

Integrated Environment for Embedded Control Systems Design

Roman Bartosinski¹, Zdeněk. Hanzálek², Petr Stružka³, and Libor Waszniowski²

¹Czech Academy of Sci.,
Pod vodarenskou vezi 4,
182 08 Praha 8, CR
bartosr@utia.cas.cz

²Czech Technical University
Karlovo nám. 13
121 35 Prague 2, CR
{hanzalek, xwasznio}@fel.cvut.cz

³UNIS, Ltd.
Jundrovská 33
624 00 Brno, CR
pstruzka@unis.cz

Abstract

The motivation of our work is to make a design tool for distributed embedded systems compliant with HIS and AUTOSAR. The tool is based on Processor Expert, a component oriented development environment supporting several hundreds of microcontrollers, and Matlab Simulink which is the de-facto standard in the rapid prototyping of the control applications but it does not have an adequate HW support. The objective is to provide an integrated development environment for embedded controllers having distributed nature and real-time requirements. Therefore we discuss the advantages of using an automatically generated code in the development cycle of the control embedded software. We present a developed block set and Processor Expert Real-Time Target for Matlab Real-Time Workshop Embedded Coder. The case study shows a development cycle for a servo control design.

1. Introduction

Since the Matlab development tool chain has become a standard in the control applications development, we focus on its facilities for a code generation. As the Matlab main weakness is identified a poor support for handling hardware devices of a target microcontroller. Since Processor Expert (PE), a tool for the microcontrollers' hardware resources management and design at high level exists; we bring an improvement of the Matlab facilities for handling the controller hardware by integrating Processor Expert to the Matlab Simulink environment.

The design of control systems is often treated separately from the design of its software and hardware implementation. The increasing use of electronic control

units in automotive applications has caused an increasing need for the simultaneous consideration of the control system and its implementation platform during the development. There is a need for supporting tools that assist designers in the modeling, the simulation and the analysis while capturing relationships among various requirements such as the control performance (e.g. rise time, overshoot, and stability), the response time, resources used (memory footprint, peripheral devices), the energy consumption, the robustness, the cost, and the design parameters related to the control system and platform design.

The product demands in terms of the competition and the legislation will moreover cause a need for the system design optimization. This is particularly relevant for a large series production where the goal is to make the hardware cost proportion as small as possible [5], [11].

The digital control theory normally assumes equidistant sampling intervals and a negligible or constant control delay from the sampling to the actuation. However, this can seldom be achieved in practice in a networked embedded system [4]. For control systems this is of particular concern. Timing variations in sampling periods and latencies degrade the control performance and may in extreme cases lead to the instability. One solution is to simulate such a behavior while using e.g. TrueTime [2], a Matlab/Simulink toolbox, which requires the precise representation of the control algorithm structure, the worst case execution time of operations and other parameters. The second solution, represented by Targetlink [3] or the approach shown in this article, is based on an automatic code generation and the processor-in-the-loop (PIL) or hardware-in-the-loop (HIL) testing.

Tools supporting the co-design of control systems and their real-time implementation [2],[3],[6],[8],[9],[10] have various objectives ranging from the simulation to the formal verification and the code generation. The current status and the future directions are surveyed in [1][5] and more extensive description of the surveyed tools is given in [7].

The model based design and the automatic generation of the production code is increasingly employed in the development of automotive applications. To support this trend, we have developed an embedded real-time target integrating the tool Processor Expert (PE) to the environment of Matlab Simulink.

PE is a tool generating a production quality C code that provides an hardware abstraction layer allowing to access peripherals (ADC, PWM, Timer,...) of many supported microcontrollers (MCU), covering the Freescale production line and many National Semiconductors and Fujitsu MCU, via an unified application interface that can be compliant with common standards (e.g. HIS or AUTOSAR [1]). A developer does not need to study all details relating to control registers of MCU peripherals. He only specifies the fundamental parameters (e.g. the resolution of ADC, the input pin, the conversion time, the mode of operation) and selects high level methods and events to access the peripheral (e.g. Measure, GetValue). Moreover, the selected parameters are verified by PE.

Matlab Simulink, on the other hand, allows engineers to develop a control application algorithm in the high level graphical language of data-flow and state-flow diagrams. The C code can be automatically generated from the model. However, the hardware (HW) of peripheral devices is not supported well. Only few MCUs are supported, portability is limited since blocks representing peripherals are different for different MCUs; they do not usually allow adjusting all HW parameters and no verification of this error prone process is done.

It is clear from the mentioned brief description of PE and Matlab Simulink that they complement one another perfectly. To allow designers to use the best features of each of these tools at the rapid application development cycle, we have developed a peripheral devices block set and a code generator target integrating PE to Simulink. PE generates the code of a HW abstraction layer and Simulink use it in the application code.

The integration of PE to Simulink allows control engineers familiar with the graphical environment of Simulink to adjust the HW peripherals that are an inseparable part of each control application on the high level, without the detail knowledge of the specific MCU.

Contrary to the other existing targets for the code generation from Simulink, PE block set allows to use all features of the HW – there are no predefined adjustments that can not be changed by the user. Since many peripherals generate interrupts and they are all supported by the corresponding blocks in the PE block set, the control application can consist of both, event driven and time driven tasks.

From the strategic point of view, it is important that due to the HW abstraction layer provided by PE, the PE block set and the target automatically support all MCUs supported by PE - that are the most important families of

MCU produced by Freescale. Also new MCUs coming to the market will be supported by the PE producer.

The model with the PE blocks can be moreover extremely simply ported to another MCU by selecting another CPU bean in the PE project window. The application design in Simulink therefore becomes HW independent.

The motivation for using an automatic code generation in the development cycle of embedded control applications is discussed in section 2. Matlab facilities for the code generation and weaknesses of the existing code generation targets are described in section 3. A brief description of PE follows in section 4. The integration of PE to the Matlab tool chain, the main contribution of this paper, is described in section 5. A support of the processor in the loop simulation is described in section 6. A short case study demonstrating the using of this technology is presented in section 7. Finally concluding remarks and future work directions are indicated in section 8.

2. Motivation to Automatic Code Generation

Problems related to the manually coded software arise from its huge complexity on one side and the requirement of its high reliability and short time to the market on the other side. The powertrain control unit software, for example, consists of 50000 lines of a code, its development effort takes 40 man-years and the average productivity of the coding process is 6 lines per day. The time to the market is only 24 months, the validation takes 5 months and the changing rate is 3 years [14].

Regardless of the quality and the efficiency problems with the manually coded SW, there is also a problem originating in the classical development process of the control application. The control strategy is formulated as a control algorithm that is continually improved and refined by the simulation on a model. Once the algorithm design is finished the implementation is done manually. With the exception of simple projects, the tasks of the control algorithm design and its implementation are done by different specialists, or even teams. Realize however, that the points of view of these specialists, their qualifications and the used tools are different. While the control engineer sees the controlled object and the requirements on the control quality, the software engineer focuses on the implementation and the architecture of the real-time system and probably does not know the details of the controlled system dynamic and the motivations for the decisions done by the control engineer.

However, the implementation is not only a simple translation of the algorithm specified in details by the simulation model to the target language. Also many decisions affecting the behavior of the control algorithm

(e.g. the hardware/software deployment, the scheduling policy) must be done.

Once the controller is manually implemented, its code is handled by software development tools (compilers, debuggers, profilers etc) that do not support the control theory point of view. Simultaneously, due to the manual implementation, the tool used for the control algorithm design and simulation loses the link between the model and the executable application. A validation and tuning of the implemented controller is therefore hard.

An automatically generated code allows a seamless development process where the only one control engineer, or a team, designs and implements the entire system. The designer therefore focuses on the controlled object from the beginning to the end of the development and the implementation issues as MCU HW, the programming language, the scheduling policy and the other non-functional aspects remain in the background [13]. All the implementation issues are covered by the code generator target developed by the real-time and MCU specialists as a support for the control engineers work.

The quality of the generated code is comparable to the hand-written code, it is readable, the development time is shorter and possible error sources are reduced.

The rapid application development approach does not bring only the automatic code generation. It is a model based development method supported by a tool chain covering entire “V” model development chain. The validation of each development phase is done by the simulation in the Matlab Simulink. First “Model in the Loop” validates the model of the controller. After the code generation, the “Processor in the Loop” simulation can be used to validate the real-time execution of the controller on the MCU in the loop with the plant model in Simulink. Then the “Hardware in the Loop” simulation can be used to validate the entire control unit. All these phases can be supported by Simulink and the corresponding code generator target. The results of each experiment are used to continuous improvement of the Simulink model that remains still the actual documentation. Contrary to the hand-written code, there is no gap between the model and the implementation.

3. Code Generation in Matlab

The C code for a rapid prototyping is generated by the tool Real-Time Workshop (RTW) [19]. The add-on RTW Embedded Coder [16] is used for the highly optimized production quality code. The tool StateFlow Coder is used for the code generation from StateFlow charts.

Besides these tools, the platform dependent target is needed [20]. The platform means a specific MCU, an operating system (or none for a bare board) and development tools (compiler, linker etc.). The target, except other, defines the language (C/C++), details about

the MCU (8/16/32bit, little/big endian), and it calls the development tools. The target intended for the real-time execution of the model defines the infrastructure deploying the generated code to bare board interrupts or operating system tasks.

An inseparable part of each target is a block set – a library of Simulink blocks representing the functional components of the targeted platform. A block set usually contains blocks interfacing the HW peripherals, the operating system and the communication services etc. Each of these blocks, implemented as an s-function [21], defines its simulation behavior and provides a user interface for the parameters setting. The code generated by RTW for each of these blocks is defined by a Target Language Compiler (TLC) script in a tlc file [22].

During the code generation, a code is generated for each block in the model according to the corresponding tlc file. These codes are combined according to the data flow in the model. Finally a make file is generated from the predefined template; the code is build and the executable application is downloaded to the development board. There are several points in this process, where user defined hooks can be called. This mechanism is used for cooperation with the target specific development tools.

3.1. Weakness of Existing Code Generation Targets

There are several weaknesses that motivate us to develop a new target based on PE.

- Only few targets exist and therefore far from all MCU families and derivatives are supported.
- Each MCU target has its own block set. This fact prevents the reusability and the portability of the model using these HW specific blocks.
- The way in which the peripheral HW is handled by the generated code is predefined by the target developers and it can not be changed by the user.
- Validation of the HW settings in the time and the resource domain is missing. Each parameter changes are therefore an error prone process.
- The simulation behavior of blocks representing peripherals is trivial (pass-through)
- Block sets are based on the low level API which is not very comfortable for users.

4. Processor Expert Overview

PE [23] is a component oriented tool for the rapid development of embedded applications. Its main task is to manage the HW resources of the MCU and to allow the design at the high level. PE contains information about supported MCUs and their on-chip peripherals. The functionality of the basic elements of the embedded

Computer-Aided Control System Design 2006. Piscataway: IEEE, 2006, p. 53-55. ISBN 0-7803-9797-5.

- [6] Šůcha, P. - Kutil, M. - Sojka, M. - Hanzálek, Z.: TORSCHE Scheduling Toolbox for Matlab. In IEEE Symposium on Computer-Aided Control System Design 2006. Piscataway: IEEE, 2006, p. 50-52. ISBN 0-7803-9797-5.
- [7] Törngren M., Henriksson D., Redell O., El-Khoury J., Simon D., Hanzalek Z. and Árzén K.. Co-design of Control Systems and their real-time implementation - A Tool Survey. Technical report. Department of Machine Design. Royal Institute of Technology – KTH, Stockholm Sweden. August 2006.
- [8] Redell, O., J. El-Khoury, and M. Törngren (2004): The AIDA tool-set for design and implementation analysis of distributed real-time control systems. *Journal of Microprocessors and Microsystems*, 28:4, pp. 163.182.
- [9] Hylands, C., E. Lee, J. Liu, X. Liu, S. Neuendorffer, Y. Xiong, Y. Zhao, and H. Zheng (2003): Overview of the Ptolemy project.. Technical Report UCBERL M0325. Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, University of California Berkeley, CA.
- [10] Simon, D., B. Espiau, K. Kapellos, and R. Pissard-Gibollet (1997): Orccad: Software engineering for real-time robotics. *A Technical Insight, Robotica, Special Issues on Languages and Software in Robotics*, 15:1, pp. 111.116.
- [11] Keutzer K. Newton A.R. Rabaey J.M. Sangiovanni-Vincentelli A. 2000. System-level design: orthogonalization of concerns and platform-based design. *IEEE Transactions on Computer-Aided Design of Integrated Circuits and Systems*. Vol 19. No 12. Dec.2000. p1523-1543.
- [12] AUTOSAR, <http://www.autosar.org>, 2006.
- [13] Ludes R. and T. Pfund: Code Generation for Manufacturing. In proceedings of the 7th LuK Symposium, LuK GmbH & Co., April 2002.
- [14] Romeo F.: *Embedded Systems: the Real Story*. Design Automation Conference, Las Vegas, June 20th, 2001
- [15] Alberto Sangiovanni-Vincentelli and Grant Martin: *A Vision for Embedded Software*. Proceedings of CASES 2001, Atlanta, Georgia, November, 2001.
- [16] Real-Time Workshop Embedded Coder User's Guide. The MathWorks, Inc., www.mathworks.com, 2005.
- [17] dSpace, www.dspaceinc.com, 2006.
- [18] ASCET, <http://en.etasgroup.com/products/ascet>, 2006
- [19] Real-Time Workshop User's Guide. The MathWorks, Inc., www.mathworks.com, 2005.
- [20] Real-Time Workshop Embedded Coder Developing Embedded Targets. The MathWorks, Inc., www.mathworks.com, 2005.
- [21] Simulink – Writing S-functions. The MathWorks, Inc., www.mathworks.com, 2005.
- [22] Real-Time Workshop Target Language Compiler. The MathWorks, Inc., www.mathworks.com, 2005.
- [23] Processor Expert help. UNIS, spol. s r.o., www.processorexpert.com, 2005.
- [24] Microsoft Component Object Model. Microsoft Corporation, msdn.microsoft.com, 2005.
- [25] MATLAB – External Interfaces. The MathWorks, Inc., www.mathworks.com, 2005.
- [26] OSEK/VDX, <http://www.osek-vdx.org>, 2006