

PHYSICAL PROTOTYPING



DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

AARHUS UNIVERSITY

PHYSICAL PROTOTYPING
13. APRIL 2026

SIMON HOGGAN CHRISTENSEN
LAB COORDINATOR



AGENDA

Messages

Project planning and prototyping

Using prototypes in concept evaluations

Digital Fabrication

Electronics

Supervision after lecture



MESSAGES



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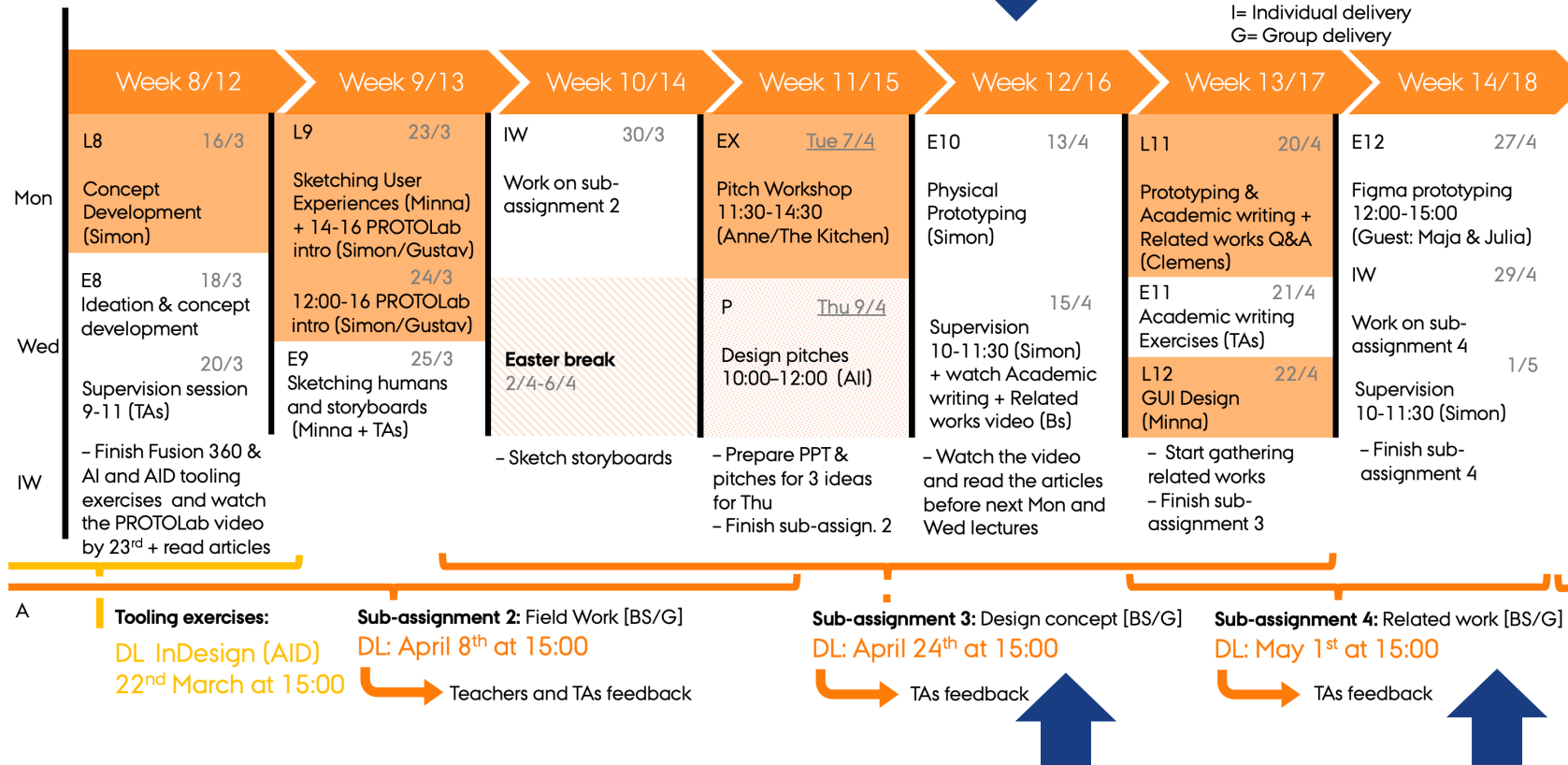
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THE ITPDP PROJECT

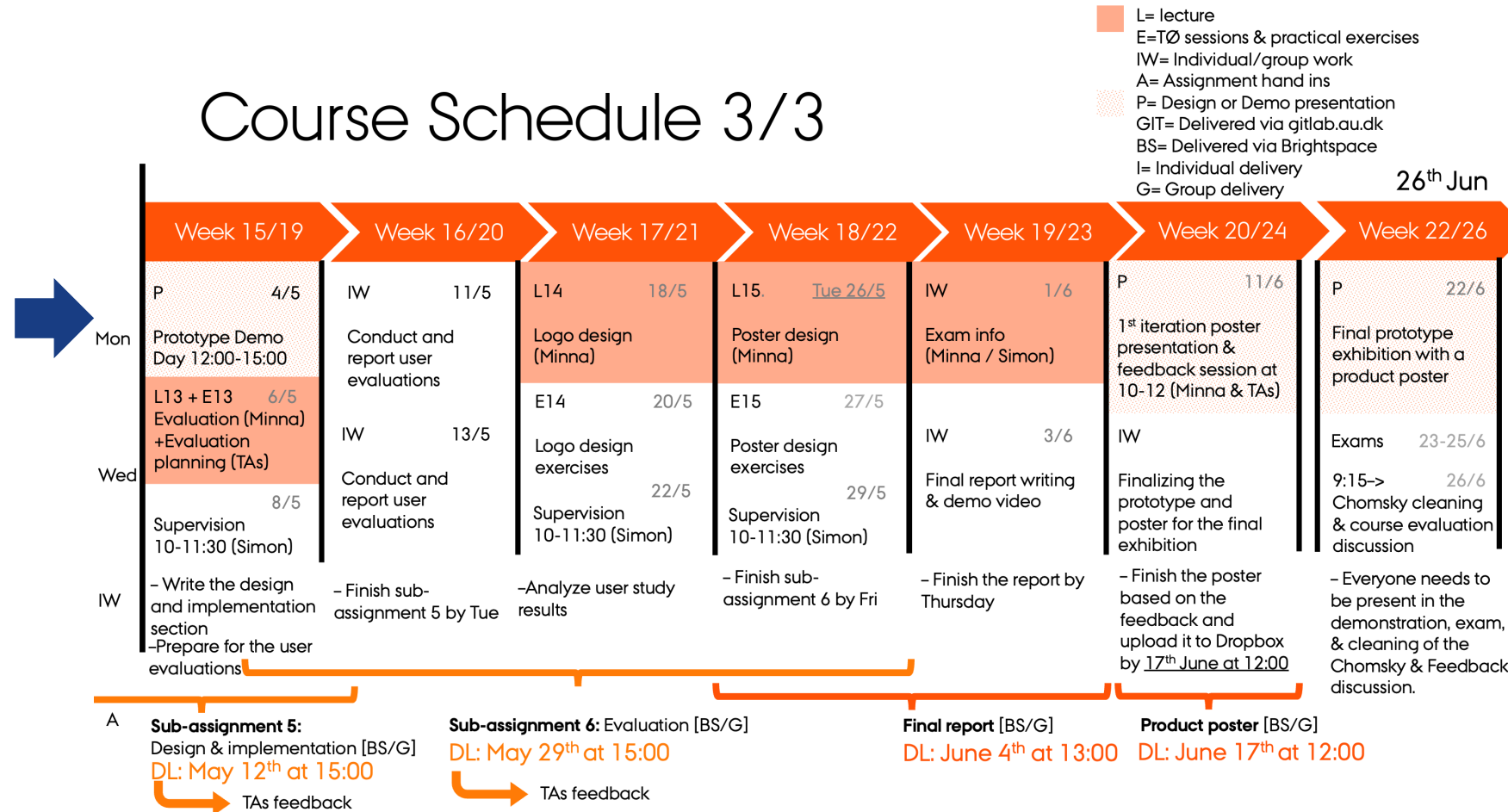
Course Schedule 2/3

- L= lecture
- E=TØ sessions & practical exercises
- IW= Individual/group work
- A= Assignment hand ins
- P= Design or Demo presentation
- GIT= Delivered via gitlab.au.dk
- BS= Delivered via Brightspace
- I= Individual delivery
- G= Group delivery



THE ITPDP PROJECT

Course Schedule 3/3



THE ITPDP PROJECT

From Brightspace under "ITPDP 2026"
Presented at first lecture about course introduction

Eligibility for exam

To be eligible for the exam, each student must hand in all tooling exercises and supporting assignments, and every group must hand in the final report, be represented in the plenary sessions, and - of course - the exam related demo session and oral exam.

Goals and requirements for the final project

The IT product must be placed clearly in relation to one of the three subthemes (or have deviation agreed upon with course educator).

The group must demonstrate an understanding of the target user group's needs and conditions, using theory and tools introduced in this course, and/or theory/tools presented earlier in their study programme.

The solution must position itself as relevant to the future users, utilizing ethnomethodological work and user-centered design to ensure validity. A successful evaluation is however not a requirement, but reflection and analysis of validity, process and outcome is the main end result.

The context of use and the challenges identified in the user studies must be taken into account.

The solution must include multiple clients/components and the cloud (typically via web technology). Several subcomponents and resources that can communicate, e.g., a system with a mobile app, a physical installation, and with automatic storage of sensor data in the cloud.

The IT product may involve a smartphone as part of the solution, but there must be an interaction with physical/tangible components in the environment or on the user, which you have designed and fabricated yourself.

Arguments must be made based on the needs of the users, usage of theory and methods, and the business potential in relation.



WORKLOAD AND EXPECTATIONS

European standard: 1 ECTS = 25-30 hours of work.

For Aarhus University, it has been set at 28 hours.

ITPDP is slightly different.

First part (seen as a 5 ECTS course): 140 hours per person, including lectures/TØ, from 26th of January to 17th of March.

Second part (seen as a 15 ECTS course): 420 hours per person, including lectures/TØ, from 18th of March to June 17th. This is equal to a minimum of 32 hours per week.

The rest of the course schedule is exam period and exam preparation time.



WORRYING TENDENCIES

Resource hour overview:

Estimated teaching time: 68-70 hours, not including supervision.

1 person group: The overall project should reflect 490 hours of work.

2 person group: The overall project should reflect 980 hours of work.

3 person group: The overall project should reflect 1470 hours of work.

4 person group: The overall project should reflect 1960 hours of work.

In the current state, your project should currently represent roughly 230 hours per person.

For a three person group = 425 hours of work (*30% deducted, prioritization*)

Can you honestly say that you have put this time into the project, preparation, lectures, reading etc.? If yes, then great!



PROJECT PLANNING

A university course.

Project planning and implementation is part of the learning outcomes – we cannot guide and/or hand-hold you the entire way.

Make sure to keep yourself updated via the Course Schedule on Brightspace.

Please ignore all other sources, as mentioned multiple times.

Be present... We cannot teach or supervise students who do not show up.

You can *technically* stay away from now until final report and exam, as long as Interview Assignment and Tooling Exercises are done. But don't.



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MVP



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“... Version of a product with just enough features to be usable by early customers”



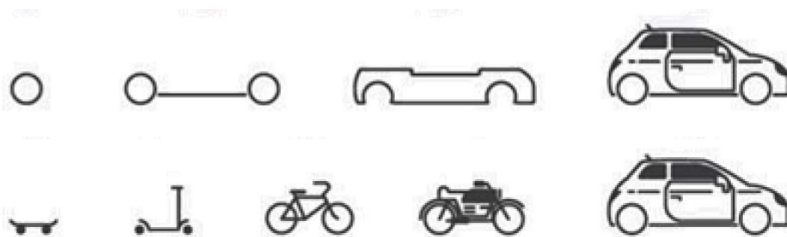
MINIMUM VIABLE PRODUCT (MVP)

Often a term used in “Agile Prototyping”.

A way to create clear goals to be able to evaluate/validate a prototype/concept.

What is the minimum features our prototype needs to have, in order to solve the identified problem and/or answer the research question?

Build towards simplistic representations of your vision – not individual small parts.



How not to build a *Minimum Viable Product*

How to build a *Minimum Viable Product*

Agile Prototyping for technical systems – Schuh et al.



BUT HOW DO YOU PLAN THIS?

M
S
C
W

Must have: Non-negotiable, primary need

Should have: Highly desirable, very important

Could have: Nice to have, optional

Won't have: Not necessary (for now)

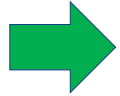
<https://activecollab.com/blog/project-management/moscow-method>



MoSCoW EXAMPLE - KITCHEN TIMER



But... how do we prioritize these??



<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Time can be set (up to two hours)- Hours and minutes are separate- The user gets notified- The timer can be reset- Timer can be paused- Fits in the kitchen- Battery lasts more than max. timer <p>Must have</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Timer can be set (up to 24 hours)- Hours, minutes and seconds- User gets multimodal feedback- Multiple concurrent timers- Small enough to carry- Battery lasts for full longitudinal study duration <p>Should have</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Timer = multiple weeks? Could have- Smartphone connected- Contextual multimodal feedback	<p>Will not have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Cloud-connection- Statistics and food categorization- Credit-card like footprint- Fusion sensing (thermometer?)- Solar panel



HOW TO PRIORITIZE POST MoSCoW



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HOW TO PRIORITIZE IN MoSCoW

Aim high, scope appropriately – you should push yourself.

Free Features First

Impact-analysis (Remember scenarios? Personas? Contextual Design?)

The art of choosing the right ecosystem/backbone

Pessimistic approximations



AIM HIGH, SCOPE APPROPRIATELY

Push yourselves, but lean into your skillset.

Always scope based on project goals (in this case course goals and delimitations).

Do not let an overly simple MVP set you back.

An MVP is built to be your fallback – leave it alone, document, take pictures, make videos.

Your MVP is then baseline for next iteration.

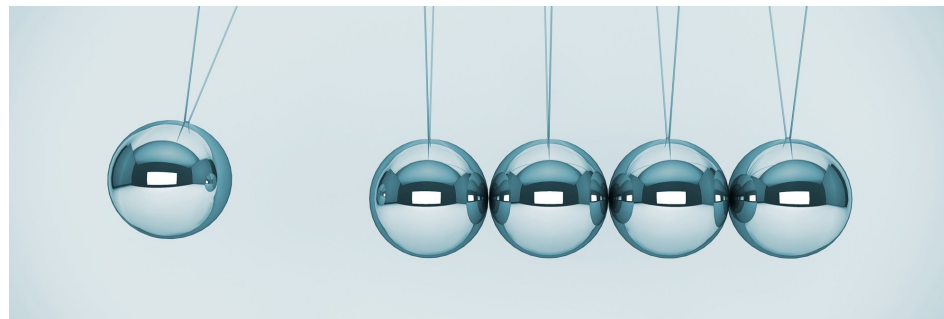


IMPACT ANALYSIS

Focus on scenario-based design and contextual design – use it!

Which features will have the most (positive) impact?

You understand your user and the context – use the analysis to strengthen arguments for feature prioritization.



IMPACT ANALYSIS - KITCHEN TIMER

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Time can be set (up to two hours) 1- Hours and minutes are separate 1- The user gets notified 2- The timer can be reset 4- Timer can be paused 5- Fits in the kitchen 6- Battery lasts more than max. timer 3 <p>Must have</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Timer can be set (up to 24 hours) 7- Hours, minutes and seconds 8- User gets multimodal feedback 9- Multiple concurrent timers 12- Small enough to carry 11- Battery lasts for full longitudinal study duration 10 <p>Should have</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Timer = multiple weeks? Could have- Smartphone connected- Contextual multimodal feedback	<p>Will not have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Cloud-connection- Statistics and food categorization- Credit-card like footprint- Fusion sensing (thermometer?)- Solar panel



“FREE FEATURES FIRST”

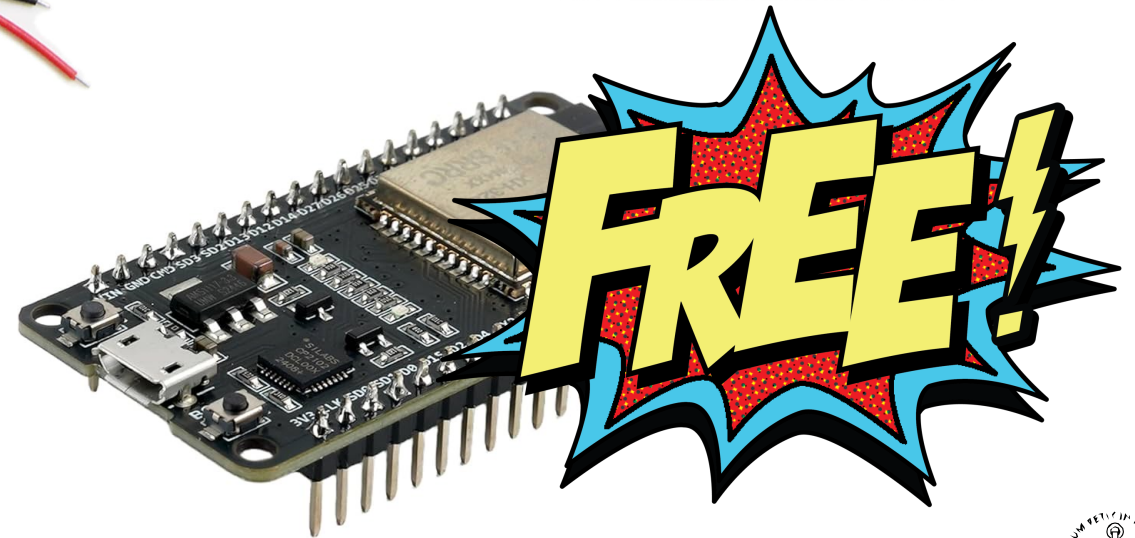
Free features are not necessarily free, but requires very little technical reiteration.

Hardware vs. software

Simple additions or changes



VS



VS



IMPACT ANALYSIS - KITCHEN TIMER

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Time can be set (up to two hours) 1- Hours and minutes are separate 1- The user gets notified 2- The timer can be reset 4- Timer can be paused 5- Fits in the kitchen 6- Battery lasts more than max. timer 3 <p>Must have</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Timer can be set (up to 24 hours) 7 FREE!- Hours, minutes and seconds 8- User gets multimodal feedback 9- Multiple concurrent timers 12- Small enough to carry 11- Battery lasts for full longitudinal study duration 10 FREE! <p>Should have</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Timer = multiple weeks? FREE!- Smartphone connected FREE!- Contextual multimodal feedback	<p>Will not have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Cloud-connection- Statistics and food categorization- Credit-card like footprint- Fusion sensing (thermometer?)- Solar panel



TIME AND SPRINTS

Agile development methodologies often refer to the term “sprint”.

I strongly suggest using this approach for testing feasibility in feature-based prototyping.

Suggested framework for prototype sprint:

Inspired by the often used “5-day design sprint” (or similar artzy naming scheme)

Following MoSCoW prioritization and free-features-first analysis.

Have initial brainstorm about implementation strategy.

Divide most crucial features up, and sprint them in pairs.

Work 24-72 hours on each feature depending on impact (two features being worked on simultaneously).

End with feasibility assessment and construct time plan based on last sprint. Or scrap.



PROTOTYPE EVALUATION



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THE FALLACY OF FLAWLESS

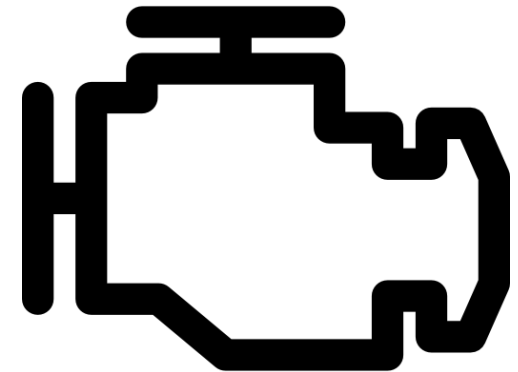
Prototypes are inherently flawed.

Small factors and variance makes a difference for replicability and comparability.

The obvious end-goal is a self-sustained and robust system.

Often that is not the case...

and maybe not the best and easiest way to add additional features?



WIZARD OF OZ



<https://www.nngroup.com/articles/wizard-of-oz/>



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FINISH, FIDELITY, FEEDBACK

Maryam Tohid, William Buxton, Ronald Baecker, and Abigail Sellen. 2006. Getting the right design and the design right.

and

Youn-Kyung Lim, Erik Stolterman, and Josh Tenenber. 2008. The anatomy of prototypes: Prototypes as filters, prototypes as manifestations of design ideas.

End goal of a prototype evaluation:

- To validate concept
- Evaluate user appropriation
- Problem-solution fit
- Feedback on future iterations

Prototype fidelity matters!

Users find it easier to critique lower fidelity prototypes.

Sometimes using multiple low-fidelity, feature-focused prototypes is the right way...

... For evaluation 😊



DIGITAL FABRICATION



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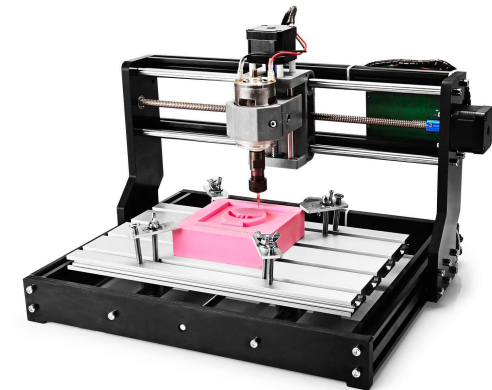


MANUFACTURING METHODS

Additive Manufacturing	Subtractive Manufacturing
3D printing as example	CNC (Computer Numerical Control) milling as example
Adding layer by layer	Taking away layer by layer
Material base = often plastic	Material base = often metals/wood
Often used for fast initial prototyping	Often used for sturdy construction



Combo =
Hybrid Process



Meh?

1. What type of features does your product have?

- small organic and intricate features → additive methods
- large or sharp features, drilled and tapped holes or other fastening features → subtractive methods

2. **What type of material do you want to work with?**

- **thermoplastics and resins → additive methods**
- **materials like metals, wood, or foam → subtractive methods**

3. How many units do you want to produce?

- low-volume production or iterative prototyping → additive methods
- large-volume production runs → subtractive methods

Meh?

RAPID PROTOTYPING

Purpose: Rapidly creating tangible artifacts or prototypes to filter/validate certain aspects.

Addendum: In house. By yourself. Something you hopefully made. Without ruining yourself...
... or the equipment 😊

Most common practice and understanding:

Utilizes digital fabrication, due to speed and work/process synchronicity.

Any fabrication occupying more than a few days is no longer rapid prototyping – it's invested construction.

Invested construction is not a bad thing – perfect for prototyping towards final demo.

Rapid prototyping is your tool to quickly test, validate and scrap. Anything too detailed - and invested - in can become hard to scrap.

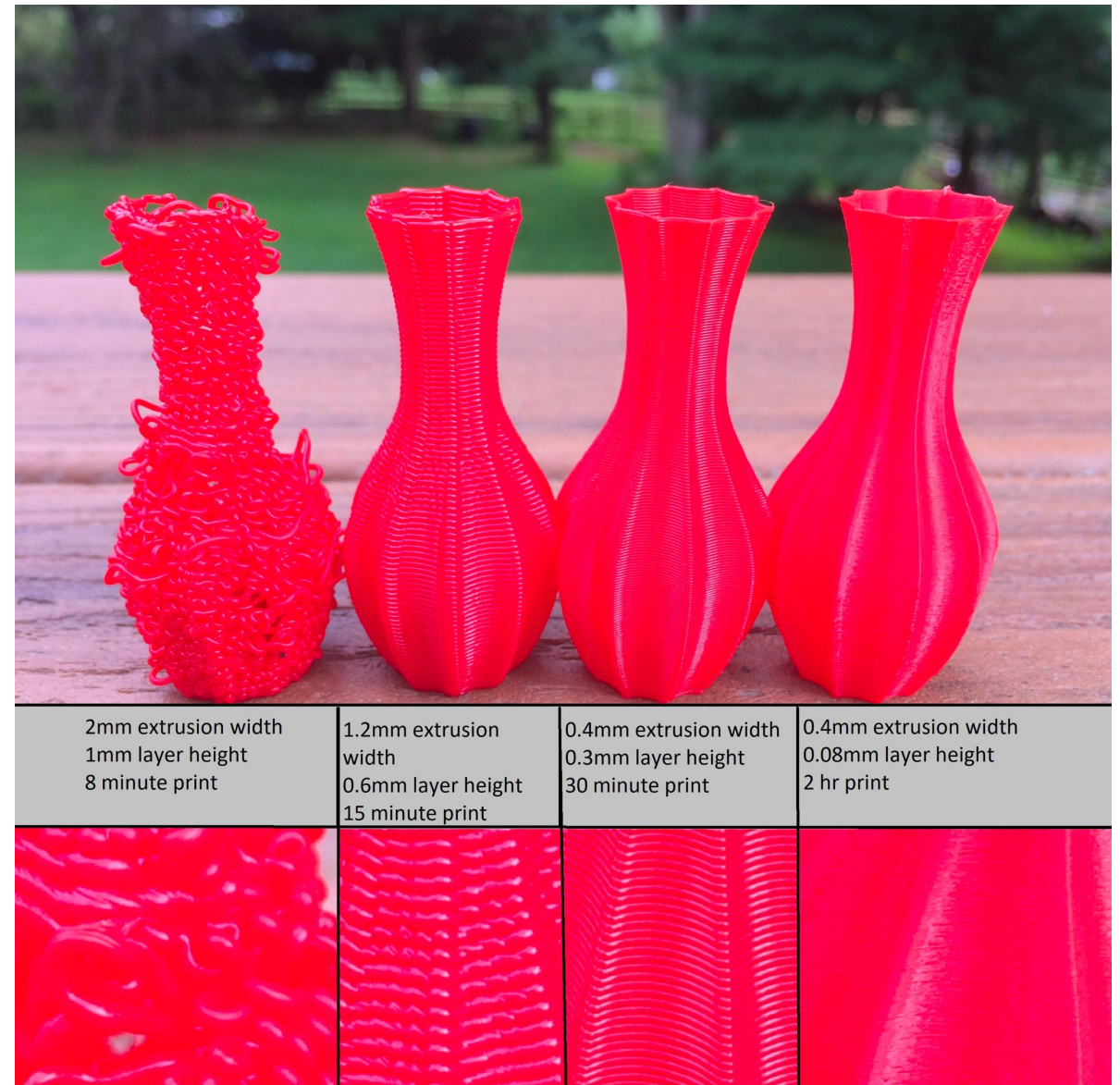


RAPID PROTOTYPING

Mastering techniques, process, equipment

=

Absolute control regarding time and scope



ARDUINO



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AGENDA

- Why Arduino for prototyping
- Alternative prototyping platforms (and what you will be taught about in other courses)
- Code examples
- ESP32 Wizard of Oz



ARDUINO AS PROTOTYPING PLATFORM

Readily available here and big part of our lab-ecosystem

Lots of documentation and code examples + tutorials

Easy prototyping, hook-up, HATs, powering etc.

Many variations, sizes and beefiness

Often limiting: CPU/GPU power, threading/cores, memory, GPIO pin amount, buffer sizes, communication.



ALTERNATIVE PLATFORMS

Wemos D1 Mini (cheap WiFi board based on ESP8266)

ESP 32 (great platform with lots of possibilities)

RPI (when you want something in between a PC and an Arduino)

ATMEL MCU family (used in PhysComp. When you want to create custom circuits)

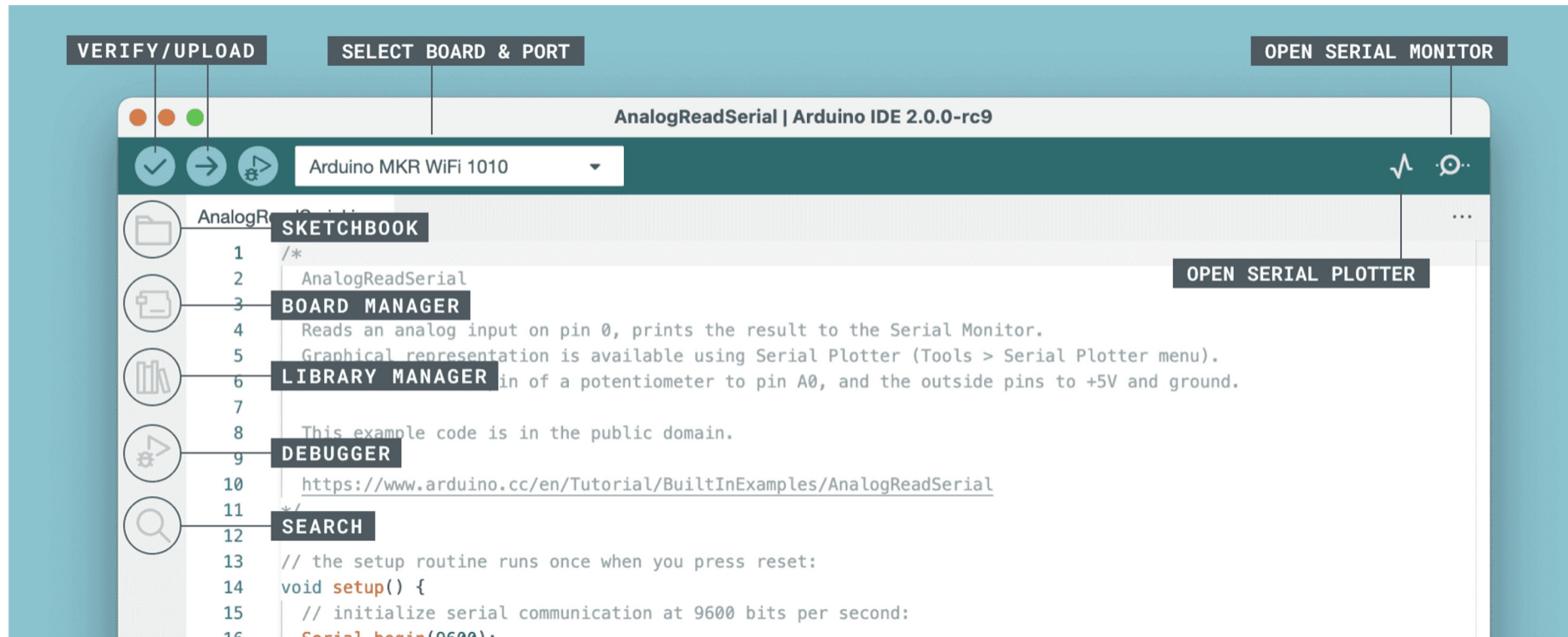
NUCs/Smartphones (for webapps/apps, graphics-intense tasks)



ARDUINO IDE

Arduino is an open-source electronics platform based on easy-to-use hardware and software.

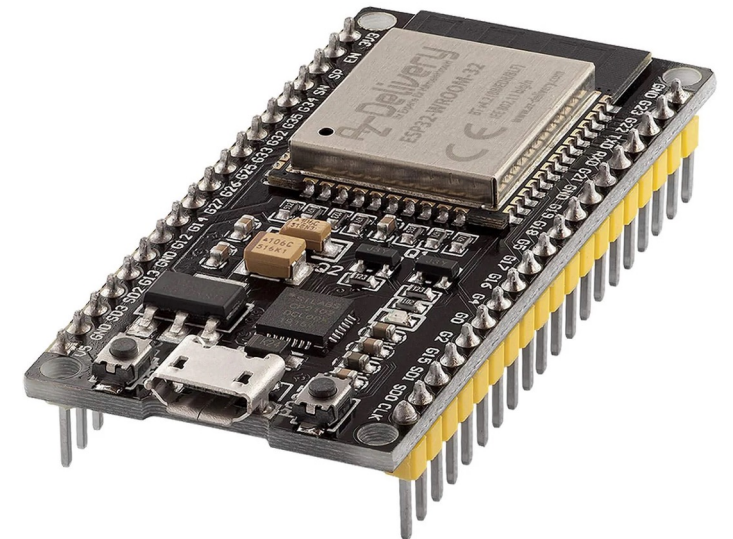
<https://www.arduino.cc/en/software>



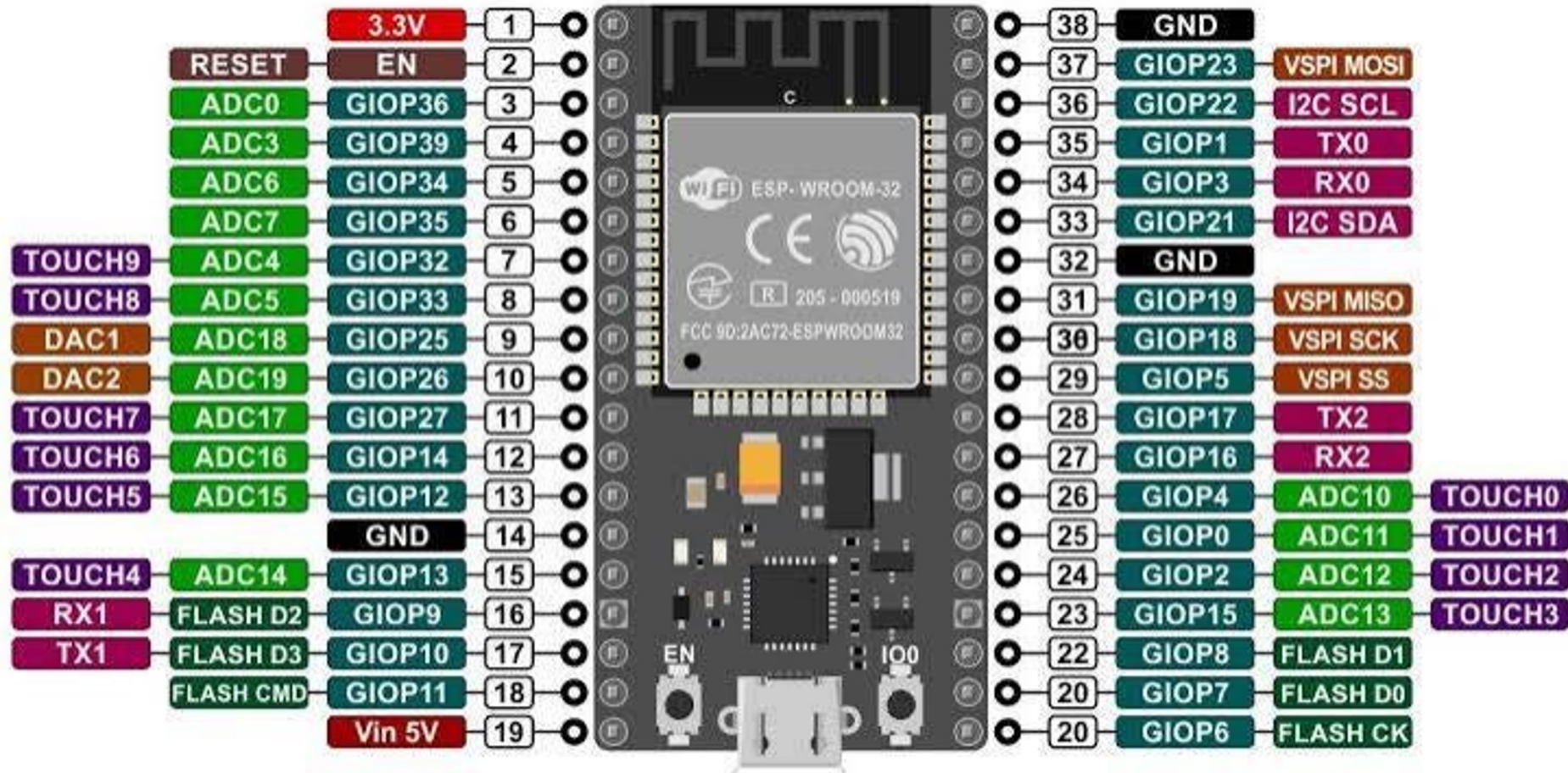
ESP32

ESP32 is widely used in System-on-Chip (SoC) solutions designed for Internet of Things (IoT) applications due to its:

- Integrated WiFi and Bluetooth
- Lower power consumption with deep sleep modes
- More I/O Features (than Arduino)



ESP32



ARDUINO V.S. ESP32 V.S. ESP8266

Feature	Arduino	ESP32	ESP8266
CPU	8-bit, 16 MHz	Dual-core, 240 MHz	Single-core, 80–160 MHz
Memory	Low (2 KB SRAM)	High (520 KB SRAM)	Moderate (160 KB SRAM)
Wi-Fi	No	Yes (Wi-Fi + Bluetooth)	Yes (Wi-Fi only)
GPIOs	~14	~34	~17
Power	High consumption	Low-power modes (~5 μ A)	Deep sleep (~10 μ A)
Analog	10-bit ADC	12-bit ADC + 2 DACs	10-bit ADC
Security	Basic	Hardware encryption	Basic
Best For	Simple projects	IoT, AI, wireless apps	IoT with Wi-Fi



ARDUINO COMPONENTS



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COMPONENTS – WHAT OPTIONS DO WE HAVE?

- Many components will be covered in Physical Computing next semester:
 - Entire lecture set on sensors and what types we have in lab as inspiration. Engineering Interactive Technologies delves further into making novel sensing techniques.
 - Entire lecture set on actuators – even more time to delve into actuators in Multimodal Interaction and Shape Changing Objects and Spaces
- **For now: Use Johannes' component inspiration kit and chomskylab.dk – and talk to supervisors/TAs/Labtools for further advice/inspiration.**



ARDUINO CODE EXAMPLES



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ARDUINO CODE EXAMPLES

“AnalogInOutSerial.ino”

“Arrays.ino”

”Smoothing.ino”

“switchCase.ino”

WiFi network examples (third-party examples)



ANALOG IN OUT SERIAL

—
Example of map

Example of analogRead

Example of Serial.print

```
// These constants won't change. They're used to give names to the pins used:
const int analogInPin = A0; // Analog input pin that the potentiometer is attached to
const int analogOutPin = 9; // Analog output pin that the LED is attached to

int sensorValue = 0; // value read from the pot
int outputValue = 0; // value output to the PWM (analog out)

void setup() {
  // initialize serial communications at 9600 bps:
  Serial.begin(9600);
}

void loop() {
  // read the analog in value:
  sensorValue = analogRead(analogInPin);
  // map it to the range of the analog out:
  outputValue = map(sensorValue, 0, 1023, 0, 255);
  // change the analog out value:
  analogWrite(analogOutPin, outputValue);

  // print the results to the Serial Monitor:
  Serial.print("sensor = ");
  Serial.print(sensorValue);
  Serial.print("\t output = ");
  Serial.println(outputValue);

  // wait 2 milliseconds before the next loop for the analog-to-digital
  // converter to settle after the last reading:
  delay(2);
}
```



ARRAYS

—
Array example because slightly different syntax compared to java

```
int timer = 100; // The higher the number, the slower the timing.
int ledPins[] = {
    2, 7, 4, 6, 5, 3
}; // an array of pin numbers to which LEDs are attached
int pinCount = 6; // the number of pins (i.e. the length of the array)

void setup() {
    // the array elements are numbered from 0 to (pinCount - 1).
    // use a for loop to initialize each pin as an output:
    for (int thisPin = 0; thisPin < pinCount; thisPin++) {
        pinMode(ledPins[thisPin], OUTPUT);
    }
}

void loop() {
    // loop from the lowest pin to the highest:
    for (int thisPin = 0; thisPin < pinCount; thisPin++) {
        // turn the pin on:
        digitalWrite(ledPins[thisPin], HIGH);
        delay(timer);
        // turn the pin off:
        digitalWrite(ledPins[thisPin], LOW);
    }

    // loop from the highest pin to the lowest:
    for (int thisPin = pinCount - 1; thisPin >= 0; thisPin--) {
        // turn the pin on:
        digitalWrite(ledPins[thisPin], HIGH);
        delay(timer);
        // turn the pin off:
        digitalWrite(ledPins[thisPin], LOW);
    }
}
```



RUNNING AVG

—
"Smoothing.ino" in Arduino--> Examples

Running average data smoothing

Useful for sensor and input with noise

Noise = variance in data without change in input

```
const int numReadings = 10;

int readings[numReadings]; // the readings from the analog input
int readIndex = 0;         // the index of the current reading
int total = 0;             // the running total
int average = 0;           // the average

int inputPin = A0;

void setup() {
  // initialize serial communication with computer:
  Serial.begin(9600);
  // initialize all the readings to 0:
  for (int thisReading = 0; thisReading < numReadings; thisReading++) {
    readings[thisReading] = 0;
  }
}

void loop() {
  // subtract the last reading:
  total = total - readings[readIndex];
  // read from the sensor:
  readings[readIndex] = analogRead(inputPin);
  // add the reading to the total:
  total = total + readings[readIndex];
  // advance to the next position in the array:
  readIndex = readIndex + 1;

  // if we're at the end of the array...
  if (readIndex >= numReadings) {
    // ...wrap around to the beginning:
    readIndex = 0;
  }

  // calculate the average:
  average = total / numReadings;
  // send it to the computer as ASCII digits
  Serial.println(average);
  delay(1); // delay in between reads for stability
}
```



SWITCHCASE

—
Crucial for ITTT cases and sensing

```
const int sensorMin = 0;    // sensor minimum, discovered through experiment
const int sensorMax = 600; // sensor maximum, discovered through experiment

void setup() {
  // initialize serial communication:
  Serial.begin(9600);
}

void loop() {
  // read the sensor:
  int sensorReading = analogRead(A0);
  // map the sensor range to a range of four options:
  int range = map(sensorReading, sensorMin, sensorMax, 0, 3);

  // do something different depending on the range value:
  switch (range) {
    case 0: // your hand is on the sensor
      Serial.println("dark");
      break;
    case 1: // your hand is close to the sensor
      Serial.println("dim");
      break;
    case 2: // your hand is a few inches from the sensor
      Serial.println("medium");
      break;
    case 3: // your hand is nowhere near the sensor
      Serial.println("bright");
      break;
  }
  delay(1); // delay in between reads for stability
}
```



ESP32 EXAMPLE – YOUR WOZ CHEATSHEET

ESP32 is a brilliant platform for the Wizard of Oz method.

Example code in Brightspace.

Simple UI via WiFiServer → interaction with ESP32

Easily adaptable.

Of course only used for evaluation and prototyping, not the final demo 😊



```
ESP32_WiFiWorkshopFinal.ino
1 // Load Wi-Fi library
2 #include <WiFi.h>
3
4 // Replace with your network credentials
5 const char* ssid = "AU-IoT";
6 const char* password = "test1234";
7
8 // Set web server port number to 80
9 WiFiServer server(80);
10
11 // Variable to store the HTTP request
12 String header;
13
14 // Auxiliar variables to store the current output state
15 String output26State = "off";
16 String output27State = "off";
17
18 // Assign output variables to GPIO pins
19 const int output26 = 26;
20 const int output27 = 27;
21
22 // Current time
23 unsigned long currentTime = millis();
24 // Previous time
25 unsigned long previousTime = 0;
26 // Define timeout time in milliseconds (example: 2000ms = 2s)
27 const long timeoutTime = 2000;
28
29 void setup() {
30   Serial.begin(921600);
31   // Initialize the output variables as outputs
32   pinMode(output26, OUTPUT);
33   pinMode(output27, OUTPUT);
34   // Set outputs to LOW
35   digitalWrite(output26, LOW);
36   digitalWrite(output27, LOW);
37
38   // Connect to Wi-Fi network with SSID and password
39   Serial.println("Connecting to ");
40   Serial.println(ssid);
41   WiFi.begin(ssid, password);
42   while (WiFi.status() != WL_CONNECTED) {
43     delay(500);
44     Serial.print(".");
45   }
46   // Print local IP address and start web server
47   Serial.println("");
48   Serial.println("WiFi connected.");
49   Serial.println("IP address: ");
50   Serial.println(WiFi.localIP());
51   server.begin();
52 }
```



INSTALL THE ESP32 BOARD IN ARDUINO IDE

- Open IDE and go to **Tools > Board > Boards Manager**
- Search "ESP32", select "**esp32 by Espressif Systems**", and click Install
- Reopen Arduino IDE
- Under **Tools>Board** you should see **esp32 → ESP32 Dev Module option**

The screenshot shows the 'BOARDS MANAGER' window in the Arduino IDE. The search bar contains 'esp32'. Below the search bar, there is a 'Type:' dropdown menu set to 'All'. Two search results are visible:

- Arduino ESP32 Boards** by Arduino: Boards included in this package: Arduino Nano ESP32. Version: 2.0.18-rc. An 'INSTALL' button is present.
- esp32** by Espressif Systems: Boards included in this package: ESP32 Dev Board, ESP32-C3 Dev Board, ESP32-C6 Dev Board, ... Version: 3.2.0. An 'INSTALL' button is present.



INSTALL USB CABLE DRIVER

Download Link: <https://www.silabs.com/developer-tools/usb-to-uart-bridge-vcp-drivers>

- **Windows Users:** The [Arduino Installer](#) should install the USB Driver automatically. But in case it doesn't work, download from the link. Windows 10 users should use **CP210x Universal Windows Driver**, and Windows 8.1,8 and 7 users can use **CP210x Windows Driver**.
- **MacOS Users:** Download the [CP210x VCP Mac OSX Driver](#). After installing, accept Privacy changes and prompts. If install fails, install legacy driver variant.
- **Testing** if the USB driver works (all OS): in the Arduino menu **Tools>port** *before* plugging in your ESP with the USB cable. You should see either none or one entry listed. Now **plug in your ESP microcontroller** and take another look at **Tools>port**. You should hopefully see one more entry. On Windows this will often be something like **COM3**. On Mac it will be **USB_to_UART** or **cu.usbserial**



TESTING AND GETTING INFO

- Open File → Examples → Basics → BareMinimum and test that upload works to your ESP32.
- During upload the device MAC address will be written (including other useful info)

```
Connecting.....  
Chip is ESP32-D0WD-V3 (revision v3.1)  
Features: WiFi, BT, Dual Core, 240MHz, VRef calibration in efuse, Coding Scheme None  
Crystal is 40MHz  
MAC: 3c:8a:1f:0c:64:00  
Uploading stub...  
Running stub...  
Stub running...  
Changing baud rate to 921600
```

- Now it's time to get on WiFi, by either using your phone hotspot as WiFi, or connect to AU-IoT via Simon (bring him your device MAC address)



GETTING ON WIFI

```
#include <WiFi.h>

const char* ssid = "AU-IoT";
const char* password = "test1234";

void setup(){
  Serial.begin(921600);
  delay(1000);

  WiFi.mode(WIFI_STA); //Optional
  WiFi.begin(ssid, password);
  Serial.println("\nConnecting");

  while(WiFi.status() != WL_CONNECTED){
    Serial.print(".");
    delay(100);
  }

  Serial.println("\nConnected to the WiFi network");
  Serial.print("Local ESP32 IP: ");
  Serial.println(WiFi.localIP());
}


void loop(){}
```

← Or your phone hotspot SSID + pass



GETTING ON WIFI

- Result 1:



```
Output Serial Monitor x
Message (Enter to send message to 'ESP32 Dev Module' on '/dev/cu.usbserial-0001') New Line 921600 baud
????????????????????????????????????????????????????????????????????????????????????
Connecting
.....
Connected to the WiFi network
Local ESP32 IP: 10.116.132.23
```

- Result 2: Endless connecting loop (retry SSID/pass or another WiFi)
- Result 3: Connection failed (retry)
- Result 4: Gibberish (check baud rate).

REACTING TO ONLINE INPUT

- Open the .ino file from Brightspace called "ESP32_WifiWorkshopFinal" (unedited code can also be found via link, remember to change SSID credentials and baud).
- Read through to understand what it does. It is a very basic HTTP-request "ESP32 as web server"-setup, and is great for future prototyping!
- Set up a breadboard with your ESP and two LEDs to pin 26 and 27 (remember a 220 ohm resistor to each + GND pin)
- Use your computer/phone to control the pins (write the IP in the URL-field in a browser)
- **Optional - IoT Doorbell:** Edit the code to work with a single buzzer instead of two LEDs – maybe even make a little melody?

Idea and code from: <https://randomnerdtutorials.com/esp32-web-server-arduino-ide/>



