Beyond Identification
Research Opportunities in
Passive Sensing, Computing, and Communication

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Overview

1. Passive RFID Today
2. What can we learn from Passive RFID?
3. WiSPs: Passive Sensing, Computing, and Actuation
4. Machine Perception with RFID
5. Research Challenges
RFID Today: “Identification Focused”

Access Control and Payment
- Passive, Proximity Technologies
  - Door entry
  - Contactless Smart Cards and Ticketing
  - Livestock Management

Automatic Tolling
- Long Range, Semi-Passive Transponders
  - EZ-Pass and Title 21 Tolling

Inventory Management
- Retail
  - Wal-Mart / Sam’s, Metro, Marks & Spencer
- Manufacturing and Industrial Sectors
  - Boeing
Technical challenges conquered...

- **Tag ICs**
  - Gen2 tag powerup thresholds approaching -20dBm
  - Robust signaling and anticollision protocols

- **Inlays**
  - Tremendously improved inlay designs
  - Near-field and far-field hybrid designs

- **Readers**
  - Single-chip reader RF ASICs
  - Sensitivity beyond -90dBm in-channel
  - Improved adjacent channel rejection
  - Improved self-jammer rejection
  - Early deployment of phased array antennas

... plenty of room to improve on these metrics ...
RFID in the Near Future

- **Access Control and Payment**
  - Proximity Technologies
    - Door entry
  - Contactless Smart Cards (MIFARE)
  - Livestock Management

- **Automatic Toll Payment**
  - EZ-Pass and Title 21 Tolling

- **Inventory Management**
  - Retail
    - Wal-Mart / Sam’s, Metro, Marks & Spencer
    - Manufacturing and Industrial
    - Boeing

- **Wireless Sensing**
  - Time, Temperature [Opas. et al., 2006]
  - HF Biomedical [Fotop. and Flynn, 2006]
  - UHF Pressure, Temp. [Sample, 2009]

- **Localization**
  - RTLS for Inventory
  - Robotic Perception
    - Localization and Mapping [Burgard ’05]
    - Pose Estimation [Deyle, Reynolds ‘08]
    - Object Manipulation [Deyle, Reynolds ’09]
What can we learn from passive RFID?

- Passive RFID Technology Spans Electromagnetic Domains
  - LF (Near-Field / Inductive Coupling)
  - HF (Near-Field / Inductive Coupling)
  - UHF and Microwave (Far-Field / Backscatter)

- Focus on Microwatts, MIPS, and MEMS
  - Power Harvesting
  - μW-Computing
  - μW-Communication
  - Integrated Sensing
Microwatts and MIPS

Batteries Don’t Follow Moore’s Law.

[Paradiso & Starner, 2005]
Power Harvesting Liberates Computing

Power Harvesting from Human Motion
- Battery-free RFID pushbutton, 15m range [Paradiso and Feldmeier, 2001]
- Biomedical sensors that live as long as their host

Vibrational Power Harvesting
- 400—600 μW (Avg.) [Roundy et al., 2005]
- Structural & Machine Health Monitoring
  - [Pisano et al., 2005]

Electromagnetic Power Harvesting
- Directed Beams (kW from space)
- Inductive coupling, resonant and non-resonant
  - WiSPs [Sample et al, 2008]
- Passive DTV: 60 μW at 4 km [Sample and Smith, 2009]

Thermal Power Harvesting
- Seiko Thermic wristwatch (~2μW)
Microwatts, MIPS, and MEMS

- New Forms of Sensing, Computing, and Actuation
  - Physical layer design + optimization
  - On-chip sensors and actuators
  - Tag localization
  - RFID aided perception
- Robotics + biomedical instrumentation applications

Dragonfly carrying UHF tag

Tagged object localization and fetching
Power Available from 1W Incident RF

- Power Budget
  - 100 µW @ 6 m
  - 10 µW @ 20 m
- Real environments have lots of multipath
- Polarization diversity helps
- Need techniques for computing with unreliable power

\[ P = \frac{G_{TX} G_{RX} \lambda^2}{4 \pi d^2} \] (Only true in an anechoic chamber!)

[K. Fu, W. Burleson, UMass Amherst]
What’s a WiSP?

- **Wireless Identification and Sensing Platform**  [Smith, 2005]
  - Concept: Passive RFID with a general purpose computing element
  - Applications: Sensing, crypto, protocol design, etc
  - Inexpensive prototyping of new RFID concepts

WiSPs at Duke

- Exploring the WISP design space
  - Novel Actuation Components
    - Piezoelectric speaker -> Piezo motors
  - Planar omnidirectional antennas
  - High data rate QAM backscatter modulation
  - Custom RFIC – WiSP companion chip for microcontrollers
SmartHAT Safety Warning System

- WiSP + piezo actuator for construction site safety
- Reader mounted to heavy construction equipment
- WiSP in hard hat
- Passive operation allows unlimited lifetime - no batteries to fail

[Thomas, Teizer, Reynolds, 2010]
Requirements

- No Battery
- Rugged, planar PCB antenna
- 8cm x 8cm or smaller
- Integrated matching network
- Maximize bandwidth

SmartHAT WiSP

Measured Pattern

Crossed Dipole
Single Dipole

[Thomas, Teizer, Reynolds, 2010]
Power Harvesters are Nonlinear

- Selecting operating point is critical in any RFID tag
- This is especially hard to do in a WiSP
  - Charging reservoir capacitor most of the time
  - Sleep current vs MCU current vs actuator current

![Graph showing efficiency delivered to 85k load](image)

![Graph showing best stage choice](image)

ADS simulations confirmed by measurement at 3, 4, 5 stages
WiSP Companion RFIC

- MOSIS / AMI 0.5μ-> 180nm Passive Analog Front End
- Support General Purpose Microcontroller: TI MSP430
  - Flexible protocol + sensor development
  - Extensive development tools
  - Partial Gen2 implementation available from Intel
- RFIC reduces WiSP complexity vs discrete AFE
- Include QAM backscatter modulation
Today’s RFID backscatter links designed for small IDs or user memory blocks
- Example: ISO18000-6c (Gen2)
- ASK or PSK (2 states)
- Up to 640 kbps

Neurotelemetry arrays require a much faster link (>10 MBPS)

Multi-state (QAM) backscatter sends multiple data bits per on-chip clock
- 2x to 4x power-bandwidth product improvement is possible with QAM backscatter!
QAM Backscatter Over the Air

[Thomas, IEEE RFID 2010, Session 4B]
Labeling the World

- UHF RFID can label almost any object
  - Dragonfly mass: 100mg - 300mg depending on subspecies
  - Liftoff capacity: 1x - 3x body mass
  - Passive tag mass: 75mg including antenna
  - Attachment method: beeswax
  - Fuse ID from RFID with optical tracking
RFID for Machine Perception

- RFID offers “Sight Beyond Light”
  - UID for semantic labels of places and things
  - Essentially zero false-positive rate
  - Read around and through some obstacles
  - Distinct near-field and far-field behavior
    - Near-field: grasping objects
    - Far-field: sensing objects from across a room

- Challenges
  - Building semantic databases
  - Treating readers and tags as sensor systems
    - Taming multipath propagation
    - Fusing RFID with other sensors
    - Computational efficiency
Localization for Robotics

- Robots are moving platforms
  - Very challenging RTLS
  - Fuse RFID data with odometry, laser, vision sensors
- Incorporate motion model and sensor models into particle filter

[Deyle, Kemp, Reynolds, IROS 2008]
Particle Filter Framework

Particle filters are based on joint PDFs:

\[
p(x_t | z_{1:t}, u_{1:t}, x_{1:t})
\]

Bayes’ Rule + 1\textsuperscript{st} Order Markov Assumption:

\[
p(x_t | z_{1:t}, u_{1:t}, x_{1:t}) = \eta \cdot p(z_t | x_t) \cdot p(x_t | u_t, x_{t-1})
\]
RFID Sensor Model

\[ p(z_{t_i} = \text{Present} | x_t) = \begin{cases} 
1.0 & \text{if } P_{\text{inc}} \geq P_{\text{th}}^{\text{tag}} \\
0.6 & \text{otherwise}
\end{cases} \]

\[ p(z_{t_i} = \text{Absent} | x_t) = \begin{cases} 
1.0 & \text{if } P_{\text{inc}} < P_{\text{th}}^{\text{tag}} \\
0.6 & \text{otherwise}
\end{cases} \]

Express probability of tag read using tag powerup threshold- Need antenna radiation pattern and propagation model with multipath.
A Multipath Model is used to calculate the receive power $P_{tag}^{inc}$ as:

$$P_{tag}^{inc} = P_{rdr} \cdot CL \cdot G_{tag} \cdot \left[ \sum_{\text{all paths}} G_{rdr}(\theta) \cdot PL \right]$$

Ground bounce and ceiling bounce are dominant and allow model simplification for computational tractability.
Particle Filter during Robot Motion
Particle Filter Results

Tag tracking in 10m x 10m room

El-E: An Assistive Robot using RFID

- Far-field antennas for tagged object localization across a room
- Near-field antennas in robot’s hand for grasped object validation
- Mission: Manipulate Tagged Objects in a Semantically Appropriate Manner
PPS Tags: Physical, Perceptual, Semantic

- Motivation: Service robots that perform tasks often done by service animals
El-E: The PPS Tag Pipeline

- User selects desired tagged object with a laser pointer
- El-E fuses camera, laser rangefinder, and RFID information to accomplish selected task
RFID Based Semantic Cues for El-E

- User designates tagged object with green laser pointer.
- El-E uses semantic database cued by tag UID to act on object

PPS-Tags: Physical, Perceptual, and Semantic Tags for Autonomous Mobile Manipulation

By Hai Nguyen, Travis Deyle, Matt Reynolds, and Charles C. Kemp

Georgia Institute of Technology & Duke University
Where are the Research Challenges?

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  - Door entry
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Cost
Security Networks

Cost,
Reliability
Antenna Perf.
IT Infrastructure

Packaging
Sensors
Lifetime

Antennas,
Waveforms,
Signal-
Processing
Semantic DB
Thank you

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- Charlie Kemp – Georgia Tech
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