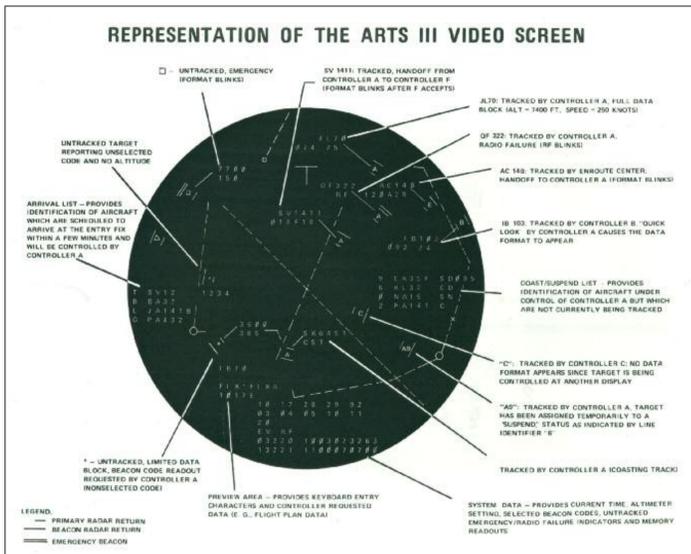


Landing Planes for 40 Years: Air Traffic Control (ATC)

Until the 1960s, coordinating aircraft at an airport was a manual operation. With more flights, cluttered radar screens and occasional accidents, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) realized it was time for a faster, more efficient system. They turned to UNIVAC who then developed the very first computerized air traffic control system. Developed in Minnesota, by UNIVAC engineers, the Automated Radar Terminal Control System (ARTS I) was installed in Atlanta, GA, in 1966.



Above: Two views out of the Chicago O'Hare airport air traffic control tower with radar screen in view. The NTDS system provided the company with the baseline technology used for the ARTS I system.



Left: A diagram explaining the various readings on the video screen of the successor to ARTS I: ARTS III. It provided the controllers with aircraft type, flight number, position, altitudes, and speed as airplanes approached the airport. It also provided warnings for potential collisions.

If you have flown any time since the late 50s, part of your flight has been under the control of systems developed by Remington Rand, Univac, etc.

Lowell Benson
Former Unisys
Systems Engineer

From the VIP Club
(retired employees)
website

UNIVAC and its successor companies continued to support Air Traffic Control (ATC) operations over the years. ARTS I was later replaced by ARTS III, which was rolled out in 1971. This was an incredibly reliable system (99.9%), which was designed to reconfigure failing units and resume ATC operations in ten seconds. While a number of operational enhancements were installed over the years, the core ATC system remained in place for over 40 years.

Below: Sunset out of the Chicago O'Hare ATC tower. Derivatives of the ARTS III served as a world model for ATC. Numerous foreign governments including Japan, Korea, and Germany purchased ATC systems.

