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Integrating Ranging Sensors into Finken Robots



FAKULTÄT FÜR
INFORMATIK

Some Department

Bachelor Thesis

Integrating Ranging Sensors into Finken Robots

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Contents

1	Prior Art	1
1.1	Finken Robots	2
1.2	Evaluation of Existing Ranging Solutions	2
1.2.1	Indor Time of Flight	3
1.2.2	Cricket / Active Bat	3
1.2.3	RSSI-based ranging	4
1.2.4	External Tracking	4
1.2.5	Atmel RTB, Dresden Elektronik, Meterionic	4
2	Implementation	5
2.1	Hardware	6
2.2	Communication Protocol	6
3	Evaluation	7
4	Future Work	9

1 Prior Art

1.1 Finken Robots

The Finken project aims to create a swarm of autonomously flying quadcopters to research swarm intelligence behaviour on robots. Many algorithms in swarm intelligence are based on distance-values. For this reason it is reasonable to search for a sensor that is capable to measure distances and integrate it into the Finken robots.

source

The Finken robots are already existing and of course it is necessary to know which kind of hardware on the robots could interfere with the ranging sensors that shall be integrated into those robots.

IMU Inertial Measurement Unit with accelerometer, magnetometer and barometer

Sonar Sensors Sonar sensors to measure distances of the nearest object in four directions (front, back, left, right)

IR-Sensor Sensor to measure distance to ground with high frequency

Optical Flow Optical flow sensor, that can be integrated to measure x-y-velocity over ground

Motors Four brushless motors that may cause RF-interference and noise

Telemetry BTLE-/Zigbee modules to exchange data with the ground station

RC-Control 2.4GHz based Radio Control to manually control the robots

fink3? Supply Lithium polymer batteries with nominally 6.6V output voltage that is converted to 5V and 3.3V by the power distribution hardware

weight Payload The overall weight of the copter in the current configuration is about g with about g headroom for additional equipment

payload

Size The copter has a rotor to rotor distance of 10cm, and a sensor tower that is about 4cm by 4cm wide to use the existing mounting holes would be favourable

1.2 Evaluation of Existing Ranging Solutions

There are some technologies that can be used for ranging, however the usual application for most of those technologies in research is positioning. For that reason it is interesting to search for positioning applications that use range

measurements, however many of those positioning technologies are based on other principles than multilateration¹.

The usual technologies used for ranging are based on time of flight measurements, signal strength, optical tracking, and phase difference measurements in signals.

1.2.1 Indoor Time of Flight

The obvious approach for replacing the GPS signal that is available outdoors is to use a similar approach indoors. <http://robotics.eecs.berkeley.edu/pister/290Q/Papers/Location/Lanzisera%20RF%20TOF%20WISES06.pdf> states that an accuracy of $2.6m_{RMS}$ was achieved indoors. With an operating area only 2m wide this approach is not suited for our robots. However this research is focused on using cheap sensor-nodes.

http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Bardia_Alavi/publication/224315086_Measurement_and_Based_Ranging_in_Indoor_Multipath_Environments/links/0912f50b396c340971000000.pdf

Another approach to provide an indoor GPS-like solution is iGPS. http://www.nikonmetrology.com/de_EU/Produkte/Grossvolumige-Messaufgaben/iGPS/iGPS however is not ranging-based but uses triangulation as underlying technology and is therefore useless to us. * iGPS http://porto.polito.it/2438175/2/IJAMT_iGPS_and_LT.pdf

quellify

find commercial solutions with better accuracy

quellify

quellify

1.2.2 Cricket / Active Bat

A very clever approach to ranging is used by ranging solutions like cricket and active bat. RF-Signals travel at the speed of light and therefore you need to be able to measure very short timings in time of flight scenarios. Sound however travels at a speed much slower than RF. Cricket and Active Bat use this to measure the time difference an RF-signal and an ultrasound pulse need to travel from transmitter to receiver to calculate the range between two sensor nodes.

Quelle, Quelle

thunderstorm and lightning very very frightening

¹The usual methods for positioning are: *multilateral*—which is what we are interested in because only ranging measurements are used, *multangular*—which is no use to us, because angle measurements are used and by *orientating in a map* with different factors like beacon-positions—which is also no use to us.

accuracy / price, moving objects, medium access (number of nodes)

There are two big problems with this approach that stem from the current setup of the Finken-Robots. The Finken Robots use ultrasound sensors to measure the distances to nearby objects. Those technologies would interfere with the ultrasound sensors already used and a replacement would be needed.

Another problem is the noise created by motors and propellers. The sound made by the quadcopters is not ending in the hearable spectrum but also extends to the ultrasound range.

measure
noise,
PWM-
frequency
of speedcon-
trollers

1.2.3 RSSI-based ranging

A property that can be used to do RF-based ranging is signal strength. The further the source of the signal is away the weaker the signal gets. RSSI-based ranging is done for several different technologies: Bluetooth, WLAN, RFID– There are even approaches using maps created of different RSSI-ranging sources. http://www.gnss.com.au/JoGPS/v9n2/JoGPS_v9n2p122-130.pdf

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quellify

typical
propaga-
tion pattern
picture

The main factor that rules out RSSI-based ranging is that radio-waves are not propagated equally in every direction. Antenna-orientation might have a much bigger impact on signal strength than distance. Additionally radio waves might be weakend when travelling through the Finken-Robots and by doing so passing wires and electronic components.

1.2.4 External Tracking


1.2.5 Atmel RTB, Dresden Elektronik, Meterionic

2 Implementation

2.1 Hardware

2.2 Communication Protocol

"TWI",
"Phillips-
I2C", "..."



3 Evaluation

4 Future Work

