Design Document

4SC020 - Embedded Motion Control 2019

Group 5

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1 Introduction

The aim of this project is to program the PICO robot to autonomously move around while avoiding walls and other obstacles and thus be able to navigate a closed environment comprising walled rooms, exit/entry points and corridors. In the Escape Room challenge (figure 1) the primary goal would be to exit the room from any given position. In the Hospital challenge, the aim would be to move between rooms to cabinets contained within the rooms. This document briefly describes the functionality and software design plan for PICO to be able to complete the given navigational tasks.

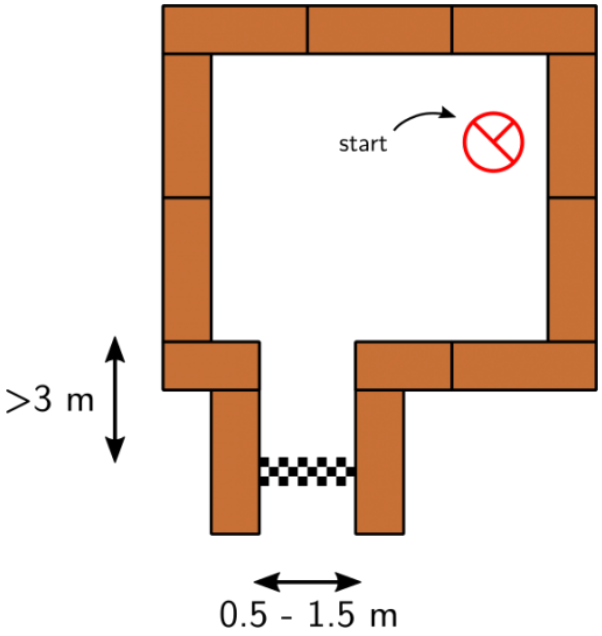

Figure 1: Sample Environment Map for Escape Room Challenge

2 Requirements

The following are the functional requirements of PICO that have been identified for the given challenges:

1. Determine its starting position with respect to its surroundings (walls, obstacles, etc.)
2. Translational and Rotational motion within the set constraints
3. Identification of target position/destination such as entry/exit point or cabinet
4. Trajectory planning to identify the quickest path from current position to destination
5. Obstacle avoidance
6. Environment mapping

3 Functions

The tasks that PICO has to perform can be modularised into the following functions:

1. Configuration: Before PICO can begin navigating its environment, its sensors and actuators need to be appropriately initialized and ready to receive or transmit data to PICO's main controller. Any additional variable/data object memory allocations will also take place during the configuration phase. This phase would typically run only when PICO is first powered on.

2. Sensing: PICO's sensors are constantly analysing its environment in terms of its distance to nearby objects, as well as the states of its actuators in terms of the amount translational and rotational motion, control effort for actuation, etc. This data is saved into a World Model so that subsequent functions can access these sensor readings for further processing.

3. Environment Mapping: PICO needs to be capable of recognizing and remembering its environment as it progresses through its tasks. This will give it the ability to "know" its position within its operating environment, by recognizing and distinguishing between walls, corners, exit/entry points, etc., and on a higher level, to even identify how to return to a room that it has already visited. The Environment Mapping function will create an environment map of PICO's surroundings in the World Model using the data previously recorded in the World Model set, and this map could then be used by the Control Planning function to plan PICO's movements.

4. Control Planning: With the generated map and sensor data, PICO can evaluate the control action it needs to take to achieve its current objective. For example, in the Escape Room challenge, this could be the trajectory it would have to traverse to reach the exit of the room. Control planning also ensures that the planned trajectories keep PICO from bumping into any walls or obstacles.

5. Locomotion: The Locomotion functions of PICO will handle all tasks pertaining to motion. Using PICO's holonomic base, this function will determine the type of motion (translational, rotational or a combination of both) PICO has to undertake to follow the provided trajectory from the Control Planning function. A higher implementation of this function would also include actuating PICOs motors with smooth acceleration profiles to avoid uncontrolled jerks in motion.

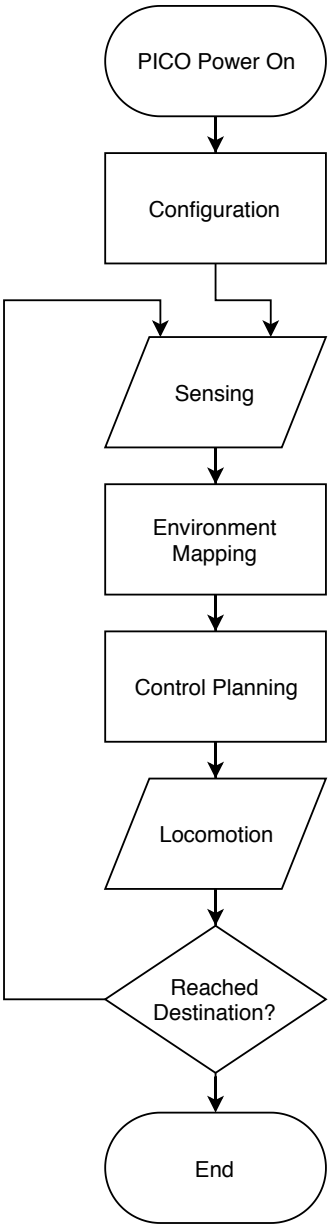

Figure 2: Function Flowchart

The simplest approach to using the above functions to solve the given challenges is by sequentially arranging these functions as shown in figure 2. At a higher level of implementation,

they can also be processed in a manner of parallel execution using multiple software threads providing/receiving data to/from the software's primary loop.

4 Components

PICO Telepresence Robot by Aldebaran:

1. Sensors:
   (a) Proximity measurement with Laser Range Finder (LRF)
   (b) Motion measurement with Wheel encoders (Odometer)
   (c) Control Effort Sensor
2. Actuators:
   (a) Holonomic Base - Omni wheels that facilitate 2D translation and rotation
3. Computer:
   (a) Intel i7 Processor
   (b) OS: Ubuntu 16.04

5 Specifications

1. Laser Range Finder (LRF)
   (a) Linear Range: 0.1 to 10 meters
   (b) Panoramic range: -2 to 2 radians
   (c) Panoramic Resolution: 0.004004 radians
2. Holonomic Base:
   (a) Maximum Linear speed: 0.5 m/s
   (b) Maximum Rotational speed: 1.2 rad/s

6 Interfaces

1. Communication with PICO: All software uploads to the PICO robot will take place through GitLab.
2. Communication within software functions: As described in the Functions section, it is necessary to exchange information from different functions. The main interface between the functions stated above will be the World Model which will contain the raw data recorded by the Sensing function, the processed information from the Environment Mapping and Control Planning functions and the planned trajectories for the Locomotion function.