Experiment 3: Interfacing basic LCD display with Arduino.

Objective: Interfacing 2x20 alphanumeric LCD with Arduino digital ports.

Description: The LiquidCrystal library allows you to control LCD displays that are compatible with the Hitachi HD44780 driver. There are many of them out there, and you can usually tell them by the 16-pin interface.

The example sketch provided prints "Hello World!" to the LCD and shows the time in seconds since the Arduino was reset.

The LCDs have a parallel interface, meaning that the microcontroller has to manipulate several interface pins at once to control the display. The interface consists of the following pins:

- A register select (RS) pin that controls where in the LCD's memory you're writing data to. You can select either the data register, which holds what goes on the screen, or an instruction register, which is where the LCD's controller looks for instructions on what to do next.
- A Read/Write (R/W) pin that selects reading mode or writing mode
- An Enable pin that enables writing to the registers
- 8 data pins (D0 -D7). The states of these pins (high or low) are the bits that you're writing to a register when you write, or the values you're reading when you read.
- There's also a display constrast pin (Vo), power supply pins (+5V and Gnd) and LED Backlight (Bklt+ and BKlt-) pins that you can use to power the LCD, control the display contrast, and turn on and off the LED backlight, respectively.

The process of controlling the display involves putting the data that form the image of what you want to display into the data registers, then putting instructions in the instruction register. The LiquidCrystal Library simplifies this for you so you don't need to know the low-level instructions.

The Hitachi-compatible LCDs can be controlled in two modes: 4-bit or 8-bit. The 4-bit mode requires seven I/O pins from the Arduino, while the 8-bit mode requires 11 pins. For displaying text on the screen, you can do most everything in 4-bit mode, so example shows how to control a 2x16 LCD in 4-bit mode.

Design:
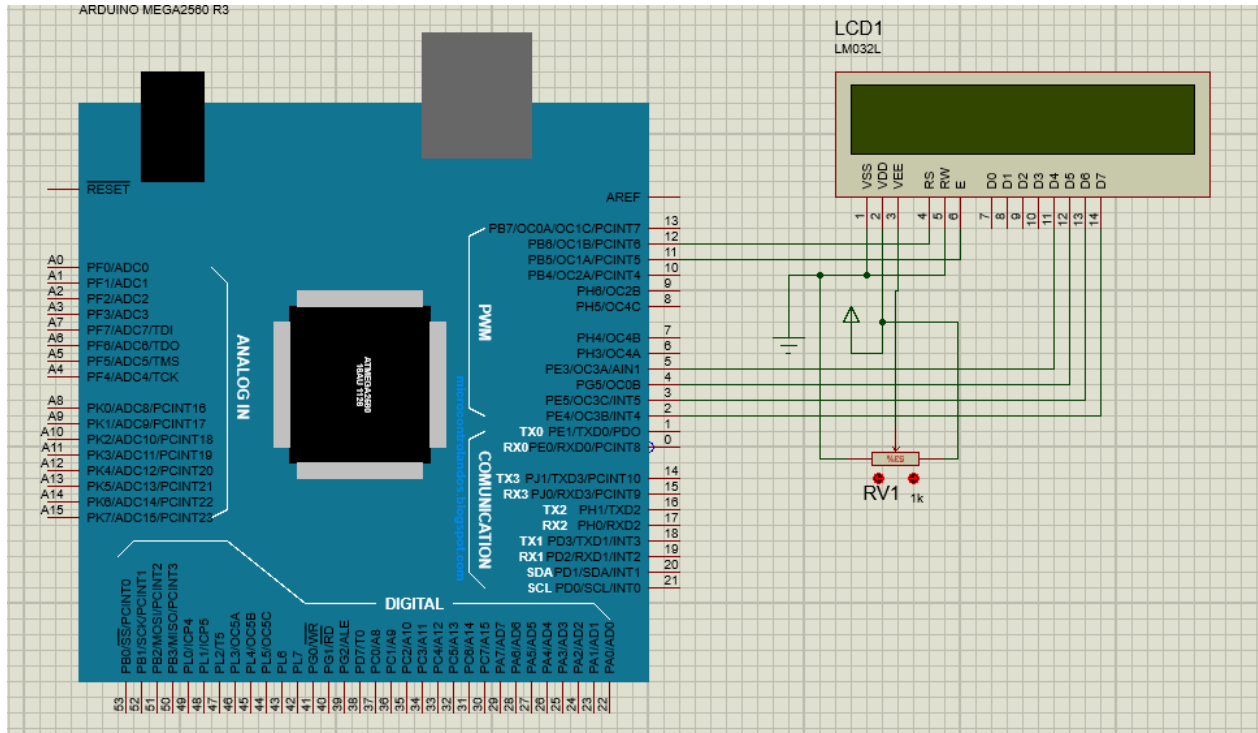
Exercises:

- Design a simple calculator using Arduino, available keypad and 2x20 LCD display.
- Design a system to show values in seven segment display.