

GROUP 8
Andrew Badzioch
Hillary Dreyer
Joseph Hiller
Quentin Smith

Final Project: NASA Space Mission Project
Conceptual Track
ITAI 2372
December 10, 2024

NASA Space Mission AI Project Introduction and Problem Statement:

Efficient power distribution is critical for space missions where energy is limited and multiple subsystems compete for power. A robust power management system ensures that mission-critical operations remain uninterrupted while optimizing energy usage. Below is a detailed solution and testing plan written to address efficient power distribution for NASA space missions.

Conceptual Project Objectives:

- Prioritize energy allocation to mission-critical systems.
- Minimize energy wastage by optimizing power routing.
- Ensure redundancy to handle component failures.
- Balance the power demands of scientific instruments, life-support systems, propulsion, and communication.

Solution Plan for Efficient Power Distribution in NASA Space Missions:

1. Components of the Solution

Smart Power Management Systems

Use AI-driven smart grids onboard spacecraft to dynamically allocate power based on real-time needs. AI smart grids are advanced EMS that utilize AI to optimize the generation, distribution and consumption of electricity in real-time.

Key Features of Smart Grids

1. Real-Time Monitoring and Prediction
2. Dynamic Allocation based on priority and real-time needs

3. Optimization through machine learning algorithms to continuously balance power from batteries, solar panels and other energy sources.
4. Autonomy where human intervention might be delayed, hindered or impossible to make split-second decisions.
5. Incorporate software algorithms that predict power consumption trends and adjust distribution priorities accordingly.

Redundant Power Architectures

Design redundant power distribution networks to ensure uninterrupted power delivery if one component fails.

Examples of Redundancies

1. Multiple power buses
2. Backup batteries
3. Batteries dedicated to critical systems such as life support or navigation/wayfinding.

Implementing fault detection systems would identify failure points in real time.

Low Loss Power Transmission

Utilize superconducting materials or advanced low-resistance conductors to minimize energy loss during power transmission between subsystems. Superconductive materials often require extremely low temperatures to maintain their properties. Utilize AI to optimize cooling systems by monitoring thermal loads and adjusting cooling power to prevent overheating or overcooling, thereby reducing unnecessary energy expenditure.

AI-Driven Diagnostics to Monitor Transmission Efficiency: Analyze sensor data with AI to identify areas of inefficiency in energy transmission and optimize performance in real-time.

Integrate voltage regulators to ensure stable and efficient power delivery. This can also be a benefit for the monitoring of system health as AI systems can continuously analyze data from sensors embedded in superconductive materials, and highlight potential maintenance issues such as wear, fatigue, corrosion, or degradation.

2. Solution Plan Breakdown

Phase 1: Requirements Analysis

- **Evaluate Subsystem Power Needs:**
 - Identify power requirements for key systems: scientific instruments, propulsion, life support, communication, thermal regulation, etc.
 - Analyze peak and average power demands under different mission scenarios (e.g., orbit, transit, landing).
- **Assess Environmental Challenges:**
 - Plan for power fluctuations due to varying solar energy availability (e.g., planetary shadowing or dust storms).
- **Define Mission Priorities:**
 - Establish a hierarchy of systems to determine energy allocation during power shortages.

Phase 2: System Design

- **A. Power Distribution Units (PDUs):**
 - Develop modular PDUs to control power flow to subsystems.
 - Include fault detection and isolation capabilities to prevent cascading failures.
- **B. Intelligent Power Controllers:**
 - Use AI-enabled controllers that monitor real-time energy demand and availability.
 - Implement algorithms for load balancing and adaptive power scaling based on subsystem priority.
- **C. Redundancy Mechanisms:**
 - Design dual or triple redundant power buses to ensure reliability.
 - Integrate swappable power modules for in-space repairs.

Phase 3: Power Allocation Algorithms

Develop software solutions to distribute power efficiently:

- **A. Priority-Based Allocation:**
 - Assign each subsystem a priority level (e.g., life support: critical, cameras: non-critical).
 - Automatically cut power to non-essential systems during shortages.
- **B. Dynamic Load Balancing:**
 - Adjust power routing dynamically based on real-time conditions (e.g., reducing power to heaters during solar exposure).
- **C. Predictive Energy Management:**

- Use machine learning models to predict energy needs based on historical data and operational schedules.
- Schedule energy-intensive tasks (e.g., data transmission) during periods of peak power availability.
-

3. Testing Plan Breakdown

Testing and validation are critical components to ensure the safe and reliable development of this plan. This plan prioritizes energy allocation to mission-critical systems, minimizes energy waste through optimal power routing, ensures redundancy and lack of component failures, and balances the power demands of scientific instruments, life-support systems, propulsion, communication, wayfinding, and other crew-critical needs.

By simulating mission scenarios, the plan rigorously examines power distribution under peak loads, technology component degradation and wear, as well as emergency conditions in a controlled environment while providing insights into system performance and resilience. Stress testing will push the system to find operational limits, and field testing validates the system's readiness for real-world usability.

Phase 4: Testing and Validation

- **A. Simulate Mission Scenarios:**
 - Test power distribution systems under various conditions, such as:
 - Peak load operations.
 - Solar panel degradation.
 - Emergency scenarios (e.g., subsystem failures or unexpected power demands).
- **B. Stress Testing:**
 - Push the power system to its limits to identify vulnerabilities.
 - Ensure fail-safes activate as intended.
- **C. Field Testing:**
 - Test the system in analog environments, such as Mars analog sites or thermal vacuum chambers.

Phase 5: Deployment, Monitoring & Continual Improvements

- **A. Integration with Spacecraft:**
 - Install and test the system on the spacecraft before launch.
 - Calibrate power distribution for the spacecraft's final configuration.
- **B. Real-Time Monitoring:**

- Use telemetry systems to monitor power distribution during the mission.
- Send updates to mission control for performance analysis and troubleshooting.
- **C. Autonomous Adjustments:**
 - Enable the spacecraft to autonomously adapt to changes in power supply or demand, reducing reliance on Earth-based intervention.

4. Advanced Plan Features

Energy Harvesting. Incorporate technologies to recover and redistribute unused or wasted energy (e.g., thermoelectric generators to convert heat to electricity).

Power Storage Optimization. Pair distribution systems with high-capacity batteries or supercapacitors for seamless energy storage and discharge.

Cross-Subsystem Collaboration. Enable communication between subsystems to share energy usage data and optimize collective consumption.

5. Benefits of the Plan

1. **Reliability:** Ensures critical systems receive uninterrupted power, even during emergencies or system failures.
2. **Efficiency:** Minimizes energy waste, extending mission duration and performance.
3. **Scalability:** Can be adapted for different types of missions, from rovers to deep-space probes.
4. **Autonomy:** Reduces dependence on Earth-based intervention for power management.

6. Potential Challenges and Mitigation

Challenge 1: Overcomplicated AI systems might introduce risks of errors.

Mitigation: Use hybrid systems where AI is supervised by predefined rules for critical operations.

Challenge 2: Redundancy adds mass to spacecraft.

Mitigation: Use lightweight materials and modular designs to minimize impact on payload capacity.

Challenge 3: Unknown conditions in deep space.

Mitigation: Include self-learning capabilities in AI to adapt to unexpected scenarios.

Conclusion

The NASA Space Mission AI Project offers an innovative approach to efficient power distribution, integrating cutting-edge AI-driven smart grids and redundant architectures. The proposed concept plan prioritizes mission-critical systems, minimizes energy waste, and ensures safety in numbers to maintain functionality during the planned unexpected scenario.

Addressing potential challenges with proactive mitigation strategies and a robust testing plan enables the plan's safe and efficient and effective implementation.

Sources:

Alhamrouni, Ibrahim, Nor Hidayah Abdul Kahar, Mohaned Salem, Mahmood Swadi, Younes Zahroui, Dheyaa Jasim Kadhim, Faisal A. Mohamed, and Mohammad Alhuyi Nazari. "A Comprehensive Review on the Role of Artificial Intelligence in Power System Stability, Control, and Protection: Insights and Future Directions." *Applied Sciences*, vol. 14, no. 14, 2024, pp. 6214. Retrieved from https://www.mdpi.com/2076-3417/14/14/6214?utm_source=chatgpt.com. Accessed Dec. 6, 2024.

NASA. "Advanced Energy Storage and Management for Space Exploration." *NASA Technical Reports Server (NTRS)*, 2023. Retrieved from <https://ntrs.nasa.gov>.

NASA. "Modular Power Systems for Space Missions: Intelligent PMAD Functional Block Diagram." *NASA Technical Reports Server (NTRS)*, 2023. Retrieved from <https://ntrs.nasa.gov>.

National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). "Space-Based Solar Power Research." *NREL Publications*, 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.nrel.gov>.