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Robotics Arm

Hawaldar Sahil Nasir, Adinath Satpute, Kale Yash Santosh

Electronics and Telecommunication Samarth Polytechnic, Belhe
Pune, India

Abstract. The robotic arm project aims to design and develop an automated system capable of performing precise pick-and-place operations to reduce human effort and increase efficiency in industrial applications. The robotic arm is designed using CAD software and fabricated using lightweight materials such as 3D-printed PLA and aluminum. Powered by servo motors and controlled through an Arduino microcontroller, the system executes coordinated multi-axis movements. By integrating motor drivers and optional position sensors, the arm handles small objects with high accuracy. Experimental testing demonstrates that the arm operates smoothly with consistent performance and minimal error. This project validates the potential of low-cost robotic systems for manufacturing, laboratory automation, and educational purposes.

keywords: Robotic Arm, Arduino UNO, Automation, Servo Motor, Pick-and-Place, Kinematics, Industrial Robotics.

I Introduction

A robotic arm is a highly complex mechanical device designed to mimic the movement and functions of a human arm. In the modern industrial landscape, these programmable manipulators have become essential tools for driving automation, ensuring safety, and achieving millimeter-level accuracy. With the growing demand for efficiency in manufacturing, the reliance on automated systems to handle repetitive and hazardous tasks has skyrocketed.

This project focuses on the design and development of an articulated robotic arm specifically optimized for pick-and-place operations. By leveraging the computational simplicity of an Arduino microcontroller and the precise angular control of servo motors, the project aims to create a cost-effective and reliable system capable of handling small-scale automation tasks.

II. Literature Survey

The field of industrial robotics has seen rapid advancements over the past few decades.
1. Early Industrial Manipulators: Early robotic arms, such as the Unimate, relied on heavy hydraulic actuators. While

powerful, they were expensive, slow, and completely unsuitable for lightweight or educational tasks.

2. Electric Actuation & SCARA Robots: The shift to electric servo motors allowed for the development of SCARA (Selective Compliance Assembly Robot Arm) systems. These provided high speed and precision for assembly lines but remained proprietary and closed- source.

3. Microcontroller-Based Automation: Recent research emphasizes democratizing robotics using open- source hardware. Studies show that combining standard microcontrollers (like the Arduino ecosystem) with modern PWM (Pulse Width Modulation) servo controllers yields highly accurate, multi-degree-of-freedom manipulators at a fraction of traditional industrial costs.

III. Platform Technology Used

The system is built upon reliable embedded electronics and precise actuation control.

- **Microcontroller (Arduino):** The core logic engine that processes programmed motion paths and translates them into actionable electronic signals.
- **Actuation System:** High-torque servo motors operating on closed-loop feedback systems to maintain precise angular positions.
- **Kinematic Control:** The software utilizes inverse and forward kinematics programmed in C++ to map the 3D space coordinates to specific servo motor angles.

IV. Problem Statement

In many manufacturing and packaging industries, sorting and moving small objects is still done manually. This manual labor is highly repetitive, prone to human error due to fatigue, and inefficient in terms of speed. Furthermore, deploying human workers in hazardous environments (e.g., handling toxic chemicals or high-temperature materials) poses severe health and safety risks. There is a strong need for an affordable, programmable, and automated mechanical solution that can consistently perform these tasks without human intervention.

V. Aim and Objectives

The primary aim is to design an automated robotic arm to replace manual human effort in repetitive tasks. Objectives:

1. To design and develop a robotic arm capable of performing precise and repeatable pick-and-place operations.
2. To implement a control system using an Arduino microcontroller and servo motors for smooth and accurate movement.
3. To study and apply automation principles that reduce human effort and increase productivity.
4. To test and evaluate the performance, accuracy, and efficiency of the robotic arm in different working conditions.
5. To explore practical applications in manufacturing, laboratories, and educational environments.

VI. Diagram

A) Block Diagram

The block diagram maps the signal and power flow. The Power Supply feeds both the Arduino and the Motor Driver. The Arduino sends logic signals to the Motor Driver, which then amplifies the current to drive the Servo Motors, ultimately moving the End Effector (Gripper).

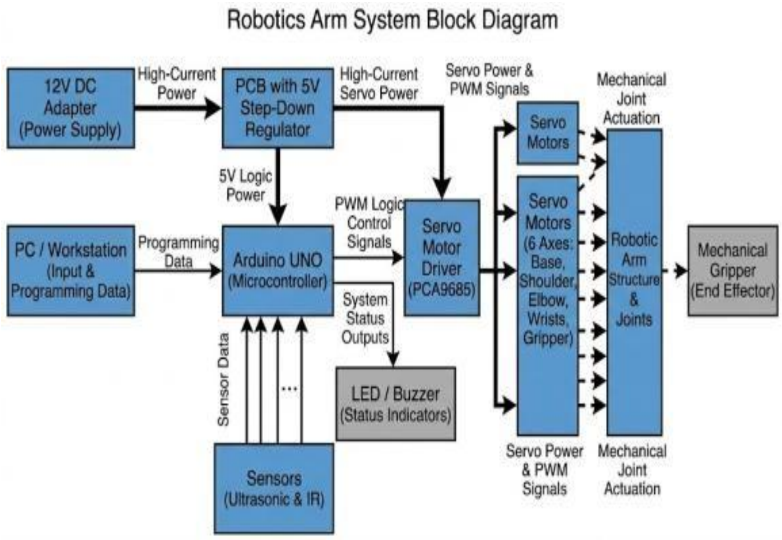

Fig. 1. System Block Diagram.

B) Flow Chart

The software logic sequentially initializes the servo positions, calculates the required joint angles for the target destination, moves the arm, actuates the gripper to grab the object, moves to the drop-off location, and releases the object.

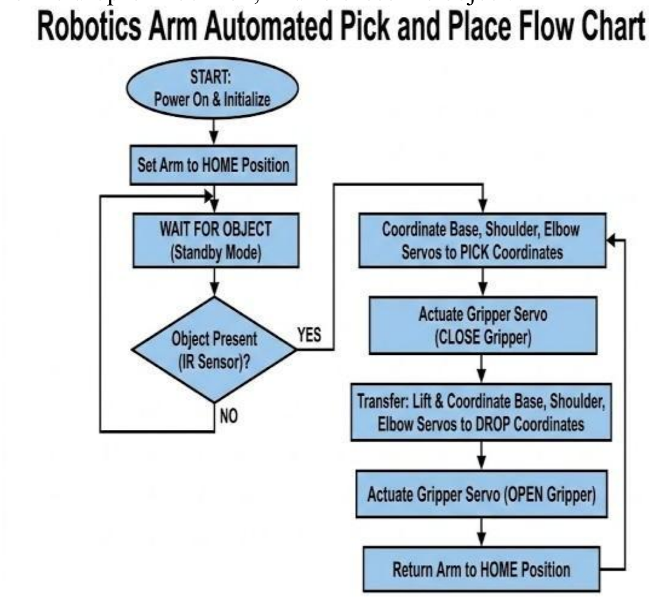

Fig. 2. Software Flow Chart.

c) Circuit Diagram

The The circuit diagram illustrates the wiring of the Arduino UNO, the external 12V/5V power distribution for the servo motors (preventing microcontroller brown-outs), and the PWM signal connections to the SG90/MG995 servos.

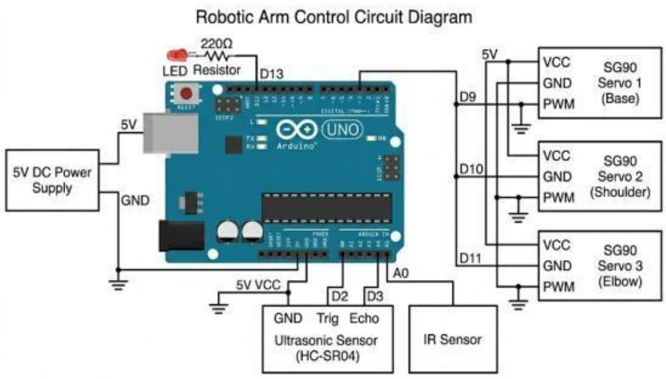

Fig. 3. Circuit Diagram.

VII. Components / Materials

The system is constructed using carefully selected mechanical and electronic components to ensure stability and precise control.

- **Arduino UNO (Microcontroller):** Acts as the central brain of the robotic arm. It reads the embedded C++ code and generates the specific Pulse Width Modulation (PWM) signals required to control the exact angle of each joint.
- **Servo Motors (SG90 / MG995):** These are the physical actuators of the system. Unlike standard DC motors, servo motors have built-in potentiometers and control circuitry (closed-loop) that allow them to hold a specific rotational angle (typically 0° to 180°), which is vital for precise joint positioning (base, shoulder, elbow, wrist).
- **Motor Driver (L293D / PCA9685):** Serves as the power and signal interface. Since standard microcontrollers cannot supply the high current required by multiple servo motors under load, the motor driver acts as a middleman, taking low-current logic signals from the Arduino and delivering high-current power to the motors.
- **Frame Material (Aluminum / 3D Printed PLA):** Forms the physical skeleton of the arm. Lightweight materials are critical to reduce the mechanical strain and torque requirements on the servo motors while maintaining structural rigidity.
- **End Effector (Gripper):** The mechanical "hand" at the end of the arm. It uses a dedicated servo to translate rotational motion into linear clamping force to securely hold and release objects.
- **Power Supply:** A dedicated 12V DC Adapter or high-discharge battery is utilized to provide clean, uninterrupted power to the heavy electrical loads of the motors.
- **Sensors (Ultrasonic / IR):** Optional feedback modules used for detecting obstacles or confirming the presence of an object before the gripper attempts to close.

VIII. Working

The automated process follows a highly coordinated sequence:

1. Power Supply & Initialization: The system is powered up, providing energy to both the Arduino and the servos. The arm immediately moves to a predefined "Home" position.

2. Signal Transmission: The Arduino processes the pre-programmed coordinate instructions and translates them into corresponding PWM logic signals sent to the motor driver.

3. Coordination of Joints: The base servo rotates to align with the target object. Simultaneously, the shoulder and elbow servos adjust their angles to lower the arm to the exact height required.

4. Gripper Operation: Once in position, the Arduino sends a signal to the end effector servo, closing the gripper to securely hold the object.

5. Motor Movement (Transfer): The arm lifts the object, rotates the base to the desired drop-off location, and lowers the arm again.

6. Automation Cycle: The gripper opens to release the object, and the arm returns to its home position to automatically repeat the cycle without human intervention.

IX. Results

During experimental trials, the robotic arm successfully demonstrated continuous pick- and-place operations.

- **Positional Accuracy:** The use of closed- loop servo motors allowed the end effector to reach spatial coordinates with highly repeatable accuracy and minimal deviation.
- **Stability:** The integration of the PCA9685/L293D motor driver prevented power drops, ensuring jitter- free movement even when lifting heavier payloads.
- **Automation:** The system successfully ran continuous loops, proving its viability for uninterrupted industrial sorting tasks.

X. Advantages & Applications

Advantages

- **Reduces Human Effort:** Automates repetitive tasks, minimizing the need for manual labor.
- **Increases Efficiency:** Works continuously without fatigue, vastly increasing the speed of operations.
- **Enhances Safety:** Can be deployed in hazardous environments (e.g., toxic areas, extreme temperatures) where human presence is risky.
- **Improves Precision:** Servo motor control drastically reduces human- induced errors.

Applications

- **Industrial Automation:** Welding, painting, assembly tasks, and production line packaging.
- **Material Handling:** Lifting and sorting materials in large-scale warehouses.
- **Medical & Lab:** Handling dangerous chemicals or performing precision-based test tube operations.
- **Space and Defense:** Remote operations in satellites, spacecraft, and bomb- disposal units.

XI. Future Scope

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Integration:** Upgrading the system with computer vision (e.g., OpenCV) to allow the arm to dynamically recognize objects, sort them by color or shape, and make autonomous decisions.
- **Wireless and IoT Control:** Integrating an ESP32 or Wi-Fi module to allow remote operation, monitoring, and telemetry logging via cloud dashboards.
- **Voice and Gesture Control**: Utilizing sensor gloves or speech recognition algorithms to make the robotic arm highly interactive and user-friendly for human-machine collaboration.
- **Enhanced Payload:** Upgrading the chassis to carbon fiber and utilizing industrial stepper motors to increase the arm's lifting capacity and reach.

XII. Conclusion

The robotic arm project successfully demonstrates the concept of automation and precise motion control using an Arduino-based embedded system. The design and development of the system show how mechanical, electrical, and programming principles can be synergized to perform real- time, highly accurate pick-and-place tasks. The project effectively achieved its main objective of reducing human effort while improving efficiency in repetitive industrial processes. Serving as a strong foundation for understanding industrial robotics, this project opens significant opportunities for further advancements, such as integrating artificial intelligence and IoT for next-generation smart manufacturing.

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