

A Probabilistic Formulation of Murphy Dynamics as Applied to the Analysis of Operational Research Problems

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Abstract

The author contends that the formulation of Murphy's Law as presently accepted in the open literature is useful only as a general statement of life patterns, but meaningless to the application of operational research problems. In fact, the direct application may be dangerously wrong.

A more satisfactory statement is that if anything can go wrong, it might. This formulation not only better fits the facts of life, but can lend itself to a mathematical formulation that can be used in the analysis of operational research problems. Such a formulation is presented based on a probabilistic model of operational realizations. Numerous examples of direct applications are cited.

1. Introduction

The classical formulation of Murphy's Law as proposed by Edsall Murphy¹ is as follows:

1 · Murphy, Edsall. *The Physical Universe*. Naples, Italy: Gross-Press, July 1723.