Cross-Platform Protocol Development Based on OMNeT++

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SIMUTools 2012: OMNeT++ Workshop
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Introduction
Simulation is indispensable for the development of (wireless) network protocols.

OMNeT++ is a powerful tool for simulations of network protocols.
Motivation

Simulation is indispensable for the development of (wireless) network protocols.

OMNeT++ is a powerful tool for simulations of network protocols.

However:

Re-implementation of protocols for a target platform is time-consuming and error-prone.
Introduction

CometOS, a component-based, extensible, tiny “operating system”

Design Goals

- Single code base for protocols, whether running simulations or executing on target hardware
- “Lightweight enough” for resource constrained hardware
- Flexibility, extensibility, avoidance of code redundancy
- Thereby: speed up protocol development and produce safe code
1 Introduction

2 Architecture and Concepts

3 Feasibility

4 Conclusion
Architecture and Concepts
Architecture

Hardware platform
Architecture

Hardware platform
Gates and Message Passing

Message handlers are executed non-preemptively (millisecond precision)

- Adoption of OMNeT++ message and gate concept
- Added type safety
  - Gates instantiated with a certain message type
  - Connections between gates are checked at compile time
    \[ \Rightarrow \text{dynamic\_casts can be avoided} \]
- Decrease of boilerplate code
  - Gates and self-messages directly bound to handler methods
  - No \texttt{handleMessage()} dispatch code necessary
- User-defined messages
  - Created by deriving from base class
  - Basic message types provided: Request/Confirm, Indication
Message Passing (2)

class MyMsg: public Message {}

class MyReceiver: public Module {
public:
   InputGate<MyMsg> gateIn;

   MyReceiver() :
      gateIn(this, &MyReceiver::handle, "gateIn")
   {}

   void handle(MyMsg *msg) {
      delete msg;
   }
};

class MySender: public Module {
public:
   OutputGate<MyMsg> gateOut;

   MySender() :
      gateOut(this, "gateOut")
   {}

   void initialize() {
      schedule(new Message, &MySender::traffic, 500);
   }

   void traffic(Message *msg) {
      gateOut.send(new MyMsg);
      delete msg;
   }
};
MAC abstraction layer

- Goal: Basis for arbitrary, platform-independent MAC protocols (CSMA, TDMA, LPL, LPP)
- Should support Link-Layer ACKs, CCA, Random Backoffs
- Hardware-supported functions of 802.15.4 transceivers
Airframes and Serialization

- Actual over-the-air packet: Managed byte array (Airframe)
- Support for serialization of simple types
- User-defined types (structs, classes):
  ⇒ serialization user-provided

```c
struct NwkHeader {
  uint16_t dst;
  uint16_t source;
}

void serialize(ByteVector &buffer, const NwkHeader &value) {
  serialize(buffer, value.dst);
  serialize(buffer, value.source);
}
...
NwkHeader nwk(SINK_ADDR, getId());
request->getAirframe().serialize(nwk);
```
Initialization

For OMNeT++
⇒ .ned, .ini files

For Hardware Platforms:
⇒ C++ initialization file

```cpp
// Setup for OMNeT++ in NED language
// (skipped declaration of modules)
network Network {  
    submodules:
        s: MySender;
        r: MyReceiver;
    connections:
        s.gateOut → r.gateIn;
}

// Setup for Hardware
MySender s;
MyReceiver r;

int main() {  
    s.gateOut.connectTo(r.gateIn);
    cometos::initialize();
    cometos::run();
    return 0;
}
```
Base Station Support

- Currently under development
- Python wrapper for existing CometOS C++ code (SWIG)
  - Reuse protocol implementation for a base station
  - Usable with real testbed or OMNeT++ real-time simulation and TCP/IP connector
- Integration of powerful remote access methodology
  - Read/write of variables
  - Remote execution of methods
  - Subscribe to events
class MyModule :
public RemoteModule {
public:
    MyModule(const char* name) :
        RemoteModule(name) {}

    void initialize() {
        declareRemote(&MyModule::add, "add");
    }

    uint16_t add(uint8_t &a, uint8_t &b) {
        return a+b;
    }
};

MyModule m( "myModule" );

r = RemoteModule( "myModule" );
r. declareRemote( "add", uint16_t, uint8_t, uint8_t );
print r.add(18, 11)

>>> 29

↑ Python console

← CometOS-Module
Typical Development Steps

1. OMNeT++ Simulation
2. OMNeT++ Simulation
3. Real-World Deployment
Feasibility
Resource Demand

- Minimum example (MySender, MyReceiver)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MCU</th>
<th>Flash</th>
<th>RAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATmega128RFA1</td>
<td>4148 Bytes</td>
<td>145 Bytes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPC1763</td>
<td>3136 Bytes</td>
<td>120 Bytes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 7 modules, forked protocol stack

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MCU</th>
<th>Flash</th>
<th>RAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATmega128RFA1</td>
<td>10 kB</td>
<td>649 Bytes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPC1763</td>
<td>7 kB</td>
<td>580 Bytes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Simulation Accuracy

- Comparison of RTTs from field installation (93 nodes at heliostat power plant in Jülich) and simulation for different number of hops

![Graph showing comparison between field test and simulation](image)
Conclusion
Conclusion, Future Work

- CometOS meets its design goals
  - Protocol implementations reusable on target hardware
  - “Lightweight enough”
- Field test at heliostat power plant in Jülich, Germany successfully running since May 2011

- Current and Future Work:
  - Smart Metering application based on CometOS
  - Improvement and extension of interface to driver layer
  - Direct support for logging and statistics recording and reporting
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Resource Demand Revisited

- RAM usage depends on target architecture (e.g., 8 bit vs 32 bit)
- Values for 32 bit MCU
  - Module: 8 Bytes
  - InputGate: 16 Byte
  - OutputGate: 4 Byte
  - RemoteModule: 30 Bytes (including Module)
  - Standard modules Layer and Endpoint with 4 and 2 Gates require 70 Bytes and 50 Bytes

- ROM usage even more depends on architecture, instruction set, compiler etc.
Experiment Setup

- Packets with 50 Bytes payload
- 100 measurements per node
- 802.15.4 (2.4 GHz ISM band, 250 kbps)
Cross-Layer Support

Communication between non-adjacent modules?
Cross-Layer Support

Communication between non-adjacent modules?

- Similar to OMNeT++’s ControlInfo or ns3’s object aggregation:
  - Attach arbitrary objects to Messages and Airframes
- Example: Setting MAC txPower from higher layer:

// Application: set tx power to −20 dBm
request→add(new MacTxPower(−20));
...

// MAC: use MacTxPower if set
MacTxPower* txPower= request→get<MacTxPower>();
if (txPower != NULL) {...}