

Domoticz vs sensors

Summary of my experience of adding sensors, and switches to Domoticz through MQTT, and RFLink.

RFLink

I have a couple of 433.92MHz things around me, and recently I developed an itch to log what is happening with them.

Devices include:

- a Yale HSA6400 alarm system (door contact sensors, pir sensor, siren, main unit, keyfobs)^[^1]
- keyfobs for the car gate of the block of flats we're living in
- some Energie RC wall sockets^[^2]

When I started looking for solutions to listen into 433MHz, I found a weird, extremely cheap project^[^3]:

- get a cheap USB soundcard
- get a 433MHz receiver and transmitter
- solder the transmitter to the headphone pins
- solder the receiver to the mic pins
- record/play back signals

For my genuine surprise, it works - but it's hard to match the incoming patterns, so I decided to keep looking.

Next next project I found was the librtlsdr^[^4] combined with rtl_433^[^5] - it converts a USB DVB-T TV tuner into a 433MHz receiver. It sounded very nice, but at the same time, I found RFLink^[^6]. RFLink is a free, but not open source Arduino Mega firmware that can receive and send 433MHz/868MHz & 2.4GHz signals from a plethora of devices - and I had an unused, first generation, made in Italy Arduino Mega around, that's been waiting to be used for a decade.

Flashing the ROM

`avrdude` is a simple flashing utility for atmega boards, including arduinos; it will be needed to flash the ROM.

```
sudo apt install avrdude
```

bash

Download and extract the RFLink ROM:

```
wget -ORFLink_v1.1_r48.zip https://doc-14-94-  
docs.googleusercontent.com/docs/securesc/  
ha0ro937gcuc717deffksulhg5h7mbp1/3esqvusiaem47f8nistrrisk5ofk  
9g6g/1540800000000/03880776249665269026/*/  
0BwEYW5Q6bg_ZLWFJUkY4bDZacms?e=download  
unzip -d RFLink_v1.1_r48 RFLink_v1.1_r48.zip  
cd RFLink_v1.1_r48
```

bash

Note: I hardcoded the v48 version in this tutorial. Visit <http://www.rflink.nl/> to see if there's a newer one.

Once the Arduino is connected, it'll show up as 'arduino mega' in dmesg, so find the device and flash the ROM as:

```
megausbdev="$(sudo dmesg | grep -i 'arduino mega' | head  
-n1 | cut -d":" -f1 | awk '{print $3}')"  
megattydev="$(sudo dmesg | grep "cdc_acm ${megausbdev}" |  
grep tty | cut -d":" -f3 | head -n1)"  
sudo avrdude -v -p atmega2560 -c stk500 -P "/dev/$  
{megattydev}" -b 115200 -D -U flash:w:RFLink.cpp.hex:i
```

bash

Note: dmesg could be used without sudo if the sysctl parameter `kernel.dmesg_restrict` is set to 0.

Once this is done, wait until the mega reboots; after that, using `minicom`, we can verify if it's working.

```
sudo apt install minicom
```

bash

```
minicom -b 57600 -D "/dev/${megattydev}" -w
```

bash

You should see something like this:

```
Welcome to minicom 2.7.1  
  
OPTIONS: I18n  
Compiled on May 6 2018, 08:02:47.  
Port /dev/ttyACM3, 15:10:35  
  
Press CTRL-A Z for help on special keys
```

```
teway V1.1 - R48;  
20;00;Nodo RadioFrequencyLink - RFLink Gateway V1.1 - R48;
```

To exit, press `CTRL+a` then `q`.

To make the device always show up on the same `/dev` path, add the following `udev` rule:

```
/etc/udev/rules.d/99-rflink.rules
```

```
# arduino mega as RFLink  
SUBSYSTEMS=="usb", ATTRS{idVendor}=="2341", ATTRS{idProduct}  
=="0010", SYMLINK+="rflink"
```

If needed, restart `udev`:

```
sudo udevadm trigger
```

```
bash
```

Physical wiring

There is a very nice, detailed tutorial in the RFLink website about connecting the different devices to the Mega itself at: <http://www.rflink.nl/blog2/wiring>

Domoticz[^7]

Domoticz is a home automation platform, which is very easy to set up, has a simple HTTP interface, and can log all those switches and devices I'm interested in.

Getting & starting Domoticz

```
sudo mkdir /opt/domoticz
cd /opt/domoticz
sudo wget https://releases.domoticz.com/releases/release/
domoticz_linux_x86_64.tgz
tar xf domoticz_linux_x86_64.tgz
sudo /opt/domoticz/domoticz -www 8080 -sslwww 0 -dbase /opt/
domoticz/domoticz.db -wwwroot /opt/domoticz/www -userdata /
opt/domoticz -log -syslog
```

bash

Now visit the server IP on port 8080 in your browser and get started with the setup.

Adding RFLink

1. Connect the RFLink device to your server
2. Find the ttyACM device for the RFLink

```
megausbdev="$(sudo dmesg | grep -i 'arduino mega' | head
-n1 | cut -d":" -f1 | awk '{print $3}')"
sudo dmesg | grep "cdc_acm ${megausbdev}" | grep tty | cut -
d":" -f3 | head -n1)
# this will print something like: ttyACM3
```

bash

1. Go to the Domoticz web interface
2. Go to [Setup](#), then [Hardware](#)
3. In the [Type](#) drop down, select [RFLink Gateway USB](#)
4. give it a name
5. [Serial Port](#) should be the ttyACM port for the RFLink

Once done, the RFLink will start sniffing all the signals it can pick up, and your devices will start showing up in the [Devic](#) menu, under [Setup](#):

ID	Name	Type	SubType	Data	Last Seen
45	rflink	Light/Switch	Aster	On	2018-10-29 11:57:51
99	rflink	Light/Switch	Aster	On	2018-10-29 07:36:42
100	rflink	Light/Switch	Aster	Off	2018-10-26 20:22:50
81	rflink	Light/Switch	Aster	On	2018-10-26 18:56:22
76	rflink	Light/Switch	Aster	On	2018-10-26 17:35:48
77	rflink	Light/Switch	Aster	Off	2018-10-27 12:54:55
48	rflink	Light/Switch	Aster	On	2018-10-26 17:35:40
63	rflink	Light/Switch	Aster	On	2018-10-26 08:42:19
52	rflink	Light/Switch	Aster	On	2018-10-25 18:33:12
51	rflink	Light/Switch	Aster	On	2018-10-25 18:16:33
50	rflink	Light/Switch	Aster	On	2018-10-25 13:58:17
47	rflink	Light/Switch	Aster	Off	2018-10-25 08:29:20

devices found by RFLink in Domoticz

Notes and finds about my sensors

Energie wall sockets

They send on and off separately, but their signal doesn't always seem to reach the RFLink properly. Still working on them. No extra setup is needed, their default **On/Off** type is what they actually are.

Yale HSA6000 PIR sensors

The send on, soon after off, and they have a re-arm time of ~6 minutes. Once detected, they initially show up as Light sensor; this can be changed by first enabling the devices (clicking on the green arrow in the **Device** menu, under **Setup**), then going into **Switches**, clicking **Edit** on the sensor, and selecting the **Motion sensor** option in **Switch type**.

Yale HSA6000 door/window contacts

They only send on signal when an open is triggered; pressing the button sends an off. There is no way to know whether they are still open or already closed. They need to be set up as **Push on button** once they are enabled (clicking on the green arrow in the **Device** menu, under **Setup**) by going into **Switches**, clicking **Edit** on the sensor, and selecting the **Push on button** option in **Switch type**.

Door contact type expects an **off** signal, so these are not proper door contacts.

gate keyfobs

I had to set the up as **Push off button**s; if I set them as push on buttons, they log 'off' entries when they are pressed.

MQTT

A few months ago I managed to set up `collectd` to process I²C data via a barely known linux subsystem, Industrial I/O, with the help of a few bash scripts. In theory, Domoticz can deal with I²C on it's own

- unfortunately it doesn't yet work on x86 platforms, and it can only do a few types of sensors. Besides that, I didn't want to lose the `collectd` data, given that Domoticz is only an experiment for now, so I started looking into my options. Domoticz have an excessive API, but it's rather uncomfortable to use it, because you need to keep track of sensor and hardware IDs.

Fortunately, there is a workaround: using MQTT as middle ground, utilizing the MySensors serial protocol.

A bit of explanation: MySensors is an open framework, both hardware and software components, to build custom sensors. One of the methods of sharing sensor information between sensors and controllers is via MQTT, a lightweight pubsub system.

The incredibly convenient part of it is that the information is push-based: Domoticz picks up new sensors if the initialization of them is sent, so no pre-setup, no tracking of internal Domoticz IDs are needed.

MQTT server

I'm not going into the details of setting up an MQTT service, because it's very simple; on Debian, it's more or less:

```
sudo apt install mosquitto
sudo systemctl enable mosquitto
sudo systemctl start mosquitto
```

bash

In order to issue updates from bash, the `mosquitto-clients` pack is needed as well:

```
sudo apt install mosquitto-clients
```

bash

MySensors MQTT in Domoticz

1. Go to **Setup**, then **Hardware**
2. In the **Type** drop down, select **MySensors Gateway with MQTT interface**
3. give it a name
4. **Remote Address**, in our case, is **127.0.0.1**
5. Port is **1883**
6. Leave **Username** and **Password** empty, unless you set up authentication in your MQTT server
7. **Topic Prefix** should be **MyMQTT (default)**

The screenshot shows the configuration form for a MySensors Gateway with MQTT interface in Domoticz. The form is set against a dark blue background. Fields include: 'Enabled' (checked), 'Name' (mysensors), 'Type' (MySensors Gateway with MQTT interface), 'Data Timeout' (Disabled), 'Remote Address' (127.0.0.1), 'Port' (1883), 'Username' (empty), 'Password' (empty), 'Topic Prefix' (MyMQTT (default)), and 'CA Filename' (empty). A red warning message is visible below the Data Timeout field. An 'Add' button is at the bottom.

Adding MyMQTT to Domoticz

Sending sensor data with bash into MQTT

Initiate the sensor meta information

For Domoticz to know about the sensor - the type, the unit, etc - the sensor needs to be initialized; this is done with the **presentation** command when it comes to MySensors.

```
mosquitto_pub -t "domoticz/in/MyMQTT/${node_id}/${  
{sensor_id}/0/0/${TYPE}" -m "${sensor_name}"
```

bash

In details:

- **domoticz/in/MyMQTT** is the main topic, it's the default for Domoticz to listen on for MySensors MQTT
- **`\${node_id}`** is the "group" of sensors; in case of my BME280, because it uses the 0x77 I²C address, I used 77.
- **`\${sensor_id}`** is a number for the specific sensor. The BME280 has a temperature, a humidity, and a pressure sensor, I used 1, 2, and 3 for them.
- **0** indicates this is a presentation command
- the next **0** indicates this is a normal message
- **`\${TYPE}`** is the sensor type, from the list at: https://www.mysensors.org/download/serial_api_20#presentation In case of the BME280, it's 6 for temperature (S_TEMP), 7 for humidity (S_HUM), and 8 for pressure (S_BARO)
- **`\${sensor_name}`** is a name for the sensor (or the node. I'm still figuring this part out)

Sending sensor value updates

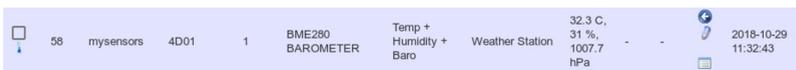
Unlike the previous initiation, this is a value update for our sensor:

```
mosquitto_pub -t "domoticz/in/MyMQTT/${node_id}/${sensor_id}/1/0/${METRICTYPE}" -m "${value}"
```

bash

In details:

- **domoticz/in/MyMQTT** same as above
- **`\${node_id}`** same as above
- **`\${sensor_id}`** same as above
- **1** indicates this is a set command
- the next **0** indicates this is a normal message
- **`\${METRICTYPE}`** is the metric type sent, from the list at: https://www.mysensors.org/download/serial_api_20#set,-req In case of the BME280, it's 0 for temperature (V_TEMP), 1 for humidity (V_HUM), and 4 for pressure (V_PRESSURE)
- **`\${value}`** is the sensor readout value



Example outcome for a BME280: once it's sending temperature, humidity, and pressure data, Domoticz automatically joins the 3 sensors into a single Weather Station entry

Working examples are in my git repository for collectd^[^12].

Happy hacking.

Links

1. <https://www.yaleasia.com/en/yale/yale-asia/products/yale-alarms/wireless-alarm-systems/b-hsa6400---yale-premium-series-home-security-alarm-system/>
2. <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Energenie-Remote-Control-Sockets-Pack/dp/B004A7XGH8>
3. https://rurandom.org/justintime/w/Cheapest_ever_433_Mhz_transceiver_for_PCs
4. <http://osmocom.org/projects/sdr/wiki/Rtl-sdr>
5. https://github.com/merbanan/rtl_433
6. <http://www.rflink.nl/blog2/easyha>
7. <https://www.domoticz.com/>
8. <https://collectd.org/>
9. <https://github.com/petermolnar/collectd-executors>
10. https://www.domoticz.com/wiki/Domoticz_API/JSON_URL's
11. https://www.mysensors.org/download/serial_api_20
12. <https://github.com/petermolnar/collectd-executors>

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