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通过低功耗蓝牙串口启动的智能物联网关

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摘要: 为实现对智能网关系统的配置和管理, 借助应用日益广泛的低功耗蓝牙(BLE)技术, 在网关系统中增加一个独立的BLE模块的基础上使用BLE串口方式来实现。这种设计方式可以允许用户在一定距离范围内使用不接触网关设备的方式对其进行简单的配置和管理, 为网关启动和复位等管理操作带来极大的便利, 具有很强的实用性和便利性。

关键词: 低功耗蓝牙; 物联网; 智能网关; 串口服务

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Bluetooth Low Energy UART booting based smart gateway for Internet of Things

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Abstract: To realize the configuration and management of smart gateway system, the Bluetooth Low Energy(BLE) Universal Asynchronous Receiver/Transmitter(UART) is utilized to the system, adding with an extra independent BLE module. This design allows users to simply configure and manage the gateway by device-non-contact way within a proper coverage area of BLE. Thus this method will greatly facilitate the gateway's management of startup and reset, and bring it great practicability and convenience.

Keywords: Bluetooth Low Energy(BLE); Internet of Things(IoT); smart gateway; UART service

随着物联网(IoT)技术的不断发展, 物联网变得越来越智能化, 而物联网网关, 作为连接感知网络与传统通信网络的纽带, 在物联网中承担着日益重要的角色。作为网关设备, 物联网网关可以实现感知网络与通信网络之间以及不同类型感知网络之间的协议转换, 既可以实现广域互联, 又可以实现局域互联^[1]。此外, 物联网网关还需要具备设备管理功能, 运营商通过物联网网关设备可以管理底层的各感知节点, 了解各节点的相关信息, 并实现远程控制^[2]。然而, 物联网网关作为一台一直处于高负荷工作状态的设备, 常常会不可避免地出现一些由于人为或非人为因素造成的物联网网关系统运行效率下降甚至死机, 这时, 便需要采取一些简单方便的方式对网关设备进行启动和复位操作。传统网关主要采取硬件启动-复位开关的方式或者是串口命令或控制台接口(如 CONSOLE)管理的方式亦或是 WEB 管理的方式来实现对网关系统的启动和复位操作。然而无论是硬件启动-复位开关的方式、串口命令或 CONSOLE 口管理的方式, 还是 WEB 管理的方式, 要么需要接触网关设备本身或与网关设备建立实物连接, 要么需要与网关设备建立可靠的网络连接, 才能对其进行启动和复位操作。基于此, 本文在所设计的网关系统中增加一个独立的低功耗蓝牙(BLE)模块, 用 BLE 串口的方式实现对网关系统进行启动和复位等管理操作。这种设计实现了对网关系统进行简单的“远距离、非接触式”管理。

1 低功耗蓝牙(BLE)介绍

BLE 技术是一种低成本、短距离、可互操作的鲁棒性无线技术, 工作在免许可的 2.4 GHz 工业、科学、医学

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(Industrial Scientific Medical, ISM)频段^[3]。BLE 在设计之初便被定位为一种超低功耗(Ultra Low Power, ULP)无线技术, 采用了多种智能手段来最大限度地降低功耗。其最大化的待机时间、快速连接和低峰值的发送/接收功耗三大特性成就了其 ULP 性能。BLE 共有 40 个信道, 可分为广播和数据 2 种信道类型, 其中广播信道有 3 个, 数据信道有 37 个, 见图 1。由于 BLE 和 WiFi 均工作在 2.4 GHz 频段, 在二者同时使用时相互之间可能会产生影响, 为此 BLE 在设计上做了系统兼容性方面的考虑, 设计 BLE 信道表时最大程度地避开了 WiFi 的工作信道, 故此 BLE 除 3 个广播信道之外, 还有 9 个数据信道分布在 WiFi 信道表之外, 见图 2, 在确保了 BLE 系统的可靠性及与 WiFi 系统的兼容性的同时, 也增强了自身的抗干扰特性^[4]。

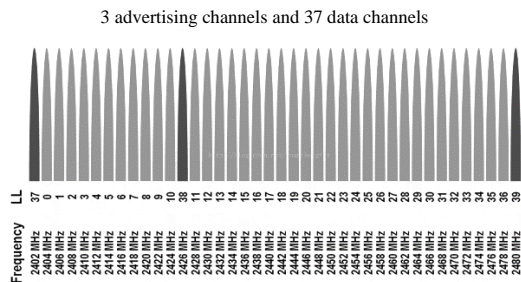


Fig.1 BLE physical channel distribution
图 1 BLE 信道分布

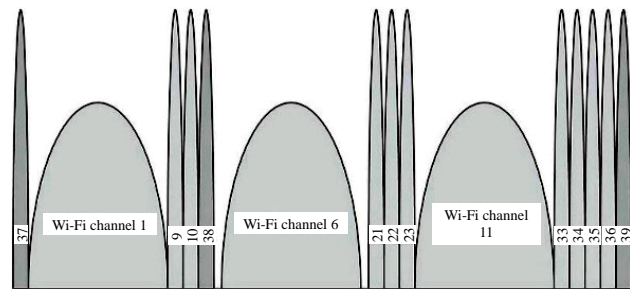


Fig.2 Channel coexistence of BLE and WiFi
图 2 BLE 信道与 WiFi 信道共存

同时 BLE 技术采用可变连接时间间隔, 可根据具体应用设置为几毫秒到几秒不等。另外, 由于 BLE 技术采用的是非常快速的连接方式, 因此平时可以处于“非连接”状态(有效地节约了能源), 此时链路两端可相互间知晓对方, 但只在必要时才开启链路, 然后在尽可能短的时间内关闭链路。BLE 技术的这种工作模式非常适合应用于一些发送数据量非常小(通常为几字节)、发送频次非常低(通常为每秒几次到每分钟几次, 甚至更低)的设备, 例如用于微型无线传感器设备(每半秒交换一次数据)或者使用完全异步通信的遥控器等其他设备的数据传送^[3]。基于以上各种特性, BLE 技术被广泛用于新一代的智能设备上, 如新一代的智能手机、平板、电脑等, 这便为本系统的应用提供了良好的基础和契机。

2 智能网关系统设计

本智能网关系统与传统网关系统相比, 最大的特点是在传统网关基础上增加了一个独立工作的 BLE 模块。通过该独立的 BLE 模块来实现对网关核心控制器的启动配置。

2.1 智能网关系统硬件设计

本智能网关系统结构示意图见图 3, 硬件设计具有如下特点: a) 核心控制器包含 ARM 和 FPGA 两部分, 具有能独立工作的 BLE 模块; b) 核心控制器中 ARM 和 FPGA 的 RST 引脚、ARM 的 BOOT 模式配置引脚均与 BLE 模块的 GPIO 引脚相连, 使 BLE 模块能对核心控制器进行复位和启动方式的配置, 同时 BLE 模块能独立于核心控制器进行工作; c) BLE 模块的 GPIO 引脚与系统时钟芯片的配置引脚相连, 以便 BLE 模块对系统时钟进行配置; d) 核心控制器与其他外围接口模块相连接。

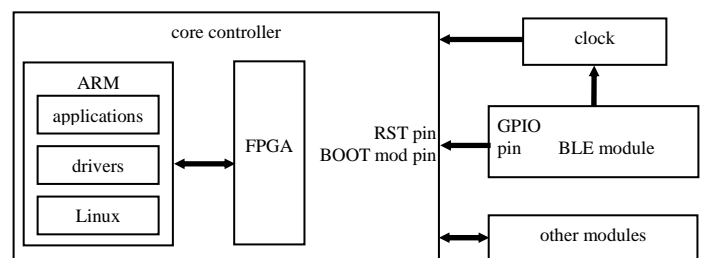


Fig.3 Diagram of smart gateway system
图 3 智能网关系统结构示意图

2.2 BLE 应用程序设计

BLE 应用程序设计主要分为 2 部分: BLE 服务程序和智能网关启动配置命令定义。

1) BLE 服务程序: 对蓝牙协议栈进行配置, 开启基本的 BLE 蓝牙服务, 同时配置并开启 BLE 串口服务, 以便实现 BLE 设备之间的 BLE 串口数据收发功能;

2) 智能网关启动配置命令定义: 主要做两方面的工作: 一方面是定义智能网关启动配置命令, 定义一些 BLE 串口能够识别且易于助记的命令, 用于进行启动操作; 另一方面在程序中完成对系统时钟的配置、核心控制器的启动方式配置、复位等操作, 以实现智能网关系统的启动配置。

2.3 智能网关系统工作过程

本智能网关系统工作中需用到 BLE 主机设备(如支持 BLE 的手机)且需在 BLE 主机中安装 BLE 串口收发软件,用于对智能网关系统进行启动控制操作,工作过程见图 4,详细操作过程如下:

1) 系统初始化:智能网关系统上电,BLE 模块初始化后,进入正常工作状态,开始发送广播信号,等待与 BLE 主机(如支持 BLE 的手机)进行连接,与此同时 BLE 模块也对网关核心控制器进行初始化,使之进入待启动状态或者初始化启动状态,等待 BLE 模块进一步接收控制命令;

2) 若无 BLE 主机设备与网关的 BLE 模块连接,则 BLE 模块一直工作在广播状态,等待与 BLE 主机设备连接,且不影响网关的正常工作;

3) 待网关的 BLE 模块与 BLE 主机设备连接成功时,网关的 BLE 模块进入连接状态,可以与 BLE 主机设备之间进行数据传输,且不影响网关的正常工作,若 BLE 主机设备向 BLE 模块发送数据,则进入步骤 4);若 BLE 主机设备与网关的 BLE 模块断开连接,则转回到步骤 2);

4) 若网关的 BLE 模块接收到系统启动或重启相关的配置命令,则对网关系统进行启动或重启操作,启动工作结束后,转回到步骤 3);若网关的 BLE 模块接收到的不是系统启动或重启相关的配置命令,则进行相应的蓝牙数据处理后,直接转回到步骤 3);

5) 反复循环进行步骤 2)~步骤 4),系统上电后,网关的 BLE 模块将一直处于激活状态,等待与 BLE 主机设备进行连接和通信。

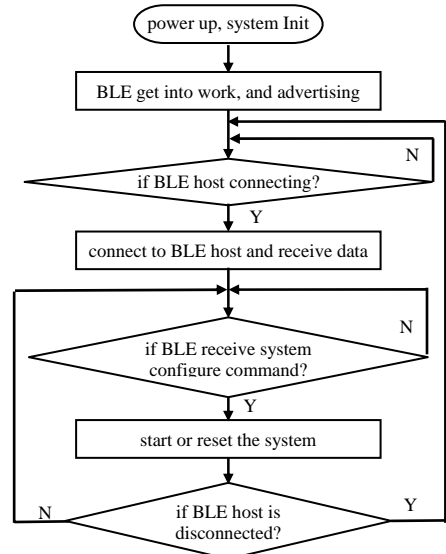


Fig.4 Workflow diagram of the gateway system startup by BLE
图 4 智能网关系统 BLE 启动工作过程图

3 智能物联网关系统验证测试

3.1 实际测试系统介绍

实际测试中的智能网关系统结构见图 5,核心控制芯片是 Xilinx 公司的 ZYNQ 7000 系列芯片,该芯片包含 ARM 和 FPGA 两部分^[5],BLE 芯片是 Nordic Semiconductor 公司的 nRF51 系列 BLE 芯片^[6],网关的核心工作都在 ARM 部分运行的 Linux 系统中完成,相应的硬件连接关系如下: a) nRF51 BLE 模块可以独立于核心控制器进行工作^[7]; b) ZYNQ 7000 芯片 ARM 部分和 FPGA 部分的 RST 引脚、BOOT 模式配置引脚均连接至 nRF51 BLE 模块的 GPIO 引脚,通过 BLE 模块可以很方便地控制网关核心控制器的启动和复位; c) nRF51 BLE 模块的 GPIO 引脚与系统时钟芯片的配置引脚相连^[8],可以方便地对系统时钟进行配置; d) WiFi 等其他外围接口模块与网关核心控制器相连接。

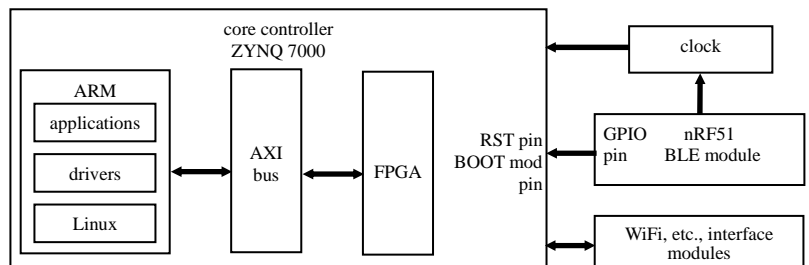


Fig.5 Real tested Smart Gateway System Diagram
图 5 实际测试的智能网关系统结构示意图

3.2 测试工具与方法

支持 BLE 的安卓智能手机和测试工具软件,工具软件包括 Windows 下的终端模拟软件 Xshell 5(见图 6)、安卓系统下 Nordic Semiconductors 公司官方提供 nRF Master Control Panel 软件^[9](见图 7)。

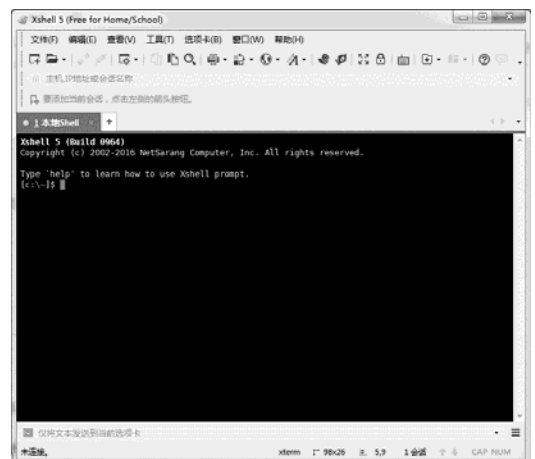


Fig.6 Xshell 5 terminal interface
图 6 Xshell 5 终端模拟软件界面

测试方法:系统启动后,打开手机蓝牙,在安卓手机上用 nRF Master Control Panel 软件与网关系统的 BLE 建立连接,然后通过 nRF Master Control Panel 软件发送网关启动命令对网关系统进行启动,网关中的 BLE 模块接收到命令后在 PC 机中的串口终端上显示接收到的启动命令,同时网关系统的串口终端界面打印出系统的启动信息,由此便可以验证网关的启动状态。

3.3 测试过程与结果

给 BLE 模块加上天线,然后给整个智能网关系统上电,因程序中已设置成初始化后启动系统,故待系统初始化完成后,整个智能网关系统将启动并开始正常工作,而 BLE 模块也进入正常工作状态,并开始广播,等待 BLE 主机设备连接,接下来使用支持 BLE 的手机进行操作,具体操作如下:

- 1) 开启手机蓝牙,打开 nRF Master Control Panel 软件,搜索智能网关系统上的 BLE 设备名称,搜索到智能网关中的 BLE 设备 Nordic_UART,选择进行连接。
- 2) 进入 nRF Master Control Panel 软件的 BLE 连接界面,再通过该软件向 BLE 模块发送配置从 SD 卡启动系统的命令 BootFromSD,见图 8。
- 3) BLE 模块接收到命令后,在串口中输出接收到的命令,并开始启动网关系统,同时在网关系统的串口终端中打印出系统启动信息,见图 9。待重启工作结束后,BLE 模块将恢复到接收数据状态。

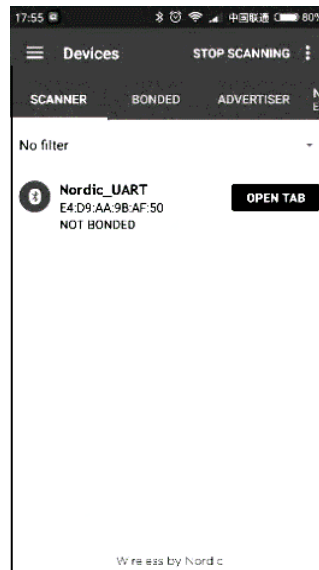


Fig.7 APP UI of nRF master control panel
图 7 nRF master control panel 软件界面

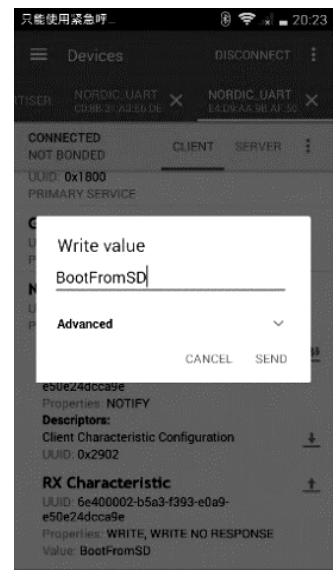


Fig.8 Mobile BLE UART sends "startup from SD card" command to the gateway
图 8 手机 BLE 串口向智能网关发送从 SD 卡启动命令

```
Connection closed.
Disconnected from remote host(新建会话 (2)) at 17:41:57.
Type 'help' to learn how to use Xshell prompt.
[c:\-ls
Connecting to COM4...
Connected.
BootFromSD
The system will boot from SD
*****
**** START SYSTEM NOW ! ****
*****
System:>
```

```
U-Boot 2014.07-dirty (Nov 11 2016 - 05:44:06)

Board: Xilinx Zynq
I2C: ready
DRAM: ECC disabled 1 GiB
MMC: zynq_sdhci: 0
spi_setup_slave: No QSPI device detected based on MIO settings
SF: Failed to set up slave
*** Warning - spi_flash_probe() failed, using default environment

In: serial
Out: serial
Err: serial
Net: Gem.e0000000
Hit any key to stop autoboot: 0
Device: zynq_sdhci
Manufacturer ID: 3
OEM: 5344
Name: SL88G
Tran Speed: 50000000
Rd Block Len: 512
SD version 3.0
```

Fig.9 BLE receives startup config command and starts the system
图 9 BLE 模块接收启动命令并配置系统启动

- 4) 系统配置操作结束后,网关开始工作。断开 BLE 连接,BLE 模块恢复到广播状态,等待下一次设置启动配置操作。

4 结论

本文所设计的智能物联网网关系统在充分利用 BLE 成熟的技术优势、低成本、应用广泛等特点的基础上,通过增加独立工作的 BLE 模块,并依赖 BLE 串口服务方式来对网关系统进行启动和复位,从而为网关的管理操作提供了一种允许用户在 BLE 覆盖范围内不接触网关设备对其进行简单管理的方式。此基于 BLE 的启动和复位模式,很好地解决了网关设备无法或不方便断电、而又需对其进行远距离“非接触式”复位或重启操作的难题,为网关系统的管理和维护提供了极大的便利。该系统设计也大大地增加了智能物联网网关系统的灵活性和便利性。当

然也还存在不足之处,如工作过程中 BLE 模块一直处于广播状态,增加了网关系统的功耗;BLE 模块仅用于控制网关系统的启动,功能比较单一;BLE 主机(如支持 BLE 的手机)与网关系统连接时可能存在一定的安全性隐患等。基于以上不足,后续将从以下几方面进行改进:a)在 BLE 模块中增加休眠与激活机制,以进一步降低网关系统的功耗;b)拓展 BLE 模块的其他业务功能,以支持 BLE 设备的其他通信业务;c)对 BLE 模块的安全性进行优化,同时增加对手机厂商提供的 BLE 管理工具的兼容性设计。

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