Battery Monitoring for Electric Vehicle Battery Packs

Analysis of Senior Project Design

# Functional Requirements

1. The system must be capable of measuring the individual voltages of eighteen 12V batteries in series.
2. The system must be capable of measuring all batteries at least once per minute.
3. The system must be capable of measuring the voltage of the battery to within 2% of the true voltage (within 240mV).
4. The system must electrically isolate batteries from each other in order to prevent short circuits.
5. The system must never draw more than 1mA of current from the battery pack.

# Primary Constraints

The primary challenge with designing this system was choosing a mechanism by which to measure the voltage of a relatively high voltage (216V) battery pack using a low voltage (3.3V or 5V) system (microcontroller and peripherals). The two aspects of this challenge were designing a mechanism to measure the voltage of the battery pack, and designing a mechanism to power the system. There are existing SOCs designed to measure battery voltages, but few of them can withstand such high voltages, and the ones that do exist are prohibitively costly. Another option (the option that was used) is to use a voltage divider to produce a smaller, measureable voltage (0-5V). In this system, however, resistances must be chosen carefully to ensure that a minimal amount of power is drawn (and wasted) from the battery pack in the process of measuring, but also that the equivalent resistance of the voltage divider is much, much lower than that of the measuring circuit (so that the measurement circuit does not significantly affect the current flowing through the voltage divider. It is also possible to use a DC/DC converter to power the system from the main battery pack, but the availability of such devices is limited, and costs can be prohibitively high. Another solution (the solution that was used) is to power the system from its own battery, while connecting the grounds from the system and the battery pack in order to take accurate measurements. Other challenges included designing a mechanism to electronically isolate batteries from one another, as well as developing a system to select which battery is being tested at any given time.