Abstract

An increasing number of sensor networks have been deployed to monitor a variety of conditions and situations. At the same time, more and more applications are starting to rely on the data from sensor networks to provide users with (near) real-time information and conditions. We argue that while ripe networking and duty cycling protocols for these networks exist, approaches to sensor network sharing and management are still immature. For example, the common approach to sensor network deployments is that one network serves a single application and often a single end-user. This approach can lead to inefficient use of resources and limits the potential for the implementation of new applications exploiting existing infrastructures. In this demonstration we present our initial efforts to the design of a sensor network architecture that supports sharing of network resources across multiple applications. The key characteristic of our approach is the virtualisation of hardware components on each sensor node, and the controlled access to these resources by multiple applications running on each node. Furthermore, our virtualisation runtime supports a range of hardware platforms (Imote2, smart-phones, laptops), offering a uniform application development API.

1 Introduction

The deployment of sensor networks to monitor a variety of conditions and situations is soaring and the demand of users for accurate information about natural and surrounding phenomena is increasing created a business case for application providers.

We argue that while quite ripe networking and duty cycling protocols for sensor networks exist, approaches to sensor network sharing and management are still immature. In particular, typical sensor networks are designed and deployed to serve a single application. Indeed, the common approach in the design of sensor networks is to deploy networks that are fit-for-purpose with the primary aim of supporting a single application that belongs to a single authority (usually the owner of the infrastructure)[2]. While this is a sensible approach for short-term and small-scale deployments, in sensor network deployments that consist of thousands of nodes with a life span of multiple years, inducing high costs of deployment and maintenance, the single-application approach can lead to inefficient use of resources and low cost-benefit results. Moreover, the requirement for dedicated sensing infrastructure to support new applications belonging to different organisations can lead to unnecessary replication of sensing infrastructure. One example that illustrates this problem is the deployment of cameras on the UK roads and motorways. Typically different authorities (police, highway agency, local city authorities) will deploy their own networks of cameras, occasionally covering the same areas.

In this work we propose a departure from the notion of sensor networks aimed at supporting a single application and serving a single user. We introduce an approach that is based on the decoupling of infrastructure and application ownership. The primary objective of this work is to create a framework that allows sensor network infrastructures to be shared among multiple applications that can potentially belong to different authorities. By achieving this level of decoupling, sensing infrastructures can be viewed as an accessible resource that can be dynamically re-purposed and re-programmed by different authorities, in order to support multiple applications.

A key challenge in realising this vision is the design of a new sensor network architecture that supports multiple applications, dynamically uploaded by different owners and simultaneously running over a shared infrastructure. In this demonstration we illustrate our efforts in exploring this vision. The key characteristics of our approach are:

- A virtualisation layer that is running on each sensor node, abstracts access to sensor resources and allows the management of these resources through policies expressed by the infrastructure owner.
- A runtime environment on each node that allows multiple applications to run inside each node.
- A policy based application deployment that enables multiple application to be deployed over the shared infrastructure.

The following sections offer an overview of our architecture and a description of the demo proposal.

2 System Architecture

The high level architecture of the system is shown in Figure 1. The design of the system is targeted to advanced sensing devices (i.e. Imote2, gumstix, smartphones) with enough memory and processing power to support multiple applications. The operating system running on each sensing device is Embedded Linux, a multitasking operating system.
Virtualisation Runtime

on top of a building plan to illustrate the physical topology of the sensor network.

During the demonstration three separate applications will be deployed concurrently on the network:

- **Environment Monitoring**: This application collects environmental readings (temperature, humidity) and reports these readings to the sink. The application will be deployed on all nodes of the network. A back-end application will show in a graphical format the data that is collected.

- **Occupancy Monitoring**: This application utilises the ambient light sensor to infer the occupancy of rooms. The application will be deployed only on sensors that are located in office spaces. A back-end application will show occupancy changes on the building plan.

- **Fire Evacuation**: This application utilises the temperature sensor to monitor the progress of a fire in the building. The application will be deployed on demand illustrating a special case of emergency. The underlying infrastructure will give priority to this application’s traffic over the previous applications.

The layout of the demonstration is shown in Figure 2. The sensor node neighbourhood is pre-configured to represent a realistic multi-hop topology. A laptop acts as a sink for the sensor network and it hosts the back-end portion of the deployed applications. A second laptop illustrates in real-time network events, such as applications deployed on each node and network traffic, utilising the Auditing component of the infrastructure.

**Through this demonstration the delegates will be able to observe how multiple applications can run on a shared infrastructure. They will see examples of selective deployment of applications on parts of the infrastructure and the effect of priorities and policies on the behaviour of the applications.**

### 4 References
