DFRobot project

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# Introduction

This project was started beginning 2015 to get familiar and (even more) enthousiastic about embedded systems, embedded Linux, Robotics. Its fits very well the curriculum of the Fontys FHICT Technology study. Topics addressed are:

* Embedded systems
* Embedded Linux
* Networking
* Web server, webpage development
* Video streaming over internet
* ROS
* Programming C, C++, Python

To get started the following hardware is used:

* DFRobot 4WD Arduino Mobile Platform
* Raspberry Pi Model B+ Computer Board
* Raspberry Pi Camera Module
* DFRduino Uno USB Microcontroller V2.0
* DFRobot Arduino Compatible Motor Shield (2A)
* Lynxmotion Pan and Tilt Kit / Aluminium
* Netgear Wireless N Adapter 150 Mbps (USB) (WNA1100-100PES)

The project will never be ‘finished’ and is perfect for keeping up to date with the latest technologies. At the moment the following phases are foreseen:

**Phase one: feasibility**

In this phase I want to investigate the areas which I see as high risk and which are crucial for success of the project. Better to encounter problems in these areas right away then later in the project.

* Spike to see if it was possible to have low latency (< 2 sec) streaming video from the Raspberry Pi B+ to a standard web browser (no plugins). This is not trivial and a lot of discussions can be found in forums.
* Spike to see how to control the Pi Camera and the Pi I/O pins from a standard web browser. Different techniques can be used and it would be good to use the right one for this project.

**Phase two: Basic system up and running**

* Robot platform controlled from a standard web browser containing streaming video. Status information will also be available.
* Next to that a charging station will be built and it should be possible to manually drive to the driving station and attach.

**Phase three: Adding more features / intelligence**

In this phase I want to add intelligence and features.

* Adding sensors like for measuring dinstance, temperature etc…
* Adding servo’s for grabbing.
* Let the robot create a map of the environment so that it can orientate itself and one can give commands like: go to room X position Y. This is where ROS comes in.
* Let the robot automatically find and attach to its charging station when needed.

# Raspberry Pi B+ configuration

## Backing up the SD card image of the Raspberry Pi

To create an image of the Pi SD card the dd command can be used. Put the SD card in the Mac and identify the 8 GB SD card disk with ‘diskutil list’. The Identifier will be something like ‘disk1’. Then in the dd command one can use /dev/disk1 for the device or for higher speed the (unbuffered) raw disk /dev/rdisk1 which is ok when using the dd command.

sudo dd if=/dev/rdisk1 of=/Users/fhict/ReneB/GitHub/rbakx/DFRobot\_SDcardBackup\_TooLargeForGithub/SDcardBackup20150124.img bs=1m

or to save space:

sudo dd if=/dev/rdisk1 bs=1m | gzip > /Users/fhict/ReneB/GitHub/rbakx/DFRobot\_SDcardBackup\_TooLargeForGithub/SDcardBackup20150124.gz

This will create an image you can use to create a new SD card. This image can be restored on an SD card using again the dd command:  
sudo dd bs=1m if=/Users/fhict/ReneB/GitHub/rbakx/ DFRobot\_SDcardBackup\_TooLargeForGithub/SDcardBackup20150124.img of=/dev/rdisk1

## Connecting the Raspberry Pi to the Macbook via the ethernet cable

We want to connect the Pi to the Macbook through the Ethernet cable so we can control the Pi with the keyboard / screen of the Macbook and also provide internet access to the Pi. The latter is done by enabling internet sharing on the Macbook.

* First configure the Ethernet network settings to static IP 192.168.2.1. It must be this address because this is the fixed IP address which the OS X Mavericks uses when enabling internet sharing. The address 192.168.2.1 address means thet the Pi must have a static address in the same subnet, e.g. 192.168.2.2. This is accomplished by setting this in **/etc/network/interfaces**. Also the gateway of the Pi has to be set there and this must be the IP of the Macbook: IP 192.168.2.1.
* Internet sharing from Macbook:  
  When enabling internet sharing on the Macbook the Macbook apparently always uses 192.168.2.1. This is on a different subnet then the Wifi, so the Macbook acts a a router.
* A reboot might be needed before internet sharing is really working. Still the setup seems not very reliable.

## Network configuration in /etc/network/interfaces

auto lo

iface lo inet loopback

iface eth0 inet static

address 192.168.2.2

netmask 255.255.255.0

gateway 192.168.2.1

allow-hotplug wlan0

iface wlan0 inet dhcp

wpa-roam /etc/wpa\_supplicant/wpa\_supplicant.conf

iface default inet dhcp

To get a static wireless IP address the wlan0 part can be changed to:

allow-hotplug wlan0

iface wlan0 inet manual

wpa-roam /etc/wpa\_supplicant/wpa\_supplicant.conf

iface default inet static

address 192.168.1.42

netmask 255.255.255.0

gateway 192.168.1.254

## Wifi configuration in /etc/wpa\_supplicant/wpa\_supplicant.conf

ctrl\_interface=DIR=/var/run/wpa\_supplicant GROUP=netdev

update\_config=1

network={

ssid="wifiwifiwifi"

psk="xxx"

# Protocol type can be: RSN (for WP2) and WPA (for WPA1)

proto=RSN

# Key management type can be: WPA-PSK or WPA-EAP (Pre-Shared or Enterprise)

key\_mgmt=WPA-PSK

# Pairwise can be CCMP or TKIP (for WPA2 or WPA1)

pairwise=CCMP

#Authorization option should be OPEN for both WPA1/WPA2 (in less commonly used $

auth\_alg=OPEN

}

Testing internet speed from command line:  
wget -O /dev/null http://speedtest.wdc01.softlayer.com/downloads/test10.zip

## Connecting the Raspberry Pi to the wireless network (no Ethernet cable)

* Configure the file /etc/network/interfaces and the /etc/wpa\_supplicant/wpa\_supplicant.conf like above.
* The Pi will get an IP address assigned by DHCP: 192.168.1.42.

## Logging into the Raspberry Pi

* Connect to Pi via SSH: ssh [pi@192.168.1.42](mailto:pi@192.168.1.42), password ‘raspberry’.
* Install VNC server on Pi and VNC client on Macbook.
* Start up VNC server on Pi with: ‘vncserver: 1’.
* Start up VNC client on Macbook and connect to 192.168.1.42, password ‘raspberr’.

## Raspberry Pi file sharing

At http://4dc5.com/2012/06/12/setting-up-vnc-on-raspberry-pi-for-mac-access/ it is described how to set up file sharing. Netatalk is installed which is an open source AFP (Apple Filing Protocol) file server. Then Avahi is installed which is a zero configuration service discovery protocol. The file ‘/etc/avahi/services/afpd.service’ is created with the avahi settings (a.o. TCP/IP port 548 is specified). Avahi is then started as a deamon which will start automatically after each reboot.

In /etc/netatalk/AppleVolumes.default at the end there is:

~/ "Home Directory"

which is the default folder to share. There you can add an extra path to share like:

/etc "/etc"

/lib “/lib”

Then on the Mac, in finder, press cmd-K (connect to server) and enter the Pi IP address and password. Then the Pi shared folder shows up in the shared section in the Finder sidebar.  
When writing to a Pi folder like ‘/etc’ from the Mac the permission is denied. This is because the user ‘pi’ is not the owner or member of the group of that folder (root is) and the permission is on 755. When writing to ‘/etc’ is needed, on the Pi do: ‘sudo chmod 777 /etc’.

After writing put back permission to 755 with ‘sudo chmod 755 /etc’.

## Apache webserver port configuration

To set the correct Apache webserver port edit ‘/etc/apache2/ports.conf’ and change port 80 to 44444:

NameVirtualHost \*:44444

Listen 44444

In addition in ‘/etc/apache2/sites-enabled/000-default’ change the first line from <VirtualHost \*:80> to <VirtualHost \*:44444>.

## Raspberry Pi camera module

Follow the instructions at ‘https://miguelmota.com/blog/raspberry-pi-camera-board-video-streaming/’ and follow the instructions at ‘Update: 19 Jan 2014 - Easier way to stream’ or ‘http://petrkout.com/electronics/low-latency-0-4-s-video-streaming-from-raspberry-pi-mjpeg-streamer-opencv/’ to install the MJPG Streamer.

Start the camera and MJPG stream:

$ LD\_LIBRARY\_PATH=/opt/mjpg-streamer/ /opt/mjpg-streamer/mjpg\_streamer -i "input\_raspicam.so –vf –hf -fps 15 -q 50 –ex sports -x 800 -y 600" -o "output\_http.so -p 44445 -w /opt/mjpg-streamer/www" > /dev/null 2>&1 &

Then the stream can be viewed at 192.168.1.42:44445.

The extra ‘> /dev/null 2>&1’ (redirect stderr to stdout) at the end is to make sure the MJPG\_streamer command returns with a prompt. Otherwise it seems to hang (despite the ‘run as background task symbol ‘&’) and when called from CGI Python the Python script hangs.

## Enable .py scripts with CGI in Apache2

Open ‘/etc/apache2/sites-enabled/000-default’ and add  
’AddHandler cgi-script .py’ to the section

<Directory "/usr/lib/cgi-bin">  
...  
</Directory>

Then reload Apache’s configuration using ‘sudo service apache2 reload’.

When running Python scripts from Apache2 through CGI the user is ‘www-data’. So scripts and external program run must have the proper group permissions.  
When using the camera module the VideoCore device ‘/dev/vchiq’ is used. The default permissions are:  
crw-rw---T 1 root video 250, 0 Jan 1 1970 /dev/vchiq  
These permissions mean that www-data cannot read from ‘/dev/vchiq’ which will give the ‘failed to open vchiq instance’ error when trying to use the camera from CGI Python. It can be seen that the user group ‘video’ is assigned to ‘/dev/vchiq’.

To be able to run the camera from CGI Python: ‘sudo chmod 666 /dev/vchiq’ works, but the original permissions are reset on reboot.  
So a permanent solution is to make the www-data (www-data is the user under which the Apache2 web server runs) member of the video group. This can be done with: usermod -a -G video www-data.

## Bash scripts versus Python scripts with CGI in Apache2

When using Python CGI the problem is encountered that for each http POST method call the Python interpreter on the Pi must be loaded and the Python script executed. This can take 1 to 3 seconds, depending if video is streaming or not. As this is not an acceptable delay I decided to switch from Python CGI to bash CGI which is much faster.

# Arduino Uno configuration