Illinois Institute of Technology - Stuart School of Business

MSF 524

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Term Project

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1) Executive Summary

Several power plant investment opportunities are evaluated in order to help an energy company make an investment decision. The opportunities are modeled using a real option of a future simple exchange option. Calculations are conducted using Monte-Carlo simulation in Matlab with the use of several variance reduction techniques. Real option premiums and exercise frequencies are used to compare the opportunities. It is found that a power plant in Alaska is the best candidate based on the real option premiums and their relative risk. However, a surface-level investigation into other factors reveals that the real option premiums alone are not enough for the company to make a reliable investment decision.

2) Introduction

An energy company has 30 power plant investment opportunities available. They are interested in evaluating the amount of money the company could make per MWh for the life of the power plant from each of the opportunities. Each opportunity would be located in one of fifteen states, and involves building either a coal power plant or a natural gas power plant to generate electricity. Once a company has built a power plant, it will be able to sell electricity to the market at the market price for the corresponding state.

In evaluating the opportunities, we follow the methods proposed by Kang and Letourneau (2013). We consider a company's real option of building a power plant that will begin generating electricity in one year (the time when the power plant is built and ready to generate). We also assume that the power plant has the ability to generate electricity continuously for 30 years. In order to model the real option, we use a compound exchange option (hereafter CEO)¹. The CEO is essentially a European call option with a target date of one year in the future. The underlying asset for the CEO is the

¹ Carr, P.(1988).

simple exchange option (hereafter SEO) to be able to sell generated electricity for the market price of electricity. The strike price of the CEO is the capital cost of the power plant *per MWh*. The target date of the SEO is the "average time weighted by the time value of money"².

In this study, we will first confirm methods to evaluate the CEO premiums for every opportunity. This will be done by determining the validity of the equation for d₁ in Carr (1988), then using the appropriate equation to mimic calculations conducted in Kang and Letourneau (2013). We will use a graphical method to confirm our calculation, thus validating our method. Lastly, we will evaluate the CEO premiums for all 30 opportunities under 4 different market scenarios, and make an appropriate recommendation to the business.

3) <u>Methodology</u>

The first task of this study is to determine the validity of the equation for d₁ in Carr (1988). In order to achieve this we must first calculate the CEO premiums using a Monte-Carlo simulation. Then we calculate both the "typo" equation and "corrected" equation. The solution calculated from the Monte-Carlo simulation will then allow us to determine the correctness of the d₁ equation in Carr (1988). The last step in this task is to compare the results of the Monte-Carlo simulation with the results of both the "typo" and the "corrected" equations. We should see a match between our Monte-Carlo simulation results and our "corrected" analytical results, and a disparity with our "typo" results.

Monte-Carlo Simulation

In order to achieve this comparison with Matlab, three functions were written which were then called through a script. The first function returned the price of the CEO calculated using Monte-Carlo simulation (hereafter **CEO_MC()**). The level of precision was required to be plus or minus one cent (+/-

² Kang, S. B. and Letourneau, P. (2013).

\$0.01). Therefore, several variance reduction techniques were implemented in order to increase the calculation speed of CEO_MC().

Outside of the function, the number of required iterations to control absolute error was calculated. This allowed us to use the least amount of iterations while still controlling error. To achieve this, CEO_MC() was run with a relatively small number of trial iterations. Then the required iterations were calculated using the variance of the CEO in the trial run, a standard normal z-coefficient, and the maximum absolute error using the equation below:

$$N = floor\left(\frac{S^2(N_{trial})(Z_{1-\frac{\alpha}{2}})^2}{2\beta^2}\right)$$

where β is the allowable absolute error of plus or minus one cent (+/- \$0.01), α is 0.05, and "floor" is a function that rounds down to the nearest whole number. There is a coefficient of one-half applied to the function to account for the fact the number of iterations will be doubled (to a total of 2N) when we implement antithetic variables.

The two variance reduction techniques used within CEO_MC() were antithetic variables and one control variate. Antithetic variables were implemented by first simulating Brownian motion components to calculate the first half of the sample points, and then using the opposite (negative) of the components to calculate the second half of the sample points.

In order to find an effective control variate, several candidates were tested by checking the correlation of the simulated control variate with the simulated CEO. An additional consideration was to ensure that a theoretical calculation could be obtained from the control variate. It was found that SEO(V, D, Tc) was heavily correlated with our CEO = EuroCall(SEO(V, D, Ts), qD, Tc). An analytical closed-form solution for SEO(V, D, Tc) is also obtainable. Therefore, SEO(V, D, Tc) was used as the control variate. The strong correlation meant that the implementation of this control variate drastically

decreased the variance in our CEO simulated points, thus decreasing the required iterations to control the absolute error and increasing calculation performance.

The simulated SEO(V, D, Tc) is calculated by computing the discounted simulated payoffs of exchanging D for V at time Tc. The theoretical SEO(V, D, Tc) is calculated by adapting the Margrabe formula in the special case where neither asset has a dividend yield. Note that the Margrabe formula used to calculate the theoretical control variate uses the same "corrected" equation for d₁ which is also present in the equation in question. Since we are using this d₁ as part of a variance reduction technique, this method does not violate our testing conditions when testing the "typo" equation. The simulated and theoretical formulas for SEO(V, D, Tc) are:

$$SEO(V, D, Tc)_{sim} = e^{-rT_c} * \max(V_{T_c} - D_{T_c}, 0),$$

and

$$SEO(V, D, Tc)_{theo} = V_0 * StdNormCDF(d_1) - D_0 * StdNormCDF(d_2)$$

where V_{T_c} and D_{T_c} are simulated values of V and D at time Tc, StdNormCDF(z) is a function for the value of the standard normal cumulative distribution function at z. d_1 , d_2 , and sigma-p are defined as follows:

$$d_1 = \frac{\ln\left(\frac{V}{D}\right) + \frac{\sigma_P^2 T_c}{2}}{\sigma_P \sqrt{T_c}} \quad , \quad d_2 = \frac{\ln\left(\frac{V}{D}\right) - \frac{\sigma_P^2 T_c}{2}}{\sigma_P \sqrt{T_c}} \quad ,$$

and

$$\sigma_P = \sqrt{\sigma_V^2 + \sigma_D^2 - 2\rho_{V,D}\sigma_V \sigma_D}$$

Despite the fact that there may be more effective control variates that can further reduce the variance of this CEO calculation, using SEO(V, D, Tc) provides adequate variance control and exceeds the calculation speed requirements for the purpose of this study.

Analytical Solutions using "Typo" and "Corrected" Equations

The second and third functions were used to calculate both versions of the analytical solution. Since d_1 components must be calculated several times to determine the analytical solution, the second function is for d_1 (hereafter **d1()**). This function was written with a special Boolean input to determine whether to use the "typo" or "corrected" versions of d_1 such that

$$d1(y,\sigma,\tau,typo) = \frac{\ln(y) + \sigma^{2}\tau}{\sigma\sqrt{\tau}} \quad , \quad d1(y,\sigma,\tau,corrected) = \frac{\ln(y) + 0.5 * \sigma^{2}\tau}{\sigma\sqrt{\tau}}$$

The third, and the last, function written is the analytical solution for the CEO, CEO_Analytic(). This function implements the analytical solution of the CEO found in equation 27 of Carr (1988). To implement this equation, the function first calculates P* by solving for P in equation 26 of Carr (1988), shown below:

$$P * StdNormCDF(d1(P, \sigma_P, T_s - T_c, _)) - StdNormCDF(d2(P, \sigma_P, T_s - T_c, _)) = q$$

where q is given, "___" represents whether we are using "typo" or "corrected", and d2 is

$$d2(y,\sigma,\tau,_) = d1(y,\sigma,\tau,_) - \sigma\sqrt{\tau} .$$

Once P* is calculated we calculate the return of CEO_Analytic() using equation 27 of Carr (1988), shown below:

$$CEO = V_0 * StdBivNormCDF(d1(P/P^*, \sigma_P, Tc, _), d1(P, \sigma_P, Ts, _))$$
$$-D_0 * StdBivNormCDF(d2(P/P^*, \sigma_P, Tc, _), d2(P, \sigma_P, Ts, _))$$
$$-q * D_0 * StdNormCDF(d2(P/P^*, \sigma_P, Tc, _)).$$

where StdBivNormCDF(z1, z2) is a function for the value of the standard bivariate normal cumulative distribution function at z1 and z2.

Confirmation of Monte-Carlo Simulation Method

Using the illustrated methods, a numerical comparison is drawn between the simulated solution and both the "corrected" and the "typo" analytical solutions. It was shown that the "typo" solution was incorrect. Moreover, the comparison confirms the accuracy of the Monte-Carlo simulation method for calculating CEO premiums to evaluate different investment opportunities. Details about the numerical comparison are in the Appendix of this document.

Evaluating Power Plant Investment Opportunities

The CEO premiums and exercise frequencies of 30 power plant investment opportunities are evaluated and compared in order to provide an investment recommendation to the business. In this process of evaluation, several scenarios are evaluated separately for each opportunity to allow for unbiased comparison. For example, while opportunity A may be optimal in scenario X, it may present to be the worst in scenarios Y and Z.

It is important to highlight the hypothetical nature of the situation and thus we do not know the true probabilities of each scenario. As such, we assume that all scenarios have an equal likelihood of occurring. Based on this assumption, we can now fairly evaluate opportunities against each other by comparing their values averaged across all scenarios. The four scenarios being used for the purpose of this investigation are "Base Case", "No Emission Cost Case", "High Emission Cost Case", and "High Capital Cost Case". As stated, we evaluate the value of each of the thirty opportunities within each of the four scenarios.

To conduct these evaluations, we use the previously described function CEO_MC(). However, we implement one change to the calculation in order to fairly evaluate the opportunities. The strike price of the SEO at time Tc is set as a constant rather than as a function of the cost of generation. To implement this, a Boolean variable is used in CEO_MC() to toggle the constancy of the strike price when calculating the simulated CEO. As with the previous use of CEO_MC(), the correlation between the CEO (with constant K) and the control variate is checked to ensure variance reduction.

Once the average premium and exercise frequency for all opportunity-scenario points are evaluated, the opportunities are compared.

4) Numerical Results

In comparing the numerical results, we are most interested in the option premiums. Figure 1 represents what the business can expect to benefit by per MWh following a specific investment. We see in this figure that the investment opportunity with the highest expected CEO premium is to build a coal plant in Alaska. The next highest CEO premiums are for the opportunities to build a natural gas plant in Alaska, a coal plant in Colorado, and a natural gas plant in Colorado (respectively). These results are not surprising considering the cost of electricity is the highest in Alaska and second highest in Colorado.

We are also interested in comparing exercise frequencies of the CEO's. We see in Figure 2 that Alaska also has the highest exercise frequency for all coal plants as well as all natural gas plants. As expected, Colorado is once again a close second. It is worth noting that the exercise frequencies for natural gas plants are always higher than those of the coal plants for every state.

In Figure 3, we consider the standard deviations of the CEO premiums across the four scenarios to draw a simple comparison of risk across the opportunities. We observe that the CEO premiums of a coal plant in Colorado have the highest standard deviations. However, since

different opportunities offer varying levels of CEO premiums, considering the standard deviation alone could be a misleading measure of risk. Furthermore, an opportunity with high CEO premiums will tend to have higher standard deviations for CEO premiums further confirming that standard deviation consideration alone is an unsuitable measure of risk.

Therefore, we use Figure 4 to show the coefficients of variation across the different opportunities. The coefficients of variation, standardized by the opportunities' mean CEO premiums, offer a better comparison of risk from one opportunity to another. This is due to the fact that the coefficient of variation is a measure of risk relative to the magnitude of the CEO premium. We observe from Figure 4 that Alaska offers the lowest coefficients of variation for CEO premiums for both coal and natural gas plants.

5) Discussion

Figures 1 – 4 show that Alaska offers the highest CEO premiums, highest exercise frequencies, and lowest *relative* risk for both coal and gas plant opportunities. Colorado is a close second in all of the above-mentioned statistics. By contrast, Texas offers the lowest CEO premiums, lowest exercise frequencies, and highest relative risk for both coal and gas plants. Even though this study is conducted under a hypothetical situation, these results may be due in part to an over-saturated energy market in Texas and a relatively low amount of generation in Alaska. This current situation is shown in Figure 5.

Despite what our study indicates, considering the fact that companies still generate a large amount of electricity out of Texas allows us to hypothesize that there may be other factors operating in companies' investment decisions. Such factors may include the level of state consumption and the cost (and ability) to export to another state. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (hereafter EIA), "Alaska is not electrically connected to the Lower 48 states"³. This lack of infrastructure connection could completely negate the benefit predicted from a high CEO premium for the business if there is not enough consumption already present in Alaska. In addition, the EIA explains that "Alaska's electricity infrastructure differs from that of the lower 48 States in that most consumers are not linked to large interconnected grids through transmission and distribution lines"⁴. From this we can infer that despite having high CEO premiums in our study, an investment opportunity in Alaska might not be optimal.

6) <u>Conclusion</u>

From an economic standpoint, it is resonable that a power plant investment opportunity in Alaska would produce a high benefit on the per MWh basis. Moreover, based on the distribution of CEO premiums, a less risk-averse investor should choose a coal plant in Alaska whereas a more risk-averse investor should choose a natural gas plant in Alaska⁵. However, the business should consider other factors before making a decision in order to ensure an optimal return. Furthermore, the business should analyze the potential sales volume for all opportunities. The business should also investigate, at minimum, the infrastructure of the location, the cost to reach its customers, and the potential price competition from other companies in or outside the region. In summary, the calculation of the CEO premiums provides a confirmation that benefits *could* be gained from investing in a certain opportunity. However, it is imperative to keep in mind that the premium is one of many factors that should be considered before going forward with a power plant investment decision.

³ U.S. Energy Information Administration. November 27, 2012.

⁴ U.S. Energy Information Administration. July, 2012.

⁵ This conclusion is drawn on the assumption that all other unmentioned factors are held constant across states.

7) Appendix (Matlab outputs for Parts A, B, and C)

Part A Results – Comparison between Carr (1988) "typo" and "corrected" equations for d_1

CE0	Calculated with Cond MC Simulati	on:	\$17.463526	
	Confidence Interval	:	\$17.4554 to	\$17.4716
	Relative Error	:	\$-0.0081 to	\$+0.0081
	Relative Error Percentage	:	-0.046% to	+0.046%
CEO	Calculated with Corrected Equati	on:	\$17.459410	
CEO	Calculated with Typo Equation	:	\$13.402568	







Part C Results – Power Plant Investment Opportunity Evaluation

_____ CEO Prices and Exercise Frequencies by State and Plant Type _____ State Pant Type Scenario Price(\$/MWh) Freq _____ California Coal Plant Base Case CaliforniaCoal PlantBase Case12.8545.3%CaliforniaCoal PlantNo Emission Cost Case18.7260.1%CaliforniaCoal PlantHigh Emission Cost Case10.2138.0%CaliforniaCoal PlantHigh Capital Cost Case3.9712.8% 12.85 45.3% -----State-Plant Mean Price 11.44 State-Plant Mean Freq 39.0% _____ California NG Plant Base Case 15.48 67.5% California NG Plant No Emission Cost Case 18.45 73.8% CaliforniaNG PlantHigh Emission Cost Case18.45/3.8%CaliforniaNG PlantHigh Emission Cost Case13.2462.1%CaliforniaNG PlantHigh Capital Cost Case6.9529.5% -----State-Plant Mean Price 13.53 State-Plant Mean Freq 58.2% _____ New York Coal Plant Base Case New York Coal Plant No Emission Cost Case 18.33 55.1% 25.48 69.3% New YorkCoal PlantHigh Emission Cost Case14.9347.7%New YorkCoal PlantHigh Capital Cost Case6.5918.7% -----State-Plant Mean Price 16.33 State-Plant Mean Freq 47.7% _____ New YorkNG PlantBase Case19.8074.3%New YorkNG PlantNo Emission Cost Case22.8179.1%New YorkNG PlantHigh Emission Cost Case17.4369.9%New YorkNG PlantHigh Capital Cost Case9.8636.9% -----State-Plant Mean Price 17.48 State-Plant Mean Freq 65.0% _____ Idaho Coal PlantBase Case7.1631.2%Coal PlantNo Emission Cost Case11.0144.5%Coal PlantHigh Emission Cost Case5.4925.1%Coal PlantHigh Capital Cost Case1.756.6% Idaho Idaho Idaho -----State-Plant Mean Price 6.35 State-Plant Mean Freq 26.9%

Idaho NG Plant Base Case 9.64 53.7% IdahoNG PlantNo Emission Cost Case12.0961.5%IdahoNG PlantHigh Emission Cost Case7.9147.3%IdahoNG PlantHigh Capital Cost Case3.5818.4% -----State-Plant Mean Price 8.31 State-Plant Mean Freq 45.2% _____ IllinoisCoal PlantBase Case8.8536.0%IllinoisCoal PlantNo Emission Cost Case13.5550.6% IllinoisCoal PlantDasc cusc0.0550.0%IllinoisCoal PlantNo Emission Cost Case13.5550.6%IllinoisCoal PlantHigh Emission Cost Case6.8429.2%IllinoisCoal PlantHigh Capital Cost Case2.358.4% -----State-Plant Mean Price 7.90 State-Plant Mean Freq 31.1% _____ IllinoisNG PlantBase Case11.2150.00IllinoisNG PlantNo Emission Cost Case13.7965.3%IllinoisNG PlantHigh Emission Cost Case9.3551.9%IllinoisNG PlantHigh Capital Cost Case4.4321.4% State-Plant Mean Price 9.69 State-Plant Mean Freq 49.2% -----AlaskaCoal PlantBase Case37.9876.2%AlaskaCoal PlantNo Emission Cost Case47.0384.9%AlaskaCoal PlantHigh Emission Cost Case32.8470.3%AlaskaCoal PlantHigh Capital Cost Case18.6438.3% -----State-Plant Mean Price 34.12 State-Plant Mean Freq 67.4% _____ Alaska NG Plant 31.67 84.9% Base Case AlaskaNG PlantNo Emission Cost Case34.2587.1%AlaskaNG PlantHigh Emission Cost Case29.4282.8%AlaskaNG PlantHigh Capital Cost Case19.0353.0% -----State-Plant Mean Price 28.59 State-Plant Mean Freq 76.9% _____ Lousiana Coal Plant Base Case 11.43 42.2% 16.90 57.0% Coal Plant No Emission Cost Case Lousiana LousianaCoal PlantHigh Emission Cost Case9.0035.0%LousianaCoal PlantHigh Capital Cost Case3.3611.2% -----State-Plant Mean Price 10.17 State-Plant Mean Freq 36.4%

_____ LousianaNG PlantBase Case14.8366.6%LousianaNG PlantNo Emission Cost Case18.0373.6%LousianaNG PlantHigh Emission Cost Case12.5160.6%LousianaNG PlantHigh Capital Cost Case6.5128.4% Lousiana NG Plant Base Case State-Plant Mean Price 12.97 State-Plant Mean Freq 57.3% _____ TexasCoal PlantBase Case6.8030.2%TexasCoal PlantNo Emission Cost Case10.7744.4%TexasCoal PlantHigh Emission Cost Case5.1624.0%TexasCoal PlantHigh Capital Cost Case1.626.3% -----State-Plant Mean Price 6.09 State-Plant Mean Freq 26.2% _____ TexasNG PlantBase Case9.229.22TexasNG PlantNo Emission Cost Case11.6860.6%TexasNG PlantHigh Emission Cost Case7.5246.0%TexasNG PlantHigh Capital Cost Case3.3617.6% State-Plant Mean Price 7.95 State-Plant Mean Freq 44.2% -----WashingtonCoal PlantBase Case12.3744.2%WashingtonCoal PlantNo Emission Cost Case17.9358.5%WashingtonCoal PlantHigh Emission Cost Case9.8237.0%WashingtonCoal PlantHigh Capital Cost Case3.7712.2% -----State-Plant Mean Price 10.97 State-Plant Mean Freq 38.0% _____ Washington NG Plant Base Case 15.77 68.4% WashingtonNG PlantNo Emission Cost Case19.0075.0%WashingtonNG PlantHigh Emission Cost Case13.4162.7%WashingtonNG PlantHigh Capital Cost Case7.1130.1% -----State-Plant Mean Price 13.82 State-Plant Mean Freq 59.0% _____ 20.83 58.8% OregonCoal PlantBase Case20.8358.8%OregonCoal PlantNo Emission Cost Case28.1671.9%OregonCoal PlantHigh Emission Cost Case17.1851.5%OregonCoal PlantHigh Capital Cost Case7.9221.4% -----State-Plant Mean Price 18.52 State-Plant Mean Freq 50.9%

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Pennsylvania NG Plant Base Case 22.76 78.4% Pennsylvania NG Plant No Emission Cost Case 26.16 82.9% Pennsylvania NG Plant High Emission Cost Case 20.09 74.2% High Capital Cost Case 11.92 41.7% State-Plant Mean Price 20.24 State-Plant Mean Freq 69.3%

8) Tables and Figures



Figure 1: Average State/Plant Type CEO Premiums over all Scenarios (µ)

Figure 2: Average State/Plant Type Exercise Frequencies over all Scenarios





Figure 3: Standard Deviations of CEO Premiums by State/Plant Type (σ)







Figure 5: Recent Energy Generation in Select States ⁶

⁶ Graph produced using data obtained from U.S. Energy Information Administration. November 12, 2013.

9) <u>References</u>

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