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Eyebot - A Line Following Robot Based On Camera Tracking

4th Semester Project in Control Theory

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Introduction

Autonomous robots are robotic devices capable of performing tasks based on inputs from various types of sensors, without human interaction. Much research in the recent years has focused on the development of autonomous cars (also known as Unmanned Automobiles) which can drive without interaction from the driver, but just by sensing the environment. This is an interesting field, as it may lower the number of traffic accidents and especially reduce the traffic congestion in bigger cities by providing a better traffic flow.

In this present project we designed and constructed an autonomous robot, capable of following a line by using a mixture of cameras and IR sensors for gathering input about the surroundings. Close attention was paid to the use of camera sensing and image processing for detecting and extracting the line. The traditional method has been to use an array of photo-sensors, but due to the low resolution, an alternative method is necessary for archiving a better stability.

This paper outlines the work done, and shows how a camera can be used instead of a traditional array of photo sensors. Further more, as an additional feature, it is explained how the live image data is streamed to a computer, for a live preview of what the 'robot sees'.

Our robot may in the following chapters be referred to as 'the robot', 'the system' or simply 'Eyebot'. TODO More attention to traffic accidents, traffic flow and congestion.

1.1 Subsystems and Block Diagram

The robot consist of several subsystems, which have different responsibilities. The block diagram in figure 1.1, outlines the basic components of the system with connections between them.

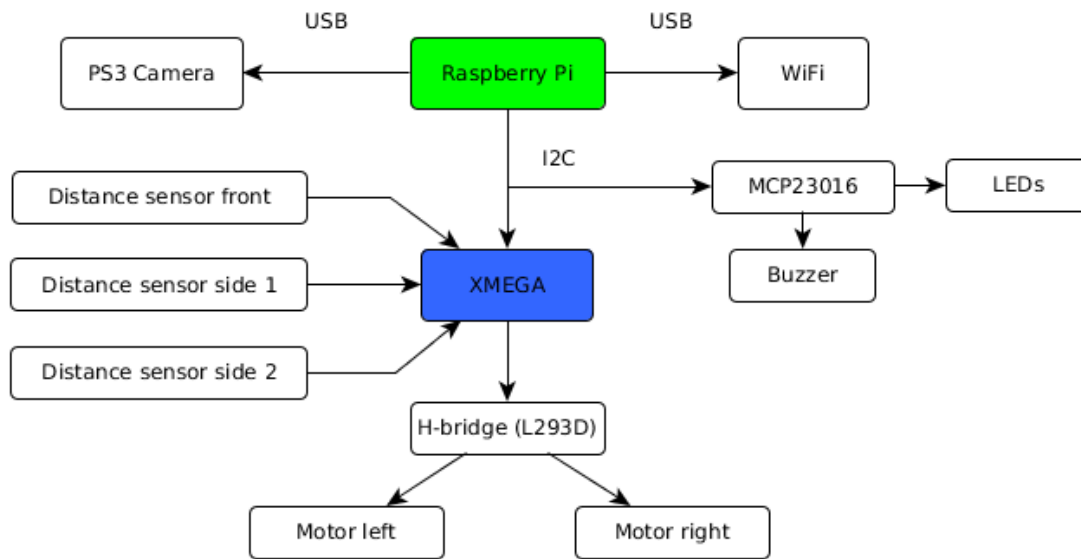


Figure 1.1: Block diagram of the subsystems

As seen on the block diagram, the main processor of the system is an ARM-based Raspberry Pi computer. The Raspberry Pi first of all acts as the overall state machine when driving the track. It knows when to follow the line, go to the wall, rotate and so on (more on that in chapter 7). Moreover the Raspberry Pi takes care of capturing images from the camera, processing the images, and calculating the error signals when following the line. As an additional feature, the live image data when following the line, are transmitted over WiFi to a laptop, for live preview of the robot's processed and annotated image. The image capture and processing is discussed in detail in chapter 2.

Below the Raspberry Pi, an Atmel XMEGA192C micro-controller is responsible for powering and controlling the motors. The XMEGA is instructed directly by the Raspberry Pi, by commands received over the I2C (Two Wire Interface) bus. Equally important the XMEGA reads analog signals from the three distance sensors, and makes them available for the Raspberry Pi through the I2C bus. The motor-controller is discussed in chapter ?? and the distance sensors are discussed in chapter 4.

As an additional feature, the robot has an array of LEDs mounted on its bumper, and a buzzer for indicating state changes. Those are powered by an MCP23016 I/O expander chip, that communicates with the Raspberry Pi using I2C. This subject will not receive any more attention in the report than this.

1.2 Requirements Specification

1.2.1 Assumptions

We assume an average speed for the robot of 1 m/s. By looking at the line, we found that it should be reasonable to make corrections every 0.1 m. This gives an maximum cycle time of 100 ms. Cycle time includes capturing and processing of the image, calculation of the error and correction value, transmitting the corrective actions to the motors, and waiting for the motors to respond and react. By tilting the camera forward, we might be able to detect future obstacles, and take required actions such as slowing down.

1.2.2 Formal requirements

1. The robot should be able to follow the track on first floor. This includes
 - Make a decision on which way to turn when seeing the line first time
 - When a short piece of tape intersects the line, the robot should turn 90 degrees to the left and drive towards the wall. It should stop 20 centimeters from the wall, turn 180 degrees (TBC) and go back and follow the line as usual.
 - When a short line is sensed on the left side of the line, the robot should speed up, and try to go as fast as possible for the rest of the track.
 - At the end of the track, the robot should drive to the wall, keeping a distance of 20 centimeters to the wall, and then follow the wall to the end of the track.
2. The robot should be able to drive at a maximum speed of 1 m/s (TBC).
3. The robot should make corrections every 0.1 m (TBC), which is every 100 ms (TBC) at 1 m/s.
4. The line should be sensed using a camera and image processing (TBC).
5. A Raspberry PI should be the main controller in the system.
6. The Raspberry PI should capture images of the floor, analyse the image, and calculate the error.
7. The motors should be controlled by an AVR microcontroller, that interfaces the Raspberry PI using I2C (TWI).

8. The speed of the motors should be controlled using PWM signals through a H-bridge.
9. The distance to the wall should be measured using a distance sensor in the front, and one or more on the left side of the robot.

1.3 Time Schedule

Tracking And Processing The Line

Using Image Processing

In this section the methods for capturing images and performing the necessary processing are explained in detail, with emphasis on how the image is processed to produce an error signal for the control system.

2.1 Capturing The Image

As explained in the introduction, the camera used for this project is a Sony PS3 Eye camera, which is based on OmniVision's OV543 camera sensor. All image capture and processing is carried out in the Raspberry Pi running the Raspbian Linux distribution.

The PS3 Eye camera is supported directly by the Linux kernel, and can be controlled by user software through the Video4Linux driver interface. The PS3 Eye camera was chosen for this project, because of its specification and low price. The camera is capable of shooting 125 frame per second, why it is perfect for computer vision applications (what is actually also was made for).

When the robot starts, the camera is set up to deliver 30 frames per second, in gray-scale colors. As part of the initialization, a callback is given to the camera module, and is called every time a new frame is ready for processing. We will not go further into the specific code, but just notice that it may be found in the 'camera.h' and 'camera.c' source files (see appendix).

Figure 2.1 shows two raw images of the line, captured by the camera. Later in this chapter, we will shows how the image extracts the line, and calculates the error signal.

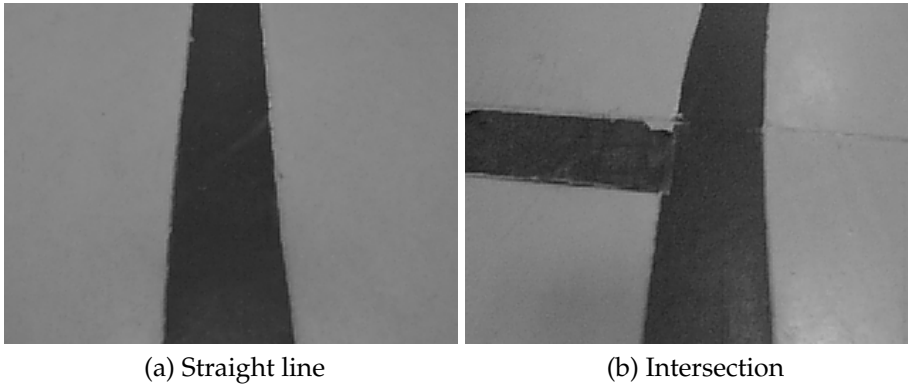


Figure 2.1: Raw images captured by the camera

2.2 Identifying and Extracting the Line

Whenever an image has been captured and is available in the memory, it is time to do the image processing and extract the line from the background. This is done using the steps listed below.

- Contrast and brightness is adjusted
- The image is 'sliced' into six horizontal slices
- For each slice, a histogram is calculated, and from that an optimum thresholding value
- Finally each pixel in each slice is marked as LINE if below the threshold value, or marked as FLOOR if above the threshold value

2.2.1 Contrast and brightness

In the following sections when referring to the image data, a simple notation will be used. The input image is given as $f(x, y)$, and the output image is given as $g(x, y)$, where x and y are the coordinates of a given pixel.

The contrast and brightness adjustments are simple point-processing operations, which can be described with the following equation.

$$g(x, y) = a \cdot f(x, y) + b \quad (2.1)$$

The brightness b changes the overall brightness of the image, thus making all individual pixels more brighter. The contrast adjusted by a simply makes the contrast between the individual pixels bigger.

In the system the possibility of changing the brightness and contrast are available, but at time of writing, the configuration is set to $a = 1$ and $b = 0$, i.e. no changes in brightness or contrast.

2.2.2 Slicing

Due to huge changes in the illumination of the image, it is split into five horizontal slices. For each of these slices a histogram is calculated, and a thresholding value is found. By doing this instead of one thresholding value for the whole image, we obtain a much better thresholding.



Figure 2.2: Raw image with slices marked

2.2.3 Histogram

Whenever the images are sliced into slices, a histogram for each slice is calculated. A histogram shows the distribution of pixels of different color values. The typical histogram of a gray-scale image shows the color values on the x-axis $[0 - 255]$, and the percentage of the given color on the y-axis $[0 - 1]$. The value 0 on the x-axis is the black colors, whereas the value 255 is the white colors. With this in mind, we can conclude that the first hill on the histogram is the line, centered around 50, and the second hill is the floor, centered around 135.

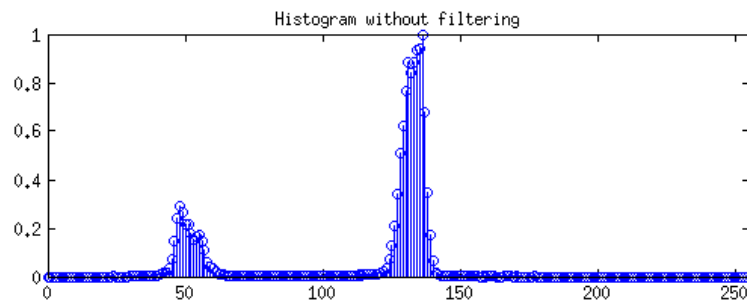


Figure 2.3: Histogram without filtered

Figure 2.3 shows the histogram of a slice from the image in figure 2.2. A lot of noise is visible on the histogram, which makes calculating the correct thresholding

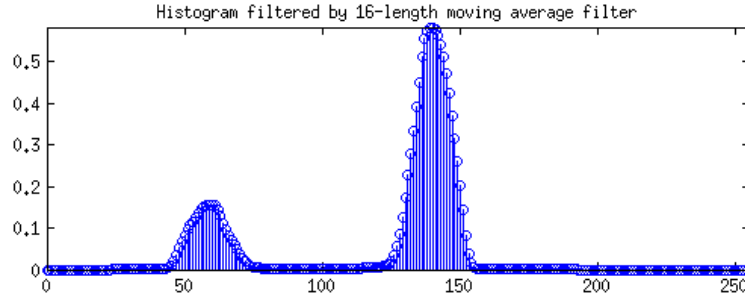


Figure 2.4: Histogram filtered with 16-point average filter

point less accurate. Hence, the histogram is filtered by a 16-point/length moving average filter, which gives the histogram shown in figure 2.4.

The filtered histogram has less spikes, and is much better when applying the Optimum Thresholding algorithm in the next section.

2.2.4 Optimum thresholding

Next, when the pretty averaged histogram is calculated, it is time to calculate the perfect threshold value for segmenting the line from the floor - in other words, finding the value on the x-axis of the histogram where a clear split between the colors of line and colors of the floor is to be found.

The Optimum Thresholding algorithm is described in [?], which also provides a reference implementation in C. This implementation is fitted into our existing code base, and used without major modifications.

The algorithms work by iterating through the histogram, finding the first valley. That is, by looking at a single color on the x-axis, where the color to the left has a larger or equal percentage, than the current color, and color to the right has a small percentage. If $h[x]$ is the histogram, then equation 2.2 describes the valley.

$$h[x - 1] \geq h[x] < h[x + 1] \quad (2.2)$$

Figure 2.5 shows the histogram zoomed in around the first valley after the top of the first hill (the line). Equation 2.2 is satisfied first time at about $x = 115$, which in this case will be the optimum thresholding value.

Listing 2.1 shows part of the implementation of optimum thresholding from image.c. In the while-loop from line 1-9, the histogram is iterated through, and a flag is set when equation 2.2 is fulfilled.

Finally, when the threshold value is calculated a slice, the image data is segmented using that value. The mathematical description of thresholding is given in equation 2.3.

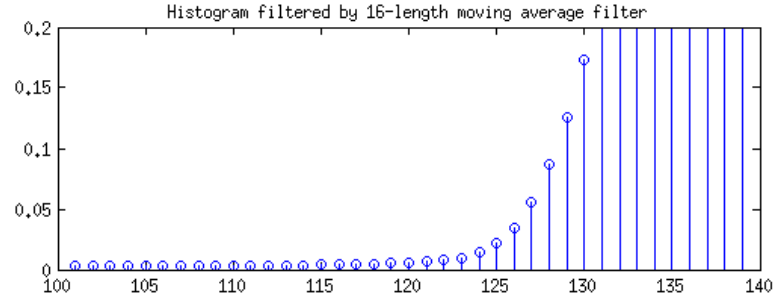


Figure 2.5: Histogram zoomed in before the 'floor' hill

Listing 2.1: Part of the thresholding code

```

1  while (flag == 0 && y < 254)
2  {
3      if (hist[y-1] >= hist[y] && hist[y] < hist[y+1])
4      {
5          flag = 1;
6          thr = y;
7      }
8      y++;
9  }
10 for (j = start; j < end; j++)
11 {
12     buffer[j] = buffer[j] < thr ? LINE : FLOOR;
13 }

```

$$\begin{aligned}
 &\text{if } f(x, y) \leq T \text{ then } g(x, y) = 0 \text{ (line)} \\
 &\text{if } f(x, y) > T \text{ then } g(x, y) = 255 \text{ (floor)}
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{2.3}$$

Line 10-13 of listing 2.1 loops through all pixels, and decides if they are line or floor. The images presented first in this chapter, is shown below in figure 2.6 in their processed and segmented versions (all images are actual extract from the robots image processing system).

As we can see on figure 2.6b, it has not been possible to find a optimal thresholding value, probably due to a too low contrast caused by sun light. In the right side of the image, only the edge of the line is marked as line.

2.3 Calculating the Error Signal

Now that the line is segmented from the floor, next step is BLOB (Binary Large Object) analysis. [?] presents a bunch of techniques for classification of BLOBs, i.e. distinguishing different BLOBs from each other. Each of the different characteristics a BLOB may be represented by, is denoted a feature. Common features are area, bounding box, compactness, circularity. Another one is called

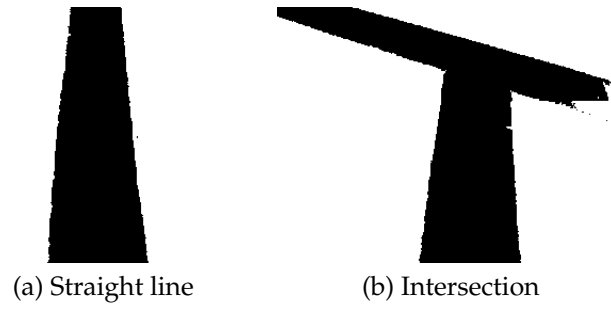


Figure 2.6: The images after being processed

‘Center of mass’, which is the physical location on an object, where you should place a finger in order to balance the object. In terms of image processing, it is the average x- and y-positions of the binary object (the line). It is defined as a point whose x-point is calculated by summing the x-coordinates of all pixels in the BLOB and dividing by the total number of pixels. Likewise for the y-value. The ‘center of mass’ feature is used to calculate the error signal the system.

In mathematical terms, the center of mass (x_c, y_c) is defined as given in equation 2.4.

$$x_c = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N x_i \quad y_c = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N y_i \quad (2.4)$$

Using the equation for center of mass, two error points are calculated for each image. One for the upper part of the image, which gives an indication of the error in the ‘future’, and an error point in the lower part of the image, which gives the actual present error. Figure 2.7 shows the two images annotated with error points. The green line indicates the optimal direction of motion.

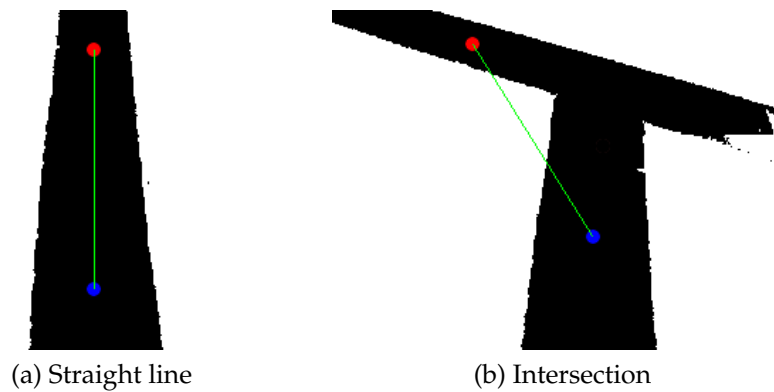


Figure 2.7: The images with two center of masses calculated

Controlling The Motors

3.1 The DC-motor

3.1.1 DC-motor

The DC-motor is a essential part of the robot. The motors used in this project is the Faulhaber 2233012s which is a 12 Volt armature motor. To succeed the tasks given in the assignment is it very important to gain control over the motor by understand the datasheet that describes the motor. The motors dose not only supply the robot with driving force but is also the steering part of the robot.

3.1.2 Gears

To give the robot more torque a gear system has been implemented in the motors. The cost of high torque through a gearsystem is a reduction in rotational speed. The gearing factor that is used is $\frac{1}{17.2}$ which means that the output shaft only turns one cycle every times the motor itself have turned 17.2 cycles. The gear system do have some disadvantages by giving the motor nonlinearity like backlash and deadlocks.

3.1.3 Transferfunction for DC-motor

In assignment 1 from the control theory course we calculated a transfer function for at DC-motor. By using this knowledge and theory we a able to calculate a transfer function for the DC-motor used in this project. The transfer function for the DC-motor is needed for making simulations of the hole system later on. All motor data is fund in the datasheet and the weight of the robot is fund by

weighting the robot on a digital precision scales and is fund to be 1400 g or 1.4 Kg.

The general transfer function:

$$G(s) = \frac{\theta_m(s)}{E_a(s)} \Rightarrow \frac{\frac{k_t}{R_a J_a}}{s + \frac{1}{J_a} (D_a + \frac{K_b K_t}{R_a})} \quad (3.1)$$

The transfer function for the robot:

$$G(s) = \frac{\omega(s)}{E_a(s)} = \frac{\frac{1633}{23.43}}{s \frac{1}{23.43} + 1} = \frac{69,69}{0,04268s + 1} \quad (3.2)$$

Where 0.04268 is the time constant.

The step respons on the DC-motor looks like this:

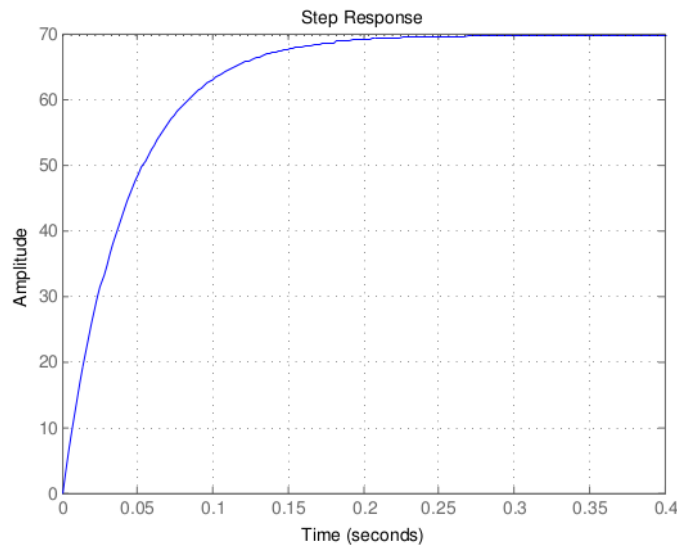


Figure 3.1: Step respons for DC-motor

3.2 Microcontroller

The MCU (Microcontroller) is the first part of the link between the sensor input and the DC-motor. In the MCU a translation is made so that the DC-motor can be controlled using simple I2C (Two way communication) commands from the sensor device. A controller is also implemented in the MCU so that the robot is able to run straight without any further instructions from the sensor device.

The MCU decodes the command form the sensor devise and then extracts informations about direction and speed. These informations is then sends down to the H-bridge and ends as Voltage in the DC-motor.

3.2.1 The MCU

The MUC used in the robot is an Atmel ATxmega192c3 a 8bit low-power microcontroller with 192kbyte flash memory running a clock frequency at 32 MHz. The choice of this MCU is based on the its speed performance and its high level of functionality features. The first MCU used in the robot was a Atmel Atmega 32 but after a brief discussion in the group and with the project supervisor we decided to change the MUC because we previously worked with the Atmega32 and wanted to explore more recent technologies and the opportunity to work with the SMD (surface mounted device) method.

3.2.2 Programming

The MUC is programed using Atmels studio 6.1 and the program language used is C. The ASF(Atmel Software Framework) libraries has be used in great extent. For more informations here about visit:

www.atmel.com/tools/avrsoftwareframework.aspx

The source code for the MCU can be found in the appendix.

3.3 H-bridge

The H-bridge receive three line per motor from the MCU The first line controls the speed with a PWM signal and the to other lines control the rotational direction of the motor.

3.3.1 PWM Pulse-width modulation

PWM (Pules-width modulation) is a method frequently used in electronics. The signals intensity it controlled by changing the duty cycle for a square wave signal with a predefined frequency. The controllable range is from 0% to 100% The frequency of the square has been chosen to be 20kHz so that is it over the human hearing range.

The figures below shows how a 25% and a 50% PWM looks between the MCU and the H-bridge. The duty cycle output of the MCU is about 15 % and 82% The reason for that is that the controller in the MCH manipulates the PWM, more about this in the Feedback and Control Loop section.

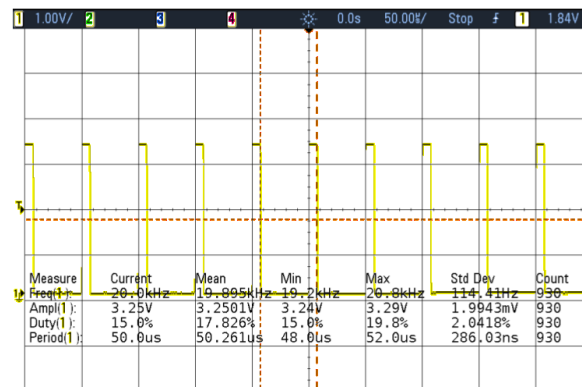


Figure 3.2: PWM with input at 25%

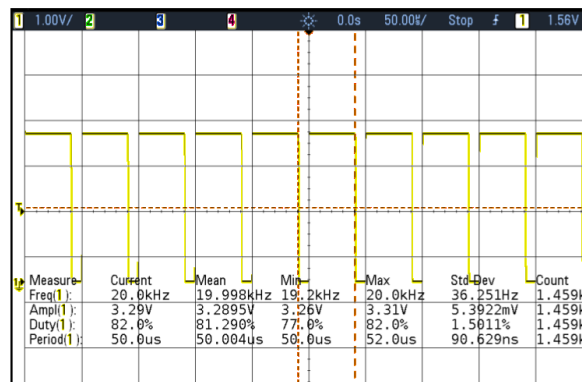


Figure 3.3: PWM with input at 50%

3.3.2 Direction control

To control the direction of the motor the H-bridge receives two lines A1 and A2 these two lines dictates the rotational direction of the DC-motor.

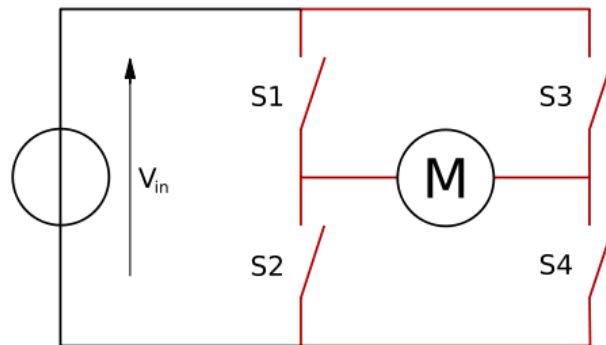


Figure 3.4: H-bridge

When line A1 is high and line A2 is low the corresponding switches S1 and S4 is closed so that the current is running in one direction. when A1 is low and A2 is high the current is running the other way and the motor it turning the other way around.

below is a truth table that describes the functionality of the H-bridge. The EN pin is the PWM input.

EN	1A	2A	FUNCTION
H	L	H	Turn right
H	H	L	Turn left
H	L	L	Fast motor stop
H	H	H	Fast motor stop
L	X	X	Fast motor stop

L = low, H = high, X = don't care

Figure 3.5: H-bridge truth table

3.4 Encoders

The DC-motor includes two encoder outputs which is used to determine position, velocity and direction of the DC-motor. Each encoder outputs 15 pulses per round and after the gear is the resolution $15 \cdot 17.2 = 258$ pulses per round. The two encoder signals is phase shifted at about 90° and that gives us the opportunity to determine the rotational direction of the motor by looking at one encoder signal and then check if the other one it high or low. This method is illustrated below in figure 3.6.

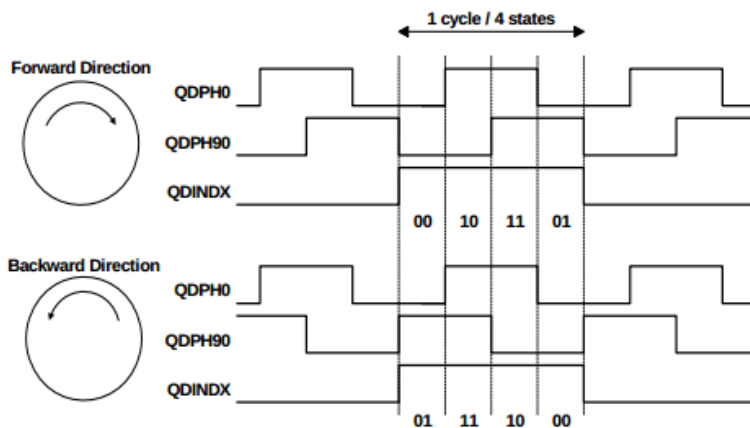


Figure 3.6: Encoder illustration from atmel Application Note AVR 1600 about Quadrature Decoder

On figure 3.7 we see the actual encoder output from the robot. The phase is about 100° between the two encoders. The velocity is found by sampling the encoder pulses over a time period of 10ms, by counting the pulses during this time and multiply it with a constant the velocity of the motor is given. Also the position between the two motors can be find by using two encoders on each motor. First we look at one motor encoder count and then match up the other motor so that the encoder count from the to motors fits, then we know the exact position of the robot. We use these method in the position controller.

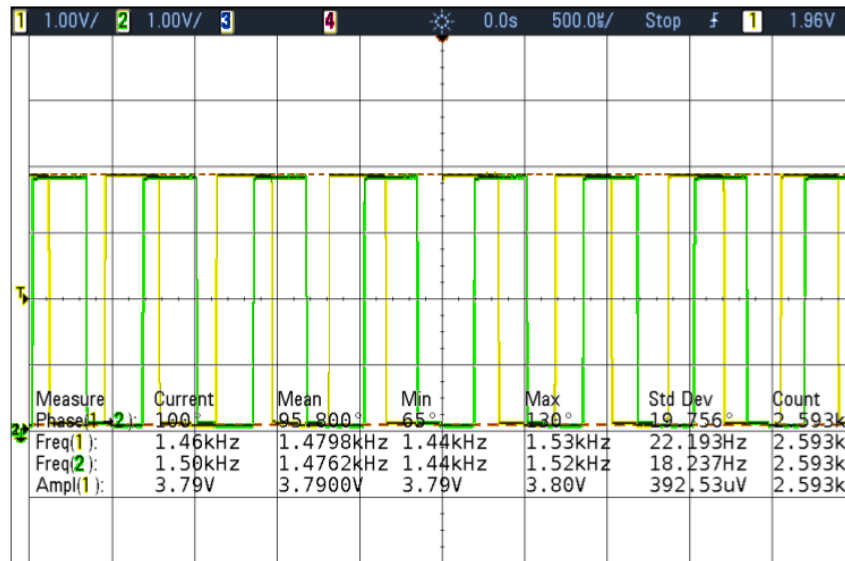


Figure 3.7: Encoder output from Motor to MCU

3.5 Feedback and Control Loop

The control loop containing the motor, MCU and encoder can be described as a unity feedback loop.

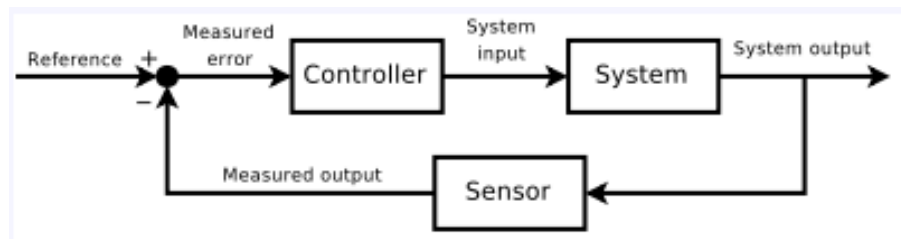


Figure 3.8: Unity feedback loop

The MCU have three different stats with three different controllers so that it can adapt to the given situation during the track. The three states are:

- 1. Straight
- 2. Position
- 3. Speed

The selection of which current stat the MCU should be in is determined by the raspberry pi(sensor system).

3.5.1 Straight state

This state is designed to make the robot go straight without any corrections from the sensor system. This is done by giving both motors a reference speed and then aligning them after the outputs from the encoders by adjusting the speed to each motor.

3.5.2 Position state

3.5.3 Speed state

This state is used when the robot follows the line by adjusting after instruction from the sensor system. A P-controller is used and the encoders have no influence on the control of the motor.

Measuring distance to wall

4.1 IR sensor

The IR sensors that is used is the SHARP 2d120x which is a nonlinear device. The IR sensor works by sending an infrared beam out, the beam then returns back to the device after hitting a surface or an obstacle, the angle that the beam returns with determines the distance.

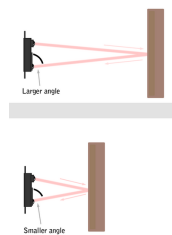


Figure 4.1: Distance IR sensor

4.2 Practical use of IR sensors

On the track is a variety of different obstacles and some of them require information about distance. To solve these tasks the robot needs a device to measure distance.

The two obstacles where the IR sensors are used:

- **Obstacle 1**

Go to the wall stop 20cm from the wall turn and return to the line.

- **Obstacle 2**

Go around the corner with a distance of 20cm to the wall and stop at the cross marked on the floor.

There is a total of three IR sensor on board the robot, one at the front just underneath the PS3 camera and two on the left side of the robot. The front sensor it used to both obstacle 1 and 2 where the two side mounted sensor it used to solve obstacle 2. All the information from the three IR sensors are send via the I2C bus to the raspberry pi to be processed and is then included in a state machines. The implementation of the two side mounted IR sensor it done by using a predefined set point that represent the desired distance to the wall. The two distances from the IR sensors and the set point are then used of calculate the error that corrects the speed to the two DC-motors

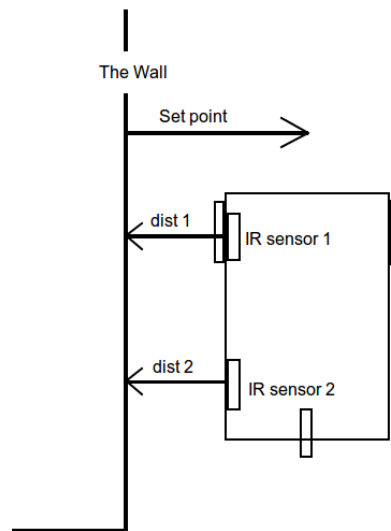


Figure 4.2: Stick to the wall

4.3 Converting using an ADC

The IR sensor returns a voltage value that is converted in to a unsigned binary one byte number in the MCU's ADC (Analog to Digital Converter) but because of the nonlinearity in the device a equation is made by plotting measurements from 1cm to 50cm. A best fitting trend line it made and from that a equation is used with the output from the ADC to give the distance in cm.

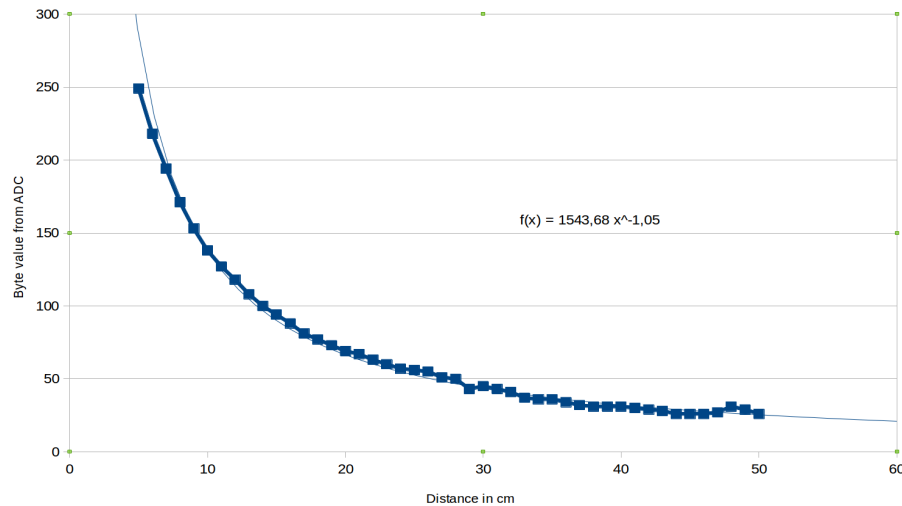


Figure 4.3: Distance IR sensor

The equations is then fund to by:

$$f(x) = 1543.68x^{-1.05} \quad (4.1)$$

Communication between devices

Control Systems

Keywords: Controller, PID , Implementation, design, tuning, [?], [?], [?]

6.1 Design of controllers

6.2 Implementation of discrete controller

6.3 Tuning of PID controllers

Following The Track

7.1 Requirements for the track

Line, going straight forward, precise turns (position control), measuring distance to the wall in the front, measuring distance in the side

7.1.1 State machine

As mentioned earlier in the report, a central state machine implemented in the Raspberry Pi, is responsible for keeping track of the overall state when completing the track. Below is a detailed explanation of each state in the state machine. Chapter ?? discussed the internal states used by the motor controller, hence it is not discussed here.

- **START**
Drive straight forward, next state set to GOTO LINE
- **GOTO LINE**
Continue forward. If line is visible, rotate 45 degrees to left, and begin following the line by going into FOLLOW LINE state.
- **FOLLOW LINE**
Follow the line until a crossing is captured. Then brake, and go into GOTO WALL mode.
- **GOTO WALL**
Rotate 90 degrees to the left. Drive forward, and stop 20 cm from the wall. Rotate 135 degrees. Drive forward, and wait a while for the camera to become stable after turning against the sun light. When the line is visible, go to FOLLOW LINE AFTER WALL state

- **FOLLOW LINE AFTER WALL**

Follow the line, this time a bit faster. When an intersection is visible, go to FOLLOW LINE SPEEDY state.

- **FOLLOW LINE SPEEDY**

Follow the line at fastest possible speed. When the end of line is seen, brake down and go to END OF LINE state.

- **END OF LINE**

Wait for three seconds, and then go to STICK TO WALL state.

- **STICK TO WALL**

Drive straight forward, and stop 20 cm from the wall. Rotate 90 degrees to the right, and begin driving forward. Go to STRAIGHT UNTIL WALL DISAPPEARS state.

- **STRAIGHT UNTIL WALL DISAPPEARS**

Continue forward until the wall on the left side, is farther away than 20 cm. Brake down and rotate 90 degrees to the left. Continue forward for a while and then go to STRAIGHT UNTIL WALL DISAPPEARS 2 state.

- **STRAIGHT UNTIL WALL DISAPPEARS 2**

Continue forward until the wall on the left side, is farther away than 20 cm. Brake down and rotate 90 degrees to the left. Continue forward for a while and then go to FOLLOW WALL 1 state.

- **FOLLOW WALL 1**

Follow the wall on the left side. Brake down when the wall in front is less than 20 cm away. Brake down and rotate 90 degrees to the right. Go to FOLLOW WALL 2 state.

- **FOLLOW WALL 2**

Follow the wall on the left side. When the wall in front is less than 20 cm away, stop and go to TRACK COMPLETE state.

- **TRACK COMPLETE**

Track is completed! Flash the LEDs and beep the buzzer!

Simulation and Testing

8.1 SIMULINK

Appendices

First Appendix

A.1 Section in Appendix

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