Softwarica COLLEGE OF IT & E-COMMERCE | in collaboration with Coventry University

Automated Smart Recycle Bin: An AI-Driven Solution for Efficient Waste Classification and Segregation Using Image Processing

Ashish Mool (220417), Anjali Shrestha (220385), Rohan KC Khatri (220353), Atom Sah (220393) and Sushmita Bishwakarma (220401)

BSc. (Hons.) Computing, Softwarica College of IT and E-commerce, University of Coventry

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Tulasi Kattel

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Executive Summary

This project introduces an AI-driven smart recycle bin; a groundbreaking solution designed to revolutionize waste management in Nepal by harnessing the economic potential of waste segregation. In an era where environmental sustainability is paramount, this innovative project integrates minimalistic hardware components with state-of-the-art image processing technology to efficiently categorize different types of waste at a small scale, paving the way for larger-scale applications in the future.

The system employs advanced image classification algorithms to accurately identify and segregate waste into primary categories such as biodegradable and non-biodegradable. With the capability for further classification of recyclable materials, the smart recycle bin facilitates the recovery of valuable resources, significantly enhancing recycling efforts. This feature is particularly crucial in a country like Nepal, where effective waste management can lead to substantial economic and environmental benefits.

Key to this project is the seamless integration of artificial intelligence with practical hardware solutions. The smart recycle bin is designed to be user-friendly, requiring minimal human intervention. By automating the waste segregation process, it not only increases efficiency but also reduces the potential for human error, ensuring that valuable recyclable materials are not overlooked. The bin's ability to adapt to various waste types makes it a versatile tool that can be implemented in homes, offices, and public spaces, contributing to a widespread adoption of sustainable practices.

Furthermore, this project highlights the significant role that technology can play in addressing global environmental challenges. By streamlining waste management processes, the AI-driven smart recycle bin promotes a more sustainable lifestyle, encouraging communities to engage in better waste disposal practices. This, in turn, helps in reducing landfill use, decreasing pollution, and conserving natural resources.

The development of this smart recycle bin also aligns with global trends towards smart cities and IoT (Internet of Things) technologies. As urban areas become more interconnected, the integration of intelligent waste management systems will be a critical component of sustainable urban development. The scalability of this project means that it can be tailored to fit the needs of different communities, from small towns to large metropolitan areas, ensuring that the benefits of efficient waste management are accessible to all.

In summary, the AI-driven smart recycle bin represents a significant advancement in waste management technology. By combining innovative image processing algorithms with practical hardware design, this project offers a scalable, efficient, and adaptive solution to waste segregation. It not only aims to enhance waste management efforts in Nepal but also serves as a model for sustainable practices worldwide. Through the recovery of valuable materials and the promotion of environmental sustainability, the smart recycle bin contributes to a cleaner, greener, and more economically viable future.

Figure 1.0: Keyword Cloud

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Introduction

In Nepal, waste management is a growing concern, especially in urban areas where rapid population growth and urbanization have led to increased waste generation. Inefficient segregation and disposal practices contribute to environmental degradation, posing health risks and straining municipal resources. The Automated Waste Management Bin project addresses this challenge by introducing a technologically advanced solution that uses image processing to classify and sort waste at the source. This innovation not only improves waste segregation efficiency but also promotes recycling and resource recovery, offering a sustainable approach to waste management. By reducing the volume of waste destined for landfills and enhancing the recovery of valuable materials, the project has the potential to transform Nepal's urban landscape, driving economic benefits through resource optimization and fostering a cleaner, healthier environment. This system aligns with global sustainability goals, paving the way for scalable and practical waste management solutions across the country.

Figure 2.0: Commercial Application of Waste Classification

Aim

The project aims to revolutionize waste management by developing an efficient classification system that leverages cutting-edge image processing technology to accurately sort various types of waste. By integrating advanced machine learning models, it seeks to enhance waste segregation and recycling efficiency, ensuring that waste is managed in a more effective and sustainable manner. With a focus on practicality and scalability, this initiative is designed to provide a robust solution for waste recovery in Nepal, optimizing system performance through the use of minimal hardware components while maintaining high accuracy and functionality. Through this approach, the project not only addresses immediate waste management challenges but also contributes to long-term environmental sustainability.

Objectives

- ✓ Design and implement a system architecture that includes a camera, image processing model, and waste sorting mechanism controlled by an Arduino.
- ✓ Integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) for training and deploying an image classification model to identify and differentiate types of waste.
- ✓ Develop a functional prototype ensuring real-time waste classification and sorting by processing live video and sending classification signals to the Arduino.
- ✓ Facilitate future enhancements by designing the system for scalability, including potential upgrades like robotic arms and advanced hardware.
- ✓ Demonstrate the practical application of the system to improve waste management practices and highlight its potential for broader implementation.

Figure 3.0: Our Objectives

Mission Statement

To revolutionize waste management in Nepal through innovative AI-driven solutions that enhance waste segregation, promote recycling, and contribute to environmental sustainability. By integrating cutting-edge technology with practical design, we aim to create scalable, user-friendly systems that drive economic and ecological benefits for communities across the country.

Vision

To lead the transformation towards a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable future by setting new standards in waste management. Our vision is to become a global pioneer in smart waste solutions, empowering communities to adopt environmentally conscious practices while optimizing resource recovery and minimizing environmental impact.

Project Justification

The surge in urbanization and industrialization has exacerbated waste management challenges, leading to significant environmental and economic impacts, particularly in countries like Nepal. With increasing waste volumes, traditional manual sorting methods are inefficient, labor-intensive, and often result in low recycling rates. The need for a more effective and scalable solution is pressing, as poor waste management contributes to environmental degradation, health risks, and economic losses.

Recent advancements in image processing and machine learning provide a promising avenue to address these challenges. Automated waste management systems, equipped with state-of-the-art technologies, have shown the potential to revolutionize waste segregation by significantly improving the speed, accuracy, and efficiency of sorting processes. By leveraging image classification algorithms such as convolutional neural networks (CNNs), these systems can accurately categorize waste into biodegradable, recyclable, and non-recyclable materials, reducing the burden on traditional waste management practices.

In Nepal, where waste segregation practices are still in their nascent stages, introducing an AI-driven smart recycle bin offers a transformative approach. The system's ability to automate the classification process not only enhances the efficiency of material recovery but also promotes environmental sustainability. With higher precision in waste sorting and reduced dependency on manual labor, the economic benefits are considerable. Recyclable materials can be reintroduced into production cycles, promoting a circular economy and generating additional revenue streams.

Moreover, this project aligns with global trends towards smart cities and sustainable urban development. As the integration of Internet of Things (IoT) technologies becomes more prevalent, there is immense potential to expand the capabilities of the smart recycle bin. Future enhancements, such as incorporating advanced robotics and real-time waste monitoring, could further optimize waste management processes and drive widespread adoption.

Figure 4.0: Project Justification

Technical Integration

The system diagram below illustrates the data flow and interactions between the components:

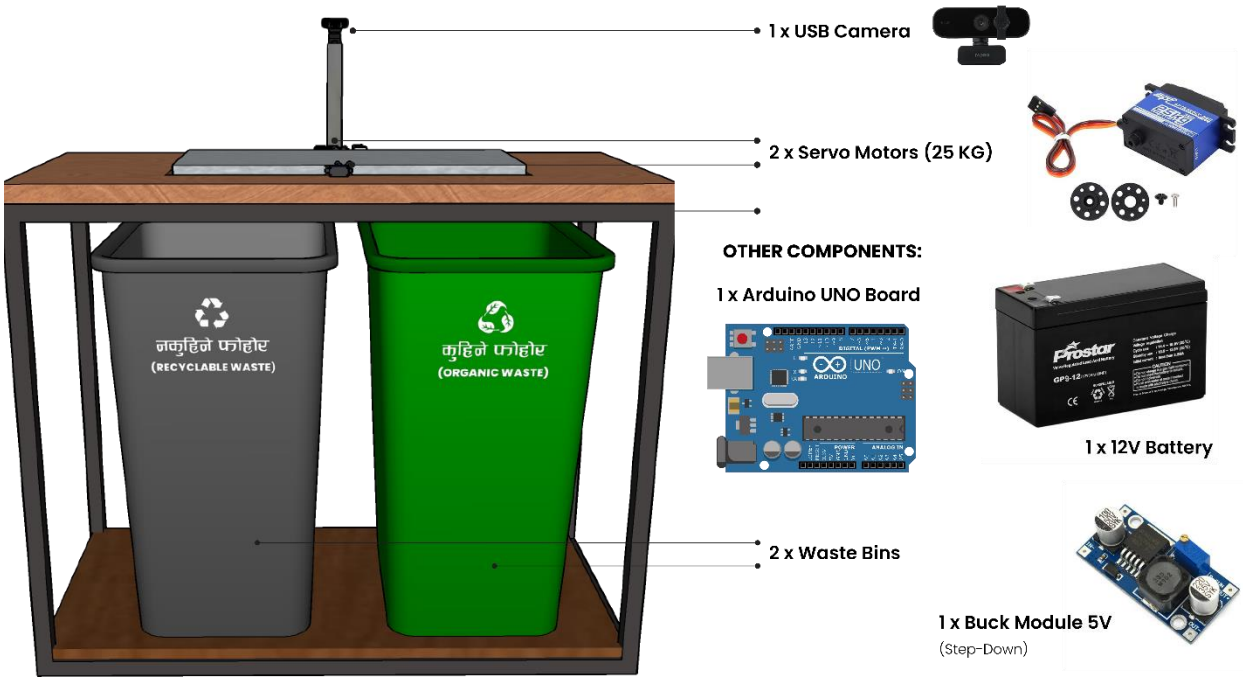

Figure 5.0: System and Components

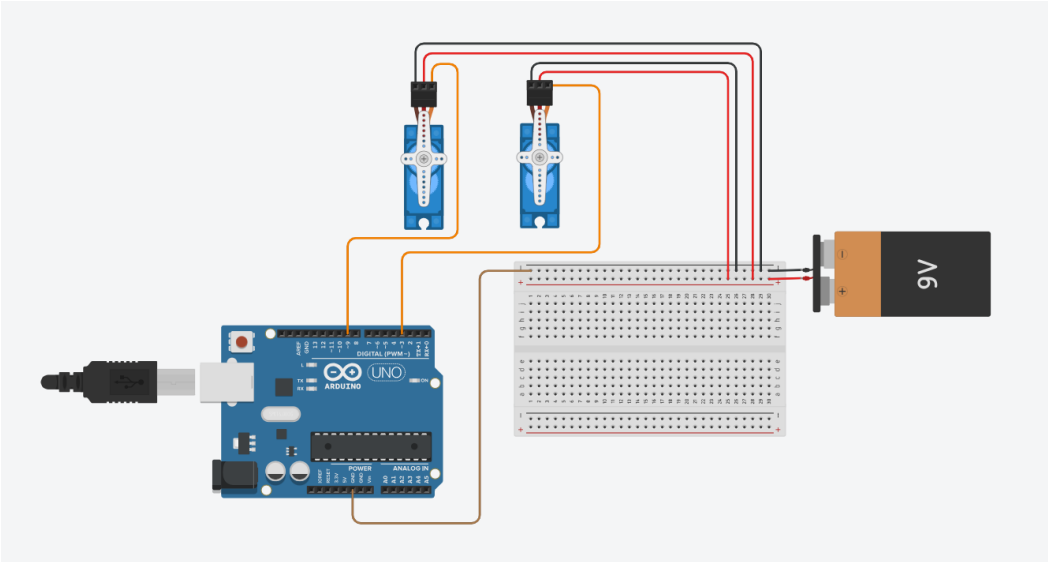

Figure 6.0: System Diagram for Servo Motor Connection with Arduino

Components and Interactions:

1. **Camera:** Positioned at the top center to capture images of the waste as it is deposited.
2. **Arduino Controller:** Interfaces with the camera and servo motors to control the waste segregation mechanism.

3. **Waste Segregation Mechanism:** Consists of servo motors tilting a board to direct waste into the appropriate bin.
4. **Motion Sensor:** Detects the presence of waste to trigger the image capture and classification process.
5. **Image Processing Model:** Uses TensorFlow and Keras to classify the waste. This model is implemented on a laptop.
6. **Bins**: Two bins located below the tilting board:
    a. Recyclable Waste Bin (Gray)
    b. Organic Waste Bin (Green)
7. **Robotic Arms (Future plan but not installed):** Intended for maneuvering mixed waste segregation but omitted due to budget and time constraints.

The initial setup of the components can be initiated by securely mounting the camera above the bin, ensuring it is properly connected and calibrated for accurate image capture. The camera will be connected to a laptop, which will run the necessary libraries and AI models to process images and classify waste using a Python script. The laptop is then connected to an Arduino, which is programmed to receive signals and control the sorting mechanism. The Arduino setup involves connecting two servo motors, powered by a 9V battery, as shown in the circuit diagram. These servo motors will tilt the sorting board to direct waste into the correct bin. The system ensures smooth operation and quick response to classification signals, with future plans to integrate robotic arms for handling mixed waste based on classification results. Following these steps ensures that the Smart Recycle Bin can effectively classify and sort waste.

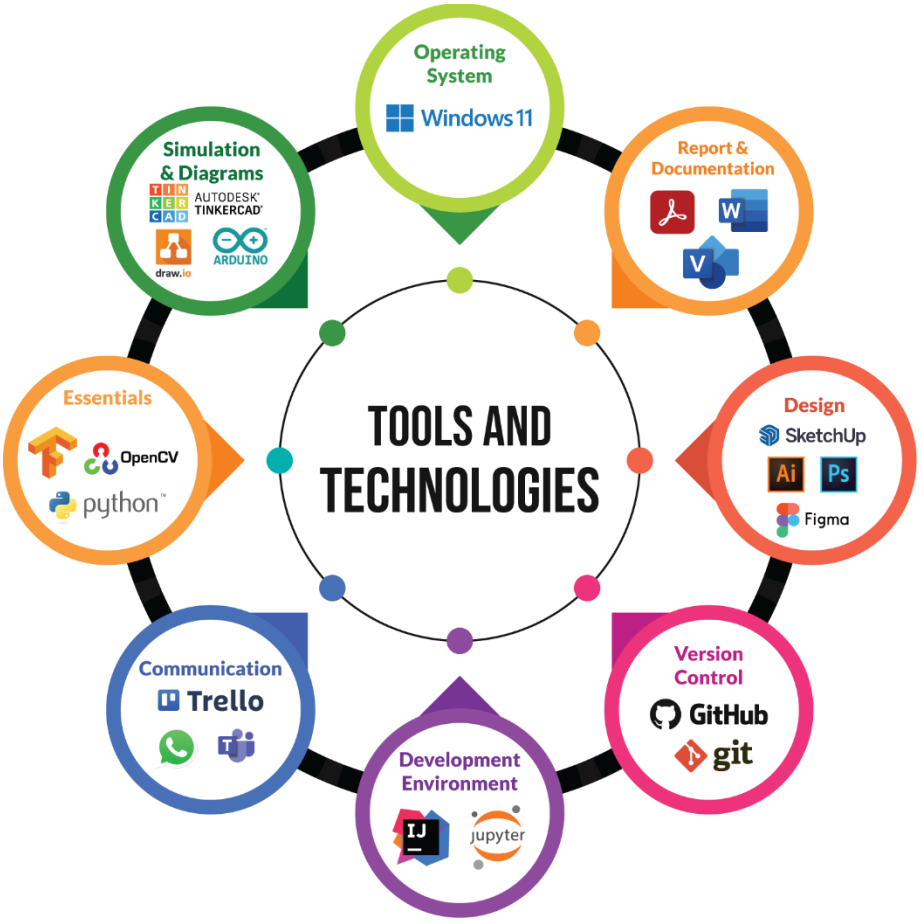

Figure 7.0: Tools and Technologies

Future Plans and Integration

The next phase of the automated waste management system will incorporate robotic arms for more complex sorting tasks, such as opening bags and handling bundled waste. It will also include motion and metal detection sensors to enhance efficiency and safety, and specialized environmental sensors to detect hazards like gas leaks or hazardous chemicals. AI and edge computing advancements will improve the system's autonomous decision-making, accuracy, and adaptability, with features like autonomous navigation. The system's design will focus on scalability and customization, ensuring its long-term relevance across various settings.

Figure 8.0: Prototype Refinement with Robotic Arms

Conclusion

This project embodies the successful fusion of advanced technologies with a collaborative team effort to tackle the pressing issue of waste management. Leveraging tools like artificial intelligence, image processing, and convolutional neural networks, the system efficiently classifies waste with remarkable accuracy. The project team overcame numerous technical challenges, including optimizing the convolutional neural network for precise waste identification and ensuring seamless real-time processing. Through dedication and adaptability, the team met critical deadlines, transforming initial concepts into a functional prototype that addresses a vital environmental need.

The project also underscores the value of teamwork and the opportunities provided by the module in fostering innovation. Each team member brought unique skills and perspectives, contributing to the system's architecture, model refinement, and integration of essential components such as sensors and robotic arms. The module facilitated an environment where ideas could be exchanged, and technical expertise could be honed, ultimately leading to a successful project that not only meets its objectives but also has the potential for future enhancements.

Looking ahead, this project lays the foundation for further advancements in waste management technology. The experience gained and the lessons learned will be invaluable in future endeavors, both in academia and industry. By integrating cutting-edge technology with a strong team dynamic, this project exemplifies how innovative solutions can emerge from collaborative efforts, offering a promising outlook for more sustainable and efficient waste management practices.

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Appendix

1. YouTube Video Link: https://youtu.be/rXvx--f0v5w
2. GitHub Link: https://github.com/ashishmool/waste-classification-envirobotics.git