Embedded Systems - Project Final Report

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1. Introduction

The primary objective of this project is to design and construct a robot that can navigate a modular field of tiles by accurately following a black line. The robot is expected to overcome obstacles and adapt to environmental variability within the field. This dynamic field comprises various tiles that introduce distinct challenges, such as ramps, obstacles, and intersections. The robot must operate independently, with no prior knowledge of the field layout.

2. Project Overview

The robot is engineered to autonomously follow a black line on a white surface, continuously adapting to obstacles and variations in the course. The key specifications include:

- Ability to detect and follow a black line with high accuracy.
- Real-time obstacle detection and avoidance capabilities.
- Efficient navigation through dynamic field layouts.
- Integration of sensors and cameras for enhanced environmental awareness.

3. Methodology

3.1 JetBot Configuration

The motors were first attached to the metal box, followed by the antennas, which were passed through a round hole in the box and secured. The camera holder was then mounted to the box, along with the camera and Acrylic board. Standoffs were installed on both the metal box and the JetBot expansion board to prepare for mounting the Jetson Nano Developer Kit. Once the expansion board was in place, the 18650 batteries were installed with attention to their correct orientation, and the motors were connected and fixed on both sides.

Afterward, the wheels were attached to the metal bottom board, which was then secured to the metal box. The Jetson Nano board was installed on the expansion board after briefly removing it to install the Wireless-AC 8265. The cooling fan was connected to the Jetson Nano, and the glue antenna was installed, followed by the connection of the 6-pin cable according to the color scheme shown below in figure 1 [1].

Finally, the power adapter was connected to the expansion board, and the JetBot was powered on.

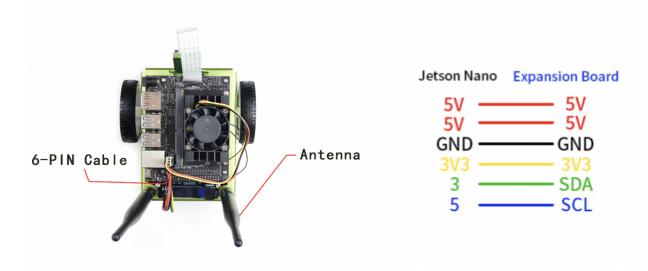


Figure 1: Pin connections between the Jetson Nano and Expansion Board

3.2 Data Collection

The data collection process involved placing the JetBot in various positions along the path, ensuring significant variation in the data. The live camera feed from the JetBot was displayed, and the point on the image to represent the target direction for the robot was selected. The X and Y coordinates of the point, along with the corresponding camera image, were saved as labels for training.

Key steps for this phase included:

- Placing the JetBot in different positions (offset from center, different angles, etc.).
- Displaying the live camera feed and annotating the images with a point to indicate the target direction.
- Saving the annotated images along with their corresponding X and Y values in the dataset.

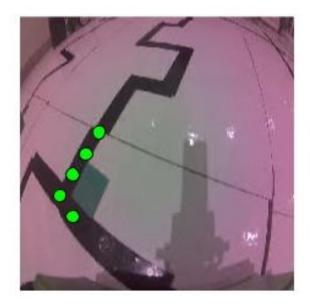
The dataset was stored in a folder with filenames encoding the X and Y coordinates, such as xy_<x>_<y>_<uid>.jpg. This ensured that the labeling process was efficient and the data was organized systematically.

The target placement guidelines included:

- Visualizing the path the robot should follow based on the live camera feed.
- Placing the target as far along the imagined path as possible while ensuring the robot could navigate safely without going off-road.
- Adjusting target placement for sharp turns by bringing it closer to the robot to prevent boundary violations.

Following these guidelines ensured the robot could navigate smoothly, with the target point progressing along the desired trajectory.

The collected dataset was used to train a neural network to predict the X and Y coordinates of the target points. The training process utilized a regression model, and



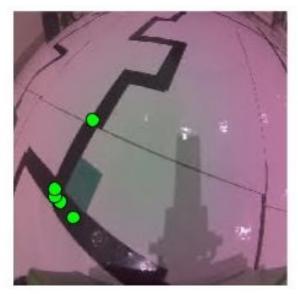


Figure 2: Labeling strategy. Left: Gradual Turn. Right: Sharp Turn. Green boxes represent position of the labels

the trained network was deployed on the JetBot. During deployment, the predicted X and Y values were used to compute an approximate steering direction. Although the values were not calibrated to angles, they were proportional to the required steering adjustments, enabling the JetBot to follow the path effectively.

The implementation involved the use of various Python libraries and tools:

- OpenCV for image visualization and annotation.
- ipywidgets and traitlets for creating interactive widgets in Jupyter notebooks.
- The jetbot library for interfacing with the JetBot's camera and motor.
- A clickable image widget, jupyter_clickable_image_widget, to capture annotation points directly from the live camera feed.

For labeling the image data we tested two methods:

- Initially we tried to label the data in a way that it follows the turn smoothly, i.e. starts turning early and gradually turns to the right or left rather than a sharp turn. The labeling is visualized in the Figure
- Although this method was working very well, we start having trouble in the box shaped paths. As the turns are very frequent, smoother turns means the jetbot won't be able to stay in the line most of the time and will keep turning. This meant higher chances of detecting wrong turns when it cannot align itself properly with the line. For this reason we labeled the data so that it makes a sharp turn when it nears the intersection. The way we achieved it is that instead of gradually changing the position to follow the turn, it points to the intersection until it gets pretty close to the intersection at which point the target point shifts towards the turn (right or left depending on specific scenarios). This ensures the jetbot doesn't deviate too much away from the line while turning and solves any issues arising while following box shaped path.

3.3 Deep Learning Model Training

To enable autonomous navigation of the JetBot, two distinct models were employed: the Steering Model and the Classification Model, each serving complementary roles in the road-following task. The ResNet-18 architecture was selected as the base model for both cases. A single fully connected convolutional layer was added at the end of each model. The output for the steering model was two values (x, y) for steering regression, while the output for the classification model was four values representing four classes. The final class was ignored, and the argmax function was applied to determine the desired class.

3.3.1 The Steering Model

The principal function of the steering model was to determine the steering direction based on visual input from the camera. This model was trained to manage various conditions and to direct the JetBot along the track. Its primary focus was on the continuous adjustment of the bot's trajectory. However, the steering model alone was inadequate for recognizing specific objects or stopping conditions.

3.3.2 The Classification Model

The classification model complemented the steering model by identifying specific objects or conditions within the environment. It was designed to classify situations such as:

• Stop conditions:

- Red lines indicating a final stop.
- Obstacles appearing anywhere on the track.
- Normal driving conditions: A clear track without obstacles.

This dual-model system allowed the JetBot to adapt effectively to its environment by halting when necessary and maintaining proper steering during normal conditions.

3.3.3 U-turn Detection

Detecting U-turns presented unique challenges that required specialized handling. Initially, U-turns were used as one of the classes in the classification model but it did not perform well. We devised the following labeling strategy to detect U-turns in the steering model:

- The y-coordinate of the predicted point was labeled very close to the JetBot, similar to sharp turns.
- The x-coordinate was labeled towards the center. This ensured the U-turn labeling was distinct from other sharp turns where the x-coordinate tended to be at the edges.

This distinct combination of x and y values enabled the differentiation of U-turns from other scenarios.

Despite these efforts, errors occasionally occurred when other conditions were misidentified as U-turns. To address this, a running average of the absolute steering value was implemented:

- During sharp turns, a single incorrect U-turn detection was ignored, as the running average of the steering value remained high.
- When approaching a U-turn from a straight path, the running average was low, ensuring accurate detection even if the x, y combination briefly matched for a few frames.

This refined approach significantly reduced false detections and improved the Jet-Bot's ability to execute U-turns smoothly, ensuring reliable navigation through complex scenarios.

3.4 Robot Control

The autonomous navigation system for the JetBot involved several key steps to ensure smooth and effective operation, including image pre-processing, camera setup for real-time visualization, and implementing a control mechanism for steering the robot.

3.4.1 Image Pre-processing and Camera Setup

The image captured by the camera was pre-processed to ensure it was in the correct format for the neural network. The image was normalized by subtracting the mean pixel values and dividing by the standard deviation. This normalization step helped the network perform better during inference by matching the format used during the training process. The image was then reshaped to fit the network's input size.

The JetBot used a camera to capture real-time video frames. The feed from the camera was continuously processed frame-by-frame to ensure real-time decision-making. This feed was then passed to the neural network for processing.

3.4.2 Steering and Control Mechanism

The trained steering model was used to predict steering directions based on the preprocessed camera input. The model's output, consisting of x and y coordinates, was flattened and converted to a NumPy array for further processing. Using the predicted coordinates, the angle of deviation (θ) was calculated using the arccosine function and validated through trigonometric computations.

After the neural network performed inference on the image, the angle of deviation was used as the error. A PID controller was implemented to ensure smooth steering control by adjusting the steering commands based on error feedback. Furthermore, the classification model was checked first to confirm normal driving conditions; only then was the steering output utilized.

3.4.3 Optimizing Performance

To optimize performance, a fast mode was implemented. When the running average of the absolute steering value was significantly low and the y-coordinate was far from the JetBot—indicating a clear path ahead—the robot's speed was increased.

3.4.4 Turning Policies

For turning, two policies were used based on the steering value:

- Low steering values: Slight adjustments were made to the motor values to steer left or right gradually.
- Sharp turns: Signaled by a steering value exceeding a set threshold, opposite motor values were applied. This caused the JetBot to turn in place, ensuring alignment with the path without losing sight of the turn.

Results and Conclusion

The live demo demonstrated the effectiveness of the trained model in controlling the Jet-Bot. The model successfully predicted the steering directions required for the JetBot to navigate the track. The outputs from the model were consistent with the expected behavior, and the JetBot was observed to move smoothly along the path without significant deviations.

The pre-processing function and model inference pipeline were verified to work effectively, enabling the JetBot to navigate the track autonomously.

A video is attached along with this report showing successful execution of the JetBot along the path.

Abstraction Model

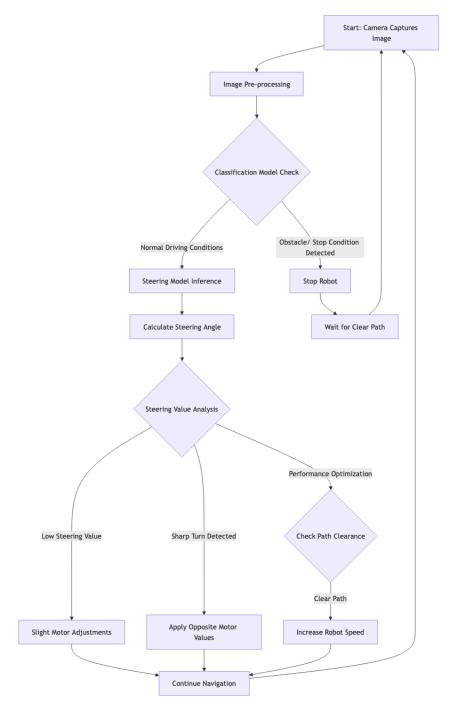


Figure 3: Abstraction Model

1 Appendix with Codes Discussed

A Code for Road Following Data Collection

Below is the Python code used for data collection. OpenCV is used to visualize and save image with labels. Libraries such as unid, datetime are used for image naming.

```
DATASET_DIR = 'dataset_final'
      os.makedirs(DATASET_DIR)
 except FileExistsError:
      print('Directories not created because they already exist')
14
 camera = Camera()
16
17
18
  camera_widget = ClickableImageWidget(width=camera.width, height=camera.
     height)
  snapshot_widget = ipywidgets.Image(width=camera.width, height=camera.
     height)
24
  traitlets.dlink((camera, 'value'), (camera_widget, 'value'), transform=
     bgr8_to_jpeg)
27
  count_widget = ipywidgets.IntText(description='count')
30
  count_widget.value = len(glob.glob(os.path.join(DATASET_DIR, '*.jpg')))
  def save_snapshot(_, content, msg):
36
      if content['event'] == 'click':
          data = content['eventData']
          x = data['offsetX']
39
          y = data['offsetY']
```

```
41
42
          uuid = 'xy_{03d_{03d_{3s}}} % (x, y, uuid1())
          image_path = os.path.join(DATASET_DIR, uuid + '.jpg')
          with open(image_path, 'wb') as f:
              f.write(camera_widget.value)
46
          snapshot = camera.value.copy()
49
          snapshot = cv2.circle(snapshot, (x, y), 8, (0, 255, 0), 3)
50
          snapshot_widget.value = bgr8_to_jpeg(snapshot)
          count_widget.value = len(glob.glob(os.path.join(DATASET_DIR, '
              *.jpg')))
55
56
  camera_widget.on_msg(save_snapshot)
59
60
  data_collection_widget = ipywidgets.VBox([
      ipywidgets.HBox([camera_widget, snapshot_widget]),
62
      count_widget
 ])
64
65
66
 display(data_collection_widget)
```

B Road Follower - Train Model

The model is trained using the images collected by the JetBot and includes the setup of the neural network architecture, data preprocessing, and training the model with a dataset.

B.1 Create Dataset Instance

```
# For steering regression

def get_x(path, width):

"""Extract the normalized x-coordinate value from the image filename.

The filename is assumed to have coordinates encoded in its structure, with '_' as the delimiter.
```

```
9
      return (float(int(path.split("_")[1])) - width / 2) / (width / 2)
12
13
  def get_y(path, height):
14
16
19
20
22
      return (float(int(path.split("_")[2])) - height / 2) / (height / 2)
23
24
def get_class(path):
27
33
      if path.split("/")[1] == 'dataset_xy2':
34
          return [1, 0, 0, 0]
35
      elif path.split("/")[1] == 'object':
36
          return [0, 1, 0, 0]
37
      elif path.split("/")[1] == 'stop':
          return [0, 0, 1, 0]
39
      elif path.split("/")[1] == 'uturn':
40
         return [0, 0, 0, 1]
41
42
43
  class XYDataset(torch.utils.data.Dataset):
      def __init__(self, directory, random_hflips=False):
46
47
49
50
51
          self.directory = directory
          self.random_hflips = random_hflips
```

```
54
           self.image_paths = glob.glob(os.path.join(self.directory,
              jpg'))
56
           self.color_jitter = transforms.ColorJitter(0.3, 0.3, 0.3, 0.3)
57
58
       def __len__(self):
60
           return len(self.image_paths)
61
62
       def __getitem__(self, idx):
63
64
65
68
           image_path = self.image_paths[idx]
           image = PIL.Image.open(image_path)
72
           width, height = image.size
75
           x = float(get_x(os.path.basename(image_path), width))
76
           y = float(get_y(os.path.basename(image_path), height))
78
79
           if float(np.random.rand(1)) > 0.5:
               image = transforms.functional.hflip(image)
82
               x = -x
83
85
           image = self.color_jitter(image)
86
           image = transforms.functional.resize(image, (224, 224))
89
           image = transforms.functional.to_tensor(image)
           image = image.numpy()[::-1].copy()
92
           image = torch.from_numpy(image)
           image = transforms.functional.normalize(image, [0.485, 0.456,
              0.406], [0.229, 0.224, 0.225])
96
97
           return image, torch.tensor([x, y]).float()
98
100
dataset = XYDataset('dataset_final', random_hflips=False)
```

```
103
104
   class RoadFollowerNN(nn.Module):
105
       def __init__(self):
107
108
109
            super(RoadFollowerNN, self).__init__()
110
            self.conv1 = nn.Conv2d(3, 16, kernel_size=3, stride=1, padding
               =1)
            self.conv2 = nn.Conv2d(16, 32, kernel_size=3, stride=1, padding
               =1)
115
            self.fc1 = nn.Linear(32 * 64 * 64, 512)
117
            self.fc2 = nn.Linear(512, 2)
118
119
       def forward(self, x):
120
123
124
126
127
           x = torch.relu(self.conv1(x))
128
           x = torch.relu(self.conv2(x))
130
131
           x = x.view(x.size(0), -1)
133
           x = torch.relu(self.fc1(x))
134
            x = self.fc2(x)
136
           return x
```

B.2 Train Regression

We train for 50 epochs and save best model if the loss is reduced.

```
# Number of training epochs
NUM_EPOCHS = 20

# Path to save the best model during training
# Uncomment the relevant model path depending on the model type
# BEST_MODEL_PATH = 'best_steering_model_xy.pth'
# BEST_MODEL_PATH = 'best_turning_model_xy.pth'
```

```
10
  BEST_MODEL_PATH = 'best_combined_final_model_xy.pth'
12
13
14 best_loss = 1e9
15
16
  optimizer = optim.Adam(model.parameters())
18
19
20
  for epoch in range(NUM_EPOCHS):
      model.train()
21
      train_loss = 0.0
      for images, labels in iter(train_loader):
25
           images = images.to(device)
26
           labels = labels.to(device)
           optimizer.zero_grad()
           outputs = model(images)
30
33
          loss = F.mse_loss(outputs, labels)
           train_loss += float(loss)
          loss.backward()
           optimizer.step()
38
40
      train_loss /= len(train_loader)
41
42
      all_output = []
44
      all_label = []
45
      model.eval()
46
      test_loss = 0.0
48
49
      for images, labels in iter(test_loader):
           images = images.to(device)
           labels = labels.to(device)
           outputs = model(images)
55
56
           all_output += [outputs]
           all_label += [labels]
59
60
```

```
loss = F.mse_loss(outputs, labels)
           test_loss += float(loss)
63
      test_loss /= len(test_loader)
67
68
      print('%f, %f' % (train_loss, test_loss))
      if test_loss < best_loss:</pre>
          torch.save(model.state_dict(), BEST_MODEL_PATH)
          best_loss = test_loss
74
  class RoadFollowerDataset(Dataset):
      def __init__(self, image_folder, label_file):
          self.image_folder = image_folder
           self.label_file = label_file
          self.image_paths = [os.path.join(image_folder, fname) for fname
               in os.listdir(image_folder)]
           self.labels = np.loadtxt(label_file)
82
      def __len__(self):
          return len(self.image_paths)
      def __getitem__(self, idx):
           image = cv2.imread(self.image_paths[idx])
          image = cv2.resize(image, (64, 64))
          image = np.transpose(image, (2, 0, 1))
          image = torch.tensor(image, dtype=torch.float32) / 255.0
          label = torch.tensor(self.labels[idx], dtype=torch.float32)
          return image, label
  train_dataset = RoadFollowerDataset(image_folder='images', label_file='
     labels.txt')
train_loader = DataLoader(train_dataset, batch_size=32, shuffle=True)
```

C Road Following - Live Demo

Here we used the model we had trained to move the JetBot smoothly on the track.

C.1 Load Trained Model

The following code was executed to initialize the PyTorch model

```
# Initialize the steering model using ResNet-18 architecture
# ResNet-18 is a convolutional neural network (CNN) commonly used for
image-related tasks

model_steer = torchvision.models.resnet18(pretrained=False) # Load
ResNet-18 without pretrained weights

model_steer.fc = torch.nn.Linear(512, 2) # Replace the fully connected
layer to output 2 values (x, y)

# Initialize the classification model using ResNet-18 architecture
# This model classifies inputs into 4 different classes
model_cls = torchvision.models.resnet18(pretrained=False) # Load
ResNet-18 without pretrained weights
model_cls.fc = torch.nn.Sequential( # Replace the fully connected
layer with a sequential block
torch.nn.Linear(512, 4) # Fully connected layer outputs 4 values (
one for each class)
```

C.2 Robot Control with PID

Now we define the PID control class for the robot, and adjust motor speeds based on steering and speed values.

Listing 1: PID Control Class

```
class JetbotPIDControl:
      def __init__(self):
          self.robot = Robot()
          self.kp = 0.15
          self.ki = 0.005
          self.kd = 0.005
9
10
          self.steering_threshold = 0.05
13
          self.base_speed = 0.08
          self.min\_speed = 0.08
          self.max\_speed = 0.09
16
17
          self.last_error = 0
19
          self.integral = 0
20
          self.last_time = time.time()
21
```

```
25
26
27
28
29
31
32
33
35
36
39
40
41
42
43
       def left(self):
44
45
             self.robot.stop()
46
             time.sleep(400/1000)
47
             self.robot.left_motor.value = -0.2 # Reveself.robot.right_motor.value = 0.2 # Forestime_sleep(500/1000)
49
             time.sleep(500/1000)
50
             self.robot.stop()
51
             time.sleep(400/1000)
53
       def update_motors(self, x, y, cl, fast_mode):
54
57
59
60
61
             if (cl == 1) or (cl == 2):
62
                  self.temp_stop()
                  return None, None
64
65
             elif c1 == 3:
66
                  self.left()
67
                  self.left()
68
                  return None, None
69
             else:
71
                  current_time = time.time()
                  dt = current_time - self.last_time
72
```

```
if dt < 0.001:
75
                    dt = 0.001
76
78
                theta = np.arccos(x / np.sqrt(x * x + (-y + 1) * (-y + 1)))
79
                error = -(theta - (pi / 2))
81
                p_term = self.kp * error
                self.integral += error * dt
84
                i_term = self.ki * self.integral
                derivative = (error - self.last_error) / dt
                d_term = self.kd * derivative
87
                steering = p_term + i_term + d_term
90
91
                steering = \max(\min(\text{steering}, 1.0), -1.0)
94
95
                speed = self.min_speed + (self.max_speed - self.min_speed)
                   *(-y + 1) / 2
97
               if abs(steering) < self.steering_threshold:</pre>
                    left_speed = speed + steering
100
                    right_speed = speed - steering
101
                else:
102
                    left_speed = speed * 1.5 * steering / abs(steering)
103
                    right_speed = -speed * 1.5 * steering / abs(steering)
104
                max_speed = max(abs(left_speed), abs(right_speed))
107
                if max_speed > 1.0:
108
                    left_speed /= max_speed
109
                    right_speed /= max_speed
110
112
                if fast_mode:
113
                    self.robot.left_motor.value = float(left_speed * 1.8)
114
                    self.robot.right_motor.value = float(right_speed * 1.8)
                else:
116
                    self.robot.left_motor.value = float(left_speed)
117
                    self.robot.right_motor.value = float(right_speed)
118
119
120
                self.last_error = error
121
                self.last_time = current_time
                return steering, speed
123
124
       def stop(self):
```

```
126
    """Stop the robot and reset PID variables."""
127    self.robot.stop()
128    self.last_error = 0
129    self.integral = 0
130
131    def temp_stop(self):
132    """Temporary stop for the robot."""
133    self.robot.stop()
```

```
controller = JetbotPIDControl()
  from collections import deque
  n = 20
10
  buffer = deque([0.1] * n, maxlen=n)
  while True:
      fast_mode = False # Flag to toggle f
14
      xy = model_steer(preprocess(camera.value)).detach().float().cpu().
         numpy().flatten()
      x = xy[0]
      y = xy[1]
19
20
      cl = model_cls(preprocess(camera.value)).detach().float().cpu().
         numpy().flatten()
      cl = cl.argmax()
23
      if cl == 3:
          c1 = 0
29
      if abs(x) < 0.15 and y > 0.35 and abs(sum(buffer)) / n < 0.015:
30
          controller.left()
          controller.left()
          continue
33
36
37
40
43
44
```

```
46
47
49
      if abs(sum(buffer)) / n < 0.0035 and y < -0.4:
           fast_mode = True
      else:
           fast_mode = False
54
      steering, speed = controller.update_motors(x, y, cl, fast_mode)
58
59
      clear_output(wait=True)
60
61
      if steering is not None and speed is not None:
           buffer.append(abs(steering))
64
           display(f
65
67
68
69
                           )
      time.sleep(1 / 1000)
```

References

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