sensor, measure mean air speed (straight wire only- no directional information) and temperature. [11]

### COMPUTER SYSTEM DESIGN: THE METHODOLOGY APPLIED

Front and rear isometric images of the RP8400 computer layout are shown in Figures 2 and 3. For analysis purposes, the product is broken down into two separate airflow compartments: the CPU / Power Section and the IO Bay.

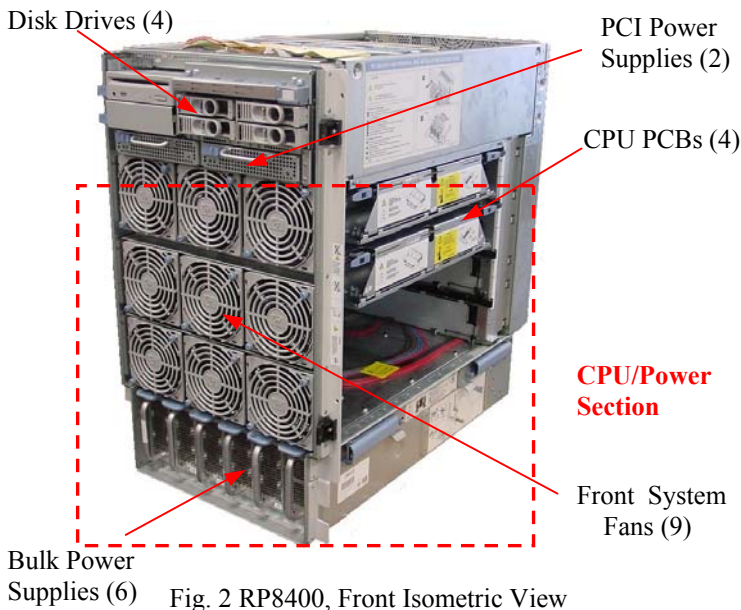


Fig. 2 RP8400, Front Isometric View

#### RP8400: Concept Development

Concept development of the RP8400 began with the general requirement to fit 16 PA-Risc microprocessors, 64 GB of memory, 4 hard-drives, 16 PCI cards and associated power conversion circuitry into an industry standard rack-mountable chassis. Since the product was to maintain the “high-availability” standard of 99.999% uptime throughout its life, the thermal performance and reliability of the product was of

the utmost importance. Additionally, the unit was to have adequate thermal and mechanical headroom for future electronic component upgrades.

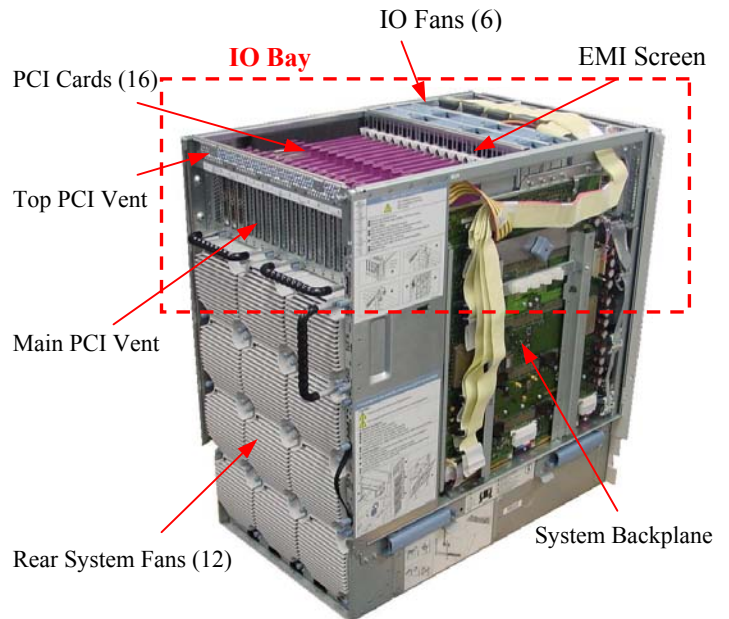


Fig. 3 RP8400, Rear Isometric View

Over the course of four months, fourteen distinct conceptual layouts, comprised of varying chassis dimensions and air movers, were developed by a multi-discipline design team. Each conceptual layout was modeled, using a commercial FNM solver called MacroFlow [12], in order to determine its thermal feasibility and identify potential risk areas. In addition to the initial release configurations, requirements for future upgrades and fan fail conditions were considered and modeled. Models were largely designed using generalized empirical correlations, geometric data from mechanical layout drawings, and vendor provided air mover data. In the case of the power supplies and decorative front bezel, existing data from a previous product design was used. Specific flow data was gathered upfront in the special case of the CPU and CEC heatsink as discussed later in this section. The CPU/Power Section flow network model for the chosen layout is shown in Figures 4. The IO Bay flow network model is shown in Figure 5.

Airflow estimates taken from the flow network models were used to predict air temperature rises through critical regions of the package as well as to estimate critical component case and junction temperatures. Worst-case component temperatures were estimated with the use of an “in-house” heatsink design spreadsheet and specific ASIC and thermal interface data ( $T_{j\max}$ ,  $P_{\max}$ ,  $\Theta_{jc}$ ,  $\Theta_{ch}$ ) described by Equation 1:

$$T_j = (T_a)_{\max} + (\Theta_{jc} + \Theta_{ch} + \Theta_{ha}) \times P_{\max} \quad \text{Eq. 1}$$

Thermal resistance,  $\Theta$ , is defined by Equation 2:

$$\Theta = \Delta T / P \quad \text{Eq. 2}$$

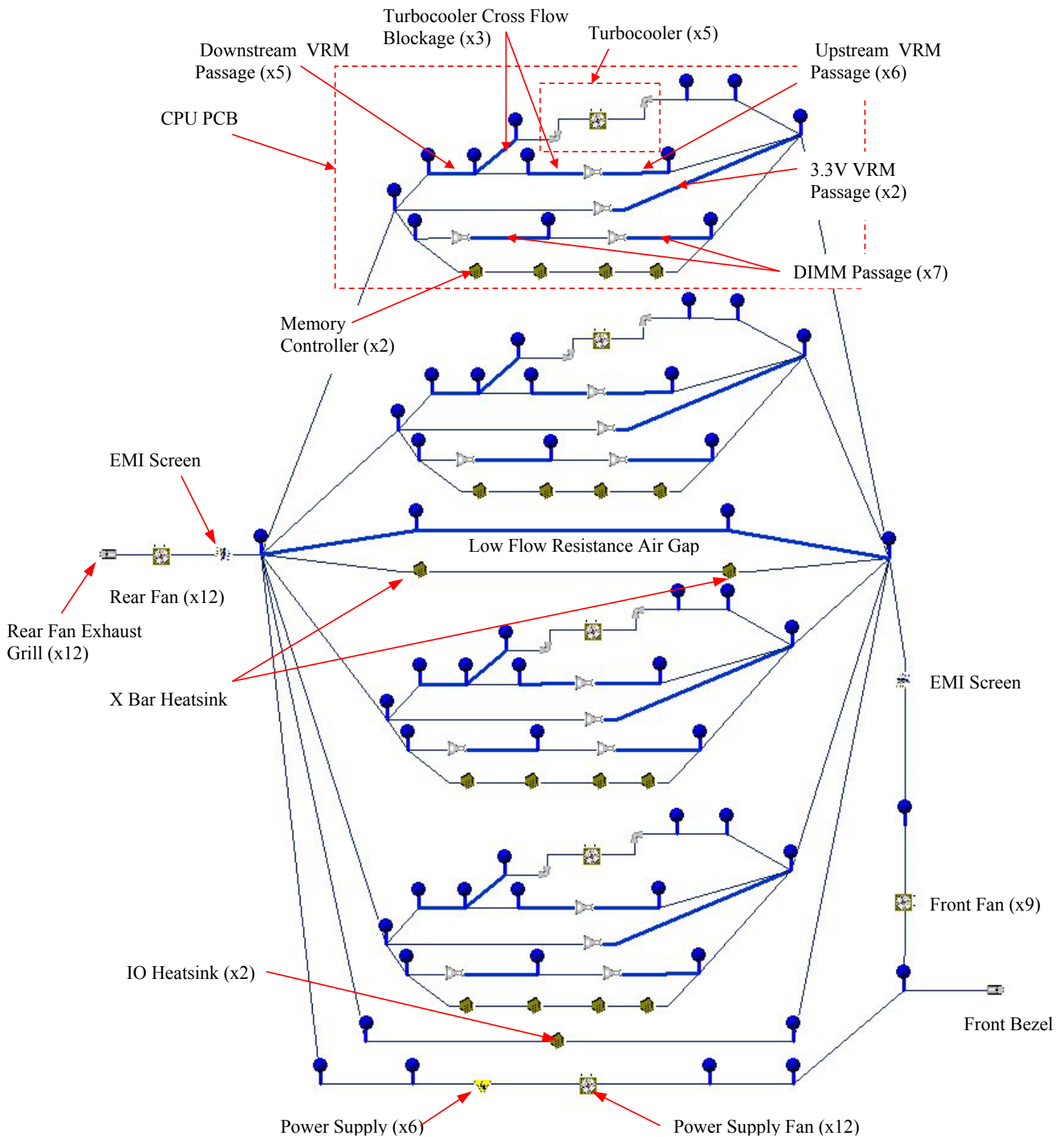


Fig. 4 CPU/Power Section Flow Network Model  
 [Note: Values in parenthesis, (x #), indicate repeated components operating in parallel]

In this manner, the thermal feasibility of each layout was determined. Layouts determined to be thermally impractical were either modified or eliminated from further consideration.

One challenge in modeling the RP8400 as a flow network was accurately representing the fan-in-heatsinks, called ‘Turbocoolers’, used to cool the CPUs and CEC chips [13].

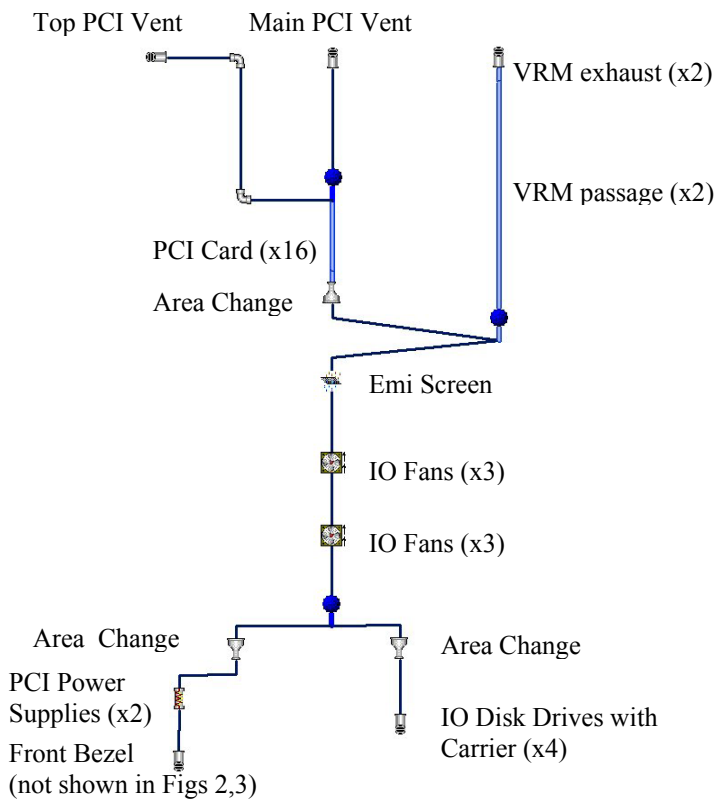


Fig. 5 IO Bay Flow Network Model

Since available space on the CPU PCB was small due to the requirements for memory and power conversion, the CPU/CEC heatsink design was extremely limited in volume (Figure 6). It was quickly determined that a passive heatsink would not suffice with available space, airflow, and preheat; each CPU and CEC chip would require its own fan for enhanced local cooling. At the outset, it was conjectured that the Turbocoolers would experience performance degradation when operating in the densely populated system. Thus, it was deemed critical to make upfront modeling estimates of the operating capability of the Turbocoolers within the system.

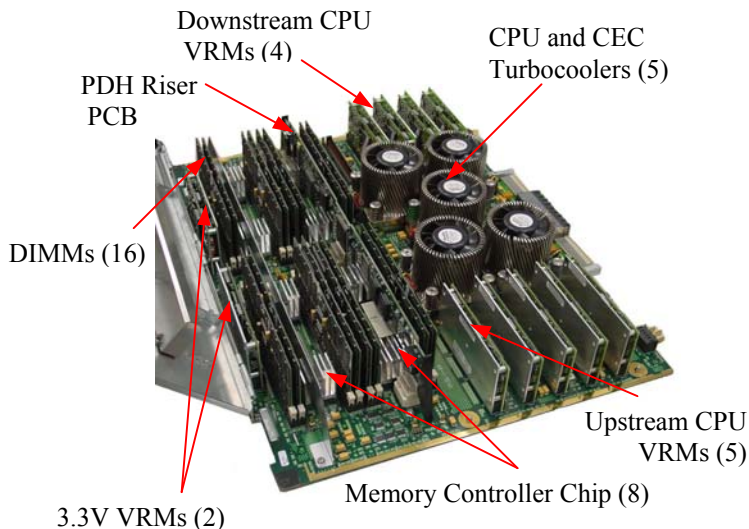


Fig. 6 CPU PCB, Top View

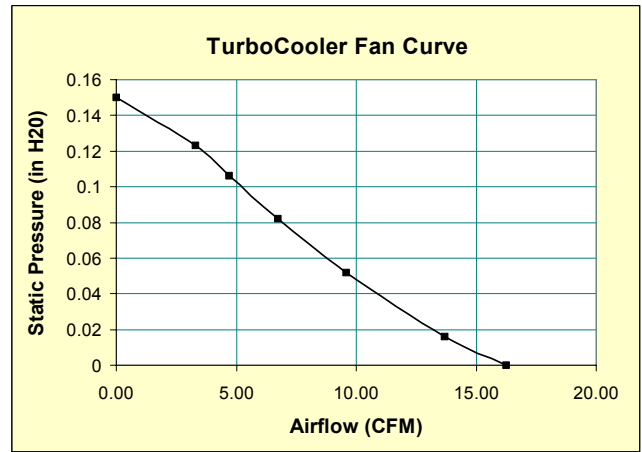


Fig. 7 Turbocooler Fan Curve

As stated previously, flow network modeling techniques require that airflow paths are primarily 2D. Clearly, the radial flow emanating from a Turbocooler does not fit this criterion. Additionally, modeling the resistance to flow due to the intricate geometry of the Turbocooler fins is not straightforward. Thus, a scheme was developed to model the Turbocooler thermal performance within the flow network model making use of available bench measured Turbocooler flow and thermal resistance data.

This method required modeling the Turbocooler in the network model as a fan possessing the pressure and flow characteristics of the Turbocooler fan- that is the fan curve as measured with the fan housed in the Turbocooler fins. The measured Turbocooler fan curve is shown in Figure 7.

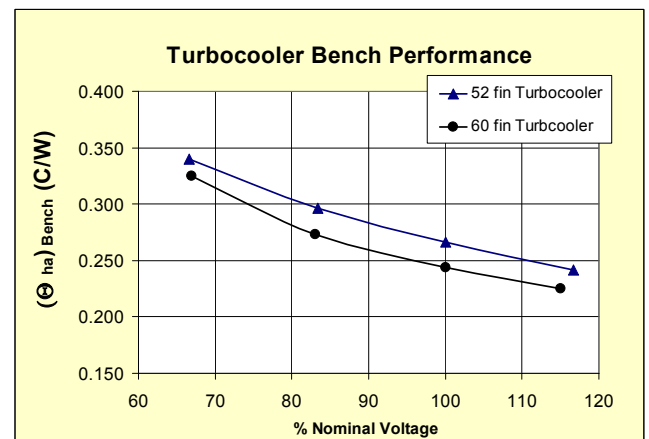


Fig. 8 Turbocooler Bench Thermal Resistance Curve

After solving the system network model, resultant airflow through each Turbocooler ( $Q_{sys}$ ) was used with the open volume bench measured Turbocooler airflow ( $Q_{bench}$ ) to perform first-order scaling, using Equation 3, on the bench measured Turbocooler thermal resistance curve ( $[\Theta_{ha}]_{bench}$ ), shown in Figure 8:

$$[\Theta_{ha}]_{sys} = [\Theta_{ha}]_{bench} \times Q_{bench} / Q_{sys} \quad \text{Eq. 3}$$

It was found that this approach adequately replicated Turbocooler performance when operating within the system, as discussed in the Results Section.

### RP8400: Detailed Design

Once the conceptual layout was chosen, the thermal designer began to concentrate on the areas of thermal risk identified in the initial modeling effort. In order to do this, more detailed modeling techniques were employed. Emphasis was placed on developing CFD models and on taking measurements within a mockup system.

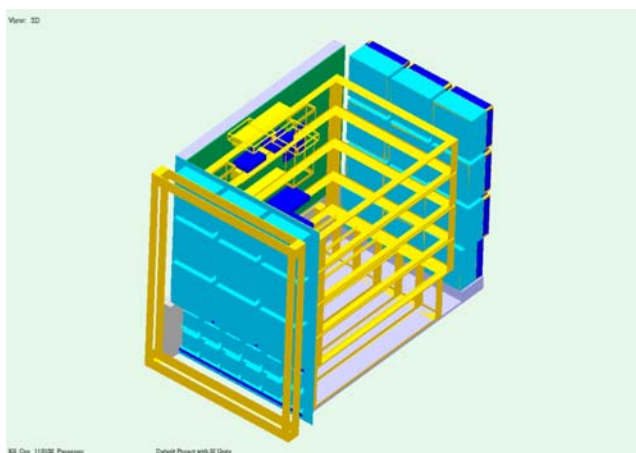


Fig. 9 CPU/Power Section CFD System Model Geometry

CFD Modeling. CFD modeling was accomplished, using a commercial CFD software package called FLOTHERM, in two stages: system level and detailed modeling. First, system level models were constructed for the two major airflow sections of the product: the IO bay and the CPU/Power section. These models were constructed in order to verify results of the flow network models and to identify possible flow phenomena (recirculation areas, 3D flow paths) not visible using FNM techniques. Because of the size and complexity of the RP8400, specific geometry was not modeled in the system level models since the resulting grid structures necessary to produce accurate results would be too cumbersome to solve. Instead, major sub-systems, such as the CPU PCBs, power supplies, hard drives, the decorative front bezel, and fan grills, were measured on a flow-bench as they became available and modeled as volume resistances as discussed in [6] and [7].

In the interests of time, heatsinks modeled in the heatsink design spreadsheet were not measured on a flow bench, but rather volume source coefficients were calculated directly from spreadsheet data and used in CFD models. (Through previous work on numerous projects, the spreadsheet tool had been validated.) Additionally, CFD models were generally not solved for heat transfer effects in order to reduce set up and modeling time. In this manner, two simplified system level CFD models were constructed and solved. The CPU/Power Section system level model geometry is shown in Figure 9. The IO Bay system level model is shown in Figure 10.

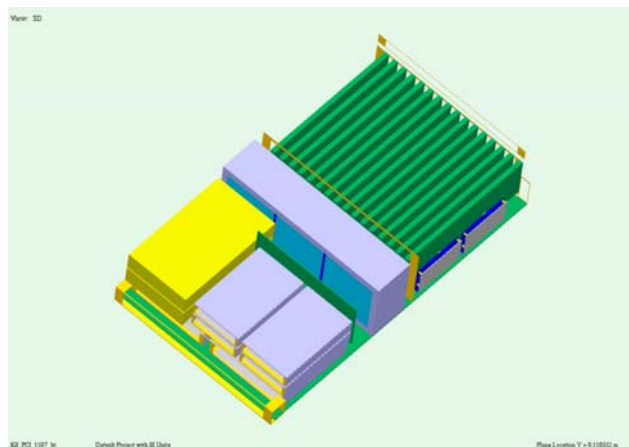


Fig. 10 IO Bay CFD System Model Geometry

The second stage of the CFD modeling effort consisted of constructing a detailed model of the CPU PCB. Airflow over the board was taken from the system level model and replicated as fixed flow devices in the board level model. Due to modeling uncertainties, it was decided to model the five Turbocoolers as a single volume resistance in order to replicate their effect and gain accurate and detailed modeling data on the flow characteristics over the remainder of the PCB. The CPU PCB CFD model geometry is shown in Figure 11.

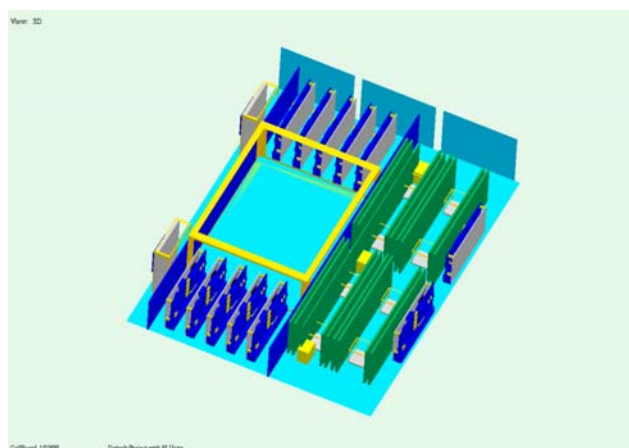


Fig. 11 CPU PCB CFD Detailed Model Geometry

Thermal Mockup. Due to uncertainties surrounding modeling of Turbocoolers, the designer decided that upfront empirical measurements were needed in order to verify the thermal performance of the Turbocoolers as predicted by the flow network models. Thus, the designer constructed a thermal mockup chassis, as shown in Figure 12. Heat sources made from thin film resistive heaters were used to thermally replicate CPUs and critical electrical components. Prototype heatsinks were constructed and attached to FR4 boards in order to replicate the PCBs in the system. Prototype power supplies were used to replicate their effect on system airflow. Temperature and airflow measurements were taken in the mockup chassis and compared with earlier predictions. Furthermore, the mockup enabled upfront acoustic measurements to be taken to obtain a first pass estimate of the

acoustic signature of the unit. (It was recognized that the mockup acoustic signature would differ from the actual chassis due to differences in material and mounting hardware.)

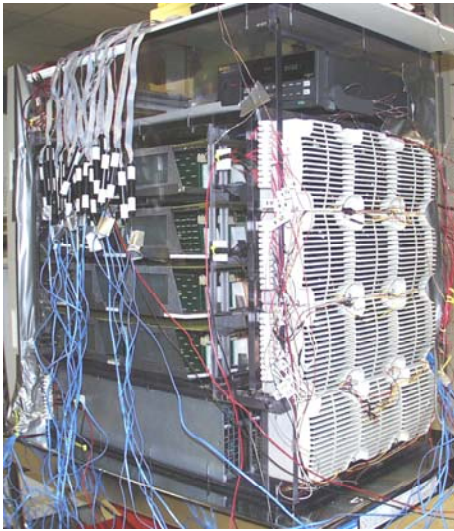


Fig. 12 RP8400 Thermal Mockup

### RP 8400: Hardware Test

Once a prototype system was available, the thermal design effort shifted focus once again. Emphasis moved to collecting temperature and airflow measurements within the actual system. The system was fully instrumented with 150 thermocouples and 46 hotwire anemometers in order to obtain a complete thermal profile. Results measured at 5000 ft altitude were extrapolated to worst-case conditions of 35°C ambient and maximum power using Equation 1. Extrapolated results were then compared with component specifications for design verification.

## RESULTS

### Airflow

Volumetric airflow predictions of flow network and CFD models are compared in Table 1. Percent difference calculations were made using equation 4:

$$\% \text{ Difference} = [1 - \text{CFD}/\text{FNM}] \times 100 \quad \text{Eq. 4}$$

Volumetric airflow rates predicted by FNM and CFD modeling techniques were within +22 and -40%. The largest deviations were seen in the area of the bulk power supplies. These deviations are most probably due to the use of “typical” power supply flow vs. pressure drop data in the flow network models, as prototype power supplies were not yet available. CFD modeling, which occurred later in the design process, utilized flow data from an actual prototype power supply.

Air speed estimates are compared with measured values in Table 2. Air speed estimates were critical to the system design because heatsinks (not including Turbocoolers) and board level VRMs were developed based on these estimates. Airspeed results from FNM, CFD, and empirical measurement were in general agreement except near the exhaust of the

Table 1. Volumetric Airflow Predictions

CPU/Power Section	FNM cfm	CFD cfm	% Difference
Main Bezel	740	780	-5
CPU Board	110	120	-9
IO HS	7.8	7.9	-1
X BAR HS	28	25	+11
DIMM	1.6	1.9	-19
MEM CON HS PDH	2.7	2.1	+22
MEM CON HS Non PDH	2.7	3.1	-15
Bulk Power Supplies	21	27	-29
Bulk Power Supply Fan*	10	14	-40
Front System Fan *	68	68	0
Rear System Fan*	62	65	-5
<b>IO Bay</b>			
PCI Power Supply	37	30	+19
Disk drives	7.2	8.8	-22
PCI Slots	5.3	5.1	+4
IO Bay Fan*	30	37	-23

\* Fan operating point

Turbocoolers where 2D modeling techniques could not completely represent the 3D flow present there. Since MacroFlow fan icons allow only a single entrance and exhaust path for the airflow through the fan (Figure 4), generic nodes were used at the exit point of the Turbocooler fans to give the exiting airflow paths downstream (through the downstream CPU VRMs) and *back upstream* (through the upstream CPU VRMs). While this FNM technique was used in an effort to replicate the radial exhaust of the Turbocoolers, it could not fully mimic the 3D effects of the flow.

Table 2. Airspeed Predictions

CPU/Power Section		FNM lfm	CFD lfm	Proto lfm
Approach IO		380	450	510
Approach X BAR		500	490	570
Approach MEM CON	PDH	310	250	290
Approach MEM CON	Non PDH	310	350	360
3.3V VRM		690	600	510
Upstream CPU VRM		530	400	150
Downstrm CPU VRM		1300	450	330
<b>IO Bay</b>				
PCI Power Supply		400	510	460
IO VRM		340	440	330
PCI Slots		420	420	340

Due to the lack of time and resources to develop an adequate CFD compact Turbocooler model, the Turbocooler region was modeled as a volume resistance in the CPU PCB detailed CFD model (Figure 11). While this method produced greater accuracy in CPU VRM airspeeds than the FNM, it also did not fully replicate the effect of Turbocooler exhaust on upstream CPU VRM flow and overestimated airflow past these components. However, because these modeling difficulties

were realized at the outset, the designer used judgment based upon experience to adjust early airflow speed estimates given to VRM vendors so as not to over predict available airflow in these areas.

With the exception of the Turbocooler region, the CPU PCB CFD model included more detailed geometry information than the system level models and thus provided a more accurate picture of the airflow over the CPU board. In addition to helping to substantiate the FNM estimates, the CFD CPU Board model pointed to a flow phenomenon not visible in the flow network models. The CFD model was able to reproduce a reduced airflow area through one row of four memory controller chips due to the obstruction of the three PDH Riser Board connectors, as shown in Figure 13. Because the channels between the DIMMs were modeled in FNM (and not the actual board geometry), this obstruction could have been overlooked if detailed CFD modeling had not been accomplished.

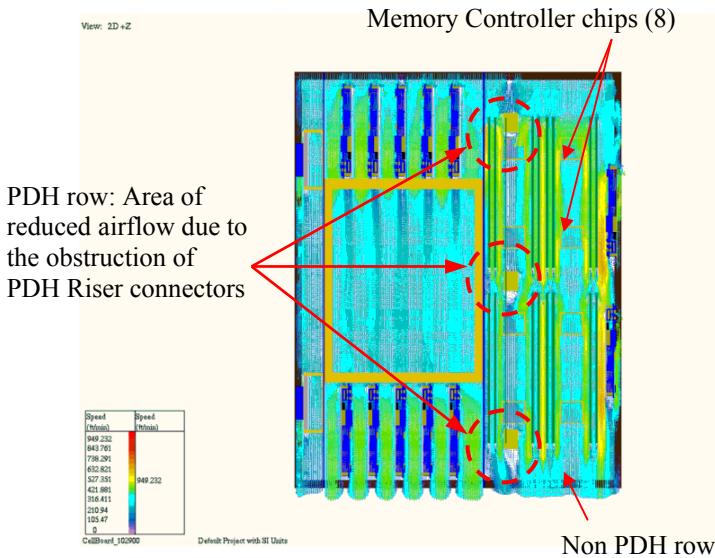


Fig. 13 CPU Board CFD Resultant Flow Vectors

### Temperature

Component case temperature estimates are compared with measurements made on the thermal mockup and prototype unit in Table 3. Component case temperatures were estimated from predicted airflow values taken from FNM and CFD models using an “in-house” heatsink spreadsheet. Component case and/or heatsink temperatures were measured on the thermal mockup and prototype unit. Reported case temperatures are extrapolated to worst case environmental and power conditions. Error on measured temperatures is +/- 1°C. For components oriented in a series configuration (cross bar chip, memory controller chip), temperatures shown correspond to the furthest downstream component.

Although there were discrepancies between measured temperatures and predicted values, the goal of the design effort was accomplished: all measured temperatures were below maximum specifications. As a result, the product was successfully released requiring no changes to the system.

Table 3. Component Case Temperatures at 35°C Room Ambient

		FNM °C	CFD °C	Mockup °C	Proto °C	Spec °C
IO		61	59	58	62	86
X BAR		68	68	69	71	82
CPU	52 fins	80	NA	78	NA	81
	60 fins	77	NA	NA	76	81
CEC	52 fins	60	NA	63	NA	81
	60 fins	58	NA	NA	68	81
MEM CON	PDH	84	91	NA	74	84
MEM CON	Non PDH	84	80	NA	71	84

Temperature predictions based upon FNM and CFD generally agreed, largely because airflow predictions by both methods were quite close. Temperature predictions based upon modeling results also agreed quite well with temperatures measured in the thermal mockup. In the case of the memory controller, CFD predicted lower air velocities across those chips blocked by PDH Riser Board connectors. Thus, predicted case temperatures for those chips affected by connector blockages were higher.

The largest deviations are seen in comparing predicted temperatures to temperatures measured in the prototype system. The worst-case deviation of 44%, based the case temperature rise over ambient, was seen in the prediction of the CEC chip case temperature. In this case, the prediction underestimated the measured temperature.

There are many possible reasons for these discrepancies. First, the complex airflow existing in the system, due largely to the radial exhaust pattern of the Turbocoolers, made precise modeling difficult. While Turbocooler FNM modeling techniques appear to predict worst-case CPU Turbocooler temperatures adequately, it fell short in reflecting the 3D geometry factors that affect the performance of the CEC Turbocooler. It appears that the performance of the CEC Turbocooler, positioned in the center of the four CPU Turbocoolers (Figure 6), is degraded due to reduced exhaust volume and impinging exhaust flow from neighboring Turbocoolers. This degradation of performance based upon position was not reflected in modeling results, but was shown in both mockup and prototype measurements. Interestingly, a comparison between mockup data (equipped with lower performing 52 fin Turbocoolers) and prototype data (equipped higher performing 60 fin Turbocoolers) showed the CEC Turbocooler to perform worse in the prototype while the CPU Turbocoolers performed better. This effect may be a result of increased impinging exhaust flow from the surrounding CPU Turbocoolers. Increased flow through the 60 fin Turbocooler may result from the increased open area (reduced flow resistance) created from cutting of additional fins into the Turbocooler body.

Second, modeled heat sinks and those used in the thermal mockup did not completely reflect the final mechanical attach features such as springs and screws required to mount the heat sinks to the board. These features block airflow and reduce available heat transfer surface area due to necessary relief areas in heatsink fin structure, as shown in Figure 14. In some cases, the blockage to airflow is significant. Because these features were not completely designed at the time thermal mockup measurements were taken, mocked up heat sinks did not fully replicate the final design and thus did not reflect these flow blockages. This error could have been reduced, if resources allowed, using the advanced modeling techniques and heatsink flow-bench testing discussed in [6] and [7].



Fig. 14 Cross Bar Chip Heatsink

Third, component power measurements taken on the prototype unit, necessary to extrapolate temperature to a worst power estimate, were accurate to +/- 10% and therefore incurred error on the prototype case temps reported. In the case of the IO and memory controller chips, a power measurement was not possible. Therefore, power dissipated by these chips was estimated by other means, resulting in a discrepancy between predicted and actual values.

Finally, because the thermal design was performed in parallel with the mechanical design, thermal models and measurements represent snapshots of component temperatures at that point in the design cycle. Design tradeoffs, made continually during the course of the design, affect the final prototype temperature measurements. Therefore, reported prototype temperature measurements represent the culmination of numerous design tradeoffs. Design tradeoffs made during the course of this design not reflected in modeling or mockup measurements are: heatsink base reduction for PCB weight reduction purposes, heatsink material changes for more cost effective manufacturing, and eliminating chassis perforation holes for structural / EMI concerns and product label placement.

### CONCLUSIONS

A system level thermal design methodology is presented and applied to the design of a multi-processor enterprise server, the RP8400. The focus of the proposed methodology is the systematic reduction of product risk through the careful application of available thermal design tools and techniques.

Applied to the design of the RP8400, the methodology is shown to provide adequate results for the thermal design of large systems possessing complex 3D flow patterns. The key advantages of the proposed methodology are that it:

- (1) enables a low risk design which meets project schedules without necessarily exact temperature / airflow predictions
- (2) utilizes an optimum combination of design tools in order to increase productivity and reduce design time
- (3) exhibits no *a priori* preference for a given design tool; emphasizes the use of whichever tool which makes sense at the time

Finally, increased accuracy over reported results can be obtained, as resources permit, through the more frequent application of detailed modeling techniques (CFD, FEA) and sub-system testing.

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