Delft University of Technology
Master's Thesis in Embedded Systems

TODO TITLE

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Master's Thesis in Embedded Systems

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Abstract

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Preface

TODO MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH TOPIC

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Internet-of-Things (IoT) is a promising vision which enables trillions of sensor devices to be connected. A common bottleneck for such devices is the energy supply. Batteries are large, expensive, heavy and wear out after several years.

A more sustainable solution than batteries, is energy harvesting where a device collects it's energy from the environment i.e. solar, radio frequency (RF), thermal or kinetic energy.

However, developing software for such devices comes with a challenge. Environmental energy can be scarce, causing frequent power failures. This contrasts with the standard assumption that programs run continuously throughout execution. The programmer has to take care of this intermittent behavior by i.e. storing data to non-volatile memory at certain intervals. The available energy tends to be random, making it difficult to predict how long a program can execute before the next power failure.

It is hard to conduct repeatable tests due to the random nature of the energy source. While comparing two algorithms, it is impossible to conclude that one algorithm outperforms the other without knowing how much the difference in available energy contributed to the result.

The goal of this thesis is to make a testbed that counters this issue, by using Ekho [9]. This an emulator capable of accurately recreating, repeatable harvesting conditions in a lab. The testbed will be made remotely accessible to reduce the effort of setting up such an environment and accelerating development in this field of study.

TODO ORGANISATIONAL DESCRIPTION OF THESIS

Chapter 2

Related work

For batteryless, intermittently powered devices there are no publicly available testbeds. This paper [1] enlists properties and features that such a testbed should have, calling for more coordinated action in this domain research. It also presents a minimal implementation of such a testbed.

There has been extensive research into the field of Wireless Sensor Networks (WSN) testbeds, which have closely related features. Besides these testbeds, several tools exist which help in developing applications for battery less devices. These will be discussed as well.

2.1 Energy Harvesting Platforms

In this section a brief overview is given of energy harvesting platforms by looking at some research and commercial examples. This survey looked into looks at energy harvesting solutions to use in WSNs [14].

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags are a basic energy harvesting solution available on the market.

2.2 Programming Models For Intermittent Computing

2.3 Wireless Sensor Network Testbeds

2.3.1 FIT IoT-LAB

FIT IoT-LAB [2] provides a very large scale infrastructure facility suitable for testing small wireless sensor devices and heterogeneous communicating objects.

IoT-LAB features over 2000 wireless sensor nodes spread across six different sites in France. Nodes are either fixed or mobile and can be allocated in various topologies throughout all sites. A variety of wireless sensors

Platform	**Description**	**MCU**	**Radio**	**Energy Harvester**	**Energy Source**	**Year**	**Citations**
WISP [13]	Family of sensors that are powered and read by UHF RFID readers	MSP430	Backscattering	Transducer and rectifiers	RF	2008	639
Flexible AD PZT Energy Harvester [11]	Self-Powered Wireless Sensor Node Enabled by an Aerosol-Deposited PZT Flexible Energy Harvester	MSP430	CS2500	Flexible piezoelectric energy harvester	Kinetic	2016	65
Umich Moo [17]	Improvement on design of WISP	MSP430	Backscattering	Transducer and rectifiers	RF	2011	63
Monjolo [7]	Energy-Harvesting AC Power metering which draws zero power under zero load conditions	MSP430	CC2420	CR2550, LTC3588	Power line energy harvesting (magnetic field)	2013	45
SPWTS [15]	A novel self-powered wireless temperature sensor based on thermoelectric generators	nRF24LE1	Build in MCU	TEC12706	Thermal	2014	31
Flicker [10]	Configurable development board for batteryless IoT	MSP430	CC1101, nRF51822, backscattering	Solar cell, transducer and rectifiers, LTC3588,	Solar, RF, Kinetic	2017	11
Capybara [6]	Co-designed hardware/software power system with dynamically reconfigurable energy storage capacity	MSP430, CC2650	CC2650	TrisolX solar panels, low-power voltage source	Solar, energy source emulation	2018	11
Pible [8]	BLE batterlyless platform	CC2650	Build in MCU	Solar panels	Solar	2018	2

Table 2.1: Research Based Energy Harvesting Platforms.

Company	Description	MCU	Radio	Energy Harvester	Energy Source
EnOcean	Various battery less solutions for i.e.Building Automation and Smart Home	8051 processor	TCM 3x0	ECO 200, ECS 300, ECT 310 Perpetuum	Solar, motion, thermal
Powercast	Provides wireless power solutions, RFID tags, RF power transmitter, RF power harvester	PIC24F	IEEE 802.15.4 transceiver, TX91502	PCC110	RF
Williot	Makes a batteryless bluetooth beacon device based on RF harvesting	ARM processor	N/A	N/A	RF
PsiKick	Provides batteryless monitoring solutions to mainly the industry. Related to the university of Virginia and Michigan.	Custom ULP SoC, ARM architecture [16]	Build in SoC	N/A	Solar, thermal

Table 2.2: Commercial Energy Harvesting Platforms.

are available, with different processor architectures (MSP430, STM32 and Cortex-A8) and different wireless chips (802.15.4 PHY @ 800 MHz or 2.4 GHz). In addition, open nodes can receive custom wireless sensors for inclusion in IoT-LAB testbed.

2.3.2 Flocklab

Flocklab [12] is a wireless sensor network (WSN) testbed, developed and run by the Computer Engineering and Networks Laboratory at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich) in Switzerland. FlockLab's key features include:

- FlockLab's observer based testbed architecture which provides services for detailed testing of sensor nodes:
- Time accurate pin tracing
- Time accurate pin actuation
- Power measurements
- Serial interface logging and writing
- Voltage control to simulate e.g. battery depletion

2.3.3 Indriya2

Indriya2 [3] is a three-dimensional wireless sensor network deployed across three floors of the School of Computing , at the National University of

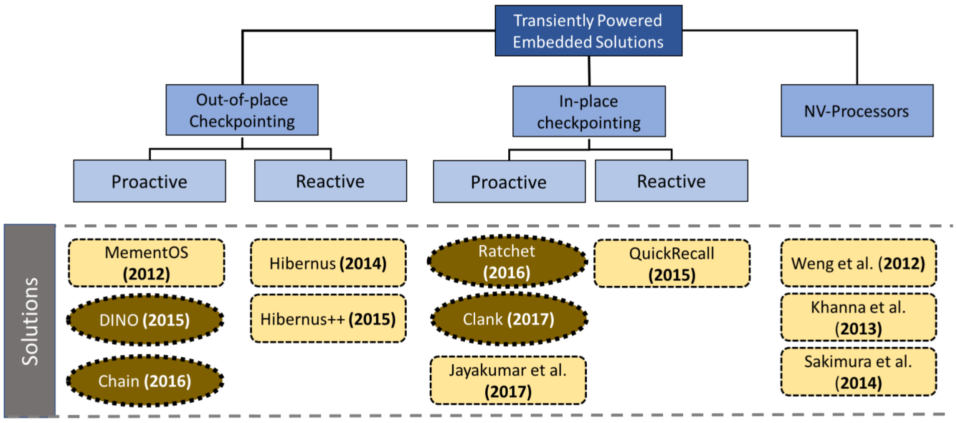

Figure 2.1: Taxonomy of several programming models for intermittent computing [4].

Singapore (NUS). The Testbed facilitates research in sensor network programming environments, communication protocols, system design, and applications. It provides a public, permanent framework for development and testing of sensor network protocols and applications. Users can interact with the Testbed through an intuitive web-based interface designed based on Harvard's Motelab's interface. Registered users can upload executables, associate those executables with motes to create a job, and schedule the job to be run on Testbed. During the job execution, all messages and other data are logged to a database which is presented to the user upon job completion and then can be used for processing and visualization.

2.4 Development Tools For Batteryless Devices

2.4.1 Ekho

To counter the issue of randomness in a energy harvesting power source, Ekho [9] has been developed. This an emulator capable of accurately recreating harvesting conditions in a lab. It reproduces the I-V characteristics of energy harvesting sources, allowing developers to choose from a library of energy traces recorded with various sources and environmental conditions.

2.4.2 Flicker

Flicker [10] is a platform for quickly prototyping batteryless embedded sensors. Flicker is an extensible, modular, plug and play architecture that supports RFID, solar, and kinetic energy harvesting; passive and active wireless communication; and a wide range of sensors through common peripheral and harvester interconnects. Flicker supports recent advances in failure-tolerant timekeeping, testing, and debugging, while providing dynamic federated energy storage where peripheral priorities and user tasks can be adjusted without hardware changes.

2.4.3 Energy aware debugger

The Energy-Interference-Free Debugger (EDB) [5], is a tool for monitoring and debugging of intermittent systems without adversely affecting their energy state. EDB recreates a familiar debugging environment for intermittent software and augments it with debugging primitives for effective diagnosis of intermittence bugs.

2.5 Contribution

The contribution of this thesis is to build a remote accessible testbed, making use of existing tools and platforms. It would be nice if I could re-use the backed server of one of the for mentioned WSNs, because this would require a lot of engineering to do this myself. Flicker would be an ideal platform to use as device under test (DUT), because it supports many peripherals which are software configurable and has the MSP430 as its core, a common micro controller in low-power applications.

Several methods can be used to track the progress and outcome of a test: serial console (printf), GPIO tracing (logic analyzer) and a debugger. Perhaps the energy aware debugger which has some nice features for intermittent devices.

The architecture is shown if Figure 2.2

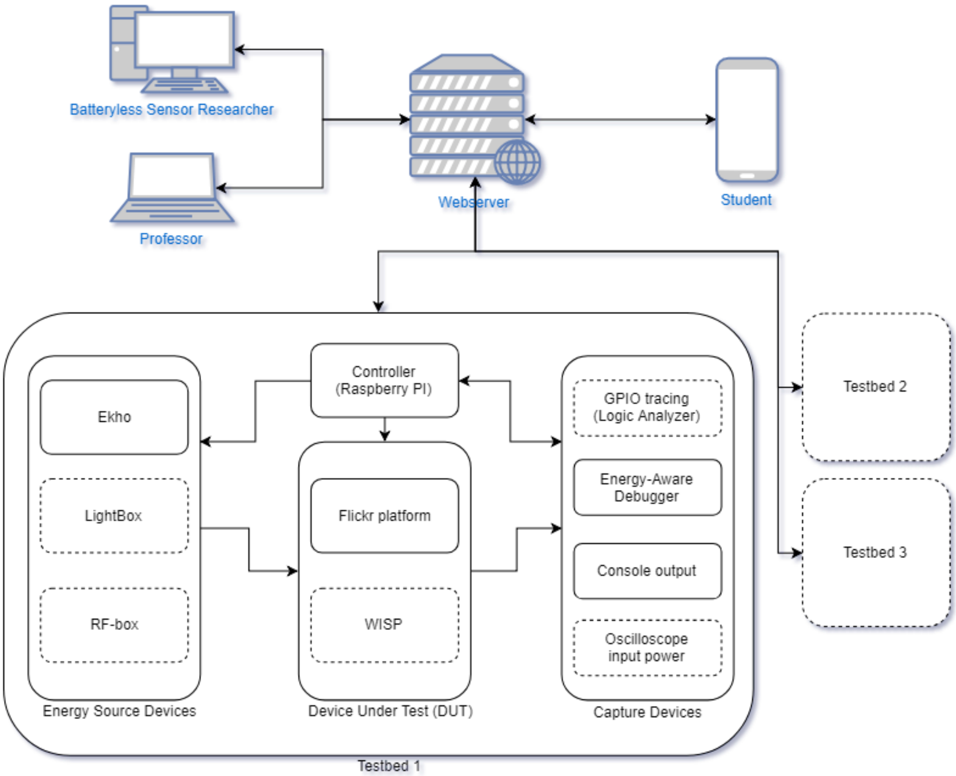

Figure 2.2: Testbed architecture

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