www.ijecs.in
International Journal Of Engineering And Computer Science
Volume 13 Issue 06 June 2024, Page No. 26229-26246
ISSN: 2319-7242 DOI: 10.18535/ijecs/v13i06.4837

Advanced Innovations in Electronic Control Units: Enhancing Performance and Reliability with AI

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Abstract

This paper proposes a methodology for the design of electronic control unit (ECU) hardware units with increased performance and reliability. Today's vehicles are equipped with dozens of ECUs that significantly influence the system's efficiency, reliability, performance, and safety. With the increased complexity of control algorithms and the environmental constraints that automotive systems operate, the robustness and efficiency of the ECUs are of utmost importance.

In this work, an approach is proposed based on combining hardware redundancy, commercial field programmable gate arrays (FPGAs), and artificial intelligence strategies to provide increased redundancy checks and robust control. An additional redundancy is added to the hardware architecture of the ECU to include a parallel hardware unit. The two controlling units operate in parallel. The output of each of them is compared, allowing redundancy checks in the computation of the output variable (oV) of the system. The mathematical model of the ECU depicts the governing equations of the ECU in the form of differential equations, which results in a corresponding state-space configuration. These mathematical models are encoded into the field programmable gate array (FPGA) and processed in hardware, leading to an equivalent software-based implementation.

To analyze the performance of both models within the ECU, an artificial neural network (ANN)-based strategy is proposed. The ANN depicts the governing equations of the ECU in the form of differential equations encoded in the form of sigmoidal functions. To analyze the reliability of the control action in the ECU, the temperature of the system is increased, which leads to a random variation of the system parameters. The variability of the ECU parameters leads to a deviation in the computation of the oV and the corresponding control action. The robustness of the control is determined in such conditions. A control law is determined to guarantee proper control action under variations in the governing equations of the system.

This control law is represented by a simple algebraic equation, which can then be cast in various control strategies, such as look-up tables or fuzzy logic controllers. Several cases are simulated to assess the performance of the proposed control law for the hardware redundancy scheme, for the ANN-based equivalent software implementation approach, and for the additional fuzzy logic controller. The simulation results are analyzed concerning the requested oV and give insight into the performance and reliability of the proposed dedicated ECU design.

Keywords: Electronic Control Units (ECUs), Hardware Redundancy, Field Programmable Gate Arrays (FPGAs), Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs), Control Algorithms, Robust Control Strategies, Performance Analysis, Reliability Assessment, Differential Equations, Fuzzy Logic Controllers

1. Introduction

The proliferation of electronics and, consequently, electronic control units (ECUs) in various vehicles has significantly impacted consumers in terms of convenience, safety, and driving experience. Adverse effects such as increased complexity, costs, and lower reliability of entire systems can result from the growing number of ECUs and their connectivity to each other (using buses, for example), as well as to the external environment. As the density of implemented ECUs in a vehicle grows, the simultaneous failure of multiple ECUs due to a common fault (e.g. faulty software or burst exposure to high electromagnetic interference (EMI)) becomes increasingly likely. Moreover, both undesired coordinated behavior of interconnected ECUs and malicious attacks on connected ECUs are more likely the more ECUs there are within the same communication structure.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies have evolved enormously in recent years. Applications such as machine learning, computer vision, and neural networks have brought substantial advantages to different approaches and markets within multiple industries, widely known as the second AI wave. The engineering, design, and manufacture of embedded systems, and especially ECUs, are also commonly regarded as a third industrial wave, focusing on new revolutionary solutions (e.g. functional integration, energy efficiency, miniaturization) and disruptive technologies and techniques (e.g. system-level techniques, heterogeneous integration, 3D packaging, and assembly). However, it is still not well known how AI could be used to enhance the performance and reliability of conventional ECUs while remaining with only the usual single ECUs in a vehicle. It is highly desirable, if possible, to generate a new AI technology revolution within the "old" electronic component market, which covers such applications as automotive and industrial machinery. These AI-enhanced ECUs could bring substantial benefits to both automotive safety and new services/functions for other semiconductor markets. With extensive embedded electronics already present in vehicles and the foreseen extensive use of the Internet of Things (IoT), "smart" connected cities, and "highways" between various embedded systems in automobiles, trains, planes, etc., questions concerning privacy and trust, as well as potential dangers to public welfare (e.g. lives since it is about transportation systems), could be directly addressed given the context of ECUs. On the other hand, AI technologies could bring significant advantages to a large share of the market, while at the same time (in contrast to novel technologies) currently ready components and concepts could be broadly used, bringing revenues earlier compared to those usually experienced with capital-intensive technologies. The use of AI-enhanced methods represents a vast, commercially attractive field with numerous application possibilities more widely than currently perceived in potential product development.

1.1. Background and Significance

Electronic control units (ECUs) are key components of most modern vehicles. They regulate, coordinate, and control various functions and systems. This includes the engine, transmission, body electronics, brakes, lighting, driver assistance, comfort, entertainment, safety, and vehicle communication network protocols. Automotive systems have shifted from mechanical architectures with purely mechanical control to highly networked architectures with decentralized electronic control systems. As a result, the use of ECUs has gradually increased from just a few devices to over 100 in state-of-the-art vehicles. In contemporary high-performance vehicles, each ECU can handle over

1000 I/Os and operates at clock frequencies of over 100 MHz. Over the last three decades, the degree of autonomy in vehicle control systems has increased significantly. The vast increase in design complexity raises the concern of performance and reliability with advanced innovations in ECUs based on artificial intelligence (AI).

In recent years, AI has been proposed as a remedy to improve the performance and reliability of ECUs concerning safety. The AI use cases are being executed with different degrees of autonomy. Growing applications of AI functions in ECUs are being considered for large-scale deployment. However, there are unique challenges amidst the advanced innovations in ECUs enabling AI use cases. The sophisticated nature of artificial intelligence causes the underlying causes of faults and failures in their designs to remain hidden (i.e., are unexplainable). Other hardware-dependent implementation functions introduce frequent run-time failures in vulnerable circuits, such as memory cells and arithmetic units. Combined with the growing ECU interconnections and the resulting higher cross-dependencies, existing automotive safety approaches might fall short in addressing these modern premature attributes. In addition, safety concerns specific to the AI use cases in ECUs have yet to be addressed in safety standards adequately. Consequently, questions arise on how the performance and reliability of ECUs with influences on safety could be enhanced concerning the advanced innovations based on AI.

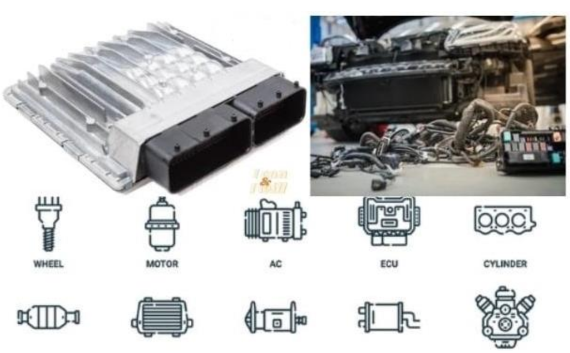

Fig 1 : The Functionality of Car ECUs

1.2. Research Aim and Objectives

The purpose of this study is to investigate how artificial intelligence (AI) can be used to improve the efficiency, reliability, and fault tolerance of electronic control units (ECUs) in automotive applications. It also seeks to identify the challenges and opportunities in this field, the reasons why these challenges matter, and the objectives to meet the identified objectives. The study focuses on three key research questions: "How can the use of artificial intelligence improve the efficiency, reliability, and fault tolerance of ECUs?", "What are the challenges and opportunities driven by AI regarding ECU design, testing, and design of experiments?", and "Why do the aforementioned challenges matter?".

The expected outcomes of this research include a comprehensive review of innovative approaches that ECUs can adopt in the context of AI, strategies to mitigate the potential negative impact of AI on SOA ECUs that are not resilient against these innovations, direction for future research on gaps in the literature, and the advancement of knowledge in this field. The study also acknowledges three limitations: innovations using AI for analysis instead of design are not addressed, innovations that do not use ML for control are not considered, and only professional papers are reviewed, with the exclusion of patents, proceedings, or white papers.

The justification of the research topic lies in the growing interest of car manufacturers in integrating AI into ECUs, which represents a significant transition in automotive history and poses challenges for existing ECUs. Overall, this research aims to contribute to the understanding of the effects of AI on electronic control units and provide recommendations for their design and testing in the automotive industry.

2. Fundamentals of Electronic Control Units (ECUs)

2. Fundamentals of Electronic Control Units (ECUs)

2.1. Definition and Functionality

An Electronic Control Unit (ECU) serves as an embedded system within an automobile, designed to execute precise control strategies through sophisticated algorithms. Comprising a microcontroller, memory components, input/output interfaces, and a power supply, ECUs function independently or in conjunction with other units to regulate a myriad of subsystems. These encompass, but are not limited to, engine, automatic transmission, steering, and brake systems. Standard features of ECUs consist of closed-loop control and fault detection systems operating in real-time to enhance safety, energy consumption, and comfort. Increases in computational resources enable the incorporation of additional intelligent features, fostering the quest for higher flexibility, reliability, performance, and lower energy consumption. With the amplification of flexibility requirements, models are becoming more complex, and the significance of confirming their dependability escalates.

Evolving development processes, marked by the growing dominance of model-based techniques, high-order non-linearities, control loops across multiple domains, and adaptivity, pose fresh challenges for verifier tools, previously employing linearization and off-line analysis methodologies. Fostered by the burgeoning complexity of models, the inadequacy of existing tools, alongside the virtual absence of formal analysis techniques for high-order non-linear systems, has led to the emergence of the analysis methodology termed as "verifying flow properties with abstraction refinement."

2.2. Evolution and Types

Initially, ECUs were purely analog devices, evolving into hybrid devices with an analog front-end. ECUs are a crucial component of road vehicles, accounting for up to 30% of manufacturing expenses. Over the last decade, the need for performance improvements and growing comfort and safety needs have intensified efforts on automotive information technologies. This has motivated the tight integration of mechanical and electronic functions in support of increasingly more complex control applications. Most of the control applications rely on complex algorithms that include either multi-dimensional control laws, model-based estimators or controllers, or both.

Over the past decade, researchers have developed rig modeling tools for the design of complex multi-technology systems controlled by an embedded control system. The methodology is based on building mathematical models of the plant system and the controller in the same language and the same mathematical formalism, allowing the reuse of the models over the entire product life cycle and their seamless integration. This is important since the diversity of the products implies that they will go through different life cycle phases that impose the need for different types of models.

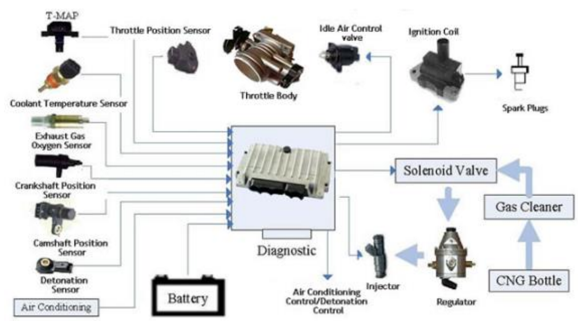

Fig 2 : Electronic Control Units (ECUs)

2.1. Definition and Functionality

Electronic Control Units (ECUs) are critical components in modern automobiles, enabling and managing a myriad of functions within vehicles. Originally conceived to fulfill basic tasks like engine management and anti-lock braking control, their role has significantly evolved over the decades. Advanced ECUs now oversee more complex systems, such as steering and other safety functions, thanks to burgeoning processing capabilities and robust networks.

An ECU is a digital electronic device designed to manage an operation or a group of operations in an automobile or other vehicle. It can be likened to the brain of the vehicle, responsible for gathering input data from various sensors deployed across the vehicle. This data typically relates to driving, vehicle status, and environmental conditions. Based on the input data, an ECU decides how to respond, affecting mechanical components like throttle valves, actuators, and switches. These decisions are always made through mathematical models embedded within the ECU's software. This software will then generate a series of output signals, like switching an actuator on/off in a certain condition or activating a step motor to drive valves based on a control algorithm's output. In summary, an ECU receives data input, processes this data using mathematical models, and generates output signals to its actuators.

The increasing integration of ECUs into automobiles is driven by the demand for enhanced vehicle performance and comfort, safety, convenience, and fuel efficiency. ECUs pose technological challenges as they typically deal with distributed networks of interconnected devices that work in unison to control complex tasks in real time. Types of ECUs are evolving to meet these challenges, moving from simple, low-power, non-communicating systems using custom devices, dedicated software, and static, fixed hardware configurations, towards sophisticated, high-performance, communicating, highly-integrated, and safety-critical systems using commercially available microcontrollers and standardized hardware and software platforms. These systems are becoming more complex due to the increasing number of implemented functions and growing interaction among functions.

2.2. Evolution and Types

In automotive applications, electronic control units (ECUs) mainly implement closed-loop control for regulating dynamic quantities (e.g., engine speed) or switching devices to achieve discrete (on/off) targets (e.g., anti-lock braking systems). Nevertheless, additional functions are gradually being implemented. Nowadays, a car may contain a constellation of several million lines of software code. ECUs need to cooperate within a networked architecture (e.g., using local area network communication protocols), ranging from an internal network on a vehicle to wide area networks (such as cellular, Wi-Fi, and satellite). This complex information technology (IT) infrastructure enables the deployment of advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) or even fully autonomous cars, depending on the vehicle type. A considerable research effort is currently devoted to supporting the growth of neuronal networks of mutually connected ECUs. The rationale for such new architectures is improved aggregation of the massive amount of information collected by vehicle sensors. Deep learning models are promising in classifying complex data patterns (such as images or speech), not necessarily governed by known physical laws. Nevertheless, such models are usually opaque to their users: their trained parameter values might need further explanation to be understood in terms of physical intent or interpretability. Similarly, the reliability of these massively parallel computers becomes questionable in case of failure.

Computational units of different types, as well as design paradigms (both of which are often intermixed), are found for ECU chip implementations. These types are largely dependent on technological advancements over the years. Two main MCU academic types prevailed until 1985: resource-constrained MIUs with dedicated architectures and interfaces for automotive function implementation, such as speech recognition, and general-purpose MCU families (like 8051 and Z8) with software-controlled on/off-chip sensors and actuators for various industry applications. In this regard, a description precedes MCU types chronologically starting from prior to 1985. Architecture/algorithm restrictions, such as fixed-point signed data formats, simple flow control, and limited on-chip computational/memory resources, were required in MIUs. Then, specialized components and on-chip peripherals were developed, such as multipliers and bit-shifting circuits, synchronous clock generators, timers, on-chip sensors, bus controllers, etc.

MCUs continued to dominate ECU implementation in the 1990s. Automotive-specific bus interfaces (e.g., CAN, K-Line), as well as dedicated components, also became standard in low-cost MCUs. European manufacturers initially prevailed. In 1988, Bosch announced the first fully integrated MCU with an on-chip bus interface and regulator for control applications on the vehicle. MCUs became more general-purpose starting in 1995, providing optional bus interfaces via exterior and conductive often patented components, resulting in different MCU versions for the same function. Nevertheless, computational architecture by manufacturers remained largely the same, mainly comprising sequential architectures. The fixed-function within-sequence processing units constitute the higher (bus) level of the, possibly pre-event, sequential fixed-unit model while computing correctly with reactivity characterizes the lower-level architecture type. No manufacturer pursued implementing new architectures until 2000. ECU paradigms became less strict on hardware restrictions, leaving design free on high-level specification (as H, GRAFCET, or UML in VHDL/Verilog). Meanwhile, as software became more complex, safety reliability directives became more rigorous (ISO 26262). Limitations of model-based architectures were also highlighted for new generations of complex ECUs.

3. Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in ECUs

The growing complexity of Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) is increasingly relying on Artificial Intelligence (AI) to tackle the intensifying difficulties concerning the shift from pure scenarios to functional environments. Such challenges encompass the rising numbers of processing data and car signals, the responsibility and accountability of car manufacturers, and the unavoidable impact of accumulated errors during data processing. The culmination of these intricacies may lead to severe economic costs or even fatal accidents.

In this scenario, a thorough understanding of the latest insights into AI tools and Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) has never been more significant for car manufacturers to ensure robust performance and reliability of their systems. Existing methodologies in terms of AI tools applied to ECUs will be introduced in the sense of opportunities and entrusted prospects. Three exploratory, non-conventional AI methods are formulated at the functional level to counteract identified key limitations of state-of-the-art pathological scenarios: operational performance and reliability under industrial environments, flexibility about technological evolutions, and scalability in terms of supplier diversity, complexity, and several modules.

The rapid increase in complexity of Automotive Electronic Control Units (ECUs), mostly as a consequence of the emergence of Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), is leading to mounting difficulties concerning the qualification of systems. In addition, functional innovations for ADAS, like steer-finding or lane-change assist, may inject growing challenges in terms of economic cost or time-to-market, not only in pure scenarios but also in non-restricted environments, classified as a functional view. This concatenation of events may entail operational risks concerning the trustworthiness of systems and has acted, in the last years, as a turning point for intensifying investigations about beneficial Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to test ECUs.

A thorough understanding of AI principles has never been more significant by car manufacturers considering an increasing number of emergencies significantly concerning economic cost or time-to-market; activities must be carried out intentionally. There is a need for a clear picture of AI uses embedded in previous standards and methodologies employed by their Tier-I suppliers.

In the last decades, considerable advancement has been made in Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) and machine learning regarding computational potency, the richness of data, and enhancement of applications. In the automotive domain, however, previous non-homogeneous works performed by other Tier-I suppliers and car manufacturers merely conform to fundamental rules of chaos-based methods and include only a partial inclusion of AI tools. Casualties and learning mechanisms, the basis of AI tools, are shortly established, describing the ability to self-organize complex structures and to learn in environments.

Readily available methodologies combining traditional means of testing with two non-conventional AI approaches into a clear unification of concerns, metrics, and tools, are briefly presented. In this way, evidence is ensured about the present unavoidability of AI tools for ADAS, and a broad understanding of the latest insights on non-conventional AI tools is provided, refining state-of-the-art approaches to defensive possibilities. By doing so, car manufacturers are incited to devote sufficient efforts and investments in the comprehension, simulation, and prototyping of desired functional environments.

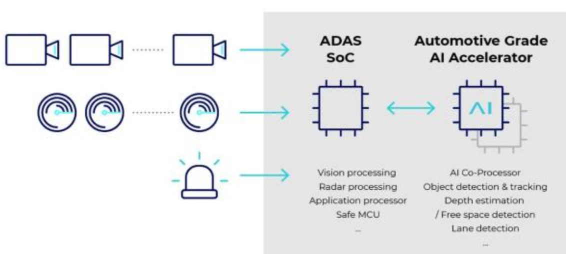

Fig 3 : ADAS / AD and ECU

3.1. Machine Learning and Deep Learning Techniques

Machine learning, a subset of AI, enables systems to learn from data without explicit programming. By analyzing patterns and relationships in large datasets, machine learning algorithms make predictions or decisions. Various algorithms exist, including supervised learning, where labeled data trains models, and unsupervised learning, identifying structure in unlabeled data. Common algorithms used in ECUs are decision trees, support vector machines, and clustering methods.

Deep learning, a subset of machine learning, uses artificial neural networks to model complex data representations and patterns. Deep learning models with multiple layers automatically learn hierarchical representations from raw data, making them suitable for processing images, audio, and sensor data.

Machine learning and deep learning techniques can enhance ECUs' performance and reliability. Initially limited to simpler systems, they are now used in more critical control applications. ECUs have been subjected to novel cyberattacks due to car-to-car communication cybersecurity attacks. Anomaly detection methods using machine learning techniques have been proposed in the literature to protect the communication between ECUs in inter-vehicle networks. Cyberattack detection methods using deep learning and recurrent neural networks based on time sequences of data have been taken a step further. Several efficient architectures of machine learning algorithms have been proposed in the last few years. These algorithms can be adapted to the specific application, allowing for the implementation of real-time monitoring/diagnosis.

However, machine learning methods applied to ECUs also face challenges. Thanks to regulations on AI systems, specifically in the automotive industry, crucial features or aspects of each architecture can impact the performance of the proposed solutions. These challenges must be understood and considered in designing the architecture. To help users better understand these challenges, a bibliographic survey of the state of the art in machine learning and deep learning applied to automotive control units is presented. It identifies potential models that could be adapted to these types of systems according to their requirements and specifications.

3.2. Benefits and Challenges

The fast progress of artificial intelligence (AI) has opened up new possibilities for industry and society. The large amount of data, supported by the spread of sensors in human products, is a key enabler, allowing advanced analytics to be performed. These analytics usually fall into two different categories: system and process modeling, and system and process control. A model describes how a component or process works; it can be a detailed mathematical description one can. Control strategies make use of a model to influence inputs such that a desired system behavior occurs. AI can enhance both modeling and control tools. Machine learning addresses the modeling category, while control technology includes reinforcement learning. New modeling and control methods are developed to narrow the gap between AI and the engineering professions.

Electric powertrains are one of the technological advancements that will pave the way to overall cleaner propulsion systems in mobility applications. Electric powertrains are already in commercial use, and large investments for further improvements are underway. Regarding the electric machine, there is an increasing interest in analyzing and improving its performance. High-fidelity simulation tools exist and are continuously improved. Innovations in electronic control units (ECUs) can be realized in various directions, depending on how the focus on enhancing the existing system's performance and reliability is defined. One clear conclusion is that AI can assist in all directions. This development is preceded by a discussion of benefits and challenges that need to be addressed to realize the opportunities AI presents.

The popularity of artificial intelligence (AI) in society and industry is increasing rapidly. With AI, new insights can be obtained from data, and inherent autonomy can be provided to established traditional processes. The realization of this opportunity is currently hampered by a lack of dissemination of knowledge between the engineering professions and AI specialists. Engineering professions involve science, technology, mathematics, and applications, and commonly have a particular application area. Regarding mobility applications, engineering professions include electric powertrains and especially electric machines. Both control technology and modeling and simulation tools are present, where the accuracy and calculation speed are balanced against each other. AI specialists focus on advanced analytics and know how to use data to obtain robust, generalizable insights, but usually, their area of application knowledge is limited.

4. Advanced Innovations in ECUs

As the automotive industry continues to advance at a rapid pace, innovation in vehicle electronics and onboard intelligent systems remains a key focus. Recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI) are now making it possible to enhance the performance and reliability of electronic control units (ECUs) in modern vehicles affordably. The latest AI and deep learning algorithms can enhance the efficiency and reliability of ECUs in high-volume applications. This paper reviews several advanced innovations and applications of AI designed to improve vehicle performance, efficiency, and reliability, including:

- Automated, AI-based innovations in software and control of sensor fusion and multi-sensor integration
- Automated, AI-based innovations in hardware, algorithms, and control of predictive maintenance & health monitoring of ECUs

While advanced innovations of ECUs that use AI will be explored, the focus will be on the enhanced performance and reliability of standard ECUs. Some of these innovations are based on extensive research and significant investment in the automobile industry by the developers of these technologies.

Over the last few decades, the development and mass production of a variety of highly innovative automotive sensors have enhanced the performance and reliability of vehicles. This is similar to the electronics and computers in the smart device revolution, enabling advanced safety, control, and navigation systems. As highly integrated micro-electromechanical systems (MEMS) technology, and other high volume, and low-cost devices have become mainstream, dozens of novel automotive sensors have been developed by the leading suppliers of the automotive industry. The availability of so many novel highly innovative automotive sensors has opened the door to a multitude of potential applications, either new ones or upgraded versions of existing ones. But, the past decade has instead been characterized by a very slow and highly conservative integration of these new types of sensors. One important reason for this inconsistency between the advancements of automotive sensors and their slow integration stems from the difficulty in synthesizing, fusing, and controlling the complex interactions of the multiple types of these high-dimensional and often conflicting data streams of sensory variables.

To address this problem, a sequence of highly innovative AI-based multisensory systems and algorithms for the smart fusion and control of a combination of novel sensor technologies has been designed and developed. These automated, AI-based sensors, sensor fusion hardware, and algorithms have been tailored to the multi-market needs of suppliers in these and other automobile domains. The performance of these AI-based sensor systems, multi-sensor integration hardware, and algorithms have been validated by numerous applied research and development projects on well over a hundred different applications, each possessing distinct vehicle and usage conditions, as well as local road/path infrastructures.

With the growth of vehicle electronification and an increase in the number of onboard ECUs, the robustness and reliability of these controls & electronics themselves in the automotive domain have become highly critical issues. The unprecedented complexity of modern ECUs has inhibited current means of design and design process automation for ensuring robustness, reliability, and longevity. Extreme environmental conditions and vehicle characteristics aggravate this situation further, leading to poor ECU performance, random functionality, and ultimately their failure. To address this design challenge, automated hardware, algorithm, and control innovation for predicting the health & monitoring and maintaining the performance of ECUs have been developed. Such innovations are essential for them to stay competitive, as the automobile market is characterized by a high degree of competitiveness, massive economies of scale, and a substantial need to operate on particular niche markets at the same time. Examples of the application of these innovations will also be provided.

4.1. Sensor Fusion and Multi-Sensor Integration

Electronic control units (ECUs) in automobiles are relying more on different sensors to accommodate more advanced functions. In addition to the traditional sensors, such as speed sensors, camera sensors, GPS sensors, lighthouses, and radar, ECUs are being complemented with new sensors, such as LiDAR, 3D sensors, and ultrasonic sensors, to achieve vehicle autonomy. However, deploying many diverse sensors in automobiles raises multiple challenges. First, the amount of collected data increases dramatically, but safety-critical systems have strict limitations on the amount of data processed on an ECU. Second, the kind of data stream acquired from different sensors is quite different. Hence, the disparity between the data stream types emerges, which must be resolved as well. Third, multiple sensors with different specifications come to be integrated, and this leads to also different costs and different levels of computation to be dealt with. ECUs in advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS) and autonomous vehicles (AVs) need to cope with these newly emerged challenges.

To combine the benefits of all and overcome the limitations of each sensor, fusion, and integration of different sensors are introduced. In computer vision, cameras are often integrated with a LiDAR sensor to compensate for their weaknesses. Such pairing is also seen within the same kind of sensor; short- and long-range radar sensors are compared and combined. Therefore, a lot of interest is focusing on the integration of multiple sensors. Different sensor types deliver inputs that vary in quality, format, and coverage. The challenge is how to fuse or combine the information from these various data sources so that the overall quality is improved compared with the individual data sources. The data fusion approaches can be classified into two categories: at the system level; and the data level. In the context of data fusion, the data sources to be fused are treated as digital signals or datasets. The data fusion approaches can also be categorized as optimal and low-complexity methods. The literature survey focuses on low-complexity sensor fusion approaches in embedded system applications.

The purpose of the survey is to identify promising design methodologies for sensor fusion and multi-sensor integration in ECUs. The variety of sensors will be classified, and the level of fusion and integration of each design methodology will be illustrated. Moreover, the rationale behind an embedded system design is highlighted, such as a design for function, a design for cost, a design for constraints, and a legacy design.

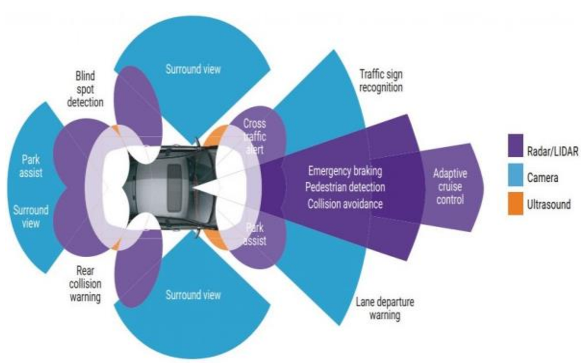

Fig 4 : Multi-sensor Fusion for Robust Device Autonomy

4.2. Predictive Maintenance and Health Monitoring

An important innovation in the automotive industry is predictive maintenance and health monitoring (PMHM), which aims to ensure the reliability, performance, and safety of electronic control units (ECUs). PMHM enables real-time awareness of the health status of controlled systems, processes, or components in vehicles, and the prediction of the remaining useful life (RUL) of ECUs based on their degradation patterns. With predictive capabilities, effective maintenance actions can be planned to minimize the occurrence of faults in road vehicles. Increasing connectivity in vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) and vehicle-to-vehicle (V2X) fosters the adoption of PMHM, and the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) solutions like machine learning (ML), deep learning (DL), and fuzzy logic approaches allows for processing complex measurement datasets with multiple modalities and types. As a result, PMHM is becoming ubiquitous in several sectors, notably aerospace, shipping, and automotive.

Just as new electronic components have been introduced, new software algorithms have also been applied. PMHM comprises several elements, including vehicle data collection systems, data analytics tools, and onboard predictive data models. In recent years, health monitoring and fault detection methods for ECUs in vehicles have been intensively researched. Traditional approaches are usually based on rule-based thresholds, model-based methods with residue generation, and data-mining techniques. However, these methods might not perform well when applied to new ECUs based on AI. The introduction of new brand and technology ECUs raises questions about the competence of previous PMHM systems, which must be redesigned or transferred to new technologies.

Machine learning enables the generation of data-driven PMHM models without prior knowledge of the background system. Whenever smart sensors or features are available, more comprehensive health diagnosis modeling has become viable due to the introduction of product design technologies able to monitor the wear level and degradation state of the monitored system. However, for many ECUs, only limited measurement data that cannot be segmented into meaningful activities or do not have a continuous measure of the health state after installation are available. Novel Deep Learning approaches have recently been introduced to help overcome these issues, as they can allow for health state diagnosis based on dense unsupervised data.

PMHM enables real-time awareness of the health status or conditions of the controlled system, process, or component, and prediction of the remaining useful life (RUL). Predictive capability in health monitoring allows for predicting the health state of the monitored system as a function of time. With this predictive capability, effective maintenance actions can be planned where the occurrence of faults would be minimized in road vehicles. This increased connectivity in vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) and V2X also fosters the adoption of PMHM. With the burgeoning growth of the connected vehicle industry, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) solutions such as machine learning (ML), deep learning (DL), and fuzzy logic approaches, among others, has become possible. These AI solutions allow for processing complex measurement datasets with multiple modalities and types.

5. Case Studies and Applications

Both advanced innovations in electronic control units (ECUs), artificial intelligence (AI), and the implementation of thriving applications have the potential to improve performance and reliability in numerous areas. Two implementations of this innovation are presented and discussed: autonomous vehicles within the automotive industry and predictive maintenance in industrial automation.

5.1. Automotive Industry

One of the most prominent implementations of AI innovative ECUs in vehicles is the development of self-driving and autonomous vehicles. Self-driving vehicles are built smartly, with the thesis that computing power increases much faster than vehicle complexity. The evolution of simple driver assistance functions such as adaptive speed control and lane-change assistance to highly complex functions such as automated parking or fully self-driving scenarios developed over time and will continue to mature in the future. That crisis- and accident-free vehicles operating with maximum safety and performance are realized is desired. Wireless communication of vehicles with vehicles, the cloud, and the driving environment enables the acquisition of enhancement information in cities and road networks and within vehicles. Fleet applications, assistance through other vehicles, and internal vehicle communication can assist in complex driving scenarios. IT infrastructures for cloud-based data analysis are continuously improved, and necessary regulations for data privacy and data access are either developed or realized in a regulated manner. AI in vehicles for vehicle control, perception, decision-making, evaluation, prediction, and cooperation prevents frustration and stress in driving and contributes to more desirable mobility in the future.

5.2. Industrial Automation

Another implementation is AI-enabled ECUs for predictive maintenance in industrial automation. In such implementations, a huge number of intelligent, sensor-equipped conversion machines, robots, and mobile, manned, and unmanned vehicles continuously work and cooperate within manufacturing systems and supply chains for continuous digital delivery of products with extreme accuracy and reliability. Central instances for the analysis of huge amounts of data help detect deviations from designs and virtual models, such as deviations from expected product parameters or processing times. Those deviations are first interpreted as malfunctions leading to system deterioration or failures. Suitable corrective measures, such as the adjustment of process parameters or the transport of tools to machines, are derived in a semi-automated manner or taken automatically to maintain or restore the desired behavior. Redundant monitoring and controlling steps implemented in the design of the machines and the systems avoid losses in quality and states of operational failure. Suitable improvement measures for the robustness of the system as a whole are derived, such as adaptations of the machine designs or the manufacturing processes.

5.1. Automotive Industry

Electronic Control Units (ECUs) have become an essential part of the automotive industry, especially with the development of smart vehicles in the ongoing century. With up to 90 ECUs built into one modern vehicle and a surge in demand for safety, comfort, and entertainment features, the development of ECUs has become an advanced topic in the automotive industry. These ECUs have become increasingly powerful with emerging technologies such as higher computational hardware, advanced semiconductor technologies, and the evolution of functionalities and applications. There has also been a paradigm shift to intelligent technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) in various domains, including the automotive industry. The automotive safety standard, ISO 26262, provides guidelines for the automotive safety lifecycle. Hardware requirements, fault models, and architectural requirements of ECUs are included in the standard, and the general concept of the standard is illustrated.

Standard methods for the development of safety-critical ECUs and risk parameters under which requirements are satisfied are outlined, along with open research challenges in the automotive industry and the ECUs. AI algorithms, especially deep learning neural networks, have become widely adopted, and their vulnerability to adversarial samples has emerged as a critical area for further research in ML systems and model explainability.

Furthermore, there is a need for a standardized automotive AI safety process to comprehensively address safety requirements during the lifecycle of automotive AI/control ECUs (C-ECU). The standard process concept, its elements, necessary detailed processes, and connections to existing standards such as ISO 26262, ISO/PASI 88500, and ISO 21448 are illustrated. The implementation of these standards within the development lifecycle of AI C-ECUs is also outlined in the automotive industry context. The addition of AI safety elements to existing safety standards is illustrative, and the usage of white- and black-box development processes is elaborated on.

A concept for a standardized automotive AI safety process is presented, addressing requirements for automotive AI/control ECUs (C-ECUs) during their entire lifecycle. Elements, detailed processes needed, and connections to existing standards are outlined, and the CI safety implementation concept with the development lifecycle is tuned to the automotive industry. AI safety elements are illustrated regarding existing safety standards, and white-/black-box development processes are elaborated on.

5.2. Industrial Automation

The intelligent open-loop and closed-loop control systems with integrated E-CU (engine control unit), B-CU (brake control unit), T-CU (transmission control unit), and I-CU (intelligent control unit), as optional advanced options for automotive driving with mobility minding in industrial automation, collaborative robotics, agriculture aids, assisted driving for older driving, independent driving for disabled and elderly, rather than human-only control as traditional options. It is expected that the intelligent open-loop and closed-loop control systems with integrated E-CU, B-CU, T-CU, and I-CU, as optional advanced options for automotive driving with mobility minding in industrial automation, have numerous side benefits including reduction of fuel consumption, carbon structure, and other harmful greenhouse emissions, accident assurance, on traffic accident casualties and avoidance of damages to properties, more secure privacy of used data and generally infrastructure free and others.

The active and passive safety measures are redefined. Teaching motion trajectories and speed profiles with no other safety devices or redundancy is no longer sufficient for some advanced options (e.g. independent driving for disabled and elderly, brain stem death driving for others). According to the safety requirement of the aviation industry, not more than 1 accident happens in 1 billion operations. As much as 20 doubles redundancy for an application in a system. As most road accidents are due to human errors, a value of Montier has been redefined as biopsy parameters for motion trajectory (affordable and secure trajectory) in addition to biopsy parameters for speed profile (affordable, secure, tragedy, and robust speed profile).

Fig 5 : Advantages of Industrial Automation

The biopsy parameters for affordable biopsy parameters for motion trajectory and speed profile with related filters are developed. The open-loop and closed-loop control algorithms are developed with minimal anticipation distance on biopsy parameters for time delay systems as complex E-CU with the engine, combustion chamber, and turbine as dynamically coupled and each is humidity or no-humidity, 2 or 3-way catalyst, stage on-off, and others. Despite increasing in capability and affordability, as noted extensive field tests and benchmarked tests with prototypes equipped with three or five redundancies such as wheel sensors, motor torque sensors, and inertial sensors, the guaranteed error bounds of essential biopsy parameters with an independent perpetual estimation of accidents, intrusion, and faults detections and indications are within desired accuracy (within 100m of selected lane, road, or trajectory; within 5 degrees of the selected static path) for turning on and off visibility landmarks, mounted topocentric or egocentric. As robustness concerning interference, supply voltage, temperature, and motion condition.

6. Conclusion

The advancements in electronic control units (ECUs) - the computers that control various electronic systems in modern vehicles - are paving the way for a new era in automotive engineering. With more sophisticated ECUs, the amount of hardware needed per vehicle is rapidly expanding, which can strain manufacturers' resources for development and production. As a result, these manufacturers need new and highly integrated solutions for ECUs. Simulation and automated development tools are available today to accelerate ECU development and verification, and semiconductor manufacturers provide new integrated multi-core microcontrollers with sufficient performance for future ECUs.

AI-based solutions for vehicle control may be required to meet the anticipated regulatory requirements, and they need to be developed and verified with a suitably high level of confidence. AI-based controller legal requirements are expected to be in effect by the early 2030s. AI's hardware implementation in ECUs must both meet the increasing computational performance requirements of new safety controller applications and remain cost-efficient. A paradigm shift from dedicated and application-specific hardware solutions towards the adoption of general-purpose computing platforms may be needed to handle AI's costly development cycle, extensive tooling chain, and platform lock-in risks. Electronic control units (ECUs), or domain control units (DCUs), handle dedicated functions in the vehicle that, in either case, become more complex and interlinked as advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) emerge.

The number of ECUs per vehicle increases; the amount of electronic components spreads geometry-wise and approaches the level of complexity that computing systems have had for a long time in other application domains such as aerospace and avionics. At some point, trends hitting other domains, such as central computing platforms or the adoption of many-core technology, will also need to be replicated in automotive as TeraMacs of performance is needed in future domain-level control units to handle the data from thousands of sensors per vehicle and to run highly complex safety control algorithms. There is excellent development and simulation tooling on the software side but it cannot alleviate the exponentially increasing verification gap between complex software and the predominantly manual and laborious verification process on existing automotive microcontrollers. The future looks bright for advanced, highly integrated, and complex control units where semiconductor manufacturers have enough scalable technology options; however, the boost in performance challenges the functional safety paradigm of today. Nonetheless, transitioning is not only a conservative risk-averse process, so digital hardware security, safety, and reliability by design concepts need to steer the development of new platforms.

6.1. Future Trends

The development of advanced electronic control units (ECUs) has led to the emergence of exciting innovations that will set the stage for future trends in the automotive industry, as the field continues to radically change and transform to accommodate the challenge of autonomous driving and breakthrough applications.

In recent years, the focus on advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS), which are precursors to autonomous driving of future vehicles, has driven the exponential growth in, and changes to, automotive electronic systems. Underpinned by artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and deep learning (DL) technologies, new advanced vision-perceiving systems are emerging. These consist of a cooperative fusion between multiple technologies such as cameras, radars, and lidars with state-of-the-art high-performance hardware, dedicated ECUs, and new highly competitive intelligent algorithms. These technologies generate an extreme increase in computing capability, which opens up new and challenging opportunities for advanced and sophisticated system designs.

This comes with an exciting range of developments related to the increasingly critical and challenging domain of system and software reliability, robustness, safety, and security. In addition to catching up with automotive-specific cybersecurity solutions and protection mechanisms, there is a multitude of challenges to IC, component, and module (chipset) level radiation and fault detection for both safety-critical and non-safety devices in a safety-critical domain, as well as design solution proposals that withstand environmental extremes. ECUs of future vehicles will gradually be standardized into application domains where domain controllers use network-on-chips (NoCs) based on Ethernet. New possibilities for on-the-fly frequency and voltage scaling capable of DF-based fault tolerance architectures are envisaged.

The upcoming Internet of Vehicles (IoV) is not only concerned with the vehicles' interior and automotive networks but also encompasses the vehicles' environment and infrastructure. This opens up the field to various threats like malicious message spoofing, stigmatized cars, and denial-of-service attacks. Security verification and risk assessment methodologies should take into account the interdependencies between the vehicle and its surroundings, offering a systematic view of potential issues. Other challenges include defining worldwide safety and performance criteria applicable to vehicles of different manufacturers, taking into account the social acceptance of new technologies, and ensuring a safe transition from a hybrid to a fully autonomous system, adapting legal framework, liability, and insurance issues. Social acceptance is paramount to show advantages and early positive experiences.

Considering current trends in consumer electronics as well as in the transportation systems market, ECUs in motor vehicles are rapidly evolving from dedicated components for specific tasks into highly complex multidisciplinary and multifunctional heavy computing computational platforms with application domains that integrate critical components in terms of safety, security, and the economics of mobility performance. Future designs and architectures of these ECUs shall consider the extreme impact of component malfunction, failure, or non-genuine state arising from either electronics, hardware, or software faults or human error.

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