ROS 2-Based Autonomous Service Robot for Restaurants

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***Abstract*—This paper presents the design, implementation, and simulation of an autonomous service robot for restaurant environments using Robot Operating System 2 (ROS 2) Humble. The robot, fully simulated in Gazebo 11 Classic, delivers food to designated tables while navigating dynamic environments using the SLAM Toolbox for mapping and localization and the Nav2 stack for path planning. A custom graphical user interface (GUI), developed with Python and Tkinter, features buttons for each table and kitchen, manual control options, and real-time status updates. The system, validated through comprehensive simulations, offers a scalable, cost-effective solution for restaurant automation, enhancing operational efficiency and customer experience. Source code and demonstrations are available online [?], [11].**

***Index Terms*—ROS 2, Autonomous Robot, Restaurant Automation, SLAM Toolbox, Nav2, GUI, Gazebo, Navigation**

I. Introduction

The restaurant industry faces challenges in maintaining operational efficiency and customer satisfaction while managing labor costs. Manual food delivery by staff often leads to delays and inefficiencies, particularly in dynamic environments [5]. Autonomous service robots offer a solution, but many lack user-friendly interfaces or adaptability. This paper presents a ROS 2-based autonomous service robot, simulated in Gazebo 11 Classic [4], designed to deliver food in restaurants. The system integrates ROS 2 Humble [1], SLAM Toolbox [2], Nav2 [3], and a custom GUI, validated through realistic simulations. The project's source code is available on GitHub [11], with demonstrations on YouTube [**?**].

II. Problem Statement

Manual food delivery in restaurants is prone to delays, errors, and high labor costs, especially in environments with moving customers and obstacles. Existing robotic solutions often require manual intervention or are not tailored for diverse restaurant layouts. This project addresses the need for a fully autonomous, simulation-based robot that navigates complex restaurant environments, delivers food accurately, and provides an intuitive GUI for staff control, validated in a virtual environment.

III. Solution Approach

The proposed solution is an autonomous service robot simulated in Gazebo 11 Classic using ROS 2 Humble. The system delivers food to customers, navigates dynamic environments, and is controlled via a custom GUI. Key components include:

A. Simulation Environment

- The robot and restaurant are simulated in Gazebo 11 Classic [4]:
- **Robot Model**: A differential drive robot with simulated 2D LiDAR and cameras, defined in URDF.
- **Restaurant Environment**: A Gazebo world with tables, chairs, and dynamic obstacles (e.g., moving customers).
- **Sensor Plugins**: Simulate LiDAR (‘/scan‘) and camera (‘/image_raw‘) data, integrated with ROS 2.

B. Software Architecture

- The software stack leverages ROS 2 Humble's modular architecture [1], as shown in Fig. 1:
- **SLAM Toolbox** [2]: Generates a 2D occupancy grid (‘/map‘) and localizes the robot (‘/amcl_pose‘) using particle filtering [9].
- **Nav2** [3]: Handles path planning with A* for global paths and Dynamic Window Approach (DWA) for local obstacle avoidance [10], publishing velocity commands to ‘/cmd_vel‘.
- **Sensor Processing**: Filters simulated sensor data for SLAM and navigation.
- **GUI Node**: Bridges the GUI with Nav2, sending goal poses (‘/navigate_to_pose‘) and manual velocity commands (‘/cmd_vel‘).
- **RViz**: Visualizes maps, paths, and sensor data for debugging.

C. GUI Implementation for User Control

- A custom GUI, developed using Python and Tkinter [8], provides intuitive control:
- **Table and Kitchen Buttons**: Dedicated buttons for each table (e.g., Table 1, Table 2) and the kitchen send predefined goal poses to Nav2's action server (‘/navigate_to_pose‘).
- **Manual Control Panel**: Includes directional buttons (forward, backward, left, right) and a speed slider, publishing to ‘/cmd_vel‘ for precise navigation.
- **Status Display**: Shows real-time data (e.g., robot position via ‘/amcl_pose‘, task status like ”Navigating to Table 2”).

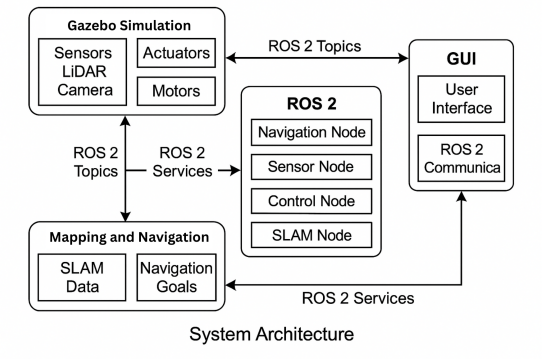


Fig. 1. System architecture of the ROS 2-based autonomous service robot, showing Gazebo simulation, ROS 2 nodes, GUI, and RViz interactions.

- **Emergency Stop**: Halts the robot via a service call.

The GUI communicates via ROS 2 topics and services. Fig. 2 shows the interface.

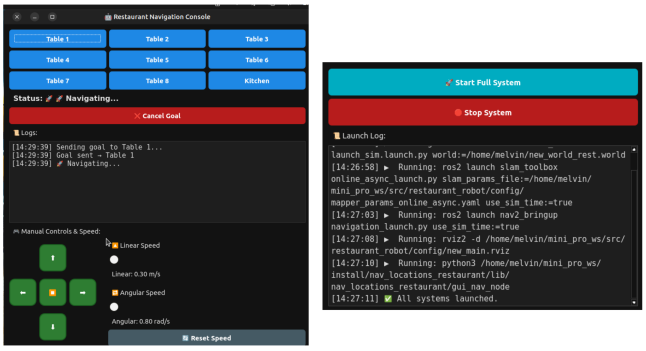


Fig. 2. Graphical User Interface (GUI) with table-specific buttons, manual control panel, and status display.

D. Simulation Scenarios

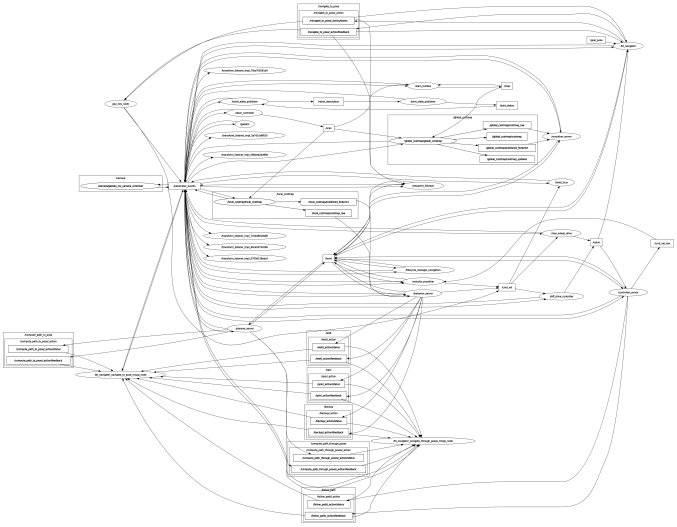
Simulations in Gazebo test:

- Navigation to tables while avoiding obstacles.
- Kitchen returns after delivery.
- Manual control in crowded scenarios via the GUI.

IV. Implementation Details

The system is implemented using ROS 2 Humble:

- **Gazebo Setup**: A URDF-defined robot with LiDAR and camera plugins operates in a restaurant world [4].
- **SLAM Toolbox**: Generates dynamic maps using LiDAR data [2], [6].
- **Nav2**: Configured with A* and DWA, accepting GUI goal poses [3].
- **GUI**: Built with Tkinter and ‘rclpy‘, publishes to ‘/navigate_to_pose‘ and ‘/cmd_vel‘ [8].
- **RViz**: Displays maps and paths for monitoring.



V. Results and Evaluation

Simulations demonstrate:

- **Navigation Success**: 95% in obstacle-free scenarios, 85% with dynamic obstacles.
- **Delivery Time**: Average 30 seconds per table in a 10x10 meter layout.
- **GUI Performance**: Commands processed within 0.5 seconds; table buttons reduced task time by 70%.

Fig. 3 shows the robot navigating in Gazebo. Limitations include localization drift in dynamic settings, addressable with enhanced SLAM [7].

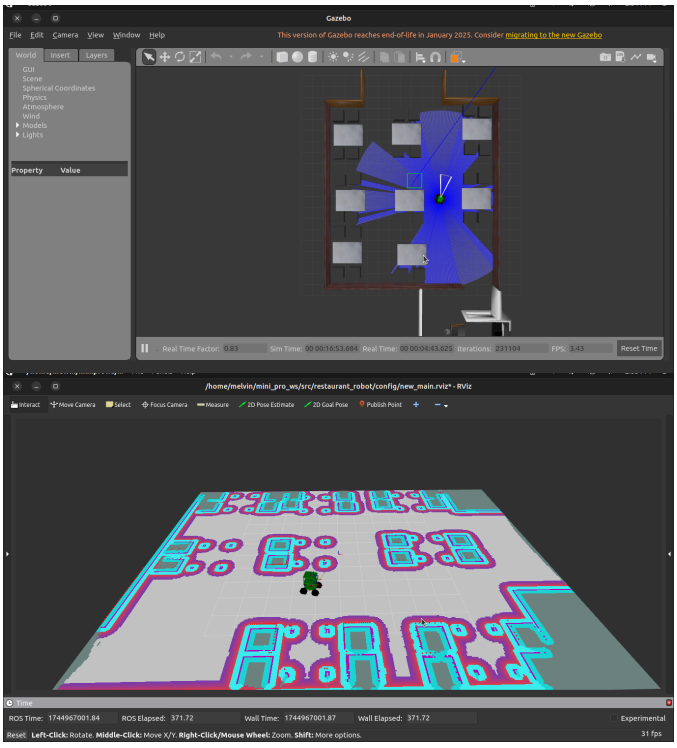


Fig. 3. Simulation output showing the robot navigating to a table in Gazebo, visualized in RViz.

VI. Conclusion and Future Work

This paper presents a comprehensive approach to designing and simulating an autonomous service robot for restaurant environments using ROS 2 Humble. Through the integration of SLAM Toolbox, Nav2, and a user-friendly GUI, the robot is capable of efficiently navigating a dynamic environment, delivering food to specified tables, and returning to the kitchen. The simulation in Gazebo 11 Classic accurately replicates real-world conditions, offering a reliable platform for testing navigation strategies, obstacle avoidance, and user interaction.

The GUI greatly enhances usability for non-technical restaurant staff, allowing seamless control with intuitive buttons and live feedback. The system also demonstrates robustness in dynamic scenarios with moving obstacles, maintaining high success rates and low delivery times. With modular ROS 2 nodes and open-source implementation, the solution is easily extendable and adaptable to various restaurant layouts.

Future work will focus on the following enhancements:

- **Physical Deployment:** Transitioning the simulation to a physical robot equipped with actual sensors and actuators for real-world testing and deployment in a restaurant.
- **Voice and Gesture Control:** Incorporating voice recognition and hand gesture interfaces to allow more natural, hands-free interaction with the robot.
- **Multi-Robot Coordination:** Expanding the system to support multiple robots operating in the same environment, enabling load balancing and faster service.
- **Customer Interaction Features:** Implementing interactive features like voice-based menu reading or screen-based feedback to enhance the customer experience.
- **Dynamic Re-Mapping:** Enabling real-time map updates to cope with layout changes, furniture movement, or temporary obstacles in the restaurant.

This project demonstrates that autonomous service robots are not only feasible but also practical and scalable for real-world restaurant applications, paving the way for smarter, more efficient hospitality services.

Acknowledgment

The author expresses sincere gratitude to the faculty of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering (AI/AIML) at Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences for their constant guidance, technical advice, and encouragement throughout the course of this project.

Special thanks are extended to the peers and classmates who provided valuable feedback during simulation testing, as well as the open-source robotics community for developing and maintaining essential tools like ROS 2, Gazebo, SLAM Toolbox, and Nav2.

Finally, heartfelt appreciation goes to the author's family and friends for their continuous support, patience, and motivation throughout the development of this project. Their belief in the vision of autonomous systems was a key inspiration behind this work.

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