

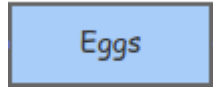
# System Dynamics PART 2

An Insight into InsightMaker  
*Dr Daniel Chalk*

First a quick recap...

# System Dynamics Building Blocks

Here are the key building blocks of a SD model :



**Stock** : A stock holds the “stuff” that is flowing around the system. Imagine a water tank.



**Flow** : Flows allow the “stuff” to move around the system. The rate at which the “stuff” flows can be controlled by the valve. Imagine water flowing through pipes.



**Variable** : A variable represents something that is not otherwise captured by the model, but will influence a stock’s level or a rate of flow.



**Link** : A link indicates that a stock’s level or a flow rate is affected by a stock’s level or a variable.

# Key “Quirks” of SD Models

SD models are a little different from the models that you’ve seen so far. In particular :

- the entities that are flowing through the model are not represented as individual entities, but as a continuous mass (think of water)
- SD models are not stochastic, but *deterministic*. That means that every time you run a SD model, you’ll get exactly the same results.
- with SD models, we’re typically interested in generally patterns / dynamics within the system, rather than accurate predictions such as “you need x doctors to meet this demand y% of the time”.

Let’s look at an example of some of these “quirks” for the Chicken and Egg model. We said that eggs take, on average, 21 days to hatch. Let’s imagine we have our time unit representing weeks (as we know chickens lay an average of 5 eggs per week).

How do you think we will describe the number of eggs hatching per week?

# Key “Quirks” of SD Models

How do you think we will describe the number of eggs hatching per week?

ANSWER : Number of Eggs / 3

WHY?

If we had 1 egg, it would take 3 weeks (21 days) to hatch. In SD world, this means that one third (or  $1/3$ ) of the egg would hatch per week.

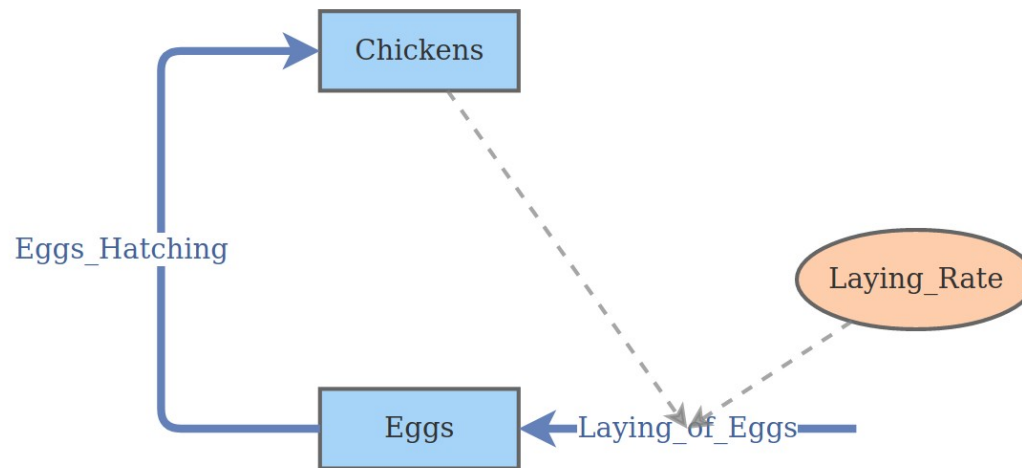
If we had 2 eggs, each week one third of each egg would hatch. Which means after week 1, we'd have two one-thirds of eggs hatched (or  $2/3$  of an egg hatched). Think about it after three weeks, we'd expect 2 chickens.  $3 \times (2/3) = 6/3 = 2$

Essentially, we're saying :

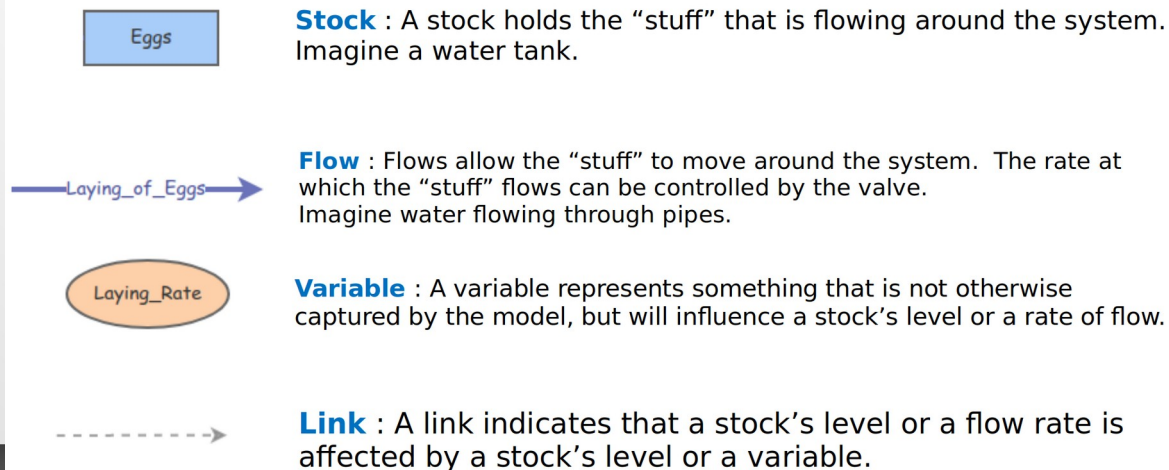
eggs hatching per week = number of eggs  $\times 1 / 3$  (a third of each egg we have).

Which we simplify to : Number of Eggs / 3

# The Chicken and Egg Model



<https://insightmaker.com/insight/112161/ChickensEggs>



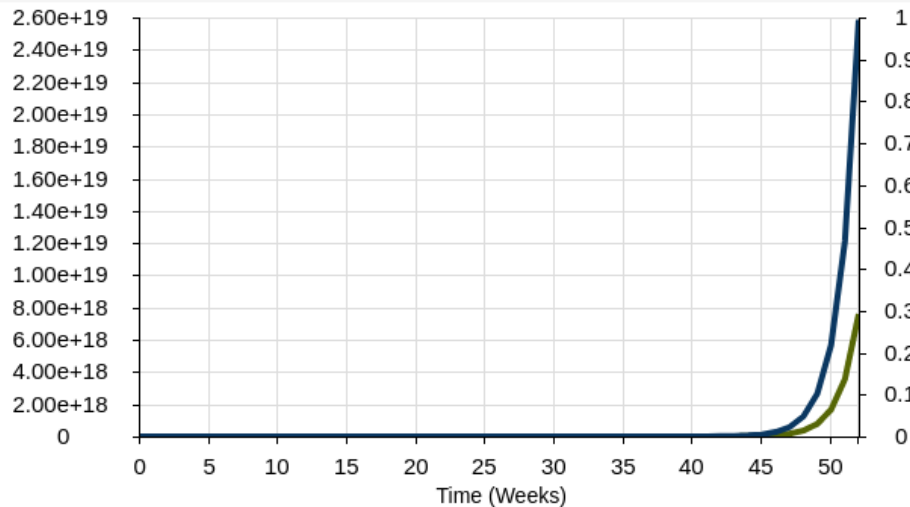
# The Chicken and Egg Model

Simulation Results 1

Add Display Configure

Default Display

New Display



100 old + (500 / 3) new

500 previous + 500 new –  
(500 / 3 ready to hatch)

Simulation Results 1

Add Display Configure

Default Display

New Display

Time	Chickens	Eggs
0	100	0
1	100	500
2	266.66666667	833.33333333
3	544.44444444	1,888.88888889
4	1,174.07407407	3,981.48148148
5	2,501.23456790	8,524.69135802
6	5,342.79835390	18,189.30041152
7	11,405.89849108	38,840.19204389

Download

Normal Speed

# Exercise 1

Your first task is to expand the chicken and egg model we previously demonstrated. You'll take a copy of the model (by "cloning" the insight) and then make the following changes to the new copy :

- Not all eggs are fertilised. Make the proportion of eggs fertilised a user-definable variable (with slider), defaulting to 1. You should only model fertilised eggs in your model.
- Chickens can either die through natural causes or predation by foxes.
- Chickens have an average lifespan of around 7 years.
- Foxes give birth to around 5 kits per year. Start with 100 foxes in the model, and no kits.
- Kits move into adulthood (when they start finding their own food) at around 12 weeks of age.
- Foxes have an average lifespan of 4 years.
- We'll make an initial assumption that each fox kills 1 chicken every 5 weeks. Make this a user definable variable (with slider).

Once you've built this new expanded model, use it to answer the following questions :

- a) Assuming all else is as above, what is the minimum proportion of eggs that need to be fertilised to ensure our chicken population doesn't die out within 1 year?
- b) If 80% of eggs were fertilised, how much more regularly would a fox need to kill a chicken to make the species extinct within a year?

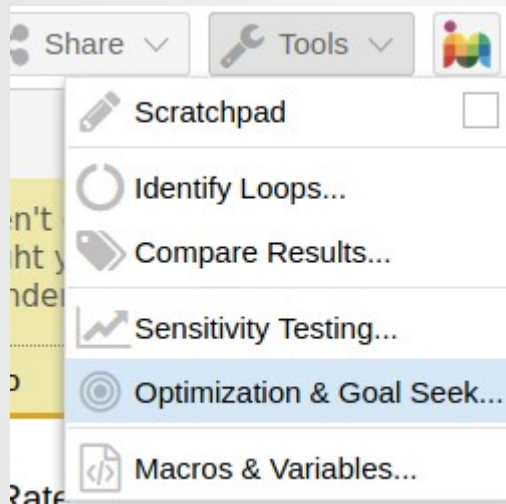
You should work in groups. You have 1 hour.



# Optimisation and Goal Seek

In the exercise, we manually tested different values in our model to answer the questions.

However, InsightMaker has a more efficient way of doing things – Goal Seek and Optimisation.



A screenshot of the 'Optimization' dialog box in InsightMaker. The 'General' tab is selected. The settings are: Goal Primitive: Chickens, Goal: Minimize, Goal Type: Final Value, and Primitives to Adjust: Fox\_Predation\_Rate. Below these settings is a table showing the optimization parameters for 'Fox\_Predation\_Rate'.

Primitive Name	Minimum Bo...	Maximum B...	Accuracy
Fox_Predation_R...	0	1	0.1

At the bottom of the dialog are 'Cancel' and 'Run Optimization' buttons.

A screenshot of the 'Optimization Results' panel in InsightMaker. The 'Summary' tab is selected. It displays the message: 'Your model has been set to the optimal solution.' Below this is a table showing the optimization results.

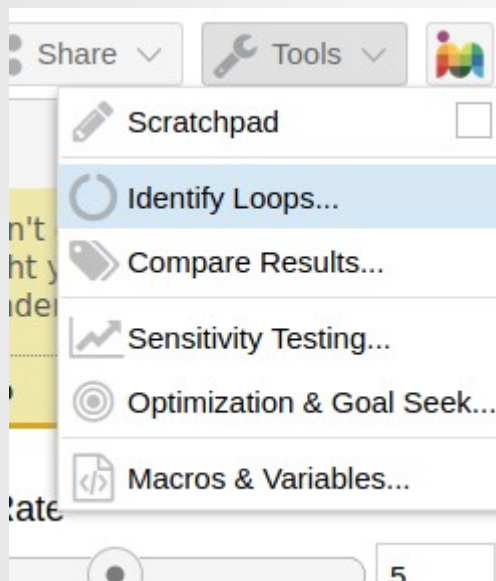
Primitive	Optimum	Range
Goal Primitive		
[Chickens]	859633531237754400	--
Changed Primitives		
[Fox_Predation_Rate]	1	0.9 - Infinity

Below the table is a note: 'Please note that the optimization algorithm is unable to fully account for local minimums or maximums. If your solution space contains such features, the algorithm may have returned erroneous results.'

At the bottom, it shows 'Optimization Duration: 0.144 seconds'.

# Automatic Loop Identification

We can also use InsightMaker to automatically identify loops in our model :



## Model Loops

### List of Loops

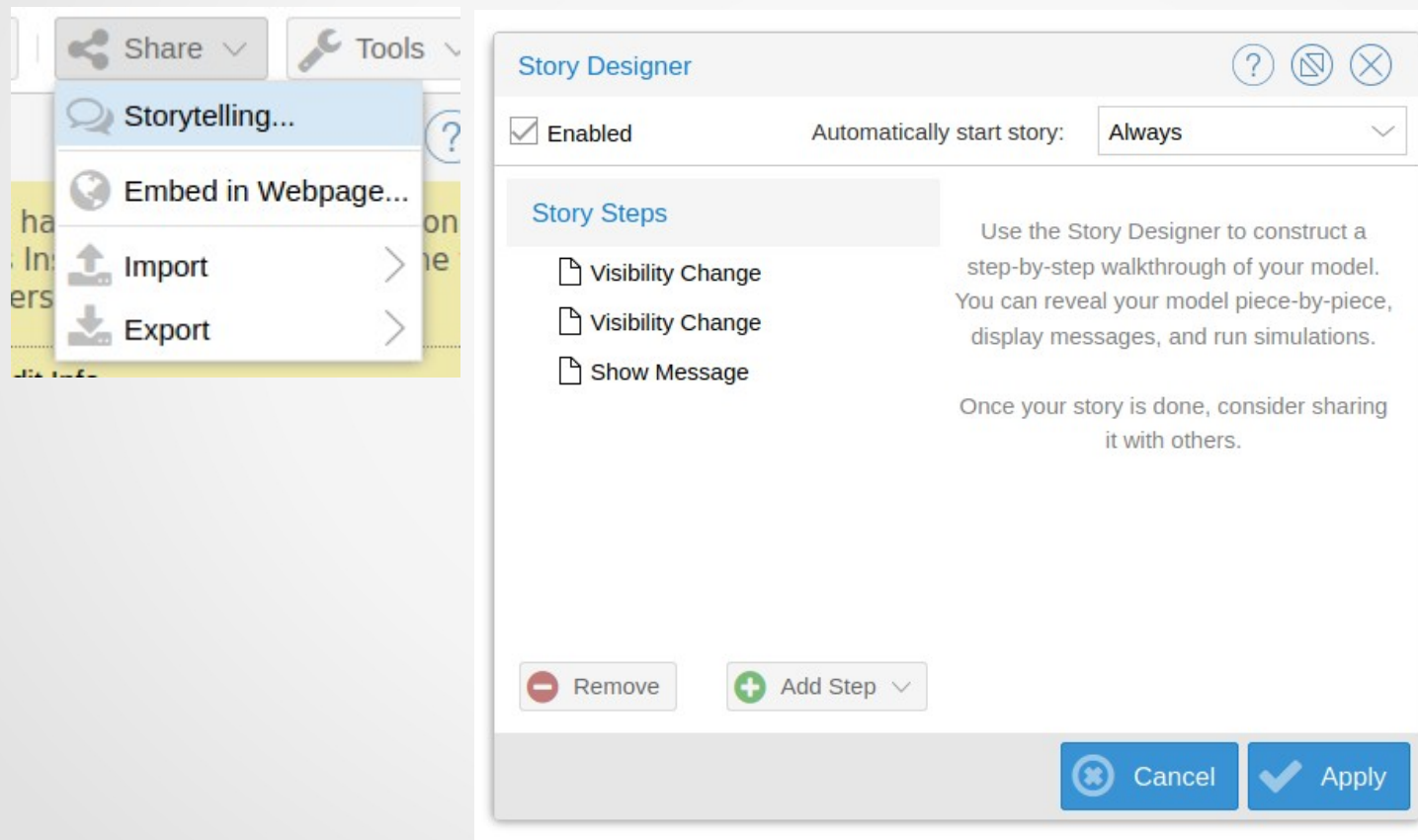
Insight Maker has identified 2 loops in the model diagram:

Chickens → Laying\_of\_Fertilised\_Eggs → Fertilised\_Eggs → Eggs\_Hatching →  
Chickens

Kits → Kits\_Reaching\_Adulthood → Foxes → Kits\_Being\_Born → Kits

# Storytelling

Storytelling is a feature that allows us to tell a story with the model, by guiding the user through a tour of the model. We can choose which bits of the model to show and when, display narrative messages, run the model at given points and more...



# Searching for Insights

Many insights that people create are shared publicly, and you can search on key words in the “Explore Insights” facility of InsightMaker.

The screenshot displays the InsightMaker website interface. At the top, a dark navigation bar contains links for Home, Groups, **Explore Insights** (highlighted with an orange circle), New Insights, and Help. On the right side of this bar are links for My Stars, About Me (with a notification badge), and Log Out. Below the navigation bar, the InsightMaker logo is visible on the left. A large banner in the center reads: "Welcome to Insight Maker: free modeling and simulation in ...". Below this banner, it says: "Get started by [creating a new Insight](#), [reading the manual](#) or checking out free videos and guides at the [Insight M...](#)". On the right side, there is a "Find Insights" section with a search input field and a "Search" button. Below the search field, it says: "Enter keywords or topics to find matching Insights." Underneath the search section is a "Popular Tags" section displaying a grid of tags such as 4V Kle, ABM, Agent-Based Model, Agriculture, AIAC, Animals, Archetype, Arquetipo Sistémico, BCTD, Behavior, Biogeochemistry, Biology, Biology: Health Care, Biomedical, Business, Causal Loop, Causal Loop Diagram, Cegep, Chaos, Circular Economy, CwIM, Climate, Clinical Care, Coronavirus, COVID-19, Crime, Decision Making, Demand, Demographics, Desert, Diabetes, Disease, Ecology, Economics, Economy, Education, Emergency, Energy, Engineering, ENVE531, Environment, Finance, Food, Food Chain, FOOD WEB, Fup, Greenhouse Effect, Growth, Health, Healthcare, Health Care, Hospital, Humanities, IACS, Infection, Inventory, ISD, KeLE ABM, Learning, Linear Economy, Macroeconomics, Management, Mat375, Mathematics, Math Modeling, Metapopulation, Methods, Ocean, Patient Flow, Performance, Perspectives, Physics, Phytoplankton, Policy, Politics, Population, Population Ecology, Population Growth, Populations, Primary Production, Regional, Rich Picture, Science, Services, SIR, SN&DD 2018, Source-sink Dynamics, Strategy, Supply, Sustainability, Systcp, System Dynamics, Systems, Systems Archetype, Systems KeLE, SystemsWiki, System Zoo, Technology, Test, and Udem.

# Exercise 2

Split into 4-5 groups. In your groups, I want you to use the Explore Insights facility to explore System Dynamics models that have been designed by other users to address COVID-related issues.

Then, pick a model that you come across and explore the model further – get a sense for how it works, what it's trying to do and the results generated by the model.

In 40 minutes, I'm going to ask you to come back, and for each group to give a short (max 5 minute) talk on the model you've selected, which should outline :

- the problem the model was trying to solve
- a brief description of how the model works
- key results / insights generated by the model
- any notable features in the model (e.g. use of storytelling to aid visualisation, other visual aspects)
- a short critical appraisal of the model (what do you think about the model? What works well? What would you have done differently?)