Wearable Air Quality Monitor Project Proposal

Team Members

- Ziheng Li (zihengl5)
- Xin Yang (xiny9)
- Zonghan Yang (zonghan2)

1. Introduction

Problem:

Air pollution has been a growing global concern. The World Health Organization estimates the air breath by 9 out of 10 people containing high levels of pollutants, leading to billions of people suffering in health issue related to it. Despite this severe situation, most individuals lack real-time information about the air quality in their current environment. And existing air quality monitors are often expensive, with prices ranging from $100 to several hundred dollars, which is not affordable to every individual. In addition, most air quality monitors are designed for fixed location and often contains limited information.

Solution:

We propose a **Wearable Air Quality Monitor** to address the need for affordable, portable, and comprehensive air quality monitoring. This device will track key air pollutants such as **Particulate Matter (PM2.5, PM10)**, **Carbon Dioxide (CO2)**, and **toxic gases like Carbon Monoxide (CO), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2), and Formaldehyde**. The monitor will connect to smartphones via Bluetooth or Wi-Fi to provide users with real-time data and notifications. We aim to make the device affordable to a wider audience by making the price between $50-80. The wearable nature allows users to monitor air quality wherever they want, and the device will offer guidance for user's behavior, such as wear a mask or avoid outdoor activities when pollution levels are high.

Visual Aid:
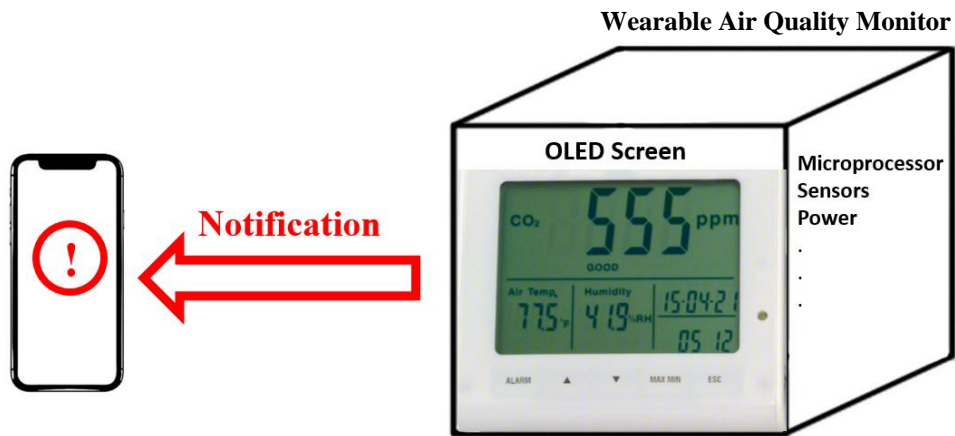
Device Description:

A compact, portable air quality monitor shaped like a small box with a LED screen on the front that displays real-time air quality levels. The device has a smooth, minimalist exterior with rounded corners. On the back, there's a clip that can attach to a backpack or belt, making it easy to carry. The monitor should include small air intake vents on the sides for sampling air quality. The overall design should be modern and user-friendly.

High-level Requirements:

- The device must be able to detect and measure **PM2.5, PM10**, and **CO2** levels with an accuracy within **±10%** of common market air quality monitors.
- The toxic gas sensors for **CO**, **NO2**, and **Formaldehyde** must trigger alerts when gas concentrations reach harmful levels. We could test this by putting our device in a sealed container, and then fill the container with toxic gas.
- The device must be portable, with less than 500 gram's weight, and should maintain a stable Bluetooth or Wi-Fi connection with a smartphone within a **5-meter's range**.

2. Design

Block Diagram:
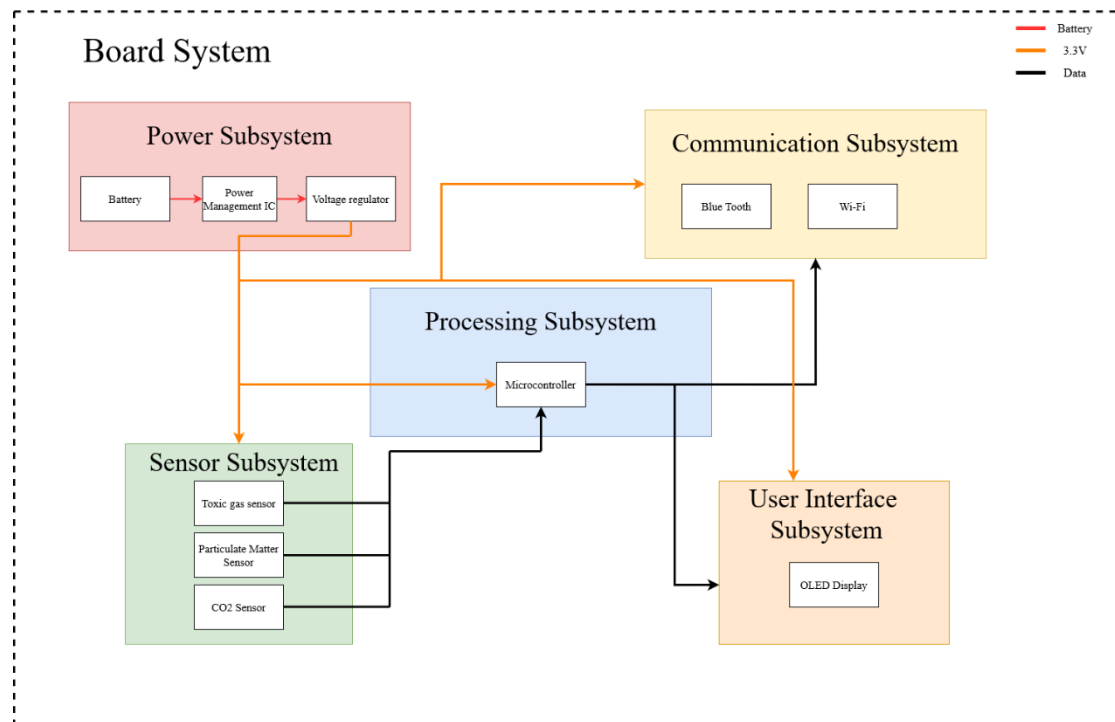
Subsystem Overview:

1. **Sensor Subsystem:** This subsystem measures air quality parameters such as PM2.5, PM10, CO2, and toxic gases like CO, NO2, and formaldehyde. The sensors collect data and then output to the microcontroller for processing.
2. **Processing Subsystem:** This subsystem processes the data collected by the sensors, performs necessary calculations, and determines whether any air quality thresholds are exceeded. It is the brain of our device and act like a bridge to communicate between user interface and communication subsystems.
3. **Communication Subsystem:** This subsystem allows the device to connect to a smartphone via Bluetooth or Wi-Fi, sending real-time data and notifications. It interacts with the smartphone to display detailed air quality information.
4. **Power Subsystem:** This subsystem includes a 5V rechargeable lithium battery, a power management IC, and a voltage regulator. It ensures the device can operate for at least 24 hours on a single charge.
5. **User Interface Subsystem:** This subsystem includes an OLED display, providing users with visual feedback on air quality readings. It also allows users to navigate through various settings.

Subsystem Requirements:

1. Sensor Subsystem

The sensor subsystem is the core of our air quality monitor, hence I will focus more on explaining this part. This subsystem is responsible for collecting accurate environmental data. It consists of multiple gas sensors, each designed to measure specific air quality parameters. These sensors are integrated into the main board. Also each position is being calibrated to meet best performance.

Components:

1. PM2.5/PM10 Sensor: PMS5003
2. CO2, Temperature, and Humidity Sensor: Hiletgo SCD41
3. Formaldehyde Sensor: DFRobot SEN0231
4. Carbon Monoxide (CO) Sensor: L-com SRAQ-G012

Operational Requirements:

- Pick the minimum and maximum operating temperature/humidity of each sensor, we decide that our sensor should operate within temperature range of -10°C to 50°C, and humidity range of 15%-90% RH. This would ensure accurate measurements for every data.
- Before put everything into use, we might need to calibrate some of the sensor, particularly for the SCD41, to maintain long-term accuracy.

Integration:

- The PMS5003 & SCD41 sensor is positioned near the sides of the air intake vents to ensure proper airflow for accurate data.
- The temperature/humidity sensor is placed so that it has good air circulation but protected from direct airflow to prevent temperature fluctuations. Also it should avoid contact with the microprocessor and human body.
- The SEN0231 formaldehyde sensor and SRAQ-G012 CO sensor are positioned directly against vents to minimize the response time for toxic gas.

Data Collection and Processing:

- Sensor readings are collected at a constant intervals (e.g., every 15 seconds) to provide real-time air quality data.

- Raw sensor data is processed by the microcontroller to convert readings into human readable data.
- The processed data is then reflect on the device's LED screen and transmitted on to user's phone.

Alert System:

- The software includes adjustable thresholds for each measured parameters.
- When any parameter exceeds its safe threshold, the device triggers an alert, which will be displayed on the LED screen and sent as a notification to the connected smartphone.

Requirement	Verification
The PM2.5 and PM10 sensors must detect particulate matter levels within ±10% accuracy.	Place the device in a controlled environment with known particulate matter concentrations and compare readings with a commercial sensor. Ensure the error margin is less than ±10%.
CO2 sensor must measure concentrations up to 5000 ppm with ±10% accuracy.	Test the sensor in a sealed container filled with CO2 gas at varying concentrations. Compare the readings with a commercial sensor and verify the accuracy is within ±10%.
CO, NO2, and Formaldehyde sensors must trigger alerts when concentrations exceed safe levels.	Place the sensors in a controlled gas chamber and increase desired gas concentrations. Verify that alerts are triggered at predefined safety thresholds.
All sensors must function accurately in temperatures ranging from -10°C to 50°C.	Test the sensor performance in both low and high-temperature conditions by putting them in fridge/oven, and then verify that readings stay within acceptable error margins.

2. Processing Subsystem

This subsystem processes the data collected by the sensors, performs necessary calculations, and determines whether any air quality thresholds are exceeded. It is the brain of our device and act like a bridge to communicate between user interface and communication subsystems.

Components:

1. Microcontroller (STM32 series): Responsible for processing raw sensor data, convert it into human readable format and interfacing with other subsystems.
2. Alerting Algorithm: Designed to compare the sensor data against known safety limits and alert users when those limits are breached.

Requirement	Verification
The microcontroller must process data from all sensors at the same time within 10 seconds.	Simulate real-world scenarios by sending data from all sensors simultaneously. Measure processing time with a stopwatch and ensure the delay is less than 10 seconds.
The microcontroller must trigger alerts within 30 seconds after detecting harmful gas.	In a controlled test, expose the sensors to harmful gas environment. Record the time taken for the microcontroller to trigger an alert and ensure it is less than 30 seconds.
Data accuracy must be maintained after multiple sensor inputs.	Simulate continuous sensor input in real-time and log data over 24 hours. Verify that the data is accurate with no significant variant.

3. Communication Subsystem

The communication subsystem allows the device to interface with a smartphone via Bluetooth or Wi-Fi, transmitting real-time air quality data. It must send notifications when pollution levels exceed the pre-set thresholds within 60 seconds.

Components

1. Bluetooth Module: RN4870/71

    o Function: Transmit data between our device and smartphone

    o Frequency Band: 2.402 to 2.480 GHz

    o Operating Voltage Range: 1.9V to 3.6V (3.3V typical)

    o Power Consumption: ~10mA average

    o Dimensions: 12 mm x 22 mm

    o Special Features: On-board chip antenna with up to 50m range

    o Working Temperature Range: -20°C to +70°C

2. Smartphone App: Displays detailed air quality information and send notifications to guide user's behavior when necessary.

Requirement	Verification
The Bluetooth must maintain a stable connection within a 5-meter range.	Test the connection in different environments and distances from 1m to 5m, ensuring consistent data transmission.
The system must send air quality notifications to a smartphone within 60 seconds of detecting harmful levels.	Expose the sensors to hazardous air conditions and use top watch to time how long it takes for a notification to appear on the smartphone. Verify that it is under 60 seconds.
The app must accurately display real-time air quality data with the sensor readings.	Compare the readings displayed on the smartphone with real-time data on LED screen from the device. Ensure that there is no difference.

4. Power Subsystem

The power subsystem consists of a rechargeable lithium-ion battery, a voltage regulator, and a power management circuit. The battery is designed to power the device continuously for at least 24 hours on a single charge. The power management should effectively save some energy and ensuring minimal waste.

Components

1. 5V Rechargeable Lithium-Ion Battery: Capacity of 4000mAh, powers all components of the air quality monitor.
2. Power Management Circuit: Integrated lithium-ion battery linear charging and discharging, I2C interface for configuration and monitoring.
3. L7805 voltage regulator: 5V voltage regulator to power the microcontroller and sensors.

Requirement	Verification
The battery must provide power for at least 24 hours on a single charge.	Fully charge the battery, then run the device continuously. Record the operational time to ensure it exceeds 24 hours.
The power management system must prevent overcharging of the battery.	Simulate the battery charging cycle and verify that charging stops once the battery is fully charged. Monitor the battery voltage to ensure no overcharging.
The system must operate efficiently under varying loads.	Test the power consumption under light, moderate, and heavy sensor activity. Measure the efficiency to ensure minimal energy waste.
The power system must provide stable voltages to all components under varying load conditions.	1Use an oscilloscope to monitor the 5V and 3.3V rails while the device cycles through different operational modes. Ensure that voltages remain within ±5% of their nominal values under all load conditions.

5. User Interface Subsystem

The user interface subsystem consists of an LED display that provides real-time feedback to the user. The interface must be easy to read in different lighting conditions and clearly indicate air quality levels, including hazard warnings. Users must be able to access real-time air quality data at a glance, with clear indications of hazard levels for different pollutants.

Components

- LED Display: Receive the data from microcontroller and convert it into visual output of real-time air quality data.
- User Controls: Allows the user to navigate between different settings in mobile app and monitor current air quality status.

Requirement	Verification
The LED display must be visible in both low-light and outdoor conditions.	Test the LED display in dark and bright lighting conditions to ensure readability in both scenarios.
The interface must display current air quality data with hazard indications clearly.	Simulate varying air quality conditions and verify that reading on the screen is the same as output from sensors, and each hazard levels are accurately displayed.
Users must be able to navigate between data intuitively.	Conduct user testing by having participants navigate through the data. Ensure the interface is clear to any new users.
The device must be portable, with less than 500 gram's weight.	Fabricate the device and weight it, ensure the reading is less than 500g.

Tolerance Analysis:

The Wearable Air Quality Monitor is designed to meet specific requirements such as long battery life, lightweight construction, and precise sensor functionality. The following tolerance analysis addresses the critical aspects that could impact the performance of the device.

Ensuring 24-Hour Operation without Recharging:

To ensure the device can operate continuously for 24 hours without recharging, we must calculate the total power consumption of all subsystems and compare it with the battery's capacity.

- **Power consumption of Components:**

  - PM2.5/PM10 Sensor (PMS5003): ~100mA at 5V → 0.5W

  - CO2 Sensor (Hiletgo SCD41): ~0.4mA at 5V → 0.002W

  - Formaldehyde Sensor (DFRobot SEN0231): ~3.6V at <50mA → 0.18W

  - CO Sensor (L-com SRAQ-G012): ~10mA at 5V → 0.05W

  - Bluetooth Module (RN4870/71): ~10mA at 3.3V → 0.033W

  - Microcontroller (STM32 series): ~100mA at 3.3V → 0.33W

  - OLED Display: ~30mA at 3.3V → 0.1W

- **Total Power Consumption:**
  Note that the PM2.5/PM10 sensor and the Formaldehyde sensor have a limited operational lifetime, approximately 12 months due to the consumption of internal materials. We want to optimize their usage to extend their lifespan. These sensors degrade over time because they rely on consumable elements to detect pollutants, and continuous operation would accelerate the depletion of these materials. To mitigate this, we will implement a power-saving strategy where the sensors only operate cyclic, at a defined interval, instead of continuously sampling the air. This approach will significantly reduce unnecessary wear on the sensors, ensuring their functionality for a long period. Additionally, the intermittent operation will reduce overall power consumption, contributing to the goal of 24-hour device operation on a single battery charge.

We decide the operating cycle for PMS5003 and Formaldehyde Sensor to be: ON for 30 seconds, Stand By for 1 minutes. PM2.5/10 and Formaldehyde tends to be invariable for a short period of time, and hence periodically sleep these two sensors will not dramatically affect the performance of our device.

$$P_{total} = 0.5\text{W} \times \frac{30}{30 + 60} + 0.002\text{W} + 0.18\text{W} \times \frac{30}{90} + 0.05\text{W} + 0.033\text{W} + 0.33\text{W} + 0.1\text{W} = 0.742\text{W}$$

- **Battery Capacity**:
  We are using a **4000mAh** lithium-ion battery rated at **5V**. The total energy stored in the battery is:

$$E_{battery} = 4000mAh \times 5V = 20Wh$$

- **Operating Time**:
  To calculate the operating time:

$$t = \frac{E_{battery}}{P_{total}} = \frac{20Wh}{0.742W} \approx 27 hours$$

Note that all the operating current are peak current, and for most of the time the actual current is lower than peak, hence the total operating time is at least 27hours. Which prove that we could easily meet the requirements of "operate continuously for 24 hours".

3. Ethics and Safety

We adhere to the principle stated by IEEE Code of Ethics. As according to I.1 of Code of Ethics we should "hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public, to strive to comply with ethical design and sustainable development practices, to protect the privacy of others, and to disclose promptly factors that might endanger the public or the environment". By designing an air quality monitor, we intend to improve the well-being of users by providing an indication of air quality surrounding them, enabling them to avoid environments that may lead to health issues due to the prevalence of pollutants. Hence, as stated in I.5 and promised in our proposal before, we must make experimental data transparent, and be honest about inaccuracies, in order to avoid giving users false negative alarm, which may result in inhaling excessive pollutants if the monitor overestimated the quality of the air. The concern raised from proposal is what's the way to minimize inaccuracies of measurement for our device, which will surely be addressed during the design procedures by improving the sensor system as best as we could.

The safety issues involve mainly two aspects: danger due to the testing environment as well as danger due to electricity usage. As it is required to test our monitor in environment with air pollution, we need to make the lab environment sealed and controlled to avoid affecting the safety and health of others. For members who will conduct testing within such environments, we promise to provide them with measures such as pollutant-resistant masks. Danger due to electricity usage is able to affect not only our team members developing the device, but also users of our final product. The monitor, especially the power system that uses batteries, may be susceptible to damage and even burning due to over-heating, suppression, and over-charging. We will surely include design procedure to test the durability of our power system and our device after assembling it, through putting the power system in circuit with current, and adjusting voltage and resistance. Any safety issue discovered will be seriously addressed, which may involve changing battery or re-design our systems. We believe that these are the best measures to sufficiently protect both users and developers from unsafe conditions caused by your project.

By adhering to these ethical and safety guidelines, we aim to develop a product that not only provides value to users but also apply to the ethical conduct.

Reference

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