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Determination of Optimal Power for ZigBee-Based Wireless Sensor Networks

By

OKHAMILA ALI YUSUF

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of **Electrical and Computer Engineering**
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of **Master of Applied Science**
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2014

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

In designing WSNs, both the transmit power, network topology, and routing scheme are considered. Transmitting at lower power affect the connectivity of the network while transmitting at excessive power reduces the lifetime of nodes and increases the network interference. Thus, determining the optimal power of the nodes that will be necessary to guarantee network connectivity. In this work, a practical self-healing and self-configuring real life prototype ZigBee Wireless Mesh Sensor Networks (WMSNs) was design to evaluate the performance of IEEE 802.15.4/ZigBee. We showed that increasing the transmit power of nodes from -6dBm to 0dBm in WMSNs leads to improved packets delivery ratio and throughput improvement and the optimal power was -2dBm for the studied topology. The testbed will aid wireless sensor network designer to make an accurate decision on transmit power and mesh network topology using Ad-hoc on-demand distance vector algorithm (AODV) as the routing scheme.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to Almighty Allah (SWT) for his infinite mercies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/SYMBOLS

AMR	Advance Meter Reading
ADC	Analog to Digital Converter
AODV	Ad-hoc On-Demand Distance Vector
API	Application Programming Interface
APS	Application Support Sub-layer
FTDI	Future Technology Devices International
GUI	Graphical User Interface
HVAC	Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning
IEEE	Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
ISM	Industrial Scientific and Medical
MAC	Media Access Control
MEMS	Microelectromechanical Systems
PAN	Personal Area Network
PHY	Physical Layer
ROM	Read Only Memory
SCADA	Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition
UART	Universal Asynchronous Receiver/Transmitter
USB	Universal Serial Bus
VLSI	Very High Scale Integration
WSN	Wireless Sensor Networks
ZC	ZigBee Coordinator
ZED	ZigBee End Device

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

A Wireless Sensor Network (WSN) is an ad-hoc network involving a spatially distributed autonomous system that are capable with the help of sensors to monitor physical or environmental situations, such as current, temperature, pressure, and they cooperatively transmit the data to the main location of the application. These types of sensors have both data processing and communication capabilities and are deployed both in outdoors and indoors applications like; security and battlefield surveillance, industrial monitoring and controls, machine health monitoring, traffic control and personal health monitoring.

The WSN is made up of many tiny low power devices from several hundred to thousands called "nodes" where each of the nodes is associated to one or several sensors in the network by communicating with each other directly or through other nodes [1]. Each of the sensor nodes consists of a radio transceiver with an antenna, a microcontroller, which is a circuit for interfacing with the sensors and a battery source. Different resource constraints lead to the cost of a node and size, result in corresponding energy constraints, communication's bandwidth, memory and computational speed of sensor nodes. WSN topology can be a star network or multi-hop wireless mesh topology. The hops network can also have different propagation technique as flooding or routing [1, 2]. Figure 1 shows typical Wireless Sensors Networks (WSN) with nodes transmitting data packets to a control node, called the coordinator.

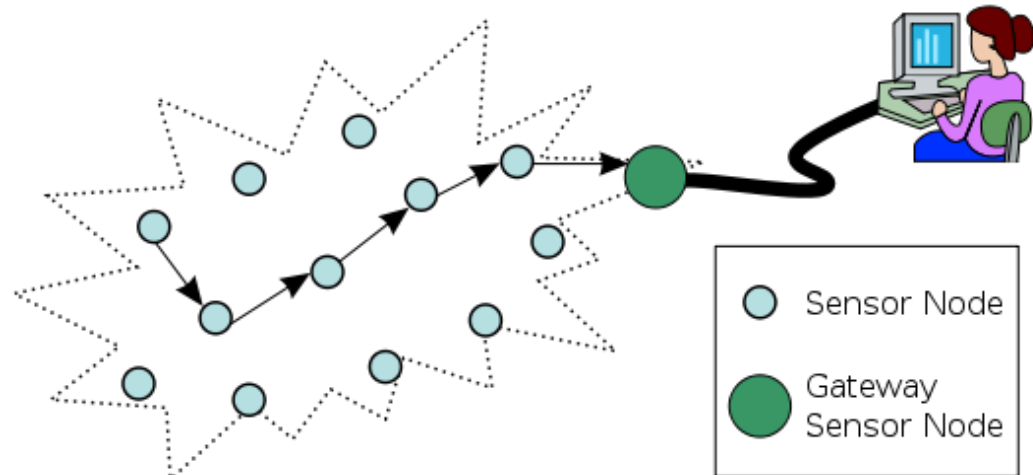


Figure 1: A Typical Wireless Sensor Networks Architecture [1]

A typical WSN have the following characteristics:

- They have large number of nodes
- A typical WSN node has the ability to withstand harsh operating conditions
- It has the ability to contain node failures
- Ease of deployment
- In typical WSN, there is power consumption constraints for nodes using energy harvesting or batteries
- Node heterogeneity
- They are data centric; which means that the communication be targeted to the nodes in a given location or with defined data content.

1.2 Motivation

Sensors capture and reveal real-world phenomena and transform these into a form which can be stored and processed. Sensors provide several societal benefits as they are integrated into devices, machines, and environments [1]. They can enhance security and surveillance, improve productivity, prevention of catastrophic infrastructural decay or failures and enable new applications such as Automatic Meter Reading (AMR), smart agriculture and smart home applications. Advances in technologies like Microelectromechanical Systems (MEMS), Very Large Scale Integrations (VLSI), and wireless technology contributed immensely to the wide acceptance of distributed sensor systems [3, 4]. For example, the miniaturization of sensing and computing technologies leads to the development of low-power, and inexpensive sensors, actuators, and controllers [3]. There is a great attention on systems that can monitor and protect bridges and tunnels, pipeline infrastructure and power grid. Large networks of sensor nodes are currently being deployed to monitor vast geographical areas for forecasting environment pollution and flooding, to monitor pesticides to improve crop's health, monitoring water usage, fertilizers, and structural health of bridges with the help of vibration sensors [4, 5].

1.3 Problem Statement

One of the most problematic issues in wireless sensor networks is conservation of power, where nodes depend on limited battery power. Transmitting at low power can affect the connectivity of the network while transmitting at excessive power not only reduces the lifetime of nodes but also increases the network interference and decreases

the network's lifetime. Thus, determining the optimal power of the nodes that will be necessary to guarantee network connectivity is necessary.

1.4 Thesis Contribution

To properly design a robust mesh network system, is important to know the communication components of the system. Hence, real life prototype ZigBee wireless mesh sensor network is designed to evaluate the performance of IEEE 802.15.4/ZigBee. The testbed will aid wireless network designer to make a proper decision on each of the transmit power, network topology and the routing scheme.

1.5 Node Architecture

The sensor nodes (wireless) are the central devices in a WSN. A node can sense, process and communicate. It also stores, executes the communication protocols and the algorithm for data-processing. The physical resources of the node influenced the size, quality, and sensed data frequency which can be extracted from the network [3]. Figure 2 display the diagram of a sensor node, which consists of sensing parts, processing, communication and power subsystems [6].

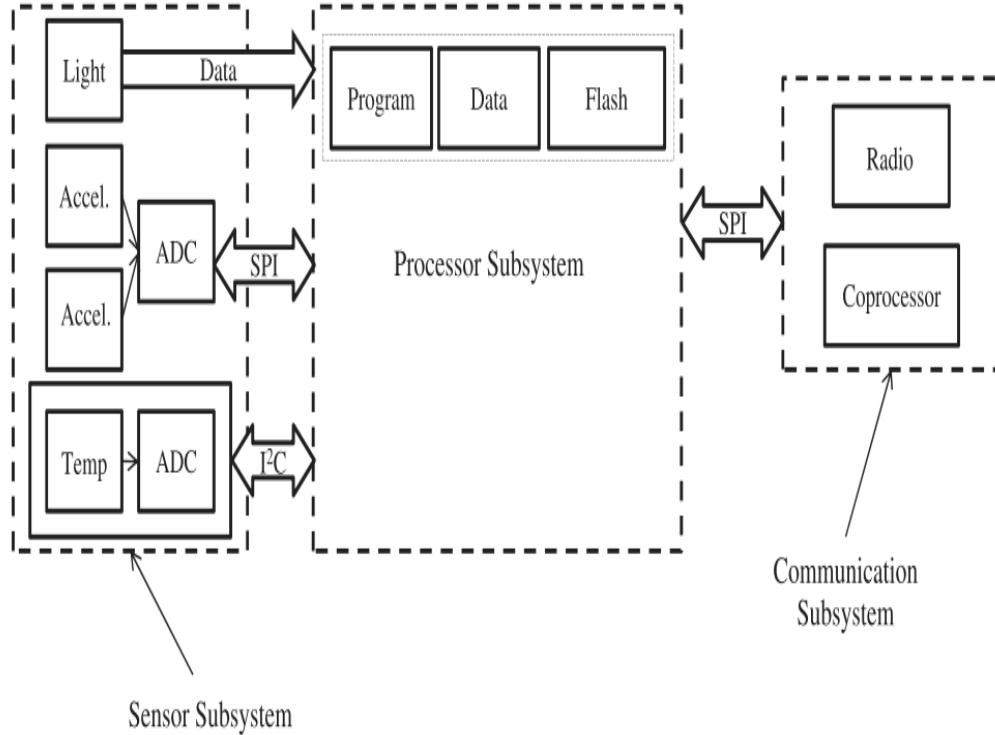


Figure 2: Architecture of Wireless Sensor Node [1]

1.5.1 The Sensing Subsystem

This subsystem combines physical sensors to produce ADC converters and the multiplexing mechanism to distribute them [1]. The sensors usually interface both the virtual and the physical world. Sensing of the physical phenomena is not unfamiliar, but the advent of MEMS made sensing a ubiquitous process. Physical sensor includes a transducer, which converts from one form of energy into another, usually into an electrical (voltage) [1, 2]. The transducer output is an analog signal, so ADC is needed to interface a digital processor with a sensing subsystem [1].

1.5.2 The Communication Subsystem

The communication subsystem is an important energy intensive subsystem as such, power consumption must be minimized. In most cases, all the commercially available transceivers have a controlling functionality to regulate the transceiver between active and inactive states (idle and sleep) [1]. With the help of this system, the sensor node communicates with the base station and other nodes. To replace or change sensor nodes that are battery powered is difficult, especially in cases where huge numbers of nodes are deployed. Hence, every aspect of the network regarding sensing devices, communication algorithms, and localization algorithms must be energy efficient [7].

The processor subsystem brings all other subsystems together. Its main aim is to process instructions regarding sensing, communication and self-organization. It consists of a processor chip, an internal flash memory to store program directions, memory that temporarily stores the sensed data, and internal clock, among other things [1].

Wireless sensor node subsystems are communicated via peripheral interface (SPI), integrated circuit (I2C) and universal serial bus (USB).

1.6 Objective

- Evaluate the impact of transmit power on ZigBee WMSNs within a real testbed and show that optimal transmit power leads to better network.
- Determine how transmit power affect wireless mesh networks topology using ZigBee.
- To determine how serial baud rate affects wireless sensor networks.

- To implement a real life prototype ZigBee wireless mesh sensor network based on AODV at different power level.

1.7 Thesis Organization

The rest of this thesis is organized as follows: In Chapter 2, we look into related work and general overview of ZigBee technology. Chapter 3 will give detailed descriptions of both the hardware and software used to achieve these results. Chapter 4 will discuss the test-bed, methodology, results and discussion of results. While Chapter 5, will present the conclusion and future work.

CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

ZigBee is the IEEE 802.15.4 MAC and PHY layers designed for low bandwidth, low-power, low-cost, wireless mesh network standard [8]. The mesh networking capability provides high reliability and longer ranges applications while the low cost enables the technology to be used in monitoring and controls of wireless applications, and a low power consumption guarantee a longer life for the batteries [9]. ZigBee operates in the Industrial, Scientific and Medical (ISM) radio bands which include; 868MHZ in Europe, 915MHZ in both Australia and United States of America and 2.4GHZ frequency band worldwide. Data transmission ranges from 20kb/s to 250kb/s in the 868MHZ to 2.4GHZ frequency band [8, 9].

ZigBee network layer supports peer-to-peer, cluster trees and generics mesh network topologies. The IEEE 802.15.4 standard, defines both the "Medium Access Control layer (MAC)" and "the physical layer" while ZigBee is built upon these two layers. Thus, both standards complete the communication protocol stack which defined WSN.

The ZigBee Alliance is a growing consortium of over 300 companies including semiconductors, module, stack, and software developers [11] that came together to form, maintain and published the ZigBee standards [10]. ZigBee is a trademark registered by this group that helps multiple vendors to produce interoperable products. IEEE 802.11 and the Wi-Fi Alliance relationship are similar for ZigBee and IEEE 802.15.4 [12]. The

general public has free access to the ZigBee specification for non-commercial purpose [10].

2.2 ZigBee Stack

The ZigBee stack architecture includes the MAC, PHY, Network and the Application support sub-layer (APS) blocks called "layers". Technically each of the layers assists the layer above it. Figure 3 shows the typical ZigBee protocol stack architecture which define the different layers

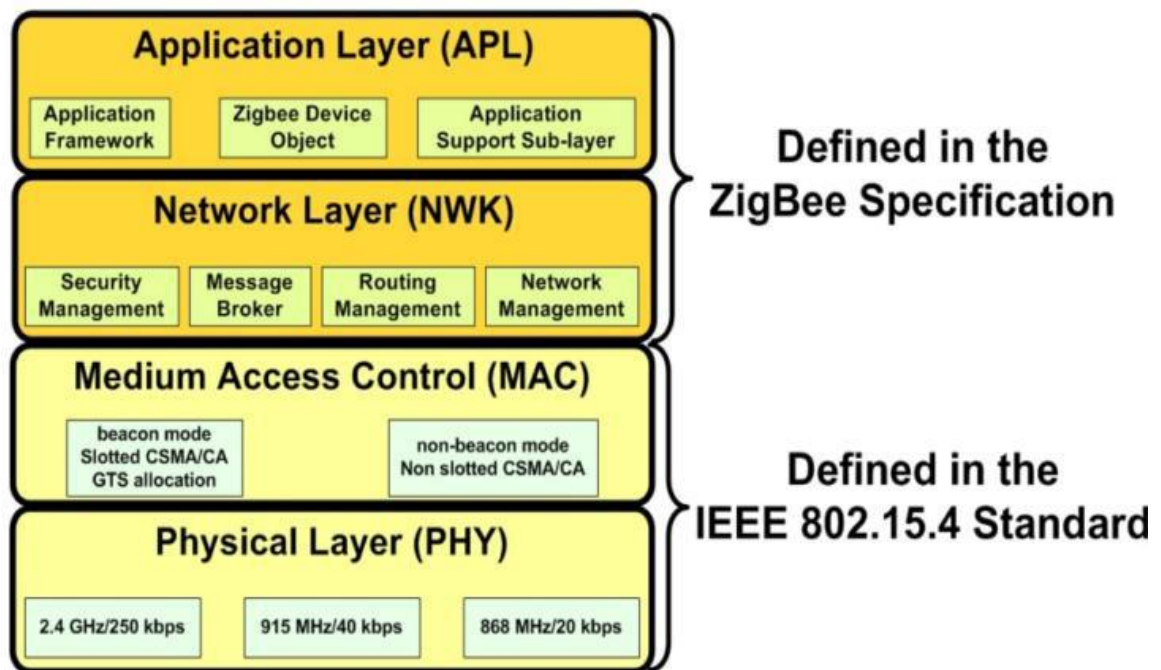


Figure 3: ZigBee Stack Architecture [10]

2.2.1 Application Layer

The ZigBee application layer is the top-level layer which consists of sub-layers viz; the application support sub-layer (APS), the Application framework (AF), the ZigBee Device Objects (ZDO) and the manufacturer defined application objects [14].

The application layer is the interface between ZigBee and users and the system [10]. The ZigBee Device Object (ZDO) is responsible for device management and advanced network management, and it also helps to define the role of the coordinator, router or end device. It initiates and responds to binding requests and provides address management of the device, security, discovering new devices on the network and their services.

The application support sub-layer (APS) helps to maintain the binding tables which define devices and services they can offer. The APS work as a bridge between network layers, and other components of the application layer [10].

2.2.2 Network Layer

This layer provides routing functions to the network to enable data packets route between devices (milt-hops) from the source to destination. Both the discovering and storage of neighbor information on routing tables is done at this layer, and also maintaining the routes between these devices. The network layer of a ZigBee coordinator is responsible for assigning 16-bit network address to new devices joining the network [5].

2.3 Types of ZigBee Devices

ZigBee has three types of devices that can participate in building a wireless sensor network. There are; coordinator, router and end devices

2.3.1 ZigBee Coordinator (ZC)

This is the most capable device type and needs maximum memory as well as high computing power. Every ZigBee network has only one coordinator.

ZC has the following characteristics

- It stores and maintain network information
- It act as both the repository for security keys and trust center [12]
- Selects a personal area network identifier (PAN ID) and a channel to run the network.
- Permits both the routers and end devices access to join the network [11]
- Assist in routing packets and can also be a source or destination for data packets [11]
- Does not sleep and help sleeping end device to buffer RF data packets.

2.3.2 ZigBee Router (ZR)

ZigBee router acts as a link between routers by transferring data from other devices. However, it must have the same PAN ID with the network before it can receive, transmit or route data [11]. It also stores and maintains network information and uses the information to know the most efficient route for data packets. After it joined the network,

it allows other end devices and more routers to join the network, when the memory and computing power improved, it can also function as a coordinator of the network.

2.3.3 ZigBee End Device

ZED has limited functions as compared to router and coordinator, it cannot route data, and it transmit and receive RF data with the help of the coordinator and router. This characteristic is done to allow the node to be asleep to prolong the battery life [9].

This node requires fewer amounts of memory and energy to reduce cost and complexity.

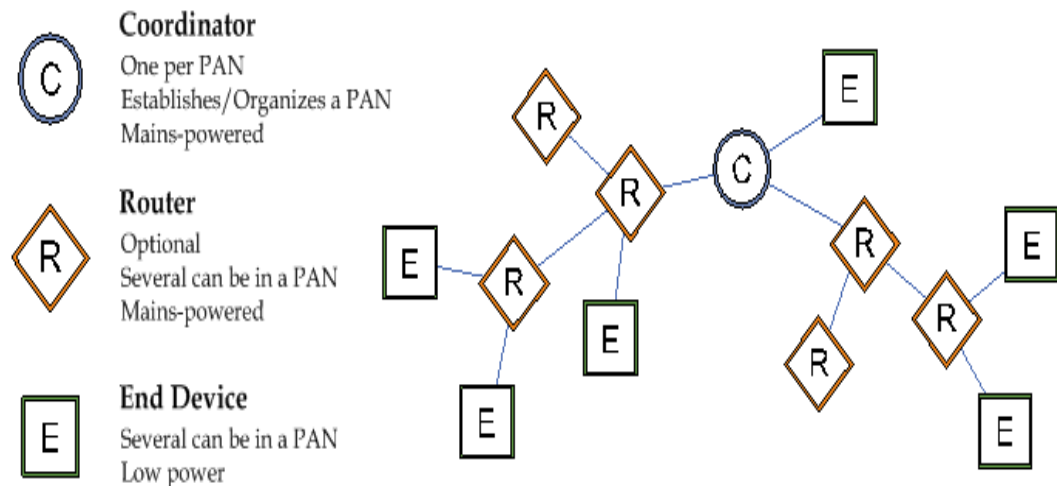


Figure 4: ZigBee Node Types [11]

Figure 4 shows a ZigBee network, displaying the coordinator(C), routers(R) and end devices (E). The coordinator starts the network by selecting a PAN ID (64-bit and 16-bit) and channel. The end device joins the network through the coordinator or router and any of these devices that permit it to join automatically becomes the “parent” of the end device. The end device must be allowed to transmit or receive RF data through its

parent and the parent must help its device to buffer or retain incoming data packets when it is asleep [9, 11, 15].

2.4 ZigBee Network Topology

ZigBee network supports star, cluster tree and mesh topologies [9, 11]. The network in a star topology is controlled by the coordinator which is responsible for starting and maintaining all the devices in the network. All the end devices communicate with the coordinator directly. Hence, any exchange of packets between the end devices must always pass through the coordinator which may lead to congestion at the coordinator as there is no alternative route from source to destination.

2.4.1 Cluster Tree Topology

This type of network consists of a coordinator, End devices and several routers. The router function is to extend the coverage of the general network. Routers use the hierarchical routing strategy for data routing and to control messages across the network [16]. In this type of network if either the coordinator or router is disabled, the end device of the disabled device is not able to communicate with other devices in the network. A special case of tree topology is called a **cluster tree topology** where parent with its children is called a **cluster** [17]. Figure 5 shows the structures of the different network topologies.

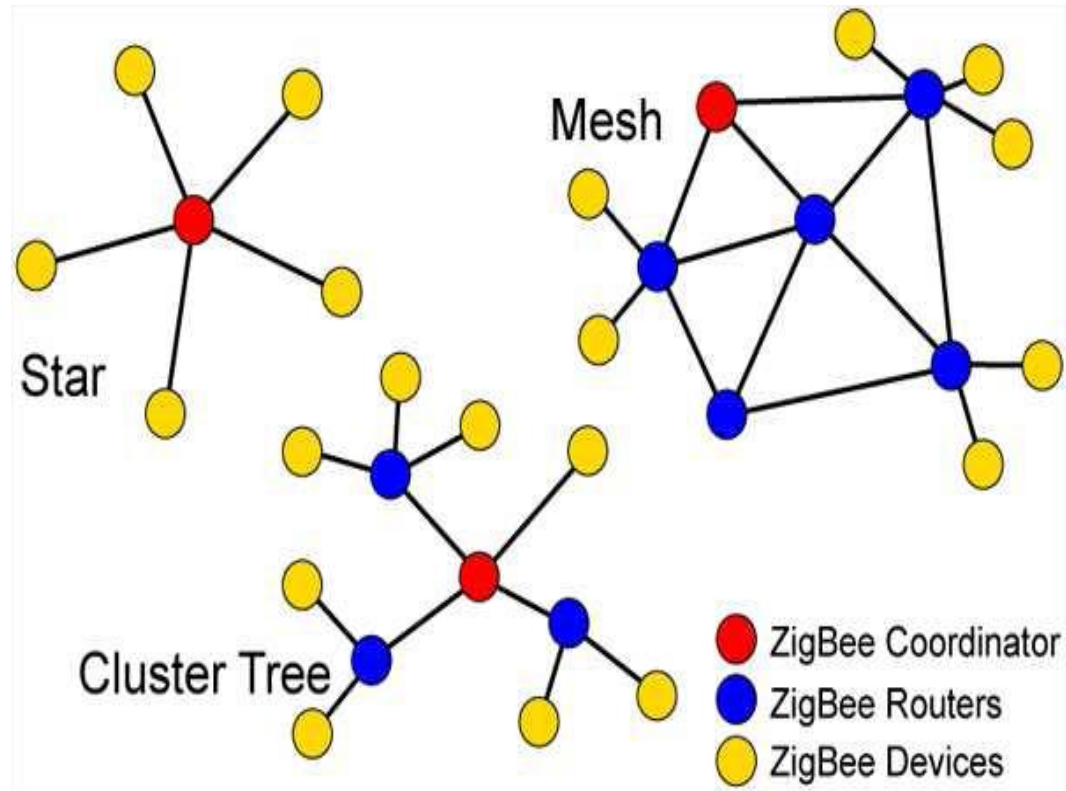


Figure 5: ZigBee Network Topologies [13]

2.4.2 Mesh Topology

This type of network consists of a coordinator, routers and end devices [18]. The topology has multi-hop capability as it allows data packets route through several devices called **multi-hops** to reach its intended destination. Multipath routing leads to high reliability. This type of protocol is more robust and its uses a more complex routing protocols compared to star or tree topology. Mesh topology is a form of ad-hoc network, is self-healing and self-organizing. It also has high fault tolerance which is due to its multi-hop ability [19].

2.5 ZigBee Addressing

ZigBee devices have a 64-bit and 16-bit address [11]. Each ZigBee node has a 64-bit unique address which is allocated during manufacturing and it is a permanent address which uniquely identifies a node. Each ZigBee node is assigned a 16-bit address called the network address when the node joins a network. This address is unique to all the physical devices in a particular network. However, this type of address is not a permanent address like the 64-bit address. Apart from the coordinator, which has a 16-bit address of 0x0000 all other devices is assigned a randomly generated address from the coordinator or router node that allows the join [11, 15]. The 16-bit address can be changed, when it is discovered that two devices in the same network have the same 16-bit address and when a node leaves the network and rejoins the same network [9, 15]. ZigBee transmissions are sent using both the source and destination 16-bit network addresses [11]. Since the 16-bit address is not permanent, it is a non-reliable method to identify a device but the routing tables on each node use the 16-bit address to determine how to route data across the network. A 64-bit address must be included in the transmissions of data to guarantee that data is delivered to the appropriate device [11, 9].

2.6 ZigBee Data Transmission

All ZigBee data packets are transmitted using the device and application layer addressing field [20]. Data packets can be transmitted as either broadcast or unicast transmissions.

2.6.1 Unicast Transmission

A unicast transmission routes data from source to destination device [8], where the destination of the message can be nearest- neighbor or multi-hops away.

2.6.2 Broadcast Transmission

A broadcast message with a ZigBee network is a message sent to all the devices in the network. To ensure the message gets to all the devices, the routers and the coordinator must broadcast the message three times to other devices when they received the message. This type of transmission is shown in figure 6.

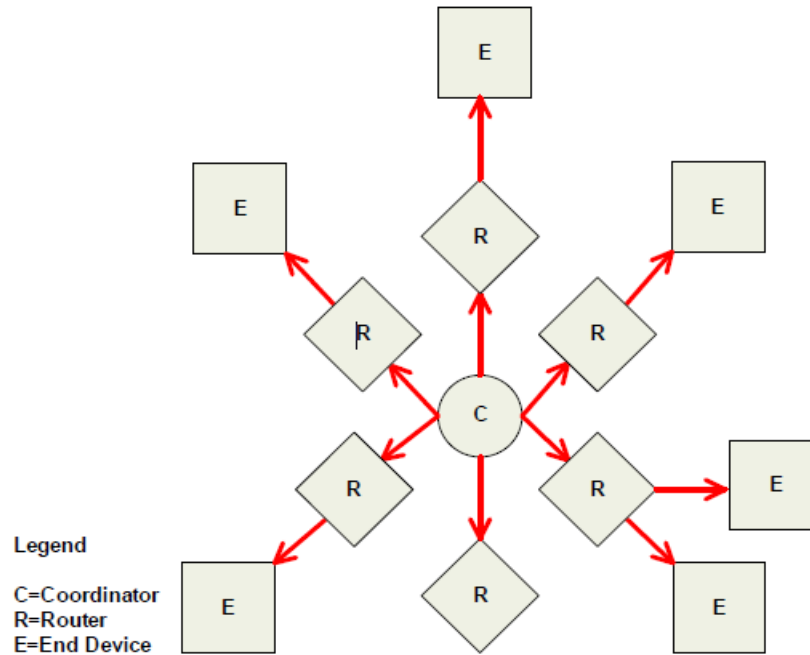


Figure 6: Broadcast Data Transmission [11].

When a node transmits a broadcast, it will create an entry in a broadcast transmission table, which is used to keep track of each broadcast that is received to make sure the packets are not endlessly transmitted [11]. The broadcast transmission table can hold eight entries and each of the entry continue for only eight seconds. The broadcast messages should be sparingly used since transmissions of broadcast are retransmitted by each node in the network [20]. When a node transmits a broadcast transmission, it confirms to ensure all neighbors also transmit the data message. If any of the neighbor nodes do not also transmit the data packets, the node then re-send the broadcast message and wait for its neighbor nodes to retransmit the broadcast message [15].

2.7 RF Packet Routing

ZigBee have three different ways of routing data, each of this technique has its own advantages and disadvantages, which are; Ad-hoc On-demand Distance Vector (AODV) mesh routing, many-to-one routing and source routing.

2.7.1 AODV Mesh Routing

ZigBee mesh network employs routing techniques to establish a link between a source node and the destination. In this type of network, data packets pass through several hops (multi-hops) to their intended destinations. The coordinators and end devices uses a process called **route discovery** to find a link between source and destination. This route discovery is based on AODV routing algorithm as shown in figure 7.

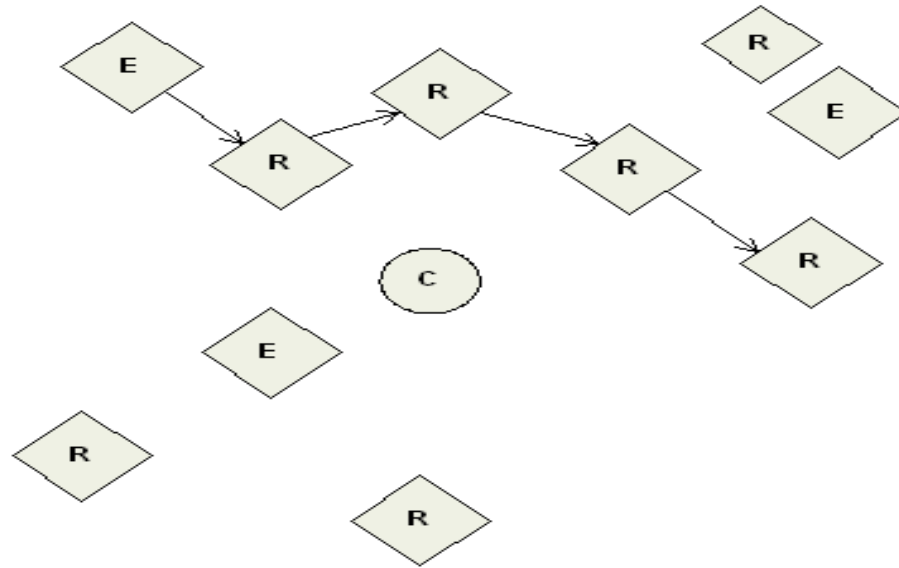


Figure 7: Transmission through a Mesh Network [11]

In AODV routing protocol, routing across the mesh is table driven, in this case each node store the next hop for a link to the destination node. Usually, the network is silent until a path is required to a particular destination. If a next hop is not known, route discovery is used to determine the path to the node [11]. In this process, a node requesting a connection, broadcasts a route request for connection and other nodes on the same network forward the message and store the sender information there by establishing a route back to the sender. When any of the nodes receive the message and have a route to the needy node, it sends back a route reply to the node requesting the route and this node select the more efficient route to the destination. In a more complex application where a device need to send a message to several remotes devices, AODV routing will need to perform a route discovery for each destination node to established a route. If there are less routing table entries with more destination devices, the AODV routes already established may be overwritten with new routes, which lead to regular route discoveries.

This can lead to high delay of data packets and poor performance of the network. In this type of condition, it is highly recommended to use many-to-one routing and source protocols [11].

2.7.2 Many-to-One Routing

AODV mesh routing will need significant overhead where several devices will have to transmit data to a central collector. The network will be flooded with messages if each node had to discover a route before sending data to the collector [21].

Many-to-one routing will be an optimization for a network of this type [11]. A single many-to-one broadcast transmission is sent from the data collectors in order to establish a reply route on all devices. In the routing, devices that receive the route request message often establish a reverse many-to-one routing entry table to establish a route to the collector [21].

2.7.3 Source Routing

Source routing is applied in a network where many-to-one routes have been established from remote nodes to the data collector Centre. This routing algorithm permits the collector to store and specify routes for several remotes unlike in many-to-one routing that establishes routing paths from many devices to a single data collector [11]. Generally, many-to-one routing is recommended in a network that have more than 40 nodes in a single personal area network (PAN).

2.8 Applications of ZigBee

ZigBee protocols are wireless technology designed for embedded applications requiring low data rates and low power consumption [10]. To pass ZigBee certification, each device must have a battery life of not less than two years.

Typical ZigBee application includes:

- Building automation
- Industrial control and monitoring
- Medical application for patient and fitness monitoring
- Embedded sensing
- Wireless sensor networks
- Automatic meter reading (AMR)
- Traffic control, street lights control, and signal lights control and
- Fire safety alarm and building monitoring
- Heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC)
- Security and surveillance
- Environmental controls

CHAPTER THREE -HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE DESCRIPTION

3.1. Introduction

For this experiment, XBee pro S2B, from Digi international, model XBP24BZ7SIT were used. Each of the modules was equipped with a wire antenna with Digi-key part number A24-HASM-450-ND, Arduino Uno board and an XBee shield (Dev-08471) and an XBee explorer dongle.

3.2 Digi XBee Pro S2B RF Module

The XBee pro series 2B version is a robust RF module suitable for wireless sensor networks and is loaded with ZigBee firmware. It is designed to support low power, low cost wireless sensor networks. This module allows one to design a more complex and robust mesh networks based on the XBee ZigBee mesh firmware. The module improves reliability at minimal power and support communication between computers, microcontrollers and similar devices. The modules operate within the Industrial, Scientific and Medical (ISM) 2.4GHZ frequency band. Table 1 shows the XBee pro S2B module pin descriptions

Table 1: XBee Module Pin Description [11]

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Direction</i>	<i>Default stat</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	VCC	-	-	Power supply
2	DOUT	Output	Output	UART Data Out
3	DIN/CONFIG	Input	Input	UART Data In
4	DIO 12	Both	Disable	Digital I/O 12
5	RESET	Both	Open-Collector with pull-up	Module Reset (reset pulse must be at least 200 ns)
6	RSSI PWM/DIO 10	Both	Output	RX Signal Strength Indicator/Digital IO
7	DIO 11	Both	Input	Digital I/O 11
8	[reserved]	-	Disable	Do not connect
9	DTR/SLEEP_RQ/DIO8	Both	Input	Pin Sleep Control Line or Digital IO 8
10	GND	-	-	Ground
11	DIO4	Both	Disable	Digital I/O4
12	CTS/DIO7	Both	Output	Clear-to-Send Flow Control or Digital I/O7. CTS, if enabled, is an output
13	ON/SLEEP	Output	Output	Module Status Indicator or Digital I/O 9
14	VREF	Input	-	Not used for EM250. Used for programmable secondary processor. For compatibility with clear XBEE modules, we recommend connecting this pin voltage reference if Analog sampling is desired. Otherwise, connect to GND
15	Associate/DIO5	Both	Output	Associated Indicator, Digital I/O 5
16	RST/DIO6	Both	Input	Request-to-send Flow Control, Digital I/O 6. RTS, if enabled, is an input
17	AD3/DIO3	Both	Disable	Analog input 3 or Digital I/O 3
18	AD2/DIO2	Both	Disable	Analog input 2 or Digital I/O 2
19	AD1/DIO1	Both	Disable	Analog input 1 or Digital I/O 1
20	Commissioning Button	Both	Disable	Analog input 0 or Digital I/O 0, or Commissioning Button

3.3 Arduino Uno Board

The Arduino Uno board is a portable microcontroller platform based on Atmega 328 with complementary parts to facilitate programming and incorporate into other circuits with the aid of a universal serial bus (USB) port to connect any applicable device to the computer. The open source nature and ease of use makes it a high demand device.

The board does not use the FTDI USB-to-serial driver chip, but it uses the Atmega16U2 program as a USB-to-Serial connector [7]. It has fourteen (14) digital input/output pins, USB connection, power jack, 16MHZ ceramic resonator, ICSP header, and a reset button. It can be connected with the computer by connecting to a power source or using a USB cable.

3.4 XBee Shield

The XBee shield is used with Arduino USB board to wirelessly communicate with ZigBee Protocol using XBee module by Digi International. This module can be used in a command mode or as a USB/Serial replacement. The shield jumpers are used to determine how its serial communication can connect to that between how its serial communication can connect to that between the microcontroller and FTDI USB-to-Serial chip on the Arduino Uno board. When the jumpers are position in the USB position the input pin (DIN) on the XBee pro module will be connected to the TX pin of the FTDI chip and the output pin (DOUT) will be connected to the Rx pin of the FTDI chip [24]. Also, when the jumpers are in the XBee position, the DIN is connected to TX and DOUT to Rx pin of the microcontroller.

3.5 XBee Explorer Dongle

The XBee module can be attached to the explorer Dongle and plug directly into the USB port without the need for a cable. It has an on-board voltage regulator up to 500mA

3.6 RF Module Operation

The XBee pro S2B RF module can communicate through its serial port with any logic and voltage compatible UART device through a logic-level asynchronous serial port [11]



Figure 8: XBee module attached to shield and Arduino Board

Figure 8 comprises of an Arduino Uno board, an XBee shield attached, and XBee module connected to a power source. This is acting as a sensor node. Asynchronous serial signal enters the module through the DIN (pin3) and the signal should be idle when there is no data transmission. Figure 8 shows the serial bit pattern of data passing through the module [21].

Each of the data byte includes 8 data bits, start bit and stop bit. Both timing and parity checking required for data communications are performed by the UART module. Two UARTS are needed to be configured with compatible settings for serial communications.

3.7 Firmware Description

Firmware is a software program or instructions programmed in the device's memory which controls the device and provides several instructions on how the devices can communicate with the other computer hardware. Firmware is stored in flash ROM that can be erased and rewritten. Examples of systems that contain firmware are embedded systems, computers digital cameras, and mobile phones.

Digi International make available for free, the proprietary firmware for XBee device with the provision of changing the behavior using a software called X-CTU with graphical user interface by setting the parameters as desired and other variable of the network.

3.7.1 Forming a ZigBee Network

ZigBee Personal Area Network (PAN) is formed when the coordinator searches for an available channel and select a PAN ID to start a network. Then after, the routers and end devices can now join the network using the PAN ID (Personal Area Network Identifier). The coordinator allocates a 16-bit network address to any router or end device joining the network. The coordinator network address is usually 0x0000. The router has ability to allow end devices join the network, when a particular node allows any node to join a network, the node that allow it, is called the parent while the node joining is called the child. Hence, joining a network, established parent and child relationships.

The new node need to first of all scans for channels that are free and identifies which it will join. In some cases, multiple networks exist in the same channel; these channels are distinguished by their PAN IDs. [21] A router or end device issue a beacon request frame on the channel and listen to see multiple coordinators and routers with the same PAN ID. A closer coordinator or router will reply to the beacon request by transmitting a beacon which contains the device information, in which case it selects the best one to connect to, usually one with best signal strength with valid PAN ID and send an associate request frame. If it is accepted, the node finally joins the network. Routers that join the network are able to route data packets unlike end devices that cannot allow other devices join the network and are not able to route data.

3.8 XBee Pro S2B RF Operation Mode

The XBee modules operate in two modes, which are; the application programming Interface (API) and transparent mode operation.

3.8.1 Transparent Operation (AT)

In transparent mode (AT), the transmitting XBee radio relay serial data to the receiving one as indicated by the Destination Address High (DH) and Destination Address Low (DL) parameters [21]. This operation is a simple operation designed for point to point communication between transmitting and receiving XBees. In other to communicate with multiple XBees, a command mode needs to be activated each time to change the destination address of the XBee. When UART data is received through the DI pin is queued up for RF transmission but RF data received which is addressed to the module's 64-bit Address is sent out to the DO pin [15].

3.8.2 Application programming Interface Operation (API)

API operation is a more robust alternative to the transparent operation. In this operation, packets are sent more quickly, predictably, and reliably using frames that have a unique format of arrangement. This frame can be generated using the frame generators in X-CTU. Thus, this frame improves the level a host application interacts with the networking capabilities of the modules [23]. The send transmit data frames in API always include; the command frame which is equivalent to the transparent mode operation (AT) commands and the RF transmit data frame and so also, the data frames received include

RF-received data frame, the command response and event notifications as associate, disassociate or reset [11].

At the host application layer, API provides another way of configuring modules and route data. In this process, instead of modifying addresses using the command mode like in AT operation, the host application transmit data frames to the module that contain the address and payload information. The module will transmit data frames to the application which contains status packets, source and payload information from received data packets [15]. API operation option help to facilitates transmitting packets data to multiple destinations without the use of command mode like in AT operation, also, receive acknowledgement (ACK) for each packet transmitted which indicate the packet was successfully delivered. The transmitting XBee resend any packet if an acknowledgement is not received. All receive packets (RX) contain the source address of transmitting radio which identify the source address of each received packet and usually, packets always include checksum for data integrity [11].

3.9 Modes of Operation

The RF module can operate in the Transmit Mode, Receive Mode, Sleep Mode and Command Mode. The module always remains in idle mode when not transmitting or receiving any data during this state, RF module constantly check for valid RF data.

3.9.1 Transmit Mode

RF module change from idle mode to transmit mode, immediately it receives serial data for packetization. Before transmitting data, the module check to ensure the

path to the destination and the 16-bit network address are known [11]. In the case where both the destination and network address is not known, route discovery takes place to determine both. If route discovery is not successful in the discovery both in the destination and network address, the packet is immediately discarded until a route is estimated. When message is sent from a source node to the destination node, acknowledgement is send to the source node to confirm that the packet was received. When an acknowledgement is not received, the source node will re-send the data packet.

3.9.2 Receive Mode

When an RF packet is received at the source, and the packet is valid then the data is transferred to serial transmit buffer.

3.9.3 Command Mode

Command mode is a state when receiving serial characters are interpreted as commands and to be able to read RF module parameters or modify RF data; it must go into command mode [11].

3.9.4 Sleep Mode

Since routers and coordinators are involved in data routing they consume more power than the end device, as such the routers and coordinators are mains powered. In sleep mode, RF module remains in a state of low power consumption when not in use. Only end devices are supported by the sleep mode. The end device parent must be able to buffer incoming data packets sent to the end device when asleep until is awake to receive its own data [21]. When an end device is awake and able to receive data, it sends out a

command to its parent coordinator or router to inform it that is available. When the command is received, it will forward any data packets that are designated for the end device [15].

3.10 Programming XBee Pro S2B Modules

The module has a firmware in it which can be upgraded with X-CTU software from Digi International to interface with the DIN and DOUT serial lines.

3.10.1 Modules Configuration Using the API Operation

In this operation, data is communicated in frames through a structured interface. The API specifies how command responses, commands and module status message are sent and received from the module using a UART Data Frame [9].

3.10.2 API Frame Specifications

In this specification, AP=1 (API Operation) and AP = 2 (API operation) with escaped characters are supported, and they can be enabled by using the API enable command.

API operation (AP parameter = 1)

The UART data frame structure when API mode is enabled (AP = 1) is

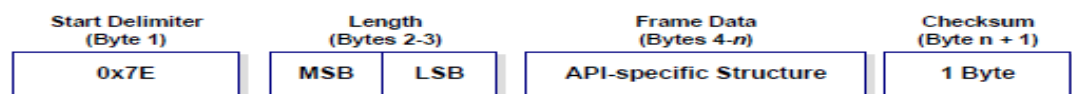


Figure 9: UART Data Frame Structure [11]

For this operation, prior to the start delimiter, any received frame is discarded. If the checksum again fails or any frame not correctly received, the module will show the nature of failure and reply with a module status frame [15].

3.10.3 API Operation with Escape Characters (API = 2)

When AP = 2 is enabled, the UART data frame structure is defined as

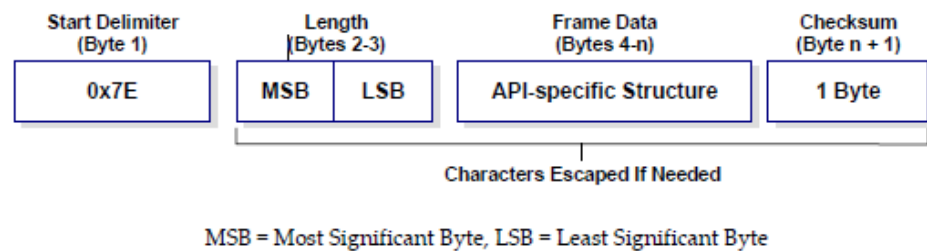


Figure 10: UART Data Frame Structure -Escape Control Character [15]

For the data frame sequencing not to interfere with when sending and receiving a UART data frame, specific data values must be escaped [21]. Insert 0x7D followed by the escaped byte, and XOR'd with 0x20 in order to escape an interfering data byte [11].

3.10.4 API Frame Structure

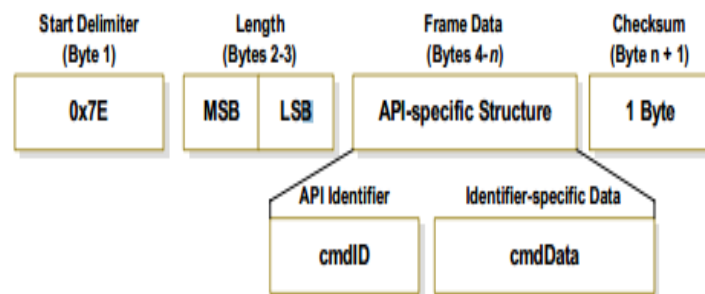


Figure 11: UART Data Frame & API Specific Structure [15]

- Start Delimiter: This indicates the starts of a frame, the XBee RF modules always wait for the byte (0x7E) to know the start of any particular frame
- Length: These bytes after the start delimiter described the total length of the data frame.
- In most cases the LSB contain the total length while MSB is usually zero
- Frame Data: The frame data is specific about the message type received. Some of the messages may contain just two bytes of data while others contain more bytes of data.
- Checksum: This indicates the last byte of the frame and is the total sum of all bytes in a frame, which is used to detect any error at the receiving end of the message.
- To calculate the checksum which test for data integrity, and exclude the frame delimiters and length, add all bytes, and keep only the lowest eight bits of the result, then subtract the result from 0 x FF.
- The API-identifier (cmdID frame) shows which of the API messages will be retained in the Identifier-specific data (cmdData frame). The XBee modules support the following format of API frames as shown in Table 2

Table 2: API Frame Names and Values [11]

<i>API frame names</i>	<i>API ID</i>
<i>Modem Status</i>	<i>0x8A</i>
<i>AT command</i>	<i>0x08</i>
<i>AT command - queue parameter value</i>	<i>0x09</i>
<i>AT command response</i>	<i>0x88</i>
<i>Remote Command request</i>	<i>0x17</i>
<i>Create Source Route</i>	<i>0x21</i>
<i>Remote Command response</i>	<i>0x97</i>
<i>ZigBee transmit request</i>	<i>0x10</i>
<i>Explicit addressing ZigBee command frame</i>	<i>0x11</i>
<i>ZigBee transmit status</i>	<i>0x8B</i>
<i>ZigBee receive packet</i>	<i>0x90</i>
<i>ZigBee explicit Rx indicator</i>	<i>0x91</i>
<i>ZigBee IO Data Sample Rx Indicator</i>	<i>0x92</i>
<i>ZigBee sensor read indicator</i>	<i>0x94</i>
<i>Node identification indicator</i>	<i>0x95</i>
<i>Over-the-Air Firmware Update Status</i>	<i>0xA0</i>
<i>Route Record Indicator</i>	<i>0xA1</i>
<i>Many-to-One Route Indicator</i>	<i>0xA3</i>

Table 2 shows dozen of API frame types. In this work, the ZigBee transmit request frame which is represented by the code 0x10 in hexadecimal form was used. The frame is used when an XBee RF radio intends to transmit data packet to another XBee on the same PAN ID. The ZigBee transmit request frame is shown in table 3.

Table 3: API Format for ZigBee TX Request [11] - API Identifier Value - (0x10)

Frame fields		Offset (Bytes)	Description
Start delimiter		0	Indicates beginning of the frame
Length		MSB 1 LSB 2	Number of bytes between the length and the checksum
Frame-specific data	Frame type	3	This is the types of frame. In the case, this would be 0 x 10 since it is TX request frame
	Frame ID	4	Identifies the UART data frame for the host to correlate with a subsequent acknowledgement. If set to 0, no response is sent.
	64 – Bit destination address	MSB 5 ... LSB 12	Sets the 64-bit address of the destination device. The following addresses are also supported: 0x0000000000000000 – Reserved 64-bit address for the coordinator. 0x0000000000000FFF – Broadcast addresses
	16 – Bit destination network address	MSB 13 LSB 14	Sets the 16—bit address of the destination device, if known. Set of 0xFFFE if the address is unknown, or if sending a broadcast.
	Broadcast radius	15	Set maximum number of hops a broadcast transmission can take. If set to 0, the broadcast radius will be to te maximum hops value.
	Options	16	Supported transmission options, which include: 0x01 – Disable ACK 0x20 – Enable APS encryption (if EE = 1) 0x40 – Use the extended transmission timeout for this destination. Enabling APS encryption decrease the maximum number of RF payload bytes by 4 (below the value reported by NP). Setting the extended timeout bit causes the stack to set the extended transmission timeout for the destination address. All unused and unsupported bits must be set to 0.
	RF data	17 ... 24	Data that is sent to the destination RF module
Checksum		25	0xFF – the 8-bit sum of bytes from offset 3 to this byte.

This frame will allow the ZigBee module to send RF data as an RF packet to the intended destination using the transmit request. To transmit a message to all devices in the network, the 64bit destination address must be set to 0x000000000000FFFF for the

broadcast transmission to all the devices present in the network. To message the coordinator, the 16-bit network address should be set to 0×0000 or set the 64-bit address to all 0×00s. When sending to multiple destinations in all transmission apart for the coordinator, setting the 16bit address to the exact 16bit address can improve the network performance [15].

Explicit Addressing ZigBee Command Frame

API Identifier Value: (0×11)

This frame described in table 4 permits ZigBee application layer fields to be designated for data transmission. It is similar to the ZigBee transmit request described in table 3.

Table 4: Explicit Addressing ZigBee Command Frame [11]

	Frame fields		Offset	Example	Description
	Start delimiter		0	0x7E	
API Packet	Length		MSB 1	0x00	Number of bytes between the length and the checksum
			LSB 2	0x1A	
	Frame-specific Data	Frame type	3	0x11	
		Frame ID	4	0x01	Identifies the UART data frame for the host to correlate with a subsequent ACK (acknowledgement). If set to 0, no response is sent.
		64 – Bit destination address	MSB 5	0x00	Sets the 64-bit address of the destination device. The following addresses are also supported: 0x0000000000000000 – Reserved 64-bit address for the coordinator. 0x000000000000FFFF – Broadcast addresses
			6	0x00	
			7	0x00	
			8	0x00	
			9	0x00	
			10	0x00	
			11	0x00	
			12	0x00	
		16 – Bit destination network address	MSB 13	0xFF	Sets the 16-bit address of the destination device, if known. Set of 0xFFFFE if the address is unknown, or if sending a broadcast.
			LSB 14	0xFE	
		Source Endpoint	15	0xA0	Source endpoint for the transmission.
		Destination Endpoint	16	0xA1	Destination endpoint for the transmission
		Cluster ID	17	0x15	Cluster ID used in the transmission
			18	0x54	
		Profile ID	19	0xC1	Profile ID used in the transmission
			20	0c05	
		Broadcast radius	21	0x00	Set maximum number of hops a broadcast transmission can take. If set to 0, the broadcast radius will be to the maximum hops value.
		Transmit Options	22	0x00	Bit field of supported transmission options. Supported values include the following 0x01 – Disable retries and route repair 0x20 – Enable APS encryption (if EE = 1) 0x40 – Use the extended transmission timeout Enabling APS encryption

					<p><i>presumes the source and destination have been authenticated</i></p> <p><i>I also decreases the maximum number of RF payload bytes by 4 (below the value reported by NP). The extended transmission timeout is needed when addressing sleeping end devices. It also increases the retry interval between retries to compensate for end device polling. See chapter 4, Transmission Timeouts, Extended Timeout for a description. Unused bits must be to 0.</i></p>
		<i>Data Payload</i>	23	0x54	<i>Data that is sent to the destination device</i>
			24	0x78	
			25	0x44	
			26	0x61	
			27	0x74	
			28	0x61	
	Checksum		29	0x3A	<i>0xFF – the 8-bit sum of bytes from offset 3 to this byte.</i>

ZigBee Transmit Status

API Identifier Value: 0x8B

After completing a TX Request, TX message status is sent by the module. That would show if the transmitted message was a success or failure as depicted in table 5.

Table 5: Transmit Status Frame [11]

	<i>Frame fields</i>		<i>Offset</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Description</i>
	<i>Start delimiter</i>		0	0x7E	
<i>API Packet</i>	<i>Length</i>		<i>MSB 1</i>	0x00	<i>Number of bytes between the length and the checksum</i>
			<i>LSB 2</i>	0x07	
		<i>Frame type</i>	3	0x8B	
		<i>Frame ID</i>	4	0x01	<i>Identifies the UART data frame being reported. Note: If Frame ID = 0 in AT Command Mode, no AT Command Response will be given</i>
		<i>16-bit address of destination</i>	5	0x7D	<i>16-bit Network Address the packet was delivered to (if successful). If not successful, this address will be 0xFFFFD; Destination Address Unknown.</i>
			6	0X84	
		<i>Transmit Retry Count</i>	7	0x00	<i>The number of application transmission retried that took place</i>
		<i>Delivery Status</i>	8	0x00	<i>0x00 = Success</i> <i>0x01 = MAC ACK Failure</i> <i>0x02 = CCA Failure</i> <i>0x015 = Invalid destination endpoint</i> <i>0x21 = Network ACK Failure</i> <i>0x22 = Not Jointed to Network</i> <i>0x23 = Self-addressed</i> <i>0x24 = Address Not Found</i> <i>0x25 = Route Not Found</i> <i>0x26 = Broadcast source failed to hear a neighbor relay the message</i> <i>0x2B = Invalid binding table index</i> <i>0x2C = Resource error lack of free buffers, timers, etc.</i> <i>0x2D = Attempted broadcast with APS transmission</i> <i>0x2E = Attempted broadcast with APS transmission, but EE = 0</i>

					<i>0x32 = Resource error lack of free buffers, timers, etc.</i> <i>0x74 = Data payload too large</i>
		<i>Discovery status</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>0x01</i>	<i>0x00 = No Discovery Overhead</i> <i>0x01 = Address Discovery</i> <i>0x02 = Route Discovery</i> <i>0x03 = Address and Route</i> <i>0x04 = Extended Timeout</i> <i>Discovery</i>
	Checksum		<i>10</i>	<i>0x71</i>	<i>0xFF – the 8 bit sum of bytes from offset 3 to this byte.</i>

ZigBee Receive Packet

API Identifier Value: (0x90)

When an RF packet is received, it will send out the UART using this message format as describe in table 6.

Table 6: ZigBee Receive Packet [11]

	<i>Frame fields</i>		<i>Offset</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>API Packet</i>	<i>Start delimiter</i>		0	0x7E	
	<i>Length</i>		<i>MSB 1</i>	0x00	Number of bytes between the length and the checksum
			<i>LSB 2</i>	0x11	
	<i>Frame – specific Data</i>	<i>Frame type</i>	3	0x90	
		<i>64 – Bit Source Address</i>	<i>MSB 4</i>	0x00	Identifies the UART data frame for the host to correlate with a subsequent ACK (acknowledgement). If set to 0, no response is sent.
			5	0x13	
			6	0xA2	64-bit address of sender. Set to 0xFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFF (unknown 64-bit address) if the sender's 64-bit addresses is unknown.
			7	0x00	
			8	0x40	
			9	0x52	
			10	0x28	
			<i>LSB 11</i>	0XAA	
		<i>16-bit source Network Address</i>	<i>MSB 12</i>	0x7D	16-bit address of sender
			<i>LSB 13</i>	0x84	
		<i>Receive Option</i>	14	0x01	0x01 – Packet Acknowledged 0x02 – Packet was a broadcast packet 0x20 – Packet encryption with APS encryption 0x40 – Packet was sent from an end device (if known) Note: Option values can be combined. For example, a 0x40 and a 0x01 will show as 0x41. Other possible values 0x21, 0x22, 0x41, 0x42, 0x60, 0x61, 0x62
		<i>Received Data</i>	15	0x52	Received RF data
			16	0x78	
			17	0x44	
			18	0x61	
			19	0x74	
			20	0x61	
	<i>Checksum</i>		21	0x0D	0xFF – the 8-bit sum of bytes from offset 3 to this byte.

CHAPTER FOUR – TESTBED AND RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

X-CTU software was used to configured, update/upload the firmware for XBee module used in this experiment. Figure 12 shows the X-CTU configuration screen. The tab name modem includes all the available firmware for different types of XBee module. The "function set" was used to configure the function, the XBee module work; as a coordinator, router or end device as the case may be. For this experiment, the firmware XBP24BZ7 was selected and configured to work in API mode.

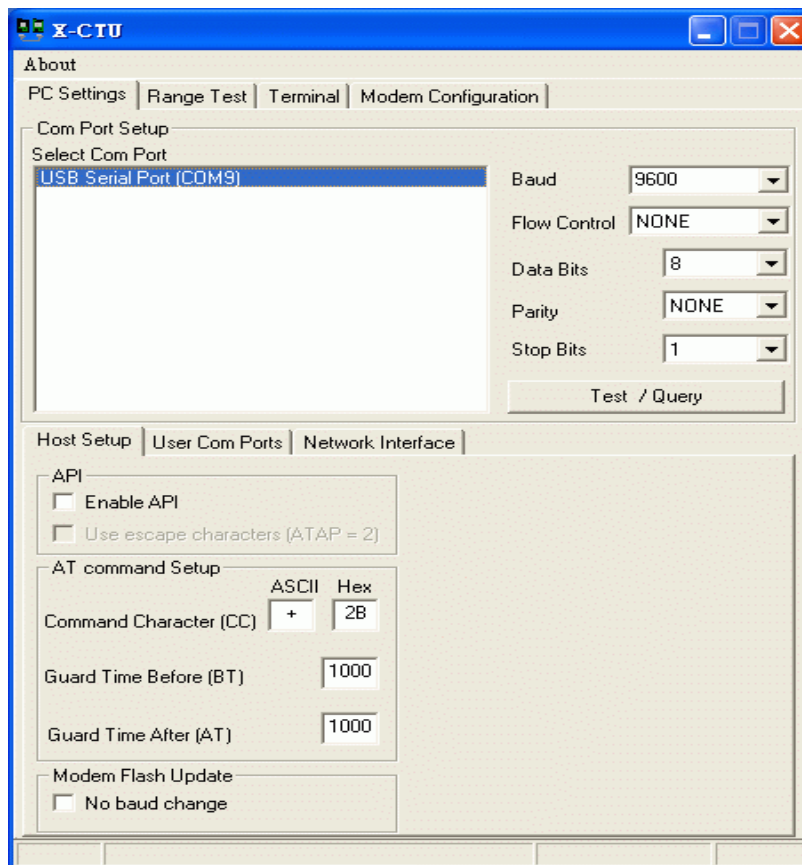


Figure 12: X-CTU Modem Configuration Snapshot-1

PC Settings: This tab allowed us to select the desired COM port and configure the port to suit the radios settings, for each of the node. This tab has three area of interest viz; The COM port setup, Host setup, and User com port [9].

Terminal: This tab allowed access to the computer COM port with a terminal emulation program and was used to read/view the received data with its ability to send and receive data packets in either HEX or ASCII format. Most of the communications occur in this tab, where the text in blue indicate message to be sent out to the radio's serial port while the text in red is message received from the radio's serial port as shown is figure 13

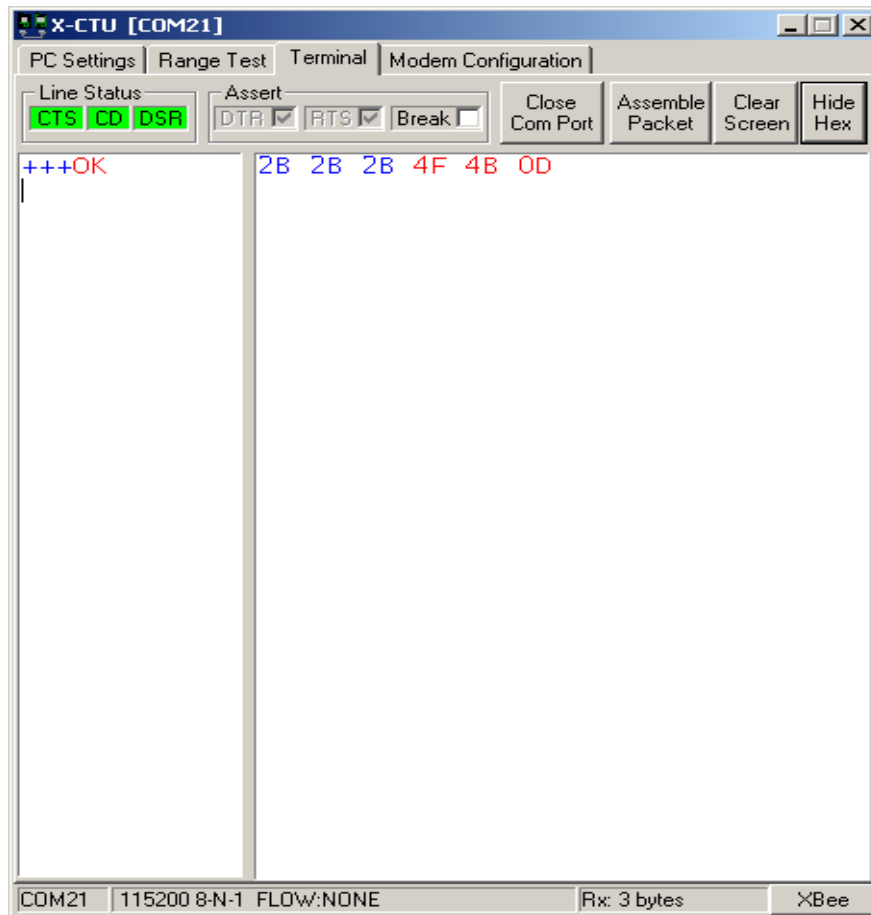


Figure 13: X-CTU Modem Configuration Snapshot-2

Modem Configuration: This tab allowed to program our XBee firmware settings and to change firmware versions. Reading and writing firmware to the XBee radio's microcontroller and it help in loading and saving a modem profile as well.

4.2 Testbed and X-CTU Interface

The testbed consists of ten nodes. Each of the node components comprises of an Arduino as the microcontroller, an XBee shield, XBee pro S2B module and an antenna. The X-CTU software was use to upgrade and upload the software to the module as either as a coordinator, router, or end device as the case may be. Particularly, the network has one coordinator, four routers and five end devices. The main reason of having more end device as compared to the routers is to reduce the power consumption in the network, this can prolong the network lifetime.

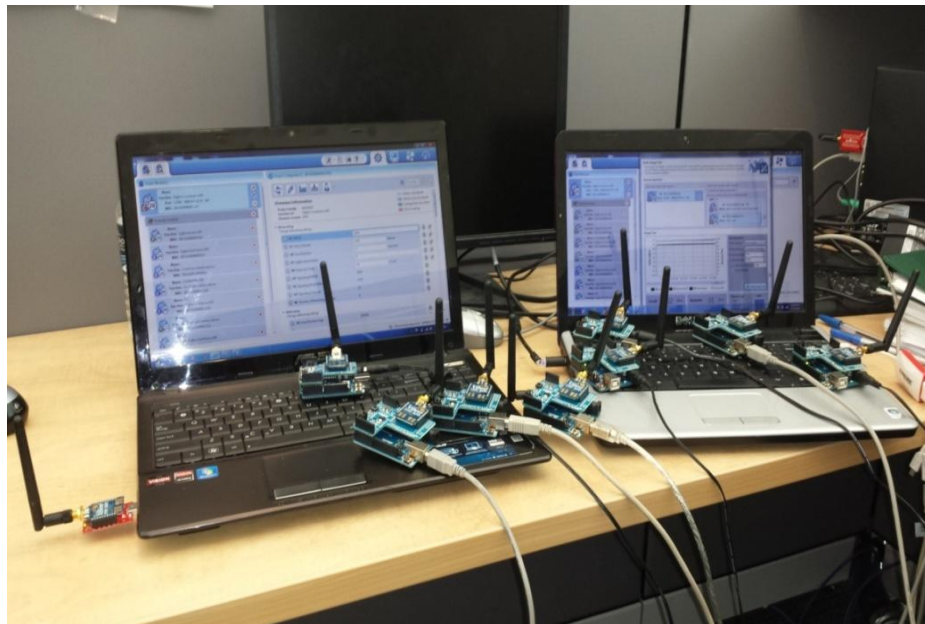


Figure 14: Testbed and X-CTU Interface

4.3 Network Deployment and Settings

In designing wireless sensor networks, a network designer needs to consider certain design parameters amongst others; the optimal transmit power of the devices, the network topology, and the routing protocol [17]. One of the most problematic issues in wireless sensor networks is conservation of power, where nodes rely on limited battery power. Transmitting at low power can affect the connectivity of the network while transmitting at excessive power not only reduces the lifetime of nodes but increases the network interference and decreases the network's lifetime. Thus, determining the optimal power of the nodes that will be necessary to guarantee network connectivity is important. The objective of this thesis is to evaluate the impact of transmit power on ZigBee wireless sensor networks and show that optimal transmit power leads to better network and to implement a real life prototype ZigBee wireless mesh sensor network based on AODV at different power level. To properly design this system, is important to know the communication components of the system. Hence, real life prototype ZigBee wireless mesh sensor network is designed to evaluate the performance of IEEE 802.15.4/ZigBee. The testbed will aid wireless network designer to make a proper decision on each of the transmit power, network topology and the routing scheme. Specifically, in our work we implement wireless mesh networks with transmit power control. The network uses Ad-hoc on Demand Distance Vector Algorithm (AODV) as shown in figure14

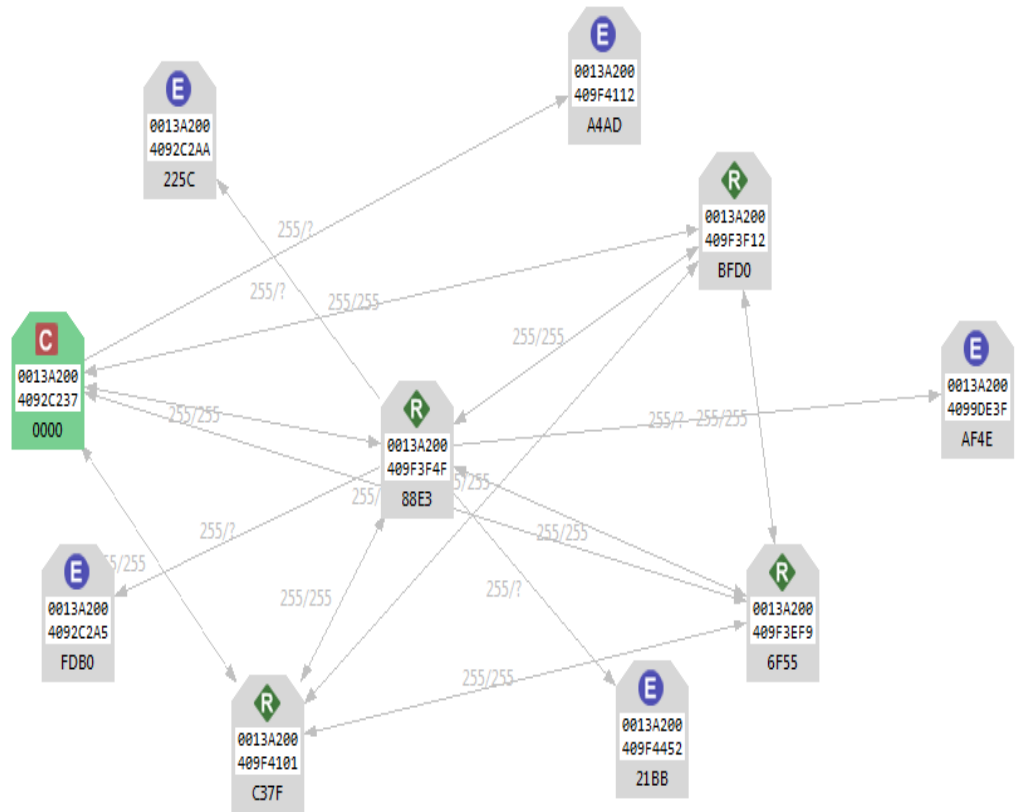


Figure 15: Network Deployment and Setting

The ZigBee radio modules are deployed as shown in the network, in figure 15 showing the Coordinator, Routers, and End Devices. Each of the nodes consists of the 16 bit Network address and media access address (MAC). All nodes are linked to their neighbors with lines as indicated in the graphs while the arrows clearly show the direction of active communication in the network. The network used Ad-hoc on Demand Distance Vector Algorithm (AODV), where nodes only take parts in routing when they are required to do so. Two or more nodes can only communicate by sending or receiving data packets only when they are willing to do so. This is the algorithm employed by ZigBee in mesh networking as deployed.

When a source node needs to communicate with any other node called the destination node, it uses the route discovery method to locate the particular node by sending out a route request packets (RREQ) to all nodes in the network. Each of the packets will have a source address, source sequence number, destination address and destination sequence number, the hop count and the broadcast ID [26, 27].

4.4 Performance Metrics

Some metrics were defined to evaluate the performance of wireless mesh sensor network using AODV to give an ideal behavior and the reliability of the network using ZigBee. These features were measured with respect to data packets;

4.4.1 Packet Delivery Ratio

This ratio indicates the percentage of packets successfully received to the packets sent [29]. It can be used to determine a congested network and how reliable is the network. This metric never considered retransmissions, which means after a packet with ID: 5 is sent out and dropped. The data packet will be re-sent, if the transmission is successful or maximum retransmission is achieved. However retransmission drops are not accounted for and only counted at the point where the data packet is dropped ultimately, and in those cases still counted as a single drop. However, after series of retransmissions, if the packet is received successfully then the drops will not be considered, which would make the total sum of the number of received packets and that of dropped packets equals the number of packets transmitted [26].

4.4.2 Network Throughput

The network throughput gives an idea on how fast data can be transmitted across a network or measure of the number of bits that can be sent from a source node to a destination node in second. In this work, we considered only the total data throughput and ignored overhead in the network. The network throughput is determined by counting total number of data packets received at the node and then computes the total number of bits received and divided by the total transmission time [30].

4.5 Experimental Procedure and Result Analysis

To properly determine the effect and reliability of a wireless sensor mesh network at different transmit power, a setup has been established to transmit data packets from X-CTU software running on a laptop with XBee module attached to Arduino microcontroller unit using XBee shield and ZigBee module. The route is determined by finding the shortest route to a destination of interest. Packet delivery ratio and throughput were measured using X-CTU graphical user interface (GUI), and the data packets were generated using frames generator on X-CTU. The working and procedure of a frame generator was discussed in chapter 3.

4.5.1 Packets Delivery Ratio Vs Transmitted Power

The network settings deployed in figure 14 was considered to observe the experimental results as shown in figure 15. The test was conducted, by varying the transmit power and packet size from 10bytes up to 80bytes with 10 iterations of each testing containing 100packets each and taking the average to avoid any experimental errors. The data packets transmitted were recorded at varying number of hops up to nine hops. The graphs and histograms under different test conditions are plotted and compared.

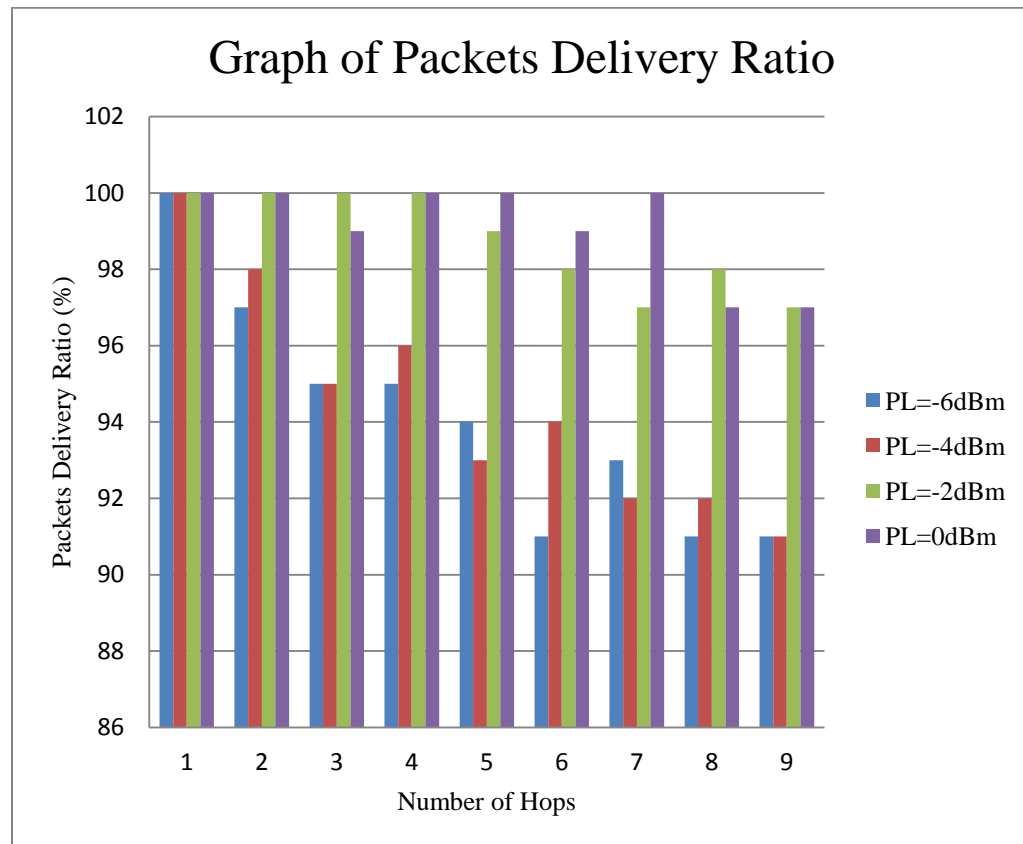


Figure 16: Graph of Packets Delivery Ratio vs number of Hops at different values of transmitted power.

The measured values of packet delivery ratio decrease linearly as the number of hops increases which is expected but increases as the transmit power increases as expected. This was obtained at the expense of high level of interference and limited life span of the network. However, the difference in the histogram between 0dBm and -2dBm was insignificant because, at -2dBm, there was an appreciable increase as compared to -4dBm and -6dBm. Increasing the transmit power more than expected will only lead to unnecessary interference acting as a disturbance to the entire network and reduce the battery life of the nodes and network.

4.5.2 Throughput Measurement At Different Transmit Power

The aim of this experiment is to determine how transmit power affect throughput of a wireless mesh sensor network as a function of the number of hops. The network topology in figure 14 was considered. ZigBee module configured as coordinator sends data packet to an End device, and the total transmission time was noted. The throughput was then calculated by dividing the size of packet by the total transmission time in seconds.

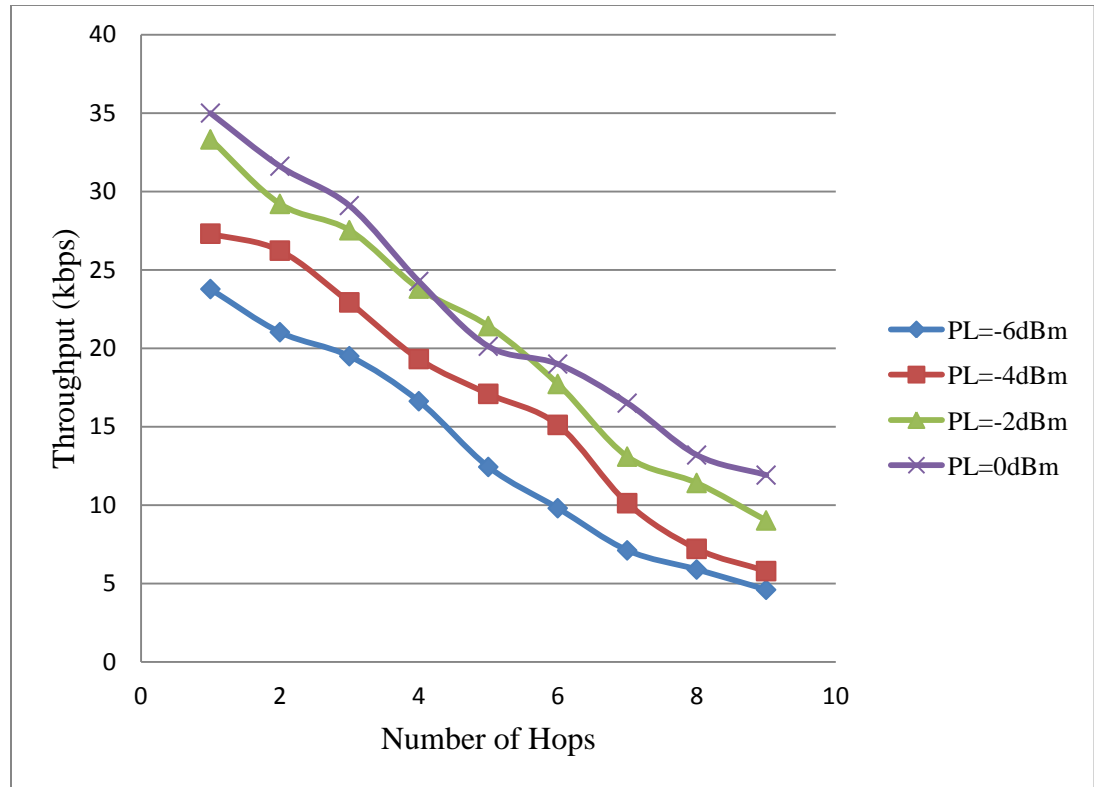


Figure 17: Graph of Throughput (kbps) vs number of Hops

The test was conducted at different transmit power and packet size from 10bytes up to 80bytes with 10 iterations of each testing containing 100packets each and taking the average to avoid any experimental errors. The data packets transmitted were recorded at varying number of hops up to nine hops. The graph of the throughput versus number of hops plotted as shown in figure 17.

The throughput constantly increases as the transmit power was increasing as expected but between 0dBm and -2dBm there was no significant difference, this makes us infer that instead of increasing it further to 0dBm that may introduce unnecessary interference we assume at -2dBm we have achieved the optimal power to transmit.

4.5.3 Graph of Throughput (Kbps) At Different Baud Rate

This experiment was done to have a firm knowledge how throughput of a wireless sensor network is affected by the baud rate and packet length. The network topology shown in figure 14 was considered and the graph of throughput is displayed in figure 18.

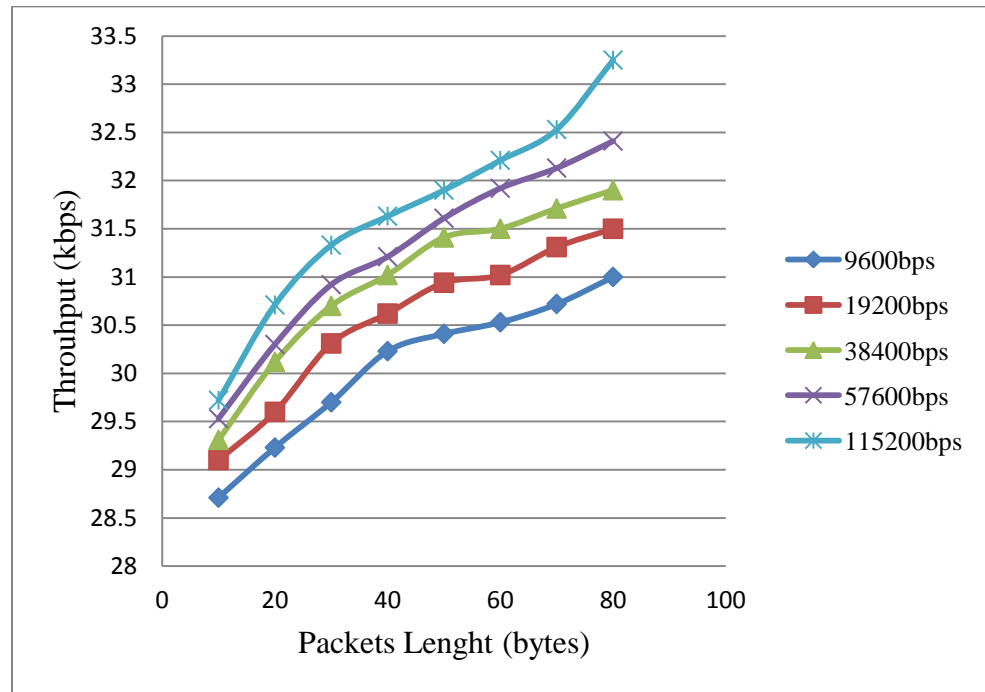


Figure 18: Graph of Throughput (kbps) at different baud rate

The experiment trial was repeated ten times by varying the packet length using different baud rate. It was observed that the baud rate affects the network throughput in such a way that as the network throughput increases, there was a corresponding increase in the baud rate. According to ZigBee standard, 250kbps transmission data rate was guaranteed [31]. The experimental results achieved shows that the performance of the network is far from this data transmission rate described.

CHAPTER FIVE – CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

5.1 Conclusions

A practical self-healing and self-configuring real life prototype ZigBee wireless mesh sensor network were studied to evaluate the performance of ZigBee protocol at different power level. The network performance was evaluated by studying two parameters namely; packet delivery ratio and throughput.

The measured values of packet delivery ratio decrease linearly as the number of hops increases but increases as the transmit power increases from power level 0dBm to -6dBm as expected. At power PL=-2dBm to 0dBm there was no visible increment as compared from -6dBm to -2dBm as shown in figure 16, In our results, PL=-2dBm was considered as the optimal power for the studied mesh topology. Increasing the transmit power above this level is undesirable as it leads to unnecessary interference and reduces the battery life; hence limit the network life span.

The network throughput constantly increases as the transmit power was increasing as expected but between 0dBm and -2dBm there was no significant difference noted, this makes us infer that instead of increasing it further to 0dBm that may introduce unnecessary interference we assume at -2dBm we have achieved the optimal power to transmit. In this experiment, we were able to show that both the PDR and the network throughput have the optimal power at -2dBm which can guarantee network connectivity.

It was observed that the baud rate affects the network throughput in such a way that as the network throughput increases, there was a corresponding increase in the baud rate. According to ZigBee standard, 250kbps transmission data rate was guaranteed [31].

The experimental results achieved shows that the performance of the network is far from this data transmission rate described. For this research work, a maximum throughput of 33.4kbps was obtained that was much lower than the theoretical values of 250kbps at 115200bps baud rate.

Thus, we showed that increasing the power levels of nodes in wireless mesh sensor networks leads to improved packets delivery ratio and throughput improvements in node-to-gateway traffic pattern. However transmitting at unnecessary power introduce excessive interference that is not desirable, therefore, to improve the network performance, the power level should be minimal.

5.2 Future Work

Since this research work gives a first prototype of this system, it gives directions for features work that will further improve it and make it more efficient. The following ideas give an overview of further studies that could be carried out in this area of study: Conduct testing using different types of WSNs simulators and routing technique to compare results. Implementing large number of nodes and conducting testing under a more conducive environment that may cause less interference. The test can also be carried out by implementing the Security/Encryption of all the nodes in the network. Finally, the test can be done to investigate the energy consumptions of the nodes and study more performance metrics like packet delay using suitable software to evaluate ZigBee protocol

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