GreenSense

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INTRODUCTION

We have created a mobile application, that works with a database in our software engineering course. Our Internet of Things (IoT) capstone project uses a distributed computing model of a smart phone application, a database accessible via the internet, an enterprise wireless (capable of storing certificates) connected embedded system prototype with a custom PCB as well as an enclosure (3D printed/laser cut).

With our project we constructed and developed a greenhouse monitoring system. Systems like this are already available to consumers and industry professionals yet most lack certain features that many people would like to see incorporated. With our project we achieve a device that has all the features and specifications to benefit everyone. Users will also be able to have up to date information for key variables inside of a greenhouse environment.

This proposal presents a plan for providing a solution for the arboretum at Humber College (Humber Arboretum, 2020) . This is an opportunity to combine the skills and knowledge that we've learned throughout our program and create a capstone project demonstrating our ability to create a greenhouse system that will improve the current system and provide the staff at Humber's arboretum an easier more efficient solution to maintain the greenhouse from anywhere.

AIM

With this project we utilized plenty of different parts/components to add the needed functionality to the device to take in readings and make changes to the environment of the greenhouse.
One of the sensors we used is the BME680 which will be responsible for taking in readings such as humidity and air quality (VOC (Volatile organic compound) gases). Next, this project includes a Gikfun EK1940 capacitive soil moisture sensor. This sensor will be responsible for reading moisture levels in the soil of various plants. Lastly, the thrid sensor we will be using is the DS18B20 sensor that will measure the temperature inside the greenhouse. Along with these three sensors we have included: an SG90 servo and case fan for a ventilation system, a 28BYJ-48 stepper and ULN2003 driver board to rotate a sunshade system, and a Gikfun EK1856 diaphragm pump for watering the plants. The physical designs of this project required use of software such as Fritzing, openSCAD, and CorelDraw. Programming was done using Java in Android Studio, Python on the Broadcom platform, and the database using Amazon's Firebase. Physical assembly of the PCB and scale model greenhouse required resources such as PCB manufacturing, 3D printing, laser cutting, metal fabrication; and tools such as a welder, grinder, soldering iron, drill, rotary tool, and various hand tools.

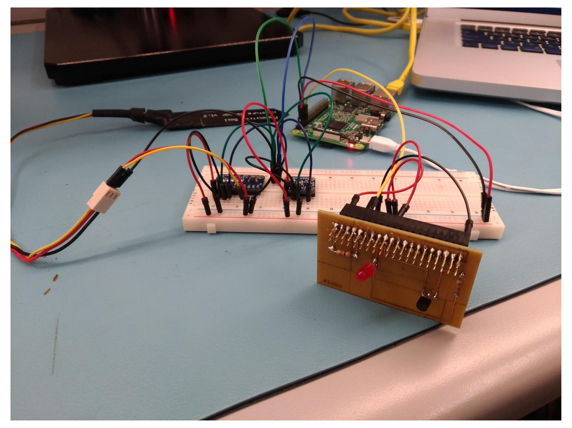
METHOD

The circuit the combines all the sensors together was transferred from the breadboard to a more permanent/production-level solution. The answer to this was to design a custom PCB. Each group member would design and edit a custom PCB using Fritzing. This was done by selecting board dimensions, drawing traces, inserting vias, and placing holes for headers/components.

Once the PCB was designed and approved by the Fritzing software, the design was exported as a Gerber file. This file was then sent to the Humber Prototype Lab for the PCB to be made. The Prototype Lab uses the LPKF ProtoLaser ST and the LPKF ProtoMat S103 to create these custom PCBs.

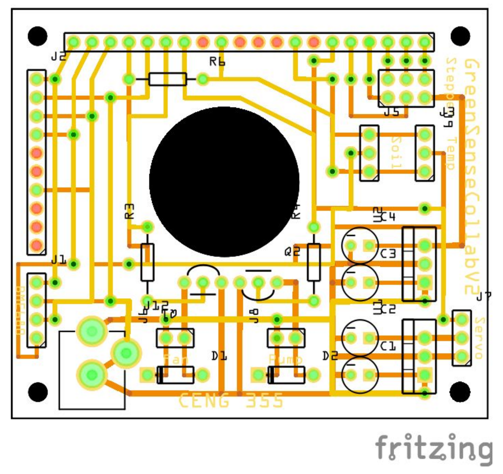
With the PCB fully assembled, we double-checked all solder joints and connections, as well as tested the circuit with a multimeter. When everything checked out, we installed the PCB onto the Raspberry Pi for the power up test.

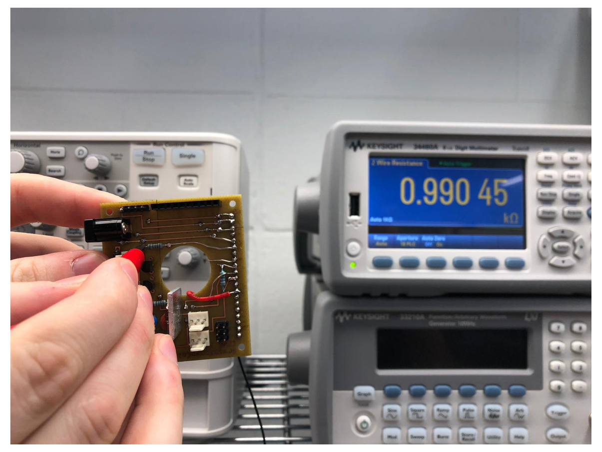
The Raspberry Pi as our CPU to control the sensors remotely. Using the following to test the sensors Raspbian, SD Formatter and VNC that allowed us to remotely control the raspberry Pi from our computer. We used python code for all three sensors to measure temperature, humidity and moisture levels.



Breadboarding all three sensors together before moving on to the PCB stage.

GreenSense PCB combines three sensors and three effectors. This work is a derivative of "http://fritzing.org/parts/" by Fritzing, used under CC:BY-SA 3.0.

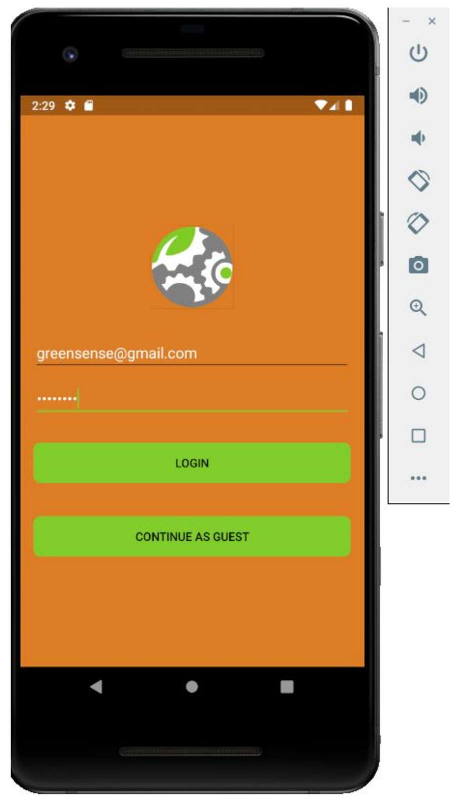




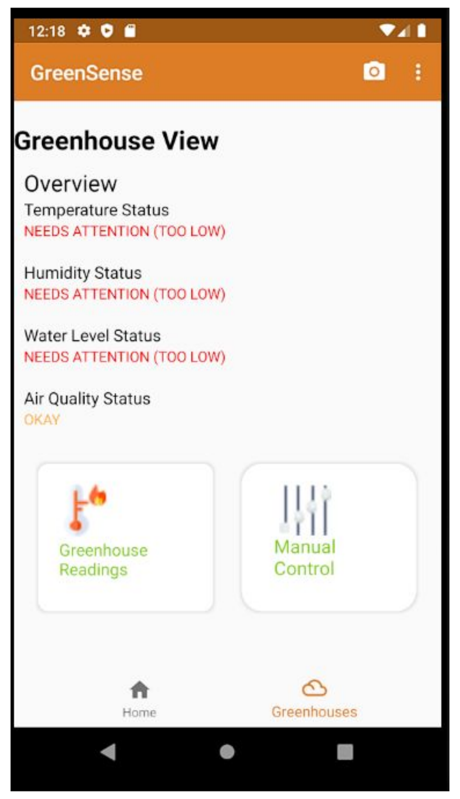
Testing the PCB (3,2020) taken by Ryan McAdie.

RESULTS

For the entire duration of semester 5 (September 2019 – December 2019) we have been working to develop an Android application that is capable of connecting with our development platform to allow for remote management of our greenhouse system. Users are able to login using credentials that are stored securely in a data base, users can access the values that we have stored in the database representing temperature, humidity, and soil moisture levels, which means we have an active connection to our database, we even have a page setup where the users will be able to make the adjustments to the environment remotely and access a database system hosted on Amazons Firestore database to retrieve up to date information on things like the current temperature inside the greenhouse, the humidity levels, the soil moisture levels of plants, and even the air quality inside the greenhouse to know if the plants are in a safe and optimal growing environment.

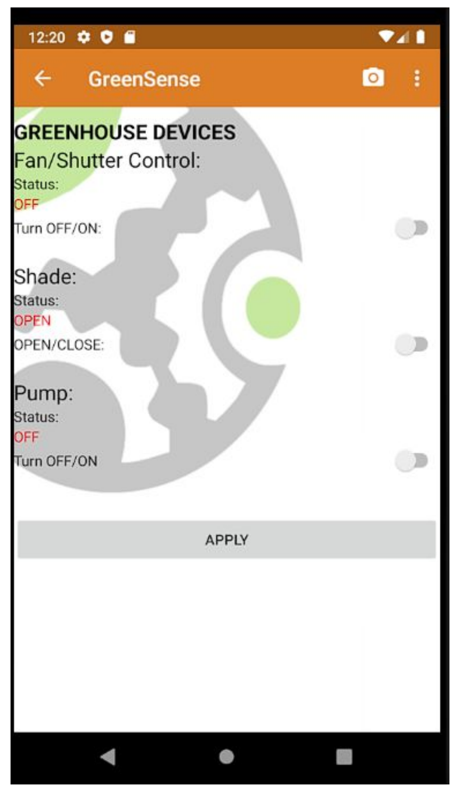


Android Studio. (2020). Screenshot from login page of GreenSense mobile application.



Android Studio. (2020). Screenshot from greenhouse overview page of GreenSense mobile application.

Android Studio. (2020). Screenshot from sensor readings page of GreenSense mobile application.



Android Studio. (2020). Screenshot from effector control page of GreenSense mobile application.

PRINTING

We decided to make a scale model greenhouse to showcase our sensors and effectors. Various components of the scale model were made using a combination of 3D printing, acrylic laser cutting, and welding/metal fabrication. 3D print models were designed using openSCAD, acrylic designs using CorelDraw, and metal fabrication designed on-the-fly. The main body of the Pi case was 3D printed and features: an acrylic door with a mounted fan for cooling, an acrylic sliding cover for the ethernet/usb, and a wire channel at the bottom. The scale model greenhouse has a custom fabricated metal outer frame and acrylic panels for the walls and roof. Due to the closing of the college/prototype lab, 1mm clear PP (Rubbermaid bin) was used as a substitute for acrylic. The clear plastic was cut by hand with an exacto knife and holes/notches were made with a drill or rotary tool. Various subsystems within the scale model greenhouse were also custom made: a 3D printed shutter system for air intake, a 3D printed housing for a stepper motor/driver board, and 3D printed pillow blocks/bearing mounts.

Complete greenhouse showing fan/shutter system.

Pi case for greenhouse. Acrylic door open showing cooling fan and wiring.

CONCLUSIONS

Our system is one of the first of its kind to implement a majority of the necessary features of a greenhouse monitoring system. This system goes above and beyond to achieve features and requirements that make managing a greenhouse a little easier; and provides peace of mind knowing that the health of your plants is taken care of. Our next steps will involve further improving upon the physical designs/components, updating and maintaining the code/database, as well as preparing a plan for moving this system into production for client purchase.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Humber Arboretum. (2020). Retrieved from Humber Arboretum and centre for urban ecology: https://humber.ca/arboretum/