



## Predictive Rate Coefficient Calculations for Combustion Modeling

Judit Zádor  
Sandia National Laboratories

The Institute for Combustion and Gasdynamics (IVG)  
University of Duisburg-Essen  
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## Combustion Research Facility



America's Combustion Research Facility

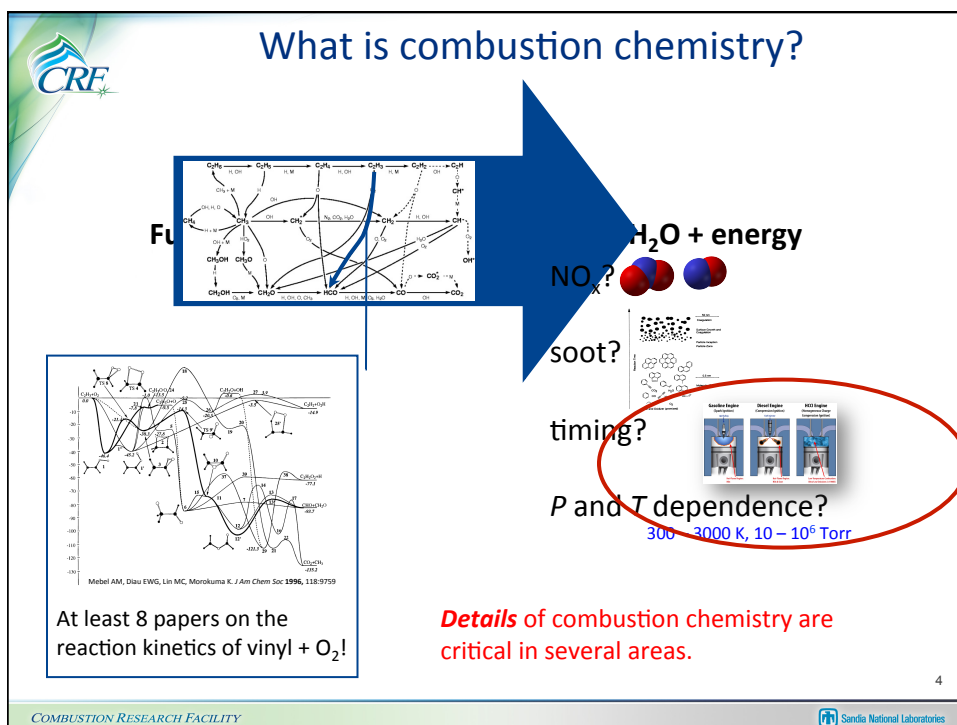
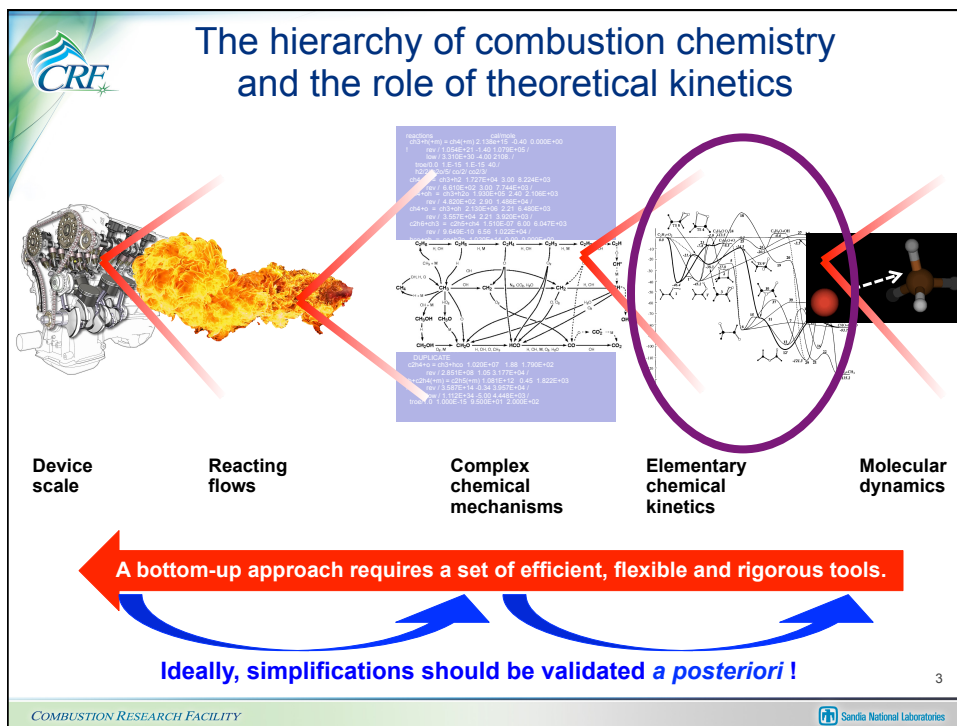
For over 30 years, the CRF has served as a national and international leader in combustion science and technology.



\*one of them...

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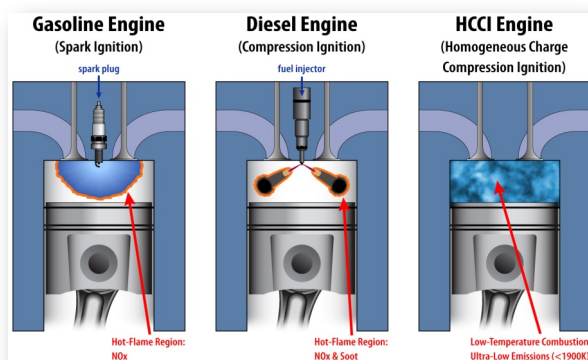






## Importance of elementary chemical kinetics in combustion and engine development

In Homogeneous Charge Compression Ignition (HCCI) engines combustion is initiated by thermal autoignition → sensitive to **molecular structure**



In practical fuels there are:

- alkanes
- olefins
- cycloalkanes
- aromatics
- oxygenates

Manley et al. *Physics Today* 2008

Advanced engine concepts and the increasing use of alternative and non-traditional fuels present new challenges for combustion modeling.

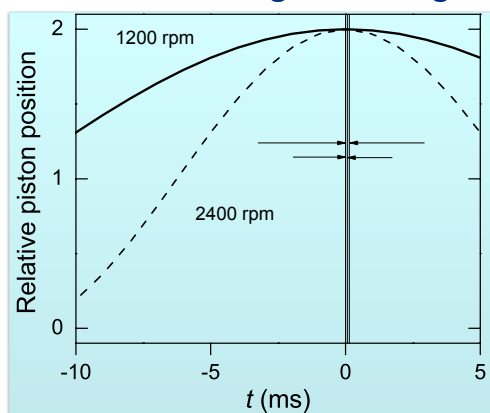
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## HCCI engine operation requires the precise knowledge of autoignition delay times



Ignition has to be timed at a minimum of 1 crank angle precision

- @ 1200 rpm ~ 140  $\mu$ s
- @ 2400 rpm ~ 70  $\mu$ s

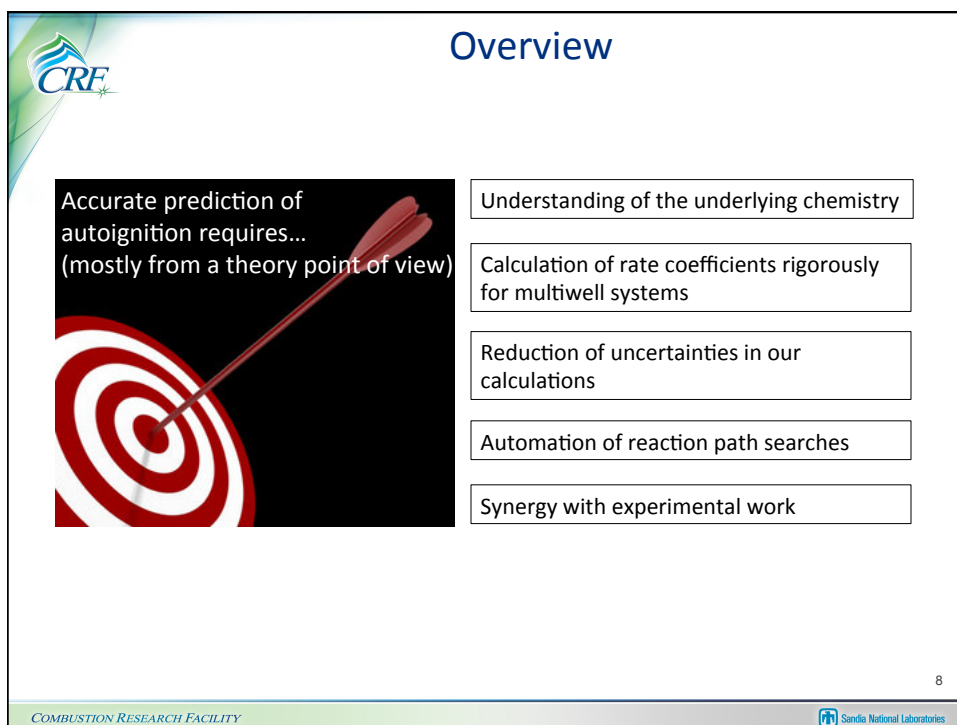
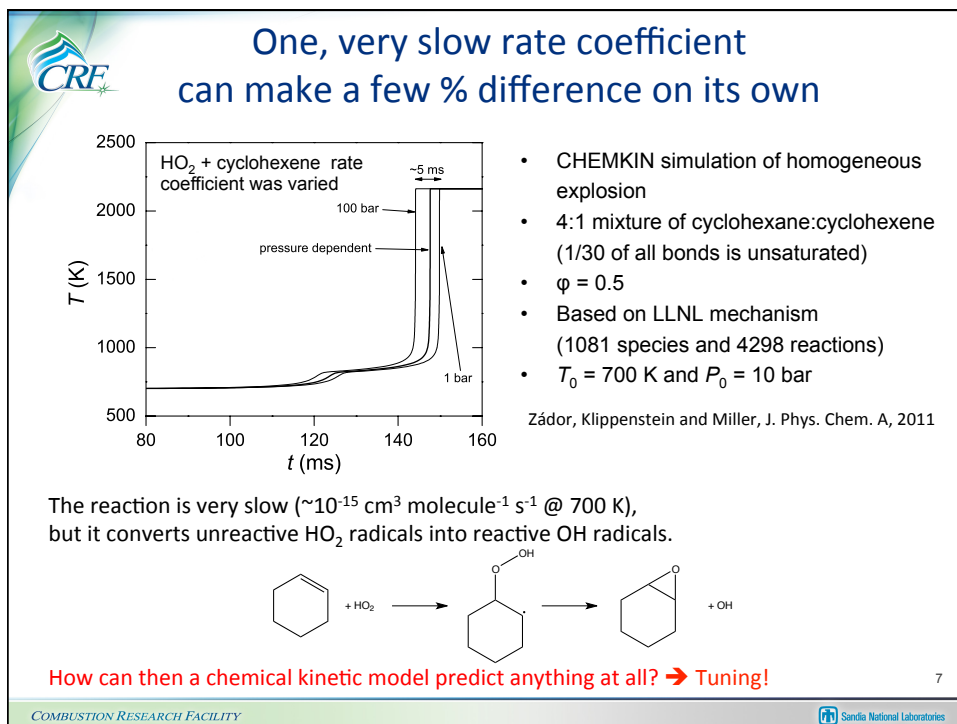
Typical ignition time in HCCI: 2-4 ms → Ignition delay predictions within ~3%.

Are chemical mechanisms capable of this?

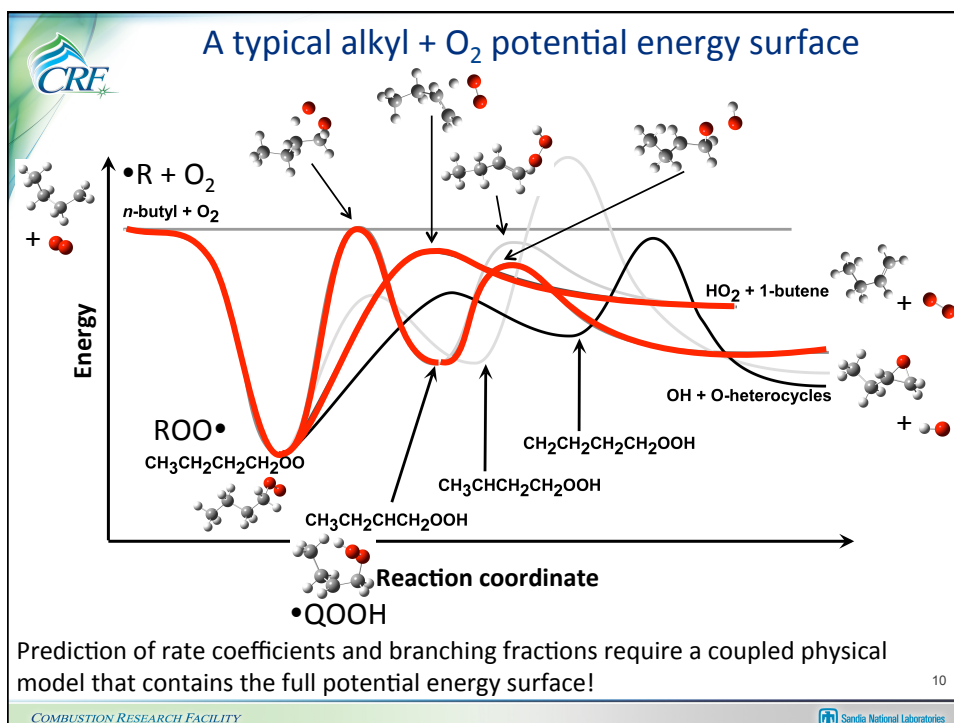
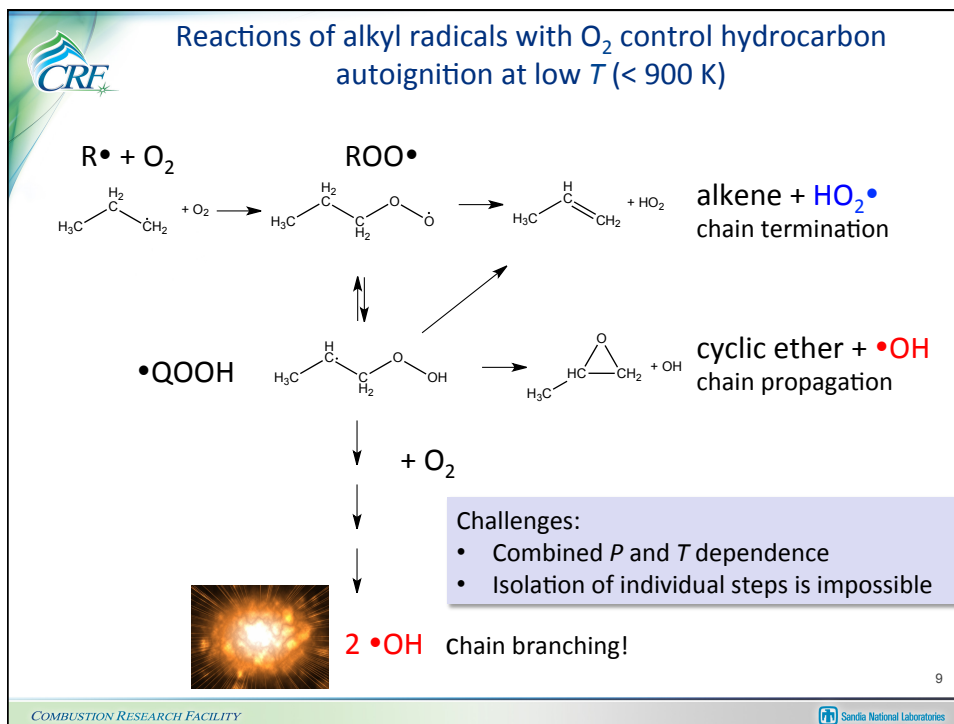
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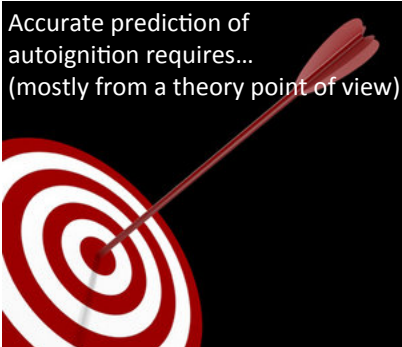








## Overview




Accurate prediction of autoignition requires...  
(mostly from a theory point of view)

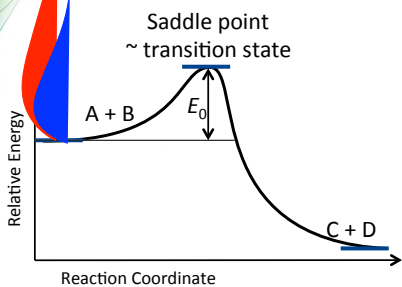
- Understanding of the underlying chemistry
- Calculation of rate coefficients rigorously for multiwell systems
- Reduction of uncertainties in our calculations
- Automation of reaction path searches
- Synergy with experimental work

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## Simple bimolecular reactions ( $A + B \rightarrow C + D$ ) have temperature dependence only



Relative Energy

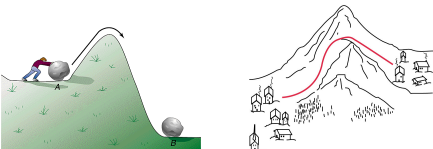
Reaction Coordinate

Saddle point  
~ transition state

$E_0$

$A + B$

$C + D$

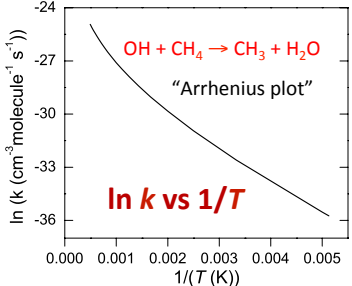


Rate coefficient is bound from above by the collision frequency,  $\sim 10^{-9} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$  ( $\sim 10^{10} \text{ collisions s}^{-1}$  at 1 bar per molecule)

e.g. if  $k = 10^{-11} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1} \rightarrow$  every 100<sup>th</sup> collision leads to a reaction.

**Transition state theory** predicts the rate coefficient as a function of temperature:

$$k(T) = \kappa(T) \frac{Q^{\text{TST}}(T)}{Q_{\text{reactant}}(T)} \exp(-E_0 / k_B T)$$



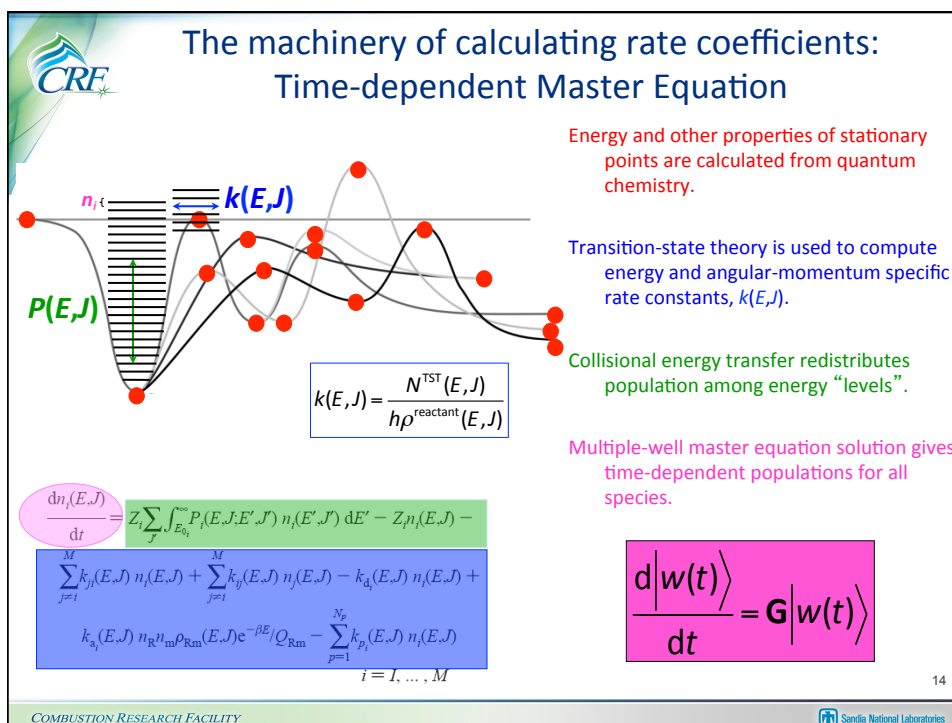
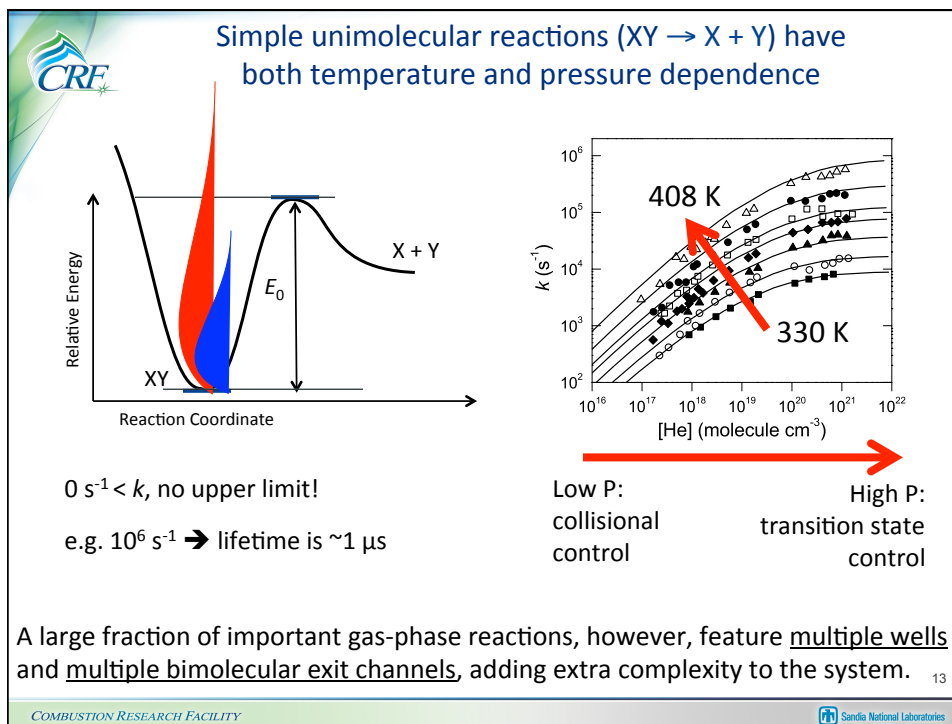
OH + CH<sub>4</sub> → CH<sub>3</sub> + H<sub>2</sub>O

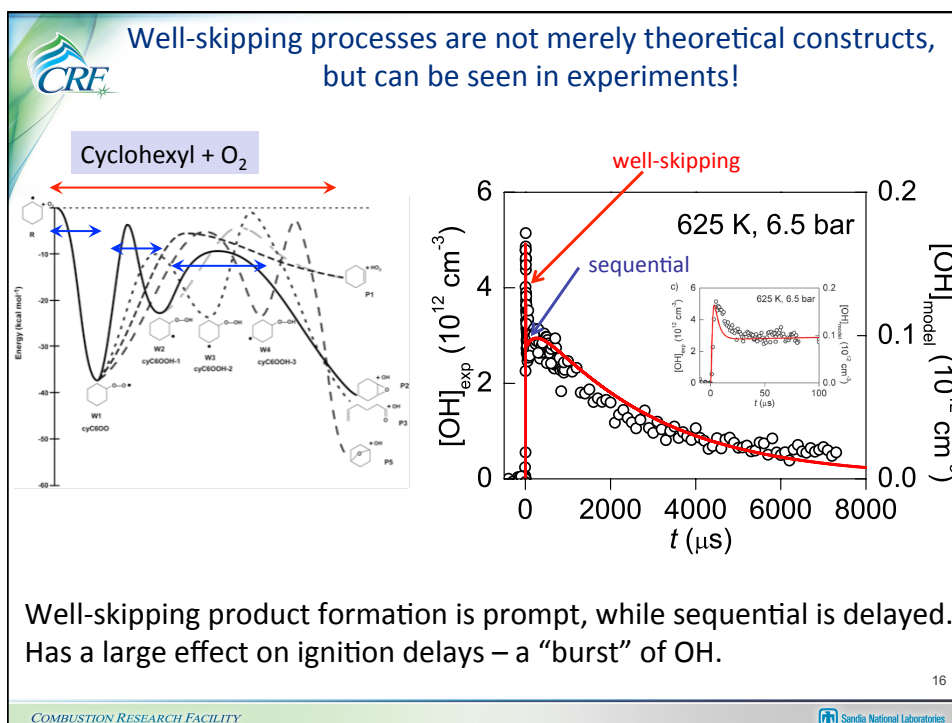
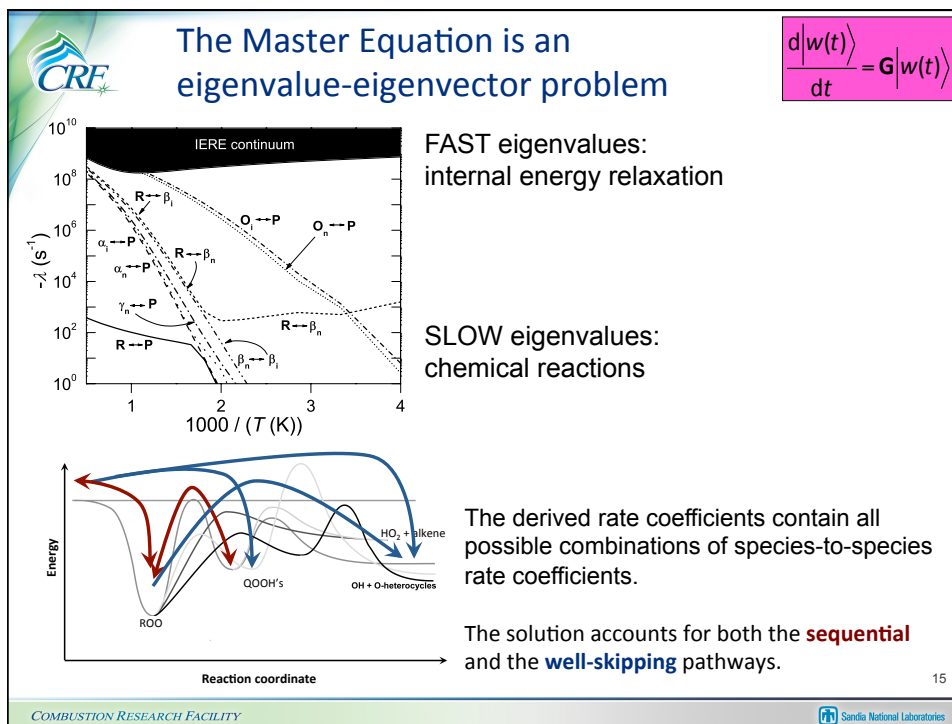
"Arrhenius plot"

ln k vs 1/T

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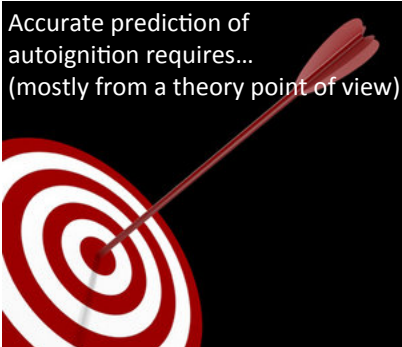
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**Overview**

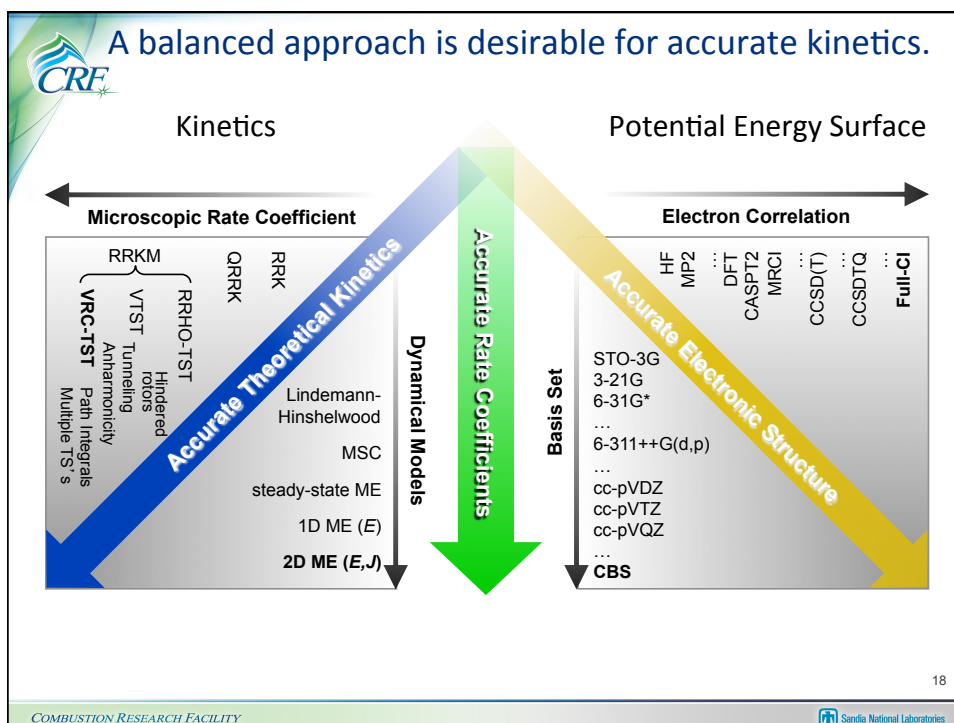
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(mostly from a theory point of view)



- Understanding of the underlying chemistry
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- Reduction of uncertainties in our calculations
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**Sources of uncertainty for reactions with barriers**

$k(E, J) = \frac{N^*(E, J)}{h\rho_R(E, J)}$

thermal averaging, canonical variational TST

$$k(T) = \kappa(T, s^*) \frac{k_B T}{h} \frac{Q^\ddagger(T, s^*)}{Q_R(T)} \exp(-E^\ddagger(s^*)/RT)$$

$s^*$ : variationally determined,  $3N-7$  dimensional dividing surface, for reactions with a barrier often well approximated by a ridge including the saddle point(s) in question

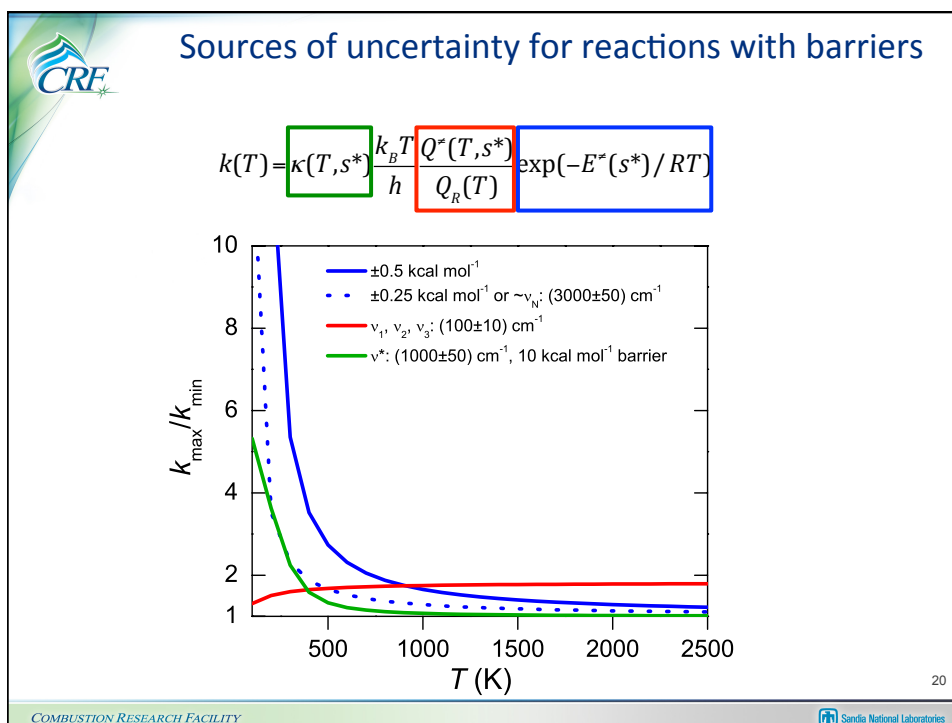
$E^\ddagger$ : barrier height,  $E_{el} + ZPE$

$Q$ : electronic, rotational and vibrational (usually largely uncoupled) partition function

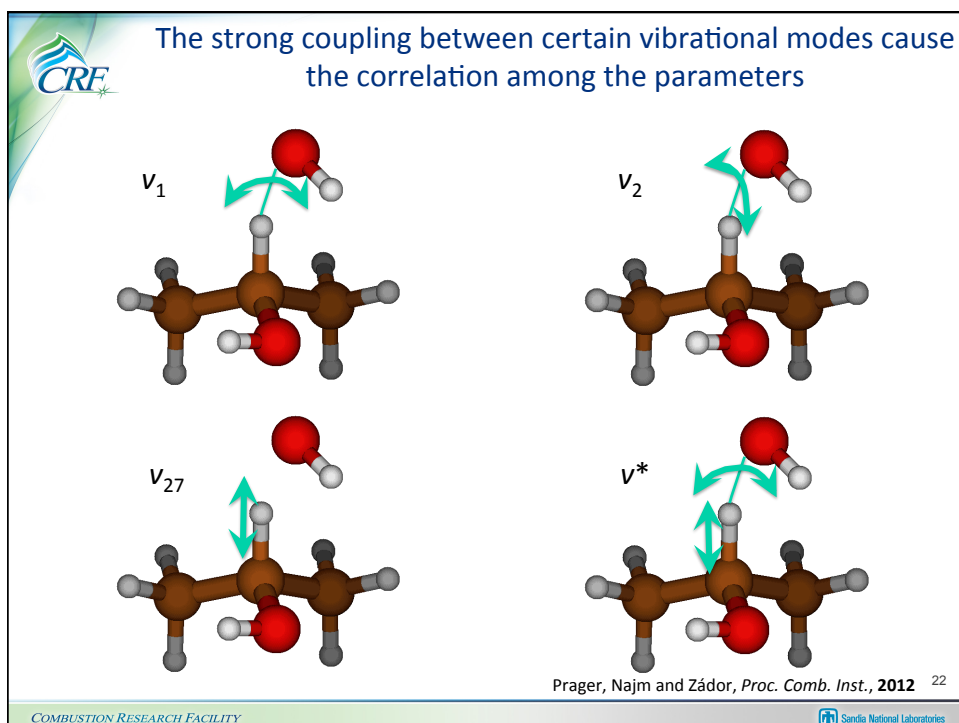
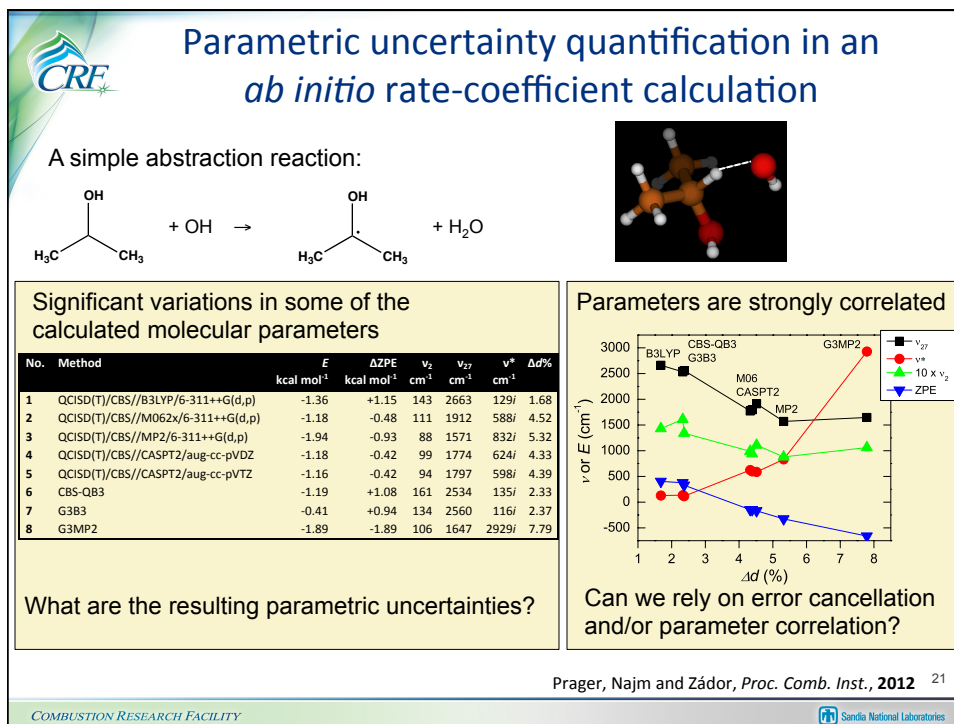
$\kappa$ : tunneling, which cannot be factored out in a rigorous sense

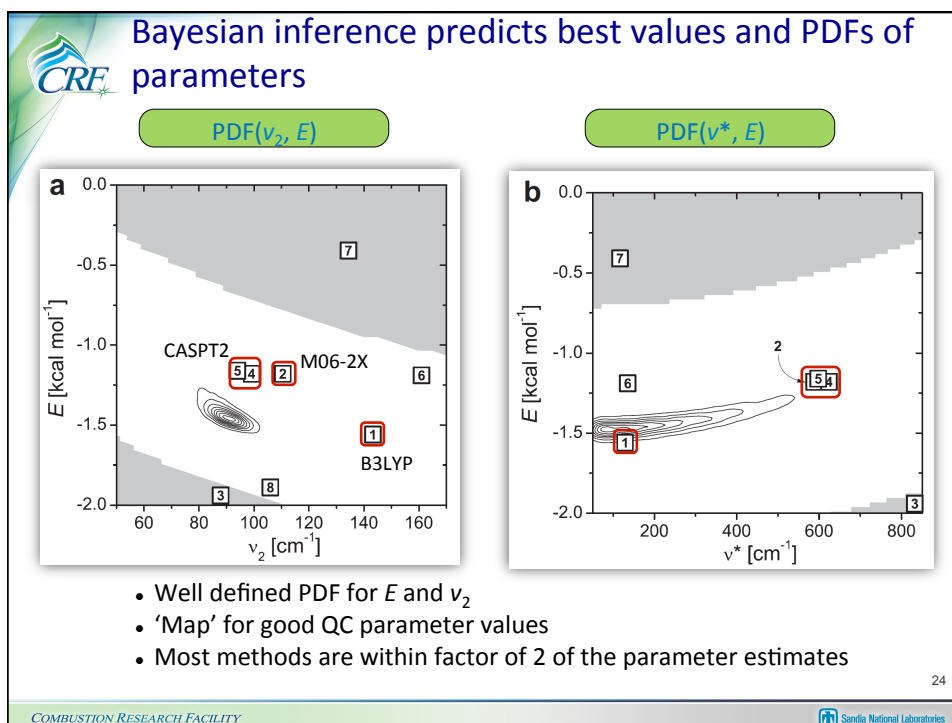
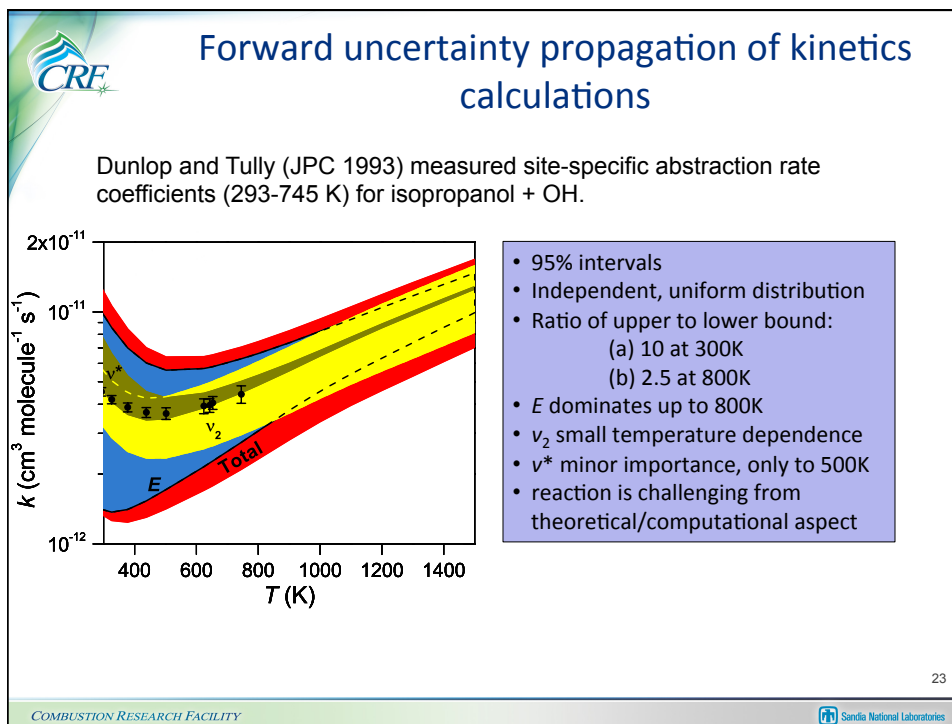
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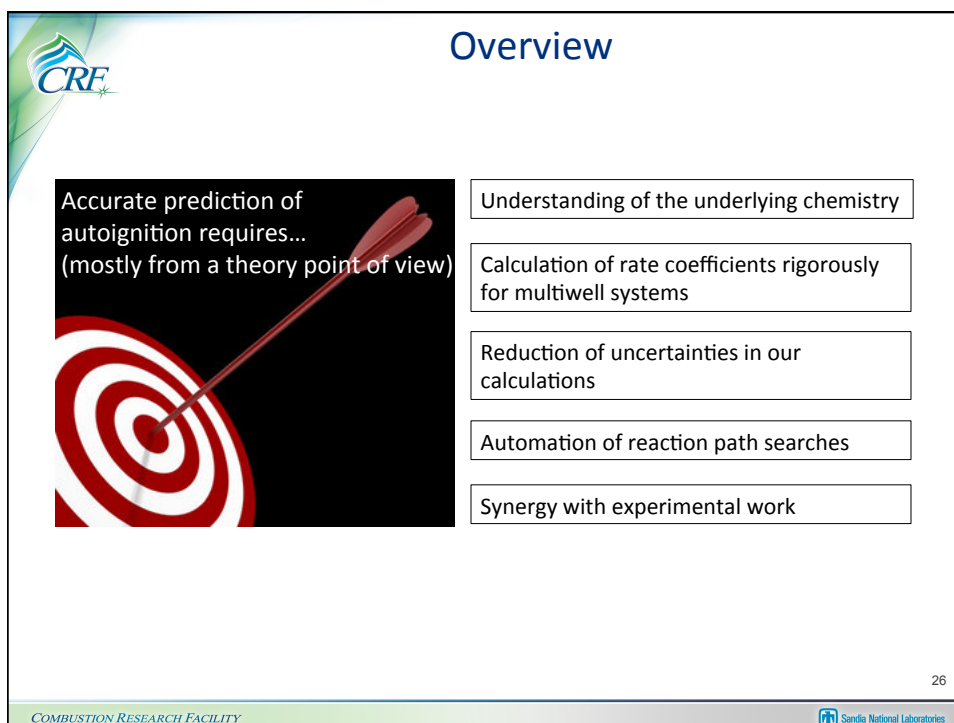
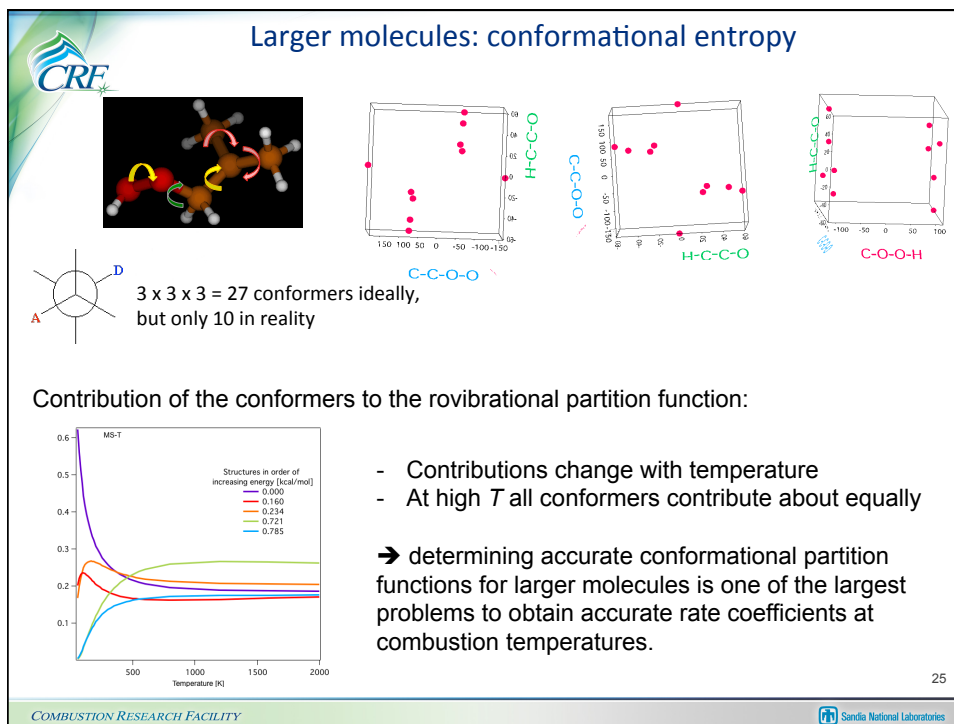
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**Automation is necessary on all levels to meet the challenges of modern combustion chemistry**

**Reaction Mechanism**  
coupled concentrations

C2H4H+H2O=C2H4O 1.00E+12 0.0 -1100.0 | Marinov 1998  
HO2+H2=H2O+H2 6.00E+10 0.0 24500.0 | Marinov 1998  
C2H4+OH=C2H3+H2 2.02E+13 0.0 5936.0 | Miller 1992  
C2H4+OH=C2H3+H2O 1.02E+07 1.98 179.0 | Baulch 1994  
C2H4+OH=C2H3+H 3.36E+08 1.88 179.0 | Baulch 1994  
C2H4+OH=C2H3+H2 6.62E+00 3.7 9500.0 | Marinov 1995  
C2H4+OH=C2H3+H2 3.95E+07 6.0 1690.0 | Dagaut 1990  
C2H4+H=(H2)=C2H5 1.08E+12 0.454 1822.0 | Feng 1993  
low/1.1122E+34 -5.0 4448.0/ | Marinov 1996  
troe/1.0 1.0E-15 95.0 200.0/  
H2O+H2O=C2H4O+H2 1.8E+14 0.0 87000.0 | Marinov 1997  
low/1.5e15 0.0 55443.0/  
C2H3+H=(H2)=C2H4 6.1e12 0.27 280.0 | IGRI-Mech2.11  
low/9.8e29 -3.88 3320.0/  
troe/0.782 208. 2663. 6095/  
H2O+H2 9.00E+13 0.0 0.0 | Tsang 1986  
C2H3+H=CH2+H2 3.00E+13 0.0 0.0 | Miller 1992  
C2H3+H=CH2+H2O 1.70E+29 -5.312 6500.0 | Marinov 1997  
C2H3+H=CH2+H2 5.50E+14 -0.611 5200.0 | Marinov 1997  
C2H3+H=CH2+H2O 2.12E+08 6.0 9484.0 | Ichimura 1996  
C2H3+H=CH2+H2 2.00E+13 0.0 0.0 | Miller 1992  
C2H3+H=CH2+H2O 3.00E+13 0.0 0.0 | Miller 1992  
C2H3+H=CH2+H2 5.00E+13 0.0 0.0 | Miller 1992  
C2H3+H=CH2+H2O 4.73E+02 3.7 5677.0 | Marinov 1998  
C2H3+H=CH2+H2 4.66E+06 -13.0 13865.0 | Marinov 1998  
C2H3+H=CH2+H2O 2.00E+13 0.0 0.0 | Fahr 1991  
C2H2+H=CH+H2 3.37E+07 2.0 14000.0 | Miller 1992  
C2H2+H=CH+H2O 5.04E+05 2.3 13500.0 | Miller 1992  
C2H2+H=CH+H2 2.18E+04 4.5 -1000.0 | Miller 1992  
dup 2.00E+11 0.0 0.0 | Vandoren 1977  
C2H2+H=CH+H2O 4.83E+04 4.0 -2000.0 | Miller 1992

Combustion of real fuels involves thousands of elementary reactions.

Automation is implemented, e.g. RMG or EXGAS.

Rules acting on symbols

Rules need to be made, tested, modified

**Elementary Reaction**  
coupled concentrations AND rate coefficients

Elementary reactions involve several (dozens) of chemical species and hundreds of conformers.

No commonly used efficient codes for automatic exploration.

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**The 3-D realization of chemical structures is one of the major the bottle necks in theoretical kinetics calculations**

Chemical “intuition” combined with literature and experimental evidence can predict almost all important pathways

conceptually simple problem (pen + paper)

Realization of all chemical structures in 3-D

hard and tedious problem

- best guess structures are “hand-built” (sculpted in 3-D visualization programs)
- search for (lowest energy) conformers is also difficult  
 $\sim 3^n$  conformers ( $n$  is the number of heavy atoms)  
 $n = 5 \rightarrow 243$   
 typically 10 or more stationary points
- Combinatorial/bookkeeping problem
- Prone to human error

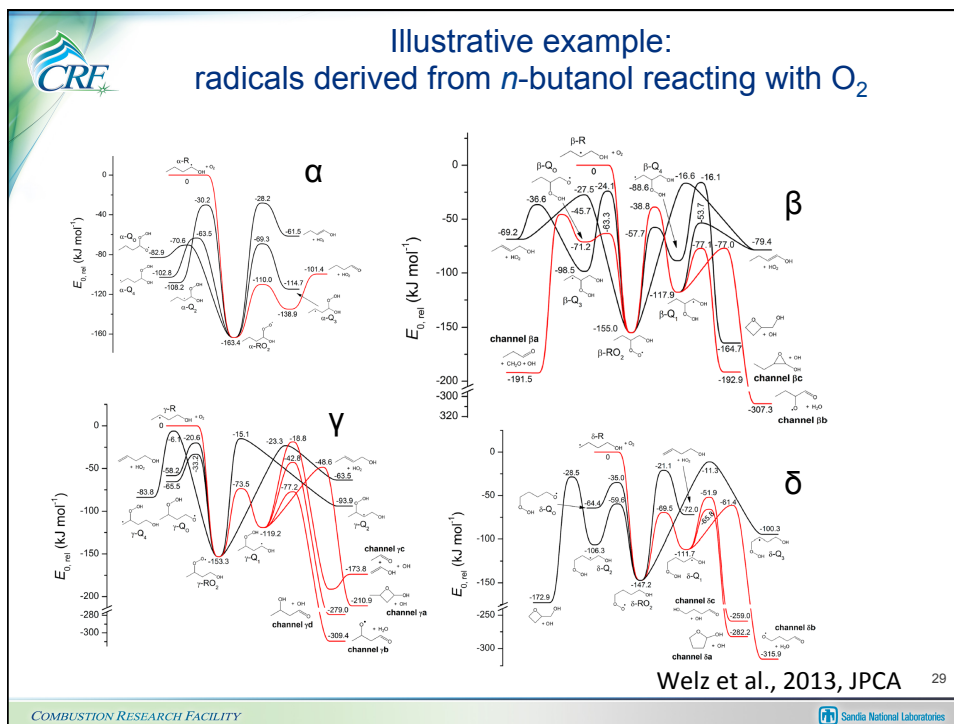
It is an extremely difficult task to search in this 3N-6 dimensional space!

In the application of modern TST theory, exploring all stationary points is probably the slowest process for molecules containing 4+ heavy atoms.

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**Strategies for finding minima on potential energy surfaces**

**I. Grid Approach**  
Calculate the full (or partial) PES using a dense enough coordinate grid.

**II. Global Approach**  
Generate all stable species from a given constituency.

e.g. Molgen\*, Kick\*\*

**III. Growing Network Approach**

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**Methods to find first-order saddle points**

**I. Local Optimization Methods**

Uphill-walking methods, which can find the saddle-point starting at a reactant, without any knowledge about the product


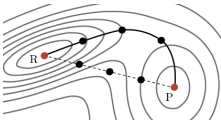
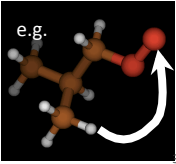
N.B.: Once close to the real saddle point, Local Optimization Methods are efficient and accurate!

**II. Double-Ended Methods**

~Morphing reactants into products, e.g. Nudged Elastic Band method, the Synchronous Transit-Guided Quasi-Newton method (implemented in Gaussian), the Ridge Method, etc.

**III. Chemistry-Based Methods**

Structural analysis using redundant internal coordinates  
+ Chemical knowledge ("intuition") to generate good guesses

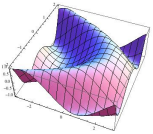





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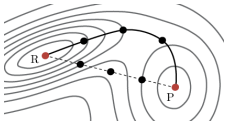
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**Pairing of methods**

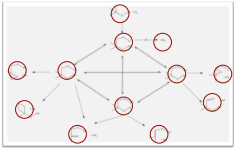
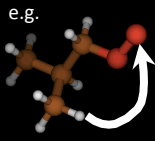
**Grid Approach ~ Local Optimization Methods**

**Global Approach ~ Double-Ended Methods**




**Growing Network Approach ~ Chemistry-Based Methods**

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## KinBot: a tool for the automated exploration of PES's relevant for gas-phase combustion chemistry

- Explores automatically the 3-D structure of stationary points on the underlying potential energy surface of elementary reactions in gas-phase combustion chemistry (C, H, O containing species currently), including the exploration of the conformational space.
- KinBot 1.0 combines a growing network approach for the network exploration with a chemistry-based approach for crawling in the network.
- The heart of the code are the algorithms that convert Cartesian coordinates into chemically meaningful information:
  - bonds
  - cycles
  - rotors
  - radical centers
  - motifs
  - symmetry numbers
  - identification of identical chemical structures
  - etc.
- Unimolecular reactions on complex, multiwell surfaces
- Bimolecular reactions (abstractions and additions)

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## Guiding principle: Bonds

All relevant reactions in gas-phase combustion can be categorized based on the number of bonds broken (B) and/or made (M) in the course of the elementary step.

**1-bond reactions:**  
 B: scission  
 M: addition

$$\text{H}_3\text{C}-\overset{\text{H}}{\underset{\text{H}_2}{\text{C}}}-\text{O}-\text{OH} \longrightarrow \text{H}_3\text{C}-\overset{\text{H}}{\text{C}}=\text{CH}_2 + \text{HO}_2$$

**2-bond reactions:**  
 BM: transfer of parts of the structure, e.g. abstractions  
 BB/MM: certain elimination/addition reactions

$$\text{H}_3\text{C}-\overset{\text{H}}{\underset{\text{H}_2}{\text{C}}}-\text{O}-\text{OH} \longrightarrow \text{H}_3\text{C}-\overset{\text{H}_2}{\underset{\text{H}_2}{\text{C}}}-\text{O}-\text{O}$$

**3-bond reactions:**  
 BMB/MBM: 1,n-eliminations/1,n-additions

**4-bond reactions:**  
 BMBM: cascade abstractions

**5-bond reactions:**  
 possible, but becomes VERY unlikely due to low entropy

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**1-bond example: Scission reactions**

**β-scission:**

C-C bond cleavage:  $C^*-C-C \rightarrow C=C + C^*$

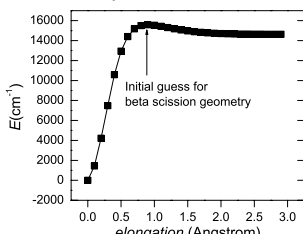
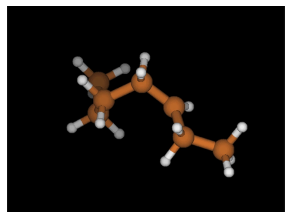
QOOH  $\rightarrow$  HO<sub>2</sub> + alkene:  $C^*-C-OOH \rightarrow C=C + HO_2^*$

H-atom elimination:  $C^*-C-H \rightarrow C=C + H^*$

aldehyde/ketone formation:  $O^*-C-C \rightarrow C=O + C^*$

ROO dissociation:  $O^*-O-C \rightarrow O_2 + C^*$

- criterion:** structure should contain  $X^* - X - X$  motif
- strategy:** scan along all X-X bonds, and search for saddle point at the maximum, or identify barrierless cases

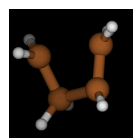
**non-β-scission:** all other bond breaking – no further search if barrierless

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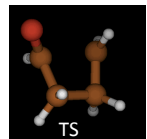
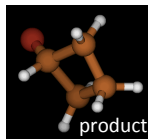
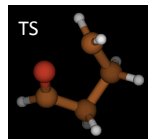
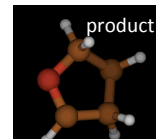
**1-bond example: Internal addition of radical sites to multiple bonds**

- criteria:** structure should contain  $C^* - nX - X^*$  motif,  $n = 1, \dots, 6$   
X\* has a multiple bond
- strategy:** fold molecule into a cyclic conformer in a series of steps

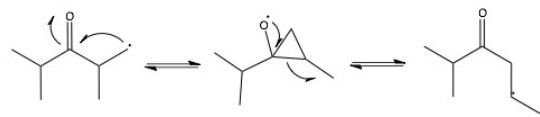
cyclization of but-3-ene-1-yl radical to cyclobutyl (or ring opening of cyclobutyl)




Ketone/aldehyde radical isomerization step

New ketone radical mechanism is a simple combination of this and a β-scission step.



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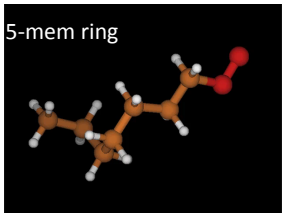
 **2-bond example: Internal H-abstraction pathways**

E.g. alkyl radical isomerization, ROO/QOOH isomerization

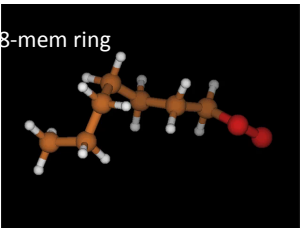
- criterion:** structure should contain  $X^\bullet - nX - H$  motif,  $n = 3, \dots, 8$
- strategy:** fold molecule into a cyclic conformer in a series of steps to generate good initial guess

ROO/QOOH isomerization

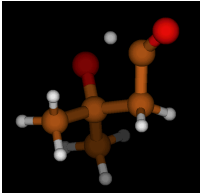
5-mem ring



8-mem ring

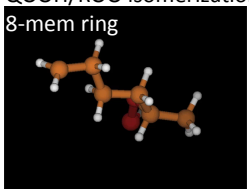


RO/RO isomerization



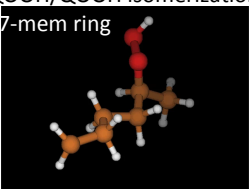
QOOH/ROO isomerization

8-mem ring





QOOH/QOOH isomerization

7-mem ring

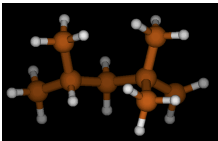


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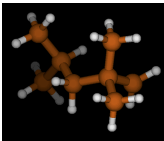
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 **Further 2-bond example: internal isomerization of an iso-octyl radical**

initial geometry ("seed")

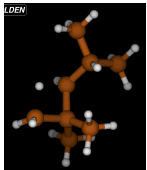


lowest energy conformer found

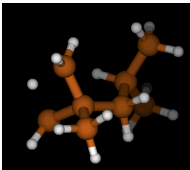


Transition states

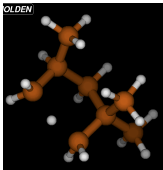
4-mem ring



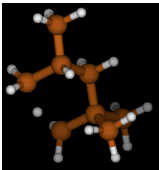
4-mem ring



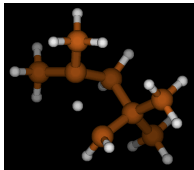
5-mem ring




6-mem ring




6-mem ring

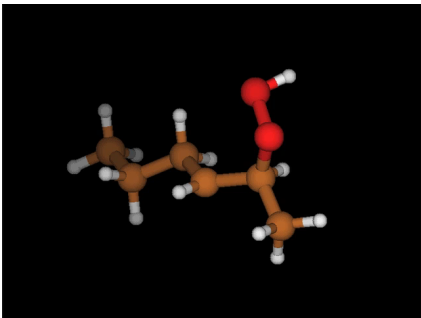
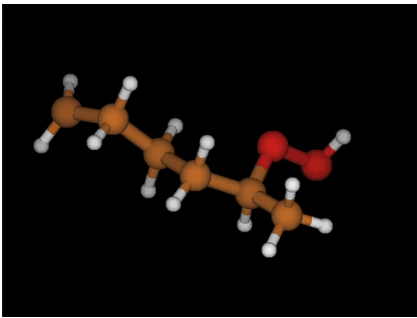


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 One more 2-bond example:  
Cyclic ether formation

- criterion:** structure should contain  $\text{C}^* - n\text{X} - \text{O} - \text{O} - \text{H}$  motif,  $n = 3, \dots, 8$
- strategy:** fold molecule into a cyclic conformer in a series of steps

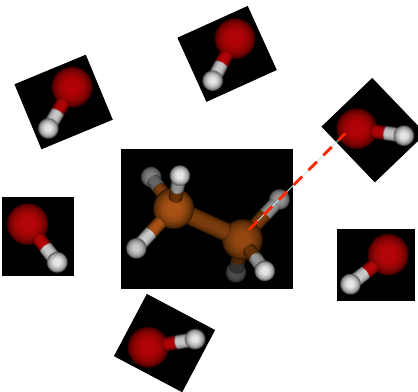



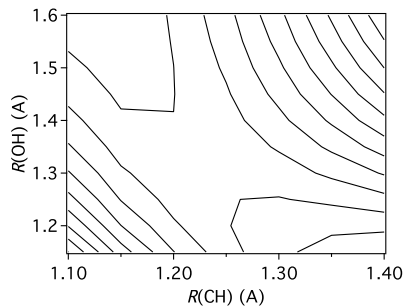
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 Bimolecular abstractions (2-bond):  
 $\text{RH} + \text{*X}, \text{*XY}, \text{*XYZ}, \text{*XYZW}$


Locating the saddle point, in principle, is straightforward using reduced dimensional scans:





Saddle point can be found with a simple minmax algorithm very reliably.

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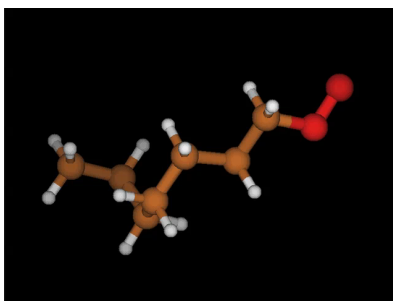
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### 3-bond example: Direct HO<sub>2</sub> elimination

More specialized rule, can be thought of a special case of internal H-elimination

- **criterion:** structure should contain  $\text{H}-\text{C}-\text{C}-\text{O}-\text{O}^{\bullet}$  motif
- **strategy:** fold molecule into a cyclic conformer in a series of steps,
  - only the final step is different from a 4-member ring elimination TS



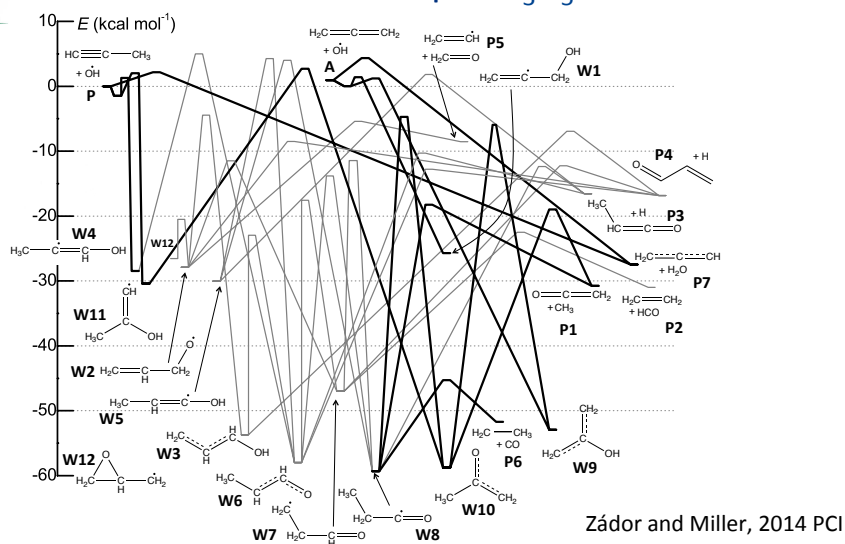
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### A real example: C<sub>3</sub>H<sub>5</sub>O

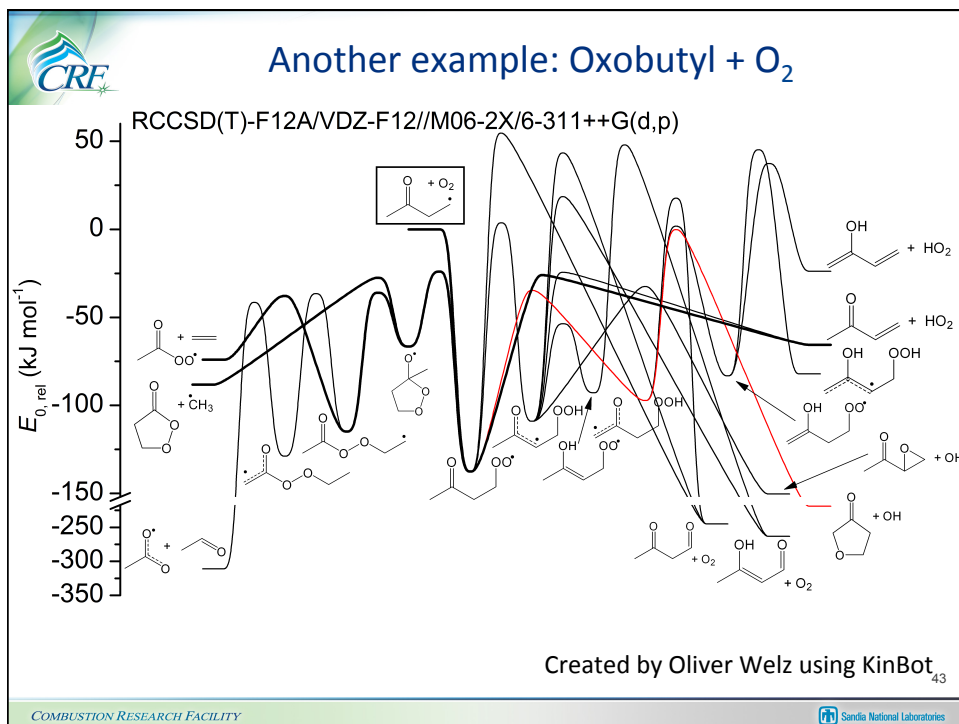


KinBot generated almost ready input for the kinetics code PAPER of Georgievskii and Klippenstein.

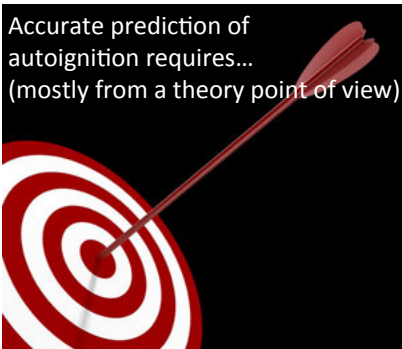
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## Overview



Accurate prediction of autoignition requires...  
(mostly from a theory point of view)


- Understanding of the underlying chemistry
- Calculating rate coefficients rigorously for multiwell systems
- Reducing uncertainties in our calculations
- Automating reaction path searches
- Characterizing key intermediates in synergy with experimental work

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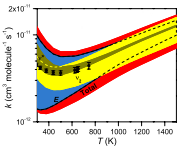
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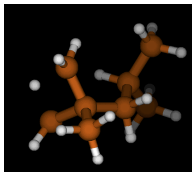
## Outlook

Only rigorous master equation methods can provide an accurate description of the physics. Simplified models are inadequate in many cases.




More systematic uncertainty studies are needed to further develop and better our theoretical framework.

In order to keep up with the pace of fuel-formulation and engine design improvements, the identification and exploration of chemical pathways should be automated. KinBot is an efficient tool for this.



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# Thank You!



and thank our sponsors:

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