

[This document contains detailed information about the project and was created as a go-to place to find answers to all of your HOWs and WHYs, so the software support and further project development are easier.]

[ January 2025 ]

[42 prague smart sigN.]

[technical documentation.]

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[SUMMARY.]

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[ABOUT THE PROJECT.]

This project is designed to manage and display information on a smart sign for the 42 Prague campus. The sign displays various messages and images, including exam schedules, battery status, and OTA updates. It communicates with the 42 Intra API and a Telegram bot to fetch and display relevant information.

[**Contractor's Requirements**.]

[and how the sign matches them.]

The finished device must fulfill the following requirements:

1. **Auditorium status display**: the device must always display the current status of the auditorium, indicating whether it is free or if an exam is in progress.  
     
   — *The Sign displays the number of the auditorium in calm black and white colours to indicate that the room is available for everyone or it displays the „exam in progress“ sign in bright red and black colours to show that the room shall not be entered by those who do not participate in the exam. The Sign is never blank.*
2. **Advance notification**: the device should notify students in advance on exam days about the need to vacate the auditorium.   
     
   — *The Sign displays a note with the exact time of the upcoming exam right from the morning of that day. 1 hour before the exam the black-white-and-red „reserve for exam“ sign with time left starts being displayed.*
3. **Autonomy**: the device must operate independently, performing its tasks and solving problems that arise without requiring the time or intervention of the educational institution's staff.   
     
   — *The Sign can connect to the Internet, access the institution server API and pull exams date and time. This is how it knows when to display the apropriate state of the auditorium. The Sign software is designed with all the common negative situations in mind which ensures the Sign does not bother anyone unless it absolutely needs to.*
4. **Problem reporting**: the device must be capable of reporting issues that cannot be resolved without assistance from the educational institution's staff.   
     
   — *When the Sign fails to resolve an unordinary situation itself and requires assistance, it displays an apropriate error message on its display as well as sends a detailed error report to its Telegram chat.*
5. **Support and expandability**: the device should be designed for support and expansion, allowing any student of the educational institution to contribute to the project, develop new functionality, and upload new software onto the device.   
     
   — *The Sign project was chosen to be made using Arduino IDE as the most beginners-friendly developing platform. The Sign has a standart USB-C port for flashing its software, monitoring its Serial port and charging its battery. The microcontroller used in the project has inner USB controller which eliminates the need of using a UART-TTL adapter. The microcontroller pins are equipped with standart Dupont sockets which allows anyone to change used pins and add new hardware by simply connecting it to the microcontroller with Dupont cables. The Sign is securelly fixed on the wall with 4 furniture double ball catches, which at the same time allow to take the Sign off the wall for maintanance.*
6. **Safety**: the device must ensure safety by incorporating protective elements for potentially dangerous electronic components.   
     
   — *The battery used in the project has an embedded protection against shortcuts, overcharging and ungercharging, which has the ability of completely disconnecting the battery from the rest of the circuit. The battery charging IC is capable of adapting its charging power, applying lower voltages when the battery is low on charge or close to being fully charged. The charging IC generally uses slightly lower charging rate than the standart charging rate for this particular battery, which will result in the battery longer life.*
7. **Rechargeable operation**: the device must operate on a rechargeable battery, include a common charging connector, and provide indications for the charging process and its completion.   
     
   — *The Sign employs an internal high-capacity rechargeable battery, which insures a long lasting operation without the need of changing batteries. The battery can be recharged by plugging the Sign into any 5V power adapter. The Sign has a USB-C connector for recharging the battery as well as for flashing the software.*
8. **Design compatibility**: both the graphical user interface (GUI) and the physical appearance of the device must align with the established style of the educational institution's interior design.   
     
   — *The body of the Sign is made of black wooden frame with mate finish, which perfectly matches the mate-black profile of the auditorium glass door. The GUI was designed inspired by the painings on the walls of the institution as well as the „42“ logo, thus nicely matching the overal style of the interiors.*

[**General description of the program run**.]

Let's take a look at one day of the 42 Prague Smart Sign‘s life. Let’s say that on this particular day there is an exam scheduled for 13:00 and it will last for 3 hours.

It is still night and the Sign is showing the cluster number with the default icons from the day before, while still being asleep. It is normal for the Sign to sleep all the time. It has its scheduled hours to wake up and check if something needs to be done. They are 6, 9, 12, 15, 18 and 21 o’clock (could have been changed in the program). But it is still too early.

Time passes by. Now, it is 6:00 in the morning. The Sign wakes up to check if there are exams today. It goes online, pulls the information from the Intra server and sees that there will be an exam starting at 13:00 and ending at 16:00. The Sign replaces the default icons from yesterday with a note “The cluster will be reserved for an exam today at 13:00” while still displaying the cluster number. Since there is nothing more for the Sign to do, it sets its alarm clock for 12:00 - an hour before the exam - and goes back to sleep.

It is 12 o'clock and the Sign wakes up again to get ready for the exam. It checks Intra to make sure the exam was not canceled during its sleep and that there is at least 1 person attending. If everything checks, it replaces the cluster number with a big warning sign that says: “RESERVATION! The cluster is reserved for an exam. Please, vacate it in due time. You have XX minutes left”. Instead of XX it first says 50 minutes, then 25 minutes and finally 5 minutes left.

Finally, it is 13:00. The exam begins. The Sign changes the previous warning sign for a new one, saying “DO NOT ENTER! Exam in progress!”. At this point the Sign has nothing else to do, so again it sets its alarm clock for 16:00 - the end of the exam - and goes to sleep.

At 16 o'clock the Sign wakes up, checks Intra, finds no more exams for today, replaces the warning sign with a cluster number with the default icons, sets its alarm clock until the next scheduled wake up - in this case 18:00 - and goes back to sleep.

At 18 o'clock the Sign wakes up, checks Intra and finds no more exams. Later, at 21 o’clock it wakes up for the last time today, finding nothing more to be done. Its work for today is over. It goes to sleep to wake up again the next morning at 6.

[PROGRAM RUN STEP-BY-STEP.]

STARTING THE PROGRAM

1. Turning on

2. Initializing the Serial Port

• Outputting a dash to the serial port gives time to synchronize data transfer with the computer and avoid losing important data

3. Initializing the file system

• If the file system initialization fails, the following functions will not be available: restoring the last used Telegram chat, the Secret value, and the OTA flag value after reinstalling the program, after a power outage, or after a software reset (i.e. after all cases when RTC memory data is lost); record the value of the last used Telegram chat, the Secret value and the OTA flag value

4. initialize the buttons (disabled due to bugs)

5. initialize ADC for battery measurements

6. initialize the SPI port of the display

7. check the reboot reason

• also restores the value of the last used Telegram chat, the Secret value and the OTA flag value after reinstalling the program, after a power outage or after a software reset (i.e. after all cases when RTC memory data is lost)

• also puts the device to sleep for 24 hours if the BROWN OUT detector is triggered. It is triggered if the battery charge is insufficient to continue operation. In this case, [DEVICE OPERATION ENDS HERE] until the battery is charged.

8. battery check

• due to the technical features of the device, we can determine the battery charge level only when it is almost discharged. Accurate battery measurements can be taken approximately between 3% and 0% of the battery charge. In ADC readings, this corresponds to 800 and 400.

• take 5 measurements of the charge level and calculate their average value

• all readings above 800 mean that the battery is sufficiently charged and there is no need to report a low battery - exit the function

• connect to Wi-Fi to report the battery status to Telegram

• all readings below 400 mean a completely discharged battery. Despite the fact that the BROWN OUT detector did not work in the previous step, you cannot continue working with such a low charge. We report a low battery in Telegram, display the message "Low battery" on the display and put the device to sleep for 24 hours. In this case, [DEVICE OPERATION ENDS HERE] until the battery is charged.

• indicators between 700 and 600 may mean that the device is charging

• if we still haven't exited the function, but the indicators are below 800, then the battery is already discharged, but we can still continue working. We report the discharged battery in Telegram, display the message "Low battery" on the display and continue executing the program.

9. initializing the OTA function (disabled due to blocking by the firewall)

10. switching to OTA mode (disabled due to blocking by the firewall)

11. choosing which mode to continue working in: in cluster number mode (default mode) or in exam mode

• Cluster number mode displays the cluster number + icons (on a normal day) or a warning message about the exam (on the day of the exam) or error messages (inability to receive exam data, expired Secret, low battery). This mode is active 99% of the time.

• The exam mode is activated 1 hour before the exam, shows a warning about the exam starting soon, then switches to a warning about the exam in progress and after the exam is over, switches back to the Cluster Number Mode. This mode is active only on the exam day, 1 hour before the exam + the entire exam time.

• Double checking the exam status flag in this function is necessary to switch from one mode to another. Do not change!

IN CLUSTER NUMBER MODE

1. connecting to a Wi-Fi network

2. checking incoming messages in the Telegram chat

• A new Secret may arrive via Telegram chat, which will be useful later when requesting exam data

3. synchronizing time, date and summer/winter time with the NTP server

• Without time data, reliable operation of the device cannot be ensured. If after several attempts to receive time data it was not possible, an error is displayed on the display and the device itself is put to sleep until the next scheduled awakening. In this case, [DEVICE OPERATION ENDS HERE], until we manage to get the time data during one of the future scheduled awakenings.

4. get exam data for the current day from Intra

• Without exam data, it is impossible to ensure reliable operation of the device. If after several attempts to get exam data it was not possible, an error is displayed on the display and the device itself is put to sleep until the next scheduled awakening. In this case, [DEVICE OPERATION ENDS HERE], until we manage to get exam data during one of the future scheduled awakenings.

• go to the Intra website

• log in to the Intra website

• go to the schedule page for today

• read the received HTML code until we find exam data

• clear the data from unnecessary garbage

• compare the received data with the existing data

If the data differs, we change it on the display;

If not, we leave it as it is.

Setting the time for the next activation.

Turning off the display power.

Power off.

[GETTING READY TO MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP THE PROJECT.]

## Needed hardware:

* Computer with any OS,
* USB to USB-C data cable compatible with your computer.

## Needed software:

* Arduino IDE with installed ESP-IDF plug-in,
* Telegram (smartphone app or its desktop version).

## Preparing the software tools

1. Install Arduino IDE and add the ESP-IDF extension. User-friendly instructions on how to do it may be found here:

<https://randomnerdtutorials.com/getting-started-with-esp32/#esp32-arduino-ide>

The online instruction suggests to download and install the latest version, but the project was built using Arduino IDE version **1.8.19** and the „esp32“ board version **3.0.7**. Compatibility with the later versions was not tested, this is why it is recomended to use this, even though outdated, versions of the tools.

1. Create a folder for Arduino IDE projects. This folder will contain all the projects ever created in Arduino IDE as well as all the installed libraries. The folder may be created anywhere on your computer and may be called any name you give to it.   
   Now, in your Arduino IDE, go to **Arduino > Settings** and at the top of the opened Settings window add the created folder path.
2. Make sure all the required libraries from the „LIBRARIES AND THEIR USE“ list are installed. To do so, in your Arduino IDE, go to **Arduino > Add library > Manage libraries**. In the opened window of the libraries manager you may find all the installed libraries as well as all the available libraries on the Internet.

It is recommended to install the libraries versions stated in the list even though they might be outdated.

1. Set the compilation target. The compiler has to be told what exact model of an ESP32 board to compile for. In case of this project it is „**XIAO\_ESP32C3**“. To do so, in your Arduino IDE, go to **Tools > Boards > ESP32 Arduino > XIAO\_ESP32C3**.

## Opening the project

1. Open the folder for Arduino IDE projects (the one created in step 2 above) in your terminal and use the following command to get yourself a copy of the project:

**git clone https://github.com/RomanAlexandroff/42-Prague-Smart-Sign.git**

1. Open your Arduino IDE and go to **File > Projects > 42-Prague-Smart-Sign > src**. Your project will open.
2. The project comes without any security-sensitive credentials. They may be found printed on the back of the Sign. Rename the „**credentials-example.h**“ file included in the project into „**credentials.h**“ and fill-in the credentials from the Sign.

**DO NOT COMPROMISE THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE CREDENTIALS !!!**

## Uploading the changes

1. Connect the Sign to your computer if you have not done so by this time.
2. Activate the software update mode. On the back of the Sign locate button **B** and button **R**. Push and hold button B. While holding button B, press button R once. Release button B. Software update mode is now active.
3. In Arduino IDE, go to **Tools** and set the following settings as follows:

* Upload speed: 115200
* CPU Frequency: 160 Mhz
* Flash Frequency: 80 Mhz
* Flash Mode: "QIO"  
   the fastest mode for the flash memory
* Partition Scheme: "Minimal SPIFFS"  
   do not use partition schemes marked with "No OTA"
* Core Debug Level: "Verbose"  
   the most detailed debugging output into the Serial monitor
* Erase All Flash Before Sketch Upload: "Disabled"
* Port: choose the development board port.

1. In Arduino IDE, click the Upload button to start uploading.

[PROGRAM FILES DESCRIPTION.]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| src.ino | Main file. |
| 42-Prague-Smart-Sign.h | Main header file that includes all necessary libraries and declares functions used across the project. Including ota.h at the bottom of the file is not coinsidential – it has to be kept below the OTA functions declarations for the OTA update to work. |
| battery\_management.cpp | Initialize inner ADC module, measure battery voltage level, assign the results to a battery state, act upon the battery state. |
| bitmap\_library.h | Contains all the images to be displayed on the device screen in bit-map form. The complete images list can be found in the file. |
| buttons\_handling.cpp | Buttons initialisation and interrupt service routines. |
| cluster\_number\_mode.cpp | Everything that the Sign does outside of the exam time: gets exact time, checks exams, displays system warnings if there are any, displays cluster number. |
| config.h | Constants to adjust and tune the program behaviour. E.g. software version number, device name, DEBUG macro, Serial port baud rate, the Sign’s wake-up hours, Wi-Fi connection time limit, etc. More about it in the **[THE CONFIG FILE.]** chapter. |
| constants.h | Constants that are not expected to be ever changed. General constants, buttons and display SPI port configurations, display driver coniguration, images and errors enumerators. |
| credentials.h | Contains project confidential information, such as Intra API authorisation data, Telegram bot token, Wi-Fi access point SSID and password. If instead of credentials.h there is only credentials-example.h, then in the **[GETTING READY TO MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP THE PROJECT.]** chapter, please, navigate to „Opening the project“, point 3. |
| display\_handling.cpp | Functions for outputting images and text onto the display, cluster number drawing logic, display initialization. Using display.powerOff() in the drawing functions may trigger the watchdog with high probability. |
| exam\_mode.cpp | Everything to handle informing students about an exam and the pre-exam time. |
| file\_system.cpp | Manages file system operations, including reading and writing to SPIFFS. |
| globals.h | Declares global variables and includes necessary libraries. |
| globals.cpp | Defines global variables used across the project. |
| intra\_interaction.cpp | Handles interactions with the 42 Intra API, including fetching exam schedules. |
| ota.h | Manages OTA updates, including initializing and handling OTA update processes. |
| other.cpp | Contains miscellaneous functions, including sleep and delay functions. |
| power\_down\_recovery.cpp | Handles power-down recovery, including reporting reboot reasons. |
| telegram\_bot.cpp | Manages interactions with the Telegram bot, including checking and responding to messages. |
| telegram\_compose\_message.cpp | Composes messages to be sent via the Telegram bot. |
| time\_utilities.cpp | Contains time-related utilities, including fetching and calculating time. |
| watchdog.cpp | Manages the watchdog timer, including starting, stopping, and resetting the watchdog. |

[The config file.]

The config.h file contains configurable parameters for tuning the software behavior of the 42 Prague Smart Sign project. This file allows you to adjust various settings, including software version, device name, debugging options, and time-related configurations. To customize the behavior of the 42 Prague Smart Sign project, modify the values in the config.h file according to your requirements. Ensure that the changes you make are consistent with the overall project requirements and do not conflict with other configurations.   
  
This documentation provides an overview of the configurable parameters in the config.h file. For detailed implementation and usage, refer to the source code files and the main project documentation.  
  
SOFTWARE\_VERSION: Defines the current version of the software.  
  
#define SOFTWARE\_VERSION 4.32  
  
  
DEVICE\_NAME: Specifies the name of the device, that can be seen in the Ports list when updating via OTA.  
  
#define DEVICE\_NAME "42 Prague Smart Sign"  
  
  
DEBUG macro: Enables or disables serial output for debugging. Comment out this line to turn off serial output. The macro does not affect the Core Debug Level, which you set in the Arduino IDE Tools. Changing the DEBUG macro and/or the Core Debug Level will change the dynamic of the whole program execution which might introduce new bugs or solve existing ones.  
  
#define DEBUG  
#ifdef DEBUG  
 #define DEBUG\_PRINTF(...) Serial.printf(\_\_VA\_ARGS\_\_)  
 #define WD\_RESET\_INFO true  
#else  
 #define DEBUG\_PRINTF(...)  
 #define WD\_RESET\_INFO false  
#endif  
  
  
EXAM\_SIMULATION macro: Uncomment this line to simulate an exam starting at the specified time. Useful for testing exam mode without actual exam data.  
  
#define EXAM\_SIMULATION  
  
  
GCC Optimization macro: Optimizes the program for faster performance.  
  
#pragma GCC optimize ("O3")  
  
  
BAUD\_RATE: Sets the speed of the serial communication.  
  
#define BAUD\_RATE 115200  
  
  
WAKE\_UP\_HOURS: Defines the hours at which the device should wake up. The format is a comma-separated list of hours (24-hour format).  
  
#define WAKE\_UP\_HOURS 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21  
  
  
RETRIES\_LIMIT: Sets the maximum number of retries for getting time and exam information.  
  
#define RETRIES\_LIMIT 3  
  
  
TIME\_ZONE: Specifies the campus time zone according to the GMT standard.  
  
#define TIME\_ZONE 1  
  
  
CONNECT\_TIMEOUT\_S: Sets the timeout for Wi-Fi connection attempts (in seconds).  
  
#define CONNECT\_TIMEOUT\_S 5  
  
  
DEBOUNCE\_DELAY\_MS: Defines the debounce delay for button presses (in milliseconds).  
  
#define DEBOUNCE\_DELAY\_MS 1000ul  
  
  
WD\_TIMEOUT\_MS: Sets the timeout for the watchdog timer (in milliseconds).  
  
#define WD\_TIMEOUT\_MS 8000  
  
  
OTA\_WAIT\_LIMIT\_S: Defines the maximum wait time for OTA updates (in seconds).  
  
#define OTA\_WAIT\_LIMIT\_S 600

[FUNCTIONS DESCRIPTION.]

### Setup

* The [setup()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html) function initializes various components, including the watchdog timer, display, SPIFFS, buttons, battery, power-down recovery, battery check, Telegram bot, and OTA updates.

### Loop

* The [loop()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html) function handles the OTA update waiting loop and calls the [ft\_pathfinder()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html) function to determine the next action based on the current status.

### Pathfinder

* The [ft\_pathfinder()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html) function determines the next action based on the current status, including handling exam mode and cluster number mode, and then puts the device to sleep for the calculated time. The function deliberately uses two if statements since the exam\_status may change its value inside the first if statement.

### Display Handling

* [ft\_draw\_text(String output, uint16\_t x, uint16\_t y)](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Draws text on the display at the specified coordinates.
* [ft\_draw\_exam\_start\_time()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Draws the exam start time on the display.
* [ft\_draw\_bitmap\_partial\_update(const unsigned char\* image, uint16\_t width, uint16\_t height)](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Draws a partial bitmap image on the display.
* [ft\_draw\_colour\_bitmap(const unsigned char\* black\_image, const unsigned char\* red\_image)](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Draws a full-color bitmap image on the display.
* [ft\_draw\_bitmap\_full\_update(const unsigned char\* image, uint16\_t width, uint16\_t height)](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Draws a full bitmap image on the display.
* [ft\_display\_cluster\_number(IMAGE\_t mode)](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Displays the cluster number and additional images/messages based on the mode.
* [ft\_clear\_display()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Clears the display.
* [ft\_display\_init()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Initializes the display.

### Exam Mode

* [ft\_exam\_mode()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Handles the exam mode, including displaying exam-related messages and images.

### File System

* [ft\_secret\_verification(String input)](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Verifies the secret token.
* [ft\_data\_restore(const char\* file\_name)](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Restores data from the specified file.
* [ft\_data\_integrity\_check()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Checks the integrity of the file system and restores necessary data.
* [ft\_write\_spiffs\_file(const char\* file\_name, char\* input)](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Writes data to the specified file in SPIFFS.
* [ft\_read\_spiffs\_file(const char\* file\_name, char\* output)](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Reads data from the specified file in SPIFFS.
* [ft\_spiffs\_init()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Initializes SPIFFS.

### Intra Interaction

* [ft\_fetch\_exams()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Fetches exam schedules from the 42 Intra API.

### Telegram Bot

* [ft\_telegram\_check()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Checks for new messages from the Telegram bot and handles them.
* [ft\_compose\_message(int32\_t subject, int16\_t days\_left)](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Composes messages to be sent via the Telegram bot.

### Time Utilities

* [ft\_expiration\_counter()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Calculates the number of days left until the secret token expires.
* [ft\_unix\_timestamp\_decoder(uint8\_t\* p\_day, uint8\_t\* p\_month, uint16\_t\* p\_year)](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Decodes a UNIX timestamp into day, month, and year.
* [ft\_get\_time()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Fetches the current time from an NTP server.
* [ft\_time\_till\_wakeup()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Calculates the time until the next wake-up.
* [ft\_time\_till\_event(int8\_t hours, uint8\_t minutes)](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Calculates the time until a specified event.
* [ft\_time\_sync(unsigned int preexam\_time)](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Synchronizes time before an exam.

### Watchdog

* [ft\_watchdog\_start()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Starts the watchdog timer.
* [ft\_watchdog\_reset()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Resets the watchdog timer.
* [ft\_watchdog\_stop()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Stops the watchdog timer.
* [ft\_watchdog\_init()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Initializes the watchdog timer.

### Other Functions

* [ft\_go\_to\_sleep(uint64\_t time\_in\_millis)](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Puts the device to sleep for the specified time.
* [ft\_delay(uint64\_t time\_in\_millis)](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Delays execution and puts the device into light sleep.
* [ft\_wifi\_connect()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Connects to Wi-Fi.
* [ft\_serial\_init()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Initializes the serial communication.
* [ft\_power\_down\_recovery()](vscode-file://vscode-app/Applications/Visual%20Studio%20Code.app/Contents/Resources/app/out/vs/code/electron-sandbox/workbench/workbench.html): Handles power-down recovery, including reporting reboot reasons.

[How to Get Exams Info from Intra.]

The Smart Sign does it in the following 6 steps:

1. connects to Wi-Fi,
2. connects to the 42 Intra server,
3. asks the server for a temporary access token using the UID and the Secret,
4. retreives the temporary access token from the server response,
5. asks the server for exam information for a particular campus, a particular cluster, on a particalar date,
6. retreives the exam information from the server response.

For testing purposes, this process can be recreated on a computer, in Terminal using Curl:

1. enter these variables into the Terminal

**CLIENT\_ID=**put\_your\_42\_API\_app\_UID\_number\_here

**SECRET\_ID=**put\_your\_42\_API\_app\_Secret\_token\_here

2. ask the 42 Intra server for a temporary access token

**curl -X POST --data "grant\_type=client\_credentials&client\_id=${CLIENT\_ID}&client\_secret=${SECRET\_ID}" https://api.intra.42.fr/oauth/token**

3. copy the access token from the server response and enter it as a variable into the Terminal

**TKN=**put\_received\_access\_token\_here

4. ask the server to send you the information about exams in the cluster C3 and put it into a .json file. 56 is the ID of the 42 Prague campus. Curl does not like square brackets [ ] in its calls, so they need to be escaped with a backslash \.

**curl -H "Authorization: Bearer $TKN" "https://api.intra.42.fr/v2/campus/56/exams&filter\[location\]=C3" > c3\_exams.json**

If you want to filter the results down to the exact date, as the Smart Sign does, use the following call instead.

**curl -H "Authorization: Bearer $TKN" "https://api.intra.42.fr/v2/campus/56/exams?filter\[location\]=C3&range\[begin\_at\]=2024-07-12T05:00:00.000Z,2024-07-12T22:00:00.000Z" > c3\_exams1.json**

5. this command opens the .json file in the Terminal

**python -m json.tool < prague\_exams.json | grep "begin\_at" | tr -d " ," | awk -F '"begin\_at":' '{print("["++count"]:", $2)}'**

[example of the 42 server access token response as the smart sign sees it.]

HTTP/2 200

date: Thu, 11 Jul 2024 13:19:37 GMT

content-type: application/json; charset=utf-8

cache-control: no-store

etag: W/"77a2df7a4e20f5f76e6364d36bc76e8a"

pragma: no-cache

set-cookie: \_mkra\_stck=15e20a8020c702e70007eb1e185a06fb%3A1720703982.2018037; path=/; max-age=10; expires=Thu, 11 Jul 2024 13:19:47 -0000; HttpOnly

status: 200 OK

vary: Origin,Accept-Encoding

x-rack-cors: preflight-hit; no-origin

x-request-id: 3d153728-82b5-48a0-84e7-7c1f1efe598a

x-runtime: 0.076367

cf-cache-status: DYNAMIC

report-to: {"endpoints":[{"url":"https:\/\/a.nel.cloudflare.com\/report\/v4?s=5%2Bb21KLqrzLETXPtKW2gerMAMrEPjiLAWT6eRUKeyuOVy3b5pvEr6Tc7D%2BMB%2BB4gqUHrTyXWaYy01CmZjQqUGReP7COyDKfBhKpl75Kwd%2FWrMWCVZD%2FkWhvM1iHF0V43hw%3D%3D"}],"group":"cf-nel","max\_age":604800}

nel: {"success\_fraction":0,"report\_to":"cf-nel","max\_age":604800}

server: cloudflare

cf-ray: 8a191610cec6bc03-FRA

{"access\_token":"03e4cb9b861dad6c49f2267cf97bd18a942507efa7840dc971008d264596cf89","token\_type":"bearer","expires\_in":6564,"scope":"public","created\_at":1720703340,"secret\_valid\_until":1722585613}

[example of the 42 server EXAM INFORMATION response as the smart sign sees it.]

HTTP/1.1 200 OK

Date: Thu, 28 Nov 2024 06:10:13 GMT

Content-Type: application/json; charset=utf-8

Transfer-Encoding: chunked

Connection: close

Cache-Control: max-age=0, private, must-revalidate

etag: W/"4dc462b36f78c9e055076113bae0d605"

status: 200 OK

vary: Origin,Accept-Encoding

x-application-id: 67990

x-application-name: 42PRAGUEAPI SCREEN

x-application-roles: None

x-content-type-options: nosniff

x-fast: false

x-frame-options: SAMEORIGIN

x-hourly-ratelimit-limit: 1200

x-hourly-ratelimit-remaining: 1199

x-page: 1

x-per-page: 30

x-rack-cors: preflight-hit; no-origin

x-request-id: 1d409b60-b763-4e10-af5a-8fe35593b80d

x-runtime: 0.196901

x-secondly-ratelimit-limit: 2

x-secondly-ratelimit-remaining: 1

x-total: 1

x-xss-protection: 1; mode=block

cf-cache-status: DYNAMIC

Server: cloudflare

CF-RAY: 8e9831883e36b353-PRG

9fa

[{"id":21213,"ip\_range":"10.11.0.0/16,10.12.0.0/16,10.13.0.0/16","begin\_at":"2024-11-28T14:00:00.000Z","end\_at":"2024-11-28T17:00:00.000Z","location":"C3","max\_people":25,"nbr\_subscribers":4,"name":"EXAM STUD","created\_at":"2024-11-22T08:20:02.386Z","updated\_at":"2024-11-27T23:40:57.806Z","campus":{"id":56,"name":"Prague","time\_zone":"Europe/Prague","language":{"id":2,"name":"English","identifier":"en","created\_at":"2015-04-14T16:07:38.122Z","updated\_at":"2024-11-18T11:22:47.733Z"},"users\_count":1335,"vogsphere\_id":52,"country":"Czech Republic","address":"AFI CITY TOWER Kolbenova 1021/9 Praha 9 - Vysočany","zip":"19000","city":"Prague","website":"https://42prague.com","facebook":"https://www.facebook.com/42Prague","twitter":"","active":true,"public":true,"email\_extension":"42prague.com","default\_hidden\_phone":false},"cursus":[{"id":21,"created\_at":"2019-07-29T08:45:17.896Z","name":"42cursus","slug":"42cursus","kind":"main"},{"id":21,"created\_at":"2019-07-29T08:45:17.896Z","name":"42cursus","slug":"42cursus","kind":"main"},{"id":21,"created\_at":"2019-07-29T08:45:17.896Z","name":"42cursus","slug":"42cursus","kind":"main"},{"id":21,"created\_at":"2019-07-29T08:45:17.896Z","name":"42cursus","slug":"42cursus","kind":"main"},{"id":21,"created\_at":"2019-07-29T08:45:17.896Z","name":"42cursus","slug":"42cursus","kind":"main"}],"projects":[{"id":1320,"name":"Exam Rank 02","slug":"exam-rank-02","difficulty":0,"parent":null,"children":[],"attachments":[],"created\_at":"2019-07-29T09:05:05.890Z","updated\_at":"2024-11-25T08:53:45.680Z","exam":true,"git\_id":null,"repository":null},{"id":1321,"name":"Exam Rank 03","slug":"exam-rank-03","difficulty":0,"parent":null,"children":[],"attachments":[],"created\_at":"2019-07-29T09:05:15.263Z","updated\_at":"2024-11-25T08:56:10.466Z","exam":true,"git\_id":null,"repository":null},{"id":1322,"name":"Exam Rank 04","slug":"exam-rank-04","difficulty":0,"parent":null,"children":[],"attachments":[],"created\_at":"2019-07-29T09:05:24.256Z","updated\_at":"2024-11-25T08:56:32.456Z","exam":true,"git\_id":null,"repository":null},{"id":1323,"name":"Exam Rank 05","slug":"exam-rank-05","difficulty":0,"parent":null,"children":[],"attachments":[],"created\_at":"2019-07-29T09:05:32.360Z","updated\_at":"2024-11-25T08:56:53.071Z","exam":true,"git\_id":null,"repository":null},{"id":1324,"name":"Exam Rank 06","slug":"exam-rank-06","difficulty":0,"parent":null,"children":[],"attachments":[],"created\_at":"2019-07-29T09:05:39.838Z","updated\_at":"2024-11-25T08:57:29.269Z","exam":true,"git\_id":null,"repository":null}]}]

0

[graphics.]

[HOW TO DRAW ON THE DISPLAY.]

[SERVICE MESSAGES MEANING.]

[LIBRARIES AND THEIR USE.]

The project was built in Arduino IDE 1.8.19.

It uses board 'esp32' version 3.0.7

The libraries in bold are explicitly included in the project.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Arduino.h** |  | String variables manipulations |
| **LittleFS** | 2.0.0 | stores data even without electricity (Telegram chat number, Secret, OTA flag value) |
| FS | 2.0.0 | dependency for the LittleFS library |
| **ArduinoOTA** | 2.0.0 | for the Over The Air update functionality |
| **WiFiUdp** | 2.0.0 | dependency for the ArduinoOTA library |
| **ESPmDNS** | 2.0.0 | dependency for the ArduinoOTA library |
| Update | 2.0.0 | dependency for the ArduinoOTA library |
| **time.h** |  | gets NTP Server date and time; deciphers UNIX timestamp for the SECRET expiration date |
| **stdio.h** |  | provides printf() function for the DEBUG macro |
| **stdint.h** |  | provides fixed-width integer types |
| **esp\_system.h** |  | allows to use ESP-IDF native functions |
| **esp\_sleep.h** |  | allows to use the Deep Sleep power-saving functionality |
| **driver/adc.h** |  | for battery charge measurements |
| **esp\_task\_wdt.h** |  | program execution watchdog |
| **Wire** | 2.0.0 | for SPI reconfiguration in the ft\_display\_init function |
| SPI | 2.0.0 | dependency for the Wire library |
| **GxEPD2\_3C** | 1.5.2 | 3-coloured version of the GxEPD2 library for e-paper displays |
| **GxEPD2\_BW** | 1.5.2 | dependency for the GxEPD2\_3C library |
| Adafruit\_GFX\_Library | 1.11.8 | dependency for the GxEPD2\_3C library |
| Adafruit\_BusIO | 1.14.4 | dependency for the GxEPD2\_3C library |
| **Fonts/FreeSansBold24pt7b.h** |  | the fonts come from the Adafruit GFX library which gets called by the GxEPD2 library |
| **WiFi** | 2.0.0 | for Wi-Fi functionality |
| **WiFiClientSecure** | 2.0.0 | for secure HTTPS requests |
| **UniversalTelegramBot** | 1.3.0 | Telegram bot; for wireless SECRET update and low battery notifications |
| ArduinoJson | 6.21.3 | dependency for the UniversalTelegramBot library |

[BUGS AND SUGGESTIONS HOW TO FIX THEM.]

***Display does not work / does not draw an image.***

* you may have miscalculated the image coordinates and the image gets drawn outside of the display field of coordinates. Remember that setRotation also rotates the display field of coordinates. Remember that coordinates always point to the top left corner of an image, but for a text it is the bottom left pixel of the first character in the first line.
* you may have misaligned the image with the partial update window if you are using one. Remember that even when you draw an image in a partial update window, you use the whole display field of coordinates to place it; a partial update window does not have its own field of coordinates.
* the display driver memory may be full. Run your program and open the Serial monitor. When an image gets drawn on the display, in the Serial monitor it says “Updating xxxxxxxxxx” where xxxxxxxxxxxx is a very long number that can be different each program run. Among all the outputted messages find the “Updating” message that corresponds to your image being drawn. Now look higher and find the “Power on” message. Keep looking higher and find the “Power off” message, it should not be separated from your “Updating” message by other “Updating” messages. If you cannot find it, it means that this is a bug. To fix it, in your code use the function to force the display to power off before drawing the image. The display will power back on automatically.

***Flash memory became too small to accomodate the software.***

* ESP32C3 comes with 4MB of onboard memory. This project‘s default memory partition scheme "Minimal SPIFFS (1.9MB APP with OTA/190KB SPIFFS)" provides exactly 1 966 080 Bytes for the software program, another 1 966 080 Bytes as an OTA buffer and 194 560 Bytes for the file system files storage space.
* Commenting out the **#pragma GCC optimize ("O3")** line in config.h will make the compiler optimize the code for lower software image size instead of faster program performance. That may win over about 2-3 KB of memory space.
* Before compiling the software image, in the „Tools“ menu of Arduino IDE, go to the Core Debug Level and switch it from „Verbose“ to „None“ — this simple step can free up to 3% of the memory space.
* Downgrade the project from the esp32 board version 3.0.7 to the esp32 board version 2.0.16. This step may require to refactor the watchdog and the battery management functionalities, but it may free up to 10% of the memory space.
* In the „Tools“ menu of Arduino IDE, go to the Partition Scheme and choose the option „Huge APP (3MB No OTA/1MB SPIFFS)“. Doing so will free up a whopping 30% of the memory space. Unfortunatelly, the Over-The-Air update functionality will not have a buffer for its work and so will no longer be available. At this point the OTA functionality code may well be removed from the project.

***Some RTC variables loose thier values over the Deep Sleep.***

* There could be more than one reason to it, but most likely it is caused by the RTC memory overflow. Try removing some less important variables from the RTC domain. The String Object type variables (or simply String variables) are known to have a big overhead and thus to take a lot of memory space. It is encouraged not to use them in the RTC domain at all.

***DEBUG\_PRINTF does not output a message.***

* the DEBUG\_PRINTF macro cannot output String type variables natively. To do that, you need to explicitly cast the String variable into the C-style string with c\_str() command. Look for examples in the program code.

***Serial monitor is empty / outputs gibberish.***

* check the DEBUG macro in the config.h file. The DEBUG definition should not be commented out for the Serial output to work. Additionally, you can set the Core Debug Level to "Verbose" in the Arduino IDE Tools to get detailed information about the firmware processes.
* make sure that the baud rate in the Serial monitor is set to the same baud rate as in the config.h file.
* you may encounter such behaviour right after the software update. It is normal. Try closing and opening again the Serial monitor window. If that does not help, push the Reset ("R") button on the module.

***Serial monitor skips some messages / does not show some messages.***

* it is a common situation at the beginning of the program. Serial communication between the computer and the microcontroller needs time to stabilise and synchronise itself. ESP32-C3 USB Serial is especially prone to this issue. To overcome it, increase the delay inside of ft\_serial\_init() or add a few empty messages to be outputted after the Serial.begin() command. You may well try to implement both of the suggested solutions at the same time.

***Wi-Fi does not connect / reconnect without apparent reason.***

* thoroughly check your network SSID and password spelling. Surprisingly, it is a very widely spread cause. A single character written small instead of capital may easily prevent you from connecting.
* make sure not to use ft\_delay() in any of your functions responsible for connecting or reconnecting to Wi-Fi. The ft\_delay() function not only delays the program execution but also puts the microcontroller's inner Wi-Fi module to sleep. Using ft\_delay() in functions responsible for retrieving information from the Internet may result in unexpected behaviour. If you are not sure that using ft\_delay() is safe in your particular function, use delay() instead.

***OTA does not work. Cannot see the device in the ports list.***

* make sure that the Sign and your computer are connected to the same Wi-Fi network and to the same Wi-Fi modem within that network. In the Telegram chat prompt the Sign with the „/status“ command to see the MAC address of the Wi-Fi modem it is currently connected to.
* try closing and reopening Arduino IDE.
* the school firewall may be blocking OTA connection. Ask your campus system administrator if it could be overcome.

***Adding multiple Strings together with the “+” command causes compilation error.***

* strangely, sometimes the compiler may not like it in one part of the code and be completely fine with it in another. The solution is to explicitly cast the variable after the first “+” command into String with the String(your\_variable\_or\_text) command. Understandably, it is strange to cast a String variable into String, but it works.

***WARNING: Skipping SSL Verification. INSECURE!***

* not a bug.
* this message appears when connecting to the Intra server and is caused by the following line in the intra\_interaction.cpp file: „client1.setInsecure();“.
* one one hand, it can be solved by getting and setting up a certificate for this connection. On the other hand, it does not affect the program run at all and can be ignored.

***setSocketOption(): fail on 0, errno: 9, "Bad file number"***

* a minor issue and does not necessarily indicate a problem with the program.
* this message may appear when the Smart Sign fails the first attempt to get a server response from the Intra server and goes for the second or third attempt.
* this error can occur when you try to set a socket option on a socket that has already been closed or is in the process of being closed. This can happen during the transition between closing the previous connection and opening a new one. As long as the SSL/TLS communication with the Intra server is functioning correctly after the reconnection, this error can generally be ignored.

***spiAttachMISO(): SPI Does not have default pins on ESP32C3!***

* not a bug.
* This message appears when the microcontroller assigns pins for the display SPI port. In this project we do not use the MISO pin (thus the „-1“ value defined for the SPI\_MISO\_PIN in the constants.h file).

***401 Unauthorized. Error! Server response came without the Access Token.***

* often happens when something is wrong with the Secret token authentication, commonly with the Secret token itself. Most likely, an extra character was added to your Secret token somewhere along the way. The character may even not to be visible in the Serial monitor. It may happen when you write to or read from the filesystem files. Try using trim() on the variable (e.g. your\_string\_variable.trim();), it will remove spaces and/or new line signs at the beginning and at the end of the string.
* rarely may happen due to the Intra server maintenance. There is no solution to it but to wait.

***Compilation error: “Section .dram0.bs 'Will Not Fit In Region Dram0\_0\_seg' Region.`Dram0\_0\_seg 'Overflowed by 9648 Bytes. Collect2: Error: LD Returned 1 Exit Status”***

* it means that the program takes more RAM space than it is available. DRAM stands for Data Random Access Memory and is used for data.
* This error may be caused for example by excessive use of global variables, large arrays, big buffers, etc.
* The most likely reason for this error in this project is the display buffer being too big. The ESP32 and the ESP32-S2 are especially prone to this issue. To overcome this problem the display buffer size should be reduced. It can be done in the display instantiation.  
  Here is the default display buffer instantiation:   
  GxEPD2\_3C<GxEPD2\_750c\_Z08, GxEPD2\_750c\_Z08::HEIGHT> display(GxEPD2\_750c\_Z08(SPI\_SS\_PIN, DC\_PIN, RST\_PIN, BUSY\_PIN));  
  And here is a reduced display buffer instantiation: GxEPD2\_3C<GxEPD2\_750c\_Z08, GxEPD2\_750c\_Z08::HEIGHT/2> display(GxEPD2\_750c\_Z08(SPI\_SS\_PIN, DC\_PIN, RST\_PIN, BUSY\_PIN));
* Less likely reason for this error is an excessive use of the global scope for data. To solve it reduce the number of global variables, use the file system to store the data instead of arrays.

***Software update fails while trying to connect to the microcontroller board***

* Go into the "Tools" menu and change the Upload Speed to 115200. Sometimes the IDE automatically sets the Upload Speed to the highest value and your board may happen not to support it.

***[INTRA] Error! Server response to the Access Token request was not received.***

***[INTRA] Error! Server response to the Exam Time request was not received.***

* If any of these error messages keep appearing in the Serial monitor, it is likely that it is not enough time for the Intra server to proceed the request from the Sign. Try going into the config.h file and incrementally increasing the value of the SERVER\_WAIT\_MS macro by 500 milliseconds each time.

[NEW bugs and Future development suggestions.]

All newly discovered bugs should be documented in the "Issues" tab of the project's GitHub repository. This helps keep track of problems and facilitates community engagement in resolving them.

Any suggestions for future development or enhancements can be added to the "Suggestions for Contributions" section in the README file of the project's GitHub repository. This allows everyone to see potential improvements and participate in developing them.

[Suggestions for dealing with confidential information.]

[External Information Sources.]

NTP (time) server API documentation

<https://cplusplus.com/reference/ctime/tm/>

GDEY075Z08 display data sheet

<https://www.laskakit.cz/user/related_files/gdey075z08.pdf>

GDEY075Z08 display code example

<https://github.com/LaskaKit/Testcode_examples/blob/main/Displays/E-Paper/7-50/GDEY075Z08_GxEPD2/GDEY075Z08_GxEPD2.ino>

UC8179 - the display hardware driver - data sheet <https://www.laskakit.cz/user/related_files/uc8179.pdf>

GxEPD2 library - the display software driver - online page

<https://github.com/ZinggJM/GxEPD2>

Online forum for GxEPD2 library proubleshooting discussions

<https://forum.arduino.cc/t/good-display-epaper-for-arduino/419657>

ESP32 RAM issue discussion page

<https://github.com/espressif/arduino-esp32/issues/1163>

XIAO ESP32C3 development board instruction page

<https://wiki.seeedstudio.com/XIAO_ESP32C3_Getting_Started/>

Video tutorial about troubleshooting the ArduinoOTA library

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_btZfxrS48>

The best instruction ever on the buttons implementation with ESP32

<https://esp32io.com/tutorials/esp32-button>