

Mobile Information Systems

Lecture 08: UbiComp & IoT

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Ubiquitous Computing

Source (FU): Mark Weiser, "The Computer for the 21st Century", 1991

- Mark Weiser, 1991: "The most profound technologies are those that disappear. They weave themselves into the fabric of everyday life until they are indistinguishable from it."
 - Proposes 3 device classes:
 - Tabs: wearable centimetre sized devices
 - Pads: hand-held decimetre-sized devices
 - Boards: metre sized interactive display devices.
- Original vision has already (mostly) arrived.

Ubiquitous Computing (2)

- ... or has it?
 - Ubiquitous computing not just about devices ...
 - ... but also about interaction (or lack thereof)
- Also {calm | ambient | pervasive} computing
 - implies less/no manual setup effort
- Ever tried to use more than one Bluetooth device at once?
 - Not *quite* there yet after all.

“Internet of Things” (IoT)

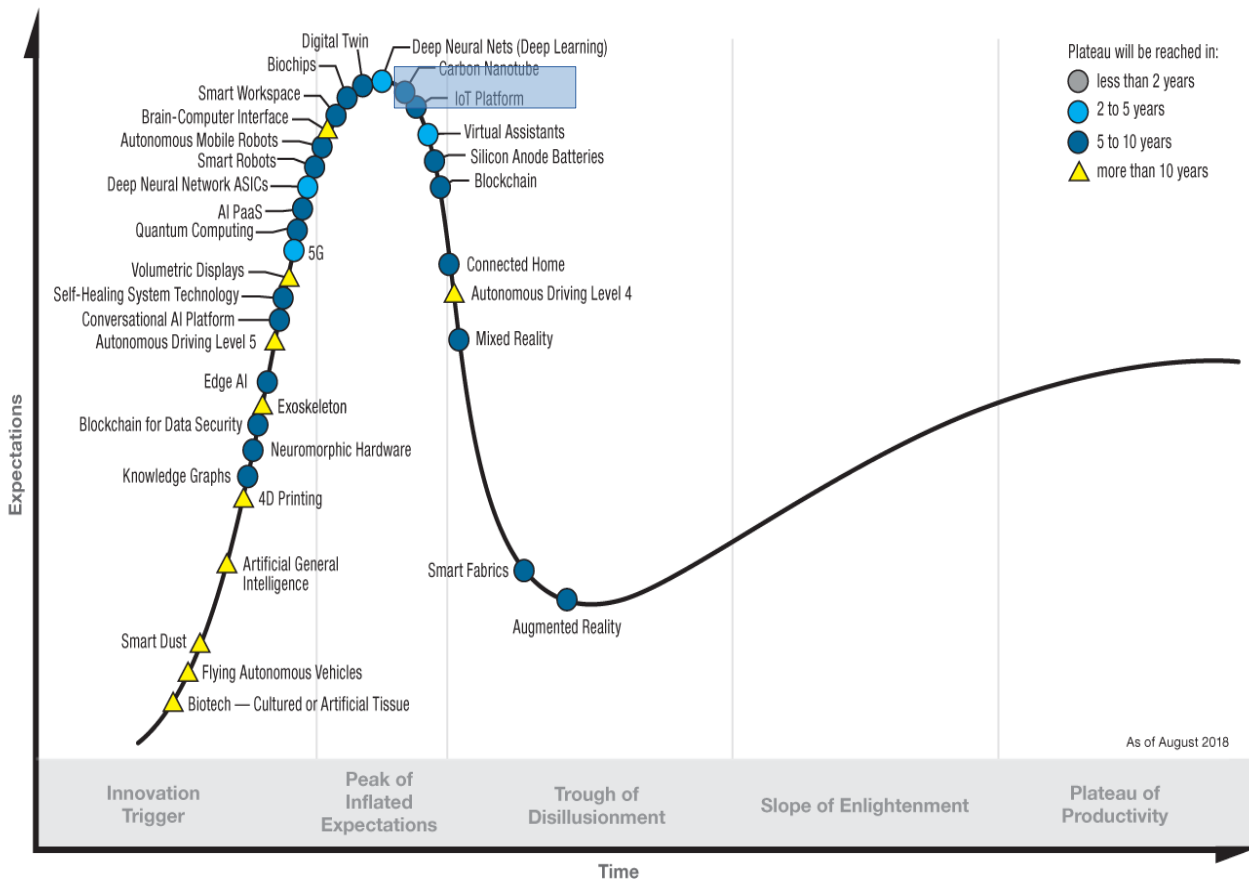
- Mostly a (widely/over-used) marketing term
- Core idea: put connectivity *everywhere*
- Basic concept similar to UbiComp:
 - Less focus on personal/interactive devices
 - More focus on “smart things” & sensor networks
 - E.g. light bulb, fridge, trash can, water meter...
 - Also: “Industry 4.0”, “Factory of the Future”

“Internet of Things” (IoT) (2)

- Stated goals:
 - Automate mundane, everyday tasks
 - Increase energy/resource efficiency
 - “Smarter” logistics, e.g. in factories
- Other goals:
 - Sell more wireless sensor modules?
 - Gather more data about consumers?
 - E.g. wireless power meter → possible to infer movie being currently watched! (How?)

UbiComp/IoT Hype Cycle

Image source (FU): <https://www.gartner.com/.../5-trends-emerge-in-gartner-hype-cycle-...2018/>



Big issues for UbiComp/IoT?

- Power/energy supply?
 - Imagine changing batteries across 1000s of sensors/ "smart things"... → energy harvesting?
- Interaction concepts?
 - People already struggle with synchronizing *two* devices → how to manage huge networks?
- Privacy & security?
 - Even more massive amounts of private data that requires adequate protection
- Standards (or lack thereof)

UbiComp/IoT Technologies

- Wearables & interaction concepts
- Sensor & mesh networks
- Personal area networks (BTLE, NFC)

Wearables & interaction concepts

- “Wearable” = any body-worn, hands-free device
 - Smartwatches, fitness trackers
 - Smart glasses, e.g. Google Glass
 - Headsets/headphones?
- Require new interaction concepts
 - E.g. small screen or no screen at all
 - use swipe/shake gestures
 - use voice commands

Smartwatches (1)

Image sources (GFDL): https://en.wikipedia.org/.../Fossil_Wrist_PDA, (PD): <https://en.wikipedia.org/.../Moto360>

- Not a new concept, exists since late 1990s
- Recent popularity due to ...
 - Companion device for smartphone
→ less complex hardware & power supply
 - Better/more sensors, e.g. motion, heart rate, ...
 - Improved screens (e.g. round LCDs)
- Problems:
 - Battery lifetime
 - Size



Smartwatches (2)

- Hardware
 - Surprisingly powerful (1 GHz quad-core, 4 GB ROM)
 - Bluetooth LE + (sometimes) WiFi
- Software
 - Android Wear (Android derivative)
 - Various proprietary OS (iOS, Tizen, ...)
 - Native notification & app support:
 - iOS device + Apple Watch
 - Android device + Android Wear

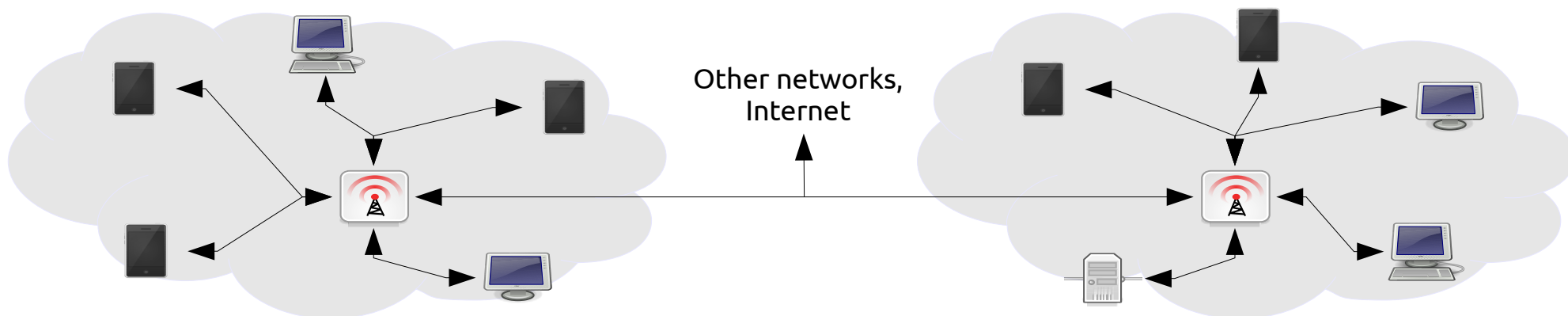
Smartwatches (3)

- New interaction concepts:
 - Rough swipes, motion gestures (no pinch-zoom :-)
 - Interaction with smartphone: e.g. trace in-air gestures after touch lifted
- Usage scenarios:
 - Notifications & quick responses
 - Data logging (body state/movement/sleep)
 - ... other ideas ... ?

Sensor & mesh networks (1)

Image source (CC): <http://tango.freedesktop.org/>

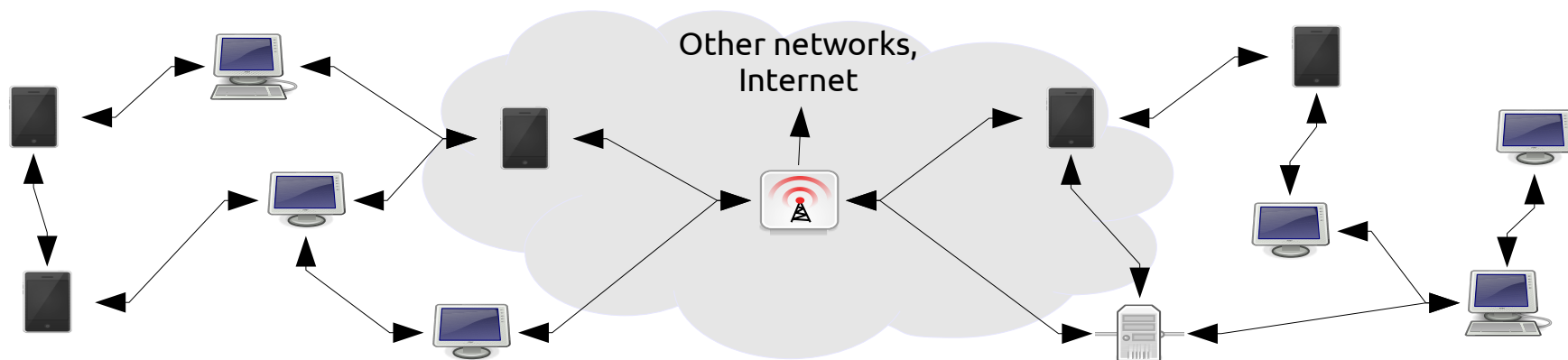
- “Regular” networks: star/tree topology
 - Central hubs for each segment (wired or wireless)
- Problems for sensors & IoT devices
 - Low transmission power → short range
 - Would require (many) additional hubs/gateways?



Sensor & mesh networks (2)

Image source (CC): <http://tango.freedesktop.org/>

- Alternative: mesh networks
 - Each device also acts as hub/relay
 - Data is forwarded across several “hops”
 - Topology can change dynamically



Sensor & mesh networks (3)

- Main forwarding strategies:
 - Flooding, re-broadcasting (problems?)
 - Routing – on-demand: e.g. Ad hoc On-Demand Distance Vector (AODV)
 - Routing – pro-active, e.g. Optimized Link State Routing (OLSR), B.A.T.M.A.N. (cf. Freifunk network)
- Current implementations:
 - ZigBee (IEEE 802.15.4)
 - Bluetooth LE (since 5.1)
 - WiFi-based (Freifunk)

Sensor & mesh networks (4)

- Alternative: LPWAN (Low Power WAN)
 - Relatively long range (1-10 km)
 - Very low bandwidth (< 50 kBit/s)
 - Also uses ISM bands
- Current standards: LoRaWAN, Weightless, WiFi HaLow, ...
- Not (yet) widely used
- Intended for smart meters, street lamps, etc.

Personal Area Network (WPAN)

- Originally IrDA, later Bluetooth (see lecture 3)
- Goal: communication with personal peripherals
- Disadvantages:
 - High power draw (on par with WiFi/cellular)
 - Complex setup procedures (pairing, PIN codes etc.)
- Alternative: Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE/BTLE), aka Bluetooth Smart
 - Also available for medium-area mesh networks

Bluetooth Low Energy (1)

Image source (FU): <http://www.bluetooth.com/Pages/Bluetooth-Brand.aspx> (Logo)

- Little in common with “classic” Bluetooth
 - Same frequency band (2.4 GHz ISM)
 - Similar modulation → no hardware change
 - Much smaller/less complex protocol stack
 - Part of Bluetooth specification v4.0
- Optimized for simple battery-powered sensors
 - Goal: months or years of battery lifetime
 - Maximum data rate 1 Mbit/sec

Bluetooth Low Energy (2)

- 2 major roles: central or peripheral
 - Peripherals can ...
 - Broadcast to all central devices
 - Unicast to one specific central device
 - Centrals can ...
 - Open connections to peripherals
 - Be notified about value changes
- OS support (mobile):
 - Central role supported since Android 4.3, iOS 5
 - Peripheral since Android 5.0 (not all devices), iOS 6

Bluetooth Low Energy (3)

- “Complexity” classes for peripherals:
 - Beacons (pure static broadcasts)
 - E.g. iBeacon: simply broadcasts own UUID
 - Additional data possible on request
 - Sensors (broad-/unicast with sensor data)
 - Multiple profiles: heart rate, activity, temperature, ...
 - Notification support to avoid constant polling
 - Bidirectional communication
 - Not primarily designed for synchronous comm.
 - Mostly for setting sensor parameters etc.

Bluetooth Low Energy (4)

- Power consumption
 - Highly dependent on advertising interval
 - nRF51822 SoC, CR2032 button cell, 1 s interval
→ estimate ~ 1 year of lifetime
 - Power management becomes very important
 - Modern SoCs have multiple peripherals that can be powered down individually

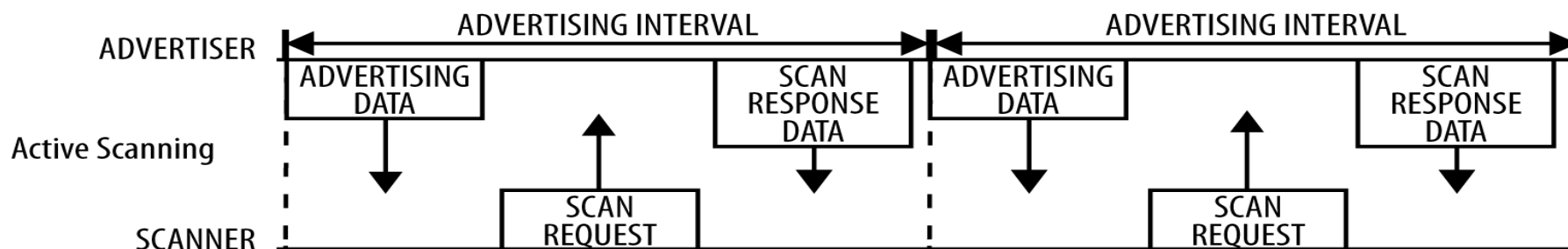
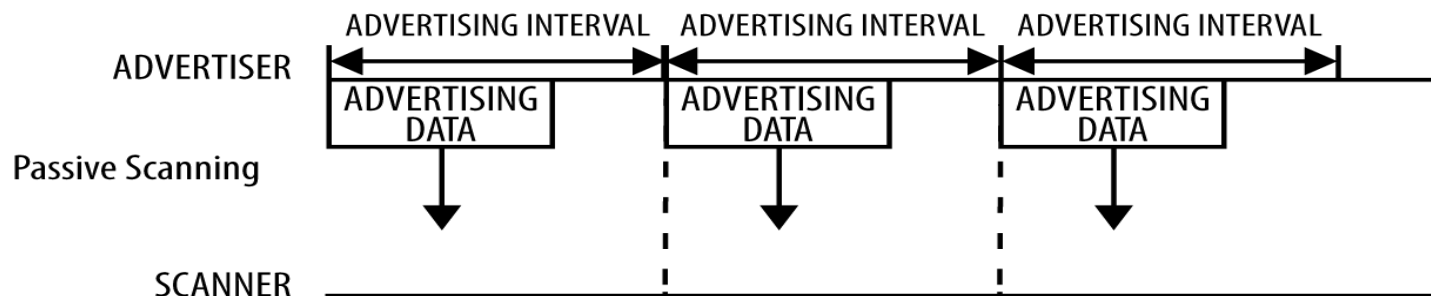
BTLE Profiles/Protocols (1)

- GAP = Generic Advertising Profile
 - Up to 31 bytes advertisement broadcast
 - Up to 31 extra bytes on request by central
- GATT = Generic Attribute Profiles
 - Only available to one central at a time
 - 1+ *services*, containing 1+ *characteristics* each
 - Each s/c identified by global 16-bit UUID
 - Publish/subscribe model
 - Value change notifications, no constant data stream
 - Less “on” time for radio module → power savings

BTLE Profiles/Protocols (2)

Image source (FU): Townsend et al., Getting Started with Bluetooth Low Energy, O'Reilly Media

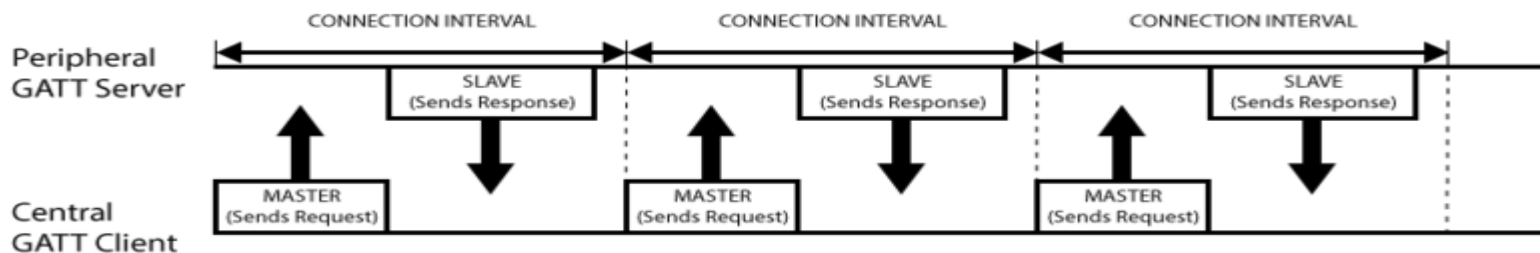
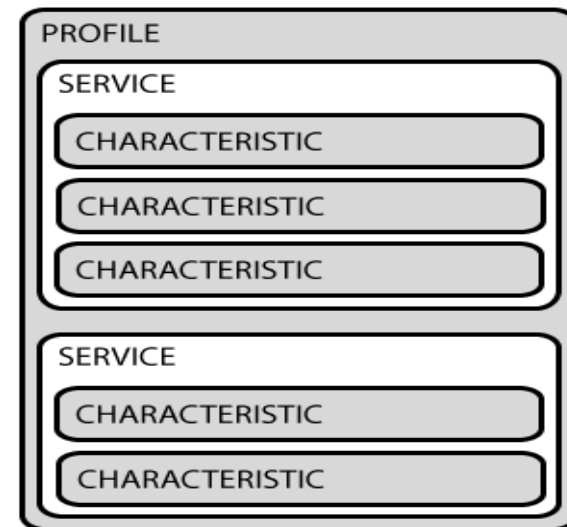
- GAP: Generic Access Profile
 - Advertising, discovery, connection establishment



BTLE Profiles/Protocols (3)

Image source (FU): <https://learn.adafruit.com/introduction-to-bluetooth-low-energy/gatt>

- GATT: Generic Attribute Profile
 - Main transport for “live” data
 - Extension of GAP
 - Profiles, services + characteristics (each with unique UUID)
 - Publish-subscribe model

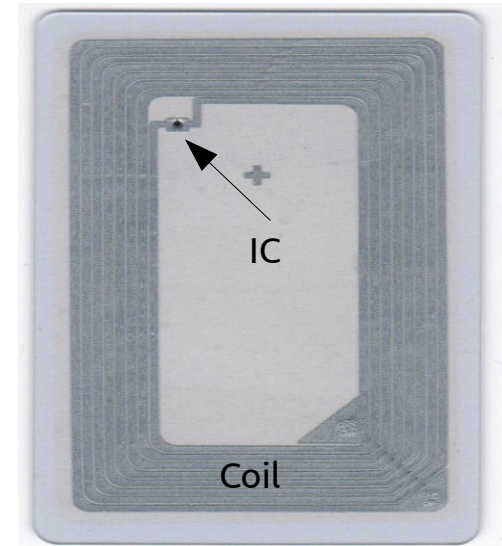




Near Field Communication (NFC)

Image sources (FU): <http://nfc-forum.org/> (Logo), (CC) own image

- Very simple devices, price down to ~ 0.30 €
 - Various form factors: sticker, token, card, glass capsule (implantable/injectable), ...
 - Contain small IC + antenna coil
- Subclass of RFID (radio freq. ID)
- Power for tag provided by reader device through magnetic field
- Communication through EM field modulation (bi-directional!)





Near Field Communication (NFC)

Image sources (FU): <http://nfc-forum.org/> (Logo)

- Characteristics:
 - 13.56 MHz band, ~ 400 kBit/sec
 - Range ~ 2 cm with standard antenna
 - Storage: 137 byte – 80 kByte
- Variants:
 - Simple storage devices (cf. NDEF standard)
 - Smart cards with crypto functions (e.g. Mifare)
 - Java cards (user-programmable in Java)
 - Card emulation (device mimics card/token)



Near Field Communication (NFC)

Image sources (FU): <http://nfc-forum.org/> (Logo)

- Usage scenarios
 - URLs/contact data, e.g. in poster/business card
 - Security & access control (Thoska)
 - Mobile payment (some credit cards, Apple Pay)
 - Passports (lots of sensitive information)
 - Device-to-device (Android Beam)
- Directed antenna can increase range to ~1 m
→ personal data stolen without direct contact



NFC Security

Image sources (FU): <http://nfc-forum.org/> (Logo)

- Public tags:
 - should be write-protected (but often are not)
 - E.g. overwrite with malicious URL?
- Security measures
 - Simple/low-level:
 - Read and/or write keys for each data block
 - Can often be brute-forced or sniffed
 - Complex/high-level:
 - Dedicated crypto “apps” in NFC chip
 - Similar security concept to SIM card

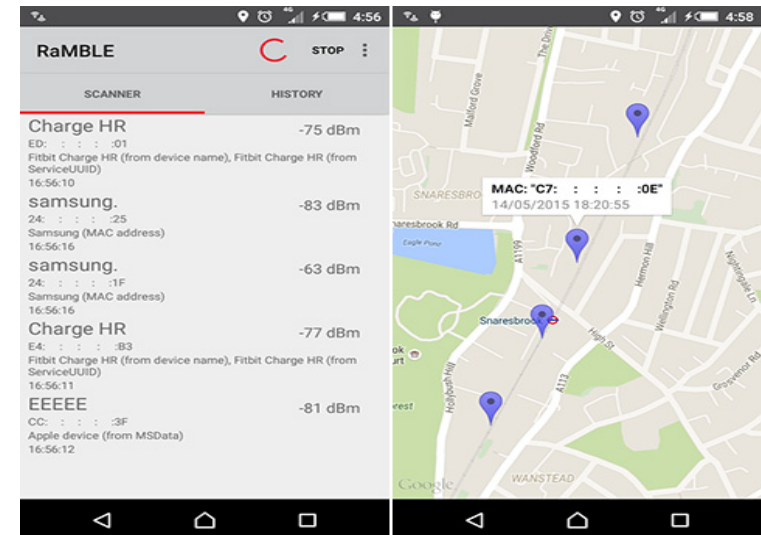
UbiComp/IoT issue: energy supply

- Possible solution: energy harvesting?
- Many possible sources
 - Sunlight/environment light
 - Vibration & sound
 - Temperature differences
 - EM radiation (e.g. power lines, TV stations)
- Drawbacks:
 - Low efficiency (few 10-100 mW)
 - Energy storage (e.g. during night?)

UbiComp/IoT issue: privacy

Image sources (FU): <http://www.net-security.org/secworld.php?id=18422>

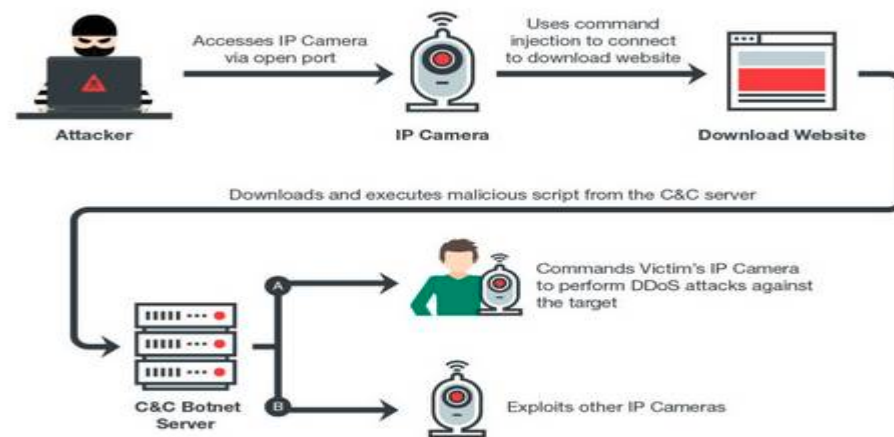
- Bluetooth LE devices: often broadcast-based
 - Implies public availability → enables tracking
 - Often leaks additional private data, e.g. pulse
 - MAC address *could* be random, but often isn't
- Classic tradeoff: security/privacy ease of setup



UbiComp/IoT issue: security

Image source (FU): https://www.theregister.co.uk/2017/05/10/persirai_iot_botnet/

- Mobile phones: bad situation regarding patches, security updates etc.
- IoT devices: even *worse*
- Customer often won't even notice, so why bother?
- Problem: insecure devices on Internet
→ can be used as part of a *botnet*, execute DDOS attacks



UbiComp/IoT issue: standards

Image sources (CC): <https://xkcd.com/927/>

- Current state: ~ 1 standard per manufacturer
→ e.g. light bulb A won't talk to control app B
 - Common ground: *sometimes* IP
 - Mostly: wild mixture (HTTP, MQTT, Zigbee, ...)
- Recent approach: **URIBeacon/Physical Web**
 - Every “smart thing” broadcasts an URL
 - Access/control via common web tools
 - Problem: mapping?



The End

