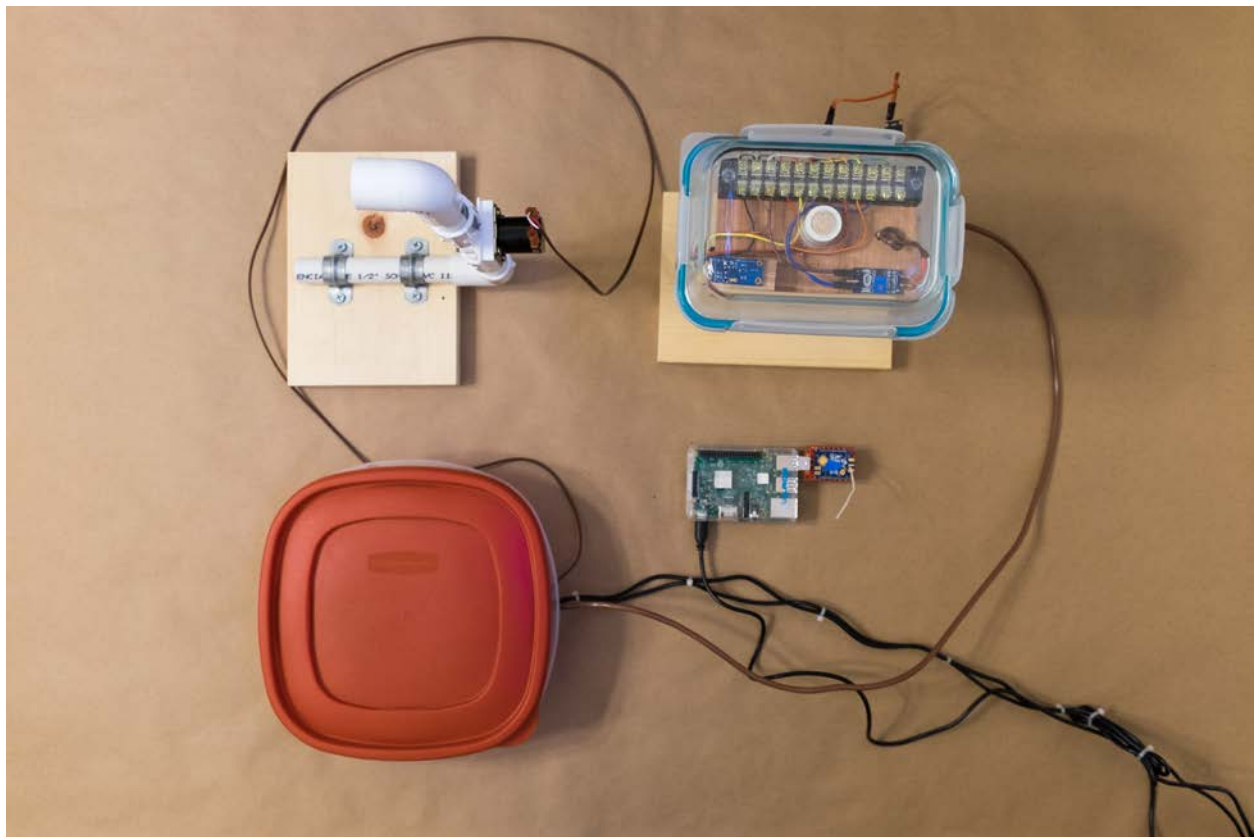


Project ALIN

Automatic Lawn Irrigation Network



December 2016 - Thomas Dye, John Walter

CSS 427 - Embedded Systems - Dr. Yang Peng

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Introduction

Our project was to create a “smart” irrigation system by using sensor analysis to control water flow to designated zones to only water plants when necessary. The challenge we faced is that different parts of a yard have different watering requirements. We needed to sense these differences and independently schedule watering for each unique locale.

This project was made possible through cooperation with UWB staff member Rafael Machado De L Silva. He has a similar project he wants created that has a high degree of feature overlap. Throughout the project, Rafael operated in the capacity of an advisor and sponsor, supplying us with both advice and the majority of the hardware used.

System Overview

Basic system:

- A single command station houses all schedule logic and provides a user interface.
- Users can configure the system and do on-demand actions through a web interface, connecting over WiFi.
- The command station talks to some arbitrary number of controllers, remotely located, using XBee radios.
- Each controller gathers sensor data from any number of irrigation zones and reports that to the command station.
- The controller also opens valves to control irrigation when the command station sends an irrigation schedule.

The command station creates or updates an irrigation plan and sends start and stop times to the controller. At the prescribed time, the controller opens and closes valves connected to piping to deliver water to zones.

The command station’s evaluation of a zone’s irrigation schedule can be augmented by user preference and the number (and type) of sensors in use. Our minimum goal for this iteration of the project was to collect soil moisture information as use that for evaluation. Sensor collection for temperature, humidity, and brightness have also been implemented. Online weather data analysis continues to be a goal for a future version of this project.

Hardware

Project ALIN is comprised of two embedded devices networked together with XBee 900Mhz radios, a single sensor pod, and an electric water valve, both of which are associated with a zone. The command station is powered by a Raspberry Pi 3 and the controller is Arduino-based.

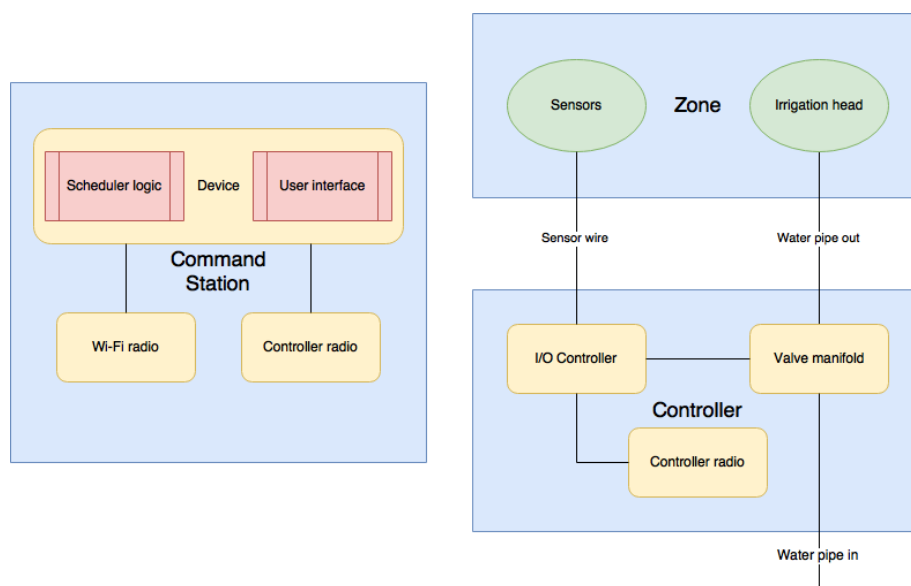


Figure 1: System Layout

The command station is a low power, internet connected embedded device. It has three responsibilities:

- Receive sensor data from controllers for all zones
- Evaluate sensor data and send out irrigation schedules when necessary
- Provide direct user interaction to configure and control the system

Based off of the scheduling algorithm, irrigation is automatic when conditions warrant it; however, manual control is also possible.

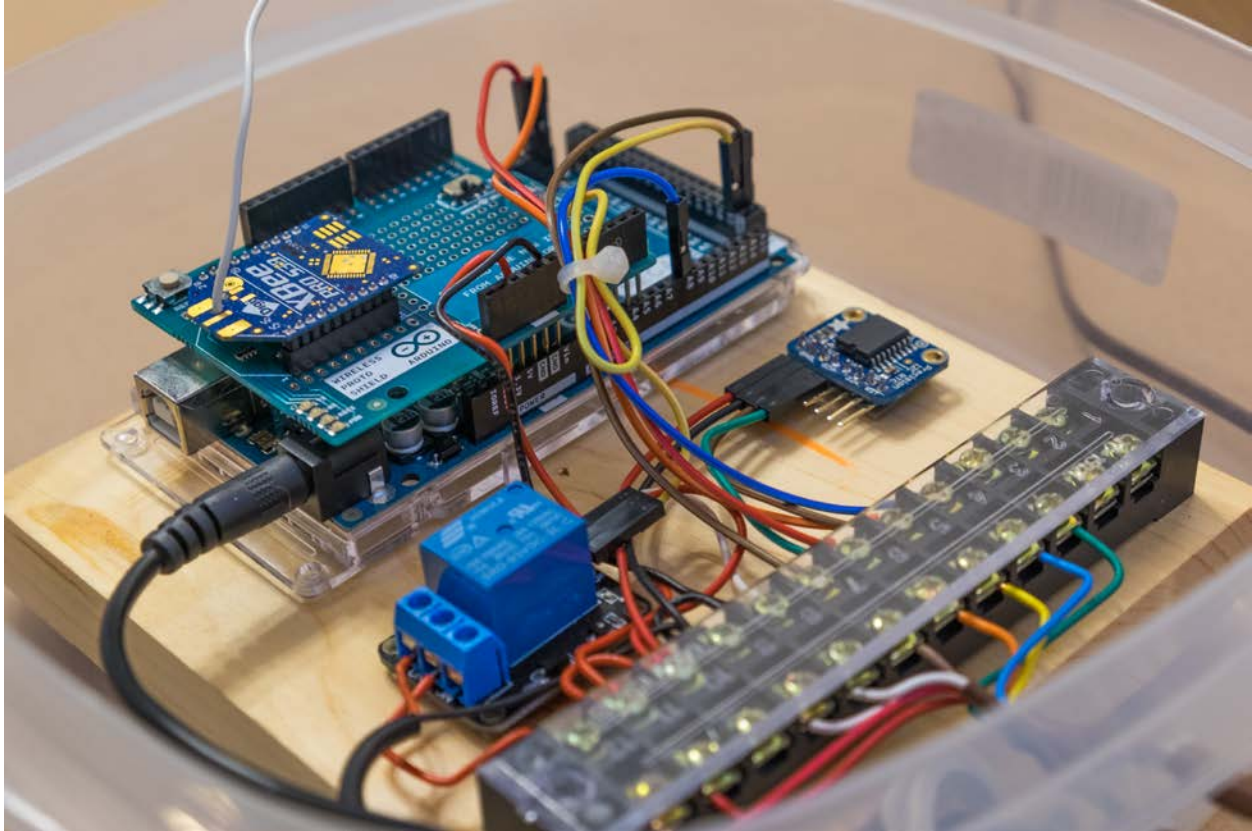


Figure 2: Command Station

The controller is designed to be wall mounted outdoors. It has three responsibilities:

- Transmits sensor data both periodically and on demand
- Receives scheduled irrigation events
- And opens, closes, or toggles the valve state for a zone.

Automatic valve control is handled through a real-time clock powered scheduler, but all functionality has manual controls through a web interface provided by the command station.

One controller handles multiple zones where relay controlled 12VDC electric valves handle water flow to the irrigation heads. Since the user defines how zones are configured, the granularity of control with irrigation is dependent on how fancy installers get with their plumbing.

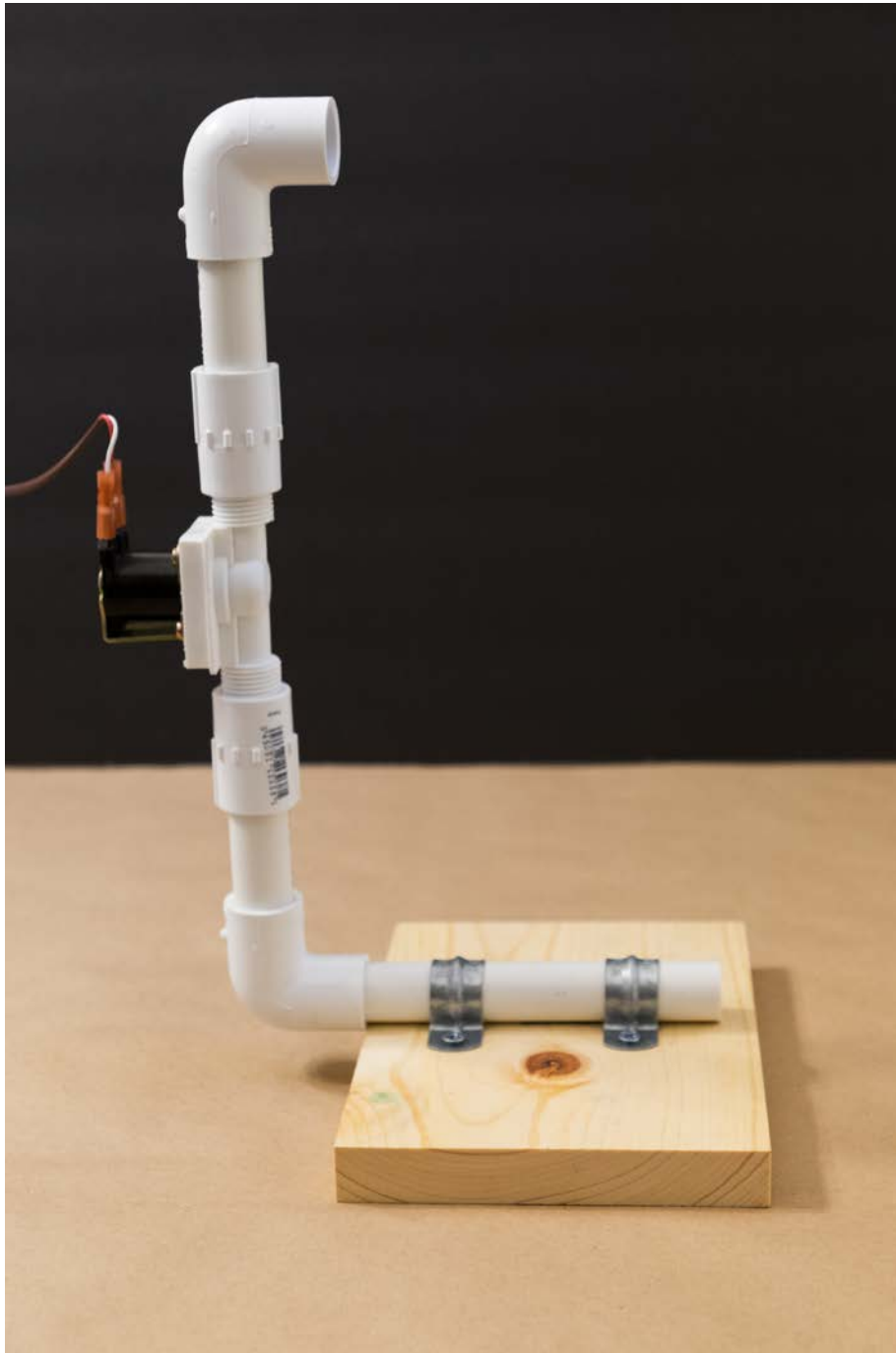


Figure 3: Valve Manifold

Sensor pods are designed to be remotely located inside the zone you're watering. Each contains four sensors, collecting:

- Temperature
- Humidity
- Light
- Moisture

Sensor pods have to be relatively weatherproof, but also need to be ventilated for accurate temperature and humidity readings. A glass lid is used to enclose the unit and provide consistent readings to the light sensor that do not diminish over time through dirt and UV discoloration.

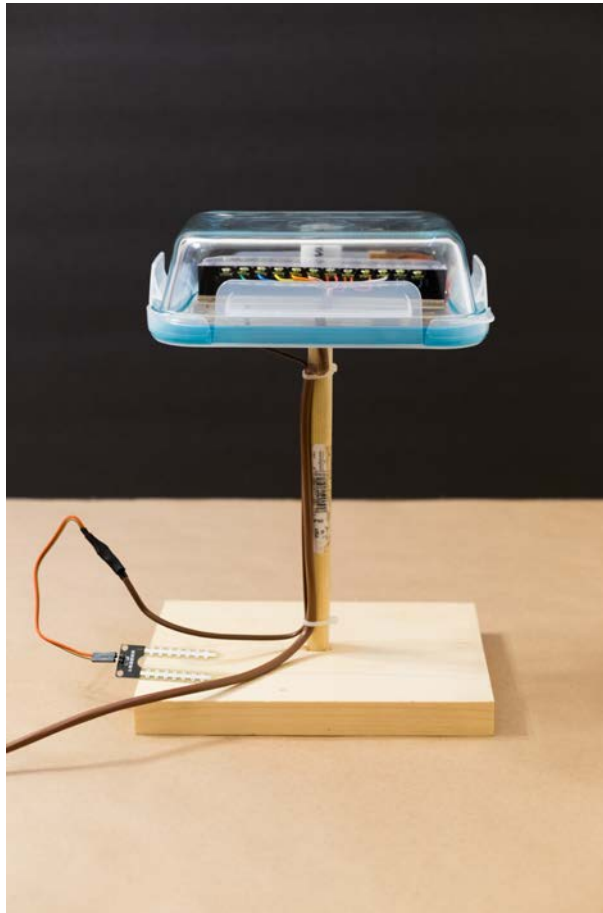


Figure 4: Sensor Pod - Closed

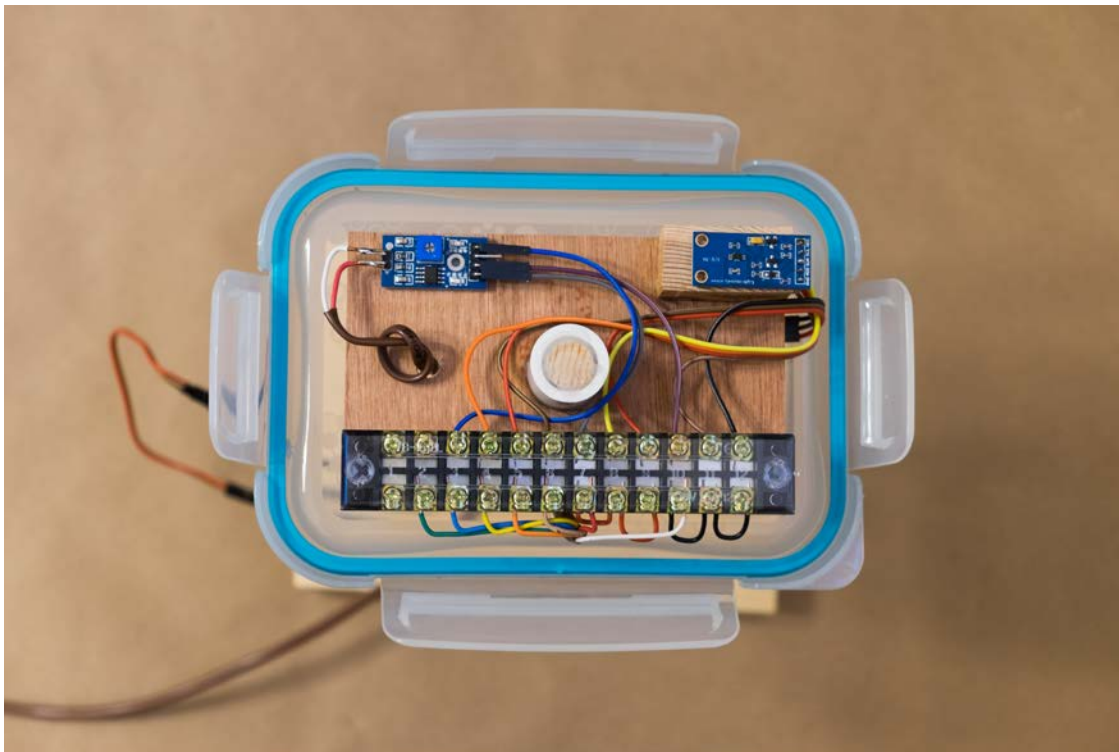


Figure 5: Sensor Pod - Open

Scheduling Algorithm

The watering schedule is affected by the following conditions:

- Time of day
- Amount of sunlight being received
- Temperature and humidity
- Soil conditions

These conditions are independently interpreted in the following way:

- Sunny days cause more evaporation than cloudy days
- Hotter days cause much more evaporation than cooler days
- Humid days prevent evaporation, but dry days promote it
- Dry soil is undesirable

The command station will determine if a zone is irrigated depending on combinations of readings taken by pod sensor inputs. Each sensor type has readings that can be distinguished as a '0' or '1' value, where a user-defined threshold separates the two.

	0	1
Temperature (A)	Not Hot	Hot
Humidity (B)	Not Humid	Humid
Light (C)	Not Sunny	Sunny
Soil Moisture (D)	Not Moist	Moist

Table 1: Sensor Threshold Categories

For any combination of the four inputs, there is one decision output: irrigate (1), or do not irrigate (0). To determine the irrigation algorithm, each combination of conditions was evaluated to determine if watering was necessary. From that, the following truth table was formed:

A	B	C	D	Output X
0	0	0	0	1
0	0	0	1	0
0	0	1	0	1
0	0	1	1	0
0	1	0	0	0
0	1	0	1	0
0	1	1	0	1
0	1	1	1	0
1	0	0	0	1
1	0	0	1	0
1	0	1	0	1
1	0	1	1	1
1	1	0	0	1
1	1	0	1	0
1	1	1	0	1
1	1	1	1	0

Table 2: Algorithm Truth Table

This combination of all inputs and outputs can be simplified down to the following Boolean equation:

$$X = \sim B \sim D + C \sim D + A \sim D + A \sim BC$$

Thus, the command station will recommend irrigation any time when the following conditions persist:

- Dry air and dry soil, or
- Sunny day and dry soil, or
- Hot air and dry soil, or
- Hot and dry air, and sunny.

As project ALIN is meant to operate as a demonstration system, it's not possible to collect data throughout the day as it normally would for a production system. The final decision to irrigate is revised in the following way:

- Evaluate the average of the last four sensor readings
- Compare those averages against thresholds for each sensor type
- Schedule irrigation if the recommended conditions exist, timed to be one minute in the future for a watering duration of one minute.

Sensor and Data Specification

The following sensors are in use:

Sensor	Model	Format	Data	Notes
Time	DS3231	I2C	S:M:H:W:D:M:Y	Real Time Clock
Temperature	DHT11	Digital	Integer Value	Measurements in centigrade scaling
Humidity	DHT11	Digital	Integer Value	Percentage ratio of dew point to temperature
Light	BH1750	I2C	Integer Value	Measurements of intensity in lux
Moisture	YL38	Analog	Integer Value	Resistance between 0 and 1023

Table 3: Sensor Overview

Message payloads are delivered inside XBee frames as comma delimited values. We devised a structured communication protocol where the payload begins with a command code and then supplies additional parameters as necessary.

Code	Code, HEX	Code, DEC	Additional Payload	Notes
C_ACK	0x00	0		Response sent when a command is received but not recognized.
C_SUCCESS	0x01	1		Response sent when a command is received, understood, and is executed.
C_FAILURE	0x02	2		Response sent when a command is received, understood, but does not have valid parameters.
C_GET_VALVE_STATE	0x10	16	Z	Request the valve state for a zone Z. Generates a C_VALVE_DATA response.
C_SET_OPEN_VALVE	0x11	17	Z	Instruct the valve open for a zone Z. Generates a C_SUCCESS response.
C_SET_CLOSE_VALVE	0x12	18	Z	Instruct the valve close for a zone Z. Generates a C_SUCCESS response.
C_SET_TOGGLE_VALVE	0x13	19	Z	Instruct the valve position (open/close) to toggle for a zone Z. Generates a C_SUCCESS response.
C_SET_TIME	0x14	20	S,M,H,W,D,M,Y	Instruct the RTC to update system time. Parameters are S:seconds (0-59), M:minutes (0-59), H:hours (0-23), W:weekday (1-7), D:day (1-31), M:month (1-12), Y:year (0-99). Generates a C_SUCCESS response.
C_GET_TIME	0x15	21		Request the time from a device. Generates a C_TIME_DATA response.
C_GET_ZONE_SENSORS	0x16	22	Z	Request sensor data for a zone Z. Generates a C_SENSOR_DATA response.
C_GET_ALL_SENSORS	0x17	23		Request sensor data for all zones. Generates a C_SENSOR_DATA response for each defined zone.
C_GET_SCHEDULE	0x18	24	Z	Request the irrigation schedule for a zone Z. Generates a C_SET_SCHEDULE response.
C_SET_SCHEDULE	0x19	25	Z,H,M,D	Instruct the device to begin irrigation at a specified time and duration for a zone Z. Parameters are H:hour (0-23), M:minute (0-59), D:duration(in minutes). Generates a C_SUCCESS response.
C_VALVE_DATA	0x30	48	Z,S	Data for valve state for a zone Z. State S = 0 is closed. State S = 1 is open.
C_TIME_DATA	0x31	49	S,M,H,W,D,M,Y	Data for the time on a device. Parameters are S:seconds (0-59), M:minutes (0-59), H:hours (0-23), W:weekday (1-7), D:day (1-31), M:month (1-12), Y:year (0-99).
C_SENSOR_DATA	0x32	50	Z,L,T,H,M	Data for sensor readings for a zone Z. Parameters are L:light (lux), T:temp (celcius), H:humidity (percentage), M:moisture (level)

Table 4: Radio Data Payload Specification

All payload information is transmitted as character arrays as literal values, i.e., the int 1023 is four bytes long, sent as characters '1' '0' '2' '3'. For example, the payload 50,1,138,22,45,1023 describes:

- Sensor data for zone 1
- Brightness is 138 lux, temperature is 22 C, humidity is 45%, and the soil is completely dry.

This system is designed to primarily be autonomous, but threshold and user preferences are configured via a web interface provided by the command station.

Zone 1

Valve is: Closed

Valve Control

- Open
- Closed
- Toggle

Update Valve

Next Scheduled

Time: 2016-12-09 13:13

Current Averages

Humidity	Temperature	Moisture	Brightness
33 %	24 C	1023 Ohms	70 Lux

Sensors

Humidity	Temperature	Moisture	Brightness
Reading: 33 %	Reading: 24 C	Reading: 1023 Ohms	Reading: 273 Lux
Threshold: 20 %	Threshold: 31 C	Threshold: 650 Ohms	Threshold: 300 Lux
New Threshold: <input type="text"/> %	New Threshold: <input type="text"/> C	New Threshold: <input type="text"/> Ohms	New Threshold: <input type="text"/> Lux

Update Thresholds

Force Sensor Updates

History

Date : 2016-12-09 13:15
Irrigation : SKIPPED

Date : 2016-12-09 13:13
Irrigation : SCHEDULED

Date : 2016-12-09 13:10
Irrigation : SKIPPED

Figure 6: Command Station Web Interface

The following communication processing is implemented on the command station:

Command	Trigger	Sends	Expects
C_GET_VALVE_STATE	Sent on 10 second interval	16,1	48,1,0
C_SET_OPEN_VALVE	On demand	17,1	1
C_SET_CLOSE_VALVE	On demand	18,1	1
C_SET_TOGGLE_VALVE	On demand	19,1	1
C_GET_ZONE_SENSORS	On demand	22,1	50,1,273,24,33,1023
C_SET_SCHEDULE	Automatic, by scheduling algorithm	25,1,13,13,1	1
C_SENSOR_DATA	Periodically received from controller	-	50,1,273,24,33,1023

Table 5: Command Station Radio Communication Sample

Note: Expected data is shown as interpreted in Figure 6.

The controller is designed to operate as a headless unit, however non-interactive serial access is available over analog pins 10 and 11 for RX and TX for diagnostic output. Radio communication and controller actions are logged to the serial console. Independent sequence counters exist for sent and received data to aid identification of transmission failures.

The following communication is implemented on the controller:

Command	Trigger	Receives	Sends
C_ACK	Received unrecognized code	99	0
C_SUCCESS	Received with correct parameters	19,1	1
C_FAILURE	Received with bad parameters	19,0	2
C_GET_VALVE_STATE	Received periodically	16,1	1
C_SET_OPEN_VALVE	Received periodically	17,1	1
C_SET_CLOSE_VALVE	Received periodically	18,1	1
C_SET_TOGGLE_VALVE	Received periodically	19,1	1
C_GET_ZONE_SENSORS	Received periodically	22,1	50,1,273,24,33,1023
C_GET_ALL_SENSORS	Received periodically	23	50,1,273,24,33,1023
C_SET_SCHEDULE	Received periodically	25,1,13,13,1	1
C_SENSOR_DATA	Sent on 30 second interval, or when requested by the command station	22,1 or 23	50,1,273,24,33,1023

Table 6: Controller Radio Communication Sample

Controller radio communication sample notes:

- The command code '99' is undefined.
- A C_FAILURE is generated because zone 0 is undefined.
- The C_GET_ALL_SENSORS generates the same response because only one sensor zone is defined. In the event of there being multiple zones, multiple C_SENSOR_DATA transmissions would be sent in rapid succession.

Both the command station and the controller use the retransmission protocol built into the XBee stack. The controller will additionally attempt up to five additional retransmissions (beyond the original transmission) with acknowledgement periods up to five seconds each before giving up. For any retransmission, the last message is resent and the internal send sequence counter is not incremented.

Serial console example:

```
Sent seq: 0, data: 50,1,273,24,33,1023
Error on seq: 0, the remote XBee did not receive our packet.
Sent seq: 0, data: 50,1,273,24,33,1023
Error on seq: 0, the remote XBee did not receive our packet.
Sent seq: 0, data: 50,1,273,24,33,1023
Error on seq: 0, the remote XBee did not receive our packet.
Sent seq: 0, data: 50,1,273,24,33,1023
Error on seq: 0, the remote XBee did not receive our packet.
Sent seq: 0, data: 50,1,273,24,33,1023
Error on seq: 0, the remote XBee did not receive our packet.
Sent seq: 0, data: 50,1,273,24,33,1023
Error on seq: 0, the remote XBee did not receive our packet.
Error on seq: 0, maximum number of retransmissions exceeded.
Received seq: 0, data: 16,1
Sent seq: 1, data: 48,1,0
```

Exception Report

Command Station

The web server uses a file-based data sharing scheme with the command station, such that the web server writes its data to files that the command station reads (and only reads) from, and likewise the command station writes its data to files that the web server reads (and only reads) from. This is not a good design for a couple reasons, not the least of which being that the web server cannot be moved to the cloud using this scheme. We went with this design because we did not know how to better achieve our goals, and it wasn't until late into the implementation that we learned that the proper design would be to have the web server alone read and write to a database while providing the command station an interface to access the database through the web server using GET and POST requests. For the purpose of our demonstration, our current file-based design was sufficient. However for ALIN 2.0, we intend to gut the command station and web server of file-based data sharing and implement the above mentioned GET/POST design.

Controller

The controller logs the occasional bad packet received from the command station, but so far this hasn't resulted in any loss of functionality (the commands still process despite the "ZB_RX_RESPONSE: format not expected" error). We would like to eventually eliminate string processing for building data payloads, as the original implementation used with character arrays on the stack was causing system crashes for unknown reasons (which were not related to off-by-one errors).

One error that presented itself during testing before presentation is that the discharging solenoid in the valve was causing sporadic controller resets through excessive electrical noise that was being generated. This was also apparent on the monitor connected to the computer which would distort. We might have damaged it through overheating as this was not always a problem, but it's worth reinvestigating sharing a common ground for all components, or at least, electrically isolating it and preventing feedback to the controller.

Team Assignments and Responsibilities

In the beginning of the project, both members worked together at drafting the design and researching the different options we had to achieve our goal implementing this system. We worked together when we were trying to establish communication between two devices over an XBee radio connection. After the point of establishing connectivity, however, we both split off in separate directions. Thomas was solely responsible for putting together the hardware and housing involving the sensors and the Arduino-based controller side of the system, while John was responsible for the Raspberry Pi based command station and web server. For the most part, these two roles were solely completed by each respective team member. There was a point in the middle of the project where we worked together again to devise the scheduling algorithm, and again nearing the end of the project when we integrated our parts together and performed testing and validation. Distribution of work was varied, but equal.

Appendix

XBee Radio Configuration

900 MHz Series 2 Radio 1: (blue tape, command station)

- Product Family: XBP9B-DM
- Function set: XBee PRO 900HP 200K
- Firmware: 071
- Network ID/PAN: 1337
- Standard Router
- Serial High: 0013A200
- Serial Low: 40E3CD0F
- API Mode 1 (without escapes)

900 MHz Series 2 Radio 2: (controller)

- Product Family: XBP9B-DM
- Function set: XBee PRO 900HP 200K
- Firmware: 071
- Network ID/PAN: 1337
- Non-Routing Module
- Serial High: 0013A200
- Serial Low: 40E3CD1E
- API Mode 2 (with escapes)

Note: The different API modes are required as the Python XBee library only works with mode 1, and the Arduino XBee library only works with mode 2. Escaping seems to only be important with regard to the library in use and the mode mismatch does not inhibit communication between devices.

Parts List

Source	Item	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price	Purpose	
School	Arduino Mega 2560	1	\$45.95	\$45.95	Controller logic board	
	Wireless Shield	1	\$28.30	\$28.30	Controller XBee interface	
	XBee Explorer	1	\$24.95	\$24.95	Command station XBee interface	
	XBee-Pro 900 S3B	2	\$59.95	\$119.90	XBee radios	
	Raspberry Pi 3	1	\$39.95	\$39.95	Command station logic board	
	Raspberry Pi Case	1	\$5.00	\$5.00	Command station enclosure	
	Raspberry Pi Power	1	\$7.95	\$7.95	Command station power source	
	16gb Card	1	\$14.95	\$14.95	Command station storage device	
	Sensor Modules	1	\$21.00	\$21.00	Controller sensors	
	Water Valve	1	\$6.95	\$6.95	Controller valve manifold	
	Total			\$314.90		
Home Depot	1x6x6 Wood Board	1	\$5.52	\$5.52	Controller base construction material	
	1/2" 2' PVC Pipe	1	\$1.22	\$1.22	Sensor tower construction material	
	1/2" Wood Dowel	1	\$1.77	\$1.77	Sensor tower construction material	
	2 Conductor Wire	6	\$0.21	\$1.26	General electrical	
	7 Conductor Wire	10	\$0.73	\$7.30	General electrical	
	#8 1/2" Wood Screws	1	\$0.98	\$0.98	General construction material	
	1/2" F 90 Deg Pipe	2	\$0.28	\$0.56	Plumbing	
	1/2" F Adapter	2	\$0.53	\$1.06	Plumbing	
	22-18AWG .25 Spade	1	\$2.99	\$2.99	General electrical	
	1/2" Pipe Straps	1	\$2.14	\$2.14	Plumbing	
	3/32" Heat Shrink	1	\$1.99	\$1.99	General electrical	
		Tax			\$2.55	
	Total			\$29.34		
Fred Meyer	Rubbermaid	1	\$3.24	\$3.24	Controller enclosure	
	Food storage	1	\$6.99	\$6.99	Sensor tower glass enclosure	
		Tax			\$1.00	
	Total			\$11.23		
Amazon	120pcs Jumper Wire	1	\$8.68	\$8.68	General electrical	
	5pc Terminal Block	1	\$7.99	\$7.99	General electrical	
	12VDC Power Supply	1	\$6.99	\$6.99	General electrical	
	Total			\$23.66		
Adafruit	DS3231 RTC	1	\$13.95	\$13.95	Controller sensor	
		Shipping			\$9.65	
		Total			\$23.60	
Project	Grand total			\$402.73		