

OpenArcade

Anish Paramsothy, paramsa

Chris Palermo, palerc

Mitchel Cox, coxm12

Shivom Sharma, shars119

Jacqueline Leung, leungw18



Project Goals and Development Process

MECHTRON 4TB6, McMaster University

Date Submitted: September 27th, 2025

Due Date: September 28th, 2025

Contents

1	Glossary	2
2	Project Goals	2
2.1	Project Description	2
2.2	Rationale	2
2.3	Goals	2
2.3.1	Level 1 Goals	2
2.3.2	Level 2 Goals	3
3	Development Process	3
3.1	Meetings	3
3.2	Overall Process Workflow	3
3.3	Group Roles	4
3.4	Technology	5

1 Glossary

2 Project Goals

2.1 Project Description

Design and development of an arcade/box style controller series of children modules (with a children module containing: buttons, joysticks, d-pad, etc), that can be mechanically connected to each other to allow for gamers to develop their own combination and style of controller. Along with the idea that gamers can combine modules together, we want to give them the option to play using the modules separately. These modules will be connected to a parent module which will communicate the inputs of the modules to the game.

2.2 Rationale

Currently, there are several game controllers that follow the ideology of “1 size fits all”, preventing gamers that may be injured, disabled, or lacking fine motor skills to play the games they want. This could be the case due to a variety of reasons:

- The controller itself is too small and is required to be held.
- Several controllers require a grip that becomes uncomfortable to the player after hours of gaming.
- Buttons and joysticks are close together and require the user to place their hands in positions that can potentially be uncomfortable.
- There is little room for customization, and a lot of controllers follow the one ideology of “one size fits all”.

2.3 Goals

We have several goals that we want to outline for the controller. We want to accomplish these to some degree of effectiveness.

2.3.1 Level 1 Goals

These goals are the most important for the functionality of the controller.

- **Modularized:** The controller should include multiple children modules, and for these to work together to play games.
- **Customizable:** The controller should be able to be attached to each other (if A and B are children modules, then they are to be attached in either A-B or B-A formats), or be able to be utilized as separate and detached children modules. The joysticks should also be swappable and include additional customization options.
- **Input Delay:** Producing the lowest amount of input delay as possible, to prevent any scenarios where games become unplayable because the inputs are not responsive enough.
- **Comfort:** The controller should be attempting to be an ergonomic substitute to other controllers, so providing better options for buttons and joysticks and their placement should be a heavy consideration. Along with this, the location of where the controller will be (either in lap or on table) will also provide an improved gaming experience for the user.
- **Functional:** The children modules should be able to fit correctly together without any mechanical issues. Along with this, the controller should function correctly in terms of gameplay, where specific inputs (button presses or joystick movement) relate to the correct outputs.

- **Robust:** The controller should meet the basic needs of staying together and not falling apart when subject to stress. This could include the force created when pressing a button, or potentially the user resting their arm on the device while playing.
- **Intuitive:** The controller should not be confusing to use, the children modules should attach in a simple manner to prevent confusion.
- **Connectivity:** The controller should be able to connect to different types of devices, with the main priority being computer.

2.3.2 Level 2 Goals

These goals are added optional goals that we want to strive towards to optimize the product.

- **Aesthetically pleasing:** The controller should look nice in order to draw in consumers.

3 Development Process

3.1 Meetings

Meetings are planned to be held weekly during 3 core timeslots:

- Tuesdays from 11:00AM to 12:00PM
- Thursdays from 4:00PM to 6:00PM
- Fridays from 12:00PM to 1:00PM

These timeslots are meant for planning individual tasks and goals for the following meetings. The time slots are to be considered an open time to meet, but not a requirement. Group discussion outside of these meetings will be conducted to determine the next appropriate meeting date.

The group will also strive to meet at different times as well, such as the weekend, or whenever everyone is available.

Group members are meant to come to meetings with some individual work done, and all work completed is to be documented in meetings notes on google drive.

3.2 Overall Process Workflow

Below is a list of steps that outline the workflow in which the OpenArcade controller will be designed and fabricated.

1. **Discussion of Hazard Analysis:** Meet in a few group meetings to identify hazards related to all aspects of design, including hazards during development, and hazards during use. This will all be noted in a hazard analysis document. To complete this task, all possible hazards should be identified.
2. **Development of System Requirements:** Outlining the hardware/software/mechanical required to complete the various milestones of the project. This document will be modified during the entire timeline of the project, as the group will define what is needed for the *proof of concept*, *rev 0* and *rev 1* milestones. The document will include a list of software and hardware used, along with the material that will be used for the housing. This will aid in drafting a bill of materials (BOM).
3. **Concept Design 1:** Drafting an initial concept design to show as the proof of concept. This should include showing the functionality of buttons on a simple scale. The goal is to develop a written

plan of what the proof of concept should be, and finalizing what hardware will be required for that.

4. **Proof of Concept:** The proof of concept will be used to outline basic functionality of the design. This will include:
 - Ability to communicate between parent board and computer.
 - Functionality of children boards (attached to buttons/joysticks) to a breadboard with LEDs
 - BOM including hardware choices

The proof of concept will be successful if the button and joystick inputs correspond to the correct outputs on the breadboard. Along with this, another successful test will be if the parent board correctly communicates to the computer.

5. **Concept Design 2:** Begin planning the finalized design. The group will work in determining how the children modules (with buttons/joysticks) will communicate with the parent module, so that direct inputs can result in outputs seen on the computer. A rough mechanical design will be made with cardboard or other simple materials so that the placement of the buttons and joysticks can be determined. Essentially a primary housing for the controller. The children modules will not be attachable yet.
6. **Rev 0:** Showcase the the buttons and joysticks communicating to the game itself. The demo will show how the buttons can be configured to specific outputs, and that they communicate the correct outputs for the corresponding inputs. Children modules will communicate to the parent module, which will be communicated to the game.
7. **Concept Design 3:** Discussion and planning of the finalized design. This will include the mechanical housing for all modules, along with how they will be attached to each other to form the full controller. The housing should contain the electrical and hardware components, while also preventing the movement/shifting of the internal pieces. Children modules should be attachable to each other. Emitted heat from the controller should also be considered when developing the housing.
8. **Rev 1:** The finalized design of the controller. The demo will include two children modules that can be attached to each other, and can successfully communicate with the game through the parent module with the correct outputs. The controller will be compared to other controllers to showcase why it is an effective substitute for the controllers in the market.

3.3 Group Roles

3.4 Technology

Software	Uses
Github	For any code and version control.
Google Drive	Any collaborative documents and shared files. Used for CAD/mechanical version control.
Autodesk Inventor	CAD for the housing of the parent and children modules, and for any custom components.
STM32CubeIDE, VsCode, Vim	IDE for code and microcontrollers.
C/C++	Language for firmware.
TypeScript/JavaScript	UI language for configurator application.
Python	Miscellaneous scripting language.
KiCad, EasyEDA, Altium	Software for PCB design.
PrusaSlicer, Bambu, Studio	Software for 3D printing.
Docker	Containerizing code to run on multiple machines (MacOS, Linux, Windows).
Heroku/Render	Website hosting platform for configurator application.
Figma, Mermaid, MSPaint, Procreate	Softwares used for systems diagramming.
LaTeX	Tool used for documentation.

Table 1: Software and their uses

Hardware	Uses
3D Printers (Bambu Lab A1, Thode Maker-space: Prusa MK4S)	To print the controller children module casing and any custom components
STM32F Series Boards	Controller for the main central unit
ESP32s Series Boards, Raspberry Pi Pico	Module-level control board (Bluetooth connection or wired to central unit)
Arcade Buttons/Joysticks	Hardware for inputs from children modules
Miscellaneous Electrical Components (Capacitors, Resistors, Power Supply, etc.)	Any electrical components required to build the controller children modules
Breadboards	Used in concept design and design verification
Breakout Boards	Used for making custom cables for USB, micro-USB
Bluetooth Card (Wi-Fi 5 enabled)	For communication between children and parent boards
Oscilloscope/Multimeter	Troubleshooting and testing
Cables (USB, Power cable)	Used for power and data transfer

Table 2: Hardware and their uses