# University of Florida <br> Intelligent Machine Design Lab 

## Card Shark

(final report)

Kevin E. Kane
ID \# 72860210
Dr. A. Arroyo

## Table of Contents

Abstract ..... 3
Executive Summary ..... 3
Introduction ..... 4
Integrated System ..... 4
Mobile Platform ..... 5
Actuation ..... 5
Sensors ..... 6
Barcode scanner Photo-resistors
Behaviors .....  6
Conclusion .....  7
Acknowledgements ..... 8
Appendix ..... 9-?Complete CodeLine tracking circuit


#### Abstract

Card Shark is an autonomous professional card-playing robot specializing in blackjack play. Using its own deck of cards with barcodes on them the robot can place bets, read its cards and the dealer's cards, and then makes the proper mathematical play for best long run results. An excite toy for everyone to watch, Card Shark's uses of entertainment could even be used directly in casinos.


## Executive Summary

In an attempt to better educate the gambling community about the simple, yet exciting game of blackjack, I've designed Card Shark. Card Sharks uses are completely for entertainment and spectator enjoyment for now. In the flashy world of Gambling and card tables, a simple robot playing a traditionally human game would be an attention grabber. Many would most likely what to even play next to the robotic gambling marvel. It does seem that future designs could also be build with more of an education/training purpose in mind. Card Sharks could be used for teaching the game to complete novices and be a fun table companion at the same time.

Card Shark is designed to function as a completely autonomous blackjack player. Card Shark has three main behavior functions that it performs, while in combination they create a false sense of intelligence. It follows a highly contrast line track counter clockwise. As it performs this task, it scans the barcodes on playing cards laid out before it. By reading and inputting these card values (or instructions as it maybe considered) Card Shark makes a blackjack playing choice. Doubling down, splitting, hitting or standing is all part of a standard repertoire for this gambling machine. In split and doubling down situations Card Shark's current design drops a colored chips to better express its desires. Complete hands are displayed on the LCD screen readable to either the dealer or observers.

With the ability to play one hand after another, and never become mentally tired, Card Shark is the first truly perfect Blackjack player. Fun to watch and possibly even learn from, Card Shark may bring an ever more positive light to the some times intimidating game of blackjack. If casinos desires are to keep patrons entertained and on the gaming floor having a couple Card Sharks in their casino may have the potential to bring more business and bets then before.

## Introduction

Card Shark is the first autonomous blackjack-playing robot ever (at lest I think so). It is mostly for fun in its current form, as no serious casino would allow a robot to play its blackjack tables. However, warehouses or other shipping companies can use the basic programming level of Card Shark's decision-making and barcode reading to move organize and distribute products. With a computerized system to organize and place goods in/out of storage, a company can expect exact and dependable work.

## Integrated System

At the heart of Card Shark is an ATMEL Atmega32L micro-controller mounted on a STK500 testing board. This micro controller directly interfaces with the following devices:
> 2 "hacked" servos for mobility around the playing table
> 2 "arm" servos for placing bets
$>1$ LCD for feedback to the dealer and operator
$>2$ photo resistor circuits for basic line following
$>1$ KaneScan barcode scanner for playing card reading
There are two movement servos that are used to drive Card Shark around the table while following the black line. These two servos are used to help it turn left or right. An interesting aspect of Card Shark is how wide it is. As a result, in order to make sharp turns I wrote code that sets one wheel in reverse (although it is slow) in order to make tight turns as I desired. This makes the Card Shark’s turns/movements appear jerky at times; however the advantages of a smaller track can then be utilized.

The "arms" are the most internal part of my design and are used to drop different colored chips from inside the chip holder areas. These chips are pushed to the cutout holes at the bottom of the platform. These servos are not hacked and are used to move one way and then back to their resting positions.

The LCD is used to inform the dealer and operator what Card Shark wishes to do with its decision; hit, stand, double down, or split. It is located on the top of Card Shark.

The photo resistors are used to follow a black line. They are incorporated in a circuit designed to give a digital ( $1=$ white, $0=$ black line) output. This keeps Card Shark in the proper place for reading the cards in order.

The Barcode scanner is used to recognize the actual card values. Each card has a barcode on it that is scanned and input to Card Shark as it drives by. A basic Code 39 is used for
the scanner and barcodes. The nice thing about this is that numbers are sent in ASCII form. These means that after reading in the value the code could subtract $\$ 30$ and have the correct hexadecimal value to be used. (Notice that Aces $=\$ 01$ and Tens $=\$ 00$ )

## Mobile Platform

The platform I designed in AutoCAD and cutout with the T-tech was quite large with dimensions of 13 " x 8 ". It holds the batteries and scanner on one side and the chips on the other, while still carrying the full STK500 in the middle. That is the scanner is on the left and playing cards are on the right when facing the same direction as Card Shark. The LCD is located on top next to the board and faces the back of Card Shark. This seemed to be the best location for both the operator and the dealer to see what Card Shark's playing choice is. An area was built to hold ten AA batteries to power the robot. On top of it is velcro to hold the scanner in place during operation. In this design velcro is the only choice as glue means you'd be unable to replace Card Shark's batteries and anything less would not hold the scanner in place. Along with the wooden frame are two separate "arms" for moving chips from their holding locations to the holes cut out in the bottom layer of the platform. A hole large enough to drop one chip bets as either the original, double down, or splitting bets. The frame is held together using screws; in this way the separate layers of the platform can be taken apart and line following circuits potentiometers may be adjusted and the betting "arms" inside can be inspected.

## Actuation

Card Shark moves vie two servos, one for each driving wheel. The other two servos are independently used for the betting "arms" inside the robot's platform. These servos are moved in three different patterns to displace three different bets; first bet, doubling down, and splitting bets. For this reasons two of the used were bought as "hacked" servos while the remained standard servos.

As a funny side note, two of my original servos (non-hacked) were destroyed when I put an excess amount of crazy glue on the dowels placed inside the rotating shafts of the servos. They were glued stiff and wouldn't move!

## Sensors

Sensor: KaneScan Barcode Scanner (just happens to have my last name in it) Part number: 02001291
Qty: $\quad 1$
Discussion: The KaneScan barcode scanner is an affordable (\$85) highly accurate (4 mils) barcode scanner. Each card in Card Shark’s deck has a barcode on the top corresponding to its value in blackjack. Aces are coded with the number 1 and are handled by the software as either 1 or 11 like in all blackjack casino games. Tens are given a value of 0 by the barcoding scheme but fixed in the programming code. The barcode scanner is mounted on the left with it scanning done behind the drive wheels. The scanner is interfaced via an RS-232 into an extra UART port built into the microcontroller.

## Sensor: Photo resistors

Part number: none
Qty: 2
Discussion: Card Shark uses two photo resistant cells for following a black line. There have been many projects that have done similarly and I followed those designs tightly. I used the same circuit design given in a report on line tracking by William the TA. By following a black line Card Shark is sure to stay on track and read all the playing cards in proper order and then place the bets in the same general locations.

## Behaviors

First Card Shark places its starting bet to be in the hand. Card Shark then follows the black line track around to scan the dealer's cards and then its own cards. It then makes the choice to hit, stand, double down, or split. Card Shark displays this decision on its LCD screen (preceded by the card's value read) and if needed drops the correct betting chip for doubling down or splitting. Card Shark then continues around the track prepared to read the next card if a hit or split was the play, or ready to read the next hand if doubling down or standing was the play.

These behaviors major components were worked on separately (line tracking, barcode reading, and betting) and then I tried to blend them together. I discovered many issues to deal with when these behaviors were brought together. One was the power needed to fully supply the STK500 board, 4 separate servos, two photo resistor circuits and one barcode scanner was a lot. I used 10 rechargeable Energizer 2300 mAh batteries and this was barely enough. (Notice: for the teacher/TA demo I tried different batteries with very bad results, including a very jumpy robot that wouldn't follow a line) Another issue with blending these behaviors is that scanning the cards is easy by hand but while driving exact alignment is needed. Slight changes in approach angles result in unread cards.

## Conclusion

Card Shark is a fully functional blackjack-playing robot. I know how to read/scan cards calculate its best betting solution and drop the proper chip for that decision. It is of course only for fun and possibly for training yourself at home. However, the basic ideas behind Card Shark are far reaching. They could be used in moving and dropping off supplies (chips) to different location in a specified track or warehouse. By having interchangeable barcodes, operators (dealers) can layout different patterns or objectives for an army of robots without actually changing the robots themselves. This system would save a lot of time and effort if many such robots were in operation at a warehouse, factory, distribution center, or any other quickly changing (yet robotically feasible) manual labor locations.

There are many, many problems with this first design of Card Shark. I will explain a couple now, but many more improvements should be made in any next generation designs. First of all my original plans were to have Card Shark carry many doubling down bet and splitting bet chips with it as it moved. It was to drop one at a time and still hold a supply of extra chips for following hands. The problem was the material used in the internal "arms" was wood. Everything was laid out in AutoCAD and finely designed to coordinate tightly with one another; however, the wood was quick to warp and bend, making my dream system impossible to utilize. I was left sanding, carving, gluing and praying only to get it holding and dropping one chip at a time (I'm clearly not a mechanical engineer). Second I never clearly laid a plan to make Card Shark stop and wait/drop bets at an exact location. One black tab and a third photo-resistor would have solved this issue. Instead, I the dealer, guessed the location of the last playing card so the bet chips would stay in the same general area.

I believed the easiest part of my project would be writing the code for playing the "basic" strategy laid out in books and online. This wasn't the case and what I expect to be a couple days work turned into assembly code over 400 words in length, and even then it was far from perfect. "Arrays" and "lookup tables" coded in a higher-level language are the only ways of doing this. I tried indirect indexing but faced more problems then I was able to tackle. The result is a maze of code through branching and jump commands. (I challenge any normal human being to try and follow it)

I would say that although Card Shark does not act completely to my desires or even correctly $100 \%$ of the time, I'm still proud of the work and effort I put into it. The code is huge, all available PWMs were used, I almost ran out of ports on the STK500, and I burned, destroyed and lost more components then I'd like to admit. It was all a learning experience. The fact is, I learned more practical things in this short summer then any other class at UF.

## Acknowledgements

One thing I learned in this course was not to just know the right people, but to know the right questions to ask those people! With that I'd like to thank, Steven Pickels for his extensive help with my many barcode scanner questions, William Dubel for direction with the line tracking and power supply circuits, Max Koessick for cutting out my platform and teaching me AVR assembly code. In addition I'd like to thank a couple students in the class as well, Jeffery Cohan for the photo-resistors, Stephen Corbett for sending me PWM example code, and the builder of "please-don't-suck-bot" for the servo wheels he offered me in my time of need.

Last I'd like to thank A. A. Arroyo and E. M. Schwartz for the opportunity they gave us to take this class. Thanks to their efforts and teachings the world of robotics has been opened to us all.

## Appendix

## Completed Code:

| ;** | Kevin E Kane | ** |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| ;** | 7/28/2004 | ** |  |
| ** | EEL 5666, UF | ** |  |
| ** | Card Shark 2.d | ** |  |
| ; ************************************************************** |  |  |  |
| ; * Program Discription: Is the second try at intergrating the blackjack |  |  | * |
| ; * playing program of Card Shark with the actuation fuctions. These |  |  | * |
| ; * actuations include the servos used for driving, sensors for line |  |  | * |
| ; * detection and additional servos for placing bets (starting, splitting |  |  | * |
| ; * and doubling down. |  |  | * |
|  |  |  |  |


| ; ***********Notes To Yourself $* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *$ |  |
| :--- | :--- |
| $; 1)$ | PortA is for LCD screen! |
| ; 2) | PortB is for anything (pin 3 is a timer PWM output, OC0) |
| ; 3) | PortC is for LEDs (NOTE: only pins 7, 6, 1, and 0 seem to work) |
| ; 4) | PortD is for TX(transmiter), RX(resiever), V0, V1(eyes), |
| ; | PWM0, PWM1 (wheels), OC2 (splitting/dd pin) |
| ; 5) | @@@@@@ = means these lines may be removed but are used for trouble shooting |
| .nolist |  |
| .include "C:\Program Files $\backslash$ Atmel\AVR Tools $\backslash$ AvrAssembler\Appnotes $\backslash m 32 d e f . i n c " ~$ |  |
| .list |  |


| .def | temp0 | =r16 | ; Temporary register 0 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| .def | temp1 | =r17 | ; Temporary register 1 (for UART I/O) |
| .def | temp2 | =r18 | ; Temporary register 2 (for LCD screen/PortA) |
| .def | temp3 | =r19 | ; Temporary register 3 |
| .def | Delay1 | =r20 | ; Delay variable 1 |
| .def | Delay2 | =r21 | ; Delay variable 2 |
| .def | Delay3 | =r22 | ; Delay variable 3 |
| .def | mpr | =r23 | ; "Multi-Purpose Register" (used for servos) |
| .def | mpr2 | =r24 | ; "Multi-Purpose Register", number 2 (used for servos) |


| ;***** Interrupt Vectors $* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * ~$. org $\quad \$ 000$ |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | rjmp | Init | ; Starting Line (jump to Init) |
| .org | \$01A |  |  |
|  | rjmp | Scan | ; UART Receive Complete |


|  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| ;***** INITIALIZATIONS!!! **************************** |  |  |
| Init: |  |  |
| ****Port Setups**** |  |  |
| ser | temp0 |  |
| out | DDRA,temp0 | ; Set PORTA to all outputs |
| out | DDRB,temp0 | ; Set PORTB to all outputs |
| ldi | temp0,0b10111111 |  |
| out | DDRC,temp0 | ; Set PORTC to all outputs except pin6 input |
| ldi | temp0,0b10110000 |  |
| out | DDRD,temp0 | ; Set PORTD pins 4, 5 and 7 as outputs, all others are |

inputs
temp0
PortA,temp0 ; Set no "pullups" for PortA
PortB,temp0 ; Set no "pullups" for PortB
PortC,temp0 ; Set no "pullups" for PortC
temp0,0b10110000 ; Set pins 4 and 5 as high initially,...
PortD,temp0 ; ...no other "pullups" for PortD
;
mpr,0b01110100 ; (timer 0) ; mode 1 PWM, "set" on rise and...







output_number:
lds
cpi
brne
ldi
call
ldi
call
no_clear:
temp0,card number ; load temp0 with "card number"
temp $0, \$ 00 \quad$; is this the dealer's card?
no_clear
temp2,\$00 ; (Clear Home)
LCDdelay
temp2,\$01
LCDdelay


ZL,0x00
; compare ZL to $\$ 00$, if
seven7:
eight8:
nine9:
zero:
two:
three:
four:
ldi
call
ldi
cpi
breq
срі breq

## breq

## cpi

## срі

breq
cpi
breq

## cpi breq

reti
ldi
call
ldi
call
rjmp
ldi call
temp2,\$83
call LCDdelay
rjmp
; $\mathrm{ZL}($ data $-\$ 30)$ is $\$ 00$ then jump to zero
ZL,0x01
ZL,0x02
ZL,0x03
ZL,0x04
ZL,0x05
ZL,0x06
ZL,0x07
ZL,0x08
ZL,0x09
;(note not a valied card number!) ; leave interrupt service routine
seven
eight
nine
temp2,\$83

## temp2,\$81

temp2,\$83
temp2,\$80
y
LCDdelay
back ; leave interrupt service routine

temp2,\$81
LCDdelay
back
; leave interrupt service routine
; leave interrupt service routine
; leave interrupt service routine

```
    rjmp back ; leave interrupt service routine
five:
ldi
call
ldi
    call LCDdelay
    rjmp back ; leave interrupt service routine
six:
ldi temp2,\$83
call LCDdelay
ldi temp2,$86
call LCDdelay
rjmp back ; leave interrupt service routine
seven:
ldi
call
    LCDdelay
                                    temp2,$83
                                temp2,$87
        call LCDdelay
        rjmp
eight:
        ldi
        call
        LCDde
                                    ; leave interrupt service routine
call LCDdelay
ldi temp2,\$88
        call LCDdelay
        rjmp back
                                    ; leave interrupt service routine
nine:
            ldi temp2,$83
        call
        LCDdelay
        ldi
                *(%),483
        temp2,$89
        call LCDdelay
        rjmp back
        ; leave interrupt service routine
;************************************************************************
;**************Variables Defined!!***************************************
.org $500
.dseg
card_number: .byte 1 ; The number of the player's card being looked at/next,
                                    ; Note: the dealer's card is "card_number" zero ( $00 )
dealer_card: .byte 1 ; value of dealer's card
players_hand_count: .byte 1 ; players total hand count
final_card_number: .byte 1 ; holds the value that card_number is counting up to!
soft: .byte 1 ; pin-0 is used as a flag for when player's hand is soft
```

Line tracking ciruit:
(from William Dubel's report on line tracking)


Circuit outputs logic high when a black line is detected.

