

### **Acknowledgements**

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Firstly I would like to thank my supervisor Stephen Farrell for his guidance, advice, and expertise over the course of this project. I would like to thank Kerry Hartnett for his assistance during the project. I would also like to thank my friends and family for their continued support throughout the year.

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project is entirely my own work and that it has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university

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Name

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Date

## Abstract

This report details the update made to an existing solar powered LoRa gateway with the aim of improving system up time, via enhanced power management. The aforementioned update involved replacing legacy hardware from the previous system, and rewriting the existing code base to allow customisation of operation parameters.

Solar power is becoming increasingly prevalent as governments and private entities look to move away from the use of fossil fuels towards renewable energy. As this transition is made, solar panel owners will look to optimize the amount of energy generated, in order to achieve maximal efficiency.

The Internet of Things (IoT) is also an area of rapid growth, with the number of IoT-connected devices growing exponentially year-on-year. Accordingly, the number of gateways used to connect devices with the cloud is also growing as increased network capacity is required.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

This report presents the final year project titled LoRa Power Management, in the area of Networks and Telecommunications

### 1.1 Project Overview

#### 1.1.1 Solar Energy

At of 2011, world energy consumption was 10 terawatts per year, by 2050 that figure is forecast to triple to 30 terawatts per year[Raz11]. With such a large growth in energy consumption, along with the rapid exhaustion of fossil fuels, renewable sources of energy are being looked to as the solution to these impending energy deficits. As one of the most developed renewable power sources in terms of technology, solar is a viable answer for many bodies looking to move away from non-renewable sources. The system described in this project uses solar energy as its power source. It aims to take into consideration the varying nature of solar irradiance when in operation.

#### 1.1.2 LoRa Gateway

LoRa gateways are used by Internet of Things devices to connect with the cloud, in order to relay data and receive downlink communications. Operators of gateways aim for maximal system up time, in order to provide the most reliable service possible. As the system described is used to power a LoRa gateway, it follows that an aim of this project is to maximize gateway operation time, to provide ample coverage to IoT devices within its range.

Figure 1.1: Previous gateway implementation



The previous implementation of the solar powered gateway, in operation January-September 2017, was handed down before beginning the project (see fig. 1.1)

### 1.1.3 On Board Computer

Some hardware from the old implementation had become faulty, and would need to be replaced. The system requires a low power board, as one with a high current draw would greatly affect the up time of both the power management program and the gateway by using unnecessary energy. In-built RTC and power management capabilities are also requirements of the board, in order for the system to power on and off at designated times and battery thresholds. The system connects to phidgets, which are data I/O boards that relay sensor information from the solar panels back to the computer, in addition to providing a visual output in the form of a screen that displays the current device state (see figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: Phidget screen



## 1.2 Reader's Guide

- Chapter 2 will cover the project background and related work.
- Chapter 3 will discuss the body of work including project methodology.
- Chapter 4 will present the conclusions and suggest potential future work in this area.
- Chapter 5 will provide the reference list.
- Chapter 6 will contain documentation for the code.

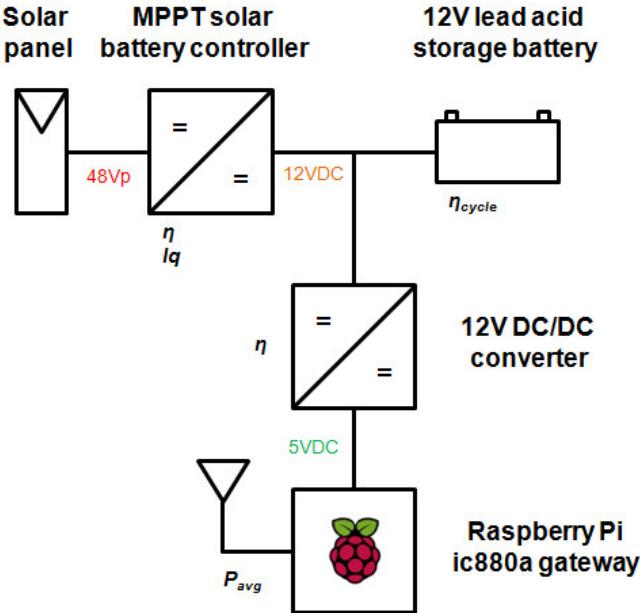
# Chapter 2

## Background

### 2.1 Motivation

The Internet of Things (IoT) is a rapidly growing area. According to Forbes, the global market for IoT is projected to grow from "\$2.99T in 2014 to \$8.9T in 2020, attaining a 19.92% Compound Annual Growth Rate" [For17]. With its expansion comes the demand for additional capacity, to allow new devices to connect with the cloud. Considering the fledgling nature of the market and the relatively low barrier to entry when compared to other telecommunications markets such as cellular, there is much work that can be done in improving the state of IoT. From security management, to coverage optimisation and maximising up time, IoT solutions still have plenty of distance left to cover.

Solar power is also an area of rapid expansion. Between 2000 and 2017, solar power has seen a growth factor of 57 [Nan17]. Combining the areas of solar and IoT enables work in an intersection between two quickly developing industries, and allows for the creation of new and exciting technologies. For instance, as IoT gateway operators look to spread their coverage across hard to reach areas such as barren deserts, the difficulty of supplying power via mains to these gateways grows significantly. However by making use of solar energy as a power source, these hubs could be set up with remarkably less effort than setting up power lines across such an area.

Figure 2.1: Solar Powered Gateway, Epyon, *TheThingsNetwork 2017*

## 2.2 State-of-the-art

The intersection between solar power and IoT gateways is a mostly unexplored area. There is a briefly documented solution available on the web, posted in February of 2017 [DSG17], the design for which can be seen in figure 2.1. The aforementioned system was relatively successful, able to stay up for "6 days" during cloudy weather. However, apart from this project there is a distinct lack of work in the solar/IoT cross section. There are products for sale in the IoT device area, such as the Cypress S6SAE101A00SA1002 Solar-Powered IoT Device Kit [CYP18], but these devices are small sensors with low power requirements. This is in contrast with IoT gateways, which are far more energy intensive, and as such require a considerably larger solar array to provide power.

# **Chapter 3**

# **Project**

## **3.1 Methodology**

The approach to creating the system was as follows

- Inspect the previous implementation, and retain the adequately working parts (both hardware and software)
- Replace defunct hardware pieces with up-to-date alternatives
- Run old software implementation on new hardware as proof-of-concept
- Design new software system
- Implement, test and tweak new system

### 3.2 Setup

Before beginning work on implementing the software system, it was necessary to bring the hardware up-to-date. Some parts of the handed-down equipment had become defunct and required replacement. The Eurotech Proteus board, used to control operation of the gateway, was no longer functioning. The solar charge controller, which regulates the solar energy received from the panels was also non-functional.

A Raspberry Pi 3 was acquired to run the power management application [rPi18], along with a solar charge controller to power the Pi via energy harvested by the panels [SCC18]. As the Pi does not have built-in RTC and power management capabilities, a WittyPi was also obtained, which adds these functionalities to the Raspberry Pi. The WittyPi is a small extension board that attaches to the Raspberry Pi, as can be seen in figure 3.1.

Once the necessary equipment was purchased, system assembly began. After being attached to the WittyPi, the Raspberry Pi was connected to the solar charge controller via USB to micro USB cable. The Pi connects to the phidget interface via Ethernet, to display current status on screen and track battery voltage. The solar charge controller was wired into the batteries and a generator as the power source, as solar panels are not usable from inside the development office. The assembly outline can be seen in figure 3.2.

Post assembly, software setup was done as follows:

- Install Pi from NOOBS
- Follow instructions to use phidgets with the Pi[PHI14]
- Clone and make the pbm mercurial repo[PBM17]
- Install WittyPi on Raspberry Pi[WPI18]

Figure 3.1: Raspberry Pi with WittyPi

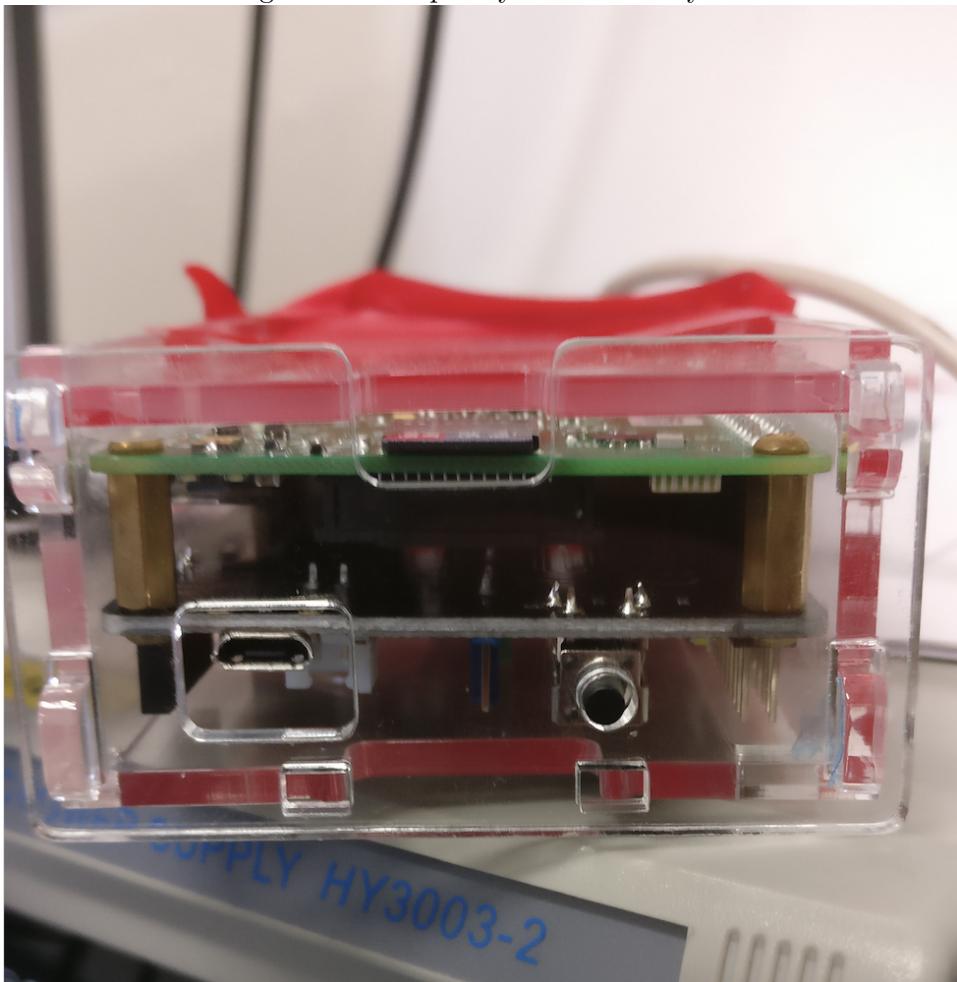
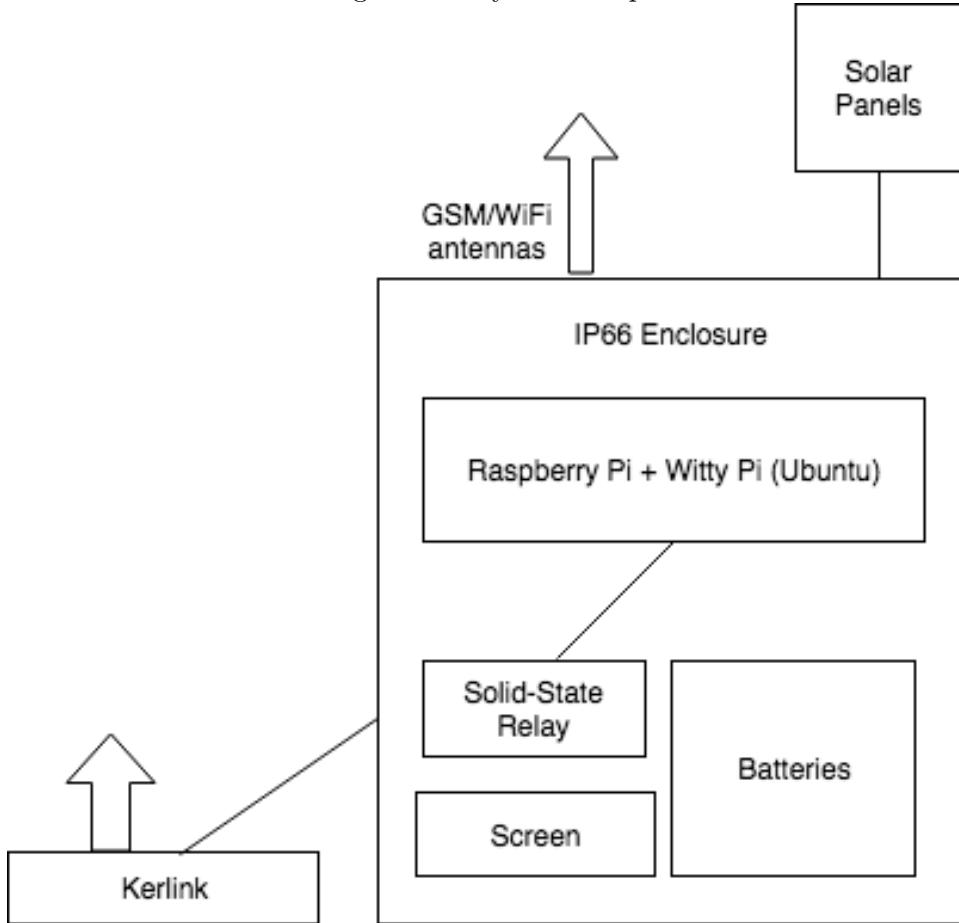


Figure 3.2: System setup



### 3.3 Design

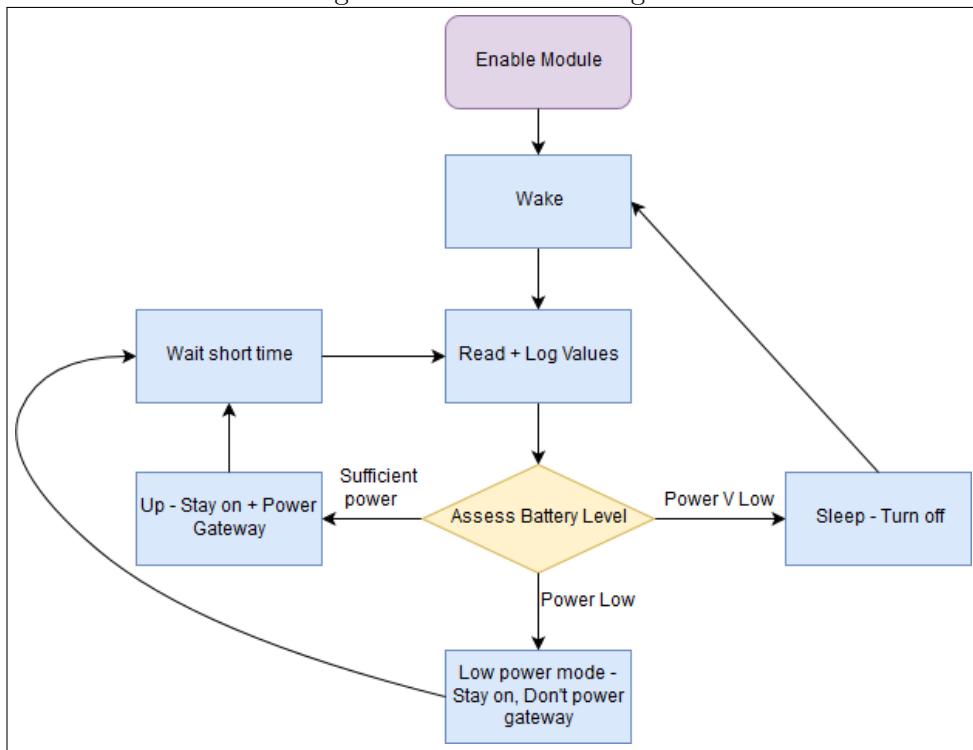
The previous implementation of the system came from a 2017 project to build a solar powered LoRa gateway[PBM17]. The general process of the previous model was kept in mind when designing the new system, as it was assessed to be well-designed but poorly implemented.

The control flow was the first piece of design work created. It is relatively simple, with the main decision being which state to transition to after assessing the battery level (eg. Up/Low Power/Sleep). When awake, the voltage and current values are consistently read and subsequently logged. In

*Up* and *Low power* states, the system will stay on and wait a short time before re-reading the aforementioned values and re-assessing the battery level. When transitioning to a *Sleep* state, the system will shut down for a period of time. How long the system stays powered down is dependent on sleep parameter passed to the program which can be manually configured. The program flow is described in figure 3.3.

The program compiles from a main C file, two libraries and a utilities bash script, in contrast with the previous implementation which used eleven files in total. It was ascertained that this was the optimal method to design the program as the main function of the main file would comprise the majority of the power management capability of the system, and as such there was no need to split the program into more files. There is also a configuration option available to users, where they can choose the "mode" in which the system operates, eg. *Greedy* mode will turn off for shorter periods of time, resulting in more log results, but the more frequent startup and shutdown cycle uses more power than *Conservative* or *Moderate* mode. Relative sleep patterns were also added later in the design process, whereby the user can set the system to stay on and turn off for constant periods of time, eg. stay on for 50 minutes, then turn off for 10 minutes, stay on for 50 minutes, off for 10, etc.

Figure 3.3: Software Design



### 3.4 Implementation

Two files were used from the previous implementation of the project [PBM17] - handlers and phidgets. These libraries are available from the phidgets website [PHA18], and provide interface kit functionality which enables retrieval of data values from sensors and updating of the screen displaying current system status. The rest of the fragmented code base was rewritten, with some usable functions salvaged. In particular,

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`updateLogFile`

---

and

---

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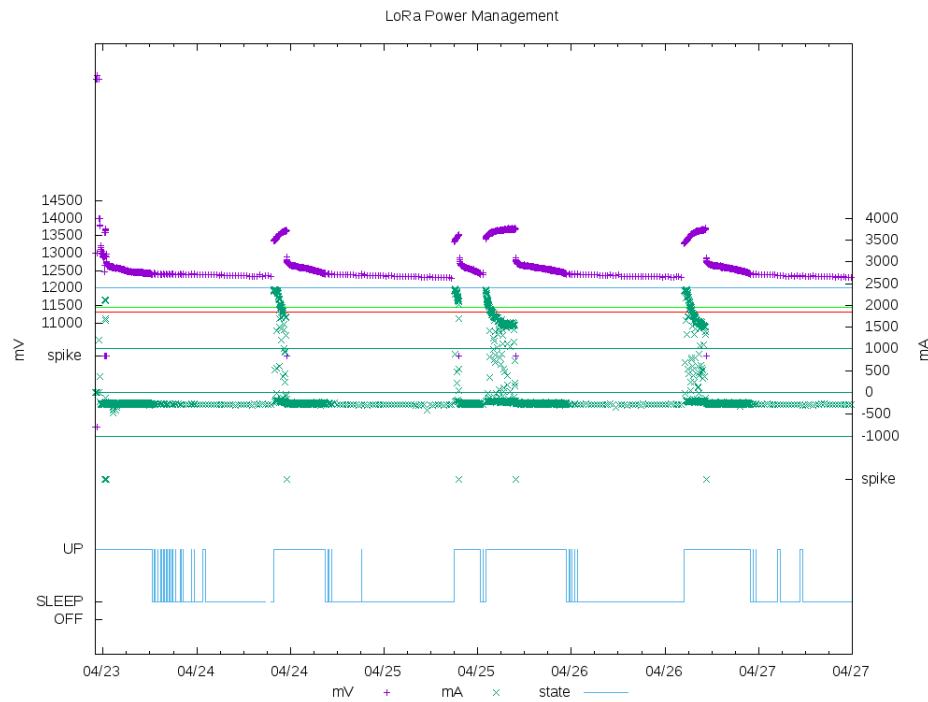
`updateSnapshotFile`

---

were re-used, as they create log files. Maintaining consistent logging formats simplifies comparison between the old and new power management programs. A full list of re-used functions can be found at the end of the chapter.

TODO

Figure 3.4: Multi-Day Results

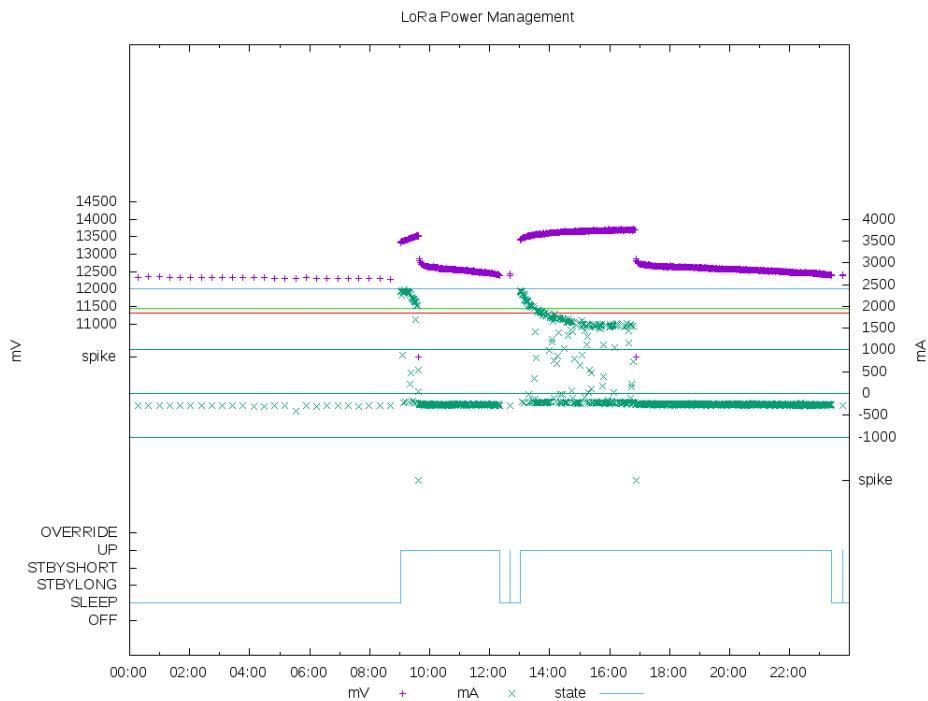


### 3.5 Testing

Testing was done in-house, using a combination of simulated voltages, battery logs from the previous implementation and manual control of power supply. Test results can be seen in figure 3.4 and 3.5, when the system was tested over a number of days. Figure 3.4 shows results over each of the days, while 3.5 shows a single day. The tests were successful, with the system staying on (UP) when it was expected to, and turning off (SLEEP) at the threshold voltage.

TODO

Figure 3.5: One-Day Breakdown



## 3.6 Updates

Tweaks to the code included:

- Recalibrating voltage and current conversions from readings.
- Updating threshold voltages to reduce likelihood of brownout.
- Adding relative sleep mode as configuration option.
- Creating scripts to demonstrate system functionality.
- Minor changes to logging function to improve consistency of output logs.

TODO

### 3.7 Salvaged Functions

---

```
updateLogFile
updateSnapshotfile
getTimeString
clearSnapFile
getProgName
kerOn
kerOff
```

---

# Chapter 4

# Conclusions

The intersection between IoT and solar power remains an open-ended question. The project described in this report could be used as a proof of concept for future collaborations between the two areas. It is clear with the rapid growth of both, their paths may well cross to a greater degree in the time to come. Once overcome, the initially daunting nature of working with unfamiliar hardware interface libraries opens up a realm of possibilities for engineers to create new systems. TODO

## 4.1 Future Work

With some changes and updates, the current version of the system could look to be ready for commercial distribution. With the addition of an API, corporate users could look to set up multiple copies of the system in various locations to both provide network coverage and collect solar power statistics. As the current project uses Witty Pi scripts, it is not portable in its entirety to other hardware setups, however with some small tweaking to the shutdown and startup calls it can be adapted to fit many Ubuntu systems.

In another direction, the computer system could be used by private bodies, such as homeowners. The use of solar panels to generate power in the home is becoming ever more prevalent, and this project could be used as a guide to setting up a solar power harvester at home. Some changes may be necessary, such as the removal of the IoT gateway if undesired, and the wiring of the system into the home in such a way as to provide power, but these are not unreasonably large.

More testing and updating could be done to allow further user configuration of system set up based on preferences and environment. TODO

## Chapter 5

# References

- [Raz11] T.M.Razykov, C.S.Ferekides, D.Morel, E.Stefanakos, H.S.Ullal, H.M.Upadhyayae "Solar photovoltaic electricity: Current status and future prospects" in *Solar Energy* Volume 85, Issue 8, August 2011. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.solener.2010.12.002>
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- [SCC18] ALLPOWERS Charge Controller, 30/04/2018, retrieved from <http://iallpowers.com/index.php?c=product&id=371>
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- [WPI18] WittyPi User Manual, 30/04/2018, retrieved from [http://www.uugear.com/doc/WittyPi2\\_UserManual.pdf](http://www.uugear.com/doc/WittyPi2_UserManual.pdf)
- [Nan17] Nancy M. Haegel "Terawatt-scale photovoltaics: Trajectories and challenges" in *Science* 356, pp. 141-143. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aal1288>
- [DSG17] Designing a Solar Powered Gateway, 30/04/2018, retrieved from <https://www.thethingsnetwork.org/forum/t/designing-a-solar-powered-gateway/5599>

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*CHAPTER 5. REFERENCES*

[CYP18]Cypress S6SAE101A00SA1002 Solar-Powered IoT Device Kit ,  
01/05/2018, retrieved from  
<http://www.cypress.com/documentation/development-kitsboards/s6sae101a00sa1002-solar-powered-iot-device-kit>

## **Chapter 6**

## **Appendix - Documentation**

# LoRa Power Management

1.0

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## 1 Documentation for LoRa gateway power management program

Main file  
Phidget handlers  
Phidget functions

## 2 File Index

### 2.1 File List

Here is a list of all documented files with brief descriptions:

C:/Users/Robert/iCloudDrive/Documents/loradtn-pi/stable/ <b>handlers.c</b> Phidget handlers	2
C:/Users/Robert/iCloudDrive/Documents/loradtn-pi/stable/ <b>handlers.h</b>	??
C:/Users/Robert/iCloudDrive/Documents/loradtn-pi/stable/ <b>pbmd.c</b> State machine + logging for power management daemon	2
C:/Users/Robert/iCloudDrive/Documents/loradtn-pi/stable/ <b>phidgets.c</b> Functions for interacting with phidgets	8
C:/Users/Robert/iCloudDrive/Documents/loradtn-pi/stable/ <b>phidgets.h</b>	??

### 3 File Documentation

#### 3.1 C:/Users/Robert/iCloudDrive/Documents/loradtn-pi/stable/handlers.c File Reference

Phidget handlers.

```
#include "handlers.h"
```

##### Functions

- int **IFK\_DetachHandler** (CPhidgetHandle IFK, void \*userptr)
- int **IFK\_ErrorHandler** (CPhidgetHandle IFK, void \*userptr, int ErrorCode, const char \*unknown)
- int **IFK\_OutputChangeHandler** (CPhidgetInterfaceKitHandle IFK, void \*userptr, int Index, int Value)
- int **IFK\_InputChangeHandler** (CPhidgetInterfaceKitHandle IFK, void \*userptr, int Index, int Value)
- int **IFK\_SensorChangeHandler** (CPhidgetInterfaceKitHandle IFK, void \*userptr, int Index, int Value)
- int **IFK\_AttachHandler** (CPhidgetHandle IFK, void \*userptr)
- int **LCD\_AttachHandler** (CPhidgetHandle IFK, void \*userptr)
- int **LCD\_DetachHandler** (CPhidgetHandle IFK, void \*userptr)
- int **LCD\_ErrorHandler** (CPhidgetHandle IFK, void \*userptr, int ErrorCode, const char \*unknown)
- void **setHandlers** (CPhidgetInterfaceKitHandle IFK, CPhidgetTextLCDHandle LCD)

##### 3.1.1 Detailed Description

Phidget handlers.

##### Date

30 April 2018

#### 3.2 C:/Users/Robert/iCloudDrive/Documents/loradtn-pi/stable/pbmd.c File Reference

State machine + logging for power management daemon.

```
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <stdio.h>
#include <string.h>
#include <time.h>
#include <unistd.h>
#include <phidget21.h>
#include <syslog.h>
#include "phidgets.h"
```

## Macros

- #define **\_GNU\_SOURCE**
- #define **BATTERY\_LOG** "/var/log/battery-new.log"
- #define **SNAP\_LOG** "/var/log/battery-snapshot-new.log"
- #define **BOOTFLAGS** "/etc/bootflag-new"
- #define **SLEEP\_STATE** 0
- #define **UP\_STATE** 1
- #define **LOW\_POWER** 2
- #define **OVERRIDE** 3
- #define **GREEDY\_STR** "GREEDY"
- #define **MODERATE\_STR** "MODERATE"
- #define **SIMULATE\_STR** "SIM"
- #define **NOSIM\_STR** "NOSIM"
- #define **DEPLETIE** "DEP"
- #define **GREEDY\_SLEEP** 10
- #define **MODERATE\_SLEEP** 20
- #define **CONSERVATIVE\_SLEEP** 60
- #define **SECONDS\_TO\_MINUTES** 60
- #define **SLEEP\_DURATION** 30
- #define **SIMULATE** 0
- #define **NO\_SIMULATE** 1
- #define **min**(a, b) (a < b ? a : b)

## Functions

- int **updateLogFile** (FILE \*logfile, int voltage, int amps, int dutAmps, int state, int spiking, const char \*prog←Name)
 

*Updates snapshot file showing snapshot of recent activity.*
- int **updateSnapshotfile** (const char \*snapFileName, int voltage, int amps, int state, int spiking, char \*mode)
 

*Updates snapshot file showing snapshot of recent activity.*
- void **getTimeString** (int wakeTimeSec, char \*wakeTimeStr)
 

*Gets time as a string.*
- int **clearSnapFile** (char \*snapFileName)
 

*Clears snapshot file.*
- char \* **getProgName** (char \*path)
 

*Gets program name.*
- char \* **getStateDesc** (int state)
 

*Gets description of current state as string.*
- int **simulateVoltage** (struct tm \*time, int currentV)
 

*Simulates voltage for testing purposes.*
- int **simulateAmps** ()
 

*Simulates amps for testing purposes.*
- int **simulateDUTAmps** ()
 

*Simulates DUT amps for testing purposes.*
- char \* **concat** (const char \*s1, const char \*s2)
 

*Concatenates strings.*
- char \* **createStartupString** (int timeToSleep)
 

*Creates startup string to be given to wittyPi as parameter.*
- char \* **createShutdownString** (int timeToWait)
 

*Creates shutdown string to be given to wittyPi as parameter.*
- int **getSleepDuration** (char \*mode)

- Get length of time to sleep for.
- void **kerOn** ()
  - Turn on kerlink Gateway.*
- void **kerOff** ()
  - Turn off kerlink Gateway.*
- int **getVoltMode** (char \*mode)
  - Check if voltages should be read or simulated.*
- void **init** ()
  -
- int **main** (int argc, char \*argv[])
  - Handles phidget interactions, state machine, logging.*

## Variables

- CPhidgetTextLCDHandle **LCD**
- CPhidgetInterfaceKitHandle **IFK**
- char \* **batteryLogLocation**
- char \* **snapshotLocation**
- char **bootflag**
- char \* **mode**
- int **sleepDuration**
- int **sleepTime**
- int **wakeTime**
- int **voltMode**
- int **batteryDeplete**
- FILE \* **logFile**

### 3.2.1 Detailed Description

State machine + logging for power management daemon.

#### Author

Robert Cooney

#### Date

23 April 2018

### 3.2.2 Function Documentation

#### 3.2.2.1 clearSnapFile()

```
int clearSnapFile (
    char * snapFileName )
```

Clears snapshot file.

**Parameters**

<i>snapFileName</i>	Name of the snapshot file
---------------------	---------------------------

**3.2.2.2 concat()**

```
char * concat (
    const char * s1,
    const char * s2 )
```

Concatenates strings.

**Parameters**

<i>s1</i>	First string to be concatenated
<i>s2</i>	Second string to be concatenated

**Returns**

Result (*s1* + *s2*)

**3.2.2.3 createShutdownString()**

```
char * createShutdownString (
    int timeToWait )
```

Creates shutdown string to be given to wittyPi as parameter.

**Parameters**

<i>timeToWait</i>	How long to wait until shutting down
-------------------	--------------------------------------

**Returns**

String used to tell Pi when to shutdown

**3.2.2.4 createStartupString()**

```
char * createStartupString (
    int timeToSleep )
```

Creates startup string to be given to wittyPi as parameter.

**Parameters**

<i>timeToSleep</i>	How long to sleep for in seconds
--------------------	----------------------------------

**Returns**

String used to tell Pi when to startup

**3.2.2.5 getSleepDuration()**

```
int getSleepDuration (
    char * mode )
```

Get length of time to sleep for.

**Parameters**

<i>mode</i>	Current operation mode
-------------	------------------------

**Returns**

How long to sleep for in seconds

**3.2.2.6 getStateDesc()**

```
char * getStateDesc (
    int state )
```

Gets description of current state as string.

**Parameters**

<i>state</i>	The current state of device - Sleep/low power/override/up
--------------	---

**Returns**

State as a string

**3.2.2.7 getTimeString()**

```
void getTimeString (
    int wakeTimeSec,
    char * wakeTimeStr )
```

Gets time as a string.

**Parameters**

<i>wakeTimeSec</i>	How long from now the time is in seconds
<i>wakeTimeStr</i>	The desired time in string format

**3.2.2.8 getVoltMode()**

```
int getVoltMode (
    char * mode )
```

Check if voltages should be read or simulated.

**Parameters**

<i>mode</i>	Simulate string parameter (SIM or NOSIM)
-------------	--

**Returns**

Int that describes mode (simulate or no simulate)

**3.2.2.9 main()**

```
int main (
    int argc,
    char * argv[] )
```

Handles phidget interactions, state machine, logging.

Clearing Pi shutdown and startup times

< Set up handlers for the Interface Kit & TextLCD

Get simulated voltages if necessary, otherwise get actual values  
Continue loop until time to shutdown arrives

**3.2.2.10 updateLogFile()**

```
int updateLogFile (
    FILE * logfile,
    int voltage,
    int amps,
    int dutAmps,
    int state,
    int spiking,
    const char * progName )
```

Updates snapshot file showing snapshot of recent activity.

**Parameters**

<i>logfile</i>	Name of log file
<i>voltage</i>	Current voltage
<i>amps</i>	Current amps
<i>dutAmps</i>	Current amps of device under test
<i>state</i>	Current state
<i>spiking</i>	Whether voltage is spiking
<i>progName</i>	Name of running program

**Returns**

0 if all ok, -1 if error occurs

**3.2.2.11 updateSnapshotfile()**

```
int updateSnapshotfile (
    const char * snapFileName,
    int voltage,
    int amps,
    int state,
    int spiking,
    char * mode )
```

Updates snapshot file showing snapshot of recent activity.

**Parameters**

<i>snapFileName</i>	Name of snapshot file
<i>voltage</i>	Current voltage
<i>amps</i>	Current amps
<i>state</i>	Current state
<i>spiking</i>	Whether voltage is spiking
<i>mode</i>	Current mode

**Returns**

0 if all ok, -1 if error occurs

**3.3 C:/Users/Robert/iCloudDrive/Documents/loradtn-pi/stable/phidgets.c File Reference**

Functions for interacting with phidgets.

```
#include "phidgets.h"
```

## Macros

- #define **PATH\_MAX** 1024
- #define **LCDINDEX** 0
- #define **IFKINDEX** 0
- #define **BUFFER\_SIZE** 21

## Functions

- void **display\_generic\_properties** (CPhidgetHandle phid)
- void **display\_IFK\_properties** (CPhidgetInterfaceKitHandle phid)
- void **display\_LCD\_properties** (CPhidgetTextLCDHandle phid)
- int **getVoltage** (CPhidgetInterfaceKitHandle IFK)
- int **getAmps** (CPhidgetInterfaceKitHandle IFK)
- int **getDUTAmps** (CPhidgetInterfaceKitHandle IFK)
- void **closeCPhidget** (CPhidgetHandle handle)
- int **testVoltageSpike** (int \*prevVoltage, time\_t \*prevVoltageTime, int \*voltage, time\_t \*voltageTime)
- int **phidgetInit** ()
- CPhidgetInterfaceKitHandle **createInterfaceKit** ()
- CPhidgetTextLCDHandle **createLCDHandle** ()
- void **setupHandlers** (CPhidgetInterfaceKitHandle IFK, CPhidgetTextLCDHandle LCD)
- void **openPhidgets** (CPhidgetInterfaceKitHandle IFK, CPhidgetTextLCDHandle LCD)
- int **checkLCD** (CPhidgetTextLCDHandle LCD, CPhidgetInterfaceKitHandle IFK)
- void **setStartupDisplay** (CPhidgetTextLCDHandle LCD)
- int **checkIFK** (CPhidgetInterfaceKitHandle IFK, CPhidgetTextLCDHandle LCD)
- void **spikeError** (int spikeCount, CPhidgetTextLCDHandle LCD, CPhidgetInterfaceKitHandle IFK)
- int **updateDisplay** (int voltage, int amps, char \*wakeTimeStr, char \*stateDescription, CPhidgetTextLCDHandle LCD, char \*mode)

## Variables

- char **topBuffer** [BUFFER\_SIZE]
- char **bottomBuffer** [BUFFER\_SIZE]

### 3.3.1 Detailed Description

Functions for interacting with phidgets.

#### Date

30 April 2018



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