

Entropy Library Documentation

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Testing	1
2	Usage	2
2.1	Initialize()	2
2.2	available()	3
2.3	random()	3
2.4	random(max)	4
2.5	random(min,max)	4
2.6	randomByte()	5
2.7	randomWord()	5
3	Library Source	6
3.1	Header	6
3.2	Code	7
3.3	Keywords	11
3.4	Software license	12

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

The Arduino currently lacks a means of obtaining true random numbers. One pre-existing library exists, TrueRandom, but a review of the performance and code base confirms that the TrueRandom library does not make use of a truly random entropy source (the unconnected analog pin) Kristinsson [2011] which is further biased by methods which introduce additional biases into the results which it does return. When using the Arduino's pseudo-random number generator, `random()`, will produce a predictable sequence of numbers unless some random mechanism is used to seed it. The manual recommends using the results from an unconnected analog pin; however, there is ample evidence that this mechanism does not introduce much randomness to the sequences produced by the internal psuedo-random number generator.

The purpose of this library is to provide a mechanism to produce a series of true random numbers based upon the entropy associated with the jitter of the AVR's watch dog timer, and the standard Timer 1. Pedersen [2006] Since this mechanism produces entropy at a relatively slow rate (approximately 8 bytes per second) its best use is as a seed value to the internal pseudo-random number generator or for those demands that do not require large numbers of random numbers, such as generating cryptographically secure passwords. Hlavac et al. [2010]

Preliminary testing indicates that this mechanism produces cryptographically secure random numbers, but the mechanism is subject to potential biases introduced by alterations to the host environment. Prior to deploying this library it is suggested that the end-user perform any testing required to establish that the specific implementation will meet the user's needs.

1.2 Testing

The underlying mechanism that the library uses to generate true random numbers were tested on a number of different arduino devices; leonardo, uno, uno (smd), and the mega (R3). Details of this preliminary testing is available Multiple [2012] which was also the source of the idea for the mechanism used by this library. The early tests performed on this library used methods published by John Walker. Walker [2011] The raw data used in the testing of the mechanism is available from <http://code.google.com/p/avr-hardware-random-number-generation/>

The library has been tested ...

Chapter 2

Usage

The library directory should be placed in your libraries sub-folder where your Arduino IDE is configured to keep your sketches. When you first place this library, you will need to re-start your Arduino IDE in order for it to recognize the new library.

To use the library, you will need to include the libraries header file, `Entropy.h` in your sketch. Prior to calling any of the entropy retrieval methods, you need to initialize the library using its `Initialize` method.

The library only produces uniformly distributed integers (bytes, ints, and longs). If other distributions are needed it is recommended that the user consult an appropriate reference Matloff [2006] on generating different distributions. One of the examples provided with the library demonstrates how to convert the random long integer returned by this library into a uniformly distributed random floating point in the range of `[0,1]`.

2.1 Initialize()

This method configures the AVR's watch dog timer and set-ups the internal structures necessary to convert the hardware timer's jitter into an unbiased stream of entropy. This method should only be called once, in the `setup` function of your sketch. After this method is executed, it will take the Arduino approximately five hundred milli-seconds before the first unsigned long (32-bit) random integer is available.

For this reason, the call to the `initialize` method should occur fairly early in the `set-up` function, allowing ample time to perform other set-up activities, before requesting any entropy.

Initialize Example

```
#include <Entropy.h>

void setup()
{
  Entropy.Initialize();
}

void loop()
{
}
```

2.2 available()

This method returns an unsigned char value that represents the number of unsigned long integers in the entropy pool. Since the entropy retrieval methods (random) will block any further program execution until at least one value exists in the entropy pool, this function should be used to only call the retrieval methods when entropy is available.

available() Example

```
#include <Entropy.h>

void setup()
{
    Entropy.Initialize();
}

void loop()
{
    if (Entropy.available())
        randomSeed(Entropy.random());
}
```

2.3 random()

The random method is the mechanism to retrieve the generated entropy. It comes in three flavors, of which, this one returns a single unsigned long (32-bit) integer value in the range of 0 to 0xFFFFFFFF. Since this method will prevent any further program execution until a value is available to return, it can take up to a maximum of 500 milliseconds to execute. If the delay is not desirable, the available method can be used to test if entropy is available prior to calling this method. If desired the returned value can be cast from unsigned to signed if needed.

The library does not produce floating point random values but if those are wanted, it is a simple matter to use the value returned by this method to produce a random floating point value.

random() Example

```
#include <Entropy.h>

void setup()
{
    Entropy.Initialize();
}

void loop()
{
    if (Entropy.available())
        randomSeed(Entropy.random());
}
```

2.4 random(max)

The random method is the mechanism to retrieve the generated entropy. It comes in three flavors, of which, this one returns a single unsigned long (32-bit) integer value in the range of [0,max). Note that the returned value will always be less than max. The returned value can be cast to any integer type that will contain the result. In other words, if max is 256 or less the returned value can be stored in a char variable or an unsigned char variable, depending upon whether negative values are required. Similarly, if max is 65536 or less the returned value can be stored in a int or unsigned int, again depending upon whether negative numbers are required.

Like the previous implementation of this method described, this method will prevent any further program execution until a value is available to return. This method behaves differently from the previous if max is less than 256 or max is less than 65536. In the first case the 32-bit unsigned integer in the entropy pool is broken into four byte sized integers. Consequently four byte sized values are returned for every 32-bit integer in the entropy pool. In a similar way, values less than 65536 but greater than or equal to 256 will return two 16-bit integer values for every 32-bit integer in the entropy pool. Note that the latter means that the method will need to use two bytes of the entropy to provide a uniformly distributed random byte (max = 256). This is necessary to allow the function to maintain uniform distribution of returned values for other values of max... More detail is available as comments in the library code.

random(max) Example

```
#include <Entropy.h>

void setup()
{
    uint8_t random_byte;
    uint16_t random_int;

    Entropy.Initialize();

    // Simulate a coin flip
    random_byte = Entropy.random(2); // return a 0 or a 1

    // Return a random integer (0 - 65365)
    random_int = Entropy.random(WDT_RETURN_WORD);
}

void loop()
{
}
```

2.5 random(min,max)

The random method is the mechanism to retrieve the generated entropy. It comes in three flavors, of which, this one returns a single unsigned long (32-bit) integer value in the range of [min,max). Note that the returned value will always be greater than or equal to min and less than max. The returned value can be cast to any integer type that will contain the result. In other words, if max is 256 or less the returned value can be stored in a

char variable or an unsigned char variable, depending upon whether negative values are required. Similarly, if max is 65536 or less the returned value can be stored in a int or unsigned int, again depending upon whether negative numbers are required.

This function is useful for simulating the role of dice, or the drawing of cards, etc.. Like the previous implementation of this method described, this method will prevent any further program execution until a value is available to return. This method behaves differently from the previous if (max-min) is less than 256 or (max-min) is less than 65536. In the first case the 32-bit unsigned integer in the entropy pool is broken into four byte sized integers. Consequently four byte sized values are returned for every 32-bit integer in the entropy pool. In a similar way, value differences less than 65536 but greater than or equal to 256 will return two 16-bit integer values for every 32-bit integer in the entropy pool.

2.6 randomByte()

This method is included to overcome the efficiency problem mentioned when attempting to retrieve a full byte of entropy using the random(256) method. Since that method will need to consume two full bytes from the entropy stream to return a single byte of entropy this method was included for the special case, where a single complete byte of entropy is needed at a time. This allows four such bytes to be returned from each entropy value, rather than two. In all other ways it behaves in a manner consistent with the random() method.

2.7 randomWord()

This method is included to overcome the efficiency problem mentioned when attempting to retrieve a full word (16-bit integer) of entropy using the random(65536) method. Since that method will need to consume four bytes from the entropy stream to return only two bytes, this method was included for the special case where a single integer is needed. This allows two such integers to be returned from each entropy value, rather than only one. In all other ways it behaves in a manner consistent with the random() method.

random(min,max) Example

```
#include <Entropy.h>

void setup()
{
    uint8_t random_byte;

    Entropy.Initialize();

    // Simulate rolling a six sided die; i.e. produce the numbers 1 through 6 with
    // equal probability
    random_byte = Entropy.random(1,7); // returns a value from 1 to 6
}

void loop()
{
}
```

Chapter 3

Library Source

3.1 Header

Entropy.h

```
// Entropy - A entropy (random number) generator for the Arduino
//
// Copyright 2012 by Walter Anderson
//
// This file is part of Entropy, an Arduino library.
// Entropy is free software: you can redistribute it and/or modify
// it under the terms of the GNU General Public License as published by
// the Free Software Foundation, either version 3 of the License, or
// (at your option) any later version.
//
// Entropy is distributed in the hope that it will be useful,
// but WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY; without even the implied warranty of
// MERCHANTABILITY or FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. See the
// GNU General Public License for more details.
//
// You should have received a copy of the GNU General Public License
// along with Entropy. If not, see <http://www.gnu.org/licenses/>.

#ifndef Entropy_h
#define Entropy_h

#include <stdint.h>
#include <avr/interrupt.h>
#include <avr/wdt.h>

const uint32_t WDT_RETURN_BYTE=256;
const uint32_t WDT_RETURN_WORD=65536;

union ENTROPY_LONG_WORD
{
    uint32_t int32;
    uint16_t int16[2];
}
```



```

    uint8_t int8[4];
};

class EntropyClass
{
public:
    void Initialize(void);
    uint32_t random(void);
    uint32_t random(uint32_t max);
    uint32_t random(uint32_t min, uint32_t max);
    uint8_t available(void);
private:
    ENTROPY_LONG_WORD share_entropy;
    uint32_t retVal;
    uint8_t random8(void);
    uint16_t random16(void);
};
extern EntropyClass Entropy;
#endif

```

3.2 Code

Entropy.cpp

```

// Entropy - A entropy (random number) generator for the Arduino
//
// Copyright 2012 by Walter Anderson
//
// This file is part of Entropy, an Arduino library.
// Entropy is free software: you can redistribute it and/or modify
// it under the terms of the GNU General Public License as published by
// the Free Software Foundation, either version 3 of the License, or
// (at your option) any later version.
//
// Entropy is distributed in the hope that it will be useful,
// but WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY; without even the implied warranty of
// MERCHANTABILITY or FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. See the
// GNU General Public License for more details.
//
// You should have received a copy of the GNU General Public License
// along with Entropy. If not, see <http://www.gnu.org/licenses/>.

#include <Entropy.h>
#include <util/atomic.h>

const uint8_t gWDT_buffer_SIZE=32;
const uint8_t WDT_POOL_SIZE=8;
const uint8_t WDT_MAX_8INT=0xFF;
const uint16_t WDT_MAX_16INT=0xFFFF;
const uint32_t WDT_MAX_32INT=0xFFFFFFFF;

```

```

uint8_t gWDT_buffer[gWDT_buffer_SIZE];
uint8_t gWDT_buffer_position;
uint8_t gWDT_loop_counter;
volatile uint8_t gWDT_pool_start;
volatile uint8_t gWDT_pool_end;
volatile uint8_t gWDT_pool_count;
volatile uint32_t gWDT_entropy_pool[WDT_POOL_SIZE];

// This function initializes the global variables needed to implement the circular entropy
// pool and the buffer that holds the raw Timer 1 values that are used to create the entropy
// pool. It then initializes the Watch Dog Timer (WDT) to perform an interrupt every 2048
// clock cycles, (about 16 ms) which is as fast as it can be set.
void EntropyClass::Initialize(void)
{
    gWDT_buffer_position=0;
    gWDT_pool_start = 0;
    gWDT_pool_end = 0;
    gWDT_pool_count = 0;
    cli(); // Temporarily turn off interrupts, until WDT configured
    MCUSR = 0; // Use the MCU status register to reset flags for WDR, BOR,
    // EXTR, and POWR
    WDTCR |= _BV(WDCE) | _BV(WDE); // WDT control register, This sets the Watchdog Change Enable
    // (WDCE) flag, which is needed to set the
    WDTCR = _BV(WDIE); // Watchdog system reset (WDE) enable and the Watchdog
    // interrupt enable (WDIE)
    sei(); // Turn interrupts on
}

// This function returns a uniformly distributed random integer in the range
// of [0,0xFFFFFFFF] as long as some entropy exists in the pool and a 0
// otherwise. To ensure a proper random return the available() function
// should be called first to ensure that entropy exists.
//
// The pool is implemented as an 8 value circular buffer
uint32_t EntropyClass::random(void)
{
    uint8_t waiting;
    while (gWDT_pool_count < 1)
        waiting += 1;
    ATOMIC_BLOCK(ATOMIC_RESTORESTATE)
    {
        retVal = gWDT_entropy_pool[gWDT_pool_start];
        gWDT_pool_start = (gWDT_pool_start + 1) % WDT_POOL_SIZE;
        --gWDT_pool_count;
    }
    return(retVal);
}

// This function returns one byte of a single 32-bit entropy value, while preserving the
// remaining bytes to be returned upon successive calls to the method. This makes best use
// of the available entropy pool when only bytes size chunks of entropy are needed. Not
// available to public use since there is a method of using the default random method for
// the end-user to achieve the same results. This internal method is for providing
// that capability to the random method, shown below

```

```

uint8_t EntropyClass::random8(void)
{
    static uint8_t byte_position=0;
    uint8_t retVal8;

    if (byte_position == 0)
        share_entropy.int32 = random();
    retVal8 = share_entropy.int8[byte_position++];
    byte_position = byte_position % 4;
    return(retVal8);
}

// This function returns one word of a single 32-bit entropy value, while preserving the
// remaining word to be returned upon successive calls to the method. This makes best
// use of the available entropy pool when only word sized chunks of entropy are needed.
// Not available to public use since there is a method of using the default random method
// for the end-user to achieve the same results. This internal method is for providing
// that capability to the random method, shown below
uint16_t EntropyClass::random16(void)
{
    static uint8_t word_position=0;
    uint16_t retVal16;

    if (word_position == 0)
        share_entropy.int32 = random();
    retVal16 = share_entropy.int16[word_position++];
    word_position = word_position % 2;
    return(retVal16);
}

// This function returns a uniformly distributed integer in the range of
// of [0,max). The added complexity of this function is required to ensure
// a uniform distribution since the naive modulus max (% max) introduces
// bias for all values of max that are not powers of two.
//
// The loops below are needed, because there is a small and non-uniform chance
// That the division below will yield an answer = max, so we just get
// the next random value until answer < max. Which prevents the introduction
// of bias caused by the division process. This is why we can't use the
// simpler modulus operation which introduces significant bias for divisors
// that aren't a power of two
uint32_t EntropyClass::random(uint32_t max)
{
    uint32_t slice;

    if (max < 2)
        retVal=0;
    else
    {
        retVal = WDT_MAX_32INT;
        if (max <= WDT_MAX_8INT) // If only byte values are needed, make best use of entropy
        { // by diving the long into four bytes and using individually
            slice = WDT_MAX_8INT / max;
            while (retVal >= max)

```

```

        retVal = random8() / slice;
    }
    else if (max <= WDT_MAX_16INT) // If only word values are need, make best use of entropy
    {
        // by diving the long into two words and using individually
        slice = WDT_MAX_16INT / max;
        while (retVal >= max)
            retVal = random16() / slice;
    }
    else
    {
        slice = WDT_MAX_32INT / max;
        while (retVal >= max)
            retVal = random() / slice;
    }
}
return(retVal);
}

// This function returns a uniformly distributed integer in the range of
// of [min,max).
uint32_t EntropyClass::random(uint32_t min, uint32_t max)
{
    uint32_t slice, tmp_random, tmax;

    tmax = max - min;
    if (tmax < 2)
        retVal=0;
    else
    {
        tmp_random = random(tmax);
        retVal = min + tmp_random;
    }
    return(retVal);
}

// This function returns a unsigned char (8-bit) with the number of unsigned long values
// in the entropy pool
uint8_t EntropyClass::available(void)
{
    return(gWDT_pool_count);
}

// This interrupt service routine is called every time the WDT interrupt is triggered.
// With the default configuration that is approximately once every 16ms, producing
// approximately two 32-bit integer values every second.
//
// The pool is implemented as an 8 value circular buffer
ISR(WDT_vect)
{
    gWDT_buffer[gWDT_buffer_position] = TCNT1L; // Record the Timer 1 low byte (only one needed)
    gWDT_buffer_position++; // every time the WDT interrupt is triggered
    if (gWDT_buffer_position >= gWDT_buffer_SIZE)
    {
        gWDT_pool_end = (gWDT_pool_start + gWDT_pool_count) % WDT_POOL_SIZE;
    }
}

```

```

// The following code is an implementation of Jenkin's one at a time hash
// This hash function has had preliminary testing to verify that it
// produces reasonably uniform random results when using WDT jitter
// on a variety of Arduino platforms
for(gWDT_loop_counter = 0; gWDT_loop_counter < gWDT_buffer_SIZE; ++gWDT_loop_counter)
{
    gWDT_entropy_pool[gWDT_pool_end] += gWDT_buffer[gWDT_loop_counter];
    gWDT_entropy_pool[gWDT_pool_end] += (gWDT_entropy_pool[gWDT_pool_end] << 10);
    gWDT_entropy_pool[gWDT_pool_end] ^= (gWDT_entropy_pool[gWDT_pool_end] >> 6);
}
gWDT_entropy_pool[gWDT_pool_end] += (gWDT_entropy_pool[gWDT_pool_end] << 3);
gWDT_entropy_pool[gWDT_pool_end] ^= (gWDT_entropy_pool[gWDT_pool_end] >> 11);
gWDT_entropy_pool[gWDT_pool_end] += (gWDT_entropy_pool[gWDT_pool_end] << 15);
gWDT_entropy_pool[gWDT_pool_end] = gWDT_entropy_pool[gWDT_pool_end];
gWDT_buffer_position = 0; // Start collecting the next 32 bytes of Timer 1 counts
if (gWDT_pool_count == WDT_POOL_SIZE) // The entropy pool is full
    gWDT_pool_start = (gWDT_pool_start + 1) % WDT_POOL_SIZE;
else // Add another unsigned long (32 bits) to the entropy pool
    ++gWDT_pool_count;
}
}

// The library implements a single global instance. There is no need, nor will the library
// work properly if multiple instances are created.
EntropyClass Entropy;

```

3.3 Keywords

keywords.txt

```

#####
# Syntax Coloring Map For TrueRandom
#####

#####
# Datatypes (KEYWORD1)
#####

Entropy KEYWORD1

#####
# Methods and Functions (KEYWORD2)
#####

random KEYWORD2
available KEYWORD2
Initialize KEYWORD2
#####
# Constants (LITERAL1)
#####

```

WDT_RETURN_BYTE LITERAL1
WDT_RETURN_WORD LITERAL1

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