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Smart Blind Stick for Visually Impaired Using Ultrasonic Sensor

[1]Saumendra Behera, [2]Jyostnamayee Behera, [3]Subrat Kumar Panda

[1,2,3]Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering, GIFT Autonomous, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

Abstract: - ***This paper discusses the implementation of an Arduino-based ultrasonic walking stick designed to assist visually impaired individuals. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 30 million people are completely blind, and around 285 million suffer from some form of visual impairment. These individuals often rely on others for mobility and face numerous challenges in their daily lives. The proposed smart stick enhances user safety by detecting obstacles ahead and delivering feedback through vibrations or upon user request. This allows visually impaired users to navigate independently and confidently. Overall, this system presents an effective solution to overcome the mobility issues faced by the blind.***

Keywords: Arduino UNO, Ultrasonic sensor, Obstacle detection, Vibration alert, Blind assistance

INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this project is to assist visually impaired individuals in navigating confidently by alerting them when their path is blocked by objects, people, or other obstacles. The system includes a buzzer that acts as an alert mechanism—the frequency of its beeps increases as the distance to an obstacle decreases. Essentially, the beep interval is inversely related to the distance from the object.

At the core of this setup is an ultrasonic sensor, which emits high-frequency sound pulses and calculates the time taken for the echo to return, thereby determining the distance of the obstacle. The sensor consists of two main components—one acts as the transmitter sending out sound waves, while the other serves as the receiver that detects the reflected waves. The system is calibrated to measure the echo time based on the speed of sound in air, which helps calculate the object's distance. The entire circuit is powered by a 9V battery and controlled via a switch.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One approach to assist the visually impaired integrates a smart stick equipped with hazard detection, artificial vision, and real-time GPS support. This system uses tools like GPS, artificial intelligence, and audio feedback to guide users in both indoor and outdoor settings. A Raspberry Pi processes the GPS data and hazard detection system, providing voice-based directions and obstacle alerts.

Another method involves using ultrasonic waves, similar to sonar technology used by the military, for object detection. These systems transmit bursts between 21 KHz and 50 KHz and alert users with sound when obstacles are detected.

Some studies focus on low-cost, user-friendly solutions that integrate ultrasonic sensors with GPS and audio guidance through Android platforms. These systems provide reliable and efficient navigation without complex interfaces.

Other enhanced designs utilize additional sensors, such as infrared and water sensors, allowing detection of various obstacles, including those above or below waist level. These systems aim to be compact, lightweight, and structurally similar to traditional canes but technologically advanced enough to provide real-time feedback.

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Overall, such innovations aim to offer affordable, reliable, and user-friendly tools to improve the independence and safety of individuals with visual impairments.

BLOCK DIAGRAM OVERVIEW

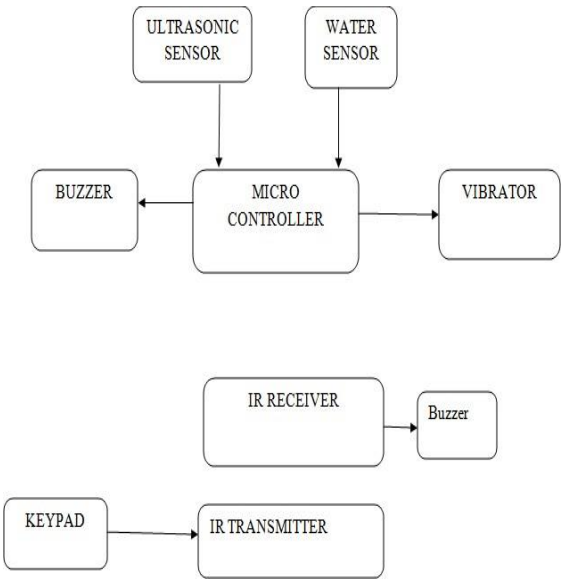
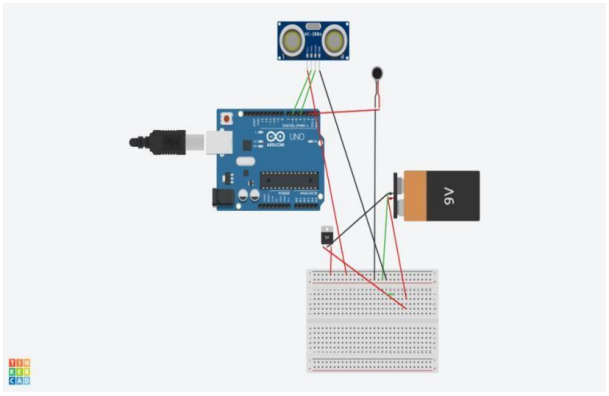


Fig. 1. Block diagram of the system

The system's core is the **Arduino microcontroller**, to which several modules are connected:

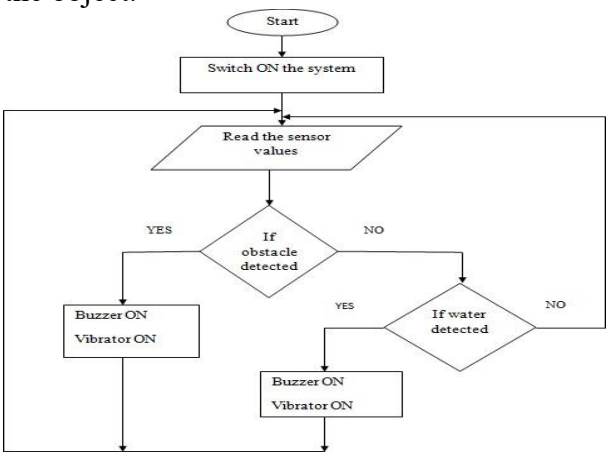
- **Ultrasonic Sensor (ULS)**: Detects obstacles by measuring distance through sound waves.
- **Vibrator and Buzzer**: Alert the user based on sensor input—stronger signals for closer obstacles.
- **Water Sensor**: Identifies the presence of water and triggers an alert to prevent damage or slipping.
- **Infrared (IR) Module**: Helps the user locate the stick if misplaced by transmitting and receiving signals.

This integration of components ensures that the stick can guide users safely through different environments by providing tactile and auditory feedback.



FLOW CHART

This is the conceptual design of the device, which includes a circuit with ultrasonic sensors and a water detector connected to an Arduino Uno microcontroller. The primary function of this smart stick is to detect obstacles within a 100 cm range. As the user approaches an obstacle, the frequency of the buzzer increases, offering auditory feedback about the proximity of the object.



Hardware Implementation – Arduino Uno

The system incorporates an **Arduino Uno** microcontroller, which interfaces with ultrasonic sensors, a water detector, and other components. The Arduino Uno is built around the ATmega328p microcontroller, offering 14 digital I/O pins (6 of which can be used for PWM output), 6 analog inputs, and a 16 MHz quartz crystal. The water sensor uses two wires whose resistance varies based on water contact, allowing it to detect

moisture levels. The RF transmitter is connected to the Arduino to send signals, which are then used for further actions, like triggering a buzzer.

Ultrasonic Sensor

Both the ultrasonic and water sensors capture real-time data and send it to the microcontroller. The microcontroller processes the information and activates the buzzer when an obstacle is detected. The water sensor alerts the user to water hazards on the ground, and the entire system operates using a battery as the power source.

RF Transmitter and Receiver

The blind stick is equipped with both an RF transmitter and receiver. The transmitter sends signals to the receiver, allowing the user to detect their stick through the echo, which helps them track its location more easily.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As the ultrasonic sensor gets closer to an obstacle, the buzzer emits a louder sound, with the volume increasing as the distance decreases. The buzzer also reacts to varying light conditions—if the Light Dependent Resistor (LDR) detects low light, the buzzer will activate. If there are no issues, the buzzer remains silent.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE

This project successfully demonstrates the design and implementation of a smart walking stick for visually impaired individuals. The smart stick provides a simple, cost-effective solution to enhance mobility by detecting obstacles within a 3-meter radius. The system is affordable, reliable, lightweight, and offers quick response times. As a next step, wireless connectivity could be incorporated to enhance features such as obstacle detection range and the addition of a GPS system for location tracking. The goal is to create an adaptive and widely accessible mobility aid for visually impaired individuals, especially in developing countries. Future improvements could include additional sensors for better obstacle detection, as well as the integration of a GPS and GSM module to notify caregivers about the user's location.

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