Log Your Instrument Test Data Directly to a Network Location

Introduction

Network-connected instruments are common in numerous modern test setups, and there are a great variety of software packages available to enable instrument configuration, test execution, and data collection and management. Additionally, many of the engineers and technicians running these tests will eventually back up their test data to some designated network location. It stands to reason that some of said engineers and technicians would seek out a means of eliminating the PC and software that seems to separate the instrument data from its eventual residence.

In the following sections we will walk the reader through one scenario that shows how to use the Test Script Processor (TSP) command set inherent in a majority of the Keithley Instruments product line to achieve the task at hand but focus on using with the Series 3706A Switch/Multimeter System. We start by reviewing the building blocks available for creating and destroying a TCP/IP sockets connection as well as formatting of our data to write out to the listener. This is followed with some instruction on how to create a simple Python-based server script (which will reside on a network host) to listen for the connecting (instrument) client and save the incoming information locally. We conclude by providing the steps to take in loading the script on to the instrument and running.

Note that we do not go into depth on all the benefits and power of the TSP command set and scripting. For more information, refer to your instrument's Reference Manual or visit tek.com for more information.

Create the TSP Script to Run on Your Instrument

While you can run a script directly on your instrument and perform direct network logging, you will still need a tool that helps you create the script file. Keithley's Test Script Builder is a free software that facilitates TSP scripting project creation, supporting direct instrument connection and interaction

allowing you to run full scripts as well as the ability to step through your code in a script debug mode. If your are familiar with programming application development environments (ADE) that use and Eclipse back-end, then many of the features, options, and tools will be easy to adapt to.





In order to maintain focus on the topic at hand, we will refrain from going into the finer details of Test Script Builder installation and usage. You can find the "Using Test Script Builder (TSB)" article as part of the software installation by using the software's menu bar and navigating to Help->Welcome->Keithley Test Script Builder. You will also find a wealth of information about using TSP (and Lua) in your instrument's Reference Manual.

To create your TSP project in Test Script Builder:

- 1. Open **Test Script Builder** using the desktop icon or the Windows Start menu tools.
- 2. Navigate to *File->New->Project*.
- 3. When the New Project Wizard appears, select TSP Project from the list provided then click Next.

- 4. In the Project name field, enter **KE3706A_Write_Scan_Data_to_Netork_Location** then click **Finish**. Note that it is important to use underscores and not blank spaces, or TSB will notify you that you are creating an invalid script name.
- 5. When presented with the "Open Associated Perspective?" dialog, click **Yes** to accept and establish the TSP perspective. This will enable syntax highlighting while creating your code and format checking each time you save.

At this point you will be presented the main.tsp file that acts as the foundation of your project coding efforts. However, every new project you create will start with a main.tsp file and this could make your work a little difficult to locate in your ADE interface as your scripting skills and files grow. To simplify, we will rename the file to match the project name.

- 6. In the **Navigator** pane (typically and by default on the left-hand side of the user interface), locate your project in the tree.
- 7. Click on the folder associated with the project to expose the **main.tsp** file.
- 8. Right-click on main.tsp to expose the pop-up menu options then select Rename.
- 9. When the dialog appears, enter the new name of the script file: KE3706A_Write_Scan_Data_to_Network_Location.tsp. Note that it is important to end the filename with the *.tsp extension to the Test Script Builder understands that this is a TSP script file.

```
▼ KE3706A_Write_Scan_Data_to_Network_Location.tsp 

1 --TODO Please insert code here.

Your updated script file name shown in the editor pane.

**TODO Please insert code here.**

**TODO
```

We can see (from the image above) that your next task will be to add your code. We will be using and referencing the code found in <u>Appendix A</u>, not covering the details of the 3706A multiplexer scan setup but focusing on the networking functions and calls.

The first function of interest is tspnet_connect() which is a wrapper function to help bundle some other checking and functionality.

- The remote_ip and remote_port are the IP address and target port number of the server or host we will be connecting to, respectively.
- The initialization_string is the default set of characters to be issued to the host from the instrument via the tspnet.connect() TSP command. The tspnet.connect() command will attempt to establish a socket connection to the host target.
- If the attempt to connect fails, the function will terminate and return the host_id with a nil value.
- If, however, the connection is successful then tspnet.ipaddress and tspnet.termination attributes are updated, and the host_id is returned with a handle to be used with other tspnet commands.

```
-- Initialize connection between the instrument and remote host
function tspnet_connect(remote_ip, remote_port, host_id,
initialization_string)
   host_id = tspnet.connect(remote_ip, remote_port, initialization_string)

if host_id == nil then return nil end

tspnet_ipaddress = remote_ip
   tspnet.termination(host_id, tspnet.TERM_LF)

return host_id
end
```

With our connection function defined, let us review how it is used in the main script area. Below we find not just the tspnet_connect() wrapper function at play, but some other tspnet-specifc tools as well:

- tspnet.reset() is used to terminate any/all active tspnet sockets that the instrument may already be using. If you have the instrument that this script is running on physically connected to (vis the TSP bus) another TSP-enabled instrument, then that instrument's active tspnet sockets will also be terminated.
- The sockets response timeout value is updated to a given value; in this case the timeout is defined to be 5 seconds.
- Variables for the server's IP address and port number are defined, as well as a variable which
 will hold the handle to the server that will be reused in other tspnet-specific functions and
 wrappers.
- Note from earlier that our tspnet_connect() wrapper function includes a parameter where the user can pass a string that is used during the initial connection to the instrument. What we pass because we will define the server socket code to expect it is the name of the file that will be created on the server and used to hold all the measurement data we send. The os.date() function is built into the Lua-based embedded TSP scripting engine and allows us to format a string with specifiers identical to those used by strftime() of the C programming language. We will be defining the end file in *.csv format so that all comma-separated strings sent to the instrument will be write-ready when they reach the server.
- Finally, we call our wrapper function, expecting successful connection and a handle that will be used for other communication actions with respect to the target server host.

```
-- Intitialize overall tsp-net configuration...
tspnet.reset()
tspnet.timeout = 5.0
-- Establish variables for remote connection
host_ipaddress = "192.168.1.111"
host_port = 60000
host_connection_id = nil
filename = os.date("data %Y-%m-%d %H-%M-%S.csv") -- timestamp the file name
```

Our next user-defined wrapper function is <code>tspnet_write()</code> which was named to align more with the verbiage commonly used with test instrument communications – for example: "write", "read", and "query". While we can surmise what might happen when we use <code>tspnet.execute()</code>, using terms like "write" or "send" remove any guesswork on the user's part and helps prevent the need to open the Reference Manual to be certain.

This function is consumed much as we might expect. However, let us review what is happening just before we call this function in the main script:

- At this point we have already configured our 3706A to perform multiplexed scanning on a series
 of channels and trigger the scan to start. All channels will be scanned once every ten seconds for
 an hour, and measurements for each channel will be added to the reading buffer as each scan
 completes.
- The for loop is used to index through the reading buffer for a given scan, populating a string variable data_string with a series of comma-separated measurements. This loop will be executed for each scan that occurs, and the code that manages monitoring scan progress can be found in the main code body. We do not use the built-in printbuffer() command because it only moves buffered readings to the output queue.
- We then send the data to the server using our tspnet_write() wrapper, passing in the host connection id and data string as arguments.

```
-- build the string of channels we want to write to the server
for i = startindex, endindex, 1 do
    if i == startindex then
        data_string = reading_buffer.readings[i]
    else
        data_string = data_string .. "," .. reading_buffer.readings[i]
    end
end
-- Send the scan data to the server
tspnet_write(host_connection_id, data_string)
```

Upon scanning completion, we will need a means to tell the server that this particular data logging instance is at an end and allow for proper client-connection termination on its end. As you will soon see, we simply write "done" to the server (because it is screening for this), then call our tspnet disconnect() wrapper function.

```
-- After the scanning is complete, notify the server that we are done
-- and disconnect
tspnet_write(host_connection_id, "done")
tspnet disconnect(host connection id)
```

There is nothing terribly spectacular to note about our disconnect wrapper other than it does some checking for a valid host ID handle prior to calling the native tspnet.disconnect() command. Still, we include it for the sake of being thorough.

```
-- Terminate the connection between the master and subordinate instrument
function tspnet_disconnect(host_id)
    if host_id ~= nil then
        tspnet.disconnect(host_id)
        host_id = nil
    end
end
```

Before transitioning to the next topic, we call attention to a useful way of providing operator feedback at the instrument front panel. Below is the series of commands executed just after our scan is triggered on the 3706A:

```
-- Update the instrument display
display.clear()
display.setcursor(1, 1)
display.settext("KE3706A DCV Scan")
display.setcursor(2, 1)
display.settext("$BSend Data Direct to Server")
```

We customize both the first and second lines of the instrument with the initial call to display.setcursor() and display.settext() placing the write cursor on line one, index position 1 then followed by writing the desired text, respectively. We see something similar with the follow-on calls to each command but with a focus on the display's second line. Note, however, in this text string that we begin with the "\$B" character code. This tells the 3706A to cause all characters that follow the character code to blink. For more information on other display character codes, refer to display.settext() in the instrument Reference Manual.

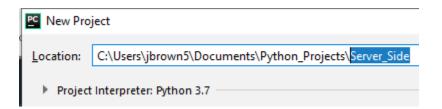
Create a Simple Server to Run on a Remote Host PC

Our simple server is derived from what you might find in many introductory "Computer Networks" college courses. This same sort of information is also freely available on the internet and we have made a link available in the <u>Resources</u> section of this document. Bear in mind that our goal for this piece of the solution is simplicity, which is why you will find that there is not a lot of code necessary to accomplish out task.

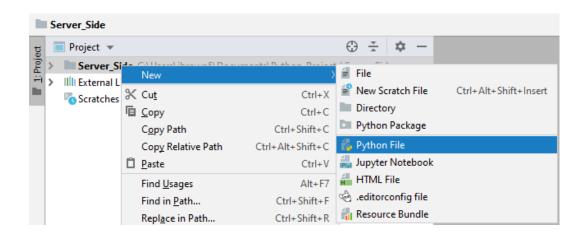
While all the example code we use for this application is available in <u>Appendix B</u>, you will still need to acquire the Python programming language for your PC as well as a powerful source code editor like PyCharm Community which is available free of charge from the team at JetBrains. Because Python is a cross-platform programming language, most of the code we write can be run on Windows or Linux systems. For help in getting started with the installation of both of these tools as well as a brief introduction on remote instrument control using Python, refer to "Getting Started with Instrument Control Using Python 3" which is available via the Tektronix GitHub repository. Note that direct links to all the tools referenced here are available in the Resources section of this document.

Let us start by creating a new project in PyCharm that will hold our code:

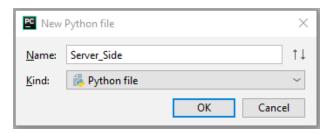
- 1. Open **PyCharm** using the desktop icon or the Windows Start menu tools. (For launching PyCharm on a Linux system, use the desktop icon or refer to the internet for guidance specific to your Linux distribution.)
- 2. Click on the + Create New Project option in the default dialog.
- 3. Add the name of your Python project that defines our objective in the area highlighted in the Location input field. We will set this to **Server_Side**. Also ensure that your Project Interpreter is set to use your choice Python installation. (Note, below, that Python 3.7 is selected.) Click the **Create** button.



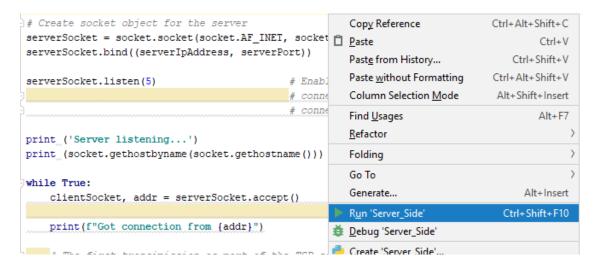
4. In the Project pane (on the left-hand side of the user interface by default), right-click on the Server_Side folder to reveal the pop-up menu and select **New->Python File** from the options provided.



5. Enter **Server_Side** in the New Python file dialog presented.



- 6. Copy the code found in Appendix B into the editor window. Note that the PyCharm environment may highlight areas in the editor and indicate warnings. While not necessary, you may want to edit the contents to eliminate the warnings and adhere to the PEP 8 coding style guidelines promoted by the PyCharm ADE.
- 7. To run or debug the code, right-click in the editor window to reveal the pop-up and select either **Run 'Server_Side'** or **Debug 'Server_Side'**.



Our main code area starts off with the instantiation of a socket object, serverSocket, then is bound to its IP address and a port through which will receive the incoming data. The server is then configured to permit up to five simultaneous incoming connections, though we will only be using one in our example.

The script program then enters a while () loop that detects an incoming client connection (which will come from our 3706A scanning script). The local terminal will report that the connection is made, then the server will ready itself for the first incoming message which we defined as the data filename in the 3706A script. This while () loop will continue until the client connection is closed.

We then fall into another while () loop that handles the incoming scan data:

- The server is queued up to receive an incoming message from the client, and we remove all trailing line feed characters from the sent message (with rstrip()) so the contents can be evaluated.
- The while () looks for a nil string first to determine if its looping action should be broken. Additionally, if the incoming message reads "done" then the loop will be broken.
- If the incoming message is our reading data then we pass the message string into the write_data_to_file() function that logs the data to the file and location defined by filename.

```
# Subsequent writes will contain a string of data which will be written to
# the file until the sender issues a "done" string.
data_to_write = clientSocket.recv(1024).decode()
while (data_to_write):
    print(data_to_write.rstrip())
    if(data_to_write.__contains__("done")):
        break
    write_data_to_file(filename, data_to_write.rstrip())
    data_to_write = clientSocket.recv(1024).decode()
```

Once the looping is broken, the client connection is terminated and a notification is sent to the server terminal window.

```
# Close the active client connection to allow for other incoming connections
# to be made.
clientSocket.close()
print("Closed connection...")
```

Load and Run the Script on Your Instrument

Because our goal is to run our network-logging script on our instrument in the absence of the PC, let us now cover the process of migrating and loading the script onto our target instrument. The first step is to move a copy of the script on to a USB flash drive. Locate the script on your hard drive via the default project path established by the TSB software install and in your specific project folder. For instance:

```
C:\Users\username\Keithley Test Script
Builder\Workspaces\workspace\KE3706A Write Scan Data To Network Location
```

Insert a USB flash drive into a compatible port on your PC then copy the **KE3706A_Write_Scan_Data_to_Network_Location.tsp** script on to the root of a USB flash drive. Remove the USB flash drive from the PC and plug it into the front port on the 3706A.

The next step is to load the script into the instrument memory. Using the buttons on the 3706A, navigate to **MENU->SCRIPT->LOAD->USB**. Use the **rotary knob** to locate and identify the script by name; it will be the active selection when the script name is visible and blinking on the display. To activate loading, depress the **rotary knob**. Note that the script will be loaded as **"<anonymous>"**.





Fully exit out of the script menu and back to the main front panel by pressing the **EXIT** button.

Recall that the script will run and provide a display update to notify your that the scan operation is in progress, blinking the "Send Data Direct to Server" message on the second line of the instrument display.



During the run, you can see the incoming data arrive at the server, being printed in the terminal window where the Python server script is running.

Additionally, you will be able to locate the data file either local to where the Python server script is running, or via the system path specified in the data file name.

data_2020-06-08_07-44-18.csv

6/8/2020 7:49 AM

Microsoft Excel Co...

11 KB

Upon scan completion (in this case the scan runs for an hour), the display will indicate "Scanning Complete!!!".



Conclusion

Removing the PC from a data logging application is useful in a number of situations. We have provided some high-level walk-throughs on constructing your instrument script code to run independent of the PC as well as offering a very basic Python server script that can be deployed on a remote network host. We complete the setup with instruction on how to move the 3706A TSP script on to the instrument and run it.

With all this in place, we take a moment of reflection to ponder how you might enhance this solution further.

- The client-server connection is highly optimistic in that we are assuming success and there are no provisions in checking for the integrity of the first and continuous connection. Code can be established on both the client and server sides to handle erroneous scenarios.
- Part of the series of tspnet wrapper functions includes tspnet_query() and tspnet_read() which might be leveraged for better handshaking between the instrument and server, further adding to the robustness of the code.

- Likewise, the server-side script should be enhanced such that it implements the code/commands necessary to send feedback to the client.
- The server-side script must be terminated by a user who as access to the server and its network location. However, it might make more sense to elaborate on the server script to have a means of closing out the application remotely.

Resources

Below is a listing of software and articles that were used in creating this document:

- Keithley Test Script Builder (TSB): https://www.tek.com/keithley-test-script-builder
- Keithley Series 3706A Switch/Multimeter System: https://www.tek.com/keithley-switching-and-data-acquisition-systems/keithley-3700a-systems-switch-multimeter
- Lua: https://www.lua.org/
- Python: https://www.python.org/
- JetBrains PyCharm: https://www.jetbrains.com/pycharm/
- "Network Programming Server & Client B: File Transfer":
 https://www.bogotobogo.com/python/python_network_programming_server_client_file_transfer.php
- "Getting Started with Instrument Control Using Python 3": https://github.com/tektronix/keithley/tree/master/Instrument Examples/Instructables/Get Started with Instr Control Python

Appendix A: Full TSP Script Code for the Series 3706A Scan Logging

```
Start TSP-Net Function Wrappers
]] -- ------
-- Initialize connection between the instrument and remote host
function tspnet connect(remote ip, remote port, host id, initialization string)
      host id = tspnet.connect(remote ip, remote port, initialization string)
      if host id == nil then return nil end
      tspnet \overline{i}paddress = remote ip
      tspnet.termination(host id, tspnet.TERM LF)
      return host id
end
-- Send command to controlled remote instrument
function tspnet write(host id, command)
      tspnet.execute(host_id, command .. "\n")
      if echo cmd == 1 then
           print(command)
end
-- Query data from the controlled instrument and return as a string
function tspnet_query(host_id, command, timeout)
      timeout = timeout or 5.0 -- Use default timeout of 5 secs if not specified
      tspnet write(host id, command)
      while tspnet.readavailable(host id) == 0 and timer.gettime() < timeout do</pre>
            delav(0.1)
      end
```

```
return tspnet.read(host id)
end
-- Terminate the connection between the master and subordinate instrument
function tspnet disconnect(host id)
       if host_id ~= nil then
               tspnet.disconnect(host id)
              host id = nil
       end
end
--[[
       End TSP-Net Function Wrappers
]]--
--[[
       Start Scan Configuration Function Wrappers
11--
function configure dcv scan(nplc, dcv range, use input divider, scan interval,
        scan_channels, scan_count)
       reset()
   dmm.func = dmm.DC VOLTS
                                             -- Set measurement function
                                            -- Set NPLC
    dmm.nplc = nplc
   if dcv range < 0.001 then</pre>
                                            -- Set Range
       dmm.autorange = dmm.ON
       dmm.autorange = dmm.OFF
       dmm.range = dcv range
   dmm.autodelay = dmm.ON
                                            -- Ensure Auto Delay is enabled
    dmm.autozero = dmm.ON
                                            -- Enable Auto Zero
    if use input divider == 1 then
                                            -- Apply the 10M input divider as needed
       dmm.inputdivider = dmm.ON
       dmm.inputdivider = dmm.OFF
       end
    dmm.configure.set("mydcvolts")
                                           -- Save Configuration
    dmm.setconfig(scan channels, "mydcvolts") -- Assign configuration to channels
   channel.connectrule = channel.BREAK BEFORE MAKE
    if scan interval > 0.1 then
        -- Establish the settings that will apply the interval between the start
        -- of scans
       trigger.timer[1].reset()
                                             -- Ensure the timer gets to a
                                             -- known relative time start
                                             -- point
        trigger.timer[1].count = 0
                                                    -- No reapeating timer events
        trigger.timer[1].delay = scan_interval
                                                    -- Apply the anticipated scan
                                                    -- interval
        trigger.timer[1].stimulus = scan.trigger.EVENT_MEASURE_COMP
        trigger.timer[1].passthrough = false
                                                    -- Trigger only initiates the
                                                    -- delay
        trigger.blender[1].reset()
                                                    -- Configure the blender
        -- stimulus...
trigger.blender[1].orenable = true -- ... for OR'ing operation
        trigger.blender[1].stimulus[1] = trigger.timer[1].EVENT ID -- ... to
                                                     -- respond/notify upon a timer
                                                    -- event
        trigger.blender[1].stimulus[2] = scan.trigger.EVENT_SCAN_READY -- ... or
                                                                   -- when then scan is ready
                                                                   -- (configured)
                                                                   -- Key triggering
        scan.trigger.arm.stimulus = trigger.blender[1].EVENT ID
                                                                   -- off of the blender event
    end
                                                            -- Create the scan
    scan.create(scan channels)
                                                            -- Set the Scan Count
    scan.scancount = scan count
    reading_buffer = dmm.makebuffer(scan.scancount * scan.stepcount)
                                                                           -- Configure
                                                                           -- the buffer
   scan.background(reading buffer)
                                                    -- Execute Scan and save to buffer
```

```
-- Update the instrument display
   display.clear()
   display.setcursor(1, 1)
   display.settext("KE3706A DCV Scan")
   display.setcursor(2, 1)
   display.settext("$BSend Data Direct to Server")
   return reading buffer
end
]]--
      End Scan Configuration Function Wrappers
]]--
  ______
             MAIN PROGRAM STARTS HERE
*******************
]]
scanchannels = "1001:1020"
                                   -- Define the channels to scan here. Note the
                                   -- following format possibilities...
                                   -- 1001:10060 - All channels starting with
                                         1001 and ending with 1060
                                   --
                                      1001,1002,1004 - Just channels 1001,
                                        1002, and 1004
                                   -- 1007:1010,1021,1031:1040 - Channels
                                       1007 through 1010, channel 1021, and
                                         channels 1031 through 1040
                                   -- Define the DCV range. If auto-ranging is
rangedcv = 10
                                   -- desired, pass 0
useinputdivider = 1
                                   -- 1 = True; 0 = False
                                   -- Number of times to run the scan
scancount = 360
scaninterval = 10
                                   -- Delay between the start of each scan (if
                                   -- needed)
nplc = 1
reading buffer = configure dcv scan(nplc, rangedcv, useinputdivider, scaninterval,
                                                               scanchannels, scancount,
reading buffer)
channelcount = scan.stepcount
startindex = 1
endindex = channelcount
total readings count = 0
target = channelcount * scancount
delay(0.5)
data_string = ""
-- Intitialize overall tsp-net configuration...
tspnet.reset()
tspnet.timeout = 5.0
-- Establish variables for remote connection
host ipaddress = "192.168.1.111"
host port = 60000
host_connection id = nil
filename = os.date("data %Y-%m-%d %H-%M-%S.csv")
-- Connect to the server/host
host connection id = tspnet connect(host ipaddress, host port, host connection id,
                                                           filename)
-- Extract readings while the scan is running....
while(total_readings_count < target) do</pre>
   vals = reading buffer.n
    -- wait unit the buffer is ready with as scan's worth of readings
   while(vals < endindex) do</pre>
       delay(0.1)
       vals = reading_buffer.n
   end
```

```
-- build the string of channels we want to write to the server
    for i = startindex, endindex, 1 do
        if i == startindex then
               data string = reading buffer.readings[i]
        else
                data string = data string .. "," .. reading buffer.readings[i]
        end
    end
    -- Send the scan data to the server
    tspnet write(host connection id, data string)
    -- Update the variables that handle the buffer indexing
    startindex = startindex + channelcount
    endindex = endindex + channelcount
    total readings count = total readings count + channelcount
-- After the scanning is complete, notify the server that we are done and disconnect tspnet_write(host_connection_id, "done")
tspnet disconnect(host connection id)
display.clear()
display.setcursor(1, 1)
display.settext("KE3706A DCV Scan")
display.setcursor(2, 1)
display.settext("$RScanning $BComplete!!!")
```

Appendix B: Full Python Server Script Code

```
# Server Side.py
import socket
                                     # Import socket module
import sys
import os.path
import operator
import time
def write data to file(output data path, dataStr):
   # This function writes the string data to the
   # target file.
   ofile = open(output_data path, "a") # append the target data
   dataStr = "{0}\n".format(dataStr)
   ofile.write(dataStr)
   ofile.close() # Close the data file.
   return
MAIN CODE STARTS HERE
serverIpAddress = socket.gethostname()  # Get local machine name
serverPort = 60000
                                    # Define the port to which the client
                                    # will use
# Create socket object for the server
serverSocket = socket.socket(socket.AF INET, socket.SOCK STREAM)
serverSocket.bind((serverIpAddress, serverPort))
serverSocket.listen(5)
                                     # Enable our server to accept up to 5
                                     # connections before refusing new
                                     # connections
print ('Server listening...')
print (socket.gethostbyname(socket.gethostname()))
```

```
while True:
   clientSocket, addr = serverSocket.accept() # Establish connection with
                                                # client.
   print("Got connection from {0}".format(addr))
    \# The first transimission as part of the TSP connect will be the instrument
    # file name that will be written to during data transmission.
   filename = clientSocket.recv(1024).decode()
    # Subsequent writes will contain a string of data which will be written to
    # the file until the sender issues a "done" string.
   data_to_write = clientSocket.recv(1024).decode()
   while (data to write):
       print(data_to_write.rstrip())
       if (data_to_write.__contains__("done")):
           break
        write data to file(filename, data to write.rstrip())
       data_to_write = clientSocket.recv(1024).decode()
   # Close the active client connection to allow for other incoming connections
   # to be made.
   clientSocket.close()
   print("Closed connection...")
# We can close the server socket, but have the option to leave open and
# run indefinitely so it is always listening for incoming connections
# and data.
serverSocket.close()
```

Revisions

Revision	Date	Authored by	Notes
1.0	2020-06-08	Josh Brown	