# Parasitic Mobility for Sensate Media 

by

Mathew Joel Laibowitz

B.S. Computer Engineering

Columbia University, 1997
Submitted to the Program in Media Arts and Sciences,
School of Architecture and Planning,
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Science in Media Arts and Sciences
at the
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
September 2004
© Massachusetts Institute of Technology 2004. All rights reserved.


Sony Career Development Professor of Media Arts and Sciences MIT Program in Media Arts and Sciences

Accepted By
Andrew Lippman
Chair, Department Committee on Graduate Students MIT Program in Media Arts and Sciences

# Parasitic Mobility for Sensor Networks 

by<br>Mathew Joel Laibowitz<br>Submitted to the Program in Media Arts and Sciences, School of Architecture and Planning, on August $12^{\text {th }}, 2004$, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Media Arts and Sciences


#### Abstract

Distributed sensor networks offer many new capabilities for monitoring environments with applicability to medical, industrial, military, anthropological, and experiential fields. By making such systems mobile, we increase the application-space for the distributed sensor network mainly by providing dynamic context-dependent deployment, continual relocatabililty, automatic node recovery, and a larger area of coverage. In existing models, the addition of actuation to sensor network nodes has exacerbated three of the main problems with these types of systems: power usage, node size, and node complexity. This work proposes a solution to these problems in the form of parasitically actuated nodes that gain their mobility and local navigational intelligence by selectively engaging and disengaging from mobile hosts in their environment. This body of work evaluates parasitically actuated sensor networks as a solution to these problems through extensive software simulation and by designing, implementing, and demonstrating a parasitically mobile sensor network.


Thesis Supervisor: Joseph A. Paradiso
Title: Associate Professor, Program in Media Arts and Sciences

# Parasitic Mobility for Sensor Networks 

by<br>Mathew Joel Laibowitz

The following people served as readers for this thesis:


MIT Program in Media Arts and Sciences


## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank and acknowledge the continuing support, without which none of this would be possible, much less enjoyable, of advisor, readers, and colleagues Joseph Paradiso, William Kaiser, David Reed, Josh Lifton, Ari Benbasat, David Merrill, Hong Ma, Mark Feldmeier, Dan Lovell, and Michael Broxton.

I would like to thank my family, Robert Laibowitz, Laura Laibowitz, Ken Laibowitz, Danielle Laibowitz, Ben, Hannah, Julianna, Rebecca, Rachel, and my grandmother Giulianna (Nonna) Goetzl for all the support and love throughout my life leading to my ability to tackle challenges such as this.

I would like to thank my friends in New York, and apologize for always being at least 8 hours late to their events.

I would especially like to thank Talia Dorsey for her direct help with the soldering, cutting, taping, gluing, finding the plastic spheres, graphics design, writing, and photography; and for all her creative inspiration throughout my life.

And finally, I would like to thank everyone who made my test a success by being attracted to strange devices with blinking lights.

## Table of Contents

Abstract ..... 3
Acknowledgements ..... 7
Table of Contents ..... 9
List of Figures ..... 11
List of Tables ..... 15
1 Introduction ..... 17
1.1 Basic Principle ..... 17
1.2 Related Work ..... 19
2 Examples of Parasitic Mobility ..... 23
2.1 Parasitic Mobility in Nature ..... 23
2.1.1 Active Parasitic Mobility ..... 24
2.1.2 Passive Parasitic Mobility ..... 25
2.1.3 Value-Added Parasitic Mobility ..... 26
2.2 Parasitic Mobility in Society ..... 28
2.3 Fictional Examples of Parasitic Mobility ..... 29
3 Software Simulation ..... 31
3.1 Design Overview ..... 31
3.1.1 Environment Setup ..... 32
3.1.2 Host Behavior Simulation ..... 38
3.1.3 Parasitic Node Behavior Simulation. ..... 41
3.1.4 Final Simulator Design Notes ..... 44
3.2 Simulator Results and Data ..... 45
3.2.1 Velocity Data ..... 46
3.2.2 Energy Usage Calculations and Comparison ..... 56
3.2.2.1 Semi-Passive Node Power Calculations ..... 53
3.2.2.2 Active Node Power Calculations ..... 56
3.2.2.3 Power Comparison 1 - NASA Urban Recon Robot ..... 59
3.2.2.4 Power Comparison 2—RoboMOTE ..... 60
3.2.2.5 Power Comparison Results ..... 60
3.2.3 Maze Simulation ..... 62
3.3 Software Simulation Conclusion ..... 66
4 Hardware System ..... 67
4.1 Electronics Design ..... 67
4.1.1 Power Module ..... 68
4.1.2 Processing ..... 70
4.1.3 Communication ..... 71
4.1.4 Sensor Suite ..... 72
4.1.5 Location System and Monitoring System ..... 73
4.2 Mechanical Design ..... 78
4.2.1 Active Node Design ..... 79
4.2.2 Passive and Semi-Passive Node Design ..... 82
4.2.3 Value-Added/Attraction Node Design ..... 83
4.3 Firmware Design ..... 85
4.3.1 Data Structures ..... 85
4.3.2 Background Processes ..... 88
4.3.3 Main Loop ..... 89
4.4 Test Application and Results ..... 93
4.4.1 Test Application Description ..... 93
4.4.2 Power Usage Discussion ..... 98
4.4.3 Trajectory Data ..... 99
4.4.4 Sensor Data ..... 112
4.5 Hardware Evaluation ..... 132
5 Conclusions ..... 135
5.1 Summary ..... 135
5.2 Possible Applications of Parasitic Mobility ..... 136
5.3 Future Work ..... 136
A Schematics and PCB Layouts ..... 139
B Microprocessor Code ..... 153
C Simulator Source Code ..... 171
D Location System Source Code ..... 199
References ..... 213

## List of Figures

2-1 Close-Up of a Tick’s Gripping Mechanism ..... 24
2-2 The Life Cycle of the Onchocerca Volvulus ..... 24
2-3 A Remora hitching a ride on a shark ..... 25
2-4 Dandelion seeds catching a ride from the wind ..... 26
2-5 Burs stuck to a foot being brought to a new location ..... 26
2-6 Bees attracted to flowers by the petals and the nectar ..... 27
2-7 People hitching a ride on a bus ..... 28
2-8 Dorothy Sensors from the movie Twister ..... 29
3-1 Screenshot of the Parasitic Mobility Simulator Map Editor. ..... 32
3-2 General Map Control section of control panel ..... 33
3-3 Wall and Portal section of the control panel ..... 33
3-4 Environmental conditions and host frequency section of the control panel ..... 34
3-5 Host and Paramor Assignment Panel and map symbols for hosts and paramors ..... 35
3-6 Screenshot of the Parasitic Mobility Simulator executing a simulation of a small, plain map containing only hosts and paramors ..... 37
3-7 Popup window showing the parameters settable on a host-by-host basis. ..... 39
3-8 Popup window showing the parameters for paramor nodes ..... 41
3-9 Logging controls and Run Loop Button ..... 44
3-10 Graph showing distance versus time data collected and averaged from repeated simulation passes ..... 46
3-11 Graph showing distance versus time data collected and averaged from repeated simulation passes at a speed of $2 \mathrm{~d} / \mathrm{t}$ ..... 49
3-12 Host Velocity versus Node Velocity ..... 51
3-13 This graph shows the results of the simulation where the distance is kept constant and the host frequency around the destination is varied. ..... 53
3-14 Graph showing the time to cover an area for different quantities of deployed nodes ..... 55
3-15 Power versus Distance of parasitic and non-parasitic mobile devices ..... 61
3-16 Maze layout for simulation of a real scenario ..... 62
3-17 Maze simulation executing ..... 64
4-1 Node Hardware with 3 layers ..... 68
4-2 Power Module top and bottom. ..... 68
4-3 Top side of Processing and Communication Module showing the Microcontroller and Memory ..... 70
4-4 Bottom side of Processing and Communication Module showing the Bluetooth Radio ..... 71
4-5 Sensor/Actuation Module top and bottom ..... 72
4-6 Top and bottom of the GPS Module layer shown without GPS chipset populated ..... 73
4-7 Bluetooth Location beacons ready to be deployed ..... 75
4-8 Bluetooth beacon with LAN cable attached and power supply plugged in ..... 76
4-9 Screenshot of the central control software for monitor node behavior from the network ..... 77
4-10 Screenshot of the node control panel allowing control and visualization of a specific node ..... 78
4-11 The active node, nicknamed the ParaHop ..... 79
4-12 CAD Drawing of the hopping actuator ..... 80
4-12 The node electronics in their spherical casing ..... 82
4-13 A label that can give the host instructions as to what to do with the node. ..... 84
4-14 Bluetooth Location system coverage of test area ..... 94
4-15 Distinct zones formed from overlapping beacons in the location system ..... 95
4-16 Trajectory for node \#1 ..... 100
4-17 Trajectory for node \#2 ..... 101
4-18 Trajectory for node \#3 ..... 102
4-19 Trajectory for node \#4 ..... 103
4-20 Trajectory for node \#5 ..... 104
4-21 Trajectory for node \#6 ..... 105
4-22 Trajectory for node \#7 ..... 106
4-23 Trajectory for node \#8 ..... 108
4-24 Trajectory for node \#9 ..... 109
4-25 Trajectory for node \#10 ..... 110
4-26 Trajectories for all nodes ..... 111
4-27 Occupation schedule for zones (which node was in which zone at what time) ..... 112
4-28 Sensor Data for Node \#1 ..... 113
4-29 Sensor Data for Node \# 2 ..... 115
4-30 Sensor Data for Node \#3 ..... 117
4-31 Sensor Data for Node \#4 ..... 119
4-32 Sensor Data fro Node \#5 ..... 121
4-33 Sensor Data for Node \#7 ..... 123
4-34 Sensor Data for Node \#8 ..... 125
4-35 Sensor Data for Node \#9 ..... 127
4-36 Sensor Data for Node \#10 ..... 129
A-1 Node Power Module Schematic. ..... 140
A-2 Node Processing and Communication Module Schematic ..... 141
A-3 Node GPS Module Schematic ..... 142
A-4 Node Sensor Module Schematic ..... 143
A-5 Node PCB Layout Top Layer ..... 144
A-6 Node PCB Layout Bottom Layer. ..... 145
A-7 Node PCB Layout Top Silkscreen ..... 146
A-8 Node PCB Layout Bottom Silkscreen ..... 147
A-9 Schematic of Bluetooth Location System Beacon ..... 148
A-10 Bluetooth Location System Beacon PCB Layout Top Layer ..... 149
A-11 Bluetooth Location System Beacon PCB Layout Bottom Layer. ..... 150
A-12 Bluetooth Location System Beacon PCB Layout Top Silkscreen ..... 151

## List of Tables

3-1 Example snippet of XML file created by the map editor ..... 36
3-2 Example snippet of XML log file ..... 45
3-3 Maze simulation results ..... 65
4-1 Data Structures used in node firmware ..... 86
4-3 Flow chart showing the basic operation in the idle state for both the active node and the semi-passive node ..... 89
4-4 Flow chart showing the firmware execution when the node is in the attached state ..... 90
4-5 Flow chart showing firmware execution while in the sensing state
4-6 Average Data per Zone (raw un-calibrated sensor data) ..... 131

## Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Basic Principle

We are at a point in time where advances in technology have enabled production of extremely small, inexpensive, and wirelessly networked sensor clusters. We can thus implant large quantities of sensors into an environment, creating a distributed sensor network. Each individual node in the network can monitor its local space and communicate with other nodes to collaboratively produce a high-level representation of the overall environment. By using distributed sensor networks, we can sculpt the sensor density to cluster around areas of interest, cover large areas, and work more efficiently by filtering local data at the node level before it is transmitted or relayed peer-to-peer. [1]

Furthermore, by adding autonomous mobility to the nodes, the system becomes more able to dynamically localize around areas of interest allowing it to cover larger total area
with fewer nodes by moving nodes away from uninteresting areas. It is well suited to sampling dynamic or poorly modeled phenomena. The addition of locomotion further provides the ability to deploy the sensor network at a distance away from the area of interest, useful in hostile environments. Cooperative micro-robots can reach places and perform tasks that their larger cousins cannot. [2] Mobility also allows the design of a system where nodes can seek out power sources, request the dispatch of other nodes to perform tasks that require more sensing capability, seek out repair, and locate data portals from which to report data. [3]

But the creation of mobile nodes is not without a price. Locomotion is costly in terms of node size and power consumption. In dense sensor systems, due to the large quantity of nodes and distributed coverage, it is difficult to manually replace batteries or maintain all nodes. Some researchers [4] have explored using robots to maintain distributed networks, but this is difficult to implement over large, unrestricted environments. Additionally, the added intelligence and processing power required for a node to successfully navigate in an arbitrary environment further increases the power and size requirements of each node. Large nodes, in physical size, complexity, cost, and power consumption, prevent the sensor network from being implanted in most environments. [5] [6]

This research is concerned with exploring a novel type of mobile distributed sensor network that achieves the benefits of mobility without the usual costs of size, power, and complexity. The innovation that allows this to happen is the design of nodes that harvest their actuation and local navigational intelligence from the environment. The node will be equipped with the ability to selectively attach to or embed itself within an external mobile host. Examples of such hosts include people, animals, vehicles, fluids, forces (eg. selectively rolling down a hill), and cellular organisms. These hosts provide a source of translational energy, and in the animate cases, they know how to navigate within their environment, allowing the node to simply decide if the host will take it closer to a point of interest. If so, the node will remain attached; when the host begins to take the node farther away from a point of interest, the node will disengage and wait for a new host.

This area of research aims to develop and understand a potential method for the combination of mobile sensor agents, dense distributed sensor networks, and energy harvesting. This thesis presents the design and development of hardware and software systems to address the combination of these interests as parasitic mobility.

### 1.2 Related Work

Although this research has no direct precedent, it is inspired by systems in nature and human society (discussed in Chapter 2) and it builds upon current work in the encompassed fields of distributed sensor networks and mobile systems.

Wireless sensor networks have become a large area of research, with many universities and institutes contributing. Strategic seed programs begun in the 1990s such as DARPA's SENSIT initiative [7], have grown into an international research movement.

Early work on highly distributed computation and sensor networks at MIT that provides the lineage to this project can be traced back to the Laboratory of Computer Science's Amorphous Computing Group's research in emergent and self-organizing behaviors in computer systems [8]. This research conducted software simulations that provided a basis for designing distributed, cooperative systems, leading to the Paintable Computing [9] paradigm proposed by Bill Butera of the MIT Media Lab’s Object Based Media Group. This platform has progressed from software simulation to the very recent development of hardware implementing a distributed sensor network comprised of about 1000 nodes. The Responsive Environments Group at the MIT Media Lab designed an earlier versatile sensor network test-bed inspired by the Paintable Computing concept called the Push-Pin computing platform [10], which can support over 100 nodes arbitrarily placed atop a 1x1 meter power substrate. Their subsequent interest in electronic skin as an ultra-dense sensor network [11] resulted in the creation of the "Tribble" project [12], a large sphere tiled by a hardwired multimodal sensor network. These systems consist of many nodes instrumented with environmental sensors that can communicate with each other to form a global picture of their situation. All the above projects illustrate many ideas in distributed
sensor networks that motivate this research and provide a basis for the design of a system useful in experimenting with the concept of parasitic mobility.

The Smart Dust Project at UC Berkeley [13] has set a theoretical goal for extremely small nodes in dense embedded sensor networks. While the project itself did not put an actual hardware platform into production, it spun-off into the Mote [14] and more recently the Spec [15]. The Mote is currently the most popular platform for experimenting with compact wireless sensing. It has also served as a building block for many mobile sensor agent projects, all of which essentially involved putting a Mote onto some sort of robot [4]. The Spec is the current result of a project intended to shrink down the Mote to the theoretical goal of the Smart Dust project. While not yet that small, the Spec is around $4 \mathrm{~mm} \times 4 \mathrm{~mm}$ (not including the battery or antenna) and will open the door for many dense sensor array experiments. Similar work is also proceeding at other institutions (e.g. The National Microelectronic Research Center in Cork, Ireland [16]); the research community is congealing around the goal of producing millimeter sized multimodal wireless sensor nodes. Parasitic Mobility is intended as a means to add mobility to systems built to meet the specifications of these projects with regards to size, power, and node complexity; as the nodes grow smaller, parasitic mobility becomes increasingly feasible and desirable. As the power source remains a problem and current research in energy scavenging [17] and adaptive sensing [18] is very relevant to this initiative. Adaptive sensing is the technique by which sensing capabilities (active sensors, sampling rate, power consumption, bit-depth, transmission, processing) are increased and decreased according to the sensor data itself, never decreasing below a level capable enough to determine when more sensing power is necessary. Such approaches are currently being implemented using the Stack Sensor Platform [19] at the MIT Media Lab. The Networked InfoMechanical Systems research area at the Center for Embedded Networked Sensing at UCLA conducts research and builds systems to investigate adaptive sensing [18] and mobility for distributed sensor networks [20].

The MIT Laboratory for Computer Science’s Network and Mobile Systems group has conducted substantial research in wireless and sensor networks. Several of their projects are directly related to the work of this thesis. They include a protocol for networking Bluetooth nodes [21] and the LEACH protocol for sensor networking [22]. These are examples of self-configuring network protocols that support mobile nodes of any variety including parasitically actuated.

And finally, while not distributed sensor networks, there are several mobile sensor devices built by attaching large sensor packages to floating platforms that drift about in ambient flows while collecting data. Some examples include Sonobuoys [23] that acoustically hunt for submarines, drifting instrumentation packages to monitor ocean temperature [24], and balloon-borne modules for surveillance and proposed planetary exploration [25].

## Chapter 2

## Examples of Parasitic Mobility

### 2.1 Parasitic Mobility in Nature

The natural world provides us with many examples of parasitic mobility, including organisms that rely entirely on larger organisms to carry them to habitable locations. Parasitic relationships of this sort are called phoretic relationships from the word phoresis, which literally means transmission [26]. In the context of this thesis, these examples are separated into three categories: active parasitic mobility consisting of organisms that attach and detach at will from hosts with their own actuation, passive parasitic mobility consisting of passive nodes that are picked up and dropped off, knowingly or unknowingly, by hosts, and value-added parasitic mobility which consists of either passive or active parasitic organisms that provide additional value to the host in exchange for transportation.

### 2.1.1 Active Parasitic Mobility



Figure 2-1: Close-Up of a Tick’s Gripping Mechanism

The first example that comes to mind when discussing parasites in nature is the tick. The tick actively attaches to hosts by falling from trees or by crawling directly onto the host. It remains attached by using an actuated gripping mechanism which it can release whenever it decides to seek food elsewhere. Although the tick is transported to new locations by the host, its primary reason for attachment is to use the host as a source of food. It is therefore not normally considered a phoretic organism. It is still relevant to the topic as the main example of an active attachment mechanism.


Figure 2-2: The Life Cycle of the Onchocerca Volvulus. Adult females release millions of microfilariae into the bloodstream of the host. There they are picked up by feeding blackflies and brought to a new host where they can start the life cycle again.

Several species of nematodes, a.k.a. round worms, exhibit phoretic behaviors. The Pelodera Coarctata is a nematode that is commonly found living in cow dung. When the
conditions in the dung deteriorate and become inhospitable for the nematode, it attaches itself to a dung beetle which will carry it to a new fresh dung pat. [27] Another such nematode is the Onchocerca Volvulus which is infamous as the cause of "River Blindness." This worm attaches itself to Blackflies that in turn bite humans allowing the worm to travel through the skin and infect the host human. These Blackflies themselves are also an example of parasitic mobility. Their larvae require an aquatic stage for growth, so they often attach themselves to freshwater crabs to bring them into the water and protect them. [27]


Figure 2-3: A Remora hitching a ride on a shark
Marine life is ripe with examples of active parasitic mobility. One example is that of the Remora or Suckerfish. These fish have developed a sucker-like organ that they use to attach to larger creatures such as sharks or manta rays. By attaching to these larger, faster animals the remora covers area faster giving it more access to food. [28]

### 2.1.2 Passive Parasitic Mobility

Plants often employ parasitic mobility as a means of distributing seeds. A common example of this is the dandelion. The dandelion seeds have a tiny parachute that carries the seed with the wind. This allows the seeds to travel some distance in hopes of landing
in an area that provides the requirements of growth. It is completely passive and at the whim of the wind. It is not expected that all the seeds will land in arable areas. This is overcome by the sheer quantity of seeds released into the air. This is more opportunistic than parasitic, but still falls within the conceptual boundaries of this research.


Figure 2-4: Dandelion seeds catching a ride from the wind


Figure 2-5: Burs stuck to a foot being brought to a new location

Other plants, with behaviors more aptly described as parasitic, distribute their seeds in bur casings. These prickly cases stick to animals that brush up against them or step on them. They are shaken lose or fall off as a result of shedding, usually at a new location.

### 2.1.3 Value-Added Parasitic Mobility

Fruit-bearing trees distribute their seeds in a value-added method. Animals gather the fruits as a food source and in turn spread the discarded seed-containing cores. This attraction and provision acts as an attachment mechanism for the seeds. The detachment mechanism is the inedibility of the seeds within the fruit, in other words, when the added value has been used up.


Figure 2-6: Bees are attracted to flowers by the petals and the nectar. Once inside the bees are covered with pollen which they carry to another flower to complete the pollination process.

Flowers use their scented petals to attract bees and other insects. The flowers also provide nectar. The bees use the nectar to make honey and carry the pollen from flower to flower. This is an extremely well evolved symbiotic system that has very little wasted energy or resources. [29]

The existence of many such well evolved systems in nature illustrates the validity of this type of mobility, and justifies researching further how to use this concept in our research.

### 2.2 Parasitic Mobility in Society



Figure 2-7: People hitching a ride on a bus
In human society, many of the systems surrounding us exhibit emergent behaviors that exemplify parasitic mobility. It is important to examine these systems, not only as conceptual examples, but also because it may be possible to embed sensor network technology directly into these existing systems and take advantage of their mobility.

Basic examples, such as people being pulled along by a bus as shown in Figure 2-7, exist throughout society. It is often beneficial to attach to something that can travel in ways that a person cannot. This example further illustrates the economies of parasitic mobility; the people are getting a free ride. This concept has been taken further by Neal Stevenson in his novel Snow Crash [30]. In Snow Crash, hitching rides on other vehicles is presented as a major method of transportation in the future setting of the story.

A simple example of parasitic mobility is when a lost object, such as a cellular phone, is returned to its owner. This method of actuation is a combination of the device identifying its destination and a desire for the host to bring it there. Keeping this in mind, it may be possible to design devices that could identify some sort of reward for bringing them to a point of interest to the device. Another example of this behavior is that of a consumer survey (a sensor of sorts) that is redeemable as a coupon when returned.

There are many everyday objects that are only useful for short bursts. One example of this is a writing utensil. A pen is needed to record information when it is presented or invented; afterwards the pen sits dormant awaiting the next burst of usefulness. During this period where the pen is not deemed useful it is free to be relocated. It is often relocated by a host requiring its use in another location. As a result, pens generally cover large areas over time, and due to their unlikelihood of being returned, people usually have redundant supplies of pens. Equipping pens with a sensor device is a good way to gain coverage of an environment, particularly an office or academic institutional building.

### 2.3 Fictional Examples of Parasitic Mobility



Figure 2-8: Dorothy Sensors from the movie Twister. Image copyright © Tim Ketzer.

In the movie Twister [31], a team of storm-chasers release a batch of sensors into a tornado. The sensors, collective called 'Dorothy', are sucked up into the vortex and collect data about the tornado from the inside. These sensor nodes are carried into the area of interest by winds themselves. In this case the sensor nodes are used to study the actuation force itself, and is mobile along with the force thereby always being at the area of interest. Although it seems possible that this system can be deployed, according to the National Severe Storms Laboratory [32], such devices have not been built. They have experimented with a large barrel-sized sensor device called TOTO (TOtable Tornado Observatory), but these tests have yielded only minimal success.

Finally, the most famous example of an object that travels without its own actuation is 'The One Ring’ from the "Lord of the Rings Trilogy." [33] This ring calls out to potential hosts to pick it up, and even renders the wearer invisible as a value-added service. And finally, the ring desires to be brought to a location which also happens to be the only place it can be destroyed; a promised reward for its successful journey.

## Chapter 3

## Software Simulation

In order to better delve into and examine the concept of parasitic mobility, extensive software simulation was performed. Through the process of designing the software simulator, the proposed systems were examined from the ground up, looking at all the factors that influence a potential sensor network of this type. This was a critical first step into research of this topic. Upon its completion, the simulator was an invaluable asset for testing and examining ideas and algorithms, collection of data identifying expected behaviors, further proving the validity of the overall concept, and providing insights directly used in the design of the hardware system described in chapter 4.

### 3.1 Design Overview

The design of the software simulator can be broken down into three sections: Environmental Simulation, Host Behavior, and Paramor Behavior. "Paramor" is the name
given to a parasitically mobile node and is an apt anagram for PARAsitic MObility Research. On top of these areas, the simulator contains all the necessary hooks for interactively changing behaviors and trying out new algorithms, detailed logging of activity data, and unattended running of multiple simulations with a desired timescale.

The simulator is grid based, and has been tested with maps as large as one million cells. The hosts and paramors participating in the simulation move by transitioning from cell to cell.

### 3.1.1 Environment Setup



Figure 3-1: Screenshot of the Parasitic Mobility Simulator Map Editor

The first step in setting up a simulation is to layout the environment using the Parasitic Mobility Simulator Map Editor. This is the interactive graphical application shown above
in Figure 3-1. The user interface for this tool consists of a window displaying a scrollable, tile-based map, and a control panel for editing the parameters of the selected tile. The red square around a tile indicates the currently selected tile editable with the control panel, and the blue square follows the mouse pointer as a cursor for selecting a new tile to edit.


Figure 3-2: General Map Control section of control panel

The first section of the control panel located in the bottom left displays the coordinates of the currently selected tile. It also displays and allows modification of the current dimensions of the map. The zoom function scales the display, but has no effect on the map itself.

It is important to note how the dimensions of the map relate to distances in the real world. The resolution of the map should be directly related to the resolution of the sensors and location system on the sensor nodes. For example, if you want to simulate an environment of 100 meters by 100 meters populated by sensor nodes that can identify their location with a resolution of 2 meters by 2 meters, you would create a map that is 50 tiles by 50 tiles.

The next section of the control panel is where you can assign walls and portals to the currently selected tile. The walls allow you to design a map with particular paths for the hosts to follow and to design a map that is based on a real environment. The portals are tiles that act as entrances and exits for the host bodies to enter and leave the environment. When a host arrives at a portal, it can decide to keep moving or it can exit and take itself out of the area. The attached paramors can react to this and jump off. The host stays outside for a duration according to its behavioral parameters (see


Figure 3-3: Wall and Portal section of the control panel section 3.1.2 for details on host behavior), and then returns through any of the available
portals. Portals are not required for simulation, but they allow multiple maps to be linked together. At the far right of the control panel, six options for textures are able to be applied to the current tile. This is for display only, and has no bearing on the simulation. If you want to make a square inaccessible for a host body, you need to surround it with walls or set the host frequency to 0 for that square. The host frequency, or host traffic distribution weight, is the likelihood that a host will travel past a given location. It can be set per tile using the section of the control panel shown in Figure 3-4. This is further explained in section 3.1.2.


Figure 3-4: Environmental conditions and host frequency section of the control panel

The section of the control panel shown in Figure 3-4 allows the user to create areas of interest for the sensor nodes and for the hosts. By setting the power parameter above zero, the tile becomes a source of power for the node to recharge its reserves. This is described in more detail in section 3.1 .3 where the node behavior is described. The nodes can also be programmed to look for certain environmental conditions such as temperature. The Host Traffic Distribution Weight parameter sets the tile's attractiveness for a mobile host on a scale of 0 to 100 , where 0 means there is no interest at the tile and the hosts will avoid it completely, and 100 means the tile is very attractive to hosts and has the highest likelihood of host traffic.


Figure 3-5: Host and Paramor Assignment Panel and map symbols for hosts and paramors

And finally, the most important section of the control panel allows you to populate the environment with host bodies, deploy paramor nodes, and assign behaviors to these entities. Up to 100 hosts and paramors can be deployed per tile. Tiles that have hosts or paramors assigned to them are indicated on the map by a head and a tick, respectively. Clicking on the Assign Behaviors button brings up a window where a name can be given to the behavior of each paramor or host. During the map creation process, only a name can be assigned; designing the actual behavior is done at a later stage of the simulation setup.

The created map is saved as an XML file. XML was chosen because it is easily readable by both humans and machines. As a result, maps can be created and modified without the use of the graphical map editor. It is very easy to set up a multi-pass simulation where the map is changed with each pass, using XML parsing tools now standard with every major operating system.

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<!--ParaSim Map File-->
<!--Filename:
C:\paramosim\parasim_run\parasim_run\bin\tests\distance_map_long2.xml-->
<!--Created: 5/17/2004 9:18:47 PM-->
<Map width="51" height="10">
    <Tile X="3" Y="1">
        <WallN>False</WallN>
        <WallE>False</WallE>
    <WallS>False</WallS>
    <WallW>False</WallW>
    <Portal>False</Portal>
    <Paramors num="0" />
    <Hosts num="1">
        <B0>Behavior 1</B0>
    </Hosts>
    <Power>0</Power>
    <Temperature>0</Temperature>
    <Light>0</Light>
    <Altitude>0</Altitude>
    <Vibration>0</Vibration>
    <Radiation>0</Radiation>
    <Texture>0</Texture>
    <HostTraffic>100</HostTraffic>
    </Tile>
    </Map>
```

Table 3-1: Example snippet of XML file created by the map editor

The complete code listing of the map editor is including in the appendices section.

Once a map file is created, it can then be imported into the Parasitic Mobility Simulator.


Figure 3-6: Screenshot of the Parasitic Mobility Simulator executing a simulation of a small, plain map containing only hosts and paramors. The red blobs are mobile hosts, the yellow blobs are stationary paramors waiting for a host to come by, the green blobs are hosts at a goal destination, and orange blobs are mobile hosts with a paramor hitching a ride. Other possible colors are black blobs indicating dead paramors that have run out of power, and white blobs indicating a node that is sensing or charging its battery.

Once the map is loaded into the simulator, a user can set up behaviors for the hosts and paramors, set up logging, and begin execution of the simulation. The simulation is displayed with full animation in real or time-scaled real time. The decision to implement
this in 3D although it is a 2D problem came from a desire to take advantage of the timing system available in the 3D coprocessor as well as to offload the graphical tasks to this coprocessor. It also allows control of the camera to view the simulation from any angle and from any distance. The camera can be made to follow a particular paramor or host, and entertaining videos can be captured.

### 3.1.2 Host Behavior Simulation

In order to accurately simulate parasitic nodes, credible hosts must be designed. It is also necessary to be able to adjust the hosts to simulate different types of real world entities.

At the lowest level, a host body needs to randomly wander through the environment. It needs to avoid obstacles and heed other attributes of the geography. The simplest host will stand at a location, list all the possibilities for a new location to travel to, and randomly select one with the randomness weighted by the environmental parameters. For example, if a host is at a location with walls on two sides (those directions have a weight of 0 ), a new location with a host frequency of 50 on one side, and one with a host frequency of 100 for the final side, it will randomly select between the two sides with a weighting of 2 to 1 likelihood in favor of the side with the 100.

Although this simulation can use just this simple model, a large number of other parameters are available to the Parasitic Mobility Simulator for more detailed host behavior simulation.


Figure 3-7: Popup window showing the parameters settable on a host-by-host basis

The window shown in Figure 3-7 appears after hitting the "Setup Hosts" button from the main control panel shown in Figure 3-6. This panel shows the rest of the parameters that can be assigned to a host. On the left side, the menu will list all the behavior names assigned to hosts from the map editor. By selecting a behavior, the user can edit the parameters for the hosts that have that behavior assigned to them. These parameters are:

- Stay Weight - This is the likelihood that the node will stay in its current location instead of heading towards one of the adjacent locations.
- Stay Duration - If a node has decided to stay in its current location this is the duration of time it will stay before repeating the selection process to identify its
next move. By use of the Stay Weight and Stay Duration parameters, hosts can be designed that move often or hardly move at all.
- Covered/Uncovered Weights - The hosts keep a record of everywhere they have been. These weights modify the weighting from the environment based on how often a host has visited the locations it is deciding between. These parameters allow the design of hosts that have a tendency to always follow a known course or are more likely to explore uncharted areas.
- Portal Weight - This parameter denotes the likelihood that a host will choose to leave through a portal when it finds one at its current location.
- Portal Duration -- This is the length of time a host that has left through a portal will wait before reemerging from the same or a different portal.
- Speed - This is a floating point number that sets the host's speed in simulator distance units per 1000 simulator time units. These units can be related to any value in the real world, provided the speed values that relate time to distance fit the scaling of the simulator units to real world units.

The execution of the host's behavior is fairly straightforward. When a host reaches a new destination, it identifies the possible choices for its next destination, and using the weightings for these choices, it randomly selects its next move. By setting these parameters, hosts can be created that have high levels of randomness or hosts can be created that have no randomness and follow a specific pattern. This implementation allows the simulation of most environments populated with mobile hosts, such as cars, people, and animals.

### 3.1.3 Parasitic Node Behavior Simulation

The basics behind a parasitically mobile node's behavior are a set of objectives for the node. When a node is idle and a host body comes in range of it, the node attaches to the host. While attached to the host, the node uses the information it can gain from the environment and host to determine if detaching will help it reach its objectives.


Figure 3-8: Popup window showing the parameters for paramor nodes

Similar to the host behavior setup, the panel shown in Figure 3-8 allows the assignment of objective and behavior parameters to each of the named behaviors assigned to paramor nodes in the map editor. In more detail, the parameters are:

- Power Rate - This is the amount of power the node uses per 1000 units of simulator time. Currently, the simulator supports only a steady rate of power usage regardless of whether the node is sensing, traveling, or waiting. However, it can log the amount of time spent in each of these states allowing complete power calculations to be made after the simulation is complete. This is illustrated in Section 3.2.2.
- Attachment Power - This is the amount of power used for each attachment or detachment the node performs.
- Battery Life - This is amount of power the node has available. When this runs to zero, the node dies.
- Power Threshold - When the node's power level drops below this threshold, it enters a mode searching for power sources. In this mode, it will always detach if near a source of power.
- Goal $\mathbf{X} / \mathbf{Y}$ - The coordinates that the node is told to head towards.
- Goto Goal - If this is checked, the node will try and reach the location stored in Goal X/Y. If it is unchecked, the value stored in Goal X/Y is ignored.
- Stop at Goal - If this is checked, when the node reaches the location stored in Goal X/Y, it will remain there indefinitely.
- Goal Time - This is the duration a node will stay at its goal if Stop at Goal is not checked. After the time is up, it will attach to the next host that comes by and start looking for a new area of interest.
- Light/Vibration/Altitude/Temperature/Radiation Threshold - These values tell the node what constitutes an area of interest. If the area contains quantities of these elements above the threshold value, it considers it interesting and will detach to start sensing. Setting these values to 100 disables checking for that element as values over 100 are not available in the map editor.
- Sensor Time - This is the duration that a node will stay at a sensor point of interest before trying to seek a new location.
- Coverage - If this is checked, the node will take into consideration where it has already been when deciding to remain attached or to detach. This is useful for applications that are looking for sensor points of interest, or trying to cover an entire area for reconnaissance.
- Hops Per Locale - When a node attaches to a new host and determines that the host is taking it in an undesirable direction, the node has the ability to hop off. However, it is possible that the node is at a spot where the only route that the host can take it is undesirable. The Hops per Locale setting assigns the maximum number of detachments the node should perform before it should stay on the host and ride to a new location. At this new location it can begin the process over again.

Once the above parameters are set up, the paramor behavior is easily implemented in the simulation environment. When a host comes within range, the paramor attaches. If it comes across an area of interest it will hop off and remain there for the specified duration. The power calculations are constantly being updated, and when it crosses the power threshold the node will not detach at a sensor point, only at a power location. It is possible to change these priorities. For example, if it is okay to risk running out of power in order to find something, the power can be lowered in priority below sensor events or destinations.

In general, if the node has a set destination, it will try to reach it. If it comes across an area of sensor interest, it will detach, stay for the sensor duration, and then try to continue towards its destination.

If a node is on a path to a destination or trying to go to where is has not been, it needs to hop off when it is on a host that is taking it farther away from its destination, or back into a covered area. This is a matter of simply calculating the distance to the destination at two points on the trajectory and testing the change in distance to the destination, or figuring out the direction and comparing it to the node's stored coverage map. It is important to allow the node to travel a distance long enough to sense the direction before hopping off. The "hops per locale" parameter is used to prevent situations with nodes being stuck as described above.

### 3.1.4 Final Simulator Design Notes

After all the parameters are set up, the simulation can be executed. Behind the scenes, the simulator takes 1 ms for each simulation time unit. This unit can be scaled to any real world time unit provided that the time dependent values of host speed, power rate, goal time, sense time, portal duration, and stay duration are scaled similarly. To make the simulator execute faster, the amount of simulation time units that complete in 1 ms can be increased. The distances can be dealt with similarly, scaling the distance dependent parameter of host speed and taking into account the distance metric when setting up behaviors.

Besides the ability to record the simulator into a video file, extensive logging capabilities are implemented. It is possible to log all the activities that happen to the hosts and paramors. The parameters are shown in Figure 39 and are pretty straightforward. Each


Figure 3-9: Logging controls and Run Loop Button
event is time-stamped in the log file. The host and paramor trajectory logging routine records every movement they make and the data can be reconstructed to map out all activity. The host trajectory section of the software places log results into large log files, and is mainly useful in debugging the host behaviors. The log files are recorded in XML format for easy parsing, as shown in Table 3-2.

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<!--ParaSim Log File-->
<!--Filename: C:\paramosim\parasim_run\parasim_run\bin\tests2\distance_log4.xml-->
<!--Created: 5/18/2004 3:14:51 AM-->
<Log>
    <LoggingStarted TimeScale="1">103613478</LoggingStarted>
    <ParamorAttachment Paramor="1" Host="6" X="5" Y="2">103616322</ParamorAttachment>
    <ParamorAttachment Paramor="5" Host="36" X="5" Y="6">103616632</ParamorAttachment>
    <ParamorAttachment Paramor="7" Host="43" X="5" Y="8">103616773</ParamorAttachment>
    <ParamorAttachment Paramor="0" Host="0" X="5" Y="1">103630242</ParamorAttachment>
    <ParamorDetachment Paramor="4" EventType="AwayFromGoal" X="6" Y="5">103630552</ParamorDetachment>
    <ParamorDetachment Paramor="2" EventType="Goal" X="9" Y="3">103630693</ParamorDetachment>
    <ParamorGoalEvent Paramor="2" X="9" Y="3">103630693</ParamorGoalEvent>
    <ParamorAttachment Paramor="0" Host="31" X="8" Y="1">103743415</ParamorAttachment>
    <ParamorDetachment Paramor="0" EventType="Goal" X="9" Y="1">103744146</ParamorDetachment>
    <ParamorGoalEvent Paramor="0" X="9" Y="1">103744146</ParamorGoalEvent>
    <LogStopped>103747641</LogStopped>
</Log>
```

Table 3-2: Example snippet of XML log file

The "Run Loop" button shown in Figure 3-9 will execute a block of code that sets up exit conditions for the simulator, such as when all the paramor nodes have reached their destinations or the entire map has been covered by the nodes collectively. It then runs the simulation multiple times, making defined parametric changes with each pass.

### 3.2 Simulator Data and Results

With the appropriate parameters, the package can simulate many environments and help test out algorithms and ascertain the requirements for a particular parasitically mobile sensor network. It can also be used to generate numerical data for predicting behavior, such as how long it will take a node to reach a location according to the hosts in the environment, the power usage compared to standard robotic devices, and how many nodes should be deployed to cover an area in a particular amount of time. This section presents these types of data collected from thousands of hours of simulation time.

### 3.2.1 Velocity Data


$\square$ Average number of hops to reach destination
$\boxed{\text { Lowest recorded number of hops to reach destination }}$

- Average Time spent attached
$\times$ Average time to get to destination
$\sim$ Lowest recorded time to destination
- Lowest recorded time spent attached

Figure 3-10: Graph showing distance versus time data collected and averaged from repeated simulation passes.

The data in the graph shown in Figure 3-10 results from simulating an environment with a constant size and host population. The speed of the hosts is also a constant 1 unit of distance per unit of time. The simulation parameters can be mapped to any units provided everything is scaled appropriately. In the next section, this data is used to calculate realworld energy usage values, and the simulator distance units are related to meters and the timing units are related to seconds. This would mean the hosts travel with a speed of 1 $\mathrm{m} / \mathrm{s}$, similar to the walking pace of a human.

The paramor behavior chosen for this test is simply to go to a particular location at a known distance away. The algorithm for attachment and detachment is to attach to every host that comes by, decide whether it is bringing the node closer to or farther away from the destination. For a real device to be able to ascertain this information, it must ride the host for long enough to get a fix on the motion or the new location. Based on the GPS and Bluetooth localization systems described in the next chapter, this was set in the simulator as $1 / 2$ of a time unit before the node knows the new location with a resolution of $1 / 2$ of a distance unit.

This simulation was executed 25 times for each distance and the results were averaged. The linearity of this graph is due to the host's random behavior with respect to the node's destination. In other words, at each point (a point being at the end of the node’s minimum cycle required to ascertain the direction that the host is traveling) the host is just as likely to turn away from the node's destination as it is to continue moving towards it. Therefore, the average time it takes for a host to take you from one location to the next location that is closer to the destination is the same regardless of how you arrived at the current location. Since the host reassesses its path at each point, the average time it takes a node to find a host going one step closer to the destination and to ride it to the next point, is constant over the entire travel. Hence, the average time it takes to go N number of steps should be N times the average time it takes to go one step, leading to a linear relationship. A simulation that uses hosts that behave less randomly, as they might in a real world
situation where the hosts are governed by pathways and destinations, is discussed in Section 3.2.3.

Besides the total time it took to reach a destination, the graph also shows the time spent attached to a host, in other words, the time spent non-idle and actually traveling. This line is quite smooth; especially in comparison to the total time including time spent idly waiting for a host to pick it up. This smoothness shows that the algorithm is working properly as most of the time is spent waiting for a beneficial host, which varies according to the random flows of the hosts. This randomness is eliminated by the paramor's decision process. The reason that the attached time and distance don't exactly scale with the host velocity is because the nodes still need to attach to the host to ascertain its direction, and even hosts that head towards the destination are not guaranteed to go exactly straight, especially considering the coarse location system of the node.

The graph also contains the number of hops, a complete cycle of attach and detach, which, along with the total time and attached time will be used to calculate the energy consumption in Section 3.2.2.

Distance versus Time and Hops
Host Speed = 2 d/t


Figure 3-11: Graph showing distance versus time data collected and averaged from repeated simulation passes. This run uses hosts that move at a speed of $2 \mathbf{d} / \mathbf{t}$.

The graph shown in Figure 3-11, repeats the same test as the graph shown in Figure 3-10, but with an environment consisting of hosts that move at a speed of $2 \mathrm{~d} / \mathrm{t}$, twice the speed of the first test. It shows that the overall node velocity is almost exactly proportional to the speed of the hosts, in an environment where the hosts move fairly randomly but with uniform distribution.

The line illustrating the time spent traveling in this second test is slightly less smooth than the same line in the first test. This is due to the increased speed causing the node to travel further off course before it can sense the direction it is traveling and detach from an inhospitable node. This is discussed further with the data in Figure 3-12.

Also shown on the graphs in Figure 3-10 and Figure 3-11 are the lowest recorded total times, lowest recorded attached time, and lowest recorded number of hops. Due to the proposed inexpensiveness of parasitically mobile sensor nodes, redundancy may be utilized. One hundred nodes can be deployed in situations where only one needs to reach a destination. In this case, it is more than likely that the first node will be there in a shorter amount of time than the average time of all the nodes.

Several additional runs, each with different host speeds, were executed. From these runs, average node velocity versus host velocity data was collected and is shown in Figure 3-12.


Figure 3-12: Host Velocity versus Node Velocity
The beginning of the curve looks as expected, a linear relationship between host velocity and node velocity. But the second half of the curve looks quite strange at first glance. The node velocity peaks at around a host velocity of $15 \mathrm{~d} / \mathrm{t}$ and then drops. This is where the resolution of the location sensing system becomes a more serious factor. When the host speed increases, it takes the attached node farther off course in the time that the node needs to sense its trajectory. At some point, the algorithm is rendered completely useless and the nodes attachment and detachment becomes completely random. In the simulator, the time needed to sense the trajectory can be turned very small, or even eliminated, by allowing the nodes to sense the host's direction before attaching. But this will definitely be an issue when designing real mobile systems where in all but very special cases (such as scheduled vehicular systems like trains) the node will have to attach to the host to find out where it is going.

The graph shown in Figure 3-13 displays the results of a similar simulation, except that in this run the distance to the destination is kept constant and the host frequency surrounding the destination is altered. The host frequency was described in the prior section under environmental simulation.

The attached time in this test is fairly constant, whereas the total time varies greatly in proportion to the host frequency. This shows that the node is spending an increasing amount of time waiting for a proper host as the frequency of such hosts goes down. The large discrepancy between the quickest node and the average is further justification for the redundancy allotted from cheap sensor nodes. Low host frequencies can be combated with the deployment of enough nodes to guarantee that one will find a host headed for the destination regardless of how rare it is.

Host Frequency at Destination versus Time and Hops

Average number of hops to reach destination
Lowest recorded number of hops to reach destination

- Average time spent attached
- Lowest recorded time to destination
- Lowest recorded time spent attached

Figure 3-13: This graph shows the results of the simulation where the distance is kept constant and the host frequency around the destination is varied.

Of particular interest to mobile sensor networks, is the ability to release nodes without a specific destination and have them attempt to scan over the entire area. In order to simulate this behavior, a new algorithm for attachment and detachment had to be implemented. The simulator allows quick trial and error of such algorithmic ideas.

The first component of the algorithm is to equip the nodes with the ability to record where they have been. When a host takes them back to a location they have already covered, they detach. This proved to be inadequate as the nodes quickly found themselves surrounded by places they had already covered up to the radius of their ability to sense where the host was taking them. Depending on the processing ability of the node, it may be possible to analyze the entire map of coverage and determine general desired directions even if it the node first must travel through an already covered area.

After experimenting with several behaviors, it appears that the key to coverage is to keep moving even if you might be heading in a direction that has a area in the immediate vicinity that the node has already visited. The chosen algorithm for this simulation is to limit discarded hosts (hosts that are heading to a location already visited) to one per location. In other words, when a host comes by an idle node, the node will attach, and decides if the host will take it to an unvisited location. If not, the node detaches and waits for the next host. This time it will take the new host without question and ride it until it finds an uncovered location, or at least arrives at a location that has nearby unvisited locations so it can detach and have a high likelihood of a host coming by that will go in that direction. It is also important not to attach to a host that already has a paramor attached to it. If two nodes are on the same path, both looking to cover the environment, they will most likely remain together by making the same decisions. Simple broadcast commands sent from individual nodes can aid with the dispersal of mobile sensor nodes. These commands can tell other nodes which areas have been covered and areas of high host traffic.

The graph in Figure 3-14 shows the timing results of the coverage simulations. The environment was set up as a 200 square unit area with a coverage map resolved in 1 unit squares. The test was run with sets of $5,10,15$, and 20 node deployments.


Figure 3-14: Graph showing the time to cover an area for different quantities of deployed nodes

The results are fairly straightforward. A large percentage of the area is covered fairly quickly. The last ten percent, usually comprised of unvisited locations surround by covered areas, takes most of the time and is completely proportional to the number of nodes deployed. This behavior is quite similar to most mobile robotic systems seeking to cover an area, such as the system designed by Maxim A. Batalin and Gaurav A. Sukhatme [34] from the University of Southern California's Robotic Embedded Systems Laboratory. Their system evaluates algorithms for mobile robots deploying sensors intended to maximize sensor coverage area. The data of the coverage area versus number of deployed robots for several of their algorithms is very similar to that for the parasitic mobility simulation, further identifying parasitic mobility as a potential replacement for standard means of mobility.

### 3.2.2 Energy Usage Calculations and Comparison

By examining the hops, attached/traveling times, and wait times from the simulator as described in section 3.2.1, we can calculate predicted values for the energy consumption rates of a parasitically mobile sensor node. In this section, we introduce the two kinds of nodes designed as the hardware components of this research and compare their predicted power usage statistics to that of two standard mobile robotic sensor devices.

### 3.2.2.1 Semi-passive Parasitic Node Power Calculations

The first device designed for this experiment is a 1 cubic inch device mimicking the passive attachment mechanism of a bur with the ability to actively detach by shaking itself loose. This device is further detailed in Chapter 4.

Since the attachment is passive and it sticks to every nearby host (bur-like attachment), it requires no additional power, actuation, or sensing during the host discovery and attachment process. When it is idle and waiting for a host, it can remain in a low-power mode and wake up on motion caused by being picked up by a host as defined in Chapter
4. The low power mode runs using a 32 KHz clock and keeps alive a comparator on accelerometer data. This low power mode draws around 35 uA . Additionally, the node will wake up once per second and check for a wireless message. This check lasts around 10 ms and uses 16 mA for that duration. However, the power for the communication system will not be included in these calculations because, at this point, we are just looking at the power needed for mobility to compare to standard techniques of moving sensors.

While attached, the semi-passive node can enter a different low-power mode and periodically wake up to check its location, progress, and sense the new surroundings. Assuming that the location system has a resolution of one meter, in the simulation of the environment with the hosts that move at $1 \mathrm{~m} / \mathrm{s}$, the device will have to wake up and sense once per second of attached time. Depending on the type of location system and sensors, the node could use up to 60 mA for up to 60 ms for gathering data about the location and conditions surrounding it. Two location systems are described in Chapter 4, both systems require less power than this estimate.

And finally, when the node decides that it is time to detach, it needs to activate a detachment mechanism, which in the case of these sticky nodes is a pager motor with a draw of 15 mA activated for 500 ms to shake loose.

So the power usage of the proposed semi-passive node can be defined in three parts as follows:

- PowerUsedPerHop $=15 \times 500\left(\frac{1}{1000}\right)\left(\frac{1}{1000}\right) \times 3.3=0.0245$ Joules/hop
- AttachedPowerRate $=60 \times 60\left(\frac{1}{1000}\right)\left(\frac{1}{1000}\right) \times 3.3=0.0119$ Joules/s
- DetachedPowerRate $=35\left(\frac{1}{1000}\right) \times\left(\frac{1}{1000}\right) \times 3.3=0.00012$ Joules/s

Using these formulas and the data shown in Figure 3-10, time and hops versus distance, we can graph power used versus distance. Figure 3-15 at the end of this section shows this calculation.

### 3.2.2.2 Active Node Power Calculations

In addition to the semi-passive nodes, an active node was design that adds an actuated method for attachment as well as detachment. Detailed design information on this "tick" modeled node is provided in Chapter 4.

The active node power calculations are fairly similar to the semi-passive node. The active node requires 30 seconds drawing 10 mA to wind the spring and execute an attachment or detachment. This node hops at a height of around 6 cm and weighs around 40 grams. If the device were $100 \%$ efficient the power usage per hop could be calculated as:

$$
\text { Energy }=m \times g \times h=0.040 \times 9.81 \times 0.060=0.024 \text { Joules }
$$

The above calculation is for a single jump; two jumps are required for a complete attachment/detachment cycle. Hence, the calculated value of 0.048 Joules per hop is substantially less than the observed value of 1.98 Joules per hop calculated below. This makes sense because the hopping mechanism is far from $100 \%$ efficient. Therefore, we will use the observed values in the overall power calculations.

Additionally, when the active node is not attached it requires more power than the semipassive node because it needs to identify and locate a potential host to attach to. This requires 30 mA of constant power draw to run an IR proximity detection circuit with a fairly high sampling rate. This sampling rate can be reduced, but worst-case ratings are being used for these calculations.

The power equations for the active node are:

- PowerUsedPerHop $=2 \times 10\left(\frac{1}{1000}\right) \times 30 \times 3.3=1.98$ Joules/hop
- AttachedPowerRate $=60 \times 60\left(\frac{1}{1000}\right)\left(\frac{1}{1000}\right) \times 3.3=0.0119$ Joules $/ \mathrm{s}$
- DetachedPowerRate $=30\left(\frac{1}{1000}\right) \times 3.3=0.099 \mathrm{Joules} / \mathrm{s}$


### 3.2.2.3 Power Comparison 1 - NASA Urban Reconnaissance Robot

The first robot chosen for power comparison with parasitic mobility is NASA's Urban Reconnaissance Robot. [35] This robot is equipped with an enormous array of sensors, actuators, and processing power. It is designed to navigate through very tricky environments. Parasitically mobile nodes gain this ability from the hosts they attach to, and these hosts have evolved to navigate their environment in the best way possible. The NASA robot is an ideal comparison as it is a prime example of the power needed to build a device that navigates in a way that parasitically mobile nodes potentially get for free.

This robot draws 145 Watts while moving, sensing, and navigating on flat ground at a rate of $80 \mathrm{~cm} /$ second. It can also climb stairs using 245 Watts of power. For this comparison, we will assume it is on flat ground. Using this energy consumption rate and speed of travel we can create power versus distance data and compare it to that of the parasitic node. This comparison is shown in Figure 3-15.

### 3.2.2.4 Power Comparison 2 -- The RoboMOTE

On the other end of the spectrum from the NASA robot is University of Southern California’s RoboMOTE [36]. It is a small wheeled robot measuring less than 6 cubic centimeters in volume. While it does not have the navigation or actuation abilities of the NASA robot, it makes up for it in size, cost, and power consumption. The RoboMOTE exhibits many of the desirable attributes in mobile sensor networks, such as small cheap nodes that can work together. When all the features required for navigation are active, the RoboMOTE uses 1.5 Watts and can travel at a speed on $0.27 \mathrm{~km} / \mathrm{h}$.

Parasitic Mobility is an attempt to bring the navigational power of the NASA robot into a device the size and cost of the RoboMOTE. That is why these two projects were chosen as points of comparison for the power consumption of these new types of networks. The RoboMOTE power consumption values are added to the data graph in Figure 3-15.

### 3.2.2.5 Power Comparison Results

Figure 3-15 illustrates the results of the above formulas, simulation tests, and comparison with robot information, in the form of power with respect to distance. The power scale is shown logarithmically since the power consumption of the NASA robot is drastically much more than that of the parasitic nodes.

## Power Usage versus Distance



Figure 3-15: Power versus Distance of parasitic and non-parasitic mobile devices.
Figure 3-15 shows that power usage of even the small RoboMOTE with its low power actuation is close to an order of magnitude greater than that of the active node, and over 2 orders of magnitude greater than that of the semi-passive node. The NASA urban robot is
another order of magnitude greater than that of the RoboMOTE. This confirms the hypothesis that parasitic mobility leads to large power savings when compared to standard mobile devices.

### 3.2.3 Maze Simulation

The final simulation was an attempt to simulate a real-world host behavior scenario.


Figure 3-16: Maze layout for simulation of a real scenario

For this test, a maze was laid out, populated with hosts, and a single paramor node. The paramor was given orders to try and reach the cell in the top-rightmost corner indicated in Figure 3-16 by a red square. The hosts were programmed to move forward along their
current path until reaching a point of decision. At this point they decide which way to go not including the direction that they came from, unless it is a dead end. Of the possible directions at an intersection, the host chooses randomly, but gives a slight preference to places that it has already been. This is intended to simulate people in an office building or other environment familiar to the host; the assumption being that people in a familiar environment will tend to take the same paths to get to where they want to go, which is normally a small subset of possible locations in the environment that differs from person to person. When a host reaches a dead end, before turning around, it remains stationary for some time to simulate arrival at a destination such as an office.

Three different paramor behaviors were implemented and compared. The first paramor behavior simulated was the as-the-crow-flies distance calculation that is the same as the previous simulations described in this chapter. The second is a basic maze-solving algorithm. For this behavior, it is assumed that the node can sense or has enough knowledge of its immediate surroundings to be able to tell which directions that the host can travel. If the host takes any path but the rightmost path, the node will detach and wait for the next host. The final behavior assumes that the node has knowledge of the complete map, not an unreasonable assumption considering the diminishing size of GPS mapping devices. In this behavior, the node decides upon pickup as soon as it can predict the direction of travel, whether the presumed destination maze point that this host is heading towards, is better than the current one. Essentially, it simplifies down to the node choosing the shortest route from its current destination and only remaining attached to hosts traveling on this chosen path.


Figure 3-17: Maze simulation executing

The simulation was run ten times with each of the three behaviors with a single node with its start and goal positions remaining the same for all runs. The environment has ten hosts in it, each starting at a different location and behaving as described above.

Since the hosts were programmed to favor places they have already been, and they were deployed in unique locations, the trend in host behavior throughout these simulations was to make a few random decisions in the beginning to establish its route, then remain generally in that area, looping, and converging with the other hosts at some of the intersections towards the center of the maze. This turned out to be quite a favorable situation for the nodes which could get relayed from host to host along the central path. The simulation was executed and the averaged data collected is shown below in Table 33.

|  | Node Behavior 1 <br> (distance algorithm) | Node Behavior 2 <br> (right-hand rule) | Node Behavior 3 <br> (path omniscient) |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Total Time | 230 | 600 | 210 |
| Attached Time | 100 | 300 | 80 |
| Number of Hops | 22 | 30 | 12 |

Table 3-3: Maze simulation results

As expected, the omniscient behavior performed the best. This makes sense since these nodes will always take the same path, and the number of decision points they will pass is fixed. So it becomes a probabilistic function of the number of decision points and possible directions that a host can turn at each of these points. It is further helped by the fact that hosts in the test do not turn around, cutting down the number of wrongful directions.

The distance algorithm behavior did not perform that much worse than the omniscient behavior. This is probably due to the fact that the maze is relatively simple, and the distancing algorithm can easily resolve the situation and more or less find the same path as the omniscient node.

Of the three behaviors, the right-hand-rule behavior is the only one that has the potential to get way off track. By nature of this type of pattern it can take a long time to reach the destination, but it is guaranteed and the coverage of the area is procedural and predictable, which may be desirable for some applications.

### 3.3 Software Simulation Conclusion

The software simulator has proven an invaluable tool with which to experiment with ideas and specific algorithms for implementing parasitic mobility. The experiences with the software simulation and the presence of these types of systems in nature have presented a favorable proof of concept for this type of mobility. The following chapter describes the design and implementation of an actual parasitically mobile sensor network, which takes into account all the quantitative and qualitative results from the software simulator.

## Chapter 4

## Hardware System

### 4.1 Electronics Design

To test the concept of parasitic mobility in a real-world setting, a hardware system comprised of electronic nodes equipped with all the necessary elements to implement the specific ideas introduced through the software simulation was designed and built. The nodes required processing, communication, data storage, a location system, a suite of sensors, and an onboard rechargeable power source. The electronics should also facilitate experimentation with different types of attachment and detachment mechanisms.


Figure 4-1: Node Hardware with 3 layers

The electronics were designed as small as could be easily built by hand using easy to obtain components. The design is based on stackable layers each around 1 square inch in size. When four layers are stacked, they are less than 1 inch high. More details on the mechanical specifications of the node hardware are given following the breakdown of the individual layers. The complete schematics, circuit board layouts, and bill of materials are listed in the appendices.

### 4.1.1 Power Module



Figure 4-2: Power Module top and bottom
The power module is based around a Lithium Polymer rechargeable battery. Lithium Polymer, LiPo for short, was the chosen battery chemistry because it is the current leader
in charge density (capacity with respect to volume) amongst easily obtainable rechargeable battery cells. Charge density is important when trying to design a node as small as possible.

The specific battery chosen is a flat package measuring 25 mm by 20 mm by 4.5 mm and weighs 3.5 grams. This is within the size requirements of the node. The battery has a capacity of 145 mAh at a voltage of 3.7 V . The battery can discharge at rates up to approximately 1 amp .

The power module also needs to be able to switch off the battery when an external power source is present and power the node from this source as well as recharge the battery. This requirement is to facilitate harvesting power from the environment whenever it power is available and make the switch transparent to the node systems.

The power module also contains a highly efficient step-down converter that provides a regulated 3.3 V to the rest of the node. The battery at full charge provides a voltage of 4.2 V . When the battery drains and the voltage drops below 3.3 V , the step-down converter allows the battery voltage to pass through directly. When the battery drops below 3 V the step-converter turns off and stops draining the battery. Draining a lithium polymer battery below 3V can destroy the battery, so this feature acts as a battery protection circuit. In addition, a resistor network is used on the feedback circuit that senses the battery voltage to provide some hysteresis preventing the battery from turning off and on due to the battery voltage rising when the load is removed.

The last feature of the power module is a gas gauge chip. This chip uses a 0.02 ohm current sense resistor to monitor battery usage and calculate remaining battery life in seconds. It provides a HDQ digital interface to allow a microcontroller to query the battery life information. HDQ is a bi-directional serial interface over one wire; it is Texas Instruments' version of the 1-Wire protocol from Dallas Semiconductor [37].

### 4.1.2 Processing



Figure 4-3: Top side of Processing and Communication Module showing the Microcontroller and Memory

A Silicon Labs C8051F311 microcontroller was chosen as the processor for the node. This processor can run up to 25 MHz using its internal digitally controlled oscillator and will use 300 uA per MHz . Also included in the processing module is an external 32 kHz crystal which is used when the processor goes into a low power mode. At 32 kHz , the analog peripherals and internal timers are still sufficiently alive to wake the processor. By alternating between these two oscillators, the battery usage can be minimized.

This processor is a fully-featured mixed signal processor with a hardware SPI controller, hardware UART, hardware $I^{2} \mathrm{C}$ controller, 4 PWM/Frequency generator outputs, and a 17 input 10-bit analog-to-digital converter. It has 1.2K of internal RAM and 16KB of flash for program storage. The C8051F311 comes in a 5mm-square leadless MLP package, making it the smallest processor available at the time of design with the peripherals needed for the Paramor node.

Lastly, the processing layer of the paramor node also contains an Atmel Dataflash memory chip with a capacity of 16 MB . This storage is required to store the firmware for the GPS module (discussed in section 4.1.4), which requires 1 MB of storage, and to store collected sensor data for later retrieval or transmission.

### 4.1.3 Communication



Figure 4-4: Bottom side of Processing and Communication Module showing the Bluetooth Radio

Each node is equipped with a wireless communication system to allow nodes to communicate with each other for distributed sensing applications, passing of navigational information, and cable-less retrieval of data from nodes.

Currently, the mobile telephone industry has driven down the size and power consumption of Bluetooth modules, and Bluetooth is easily interfaced to (if not already connected) by PCs and other devices. For these reasons Bluetooth was chosen as the wireless protocol and hardware. Bluetooth modules are available with embedded antennas and communication ranges up to 100 meters in a 13 mm by 24 mm package.

The specific Bluetooth module used is the BR-C11A Class 1 Bluetooth module from BlueRadios, Inc [38] which includes an antenna and has a Bluetooth protocol stack programmed directly into the module itself. This allows complete control of the Bluetooth radio via simple UART commands.

The embedded Bluetooth stack supports Bluetooth Inquiry to find other devices in range and can connect to and communicate with 7 nodes simultaneously. It is easy to discover, register, connect, and disconnect nodes allowing large-scale peer-to-peer networks to be generated.

### 4.1.4 Sensor Suite



Figure 4-5: Sensor/Actuation Module top and bottom

The sensor and actuation module contains the following input and output mechanisms:

- 2 Axis Accelerometer - Used to determine if the node has been picked up or dropped off, as well as for collecting vibration and inertial data
- Microphone - Used to collect audio data from the environment
- Active Infrared Proximity Sensor - Used to test node distance from an external object or used to test presence of a potential host
- Temperature Sensor - Used to collect environmental data
- Light Sensor - Used to collect environmental data
- RGB LED - Used to display status and sensor information, as well as to act as a signal or attractive device to potential hosts
- Pager Motor - Used as a detachment device in the semi-passive node design or to signal host to release node
- Motor Controller - Used to control an external motor used for attachment and detachment in the active node design

This module also contains the analog circuitry necessary to interface the sensors and outputs to the microcontroller

### 4.1.5 Location System and Monitor System

Each node needs to be equipped with a system for placing itself in the environment. The first location system designed for this system is a GPS module.


Figure 4-6: Top and bottom of the GPS Module layer shown without GPS chipset populated

The design of the GPS layer is based around the Motorola FS OnCore single chip GPS module. This module can work in Assisted Mode (which requires a GPS beacon) and Autonomous Mode. The design of the GPS layer includes the Motorola Module, a Yageo Embedded GPS Antenna, and the required power supply components. The GPS system also requires enough storage to store the GPS firmware, and a processor capable of writing the firmware into the GPS module over its SPI interface at boot time.

A prototype GPS module was built using the sample FS OnCore chip included in the development kit. Using the Assisted GPS mode, a position fix, accurate within a few meters, could be achieved in 1 second using 75 mW of power. While not working on a position fix, the module could be put into a sleep mode where it will draw only a few micro-amps. The GPS module worked decently indoors (with the Assisted-GPS beacon placed in front of a window) and outdoors and proved itself as a usable location system for this application.

Unfortunately, at the time of writing this, Motorola could only provide a few samples of their GPS chipset, and could not yet ship the quantity needed for this research. So a second type of location system was designed to be used until the GPS chipsets become available.

The second location system is a series of Bluetooth beacons, each with a 10 meter range, placed in an overlapping grid around the area of interest. The nodes can inquire to find out which beacons are in range and figure out their location from this information.


Figure 4-7: Bluetooth Location beacons ready to be deployed

Each Bluetooth beacon is comprised of a Bluetooth radio module, a power supply, and a Lantronix XPort. The Xport is an Ethernet controller and a processor built into an Ethernet connector form-factor. The XPort allows quick and easy development of a sockets interface to the functions of the Bluetooth module.

With this network capability, the beacons can also be used to connect from a central location on the network to any of the nodes that are in range of any of the beacons. This facility can be used for test purposes to track the nodes, retrieve any collected data, or manually control the functions of the node.


Figure 4-8: Bluetooth beacon with LAN cable attached and power supply plugged in
The central monitoring software maintains a list of IP addresses of the beacons in the systems, and can inquire to find out what nodes are in range of each beacon. It can then put together a node-centric view which will list all the nodes and allow connection to an individual node.


Figure 4-9: Screenshot of the central control software for monitor node behavior from the network. The left panel contains IP addresses for the beacons, the center panel allows commands to be sent and received from a particular beacon, and the panel in the bottom right allows inquiry commands to be sent to all the connected beacons and a global node list to be built. A node can be selected from this list and a control panel for that node can be opened. Manual commands can be sent to a node once connected using the beacon controls in the center panel.


Figure 4-10: Screenshot of the node control panel allowing control and visualization of a specific node. The red sphere moves according to acceleration data, and glows according to light sensor data. Using this control panel, a user can also turn the motor on and off, change the LED color, listen to the audio from the microphone, view temperature sensor data, and view the remaining battery life.

### 4.2 Mechanical Design

The electronics described in the preceding section need to be encased and equipped with the mechanisms to support parasitic mobility. In chapter 2, we have identified four types of parasitic mobility attachment/detachment mechanisms: active, passive, semi-passive, and attraction/value-added. In this section, hardware designs to support experiments for these four types of mechanisms are described.

### 4.2.1 Active Node Design

The first node was built to test the concept of an active node based on the natural parasitic behaviors of fleas and ticks. The basic idea is to build a hopping robot that can sense a nearby object, hop at it or onto it, and attach. The mechanism needs also to be able to cause the node to detach on command and fall off the host.


Figure 4-11: The active node, nicknamed the ParaHop.

This active node, shown in Figure 4-11 and Figure $4-12$, is 40 mm tall by 30 mm wide by 30 mm deep, including a mechanical launching mechanism and all electronics, comprised of the power module with battery, processing and communication layer, and sensor/actuator module as described in the preceding section.

The device consists of the electronics mounted to a frame consisting of 3 horizontal bars and two vertical bolts using nuts to position the plastic crossbars. The frame also contains two aluminum feet to hold the node upright, ready to jump. A future enhancement will be to encase the node in a self-righting egg-shaped plastic case.

Down the center of the frame are the hopping piston and a planetary-geared, 8 mm in diameter motor used to reset and release the piston. The design of the piston is shown in Figure 4-12.


Figure 4-12: CAD Drawing of the hopping actuator.

The hopping actuator is designed around two telescoping square tubes. Both of the tubes have plastic end caps with a hole for the threaded rod (lead screw) to pass through the
middle of the piston. Around the lead screw in the outer tube is a spring. By turning the lead screw, the lead nut located inside the inner tube is pulled upwards, compressing the spring, and pulling the inner tube up inside the outer tube. When the inner tube is pulled completely inside the outer tube, a spring plunger latches the inner tube in place through a hole near the bottom end of the inner tube.

Once the inner tube is latched, the motor is no longer under any strain and can be disengaged until it is time to hop. When it is time to hop, the motor reverses and sends the lead nut downwards until it hits the plunger on the inside of the inner tube. When the lead nut keeps going, it will push the plunger and release the latch. This will free the spring to expand, pushing the inner tube outwards and causing the node to hop. For more precision, the motor can reverse after the latch engages, and stop with the lead nut just above the latch. In this state, it is ready to trigger a hop on a moments notice. A minor change in the design would allow the node to be deployed with a spring pre-wound for a certain number of hops.

The node was then equipped with 5 hooks protruding in all directions, each with a curvature of 1 inch in diameter. The robot would hop to heights around 8 cm from the ground at an angle of around 70 degrees. Due to the placement of the motor and the battery it always hopped in the same direction relative to itself. This height proved enough to hook into a person's pant leg or shoe. Other attachment devices were tried including Velcro and silicon adhesive, but only a large hook could grab clothing, given the irregularities in the approach vector. The power usage statistics were given in Chapter 3. Other attachment mechanisms such as shuttered magnets for vehicles and electrically activated adhesives were briefly examined. Most of these methods were deemed unsuitable for testing on humans.

### 4.2.2 Semi-Passive and Passive Node Design

The next experiment was to design nodes with semi-passive and fully passive attachment and detachment mechanisms. The power calculations shown in Chapter 3 denote huge power savings for these types of nodes.

To build nodes of this type, the electronics were enclosed in a plastic sphere with an outer diameter of two inches. The electronics were attached strongly to the spherical case, allowing the pager motor's vibrations to affect the external surfaces.


Figure 4-12: The node electronics in their spherical casing
To make these spherical devices into semi-passive nodes, the surface was coated with a polyester double-sided adhesive tape from 3M. Polyester tape was chosen because it can stretch and form a tight, smooth layer around the sphere. It is necessary that the surface is smooth to prevent too much of the surface from sticking to a host, making it difficult for the ball to shake loose. The polyester tape is very thin and works perfectly in this regard. It is available in a wide range of sticking strengths. Through trial and error, the appropriate stickiness was found that allowed the ball to easily stick to anything it touched and remain stuck until it is shaken loose from inside with the pager motor.

In order to create passive nodes, a different adhesive needed to be used. The bond, when attached, would have to degrade over time, allowing a new bond formed on the opposite side of the sphere to be the stronger bond allowing the node to be pulled from its original host. If no new host came about, the bond would degrade and the node would eventually fall free without the use of the pager motor or any form of actuation. Various consistencies of silicon were mixed and tested. Through this trial and error, a working silicon adhesive was created that performed as desired. When a bond was made, the silicon would get weakened at the spot of the bond by getting soiled by the host's surface. This worked quite well; however, the ball would have a limited number of attachments before it became too dirty to stick at all. The polyester tape did not have this problem because it was much stickier and less greasy, but required the pager motor to dislodge it. Other attachment mechanisms, such as devices based on hooked microstructures, could be potential candidates for parasitic nodes, but would require more resources to develop.

### 4.2.3 Value-Added/Attraction Node Design

The basic spherical node without any sticky surface falls into this category by way of its full spectrum LED. This LED can be programmed to display attractive patterns that catch the eye of a passerby, especially in an academic research institution where everyone is attracted to blinking lights and novel objects of technology. Once attracted, the host can receive instructions from the node as to what the node does and what the host can do with it. Figure $4-13$ shows a label that can be applied to the node to give the host specific instructions.


Figure 4-13: A label that can give the host instructions as to what to do with the node. This can be combined with a reward from the node for the host if the instructions are followed

The nodes can then reward their attracted host for following the instructions. Example rewards can be discounts provided on purchases while carrying the node, or providing useful information to the host. When the node wants to be dropped off, it can stop providing these rewards, vibrate or make a sound signaling a desire to be put down, and/or turn off the LED until it is ready to be picked up again.

While extensive testing was done on all the mechanisms described in this section, the complete multi-node test described in section 4.4 was done using the simplest of the nodes, the labeled value-added sphere. As shown in section 4.4, this attachment mechanism worked quite well given the test environment, a building at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

### 4.3 Firmware Design

The firmware design is based around the software simulator's node behavior design. The node firmware can be seen as being formed from three entities: data structures that hold state information, behavior information, and map information; background processes that handle actions implemented in hardware or through the use of hardware peripherals such as the wireless communication and the sensor readings; and the main firmware code that executes the node's activity. The firmware is written for the Silicon Laboratories series of 8051-style processors using the Keil C compiler.

### 4.3.1 Data Structures

The basic data structures used by the firmware to store its internal information are shown below in Table 4-1.

```
//-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
// Data Structures
//-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------
typedef struct {
    unsigned int btX;
    unsigned int btY;
    unsigned char latDir;
    unsigned int latDeg;
    unsigned int latMin;
    float latSec;
    unsigned char lonDir;
    unsigned int lonDeg;
    unsigned int lonMin;
    float lonSec;
} location;
typedef struct {
    unsigned int powerThreshold;
    location goal;
    unsigned char gotoGoal;
    unsigned char stopAtGoal;
    unsigned char coverage;
    unsigned int LightThreshold;
    unsigned int VibrationThreshold;
    unsigned int TemperatureThreshold;
    unsigned int AltitudeThreshold;
    unsigned int AudioThreshold;
    unsigned int senseTime;
    unsigned int stopTime;
    unsigned int hopsPerLocale;
} behavior;
typedef struct {
    location *good;
    location *bad;
    location *visited;
    location *unvisited;
} map;
typedef struct {
    unsigned int sensors[];
    unsigned int powerLeft;
    unsigned int hopsRemaining;
    unsigned int senseTicks;
    unsigned char state;
    location current;
    map node_map;
    behavior node_behavior;
} node;
enum { IDLE, ATTACHED, SENSING };
```

Table 4-1: Data Structures used in node firmware
There are four basic data structures used in the firmware. The first structure, location, contains information to identify a location in a coordinate system. The structure uses both the Bluetooth location system, which gives an XY coordinate, and the GPS system, which returns the coordinates in longitude and latitude. The GPS location system is not
currently implemented in the firmware, but the data hooks for it are included for future use.

The map structure is used to store geographic information. This structure is created from lists of locations. The first list includes locations considered as good. These locations are ones that the node considers as attractive to visit. These can be locations known to have a high host frequency or hosts that are most likely to bring a node to a point of interest. The structure also contains a list of bad locations, which are locations that are known to have a low host frequency or to be a dead end. Good and bad locations can be entered manually, either prior to deployment or over a communication channel if available. They can further be discovered and identified by the nodes themselves. Once discovered, a node can broadcast these locations to any other nodes in range. The map structure also contains a list of the locations visited and a list of the locations that are known to be unvisited. These lists are used by a node trying to maximize coverage. Like the good and bad locations, the unvisited locations can be entered in manually or discovered and transmitted from node to node.

The behavior structure holds data that is very similar to the parameters identified in Section 3.1.3's discussion of the node behavior in the software simulator. Please refer to this section for details about the behavioral parameters.

The last data structure is the main structure for the node, including instances of the map and the behavior structure. This structure contains the current state, which uses the enumerated values of idle, attached, or sensing. The senseTicks variable is an internal counter that tracks the time left. The hopsRemaining variable is also an internal variable used to track how many hops have happened at the current location. The sensors array contains the current value of the six sensors described in Section 4.1.4 and the powerLeft variable stores the remaining time left on the current charge of the battery. Finally, the node structure contains the current location returned from the location system.

### 4.3.2 Background Processes

The chosen microcontroller and the hardware design combine to allow several activities to happen without taxing the main program loop.

The first of these systems is the Bluetooth radio. The radio module contains an embedded processor with a Bluetooth communication stack. This stack defaults to a mode where other nodes can find it, connect to it, and communicate to it. The data is then passed to the processor through a serial connection. On the processor side, the serial communication is handled by a hardware UART and the data reception is interrupt-driven. The serial interface is set to a speed of 9600 bits per second to allow successful operation in the low power mode running at a processor speed of 32 kHz .

Most of the possible wireless communication packets contain information that gets stored in the node's data structures for the main loop to use in its state machine. This happens completely in the interrupt service routine and the data is immediately available to the main loop.

The environmental sensors are read using the processor's analog to digital conversion hardware. This is also an interrupt-driven processor. After the conversion is finished, the interrupt service routine stores the values in the sensor array. The sampling is much slower when the node is in the low-powered idle state. In this state, the sensors are mainly used to detect when the node has been picked up and should transition to the attached state. The lower sampling rate is still adequate to identify this occurrence.

The battery life is monitored by a specialized gas gauge chip. However, the interface to read the battery life value from this chip is not connected to a hardware peripheral in the microcontroller hence must be controlled in the firmware. Furthermore, this communication is too fast to be performed in the low power mode. This proves to be adequate since the power drain in the low power mode is so minimal. Accordingly the battery life is checked routinely during the attached and sensing states.

### 4.3.3 Main Firmware Execution Code

The main firmware execution can be illustrated by the three diagrams shown in Table 4-3, Table 4-4, and Table 4-5. Each flowchart illustrates one of the three states that the node can be in: idle, attached, and sensing, respectively.


Table 4-3: Flow chart showing the basic operation in the idle state for both the active node and the semi-passive node.


Table 4-4: Flow chart showing the firmware execution when the node is in the attached state


Table 4-5: Flow chart showing firmware execution while in the sensing state

Tables 4-3, 4-4, and 4-5 illustrate the general firmware flow for a generic parasitic node based on the ideas developed from the software simulator. It is quite easy to modify this basic code to support many specific sensor network applications.

It is important to note that the sensing state is the state where the node has detached and is collecting data, but it is not the only time the sensor data can be collected. The sensors are fully active in the attached state and the data can be stored or collected in this state as well. It is also possible to collect data in the idle state, but with a sacrifice of power depending on the sampling rate and how many sensors are active. Furthermore, it is possible to combine the idle state and the sensing state into one state that is always collecting data and looking for a host.

In general, the three states exist only for power management reasons. The states allow the node to enable and disable peripherals and functions according to what the node needs in a particular state. For applications with less of a power restriction, the node can always be sensing, checking its location and power, and calculating whether it should detach or attach.

For semi-passive and passive nodes, the node can transition to the attached state from either the idle or the sensing state when it senses that it is moving. This is shown in Table $4-5$. Active nodes, on the other hand, can control their state change into and out of the attached states.

The complete code listing of the firmware used in the test is given in Appendix B.

### 4.4 Test Application and Results

The final stage in this body of work was to execute a test of the parasitic nodes described above in this chapter by releasing them into a real-world situation. More specifically, ten semi-passive, value-added, spherical nodes were given orders and released into an environment populated by human hosts.

### 4.4.1 Test Application Description

The area selected for this test application was the third floor of the Media Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This floor is usually inhabited by about 40 students and faculty and has light but steady traffic through its pathways. Furthermore, its inhabitants are known to be attracted to strange devices with blinking LEDs and are more than willing to pick up and carry around the sensor nodes.

In order to run this test, the floor first needed to be covered with the Bluetooth location beacons. The entire floor was able to be covered with only 6 beacons. These beacons were set at the 100 -meter-range power output class of Bluetooth. However, the real range of the beacons indoors is closer to 25 meters. With these six beacons and the areas where two or three beacons overlap, we were able to divide the floor into a grid of 16 distinct zones. This resolution is more than adequate for this test. The beacons are given base-two numbers allowing unique numbers to be formed for the overlapping areas.


Figure 4-14: Bluetooth Location system coverage of test area

The location system's Bluetooth-based locations were mapped to the test area by performing a walkthrough calibration carrying a test node. These locations were given $\mathrm{X} / \mathrm{Y}$ coordinates that the sensor nodes can use in calculations concerning direction of travel related to their goals.


Figure 4-15: Distinct zones formed from overlapping beacons in the location system.
The nodes were then prepared, first by programming the application-specific firmware into each node. The firmware for this test closely follows the flowcharts in Section 4.3. This test application firmware uses all three identified states (idle, attached, sensing) and specifically enables and disables peripherals and alters the sampling rates accordingly. This allowed the application to be optimized for power usage.

The firmware for this test run logged the sensor data, state changes, and location information to the flash memory for the entire test run, regardless of state. Special modes were added for retrieving the data from the nodes via the Bluetooth location system and for general health monitoring.

The nodes were then given their specific behaviors. Of the ten nodes released, six were told to try and get to specific geographic locations using the distance checking algorithm from the software simulator. The version of this algorithm that runs on the embedded platform in the node is quite scaled down from the algorithm used in the software simulation due to processing power restrictions. The algorithm used in the nodes just simply uses the last two locations it recognized to guess the next location that it will be brought to based on a linear extrapolation. If this guessed location is closer (with an adjustable threshold) to its goal than the current position, it will stay in the attached state; if it is farther away from the goal than the current position, it will try to detach. Detachment for this test involves vibrating the pager motor and flashing a red LED in an attempt to be put down. It also maintains a counter of how many detachments it has attempted and will ignore its distance-checking algorithm if it has hopped multiple times and not gotten any closer to the destination. This prevents getting stuck in a situation such as being at a dead end, where all hosts will take the node away from the goal, at least temporarily.

The remaining four nodes were given specific sensor conditions to look for. All ten nodes will constantly collect sensor data throughout the test, but these nodes are also programmed with desired sensor conditions that will cause them to detach. The node will then stay in this location to observe the phenomenon it has found interesting for a predetermined amount of time, or until the sensing condition disappears. If the node is picked up from this state or from a state where it has reached its geographic goal, it will immediately attempt to detach until its, time spent at the goal or sensor point of interest has elapsed.

The batteries were then completely charged and the nodes were sealed into their plastic spheres as shown in Figure 4-12 and labeled with the instruction label shown in Figure 413. To additionally aid the attachment and detachment process, an email was sent to the building's inhabitants telling them to keep an eye out for the spheres, and to feel free to pick them up and carry them around, being sure to put them down when they shake. No information was given about the devices or the test, and the nodes all looked identical, regardless of their goal. There were about 40 people in the building when the test started.

The nodes were then deployed in a high-traffic hallway, where they would wait to be picked up. The positions of the nodes can be monitored from any PC on the network. Within fifteen minutes all of the nodes had found their way to a new location. Some were knocked around and rolled, and some were picked up a brought around to new locations. The people carrying them mostly obeyed the device when it shook and wanted to be put down, sometimes even tossing it away, startled by the vibration.

The batteries lasted for close to four hours. This is discussed further in Section 4.4.2. While the test was running, the nodes collected sensor data at a rate of 30 Hz . The sensors were sampled faster when the power modes allowed it, but logged at a rate that would let the flash storage last for the duration of this test. The nodes collected location data, attachment data, state changes, sensor data, and the time when they reached their goals. The networked location system also recorded the trajectory of each node on its central computer.

The test generally ran without a hitch, other than the disappearance of one of the ten nodes. This is an expected loss considering the unknowns of the host's behaviors. This node was thought to have been carried outside the range of the location system, purposefully stolen, or had a power issue. Trajectory data for this node was still able to be recovered from the location system up until it disappeared. Fundamental to the concept of parasitic mobility is that the nodes are cheap and the potential to lose many nodes is made up for with redundancy of inexpensive nodes. The node was found one week later and its sensor data was recovered.

Another node got locked inside an office soon after deployment and remained there for the duration of the battery life. And one other node was discovered to have manufacturing defects preventing it from recording data to the flash, so it was removed from the test. The remaining eight nodes easily covered the test area.

### 4.4.2 Power Usage Discussion

As mentioned above in Section 4.4.1, the test lasted for 4 hours on a single charge of the battery. The battery that was used has a capacity of 145 mAh , however, the protection circuitry on the node's power layer disconnects the battery when it has drained to 3.0 V . At this point the battery still has $20 \%$ of its capacity. Accordingly, the nodes had an average current draw of just less than 30 mA . This test run incroporated many power optimizations, but also had many features enabled for the logging and observation of the test operation such as the constant flash writes, data dumps over the wireless network, and health monitoring communications with the observer's PC. Further power savings could be achieved by cutting the output power of the radio transceiver from Bluetooth's specified high power mode to its normal output power mode.

The following two sections, Section 4.4.3 and Section 4.4.4 present the actual trajectories the nodes traveled and an environmental mapping observed by the sensors, respectively.

### 4.4.3 Trajectory Data

The following Figures show the floorplan of the area used for this test and the trajectory that the nodes followed, including any major stops. These trajectories are re-created from the log files of the location system and the data collected and recovered from each node. The position data can have a refresh rate as slow as 3 minutes, so some interpolation is done based on the layout of the floor and regions where people can walk free from obstacles. Furthermore, since the resolution of the location system is fairly sparse, some activities that happened completely within a single zone of the location system are omitted from these maps. For example, if a node is picked up that has reached its goal or is in an area that it does not want to leave, it shakes to be put back down, hence (ideally) is released into the same general area. This scenario does not show up in these maps because they are generally not important to the trajectory discussion. However, all significant attachments and detachments leading to changes in trajectory or to the completion of the node's goal are shown with timing information. Section 4.4.4 presents the sensor data which gives a more detailed narrative of the individual node's encounters.


Figure 4-16: Trajectory for node \#1
Node 1 was given the orders to try a find a specific geographic location. This location was zone 1 as shown in Figure 4-15. Since this is the deployment location, this node was also told to wait until it has crossed through a few other zones to try and find its goal. It returned to its goal after 42 minutes, where it remained and was promptly released every time it was picked up. It had one significant detachment, after it filled the requirement of leaving the original zone; it eventually realized it was going further away from its goal and detached outside room 326. It waited there for 33 minutes until a suitable host came by and picked it up; this host was walking towards its goal, it hung on until its destination was reached. According to the data collected, it took close to 4 minutes to walk the length of this hallway. This data is taken from the location system which has a refresh rate
dependent on many factors, including the number of other Bluetooth devices in the area; it can refresh as quick as a few seconds or as slow as every 4 minutes.


Figure 4-17: Trajectory for node \#2
Node 2 was given orders to try a find location zone 2 . Location zone 2 is one of the more difficult locations to find, because it is a narrow zone existing where beacon 2 is not overlapped by any other beacon. When the map was built, it turned out that beacon 2 was mostly overlapped by beacons 1 and 4, leaving only a sliver of beacon 2 left to build zone 2. Unfortunately, node 2 wound up being locked in an office within the first 5 minutes of the test and could not be recovered until the next morning, long after the batteries had died, leaving its goal unfinished. With better power management techniques, such as those discussed in Ari Benbasat's paper on adaptive power management [39], this situation does not have to drain the batteries, even though it is technically considered to
be in a sensing state. These techniques allow low-powered sensing based on using exactly as much sensing power is needed to accurately depict the environment.


Figure 4-18: Trajectory for node \#3
Node 3 was given the orders to find its way to location zone 4, which is in the top right corner of the map. It found its way there in 75 minutes. The batteries lasted for around 4 hours; however, since the test was started in the evening, the number of people in the building was decreasing and fell to almost none at around 2 hours into the test. So it can be assumed that very little or no mobility happened after this time. The nodes did continue to sense and collect data.

Node 3 made a fairly large loop going away from its goal. This area of the map is the sparsest as far as the location system goes, so the detachment algorithm for finding the
specific goal has trouble here. However, it did detach 3 times in the span of 15 minutes, showing that it was trying to get back on track, which it eventually it did.


Figure 4-19: Trajectory for node \#4
Node 4 was told to try and find location zone 8 , which is located around the left side of the open area in the center. It appears that the node passed right through this zone. This means that either the person carrying the node ignored its wishes to be dropped off or it was carried too quickly across the zone to react. This was the node that disappeared and was recovered one week later. The sensor data recovered shows a lot of accelerometer activity during the time that it was in-between zone one and zone 16 . The logs show one attempted detachment at the goal location, but no stopping of motion. It seems that the host ignored its call for detachment.


Figure 4-20: Trajectory for node \#5
Node 5's trajectory was pretty straightforward. It was told to try and get to zone 16 which is in the top left corner of the map. It made it there in 43 minutes with one significant detachment due to the host changing course and leaving it in the hallway when it shook. It waited 38 minutes for another host to come by and took it to its destination.

(O) never picked up

Figure 4-21: Trajectory for node \#6
Node 6 was the last of the nodes told to go to a specific location. It had some hardware problems and was removed from the test.


Figure 4-22: Trajectory for node \#7
The remaining four nodes whose trajectories are shown in Figures 4-22, 4-23, 4-24, and $4-25$, were given environmental conditions to try and find. The first two of these nodes were told to look for bright lighting conditions. When an acceptable condition is found, the node will detach and start a sensing timer. If it is picked up before this timer runs out and the sensing condition persists, it will immediately ask to be put down. If the sensing condition becomes uninteresting and it gets picked up again, it will take the ride. If the sensing timer runs out and the sensing condition still exists, it will still catch the ride. If it returns to the same location or any other location where the sought-after condition is present, then it will detach and start the timer again. The duration of the sensing timer is set as part of the node's behavioral orders.

Node 7 found a location in the top left corner that it considered to be of interest, in this case contained a bright light source, as the node was instructed to seek bright illumination. The data recovered from the node showed that this was indeed the case, but that the lighting condition dipped and became uninteresting. Since the nodes are spherical, how the node winds up being oriented becomes important for the light sensor especially. According to the data from the node, this node was picked up but then noted a lighting condition that was below the threshold for it to consider it interesting. In fact, it was far below the level that it had seen before it was picked up. This indicated that the person who picked it up must have covered the light sensor. The node therefore thought that the location was undesirable and did not ask to be put back down. When it returned the second time, it was better oriented and noticed the lighting condition, detached, and remained there for the rest of the test. This took only 26 minutes to happen, meaning that the node was able to fend off hosts picking it up for the remaining hour and a half of high traffic time. The data collected shows 4 attempted pick ups, all successfully ending in the node being placed back in the same location. This can be seen in the sensor data graphs of Section 4.4.4 as areas where the location curve is flat and there are level shifts (reorientation) in the accelerometer data.

The issue with the sensor readings being influenced by the way in which they are carried and how they are oriented when at rest can possibly be improved by the addition of redundant and symmetric sensors to each node.


Figure 4-23: Trajectory for node \#8
Node 8 was given the same orders as Node 7. It also wound up in the same spot as Node 7, verifying that it is a spot of brightness. In actuality, it is a spot that receives light from several sources and is clearly the brightest spot on the floor on the average.

Node 8 did a similar zig-zag as Node 7. It found the location, but then was taken away briefly and found its way back. However, unlike Node 7, this node allowed itself to be picked up because it had exhausted its sensor timer. The end result was the same, and it returned to the area of interest. Both nodes remained there until the end of the test.


Figure 4-24: Trajectory for node \#9
Node 9 was told to look for an area of high temperature. It found one right away at its first detachment location. It stayed there until it exhausted its sensor timer. When it was picked up again, it fairly quickly found another location that met its criteria. In fact, it was encountered as soon as the node crossed into the next zone. This indicates that this area was most likely a few degrees warmer on the whole.


Figure 4-25: Trajectory for node \#10
Node 10 was given similar orders as Node 9 but with a higher degree of temperature to look for. It passed right by the area that Node 9 had detected as interesting, but since it was in between the thresholds on the two nodes, Node 10 did not detach. It came back close to an hour later and the temperature was now high enough to now find it acceptable to detach and start sensing.


Figure 4-26: Trajectories for all nodes
Figure 4-26 shows the travels of all the nodes. It shows that the nodes pretty covered many times over all the publicly accessible areas of the floor. Figure 4-27 shows which node was in which zone at what time. This information is presented in greater detail in Section 4.4.4.


Figure 4-27: Occupation schedule for zones (which node was in which zone at what time)

### 4.4.4 Sensor Data

This section presents the sensor data retrieved from the nodes after the test was complete. The nodes had enough storage to store just less than 2 hours of sensor data at around 30 samples per second. This proved enough as little or no activity happened after 85 minutes and the trajectory data discussed in Section 4.4.3 does not pass this time point. The sampling rate varied slightly from node to node and some of the nodes used up their memory faster than others. The data is presented normalized across all the nodes for comparison. For each node, six subplots are shown all with a common $X$ axis of time in seconds as shown on the location plot. The position vector is from the location system which is less resolute than the sensor data; therefore there is usually some slight framing error correlating the sensor data with the location data. This is minor and it is quite easy to observe the relationship between the trajectory activity and the sensor activity.

## Node \#1 Sensor Data

## Accelerometer X



Accelerometer $Y$


Audio Magnitude


## Light



Figure 4-28: Sensor Data for Node \#1

## Node \#2 Sensor Data

## Accelerometer X



Accelerometer Y


Audio Magnitude


## Light



Figure 4-29: Sensor Data for Node \# 2

## Node \#3 Sensor Data

Accelerometer X


Accelerometer $Y$


Audio Magnitude


## Light




Figure 4-30: Sensor Data for Node \#3


## Light



Figure 4-31: Sensor Data for Node \#4

## Node \#5 Sensor Data

## Accelerometer $X$



Accelerometer $Y$


Audio Magnitude


## Light



Figure 4-32: Sensor Data fro Node \#5

## Node \#7 Sensor Data (Node \#6 was D.O.A.)

Accelerometer $X$


Accelerometer Y


Audio Magnitude


## Light




Figure 4-33: Sensor Data for Node \#7

## Node \#8 Sensor Data <br> Accelerometer X



Accelerometer Y


Audio Magnitude


## Light



Figure 4-34: Sensor Data for Node \#8

## Node \#9 Sensor Data

Accelerometer $X$


Accelerometer $Y$


Audio Magnitude


## Light



Figure 4-35: Sensor Data for Node \#9

## Node \#10 Sensor Data

## Accelerometer X



Accelerometer $Y$


Audio Magnitude


## Light



Figure 4-36: Sensor Data for Node \#10

The first thing that can be seen from the graphs in Figures 4-28 through 4-36 is the relationship between location change and sensor activity. The nodes themselves use the accelerometers to assess their current state (attached/moving, idle, sensing). Combining all this data presents a very detailed picture of the behavior of the node.

For example, in Section 4.4 .3 we mentioned that Node $\# 7$ found a light source and remained there for 4 attempted attachments. This can easily be seen by looking at the graphs in Figure 4-33. The light sensor shows two areas where the light value dropped very low, indicating a bright area. These two areas roughly match the times that the node was in zone 16. During the second stay in zone 16, there were several level shifts in the accelerometer data. These indicate a change in orientation, and the activity in between these levels is due to the node being picked and vibrating to be put back down.

The un-calibrated data shown in Table 4-6 was gathered by taking the average of all sensor data collected by all the nodes in each location zone. Please refer to Figure 4-15 to see where these zones map to on the floor plan.

| Zone | Light (lower is <br> brighter) | Temperature | Audio Level |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | 633.9 | 5.0 | 423.0 |
| 2 | 624.8 | 5.1 | 423.6 |
| 3 | 624.9 | 5.0 | 424.9 |
| 4 | 603.9 | 4.8 | 424.8 |
| 6 | 613.3 | 4.8 | 424.8 |
| 8 | 608.4 | 5.7 | 423.9 |
| 10 | 609.2 | 5.5 | 424.6 |
| 16 | 594.1 | 4.7 | 423.0 |
| 20 | 603.2 | 4.7 | 425.1 |
| 24 | 603.4 | 5.1 | 423.3 |
| 28 | 602.8 | 5.0 | 424.8 |


| 30 | 605.4 | 5.0 | 423.8 |
| :---: | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 32 | 617.3 | 4.8 | 425.4 |
| 33 | 626.3 | 4.9 | 426.2 |
| 40 | 612.2 | 5.2 | 424.1 |
| 43 | 613.2 | 5.3 | 424.2 |

Table 4-6: Average Data per Zone (raw un-calibrated sensor data)
The data in Table 4-6 gives an overall view of the area. It is important to note that some of the sensor data can be influenced by how the device is attached and carried by the host. For example, a rolling node can have alternating light and dark views presented to the light sensor. These factors average themselves out somewhat and general information about the environment can be gleamed. This is verified by the trajectory data from section 4.4.3, which constantly identified certain areas as higher in temperature and brighter in light. Generally, the sensor data stayed around a known baseline, as the environment is fairly controlled and regulated.

### 4.5 Hardware Evaluation

The hardware design proved quite adequate for experimentation with the concept of parasitic mobility. The specific version used for this test was mechanically robust and none of them stopped working due to mechanical stress.

Of the ten nodes deployed, only one suffered from complete failure due to the hardware, and it was most likely due to a manufacturing problem. Another node may have had some hardware issues, but it is not conclusive. Further testing on the node after its recovery was successful and show that it is working fine.

The firmware also proved to be quite robust, and there were no unexpected firmware crashes or missed or mangled data.

One issue was that the sampling rate of the sensors was too slow. This is an easy fix for the next version. It was kept low while testing to simplify development, testing, and debugging, as well as to allow the flash to last for the entire test. As the development progresses, the sampling rate will most likely increase and become adaptive. The sampling rate at the time of this test was too slow to pull features out of the audio other than the net amplitude.

One of the major successes of the hardware design was the power supply and power management systems that each node incorporates. The battery lasted as long, if not longer, than expected considering the additional data logging and communication requirements of running such a test. Clever wakeup and adaptive sensing can improve this considerably.

The size of the nodes is currently too big to attach to a human or an animal without its knowing. The current size is more than adequate, however, for applications where the hosts are vehicles.

The location system, while it worked adequately for this test, was not resolute enough for fine-grained indoor tracking. Using this type of system properly on such a scale would require 3 times as many location beacons. It would also need to refresh faster and more consistently. Many indoor location systems are under active development [40], hence this situation is rapidly evolving.

## Chapter 5

## Conclusion

### 5.1 Summary

Through the work described in this thesis, a new field of research has emerged. This field sits at the crossroads of distributed sensor networks, mobile systems, and power harvesting.

Through simulation and test we have illustrated that it is possible to develop a parasitically mobile sensor network. Our results indicate that they can, in some ways, perform as well as standard robotic mobile sensor networks, but with huge potential savings with regards to power consumption, node complexity, and general robustness due to their relative simplicity.

### 5.2 Possible Applications of Parasitic Mobility

In certain environments, parasitic mobility can be used as a replacement for standard mobility for dense, distributed sensor systems. Systems of this sort include applications to sense toxic areas requiring sensor deployment at a safe distance, dynamically reconfigurable systems such as weather monitoring sensors that need to follow the relative phenomena, and systems where the accuracy of node deployment is minimal such as for nodes being released in water or from a vehicle.

Going further, parasitic mobility can possibly lead to applications that can only be done (or are better done) with parasitic mobility than standard mobility. Any example where the host behavior is part of what is desired to be monitored would fit this category. In these systems, parasitically mobile nodes would attach to their subjects and would always be at the points of interest.

One application that would be interesting to explore is the idea of a rating system based on breadcrumb trails. Essentially, the parasitic nodes would attach to hosts and pool up in spots of high traffic. These points can propagate through the system and provide information on the popularity of certain pathways and locations.

### 5.3 Future Work

Our systems can be further perfected, e.g., a first step would be to increase the performance of the system by increasing the sample rate of the sensors, the onboard processing power, and the resolution and refresh rate of the location system. Deploying the GPS system would also be advantageous. By increasing the node's capabilities, it will be possible to give the nodes more information about the environment such as onboard databases of map information.

Hooking this research up with actual power harvesting could be a natural fit, allowing self-maintaining, perpetual systems to be developed. These systems can harvest the power from their environment (taking inspiration from the tick, which harvests chemical energy from its host) or from forces acted upon the nodes, such as when they are in the attached state. Smarter power management can be developed, as well as power adaptive sensing, to improve battery conservation.

Also, adding more distributed, node-node communication to the test system would open up some new venues for research. By collaboration, the sensor nodes could optimize their mobility and detachment and attachment algorithms.

More experimentation with new types of attachment and detachment mechanisms could lead to new applications of parasitic mobility, e.g. attaching to vehicles. Also, embedding sensor nodes into everyday objects is an exciting prospect. These directions can benefit from smaller nodes. Adding sensors (e.g. camera, motion sensor, and magnetic sensor) can also allow detection and attachment to a larger variety of hosts, as well as a wider range of sensing applications.

Finally, the major outstanding piece of work would be to develop and deploy the system for a real application. Some possible applications were mentioned in Section 5.2 and can arise from inspiration that comes about from further technical enhancements and conceptual experiments.

## Appendix A

## Schematics and PCB Layouts



Figure A-1: Node Power Module Schematic


Figure A-2: Node Processing and Communication Module Schematic


Figure A-3: Node GPS Module Schematic


Figure A-4: Node Sensor Module Schematic


Figure A-5: Node PCB Layout Top Layer


Figure A-6: Node PCB Layout Bottom Layer


Figure A-7: Node PCB Layout Top SilkScreen


Figure A-8: Node PCB Layout Bottom SilksScreen


Figure A-9: Schematic of Bluetooth Location System Beacon


Figure A-10: Bluetooth Location System Beacon PCB Layout Top Layer


Figure A-11: Bluetooth Location System Beacon PCB Layout Bottom Layer


Figure A-12: Bluetooth Location System Beacon Top SilkScreen

## Appendix B

## Microprocessor Code



















## Appendix C

## Software Simulator Code











## 

 End Applis.


































## Appendix D

## Location System Code







 $\vdots$
$\vdots$
$\vdots$
0
0
0
0
0
0
$\vdots$
$\vdots$
0
0
0



费
品品
品














## References

[1] Meguerdichian, S., S. Slijepcevic, V. Karayan, and M. Potkonjak. Localized algorithms in wireless ad-hoc networks: location discovery and sensor exposure. In MOBIHOC 2001. Proceedings of the 2001 ACM International Symposium on Mobile Ad Hoc Networking and Computing. 2001. Long Beach, CA, USA: ACM. p. 106.
[2] Grabowski, R., L. E. Navarro-Serment, and P. K. Khosla. Small is beautiful: an army of small robots. Scientific American (International Edition), 2003. 289(5): p. 42.
[3] Howard, A., M. J. Mataric, and G. S. Sukhatme. An incremental self-deployment algorithm for mobile sensor networks. Autonomous Robots, 2002. 13(2): p. 113.
[4] LaMarca, A., W. Brunette, D. Koizumi, M. Lease, S. B. Sigurdsson, K. Sikorski, D. Fox, and G. Borriello. Making sensor networks practical with robots. In Pervasive Computing. First International Conference, Pervasive 2002. Proceedings (Lecture Notes in Computer Science Vol.2414). 2002. Zurich, Switzerland: Springer-Verlag. p. 152.
[5] Sinha, A. and A. Chandrakasan. Dynamic power management in wireless sensor networks. IEEE Design \& Test of Computers, 2001. 18(2): p. 62.
[6] Rahimi, M., H. Shah, G. S. Sukhatme, J. Heideman, and D. Estrin. Studying the feasibility of energy harvesting in a mobile sensor network. In 2003 IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (Cat. No.03CH37422). 2003. Taipei, Taiwan: IEEE. p. 19.
[7] Chee-Yee, Chong and S. P. Kumar. Sensor networks: evolution, opportunities, and challenges. Proceedings of the IEEE, 2003. 91(8): p. 1247.
[8] Abelson, H., D. Allen, D. Coore, C. Hanson, G. Homsy, T. F. Knight, Jr., R. Nagpa, E. Rauch, G. J. Sussman, and R. Weiss. Amorphous computing. Communications of the ACM, 2000. 43(5): p. 74.
[9] Butera, William Joseph. Programming a Paintable Computer. Ph.D. thesis, Program in Media Arts and Sciences, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, February 2002.
[10] Lifton, J., Seetharam Deva, M. Broxton, and J. Paradiso. Pushpin computing system overview: a platform for distributed, embedded, ubiquitous sensor networks. In Pervasive Computing. First International Conference, Pervasive 2002. Proceedings (Lecture Notes in Computer Science Vol.2414). 2002. Zurich, Switzerland: Springer-Verlag. p. 139.
[11] Paradiso, Joseph A., Joshua Lifton, and Michael Broxton. Sensate Media: Multimodal Skins as Dense Sensor Networks. BT Technology Journal, To Be Published 2004.
[12] Lifton, J., M. Broxton, and J. A. Paradiso. Distributed sensor networks as sensate skin. In Proceedings of IEEE Sensors 2003 (IEEE Cat. No.03CH37498). 2003. Toronto, Ont., Canada: IEEE. p. 743.
[13] Kahn, J. M., R. H. Katz, and K. S. Pister. Next century challenges: mobile networking for "Smart Dust". In MobiCom'99. Proceedings of Fifth Annual ACM/IEEE International Conference on Mobile Computing and Networking. 1999. Seattle, WA, USA: ACM. p. 271.
[14] Warneke, B., B. Atwood, and K. S. J. Pister. Smart dust mote forerunners. In Technical Digest. MEMS 2001. 14th IEEE International Conference on Micro Electro Mechanical Systems (Cat. No.01CH37090). 2001. Interlaken, Switzerland: IEEE. p. 357.
[15] Hill, Jason. Spec takes the next step toward the vision of true smart dust. 2003. http://www.jlhlabs.com/jhill_cs/
[16] Barton, J., K. Delaney, S. Bellis, C. O'Mathuna, J. A. Paradiso, and A. Benbasat. Development of distributed sensing systems of autonomous micro-modules. In 53rd Electronic Components and Technology Conference. Proceedings (Cat. No.03CH37438). 2003. New Orleans, LA, USA: IEEE. p. 1112.
[17] Thad Starner, Joseph A. Paradiso. Human Generated Power for Mobile Electronics. 2004.
[18] Rahimi, Mohammad, Richard Pon, William J. Kaiser, Gaurav S. Sukhatme, Deborah Estrin, and Mani Srivastava. Adaptive Sampling for Environmental

Robots, in UCLA Center for Embedded Networked Sensing Technical Report Number 29, 2003; University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA.
[19] Benbasat, A. Y., S. J. Morris, and J. A. Paradiso. A wireless modular sensor architecture and its application in on-shoe gait analysis. In Proceedings of IEEE Sensors 2003 (IEEE Cat. No.03CH37498). 2003. Toronto, Ont., Canada: IEEE. p. 1086.
[20] Kaiser, William J., Gregory J. Pottie, Mani Srivastava, Gaurav S. Sukhatme, John Villasenor, and Deborah Estrin. Networked Infomechanical Systems (NIMS) for Ambient Intelligence, in UCLA Center for Embedded Networked Sensing Technical Report Number 31, 2003; University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA.
[21] Law, C., A. K. Mehta, and K. Y. Siu. A new Bluetooth scatternet formation protocol. Mobile Networks and Applications, 2003. 8(5): p. 485.
[22] Heinzelman, W. R., A. Chandrakasan, and H. Balakrishnan. Energy-efficient communication protocol for wireless microsensor networks. In Proceedings of the 33rd Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences. 2000. Maui, HI, USA: IEEE Comput. Soc. p. 10 pp. vol.2.
[23] Houston, Kenneth M. and Kent R. Engebretson. The Intelligent Sonobuoy System - A Concept for Mapping of Target Fields. Draper Laboratories, Issue CSDL-P3429.
[24] Irish, James D., Walter Paul, J. N. Shaumeyer, Carl C. Gaither III, and John M. Borden. The Next-Generation Ocean Observing Buoy in Support of NASA's Earth Science Enterprise. Sea Technology, May 1999. (40): p. 37-43.
[25] Kerzhanovich, Viktor V., James A. Cutts, and Jeffery L. Hall. Low-cost balloon missions to mars and venus. In European Space Agency, (Special Publication) ESA SP. 2003. p. 285.
[26] Bush, Albert O., Jacqueline C. Fernandez, Gerald W. Esch, and J. Richard Seed. Parasitism: The Diversity and Ecology of Animal Parasites. 2001, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK. p. 391-399.
[27] Bush, Albert O., Jacqueline C. Fernandez, Gerald W. Esch, and J. Richard Seed. Parasitism: The Diversity and Ecology of Animal Parasites. 2001, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK. p. 160-196.
[28] Bush, Albert O., Jacqueline C. Fernandez, Gerald W. Esch, and J. Richard Seed. Parasitism: The Diversity and Ecology of Animal Parasites. 2001, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK. p. 306-310.
[29] Bush, Albert O., Jacqueline C. Fernandez, Gerald W. Esch, and J. Richard Seed. Parasitism: The Diversity and Ecology of Animal Parasites. 2001, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK. p. 6-9.
[30] Stevenson, Neal. Snow Crash. 1992, Bantam Books.
[31] de Bont, Jan. Twister. 1996, Warner Bros., USA.
[32] The National Severe Storms Laboratory FAQ. http://www.nssl.noaa.gov/faq/vortex.shtml
[33] Tolkien, J.R.R. The Lord of the Rings. 1954-1955, London, George Allen \& Unwin.
[34] Batalin, M. A. and G. S. Sukhatme. Sensor coverage using mobile robots and stationary nodes. Proceedings of the SPIE - The International Society for Optical Engineering, 2002. 4868: p. 269.
[35] Matthies, L., Y. Xiong, R. Hogg, D. Zhu, A. Rankin, B. Kennedy, M. Hebert, R. Maclachlan, C. Won, T. Frost, G. Sukhatme, M. McHenry, and S. Goldberg. A portable, autonomous, urban reconnaissance robot. Robotics and Autonomous Systems, 2002. 40(2-3): p. 163.
[36] Sibley, G. T., M. H. Rahimi, and G. S. Sukhatme. Robomote: a tiny mobile robot platform for large-scale ad-hoc sensor networks. In Proceedings 2002 IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (Cat. No.02CH37292). 2002. Washington, DC, USA: IEEE. p. 1143.
[37] Texas Instruments. HDQ Communication Basics for TI's Battery Monitor ICs, in Application Report Number SLVA101, 2001.
[38] BlueRadios, Inc. http://www.blueradios.com
[39] Benbasat, A. and J.P. Paradiso. Design of Real-Time Adaptive Power Optimal Sensor Systems. IEEE Sensors, To be published 2004.
[40] Hightower, J. and G. Borriello. Location systems for ubiquitous computing. IEEE Computer, 2001. 34(8): p. 57.

