

Stabilisation of a Pan-and-Tilt Unit holding a camera

Final Report for CS39440 Major Project

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Declaration of originality

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- I have read the sections on unfair practice in the Students' Examinations Handbook and the relevant sections of the current Student Handbook of the Department of Computer Science.
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Date

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I would like to acknowledge with gratitude the guidance for this project given by Fred Labrosse over the last few months. Despite the busy schedule, he has always been ready to meet me and discuss my concerns.

I would also like to thank Ian Izett and Peter, two wonderful technicians at the DSL lab who provided help with the hardware and kindly answered my questions.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family who have guided me in completing this study and have always been there for me.

Abstract

Computer Science department at Aberystwyth University has a large all-terrain rover that is equipped with a panoramic camera mounted on a Pan-and-Tilt Unit (PTU) that is stabilised using gyroscopes. One of the problems of the gyroscopes is that they tend to drift and therefore need to be regularly corrected to ensure the camera stays vertical. In order to fix this issue a small hardware module will be built and corresponding software developed. Complete system will interface tilt sensor (inclinometer) with the PTU to ensure camera "verticality". In this report root of the problem will be analysed, possible solutions and algorithms used to calculate PTU drift rate presented.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Overview

The Pan-and-Tilt Unit (PTU) is a stabilised 2-axes platform mounted on the Idris electric vehicle that holds a panoramic camera. This vehicle is used in other research projects and drives in different places where it can go up and down the hills [5]. PTU has a built in functionality to stabilize at the chosen position: in case the rover drives up the hill camera will stay vertical. In order to achieve camera verticality stabilization command could only be invoked once, when the rover is standing on the flat surface(PTU would record current platform orientation and then when vehicles moves try to keep it in its original position). Its position could also be adjusted manually if vehicle is not on a flat surface and then stabilization command could be issued.

1.2 Problem analysis

To ensure stability of the camera PTU uses gyroscopes. This would be enough on its own in a perfect world. However, the well-known problem of the gyroscopes is that their readings are affected by the different air temperature, magnetic effects, jitter etc. [9]. Another problem with the gyroscopes is that they get current orientation by integrated twice rotational acceleration. This integration is error prone, and the error accumulates with time. In reality when PTU is issued with the stabilization command the platform slowly drifts on both axes and goes to the position which can be up to 20 degrees different from where it should be. This project will concentrate on fixing this particular issue as well as trying to enhance the overall system functionality.

1.3 Aim

The aim of this project is to modify system which is currently in place and implement functionality to stabilize Pan-Tilt Unit with drift compensation. The system should be fully automated and perform drift rate calculation and following calibration on its own, when the appropriate request comes in from the client.

1.4 Proposed Solution

One of the possible solutions could be the use of the additional PTU functionality. It allows to cancel drift by specifying the calculated in advance drift rate in radians per second. The problem

with this solution is that the drift rate can change if the surround environment changes (sun goes behind the clouds and air temperature drops affecting gyroscope readings). It would be impossible to calculate new drift rate manually every 10 minutes.

The proposed solution is to automate the drift rate calculation so that it can be adjusted while driving. However this approach requires additional information about the current vehicle orientation in space (its inclination angles with respect to gravity) to be able to predict required PTU position which will then be compared with the actual position and the drift calculated. Electronic inclinometer can be used for this purpose. Inclinometer response is an electric signal representing an angle between the internal axis and the gravity vector [9]. Accurate readings can only be obtained using the device if it is in a stable position and does not accelerate, otherwise it will provide erroneous data representing the sum of two vectors - earth gravity and acceleration. This imposes certain limitations. PTU drift rate calibration can only be performed when the vehicle does not move.

1.5 Objectives

The aims of this project are:

- To port current system from the Gumstix on to the Raspberry Pi.
- To implement commands for the PTU stabilization and drift rate.
- To develop drift rate calculation with following calibration.
- To develop PTU verticality functionality.
- To implement support for the new PTU functionality in the server side software.
- To extend client side API to reflect new server functionality.

1.6 Schedule and Project Management

The project will take around 15 weeks to complete. First week will be spent on the problem analysis, background research and Outline Project Specification production. In the middle of the project a poster will be produced and together with the Easter break it will take another week. Production of the final report, its review and proof reading should take no more than a week during the final stage. Twelve weeks in total will be left for the system development.

For the backup purposes and to keep track of the different code versions Version Control System will be used. I plan to use the free Github account to store all of my code and corresponding documentation. This way I will be able to restore work in a case of the system failure. VCS allows to see previous version of any file in the repository and what changes we made to it since it was added, this may help to resolve a bug by looking at what changes were introduced or it may help to restore piece of code that went missing.

Due to the tight time-frame imposed for the development of the system, an agile system development methodology will be followed. Agile development has a focus on generating working software prototypes quickly in cycles, rather than the classical approach of thorough documentation and following a strict plan. During the stage of software development there are likely to be unexpected technical difficulties that appear and need to be overcome, which can put the project behind the schedule.

The agile methodology attempts to provide the project with a clear direction by regularly assessing the development of the project at the end of each iteration and interacting with the client to ensure the project is coming closer by fulfilling its requirements. When the progress of the project is assessed regularly, it gives an opportunity to steer it back into the right direction if there is evidence suggesting that the course development is moving away from the target. The waterfall method which has a single fixed completion date at which the project finishes and should be ready to deploy runs the risk of delays if the system does not come together as planned. Thus the agile approach greatly reduces both development time and costs [4].

Following the initial evaluation of the different software development methodologies the feature-driven development methodology was chosen. At different stages of this project the work will focus on the different parts of the system. In each part there is a set of clearly identifiable features which are required for the final system to work. At the beginning of the project the consultations with the client (project supervisor) were conducted to identify the overall model of the system. At the following meetings the overall model was shaped and the feature list built. The development of the system will be organised into iterations of relatively short 2 week cycles, with a set of working features produced at the end of each cycle.

Iteration 0 will focus on porting code to the new platform. It is not expected that the system will work from the very beginning. However, once minor code adjustment are done the basic features should start working.

Iteration 1 has an aim of implementing new commands in the PTU TASS library.

Iteration 2 will focus on drift rate calculation algorithm development and testing. This iteration builds on the functionality laid down in the previous cycle and incorporates the ability to calculate drift rate as well as stabilize platform with drift compensation.

Iteration 3 will depend on the work done during all previous cycles. Without successful completion of all previous steps this iteration will not be possible since at this stage all features are incorporated in to the final system. In this iteration server side software will be updated to make use of the new features in the PTU TASS library. Client side API will be changed to reflect new functionality of the server.

At the end of each cycle there will be a consultation with the client as to whether he feels that the project is continuing in the right direction.

The project schedule was produced to illustrate all the main tasks and planned deliverables (figure 1.1).

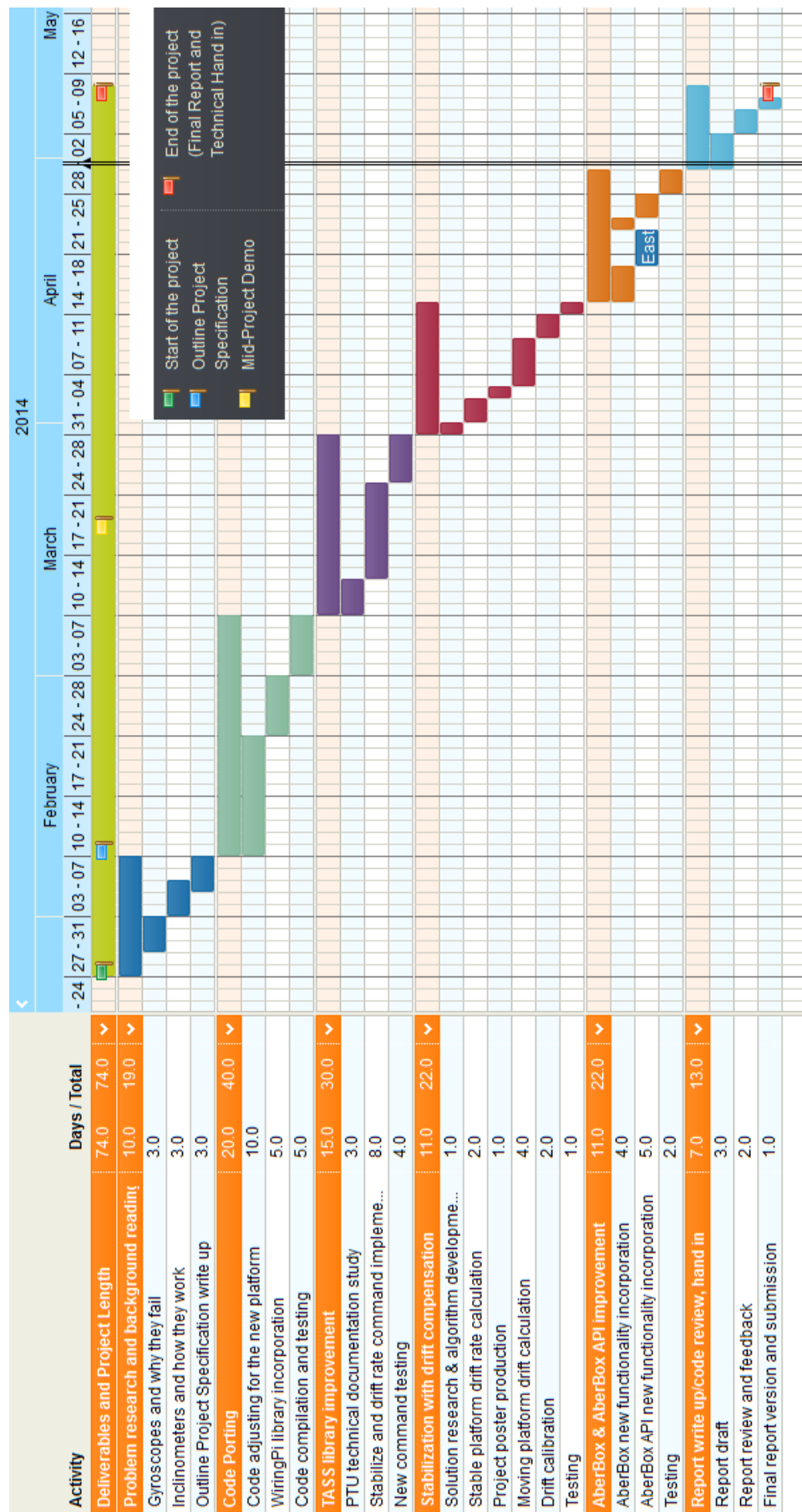


Figure 1.1: Project schedule

Chapter 2

System design

Since the hardware choice was dictated by the current system base and client choice there is not much to be discussed in this field. This chapter will give just a quick overview of the hardware design and then will concentrate on the software part and in particular drift rate algorithm development.

This project is based on the system that is currently in place, it has control over PTU can take readings from the inclinometer and control relays. It consists of the Gumstix minicomputer, GPIO14 chip, relays, inclinometer, PTU, server side code (running on Gumstix), client side code (provides API for the interaction with the server) and the library implementing PTU TASS communication protocol to interact with the PTU.

2.1 Changes to the system

There was a decision made by the client to replace the platform (Gumstix) that is currently used. The rationale behind the decision were client's concerns about the currently used Gumstix computer which is getting old. In case of a breakdown it would be difficult to find the replacement parts. One of the features requested was the ability to compile accompanying code on the platform itself (this is currently impossible on the Gumstix due to the hardware limitations) instead of cross-compiling code on the PC and then uploading executables to the Gumstix. Following a thorough discussion Raspberry Pi minicomputer was chosen as a replacement platform. It has enough power to compile the code as well as all the required interfaces for the connection of the other equipment. PTU TASS library will be reused and its functionality extended to implement the new features. Server and client side codes will be adjusted accordingly to provide access to the new functionality.

2.2 System architecture overview

This project will consist from the hardware and software parts, each of them will be discussed further in this chapter. The server side will have software running on the Raspberry PI minicomputer and handling all client requests. Connection will be initiated by the client over the TCP/IP protocol. Client side application will be using provided AberBox API to send/receive commands. Overall system architecture is presented on the figure 2.1.

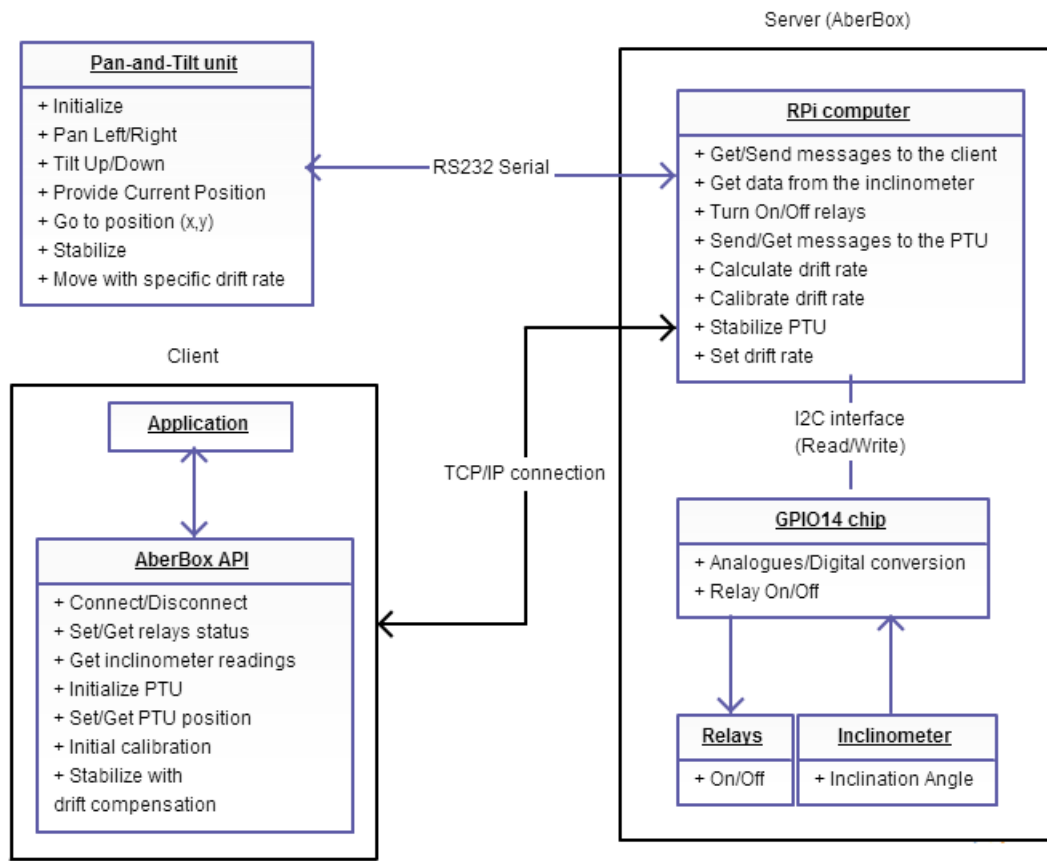


Figure 2.1: System Architecture Overview

2.3 Hardware Design

The proposed system will consist of the Raspberry Pi minicomputer, analogue inclinometer, GPIO14 chip, relays and the PTU.

2.3.1 Raspberry Pi

As a platform for the main control system Raspberry Pi minicomputer was chosen. It will replace the currently employed for this task Gumstix single board computer.

Raspberry Pi is a credit-card-sized single-board computer with a 512 MiB of RAM and 700 MHz ARM based CPU. It is powerful enough for the proposed tasks to be completed and have all the required interfaces to be connected to the other peripheral. It has GPIO pins, including SPI and I²C interfaces, UART serial console, 5v and GND supply pins. Since there will be loads of power available on the vehicle power consumptions of the device were not taken in to account when choosing the platform. Such a powerful device may be an overkill for this task, but the decision was made by the client. Furthermore in the future this platform may be used to handle additional tasks.

2.3.2 Inclinometer

An inclinometer will be required to get data about the current chassis position in the space. The client suggested to use the analogue SCA121T-D05 dual axis inclinometer (figure 2.2) that provided instrumentation grade performance for levelling applications in harsh environment. It will be bolted to the chassis of the vehicle and will provide information about the inclination angles. This data will then be used during the PTU drift rate calibration. Since it is an analogue device a way to convert from analogue to digital format will be required.

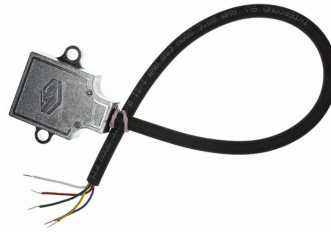


Figure 2.2: SCA121T-D05 Inclinometer

2.3.3 GPIO14 Chip

The GPIO14 chip is a pre-programmed PIC16F818 micro controller. It intends to provide general purpose I/O expansion on the I^2C bus. It has 14 general purpose I/O lines and 5 analogues input channels with 10-bit A/D conversion [1]. GPIO14 chip will be used to convert inclinometer signal from the analogue format to digital and to switch on/off relays. This chip will be connected over the I^2C bus to the Raspberry Pi.

2.3.4 PTU

Pan-and-Tilt Unit is a high-precision integrated motion control systems produced by the Sagebrush Technology (now part of the RIEtech Global, LLC [2]). It is designed for the <10Kg payloads and is often used to hold cameras, antennas or for instrument positioning. To connect it to the Raspberry Pi (which has TTL interface) RS-232 to TTL converter will be used. As a part of this project it is used to hold a panoramic camera.

2.4 Software Design

This study will be based on the code that is already used on the Gumstix. It is currently used to send control commands to the PTU, get readings from the inclinometer and switch on/off relays. The code base consists of three main parts: the client side software, the server side software (running on the Gumstix and responding to client calls) and the library that implements PTU TASS communication protocol. In this section different software design aspect will be discussed

2.4.1 PTU TASS library

PTU TASS library is written in the C++ and implements commands to communicate with the PTU. All communication is done over the serial interface. Currently the library has all the necessary commands implemented to perform basics tasks such as: pan left/right, tilt up/down, get/set position, get/set rotation limits. One of the objectives of this project is to implement 'stabilize' and 'drift rate' commands, as well as drift rate calculation.

The class diagram for the library is presented on the figure 2.3. PTInterface class provides functionality to interact with the PTU. It has two data structures defined. PTcoord data structure is used to hold values of the PTU position. DriftRate data structure is created at the beginning of the program and stores drift rate values for the both axes, there is a StabilizationTime attribute as well, it is required to store time of the last call to stabilization command. The drift rate data structure will have private access specifier since it should be accessed by the instantiated object only, no other code should be able to modify values inside since it will affect the PTU drift rate value used for the drift rate cancellation.

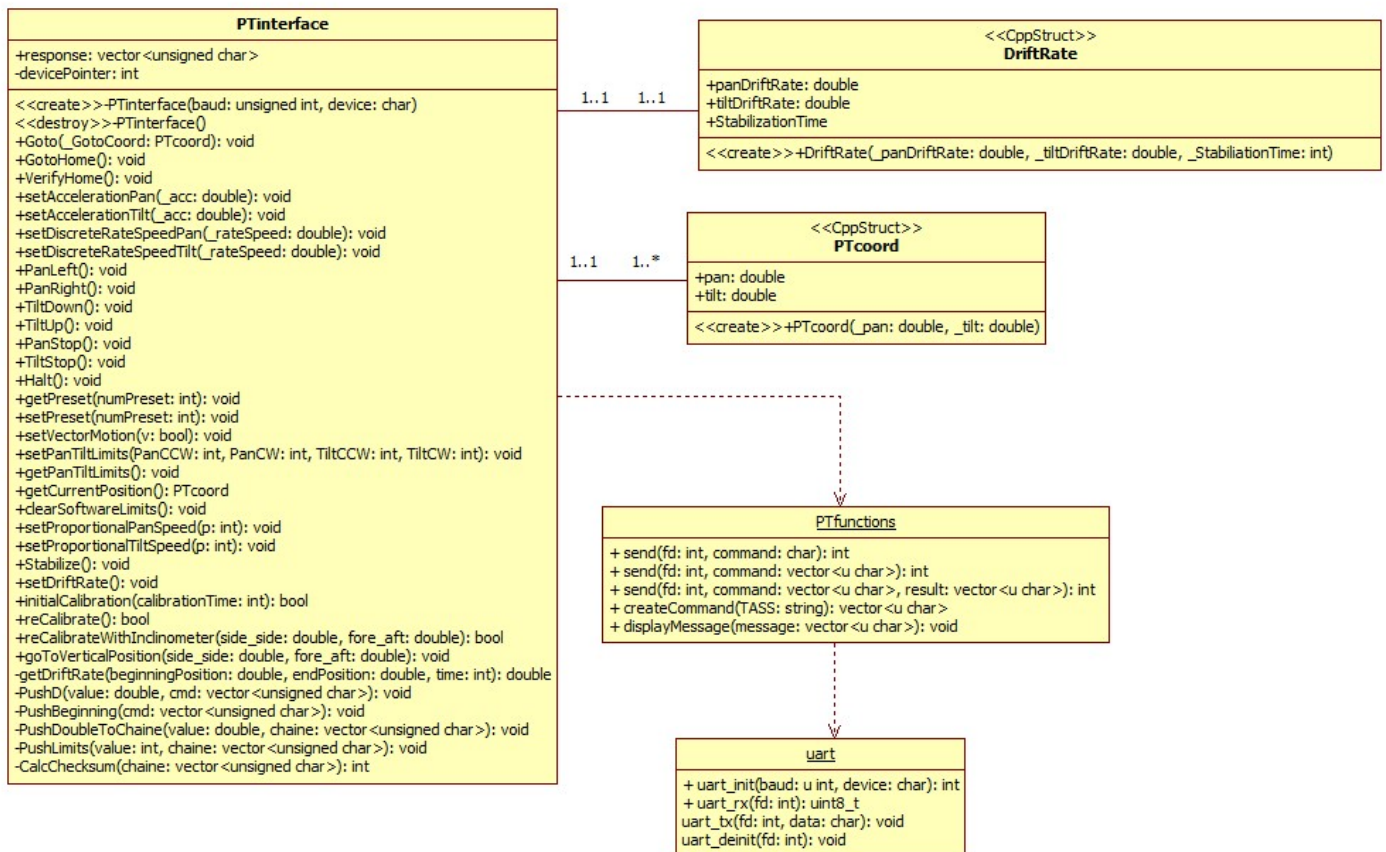


Figure 2.3: PTU TASS library

2.4.1.1 Stabilization command

The stabilization command tells PTU to maintain a desired platform orientation in the space independent of the vehicle motion. The stabilization command consists of the two letters "HI" which

needs to be sent to the PTU in ASCII encoding. The message format consists of six bytes of header plus one to 256 bytes of payload plus a one byte checksum [15]. This command will be implemented and added to the `PTInterface` class as the `stabilize()` function without any arguments and will not return anything. It will have a public access specifier to be accessible by the external code.

2.4.1.2 Drift rate command

There are two commands available to specify drift rate: `"*mPf,f,f,f"` and `"*mrf,f"`. The first one moves the platform to a specific position and then command it to continue to move at a given inertial rate. The second one just command PTU to move at a given inertial rate without telling desired position. There were plans to use both commands, but after some testing was carried out it appeared that the first command doesn't work as it is described in the documentation. The problem in detail will be presented in the implementation chapter under the ?? section. This fact influenced further design decisions since there was just one command available to set the drift rate.

The star in the beginning of the `*mrf,f` command means that this is experimental feature and may not work as described. Following two letters define command itself. The two `f` characters define floating-point number format and should be replaced with the two numbers representing the drift rate. It is necessary to supply fractional part of the number as well, even if it will consist from the zeroes only (e.g 10.00 not just 10) otherwise command will not be understood by the PTU.

As it was mentioned in previous subsection, command and following numbers should be in the ASCII encoding. The fact that floating-point numbers are unknown before the drift rate is calculated, means that they will have to be translated in to the ASCII encoding while the program is running. Special function will be developed just for this task. One possible approach to translate double in to the ASCII encoding in C++ is to use `std::cout` object. However with this approach alternative function to calculate the checksum would be required. The current function, that calculates the checksum of the message, takes as an argument vector of characters and returns integer.

I decided to use `sprintf` function to translate double values in to the ASCII encoding. With this approach the system will be able to calculate the checksum of the message with the function that is already available. I am also more comfortable using `sprintf` because it mimics behaviour of the `printf` which is already familiar to me. The only difference is that `sprintf` function directs all output to the supplied buffer instead of the console.

2.4.2 Server Side

The server side software is responsible for the overall control of the PTU and inclinometer. It will be running on Raspberry Pi minicomputer and will respond to the client commands. One of the main challenges is to port the current system from the Gumstix to the Raspberry Pi platform and make it work.

2.4.3 Client Side

The client side software provides an API to interact with the server side. The connection is made over the TCP/IP protocol. The plan is to extend the API upon the creation of the new stabilization functionality.

2.4.4 Operating System

Raspbian is a free operating system that will be running on the Raspberry Pi. It requires some initial configuration before the main software can be successfully run. Firstly, it requires configuration to prevent Linux from using the serial port; it also needs WiringPi library [7] installed to successfully communicate over the I²C bus with the GPIO14 chip. All the necessary configuration is covered in the Appendix A.

2.5 Drift rate calculation

PTU drift rate in essence is a speed at which platform moves on the both axes. To calculate speed we use formula where distance travelled is divided by the time of travel. The same method can be applied to calculate the drift rate of the PTU platform. At the beginning we record current PTU platform position on both axes, tell it to stabilize at the current position (and it starts to drift), wait certain amount of time and record position again. Knowing start and end position we can find out the distance travelled. Dividing distance travelled by the time waited we get the speed or drift rate.

However this method will work only if the Pan-Tilt Unit orientation in the space remains the same during both reading of the platform position. If the unit would be tilted while it is stabilized it would try to adjust platform position to reflect its current orientation in the space. Then the position value recorded at the end would be made up of the drift rate plus the PTU orientation in the space, which is not what required. However this scenario needs to be accommodate as well since the rover will be continuously stopping at the different places (with the different chassis inclination angles) and performing drift rate calibration. In the following subsections algorithms to calculate drift rate will be presented for the both cases.

It is planned to perform initial drift rate calculation at the each start of the program. The first algorithm perfectly suits this task since it provides initial values which can be used to cancel drift at the early stage and avoid huge drift at the beginning. The second algorithm, that uses values from the inclinometer, is intended to be used to adjust or recalibrate the drift rate which is already applied to platform.

2.5.1 Fixed position drift rate

For the platform that is not moving during the calibration, drift rate can be calculated using the following formula:

$$DR = \frac{\Delta P_{1,2}}{t},$$

where DR - is a drift rate, $\Delta P_{1,2}$ - is a difference of the two position readings, taken at the beginning and the end of the stabilization, t - the time elapsed between two readings.

Since the platform reports its position in degrees, the result we get is in degrees per second as well. However the drift rate sent to the PTU must be specified in the radians per second. To convert it to the radians following formula can be used:

$$DR = \left(\frac{DR_{deg/s} * \pi}{180} \right) * -1,$$

where DR - is a drift rate in radians per second, $DR_{deg/s}$ - is a drift rate in degrees per second. To stabilize PTU drift rate sent needs to be of the same magnitude, but an opposite sign, for this purpose whole expression is multiplied by minus one.

The algorithm for the drift rate calculation is presented on the figure 2.4

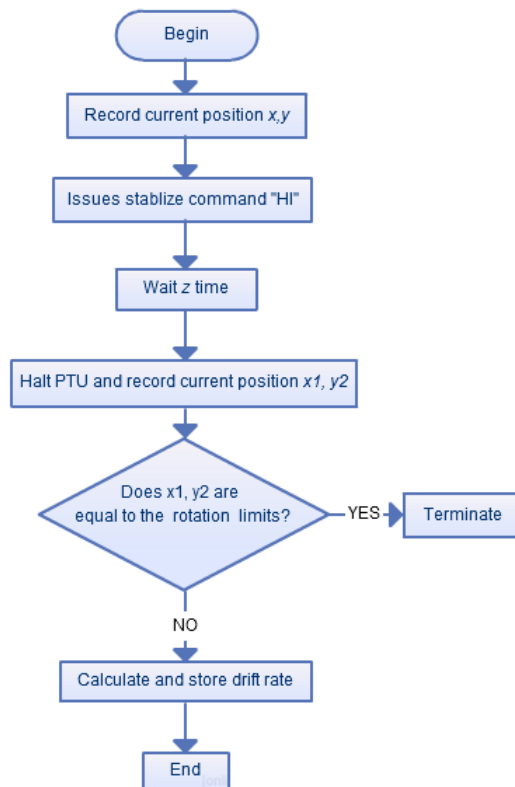


Figure 2.4: Drift rate calculation

Since the time frame for this task to take place is specified in advance, there is a check to make sure that during the initial drift rate calculation procedure PTU doesn't hit its physical rotation limits. The logic is that if it did hit rotation limits, platform would not be drifting any further, however the time would be still moving forwards. We can not rely on that data from about the second position since we don't know how quickly rotation limits were hit. Hence we can not accurately determine the drift rate based on this data.

2.5.2 Drift rate for the moving vehicle

The drift rate calculation for the moving vehicle is a bit more complicated and requires information about the platform position in the space. The rover will be stopping from time to time to do a drift rate calibration. However it is very unlikely that when it stops position will be the same as it was the last time when calibration took place. To be able to calculate drift rate, while PTU is being stabilized and rover moved to a different place, we need to know current PTU orientation in the space (inclination angles of the chassis that PTU is mounted on). For this purpose inclinometer, mounted on the chassis, will be used to obtain current vehicle position. Knowing the inclination of the chassis and current PTU platform position we can find out difference between these two values which will be the drift rate. The algorithm for the drift rate calculation is presented on the figure 2.5

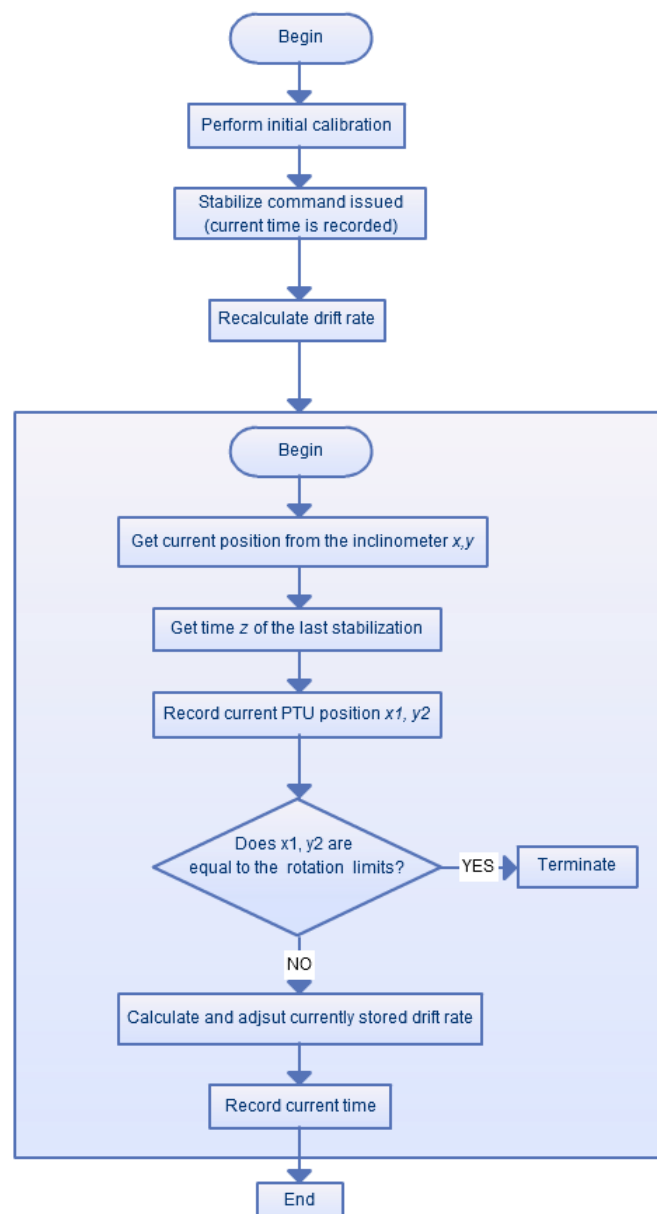


Figure 2.5: Drift rate calculation for the moving vehicle

Chapter 3

Implementation

The implementation of the project began on schedule at the beginning of week 2. The following chapter describes how the design was implemented in the development of a working system. Important code samples and functions have been included where appropriate. Using the chosen methodology, development ran in a series of iterations, at the end of each the different parts of the system were expected to work.

For the system development it was required to be able to connect Raspberry Pi to the PTU to test the code functionality. The PTU was unmounted from the rover, brought to the Digital Systems Laboratory, bolted on the stand and connected to the power supply.

Replacement of the Gumstix to the Raspberry Pi minicomputer and all the necessary wiring was done by the laboratory technician who I am very grateful to. Otherwise it would probably have taken a few more weeks of my time to find out how everything should be fitted in.

3.1 Raspberry Pi set up

Before any further work could be conducted Raspberry Pi minicomputer required operating system and some initial configuration. To get Raspberry Pi up and running quick start guide [13] was followed. Since the monitor with the HDMI input was not available, HDMI->VGA adapter was used, there were some problems in getting video output on the screen, however after tweaking configuration file problem was resolved. Once the system locale was changed and boot partition expanded initial setup was finished. To be able to work with the Pi remotely over the TCP/IP network secure shell protocol was enabled and static IP address configured (static IP address was used because RPi and computer used direct connection and as such no DHCP server was available). For the easier code editing and uploading the SAMBA suite was installed and SMB/CIFS share created. Now it was possible to access code directly from the Windows machine and edit it over the network.

3.2 Iteration 0

The iteration 0 focused on moving code from the Gumsitx on to the Raspberry Pi. This meant compiling source code on the new platform and testing its functionality. The following tasks were identified for this iteration:

1. Compile and run program on the new system.

2. Check that client on the different computer can make connection to the server.
3. Add platform specific I^2C library.
4. Check that data about inclination can be read from the inclinometer.
5. Check that relays can be switch on/off.

Since both platforms were running some sort of the Linux based OS it was not expected to see any OS specific compilation errors.

3.2.1 I^2C bus configuration

Due to the fact that two platforms were different in the architecture it was expected that implementation for the I^2C bus will be different on the Raspberry Pi and code that makes use of it may not work or even compile. It was decided to analyse current code and try to identify any platform specific code or libraries. After a quick analysis the piece of the code making calls to the I^2C library was found. It was a code in the file `gpio14.c` which provided certain level of abstraction when sending and receiving commands to/from the GPIO14 chip. This code was using a library which was specific to the Gumstix environment and would not work on the Raspberry Pi. Luckily the WiringPi project was found online. It is a GPIO access library written in C for the RaspberryPi and released under the LGPL license so it was available for commercial or non-commercial use. WiringPi includes a library which can make it easier to use the Raspberry Pi's on-board I^2C interface [7]. The installation of the WiringPi library is covered in the appendix A.

The I^2C library in WiringPi package provides the similar interface, to write and read data on the bus, as the library on the Gumstix. However there were a few differences. The file descriptor was required each time to read/write data on the bus. The function names in the new library were different as well.

The `gpio14.c` file required some changes to be able to interact with the GPIO14 chip over the I^2C bus. First of all function names to read and write data were change to the equivalent ones provided by the new library. Secondly after the I^2C system is initialised the returned file descriptor is stored in a variable and passed as an argument in future when reading/writing on the bus.

It looks like an easy fix, however a substantial amount of time was spent to understand the problem, look for the solution and put it in place. One of the problems was that a majority of the examples found on the web pages were describing interactions with the I^2C bus in the Python using incompatible with C libraries. At some point I even thought that I will have to develop my own library for the I^2C . Luckily WiringPi project was found.

Considerable amount of time was spent examining GPIO14 chip documentation and how it works, together with background reading of the I^2C bus specification and how data over it is sent to the GPIO14 chip. This knowledge was required to understand the code in the `gpio14.c` file and what it does, to be sure that when everything is compiled it will work.

After the issue with the library was resolved and minor issues fixed code was compiled and run. During testing application was running fine, it accepted client connection and would respond to the commands. However no sensible readings could be obtained from the inclinometer. Further investigation showed that device initialized in the default code was wrong. To obtain correct address of the GPIO14 chip on the I^2C bus I used `gpio i2cdetect` command. It showed up that chip appears under the 0x20 address, not the 0x21 as it was in the code. I suspect it was

specific to the previous platform or was changed for the testing. Another minor issue faced was the code, to initialize GPIO14 chip, placed in the file responsible for the relay control. The call to the `relay_init()` function in the `relay_control.c` file would initialize GPIO14 chip as well, although this is not obvious when looking at the function name and becomes apparent only after the implementation is examined. This led to some confusion and slow down. After these issues were resolved inclinometer readings were successfully obtained.

The last minor problem was the issues with sending inclinometer readings back to the client. At client side they were not the same as on server, in fact most of the time it was showing just zeroes. Since this feature was not in the priority it was decided to leave it until the iteration 3, when new functionality would be incorporated to the current code.

3.3 Iteration 1

The iteration 1 focused on implementing new PTU control commands in the PTU TASS library. As it was mentioned in the 2.4.1 section there were two commands to implement:

1. The stabilize command "HI".
2. The drift rate command "`*mrf, f`".

There were no difficulties encountered with implementation of the stabilize command. All it required is to send "HI" letters in the ASCII encoding to the PTU. The man page for the ASCII character-encoding scheme was consulted to identify corresponding numbers to the letters "H" and "I". To hold the message was used a vector of unsigned characters where the header, payload (the message) and the checksum are pushed. Testing showed that the implemented command works fine and PTU starts to stabilize at the current position straight away.

The second command was a bit more complex. With the command(`*mr`) itself it required two floating-point numbers to be supplied as well. These numbers are unknown before the application performs drift rate calculation and hence can not be converted to the ASCII encoding in advance as it is done with the majority of the other commands. For this purpose was developed separate function that takes as arguments floating-point number and vector of characters. The supplied number is then converted to the ASCII encoding using `sprintf()` function and added to the vector.

Although these two commands presented a relatively simple task, the implementation took a bit longer than planned. Before starting this project I knew a very little about the ASCII encoding and how it works. There was some confusion since the documentation stated that all command information is to be represented by hexadecimal ASCII characters, however the current implementation used decimal notation and it worked fine. I decided to use decimal numbers as well and follow overall code notation laid out by the previous author.

3.4 Iteration 2

When the iteration 1 has finished with all the necessary features implemented and tested it was time to implement both algorithms for the drift rate calculation mentioned in the 2.5 section. The drift rate calculation could be implemented either in the control software or in the PTU TASS library. Since the values from the inclinometer are obtained by the server side software at the early stage it was planned to implement drift rate calculation in there. However such approach would

require multiple calls to the TASS library (to get the current platform position, previous position, time when stabilize command was issued) and would not be very efficient since there would be data fragmentation. There was a possibility that PTU could be used with the different control unit in the future and putting drift rate calculation in the library could potentially simplify job for the future users/developers. The final decision was made to incorporate drift rate calculation functionality in to the TASS library. This way it will be possible to reuse library in the future if the control system changes and avoid rewriting drift rate calculation for the new control system.

The *initial drift rate calculation* function would rely completely on the data from the PTU and would not require any data from the external sensors. The second drift rate function would take as a parameters two floating-point numbers representing inclination on the vehicle. This function will be called from the control application that has access to the inclinometer. Whenever drift rate needs to be recalculated the control system will fetch data from the inclinometer and supply it as an argument when calling appropriate function in the library.

The additional function called `goToVerticalPosition` was implemented to provide an easy way to set platform at the vertical orientation even if vehicle is standing on the hill. This function takes two floating-point numbers arguments representing current vehicle inclination.

3.5 Fixed position drift rate

While implementing and testing the drift rate calculation for the fixed position, there was encountered an issue in the algorithm. After the discussion of the proposed algorithm with the supervisor problem became apparent and was quickly fixed. The issue found was in the algorithm of the drift rate recalibration. To obtain the right drift rate each recalibration requires data about the distance travelled and the time elapsed. When the stabilize command is issued the PTU platform position and current time are recorded so that time elapsed and distance travelled could be calculated during the next recalibration.

Indeed the drift rate calculation worked fine on the first recalibration: based on the values recorded during the stabilize command the drift rate was calculated and adjusted. On the following recalibration the drift rate was again calculated based on the time and position recorded during the stabilization command. However it should be based on the time and position of the last calibration, since that is when the drift rate was last time adjusted. The fix for this issue was to record position and time after the each recalibration so that following calculation would be correct. The algorithm in the design section was updated accordingly.

3.6 Drift rate for the moving vehicle

The implementation of the drift rate calculation for the moving vehicle did not face any significant problems, partially because of the experience gained that is mentioned in the previous section. The implemented functionality was tested by reissuing drift rate recalibration command every 5-10 minutes over the period of one hour. During the testing platform would stay at the chosen position at least for 7-10 minutes, meaning that over the time drift rate was recalculated correctly.

It is sad to say but another mistake in the algorithm was discovered at the time of writing this report. It could be easily fixed given more time. The algorithm presented on the figure 2.5 will work only if we assume that vertical position of the PTU platform is desired at all times. It does not accommodate the case when the PTU platform is stabilized at the position other than vertical.

3.7 AberBox & AberBox API improvements

The iteration 3 was not started due to the time constraints. At this iteration it was planned to integrate new functionality of the PTU TASS library in to the server control application and expose new features over the client side API.

There was a project slippage during the all stages. In average a bit less than a week was spent extra on the each iteration to finish, resulting in a final slippage of almost three weeks. By the time iteration 2 finished there was one week left until the end of the project and decision was made to concentrate on the documentation and final report. One of the reasons of the slippage could be named a continuous background reading required at all stages. The project scope was in a bit different area than my knowledge of expertise, meaning that it required an extra time to learn and make use of the new (to me) technologies.

Chapter 4

Testing

System testing is an investigation conducted to demonstrate that the final system meets the requirements set at the beginning of the project, works as expected and satisfies the needs of the client.

Although the final system was not build, the separate parts of it were tested at the end of each iteration. In this chapter testing of the following parts will be presented:

- Successful system porting.
- PTU TASS library new functionality.
- Drift rate calculation.

For the purpose of this project the specification-based testing method will be used. This method is a part of the black-box testing technique. In the black-box technique the system tester has no knowledge about the system internals and function implementations. The aim of the specification based testing is to tests functionality of the system based on the requirements and specifications outlined at the planning stage. Although such testing type is considered insufficient to guard against complex or high-risk situations [3], it is believed to be enough to test the completed parts of the overall system in this project. First of all implementation of the new functionality and code porting doest not present a highly complex task with loads of coding, where more thorough testing would be required. Secondly as it is with PTU TASS library the only practical way to test new functions is by invoking control functions and observing behaviour of the Pan-Tilt Unit. The unit testing was considered at the initial stages of the project, however after the implementation stage it became apparent that there is not that much new code and it is not that complex to write unit tests for it.

The tests will be build around specifications and requirements outlined in at the planing stage. Majority of the functions tested will be triggering some action of the real hardware. As such majority of tests will concentrate on observing the hardware behaviour and noting it down.

All the tests were conducted on the Raspberry Pi minicomputer running the Raspbian OS. The only exception was a client side application running on the Windows 7 OS based laptop and connecting to the server side application. During the testing Raspberry Pi was managed over the network using the SSH protocol from the laptop running Windows 7 OS, systems were connected using direct LAN connection and were configured with the static IP addresses.

4.1 Ported System Testing

The table 4.1 reflects the testing carried out to ensure that the ported code from the Gumstix to the Raspberry Pi has its original functionality working.

4.2 PTU TASS library testing

The table 4.2 presents tests carried out on the PTU TASS library to ensure that the new functionality is implemented right and works well. The functionality of the basic commands were tested as well to ensure that they still work after migrating to the new platform. Table contains description of the test, input data supplied or function triggered, expected output or system behaviour. After executing a test, the decision is defined according to the following rules: P -Pass, F - Fail. Any comments are in the comment box. FR - refers to the functional requirement set at the planning stage

4.3 Stabilization with drift compensation testing

On the table 4.3 there are present results of stabilization with drift compensation testing. The purpose of this testing is to ensure that drift rate calculation works correctly and platform doesn't drift or drift insignificantly over the short period of time (10 minutes).

ID	Requirement	Description	Input	Expected output	Pass/ Fail	Comment
1	FR1	Code can be compiled and run on the new system	N/A	Code compiles successfully and application is running	P	
2	FR2	Client is able to connect to the server	Client initiates the connection	The server side application should handle client and respond to the commands	P	
3	FR3	Inclinometer values can be retrieved on the server	N/A	Values from the inclinometer should reflect its inclination angles on the both axes	P	
4	FR4	Inclinometer values are sent to the client	Appropriate command on the client is invoked	Inclinometer values should be the same as on the server	F	When arriving to the client data is either corrupt or not sent correctly
5	FR5	Relay statuses can be retrieved by the client from the server	Appropriate command on the client is invoked	Server should return number where relay statuses are encoded	P	
6	FR6	Set/Reset specific relay	Appropriate command on the client is invoked and relay number N is supplied	Relay N is either turned on/off	P	There is a clicking noise when the relay is turned on/off as well as light indicating current status
7	FR7	Get status of the specific relay	Appropriate command on the client is invoked and relay number N is supplied	The server should return 1 if relay is turned on or 0 if not	P	

Table 4.1: Ported System Functionality Testing

ID	Requirement	Description	Input	Expected output	Pass/ Fail	Comment
1	FR1	Connect to the PTU, perform fast initialization, go to Home position	connect, fastInit and goHome functions are called	PTU platform should rotate to identify its limits and go the Home position	P	
2	FR2	Command the PTU to tilt Up/Down	Corresponding functions are called	PTU platform should tilt UP/Down	P	
3	FR3	Command the PTU to pan Left/Right	Corresponding functions are called	PTU platform should pan Left/Right	P	
4	FR4	Keep platform stabilized	Stabilize function is called	PTU should adjust platform position to keep it vertical when the whole unit is tilted	P	Platform position changes when whole unit is tilted
5	FR5	Send drift rate to the PTU	Corresponding function is called with data from the inclinometer supplied as arguments	When stabilized platform starts to move at the given rate	P	
6	FR6		Platform is stabilized with the given drift rate			

Table 4.2: PTU TASS library testing

ID	Requirement	Description	Input	Expected output	Pass/ Fail	Comment
1	FR7.1	Initial drift rate calculation	Appropriate function is called	PTU platform should drift over the specified amount of time and then return to the home position	P	
2	FR7.2	Stabilize platform with the drift rate calculated at the previous step	Stabilize function is called first, then the drift rate is applied	The platform should not drift or drift insignificantly	P	Although the drift still exists it is much lower
3	FR8.1	Drift rate calibration for the platform with fixed position	Appropriate function is called and new drift rate is calculated	N/A	P	The function is supposed to recalculate and adjust current drift rate
4	FR8.2	Apply drift rate calculated at the previous step	Appropriate function is invoked	If the drift rate was calculated correctly the PTU should not drift or drift less	P	
5	FR8.3	Drift rate calibration based on the data from the inclinometer	The PTU is physically tilted and appropriate drift calibration function is invoked	N/A	P	The function is supposed to recalculate and adjust current drift rate
6	FR8.4	Apply drift rate calculated at the previous step	Appropriate function is invoked	If the drift rate was calculated correctly the PTU should not drift or drift less	P	

Table 4.3: Stabilization with drift compensation testing

4.4 Functional Requirements

The functional requirements outline what

Chapter 5

Evaluation

Relevance to the degree

My degree scheme primary focus is to teach programming for the embedded and micro devices with limited processing power and hardware capabilities. It also focuses on teaching the right hardware choice for a particular task.

This project perfectly suited my degree scheme. It had both hardware and software parts. My work involved dealing with the micro computer with limited power capabilities. It had stages where I needed to learn different interface connections such as I^2C and serial RS-232. I gained some experience working with a GPIO14 chip. Although this was not the main aim of the project, but learning how GPIO14 chip works and that in reality it is just a micro controller was a desired experience of mine for a very long time. In this project I tackled a real world problem. I was developing solution to calculate and compensate drift rate of the Pan-Tilt Unit. Although in overall project didn't present a very complex problem there was quite a lot of work to be done with the code porting and in particular the background reading. I learned that background is a continuous process and can not be locked down to some specific point in time. After performing most of my initial research I would still come across new methods that could be incorporated and have to rewrite a part of my background research.

The Project Requirements

This project had quite a few functional requirements for the final system. At the end most of them were fulfilled First of all the system that works on the new platform. This requirement was achieved and system worked very well on the new platform. It could acquire sensible data from the inclinometer, switch on and off relays and accept client connections over the network. The main problem in porting code was the different implementation of the I^2C bus on the Raspberry Pi. The I^2C bus was required to talk to the GPIO14 chip, which in turn provided access to the inclinometer and relays. After the necessary library was found and installed code required a few to tweaks to make it work. Although this solution sounds trivial it required examination of the current code and understanding how it work to be able replace right functions and modify them accordingly.

The next requirement was to implement support for the new commands in the PTU TASS library. The implementation of new commands was not that difficult, but again it required to consult corresponding PTU documentation to find out about the protocol used as well as examine

the present implementation to be consistent while adding new functionality. It took some time to understand the protocol, how the messages are composed and that data inside them needs to be presented in the ASCII encoding, something that took a little while to understand although supposed to be straightforward.

The drift rate calculation was more about mathematics and right algorithm development. Probably this was the most easiest part of the project since by that time I had all the necessary knowledge of the system internals and could concentrate on the coding rather than learning something new.

It is sad that I run out of time and didn't integrated support of the new library functionality in to the main control system. However I think this is not the most critical part of the project since it could be fixed within a week or so. The real achievement is the fact that it was possible to develop the right algorithm for the drift rate calculation and that it proved to be working when stabilizing the PTU with the drift compensation. Before the practical testing was conducted it was unknown whether the calculations will be precise enough to cancel the drift. In the end the drift compensation works fine and PTU platform can stay vertical for at least 10 minutes before the drift changes and needs to be recalculated.

In overall project succeeded in achieving its main task: the PTU stabilization with drift compensation. There are some missing bits but they do not form the core of the project and as it was mentioned could be fixed within a short time.

Technology

One of the main challenges was the mastering of the new technologies such as C++, Raspberry Pi configuration, use of the I^2C bus and RS-232 serial interface. The C++ is object oriented programming language the same as Java. Although I had extensive knowledge of Java gained in the previous years, the C++ was different. Of course the paradigm of the classes and objects with inheritance and polymorphism is the same as in Java. However the definition of the classes was different with the introduction of the destructor's, public and private sections instead of tagging each individual function or variable. The class definition only contained the declarations of the methods and actual implementations were listed separately. To modify the function arguments I would need to use pointers.

Process and method

The Feature Driven Development methodology chosen to manage the project was efficient

5.1 Were you using technology you were familiar with or technology that was new to you?

summarize what you have achieved in comparison with the original project aims assess critically the work that you have carried out How could you have improved it Would you approach it differently if you were to start the project over again If you were able to continue with the work how would you extend the project

Appendices

Appendix A

Libraries and Raspberry Pi configuration

This Appendix contains essential information on the Raspberry Pi configuration. This configuration is required for the proper server side software functioning.

1.1 Raspbian OS configuration

The installation procedure of the Raspbian OS is covered on this website: <http://www.raspbian.org/>

1.2 Preventing Linux using the serial port

Disabling the serial console is required to use the Raspberry Pi's serial port (UART) to talk to other devices. There is a script which allows to automate the whole process and is covered in detail on this page: <https://github.com/lurch/rpi-serial-console> .

1.3 WiringPi library

The WiringPi project has been used to read and write data on I²C bus as part of the interaction with the gpio14 chip. The library is open source and it is available from the Gordons Projects website: <http://wiringpi.com/> . Installation is covered on this web page: <http://wiringpi.com/download-and-install/> . Before the I²C interface can be used I²C drivers need to be load into the kernel, guide is available at the <http://wiringpi.com/reference/i2c-library/> .

Annotated Bibliography

- [1] "GPIO14 - General Purpose I2C I/O Expansion Chip." [Online]. Available: <http://www.robot-electronics.co.uk/htm/gpio14tech.htm>

This page gives an overview of the GPIO14 chip (which is essentially a pre-programmed PIC16F818 8-bit microcontroller). Information on this page gave understand of how chip works and how it should be connected on I2C bus with other device. I used it heavily while migrating code from the Gumstix to RPI. In particular I was referring to this page to understand what information is held in the different registers and where I need to write data to change chip behaviour.

- [2] "RIEtech Global." [Online]. Available: <http://www.rietechnotioncontrol.com/aboutus.html>

Includes description of the company: when it was established and what it produces.

- [3] J. Bach, "Risk and Requirements Based Testing." [Online]. Available: http://www.damianbrunold.ch/files/testing/requirements_based_testing.pdf

This article discusses testing based on the requirements and the fact that requirements evolve during the project lifecycle and cannot be specified all at one.

- [4] Community, "Principles behind the Agile Manifesto." [Online]. Available: <http://agilemanifesto.org/principles.html>

Explains ideas behind the agile manifesto and what they really mean. Gave me an understanding of how development should be done in agile environment.

- [5] Dr Frédéric Labrosse, "Project: Idris." [Online]. Available: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/cs/research/ir/robots/idris/>

This web page gives an overview of the Idris vehicle and what it is used for. In particular I was interested in how PTU is mounted on the vehicle (its physical orientation).

- [6] R. P. Foundation, "Raspbian Installer." [Online]. Available: <http://www.raspbian.org/RaspbianInstaller>

This page has extensive documentation describing how Raspbian OS should be installed on the RPi. It also contains suggestions for the tweaks.

- [7] Gordons Projects, "Wiring Pi - GPIO Interface library for the Raspberry Pi." [Online]. Available: <http://wiringpi.com/>

This website is a home for the WiringPi library. I was consulting it when porting code from the Gumstix to the RPi. In particular I was looking how to install WiringPi library and what functions are available to send commands over I2C to the gpio14 chip.

- [8] D. Graham, E. van Veenendaal, I. Evans, and R. Black, *Foundations of Software Testing*. New Delhi: Pearson Education.

Certain chapters from the book we read to get an overview of the testing techniques and their appropriateness in the different projects.

- [9] Jacob Fraden, *Handbook of Modern Sensors*. Springer, 2010, p. 680. [Online]. Available: <http://www.plentyofbooks.net/2011/05/download-handbook-of-modern-sensors-4th.html> 1441964657.

This book gave me understanding of why different sensors are not perfect and may have problems with accuracy. On 339 p. it covers gyroscope architecture and in particular discusses factors that affect their accuracy.

- [10] Y. Kreinin, "How to mix C and C++." [Online]. Available: <http://yosefk.com/c++fqa/mixing.html>
- [11] Murata Electronics, "SCA121T dual axis inclinometer modules data sheet." [Online]. Available: http://www.murataelectronics.com/sites/default/files/documents/sca121t_inclinometer_datasheet_82127400a2.pdf

This data sheet describes inclinometers features and characteristics. I was particularly interested in understanding the measuring directions.

- [12] NXP Semiconductor, "I2C-bus specification and user manual," 2012. [Online]. Available: http://www.nxp.com/documents/other/UM10204_v5.pdf

This user manual gives in depth description of I2C bus; I was interested in analysing the fundamental architecture of this bus as well as reading about SDA and SCL signals.

- [13] Raspberry Pi Foundation, "Raspberry Pi Quick Start Guide." [Online]. Available: <http://www.raspberrypi.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/quick-start-guide-v1.1.pdf>

Describes steps to get RPi up and running in a short time.

- [14] —, "What is a Raspberry Pi?" [Online]. Available: <http://www.raspberrypi.org>

This website gives an overview of the Raspberry Pi computer and what it is capable of. It was a starting point for me in understanding of its hardware specifications and documentation about initial setup.

- [15] Sagebrush Technology Inc, "Command Set Documentation, Pan-Tilt Gimbals, Servomotor Version," 2004.

This command set documentation defines a standard for the control of the PTU. I am interested in the contents of the tables with information about the error codes and general device control commands.

- [16] Sagebrush Technology Inc., “Model 20 Pan-Tilt Gimbal User Manual,” 2005.

This manual describes system set-up information and identifies the parameters necessary to operate a Model 20 Servo unit. In particular it describes available TASS stabilization commands.

- [17] SensorWiki.org, “Gyroscope.” [Online]. Available: <http://sensorwiki.org/doku.php/sensors/gyroscope>