



**Vehicular networking
and road weather
related research in
Sodankylä**

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Vehicular networking and road weather related research in Sodankylä

T. Sukuvaara, K. Mäenpää, and R. Ylitalo

Finnish Meteorological Institute, P.O. Box 503, 00101 Helsinki, Finland

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Correspondence to: T. Sukuvaara (timo.sukuvaara@fmi.fi)

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Abstract

Vehicular networking and especially safety-related wireless vehicular services have been under intensive research for almost a decade now. Only in recent years, also the road weather information has been acknowledged to play an important role when aiming to reduce traffic accidents and fatalities via Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS). Part of the progress can be seen as a result of Finnish Meteorological Institute's (FMI) long-term research work in Sodankylä within the topic, originally started in 2006.

Within multiple research projects, FMI Arctic Research Centre has been developing wireless vehicular networking and road weather services, in co-operation with FMI meteorological services team in Helsinki. At the beginning the wireless communication was conducted with traditional Wi-Fi type local area networking, but during the development the system has been evolved to hybrid communication system of combined Vehicular area Networking (VANET system with special IEEE 802.11p protocol and supporting cellular networking based on 3G commercial network, not forgetting support for Wi-Fi-based devices also. For the piloting purposes and further research, we have established a special combined road weather station (RWS) and roadside unit (RSU), to interact with vehicles as a service hotspot. In the RWS/RSU we have chosen to build support to all major approaches, IEEE 802.11, traditional Wi-Fi and cellular 3G. We employ road weather systems of FMI, RWS and vehicle data gathered from vehicles, into the up-to-date localized weather data delivered in real-time. IEEE 802.11p vehicular networking is supported with Wi-Fi and 3G communications.

This paper briefly introduces the research work related vehicular networking and road weather services conducted in Sodankylä, as well as the research project involved in this work. The current status of instrumentation, available services and capabilities are presented in order to formulate the clear general view of the research field.

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Road Operation). As the result of all these projects and research work, the interactive RWS station, together with research vehicles, forms the pilot system in Sodankylä, acting as a real-life test bed for the present and yet to come demonstration systems.

2 Research Road Weather Station

5 FMI has constructed a special combined Road Weather Station and Road Side Unit (RWS/RSU) to the Northern Finland, nearby its facilities in Sodankylä. The station, viewed in Fig. 1, is equipped with up-to-date road weather measurement instrumentation. The general objective is to design, develop and test both the local road weather service generation and the service data delivery between RWS and vehicles.

10 The collection of RWS measurements is listed in Fig. 2.

The IEEE 802.11p VANET standard is used as the primary communication entity. Traditional Wi-Fi (IEEE 802.11g/n) and cellular networking (3G) are used as reference methods for the existing operative solution and as the alternative communication methods if VANET network is not available.

15 The interaction between vehicle and RWS represents the typical V2I communication. The vehicle passing the RWS/RSU is supplemented wirelessly and automatically with up-to-date road weather related data and services, and at the same time possible vehicle-oriented measurement data is delivered upwards. As seen in Fig. 3, the local server in RWS/RSU is hosting the station operations. It is linked with NEC Linkbird-MX modem for IEEE 802.11p communication attempting, but it has also internal Wi-Fi modem, and both of these communication channels are actively seeking the passing vehicle communication systems. The local server is also gathering measurement data from two different measurement entities, Vaisala Rosa road weather measurement system and FMI weather station measurements. The data from these sources, together
20 with vehicle-oriented data is sorted and further delivered to FMI local facilities through 3G communication link. The advanced services are developed in FMI facilities and delivered back to the RWS/RSU, to be further delivered to vehicles. The messaging

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4 Measurement data

Vehicular networking and road weather related measurements generated in Sodankylä RWS and supporting infrastructure consists of operative example RWS services as well as specially tailored pilot measurements.

The operative RWS services are gathered into our public RWS website, found from <http://sodrws.fmi.fi> and viewed in Fig. 7. The historical data series captured from the RWS are presented in our public local database, in <http://litdb.fmi.fi/rws.php>. The website contents are tailored also to the mobile devices of Android-based operating system as well as iPhone and Jolla, aiming to present our vision of road weather services user interface scalable for different environments. In addition to this, we are collecting the measurement data into historical time series, to be exploited in the future research. An example of such data set, road frost data from the winter 2014–2015, is presented in Fig. 8. The frost measurement is conducted with multiple temperature sensors buried in different depths, indicating frost when temperature below zero. In the warm periods and at the end of winter season, frost is melting first from the ground level, which can clearly be seen in Fig. 8.

As an example of the pilot measurements in Sodankylä, the data throughput estimation measurements conducted between combined RWS/RSU and passing vehicle are presented in Figs. 9 and 10. In this measurement we focused on the IEEE 802.11p based VANET (Vehicular Area Networking) communication, comparing it to the traditional Wi-Fi based communication in the same environment and conditions (based on IEEE 802.11g standard). On the RWS/RSU side the host computer located in the station was employed to broadcast data for the passing vehicles in pre-defined packet size and interval, respectively. Many different combinations were briefly tested, until the optimal rate (1500 byte packets in 1 ms interval) was found and further used in the measurements. Figure 9 presents the results with 80 km h^{-1} vehicle speed, Fig. 10 results with 100 km h^{-1} , respectively. The green colored line is the Wi-Fi measurement average and the lighter green lines are the Wi-Fi measurements. Similarly the solid orange

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and 3G communications. In the future, 4G and 5G communication will be employed and tested as well.

Our research shows that our approach of hybrid communication offers considerable approach for serving vehicles with real-time weather and traffic information. We have also constructed an extensive set of road weather measurements, to be exploited as part of road weather services of FMI as well part of vehicular networking research. Detailed and more specific data contents with local area weather data can be delivered to vehicles in service hotspots located beside road. Whenever outside the range of any RWS, 3G cellular data ensures that the most critical information related to weather and traffic is always up to date. As a summary, our approach of combined RWS/RSU represents our imagination of merging modern road weather services and vehicular intelligence, and stands for respectable test bed for the future road weather and networking services as well.

FMI's combined Road Weather Station (RWS)/Road Side Unit (RSU) in Sodankylä is the unique research platform combining very advanced road weather measurements with versatile collection of the most common wireless communication methodologies used in vehicular environment. Together with harsh, arctic road weather conditions it represents incomparable development environment and pilot RWS station within the field of ITS (Intelligent Transport Systems) and vehicular networking.

Acknowledgements. This work has been supported in part by number of different research projects, funded by the Technology Advancement Agency of Finland (TEKES) and the European Union EUREKA cluster program Celtic Plus, European Union FP7 program, Interreg IV A Nord and Northern Periphery Programme, respectively. The authors wish to thank all the financiers and project partners in this work.

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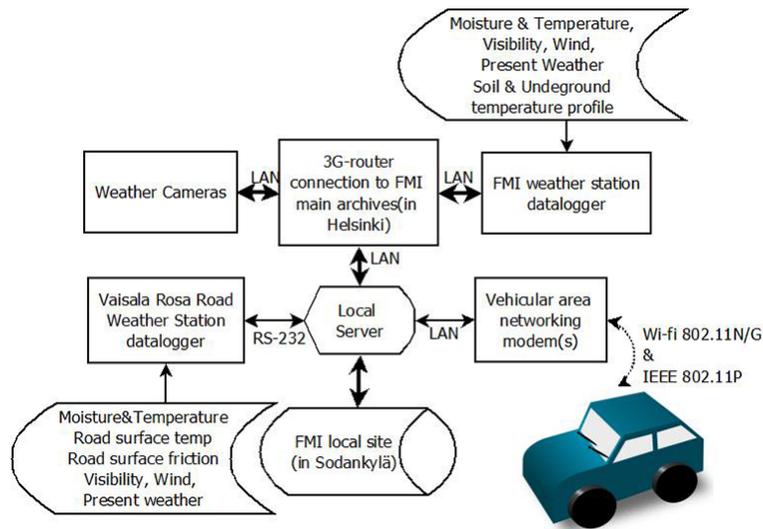


Figure 3. Communication entity of RWS/RSU.

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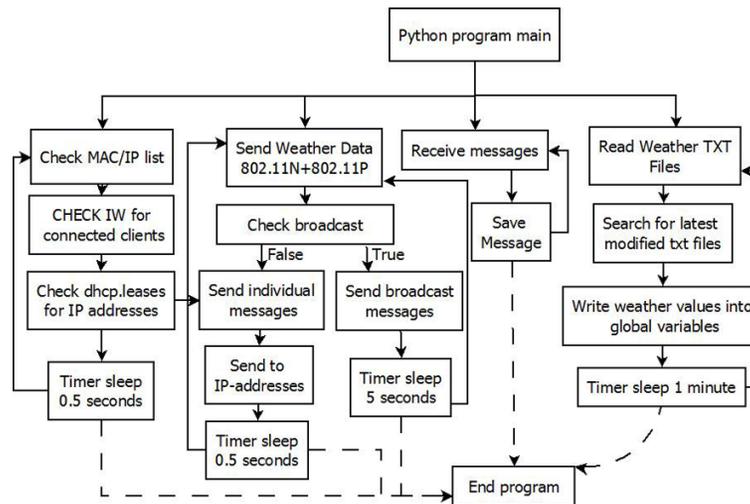


Figure 4. Operational process in RWS/RSU.

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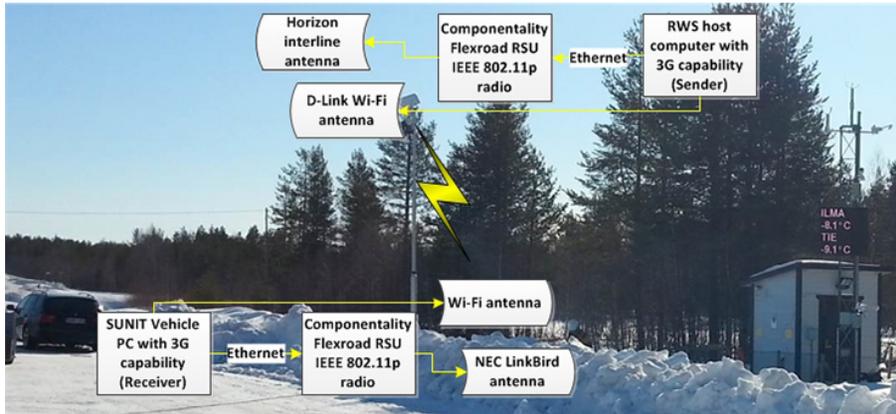


Figure 5. Devices and their connections in IEEE 802.11p communication.

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Figure 6. Teconer friction measurement instrument mounted into the vehicle.

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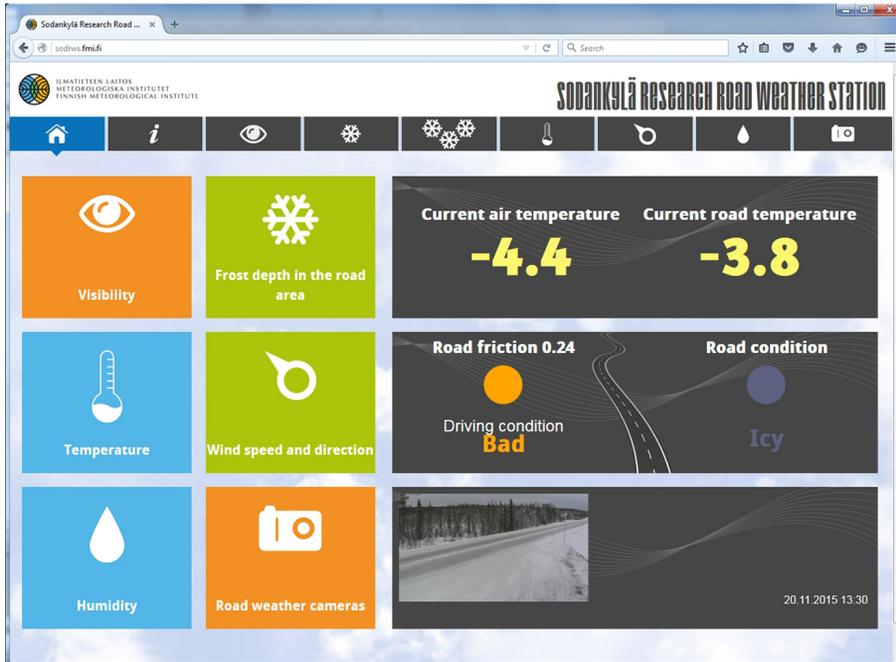


Figure 7. Road weather station website at <http://sodrws.fmi.fi>.

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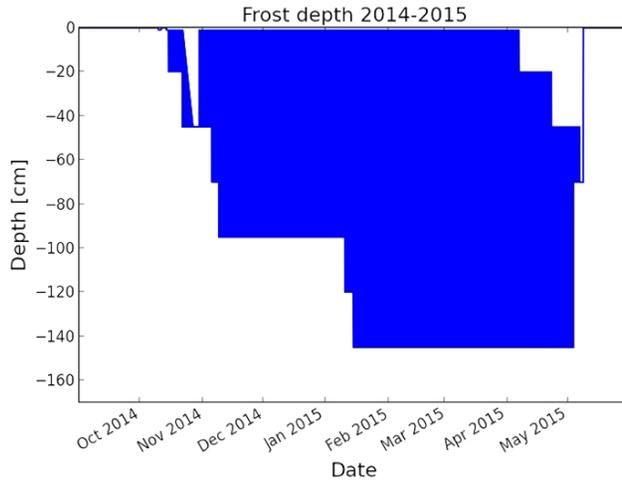


Figure 8. Frost depth data from the RWS measurements.

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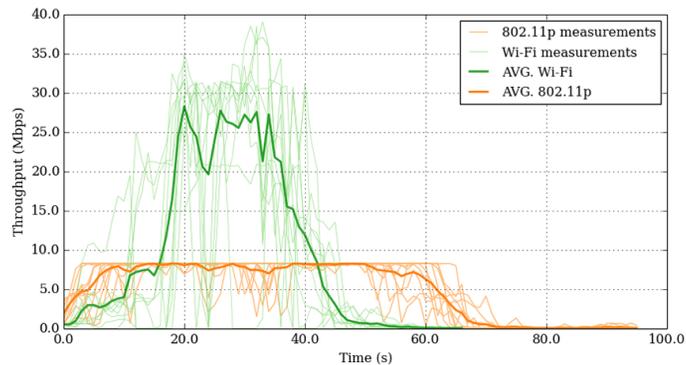


Figure 9. Data throughput from combined RWS/RSU to vehicle with 80 km h^{-1} speed.

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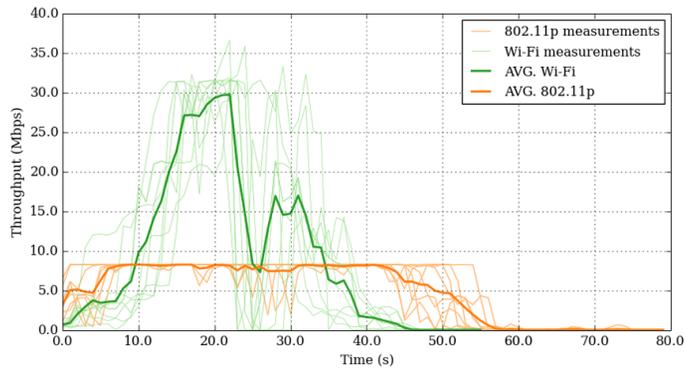


Figure 10. Data throughput from combined RWS/RSU to vehicle with 100 km h^{-1} speed.

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