Hand-on IoT Specialization - IoT Communications course

Introduction

The present work is the continuation of the IoT Devices course where I assembled the Freenove Smart Car 4WD. Please refer to this short video: https://youtu.be/d5gMhNugcTo.

I will show how I have configured the different proposed aspects in the agenda of the course:

1. Set up the Bluetooth communication between the Raspberry PI and the desktop computer
2. Set up the wifi communication between the Raspberry PI and the desktop computer
3. Start up the web application that uses ElectronJS in the front-end and the Wifi python server in the backend

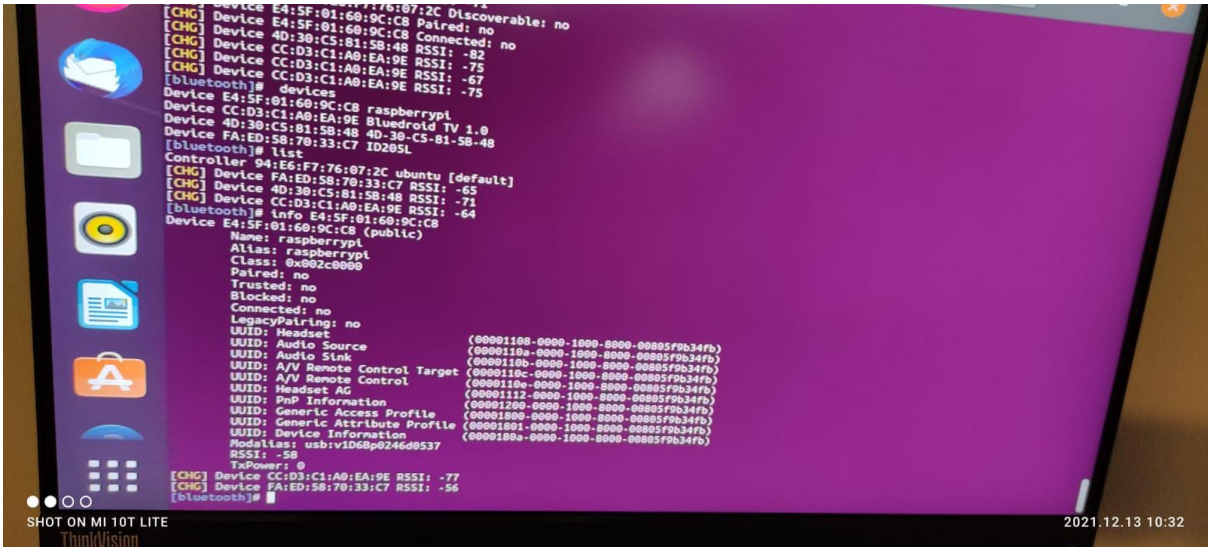
Setting up the Bluetooth connection

The devices used for these activities are a Windows 10 computer and the Raspberry PI. Initially, I installed the server program (bt_server.py) in the Raspberry and tried to do the same with the client one in Windows, but due to libraries problems that I didn't manage to solve I had to switch to other alternatives for the client operating system. I tried later running Ubuntu in VirtualBox and also VMWare (as was proposed) but it didn't work either, in both cases due to the virtualization tool didn't recognize the Bluetooth device of my desktop computer.
Due to all these limitations, I ran Ubuntu bare metal on the Desktop computer using a bootable flash USB stick, without installing the system, but configuring the package manager to install all the needed dependencies to be able to have Python, development libraries, and network utilities.
In such a way, I managed to run an operating system in the desktop computer able to run the python client using the pybluez library without problems and also recognizing the Bluetooth device (using bluetoothctl). And then I managed to run the client app connected to the server one in the Raspberry.

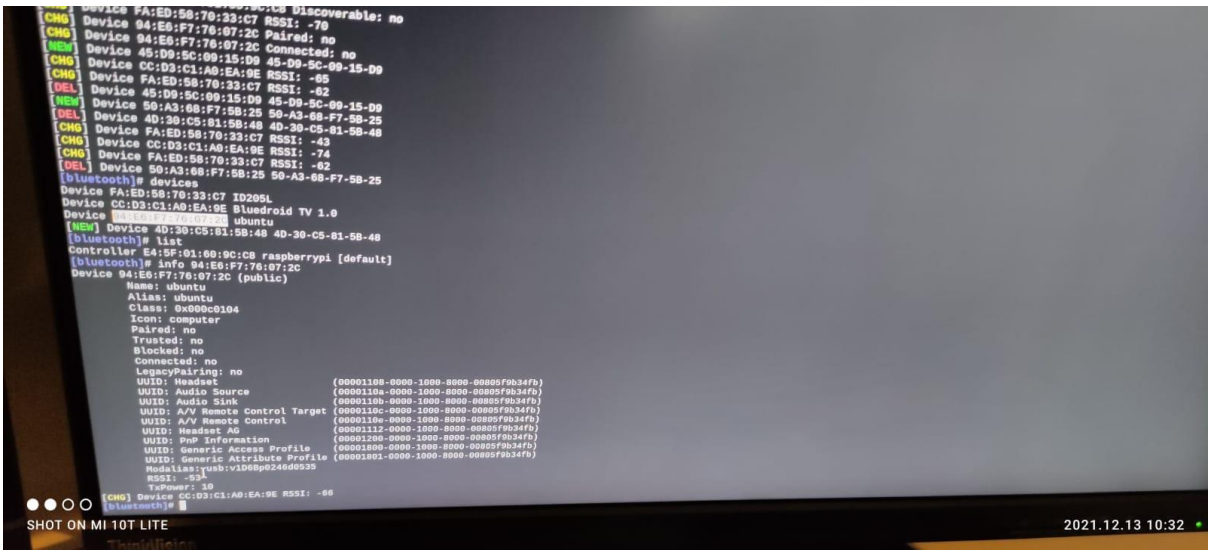
Something else to mention, it was necessary to pick some other port for the connection and configure properly the IDs of the server Bluetooth device in both sides. For this experiment, I chose port 10000 (and of course I had to allow the incoming connections from the firewall using ufw).

Pictures:

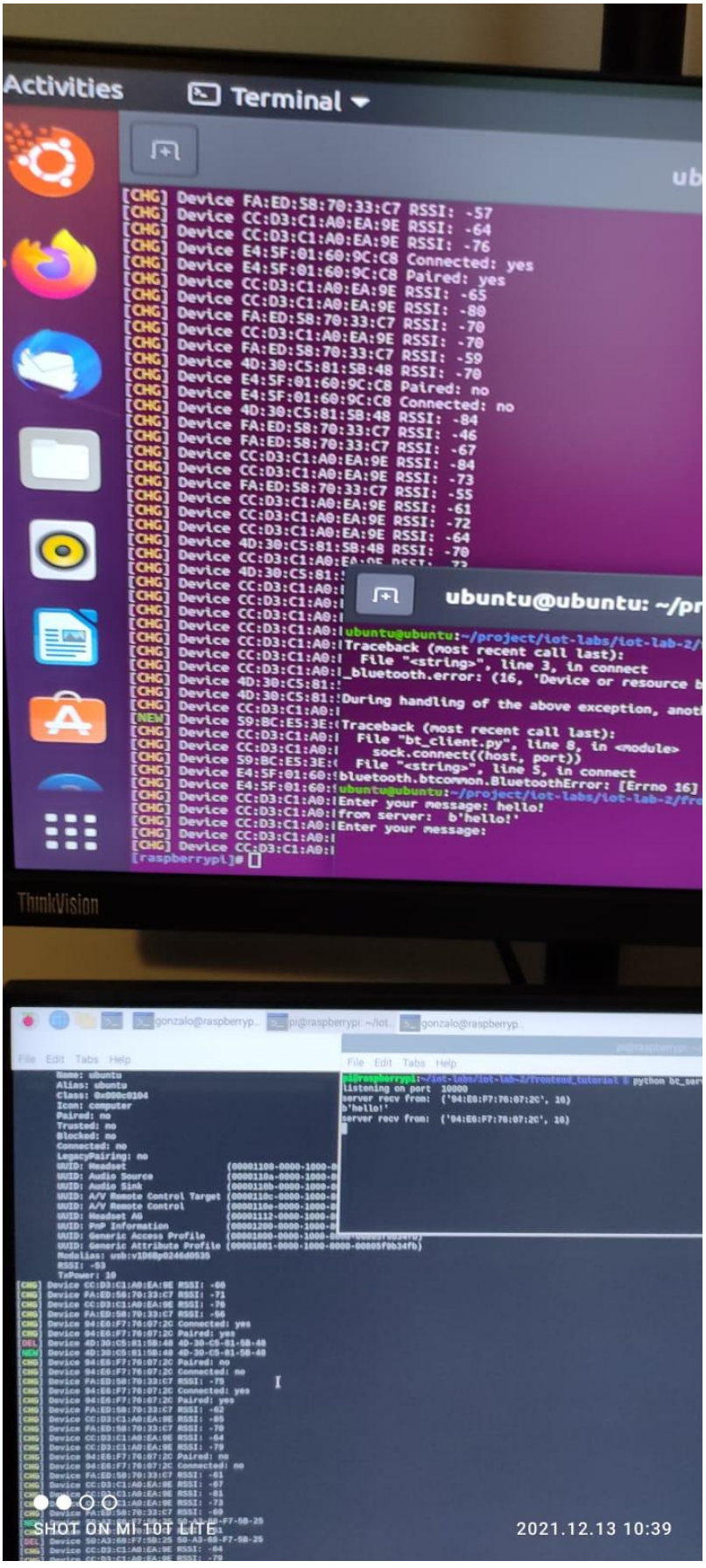
Running bluetoothctl on the desktop computer we can see that now the bluetooth device is recognized and we can also explore the near devices.



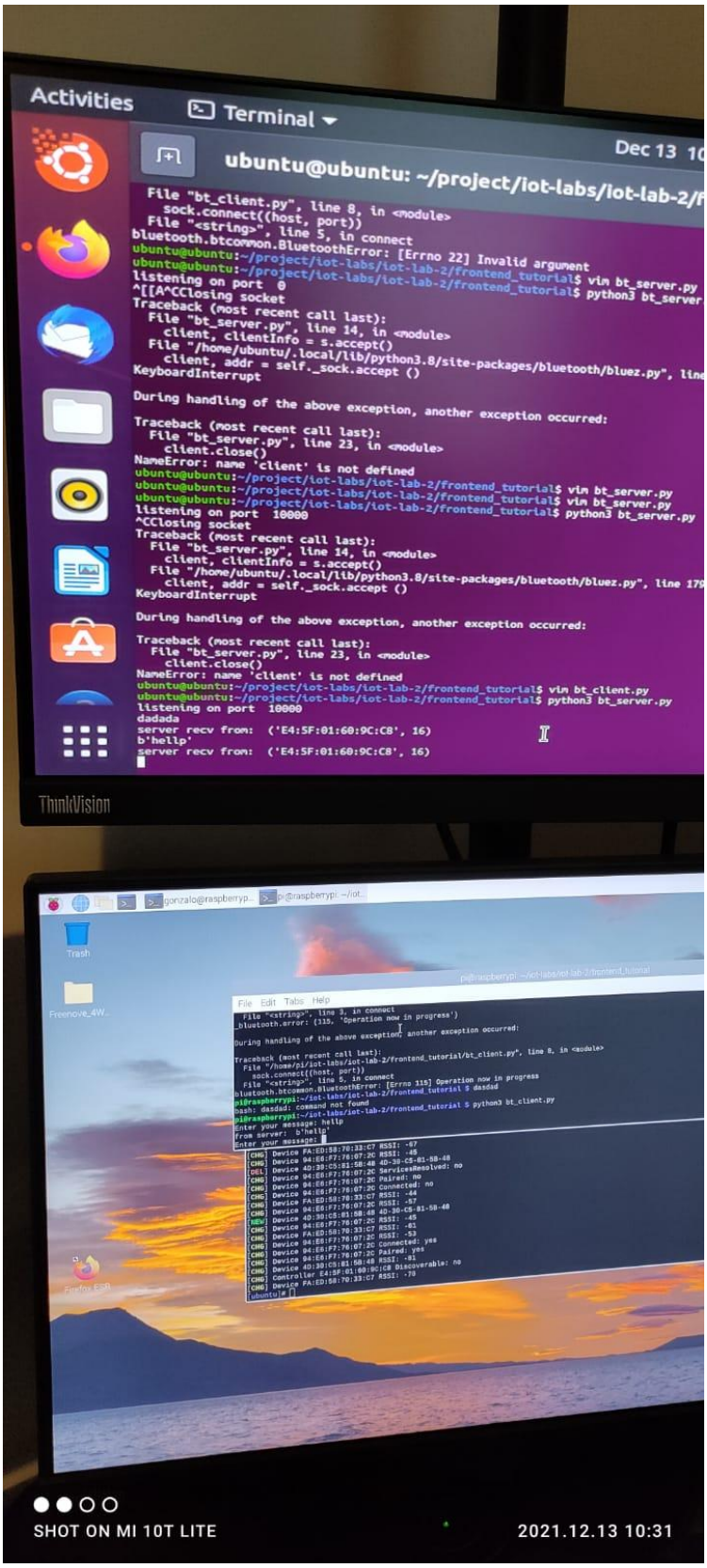
On the other hand, we can see the Ubuntu bluetooth device on the Raspberry PI



Then, as required, we can run the server on the Raspberry and the client on the Ubuntu desktop…


Activities
Terminal
ubuntu@ubuntu: ~/pr
ThinkVision
SHOT ON MI 10T LITE
2021.12.13 10:39

Or in the other way round, the client on the Raspberry and the server on the Ubuntu desktop..

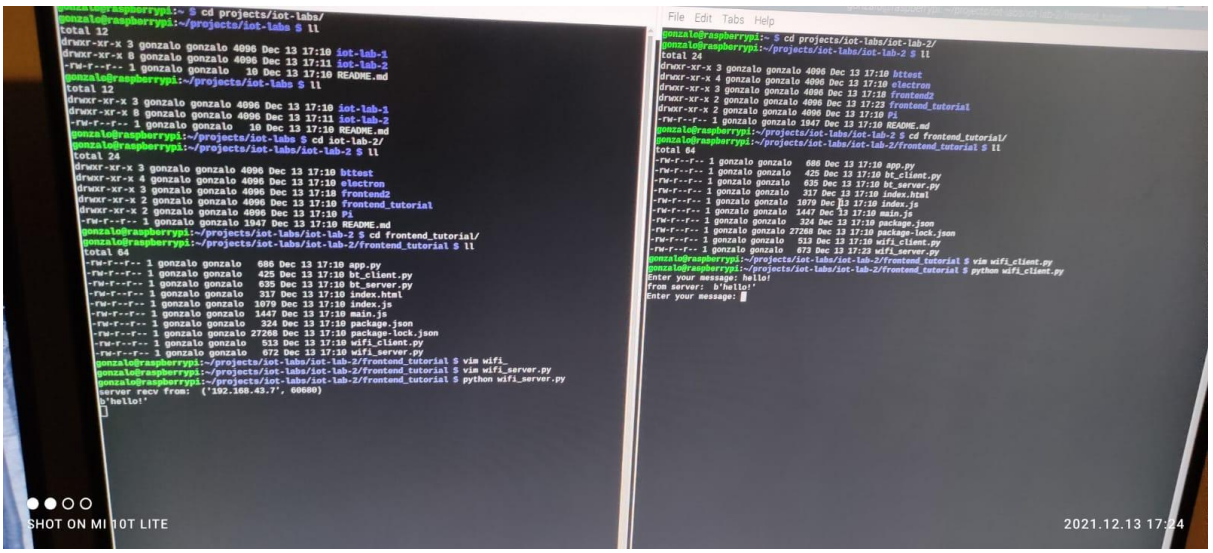


Wireless connection

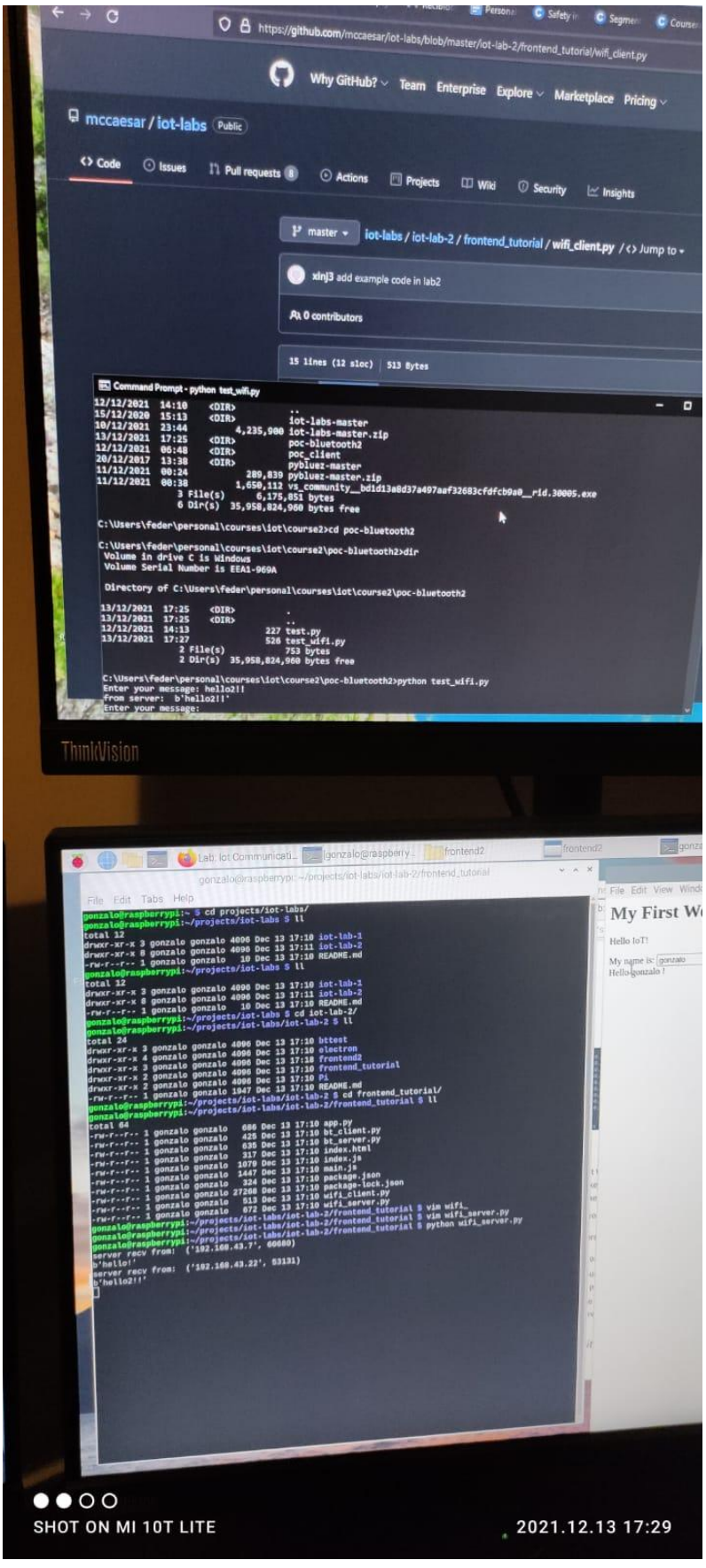
For setting up the socket communication over the TCP-IP WiFi connection I just had to install the socket library on Windows and Raspbian, configure the right IP addresses in the python code, and allow the incoming connections to the port. Other than that the connection was quite straightforward.

Pictures

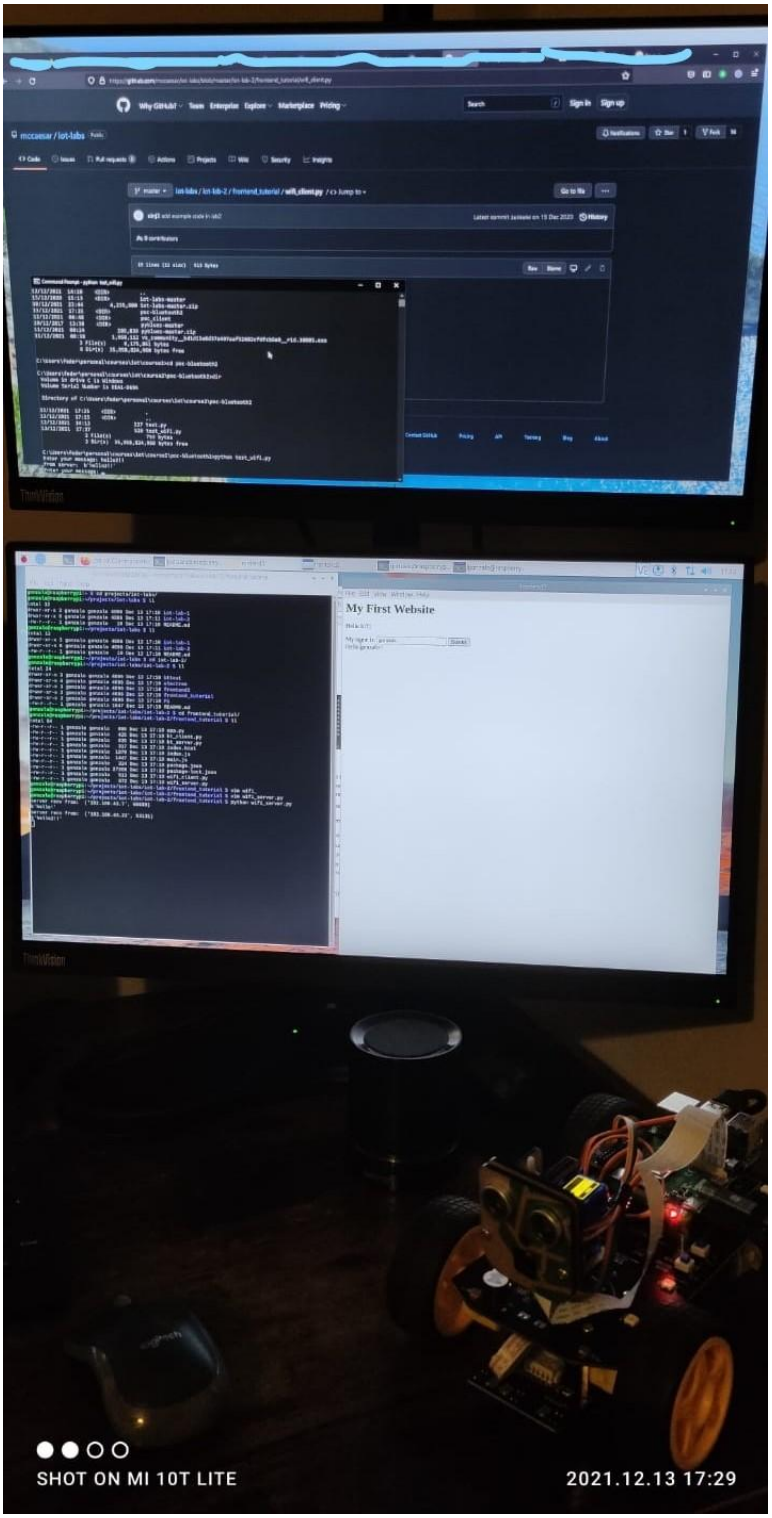
First I ran both programs on the Raspberry PI to do a quick test…



And later I ran the client one on Windows..


https://github.com/mccaesar/iot-labs/blob/master/iot-lab-2/frontend_tutorial/wifi_client.py
Why GitHub? Team Enterprise Explore Marketplace Pricing
mccaesar / iot-labs Public
Code Issues Pull requests Actions Projects Wiki Security Insights
master iot-labs / iot-lab-2 / frontend_tutorial / wifi_client.py Jump to
xinj3 add example code in lab2
0 contributors
15 lines (12 sloc) 513 Bytes
Command Prompt - python test_wifi.py
12/12/2021 14:10 <DIR> ..
15/12/2020 15:13 <DIR> iot-labs-master
10/12/2021 23:44 4,235,900 iot-labs-master.zip
13/12/2021 17:25 <DIR> poc-bluetooth2
12/12/2021 06:48 <DIR> poc_client
20/12/2017 13:38 <DIR> pybluez-master
11/12/2021 00:24 289,839 pybluez-master.zip
11/12/2021 00:38 1,650,112 vs_community__bd1d13a8d37a497aaf32683cfdfcb9a0__rid.30005.exe
3 File(s) 6,175,851 bytes
6 Dir(s) 35,958,824,960 bytes free
C:\Users\feder\personal\courses\iot\course2>cd poc-bluetooth2
C:\Users\feder\personal\courses\iot\course2\poc-bluetooth2>dir
Volume in drive C is Windows
Volume Serial Number is EEA1-969A
Directory of C:\Users\feder\personal\courses\iot\course2\poc-bluetooth2
13/12/2021 17:25 <DIR> .
13/12/2021 17:25 <DIR> ..
12/12/2021 14:13 227 test.py
13/12/2021 17:27 526 test_wifi.py
2 File(s) 753 bytes
2 Dir(s) 35,958,824,960 bytes free
C:\Users\feder\personal\courses\iot\course2\poc-bluetooth2>python test_wifi.py
Enter your message: hello2!!
From server: b'hello2!!'
Enter your message:
ThinkVision
gonzalo@raspberrypi: ~/projects/iot-labs/iot-lab-2/frontend_tutorial
File Edit Tabs Help
gonzalo@raspberrypi:~ $ cd projects/iot-labs/
gonzalo@raspberrypi:~/projects/iot-labs $ ll
total 12
drwxr-xr-x 3 gonzalo gonzalo 4096 Dec 13 17:10 iot-lab-1
drwxr-xr-x 8 gonzalo gonzalo 4096 Dec 13 17:11 iot-lab-2
-rw-r--r-- 1 gonzalo gonzalo 10 Dec 13 17:10 README.md
gonzalo@raspberrypi:~/projects/iot-labs $ ll
total 12
drwxr-xr-x 3 gonzalo gonzalo 4096 Dec 13 17:10 iot-lab-1
drwxr-xr-x 8 gonzalo gonzalo 4096 Dec 13 17:11 iot-lab-2
-rw-r--r-- 1 gonzalo gonzalo 10 Dec 13 17:10 README.md
gonzalo@raspberrypi:~/projects/iot-labs $ cd iot-lab-2/
gonzalo@raspberrypi:~/projects/iot-labs/iot-lab-2 $ ll
total 24
drwxr-xr-x 3 gonzalo gonzalo 4096 Dec 13 17:10 bttest
drwxr-xr-x 4 gonzalo gonzalo 4096 Dec 13 17:10 electron
drwxr-xr-x 3 gonzalo gonzalo 4096 Dec 13 17:10 frontend2
drwxr-xr-x 2 gonzalo gonzalo 4096 Dec 13 17:10 frontend_tutorial
drwxr-xr-x 2 gonzalo gonzalo 4096 Dec 13 17:10 P4
-rw-r--r-- 1 gonzalo gonzalo 1947 Dec 13 17:10 README.md
gonzalo@raspberrypi:~/projects/iot-labs/iot-lab-2 $ cd frontend_tutorial/
gonzalo@raspberrypi:~/projects/iot-labs/iot-lab-2/frontend_tutorial $ ll
total 64
-rw-r--r-- 1 gonzalo gonzalo 686 Dec 13 17:10 app.py
-rw-r--r-- 1 gonzalo gonzalo 425 Dec 13 17:10 bt_client.py
-rw-r--r-- 1 gonzalo gonzalo 635 Dec 13 17:10 bt_server.py
-rw-r--r-- 1 gonzalo gonzalo 317 Dec 13 17:10 index.html
-rw-r--r-- 1 gonzalo gonzalo 1079 Dec 13 17:10 index.js
-rw-r--r-- 1 gonzalo gonzalo 1447 Dec 13 17:10 main.js
-rw-r--r-- 1 gonzalo gonzalo 324 Dec 13 17:10 package.json
-rw-r--r-- 1 gonzalo gonzalo 27268 Dec 13 17:10 package-lock.json
-rw-r--r-- 1 gonzalo gonzalo 513 Dec 13 17:10 wifi_client.py
-rw-r--r-- 1 gonzalo gonzalo 672 Dec 13 17:10 wifi_server.py
gonzalo@raspberrypi:~/projects/iot-labs/iot-lab-2/frontend_tutorial $ vim wifi_
-rw-r--r-- 1 gonzalo gonzalo 672 Dec 13 17:10 wifi_server.py
gonzalo@raspberrypi:~/projects/iot-labs/iot-lab-2/frontend_tutorial $ vim wifi_server.py
gonzalo@raspberrypi:~/projects/iot-labs/iot-lab-2/frontend_tutorial $ python wifi_server.py
server recv from: ('192.168.43.7', 60680)
b'hello!'
server recv from: ('192.168.43.22', 53131)
b'hello2!!'
My First W
Hello IoT!
My name is: gonzalo
Hello gonzalo !
SHOT ON MI 10T LITE
2021.12.13 17:29

And another picture with my lovely Smart Car ^^ (isn’t it cute?)

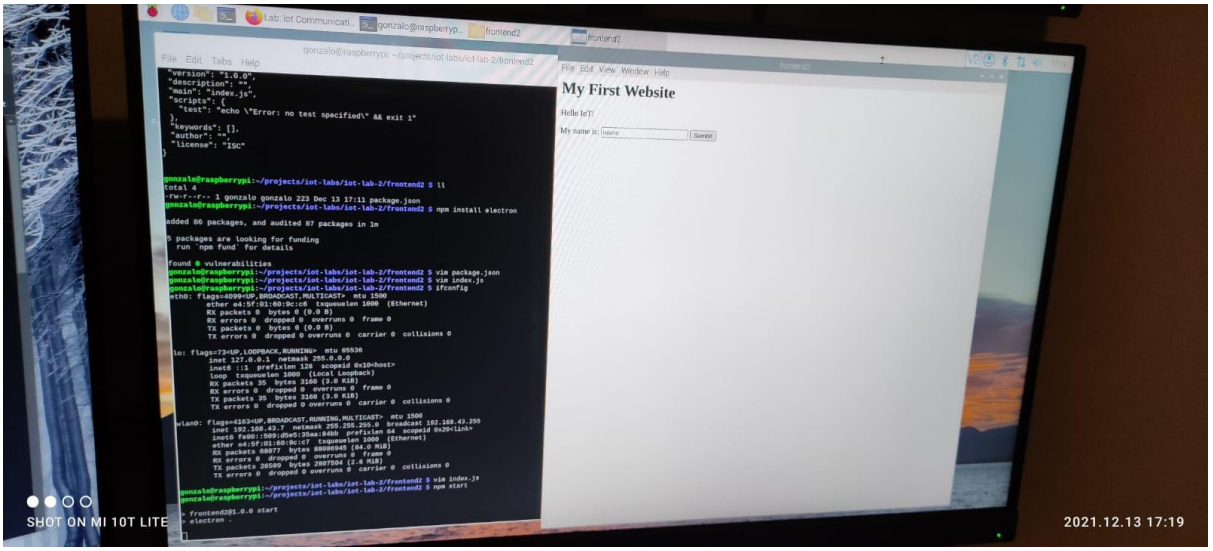


Web Frontend using Node.js and ElectronJs

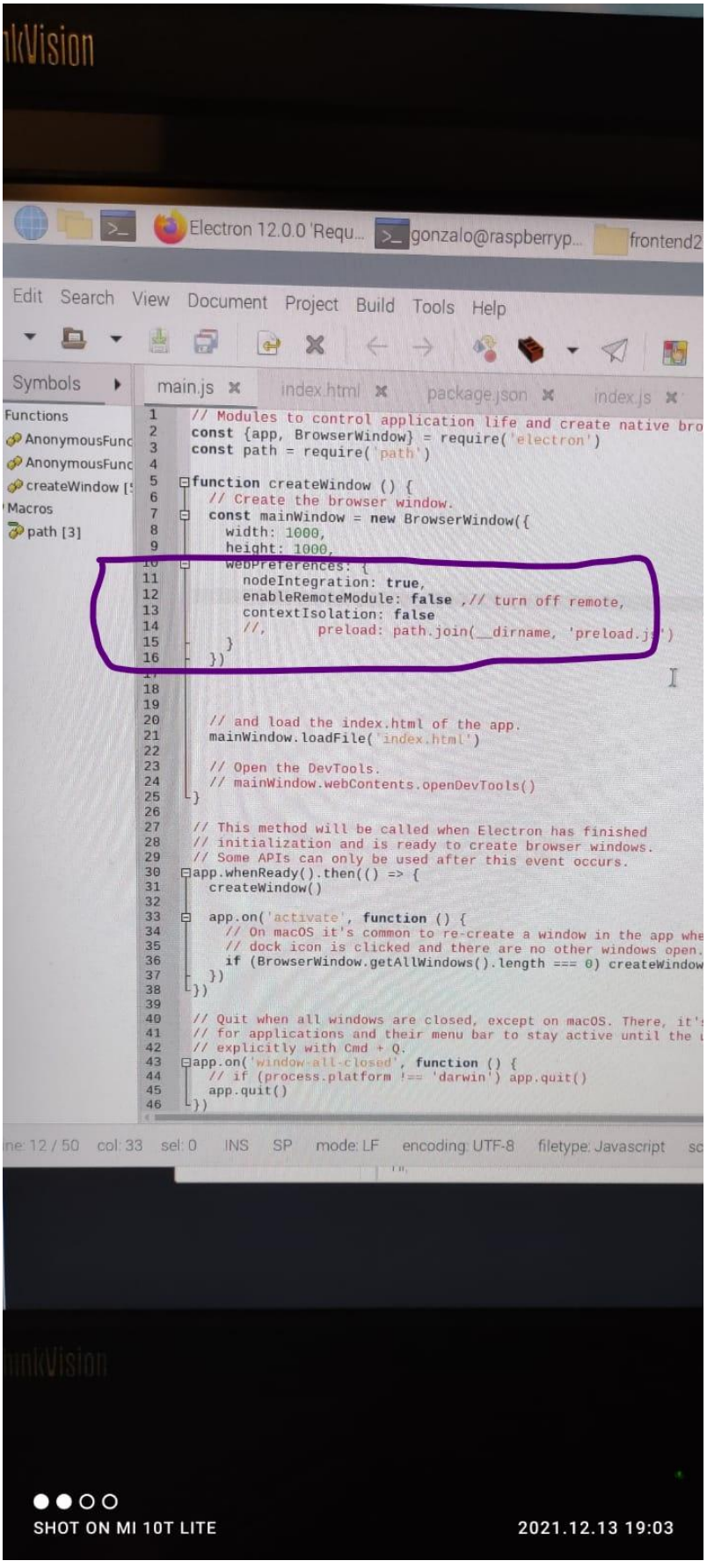
To start up the web frontend I first cloned the indicated repository and ran the commands for installing the node dependencies and starting up the server (npm install & npm start). This didn't work quite well then I followed the steps for creating the app from scratch but adding the files of the mentioned repository.
Then I ran:

$ npm init -y
$ npm install electron
$ npm start

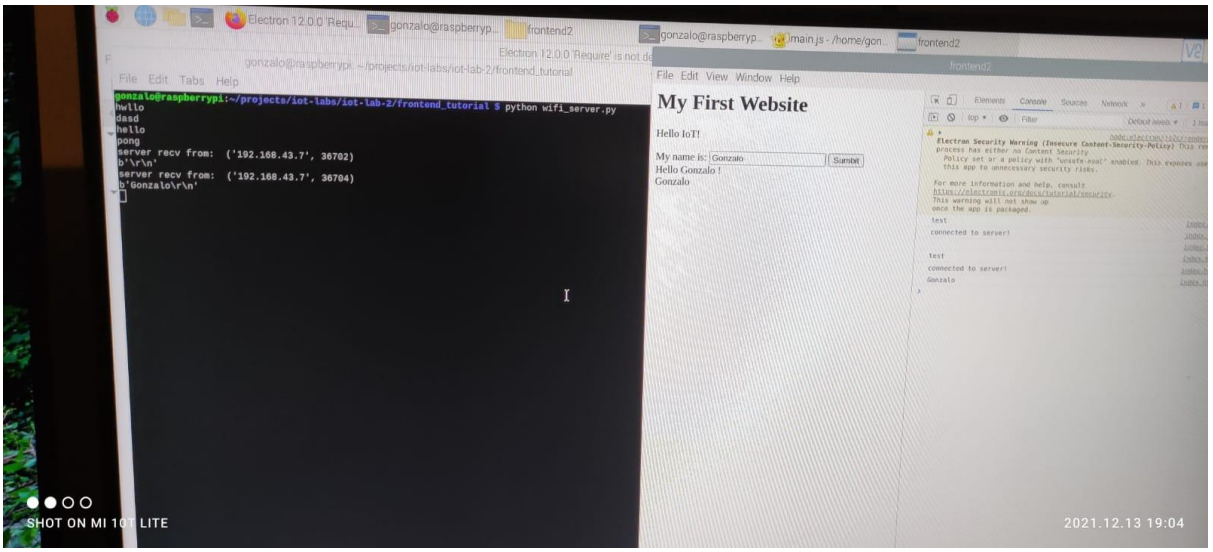
After adding the files of the iot-labs-2 folder in my npm project I managed to start up the web app (the hello world one).



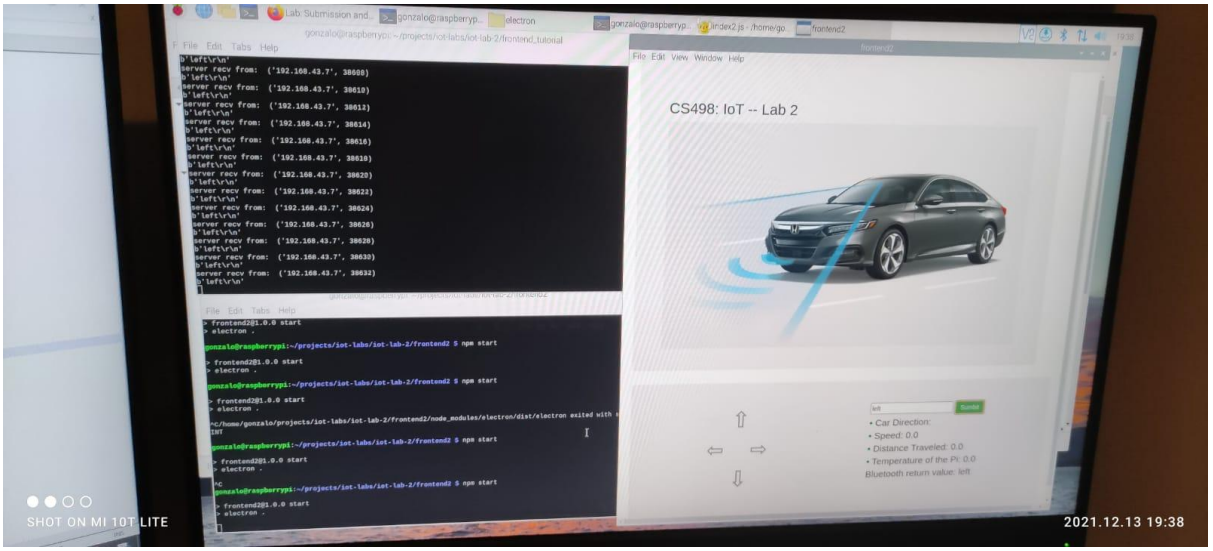
Then I configured the right IP addresses in the index.js and wifi_server.py files to establish the backend socket communication.
I had some problems at this point due to some runtime behavior of ElectronJS. I haven't used this framework before then I had to research a bit. The problem was that even in node is quite common to use the verb 'require' to include libraries and other modules, it just runs in the node server (the backend). Here in this application, it seems that ElectronJS is a front-end framework that is embedding the web application in sort of desktop application without using the browser for the renderization (just the engine of the browser) and it also uses the 'require' verb everywhere. Anyway, even this is normal for ElectronJS the renderization engine was throwing an error that 'require is not defined'.
After googling a bit and trying different alternatives I solved just including one line of code in the configuration of Electron setting 'contextIsolation' to 'false'.


Electron 12.0.0 'Requ...
gonzalo@raspberryp...
frontend2
Edit Search View Document Project Build Tools Help
Symbols
main.js
index.html
package.json
index.js
Functions
AnonymousFunc
AnonymousFunc
createWindow [
Macros
path [3]
// Modules to control application life and create native bro
const {app, BrowserWindow} = require('electron')
const path = require('path')
function createWindow () {
// Create the browser window.
const mainWindow = new BrowserWindow({
width: 1000,
height: 1000,
webPreferences: {
nodeIntegration: true,
enableRemoteModule: false ,// turn off remote,
contextIsolation: false
//, preload: path.join(__dirname, 'preload.js')
}
})
// and load the index.html of the app.
mainWindow.loadFile('index.html')
// Open the DevTools.
// mainWindow.webContents.openDevTools()
}
// This method will be called when Electron has finished
// initialization and is ready to create browser windows.
// Some APIs can only be used after this event occurs.
app.whenReady().then(() => {
createWindow()
app.on('activate', function () {
// On macOS it's common to re-create a window in the app whe
// dock icon is clicked and there are no other windows open.
if (BrowserWindow.getAllWindows().length === 0) createWindow
})
})
// Quit when all windows are closed, except on macOS. There, it'
// for applications and their menu bar to stay active until the
// explicitly with Cmd + Q.
app.on('window-all-closed', function () {
// if (process.platform !== 'darwin') app.quit()
app.quit()
})
ne: 12 / 50 col: 33 sel: 0 INS SP mode: LF encoding: UTF-8 filetype: Javascript
SHOT ON MI 10T LITE
2021.12.13 19:03

After doing that, the web app started up without problems and I managed to conclude the communication between the hello world page and the python server app.



Finally for starting up the proper Car Web frontend and send instructions to the car I just moved the files from the electron folder to the current one, configured the IP addresses again and again ran npm start and then in the new frontend just indicating the directions to execute ‘left’, ‘right’, etc, that was sent to the python backend that is able to communicate with the Raspberry PI drivers and execute it on the car.



Conclusions

The Bluetooth part was a bit challenging essentially due to the problems of the pybluez libraries in Windows and the lack of an easy way of running a virtual operating system that just recognizes the Bluetooth device of the host. Other than that, the Bluetooth protocol didn’t present great challenges, it was just a matter of running the client and server programs

a few times -and maybe struggling a bit with the bluetoothctl tool to pair, connect, disconnect, etc- till find the point where the connection is established.
The wifi part wasn't challenging at all. And finally the web frontend part it was a bit tricky essentially due to the behavior of ElectronJS.