

The GINSENG System for Wireless Monitoring and Control: Design and Deployment Experiences

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Today's industrial facilities such as oil refineries, chemical plants and factories rely on *wired* sensor systems to monitor and control the production processes. The deployment and maintenance of such cabled systems is expensive and inflexible. It is therefore desirable to replace or augment these systems using wireless technology which requires us to overcome significant technical challenges. Process automation and control applications are mission-critical and require timely and reliable data delivery, which is difficult to provide in industrial environments with harsh radio environments. In this paper we present the GINSENG system which implements performance control to allow us to use wireless sensor networks for mission-critical applications in industrial environments. GINSENG is a complete system solution that comprises on-node system software, network protocols, and back-end systems with sophisticated data processing capability. GINSENG assumes that a deployment can be carefully planned. A TDMA-based MAC protocol, tailored to the deployment environment is employed to provide reliable and timely data delivery. Performance debugging components are used to unintrusively monitor the system performance and identify problems as they occur. The paper reports on a real-world deployment of GINSENG in an especially challenging environment of an operational oil refinery in Sines, Portugal. We provide experimental results from this deployment and share the experiences gained. These results demonstrate the use of GINSENG for sensing and actuation and allow an assessment of its ability to operate within the required performance bounds. We also identify shortcomings that manifested during the evaluation phase, thus giving a useful perspective on the challenges that have to be overcome in these harsh application settings.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Automation and control are fundamental tasks in industrial environments. Today these are mainly based on wired analog communication, with most industries being heavily automated. Cabled sensors are used for monitoring and communication of sensor readings to a control room in which software is used for closed-loop control, to raise alarms or for simple process observation. These operational systems are proven to be efficient and reliable and are used even in the most critical scenarios such as nuclear power industries and oil refineries. However, they present some highly significant drawbacks regarding deployment and reconfiguration.

The deployment of an entire system is very costly as it requires the installation of thousands of cables which must comply with industry-specific regulatory standards. Further costs accumulate as the installation needs to be protected which often requires the laying of cables underground. This severely limits installation flexibility, making it very difficult to reconfigure the system should that be necessary to accommodate new production processes.

A wireless solution seems highly desirable to overcome the outlined limitations. Wireless Sensor Networks (WSNs) are, in principle, the closest technology to offer such an alternative. Nodes are readily deployed and system reconfiguration can be carried out easily. The focus of WSN deployments in the research literature has been on applications which are non-critical in terms of performance, such as

animal habitat or environmental monitoring. Various aspects of performance control for WSNs have been addressed, such as for real-time medium access control and routing, but there is a lack of systems that offer performance assurances with backend support and combine low energy consumption, high packet delivery rate and closed-loop actuation. Consequently, and with some justification, industry has shown a marked reluctance to embrace WSNs for mission-critical settings.

In the recent past, several standards have become available that enable the use of wireless communication to connect industrial devices to control systems, mainly targeting remote equipment monitoring. Perhaps the most well-known is WirelessHART, which was approved as a standard by the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) in April 2010. In Section 6 we discuss WirelessHART and related systems in detail, providing a qualitative comparison with our work. Unfortunately, there appear to be no independent peer-reviewed publications that evaluate the performance of these offerings in a real industrial deployment, and in addition, many key features that affect performance are not specified in the standards but left to individual vendors to implement. Furthermore, there are key differences in the scope of these systems, such that, while these address many key issues for wireless monitoring, our GINSENG solution stands alone as offering a complete solution that includes not just the network protocols and system software, but also encompassing performance debugging and tight integration with industry-grade middleware for complex event management.

Our solution, GINSENG, stems from a multi-partner FP7 European project led by University College Cork in which a performance controlled WSN has been designed and evaluated. The current deployment is at the Petrogal oil refinery, located at Sines, Portugal. This is the largest refinery in the Iberian peninsula and stands among the largest in Europe. The Petrogal refinery is today completely automated, but totally based on wired systems. Upgrades to the sensor/actuator system are frequently needed, but sometimes they are impossible to perform or extremely expensive. Therefore, within the scope of the GINSENG project and to directly answer the needs of Petrogal, a real WSN has been deployed in the refinery. We have studied and developed this network to assure the desired controlled performance and consequently the desired reliability. To meet these requirements, we performed several in-field evaluations. The results allowed us to assess the ability of GINSENG to operate within the required performance bounds for sensing and actuation, and to identify shortcomings that manifested during the evaluation phase, thus giving a useful perspective on the challenges that have to be overcome in these harsh application settings. Furthermore, the experiments show that the GINSENG system is able to provide performance debugging information which is necessary to detect reliably problems and to provide data for system reconfiguration.

Unlike most papers that report on wireless sensor network deployments, a special aspect of our work is the opportunity to deploy in a *real industrial environment* and use it to conduct on-site experiments. Towards this end, we make three key contributions. The first contribution is to present the GINSENG system as an end-to-end solution for industrial monitoring and control, highlighting the novel features of the design. By end-to-end we mean that it encompasses the backend software (middleware and applications) in addition to protocol and system software. The second



Fig. 1: I/O Cabinets and Wiring cabinet.

contribution is to detail a real and challenging industrial application scenario and our experiences in physically deploying the GINSENG system in that context. The industrial setting we chose is deeply challenging, involving electromagnetic interference, obstacles to radio communication, explosive atmosphere, and difficulties in physical access due to site security. The third contribution is to leverage that deployment to gather valuable results from on-site experiments and analyse the system performance. Our results show that our system is highly significant in that it combines sensing and closed-loop actuation, high packet delivery rates, and low energy consumption.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows. The next section specifies the problem definition and sets the overall context by discussing the application scenarios. Section 3 presents the GINSENG system architecture and details the key elements of the system design. Section 4 describes the deployment of the complete solution at an operational oil refinery, while Section 5 presents the experimental results and analysis. Section 6 provides a summary and comparison with related work and Section 8 concludes the paper.

2. APPLICATION SCENARIOS AND PROBLEM DEFINITION

The Petrogal oil refinery is a complex industrial facility that includes a wide range of processing that needs careful monitoring and control of operations. There are currently 35,000 sensors and actuators in use in the refinery to perform monitoring of industrial operations such as leakage detection, measurement of pressure in the pipes, the temperature of burners, or fluid levels of tanks. Sensor sampling periods are generally in the order of a few seconds, with 3 s being a typical and acceptable value. The system tolerates a few missing sampling points without causing problems. Such failures are indicated and maintenance for the sensor is scheduled. For most sensors, set-point values can be defined that, when exceeded, trigger alarms to be handled by control room operators. Some sensors are part of automated control loops where actuators react automatically to sensor input. In practice it is usually the case that such sensors and actuators are located in close proximity because the points of observation and reaction are coincident.

Figure 1 illustrates the current situation at the refinery where each of the sensors is terminated in a wiring closet in a control building. In the long term, the ability to

replace most of these wired links with wireless has a multitude of benefits, including cost reduction, increased flexibility in plant reconfiguration, and simplified control room infrastructure.

2.1 Monitoring and Control System

The operations in place at the refinery utilize three systems for the monitoring and control of the plant: the indicatory system, the semi-automatic control system, and the automatic control system. Although this section describes the oil refinery monitoring and control system, the three classifications of systems mentioned above apply to any industrial plant. All plants have indicatory, semi-automatic control, and automatic control systems and should have similar requirements as the systems in the refinery. Therefore, it should be possible to apply the solutions found for these scenarios to the more general cases.

The indicatory system is used purely to provide the control center with information about status and faults of equipment and generic aspects of the environment. Within this system, information flows one way from the in-field sensors to the control center. It is assumed that data from sensors needs to arrive within a given time frame and with a given reliability. Reliability and delay bounds in the indicatory system are not as strict as they are in the two systems described next. Some delay between measurement and display of information in the control center is acceptable. According to the refinery requirements acceptable values are delays of 3 s and a transmission reliability of 99 %.

The semi-automatic control system is used to control different aspects of the refinery. This system is similar to the previously described indicatory system but includes actuators as well and information flows in both directions: from in-field sensors to the control center, and from the control center to actuators. Upon data arrival from sensors an operator may decide to send commands to in-field actuators. Operators require instant feedback from sensors as actuators are used to modify aspects of the environment. The same requirements that applied to the indicatory system exist for this type of system as well, with the exception that it applies both to upstream and downstream data.

The automatic control system is used to deploy automated control loops within the refinery. The system is similar to the previously described semi-automatic control system but commands to actuators are sent automatically (by the control system and not after operator intervention) upon receiving sensor data. Sensors and actuators in this system are part of an automated closed loop system. However, operators may be allowed to set parameters which influence the decision process. For example, an operator might configure a control loop such that a valve closes if pressure above an operator-defined threshold is measured. In this system it is extremely important that data arrives at its intended destination in a timely and reliable manner. Therefore, the required delay is significantly lower than the indicatory and semi-automatic cases; round-trip delays of 2 s (1 s one-way delay instead of 3 s) are typical values.

In the following subsections we describe two refinery operation scenarios in more detail to better illustrate the system requirements. The first scenario describes a production monitoring scenario while the second describes production monitoring and control. The first example uses the indicatory system while the second one

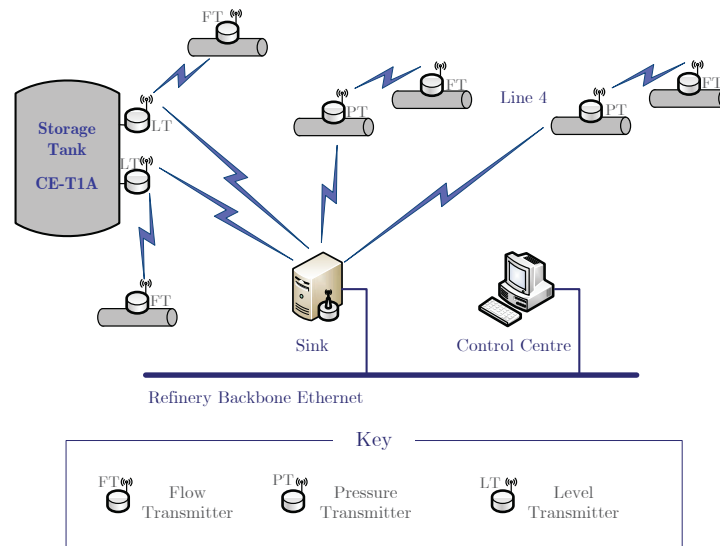


Fig. 2: Production Monitoring Scenario.

requires the semi-automatic control system. The second example may use elements of the automatic control system in cases where control is configured to run without human intervention.

2.2 Example 1: Production Monitoring

This application scenario is an example of an indicatory system. Figure 2 shows a small section of the plant that has a number of pipes that contain materials that are pumped into a storage tank. In this scenario, sensors of two different types are used to provide information to the control center staff:

- Pressure is monitored within each pipe not only for safety reasons to keep pipe pressure within pipe tolerances, but also to detect leakage. Pressure is usually measured in Pascal (Pa). A typical pressure sensor has a P_{min} and P_{max} using $32\ bits$ as sample size. Pressure is typically sampled every second.
- Flow is monitored within each pipe to determine the rate at which product is flowing. Flow is measured in m^3/h every second using $32\ bit$ as sample size.
- Level is monitored within storage tanks. Levels are measured in m every second using $32\ bits$ as sample size.

In this scenario all sensors are in close proximity (less than $50\ m$). However, due to environment conditions (a built-up environment with a lot of metal pipes) it is expected that some nodes would have to fulfill two functions: sensing and data forwarding. The expected network lifetime, i.e. before maintenance needs to be scheduled for changing the batteries, is at least 180 days.

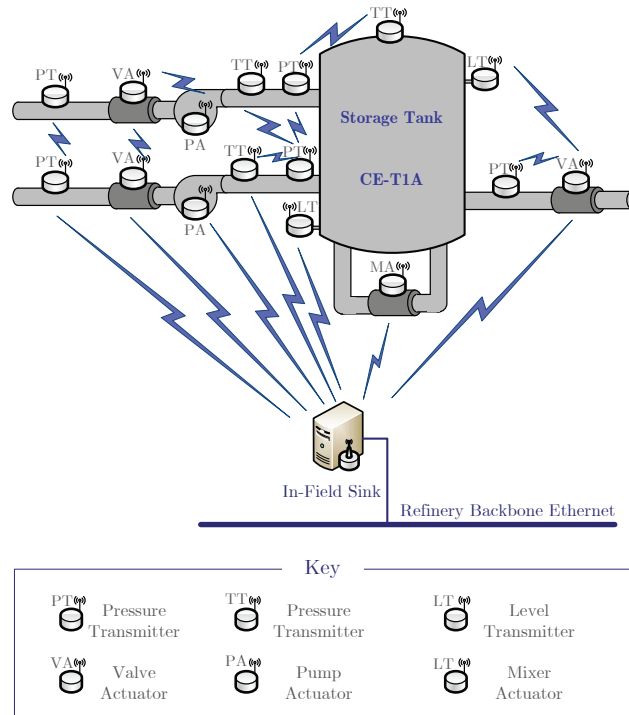


Fig. 3: Production Control Scenario.

2.3 Example 2: Production Monitoring and Control

This scenario is an example of the semi-automatic control system. Figure 3 shows a small section of the refinery. The information is carried from sensors to the control center to allow technicians to make production-based decisions. With the use of actuators technicians can alter aspects of production, such as the speed of product flow, which is controlled via pumps. In addition to the sensors seen in the previous scenario, actuators are also included that can configure pumps, mixers, or open/close valves.

This scenario includes three sensor types measuring temperature, pressure, and filling levels. This information is sent to the control center, which is monitored by technicians. In addition to the three types of network devices seen in the previous scenario, additional actuator devices are present. Technicians using this information can manage production by controlling three types of plant objects via actuators. These actuators are necessary to enable control of production. These actuators include:

- Shut-off valves are integrated into pipes and are used to interrupt product flow during day-to-day operations and in the case of emergency.
- Pumps can operate at different speeds to increase or decrease the pressure and thus flow of product through the piping system. A 32 bit value is sufficient to set pump speed.

—Mixing Tanks can blend together products. When mixing is enabled the contents of the tank is blended and forced out into the output pipe for continued processing at another location. Actuators control the speed at which the mixers operate. A 32 *bit* value is used to set mixing parameters.

As described at the beginning of this section, commands need to reach an actuator within 3s and with a reliability of 99 %. Again, in this scenario all sensors are in close proximity (less than 50 *m*) and connection points to the refinery backbone are available. The expected network lifetime is also at least 180 days.

3. GINSENG SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

The GINSENG system assumes that sensors and actuators can be organised in relatively small wireless sensor networks which are connected to a wired backbone infrastructure. It is assumed that highly performance critical communication (i.e. for control loops) is executed within a WSN and only communication with more relaxed performance requirements (i.e. for control room monitoring; for control loops with slow cycles) extends into the backbone infrastructure. The GINSENG system architecture follows these structural assumptions which allows us to provide a system with the objective of assuring strict performance. These assumptions generally fit production process configurations very well. Sensors and associated actuators that are part of a tightly controlled production process are often found in close proximity of each other (See Section 2). Furthermore, a dedicated wired backbone infrastructure which connects production areas and contains central elements such as the control room is generally present in larger facilities.

The GINSENG system uses a distributed middleware to facilitate application data exchange among nodes in different wireless clusters and backend services. Furthermore, the middleware provides a uniform Application Programming Interface (API) for implementing data monitoring and control loops, attaching user interfaces (e.g. to implement control room functionality), adding data storage (e.g. to implement data logging) and adding external systems (e.g. maintenance management and supply chain management).

GINSENG communication in the backbone network assumes a network is able to provide deterministic performance, i.e. the network is able to give bounds on data transport delay and reliability. In practice, a sufficiently provisioned best effort network fulfils this requirement for most application cases (as we will show in Section 5). GINSENG communication in the WSNs uses a Time Division Multiple Access (TDMA)-based Medium Access Control (MAC) protocol, called GinMAC, at its heart. GinMAC provides the necessary capability of giving strict bounds for message transport reliability and delay. A number of additional modules that must work alongside a MAC aiming at providing performance guarantees are tightly integrated with GinMAC. These include, for example, topology control, queue management, and performance debugging facilities.

GINSENG applications running on sensor/actuator nodes and middleware components involved in processing performance critical messages are designed to provide bounds on processing times. Thus, given bounds provided by GinMAC or the backbone network (if involved in the communication path) it is possible to implement a system that provides performance assurances. The adherence to strict delay

and reliability requirements is essential in the context of process automation and control as it is a requirement for critical monitoring tasks and, in particular, control loop implementation.

The GINSENG system monitors message timing in each part of the system. When a time bound is exceeded an alarm is generated and a control engineer is informed to take action. An interface for the specification of desired latency bounds concerning processing and delivery in the WSN and backbone is provided. Latency information is collected within messages as they travel through the system. When the messages arrive at the middleware the information is evaluated against defined bounds.

3.1 GINSENG System Components

A GINSENG system employs a number of software components which are located either on nodes deployed in wireless clusters or on standard server systems within the backend infrastructure. The next paragraphs describe the main components of a GINSENG system. The system architecture is shown in Figure 4.

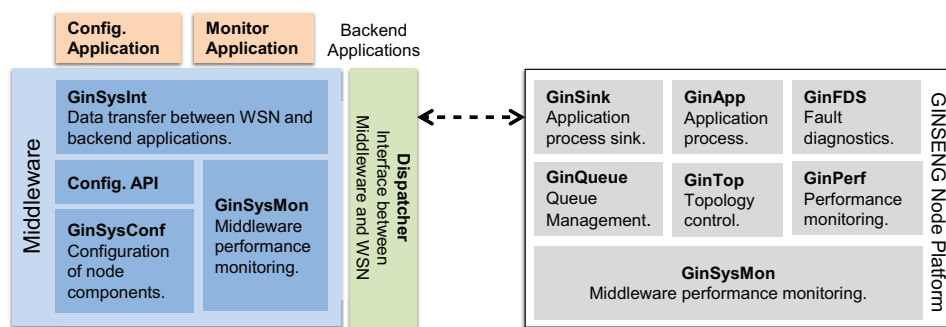


Fig. 4: GINSENG System Components.

GINSENG Middleware. The GINSENG system uses a middleware to facilitate application data exchange among sensors and actuators in different WSNs and among backend services. To scale for large industrial scenarios, the middleware design enables the distributed deployment of the following components.

GinSysInt - The System Integration component facilitates data transfer between WSNs and backend applications. Measurement data from sensors and additional diagnosis data (such as wireless network performance monitoring data) is fed into the middleware, pre-processed and forwarded to all subscribed consuming applications. Further, actuation commands and configuration data for sensors and actuators in WSNs is passed from the middleware to WSNs.

GinSysMon - The Performance Monitoring continuously controls the performance of the middleware during runtime. It extends and applies the data quality metrics and algebra presented in [Klein and Lehner 2009b] towards the GINSENG application scenarios. Second, whenever it detects a quality decrease or a user triggers a quality optimisation with regard to a specific performance metric, the Performance Monitoring component starts the quality-driven optimisation of the sensor stream

processing [Klein and Lehner 2009a]. Finally, the performance monitoring enables the performance-driven load shedding [Klein et al. 2009] to avoid middleware overload situations and enable reliable data processing. Essentially, this middleware element ensures that processing delays stay within required bounds.

GinSysConf - The System Configuration enables the definition of commands that configure the data gathering and actuation via GinApp and GinSink, as well as the configuration of agents in the GinFDS (all described next). Such commands can be either defined manually by users or are automatically generated by backend applications for production control. The System Configuration component provides the Config API that exposes all configuration services to external applications, e.g., for user-defined commands, and interprets the user-input and derives appropriate command message(s) to be sent to all relevant nodes.

Dispatcher - Data is forwarded from a sink node to the Dispatcher software located on a host in the backbone which then feeds data into the middleware. Likewise, data is transmitted via the Dispatcher into a WSN. The Dispatcher employs flow control mechanisms to avoid interfering with the strict TDMA schedule of the sink node. Furthermore, reliable communication is ensured by using Cycling Redundancy Checking (CRC) checksums, acknowledgements and automatic retransmissions.

The current implementation uses a USB/serial connection between sink node and PC, whereas a GINSENG system in full production would integrate the functionality of the sink node and Dispatcher within an embedded system.

GINSENG Node Platform. Sensor and actuator nodes are implemented using Contiki. Each node uses a TDMA based MAC protocol called GinMAC as communication protocol which ensures timely and reliable data delivery. A number of additional modules required in a performance controlled network are tightly integrated with GinMAC. These components are: topology control (GinTop), queue management (GinQueue) and performance debugging (GinPerf).

GinMAC - GinMAC is a single channel TDMA protocol which uses exclusive slots for data transmission. Neighbouring wireless clusters are required to use different transmission channels in order to prevent collisions. GinMAC provides redundant slots to compensate for potential packet losses. GinMAC accepts packets from the upper layers (e.g. GinApp and GinSink), which are queued and then transmitted by the radio at the appropriate time.

GinTop - A GINSENG system uses a tree topology envelope specified before network deployment for network organisation. GinTop is responsible for assigning nodes to a position in the logical network topology such that the resulting topology fits within the provisioned topology envelope.

GinQueue - GinQueue is called by GinMAC for packet scheduling decisions. Sensor data and actuator data is queued with high priority while other data such as configuration data or performance debugging data is queued with low priority.

GinPerf - GinPerf is used to monitor the performance of the wireless networks. It is used to collect performance related information on nodes, to process this data and to forward processing results and raw information to the middleware via the sink node where it can be further analysed and combined with data from other WSNs.

GinApp - Each node in a WSN carries this component which is responsible to poll periodically sensor data and/or to initiate actuation if required. GinApp can be configured (e.g. polling frequency, actuation parameters, etc.) using the Config API offered by the GinSysConf component. For example, sensor and actuator behaviour can be configured via a control center using the Config API provided by the GinSysConf component.

GinFDS - The Fault Diagnosis and Supervision component is based on a multi-agent hierarchical architecture, located at node level, in order to guarantee high quality of acquired data and fault tolerance in closed-loop control systems. Each agent is configurable and is responsible for specific tasks, such as, monitoring sensors readings, outliers filtering and handling communication faults (in the forward link) on the control system.

GinSink - The sink node in a wireless cluster carries this component which has two functions. Firstly, GinSink is the bridge between wireless cluster and backbone infrastructure. GinSink is used to pass received messages from the wireless network to the backbone infrastructure. Secondly, GinSink can be used to implement control functionality. Incoming sensor messages can be processed and messages with actuation commands can be generated as a result that is then distributed to actuators within the wireless cluster. GinSink can be configured for example to set forwarding filters and control loop parameters.

3.2 The GINSENG Data Path

The GinApp process running on the sensor nodes reads and pre-processes sensor data and then decides if data must be forwarded. In addition, the GinFDS component may be used to perform outlier detection to ensure data quality (more details on outlier detection will be given in Section 5). All data is routed via the sink node in a WSN as this is a property of the employed GinMAC protocol.

A task on the sink node then processes the data and may, as a result, generate commands to be sent to actuators within the same wireless cluster. Alternatively, the data may be forwarded by the sink node to a system in the backbone infrastructure. Data is forwarded from the sink node via USB/serial connection to the Dispatcher software which then forwards data to systems in the backbone. A combination is as well possible whereby data is forwarded to the backbone infrastructure while command messages for actuators in the WSN are generated. In particular the last option allows us to implement control loops with strict performance requirements while monitoring messages travelling through the backbone infrastructure may have more relaxed performance requirements.

Middleware components in the backbone are also likely to process incoming data from sensors. In this case, input data from multiple WSNs and input from additional sources (eg process/risk management servers) can be used in decision-making. Command messages for actuators located in WSNs that are closely linked to the middleware servers or for other secondary systems may be the result. Obviously, if control loops are constructed this way, data transport delays in the backbone infrastructure and the WSNs must be taken into account and some very performance critical systems may not be implementable this way.

Sensor and actuator data have to be treated with priority. Other data such as system maintenance messages, debugging information, and control messages must

be transported by the system without interacting negatively with application data delivery.

3.3 GINSENG Resource Provisioning

In a monitoring scenario data has to be delivered within time T from the sensor nodes to the backend-application which presents the data. The time T can be broken down into the time T_W required for the WSN (reading sensor data, delivering the data upstream to the sink node and forwarding this data to the middleware) and time T_B required for data transport and processing in the middleware of the backend system.

The GINSENG system must be designed such that for each data source the required deadline T can be met. Within each WSN the time T_W is determined by the TDMA schedule length F . GinMAC is designed such that it is ensured that data from all nodes can be delivered to the backend system within this time frame. Inside the backend systems the time T_B is determined by the software systems as well as the intermediate wired networks and the server hardware.

3.3.1 Backbone Infrastructure. As said, dimensioning of the backend system depends on a number of factors. Thus, a generic description of how to determine $T_{B_{max}}$ cannot be given, without assuming specific technologies for real-time networks in the backend and real-time operating systems on the servers.

More pragmatically, it is possible to put the backend systems through a load test to determine a worst-case delay for data transport and processing delays observed during the load test (see Section 5.2). While the numbers obtained in those tests are not strict delay bounds, we have observed that the maximum observed T_B is two orders of magnitude lower than T_W in our system.

Therefore, we do not attempt to enforce strict real-time in the backend. Due to the significant differences in the order of the measured delay we assume that the processing time in the backend T_B does not increase into the same order of magnitude as the time the WSN takes to transport the data into the backend system T_W for reasonable numbers of events per second. The assumption is verified by the measurements presented in the Evaluation Section 5.

Furthermore, if necessary, over-provisioning of both the backend network as well as the backend servers can serve to further distance the observed delays from the acceptable delays.

3.3.2 Wireless Sensor Network. A network dimensioning process is carried out before the network is deployed. The input for the dimensioning process are network and application characteristics that are known before deployment. The output of the dimensioning process is a TDMA schedule with frame length F that each node has to follow. The GinMAC protocol is detailed in [Suriyachai et al. 2010]. However, to understand the evaluation presented in the next section we give a brief summary of the protocol details here in this section.

The GinMAC TDMA frame consists of three types of slots: basic slots, additional slots and unused slots. First, the frame contains a number of basic slots which are selected such that within frame length F each sensor can forward one message to the sink and the sink can transmit one message to each actuator. Second, the GinMAC frame uses additional slots to improve transmission reliability. Finally,

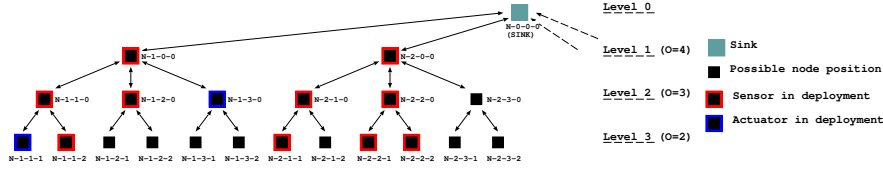


Fig. 5: Example topology with $N_A = 2$ actuators and $N_S = 10$ sensors.

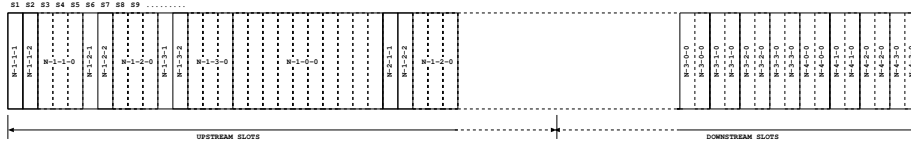


Fig. 6: Transmission slot allocation for the topology shown in Figure 5.

the frame may contain unused slots which are purely used to improve the duty cycle of nodes.

The above types of slots within the GinMAC frame must be designed such that the delay, reliability and energy consumption requirements are met. However, it may not always be possible to find a frame that simultaneously fulfils all three requirements. If that is the case, some dimensioning assumptions must be relaxed.

To determine the number of basic slots required in a GinMAC frame, a topology envelope is assumed. This topology envelope is specified as a tree rooted at the sink and described by the parameters: maximum hop distance H and fan-out degrees O_h ($0 \leq h \leq H$) at each tree level h ; we define $O_0 = 1$. The topology envelope can accommodate a maximum number of $N^{max} = \sum_{n=1}^H \prod_{m=1}^n O_m$ nodes. However, in the actual deployment a number of nodes $N \leq N^{max}$ may be used. Nodes in the later deployment can take any place in the network and even move their topological location as long as the resulting deployed topology stays within this topology envelope, of course subject to the requirement that the node's application message demands are consistent with those assumed for dimensioning purposes. The maximum number of sensor nodes N_S^{max} and actuator nodes N_A^{max} (with $N^{max} = N_S^{max} + N_A^{max}$) must also be known.

To determine the number of additional slots needed for reliability control, the worst-case link characteristics in the deployment area must be known. As the network is deployed in a known environment, it is possible to determine this value by measurement. The configuration of basic and additional slots determines an energy consumption baseline of nodes. Adding unused slots within the GinMAC frame can improve upon this baseline.

The allocation of basic slots for the example given in Figure 5 is depicted in Figure 6. The total number of slots in F needed to forward data to the sink in the example topology is $S_B^{up} = 100$. (see [Suriyachai et al. 2010] for generic formulae to determine required slot numbers in generic topologies). The required number of downstream slots in the topology shown in Figure 5 where there is a maximum of $N_A^{max} = 2$ actuators in the network is $S_B^{down} = 34$

To determine the number of additional slots, we first need to choose a worst-case

link reliability that GinMAC will support. The deployed system will use a topology that fits into the topology envelope and uses only links with reliability better than the selected worst-case link reliability. These links are called good links and are determined before deployment. A good link is defined by burst lengths. A good link must not have more than B_{max} consecutive transmission errors and must provide at least B_{min} consecutive successful transmissions between two bursts [Munir et al. 2010].

In a scenario where good links can be characterised with short B_{max} and long B_{min} , it is possible to efficiently add additional retransmission slots on the same link to deal with losses. Consider node N-1-1-0 in the example shown in Figure 5, $B_{max} = 2$ and $B_{min} = 2$. The node requires 3 basic slots for upstream transmissions, and in a worst case any 2 of the 3 transmissions might be lost. However, if 4 additional transmission slots are allocated, all 3 packets are guaranteed to be delivered within the 7 slots provided that the channel conforms to chosen B_{max} and B_{min} .

4. GINSENG DEPLOYMENT

Deploying a wireless sensor networks in an operational oil refinery poses a number of challenges normal sensor networks applications do not face. To protect against the hazard of explosion caused by electrical equipment, sensor nodes have to be enclosed in ATmosphere EXplosive (ATEX) boxes which impacts wireless communication. Furthermore, the environment itself with large metal structures and heavy machines moving around has a strong and hard to predict impact on low power communication and hence requires a more controlled deployment strategy than for most traditional sensor network applications. In this section we describe our deployment and detail many challenges we encountered before we were able to set up a stable deployment useful for scientific evaluations.

4.1 System Set-up

The GINSENG deployment comprises a complete end-to-end solution for production control and automation based on wireless sensor networks. Therefore, the deployment also includes an advanced middleware, back-end as well as front-end applications. Figure 7 depicts the complete deployment scenario.

We have deployed two adjacent wireless networks WSN1 and WSN2, constituted by 12 nodes each, with different configurations in the refinery. The networks differ in topology, physical layout, connected sensors and used network channel. Our motivation for deploying two networks is twofold: First, to demonstrate and evaluate the integration and interoperability of different networks. Second, to demonstrate and evaluate closed-loop control between different networks where the sensor is in one network and the actuator is part of another network.

Figure 7 depicts that we have also deployed four server hosts in the GINSENG control room in a portable office located in the heart of the water treatment zone (ATEX) and a monitoring PC at the refinery control room in a building outside the water treatment zone. We have deployed two sinks, one for WSN1 (Host1) and one for WSN2 (Host2). The GINSENG middleware is distributed on two hosts (Host3 and Host4) to validate its scalability for large application scenarios. The PC at the control room runs two applications. First, the Refinery Monitoring application

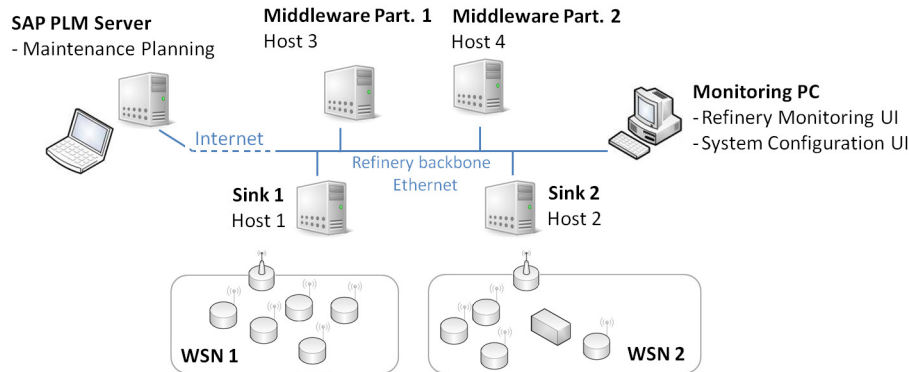


Fig. 7: The GINSENG deployment set-up also includes middleware, back-end and front-end applications.

that compares GINSENG’s performance with the performance of the existing wired analog system. Second, the System Configuration front-end to send user-defined commands to the WSNs. All machines run Linux. They are connected to the refinery backbone via IEEE 802.3 Ethernet Cat6e STP cables.

Finally, we run an SAP PLM server that enables predictive maintenance planning of WSNs and refinery. This host is located at the SAP Research Center in Dresden, Germany, to demonstrate interoperability with remote and complex back-end applications.

4.2 Middleware and Application Deployment

Figure 8 illustrates the deployment of the GINSENG middleware and connected applications in more detail. The Dispatcher software installed at Host1 and Host2 processes packets from the sensor networks that arrive at Sink1 and Sink2 and forwards them via a TCP/IP connection towards the GINSENG middleware. Further, it transfers system configuration commands from the middleware to individual sensor nodes.

As stated in Section 3, the middleware was designed for a distributed deployment scaling up to a large numbers of connected data sources and back-end applications and hence requires high data rates at high reliability. To validate the distributed design, we deployed the middleware at two servers, Host3 and Host4. Host4 comprises the central middleware database that stores all MW-related configurations like deployed agents and connection parameters, the admin UI to manage these configurations, the system configuration component to derive commands, e.g., for cross-WSN actuation and the system integration component connected to Host2, i.e., WSN2. At Host3 the second system integration partition, that connects to WSN1, is installed.

Both system integration partitions comprise the WSN adapter layer for downwards connectivity, the back-end adapter layer with various adapter agents to connect different back-end applications (like the Refinery Monitoring application in the refinery control room or the SAP PLM server for maintenance planning) and a Complex Event Processing (CEP) agent to aggregate and analyse incoming sensor

data.

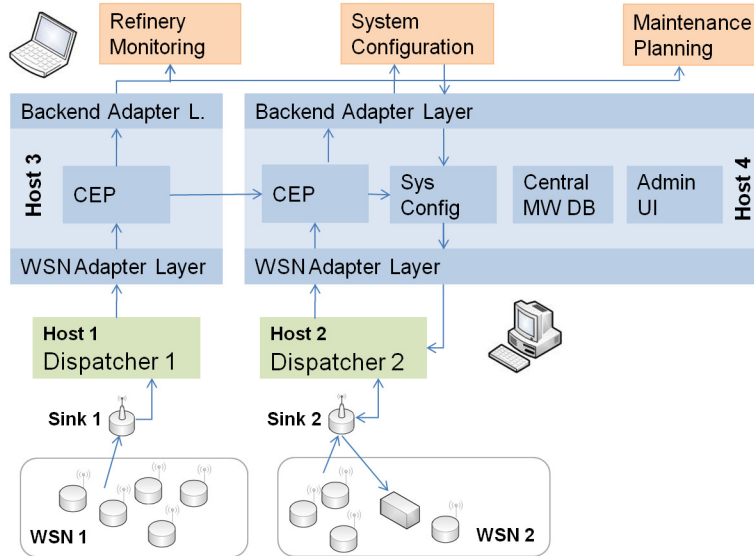


Fig. 8: Distribution of GINSENG middleware in the deployment.

4.3 Network Design and Topology

Following from the discussion of network dimensioning, a hierarchical topology is a natural choice to achieve scalability. The physical constraints of the testbed were the dominating factor in determining the actual topology chosen. While WSN1 follows a 3-3 hierarchical topology, the second network (WSN2) is based on a 3-1-2 configuration. Figure 9 illustrates the physical topology of both networks relative to the GINSENG control room that is located between the two networks. Figure 11 and Figure 12 detail the logical topology of each one individually. Both networks also include actuators that control valves.

As mentioned above, the refinery environment is highly challenging with respect to wireless communication. Huge metal structures and machines operating non-stop cause a high noise level, which might seriously affect the system performance. In general however the radio environment, while noisy, was observed to usually be fairly stable, with reliability levels on individual links lying within well-defined ranges. Figure 10 shows some of the sensor locations, the portable office with the GINSENG control room, as well as one of the deployed nodes within the ATEX box and an attached 9 dB antenna.

The sensors attached to transducers and to actuators are dependent on the location of the measurement points and control equipment (see Figure 9). The hierarchical topology and the additional relaying nodes were carefully chosen to obtain good network performance. The process followed an empirical approach based on visual inspection of node's location and power transmission measurements between nodes.

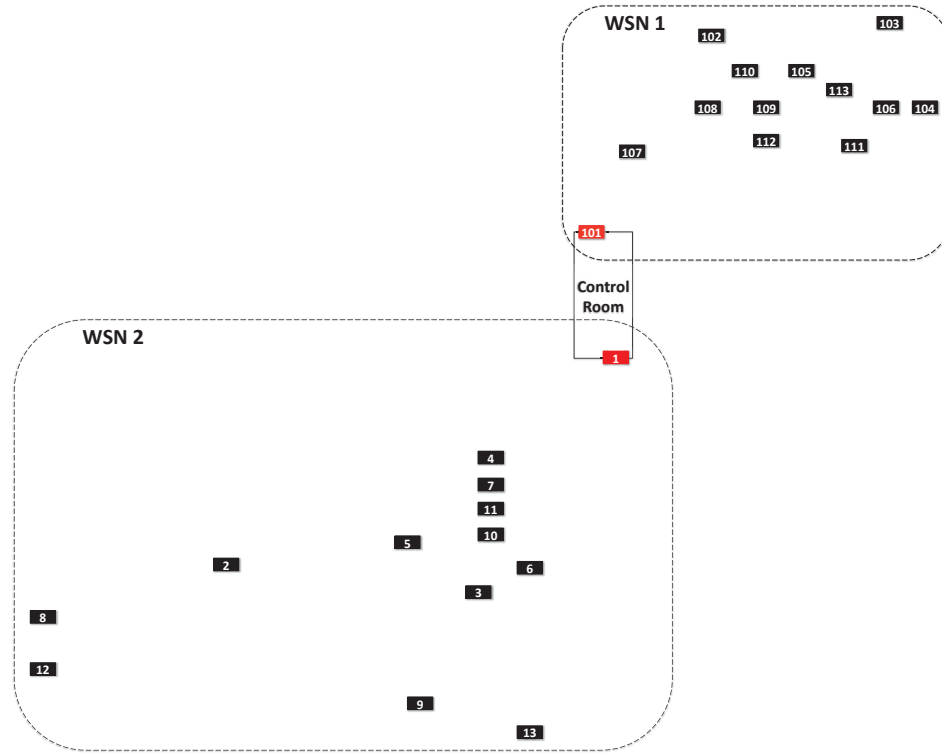


Fig. 9: Physical topology of the networks

As a logical tree, a balanced tree was chosen in which we can use $B_{max} = B_{min} = 1$ which has one re-transmission slot per message and enables a schedule that meets the desired delivery times (We will give more details on dimensioning and schedule construction in the next section).

The node identifiers in the Figure (also used later in explaining the logical topology) are unique to each node.

4.4 Deployment-specific Challenges

The deployment of a network in a sensitive environment such as an oil refinery poses many new challenges ranging from operational constraints such as physical access and the need to put sensors into ATEX-certified enclosures. It also required us to employ special corrosive-resistant antennae that are external to the ATEX enclosure. Naturally, these had an impact on the cost of each node; in our case the additional costs were approximately €125 for each ATEX enclosure and €220 for each antenna. In different settings the deployment constraints will differ and the features and costs of the required enclosures and antennae may be higher or lower than these values. For example, low-end ATEX enclosures are available for under €10, and low-end external antennae for tens of Euro.

The oil refinery, as many other heavy industrial sites, has very strict rules regarding the movement and management of personnel within certain areas. Several



Fig. 10: Sensors deployed in the refinery.

areas are classified as ATEX areas and not all employees are allowed to stay there. In some cases, we also needed to take sensor nodes out of a certain zone in order to reprogram and debug them. Obviously, this is time-consuming and requires very good preparation as well as thorough testing before deploying networks in the refinery.

Our experience has shown that it is challenging to predict the radio behaviour. ACM Transactions on Sensor Networks, Vol. X, No. X, XX 20XX.

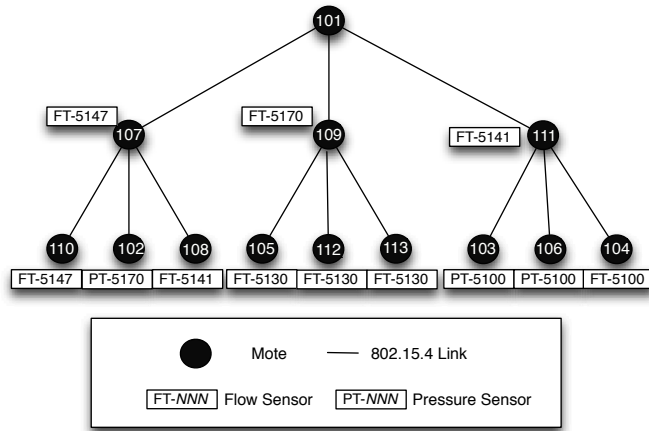


Fig. 11: Logical topology of network 1.

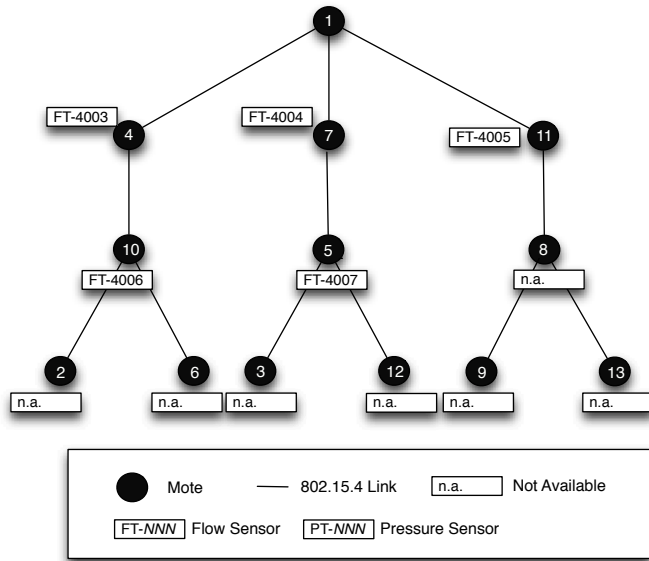


Fig. 12: Logical topology of network 2.

Furthermore, we had previously tested ATEX-enclosures that had a very low impact on wireless communication [Boano et al. 2009], when antennas are located outside the ATEX boxes. Consequently, the ATEX boxes we had to use in the refinery blocked all communication from our TelosB nodes when we used the on-board antennas. Therefore, we had to use external antennas that we fasten to the ATEX boxes. We first tried external antennas with 1 dB gain. These antennas enabled communication but only at very low packet delivery rates. In addition, the initial

1 dB antenna, a standard WLAN external antenna, was within only two weeks in the refinery literally destroyed and unusable due to the corrosive environment in the refinery. As a result, we have studied alternative antennas, concluding that the best option would be a ceramic white 45.72 cm antenna, with 9 dB of gain, capable to assure maximum performance, quality and durability. It was not just a question of power but also a question of resistance and durability in these corrosive environments. While operating with these antennas in the refinery we realised that although the clamps became corroded, the ceramic antenna had never shown any problem. The 9 dB of gain were also a key point in this choice, contributing to extend the transmission range [Raman and Chebrolu 2008].

In the next section, we show some experimental results that demonstrate the importance of channel selection. Those experiments revealed that the selection of an appropriate IEEE 802.15.4 channel significantly increased packet delivery rates. In addition, a deeper analysis on coverage and radio interference in the refinery can be found in [Tran et al. 2011].

4.5 Channel Selection

In order to achieve reliable and energy-efficient communication, we conducted some preliminary experiments to demonstrate the importance of selecting appropriate IEEE 802.15.4 channels. In the experiment, a node sends 200 packets in one hop to the sink node with an inter-packet transmission time of 200 ms. The sink extracts the received signal strength indicator (Receiver Signal Strength Indicator (RSSI)) and the message id to calculate the Packet Reception Rate (Packet Reception Rate (PRR)) measured from source to sink without retries. We performed measurements with both external antennas, i.e., the ones with a gain of 1 dB and 9 dB respectively. As expected, the 9 dB antenna performed significantly better, so we omit the results for the 1 dB antenna.

Our results are shown in Figure 13. Channels 13 to 18 exhibit good results with almost no packet losses and an RSSI between -60 and -63 dBm. Channels 25 and 26 also show a good PRR but with a lower RSSI. The important insight from this experiment is that we need to conduct experiments at the site to avoid choosing a bad channel.

Figure 13 shows that channel 21 would lead to significantly worse performance than the other channels and should be avoided. The reason for this behavior is technically unknown. We can only hypothesize that some equipment at the refinery was generating interference at this particular frequency in that area of the plant. From our field experience we have learned that in the refinery channels performance changes from area to area depending on the structures and operations running locally, which cause different types of noise and radio interferences. Hence, for each deployment we concluded that not only a previous spectrum analysis is needed, but also that it must be repeated periodically during the network lifetime, as part of a maintenance regime, to guarantee that the spectrum interference has not changed. In a future proposal cognitive radios capable to do this kind of evaluation “on the fly”, should be considered.

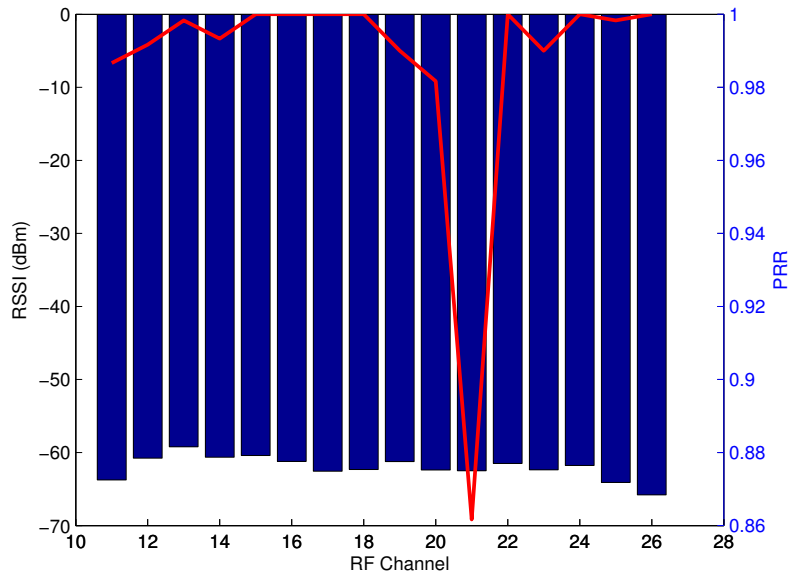


Fig. 13: Performance of the 802.15.4 channels.

5. EVALUATION

In this section we present and analyse results obtained from experiments performed in the Petrogal refinery in Sines. As GINSENG provides a complete solution for wireless monitoring and control a number of different system aspects are evaluated.

Network performance is analysed and contributions of the different system elements are quantified. Given the focus of the research, the key metrics of interest are delay and reliability of message delivery. Network performance of the wireless sensor networks is investigated in detail as it is the dominant factor in determining overall system performance. However, performance of the backend infrastructure is analysed as well including its scalability. System performance in the context of monitoring-only applications and also applications with automated control loops is investigated. Finally, a comparison of data obtained from the installed cabled monitoring system with data obtained through GINSENG is carried out to show that GINSENG is a valid alternative to the existing cabled system.

To allow for those different evaluations of the performance of the network and of other system characteristics, several experiments have been carried out within the Petrogal Sines testbed. Experiments of different lengths have been performed: experiments with shorter duration have been designed to evaluate specific aspects of the system and also to investigate the general characteristics of the system. The overall system was evaluated using a longer-term experiment running continuously for a two week period.

5.1 System Setup for Evaluation

The network setup as described in the previous section was used for evaluation. For the two WSNs (Network 1 and Network 2) channels 16 and 14 respectively were selected as they provided a relatively clean communication environment as explained in Section 4.5. Then, for both networks a topology was selected that allowed us to employ a GinMAC schedule with $B_{max} = 1$ and $B_{min} = 1$ that supports end-to-end reliability of 99 %. These resulting logical topologies were shown in Figures 11 and 12, while the physical topologies can be seen in Figures 14 and 15. It was our aim to find topologies that require few retransmission slots in order to keep transmission latencies low. Other topologies are possible of course but may require a higher number of retransmission slots within the schedule. Unlike the node identifiers used in the previous section that served simply to uniquely distinguish nodes, the node identifiers used in this section are topological, explicitly giving the location within the network tree in terms of branch and level, and thus facilitating interpretation of the results.

In both networks nodes are set to generate data messages once every second. A subset of nodes in each network is configured to work as actuators as well as sensors. A minimum GinMAC schedule was devised for both networks which provides the necessary room for upstream and downstream messages; maintenance messages, such as time synchronisation; and sufficient time for application processing (in these slots no communication takes place and processing cycles are ensured to be available at every node for application tasks).

Network 1 contains 12 nodes along with a sink node that is connected to a sink PC. It is a 3-3 network as shown in Figure 11, with each child of the sink having three children of its own. The tree has three branches:

Branch 1 consists of nodes 1-0, 1-1, 1-2 and 1-3 with node 1-0 forwarding messages from nodes 1-1, 1-2 and 1-3 to the sink, 0-0.

Branch 2 consists of nodes 2-0, 2-1, 2-2 and 2-3 with node 2-0 forwarding messages from nodes 2-1, 2-2 and 2-3 to the sink, 0-0.

Branch 3 consists of nodes 3-0, 3-1, 3-2 and 3-3 with node 3-0 forwarding messages from nodes 3-1, 3-2 and 3-3 to the sink, 0-0.

In Network 1 Node 1-0 is used as sensor and actuator. Sensor data generated by Node 1-0 is used as input for actuation on the same node.

The data sources considered to determine an actuation are configured through the GINSENG UI. The GINSENG UI, and consequently, the middleware allow selecting one or multiple data sources to be used in the computation. One data source was used in the GINSENG setup, because there was only one sensor able to read the physical variable that will trigger the actuation.

To support the communication requirements a GinMAC schedule employing 92 slots in one TDMA epoch is used in Network 1. Each slot has a duration of 10 *ms* leading to an epoch duration of 920 *ms*. The slot allocation does not follow the strict layout given in Section 3 in order to allow for optimisation for the control loop. The first 2 slots in the epoch are reserved for application processing. In these slots all nodes generate sensor data that has to be transported. Next are 2 dedicated upstream slots for node 1-0 to transmit the sensor data necessary as input for the control loop. Thereafter 16 slots for sensor data from nodes in Branch 1 are

provisioned. Next are 2 unicast downstream slots for actuator messages directed to node 1-0. Thereafter 4 slots for broadcast downstream traffic are provided. These slots can be used to carry sensor node configuration commands (e.g. to switch sensing on or off). These are followed by 4 slots used for time synchronisation of the network. Then 28 upstream slots for sensor data from Branch 2 and Branch 3 are provided. Finally, 34 processing slots are provided, which is the time in which uninterrupted application processing can be carried out. This time is particularly important for the sink node, which uses this time for data forwarding over the serial port.

With this configuration all sensor data generated at the start of the TDMA Epoch is guaranteed to be transported to the sink and forwarded to the sink PC within 920 *ms*. Even if messages must be retransmitted this time bound will not be violated as long as link errors are not worse than the assumed characteristic of $B_{max} = 1$ and $B_{min} = 1$.

Network 2 uses a different TDMA schedule configuration. For Network 2 100 slots are provisioned which allows data transport within a delay bound of 1 *s*. In Network 2 a 3-1-2 topology with 3 branches are used as shown in Figure 12. In this network, Node 3-1-0 is used as an actuator.

As described in Section 2, monitoring requires an overall data transport delay of 3*s* which can be easily provided with the given configuration. The wireless sensor network contributes at most 1 *s* and, as we show next, the contribution of the middleware is an order of magnitude below the contribution of the sensor network.

Closed loop control can also be supported as the transport of sensor data upstream and subsequent transport of an actuation message downstream can be completed in one TDMA epoch which is far below the 3 *s* requirement. Even if sensor and actuator are located in different wireless sensor networks these requirements can be met.

5.2 Overall System and Middleware Performance

We started with relatively short duration tests of about 24 hours. The measurement results for the three branches have shown that the network works properly and is well provisioned during this time. As we can see in Figures 17a and 17b the delays in the backend parts, e.g, in the Dispatcher, Ethernet, and Middleware components are very small and this is the case for messages from every node. Further, the times needed within all these backend components are very small, hence, we can concentrate on the WSN part for more detailed evaluations in the next part.

The types of the networks deployed and the applications running over them were not considered challenging enough for the middleware subsystem, in terms of event generation capabilities. To provide the necessary stress conditions, prove the scalability of the GINSENG middleware, and reflect real-world requirements (which might include a large number of sensors, likely organised in many WSNs which are connected via many sink nodes to one backend system) we artificially generated sensor event messages with a high data rate and repeated the performance evaluation with an otherwise identical experimental configuration. We then plotted the measured middleware latency versus time as we increased the sensor events in a series of steps. As shown in Figure 16, one middleware partition is able to process up to 8800 sensor events per second without significant performance decrease. In

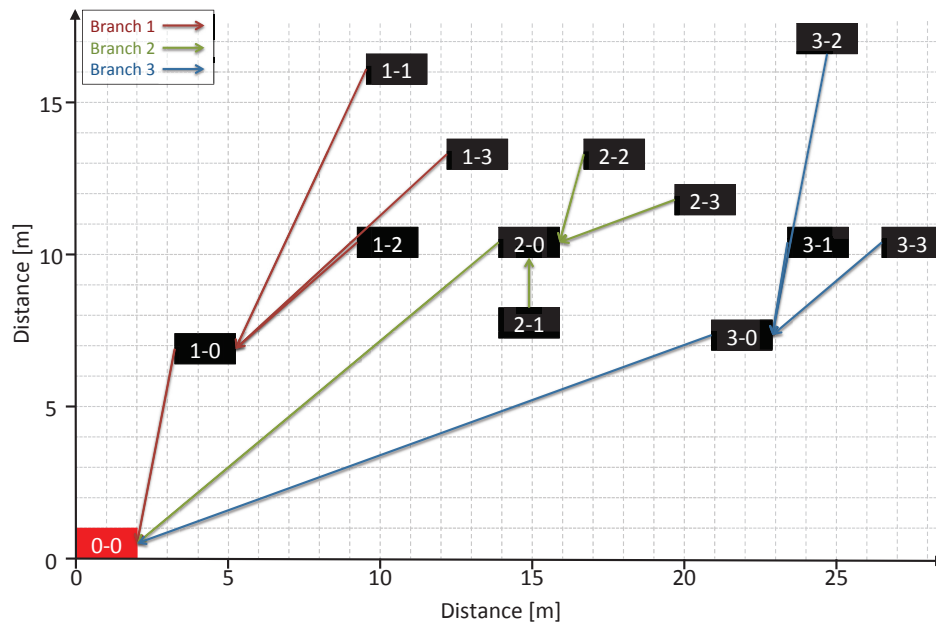


Fig. 14: Physical Topology of Network 1.

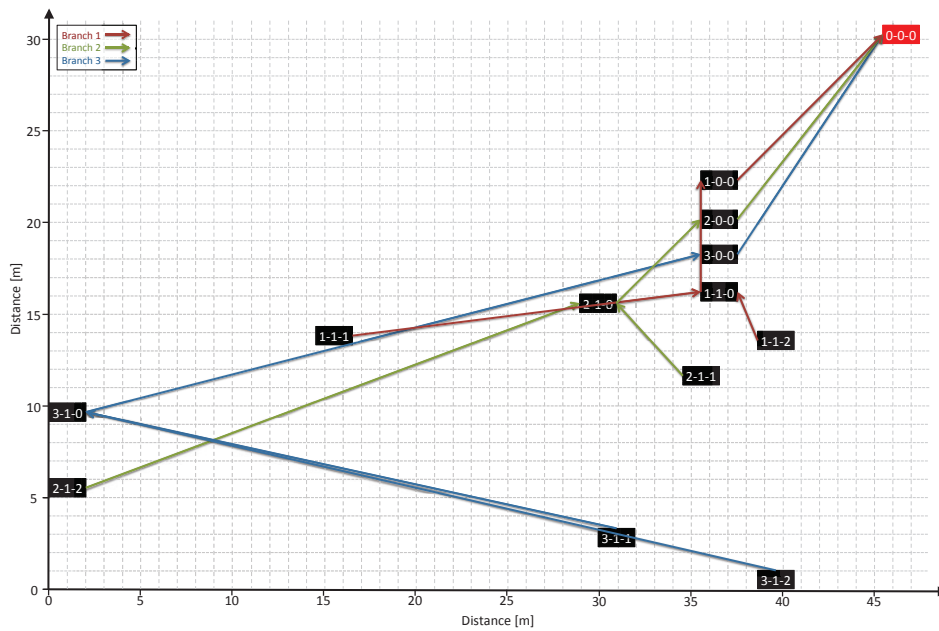


Fig. 15: Physical Topology of Network 2.

this figure, the ping+pong curve shows the delay between the entry and exit agents
 ACM Transactions on Sensor Networks, Vol. X, No. X, XX 20XX.

within the middleware. The background execution of garbage collection causes a brief increase in delay, but even so the delay total remains very low in absolute terms. Of course the upper bound on latency identified in the testbed depends on the memory capacity and CPU power of the middleware computers. For even higher scalability, the middleware design can be distributed across multiple machines, each responsible for different WSNs, and only interacting in cases where cross-WSN activity needs to be handled.

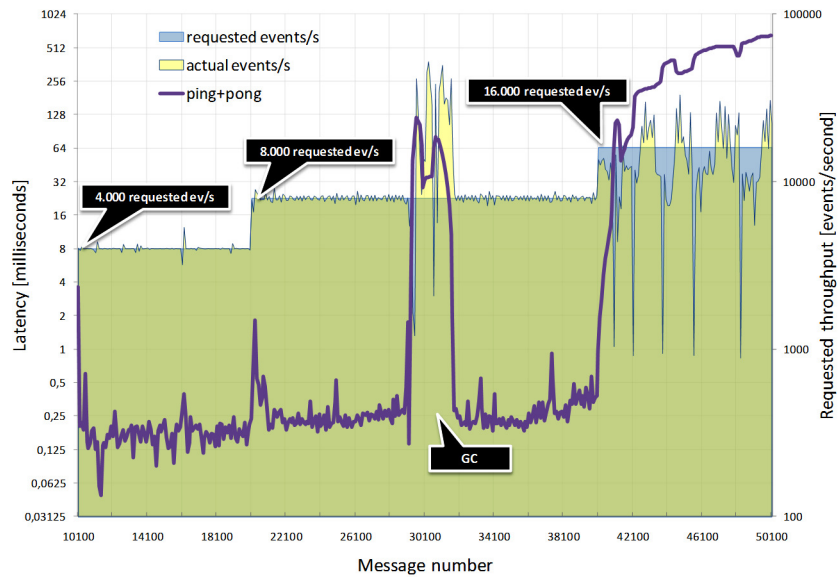


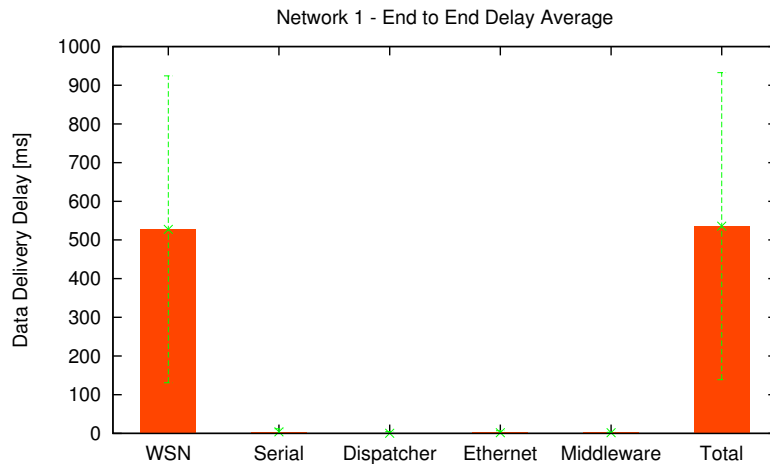
Fig. 16: Middleware scalability, up to 8800 events/second.

5.3 Sensor Network Performance

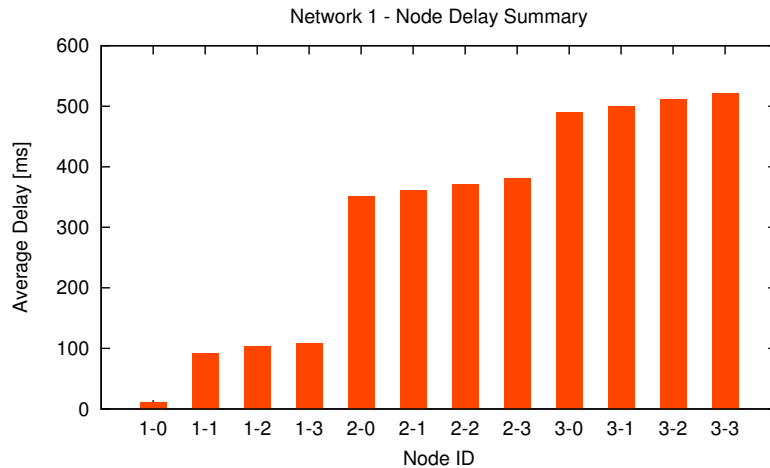
After these initial experiments that ran over a period of 24 hours we conducted longer-term evaluation based on a period of 14 days with the goal of a detailed analysis of the data transport capabilities of Network 1. The results are plotted in Figures 18, 19, and 20, presenting measurements of loss for each of the three network branches. In each case the results are shown for per-node end-to-end losses, per-link losses, and per-node end-to-end burst losses.

These measurements show that at the beginning the WSN is operating as designed and within performance bounds, but that after a few days some problems were evident. For Network 1, Branch 1 we see that nodes 1-0 and 1-3 experience very low losses while nodes 1-1 and 1-2 clearly develop problems. This is also evident looking at the losses on a given link. In this case, the links from node 1-1 to node 1-0 and node 1-2 to node 1-0 are showing considerable losses. Also, the number of consecutive packets lost in each burst of losses serves to further illustrate these issues.

For Network 1, Branch 2 we see that there are a small number of lost packets at the beginning (mostly well below 1 %), but that losses are minimal once the



(a) Delivery Delay



(b) Node Delivery Delay

Fig. 17: Network 1 Delivery Delays. These are low and bounded, dominated by WSN delays.

network has completed its initial configuration stage and stabilises. The link loss ratio and the loss bursts show the same overall behaviour. The size of the loss bursts for Network 1, Branch 2 are very small, usually just comprising a single packet.

Branch 3 in Network 1 is similar to Branch 2 in that there are just a small number of lost packets during the networks initial configuration stage and very few thereafter. End-to-end losses, per-link losses, and burst losses are all low.

The reliability of Network 1 is summarised in Figure 21. As previously noted, nodes 1-1 and 1-2 were problematic, while the other nodes experienced losses well within operational limits. This matter is discussed further below in the context of topology adaptation.

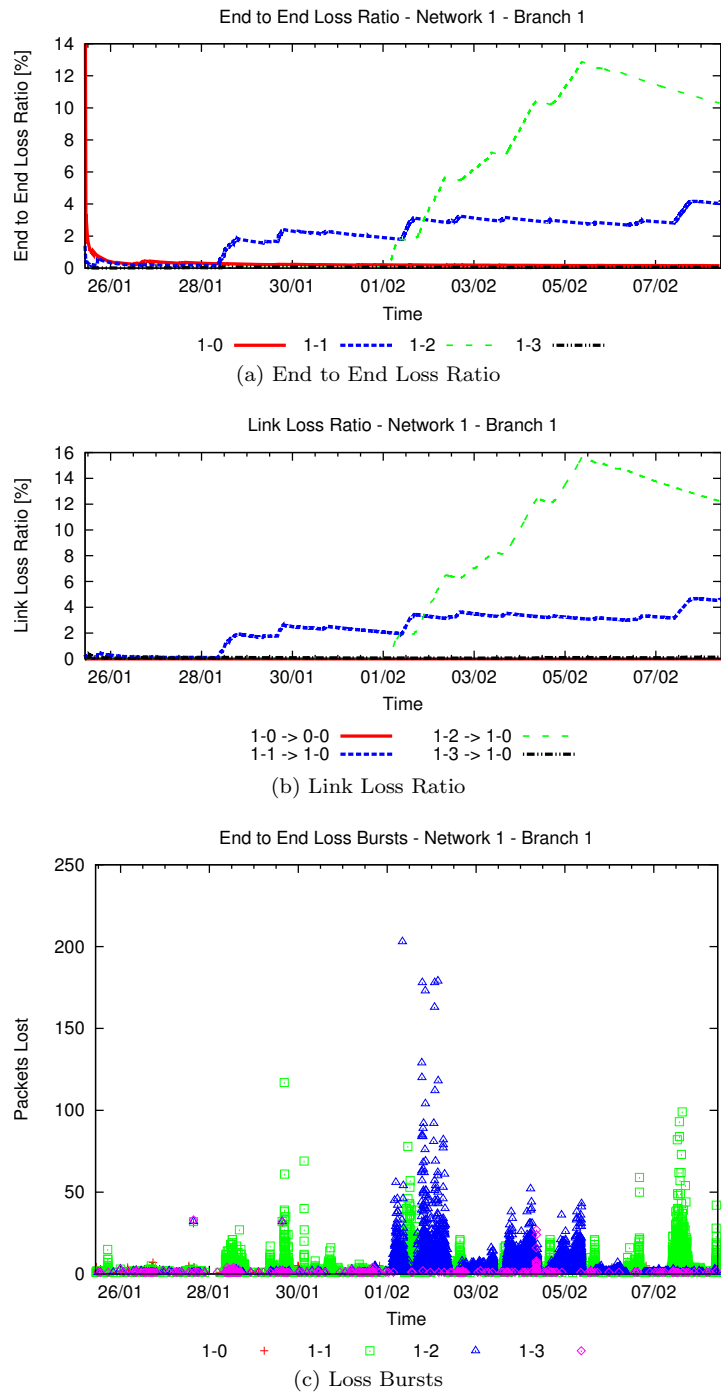


Fig. 18: Network 1, Branch 1, showing problematic links.

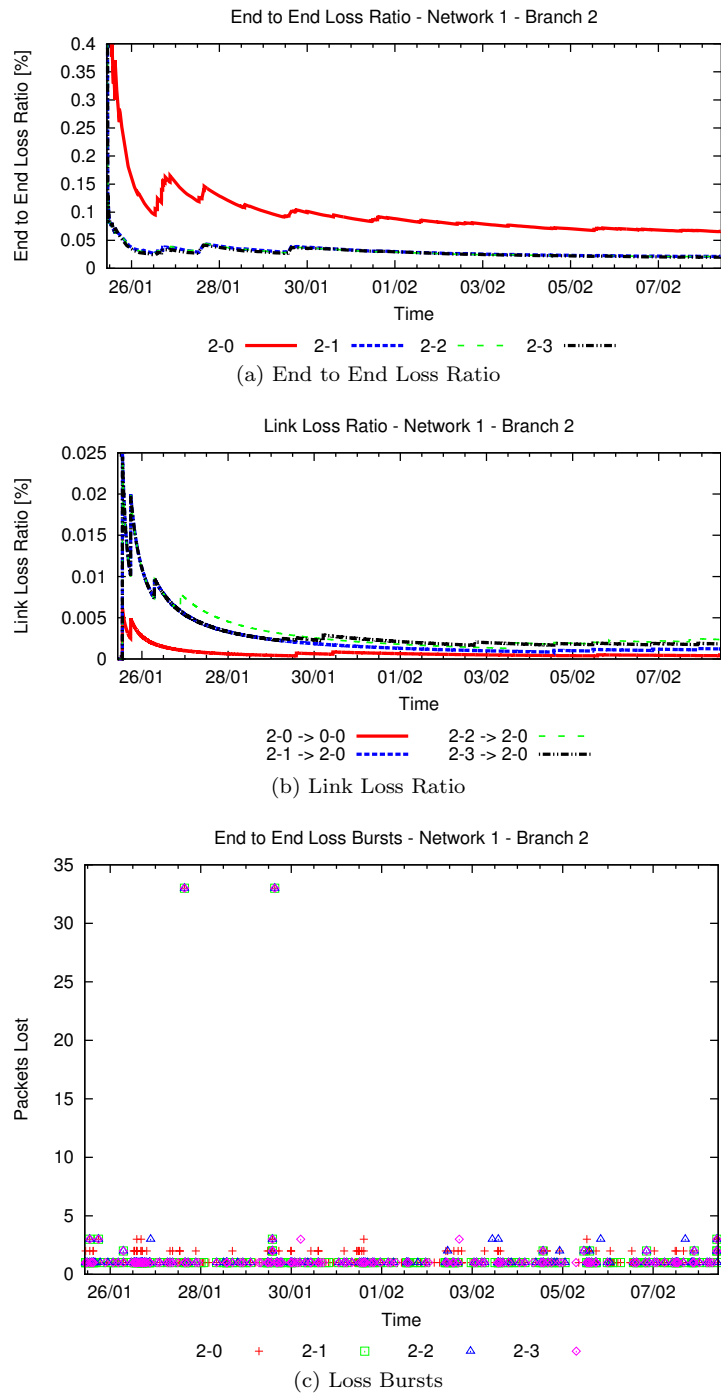


Fig. 19: Network 1, Branch 2, showing very low losses.

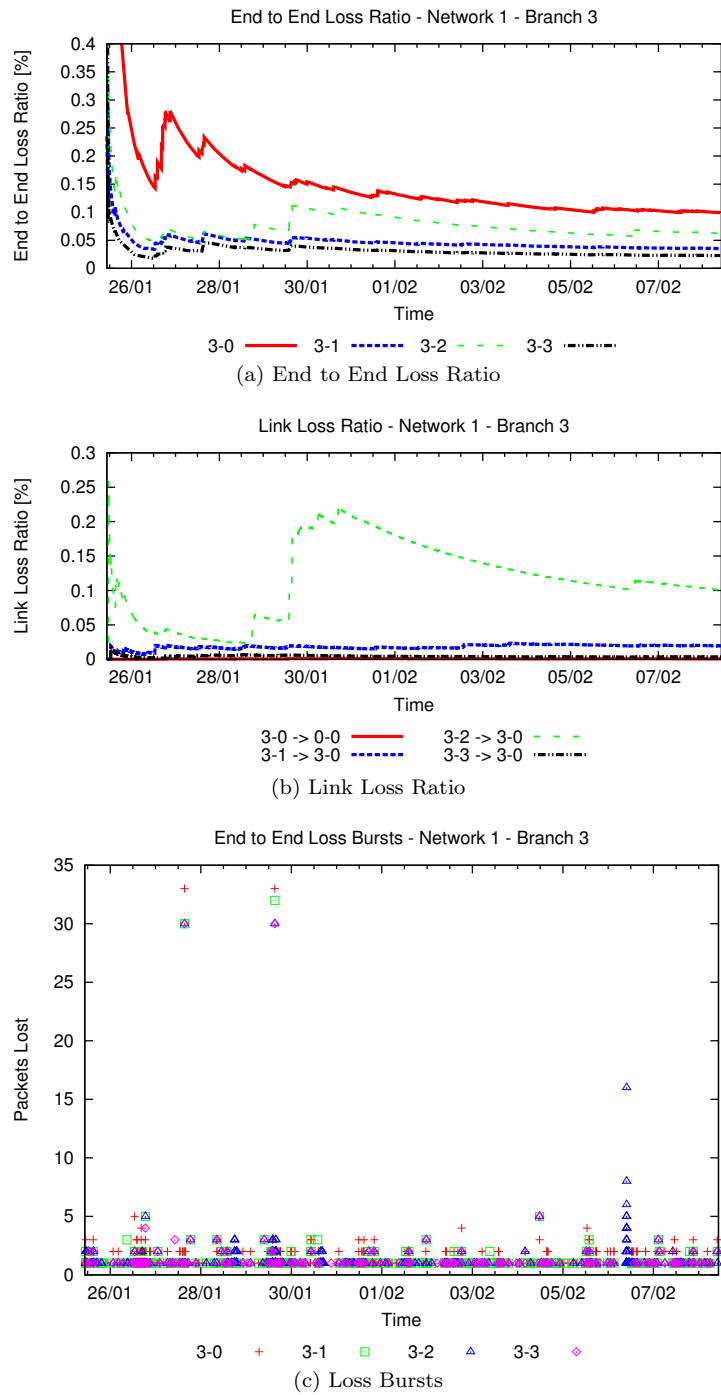


Fig. 20: Network 1, Branch 3, showing very low losses.

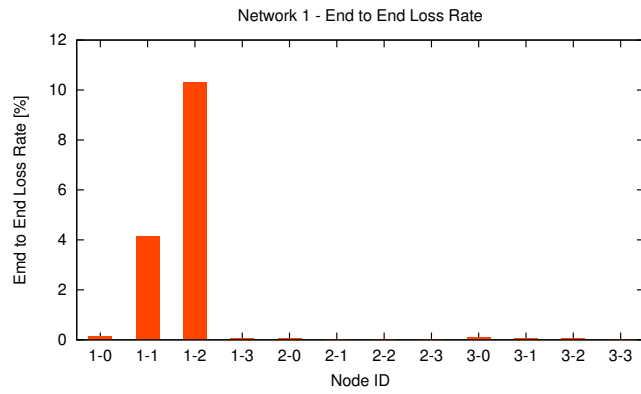
Figure 21 shows the power consumption of all nodes in Network 1. Node 0-0 (i.e. the sink) has the highest consumption as it has to handle all network traffic, and is the only node spending any noticeable energy on processing. This is due to the fact that the sink has to forward data on the serial port to the Dispatcher. However, it is generally accepted in the literature that sink nodes would not normally not rely on the same constrained power source as a regular sensor node and thus the increased power consumption is not a significant factor. All nodes expend more energy on receiving than on transmitting. Recall that nodes listen in all potential receive slots for incoming messages. However, it is not always necessary to use retransmission slots which explains the balance between energy consumption for transmission and reception. Nodes 1-1 and 1-2 encounter a high loss rate on the path towards node 1-0. Thus retransmission slots are often used in this situation, which explains the higher energy consumption of these nodes compared with node 1-3. In Branch 2 and Branch 3 there are lower loss levels and nodes have very similar energy consumption patterns (e.g. 2-1, 2-2, 2-3). If one excludes the sink node (Node 0-0), node 1-0 has the shortest lifetime if run on batteries. To gauge the impact on lifetime, if one were to assume the use of 4 standard 3000 *mAh* batteries this node would have a life expectancy of 254 days, which is above the lifetime requirement as outlined in Section 2.

For Network 2, the results of our measurements show a similar behaviour and thus are not detailed here. An overview about the delivery delays of the Network 2 components is given in Figures 22a and 22b. Additionally, we show the per-node distribution among the system components (WSN, serial, Dispatcher, Ethernet, middleware) for these delays in Figure 22c. We can see also here that the delays in the backend components are very small for all nodes.

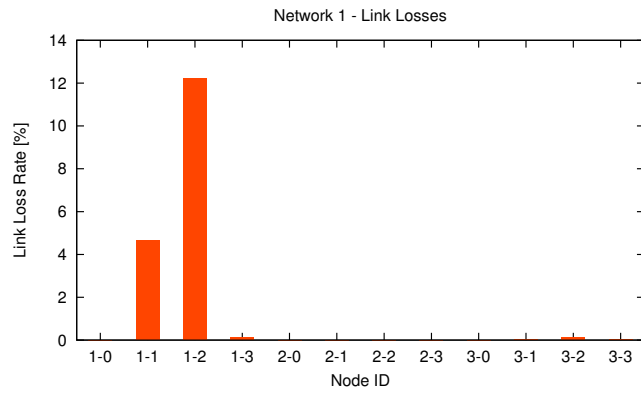
5.4 Dynamic Topology Control

Reliability issues in both networks occurred at specific links and affected related branches. This unexpected behaviour was induced during normal operating conditions, and without a specific visible, or measurable, related activity. The key consequence was that the basis on which the network had been dimensioned was too conservative and did not anticipate this behaviour. Therefore, higher losses started to occur which needed (i) the detection of these problems and (ii) an adaptation for the network provisioning. For item (i), the performance debugging tools can effectively detect such problems. Regarding (ii), to deal with such changes in the environmental conditions of the system, adaptation would be needed. One approach to adaptation is to dynamically alter the network topology while still ensuring the performance bounds. The Topology Control module (GinTop) of the GINSENG architecture has many functions. The most important functions are the Dynamic Tree Construction, and the Topology Maintenance and Dynamic Control.

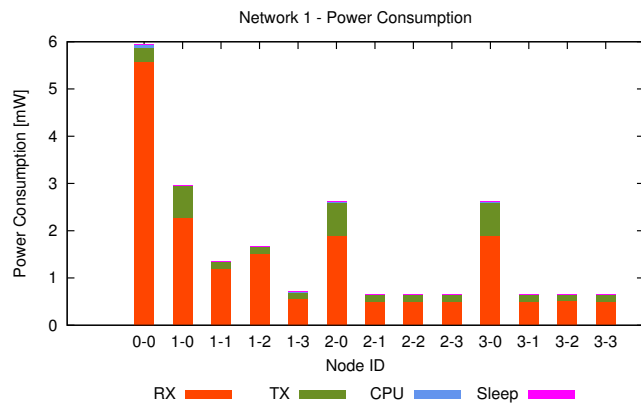
5.4.1 Dynamic Tree Construction. The Dynamic Tree Construction function aims at self-organizing the network, in a distributed and de-centralized fashion, to create the best possible physical connectivity that conforms to the logical tree required by GinMAC. This function is one of the first to take place during the setup of the network. To evaluate the Dynamic Tree Construction functionality, a set of experiments were conducted inside the refinery area to gather information on



(a) End to End Loss Ratio

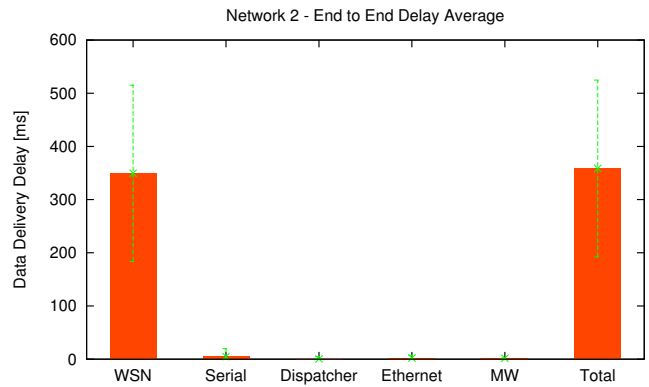


(b) Link Loss Ratio

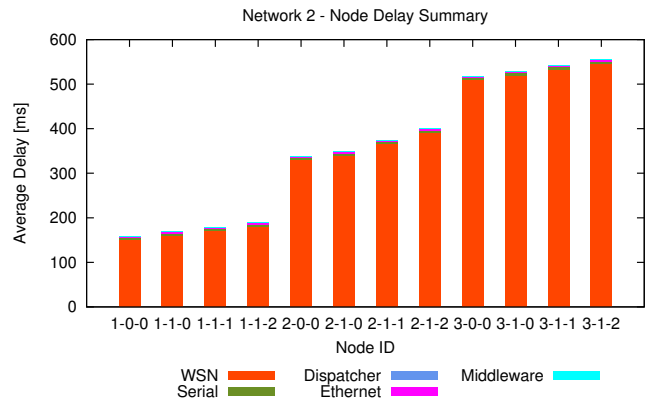


(c) Power Consumption

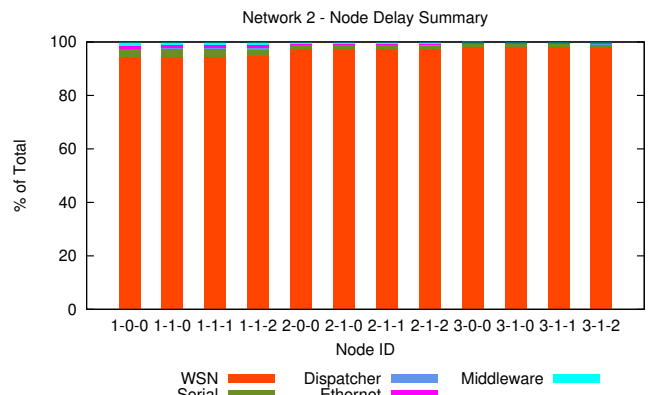
Fig. 21: Network 1, Loss Summary and Power Consumption. Losses are generally low, except on problematic links in Branch 1. Power consumption yields node lifetimes well within requirements for the scenario.



(a) Delivery Delay



(b) Node Delivery Delay



(c) Node Delivery Delay Percentage

Fig. 22: Network 2 Delivery Delays, which are low and bounded and well within scenario requirements.

Table I: Dynamic Tree construction.

Frequency (out of 12)	Connected nodes(out of 14)	Percentage of connected nodes	Average construction time(s)
9	14	100.00%	22.376
2	11	78.57%	16.260
1	10	71.43%	11.720

the time taken to construct the tree topology and the number of nodes that have been attached. In this set of experiments we were trying to allocate 14 nodes in a 3-2-1 logical tree structure (with 16 available positions). The testbed was operated for 24 hours and during this time we rebuilt the tree 12 times in order to obtain values from different tree-based topologies.

The results show that our solution dynamically connected all 14 nodes in 9 out of 12 tests. Based on this ratio we verify the need of the topology maintenance and optimisation mechanism so that to guarantee the connection of all the nodes (see next subsection). The results of the tests are summarized in Table I.

Table I also shows the average tree construction time, which is about 22.3 seconds (for a full tree case). This value corresponds to the time between the first advertisement from the sink until the joining of the last node to the tree (reception of a Join Ack). We consider that this is a satisfactory time interval for the tree self-organization. This time is related to the epoch duration, which depends on the number of required slots, which in turn are based on the tree size. Therefore, a different tree structure will have a different construction time. The construction time can also be reduced if the number of slots per epoch is further optimised.

5.4.2 Topology Maintenance and Dynamic Control. Topology maintenance refers to the control messages and the actions taken to enable nodes in the network to recognize that they, or their parents or their children, have been disconnected from the tree and advertise or seek connections accordingly. It becomes useful during maintenance operations (for example battery replacement) in the sense that a node can be removed and re-introduced in the network and it can automatically find a free position for association. Dynamic Topology Control (DTC) refers to the signaling exchanged and the actions taken to enable the network to adapt to adverse conditions, such as those described in Section 5.3.

As noted, the majority of the links are stable with only few losses, while some links report an increased number of losses. An example of such link is the link from node 1-2 to 1-0 as shown in Figure 18a. In order to address this phenomenon, we would need to dynamically re-attach the lowest-level node (1-2) to a new tree position. To be able to do that we would have to be in a network with free tree positions to move a node with problematic link quality. Sensor nodes have only local information, whereas the end-to-end loss rate is calculated at the backend system. Therefore, the trigger for searching a new attachment point must be based on metrics that are locally available. Such metrics are the link loss and the RSSI. The suitability of the RSSI was proven in [Srinivasan and Levis 2006].

Due to the signal fluctuations that affect the RSSI value and the retransmission ability of the system, a combination of both metrics can give a better decision about the triggering initiation. Since the system is not linear but dynamic we decided

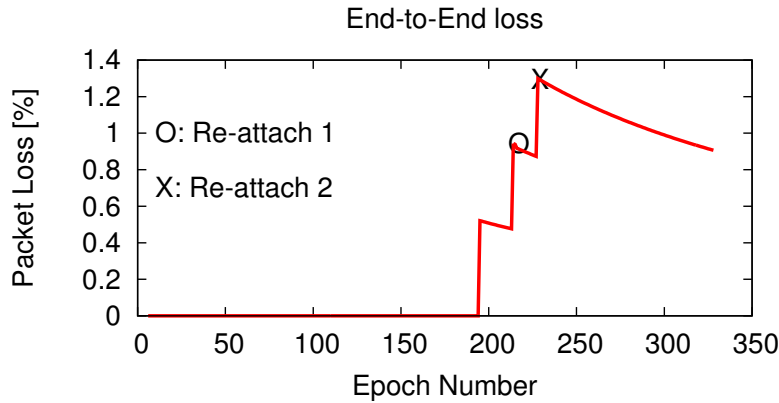


Fig. 23: DTC-triggered link change.

to use Fuzzy Logic for the adaptation control, as it provides the characteristic of flexibility to modify the design easily and the advantage that it can be built on top of the experience of experts and needs no training and learning procedures like other solutions (such as neural networks). Using linguistic rules that describe the behaviour of the environment in widely differing operating conditions, the proposed fuzzy logic controller dynamically calculates the decision probability (to trigger the decision whether a sensor node has to attach to a new position or not), based on two network state inputs: the instantaneous value of the RSSI, and the link loss rate. In order to test if our solution managed to recognise bad links and to successfully re-attach the problematic node to a new tree position we run a number of short-term experiments using the refinery testbed. We have performed a set of experiments with a 3-2-1 tree (16 node positions) and 13 nodes. Figure 23 shows a representative example of the results. We observe that the link quality is sufficient to achieve 0 % packet losses at the backend system until epoch 190, at which point an event caused the end-to-end loss to increase. The fuzzy controller operated and triggered the search of a new attachment point in three different instances (epochs 190, 230, and 260). Such a search may not result in a re-attachment either because no attachment point exists in the node's vicinity, or because the possible new attachment points do not have performance qualities that satisfy the controller's requirements. In this particular experiment the node managed to re-attach two times during the specific experiment. The first search did not result in a re-attachment due to the inability to find a better connection point. The second search resulted in a change (indicated in Figure 23 as re-attach 1). After re-attachment 1, we observed that the end-to-end packet loss decreased but after few epochs it increased again. Then, re-attachment 2 occurred and the end-to-end packet loss was decreasing again until the end of the experiment. Observing this behaviour, we can reach the following conclusions. First, the search for a new position is not always successful and depends on the available free positions in the logical topology. Secondly, the re-attachment to a new position cannot guarantee that the new position can provide better performance for the rest of the connection time (as it happened with re-attachment 1). Finally, the fuzzy logic controller successfully manages to control the increased end-to-end

packet losses that may occur during the operation of a network.

5.5 Closed-Loop Control

For closed-loop control several different configurations can be implemented depending on the location where the control loop is closed. When the actuator and the sensor are the same node it is theoretically possible to implement local control. However, in most application cases sensing and actuation would be implemented at different nodes due to constraints on the physical locations in a real deployment. For these cases GINSENG provides the option of closing the control loop at

- (1) the sink node: sensor data travels to the sink node where decisions are made and actuation commands are issued;
- (2) the middleware: decisions are made in the back-end infrastructure, where actuation commands are issued.

Closing the control loop at the sink node enables fast reaction times as communication into the backbone infrastructure is not necessary. Closing the control loop at the middleware has the advantage of using sensors and actuators in different wireless networks but reaction times will be slower. The use of middleware also enables more sophisticated decision making for application scenarios where that may be useful.

5.5.1 Closed-Loop inside WSN through sink node. Figure 24 shows the latency values for the control loop in Network 1 closed within the sink node. In this case, the closed loop through the sink involved a sensor node sending its sensed value to the sink node in the same WSN, the sink node evaluating a threshold and sending an actuation command to an actuator node. The latency is very dependent on the settings of the TDMA schedule. In this case we configured the slots so that there are 16 slots between upstream and downstream path. The resulting total latency is about 170 *ms*. Latency variation is due to the retransmission slots used in upstream and downstream direction. A message might have to be retransmitted in case of losses which increases latency.

5.5.2 Closed-Loop through Middleware. For these experiments, both networks were used. In Network 1 the node 107 (1-0) was used as sensing node and node 8 (3-1-0) in Network 2 was the actuator.

When closing the control loop in the middleware latency increases significantly by an average of 450 *ms*. This is due to the fact that sensing and actuation cannot be performed anymore within the same TDMA Epoch. The sink node transfers data via serial connection to a sink PC. After data is processed in the middleware it is transferred back to the sink node where the actuation command is queued until a slot for downstream transport is available. On average, an actuator command is queued for the duration of half a TDMA epoch before the slot is available (if only one such slot is provisioned per epoch).

5.6 Data Consistency

An experiment was performed to evaluate the consistency between the sensor samples delivered by GINSENG and the values produced by the existing cabled solution. For GINSENG, sensor nodes read from an analog-to-digital converter, while in the

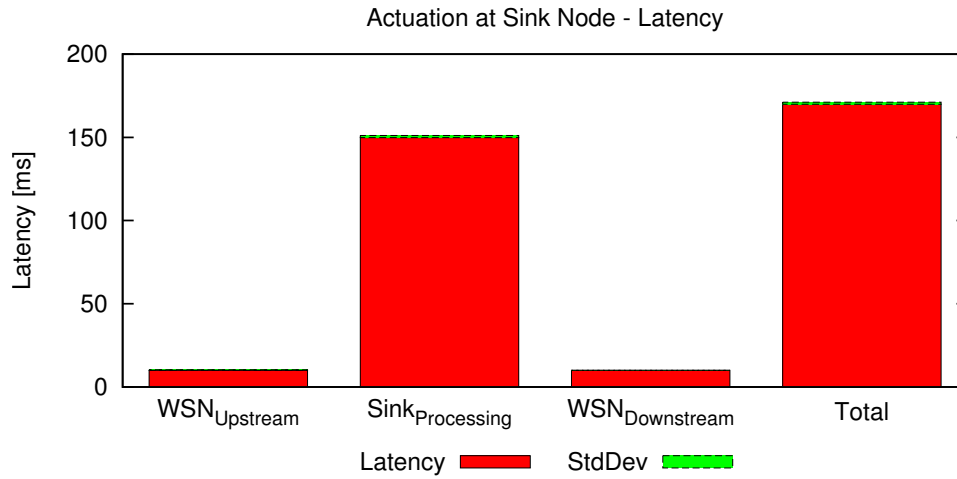


Fig. 24: Average actuation delay through sink node, which is low and bounded, lying well within scenario requirements.

cabled system analog readings are recorded. During a one hour experiment, we measured these two sets of readings and then compared.

The average measured relative error between the two platforms was seen to be less than 1 % for all nodes. Figure 25 includes both curves (wired and wireless) for PT 5170, a Pressure Transmitter, overlapped on each other. By zooming on a small time interval (5 minutes) of Figure 25 one notices that the curves do not precisely match, but that the wireless signal presents some variance, which can generally be attributed to outliers resulting from noise, errors related to analogue-to-digital conversion, and random events. In order to improve the data quality, these outliers should be detected and accommodated using dedicated techniques. Given the stringent resource constraints of nodes in the field, in particular computational power, a univariate statistical-based approach was implemented at the node level by means of a specific agent in the GinFDS. The algorithm relies on the assumption of quasi-stationarity of the underlying process in the neighbourhood of each sample, and using oversampling techniques.

Figure 26 shows results using the proposed approach for detecting and filtering of outliers, running on a particular sensor node. As can be observed from this figure, whenever a given sample falls outside the computed admissible threshold it is assumed as an outlier and accordingly accommodated by replacing the sample with the corresponding moving average value.

Overall, the root-mean-square deviation was 0.000302633 (without accommodation of outliers) respectively 0.000223399 (with accommodation of outliers).

6. RELATED WORK

In this section we discuss related work that we divide in two parts. First we discuss some standards that are related to GINSENG, namely IEEE 802.15.4, WirelessHART, ISA100 and WIA-IP. Then we compare our GINSENG system to some other deployment efforts.

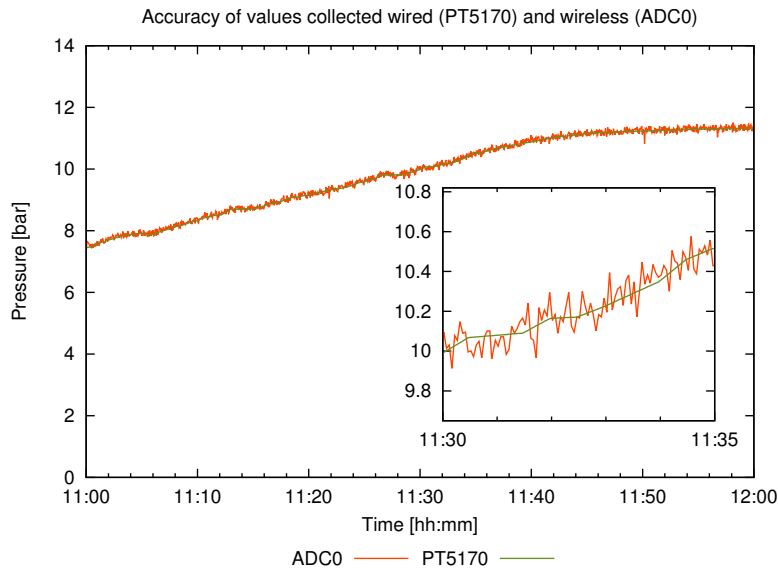


Fig. 25: Comparison of wired (PT 5170) and wireless (ADC0) values, showing strong correlation.

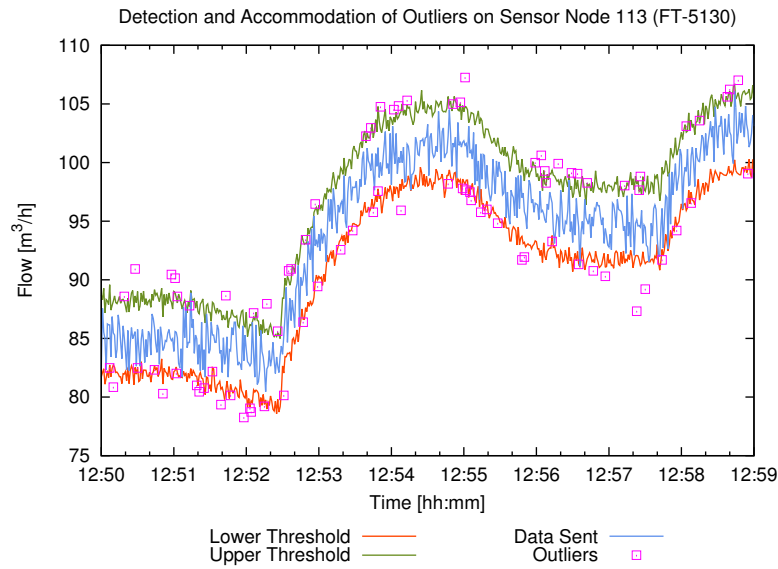


Fig. 26: Outliers detection and accommodation at node level.

6.1 Related Standards

There are some existing and upcoming standards that are related to the GINSENG system. These include IEEE 802.15.4 [Society 2003], WirelessHART [Kim et al. 2008], ISA-100.11a [ISA 2009], and the Chinese standard WIA-PA [Zhong et al. 2010].

WirelessHART and the GINSENG system share many similarities at the MAC

layer. Both systems are time-slotted using small time slots of 10 ms and use IEEE 802.15.4 frames. In the context of this work, we are mainly interested in the relation between the GINSENG and WirelessHART from a systems point of view. Both systems are centralised. In WirelessHART, the network manager, an entity outside the network, is responsible for computing an exact schedule that specifies when nodes (field devices in WirelessHART terminology) send and receive messages on which of the 16 channels. The network manager also determines the paths. The network manager itself is not part of the standard and the implementations of vendors are usually unknown to the network owner. In GINSENG, our approach is to precompute a schedule offline and compile it into the binary that is running on the nodes. Note, however, that the topology itself does not need to be determined before deployment, and hence the exact placement of a node within a tree may be determined first at run-time.

As Åkerberg et al. have shown, current network managers for WirelessHART (and also for ISA-100.11a) only support efficient data transfer from sensors to the gateway but not from the gateway to actuators [Åkerberg et al. 2011]. Hence, the provision of control loops as we perform in GINSENG, is currently not supported in existing WirelessHART equipment that seems to focus merely on monitoring tasks.

WirelessHART networks are usually deployed as one large network where multiple channels are used to increase reliability. In GINSENG, we take a different approach. Within one network we use only one channel which reduces complexity and simplifies debugging. Our experiments in the refinery have shown that this is sufficient to achieve very high packet delivery rates even though we do not provide for many retransmissions. Also others have concluded that the use of one channel is enough [Ortiz and Culler 2010]. In GINSENG, we construct larger networks with different subnets that use different channels.

The GINSENG system is a complete system in that we also include e.g. performance debugging, something that is not part of the WirelessHART standard. Furthermore, in this paper we also present detailed performance evaluations of the GINSENG system. We are not aware of any detailed studies regarding the performance of deployed WirelessHART systems even though some papers have described implementations of WirelessHART [Kim et al. 2008; Song et al. 2008]. Research on WirelessHART has so far focused on scheduling [Saifullah et al. 2011; 2010; Zhang et al. 2009], energy efficiency [Khader et al. 2011], security [Raza et al. 2009; Raza et al. 2009] and testing suites [Han et al. 2009].

GINSENG uses the physical layer frame format of the IEEE 802.15.4 standard [Society 2003] following the philosophy of WirelessHART that picks up only the physical layer of IEEE 802.15.4 which allows greater freedom in exploring design and implementation choices. At the MAC layer, IEEE 802.15.4 networks can either be nonbeacon-enabled or beacon-enabled mode [Society 2003]. While, e.g., 6LoWPAN does not use the beacon-enabled mode, the beacon-enabled mode enables contention-free access to the wireless medium which can be utilised to provision sensor networks that provide quality-of-service guarantees as we do in GINSENG. For example, Tennina et al. use this mode to design the EMMON architecture that aims at large-scale sensor networks for real-time monitoring and has been demonstrated in a testbed of 300 nodes [Tennina et al. 2011]. Park et al. have designed

Breath, a self-adapting protocol that aims at minimising power consumption while giving guarantees on data yield and delay [Park et al. 2011]. They use a MAC layer similar to the one of IEEE 802.15.4 and demonstrate improved performance compared to the standard.

ISA-100.11a is a standard that targets similar scenarios as WirelessHART but offers a “vaster coverage and broader view of process automation solution” [Wang 2011]. We are not aware of any deployment results. The same is true of WIA-PA [Zhong et al. 2010].

6.2 Related Sensor Network Projects and Deployments

While there exists a large number of deployments of sensor networks [Romer and Mattern 2004], there are only few deployments in real industrial settings. Krishnamurthy et al. deployed trial deployments of wireless sensor networks in two industrial settings, a semiconductor plant and an oil tanker [Krishnamurthy et al. 2005]. Peterson and Carlsen evaluated WirelessHART in a lab setting [Peterson and Carlsen 2009] but as our experience has shown this is very different from deploying a sensor network in a real industrial environment.

WINTeR is a testbed specifically targeted at radio-harsh environments that can be found in the oil and gas industry. The testbed mimics the industrial surroundings with complex multipath propagation, provides the means to generate interference and has software that allows remote access. Unlike the GINSENG deployment, however, WINTeR is not in a real industrial plant but replicates real industrial surroundings [Slipp et al. 2008].

Similar to GINSENG, the WASP project also targets integration with the backends and existing software environments [Atallah et al. 2008]. In contrast to GINSENG, their focus is on healthcare and herd monitoring, rather than industrial monitoring and control which has more stringent performance requirements and comprises also control.

Two deployments that have been very successful in reliable data delivery are RACNet, a large sensor network with almost 700 nodes, deployed for monitoring environmental parameters in data centers [Liang et al. 2009], and the deployment in the Torre Aquila [Ceriotti et al. 2009]. Both papers report data delivery rates above 99 %. There was, however, no need for low or predictable delay as in GINSENG. A subsequent deployment of Ceriotti et al. was the first to close the control loop, but in contrast to our deployment the control loops were at larger time scales and the deployment was not in an industrial environment [Ceriotti et al. 2011]. The PermaSense deployment uses the Dozer protocol stack to achieve duty cycles below 1 % but at much lower data rates than the GINSENG system and without closing the control loop [Beutel et al. 2009]. Lu et al. have presented RAP, a protocol that reduces the end-to-end deadline miss ratio for sensing applications but does not target control [Lu et al. 2002].

7. DISCUSSION

In this section we discuss the key lessons from GINSENG and summarise the feedback from the end-user company Petrogal.

7.1 Key Lessons

The result of the GINSENG project is the design, implementation, deployment and evaluation of a sensor network system for wireless monitoring and control. Here we summarise the key lessons learned during these activities:

- (1) TDMA-based medium access control proved to be an appropriate choice in allowing us to provision the sensor network for assured delivery delays;
- (2) even in environments where radio link behaviour is observed to be usually very good, it is necessary to have built-in mechanisms to adapt to link dynamics;
- (3) in our experience links were often quite stable in terms of expected operational bounds, so the additional overhead (notably in terms of energy) of mechanisms that can monitor behaviour and adapt in real-time is usually not justified. Instead, techniques that adapt over longer time-scales are more likely to be more appropriate.
- (4) providing an end-to-end solution with middleware that seamlessly integrates with backend IT systems is vitally important from an end-user perspective;
- (5) the ability to offer a variety of backend applications/interfaces proved decisive in end-user acceptance and evaluation;
- (6) the physical environment presented several challenges that impact on performance control and must be considered in deployment planning, notably restrictions on potential node locations (and hence topology), ATEX packaging and its effects on communication, and the need for corrosive-resistant antennas;
- (7) the difficulty in access to the deployment site, coupled with the experimental nature of the system, meant that we relied heavily on our ability to remotely reprogram the sensor nodes;
- (8) our performance debugging tools were essential in allowing us to quickly identify problems, such as short-term or intermittent radio link failures, but in cases where the causes were due to external interference it was usually not possible to identify the root cause due to the complexity of the physical environment;
- (9) an essential requirement that must be considered up-front is the need to be able to establish ground truth, including for wireless link behaviour and sensor data readings;
- (10) for larger deployments of wireless monitoring and control networks a suite of automated planning tools will be needed that take into account the key factors, including physical site limitations, topology design, and performance scheduling.

We hope these lessons will be useful to other researchers working on wireless monitoring and control, and to industry practitioners involved in evolving current standards for such networks.

7.2 Industry Feedback

The role of partner Petrogal was to (i) provide domain-specific input in specifying the application scenarios, including tolerances for delay and reliability; (ii) to

facilitate the testbed deployment, including identifying the physical location, commissioning equipment, and maintaining the system; and (iii) to provide end-user analysis of the final system.

For Petrogal a key benefit of the project has been to allow an assessment of wireless technology for monitoring and control, allowing a direct in-situ contrast with their existing wired system. The provision of a backend application with a user interface that was modelled on the current system they use acted to facilitate this activity by allowing control room operators to observe GINSENG in operation alongside the system they use today. Petrogal have hosted visits by several technology companies to show them the GINSENG testbed and impress upon them their plans to embrace wireless technology in the future.

Feedback from Petrogal to the research partners highlighted several key benefits of adopting GINSENG:

- (1) Flexibility for post-deployment reconfiguration (in the Petrochemical industry this is frequent);
- (2) Lower costs for deployment, primarily by avoiding digging trenches for cables;
- (3) Ability of the GINSENG middleware system to integrate with the **WSN!** and support a varied and extendable set of related backend applications;
- (4) Provision of a monitoring backend application that can integrate with the GINSENG middleware and represent the sensors/actuators with a graphical user interface that is similar to that currently used by the control room staff.

Petrogal also identified several open issues with the GINSENG solution:

- (1) GINSENG is not a finished product, and it not an industry standard;
- (2) Experimental results are convincing, but there is a need for techniques to handle poor radio links;
- (3) The required effort/cost for planning a GINSENG-like network is unclear;
- (4) while outside the scope of the project, the lack of security mechanisms is an obvious limitation that would inhibit commercialisation.

In addition Petrogal believe that while GINSENG is very promising, that in general WSN hardware and software tools do not seem as mature when compared to those for wired control systems.

8. CONCLUSION

From the smallest to the biggest company, intelligent systems are crucial to assure a reliable and healthy operability. In critical scenarios, such as an oil refinery, the whole system must work 24/7 and any interruption has an impact on the economy and any accident means an extremely dangerous situation for the population and environment. Industrial process automation and control systems are used on a large scale and we rely on their correct operation. Industry demands more flexible and cost effective solutions which can be implemented using wireless technology. However, when employing wireless technology a number of challenges have to be addressed in order to maintain reliability levels as present in current wired systems.

The GINSENG research project has designed and deployed a WSN-based solution that offers the benefits of WSN such as low-cost and ease of deployment, while

recognising the need for operating to required performance levels. In this paper we presented the GINSENG solution and the results of our on-site deployment and experiments. The experiments show that WSN deployment in an industrial process monitoring and control setting is extremely demanding in terms of hardware deployment, radio communication, performance assurance and system management. The results allowed a thorough assessment of GINSENG, focusing on meeting targets for message delivery latency and reliability. It was demonstrated that GINSENG is able to integrate the required backend capabilities that are desired to support the needs of the industrial partner. Our deployment was limited in terms of the number of sensor nodes, but was sufficient to evaluate the fundamental operational objectives for a GINSENG sensor network. Each individual GINSENG sensor network is limited in scale by virtue of having to assure message latency and thus having to bound the number transmissions on the path from each node to the sink. In the GINSENG approach, scaling to larger deployments is achieved by linking together multiple GINSENG sensor networks using the GINSENG middleware, which has proven scalability properties. Future work will include development of tools to automate the deployment planning process and to manage such large GINSENG deployments.

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