

BACHELOR PAPER

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BOINSO – Open source development of a distributed satellite monitoring network and its implications on telemedicine applications of the future

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ICH BIN EIN TEST

Schlagworte: BOINSO

Abstract

I AM A TEST

Keywords: BOINSO

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I acknowledge this paper as a piece of bullcr*p

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1 Introduction

The use of pico and micro satellites in the context of educational aerospace programs has introduced opportunities for both private enthusiasts and students in small scale cost efficient satellite endeavors. Mostly lacking central oversight and costly infrastructure around the globe the efficiency of those programs is depending on the collaborative efforts of a growing community sharing both hardware, computational infrastructure and time. Due to the characteristics of orbiters deployed in a Low Earth Orbit (LEO) a stationary observer can establish a direct line of sight only up to twelve times a day – as stated in [1] – which can be maintained for about fifteen minutes per pass.

The challenges posed by the difficult monitoring of small satellites orbiting in LEO and possible ways to overcome them were outlined in [2]. This bachelor paper focuses on the implementation of an accessible and easily modifiable solution to connect Mission Control Centers (MCCs) and give Ground Control Centers (GCCs) the opportunity to deliver viable contributions to the monitoring process.

In the following chapters the reader is going to be presented with an outline of the tools and materials used to achieve this goal, the structure of the different applications written for this task as well as details about their implementation. Finally there will be a recapitulation of challenges which arose during the work on the project and an outlook on future developments.

1.1 BOINSO Core Web Application

The BOINSO Core Web Application is the main entry point for MCC administrators for maintaining the data related to their managed satellites. Besides the administrative interface the Core Web Application offers an Application Programming Interface (API) accessible via Representational State Transfer (REST) calls. An additional part of the Core Application is an OAuth2 provider which is used to authenticate users with a MCC.

1.2 BOINSO MCC Web Client

The BOINSO MCC Web Client is a HTML5/JavaScript sample implementation of a custom BOINSO client. It offers GCCs the possibility to register with a MCC, manually download Two Line Elements (TLE) files, administer their profile data and their tracking data.

1.3 BOINSO GPredict Bridge

The BOINSO GPredict Bridge is a piece of middle-ware distributed as a python module. It is used to pull updates of satellite data from the MCCs to their affiliated GCCs and in return automatically upload tracking data to the BOINSO Core Web Application of the satellites owner using the client API.

2 Material

The following sections list the different tools used while working on the components of the BOINSO network applications.

2.1 General

This section includes tools which allow a group of developers to work on complex projects in a decentralized manner. As this project is intended to be used in an academic context and monetary resources are scarce in this field tools that are either open source or free of charge for educational programs.

2.1.1 GIT-SCM

The Git Source Code Mirror (git-scm) is a "[...] fast, scalable, distributed revision control system with a [...] rich command set that provides both high-level operations and full access to internals" as declared in [3]. It follows the same "branch -> develop -> merge" work-flow as Subversion (SVN) and is freely distributed under the GNU General Public Licence Version 2 (GPLv2). It was originally developed by Linus Torvalds to offer Linux Kernel developers a free way to collaboratively work on a distributed code-base efficiently.

2.1.2 GitHub

GitHub is a provider of cloud hosted git-scm repositories. As GitHub was originally introduced by members of the open source community it still maintains a very generous relationship to open source contributors. GitHub users who publish their work to public repositories may use virtually all services bound to the GitHub infrastructure free of charge with only minimal limitations. GitHub also offers premium enterprise accounts which include a certain amount of private repositories and premium services if they are needed.

2.1.3 Travis-CI

Travis-CI is a web hosted continuous integration server. Continuous integration is the automated process of building and testing a project with every introduction or modification of a software component. Its goal is to assure and improve the quality of the project while alerting the development team if a change would lead to a breaking application.

In contrast of other continuous integration solutions like Jenkins – an open source continuous integration server implemented in the Java programming language – the configuration of a Travis-CI process is done by adding a simple configuration file to root of your git-scm repository as seen in listing 1.

```
1 language: python
2
3 python:
4     - "2.7"
5     - "3.4"
6
7 services: postgresql
8
9 before_script:
10     - psql -c 'create database travisci;' -U postgres
11
12 install:
13     - pip install -r requirements.txt
14     - pip install coveralls
15
16 script:
17     - coverage run --rcfile=.coverage.rc manage.py test
18
19 after_success:
20     coveralls --rcfile=.coverage.rc
```

Code 1: BOINSO Travis-CI configuration file. For this file type the YAML syntax is used. The built process runs once for every Python interpreter version included in the configuration. Services like a data base connection can be included and configured prior to the built process. It is possible to include command line expressions and additional hooks which react to Travis-CI events.

2.1.4 Vagrant

Vagrant is a tool which is used to virtualize development environments. It offers a command line interface to download, start up, pause, halt and provision images of virtual machines which

come configured with all the dependencies needed to develop, run and test an application. Base images can be built to closely model a production system as closely as possible being configured by a trained system administrator masking the complexity of this system from developers and designers. Depending on the base image type Vagrant users have to have access to a certain virtualization provider – also known as hypervisor.

The initialization process of a Vagrant environment depends on the presence of a vagrant configuration file – simply known as the Vagrantfile. Listing 2 depicts the Vagrantfile of the BOINSO Core Web Application.

```
1 Vagrant.configure(2) do |config|
2
3   config.vm.box = "Walternative/django_base_box"
4   config.vm.provision :shell, path: "bootstrap.sh"
5   config.vm.network :forwarded_port, host: 8000, guest: 8000
6
7 end
```

Code 2: BOINSO Core Web Application Vagrantfile including expressions to set the virtual base box, a simple shell provisioner executing a bash script which installs variable project dependencies, and the automated port forwarding from the virtual box to the host development machine

Provisioning can be done by DevOps tools like Puppet or Chef or any other program used in this context. As the scope and the resources of this project are limited a simple shell provisioner was used. An example for a provisioning script can be seen in listing 3.

```
1 #!/usr/bin/env bash
2
3 cd /vagrant
4 sudo rm /var/lib/apt/lists/* -R
5 sudo apt-get update
6 sudo apt-get upgrade -y
7
8 # whatever you want to provision comes here
9 # right now only shell provisioning works in this box
10 # chef/puppet will be added (eventually)
11
12 sudo pip3 install -r requirements.txt
13
14 echo "provisioner is done"
15 exit 0
```

Code 3: Vagrant shell provisioning bash script

2.1.5 Open Source Licensing

Open source software is easy to extend and distribute as portability issues can be solved directly in the source code. Unfortunately there are numerous developers and companies which sole purpose seems to be the destruction of open source projects through the medium of patenting and licensing schemes. To protect a project and its collaborators a well established software license should be used. The Free Software Foundation (FSS) provides a set of licenses and guidelines for their own licensing products and affiliated licenses. A starter guide for choosing the right free software license can be found at [4]. Project initiator should be aware that licenses recommended by the FSS are most likely going to be rather strict free software licenses which makes later commercial use harder in many cases. That is the reason for the BOINSO project favoring the Apache License 2.0.

2.2 BOINSO Core Web Application

This section focuses on the tools and frameworks used to implement the core of the BOINSO Core Web Application.

2.2.1 pip

In a modern Python environment pip is used to manage Python modules. Pip itself is a python module which accesses the Python Package Index (PyPI), downloads a module and its dependencies, starts the compilation process for Python extensions and either adds the module to the global Python interpreters Python path or the path of a local virtual Python environment. Besides installing single packages on demand for console execution pip can also be used as a dependency management tool. Rather than manually managing all dependencies of a projects developers normally include a requirements.txt file to their project roots which is used by pip to install project dependencies in the right version. Listing 4 shows the requirements.txt file of the BOINSO Core Web Application.

```
1 # if you change your database backend you don't need this driver
2 psycopg2==2.6
3
4 # for the safest timezone support install this package
5 pytz==2014.10
6
7 Django==1.7.5
8.djangorestframework==3.0.5
9 django-oauth-toolkit==0.7.2
10
11
12 # for enabling CORS-Headers (used when AJAX calls are fired from another domain)
13 django-cors-headers==1.0.0
```

```
14
15 # this package is exclusively for testing ssl
16 # never use the django devel server or the django ssl server for production!
17 django-sslserver==0.14
18
19 # for building docu only
20 sphinx
21 sphinx_rtd_theme
```

Code 4: BOINSO Core Web Application requirements.txt file including project dependencies and their version. Version notation follows the "major.minor.patch" pattern. Omitting versioning information means that the latest available version of a module will be installed – in this case this is not likely to cause problems as sphinx is only used to generate documentation.

2.2.2 Virtualenv

Virtualenv is a Python command line tool to create local light weight Python environments with encapsulated tools and an isolated Python module path. Virtual environments can be activated on a per shell basis and replace the system's standard Python installation in this scope. Virtualenv is used to separate the dependencies of a distinct application from other project as different dependency versions are prone to errors when being installed to the same context.

2.2.3 Django

Django is one of the major Python web frameworks. It is backed by a very committed developer community, easy to use, secure and scalable. Without further configuration it includes powerful management tools, database independent Object Relational Mapping (ORM) facilities, an intuitive template engine and an automatically generated administration interface. The project maintainers offer these tools but are very keen on making sure that all components are as modular as possible. This means that almost all components can be substituted by other established projects (e.g.: Jinja template engine instead of Django template engine or SQLAlchemy ORM instead of Django ORM). Besides substituting core components the Django app system also allows developers to write framework extensions which add additional functionality.

Django can be used to its full potential when working on data driven dynamic web applications. To give developers granular control of application functionality and to enforce a maintainable code base the framework makes extensive use of the Model View Controller (MVC) pattern. Figure 1 shows the typical collaborative processes between the different MVC components.

Model

The model is the programmatic representation of an entity. The ORM implementation maps the different data members of the model class to a table in the databases and casts the fields to the

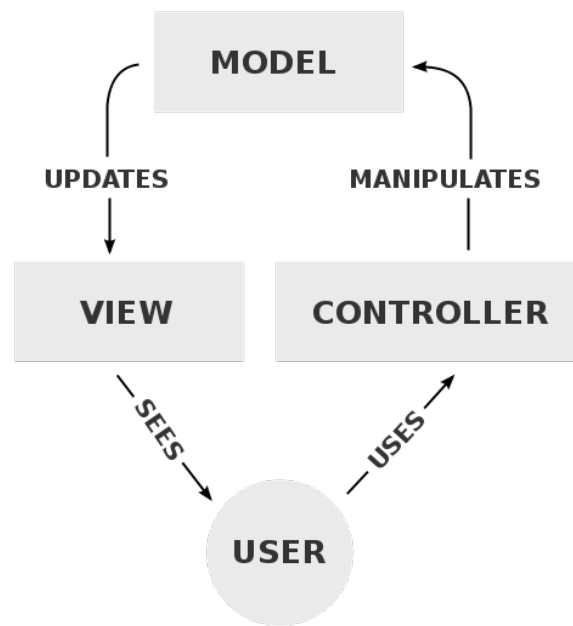


Figure 1: Typical collaboration of MVC components

related database vendor type implementations. An example for a simple model implementation can be seen in listing 5. Besides the correct mapping to the data base the field types also allow the usage of validation chains which throw errors if input values violate input constraints.

```

1  class Satellite(models.Model):
2
3      """
4      Satellite model represents an earth orbiter.
5      Closely modelled after GPredict satellite representation.
6      """
7
8      catalogue_number = models.IntegerField(blank=False)
9      version = models.IntegerField(default=1)
10     name = models.CharField(max_length=140)
11     nickname = models.CharField(max_length=140)
12     tle = models.FileField(null=True, blank=True)
13
14     # definitions for operation choices
15     OP_STAT_UNKNOWN = 0          # unknown status
16     OP_STAT_OPERATIONAL = 1      # operational
17     OP_STAT_NONOP = 2           # non operational
18     OP_STAT_PARTIAL = 3         # partially operational
19     OP_STAT_STDBY = 4           # standby
20     OP_STAT_SPARE = 5           # spare
21     OP_STAT_EXTENDED = 6        # extended mission
22

```

```

23     STAT_CHOICES = (
24         (OP_STAT_UNKNOWN, 'operation status unknown'),
25         (OP_STAT_OPERATIONAL, 'operational'),
26         (OP_STAT_NONOP, 'non operational'),
27         (OP_STAT_PARTIAL, 'partially operational'),
28         (OP_STAT_STDBY, 'on standby'),
29         (OP_STAT_SPARE, 'spare'),
30         (OP_STAT_EXTENDED, 'extended mission')
31     )
32
33     status = models.IntegerField(max_length=2,
34                                 choices=STAT_CHOICES,
35                                 default=OP_STAT_UNKNOWN)
36
37     def __str__(self):
38         return "{} Version {}".format(self.name, self.version)

```

Code 5: BOINSO Core Web Application satellite model

View

The view is the layer in which data is presented to clients who can interact with it without having knowledge of the underlying logic. In classical Django applications a view is called a template and rendered to a Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) document presented to a web browser. The BOINSO Core Web Application makes use of the Django Representational State Transfer (REST) Framework where a serializer is used instead of a template. Listing 6 shows the serializer related to the satellite model shown in listing 5 extending a model serializer provided by the Django REST Framework which provides resource identification and resource location by Uniform Resource Locator (URL) fields catering to the Hypermedia as the Engine of Application State (HATEOAS) principle introduced in [5].

```

1  class SatelliteSerializer(serializers.HyperlinkedModelSerializer):
2
3      """
4      Serializes Satellite objects. Clients should see data
5      regardless of their login status. Read only.
6      """
7
8      transponders = serializers.HyperlinkedRelatedField(
9          many=True,
10         read_only=True,
11         view_name='transponder-detail'
12     )
13
14     class Meta:
15         model = Satellite
16         fields = ('url', 'catalogue_number', 'version', 'name', 'nickname',
17                 'tle', 'status', 'transponders')

```

Controller

The controller reacts to signals set by the user, manipulates the state of a model and updates views. Business logic is incorporated in this component. In the Django vernacular a controller is – to the confusion of many users – called a view. A sample of a more complex controller is depicted in listing 7 where a client request containing an OAuth2 access token is used to filter for the related user object. The view establishes the connection to the serializer class and checks requests for both authentication (client is registered user) and permission (registered user has the rights to view/modify requested data).

```
1 class UserProfileProxy(generics.ListAPIView):
2
3     """
4     Narrows down the search for a user via his authentication.
5     Authenticated user sees his own profile and a link to his user endpoint.
6     Is used to get userdata via oauth token authentication.
7     """
8
9     serializer_class = UserProfileSerializer
10    authentication_classes = (OAuth2Authentication,)
11    permission_classes = (IsAuthenticated, TokenHasReadWriteScope)
12
13    def get_queryset(self):
14        """
15        This view should only get the profile of the authenticated user.
16        """
17
18        user = self.request.user
19        return UserProfile.objects.filter(user=user)
```

Code 7: BOINSO Core Web Application UserProfileProxy

2.2.4 Nginx

Nginx is an open source reverse proxy for protocols for web and mail protocols, as well as a load balancer, cache and a web server. It is available for all major operating systems, easy to deploy and easy to configure. In the context of a deployed Django application Nginx is used to tunnel requests to the application's Web Server Gateway Interface (WSGI) server, to serve static content (images, style sheets, etc.) and to cache non dynamic content. An example for a production configuration file for a Django application using Nginx can be seen in listing 8.

```
1 server {
```

```

2      listen 8000 default_server;
3      listen [::]:8000 default_server ipv6only=on;
4
5      server_name localhost my_domain.com;
6
7      client_max_body_size 20M;
8
9      location / {
10         proxy_set_header Host $http_host;
11         proxy_set_header X-Forwarded-For $proxy_add_x_forwarded_for;
12         proxy_pass http://127.0.0.1:8001;
13     }
14
15     location /static/ {
16         autoindex on;
17         alias /PATH_TO_PROJECT/staticfiles/;
18     }
19 }

```

Code 8: Nginx configuration file example. Virtual host is instructed to listen to port 8000 while limiting the maximum body size to 20 megabyte. Requests directed at the virtual host are forwarded to the local application server including the original headers. A static file request is handled by Nginx.

2.2.5 Gunicorn

Gunicorn is a Python WSGI server implemented adhering to the WSGI definition postulated in [6]. As the integrated Django development server is well suited for testing and developing but it is not suited for a production environment due to stability and security implications deployment the usage of a well established solution such as Gunicorn or uWSGI. In cases where the production environment cannot sustain aforementioned solutions (as on Windows server machines) or whenever it is simply not desired to use an additional third party solution there are also modules for the popular Apache Web Server (Berkeley Software Distribution (BSD) httpd) or the Microsoft Internet Information Services (IIS).

Gunicorn is normally installed as a Python module in a virtual environment. This means that there is normally no native operating system hook which starts, restarts and monitors the server processes. In a Python environment a service which can be used to keep the server alive is called supervisord. With a simple configuration file like the one in listing 9 supervisord can handle the server life-cycle, restarting failed and zombie processes. The configuration execution itself can be handed to the operating system via the system initiator daemon (on Unix systems mostly initd, systemd or upstartd).

```

1 [supervisord]
2 logfile=/tmp/supervisord.log ; (main log file;default $CWD/supervisord.log)

```



```

3 logfile_maxbytes=50MB      ; (max main logfile bytes b4 rotation;default 50MB)
4 logfile_backups=10        ; (num of main logfile rotation backups;default 10)
5 loglevel=info             ; (log level;default info; others: debug,warn,trace)
6 pidfile=/tmp/supervisord.pid ; (supervisord pidfile;default supervisord.pid)
7 nodaemon=false            ; (start in foreground if true;default false)
8 minfds=1024               ; (min. avail startup file descriptors;default 1024)
9 minprocs=200              ; (min. avail process descriptors;default 200)
10
11 [program:gunicorn]
12 command=/VIRTUAL_ENV_PATH/bin/gunicorn APPLICATION_NAME.wsgi:application -w 4
    --bind 127.0.0.1:8001 --pid /tmp/gunicorn.pid ;
13 stdout_events_enabled = true
14 stderr_events_enabled = true
15 directory=/PATH_TO_APPLICATION/ ;

```

Code 9: Supervisord configuration file.

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List of Abbreviations

API	Application Programming Interface
GENSO	Global Educational Network for Satellite Operations
BOINC	Berkeley Open Infrastructure for Network Computing
LEO	Low Earth Orbit
GEO	Geostationary Orbit
GPL	GNU General Public License
MCC	Mission Control Center
GCC	Ground Control Center
COTS	Commercial off-the-shelf
ISEB	International Space Education Board
CSA	Canadian Space Agency
ESA	European Space Agency
JAXA	Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
CPU	Central Processing Unit
GPU	Graphics Processing Unit
PRC	Public Resource Computing
TNC	Terminal Node Controller
LTS	Long Term Support
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
CGI	Common Gateway Interface
MPL-2.0	Mozilla Public License Version 2.0

NORAD North American Aerospace Defense Command

HamLib Ham Radio Control Libraries

TLE Two Line Elements

git-scm Git Source Code Mirror

SVN Subversion

GPLv2 GNU General Public Licence Version 2

REST Representational State Transfer

PyPI Python Package Index

FSS Free Software Foundation

ORM Object Relational Mapping

MVC Model View Controller

HTML Hypertext Markup Language

URL Uniform Resource Locator

HATEOAS Hypermedia as the Engine of Application State

HTTP Hypertext Transfer Protocol

WSGI Web Server Gateway Interface

BSD Berkeley Software Distribution

IIS Microsoft Internet Information Services