

**Project Report**

for the subject

**Internet of Things**

Topic:

**Molt Prevention System**

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1. Introduction

This project aims to develop a comprehensive IoT system to monitor and analyze indoor and outdoor environmental conditions in real time. By utilizing a network of sensors to measure temperature and humidity, the system calculates absolute humidity and recommends the best times for ventilation based on outdoor weather data. Users can register their houses, configure rooms, and receive timely notifications through a user-friendly interface, ensuring efficient moisture control and healthier living environments.

With the integration of digital twins to represent houses and their rooms, the system also leverages geolocation data to fetch precise weather information for external comparisons. This feature ensures accurate recommendations tailored to the unique environmental context of each user.

The report details the design, implementation, and evaluation of this IoT-based mold prevention system, highlighting its functional and non-functional requirements, technical architecture, and real-world applications. By bridging smart technology with practical problem-solving, this project showcases how IoT can be effectively applied to improve indoor living conditions while promoting energy-efficient practices.

## How to prevent mold from growing

Moisture is the most critical factor for mold development. It can result from various sources, such as water leaks, condensation on windows or walls, or high humidity levels. Indoor relative humidity above 60% creates an ideal environment for mold. A poor ventilation allows mold to grow. This often happens in spaces with limited airflow, such as basements, bathrooms and closed rooms.

Key strategies that prevent mold from growing include managing the indoor humidity level below 60% and ensuring proper ventilation. Also the timing for the ventilation to happen is important. If air becomes warmer, it can contain a higher amount of water. So for example if during ventilation hot air comes inside and it´s cooling down there, it can contain less water. This causes water to condense, which results in mold. To prevent this, it could be useful to compare the humidity levels of indoor and outdoor air.

## Relative Humidity and Absolut Humidity

Two key measures of humidity are relative humidity (RH) and absolute humidity (AH).

Relative humidity (RH) represents the amount of water vapor in the air compared to the maximum amount the air can hold at a given temperature. It is expressed as a percentage. For example, if the air contains half of its moisture-holding capacity, the relative humidity is 50%. However, this measurement is highly temperature-dependent. Warmer air can hold more water vapor, so RH increases as the air cools, even if no additional moisture is introduced. For this reason, RH is helpful in understanding how "humid" the air feels but does not provide an accurate picture of the actual moisture content when comparing environments with different temperatures.

Absolute humidity (AH), on the other hand, measures the actual quantity of water vapor in the air, expressed in grams of water vapor per cubic meter of air (g/m³). Unlike RH, AH is not influenced by temperature changes, making it a more reliable metric for assessing the actual moisture content of the air. For example, if the absolute humidity indoors is 10 g/m³ and the absolute humidity outdoors is 7 g/m³, it would be effective to ventilate the room to reduce indoor moisture. The formula to calculate absolute humidity (AH) from temperature (T) and relative humidity (RH) is written down in (1). [1]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | (1) |

The key difference between these two measurements lies in their dependency on temperature. RH varies with temperature and provides a relative indication of how saturated the air feels, whereas AH remains constant regardless of temperature and directly reflects the water vapor present in the air.

For mold prevention, both metrics are important. High relative humidity, particularly above 60%, creates conditions conducive to mold growth, especially in warm spaces. However, comparing absolute humidity levels between indoor and outdoor environments is essential to determine when ventilation is effective.

# Analysis

This part contains a definition of the given scenario and an analysis of the functional and non-functional requirements.

## Scenario Definition

Mold formation is a common problem in homes with poor ventilation, especially during cold and damp seasons. Excessive indoor humidity contributes to mold growth, which can damage property and pose health risks.

By monitoring environmental conditions and guiding users on optimal ventilation times, this system aims to create a healthier living environment.

A typical use case involves:

* Monitoring temperature and humidity in rooms such as the living room, bedroom, and kitchen.
* Fetching outdoor climate data from sensors or APIs.
* Computing absolute humidity for both indoor and outdoor conditions.
* Comparing humidity levels to recommend when windows should be opened.
* Providing notifications trends via a user-friendly dashboard or mobile app.

The following assumptions has been made:

* The user has access to Wi-Fi or a reliable network for data communication.
* The user will install sensors in appropriate locations to ensure accurate readings.
* The system will rely on external weather APIs if outdoor sensors are not available.

## Competitors

This Part contains research on different competitors, who fulfill atleast a part of the scenario.

### Xiaomi “Mi Temperature and Humidity Monitor 2”

Xiaomi is a chinese brand, which is speazialised on consumer electronics, including devices for smart homes. There they are offering a smart device to measure temperature and humidity. The device includes a display and is connected via bluetooth to other devices, for example heating or vaporation. It´s shown in Image 1.

Ein Bild, das Uhr, Digitale Uhr, Im Haus enthält.

Automatisch generierte Beschreibung

Image 1: Mi Temperature and Humidity Monitor 2 [2]

The costs for one device are around 10€. [2]

For User Notification you need the “Smart Home Hub 2”. It´s connected to the internet and offer bluetooth connectivity. The user could connect the termperature and humidity monitor to the internet and get notifications on his smartphone. The Costs for the “Smart Home Hub 2” are around 35€. You can connect multiple sensors to it. [3]

### Bosch Smart Home “Room thermostat II”

The “Room thermostat II” is a smart home measuring device by Bosch. It`s ued in a similar way to the one made by Xiaomi.

Ein Bild, das Text, Elektronisches Gerät, Gerät, Elektronik enthält.

Automatisch generierte Beschreibung

Image 2: Room thermostat II [4]

The devices are connected via bluetooth to a Smart Home Controller, which is connected to the internet. Bosch Smart Home offers then a mobile application to check temperature and humidity and offers the opportunity to turn on heating or ventilation. The costs compeared to the solution oferd by xiaomi are much higher. One “Room thermostat II” is offered for 79,99€ and the Controller for 100€. [4] [5]

### KNX

KNX is a standardized, open protocol for home and building automation that allows various devices and systems to communicate with each other, regardless of the manufacturer. It is widely used for smart home installations and building management systems, offering features like lighting control, HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning), security, and energy management. It could be useful to connect our sensors to the knx-network. We could also implement the ventilation service and the user client with this communication protocol. But there are a few challenges. On the one hand knx devices are usually wired to each other. Also there a high costs knx user licences. This makes the system not affordable for everybody.

## Functional Requirements

The Functional Requirements (FR) defining the functional behavior of the system. We created them to describe how the system should work. They are listet in Table 1.

Table 1: Functional Requirements

|  |
| --- |
| **Functional Requirements** |
| **FR1 – Indoor Temperature and Humidity Monitoring**  **Requirement:** The System can measure the temperature and humidity in multiple indoor rooms.  **Input:** Current room temperature and humidity  **Output:** System status update |
| **FR2 – Outdoor Temperature and Humidity Monitoring**  **Requirement:** The System can fetch the outdoor temperature and humidity using API’s or sensors.  **Input:** Current outdoor temperature and humidity at a specific location  **Output:** System status update |
| **FR3 – Absolute Humidity Calculation**  **Requirement:** The System can calculate the Absolute Humidity for indoor and outdoor conditions  **Input:** Temperature and Relative Humidity  **Output:** System status update |
| **FR4 – Compare Indoor and Outdoor Absolute Humidity**  **Requirement:** The System can compare the Absolut Humidity for indoor and outdoor conditions. Raises a flag, if the user should open a window.  **Input:** Absolute Humidity  **Output:** System status update, Flag |
| **FR5 – User Notification to recommend when the window should be opened**  **Requirement:** Notify the user when outdoor Absolute Humidity is lower than indoor Absolute Humidity.  **Input:** Absolute Humidity Comparison  **Output:** Notification to the user |
| **FR6 – User Warning for high indoor Relative Humidity**  **Requirement:** Send a warning to the user, when the indoor Relative Humidity exceeds a defined threshold.  **Input:** Indoor Relative Humidity  **Output:** Alert notification to the user |
| **FR7 – Update Sensor Configuration**  **Requirement:** Allows the user to dynamically add or remove sensors  **Input:** Sensor Configuration Data  **Output:** Updated System |
| **FR8 – Update Thresholds**  **Requirement:** Allows the user to dynamically update thresholds for alerts and notifications.  **Input:** User Input  **Output:** Updated System |
| **FR9 – User registration**  **Requirement:** Allow user registration.  **Input:** User data  **Output:** Registered User |
| **FR10 – House registration**  **Requirement:** Allow house registration. A house contains one or more rooms.  **Input:** House data  **Output:** Updated System |
| **FR11 – Remote Window Opening**  **Requirement:** The user can open the windows remotely or start a ventilation system.  **Input:** User command  **Output:** Window opened, or ventilation system started |

The following part analyses the functional requirements and shows which system can be used to fulfill the requirement.

## Non-functional requirements

Beside their functional requirements there are also non-functional requirements. They are defining how the system could be used. Table 2 shows a list.

Table 2: Non-functional requirements

|  |
| --- |
| **Non-Functional Requirements** |
| **NFR1 - Cost-Effectiveness**  The system must be affordable to ensure accessibility for a broad range of users. |
| **NFR2 - Energy Efficiency**  Sensors must operate with low power consumption to ensure extended battery life. Data transmission must be optimized to reduce energy usage. |
| **NFR3 – Real Time Notifications**  The system must send real-time notifications to users about updates or issues, ensuring timely actions. |
| **NFR4 - Environmental Conditions**  Indoor sensors must operate reliably within 0°C to 50°C and 10%-90% Humidity.  Outdoor sensors must operate reliably within -20°C to 50°C and 0%-100% Humidity.  Outdoor sensors must withstand environmental conditions such as rain, frost, and heat. |

## Hardware

In this part the functional and non-functional requirements are analysed to check, which hardware is needed to fulfill them. Therefore all FR and NFR connected to the Hardware Setup are listed in Table 3.

Table 3: FR and NFR linked to hardware design

|  |
| --- |
| **FR1 – Indoor Temperature and Humidity Monitoring**  **Requirement:** The System can measure the temperature and humidity in multiple indoor rooms.  **Input:** Current room temperature and humidity  **Output:** System status update |
| **FR2 – Outdoor Temperature and Humidity Monitoring**  **Requirement:** The System can fetch the outdoor temperature and humidity using API’s or sensors.  **Input:** Current outdoor temperature and humidity at a specific location  **Output:** System status update |
| **FR11 – Remote Window Opening**  **Requirement:** The user can open the windows remotely or start a ventilation system.  **Input:** User command  **Output:** Window opened, or ventilation system started |
| **NFR1 - Cost-Effectiveness**  The system must be affordable to ensure accessibility for a broad range of users. |
| **NFR2 - Energy Efficiency**  Sensors must operate with low power consumption to ensure extended battery life. Data transmission must be optimized to reduce energy usage. |
| **NFR3 – Real Time Notifications**  The system must send real-time notifications to users about updates or issues, ensuring timely actions. |
| **NFR4 - Environmental Conditions**  Indoor sensors must operate reliably within 0°C to 50°C and 10%-90% Humidity.  Outdoor sensors must operate reliably within -20°C to 50°C and 0%-100% Humidity.  Outdoor sensors must withstand environmental conditions such as rain, frost, and heat. |
|  |

### Humidity and Temperature Monitoring

The system should measure the temperature and humidity in indoor and outdoor environments and upload them to the system. As a system we used in this case a flask server. We already gained a lot of experiences with this framework during the lab. This makes it in this case easier to implement the programm code. As a database we are using MongoDB. So the requirements is here to monitor the temperature and humidity and upload the values to the database.

During research three different temperature and humidity measuring devices have been found. They are listed and compared in Table 3.

Table 4: Compared Temperature and Humidity Sensors

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Image | DHT22 AM2302 Temperatursensor und Luftfeuchtigkeitssensor - AZ-Delivery | DHT11 Temperatursensor und Luftfeuchtigkeitssensor kompatibel mit Arduino und Raspberry Pi - AZ-Delivery | GY-BME280 Barometrischer Sensor für Temperatur, Luftfeuchtigkeit und Luftdruck - AZ-Delivery |
| Name | DHT22 [6] | DHT11 [7] | BME280 [8] |
| Price | 9,49€ | 4,99€ | 10,99€ |
| Measuring Range | -40°C - 80°C  0% - 100% | 0°C - 50°C  20% - 90% | -40°C bis 85 °C  0% - 100% |
| Accuracy | ±0.5°C  ±2%RH | ±2°C  ±5% | ±1.0°C  ±3% |
| Communication | Serial | Serial | I²C |

If we analyse the sensors for the desired usecase, the DHT11 sensor isn`t fulfilling the requirements in NFR4. Even if it`s the cheapest one, the accuracy is quite low. For this reason, we are going to choose the DHT22. The measuring range fulfills NFR4 and it has a good accuracy.

For the board the sensor is connected to, they are different possibilities. Some of them are listet and compared in Table 5.

Table 5: Comparison of different boards

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Image** |  |  | NodeMCU Lua Lolin V3 Module ESP8266 ESP-12F WIFI Wifi Development Board mit CH340 - AZ-Delivery |
| **Name** | Arduino Nano ESP32 [9] | Raspberry Pi Zero 2 W [10] | NodeMCU V3 ESP8266 |
| **Processor** | Dual-Core Xtensa LX7, up to 240 MHz | Quad-Core ARM Cortex-A53, 1 GHz | Tensilica L106, 80/160 MHz |
| **RAM** | 520 KB SRAM | 512 MB LPDDR2 | 32 KB Instruction + 96 KB Data |
| **Storage** | 384 kB ROM  16 kB SRAM in RTC (low power mode) | microSD card (user-defined size) | 4 MB Flash |
| **Communication Ports** | SPI, I2C, I2S, UART, CAN, GPIO | I2C, SPI, UART, GPIO, Mini HDMI port, CSI-2 camera connector | SDIO 2.0, SPI, UART, I2C, I2S, IRDA, PWM, GPIO |
| **Wi-Fi** | Yes (2.4 GHz + 5 GHz, Wi-Fi 4) | Yes (2.4 GHz, Wi-Fi 4) | Yes (2.4 GHz, Wi-Fi 4) |
| **Bluetooth** | Yes (Bluetooth 4.2 + BLE) | Yes (Bluetooth 4.2, BLE) | No |
| **GPIO-Pins** | 21 | 40 | 18 |
| **Key Features** | Dual-core, energy-efficient, versatile for IoT projects | Powerful, suitable for Linux-based applications | Simple for IoT, compact, cost-effective |
| **Price** | 21,96€ | 18,90€ | 7,99€ |

All three devices fulfill the requirements. For this project, the NodeMCU has been chosen. It`s by far the cheapest option and offers all the connections that are needed. We also gained some experience with this device, which makes it easier and less time intensive to implement the functions. For costs reasons we want to use the same sensor for outdoor and indoor measurements. Therefore only one prototype is needed to check the functionalities.

### Remote Window Opening

For opening and closing windows or starting ventilation remotly, we need another hardware setup. At this point of the project we don`t know, what kind of actuator we might use to open the window. For this reason we want to start with a relais. The relais could be controlled by a microcontroller and start a motor, which opens a window or power the ventilation. The relais is needed, becouse a microcontroller is typically not able to deliver the needed current.

A possible relais module is shown in Image 3. It consists of an ESP8266 board, which is mounted on top of a relais. It`s therefore easy controlable using a wifi connection. Costs are 6,49€, which makes the module a really affordable solution. [11]

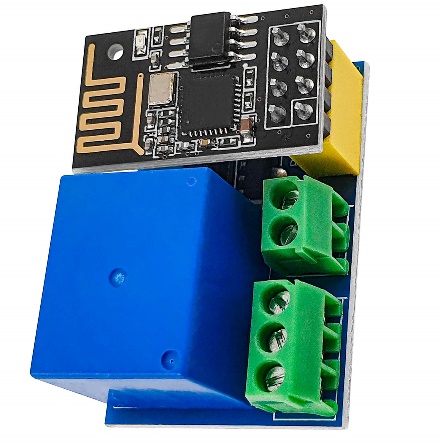


Image 3: ESP8266 Relais Module [11]

The mounted Relais is capable of handling up to 50V and 5A AC or 30V and 5A DC.

## Communication

For the communication between the choosen NodeMCU and the Flask Server there are multiple ways. Three different ones are presented in the following part:

### HTTP Request (REST API)

HTTP is the most common communication method used in web development. Each NodeMCU device can act as a client, sending data to the Flask server via HTTP requests (e.g., POST or GET). The Flask server processes these requests and responds accordingly.

**How it Works**:

* + Each device sends a request to a specific endpoint (URL) defined on the Flask server. For example, /device/data could receive temperature readings, while /device/status might handle status updates.

**Strengths**:

* + Simple to set up and widely supported.
  + Ideal for infrequent or non-time-critical updates.

**Weaknesses**:

* + Not efficient for real-time communication because each request is independent. Overhead in constantly re-establishing a connection for each request.

**Scalability**:

* + Works well with several devices but can become inefficient as the number of devices or the frequency of updates increases.

### WebSocket

WebSocket provides a persistent, full-duplex communication channel between the NodeMCU devices and the Flask server. Unlike HTTP, the connection remains open, allowing for instantaneous, real-time data exchange in both directions.

**How it Works**:

* + The Flask server creates a WebSocket endpoint that all devices can connect to. Once connected, devices can send data to the server or receive updates from it without repeatedly opening and closing connections.

**Strengths**:

* + Real-time, low-latency communication.
  + Efficient for frequent or continuous data exchange.

**Weaknesses**:

* + Slightly more complex to set up compared to HTTP.
  + Requires keeping track of active connections for multiple devices.

**Scalability**:

* + Works well for several devices but may require additional optimization or resources as the number of connections increases.

### MQTT Protocol

MQTT is a lightweight messaging protocol designed for IoT systems. It uses a publish/subscribe model, where NodeMCU devices and the Flask server communicate through an intermediary called the MQTT broker.

**How it Works**:

* + Each NodeMCU device publishes messages (e.g., sensor readings) to a specific topic on the MQTT broker.
  + The Flask server subscribes to these topics to receive the data. Similarly, the Flask server can publish messages to topics that the devices subscribe to, enabling two-way communication.

**Strengths**:

* + Designed for IoT and supports connecting a large number of devices efficiently.
  + Decouples devices and the server, meaning devices don't need to know about each other's existence. Reliable delivery of messages even with intermittent connections (depending on Quality of Service settings).

**Weaknesses**:

* + Requires setting up or using an MQTT broker (an additional component).
  + Learning curve if unfamiliar with MQTT concepts.

**Scalability**:

* + Highly scalable and supports many devices, making it the best choice for large IoT deployments.

A Comparison between the three methods is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Comparison between communication methods

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Method** | **Best Use Case** | **Real-Time** | **Ease of Setup** | **Scalability** | **Efficiency** |
| HTTP | Periodic updates or simple data logging | ✘ | Easy | Moderate | Moderate |
| WebSocket | Real-time control or frequent data updates | ✔ | Medium | Good | High |
| MQTT | IoT systems with many devices (publish/subscribe) | ✔ | Medium | Excellent | Very High |

For the molt prevention system the mqtt-protocol is chosen. It offers a high efficiency and scalability, which is perfect for the given problem.

# Literature

|  |  |
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